

## Membership

**Blue Dragon:** \$100/mo and up  
**Red Bird:** \$50/mo and up  
**White Tiger:** \$30/mo and up  
**Black Tortoise:** \$10/mo and up

We encourage members to make their monthly gifts automatically, via the PayPal button on our website or online bill pay programs at their own banks.

- Please change my mailing address.  
 Please remove me from your mailing list.

## Eiheiji incense for sale

Or buy online from our gift shop at [www.milwaukeezencenter.org/](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org/)

Item	Qty.	Price	Tax*	Total
Short (5.5")		\$10.00	.55	
Long (10")		\$10.00	.55	

Shipping:  
 \$4.00 for first two boxes of incense,  
 plus .50 per box thereafter.

\* Only Wisconsin residents need include applicable sales tax.

Donation \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total funds enclosed** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please make checks payable to Milwaukee Zen Center.  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

## milwaukee zen center

2825 N. Stowell Ave. Milwaukee WI 53211-3775

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## Weekly practice schedule

### MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY MORNINGS

6:15 zazen  
 6:50 kinhin  
 7:00 zazen  
 7:30 service

### SATURDAY MORNING

7:30 zazen  
 8:00 kinhin  
 8:10 zazen  
 8:40 service  
 8:50 work period  
 9:15 book discussion

### WEDNESDAY EVENING

6:30 Introduction to zen practice  
 6:30 zazen  
 7:10 kinhin  
 7:20 zazen

### SUNDAY MORNING

8:20 Introduction to zazen  
 9:30 zazen  
 10:10 kinhin  
 10:20 dharma talk  
 11:00 informal tea

SUNDAY & MONDAY EVENING 7:00 zazen

## Stay in touch with MZC

### Online:

- See our complete schedule of practice and activities at [www.milwaukeezencenter.org](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org)
- For the latest news and events, visit us on Facebook
- E-mail us at [kokyo-an@att.net](mailto:kokyo-an@att.net)

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# The Mirror

milwaukee zen center

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## HIDING A WHITE HERON IN THE MOONLIGHT

*The meaning is not in the words, yet it responds to the inquiring impulse.*

-- Song of the Jewel Mirror Awareness

**By Reirin Gumbel, resident priest**

We ask: "What does it mean?" and expect an answer. The Buddha often refused to give one, and on his deathbed he even said he had never spoken a word, despite having taught for 40 years. Meaning is generated by language, and at the same time, it is ungraspable in words. Nothing has meaning in and of itself, and still meaning can be experienced.

The Buddha walked along on a mountainside with his disciples and several bodhisattvas. Suddenly he stopped and said: "This is a good place for a sanctuary." Manjushri picked up a blade of grass, stuck it in the ground and said: "The sanctuary is built!" The Buddha smiled. We build sanctuaries with our actions. They become places of rest and refuge. But they can be dismantled any time and lose their meaning.

A word that the Buddha used in explaining karma is cetana, which translates as conscious action, or intention. Our actions, generated by cetana, have consequences, and the consequences will be experienced by us, either right away or later; sometimes very much later. Important is how we respond when we experience a consequence: If we are unaware of it, deny it or act on it, more karma is created. By acknowledging and then letting it go, karma can be purified and turn into wisdom. Ritual and forms are without intrinsic meaning, but we create meaning with our actions of body, speech and mind. They become precious, because we imbue them with meaning. But at the same time that we need to observe the rules carefully, it is important not to get attached to them.

In Soto Zen, rituals and ceremonies are an important part of the teaching. The student will

watch the teacher carefully and learn how to enact the meaning without ever being told about it. Over and over, the same actions are performed, first in a clumsy and self-conscious way, until eventually they become fluid and effortless. When there is a danger of them becoming habitual, or of the student becoming proud of him/herself, the teacher will change the procedure. The point is in going through the motions selflessly, so that there is no more space between self and other.



Hiding a Heron  
in the  
Moonlight

Students who practiced in close proximity with Shunryu Suzuki Roshi remember how much this was the case with their teacher. He would not talk much about what he expected the students to do, but set the example by his own way of living. My teacher started working in the kitchen when I was tenzo in order to observe my work. I learned my most important lessons through her feedback. That feedback was another form of teaching.

What we take in with our senses, including the mind, is conventional reality, which is constantly in flux and subject to passing away. We can go along with it, flow with it, respond to it and not cling to it. That is the way to freedom.

