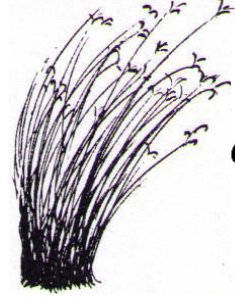


Nebraska Zen Center
3625 Lafayette Avenue
Omaha, NE 68131-1363

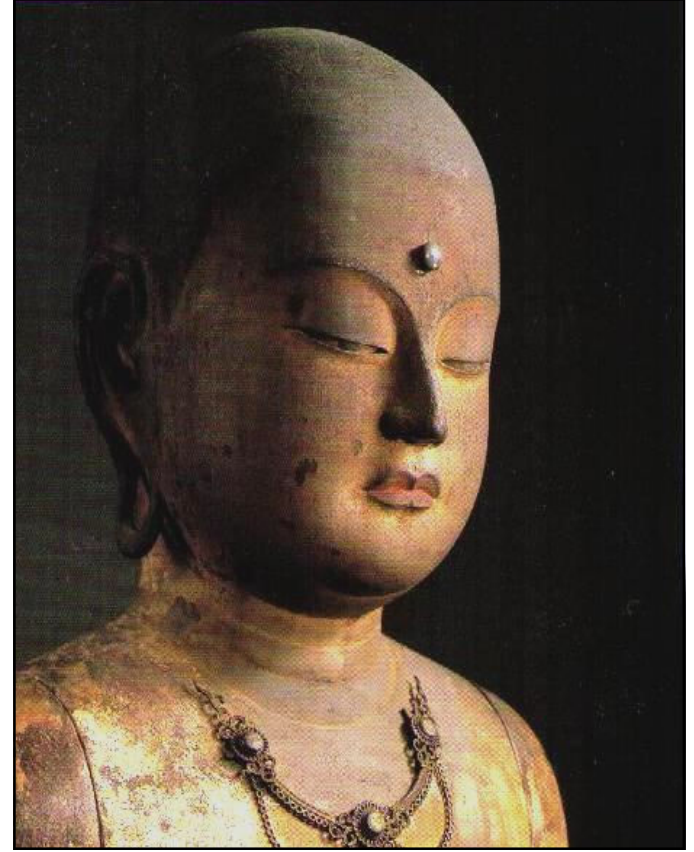
www.prairiewindzen.org
heartland@prairiewindzen.org
(402) 551-9035

Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Omaha, Nebraska
PERMIT NO. 1370



Prairie Wind



*Published by the Order of the Prairie Wind for Nebraska Zen Center /
Heartland Temple and Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple*

Volume 25, Issue 2

Fall 2015

PRATYEKABUDDHA WALT WHITMAN

by Nonin Chowaney

Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple is a Soto Zen Buddhist temple established for Zen practice. The center follows the tradition established in Japan by Zen Master Eihei Dogen in the 13th century and transmitted in this century by two Masters, Rev. Shunryu Suzuki, founder of San Francisco Zen Center and author of *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* and Rev. Dainin Katagiri, who assisted Rev. Suzuki in San Francisco and later founded Minnesota Zen Meditation Center in Minneapolis. Rev. Katagiri was instrumental in establishing Nebraska Zen Center in 1975

Rev. Nonin Chowaney is NZC's Head Priest. He trained with Rev. Katagiri and was ordained by him. Rev. Chowaney also trained at Tassajara Zen Monastery in California and in Japan at Zuio-ji and Shogo-ji monasteries. He received formal Dharma Transmission from Rev. Katagiri and has been authorized to teach by him and by the Soto Zen Church in Japan.

Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple is NZC's sister temple and follows the same Soto Zen Buddhist tradition.

Rev. Kotoku Crivello is ZCP's Head Priest. He trained with Rev. Gengo Akiba, the Bishop of North American Soto Zen temples affiliated with the Japanese Soto Zen system and was ordained by him at Kojin-an temple in Oakland, California. Rev. Crivello also trained in American and Japanese monasteries, received formal Dharma Transmission from Rev. Akiba, and has been authorized to teach by him and by the Soto Zen Church in Japan.

Rev. Kyoki Roberts is ZCP's retired Head Priest. She was ordained by Rev. Chowaney and received formal Dharma Transmission from him. She resides at ZCP and is the administrator of An Olive Branch, a Buddhist mediation and conciliation service.

Prairie Wind (© 2015 Nebraska Zen Center) is the newsletter for both **Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple** and **Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple**.

Cover: Bodhisattva — China

We **always** need material for *Prairie Wind*. Send us articles, drawings, poems, photos, etc. The deadline for publication in our **Winter** issue is **November 15th**.

