

Great Plains Zen Center



Sangha Newsletter

February through April 2016

Nirvana Day Sesshin – February 11-14

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 Thursday evening (2/11), and runs through Sunday morning (2/14), and will include a special service on Saturday, February 13. We are grateful to Annie Myoshin Markovich for the beautiful painting of the reclining Buddha attended by various animals. The painting's subject is traditional for Nirvana Day and will be displayed in the zendo throughout sesshin. 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. Please register online at http://greatplainszen.org.



The Paranirvana of The Buddha -by Annie Myoshin Markovich with Sarah, Finn and Ahimsa Kyrie

Benefit Concert & Silent Auction – February 20

We are very excited about our upcoming Benefit Concert coming up on Saturday, February 20 at Countryside Unitarian Church (1025 N Smith St. in Palatine). The concert features the fusion-rock guitar duo Whatismu performing from their newly released, self-titled CD and videos. Whatismu is led by the remarkable Chicago guitaristand Great Plains member-Lorrie Chikuin Kountz. The music is a hybrid of Indian percussion, rock guitars and EBM synthesizers. Chikuin named the duo and their project, Whatismu, for a famous zen koan. Their performance will be accompanied by intricate and haunting videos created by Whatismu guitarist Laura Jansons and producer Lee Popa. The concert will also feature special guests Jimy Sohns, lead singer of Chicago's 60's hit group, Shadows of Knight (Gloria), and Ted Aliotta (co-writer of *Lake Shore Drive*) performing a rare, personal acoustic set with Chikuin. More detailed information about the concert and the performers can be found here: http://greatplainszen.org/benefit concert.

Before and during the concert, we are hosting a **Silent Auction**. We have found many talented artists among our members and friends, and have a great variety of beautiful works offered for bid. Art includes original paintings, photographs, jewelry and crafts. To preview the auction items, please visit this page: http://greatplainszen.org/silent_auction.

Doors will open at 6:00 to begin the silent auction. The concert begins at 7:00 PM. Children are welcome. Tickets are \$20 and may be purchased at the door, or in advance at http://greatplainszen.org/benefit concert.

Exploring Your Inner Path - March 5

Exploring Your Inner Path: A Day of Contemplative Activities from Meditation to Blacksmithing, will be held on Saturday, March 5 from 8:30-5:00 at Great Plains Zen Center, W7762 Falk Rd., Monroe, WI 53566. This a special opportunity for those exploring spiritual practices to see what is right for them. Experienced practitioners are also encouraged to attend and explore complementary practices. Instruction in four styles of meditation, including metta (lovingkindness meditation) will be provided. A delicious vegetarian lunch will be provided and we will close with a sharing circle and kirtan chanting of the Heart Sutra Gatha.

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Beginner's Mind Sesshin – March 18-20

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 (3/18) and concludes Sunday morning (3/20). The cost of this retreat is \$75 and includes overnight lodging Friday & Saturday, as well as all meals. Please register online http://greatplainszen.org.

This sesshin coincides with *Ohigan*, which is a week-long observance that runs from 3 days before—until 3 days after—the March equinox (3/19 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.

Three Day Sesshin - April 7-10

Our April retreat begins on Thursday evening, (4/7) and runs through Sunday morning (4/10). 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.

Buddha's Birthday Celebration - April 17

Our annual Buddha's Birthday celebration will take place on **Sunday, April 17 from 3:00-4:30 PM** at **Countryside Church**, 1025 N. Smith St. in Palatine. Children will receive instruction in meditation and practice a short period of it. They will complete a Zentangle-inspired art project (a form of meditation in art). We will also 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. 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!

Remaining Retreat Dates* for 2016:

Please note that some dates (those marked with an asterisk) have been changed since publication in November.)

Feb. 11-14 Nirvana Day Sesshin (3-Day)
March 18-20 Beginner's Mind Sesshin (2-Day)
April 7-10 3-Day Sesshin
May (no retreat in May)

June 9-12 Three Day Sesshin
 June 30- July 3 Three Day Sesshin

*Aug. 7-14 Peaceful Way 7-Day Sesshin
 Sept. 16-18 Beginner's Mind Sesshin (2-Day)
 October 13-16 Bodhidharma Sesshin (3-Day)

• Nov. 11-13 Zazenkai

• *Dec. 6-11 Rohatsu sesshin (5-Day)

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

Exploring Your Inner Path – March 5

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Participants will also choose two 1-hour classes in the morning and two in the afternoon from the following:

Breathing Earth Qi Gong with Steven Spiro. Breathing Earth Qi Gong has evolved over the course of over twenty years of practice and teaching. The exercises include slow, graceful movements, meditative postures, visualizations, and individual and group energetic experiences. Based upon the ancient Asian arts of "energy cultivation", Breathing Earth Qi Gong is presented in ways relevant to the western practitioner. The focus is on wellness, flexibility, spiritual attunement, and breath-and-body awareness. Steven Spiro studied Taiji and Qi Gong with Master Tricia Yu, Donna Silver, and others at the Madison Tai Chi Center. He has trained with other Qi masters and meditation teachers, and is an ordained Zen Buddhist chaplain.

