

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!

Item	Qty.	Price	Tax*	Total
Short (5.5")		\$15.00	.83	
Long (10")		\$15.00	.83	

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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U. S. POSTAGE
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Weekly practice schedule

MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY MORNINGS

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

MONDAY EVENING

5:30 zazen
6:00 kinhin
6:10 zazen

WEDNESDAY EVENING

6:30 introductory class
6:30 zazen
7:10 kinhin
7:20 zazen

SATURDAY MORNING

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

SUNDAY MORNING

8:30 t'ai chi
9:15 zazen instruction
9:30 zazen
10:10 kinhin
10:20 dharma talk
11:00 informal tea

Stay in touch with MZC

Online:

- See our complete schedule of practice and activities at www.milwaukeezencenter.org
- For the latest news and events, visit us on Facebook
- E-mail us at kokyoan@gmail.com

Street address:

2825 N. Stowell Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53211-3775

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The Mirror

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milwaukee zen center

volume 30, no. 6

July 2016

DON'T WASTE YOUR LIFE!

By Reirin Gumbel, resident priest

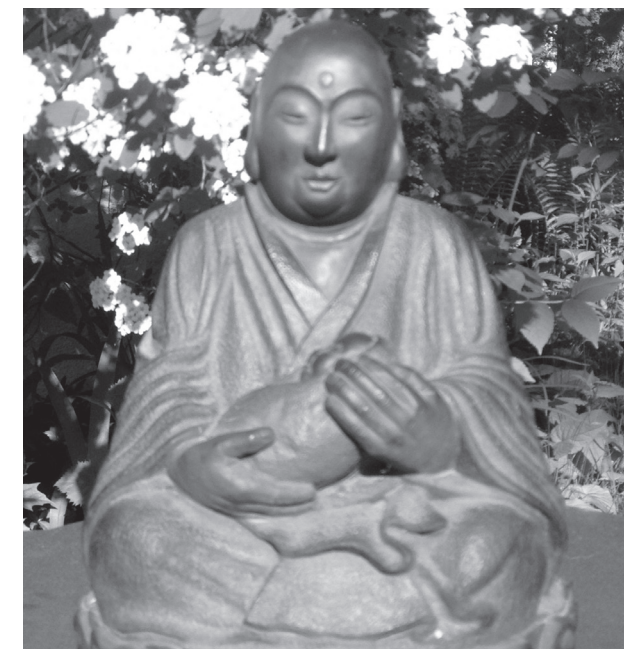
There is enough evidence that the world which we know is undergoing a huge change. We are confronted with upheavals on all fronts; extremes are happening in the natural environment, in economics, politics, etc.

Human ingenuity, as much as it is progressing, is challenged, and we wonder how we can face scarcity and death. Impermanence has always been going on; ice ages and meteor crashes brought on extinction on a wide scale, and people have always been at war with each other. But now we seem to be more aware of global destruction as well as our own mortality.

Buddhist quiescence is often criticized as ineffective and escapist. However, the Buddha did not avoid old age, sickness, and death. He realized that withdrawal from the world, through mental concentration or ascetic practices alone, did not satisfy his quest, that he had to face life in order to overcome human suffering. After years of asceticism, he finally accepted food from a young woman and sat under the Bodhi Tree, in a calm and quiet posture, with the vow not to move until he understood reality. Mara confronted him with the evils and pleasures of the world, and because he was well trained, he could withstand the temptations and face everything with a calm mind. He realized impermanence, that nothing has absolute existence, and that suffering arises from believing otherwise.

Compassion for deluded beings arose from that insight and he got up to teach them for the rest of his life. When a young mother came to him with her dead baby, he did not magically restore its life, but asked her to bring him a sesame seed from all the houses in which there had not been a death. As she went from door to door, she understood that death is inescapable, and grief is part of life. She became a nun in the Buddha's community.

"Awake, awake everyone! Birth and death is a serious matter – don't waste this life!" is the inscription on the han, the wooden timepiece in Zen temples. It reminds the students that time is passing. Taigen Leighton says in *Just This Is It*, his book on Dongshan: "Particulars are expressions of the universal, and the universal only exists in its particular expressions." And in Nagarjuna's *Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way* we read: "Without a foundation in the conventional truth, the significance of the



ultimate cannot be taught. Without understanding the significance of the ultimate, liberation is not achieved."

In order to live a full life and become liberated, we need to embrace our problems. We need to look at things in order to understand their no-thingness. Overcoming a threat by facing it is the only way that can bring peace and joy in the end.

A wonderful example I found recently in a lecture by Bryan Stevenson, author of *Just Mercy*. His talk reminded me of Buddhist teaching, even though he may never have heard of it. Stevenson is a criminal lawyer in Alabama,

working for human decency in imprisonment and abolition of the death penalty. His instruction on how to change the world comes in five parts:

1. You need proximity; stay close with what is happening
2. Change the narrative.
3. Have hope; do not give up.
4. Be ready to be uncomfortable and do uncomfortable things.
5. Let yourself be broken; compassion arises from a broken heart.

Zen teaches us the same:

Proximity: Many koans are about intimacy between teacher and student. As Bryan received this teaching from his grandmother's tight hugs, students may receive compassionate feedback in the form of hits or harsh words.

Narrative: The Zen student is constantly reminded that her thoughts are conscious constructions. The Dhammapada already states that "all experience is preceded by mind, led by mind, made by mind," and our stories can be exchanged for more beneficial ones.

