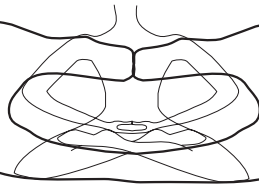


Sangha Life



The Missouri Zen Center

June-July, 2008

The Missouri Zen Center

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



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Coming Events

- June 7: Change Your Mind Day
- June 14: Veggie gardening course
- June 14: Movie Night
- June 22: MZC Board meeting
- July 5: Movie Night
- July 29: Rosan returns
- Aug. 9-16: Great Sky Sesshin
- Aug. 30-Sept. 1: Japanese Festival



*Address Correction
Requested*

Visit Our Web Site:

www.missourizencenter.org

Rosan returns to St. Louis

Rosan Daido will return to St. Louis on July 29 and will remain here until about the end of September. We wish him a safe trip and look forward to his return! In the meantime, we continue to sit and work together as a sangha and within the wider world. Please join us anytime to practice the Awakened Way and for the special events we have planned over the next few months.

Looking for a Few Good Volunteers

Rosan often tells us about the monk on top of the 100-foot pole. One way to step off that pole is to offer your best effort and spirit to tasks needing to be done. The Zen Center offers many possible avenues to work on behalf of the Awakened Way and for the

benefit of all beings. Yard and garden work, repair and maintenance of the building, library work, sewing and stuffing zafus and zabutons, and participating in the Japanese Festival fundraiser (see the article elsewhere) are all ways to offer your effort and spirit for all. As reported last issue, we are looking for a person to take over as Treasurer for the Zen Center; see the April-May issue for details. To find out more about all of these opportunities, please contact the Zen Center.

Change Your Mind Day, June 7

On Saturday, June 7 from 1-3 p.m., the Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis will sponsor the 2008 Change Your Mind Day event at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge. Change Your Mind Day is a nationwide event, held on the first Saturday in June, to celebrate the Buddhist concept of transforming one's thinking from confusion

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to wisdom, from discontent to happiness, from anger to compassion. It began in 1994 in New York City and over the years has spread to more than 50 cities in the U.S. and Australia. During the event participants will meditate and hear a talk by the guest speaker, Ven. Direk Buddhayanandho, abbot of Wat Phrasriratanaram in St. Louis and Watpa Buddhayanandharam in Nevada. The event is free and open to the public.

The Old Chain of Rocks Bridge is located off Riverview Blvd., just south of I-270; take the Riverview exit off I-270 and turn south. Trailnet charges \$3 per car for parking in the lot at the bridge, but some free parking will be available nearby and a shuttle will be available for people who arrive before the 1 p.m. start time.

For more information: kalen1@att.net or 314-961-7515. The Zen Center is a member organization of the Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis.

Successful Fall Veggie Gardening Course

Suppose you've been unable to get a garden growing this spring. You may have been too busy, or the heavy

rains prevented you from preparing your garden for crops. Maybe you're just now getting interested in trying to grow some of your own food. Perhaps you've tried growing crops for a fall garden in the past, but the seeds didn't come up, or the vegetables didn't mature before cold weather killed them. You might be wondering, is it too late to start a garden? What can I grow now? How can I get the seeds to come up? When must I plant seeds to get a good crop?

I've been growing vegetables for 15 years, and one of my goals has been to have the widest possible variety of crops during the entire growing season. During that time, I've learned a lot about how to match the St. Louis climate and the sun's seasonal patterns to the needs of vegetable seeds and plants in order to harvest a wide variety of vegetables from my vegetable garden well into November. On Saturday, June 14 beginning at 9 a.m. at the Zen Center, I'll share what I've learned in answer to all the questions posed above.

What to expect: you'll learn about changes in the sun's position and day length and about changes in

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climate from the middle of June through late November and how all those factors affect the way different vegetables grow. You'll receive a chart summarizing my experience on the best times to start seeds for a decent harvest of a wide variety of crops, everything from tomatoes, squash, and beans to lettuce, kale, and radishes. With this information in hand, you should find it easier to grow and get a good crop from seeds that you start from now through September. I won't cover garden preparation in this course but I will provide some references that I have found helpful.

