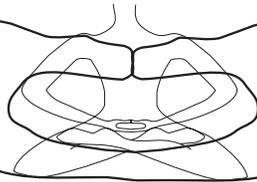


Sangha Life



The Missouri Zen Center

December, 2009-January, 2010

The Missouri Zen Center

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Webster Groves, MO 63119
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Coming Events

- Dec. 4-6: Rohatsu sesshin
- Dec. 31: New Year's Eve sitting
- Jan. 17: Board and sangha meetings
- Jan. 30: all day sitting



Visit Our Web Site:

www.missourizencenter.org

*Address Correction
Requested*

Study Dogen's *Shobogenzo*

The Thursday night Dharma Study Group, under the direction of Rosan Yoshida, is studying Dogen's *Shobogenzo*. The study group meets from 7:50 till 9:00 p.m. All are welcome! We began our *Shobogenzo* study with *Shoji (Life/Death)* translated by Rev. Yoshida.

Copies of *Shoji* will be available for the group on Thursday night and will be available at the book display downstairs on an ongoing basis. The Zen Center is suggesting a \$2 donation for each copy, to help defray copying costs.

Rohatsu Sesshin Dec. 4-6

In Zen tradition the date of Buddha's awakening is commemorated by a weeklong sesshin, the Rohatsu sesshin, ending on Dec. 8. MZC will hold its Rohatsu sesshin, guided by our teacher Rosan, starting on Friday evening, Dec. 4, with zazen from 7 - 7:40 p.m.,

kinhin from 7:40 - 7:50 p.m., and zazen from 7:50 - 8:30 p.m. The usual Sunday morning schedule will be followed on Dec. 6. As of press time the scheduling for Saturday, Dec. 5 has not been determined. Check MZC's listserv and postings at MZC for more info, or contact MZC.

Possible Holiday Schedule Changes

Depending on the availability of doans, some of the sittings during the last week or so 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 MZC by phone or email concerning possible schedule changes at that time. If you are not already on MZC's listserv, signup instructions are given elsewhere in this newsletter.

New Year's Eve Sitting

We will hold our traditional New Year's Eve special sitting on
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Thursday, Dec. 31. 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 in the company of the sangha. We invite everyone to attend this sitting and to bring a vegetarian dish to share during the potluck.

At press time it is not known if the 7 p.m. sitting or the Dharma Study Group will be held that evening. Please watch the listserv and postings at MZC for more info.

It is expected that the 6 a.m. sitting on Friday, Jan. 1 will be cancelled. The regular schedule will resume with the 7 p.m. sitting on Jan. 1.

Board, Sangha Meetings Jan. 17

We will hold meetings of MZC's Board of Directors, and of the sangha as a whole, both on Sunday, January 17.

The Board meeting will begin first, around 10 a.m. depending on the time needed for the teisho and samu. Because the Board is the body with fiduciary responsibility for MZC, the Board meeting will focus on financial issues. Its purpose is to ensure that MZC's fiscal matters are consistent with our organizational goals. All are welcome to attend.

Following the Board meeting, we will hold a sangha-wide meeting. Our sangha meetings are where we discuss how MZC is doing as a whole and decide, together, how we will fulfill the three pillars of our practice. We talk about what is going well and what needs to be improved. Please join us as we work together to practice the Awakened Way and offer it to all beings.

The sangha meeting will begin about 11 a.m. and will include a potluck lunch. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share.

Sesshin & One-day Sittings in 2010

The program of three sesshins and monthly one-day sittings that we begun in 2009 has been received well. We are planning to have the same three sesshins (at the spring and fall equinoxes and at Rohatsu, Dec. 8) during 2010. Exact dates and details will be announced later.

MZC plans to continue offering one-day sittings on the last Saturday of each month in which no sesshin is scheduled during 2010, with the possible exception of November. The first such one-day sitting will take place on Saturday, January 30. Again, check the listserv and postings, or contact MZC, for more info as the schedule for this event is determined.

