

April 1 2023  
Volume 1, Issue 2



# Rocky Mountain Zen Newsletter

## BEYOND SPRING EQUINOX

I wish our friends of Rocky Mountain Zen Sangha a peaceful closure to the long cold winter season as we approach the spring equinox. I recently had a great visit to Calgary, Lethbridge, Raymond, and Edmonton last month to have a half-day Zazen-kai at the Bunka Centre of Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden with our friends in Alberta.

We also enjoyed getting connected with Tim Sampson of the Calgary Soto Zen Sangha, Tracey Pickup of Wildrose Sangha in Calgary, and Alda Ngo and Aaron Roth of Going as a River Sangha in Edmonton. In addition, I was able to confirm the Dharma connection of the sanghas across the Rocky Mountain in B.C. with Mountain Rain Zen Community in Vancouver and Middle Way Sangha in Victoria.

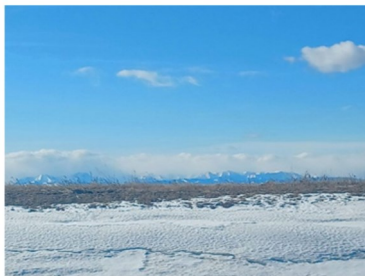
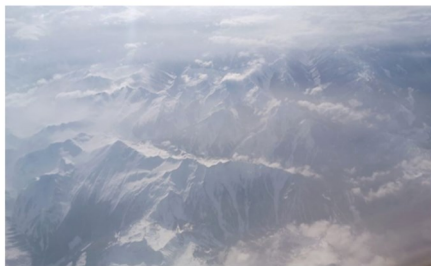
I hope we continue to cherish the Zen practice both within among our close friends of sangha and the among the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in ten directions from the past, present and future.

Warmly in gassho,  
*Gyokei Yuki Yokoyama*



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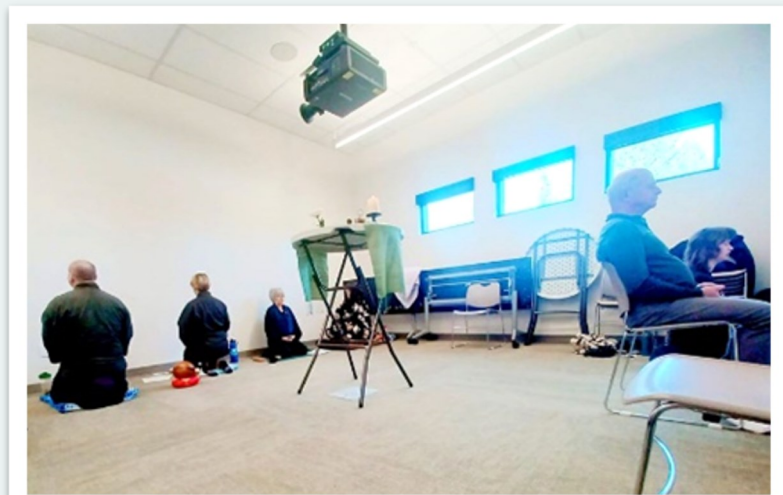
# ROCKY MOUNTAIN ZEN FIRST ANNIVERSARY ZAZEN-KAI

Rocky Mountain First Anniversary Zazen-kai at Bunka Centre, Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden, Lethbridge, Alberta.

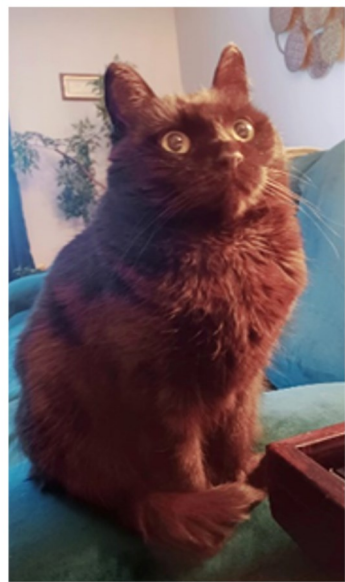
We had Mokusho (Quebec) and Randall (Sogaku) (Tennessee) join us on Zoom and Melissa and Sean (Horyu) (Edmonton), Laurie-Ann and Margaret (Lethbridge) and JP and Kathy (Reigetsu) (Raymond) join us in person.



