



# Great Plains Zen Center



*Sangha Newsletter*

*August through October, 2009*

### **3-Day Precepts Sesshin - August 27-30**

This retreat, organized by the Great Wave Zen Sangha, will run from 8:00 p.m., Thursday through 8:00 a.m. on Sunday. It will take place at the White Sands Zen Center in Spring Lake, Michigan. (For a map and driving directions, as well as online registration, visit the Great Wave Website at [www.greatwave.org](http://www.greatwave.org).) We are very pleased to have a second sesshin opportunity joining the White Sands and Great Wave centers together under the leadership of Myoyu Roshi.

A focus on the Buddhist Precepts will permeate this retreat, which will include talks on the precepts and opportunities to work on rakusu during samu. This is an important event for everyone, but, especially for those wishing to receive *jukai* in the near future. To register for this sesshin, please go to [www.greatwave.org](http://www.greatwave.org).

### **Work Weekend - September 18-20**

Come join us for a wonderful fall weekend at Myoshinji. Participants are welcome to come for any or all of the program. There will be sitting on Friday night, then morning sitting on Saturday, followed by the workday, socializing and possibly enjoying a bonfire in the evening, with sitting again on Sunday morning, ending by 8 AM or so. This would be a wonderful chance to come and see the new gardens planted during the Eagle Scout projects. We will also be planting the first of the prairie, doing lots of weeding, and possibly beginning work on the Jizo garden. The program is free, except that participants are encouraged to bring a small monetary donation to cover food costs.

### **Bodhidharma Day Celebration - October 4**

On Sunday, October 4, we will celebrate Bodhidharma Day at the Countryside Unitarian Church in Palatine. Please visit the Great Plains Website ( [greatplainszen.org](http://greatplainszen.org) ) for details. Activities for kids and families will be held to bring the families of our sangha members together for some fun and socializing.

### **3-day Sesshin - October 9-12**

This retreat will be held at *Myoshinji* in Monroe, Wisconsin, beginning at 7:30 p.m. on Friday evening, and ending at 8:00 a.m. on Monday (Columbus Day).

### **Registration for GPZC Events**

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 will be unable to meet this deadline, please contact us to make arrangements and check on availability of space in the event. Late cancellations are subject to a \$35 non-refundable fee.

The cost for each 3-day *sesshin* is \$150 for current Practicing Members; \$180 for others. Students may attend any *sesshin* on a part-time basis (\$50 per day for current Practicing Members; \$60 per day for others). To register, please *register/pay online at [greatplainszen.org](http://greatplainszen.org)*.

### **Also: Great Sky Sesshin - August 8-15**

For those interested in a second seven-day sesshin this summer, the **Great Sky Sesshin** takes place in Minnesota at Hokyoji, **August 8-15**. This sesshin features Dokai Georgesen, resident associate teacher at Hokyoji and five invited teachers, including Tonen O'Connor from Milwaukee Zen Center, Zuiko Redding from Cedar Rapids Zen Center, Rosan Yoshida from Missouri Zen Center, teacher/author Brad Warner, and Myoyu Roshi. For further information about this sesshin, please go to <http://hokyoji.tripod.com/id45.html> or [http://appletonzen.org/basic\\_information.pdf](http://appletonzen.org/basic_information.pdf)

### **Roshi to Teach Course in Meditation at Blackhawk Technical College this fall**

Roshi will be teaching a 10-week course on Monday nights at BTC in Monroe starting September 28, 2009. The course will be a practicum, teaching students how to sit. The course will also include discussions on some basic reading material, discussion of how practice is impacting our lives, opportunities to also learn metta (loving-kindness) meditation, various mindfulness practices and will present some of the current research on the benefits and effects of meditation from physiological and neurological standpoints. Please pass the word along to anyone who might be interested. BTC is on Rt. 81 at the north end of Monroe, less than 10 minutes from Myoshinji

### **Future Event Dates Set**

The Board of Directors has set special activity dates for the coming year. Please visit the website @ [greatplainszen.org](http://greatplainszen.org) to monitor any possible changes which may occur to these planned dates.

- Zazenkai – November 6-8
- Bodhi Day Zazenkai – December 4-6
- 3-Day Sesshin – January 15-18
- 3-Day Nirvana Day Sesshin – February 26 - March 1
- 3-Day Sesshin – April 1-4
- Zazenkai – May 14-16 \* *Start of Summer Ango*
- Zazenkai – June 11-13
- 7-Day Sesshin – July 5-11
- 3-Day Sesshin – August 5-8 \* *End of Summer Ango*

### **Scouts Install Two Gardens at Myoshinji**

Enhancement of the grounds of Myoshinji through the installation of two gardens was the focus of a recent project coordinated by Eagle Scout candidate Alex Slepak. Members of Boy Scout Troop 100 (Buffalo Grove, IL) and Venturing Crew 747 (Long Grove, IL) spent the weekend of June 21 on the project. Working from a list of native plant materials selected by Myoyu Roshi, grasses, flowers, and other flora were purchased with funds donated by Zen Center members as well as scouts and their families.