New Rain Gardens Taking Shape

by Kuryo

Many of you know that MZC has suffered from drainage problems for years. The major source of the problem is the two parking lots off of Big Bend that border MZC's back yard. Rain falling on the parking lots runs off onto our back yard. During heavy rains, most

of the water flows downhill through the back yard and into the front yard, eroding the ground and carrying soil into the pond.

MZC received generous donations of consultations with two local experts this fall. They recommended that we create shallow depressions to hold much of the water that runs off the parking lots. These areas, called rain gardens, allow the caught runoff to soak into the soil, as it would have done before paving and compacted lawns interfered. Rain gardens are generally planted with deep-rooted native plants that are well adapted to occasional wet soil. The deep roots allow more of the water to soak into the soil and replenish groundwater. In turn, the now-replenished groundwater, the source of stream flows, supports a higher average stream flow, improving stream water quality. During heavy rains, rain gardens hold runoff and allow it to soak in later, slowing down its flow into streams. This reduces the rainfall-induced rises in streams and the amount of sediment that runs into streams, again improving water quality. If all that were not enough, the plants in the rain garden offer habitat to wildlife and can be chosen to offer beauty for humans as well.

During the fall, sangha members and volunteers from Webster Works Worldwide, an initiative of Webster University, moved and then shredded the leaves and branches that MZC had accumulated over the years in the corner of the backyard that receives much of the runoff. Then sangha members cleaned out a drainage ditch in the back yard that collects some of the runoff from the parking lots, and directed the water from it into a series of shallow depressions that were dug where the pile of leaves and branches used to be. The gentle contours of the rain gardens are very restful to the eye. Take a look at the rain gardens the next time you are at MZC!

How can you help? We'll be continuing to refine the shape of the depressions until the soil freezes; you can attend the garden workdays that we set up to shape the final contours of the rain gardens. If you have some of the plants we need in your own garden, we'd love to receive divisions from your plants in the spring. As spring approaches we'll ask for pledges of divisions. Then we'll hold garden workdays to plant the rain garden. Watch the listserv for more info, and come help us turn a runoff problem into a beautiful garden for all beings to enjoy!

Letter from the Board of Directors

In 2009, we welcomed our teacher, Dr. Rosan Yoshida, back to St. Louis upon his retirement from Toyo University. Rosan has received the title of Kokusai Fukuyoshi (International Propagator of Zen) and the Sotoshu, the official Soto Zen organization, has designated MZC as Zen-gen-ji. Rosan tells us that "*Zen stands for meditation (禪), but it can stand for good (善) and all (全). Gen refers to source (源), but it can stand for profound (玄) and realization (元). Ji means temple. Thus, the Missouri Zen Center is a temple dedicated to the realization of the profound source through Zen, good for all.*" We are profoundly grateful that Rosan is finally able to live in St. Louis and teach us every day. We offer a deep bow to him and rededicate our own practice of the Awakened Day, the Global Ethic, and voluntary simplicity as

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our response to his full dedication to the same.

We offer gratitude to everyone in the sangha for their contributions of time and money over the course of 2009. There is far too much work that has been done to list it all; nonetheless, we notice and appreciate all of the work everyone has done and continues to do.

The Board is pleased to report that because of the efforts of the entire sangha, MZC is in good financial shape as we end 2009. We look forward to your continued support in 2010. For those of you in a position 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 and careful use.

May our practice sustain and benefit all beings in 2010.

Better Veggies from Garden Design

by Kuryo

It's winter, and unless you have a cold frame or other season-extension device, you aren't at work in your vegetable garden. But that doesn't mean you aren't doing any gardening. In fact, the analysis and design that you do this winter will help you improve your gardening skills and yield next year and after that. I keep detailed records of what I grow and when I start and harvest it, and it helps me to decide what to plant the next year and how to resolve problems.

