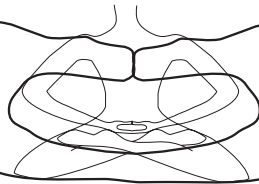


Sangha Life



The Missouri Zen Center

February-March, 2010

The Missouri Zen Center

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



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Coming Events

- Feb. 27: MZC Annual Meeting
- Mondays in March: Intro to Zen classes
- Mar. 7: Socially engaged Buddhism
- Mar. 8-9: Stephen Batchelor in St. Louis
- Mar. 20-21: Spring equinox sesshin
- April 17: Board, sangha meetings
- May 15: Guest teacher at MZC
- May 16: Vesak Day @ MABA
- Aug. 7-14: Great Sky Sesshin, www.hokyoji.org



*Address Correction
Requested*

Visit Our Web Site:

www.missourizencenter.org

MZC Annual Meeting, Feb. 27

The Annual Meeting of the Missouri Zen Center will be held on Saturday, February 27 starting at 10:45 a.m. following the family sitting and discussion. The meeting will begin with election of new Board members, followed by a lunch potluck. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share.

This is the one meeting each year that our Zen Center must conduct, according to our by-laws. The primary purpose of this meeting 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.

If there are any other issues we wish to discuss during lunch, anyone can bring them up. Otherwise we'll enjoy the fellowship of eating together, as well as the delicious food that our members always make and share with us!

Following lunch, the new Board will meet very briefly for the purpose of naming the officers for 2010. This is the one Board meeting that is

required by our by-laws. Please see the article on nominations to the Board for more info on MZC's Board and its duties.

Nominations Open for MZC Board Positions

As is required 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. All of our current Board members (Kuryo, Suzanne, Junsho, Brittany, 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. We welcome new members to the Board so that

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knowledge of how to keep the Zen Center operational is spread as widely as possible among the sangha.

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. Nominations should be submitted to the Zen Center (you can call, email to info@missourizencenter.org, leave a note in a Board member's box at the Zen Center, or talk to a current Board member) by Saturday, Feb. 20. If you nominate someone else, please be sure you have his or her 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.

Intro to Zen & Awakened Way Classes

On each of the five Mondays in March, MZC will offer a special series of Introduction to Zen and the Awakened Way classes that will give a more thorough introduction to and grounding in Zen practice for people who are new to our practice. Each class will include a meditation period that increases in length as the classes progress and instruction from our teacher and abbot, Dr. Rosan Yoshida. Each class will build on the previous classes, thus we strongly encourage attendance on all five Mondays in March so that you may receive a comprehensive introduction to Zen practice and Buddhism (the Awakened Way). Each class will consist of zazen instruction and meditation, a lecture, and a discussion period where questions can be asked and answered.

The topics for each Monday's instruction will be as follows. Each class will begin at 7:00 p.m. and last till about 8:30 p.m.

Mar. 1: Buddha: What is Buddhism? Why is Zen needed? How do you do Za-zen (sitting meditation)?

Mar. 8: Dharma: What are the Three Treasures? What are Dharma and Karma?

Mar. 15: Saṅgha: Limitless life, light, liberation and love; the Three Dharma Marks

Mar. 22: Samādhi/Concentration: Unconditioned peace, the Four Meditation Stages

Mar. 29: Paññā/Prognosis: Unsurpassed awakening, Dependent Origination, etc.

Buddhist instruction is traditionally given freely, and dāna (donations) from those who receive instruction is also traditional in Buddhist practice. Although these traditions may seem contradictory, they are actually complementary. The teaching is offered freely for the benefit of all, and at the same time, we need to cover the expenses of keeping MZC in operation so that the teaching may continue to be offered. We request dāna of \$30 total to attend all five classes. If this is a hardship for you, please offer what you can, and it will be gratefully accepted.

To register, please contact MZC and include your name, phone number, and dāna. We will accept registrations until all spaces are full. If we have more registrants than spaces, we will open a waiting list. If you register and then must drop out, please inform us so we can offer your space to someone on the waiting list.

Sesshin March 20-21

The spring equinox sesshin will take place on the weekend of March 20-21. Please check the listserv and postings at the Zen Center for the sesshin schedule and other information about the sesshin.

Socially engaged Buddhism, Mar. 7

The Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis, of which the Zen Center is a member, will hold a special event on socially-engaged Buddhism on

Sunday, March 7 from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. at All Saints Church School Basement, 6419 Clemens, University City, MO 63130. This program is free and open to the public.

