



Great Plains Zen Center



Sangha Newsletter

February through April, 2015

Nirvana Day Zazenkai – February 6-8

Our annual observance of Nirvana Day, commemorating the day Shakyamuni Buddha passed from this realm of teaching and entered parinirvana at the age of 80, will take place during the February retreat. This zazenkai begins on Friday evening (2/6), and runs through Sunday morning (2/8), and will include a special service on Saturday, February 7. *The cost of this retreat is \$75 for members and non-members and includes overnight lodging Friday & Saturday, as well as all meals.*



Buddha entering Nirvana.

Nirvana Day is traditionally observed on February 15.

Beginner's Mind Sesshin – March 13-15

Those who are in the early stages of their practice are encouraged to join us in March at *Myoshinji*—our center's home in Monroe, Wisconsin—for our *Beginner's Mind Sesshin*. Sesshin (intensive practice retreats) are an important part of Zen practice. This retreat will introduce students to the formal practices that are integral to sesshin, including: sitting and walking meditation; liturgy; taking meals in the traditional, formal *oryoki* style; and work practice. Roshi will help students understand the many components and aspects of retreat practice, offering opportunities to ask questions about Zen practice and to explore the important student-teacher relationship. The sesshin begins Friday evening (3/13) and concludes Sunday morning (3/15). *The cost of this retreat is \$75 and includes overnight lodging Friday & Saturday, as well as all meals. See registration information on page 3.*

Three Day Sesshin – April 16-19

Our April retreat begins on Thursday evening, (4/16) and runs through Sunday morning (4/19). Join us as Spring awakens at *Myoshinji*. *The cost of this retreat is \$150 for members, \$180 for non-members, and includes lodging as well as all meals. Part time attendance is allowed.*



Baian Hakuju Memorial Observed February 4

February 4 marks the anniversary of the passing of Baian Hakuju Kuroda, Roshi, (1898 – 1978), Maezumi Roshi's father and main teacher. Baian Hakuju became abbot of Koshin-ji in Otawara City, Japan in 1922. He is the honorary founder of Zen Center of Los Angeles/Busshin-ji. We chant Baian Hakuju Kuroda, Roshi's name during morning service as the 85th ancestor teacher in our lineage.

Memorial Observations in March

We observe the annual memorial date of Tung-shan Liang-chieh (Tozan Ryokai), one of the two founders of the Caodong (Soto) School in China, on March 8. We chant Master Tozan's name in our lineage as the 45th ancestor.

March 28 is the annual memorial date of Hakuun Yasutani Roshi, who was one of Maezumi Roshi's teachers and also taught or influenced many well-known American Zen teachers. Yasutani Roshi's "Introductory Lectures on Zen Training" in the book *Three Pillars of Zen* form the basis for introducing new students to Zen practice at many centers, including our own. He was a controversial but highly influential teacher. Maezumi Roshi met Yasutani Roshi in Los Angeles and studied koans with him over the following years, culminating in dharma succession from Yasutani Roshi in 1970.

Ohigan Week – March 17-23

Ohigan refers to two, week-long Buddhist observances, each of which starts 3 days prior to the March or September equinox and concludes three days after. The March equinox this year occurs on March 20, so the Ohigan week runs from Tuesday, March 17 through Monday, March 23. The word "higan" literally means "the other shore" ("o" is an honorific prefix, as in "okesa" referring to a monk's robe). Ohigan is traditionally a time to renew our determination in our practice. "Crossing over to the other shore" really means to see clearly that this very shore on which we stand is the other shore. It is common for Buddhists to focus on study of the six paramitas: dana (giving); sila (precepts); ksanti (patience); virya (energy); samadhi (concentration); and prajna (wisdom) at this time. These qualities are in fact what we need to cultivate and practice in order to make the ground fertile for our own awakening. Everyone is encouraged to be especially aware of cultivating these qualities and their value in our lives during the Ohigan week.

Focus on Children

Buddha's Birthday Celebration – April 12

This year, Buddha's Birthday celebration will take place on **Sunday, April 12 from 3-4:30 PM** at Countryside Church, 1025 N. Smith St. in Palatine. In previous years, activities have been geared toward the children. This year, though, our sangha children are preparing a special program for us, so we invite sangha members and friends to come and watch. Also featured will be a display of art by children in our sangha. We will have our traditional Buddha's Birthday service with the beautiful flower house and refreshments following. **If your children would like to participate, please contact Myoyu Roshi at s.myoyu.andersen@gmail.com or by phone at 608-325-6248.** It's a great opportunity to learn a little about Buddhism, meet like-minded children and have some fun!



