



The Missouri Zen Center

February-March, 2006

The Missouri Zen Center

220 Spring Avenue
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Coming Events

- 1st and 3rd Saturdays: Movie Nights
- Early March: Rosan returns
- March 11: Members meeting & Board election
- March 12: Board meeting



*Address Correction
Requested*

Visit Our Web Site:

www.missourizencenter.org

Rosan Returns in March

We look forward to our teacher Rosan's return to St. Louis in early March. He will remain in St. Louis for two or three weeks and will be present for the annual Member's Meeting and potluck on March 11. This is the time when spring flowers usually begin blooming. Please join us for sitting and enjoy the beautiful gardens at the Zen Center!

Movie Night Returns

For the next few months, the Zen Center will host a Movie Night on the first and third Saturday evenings of the month. We'll choose a movie with a theme that evokes our practice in some way. Generally the movie will begin at 7pm, with popcorn and juice available (donations toward the refreshments are very welcome!). The movie and the starting time will be posted to the Zen Center listserv before each movie night, so please check the listserv to be sure of the date and starting time. If anyone has suggestions for a good movie, Kalen will be happy to receive them.

Members Meeting and Board Election

The MZC Board announces that nominations for new Board members are open. The Board is charged with ensuring that the Zen Center abides by its bylaws. In addition the Board takes responsibility for organizing the work necessary to keep the Zen Center in existence, such as our fundraisers.

In accordance with our bylaws, and because we'd love to have more people to help us with this important work, we request nominations for new members to the Board. Nominees should have a strong commitment to our practice and to the Zen Center as a place for the sangha to practice and a means to bring the practice to more people. Nominees need to be willing to participate in Board meetings, usually held once a month, and to do whatever work they commit to during the meetings. The term of membership is three years. You may nominate yourself or someone else. Please submit your nominations to the Zen Center no later than February 28.

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The Board member election and annual Members Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 11 starting at 5pm at the Zen Center. Anyone who meets at least one of the following criteria may vote at that meeting:

- has taken lay ordination at the Zen Center;
- is current with member dues; or
- is active but is not able to pay dues. Anyone falling into this last situation should contact the Zen Center by February 28 so that we can have a ballot prepared for them.

Following election of Board members, we'll conduct any other necessary business. Then we'll share a vegetarian potluck. Please bring a dish to share and enjoy the food others bring! We are fortunate to have many talented cooks in our sangha!

Hosta Sale

One of the two biggest fundraisers of the year is approaching ... the Hosta Sale. We hold this sale on the Saturday prior to Mother's Day. The sale is named for the plant we sell the most of, hostas. The beauty of a hosta is in its leaf. The leaves can range from an inch or two long to over a foot long. They can be smooth or puckered, straight or twisted. They come in shades of green, yellow, white, or blue, or mixtures of these. The plants can be rounded or vase-shaped, tiny mounds less than 6 inches across to behemoths of 3 to 4 feet across. Hostas enjoy shady gardens, the sort that predominate in older suburbs with lots of large trees such as Webster Groves and its environs. We've offered other popular perennial and annual plants as well at the Sale, and it has been well patronized.

Over the past few years we have noticed a trend of reduced income from our Hosta Sale fundraiser. Several people met last summer to consider ways to revitalize the Sale.

One of the ways we hope to improve the Sale is to sell a wider variety of items. We might sell well-made garden tools, other garden-related items or potential gift items made by sangha members, and a wider variety of plants including more unusual hostas. We have bought some containers and plan to offer a build-your-own-container-garden service (buy a container and your choice of plants for it; volunteers will fill the container with soil and the chosen plants). We'll also sell honey at the Sale.

Anyone who can contribute to the array of items we offer at the Sale, we welcome your contributions! These might include:

- plants grown from seed;
- divisions from garden plants or tropical houseplants;
- items that could make good Mother's Day gifts.

If you have questions about whether a plant would be suitable for the Sale, please ask Kuryo or Kalen. We are especially interested in plants that are not widely available for sale, are suitable for containers, and/or are particularly attractive or unusual. Please be certain to label your plants; we can't sell them if we don't know what they are. If you make something that you would be willing to offer to the Zen Center at terms consistent with the fundraising nature of the Hosta Sale, please check with Kuryo as soon as possible so your idea may be considered at the next Board meeting.



Daffodils along the front walk at the zen Center.

As always we will need volunteers to help us prepare for the Sale and on the Sale morning. We may have a workday to build more display tables for the Sale in February or March and may have a workday late in March to prepare the soil-compost mix for the potted plants that we sell. Workdays will be announced in the listserv and by postings at the Zen Center. More information on volunteer help needed for the Sale will be available in the next issue of Sangha Life and will be posted to the listserv and at the Zen Center. Please join us as we work for the benefit of the Center and all beings!

Conserving Energy, Reducing Suffering

by Kuryo

In the last few months the price of natural gas has about doubled. Those of us who have furnaces or boilers fired by natural gas have paid higher heating bills as a result. We are near or past the point of peak availability of natural gas, and of oil as well. Over the next several years, as the demand for these grows but the supply lessens, prices will continue to increase. Further, as we burn more carbon-containing fuels like these, global climate change will continue to accelerate.

