

# Sangha Life

**The Missouri Zen Center**

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**August-September, 2007**



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## **Coming Events**

- Aug. 3-5: sesshin
- Aug. 4: Movie Night
- Aug. 5: MZC Board meeting
- Sept. 1-3: Japanese Festival
- Sept. 8: Movie Night
- Sept. 17: Rosan leaves for Japan



*Address Correction  
Requested*

Visit Our Web Site:  
[www.missourizencenter.org](http://www.missourizencenter.org)

## **Rosan Is Here**

Our teacher and abbot Rosan Daido has returned to St. Louis and will be practicing with us through September 15 except for the week of the Great Sky Sesshin, where he will be one of the teachers in residence. Rosan will sit every period at the Zen Center except for the 11 a.m. sittings Mon.-Wed. Please join us and awaken to your ocean life through sitting.

## **Sesshin Aug. 3-5**

The Missouri Zen Center, along with resident teacher and abbot Rev. Rosan Daido,

will host a weekend sesshin taking place on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, August 3-5.

Sesshin means "directly pointing to the mind" or "touching the mind." Sesshin is an opportunity for sustained and deepened zazen practice: a retreat from everyday activity for increased focus on practice.

All experience levels are welcome. Come for some or all of the sesshin. For more info, a schedule, and/or to register, contact the Zen Center.

## **Movie Nights on Aug. 4, Sept. 8**

August 4, dinner at 7 p.m. (by reservation), movie at 8 p.m.

*Who Killed the Electric Car?* rated PG, running time 1 hr 31 min —directed by Chris Paine

Opening with a mock funeral for General Motors' EV1 electric car, this multifaceted documentary seeks the culprit responsible for its demise and finds plenty of blame to go around. Arriving as it does on the heels of Al Gore's surprise Hollywood hit, *An Inconvenient Truth*, which has caused the issue of global warming to enter the popular zeitgeist, *Who Killed the Electric Car?* seems like the obvious if circumstantial follow-up. Naturally appealing to environmentalists and techno motorheads, this film's story also unfolds like a good murder mystery, broadening its scope into areas such as grassroots organizing, corporate conspiracies, and governmental interference. The film interviews owners, auto makers, legislators, and engineers to find out why the car posed such a threat to the status quo and the welfare of the many auto-related industries.

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Dinner begins at 7 p.m. and will include: Vegetable Fried Rice with Garlic, Garden Salad and Fruit Salad. Frederic Arandella's mother will be our cook.

September 8, dinner at 6 p.m. (by reservation), movie at 7 p.m.

*Travelers and Magicians* rated PG, running time 1 hr 48 min

In this movie, Tibetan Buddhist director Khyentse Norbu spins two parallel stories that deliver one message — happiness can be discovered simply by being in the present moment. Picking up from his internationally acclaimed feature, *The Cup*, Norbu's second film is filled with gentle humor, gorgeous scenery and music, and astute observations of the foibles of human nature. Shot entirely in Dzongkha, Bhutan, a tiny country of 700,000 people in Central Asia, Norbu assembled a cast of non-actors including a monk, a banking executive, and a government researcher, and all perform with distinction. In the first story, a young university graduate working in the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan longs for a more exciting life in America but discovers the quiet places in his mind when he misses the bus to his first destination. The second tale is about a young student of magic who also seeks to escape his mundane life in his rural village but must confront passion and jealousy when he loses his way in a forest.

Dinner for September 8 will begin at 7 p.m. with the cook and meal content to be announced later.

Note: the September Movie Night is taking place on the second Saturday of September to avoid conflict with the Japanese Festival.

Please make your reservations by Thursday, August 2 or September 6, respectively, if you plan to come for dinner so that our cooks will have an idea of how much food to prepare. Thank you. (A \$5 donation is suggested for those eating dinner. Proceeds will go to the Zen Center.) For dinner reservations call (314) 961-6138 or email to: [hale55@hotmail.com](mailto:hale55@hotmail.com)

## **Volunteers Needed Labor Day Weekend!**

As we reported in the last newsletter, the Zen Center's major fundraising event of the year will occur over the Labor Day weekend, Saturday through Monday, September 1-3, when we run a food booth at the Japanese Festival, taking place at the Missouri Botanical Garden. We are very grateful to the Missouri Botanical Garden for making the booth available to us and to our sangha and friends for volunteering their time for all the different tasks involved in running a successful food booth.

