



Term Student Explanation: 2019 Spring Practice Term

Buddha Eye Temple

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Sincerity is one of the simplest things in the world and also one of the most difficult. It requires vulnerability and uprightness in the face of a constantly shifting and challenging world. We are called to sincerity through the activities and encounters of daily life, and yet, attending to it can be quite elusive. Meeting life squarely takes constant attention and there are countless ways to escape. The foremost aim of the term trainee program is to cultivate and guide our sincere heart through inquiry into the Buddha way. What calls to each of us has called to countless beings throughout the ages and in every corner of the world. What is the call now? Here? How will you respond?

Zen is known for strict, sometimes severe, training. While certainly there is a time and place for austerities, the true strictness of zen is not limited to our typical image of renunciate life. Simply stated, training is removing the gap between our life and Buddha Dharma. We engage training in order to bring all of life into the field of practice; or rather, to wake up to this life as practice of Buddha Dharma. In the traditional monastic practice periods held at zen monasteries, this training is accomplished through cloister and intense attention to every detail of daily life. Zazen, chanting, and studying sutras (the kinds of things we typically associate with Buddhist practice) are of course central, but equal attention is paid to cooking, eating, sleeping, relating to each other, and otherwise taking care of temple life. At the temple we model this kind of monastic training in sesshin and other retreats, but in a community temple like ours, the practice term looks different than the monastic cloister. Recognizing that we all have diverse responsibilities and affiliations throughout the wider community, training is organized to help us wake up to the importance of our whole life, in and outside the temple walls. The approach is to embrace the terrain of our daily life as the field of Buddhist practice and so walk and learn together with each other and the wider world.

Requirements

The program is structured with the following requirements:

- ⤴ **Regular daily zazen and chanting practice:** This is fundamental. All trainees submit an explanation of how they will approach zazen and chanting during the practice period. Minimum requirements are 30 minutes of and a recitation of the term text, daily (at least 6 days a week).
 - ⤴ **Thursday evening meetings:** Term trainees are required to attend these meetings every Thursday from 6:30-8:30 PM. These meetings focus on clarifying dharma principles and connecting them with life. We will use a variety of approaches including: teisho, dharma inquiry, small and large group discussion, sanzen, dharma combat, ritual study, and text study. Absences need to be discussed in advance.
 - ⤴ **Homework:** Homework will consist of several written reflections and explorations of our term text: Verses of Faith Mind.
 - ⤴ **Sanzen:** Term Students should see the Term Teacher for sanzen a minimum of five times during the term.
 - ⤴ **Assemblies:** Trainees should be involved in the regular assemblies of the temple. The minimum requirement is attendance at either Sunday program or Tuesday class most weeks.
 - ⤴ **Zendo Practice Position:** Term Students serve the larger community by facilitating practice, supporting and being supported by the life of the temple. Each student will choose or be assigned a specific way to contribute to the various assemblies at Buddha Eye.
- Participation in Retreats:** You may want to consider participating in all or part of the two meditation intensives during the term.