The schedule of events is as follows.

2:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. - "Heart Sutra" chanting in different languages (in the following order: English, Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Sanskrit)

2:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. - Rosan Dr. Yoshida - Global Ethic & Global warming

2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. - Rev. Kalen - Prisoners & Homelessness issues

3:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. - Ven. Sungak Sunim - Addiction

3:15 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. - Prof. Don Sloane - Zen Brain

3:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m. - Dr. Kongsak Tanphaichitr - Buddhism & Science

3:45 p.m. - 4:15 p.m. - Round Table Discussion (Group session)

4:15 p.m. - 4:55 p.m. - Panel Discussion

4:55 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Merit Dedication, led by Don Sloane

Stephen Batchelor in St. Louis, Mar. 8-9

Stephen Batchelor, author of several books on various aspects of Buddhist practice, will be present at two locations in St. Louis to discuss his new book, *Confessions of a Buddhist Atheist*. At 7 p.m. on Monday, Mar. 8 he will be at the First Unitarian Church, 5007 Waterman in the Central West End, sponsored by the Center for Pragmatic Buddhism. He will also be at Left Bank Books, 399 N. Euclid in the Central West End at 7 p.m. on March 9.

For schedule info, check his website, <http://stephenbatchelor.org/book-confession.html>. For more info on his appearance on Mar. 8, see the Center for Pragmatic Buddhism, www.pragmaticbuddhism.org. For more info on his appearance at Left Bank Books, please check www.left-bank.com.

Board, Sangha Meetings on April 17

MZC's Board of Directors will meet on Saturday, April 17 immediately following family sitting and discussion, starting at 10:45 a.m. The purpose of the Board is to ensure that MZC's finances are properly managed so MZC may continue to fulfill its mission. All sangha members are invited to attend.

Immediately following the Board meeting, starting about noon, we will hold a combined lunch potluck and sangha meeting. Our sangha meetings are where we all meet together to discuss what is going well and what needs improvement, where we work together to resolve problems, and where we consider new directions for our practice and our Center - and where we can just enjoy being together and eating delicious food. Please come to the sangha meeting and participate together in the Awakened Way! Bring a vegetarian dish to share.

Guest Teacher at MZC, May 15

On Saturday, May 15 MZC is honored to have as guest teacher Rev. Shohaku Okumura of Sanshin Zen Community in Bloomington, Indiana. Please watch the listserv and postings at the Zen Center and on our web site for schedule info.

Shohaku Okumura, founder and guiding teacher of the Sanshin Zen Community, was born in Osaka, Japan, in 1948. In 1970, he was ordained by the late Kosho Uchiyama-roshi, one of the foremost Zen masters of the twentieth-century. Okumura-roshi received Dharma transmission from his teacher in 1975 and, shortly after, became one of the founding members of Pioneer Valley Zendo in Massachusetts. He returned to Japan in 1981 and began translating the works of Dogen, Uchiyama and other Soto masters from Japanese into English. In 1993, he moved back to the United States with his wife, Yuko, and their two children. He

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has previously served as teacher at the Kyoto Zen Center in Japan and at the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center in Minneapolis. In addition to serving as teacher of Sanshin Zen Community, he is currently Director of the Soto Zen International Center in San Francisco. Today, he is recognized for his unique perspective on the life and teachings of Dogen Zenji derived from his experience as both practitioner and translator, and as a teacher in both Japanese and Western practice communities. He gives frequent lectures on the Shobogenzo and other foundational texts. His translations have been published in several books, including *Dogen's Extensive Record* (Wisdom Publications, 2004) and *The Wholehearted Way* (Tuttle Publishing, 1997), and his lectures have appeared in *Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly*, *Dharma Eye*, and *Buddhism Now*. He continues to lead sesshins (intensive meditation retreats) and genzo-e (Shobogenzo study) retreats at Sanshin-ji and at various other centers in the US and abroad.

Rev. Okumura is also the guest teacher for this year's Vesak Day event, on May 16.

Vesak Day, May 16

On Sunday, May 16 the Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis will hold its annual Vesak Day celebration at Mid-America Buddhist Association (MABA) in Augusta. Vesak Day, in the southern Buddhist tradition, commemorates the birth, awakening, and death of the Buddha. The day's events are free and open to the public.