This event is both a crucial fundraiser helping to keep the Zen Center in operation and an outreach opportunity to inform the wider community about our practice and invite them to join us. While many people now find us through the Internet, a significant number continue to make their first connection to Zen practice and/or the Zen Center through meeting us at our food booth or through Rosan's talks at the Festival.

Rosan tells us that volunteering for Zen Center activities is an important contribution to the Zen Center and to offering the Dharma to all beings. We need at least 8, and better yet 12, volunteers during each of the nine four-hour shifts to allow our food booth to run safely and in an enjoyable manner for all involved while producing high quality food for our customers.

We ask that all members of the sangha who are able to do so commit to working a minimum of one, preferably two or more, shifts at the Festival in order to ensure that all shifts receive enough volunteers to allow for efficient, safe operation. These shifts could be on the same or different days. All volunteers will receive a free pass to the Festival and free parking, good for all three days. We welcome responsible family members and friends as volunteers also as long as volunteer and parking passes remain for them (sangha members will be given preference if we run short of passes).

The shifts are the same each day: 8 a.m. – noon, 11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., and 3-7 p.m. The half-hour overlap allows for smooth transitions from one set of volunteers to the next.

Sign-up sheets for each shift will soon be posted on the closet door of the Zen Center. Please put your name and phone number down for the shift(s) of your choice. If you are also signing up family members or friends, put their names and phone numbers down as well. If you prefer, you may call Kuryo at home, 314-355-3505, to sign up for a shift.

Volunteer passes (yellow cards with the word Participant on them) and parking passes (large orange cards with the words Volunteer/Staff on them) should be in Kuryo's box at the Zen Center after August 6 if not before. Please take one volunteer pass for each volunteer and one parking pass for each car to be parked at the Festival. Please put your name and the number of passes you took on the envelope in which you find each set of cards, and take only as many as you know you will need, as we only receive a limited number of passes. If you can't pick up your passes at the Zen Center, please contact Kuryo to make other arrangements to receive them.

All food service personnel must wear hats (city Health Department regulations). If you don't have a suitable hat, the Zen Center has hats with Rosan's calligraphy available for purchase. We ask all sangha members to wear a Zen Center T-shirt if possible, which creates a unified appearance at our booth. These are also available at the Zen Center for purchase.

Be sure to enjoy the Japanese Festival's many activities when you are not working at our booth! The Japanese Festival is one of St. Louis' premier cultural events and is a great way to learn more about Japan and Japanese culture. To learn more about the Festival, check the Missouri Botanical Garden's website, [www.mobot.org](http://www.mobot.org).

## **Voluntary Simplicity Study Group To Form**

**By Kuryo**

Voluntary simplicity is one of the three pillars of practice at our Zen Center. Rosan tells us elsewhere in this newsletter that we need to move from a selfish ego-driven life to a global eco-logical life. The practice of voluntary simplicity entails reducing material and mental excess and clutter in favor of a life that saves all by reducing wants and fulfilling needs in the least harmful way possible. By living simply, we live a global life.

But it can be very difficult to live simply. Our cultural karma acts to tend to increase our hours at paid employment and offer ever more enticing goodies for our consumption while denying knowledge of the harms these visit on ourselves and all beings. How can we stop this karma and begin to live a simple, safe, sustaining life?

As Rosan tells us, when we sit we stop all karmas. A sangha offers us help and support on the path to awakening. We

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can create a sangha of practitioners of simplicity by meeting periodically to discuss how we might live more simply. Such groups are called study groups or study circles. During meetings, group members discuss ideas based on reading done beforehand and may commit to trying certain actions before the next meeting. Being part of a simplicity group offers support to go against the more-is-better mindset so prevalent in our culture.

