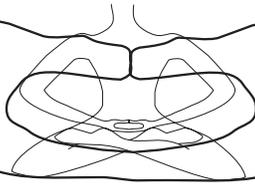


Sangha Life



The Missouri Zen Center

December, 2007-January, 2008

The Missouri Zen Center

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



Printed on recycled paper

Coming Events

- Dec. 16: MZC Board Meeting
- Dec. 22: Solstice Celebration
- Dec. 25-Jan. 5: Rosan in St. Louis
- Dec. 31: New Year's Eve Sitting
- Jan. 2: MZC Board Meeting
- Jan. 5: Movie Night



*Address Correction
Requested*

Visit Our Web Site:

www.missourizencenter.org

Rosan Returns for the Holidays

Our teacher and abbot Rosan Daido will return to St. Louis on December 25 and will remain through the first weekend in January. We welcome him back and look forward to sitting with him. Please join us at any time for zazen and for our special events, as described elsewhere in this newsletter.

Request for Buddhist Books

Kalen writes that Inside Dharma has received a request for Buddhist books from a woman in a federal prison in Illinois. Maybe some of you would like to mail her some of your old books. The rules are THEY HAVE TO BE PAPERBACK and ONLY 5 AT A TIME (in one package) CAN BE SENT but there's no limit to how many packages she gets. You should put your first name and Inside Dharma's address as your return address to pro-

tect your privacy (Inside Dharma, P.O. Box 220721, St. Louis, MO 63122). If you include your first name, Kalen can direct any response from her to you. All books are appreciated; books on women in Buddhism would be particularly appropriate for her to receive.

Her address is:

Bebe Hok-Le #32918044
Federal Prison Camp
P.O. Box 6000
Greenville, IL 62246

Kalen sends books media rate, which is slower but costs a lot less. If you want to package them and bring them to Kalen, she'll mail them for you. Contact her through Inside Dharma (www.insidedharma.org).

Letter from the Board of Directors

Dharma Brothers and Sisters,

The sangha worked together during 2007 to enable the Zen Center to offer a full schedule of sittings and other special events. In this letter we share with you a synopsis of our work during the year.

In 2007 the Zen Center decided to discontinue the Hosta/Plant Sale fundraiser. We express profound gratitude to Kalen who developed this fundraising event 13 years ago and gave many, many hours of effort in organizing, promoting, and working at this event over the years. Many other sangha members have also worked in different capacities over the years to support this event; we express gratitude for all of the work each of you has done.

The Zen Center has recognized an opportunity offer information to the sangha and to anyone else who wishes to live by the three pillars of our practice (zazen, the Global Ethic, and voluntary simplicity). Two workshops and two ongoing courses were offered in 2007. One of the workshops examined reducing energy use at home; the other taught sustainable food gardening techniques. The Zen Center also sponsored two courses that are ongoing as of this writing: a Japanese language course emphasizing understanding of Japanese as used in Zen practice, and a voluntary simplicity course using Janet Luhr's book *The Simple Living Guide* as the course textbook. As is traditional in Buddhist practice, we offer the courses on a donation basis. While the courses are not intended to be major fundraisers, attendees have been generous with donations to support the Zen Center.

The sangha worked together to ensure a successful Japanese Festival fundraiser and to make and sell zafus and zabutons. We continue to offer books, T-shirts, and other items for sale. In addition we have managed our funds carefully, seeking to reduce expenditures wherever possible. As a result our financial health is quite good. We thank everyone who has supported all of these various activities through organization, participation, and purchases.

The Zen Center began offering Movie Night on the first Saturday of every month early in the year and continues to do so. Each month's format includes a dinner prepared by a sangha member followed by a movie. Movie Night organizers Frederick and John have carefully chosen movies which offer a connection to the three pillars of our practice. We bow to Frederick and John and to the people who have prepared dinners for their efforts.

During 2007 several people worked together to redesign the Zen Center's website. If you haven't looked at our website recently, take a look. They have created an inviting site, which provides all the information needed for people new to Buddhist practice and the Zen Center.

Mark Hartsuyker devoted much time and effort to record Rosan's Beginners Mind course in September 2005 and then edited the recordings to create a 2 CD set of the course, which became available this year for a donation of \$15. We thank Mark for his efforts on behalf of beginners and experienced members alike.

