



Great Plains Zen Center



Sangha Newsletter

August through October 2016

Peaceful Way Sesshin – August 7-14

The devastating effects of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima (August 6, 1941) and Nagasaki (August 9, 1941), along with the enormous suffering caused by war, genocide and all aggression throughout human history were the inspiration for this “Peaceful Way” sesshin. Along with the practices of zazen, service, oryoki and work, which make up our typical sesshin, we will incorporate the practice of metta bhavana (lovingkindness meditation) and the Five Buddha Family Mandala. We would especially like to dedicate our practice during this sesshin to the well being of all indigenous people in America (Native Americans) and throughout the world, to whom so much harm has been done and continues to be done. And also to all those who have been marginalized due to their gender, race, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability. The final evening of sesshin, Saturday night 8/13 we will have the Gate of Sweet Nectar Ceremony (see related article).

The cost for this retreat is \$300 for members; \$360 for non-members. This fee includes lodging and all meals. Part time attendance is allowed (\$50/night for members; \$60/night for non-members).

Gate of Sweet Nectar Ceremony – August 13

(8:00 PM Saturday during our Peaceful Way Sesshin.)

All are welcome to attend this special event, even if not attending the rest of sesshin. Those coming from out of town are welcome to spend Saturday night at Myoshinji and join us for the early morning zazen and informal breakfast at the conclusion of the sesshin.

The Gate of Sweet Nectar Ceremony is based on a sutra called the Kan Ro Mon, commonly chanted in Japanese monasteries today. The Kan Ro Mon is said to have originated as a prayer given to Buddha's disciple, Moggallana to help his mother who was suffering in the Hell of Hungry Demons. Whenever she attempted to eat, the food burst into flames, causing even more suffering. By the offering of this prayer, her suffering was relieved. Roshi Bernie Glassman, founder of the Zen Peacemaker Order, translated the Kan Ro Mon along with his teacher, Maezumi Roshi and added elements from other traditions to create the Gate of Sweet Nectar.

The Gate of Sweet Nectar is about bringing nourishment to those, like Moggallana's mother, who are forgotten, marginalized or uncared for. When we invoke this ceremony, we vow to become aware of and nourish all parts of ourselves and society. We remember our own ancestors by reading the names of those who have passed on.

Following the ceremony, we have a candlelight procession to shrines around the grounds.

Please join us for this ceremony, which is both timely and powerful. We also ask that you bring donations of non-perishable food items that will be taken to the local food pantry after the ceremony.

Please email if you will be attending the ceremony—myoyu.roshi@greatplainszen.org

Beginner's Mind Sesshin – September 16-18

Beginner's Mind Sesshin is designed to help those newer to practice learn about all facets of retreat procedures and activities, including taking meals in the formal 3-bowl oryoki style, and participating in daily liturgical services. Because time is set aside for instruction and explanation throughout each day, this is an ideal first retreat experience. The retreat runs Friday evening through Sunday morning, 9/16-18.

The cost for this retreat is \$75 for both members and non-members. This fee includes lodging and all meals.

O-Higan – September 22

O-higan, The Autumnal Equinox, occurs on Thursday, September 22 this year. In Japan, the week of the Autumnal Equinox is called prajna week. During this time, we focus especially on the practice of the six paramitas, which are: generosity (dana), precepts (sila), patience (kshanti), effort (virya), concentration (dhyana) and wisdom (prajna). Everyone is encouraged to take on a practice of focusing on each paramita in turn, whether it be for one week each or one day each, during the month of September.

Honoring the Way of Zazen Sesshin Oct. 13-16

This historic sesshin will be the first ever held in our new meditation hall. We strongly encourage you to come, even if for part of a day, to be part of this long-anticipated event. In the style of our typical October sesshin, there will be an emphasis on just sitting, with no dokusan and only one talk on Saturday morning. At 10:00 AM on Sunday, following the conclusion of sesshin, we will have **jukai, the formal taking of the Buddhist Precepts** for two long-term members, Sherry Lira and John Knewitz. You are encouraged to attend this ceremony to witness their vows of commitment to the practice. Each will be given a Dharma name by Roshi and will wear the rakusu (ceremonial garment) they have each made. An informal celebratory lunch follows.

The cost for this retreat is \$150 for members; \$180 for non-members. This fee includes lodging and all meals, and runs Thursday evening through Sunday morning. Part time attendance is allowed (\$50/night for members; \$60/night for non-members). *There is no charge for attending the jukai ceremony.*

A Message From Our Teacher, Myoyu Roshi:***“Hatred by hatred does not end in this world.******Through love alone does hatred end.******This is an ancient law.” –The Dhammapada***

These are extraordinary times. The levels of hatred, bigotry, misunderstanding, intolerance and lack of awareness unapologetically expressed in thought, word and deed seem unprecedented.

