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## Wednesday Zen talks

**By Michael Olbrich-Majer, Seelheim (Germany)**

“How could I organize and motivate myself to sit continuously at home?”

“Does zen help you if you feel angry or go through conflicts?”

“Why do we have to go on with zazen although we already are buddhas?”

These are the kind of questions we talk about every first Wednesday of the month. After only one zazen - instead of two - followed by the ceremony, we gather in the dojo, sit in a circle on our zafus and one of us has the opportunity to ask a question. The question should have a direct reference to the zen-practice of the questioner. Then the door is open for individual answers based on everyone's own practice, but closed to discussions. The point is to share our experience in trying to fit the spirit of Zen into our everyday life, rather than displaying our zen knowledge or culture based on what we heard or read, or conducting “right or wrong” debates.

The talk is moderated by the leader of our zen group, and we start and finish with a gassho. We treat one question only and it normally takes half an hour. So, instead of sitting in a pub after zazen with a beer, presenting and discussing views on Zen, we have found a way to enrich our practice by sharing our own problems encountered and steps achieved while proceeding on the Way in a dojo-atmosphere.

We learn from each other and together as the small sangha we are, and we tackle several topics such as: “How do we talk about Zen with others?” “What is the meaning of the instruments or the Kesa?” “Do we really have to save all sentient beings?”

I have to amend that we are two monks and some experienced Zen followers, and only five to eight people, what makes the process easier.

Not everyone goes to sesshins, and not everyone has the courage to ask a question during the mondo. Therefore I warmly encourage every dojo or group to try these regular talks as precious means of mutual help and practice support along the Way.