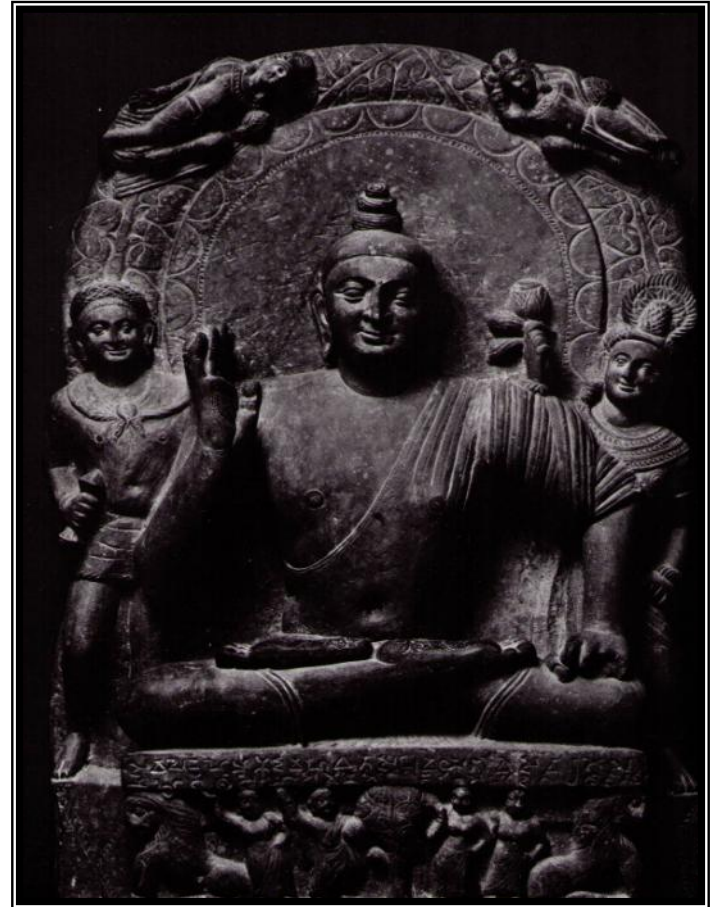




Prairie Wind



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

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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, OPW, 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. Rev. Chowaney is the founder of the Order of the Prairie Wind.

Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple is NZC's sister temple. ZCP also follows the Soto Zen Buddhist tradition established by Zen Master Dogen..

Rev. Kyoki Roberts, OPW, is ZCP's Head Priest and a founding member of the Order of the Prairie Wind. She is the senior ordained student of Rev. Nonin Chowaney and has trained at Hokyoji Monastery in Minnesota, San Francisco Zen Center and Green Gulch Farm in California, and Zuioji and Shogoji monasteries in Japan. Rev. Roberts received Dharma Transmission from Rev. Chowaney and was authorized to teach by him and by the Soto Zen Church in Japan. She was appointed to serve as ZCP's Head Priest in 2001

Prairie Wind (© 2008 Nebraska Zen Center) is the newsletter for both **Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple** and **Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple**.

We **always** need material for ***Prairie Wind***. Send us articles, drawings, poems, photos, cartoons, etc. The deadline for publication in our Summer issue is **May 1st**.

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: **kyoki@prairiewindzen.org**

JUST THIS

by Nonin Chowaney

When I went to practice at Zuioji monastery in Japan many years ago, I only knew a few phrases of Japanese. I couldn't understand dharma talks at all, and I frequently fell asleep during them! Every once and a while, the person giving the talk, usually Ikko Narasaki, would raise his voice and say "nyoze!" very forcefully, and it would wake me up. I didn't know what the word meant, but I heard it so often that it stuck in my mind. I eventually asked one of the English-speaking Japanese monks what "nyoze" meant, and he answered, "just this."

"Just this" has stuck in my mind over the years, not only because I heard "nyoze" so often in Japan but also because it was made clear to me early on that this is the main thrust of Zen Buddhist practice. We are told to focus on "just this," what's right in front of us here and now.

