



Great Plains Zen Center



Sangha Newsletter

February through April 2017

Nirvana Day Zazenkai – February 10-12

This retreat commemorates the passing of Shakyamuni Buddha from this realm of teaching into Parinirvana at the age of 80. The zazenkai begins on Friday evening (2/10) at 8 PM and runs through Sunday morning (2/12). On Friday night, there will be a Fusatsu, Renewal of the Vows ceremony. The beautiful painting by Annie Myoshin Markovich, with help of Ripples students, will be displayed in the zendo throughout the zazenkai. . *The cost of this retreat is \$75 and includes overnight lodging Friday and Saturday nights as well as all meals. Please register at the following link:*

<http://www.greatplainszen.org/node/331>

One-Day Council Training – Sunday, March 5

With Annie Myoshin Markovich. 9:30AM - 5PM

What is the practice of council? The Way of Council, by Jack Zimmerman and Gigi Coyle, was published in 1996 and has been instrumental in helping to take Council into the world. Council practice, in its modern form, is a circle form of communication and wisdom sharing practiced by virtually all indigenous peoples around the world. In Council circles, each person learns to offer their personal story from their heart, not their head, and to listen with full attention. There are no fixed leaders but, rather, facilitators; the group's emerging spirit and the process itself are the primary guides and everyone in the circle shares responsibility and leadership for what evolves. *(From text describing Council at the Ojai Foundation.)*

Council Training is effective in bringing together people who are experiencing conflict of ideas— for example, couples, partners, and members of corporations or government organizations. Listening to the other viewpoint without judgment—really listening—can open the heart to deeper communication and understanding in the world we live in today. The practice of deep listening without judgment fosters an atmosphere of respect for one's self and for others and promotes empathy, dissolving barriers to cooperation, understanding and community. Council focuses our intention and energy on the common stories, values, fears and aspirations that make us human; it reminds us that we are more alike than we are different, more capable of finding common ground than we may have thought. There are five rules of Council:

1. ***Listen from the heart***
2. ***Speak from the heart*** --- which means this talk is deeper than usual sharing.
3. ***No crosstalk***—or as the Native Elders call it, "No crossing over the children's fire."
4. ***Confidentiality***, meaning everything that is said here stays here. No gossip or criticism of what is said.
5. ***Speaking spontaneously***, meaning no preparing to say something before your turn comes up.

About the facilitator: Annie Markovich completed the Bearing Witness Training Program in 2014-2015 in Krakow, Poland under the guidance of Acharya Fleet Maul and Jared Seide. Acharya Fleet Maul was the first person to introduce the Bearing Witness group in Auschwitz to Council. Fleet taught us the importance of confidentiality, meaning everything that is said in Council stays there, there is no gossip or criticism. To me, this is a major tool, which allows participants to open up without fear of judgment or retaliation. Bernie Glassman, Founder of the Zen Peacemaker Order, felt the need for Council Training during the Bearing Witness Retreat in Auschwitz, Poland, in 2014 as a vehicle or safe container for the emotional, physical and spiritual feelings that surface during this retreat.

Logistics: This training will take place at GPZC's retreat center, Myoshinji in Monroe, WI., W7762 Falk Rd., Monroe, WI 53566 and will include a vegetarian lunch. Accommodations on Saturday night are available at Myoshinji free of charge for those who require it. Suggested donation for this training is \$25-50 on a sliding scale basis. Fifty percent of the proceeds will go to the presenter, Myoshin. To register, please visit: <http://www.greatplainszen.org> .

Beginner's Mind Sesshin – March 17-19

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 (3/17) and concludes Sunday morning (3/19). *The cost of this retreat is \$75 and includes overnight lodging Friday & Saturday, as well as all meals. Please register online at* <http://www.greatplainszen.org/node/237>

This sesshin coincides with *Ohigan*, which is a week-long observance that runs from 3 days before—until 3 days after—the March equinox (3/20 this year). *Ohigan* is traditionally a time to renew our determination in our practice. It is common for Buddhists to focus on study of the six paramitas (perfections): dana (giving); sila (precepts); ksanti (patience); virya (energy); samadhi (concentration); and prajna (wisdom) at this time.

