

# Pine Wind Zen Center

The Zen Society

## 2011 - 2012 Student Training Program for Home Practitioners

**"All Students are strongly encouraged to participate in the 2011-2012 Zen Training Program for Home Practitioners at a level that best suits their family and personal commitments, and career responsibilities."**

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**The Zen Training Program for Home Practitioners - 2011-2012** is designed for persons with a strong inclination to develop a deeply grounded spiritual life, and to practice with a teacher and a community (sangha) with vigor and determination. The benefits of Zen training relies on the integration of spiritual practice with daily life.

Becoming a student is a process of making a conscious commitment to the teachers, the training, and the sangha (community). It involves noticing what is of fundamental importance in our lives and dedicating time and energy to break free of a lifetime of conditioning - the causes of suffering.

While the teachings are traditionally understood as a means of awakening and cultivating the twin Buddhist virtues of wisdom and compassion, Seijaku Roshi brings a unique commitment to ecumenism whereby participants are welcome to and able to interpret these virtues in terms of their own faith or worldview.

Students are **strongly encouraged to participate at a level suitable for their family and personal commitments, and career responsibilities**, while recommending that each student make every effort toward regular and consistent practice in the following ***Foundations***.

These ***Foundations*** are not abstractions, but the essential condition of our lives. They show us the relevance of our spiritual practice toward manifesting our experience of wholeness and well-being. Taken up collectively, they provide a clear path for self-discovery to those who are willing to engage them.

**There are three basic minimum requirements involved:**

- Attend the One-Day Introductory Orientation Retreat on September 10, 2011.
- Attend monthly Dokusan (Private Spiritual Direction) with Seijaku Roshi.
- Attend monthly Academic Zen-Studies Courses held one Sunday evening a month.

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### Training Paradigm

#### Seven Foundations for Awakening (Enlightenment)

- **Mastering Meditation (Shikantaza)**

The ancient Zen-Masters and Western Contemplatives all recognized the vital importance of mastering "Just-Sitting", "Being still and knowing I AM." You will learn the fundamentals of genuine meditation practice as they have known it throughout the centuries, and then train regularly *not to learn meditation - but to master it.*

- **Academic Study (Required)**

Most western Zen practitioners are not familiar with the historical, philosophical and psychological underpinnings of the tradition, so the study of Buddhist texts and commentaries is very important to establish a strong foundation, and sustainable spiritual practice. Furthermore, though it is true that words are not the same as the reality they describe, when used skillfully, they can act as a medium for direct realization.

Rev. Dr. Nora Bankei DeClassis, Abbess of Jizo-An Monastery, Pine Wind Zen Center (June 25, 2011), has over the years created a concise, in-depth, and inclusive academic program which not only supports the students efforts, but also informs and inspires.

- **Dharma Discourses and Talks**

Monthly Dharma Discourses, Talks, and workshops provide regular exposure to teachers, including Seijaku Roshi, and the Community, as well as opportunities to dialogue, ask questions, and share personal insights in a supportive and conducive environment for personal development.

- **Liturgy**

Zen liturgy is manifesting in form what we know intuitively. Liturgy reconnects us with that which is not seen with human eyes or the conceptual mind and makes visible the invisible, bringing into awareness the shared experience of a group.

(Having no dogmas or conventional religious doctrines, the teachings are traditionally understood as a means of awakening and cultivating the twin Buddhist virtues of wisdom and compassion . Seijaku Roshi brings a unique commitment to religious inclusiveness whereby participants are welcome to and able to interpret these virtues in terms of their own faith or worldview.) Therefore, all of Zen's rituals point to the intimacy between the self and the myriad of manifestations.

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- **Teacher-Student Relationship (Required)**

Zen is a relational spiritual path or practice, and the relationship between the student and teacher is essential. Although fundamentally from a Buddhist perspective, teachers have nothing to give, they are indispensable in helping us navigate the difficulties we encounter along the way, directly pointing to our original perfection.

Regular meetings with Seijaku Roshi and Senior Teachers is an integral and pivotal foundation for a sustainable spiritual practice.

- **Body Energy Practice**

The body is an instrument of communication, a vehicle of self-realization. This foundation is an experience that encompasses our whole being. The search for self-knowledge is often reduced to a either a conceptual or purely mental pursuit. Body Energy Work practice helps us to unify body, breath and mind through activities ranging from refined practices like **Qi Gong, Tai Chi, Yoga, and Reiki** to mundane activities like washing our face or eating breakfast. Through Body Energy Work practice we attain the Way through realizing the unity of mind-body, and all the ten thousand things.

- **Caretaker Practice**

Do we perceive work as merely “a job to be done” or as a manifestation of the miracle of being alive? Right Livelihood is one of the key aspects of the Eightfold Path, the Buddha's prescription for cessation from suffering. It is a reminder that our spiritual practice does not function isolated in our own small world, but must translate into the sacred activity of living and working “in the marketplace.”, and our (interconnectedness) responsibility as caretakers of the human family and the natural world.

As a relational spiritual practice, Caretaker Practice connects us with the world around us, and gives us the opportunity to explore labor that is nourishing to ourselves and others.

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**Who Should Apply?** - Anyone with or without any meditation experience, and who possesses a strong inclination to develop a deeply grounded spiritual life, and practice with a teacher and a community (sangha) with vigor and determination, is welcome to apply.

**Tuition** - An annual tax-exempt donation (Temple Benefactor Level) of \$1200, payable in monthly installments of \$100 includes:

- **All programs, classes, and workshops defined in the Training Paradigm held on campus and not requiring a fee for a guest speaker, or concert.**
- **Meditation Supplies including, those without, meditation cushions for home use.**
- **Meals and lodging during meditation retreats held on campus.**
- **Academic Study Program Handouts.**
- **Access to all other public programs held on campus without any additional fees, or at a substantially discounted rate.**
- **Spiritual Counseling or Life Coaching with a senior monk, in addition to monthly spiritual direction (Dokusan) with Seijaku Roshi.**
- **Monthly E-Newsletter.**
- **Monastery Store Discounts.**
- **Zen Center T-Shirt or Sweatshirt.**
- **Invitation to Students-Only Events.**
- **Course Certification and the end of Training Period for those proven proficient.**

**A 50% discount is available for a Spouse, Partner, and Family member who wishes to include their application with yours.**

**Applications may be downloaded online and must arrive no later than September 1, 2011.**