



Great Plains Zen Center



Sangha Newsletter

May through July, 2015

Summer Ango 2015

This summer, we will hold a special practice period, angō, from Saturday, May 23 - Sunday, August 23. Angō, meaning “peaceful dwelling,” originated from the Buddha’s practice of remaining in one place for the rainy season when travel was difficult. During a traditional 90-day angō, participants are expected to remain on the monastery grounds for the entire time. There is an extensive practice schedule.

The abbot appoints a shuso—or head trainee monk. This person serves as a “model student,” attending all activities and doing service 3 times per day, even on rest days. Angō includes the ceremony of Shuso Hossen on August 1, at the end of our seven-day sesshin. This is Dharma combat with the shuso, who gives a talk on a koan and then fields questions from students in a lively interchange. The shuso for this summer will be Jeff Ryuzan Slepak.

Angō will conclude with the August Peaceful Way Sesshin, August 20-23. This sesshin includes our annual Gate of Sweet Nectar ceremony on Saturday evening, August 22.

We invite everyone to attend the angō and shuso entering ceremony on Saturday morning, May 23 at Myoshinji (during sesshin). While staying at Myoshinji for the 93 days of the angō is not possible for most people, everyone is encouraged to make a special commitment to practice during angō. We can each find a way to stay immersed in our practice for the 93 days, even when it is challenging and inconvenient. Even without living at a monastery, we can remain grounded in our practice vows. *Please check our website for information on making a formal participation commitment.*

Maezumi Roshi Memorial

Beginner’s Mind II Sesshin – May 22-24

Angō 2015 begins with this Beginner’s Mind sesshin honoring Maezumi Roshi. A sesshin in his honor is a most fitting tribute, as Maezumi Roshi always said that our zazen was the best gift he could receive from us. This is the first time we are offering a “Beginner’s Mind II” sesshin. It is geared for those relatively new to practice and especially those who have attended a Beginner’s Mind sesshin in the past. The basics of zendo and ceremonial procedures will be reviewed and built upon with more in-depth training about some of our practices such as chanting and playing temple instruments. Participants will have the opportunity to learn a service position with the mentoring of an experienced practitioner. Sesshin begins Friday evening (5/22) and concludes Sunday morning (5/24). The cost of this retreat is \$75 and includes overnight lodging Friday & Saturday, as well as all meals. This is truly one of the most beautiful times of the year to experience sesshin at Myoshinji.

Honoring Our Founder

Each May, we honor **Koun Taizan Maezumi Roshi**, Myōyū Roshi’s teacher. Maezumi Roshi received Dharma transmission from Hakuin Kuroda, Roshi, in 1955 and also received approval as a teacher (Inka) from both Koryū Osaka Roshi, and Hakuun Yasutani Roshi. In 1967, Maezumi Roshi established the Zen Center of Los Angeles. In 1976, he established the Kuroda Institute for the Study of Buddhism and Human Values, a non-profit educational organization formed to promote scholarship on Buddhism in its historical, philosophical, and cultural ramifications.



Maezumi Roshi had 12 successors who in turn have transmitted the Dharma to more generations of successors. Dharma descendants of Maezumi Roshi, collectively known as the White Plum Asanga, number well over 100 members at this time. At the age of 64, Maezumi Roshi died suddenly in Tokyo, Japan in the early morning hours of Monday, May 15 (Japanese time), 1995.

Three Day Sesshin – June 25-28

Angō 2015 continues with our June retreat – a three-day sesshin. It will begin on Thursday evening, June 25 and conclude Sunday morning June 28. The cost for this retreat is \$150 for members; \$180 for non-members. This fee includes lodging and all meals. Part time attendance is allowable (\$50/night for members; \$60/night for non-members).

Seven-Day Sesshin – July 26-August 1

The third retreat for Angō 2015 is our seven-day sesshin. This retreat will begin on Sunday evening, July 26, and conclude on Saturday, August 1. The cost for this retreat is \$300 for members; \$360 for non-members. This fee includes lodging and all meals. Part time attendance is allowable (\$50/night for members; \$60/night for non-members).

Buddha's Birthday

Many thanks to everyone who made our recent Buddha's Birthday celebration such a success. We had over 20 people participating, including 9 children ranging in age from 3 – 13. Artwork, essays, stories, riddles and poems by the children filled three large display boards. The children in attendance made beautiful “gratitude flowers,” showing who and what they were grateful for in their lives.

