

Winter 2002

*Donation Request*

# Zen Group News

*Newsletter of the Bellingham Zen Practice Group*

*Guiding Teacher: Zoketsu Norman Fisher*

*Resident Priest: Nomon Tim Burnett*

## Bellingham Zen Practice Group Winter 2002 Practice Period

From January 2<sup>nd</sup> to March 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Bellingham Zen Practice is holding a two month winter practice period in cooperation with our sister sangha in Vancouver, Mountain Rain Zen Community (formerly part of the Karuna Meditation Society).

Following the ancient tradition of the "rains retreat" in which the original monastic sangha settled down for intensive practice during the monsoon season in India, a practice period is a time to turn your focus more toward practice.

In residential centers, practice period students follow an intense schedule of daily meditation, rituals,

work and study. In our home-based lay practice, a practice period is an opportunity to choose to increase your personal focus on dharma practice with the support of the sangha. While we will have an opening ceremony and three retreats (see below) during the practice period, the main focus is always our own practice in our daily lives. Please consider how you will use this time. You might sit more, study texts, sample the practice in other traditions, do service work, work on a habit or pattern you wish to change, or perform some kind of daily ritual to remind yourself of the practice period.

### PRACTICE PERIOD EVENTS

**Opening Ceremony:** Thurs., Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7pm-9pm Opening ceremony including an opportunity to share your practice plan with the sangha. Dharma Hall.

**Student Talks:** Most of the Thursday evening sessions during Practice Period will feature short talks by experienced students of the sangha with tea and discussion.

**Residential Sesshin:** Tuesday evening, January 7<sup>th</sup> – Sunday afternoon January 12<sup>th</sup>, with Norman Fisher at Loon Lake near Vancouver. Cost approx. \$175 plus donation to the teacher. Contact Kate or Michael at (604) 929-1804 or [pheobe.skm@telus.net](mailto:pheobe.skm@telus.net) or mail in a registration form from the Hall to register.

**Public Talk and Slide Show** by Andy Ferguson, author of *Zen's Chinese Ancestors*—Friday, January 31, at 7pm at the Bellingham Dharma Hall. See page four for details.

**Sangha Meeting:** Saturday, February 1, 3–5pm, at the Dharma Hall.

**One Day Sitting:** Sunday February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9am – 3pm, at the Bellingham Dharma Hall. Dharma talk by Nomon Tim Burnett. Contact Nancy Welch at (360) 671-3992 or [registrar@bellinghamzen.org](mailto:registrar@bellinghamzen.org) No fee, pre-registration required. Sack lunch.

**Practice Discussion Evening:** Tuesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 7pm – 9pm. Home of Kelly and Dan (2409 'H' Street). A chance to check in with the sangha, discuss our practice and receive some support.

**Non-residential Zen Retreat:** Thursday evening February 27<sup>th</sup> – Sunday afternoon March 2<sup>nd</sup> with Norman Fisher at the Dharma Hall. Registration fee \$55 (\$45 for Dharma Hall Member), \$65 after February 15<sup>th</sup>; plus teacher donation. To register contact Nancy Welch at (360) 671-3992 or [registrar@bellinghamzen.org](mailto:registrar@bellinghamzen.org)

**Sangha Practice Meeting** with Zoketsu. For members of the Bellingham sangha (those who attend Thursday nights). Friday Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> 7pm-9pm, Dharma Hall

**Public Talk by Zoketsu Norman Fisher,** Saturday March 1<sup>st</sup>, 7pm, Bellingham Dharma Hall.

**Closing Ceremony:** Sunday afternoon, March 2<sup>nd</sup> practice period closing ceremony, details T.B.A



## January 2003

| Sun  | Mon | Tue   | Wed | Thu  | Fri                                 | Sat   |    |
|--|-----|---|-----|--|-------------------------------------|---|----|
|  |     |   | 1   |  | Practice period<br>Opening ceremony | 3   | 4  |
| 5  | 6   | 7 Residential Retreat<br>Loon Lake—Zoketsu Norman Fischer | 8   | 9 [Thursday sitting as<br>usual in Bellingham] | 10                                  | 11  |    |
| 12 Loon Lake<br>Priest Ordination<br>Ceremony—2:00 | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16   | Practice Period<br>Student Talk     | 17  | 18 |
| 19   | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23   | Practice Period<br>Student Talk     | 24  | 25 |
| 26   | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30   | Practice Period<br>Student Talk     | Zen Ancestors Slide<br>Show, 7pm, Dharma Hall |    |

