

Prairie Wind

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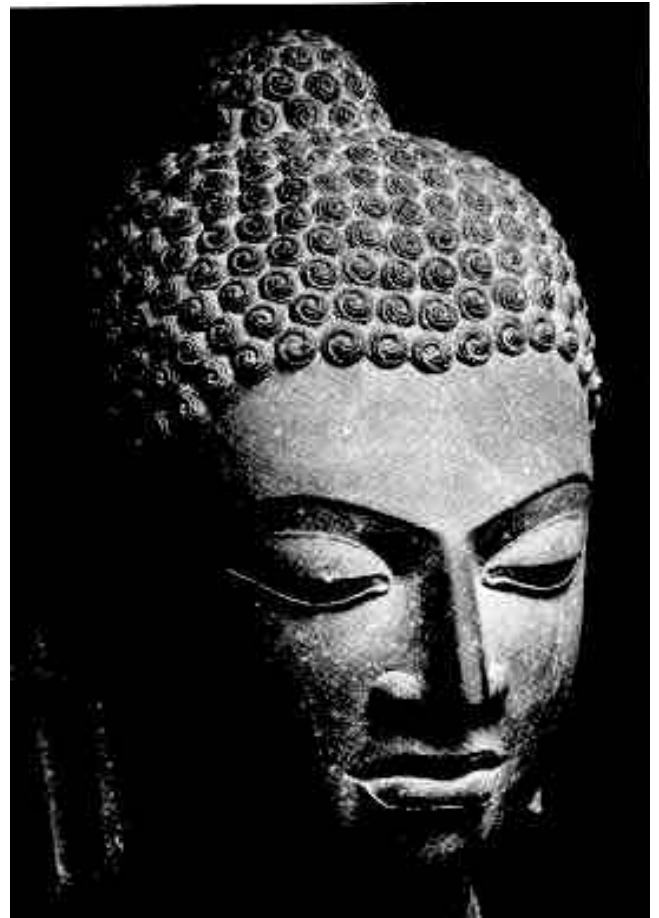
SECTARIANISM

by Nonin Chowaney

All Buddhists trace themselves back to Shakyamuni Buddha, who was born a prince of the Shakya clan in northern India 2500 years ago and named Gautama Siddhartha. After he awakened, he was known as “the Buddha,” which literally means “the awakened one.” “Shakyamuni” was added later, and means “sage of the Shakyas.” Shakyamuni Buddha taught the way to awakening for forty years, and this form of spiritual practice became known as “Buddhism.”

All Buddhists honor Shakyamuni Buddha and his teachings, and, through practice, continually re-discover and confirm the truths realized by him. These are our roots. But the practices followed to arrive at these truths have developed and expanded greatly over the centuries. These are our branches.

There are many different forms of Buddhism. Zen, Tibetan, and Theravada are the ones most familiar to Americans because these forms are practiced by the largest numbers of people in this country. There are others, however. Pure Land Buddhism has the most adherents of any form of Buddhism in Japan, and it also is practiced here in America. There are many esoteric schools still adhered to in the Far East and practiced here as well. In China and Korea, some ways of practice synthesize different forms. And within the three forms of Buddhism most adhered to in America, there are a variety of different styles. Neither Buddhism in general nor any of these ways of practice in particular are monolithic, homogeneous entities.



Shakyamuni Buddha — India

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Sumi-e painting — Tsugen Narasaki

SHORT TEACHINGS

Tolerance

In the third century B.C., the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka of India, following this [Buddha's] noble example of tolerance and understanding, honored and supported all other religions in his vast empire. In one of his Edicts carved on rock, the original of which one may read even today, the Emperor declared:

“One should not honor only one's own religion and condemn the religions of others, but one should honor others' religion for this or that reason. So doing, one helps one's own religion to grow and renders service to the religions of others too. In acting otherwise one digs the grave of one's own religion and also does harm to other religions. Whosoever honors his own religion and condemns other religions, does so indeed through devotion to his own religion, thinking ‘I will glorify my own religion.’ but on the contrary, in so doing he injures his own religion more gravely. So concord is good: Let all listen and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others.”