*Special thanks to Reigetsu Kathy and JP for hosting us at their house in Raymond.*







## Zendo Pets of Rocky Mountain Zen

Please meet Sylvia, the Official Mascot of Rocky Mountain Zen. She lives in Raymond, AB., with RMZ's Kathy (Reigetsu). She likes chin scratches, sitting in zazen, and knocking over things in the zendo. She purrs the loudest when sitting with our teacher, Gyokei-san.

*We will feature the pets who practice with us in each newsletter. Send in your pictures for a feature in a future edition!*



*Our Edmonton practice leader, Horyu (Sean) received his rakusu (left). A big thank you to Sean for driving all the way from Edmonton to Raymond and back!*



*Raymond Zendo in the sun*



*Beautiful sunrise in Raymond*



*Catching up with Kinjo Sensei from Take's Karate Dojo (left) and Trudy, a RMZ member in Lethbridge (right).*



*Meeting Wildrose Sangha in Calgary (left) and joining in practice with Calgary Soto Zen (right).*

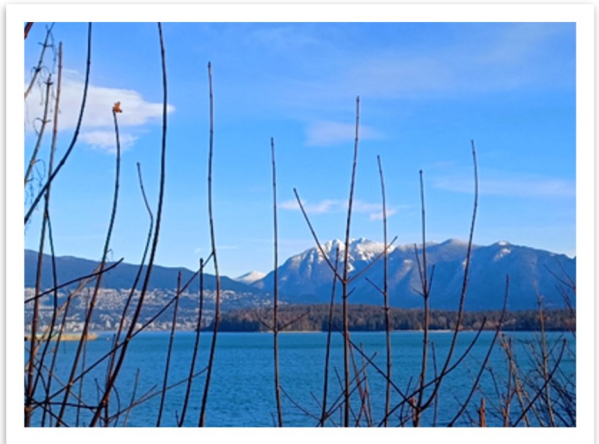


**Meeting with Aaron and Alda from Going as a River Sangha in Edmonton**

Sean, Melissa and Yuki sat with Alda and her sangha members including Aaron on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023. It was a great opportunity to build a connection with Thích Nhất Hạnh's school.

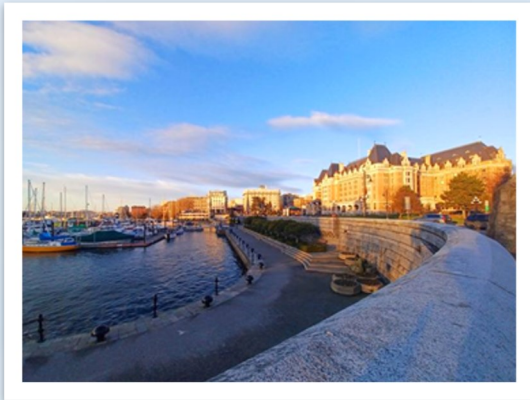


## VISITING BRITISH COLUMBIA SANGHAS



Mountain Rain Zen Community, Blue Mountain Zendo, Wall Street Zendo, and Vancouver Zen Center Gyokei visited the Mountain Rain Zen Community currently led by Kate McCandless and Michael Newton. This community has the largest number of members and is growing bigger with the participation of people of all ages.

## British Columbia Adventures—On the Island!



### Middle Way Sangha, Victoria Soto Zen

Gyokei visited Wayne from the Middle Way Sangha. Wayne is a lay teacher and a student of Richard Baker. They are well connected with the Mountain Rain Zen Community.



*Vancouver Zen Center (left) and Wall Street Zendo (right).*



## Recent Dharma Talk



**Rev. Kuden Boyle, Forest City Zen Group**

**London ON.**

*Rev. Kuden Boyle generously shared with us his insight on Zen practice on February 11th, 2023. He is a dharma-transmitted teacher of Forest Zen Group located in London, Ontario.*

### **Collective Heat of Charcoals**

Kodo Sawaki once said the charcoals scattered around individually can generate only so much heat and eventually die out. Yet when collected in one place, they generate heat strong enough to burn down the entire building. Individual Zen practitioner and sangha is like this. When we share the heat of the flame of Dharma, we generate heat that is beyond our own capacity. That is the strength of Sangha.



