



Great Plains Zen Center



Sangha Newsletter

February through April 2008

Nirvana Day Sesshin- February 15-18

February 15 is the traditional date of commemoration of the Buddha's parinirvana. During this 3-Day sesshin, we will study the Eight Awarenesses of the Enlightened Person, described in the Mahaparinirvana Sutra as the final teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha before his passing from this realm of teaching. These eight awarenesses are: having few desires; knowing how to be satisfied; enjoying serenity and tranquility; exerting meticulous effort; not forgetting right thought; practicing Samadhi; cultivating wisdom; and avoiding idle talk. Also the subject of Dogen Zenji's final chapter "Hachidainingaku" in the Shobogenzo and recorded shortly before his passing, these eight awarenesses have much to teach us about establishing a life of joyful, meaningful practice right within our complex and challenging lives.

This *sesshin* will be held February 15-18, beginning at 7:30 p.m. on Friday evening, and ending at 8:00 a.m. on Monday. Please consider this opportunity to enjoy sesshin at *Myoshinji* in the peace and beauty of late winter. The fee for participation is \$150 for current Practicing Members; \$180 for others.

3rd Buddhist Women's Conference-March 8

The Buddhist Council of the Midwest Announces The 3rd Annual Buddhist Women's Conference "*BEING THE DHARMA*" will be held at the Lake Street Church, 607 Lake Street, Evanston, IL 60201 on March 8.

The conference will be an opportunity for women, lay and ordained, to share their practice, cultures, experience, and life as women in the context of the dharma. Women of all Buddhist traditions are represented as planners, presenters, and participants. Current information on the 2008 Conference (including online registration) is available on the Conference Website, www.dharmawomen.org.

Choosing the Bodhisattva Way: the Practice of the Six Paramitas (workshop) March 14-16

The two equinoxes are the times of the year when the sun rises exactly in the east and sets exactly in the west and all places on earth experience exactly 12 hours of day and 12 hours of night. In the Japanese Buddhist tradition, the week of the Autumnal Equinox is called Prajna week. This time is dedicated to the study of the Buddhist teaching of the Six Paramitas or Six Perfections. We will observe this tradition around the time of the Vernal Equinox by offering a weekend workshop on the Six Paramitas at *Myoshinji*, in Monroe, Wisconsin. The workshop begins at 7:30 PM on Friday and finishes on Sunday morning. The workshop consists of zazen (meditation), talks and guided meditations, with vegetarian meals provided. Those who are unable to stay for the entire weekend are invited to attend on Saturday only.

The Sanskrit word "paramita" literally means "crossing over to the other shore." Through the practice of these six attributes or perfections of the awakened heart, we can cross over from our delusion and ignorance to enlightenment and peace, just as the sun crosses from one hemisphere to the other at the time of the equinox. The word "perfection," the usual rendering of the Sanskrit word "paramita" often inspires self-criticism and doubt as we instantly set up standards of perfection and compare ourselves and others to these. We feel a deep gap between what we read in the sutras as the qualities of the Bodhisattva, the one dedicated to serving the highest welfare of all beings, and our own lives and behavior. The teaching of the paramitas, however, offer us the opportunity to identify with and cultivate our innate Bodhisattva nature, rather than with our habitual self-clinging. Every one of us, without exception has the potential to practice dana (selfless giving, open-heartedness), sila (precepts, ethical activity), ksanti (patience, inclusiveness), virya (joyous effort and diligence), dhyana (meditation, focused concentration), and prajna (wisdom).

Please join us in this workshop, which is open to beginners and experienced practitioners alike. Register online at our website; www.greatplainszen.org or call the Great Plains Zen Center at 608-325-6248. The cost of the workshop is \$35 for members, \$25 for all others.

Sesshin in Ludington, MI March 28-30

A 2-day *sesshin*, hosted by the Great Wave Zen Center will be held March 28-30, beginning at 7:30 p.m. on Friday evening, and ending at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday. Please visit the Great Wave Zen Center website for further information and registration: www.greatwave.org Click on "Events" and follow the link to register.

Buddha's Birthday Celebration- April 6

Please mark your calendars and join us at Countryside Unitarian Church, Palatine at 6pm on April 6 for potluck dinner, service and one sitting to commemorate Buddha's Birthday. Families, including children, are invited to join in.

