



# Prairie Wind

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## ANOTHER VOICE

Usually, each issue of *Prairie Wind* begins with an article that I have written. From time to time, however, we like to feature another voice. In this issue, that voice belongs to Roko Sherry Chayat, Abbot of The Zen Center of Syracuse Hoen-ji, in Syracuse, New York.

I first met Roko at an American Zen Teachers Association meeting near Portland, Oregon some years ago. Because I grew up in Auburn, New York, which is near Syracuse, I was interested in finding out how a Zen Buddhist temple came to be established in that area. Roko and I had a very pleasant lunch at that meeting. We talked about our connections to Central New York and how we came to walk the Zen Buddhist path. A few years later, I visited Zen Center of Syracuse to attend Roko's dharma transmission ceremony and found out that the temple is located fifteen miles down the road from the turnoff to my grandfather's dairy farm outside of Auburn. Sometimes we find connections when and where we least expect them!

Roko began practicing with the Japanese Rinzai Zen Master Eido Shimano in New York City in 1967. Later, she studied with the American Zen Master Maurine Stuart and was ordained a priest by her in 1985. When Maurine died in 1990, Roko resumed studying with Eido Shimano and was re-ordained by him in 1991. Roko received dharma transmission from Eido Shimano in 1998, becoming the first American woman to receive official Rinzai dharma transmission.

Roko's article, which begins on page three, was originally presented as a dharma talk at Zen Center of Syracuse and was first printed in the Fall 2005 issue of the that temple's magazine, *Dharma Connection*. In her clear, down-to earth way and with her strong spirit, Roko examines essential issues faced by all of us who practice Zen Buddhism. We are grateful to her for giving us permission to re-print the article here.

*Rev. Nonin Chowaney, OPW  
Abbot, Heartland Temple*



Buddha — Japan



This — Calligraphy by Nonin Chowaney

# THE POINT OF YOUR LIFE

by Roko Sherry Chayat

In 1974, Bob Dylan released one of his greatest albums, *Blood on the Tracks*. One of the songs on that album is called “Shelter from the Storm.” The refrain goes, “Come in, she said, I’ll give you – shelter from the storm.”

Many of us come initially to the practice of zazen feeling distressed in one way or another, yearning for something we feel we lack, and filled with a surfeit of worry, stress, and confusion. We come here and feel a beckoning; we’re drawn to the practice, inexplicably drawn to it. After sitting for awhile, we find that this place, this practice, is somehow the path home, and we find that home within us. We cannot locate it in any particular place, no matter how much we look for it. We’re at home. In some wonderful and unexpected way, we find shelter from the storm.

Then, after the initial honeymoon stage, what do we find out about his wonderful shelter? What do we notice? What is it that makes us start to doubt the whole structure? The roof flies off, and everything flows in! We discover that we are the storm. Yikes! We come to this shelter, and ah, it’s so nice, so quiet, everybody does everything so beautifully. It’s peaceful, and I don’t have to worry about anything because I’m still a new student. They don’t even notice me as I come, and when I go, nobody minds. Great.

But then, a little time passes, and that serene feeling is disrupted. The other day, we were sitting in the zendo at Wednesday morning service, and everyone was chanting amidst an exciting rain storm outside. There was the sound of a key in the door, and Kyugen came in and said: “There’s a huge flood in the Forman House [Zen Center of Syracuse’s main building – ed.]. The night before, the roofers, believing the weather report about dry weather for another day, had not put the plastic tarpaulins up.

We think that we’ve got shelter. Then, we discover a flood inside! It’s not a matter of whether the roofers put a tarp on or not.

The reality is a storm inside. Ah. That is when practice can truly begin. When you discover that there is no structure to keep you safe from stormy weather, that’s good. It’s good because you are then forced to look within, to see what you are carrying with you, to see the storms that you inflict upon yourself and everyone else and not only to see it, for that’s not enough, but also to begin to really penetrate into it, and, therefore, to begin to change.

Just as we secretly doubt the reality of our own Buddha-nature, no matter what we read or chant, we tell ourselves with insidious certitude that whatever is wrong in our life is being done to us, so how can we do anything about it? How can we really change? The underlying refrain is, “I can’t help it.” First of all, you were born at a certain time; maybe Saturn was square Jupiter. Second, you had terrible parents. Maybe you are friends with them now that they’re dead, but there’s a grudging resentment; they could have done better. Third, you can’t help but be aware that this is a terrible culture that we are living in. We have dreadful people in public office. They are destroying the planet. Many other such thoughts vindicate your inability to act, to change. But what is required, pure and simple, is the energy and conviction to do it.

