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Prairie Wind



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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 (© 2013 Nebraska Zen Center) is the newsletter for both **Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple** and **Zen Center of Pittsburgh / Deep Spring Temple**.

Cover : Buddha — Drawing by Robert Taylor

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

PUTTING DOWN OUR BURDEN

by *Nonin Chowaney*

What a relief to put down our burden, all the baggage we carry with us -- our likes, dislikes, unfinished work, hopes, regrets -- and enter this moment free.

I experienced this during our last one-day sitting. After lunch, I sat down on the recliner in my room with a cup of coffee. I didn't want to be anywhere else. The coffee, the softness of the chair's cushions, the dog hair on the rug, the sunlight streaming in the window -- it was enough. I felt complete.

Like a mountain climber taking off his pack at the top of the mountain and plopping down in the snow, I felt so relieved to sit down unencumbered, and I felt grateful just to be here, in this small temple in Omaha, in sesshin, sitting zazen, eating simple food with good dharma friends, all in silence. Gratitude welled up and included all my teachers, my parents, all the buddhas and ancestors, all bodhisattvas, all beings who support our lives and make it possible for us to live, to be here, to bloom in this moment. What more is needed?

The poet Charles Bukowski wrote, "I've learned to feel good when I feel good." Sitting on the couch, I felt good. And it felt *good* to feel good. There is enough dissatisfaction and pain in life; we should allow ourselves to feel good whenever possible!

A monk asked Seng Ts'an, the third Zen ancestor in China, "What is the path to liberation?" Seng Ts'an replied, "Who

binds you?" "No one binds me," said the monk. "Why then," asked Seng Ts'an, "do you seek liberation?"

Our teaching is that there is nothing to seek. Zazen is an opportunity to enter the present moment in its completeness and simplicity. In a life that has become increasingly complicated, busy, and fragmented, zazen retreats (*sesshin*) are a great gift, an opportunity to concentrate the mind on the present moment over long periods of time, to engage fully in the practice/realization of awareness, or enlightenment.

I have come to treasure *sesshin*, to treasure the opportunity to "just sit" and put everything else aside for as long as *sesshin* lasts -- a day, two days, or seven days. This practice gives us an opportunity to experience the infinite possibilities of our life right in the middle of it.

How often have we heard people say that they have trouble finding the time to sit quietly? What a shame. To people whose hectic lives and large burdens made the practice of zazen difficult and sometimes impossible, my master, Dainin Katagiri, would say, "I feel sorry for you." When I felt complete the other day in my room, I thought of the many people having difficulty in their lives who don't have the opportunity to experience *sesshin*, and I felt so grateful for this practice, for the opportunity to see, with the

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Putting Down Our Burden

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inner eye of wisdom, that this moment is perfect exactly as it is, full and complete, beyond positive or negative, beyond good or bad. It just *is*.

Our teaching, the wisdom of the awakened ones, is that the deepest life of all the Buddhas and ancestors can be completely realized in petting the cat or bowing during morning service. In the words of the 13th century Zen monk/poet Muso Soseki:

*In the real world
the pure world
no separation exists
why wait
for another time
and another meeting
the teaching
on Vulture Peak
is here today
who else
are you looking for
to preserve the Way?*

trans. W.S. Merwin and Soiku
Shigematsu

Who else and where else indeed? Vulture Peak was the place where Shakyamuni Buddha gave his dharma talks 2500 years ago. We create Vulture Peak every time we gather for dharma talks. We create the Buddhadharmas in our daily lives. If it doesn't exist here, where can it exist? As ideas in our heads? As words in a book? I don't think so.

In *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, Shunryu

Suzuki talks about "limiting your activity." By this he meant to "concentrate on what you are doing in this moment." This in itself is awakening, for, in his words, if you "limit your activity to what you can do just now, in this moment, then you can express fully your true nature, which is the Buddha nature," the nature of the fully-liberated ones. When we practice in this way, taking the dog for a walk or reading the morning paper after breakfast becomes Buddha activity, complete, full of wonder and mystery, with nothing lacking; all we have to do is *be here* in this moment.

