



HOT!!!

As many of you know, we've had a very hot summer. During the Great Sky Sesshin we experienced endless days in the upper 90's with humidity off the charts. Those of us in 4 layers of priest clothing were streaming with sweat.

Experiencing this heat, I noticed something: at first, I was pouring with sweat, but as I sat motionless, the sweat dried and I began to feel cooler, so that by the time kinhin arrived I was more comfortable. Of course, this is simply the difference in body heat generated by motion and stillness, but it made me think about an exchange between two Chinese Zen masters.

This exchange is a favorite of Dôgen's, appearing in *Shinji Shôbôgenzô* (his own koan collection), in an evening talk he gave, and in the fascicle, **Spring and Autumn** (*Shunjû*) in *Shôbôgenzô*.

Here's the exchange as it appears in Katherine Thanas and Kazuaki Tanahashi's translation

of **Spring and Autumn**:

"Great Master Wuben of Dongshan was once asked by a monk, "When cold or heat comes, how can we avoid it?"

The master said, "Why don't you go where there is no cold or heat?"

The monk said, "What do you mean by "where there is no cold or heat?"

The master said, "When it is cold, cold finishes the monk. When it is hot, heat totals the monk."

Dôgen suggests that we study the monk's question carefully, advising that "This is to study the moment when cold comes or the moment when heat comes. This cold or heat, complete cold or complete heat – is cold itself or heat itself."

The glossary to the translation says that "cold and heat" represent "life and death." So the issue is how to avoid defining the actual moment in which we find ourselves as something we wish to escape.

What is the place with no cold or heat?

Our instinct is to say that no such place can exist, until we realize that "cold" and "hot" are just labels that we apply to the temperature of the moment. And the way our discriminating mind works, we define things by comparison to something else. "Hot" is "not cold" and "cold" is "not hot."

Perhaps, then, the place where there is no cold or heat is the temperature that is only this, so totally filling the moment that there is no other, no source of comparison. It is the comparison that creates the thing we wish to avoid. But when I know only this, I know neither hot nor cold. I can begin to see my life (and death) as Dôgen did, as just this, each moment complete in itself, without comparison to other moments remembered or dreamed.

But there is more to it than this. The master continues, "When it is cold, cold finishes the monk. When it is hot, heat totals the monk." Dôgen says in his evening talk, "When heat and

cold comes, let go and proceed." and in **Spring and Autumn** he quotes Master Souxun as saying "In this life you can avoid cold and heat." Dôgen comments: " 'In this life' is your whole life; 'avoiding cold and heat' is nothing other than dropping away body and mind."

If the "monk" – you or I – drops away, there is no person to make the discriminating comparisons that bring us to say "Hot!" or "Cold!". There is no person to wish to avoid them, no person to find them distasteful. In zazen, as we let go of our thoughts the problems of comparison, of like and dislike, diminish.

I didn't really mind the heat so much at the Great Sky Sesshin. Letting go of thoughts during zazen seemed to include letting go of the heat. Now if only I could accept each moment of my life and death as easily as I accepted the sweat at Hokyôji .

–Tonen O'Connor

Milwaukee Zen Center – Schedule

September

- 1 Introduction to Zen
- 4 CLOSED for holiday

October

- 6 Introduction to Zen
- 16 All-day sitting
- 17 All-day sitting

November

- 3 Introduction to Zen
- 20 All-day sitting
- 21 All-day sitting
- 25 CLOSED for holiday

To see the 2010 Schedule and more information on Two-day sitting, visit our web site at www.milwaukeezencenter.org



Great Sky Sesshin ceremony at the grave site of Katagiri Roshi at Hokyoji in Minnesota.



Tomon Marr answers questions during the shuso ceremony.

Happenings

On July 21 and 22, Tomon Marr participated as the *shuso* (head monk) in a ceremony known as *hossenshiki*. To serve as *shuso* marks a significant point along the path of a priest-in-training. A wonderful group of Soto priests joined us to for the celebration:

Setsuan Gaelyn Godwin – Houston Zen Center, **Hôkô Karnegis** – St.Paul, MN, **Ryoten Lehman** – Ryumonji Zen Monastery, Iowa, **Senyu Matsumoto** – Los Angeles office of the Sotoshu, **Shohaku Okumura** – Sanshin Zen Community, Indiana, **Zuiko Redding** – Cedar Rapids Zen Center, Iowa, **Daigaku Rummé** – director of Sotoshu North America office, Los Angeles, **Shoken Winecoff** – Ryumonji Zen Monastery, Iowa, **Rosan Yoshida** - Missouri Zen Center. Members of the MZC sangha also participated in the ceremonies: Bob Balderson, Jim Bowker, Jim Gother and Kyle McKinney. Thanks go to Susan Winecke who planned and Bob Balderson, who put together a supper for our guests, Peter Johnson and Pete Tofte who provided transportation and the sangha members who contributed to a splendid potluck lunch.

July 30 & 31, Tonen attended a meeting of the Association of Soto Zen Buddhists (priests certified as teachers by the Japanese Sotoshu) in San Francisco.

