

# Myōju

Soto Zen Buddhism in Australia



March 2019, Issue 75

## Impermanence as Possibility

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*Illustration Sally Richmond*



MYOJU IS A PUBLICATION OF JIKISHOAN ZEN BUDDHIST COMMUNITY INC

## Editorial

To what shall I liken the world?  
Moonlight, reflected in dewdrops  
Shaken from a crane's bill.

—Zen Master Dogen

Welcome to the first edition of *Myoju* for 2019, an auspicious year for the Jikishoan community as it enters its 20th year, which as Ekai Osho has noted, represents a new phase of maturity, like that of a young adult moving from dependence to independence. In May Ekai Osho will be installed as Abbot of Tokozan, the first Soto Zen temple in Australia and as such, the first roots of the Soto lineage will take to the earth of our ancient land.

The theme for the four issues of the year will be based on that most fundamental of Buddha's teaching, impermanence. The theme for this issue, 'Impermanence as Possibility', speaks to the potential of the Jikishoan community to continue to evolve and transform as we seek to embed those roots within the ground of the wider community.

In this issue we also have a focus on Zen Master Dogen's teaching *Tenzo Kyokun* (Instructions to the Cook). Nothing says impermanence in the vegetable kingdom quite like a mushroom and James Watt, the *Tenzo* for the Jikishoan community, reveals its wonders in his student talk. In *Sangha News*, Teishin Shona Innes reflects on the relationship between impermanence and the practice of *sangha dana*, and long-term member of the community, Ann Alexander, reflects on moving back to her home city of Hobart.

In this issue we welcome back previous *Myoju* co-ordinator Robin Laurie, this time to the role of production with training and support from Sangetsu Dan Carter. We wish Robin all the best in her new role, and to the Jikishoan community, a joyful year of practice in our 20th anniversary year.

Jessica Cummins  
On behalf of Ekai Korematsu Osho—Editor

## Myoju

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## Next Issue

The next issue of *Myoju* will be posted around the Winter Solstice June 2019.

Contributions that support our practice are most welcome, including articles, reviews of books or online materials, interviews, personal reflections, artwork and photographs.

The content deadline is **22 April 2019** and the theme is 'Impermanence and Practice'.

If you would like to contribute or advertise in the next issue of *Myoju*, email publications @ jikishoan.org.au.

## Abbot's News



*Tanga Ryo Entering Ceremony for Practice Period. Photo: Katherine Yeo*

The first three months of 2019 witnessed Ekai Osho's continuing efforts to plan the multi-faceted schedule for the celebrations of Jikishoan's 20th year. At the same time Ekai Osho continued his teachings within Tokozan and beyond.

After the introductory three Sanzenkai, Main Course B conducted *bansan* at the end of January, with Ekai Osho leading the community. Main Course A also returned to classes in January. And for the first time in its ten years, MCA classes are now held at three locations – Shogoin (Footscray), Tokozan (Heidelberg) and the Australian Shiatsu College (Brunswick).

Ekai Osho continues to teach the Dharma beyond Tokozan. At the 36th Buddhist Summer School on 12 and 13 January, Ekai Osho taught "On Taking Refuge in the Treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha" (Kie Bupposo Ho' from *Shobogenzo*). On 24 February, at the Tibetan Buddhist Society's Losar or New Year festivities, Ekai Osho's talk was "What is Buddhist Meditation?" On both these occasions, Teishin Shona, Teacher-in-Training, was the attendant.

In preparation for Jikishoan's 20th Year celebrations, two Sotoshu officials from the International Department, Rev Shundo Kushida and Rev Taiga Ito, came for preparation for the *shinzan-shiki*, (the Abbot Installation Ceremony), the *kessei-ango* (monastic practice period) and connected event the *hossenshiki* (Shuso ceremony). This will be conducted according to Soto Zen tradition. The Reverends spent three hectic days at Tokozan, from 5 - 8 January.

During that time, Ekai Osho hosted *chosan* on two mornings and also supper. Present were the two Reverends from Sotoshu and four Australian monks who have been studying at Toshoji – Esho Osho, Kanzan Cawthorn, Isshin

Taylor and Koun Vincent. This group of monks, together with three Committee members from Jikishoan, paid a visit to Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan of Quang Minh Temple. Venerable has generously offered to assist with resources.

Ekai Osho also made contact with leaders of various other Buddhist groups: Chi Kwang Sunim of Chonghye SA Seon Centre and Kagyu E-Vam Buddhist Insitute.

Professor Arthur McKeown, Director of the Buddhist Studies in India Program, Carleton-Antioch Global Engagement, will also be here for three weeks of the celebrations. A series of evening talks by these distinguished speakers has been planned, beginning the week of 6 May.

The temple is very close to readiness for the 20th Year Celebrations. Ekai Osho has built the *kaisando* – a multi-function room dedicated to the Founder, Tsugen Narasaki Roshi, and other important teachers. To attend to further preparation Ekai Osho made a ten-day trip to Japan. He visited four temples – Zuioji, Toshoji, Jokoji and Rinzoin and the headquarters of Sotoshu.

The entry ceremony of the *tanga* preparation period for *ango* (formal monastic training from 15 April to 15 July) was held at Tokozan on 17 February, led by the Head Monk, Isshin Taylor. The *tanga* period will close on 24 March.

Ekai Osho encourages Sanzen students to take advantage of the opportunities for training and practice in everyday life offered in this formal monastic training period.

Shuzan Katherine Yeo  
Attendant to the Abbot

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## Committee News

The 20th Committee of Management is settling into its term of practice. We have a full compliment of Committee members this year – four Office Bearers and five Ordinary Members. Our newest members, Nicky Coles, Tan Nguyen and Michael Colton are a very welcome addition to the group, and their commitment and presence is much appreciated. Iris Dillow has resigned as assistant committee member and we thank her for her dedication and care in fulfilling the role.

