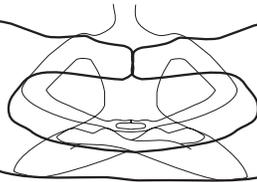


# Sangha Life



**The Missouri Zen Center**

**October-November, 2007**

**The Missouri Zen Center**

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



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**Coming Events**

- Oct. 6: Movie Night
- Oct. 19-21: Sesshin
- Oct. 26: Mindfulness Day
- Oct. 28: David Chadwick at MZC
- Nov. 3: Movie Night
- Nov. 10: Inside Dharma art auction
- Nov. 11: MZC Board meeting
- Dec. 7-9: Rohatsu sesshin
- Dec. 22: Solstice celebration
- Dec. 31: New Years Eve sitting



*Address Correction  
Requested*

Visit Our Web Site:

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

**Japanese Class**

On Thursday evenings following sitting, the Zen Center offers a Japanese language class taught by James M. The class is being held in the library and is open to anyone wishing to learn Japanese in the context of Zen practice. The Zen Center welcomes dana of \$5 per class for those who wish to support the Zen Center; the dana amount may be changed according to the donor's circumstances.

**Movie Nights: Oct. 6, Nov. 3**

On Saturday, October 6 and Saturday, November 3, come to the Zen Center to enjoy an excellent vegetarian dinner and a movie that offers a perspective on some of the critical questions of our time. In each case dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., with the movie beginning at 7:00 p.m. Descriptions of the dinner and movie on each night follow.

Saturday, October 6

Movie: *A Day Without a Mexican*, Running time - 1hr 40min.

Spanish: *Un Día sin Mexicanos* is a 2004 film directed by Sergio Arau.

*A Day Without a Mexican*, which opened on May 14, 2004 in limited release throughout Southern California and on September 17 in theaters in Chicago, Texas, Florida and New York City, is a fantasy in which all Latinos in the U.S. state of California suddenly disappear.

The film takes a satirical look at the range of effects on the (non-Latino, mostly White) Californians who remain. This film does not dwell on the mechanics of how Latinos disappear. Where Latinos went doesn't seem as important as what happens to California without them. The disappearance coincides with a "pink fog" which surrounds California. Nothing crosses the pink fog border, and it is said to be responsible for the lack of telephone and internet communications outside the state.

Dinner for October 6 will begin at 6:00 p.m. The menu will be bean enchiladas, with delicious toppings of lettuce, cheese

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and sauce. Dessert will be rice pudding. Ryushin (Don Benage) will prepare dinner.

#### Saturday, November 3

Movie: *Super Size Me* - running time 1hr 40min

An Academy Award-nominated 2004 documentary film, directed by and starring Morgan Spurlock, an American independent filmmaker. It follows a 30-day time period (February 2003) during which Spurlock subsists exclusively on McDonald's fast food and stops exercising. The film documents this lifestyle's drastic effects on Spurlock's physical and psychological well-being and explores the fast food industry's corporate influence, including how it encourages poor nutrition for its own profit. During the filming, Spurlock dined at McDonald's restaurants three times per day, sampling every item on the chain's menu at least once. He consumed an average of 5,000 calories (the equivalent of 9.26 Big Macs) per day during the experiment.

Dinner for November 3 will begin at 6:00 p.m. The menu will be lentil soup and tossed green salad with spinach, sprouts and sunflower seeds. There will be no dessert. John Hale will prepare dinner.

Please make your dinner reservations by Friday, October 5, or Friday November 2, respectively, if you plan to come for dinner so that our cooks will have an idea of how much food to prepare. Thank you. (A \$5 donation is suggested for those eating dinner. Proceeds will go to the Zen Center.) For dinner reservations call (314) 961-6138 or email [info@missourizencenter.org](mailto:info@missourizencenter.org)

### **Sesshin Oct. 19-21**

The Missouri Zen Center will host a weekend sesshin beginning on Friday evening, October 19, through Sunday morning, October 21 at the Zen Center. *Sesshin* means "directly pointing to the mind" or "touching the mind." By reducing everyday activities and distractions to a minimum, sesshin offers an opportunity to increase our focus on practice and thus to experience our minds more directly than we usually do.

