



### Getting Wet

This is a time of sunshine and rain. The flowers and trees are beginning to bloom and sprout leaves. It's hard to know from one day to the next what the weather will bring. We had a rather long sunny patch over the past few days and I began to notice that growing things were crying for water. So when the clouds rolled in and the rain came down hard, I felt a sense of relief and gratitude.

Watching the rain soak into the grateful earth, I was reminded of The Parable of the Plants in The Lotus Sutra. In this parable, the Dharma is likened to the rain that falls equally on everything...great trees and small bushes, old mosses and brand new seedlings.

*The rain falls everywhere,  
Coming down on all sides,  
Flowing everywhere  
without limit,  
Reaching over the face  
of the earth.  
All the trees,*

*Superior, middling,  
or inferior,  
Each, according to its size,  
Can grow and develop.*

*The Buddha is like this  
He appears in the world,  
Like a great cloud  
Universally covering  
all things.*

*This one-flavored Dharma  
is to be practiced  
According to one's ability.  
Just as those thickets, forests,  
medicinal herbs, and trees,  
According to their size, grow  
lush and beautiful. \**

This is the promise of the Buddha that the Dharma, and the freedom that it teaches, is available and accessible to all. We needn't feel we are excluded because of who we may feel we are. The Dharma is never exclusive and the truth of the Buddha's teachings is available to all, Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike. For the Buddha set out to find a way out of suffering for all people, not just those obviously allied with him.

The Buddha realized

the interdependence of all things and he taught it by every means at his command. And the truth of interdependence means that the rain must fall on everyone, for no one can be singled out for rain or drought. The Dharma is of one flavor for all who receive it and that flavor is described in the sutra as being the flavor of liberation and nirvana.

It is wonderfully encouraging that the Dharma, the truth of how things are, of how this universe lives, is there for me to understand and to avail myself of in my own way. The Buddha's voice rings in my ears with a different sound from the way it may be heard by others, but for each of us he is offering the opportunity to grasp liberation, to free ourselves from ourselves.

But as I looked out my window at the plants thirstily accepting the rain, I noticed something else. It wasn't raining inside my car. In fact, one of the major features

of my car was its ability to keep out the rain. Then I began to notice the way in which my view also encompassed other man-made structures: garages and houses designed to keep out the rain. And I found I was searching for my raincoat and umbrella before venturing out.

The Parable of the Plants offers rain to growing things that accept it gratefully, and the analogy is drawn with the manner in which the Buddha offers the Dharma teachings equally to all. But the sutra doesn't address the issue of our unwillingness to experience the Dharma. We are far too busy following our own desires to listen. In fact, we are busy building artificial structures designed to protect our ego from seeing its true nature. We work hard to advance our ego's suggestion that we are not interdependent, that we can go it alone just fine, thank you. Our ego works ceaselessly to

*continued from page 1*

build leak-proof walls and roofs, so that it may stay dry and secure inside its self-made fortress.

Yet it is this very effort to constantly protect our ego, our self-view, our desire to control our personal environment that exhausts and torments us. Assaulted on all sides by the storms of life, we struggle to stay under cover, to stay dry, to never get wet.

Yet the joy of spring wells up in us because things are being renewed, emerging from their shriveled, brown husks to put forth vivid green shoots. The blossoms are shouting aloud with exuberance and the birds are painting gorgeous pictures of new life.

Spring is one of the times when it seems to me that I understand the Zen admonition to “hear with your eyes and see with your ears.” All our senses respond to this renewal. And it is the rain that liberates growing things from their winter confinement.

Of course, the seed we plant is the flower and the bare tree of winter is the lush green tree of June and the flaming red tree of October. All forms are inherent in each form. The baby is the old man and the old man the baby. Cause and effect are one. But according to the Buddha’s teachings we need both causes and conditions. It is the rain that is the condition for

the renewal of the plants in my garden; a healthy life is the condition that enables the child to become the man.

