

Sangha Life



The Missouri Zen Center

August-September, 2010

The Missouri Zen Center

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Printed on recycled paper



Coming Events

- Sept. 3: load supplies for Japanese Festival
- Sept. 4-6: Japanese Festival food booth fundraiser
- Oct. 2-3: sesshin
- Oct. 17: Board, sangha meetings

Visit Our Web Site:

www.missourizencenter.org

*Address Correction
Requested*

Buy Flowers & Benefit MZC!

MZC is participating in the Flower Power fundraising program for fall planting. If you will be buying bulbs or plants for your garden this fall, pick up a copy of the Flower Power Fundraising catalog available at MZC. Half of any item that you purchase from this catalog gets donated back to MZC. Contact MZC for more info on this program.

Interested In Editing Text For Sangha Life?

by Kuryo

If you have ever thought that you'd like to be the text co-editor for *Sangha Life*, now is the time to speak up. I've been the text co-editor for 11 years as of this fall. While I am willing to continue doing it if no one else wants the job, I wouldn't mind passing it on

to someone who would enjoy doing it. Please contact me through MZC if you are interested or want more information.

Volunteer on Labor Day Weekend, Sept. 4-6

The Zen Center will again be operating a food booth at the Japanese Festival, held at the Missouri Botanical Garden on Labor Day weekend, September 4-6. We respectfully request your volunteer assistance to help us make this fund-raising event and opportunity to serve go as smoothly as possible and be as beneficial as possible. We gratefully acknowledge the Missouri Botanical Garden for allowing us to operate our food booth at the Japanese Festival and for providing excellent assistance toward making it a success for everyone involved.

We operate the food booth for several different reasons. On one level, we are able to raise a significant fraction of the money

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needed for the Zen Center's yearly expenses in one concentrated weekend of work. On another level, because Zen is part of the Japanese cultural fabric, our presence at the Festival brings attention to the practice of Zen and its role in Japanese culture to Festival attendees. Some of the people who come to our booth, and all who come to Rosan's lectures, want to know more about Zen practice. We can answer their questions and direct them to the Zen Center to learn more and to try the practice for themselves. On yet another level, operating the food booth offers us the opportunity to serve all beings. We step off that 100-foot pole and serve the people who attend the festival by offering them delicious vegetarian meals. In this way we offer the fruits (and vegetables) of our practice to all beings.

We need lots of volunteers to run a high-quality food booth operation that doesn't overwork the volunteers in the process. We need as many people as possible to commit to at least one, and preferably two or more, four-hour work shifts during the course of the Festival so that we can have a minimum of 4-6 people each at the sales booth and in the food preparation area.

To volunteer, sign up on the sign-up sheets posted on the closet door at the Zen Center, or call or email the Zen Center, leaving your name, phone number, and choice of shifts. The shifts last from 8 a.m.-noon, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., and 3-8 p.m. each day.

On Friday, September 3 we will be loading a truck with Japanese Festival supplies to take to the Garden. We will need volunteers to help with that process as well. The time will be announced on the email list and posted at the Zen Center.

Everyone who signs up to work a shift at the Festival receives a free admission pass good for all three days ... a \$15/day value to nonmembers of the Garden. In addition, parking passes for volunteers needing to drive to the Festival will be available. Once each kind of pass arrives at the Zen Center (mid to late August), volunteers can get the passes they need. We will notify the email list and post at MZC when the passes arrive.

All food service personnel must wear hats (city Health Department regulations). We have hats available for purchase at the Zen Center (if you ask in time, Rosan can do calligraphy on your hat), or you can wear your own hat or one of the paper caps that we'll have on hand at the food booth and preparation areas. If you have a Zen Center T-shirt, please wear it; if we are all wearing MZC T-shirts, it makes a professional visual appearance. We have T-shirts available for purchase at the Zen Center. Some sangha members find it helpful to have one T-shirt dedicated for use at the Festival, because stains seem to be hard to avoid.