I have come to appreciate a simple life. I don't feel like I have to go anywhere or do anything special to be complete. I spent many years chasing after careers, relationships, spectacular states of mind, and "esoteric" teaching; all those desires brought me was frustration, dissatisfaction, and more pain. It wasn't until I met a true Zen master and sat down to look quietly within did a measure of peace and harmony come into my life.

In the words of the old Shaker song, "'Tis a gift to be simple, 'Tis a gift to be free." And where do we find these gifts? We already have them. All we have to do is realize it. Sit down, calm the mind, and let things be.

**Rev. Nonin Chowaney is the abbot of
Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland
Temple.**

SONG OF REALIZATION (SHODOKA)

by Yung-Chia Hsuan-Chueh (665-713)

We are unable to determine the translator of this sutra. We apologize to whoever that may be — Ed.

Do you see those Zen students? They have forgotten what they have learned, yet they practice easily and freely what they have learned and also what they should learn.

They live in equanimity, calmly and contentedly. They are free of all care and act naturally and reasonably.

They neither strive to avoid delusion nor seek after the truth. They know delusion as baseless and truth as themselves.

They see the true nature of ignorance as Buddha-nature and the true body of their illusionary bodies as Dharmakaya, the Buddha's eternal body.

When you realize completely the Dharma-body, you see no object.

You, yourself, are the source of all things, and your true nature is another name of the eternal Buddha.

Material things and mental phenomena come and go like clouds in the blue sky. Greed, anger, and ignorance disappear like foam on the water, like a mirage on the ocean.

When you realize the truth, there is no delusion concerning personal desires or self-limited ideas.

You know that there is no ego-entity existing inside yourself, and you see clearly the emptiness of all form as merely shadows in relation to both subjective and objective elements.

If you live in Zen, you can leave hell in your dreams of yesterday, and make your own paradise wherever you stand.

Those without realization, who cheat people with false knowledge, will create hell in their own lives.

The minute you attain Buddha's Zen,

The six perfections and ten thousand good actions are already complete within you.

In your dream, there are six realms of existence,

But when you awake, they will be reduced to nothingness.

No sin, no happiness, no loss, and no gain.

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NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER SANGHA NOTES

Our **Annual Sangha Meeting** will be held on **Saturday, Feb. 1 at 10:00 a.m.** We will be replacing Board members whose terms have expired and electing Officers for 2014. We will also be reviewing and finishing business from 2013. **We encourage all who practice at Heartland Temple to attend this meeting.**

This past September, **Kanho Doug Dittman** was **authorized by Nonin** in a **Lay Entrustment Ceremony** to function as a **Lay Teacher** in our Soto Zen Lineage. Doug has established a practice place at his farm north of Lincoln, NE. It is called **Tending the Ox Zendo** and will remain affiliated with Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple. Doug will function as an independent teacher there but will maintain his ties with Nonin.



Kanho Doug bows to **Nonin** during the **Lay Entrustment Ceremony**, with **Koshin Milo Alexander** attending in the background.

More pictures on subsequent pages.

Winter Practice Period will begin with February Sesshin on the **8th and 9th** and will end with **April Sesshin** on the **12th and 13th**. Practice Period is designed to provide structure for those who wish to **intensify their practice and their sangha connections for a specific period of time** by making specific commitments in three areas: **daily practice at home, regular involvement at the temple, and attendance at special events.** Interested students should write up their commitments and turn them in to Nonin before February 5th. If this is your first Practice Period, speak to **Nonin** before turning in your commitments.

Many thanks to all those who maintained the temple and grounds this Fall. **Special thanks** go to **Shoju Pam Griffin** for her garden work and to **Kanho Doug** for sheet rock installation and painting in the Memorial Altar room.

Nonin visited and gave talks this Fall at the **Child Saving Institute** and at **University of Nebraska — Omaha**. He also gave talks and zazen instruction to groups visiting NZC from **Creighton University** and **Nebraska Methodist College**.

NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER WINTER EVENTS

SESSHIN

There will be Two sesshins at NZC this Winter: A Seven– day **Sesshin (Rohatsu)** from **December 1st through 7th** and a **Two-day Sesshin** on **February 8th and 9th** . Fees: \$40 per day for members; \$50 for non-members. Lower rates are available for those with limited income. **E-mail us at heartland@prairiewindzen.org** or call **402-551-9035** to register.

DHARMA STUDY CLASS

Nonin will lead a **Dharma Study Class** at the temple this Winter. It will meet on four successive **Saturday mornings** from **10 a.m. till noon, on February 22nd and March 1st, 8th, and 15th**. The subject for study will be announced later. The class is free to sangha members. The fee for others is \$15 per class.

LAY INITIATION — RECEIVING THE PRECEPTS

A **Precept Ceremony Signifying Lay Initiation** will be offered at Heartland Temple next March. Anyone interested in participating should talk to **Nonin**. He suggests the following for considering this step: firm commitments to **sitting zazen, to practicing with a teacher, to participating in sangha, and to continuing dharma study.** **Rakusu sewing** will begin on **February 16th**.

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

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 need-

We are closed on Monday.

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

ZEN CENTER OF PITTSBURGH SANGHA NOTES

If you want to receive monthly schedule updates and last-minute changes to events. Join our e-mail list. Go to <http://www.prairiewindzen.org/zcp/list.htm> and register. Or, e-mail ZCP at kyoki@prairiewindzen.org. You will also receive our monthly e-Newsletter.

Congratulations to **Laura and Adam Litchfield** on their marriage in September! Thank you to **Rev. Hogen Green** and **Dr. Clark Chilson** for the Introduction to Naikan talk in November and to **Rev. Daishin McCabe** for leading our November sesshin.

A note to our extended Sangha of Deep Spring Temple:

Most of you know I have been struggling with an “entrapped peroneal nerve of the left knee.” After three surgeries and many alternative regimens, the problem is unresolved. I am currently working with pain management doctors. (A deep bow of gratitude to Nonin and his Sangha at Heartland Temple for opening their doors and hearts to me this past October as I visited doctors in Omaha.) This Fall, we reduced the weekly schedule to Saturday and Sunday mornings. Our active Sangha members, having met at a day-long retreat, have stepped up to take care of the daily maintenance of the temple.

I continue to practice as best I can, to offer dokusan, and to meet with school groups. The Board is encouraging me to find a priest to spend a few months here to carry some of this load as well as lead sesshins and expand the daily schedule. Please stay tuned! Meanwhile, Dave Zenetsu Belako is serving as work leader. If you have an hour or two to volunteer please contact him at his e-mail address: davebelako@gmail.com. Active Sangha members are also encouraged to join our listserv to stay current on a daily basis. To join, write to Steven Bend at: stevenbend@gmail.com. Of course, our Sangha-at-large follows us by joining our e-mail list on the website, www.deepspringzen.org.

Thank you for the continued prayers on my behalf.

Hands palm-to-palm,

Kyoki

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Sewickley, PA 15143 tel: (412) 741-1262 e-mail: kyoki@prairiewindzen.org
website: www.prairiewindzen.org

ZCP WINTER EVENTS

DECEMBER

- 1 — World Peace Ceremony, 9 a.m.
- 8 — Buddha’s Enlightenment Day, 9 a.m.
- 18 — Precept Ceremony, 6 p.m.
- 31 — New Year’s Eve Celebration, 6 p.m. - 1 a.m.

JANUARY

- 5 — World Peace Ceremony, 9 a.m.
- 16 — Precept Ceremony, 6 p.m.
- 19 — Katagiri-roshi’s Birthday, 9 a.m.
- 26 — Dogen’s Birthday, 9 a.m.

FEBRUARY

- 2 — World Peace Ceremony, 9 a.m.
- 14 — Precept Ceremony, 6 p.m.
- 16 — Buddha’s Parinirvana, 9 a.m.

MARCH

- 1 — Katagiri-roshi’s Memorial, 6:30 a.m.
- 2 — World Peace Ceremony, 9 a.m.
- 8-15 — Naikan Retreat (No Zen Schedule)
- 16 — Precept Ceremony, 9 a.m.