A while ago, I was given a video that explored Zen Buddhism in Japan. In it, Mumon Yamada, a Rinzai Zen Master, held out his left hand and made a fist with his thumb on top. He balanced the short stick that he carried on top of his thumbnail. He then put the index finger of his right hand on one end of the stick, pressed down until the stick wobbled and said, "This is the past. It is gone. We cannot stand here." Then, he put his finger on the other end of the stick, pressed down, and said, "This is

the future. It is not here yet. We cannot stand here, either." Then, he placed his finger on the stick just above his thumbnail, pressed down, and the stick remained firm. "This is the present," he said. "It's the only place we can stand." This place is "just this."

Zazen (sitting meditation) is the core practice in Soto Zen Buddhism. When I give zazen instruction, I tell people to sit in a good posture, to allow thoughts to come without suppressing them, to let them go without clinging to them, and to pay attention to, or follow, the breath. I also tell them that when consciousness arises that the present moment is not being attended to, that the breath is not being followed, to drop whatever thought has arisen and return to breath; return to "just this." Then, the process starts again. Zazen is a process of returning to "just this" over and over again.

Focusing on the issue at hand, however, is not limited to Zen Buddhist practice and is not only encouraged in Zen Buddhist texts. I like to take the truth where I find it, and I frequently find it in poetry. Here at Heartland Temple, we had a Dharma Study Class last Fall, and the theme was Zen in Contemporary American Poetry. Many of the poems we examined had to do with

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Just This

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“just this,” and I’d like to take a look at a couple of them. The first one is by David Budbill:

The First Green of Spring

Out walking in the swamp picking
cowslip, marsh marigold,
this sweet first green of spring. Now
sautéed in a pan melting
to a deeper green than ever they were
alive, this green, this life,

harbinger of things to come. Now we
sit at the table munching
on this message from the dawn which
says we and the world
are alive again today, and this is the
world’s birthday. And

even though we know we are growing
old, we are dying, we
will never be young again, we also
know we’re still right here
now today, and, my oh my, don’t these
greens taste good.

I love this poem. David Budbill was in his sixties when he wrote it. I am sixty-six now. We are not young men any more. However, if we linger on thoughts of growing old, on moving toward death, on dying, or lament that we’re not young any more, we miss what’s in front of us, which is a lovely world full of wonderful things like fresh spring greens. If we drop our thoughts and focus on “just this,” we

fully experience this moment and all it affords us, and “my oh my, don’t these greens taste good.”

Budbill’s poem reminds me of this Zen Buddhist parable:

A man was being stalked by a tiger and began running through the forest. He came to the edge of a cliff with the tiger right behind, and he jumped over the edge and grabbed onto a branch of a small tree growing out of the side of the cliff. The tiger stood snarling above him and the branch began to crack. Trapped between the tiger and the ground below, he saw a bunch of strawberries, picked one, and exclaimed, ‘oh, how sweet!’

We can look at the tiger and the ground below in a variety of ways, and when we do, we can see that we run into situations like this frequently. Perhaps it is a demanding boss and a difficult to accomplish deadline. Perhaps it’s an unreasonable workload and an upcoming company downsizing. Perhaps it is a bunch of bills and a diminishing bank account. Perhaps it is a terminal illness and an inevitable death. The lesson of this parable is “just this.” It is the same lesson that Mumon Yamada taught us by pointing out the insubstantiality of past and future and metaphorically showing us that we can only live in the present moment.

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Just This

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Here’s how the poet Jane Kenyon sees it:

Coming Home at Twilight in Late Summer

We turned into the drive,
and gravel flew up from the tires
like sparks from a fire. So much
to be done – the unpacking, the mail
and papers . . . the grass needed mow
ing. . . .
We climbed stiffly out of the car.
The shut-off engine ticked as it
cooled.

And then we noticed the pear tree,
the limbs so heavy with fruit
they nearly touched the ground.
We went out to the meadow; our
steps
made black holes in the grass;
and we each took a pear,
and ate, and were grateful.

