

## Full Moon Zen

### Precepts As a Path to Wholeness

Led by Jeff Kōgen Seul, Roshi  
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*We have to learn to value ignorance as much as knowledge  
And failure as much as success.  
As you integrate ignorance and failure into your knowledge and success,  
do the same with all the alien parts of yourself.  
Take everything that's bright and beautiful in you  
and introduce it to the shadow side of yourself.  
Let your altruism meet your egotism,  
Let your generosity meet your greed,  
Let your joy meet your grief.*

*Everyone has a shadow...  
But when you are able to say,  
"I am all of the above, my shadow as well as my light,"  
The shadow's power is put in service of the good.  
Wholeness is the goal, but wholeness does not mean perfection,  
It means embracing brokenness as an integral part of your life.*

*As you welcome whatever you find alien within yourself,  
extend that same welcome to whatever you find alien in the outer world.  
I don't know any virtue more important these days  
than hospitality to the stranger,  
to those we perceive as "other" than us.*

Parker Palmer

#### Discussion Group Overview

The Bodhisattva Precepts are the core ethical teachings and guideposts of Zen Buddhism, designed to support the development of wisdom and compassion. For centuries, receiving and taking the precepts in the rite of Jukai has been how one formally expresses commitment to Zen as a way of life. However, receiving and taking the precepts signifies much more than identification as, or becoming, a Zen Buddhist. One vows to put the precepts at the very heart of one's Zen practice and the whole of one's life.

The precepts are much more than a set of principles, injunctions, and rules for proper conduct. We can use the precepts to look deeply at ourselves and how we fail to keep them; to seek wholeness and integration by recognizing the killer, the liar, and the stealer within ourselves. When we can welcome the things we tend to reject in ourselves, we can begin to accept what we reject in others, opening a portal into our Oneness with, and dissolving our feeling of separation from, all things.

As the precepts open a window into the parts of ourselves that we may dislike and disidentify with, we are able to see them, own them, and integrate them into who we are, thus liberating them. In the process we become more whole and more fully awake. Each of our shadow parts defends a vital need or principle. Alienated, it tends to assert itself in ways that subvert our best intentions. Integrated, it stands aside or helps us serve them.

In this study group we will work with the precepts to deepen our practice in important ways that are distinct from, but which complement, our practice on the cushion. You are invited to participate even if you have no present intention of taking Jukai, or if you already have done so. We see precepts practice as ongoing and ever-deepening. This recurring study group is an important opportunity for growing toward wholeness.

### Format

We will meet via Zoom twice a month for one-hour sessions. We will work with each precept from multiple perspectives, spending two sessions on each Precept. The first session will be a discussion of the precept from what are known in Zen as the literal, subjective, and intrinsic perspectives. In the second session, we will engage in exercises that help us discover all the subtle ways we fail to keep that precept, meeting the killer, liar, stealer, etc. within ourselves.

We encourage you to keep a journal of your reflections throughout this course. We will occasionally suggest that you do an exercise in the Shadow Workbook to prepare for an upcoming session.

### Texts

We will be using two primary texts for this study group:

- Nancy Mujo Baker's book [Opening to Oneness: A Practical and Philosophical Guide to the Zen Precepts](#) is our primary text. Baker Roshi is a retired philosophy professor and a Zen teacher in the [White Plum Asanga](#), the association of teachers in the lineage of Taizan Maezumi, Roshi, to which Jeff and Fran belong.
- We also will be using the [Shadow Work Journal and Workbook](#) by Luna Blackwood for practices to support our explorations.

There also will be other readings assigned for some sessions.

If you wish to do additional reading, you will find several other excellent books in the [Additional Resources](#) section below.

### Optional Immersive Experience

There also will be an optional in-person session once a month for those who are interested in exploring immersive role play as a powerful way to experience ourselves as the killer, liar, stealer, etc. These sessions will be facilitated by fellow Zen student and FMZ member, Caro Murphy. Caro is a professor of Game Design at Northeastern University. We are very excited to be working with them in this innovative and intimate way of accessing our undiscovered parts.

### Zoom Information

We will be meeting on the [FMZ Zoom link](#), which may also be found on the homepage of our website, [fullmoonzen.org](http://fullmoonzen.org).

### Schedule and Readings

#### **Session 1: Introduction and Overview: The Precepts, Shadow, and Jukai**

- Baker: Introduction, and Chapters 21 and 23
- Luna Blackwood, *The Shadow Work Journal and Workbook*, pp. 11-15; 93-101; 111-115; 121-123.

#### **Session 2: Three Treasures, Three Pure Precepts**

- [FMZ Liturgy Book](#), E5, E6-E7
- Taizan Maezumi, "On Becoming a Buddhist," in [Appreciate Your Life: The Essence of Zen Practice](#), pp. 110-112
- Bernie Glassman, [Infinite Circle: Teachings in Zen](#)
  - Chapter 12, "The Bodhisattva Precepts: Literal, Subjective, and Intrinsic Perspective," pp. 111-116
  - Chapter 13, "The Three Treasures and the Three Pure Precepts," pp. 117-124

#### **Session 3: Non-Killing (First Grave Precepts) Part I**

- Baker, Chapter 1
- Reflection on this precept from the Literal, Subjective, and Intrinsic perspectives.

