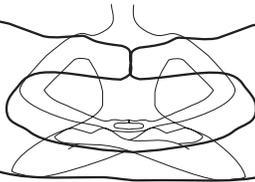


Sangha Life



The Missouri Zen Center

October-November, 2008

The Missouri Zen Center

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



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Coming Events

- Oct. 4: Movie Night
- Oct. 5: MZC Board meeting
- Oct. 24-25: Zuiko Redding at MZC
- Oct. 25: Mindfulness Day
- Nov. 1: Movie Night



*Address Correction
Requested*

Visit Our Web Site:

www.missourizencenter.org

Rosan Back in Japan

On September 29, our teacher and abbot Rosan Daido returned to Japan to begin his final semester as a professor at Toyo University. We expect him to return to St. Louis for winter break around December 20; he will remain here for about 2 weeks. We wish him a good semester and encourage everyone to continue sitting in perfect peace at the Zen Center.

MZC Board Meeting, Oct. 5

The MZC Board of Directors will hold its next meeting on Sunday, October 5 at the Zen Center following samu. The meeting will begin between 9:30 and 10 a.m. We welcome everyone to attend. The Board is the body charged with ensuring that MZC abides by its by-laws. It has also taken responsibility for the continuing

ability of MZC to offer the Dharma to everyone with an interest in it. We encourage everyone who wants to help us keep the Zen Center in good shape to join us in this work.

The Board normally meets once a month on Sunday mornings. The date for the next meeting will be set at the October 5 meeting.

Movie Nights, Oct. 4 & Nov. 1

For anyone who is a fan of good movies with a connection to the Dharma, we encourage you to attend the Zen Center's Movie Nights, usually held on the first Saturday evening of the month.

Saturday, October 4: Princess Mononoke

Carryout pizza will be served at 6:00 p.m. Please call 961-6138 by 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 4 to make din-

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ner reservations.

The movie will begin at 7:00 p.m. This month's movie is *Princess Mononoke* (anime). *Princess Mononoke* is a fantasy adventure, directed by Hayao Miyazaki. Writers are Hayao Miyazaki (screenplay) and Neil Gaiman (English adaptation: US version). Runtime is 134 minutes.

Princess Mononoke is a story of an epic struggle between humanity and nature. Set in feudal Japan, a time of upheaval, of samurai warriors and isolated villages, this story concerns a gun-wielding, young brave princess raised by wolves named Princess Mononoke. She is sent to an ancient forested land to defend the forest from human encroachment, which threatens to unbalance the forces of nature.

Saturday, November 1: *The Burmese Harp*

Dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m. Please call 961-6138 by Thursday, Oct. 30 to make dinner reservations.

The movie will begin at 7:00 p.m.

This month's movie is *The Burmese Harp*, directed by Kon Ichikawa. Writers are Michio Takeyama (novel) and Natto Wada (screenwriter). The release date in the US was April 28, 1967. Genre is Drama/War. The movie was filmed in black and white. Runtime is 116 minutes.

In July 1943 Japan's army is on the run. A platoon in Burma sings to keep its spirit up. Inspiration comes from their self-taught lute player, Mizushima. At war's end, while they await repatriation at Mudon prison camp, Mizushima is sent to convince a Japanese company dug into a mountain that it must surrender. He fails, the British attack, many die, and his companions fear he's been killed. However, he has survived and disguised himself as a Buddhist priest. En route to Mudon to join his comrades, the frequent sight of dead Japanese soldiers overwhelms him. He vows to live a life of prayer, burying bones and bodies; his friends want him to return with them to Japan.

Mindfulness Day Oct. 24-26

On Saturday, October 25 the annual Mindfulness Day Colloquium will be co-sponsored by the Department of Religious Studies at Washington University in St. Louis and the Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis, of which the Zen Center is a member organization. One of the two guest speakers will be Rev. Zuiko Redding, resident teacher at Cedar Rapids Zen Center and a Dharma sister of Rosan. Zuiko will also attend and offer talks at other area Buddhist centers before and after the Colloquium, including the Zen Center. The detailed schedule for Mindfulness Day and associated events is

below. All events are free and open to the public.

Mindfulness Day Colloquium: Saturday, October 25, 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Location: Room 100, Brown Hall, Washington University in St. Louis

Schedule:

12:30 – 1:00 p.m.: Refreshments

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.: Dharma talk and meditation by guest speaker Rev. Zuiko Redding (resident teacher, Cedar Rapids Zen Center). She will speak on "Human Rights and Mindfulness."

2:30-3:30 p.m.: Second guest speaker, to be announced.

Zuiko Redding grew up in Texas where she encountered Zen as a university student. She studied in Milwaukee with Tozen Akiyama and in Minneapolis with Dainin Katagiri. In 1992 she was ordained in Japan by Tsugen Narasaki. She remained to practice under his direction at Zuijōji Monastery and its mountain training center, Shogoji. She received certification as a teacher in the Soto tradition from Rev. Narasaki in 1996 and returned to the US in 1997. She has done monastic practice at Hokyōji in southern Minnesota. She is also a member of the American Zen Teachers Association and the Association of Soto Zen Buddhists.

Zuiko will also be speaking and practicing at the following Buddhist centers during her visit to St. Louis.

Friday, October 24

Missouri Zen Center, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Zuiko will join us for evening zazen. Following zazen, she will offer a dharma talk, which will touch on the jhanas as well as the Dhammapada.

Saturday, October 25

Missouri Zen Center, morning

Zuiko will join us for zazen from 8:00–8:40 a.m. and family zazen from 10:00–11:00 a.m.

Thai Temple, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Zuiko will participate in meditation and give a Dharma talk on "Shikan-taza."