Once the poet turns away from all that needs to be done upon returning home after an absence and turns toward the pear tree in front of her, the poem shifts from stiff resignation to joyous gratitude for the here and now and the sweetness it brings, for “just this.”

Those who have been reading this publication over the past year are aware of the serious illness that struck me after surgery a year ago last

January. I nearly died, and I then spent two months in the hospital and another five months recuperating at home and engaging in out-patient physical therapy before I regained full strength.

I’m extremely grateful these days, grateful for my life and the opportunity it affords me to experience the fulfillment and joy of engaging in everyday things. I feel as if I’m in “bonus time” from here on out, and I’m not going waste time lamenting when things don’t go exactly the way I want them to. If we can just focus on the issue at hand, and what’s in front of us, life is a lot easier.

Jane Kenyon expresses it this way:

The Clothes Pin

How much better it is
to carry wood to the fire
than to moan about your life.
How much better
to throw the garbage
onto the compost, or to pin the clean
sheet on the line
with a gray-brown wooden clothes
pin!

If we focus on the here and now, we realize that we don’t have to look anywhere else for peace and contentment. These can only be realized here and now, at this time

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NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER SANGHA NOTES

Our **Annual Sangha Meeting** on February 2nd brought changes to our **Board of Directors**. Board Member **Toze Hal Holoun's** term was up, and he has declined to serve another term. Hal was replaced on the Board by **Eisai Elizabeth Muia**. **Thank you so much**, Hal, for your service and **thank you**, Elizabeth, for taking on this responsibility. Our **Officers** for 2008, elected at the Feb. 2nd Board Meeting, are: **President — Zenryu Vicki Grunwald, Vice-president — Kanho Doug Dittman, Secretary — Greg McLawsen, and Treasurer — Chuko Jean Bailey**. **Many thanks** to continuing Board Members for serving the sangha in this way!

Sangha member **Milo Alexander** is sewing a **rakusu** in preparation for a **Precept Ceremony** signifying **Lay Initiation** on **March 16th**. **All are invited to attend the ceremony**.

The **Board of Directors** has decided not to make an offer on the house next door, so we are **proceeding with our previous plans to build an addition** to our current building. We have found a contractor and will break ground **at the end of March**. **Many thanks** to **Kanho Doug Dittman** for locating the contractor and



Nonin's dharma brother, **Dosho Port**, visited us and **led sesshin** on the weekend of February 16th. **Thank you so much** for coming, Dosho, and for sharing your deep understanding of Dogen's way with us. Hopefully, you'll come again!

Noted landscape artist and sangha member **Toze Hal Holoun** is the featured artist at one of the area's largest and most prestigious art shows. The **20th Annual Wings Over the Platte Fine Art Exhibition and Sale** runs from February 15 - April 11 at the **Stuhr Museum** in Grand Island, Nebraska.. Some of Hal's work can be viewed at www.stuhrmuseum.org/holoun.htm.

NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER SPRING EVENTS

SESSHIN

There will be two sesshins at NZC this Spring, a **One-day Sesshin** on March 22nd and a **Two-day Sesshin** on **April 19th and 20th**. Fees; \$30 per day for members; \$40 for non-members. Lower rates are available for those with limited income. call **402-551-9035** or **e-mail** us at heartland@prairiewindzen.org to register.

BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

We'll celebrate **Buddha's Birthday** with a special service on **Sunday, April 6th at 10:00**. Afterwards, there'll be a **dharma talk** and a **pot-luck lunch** with **birthday cake** and **ice-cream**. **Everyone is invited to attend**.

REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

A **special service** dedicated to deceased sangha members, relatives, teachers, and friends will be held on **Sunday, May 11th** before dharma talk. Either **bring photographs** of those you would like to remember or **write their names** on small cards to place on the Buddha Hall altar (we'll have cards at the temple).

