



# Prairie Wind

Volume 16, Issue 2

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

Summer 2007

## BODHISATTVAS

by Nonin Chowaney

In Mahayana Buddhism, bodhisattvas – enlightened beings – are embodiments, or personifications, of certain qualities that we revere. Manjushri, whose image sits on our zendo altar at Heartland Temple, is the embodiment of wisdom; Avalokiteshvara, whose image occupies a side altar in our Buddha Hall, is the embodiment of compassion. Two more bodhisattvas that are important in Soto Zen Buddhism are Samantabhadra, the embodiment of insight into the unity of sameness and difference and the protector of those who teach the dharma and Ksitigarbha, the helper of deceased children and the protector of travelers. In Japanese, these four are known as *Monju*, *Kannon*, *Fugen*, and *Jizo*.



SA — Avalokiteshvara; Homage to Kanzeon Bosa  
Calligraphy by Nonin Chowaney

These figures are not historical personages, however. They serve as examples of what the qualities they represent are in human terms. Unless these qualities are realized (made real) in daily human life, they are only ideas; they have no substance.

As Soto Zen Buddhist practitioners, our mission is to embody and manifest these special qualities day-by-day. We then become the bodhisattvas we revere by realizing the qualities they represent.

One of my favorite examples of a manifestation of Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, appeared many years ago on the television program *On the Road*, hosted by Charles Kuralt. This particular program featured an African-American man who worked in a post office in North Carolina. Every night after work, he would go to a garage be-

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# THE BODHISATTVA

**Bodhisattva** (Skt.: Pali, *bodhisatta*, ‘Enlightenment Being’; Chin., P’u-sa; Jap., Bosatsu; Korean, Posal; Tib., byang.chub sems.dpa, ‘Hero of the Thought of Enlightenment’). In Theravada Buddhism a title exclusively identifying historical Buddhas (i.e. Sakyamuni) in their previous lives, before their Buddhahood was attained; and in Mahayana Buddhism to describe any being who, out of compassion, has taken the bodhisattva vow to become a Buddha for the sake of all sentient beings. The Theravadin concept involves the belief that there is only one Buddha (for this world cycle), and that the highest an ordinary person can aspire to is to be arhat or pratyekabuddha; the Mahayana concept involves the belief that the attainment of Buddha by way of being bodhisattva, is a possibility for everyone.

from *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*

**Bodhisattva** Skt., lit., “enlightenment being” in Mahayana Buddhism a bodhisattva is a being who sees buddhahood through the systematic practice of the perfect virtues (*paramita*) but renounces complete entry into nirvana until all beings are saved. The determining factor for action is compassion (*karuna*), supported by highest insight and wisdom (*prajna*). A bodhisattva provides active help, is ready to take upon himself the suffering of all other beings, and to transfer his own karmic merit to other beings. The way of a bodhisattva begins with arousing the thought of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*) and taking the bodhisattva vow (*pranidhana*).

from *The Shambala Dictionary of Buddhism and Zen*

## The Four Bodhisattva Vows

Beings are numberless; I vow to free 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 realize it.

from *The Order of the Prairie Wind Sutra Book*

**Bodhisattvas** are beings who are dedicated to the universal awakening or enlightenment of everyone. They exist as guides and providers of succor to suffering beings, and offer everyone an approach to meaningful spiritual life.

from *Bodhisattva Archetypes*, by Taigen Daniel Leighton

**The compassion and wisdom** of the Bodhisattvas in the Mahayana scriptures are both descriptive and exhortatory. There are wonderful beings who have great abilities and perfect compassion They have progressed well along the path to Supreme Buddhahood and are able and willing to help sentient beings in whatever ways may be of greatest benefit. On the other hand the followers of the Mahayana are exhorted to take the Bodhisattva vow themselves, to take these teachings and the stories of Bodhisattvas as models.

