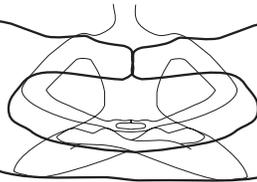


Sangha Life



The Missouri Zen Center

February-March, 2008

The Missouri Zen Center

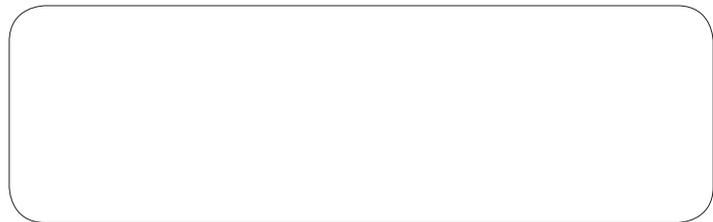
220 Spring Avenue
Webster Groves, MO 63119
(314) 961-6138



Printed on recycled paper

Coming Events

- Feb.: Board nominations accepted
- Feb. 2: Movie Night
- Feb. 10: MZC Board meeting
- Mar. 1: Movie Night
- Mar. 7-31: Rosan in St. Louis
- Mar. 15: MZC Annual Meeting & potluck
- Mar. 16: MZC Board meeting
- Mar. 19: Dharma talk



*Address Correction
Requested*

Visit Our Web Site:

www.missourizencenter.org

Rosan Returns in March

We look forward to Rev. Rosan Daido's return to St. Louis on March 7. He will remain in St. Louis until March 31. Please join us anytime for sitting in perfect peace and for practice of the Global Ethic and voluntary simplicity. Also note the special events we have scheduled during the time Rosan is in St. Louis and enjoy the opportunity to learn from him while he is here.

Volunteers Needed

Do you like to work with books, garden, sew, do repair work? If so, we could use your help in the library, yard, or in sewing and stuffing zafus. Or you may have some other area of interest or skill that you'd like to contribute to improving the Zen Center. If so, contact John at halej55@hotmail.com or call 314-961-6138.

Food Outreach Donations Accepted

The Zen Center is continuing to collect canned and other non-perishable food items for Food Outreach, the only St. Louis area organization focussed exclusively on providing nutritional support to men, women, and children living with HIV/AIDS. Non-perishable food items can be placed in the Food Outreach receptacle located on the front porch of the Missouri Zen Center at any time. On cold days the receptacle may be inside, in which case you may put your donations on the table on the front porch.

Food Outreach will accept any non-perishable food items. A list of requested items that Food Outreach is able to immediately incorporate into its Nutrition Center includes: canned tuna fish, canned turkey, canned chicken, canned salmon, canned corn, canned green beans, canned mixed

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1

vegetables, canned mandarin oranges, canned pineapple chunks, and canned peaches.

For more information about Food Outreach see their website:

<http://www.foodoutreach.org/>

Movie Nights, Feb. 2 and Mar. 1

On the first Saturday evening of both February and March, the Missouri Zen Center will host a dinner, followed by a movie. Movie Nights offer a chance to enjoy an excellent dinner with the sangha and to look at our practice in a different way through the medium of the movie.

Saturday, February 2: *Laputa: Castle in the Sky*

Dinner will begin at 6 p.m.; the menu will be announced. Please make dinner reservations if you'll be joining us for the dinner. To make your reservation send an email to halej55@hotmail.com or call 961-6138 by Friday, Feb. 1.

The movie (beginning at 7 p.m.) will be *Laputa: Castle in the Sky*, a frequently astounding animated feature from Japan. Written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki, it is an imaginative extrapolation of a reference in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* to Laputa, a floating island-city hovering over Balnibarbi. Miyazaki uses that to spin off a modernistic sci-fi fable with a subtle ecological message that is delivered only after two hours of Indiana Jones-style adventure. Length: 125 minutes. Genre: Anime/ science fiction / fantasy / action / drama. Rating: NR (parental guidance suggested).

Donations are gladly accepted from those eating dinner on this evening and will go to Missouri Zen Center.

Saturday, March 1: *Greenfingers*

Dinner will begin at 6 p.m. The dinner will be vegetarian chili and will be prepared by Kalen of Inside Dharma. Please make dinner reservations if you'll be joining us for the dinner. To make your reservation send an email to halej55@hotmail.com or call 961-6138 by Thursday Feb. 28.