OTHER SPRING EVENTS

Mar 2	World Peace Ceremony Group Discussion
5	Precept Ceremony
Apr 9	Precept Ceremony
13	World Peace Ceremony Group Discussion
May 4	World Peace Ceremony Group Discussion
7	Precept Ceremony

Heartland Temple will be closed over Memorial Day Weekend. There'll be **no sitting on Thursday, May 22nd/** The temple will re-open with morning sitting on **Tuesday, May 27th**.

ZEN CENTER OF PITTSBURGH SANGHA NOTES

If you want to receive monthly schedule updates and last-minute changes to events, join our e-mail list by going to <http://www.prairiewindzen.org/zcp/list.htm> and registering, or send an e-mail to Zen Center of Pittsburgh at: kyoki@prairiewindzen.org.

We've been busy this winter at Deep Spring! **Tom Rudy** headed up a work crew of **Jisen Coghlan**, **Ryushin John Ott**, **Ryan Minster** and **Dave Christy**. The crew remodeled the women's bath, and it's beautiful — **thank you all!**

Thanks also to **Taikan Doug Gouge** and **Ryushin John**, who installed new bay windows in the large upstairs room.

Kaethejean Bleicher is sewing zafus for the new Wednesday night sitting group at Friends Meeting House that **Jigen Cressida Magaro** and **Shogen Gary Crouth** are heading up, and **Harry Troelstra** is working with the City of Pittsburgh's 250th year celebration to create services associated with **Peace Poles** that have been placed around the city. **Thanks to all of you** for your work, and also **thanks to Liaoran Mimi Jong**, who designed and **Dan Kendgia**, who donated the printing of new Zen Center t-shirts for all of us here at the temple.

Jyoshin Bryan Ritti has been working with teachers around the country to develop a **women's lineage** to incorporate into the personal lineage we use here at Deep Spring each morning, and **Ryushin John** and **Kaethejean** are busy starting plants indoors for our garden.

Jisen Coghlan is off to **Shasta Abbey** to continue monastic training as a novice priest. She will return in May.

The **Soto Zen Buddhist Association** will hold its **2nd National Ango** here at Deep Spring Temple **from July 22-August 22nd**. This angu is for training novice priests from around the country.

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

ZCP SPRING EVENTS

MARCH

1—Katagiri Memorial*
2—World Peace Ceremony*
4, 11—Buddhist Studies Class
6—Intro to Zen**
8—1/2 day sitting at Friends Meeting House 9-12 a.m.**
18—Precept Renewal
27—Intro to Zen**
29—One-day sitting**

APRIL

1,8,15,22—Buddhist Studies Class
6—World Peace Ceremony*
17—Intro to Zen**
22—Precept Renewal
25-27— Two-day Sesshin**

MAY

4—World Peace Ceremony*
8—Intro to Zen**
11—Remembrance Day
16-18—Sangha Work Weekend
20—Precept Renewal
25-28—ZCP closed
29—Intro to Zen**

*Special morning service
**Please register for this event

ZCP DAILY SCHEDULE

AM

Tuesday

7:00 a.m. — Zazen at the Mattress Factory

Wednesday — Saturday

5:30 a.m. — Zazen

6:45 a.m. — Morning Service

PM

Tuesday — Friday

6:00 — 7:15

Closed Mondays

SUNDAY ONLY

10:00 a.m. — Zazen

10:40 a.m. — Work Practice

11:15 a.m. — Service/Dharma Talk

12:30 p.m. — Lunch

WHITE LOTUS SANGHA NOTES

Last Fall, NZC sangha members and Prison Volunteers **Zenryu Vicki Grunwald** and **Ryoshin Joe Marshall**, started visiting Omaha Correctional Center (OCC) in Omaha and established the sitting group there as part of the **White Lotus Sangha**. NZC sangha member **Milo Alexander** has also begun volunteering at OCC, so the men will now have volunteer visits twice a month.

