

Sangha Life



The Missouri Zen Center

October-November, 2005

The Missouri Zen Center

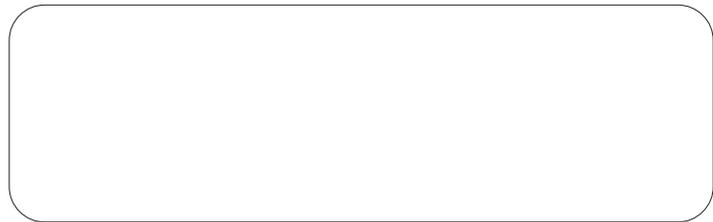
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Coming Events

- Ongoing: ICAN! Food Drive
- Ongoing: submissions for Dharma Life prison issue
- Ongoing: donations for prison program
- October 25: Beginner's Night & Simplicity discussion
- Nov. 5: Mindfulness Day
- December 20: Rosan returns



*Address Correction
Requested*

Visit Our Web Site:
www.missourizencenter.org

Carol Anderson Takes Lay Ordination

On Sunday, September 25, Carol Anderson agreed to observe the 16 lay precepts and was given the Dharma name Karo. Her name means *flower-dewdrop*. Please continue to offer your support to Karo and to the sangha and all beings by sitting and by stepping off the 100 foot pole with skillful actions.

Food Drive Continues

Faith Beyond Walls is continuing the I-CAN food drive, originally scheduled to end on September 9th. Food banks normally have a hard time meeting the needs of their agencies. Lately several thousand refugees from the U.S. Gulf Coast have settled in the St. Louis area. The need for food will be greater than usual until those families and individuals are re-established.

Missouri Zen Center is continuing to serve as one of the collection points for Faith Beyond Walls' <www.faithbeyondwalls.org> second annual I-CAN (Interfaith Congregations and Neighborhoods) food drive. Your donations go to St. Louis Area Food Bank which distributes

food to food pantries in several Missouri and Illinois counties. St. Louis Area Food Bank providers distribute food to 43,580 people weekly in the St. Louis area. A great many of the people receiving food work full time at minimum wage jobs. The food distribution allows them and their families to eat until the next pay day.

The red Food Bank barrel is located on the front porch of the Zen Center. Please donate canned soups, canned fruits, canned vegetables, canned meats, baby formula, rice, beans, hot or cold cereal, peanut butter, boxed macaroni and cheese, dry milk, and other non-perishable foods. When we fill the barrel Food Bank will collect it and replace it with another empty one. The food drive will continue until February.

Donations Needed For Prison Program

As some of the prisoners who are part of the *Inside Dharma* sangha are released from prison, the need for items to furnish apartments continues. Prisoners are released with next to no money, only enough for a bus ticket. Many of them are not in contact with their families and friends "outside"

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1

for a variety of reasons, and even when they are, their families and friends often do not have sufficient resources to help them start over.

Kalen is requesting donations of goods to furnish apartments for people who will be released soon. They need everything: furniture, kitchenware, towels, cleaning supplies, you name it. She will be happy to pick up items from people located near the Zen Center. She will also gratefully accept items left at the Zen Center for pickup. Please get in touch with her if you have items to donate and to make arrangements to get them to her: leave a note in her box at the Zen Center, email her at kalen1@aol.com, or call her at 314-961-7515.

Prison Is Not Just Behind Bars: A Call For Submissions

Over the winter Kalen will be putting together a special issue of Dharma Life titled Prison. She writes: "The Buddha teaches us the path to liberation, but it is not an external



Altar for the pond dedication ceremony.



Rosan with Karo following ordination.

liberation from the circumstances of the world. Prison doesn't have to be behind bars. In what ways do we imprison ourselves? In what ways can we liberate ourselves by changing our minds?"