So, I wonder, when I stay dry inside my self-constructed “house”, will I taste renewal or will I stay mired in my suffering? To emerge into the dynamic world of constant change, of uncertainty, of responding rather than attempting to control, is a bit like going out without a raincoat and umbrella. Fortunately, when we get wet with the Dharma that falls like a gentle rain on everyone, we do not feel cold and wet. We feel renewal. We feel the dead limbs of our isolation begin to put forth green shoots.

I remember something

I experienced in India nearly 30 years ago. I was having a meeting with a cultural officer in New Delhi and the heat was terrible – so smothering and oppressive that you could hardly breathe. Suddenly he leaped from his desk, threw open the window and leaned out, shouting, “Isn’t it wonderful?” The monsoon had come, rain was pounding down in sheets and people were dancing in the streets.

I hope we will learn to dance for joy, soaked by the rain of the Dharma.

**Tonen O’Connor**

*\* From the translation of The Lotus Sutra by Gene Reeves*



### **Sixth Annual Great Sky Sesshin** August 7-14, 2010

Hokyoji Zen Practice Community in beautiful southern Minnesota co-sponsored by Cedar Rapids Zen Center and Milwaukee Zen Center

Teachers: Dokai Georgesen  
Tonen O’Connor  
Zuiko Redding  
Rosan Yoshida  
Brad Warner

Limited to 24 participants  
Information: [www.milwaukeezencenter.org](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org)  
or email: [kokyo-an@earthlink.net](mailto:kokyo-an@earthlink.net)

### **Milwaukee Zen Center – Schedule**

#### **May**

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 5  | Introduction to Zen   |
| 14 | 7:00 p.m. lecture by Andy Ferguson - <i>A Better Understanding of Bodhidharma</i> |
| 15 | All-day sitting   |
| 16 | All-day sitting   |

#### **June**

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| 2 | Introduction to Zen |
|---|---------------------|

#### **July**

- |         |                               |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| 3       | CLOSED for holiday            |
| 7       | Introduction to Zen           |
| 21 & 22 | Shuso ceremony for Tomon Marr |

To see the 2010 Schedule and more information on Two-day sitting, visit our web site at [www.milwaukeezencenter.org](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org)

## Happenings

The MZC Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, March 14. Following approval of the Minutes for the 2009 Annual Meeting, Pete Tofte presented the Treasurer's report. In the previous fiscal year, the MZC had total income of \$28,395.84 and total expenses of \$25,095.83, designated as follows:

### General Fund:

income \$18,092.49  
(\$4,000 set aside in the Resident Teacher's Fund)\*  
expenses \$16,386.09

### Prison Fund:

income: \$3,158.00,  
expenses: \$2,233.63

### Great Sky Fund:

income: \$6,463.64  
expenses: \$6,476.11

*\*The Resident Teacher's Fund is a restricted fund to be used to underwrite expenses related to the hiring of a teacher to succeed Tonen.*

It was reported that the Board has adopted an Ethics Statement and Grievance Procedures based firmly on the Bodhisattva Precepts and modeled after the Ethics Statement of the Stone Creek Zen Center, which generously allowed us to use their fine work.

The Search Committee is under way, chaired by Linda Gee. An announcement drafted by Lorraine McNamara-McGraw will soon be distributed

widely. The Web Site Committee, led by Linda Gee, with assistance from Lorraine McNamara-McGraw and Tonen O'Connor, is close to being ready to put up our new site, thanks to the work of Kerri Korth, who handled much of the technology involved.

The Board for the coming year was elected by the membership and then at a meeting following the Annual Meeting elected its officers:  
President: Peter Johnson  
Vice-President: Linda Gee  
Secretary: Jim Gother  
Treasurer: Pete Tofte  
At-large: John Eimes, Lorraine McNamara-McGraw, John Rhiel, Susan Winecki  
Complete Minutes and financial reports are available at the MZC upon request.

**Buddha's Birthday** was celebrated on April 10, with the usual bathing of the Baby Buddha, and **Rev. Zuiko Redding**, Resident Teacher at the Cedar Rapids Zen Center, gave a guest dharma talk. Tonen has given talks and answered questions at three area colleges: UW-Fond du Lac, Carthage College and Ripon College, and collaborated in leading a workshop at a Buddhist Women's Conference in Chicago.