Zenryu Vicki recently made a survey of liturgical supplies at all the prisons and found that both Nebraska State Penitentiary (NSP) and Omaha Correctional Center (OCC) were in need. **Heartland Temple** sangha members donated funds to purchase small bells for both prisons and an inkin for NSP. **Thanks to all who donated** and special thanks to **Zen Mountain Monastery's** store for providing a ten percent discount for the items.

Three **White Lotus Sangha** members at NSP will begin sewing rakus soon in preparation for **Lay Initiation**.

Ryoshin Joe Marshall explains how he got started as a prison volunteer: "I started because **Zenryu Vicki** told me that she couldn't visit the group in the OCC chapel without a male to accompany her because the chapel

WHITE LOTUS SANGHA

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**.

was an unguarded area, but I procrastinated for a while. I was in no hurry because I had a stereotypical view of inmates based on films and novels.

During my first visit, I was astounded by the graciousness with which I was received by the men. **John, Richard**, and I bowed to each other the first time we met, and because I was a guest, I was given an excellent zafu and zabuton to sit on while one of the men was sitting on a couple of folded-up blankets! I now volunteer at all four prisons, and I'm grateful to **White Lotus Sangha members** for taking me beyond my pre-conceived ideas. I greatly enjoy their companionship and conversation as we practice together."

Many thanks to **Vicki, Joe**, and **Milo** for their prison volunteer work and also to our other prison volunteers: **Rev. Nonin Chowaney, Seishin Larry Pelter, Kanho**

ZEN MEDITATION WORKSHOP

A **three-hour workshop** in Zen Meditation for the beginner, **including instruction in sitting and walking meditation** that harmonizes body, mind, and breath.

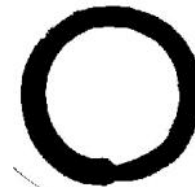
Taught by **Rev. Nonin Chowaney**, abbot of Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple

At **Nebraska Zen Center, 3625 Lafayette Ave, Omaha, NE 68131**

On **Saturday, March 29th**, from **10:00 am till 1:00 p.m.**

Cost: **\$20**

For further information or to register, either e-mail NZC at heartland@prairiewindzen.org or call **402-551-9035**.



Just This

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and in this place, for right here is the only place we can stand. Also, this present moment is constantly changing, so peace and contentment must be realized moment-by-moment; it is an on-going process.

I write the characters for *nyoze*, "just this," quite frequently. I do this not only as a reminder to myself but also for those to whom I give the calligraphy and to those who purchase it through our website. I hope that the *nyoze* that I've written functions like the *nyoze*! I heard at Zuioji monastery, that it wakes whoever reads it up to *this moment* and *this place*.

The following untitled poem by Robert Duncan sums it up for me:

I have
nothing to go on

but I must
get across

where there is
nor here nor there



Practice — Calligraphy by Nonin Chowaney

*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.

LINCOLN ZEN GROUP

A group affiliated with NZC meets in Lincoln weekly on **Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm** at the **Unitarian Universalist Church, 6300 A St.** For further information, e-mail or call **Seishin Larry Pelter** at **lpelter@alltel.net** (402-483-1755) or **Kanho Doug Dittman** at **dougdittman@earthlink.net** (402-783-2124). Zazen Instruction is available for newcomers if arranged in advance.

SANKON ZAZEN SETSU

by Zen Master Keizan Jokin

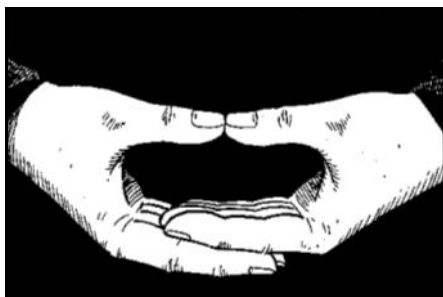
Those who do zazen naturally have no interest in such matters as how Buddhas appear in this present world, nor do they consider truths that are untransmittable by even the Buddhas and Ancestors. They do not doctrinalize about all things being expressions of the self, for they are beyond enlightenment and delusion. Since they never consider anything from a dualistic point of view, nothing ever enslaves them, even when differences show themselves. They just eat when they are hungry and sleep when they are tired.

