

Sangha Life

The Missouri Zen Center

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220 Spring Avenue
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October-November, 2010



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Coming Events

- Oct. 9: garden work day
- Oct. 16: meet ex-prisoners
- Oct. 16: Mindfulness Day
- Oct. 17: Board/sangha meeting
- Nov. 13: Inside Dharma art show and sale
- Early December: Rohatsu sesshin



Visit Our Web Site:
www.missourizencenter.org

*Address Correction
Requested*

Dharma Study Group

The Dharma Study Group has resumed meeting on Thursday evenings following the evening sitting. We have returned to the text we started earlier, *Zazen Shin*, a fascicle of the *Shobogenzo*. Copies of the text will be available at the meetings.

Garden Work Day, Oct. 9

by Erin

Our next garden work day will take place on Saturday, October 9. There are a few things we need to do before a frost, such as taking the pond plants out of the pond and moving some cold-sensitive plants from pots to the ground and others from the ground to the indoors. There is also some general weeding, transplanting of new shrubs, etc., to do.

If it rains, please consider coming and doing a little cleaning inside. Here's the plan, but feel free to stop in anytime.

8:00 a.m. Zazen

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Samu

12:00 p.m.-1:30ish p.m. Lunch / Tea

Assumptions and Delusions

by Kalen

Recently I attended the annual Prison Chaplain conference for the State of Missouri, which takes place in Columbia. I was struck by the numerous Christian prayers that were offered before the meeting began, before lunch, at the end of the day, etc. There are 22 prison chaplains in Missouri; 21 are male. I am female. 21 are Christian. I am Buddhist. I felt so alone at times. While the praying was going on, I stood silently and respectfully by but I

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noticed multiple strange glances at me because I was not praying. At one of the talks, a legal person for the Department of Corrections was there and I stayed afterwards to explain to him how I felt. I explained that I did not mind others praying, but there should have been offered an “out” for those who do not pray. For example, asking those who wish to pray to retire to a nearby room. Many times I felt trapped in the crowd and if I tried to leave, it would have made a big scene. The legal person was very attentive and understanding. He said the state just assumed that everyone was Christian, and he needed to take a harder look at this. I felt I was heard.

But then I got to thinking about inmates and all the problems they face once they are released from prison. They must feel the alienation I felt, only on a much larger scale. Once they are out of prison they sometimes are considered murderers, rapist, thieves, child molesters, etc. even though they went into prison for a drug problem. Often they cannot get a job; often they cannot find housing in a decent area; often they are not allowed to attend certain events or participate in normal activities. They are marked for life even though they paid their time. They must somehow overcome the fears and assumptions of others.

As I watched television I understood what all the fear was about. The men on television are almost always big, muscular, bald, sometimes with 666 or other scary symbols tattooed on their heads, and they are always manipulating or controlling others. Scary, eh? Some stereotype... And then I crossed that with the ex-offenders I knew. The two images didn't match at all...

So I came up with an idea: Why not have a time to come meet your local ex-offender? I have a few men who are willing to put themselves on the line and allow people to ask them questions and just be curious about their life inside and outside of prison. This is very courageous on their part, I think.

As we need a neutral meeting place, I thought that we could meet at our center at the All Saints school building in University City. It is located at the corner of Westgate and Clemens. We're on the second floor.

Perhaps together we can explore impressions, assumptions and delusions. I would like to invite anyone who may be interested just to show up with your questions and curiosity. So mark you calendars for Saturday morning, Oct. 16 at 9:30 a.m. Since this is also Mindfulness Day, we can end early (11 a.m.) so everyone can go to lunch (perhaps in the wonderful U City loop area) and then attend the Mindfulness Day celebration in Tower Grove Park.

Board, Sangha Meetings Oct. 17

by Kuryo

The next meeting of the MZC Board and sangha will take place on Sunday, October 17 following the family sitting. We'll try a different schedule this time: we'll begin with a vegetarian potluck lunch and combine the Board and sangha meetings as we eat lunch.

Please bring a vegetarian dish to share and join us as we work together so our sangha survives and thrives! If you can't attend but have an agenda item for the meeting, please contact Kuryo through MZC so we can add that item to our agenda.

Inside Dharma Art Show, Nov. 13

by Kalen

Inside Dharma's prison art show will be held on Saturday, November 13 from 6 till 9 p.m at All Saints School at Clemens and Westgate in U City. It will not be an auction this year but rather a priced art event. There will be food and we're working on entertainment now. This is our fifth prison art show and should prove to be exciting.