#### **Session 4: Non-Killing Part II**

- Baker, Part One Introduction; Part Two Introduction; Chapter 11
- Read and be prepared to do exercises on pp. 39-40.

#### **Session 5: Non-Stealing (Second Grave Precept) Part I**

- Baker, Chapter 2
- Reflection on this precept from the Literal, Subjective, and Intrinsic perspectives

**Session 6: Non-Stealing Part II**

- Read and be prepared to do the exercise on pages 49-50.

**Session 7: Non-Misusing Sex (Third Grave Precept) Part I**

- Nancy Baker, Chapter 3
- Reflection on this precept from the Literal, Subjective, and Intrinsic perspectives.

**Session 8: Non-Misusing Sex Part II**

- Read and be prepared to do the exercises on page 58.

**Session 9: Non-Lying (Fourth Grave Precept) Part I**

- Nancy Baker, "Non-lying," Chapter 4
- Reflection on this precept from the Literal, Subjective, and Intrinsic perspectives.

**Session 10: Non-Lying Part II**

- Read and be prepared to do the exercises on p. 67

**Session 11: Non-Misusing Intoxicants (Fifth Grave Precept) Part I**

- Nancy Baker, Chapter 5
- Reflection on this precept from the Literal, Subjective, and Intrinsic perspectives.

**Session 12: Non-Misusing Intoxicants Part II**

- Read and be prepared to do the exercises on p. 76

**Session 13: Non-Talking About Others' Errors Faults (Sixth Grave Precept) Part I**

- Nancy Baker, Chapter 6
- Reflection on this precept from the Literal, Subjective, and Intrinsic perspectives.

**Session 14: Non-Talking About Others' Errors Faults Part II**

- Read and be prepared to do the exercises on p. 84
- Reflect on questions in Luna Blackwood p. 72

**Session 15: Non-Elevating Oneself and Blaming Others (Seventh Grave Precept) Part I**

- Nancy Baker, Chapter 7
- Reflection on this precept from the Literal, Subjective, and Intrinsic perspectives.

**Session 16: Non-Elevating Oneself and Blaming Others Part II**

- Read and be prepared to do the exercises on pp. 96-97
- Reflect on questions in Luna Blackwood, pp. 70 and 78

**Session 17: Non-Being Stingy (Eighth Grave Precept) Part I**

- Nancy Baker, "Non-Being Stingy," Chapter 8
- [As Kingfishers Catch Fire, Gerard Manley Hopkins](#)
- [Sweet Darkness, David Whyte](#)

- [“The glory of God is to conceal a thing . . .” Francis Bacon](#)
- Reflection on this precept from the Literal, Subjective, and Intrinsic perspectives.

### **Session 18: Non-Being Stingy Part II**

- Read and be prepared to do the exercises on p. 106

### **Session 19: Non-Being Angry (Ninth Grave Precept) Part I**

- Nancy Baker, Chapter 9
- Reflection on this precept from the Literal, Subjective, and Intrinsic perspectives.

### **Session 20: Non-Being Angry Part II**

- Read and be prepared to do the exercises on pp. 115-116
- Reflect on questions in Luna Blackwood, p.82

### **Session 21: Non-Abusing the Three Treasures**

- Nancy Baker, Chapter 10
- Reflection on this precept from the Literal, Subjective, and Intrinsic perspectives
- Luna Blackwood pp 129-131

### **Conclusion**

- Baker, Chapter 22
- Luna Blackwood, *Healing and Integrating Shadow*, p.143-151
- Reflect on Shadow Integration questions, p. 68.

### Additional Resources:

#### **The Zen Precepts**

- Diane Rizetto, *Waking Up to What You Do: A Zen Practice for Meeting Every Situation with Intelligence and Compassion*
- Robert Aitken, *The Mind of Clover: Essays in Zen Buddhist Ethics*
- Koshin Paley Ellison, *Wholehearted: Slow Down, Help Out, Wake Up*
- Reb Anderson, *Being Upright: Zen Meditation and the Bodhisattva Precepts*
- John Daido Loori, *The Heart of Being: Moral and Ethical Teachings of Zen Buddhism*

#### **Shadow**

- Robert Bly, *Little Book on the Shadow*
- Connie Sweig, *Meeting the Shadow on the Spiritual Path: The Dance of Darkness and Light in Our Search for Awakening*
- Robert Augustus Masters, *Bringing Your Shadow Out of the Dark: Breaking Free from the Hidden Forces That Drive You*
- Joseph Bobrow, *Zen and Psychotherapy: Partners in Liberation*

#### **Zen and Society**

- Larry Yang, *Awakening Together: The Spiritual Practice of Inclusivity and Community*
- "[Joanna Macy on the Great Awakening the Planet Needs](#)"
- David Loy, *Ecodharma: Buddhist Teachings for the Ecological Crisis*
- David Loy, *A New Buddhist Path: Enlightenment, Evolution, and Ethics in the Modern World*