Those who do zazen completely, seamlessly, give up everything and cut all ties. Since throughout the entire day they are never idle, every moment of life, every breath, is a meditation upon truth; as an alternative to this, they may concentrate on a koan with eyes fixed on one place, such as the tip of the nose. The considerations of life and death, or going and staying, are not to be seen upon the face. The discriminatory mind can never perceive the highest truth of the eternal, nor can it comprehend the Buddha mind.

Since there is no dualism in their thought, they are enlightened. From the far past to the present day, wisdom is always shining clearly and brightly. The whole universe in all the ten

directions is permeated suddenly by the illumination from their heads; all phenomena are seen separately within their bodies.

Those who do zazen single-mindedly consider everything from all angles before freeing themselves from good and evil karma. Their minds express naturally the true nature of all the Buddhas, for their feet stand where the Buddha stands; thus are evil ways avoided. The hands are in the position for meditation, holding no scripture. The mouth being tightly shut, it is as if a seal were upon the lips, for no word of any



doctrine is ever uttered. The eyes are neither wide open nor half shut; in no way is anything considered from the point of view of differentiation, for the voice of good and evil is not listened to. The nose takes no cognizance of smell as either good or bad; the body relies upon nothing, for all delusion is suddenly ended.

Since there is no delusion to disturb the mind, neither sorrow nor joy is to be found. As in the case of a wooden Buddha, both material and form are one with the truth. Although worldly thoughts may arise, they are not disturbing, for the mind is a bright mirror in which no shadows move. From zazen, the precepts arise eternally, whether they are the five, the eight, the great precepts of the bodhisattva, the precepts of the priesthood, the three thousand manners, the eighty thousand beliefs, or the highest law of the Buddhas and ancestors. In all training, nothing whatsoever compares with zazen.

Even if only one merit is gained from doing zazen, it is greater than the building of a hundred, a thousand, or an uncountable number of temples. Just do zazen forever, without ceasing, for by so doing, we are free of birth and death and realize our own latent Buddha nature. It is perfect and natural to go, stay, sit, and lie down; to see, hear, understand, and know are natural manifestations of the True Self; between first mind and last mind there is no difference, and none can make an argument about either knowledge or ignorance. Do zazen with your whole being; never forget and lose it.

The Just

*If you determine your course
With force or speed,
You miss the way of the law.*

*Quietly consider what is right
and what is wrong.
Receiving all opinions equally,
Without haste, wisely,
Observe the law.*

*Who is wise, the eloquent
Or the quiet person?
Be quiet, and loving, and
fearless.*

*For the mind talks.
But the body knows.
Gray hairs do not make a
master.*

*A person may grow old in
vain.*

*The true master lives in truth,
In goodness and restraint,
Nonviolence, moderation and
purity.*

The Dhammapada

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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.

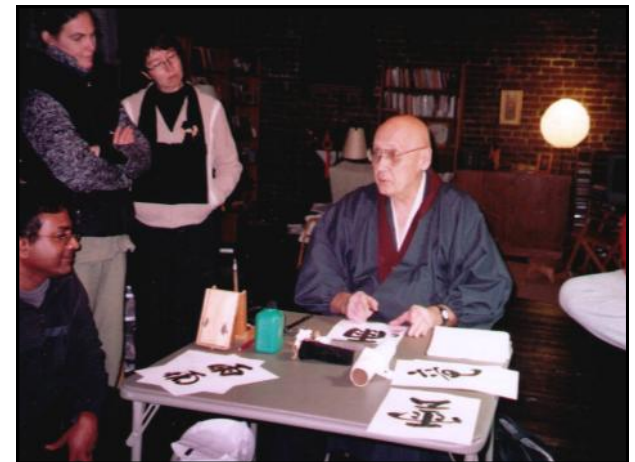
Nonin also accepts **commissions** to write temple names, individual dharma names, and specific characters or Zen phrases. **For further information**, contact him directly at the following e-mail address: heartland@prairiewindzen.org.