The Zen Center offered a number of special events in 2007. The Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis, of which the Zen Center is a member, again sponsored Vesak Day in May at MABA, Change Your Mind Day in June at the Chain of Rocks Bridge, and Mindfulness Day at Washington University in October. The Zen Center welcomed Soto Zen monk Daigaku Rumme to the Zen Center in June, holding a sesshin during his visit. We welcomed the Mindfulness Day speaker, David Chadwick, to the Zen Center for zazen and a teisho the Sunday following Mindfulness Day. We also sat sesshins in August, October, and December (Rohatsu). We're offering a winter solstice celebration again this year and as always, the special sitting on New Year's Eve followed by a potluck supper.

A sangha is sustained only through the efforts of its members. Efforts include teaching; maintaining the Zen Center and its gardens; work on fundraisers and sale merchandise; membership on the Board or acting as an officer; offering a class or other special event or product; writing or editing publications or the website; maintaining our listserv and our library; and acting as doan, tenzo, and so forth during regular sittings or sesshins. Another way to sustain the Zen Center is through financial contributions. While we endeavor to keep spending at a minimum, we do need to pay for utilities, insurance, maintenance, supplies, and other expenses associated with the building, gardens, and activities. We welcome contributions of all levels, whether these are occasional donations or payment of regular membership dues (suggested at \$25/month but can be adjusted according to your circumstances). Many people make contributions to organizations they support at year's end. If you are in a position to do this, the Zen Center will be very grateful to accept it and put it to work.

May our practice sustain and benefit all beings in 2008.

MZC Board Meetings

The MZC Board of Directors will meet at the Zen Center on Sunday, December 16 following samu (starting between 9:30 and 10 a.m. depending on the time needed for the preceding teisho and samu) and on Wednesday, January 2 following evening sitting (beginning at 7:45 p.m.). All are welcome to attend Board meetings.

Solstice Celebration, Dec. 22

Please join us for the 2nd annual MZC winter solstice

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celebration, to be held on Saturday, December 22 following the family sitting. Bring small percussion instruments if you have any (there will be plenty as some of our members have collections), and we'll join together in a spontaneous drumming session to welcome back the sun! After the drumming winds down, we'll enjoy a potluck lunch; bring a vegetarian dish to share.

Sitting on Christmas Day

This year Christmas, December 25, falls on Tuesday. Meiku and Kuryo will be at the Zen Center that evening

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as usual for sitting followed by tea and discussion. We invite anyone who is not spending the evening with family and/or friends to join us for sitting and for tea and discussion following. We'll bring some special Christmas treats for tea; perhaps others will also wish to bring cookies or other treats to share. What better way to embody the Christmas message of peace and goodwill toward all than by sitting in perfect peace?

Some sittings may be cancelled during the week of Christmas if no doans are available. Please check the listserv

and postings at the Zen Center for any cancellations.

New Year's Eve Sitting

On Monday, December 31 beginning at 9 p.m. we'll hold our traditional New Year's Eve special sitting. Starting at 9 p.m. we'll sit 40 minutes of zazen followed by 10 minutes of kinhin. Zazen and kinhin continue until shortly before midnight, when the bell is rung 108 times to mark the changing of the year. Following the bell-ringing we'll enjoy a potluck vegetarian supper. In this way we can begin the New Year with a peaceful mind and heart (and

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Power for The People: Ethical Use of Powered Lawn Mowers

By Kuryo

I have suggested that an ethical lawn has three characteristics:

- No larger than needed for what it's used for;
- Not needing chemical herbicides, pesticides, or fertilizers to maintain it;
- Not needing water above normal rainfall, or minimal extra watering.

In the previous issue we noted that lawns are by definition mowed expanses of grass, so ethical lawn mowing means choosing the least damaging way to mow that is possible in your situation. If you are not able to use a human-powered mower for part or all of your mowing, then it's appropriate to look at the various types of powered mowers available and to choose one that works for you and harms the least.

While gasoline-powered lawn mowers are the most common, electric mowers also exist. These can be powered by a battery or by an external power source such as household current conducted by means of an extension cord.

Battery-powered mowers offer the advantage of no cord to cut accidentally and, if solar-charged or charged off renewably-generated electricity, their use does not generate greenhouse gases. Their disadvantages include a short mowing time between charges (they are generally only practical for very small lawns), heaviness due to the battery, and the battery itself (batteries require a lot of energy to manufacture, contain toxic materials, and may need to be replaced every few years).