Walpola Rahula

Sectarianism

I have noticed some tendency towards sectarianism amongst new practitioners [in the West]. This is absolutely wrong. Religion should never become a source of conflict, a further factor of division within the human community. For my own part, I have even, on the basis of my deep respect for the contribution that other faiths can make towards human happiness, participated in the ceremonies of other religions. And, following the example of a great many Tibetan lamas both ancient and modern, I continue to take teachings from as many different traditions as possible. For whilst it is true that some schools of thought felt it desirable for a practitioner to stay within his or her own tradition, people have always been free to do as they think fit. Further-

more, Tibetan society has always been highly tolerant of other people beliefs. . . . I am therefore firmly in favor of a liberal approach. Sectarianism is poison.

the Dalai Lama

True teaching

[Zen Master] Dogen did not call himself a Soto teacher or a Soto disciple. He said, “Other people may call us the Soto school, but there is no reason for us to call ourselves Soto. You should not even use the name of Soto.” No school should consider itself a separate school. It should just be one tentative form of Buddhism. But as long as the various schools do not accept this kind of understanding, as long as they continue calling themselves by their particular names, we must accept the tentative name of Soto. But I want to make this point clear. Actually we are not the Soto school at all. We are just Buddhists. We are not even Zen Buddhists; we are just Buddhists. If we understand this point we are truly Buddhists.

Buddha's teaching is everywhere. Today it is raining. This is Buddha's teaching. People think their own way or their own religious understanding is Buddha's way, without knowing what they are hearing, or what they are doing, or where they are. Religion is not any particular teaching. Religion is everywhere. We have to understand our teaching in this way. We should forget all about some particular teaching; we should not ask which is good or bad. There should not be any particular teaching. Teaching is in each moment, in every existence. That is the true teaching.

Shunryu Suzuki

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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.

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SANGHA NOTES

Tetsugen Eric Heintz was **priest-ordained** in Des Moines, Iowa on April 15th. His full priest name is **Dai-an Tetsugen** (Great Calm, Penetrate the Source). Tetsugen is a long-time student of Nonin's and is the 3rd priest he has ordained. **Congratulations!**

Erin Walter was **lay-ordained** at NZC on February 28th. Her dharma name is



Lay Ordination — Erin and Nonin

Myoko, (Wondrous Light). Erin also graduated from high school on May 23th. **Congratulations** on passing both these milestones!

Eido Bruce Espe will be **priest-ordained** by Nonin at NZC at **10 a.m. on June 6th**. There will be a pot-luck lunch following. **All are invited to attend.**

Revs. Kyoki Roberts and Tesshin Lehmborg will be coming to Omaha on June 1st to help with preparations for the ordination and will participate in a **month-long training period** with Eido and Nonin at NZC during June.

Kyoki has established a temple near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. **Zen Center of Pittsburgh** was incorporated as a non-profit religious corporation in March. It

is an affiliate of NZC and is located in Sewickley, PA, twenty minutes north of Pittsburgh, in an old farmhouse adjacent to the thousand-acre Sewickley Heights Borough Park. ZCP's address is **c/o Rev. Kyoki Roberts, Barberrry Road, Sewickley, PA 15143. Tel: (412) 708-3345 or (412) 741-1262.** Kyoki's e-mail address is: **jlr@stargate.net.**

Prairie Wind is now online at our website, **www.geocities.com/Tokyo/temple/7228**. Thanks go to our webmaster, **Tessho Mike D'Elia**, for accomplishing this and for his continued work on the site.

Thanks also to sangha member **Shozen Ned Harrison** for organizing **Saturday Zendo Cleaning**, to **Ken Mclure and Jean Bailey** for helping out, and to **Eli Criffield** for volunteering to mow the lawn this summer. **If you are interested in helping with Sangha work projects on Saturday this summer, contact Ned or Nonin, who has volunteered to cook lunch for those participating!**

Please note our new e-mail address: **nzc@aol.com**

SESSHIN

There will be one sesshin at NZC this Summer, a **One-day sitting on Sunday, June 13th**. Our suggested donations will apply: \$40 per day for non-members and \$30 for members. Lower rates may be arranged for those with limited income. Please write NZC or call **(402) 551-9035**.