Buddha's Birthday Celebration, Saturday April 8

Our annual Buddha's Birthday celebration will take place on Saturday April 8 from 11:00am-1:00pm at Myoshinji, W7762 Falk Rd., Monroe, WI 53566. There will be various activities for the children including meditation. We will also have our traditional Buddha's Birthday service with the beautiful flower house followed by a simple vegetarian lunch. If your children would like to participate, please contact Myoyu Roshi at s.myoyu.andersen@gmail.com or by phone at 608-325-6248. Please let us know if you would be able to come early and help make the flower house. It's a great opportunity to learn a little about Buddhism, meet like-minded children and have some fun!

Street Retreat in Chicago – April 20-23

led by Roshi Grover Genro Gauntt

We are very excited to announce the very first-ever Chicago Street Retreat. Roshi Grover Genro Gauntt, of the Hudson River Peacemaker Center, Bronx NY, will lead this retreat. Roshi Genro has extensive experience in leading street retreats in many locations around the world. You are invited to step out of your comfort zone and experience what some have called a “life-changing experience.” For more information or to register, please contact the retreat coordinator, Annie Myoshin Markovich at anniemarkovich@mac.com.

What is a street retreat? A street retreat is a plunge into the unknown. It is an opportunity to go beyond our imagined limits. It's the barest poke at renunciation. We will live on the streets of Chicago with no resources other than our true nature, experiencing homelessness first-hand, having to beg for money, find places to get food, shelter, to use the bathroom, etc. By bearing witness to homelessness, we begin to see our prejudices and boundaries directly and to recognize our common humanness. It is a way to experience our interconnection and realize our responsibilities.

"When we go... to bear witness to life on the streets, we're offering ourselves. Not blankets, not food, not clothes, just ourselves." -Bernie Glassman, Bearing Witness

Basic logistics: The retreat will begin Thursday, April 20 at 2:30 PM and end Sunday, April 23 by noon. Our group will be together almost all of the time, breaking into packs for short times during the day and always secured by buddies. We will meet twice a day for meditation, liturgy, and council.

Partial time participation is not an option. You can only join for the entire retreat. At the beginning of the retreat, we will conduct an orientation. You will meet your street cohorts and facilitators. We will discuss what to expect, but the unexpected will be our root teacher on the street. **Please visit the following site on the GPZC website for more detailed information about the retreat and the preparation necessary for the retreat, including “raising a mala”:** <http://www.greatplainszen.org/node/415>

Remaining Retreat Dates for 2017

- Feb 10-12 Nirvana Day Zazenkai
- March 17-19 Beginner's Mind Sesshin
- April 27-30 Street Retreat in Chicago (led by Roshi Genro Gauntt)
- May 18-21 Three-day sesshin
- June 8-11 Three-day sesshin
- July 16-23 Seven-day sesshin
- August 25-27 Peaceful Way Zazenkai (2-day)
- September 22-24 Beginner's Mind Sesshin
- October 19-22 Honoring the Way of Zazen Sesshin
- November 10-12 Zazenkai
- December 5-10 Rohatsu Five-day sesshin

(All retreats are held at Myoshinji in Monroe, Wisconsin.)

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.



On Serving the Community

by GPZC Member John Genshin Knewitz

In the Jukai ceremony, Zen practitioners vow to do good for others. This vow, one of the Three Pure Precepts, has its origins in the *Dhammapada*, part of the vast Pali Canon. It is ancient and very deep, though it may not at first appear so. On its surface, the vow to do good for others seems even more straightforward than the Golden Rule. The motivation of the Buddhist, however, goes beyond mutual self-interest: it lies in treating others with the deepest compassion because they are none other than ourselves. Buddhism compels us to go beyond the creation of good relations to create harmony with the larger parts of who we, in fact, are. The path of the Bodhisattva is nothing other than this -- the pursuit of a path in which, through the realization of limitless compassion, all sentient beings are saved. How do we go about this?

No matter where we are in our practice, we can progress only by taking the next step. This process never ends. So this is where we must begin – by taking the next step. Aesop, a contemporary of Shakyamuni Buddha, wrote, in *The Lion and the Mouse*, “No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.”

(continued...)

