

# Cedar Rapids Zen Center - Jikyouji

P.O. Box 863 Cedar Rapids IA 52406-0863  
(319) 247-5986 crzc@cedarrapidstzencenter.org www.cedarrapidstzencenter.org

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Winter greetings to you,

We've just finished our two-day Rohatsu Sesshin and I confess that I'm never enthusiastic about sitting sesshin but I'm always glad I did. My head gets screwed on straight again. This return to sanity and connectedness is why the Center is here.

One of our members puts it this way – *Sitting with others in the zendo, I am moved from connection with self to connection with others. It's difficult to describe well – it's knowing that the molecules I breathe in and out are part of endless oneness. I experience interconnectedness deeply, beyond words. This is an anchor as I go about my weekly business.*

Practice changes actions, too. Several years ago a sullen young man started coming to one of the prison groups and I wondered how long he'd last. He lasted, and we all quietly practiced with his snarky remarks and his hard eyes. As months turned into years, I slowly became aware that he no longer had a contradictory comment for everything. Now he was talking more about his art than about anger and frustration. These days he works on being a model for the young cocky guys, someone who lives with quiet strength and wisdom. Though he may never leave those walls, we all benefit from his grace and clarity in a place that needs a lot of that.

**Your past generosity made these things possible. With your continued support, we can continue the Buddha's work of helping people find peace.** Your contributions make possible all that happens here:

**Practice opportunities** Zazen, dharma talks, all-day sittings, sesshins, and study groups nourish practice and renew it. Sharing tea and conversation, browsing the library, or quietly working at the center steady our lives and help us get over the hard places.

**Outreach to everyone** We post dharma talks online, publish a monthly e-newsletter, and maintain a Facebook page and a web site. Through this work, the practice is out there to support the lives of over a thousand people who subscribe electronically or come to the center.

**Prison dharma** Men in five Iowa prisons have a chance to sit and study dharma weekly. They are serious about making their lives more sane, and sitting and support for daily life practice are jewels for them.

While the dharma is free, utilities, building maintenance, and personnel are not. I invite you to walk with us in helping all beings live the peace, clarity, and sanity.

**All gifts are welcome, whether one-time donations, or a monthly pledges.** And your contribution is tax-deductible. If you like giving electronically, go to [www.cedarrapidstzencenter.org](http://www.cedarrapidstzencenter.org) and click on the donation button.

Thank you in advance for your support. If you can, come sit with us.

With deep bow,