### 20th Anniversary Celebrations

This is a great occasion for the Jikishoan Community and for Soto Zen Buddhism at large. Please read the insert from Ekai Osho for the outline and details of these celebrations and we invite you to participate. This is not only a celebration of 20 years practice and building of Jikishoan community but also provides a platform for activities for the next 10 to 20 years. If you have any queries please be in touch with Shuzan Katherine Yeo or myself.

Gassho,  
**Shona Innes**  
President  
20th Committee of Management.

*Ekai Korematsu Osho and the 20th Committee of Management would like to welcome Peter Esan Brammer, as the newest member of Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community.*



*Jikishoan 20th Committee of Management at the AGM 2018. Photo: Katherine Yeo*

## Welcome to Jikishoan

Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community is a growing community of people learning and practising Zen meditation under the guidance of Ekai Korematsu Osho. Ekai Osho has practised and taught Zen Buddhism in Japan, the United States and India for over 30 years.

The name of the community encapsulates its spirit: 'Jiki' means straightforward or direct; 'sho' means proof or satori; and 'an' means hut. The practice is the proof—there is no proof separate from that. The proof, satori or awakening does not come after you've finished—it is direct, here and now.

Jikishoan runs a range of programmes throughout the year, which are conducted in the spirit of Bendoho—the original way of practice prescribed by Dogen Zenji in the 13th century.

More information about courses, one-day workshops, retreats and weekly meditation sessions can be found in the teaching schedule of this magazine and on the website at [jikishoan.org.au](http://jikishoan.org.au). We warmly welcome anyone who would like to know more about Zen Buddhism to attend any of these activities.

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## Bright Pearl

A note on the title of this magazine.



Master Gensa Shibi said as an expression of the truth, 'The whole universe in the ten directions is one bright pearl.' One day a monk asked Master Gensa, 'I have heard your words that the whole universe in the ten directions is one bright pearl. How should we understand this?' The Master answered, 'The whole universe in the ten directions is one bright pearl. What use is understanding?'

Later the Master asked the monk, 'How do you understand this?' The monk replied, 'The whole universe in the ten directions is one bright pearl. What use is understanding?' The Master said, 'I see that you are struggling to get inside a demon's cave in a black mountain ... even surmising and worry is not different from the bright pearl. No action nor any thought has ever been caused by anything other than the bright pearl. Therefore, forward and backward steps in a demon's black-mountain cave are just the one bright pearl itself.'

Excerpted from 'Ikka-no-Myoju' in Dogen Zenji's *Shobogenzo*.

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## Dharma talk

# The Three Minds of Zen

### *Ekai Korematsu Osho*

A talk given by Ekai Osho at Retreat 59, November 2018. Ekai Osho is referring to the Three Minds of Zen Practice as set out by Zen Master Dogen in 'Tenzo Kyokun' (Instructions for the Cook), a chapter in Eihei Shingi - Pure Standards for the Zen Community.

Cultivation, according to the stage or phase where one is. Zen Master Dogen has made it very clear; if you're talking about the heart and mind then the first stage is joyful mind, tapping into that joy. Where that joy comes from is sustainable and lasting, it's your own resource. That is one of the three minds.

I use a different term. When joy comes it means self-care is met. You are able to look after yourself physically, mentally - harmonising. You become an expert in managing your physical requirements; enough exercise - not too much - that is harmonising, then naturally your being is joyful. Everything is a reason to be happy; sounds and colours make people very happy, it's one important factor of joyful mind. Just sitting is very joyful; just being able to breathe makes you so happy - it doesn't cost anything!

And because this joy brings a natural pattern of breathing; very slow, natural and healthy, joy comes with managing our own feelings. If you're able to manage your feelings - and being human is characterised by various feelings and emotions, both negative and positive - you become a master of your own feelings. It is a joy. You can manage anger, it doesn't bother you. Excitement doesn't overwhelm or overcome you. Joy comes from that. Joyful mind.

Intensive training in the three forms of zazen has to come first - it will last as long as you live. But that part of training cannot be done effectively if you are looking for something outside of yourself, if you are always looking for the conditions which are going to make you happy. When things are going well you are happy; that is not joyful mind. It requires cultivation and training, then you can receive it.

So when all those thoughts arise you use that - the cultivation of joyful mind. It's a result of your training. The technical term is *jijuyu samadhi*, self-enjoyment *samadhi*. The body/mind is called *sambhogakaya* body, Sambhogakaya Buddha. We recite this in the meal chant. *sambhogakaya* is the reward body; you have done the cultivation, so you arrive at that point. You tap into your resource - universal - but you have to do that to receive the *sambhogakaya*. These are the criteria of the Buddha's work. This kind of joyful mind brings benefit to the society. It's not a stressful mind - working hard. 'Look at what I'm doing - I've attended every session of the schedule. Hard work!'

Joyful mind is not like that, it is the criteria of the Buddha - *jijuyu samadhi*, self-enjoyment *samadhi*. *Ji* means the self, *ju* means receiving. Nurtured by that the Buddha's activity continues. Another way to say this is entering into the Buddha way through harmonising body, breath and mind. If you do not learn to harmonise your body, breath and mind consciousness in one you cannot enter it; *Jijuyu samadhi* is not there, joyful mind is not cultivated. But this is not the end-goal either, this is the platform.