## February 2003

| Sun   | Mon | Tue                               | Wed | Thu  | Fri                             | Sat                               |    |
|---|-----|-----------------------------------|-----|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----|
|   |     |                                   |     |  |                                 | Sangha meeting—3-5<br>Dharma Hall |    |
| 1 One Day Sitting<br>Dharma Hall<br>9:00-3:00 | 3   | Practice<br>Discussion<br>Evening | 5   |  | Practice Period<br>Student Talk | 7                                 | 8  |
| 9   | 10  | 11                                | 12  |  | Practice Period<br>Student Talk | 14                                | 15 |
| 16  | 17  | 18                                | 19  |  | Practice Period<br>Student Talk | 21                                | 22 |
| 23  | 24  | 25                                | 26  | Non-residential Retreat—<br>Zoketsu Norman Fischer—through March 2<br>Bellingham Dharma Hall |                                 |                                   |    |

## March 2003

| Sun                                 | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri                  | Sat                                   |    |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------------------|---------------------------------------|----|
|                                     |     |     |     |     |                      | Public Talk<br>Zoketsu Norman Fischer |    |
| Practice Period<br>Closing Ceremony | 3   | 4   | 5   |     | Tea and discussion   | 7                                     | 8  |
| 9                                   | 10  | 11  | 12  |     | Full Moon Ceremony   | 14                                    | 15 |
| 16                                  | 17  | 18  | 19  |     | Tea and Discussion   | 21                                    | 22 |
| 23                                  | 24  | 25  | 26  |     | Tea and Book Reviews | 28                                    | 29 |
| 30                                  | 31  |     |     |     |                      |                                       |    |

## Dear Friends of the Bellingham Zen Practice Group,

For eleven years now we have been doing our best to support each other in Zen practice in the style of Suzuki-roshi. It has been a beautiful and organic process for all of us, I think. Gradually friendships in the dharma have blossomed. Gradually we have all grown as students of Zen and as people. About half-way through these years we formalized our growing relationship with our wonderful teacher, Zoketsu Norman Fischer. Norman is now our guiding teacher, and even though he doesn't live in Bellingham he is ever present and a huge support for us individually and as a group.

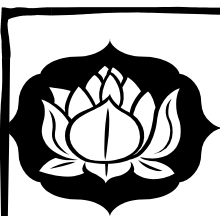
Particularly moving to me are those of you who can't come on Thursday nights, but somehow do still keep in touch and keep connected. By coming to retreats. Through the website, email and the mail. By reading this newsletter. Just knowing that you are out there, also doing your best to practice, being part of our extended sangha, is a great support for us here. It is particularly to you that I wanted to write this note, and explain why we are asking for money.

We have always tried to keep things simple. Following the essence of our Soto Zen tradition, definitely, but still with an eye towards simplicity and inclusion of all. And part of that has been to try to keep our retreat fees low. To welcome all to join us however they can and never to make a big issue out of money. To not even have "members" particularly!

And yet, it does cost money to run things. Sending out this newsletter cost us about \$900 this year. So we've decided to make sure we are using our resources wisely, and also invite you to chip in if you like. Enclosed in this, our new annual "appeal newsletter," is a form to fill out and an envelope. Please let us know if you still want to receive our newsletter, and whether you are email savvy enough to get in over the email. The form explains the options. And also please consider writing us a small check to help with newsletter expenses and for our general fund that we use for retreats, temple supplies, and so forth. As is our custom with *dana* (generosity practice), we have not specified any fees or amounts. Please just give what feels appropriate to you. And if you are unable to make a donation now we are still more than happy to send you our newsletter and invite you to join with us in practice in any way you like.

*yours in the dharma,*

Nomon Tim Burnett



### Thank You, Dharma Hall

Events held at the Bellingham Dharma Hall are always free or low cost. This is because the members of the Dharma Hall cover the hall's rent and operating expenses. We invite you also consider joining the Dharma Hall. The existence of the Hall makes it much easier for the Zen Practice Group to offer low-cost or free practice events. See the bulletin board near the door of the Hall or contact Dharma Hall treasurer Russ Graham at [russg@nas.com](mailto:russg@nas.com) or 734-2553 for membership info.

### New Committee on Decision-Making

Bob Penny, Nancy Welch, and Dan Miller are doing the important work of exploring how the Zen Group should make decisions. Up to now decisions have been made informally at Sangha Meetings. We're finding that it's time for more structure to avoid conflict, clarify who makes which decisions, and avoid volunteer burn-out.

Bob recommends the book *Building United Judgment: A Handbook for Consensus Decision Making*. It describes in detail a process similar to what we do already in an informal way. But there is also good information which could help us improve on what we're doing. Bob will make his personal copy available through the Dharma Hall library.

