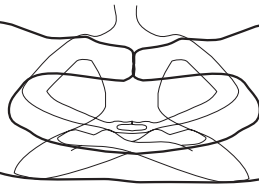


# Sangha Life



**The Missouri Zen Center**

**February-March, 2009**

**The Missouri Zen Center**

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



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**Coming Events**

- Movie Nights: TBA
- Feb. 21: Annual Meeting & Board election
- Mar. 8: Daylight Savings Time begins
- Late March: Rosan returns
- May 17: Vesak Day



*Address Correction  
Requested*

Visit Our Web Site:

[www.missourizencenter.org](http://www.missourizencenter.org)

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**Rosan to Retire in St. Louis in March**

Our teacher and abbot, Dr. Rosan Yoshida, retires from his professorship at Toyo University in Japan in early March. After he completes the arrangements to move out of his apartment, he will return to St. Louis and remain here. We expect him to return late in March.

Please join us in wishing Rosan an excellent final semester and a safe return to St. Louis!

**New Ideas Sought for MZC Movie Nights**

*by John Hale*

The MZC Movie Night Committee wants to hear from you about your ideas for the monthly Movie Night social event at MZC. Here are some possibilities we are considering.

We could pick a movie that children and adults would enjoy and watch it at an earlier time. In that case we could

start the movie at 4:30, 5:00 or 5:30 p.m. so kids and adults can get to bed early.

We could also consider discontinuing the practice of preparing dinner for Movie Nights, except in the case of special occasions, so that attendees don't have the added burden of preparing a meal and cleaning up after eating. We might consider having light snacks instead, such as popcorn.

If anyone has other ideas or would like to get involved in the planning of Movie Nights, please contact John or Fredrick.

Also remember, we have moved away from following a protocol of watching only movies that are related to Buddhism or that are especially related to ethical, moral or global issues. We do still look for these sorts of movies though—and actually everything is related to the Dharma somehow. Movie Night is primarily a way for us to get to

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gether and enjoy each other's company. So, as long as we are in agreement about the movies we choose, there is a lot of flexibility in what we decide to watch.

We are looking for suggestions of movies, dates, and times for February and March Movie Nights. Date suggestions can be any Saturday and start times can be anytime from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m. Please email your suggestions to: [halej55@hotmail.com](mailto:halej55@hotmail.com) or call (314) 961-6138.

### **MZC Annual Meeting, Feb. 21**

The Annual Meeting of the Missouri Zen Center will be held on Saturday, February 21 following the family sitting and discussion. The meeting will start about 11 a.m. with the election of new Board members and will include a lunch potluck. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share.

The primary purpose of this meeting, according to our by-laws, is to elect new members to our Board of Directors. Anyone who has paid membership dues or has taken lay ordination at the Zen Center may vote at this meeting. If you don't fall into either category but you've been coming to the Zen Center more or less regularly for some time (meaning we recognize you as part of the sangha), you may also vote at this meeting.

After the Board election is completed, we will hold an informal meeting to let everyone in attendance know how and what the Zen Center is doing and hear your ideas on what we can do differently and better. We'll hold this part of the meeting during the potluck so we can enjoy good food together while we share ideas.

We hope everyone in the sangha will attend so you can meet and get to know continuing and new Board members, learn how our sangha is doing, and work together to make it better.

### **Nominations open for MZC Board positions**

As is the case for any non-profit organization, the Zen Center has a Board of Directors, charged with managing the business of the Zen Center. But the Board members are also sangha members, and as such, we are practicing the Awakened Way together with all. This means we are not, and don't see ourselves as, separate from the sangha as a whole.

To this end, the Board needs only to do the absolute minimum required by our by-laws (to exist and make sure that the Zen Center's finances are properly managed). The sangha as a whole determines what the whole Zen Center does as an outgrowth of our practice together.

Our by-laws require us to hold an election once a year to seat new members on the Board. Board members serve for three years and can be re-elected. We have three current Board members whose terms end as of the next Board meeting following the Annual Meeting on February 21 (John, Kathy, and Sheryll). Ryushin has resigned from the Board due to lack of time, and we are very grateful for his service during the past year. The rest of the Board (Kuryo, Suzanne,

Gary, Mitsudo, and Rosan) will continue as their three year terms are ongoing, and in Rosan's case, he is automatically on the Board as our abbot and Executive Director.

