Myōju

Soto Zen Buddhism in Australia

March 2020, Issue 79

BEGINNING: DISCOVERY

New growth after the fires

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Ekai Korematsu Osho

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MYOJU IS A PUBLICATION OF JIKISHOAN ZEN BUDDHIST COMMUNITY INC

Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn 2020 edition of Myoju magazine. As we go to press, we are facing a new reality. Communal life and society as we know it is changing and will continue to change in ways that we cannot foresee. Faced with the threat of COVID-19, Ekai Osho and the Committee of Management have responded with a suspension to communal activities. We hope that everybody is coping with greater physical separation.

Ekai Osho's theme for this year is 'Beginning', with 'Discovery' as the focus leading up to the equinox. Whether we are just starting out on the path of practice or have been practicing for many years, what is it to come back to the beginning, to rediscover?

In Ekai Osho's Dharma talk, 'The Goal of Buddhism' he emphasises the importance of setting a clear goal, putting it into practice, and recognising and facing the challenges as they arise. This is our dynamic nature.

Teishin Shona Innes in her Sunday Sanzenkai talk 'Begin at the Beginning' reminds us that our practice is one of '... coming back to the beginning. It's not a true beginning unless there is a sense of purity there, purity meaning nothing extra'.

Last year's commemoration of *Rohatsu*, Buddha's enlightenment, on 8 December coincided with Ekai Osho offering a precepts ceremony for three Jikishoan members; Sally Donen Wain, Helen Shoko O'Shea and Caleb Taizen Mortenson.

In December and January wild bushfires raged throughout eastern Australia. Some of Jikishoan's members were directly affected, as fires threatened their homes and properties. In 'Waiting for the Fire' Harry Laing describes watching and waiting as the fire approached his home.

Thank you to Ekai Osho for his direction in this ever changing reality.

Gassho,
Margaret Kokyo Lynch, Coordinator
On behalf of Ekai Korematsu Osho – Editor

Myoju

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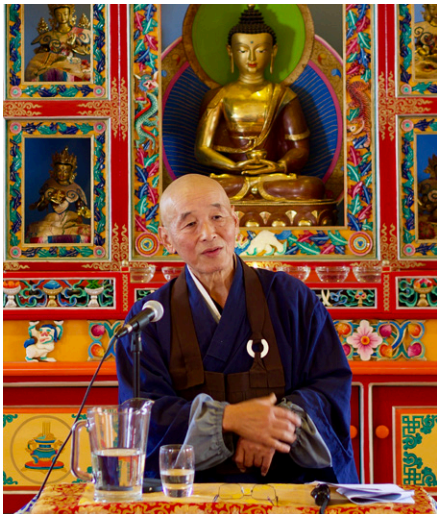
Next Issue

The next issue of Myoju will be posted around the Winter Solstice **June 2020**.

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 **April 26, 2020** and the theme is **Beginning: Life.**

Abbot's News



Ekai Osho at the Buddhist Summer School in Healesville. Photograph: Jack Palmer

The theme chosen by Ekai Osho for Jikishoan in 2020 is that of 'Beginning', and for the first quarter of the year the focus is on 'Beginning – Discovery'. Leading the way Ekai Osho presided over the *Bansan* (entering) ceremony on 5 January 2020.

Ekai Osho was once again invited to teach at E-Vam Institute's 37th Buddhist Summer School, held on 11-12 January. An average of sixteen people attended each of the four sessions. Ekai Osho chose Dogen Zenji's text on meditation, *Fukanzazengi* (Universal Recommendations for Zazen). On the opening day a public forum was held; Ekai Osho was a member of the panel of speakers and was invited to provide the topic for this year's forum: 'What is the goal of Buddhism? How to realise it, and what are the challenges to realising this goal?' This topic stimulated lively discussion amongst the audience.

Ekai Osho also taught *Fukanzazengi* at Jikishoan's retreat of November last year; guiding his students to a return to fundamentals. In this text Zen Master Dogen speaks of Zazen and enlightenment as being one and the same.

Fukanzazengi was also the text Osho taught from at Nyima Tashi Buddhist College, Buddhist Summer School (20-23 February) in Auckland, New Zealand – the third time Osho has been invited to their bi-annual event – and at the Tibetan Buddhist Society's New Year Festival on 1 March. The Festival offered participants an opportunity to find out how meditation can be a guide to inner happiness.

On 8 March, Ekai Osho attended Jikishoan's Annual Sangha Picnic that was held at Darebin Parklands.