Several things come to mind. First, no one operates in a vacuum. The anger, intolerance, and frustration do not suddenly and randomly spew forth from some one of us, but are born from all of us in all times and places. Though one person or another may appear to be a particularly clear embodiment of this negative culture, their voice arises and flourishes with such force only because it is welcomed and encouraged by the negativity around them. It is a mirror – collectively and individually – of all of our manifestations of anger, intolerance and divisiveness. In it is reflected all of the darker shadows of humanity – from lynch mobs, to genocide, to gross injustices in our world today. In it also are reflected our indifference, inaction, and unawareness that ultimately allow the negativity to prevail. At this time, it is so important for us to acknowledge our complicity, however unintentional it may be. It is time for us to wake up.

It feels like we have reached a point where the hatred, greed, and disregard that have always been a part of human existence have become so visible, so universally in our line of sight, that we, in our desperation, could easily be confused and cajoled into doing and saying things that are well beyond the reach of our common sense and good heart. There is also temptation to give in to helplessness.

Yet the good news is that each of us has the power to change this trajectory. In fact, we are actually the ones who can. By every act of kindness, inclusiveness, truth, awareness and presence in the face of aggressive words, you and I begin to change the story line. If enough of us have this commitment to clarity, kindness and presence, we can tip the balance; change the image in the mirror. We must speak the truth and expect it of others. We must exercise tolerance and expect it of others. We must work actively for the well being of not a few, but all. Remember your goodness and act on it! Find the goodness of others and speak to it!

And above all, be fearless in finding those places within yourself that harbor the same ill will, selfishness, ignorance, disregard and divisiveness (yes, including racism) that you see around you. There is no shame in finding these and bringing them to light. In fact, that is exactly what we, as part of humanity, all need to do. Rather than trying to deceive our selves or others about them, reacting angrily against them, blaming them on others or shouting louder to drown out what we are afraid to see, we simply need to be firmly and uncompromisingly aware and honest, bearing witness to these shadow qualities when they arise within us.

And bearing witness, too, to their evolution–mediated by our own unflinching acknowledgment– into feelings of helpfulness, generosity, clear seeing, empathy and inclusiveness. Those qualities, too, have been present throughout human history, waiting patiently for their opportunity to grow and abound. They, also, are present in each one of us, nurtured by our hours of practice on the cushion and in every day of our lives. And they can and do move mountains.

Investigating Racism in Our Lives and Communities**–Resources for Teachers and Practitioners**

A circle of member teachers of the White Plum Asanga from all over the United States have been meeting for the past year, with the intention of raising our awareness of the racism in our lives and communities, how those of us who are white can be better allies to people of color and how we can make our sanghas more diverse and welcoming. We have put together a list of resources – books, films, videos, websites, study guides and essays – pertinent to racism as it affects members of the African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic, Native American and Semitic communities. This list can be found on the GPZC website at the following link:

http://greatplainszen.org/racism_resources

While not a complete or even representative list, we hope it will serve as a starting point to facilitate dialogue and reflection on this challenging but essential topic. Please take some time to look over the list and explore resources that interest you. Let us know if you would like to help with some GPZC events pertinent to these topics.

Monroe Crop Hunger Walk – October 2

Again this year, GPZC is participating in a Crop Hunger Walk on **Sunday, October 2 starting at 12 PM in Monroe, Wisconsin**. The walk is a collaborative effort between a number of Monroe area churches (including GPZC) and the Church World Service. We would like to get as many walkers from GPZC as possible. Each walker is responsible for soliciting sponsors who contribute a lump sum or per mile rate. Walkers can opt for the 2.5 mile or the 5 mile route.

A portion of the money raised is given to various Church World Service projects overseas and the rest goes to local resources, such as Green County Food Pantry or Second Harvest Foodbank (where some of us volunteered in the past). The majority of overseas projects are for refugee assistance, and also for global hunger and disaster relief and recovery operations. This is a great way for GPZC members to work with other faith communities to make a difference locally and internationally and to have fun.

As in last year, GPZC is responsible for organizing the Food Sculpture Contest. Youth groups can enter by creating a “sculpture” out of non-perishable food items. Groups win prizes for the best sculptures and the food is then donated to the local food pantry. Please let Roshi know if you plan to participate: myoyu.roshi@greatplainszen.org

Upcoming Memorial Dates

August 3 is the annual memorial date for **Dajian Huineng** (638-713), the Sixth Chinese Ancestor teacher in our lineage. Master Huineng is revered by all five of the traditional Zen schools. Much of what we know about the Sixth Ancestor comes from *The Platform Sutra*, which is thought to have been an oral teaching of Master Huineng as recorded by his student, Fahai.

On **September 29** of each year, we honor the two founders of the Japanese Soto School, **Eihei Dogen Dai Osho** (1200-1253) and **Soji Keizan Dai Osho** (1268-1325). Dogen Zenji made the perilous trip to China to fulfill his vow to fully awaken. After study with the great Chinese Master Tiantong Rujing, he returned to Japan to establish Japanese Soto Zen. He is revered not only in Zen circles, but also as one of the greatest Japanese philosophers of all time. Keizan Zenji came three Dharma generations later, having studied with Dogen Zenji's successor, Koun Ejo and his successor, Tetsu Gikai. Keizan Zenji is especially known for his work, *The Record of Transmitting the Light (Denko Roku)*. Dogen Zenji was strict and deeply determined, while Keizan Zenji was more gentle and credited with broadening and revitalizing the Soto School. Thus the two founders are sometimes referred to as the father and mother of the Soto School respectively.

