

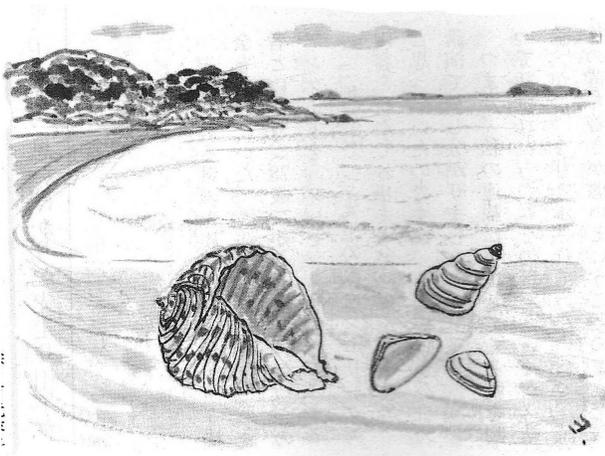


## Beach glass

My life has become rather sedentary. I'm usually sitting on a cushion, in front of a computer, or doing some kind of needlework. In an effort to maintain my health, I try to take regular brisk walks, and my favorite route takes me down the street to Lake Park, where I pick up the Locust Street Ravine Trail and hike to the shoreline of Lake Michigan. It takes about twenty minutes from the door of the Zen Center to the water and another twenty minutes back. If I spend about twenty minutes enjoying the lake, that's a manageable hour out of the day.

Trouble is, once I get to the lakeshore, I have such a good time that I forget to come back. On a windy day, it's exciting to see and hear the whitecaps roll in and crash on the beach. On a mild day, it might be the clouds or the gulls that provide the focal point. The lake is so huge that the horizon line is curved, and I can easily imagine I'm looking at the sea. I climb on the rocks, dig around in the piles of abandoned shells, and enjoy a second childhood.

My favorite game at the lakeshore is collecting beach glass. There's plenty of evidence that the shoreline hosts small drinking parties from time to time. Bits of broken bottles make their way into the waves, where they're tumbled over and over in the slurry of sand churned up by the breaking waves. When they reappear on the beach, they're softly frosted, and the razor edges have become gentle curves.



What used to be refuse that was a little unsightly and dangerous now gleams like jewels in the sand.

When we throw ourselves into the breaking waves of our lives, our rough edges too get knocked off and worn away. Our daily life with this body and mind is the ground of practice—the only one we have. When things are turbulent and we feel like we're caught in wave after wave of turmoil, that's exactly the place of practice. Can we keep our intention intact in the midst of all this? Vowing and repenting, over and over again, can we allow ourselves to be buffeted about by the breaking waves and let go of the sharp edges on which we get caught?

When we practice with a sangha, our friends on the Way act as the grains of sand that polish away our sharp edges. Becoming part of a sangha means dropping the ego. Each of us is affected by what others do, so this practice, this life, can't be all about the individual. When we take some action in the midst of the sangha, we see the effect it has on everyone else. There has to be some give and take if we are all to live and practice and awaken together, and in that give and take we are polished until our Buddha nature, our True Self, becomes visible.

Just as each piece of beach glass is different, so each of us retains our uniqueness. Certain causes and conditions led to a bottle breaking a particular way, into a specific number of pieces of various certain shapes. The basic color and shape of each of these shards is still discernable when it reappears on the beach. Certain causes and conditions led to each of us being the way we are. No amount of polishing will rub away our particular set of gifts and interests. Practice will simply hone them and make them more accessible, putting us in a better position to offer them effectively in the world as part of our bodhisattva practice.

What happens when we empty the container of ego and delusion, smash it and throw the shards into the breakers of our lives? It will take time and faith in this ancient and inexorable process for finely polished gemstones wash up on the shore.

## Upcoming events

### ■ May

#### 5 Informal breakfast 8 am

For the first breakfast of the month, we put aside our oryoki for an informal meal, where practitioners can chat, catch up and get to know each other.

#### 6 Work day 12-4 pm

After a potluck lunch, we'll set to work on the grounds.

#### 12 Dharma transmission celebration for Tomon Marr 9:30 am

The sangha will come together to recognize the end of Tomon's formal training with Tonen and her authorization to teach and function as clergy on her own.

#### 13 Mother's Day observance

Before the Sunday dharma talk, we'll chant for our mothers. Please bring a photo of your mother for our special altar.

#### 19 & 20 Two day sitting

Dig into zazen practice by sitting for an extended time. This is the last two-day sitting until the fall.

### ■ June

#### 2 Informal breakfast 8 am

See May 5 information above.

#### 3 Guest talk and work day

The weekly dharma talk will be given by guest teacher Taizen Dale Verkuilen from the Stray Dog Sangha in Madison. After a potluck lunch at noon, we'll set to work on the grounds.

#### 5—7 Visit from Vivian Gruenenfelder and Zuiko Redding

Vivian (Shasta Abbey, CA) and Zuiko (Cedar Rapids Zen Center, IA) will be following the regular practice schedule with the sangha; please come and join them. On the evening of the 6th (Wednesday), the first period of zazen will be followed by a tea and social time with our visitors so that sangha members can get to know them or renew acquaintances.

#### 17 Father's Day observance

Before the Sunday dharma talk, we'll chant for our fathers. Please bring a photo of your father for our special altar.

For complete and current information about our practice and events schedule, please visit us online at [www.milwaukeezencenter.org](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org).

