

## **Spring 2010 Practice Term Explanation**

Our Practice Term developed out of the Zen monastic tradition of a biannual practice period. Traditionally a monastery holds two 90-day periods a year (known as “Ango”) when the monks don’t leave the monastery, except for their alms rounds. They use that time, the container of the community and the teachings of the abbot, to investigate Dharma wholeheartedly. The Ango tradition has been adapted by many community temples as a way of providing an opportunity for lay students to direct their study of Dharma. Although our Practice Term is much less severe than in a monastic setting, it serves the same purpose of bringing together the resources of the community over a specific period of time to help focus practice and investigation. We may not be living the severities of monastic life, but our lives are still rigorous and very busy. Without focusing our attention, we may never make the time, even though we intend to, to find out about the questions at the very bottom of our heart. Practice Terms help us take the time and give us the resources to pay attention.

The goal of the Term Student program is to help construct a platform of practice from which students can investigate Buddha Dharma in their lives. The basic building blocks of that platform are: daily zazen, the community of practitioners, engagement with the teacher, and Dharma study. The requirements of the Term Student program are designed to support students in establishing those activities in their life and give them the teacher-student relationship and fellow student relationships that help make the practice come alive. To these ends, the Term Student program includes requirements for daily zazen, meetings with the teacher, Dharma study and three Term Student meetings. These meetings are all scheduled on Thursday nights at 7:00 p.m.: February 18<sup>th</sup>, March 1<sup>st</sup>, and May 6<sup>th</sup>.

Within this group of Term Students there are a few who may wish to take on a further level of commitment to training. These students are called Term Trainees. Trainees enter into a tighter container of practice in terms of commitment to zazen, frequency of involvement with the teacher, Dharma study, peer engagement and responsibility for Zendo upkeep and programming. Trainees meet every Thursday night throughout the term. These meetings will focus on practicing the formal and ritual aspects of maintaining the Dharma at this temple.

Applications for the Term Student and Term Trainee programs are available on the website and at the Zendo. Please read over these and discuss them with Ejo if you are interested in participating.

**SEE THE BACK OF THIS SHEET FOR THE FALL TERM SCHEDULE.**