ANNUAL SANGHA PICNIC

Our **Annual Sangha Picnic** will be held on **Sunday, June 27th**. All are welcome! Our regular morning schedule will be in effect that day, early sitting and service, 9 a.m. sitting and dharma talk. **The party will be from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with pot-luck lunch @ noon.**

NZC will provide beverages. Please join us if you can, and bring the kids. We also invite people from the neighborhood, so this is a good time to meet them. **If the weather's bad, we'll do it inside.**

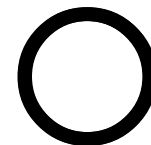
OTHER SUMMER EVENTS

June 20 — Board Meeting
25 — Ryaku Fusatsu

July 4 — Closed
July 30 — Ryaku Fusatsu

August 1 — World Peace Ceremony
Group Discussion

27 — Ryaku Fusatsu



Sectarianism

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When human beings see differences (the branches) and focus on them, they tend to ignore the similarities, the shared heritage (the roots). Then, it becomes easier to take the next step, to regard your way (or yourself) as better and others as worse, or your way as true, or authentic, and other ways as false, or inauthentic. This is human ego at work, and it has bred sectarian rivalry, bitterness, and suspicion throughout Buddhist history. Unfortunately, it is still going on.

When Shakyamuni Buddha was alive, Buddhism was pretty much homogeneous. Everyone lived and practiced much in the same way as he did (if they were monastic practitioners) or according to his guidance (if they were lay people). After he died, and especially when Buddhism spread outside India, things became more complicated.

One of the oldest examples of sectarian rivalry in Buddhism is the conflict between *Hinayana* and *Mahayana*. *Hinayana* (small vehicle) refers to the eighteen schools that grew out of the original community surrounding Shakyamuni Buddha. *Mahayana* (large vehicle) was a later development in which ways of practice changed dramatically. Some adherents of Mahayana (and I say *some*, not all) saw themselves as superior in breath and scope and regarded followers of Hinayana as inferior, narrow-minded practitioners of an out-of-date, limited form of Buddhism. Some Hinayana practitioners (again *some*, not all) saw themselves as followers of the “true way” and viewed Mahayanists as heretics. The name *Hinayana* itself originated as a derogatory term coined by followers of Mahayana. Even today, practitioners of Hinayana don’t like it. They refer to their tradition as *Theravada* (the Way of the Elders), even though Theravada was only one of the original eighteen schools.

This particular sectarian animosity has continued throughout the centuries. Zen

Buddhism is a Mahayana path, and in ancient Chinese Zen texts, Theravadan Buddhism is referred to by phrases like “the lower path,” and even, “stinking Hinayana.” On the other hand, I’ve seen Mahayana Buddhism referred to as “not Buddha’s way,” and much worse, in some ancient texts.

Even today, there is animosity. A few years ago, I heard a noted Theravadan nun dismiss the Heart Sutra, a core text in Mahayana Buddhism by saying, “those are not Buddha’s words.” This same nun told a friend of mine, a fully-ordained Zen priest who’d been wearing her hair short, that she wasn’t really a nun because she didn’t shave her head. On the other hand, a noted Zen teacher once told me that there was no need to read the *Pali Nikayas* (core Theravadan sutras), because “we’ve gone beyond all that.” And I heard another Zen teacher, an American, say that Theravadan Buddhism was too culture-bound and backward to ever make an impact in this country.

It is important to realize that not all followers of Theravada or Mahayana see things in this way, however, only those who have given in to ego-driven needs to see themselves or their path as better than others. My Zen teacher, Dainin Katagiri, encouraged me to read the *Pali Nikayas* to get a feel for what Shakyamuni Buddha was really like and to examine how he lived his life day-to-day; Katagiri-roshi also invited Theravadan monks to give talks at our temple in Minneapolis. Other Zen teachers can be similarly open-minded. A Zen monk I trained with in Japan was encouraged by his teacher to go to Thailand and practice with Theravadan monks to experience what it was like to live as Shakyamuni Buddha did. He went and stayed for two years.

And of course, not all Theravadan practitioners are as small-minded as

LINCOLN ZEN GROUP

A group affiliated with NZC meets weekly on **Sunday evenings, 7:00 p.m.** at the **Lincoln Women’s Club, 407 South 14th St.** Zazen instruction is available for newcomers. For further information, call **Kido Albert Lickei** at **(402) 466-7597** or **Seishin Larry Pelter** at **(402) 483-1755**.