The Zen Center is planning to form a voluntary simplicity study group that will begin meeting sometime in October. At press time the details are still being worked out. The textbook for the study group will probably be *The Simple Living Guide*, written by Janet Luhrs. The group will meet in person once a month for about a year to discuss ideas from the chapter studied that month and will communicate between meetings through a group listserv. The group will be geared primarily to people who are just beginning on the path to living more simply and we hope to have people from the larger community

as well as the Zen Center in the group. There will probably be two or three rotating facilitators for the in-person meetings. In-person meetings will last about two hours and will take place at a time determined by facilitators' and group members' schedules.

If you wish to live more simply but are finding it difficult to begin, and particularly if you are facing a transition in your life that has you questioning your previous lifestyle and yearning to live more meaningfully, we encourage you to consider joining the simplicity study group. Please contact Kuryo through the Zen Center with your name, email address, and/or phone number and times you can meet (examples: Wednesday evenings 7-9pm or Saturday mornings 10am-noon) by August 31. Once the potential facilitators have worked out more details, you'll be contacted with updated information and offered the opportunity to register. We encourage you to let interested family members and friends know about this study group. The group will be kept small, no more than about 15 people, and registration will be closed once the size limit is reached.

## **The Ethical Lawn: Bring Back the Buffalo (Grass)**

**By Kuryo**

In the last issue I began a series on the simple, ethical lawn. Ethical lawns, in my view, share the following characteristics:

- No larger than needed for the uses of the people maintaining it;
- Not needing chemical fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides for maintenance;
- Not needing water over normal rainfall for maintenance.

If you decide a small lawn is appropriate and you want one that fits the characteristics of an ethical lawn, you need to determine what type of grass best fits those. In this article I will look at grasses available in the St. Louis region to determine their fit to the characteristics of an ethical lawn.

In the St. Louis area, the usual lawn grasses are bluegrasses, fescues, zoysia, or bermudagrass. The first two are cool season grasses: they make most of their growth in the cooler weather of spring and fall. The last two grow best during summer. None of these fulfills all criteria for a simple, ethical lawn. The cool season grasses need watering during dry periods or they will go dormant, allowing other plants to sprout and grow. They may need to be mowed twice a week during rainy, cool weather when they grow rapidly. They are well suited to reel lawnmower use, however. The last two are popular because they form a dense carpet that out-competes many common "weeds". They grow more slowly, requiring less mowing than cool season grasses, and need less supplemental watering. However, they go dormant with the first fall frost and stay dormant till May. Worse, they spread by runners into gardens, the next-door neighbor's cool season lawn, and into planters and over sidewalks. If your neighbor has zoysia or bermudagrass, sooner or later you will, too. Finally, most reel mowers do not work well on these two grasses, tending to slide on the lawn rather than cutting it (although I know of at least one reel mower that does cut these grasses adequately).

A better choice for a sunny lawn is buffalo grass, *Buchloe dactyloides*. This grass is native to dry prairies like the loess hill prairies of northwest Missouri. It will survive with no supplemental watering in St. Louis and does not need fertilization. It grows more slowly than zoysia or bermudagrass, so it needs less mowing, once a month or less to keep it at a height of three to four inches. It spreads by runners but is not as competitive as zoysia or bermudagrass so it is less apt to invade gardens and the next-door neighbor's lawn. Merv Wallace of Missouri Wildflowers Nursery says that because Missouri gets a good amount of rain and has decent soil, buffalo grass lawns tend to be a little "weedy." However, heavy foot traffic helps to set back the "weeds" but not bother the grass, so this would make an excellent grass for a child's play area. Like zoysia or bermudagrass, it will go dormant with the first frost of fall and stay dormant till about May.

If you do not have an area with enough sun for buffalo grass (like zoysia or bermudagrass, it needs at least 6 to 8 hours of sun), you can use one or a combination of the cool season grasses developed for shadier locations. Or you might forget a lawn altogether in favor of a groundcover, garden, or combination of these.