I saw this saying on the wall at Myoshinji and it struck me that the understanding expressed in this fable, one we may have heard as children, makes an essential point about how we can each walk our Bodhissatva path. When we sit in zazen, no one who has gone hungry has thereby been fed, but the seed through which they may receive some future meal may have been sewn. We may not save the world today, but we can express our understanding of our Buddha nature with small steps and follow that lead for the rest of our lives. And when we take these steps, as Buddhists, we do so, not with the self-satisfaction that comes from being “do gooders,” but with the understanding that our actions are a manifestation of our absolute intimacy with others, with the universe. There is no pride in this, but deep gratitude at our good fortune to have found this practice and at having the ability to express it in this serving way. Tomorrow, we may not be able to do so.

Our two practice centers, Myoshinji and the Countryside Unitarian Universalist Church, are in the towns of Monroe, Wisconsin and Palatine, Illinois. We are part of them – we lie within them and are dependent on them for our existence and our ability to practice our chosen path. People in these communities, like all communities, have needs. While many of us participate in service activities, as our Great Plains sangha matures, it makes sense to continue to ask ourselves what good we are doing for others in the places where we practice. There seems to be a growing awareness that we -- as a sangha -- can and should do more locally, especially in the greater Palatine area. Can we increase our presence, more fully express the compassion developed through our practice, within our spiritual homes? This awareness within our mind-hearts moves us to act, to take those simple steps to help more “at home.” During the coming months, please look for increased information on our website and Facebook page about local community service projects in the Palatine area, regular updates on activities in or near Monroe, and -- if you are so moved -- ways that you can help with planning and participation.

With bows, *Genshin*



Gate of Sweet Nectar Ceremony

This quarter, the Gate of Sweet Nectar Ceremony will be held at **Countryside Church** in Palatine on **Sunday evening, 2/19** at 7:30 (following a period of zazen) and on **Friday evening, 3/10 at Myoshinji** in Monroe (following a period of zazen.) The Gate of Sweet Nectar is the primary liturgy of the Zen Peacemaker Order. Based on a sutra called the KanRoMon, it is about bringing nourishment to those 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. Please join us for this inspiring ceremony.

We are taking a collection of needed items for the medics caring for the Water Protectors at Standing Rock in North Dakota. The following is an explanation and list of items requested by the Standing Rock Medic and Healer Council. **Please bring any of the following items to Countryside Church on Feb.19**, the night of the GSN Ceremony. We will box and send the items to North Dakota. Please let Roshi know if you have any questions. If you are not able to attend on Feb. 19, you may drop off the items any Sunday night at Palatine or any Friday night or Saturday morning at Myoshinji.

The Medics are moving their facilities to be safe from potential spring flooding. They have identified weight loss due to insufficient calories for the harsh winter weather conditions as a major issue.

- *Ensure* (Weight Gain) Vanilla or Chocolate
- HIGH CALORIE meal replacements
- Long Johns: Woman size Small (fleece; soft/fuzzy)
- Long Johns: Men size Large (soft, not fuzzy)
- Cots (single, double and bunk bed)
- *Redbull / Monster* Energy Drinks (High Need)
- Light weight down jacket: women's size small
- Scotch Guard waterproofing spray for shoes and clothes
- Batteries: Size D and AA are needed most, but all sizes are needed. **No lithium batteries may be shipped.*
- Cooking Spices (Onion Powder, Chili Powder, Garlic Powder, etc.)
- Chocolate (all kinds; Dark and Milk preferred)
- Candy
- Homemade goodies (Jellies, Jams, cookies, etc.)
- Beef Jerky
- Granola Bars
- MRE's (Meals-Ready to Eat) **Must be in non-perishable form for mailing.*
- Nuts
- Gift Cards (Wal-Mart, Amazon, Gas cards)

Tax-deductable donations may be made online at:

<https://medichealercouncil.com/donate/>

Weekly Schedule at Myoshinji

Each week, sitting takes place Friday at 5:30 AM (followed by service) and Friday evening at 7 PM. On Saturdays, there is service at 8:30 AM followed by two periods of zazen starting at 9AM. During retreats, Saturday morning sitting is open to those not attending the retreat with zazen beginning at 9:15. Once per month, we have an **Introduction to Zen Practice Workshop** in place of the regular Saturday AM schedule. See below for dates.

