

Still Point Zen Buddhist Temple
A Zen Temple in the Heart of Detroit

Course Descriptions

Meditation Course

This is a three session course that provides instruction on meditation postures; yoga stretches that help improve one's meditation practice; mindful breathing and concentration; and temple etiquette. Our emphasis is on developing a deep sense of peace that we can take back into the rest of our lives, for the benefit of all beings. This course can be taken by beginners as an introduction to meditation, as well as by more seasoned practitioners seeking to fine-tune their practice.

Zen and the Art of Writing

Writing can be a deeply spiritual practice. The half-day seminar will cover ground rules for writing - whether you write just for yourself or for others. Also included: several writing exercises for strengthening one's mindfulness muscles. The Zen and the Art of Writing retreat is a full day of exercises combining writing and meditation. This retreat can be attended over and over and over.

Basic Elements of Zen Practice seminar

Designed for everyone from beginners to seasoned practitioners, this seminar focuses on the formal practices of Zen Buddhism, their historical developments, and the ways in which they can inform and enrich the everyday lives of 21st century householders in the Motor City. While Still Point's meditation class teaches the specifics of sitting practice, this seminar contextualizes it, as well as examines in further detail Zen's lesser-known practices and liturgy.

Day One: Formal Practices of the Various Zen Schools: Their Functions and Historical Evolutions

Day Two: The Six Paramitas and The Practice of Everyday Life.

The Life of Buddha

This class focuses on Shakyamuni Buddha, who was born into a life of extreme comfort and luxury, and who gave it all up at the age of 29 to discover why people suffer -- and to put an end to such suffering. His is a great, wild and wonderful story, filled with timeless lessons of wisdom and compassion.

On Forgiveness

Spiritual growth, by its very nature, includes the practice of forgiveness. In Buddhism

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forgiveness is not about turning the other cheek or letting someone continue getting away with behavior that is unkind or cruel. Real forgiveness means letting go. This seminar introduces techniques we can use to deepen our ability to forgive and get on with the rest of our lives.

Zen Poetry: The Art of Writing Haiku

Haiku are basically short, imagistic poems. As with photos, haiku have a way of awakening us to the details of everyday life. This half-day seminar introduces the haiku, its history, and intersections with Zen practice, and features numerous writing exercises culminating in a to-be-announced investigation of haiku master Basho's dictum, "To learn about the pine, go to the pine." Bring a clean, full-size notebook and your favorite pen.

Mindfulness in Everyday Life

To practice mindfulness in our daily lives is to practice the realization that our true nature can exist nowhere but here and now. This seminar considers daily situations, from morning breakfast and driving to work in traffic jams, to working out conflicts at work or home. Infused with mindfulness, every situation in our lives is a vehicle for awakening.

Buddhist Approaches to Death and Dying

Buddhism emphasizes the truth that "all things arise and pass away," recognizing that, because of this, life itself is constantly being renewed. But Buddhism also kindly acknowledges the difficulties this may bring us, and so has sprouted through the centuries numerous wise and practical teachings on death and dying. This class will help participants gain a better understanding of what happens during the dying process. We will examine ways we can help others in their dying and look at issues we all must face in our own mortality.

Understanding The Heart Sutra

Description forthcoming.

Understanding The Lotus Sutra

In every Buddhist tradition, the scriptures (sutras) are an important aspect of practice, containing the teachings that have been passed down for centuries. This half-day seminar will discuss the Lotus Sutra, one of the most important sutras in Mahayana Buddhism. Seminar participants will explore its place in Zen Buddhist practice, as well as the message of the stories it contains. No previous experience or knowledge is required for this seminar.

Korean Zen: A History

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To this day, Korean Zen loudly echoes the earliest Chan (Zen) communities of China. Properly called "Son," Korean Zen is earthy and unpretentious, and its history is filled with inspiring examples of spiritual cultivation - some quiet and steady; some wild and often hilariously inadvisable. This class will briefly examine the lives and teachings of some of Zen's earliest pioneers in China before looking more closely at Korean Son proper, and will finish by outlining Son - and more generally Korean Buddhism - as presently practiced in South Korea and throughout the world.

Moving Energy in the Body: Basic Ki Gong, Ki Breathing, and Guided Visualization
Description forthcoming.

Being Peace in Times of War

Teachings of Pema Chodron (creative uncertainty), Thich Nhat Hanh (embracing emotions), and Marshall Rosenberg (non-violent communication) will be our guide. Please bring a journal and pen with you.

Verses on the Faith Mind: Investigating One of Zen's Earliest Teachings

Zen began as a meditation-based style of Buddhism in China with the arrival of the Indian monk Bodhidharma. His spiritual grandson was the monk Seng T'san, who is credited with writing what is perhaps Zen's first proper text. Hsin-Hsin Ming (or "Verses on the Faith Mind") is a poem that reflects Zen's philosophical origins as a kind of marriage of Chinese Taoism and Indian Mahayana Buddhism. This seminar will examine the legends of these early Zen pioneers, as well as unpack these beautiful teachings, which are every bit as relevant to householders in the 21st century as they were to mountain ascetics during the Sui Dynasty.

Mysticism in the World's Religions

The world's major religions have all generated voices of wisdom and holiness. This interactive seminar will invite reflection and conversation on the words and teachings of wisdom traditions the world around. Writings of Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Hindu, and secular experiences will provide ample fuel to fire our spiritual intuition amidst the comfortable ambience of Still Point.

Earth Zen: Home Gardening from a Buddhist Perspective

Description forthcoming.