We'll begin the course at 9 a.m. in the Zen Center's library. At 10 a.m. we'll take a break for the family sitting. We'll reconvene after family sitting ends (around 10:30 a.m.) and continue for another hour or so, until we've covered all the material and everyone has a chance to ask all the questions they have. Anyone who wants to can stay for a potluck lunch. If you plan to stay for lunch, bring a vegetarian dish to share.

I'm offering the information for free, but I would be grateful if participants would offer *dana* of their choosing to the Zen Center. Dana helps to keep the Zen Center in existence so that it may offer more people the opportunity to learn and practice the Awakened Way.

To register, please contact me through the Zen Center, or you can just show up at 9 a.m. on June 14.

Dinner & Movie Nights, June 14 & July 5

June 14 movie: *The Next Industrial Revolution*

Dinner begins at 6 p.m. Dinner will be white bean chili and cornbread with brownies for desert, prepared by Gary Byrd. Make your reservations for dinner by June 12: send an email to halej55@hotmail.com or call 961-6138.

Movie begins at 7 p.m. The movie will be *The Next Industrial Revolution* (55 minutes, US release date 2001, William McDonough, Michael Braungart and the Birth of the Sustainable Economy). Architect Bill McDonough and chemist Michael Braungart bring together ecology and human design. Directed by Chris Bedford and Shelley Morhaim; produced by Shelley Morhaim for Earthome Productions. Narrated by Susan Sarandon. We will watch the DVD version with special features available. "One of the most informative, brilliant and hopeful films about the transformation of industrial and economic activities," according to Anthony Cortese, Sc.D., President, Second Nature, Inc. While some environmental observers predict doomsday scenarios in which a rapidly increasing human population is forced to compete for ever scarcer natural resources, Bill McDonough sees a more exciting and hopeful future. In his vision humanity takes nature itself as our guide, reinventing technical enterprises to be as safe and ever-renewing as natural processes.

Can't happen? It's already happening...at Nike, at Ford Motor Company, at Oberlin College, at Herman Miller Furniture, and at DesignTex...and it's part of what architect McDonough and his partner, chemist Michael Braungart, call "The Next Industrial Revolution." Shot in Europe and the United States, the film explores how businesses are transforming themselves to work with nature and enhance profitability. "This film is an inspirational look at a hopeful vision of the future. It does an excellent job of presenting both theory and real world examples of a design revolution that has the potential to re-make our world," according to James Gustave Speth, Dean, Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies

July 5 movie: *Little Buddha*

Dinner begins at 6 p.m. Menu to be announced. If you're interested in having dinner, contact us by July 3 (email halej55@hotmail.com or call 961-6138).

Movie begins at 7 p.m. The movie will be *Little Buddha*. *Little Buddha* (140 minutes) is a story about the quest of a group of monks, led by Lama Norbu (Ruocheng Ying), to seek out the reincarnation of his great Buddhist teacher, Lama Dorje (Geshe Tsultim Gyeltsen). In the story, the Lama Norbu relates the story of Buddha, which is also enacted as a story within the story. In the story, a Hindu Prince called Siddhartha (Keanu Reeves) embarks on a journey to attain enlightenment.

Great Sky Sesshin, Aug. 9-16

The annual Great Sky Sesshin, a Soto Zen style sesshin, draws together teachers and practitioners from all over the Midwest for seven days of deepening understanding of the dharma under the extraordinary big sky of Hokyoji. You are invited to attend the sesshin at Hokyoji Zen Practice Community, a beautiful rural setting of meadow, forest, and rolling hills in southern Minnesota just west of the Mississippi River. The daily schedule will consist of zazen, dharma talks, services, dokusan, meals with oryoki, tea breaks, and work.