Here we are, practicing in the incredible tradition called Rinzai Zen. Maybe you’d rather be practicing something else, but you come here because it’s convenient. It’s a nice place. Let me tell you something, however; we are practicing Rinzai Zen, which means, as I so often tell you, that this is not a scenic overlook. There is not a moment to lose in complacency. We must ask over and over again, “What is this?” This is the first engagement of the change-producing energy I just men-

## Nebraska Zen Center Officers

Ryoshin Joe Marshall	President
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Rev. Nonin Chowaney, OPW

Abbot



**Nebraska Zen Center** is a Soto Zen Buddhist Temple established for Zen practice. The center follows the tradition established in Japan by Zen Master Eihei Dogen in the 13th century and transmitted in this century by two Masters, Rev. Shunryu Suzuki, founder of San Francisco Zen Center and author of *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind* and Rev. Dainin Katagiri, who assisted Rev. Suzuki in San Francisco and later founded Minnesota Zen Meditation Center in Minneapolis. Rev. Katagiri was instrumental in establishing Nebraska Zen Center in 1975.

**Rev. Nonin Chowaney**, an American Zen Master, is NZC’s Head Priest and Teacher. He trained with Rev. Katagiri and was ordained by him. Rev. Chowaney also trained at Tassajara Zen Monastery in California and in Japan at Zuio-ji and Shogo-ji monasteries. He received formal Dharma Transmission from Rev. Katagiri and has been certified to teach by him and by the Soto Zen Church in Japan.

tioned. There comes a point when, because of your strong sitting, you finally say, “I’m tired of living as a victim. Enough! I’m not going to worry about what others think. I’m not going to procrastinate another minute.”

I had a person come to me once and say, “I’ve wasted my life up to this point. Okay.

Continued on page 6

# NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER — SANGHA NOTES

**ANNUAL FUND-RAISING BEGINS.** By now, you should have received our **annual fund-raising appeal.** We do a lot at NZC, and we do it with limited funds. **Please consider helping us with a donation.** We will be grateful for any support you can give. All donations to NZC are **tax deductible.**

**HEARTLAND TEMPLE WILL BE CLOSED FROM MONDAY, JANUARY 1ST THROUGH MONDAY, JANUARY 15TH. WE WILL RE-OPEN TUESDAY, JANUARY 16TH, WITH OUR REGULAR SCHEDULE IN EFFECT.**

Our **Annual Sangha Meeting** will be held **Saturday, February 3rd at 10:00 a.m.** We will be replacing Board members whose terms have expired and electing Officers for 2007. We will also be reviewing and finishing business from 2006. **We encourage all who practice at Heartland Temple to attend this meeting. A communal lunch will be served afterwards.**



When's it's time to encounter the dharma, it's time.

Kanho Doug Dittman in Heartland temple's garage with a chicken who rode to the temple in the undercarriage of Doug's truck all the way from his farm near Raymond, NE, a distance of over fifty miles.

The **Raku Pottery Firing and Sale** was a huge success! Over **fifty people** attended on a beautiful Fall day, and we raised over **\$1200** for the temple. **Many, many thanks** to **Seishin Larry Pelter** and **Kanho Doug Dittman**, who organized the event. **Seishin Larry** made and donated pottery, ran the kiln he brought, and worked tirelessly the whole afternoon, and **Kanho Doug** and wife **Krista** opened their farm and made and donated food for all. **Special thanks** to **Toze Hal Holoun** for donating a painting that was auctioned, to **Nonin** for writing on pottery, to **Peg Pelter** for helping set up and for handling sales, to **Kanho Doug** for the hayrack rides, to **Antonio Laravie** for donating two pottery pieces, and **to all who came and supported** the event.

**Noshin Marcia Prideaux** and **Koshin Bob Schenck** have both resigned from our **Board of Directors.** **Many thanks** to both of you for your service, and **special thanks** to **Noshin Marcia** for serving as Board Secretary for some time and for re-organizing Board minutes.

**Thanks also** to all who helped prepare the grounds and gardens for Winter during our **Fall Yard Clean-up.** We filled ninety-eight (!!) tall yard waste bags.