The guest teacher this year will be Rev. Shohaku Okumura, founder and guiding teacher of the Sanshin Zen Community in Bloomington, Indiana. He will also speak at the Zen Center on May 15. His biography may be found in the article on the May 15 event.

More info on the schedule of events for Vesak Day will be posted to the MZC listserv and at the Zen Center when it becomes available.

Seed Starting Made Sort-of Simple

by Kuryo

For those of you who want to grow a veggie garden (or herbs, or flowers) in 2010 but haven't grown from seed before, or if you're trying to decide whether it makes more sense to grow from seed or to buy plants, I'll offer you my ideas and experience on this subject.

First, how do you decide whether it's best to start your own seeds or better to buy seedlings grown by someone else? I think that if you are a brand-new gardener with little confidence in raising plants from seeds, then grow only a small garden and buy all the seedlings for it. Concentrate your time on learning to grow the seedlings to full-size plants. If you want to try raising seeds, buy one pack of seeds for one of the kinds of plants you want to grow and try growing a few plants from seed. You can expand the size of your garden each year as you gain expertise. I recommend buying your seedlings from independent growers rather than the big-box stores. Last year's epidemic of late blight along the East Coast to as far west as Ohio appears to have originated in tomato seedlings purchased from big-box stores and spread rapidly due to very damp, cool conditions prevailing there last summer. Late blight is the disease that killed potatoes and resulted in the Irish potato famine in the 1800s. It also kills tomato plants.

People who enjoy gardening may find at some point that their garden grows so large that buying seedlings becomes too expensive, or they want to try varieties they can't buy, or they really enjoy raising plants from seeds and want to do more of it. Then the question becomes what is the most economical way to raise seedlings.

The cheapest approach is to start as many seeds directly in the garden as you can, only raising seedlings of such plants as benefit most by it. This means raising seedlings for plants such as tomatoes, peppers, eggplants,

and other plants that need a long head start in temperatures that do not prevail outdoors in St. Louis in the winter and early spring. If you do this, you can limit your seed-raising area to favorable windowsills, an enclosed sunny porch, or a small set-up like one grow light or one small cold frame. If you want to grow seedlings of crops like cabbage or lettuce which could be started in the garden, you'll need more space than if you just want to raise a few special tomato or pepper plants.

If you're at the scale of raising a handful of tomato or pepper plants and you have a sunny window, you can start seeds in small pots set on the windowsill or on a small table (tray tables work well) set right next to the window. It's important to put the pots as close to the window as you can, to maximize light on the seedlings. You could purchase a small bag of potting soil or if you can find some unfrozen, decent soil in your yard or garden, mix it half and half with compost, mix about 4 parts of that with 1 part of earthworm castings if you have them, and fill your pots with that. Start these seeds in early March, rotate the pots every few days so the plants grow as straight as possible, and bring them outside in April to finish growing (bringing them back inside if frost threatens). You should get some good-sized plants by early May for planting into the garden. Consult Nancy Bubel's book *The New Seed-Starters Handbook* for the rest of the cultural information I left out.

If you don't have a sunny window, or if you want to raise more plants than will fit in your window, you will need a bright, warm place to start the seeds and raise the seedlings to size. The warmer your seeds need to be and the earlier you choose to or have to start them, the more it will cost you to raise them. I suggest limiting the number of seeds you start that need warm temperatures, such as tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants, to what you can fit onto a heat mat (available from many garden seed catalogs and retailers). I have one that is 16" x 37" which fits into the tray under a 2' x 4' fluorescent light fixture. It draws 120 watts, so when it is on for 24 hours a day as it needs to be when I raise seeds needing warmth in our basement, it requires 2.9 KWh of electricity each day it's on. The mat itself costs almost \$100 new. Smaller, cheaper heat mats that draw less power are also available. The fluorescent light required to grow the seedlings once they come up has two 40 watt tubes in it and should be on about 16 hours a day to raise decent seedlings. That's another 0.6 KWh per day of electrical usage, plus the cost of the light fixture and tubes. You can find a workable fluorescent fixture of that size in hardware stores for much cheaper than the slightly better version that garden retailers sell. If you raise seeds that can germinate at cooler temperatures in your house or basement you won't need the heat mat, but if you have more than can fit near your windows, you'll need the light fixture.

