

NO SELF

The way you exist on your black cushion is the way each thing exists in its own position.



In Buddhism we use the word “self,” but actually Buddhism does not have the concept of self. We emphasize “no self.”

No self means to see “things as it is”; “things as it is” is no self. When we are not caught by ideas of self, we can see “things as it is.” Just as things exist as they are, we also exist as we are: that is “no self.” It doesn’t mean we do not exist. We exist, but we exist “as we are,” not as a self. To live in that kind of way is the purpose of our practice.

The main purpose of our practice is to realize what we are, and what things are, in a true sense. On your black cushion, when you find yourself in its true sense, you exist there. That you exist there means that everything exists in the same way that you exist. The way you exist on your black cushion is the way each thing exists in its own position.

When your action in your life is based on this kind of zazen practice, you will always be in good harmony with your family, with your neighbors, and with things you encounter. You will not make excessive effort and you will not be idle. You will do exactly what is needed. That is the feeling of zazen.

That you exist here means that Buddha exists, and that Buddha exists means that you exist here. There is no difference between Buddha and you. Buddha exists in that way, and you exist in that way. Gautama Buddha is someone who attained Buddhahood after making a great effort for six years. Before he attained Buddhahood, he was already Buddha. Then he realized Gautama Buddha as himself, and when he did so, he realized that everything existed in that same way. Because you are originally Buddha, you will be happy to be exactly as you are.

We know how we can help others only when we know how we should exist. For this reason, we must extend zazen practice to our everyday life. Having the right practice in our everyday life, we can help others in a true sense.