**It is frequently** said in textbooks that the compassion of Bodhisattvas is so great that they postpone *nirvana*, or turn back from *nirvana*, in order to place all other sentient beings in *nirvana* first. . . . I asked the late Kensur Pema Gyaltzen, head abbot of Drepung Monastery and one of the most learned Tibetan scholars, about this while he was on a visit to Britain. I explained that it was widely asserted in books available in the West that the Bodhisattva does not become enlightened until he [or she] has helped all other sentient beings to enlightenment. The eminent Lama seemed to find this most amusing since, as he put it, all those who had become Bodhisattvas would not become enlightened, while those who had not become Bodhisattvas would! He stated quite categorically that . . . this is not how Bodhisattvas behave. In Tibetan practice the merit from virtuous deeds is always directed towards obtaining full Buddhahood in order to be able to help beings most effectively. There is never any mention of postponing or turning back from Buddhahood. Otherwise any Bodhisattva would be presumably either deficient in compassion or have broken his [or her] vow.

from *Mahayana Buddhism*, by Paul Williams

# NOT USING ZAZEN

by Doshō Port

## Case

A student asked, “Sometimes when I’m angry, I’ll go and sit zazen. It helps me calm down and process what I’m angry about.”

Katagiri-roshi looked down at the floor and grumbled, “Don’t use zazen in that way.”

## Commentary

The student who used zazen to deal with anger, like many dharma students today, wanted a tool for his personal psychotherapeutic process. This is counterfeit Zen. Although some good might come from it, such zazen is not the “wondrous way simply transmitted by buddha ancestors,” as Zen Master Dogen states in “Bendowa.” It is more likely the ego seizing a new fascination and co-opting zazen into a personalized system of self-grasping.

In 1988, in one of Katagiri-roshi’s last dharma talks, “Review and Renew Buddhism for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” he made this same point, as if warning against what was to come in American Soto Zen in the ensuing two decades:

As to renewing Buddhism, there is nothing to renew in Buddhism itself but instead *renew human beings who take care of Buddhism*. [italics mine] This is the most important point. Buddhism is mainly very conservative in order to maintain the essence of Buddha’s teaching century after century. Wherever Buddhism has gone, Buddha ancestors have tried to maintain this essence. That is why Buddhism has flourished in China, Tibet, and Japan. If you forget the essence of Buddha’s teaching, Buddhism doesn’t work for the long run.

Two points stand out here. First, Roshi suggests that rather than Americanizing Buddhism to fit current practitioners (and increase membership in Zen centers), we ought to maintain the essence and encourage practitioners to become new by fitting themselves into the dharma. From that perspective, it is not doing anyone a service by

adapting the dharma to make it easily digestible for them, because it robs the practitioner of the opportunity to let go of the stinky self and become new. Instead of rewiring our wacky heads, we want to rewire the dharma to fit our wacky wiring!

The second point is suggested by Katagiri-roshi’s phrase, “renew human beings who take care of Buddhism.” This puts a different perspective on practice than the usual “what’s-in-it-for-me?” attitude. Instead, Roshi viewed current practitioners as people who are taking care of the essence of Buddhism in this time and place and protecting the fundamental so that those who come after us might have direct access to it. Currying favor with people by manipulating the dharma and appealing to transient needs might very well result in blocking those who come after us from having direct access to the essential point of the buddha dharma.

Another characteristic of contemporary Zen practice, often encouraged by Zen centers, is to combine zazen with other practices, such as community circles, twelve-step programs, psychotherapy, martial arts, *shakuhachi* (traditional Japanese flute), drawing, loving-kindness meditation, nature hikes, pilgrimages to holy sites, practicing the precepts like Moses’ commandments, clowning, shamanism, writing, yoga, cooking, social action, educating children, and dharma dating. Whatever the teacher or influential community members happen to be interested in is combined with zazen and sold as the true way, sometimes augmenting the center’s membership with people who aren’t really interested in zazen.

Similar issues have faced previous generations of practitioners. What did Zen Master Dogen do? In “Bendowa,” a questioner asked,

## Nebraska Zen Center Officers

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Rev. Nonin Chowaney, OPW

Abbot



Nebraska Zen Center 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, an American Zen Master, is NZC’s Head Priest and Teacher. 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 certified to teach by him and by the Soto Zen Church in Japan.