## SESSHIN

There will be **three sesshins** at NZC this Winter, a **Seven-day sesshin** (Rohatsu) from December 1-7, a **Two day sesshin** on February 10th and 11th, and a **One-day sesshin** on March 17th. Fees; \$30 per day for members; \$40 for non-members. Lower rates are available for those with limited income. **E-mail [heartland@prairiewindzen.org](mailto:heartland@prairiewindzen.org)** or call **402-551-9035** to register.

## LAY INITIATION RECEIVING THE PRECEPTS

A **Precept Ceremony** signifying **Lay Initiation** will be offered at Heartland Temple next March. Anyone interested in participating should talk to **Nonin.** He suggests the following guidelines for considering this step: **a commitment to zazen, a commitment to study with a teacher, a commitment to sangha, and a commitment to dharma study.** Rakusu sewing begins **January 28th.**

## DHARMA STUDY CLASS

**Nonin** will lead a **Dharma Study Class** at the temple this Winter. It will meet on three successive **Saturday mornings** from **10 a.m. till noon** on **March 3rd, 10th, and 17th.** The text for study will be announced later. This class is **free to members.** The **non-member fee** is **\$15 per class.**

## OTHER WINTER EVENTS

Dec 13	Precept Ceremony
Jan 31	Precept Ceremony
Feb 4	World Peace Ceremony
	Group Discussion
28	Precept Ceremony

# ZEN CENTER OF PITTSBURGH – SANGHA NOTES

## ZCP WINTER EVENTS

### DECEMBER

- 1-7 — Rohatsu Sesshin (in Nebraska)\*\*\*
- 9 — ZCP closed
- 12 — Precept Ceremony (Ryaku fusatsu)\*  
Tea w/Rev. Cathleen Williams
- 14 — Intro to Zen\*\*\*
- 17 — Board Meeting (Sangha Welcome)
- 24-26 — ZCP Closed
- 31 — New Year's Eve Party (6pm-1am)

### JANUARY

- 1 — ZCP Closed
- 2 — Precept Ceremony\*
- 4 — Intro to Zen\*\*\*
- 7 — World Peace Ceremony
- 12-14 — Two-day Sesshin\*\*\*
- 16 — Buddhist Studies Class (5 wks.)
- 19 — Dainin Katagiri's Birthday\*\*
- 25 — Intro to Zen\*\*\*
- 26 — Zen Master Dogen's Birthday\*\*
- 30 — Precept Ceremony\*

### FEBRUARY

- 4 — World Peace Ceremony
- 9-11 — Two-day Sesshin\*\*\*
- 15 — Buddha's Parinirvana\*\*  
Intro to Zen\*\*\*

\*After evening zazen; open to all

\*\*Special morning service

\*\*\*Please register for this event

## ZCP DAILY SCHEDULE

### AM

#### Tuesday

7:00 a.m. - Zazen at the Mattress Factory

#### Wednesday - Saturday

5:30 a.m. - Zazen

6:45 a.m. - Morning Service

### PM

#### Tuesday - Friday

6:00 - 7:15 p.m. - Zazen

#### Sunday

10:00 a.m. - Zazen

10:40 a.m. - Work Practice

11:15 a.m. - Service/Dharma Talk

12:30 p.m. - Lunch

Closed Mondays

If you want to receive monthly schedule updates and last-minute changes to events, join our e-mail list by going to <http://www.prairiewindzen.org/zcp/list.htm> and registering, or send an e-mail to Zen Center of Pittsburgh at: [kyoki@prairiewindzen.org](mailto:kyoki@prairiewindzen.org).

Many thanks to all who participated in our Annual Fall Clean-up. The temple grounds and gardens are now prepared for Winter. Special thanks to **Ryushin John Ott**, who served as Work Leader.

Many thanks to **Rev. Jisen Coghlan**, for scraping, sanding, and painting all of our outdoor furniture, to **Hoetsu Leslie Hospodar**, for serving as Office Manager and updating both Quickbooks and our database, to **Kogen Hernan Brizuella**, for rebuilding our computer, and to **Taikan Doug Gouge**, who'll be taking over as Office Manager.

Our thanks also go to **Laura Gouge** for donating a vacuum cleaner, to **Kaethejean Bleicher** for vegetables, to **Liaoran Mimi Jong** for designing the new entranceway, and to all **Sangha members** for their ongoing support of Kyoki and the temple.



