

# Introduction to Zen Buddhism

Mondays, June 16 – August 4 at 7:00 PM EST  
Online Via Zoom

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## Description

During this eight-session online course, we'll explore the basics of Zen Buddhism, cover the core concepts of Zen, ways to engage in practice, and how to live these teachings day-to-day. Whether you're brand new to Buddhism, just curious about meditation, or looking to reconnect with beginner's mind, you are welcome.

## Requirements

Introduction to Zen Buddhism is an entirely web-based course with no face-to-face meetings. Success in this course depends on having consistent internet access.

Sessions will be conducted via Zoom, a video conferencing platform. Zoom is available for free online. You can use Zoom on a computer, tablet, or smartphone. To help maximize your experience, Zoom Support provides many self-help resources to ensure your questions are answered: <https://support.zoom.com/hc/en>

## Participation & Communications

Active participation is vital to the success of this course, as it enhances your Zen practice and that of our sangha. Recordings of each session will be available online on the Ordinary Zen Sangha YouTube Channel, Facebook Group (please contact the instructor for access), and website within 72 hours. Additional course material will be made available to you upon request; course material is under license by Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International.

If you need to reach me, email is the best method. I generally respond to emails within 72 hours. You may also post course-related questions on the Ordinary Zen Sangha Facebook Group, where I will respond within 72 hours. Please note that other sangha members may also engage in the conversation. If you're having trouble with the course or its material, please email me to discuss the issues.

Announcements will be posted to the Ordinary Zen Sangha Facebook Group as needed. If there's additional important information, I will send it to the email address you provided during registration.

## **Policies & Expectations**

Professionalism is always expected, including your interactions online. Because our online community of practice is a space designed for the free exchange of ideas, we must show respect for one another in all interactions. We will show respect for one another by exhibiting patience and courtesy in our exchanges. Appropriate language and restraint from verbal attacks upon those whose perspectives differ from your own is a minimum requirement. Courtesy and kindness are the norm for our sangha members.

We are all lifelong learners, embodying a beginner's mind by constantly absorbing lessons from the world around us. Attentive, reflective individuals are always open to learning from others. Good discussions are energetic and passionate, yet always respectful and constructive. Vibrant, rigorous inquiry emerges from conversations that:

- Challenge, defend, and apply a range of ideas, theories, perspectives, and skills.
- Extend wisdom into new areas and applications.
- Seek resolution and deeper understanding.

## Ordinary Zen Sangha Community of Practice Expectations

Ordinary Zen Sangha is committed to a community that is supportive, safe, and respectful of all individuals, one that fully embodies our practice. Our community of practice comprises members who participate in both in-person and online sangha-related activities. To that end, all sangha-related activities will be conducted in an atmosphere of friendly participation and interaction among members, recognizing and appreciating the unique experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives that each person brings. Ordinary Zen Sangha members treat others with dignity and respect.

## Ordinary Zen Sangha Facebook Group Netiquette Expectations

The Ordinary Zen Sangha Facebook Group offers a platform for sangha members to share ideas and insights with our online community of practice. Ordinary Zen Sangha members engage in a respectful and supportive environment in all group interactions.

Ordinary Zen Sangha members follow these netiquette guidelines:

- **Respect one another:** It's essential to avoid personal attacks, even if you disagree with someone's opinion. We encourage healthy, constructive discussions.
- **Avoid using all CAPS:** Writing in all capital letters can come across as "shouting" and is generally seen as impolite or aggressive.
- **Use proper salutations:** Always begin posts, comments, or replies with a polite greeting (e.g., Dear Sangha Members, Good afternoon, Mr. Name).
- **Communicate tastefully:** Avoid profanity or offensive language in any communication.
- **Review before posting:** Always reread and carefully edit your message before you send, submit, or post it.

Mindful, caring contributions that enrich our community of practice are welcome; however, moderators will remove posts that are not respectful, do not focus on sangha-related activities or weekly dharma talks, or are deemed unconstructive.

## Course Schedule & Session Descriptions

- **Week 1**

- **Topic:** The Buddha
- **Date & Time:** Monday, June 16 at 7:00 PM
- **Description:** Welcome! During this session, we'll learn more about the Buddha's life and legacy, discuss the Buddha's role as a Teacher, and dispel common misconceptions about the Buddha. We'll end our time together exploring our own Buddha nature and what it means to be a bodhisattva.

- **Week 2**

- **Topic:** Buddhist Traditions
- **Date & Time:** Monday, June 23 at 7:00 PM
- **Description:** This session will explore the major schools of Buddhism, examining key Buddhist texts, rituals, and influential teachers. There will be a brief introduction to the origins of Zen Buddhism, followed by a discussion on the role of the Sangha.

- **Week 3**

- **Topic:** Core Principles & Practices of Zen
- **Date & Time:** Monday, June 30 at 7:00 PM
- **Description:** Does Zen make sense? We'll answer that question and introduce key figures in Zen Buddhism, their origins, and their transmission of the Dharma through various schools of Zen.

- **Week 4**

- **Topic:** The Four Noble Truths & Eightfold Path
- **Date & Time:** Monday, July 7 at 7:00 PM
- **Description:** This session will provide a foundational lesson on the Three Jewels, the Four Noble Truths, and the Eightfold Path—profound Buddhist insights for Zen practice.

- **Week 5**

- **Topic:** Working with Mind, Heart & Spirit
- **Date & Time:** Monday, July 14 at 7:00 PM
- **Description:** Sit like your head is on fire. We'll explore the Five Aggregates, disturbances that obscure clarity and peace, and how to integrate Zen into our daily lives. Dharma Teacher Abbot Will (Hae An) Rauschenberger will be in attendance to help answer your questions on the topic.

- **Week 6**

- **Topic:** Transforming the Zen Mind
- **Date & Time:** Monday, July 21 at 7:00 PM

- **Description:** This week, we'll explore fundamental concepts on the transformation of the Zen mind, how suffering is part of the path to liberation, and the importance of rest as an act of acceptance. Dharma Teacher Abbot Will (Hae An) Rauschenberger will be in attendance to help answer your questions on the topic.
- **Week 7**
  - **Topic:** Lotus of the Heart
  - **Date & Time:** Monday, July 28 at 7:00 PM
  - **Description:** During this session, we'll connect and deepen our understanding of dependent origination and the Doctrine of Two Truths. We'll also explore Zen guidance on karma, awakening within our suffering, and the Five Moral Precepts. Dharma Teacher Abbot Will (Hae An) Rauschenberger will be in attendance to help answer your questions on the topic.
- **Week 8**
  - **Topic:** Living the Dharma
  - **Date & Time:** Monday, August 4 at 7:00 PM
  - **Description:** In this final session, we'll offer insights on how to stay engaged in Zen practice, including maintaining beginner's mind, developing curiosity, and being open to the dharma. Dharma Teacher Abbot Will (Hae An) Rauschenberger will be in attendance to help answer your questions on the topic.



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