Friday will begin at 6:00 a.m. and end at 9:30 p.m. - with a total of nine zazen periods. Saturday will begin at 6:00 a.m. and end at 8:30 p.m. — with a total of nine zazen periods. Sunday will begin at 6:20 a.m. and end at about 11:30 a.m. (usual Sunday schedule). Call or email Missouri Zen Center for a detailed schedule.

To register for this sesshin or to get more details, please email: [info@missourizencenter.org](mailto:info@missourizencenter.org) or call (314) 961-6138. If registering, include your name, phone number, and email address. Registration is especially recommended for those who will be joining us for Oryoki and/or plan to participate in seven or more zazen periods during the sesshin.

*Oryoki* means "suitable bowl" (suitable amount of food). Oryoki practice is a silent meal taken at a monastery. All our meals during Sesshin will be eaten using Oryoki. We welcome everyone to join us for Oryoki meals, regardless of prior experience. There are a few signals that are used to communicate with servers, and protocol and meal chants that help us develop mindfulness and show our gratitude for the effort of those who brought us the food and also for the life system out of which it came to us. The protocol and signals also bring order and elegance to Oryoki practice. For those who would like to learn Oryoki communication signals and protocol please email: [info@missourizencenter.org](mailto:info@missourizencenter.org) or call (314) 961-6138 to sign up for an Oryoki training session.

*Kinbin* (walking Zen) practice brings forward the wakeful,

concentrated, calm unfettered state into free movement, as well as relieves any stiffness in the body from long, still sitting.

*Samu* ("work service") is the physical work that is part of everyday life in a Zen monastery, and particularly the work periods during a sesshin. If the work is carried out wakefully, in a manner based entirely on the activity of collective attention and total carefulness, then it is a continuation and another form of zazen. Sesshin duties include cleaning and last minute preparations; oryoki servers; tenzo (cook); doan; and dishwashers. Sesshin attendees will volunteer to perform these duties.

The family sitting will take place at the usual time of 10:00-11:20 a.m. on Saturday, October 20.

Donations are welcomed but not required and will be used to help defray sesshin expenses. The suggested donation amount is \$10.

Lodging is available at the Zen Center. Please call or email for reservations.

### **Mindfulness Day Colloquium, Oct. 26 & David Chadwick at MZC, Oct. 28**

On Friday evening, Oct. 26 at 7:00 p.m., David Chadwick will speak on *Zen and Mindfulness*. The talk will take place at Washington University, in Brown Hall, Room 100. This event is co-sponsored by the Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis (of which MZC is a member) and the Department of Religious Studies, Washington University in St. Louis.

Mindfulness has been practiced for over 2500 years throughout the world by various cultures and has recently been studied by a number of scientific disciplines, including psychology and neurology. Research has shown that mindfulness is effective in enhancing concentration, in treating depression and anxiety disorders, as well as in cultivating authentic happiness. It is a simple technique that takes just a few minutes of practice daily.

David Chadwick, author of *Crooked Cucumber*, a biography of Suzuki Roshi, began practicing with Shunryu Suzuki in 1966 at the age of twenty-one and was ordained by him in 1971. He is the author of *Thank You and O.K!: An American Zen Failure in Japan*, which chronicled his years in Japan.

In addition, David Chadwick will be teaching on:

- Saturday, October 27, 9 am – Meditation and Dharma Talk at Inside Dharma, Central West End (4341 Westminster, Carriage House; [www.IndieDharma.org](http://www.IndieDharma.org))
- Saturday, October 27, 7 pm – Dhamma Talk at the Thai Temple, Florissant (890 Lindsey Lane; [www.stlthaitemple.org](http://www.stlthaitemple.org))
- Sunday, October 28, 10 am – Meditation and Compassion at MABA Monastery, Augusta, MO (Hwy 94 & Schindler; [www.maba-usa.org](http://www.maba-usa.org))
- Sunday, October 28, 7 pm – Meditation and Dharma Talk at Missouri Zen Center. Zazen from 7-7:40 p.m., Chadwick's talk from 7:40-9 p.m. Contact the Zen Center or visit our website, [www.missourizencenter.org](http://www.missourizencenter.org) for directions and parking info.