The students arrived on Friday evening and worked hard through the weekend to clear invasive grass and weeds from the garden sites—one near the front of the house and the other around the new sign that greets visitors arriving on Falk Road. Once the beds were prepared, a mix of native plants chosen for their adaptability to Myoshinji's climate were planted and mulched. The garden by the house received a white plum tree, significant for representing Myoshinji as a temple in the White Plum Lineage of Taizan Maezumi Roshi. The gardens were given a finishing touch with the addition of some solar lighting that provides a subtle effect for the gardens as well as offer illumination for the entry sign.

On Saturday evening, at the scouts' request, dinner was taken in the zendo in a modified *oryoki* format. Myoyu Roshi then led the scouts in a brief period of silent meditation. We are grateful for the hard work done by the students, as well as parent volunteers and Zen Center members. The gardens turned out beautifully and will fill in nicely over the coming years and contribute to our vision of prairie restoration efforts on the Myoshinji property.



### **New Member Welcome**

GPZC welcomes new member, John Hagen. John is an engineer who joined us in the fall of last year. John is now actively involved in sesshin and has been learning many of the various service positions. Recently, John took the initiative to design several "green" adaptations for our planned conversion of Myoshinji's work building into a finished zendo. John's understanding of passive and geothermal heating and cooling are pointing us to design ideas that are both cost-saving and environmentally friendly.



### **Sesshin is a Unique and Rare Opportunity to Deepen our Practice – a message from Roshi**

I would like to encourage those who have been practicing to consider the importance and great benefit of attending sesshin, or intensive retreats. While practicing daily at home is very important, having the chance to set other concerns aside and dive deep into practice is a challenging, but truly remarkable experience in our practice lives. While it is not easy for many of us to create this space in our lives with our multiple responsibilities, I would encourage us to try to do so.

During sesshin, we all live together at Myoshinji and follow the same schedule with multiple periods of zazen interspersed with walking meditation, as well as services, formal meals and work period throughout the day. Silence throughout the weekend allows us to focus on our practice intensely, without the usual distractions.

In the words of Keizan Zenji, "Listening and thinking are like being outside the gate; zazen is returning home and sitting in peace."

### **New Members' Orientation Nights in Palatine**

Continuing this quarter, GPZC will designate one Sunday night each month for New Members' Orientation. Those who are new members—or considering membership in GPZC—will enjoy an opportunity to learn about some important topics in informal sessions with Roshi or senior students over tea prior to scheduled sitting. Orientation teas will begin at 6:15, and last about half an hour, followed by sitting at 7:00. With one focus each evening, topics to be discussed include: Zendo Procedures; Bells and Service Positions; Chanting and Liturgy; Retreat Opportunities and Daily Routines. And there will always be time for questions and answers each time as well. Please join us and get to know GPZC members in an informal setting.

### Introduction to Zen Practice Workshops

Great Plains Zen Center will continue to hold monthly Introductory Workshops at Countryside Unitarian Church, 1025 N Smith Rd, 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. Attendance at an introductory workshop is required of anyone who would like to become a member of the Great Plains Zen Center.

Workshops in Palatine will be held Saturdays, August 29, September 12 and October 24 and run from 8:30-11:30 a.m., followed by an informal lunch.

Workshops at Myoshinji will be held Saturdays, August 22, September 26 and October 24. Workshops run from 8:30-11:30 a.m., followed by an informal lunch.

The cost for each workshop is \$25 per person in Illinois, \$15 per person at Myoshinji (free for repeating participants). Visit [greatplainszen.org/workshops](http://greatplainszen.org/workshops) to register, or call us at (847) 274-4793.

### Weekly Schedule in Palatine @ CUUC

*Zazen* (Zen meditation) is held every Sunday at 7:00 p.m. at Countryside Unitarian Universalist Church, 1025 N. Smith Road in Palatine, IL. 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 they have formally taken the Buddhist Vows or not. Upcoming *Fusatsu* dates are August 23, September 20 and October 25.

One Sunday sitting each month will feature *teisho* (a formal dharma talk) by our teacher, Susan Myoyu Andersen, Roshi, followed by group discussion. Upcoming *teisho* are scheduled for August 2 and September 6. (No *teisho* in October; please join us for the Bodhidharma Day Celebration – see page 1.)

### Other Services Offered by Great Plains Zen Center

Myoyu Roshi is an ordained Buddhist priest and can perform weddings, baby blessings, memorials and funerals, and home visits for those members who are seriously ill. She is also a Reiki practitioner. For further information about these services, please contact [myoyu.roshi@greatplainszen.org](mailto:myoyu.roshi@greatplainszen.org)

### Contact Us

By phone: (847) 274-4793

By e-mail: [gpzc@greatplainszen.org](mailto:gpzc@greatplainszen.org)

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

### Visit Our Web Site

Find out more about the Great Plains Zen Center on the web at: [greatplainszen.org](http://greatplainszen.org)

### 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 and Summer Ango 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 Member**, is for anyone committing to any amount, \$75 and above per month.