ZCP DAILY SCHEDULE

Due to Kyoki’s current physical disability, we are only open on these days at these times:

Saturday — 6:30-7:30 a.m.
Sunday — 8:30 a.m.– Noon



Deep Spring in the Snow

WHITE LOTUS SANGHA NOTES

by Terrell Henderson

I'm a member of the White Lotus Sangha at a prison in Nebraska. I would like to share the experience of my first sesshin. For starters, I don't know much about sesshin, but I've gathered information that it's a two or three day event dedicated exclusively to zazen. We don't have formal sesshins at the prison, so I decided to have one on my own. I planned it for my two days off from work.

I set my alarm for 4:20 a.m., got up and stretched to get ready to sit at 5:00. I'm in a single-man cell, so I didn't have to worry about any distraction. I decided to sit for one hour, alternating between half-lotus and seiza, and then do fifteen minutes of kinhin. I repeat this until 8:00 p.m. each night. The only activities I allowed myself outside of zazen were the three daily meals and a shower. In the afternoon and at the end of the day, I would chant the "Repentance Verse" and "Three Refuges Verse" three times each. Then, I'd chant the "Four Vows," the "Names of the Buddhas and Ancestors," and the "Heart Sutra" once each.

The first day, my mind was freaking out. I had no control at all. No matter how many times I returned to my breath and center, the mind just kept on rambling. At times, it was mov-

ing so fast that thoughts were undecipherable. "Why are you doing this; there's nothing to attain anyway." "SHUT UP!!!" "Breathe." My mind was arguing with itself like a brother and sister on a road trip. Then another thought came: "If I call *"this"* mind *"my"* mind, then why can't I tame it?" Then I realized, "That's a good question, but this isn't zazen, it's analyzing

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**.

and thinking. SHUT UP DAMMIT!"
Okay, here we go again.

After a little while, the volume in the rambling went down a notch, then a little more, then nothing. Guess what happened? "I'm doing it!" This thought ruined a beautiful moment. It was like I was watching over a deranged child that refused any

Song of Realization

from page 3

Do not try to seek these things in Mind-Essence.
For a long time, you have not wiped the dust from your mirror.
Now is the time for you to see its brilliance precisely.
Who thinks non-thinking, and who recognizes non-existence?
If it is really non-existence, you cannot think of it.
Ask a robot whether it is happy or not.
As long as you aim to become Buddha,
No matter how you strive, you will never be one.

Do not cling to the four elements.
Drink and eat according to your true nature.
Things are transient; therefore, they are in a state of emptiness.
This is Buddha's realization.

A true disciple of Buddha speaks the ultimate truth.
If you do not agree with what I say, you are free to discuss it.
You must remember, however, that Buddhism is concerned with the root of truth,
Not with the branches or leaves.

Most people do not recognize the wish-fulfilling jewel, the jewel of wisdom.
It is hidden in the secret place of Tathagata awaiting discovery and attainment.
The six senses and the six worlds interweave, making life as it is.
It is an illusion as a whole, yet nothing exists to be called illusion.
The perfect light of this wish-fulfilling-jewel, the jewel of wisdom, illuminates
humanity.
It has neither color nor form, nor has it non-color and non-form.

Clarify the five kinds of vision, and acquire the five powers.

It is possible only through zazen that goes beyond speculation.
One can see the images in the mirror naturally.
To hold the reflection of the moon on the water is impossible.

A Zen student should walk alone at all times.
Those who have attained tread the same road of Nirvana.
Each of them is natural in manner and clean and contented of heart.
Since not one of them is concerned with special attraction, no one pays them
special attention.

The followers of Buddha speak of their poverty.
The simplicity of their living may be called poor but not their Zen.

Song of Realization

from page 11

Their robes, torn and mended, show the world their poverty;
Their Zen, unseen by others, is the treasure beyond all value.
No matter how much it is used, the priceless treasure never deteriorates.
It may be given freely to others who need it.
The three bodies of Buddha and the four kinds of wisdom are completely contained in it.

The eight kinds of emancipation and the six miraculous powers are merely impressions of the same seal.