The movie (beginning at 7 p.m.) will be *Greenfingers*, a loving comedy, directed by Joel Hershman. It is loosely based on a true story about the award-winning prisoners of HMP Leyhill, a minimum-security prison in the Cotswolds, England. When Colin Briggs is placed in an experimental program to finish off his prison sentence, all he wants is peace and quiet. But after his wise, elderly roommate Fergus introduces him to gardening, Colin uncovers a talent and passion for plants. Teaming up with his fellow inmates, Colin gets the attention of celebrated gardener Georgina Woodhouse. Soon, the unexpected gardeners are preparing to compete for England's highest flower show award. And when Colin meets Georgina's beautiful daughter Primrose, he discovers another reason to fight for his freedom: true love. Running time: 91 minutes. Actors: Clive Owen, Helen Mirren, David Kelly, Warren Clarke, Danny Dyer.

Donations will be gratefully accepted and will go to support the great work of the locally based prison outreach program, Inside Dharma. For more info: www.insidedharma.org or contact Kalen at kalen1@att.net

Dharma Talks on March 19 and 26

On Wednesday, March 19 and Wednesday, March 26 at the Zen Center, following the evening sitting, Rev. Rosan Daido will offer a teisho (Dharma talk). The talk will begin at about 7:45 p.m. and there will be a question and answer period following the talk. The topics he will discuss on each evening are below.

March 19: Buddhist Principles (Dependent Origination, Four Noble Truths, etc.)

March 26: Buddhist Practices (Eightfold Noble Path, Meditation Stages, etc.)

All are invited for zazen and the teisho. If you know of anyone who would be interested in learning more about our practice from our teacher, please encourage them to attend. For anyone who has not sat zazen before and would like instructions, please attend on a Monday evening (Beginners Night), or if this is not possible, please contact the Zen Center to arrange a time for instruction.

Spring Equinox Sesshin, March 20-22

by John Hale

Missouri Zen Center's March sesshin will coincide with the spring equinox. We planned it this way by suggestion of Rev. Rosan Daido as he pointed out a common theme between zazen and the "equanimity" of season and length of day and night that occurs at the spring equinox.

...the fourth stage of the four jhanas (meditations), where all previous characteristics such as deliberation and contemplation cease. This is the state of 'the single-pointed mind illuminating in equanimity'...

—Rev. Rosan Daido in *No Self:*

A New Systematic Interpretation of Buddhism

SESSHIN means "embracing the mind" or "touching the mind." Sesshin is an opportunity for sustained and deepened zazen practice. It is a retreat from everyday activity for increased focus on practice.

The sesshin will take place on Thursday-Saturday, March 20-22, beginning about 5 a.m. and ending about 9 p.m. each day, followed by the usual Sunday schedule on March 23. Each day will include the following activities.

ZAZEN (seated meditation) - 9 sittings per day are possible but not mandatory.

KINHIN (walking Zen) brings forward the wakeful, concentrated, calm unfettered state of zazen into free movement. It also relieves any stiffness in the body from long, still sitting.

Dharma Talks by Rev. Rosan Daido - Dharma stands for forms (dharma), norms (dharma), and the teaching of them. The Buddha's awakening and teaching lie in Dependent Origination (Dharma of all dharmas): all forms (phenomena) are dependently originated on causes and conditions. Our consciousness-world is originated on six sense organs and objects.

DOKUSAN is an interview with a teacher during which you may seek guidance concerning your practice or ask general questions relating to Zen and Buddhism.

ORYOKI means "suitable bowl" (suitable amount of food).

Continued on Page 3

Continued from Page 2

Oryoki practice is a silent meal taken at a monastery. Ask about learning oryoki practice prior to the sesshin

SAMU means “doing duty.” It is the physical work that is part of everyday life in a Zen monastery, and particularly the work periods during a sesshin. It is zazen in action, applying awakening to and harmony with doing and work.

SESSHIN DUTIES include cleaning and last minute preparations, oryoki servers, tenzo (cook), doan, and dishwashers. Volunteers are needed for all of these.