“Will it be a problem if people who work diligently at this zazen also combine it with practicing mantrayana or shamata / vipasana?” Dogen’s reply was:

When I was in China and had a chance to ask my teacher about the essence, he said

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## NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER — SANGHA NOTES

Many thanks to Sangha members **Milo Alexander** and **Kanho Doug Dittman** for moving us forward toward constructing an addition to our temple. Milo handled our **zoning issues**, and the city was issued us a **conditional use permit**. Doug **located a contractor** and **received a bid** for the new construction.

The bid came in at **\$159,000**. We have neThere will be **one sesshin** at NZC this Summer, a **Two-day sesshin** on June 9th and 10th. 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 [heartland@prairiewindzen.org](mailto:heartland@prairiewindzen.org) to register. arly **\$50,000** in our building fund account, so we need to raise **\$30,000** to have half the amount in hand. Once we have half, we can start building. **We hope to raise the money over the next month**, so we can **break ground this summer** and have the structure **closed in by Winter**. We'll then begin raising the rest of the money to finish the interior. We'll be calling people soon and asking them to meet with us to discuss the project solicit funds. **Please help if you can.**



**Many thanks** to all who stepped up to help keep NZC functioning when **Nonin** was in the hospital and recuperating at the temple. **Special thanks** to those dharma teachers who came to Heartland Temple and either gave dharma talks and led retreats during Nonin's absence. They are: **Joen Snyder**, of Compassionate Ocean Dharma Center in Minneapolis, MN, **Dosho Port**, of Wild Fox Zen in White Bear Township, MN, **Gyokuko Carlson**, of Dharma Rain Zen Center in Portland, OR, and **Susan Jion Postal**, of Empty Hand Zendo in New Rochelle, NY. **Thank you all so much!**

Sangha member **Eisai Elizabeth Muia** has returned to **Tassajara Monastery** after a two-week visit to Heartland Temple in April. Elizabeth will continue her residency at Tassjara indefinitely.

Sangha member **George Patenode** has sewn a rakusu in preparation for **Lay Initiation** at the temple in late May.

### SESSHIN

There will be **one sesshin** at NZC this Summer, a **Two-day sesshin** on June 9th and 10th. 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 [heartland@prairiewindzen.org](mailto:heartland@prairiewindzen.org) to register.

### JUNE STUDENT TALKS

On **June 3rd**, we'll have **World Peace Ceremony** and monthly **Group Discussion**. During the rest of June, Sunday morning dharma talks will be given by **students** on the **10th, 17th, and 24th**. Students will focus on what brought them to Zen practice, what their joys and difficulties have been, and what has kept them at it over time.

### OTHER SUMMER EVENTS

Jun 27	Precept Ceremony
Jul 1	World Peace Ceremony
	Group Discussion
Aug 1	Precept Ceremony

# ZEN CENTER OF PITTSBURGH – SANGHA NOTES

## ZCP SUMMER EVENTS

### JUNE

- 1-3 — Three-day Sesshin\*\*\*
- 1-10 — June Intensive\*\*\*
- 3 — World Peace Ceremony
- 6 — Ryaku Fusatsu\*
- 26 — Ryaku Fusatsu\*

### JULY

- 1 — World Peace Ceremony
- 3-5 — ZCP Closed
- 8 — ZCP Board Meeting
- 17 — An Evening with Sevan Ross
- 20 — Ikko Narasaki's Memorial Day\*\*
- 21 — One-day Sitting\*\*\*
- 28 — Rakusu Sewing Begins\*\*\*

### AUGUST

- 5 — World Peace Ceremony
- 12 — One-Day Sitting\*\*\*
- 28 — Ryaku Fusatsu\*

### SEPTEMBER

- 2 — World Peace Ceremony
- 7-9 — Compassionate Care for the Dying Workshop\*\*\*

- \*After evening zazen; open to all
- \*\*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 p.m. - Zazen

#### Sunday

10:00 a.m. - Zazen

10:40 a.m. - Work Practice

11:15 a.m. - Service/Dharma Talk

12:30 p.m. - Lunch

Closed Mondays

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](mailto:kyoki@prairiewindzen.org).