Also, the **Gate of Sweet Nectar** ceremony and **Fusatsu** (Renewal of the Vows ceremony) will take place on these dates: **2/10** Fusatsu; **3/10** GSN; **4/7** Fusatsu. All are welcome to all of these ceremonies. *Please check our Facebook page or website for other special events at Myoshinji.*

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. One Sunday sitting each month features a *teisho* (a formal dharma talk) by our teacher, Susan Myoyu Andersen, Roshi, followed by group discussion.

Also, the **Gate of Sweet Nectar** ceremony and **Fusatsu** (Renewal of the Vows ceremony) will take place on these dates: **2/19** GSN; **3/12** Fusatsu; (**April** GSN will be held during the Street Retreat).

Once a month, members and friends are invited to gather before sitting at **6:15 pm** for informal *Tea and Chat*. 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, **February 18**, **March 11**, and **April 15**, and run from 8:30-11:30 AM, followed by an informal lunch.
- Workshops at **Myoshinji** (Wisconsin) will be held Saturdays, **February 25**, **March 25** and **April 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 (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 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.

Great Plains Zen Center now on Facebook

Please visit and “like” our *public page*, **Great Plains Zen Center**: <http://www.facebook.com/GreatPlainsZenCenter/>.

There, we will post updates on events and schedules and other important information.

You can also request to join our **GPZC Sangha group**: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/897271090403374/>

You can also follow Myoyu Roshi on Twitter @MyoyuA, for social action posts.

And visit our *website*, <http://www.greatplainszen.org> for 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.

Contact Us

By phone: (608) 325-6248

By e-mail: gpzc@greatplainszen.org

Our postal mailing addresses:

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Find out more about the Great Plains Zen Center on the web at: <http://www.greatplainszen.org> and <http://www.facebook.com/GreatPlainsZenCenter/>

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

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

February 2017

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

March 2017

<i>* Day of Reflection</i>			1	2	3 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen	4 8:30a Service 9:00a Zazen
5 <i>Council Training</i>	6	7	8	9	10 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Gate Sw.N.	11 8:30a Service 9:00a Zazen
12 *	13	14	15	16	17 Sesshin	18 Sesshin 9:15a Zazen
19 Sesshin	20 <i>Spring Ohigan</i>	21	22	23	24 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen	25 8:30 am Intro Workshop
26	27	28	29	30	31 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen	1 (April) 8:30a Service 9:00a Zazen

April 2017

2	3	4	5	6	7 * 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen & Fusatsu	8 8:30a Service 9:00a Zazen 11:00 Buddha's Birthday
9	10	11	12	13	14 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen	15 8:30 am Intro Workshop
16	17	18	19	20 Sesshin ♦	21 Sesshin ♦	22 Sesshin ♦
23 Sesshin ♦	24	25	26	27	28 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen	29 8:30a Service 9:00a Zazen
30	<i>* Day of Reflection</i> ♦ Street Retreat Chicago – led by Roshi Genro Gauntt. See article for details.					

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

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

February 2017

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

March 2017

* Day of Reflection			1	2	3	4
5 Council Training <i>(@ Myoshinji)</i> <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	6	7	8	9	10	11 <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop</i>
12 * <i>6:15p Tea</i> <i>7:00 pm Zazen & Fusatsu</i>	13	14	15	16	17 Sesshin	18 Sesshin
19 Sesshin <i>7:00 pm Zazen</i>	20 Spring Ohigan	21	22	23	24	25
26 <i>7:00 pm Zazen & Teisho</i>	27	28	29	30	31	1 (April)

April 2017

2 <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	3	4	5	6	7 *	8 <i>(Buddha's Birthday @ Myoshinji)</i>
9 <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	10	11	12	13	14	15 <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop</i>
16 <i>7:00 pm Zazen</i>	17	18	19	20 Sesshin ♦	21 Sesshin ♦	22 Sesshin ♦
23 Sesshin ♦ <i>7 pm Zazen & Teisho</i>	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 <i>7:00p Zazen</i>	* Day of Reflection					
♦ Street Retreat Chicago – led by Roshi Genro Gauntt. See article for details.						