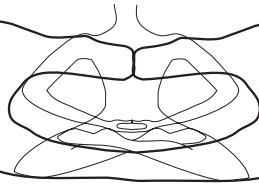


Sangha Life



The Missouri Zen Center

August-September, 2005

The Missouri Zen Center

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



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Coming Events

- Aug. 12-Sept. 9: ICAN! Food Drive
- Sept. 3-5: Japanese Festival fundraiser
- Wednesdays, Sept. 7-Oct.12: Beginners Mind
- Sept. 24: Sesshin
- Sept. 25: Lay ordination and potluck lunch
- Oct. 15: Your Money or Your Life workshop
- Nov. 5: Mindfulness Day



*Address Correction
Requested*

Visit Our Web Site:
www.missourizencenter.org

New Pond Completed

Sangha member William Pizzola has designed and installed a new pond at the Zen Center to replace the one that was destroyed by the falling tree in May 2004. The new pond features a short streambed with a rock beach sloping into the pond. Will expects that turtles, frogs, and toads can use the gentle slope to get into and out of the pond as they wish. We have already seen birds using the pond! Fish have appeared in the new pond as well. The sound of the water flowing over the rocks in the streambed permeates the Buddha hall during meditation periods.

The pond renovation is part of the work required of the Zen Center to obtain its new occupancy permit, the remaining requirement we need to fulfill for our use permit. Other work has been completed or will be within the next month or two. We are also working to improve our gardens and welcome volunteers to help; watch the listserv for announcements of garden work periods.



ICAN! Food Drive

The Zen Center is one of 12 religious organizations participating in this year's ICAN! Food Drive, taking place from August 12 to September 9. This is the second year of the ICAN! food drive, organized by Faith Beyond Walls, www.faithbeyondwalls.org, a local interreligious partnership to perform community service. The Zen Center has participated both years. All donations collected will be distributed by the St. Louis Area Foodbank. In a given week, 43,580 people will receive food distributions from the St. Louis Area Foodbank. The need is great; your donations will help to fulfill that need.

On August 12, a food barrel for collecting the donations will be placed on the front porch of the Zen Center. Recommended items are canned meats, baby formula, rice, canned fruits, beef stew, beans, canned soups, hot or cold cereal, peanut butter, diapers, feminine hygiene products, toilet paper, canned vegetables, macaroni and cheese, and powdered milk. As a barrel is filled, it will be removed from the porch and another barrel put in its place. If the barrel is full when you make a donation, put

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your donation near the barrel. The last barrel will be collected on September 9. We encourage donations from sangha members and friends!

Volunteers Needed For Japanese Festival

The Zen Center needs volunteers to work at its food booth at the Missouri Botanical Garden's Japanese Festival. This fund-raiser, one of two major fund-raisers put on by the Zen Center each year, helps us meet Zen Center expenses while keeping member dues at an affordable level.

The Japanese Festival is held on Labor Day weekend, which is Saturday, September 3 through Monday, September 5 this year. We will prepare and sell fruit slushies, green tea, vegetable rice, sesame noodles, and sushi.

We need as many members and friends as possible to work one or two (or more!) four-hour shifts anytime that weekend. It takes many volunteers for our food booth to be successful. We need to prepare ingredients; cook the food; transport food from where it's made to where it's sold; make slushies and green tea; handle food sales; keep equipment and the booth clean; and answer questions about our practice. We need people to set up the kitchen and the booth each morning, clean up on Saturday and Sunday evenings, and pack up on Monday evening. We have found that it requires at least 8 to 10 people per shift to prepare and sell enough food for our customers and to keep our booth running safely and efficiently.