Our support comes almost entirely from generous donors who help us make the Dharma available. Our apologies if anyone's name has been omitted from the following list. Please accept this acknowledgment of our gratitude.

Monica Adams	Scott Miller
Kenneth Anderson	Edward Mondini
Robert Balderson	Edith Moravcsik
Steven Bauer	Leslie Morris
Dai-en Bennage	Luke Mueller
Berkeley Zen Center	L. Louise Mullen
Chiyoko Bermant	Lorraine McNamara-McGraw
Mary Bernau-Eigen	Susan McVicker
Hathaway Berry	Michael Newhall
Russell Borkin	Donald Niederfrank
Jim Bowker	Jack Norman
Frank Brezovar	John Nomura
Jeffrey Callahan	Tonen O'Connor
Alex Carlson	Oshkosh Zen Center
Bruce Cheever	Martha Osvat
Patricia Deevy	Henry Panowitsch
James Dorr	Thomas Peralta, Jr.
Chuck Eigen	Myou Dung T Pham
John Eimes	Irene Perez
Kirk Ennenga	Eric Peterson
Phyllis Feia	Daniel Putman
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Norma Fogelberg	William Rassieur
Timothy Freeman	Michelle Regier
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David Goggin	John Rhiel
James Gother	Tom Rimer
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Robert Hanson	John Sabin
Terry Harvey	Fereshteh Sadr
Ihab Hassan	Rodney Sanchez
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Sandy Hollister	Philip Scarr
Eileen Housfeld	Kevin Schroeter
Pamela Hunter	Jeff Seymour
Peter Johnson	Vernon Shabunia
Janice Karnegis	Sylvia Sherman
Carol Klaus	Mike Stupich
Vernon Labunia	Kenneth Swanson
Peter Lee	Peter Tofte
Paul Lehmberg	Robin Twohig
Joy Levy	Francisco Valenzuela
Marilyn Libman	Jisho Warner
John Longeway	John Wiley
Anthony Ludlow	Susan Winecke
Mary Lux	Jen & Tim Yukl
Francis Mariner	
Tomon Marr	

# **milwaukee zen center**

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## **Wed., Thurs., Fri.**

6:15 am Zazen  
(Zen sitting)  
6:55 am Kinhin  
(Zen walking)  
7:05 am Zazen  
7:45 am Service  
8:00 end of practice  
  
6:30 pm Zazen  
7:10 pm Kinhin  
7:20 pm Zazen

## **Saturday**

6:15 am Zazen  
6:55 am Kinhin  
7:05 am Zazen  
7:45 am Service  
8:00 breakfast, oryoki  
8:25 work period  
9:15 break, coffee & tea  
9:30 study class\*  
10:30 end of practice  
*\*except on all-day sitting days*

## **Introduction to Zen**

An informal presentation on Buddhism and Zen, followed by instruction in zen sitting, tea and discussion.  
6:30-8:30 p.m.—first Wednesday of each month.

Zen sitting instruction and private interview available by appointment. Call 963-0526.

### **MZC Contact Information**

For messages: **Phone:** (414) 963-0526  
**Fax:** (414) 963-0517 **E-mail:** kokyo-an@earthlink.net  
For information and  
schedules: [www.milwaukeezencenter.org](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org)

### **Useful Websites:**

Soto Zen Buddhism: <http://global.sotozen-net.or.jp/>  
Soto Zen in America: <http://www.szba.org>

## **Membership Information / Order Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### **I am interested in a membership (tax deductible):**

- General -\$25/month
- Supporting – \$30 or more/month
- Out-of-town – \$10/month
- Participating - any amount you can afford \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to make a one-time contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Please add me to your mailing list
- Please remove me from your mailing list
- Please change my mailing address

TITLE	QTY	PRICE	TAX*	TOTAL
Eiheiji Incense — Short 5.5"		\$ 7.00	.39	\$
Long 10"		\$ 7.00	.39	\$
Shipping - \$3.00 first two boxes of incense and 50¢ per item thereafter.				\$

*\*Only Wis. residents need include applicable sales tax.*

**TOTAL \$** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to Milwaukee Zen Center**

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