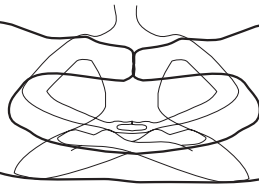


Sangha Life



The Missouri Zen Center

June-July, 2009

The Missouri Zen Center

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



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Coming Events

- June 5: Taiun Elliston at MZC
- June 6: Change Your Mind Day
- June 12-14: Sesshin
- June 14: Lay ordination
- June 20: Sangha-wide meeting
- Aug. 2: MZC Board meeting
- Aug. 8-15: Great Sky Sesshin
- Sept. 5-7: Japanese Festival



**Address Correction
Requested**

Visit Our Web Site:

www.missourizencenter.org

Sotoshu designates MZC as Zengenji

The Sotoshu (Soto Zen headquarters) has designated the Zen Center as Zengenji, or Zen Source Temple, and appointed Rosan as Kokusai Fukyoshi, or International Propagator of Zen. We are very honored by the Sotoshu's recognition of Rosan's and the sangha's work over many years to establish and maintain the Zen Center. Please join us in practicing the Awakened Way together with all!

Movie Nights in June and July

The date, time, and movie for MZC's June movie night are undetermined; suggestions are welcome. The July Movie Night will most likely be Rosan's slide show and commentary on the Buddhist temples and sights he visited on his trip to China in March. We'd like to borrow a digital slide projector for this presentation, and we are also looking for suggestions for when to have this movie night. Please contact us if you have suggestions regarding the June and July movie nights, and watch for announcements.

Taiun Elliston at MZC, June 5

On Friday evening, June 5, MZC welcomes Sensei Taiun Elliston, head of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center, as guest teacher. We will sit as usual beginning at 7 p.m. Following zazen, Sensei Elliston will speak on "Zen's Middle Way Between Science and Religion."

Sensei Elliston is the guest speaker at Change Your Mind Day (see below).

Change Your Mind Day, June 6

The St. Louis celebration of Change Your Mind Day, a nationwide event held on the first Saturday in June, will take place on Saturday, June 6 from 1-3 p.m. at the South Staircase of the St. Louis Gateway Arch in downtown St. Louis. The guest speaker will be Sensei Taiun Elliston, head of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center (Soyu Matsuoka lineage). Sensei Elliston will speak on "How Much is Enough? Spiritual Poverty in a Down Economy."

The event is sponsored by the Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis. It is free and open to the public (donations are welcome). For more info: kalen1@att.net, 314-961-7515.

Sesshin and lay ordination, June 12-14

Please join us for all or part of a sesshin to be held at MZC beginning on Friday evening, June 12 and ending on Sunday afternoon, June 14.

John Hale will be taking lay ordination on June 14. He'll agree to observe the 16 lay precepts and will receive a Dharma name in recognition. Please join us for his lay ordination to offer your support for him and all beings. We'll hold a potluck lunch following the lay ordination. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share.

If you enter or leave MZC while the sesshin is ongoing, please do so during breaks, or when transitions between activities are taking place. The schedules for each day are shown below. Any updates or changes will be posted to the MZC listserv and at the Zen Center.

Friday evening, June 12

7:00 p.m. - zazen; 7:40 p.m. - kinhin; 7:50 p.m. - zazen; 8:30 p.m. - end of day.

Saturday, June 13

7:10 a.m. - zazen; 7:50 a.m. - kinhin; 8:00 a.m. - zazen; 8:40 a.m. - service; 8:50 a.m. - tea and snacks.

10:00 a.m. - family zazen; 11:00 a.m. - break.

11:20 a.m. - zazen; 12:00 p.m. - service; 12:15 p.m. - oryoki meal; 1:00 p.m. - break.

1:15 p.m. - work period; 2:15 p.m. - tea and snacks.

3:00 p.m. - zazen; dokusan appointments begin; 3:40 p.m. - kinhin; 3:50 p.m. - zazen; 4:30 p.m. - kinhin; 4:40 p.m. - zazen; 5:20 p.m. - teisho; 6:00 p.m. - tea and snacks; 6:50 p.m. - end of day.

Sunday, June 14

6:20 a.m. - zazen; 7:00 a.m. - service; 7:20 a.m. - zazen; 8:00 a.m. - kinhin; 8:10 a.m. - zazen; 8:30 a.m. - teisho; 9:30 a.m. - samu.

10:30 a.m. - lay ordination; 11:30 a.m. - potluck; 1:00 p.m. - clean up/end of day.

