

The Board of Directors of  
**Ancient Dragon Zen Gate**

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

PO Box 13251  
Chicago, IL 60613-0251

November 1, 2007

Dear Friend of the Dharma,

We've heard, in one of the ancient teachings from the *Book of Serenity*, that the Buddha once pointed to the ground and said, "This spot is good to build a sanctuary." In our world today, it's hard to imagine a single piece of earth that doesn't need a sanctuary. Here at Ancient Dragon Zen Gate, as we build a Suzuki Roshi lineage sangha in the Midwest, we are learning that Buddha was speaking to all of us: that all sanctuaries are built on *this* spot, wherever we are, and we are honored to share in the timeless process of developing such a refuge. We are writing to ask you to join us.

Ancient Dragon Zen Gate is a young and developing sangha, and yet, in our first twelve months as an "official" non-profit, we have passed many milestones. Thanks to the dedication of our teacher, Taigen Dan Leighton, we are offering zazen, dharma talks, and classes to the public twice a week. Every month, we are hosting a meeting of the local chapter of the Buddhist Peace Fellowship. In the past year, we have sat together on fourteen sesshin days, and studied together in four seminars. People from all over the Midwest have come to Chicago to hear Taigen teach. At nearly every one of our meetings, there is someone who is experiencing zazen and Soto Zen practice for the first time. Taigen's two ordained priests, Myoshi Roger Thomson and Hogetsu Laurie Belzer, have been helping and being trained by Taigen at every turn, as have our devoted core of regular practitioners.

After meeting together as a sangha for several years, Ancient Dragon Zen Gate incorporated one year ago as a non-profit, and has been recognized as a 501(c)(3) charity by the Internal Revenue Service. We were grateful to receive sufficient donations to cover Taigen's relocation from Berkeley and to establish a parsonage for him in Chicago. We've been able to build a modest emergency reserve against the inevitable "rainy days," and we are moved and grateful to have been so supported in our efforts to create a stable Midwestern platform for Suzuki Roshi's Dharma.

Thanks to the sincere generosity of nearly twenty monthly supporters, and the *dana* of those who participate in our sittings, seminars, and sesshins, we have been able to fund Taigen's teaching effort with a reliable monthly stipend. Our dedicated members have provided us with the means to support our teacher, and we thank, and bow deeply to, all of you.

At this point, what we really need your help with is paying the rent. Like non-profits small and large, our current income is just not enough to meet all of our current expenses. To be able to offer the Dharma, we need to establish our own sanctuary with a dedicated zendo. There are many programs that we could offer if we could afford the cost of the venue. Our ability to rent the space for our events, and our aspiration to eventually lease our own storefront zendo, depend entirely on your kindness and generosity. Through this year-end request, we hope to find the resources to secure Taigen's teaching seat for another year.

We ask you to contribute what you can. Your donation now will give us the financial confidence to go forward in 2008 with a full program of zazen, study, and instruction. For your convenience, donations can be made on our website, [www.ancientdragon.org](http://www.ancientdragon.org). You can also help to establish a home for Soto Zen in Chicago by becoming a monthly supporter and pledging a regular monthly donation, spreading your contribution over the whole year. We are happy to be able to assure you that all your gifts are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

The *Book of Serenity* tells us that when the Buddha said, "This spot is good to build a sanctuary," one of his companions responded by taking a blade of grass and placing it in the ground. We are all doing what we can, just as we are, and with the resources at our disposal, to take refuge in sangha and to make this place a safe haven. In the context of our mutual aspiration and devotion to the Buddha Way, every person's unique gift actualizes the fundamental meaning of sanctuary. Thank you for your contribution.

With our deepest bows,

The Ancient Dragon Zen Gate Board of Directors  
Eric Shutt, President

-----Detach and Return this Section if Contributing by Mail-----

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to become a Supporter of Ancient Dragon Zen Gate and pledge a regular monthly contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ beginning in December 2007 or \_\_\_\_\_.

I would like to make a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help establish the Dharma in Chicago.

Donation checks can be made out to Ancient Dragon Zen Gate and mailed to us at:  
P O Box 13251  
Chicago, IL 60613-0251

Donations can also be made by credit card from a secure online website. Go to:  
[www.ancientdragon.org](http://www.ancientdragon.org)  
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