

Spring 2024 Practice Period:

Title: The Dharma Gate of Non-Thinking: Entering on the Path of Shikantaza Practice

Description: During this spring's practice period, participants will embark on an eight-week journey to explore the historical roots and philosophy of shikantaza practice. Often sighted as a cornerstone of Soto Zen, the concept of shikantaza, or "Just Sitting practice," is said to illuminate the bare essence of the Soto Zen tradition. The eight-week session will offer participants a variety of avenues to explore shikantaza practice, including large group discussions facilitated by experienced Zen teachers, opportunities for ongoing peer-to-peer dialogues, hands on meditation practice, and an exploration of a variety of written sources that span revered Buddhist teachers to contemporary voices. In addition, participants will be offered a rich variety of exercises that embody shikantaza and apply the teachings of shikantaza to daily life.

Practice Period Leaders

- **Ted O'Toole:** E-mail, donen9@gmail.com.
- **Mark Turbak:** (651) 278-6047, PracticePeriod2024@gmail.com

Weekly Schedule

Optional assignment to be completed by Week 1 (Wednesday, April 3rd / Thursday, April 4th)

- Domyo Burke. (2023). *Shikantaza: Having the Guts to Just Sit and Let Go of Doing Anything*. Zen Studies Podcast.

Week 1 (Wednesday, April 3rd / Thursday, April 4): Practice Period Overview and Reflections on Domyo Burke Podcast (Ted O'Toole)

Assignments to be completed by Week 2 (Wednesday, April 10th / Thursday, April 11th)

- Issho Fujita (2002). *Zazen is Not the Same as Meditation*. Barre Center for Buddhist Studies Insight Journal, Spring 2002.
- Taigen Dan Leighton (2002). *Hongzhi, Dogen and the Background of Shikantaza*. The Art of Just Sitting: Essential Zen Writings on the Practice of Shikantaza

Week 2 (Wednesday, April 10th / Thursday, April 11th): Just Sitting: Bringing Shikantaza to Life (Ted O'Toole)

Assignments to be completed by Week 3 (Wednesday, April 17th / Thursday, April 18th)

- Guo Gu (2020). *You Are Already Enlightened*. Lion's Roar
- Hongzi Zhenguiue (12th Century CE). *Guideposts on Silent Illumination*
- Hongzhi Zenguiue (12th Century CE).. *Cultivating the Empty Field*

Week 3 (Wednesday, April 17th / Thursday, April 18th): Hongzhi's Silent Illumination's History, Tradition and Contemporary Expression (Mark Turbak)

Assignments to be completed by Week 4 (Wednesday, April 24th / Thursday, April 25th)

- Jan Chosen Bays (2018). *Koan and Shikantaza: Escaping the Trap of Delusion*. Lion's Roar.

- Eve Myoen Marko and Wendy Egyoku (2020). *Louise Collets Eggs*. Book of Householder Koans: Waking Up in the Land of Attachment.
- Sallie Jiko Tisdale (2013). *Kongshi's Bathhouse*. The Hidden Lamp: Stories from Twenty-Five Centuries of Awakened Women.

Week 4 (Wednesday, April 24th / Thursday, April 25th): Illuminating Shikantaza Practice through Koan Study (Mark Turbak)

Assignments to be completed by Week 5 (Wednesday, May 1st / Thursday, May 2nd)

- James Ishmeal Ford (2022) *Master Dogen & the Koan of Shikantaza*. Patheos.
- Dogen Zenji (1231). *Bendowa (The Wholehearted Way)*

Week 5 (Wednesday, May 1st / Thursday, May 2nd): Eihei Dogen's Art of Thinking of Non-Thinking (Ted O'Toole)

Assignments to be completed by week 6 (Wednesday, May 8th / Thursday, May 9th)

- Ed. Beata Grant (2003). *Daughters of Emptiness. Poems of Chinese Buddhist Nuns*.
 - Haiyin (9th Century). *The color of water merges with that of the sky...*, p. 28
 - Zhengjue (12th Century). *Spring morning on the lake: the wind merges with the rain...*, p. 34
 - Miaozhan (13th Century). *In the shade of the two trees and the hanging greens of the cliff...*, p. 48
 - Wuwei (16th Century). *After sixty four years of working and toiling...*, p. 58
 - Shenyi (17th Century). *Recalling a past experience sent to Wang convent...*, p.63
 - Ziyong (19th Century). *Traveling in the mountains*, p. 138

Week 6 (Wednesday, May 8th / Thursday, May 9th): Shikantaza Practice and Poetic Imagery (Ted O'Toole)

Assignments to be completed by Week 7 (Wednesday, May 15th / Thursday, May 16th)

- Zenju Earthlyn Manual. (2020). Except *Deepest Peace: Contemplations from a Season of Stillness*.
- Zenju Earthlyn Manual. (2021). *Dharma Talk: Boundlessness*. Berkeley Zen Center Community. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRLrwVx-IWQ&t=3361s>

Week 7 (Wednesday, May 15th / Thursday, May 16th): Shikantaza meets Daily Life in the 21st Century (Mark Turbak)

No Assignments for Week 8 (Wednesday, May 22nd / Thursday, May 23rd)

Week 8 (Wednesday, May 22nd / Thursday, May 23rd): Mark Turbak Shuso Ceremony