Websites for **Nebraska Zen Center** and **Zen Center of Pittsburgh** are at: www.prairiewindzen.org.

Nebraska Zen Center's e-mail address is: heartland@prairiewindzen.org.
Zen Center of Pittsburgh's e-mail address is: kotoku@deepspringzen.org

In Buddhism, a pratyekabuddha refers to a person who awakens to his or her true nature spontaneously, without having engaged in any specific practices that cultivate awakening. In Zen Buddhism, the Chinese sixth ancestor, Huineng, was an example of this. He was an illiterate woodcutter who awakened when he heard a passing monk reciting the Heart Sutra. Subsequently, he practiced Zen Buddhism with Master Hongren, went through Dharma Transmission with him, transmitted to the next generation, and eventually became an important figure in our Dharma Lineage.

I've always regarded the American poet Walt Whitman as a pratyekabuddha. The main difference between him and Huineng was that although his poetry reflected deep awakening, he never engaged in any Buddhist practices with a teacher during his life in 19th century America and subsequently was not able to instruct others in any path of awakening. This was unfortunate but understandable, given the time and place of his birth.

Whitman is one of my favorite poets, and last December I was given a gift of a beautiful, recently published hand-set copy, on handmade paper, of the original edition of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, which was first published in 1855. It's a beautiful book bound in board, and I've read it over and over these past few months. The lead poem in *Leaves of Grass* is a very long one called *Song of Myself*, and I'd like to share with you some passages from it

that reflect a pratyekabuddha's deep understanding of his, and our, original nature.

Whitman's understanding of himself transcended the common European understanding of the self or soul as beginning at birth and ending at death, something fixed that remains permanent over time. He saw the self as huge, vast, and impermanent, constantly changing. In an absolute sense, it encompasses the entire universe. This is a buddha's, an awakened person's, understanding.

Here are the first three lines from *Song of Myself*:

*I celebrate myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as
good belongs to you.*

These lines indicate clearly that Whitman understood his true nature, which is boundless and encompasses all. They remind me of these lines from the *Hsin Hsin Ming* (Verses on the Faith Mind), an important Zen Buddhist text:

*If the mind makes no discriminations,
the ten thousand things
are as they are, of single essence . . .
When all things are seen equally,
the timeless Self-essence is reached.*

Later in *Song of Myself*, Whitman says:

Do I contradict myself?

Pratyekabuddha

from page 3

*Very well then . . . I contradict myself
I am large . . . I contain multitudes.*

These are three of my favorite lines in *Song of Myself*. They remind me of the following lines from the *Genjokoan*, a primary work of the quintessential Soto Zen Buddhist Master Eihei Dogen:

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.

The Zen Buddhist Teacher Elizabeth Yuin Hamilton writes, "When Dogen Zenji reminds us that we need to study the self in order to see through its limitations, he's exhorting us to awaken *as* all existence to experience the boundlessness of our identity." She goes on to say that this is what Whitman awakened to, or he wouldn't have been able to experientially say, "I am large . . . I contain multitudes."

So, the self that Whitman is referring to is not the separate egoistic self, for what he assumes the other shall assume. This is the non-dualistic, absolute self, the same self that Dogen is referring to. Zen Buddhist practitioners understand this as no self, for as Whitman says, every atom belonging to him belongs to you. If there is no-self there is no other; all things are one body.

As I mentioned earlier, *Song of Myself* is a very long poem, so I won't be able

to do it justice here. However, I'd like to share a few more of my favorite passages. Further along in the poem, Whitman says:

*Stop this day and night with me and you
shall possess the origin of all poems,
You shall possess the good of the earth
and sun . . . there are millions of suns
left.*

*You shall no longer take things at second
or third hand . . . nor look through the
eyes of the dead . . . nor feed on
the spectres in books
You shall not look through my eyes ei-
ther, nor take things from me,
You shall listen to all sides and filter
them from yourself.*

In other words, see things directly, with no gap between self and others. This is the non-dualistic experience sometimes called "self-realization," but this is the realization of the true self. When one "realizes," or makes this real, one understands that, in Whitman's words:

*There was never any more inception than
there is now,
Nor any more youth or age than there
is now;
And will never be any more perfection
than there is now,
Nor any more heaven or hell than there
is now;*

A Zen Buddhist master would say, "Now is all there is," or, there is only "Just this." Whitman saw clearly that the past is gone and the future has not yet arrived. We can live only in this moment, which is constantly changing, unfixated. Past and future may come up, but they're just ideas. There is nothing but here and now,

Pratyekabuddha

from previous page

and in that here and now, there is constant becoming. As Whitman puts it:

*Urge and urge and urge,
Always the procreant urge of the world.*

Later in *Song of Myself*, he goes on to say:

*Eternity lies in bottomless reservoirs . . .
. . . its buckets are rising forever and
ever,
They pour and they pour and they ex-
hale away.*

*We have thus far exhausted trillions of
winters and summers;
There are trillions ahead, and trillions
ahead of them*

*Births have brought us richness and
variety,
And other births will bring us richness
and variety.*

*I do not call one greater and one
smaller,
That which fills its period and place is
equal to any.*

Again, this moment, which is all we have, contains all. Each moment is full and complete in itself.

