



Great Plains Zen Center



Sangha Newsletter

November, 2011 through January, 2012

Zazenkai at Myoshinji – November 4-6

Our November retreat begins on Friday evening, November 4, and runs through Sunday morning, November 6, and is taking place at *Myoshinji* in Monroe, Wisconsin. The cost of this retreat is \$75 and includes overnight lodging Friday and Saturday, as well as all meals.

Bodhi Day Zazenkai at Logan Square–December 3

Our annual observance of Bodhi Day, the day commemorating the enlightenment of Shakyamuni Buddha, will take place on December 3. This special event will be held at *Logan Square Zendo* in Chicago from 6:00 am – 5:00 pm. The first of the day's sittings begins at 6:00. Participants may choose to join us at 9:00 (after breakfast), when we will have two sittings followed by a special Bodhi Day service at 10:30. The cost of this one-day sitting is \$50. Meals are also included. Directions will be available on our website.

In the traditional Mahayana Buddhist calendar, Bodhi Day is December 8th, called Rohatsu in Japanese (literally, the 8th day of the 12th month). Mahayana Buddhists also recognize April 8 as the anniversary of Buddha's birth (Hanamatsuri) and February 8th or 15th as Nirvana Day, commemorating the passing of the Buddha from this sphere of teaching.

3-Day Sesshin at Myoshinji – January 13-16

Our first sesshin for 2012 will be held January 13-16 at Myoshinji. The retreat begins on Friday evening, and runs through Monday morning (Martin Luther King Day). The cost for each 3-day *sesshin* is \$150 for current Practicing Members; \$180 for others. Fees include meals and overnight lodging. Participants may attend any *sesshin* on a part-time basis (\$50 per day for current Practicing Members; \$60 per day for others).

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.



Attention Volunteers!

Starting November 6, a group of churches in Green County, Wisconsin will begin a program to help families in the area who are homeless. The program, Family Promise, is a national, interfaith non-profit organization, helping low-income families achieve lasting independence by providing shelter, meals and support services for families who are homeless. (www.familypromise.org)

Our local organization, Family Promise Green County, consists of a network of 13 host churches in Monroe, Albany, New Glarus and Browntown, that will house the families overnight and other churches and volunteers who will provide support. As of March 2011, there were approximately 90 identified homeless families in Green County. Our program will serve about 4-5 families at a time. Families will spend the night at each host church for a week at a time on a rotating basis. During the day, children will be picked up and taken to their regular school and adults will go to a day center with programming to help them find jobs and connect with needed resources. Volunteers are needed for staffing the day center, helping with meal prep, clean-up, overnight supervision and activities at the host churches.

Great Plains Zen Center is seeking volunteers to help – once a week or once a month, whatever fits your schedule. Please consider volunteering. This is a wonderful opportunity to be of real service to families who need assistance and it is also a great chance to work with a diverse religious community of caring people. Call Myoyu Roshi at 608-325-6248 for more information.

*With a boundless heart should one cherish all living beings:
Radiating kindness over the entire world. – Metta Sutta*

Houses for Change

Looking for an opportunity to share the importance of giving and helping others with your children? "Houses for Change" is an innovative, educational arts and crafts project for kids, sponsored by Family Promise, to raise awareness and funds to help families who are homeless. It offers congregations, schools and other organizations a "teachable moment" regarding the causes and effects of homelessness -- and provides a hands-on opportunity for participants to make a difference "Houses for Change" answers the question, "What can I do to help end homelessness?" Children decorate plain boxes to look like houses and take their boxes home and in the following weeks fill them with loose change. At a selected date, for example Thanksgiving, Easter, the end of the year or end of the school year, families bring their filled boxes back to the participating organization for a communal donation to fight family homelessness.

(continued...)