Zen Master Dogen then talks about the next mind, parental mind, *roshin*. I'm talking about the attitude and mind Zen Master Dogen is pointing to in the conclusion of 'Tenzo Kyokun'. In the kitchen, joyful mind, *kishin* - joyful mind/heart needs to be cultivated within and then you can tap into that and joy prevails. 'I am doing stressful work but actually I'm enjoying it'. You don't know whether you are totally stressed out or whether it's just tremendous joy coming through hard work. You know what I mean? If you

...training cannot be done effectively if you are looking for something outside of yourself, if you are always looking for the conditions which are going to make you happy.

are doing something you like you don't mind pushing to the limit - you are totally stressed but you like it! So, you tap into the harmony of that, the unity, so there are no dualities, no picking and choosing.

When you tap into the resource that brings a lot of potential, you tap into the universal source. You have to do it for your own sake, no-one else can help you. So there is no point asking 'Who did this - I did so much!' Don't you think we waste too much time on 'I am doing this much but teacher didn't give me any incentives?' That is early stage. If you meet with [someone at] that stage, your response comes from the joyful mind - taking that person in. That becomes the next step, cultivation of *roshin*. *Roshin* means old heart/mind. Parental experience.

Parental mind is like... one has come to the reward body and mind. Without anything extra they will do something for you - like a parent to a baby or child. That level of practice becomes available to you if you first cultivate joyful mind, then there is the opportunity to cultivate parental mind. Babies just need to be themselves - offering their parents training in parental mind by being high maintenance, otherwise there's no cultivation. 'If I do that baby will say thank you' - no! They will take everything forever - your sleeping time, everything. So that is the next stage. But the one who can engage in cultivation, the person who can tap into the joyful mind, who is no longer wasting time on 'I am doing this, or he did that.' You don't waste time, so you can give attention. That is the training system.

A concrete way is to receive the position of attendant. The *jisha* attends to the teacher. To perform the role of *jisha* means tapping into the ground of joy with the practice - reward body. The *jisha* is looking after the needs of the teacher. The teacher is like a baby, high maintenance, very demanding. The *jisha* has to arrive at that place, ready to work on parental mind. Just work. 'This is not a good teacher, he offended me!' We waste a lot of time on that. It's a different place. *Shuso* is the same thing, the attendant - the *benji* or *shoki* - an opportunity to develop parental mind, so even if you have monastic training

and you are able only to do the skill part - not the role of attendant - you don't develop parental mind. But if you develop parental mind you know all about the baby - just looking, you don't have to ask questions. Baby needs his nappy (laughs) and milk - feeding, sleeping, baby is happy. And when baby is happy you are happy. Intimate.

So being appointed to the role of *jisha* is an honour. The same as the training system in the *tenzo ryo*. The *tennan* is the attendant to the *tenzo*. *Tenzo* asks you to do this and that, very fundamental things, very demanding. Under the skill of the coordinator the *tennan* is able to grow in certain areas. They start with *gomasio*, but not only *gomasio*. 'I completed *tennan* training!' What you did was learn to make *gomasio*. 'My *tennan* training is finished. 'It's not like that - you are attending to the *tenzo*, to all aspects of the baby.

So if you don't have that ground there is no bearing to be in the role of *tenzo* - in name only. You have to go back to the various things, to the training system. What I'm saying is everything has training but cultivation of joyful mind comes first. That training has to be in place to tap into the universal source. But if you don't do that you have no access to it, forever looking to others, 'when conditions are perfect I will be perfect'. Don't you think so? Blaming it on the weather, on the food, on other people. You will have no clue about the Zen saying 'every day is a good day'. That is the perfect expression for tapping into the source of joy - whether you live or die.

So three minds. The cultivation of joyful mind starts with looking after yourself, self-care. The three parts coming together in fulfilment, from joyful mind to the parental mind. Parental mind is the mind that manifests joy into every aspect of your life. Joy in the hardship. Only with cultivation of parental mind can you overcome ego. The last stage is big mind, magnanimous mind. Finally coming to terms and understanding what big means. Zen Master Dogen put it in that way.

Transcribed by Margaret Kokyo Lynch. Edited by Margaret Kokyo Lynch and Iris Shinkai Dillow.

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## Student talk

# What Can Mushrooms Teach Us About Impermanence ?

JAMES HOGEN WATT

I'm the tenzo for Jikishoan, the head cook for the community. I've been the tenzo for nearly three years now and in the tenzo ryo for around six years. I'm also in my fourth year as a B course student with my practice based here on Sunday evenings. Tenzo ryo practice extends across a total of 75 occasions a year. Sunday Sanzenkai is what Ekai Osho considers the base for tenzo practice. The retreat tenzo ryo is like a 'pop-up' ryo and is made up of both regular tenzo ryo members and other participants on retreat.

I want to start by telling you a bit about shiitake mushrooms. During retreat they are used every day in various dishes and to make the dashi stock, which is made by soaking dried shiitake mushrooms with *kombu* (seaweed) in water overnight.

The Japanese name shiitake is composed of two parts - *shī*, the name of the tree *castanopsis cuspidata* (native to Japan and Korea) which provides the dead logs on which the mushrooms are typically cultivated; and *take*, mushroom. The earliest written record of shiitake cultivation was in China by He Zhan in 1209. The first book on shiitake cultivation in Japan was by Satō Chūryō in 1796. So shiitake mushrooms have quite a history and even feature in stories and teachings written by Zen Master Dogen.

Mushrooms tend to conjure up images of dark, damp and rotting places - not the sort of imagery we usually associate with Zen - but mushrooms are in fact the fruits of Zen.

The part of the mushroom that we see is actually called the fruit, but the actual body of the mushroom is a mycelium made out of a web of tiny filaments. The mycelium is usually hidden in the soil, in wood, or another food source. A mycelium may be the size of a single ant, or cover many kilometres and can grow up to one kilometre a day.