Kyoki with new Avalokiteshvara and other residents of the Buddha Hall

During the past months, **Kyoki** has traveled to **Zen Mountain Monastery** in New York to attend the national meeting of the Soto Zen Buddhist Association, of which she is a Board Member, to **Great Tree Zen Temple** in North Carolina, where she also serves as a Board Member, and to **The University of Toledo** in Ohio, where she gave several talks on feminism and Buddhism at the University of Toledo. **Kyoki** also recently spoke at the International Festival at **Carnegie Mellon University** in Pittsburgh.

All are welcome to join us for our **New Year's Eve Gathering**. There'll be a **potluck dinner and music, a special service, zazen, and ringing 108 bells to welcome the New Year**. We'll end with **buckwheat noodles** served at midnight.



## The Point of Your Life

from page 3

I'm not going to waste the rest of it! I've just come to a turning point." Of course, he had not wasted his life, and neither have any of you. Everything you have done has brought you to this point, but now you are at this point. Live this point! This is really the quintessence of our practice, to live this point. There is no one or no thing keeping you from doing it, no matter what you think. Just get rid of clinging to what you think is keeping you from living this point.

Yesterday, we had a work day here at the temple, and quite a few of you were here. I am so grateful, but I also know how grateful you are for having been allowed to do this work, right? It was incredible to feel the energy coursing through each of you, coursing through the earth, the trees, the air. We weren't working to "make things nice." We were engaging with the force of life itself, this one-pointed force. With such engagement, there is nothing that can stop you from living your life.

Jakusho Kwong, abbot of Sonoma Mountain Zen Center, talks about this kind of engagement in his book, *No Beginning, No End: the Intimate Heart of Zen*. He says,

In a Zen temple or monastery, collecting garbage is one of the most important jobs. When we pick up papers or garbage, we have to understand that we are also picking up the garbage inside our own minds. The words *outside* and *inside* are two ways of describing one thing. Our thoughts and dualistic understanding are a kind of littering in our mind.

It's not just a matter of going down to Onondaga Creek and dragging out the old shopping carts, bicycles, and litter, but of asking, "What's littering my own mind?"

Jakusho Kwong continues,

When we pick one up, we pick both up in exactly the same way. . . . When we pick up the garbage, we pick it up one hundred percent. It's like when lightning strikes the sky – nothing remains. This

kind of action affects other people.

Then he says something very important: "If we pick it up in a distracted way, with our minds on something else, we just make more litter."

It's so nice to be able to read someone else saying this, because I am always warning you about multitasking, and the resulting fallout around you when you rush around doing this and that and a million other things at the same time instead of engaging one hundred percent in this one thing. There is just the One Mind, the One Task, and when you realize this, then "no more worries about your not being perfect."

Kwong continues,

That's why we give to this task and to all of our activities one hundred percent of ourselves. No matter how small the task may seem – picking up a speck of dust – or how big, we still give it one hundred percent. As it says in the *Sandokai* [The Harmony of Difference and Sameness – ed.], each thing has its own intrinsic value. It is with this very same spirit of realization that we approach our work and our life. Practicing in this way, realizing the self within the activity because the self becomes the activity, is known in Japanese as *jijuyuzammai* [self-fulfilling absorption – ed.].

When we practice in this way, we can understand Zen Master Dogen's famous saying, "To study the self is to forget the self." When we are just setting a stone on the path, just hammering clapboard, just sweeping, just cleaning, we are forgetting the self. When we forget the self, then what? Everything is enlightening us. This speck of dust is none other than Buddha. Self becomes the activity, just as it is.

Kwong goes on to say, "When we pick up garbage, everything is being picked up." When you pick up a cucumber that has fallen to the floor with This Mind, with *jijuyuzammai* (and mindfully doesn't

## LINCOLN ZEN GROUP

A group affiliated with NZC meets in Lincoln weekly on **Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm** at the **Unitarian Universalist Church, 6300 A St.** For further information, e-mail or call **Seishin Larry Pelter** at **lpelter@alltel.net** (402-483-1755) or **Kanho Doug Dittman** at **dougdittman@earthlink.net** (402-783-2124). Zazen Instruction is available for newcomers if arranged in

## WHITE LOTUS SANGHA

The **White Lotus Sangha**, a group affiliated with NZC, meets on Friday evenings in three Nebraska prisons, **Nebraska State Penitentiary** and **Lincoln Correctional Center** in Lincoln and **Tecumseh State Correctional Institute** in Tecumseh. For further information, see the **Religious Coordinator** at either of the above institutions, call **(402) 551-9035**, e-mail **heartland@prairiewindzen.org**, or write **Nebraska Zen Center, 3625 Lafayette Ave., Omaha, NE, 68131-**

mean that you do it slowly, but simply with no self in the way), it's just cucumber! Everything is being picked up. Your whole life transforms. It's not a matter of conceptualizing about how you want to change your life. It's not a matter of having some idea about what you want to change in yourself or how other people should change. When you forget the self in whatever you do, everything is picked up.

