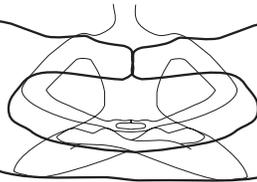


Sangha Life



The Missouri Zen Center

December, 2008-January, 2009

The Missouri Zen Center

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



Printed on recycled paper

Coming Events

- Dec. 6: Inside Dharma art auction
- Dec. 24: Rosan returns
- Dec. 31: New Years Eve sitting
- Jan. 3: 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 24 and will remain here through the first weekend in January. We welcome him back and look forward to sitting with him. He will retire from his professorship in March 2009 and will live in St. Louis upon his retirement.

Volunteers Appreciated!

After zazen, during his teishos, Rosan often reminds us that we must step off the 100-foot pole and bring the mind and body of zazen into action in the world. One way to do this is to volunteer at the Zen Center. If you have a skill you'd like to share with us, contact the Zen Center to see if and how we can make use

of your skill. Routine cleaning, seasonal yard work, and various maintenance tasks like painting always need to be done. If you'd like to help us make zafus and zabutons for sale, we can use the help. If anyone would like to write something for this newsletter, contact Kuryo at the Zen Center with your idea. And nominations for a term on the Zen Center's Board of Directors will be announced in early 2009. To find out more about what the Board members do, contact the Zen Center or watch for the article in the next issue of this newsletter.

Inside Dharma Art Auction, Dec. 6

Inside Dharma, a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing the Dharma to prisoners residing in Missouri state prisons, presents its 3rd Annual Prison Art Auction

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on Saturday, December 6 from noon till 9 p.m. It will be held at All Saints School, which is located on Westgate (the stoplight nearest Blueberry Hill). Go north from Delmar on Westgate to the corner of Clemens – just 2 blocks. You will see All Saints Church – the school is between the church and the rectory. Come on in and come down 1/2 flight to the cafeteria.

This year we will have a special Vendor's Market, which will feature:

- *Suttonwood Antiques – antique Chinese collectibles including hand carved Buddha statues – 20% of all sales will support Inside Dharma
 - *Karmic Klutter – the best organic soap and body products around
 - *Tim Smith's caricatures – he's famous for them
 - *Nature note cards by Sue Fletcher
 - *Blank collectible note cards
 - *Unprocessed honey
 - *Chair massages
- and more!

Prisoners from all over the country contribute art for the auction. All proceeds are used to support Inside Dharma which provides “dress-out” clothing, newsletters, books, volunteers who lead Buddhist groups in prison, other support for those coming out of prison, and so on. Some artists are in for life and will never directly benefit from their donation but they are “paying it forward” for others. This year's artwork includes beadwork by the Native American group at Bowling Green, many drawings, miniatures from a man at Bonne Terre, etc. Prison artwork will be auctioned all day and evening via a silent auction process. You do not have to be present when highest bids are called.

Also, an old-fashioned pie auction will take place at 7:30 p.m. LOADS of fun and good eating too! If you've never been to one – it's time!

So mark your calendar and be sure to come!

For more information, contact Kalen at Kalen1@att.net

Possible Schedule Changes in Late December

Depending on the availability of doans, some of the sittings during the last week of December may be cancelled. The latest information on schedule changes is posted to the Zen Center's listserv and at the Zen Center. You may also contact the Zen Center by phone or email, or check our website, for the latest schedule information. If you are not already signed up to the Zen Center's listserv, you can sign up for it following

the instructions at the end of this issue.

New Year's Eve Sitting

On Wednesday evening, December 31 we'll hold our traditional New Year's Eve special sitting. Beginning 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 a full stomach). We invite everyone to attend this sitting and to bring a vegetarian dish to share during the potluck afterward.

Unless it is announced otherwise, expect the 7 p.m. sitting on December 31, and the Dhammapada study group that follows, to be cancelled. Also expect the 6 a.m. sitting on Thursday, January 1 to be cancelled. The regular schedule will resume with the 11 a.m. sitting on January 1 unless it is announced otherwise.

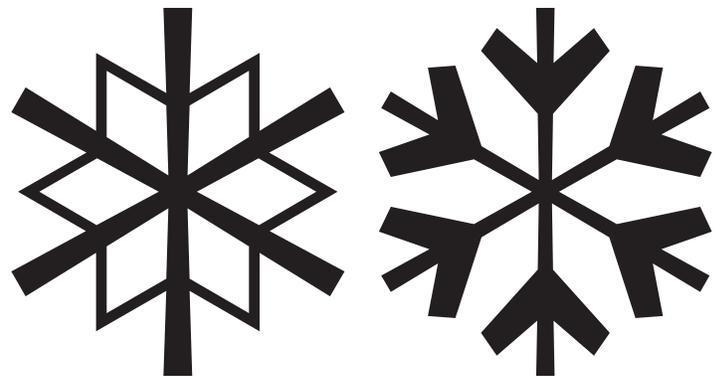
Movie Night, Jan. 3

Every month (with occasional exceptions) the Zen Center offers a movie showing on the first Saturday evening of the month. We try to pick a movie that offers illumination on an aspect of the dharma. Suggestions for good movies are appreciated and may be directed to the Zen Center.

The January 2009 Movie Night will take place on Saturday, January 3. Dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m., with the menu to be announced. If you plan to be present for dinner, please call 314-961-6138 by Friday, January 2.