### **Wind of the House**

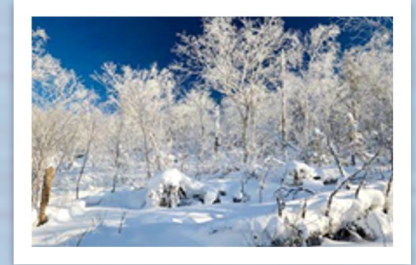
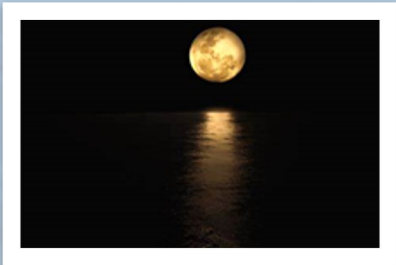
Hoitus Suzuki Roshi recently said in one of the Dharma talks,

*“For a Zen practitioner, it is important to remember those in suffering and pain even when we are celebrating our daily life and auspicious occasions..”*

He encouraged us to think about this deeply. Then he said:

*“The wind of the house is like the pure white snow in the winter, buds of plum blossoms, or the moon light in the dark.”*

That is how we pray for those in suffering, live this single day, and practice Zen.





**Celebrating**  
 For over a century, the living circle of Zen has grown roots, put forth blossoms and  
**One Hundred Years**  
 Flowered in North America. Help honor the depth and breadth of Soto Zen Buddhism  
**of American Zen**  
 as it has transformed our lives. Explore the many events and projects surrounding the 2022 centennial at [www.100SotoZen.org](http://www.100SotoZen.org)




*100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Soto Zen Mission with the Head Priest of Japanese Soto Zen School at Zenshuji Soto Mission on May 28.*

Preliminary 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memorial Service for Keizan Jokin Zenji with President of Soto Zen Headquarters Office in Tokyo on May 27 and the 700<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memorial Service for Keizan Jokin Zenji and Plan for a Japan Tour in 2024.

Announcement of Official Translation of Shobogenzo by Eihei Dogen on May 27.

### **Kotatsu—Blanketed Table**



In Japan, people still use Kotatsu in the living room to stay warm. Kotatsu is a low table with a small heater installed under the table and covered in a blanket. This creates a cozy space for family to chat, drink tea, or watch TV.

This zendo cat approves.



## One Point Instruction of Zazen

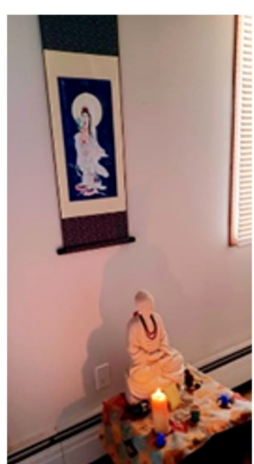
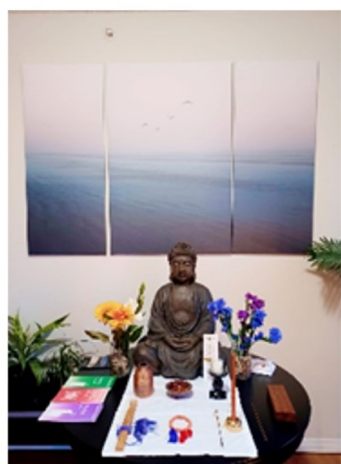


Settle your breath, body and mind

Exhale completely and take a breath  
(Kanki-issoku)

Quietly make a deep exhalation and inhalation. Slightly open your mouth and exhale smoothly and slowly. In order to expel all the air from your lungs, exhale from the abdomen. Then close your mouth and continue to breathe through your nose naturally. This is called *kanki-issoku*.

## Canadian Altars from Yuki's Travels



All Living Beings Hermitage (top left), Wildrose Sangha (top second from left), Ninen from Tsawwassen (top second from right), Avalokiteshvara of Vancouver Zen Centre (top right). Onsen from Victoria (bottom left), Reigetsu's altar in Raymond (bottom middle), Clare from Vancouver (bottom right).