Artwork For Our Buddha's Birthday Art Exhibit

We are inviting parents to spend some time with their children for the next few months talking about the paramitas and how to cultivate them (see the *Ohigan* article, above). Encourage your children to make a picture or other artwork illustrating one of the paramitas. Pictures could illustrate generosity, patience, tolerance, inclusion, energy or effort, concentration or wisdom in any way your child chooses to portray any of these. Talking about these qualities with your child and then having them creatively express their understanding through art is a wonderful hands-on way of teaching your child about Buddhism at home.

You may drop off completed artwork during Sunday night sitting at Countryside Church or during Saturday AM sitting at Myoshinji during the months of February or March so that it can be displayed during the Buddha's Birthday celebration in April. Please contact Roshi at s.myoyu.andersen@gmail.com or 608-325-6248 for further information.

Announcing the Ripples Program

Ripples is a new, 10-week experiential class based on the Noble Eightfold Path, designed to teach children (and adults, too!) the fundamentals of meditation and how to extend this concentration and awareness outward into all aspects of their lives and what they do, say and think about every day. Through a variety of fun, experiential lessons, children learn how their attempt to live a mindful, aware life ripples out to benefit all others. The program can be adapted to serve children of all ages.

Ripples consists of about 10 weekly lessons. Children learn kid-friendly meditation and are supported in developing a practice at home (Helpful Concentration). We explore how to apply this concentration in various activities (Helpful Mindfulness): play; sports; arts; chores; and even self-care skills. We learn a little about how our brains work – what happens when we lose our temper and what happens when we are able to stop and think before we act. We look at Helpful Effort: ways to encourage ourselves to remain mindful and how to look out for what gets us off track. Along with learning about Helpful Speech (and not helpful speech), we introduce the Talking Circle. This is an opportunity for children to learn to really listen to each other without interrupting or judgment and also a wonderful chance for each child to feel really heard. We explore our connectedness to all on the planet and how our actions affect everybody – even plants and animals (Helpful Action). We cultivate appreciation and gratitude for all that is being done for us.

Class participants choose a problem they've heard about in the community and decide on some action as a group to make a difference (Helpful Livelihood). We will also look at how our individual actions at home (remembering to turn off the lights, recycling and so on) have an impact. We also work on becoming more mindful of our own emotions. We practice some simple exercises to cultivate lovingkindness, compassion, inclusiveness and generosity (Helpful Intention). We use our awareness to see the “bigger picture” and tap into our caring and giving nature, instead of thinking just of ourselves (Helpful Wisdom). We see that this actually makes us feel good, too.



Our first-ever Ripples program is now underway at Myoshinji. We are happy to have about 20 students from a home-schooling network in Green County, WI in the program. Plans are underway for potential programs in a few schools and community mental health organizations in Wisconsin. Ripples is not just for children. A version of the program suitable for a prison population has been developed in conjunction with GPZC member, Anneliese Shogaku Vandre, who is a mental health case manager pursuing licensure as a psychotherapist. Please contact Roshi at 608-325-6248 or email s.myoyu.andersen@gmail.com if you are interested in this program for your school or community group.

Sangha Condolences

The Great Plains Zen Center Sangha extends its sincere condolences to two of our members who had parents pass away recently. Kurt Jishin Ottinger's mother, Betty Ottinger, passed away on December 16 at age 88. Betty was born in Kansas City, MO, and over the years lived in Oklahoma, Colorado and Texas. She is survived by 2 children, 4 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

Sherry Lira's father, Herman Hemauer, passed away on January 8 at age 91. Herman was born in Wisconsin, and served in the Army Air Corps during World War II. From 1950 on, he lived in Westchester, IL. He is survived by 4 children, 9 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren, and his brother, Alfred.

New eBook Published by John Seishin Hagen

GPZC member John Seishin Hagen has recently published his first e-book, *The Emperor Has No Clothes: A Practical Guide for Environmental and Social Transformation*.