Kwong continues, "Therefore, when it is our responsibility to pick it up, garbage is the most important part of our practice." Traditionally in Zen monasteries, the head monk cleans the toilet because, according to

## *The Point of Your Life*

from page 6

Kwong, “even such a seemingly menial task has its intrinsic value.” When the head monk becomes the activity, he or she “is unknowingly communicating that to everyone and to everything.” This is done unknowingly; in other words, without thinking, “Look how well I’m doing the toilet; I’m serving as a role model for everybody else.” Unknowingly means no-self revealed in activity. Cleaning the toilet is bowing to your own Buddha-nature.

Kwong adds,

That’s what it means to work together, as opposed to working just by ourselves.” We communicate through raking the paths, stacking the wood. . . . We can see and feel the awareness behind the task. It’s the ultimate Internet or World Wide Web. Everything is included in our activity, so we are all *really* doing it together.

Onondaga Creek flows right outside our zendo. We, too, can’t help but flow. That is what Zen Master Hakuin means when he tells us, “Sentient beings are primarily all Buddhas.” But most of the time, our emotional reaction to all our various karmic situations – the ups and downs of life blah, blah, blah – catches us up in a kind of a logjam, right? We feel as though we’re stuck in a logjam rather than flowing along. Of course wonderful, flowing creatures such as you, beautiful bodhisattvas, fundamentally have no problem, but every now and then, once in awhile, you may find yourself in a LOGJAM! You may hear yourself whining, “I can’t get it, I’m stuck here; I keep doing the same stupid thing. I keep trying to find the way out, yet whatever I do, I’m back to the same old, same old.”

There is a Laurie Anderson song that goes, “When you see a man who has fallen, pick him up and carry him. When you see a woman who is broken, put her all into your arms.” Just pick up the person who has fallen, not in some pitying way, saying, “Oh, you poor dear, I’ll pick you up.” No, please, we are not talking about that kind of sentimental meddling

here. Just pick up what is in your life. When action is called for, act! We’re talking about how to change, how to break through the logjam. What is it we have to do? It starts right here with this trash. Just pick up the trash. It starts with writing this paper, writing that letter, making this phone call, clearly seeing what you are doing, paying attention to the details of your life, the things that are boring, that don’t seem at all to be a part of the spiritual quest. You may hear yourself say, “Oh, but I’m a person who . . .” Well, that may be, but that’s just one of those stories you tell yourself. Meanwhile, what’s going on? Does the baby’s diaper need changing?

Don’t let anybody – especially your old habitual thinking – keep you from living your flowing life, from enacting change. What are you afraid of? Many people are afraid of anger. When you look at the source of your anger through deep zazen, when you go far beyond all the usually boring accusations about what was done to you, what you may find is fear. Maybe no one will like you? Maybe you’ll die? Probably that’s true. This fear that underlies and gives rise to very difficult emotions must be seen, must be looked at, and when you do, you may find great laughter. This requires a practice of assiduity, courage, and strong and focused energy, a practice that shakes your assumptions and accusations loose and at the same time brings a new openness and lightheartedness.

We all are combustible. The Andromeda galaxy is a spiral galaxy orbited by two companion galaxies. It about two million light years away, and is the nearest galaxy similar to the Milky Way. Light years away, yet right here. This life! (finger snap!) This star! (finger snap!) Be the one-pointed star that you are. Right here, alive. Soon you’ll be one of those dead stars. Some of the stars we see are dead already, no? They died a long time ago, and we are still seeing their light because it takes so long for it to get here. Die, so that you may live! Burn! Combust! Without leaving a

### **SANGHA MEMBERSHIP AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

#### **NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER ZEN CENTER OF PITTSBURGH**

##### **Membership**

**While no one needs to formally join either temple to share in our practices, we invite you to become a member of either Nebraska Zen Center or Zen Center of Pittsburgh. Members are people who feel that Zen Buddhism is an important part of their lives and who wish to express that feeling by joining a community of practitioners.**

**If you are interested in becoming a member, please speak with the appropriate person at either temple after Sunday services.**

##### **Financial Support**

**Buddhist communities have always relied on the generosity of their supporters. For income, we depend on those who believe in the good of what we do and wish to nourish it.**

**No one is refused temple membership due to an inability to pay. We do, however, encourage members to commit to our financial support through monthly pledges. We also encourage members to exhibit this support through participation in work projects.**

**The amount of your pledge is your personal decision. We ask you to support the temple at a level appropriate to your means. For those who participate regularly, we suggest a monthly pledge that reflects one hour of your earnings per week, or four hours per month. Because we are non-profit religious corporations, all donations are tax deductible.**

trace. This is our practice. Burn, baby. Do your work!