Whitman not only realized his deep, non-dualistic connection with all human beings but also with all other beings, especially with animals. He says:

*The sharphoofed moose of the north,
the cat on the housesill, the chickadee,
the prairie-dog,
The litter of the grunting sow as they
tug at her teats,*

*The brood of the turkey hen, and she
with her halfspread wings,
I see in them and myself the same old
law. . . .*

All truths wait in all things.

This is the same old law, or truth, or dharma that governs the coming together and falling apart of not only all human and animal beings but of all beings, animate and inanimate. The law of impermanence, of the absolute and relative nature of all beings, or, in other words the sameness of himself and the turkey hen -- their absolute nature -- and the difference between himself and the turkey hen -- their relative nature.

How often have we heard the same expressed in many different ways by many different Zen Buddhist masters?

The following lines from *Leaves of Grass* sum up the expansiveness of Whitman's absorption into the true nature of the universe and his understanding of his place in it:

*I have said that the soul is not more
than the body,
And I have said that the body is not
more than the soul,
And nothing, not God, is greater to one
than one's self is, . . .*

*And there is no object so soft but it
makes a hub for the wheeled universe,
And any man or woman shall stand
cool and supercilious before a million
universes
And I call to mankind, be not curious
about God,
No array of terms can say how much I*

continued on next page

continued on page 12

NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER SANGHA NOTES

FALL PRACTICE PERIOD begins with a **Two-day Sesshin** on **September 12th and 13th**. Practice Period provides structure for intensifying one's practice and sangha connections for a specific period of time in three areas: **(1) daily practice at home** (sitting and devotional services), **(2) regular involvement at the temple** (e.g., specific morning or evening sittings, Sunday morning practice, or work practice, and **(3) attendance at special events** (e.g., sesshins, study groups, or precept ceremonies. Practice Period students will also keep a **practice journal** and will **meet with Nonin as a group** two or three times during the period, which will end with **Rohatsu Sesshin** (Dec. 1-7)



Nonin with Janelle Arthur, Annette Jordan, and Eric Currie after **Lay Initiation** in March. Janelle's dharma name is **Roko** (clear, bright light); Annette's is **Seishin** (sincere heart), and Eric's is **Taishin** (peaceful heart/mind), **Congratulations to you all! More photos on pg. 22**

Photo by Ron Semerena

Many thanks to those who've been doing temple jobs this Spring and Summer. We've been able to keep the temple clean and bright, especially the practice areas, due to the work of sangha members. **Special thanks** go to **Shoju Pam Griffin**, who once again this year has put in a lot of time on the gardens and grounds

Former sangha member **Eisai Elizabeth Muia** came for a visit earlier this Summer. It was great to see you!

NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER FALL EVENTS

SESSHIN

There will be three sesshins at NZC this Fall: a **Two-day Sesshin** on **September 12th and 13th**, a **One-day Sesshin** on **October 17th**, and a **Seven-day Sesshin (Rohatsu)** from **December 1st—7th**. on Fees: \$40 per day for members; \$50 for non-members. Lower rates are available for those with limited income. E-mail us at heartland@prairiewindzen.org or call 402-551-9035 to register.

DHARMA STUDY CLASS

Nonin will lead a **Dharma Study Class** at the temple this Fall. It will meet on four successive **Saturday mornings** from **10 a.m. till noon**, on **October 3rd, 10th, 17th, and 24th**. We'll be examining the dharma as presented in **poems by a variety of poets** from America, Europe, China, and Japan — some Buddhist, some not; some contemporary; some ancient. The class is free to sangha members. The fee for others is \$15 per class.

The temple will be closed over Thanksgiving from Wednesday evening, the 25th through Saturday evening, the 28th.