Guess what the largest living thing on the planet is? It's actually a mushroom in Oregon in the USA! This particular

gargantuan fungus covers about nine square kilometres in Oregon. I quite like the idea that perhaps we are like a fungus, appearing to be separate, individual fruits but actually all connected below the surface as part of a mycelium web.

Fungi are like simple plants that lack chlorophyll, the green pigment that allows most plants to convert sunlight into carbohydrate. Instead, most fungi obtain nutrients from dead plant matter. Fungi are like miniature versions of our stomachs, turned inside-out. They eat by releasing enzymes outside of their bodies that break down nutrients so they can then be absorbed. This breaking down in order to grow is a common image in Buddhism. I have always liked the relationship between the word humility and humus - humus being the rich organic matter prevalent in fertile soil. When we are humble and have humility we are very down to earth.

Jacinda Ardern, New Zealand's prime minister recently gave her inaugural speech at the United Nations. She introduced the world to the Maori word *kaitakitanga*. This term describes the guardianship and parental role we should take in caring for the sky, sea and the land. Jacinda used it in reference to global warming and the environment. Mushrooms also have an important role in the ecosystem and environment. Fungi are important decomposers in the natural world and scientific studies have shown that mushrooms have a role in slowing climate warming. Zen Master Dogen encourages us to live our life according to what he called the three minds: *daishin*, big mind; *roshin*, parental mind and *kishin*, joyful mind. By following the teachings and sitting Zazen we can cultivate these three minds. Roshin, parental mind, is perhaps what *kaitakitanga* feels like - and shows in our kitchen practice when we care for each other and the equipment and ingredients we use.

Mushrooms also happen to be very nutritious - an important fact for a tenzo when you're providing the



*Shitake mushrooms growing on a log.*

sustenance to the community - which is actually the aim of the tenzo ryo and the whole reason we exist. Mushrooms are a good source of B vitamins and rank the highest among vegetables for protein content. They are low in fat and calories, and in dried form, have almost as much protein as veal. They have been called the vegetarian's steak!

I came across a company in northern NSW who have designed a range of health drinks with various mushrooms. The company is called Lifecykel and one of their Magick drinks is a chocolate flavoured drink with Reishi mushroom added. The description says, "if you are feeling stressed and needing calmness then this mushroom is for you - it's meditation in a cup!" If only it were that easy.

The first chapter of *Eihei Shingi* (Pure Standards for the Zen Community), by Zen Master Dogen is called Tenzo Kyokun (Instructions for the Cook). While it's a chapter about how to be the tenzo - it's actually about how to live your life. In one passage, Zen Master Dogen writes of meeting an elderly tenzo, hard at work: 'I approached and asked his age. He replied that he was sixty-eight years old. Then I went on to ask him why he never used any assistants. He answered, "other people are not me." "You are right," I said; "I can see that your work is the activity of the Buddhadharmā, but why are you working so hard in this scorching sun?" He replied, "If I do not do it now, when else can I do it." There was nothing else for me to say. As I walked on along that passageway, I began to sense inwardly the true significance of the role of tenzo'.

To me the teaching here is no matter what life throws at us and whatever situation we find ourselves in we are the only ones who can live through it - no one else can have the experience for us. Sometimes the life we find ourselves in is not the one we want. At one time or another most of us look for an escape and avoidance strategies to get away from the pain we feel. We might endlessly talk to others about our problems, hoping a problem shared is a problem

halved, maybe we look for a romantic partner hoping that if someone loves us they can carry the load with us.

Tom Vincent or Tenzan has been the retreat Tenzo for the last couple of years - he has an expression he uses in the kitchen when things go wrong - 'shitake happens!' When a dish goes wrong in the kitchen you have no choice but to accept what is happening and get on with it. We have to adopt our parental mind and magnanimous mind and meet these experiences face-on. We need an attitude of caring, without avoidance. We need to nurture and care for the wilted lettuce in the same way as the fresh crisp lettuce.

Once when I was going through a hard time in my life - I was meeting with a psychologist, I moved jobs and bought a new car - I was hoping that I could offload my worries onto someone else and find a new self. These things might have helped a little but I still had to live my own life - the one I had right then and there. I had to sit like a mushroom in my dark and damp life. That's what this practice has taught me.

The mushroom nicely reflects the roots, stem and fruits of our practice. So next time you sit zazen imagine that you are a mushroom. The underground mycelium complexes are the roots that connects us, the stem is the wood or material you decompose as you feed and transform yourself and the fruits are the visible part of each other we enjoy and are nourished by. So the mushroom is actually a pretty amazing organism and like us its nutritious fruits often come out of the dark and damp times in our life. To me one of the most important teachings Buddhism has to offer is that the only way we can truly live our lives is by being resolved to living it out as it is. All we have is this life, right here and right now. When the here and now intersects - this is when our eyes are open to the true nature of reality.

*Talk given at Sunday Sanzenkai 26 October 2018.*

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# OPEN BASKET: SANGHA NEWS

## Sangha Dana in the World of Impermanence

TEISHIN SHONA INNES

In 2015 at Retreat 50, Ekai Osho introduced the practice of *Sangha Dana*, which gave the opportunity for members and students to sponsor a meal or tea for the day. We have continued this practice at every retreat since then and at our most recent retreat 59, it had become quite settled in the schedule. Members and/or retreat participants sponsored all meals and tea. I have had the privilege of taking the role of *shika* at the last three retreats and so have been directly involved in the administration of Sangha Dana and in leading each of the offering ceremonies.

My experience of these ceremonies is that, without sentimentality, the act of offering brings out the heart quality and deeper meaning in the practice. This is in large part due to the fact that the sponsorships are made in dedication to a person, group, event or cause that is close to the heart of the person making the offering. Through

this process our community opens to include family, friends, and the wider community.