The excellent student of Zen goes directly to the ultimate truth.
The fair or good ones like to learn from others but have no steady faith.
Once you strip off the tattered clothing of prejudice, you will see your true self.
How can you wander around in outward striving?

Some may slander or argue against Zen.
They are playing with fire, trying to burn the heavens in vain.
A true student of Zen will take their words as sweet dew-drops,
Forgetting even this sweetness when entering the region of non-thinking.

I observe abusive words as virtuous action,
And consider the abuser as one of my good teachers.
Since my feeling is neither for nor against the abuser,
Why should I express the two powers of perseverance, the knowledge of the unborn
and the love of all beings?

One who attains Zen must acquire its eloquence.
Meditation and wisdom must have their full brilliance unclouded by an idea of emptiness.
Such an accomplishment is not limited to the few.
The Buddhas, countless as the sands of the Ganges, are all witness to this fact.

The fearless thought of Zen is like the mighty roar of the lion,
Striking terror in the hearts of other beasts.
Even the king of elephants will run away, forgetting his pride.
Courageous students alone, like the dragon, hear the roar with calm pleasure.

Zen students journey by land and sea, across rivers and over mountains,
Visiting monasteries and receiving personal guidance from teachers.
I also followed the way, reaching Sokei, where I met my master and received
Dharma.

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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.

TENDING THE OX ZENDO

A group affiliated with NZC meets weekly on **Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm at Branched Oak Farm, 17015 NW 70th St, Raymond, NE 68428-4041.** For further information, e-mail or call **Kanho Doug Dittman** at **dougd@windstream.net** (402-783-2124). Zazen Instruction is available for newcomers if arranged in advance.

Song of Realization

from page 12

Now I know my true being has nothing to do with birth and death.

Zen students walk in Zen and sit in Zen.

Whether in speech and action or silence and inaction, their bodies always dwell in peace.

They smile, facing the sword that takes life.

They keep their poise, even at the moment of death.

Drugs cannot alter their calmness.

Our great teacher, Shakyamuni, met Dipankara Buddha many millions of years ago and accepted his

Dharma.

Ever since, he is master of Patience, life after life.

Human beings are born many times, so they die many times.

Life and death continue endlessly.

If people realize the true meaning of unborn,

They will transcend both gladness and grief.

They live alone in a mountain hut

Among the old pine trees,

Meditating comfortably

And living peacefully.

Those who understand Dharma always act naturally.

Most people in the world live in the world of causes and conditions, but Zen students live in the unconditioned.

Those who give something to others in order to receive something in return are shooting arrows heavenward.

The arrow, which was shot against heaven, returns to the earth.

When striving and gaining are balanced, nothing remains.

Aimless striving is quite different;

It opens the gate of truth leading to the garden of Tathagata.

True Zen students ignore the branches and leaves until they reach the root.

It is like the image of the moon reflected in the water of a jade bowl.

The real beauty of the wish-fulfilling jewel, the treasure of emancipation, I now know.

I and others are benefitted eternally.

The moon rises above the river; the wind plays softly in the pines on the shore all night long.

continued on next page

Song of Realization

from previous page

What is the meaning of this serenity?

You must see the precepts of Buddha-nature vividly imprinted;

Dew, fog, cloud, and mist clothe the original person in full.

A begging bowl once conquered dragons and a staff pacified fighting tigers.

The staff had six rings on top whose tinkling called people from their dreams.

The bowl and the staff are not mere symbols of the teaching,

But the Tathagata's actual work remaining in the world.



Sangha members, family, and friends at Lay Entrustment

Without exception everything is reflected in this mirror.

The whole universe is a gem of light beyond the terms of in and out.

When Zen-students see emptiness one-sidedly, they are likely to ignore the law of causation.

They will then live aimlessly with negative thoughts and wrong actions.

They falsely deny the existence of anything, but admit an entity of emptiness.

To escape drowning, they throw themselves into the fire.

Those who reject delusion to search for truth

May achieve skill in discrimination,

But such students will never reach enlightenment

Because they mistake their enemies for their own dear children.

People miss the spiritual treasure and lose proper merit

Ideal Zen students neither seek the true nor avoid the untrue.

