

Dedication of the Des Moines Zen Center Temple Building

On this Sunday morning, May 27, 2018, we gather together for the dedication of this new temple building of the Des Moines Zen Center. Please listen friends and Sangha members . . .

Forty or more years ago a few Sangha members started coming together to light a candle of peace and enlightenment. These early practitioners sat upright to turned their light inward to illuminate the world. Their practice was one of Wisdom and Compassion to see the Oneness of all beings in the Ten Directions and to live accordingly.

There are many chapters of this auspicious moment as we gather together this morning for all beings to dedicate this temple. When the Buddha wanted to build a temple building his disciple Ananda picked a blade of grass and stuck it in the earth and said, "The temple is built." And so here in Des Moines Iowa it was no different. Some of the original founders of this temple are still with us. They started with a blade of grass. Just coming together.

Their first dwelling places were always riddled with falling plaster and leaky roofs, with back entrances and narrow spaces. But they continued . . .

How amazing it is! Today we celebrate the past and the future. May this temple touch future generations far and wide. May it thrive and meet high standards! May it be a guidepost for future generations.

Our practice is to sit. But this sitting is not limited to a zafu cushion or a chair. It is twenty-four hour zazen. It is to sit with all beings in the midst of the entire Universe. We are this Universe, this Universe is us. There is no dichotomizing.

Live in peace and harmony with all beings and with each other. It is the Buddha Way (or if translated . . . a more *Enlightened Way*). In this way we cannot fail to see our great Ancestor in India, Shakyamuni Buddha; the first Ancestor in China, Bodhidharma; the first Ancestor in Japan, Eihei Dogen. We also cannot fail to see our founding teacher here in the Midwest, Dainin Katagiri, and his descendants. May they all be here with us as witnesses.

And today, I cannot think of this moment without the efforts of your head priest, Eido Espe; and your ever gracious Sangha who has worked diligently and tirelessly to support

him and make this day happen.

Today we open the eye of the main image of the Tathagata Shakyamuni Buddha and dedicate this temple. May it be a harbor in the storm, and a beacon of peace for all who come.

I pray that this temple be a place where the Zen wind turns the wheel of the Dharma, so that it will always flourish here. May this fragrant breeze blow continually, so that all beings may be liberated. May this place have eternal prosperity, so that all who come here may benefit. And finally. . . I humbly ask for the Buddha's illumined compassion for all who enter these doors.

Shoken Winecoff
Abbot, Ryumonji