Garden seed catalogs start arriving in December. I recommend getting catalogs from several different seed companies. Not only do the different companies carry different varieties of seeds, but they also include varying amounts of information on how to plant and harvest the seeds, and different kinds of garden books for purchase. My favorite seed catalogs are Fedco Seeds, Johnny's Selected Seeds, Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, and Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds. You can google them, or ask me to provide addresses and phone numbers if you don't have access to the Internet.

Once you have the catalogs and have considered the many great veggies you want to grow next year, it's time to come back to earth (figuratively, at least) and decide what you can actually grow in the space you actually have available, and how much you can actually eat of what you will be growing. Growing vegetables is not difficult. If you plant the seeds at the right time, in the right way, and give them a bit of attention when needed, they will grow. The art of gardening is in arranging the garden to give you the food you want to eat and just enough for you to eat and/or preserve all of it, and in extending the season of fresh food as long as possible. This is the part that takes awhile to learn how to do. If you are new to gardening, expect to have too much or not enough of what you want. Take a deep breath, enjoy what you do get, and take notes on what happened so you can puzzle it out over the winter when you have time to read seed catalogs and garden books.

After I've finished reading seed catalogs and completed and reviewed all the record sheets I keep on each crop, I take a piece of graph paper and last year's garden plan, and I begin to draw up the garden plan for the next year. Reviewing the previous year's records lets me know whether or not we had enough of a crop, or too much, and when I can expect to have that crop available the

next year. From reading the seed catalogs I have an idea of some new things I'd like to try in the coming year. Now comes the tricky part: figuring out how much space each crop should get and where it should go in the garden.

You'll need to learn about crop rotation. You can learn it from reading a number of different vegetable gardening books, or from a good gardener. One of the things you try to do is arrange the garden layout so that you are growing a crop from a different plant family in a particular space than the one it grew the year before. This is because plant families tend to share pests and diseases, so it's best to not grow them in the same place from year to year to avoid buildups of the pests and diseases. Another basic concept in rotation is that some plant families need to extract more fertility from the soil than others, and one family, the legumes, restores some of the fertility the others drain. You try to arrange plantings to put heavy feeders, like corn, where the legumes grew the year before. You also need to consider how tall some plants grow in deciding where to put them. Corn, for instance, will shade crops planted to the north of it. This might be useful or harmful, depending on what you plant there. You might want to put crops next to others that help them grow and away from those that hinder their growth. Finally, you might want to keep different varieties of the same crop from cross-pollinating, so you have to space them to avoid that.

The other basic concept in garden planning is to decide how much you want to eat and how much area is required to grow that much food. I suggest starting with the charts in John Jeavons' book *How to Grow More Vegetables*. He gives the yield, in pounds, for a 100 square foot plot at three different levels of expertise for different crops. Beginning gardeners should always use the smallest number in that chart. Even after 15 years, I rarely do better than the middle number, and many times not that well. If you think you can use 30 pounds of beans, for instance, you'd need to set aside a 100 square foot area for your bean crop. If you'd only use 15 pounds, you only need to plant 50 square feet. This requires that you have a fairly good idea of how much you want to eat of each crop. Using the yield number from Jeavons' book or your past records, and knowing the harvest you want in pounds, list the amount of square feet to devote to each crop. (I think it is easiest to garden in wide beds rather than rows, hence I am concerned with square feet rather than linear row feet, but if you garden in rows, you should be able to find the amount you can harvest per foot of row and use that to decide how many feet of row you want.)

To draw your plan on graph paper, first plot your garden area on the graph paper, using an appropriate scale. I prefer to plot each bed separately rather than the garden as a whole, because the paths aren't planted, except by weeds. Using the number of square feet you want for each crop, attempt to make a plan that includes all the crops you want and fulfills crop rotation principles. It probably won't work perfectly; at least it doesn't for me, because it would take a much larger garden than I now have to fulfill all the constraints. But do the best you can. Do this work in pencil, because you may want to do some erasing as you puzzle through the possibilities. You may need to change the amount of space you had planned for a particular crop or violate some principles of crop rotation in order

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to make the best garden plan possible for the size garden you have.