We welcome the help of responsible family members and friends who are willing to work one or more shifts, as long as we have extra passes remaining after all sangha members who are volunteering have received their passes. Please put their names on the sign-up sheet too, and acquire passes (volunteer and parking, if needed)

for them. Check with the Zen Center about a week before the Festival to find out if we have extra passes available for family members and friends who are willing to volunteer. Please contact the Zen Center if you have questions or need more information on our food booth at the Festival.

The Japanese Festival is one of the premiere cultural events in St. Louis. Before and after your work shifts, you will enjoy the many different activities and demonstrations offered during the Festival. Or just enjoy a walk through the Japanese Garden or the other gardens. For a schedule of events and more information about the Japanese Festival, call the Missouri Botanical Garden at 314-577-9400 or visit www.mobot.org.

Zazen May Be Cancelled Sept. 4-6

In the past, we have cancelled all zazen periods taking place during the days that we are working on our Japanese Festival food booth. Although that announcement had not been made as of the time of writing this, please be sure to check the MZC email list or postings at MZC as it seems likely that we will again cancel zazen on those days in favor of food booth practice. The regular schedule will resume on Tuesday morning, Sept. 7.

Fall Sesshin, Board & Sangha Meetings

At the July sangha meeting we determined that the best weekend for the fall sesshin is the weekend of Oct. 2-3. Please mark your calendars and watch for more announcements at MZC and on our e-list as the sesshin date approaches.

The sangha decided to avoid scheduling a one-day sit during August. Because of the need to find out when other anticipated events will occur, a date for a one-day sit in September has not been determined yet. Please check the email list for later communications about potential dates for a one-day sit in September.

The next MZC Board and sangha meetings will take place on Sunday, October 17 following the family sitting and discussion. We anticipate that the board meeting will take from about 11 a.m. till noon, with a combined potluck lunch and sangha meeting following. We'll provide more information as needed when the date approaches.

MZC Updates

The best way to stay current on what is happening at MZC is to subscribe to our email list. Directions for doing so may be found on page 4 in this issue. For those of you who don't have access to email, here are some things you might have missed that have changed since the last newsletter.

First, the Monday morning zazen period from 11-11:40 a.m. has been cancelled.

Second, the Dharma Study Group will not meet the week of August 12, while Rosan is at the Great Sky Sesshin. They will start with a new text on August 19. One possibility for a new text is another book from the *Shobogenzo*, *Zazen Shin*, commonly translated as

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Lancet of Zazen. Check with the Study Group for more info.

Third, we've set up a procedure for use when making donations of tangible items, if you wish to receive acknowledgment of your donation in your end of the year donation letter. The procedure is as follows.

1. Bring the item to Kuryo (preferred), or if that is not possible, another board member (or take us to the item where it is stored at MZC, if it is too large or heavy to bring to the office), so we may verify the item is in MZC's possession and note the date, donor, and item description in a log book;
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 tax letter.

If you don't need an acknowledgment of the tangible donation (for instance, if you don't itemize deductions), you can just bring it to MZC. It would be best to check first to see if the tangible item is something MZC can use, unless you are responding to a specific request for a donation.

How To Reduce Winter Heating Use

by Kuryo

As I write this, on a day when the high is expected to be about 100°F, winter heating is the last thing on my mind. I've had more than enough natural heat this summer. But in fact summer heat is part of the reason for this article. The more we burn fossil fuels, the more carbon dioxide we emit into the atmosphere, thus the higher the average global temperature and the hotter, on average, summer will be. Winter heating is a significant source of carbon dioxide emissions, even if you use natural gas heating (don't let Laclede Gas' current greenwashing campaign convince you otherwise). And although you won't be using your furnace while this newsletter is current, you can take steps now to cope with cooler winter household temperatures if you choose to lower your thermostat when heating season returns.

It appears likely that we will not be able to build out enough renewable energy resources to generate sufficient energy to account for current demand met from nonrenewable resources (fossil fuels). Yet we cannot continue to use fossil fuels at anywhere near the rate we now do if we want to avoid the kind of tipping point that will cause humans to undergo a rapid and very painful population crash. Plus many if not most of us are coping with reduced personal financial resources due to economic issues. All these point to reducing winter household temperatures below the target of 68°F, or even 65°F, that you have probably heard quoted by numerous environmental organizations. It is possible to reduce winter heating to 55-60°F and still live a normal life — Meiku and I are living proof of this — and it's even possible to survive with no supplemental heat if you know what to do and are prepared for

some discomfort. This issue I'll consider some relatively low-cost ways to improve your comfort when setting the thermostat lower that you can do whether you rent or own.