The book's purpose is to provide a means to effect desirable changes in the interlocked social and environmental problems we are beset with. The first part examines some aspects of how various kinds of economic/social systems have responded to these kinds of challenges. The second part probes the status of the environment and evaluates the current technical capabilities to address these problems. The last part offers some workable solutions to these problems. The book can be purchased and downloaded at Smashwords at this URL:

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/510315>

Day of Reflection & Month of Everyday Practice Continue Online

Anyone who wishes to deepen their commitment to manifesting the precepts in their everyday lives is reminded of our two complementary home study programs. The **Day of Reflection** takes place on one Sunday each month. Each person recites the Day of Reflection Vows and tries to observe them throughout the day during all of their regular activities. Upcoming dates for the Day of Reflection are: February 1, March 1, and April 5. Following each Day of Reflection, we have the **Month of Everyday Practice**, which features a talk by Roshi about one of the 10 Grave Precepts. We then make a commitment to look deeply into that precept and how it manifests in our lives throughout the month. Find more information on our website at

<http://www.greatplainszen.org/precepts>.

Registration for GPZC Events

To register for GPZC events, please register/pay online at www.greatplainszen.org. Please register for any sesshin, zazenkaï or workshop at least 1 week prior to the start. This allows us to assign positions and arrange other logistics for the event. If you are unable to meet this deadline, please contact us to make arrangements and check on availability of space. Late cancellations are subject to a \$35 non-refundable fee.

Weekly Schedule at Myoshinji

Early morning sitting takes place at Myoshinji at 5:30 AM on Fridays with a morning service following. Evening zazen takes place Fridays at 7 PM. The Saturday schedule includes Zazen at 9 AM followed by talk or discussion as well as an optional morning service at 8:30 AM for those who wish to learn traditional Soto Zen Buddhist liturgy. This provides an opportunity to learn the service positions we do during sesshin and practice them on a regular basis.

Weekly Schedule in Palatine at CCUU

Zazen (Zen meditation) is held every Sunday at 7:00 PM at Countryside Church - Unitarian Universalist, 1025 N. Smith Road, in Palatine, Illinois. We welcome new friends to join us any Sunday. A standard schedule includes a 30-minute period of zazen, 10 minutes of kinhin (walking meditation) and a second 30-minute period of zazen.

Each month, the Zen Center holds *Fusatsu*, the *Renewal of the Vows* ceremony (in place of the second zazen period). Everyone is welcome whether or not they have formally received the Buddhist Vows. One Sunday sitting each month features a *teisho* (a formal dharma talk) by our teacher, Susan Myoyu Andersen, Roshi, followed by group discussion. Also, once a month, members and friends are invited to gather at 6:15 pm where we will alternate between **Council** discussion – or informal **Tea and Chat** prior to sitting. This is an opportunity to just visit and for newcomers and “regulars” alike to get to know one another in an informal setting. *Please see the calendar for specific dates for these activities*

Introduction to Zen Practice Workshops

Great Plains Zen Center will continue to hold monthly Introductory Workshops at Countryside Unitarian Church, 1025 N. Smith Road, Palatine, Illinois, and at Myoshinji in Monroe, Wisconsin. Each workshop provides basic, practical information including how to do zazen (Zen meditation), how to practice at home and throughout the day, the aims of practice, and what opportunities for additional or more advanced practice are offered at GPZC.

- Workshops in **Palatine** (Illinois) will be held Saturdays, February 21, March 21 and April 25, and run from 8:30-11:30 AM, followed by an informal lunch.

- Workshops at **Myoshinji** (Wisconsin) will be held Saturdays, February 21 and March 28 (no workshop in April). Workshops run from 8:30-11:30 AM.

The cost for each workshop is \$25 per person (\$15 for students and seniors; free for repeating participants).

Visit <http://greatplainszen.org/workshops> to register, or call us at (847) 274-4793 or (608) 325-6248. Please note that workshops are held in two different locations (Palatine, Illinois and Monroe, Wisconsin). *Be sure to note the location carefully when registering.*

Membership in the Great Plains Zen Center

There are four levels of membership in the Sangha of the Great Plains Zen Center: **Practicing Membership** (\$50 per month) is for anyone who will be practicing zazen with the sangha on a regular, weekly basis. Practicing Members receive a discounted rate for sesshin (retreats). **Affiliate Membership** (\$30 per month) is for sangha members who live at a greater distance from the regular sittings, and who are not able to attend on a regular basis. **Friend of GPZC** (any amount per year) is for anyone who wishes to support the Zen Center and be included in all special communications. **Sustaining Membership** is for anyone committing to any amount, \$75 and above, per month.