Because things change - people are born and they die - we can experience transience at a very personal level. The value of the people in our lives is heightened. If we don't acknowledge and connect with impermanence, then it is very easy to take people and things for granted.

A *dana* offering ceremony acknowledges the unique nature of each existence - because of that uniqueness each moment/each person is precious.

By experiencing impermanence there is the possibility of connection in each moment - to the real stuff of our lives. All this in the context of the Buddhas of the ten directions.

*“May the impartial divine eye actually bestow clear illumination. Humbly, together with the esteemed assembly we chant....”*



Sangha dana offerings on the mantelpiece at Retreat 59. Photo: Shona Innes

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The last day at Retreat #59 the Sangha has an informal and entertaining lunch. Photo: Ekai Osho



Retreat 59 Tanga Ryo. Photo: Katherine Yeo



Ekai Osho and visitors, Rev Shundo Kushida (Shumucho Tokyo) and Rev Taiga Ito (Sotoshu International Centre, USA). Photo: Katherine Yeo

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# What's Missing

JAY STRAUSS



My name is Jay Strauss and I am a college student from the USA. I recently visited Jikishoan as part of an Independent Study Project in which I explored the role of the tenzo within Soto Zen Buddhism. I learned so much in my three weeks visiting the Jikishoan community, and one passage from the 'Tenzo Kyokun', (the *teisho* reading for retreat 59) holds my interest as I continue to digest what I have learned. This passage looks at an interaction between a tenzo by the name of Xuefeng and his teacher Dongshan. Zen Master Dogen writes,

'One day, while the rice was being cleaned, Dongshan asked, "Do you sift out the sand from the rice or do you sift out the rice from the sand?" Xuefeng said, "I throw out the sand and the rice at the same time". Dongshan said, "Then what will the community eat?" Xuefeng overturned the bowl. Dongshan said, "Later you will meet somebody else". (Tenzo Kyokun, p 35)

There is much to understand about this passage but what intrigues me is Dongshan's final response. Why must he meet someone else? Did Xuefeng do something wrong? Should he not have overturned the bowl? The note at the end of the chapter on Dongshan's response gives more insight stating, "Xuefeng has some understanding but will need to meet another teacher." Even with this addition, I found myself wondering why this was necessary, what was he missing?

My search for the answer to this question was no doubt in the hopes that the answer would fill gaps in my personal understanding of the teachings. On day three of the retreat, I asked Ekai Osho, hoping for a direct response to what Xuefeng did wrong. Ekai Osho replied that the conditions simply were not there. Dongshan, it seems, acknowledges Xuefeng's way-seeking mind but the conditions for

realisation are about more than just the individual. In my own analysis I had focused on Xuefeng and had totally neglected to acknowledge everything else that conditions each moment.

We often search for the 'why' of the situation and assert blame if something has not gone the way we planned. Why does something work or not work, or why did it happen in this way and not that way? In acknowledging the way that so many conditions arise and fall, we can accept what is possible and impossible in every moment and step back from always asking why. It no longer becomes about the individual in each moment as they are only one piece.

This points to the importance of community, which is a recurring theme throughout the 'Tenzo Kyokun' and one of the main reasons why the tenzo, as one who serves the community, is such an important role. In flipping over the bowl, Xuefeng seems to have isolated himself without thinking about the community. He may have displayed a way-seeking mind but Dongshan was a teacher who emphasised the importance of community and, as a result, the larger conditions of the situation were not ripe for realisation.

In my time with Jikishoan I found that the tenzo ryo was so successful not only because of its members, but also because there was such a strong, well-run community for it to serve.

## Bibliography

Dōgen, et al. *Dōgen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community: a Translation of the Eihei Shingi*. State University of New York Press, 1996

# Guinea Pig Zen

MICHAEL KENDO COLTON



My plan was to carry out a solitary retreat (*sesshin*) over the same period as Jikishoan's August retreat. Why did I want to do this? I simply desired to do more intensive zazen practice and to maintain silence throughout. I was influenced and prepared for the experience by my practice at the Pioneer Valley Zendo, in my home state of Massachusetts, with its emphasis on *shikantaza*. The Valley Zendo is a branch of Antaiji monastery that practices in the tradition of Kodo Sawaki and Kodo Uchiyama Roshi.

I approached Ekai Osho about the prospect as I wanted to see what he had to say and to seek his approval. I told him I wanted to 'refine my zazen'. He responded by saying 'zazen is not a step by step method'. I took this on board, but then he said that he had never done a solitary retreat himself and that this was an 'experiment' in which I was the 'guinea pig'. With this ambiguous comment, I could see that he approved of my plan and was interested in it. The only condition he made is that I write something about it for Myoju.

My practice schedule for the seven days was to sit eleven one hour periods (fifty minutes zazen, ten minutes kinhin) per day from 4 a.m. to 9 p.m. This would allow me a two-hour break at each mealtime, which would enable me to do things such as cooking, cleaning, study and (hopefully) exercise. For study material, I chose the same *teisho* as was being used in the August Retreat and Zen Master Dogen's *Gakudo-Yojinshu* (Points to Watch in Practicing the Way).

In planning my solitary *sesshin* I was surprised to realize what a practical activity it was and what a constructed situation I was creating. It was not that different from planning for a beach holiday. There were many unspiritual and mundane things to arrange – food, purchases like a rice cooker and kettle, bedding, cutlery, cleaning supplies and so on. All this really made me identify with those whose job is to plan and arrange our Jikishoan retreats. This would be the first time I had used my mostly renovated bungalow so I found myself insulating the back wall and buying a rug. Would I be warm enough? Where would I sleep? On

what? How should I keep time? Is the family clear about what I am doing? Have I left any overdue bills? Will they remember to take out the bins?

