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## **WHY ZAZEN --- AND HOW**

**Zenrin Robert Lewis**

**Why:** To live, to realize, to actualize, who you are by nature- this is the point of effective Zen practice. Called your Buddha-nature, it is who you already are and always have been. Living your Buddha-nature with calm wholehearted intensity, you see what's actually happening here the way it is. Calm intensity is a contradiction in terms, but dedicated zazen goes beyond words: it naturally leads to the calm intensity that breaks through koan barriers. Those breakthroughs are what koans are for: clearing away impediments to your seeing it like it is.

**How:** In his First Rohatsu Exhortation, Hakuin says "you who

practice Zen samadhi" must (1) sit in the full lotus posture on a thick mat, (2) loosen your clothing, (3) erect your spine and let your body become settled, (4) begin breath-counting concentration, (5) fill your *tanden* (your lower abdomen) with *ki* (the energy alive within), and then (6) directly engage your single koan. | [Read More](#)

## FROM THE ABBOT

### The Old Woman's Enlightenment

An old woman went to hear Master Hakuin give a lecture. He said, "Your mind is the Pure Land, and your body is Amida Buddha. When Amida Buddha appears, mountains, rivers, forests, and fields all radiate a great light. If you want to understand, look into your own heart."

The old woman pondered Hakuin's words day and night, waking and sleeping. One day, as she was washing a pot after breakfast, a great light flashed through her mind. She dropped the pot and ran to tell Hakuin. "Amida Buddha filled my whole body. Mountains, rivers, forests, and fields are all shining with light. How wonderful!" She danced for joy.

"What are you talking about?" Hakuin asked. "Does the light shine up your asshole?"

Small as she was, she gave him a big push, saying, "I can see you're not enlightened yet!" They both burst out laughing.

### Commentary by Shinge Roshi

The unnamed old woman is a prototype often cast as someone initially dismissed, but whose cutting wisdom takes male protagonists by surprise—there are many stories from China and Japan in which monks' puffed-up views of their own attainment are | [Read More](#)

## Poetry by Kaijo Matthew Russel

### **The Sand Grains of the Ganges**

Lately I've been thinking of the sand grains of the Ganges  
or, rather, seeing them:  
in the grooves of floorboards and the fibers of carpet,  
in the pixels on a screen and splotches on canvas,  
in the bricks of buildings and the glass within concrete  
sidewalks.  
Everywhere I turn, it seems, the sand grains of the Ganges  
are there  
reminding me how incomprehensible all this really is.  
How immaculate the fragrance of a Christmas tree!

### **Snowflakes**

The snowflakes descend in droves!  
Floating, pausing, swirling, diving, each one eventually lands.  
Hundreds, thousands, millions, billions, trillions of  
snowflakes!  
What a precious gift.

### **The Cold of Winter**

As though it had never been before, I feel the cold of winter.  
Walking, one step after another. An unforgiving wind leaves  
each uncovered place with its sting, winding and whipping  
through fingers and forehead. This cold knows no boundary,  
I feel, as it slowly permeates the coat I'm wearing. Each step  
it seeps deeper, deeper - my breath seizes up as another  
burst of wind flies by. How to grapple with this cold, I  
wonder? Clueless, I just keep walking, one step at a time.

## Shinge Roshi speaks at the Rubin Museum

Wednesday, February 19, 7 P.M.

The Rubin continues its Brainwave series with this event. The focus this year is "mind over matter," looking at will power and concentration. This program offers a sneak preview of a short filmed portrait of writer Peter Matthiessen followed by an onstage conversation between Shinge Roshi and a mind scientist from M.I.T. \$20 fee, includes admission to the museum galleries, 10% off for Rubin Museum members. For more information and tickets [click here](#).

## DAI BOSATSU ZENDO

### WINTER INTERIM

We have tried a new approach for Winter Interim, sending out an invitation to professors and students at colleges and universities in the Northeast to participate in a special program called "Winter Life at a Zen Monastery." While the schedule is similar to that of our usual Interim period, it offers more personal time in addition to daily zazen, work projects, and movement meditation like yoga, tai chi, and Qigong.