LAKE SUPERIOR ZENDO

Lake Superior Zendo is located at **407 E. Arch St. in Marquette, Michigan**. It is affiliated with NZC and offers daily sitting, special ceremonies, and retreats. Zazen Instruction is available for newcomers. Call **Rev. Tesshin Paul Lehmborg** at **(906) 226-6407** for information.

ZEN CENTER OF PITTSBURGH

Zen Center of Pittsburgh is located on **Barberry Road, in Sewickley, PA 15143**. It is affiliated with NZC and offers daily sitting, classes, special ceremonies, and retreats. Zazen Instruction is available. For information, contact **Rev. Kyoki Roberts** at either **(412) 741-1262** or **(412) 708-3345**.

the ones I cited earlier. I recently read an article entitled “The Heart Sutra, Emptiness, and Theravada Buddhism” by a Theravadan monk named Bodhicari Dharmajiva in which the author discusses the Heart Sutra as a teaching on

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emptiness (*shunyata*) that squares exactly with core Theravadan teachings on the subject. He recommends its study by all Theravadan practitioners. When I was in Japan, a Theravadan monk came to our monastery to practice. He was an open-hearted person who had developed an interest in Zen and wanted to experience it. He was also interested in what the similarities and differences were between his way of practice and ours. Although sectarian rivalry between Hinayana and Mahayana occurs throughout Buddhist history, conflicts and harsh words are not always the rule.

More sectarian complications occur when *Vajrayana* is added to the Hinayana/Mahayana mix. *Vajrayana* means, “diamond vehicle” and is what followers of Tibetan Buddhism call their way of practice. I’m not sure how the word originated, but some (again, not all) practitioners of this form of Buddhism regard their way as a step above Theravada and Mahayana. They see *Vajrayana* as the highest form of Buddhism!

Followers of Theravada and Mahayana, as well as many followers of *Vajrayana*, however, regard it as only one of the many forms of Mahayana Buddhism, like Zen.

Practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism sometimes exhibit the same sectarian one-upsmanship that Theravadan and Zen practitioners do. During a panel discussion I moderated between Tibetan monks and Jesuit priests and theologians at Creighton University here in Omaha, where I teach, one of the Tibetan monks said that “Tibetan Buddhism is the most complete form of Buddhism in the world today.” My blood pressure rose significantly when I heard that. I didn’t want

people to walk away believing that bit of misinformation, so I strongly disagreed with him; in my view, all the major forms of Buddhism are complete in and by themselves. I was not only annoyed with his sectarian narrowness but also at his rudeness in saying something like

Whether you are Buddhist or Christian or something else, if you see the world with only a small, sectarian understanding, you will never find true peace. The truth is beyond any sectarian view. If you would live in peace and harmony with others, you must manifest your life in a universal way.

Dainin Katagiri

that in front of a Zen priest.

Once, I heard a Tibetan teacher say to a group, including Zen students, that people need some form of foundation practice before they do Zen meditation, and since Zen does not offer these practices, people should come and study with him, for he could guide them properly. On the other hand, a Zen teacher I know sometimes dismisses Tibetan practices as “mumbo-jumbo!” Sometimes, remarks like this can be laughed at and dismissed as just silly, or as garden-variety egoism, but superficial and silly as they are, they are hurtful, and they can also mislead those who are either new to Buddhist practice or regard those who make them

as authorities.

Sectarian conflict and animosity not only occurs between the major forms of Buddhism but within them as well. There are and have been conflicts between Rinzai and Soto Zen, the two major forms of Zen in Japan, both of which are practiced in this country. I have heard Soto Zen practitioners put down Rinzai Zen, even though Zen Master Dogen, who brought Soto Zen practice to Japan, spoke vehemently against this kind of sectarian egoism and rivalry. I’ve also read books by Rinzai masters who put down Soto Zen. In Theravadan Buddhism, masters such as Buddhadasa, who didn’t strictly adhere to orthodox views and practices, are spoken against and marginalized in their own countries, and in Tibetan Buddhism, conflicts between different teachers and schools frequently occur.