Once things were in place it became clear how important the 'form' was to the whole undertaking. By 'form', I mean the entire schedule and functions of doing *sesshin*/retreat. This includes what we do, such as zazen, samu or meals and how and when we do it. To do *sesshin* is to simplify our life by submitting to, relying upon and being protected by this form. Perhaps because there was no group to depend upon I felt this reliance more strongly. I had to assume all the roles in miniature such as ino and tenzo and perform all the jobs myself.

In regards to my experience, Ekai Osho's description of me as guinea pig remains with me as appropriate. The guinea pig doesn't have any expectation of what's to come in the experiment that they are a part of. In the same way, I didn't know what I was doing but I think that's the best way to be because, in my experience, zazen, or practice, has nothing to do with our small mind perceptions and expectations. Zen Master Dogen expressed it well when he wrote in the *Shobogenzo* Bendowa: 'That which is associated with perception cannot be the standard of enlightenment.' However, how much of this I have realised is questionable; I still went through endless, varied and grasping states of mind. Sometimes I felt like quitting, sometimes I felt lonely, at other times I thought that I had great insights and was exhilarated. But as the days passed these ideas seemed to thin out and gradually drop off, giving away to the bare bones of form, faith and resolve.

In retrospect, it was a more peaceful and less physically demanding experience than I had anticipated. I did alter my posture between periods because I don't think there is much value in enduring unnecessary discomfort. Would I do it again? Yes, I think of this experience as more of a trial run, but I do know enough to be careful to try and not form expectations of what the next solitary *sesshin* will actually be like.

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# Concrete Buddha

PETER WAGYO SCHREINER

Many years ago when our daughter was an infant, Candace and I were given a concrete Buddha for our garden as a Christmas present from her mum. It remained in our Ballarat garden for over eight years under the shade of a healthy, red, bottlebrush tree. Surrounded by various types of honeyeaters and other animals, the front of our Buddha became the burial place for deceased pets and birds that we found in our garden.

Last year we moved from Ballarat to Newcastle NSW, accompanied by our outside Buddha. In the first six months it sat in the front yard of our rental in a subtropical garden surrounded by lush trees. Recently, we moved to a new place and our Buddha sits prominently in our courtyard surrounded by different animals.

Our place is near a forest, home to Whip Birds, Bell Birds, lizards, and a black snake (allegedly). Every morning and evening we are graced with a flyover by over 20,000 flying foxes travelling between local forests.

In all of our Buddha's locations, it sits there prominently and we are reminded of its presence. As conditions change, it can be pure white when in full sun. On rainy days it becomes dark and mossy. Our statue often catches my attention when looking out from the kitchen or leaving for work, reminding me of my neglected practice. It appears luminescent and precious amidst the transient environment.



*The concrete Buddha with Ariella Schreiner in the Ballarat garden.*



*The concrete Buddha and Ariella in Newcastle several years later*

# Moving back to Hobart

ANN MEIKYO ALEXANDER



In March 2018, after 27 years in Melbourne, I moved back to Hobart. I had been looking for a place with a bit of land on which to spend ten years or so making a garden—a creative project to keep me busy in retirement. In late 2017, during a weekend visit to Hobart, my partner and I found the perfect house. It is on just over an acre, perched at the top of a hill, in South Hobart. The views over the river and city are breathtaking. You can walk to the bush in ten minutes, to the centre of the city in forty. In a rare moment of total accord we knew immediately that this house was something special, somewhere we could see ourselves living happily together. We also realised that we would need to act quickly and decisively to have a chance of getting it. By the end of the weekend we had signed a contract to buy and, after months of prevarication, the decision to sell our Melbourne house was finally made.

It's been interesting coming back in my sixties to live in the city in which I grew up and spent my twenties and early thirties—those restless years of forging an adult identity. Hobart has changed quite a bit while I've been away. The city has a more sophisticated and cosmopolitan vibe—the MONA effect—with more cafes, restaurants, festivals, tourists...and traffic. However, the things that are more important to me—the mountain, the river, the bush—seem largely unchanged, although Mount Wellington

has acquired an indigenous identity as 'kunanyi'. This mountain has always had a strong place in my heart and I am doing what I can to help prevent the building of a cable car to the summit over the ancient dolerite columns known as 'the organ pipes'.

I too have changed in the years that I have been away. Hopefully, with age has come a mellowing and greater willingness to simply accept things as they are. For several years now I have had a daily zazen practice and deepening this practice continues to be a high priority. While I miss the Jikishoan community, sitting regularly with the Hobart Mountains and Rivers Zen Group has provided a sense of sangha. Working with the people I sit with down here to make the practice available to others is becoming increasingly important, especially as family obligations prevent me getting to Melbourne regularly for Jikishoan retreats.

Overall, the move has been a great success. The garden is coming on, and now summer is here we are eating the first crop from the new vegie patch. The big goal for 2019 is to build a chicken shed. Of course, there have been difficulties, but there will always be difficulties. Without difficulties there would be no life!

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# A Morning of Unexpectedation

LACHLAN MCNEISH

**T**oday I heard the wind rustle the leaves as if I had never heard the sound before. Surprising and new.

Sound textured with a new vibrancy.

Sound as sound, rather than perception.

Not leaves rustling or even the sound of each leaf hitting the other. Just vibrations against the ear drum. Sharp and wistful.

A crow caws. The rattle of the throat enlivens the imagination as the mind registers each wave of vibration.

Lorikeets chirp and chatter but I hear each call and response as if I don't know what they'll sound like next.

The normal background hum of suburbia somehow separated and detailed again, as when the mind explores texture when seeing a famous painting up-close for the first time. The lick of resistant oil paint, and the drag of the brush fibres. Both equally distinct and whole of the painting itself.

I brought to this morning no classification nor expectation for the first time in as long as I can remember. It just happened.