Any of these levels of dues can be submitted at our website:
<http://greatplainszen.org/membership/dues>

Membership helps deepen one's commitment to practice, helps support the center and helps make the practice available to more people now and in the future. Please join us.

Contact Us

By phone: (847) 274-4793

Myoshinji (Monroe, Wisconsin): (608) 325-6248

By e-mail: gpzc@greatplainszen.org

Note our NEW mailing address:

PO Box 2077

Palatine, IL 60078-2077

Find out more about the Great Plains Zen Center on the web at: **greatplainszen.org**

Check out our website: <http://www.greatplainszen.org>

If you haven't opened the GPZC website recently, please visit! You'll find pages covering the following topics: Starting Zen Practice, Community, Workshops, Retreats, Zen Peacemaker Order and a page for children—and much more. You can also learn about our teacher, Myoyu Roshi, and our home, *Myoshinji*, in Monroe, Wisconsin. The site also carries information about all of our upcoming activities, as well as links for registering for events.

GPZC

P.O. Box 2077

Palatine, IL 60078-2077



Great Plains Zen Center – Myoshinji (Subtle Mind Temple) – Monroe, Wisconsin

W77962 Falk Rd • Monroe, WI • 608-325-6248

February 2015

1	2	3	4	5	6 Zazenkai	7 Zazenkai 9:00am Zazen
8 Zazenkai	9	10	11	12	13 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	14 8:30am Service 9:00am Zazen
15 Nirvana Day	16	17	18	19	20 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	21 8:30 am Intro Workshop
22	23	24	25	26	27 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	28 8:30am Service 9am Zazen

March 2015

1	2	3	4	5	6 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen	7 8:30am Service 9am Zazen
8	9	10	11	12	13 Sesshin	14 Sesshin 9am Zazen
15 Sesshin	16	17	18	19	20 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	21 8:30am Service 9am Zazen
22	23	24	25	26	27 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	28 8:30 am Intro Workshop
29	30	31				

April 2015

			1	2	3 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen	4 8:30am Service 9am Zazen
5 Easter	6	7	8 Buddha's Birthday	9	10 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen	11 8:30am Service 9am Zazen
12	13	14	15	16 Sesshin	17 Sesshin	18 Sesshin 9am Zazen
19 Sesshin	20	21	22	23	24 (closed)	25 (closed)
26	27	28	29	30		

Great Plains Zen Center – Countryside Unitarian Church – Palatine, Illinois

1025 N Smith Rd • Palatine, IL • 847-274-4793

February 2015

1 <i>7:00 pm Zazen & Fusatsu</i>	2	3	4	5	6 <i>Zazenkai</i>	7 <i>Zazenkai</i>
8 <i>Zazenkai</i> <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 <i>Nirvana Day</i> <i>6:15p Tea</i> <i>7:00p Zazen & Teisho</i>	16	17	18	19	20	21 <i>8:30 am</i> <i>Intro Workshop</i>
22 <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2015

1 <i>7:00 pm Zazen & Fusatsu</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 <i>7:00p Zazen</i>	9	10	11	12	13 <i>Sesshin</i>	14 <i>Sesshin</i>
15 <i>Sesshin</i> <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	16	17	18	19	20	21 <i>8:30 am</i> <i>Intro Workshop</i>
22 <i>6:15p</i> <i>Council; 7:00p</i> <i>Zazen & Teisho</i>	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	30	31				

April 2015

			1	2	3	4
5 <i>Easter</i> <i>7:00 pm Zazen & Fusatsu</i>	6	7	8 <i>Buddha's Birthday</i>	9	10	11
12 <i>3:00-4:30pm</i> <i>Buddha's Birthday</i> <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	13	14	15	16 <i>Sesshin</i>	17 <i>Sesshin</i>	18 <i>Sesshin</i>
19 <i>Sesshin</i> <i>7:00p Zazen</i>	20	21	22	23	24	25 <i>8:30 am</i> <i>Intro Workshop</i>
26 <i>6:15p Tea</i> <i>7:00p Zazen</i>	27	28	29	30		