WEEKLY ZENDO SCHEDULE — NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER

Morning

Tuesday thru Friday and on Sunday
6:00 - 7:00 — Sitting Meditation
(Walking as Needed)
7:00 - 7:30 — Service
7:30 - 7:45 — Cleaning

Sunday Only

8:30 — Zazen Instruction
9:00 - 9:25 — Sitting Meditation
9:25 - 9:35 — Walking Meditation
9:35 - 10:00 — Sitting Meditation
10:00 - 10:10 — Service

Evening

Tuesday — Wednesday
7:00 - 8:30 — Sitting Meditation
(Walking as needed)
Thursday
6:00 - 8:30 — Classes as scheduled
Friday
7:00 - 8:30 — Sitting Meditation

We are closed on Saturday & Monday.

If you are new to the temple, you must have zazen instruction before joining us. Please arrive by 8:30 on Sunday morning for instruction.

ZEN CENTER OF PITTSBURGH SANGHA NOTES

If you want to receive monthly schedule updates and last-minute changes to events, join our-mail list. Go to <http://www.deepspringzen.org>, scroll down the page and register. Or, e-mail ZCP at kotoku@deepspringzen.org. You will also receive our monthly e-Newsletter.

Kotoku and Colleen Crivello arrived in mid-June with sincere gratitude for all that has brought the move to happen. Kyoki provided a warm welcome and Kotoku immediately assumed **Head Priest** duties. There will be formal **stepping down and installation ceremonies** for Kyoki and Kotoku in the early Fall.



Kotoku, left, holding the Head Priest stick after it was passed to him by Kyoki, right.

We had a Half-day sitting on July 12th and a One-day Sesshin on August 8th. At this writing, preparations are being made for an **Obon festival** to be held on **August 29th**. This is a special open house event for neighbors and friends to enjoy the grounds and share some fun. It will include a **Tea Ceremony Demonstration** by **Myoshu Wren**, a long-time dharma sister of the Crivellos, who teaches in Ohio.

Mya, our beloved temple dog, was suffering greatly from cancer and was put down earlier this Summer. She was a good friend to all, brought much joy to the temple, and will be sorely missed.

ZCP FALL EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

4-6 — Labor Day Sesshin
20 — Fall Equinox & World Peace Ceremony
21 — International World Peace Day

OCTOBER

5 — Bodhidharma Day
10-11 — Two-day Sesshin

NOVEMBER

5-8 — Three-day Sesshin
25-29 — Zen Center Closed

DECEMBER

1-7 — Rohatsu Sesshin
23-27 — Zen Center Closed
31 — New Year's Eve

Sesshin is an intense period of practice consisting of sitting/walking meditation, services, work and dokusan (private interviews with teachers). You must sign up for this event.]

ZCP DAILY SCHEDULE

Closed Mondays

MORNINGS

Tuesday — Friday:
6:00 — Zazen
6:40 — Service

Saturday

7:00 — 7:50 Zazen
8:00 — Service
8:30 — Breakfast
Cleaning / Special projects

Sunday

9:00 — Doors Open
9:30 — Orientation
10:00 — Zazen
10:45 — Soji (Work Practice)
11:15 — Service
Dharma Talk
Lunch

EVENINGS

Tuesday
6:30 — 7:30 Zazen

Wednesday

6:30 — 7:30 Zazen

Thursday

6:30 — 7:30 Zazen

Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple, 124 Willow Ridge Road,
Sewickley, PA 15143 tel: (412) 741-1262 e-mail: kotoku@deepspringzen.org
website: www.deepspringzen.org

WHITE LOTUS SANGHA NOTES

The **White Lotus Sangha**, a group affiliated with NZC, meets on Friday evenings in four Nebraska prisons, **Nebraska State Penitentiary** and **Lincoln Correctional Center** in Lincoln, **Tecumseh State Correctional Institute** in Tecumseh, and **Omaha Correctional Center** in Omaha.

For further information, see the **Religious Coordinator** at either of the above institutions, e-mail heartland@prairiewindzen.org, call (402) 551-9035, or write **Nebraska Zen Center, 3625 Lafayette Ave., Omaha, NE, 68131-1363.**

Impermanence

by Zenryu Vicki Grunwald

Every Zen student knows and understands what impermanence means. Heck, most people who are not Zen students understand that things are constantly changing. We see it in our aging parents, our new gray hairs, growing children, tsunami destruction, political candidate elections, and the list goes on. But knowing that everything is changing and nothing is permanent is different from experiencing impermanence.

Recently, Tecumseh State Correctional Institution (TSCI) experienced a riot. According to the news reports, it was pretty bad. A housing unit was badly damaged, and people were injured and even killed. The prison immediately went on lockdown. To my knowledge, they have not resumed normal operations, and may not do so for some time. Knowing that the situation is impermanent brings little comfort to the men who are locked in their cells, some 3 to a room originally designed for 1 person.