We wish **Nonin** a full recovery from his surgeries this past January. **Jisen Coghlan** spent three months in Omaha as **Nonin's primary caregiver**. She also **handled the daily affairs** at the temple until Nonin was able to resume functioning as abbot. Jisen returned home in early May.

We have purchased **six-and-a-half acres** of land immediately adjacent to the East boundary of our temple property. The purchase of this lovely parcel of mixed Eastern Hardwood forest and grassy meadow will now not only protect it from development but also will insure that the rural nature of our temple is protected from all sides. We are deeply grateful to **all those who made this purchase possible**, with special thanks to **an anonymous supporter** who loaned us the money to complete the purchase, **to all those who donated money**, and to **Taikan Doug Gouge** for negotiating many hours to make it happen.



Special thanks **Ryushin John Ott** for taking care of the garden and to the many others who helped, especially **Aimee Curran, Pat Speak, John Bray**, and our newest temple residents, **Paige and Bryan Ritti**. **Paige**, aged two, has assumed the role of **co-teacher** with **Kyoki** on the importance of being present in each activity.

Finally, we would like to **express our sympathy** to the **Roberts family** on the death of our dear friend and benefactor **Joe Roberts**, Kyoki's father. While his favorite activity here was mowing the lawn, he also loved to putter around the grounds fixing this or that, bringing a load of compost for the garden, or running to the local hardware store for a needed tool. Most importantly, he brought his smile to each of us. **Rhonda Rosen** has donated an oak tree in his honor. **Joe, you will be missed.**

## ***Bodhisattvas***

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hind his house and re-condition bicycles that he either salvaged from junkyards or was given by the police department after they were left unclaimed in the impound lot.

This man, whose name I've forgotten, would match bicycles with needy children and teach them how to repair and maintain them. When the bikes were road-worthy and he was certain that the children could take care of them, he'd give them the bikes. In this way, the man had helped hundreds of children over the years.

I'll always remember how this particular TV program ended. It showed the man working in his shop late at night as the camera panned back to the street. Charles Kuralt then said, "I asked him why he did this; why did he spend so much time working on bicycles after spending a full day at his job? His reply was, 'What's the use in living if you can't help somebody?'" This man was a true bodhisattva, a manifestation of Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, who hears the suffering of all beings and resolves to do something about it.

My master, Dainin Katagiri, often said that "When you need a bodhisattva, one will appear." I've found this to be true in my life, especially over the past four months.

In late December, I had a re-occurrence of the intestinal problems that have troubled me over the past few years, and on December 30th, I entered Bergan-Mercy Hospital for emergency surgery to resection my colon. The surgeon ended up removing my entire colon, for it was too badly diseased to remove only part of it. My small intestine was hooked up to the rectum, and I began to recover from the procedure.

Everything went well for a few days, and then all hell broke loose. Because blood flow was never re-established over the connection between the ileum and the rectum, the connection failed, and I went into sepsis, which is a very serious bacterial invasion of the entire body cavity. My

kidneys also completely failed, and I came as close to dying as a human being can get. I was put into medically-induced complete paralysis and hooked up to a ventilator for five days to give my body a chance to recover. I spent ten days in the Intensive Care Unit, after which I was transferred to a step-down unit, where I spent nearly three weeks. I was then transferred to a rehabilitation unit at Immanuel Medical Center, where I spent another three weeks recuperating and participating in physical and occupational therapy.

After spending two months in hospitals, I was discharged and went home to the temple. There, I spent three weeks on Home Health Care, during which time I was regularly visited by nurses and therapists. After completing my time on home care, I went back to rehab as an out-patient, and I'm still participating in physical therapy there three times a week.

At this time, I'm feeling great. My doctors and therapists expect a full recovery, and I'm getting stronger every week. I'm driving again, sitting daily, hiking with my dogs, working at the temple, and generally getting out and about. By the end of this summer, I expect to be back to full-strength.

During my medical adventure, I had great need for bodhisattvas, and the universe provided many to help me. My oldest disciple, Rev. Kyoki Roberts, came from Deep Spring Temple near Pittsburgh when I originally went into surgery and was with me for a month through the most difficult times. Everyone who is in the hospital, especially those who are so sick that they can't speak for themselves, needs a compassionate advocate, and Kyoki was that for me. My daughter Jennifer, who is a pediatric intensive care nurse and is studying to become a nurse practitioner, came for a week when I was at my worst, and she and Kyoki made sure that I received the best care possible. After she returned to her home in New Jersey, Jennifer made many phone calls to my doctors.