We will have tables to rent if you know of anyone who would like to sell things. The table rental will be only \$20 and people renting the tables will keep all the money they make and will staff their own tables. We do not want “junkie” stuff but really cool things. If you know of anyone who'd like to sell some artsy things, please pass this on to them and have them contact me asap.

We are also going to have a “white elephant” table and we need donations to sell. All of this money will go to Inside Dharma.

A native hand-made flute is being donated and we'll raffle that off and even have a demonstration of flute playing.

Mark your calendars and please spread the word about the table rentals and look around for some fun “white elephant” salable items.

Sesshin and Lay Ordination in December

Four people expect to take lay ordination during the Rohatsu sesshin in December: Richard, Sheryll, Steve, and Erin.

The exact date and schedule for the Rohatsu sesshin haven't been determined yet, although we will most likely decide on the date during the Oct. 17 Board/sangha meeting, with the schedule posted closer to the sesshin. Since Rohatsu is Dec. 8, we normally hold this sesshin the first weekend of December, unless Dec. 8 itself falls on a weekend. Thus it seems likely that this year's Rohatsu sesshin will take place Dec. 3-5. You could pencil it in on your calendars now and wait for a confirmed date to come out of the Oct. 17 meeting.

Great Sky Sesshin – August 2010

by Kathleen

Why do a sesshin (a 3 to 7 day intensive Buddhist retreat)? To deepen your practice? To reveal yourself? To reveal your karma? To see what you are made of? To know yourself? You can't know why you do a sesshin until you do a sesshin. Wanting to be closer to the source only to find out it's always been right where you are... As my teacher says, “We need to cultivate, cultivate, cultivate!” So I went and did a 7 day retreat in Minnesota with about 20 other people.

Day 1 - Arrive on time, mind you in spite of getting lost twice. Find our room and settle into it. Greeted by smiling, welcoming, familiar faces.

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Go to orientation, learn oriyoki style eating which would take all week to learn well. How to open the cloth and fold back for your placemat. How to pick up your napkin from the corner and spread on your lap in one swift motion. Paying attention, paying attention, being nervous, watching others, making many, many mistakes, watching myself.

My job for the week was to be a server. Buddha serving Buddha. But I did not feel like Buddha so I just served the Buddhas. Walk lightly on my feet with pot held high. Bowing between two people, go down on my knees with the top of both feet on the ground. Serve the one on my left first. Do not handle the Buddha bowl. Rising slowly and bowing again, always mindful.

Day 2 - Nine Zazen periods - back aching, hot, sweat dripping down my back. But sitting was a refuge from what felt like the constant barrage of corrections I was receiving (as others were as well). Hold gassho higher, enter the zendo this way, receive the bowl to the side, remember to do gassho when the teacher walks behind you.

Day 3 - Having difficulty with all the corrections. All meant to support and teach - but none the less - feeling inadequate. Corrections never said meanly . . . Karma lesson starting to unfold.

I had a recurring dream while at Great Sky, three nights in a row. The first night I had returned home and could not find my cats but there were many small critters in my house, cats, possums, raccoons, a fluorescent blue cat. Some were sick and needed help. I found someone to care for the sick blue cat. Never did I find my own cats.

In the second night's dream I found my cats but they were being taunted by the other cats and animals. I was trying to protect them, shield them.

And the third night I was protecting a puppy from the other animals. It was scared. Again I was unable to find my own cats.

I missed my cats a lot while at Great Sky and thought of them often.

Was I learning something in my dreams as I was learning something every day? A lesson about attachment/nonattachment? Or was it about helping all sentient beings? Or perhaps it was just about searching?

Day 4 - The Bells. I can still hear them. I miss them. The morning bell at 4:30 to wake us for the first zazen at 5 a.m. But I was already awake and up as many people were.

Hokyoji - nestled in a valley surrounded by forested hills. Hokyoji - heat, rain, thunder, lightening, countless stars, northern stars, howling coyotes, ticks, mosquitoes, moonless sky, baby fawn, community, sangha community, newly formed sangha community committed to a week-long sesshin.

Day 5 - Sitting side by side in the Zendo, eating side by side, sitting in the tea house with one another in silence. Working together in the garden, on the path, at the gravesite of Dainin Katigiri Roshi, its founder. And then a break in the day at 3 p.m. for conversation,

snacks, reinforcing sense of community, friendship and then back to the Zendo for Zazen, the quiet. "Returning to the Silence" its founder had said.

Day 6 - Each day a different teacher giving a Dharma Talk. The teachers, one more different than the next - Wise, Tough, Compassionate, Funny, Demanding, Thought Provoking, Kind. All of that and more.