Knowing that the mandatory overtime was impermanent brought little comfort to the men at Nebraska State Penitentiary (NSP) who had to work mandatory 12 hour shifts to complete the work diverted from TSCI while they were locked down.

In April, a former inmate and sangha member took his life. He touched many on both sides of the bars. We all know that his life, all life is impermanent. But knowing that everything is permanent is different from living it.

I think that's where Zen Buddhist practice comes in. Frustration, anger, and grief arise. We don't ignore those feelings just because we know they are impermanent. They are our life, at least in that moment. Sometimes, the feelings are very strong. And we can't let them go until we experience them fully. So, we feel angry and helpless when we can't leave our cells for hours at a time. We sigh and groan as we collapse into a hard bed after yet another 12 hour shift. And we sit and cry at the loss of our friend.

TENDING THE OX ZENDO SANGHA NOTES

A group affiliated with NZC meets weekly on **WEDNESDAY EVENINGS** at **7:00 pm** at **Branched Oak Farm, 17015 NW 70th St, Raymond, NE 68428-4041.** For further information, e-mail or call **Kanho Doug Dittman** at doug@windstream.net (402-326-6954). Zazen Instruction is available for newcomers if arranged in advance.

Tending the Ox will offer three **One-day retreats** on the following **Sundays:**

September 27
October 25th
December 13th

These retreats will run from 9:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m., and a **mid-day meal** will be served. Attendance is limited to **10 participants**, and the fee is **\$30 per day. Advance registration is required.**

Zen Meditation and Nature Workshops will be offered on two **Sundays, September 20th (Fall) and December 20th (Winter), from 10 a.m. till noon.** The fee is \$20.



Intimacy on the Farm — Kanho Doug and Robin

Pratyekabuddha

from page 5

am at peace about God and about death.

*I hear and behold God in every object,
yet understand God not in the least.
Nor do I understand who there can be
more wonderful than myself*

*Why should I wish to see God better
than this day.
I see something of God each hour of the
twenty-four, and each moment then,
In the faces of men and women I see
God, and in my own face in the glass
I find letters from God dropped in the
street, and everyone in signed by
God's name.
And I leave them were they are, for I
know that others will punctually come
forever and ever.*

Substitute "Mind" for "soul" and "Buddha" for God, and these words could have been spoken by any Buddhist master past or present.

Near the end of *Song of Myself*, Whitman says this to us:

*Long enough have you dreamed con-
temptible dreams,
Now I wash the gum from your eyes,
You must habit yourself to the dazzle of
the light and of every moment of your
life.*

*Long have you timidly waded, holding
a
plank by the shore,
Now I will you to be a bold swimmer,
To jump off in the midst of the sea, and
rise again and no to me and shout,
and
laughingly dash with your hair.*

This injunction is the same as the following from the 79th koan in the koan collection *The Book of Serenity*:

*The man sitting atop the hundred-foot
pole:
Though he's gained entry, this is not yet
the real
Atop the hundred-foot pole, he should
step forward:
The universe in all directions is the
whole body.*

Now that I've written this article, I find myself wanting to read "*Song of Myself*" once more, to curl up in my recliner and immerse myself in Whitman's beautiful pratyekabuddha's words. Maybe I'll wait till a cold winter's night, for sometimes postponing one's pleasure heightens it, so I'll probably wait a while until I need a walk along Buddha's path with a good dharma brother. When we walk is immaterial, for he's always ready to walk with me. As he says near the end of his masterpiece:

*I bequeath myself to the dirt to
grow from the grass I love,*

*If you want me again look for me
under your bootsoles.*

SANGHA MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER / ZEN CENTER OF PITTSBURGH

Membership

While no one needs to formally join either temple to share in our practices, we invite you to become a member of either Nebraska Zen Center or Zen Center of Pittsburgh. Members are people who feel that Zen Buddhism is an important part of their lives and who wish to express that feeling by joining a community of practitioners.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please speak with the appropriate person at either temple after Sunday services.

Financial Support

Buddhist communities have always relied on the generosity of their supporters. For income, we depend on those who believe in the good of what we do and wish to nourish it. No one is refused temple membership due to an inability to pay. We do, however, encourage members to commit to our financial support through monthly pledges.

We also encourage members to exhibit this support through participation in work projects.

The amount of your pledge is your personal decision. We ask you to support the temple at a level appropriate to your means. For those who participate regularly, we suggest a monthly pledge that reflects one hour of your earnings per week, or four hours per month. Because we are non-profit religious corporations, all donations are tax deductible.