LODGING is available at the Zen Center. Please call or email to make a reservation.

DONATIONS are welcomed but not required and will be used to help defray sesshin expenses.

FAMILY SITTING will take place from 10-11:20 a.m. on Saturday, March 22.

All experience levels are welcome. Come for some or all of the sesshin. If you are interested in participating, contact John Hale at halej55@hotmail.com or call (314) 961-6138.

Members Meeting & Board Election

The MZC Board announces that nominations for new Board members are open during the month of February. The

Continued on Page 4

The Ethical Lawn: How Does Your Lawn Drink?

By Kuryo

In the last two issues of *Sangha Life*, we’ve considered how to mow ethically. Because lawns are by definition mowed expanses of grass, mowing is a given with any lawn. For an ethical lawn, the question is not whether to mow, but how. But what about watering? What might be benefits and drawbacks to watering? Are there ways to use natural rainfall more effectively to keep your lawn healthy?

Remember that lawn grasses are an early stage of ecological succession, meaning that taller plants, shrubs, and trees will over time grow within the lawn. For grass, as with any plant, some amount of water is necessary to keep it alive. Receiving sufficient water helps the grass to grow strongly, which may shade out some of the competing plants.

Watering occurs naturally whenever it rains. However, the St. Louis region is subject to low-rainfall periods, which may last for a few to several weeks at a time, at any time during the year. When that happens during the growing season, people drag out hoses and sprinklers or turn on irrigation systems and apply water (water that has undergone extensive purification to make it safe to drink) to their lawns in an attempt to keep them actively growing and green.

From an ethical standpoint, we might question whether it is appropriate to apply drinkable water to a lawn. Treating water to drinking-water standards is very energy-intensive. Many different materials are required to treat river water to make it drinkable, all of which must be mined, refined, and/or manufactured and transported to water treatment plants, all of which requires large amounts of energy and generates carbon dioxide and various toxic by-products. The final stage of water treatment requires the use of chlorine, a very hazardous substance, which is stored in large quantities on-site at treatment plants, presenting a risk to the surrounding community. When it’s added to water, chlorine reacts with dissolved organic materials in the water, forming organochlorine compounds. These are hazardous substances in their own right that all beings who drink or live in the water are exposed to. Given all this, I suggest that an ethical lawn is one not watered by treated water. (More-effective use of the rainwater that falls on your roof or lot is an ethical alternative I discuss more below.)

Consider the following strategies to keep lawns as green as possible without watering:

- Choose a grass that needs no water beyond natural rainfall;

- Minimize or eliminate fertilizer (the fertilized growth requires extra water);

- Increase the water-holding capacity of the soil to more effectively hold rainwater.

Remember that if you don’t water your lawn, it will grow more slowly and you’ll need to mow less often!

Applying a thin layer of compost or composted manure to your lawn each year will, over time, improve the water-holding capacity of the soil by increasing the organic matter (humus) in the soil. Lawns so improved will stay greener with less water.

Another way to increase the water-holding capacity of your lawn is to mow it when autumn leaves cover it. The now-shredded leaves will sift down onto the soil. If you’ve ever raked a layer of leaves and discovered rich soil full of earthworms below it, you’ll know what happens next. Once the earthworms and other critters work on them, the leaves become humus. And you won’t need to rake those leaves (unless you want them for compost or mulch).

A rain garden uphill from or level with your lawn will increase the amount of water that percolates into the soil by channeling roof runoff to the rain garden, where it can soak into the soil. The rain garden must be uphill from or level with your lawn in order to benefit it. Searching the web for “rain garden” will offer ideas on how to create a rain garden. Missouri residents can contact the Missouri Department of Conservation and ask to receive a free copy of the publication “Native Plant Rain Gardens: A Grow Native! Guide” which includes information on how to create a rain garden and what plants to use in it.

It is possible to catch rainwater off your roof and hold it in storage for later use in watering your lawn or garden. Look for books on water conservation or search the web for “rain barrel” or similar terms. This is an ethical alternative to using treated water for watering. Unless your lawn is very small or your rainwater storage tank is very large, however, you will not be able to store enough water for thorough watering during a prolonged dry spell. If you want to see a simple rain barrel system that Meiku and I have set up at our house, please contact me through the Zen Center.