## 6TH FLAVOR FROM GYOKEI'S TALK AT THE BUNKA CENTER

Monks of Eiheiji once said, to serve a meal for a sangha, there must be a harmony of 6 flavors: sourness bitterness, sweetness, saltiness, spiciness, and then subtlety.

### 六味 Rokumi Six Flavors



- 1) 苦味 (にがみ Nigami/ Bitter)
- 2) 酸味 (さんみ Sanmi/ Sour)
- 3) 甘味 (あまみ Amami/ Sweet)
- 4) 辛味 (からみ Karami/ Spicy)
- 5) 鹹味 (かんみ Kanmi/ Salty)
- 6) 淡味 (たんみ Tanmi/Subtle)

We honor the flavor of all and especially of subtle flavor of the ingredient is the original flavor that enhances the other flavors. Practice of Zen, relationship with other individuals, and life itself have their own subtle flavor.

How do we taste it? The six flavored meal embody three virtues:

- 1) simple
- 2) clean
- 3) in accordance with Dharma.

It is the principle for Zen cooking, and it is also the principle of our receiving the meal.

Easily enough, we can see this is how we receive life, and practice relationships. To live such teachings require patience and constancy.

It is not about suppressing your ego, questions, desires. It is more about honoring the nature, like the Indigenous hunter patiently waiting for nature to make its offerings according to its own time, for hours and sometimes days.

It is the attitude we maintain when we practice Zen.



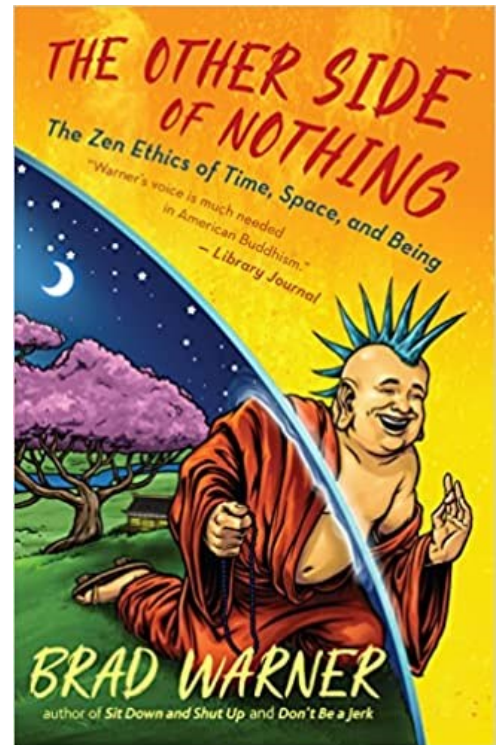
# BOOK REVIEW—THE OTHER SIDE OF NOTHING BY BRAD WARNER

*Review provided by Randall (Sogaku) of RMZ*

The Buddha. The Dharma. The Sangha. And.....Ultraman?  
*The Other Side of Nothing: The Zen Ethics of Time, Space, and Self* by Brad Warner explores Buddhist ethics of the Soto Zen tradition, using the Noble Eightfold Path and the Buddhist Precepts as guidelines to live, and steer, an ethical life. The components of each are examined, and related to his own life as examples of how the Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path can enhance anyone's life.

His writing style is direct and simple in order to make complex Zen concepts easier to understand for any reader, non-Buddhist or Buddhist alike. Thrown throughout the book are references to TV series and films he enjoys such as Ultraman, Godzilla, Ancient Aliens, and Star Trek. Some readers may not fully grasp the references but he does explain them enough to not to leave the reader searching online for old Star Trek episodes. However, he never deviates from his main goal: explaining Zen ethics.

Overall, *The Other Side of Nothing* would be recommended to any Buddhist and those wanting to learn more about Soto Zen Buddhism. In this reviewer's opinion, the book is his best thus far.



## Rocky Mountain Zen Online

ZOOM ID: 692 424 2965

M/W/F Sunrise Zazen 6:30 am—7:15 am

Book Club every 1st and 3rd Wednesday, and every  
2nd and 4th Thursday of the month  
7:00 pm - 7:45 pm

Full service Sat 9:30 am—10:30 am

[www.rockymountainzen.weebly.com](http://www.rockymountainzen.weebly.com)