## DHARMA GATES ARE BOUNDLESS

The cover of the Summer 2015 issue of *Buddhadharma* magazine featured an announcement for an article on “How to Adapt Your Practice in Old Age.” “Hmmp!” I thought, “I’m not adapting my practice in old age. Old age is the practice.”

There was truth in this thought. We so often separate our daily lives from our practice, thinking that it is conducted in a particular way and a particular posture. A person quoted in the *Buddhadharma* article bemoans the fact that prostrations are no longer possible, without understanding that this is a gate to a personal experience of the Buddha’s teaching on impermanence. We forget that the Buddha taught not that we should simply observe emptiness of fixed self in the things around us, but that we should experience it deeply in our own lives.

Each instant of our daily life is practice and each moment offers a dharma gate into the truth. The third of the Four Bodhisattva Vows says: “Dharma gates are boundless, I vow to enter them.” To enter them we must recognize them as they rise before us, offering boundless opportunities to experience “things as they are.”

If I am not mindful, the vegetables roasting in the oven will burn. I turn the key in the ignition of my car, opening a dharma gate to the interconnectedness of all things as my fingers, the key and the engine work together to realize the comforting purr that says I can back out of my driveway.

Even more important than the lessons offered by my day are the demands that day makes that I practice the deep principles of respect, helpfulness, awareness and care for others that are the backbone of my Buddhist faith.

Here are selections from the *Vimalakirti Sutra*\* that clarify the nature of a practice that offers us passage through dharma gates. In it, the young bodhisattva Shining Adornment describes an encounter with the Layman Vimalakirti.

*Vimalakirti was then entering the city and I accordingly bowed to him and said, “Layman, where are you coming from?” He replied, “I am coming from the place of practice.” “The place of practice -- where is that?” I asked. He replied, “An upright mind is the place of practice for it is without sham or falsehood. The resolve to act is the place of practice for it can judge matters properly. A deeply searching mind is the place of practice for it multiplies benefits.... Almsgiving is the place of practice for it hopes for no reward. Observance of the precepts is the place of practice for it brings fulfillment of vows. Forbearance is the place of practice because it enables one to view all beings with a mind free of obstruction... Meditation is the place of practice for it makes the mind tame and gentle. Wisdom is the place of practice because it sees all things as they are.”*

Each instant of our daily lives arrives as a dharma gate. Let us try to practice so that these gates open to the truth of things as they are.

---- **Tonen O’Connor**

*\*Quote from Vimalakirti Sutra comes from a translation by Burton Watson*

Follow our events and activity on Facebook  
Listen to dharma talks on our website  
[www.milwaukeezencenter.org](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org)

Available from Zen Center:  
T-shirts (\$22)  
Book, “30 Years of Reflections” (\$16.95)  
2016 Zen calendar (reduced to \$10)

## CHANGES PLANNED IN LITURGY

### *A letter from Reirin Gumbel, resident priest*

After consulting with sangha members who show up regularly for morning service, I have decided to make some changes in the liturgy at the Milwaukee Zen Center.

With apologies to all who will have to memorize new words, there will soon be a new sutra book that reflects these changes.

#### **Among the changes:**

The robe verse, chanted daily at the end of the second period of sitting, will be chanted twice in Japanese, and once in an English translation – a translation that is different from the one we now use.

After the first three bows in the morning service, we will chant repentances (the purification chant, starting with “All my ancient twisted karma...”) and refuges (taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha).

Every other morning (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) the main daily chant will be the Heart Sutra in Japanese.

The weekly well-being service is moving from Monday to Friday.

We’re looking forward to a large group of strong voices to greet the day.

#### **In two other matters:**

Since we have moved the altar to the back wall, entering and exiting the zendo is different for those who sit on the right side. They should enter on the right side of the door, cross the threshold with the right foot, then proceed along the bowing mat and turn right to one of the seats. Exiting is done by retracing your steps (crossing the left side of the threshold with your left foot).

And just as a reminder: Watches and any electronic devices are not allowed in the zendo, with doans the only exception, because they need a timer. Also, anything distracting, such as obvious jewelry or very bright clothing, should be left outside of that room, so that everyone can enjoy the quiet beauty of the sacred space. Also, head coverings should be worn only if there is a medical need.

Thank you for your understanding!  
*Sincerely, your resident priest, Reirin.*



Jon Proniewski with Rev. Tonen O’Connor, resident priest emerita, at Jon’s lay ordination ceremony on Jan. 16.