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The Wisdom of Humility by Guiding Teacher Tim Burkett

Humility comes from the root word humus, which means earth, soil. The dictionary defines humus as the dark organic material in soils, produced by the decomposition of vegetable or animal matter and essential to the fertility of the earth.

Naturally and organically we are creatures of the earth; Alan Watts used to say that the earth is peopling. We came from the saltwater of the oceans and from the richness of the soil, which includes everything. It is aerated and moist because it's not separate from the air and clouds.

Humility allows you to go all the way to the fertile ground, not stick up like you're some big deal because you've got something that others don't have. When you sink all the way to the ground you actually are a Big Deal—not because you are you but because you are not you. You've sunk down to the fertile ground of all being, which is not a solid ground. It is aerated with all sentient beings, so aerated that there's no solidity at all. It is completely groundless.



With humility we may even experience the groundless ground from which all of reality arises and takes a particular shape and function for a little while in the conventional world. Then it returns to the groundless ground of

interdependence and interpenetration. Humility is realizing in a visceral way that we are not separate from anything else. It allows us to sink down into the rich soil, all the way to the bottom.

The more naturally humble you are the more confident you are. It's not a childish, arrogant confidence that is based on some accomplishment that you are proud of. Relaxed confidence doesn't depend on accomplishment because it is the parent of accomplishment not the child of it.

You don't have to be right all the time. If you worry about being right then you have a very fragile confidence. But with humility your confidence is steady, it can withstand turbulent times when things don't go the way you thought they would. When you fall down you just get up. Falling down is no problem. Asking for help is no problem.

Confidence without humility is heavy, so heavy that it's hard to get up when you've fallen. It tells you that failure means you can't do it. You're embarrassed and even ashamed to ask for help because that means you're not good enough. Confidence without humility is rigid. It breaks easily because it is clinging to something specific.

Zen practice is about sinking down into the humus, where humility and confidence come together naturally to create a humble feeling of being at home in your body, wherever it is, whatever is happening. In the soil, we discover a way of being that allows us to experience the world as alive and part of who we are.

Mission:

Our mission is to help people experience a deep and quiet joy—a joy that arises whenever we are fully engaged in the work or play of this moment.

Guiding Teacher:

Tim Burkett

Asst. Guiding Teacher

Ted O'Toole

Dharma Heirs:

Ben Connelly

Guy Gibbon

Wanda Isle

Bussho Lahn

Susan Nelson

Ted O'Toole

Rosemary Taylor

Priests-in-Training:

Stacy Lee King

Mark Turbak

Board Members:

Karen Davis

Paul Gilsdorf

Bussho Lahn

Deb Mielke

Susan Nelson

Jim Niland

Wayne Moskowitz

Randy Wedin

Board of Directors Update

There is lots to be happy about on the board right now! The Open House that we hosted this June as part of the ECCO neighborhood event was a great success, with about 30-40 visitors to the center. MZMC volunteers gave guided tours of our building and many newcomers attended the Introduction to Meditation classes offered that day as well. Lots of connections were made, and lots of friendly seeds were planted!

Our Spring Appeal was also a great success, with our grand total, \$16,845 being \$1,845 over our goal. These funds will go toward maintaining our facility and developing our administrative capacity. Many thanks to our generous members and all who contributed to the appeal.

Finally, the board approved a budget item to allocate funds to a new office position, Communications Administrator. Our goal is to communicate more effectively and more consistently with those on our mailing lists, with a long-term vision of building more relationships and increasing access to the dharma.

Retreat and Class Offerings

Half-Day Sesshin (August 20)

This brief immersion in the traditional sesshin schedule is a good opportunity to become familiar with the forms, stay in practice, or brush up after some time away. This morning includes an orientation, zazen, kinhin (walking meditation), liturgy, a formal vegetarian breakfast using oryoki bowls, and one-to-one meetings with the teacher. This sesshin is led by Ted O'Toole.

Original Zen: What were the first Zen teachings? (August 31)

1500 years ago in China, Buddhism took a new and dynamic form called Zen that thrives to this day. Direct knowledge beyond words, spontaneity, harmony with nature, and bare attention to just this moment are hallmarks of this tradition. We will study some of the earliest and most influential Zen teachers, each with a unique and beautiful expression of every person's ability to awaken now. This class is led by Wanda Isle and runs for six Wednesday evenings and begins on August 31.