As Buddhists, we want to reduce the suffering caused by rising energy prices and that caused by climate changes. One way to reduce suffering would be to reduce energy usage in our homes. You may have read that sealing air leaks, adding insulation, using more energy-efficient appliances, and so forth will save energy. But perhaps you're wondering how much effect such changes may have. I will share Meiku's and my experience as we have striven to reduce our energy use and offer resources so that you can investigate what changes might be appropriate for you.

The book *Homemade Money: How to Save Energy and Dollars in Your Home*, by Richard Heede and the staff of Rocky Mountain Institute (www.rmi.org), offers a comprehensive discussion of energy-saving strategies. We began with the low-cost, fast-payback ways to save energy described in Chapter 1, such as replacing incandescent lightbulbs with compact fluorescents, turning off lights and powered equipment when they aren't being used, reducing the temperature setting on our

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hot water heater, washing clothes in warm or cold water and rinsing them in cold water, air-drying clothes, and so forth. We started keeping the house at 66°F during the day and 60°F at night during the heating season. We added insulation to the hot water pipes. Actions like these may have cut 10% or so off our energy usage. In 1996 we needed to replace our gas furnace ... we chose a 92% efficient model compared to about 50% or less efficiency for the old furnace. That single change reduced our natural gas usage by about 25%. Chapter 1 describes changes like this as longer-term strategies that save more energy but have a longer payback time. They make sense when, for instance, a homeowner needs to replace existing appliances.

In 2002 we moved to our current house. While continuing with the energy-conserving habits discussed above, we also replaced the 30+ year old refrigerator and washing machine and the 25+ year old furnace and air conditioner since current models are far more energy-efficient. We used the websites of the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy and the Energy Star program to help us determine which models meeting our requirements used the least energy (see www.aceee.org and www.energystar.gov for current ratings). We got a programmable thermostat and set the heat as before; we set the air conditioner to 80°F. Last year we hired a home performance contractor to seal air leaks throughout the house, insulate the attic to R-44, and insulate the walls, ductwork, and basement and crawlspace ceilings. He also replaced our leaking electric water heater with a gas water heater and added insulation around it. He told us that after sealing our house, the air leakage rate dropped by 41%. You can use the information in *Homemade Money* to do your own evaluation and air leak sealing and to learn where to add insulation and what materials to use. If you prefer to contract this work out, go to www.earthwayshome.org/home-performance.html or call Glenda Abney of Earthways Home at 314-577-0288 for information on home performance contractors in the St. Louis area.

How much energy did all this save? AmerenUE and Laclede Gas include energy usage information on their receipts; I keep a spreadsheet with this information to help me evaluate the effects of changes we make. Contact your energy supplier for your energy usage information if you don't have it at hand. We hadn't done any improvements in 1990 so I use it as the base year for testing the effects of our

Susokukan Breath counting meditation.

Zuisokukan Breath watching (literally, following) meditation.

Shikan-taza Pure (unconditioned) sitting at absolute here and now in total awakening and full functioning with no special (limited) ends (no possession, no enlightenment) and no other accessory means thereto, such as recitation, prayer, ritual, etc.

Live Boundless Life

by Rosan Daido

The universe is interdependently originated and originating on limitless causes and conditions. Selfishness is going against this, creating all problems and sufferings. Our selfish human civilization (nations, corporations, religions, etc.) is colliding with the global life system. Thus we all die with delusion, bondage, discrimination, exploitation and extermination. Humans must awaken to this reality to solve the fundamental problem of this selfishness, bound by karma. Karma stops in still sitting, zazen. Hence, cultivation itself is verification. Then we can live a boundless life with truth, freedom, equality, love and peace. Dogen said, "Without limited mind, there are limitless merits." Practice zen and verify limitless liberation, light, love and life always!

improvements. Projecting our usage for 2006 from our electric and natural gas bills for the last four months (after the work described above was completed), I predict that we will use about 40% less electricity and 70% less natural gas in 2006 than we used in 1990. This means we'll emit that much less carbon dioxide, the major culprit in global climate change. It also means smaller energy bills. Electricity prices have changed little since 1990 but natural gas prices have gone up almost a factor of 4 since then. We expect to pay about the same for natural gas in 2006 as in 1990 even though we will use almost 70% less than we did in 1990! Payback time is difficult to calculate because I expect the price to continue to climb but a payback time of 15 to 25 years is likely ... and we plan to remain in this house longer than that.

If this intrigues you, look over *Homemade Money* for ideas on what you could do. Start with the free stuff you aren't already doing, then move to the low cost, rapid payback stuff. Do the more expensive but more energy-saving changes as opportunities present themselves, as we did ... you can consult the websites listed above and links within to learn more. The Earthways Home, part of the Missouri Botanical Garden, offers tours of the home, which is fitted with many energy-saving technologies; see their website or call them at 314-531-1996. Enjoy your steps toward reducing energy use!

