

## NO RULES

*Even if the form is perfect, if our intention is not right, it is not our way.*



There was a famous Zen master who died around fifty years ago. He had very good disciples who were sincere students. He lived with them in a monastery near a small city, and they were very poor. His disciples wanted a bell for their chanting, so they asked him to buy one for the temple. He was very angry that his students asked him for a bell.

“Why?” he asked them. “What is the point of reciting the sutra with a bell? It seems like you want to use the bell so that people in town will appreciate our practice. If so, that is not my way! We have to practice for the sake of our understanding, not for what others may want. So if we can chant the sutra without a bell, that is enough. There is no need to buy a bell so that others can hear it.”

Of course we have some rules in our chanting, and without bells it is not a perfect ceremony. But even if the form is perfect, if our intention is not right, it is not our way. So there are rules, but actually there are no rules. We have precepts, but actually there are no precepts. Precepts are set up according to the circumstances.