In the next three issues of *Sangha Life* we’ll consider fertilization, “weed” and “pest” control, and raking from an ethical lawn standpoint. After that we’ll look at how to convert unwanted lawn areas to preferred plantings and touch on possibilities for what those might be.

Continued from Page 3

Board is charged with ensuring that the Zen Center abides by its bylaws. In addition the Board takes responsibility for organizing the work necessary to keep the Zen Center in existence. This includes fundraisers, maintenance of the building and grounds, and other work to keep the Zen Center as a vital place for practice of the Three Pillars: zazen, voluntary simplicity, and the Global Ethic.

In accordance with our bylaws, and because we'd like to have more people to join in this important work, we request nominations for new members to the Board. Nominees should have a strong commitment to our practice and to the Zen Center as a place for the sangha to practice and a means to bring the practice to more people. Nominees need to be willing to participate in Board meetings, usually held once a month, and to do whatever work they commit to during the meetings. The term of membership on the Board is three years. You may nominate yourself or someone else. If you wish to nominate someone else, please be sure to get his or her agreement first. Please submit your nominations to the Zen Center no later than February 29. The list of candidates will be published on the Zen Center listserv and posted at the Zen Center in early March.

Live a Metta Life

by Rosan Daido

The law of Dependent Origination means that all are related and relative systems in time and space. People, plants, and planets are relatives and responsible to all. We are together and friends (both tomo in Japanese) with all. One whole system is the truth of sciences. One holy ideal is the reality of religions. *Mitra, Mithra, Metteya/Maitreya, Massiah/Messiah, Mazda* (all meaning "friend") are to be realized by religious practitioners. *Metta* (friendship) is the only way to far-sight, fearlessness, and freedom. Freedom is friendship (*philia*) and the beloved-domain (*priya-dhaman*). Holy practice is *metta* life with the whole world.

The Board member election and annual Members Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 15 starting at 5 p.m. at the Zen Center. Anyone who meets one of the following criteria may vote at that meeting:

- has taken lay ordination through the Zen Center; or
- is current with member dues; or
- is active but is not able to pay dues. Anyone falling into this last category should contact the Zen Center by February 29.

Please note that each person needs to meet only one of the above criteria, and each person who meets one (or more) of the above criteria will have one vote at the meeting. We must meet a quorum for the meeting to be in accordance with our bylaws. We hope as many of you as possible will attend and take the opportunity to elect new Board members and get to know everyone on the Board. The Board wants to work for the benefit of the sangha and all beings; we need guidance from the sangha to do this.

Following election of Board members, we'll conduct any other necessary business. Then we'll hold a vegetarian potluck dinner. Please bring a dish to share and enjoy the food others bring! This will be an opportunity to enjoy an informal evening with our teacher Rosan and other members of the sangha. We have many excellent cooks in our sangha so potlucks are always a real treat!

E-mail List

Subscribe to our e-mail list at:

<http://groups.google.com/group/mzclist>

Once you are signed up, you can send messages to the list using this address:

mzclist@googlegroups.com

Regular Zendo Schedule

Sunday

6:20-7:00 am	Zazen
7:00-7:20 am	Service (sutras)
7:20-8:00 am	Zazen
8:00-8:10 am	Kinhin
8:10-8:30 am	Zazen
8:30 am	Talk/discussion, work period, tea

You are welcome to come throughout the morning, but please do not enter the zendo during zazen. Enter quietly at other times.

Monday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
11:00-11:40 am	Zazen
7:00-9:00 pm	Writing Practice
Beginner's Night*:	
6:30-7:00 pm	Instruction
7:00-7:20 pm	Zazen
7:20-8:00 pm	Discussion/Q&A

Tuesday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
11:00-11:40 am	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen
7:40-9:00 pm	Tea/discussion

Wednesday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
11:00-11:40 am	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen

Thursday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen

Friday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen

Saturday

8:00-8:40 am	Zazen
8:40-9:30 am	Discussion
10:00-10:30 am	Family Sitting

Work periods may be scheduled following zazen.

** Anyone bringing a class to the Monday Beginners Night, or wishing to bring a class at any other time to the Zen Center, should contact the Zen Center well in advance.*