The movie will begin at 7:00 p.m., with the title to be announced. Please call or email with your suggestions for what we might watch for our January movie. Email: halej55@hotmail.com

There will be no Movie Night in December.



Letter from the Board of Directors

During 2008 the sangha of the Zen Center worked together to maintain the sitting schedule and to offer a number of special events for the sangha and for the wider community. In this letter we share with you a synopsis of our work during the year.

Again during 2008 we have maintained a full schedule of sittings, including multiple sittings every day of the week. This is only possible because we have many doans and because the doans cooperate to cover each other's sittings when required. In this way we offer many more people the opportunity to sit in perfect peace than could otherwise be managed by a sangha of our size. A deep bow to all the doans and to everyone else who participates in our meditation periods.

We also offer opportunities for studying the Dhammapada (Wednesday evenings) and the Japanese language (Thursday evenings). We continue to offer Beginners Night on Monday evenings, a chance for newcomers to learn how to sit and to experience zazen for themselves, and tea and discussion on Tuesday evenings, a more informal opportunity to learn together. We also offered a two-hour workshop on successful fall vegetable gardening in mid-June. All of these efforts help us to grow in our ability to realize awakening for ourselves and all beings.

We offer profound and continuing gratitude to Rosan for his work as our teacher and abbot, and more generally on behalf of all beings. For many years, Rosan has been splitting his time between Japan, where he teaches during the school year, and St. Louis, where he spends breaks within and between semesters. In March 2009, Rosan will retire and remain in St. Louis. We look forward to being able to sit and work with him year-round!

We have been fortunate to have visiting teachers spend time at the Zen Center during 2008 and we express much gratitude to them for sitting with us and offering Dharma talks and dokusan. On May 2 and 3, Zenkai Taiun Elliston, abbot of the Atlanta Soto Zen Center, was our guest teacher while he was in St. Louis for the Vesak Day event. Zuiko Redding, Rosan's Dharma sister and abbot of the Cedar Rapids Zen Center in Iowa, came to St. Louis twice. She was here from May 23-25, which included an extended sitting at MZC and a public talk that she gave at the Ethical Society on May 24. She was also here on October 24-25 when she was one of the speakers for the Mindfulness Day event held on the 25th.

As a member of the Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis, the Zen Center participated in the three events organized by the Buddhist Council: Vesak Day on May 4, Change Your Mind Day on June 7, and Mindfulness Day on October 25. The Zen Center also offered the usual New Year's Eve special sitting; sesshins on March 20-22 and September 19-21; and special Beginners Night sittings on September 8, 15, and 22 when Rosan was here and could teach them. In addition, Rosan offered teishos following the evening sittings on two Wednesday evenings (March 19 and 26).

It may seem mundane to care for our zendo and grounds, but in fact by doing so we step off the 100-foot pole on behalf of all beings. We offer deep bows to John Hale for his work every day, and to the many other members of the sangha who have participated in this work at various times during the year. You may notice the beneficial effects of three of this year's projects: beautifying the back porch, painting the bathroom, and correcting the drainage problems we used to experience during heavy rains.

We welcomed a new Treasurer during 2008, Suzanne Reinhold, and new Board members Gary Byrd and Ryushin Don Benage. Meiku and Karo left the Board after the end of their terms; we offer gratitude to each of them for their years of service on our Board.

We were most fortunate to have excellent weather for the Japanese Festival over the Labor Day weekend, when we run a food booth as a fundraiser and service opportunity. Brittany Lueken and Rosan collaborated on a design for a banner sign advertising our offerings at our food booth. Their beautiful sign drew many more customers to the booth than we had the previous year. Because of the hard work of all the Japanese Festival volunteers, we were able to serve all of those customers and realize an excellent net profit from our efforts, among the best ever. Thank you to everyone who worked to make the Japanese Festival food booth a success! We also continue to receive donations from many of our members and visitors and for our classes and events. We continue to sew and offer for sale zafus and zabutons, and we continue to offer T-shirts, local honey, books, and instructional CDs for sale.

Our successful Japanese Festival, the ongoing efforts of our Board members and others to minimize expenses, and the donations offered by the sangha and visitors, in addition to product sales, have left us in good financial shape as we begin a New Year. We hope that the sangha will continue to support the Zen Center in the next year as it has in the past, both financially and in actions. For those of you who are able to make an extra donation at the end of the year, please know that we appreciate donations of any size and that we will put them to good use.

May our practice sustain and benefit all beings in 2009.

Ethical Lawn series continues next issue

In the February-March 2009 issue of this newsletter, the Ethical Lawn series will begin to address possible replacements for part or all of a lawn. In the meantime, if anyone has a question on anything that has been discussed so far or something he/she wants to see addressed in the remaining columns, please contact Kuryo through the Zen Center.

Live the Mitra Life

By Rosan Daido

Religions have proclaimed "one world in truth" (Dao, Dharma, Deva, Dyau, Zeus, Jovis, Yahwe, etc.) and promoted "a friend" as a future savior or an ideal figure (Mitra, Mithra, Mettheya, Maitreya, Miroku, Mazda, Messiah, etc.). It is high time for us to realize them rather than just waiting, never reaching the goal of re-uniting with the holy, never realizing the wholesome world.



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 |
| 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 |
| 7:00-9:00 pm | Writing Practice evening Buddhist Text Study Group call for details |

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.*