They know that these are merely dualistic ideas that have no form.

Non-form is neither empty nor not empty.

It is the true form of Buddha's wisdom.

The mind-mirror illumines all ingenuously. Its penetrating, limitless rays reach everywhere in the universe.

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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 water-color 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.

Song of Realization

from page 15

Because they depend on dualistic thinking and neglect the essence of mind.
To pass through the gate of Zen, one must correct this error.
Then one can attain the wisdom to enter the palace of Nirvana.

The true student of Zen carries the sword of Wisdom.
The blade is so sharp that one feels the searing flame around it.
It cuts away the delusions of non-Buddhist thought as well as the haughty pride of heavenly devils.

Sometimes students preach like a thunderstorm;
Sometimes, they pour the gentle rain of loving kindness.
They walk like the king of the elephants, yet always love other beings.
They teach five students of different nature, leading them to Buddhahood, although they come to them through the three different gates.

The precious grass of the Himalayas is the only kind in the meadow.
Cows that graze there give the best milk, from which is made the richest cheese.
Zen students partake of teaching always as pure.
When human character is purified, it is the character of all beings;
When the law of humanity is completed, it is the law of the universe.
One moon is reflected on many waters;
Innumerable reflections are nothing but the image of one moon.
The Dharmakaya of all Buddhas becomes my inner being;
My inner being is unified with Tathagata.
One stage of meditation contains all other stages completely;
The Essence of Mind is not limited by color, form, thought, nor any activity.
A map of the fingers and eight thousand gates of the teaching are established.
A wink of the eye and countless ages of time have vanished.
Innumerable names and categories have nothing to do with realization.

You cannot praise nor blame realization.
Like the sky, truth has no bounds.
Wherever you stand, it surrounds you.
When you seek it, you cannot reach it;
Your hand cannot hold it, nor your mind exclude it.
When you no longer seek it, it is with you.
In silence, you speak it loudly; in speech, you manifest its silence.
Thus, the gate of compassion opens wide to the benefit of all beings.

When a person asks me what branch of Buddhism I studied,
I tell him about Great Wisdom, the root of the teaching.

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Song of Realization

from page 17

Without Great Wisdom, though you know right and wrong, you are beyond the truth.
With the root of the teaching, wherever you go is the land of the truth.
I studied Great Wisdom for many, many lives;
This statement is neither to deceive you nor trick you.
I was told to spread the teaching;
The order came from Buddha through the generations.
The lamp of wisdom was first transmitted to Mahakasyapa,
Then, through twenty-eight generations of Ancestors.
Bodhidharma, the Indian Ancestor, came to this country across the seas.
My teacher, who works in Sokei, received the robe
To become the Sixth Ancestor in this land, as you have heard.
Who knows how many generations will carry the teaching in the future?

The true does not stand by itself, and the false never exists alone.
When the idea of existence and non-existence vanishes, the idea of emptiness and non-emptiness disappears.
The Sutra gives twenty names to emptiness, each showing you the one body of Buddha-nature.
The mind rises and contacts the outer world, thus delusions appear.
Subjectivity and objectivity are like dust on the surface of a mirror.
When the mirror is free of dust, it shines brightly.
If no mind rises, there is no contact, no delusion; only true nature appears.

It is sad to live in the time when Dharma is not practiced and evil thoughts grow.
People cannot accept true teaching and cannot discipline themselves.
They live far from wisdom, clinging to wrong ideas.
Evil is strong and disciples are weak; fear and hatred are spreading.
Even though they hear of the intuitive teaching of Tathagata,
They desire to crush it under their heels.

Craving produces action that creates suffering.
It is useless to blame others when you reap what you have sown.
Those who do not wish to suffer in hell,
Should not slander the Wheel of Dharma.

No other trees grow in the Sandalwood forest;
For countless ages, only lions have lived there,
Roaming freely in the silent, dark grove.
No birds and no other animals enter the forest;
Only the lion cubs follow the older beasts.
Even the three-year-old roars loudly.
How can a yelping fox imitate the king of Dharma?

