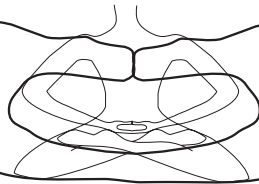


# Sangha Life



**The Missouri Zen Center**

**May-July, 2011**

**The Missouri Zen Center**

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



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**Coming Events**

- May 14: help set up for Vesak Day
- May 15: Vesak Day
- July 22-24: guest teacher at MZC
- Aug. 7: MZC Board/sangha meeting
- Aug. 13-20: Great Sky Sesshin

Visit Our Web Site:

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

*Address Correction  
Requested*

**MZC Blog**

*by Rosan Daido*

We have now a new blog page at the MZC website. Anyone can access from the navigation column of the website or directly from the following address:

<http://missourizencenter.org/mzcherenow/>

Anyone can access, subscribe, and post there. We may make it a good exchange of ideas place.

**MZC Board for 2011**

At the Annual Meeting on March 13, sangha members in attendance elected Kathleen and re-elected Kuryo to the MZC Board of Directors by unanimous vote in both cases.

The Board then met briefly and chose the following people to be officers for 2011:

- President: Kuryo
- Vice president: Brittany
- Treasurer: Suzanne
- Secretary: Maku

Kathleen and Erin, who along with Rosan are the other Board members for 2011, were named co-chairs of Publicity and Public Relations for MZC.

**Vesak Day, May 15**

Vesak Day 2011 will be held at Mid-America Buddhist Association (MABA) in Augusta on Sunday, May 15 from 10 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. We've included a poster which you are

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free to copy and distribute. Please let interested folks know about this free and informative event. It's sponsored by the Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis, of which MZC is a member organization.

As you know, the many people who volunteer each year make this large and very moving event go smoothly. Please consider helping in any of the contexts described below. It's a great opportunity to get to know others in the regional St. Louis Buddhist community.

Saturday, May 14: Volunteer to set up tents and help with other preparations.

- 9:30-11:30: Work period, preparations
- 11:30-12:30: Vegetarian potluck lunch
- 12:30-1:00: Casual Dharma talk followed by Q & A by Dr. Guo Gu, "Work as Practice."
- 1:00-3:30: Resume work period

If you would like to volunteer on Saturday, please let Ven. Kungshih Shi know by sending a message to [maba\\_usa@yahoo.com](mailto:maba_usa@yahoo.com). If you're writing on behalf of your center or temple, please indicate how many people will be attending.

Sunday, May 15: Children's activities

There are also a number of volunteer opportunities on Sunday; please let us know if you'd be available to help. And, if you would be available to help with children's activities on Sunday, please contact Leonora Kham: [lkham@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lkham@sbcglobal.net).

### **Guest Teacher at MZC, July 22-24**

Dokai Georgesen, Resident Teacher of Hokyoji Zen Practice Community, has been invited to be guest teacher at MZC from July 22-24. Please save the dates and watch for more details to be posted to MZC's e-list, website, and Facebook page, as well as at MZC.

### **Board/Sangha Meeting, Aug. 7**

The next MZC Board/Sangha meeting will take place on Sunday, Aug. 7 at MZC following family sitting and discussion. As usual, we'll enjoy a vegetarian potluck lunch while we meet. Please bring a dish to share and join us as we work together to keep MZC going and make it better!

### **Great Sky Sesshin, Aug. 13-20**

The 7th annual Great Sky Sesshin will be held from Saturday, Aug. 13-20, 2011 at Hokyoji Zen Practice Community in

Eitzen, Minnesota. The daily schedule will include zazen, dharma talks, services, dokusan, meals with oryoki, tea breaks and work periods.

*Teachers:*

Myoyu Andersen, Great Plains Zen Center  
Tonon O'Connor, Milwaukee Zen Center  
Zuiko Redding, Cedar Rapids Zen Center  
Rosan Yoshida, Missouri Zen Center

*Associate Teacher:*

Dokai Georgesen, Resident Teacher, Hokyoji Zen Practice Community

Cost is \$300 for those who wish to sleep on a bunk bed with an air mattress; \$265 for those who wish to sleep in the zendo or who will be camping at Hokyoji during the sesshin.

Deadline for registration is July 23. There is room for only 24 participants.