## Great Sky Sesshin at Hokyoji Zen Practice Community

August 11—18

This Soto Zen style sesshin draws together teachers and practitioners for seven days of deepening their understanding of the dharma under the extraordinary great sky of Hokyoji. Our theme and text for this year's sesshin is Dōgen's *Shōji* (Birth and Death) fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō*. For details, please visit our website at [www.milwaukeezencenter.org](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org).

## Dharma Book Fund has regional impact

The Dharma Book Fund has made written teachings available to practitioners in more than a dozen institutions around Wisconsin.

The fund was established by MZC's board of directors in October 2011 at Tonen O'Connor's semi-retirement to honor her work with prison sanghas and her interest in issues of literacy. The fund makes dharma books available to those who cannot acquire them on their own. Donations to the fund continue to be accepted.

"We've distributed dharma books to chapel libraries, teachers for use with sanghas, and some individual inmates," Tonen reported. "Our generous donors have made a considerable impact. I'm sure that there will be more opportunities for distribution of dharma books, once we have replenished the fund."

MZC continues to accept donations to the fund by check or through the website at [www.milwaukeezencenter.org/donations/index.html](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org/donations/index.html)

### *Correctional institutions:*

- Green Bay
- Oshkosh
- Taycheedah
- Waupun
- Dodge
- Kettle Moraine
- Redgranite
- Fox Lake
- Columbia
- New Lisbon
- Racine

### *As well as:*

- Oakhill Correctional Facility
- Wisconsin Secure Program Facility
- Wisconsin Resource Center  
(both men's and women's divisions)

## Happenings

Sangha members gathered for the 2012 annual meeting on March 10. The group heard updates from the treasurer, practice director and president, and elected directors to the board. New directors Mary Bernau-Eigen and Rusty Borkin joined incumbents Peter Johnson, Linda Gee, Pete Tofte, Lorraine McNamara-McGraw and Susan Winecke.

To mark the one-year anniversary, Sotoshu Shumicho, the headquarters of our denomination, requested that temple bells be rung at the exact time of the Great East Japan Earthquake: March 11, 2:46 pm. That's March 10, 11:46 pm Milwaukee time, when Hoko donned robes and sounded the zendo bell.

March was a busy month of public speaking for Tonen. She gave a presentation on the core teachings of Buddhism, sponsored by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, that was well-attended by both members of the order and the general public. Later that week she gave a talk at Marquette University on meditation as a way of knowing beyond intellectual conceptualization. The next day Hoko joined her at Marquette to lead a zazen workshop.

Hoko gave the silent reflection at this year's International Women's Day event at Mount Mary College. Amidst a room full of women with roots in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe, she said a few words, led a moment of silence, and ended with a chant.

Hoko and Tonen attended meetings of the Milwaukee Association for Interfaith Relations, held at the Islamic Resource Center, and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship, held at MZC.

About a dozen folks were on hand March 14 to hear Madison author Barbara Verkuilen talk about and read from her Zen fable, *Zen Master Bho Li*, at Woodland Pattern Book Center. The event was cosponsored by the MZC.

Tonen's prison ministry work has included pastoral visits to Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution, Redgranite and Oshkosh Correctional Institutions, and

a Buddhist group meeting at OSCI, as well as weekly visits to Racine Correctional Institution. She also attended the biannual meeting in Madison of the Department of Corrections Religious Practices Advisory Committee, and consulted with Judy Hall, coordinator for the Midwest Meditation Volunteers and Chaplain Ron Beyah concerning the meditation program at the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility.

Rogers Memorial Hospital received a pastoral visit and group presentation from Tonen as well.

MZC was bursting at the seams when 35 sociology of religion students from the Milwaukee Area Technical College spent the evening learning about Buddhism. Hoko gave a talk and then opened the program up to lively discussion.

The sangha celebrated Buddha's birthday on April 8 with chanting, bows, bathing the baby Buddha, and refreshments.

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Visit our *Gift Shop* at [www.milwaukeezencenter.org](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org)

Visit us online at

[www.milwaukeezencenter.org](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org)

- Daily happenings on our *What's New* page
- Recorded dharma talks
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**Bookmark and visit often!**

# **milwaukee zen center**

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### **What's new at MZC?**

Find out on the *What's New* page of our website.  
Events, visitors, photos, activities, and more.  
Go to [www.milwaukeezencenter.org](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org) and  
click on *What's New*.

### **Weekly practice schedule**

Complete activity schedule: [www.milwaukeezencenter.org](http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org)

#### **Wed-Fri morning**

6:15 zazen  
6:55 kinhin  
7:05 zazen  
7:45 service  
8:00 end

#### **Wed-Fri evening**

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

#### **Saturday morning**

6:15 zazen  
6:55 kinhin  
7:05 zazen  
7:45 service  
8:00 breakfast  
8:25 work period  
9:15 break  
9:30 dharma  
discussion  
10:30 end

#### **Sunday morning**

8:20 *Intro to Zazen* 10:20 dharma talk  
9:30 zazen 11:00 informal tea  
10:10 kinhin

### **Contact MZC**

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### **I want to be a member of MZC!**

- Sustaining: \$30 or more per month
- Supporting: \$25 or more per month
- Maintaining: \$10 per month
- Contributing: any affordable monthly amount: \$\_\_\_\_\_

### **Eiheiji incense for sale**

**NEW: buy online!**

| <i>Item</i>  | <i>Qty.</i> | <i>Price</i> | <i>Tax*</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Short (5.5") |             | \$8.00       | .45         |              |
| Long (10")   |             | \$8.00       | .45         |              |

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

\*Only WI residents need include applicable sales tax.

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