## ***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

## ***WHITE LOTUS SANGHA***

The **White Lotus Sangha**, a group affiliated with NZC, meets on Friday evenings in three Nebraska prisons, **Nebraska State Penitentiary** and **Lincoln Correctional Center** in Lincoln and **Tecumseh State Correctional Institute** in Tecumseh. For further information, see the **Religious Coordinator** at either of the above institutions, call **(402) 551-9035**, e-mail **heartland@prairiewindzen.org**, or write **Nebraska Zen Center, 3625 Lafayette Ave., Omaha, NE, 68131-**

She kept abreast of my condition and relayed the messages to Kyoki and me. My sister Diane also came from Long Island to be with me after surgery, when things were touch and go.

To provide some continuity when I was about to leave the stepdown unit for rehab and Kyoki was about to return to Pittsburgh, Rev. Jisen Coghlan, Kyoki's disciple, came for three months, saw me through rehab, and became my primary care-giver after I returned to the temple. Jisen is a physical therapist who's worked in wound care and knows her way around hospitals and medical care, so she was invaluable to

## ***Bodhisattvas***

from page 6

me throughout my recovery.

Compassion means to feel another's suffering and want to do something about it. It's not enough to feel it and leave it at that; true compassion includes wanting to do something to help. When I needed compassionate bodhisattvas, four of them appeared, in the persons of Kyoki, Jennifer, Diane, and Jisen.

I've received so much wise and compassionate help over the past few months that I feel especially fortunate and blessed. When I first went into sepsis, I went into atrial fibrillation and was misdiagnosed as having a heart attack. They wheeled me down to the cardiac unit and I've been told that they were hooking me up to the monitoring machines when Dr. Conley, Bergan-Mercy Hospital's infectious disease specialist, burst in, started unhooking me, and told everyone that I was in sepsis and that they needed to get me to the operating room and call the surgeon immediately. He was Samantbhadracharya charging in to protect a teacher of the dharma.

When I needed a wise, compassionate, and active bodhisattva, Dr. Conley appeared at a most critical time and essentially saved my life.

While I was in the ICU, one of my nurses, Brenda, was especially compassionate and kind to me. She would always come into my room with a smile on her face and a warm tone in her voice. During my third surgery, I had an ileostomy and was fitted with an ileostomy bag. When Brenda was a young woman, she also had an ileostomy and wore the bags for time before she had a second operation to reconnect her small intestine to her rectum. She would talk to me about her experiences at length and greatly eased my mind about my condition. She assured me that wearing the bag was not such a big deal and that I could live a normal life with no restrictions. She knew that I was concerned about the ileostomy and wanted to help. I specifically remember her saying one day, "It's only poop!" She was a true bodhisattva

when I really needed one.

My primary care physician, Dr. Christine Inguanzo is also a true bodhisattva. She is a great doctor who constantly exhibits the wisdom necessary for her profession and the compassion necessary to make her excellent at it. Whenever she came into my room, she would walk over to me, take my hand, and ask me how I was feeling. She would talk to me at length about all of my concerns and answer all of my questions. When my daughter called to inquire about me, Dr. Inguanzo always called her back as soon as she could. It's always been clear to me that she cared about me, and I've always trusted her to stay on top of things and to take good care of me.

There were also many others who came along when I really needed them. Marty, one of my nurses in rehab, was especially helpful when I developed a blood clot. She took time out of her busy day to sit down at my bedside, hold my hand, and explain to me exactly what the condition meant and how I would be treated for it. I won't forget the big hug she gave me after our talk was over. I'm also very grateful to Karen Brown, my wound care and ostomy nurse, who saw me many times when I was having trouble with my ostomy appliance and worked hard to find one that fit me. I'm also grateful to Sandy Olson, another wound care nurse, who dropped off some new appliances late one evening when she and her husband were on their way home after going out to dinner.

