



The Missouri Zen Center

June-July, 2006

The Missouri Zen Center

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Coming Events

- June 3: Change Your Mind Day
- June 24: Back Yard Composter Training
- June 30: Ven. Chodron talk at MBG
- July 24: Rosan returns
- Aug. 12-19: Great Sky Sesshin
- Sept. 2-4: Japanese Festival
- Mid Sept.: Simplicity course begins



*Address Correction
Requested*

Visit Our Web Site:
www.missourizencenter.org

Rosan Returns July 24

Please welcome our teacher Rosan when he returns to St. Louis on July 24. We expect him to remain in St. Louis through the end of September. In the meantime, as Rosan might say, sit more — the Zen Center has added additional meditation periods, noted elsewhere in this newsletter. Come and sit in perfect peace with us!

Additional Zazen Times

The Zen Center will offer zazen on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 11-11:40 am until further notice. This addition to our schedule will benefit students and second shift workers who otherwise might not be able to attend our usual early morning and evening zazen periods.

Also, zazen and yoga are now being offered every Sunday evening at the Zen Center. Zazen takes place from 6-6:40 pm, followed by yoga until 7:30 pm.

Change Your Mind Day, June 3

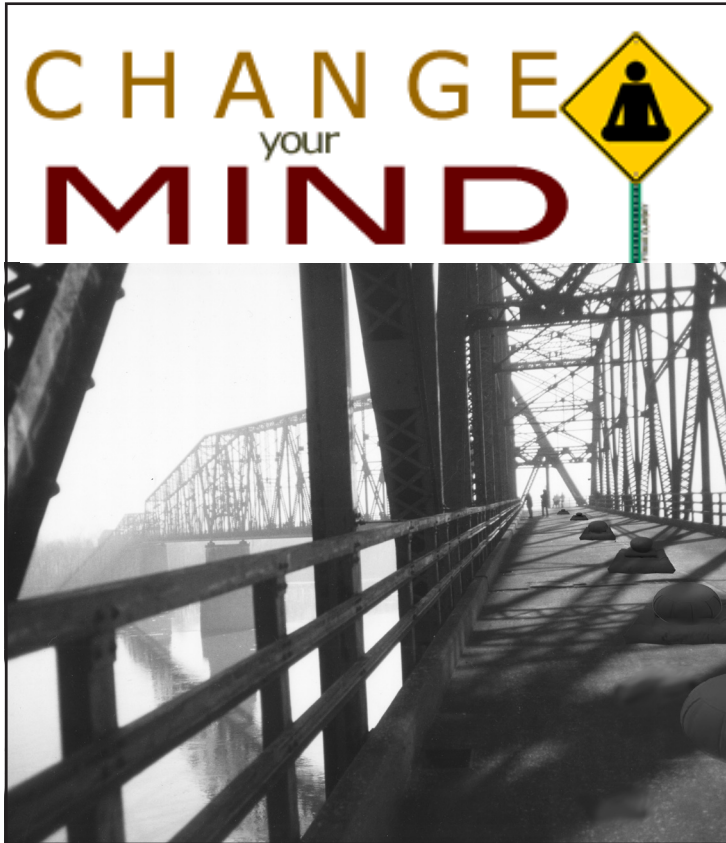
The Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis (to which the Zen Center belongs) is sponsoring the St. Louis edition of Change Your Mind Day 2006 on Saturday, June 3 beginning at 1:00 pm on the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge, just south of the Riverview Blvd. exit off I-270. The event is free and open to the public. The schedule is as follows:

- 1:00 pm Tai Chi demonstration
- 1:15 pm Walking to the bridge
- 1:30 pm Sitting meditation
- 2:00 pm Walking back from the bridge
- 2:15 pm Dharma Talk (guest speaker Rev. Ryugen Fisher)
- 3:00 pm Q&A/closing

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Change Your Mind Day began in 1994 in New York City and is now celebrated nationwide by Buddhists in over 50 cities including in Alaska, and also in Australia. This special day celebrates the Buddhist concept of transforming one's thinking from confusion to wisdom, from discontent to happiness, from anger to compassion. It is presented by the Tricycle Foundation and co-sponsored by the Frederick P. Lenz Foundation for American Buddhism and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.