# WHAT IS RYAKU FUSATSU?

By Nonin Chowaney

At Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple, we perform an ancient chanting and bowing ceremony called *Ryaku Fusatsu* (Jap.) once a month. We also refer to this ceremony as our Precept Ceremony, for in it we re-affirm our commitments to live according to the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts, our Ethical Guidelines for everyday life. I'd like to explain what this ceremony is and how we perform it.

*Ryaku Fusatsu* is indeed ancient. Its roots go back to Pre-Buddhist India, to ancient Vedic lunar sacrifices performed on the nights of the new and full moon. By Shakyamuni Buddha's time 2600 years ago, these sacrifices were no longer performed, but the new and full moon occurrences were still observed by Hindus as holy days of purification and fasting, days when the Gods came to dwell in the house. They became known as *Upavastha* (from the Sanskrit *upa*, "near" and *vas*, "dwell").

Legend has it that Shakyamuni Buddha's followers also gathered on those days, perhaps because they didn't want to be left out. They would sit down and meditate together. Later, lay disciples – in whose homes the monks and nuns would sometimes gather – wanted some teaching, so the monks began to recite the 227 rules of the *Patimokkha* discipline, the rules governing everyday conduct for monks and nuns (there were 257 for nuns). This recitation developed into a confession and repentance ceremony, during which the monks and nuns would speak up if they had violated any of the rules and vow to do better in the future.

This ceremony is still performed today, at the same time and in the ancient way, by Theravadin monks and is called *Uposatha* in the Pali language, a variation of the old *Upavastha*, the, "near-dwelling" of the Gods on the ancient Hindu holy days. In Mahayana Buddhism, the spirit of the ceremony is preserved, but the 227 rules are not recited, because Mahayana sects have abandoned them. Instead of the confession being made to other monks, it is

made directly to Buddha.

The ceremony was transmitted, with lots of changes and developments, from India through China to Japan and now has been transmitted to America as *Ryaku Fusatsu*, as it is known in Soto Zen Buddhism.

"*Ryaku*" means, "abbreviated," or "simple." This distinguishes the ceremony from a "full *fusatsu*," a complicated, elaborate event still performed in Japan once or twice a year in some large temples. It takes two to three hours to complete. The simple ceremony we do here takes about forty-five minutes.

"*Fusatsu*" means, "to continue good practice," or, "to stop unwholesome action (karma)." The name conveys the spirit of repentance and confession present in the Theravadin *Uposatha* Ceremony.

*Ryaku Fusatsu* today, as performed in Soto Zen temples, includes the reading / transmission of Buddha's precepts, lots of bowing, and some of the elaborate, beautiful chanting common to Soto Zen Buddhism in Japan but rarely heard in America.

The ceremony has a series of parts. It begins with an incense offering to all Buddhas throughout space and time. We then chant the Formless Repentance: "All my past and harmful karma, Born from beginningless greed hate and delusion, through body, speech, and mind, I now fully avow." After our repentance, we invoke the presence of all Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Ancestors and call up their wisdom and compassion by chanting the names of a series of representatives, Shakyamuni Buddha, Maitreya Buddha, Manjusri Bodhisattva, Zen Master Dogen, and others. Then, we chant the Four Bodhisattva Vows: "Beings are numberless; I vow to free them, Delusions are inexhaustible; I vow to end them, Dharma gates are boundless; I vow to enter them, Buddha's way

is unsurpassable; I vow to realize it."

