



1423 New York Street
Lawrence, KS 66044



KANSAS ZEN CENTER

The Kansas Zen Center is a nonprofit organization founded in 1978 in Lawrence, KS. KZC is affiliated with the Kwan Um School of Zen, an international organization with more than 60 centers and groups. The Kwan Um School was founded by Zen Master Seung Sahn, the first Korean Zen Master to live and teach in the West.

MAKING A DONATION

Donations to the Kansas Zen Center are tax-deductible and may be sent to the Kansas Zen Center at 1423 New York Street, Lawrence, KS 66044. A receipt that may be used for tax purposes will be mailed back to you. Thank you for all your support!

BECOMING A KZC MEMBER

Becoming a member of the Kansas Zen Center also makes you a member of the Kwan Um School of Zen. KZC Membership is \$25/month for individuals and \$35/month for families. Membership dues help support your Center, the School and the transmission of Zen teaching.

Members receive the KZC newsletter, the Kwan Um School newsletter, Primary Point magazine and discounts on retreat fees, and they have the right to vote in the annual election of officers and board members. For more information on becoming a member, please access our web site at www.kansaszencenter.org.

Sangha Notes

- Congratulations to Jane Gnojek on the birth of her granddaughter Isla and on her new job, to Won-Jin Jin for completing his Ph.D. in aerospace engineering, and to Heather LaBash and Alex Parmelee on their engagement.
- Condolences to Todd Bond on his grandmother's death, and to Heather LaBash on her grandmother's death. And we mourn J.W. Harrington, executive director of the Kwan Um School of Zen for many years, who died on April 7.
- Congratulations to the people who took 5 precepts in December: Wenda Davis, Zach Miller, Alex Parmelee. And to the people who took 5 precepts in April: Todd Bond, Kevin Coash, Elliot Kimball, Heather LaBash.
- Thanks to Purnaprajna, violinist, and to Shiva Narasimhamurthy, drummer, for their amazing concert of South Indian music at the Zen center this April.
- It takes a lot of people to keep the Zen Center going. Thanks to Charlie Vitale and Stan Lombardo for winterizing the pond; Judy Roitman and Jan Schaake for fall

raking; Alex Parmelee and Heather LaBash for cleaning the basement; Jane Gnojek, Tom Davis, Rita Sooby, Stan Lombardo, and Kevin Coash for shoveling snow. Thanks to the people who helped on the December work day: Won-Jin Jin, Larry Miglionico, Charlie Vitale, Rita Sooby, Steve Olson, Edna Baginsky, Tom Davis, Wenda Davis. Thanks to the people who helped on the April work day: Darryl Clark, Won-Jin Jin, Tom Davis, Charlie Vitale, Meg Givens, Rita Sooby, Judy Roitman, Alex Parmelee, Heather LaBash, Bailey Lombardo, Stanley Lombardo. Thanks to Beth Vitale for producing our newsletters, to Jane Gnojek for producing ads, flyers, and the calendar, and to all the folks who helped with mailings and putting up flyers.

- Alex Parmelee and Heather LaBash will be moving to Colorado this summer for Alex's medical residency. They've improved the physical plant enormously, and we thank them for it. If you're interested in living at the Zen Center, rooms will be available August 1.

Goals

Judy Roitman
Guiding Teacher/JDPSN

The other day someone asked me “What is the goal in Zen?” This is one of the most common questions people ask about Zen. When you tell them there isn’t a goal, there isn’t an endpoint, people become incredulous: then why on earth do you do it?

Many people start to practice because they have some kind of goal. People in the martial arts might start meditation practice to help them focus better. Unhappy people want to be happier. Anxious people want to be calmer. Many people start meditation to improve their physical health. When I started to practice meditation, my mathematical colleagues would ask me, “does it help you prove theorems?” When I said no, they lost interest.

Meditation can have wonderful side effects: people often do focus better, become happier, calmer, healthier; maybe somewhere someone has even proved more theorems. These side effects are real, but they are not the point. My teacher, Zen Master Seung Sahn, used to call this kind of thing dharma candy. It’s like the trail of Reese’s Pieces luring ET. Even if we follow the candy, the candy is not the point.

When the great Zen master Ma Jo was a young man he practiced very hard. His teacher Hui Jang saw him sitting Zen in the courtyard. “What are you doing?” the teacher asked. “I am practicing hard so I can become a Buddha,” Ma Jo replied. In the old Chinese and Korean temples the building are roofed with ceramic tiles, and there are piles of tiles sitting around waiting for donors to pay a little money to have their name written on them – this is one way of supporting the temple. It’s this way today, and it was this way 1300 years ago when Ma Jo was born. There were a bunch of such tiles sitting in the temple courtyard, so Hui Jang picked one up and started polishing it. Curious, Ma Jo asked what he was doing. “I am polishing this tile so it can become a mirror,” Hui Jang said. “How can you make a mirror by polishing a ceramic tile?” asked Ma Jo. “How can you become a Buddha by sitting in meditation?” asked his teacher.