Time for Dokusan. What to ask, what to ask. "Let it be natural," a friend encouraged, don't prepare. But then nothing came until close to the time and then words came out, a question formed.

Some questions just practical, "How much pain should one endure while sitting zazen before bowing and changing positions?"

And others more thought provoking. Why should I do a sesshin? What is karma and where does it come from? How do I know if I am doing "Right Livelihood?"

My teacher, Rosan Yoshida Roshi, one of the five teachers... great patience, great compassion. Like being with an old friend among new ones... comforting, protecting, friendship, great teacher, companionship, being present.

As the days passed there became a rhythm with serving, oriyoki, working outside, zazen. I walked lighter in the zendo, more mindful with oriyoki, felt the strength of friendship grow with others. Enjoyed the view when walking to and from the Zendo, a trip made many times a day. Became a dharma sister with my friend Erin, developed our own personalized dharma greeting. Shared much of my own anxieties and fears with her, as well as much needed laughter!

Some of my dharma lessons I received through silence, some through Dokusan. One Dokusan yielding a wonderful cathartic cry... a continuation of what appeared to be the same lesson that started earlier in the week, which has stayed with me.

Day 7 - With the week coming to an end we had a short but beautiful memorial for Robert Aitken Roshi and then moved up the hill to the grave site of Jikai Dainin Katigiri Roshi. All the teachers in robes led the way in single file up the steep hill, slowly, consciously, methodically. Wild flowers of yellow and lavender lined the sides of the path, along with apple trees, hot sun, holding the incense burner filled with small lentil and black beans.

Listening to the teacher's homage to their great teacher one by one, some moved to speak, some not. Each one of us light a stick of incense and offered it to him. We could say something if we wanted.

I wanted to say something but kept quiet.

What I said in silence was "Thank you, Katigiri Roshi, for such a beautiful place for us to come together and to practice together."

And I will come back.

How Can We Witness Wholly Wholesome Wisdom?

By Rosan Daido

The recent discovery of 40% loss of phytoplankton, which provide much of Earth's oxygen and consist of about half of the total organic matter, cautioned scientists of the potential for the doomsday of mankind within a century. This is only an addition to the mounting global problematique. Mankind together with the total life system will decline and decimate due to its delusion and desire by itself and its hegemony.

Short-sighted outlooks and short-circuited actions are the fundamental problems of humans due to their body-brain systems (movement-mend-motives). Grasping hands can have nothing unless letting go of grasping. Possession is possessedness. Like a memory-loss patient, humans have lost memory of the memory-loss itself – they don't understand that they don't understand at all.

Separation is the source of suffering. Humans regard themselves as separated from others – other humans, animals, plants, nature, the world and even in themselves – emotion, conception, volition, mind, body. This is due to mental symbolism and the resultant physical separation – ideas and senses. This becomes selfishness (sinfulness=separation).

Separation creates systemic syndrome – alienation, abomination, blindness, baseness, delusion, destruction, fear, fatigue, greed, hatred, etc., resulting in global problems such as global warming, wars, ecological collapse, and mass extinction of species, mostly unrecognized and essentially unrectified.

The Buddha said that humans are karma-wombed (-yoni), -heir (-dâyâda), -relative (-bandhu), -owner (kamm-saka), -machines (-yanta). They are driven by karmas (physical-verbal-mental-temporal-spatial-nutritional-environmental, etc.) Human karma has changed humans (body-brain-action-attitude, etc.) and their worlds (ecological-economic-social-cultural, etc.). We are what we inherit, eat, do, think, project...

The Buddha found the way to stop karma and see truth unbound by karmas for the first time in four billion years of life history. He witnessed nirvana (absolute peace unconditioned by karma) and awakening in the Dharma (norm/law) of all dharmas (forms/phenomena), i.e., Dependent Origination. He cultivated and verified unconditioned peace and unsurpassed awakening, becoming Tatha-gata (Thus-being, Truth-being).

Religion is reunion, returning to the holy (wholly wholesome) dharma/truth/life/way. The partial ways/lives/truths/dharmas are neither holy nor wholesome (systemic, sustainable, saving). Only practice makes perfect. Cultivation is verification. We must sit and see karmaless truth in unity of all – the entire world as a ball of clear crystal.