Nominations are now open for new members to the Board. We encourage sangha members to consider nominating themselves or someone else to the Board. A good nominee is someone who has a strong commitment to our practice and to the Zen Center as our place to practice together. Past Board members, and those current members whose terms are ending, may be nominated for another term. Nominations should be submitted to the Zen Center (you can call, email to [info@missourizencenter.org](mailto:info@missourizencenter.org), or leave a note in a Board member's box at the Zen Center) by Sunday, February 15. If you nominate someone else, please be sure you have their permission to do so. We don't want anyone to be put in the awkward position of being nominated but not being able to serve on the Board.

The Board is required to meet only once a year, according to our by-laws. The purpose of that meeting is to decide on who the officers of the Board will be for the next year. That meeting will take place soon after the February 21 meeting; the date will be determined by the Board members and announced to the sangha. After that, we plan to hold sangha-wide meetings on a periodic basis at which we can discuss informally what is going on and decide, as a sangha, on what we do together. The meeting on February 21 will be one such meeting. The sangha will decide how often and when we have similar meetings. We hope there will be few, if any, separate Board meetings needed. If we do need to hold a Board meeting (for instance, if there is a major change in MZC's financial picture), we will announce the meeting to the sangha and all sangha members will be welcome to attend.

If you have any questions about how the Board works, please let one of the board members know.

### **Vesak Day, May 17**

In many Buddhist traditions, the Sunday closest to the first full moon in May is set aside each year as Vesak Day, a day to commemorate the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha. Sponsored by the Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis, this year's Vesak Day celebration will be held on Sunday, May 17, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the Fo Guang Shan St. Louis Buddhist Center in Bridgeton, Missouri. The event is free and open to the public. There will be special events for children, including "Bathing the Buddha", painting for children with Lisa Levine, origami with Noriko Hanpeter, and others.

This year's Special Guest is Karma Lekshe Tsomo, Associate Professor, Dept. of Theology & Religious Studies, University of San Diego. Karma Lekshe Tsomo's doctoral research focused on death and identity in China and Tibet. Her primary academic interests include women in Buddhism, Buddhism and bioethics, religion and cultural change, and Buddhism in the United States. In addition to her academic work, she is actively involved in interfaith dialogue and

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in grassroots initiatives for the empowerment of women. She is president of Sakyadhita: International Association of Buddhist Women ([www.sakyadhita.org](http://www.sakyadhita.org)) and director of Jamyang Foundation ([www.jamyang.org](http://www.jamyang.org)), an initiative to provide educational opportunities for women in the Indian Himalayas and Bangladesh.

The schedule for Vesak Day is as follows.

9:00 a.m.	Arrival and parking
9:30 - 9:45 a.m.	Opening Ceremony, led by the Monastics
9:45 - 10:30 a.m.	Bathing Buddha Rite, led by the Monastics
10:30 - 11:45 a.m.	Guided Meditation and Dharma Talk by Ven. Sungak Sunim, Abbot of the Buddhara Monastery (Children's programs at the lower level: origami, painting)
11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Vegetarian Lunch & Entertainment. Music by John Goldstein et al; Joe & Kim, the Jugglers, will perform
1:00 - 1:20 p.m.	Walking Meditation
1:30 - 3:00 p.m.	Dharma Talk on "Buddhism vs. Consumerism" with Q & A, by Guest Speaker Karma Lekshe Tsomo, Associate Professor, Dept. of Theology & Religious Studies, Univ. of San Diego
3:00 p.m.	Dedication of Merit & Closing Ceremony, led by Ven. Miao Han, Director, Fo Guang Shan St. Louis Buddhist Center

Directions: From I-270, head east on Dorsett Road. Turn left at Millwell Dr. (0.6 miles). Turn right at Midland Ave. (0.4 miles). Turn left at Smiley Road (0.4 miles), and stay on Smiley Road (0.3 miles). Fo Guang Shan St. Louis Buddhist Center, 3109 Smiley Rd, Bridgeton, MO 63044 will be on the left. See the Fo Gaung Shan St. Louis Buddhist Center Website at: [www.fgsstbc.org](http://www.fgsstbc.org)

Missouri Zen Center is a member organization of the Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis. We encourage the sangha to attend Vesak Day and to bring friends and family members who are interested in learning more about Buddhist practice.