**You can help:** (1) speak with Bob, Nancy, or Dan about your ideas for leadership and decision-making, (2) read *Building United Judgment* so that we can build a common language about decision making and consensus, (3) come to sangha meetings and help us consider the recommendations and ideas of this new committee (4) forward tidbits, ideas, book suggestions, manifestos and declarations to Bob at [bobp@nas.com](mailto:bobp@nas.com) or 398-8834.

The committee hopes to have good information to share with everyone for discussion at the next regular sangha meeting Saturday, Feb. 1st, from 3-5pm at the Dharma Hall.



*Newsletter of the Bellingham Zen Practice Group*

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Bellingham Dharma Hall  
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Resident Priest:  
Nomon Tim Burnett 360-647-2363  
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WWW.BELLINGHAMZEN.ORG

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## Additional Events

April 26-27, 2003  
Weekend Retreat in Vancouver with  
Zoketsu Norman Fischer.

May 1-4 (arrive April 30)  
Spring Sesshin at Mar de Jade in Chacala,  
Mexico with Zoketsu Norman Fischer.

June 9- 14, 2003  
Samish Island Summer Sesshin—Six-day  
Residential Sesshin with Zoketsu Norman  
Fischer.

October 3-5, 2003  
Three-day Study Retreat with Zoketsu Nor-  
man Fischer— Bellingham Dharma Hall.

### **Zen's Chinese Ancestors—Andy Ferguson**

Friday January 31st, 7pm, Bellingham Dharma Hall

Slide show with Andy Ferguson, author of *Zen's Chinese Heritage*. Andy will focus on the first six Chinese ancestors of Zen, from Bodhidharma to Hui Neng. His presentation will include slides of each teacher's temples in China and stories of these ancient masters.

No registration or fee. Donations for Andy gratefully accepted at the door.

### **A New Event**

A new event on Thursday evenings every few months is Tea & Book Reviews. Instead of one person bringing a reading, everyone will bring in a book they are studying or reading to share with the group. A great way to get new ideas for study! The book could be a formal Buddhist book or even a novel or poetry collection that somehow is inspiring and important to your practice.

## Staying on our Mailing List

**IMPORTANT NOTE: To stay on our mailing list you MUST return the form below in the self-addressed envelope enclosed with this newsletter.**

In an effort to be sure we are spending our resources wisely, we will only continue mailing you newsletters, flyers and event announcements if you mail us back the form below to tell us that you are still interested.

If you have email and would prefer to receive newsletters and all other communication from us by email only, this also saves us money and paper. Please indicate this below. (Note that newsletters will be sent in "PDF" (portable document format—this may require you to install free software from Adobe, directions will be included in the email).

Finally if you would like to receive these newsletters in the mail AND receive periodic updates and announcements by email, that is another option. These email announcements will be in plain email with no "PDF" software required.

If you no longer wish to hear from us, that is fine. Just let us know.

## Annual Request for Donations

Mailing you this newsletter costs us about \$8 per year. With this first annual "donation request" issue of the newsletter, we invite you to send a donation to help cover the cost of the newsletter. We further invite you to donate a little more to cover other Zen group costs if you like.

The Bellingham Zen Practice group is a completely volunteer organization. Every penny you donate is used to support our Zen programs in the Bellingham area. Funds are used for altar supplies, promotion, photocopying, the purchase of temple equipment, or saved for future projects.

Donations are completely voluntary. We will gladly send you this newsletter regardless of donations made. Any donation received with our thanks. (Unfortunately we are not a tax-deductible non-profit). Further, there are no "membership requirements" of any kind for attending Zen Group events. All are welcome—always.

Thank you very much.

**RETURN THIS FORM !!!**

## To Stay Connected

## To the Zen Group

## Mailing List or Email List

PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE

*Please check one option and fill in your address & email below*

- REGULAR MAIL ONLY OPTION**—Please continue to mail new newsletters, announcements, and other information about Zen Practice in the Bellingham area using regular mail only.
- EMAIL ONLY OPTION**—Please do all communication with me be email. Send me the newsletter in PDF (Portable Document Format) attached to an email message, and use plain email to send me announcements about upcoming events, changes, and information. (I understand that the newsletter emails will include instructions about how to open the newsletter document in PDF format.)
- NEWSLETTER IN THE MAIL + EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS**— Please mail me the newsletter on paper and also send me updates and announcements by plain email.
- NO THANKS**— I no longer desire to to receive any communication from the Zen Group.

optional donations also welcome, checks made out to *Bellingham Zen Practice Group*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email (please print CLEARLY): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

(ZIP CODE) \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE MAIL IN THIS FORM, EVEN IF YOU WANT TO BE REMOVED FROM THE MAILING LIST,  
(We are nice people so it's hard for us to take you off the mailing list unless you tell us to!)