

From “Zazen as Offering”
Fall Practice Period
Green Gulch Farm
November 15, 2007

When you have tiredness which is filling a lot of your body, so that you’re like this big mountain of tiredness, especially if you’re sitting, you’re this big mass of tiredness. Just feel the tiredness from the top of your head, down through your face, into your shoulders, all the way down to the tips of your toes, just completely feel tired, and even when you’re really, really tired, you might be able to feel that tired. When you’re tired it doesn’t take a lot of energy to feel tired. It actually takes a little less energy to go with the tiredness than to fight it. In my own experience, and some other people I know, too, when they’re tired, if they fight the tired, then they kind of fall over. You know? But if they kind of just relax with the tired, just relax completely into the fullness to the bottom of the tired, there you are—no resistance to it, completely, exactly as tired as you are. And then that’s that, and you’re resting. You might even go to sleep, but before you go to sleep you’re already resting. Then you may do some other kind of resting called sleep and that may be good too. But the resting you do before you conk out, when you’re really, completely relaxing, and being present with your tiredness sometimes wakes you up. Sometimes you don’t go to sleep. Sometimes energy comes up again. Alternatively, sometimes you go to sleep, and afterward you wake up and feel very refreshed. You didn’t go to sleep in a resistant, tiring way, so you’re open for some refreshment. Some people are tired and they fight the tiredness, and then when they go to sleep, they fight the sleep. They’re kind of angry at themselves for being asleep, so they just never get any rest. They’re sleeping all the time but getting no rest, because they think they’re not supposed to be sleeping, rather than wholeheartedly being tired.

You could be washing dishes, and also very tired, but you have more energy than somebody else who’s next to you who can’t even think that. He’s more tired than you are, but he can’t think, “I’m not wholeheartedly doing this.” He’s wholeheartedly being tired, and wholeheartedly just barely able to hold onto the dishes, but he doesn’t have the extra energy to comment. People are telling him to go faster, and he just doesn’t have the energy to get upset. He can’t strike back, he’s just too tired. This is a Zen Center. You can be tired. You have a good reason to be tired—you’re getting up early in the morning. You’re sleep deprived.

Some people say, “Why are we sleep deprived?” Uh, well, I don’t know. I’m tired, go ask somebody else why we’re sleep deprived. Go ask the director. Or, the director’s not here, though, but her assistant can help you. Where’s her assistant? Oh, there she is! You can ask her assistant, “Why are we sleep deprived?” But she’s not tired, right, so she can answer, maybe. But she might not be in the mood, so she might send you to Owl. He knows a lot about that, because he used to be very sleep deprived. But now you’re getting more rest, right?

LO: Well, I don’t sleep at night, because I’m an owl.

That’s the reason! I was wondering. I didn’t realize why I was naming him that till just now. Now I understand where that name came from. I channeled it from you-know-who. So, here we are, sitting in the world of Zen, and if you want to, you can go to bed early tonight, and sleep, sleep, and sleep. Is that okay? Good night.

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