

Beginner's Handbook

Arcata Zen Group
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*In a beginner's mind
there are many possibilities;
In an expert's mind
there are few.*

~ Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

林 心 寺

Rin Shin-ji ~ Forest Heart Temple

Zen Buddhism focuses on meditation and awareness rather than creed, doctrine, or dogma. The Arcata Zen Group (AZG) offers you the opportunity to study and practice Zen Buddhism. Meditation (zazen and kinhin), dharma talks, services, group reading and discussion, and teacher-led retreats (sesshin) form the core of our practice.

Participation and Membership

All regularly scheduled activities are open to anyone who wishes to participate.

If you would like to become a member of the AZG, please complete a membership form. Memberships are renewed annually; there is no fee. The AZG depends on the generous donations and regular pledges of participants and members for its continued support.

The AZG has an extensive lending library of books, audio tapes, and other materials on Buddhism, Zen and related topics, which are housed at Rin Shin-ji and may be checked out for use by members.

The AZG Board of Directors is elected each January by the membership.

Zendo Procedures

Take your shoes off before entering the zendo.

Arrive at least five minutes before zazen, or sitting meditation, begins. Avoid entering during periods of zazen. If arriving late, it is best to wait and enter during the kinhin (walking meditation) period.

Be as quiet as possible upon entering the Zendo and during meditation periods.

Bow in gassho, hands held with palms together, at the threshold when entering the meditation hall and proceed to an available seat (zafu, zabuton, bench, or chair). Additional cushions may be obtained by the door.

Before sitting down for zazen, stand facing your seat, bow toward it in gassho, then turn and bow toward the center of the meditation

hall. Be seated facing the wall and assume your zazen posture. When it is time to start zazen, a single 'clunk' of the bell will sound to begin the **robe chant**:

Now we open Buddha's robe
A field far beyond form and emptiness,
The Tathagata's teaching for all beings.

Dai zai ge da pu ku
Mu so fu ku den e
Hi bu nyorai kyo
Ko do sho shu jo

Now we open Buddha's robe
A field far beyond form and emptiness,
The Tathagata's teaching for all beings.

The meditation bell is struck **THREE** times to mark the beginning of each period of zazen. It is struck **TWICE** to indicate the end of a period being followed by kinhin, and **ONCE** at the end of the last period of zazen.

After the meditation bell rings **TWICE** ending the first period of zazen, bow in gassho while seated. Move off the zafu and zabuton. Clean off any lint from the zabuton and plump and arrange your zafu in the center of the zabuton. Stand in gassho and bow toward your seat, then turn to face the center of the room and bow in unison with the sangha. Circle to the left and form a line behind the kinhin leader, who is holding the wooden clappers. Hold your hands in the shashu mudra. That is, with the left hand in a fist curled around the left thumb, right hand curled around left with right thumb on top.

The leader announces, "Continuing our meditation we walk in step with the person in front of us. Begin on the left foot at the sound of the clappers." **ONE** clap begins kinhin and **TWO** will end it. Kinhin is done in synchrony with the leader's steps. At the sound of the two claps ending kinhin, stop, place your feet together, bow in gassho with the group, and return at a normal walking pace to

your meditation seat.

If you need to use the restroom or to depart, do it during kinhin. When you return during kinhin, wait for a space in the line or until the end of the line; bow, and re-enter. Those in kinhin do not stop when someone re-enters.

ON HUMILITY

Suzuki Roshi

Bowing is a very serious practice. You should be prepared to bow, even in your last moment. Even though it is impossible to get rid of our self-centered desires, we have to do it. Our true nature wants us to . . . sometimes the disciple bows to the master, sometimes the master bows to the disciple. A master who cannot bow to his disciple cannot bow to the Buddha. Sometimes the master and disciple bow together to the Buddha. Sometimes we bow to cats and dogs.

Sunday Morning Services

Each Sunday a brief service is held after the last period of meditation. The service begins with nine full bows (from a standing position with hands in gassho, kneel toward the altar, touch your forehead to the floor, hands palms up on the floor at the level of your head, then gently raise and lower your hands). After the last bow, the sangha is seated and a sutra is chanted, according to the following schedule:

- . First Sunday of the month: Heart Sutra
- . Second Sunday: Hakuin Zenji's Song of Zazen
- . Third Sunday: Metta Sutta
- . Fourth Sunday: Sandokai: The Identity of Relative and Absolute
- . Fifth Sunday: Heart Sutra in Sino-Japanese; Enmei Jukko Kannon Gyo (chanted nine times)

The kokyo (chant leader) begins by chanting the name of the sutra,

then all join in and chant together. Upon completion of the sutra, the kokyo intones a dedication, after which the following is chanted by all:

All Buddhas, ten directions, three times,
All beings, Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas,
Wisdom beyond wisdom, Maha Prajna Paramita.