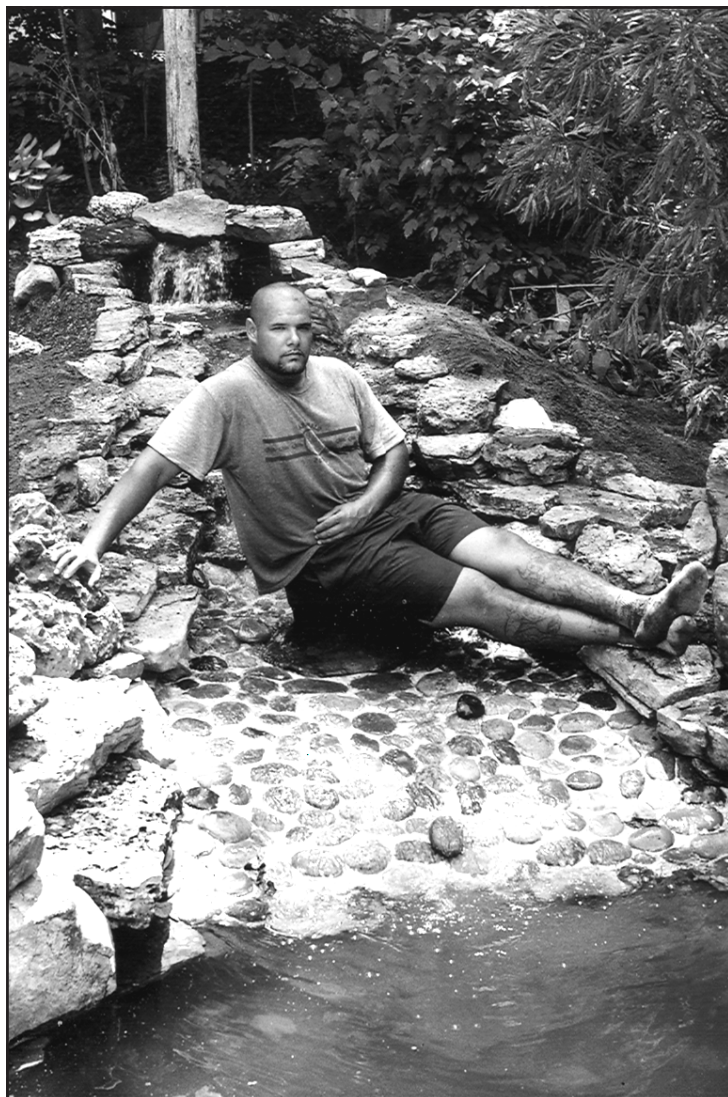
The booth offers us a wonderful opportunity to spread the Dharma while we prepare delicious food for festival-goers. Many people hear about us for the first time when they purchase food at our booth. Later they learn about the Awakened Way through taking our classes and sitting with us.

Work shifts each day are from 8 a.m.-noon; 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.; and 3-7 p.m. We may need help on Friday evening, September 2, after sitting to locate and organize equipment at the Zen Center. On Saturday morning, we will need volunteers to arrive at the Zen Center early to transport items to the Botanical Garden. The final shift on Monday includes time for cleaning up and returning items to the Zen Center.

Everyone who works any of the shifts will receive a pass for free admission to the Japanese Festival and a parking pass for the volunteer parking areas. This will save you the ten dollar admission fee for the Japanese Festival and allow you to enjoy the many festival activities during the time you are not working at our booth. Your family members and friends who volunteer will also receive this benefit, so let them know about this opportunity and ask them to join us! We need all the help we can get. If you can't work for two shifts, how about getting at least one family member or friend to work the same shift you do? Two people working one shift equals one person working two shifts! Children who are old enough to make change or dish up food, and can follow instructions on safe food handling, are welcome to volunteer as well.

If you are able to participate in this fund-raiser, we welcome your help with gratitude. A sign-up sheet for each shift is posted at the Zen Center. You may sign up any time you are at the Zen Center. You may also sign up by phone or e-mail to the Zen Center. When you sign up, please include your name and those of family and friends who are also volunteering and your phone number. Also include the shift(s) you wish to work if you are signing up by phone or email.

We look forward to working with you at our food booth at the Japanese Festival.



William Pizzola poses on the new pond.

Beginners Mind

A special series of classes for beginning students of Zen will take place on six Wednesday evenings starting on Wednesday, September 7 from 7-9pm and continuing through Wednesday, October 12. This class is especially suited to people who have never sat before and who want to learn more about Zen from both an experiential and a religious standpoint. Detailed instructions on sitting posture, progressively longer periods of Zen meditation, question and answer periods, and information on Buddhist history, practice, and living will all be offered over the six weeks. By the time the class ends, attendees should be well established in their sitting practice and be ready to attend any of the meditation periods offered at the Zen Center.