Sesshin @ Myoshinji- April 17-20

A 3-day *sesshin* will be held April 17-20, beginning at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday evening, and ending at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday. *Sesshin* is an intensive meditation retreat that offers us an important opportunity to strengthen our practice. In addition to alternating periods of zazen and kinhin (sitting and walking meditation), the daily schedule includes one period of samu (work practice), three services, and three meal periods (oryoki style) and *teisho* given by Roshi. The fee for participation is \$150 for current Practicing Members; \$180 for others.

February

					1	2
3 7pm <i>Zazen</i>	4	5	6	7	8	9 <i>Intro to Zen Workshop IL</i>
10 7p <i>Talk & Tea</i>	11	12	13	14	15 <i>Sesshin</i>	16 <i>Sesshin</i>
17 <i>Sesshin</i> 7pm <i>Zazen</i>	18 <i>Sesshin</i> President's Day	19	20	21	22	23
24 7pm <i>Fusatsu</i>	25	26	27	28	29	1 (March) <i>Intro to Zen Workshop WI</i>

March

2 7pm <i>Zazen</i>	3	4	5	6	7	8 Buddhist Women's Conf.
9 7p <i>Talk & Tea</i>	10	11	12	13	14 <i>6 Paramitas</i>	15 <i>6 Paramitas</i>
16 <i>6 Paramitas</i> 7pm <i>Zazen</i>	17	18	19	20	21 Good Friday	22 <i>Intro to Zen Workshop IL</i>
23 Easter 7pm <i>Fusatsu</i>	24	25	26	27	28 <i>GWZC sesshin</i>	29 <i>GWZC sesshin</i>
30 <i>GWZC sesshin</i> 7pm <i>Zazen</i>	31					

April

		1	2	3	4	5 <i>Intro to Zen Workshop WI</i>
6 <i>Buddha's Birthday - Dinner; Service</i>	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 7pm <i>Zazen</i>	14	15	16	17 <i>Sesshin</i>	18 <i>Sesshin</i>	19 <i>Sesshin</i>
20 <i>Sesshin</i> 7pm <i>Zazen</i>	21	22	23	24	25	26 <i>Intro to Zen Workshop IL</i>
27 7pm <i>Fusatsu</i>	28	29	30	31		

Membership in the Great Plains Zen Center

There are three 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 in Palatine, 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.

Contact Us

By phone: (847) 274-4793
By e-mail: 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

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.

Sign up for Nutrition e-Newsletters

Dr. Roc Ordman, professor of chemistry and bio-chemistry at Beloit College and member of Great Plains Zen Center, sends out e-mails twice per month summarizing the latest peer-reviewed research on nutrition. The e-mails have a link to longer explanations and the published articles. Dr. Ordman was elected to the American Society of Nutrition for his published research. He attends the Sunday morning programs at Myoshinji nearly every week. Dr. Ordman has extended the opportunity for all friends of Great Plains Zen Center to receive his nutrition e-mails. To sign up for this, please e-mail him at ordman@beloit.edu and type "Add to Nutrition list" in the subject line.

Great Plains Zen Center - Dues / Donation Remittance
Or donate online at greatplainszen.org

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

e-mail: _____

(Please tell us if your mailing label has any incorrect information or spellings.)

Enclosed, please find membership dues as indicated:

Practicing Member (\$50 /month) for the month(s) of _____

Affiliate Member (\$30 /month) for the month(s) of _____

Friend of GPZC (any amount) for 2008 _____

Enclosed, please find my donation as indicated:

Unrestricted donation in the amount of \$ _____

Building Fund donation in the amount of \$ _____

*Please clip this form and mail with your check to:
Great Plains Zen Center * P.O. Box 3362 * Barrington, IL 60011*

Introduction to Zen Practice Workshops

Great Plains Zen Center will continue to hold monthly Introductory Workshops at Countryside Church, 1025 N Smith Rd, Palatine, IL. 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 full-time member of the Great Plains Zen Center.

Workshops will be held Saturdays, Feb. 9, March 22 and April 26 and run from 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m., followed by an informal lunch. The cost for the workshop is \$25 per person (free for repeating participants).