The list goes on and on. When I went back to rehab as an outpatient, my Physical Therapist, Lindsay, and my Occupational Therapist, Karla, greeted me with big smiles, open arms and big hugs. They obviously cared about me and my recovery, and I'm extremely grateful for their kind, compassionate help in getting me up and functioning.

Of course, I also needed people to take care of the temple when I was unable to. Four Zen teachers – Revs. Joen Snyder from Minneapolis, Doshu Port from

### **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.**

Minnesota, Gyokuko Carlson from Oregon, and Susan Jion Postal from New York – came to Omaha, led retreats, and gave classes during our Winter Practice Period. Also, our members stepped up, took jobs around the temple and kept everything going during my absence. I won't mention them by name, for I might inadvertently leave someone out. When I needed bodhisattvas, they

## Not Using Zazen

from page 3

he had never heard that the ancestors who properly transmitted the buddha seal from ancient to present times in India and China had ever combined practices like that. *Truly, if you do not engage in one thing, you will never reach one wisdom.* [italics mine]

Truly engaging upright sitting wholeheartedly requires enormous devotion, as Zen Master Dogen and virtually all authentic ancient and modern Zen teachers report. Why then do practitioners in America use their valuable time running around frantically sampling so many things? How can one truly practice, manifest, realize, and attain the one wisdom by dharmic multi-tasking?

Those in the past who have truly become people of the Way, women and men settled deeply in zazen-as-zazen, haven't used zazen as a tool for temporary psychological relief or, worse yet, combined Zen philosophy with other things in order to be popular or pay the mortgage. As the Zen poet-monk Ryokan writes,

When the [practitioners] of old sacrificed themselves for the sake of the dharma, they rid themselves of all ego, never greedy for fame or gain, seeking the Way alone.

By diluting the fundamental point and our lineage's unique approach, we betray our teachers and overlook the true jewel sewn in the hem of our robes. We might instead single-pointedly focus on this jewel. Only in so doing can we make a significant contribution to the blooming dharma discourse in America. What is the essence of Buddhism as transmitted through the lineage of buddha ancestors? What is Zen Master Dogen's wondrous Way of Bud-

dha ancestors?

In the Hayashi-Katagiri lineage, zazen, which has nothing to do with sitting or lying down, is itself the expression of the fundamental. What is this zazen? In a dharma talk titled, "Digesting Zazen Koan," Katagiri-roshi says:

I often emphasize that zazen is a koan we have to digest in our whole life. Zazen is not the simple issue you have thought. "Simple issue you have thought" means you usually think zazen is a means to discover

***Those in the past who have truly become people of the Way, women and men settled deeply in zazen-as-zazen, haven't used zazen as a tool for temporary psychological relief or, worse yet, combined Zen philosophy with other things in order to be popular or pay the mortgage.***

peace. At that time, you never have the great opportunity to digest zazen exactly in your life. . . . If you misunderstand zazen you misunderstand Buddhism. Even though it is difficult, you have to practice zazen in the appropriate way. That's why Dogen-zenji wrote ninety-five fascicles of *Shobogenzo*, explaining the meaning of zazen, the quality of zazen, the significance of zazen.

In order to glimpse the jewel sewn in the hem of our robes, let's look at a passage from one of the source texts of Soto Zen, "The Thirty-Seven Conditions Contributing to Bodhisattva Practice" ("*Sanjūshichihon bodai bunpō*")." In this text, Zen Master Dogen dynamically presents *shikan*-mindfulness in this way:

Observing the body as not-pure means that one skin bag of the present observing body is the entire universe of the ten directions. [literally, "observing" is "vipassana," which means insight, clear seeing, deep seeing, or discernment] This is the true body – a not-pure observing body which is vividly hopping along. No hopping along is no attainment of observation. No body is no attainment of practice, no attainment of teaching, and no attainment of observation. Yet the attainment of observation has already been actualized. You should realize that attainment is hopping alongness. This so-called attainment of observation is the daily activities of sweeping the grounds and washing the floor.