Restorative Yoga with **Chris Wellington**. This class will focus on opening and relaxing the body as a support for meditation practice. Comfortable clothing is helpful. **Chris Wellington** has practiced yoga and meditation for 15 years and is currently a student of Zen. She is a 500-hour graduate of the Alignment Yoga Teaching Training in Madison.

Blacksmithing as a Meditative Practice with Chuck Wellington. This class will introduce students to the use of a coal fire forge. Each student will have the opportunity to shape hot metal on an anvil. The meditative aspect of this craft will be emphasized. Chuck Wellington has been doing blacksmithing for 10 years at the Prairie Song forge on his farm. He finds it to be a very contemplative activity.

Introduction to Zentangle with Kathy King. Students will engage in the process of creating a Zentangle as a form of "artistic meditation", focusing on each stroke with one-pointed concentration as they create an intricate, repeating design.

How to Make a Mala (Buddhist prayer beads) with Kathy King. In this class, students will make a traditional wrist mala that they can take home. The history and use of the mala (not just for Buddhists!) will be discussed. Kathy King is a life long artist with many interests and abilities. Kathy's enthusiasm for art is contagious. She is well known in the region for jewelry and pottery making, drawing, painting and printmaking. She currently teaches art at Monroe High School.

Chanting as a Spiritual Practice with Beth Wortzel and Jim Powell. Chanting is a powerful tool to open the heart and uplift the mind. It has existed in all spiritual traditions around the world for millennia. In this class we will explore its inner workings and practice, together some of the ancient Sanskrit mantras as well as chants in English. No special musical talent or singing ability is required as anyone, through practice, can experience the spiritual benefits of chanting. Beth Wortzel and Jim Powell are members of Jaya, a band known for their original sacred songs and chants or bhajan and kirtan. They are also trained sound healers, yoga meditation teachers and practicing psychotherapists who have led countless workshops together since the 1970's on topics ranging from yoga philosophy to sound healing and more.

Please register by Feb.15 to get the early bird rate of \$90 for the full day event; the cost is \$100 if registering after 2/15. The cost for half-day attendance is \$60. You can register online at http://www.greatplainszen.org/exploring_path or mail the enclosed registration form to GPZC, W7762 Falk Rd., Monroe, WI 53566. We are wheel chair accessible. Please register early, as class sizes are limited and on a first come, first served basis!

All proceeds from this special fundraising event will go to GPZC's Building Renovation Fund. Please read more about this at: http://greatplainszen.org/renovation_campaign.

<u>Community Meditation – Saturdays in Monroe</u>

Are you interested in checking out meditation in an informal setting? **Orange Kitten Yarns**, 1620 11th Street in Monroe is hosting a weekly community meditation gathering on **Saturdays from 4:30-5:30** especially geared for those new to meditation. Myoyu Roshi leads meditation for about a half hour, followed by tea and discussion. No pre-registration necessary; you can just show up. Orange Kitten Yarns is conveniently located on the square in Monroe. Come early and browse in this beautiful shop that features a great selection of local and imported yarns, knitting supplies and classes, herbal teas, locally-made soaps and lotions and much more. For information, call Jocelyn Kline at 608-328-4140.

Memorial Observations in February & March

February 4 marks the anniversary of the passing of Baian Hakujun Kuroda, Roshi, Maezumi Roshi's father and main teacher. On March 8, 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. 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.

Sangha Condolences

The Great Plains Zen Center Sangha extends its sincere condolences to John Gendo Wolff, Sensei and Tandy Hoen Sturgeon on the death of their son, Ben. He is remembered as a generous person who made friends easily. He was a talented musican, and was interested in Buddhist introspection. His brother and sister, Jordan and Jessamyn, also survive Ben.

Sensei sent us this message: "Hoen and I would like to express our gratitude to everyone in the GPZC Sangha for the thoughtful gifts, cards, and kind words that have been sent our way. We are very deeply touched and truly comforted by your loving-kindness."