Buddhist nun will speak on Creating Peace

On Friday, June 30 Buddhist nun Venerable Thubten Chodron will speak and answer questions on "Creating Peace" from 7-8:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the Missouri Botanical Garden, 4344 Shaw in St. Louis (314-577-5100; www.mobot.org). She will discuss different kinds of peace and how they relate to the three higher trainings of Buddhism: wisdom, morality, and concentration. This is a rare opportunity to hear Ven. Chodron, a delightful and inspiring speaker, in person. Following her talk she will answer questions from the audience. The Missouri Zen Center is sponsoring her talk.

Venerable Thubten Chodron was ordained as a Buddhist nun in 1977. She studied and practiced Tibetan Buddhism under the guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tsenzhab Serkong Rinpoche, Zopa Rinpoche, and other Tibetan masters for many years in India and Nepal. She has been resident teacher at Amitabha Buddhist Centre in Singapore and at Dharma Friendship Foundation in Seattle and was co-organizer of "Life as a Western Buddhist Nun," an educa-

tional program in Bodhgaya in 1996. In 2003, she founded Sravasti Abbey, one of the few Buddhist monasteries in the United States, near Newport, Washington. She is involved in interfaith dialogue, prison work, conferences between scientists and Buddhists, meetings of Western Buddhist teachers, and gatherings of Western Buddhist monastics. She teaches Buddhist philosophy, psychology, and meditation worldwide. Her books include *Open Heart, Clear Mind*; *Buddhism for Beginners*; *Working with Anger*; *Taming the Mind*; *Cultivating a Compassionate Heart*; and *How to Free Your Mind*.

Great Sky Sesshin

The Great Sky Sesshin, a Soto Zen-style sesshin bringing together teachers and lay participants from all over the Midwest to deepen their practice, will be held at Hokyoji in southeast Minnesota from August 12 through 19. Each day will include zazen, sutra chanting, dharma talks, dokusan, formal oryoki meals and work. Teachers will include Dokai Georgesen (Hokyoji), Tonen O'Conner (Milwaukee Zen Center), Zuiko Redding (Cedar Rapids Zen Center), Genmyo Smith (Prairie Zen Center in Champaign, IL), and Rosan. Cost is \$280 for a bunk bed (with air mattress) or \$230 for camping. For more info please go to www.milwaukeezencenter.org or contact Tonen O'Conner at kokyo-an@earthlink.net or 414-963-0526.

Volunteers Needed Labor Day Weekend!

Our biggest fund-raising event of the year will occur on Labor Day weekend, which this year is Saturday, September 2 through Monday, September 4, when the Zen Center runs a food booth at the Japanese Festival taking place at the Missouri Botanical Garden. For many people in our sangha our presence at the Japanese Festival has been their introduction to the Zen Center or to the practice of Zen. Thus this event is not only an important fund-raiser, helping to keep the Zen Center in operation, but is also an opportunity to put our practice into action and to bring it to the wider public.

It takes many volunteers to make our food booth run safely and in an enjoyable manner for all involved. 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.

Be sure to enjoy the Japanese Festival's many activities when you are not working at our booth; volunteers get in for free, a major benefit. The Festival is one of St. Louis' premier cultural events and is a great way to learn more about Japan and Japanese culture. We understand the sumo wrestlers will be offering demonstrations again this year, a rare event and one which was very popular with last year's attendees.

Back Yard Composter Training, June 24

A free Back Yard Composter Training class will be held at the Zen Center on Saturday, June 24 at 1:00 pm. This class on the essentials of composting, how to compost, and the beneficial uses of compost is offered by the St. Louis County Department of Health. The class will last for an hour or so. A free compost bin is offered to all class participants.

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Anyone who wishes to take the course and has not already registered needs to do so by June 18. To register, contact Kuryo at the Zen Center. When you register, please also tell Kuryo which of the two models of compost bin (pictured elsewhere in the newsletter) you wish to receive. If you have questions, contact Kuryo.

Simpler Living Through Unconventional Wisdom

by Kuryo

In our culture, a set of propositions we call “conventional wisdom” are often invoked to explain, or explain away, our actions. Supposedly these sayings represent wisdom passed down by our elders. Sometimes the conventional wisdom really is wise, as in many proverbs. Other times what passes for wisdom has more to do with enriching powerful people than it does with living in tune with the Dharma. Looking critically at some examples may help us to deconstruct other “wisdoms” that prevent us from living more simply.