Retreat at Hokyoji Zen Practice Community, Eitzen MN (September 20-25)

The fall retreat at Hokyoji, in the bluff country of southeastern Minnesota, is an opportunity to practice surrounded by nature, far from the distractions of city life. We alternate sitting and walking meditation throughout the day, along with daily dharma talks, one-to-one meetings with the teachers, vegetarian meals, a work period, and outdoor group meditation walks. This retreat is led by Susan Nelson and Tim Burkett. There is also a weekend option for this retreat.

Cha-Do: The Way of Tea by Jack Sattel

It is often said that all the major Japanese arts—ceramics, calligraphy, flower-arranging and more—come together in Cha-do. More usually referred to as the Japanese tea ceremony, Cha-do has had a group of practitioners and teachers for more than 25 years in Minnesota.

Tea itself was first introduced to Japan from China in the 6th century. It wasn't until 1191 that tea really took hold in Japan with the return from China of the Zen priest Eisai (1141-1215). Eisai introduced powdered tea and tea seeds brought back from China—planting the seeds at the Kozan-ji temple in the hills northwest of Kyoto.

The tea master Sen Rikyu (1522-1591) developed the “wabi-cha” style of tea built around quiet and austere taste—and this is the style of tea that is practiced and taught in Japan and around the world to the present day. The concepts of “wa/kei/sei/jaku” (harmony/respect/purity/tranquility) are the principles that practitioners seek to integrate into their study of tea and their daily lives.

A long time ago Sen Rikyu said that Cha-do is nothing more than boiling water, making tea, and drinking it. It is this simplicity that makes the study of the tea ceremony a lifelong pursuit.

This fall the MZMC Board will host Jack Sattel and Karen Sontag-Sattel, who will offer the tea ceremonies at the Center. Proceeds will support MZMC. There will be more details about dates and times in the next newsletter.



Tea Ceremony with Karen Sontag-Sattel



New! Try a Beginner's Mind Retreat

Beginner's Mind Retreats are perfect for beginners, and, since we all wish to cultivate beginner's mind, they are perfect for all of us! They are short, three-hour retreats on Saturday afternoons, from one to four. They include guided and sitting meditation, an emphasis on traditional Zen forms, and a short dharma talk.

Beginner's Mind Retreats are great for those who have never done a retreat, and want to dip a toe into the water. They are also great for those accomplished swimmers who would like a little time to refresh that special sense of quiet, shared with a group, and to reconnect to the mind of the beginner, which sees things anew. The next opportunities are July 30 with Ted O'Toole and November 5 with Wanda Isle.

Mark Your Calendar for a Visit from Shoken Winecoff

MZMC will welcome Shoken Winecoff Roshi on Sunday, September 11. Shoken is a long-time friend of the Zen Center, and we're pleased to have him back for a visit and a dharma talk. He is the founding teacher and abbot of Ryumonji Zen Monastery in Dorchester, Iowa and one of twelve Dharma Heirs of our own founder Dainin Katagiri Roshi.

Rev. Winecoff practiced with Katagiri from 1976 until Katagiri's death in 1990. Shoken also received formal training with Ikko Narasaki Roshi and Tsugen Narasaki Roshi at Zuioji Zen Monastery and Shogoji Zen Monastery in Japan for three years from 1989 to 1992. Since that time he has devoted himself to establishing Ryumonji Zen Monastery.



Shoken Winecoff
Ryumonji Zen Monastery



Join Us for Work Practice by Tim Burkett

“When you do something, you should burn yourself up completely, like a good bonfire, leaving no trace of yourself.” —Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

One of the things I enjoyed most as a Zen student was doing manual labor along-side my fellow sangha members and teachers. As many of you know, in Zen we stress the importance of manual labor as a way of calming the mind, immersing ourselves in the moment, and creating a pleasing physical environment.

Recently, my son, who is in his forties, found his birth certificate and brought it over for me to look at. In the space for “father’s occupation,” was the word “janitor.” This brought back fond memories of three different jobs that I particularly enjoyed--working as a janitor at a lodge near the place where my son was born, working in a plant nursery, and working in a cannery. I worked at these jobs in the first decade of my Zen practice. I saw each of these as an opportunity to extend my seated meditation into the most simple activities of daily life. It may seem a little odd to hear me say that my memories of these jobs bring me great joy, but it’s the truth. If we perform our simple activities of daily living with care and attention, we can settle into the same joyful stillness that we experience while sitting in meditation.

I invite you to join me the first Sunday of every month from 11:30-12:30 to do light work together. If you enjoy working in the yard and gardens, Stacy Lee King holds garden practice each Saturday at 11:30.