Pratyekabuddha

from previous page



continued on next page

EVERYDAY COURAGE

by Zuiko Redding

This morning I looked down the basement stairs and breathed a quiet sigh. No puddles. In the heavy spring and summer rains, water can seep in through cracks in the stone walls near the floor, making small brooks and ponds. There's nothing for it but to just get down there and start working. At least the floor will be clean and I'll have gotten some exercise by the end of it. As I squeeze out the mop or empty the shop vac, I sometimes wish that I were doing something a bit more glamorous and important than spilling murky water down the basement sink.

The last time I found myself mopping, I remembered a passage in *Eihei Koroku* that I like a lot.

The courage of a fisherman is to enter the water without avoiding deep-sea dragons. The courage of a hunter is to travel the earth without avoiding tigers. The courage of a general is to face the drawn sword before him and see death as just like life. What is the courage of patch-robed monks?

Spread out your bedding and sleep; set out your bowls and eat rice; exhale through your nostrils; radiate light from your eyes. ... With vitality, eat lots of rice and then use the toilet. Transcend your prediction of future Buddhahood from

Gautama.

We often think courage is something special – something that first responders and soldiers have but we don't. Courage is much more pedestrian than entering burning buildings or staring down tigers. It's about facing things we don't want to face – making the bed, taking care of a sick child, mopping up the basement are acts of courage.

Lady Bird Johnson understood courage. At a dinner toast in 1965, she said:

Let's drink to ... courage, just the sort of pedestrian courage that makes you get up in the morning and go on about the day's business, however frustrating and hopeless and endless and imperfect and unsure the course of the day may be.

She wasn't speaking abstractly – this was her life. And ours. Some days are fulfilling and purposeful. Others are frustrating, hopeless, endless and it's hard to see any direction. We can only put the sodden basement rugs in the washer and trust that this is what's needed.

Courage is to live every day, paying attention to each moment, to just take the next step with full attention. It is taking care of all the things, large and small, that come our way. Those things may seem insignificant and endless. We may do them with awkwardness and clumsiness. And not

Everyday Courage

from previous page

know where all this will lead. The only thing we can do is take the next step and find out.

To do this means to vow to fully live in the reality of our lives. Or maybe we can call it faith. It's the force inside us that gives us a natural discipline, keeping us on course, keeping us moving. It comes from truly seeing this life, right now – having the buddhas' and ancestors' awake minds. This is what Dōgen means when he tells us “Transcend your prediction of future Buddhahood from Gautama.” We “get up in the morning and go about the day's business.” Mrs. Johnson did not say “our business,” but “the day's business.” This “business” was the business of the Universe. She saw that it was not about her convenience. She just let it be frustrating, hopeless, endless and imperfect and lived in the midst of all that. Understanding that our lives are lived to benefit all things, she could take the next step.

I'm sure Dogen would have recognized the light in Mrs. Johnson's eyes.

“Radiating light” is being aware and active. When we live with vitality, our eyes are clear and shining. To be in the midst of life is not to be a victim of it. The situation may be a hard one. We may be in a job that destroys our

spirit or we may be caring for a sick, frail loved one in the midst of job and family responsibilities. Not being a victim means standing up in whatever way we need to, to do whatever is needed to take care of things. As a political wife, Lady



Enso — Each Moment, Only Once

Calligraphy by Nonin Chowaney
on handmade paper

Bird Johnson had to fit into a mold that allowed little freedom to do the things she loved. But that didn't stop her from finding something that fed her spirit. She worked to promote the use of wild plants as roadside landscaping. Her pedestrian courage in speaking for wildflowers

continued on next page

continued on page 17

CALLIGRAPHY FOR SALE ON OUR WEBSITE



Mu (nothing)

Nonin's calligraphy can be purchased through our website, at www.prairiewindzen.org. Click on **Nebraska Zen Center** and go to Nonin's calligraphy pages.

There are **over fifty items for sale**, one and two-character pieces, longer phrases, and specialty items. All are **signed and stamped originals** and are written on high-quality paper, either Canson watercolor paper, Rives BFK, or archival matboard.

Nonin also accepts **commissions**

to write temple names, individual dharma names, and specific characters or Zen phrases. **For further information**, contact him directly at the following

e-mail address: heartland@prairiewindzen.org.

We sell and ship the calligraphy unframed. **Each piece can be mounted and framed by a good framer using traditional methods.**

All profits from website calligraphy sales go directly to Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple.

Everyday Courage

from page 15

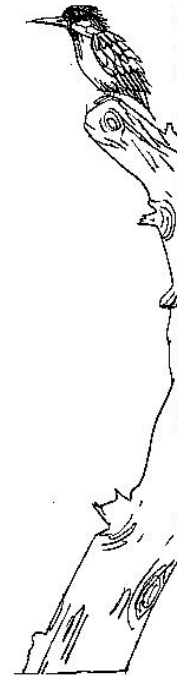
makes me think of her every time I see native grasses and flowers on our Iowa roadsides.

