
Who we are?

The Zen Buddhist Association of Europe (ABZE) was created by Master Yuno Rech's disciples in July 2007. Its main objective is to organize and spread the practice of Soto Zen Buddhism, transmitted from Buddha Shakyamuni by Masters such as Bodhidharma, Tosan, Dôgen, Keizan, Kodo Sawaki, Taïsen Deshimaru, Niwa Renpo, Yuno Rech and his disciples, in the spirit of person to person transmission proper to this school. The association will study, practice and transmit the fundamental principles of this tradition all while adapting them to current living conditions in Europe.

ABZE is Buddhist because its members have faith in the awakening of Shakyamuni and strive to practice all his teachings; in particular, the Four Noble Truths and the Six Paramitas (generosity, ethics, patience, effort, meditation and wisdom).

They are committed to respecting Buddha, his teaching and the community of those practicing this teaching.

They vow to help beings awaken themselves, by helping them to relieve their attachments which are the causes of suffering, to study and to practice the teachings of Buddha and the Masters of Soto Zen transmission, and also to awaken themselves to the profound dimension of the Way for the well being of all.

ABZE belongs to the Soto Zen School whose founders in Japan were Master Dôgen and Master Keizan after Master Tosan in China. This implies that the practice is most particularly clarified by the teachings of these Masters, respecting these fundamental principles:

1. Meditation in zazen is not a technique among others. It is the practice of awakening, the source of all other practices. It is practiced with the greatest simplicity and the greatest terseness: in other words, just sitting and abandoning all preoccupations (*shikantaza*) with a mind not attached to anything (*hishiryo*), with neither desire nor aversion to anything (*mushotoku*).
2. This pure practice is the realization of awakening itself.
3. There is neither separation nor opposition between meditation, rituals and daily life.
4. The practice, studying the teachings and awakening are not separate.
5. All beings and Buddha are neither fundamentally different nor separated. They are interdependent and share the same „Buddha nature“.
6. An Awakened Buddha is one who lives in harmony with the Dharma expressing profound Reality of all which exists.
7. Everything exists through the interdependence of causes and conditions. Nothing and no one exists alone: this implies a sense of responsibility for one's words and acts, respect for others and all forms of life (ethics and ecology).

8. Even if the practice of Zen Buddhism promotes the well being of everyone, it is not reduced to a technique for wellness or for personal development. ABZE is careful that its teaching expresses the true spiritual dimension of Zen Buddhism.
9. Our practice is the practice of «liberation» from all causes of suffering linked to our greed, aggressiveness and ignorance (which are the three basic poisons referred to by Buddha). It is a question of everyone being careful not to let phenomena develop such as rivalry, stranglehold, abusive power and other attachments which frequently corrupt the functioning of organizations, especially churches and so called « spiritual» communities. Being able to become conscious of this and changing it if this happens will be part of the training of teachers and of everyone's practice. This implies wisdom and vigilance.

ABZE is a European Association: its members practice, run Dojos and organize sesshins and sessions in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and Spain. The Association does not yet have a place to organize big sesshins which are currently held in Pegomas, near Cannes, (south of France) at the Gendronniere Zen temple near Blois (Loire Valley, France), in Godinne near Namur (Belgium), in Ghigo di Prali near Turin (Italy) and in Grube Louise near Cologne (Germany).

ABZE strives to spread the practice of Soto Zen Buddhism through conferences, training programs, sesshins and daily practice in Dojos.

It trains teachers thus enabling the transmission of Soto Zen with respect to the essence of this tradition.

It operates within a spirit of openness and cooperation with organizations pursuing a similar objective, especially the International Zen Association (AZI) the Sotoshu Shumucho, the Buddhist Union of France (UBF), as well as different Buddhist unions in Europe.

It uses its website to circulate information and teachings for all publics, but especially for its member and teachers.

It handles publication and dispatching of information on Soto Zen Buddhism thought and practice.

It encourages inter-religious dialogue.

Being conscious of the importance of ethics and ecology, it encourages its members to have a responsible attitude throughout the different aspects of individual, family, professional and social life.