White Lotus Sangha

from page 10

sense of order. It seemed harder to sit zazen in sesshin than during the half an hour I've sat on any given night. There were excuses going through my head: "Go out of the cell, get a cup of coffee, and mingle a little bit; hell, you've put in some hours already." Then to counter that another thought came: "If you were doing sesshin at the temple, would you just get up and do these things? THAT'S ENOUGH!"

The final day was similar, although my legs and upper body were a little sore. The thoughts never stopped, but they came and went quicker and easier. The last three hours were the most quiet and focused for some reason. A part of me didn't want it to end, so I guess I was cherishing the moment.

Sesshin isn't hard or easy; it's just what it is, only sesshin. I look forward to doing another, and I'm writing this to maybe motivate others to sit a sesshin. All I can advise is "just do it." I didn't see the Buddha, but I was one with the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.



Kanho Doug and Nonin sharing the teacher's seat during the Lay Entrustment ceremony



The Five Remembrances

*I am of the nature to grow old. There is no way to escape growing old.
I am of the nature to have ill-health. There is no way to escape having ill health.
I am of the nature to die. There is no way to escape death.
All that is dear to me and everyone I love are of the nature to change.
There is no way to escape being separated from them.
My deeds are my closest companions. I am the beneficiary of my deeds.
My deeds are the ground on which I stand.*

Song of Realization

from page 18

Even though hundreds of monsters open their mouths, it will be in vain.

Zen doctrine is no subject for sentiment.
Doubts cannot be cleared by argument.
I stubbornly demand your silence
To save you from the pitfall of being and non-being.

Wrong is not always wrong, nor right always right.
If you cling to fixed ideas, a tenth-of-an-inch difference will set you ten thousand miles away.
When she reaches the source, the infant female dragon enters Buddhahood;
When they fail to touch the essence, learned disciples of Buddha suffer the tortures of hell.

From early youth, I have accumulated the knowledge of Buddhism, studying the Sutras and Shastras.
I had no time to rest as I classified the terms of the teaching.
Like a man counting the grains of sand on the shore, I tired myself in vain.
I felt that Buddha scolded me as I read his words in the Sutra:
"Why name the price of your neighbor's treasure?"
For years, I travelled in the wrong direction,
Like a prodigal son wandering from his home.

A person whose character is wrongly developed seldom understands things correctly,
So it is difficult to attain the abrupt wisdom of Tathagata.
Two classes of students seek emancipation for themselves, not for the love of sentient beings.
Worldly scholars have dualistic knowledge, but they lack the wisdom of emancipation.

Those who are stupid and childish wander beyond realization.
When they see a closed fist, they assume there is something in it.
If you point your finger to the moon, they discuss the finger, not the moon.
Their thought never goes beyond the five senses as they play hide and seek in the material world.

Those who see nothing but Mind-Essence are Tathagatas.
They should be called Avalokitesvara, the one who sees the world clearly with wisdom and compassion.
When one realizes the truth, one knows that karma-hindrance does not exist as an entity.

continued on next page

Song of Realization

from previous page

One who does not know true emptiness worries about debts and credits.

Hungry people refuse the royal feast;
How can illness be cured when they turn from the good physician?

If you have the Wisdom of Emancipation [prajna], you can practice Zen in the world of desires.
Like the lotus unconsumed by the fire, nothing can destroy your Zen.
Although Yuse, a monk, once broke the main precepts, he went ahead, without faltering, to reach Nirvana;
The pure land, which he built, exists even now.

Buddhadharma makes anyone fearless.
What a pity that stupid minds do not appreciate this fact!
They consider only loss or gain within the precepts,
Forgetting that they can still open the secret door of Tathagata unaided.
In ages past, two monks broke the precepts.
Their chief monk, Upali, considered them hopeless in the light of his feeble understanding,
But Vimalakirti, a layperson, cleared their clouds of doubt to realize truth, in the way frost is melted by warm sunshine.

The wonderful power of emancipation!
It is applied in countless ways, in limitless ways.
One should make four kinds of offering for this treasure.
If you mean to pay for it, a million gold pieces are not enough;

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Meditation Workshop at Nebraska Zen Center

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 3625 Lafayette Ave, Omaha, NE 68131 on **Saturday, March 22nd**, from 10 a.m. till 1 p.m. Fee: \$20

For further info or to register, either e-mail heartland@prairiewind.zen. org or call 402-551-9035.