Hope: The bodhisattva will never give up. Even though Buddhists do not use the word "hope," there is the faith that we can follow Shakyamuni's example, wake up and save all beings.

Discomfort: A monk's training is designed to include discomfort, and the bodhisattva is asked to be a witness in the hell realms.

Brokenness: There is a story about Avalokiteshvara's head shattering into eleven pieces, when he faces the world's extreme suffering, and true compassion arising through his brokenness. All this is clearly not avoidance. A zendo may appear like a place where one can forget the world and its problems, which has brought on the criticism mentioned above.

Finding calm and quiet is necessary for realization; we need to practice shamatha for insight to arise. But there is also the request to practice "as with the head on fire," and meditation is considered hard work. Not indulging in comfortable habits, not running away from painful feelings, constantly returning to the breath, are important instructions.

Practices of meditation and voluntary deprivation are useful and necessary in making us strong and ready to face the inevitable. Only through this effort can we mature into a fearless being who will be able to relieve one's own and others' suffering. Giving up self-clinging, we gain the confidence of a person who knows him - or herself, deeply connected with all life, able to be responsive and creative in all situations.

Bryan Stevenson appears to be such a person, in touch with a reality that is not pretty, and at the same time being joyful and compassionate.

NEW BOARD SEATED

Members of the Milwaukee Zen Center elected a nine-member board for 2016-'17, the largest board in recent memory, and that board has selected Lorraine McNamara-McGraw as Zen Center president.

The actions came on March 12, at the organization's annual meeting and at a short board meeting afterwards.

Welcome to the new board:

Lorraine McNamara-McGraw, president; Peter Johnson, vice president; Kara Posnanski, treasurer; Laura Gillis, secretary; and Mary Neubauer, Kevin Schroeter, Tom Tolan, Ted Weber and Susan Winecke, members at large. In June, the board added a 10th member: Tom Ryan.

Thank you all for taking on these responsibilities!



Follow our events and activity on Facebook
Listen to dharma talks on our website
www.milwaukeezencenter.org

Available from Zen Center:
30th Anniversary T-shirts (\$22)
Book, "30 Years of Reflections" (\$16.95)

MEMBERSHIP: FOUNDATION OF A VIABLE CENTER

By Peter Johnson

We have all been courted by various organizations to become members and enjoy specific benefits. It might be a magazine subscription with a bonus logo tote bag or just an opportunity to have a voice in the political arena. Sometimes our decision to take a membership is an expression of our desire to just belong.

By attaching ourselves to a larger body where mission and vision strike a chord, we feel connected. We also understand that the selected organization also benefits from our commitment in a number of ways. Membership dues provide needed resources to carry out the group's mission and our individual voice adds strength to the organization's vision.

At the Milwaukee Zen Center we offer no special perks with a membership. You can be a Blue Dragon, Red Bird, White Tiger, or Black Tortoise, depending on your membership level, and receive the same sincere thank you. Whatever traditional guardian animal you represent, the importance of that guardianship cannot be underestimated. It is a unique personal pledge to make our practice possible. It can be thought of as a sacred investment in the legacy of our tradition and the "energy" needed to take care of our teachers, our facility, and our special outreach activities.

Membership and special gifts have allowed the Milwaukee Zen Center to remain viable for the past thirty years. We are like the special ash that graces our back yard. It has grown steadily year after year with pruning and love. When threatened by the emerald ash borer, our membership took action to protect it with special trunk injections. As a result it provides shade and protection and a home for the flocking sparrows.

At this particular time, the Milwaukee Zen Center is hoping to also benefit from "injections" to help us continue to meet our needs and sustain our vision. We also are faced with the challenges of an aging building where needed repairs and updates affect our stable financial status. On the bright side, we are finding a renewal of interest in our practice as we broaden our center's outreach through advertising and public activities — which also is a financial investment.

May I suggest that this is an important time for each of us to review our membership status. Paying my own dues regularly on a monthly basis is

something I vow to do, as I have been lax. It might even be time for me to look at a new giving level, by shifting my own priorities in spending.

For those newsletter readers who live out of town and are not yet MZC members, please consider becoming "guardians" at some level. Every regular monthly pledge commitment, no matter how big or small, will be received with genuine gratitude.

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. We'll be able to count on these funds each month, and members don't have to remember to write and send checks.

Nope, sorry, no perks for membership — just the understanding that you are uniquely a part of a very sacred mission which aims to make our ageless practice possible and available to others.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

To our sangha:

It's been four months now, but I'm gratified to have the opportunity to serve as president of the Milwaukee Zen Center.

As always, the center continues to need the support of its members — both financial, and in attendance at meditation and our public events.

The past year has been eventful for us: a successful celebration of 30 years of resident teaching last September, and in that same month, the arrival of Reirin Gumbel, our new resident priest.

Reirin has brought more practitioners through our doors this past year, and we're very grateful to her for that. The half-day and full-day practice sessions she introduced have been excellent. We're also happy to be continuing the work with prisoners that our former priest, Tonen O'Connor, has pursued so strongly over many years.

There have been challenges as well — one example being the fact that we missed an issue of this newsletter because of a transition in responsibilities. I hope we resume production of it on a regular basis. The help of members in that process would be appreciated.

Your help and support is crucial to the continuing health of the Milwaukee Zen Center. With that support, we hope to be around for another 30 years.

Sincerely,
Lorraine McNamara-McGraw, president