At the conclusion of this dharani, the group stands and performs three full bows, followed by two standing bows in gassho: the first is toward the altar; the second done after turning to face each other. This ends the service.

After the service on Sunday mornings, the group forms a circle with the zabutons and the activities continue. Although not obliged, anyone may participate in the ensuing reading and discussion. Feel free to share your thoughts and feelings about the reading or discussion. Offer your insights and experience.

After announcements at the end of the discussion, the group will bow together in gassho to end the Sunday activities. We welcome your help in putting away the zafus, zabutons, and chairs, and cleaning up the hall. This activity may provide you with an opportunity to meet members of the sangha. All are welcome to an informal gathering immediately following cleanup.

Dharma Talks

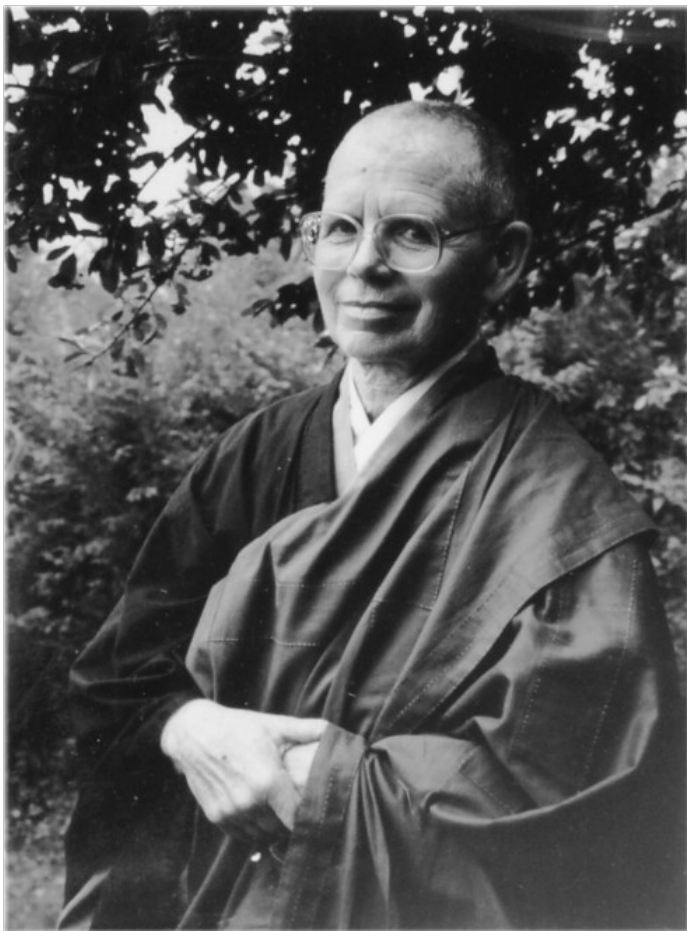
Immediately before a Dharma talk is given, the sangha chants the following verse:

An unsurpassed, perfect and penetrating Dharma
is rarely met with
Even in a hundred, thousand, million kalpas.
Having it to see and listen to, to remember and accept,
I vow to taste the truth of the Tathagata's words.

At the close of the Dharma talk, and ensuing question and answer period, the sangha chants the Four Great Vows:

Beings are numberless,
I vow to awaken with them.
Delusions are inexhaustible,
I vow to end them.
Dharma gates are boundless,
I vow to enter them.
Buddha's way is unsurpassable,
I vow to become it.

Maylie Scott ~ Founding Abbess, Rin Shin-ji



March 29, 1935 ~ May 10, 2001

Regularly-Used Chants

GREAT WISDOM BEYOND WISDOM HEART SUTRA

Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva

When practicing deeply the prajna paramita

Perceived that all five skandhas in their own being are empty

And was saved from all suffering.

"Oh Shariputra, form does not differ from emptiness

Emptiness does not differ from form.

That which is form is emptiness; that which is emptiness, form.

The same is true of feelings, perceptions, formations,
consciousness.