Everyday courage is not easy. We eat our dinner, then wash our dishes, thinking that the time might be more fruitfully spent on other things, not having confidence in our present action. We turn down the covers and climb into bed, being kept from sleep by the anxiety about tomorrow. We waver between trying to get to sleep and getting up and working on that project for tomorrow.

Everyday courage is the faith that doing our dishes or going to bed is what the reality of life needs right now, trusting that if we take care of these details our lives will take care of themselves. Faith and courage are intertwined. To have the faith to take a step requires courage. If we can just do it, then we will see whether it works or not and be able to know the direction from there.

Miyazaki Ekiho Zenji once remarked that enlightenment is living without fear. Living without fear is just doing what reality asks of us, no matter how hopeless, frustrating and endless it seems to be, with the confidence that this is where we need to be right now. When we can have this kind of courage, our lives radiate light.

Rev. Zuiko Redding is Head Priest at Cedar Rapids Zen Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



SAWAKI-ROSHI'S ZAZEN

by Kosho Uchiyama

Sawaki-roshi ended a long talk on zazen by saying that it is good for nothing. People thought that he was joking. That however, was not the case. As I have already said [elsewhere]; wherever, whatever happens, I live out my life. As long as I maintain this attitude, I cannot go anywhere. There is nowhere to go. Since I have nowhere to go, it is natural to say that zazen is good for nothing. There I nothing to gain from it because it is universe-full.

Shortly after I began to practice with Sawaki-roshi, I had an opportunity to walk with him in the town of Utsunomiya. While we were walking, I said, "As you know, I'm a rather incompetent person, but I want to continue to practice zazen with you for twenty or even thirty years or until you die. If I do that, would it be possible for a weak person like me to become a little stronger?" Sawaki-roshi replied, "No! Zazen is useless." He had a loud, deep voice, was powerful and resolute. "I am not like this because of my practice of zazen," he continued, "I was like this before I began to practice. Zazen doesn't change a person. Zazen is useless." When I heard these words I thought to myself. "Although Sawaki-roshi said it wouldn't be possible, still I'll be able to improve myself." I followed him for twenty five years, until he passed away.

Sawaki-roshi passed away in December, 1965. While he was alive, I somehow relied on him. After he died, I couldn't do that anymore. Just after his death, I recalled the question I asked during our walk in Utsunomiya and asked myself the question, "Have I changed after practicing zazen with the Roshi for twenty five years?" I realized that I hadn't really changed at all. In that moment it was natural for me to say to myself. "A violet blossoms as a violet, a rose blossoms as a rose. There are people like Sawaki-roshi who resemble huge rose blossoms. There are other people, like me, who resemble tiny, pretty violet blossoms. Which is better? It's not a relevant question. I should blossom wholeheartedly, just as I am.

I am living out the universe-full life of absolute reality regardless of whether I think so or not, believe it or not, accept it, or reject it. The point of our practice is to manifest this universe-full life here and now. In this there is no judgment in regard to success and failure. If there is success and failure, I am then in relationship to others. However, since everything I encounter here and now is a part of my life, I shouldn't treat anything roughly. I should take care of everything wholeheartedly. I practice in this way. Everything I encounter is my life. "Where one attains one thing, one penetrates one thing, when one encounters one practice, one cultivates one practice," is the way Zen Master Dogen expressed it in *Shobogenzo Genjokoan*. When I encounter one thing, I practice one thing.

For example, when you climb a mountain, you climb moment by moment, one step at a time. It's not that you climb a mountain only when you reach the summit. To advance one step at a time is what's important. We live moment by moment, step by step. This is an activity of the whole universe. It is an activity which is good for nothing. It

continued on next page

Sawaki-roshi's Zazen

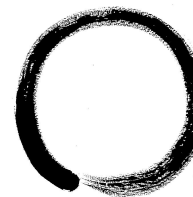
from previous page

is practice-enlightenment without defilement. According to *Shobogenzo Yuibutsu yobutsu*, "undefiled" means to neither accept nor reject, to not discriminate. There is nothing to pick up or throw away. There is nowhere to go. Since it is universe-full, it cannot be defiled. With this pure life force within myself, I live always here and now, manifesting the whole universe to just do this practice which is good for nothing is the meaning of the word *shikan* [justness]. Zen Master Dogen often used the word *shikan* "just doing" or "doing single-mindedly." This doesn't mean experiencing ecstasy or becoming mentally absorbed in some activity. To experience ecstasy or become mentally absorbed, some object or goal is needed. *Shikan* has no object. It is "just doing" as the pure life force of the self.