Sunday, October 26

Mid-America Buddhist Association (MABA), 10 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Zuiko will participate in meditation and offer a Dharma talk on "Compassion and Practice of the Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva (Guanyin)." Lunch will follow the talk.

For more information call (314) 961-6138.



The Ethical Lawn: Reducing Your Lawn's Size, Ethically

By Kuryo

During the last several issues of *Sangha Life*, we've examined lawns from a viewpoint that respects the functions that an appropriately sized lawn offers and considers how to care for lawns in a way that also respects all beings. Those of us who realize that the lawn we care for is bigger than it needs to be may wish to consider how to reduce its size and what to put in its place.

As with the other issues we've discussed in this series, there are several different ways to remove portions of a lawn. Which you choose will depend on the amount of lawn you want to remove, your body's ability to handle the tools needed, and the funds you have available. I suggest that consideration of the effect of the method on other beings — the ethical dimension — is as important a consideration as any of the others mentioned above.

The easiest method to reduce the size of your lawn is to do the reverse of what the lawn care industry tells you to do to maintain the lawn. In this case, you stop watering, weeding, and fertilizing the lawn to allow the non-grass plants room to grow. You choose a mowing schedule that sets back the grass as much as possible while also adhering to any weed ordinances in your locality. Leaving grass clippings and fallen leaves on the lawn will help to set back the grass. This method allows natural ecological processes to do the work for you. For a lawn in partial shade, it may take only a few years to eliminate the grass in favor of existing groundcovers like violets. Lawns of tight, warm-season grasses like zoysia in full sun will take many years to convert by this method. Mowing them very low (under 1" high) during their active growing period may help to set the grass back.

If you have the ability to handle tools such as a shovel, spade, or mattock and you have only a small amount of lawn to remove (a few hundred square feet or less), you can slice, dig, or chop out the lawn by hand. If you choose this method, try to work when the soil is moist but not wet and the temperature is cool. You can compost the sod or use it to repair damaged patches of lawn where you want a lawn.

Another method of lawn removal is to smother it with a layer of mulch. There is less physical labor associated with this method, so you can remove larger areas of lawn, and the old lawn decomposes into soil in place. You can use a barrier layer of materials that would have otherwise become waste and materials like autumn leaves or dead plant stems that you obtain from your own property or others nearby. I have been successful using one layer of corrugated cardboard, two layers of kraft paper (brown paper bags), or 6-8 sheets of newspaper, all well overlapped, as the barrier layer, covered with enough dead plant stems to hold the paper in place. If you don't use a barrier layer, you will need a layer of mulch at least 6" thick to kill the grass underneath. In this case you'll probably need to bring in mulch. The more local the source of mulch and the more the mulch material came from yard waste like grass, leaves, and branches, the more it will meet ethical lawn criteria. Good sources of mulch made from chipped wood and other yard wastes exist in both St. Louis City and St. Louis County, since all yard wastes must be kept out of landfills. Avoid buying bagged mulches; besides not being local, the bags are made of plastic, and bagged mulch is much more costly for equal volumes of mulch. I suggest avoiding dyed mulches because the dye is an unnecessary addition that might be harmful to the soil life. There have been some reports of mulch contaminated by herbicides from other states; if you use materials from your own property or from nearby properties that you know have not received herbicide treatment, you can avoid this possible problem. You can buy landscaping fabric to use as the barrier layer, but it is preferable from an ethical-lawn viewpoint, as well as cheaper, to use material that would otherwise have been trashed, recycled, or composted.

I have used solarization to kill grass during the summer. To do this, put a layer of plastic over the area where you want the grass to die, weigh down the edges, and let heat from sunlight kill the grass. While this is less labor-intensive than other methods, it kills some of the soil life, and it requires the use of plastic. Unless you use greenhouse plastic, which contains additives to delay degradation by sunlight, the plastic will degrade into pieces and blow all over the neighborhood before you realize what is happening. While greenhouse plastic will last for many years if you remove it after a few to several weeks when the grass is dead, it is still plastic, still made from oil. I suggest this method only if you, like me, have a piece of greenhouse plastic left over from a previous project. You could use glass the same way, but glass is much harder to handle and less safe to anyone using your yard.

Another possibility is to use machinery, such as a sod-cutter or tiller, to remove the sod layer (the sod-cutter) or to shred the grass into tiny bits and bury it in the soil (the tiller). You can rent these machines at an hourly rate if you do not have them, and rental makes ethical and financial sense. The disadvantage of tilling is that

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it is harmful to soil life and structure. Try to avoid a situation where the same ground is tilled over multiple years. Sod removal is less of a problem in this respect, but you will need to compost or dispose of the sod you cut off.

The final method of lawn removal, using herbicides to kill the grass, is not an appropriate method for an ethical lawn, as I discussed in the August-September 2008 issue.

If the method you chose left bare soil, you'll need to either put down a mulch layer or sow seeds of a cover crop if you will not be planting the bare area within a week or two. Nature wants to fill any bare area with plants ... and she works fast.

In the next issue, I'll begin discussion of what might take the place of part (or all) of your lawn.

Live Nirvana Life

By Rosan Daido

The four dharma marks (impermanence, suffering, no-self, nirvana) are marks unique to the Awakened Way. Nirvana, unconditioned peace, is especially unique in the Awakened Way. Unconditioned peace refers to unsurpassed awakening and the latter confirms the former. Conventional ways are dominated and driven by karma. Upright sitting stops karma and settles one in dharma. Constant practice can change the karma-machine into the dharma-body. Only practice makes perfect. Dogen said, "Even though this dharma is abundantly endowed, it never develops without cultivation. It can never be attained without verification."

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.*

Peace