Oh Shariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness;

They do not appear nor disappear, are not tainted nor pure,

Do not increase nor decrease.

Therefore in emptiness, no form,

No feelings, no perceptions, no formations, no consciousness,

No eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind;

No color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of mind;

No realm of eyes until no realm of mind consciousness;

No ignorance and also no extinction of it until no old-age-and-death

And also no extinction of it; no suffering, no origination, no
stopping, no path; no cognition, also no attainment.

With nothing to attain a bodhisattva depends on prajna paramita

And the mind is no hindrance.

Without any hindrance no fears exist;

Far apart from every perverted view one dwells in nirvana.

In the three worlds all buddhas depend on prajna paramita

And attain unsurpassed complete perfect enlightenment.

Therefore know the prajna paramita,

Is the great transcendent mantra,
Is the great bright mantra, is the utmost mantra,
is the supreme mantra,
which is able to relieve all suffering
And is true, not false.
So proclaim the prajna paramita mantra,
Proclaim the mantra that says:
Gate, gate, paragate, parasamgate! Bodhi! Svaha!"

MAKA HANNYA HARAMITTA SHIN GYO

Kan ji zai bo satsu gyo jin han nya ha ra mita ta ji
Sho ken go on kai ku do is sai ku yaku sha ri shi
Shiki fu i ku ku fu i shiki shiki soku ze ku ku soku
Ze shiki ju so gyo shiki yaku bu nyo ze sha ri shi ze
Sho ho ku so fu sho fu metsu fu ku fu jo fu zo
Fu gen ze ko ku chu mu shiki mu ju so gyo shiki mu
Gen ni bi zes shin ni mu shiki sho ko mi soku ho mu
Gen kai nai shi mu i shiki kai mu mu myo yaku mu mu
Myo jin nai shi mu ro shi yaku mu ro shi jin mu ku
Shu metsu do mu chi yaku mu toku i mu sho tok ko bo
Dai sat ta e han nya ha ra mi ta ko shin mu ke
Ge mu ke ge ko mu u ku fu on ri is sai ten
Do mu so ku gyo ne han san ze sho butsu e han nya
Ha ra ta ko toku a noku ta ra myaku mita san bo
Dai ko chi han nya ha ra ta ze dai jin shu ze
Dai myo shu ze imu jo shu ze mu to do shu no jo
Is sai ku shin jitsu fu ko ko setsu han nya ha ra mit
Ta shu soku setsu shu watsu
Gya te gya te ha ra gya te hara so gya te bodhi
Ji sowa ka Han nya shin gyo

(Spoken by Chanter alone:
Negawa kuwa kono kudoku o motte
amaneku issai ni oyo boshi
warera to shujo to minatomo ni butsudo o
jo sen koto o)

(All join in)

Ji Ho San Shi I Shi Fu

Shi Son Bu Sa Mo Ko Sa

Mo Ko Ho Ja Ho Ro Mi

HAKUIN ZENJI'S SONG OF ZAZEN

All beings by nature are Buddha, as ice by nature is water;
Apart from water there is no ice, apart from beings no Buddha.
How sad that people ignore the near and search for truth afar,
Like someone in the midst of water crying out in thirst,
like the child of a wealthy home wandering among the poor.
Lost on the dark paths of ignorance,
we wander through the six worlds;
From dark path to dark path we wander,
when shall we be freed from birth and death?
For this the zazen of the Mahayana deserves the highest praise:
Offerings, Precepts, Paramitas, Nembutsu, atonement, practice-
The many other virtues, all arise from zazen.
Those who try zazen even once wipe away immeasurable crimes.
Where are all the dark paths then? The Pure Land is near.
Those who hear this truth even once,
And listen with a grateful heart,
treasuring it, revering it, gain blessings without end.
Much more if you turn yourself about,
and confirm your own self nature-
self nature that is no nature - you are far beyond argument.
The oneness of cause and effect is clear, not two, not three,
The path is straight:
With form that is no form, coming and going - never astray;
With thought that is no thought,
Singing and dancing are the voice of the Law.
Boundless and free is the sky of Samadhi,
Bright the full moon of wisdom, truly is anything missing now?
Nirvana is right here, before our eyes.
This very place is the Lotus Land, this very body the Buddha.