Mowers powered by household current from extension cords can be very practical for a small lawn, although hard to find. I used one when we lived on an eighth-acre lot and was quite happy with it. They are light and easy to push. You don't need to store or use gasoline, a hazardous substance. If the electricity source is renewable (not the case in St. Louis unless you generate your own electricity), they don't produce greenhouse gases. The disadvantages are due to the extension cord. Unless you take considerable care when mowing, it is easy to cut the cord with the mower (I never cut the cord, however). The longer the extension cord, the less power available to the engine; it's not practical to use longer than a 50 foot cord so these won't work for a large yard. The cord must be rated for outdoor use and of the proper gauge for the length (the mower manual has this information). Generally the cord must be moved to different outlets to mow the entire lawn. If this sort of mower works in your situation, it may offer an ethical advantage over a gasoline-powered mower, especially where electricity comes from natural gas fired or hydropower plants. In St. Louis, where 70% of the electricity comes from coal-fired plants, it's less clear if electric mowers have an ethical advantage over gasoline mowers. If your household electricity comes from solar cells or windmills, an electric mower offers a clear advantage over a gasoline mower.

If you find that a gasoline-powered lawn mower is needed, use the smallest one possible given the size of your lawn and your physical condition. One that isn't self-propelled will use less energy than one that is (you supply the energy to push a mower that isn't self-propelled). If you can use a self-propelled standard lawnmower rather than a riding mower, you'll create less greenhouse gases, save yourself some money, and have an easier time returning the mower if needed for repairs. If you can't push a powered mower or walk behind a self-propelled mower, another option would be to hire the lawn-mowing out. In this case, you can reduce greenhouse gases by hiring someone who will follow ethical mowing guidelines. There is a company in California, Terra Nova Ecological Landscaping, that uses reel lawnmowers and transports its mowers and other equipment to the job site by bicycle. This might be a good business opportunity for someone in the St. Louis region, especially in the city of St. Louis where the terrain is rather flat and the lawns are small.

When using any fossil-fuel-powered lawnmower it is best to mow as few times as possible to minimize the use of fuel and the production of greenhouse gases. What defines possible? If it's okay for a lawn to look uneven in height, fewer mowings will be required (be aware of weed ordinances in your community and mow when needed to bring the height of the grass below the action level of the ordinance). Lawns that don't receive supplemental water don't need to be mowed as often. Slower-growing grasses like zoysia, bermudagrass, and buffalo grass generally will require fewer mowings than bluegrass or fescue lawns.

Next issue we'll discuss how to weed and water lawns in the most ethical way. After that we'll begin to examine alternatives to lawns that follow the ethical guidelines above.

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a full stomach). We invite everyone to attend this sitting and to bring a vegetarian dish to share during the potluck afterward.

The Monday Beginner's Night will be cancelled on December 31. The 6 a.m. sitting on Tuesday, January 1 will be canceled; check the listserv or at the Zen Center to see if the 11 a.m. sitting will take place. The regular schedule will resume with the evening sitting on January 1.

Movie Night & Dinner/Fundraiser

The Zen Center will host a Movie Night and Dinner/Fundraiser on Saturday, January 5. Dinner will begin at 6:00 p.m. The movie will begin at 7:00 p.m. For dinner reservations please send an email to halej55@hotmail.com or call 961-6138 by 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 3. Donations are welcomed and will go to the International Campaign for Tibet.

Live A Good Day Every Day

by Rosan Daido

Sitting in zen frees you in unconditioned peace. Morning sitting lets you start your day in a peaceful, free, and good state. Sitting anytime in the day reasserts it. Sitting in the evening lets you complete a good day in sound sleep. Thus, make every day a good day.

Movie: *Kundun* - running time: 2hr 15 min

Director Martin Scorsese brings to the screen the true story of one of our era's most compelling and inspiring figures, the fourteenth Dalai Lama. Told through the eyes of His Holiness, *Kundun* chronicles his early life, from childhood through the Chinese occupation and his journey into exile. The film charts his extraordinary growth into a man who raises the world's consciousness about the Buddhist society of the spirit, the plight of Tibet, and the sufferings endured by his people with unspeakable grace and dignity. It is the story of a remarkable boy, imbued with the insight and wisdom of centuries, whose will proves indomitable and spirit inviolate.

A vegetarian dinner will be prepared especially for this event and will begin at 6:00 p.m. The dinner menu will be announced soon. Please make your dinner reservations by 12:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 3 if you plan to come for dinner so the cook 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 International Campaign for Tibet. For dinner reservations call (314) 961-6138 or email halej55@hotmail.com

Visit the website of the International Campaign for Tibet at www.savetibet.org

E-mail List

The Zen Center's previous e-mail list through the Buddhist Council no longer exists.

If you wish to sign up for our current list, sign up 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.*