When reducing your household's winter temperature, wearing the right clothing to keep your body warm becomes important. If you are like me, one sweater over a shirt won't keep you anywhere near warm enough at 55°F unless you are expending significant energy at housework. I found I needed to wear five layers in all to keep my core warm enough. It's best if at least one of the layers is wool or another fabric that holds in heat better than cotton does; two layers of wool are even better. To keep legs warm, long underwear and some variety of warm pants, such as lined jeans, thick sweatpants, or wool pants work for me; long wool skirts should also work. The best way to find out what works for you is to turn down your thermostat and experiment!

Hands and feet can be difficult to keep warm in the winter, especially for those of us with poor circulation to extremities. To keep my feet from being too cold I needed to wear silk sock liners, wool socks, and warm booties. Wearing fingerless gloves helped keep my hands a little warmer. Drinking plenty of warm liquids warmed me up some, as did periodic exercise or even just doing normal housework. When you're inactive (computer work, reading, and so forth), wrapping up in a blanket will help too. Since different people have different physiologies, you'll need to experiment to find what works for you. Now is a good time to visit thrift stores and garage sales for extra layers of clothes you may need, and to check sporting-goods retailers for high quality long underwear and sock and glove liners.

Keeping warm enough while sleeping is especially critical if you've felt mildly cold all day. Think multiple comforters and/or blankets, and maybe some way to pre-warm your bed, like a hot water bottle or an electric heating pad. Down comforters and wool blankets provide more warmth than cotton or synthetic counterparts. Now is a good time to look for these, especially if you want to avoid buying new.

Another way to cope is to move most of your activities into one small area of your house and keep that area a little warmer while reducing or even eliminating heat to the rest of the house. Sleeping areas can be cooler than the rest of the house as long as you have enough blankets and comforters to keep your body warm while you sleep. The usual way to add heat to small spaces is with a space heater. If you go this route, be careful to follow all appropriate safety precautions; space heaters can be very dangerous if used incorrectly! Plus, you might create more carbon emissions using an electric space heater than using a natural gas furnace because burning coal for electricity creates more emissions than burning natural gas for an equivalent amount of heat. On the other hand, if you have an electric furnace, reducing the number of rooms you heat through use of an electric space heater could result in savings of both money and emissions. A smaller-scale source of

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extra heat could be a heating pad that you use while you are seated, or a heated footrest for your feet.

Sangha members gave us their tip for reducing heat use in a two-story house: close the heating vents on the upper story during heating season. Enough heat rises from the first floor to keep the upper floor warm enough, especially since most upper floors are used only or primarily for sleeping. Again, you'll need to try this to see if it works in your situation.

Next issue I'll discuss some higher-cost ways to make an even bigger dent in your heating bills, even doing without fossil fuel altogether.

How Can We Function Free and Full in Wholesome Whole?

by Rosan Daido

Humans are the most advanced in individualization with their brains and bodies, conceptions and perceptions, expanded by social and scientific systems. We are shut in multiple boxes of selves, societies, states, species, and symbolisms. We are thus divided and darkened, enhanced by delusions and desires.

Mankind is now the most separated, selfish, and sinful among species. It is the greatest source of suffering for all beings, bringing the sixth mass extinction, natural disorder, economic and ecological meltdown, and more to the global life system. We are driven by delusions and desires, caught by karma.

Stopping karma and seeing causality is the crucial key to break the causal chains and bring sound solutions. They can break through the boxes and bring about free and full function seeing and settling into the wholesome whole. They can lead to unconditioned peace and unsurpassed awakening.

Sitting calm and clear reveals one unified, perfectly penetrating and pure universe of peace and truth. The interdependent, integral, wholly wholesome world thus revealed is essential for the free and full function of all and total life systems. A systemic, sustainable, saving, safe, and simple life lives on the law of life, love and liberation.

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 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
 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