To register or for more info, please contact Cedar Rapids Zen Center at [crzc@cedarrapidszencenter.org](mailto:crzc@cedarrapidszencenter.org) or 319-247-5986, or visit [www.cedarrapidszencenter.org](http://www.cedarrapidszencenter.org).

### **Letter to the Editor**

*by Bob and Suzanne Reinhold  
and Rido and Susan Burke*

Brad Warner's book *Sex, Sin & Zen* ( hereinafter *S, S & Z*) purports to be about Zen Buddhism but, in fact, is a book about sex. It was a mistake for the Missouri Zen Center to sponsor a talk by Warner and to schedule and promote a book-signing for him.

We have nothing against the freedom to look at adult pornography, but are completely opposed to the MZC engaging and promoting a speaker who has written for a porn website, and who has written a book such as *S, S & Z*. We expect more of the Zen Center. Brad Warner should be judged by any book that he has written. The description of Warner as a "shock jock" by the reviewer of *S, S & Z* in the December, 2010 issue of *Tricycle Magazine* could not be better exemplified than in the opening "piece of ass chant." (p. 1)

Warner admits pornography exploits women (p.83). As an ordained Soto Zen priest, should not Warner be espousing the eightfold path of right action, and is not exploitation of women the opposite of right action? The cover of *S, S & Z* includes two women naked from the waist up who appear to be engaging in sexual activity and a woman who is winking at the reader, while Warner smiles next to her in his priestly robes. The cover

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appears sensational and undignified, and reflects much of the book's contents. Brad Warner interviews porn actress Nina Hartley, who was raised as a Buddhist, and whom he seems to hold out as an expert on sexuality. A book with an interview with Ms. Hartley in it is clearly offering sexual titillation. The flier for the Warner book-signing and talk was selling sex, not Zen Buddhism. We notice that the woman's eyes and breasts were not shown while her lips, prominently rouged, were visible and emphasized! What kind of image of woman is this we are being offered?

The Brad Warner blog very prominently displayed, on or about February 15, 2011, a cartoon which depicted an obese woman about to enter an office. Inside the office, a psychotherapist was sitting with a patient, and says to the patient "I think I have a cure for your sex addiction." Why has the MZC featured a speaker who insults persons with food and eating disorders, and what does such a cartoon have to do with Zen Buddhism, the stated interest of Warner?

Warner thinks that a person who organizes a zazen group should not be considered a Buddhist teacher and, therefore, the teacher might date someone who sits in the group (pp. 256-258). Warner thereby seeks to absolve himself of wrongdoing since he dated a person who attended his Zazen group, and Warner is an ordained Soto Zen priest. This issue brings to mind Baker Roshi who was the teacher at the San Francisco Zen Center and left his position in disgrace after engaging in sexual affairs with students.

Buddhism and Zen Buddhism merit dignity and respect. Nothing about the *S, S & Z* book is dignified but is rather sensational. We wonder how other many Zen centers rejected Warner as a speaker and why? The very thought that the recent involvement of Brad Warner in such a major way in the MZC could be a harbinger of future such events is disturbing to us.

Does anyone agree with us?

## Response to Letter

*by Kuryo*

I was part of the committee of Board and sangha members who worked together to bring Brad to St. Louis. Brad and other Buddhist teachers who were/are part of the punk scene bring that sensibility into their writing and teaching. They engage people who may be left cold by other writers and teachers.

Brad was a teacher at Great Sky Sesshin for three years, along with our teacher. Dr. Yoshida did not object to bringing Brad here.

Both of the talks that Brad gave while in St. Louis were well attended and well received. Brad spoke about Buddhism at

at least one area high school while he was in St. Louis, and a number of the students from that class were in attendance when Brad spoke at MZC.

I've read some of Brad's columns on the pornographic web site mentioned above. I've found them to be thoughtful pieces, respectful of their audience, and very good explanations of basic Buddhist principles that address the concerns of people who run, write for, and visit the web site. Should we not support bringing Buddhist ideas to people wherever and whoever they are?

Brad's and Nina's discussion of pornography is much more nuanced than the letter writers' pulling of a phrase out of its context suggests. I encourage people who want to know what Brad and Nina really said to read the chapter on Zen and porn as well as the interview with Nina, a chapter of its own.

When I look at the book cover, I remember the feeling I had in my teens and 20s of being in a sexual minefield and trying to keep my wits about me in the midst of that minefield. I see nothing disrespectful of women or of Buddhist practice in the cover image. I didn't find anything objectionable about the poster imagery, either.

