

Final Paper

Part 1: Objective Understanding

Enumerate 4 **major** points of Zen as discussed in the readings or class discussions. Show your objective understanding of the concepts by describing each in several sentences. The last sentence should be your personal comment on the point. (e.g. Does it appear to be true or false for you? Does this seem to apply in your experience?) One to one and a half pages of well-constructed responses can be sufficient for this section.

Part 2: Personal analysis and responses to a key line in the Heart Sutra

The Heart Sutra is one of the oldest (first century CE) most well-known Buddhist scriptures. It is short, but contains the essential concepts of Buddhist beliefs or philosophies. It is for this reason that it is called the Heart Sutra.

The line of emphasis for this paper is:

“Oh Shariputra, form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form.”

Two translations and commentaries are on the Final Paper Resource link:

Master Hakuin Ekaku-Lecture from 1744 (Translated by Norman Waddell)

Roshi Enkyo O’Hara—Lecture 2010 (Roshi is the Abbot of the Village Zendo)

Read the two translations of the Heart Sutra. They were translated in different centuries, by people in different cultures. They have the same essential meaning, but there are differences in word selection and tone.

This section requires two different activities:

1 Read the commentaries by the two teachers given 250 years apart. Commentaries are used to shed light on the text. They may not explain the passage, but are intended to help bring insight and energy into the practice. Pick 3 specific points from the commentary and discuss on how they affected your understanding of the central line. Both commentaries should be used.

2. Based on your reading of the two commentaries or readings earlier in the class as well as your own experience, write your own original commentary on this single line. The insights, style, and energy should reflect your own experience rather than an explanation of your academic work.

3 full pages for this section.

Part 3

Formulate 3 thoughtful questions. They may be on this assignment or any topic associated with the Seminar.

Technical Details

A rubric is included in the packet. This can be used to guide your responses. Please see me for clarifications or discussion. The paper may be handed in early: due date is the last class Wed Jan 16.

Collaboration with others or the use of any other sources are NOT permitted for this paper. The only references are the final paper resources/class readings on the web, and your response papers.