At Tokozan, Ekai Osho began preparations for Teishin Shona and Shuzan Katherine's monastic ordination. Every Thursday morning since 31 December 2019, the trainees, joined by Rev. Isshin Taylor and Shudo Hannah Sensei have sat zazen and offered incense to Osho's lineage. This is followed by calligraphy practice, in preparation for writing the *kechimiyaku* ('bloodline'/ancestral chart).

On the nights of the full moon and new moon Ekai Osho leads members and students in *Ryaku Fusatsu*, an ancient repentance ceremony. Six of these ceremonies were conducted at Tokozan.

Osho, whenever in Melbourne, received forty-one Temple lunch offerings on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

In these three months, Ekai Osho attended:

7 Practice Interviews

2 Publication Sub-committee meetings

3 Fusu Ryo meetings

1 Finance Sub-committee meeting

1 Tenzo Ryo meeting

2 IBS Administration meetings

Committee of Management #263

During this critical period the Abbot has recommended that members of the 21st Committee of Management meet weekly at Tokozan to review and assess the situation and to inform the Community accordingly.

Shuzan Katherine Yeo
Hoan / Attendant to Abbot

Committee News

Community Health

On 17 March, at meeting #264, the Committee of Management made a resolution to suspend all common activities from 18 March to 17 April. Jikishoan members were immediately informed by email (please refer to the hardcopy insert in this Myoju). During this period of suspension of Jikishoan's practice activities, members of the committee will meet on a weekly basis to reassess and respond to any changes in the circumstances and advice surrounding the the COVID-19 situation.

The Committee of Management meeting of April 14 will reassess the health situation and inform all members of plans for practice activities during April/May.

If you become aware of anyone in our community who needs assistance eg. delivery of food and supplies during self-isolation, please let us know and we will assist in whatever way we can.

AGM Preparations

Due to our AGM being held later last year, this year's schedule of Committee meetings is shorter than usual. A primary focus at this time is to make sure we are prepared for the audit of financial statements at the end of this financial year. To this end, a Fusu ryo practice group has been formed in line with a strategic plan drafted by Naomi Richards.

It is planned that this group will meet outside of Sanzenkai hours once per quarter, to assist the treasurer with filing and other administrative tasks that can be appropriately done by members and students. The next meeting is planned for Monday 27 April at 10.30am. This activity is open to anyone in the community who would like to take an active part in Jikishoan's practice at the home temple.

21st Foundation Day Celebration – 26 April

Due to the COVID-19 virus, the 21st Foundation Day celebration of 26 April will be scaled down to a 3-hour event, using the Sunday Sanzenkai format. It will be held at the Australian Shiatsu College and doors will be open at 5 pm.

All Jikishoan members are invited to attend. A letter of invitation will be sent out soon with a request that members and students let us know if you will be attending. Please see the Foundation Day notice for the schedule (*sajo*) for the evening. The 'Silent Auction' and 'Entertainment' segment of the initially planned celebration will not take place.

Monastic Novice Ordination (Shukke Tokudo) – 2 May (TBC)

On Saturday 2 May, Teishin Shona and Shuzan Katherine will receive monastic novice ordination from Ekai Osho at Tokozan home temple. At 2.30pm the zendo will be open for zazen with the ceremony taking place at 3pm. Light refreshments will be offered afterwards. If you are interested in attending please be in touch with Shuzan Katherine, Abbot's assistant, katherinelianyeo@gmail.com, 0422 407 870.

Gassho,
Shona Innes, 21st Committee of Management

Foundation Day

You are cordially invited to Jikishoan's 21st Anniversary Event

Sunday 26 April
Foundation Day Special Sanzenkai
5 – 9:00 PM

5:00 pm	*Doors Open*
5:15 pm	*Instruction for newcomers*
5:25 pm	*Zendo Open: Han 3 hits*
5:30 pm	*Kinhin – Zazen – Kinhin*
6:20 pm	*Tea Ceremony*
6:40 pm	*21st Anniversary Service and Incense Offering*
7:00 pm	*Dharma Talk - Ekai Osho*
7:45 pm	*Anniversary photo*
7:50 pm	*Pot Luck Supper*
9:00 pm	*Exit / Door Close*

Venue: Australian Shiatsu College
103 Evans St. Brunswick, VIC 3056

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www.jikishoan.org.au

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 programs 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. 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*.