In our modern world, most people think in terms of competition with others in the struggle for existence, for money, or status, or power, But a true way of life has nothing to do with relationship to others. We are the self that is only the self. We do self with the self by the self. This self is universe-full; it is one with the whole universe. Whoever, whatever I encounter is my life. We just do things with the true, pure life force of the self without expectation. We don't have to weep when we fail or fall behind in some kind of competition. There is no need to escape from anything or chase after anything because of a desire to gain happiness and to reject unhappiness. If we restlessly run this way and that, our lives are unstable.

Living straightforwardly with a dignified attitude, moved by the life force of the self that is one with the whole universe – this is the way of life based on zazen the Sawaki-roshi taught.

Kosho Uchiyama (1912-1998) was a transmitted disciple of Kodo Sawaki's and the founding Abbot of Antai-ji monastery.



LAY INTIATION



Opening bows to Nonin, the Preceptor



Taishin Eric receiving lineage papers



Seishin Annette receiving wisdom water



Receiving the Precepts



Roko Janelle receiving the rakusu

Photos by Ron Semerena

METTA MEDITATION

*May I be well, happy, peaceful and prosperous.
May no harm come to me, may no difficulties come to me, may no problems come to me,
may I always meet with success.
May I also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life.*

*May my parents be well, happy, peaceful and prosperous.
May no harm come to them, may no difficulties come to them, may no problems come to them,
may they always meet with success.
May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life.*

*May my teachers be well, happy, peaceful and prosperous.
May no harm come to them, may no difficulties come to them, may no problems come to them,
may they always meet with success.
May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life.*

*May my family be well, happy, peaceful and prosperous.
May no harm come to them, may no difficulties come to them, may no problems come to them,
may they always meet with success.
May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life.*

*May my friends be well, happy, peaceful and prosperous.
May no harm come to them, may no difficulties come to them, may no problems come to them,
may they always meet with success.
May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life.*

*May those unfriendly to me be well, happy, peaceful and prosperous.
May no harm come to them, may no difficulties come to them, may no problems come to them,
may they always meet with success.
May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life.*

*May all living beings be well, happy, peaceful and prosperous.
May no harm come to them, may no difficulties come to them, may no problems come to them,
may they always meet with success.
May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life.*

*May the suffering not suffer, the fearful not fear, the grieving not grieve.
May all beings be well and happy.*

Kindness

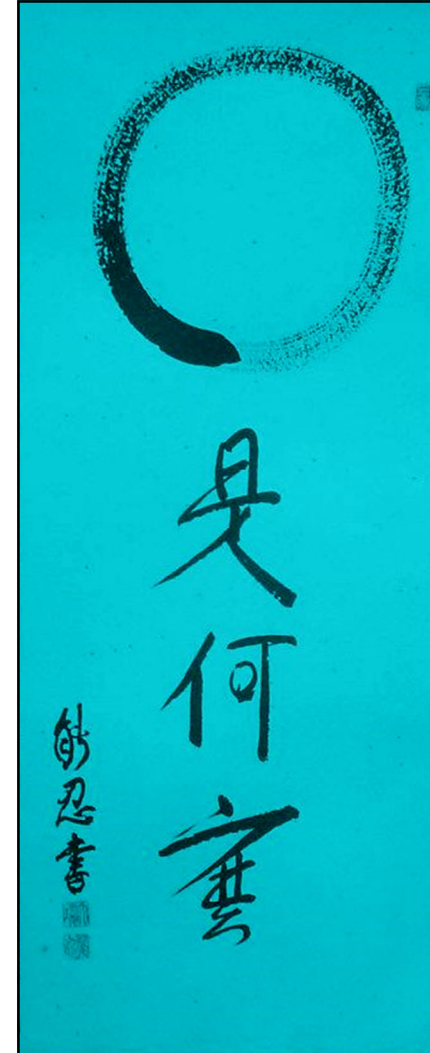
*Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.
What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness.
how you ride and ride
thinking the bus will never stop,
the passengers eating maize and chicken
will stare out the window forever.*

*Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,
you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho
lies dead by the side of the road.
You must see how this could be you,
how he too was someone
who journeyed through the night with plans
and the simple breath that kept him alive.*

*Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.*

*Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day to mail letters and purchase
bread,
only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
it is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you everywhere
like a shadow or a friend.*

Naomi Shihab Nye



Enso — What is this?
Calligraphy by Nonin Chowaney