METTA SUTTA

This is what should be accomplished by the one who is wise, who seeks the good and has obtained peace:

Let one be strenuous, upright and sincere,
Without pride, easily contented and joyous.
Let one not be submerged by the things of the world.
Let one not take upon one's self the burden of riches.
Let one's senses be controlled.
Let one be wise but not puffed up,
And let one not desire great possessions, even for one's family.
Let one do nothing that is mean or that the wise would reprove.
May all beings be happy.
May they be joyous and live in safety.

All living beings, whether weak or strong,
In high or middle or low realms of existence,
Small or great, visible or invisible, near or far,
Born or to be born, may all beings be happy.
Let no one deceive another, nor despise any being in any state;
Let none by anger or hatred wish harm to another.

Even as a mother at the risk of her life watches over and
Protects her only child, so with a boundless mind should one
Cherish all living things, suffusing love over the entire world,
Above, below, and all around, without limit; so let one cultivate
An infinite good will toward the whole world.

Standing or walking, sitting or lying down, during all one's
Waking hours, let one practice the way, with gratitude.

Not holding to fixed views, abandoning vague discussions,
Endowed with insight, freed from sense appetites,
One who achieves the Way will be freed
from the duality of birth and death.

SANDOKAI: THE IDENTITY OF RELATIVE AND ABSOLUTE

The mind of the **Great** Sage of India
Is *intimately conveyed west and east*.
Among human beings are **wise** ones and fools
In the *Way there is no teacher of north and south*.
The subtle Source is **clear** and bright;
The *branching streams flow in the dark*.
To be attached to things is **primordial** illusion;
To *encounter the absolute is not yet enlightenment*.
All spheres, every **sense** and field *intermingle even as they shine*
alone,
Interacting **even** as they merge,
Yet *keeping their places in expressions of their own*.
Forms differ **primally** in shape and character and *sounds in harsh*
or soothing tones.
The dark makes **all** words one;
The *brightness distinguishes good and bad phrases*.
The four elements **return** to their true nature as a *child to its*
mother.
Fire is hot, **water** is wet, *wind moves and the earth is dense*.
Eye and form, **ear** and sound, **nose** and smell, *tongue and taste,*
the sweet and sour:
Each **independent** of the other
Like *leaves that come from the same root*.
And though leaves and root **must** go back to the Source
Both *root and leaves have their own uses*.
Light is **also** darkness, but *do not move with it as darkness*.
Darkness is light; *do not see it as light*.
Light and darkness are **not** one, **not** two like the *foot before and*
the foot behind in walking.
Each thing has its **own** being
Which is not *different from its place and function*.
The relative **fits** the absolute as a *box and its lid*.
The absolute **meets** the relative
Like two *arrow points that meet in mid-air*.
Hearing this, **simply** perceive the Source, *make no criterion*.

If you do not **see** the Way, you *do not see it even as you walk on it.*
When you walk the Way you **draw** no nearer, progress *no farther.*
Who fails to see **this** is *mountains and rivers* away.
Listen, those who would **pierce** this subtle matter:
Do not waste your time by night or day.

ENMEI JUKKO KANNON GYO

Kan ze on
Na mu Butsu
Yo butsu u in
Yo butsu u en
Bup po so en
Jo raku ga jo
Cho nen Kan ze on
Bo nen Kan ze on
Nen nen ju shin ki
Nen nen fu ri shin



ZAZEN POSTURE

Pat Phelan

I want to talk about zazen or zen meditation. The first part of the word, za, means sitting and the second part of the word, zen, is from the Chinese word "Ch'an" which is from the Sanskrit word "dhyana" which means concentration. So zazen literally means sitting concentration. It is recommended that you begin zazen practice by first being aware of your posture. After you are able to maintain mindfulness of posture fairly well, you can begin mindful awareness of your breath.

Zazen can be done sitting cross-legged on a cushion, sitting in a chair, or lying down while paying attention to most of the same points of posture. If you are sitting cross-legged on a cushion, please experiment with where you place yourself on the cushion. Many people sit close to the edge of the cushion. Only your spine needs to be supported by the cushion, not your legs. I also recommend trying out different heights of cushions. Sit on a thin cushion; sit on a thick cushion; try sitting on two cushions. Experiment and see how different heights work with your posture.

Cross-legged sitting is considered a stable way to sit because there are three points of support, your two knees and your sitting bones. If you are sitting on a cushion your knees should be supported. If they don't touch the floor, it will be hard to have the strength you need in your lower back. So place a cushion under your knee or knees if they are not touching the floor so they won't be dangling. If you are sitting cross-legged, alternate which leg is on top. Even if your less-flexible side feels pretty awkward, alternate your legs. If you don't your body will become asymmetrical over the years.