Sangha Meeting, June 20

The next sangha-wide meeting to discuss what is happening at the Zen Center and to hear from everyone about their ideas and concerns will take place at the Zen Center on Saturday, June 20 following the conclusion of the family sitting and discussion. Arrive around 11 a.m. if you're not already there for family sitting. We'll combine the meeting with a vegetarian potluck lunch. Please join us for lunch (bring a dish to share) and a conversation on what we are doing and how we can do it better.

MZC Board Meeting, Aug. 2

The next meeting of the MZC Board of Directors will take place on Sunday, Aug. 2 following the teisho and samu (beginning between 9:30 and 10 a.m.). All are welcome to attend Board meetings. The function of the Board is to ensure that MZC is acting in accordance with its mission and in a fiscally responsible way.

Great Sky Sesshin, Aug. 8-15

The annual Great Sky Sesshin, sponsored by Cedar Rapids Zen Center and Milwaukee Zen Center, will take place at Hokyoji Zen Practice Community near Eitzen, Minnesota. Arrival is by 4 p.m., Saturday, August 8. Departure will be after 1 p.m. clean-up, Saturday, August 15.

Hokyoji Zen Practice Community is in a beautiful rural setting of meadow, forest and rolling hills in southern Minnesota just west

of the Mississippi River. Accommodations are very simple, ranging from dormitory - style bunk beds to the zendo floor to personal camping equipment. Participants should bring their own sleeping bags, towels and toiletries. There are showers and outdoor toilets available. The zendo is a lovely Japanese style structure.

A daily schedule of zazen, dharma talks, services, dokusan, meals with oryoki, tea breaks and work periods will be observed during the sesshin.

This year's teachers include Myoyu Andersen, Great Plains Zen Center; Tonen O'Connor, Milwaukee Zen Center; Zuiko Redding, Cedar Rapids Zen Center; Rosan Yoshida, Missouri Zen Center; and Brad Warner, author of *Hardcore Zen*, *Sit Down & Shut Up*, and *Zen Wrapped in Karma Dipped in Chocolate*. Associate Teacher is Dokai Georgesen, Resident Teacher, Hokyoji Zen Practice Community.

The purpose of this Soto Zen style sesshin is to draw together teachers and practitioners for seven days of deepening their understanding of the dharma under the extraordinary big sky of Hokyoji.

Participation is limited to 24 practitioners. Cost is \$285 - bunk bed (with air mattress) or \$250 - zendo or camping.

A registration form can be obtained from the Milwaukee Zen Center (see below for contact info) and should be returned with payment in full to the Milwaukee Zen Center, 2825 N. Stowell Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53211. The deadline for registration is no later than July 13. A full information packet will be provided after registration.

For questions or further information, please contact the Milwaukee Zen Center.

E-Mail: kokyo-an@earthlink.net Phone: (414) 963-0526 Fax: (414)963-0517

Volunteers Needed Labor Day Weekend!

The Zen Center's biggest fundraising event of the year will occur over the Labor Day weekend, September 5-7, when we run a food booth at the Japanese Festival, taking place at the Missouri Botanical Garden. Please set aside some time over the weekend to help us make food and staff the booth. Consider it as a chance to step off that 100 foot pole Rosan tells us about as we help to awaken the world through the offering of healthful, delicious food to festival attendees. You'll hear more about volunteering for the fundraiser in the next newsletter and through postings at the Zen Center and on our listserv. You may also contact us for more information.

The Buddhist Community in St. Louis

by John Hale

Vesak Day, held each year in May, is a reminder of the strong Buddhist community that St. Louis has created through the diligent work of the Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis.

Ven. Lekshe, one of this year's guest speakers for the event, said she was happy to see a thriving Buddhist community in St. Louis and is also glad to see that a Buddhist Council has been established here. She was making reference to the fact that this is not always the norm in other cities. Differences in beliefs that are present among the various sects of Buddhism may make it difficult to work together.

One rewarding aspect of a diverse Buddhist community in St. Louis working together as a council is that we create dialog between us which provides a forum for continued learning and growth for participating individuals. Through interfaith dialog, as it's said,

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we come to understand our own unique spiritual paths better. And likewise, with the St. Louis area Buddhist groups, through our ongoing dialog and by working together to organize Buddhist talks and events, we learn about aspects of the Buddha's teaching that we might not be as familiar with, had we not ventured out to meet people from other traditions. We see, for instance in the Tibetan traditions, a strong practice for developing loving kindness. In Zen the biggest emphasis is put on just sitting. It's not that Zen practice lacks loving kindness, it's just that we do not stress it as much, or that we come to it in a different way, but it's still there. And for Zen practitioners, it might help us to hear about the Tibetan Buddhist loving kindness practices. Hearing the Buddha's teachings on compassion illuminated in this way for us, we might find it useful to incorporate this same sort of compassion into our own practice.