If you don't know how to plan a garden, many books have a sample plan for a new gardener. Try one of those, and keep records of your yield. The book I referenced above offers a sample plan. If you want to know how I keep records of each particular crop, ask me.

Once you decide on your garden plan, you can turn to ordering seeds. I try to get most of my seeds from the same company to keep shipping and handling costs low. I also make up a chart to help me remember when to start the seed and how much to start. Next issue I will discuss seed starting made as pain-free as I can manage, right on time for those of us in the St. Louis, MO region.

How Can We Realize Unconditioned Peace and Unsurpassed Awakening?

by Rosan Daido

Buddhist goal is in realizing unconditioned peace (nirvana) and unsurpassed right complete awakening, (*anuttara samyak sambodhi*) intertwined. Unconditioned peace is realized in solid, serene sitting stopping karma. Here we witness peace unconditioned by volition, emotion and intellection. Here we are awakened to the truth of Dependent Origination of all phenomena (perception, conception, feeling, emotion, etc.) and Dependent Cessation of them and the path to it.

Buddhist holy truth is holy (wholly wholesome), neither partial nor sick (neither selfish nor separated). In the systemic dynamism in Dependent Origination, phenomena are related and relative: impermanent (not self-same), suffering (not self-sovereign, wish-fulfilling), and thus no-self (substance, entity) (: Three Dharma Marks). Because of this, we can have the Four Holy Truths, which are Truth (reality) of suffering, Cause of suffering (: craving), Cessation of suffering (: nirvana) and the Path leading to cessation of suffering.

Buddhist holy path is summed up in 37 Awakening Limbs (4 Potency Bases = 4 Mindfulness Applications = 4 Right Exertions, 5 Faculties = 5 Powers, 7 Awakening Limbs, 8-fold Holy Path) in Theravada. Beside them 6 Perfections are stressed in Mahayana. The most well known is the Eightfold Holy (: *ariya: hagia*) Paths {right view, thinking (: *paññā* limbs), speech, action, livelihood (: *sīla* limbs), striving, mindfulness, concentration (: *samādhi* limbs)}. *Samadhi* encompasses them and enters into the goal.

Buddhist 3 learnings consist of *sīla* (morality), *samādhi* (concentration) and *paññā* (prognosis). When we practice sitting meditation (*jhāna, chan, zen*), we perfect them altogether with solid strong spine (*sīla*), holy harmonious heart (*samādhi*) and calm, clear cerebrum (*paññā*). These three mature into unconditioned peace and unsurpassed awakening. We become peace and truth in Dependent Origination like trees in free, full function with all in purity, beauty, goodness and holiness.

Buddhist triple treasure consists of Buddha (Awakened One), Dharma and Sangha (community). The Buddha was awakened in the Dharma (Norm, Law) of all dharmas (forms, phenomena), i.e., Dependent Origination, which is the master key to open all dharma doors to enjoy limitless learning, liberation, light, love and life. The community is comprised of awakening-beings (bodhisattvas) to realize Buddhahood in the Dharma with all dharmas. The bodhisattva vow is to save all prior to oneself due to the Dharma.

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
8:30-11:00 am	Lecture (Teisho)/

Discussion, 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.

Monday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
Beginner's Night*:	
11:00-11:40 am	Zazen
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
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
6:50-7:30 am	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen

Thursday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
12:15-12:55 pm	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen
7:50-9:00 pm	Buddhist Text
Study Group (call for details)	

Friday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen

Saturday

8:00-8:40 am	Zazen
10:00-10:20 am	Family Sitting
10:20-11:00 am	Children's activities

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.*

