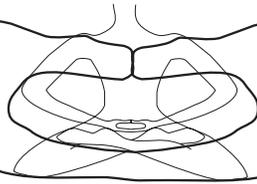


# Sangha Life



**The Missouri Zen Center**

**June-July, 2010**

**The Missouri Zen Center**

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



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**Coming Events**

- June 6: Family sitting moves to Sundays
- June 12: Tea Way class begins
- July 18: Board, sangha meetings
- Aug. 7-14: Great Sky Sesshin, [www.hokyoji.org](http://www.hokyoji.org)
- Sept. 4-6: Japanese Festival food booth



Visit Our Web Site:

[www.missourizencenter.org](http://www.missourizencenter.org)

*Address Correction  
Requested*

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## **Sangha Life Mailing List Update**

Through *Sangha Life* we communicate with the sangha and with people who are interested in learning more about Zen practice or in joining the sangha. We'd like it to go to the people who really want it. Thus, we will update the *Sangha Life* mailing list to get the list better in line with the people who value receiving it.

Those of you who have taken lay ordination through MZC will always receive a copy mailed to the address we have on file for you. (If you prefer to read it on-line at MZC's web site, you need only to contact us and say so; we'll take you off the paper copy list. If you ever want to receive a paper copy again, just let us know.) Similarly, those of you who make regular donations to MZC and those of you who pay the \$15 yearly paper subscription fee will continue receiving a paper copy, unless you tell us you'd prefer to

look at the newsletter on-line.

Some of you who receive this newsletter may not fall into any of the categories above. Before the next issue comes out, we will remove from the list those names that do not fall into the above categories.

If you want to continue receiving this newsletter but do not fall into any of the above categories, you may subscribe for \$15/year (send your address and a check made out to Missouri Zen Center). If you are paying regular member donations but don't get the newsletter mailed to you and you want it, please contact MZC with your address and request to receive the newsletter by mail. If you aren't sure if we have your correct status or your correct address, please contact us so we can correct our database. Remember, too, that we keep paper copies of the newsletter on hand at MZC; you may always pick up a paper copy for free at MZC.

## Family Sitting Now Sunday Mornings

*by Kathy*

After six and a half years of the family sitting taking place on Saturday mornings, the family sitting will be moving to Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. starting on June 6th. We will begin with a 20 minute sitting followed by chanting, a short story and either a short discussion or craft or activity. We hope this new change in schedule can accommodate more families and as always everyone is welcome to participate in the family sitting and following activities.

## Tea Way Classes

*by Erin*

A longtime friend of the Missouri Zen Center, Hatsuko Eilers, has graciously offered to hold a series of classes on chado (sado), or the Way of Tea. Classes will include instruction on how to perform the tea way itself and discussion of the ways it has been influenced by Zen Buddhism. The first meeting will be on Saturday, June 12, 1:00 p.m. at MZC, and we'll meet monthly after that. Everyone is welcome. Because the sitting style is seiza (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seiza>), wearing loose-fitting clothing is recommended. If interested, please contact me at [erinkdavis@sbcglobal.net](mailto:erinkdavis@sbcglobal.net).

## Board & Sangha Meetings, July 18

The next scheduled meetings of MZC's Board of Directors and of the sangha as a whole will take place on Sunday, July 18 following the family sitting and discussion. The Board meeting will begin at about 10:45 a.m. and last until about noon. All are welcome to attend and participate in the discussions, but only Board members may vote. Because the Board holds only fiduciary responsibility for MZC, only such topics will be on the Board's agenda.

Following the Board meeting, we'll share a potluck lunch and hold the sangha meeting as we eat. The sangha meeting is where we can discuss anything that pertains to the sangha as a whole. We welcome everyone's participation and ideas! We can learn better what we are doing well and where we need to improve, and we can get to know each other better and support each other's practice and MZC as the place where we practice for the benefit of all beings. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share and join us!

## Volunteers Needed Labor Day Weekend!

The Zen Center holds a fundraising event every year over the Labor Day weekend, September 4-6 this year, 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 email list. You may also contact us for more information.

## Inside Dharma Looking for Volunteers

*by Junsho*

In the past year and a half or so several of the Volunteers in Corrections who volunteer through Inside Dharma (the Buddhist prison outreach program, dedicated to bringing the Awakened Way to people in Missouri prisons) have left the program for various reasons. New volunteers continue to join, but Inside Dharma is always looking for new people who are willing to volunteer within a prison setting. Volunteers need not be long-time Buddhist or Zen students to do what it takes to bring about great change in the lives of incarcerated men. By showing up, volunteers make it possible for inmates to learn more about Buddhism and meditate together.

If you are interested in leading a Buddhist meditation group for incarcerated men, please see the Inside Dharma web site, [www.insidedharma.net](http://www.insidedharma.net), for more details about how to get started.

## Donation Box for Dog Rescue Program

*by Kuryo and Kalen*

You may have heard that some of the men at the Bonne Terre state prison are training dogs rescued by Diana's Grove Dog Rescue. The man I write to, Kenny Jones, is one of the men doing dog training at Bonne Terre.