The interfaith dialog between Buddhist groups in St. Louis also breaks down walls and melts away tensions between people of differing religious beliefs. I've seen this process in action through my experience of participating in an interfaith dialog group that has met monthly for the past two years. In this group, we learn about other faith traditions and also develop friendships across sometimes extremely different belief systems. And this development of trust and friendship between faith traditions is actually the founding reason for interfaith dialog.

The Buddhist Council's monthly meetings are announced through the Zen Center listserv and are open to all. Also, the interfaith dialog group that I attend is open to those who would like to see what that's like. If you'd like to hear more about it, contact me at the Zen Center.

Vigil Held as Executions Resume

by John Hale

Vigils were held for Dennis Skillicorn and his victims at St. Francis Xavier Church in St. Louis and the Bonne Terre prison grounds on May 19. Although I have recently been reading about the death penalty in the U.S., participating in these vigils helped me understand better the issues and opinions surrounding the death penalty. I had the opportunity to meet a few members of Missourians to Abolish the Death Penalty (MADP) and to hear their statements and experiences. What took place that night which was harder to comprehend but provided the most powerful persuasion was the execution of Mr. Skillicorn. Over fifty of us stood together on prison grounds, holding candles, all of us facing the death house quite nearby, to offer our presence, prayers, and opposition to this hateful and sad situation we shared on that chilly night, while a fellow human being had his life ended for him by the state on May 20 just after midnight.

At the St. Francis Xavier Church candlelight vigil, there was a 15 minute silent time offered for the memories of four victims who suffered and died, the family members and friends whose loved ones were violently taken from them, and for Mr. Skillicorn as he prepared to die.

At both gatherings the participants and speakers were very positive and respectful as they spoke compassionately of the people working in the prison system, victims, and the families of the victims. The mood at both gatherings was quiet, somber, and yet hopeful for the future and ending the death penalty in Missouri.

On the death penalty issue and the criminal justice system in general, my teacher Rev. Rosan Yoshida points out that we have a bad societal and institutional environment and then when people do bad things we punish them.

As we reflect on Rosan's comments, our Buddhist teaching of

Dependent Origination, and our own experience, we see continual levels of connections and no definite starting place or simple answers to the problems that produce criminal behavior. We can see, however, that our society supports competition and violence at many levels, rooted in our combined karma as human beings - all we've done to support our greed, anger, and delusion throughout human history. If we are ignorant of the nature of our suffering and we continue to seek fulfillment by means of acquisition and control, putting our desires above the peace and happiness of others, we find it easier to abuse and kill fellow human beings and then the state in turn kills us. "We kill those who kill, to send the message that killing is wrong," a sign at the vigil read. And the cycle of violence continues, "accepting and institutionalizing killing," Rev. Yoshida adds. He continues, "Neither religions nor reasonable minds admit killing. Neither individuals nor institutions have the right to kill, as we are equal." Mahatma Gandhi said that when violence is committed against us we gain merit, when we commit violence we lose merit.

On June 17, Reginald Clemons is scheduled to be executed. To learn more about Mr. Clemons' case and Missourians to Abolish the Death Penalty visit the website www.moabolition.org. (Ed. note: A website established on Clemons' behalf is www.justice-forreggie.com.)

Growing Veggies in June and July

by Kuryo

In the April-May 2009 issue of Sangha Life, I began a series called Grow Your Own Veggies: A Month-by-Month Guide. Please refer to that article for general information on creating a veggie garden and on spacing and culture for various types of veggies. In this issue we'll look at veggies you can start during June and July.

To grow a successful garden, in addition to proper preparation and ongoing management of your garden space, you need to understand the climate and day length conditions the seeds need to germinate and the plants need to grow to size, and match them to the prevailing conditions. This is especially important when growing veggies from midsummer through fall.

Most plants are affected by day length and whether it is increasing or decreasing while they grow. Many plants use increasing or decreasing day length as a signal to flower and fruit. The long days of June and July make it very difficult to grow lettuces to size. Lettuces flower and set seed (bolt) as day length increases and remains long, but we eat their leaves, not their seeds.