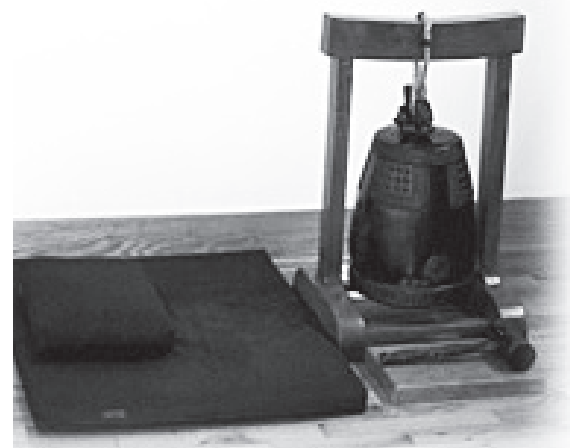
When Gautama Siddharta Shakyamuni sat under the bodhi tree, he had no goal. He had no preconception of what was going to happen, no idea of how things were supposed to turn out. He wasn’t even interested in becoming a Buddha. He had practiced long and hard with the greatest teachers of his day, and had achieved deep levels of meditative states. Two teachers had wanted to name him their successor, but he said no. Many people would have given anything to have achieved the states he achieved, but he understood that this is not the point.

Instead of a goal, he had a great question: what is the cause of suffering? He was not going to move from his seat until his question was resolved. This was a direction, which is very different from a goal. He didn’t check himself: am I there yet? He wasn’t looking for an answer that he could recite on demand. He had no idea that this or that should happen.

Instead, he looked deeply, with an open mind. He was assailed by demons, but he did not waver. After weeks or years – versions differ – he looked up and saw the morning star. He must have looked up and seen the morning star thousands of times, but this time his mind opened. He could have just as easily awakened by seeing someone in a gorilla suit, if such a person had been walking by. Why not?

As for Ma Jo, he never became Buddha. Instead, he became the great Master Ma, one of the greatest teachers of Zen in China. Here’s another story about him.

A monk asked Master Ma “Please, sir, going beyond ‘four words and one hundred negations,’ directly point out to me the meaning of the coming from the west.” This is in some sense a very technical question, referring to the great 2nd century teacher from India, Nagarjuna, and to the man who brought Zen to China, Bodhidharma. But it also is a question that points to the heart of Zen. And what was Ma Jo’s response to this important question? “I’m tired today and can’t explain it to you. Go ask Ji Jang [a contemporary teacher].” The story goes on but the point is made: Ma Jo did not become Buddha, but he completely became Ma Jo.



Practice Schedule

KANSAS ZEN CENTER
1423 New York St., Lawrence, KS 66044
info@kansaszencenter.org

SUNDAY
Beginner’s Orientation 9:00 a.m.
Morning Practice 9:30-11:30 a.m.
Dharma Talk 11:00 a.m.

TUESDAY
Morning Practice 6:30-8:00 a.m.

WEDNESDAY
Special Chanting 6:30-7:00 p.m.
Evening Practice 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Kong-an interviews with
Dharma Master Judy Roitman
second Wednesday of every month

THURSDAY
Early Morning Practice 6:00-7:00 a.m.

SATURDAY
Morning Practice 6:30-8:00 a.m.

KANSAS CITY ZEN GROUP
Unity Temple on the Plaza
(816) 459-3129 info@kansaszencenter.org

TUESDAY
Evening Practice 7:00-8:00 p.m.
Kong-an interviews with
Judy Roitman, Guiding Teacher/JDPSN
the third Tuesday evening practice of the month

Upcoming Events

Foundations of Zen class

Thursdays September 17 and September 24, 7 p.m.
\$20 for both sessions

The Foundations of Zen class is an introductory class about our forms and about practice. All are welcome. Led by Dharma Teacher Jane Gnojek

2-day retreat

Friday May 29 6:30 p.m. to Sunday May 31 noon,
guest teacher Thom Pastor, JDPSN,
Guiding Teacher of the Great Brightness Zen
Center in Las Vegas

1-day retreat

Saturday September 26 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Bring a brown bag lunch. Led by Judy Roitman,
Guiding Teacher/JDPSN

2-day retreat

Friday November 13 6:30 p.m. to Sunday
November 15 noon
Led by Guiding Teacher Judy Roitman, JDPSN

Monthly

First Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.
Unity Temple on the Plaza
Introduction to Zen Class.
The basics and origin of our zen practice.

To register for retreats or classes, please contact
us at info@kansaszencenter.org. Please visit www.
kansaszencenter.org for information on retreat fees.

