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# Zen in the Basque Country and Navarre region

History of the beginning of the Zen practice in the Basque Country and Navarre region

**By Eukeni Callejo**

The practice of Zen in the Spanish Basque Country began in 1981. In the autumn of that year, a meeting was held in Bilbao, from which the various groups and dojos of the Basque Country will be born.

The Secretariat of the AZI had put two persons in contact: Luis Fernando Cámara, who had practiced that year with Master Deshimaru at the summer camp of La Gendronnière, and Eukeni Callejo, who also practiced with Maître Deshimaru in March of the same year, but at the Pernety dojo in Paris. It is from this meeting that a joint practice began from Monday to Friday from 7am to 8am, in a centre called «Satori» located opposite the Jesuit College of Bilbao.

Fall and winter 1981 go by... In the spring of 1982, the group expanded: eight people from the group decided to go to an Easter sesshin in Seville with Master Deshimaru. Since he was already seriously ill, he could not lead the sesshin and was replaced by Claude Philippe.

That year as well, Luis Fernando and Eukeni Callejo took part to the summer camp at La Gendronnière. In the autumn of the following year, they began practicing in a centre called «Heian» (Bizkaia), a centre owned by Luis Fernando who lent the premises for the practice of zazen several mornings a week.

At the same time, Koldo Galarza, currently in charge of the Bilbao dojo, joined the group. From that moment on, the group began to grow and a first sesshin was organised with Paco Villalba (Dokusho) in Las Arenas, then another in Eibar. New people joined the group: Nacho Sánchez, Marian Aransay, and others...

At the 1983 winter camp in La Gendronnière, Eukeni was ordained monk by Etienne Zeisler and in February 1984, he moved to Navarre, to the Cuenca of Pamplona, where he created a dojo from which he took the leadership. He contacted people interested in Zen and gathered a small group of 4 people in a flat of Huércanos street (Chantrea district of Pamplona): Carlos Arroyo, Alberto Arzoz and Carlos Osés.

At the same time, Nekane Cortázar arrived from Vizcaya to Pamplona. He joined the group which began to grow in such a way that, in 1985, they moved to a place lent by the Seminary of Pamplona. It was at that time that Antonio Arana (the current responsible of the dojo), Txus Laita (the co-responsible), María Aguirre, Araceli Beato and many others joined them ...

Then the dojo organized a regional Easter sesshin led by Stéphane Thibaut in Roncesvalles. This sesshin gathered more than 100 people.

After that, the dojo organized several sesshin and after a brief period at the Surya Centre (the Centre for Training and Activities for Welfare), it finally settled at 7, Monasterios Square of Navarre, where it still continues to function nowadays.