August 7- 14, the MZC and the Cedar Rapids Zen Center co-sponsored the sixth annual Great Sky Sesshin at Hokyoji in Minnesota, with strong practice by 16 participants from seven states and Canada. Teachers included Dokai Georgeson, Tonen O'Connor, Zuiko Redding, Brad Warner and Rosan Yoshida. John Rhiel and Maude McGraw attended from the MZC.

Our congratulations to John and Myunghee Eimes on the birth of their son, Max Jun Suh Eimes.



Priests assembled for the shuso ceremony



My Dog is a Zen Master

(Part Two)

I am a biologist and cannot seem to help but view the living world from a scientific point of view. Thus, whenever animal behavior is in question, my first thoughts are always about origin. How did this behavior evolve? It is in this light that I consider the three poisons. I believe that the three poisons are called poisons because they are toxic and, like any toxic substance, the only way to not suffer their effects is to avoid them, or at least limit your exposure. Well, we already know that we cannot completely avoid anger, greed and ignorance. Lucky for us, the Buddha had some great ideas on how to limit the suffering we must endure.

I do not think the three poisons are equally toxic. I consider anger and greed less toxic than ignorance. First, anger is really a manifestation of our innate “fight or flight” response. When

our brains perceive a threat, hormones flow and neurons fire preparing our bodies to either fight or flee the situation. If the situation at hand calls for “fight”, then the response often manifests itself as anger. Yet, this anger is often derived from fear. It may not look like the snake rattling its tail at you is afraid, but it is. And though the fight or flight response is usually only triggered in situations that are potentially dangerous, we humans have found a variety of ways to trigger it in non-vital situations.

Humans are hard wired for greed as well. Humans have spent the vast majority of their time on Earth as hunter-gatherers. What we call “greed” can be traced back to our instinctive drive toward resource allocation. Individuals with more resources can have more offspring, and having offspring is the number one objective of most animals. Again, humans have found all sorts of ways to distort the natural expression of this need to allocate resources. This formerly beneficial behavior has evolved into something that often causes suffering. In nature, the natural drive to obtain resources is held in check by

competition by other animals or by predation (including disease). For humans, there is nothing to hold our resource allocation in check except other humans and the occasional pandemic. Our drive, unchecked by nature, has become distended and perverted. This “un-natural” expression of an evolved behavior is truly toxic. So, how do we avoid ingesting these formerly beneficial substances that have evolved into poisons? Avoid the third (and most deadly) poison, ignorance.

When Gidget was shivering with fear, huddled in the back of the closet, we said she was afraid of the fighter jets. But this is not true. Gidget is not afraid of fighter jets. She doesn't even know what a fighter jet is. What caused Gidget's suffering was ignorance. What made her miserable, what caused her fear, was the fact that there was something very loud outside and our house was shaking on its foundation. Thus, this Zen Master dog was reduced to acute suffering because of the third poison. This sort of evens the score between dogs and humans, when it comes to Buddha Nature. Humans have the ability

to take the mystery out of many phenomena that frighten other beings. In fact, most of the natural phenomena that used to frighten humans have been explained by science. We are no longer victims of ignorance, or at least we shouldn't be. The argument has been made that often the sources of anger and greed are found in ignorance. This can be ignorance of the situation, the perceived threat or the benefit of some perceived resource.

The opposite of ignorance is enlightenment. I believe that more often than not, the root of anger, fear and anxiety is lack of enlightenment. Enlightenment, to me, is simply the process of becoming more aware of one's place in the universe. In this regard, perhaps dogs are less “aware” than humans. Still, I think it might be useful for Buddhists to be mindful of the serenity that comes with being a dog as well as being thankful for our ability to solve problems with our intellect. I think we can learn a lot from dogs. So the question becomes: Do Buddhas have “dog nature”?

– John A. Eimes

milwaukee zen center

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Wed., Thurs., Fri.

6:15 am Zazen
(Zen sitting)
6:55 am Kinhin
(Zen walking)
7:05 am Zazen
7:45 am Service
8:00 end of practice

6:30 pm Zazen
7:10 pm Kinhin
7:20 pm Zazen

Saturday

6:15 am Zazen
6:55 am Kinhin
7:05 am Zazen
7:45 am Service
8:00 breakfast, oryoki
8:25 work period
9:15 break, coffee & tea
9:30 study class*
10:30 end of practice
*except on all-day sitting days

Introduction to Zen

An informal presentation on Buddhism and Zen, followed by instruction in zen sitting, tea and discussion.
6:30-8:30 p.m.—first Wednesday of each month.

Zen sitting instruction and private interview available by appointment. Call 963-0526.

MZC Contact Information

For messages: **Phone:** (414) 963-0526
Fax: (414) 963-0517 **E-mail:** kokyo-an@earthlink.net
For information and
schedules: www.milwaukeezencenter.org

Useful Websites:

Soto Zen Buddhism: <http://global.sotozen-net.or.jp/>
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