We ask class attendees to make a donation of \$30 to help support the Zen Center. However, do not let an inability to pay keep you from attending the class if you have a strong desire to take it. Smaller donations or volunteer help will be gratefully accepted. Also, we ask all attendees to arrive promptly at 7pm; better to arrive early than late.

To register, mail the following to the Zen Center: your name, address, phone, email if applicable, and donation (checks may be made payable to the Missouri Zen Center). If you have questions about the class, contact the Zen Center.



Sesshin & Lay Ordination

A day and a half sesshin will take place on Saturday, September 24 through Sunday, September 25. Sesshin, an extended period of sitting, allows us to see more clearly how our minds operate. Following the Sunday sitting periods, the lay ordination ceremony will take place. Lay ordainees vow to accept and practice 16 precepts.

The sesshin will begin at 6:20am on Saturday and will include 4 sitting periods alternating with chanting and kinhin in the morning, followed by a Dharma talk and samu. An oryoki lunch will be offered. Three sittings alternating with kinhin take place after lunch, concluding with a recitation and tea and discussion. Two sittings in the evening may be offered as well.

The sesshin will conclude with the normal Sunday morning schedule until samu, when preparations for lay ordination will be made. Lay ordination will take place starting at 11am on Sunday and will be followed by a vegetarian potluck. Please join us and offer the support of our sangha to our lay ordainees!

Your Money or Your Life

On Saturday, October 15 from 9am to about 4pm the Zen Center will offer a workshop on the *Your Money or Your Life* program to help your spending become more satisfying and more in line with your values. This

can begin, or aid, your practice of voluntary simplicity. As one of the three pillars of our practice, voluntary simplicity means stepping off the 100 foot pole to reduce our bondage to consumerism and to time famine. It means having more time for the truly important and meaningful activities in our lives, including our spiritual practice. It also means bringing our way of life more in line with the Earth's ability to sustain us.

During the workshop we'll play the audio program of one of the seminars Joe Dominguez, the late co-author of the book *Your Money or Your Life*, gave on this topic in the 1980s. Joe's dynamic speaking style and effective use of language inspired many people to take up the 9 steps of his program years before the book that he co-authored with Vicki Robin made it into print. Along the way we'll have group discussions of some of the ideas he presents. Kuryo will act as facilitator. Several presenters who have tried different ways to introduce the program to people, including hour-long talks and eight-week study groups, have found that the seminar seems to be the most effective way to introduce the program and inspire people to practice it.

We'll meet in the Zen Center library at 9am (come sit with us first at 8am and tune-up your mindfulness for the workshop!). We'll have an hour break for lunch; you may bring your own, or there are several good restaurants a short walk from the Zen Center. The workshop will last till

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Living the Global Ethic Resisting War Taxes

by Kuryo

On Sunday, August 7, during his Dharma talk, Rosan mentioned how paying taxes to the US government supports the war effort, directly through expenditures on ongoing wars and other defense expenses and indirectly through payments of medical expenses to veterans, veteran's pensions, and debt service incurred to pay for past wars. The War Resisters League, www.warresisters.org, publishes calculations of the percentage of tax dollars going to pay for current wars and war-related expenses and those of past wars. They have calculated that about 18% of the Fiscal Year 2006 expenditures pay for past wars and military items, and about 30% of the expenditures pay for current military and related expenses. They exclude expenditures for trust funds such as Social Security because they come from income flows separate from the General Fund, into which tax monies flow. The IRS, www.irs.gov, includes Social Security expenditures in its calculations of tax distributions, making its military spending percentage misleadingly low.