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
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
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MINDFULNESS DAY

Mindful Living: Individual, Social, and Global

An afternoon of reflection with local Buddhist Teachers



**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 16, 2010
1:30 - 3:30pm**

Meditation: Instructions and Benefits

Ven. Master Ji Ru, Abbot, Mid-America Buddhist Association

Social Interaction with Mindfulness

**Kongsak Tanphaichitr, M. D., Chairman,
Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis**

Global Ethic: Bringing into Practical Life

Dr. Rosan Yoshida, Director, Missouri Zen Center

Native American flute music by LURA KOCH

**Tower Grove Park
Carriage Pavillion Gazebo**

Directions: From Kingshighway go east on Arsenal, left on Center Cross Drive, right on Main Drive. Old Carriage Pavillion is on the right just before reaching Humboldt Circle.

The Great American Hot Air Leak

(and how to stop it)

by Kuryo

In the last issue, we considered some free or low cost measures to take to reduce your use of heating over the coming heating season and why you might wish to take these actions. The measures we'll consider this issue are generally easier for homeowners to do than renters, although some renters may find some of them practical as well. The costs run the gamut from rather cheap (caulk, window films, weather-stripping) to quite expensive (insulation, new windows). While all measures will quickly save enough energy to compensate for the energy required to make them, some of the measures will pay back financially quickly (caulk), others not in less than 10-20 years (wall insulation). They will all pay back immediately in terms of reduced discomfort at lower thermostat settings.

A surprising amount of the heated air in a dwelling leaks straight to the outside through gaps and holes. Plugging those gaps is the cheapest and most cost-effective way to reduce your heating cost and fuel use. Look for gaps to seal wherever two or more surfaces meet, such as where your windowframes meet the house or your door contacts the door frame. Caulk and weatherstripping are what you need to seal whatever gaps you find. Many if not most hardware stores carry books that include details on how to apply these materials. It's likely that your public library has similar books available for checkout. The book *Homemade Money*, referenced at the end of this article, has a chart comparing different types of caulk. If you've sealed most of the leaks, you will notice a decrease in cold drafts, and your feet will thank you, although your heating utility may not.

Some gaps hide in non-obvious places, like the sheet-metal ductwork of a forced-air heating system that leaks heat into an unfinished basement. The best way to find all the gaps, if you can afford it, is to retain the services of a home performance contractor. This will cost you on the order of a few to several hundred or more dollars, depending on the size of the dwelling. In the St. Louis region, you can locate them through the Healthy Planet newspaper (free at various locations around town, including businesses on Big Bend near MZC) or through the Earthways Center portion of the Missouri Botanical Garden's website (www.mobot.org). If you have the financial resources and you can find a contractor that does the work, you can hire them to seal the gaps that your home performance contractor found. The older your dwelling is, the more leakage it probably has and the faster the payback will be once the leaks are found and sealed (and the more comfortable you will feel in winter).

Your dwelling also leaks warmth through uncovered and single-pane windows. You can cut down on these losses with clinging window films, storm windows, and even just closing the blinds and curtains over your windows at night. If you want to go to a little more effort, some books and websites show you how to make insulated window coverings, or you can look for a vendor who can make them to order.

Adding insulation is what comes to most peoples' minds when they think about saving energy. Insulating is only cost-effective, however, if it's done after you seal air leaks. The most cost-effective place to add insulation is in your attic if you don't already have enough. In the St. Louis area you want to have enough insulation in your attic to achieve an R-44 rating. There are a variety of different materials to choose from when adding insulation to your attic. You'll want to choose a material which is compatible with any insulation which is now in place and is not hazardous. Blown cellulose is probably the most suitable material for most attics, but more difficult for a do-it-yourselfer to install than fiberglass batts. *Homemade Money* has good information on the advantages and disadvantages of various insulation materials. Other good places to add insulation are to forced-air ductwork (but only after it's sealed) and to basement ceilings. Blowing insulation into uninsulated walls is helpful as well but requires a long time for financial payback and is best done by specialists.

If you have a pre-1990 furnace needing to be replaced, by all means replace it with the most energy-efficient model you can afford. Natural gas forced-air furnaces of 96% or better efficiency are readily available. This is an expensive and long-payback item, but if you need to replace the furnace anyway, it's worth doing.

Probably the last thing to consider for most people is replacing windows. New windows are expensive and require a lot of energy to produce. You'll find it more cost-effective to caulk and weather-strip around your windows, replace any broken window panes and re-putty any loose ones, and add clinging window film and/or storm windows than to replace your windows. Home rehabbing websites have lots of information on repairing old wooden windows and why you might want to repair them rather than replace them. If you do choose to buy replacement windows, spend however much is needed to get double-pane windows with the longest possible guarantee against leakage. Once they leak, and they will leak eventually, you will have permanent fogging between the two layers of glass.

Homemade Money: How to Save Energy and Dollars in Your Home, by Richard Heede (Rocky Mountain Institute, www.rmi.org, 1995)