Any of these levels of dues can be submitted at our website at: <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.



**The Sangha Newsletter is Now Digital**

The Great Plains Zen Center Sangha Newsletter has moved to *electronic delivery* as the default mode. You may **download** the current newsletter by visiting our web site's "News" page (<http://www.greatplainszen.org/news> ) To request a hard copy or to be placed on our e-mail list, contact us at [gpzc@greatplainszen.org](mailto:gpzc@greatplainszen.org)

**Practice Circles at Myoshinji**

One Saturday per month, GPZC will hold a Practice Circle in place of our regular Saturday morning program at Myoshinji in Wisconsin. The schedule is as follows:

- 9:00 a.m. Zazen
- 9:30 Kinhin (walking meditation)
- 9:40 Teisho (talk by Myoyu Roshi)
- 10:00 Informal discussion on our practice in everyday life
- 10:30 Zazen
- 11:00- 11:10 Closing

This format is based on the three aims of Zen practice, which are: *kai* (precepts or harmonious living), *jo* (concentration or meditation) and *e* (wisdom). These Practice Circles are open to anyone and a good follow-up to the Introductory Workshop (also offered monthly). This is a wonderful way for friends and members of GPZC to support each other's practice and develop a strong Zen Community. People of all religious beliefs and practices are also welcome to participate and learn more about how ancient Buddhist wisdom and guidelines for everyday life can enrich their own spiritual practice. **Upcoming dates for Practice Circles are: August 1, September 5 and October 3.**

On Saturdays other than Practice Circle dates, our regular Saturday morning program in Wisconsin will continue starting at 9 am with two periods of *zazen* (meditation) followed by an informal discussion.

Please call 608-325-6248 for further details or to confirm scheduled events.

**GPZC  
P.O. Box 3362  
Barrington, IL 60011**



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

608-325-6248

**August**

*Practice Circle 8/1*

2	3	4 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen &amp; Discussion</i>	5 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	6 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	7	8 <i>9am Zazen</i>
9 [no sittings this week]	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen &amp; Discussion</i>	19 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	20 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	21	22 <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop</i>
23	24	25 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen &amp; Discussion</i>	26 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	27 <b>Sesshin</b> in Ludington	28 <b>Sesshin</b> in Ludington	29 <b>Sesshin</b> in Ludington

**September**

30 <b>Sesshin</b> in Ludington	31	1 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen &amp; Discussion</i>	2 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	3 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	4	5 <i>9am Practice Circle</i>
6	7 <b>Labor Day</b>	8 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen &amp; Discussion</i>	9 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	10 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	11	12 <i>9am Zazen</i>
13	14	15 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen &amp; Discussion</i>	16 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	17 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	18 <b>Work Weekend</b>	19 <b>Work Weekend</b>
20 <b>Work Weekend</b>	21	22 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen &amp; Discussion</i>	23 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	24 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	25	26 <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop</i>
27	28	29 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen &amp; Discussion</i>	30 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>			

**October**

				1 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	2	3 <i>9am Practice Circle</i>
4	5	6 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen &amp; Discussion</i>	7 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	8 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	9 <b>Sesshin</b>	10 <b>Sesshin</b>
11 <b>Sesshin</b>	12 <b>Sesshin Columbus Day</b>	13 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen &amp; Discussion</i>	14 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	15 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	16	17 <i>9am Zazen</i>
18	19	20 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen &amp; Discussion</i>	21 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	22 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	23	24 <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop</i>
25	26	27 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen &amp; Discussion</i>	28 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	29 <i>6am Zazen 7:30 pm Zazen</i>	30	31 <i>9am Zazen</i>

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

847-274-4793

**August**

2 <i>7 pm Zazen &amp; Teisho</i>	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 <i>6:15 orientation 7 pm Zazen</i>	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 <i>7 pm Zazen &amp; Fusatsuu</i>	24	25	26	27 <i>Sesshin in Ludington</i>	28 <i>Sesshin in Ludington</i>	29 <i>Sesshin</i> <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop</i>

**September**

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

**October**

				1	2	3
4 <i>Bodhidharma Day Celebraton 7 pm Zazen</i>	5	6	7	8	9 <i>Sesshin</i>	10 <i>Sesshin</i>
11 <i>Sesshin 7 pm Zazen</i>	12 <i>Sesshin Columbus Day</i>	13	14	15	16	17
18 <i>6:15 orientation 7 pm Zazen</i>	19	20	21	22	23	24 <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop</i>
25 <i>7 pm Zazen &amp; Fusatsuu</i>	26	27	28	29	30	31