Dainin Katagiri was fond of saying that the world’s great spiritual traditions, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and all the many others are like fingers pointing at the moon. The moon is truth, and all authentic paths lead to it. This is also true in regard to different Buddhist paths. I like to add that we should never mistake the finger for the moon. Paths can only direct us to the truth. They are not the truth itself, which is beyond any path, any “*yana*, or vehicle,” any “ism,” beyond any and all words or functions that discriminate and separate things into this and that, true and false, right and wrong. All of this is dualistic. If we mistake the finger for the moon, and regard our way as the truth, we mistake the path for the goal and get stuck, blocking further development and keeping ourselves from realizing things as they are. The moon, then, moves farther and farther away.

Also, living in peace and harmony with all beings is one of our most cherished ideals. The Buddhist precepts, our ethical guidelines, point us toward realizing

Self-fulfilling Absorption

This sutra was written in the 13th century by Zen Master Eihei Dogen. In Japanese, it is known as Jijuyu Zammai. It is chanted daily in some Soto Zen practice places. This translation is by Masao Abe and Norman Waddell. Nonin Chowaney has made minor revisions to eliminate gender specificity and to provide a smoother chanting version for inclusion in our Sutra book.

Ancestors and Buddhas, who have maintained the Buddha dharma, all have held that practice based upon proper sitting in zazen in self-fulfilling absorption was the right path through which their enlightenment opened. In India and China, those who have gained enlightenment have all followed in this way of practice. It is based upon the right transmission of the wonderful means in private encounter from master to disciple and their receiving and maintaining of its authentic essence.

According to the authentic tradition of Buddhism, the Buddha dharma, transmitted rightly and directly from one to another, is the supreme of the supreme. From the first time you meet your master and receive the teaching, you have no need for either incense-offerings, homage-paying, chanting Buddha's names, penance disciplines, or silent sutra-readings; only cast off body and mind in zazen.

When even for a short period of time you sit properly in absorption, imprinting the Buddha-seal in deeds, words, and thoughts, each and every thing excluding none is the Buddha-seal, and all space without exception is enlightenment. Accordingly, it makes Buddha-tathagatas all increase the dharma-joy of their original source, and renew the adornments of the Way of enlightenment. Then, when all classes of all beings in the ten directions of the universe — the hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, and animals; the fighting spirits, humans, and heavenly beings — all together at one time being bright and pure in body and mind, realize the stage of absolute emancipation and reveal their original aspect, at that time all things together come to realization in themselves of the true enlightenment of the Buddha, utilize the Buddha-body, immediately leap the confines of this personal enlightenment, sit properly beneath the kingly Tree of Enlightenment, turn simultaneously

the great and utterly incomparable dharma wheel, and expound the ultimate and profound wisdom free from all human agency.

Since, moreover, these enlightened ones in their turn enter into the way of imperceptible mutual assistance, people in zazen without fail cast off body and mind, sever the heretofore disordered and defiled thoughts and views emanating from discriminating consciousness, conform totally within themselves to the genuine Buddha dharma, and assist universally in performing the work of Buddhas at each of the various place the Buddha-tathagatas teach, that are as infinitely numberless as the smallest atom-particles — imparting universally the self-transcending Buddha, vigorously uplifting the dharma transcending Buddha. Then the land, the trees and grasses, fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles, all the various things in the ten directions, perform the work of Buddhas. Because of this, all persons who share in the wind and water benefits thus produced receive the unperceived help of the Buddhas' wonderful and incomprehensible teaching and guidance, and all manifest their inherent enlightenment. Since all who receive and employ this fire and water turn round and round the teaching of original enlightenment, all who dwell and talk together with them also join with one another in possessing the inexhaustible Buddha-virtue, causing to spread and spread even wider, circulating the inexhaustible, unceasing, incomprehensible, and immeasurable Buddha dharma, inside and outside throughout the universe. Yet such things are not mingled in the perceptions of one sitting in zazen, because this occurs in the stillness of absorption beyond human artifice, and is in itself realization. If practice and realization were two different stages as ordinary people consider them to be, the one sitting in zazen and things should perceive each other. To be associated with perceptions is not the mark of realization, because the mark of realization is to be beyond such illu-

Truth needs no label; it is neither Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, nor Moslem. It is not the monopoly of anybody. Sectarian labels are a hindrance to the independent understanding of Truth, and they produce harmful prejudices in people's minds.

