

The Gdańsk Zen Nomads Have Settled

Jarosław Marzec

My personal odyssey with the Kwan Um School of Zen started on December 15, 1992, when I attended a dharma talk by Jane McLaughlin JDPSN (now Zen Master Bon Yeon). It was at Żak, a student club in Gdańsk. Maybe a week earlier, I had seen a poster about the event on a pillar while I was crossing the street near the club. Fittingly, it was a pillar of the rail system.

I was already interested in Buddhism—I had listened to a lecture in the Japanese tradition in Stockholm two years earlier. But what was important this time was that I left the dharma talk at the student club with the address of the Gdańsk Zen Center typed on a little sheet of paper. A week later, I started practicing there. I was twenty-two years old.

Now, everything has changed because activities can be found so easily on the internet. But having a permanent place for practice is crucial. In our impermanent social circumstances, a Zen center provides stabilization for practice. It guarantees the continuity for our common efforts. If I hadn't obtained the address at that first meeting, it would have been hard to start practice.

In my twenty-seven years with the Gdańsk Zen Center, conditions have not been easy. Our location changed at least seven times. We often shared a space with a friendly Soto Zen sangha, an experience that strengthened our motivation for together-efforts on the path. Together with the Japanese sangha we have regularly organized a Vesak (Buddha's birth-

day) celebration. And we support any event with a friendly sangha.

I would like to describe the most crucial event in the forty-year history of the Gdańsk Zen Center: we finally settled into our own place. At the close of our last practice at Żabianka, prior to moving, our senior dharma teacher said that the Zen center is created by practitioners, not by having a concrete place to practice. In the style of the middle way, I would rather say that all of the elements must be in place: we need sangha members as well as a stable location where we can comfortably carry out our daily practice.

The life of the sangha and our common efforts have brought something precious to the history of the Gdańsk Zen Center. Even without a permanent home, we still came together for all of those years. On October 18, 2019, we hosted Zen Master Joeng Hye and celebrated the opening of the new Gdańsk Zen Center.

Jarosław Marzec is a dharma teacher and practices in the Gdańsk Zen Center. He has a PhD in pedagogy and is an independent researcher and writer. He has published three books: Discourse, Text, and Narrative: Essays on the Postmodern Culture (2002); The Pedagogical Discourse of Humanistic Psychology (2018); and Waves of Existence: My Encounters with Ken Wilber (2019). His next book, Spirituality, Identity, and Education: Peregrinations on Instant Culture, was published in February 2020.

[25



WEBSITE:
[HTTPS://SITES.GOOGLE.COM/
 ZENGROUPPGH.COM/
 ZENGROUPPGH/HOME](https://sites.google.com/zengrouppgh.com/zengrouppgh/home)

THE ZEN GROUP OF PITTSBURGH

PROVIDING A SPACE FOR BUDDHIST PRACTICE IN THE STEEL CITY

PRACTICE TIMES:
 MON & WED
 7PM - 8PM
 (ONLINE UNTIL WE CAN MEET IN-PERSON AGAIN)
 CONTACT:
 ABBOT@ZENGROUPPGH.COM

Join a livestream meditation practice

PRACTICE TOGETHER WITH OTHERS
 ONLINE & IN THE SAFETY OF YOUR HOME



FIND A PRACTICE SESSION THAT FITS YOUR SCHEDULE:
KWANUMZENONLINE.ORG/EVENTS



Kwan Um School of Zen

LEARN MORE AT: www.kwanumeurope.org/srp2020/

SUMMER RETREAT PROGRAM ONLINE & OFFLINE

Technology meets 2500 year old tradition with authorized lineage holders of Korean Zen Master Seung Sahn

LEGEND: [Online icon] Online [Offline icon] Offline (Location)

1	LONDON ZC	5-11 Jul
2	SUFI KANKA	12 - 25 Jul
3	HOO HASHARON	26 Jul - 1 Aug
4	MOTTEREAU	2 - 8 Aug
5	SURYA CENTRUM	2 - 8 Aug
6	WU BONG SA	31 Jul - 7 Aug
7	BORI SA	16 - 29 Aug
8	VIENNA ZC	5 - 12 Sep

Flexible schedule, affordable price, beginners intro, online Dharma talks, sitting meditation, chanting and kongan interviews.