Rosan will be one of the teachers at the sesshin, joined by Susan Myoyu Andersen (Great Plains Zen Center in Palatine, IL); Tonen O'Connor (Milwaukee Zen Center); Zuiko Redding (Cedar Rapids Zen Center); and Brad Warner (Dogen Sangha, Los Angeles). Associate teacher will be Dokai Georgesen, Hokyoji Zen Practice Community.

You must register to join the sesshin, which is limited to 24 participants. Registration cost is \$285 for a bunk bed, \$250 for camping. The deadline for registration is July 1. Registration materials are available from Milwaukee Zen Center at www.milwaukeezencenter.org. For more info, contact Milwaukee Zen Center (414-963-0526, kokyo-an@earthlink.net, www.milwaukeezencenter.org) or Cedar Rapids Zen Center (319-247-5986, crzc@avalon.net, www.avalon.net/~crzc/).

Live Egoless Life

By Rosan Daido

Ego is incompatible with eco and ethic. An ego-centered life is incompatible with the systemic whole. Egoism is the source of all suffering, eventually ending in total catastrophe. An egoless life is a holy, wholesome life wholly communicating truth, beauty, and goodness. An egoless life offers limitless life, light, liberation, and love with all. Ego is the first button to mismatch all other buttons with delusion, bondage, discrimination, exploitation, and extermination. Buddhas live with awakening, freedom, equality, love, and peace.

Volunteers Needed Labor Day Weekend!

The Zen Center's biggest fundraising event of the year will occur over the Labor Day weekend, August 30-September 1, when we run a food booth at the Japanese Festival, taking place at the Missouri Botanical Garden. We are offered the opportunity to run a food booth because of the high quality of the food we make, which is possible only because many members of the sangha work together to make and serve the food. We are very grateful to the Missouri Botanical Garden for making the booth available to us and to our sangha and friends for volunteering their time for all the different tasks involved in running a successful food booth. Rosan will be offering talks on Zen practice at the Japanese Festival as he does every year.

For many people in our sangha our presence at the Japanese Festival has been their introduction to the practice of Zen or to the Zen Center as a place to practice. Thus this event is both a crucial fundraiser helping to keep the Zen Center in operation and an outreach opportunity to inform the wider community about our practice and invite them to join us.

It takes many volunteers to allow our food booth to run safely and in an enjoyable manner for all involved while producing high quality food for our customers. Please plan to spend a few hours working at our booth on one or more days during the Festival. More details on how to participate will be forthcoming in the next issue of Sangha Life and on the Zen Center's listserv. All volunteers will receive a free pass to the Festival and free parking.

This year all the food booths will remain open until 8 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday (an hour later than in past years) and until 5 p.m. on Monday, when the Festival closes.

The Japanese Festival is one of St. Louis' premier cultural events and is a great way to learn more about Japan and Japanese culture. To learn more about the Festival, check the Missouri Botanical Garden's website, www.mobot.org.

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 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
7:00-9:00 pm	Writing Practice
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

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.*



The Ethical Lawn: What about Weeds?

By Kuryo

Since the seeds of other plants exist in the soil and are continuously brought in by wind, water, and animals, non-grass plants sprout up over time in a lawn. We call these non-grass plants “weeds” – a cultural concept with no biological meaning – and are told by manufacturers of lawn chemicals that they need to be killed or they will “take over.” Those of you who wish to have a small lawn need to consider carefully the reasons for the presence of “weeds” and what, if any, control measures might be appropriate without doing harm to other beings.

The lawn products industry and many people who want a perfect lawn define a lawn as a monoculture of grass. We know that monocultures in agriculture are vulnerable to “pests” and “weeds” because of their inability to provide all their needs for themselves. Lawn grass monocultures are no different. Lawn grasses cannot perform all needed biological services, like fertilization, pest control, and full use of the sunlight, nutrients, and water present in their area, by themselves. In biological language, niches are available for other plants to occupy. And they will do so at the first opportunity. This is why it is impossible to have a “weed-free” lawn without putting time and money into reducing the “weed” population. Furthermore, the proportion of “weeds” will increase with time if no control measures are taken, as nature attempts to create a complete ecosystem in place of your monoculture lawn.

