

APRIL 2024

O-AN NEWSLETTER



Ango

Greetings Bodhisattvas:

We are coming to the end of our Ango period this year, and what a full three months it has been.

We have covered our last two paramitas this past month: concentration and wisdom. During one of our discussions, there was a lot of talk about posture, specifically the posture we take while sitting. As we come out of our period of peaceful abiding, I want to encourage you all to continue carrying the posture we have been creating together each Sunday, out into the world with the Bodhisattva spirit that the paramitas help realize.

When we started Ango this year, I was worried that I would have a hard time and be spread too thin with my other commitments. It is with a deep sense of gratitude to you all that I say this did not come to pass. The (joyful) effort the sangha put into our gatherings, into buddy practice, and into individual practice; everyone's patience as we settled into our new format; their generosity in sharing their experiences, questions, and challenges; exploring the precepts and taking them out into the world; concentrating on our teachings and in regular sitting practice; and the wisdom that each person brought to our gatherings – a study of the paramitas indeed.

So, with many, many bows, thank you all very much; I have no complaints whatsoever!

鳳雲大玄

Phoenix Cloud Great Mystery

Outdoor Developments

The winter months at O-An Zendo are quiet. Nature rests, and we try our best to do so. Now that spring has arrived, activities have increased, especially around the temple's grounds.

This month, we are highlighting further developments to the meditation trail featuring Myoshin and Taishin. Meidō has been busy with the Friendship Garden as she prepares for more trees and large rocks. We are fortunate to have Endless Circle as our place of practice.





Vesak Sesshin / Shuso Hossen Ceremony

From Friday, April 5th, through Sunday, April 7th, O-An Zendo will hold its spring and first sesshin (multi-day Dharma retreat) of the year. The occasion is Vesak, an assembly commemorating the Buddha's birth.

The ceremonial conclusion to the sesshin is Shuso Hossen (Dharma Inquiry Ceremony). Daigen Ross McCurdy, O-An Zendo's 2024 Shuso (Head Student), who has guided and supported our sangha for the last three months of practice, will welcome and respond to our Dharma questions, expressing his understanding of practice from Ango.

Welcome Back! / New Liturgy

After several months of home practice and virtual Sunday gatherings, O-An Zendo will resume in-person practice on Sunday, April 14th. We look forward to the sangha's return on Sundays for service and sitting, quarterly sesshins (multi-day Dharma retreats), monthly Samu (work practice), and more.

We are also pleased to announce the completion of the first phase of a substantially revised liturgy. Sangha members will see and hear a mixture of old and new chants during Sunday Service. There is a special treat for the Dōan-ryo, too!

Letter from the Board

Dear O-An Sangha:

It is hard to miss the beautiful signs of spring all around us. After the winter season, I am cheered by the green grass, budding plants, and the promise of warmer days. We want to express gratitude to our Shuso (Head Student) Daigen Ross McCurdy for leading us through a thoughtful study of the Six Perfections during the Ango period that concluded in March.

April will be an active month at O-An Zendo, including our first sesshin of 2024 and a Shuso Hossen (Dharma Inquiry Ceremony) for Daigen. In-person attendance for regular Sunday service begins on April 14th.

Food Bank—Please consider bringing donations to the Centre County Food Bank and placing them in the Zendo entranceway. We will pack everything up on April 28th, 2024, and transport the offerings to the Food Bank.

Items needed include:

- Non-perishable goods in cans, boxes, or shelf-stable packaging
- Women's sanitary products
- Incontinence protection products
- Please do not bring any perishable items like baked goods or fresh fruit/vegetables.

O-An Board—Please consider serving as O-An Zendo's Fundraising Committee Chair in 2024. This is an opportunity to contribute your time and talent to O-An Zendo. We have some upcoming expenses related to maintaining and expanding the Zendo. If interested in filling the vacant Fundraising Committee chair position, please contact Andrea Young at 814-330-0745 or at andrea.renee.penney@gmail.com for more information.

Generosity—O-An Zendo relies on the Sangha's generosity (Dana) to pay expenses and keep our Zendo functioning. Please consider becoming a member or periodically [donating using our PayPal account](#). We have updated the dropdown and ask you to **take a moment to code donations using the refreshed categories**. Dana is provided directly to the Guiding Teacher (Dokusan) or Taishin (Sewing) at the time of service or through Paypal.

In gratitude and gassho, O-An Zendo Executive Board

Centre Gives / Dokusan Room

A new Dokusan Room! All contributions to the May 8-9 Centre Gives community fundraising campaign will be dedicated to creating a space for private meetings with our Guiding Teacher. The new thirteen-square-foot room will be attached to the main house and serve as a retreat space when needed. As a local non-profit serving Centre County, O-An has been fortunate to have often participated in Centre Gives. Please mark your calendars for this annual giving opportunity. Your generosity is always deeply appreciated.



Sangha Spotlight: Andrea Young

“I had been practicing transcendental meditation on my own for about 12 years when, in the summer of 2019,” says Andrea, “I found the jewel of the O-An Sangha.”

Prior to finding O-An, Andrea was a yoga teacher — only slightly interested in Buddhism. It seemed daunting to her then, but her desire for a spiritual community was enough to overcome that reservation and lead her steadily to studying and practicing Zen. She appreciates the “scholars” in our Sangha, and with Meido’s teaching and Taishin’s and Daigen’s guidance, she has come to understand that she can be a student of Zen in her own way.

Last November, she decided to deepen her practice. She is currently studying and sewing a Rakusu in preparation for receiving the Ten Clear Mind Precepts. She has served on O-An’s Board of Directors since January 2020 and is currently serving as Secretary/Treasurer.

The mother of three daughters, Alaina, 35, Leah, 24, and Halee, 17, Andrea lives in Altoona with her two youngest, two pups, and two cats. She enjoys tending her garden, slow hiking, and kayaking on calm waters.

Andrea has worked for the Department of Veterans Affairs for 15 years. She is a communications specialist with the Whole Health national program office after having spent nine years as the Public Affairs Officer at the Altoona VA Medical Center. She holds a degree in Journalism and Public Relations from Lock Haven University.

We are genuinely delighted to have the jewel that is Andrea shining her light in the O-An Sangha!