Graduate and undergraduate students have come for periods of a week to a month from such schools as Syracuse University, SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry |

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SAMU WEEKEND | FRIDAY-SUNDAY | MARCH  
21-23

Join us for a weekend of Zen sitting and work practice on a variety of projects in and around the monastery. As much as the weather allows, Samu Weekends are devoted to outdoor work. Typical outdoor work assignments include splitting firewood, weeding, raking, and landscaping. Some participants may also be asked to work indoors. Mindful work is emphasized.

### **Shoes...jackets...shoes...jackets...**

So many visitors to DBZ, so many hard-working arms and feet, and so much clothing. Our shoe rooms are overflowing. We love you to visit, we love that you entrust your shoes and jackets to us, but we're out of space! Please, please, come back and identify your footwear! Come to Samu weekend March 21-23 or May 30-June 1 (why not come to both?), Holy Days Sesshin April 5-12, Nyogen Senzaki Sesshin May 3-8, or just come visit. All shoes (and jackets - did we mention jackets?) not identified by June 1 will be subject to donation to those in need.

**Call 845 439-4566 or [email](#) us for more info or for reservations**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

April 2 Wednesday, Kessei Opening  
April 5-12 Saturday-Saturday, Holy Days Sesshin  
April 18-20 Friday-Sunday, Intro to Zen

## NEW YORK ZENDO

**PARINIRVANA ALL-DAY SIT**  
**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM**  
Please join us as we come together to commemorate

Shakyamuni Buddha's final nirvana. In addition to the usual zazen, chanting, and kinhin, Hokuto Dan Diffin will offer Dharma interviews and a Dharma talk. Hokuto will continue to explore his basic curriculum for Zen training, "Zen Buddhism by the Numbers." This talk will take up number 4: the Four Noble Truths and the Four Great Vows for All.

Doors open at 7:15 a.m. There will be a formal lunch served in the zendo. A suggested donation of \$30 for members or \$40 for nonmembers is appreciated. For more information, please [email](#) or call (212) 861-3333.

## HATHA YOGA FOR STUDENTS OF ZAZEN SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 12:00-1:00 PM

Krystal Stone will offer a one-hour workshop focusing on poses that increase flexibility in the hips and knees and build strength in the core muscles, creating a foundation for stronger and more pain-free zazen. Individual instruction and pose variations ensure that both complete beginners and those with established yoga practices will benefit. Krystal, a longtime ZSS sangha member, was awarded her yoga teacher certification in 2009 from the Integral Yoga Institute. She provides therapeutic yoga instruction to private clients and teaches yoga at the Borough of Manhattan Community College and Marymount College. The fee for the workshop is \$20. All students should bring a yoga mat. For more information, email [krystalstoneholistics@gmail.com](mailto:krystalstoneholistics@gmail.com).

**Call 212 861 3333 or [email](#) us for more info or for reservations**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**MARCH-ON WEEKEND SESSHIN | MARCH  
14-16**

**WITH KOBAYASHI ROSHI AND SHINGE ROSHI**

For our second weekend sesshin of the year, we welcome Gentoku Kobayashi Roshi, abbot of Daisen-in, the training monastery for the Shokoku-ji branch of Rinzai Zen in Japan.

Shinge Roshi has invited Kobayashi Roshi to co-lead this sesshin with her. Kobayashi Roshi will offer dokusan and teisho on Saturday. Shinge Roshi will open the sesshin with a talk on Friday and offer dokusan on Sunday. Full participation is encouraged, though part-time participation will be considered as space allows. Also, there will be limited room to accommodate overnight participants at the zendo. For more information or to reserve your space early, please [email](#) or call (212) 861-3333.

## CHANTING SERVICE

Following Buddhist tradition, at DBZ and New York Zendo, Dai Segaki is chanted each morning, and those recently deceased are memorialized for 49 days after the date of their passing. If you would like to participate in this tradition, please send the names to be chanted and the date of the person's death to [office@newyorkzendo.org](mailto:office@newyorkzendo.org) and/or [office@daibosatsu.org](mailto:office@daibosatsu.org).

## COME PRACTICE WITH US!

Check our site for more info on our programs and calendar of events

**ZENSTUDIES.ORG** See [YouTube link](#) for videos of of Roshi's talks.

**Your support is greatly needed and very much appreciated**

Dai Bosatsu Zendo | 223 Beecher Lake Road | Livingston Manor, NY 12758

New York Zendo | 223 East 67th Street | New York, NY  
10065

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