My mind struggles with the concept of hearing familiar sounds, as if it were the first time they ever entered my consciousness.

The duality is broken when I remember the guidance of a wise friend. This is the first time I've heard these sounds. They may be recognised as leaf, parrot, crow and bus. But this is the first time I've heard these exact sounds. This experience is both familiar and new. They cannot be separated.

A brief glimpse at beginner's mind.

What can be truly obtained cannot be sought. It can only be experienced through the lack of desire, aversion or expectation. The importance of a quiet mind. Of just being. What can be known cannot be known.

The sounds fade to a hum. I'm trying to hear them now, but with that effort they become known again. Trying to capture them in words they take solid, dull and lifeless form.

But as my hearing blurs, my eyes focus. I didn't expect this.

A unique morning of freedom on a morning like any other. Not tired. Not remorseful. Not hurried. Just here. Relief.



Photo: Karen Threlfall

## Shogoin News

SHUDO HANNAH SENSEI

Shogoin activities in the first quarter of 2019 have been well attended. The IBS program has continued with the A1 classes on Saturday mornings and Sanzenkai on Thursday evenings. 14 of us celebrated Bansan on January 31 and were honoured by Ekai Osho joining us.

Rakusu sewing workshops have attracted much enthusiasm. Eleven members from as far afield as Castlemaine, Frankston and Bend of Islands have come together quietly to make their own rakusu over three Saturday afternoons.

The tea workshop and tea ceremony with Sosen Inadera Sensei were entertaining and informative. We plan to repeat them later in the year.

We are not so busy with extra activities for the next quarter (April-June), as there is a great deal happening in May at Tokozaan and the Easter retreat. During the Practice Period the Sanzenkai Shuso-in-training, Marisha Rothman, will be joining us at Thursday Sanzenkai to perform the *shokoshi* role.

For Your Diary:

Sanzenkai visits from Dr Arthur McKeown

Visit - Thursday 2 May, Talk - Thursday 16 May.

Dr McKeown, from the USA, is the Director of the Buddhist Studies in India program, the Carleton-Antioch University Global Engagement program, and is a very knowledgeable and entertaining speaker. Many Jikishoan students have studied with him at Bodhigaya.

Rakusu sewing: Saturdays 1, 8, 15 June.

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# Soto Kitchen

BY KAREN TOKUREN THRELFALL

As cooler days of Autumn are once more upon us, we have two recipes to use up the abundance of the warmer months, with any left over summer vegetables finding their way into these easy to prepare and more warming dishes of pan fried cucumber and simple vegetable soup.

Great Zen Master Dogen says in the 'Tenzo Kyokun' (Instructions to the Cook), 'Do not be so absent minded in your activities, nor so absorbed in one aspect of a matter that you fail to see its other aspects. Do not overlook one drop in the ocean of virtue (by entrusting the work to others). Cultivate a spirit which strives to increase the source of goodness upon the mountain of goodness'.

## Pan Fried Cucumber Serves 4

An adaptation of an original recipe in *The Cook's Companion* by Stephanie Alexander.

I have tried this recipe with continental cucumbers and also some extra large cucumbers given to me by a Jikishoan member. Both worked really well.

### Ingredients

Cucumbers of your choice 2  
Butter 1 tbsp

### Optional Ingredients

Zucchini 1  
Sliced spring onions 2  
A couple of sprigs of fresh chopped oregano  
Salt, Pepper

### Method

1. Chop the cucumbers into large rounds. Do the same with the zucchini if using it..
2. Melt a tablespoon of butter in a frying pan and place the cucumbers and zucchini rounds in.
3. Once the rounds are brown on one side flip them over and brown on the other side. Add the optional ingredients and give a little stir. The insides of the cucumber and zucchini rounds should be soft but not mushy.
4. Once both sides are brown take out and serve hot, straight from the pan or allow to cool and serve as part of a cold side salad.

## Simple Vegetable Soup Serves 6

An adaptation of a recipe at [cilantroandcitronella.com](http://cilantroandcitronella.com)

### Ingredients

Leek 1  
Medium carrots 2  
Celery Stick 1  
Green beans cut to bite size ¾ cup  
Zucchini 1  
Can of chopped tomatoes 1  
Bunch of chopped coriander 1  
Cups of water 3  
Cups of vegetable stock 3  
Olive Oil 1 tbsp

### Method

1. Heat oil in a large pot and add leek, carrots, celery and small amount of salt. Sauté on low heat for about 10 minutes.
2. Pour in the vegetable stock and water and bring to a simmer.
3. Add remaining ingredients and simmer until the vegetables are tender. Season to taste.
4. Serve with crusty sour dough bread and cheese.



Pan Fried Cucumbers  
Photo: Karen Threlfall

# Calendar of Events

April–June 2019

## WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

DAY	DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	CONTACT
Sunday	Weekly	5.30 – 7.30pm	Sanzenkai	Brunswick	Annie/Shona
		7.45 – 8.30pm	Supper		James/Karen
Thursday	Weekly	7 – 9pm	Sanzenkai	Footscray	Hannah/Karen

## APRIL

Tuesday	16 April	7 – 9.30pm	Committee Meeting #252	Footscray	President/ Vice President
Thursday	Thurs 18 April- Thurs 25 April	7 days	Easter Retreat #60	Adekate Conference Centre	Hannah/Annie

## MAY

Friday, Saturday Sunday	10, 11, 12 May	9am – 5pm	20th Anniversary Celebrations	Tokozan St Pius X school	Katherine/Shona
Tuesday	21 May	7pm – 9.30pm	Committee Meeting #253	Footscray	President/ Vice President