Zen Center E-mail List

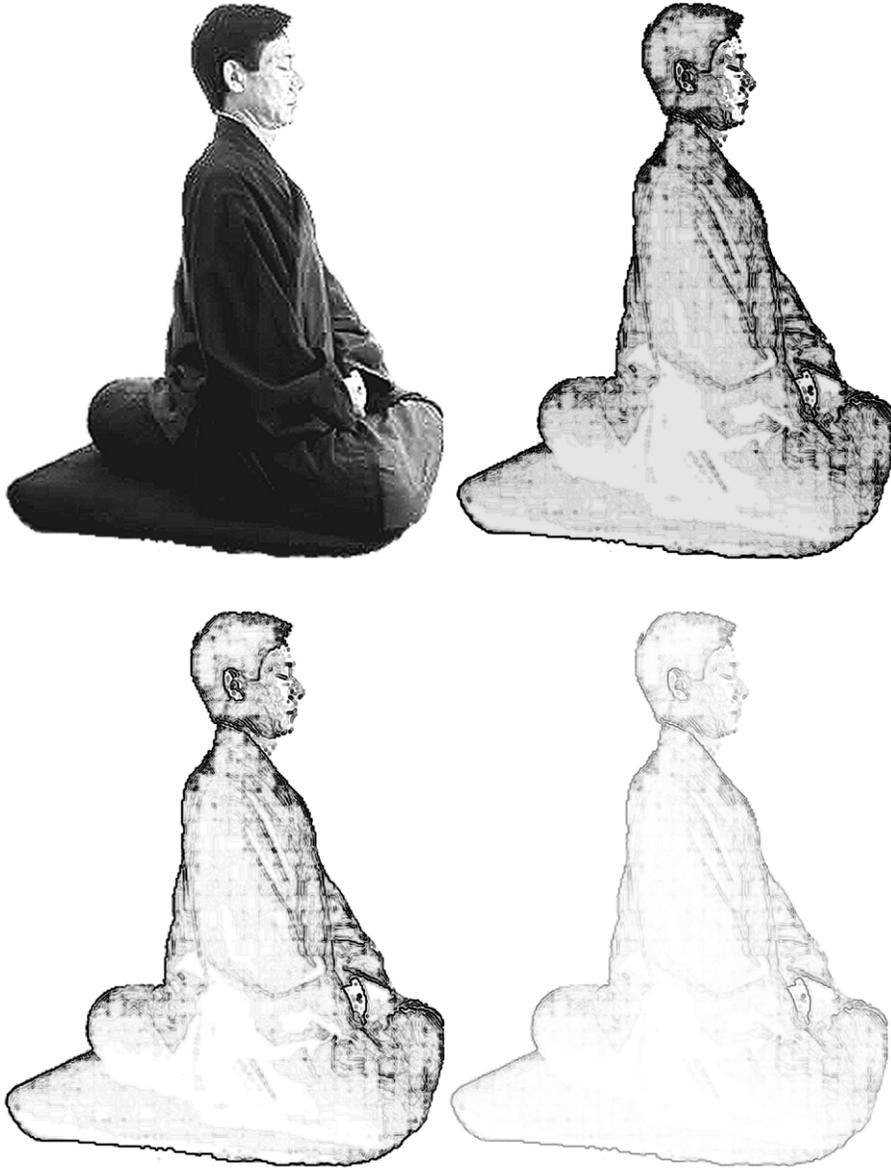
All members and friends of the sangha are invited to subscribe to the Missouri Zen Center e-mail list. To subscribe, send an e-mail message from the address you wish to use for list messages to:

`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:

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Now, in entering into zen, a quiet room is suitable. Eat and drink with propriety. Discard all relations and put all concerns to rest, not thinking of good and bad, not entertaining right and wrong. Let the drives of mind, will and consciousness cease. Stop the measuring of memories, ideas and meditations. No design even to become a buddha should be harbored. How can it be concerned with sitting or lying down?

The usual practice is to spread out a thick mat and to place a cushion on it. Then sit in the full or half cross-legged [lotus] position. In the full cross-legged position, place your right foot on your left thigh, and your left foot on your right thigh. In the half cross-legged position, simply press your right thigh with your left foot.

Wear your robes and sashes loosely, but neatly and in an orderly manner.

Next, place your right hand on your left foot, and place your left palm on your right palm [both upward], thumb tips supporting each other.

Now, sit upright, leaning neither to the left nor to the right, neither forward nor backward. You must keep your ears straight over your shoulders and your nose in line with your navel. Put your tongue against your upper gum, your lips and teeth closed. Always keep your eyes open. Breathe through your nose smoothly and subtly.

Maintaining the proper body posture, exhale deeply once, and rock to the left and right. Settle into solid, steadfast, immovable sitting. Fathom the unfathomable state. How do you fathom the unfathomable state? Fathomless! Such is the essential art of zazen.

—from Dogen's *Fukanzazengi*

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.