After the Four Vows, the *Ino* (chanting leader) receives Wisdom Water from the *Doshi* (service leader) and purifies the room by sprinkling it around the perimeter. Then, the *Doshi*, acting as Preceptor, reads Zen Master Dogen's "Essay On Receiving and Conferring the Precepts." In the middle of this reading at Heartland Temple, we have instituted the practice of taking the Precepts together. The *Doshi* reads each precept and asks the sangha if they will "receive and maintain this precept." The sangha replies, "Yes, I will" after each one. The following are the Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts we use during the ceremony:

## THREE REFUGES

I take refuge in Buddha  
I take refuge in Dharma  
I take refuge in Sangha

## THREE PURE PRECEPTS

A follower of the Way does no harm.  
A follower of the Way does good.  
A follower of the Way lives to benefit all beings

## TEN PROHIBITORY PRECEPTS

I am reverential and mindful with all life;  
I am not violent; I do not willfully kill.  
I respect the property of others; I do not steal.  
I am conscious and loving in my relationships; I do not misuse sexuality.  
I honor honesty and truth; I do not deceive.  
I exercise proper care of my body/mind; I am not gluttonous; I do not abuse drugs or encourage others to do so.  
I recognize that words can hurt others; I do not slander.  
I am humble; I do not praise myself or judge others.  
I cultivate letting go; I do not attach to anything, even the teaching.  
I cultivate inner peace; I do not harbor ill-



## CALLIGRAPHY FOR SALE ON OUR WEBSITE



Mu (nothing)

Nonin's calligraphy can be purchased through our website, at [www.prairiewindzen.org](http://www.prairiewindzen.org). Click on **Nebraska Zen Center** and go to Nonin's **calligraphy pages**.

There are **over fifty items for sale**, one and two-character pieces, longer phrases, and specialty items. All are **signed and stamped originals** and are written on high-quality paper, either Canson watercolor paper, Rives BFK, or archival matboard.

We sell and ship the calligraphy unframed. **Each piece can be mounted and framed using traditional methods** by any good framer.

**All profits from website calligraphy sales go directly to Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple.**

### *What is Ryaku Fusatsu?*

from page 8

will.  
I esteem the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha; I do not defame them.

We then take refuge in the Three Treasures by reciting the following:

I take refuge in Buddha.  
May all beings  
embody the great Way,  
resolving to awaken.

I take refuge in Dharma.  
May all beings  
deeply enter the sutras,  
wisdom like an ocean.

I take refuge in Sangha.  
May all beings  
support harmony in the community,  
free from hindrance.

*Ryaku Fusatsu* ends with the *Doshi* reciting an *Eko* (merit transfer), which reads, "On this full moon night, we offer the

merit of the Bodhisattva's way throughout every world system to the unconditioned nature of all being." The Sangha then chants the closing verse, "All Buddhas throughout space and time; all honored ones, bodhisattvas, mahasattvas [great beings]; wisdom beyond wisdom, maha prajna paramita [great perfect wisdom].

*Ryaku Fusatsu* offers us an opportunity to acknowledge all past action (karma), to receive the precepts, and to rededicate ourselves to the practice of the Bodhisattva's Way. We perform this ceremony at Nebraska Zen Center / Heartland Temple every month, as close to the evening of the full moon as possible to conform to the ancient tradition.



### *From the editor:*

We **always** need material. Send us articles, drawings, poems, photos, cartoons, letters, etc. The deadline for publication in our **Spring** issue is **February 1st**.

Websites for **Nebraska Zen Center** and **Zen Center of Pittsburgh** are at: [www.prairiewindzen.org](http://www.prairiewindzen.org)

**Nebraska Zen Center's** e-mail address is: [heartland@prairiewindzen.org](mailto:heartland@prairiewindzen.org)

**Zen Center of Pittsburgh's** e-mail address is: [kyoki@prairiewindzen.org](mailto:kyoki@prairiewindzen.org)

# RAKU FIRING AND POTTERY SALE



Watching Nonin write on pottery



Toze Hal Holoun, Zenryu Vicki Grunwald, and Eisai Elizabeth Muia looking over the goods



