

San Antonio Zen Center



Welcome to the San Antonio Zen Center!

The San Antonio Zen Center is in the Soto lineage of Zen which came to the United States with Shunryu Suzuki's founding of the San Francisco Zen Center in 1959. It was born through an affiliation with the Austin Zen Center in the 1990's, grew at the San Antonio Shambhala Center, and opened as a center in its own right in April 2008. It continues to benefit from ties with the San Francisco, Austin, and Houston Zen Centers, as well as Green Gulch Farm and Tassajara Zen Mountain Center.

If I speak of Zen, it won't be Zen I'm speaking of.

--Philip Kapleau

You have to say something.

--Dainin Katagiri

Center Schedule

Monday Early Sit - 6:00 a.m.: Begin first 30 minute sit 6:00 a.m. followed by kinhin from 6:30 a.m.-6:40 a.m., then a second sit from 6:40 a.m.-7:10 a.m.

Monday - 5:40 p.m.: Seated Meditation - 40 minutes followed by short bowing & chanting ceremony.

Monday - 7:30 p.m.: Buddhism & the 12 step model of recovery meditation & discussion group. 20 minutes of meditation, then reading & discussion, then more meditation.

Wednesday - 5:40 p.m.: Seated Meditation - 40 minutes followed by short bowing & chanting ceremony.

Thursday Early Sit - 6:00 a.m.: Begin first 30 minute sit 6:00 a.m. followed by kinhin from 6:30 a.m.-6:40 a.m., then a second sit from 6:40 a.m.-7:10 a.m.

Saturday Morning

8:15 a.m.: Seated Meditation

8:45 a.m.: Walking Meditation

8:55 a.m.: Seated Meditation

9:25 a.m.: Morning Ceremony

9:40 a.m.: Temple Cleaning

10:00 a.m.: Break

10:15 a.m.: Dharma Talk

Beginner's instruction is offered on the 2nd & 4th Saturdays of the month at noon. Please call the Center for more information.

What is Zen?

"The purpose of studying Buddhism is not to study Buddhism, but to study ourselves."

Zen is a form of Buddhism that began in China and developed further in Japan. Our lineage, Soto Zen, is derived from the teachings of Eihei Dogen, who lived in Japan in the 1200's. Many of us have our first contact with Zen through koans, paradoxical questions such as "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" However, Soto emphasizes zazen, or "just sitting", and the gradual ripening of understanding more so than the study of koans and attaining sudden enlightenment (kensho). Still there is no need to exclude koans and kensho from Soto practice.

It might be said that Zen is awakening to the present anew in each moment, both being it and relating to it appropriately, in that one neither grasps at the present reality nor pushes it away.

Zen teachings touch on the things that all lineages of Buddhism have in common, though with varying degrees of emphasis (Reb Anderson, personal communication, 2004):

- The impermanence of all things and conditions
- The continual co-arising of things only in relation to all else
- The limitations of conceptual thought
- The importance of compassion for all beings
- The realization that all things are the same in true nature, in that they are devoid of an independently existing essence apart from the rest of the universe

John Grimes is now the resident priest at San Antonio Zen Center. He is available for private practice discussion.



For more information, the full schedule, and notices of special classes and events, please contact us:

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Look for us on Facebook and MySpace



A Few Useful Terms

<i>Dharma</i>	The teachings of Buddha, or more broadly, the natural law of the universe
<i>Doan</i>	Person who keeps time during zazen and plays the bells for service
<i>Ino</i>	Person in charge of the comfort and maintenance of the zendo
<i>Kinhin</i>	Meditative practice done while walking
<i>Kokyo</i>	The chant leader who gives cues for service
<i>Sangha</i>	A group of people practicing Zen, or by extension, everyone we encounter in daily life
<i>Soji</i>	Formal cleaning of the zendo and center
<i>Zafu</i>	The small, round cushion used for zazen
<i>Zazen</i>	Meditative practice done in a seated position
<i>Zendo</i>	Meditation hall

Meditation: It's Not What You Think

The primary form of meditation in Zen is zazen, or sitting practice, but we also use kinhin (walking meditation) as well as chanting and other forms of practice. This is just a short primer; everyone is encouraged to attend beginner's instruction, offered twice a month.

Zazen

Zazen is the heart of Zen practice. Although there are many possible postures, the most common is as follows:

- Sit cross-legged on the edge of the cushion so that your back is straight but not strained.
- Relax your shoulders and hold your hands in your lap with your thumbs just touching
- Straighten your neck so that your ears are over your shoulders and your nose is in line with your sternum
- Keep your eyes half-open with a softened, downward gaze
- The base of your posture should be the pelvis and both knees, but it is fine to use support cushions as needed
- Once your posture is settled, you can begin to allow the mind to settle. One practice is to breathe naturally as you count your exhalations up to ten, then return to one. You may lose count or notice thoughts arise in the natural activity of the mind; that is okay. They can come and go without our grasping or rejecting them. Just return to one.

Kinhin

Walking meditation is an extension of zazen.

- Stand erect with hands at chest level, right palm around the left fist.
- Walk slowly, clockwise, and orient the attention as for zazen.
- Try to keep an even space in front of and behind you.
- If you allow your steps and your breath to arise naturally together, you will often find you take one breath per step.
- Your movement should be continual, like a wave.



So the most difficult thing is always to keep your beginner's mind. There is no need to have a deep understanding of Zen. Even though you read much Zen literature, you must read each sentence with a fresh mind. You should not say, "I know what Zen is," or "I have attained enlightenment"...If you start to practice zazen, you will begin to appreciate your beginner's mind. It is the secret of Zen practice.

--Shunryu Suzuki

References and Suggested Reading

- *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind: Informal Talks on Zen Meditation and Practice*, by Shunryu Suzuki
- *Not Always So: Practicing the True Spirit of Zen*, by Shunryu Suzuki
- *Being Upright: Zen Meditation and the Bodhisattva Precepts*, by Reb Anderson
- *Warm Smiles from Cold Mountains*, by Reb Anderson
- *Nothing Special: Living Zen*, by Charlotte Joko Beck
- *Everyday Zen*, by Charlotte Joko Beck
- *Crooked Cucumber: The Life and Zen Teachings of Shunryu Suzuki*, by David Chadwick
- *Taking the Path of Zen*, by David Aitken
- *You Have to Say Something: Manifesting Zen Insight*, by Dainin Katagiri
- *Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dogen*, by Kazuaki Tanahashi