

Episode 5: Embodied and boundless | A conversation with Zenju Earthlyn Manuel

“Practicing to be a contemplative,” says Zen priest Sensei Zenju, “you’re learning to be embodied and to be boundless at the same time.”

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"What would be that place in which you would awaken to everything despite the horror in the world?"

[Sensei Zenju Earthlyn Manuel](#) is an ordained Zen priest and the dharma heir of Buddha in the Suzuki Roshi lineage through the San Francisco Zen Center (SFZC). Sensei Zenju's practice is influenced by Native American and African indigenous traditions. She was raised in the Church of Christ, where she was an avid reader of the Bible and adored the true mystic teachings on Christ's path well into adulthood.

She is the author of many books, including [*The Deepest Peace: Contemplations from a Season of Stillness*](#), [*Sanctuary: A Meditation on Home, Homelessness, and Belonging*](#), [*The Way of Tenderness: Awakening through Race, Sexuality, and Gender*](#), and [*Be Love: An Exploration of Our Deepest Desire*](#).

Content warning: In this episode, we briefly mention suicide in the context of dealing with rage and racial injustice.

We explored the ways mysticism cannot be embodied, the importance of cultural sanctuary as a place of safety, and the value of rage: "That is not the purpose of any spiritual practice, to wipe away what you have, but to take what you have," said Sensei Zenju. "And rage is what we have."