Please send submissions addressing these themes to:

Kalen's Prison Booklet
Inside Dharma
Box 220721
Kirkwood, MO 63122

Beginner's Night & Simplicity Discussion

The Zen Center will welcome a special guest for the Tuesday night discussion to be held on Tuesday, October 25. Gerald Iversen, the national coordinator of *Alternatives for Simple Living*, will offer a short talk and lead a discussion on simplicity following the evening meditation period. Alternatives' motto is "equipping people of faith to challenge consumerism, live justly and celebrate responsibly." They offer both resources developed by their organization and many books, CDs, videos, and other resources along these lines. While their roots are in progressive Christianity, many of their resources are appropriate for anyone. Alternatives' website is www.SimpleLiving.org.

The simplicity talk and discussion will begin at 7:30pm and last till 9:00pm. This will ensure that we have enough time for a good discussion. We will have tea and light snacks during the discussion as is usual on Tuesday evenings. Please attend and learn more about the practice of simplicity!

We will also offer a short introduction to Zen practice and sitting instruction from 6:30-7:00pm similar to the Monday evening beginner's night, followed by meditation from 7:00-7:20pm only in order to leave enough time for the simplicity discussion. If you know of anyone who wishes to try Zen meditation but cannot attend the Monday beginner's night, please let them know about this opportunity.

Mindfulness Day

The Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis will offer Mindfulness Day at the Thai Buddhist Temple, 890 Lindsay Lane in Florissant, on Saturday, November 5 from 1-4pm. The event is free and open to the

Continued on Page 3

public. More information on the event will be posted at the Zen Center and on our listserv as soon as it becomes available. Please join us for Mindfulness Day, and let your family members, friends, acquaintances, and co-workers know about this event as well as it is a good introduction to Buddhist practice.

Items for Sale

If you are looking for Dharma books, locally produced honey, nectarine freezer preserves, incense, zafus, pottery, or Zen Center clothing items, you need look no farther than the Zen Center. All of these items are available for purchase at the Zen Center. All but the zafus and the freezer preserves may be found in the display area near the front door.

The newest items are a special issue of *Dharma Life* on voluntary



simplicity (*The Dharma of Simplicity*); two new books; and preserves made from the nectarines left over from the Japanese Festival. The nectarine preserves may be found in the freezer; the price is marked on each jar. Please note these must be kept in the freezer or refrigerator to remain safe to eat.

The prices for many of the items are given on posters mounted next to the main display. Some items, like the books, honey, and pottery, have prices marked on each item. For the pottery, the price is on the underside of the item. To pay for an item, place cash or a check made out to the Missouri Zen Center in one of the envelopes at the front of the display; include a note indicating what you purchased; and put the envelope in the cash box mounted on the closet wall next to the display.

The Zen Center makes and sells zafus. We usually have a few zafus for sale at any time. They may be found in the library and cost \$45 each. Make payments for zafus as for the items in the main display.

Living the Global Ethic

Responding to civilizational crises

by *Kuryo*

Many times Rosan speaks to us about the different crises facing our civilization. Those who want to learn more about how past civilizations have responded to similar crises have a resource in a book by Jared Diamond entitled *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*.

Diamond discusses many different societies, past and present, which have collapsed and some which have succeeded. He identifies a combination of five different sets of factors as critical to the long-term success or failure (collapse) of a society. These sets of factors are environmental damages inflicted upon a society's land base and associated water resources; climate changes; hostile neighboring societies; changes in trading patterns with friendly societies; and how a society responds to its environmental and relational challenges. Diamond's discussions of societies of the Pacific Islands and those of Norse descent who populated islands in the northern Atlantic illustrate the ways in which the sets of factors act separately or together to cause the collapse of societies which had been viable for hundreds of years prior to their collapse.