Heat also affects what we can grow in June and July. In St. Louis, average highs are around 89°-90°F and nighttime lows are around 69°-71°F during the entire month of July. At the beginning of June, the average high is about 82°F and the average low is about 62°F, increasing through the month to the July figures. This is too hot for good leaf growth of lettuce, and it induces dormancy in many onion-family plants. On the other hand, heat-loving crops like corn, beans, squash, okra, and sweet potatoes thrive when planted in June.

The final factor is the number of days it takes from planting seeds or transplants to the time of harvest. Heat-loving crops die with the first frost. In St. Louis, the average first frost date is around October 31, although it can occur as early as the end of September or as late as November 25. On June 1 it's about 150 days till first frost; it's about 120 days on June 30 and 90 days by July 31. If you're planting heat-loving crops, make sure that the days-to-maturity number on the seed packet or plant tag is no longer than the number of days left till the average first fall frost. It's safest to choose a variety with a days-to-maturity 14-21 days

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Live an Equal Life

by Rosan Daido

All are an interdependent part and parcel of the limitless life system in time and space. This requires equal and ethical living. No one has the right to go against equal rights and ethical norms (no killing, stealing, lying, etc.). Only human hubris commits sins (wars, execution, pollution, etc.) based on the five calamities (delusion, bondage, discrimination, exploitation, extermination).

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less than that if you want to be sure that an early frost will not end your veggies' lives before you can eat the good parts!

In June, you can plant summer and winter squashes, cucumbers, melons, and gourds; beans, lima beans, black-eyed peas/cowpeas, and edamame/soybeans; peppers, tomatoes, and eggplants; carrots and parsnips; corn; okra; sweet potatoes; basil and shiso; and sunflowers. All of these except sweet potatoes may be started from seeds sown directly into the garden no later than the end of June. You might find seedlings for purchase and planting. Sweet potatoes are started from purchased slips (small rooted plants; you may find these for sale at farmers markets, farm stands, or garden/farm supply stores). In each case, look for varieties with days-to-maturity of no more than 150 days if starting at the beginning of June to 120 days if starting at the end. You may get better yields and avoid any problems from early frosts if you use varieties with no more than about 90-110 days-to-maturity. In the case of carrots and parsnips, start them at the beginning of a 4 or so day long period of cooler nighttime lows (mid 60s or lower) since they germinate best at lower temperatures. For all of them, don't start them during a heat wave, when the nighttime lows don't drop below 70°F. During heat waves, it's hard to keep the seeds moist and cool enough to germinate.

In July you can plant summer squashes, cucumbers, bush beans, corn, and potatoes if the weather is not too hot. The day length is beginning to decrease, requiring the addition of 14-21 days to the days-to-maturity figure to account for slowed growth in fall when day length drops below 12 hours.

Of the above, all but potatoes are started by sowing seeds directly in the garden. Choose a variety with days-to-maturity of 90 days or less (less is better) and don't start anything but bush beans later than mid-July because they probably won't mature before frost. Again, be sure not to start seeds during a heat wave. Start them at the beginning of a 3-5 or more day period with nighttime lows less than 70°F. Weather forecasts that far ahead are pretty accurate; use them and you'll waste fewer seeds.

You might have success replanting some of the potatoes you harvested from your April planting, if it isn't too hot. Don't bother replanting them if we're in an extended heat wave during July. The seed potato will go dormant if the weather is too hot and won't wake up until the soil cools, maybe not till September, which is too late for a crop.

If we are experiencing an extended cool spell with nighttime lows in the mid 60s or less during the second half of July, you can sow some of the cabbage-family crops like kale, collards, mustard or turnip greens, or Asian greens; daikon or large storage radishes; arugula; beets or chard; carrots or dill; or heat-resistant lettuce varieties. Be sure to sow seeds when expecting at least 3 to 5 days of lows 65°F or lower, keep the seeds moist and cool, and hope that the weather in August isn't hotter than normal. If August weather is favorable, you'll be rewarded with an extra-long season and high yields of all these crops. On the other hand, if August goes hotter than normal, your plants may sulk or die. No guarantees in gardening!

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
8:30-11:00 am	Lecture (Teisho)/ Discussion, Work Period (Samu) & 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
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
6:40-6:50 am	Kinhin
6:50-7:30 am	Zazen
11:00-11:40 am	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen

Thursday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
12:15-12:55 pm	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen
7:50-9:00 pm	Buddhist Text Study Group (call for details)

Friday

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

Saturday

8:00-8:40 am	Zazen
10:00-10:20 am	Family Sitting
10:20-11:00 am	Children's activities

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.*