明珠

Dharma Talk

Ekai Korematsu Osho

THE GOAL OF BUDDHISM

Photograph: Sangetsu Carter

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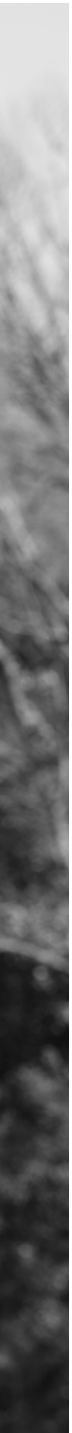

Everyone, welcome and Happy New Year. This is the first session of the year. The beginning. It is good to have a cycle, one period ends and another starts. At the end of the year you celebrate and start again, refreshed and new with what you want to do for the year, a goal for the year, a New Year's resolution. I'm wondering how many people have thought about it, or maybe you're too busy to think about it. A typical beginning is like that. You create some kind of commitment, you have a clear sense of it...on a personal level, and on the collective level, a resolution or goal for the family. Jikishoan has its own way, by resuming the schedule.

It is related to mindfulness practice. It's not mindfulness practice if you don't have a clear sense of your commitment, if you're not conscious of it. It's not a vague thing. If you haven't memorised it, there is no mindfulness practice, you are just being swung by emotion, by the feeling of the time. So you need to memorise if you want to practise mindfulness. If you make a resolution, a goal for the year, then keep it, be mindful, and then practise it. Advancing in the Way is our way.

For instance, the *Ino ryo*. They need to memorise the meaning of the bells and when to hit them. If you are doing it automatically, there is no mindfulness practice. It is mindless. The people who know, who have trained in the practice can mention mistakes, and the people who have Way mind appreciate that, they are not embarrassed or offended. People who are really dedicated to the Way appreciate learning. To be mindful means to be always conscious.

We like the word mindfulness, but actually there is no understanding, it is mindless. Meditation is the same, you like the word. Mindfulness in Japanese is *nen*, the character has two parts, two characters put together, 'now' and 'heart'.

We chant *Enmei jikku kannon gyō*:

Kanzeon
na mu butsu
yō butsu u in
yō butsu u en
bup-po sō en
jō raku ga jō
chō nen kanzeon
bō nen kanzeon
nen nen ju shin ki
nen nen fu ri shin.

Kanzeon!
I venerate the Buddha;
with the Buddha I have my source,
with the Buddha I have affinity
affinity with the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha,
constancy, ease, assurance, purity.
Mornings, my thought is Kanzeon,
evenings my thought is Kanzeon
thought after thought arises in mind
thought after thought is not separate from mind.

That is the mindfulness of Avalokiteshvara. People who study and practice Buddhism need to understand in that way. It is out of the question if there is no goal, no clarity. If you start to see a clear goal, then your individual level practice becomes clearer. You have to have a clear goal or there's no strategy.

What is the goal of Buddhism? Have you thought about it? Awakening is an individual thing, an individual goal, everyone has to tap into personal awakening, you cannot borrow other people's awakening. But when you say Buddhism, it is no longer limited to the personal, it's a collective thing. What is the goal of Buddhism? That is the question.

"...everyone has to tap into personal awakening, you cannot borrow other people's awakening. But when you say Buddhism, it is no longer limited to the personal, it's a collective thing."

Student: To relieve all suffering, so that all beings can experience nirvana.

Ekai Osho: Yes, removing suffering, alleviating suffering is an aspect of Buddhism as a religion. The main goal of religion is to remove suffering. In Buddhism, personal awakening leads to the culture of the monastic, and the monastic tries to benefit the community. The community has a lot of suffering, unnecessary suffering. So religion plays an important role. Christianity is the same; born into a heaven, no suffering, only joy and happiness, no bad things.

It's not a difficult thing. We have been reciting, doing the same things again and again. Chanting is not just automatically chanting. Particularly the *Eko*, the dedication. After chanting the Heart Sutra the *Ino* or *kokyo* recites the dedication verse, the *Fueko*;

Nega waku wa kono kudo ku o motte
Amaneku issai ni oyoboshi
warera to shujo to mina tomoni
Butsu do o jozen koto o...

You need to memorise the translation.

May this merit extend universally to all
So that we together with all beings realise the Buddha Way.

That prayer expresses the very core goal of Buddhism in the Mahayana way. So the goal of Buddhism is already stated; so that we together with all beings realise the Buddha Way. That is Buddha's way.

So are you practising the Buddha Way together with all beings? That is the goal of Buddhism in the Mahayana tradition. Of course, all together realising the Buddha way is *Ekayana*, *eka* means one, one vehicle, all together. So in that scope, in that kind of vision we practise together. It is not good enough that you alone attain some thing.