Sit Comfortably

Many people who find that sitting cross-legged doesn't work for them, sit Japanese style or seiza by kneeling with their knees together and tucking their feet underneath them. Using a cushion or a small wooden bench takes the weight off the feet. If you are

sitting on a chair, your feet should be flat on the floor. If you have a physical difficulty that won't allow you to sit, you can practice zazen lying down. When you do, bend your knees and place your feet flat on the surface. This allows your lower back to come into line with the upper back. This is all preliminary to taking zazen posture. Find a position that you can be in for a while relatively still.

Two characteristics of zazen are energy and being relaxed. There should be energy in zazen and some effort, but not too much effort. If there is too much effort, you will become tense, your zazen practice will be a strain. While sitting, you should be relaxed but awake. If you become too relaxed you will day dream or fall asleep.

In *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind*, Suzuki-Roshi said, "The most important thing in taking the zazen posture is to keep your spine straight." So whether you are lying down, sitting in a chair, or sitting on a cushion, try to keep a straight back. Push in a little at the back of your waist, or arch your back a little, but just a little. You do not want to be sway-backed, and when you push in at the waist if your back gets sore, that's too much pushing. Your spine should be straight all the way up through the top of your head, and your head should be parallel to the ceiling or if you like, parallel to the sky.

Notice Posture and State of Mind

I would like to mention two of the ways we can work with our posture. One is to bring your attention to your posture, or your spine, throughout the period of zazen, and readjust it, so you are noticing your back over and over again and continually readjusting it if it is not straight. Another way is to bring your attention to your posture and note your position: is your back crooked or curved, straight or leaning. Notice what your state of mind is, how you are breathing - whatever position you find your back in, notice it and see how it affects this moment.

Relax your shoulders and place your ears over your shoulders. We sit with our eyes open, and we face the wall. To do zazen with your eyes open means that they shouldn't be wide open and they shouldn't be closed, but somewhere in between. You shouldn't be staring at anything or even have your eyes focused. Your eyes should be opened enough to allow light in. Look downward so your gaze comes to the floor about two or three feet in front of you. When gazing downward, keep your face straight ahead so that if your eyes were wide open you would be looking straight ahead. Only your gaze is cast downward, not your head.

Place your tongue on the roof of your mouth and hold your teeth together without grinding them or holding your jaw tightly. Pull your chin straight in so that you are facing straight ahead with the top of your head parallel to the ceiling. If your chin is tilted downward, you can easily become dreamy or drowsy. If your chin is drifting upward, you tend to start thinking and getting kind of "out there." The chin need only be pulled in slightly: it is almost more an attitude than a physical action.

Rest Upright

Usually at this point, if we are sitting on a cushion, we rock back and forth from side to side to find the center of our posture. This is to help us keep from leaning to the left or right or forward or backward. We start by rocking from side to side in smaller and smaller arcs until we rest upright.

The next point is the position of our hands, called the mudra. We place our hands, one on top of the other, with the palms facing upward. Fingers should overlap and thumb tips come together forming a circular shape. The edge of the hands should be held against the abdomen with the thumbs at the navel. The thumb tips should remain in contact, touching with enough pressure to support a single sheet of paper. If you become sleepy or dreamy, the thumbs tend to drift away from each other. If you are agitated or putting too much effort or tension into your zazen your thumbs tend to push against each other making a "peak." So you may want

to return your attention to your thumbs from time to time throughout the period of zazen.

This is a description of an ideal zazen posture. But we have to start with the body we have, the body we are. We have no choice. By placing our attention in the minute details of our physical posture, we get to know our body, where we have tension, where we are crooked, where we are holding, where we are at ease. We can know our limitations, we can own our body. These points of posture can be a way of engaging our practice, a way of entering the path.

KINHIN: WALKING MEDITATION*

In terminating a period of seated meditation do not rise abruptly, but begin by rocking from side to side, first in small swings, then in large ones, for about half a dozen times. You will observe that your movements in this exercise are the reverse of those you engage in when you begin zazen. Seated meditation is usually followed by a period of walking meditation called kinhin.