Pamela Imperato, Shuji Valdene Mintzmyer, and Chuko Jean Bailey



Nonin writing



Seishin Larry Pelter explaining the raku process



Branched Oak Farm resident

## Nebraska Zen Center 2006 Practice Schedule

Jan	19	Dainin Katagiri's Birthday*
	26	Zen Master Dogen's Birthday*
	28	Rakusu Sewing Begins
	31	Precept Ceremony ( <i>Ryaku fusatsu</i> )
Feb	4	World Peace Ceremony
	10-11	<b>Two-day Sesshin</b> Winter Practice Period Begins
	15	Buddha's Parinirvana*
	28	Precept Ceremony ( <i>Ryaku fusatsu</i> )
Mar	1	Dainin Katagiri's Memorial Day
	4	World Peace Ceremony
	6-11	Lay Initiation Week
	11	Lay Initiation
	17	<b>One-day Sesshin</b>
Apr	1	World Peace Ceremony
	4	Precept Ceremony ( <i>Ryaku fusatsu</i> )
	8	Buddha's Birthday*
	14-15	<b>Two-day Sesshin</b>
May	2	Precept Ceremony ( <i>Ryaku fusatsu</i> )
	6	World Peace Ceremony
	13	Remembrance Day
	30	Precept Ceremony ( <i>Ryaku fusatsu</i> )
Jun	1	OPW Practice Period Begins (at ZCP)
	3	World Peace Ceremony
	8-10	<b>Three-day Sesshin (at ZCP)</b>
	27	Precept Ceremony ( <i>Ryaku fusatsu</i> )
Jul	1	World Peace Ceremony
	20	Ikko Narasaki's Memorial Day
Aug	1	Precept Ceremony ( <i>Ryaku fusatsu</i> )
	5	World Peace Ceremony
	29	Precept Ceremony ( <i>Ryaku fusatsu</i> )
Sep	2	World Peace Ceremony
	8-9	<b>Two-day Sesshin</b> Fall Practice Period Begins
	26	Precept Ceremony ( <b>Ryaku fusatsu</b> )
	29	Zen Master Dogen's Parinirvana*
Oct	7	World Peace Ceremony
	18	Bodhidharma Day*
	20	<b>One-day Sesshin</b>
	24	Precept Ceremony ( <i>Ryaku fusatsu</i> )
Nov	4	World Peace Ceremony
	28	Precept Ceremony ( <i>Ryaku fusatsu</i> )
Dec	1-7	<b>Rohatsu Sesshin</b>
	8	Buddha's Enlightenment Day*
	26	Precept Ceremony ( <i>Ryaku fusatsu</i> )

\*Services commemorating these days will be held before dharma talk on the Sunday nearest the date indicated.

Precept Ceremony (*Ryaku fusatsu*) flows a shortened evening zazen.

World Peace Ceremony precedes monthly Group Discussion.

## NEW YEAR'S EVE AT NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER

All are welcome to join us for New Year's Eve Services. We'll begin at 6:00 p.m. with a Pot-luck Supper followed by Services at 8:00. We'll then sit zazen from 9:30 till midnight, with walking meditation when needed. During sitting, we'll ring the temple bell 108 times to mark the turning of the year. Refreshments will be served at midnight.

You may attend during any part of the evening. Come when you like, and leave whenever you need to.

## WINTER PRACTICE PERIOD AT NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER

Winter Practice Period will begin with February Sesshin on the 10th and 11th and will end with April Sesshin on the 14th and 15th.

Practice Period is designed to provide structure for those who wish to intensify their practice and their sangha connections for a specific period of time. Practice Period students commit to intensifying practice in three areas: (1) daily practice at home (sitting and devotional services), (2) regular involvement at the temple (e.g., on Sunday mornings and for work practice), and (3) special events (e.g., sesshins, study groups, and Precept Ceremonies). Practice Period Students also commit to keeping a daily practice journal and to periodic Practice Period Group meetings.

Interested students should write up their Practice Period commitments and turn them in to Nonin before February 10th. If this is your first Practice Period, speak with Nonin before turning in your commitments.

## WEEKLY ZENDO SCHEDULE — NEBRASKA ZEN CENTER

### Morning

#### Tuesday — Sunday

- 6:00 - 7:00 — Sitting Meditation  
(Walking as Needed)
- 7:00 - 7:30 — Service
- 7:30 - 7:45 — Cleaning

#### Sunday Only

- 8:30 — Zazen Instruction
- 9:00 - 9:25 — Sitting Meditation
- 9:25 - 9:35 — Walking Meditation
- 9:35 - 10:00 — Sitting Meditation
- 10:00 - 10:10 — Service
- 10:10 - 11:00 — Dharma Talk

If you are new to the temple, you must have zazen instruction before joining us. Please arrive by 8:30 on Sunday morning for instruction.

### Evening

#### Tuesday — Wednesday

- 7:00 - 8:30 — Sitting Meditation  
(Walking as needed)

#### Thursday

- 6:00 - 8:30 — Classes as scheduled

#### Friday

- 7:00 - 8:30 — Sitting Meditation  
(Walking as needed)

We are closed on Monday

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**heartland@prairiewindzen.org**