

To: Lotus Sangha/Dharma Heart Zen Sangha practitioners  
From: Chris

Hi everyone,

Every fall we gather together to renew, affirm and deepen our practice in an Annual Practice Period. The Women's Lotus Sangha has been doing this for many years. This year Cotati Dharma Heart Zen Sangha practitioners are also invited to participate. I will be leading these Sonoma County Fall Practice Periods, and in addition this year I will also be leading the Fall Everyday Zen Practice Period.

You can join the Lotus Sangha/Dharma Heart Zen Sangha Fall Practice Period by reading the information below, filling out the application form and returning it to me. If you practice with both sanghas, you will become part of the practice period in both sanghas when you fill out the form (there is no extra work or obligation in being part of both ).

You can also consider joining the EDZ Fall Practice Period. Information and applications can be found through this link. <http://everydayzen.org/programs/bay-area-practice-period/>. Our dear dharma friend Mary Ann Sacksteder will be the head student/Shuso - a traditional training position - for this practice period.

If you join the EDZ Practice Period you are welcome to participate in all Lotus Sangha and Dharma Heart Zen Sangha Practice Period events. ( note: you are not eligible to be a long distance participant in the EDZ Practice Period.)

So there are many ways to practice together this fall! Please consider joining in this period of wholeheartedly giving ourselves to practice and to awakening with and for all beings.

If you have any questions please let me know.  
With love, Chris

***Regular Lotus Sangha Tuesday sittings and Dharma Heart Zen Sangha Thursday sittings continue for everyone regardless of whether you are part of a practice period.***

# 2017 ANNUAL FALL PRACTICE PERIOD;

Lotus Sangha, Tues. Sept. 26 - Tues. Dec. 5.  
Dharma Heart Zen Sangha, Thurs. Sept. 28 - Thurs.  
Dec. 7

**The annual Fall Practice Period** begins with an Opening Ceremony at the regular sitting dates listed above, and conclude with a ceremony at the regular sittings listed above.

Everyone is welcome to attend the ceremonies and all regular sittings regardless of whether you join the practice period.

## **What is a Practice Period?**

Practice Period is an ancient Zen Buddhist tradition. It is a special time set aside each year when practitioners make personal and collective commitments to intensify their practice.

Traditionally, Zen practice periods take place in monasteries. Our practice is not focused on what happens at a temple, but on everyday activity in the world and within in our homes, relationships, places of work, and within the sangha.

And so, the practice periods depend on the integrity of the personal commitment each person who joins will make, as well as the strength of our shared intention and mutual support.

It is a wonderful time of deepening sangha relations and commitment to personal practice and can support and renew us throughout the year.

**The theme for the Practice Period in both sanghas will be ‘Embodying Peace in Our Everyday Lives and in the World’.**

The early Pali teachings of the Buddha will be our guide as we study and practice with anger, right speech, spiritual friendship, intentional community, interpersonal relationships, conflict, and living and embodying a life of peace and harmony.

We will use the text ‘*The Buddha’s Teachings on Social and Communal Harmony*’, edited by Bhikkhu Bodhi, a well respected Buddhist scholar and social activist.

## **How do I join?**

Simply fill out the **commitment form** below and email it me at [chrisfortin@comcast.net](mailto:chrisfortin@comcast.net)

The deadline for joining the Practice Period and submitting a commitment form is Friday **Sept. 22**.

The form asks you to make a special practice commitment during this time of deepening practice.

## **Is there a fee for joining the Practice Period?**

No, but it would be appropriate for anyone who joins to send in a donation, according to what you are able. Donations/ Dana are deeply appreciated and make it possible for me to continue to share the dharma. Dana, and your generosity, is my sole source of income.

## **Practice Period Events:**

Below you will find a brief schedule of events for the Practice Period. Please make a special effort to commit to coming to as many of these events as possible. Especially important are the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

It is not necessary that you be able to attend all of these events to be in the Practice Period. You can also find these events at <http://www.dharmaheartzen.com/>.

If you are part of the EDZ Fall Practice Period, which I am also leading this fall ( separate application ), you are also invited to participate in the ceremonies and practice events below.