Kin hin is performed with the hands in the shashu mudra. Walk closely behind and in step with the person immediately in front of you in the kin hin line. The walking starts as the kin hin leader sounds the clapper; the entire group begins on the left foot. Moving in unison, the kin hin line can be compared to a caterpillar. This onebody practice becomes a tangible vehicle for unity of focus within the group.

Whatever the specific form of kin hin that is practiced you should think of it as zazen in motion. Concentration on the relationship between the breath and body should be maintained. Even though this walking relieves the stiffness in your legs, such exercise is to be regarded as a mere by-product and not the main object of kin hin. Hence those of you who are counting your breaths should continue counting during kin hin.

**Portions of this essay are excerpted from "Walking" by Hakuun Yasutani Roshi (as excerpted in the Summer 1996 Tricycle, taken from The Three Pillars of Zen, ed. Philip Kapleau), as well as from the previously unpublished "Kinhin" by Mark Pringle.*

ON PRACTICE: BREATHING

Suzuki Roshi

When we practice zazen our mind always follows our breathing. When we inhale, the air comes into the inner world. When we exhale, the air goes out to the outer world. The inner world is limitless, and the outer world is also limitless. We say "inner world" or "outer world," but actually there is just one whole world. In this limitless world, our throat is like a swinging door. The air comes in and goes out like someone passing through a swinging door. If you think, "I breathe," the "I" is extra. There is no you to say "I." What we call "I" is just a swinging door which moves when we inhale and when we exhale. It just moves: that is all. When your mind is pure and calm enough to follow this movement, there is nothing, no "I," no world, no mind nor body: just a swinging door.

So when we practice zazen, all that exists is the movement of the breathing, but we are aware of this movement. You should not be absent-minded. But to be aware of the movement does not mean to be aware of your small self, but rather of your universal nature, or Buddha nature. This kind of awareness is very important, because we are usually so one-sided. Our usual understanding of life is dualistic; you and I, this and that, good and bad. But actually these discriminations are themselves the awareness of the universal existence. "You" means to be aware of the universe in the form of you, and "I" means to be aware of it in the form of "I." You and I are just swinging doors. This kind of understanding is necessary. This should not even be called understanding: it is actually the true experience of life through Zen practice.

Time and Space are One

So when you practice zazen, there is no idea of time or space. You

may say, "We started sitting at a quarter to six in this room." Thus you have some idea of time (at quarter to six) and some idea of space (in this room). Actually what you are doing, however, is just sitting and being aware of the universal activity. That is all. This moment the swinging door is open in one direction, and the next moment the swinging door will be opening in the opposite direction. Moment after moment each of us repeats this activity. Here there is no idea of time or space. Time and space are one. You may say, "I must do something this afternoon," but actually there is no "this afternoon." We do things one after the other. That is all. There is no such time as "this afternoon" or "one o'clock" or "two o'clock." At one o'clock you will eat your lunch. To eat lunch is itself one o'clock. You will be somewhere, but that place cannot be separated from one o'clock. For someone who actually appreciates our life, they are the same. But when we become tired of our life we must say, "I shouldn't have come to this place. It may have been much better to have gone to some other place for lunch. This place is not so good." In your mind you create an idea of place separate from an actual time.

Or you may say, "This is bad, so I should not do this." Actually, when you say, "I should not do this," you are doing not-doing in that moment. So there is no choice for you. When you separate the idea of time and space, you feel as if you have some choice, but actually, you have to do something or you have to do not-doing. Not-to-do something is doing something. Good and bad are only in your mind. So we should not say, "This is good," or "This is bad." Instead of saying bad, you should say, "not-to-do"! If you think "This is bad," it will create some confusion for you. So in the realm of pure religion there is no confusion of time and space, or good or bad. All that we should do is just do something as it comes. Do something! Whatever it is, we should do it, even if it is not-doing something. We should live in this moment. So when we sit we concentrate on our breathing and we become a swinging door, and we do something we should do, something we must do. This is zen practice. In this practice there is no confusion. If you establish this kind of life you have no confusion whatsoever.

Dependent and Independent

Tozan, a famous Zen master, said, "The blue mountain is the father of the white cloud. The white cloud is the son of the blue mountain. All day long they depend on each other, without being dependent on each other. The white cloud is always the white cloud. The blue mountain is always the blue mountain." This is a pure, clear interpretation of life. There may be many things like the white cloud and blue mountain: man and woman, teacher and disciple. They depend on each other. But the white cloud should not be bothered by the blue mountain. The blue mountain should not be bothered by the white cloud. They are quite independent, but yet dependent. This is how we live, and how we practice zazen.