All events are free (with free parking) and open to the public. Donations to the Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis are welcome. Brown Hall is located on Forsyth, the second right turn into the campus west of Skinker; enter the campus on Chaplin Dr. by Goldfarb Hall, just south of the main Brookings Hall. See Campus Map at [http://www.bgu.ac.il/~zohary/p-FEM2000/wu\\_map.jpg](http://www.bgu.ac.il/~zohary/p-FEM2000/wu_map.jpg) (Building # 12)

For more information contact 314-576-4900 or [cviewer@aol.com](mailto:cviewer@aol.com)

### Art Auction for Inside Dharma

On Saturday, November 10 Inside Dharma will hold the second annual *Art from Inside* prison art auction and sale. The auction will be held starting at 6:30 p.m. at Eve's Garden, 3150 Morganford (two blocks south of Arsenal). The auction and sale will include works of art created by corrections inmates, such as bird houses, paintings, and drawings, and Insights from Inside, an anthology of prison writing. Organic free trade coffee, locally produced handmade chocolates, and Tibetan thangkas and practice items from India will also be sold. Live music and delicious snacks will be available.

The art auction and sale will raise funds for Inside Dharma, whose work includes the Inside Dharma Prison Project; the Buddha Bag Homeless Project; and the Shinzo Sangha. For tickets, email [Kalen@InsideDharma.org](mailto:Kalen@InsideDharma.org) or [Shoshin@InsideDharma.org](mailto:Shoshin@InsideDharma.org).

### MZC Board meeting, Nov. 11

On Sunday, November 11 the Zen Center's Board of Directors will meet at the Zen Center during the tea and discussion period. The meeting will begin sometime between 9:30 and 10 a.m., depending on the amount of time needed for the preceding teisho and samu. All are welcome to attend. If anyone has an agenda item for the meeting but cannot attend, please submit that information to Kuryo through the Zen Center.

### Rohatsu Sesshin Dec. 7-9

We will hold a Rohatsu sesshin at the Zen Center starting on Friday evening, December 7, and continuing through Sunday morning, December 9. In Zen, Rohatsu (December 8) is regarded as the day that Buddha awakened. Zen centers all over the world commemorate the Buddha's awakening, and our own potential to awaken, by holding a sesshin including this date.

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## The Ethical Lawn: Reel Mowing

*By Kuryo*

I have suggested that an ethical lawn has three characteristics:

- No larger than needed for what it's used for;
- Not needing chemical herbicides, pesticides, or fertilizers;
- Not needing water above normal rainfall, or minimal extra watering.

It is possible to maintain a lawn without the use of any fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides as long as perfect looks are not required. It's also possible to maintain a lawn without any water over normal rainfall if buffalo grass is used or if it's acceptable that other types of grasses go dormant (turn brown) during droughty periods. However, the definition of a lawn is that it is a mowed expanse of grass, so a lawn must be mowed to be a lawn. Hence, how often you mow and what kind of mower you use are what makes a lawn ethical, in my view.

If a human-powered lawn mower is used, an ethical lawn can be mowed as often as you want to do so. Human-powered lawn mowers don't generate any greenhouse gases in their use (although that is not true of their manufacture) and don't require any fossil-fuel energy to run them. Next issue we'll consider this question for users of powered lawnmowers.

The human-powered lawnmowers that I'm aware of have the blades arranged on a reel and use a scissors action to snip grass rather than the more knife-like action of a rotary lawn mower. To operate these mowers, push them in front of you as you walk. I've seen new reel mowers at big-box home supply stores and at some locally-owned hardware stores. Online garden-supply retailers may stock one or more types of reel mowers. I bought a reel mower with a maximum 3 inch cutting height from Lee Valley ([www.leevalley.com](http://www.leevalley.com)). You may find a used reel mower at a garage or estate sale. We have one that Meiku's father used in the 1950s.