## **The Ethical Lawn: What to Grow Instead of a Lawn**

*by Kuryo*

Let's suppose that you have decided that your lawn is bigger than it needs to be, and you would like to grow something which is beneficial to people and other living beings in its place. What might you grow in place of a lawn?

This isn't a simple question to answer. You need to have some idea what you could grow, given the soil, sunlight, and water in the area you want to convert from lawn and

how large that area is. You need to know what you want to grow and bring that into alignment with what it is possible for you to grow in your conditions. You need to consider the time and financial resources you have available for your potential garden. If you want to have an ethical garden, you need to know how to plant and care for the garden in an ethical manner. Whole chapters in books have been written describing processes to help people with garden design, and entire books on the different kinds of gardens. I suggest consulting organic gardening books or permaculture books if you need help with this.

Very briefly, here are a few ideas about what you could grow instead of a lawn. I list them this way because many gardening books and articles cover particular garden styles, like herbs, native plants, and edible landscapes. Check them out for more information.



### 1. A groundcover

Gardeners define groundcovers as plants which grow no taller than about 1 foot and which spread rapidly by either seeds or roots. You may have seen the groundcover form of euonymus replacing some of your neighbor's lawns. Many people have patches of violets in place of or taking over from lawns in shady spots. Moss can replace a lawn if the conditions are right.

### 2. Flower beds

This could be anything from annual flowers like petunias to a border of perennial flowers to a large planting of mixed trees, shrubs, and perennial and annual flowers and foliage plants.

### 3. Herb garden

Herb gardens may include culinary, medicinal, dye, fiber, craft, or other useful plants, but usually not those consumed in large enough quantities to be called foods.

### 4. Native plant garden

Most gardeners say that "native" means a plant that grew in our area prior to about 1500, before Europeans brought their plant and weed seeds along with them. A native plant garden could be anything from a bed that includes some of the showiest native flowers to a restoration to the natural community appropriate to the garden area's soil, slope, and bedrock conditions.

## Live Zen Life

by Rosan Daido

I saw the premiere of "Zen" (Dogen's life). A Chinese cook monk (tenzo) told Dogen: "The whole world has never been covered." Dogen realized it and returned home empty-handed to first write "A Universal Recommendation for Right Zazen." Zazen stops karma (delusion and craving) and realizes selfless truth and unconditioned peace.

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### 5. Edible garden

This could be a groundcover of strawberries, fruiting shrubs like raspberries or blueberries, or patches of vegetables or a traditional vegetable garden. You could even create an edible landscape (a landscape of trees, shrubs, taller and shorter plants, and vines where many or most of the plants have parts we can eat).

### 6. Butterfly, bee, beneficial insect, or hummingbird garden

You could design a garden that includes plants that draw insects or hummingbirds. For insects, you want to consider not only the kinds of plants the adult insects eat, but also plants that the larval stages eat. Hummingbird gardens include flowers that are favorites of hummingbirds.

### 7. Rain garden

If the area you want to convert from lawn is lower than the downspouts draining your roof, you can create a rain garden that will catch and hold the rainwater draining off your roof. These gardens can be beautiful and improve the water quality of the stream your lawn drains into by allowing rain to soak into the ground, as it did before we humans concreted everything in sight.

You might want to include some food plants in the area you are converting from lawn. Eating home-grown foods can improve our health, save us money, reduce our impact on the Earth when our home-grown foods replace foods brought in from long distances, and make our meals more appetizing. Some subdivisions and municipalities forbid food plantings in front yards, so you should check out this possibility if you want to grow food plants (and consider working to change the rules if food plants are not allowed).

If you can use a shovel, you can dig a garden and grow vegetables or small fruits like strawberries. Now is a good time to plan your garden and purchase seeds or plants (for spring shipping, in the case of plants). In the St. Louis region you can start some seeds indoors in February, such as cabbage and onions. You can start just about everything else except squash, melons, and cucumbers in March. Now is also a good time to order fruit and nut bearing shrubs and trees for planting in the spring.

If you want recommendations on good gardening books and seed companies, let me know. Next issue's column, on permaculture gardening and where lawns fit in, will be the last in this series.

### 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](mailto: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.*

