

What Is Practice Period?

Time

Each Moment Is the Universe: Zen and the Way of Being Time

When there is no concept of you or zazen, there is just transiency, just time.
So you are not you, you are time. That's all! Dainin Katagiri Roshi

Practice period is a time to deepen one's commitment to practice by exploring just what practice is for you. During this time, we take on some more formal practice, deepening quiet. It is an excellent opportunity to experience sitting more zazen. We will offer informal zazen on Tuesday and Friday evenings, in addition to the usual Wednesday evenings. Zazen on Saturday mornings will be longer and we will offer zazen and service each weekday morning at 6:30 a.m. Longer sittings will start a bit earlier and end a bit later. All on Zoom, of course. Practice Period is deeply nourishing.

In the Buddha's time, during the rainy season the monks would gather together to practice and study as a group. This time of reflection continued in monastic practice in China and Japan. It has traditionally been 90 days long. This is the length of a practice period at Tassajara. At urban Centers practice periods often last 6-8 weeks and end with a sesshin. This one will be 7 weeks and we will have a Shuso (Head Student) Kate Flores. We will also have Practice Period buddies.

Accompanying this explanation is a calendar with the practice events for the practice period. Please review it and then fill out the statement of intention if you would like to participate in some way. Before filling out the intention statement, please think about what is realistic for you. It is useful for practice period to be a stretch but not if it is unrealistic. So, do not to commit to more than you can do. Better to commit to a bit less and do extra than to commit to too much and then feel bad.

Practice Period is a good time for you to commit to more zazen for yourself, mornings or evenings. We will begin on October 3 with a One-Day Sitting and an Opening of Practice Period and Shuso Entering Ceremony. We will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 6:30 p.m. On Wednesday evening October 28, for the check-in before the Full Moon Ceremony, we will use a Council format, with a "talking object" held by the person talking.

The Practice Period will end with a five-day sesshin, November 18-22. If you cannot join during the days you work, please consider joining morning and/or evening to encourage those sitting and to deepen your own practice during those days. Then, sit the days you can. On Friday afternoon, November 20, there will be a Shosan Ceremony, all in the Practice Period are encouraged to join to ask the teacher a dharma question. On Sunday, November 22, the Practice Period and sesshin will end with a Shuso Ceremony, in which students and visiting former shusos ask the shuso dharma questions that reflect their practice. Please try to come to this ceremony if you are in the Practice Period whether or not you are in the sesshin. It will begin at 3:30 p.m. Please try to come to this ceremony if you are in the Practice Period whether or not you are in the sesshin. It will begin at 3:30 p.m. and will close the sesshin and the Practice Period.

The class, on Wednesday evenings, will be based on a great book by Dainin Katagiri Roshi: Each Moment is the Universe: Zen and the Way of Being Time. Katagiri Roshi, worked with Suzuki roshi for years then left to be the abbot of the Minnesota Zen Center. His talks about time are gathered in this book and reflect his understanding and also Dogen's teaching about time in his fascicle, "Uji" (often translated as Being Time.) It is available on Google Books for free.

On October 17, we may have a Sangha Samu Day to take deep care of our temple if we can find a way to sit outside and to work far enough apart. Don't forget our wonderful Sejiki, November 11, honoring the Hungry Ghosts, along with the party that follows. The party is also Practice Period Skit Night so come prepared to share your talent. More about this later.

Practice Period Calendar 2020

Regular schedule: (All Zoom)

Monday: 6:30 a.m. (formal)*

Tuesday: 6:30 a.m. (formal) and 5:40 p.m. (informal)*

Wednesday: 6:30 a.m. and 5:40 p.m. (both formal)

Thursday: 6:30 a.m. (formal)

Friday: 6:30 a.m. (formal) 5:40 p.m. (informal)

Saturday: 8:00-11:30 a.m.: one hour open zazen, service, short break, then 9:30 zazen and Saturday program

Special Schedule: (All Zoom)

September:

26 Sangha Meeting: Orientation and Buddy Choosing (5:40 p.m. zazen followed by meeting)

October:

3 One Day Sit (8:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m.) PP Open/Shuso Enter at 5:30 p.m.

7 Class after service at 6:10, short break, and class from 6:30-7:30

17 Sangha Samu Day 9:30a.m.-3 p.m. (Stay tuned)

14 Class after service at 6:10, short break, and class from 6:30-7:30

21 Class after service at 6:10, short break, and class from 6:30-7:30

28 Full Moon Ceremony/Class: Zazen 5:40-6:00, Council/check-in 6-6:20, Ceremony 6:20-6:45. Class 6:45-7:45

November:

4 Class after service at 6:10, short break, and class from 6:30-7:30

11 Sejiki/Skit Night 4:45 p.m. altar prep/5:40 zazen/
6:20ceremony/6:45 skit night

18-22 Sesshin 8:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m.; Sunday ends with Shuso Ceremony

20 Shosan Ceremony 3:30 p.m. (All in Practice Period are welcome)

22 Shuso Ceremony at 3:30 p.m. (All in Practice Period are welcome)

*Formal sitting means more formal clothing and service, usually 40 minute period. Informal means less formal clothing and no service, usually 30 minute period.

Statement of Intention

(Please give to Mary and
tell her if you want a copy)

On the statement of intention, you might want to think about a theme for yourself, such as “right speech” or something in your daily life. It is also fine to simply stay with your breath and body. At the end of the statement, there is a question about any other commitment you may wish to make. We will again use a system of “practice buddies” during this Practice Period. This means you will draw the name of someone with whom to be accountable for sitting each day and/or for study and/or for practice with intention. We will have a Sangha meeting to include discussion of Practice Period and buddies on Saturday September 26 instead of lecture.

Please contact me if you have any questions or you want some support in deciding about what commitment to make during the Practice Period.

Name: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

In general, what is your intention for this practice period?

Which events will you participate in?

Sangha Meeting/Buddy drawing 9/26

One-Day Sitting 10/3 with Opening Ceremony/Shuso Entering at 5:30

Morning Zazen: Mon-Fri 6:30-7:10 a.m. (includes service)

Evening Zazen: Tu/Fri 5:40-6:10 p.m. (no service)

Wed 5:40-7:30 or 7:45 p.m. Zazen, service, class (some special events)

Saturday Morning early program 8:00-9:30 (includes zazen and service)

Saturday Morning regular 9:30-11:30 program zazen, lecture and DYI tea

Class: Wednesdays 10/7, 14, 21, 28 and 11/4 (all classes at 6:30 or a bit later p.m. after service or special events)

Sangha Samu Day 10/17 9:30a.m.-3:00 p.m. Stat tuned (no early program)

Full Moon Ceremony before class 10/28, Council-style check-in at 6, ceremony 6:20.

Sejiki/Skit Night 11/1 4:45 p.m. altar prep/5:40 zazen/6:20 ceremony/6:45 skit night

Sesshin 11/18-22

11/20 Shosan 5:30 p.m.

11/22 Shuso Ceremony

Is there some other commitment you wish to make, such as sitting at home? If so, what is it?

If you know, who is your buddy and what commitment have you made to one another?