Song of Realization

from page 21

If you sacrifice everything you have, it will not cover your debt.
A few words from your realization are payment in full, even for debts of the remote past.

Zen, superior among all teachings, is the Dharma king,
As is proven by the attainment of countless Tathagatas.
Now I know what the wish-fulfilling jewel is,
I transmit it to anyone who receives it accordingly.

In the eye of realization, there is nothing to be seen.
There is neither person nor Buddha;
All things in the universe are mere bubbles on the sea.
Sages disappear in a lightning flash.

Even at the moment of the fatal blow,
Zen students keep their equanimity as usual.
They carry their zazen moment after moment.

Nothing in the world can put out their lamp of wisdom.
The sun may turn cold and the moon hot,
But even then,
No devils or satans can crush
The ultimate truth of Buddha-dharma.
As the elephant draws the carriage,
The great wheels are turned.
Can the road be blocked by a foolish mantis stretching its legs?

The elephant is not found in the company of rabbits.
Enlightenment transcends meager intellection.
Stop looking at the skies with a telescope;
Heavens exist beyond your measurement.
There remains nothing but your own actualization.
Come to me this minute and deal with me personally.



Kanho Doug's wife Kristen, mother Alice, Nonin, and Kanho Doug after the ceremony



NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER 2014 PRACTICE SCHEDULE

Jan 1-14	NZC closed	Jul 6	World Peace Ceremony
15	Precepts Ceremony		Group Discussion
19	Dainin Katagiri's Birthday*	9	Precepts Ceremony
26	Zen Master Dogen's Birthday*	20	Ikko Narasaki's Memorial Day*
Feb 2	World Peace Ceremony	Aug 3	World Peace Ceremony
	Group Discussion		Group Discussion
8-9	Two-day Sesshin	13	Precepts Ceremony
	Winter Practice Period Begins	Sep 7	World Peace Ceremony
12	Precepts Ceremony		Group Discussion
15	Buddha's Parinirvana*	10	Precepts Ceremony
16	Rakusu Sewing Begins	13-14	Two-Day Sesshin
Mar 1	Katagiri-roshi's Memorial Day*		Fall Practice Period Begins
2	World Peace Ceremony	29	Zen Master Dogen's Parinirvana*
	Group Discussion	Oct 5	World Peace Ceremony
8	One-day Sesshin		Group Discussion
19	Precepts Ceremony	8	Precepts Ceremony
26-29	Lay Initiation Week	11	One-Day Sesshin
30	Lay Initiation	19	Bodhidharma Day*
Apr 8	Buddha's Birthday	Nov 2	World Peace Ceremony
12-13	Two-Day Sesshin		Group Discussion
	Practice Period Ends	5	Precepts Ceremony
13	World Peace Ceremony	26-29	NZC Closed
	Group Discussion	Dec 1-7	Rohatsu Sesshin
16	Precepts Ceremony		Practice Period Ends
May 4	Remembrance Day	8	Buddha's Enlightenment Day*
11	World Peace Ceremony	10	Precepts Ceremony
	Group Discussion	24-26	NZC Closed
14	Precepts Ceremony		
22-27	NZC Closed		
Jun 1	World Peace Ceremony		
	Group Discussion		
11	Precepts Ceremony		
21-22	Two-Day Sesshin		

*Special services commemorating these days will be held before dharma talk on the Sunday nearest the date indicated.
Precepts Ceremonies follow evening zazen.
World Peace Ceremonies precede monthly Group Discussions.

New Year's Eve at Nebraska Zen Center

All are welcome to join us for New Year's Eve Services at Nebraska Zen Center. We'll begin at 6:00 p.m. with a Pot-luck Dinner, followed by Services at 8:00. We'll then sit zazen from 9:00 till midnight, with walking meditation as needed. During sitting, we'll ring the temple bell 108 times to mark the turning of the year.

You may attend during any part of the evening Come when you like and leave when you wish.