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.



Nonin writing on a wall at Clouds in Water Zen Center
Photo by Rebecca Pavlenko



Nonin giving a calligraphy demonstration at Empty Hand Zendo

POEMS

Driving

*Last days of Winter,
White pines brace the sky.*

*Miles of snow and ice
Stretch on and on.*

*Somewhere in this body
There is a deep spring.*

*Where these trees have roots,
Where this snow settles*

*And in time
Melts away.*

Arnold Ackerley

After Work

*copying sutras
by the crackling woodfire
in the dining room
after a full morning
raking leaves in the rain*

*the joy of work
sunk deep
in the bones*

Nonin Chowaney

At Friday Morning Zazen

*Balancing on the rolling ball of my breath
The sounds of wind and birds
. . . arise and fall . . .
No agenda this morning; no need to leave only to arrive.
Just a cat, a cushion, and a rolling ball.
Useless to say anything is better or worse.*

George Patenode

Subtle Source

*(for Marie Reigen with
Boundless Love)*

*Our first walk together.
I take you to the lake.*

*Spotting the year's first dragonfly
with you;
what could bring greater joy?
You sit on my lap so elegantly.
silent, still, attentive.*

*Salamanders do the work of living
before our eyes.
Water flows endlessly
and sunlight touches everything.*

*I reflect on your birth;
you did not emerge from nothing.
You were born of this earth,
this sky, this flowing water.*

*A part — or even the whole —
of this great body extending with-
out limit,
without birth and death
(yet those come too).*

*And yet, mysteriously,
you are born of yourself,
again and again;
a subtle source shining bright
in each moment and every place.*

*Arnold Ackerley
5/03/07*



from RAIHAI-TOKUZUI

by Zen Master Dogen

Raihai Tokuzui is translated by Nishijima and Cross in their translation of *Shobozenzo* as “Prostrating to Attainment of the Marrow.” In their introduction to this fascicle of Zen Master Dogen’s masterwork, they interpret this phrase to mean: “revering what has got the truth.” They go on to say that “the value of a being must be decided according to whether or not it has got the truth. So he [Dogen] said, ‘even if it is a child, a woman, a devil, or an animal like a wild fox, if it has got the truth, we must revere it whole-heartedly.’ In this attitude, we can find Master Dogen’s sincere reverence of the truth, and his view of men, women, and animals.”

We are printing these sections from Nishijima and Cross’s translation because we feel that they are of special relevance to our time. — ed.

Long ago, in the Tang Dynasty, Great Master Shinsai of Joshu established the mind and set off as a wayfarer. In the story he says, “*I shall question anyone who is superior to me, even a child of seven. And I shall teach anyone who is inferior to me, even a man of a hundred.*” The old man is willing to prostrate himself on asking a seven-year-old about the Dharma — this is a rare example of a resolute spirit, and the working of the mind of an eternal Buddha. When a bhikshuni [nun — ed.] who has got the truth and got the

Dharma manifests herself in the world, bhikshus [monks — ed.] who seek the Dharma and learn in practice will devote themselves to her order, prostrating themselves and asking about the Dharma — this is an excellent example of learning in practice. For instance, it is like the thirsty finding drink.

...

The Chinese Zen Master Shikan is a venerable patriarch in Rinzai’s lineage. Once upon a time, Rinzai sees the Master coming [to visit] and holds onto him. The Master says, “*It is understood.*” Rinzai lets go and says, “*I will allow you to stop for a while.*” From this point on, he has already become Rinzai’s disciple. He leaves Rinzai and goes to Matsuzan [Nun-Master Matsuzan Ryonen], at which time Matsuzan asks him, “*Where have you come from?*” The Master says, “*the entrance of the road.*” Matsuzan says, “*Why have you come here without anything on?*” The Master has no words. He just prostrates himself, bowing as disciple to teacher. . . . Later, when he has manifested himself in the world, he preaches to the assembly, “*I got half a dipper at Old Papa Rinzai’s place, and I got half a dipper at Old Mama Matsuzan’s place. Making a dipper with both, I have finished drinking, and, having arrived directly at the present, I am completely satisfied.*” . . . Zen Master Shikan’s prostration to

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and pursuit of the Dharma under Nun Matsuzan Ryonen are an excellent example of a resolute spirit, and integrity the students of later ages should emulate. We can say that he broke all barriers, large and small.