Choosing the right reel mower requires knowledge of your lawn (kind of grass, evenness of ground, presence of fallen objects) and how different reel heights interact with those parameters. Old reel mowers as well as many new ones mow very close to the surface, with a cutting height of about an inch. This is fine for cool season grasses like bluegrass or fescue and if your ground is quite even (no molehills or similar-sized holes) and with few fallen objects like twigs, seeds, or nuts. Zoysia or bermudagrass lawns defeat most reel mowers, however, because these carpet-like grasses require taller mowing heights. Molehills and holes present difficult obstacles to mowers with such short cutting heights, and fallen twigs, nuts, and seed cases like sweetgum balls jam up the reel of low-height mowers. I recommend a reel mower that can be adjusted to a height of at least 2 inches, preferably 3 inches. Our Lee Valley reel mower, which has a 3 inch cutting height and a 20 inch cutting width, mows our motley lawn, including areas of zoysia and/or bermudagrass, reasonably well, although it takes more effort to mow these tough grasses. It mows over most twigs and nuts without catching them in the reel.

Reel mowers have many advantages over powered mowers. Reel mowers are less noisy and much safer to operate than powered mowers (a child can mow with a reel mower). They don't use gas or oil as do gasoline-powered mowers. They don't require an extension cord or a battery as do electric-powered mowers. Reel mowers require the operator to exercise. And they allow for a leisurely mowing pace with plenty of time to get a glass of water or listen to a bird singing.

While a reel mower has the advantages noted above, it does have some disadvantages to consider. One is that the scissors action does not cut certain kinds of "weeds" well such as those with wiry or stringy stems like plantain flower stems. Grass flower stems don't cut as well as the grass leaves for this reason. If you have a "weedy" lawn, it's unlikely that a reel-powered lawn mower will give you the same even look that a rotary mower will. If you use a reel mower and want that very even look, you'll need to pay more attention to "weed" prevention and removal. Another disadvantage is that it will take longer to mow with a reel mower, partly because human effort is slower than a gas or electric engine, partly because reel mowers generally have smaller cutting widths. My experience is that it takes 1 1/2 to 2 times longer to mow the same area with our reel mower as with our gas-powered mower. The larger the lawn, the more important this issue becomes. In addition, reel mowers cut best and are easiest to push when grass is cut often, more often than is necessary with power mowers, adding to the time required for lawn mowing. Finally, reel mowers require the operator to be able to walk and push the mower for the time needed to mow the lawn. Dense lawns require significant effort to cut.

Suppose that you decide the disadvantages of a reel mower outweigh the advantages for you. What would be the most ethical way to get the mowing job done? We'll consider the various possibilities in the next issue of *Sangha Life*.

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All experience levels are welcome. Come for some or all of the sesshin. A detailed schedule will be posted at the Zen Center and on the Zen Center's listserv. For more info and/or to register for the sesshin, contact the Zen Center.

**Solstice Celebration Dec. 22**

Following family sitting on Saturday, December 22 at the Zen Center, we'll get together for a celebration of the winter solstice. Bring a vegetarian potluck dish and join us to drum the sun back! Drums and other percussion instruments will be available; feel free to bring any you may have. We'll drum first, then share a potluck lunch. If you were there last year, you'll be back. If you weren't, don't miss it this year! More details will be included in the next issue of *Sangha Life*.

**New Year's Eve Sitting**

On Monday evening, December 31 the Zen Center will offer a special sitting beginning at 9 p.m. until midnight. At midnight the bell will be rung 108 times to mark the changing of the year. Following the bell-ringing we'll enjoy a potluck vegetarian supper. More details will be included in the next issue of *Sangha Life*.

**Live a Calm and Clear Life**

*By Rosan Daido*

Live a calm and clear life like the renowned mid-autumn moon in the crisp cool cloudless air. Stable serene sitting makes the mind-moon full and free of cloud, illuminating the bright and beautiful world.

**Zen Center E-mail List**

missourizencentersubscribe@buddhistcouncil.us

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:

missourizencenter-owner@buddhistcouncil.us

**Please note:** we may lose our current e-mail server at any moment. To help us make the transition if and when we need a new list server, new subscribers should also please send their subscribed e-mail addresses to joe@joethejugler.com.



*Sbiso gone to seed as Summer turns to Fall.*

**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.*