The annual memorial date for **Bodhidharma** is **October 5**. Bodhidharma is a legendary figure who is thought to have lived in the late 5th and early 6th centuries and is the first Chinese Zen Ancestor teacher, 28th in our lineage. Bodhidharma is said to have journeyed from India to bring the teachings of Zen to China. Bodhidharma embodies the spirit of fiercely determined zazen and an unflinching determination to pursue true awakening. His terse, straightforward statements and irreverence for political favor have become the subject of numerous Zen koans.



Weekly Schedule at Myoshinji

After the Summer Practice Period concludes on August 14, the daily schedule at Myoshinji returns to normal with zazen and service at 5:30 AM and zazen at 7 PM on Fridays. 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. Community Meditation occurs at 4:30 every Saturday afternoon, followed by discussion, at Orange Kitten Yarns, 1620 11th St., Monroe, WI (on the Square).

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 before sitting at **6:15 pm** for informal **Tea and Chat** alternating with **Council** (a more formal format for discussion and sharing). These events offer an opportunity for newcomers and "regulars" alike to get to know—and share with—one another. *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, August 20, September 10 and October 22, and run from 8:30-11:30 AM, followed by an informal lunch.
- Workshops at **Myoshinji** (Wisconsin) will be held Saturdays, August 20, September 24 and October 22. 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.*

Registration for GPZC Events

To register for GPZC events, please *register/pay online* at www.greatplainszen.org. Please register for any sesshin, zazenkai or workshop *at least one 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.

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 current 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

August 2016

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|
| | 1 <i>Hui-neng Memorial Day</i> | 2 | 3 <i>7 pm Zazen</i> | 4 <i>5:30 a Zazen & service</i> | 5 <i>5:30 a Zazen & service 7 pm Zazen</i> | 6 <i>8:30a Service 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*</i> |
| 7 <i>Peaceful Way Sesshin</i> | 8 <i>Peaceful Way Sesshin</i> | 9 <i>Peaceful Way Sesshin</i> | 10 <i>Peaceful Way Sesshin</i> | 11 <i>Peaceful Way Sesshin</i> | 12 <i>Peaceful Way Sesshin</i> | 13 <i>Peaceful Way Sesshin 8:00p GSN**</i> |
| 14 <i>Peaceful Way Sesshin</i> | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 <i>5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen</i> | 20 <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop 4:30p CM*</i> |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 <i>5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen</i> | 27 <i>8:30a Service 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*</i> |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | * <i>4:30p CM = Community Meditation @ Orange Kitten Yarns 4:30-5:30 PM</i> ** <i>Gate of Sweet Nectar Ceremony – 8:00 PM 8/13</i> | | |

September 2016

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----|----|--|---|---|
| * <i>4:30p CM = Community Meditation @ Orange Kitten Yarns 4:30-5:30 PM</i> | | | | 1 | 2 <i>5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen</i> | 3 <i>8:30a Service 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*</i> |
| 4 | 5 <i>Labor Day</i> | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 <i>5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen</i> | 10 <i>8:30a Service 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*</i> |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 <i>5:30a Zazen Sesshin</i> | 17 <i>9am Zazen Sesshin</i> |
| 18 <i>Sesshin</i> | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 <i>5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen</i> | 24 <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop 4:30p CM*</i> |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 <i>Founders' Day– Dogen Zenji & Keizan Zenji</i> | 30 <i>5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen</i> | 1 <i>8:30a Service 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*</i> |

October 2016

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|----|----------------------|--|---|
| 2 <i>Crop Hunger Walk **</i> | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 <i>5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen</i> | 8 <i>8:30a Service 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*</i> |
| 9 | 10 <i>Bodhidharma Memorial Day</i> | 11 | 12 | 13 <i>Sesshin</i> | 14 <i>Sesshin</i> | 15 <i>Sesshin 9am Zazen</i> |
| 16 <i>Sesshin</i> | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 <i>5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen</i> | 22 <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop 4:30p CM*</i> |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 <i>5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen</i> | 29 <i>8:30a Service 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*</i> |
| 30 | 31 | * <i>4:30p CM = Community Meditation @ Orange Kitten Yarns 4:30-5:30 PM</i> ** <i>Crop Hunger Walk 10/2: Registration @ 11:00; Walk at 12:00</i> | | | | |

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

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

August 2016

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

September 2016

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|----|----|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 <i>7 pm Zazen</i> | 5 <i>Labor Day</i> | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop</i> |
| 11 <i>6:15p Tea</i> <i>7:00 pm Zazen & Fusatsu</i> | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 <i>Sesshin</i> | 17 <i>Sesshin</i> |
| 18 <i>Sesshin</i> <i>7 pm Zazen</i> | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 <i>7:00p Zazen & Teisho</i> | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 <i>Foudners' Day– Dogen Zenji & Keizan Zenji</i> | 30 | 1 (Oct.) |

October 2016

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