You didn't think the fundamental was going to be something that you could easily wrap your head around, did you? Katagiri-roshi comments:

If you read this explanation of mindfulness in Japanese, it's like repeating a dharani. . . . This chapter of *Shobogenzo* is very difficult to understand because [Dogen] explains the whole of traditional Buddhist practice completely beyond the traditional understanding. If you understand it well, you will touch the deep source of Buddha's teaching, penetrating to everybody's life and all sentient beings.

A passage like the above from Zen Master Dogen could serve as dharma food to sustain a lifetime of inquiry and practice.

Here's how I would express the Dogen passage: The insight body, the clear seeing body, is beyond the nets and cages of purity and impurity. This is the "not-pure" body. This clear seeing not-pure body of no fixed category is one stinking skin bag and the limpid clear light of bliss. Still, it is simply the insight body – holy, profane, and undeniably galloping across the blue



## CALLIGRAPHY FOR SALE ON OUR WEBSITE



Mu (nothing)

Nonin's calligraphy can be purchased through our website, at [www.prairiewindzen.org](http://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.

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

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

### ***Bodhisattvas***

from page 7

appeared, and I'm extremely grateful to them all.

Now that I'm well along on the road to complete recovery, I feel that everything from here on out is a bonus, and I'm so happy to be able to function once again as a temple priest. Katagiri-roshi was right when he said "When you need a bodhisattva, one will appear." I am so grateful to all of those who appeared to help me.

***Nonin Chowaney is Head Priest at Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple in Omaha, NE***

### ***Not Using Zen***

from page 8

sky. In becoming one without intruding on the other, there is no rider, no horse, no movement, and no explanation. This wholehearted galloping of horse and rider is how attainment is actualized. We are already galloping like this. This galloping not-pure insight body is not found apart from rolling up our sleeves and going to work.

This is my present understanding and my present course of practice and teaching – not using zazen. Even if Katagiri-roshi came back and I was the first one fired, I would continue like this.

***Dosho Port is Head Priest at Wild Fox Zen in White Bear Township, MN. The above article originally appeared in the newsletter of that temple and is reprinted here by permission.***

### ***From the editor:***

We **always** need material. Send us articles, drawings, poems, photos, cartoons, letters, etc. The deadline for publication in our **Fall** issue is **August 1st**.

Websites for **Nebraska Zen Center** and **Zen Center of Pittsburgh** are at: [www.prairiewindzen.org](http://www.prairiewindzen.org)

**Nebraska Zen Center's** e-mail address is: [heartland@prairiewindzen.org](mailto:heartland@prairiewindzen.org)

**Zen Center of Pittsburgh's** e-mail address is: [kyoki@prairiewindzen.org](mailto:kyoki@prairiewindzen.org)



Not Two — Calligraphy by Nonin Chowaney

## *SHY ABOUT COMING TO ZEN CENTER?*

Perhaps you've never come to our temple because you weren't sure that you'd be welcomed. Maybe you came to Zazen Instruction once, but it's been a while, and you've forgotten what you learned. Maybe you haven't come back because it would be too embarrassing to make mistakes in front of everyone, or maybe it was so different from what you're used to that you felt uncomfortable and awkward. Perhaps you don't feel that you could sit for the length of time that we do. Maybe you came a few times a while ago but haven't been back since and would feel awkward coming again after a long absence.

All of the above reasons for not coming have been expressed by newcomers. They have also been felt by most of us when we first started coming!

If you'd like to come sit with us on a Sunday morning, please do. You don't have to call, just come on any Sunday. We have open services at 9:00 and provide zazen instruction for those who need it at 8:30. You can then join us for the second meditation period at 9:30. We also have a chanting and bowing service and either a dharma talk or group discussion after that. Please be here no later than 8:30, and wear loose-fitting clothes, no shorts, for you'll be sitting on cushions on the floor.

We are not a closed, insular group. We welcome you to come practice Zen Buddhism with us, no matter what your experience or lack of it.

## *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**

On **Saturday, July 28th**, from **10:00 a.m.** till **1:00 p.m.**

Cost: **\$20**

For further information or to register, either e-mail NZC at [heartland@prairiewindzen.org](mailto:heartland@prairiewindzen.org) or call **402-551-9035**

## 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

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

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

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