(...Houses)

The boxes can be picked up at Great Plains Zen Center in Monroe, WI or at weekly sitting at GPZC, Countryside Church in Palatine, with instructions and age-appropriate fact sheets on homelessness provided. Decorated and filled boxes should be returned to GPZC at either location by December 18. At that time, the contents will be distributed evenly among the participating families in the Family Promise Green County program. Please call Myoyu Roshi at 608-325-6248 if you'd like to participate. More information is available at <http://www.familypromise.org/housesforchange/index.php>.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has. — Margaret Mead

Poetry Offering**MASTER OF THE NETS**

Who is not guilty of mixing tracks with fishermen?

I see them, plaid-skinned under braced maples,
casting below the dam toward the salmon,
the foaming spillway, its noisy rage
outlasting the attention until all is submerged
in a deaf, white serenity.

For their part, the fishermen
and their plaid sons gaze as fish
lob themselves into the violent froth.
Above, the moth wings of the autumn forest
yawn in undulant, gold and iron-gall display.

But the fish,
in a trance, will not feed, no matter the lure;
all those caught come snagged through spine or tail
into chapped October hands.

What is needed, my friends, is a net.
None of this haphazard
thatch of lines crisscrossing the water
like so many tall grasses in a rain, but a net,
vast as star fields, with a jewel at every knot.

To be a master of the nets is not
nearly so grand as it sounds; it means only
that along the stinking, moonlit banks,
alone but for the sighing mosquitoes
and slumbering loaves of secret fish,
one wades into the deep water; it means one
casts the broad arc of desire to its furthest reach,
toiling in vain to square the flowing night.

-John Gendo Wolff, Senior Monk

Notes from "Creating a Mindful Society"

—from Ryuzan, GPZC Student

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend a recent conference in New York, *Creating a Mindful Society*. The purpose of the conference was to "explore all the proven, practical ways that mindfulness can benefit our lives and transform our society, from health, work and family to education, leadership and policy."

As a high school teacher, I was most interested in learning more about the growing mindfulness movement in school settings, and I was happy to find there are many resources to support this movement. The importance of mindfulness in education is articulated well by the organization, *Mindfulness in Education* (mindfuleducation.org):

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention here and now, with kindness and curiosity and then choosing your behavior. Research shows that mindfulness benefits both students and teachers. Scientific studies show that practicing mindfulness enhances students' concentration, attention, executive function (planning, decision making, impulse control) openness to learning, emotional balance, pro-social behavior, compassionate action and physical and mental well-being. Studies with teachers and other caring professionals show that practicing mindfulness decreases occupational stress, burnout, and fatigue, and increases empathy, compassion and effective communication, and enhances the classroom environment and pro-social behavior. Educational institutions including early childhood centers, public and private schools, and universities have embraced mindfulness as a valuable educational practice. Join educational colleagues from across disciplines to explore the role of mindfulness in teaching and learning.

The conference opened with a welcome by Saki Santorelli of the Center for Mindfulness. During the two days, keynote presentations were given by several leaders in the mindfulness movement, including: Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder and director of the Stress Reduction Clinic at University of Massachusetts—*The Transformative Power of Mindfulness in America*; Richie Davidson, founder of the Center for Investigating Healthy Minds at University of Wisconsin—*Change Your Brain by Transforming Your Mind*; Janice Marturano, founder of the Institute for Mindful Leadership—*Finding the Space to Lead*; and Congressman Tim Ryan from Ohio—*A Mindful Nation*. There were also many other presentations by people who are really changing lives as they help others learn to experience the many benefits of mindful living.

In each case, it was evident that the presenters are experienced meditators, and the primary component to the various ways they approach teaching others to become more mindful is through a commitment to meditation practice.

Many of the conference sponsors and presenters have websites rich in resources for those who want to delve into learning more about mindfulness and current news about the mindfulness movement. Some of these are provided on page 3.

Mindfulness Resources...

Association for Mindfulness in Education:
<http://www.mindfuleducation.org/>

The Mindfulness in Schools Project:
<http://mindfulnessinschools.org>

Center for Investigating Healthy Minds:
<http://www.investigatinghealthyminds.org>

mindful: living with awareness and compassion:
<http://mindful.org>

Institute for Mindful Leadership:
<http://www.instituteformindfulleadership.org>

the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society:
<http://www.contemplativemind.org/>

Omega Institute for Holistic Studies:
<http://eomega.org>

The Garrison Institute:
<http://www.garrisoninstitute.org>

Garrison Institute's Contemplative Education Links page:
http://www.garrisoninstitute.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=230&Itemid=1025

Holistic Life Foundation, Inc. – Baltimore, MD:
<http://www.hlfinc.org/home.htm>

Zazenkai & Sesshin are Unique and Rare Opportunities 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 *zazenkai* and *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 *zazenkai* and *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 week or weekend allows us to focus on our practice intensely, without the usual distractions.

*Listening and thinking are like being outside the gate;
 zazen is returning home and sitting in peace.*
 –Keizan Zenji

Upcoming Dates:

- November 4-6 Zazenkai
- December 3 Zazenkai (Logan Square Zendo)
- January 13-16 3-Day sesshin
- Feb. 17-20 3-Day sesshin
- March 2-5 3-Day sesshin
- April (dates t.b.a.) Sesshin in Ludington, MI
- May 11-13 Founder's Memorial Zazenkai

**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 will feature *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 for informal *Talk & Tea* at 6:15. 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, December 10 and January 21 (no workshop in November), and run from 8:30-11:30 AM, followed by an informal lunch.
- Workshops at **Myoshinji** (Wisconsin) will be held Saturdays, December 17 and January 7 (no workshop in November). 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 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:
<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
By e-mail: gpzc@greatplainszen.org
Myoshinji (Monroe, Wisconsin): (608) 325-6248
Find out more about the Great Plains Zen Center on the web at: greatplainszen.org

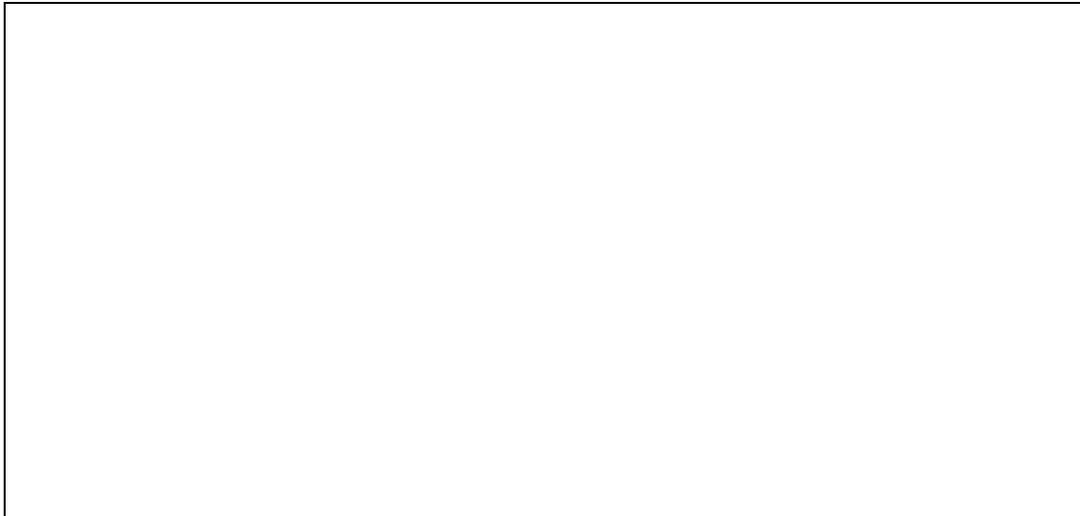
Seeking Donation: Vacuum Cleaner

If you have a full-size vacuum cleaner in good condition that you would be willing to donate for use at Myoshinji, please contact Myoyu Roshi at (608) 325-6248. Thank you!

Weekly Schedule at Myoshinji

Myoshinji's weekly schedule includes these opportunities: Evening zazen each Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:00 PM (followed by discussion and ending about 8:30 PM on Tuesdays); Saturday morning zazen continues to be offered at 9:00 AM, followed by teisho, zendo position instruction or discussion, ending about 11:00 AM. [See *calendar for exceptions*.] Myoshinji is located at W7762 Falk Rd, Monroe, Wisconsin 53566

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



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

W7762 Falk Rd • Monroe, WI • 608-325-6248

November 2011

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | | 1 7:00p Zazen & Discussion | 2 7:00p Zazen | 3 | 4 Zazenkai | 5 Zazenkai |
| 6 Zazenkai | 7 | 8 7:00p Zazen & Discussion | 9 7:00p Zazen | 10 | 11 | 12 9am Zazen |
| 13 | 14 | 15 7:00p Zazen & Discussion | 16 7:00p Zazen | 17 | 18 | 19 9am Zazen |
| 20 | 21 | 22 7:00p Zazen & Discussion | 23 (no zazen) | 24 Thanksgiving | 25 | 26 9am Zazen |
| 27 | 28 | 39 7:00p Zazen & Discussion | 30 7:00p Zazen | | | |

December 2011

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|----------------------------|----|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----|--|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 no Zazen (Zazenkai in Chicago) |
| 4 | 5 | 6 7:00p Zazen & Discussion | 7 7:00p Zazen | 8 Bodhi Day | 9 | 10 9am Zazen |
| 11 | 12 | 13 7:00p Zazen & Discussion | 14 7:00p Zazen | 15 | 16 | 17 8:30 am Intro Workshop |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 no Zazen |
| 25 Christmas Day | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 no Zazen |

January 2012

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|----|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 New Year's | 2 | 3 7:00p Zazen & Discussion | 4 7:00p Zazen | 5 | 6 | 7 8:30 am Intro Workshop |
| 8 | 9 | 10 7:00p Zazen & Discussion | 11 7:00p Zazen | 12 | 13 Sesshin | 14 Sesshin |
| 15 Sesshin | 16 Sesshin MLK Day | 17 7:00p Zazen & Discussion | 18 7:00p Zazen | 19 | 20 | 21 9am Zazen |
| 22 | 23 | 24 7:00p Zazen & Discussion | 25 7:00p Zazen | 26 | 27 | 28 9am Zazen |
| 29 | 30 | 31 7:00p Zazen & Discussion | | | | |

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

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

November 2011

| | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 <i>Zazenkai</i> | 5 <i>Zazenkai</i> |
| 6 <i>Zazenkai</i> 7 pm Zazen | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 7 pm Zazen | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 5:45 Jukai Class 7 pm Zazen & Teisho | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 <i>Thanksgiving</i> | 25 | 26 |
| 27 7 pm Zazen & Fusatsu | 28 | 39 | 30 | | | |

December 2011

| | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|-----------------------|----|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 <i>Zazenkai</i> (at Logan Square) |
| 4 7 pm Zazen | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 <i>Bodhi Day</i> | 9 | 10 8:30 am Intro Workshop |
| 11 7 pm Zazen & Teisho | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 6:15 Tea 7 pm Zazen & Fusatsu | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 <i>Christmas Day</i> (no Zazen) | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

January 2012

| | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|----|----|----|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 <i>New Year's</i> (no Zazen) | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 7 pm Zazen & Teisho | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 <i>Sesshin</i> | 14 <i>Sesshin</i> |
| 15 <i>Sesshin</i> 7 pm Zazen | 16 <i>Sesshin</i> MLK Day | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 8:30 am Intro Workshop |
| 22 6:15 Tea 7 pm Zazen & Fusatsu | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 7 pm Zazen | 30 | 31 | | | | |