If you can use the sun for free heat and light, you can raise better seedlings for a lot less money and fossil fuel energy. If you have an enclosed sunny porch, you have an ideal set-up to raise seedlings cheaply. You should be able to start crops like onions, lettuce, and cabbage in it by mid-February unless it's very cold outside, and crops like tomatoes and peppers by March.

If you don't have an enclosed porch, you can make a cold frame (a bottomless box with a clear top) for raising seedlings. They can be made from scrap lumber and topped with scavenged windows or storm doors for the least cost. Many garden books include some information on cold frames, and books on season extension and greenhouses often include plans for making cold frames and info on how to use them. They can be used starting in March if sited well. A cold frame requires much more attention from the gardener than a sunny porch does. On sunny days the clear top of a cold frame needs to be opened so the seeds and plants don't get too hot, and the top then replaced at night unless the night is well above freezing. Cold frames can get too cold on below-freezing nights unless they are covered, and then the cover must be removed shortly after sunrise. If a gardener is willing to put in the effort to manage it, however,

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a cold frame works very well. The seedling quality will be much higher when grown in cold frames than on a windowsill or under lights because the cold frame is much brighter, and the plants will not need to be hardened-off before planting as they do when grown under lights.

This article completes the series on raising vegetables. Happy growing!

How We Can Solve and Surpass Samsara Suffering

by *Rosan Daido*

Humans evolved and developed bodies and brains. Sense perception and consciousness are dependently originated on sense organs (body) and sense integration (brain). Images and ideas (languages) are dependently originated on them. "I (*Ich, ego, aham*)" idea and "my (*mein, mei, mama*)" possession (my body, I possess, etc.) depend and develop on them. These ideas are strengthened in daily deeds and dealings. Thus, egoism and selfishness settle, serving and stifling selves, societies and species. Then, "self" becomes the source of samsara (fleeting life) and suffering. With self-identification (with body/brain) we undergo birth, aging, sickness, death, losing things, parting with loved ones, etc., constantly and continually, as individuals and societies, economic and ecological systems.

Only through stopping and scrutinizing such symbolism can we understand the delusion of "self" and devastation of selfishness (accruing attachment and aversion, etc.). "Self" requires "self-sameness" and "self-sovereignty," but the truth of Dependent Origination voids such notions (the three dharma marks of impermanence, suffering, and no self). This selfishness is strongest among humans due to their moving bodies ("my" body) and developed brains ("I" consciousness). This fundamental delusion/nescience drives humans to greed, anger, anxiety, fear, despair, etc., leading to discrimination, exploitation, extermination and extinction.

This is our strong, stiff human karma leading to individual and social strife and suffering and economic and ecological deterioration and devastation. Only through the constant and continuous practice of sitting and stopping karmas can we transcend karmas (karma-machines). In the mundane (common-sense) realm, we conventionally admit selves in daily dealings (the tentative/conventional truth), but in the supra-mundane realm (super-sense: beyond conception), there is no (eternal, independent) self (the ultimate/supreme truth) (two truths). We must fully settle in, study and scrutinize "self," and witness dharma (form/phenomena) world and Dharma (Norm/law) operating therein, surpassing "self" sticking and suffering. This is self-supported and dharma-sustained study (two resorts: self and dharma).

This study requires physical, mental and insight cultivation/verification processes (three learnings cf. three karmas: bodily, verbal, and mental karmas). We can decrease and cease wrong/bad karmas, and start and increase right/good karmas (the four applications/strivings). The five or ten precepts/karma-paths are basic codes of conduct for holy (wholly wholesome) harmony and full freedom. The vague notion of body/mind is scrutinized in five categories/aggregates of form (*rupa*), ideas (*saññā*), feelings (*vedanā*), formations (*sañkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāna*) to examine if the three dharma marks are applicable.

Six sense bases (or roots; organs and objects make up 12 bases) are observed, ordered, protected and purified for practice and perfection. Our worlds (emotional, material, and immaterial: the three worlds or realms), space and time, are dependently originated or ceased on the six senses. Each is essentially a mental/conscious world of dynamic phenomena, appearing and disappearing from moment to moment. Thus our conscious realms slide and shift from zero to infinity, through six realms/life-modes of nadir to zenith (the six paths of hell-being, hungry ghost, animal being, devilish being, human being, and heavenly being). We may remain as humans or live like wolves or awakened ones, depending on our cultivation and verification.

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.*

