



## The Fist

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October 01, 2002

I've been asked what is this "fist" stuff all about? The context for the question comes from some of our meditation sessions when I have occasionally held up my hand, near the side of my face, close to the ear, curled the fingers inward and commented to everyone present "This is Your Fist". What's going on here? Am I disowning a part of my anatomy or seemingly giving it away to others? Can I actually deny the existence of part of my anatomy? In addition, now and then, I will actually make "a fist" open my hand and ask "where did the fist go?" ❀

## Becoming a Buddhist

Becoming a Buddhist is traditionally called taking refuge and it is done by thrice reciting this intention in the following way:

I take refuge in the Buddha;

I take refuge in the Dharma;

I take refuge in the Sangha

*Or by chanting (in Pali)*

Buddham Saranam Gacchami

Dharmam Saranam Gacchami

Sanghajm Saranam Gacchami

*Stated in a more contemporary way:*

I go to the Buddha for guidance

I go to the Dharma for guidance

I go to the Sangha for guidance

Since Sangha is a traditional term for an assembly of monastics a more relevant statement, for lay practitioners, might be:

I will look to the path of the Buddha and study the teachings of Buddhism for my guidance. In addition I will seek the association of like minded friends for support and feedback

Not becoming a Buddhist, by formally "taking refuge", will not interfere with the fruits of study and application of the Buddha's path. ❀

## The Shout and the Fish

Often, breaking the wonderful deep silence and stillness of one of our meditation sessions, comes a sudden and startling event: a loud and forceful shout of HA! from me, or sharp, piercing "crak" as the moktok or fish



is struck by a wooden mallet. These types of punctuation have a long history in the practice of Zen. These sudden sounds function, of course, to arouse the meditators; to facilitate their attention, concentration, and alertness. But often more happens than simply an increase in arousal. ❁

### **Kyosaku**

Ed patrolling the Zendo with the Kyosaku ( or Keisaku) "wakeup stick in hand" which represents the sword of "Manjusri" which cuts through all delusions. Basically relaxes the trapezius muscle when it is whacked and makes a loud "crack" noise to startle those lost in meditation. ❁





## Stories and Sayings

### No fixed Way to Be

If there is no fixed way for me to be, judgments of myself do not pertain.  
If someone says "I love you", the response should be, "Your Welcome".  
In order to have an experience, we forget the elements of which it is made.  
You can't stop doing anything you don't know how to do. 🌸

### Exercise

Run your finger along the edge of a surface, like the edge of a table. How many sensations do you experience? What do you have to do to experience both your finger and the table? 🌸

### Story: The Goose in the Bottle

A farmer put a goose into a bottle, when the goose was a tiny gosling. The farmer fed the goose until it grew to full size. How do you get the goose out of the bottle without harming the goose or breaking the bottle? 🌸

Note: The above story prompted many weeks of entertaining answers at the Tuesday night meditation Group. Once when we arrived at Eric and Shannon's to find a stuffed goose in the middle of the floor. 🌸