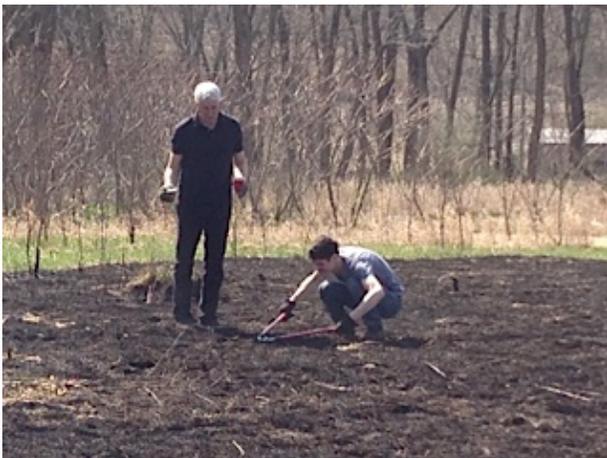


Blue Lotus—Beauty & Wisdom by Jack B. age 9

Wisdom Heart Prairie:

Allowing the Buddha Seed to Grow

We are very grateful to three members of the Prairie Enthusiasts group who did a prescribed burn on the land to the south of the driveway at Myoshinji just before April sesshin. This is part of a plan to restore much of our property to native prairie. Following the burn, we have put down clear plastic sheeting, a process called “solarization,” which we hope will eliminate much of the non-native grasses that currently dominate the hillside and would prevent the prairie plants from taking hold. In November, we will plant prairie seed. The process of restoring the land back to native prairie is a long process. It will require ongoing years of stewardship and care, much as our Buddha seed requires ongoing nurturing to produce the beautiful bloom of maturing practice.



Shared Stewardship Circles

Here at Great Plains Zen Center, we would like to begin experimenting with the use of shared stewardship circles as a way of taking responsibility for various administrative and practice aspects of our Zen Center. For example, there would be a circle responsible for welcoming and serving the needs of new members and friends of GPZC and another circle responsible for caring for the buildings and grounds at Myoshinji.

Initiating shared stewardship at GPZC has been under consideration for a while, but it has come into focus as a result of recent conversations with Roshi Egyoku, the abbot of Zen Center of Los Angeles (ZCLA) and Roshi Bernie, founder of Zen Peacemakers and first successor of Maezumi Roshi. The shared stewardship model we envision uses the Three Tenets of the Zen Peacemakers (not knowing, bearing witness, and taking action that arises from not knowing and bearing witness) as tools for guiding and carrying out the leadership functions of the organization.

It is our intention to evolve a system that includes everyone, promotes all voices to be heard and allows the wisdom of the group (which is not necessarily the same as the wisdom of individuals) to bring forth creative and fitting actions and ideas that serve and support all of us in practice. I had the opportunity in April, while attending the Gate of Sweet Nectar Training at ZCLA to observe this in action. While ZCLA is a much larger organization with residential training as well, I think the model used there is a good starting point as we see what works for us.

Creating some circles focused on specific areas and developing our collective skill in these jobs seems a manageable way to initiate shared stewardship at Great Plains Zen Center. These circles will be responsible as a group for guiding and carrying out various responsibilities of GPZC. I encourage those who are interested and available to sign up for one or more of these circles. As a relatively small sangha, we need many hands and eyes to carry out the work of the organization. The individuals who have signed up for each circle will work out a schedule of meetings that works for the group. Note that names and scopes of duties of circles will likely evolve and change and more circles will be added as any of us see the need or interest. Some possible/probable groups include: Hospitality, Myoshinji Building and Grounds, Service/Outreach, Leadership and Liturgy. An opportunity to sign up for some of these circles will be sent in a later email.

**Day of Reflection and
Month of Everyday Practice continue online**

Day of Reflection is an invitation to make a vow for one day each month to make a special effort to observe the 16 Bodhisattva Precepts. The practice can be done at home or wherever you are and takes place on the same Sunday when we hold *Fusatsu*, the ceremony to formally renew our vows. The Day of Reflection practice originates from the Zen Peacemaker Order, but is open to anyone who wishes to strengthen their resolve to guide their life by the Buddhist precepts. The day ends with a simple Transfer of Merit dedication. **Month of Every Day Precept Practice** is an opportunity to continue precept study for the remainder of the month following the **Day of Reflection** by focusing on one of the Ten Grave Precepts. Please visit our website to see the Day of Reflection Vow and the current talk on the Precept for the month 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, zazenkai 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 for 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, June 20 and July 18 (no workshop in May), and run from 8:30-11:30 AM, followed by an informal lunch.
- Workshops at **Myoshinji** (Wisconsin) will be held Saturdays, May 9, June 13 and July 11. 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 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

May 2015

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

June 2015

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

July 2015

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

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

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

May 2015

<i>(no Intro Workshop in May)</i>					1	2
3 <i>7:00 pm Zazen & Fusatsu</i>	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	11	12	13	14 <i>Maezumi Roshi Memorial Day</i>	15	16
17 <i>6:15p Tea 7:00p Zazen & Teisho</i>	18	19	20	21	22 Sesshin	23 Sesshin
24 Sesshin <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	25	26	27	28	29	30

June 2015

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

July 2015

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