When we become truly ourselves, we just become a swinging door, and we are purely independent of and at the same time, dependent on everything. Without air, we cannot breathe. Each of us is in the midst of myriads of worlds. We are in the center of the world always, moment after moment. So we are completely dependent and independent. If you have this kind of experience, this kind of existence, you have absolute independence: you will not be bothered by anything. So when you practice zazen, your mind should be concentrated on your breathing. This kind of activity is the fundamental activity of the universal being. Without this experience, this practice, it is impossible to attain absolute freedom.

GENJO KOAN: ACTUALIZING THE FUNDAMENTAL POINT

Eihei Dogen

1.

As all things are Buddha-dharma, there is delusion and realization, practice and birth and death, and there are buddhas and sentient beings. As the myriad things are without an abiding self, there is no delusion, no realization, no buddha, no sentient being, no birth and death. The Buddha Way is, basically, leaping clear of the

many and the one; thus there are birth and death, delusion and realization, sentient beings and buddhas. Yet in attachment blossoms fall, and in aversion weeds spread.

2.

To carry yourself forward and experience myriad things is delusion. That myriad things come forth and experience themselves is awakening. Those who have great realization of delusion are buddhas; those who are greatly deluded about realization are sentient beings. Further, there are those who continue realizing beyond realization, who are in delusion throughout delusion. When buddhas are truly buddhas they do not necessarily notice that they are buddhas. However, they are actualized buddhas, who go on actualizing buddhas.

3.

When you see forms or hear sounds fully engaging body-and-mind, you grasp things directly. Unlike things and their reflections in the mirror, and unlike the moon and its reflection in the water, when one side is illuminated the other side is dark.

4.

To study the Buddha Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things. When actualized by myriad things, your body and mind as well as the bodies and minds of others drop away. No trace of realization remains, and this no-trace continues endlessly.

Translated by Robert Aitken and Kazuaki Tanahashi Revised at San Francisco Zen Center. Eihei Dogen (1200-1253) was among the first to transmit Zen Buddhism from China to Japan. He is recognized by many as the founder of the Soto school.

AVOID CHEMICAL FRAGRANCES

At AZG gatherings, many people sit in very close proximity for extended periods.

For persons with chemical sensitivities, chemical fragrances can cause headaches, coughing, respiratory distress, and eventually immune suppression and compromised overall health.

Not only perfumes, hand soap and deodorant, but laundry products, dish soap, and lotions can leave traces that will affect some people.

Please: refrain from the use of scented products at all AZG gatherings.

GLOSSARY

Zen Buddhism has emerged in a historical process involving India, China, Korea, and Japan. The words that are used to describe elements and practices of Zen reflect this genesis. Here are a few terms that have been used in this handbook. Other than the exceptions noted, most terms are Japanese.

Dharani: [Sanskrit] Literally "holder;" short sutras that contain formulas of knowledge comprised of syllables with a symbolic content such as mantras. They can convey the essence of a teaching in a particular state of mind that is created by repetition of the dharani. They are generally longer than mantras.

Doan: Bell ringer

Gassho: Literally means "palms of the hands placed together." In Zen, used as an expression of the ancient gesture of greeting, request, gratitude, veneration, or supplication common in many cultures. In this gesture of "palms of the hands placed together," a state of mind is spontaneously manifested that suggests the unity of the antithetical forces of the phenomenal world.

Jisha: Priest's attendant

Kokyo: Chant leader

Sangha: [Sanskrit] Literally, "crowd, host;" the Buddhist community. In a narrower sense, the sangha consists of monks, nuns, and novices. In a wider sense the sangha includes all of the lay followers of Buddhism.

Shashu: Hand mudra for kinhin. Left hand: the thumb is held in the palm of wrapped fingers. Right hand wraps around the left fist and both are held against the sternum.

Zabuton: Literally a "sitting mat;" a mat usually filled with kapok covered with a dark fabric on which zazen is practiced.

Zafu: Literally a "sitting cushion;" a round, firmly stuffed cushion covered with dark fabric that is used for zazen.

Zendo: Literally "zen hall;" the room in which zazen is practiced.

*Sixty-six times have these eyes beheld
the changing scenes of autumn.*

*I have said enough about moonlight;
ask me no more.*

*Only listen to the voice of pines and cedars
when no wind stirs.*

~ a zen nun

Arcata Zen Group
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