...

Furthermore, nowadays extremely stupid people look at women without having corrected the prejudice that women are objects of sexual greed. Disciples of the Buddha must not be like this. If whatever may become the object of sexual greed is to be hated, do not all men deserve to be hated too? As regards the causes and conditions of becoming tainted, a man can be the object, a woman can be the object, what is neither man nor woman can be the object, and dreams and fantasies, flowers in space, can also be the object. There have been impure acts done with a reflection on water as an object, and there have been impure acts done with the sun in the sky as an object. . . . If we hate whatever might become the object of sexual greed, all men and women will hate each other, and we will never have any chance to attain salvation. We should examine this truth in detail.

...

Even in China, there was a stupid monk who made the following vow: “*Through every life in every age, I shall never look at a woman.*” Upon

what morality is this vow based? Is it based on the morality of non-Buddhists? Or is it based on the morality of heavenly demons? What wrong is there in a woman? What virtue is there in a man? Among bad people there are men who are bad people. Among good people there are women who are good people. Wanting to hear the Dharma, and wanting to get liberation, never depend upon whether we are a man or a woman. When they have yet to cut delusion, men and women alike have yet to cut delusion. When they cut delusion and experience the principle, there is nothing at all to choose between a man and a woman. Moreover, if [a man] has vowed never to look at a woman, must he discard women even when vowing to save limitlessly many living beings? If he discards them, he is not a bodhisattva. How much less [does he have] the Buddha’s compassion. . . . If the vow of that monk were true, not only would we fail to save women, but also, when a woman who had got the Dharma manifested herself in the world and preached the Dharma for human beings and gods, we would be forbidden to come and listen to her, would we not? Anyone who did not come and listen would be not a bodhisattva, but just a non-Buddhist.

...

Again in Japan [in Dogen’s time —

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ed.] there is one particularly laughable institution. This is either called a “sanctuary,” or called “a place for practicing the truth of the Great Vehicle,” where bhiksunis and other women are not allowed to enter. The wrong custom has long been handed down, and so people cannot recognize it for what it is. People who emulate the ancients do not rectify it, and men of wide knowledge give no thought to it. Calling it the enactment of people of authority, or terming it the legacy of men of tradition, they never discuss it at all. If one laughed, a person’s guts might split. Just who are the so-called people of authority? . . . the Buddha’s order when he was in the world included all four groups: bhiksus, bhiksunis, upasakas [laymen], and upsikas [laywomen], it included the eight kinds of beings, the thirty-seven kinds of beings, and the eighty-four thousand kinds of beings. The formation of the Buddhist order is clearly the Buddhist order itself. So what kind of order has no bhiksunis, has no women, and has no eight kinds of being?

...

When a woman has already become Buddha, is there anything in all directions that she cannot perfectly realize? Who could aim to bar her from passing? She already has virtue that *widely illumines the ten*

directions; what meaning can a boundary have? . . . [Those who exclude women are just very stupid fools who deceive and delude secular people.

...

We should prostrate ourselves in veneration of the virtue by which [the buddhas], through acts of salvation and acceptance, cover all living being with their influence. Who could deny that this [prostration] is the attainment of the marrow of the truth?

...

Written at Kannon-dori-koshohorin-ji temple on the day of purity and brightness in the 2nd year of En-o [1240 — ed.]



NZC in Winter — Photo by Leslie Hospodar



ZCP Jizo in Snow

WEEKLY ZENDO SCHEDULE — NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER

Morning

Tuesday — 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
10:10 - 11:00 — Dharma Talk

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.

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
(Walking as needed)

We are closed on Monday.

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