Film Based on Myosen's Novel, "Lamb" Debuts

Congratulations to sangha member Bonnie Myosen Nadzam on the January 8 release of the movie, *Lamb*, starring Ross Partridge and Oona Laurence based on her award-winning novel of the same name. *Lamb* is a novel about a middle-aged man who befriends a young girl and coaxes her into joining him at his rural hideaway, and the "dangerously unclassifiable" relationship that results. Critics referred to this the novel, winner of the 2011 Flaherty-Dunnan First Novel Prize, as: "a stunning debut," "brilliant, dark and very disturbing" and "a masterful exploration of the dynamics of love and dependency..." Myosen's book *Love in the Anthropocene*, coauthored with environmental philosopher Tim Jamieson, was published in September 2015 and her new novel, *Lions: A Novel*, will be released in July 2016.

Introduction to Zen Practice Workshops

Great Plains Zen Center continues to offer 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 20, March 12 and April 16, and run from 8:30-11:30 AM, followed by an informal lunch.
- Workshops at **Myoshinji** (Wisconsin) will be held Saturdays, February 27 and April 23. (No workshop here in March.) 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.

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 before sitting at 6:15 pm for informal *Tea and Chat* alternating with *Council* (a more formal format for discussion and sharing). *Please see the calendar for specific dates for these activities*.

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

<u>Great Plains Zen Center – Myoshinji (Subtle Mind Temple) – Monroe, Wisconsin</u> W77962 Falk Rd • Monroe, WI • 608-325-6248

February 2016

	1	2	3	4	5 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	6 8:30am Service 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*
7	8	9	10	11 Sesshin	12 Sesshin	13 Sesshin 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*
14 Sesshin	15 Nirvana Day	16	17	18	19 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	20 8:30am Service 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*
21	22	23	24	25	26 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	27 8:30 am Intro Workshop 4:30p CM*
28	29	* 4:30p CM = Community Meditation @ Orange Kitten Yarns 4:30 – 5:30 PM ** Feb. 20: Benefit Concert & Silent Auction @ CCUU. Doors open at 6:00; Concert at 7:00 PM				

March 2016

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* 4:30p CM = Community Meditation @ Orange Kitten Yarns 4:30 - 5:30 PM		1	2	3	4 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	5 All Day: Exploring Your Inner Path **
6	7	8	9	10	11 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	12 8:30am Service 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*
13	14	15	16	17	18 Sesshin	19 Sesshin 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*
20 Sesshin	21	22	23	24	25 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	26 8:30am Service 9am Zazen 4:30p CM*
27	28	29	30	31	** See p. 2 for details on <i>Exploring Your Inner Path</i> event.	

April 2016

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

<u>Great Plains Zen Center – Countryside Unitarian Church – Palatine, Illinois</u> 1025 N Smith Rd • Palatine, IL • 847-274-4793

February 2016

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 7:00 pm Zazen & Fusatsu	8	9	10	11 Sesshin	12 Sesshin	13 Sesshin
14 Sesshin 7 pm Zazen	15 Nirvana Day	16	17	18	19	20 8:30 am Intro Workshop **7:00 pm Concert
21 6:15p Council; 7:00p Zazen & Teisho	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 7:00p Zazen	29	* * Benefit Concert & Silent Auction Feb. 20 at CCUU. Doors open at 6:00 for auction bidding; Concert at 7:00 PM				

March 2016

		1	2	3	4	5 All Day: Exploring Your Inner Path **	
6 7:00 pm Zazen & Fusatsu	7	8	9	10	11	12 8:30 am Intro Workshop	
13 * 6:15 Tea 7:00p Zazen & Teisho	14	15	16	17	18 Sesshin	19 Sesshin	
20 Sesshin 7 pm Zazen	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27 7 pm Zazen	28	29	30	31		** See p. 2 for details on <i>Exploring Your Inner Path</i> event, March 5 in Monroe.	

April 2016

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* (Buddha's Birthda ** Join us April 17 j	•	1	2			
3 7:00 pm Zazen & Fusatsu	4	5	6	7 Sesshin	8 * Sesshin	9 Sesshin
10 Sesshin 7 pm Zazen	11	12	13	14	15	16 8:30 am Intro Workshop
17 3:00 Buddha's Birthday Celeb. ** 7:00p Zazen	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 6:15 Council; 7:00 pm Zazen & Gate of Sweet Nectar	25	26	27	28	29	30