

MZC provides a place for meditation, study and reflection, leading to inner awakening and mindful, compassionate action through traditional Soto Zen Practice.

DOGEN'S VIEW OF THE SELF

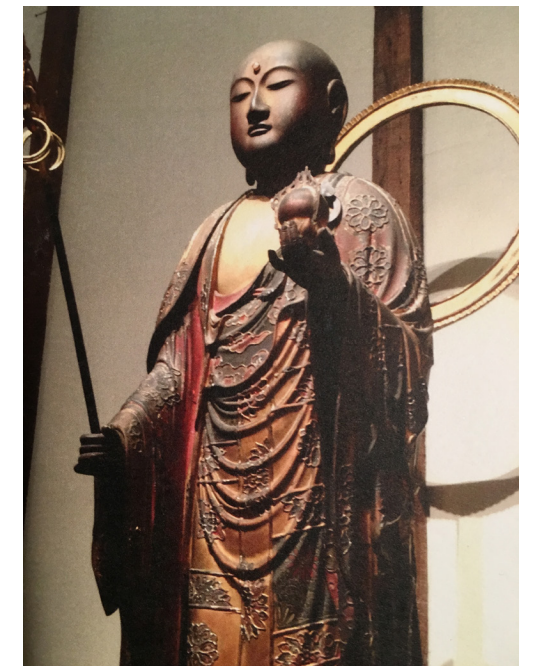
by *Reirin Gumbel*
MZC resident priest

Recently I came across an article by Francis Cook (*Dogen's View of Authentic Selfhood*), which gave me a new perspective on how the self functions in the world. We are familiar with Eihei Dogen's pronouncement in *Fukanzazengi* (*Universal Recommendations for the Principles of Zazen*): "You should...cease from practice based on intellectual understanding...and learn the backward step that turns your light inwardly to illuminate your self. Body and mind... will drop away, and your original face will be manifest."

Francis Cook says this "original face" is the authentic self that is in complete harmony and accordance with the world. In fact, it **is** the world. The subject is the object. "The life of the authentic self is none other than the life of everything, and therefore the authentic self is part of the world of everyday events,... a self which is...an active participant in the world, and a self which is committed to the world." (Cook) The bodhisattva vows to be enlightened for the benefit of all beings, to respond to suffering and struggle in the world by using skillful means.

A group of us are currently studying Eihei Dogen's *Sansuikyo*, the Mountains and Waters Sutra, and we are trying to wrap our minds around his teaching of the natural world, sentient and insentient, being the

self. Dogen makes that claim in many of his essays, e.g. "What the Buddha means by the self is precisely the entire universe" (*Yuibutsu yobutsu, Only a Buddha and a Buddha*). It is obvious that this can only be understood when we are able to transcend the small self and let go of duality. This may mean that we enter a different realm that has nothing to do with our day-to-day reality. But I am learning from our ancestor that through transcendence of the small self can I be of true benefit to beings. Zazen serves our vow to be active in the world.



Weekly Practice Schedule

Saturday Morning

7:30 zazen
8:00 kinhin
8:10 zazen
8:40 service
8:50 soji (work)
9:15 book discussion group

There is no book group on Saturdays when we have a longer sitting (often a zazenkai in the first and a half-day sit in the third week)

Sunday Morning

9:30 zazen
10:05 kinhin
10:15 dharma talk
11:00 informal tea

Every Sunday

9:00 am Zazen Instruction for Beginners

Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday and Friday Mornings

6:15 zazen
6:50 kinhin
7:00 zazen
7:30 service

Wednesday and Thursday Evening Sitting:

6:30 pm zazen
7:00 kinhin
7:10 zazen
7:40 even. service
7:50 Q&A

Every Wednesday

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Introduction to Zen Practice

NOTE: This is the last MIRROR in this format. Further editions will be available online. Please, subscribe to the mailing list on our website, mkzen.org/contact. Let us know if you need to receive it by mail, and we will send you a copy.

Stay in touch with MZC

See our complete schedule of practice and activities at mkzen.org. Subscribe on that website to our monthly email newsletter. Visit us on Facebook, and contact us at info@mkzen.org

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For a complete schedule of Zen Center Practice, please visit mkzen.org

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WHAT DO THE HINDRANCES HINDER? PART 2