## JUNE

Tuesday	11 June	7pm – 9.30pm	Committee Meeting #254	Footscray	President/ Vice President
Sunday	23 June	5.30 – 7.30pm	Bansan (Exit)	Brunswick	Annie/Shona
Sunday	30 June		Membership Renewal Due	Footscray	Membership Secretary / Marisha Rothman

## ADDRESSES

**Brunswick**  
Australian Shiatsu College  
103 Evans St  
Brunswick VIC 3056

**Footscray**  
On application.

**Post**  
JZBC Inc  
PO Box 196  
Heidelberg West Vic 3081

**Online**  
www.jikishoan.org.au  
contact @ jikishoan.org.au

**Publications (Shuppan)**  
publications @ jikishoan.org.au  
webmaster @ jikishoan.org.au

**Myoju**  
Jessica Cummins  
Coordinator  
0422 968 947

## CONTACT

**General Enquiries**  
9440 5597  
contact @ jikishoan.org.au

**Sunday Sanzenkai  
Zendo Coordinators**  
Annie Bolitho Jikishoan Ino  
0407 648603

Shona Innes  
IBS MCB Coordinator  
0421 285 338

**Kitchen**  
James Watt (Tenzo)  
0425 737 608

Karen Threlfall (Roster)  
0418 342 674

**Thursday Sanzenkai**  
Hannah Forsyth 03 8307 9600  
Karen Threlfall 0418 342 674

## 20th COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2018–2019

**President (Tsusu)**  
Shona Innes  
0421 285 338

**Vice President (Kan'in)**  
Marisha Rothman  
0400 873 698

**Finance (Fusu)**  
John Hickey  
0435 939 485

**Secretary (Shoji)**  
Irwin Rothman  
03 9557 7738

**Membership Secretary**  
Marisha Rothman  
0400 873 698

**Ordinary Committee  
Members:**  
Katherine Yeo  
0422 407 870

Christine Maingard  
0430 599 430

Nicky Coles  
0451 679 607

Michael Colton  
0434 664 829

Tan Hai Nguyen  
0412 574 877

**Assistant Committee  
Members:**  
Julie Martindale  
0403 184 153

Naomi Richards  
0407 839 890

Hannah Forsyth  
0408 100 710



**JIKISHOAN** 直証庵  
zen buddhist community

## Teaching Schedule April–June 2019

Teachings are directed by Ekai Korematsu Osho. Brochures providing more information are available. Please check the website or contact one of the IBS coordinators listed at the bottom of this page.

### SANZENKAI

**Brunswick** (5:30 – 7:30pm Sundays)

Zazen (sitting meditation), kinhin (walking meditation), tea ceremony, chanting service and Dharma talk (by the teacher or an experienced member). For beginners, members and friends.

Newcomers; please arrive by 5:15 pm. Attendance by donation (according to one's means). Participants are welcome to stay for an informal supper.

Bansan (Exiting Ceremony): 23 June

**Footscray** (7 – 9pm Thursdays)

Zazen, kinhin, tea ceremony, chanting service and reading. Attendance by donation.

Bansan (Exiting Ceremony): 20 June

### INTEGRATED BUDDHIST STUDIES

**Main Course A1** – Shogoin, Footscray

Ten classes, 9 – 11 am Saturdays

Term two, 6 April – 22 June

**Main Course A2** – Tokozan, Heidelberg West

Ten classes, 5pm – 7pm Saturdays

Term two, 6 April – 22 June

**Main Course A3** – Australian Shiatsu College, Brunswick

Ten classes, 7 – 9 pm Wednesdays

Term two, 10 April – 19 June

Cost is \$65 admission fee, \$600 per year (4 terms, 40 classes), \$185 per term (10 classes) or \$100 for 5 classes.

Members by donation for casual classes.

**Main Course B1** (5:30 – 8:30 pm Sundays, Brunswick)

Semester 1, 2019: 27 Jan to 23 June

Concludes with Bansan (Exiting Ceremony) on 23 June

Venue: Australian Shiatsu College, Brunswick

**Main Course B2** (7 – 9 pm Thursdays, Footscray)

Semester 1, 2019: 23 Jan to 20 June

Concludes with Bansan (Exiting Ceremony) on 20 June

Venue: Shogoin

Cost is \$265 per year (2 semesters) or \$185 per semester.

### Main Course C

Retreats and overseas study. Jikishoan holds three seven-day retreats per year.

For 2019: 18 – 25 April (R#60), 23 – 30 August (R#61), 22 – 29 November (R#62).

Cost: \$1470 / 3 retreats 2019, or \$4095 / 9 retreats 2019 – 2021

### ONE DAY WORKSHOPS

The workshops offer a sound introductory experience to Zen Buddhism. They are also suitable for experienced people wanting to consolidate their practice. All workshops are held at Shogoin, Footscray. Includes morning and afternoon teas and lunch.

Sunday 7 April, 2 June

Non-members \$100. Members and IBS students by donation.

### BENDOHO RETREAT

A seven-day intensive residential Zen experience, including daily *chosan* (morning tea), *dokusan* (interview with the Teacher), and *teisho* (Dharma talk). Cost depends on the number of days attended and includes meals and accommodation.

6 pm Thursday 18 April – 2pm Thursday 25 April

Venue: Adekate Fellowship Centre, Creswick

### IBS COORDINATORS

General enquiry and Main Course C:

Hannah Forsyth 03 8307 0600 / 0408 100 710

IBS Student Secretary and Main Course B:

Shona Innes: 0421 285 338 / B-course @ jikishoan.org.au

Main Course A:

Katherine Yeo: 0422 407 870 / A-course @ jikishoan.org.au

GENERAL ENQUIRY, BOOKING and ENROLMENT  
Phone 03 9440 5597 or email: contact @ jikishoan.org.au

[www.jikishoan.org.au](http://www.jikishoan.org.au)