



Light of the Buddhas: Generating Light in Times of Darkness
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Artist Statement

Zen resurrected my spirit. It brought light into my life where there was darkness. I encountered Zen in a World Religions class in college at a time when I began to question the purpose of life in general, and my life in particular. Watching a Japanese Zen Master teach meditation, give talks on Zen and do a calligraphy demonstration as a Junior in University, I intuitively knew there was much more to life than I was presently perceiving, and that if I wanted to experience a broader spectrum of reality I could, if I chose to.

Prior to my living in a Zen Temple for 15 years I had the good fortune to work in Japan as an English teacher in a Junior High. One of the teachers I co-taught English with, Mariko Tachihara Sensei, was the head of the calligraphy club. Because she spoke excellent English and was so enthusiastic of my progress in her club, I learned the foundations of the Art of Shodo – The Way of The Brush. This was my beginning.

My Zen teacher, Dai-En Bennage Roshi, also encouraged me to continue the practice of Shodo during my 15-year apprenticeship with her. For me, Shodo has been not simply an art form but a path to healing. Shodo is a way to calm the body and mind and to put things into perspective, physically, mentally, and spiritually. On a physical level the lines of the Chinese Character are balanced within each character and between characters. My bodily posture is brought into proper alignment – back upright and proper movement of my arm, elbow, wrist, and fingers. On a mental level, I let go of the bad and the good things that happened during the day, focus on my breath, and my writing. I let go of everything else. On a spiritual level, whatever I happen to produce in the moment is a reflection of my own heart.

This exhibition is about light. The images – Bodhisattvas (Enlightening Beings) – are surrounded by light. They are embodiments of light and of truth.

Furthermore, the various Zen sayings such as, “One Chance, One Encounter”, or “No Birth, No Death”, shed light on aspects of reality perhaps overlooked by many of us. They are meant to bring us face-to-face with the immediacy of our life, with a sense of gratitude for its preciousness, and is an admonition to recognize and not waste opportunities when they arise. These calligraphies are my prayers and wishes to humanity.