Of the environmental damages, deforestation ranked as a, and in many cases the, major environmental factor in the collapse of all the societies Diamond discusses. We are mostly unaware of the great importance of forested land in maintaining a stable environment. When forests are cleared, soils become susceptible to erosion from rainfall, and to loss from winds. Leaf-fall no longer renews the fertility of soil, and the population of microorganisms and macroinvertebrates like earthworms changes in ways that reduces the fertility of the soil. Removing tree cover also reduces the ability of the soil to retain water, and it reduces rainfall in the area because water transpired by trees is a major source of atmospheric water which becomes rain. When we depended on wood from trees for our shelter, transportation, food, and fuel, loss of forests meant an inability to meet those needs.

The societies that succeeded did so in part because they changed their forest clearance practices before the soil had become so eroded that it could not support tree regrowth. Japan and Germany are two countries that have increased forest coverage through managed plantings over the last few hundred years, after large-scale deforestation had occurred but before it was irreversible. Tikopia (a small island in the south Pacific) and New Guinea societies developed what Diamond calls silviculture, an agriculture based on trees rather than annual plants. When it was developed for semi-tropical and temperate climates in Australia in the 1970s by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren, they named it permaculture. Permaculture mixes food-bearing trees, shrubs, and plants with other plants chosen to provide beneficial services to the forest as a whole and to its inhabitants, including humans: services such as nitrogen fixation, food for forest animals, timber, fiber, fodder for livestock, medicines, soil stabilization and water retention, and so forth. This helps to stabilize soil and rainfall in the region and provides a steady source of food, fuel, and various materials to people and the other beings living in the forest.

Diamond reminds us that we are not doomed to collapse; there are societies which faced serious environmental problems and responded to them in ways which avoided collapse. He suggests that the two most important responses are long-term planning (made at a time when problems are perceivable but not at a crisis) and a willingness to reconsider core values. Long-term planning, he notes, depends somewhat on size of a society; smaller societies make it easier for each person to know the land intimately enough to recognize threats to it and to respond to them in time. In this vein we can purchase locally produced items whenever possible, as local producers are the ones who know the region best and are most likely to care about its long-term viability.

Regarding values, Diamond says that the most critical reappraisal we face is, how much of our "traditional" (his word) consumer values and First World living standard can we afford to retain? He notes that current First World consumption cannot be sustained, much less that of all humans living at that level; neither can we condemn the poor to continuing misery. Our only choice is to determine a consumption level that is about the same for all people and that can be sustained indefinitely for a given population size.

If our overconsumption is the most pressing cultural value we must confront, then living more simply is an appropriate response, as reflected in the position of voluntary simplicity as one of the three pillars of our practice. On Tuesday, October 25 from 7:30-9:00pm special guest Gerald Iversen, national coordinator of *Alternatives for Simple Living*, will lead a discussion on simplicity. Please join us for this event! You will find more information on it elsewhere in this newsletter.

LIVE THE DHARMA BODY

by Rosan Daido

The five dharma bodies consist of the three learnings (morality, concentration, and prognosis) plus liberation and liberation-knowledge/witness. By sitting and stopping all karmas (old/new, physical/verbal/mental), anyone regardless of race, religion, age, or gender can attain the five dharma bodies. Thus only can we attain immovability, immortality in truth/peace and paradise/pureland here and now. Without attaining the dharma bodies, beyond karma bodies, neither selves nor civilizations can solve the problems and sufferings of their disease/death and disaster/demise.

Zen Center E-mail List

All members and friends of the sangha are invited to subscribe to the Missouri Zen Center e-mail list. To subscribe, send an e-mail message from the address you wish to use for list messages to:

missourizencenter-subscribe@buddhistcouncil.us

The message field should remain blank.

You will receive a message asking you to confirm your subscription. Follow the directions in that message and your address will then be added to the list. If you encounter difficulties, consult the list owner at this address:

missourizencenter-owner@buddhistcouncil.us

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
6:30-7:00 pm	Instruction
7:00-7:20 pm	Zazen
7:20-9:00 pm	Discussion/ questions

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
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen
After sitting	Writing Practice

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
After sitting	Dinner out

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. Any changes to this schedule: please contact the Zen Center.