The foregoing discussion assumes you are in a situation where installing a new lawn is necessary: perhaps you've had a house built or are rehabbing a seriously neglected lawn. If you already have a lawn of whatever type and don't want to go to the work and expense of ripping it out and installing a new one, check out later articles on ethical lawn maintenance.

In the next issue of *Sangha Life*, I'll discuss ethical lawn mowing, including a discussion of reel lawnmowers. Next I'll look at other topics of ethical lawn maintenance. After that I'll look briefly at how you can install a new lawn following ethical lawn guidelines. Then I'll begin a discussion of what you might choose to have instead of a lawn, such as a groundcover or a garden. If you have a particular question you'd like me to consider for succeeding issues, contact me at the Zen Center.

## New Pricing for Zafus and Zabutons

The Zen Center makes and sells zafus and zabutons to offer these aids to practice at an affordable price to the sangha. The Zen Center makes a small profit on each item, which along with donations and fundraiser income helps to keep the Zen Center in operation. All labor to make these items is donated; each item requires several hours of labor to create. The mark-up is on the cost of materials.

As of August 1, zafus will be sold for \$55 each and zabutons for \$65 each. Items may be purchased at the Zen Center. Talk with the doan before or after sitting or contact the Zen Center to arrange for purchase at other times.

We occasionally have zafus with minor flaws available at a lower cost. The flaw will be indicated on the price tag; it will affect the appearance of the zafu but not its use. If you want to check on the availability of such a zafu and its price, contact the Zen Center.

Every Tuesday late afternoon and early evening at the Zen Center, volunteers gather to make zafus and zabutons for sale. We mark and cut pieces, pin and stitch them together, and stuff zafus with kapok and zabutons with batting. If you can help, we'd love to have you join us! No previous sewing experience is necessary. We begin about 5 p.m.; you are welcome to join us until cleanup begins at about 6:40 p.m. Then sit with us and enjoy tea and discussion following sitting till about 9 p.m.

## Live a global life

*By Rosan Daido*

The global problematique, caused by humans, is endangering the global life system. This is due to the selfishness of individuals, corporations, nations, and so on. The only solution to this is stopping our selfish life and starting our global life. We must stop living the five calamities (delusion, bondage, discrimination, exploitation, and extermination) and start living the five blisses (awakening, freedom, equality, love, and peace). We must understand the global system (5Ss: Systemic, Sustainable, Saving, Safe, and Simple) and observe the global ethic (5Ls: Law, Life, Love, Liberation, and Lielessness; 5Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rearrange, and Restore; and 5As: Access, Assess, Agree, Act, and Advise).

## New Zen Center T-shirts

This summer, the Zen Center has received a new shipment of Zen Center T-shirts. Besides more of the ever-popular basic black shirts, we now have azalea (pink-magenta to my eyes) and sapphire (vivid blue), all in a range of sizes from small to extra-large. The azalea shirts seem to be especially popular this year. If your old Zen Center T-shirt is bleach-stained from being worn at the Japanese Festival like mine is, here's a chance to get a non-stained shirt, and keep your old shirt for use during the Festival. At least it works for me. Prices are \$15 each.

## Zen Center E-mail List

[missourizencentersubscribe@buddhistcouncil.us](mailto:missourizencentersubscribe@buddhistcouncil.us)

Zen Center e-mail list. To subscribe, send an e-mail message from the address you wish to use for list messages to:

[missourizcenter-subscribe@buddhistcouncil.us](mailto:missourizcenter-subscribe@buddhistcouncil.us)

The message field should remain blank.

You will receive a message asking you to confirm your subscription. Follow the directions in that message and your address will then be added to the list. If you encounter difficulties, consult the list owner at this address:

[missourizencenter-owner@buddhistcouncil.us](mailto:missourizencenter-owner@buddhistcouncil.us)

**Please note:** we may lose our current e-mail server at any moment. To help us make the transition if and when we need a new list server, new subscribers should also please send their subscribed e-mail addresses to [joe@joethejuggler.com](mailto:joe@joethejuggler.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 Beginner's Night, or wishing to bring a class at any other time to the Zen Center, should contact the Zen Center well in advance.

