

A Sacred Space

by Brother Erikos, Abbot
The Stoic Monastery

At the group video meeting of Fall Equinox, 21 SEP 24, Br. Erikos presented this material discussing his personal sacred space with his fellow monks.



photo taken from my eye level in chair

1. The Room: The Sacred Space in my "Monastery of One," a converted bedroom, 11'X12', with a bed, dresser, built-in bookcase, 2 windows, and closet. The actual Sacred Space is an alcove on the south wall next to the closet.

This has been my monastery and sacred space since I moved into this house 28 years ago. All of my mystical experiences and true shamanic journeys were here.

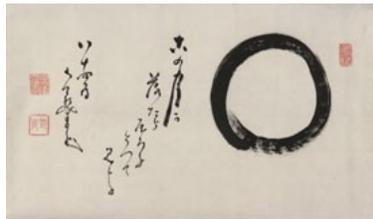
2. The Space:

- Rocking chair. Started using a chair several years ago when my hips and knees could no longer sit in a Lotus position—sometime in my 70s
- End table: An old end table with legs cut off and painted gloss black
- Wooden box with NW Indian eagle image use for pens, glasses, and notes
- Clay coaster for green tea I have with my morning meditations
- Singing brass bowl on the left side
- Hawk feathers I found (gifts from the sky) and drumstick for drumming on the right. You can see the edge of a 22" shaman's goat skin drum from Pakistan
- Terracotta bowl, my second "fire bowl," 2/3 full of old candle wax. I now use an electronic candle to avoid many years of breathing votive candle fumes
- The original Stick of Stick Action Meditation leans in the corner on the right

- Hanging flower pot on the left is from the Old City of Jerusalem I bought while I was there 17 years ago. It contains water and a spray from a branch of my eucalypt I've written about before. Long history here

3. Icons:

- *Top*: nine (9) reduced images of my meditation Impulse drawings done between early 1990s and early 2000s. Title: "Beauty, Truth, and Love"
- *Left*: Drawing of the "Coyote on the Roof" as a symbol for all of the "messages from the universe" I have had
- *Right*: Black Eagle, the original Black Eagle drawing symbolizing my oversoul
- *Center*: Original "Perfect wa" ink brush drawing, February 1984. After 4 months of daily meditation to create a perfect circle this work was done. To me it represented the nothing we don't know. The meditation was done at 6 AM in my unheated room through the winter of '83-'84 each morning when the nearby Buddhist temple bell tolled at that time. (More detail of this process can be found in MOO. Several years after I did this intuitive discipline I learned Zen monks had been doing this same kind of work for centuries, calling it "Enso."



NAKAHARA Nantenbo
Japanese 1839–1925
Enso with a Poem 1922
ink on paper
32.8 x 58.7 cm (image and sheet)
Lillian Ernestine Lobb Bequest, 2003
2003.268

According to the following Internet page, "The enso ('circle') is one of the deepest symbols in Japanese Zen. The enso is the revelation of a world of the spirit without beginning and end. The Zen circle of enlightenment reflects that transforming experience - perfectly empty yet completely full, infinite, shining brightly like the moon-mind of enlightenment."

https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/artofzen/ed_zen_today.html

4. Meditation:

- Currently, I arise between 4:30-5 AM everyday to meditate
- I first address the Icons on the wall, welcoming the day, et cetera,
- Then I repeat DOE (synthesis of the discourses of Epictetus)
- For 6 days/week I chant 15 minutes, followed by Insight Meditation (empty mind, listening to the breath) for 45 minutes, a total of one hour
- On Sunday I have a special morning meditation too detailed for the time remaining.