Regarding the affair that Brad had with the woman who attended his group: the woman Richard Baker slept with felt he exploited them at a time when they were vulnerable. In Brad's case, it appears that not only was no exploitation involved, but that the only people who complained were some of the other sangha members, not the woman herself. Again, the discussion in the book is so much more nuanced than I have space to convey that I recommend people read the whole chapter (it begins on page 249).

Regarding the cartoon mentioned: I have to admit that I don't understand the point of the cartoon. Perhaps it refers to something in pop culture which I am unaware of; maybe if I understood it, I could better determine if I agreed with the letter writers or not. I don't know how it relates to the accompanying article, in which Brad points out what he sees as inconsistencies and unhelpful actions on the part of the American Zen Teacher's Association regarding a situation with a particular Zen teacher.

I don't find anything in any of Brad's books (I have read all of them), or either of his public talks while in St. Louis (I attended both) or on his web site, that isn't respectful of Buddhism. Brad is very serious about Zen practice and about bringing Zen practice to everyone. True enough, there's plenty of funny, undignified if you will, writing in this and his other books. I think Brad's irreverence is especially appropriate for a book on sex and Zen. The book addresses topics other Buddhist authors have not addressed, and it does so in a way that is fully aware of the complexity of sexual experiences and locates those in a context

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of Buddhist practice. I have no qualms about recommending it to anyone who wants to know more about this emotion-charged subject.

I thank Suzanne, Bob, Susan, and Rido for their willingness to state their position, whether or not others agree with it. It's in discussion that we learn the most.

## Why One Should Practice Zazen

By Rosan Daido

**Problems:** We have been experiencing increased, intensified, extraordinary, and devastating disasters – earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, tornadoes, heat waves, floods, fires, droughts, inundations, nuclear disasters, starvations, epidemics, global warming, mass extinction, etc. Humans created surreal superstructures (pyramidal civilization destroying the global life system) and substances (atomic, biological, and chemical substances damaging life forms for millennia).

**Causes:** All the multiplied and compounded disasters due to such human superstructures and substances come from our human karma (old and new actions and action results, physical, verbal and mental – volitions, emotions, conceptions). We claim to drive our systems and sources for prosperity and peace, but actually we are driven by our own and shared karma of short-sighted self-interest and short-circuited system destruction – the three poisons (delusion, attachment, aversion) taking the three steps (delusion-action-suffering).

**Solutions:** Because karma (action/habit) is the essential dynamic cause, solutions lie in stopping karma. Stopping karma enables one to witness holy truth, goodness, beauty, peace, etc., solving the self-problem and samsara (transmigration through birth/death) suffering. Karma is the source of evolution or devolution, development or deterioration. So we must first stop it, squarely see the truth, and select the methods. Many a mickle makes a muckle into a pyramid or an Indra-net.

**Methods:** The essential, effective, major method of stopping karma is still sitting, stopping physical, verbal and mental karma – as an unmoved bowl (body) stills water (mind) reflecting the world without turbulence and turbidity (truth). This frees anyone from karma and facilitates holy (wholly wholesome) and full function. Constant sitting enables one to witness and work in profound insight and far-reaching effect into a truthful and peaceful world with holy and happy life.

### 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 am Zazen  
 7:00 am Service (sutras)  
 7:20 am Zazen  
 8:00 am Kinhin  
 8:10 am Short Zazen  
 8:30 am Lecture (Teisho)  
 9:30 am 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.*  
 10:00-10:20 am Family Sitting  
 10:20-11:00 am Children's activities

#### Monday

6:00-6:50 am Zazen & Heart Sutra  
 Beginner's Night Registration required (at least 24 hours in advance)  
 6:30-7:00 pm Instruction  
 7:00-7:20 pm Zazen  
 7:20-8:00 pm Discussion/Q&A

#### Tuesday

6:00-6:50 am Zazen & Heart Sutra  
 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  
 6:50-7:40 am Zazen & Heart Sutra  
 7:00-7:40 pm Zazen

#### Thursday

6:00-6:50 am Zazen & Heart Sutra  
 7:00-7:40 pm Zazen  
 7:50-9:00 pm Dharma Study  
 Group (call for details)

#### Friday

6:00-6:50 am Zazen & Heart Sutra  
 7:00-7:40 pm Zazen

#### Saturday

8:00-8:50 am Zazen & Heart Sutra