If you haven't heard about the effort: Diana's Grove Dog Rescue is a no-kill facility that is committed to finding a home for every rescued dog. Some dogs come to the facility needing more training than the rescue program can provide. They were able to arrange to have some of the men at Bonne Terre receive extensive training to work with those dogs, so that the dogs may then be adopted out to permanent homes. All dogs will be trained in basic obedience and will be tested for the Canine Good Citizen Award prior to their adoption. This is good for everyone involved. Kenny is very grateful for the opportunity to be in the program, and he loves doing the training and having the dog live with him (the dogs live with their trainers). He has already trained a couple of dogs and will continue to train more as each dog graduates from training.

The rescue facility is always in need of donated items to do its work better. Bonne Terre has a box in the visitor's center to receive donations. I have placed a small box on the back porch at MZC to receive donated items. The next time I visit Kenny, I'll take the donated items with me and drop them off.

Items that are welcome include: brushes; shampoo; puppy pads; doggy poop bags; bowls; leashes; buckle collars; blankets; bath towels; paper towels; plastic storage containers with lids; plastic Frisbees; and notebooks, without spirals, for Daily Training Journals. I've put a sign on the box with this list.

Kenny tells me to say hello to everyone and to thank the whole sangha for supporting him and others, and for whatever items we can contribute to the rescue organization.

*Kalen adds:* the prison dog program is going statewide. Apparently the top people at D.O.C. have found it beneficial for both

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offenders and the dogs. A very good thing is happening. We are also to get dogs at Farmington where I'm chaplain. However, they are asking at Farmington to hold off until July (the new fiscal year for D.O.C.) to actually turn the donations in. It is great to collect now however. I'm under the impression that while the state is giving permission to do the program, it will depend mostly on donations to feed and house the dogs — that money will not come from state funds.

This is one of the better things that are happening "inside." It helps the dogs and the few offenders that are selected to work with the dogs have changed greatly. I hope everyone can support it. We will be putting out a request also for monetary support in July.

### **Tangible Item Donations**

Some of our members occasionally donate tangible items to MZC rather than cash. MZC wants to keep better track of such donations and to comply with IRS regulations when acknowledging their receipt. The Board has developed a procedure to follow in those cases where members wish to receive acknowledgement of tangible items donated to MZC. Please note that if you do not need to receive such acknowledgement for tax purposes, you do not need to follow the procedure below.

Before you donate a tangible item, please check with Rosan or another Board member to ensure that MZC can use the item you donate, if you are not responding to a specific request for an item. Then, if you need acknowledgment from MZC in your end of the year donation letter, please follow this procedure.

1. Bring the item(s) to Kuryo (preferred), or if that is not possible, another board member, so we may verify the item is in MZC's possession and note the date, donor, and item description in a logbook kept for this purpose. If the item is too large or heavy to bring to the MZC office, take us to the item where it is stored at MZC so we may verify that it has been received by MZC.
2. If the item is new and you want acknowledgment of its value for tax purposes, bring the original receipt (and a copy, if you want the original back, or we can copy it in the office) so we may see the original receipt and then either keep it or a copy of it. If the item is used, we will provide only a description of the item in the donation letter you receive following the end of the year.

We greatly appreciate your help in this matter and as always, we receive all donations with gratitude and will put them to use to benefit all beings.

### **Doing What We Can**

*by Maku*

Most of us are moved to begin practicing the Awakened Way by a desire to live a life that's free of suffering. If we can just see our lives in a brand new light, if we can just let go of our delusive thinking, if we can just wake up — then we will be free. This is the

teaching of the Buddha. Ah, but as our practice deepens and we awaken from our small-self slumber, it might seem that our suffering has only intensified! The awareness that we thought would free us from "our" suffering has brought us face to face with just how much suffering is "out there" in the world. We'd like to do something about it, but what? There's so much to do; and, anyway, our lives are so fleetingly short — like dewdrops on a blade of grass, as Dogen says. My practice was at just such a place some years ago as I said goodbye to the corporate world and headed out from Portland on a cross-country bicycle trip, hoping to answer the question: what can I do?

I was fairly well-seasoned by the time I made it to Wyoming's Wind River Canyon, having weathered the Coastal Range, Cascades, and Blue Mountains of Oregon; the Sawtooth Range in Idaho; and, of course, the Rockies. Such trials open up the traveler to seeing things we might not otherwise have seen, just as practice opens us up to insights that might not otherwise have visited us. The Wind River Canyon is about fifteen miles long and a half-mile deep in spots. Picture if you will the many layers of the earth's crust, deposited over millions of years. Now picture those layers tilted at a relatively steep angle as one end is lifted up by forces deep inside the earth. Finally, picture a river — a recent arrival on the scene — flowing down this sloping landscape and slicing through its layers. Since the Wind River flows at a shallower angle than the layers of deposition, a journey up the river is like a journey back in time. Whereas the mouth of the canyon opens up onto the relatively recent red mudstone beds of the Triassic period (around 225 million years ago), it begins by cutting through nearly billion year-old Pre-Cambrian granite.