Over the years people such as Henry David Thoreau, religious groups such as the Society of Friends, and antiwar organizations such as the War Resisters League have advocated for nonpayment of war taxes. Thoreau spent one night in jail due to his refusal to pay a tax that he felt supported a then-current war. Apparently his friend Ralph Waldo Emerson visited him while he was in jail and asked him what he was doing there. Thoreau responded, why aren't you in here with me? We face this same dilemma. As working adults we find ourselves paying taxes to the federal government, some of which support war, others of which fund programs that seem beneficial. At present there is no procedure for us to divert our tax payments into a fund that supports only social programs, though such a fund been proposed by some members of the House and Senate. Another attempt to institute a Peace Tax Fund may be made in the upcoming legislative session.

Refusing to pay income taxes that pay for war involves various difficulties: from trying to live on an income less than taxable limits, to forcible collection of unpaid taxes by the IRS including seizures of funds or property like houses or cars, even to jail terms in some cases. Anyone who is interested in learning more about ways to avoid paying war taxes, possible consequences, and how to reduce their severity, can read *War Tax Resistance: A Guide to Withholding Your Support from the Military*, by Ed Hedeman. It is available from the War Resisters League.

An easy way to begin, with close to no risk, is to refuse to pay the federal excise tax on phone service. This tax was first imposed as a "temporary" tax by the War Tax Revenue Act of 1914 and has been imposed during WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. In 1990 it became permanent and was set at 3%. While it was claimed that funds would be used to fund child care, like income taxes it goes directly into the General Fund from which all government expenditures are made.

For most of us the amount we pay is so small that the government would spend much more to attempt to collect the tax, and it rarely does so. Meiku and I have refused to pay the federal excise tax on our phone service for the past three years. Court decisions have held that phone service cannot be cut off for refusal to pay the tax. The tax not paid can be given to a group such as the St. Louis Covenant Community of War Tax Resisters (SLCCWTR), 314-725-5303, hras@humanrightSACTION.net. They hold events each April 15 and at other times to raise awareness about resisting war taxes, and as a group they meet each spring or summer to distribute refused taxes given to them to peace, human rights, and other social justice causes.

To begin phone tax refusal, contact the SLCCWTR or read the the book cited above, which includes wording to use with your phone company should it refuse to credit you for the unpaid tax. If at any time you need advice, also contact SLCCWTR. They will put you on their list to receive notifications of actions and where to send refused taxes. You can thereby take a step off the 100 foot pole in the service of peace.

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about 4pm. Attendees should bring a copy of the workbook for the audio program, titled *Transforming Your Relationship with Money: A Complete Workbook and Audio Course*. The workbook by itself costs \$10 plus shipping. If you prefer, you may purchase a copy of the CD recording of the seminar for your own use, which includes the workbook, for \$39.95 plus shipping; just bring the workbook to the workshop. Both items may be purchased at the Simple Living Network's website, www.simpleliving.net. A donation to the Zen Center would be appreciated as well. Please join us on October 15! Contact Kuryo at the Zen Center to register or for more information.

Mindfulness Day

The Buddhist Council of Greater St. Louis will offer Mindfulness Day at the Thai Buddhist Temple, 890 Lindsay Lane in Florissant, on Saturday, November 5 from 1-4pm. The event is free and open to the public. More information on the event will be available in the next issue of the newsletter. It will also be posted at the Zen Center and on our listserv as soon as it becomes available. Please join us for Mindfulness Day, and let your family members, friends, acquaintances, and co-workers know about this event as well as it is a good introduction to Buddhist practice.

LIVE SELFLESS LIFE

by Rosan Daido

The global or universal life system is limitlessly interdependent. Selfishness against it is the source of all suffering. Selfishness is sinfulness in the holiness (whole/wholeness) of the total life system, like a bubble pitting itself against the ocean. Selfishness, whether individual, social or global, can never solve problems. Only selfless holiness can solve them. If it is not whole, it is not truth, goodness, or beauty in totality. If it is not wholesome, it is not harmonious, free (priya, beloved), or happy in reality. If it is not holy, it is not religion in function. Amrita (immortality, ambrosia) here and now is only found in selflessness.

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.

Monday

6:00-6:40 am	Zazen
6:30-7:00 pm	Instruction
7:00-7:20 pm	Zazen
7:20-9:00 pm	Discussion/ questions

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
7:00-7:40 pm	Zazen
After sitting	Writing Practice

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
After sitting	Dinner out

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.