If you are part of the Women's Lotus Sangha or Dharma Heart Zen Sanghas you can attend ceremonies and events in either sangha.

## **Fall Practice Period 2017 Scheduled Events.**

Sitting and Opening Ceremony; LS Tuesday Sept 26. DHZ Thursday Sept. 28

Lotus Sangha Tuesdays Sittings, 5-6:30 pm. Sept. Oct 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, Nov. 7, 14, 21, 28, Dec. 5. Or listen to recordings online

Dharma Heart Zen Sangha, Thursday Sittings, 10-11:30 am. Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26, Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Dec. 7. Or listen to recordings online.

Sunday, Nov. 12 Dharma Heart Zen Sangha /Lotus Sangha Sitting and Lay Ordination Bodhisattva Ceremony/Jukai 9-4:00, 85 La Plaza, Cotati.

Dec. 1- 3, Annual Buddha's Enlightenment Retreat with Chris and Bruce Fortin, St. Dorothy's Retreat Center .

Sitting and Closing Dharma Inquiry Ceremony. LS Tues. Dec. 5, DHZ Thurs. Dec. 7.

**Other practice events you can consider attending during this time (not necessary for participation in the PP).**

Oct 5-8, Sky Island Zen, Aravaipa Canyon, Tuscon Arizona (EDZ affiliate sangha). Women's Retreat with Chris and Sue Moon. <https://skyislandzen.wordpress.com/>,

Dharma and Racial Justice Book and Study Group, with Chris and Sarah Emerson, monthly, ongoing, Wed. eves, 6:30-8

Oct 23-29 EDZ Sesshin, lead by Chris and Norman Fischer, Santa Sabina, San Rafael. [everydayzen.org/index.php](http://everydayzen.org/index.php)

Nov, 5 , Being Bodhisattvas, Workshop at Green Gulch Farm, with Chris and Jaune Evans <http://www.sfzc.org/green-gulch/calendar>

**Practice Period tea:**

In addition to these events there will be 2 practice period teas. You can attend one or both. These will be scheduled on a weekend and are a wonderful and intimate opportunity to meet together to get to know each other better and to talk about our practice. ( EDZ Practice Period participants can also attend)

Please let me know if you would like to host one of these in your home (we meet for about 2 hours).

We may combine one of our teas with a EDZ Practice Period tea for Sonoma County residents.

### **Practice Period Sangha Partners:**

A sangha partner is a person, in your sangha, who is in the Practice Period with whom you **speak on the phone or in person three times during the Practice Period**. Your partner could be someone you request or someone assigned to you at the beginning of the Practice Period. It is a wonderful way to build sangha relations and to support each others practice. I will send suggestions about how to keep your communication focused and practice oriented.

### **Personal Commitment:**

Finally, we ask each member of the Practice Period to make **a personal commitment to intensify your practice in whatever way possible**. This might include more sitting at home, more study or reading, work on a particular practice theme in daily life, or some appropriate personal alteration in lifestyle. This is a personal decision so please consider something that is possible in the context of your everyday life. Practice Period is to encourage you and to deepen your practice, not to create more stress.

**So these are the elements of the Practice Period, within your sangha:**

- 1) a commitment to attend as many practice events as you can during the Practice Period**
- 2) a commitment to attend a practice period tea.**
- 3) a commitment to connect with your sangha partner three times.**
- 4) a commitment to intensify your personal practice**

## **Practice Period Commitment Form**

( If you bring intention and time to filling out this form it can help you enter the practice period with deeper clarity and commitment. )

(please copy this form and paste into a new email; send that email to me at [chrisfortin@comcast.net](mailto:chrisfortin@comcast.net).)

Name:

Date and place of birth:

Address phone, email, as well as best times to contact:

Your work and family situation:

What intention brings you to make a commitment to join this Practice Period?

What experience have you had with spiritual practice?

What has been the main focus of your current practice?

Do you imagine it will change during this Practice Period?

Is there someone in the Practice Period who you'd like to work with as your sangha partner? Who?

Events you will attend during the Practice Period:

Personal commitments to intensify your practice: