



Great Plains Zen Center



Sangha Newsletter

November, 2013 through January, 2014

New Class: Manifesting The Great Vow

Our new class, “Manifesting the Great Vow”, begins Nov. 3 in Palatine and November 9 in Monroe. The class will focus on the Eighth pāramitā, pranidhāna, which is the Bodhisattva vow. We will study in depth some of the familiar vows and verses we chant during daily sitting and sesshin. Our primary text will be *Living by Vow* by **Shohaku Okumura Roshi** with some related reading material to be provided throughout the class. Participants will be expected to read the assigned chapter prior to each class and come prepared to discuss it. Participants will also be asked to spend time between classes reflecting upon their own vows and how these vows are guiding and manifesting in their daily lives.

The class will include 3 talks (*teisho*) and 6 discussion classes in November, December and January. The schedule of talks and discussion classes is listed below for both locations: Countryside church in Palatine, IL and Myoshinji Subtle Mind Temple in Monroe, WI. ***Reading assignments to be completed prior to discussion classes are shown in parentheses.***

Note that talks at Countryside Church are at the usual teisho time and discussion classes are at 6:00PM prior to sitting, (in place of teas and councils). At Myoshinji, discussion classes (& teisho—during retreats) take place at 10:30AM on Saturday mornings. We are encouraging those attending discussions at Countryside to arrive early (about 5:40) to help Ryūzan set up the zendo prior to the class.

Countryside Church, Palatine, IL

- 11/3 Teisho: Pranidhāna, the Perfection of Vows
- 11/10 Class: The Four Bodhisattva Vows (*LBV*, ch 1)
- 11/24 Class: Gatha of Atonement (*LBV*, ch 2)
- 12/15 Class: Three Refuges (*LBV*, ch 3)
- 12/15 Teisho: Verse of the Kesa
- 12/29 Class: Verse of the Kesa (*LBV*, ch 4)
- 1/12 Class: Gatha on Opening the Sutra (*LBV*, ch 8)
- 1/12 Teisho: Meal chants
- 1/26 Class: Meal chants (*LBV*, ch 5)

Myoshinji, Monroe, WI

- 11/9 Class: The Four Bodhisattva Vows (*LBV*, ch1)
- 11/16 Teisho: Gatha of Atonement
- 11/23 Class: Gatha of Atonement (*LBV*, ch 2)
- 12/7 Teisho: Three Refuges
- 12/14 Class: Three Refuges (*LBV*, ch 3)
- 12/28 Class: Verse of the Kesa (*LBV*, ch 4)
- 1/11 Class: Gatha on Opening the Sutra (*LBV*, ch 8)
- 1/18 Teisho: Meal chants
- 1/25 Class: Meal chants (*LBV*, ch 5)

The classes will be open to all interested students. A suggested donation of \$5 per discussion class session will be gratefully accepted at any point during the series. While we encourage participants to attend all classes and talks, it is OK if you are only able to attend some of the classes. Each class will cover a different chant. If unable to attend on site, it is possible to attend via Skype or telephone (over speaker phone). Please let us know when you register if you wish to make those arrangements and we will do our best to accommodate them.

Please register for the class online on our website www.greatplainszen.org or call 608-325-6248. Note that no payment is due on registration. Donations can be made prior to the series or at each class.

Living by Vow by Shohaku Okumura can be purchased by following one of these links:

Amazon (\$13.50 – paperback; \$9.99 e-formats):

<http://www.amazon.com/Living-Vow-Practical-Introduction-Essential/dp/1614290105>

Wisdom Publications (\$18.95 – paperback; \$9.99 e-formats):

<http://www.wisdompubs.org/book/living-vow>

Zazenkai - November 15-17

Our next retreat will be a zazenkai held November 15-17 at Myoshinji. The retreat begins on Friday evening and runs through Sunday morning. The Saturday morning teisho during this sesshin is part of the Manifesting the Great Vow class and will be about the Gatha of Atonement. *The cost of this retreat is \$75 and includes overnight lodging Friday and Saturday nights as well as all meals.*

Rohatsu Sesshin – December 4-8, 2013

(Commemorating Buddha’s Enlightenment)

This year, Rohatsu will begin Wednesday night, December 4th and end on Sunday morning, December 8 with a special Bodhi Day Service at 7:30 AM during our usual morning service. The Saturday morning teisho during this sesshin is part of the Manifesting the Great Vow class and will be about the Three Refuges. This is the most important sesshin of the year and we encourage you to try to attend part or all of it. 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 15th as Nirvana Day, commemorating the passing of the Buddha from this sphere of teaching.

(continued...)

(Rohatsu Sesshin continued...)

During Rohatsu, students are encouraged to plunge into practice with a strong determination to resolve the Great Matter of Life and Death. The cold winds and snow of December at Myoshinji provide an austere, intense backdrop for practice. Please come and support each other in this wonderful practice opportunity. *The cost of this retreat is \$200 for members or \$240 for non-members and includes overnight lodging Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights and all meals.*

January Three-Day Sesshin – January 16-19

Our January 3 day sesshin runs Thursday evening, 1/16 through Sunday morning, 1/19. We will honor Dr. Martin Luther King by including daily practice of metta (loving kindness meditation) in the schedule. The Saturday morning teisho will focus on our Meal Chants and is part of the Manifesting the Great Vow class. *The cost of this retreat is \$150 for members or \$180 for non-members and includes overnight lodging Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights as well as all meals.*

New Year's Zazen

Although it proves challenging to get the Sangha together for zazen on New Year's Eve, we encourage everyone to experience the traditional practice of sitting through the New Year wherever you are. Whether you sit for one half hour from 11:35 to 12:05 or just for a few minutes at midnight, by doing zazen as the New Year begins, you are creating a wonderful beginning for another year of practice. You will also know that many others in ours and other Sanghas around the world are sitting with you at that moment.

“The buildings and grounds protect the Dharma and give peace to all. The Sangha in the Ten Directions will increase in wisdom and fortune...”

from Nenju ceremony performed at the end of sesshin

Many improvements at Myoshinji this past year

We are happy to report that all of the lower deck and the upper deck railings were power washed and stained earlier this fall. We used a high quality water-based timber oil that will protect the wood and last for a number of years. The color matches the oak framing around the doors and looks very nice. Many thanks to Ken Yunen Andersen for initiating this project and donating several work days, and to all who helped with the laborious task of applying the stain. Sometime next year, we plan to replace the warped boards on the surface of the upper deck with new pressure treated boards that can be stained to match.

In the last year, we've been able to make numerous other improvements at Myoshinji including refinishing the kitchen/zendo wall, some interior painting, getting a new hardwood floor in the zendo, shoji screens for the dokusan room and custom-made shoji screens in the zendo thanks to

the generous donations and hard work of many Sangha members. We also planted a memorial garden around the Jizo shrine and started a vegetable garden for next year. We hope to add some wheelchair accessible (raised) vegetable plots in the coming year as well.



Roof Replacement Fundraising Drive underway

At this time, it has become necessary to launch a fundraising drive to replace the roof on Myoshinji's main building housing the zendo and living space. The building is nearly 20 years old and still has its original roof. While there are no obvious leaks, there is damage to many shingles, to be expected given the severity of Wisconsin winters, wind and hail. Typically, insurance guidelines in Wisconsin call for a roof to be replaced about every 17 years.

We would like to begin a fundraising effort now and will schedule the roof replacement when we have sufficient funds. We've gotten quotes for a good quality asphalt shingle roof of about \$4,800 from several vendors and a quote for a metal roof of \$5,600. Our anonymous matching donor has again graciously offered to match funds up to \$2,500. So, we can get an asphalt shingle roof if we can raise \$2,400 and a metal roof if we can raise \$3,100.

The challenge is on! As a donor, you can either choose to pledge a monthly amount or make a lump sum donation. We recognize that these are challenging financial times for many. So we especially appreciate any amount that you can give. With twenty people giving \$10 per month, we could get the shingle roof within a year. With twenty people contributing about \$15 per month, we could get the steel roof in a year's time.

As always, donations can be mailed, dropped off at Myoshinji or at Sunday night zazen in Palatine, or contributed online at our website. Please help us protect our wonderful zendo with a new roof so that we can continue to practice together in the coming years. We are very grateful for your generosity and sincere practice.

Bearing Witness Retreat – April 14-19, 2014**–Rwanda**

The Rwandan organization, Memos: Learning From History, the Hudson River Peacemaker Center and the Zen Peacemakers will jointly sponsor a Bearing Witness Retreat in Rwanda marking the twenty year anniversary of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The retreat will be multi-faith and multinational in character, based on the Zen Peacemakers' Three Tenets: Not-Knowing, Bearing Witness, and Loving Action. The Zen Peacemaker Order, founded by Myoyu Roshi's Dharma brother, Bernie Tetsugen Roshi has previously held numerous Bearing Witness Retreats at the site of the concentration camps at Auschwitz-Birkenau and was asked by Rwandans to come and co-facilitate a Bearing Witness Retreat in their country. The retreat facilitators ("Spirit Holders") will eventually include representatives from Rwanda, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania USA, Belgium and France.

"Humanity's darkest side is extraordinarily fresh in the raw memories of Rwanda's survivors – and killers. It is incredible that they can all live together. Their path of forgiveness and reconciliation demonstrates humanity's hope." – quote by Grant Couch, participant of 2010 Retreat in Rwanda

Check out our website: <http://www.greatplainszen.org>

If you haven't opened the GPZC website recently, please visit! Among the changes are more pictures, a community webpage listing local volunteer opportunities and the text of some children's Dharma songs on the Practice for Children page. Special thanks to Drake Andersen and Shingetsu Hellige, our webmasters!

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, November 23 & January 11 (none in December) and run from 8:30-11:30 AM, followed by an informal lunch.
- Workshop at **Myoshinji** (Wisconsin) will be held January 24 (none in November or December). 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.*

Weekend Visits to Myoshinji

Members and friends are welcome to come to Myoshinji for personal retreats and/or to assist with the many work projects underway. These projects include the ongoing care of the gardens, prairie development, deck cleaning and staining, establishment of a vegetable garden, indoor painting and more. Guests are welcome to enjoy the bountiful farm share veggies and participate in services and zazen while here. There are some wonderful local attractions as well within an hour's drive of Myoshinji. Families with children are welcome. The best time to visit is anytime between Thursday afternoon and Sunday morning, except during sesshin (check calendar for dates). Other times are available by special arrangement. To arrange a visit, call 608-325-6248.

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.

Weekly Schedule at Myoshinji

Early morning sitting takes place at Myoshinji at 5:30 on Friday with a morning service following. Evening zazen takes place Wednesdays, Thursdays and 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.

Retreat dates for 2014:

- Jan 16-19 Three Day Sesshin
- Feb. 7-9 Nirvana Day Sesshin
- March 21-23 Beginner's Mind Sesshin
- April* * (No sesshin due to Roshi's trip)
- May 15-18 3 day sesshin
- June 8-14 7 day sesshin (Sun - Sat)
- July 11-13 zazenkai
- August 14-17 3 Day Sesshin (Th-Sun)
- Sept. 19-21 Beginner's Mind Sesshin
- October 9-12 Bodhidharma Sesshin
- Nov 7-9 zazenkai
- Dec. 3-7 Rohatsu sesshin (Wed - Sun)

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

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 NEW mailing address:

PO Box 2077
Palatine, IL 60078-2077

Find out more about the Great Plains Zen Center on the web at: greatplainszen.org

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.

GPZC
P.O. Box 2077
Palatine, IL 60078-2077

(Note our new mailing address!)

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

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

November 2013

Manifesting the Great Vow –Discussion Classes & Teisho (dharma talks) as marked. <i>See article on page 1 for details & reading assignments.</i>					1 5:30a Zazen 7:00p Zazen	2 8:30am Service 9am Zazen
3	4	5	6 7:00p Zazen	7 7:00p Zazen	8 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	9 8:30am Service 9:00am Zazen, 10:30 MGV Class
10	11 <i>Veteran's Day</i>	12	13 7:00p Zazen	14 7:00p Zazen	15 Zazenkai 5:30a Zazen & Service	16 Zazenkai 9am Zazen MGV Teisho
17 Zazenkai	18	19	20 7:00p Zazen	21 7:00p Zazen	22 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	23 8:30am Service 9:00am Zazen, 10:30 MGV Class
24	25	26	27 7:00p Zazen	28 Thanksgiving (closed)	29 (closed)	30 (closed)

December 2013

1	2	3	4 <i>Sesshin</i>	5 <i>Sesshin</i>	6 <i>Sesshin</i>	7 <i>Sesshin</i> 9am Zazen MGV Teisho
8 <i>Sesshin</i> * <i>Bodhi Day</i>	9	10	11 7:00p Zazen	12 7:00p Zazen	13 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	14 8:30am Service 9:00am Zazen, 10:30 MGV Class
15	16	17	18 7:00p Zazen	19 7:00p Zazen	20 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	21 8:30am Service 9am Zazen
22	23	24	25 Christmas (closed)	26 (closed)	27 (closed)	28 8:30am Service 9:00am Zazen, 10:30 MGV Class
29	30	31				

January 2014

			1 New Year's Day closed	2 closed	3 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00 p Zazen	4 8:30 am Intro Workshop
5	6	7	8 7:00p Zazen	9 7:00p Zazen	10 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	11 8:30am Service 9:00am Zazen, 10:30 MGV Class
12	13	14	15 7:00p Zazen	16 <i>Sesshin</i>	17 <i>Sesshin</i>	18 <i>Sesshin</i> 9am Zazen MGV Teisho
19 <i>Sesshin</i>	20 <i>M L King Day</i>	21	22 7:00p Zazen	23 7:00p Zazen	24 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	25 8:30am Service 9:00am Zazen, 10:30 MGV Class
26	27	28	29 7:00p Zazen	30 7:00p Zazen	31 5:30a Zazen & Service 7:00p Zazen	

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

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

November 2013

Manifesting the Great Vow –Discussion Classes & Teisho (dharma talks) as marked. <i>See article on page 1 for details & reading assignments.</i>					1	2
3 <i>7 pm Zazen & MGV Teisho</i>	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 <i>6p MGV Class 7 pm Zazen</i>	11 <i>Veteran's Day</i>	12	13	14	15 <i>Zazenkai</i>	16 <i>Zazenkai (& MGV Teisho)</i>
17 <i>Zazenkai</i> <i>7:00p Zazen</i>	18	19	20	21	22	23 <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop</i>
24 <i>6p MGV Class 7 pm Zazen & Fusatsu</i>	25	26	27	28	29	30

December 2013

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

January 2014

			1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2	3	4
5 <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	6	7	8	9	10	11 <i>8:30 am Intro Workshop</i>
12 <i>6p MGV Class 7 pm Zazen & MGV Teisho</i>	13	14	15	16 <i>Sesshin</i>	17 <i>Sesshin</i>	18 <i>Sesshin (& MGV Teisho)</i>
19 <i>Sesshin</i> <i>7 pm Zazen</i>	20 <i>ML King Day</i>	21	22	23	24	25
26 <i>6p MGV Class 7 pm Zazen & Fusatsu</i>	27	28	29	30		