As I made my way up the canyon — past the grayish-beige of the Permian Period, the yellow, peach, and creamy rust of the Pennsylvanian Period, the creamy buff of the Ordovician Period, and the gray-brown of the Cambrian — I became more and more keenly aware that my very existence is supported by, dependent upon, and the result of all life that came before. Stem reptiles, lunged fish, invertebrates, the first flowering plants, single celled life forms — if each and every one of those beings had not strived to its fullest, doing its part to fill in the web of life as completely as it could be filled, would we even be here today? This realization was given even greater poignancy by the fact that the Triassic Period marked a brand new blossoming of life after some catastrophic event caused the vast majority of all of those life forms to become extinct. On one hand, we might wonder what those now-extinct lives amounted to. But on the other hand, how could the right genetic codes have been arrived at — the ones capable of surviving such a catastrophe — if each life form had not done what it could?

Doing what we can — what else can we expect of ourselves? We can hold ourselves back from doing something because it may not measure up to what we consider making a difference. We can lament the shortness of our lives, the limitations of our bodies and minds, the vastness of the work to do, but it doesn't change the

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fact that we are here right now with work to do. The “lowliest” amongst us have done their part, lived out their karma, and paved the way for new generations of life. Let us not lament the “lowliness” of what we have to offer. Let us simply do what we can do.

Yoshida roshi often mentions in his Dharma talks that we have entered yet another period of mass extinction. However, unlike others caused by asteroids, or super-volcanic activity, or glaciations, this one is precipitated by humankind alone. Will we squander the lives of all those countless beings that helped create the genetic code that allows us now to sit in zazen? Or will we sit with all those beings and vow to do what we can do?

## How We Can Solve Global Problems

*By Rosan Daido*

In Zen tradition, we say we live everyday a good day. Zazen (sitting meditation) stops karma (action and action result), sees the truth of Dependent Origination (unsurpassed awakening) and settles in unconditioned peace (nirvana). In it one witnesses voidness (suññatā, śūnyatā) of all (volition, emotion, conception) and works free from and with all.

The prognosis of voidness enables one to penetrate from zero to infinity of all phenomena, and the practice of it empowers one to live freely from zero to infinity in all situations, far-sighted, full-functioned, fathomless and fearless. One can know the selfless world, boundless realms, limitless learning, life, light, liberation and love and act accordingly.

If we are selfless, we may live a good day everyday, having no problems personally. However, in a global age with the global problematique, we cannot live a good day without the wholesome whole world. Dependent Origination means relatedness and relativity. Thus we must not mistake the self as the whole and misconduct upon mini-max mistake.

To be wholly wholesome, we must know the whole and act wholly and holistically. The Awakened Way is not just knowledge or belief, but both knowledge and action unified. It is the practice of the four applications (decreasing and stopping evil and increasing and starting good) in cultivation and verification of free full function for the self and other.

Sitting conduces to stopping karma, going beyond it, reaching zero (no self, nirvana), thus refreshing and renewing our lives constantly. We return to the origin (zero) and renew our perspective of the world continuously. For this we must know the world - ego, economy, ecology, etc. and act adjusting to the new situation in perspective and priority.

The Awakened Way consists of awakened knowledge (prognosis) and wakeful actions (praxis) in holiness, harmony and happiness. It is the process of the five blisses (awakening, freedom, equality, love and peace) and the practice of truth, goodness, and beauty in holy harmony. We realize dependent origination and cessation or voidness unbound, unshaken.

### 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](mailto:mzclist@googlegroups.com)

### Regular Zendo Schedule

#### Sunday

- 6:20 am Zazen
  - 7:00 am Service (sutras)
  - 7:20 am Zazen
  - 8:00 am Kinhin
  - 8:10 am Short Zazen
  - 8:30 am Lecture (Teisho)
  - 9:30 am 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.*
- 10:00-10:20 am Family Sitting
  - 10:20-11:00 am Children's activities

#### Monday

- 6:00-6:50 am Zazen & Heart Sutra
  - 11:00-11:40 am Zazen
- Beginner's Night Registration required (at least 24 hours in advance)
- 6:30-7:00 pm Instruction
  - 7:00-7:20 pm Zazen
  - 7:20-8:00 pm Discussion/Q&A

#### Tuesday

- 6:00-6:50 am Zazen & Heart Sutra
- 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
- 6:50-7:40 am Zazen & Heart Sutra
- 7:00-7:40 pm Zazen

#### Thursday

- 6:00-6:50 am Zazen & Heart Sutra
- 12:15-12:55 pm Zazen
- 7:00-7:40 pm Zazen
- 7:50-9:00 pm Dharma Study Group (call for details)

#### Friday

- 6:00-6:50 am Zazen & Heart Sutra
- 7:00-7:40 pm Zazen

#### Saturday

- 8:00-8:50 am Zazen & Heart Sutra