Mowing reduces the number of some “weeds” by keeping them from flowering or cutting them off enough times that they weaken and die. Mowing high and often during the grass’ active growing season, removing only a small amount of growth each time, will help to favor lawn grass over other plants.

As for the other plants, you need remove them only if you wish to have a mostly “weed”-free lawn. Removing “weeds” can be done by hand-weeding, applying a chemical herbicide, applying a plant-based herbicide such as corn gluten, or by altering conditions to favor lawn grass over certain kinds of “weeds.”

For a small lawn with only a few “weeds,” hand-weeding is an ethical choice. Some hand-weeding tools are designed to be used from a standing position; check for these in stores and garden tool catalogs. Some common “weeds,” like dandelion, are edible and nutritious. You can try making a salad or cooked greens from your “weeds”! Be sure to consult a guidebook or a knowledgeable person to make certain of the identity and edibility of any “weed” you are considering eating, and try just a taste at first to determine if it is compatible with your body.

Chemical herbicides come in two basic varieties. Some kill broad-leaved plants (most but not all “weeds” fall into this category) or undesired grasses like quackgrass but do not harm lawn grasses or at least harm them less. These are usually applied to the entire lawn and are the type found in weed-and-feed preparations. The others kill nearly all plants they touch; they must be applied only to the “weed” you wish to kill, as they will kill lawn grass too. While the industry suggests both kinds are safe, closer examination indicates that all herbicides have adverse effects. Some weaken or kill non-target species like earthworms, fish, and beneficial insects. Some have been shown to reduce the yield of vegetables by up to 99% after small amounts of the herbicide drifted onto them from nearby spraying. Some are long-lasting poisons that remain active in the soil for many years after exposure. Two of these, picloram and clopyralid, got into municipal compost in some cities after materials contaminated with them were put in the pile. People who bought and used the contaminated compost reported that their plants died. The manufacture of some herbicides leads to toxic by-products that find their way into the ecosystem. For all these and more reasons, chemical herbicides are not an ethical choice. Avoid the use of these poisons, including weed-and-feed preparations (besides the herbicides, these contain chemical fertilizers which adversely affect soil structure and life).

Some lawn-products companies and organic lawn care publications claim that plant-based herbicides like corn gluten or vinegar are a safer alternative to chemical herbicides. I have not used these products myself so I cannot speak from personal experience about how effective they are. If you want to know more about these alternatives, check with organic gardening information sources such as books, *Organic Gardening* magazine’s website (www.organicgardening.com), and retailers of organic gardening products. Corn gluten may not be a good choice since it is likely to come from genetically engineered corn (much of the corn not labeled organic is genetically engineered).

In some cases, you may be able to reduce the amount of “weeds” in your lawn by changing soil conditions. Apparently violets do better than grass when soil becomes too acid. By adding the right amount of agricultural lime to a lawn, grass may be favored over violets, if this is your preference. I suggest checking the University of Missouri’s Extension publications (<http://muextension.missouri.edu/xplor>) or calling the Missouri Botanical Garden’s question-and-answer desk for more information about “weeds” that concern you to learn if you can control them through changing soil conditions.

When autumn leaves cover grass, they reduce the amount of sunlight the grass gets. Because the role of grass is to cover ground where there are no or few trees or shrubs, grass requires a lot of sunlight to do its best. For anyone who wants to maintain a lawn with few “weeds”, either rake and remove leaves as they accumulate (they can be composted or spread elsewhere as a mulch), or mow often as they fall to shred them in place. The latter option will help to create a richer soil that aids grass growth.

If you can accept the inevitable appearance of “weeds” in your lawn, the easiest option is to leave them in place, mow whatever is there whenever you get to it, and call it your lawn.

In the next issue, we’ll look at so-called “pests” from our ethical-lawn viewpoint.