Visit greatplainszen.org/workshops to register, or call us at (847) 274-4793.

Weekly Zazen; Monthly Fusatsu & Teisho

•*Zazen* (Zen meditation) is held every Sunday at 7:00 pm at Countryside Unitarian Universalist Church, 1025 N. Smith Road in Palatine, IL. We welcome new friends to join us any Sunday.

•Each month, the Zen Center holds *Fusatsu*, the *Renewal of the Vows* ceremony. Everyone is welcome whether they have formally taken the Buddhist Vows or not. Upcoming *Fusatsu* dates are Feb. 24, March 23 and April 27.

•One Sunday sitting each month will feature *teisho* (a formal dharma talk) by our teacher, Susan *Myoyu* Andersen, Roshi, followed by an informal tea and discussion. Upcoming *teisho* are scheduled for Feb. 10, March 9 (no talk in April).

Wisconsin Program Updates

Our retreat center, *Myoshinji*, is located at W7762 Falk Rd., Monroe, Wisconsin 53566.

Beginning on Sunday, February 3, the Sunday morning program in Monroe, Wisconsin will begin at 10:30 am instead of 9:00 am. These Sunday meditation classes consist of two half hour periods of sitting (meditation) followed by a short Dharma talk and will finish by 12:30. Beginning instruction is always available during the program for newcomers. Experienced practitioners are also welcome and will be given the opportunity for further training on zendo procedures and duties. Please join us on Sundays.

New! Introduction to Zen Practice workshops will now be offered also in Monroe, Wisconsin at *Myoshinji*. The first two are scheduled to run from 9:00 to 11:30 AM on Saturday, March 1 and Saturday, April 5.

These are open to newcomers and regularly-attending practitioners alike, offering basic instruction in how to do *zazen* (Zen meditation), types and goals of Zen practice, how to practice at home, and the elements of starting a successful, ongoing practice. The cost for the workshop is \$15.00, which may be paid online at www.greatplainszen.org or at the door. Please contact us at 608-325-6248 or check our website for details. Pre-registration for this workshop is requested. Our facility is wheelchair accessible.

GPZC

P.O. Box 3362

Barrington, IL 60011



Great Plains Zen Center ~ Registration

~ *Nirvana Day Sesshin (February 15-18)*~
~ *The Six Paramitas –Workshop (March 14-16)* ~
~ *Three Day Sesshin (April 17-20)* ~

You may also register & pay online at www.greatplainszen.org/workshop
(There is a 10% discount when registering online.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: -(____) _____

E-mail Address: _____ (we will not share e-mail addresses)

Emergency Contact: Who? _____ Phone- _____

- Medical information (allergies; medications; chronic conditions; contact lenses; etc.):

- Please mention here any food restrictions/allergies, or disabilities:

Please check the event(s) you will attend:

_____ *Nirvana Day Sesshin (February 15-18)

_____ Full time (members \$150, nonmembers \$180)

_____ Part time (\$50 per day for members, \$60 per day for nonmembers)

Please indicate which days you will attend, including approximate arrival and departure times:

_____ *Six Paramitas Workshop (March 14-16)

_____ Full time (members \$25, nonmembers \$35)

_____ Saturday Only (members \$25, nonmembers \$35)

Please indicate which days you will attend, including approximate arrival and departure times:

_____ *Three Day Sesshin (April 17-20)

_____ Full time (members \$150, nonmembers \$180)

_____ Part time (\$50 per day for members, \$60 per day for nonmembers)

Please indicate which days you will attend, including approximate arrival and departure times:

* For all above events, Oryoki is a vital part of our practice; an Oryoki set is required for formal meals.

Please check one of the following (and include rental or purchase cost with your registration fee):

___ I will bring my own oryoki set

___ I would like to rent an oryoki set (\$5)

___ I would like to purchase an oryoki set (\$55) -complete set with bowls and cloths.

Please send this form, and a deposit of 50% (generally, \$35 is non-refundable) to

G.P.Z.C., P.O. Box 3362, Barrington, IL 60011

To help us plan properly, please register at least 5 days prior to any event.

The remainder is due upon arrival.

For further information, please contact G.P.Z.C. at (847-274-4793) or gpzc@greatplainszen.org.