Walpola Rahula

Self-fulfilling Absorption

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sions.

Moreover, although in realization the mind and its objects both arise and disappear within the stillness of absorption, since it occurs within the sphere of self-fulfillment, it does not disturb a single mote of dust, nor infringe upon a single phenomenon. It does great and wide-ranging Buddha-work and performs the exceedingly profound, recondite activities of preaching and enlightening. The trees, grasses, and land involved in this all emit a bright and shining light, and preach the profound and incomprehensible dharma; and it is endless. Trees and grasses, wall and fence expound and exalt the dharma for the sake of ordinary people, sages, and all living beings. Ordinary people, sages and all living beings in turn preach and exalt the dharma for the sake of trees, grasses, wall, and fence. The dimension of self-enlightenment *qua* enlightening others basically is fully replete with the characteristics of realization, and causes the principle of realization unceasingly.

Because of this, when even just one person, at one time, sits in zazen, they become, imperceptibly, one with each and all of the myriad things, and permeate completely all time, so that within the limitless universe, throughout past, future, and present, they are performing the eternal and ceaseless work of guiding beings to enlightenment. It is, for each and every thing, one and the same undifferentiated practice, and undifferentiated realization. Only this is not limited to the practice of sitting alone; the sound that issues from the striking of the hammer is an endless and wondrous voice that resounds before and after the fall of the hammer. And this is not all the practice of zazen does. Each and every thing is, in its original aspect, provided original practice — it cannot be measured or comprehended.

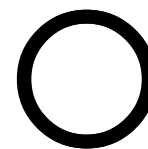
Sectarianism

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this. How can we live in peace and harmony with all beings if we can't do so with our fellow Buddhist practitioners? Regarding others and their practices as inferior and treating them accordingly only hurts people and creates conflict. Mutual respect and tolerance fosters peace and harmony.

I tell people who are interested in Buddhism that all the major forms are complete in themselves and worthy of practice; all of them lead to the truth. I knew early on that Zen was my path, and even though I've explored other ways of practice, it has remained so. However, some people go from one path to another for many years before they can commit to one. I encourage people to experience all ways of practice that interest them, and if a particular way strikes something deep within, to stick with that way until they either know in their heart of hearts that it's their path or they just as clearly know that it isn't. This is not intellectual "knowing," however. It comes from deep within.

It's also good to remember that that no spiritual tradition, Buddhist or otherwise, exists as a separate entity apart from the people teaching and practicing it. There are good, mediocre, and not-so-good teachers in all traditions. A good teacher would never say that their way is the only way, the best way, or the most complete.





NEW WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Our weekly schedule has been changed. Our regular Saturday morning schedule (sittings, dharma talks, etc.) has been moved to Sunday morning. **All Sunday events are open to the public, and newcomers are especially welcome.** There are also some other changes. **SEE PAGE 10.**

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MEMBERSHIP

Membership in Nebraska Zen Center represents a commitment to the Sangha and its support. One becomes a member by participating and by filling out a membership form.

We encourage members to commit to monthly donations. The Board of Directors has adopted the following membership categories:

A **Full Member** pledges at least \$40 per month;
An **Out-of town** or **Student Member**, \$15 per month.

NZC's Website Address is:
www.geocities.com/Tokyo/temple/7228/

Our E-mail address is:
nzc@aol.com

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 15th.**

WEEKLY ZENDO SCHEDULE

Morning

Tuesday — Sunday

6:00 - 7:00 — Sitting Meditation
(Walking as Needed)

7:00 - 7:30 — Service

7:30 - 7:45 — Cleaning

Sunday Only

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

Evening

Tuesday — Wednesday

7:00 - 8:30 — Sitting Meditation
(Walking as needed)

Thursday

7:00 - 8:30 — Zazen Instruction
(by appointment; call 551-9035)

Friday

7:00 - 8:30 — Sitting Meditation
(Walking as needed)

We are closed on Monday

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