By Chuck Eigen
MZC sangha member

In my own practice as a psychotherapist, I often refer to the teaching on the Five Hindrances, in order to help clients to become aware of what they are experiencing. The Five Hindrances refer to the common mind/body states that we all have to deal with, namely hatred/anger/ill-will, craving, mental agitation/worry/restlessness/anxiety, sloth and torpor, and doubt and confusion. What do the five hindrances hinder? The short answer is clear seeing. In the teachings on the five hindrances, as described in the Pali texts, translated by Andrew Olendzki (Spring 2005 issue of Insight Journal), the mind is compared to water and the effects of the five hindrances are likened to various factors that would disturb still water. Paraphrasing, the texts said that if you look into still water, your reflection can be clearly seen. However, if the water is disturbed, then it no longer reflects accurately. For example, anger would be like trying to see your reflection in boiling water: you can't do it. Restlessness or anxiety is like windswept water which, likewise, will not reflect clearly, and so forth. The interesting thing about the hindrances, and any reaction for that matter, beyond the effect it has on reflecting (or being in tune with) reality, is that when you try to communicate with someone while in a reactive state, you are likely to elicit the other person's reactions in response. That's not a recipe for satisfying communication. On the other hand, the more we can speak for what we are feeling, rather than from what we are feeling, the better chance we have of being heard. But reactions are fast, and so we have to get there first, and that's where another Buddhist attribute, mindfulness, which Verasak Veradhamo called "the speed of wisdom," comes in.

The **Branching Streams Conference** that MZC hosted in September was a great success. Forty Zen teachers in the Shunryu Suzuki lineage met for a three-day retreat in the idyllic and peaceful setting of the Siena Center in Racine. We heard Rev. Michaela Bono on Zen Practice and Restorative Justice, Rev. Tonen O'Connor on Prison Practice, and Stephanie Kaza on Climate Change and Climate Justice as Practice Fields. There was a presentation by former Poet Laureate Kimberley Blaeser on Picto-Poems and one on Election Sesshins with Rob Lyons. Breakout groups gave opportunities for discussions on various pressing issues, and every morning started with zazen and service. It was a wonderful time of reunion with old friends and new connections.



Branching Streams Gathering 2019

On September 22, we celebrated several practitioners' 70th birthdays, Reirin's receiving Dharma Transmission, and the inauguration of our new altar. Reirin's teacher, Furyu Schroeder was with us and performed the Eye Opening Ritual for the new Buddha statue. We had a lovely party with great conversation and good food.



MZC EVENTS

New Year's Eve Sitting

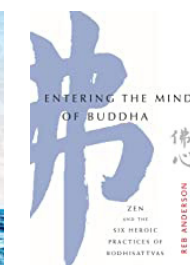
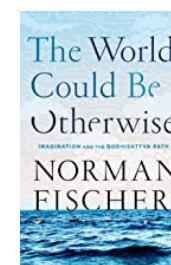
Let us gather our minds in a peaceful place, contemplating our intentions for the New Year. Relaxed periods of zazen at your own pace, from 8 until 9:30 pm. Japanese noodles as refreshment and break. Resuming sitting at 10:30 pm. At 11:40 pm, the Peace Bell will be rung 108 times. Fire Ceremony at midnight: Throw your old karma into the cleansing fire!



Peace Bell at Milwaukee Zen Center

The Six Paramitas – Heroic Practices for Zen Students

Eight Classes on the meaning and practice of the Bodhisattva Virtues of Generosity, Discipline, Patience, Energy, Meditation, and Wisdom. We will be consulting Tenshin Reb Anderson's book *Entering the Mind of Buddha* and Norman Fischer, *The World Could Be Otherwise*. Both books will be available for sale. Mondays, January 6 – February 24, 2020



Visit the website for details and other events:
mkzen.org

Here you can subscribe to the monthly email-newsletter and stay well-informed.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FREE ALL SENTIENT BEINGS?

When we know something or someone, what we know is the knowledge that the mind has acquired, a reference library of thoughts and images. When I know who and what you are, what I know is what I knew. That kind of knowing is always backward facing, and doesn't allow for something new. There is another kind of knowing which is not mediated by the categories that thought applies to everything. This knowing is immediate and intimate with the continual flow of phenomena. This is meditation. That's why there are seemingly contradictory zen instructions of "just don't know," and "only know." Zen practitioners say, "We free all sentient beings," at the end of their morning chant. Part of what that implies is to free others from the confines of our thoughts, that is, our images, assumptions, and expectations. This is not so hard to do with someone who is not in your life. If I imagine letting unknown persons be free of my expectations about them, it's just imaginary. But if I can disentangle my images of others, whom I know, from my images of my self, then that can mean more, because it allows others to be who they are, independent of my ideas about them, and what I think I need from them. Then I no longer need others, or anything other, to be other than who or what it already is. Of course, all that is imaginary too, but closer to where we live. Our images of the other reveal as little of the reality of the other as does a photo of a mountain convey its reality. Actually, the hardest thing about freeing all sentient beings is freeing ourselves, and after all, we are sentient beings too. But when we can do that, if even only momentarily, the rest are already freed (for the moment) from the images we cast upon them. When Dogen said, in Shobogenzo, "Drop off body and mind, and



drop off body and mind of others," what he was referring to was dropping off thoughts and images. When we can do that, we can touch, or be, or realize, if only in passing, a knowing beyond (before) knowledge.

A bodhisattva benefitting sentient beings. Palm-leaf manuscript, India