One of the more common examples of conventional wisdom is when we use time-saving as a reason for buying something more expensive than we might otherwise have. For instance, a lot of lawn tractors and large mowers have been sold to people who are mowing quarter-acre or smaller lawns. The premise is that because these machines can mow larger swaths than the usual small powered lawn mowers, they save time. We assume that the saved time will be spent on a more valued pursuit. But do the large mowers and lawn tractors actually save time? Consider that their initial cost is hundreds or thousands of dollars higher than a small mower. In the book *Your Money or Your Life*, Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin point out that paid employment amounts to exchanging our time for money in the form of wages. They offer a procedure to calculate a real hourly wage including the extra time and money spent just to keep a job, such as commuting costs and time. Knowing this number, we can calculate how many hours we need to work for any purchase we make. For most of us, spending an extra \$500 to \$1000 or more on a large mower or tractor amounts to working as much as 100 extra hours or more just to cover the purchase. We might not spend that much time mowing the lawn in an entire year! And that isn't the only way the more expensive machine costs more time and money. Consider that its extra complexity means it will need more expensive maintenance and repairs, more often; that it will use more gasoline and oil; and that it will be harder to get to the repair shop and might cost extra money to get it there. We need to work even more time to cover these expenses. For these reasons Meiku and I use a standard small powered lawn mower even though most of our acre lot is still in lawn. We are slowly decreasing the amount of the lot needing mowing in different ways. Eventually we'll reduce the lawn to the point where we can use a non-powered reel mower to mow it. Consider where you might be able to switch from a “timesaving” machine

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Types of Compost Bins



Handy Composter

- 30" High.
- Assembles without tools
- Can change diameter from 18" to 39"
- Holds 10-20 cubic feet of material
- Made of recycled content plastic



Earth Machine

- 33" High, 34" base
- Assembles without tools
- Has a lid for a completely enclosed system
- Holds 10 cubic feet of material
- Made of recycled content plastic

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to a smaller, cheaper alternative. Doing this and other simplicity practices consistently can offer great savings of both money and time and lead to working fewer hours or to a lower-paid but more satisfying job. In addition, the smaller, cheaper alternative generally requires less energy and materials to make and operate and creates less pollution in its use and disposal, making it a wiser choice for our interdependent world.

More insidious and destructive examples of conventional wisdom can be found in some of the cultural myths we are taught. Consider the one about government being a social contract, for example. Supposedly “the people” decided that they needed a government and laws to codify what sorts of behaviors are prohibited, police to catch those breaking the law, and courts to determine if an accused person broke a law and, if so, what punishment to set. But there is no evidence to suggest that common people were ever given the chance to decide whether or not they wanted to be governed by law, or how they might wish to govern themselves. Government by law means that offenses are committed against the state, not against individuals. States are set up by, maintained by, and intended to benefit people and organizations with power. We can better understand how laws are made and how they are enforced when we realize that they are intended as a means to keep certain people and organizations powerful and reduce the threat of the rest of us demanding to have a real say in what is done and how it’s done.

One of the reasons to join a group discussion course on simplicity is to share with other people ways to deconstruct conventional wisdom. Otherwise it’s difficult to see convention as just that rather than “the way things really are.” We are planning to offer a voluntary simplicity discussion course at the Zen Center starting in about mid-September on Tuesday evenings. Watch for more details and sign-up info in the next issue of Sangha Life.

Live a good life

by Rosan Daido

As we are part and parcel of an interdependently originated system in time and space, we must live a good life in the past, present and future for self and other. This is the holy (wholly wholesome) life. For this, we must be awakened to the truth of this system. Truth leads to freedom, equality, love and peace (the five blisses). Otherwise we only struggle and suffer in delusion, bondage, discrimination, exploitation and extermination (the five calamities). There is no such thing as a good life for oneself and bad lives for others.

Zen Center E-mail List

All members and friends of the sangha are invited to subscribe to the Missouri 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

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.

6:00-6:40 pm	Zazen
6:40-7:30 pm	Yoga

Monday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
11:00-11:40 am	Zazen
6:30-7:00 pm	Instruction
7:00-7:20 pm	Zazen
7:20-9:00 pm	Writing Practice

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. Any changes to this schedule: please contact the Zen Center.