For the *Ino ryo*, to practise and attain the Buddha way with all beings means to memorise the *sajō* and hit the bells at the right time. It's not enough to say, "I've finished *Ino* training, I know it – those guys are not there yet – embarrassing." That is not it. It is the one who knows, together with the others "Oh, you did it wrong. Next time you will get it right." Something like that. So no blame, all seeking to achieve the goal. Experienced ones and new ones together achieving the Buddha Way.

And the various forms of practice are the method, the strategy. Everything we do is the Buddha Way. When chanting, the Buddha Way is to chant, there is no other way. At chanting time, be present with heart-mind and when chanting is finished go onto the next thing. Practice the Buddha Way.

Way-seeking mind; deliver it, refine it and extend it in innumerable ways to the various places and times. Time changes, space changes and the way you are with mindfulness changes. Extending in innumerable ways; that is the ground for the appearance of Avalokiteshvara. Avalokiteshvara is not fixed.

Buddhism's goals and your personal goals, the resolutions you make – it helps if they are integrated. Auspicious things happen. You get strength in your practice and strength in your day-to-day activity because it is clear to you. Mindfulness pervades everywhere. So practice delivery comes. The goal is there and you need to realise it. How do you realise it? Through the practice.

What are the challenges of delivering Buddhism? That is an interesting question. The challenges are not something external. In the ordinary sense we like to think the challenges are exterior, outside ourselves. What is your goal? That is one thing. What is the goal of Buddhism? That is another. Then next, how will you deliver it? Discipline is important. Effort comes, making effort through the challenging times. So what is the challenge to your goal? That is important.

I'm just putting this into three parts: The goal is the purpose, and then how to deliver it, how to put it into practice? And what is the challenge? Working with the challenge through skilfulness and discipline in delivering it through your training. Memorise it, practise it, face the challenges, make an appropriate effort, that is where the training comes. Not too much or too little, slowly, slowly. In Bendoho it says – 'Buddhas appear because of the Way, without the Way they do not appear'. This is the Buddha Way.

Anyway, good luck to you all. My work is dependent on you, how well you memorise and put it into practice. Work with the challenges, it all depends on you.

Edited by Iris Dillow

A Question for Ekai Osho

BY EKAI KOREMATSU OSHO

Student:

I've dropped the other practice I have been doing and I have been trying to do the one as described here for Zazen. I'm a little confused about a couple of points. You seem to indicate that just by bringing your attention briefly back to those three points, that will bring you to a place of thoughtlessness. That hasn't been happening to me. You also mentioned that when you drift off, to just come back to your breathing. What then has been happening is, automatically, without trying, my attention will stay with the breath for the entire duration. But I thought you were saying this is not a practice of staying on the breath?

Ekai Osho:

I think you are becoming the observer, that is why. Stop observing, just return, that is enough, simply breathe. You are observing, there is a controller there – that habit is very strong, objectively seeing things. Simply breathe. If you just simply breathe, inhale and exhale, and if your attention is linked with the breath, there is no room for you to think about it. It is very strange to have your attention on your breath and at the same time be able to think. Simply breathe, inhale and exhale. Wandering means your awareness is interrupted, but the realisation of that may not come right away. When you realise that you have drifted away, that is a realisation in itself, a kind of awakening, and then you can bring yourself back to the point. By fixing yourself into the breath as an object, or posture as an object you are missing the whole point.

That is the kind of effort you make if you work on it objectively. Objective truth is dead truth, there is no life. That is the kind of education, the kind of influence we have received; objective truth, dead life, no life. Life means always changing – in the midst of change we just re-align, everything is changing. Like the sophisticated system of controlling an airplane, moving, identifying itself – you cannot fix it, but always checking. Just simply returning is enough. Once you have returned, drop it and settle into the breath.

It's the same as returning to your own home. You have to make sure you know where your own home is and how to return to it. When you return home, you don't have to be still, you just do whatever, you resume. When you find yourself outside of your home, make sure you can come back.

Student:

So, I return my attention back after drifting off, back to the three points?

Ekai Osho:

It's not a mental thing; just straighten your back. The commander is always there. You need to start with the first instruction. If you can start there, then the rest will come easily. Straighten your back. If you start to wander bring your attention back to the spine, and simply breathe. There is very little room for you to wander if you do that. But the habit is so strong, it takes away from that, you wander, then you return to the spine, but not fixing your attention to the spine, bring your attention back to the breath.

How you align the spine is a very concrete thing, it is an imaginary effort. Push the ceiling with the back of your head, that kind of effort, that's all. That gives a sense of straightness. You need to do this physically. That kind of effort gives you an opportunity to train your mind. By working physically with the posture, you are giving good discipline to the mind, without that, the mind has its own condition and state which you will never, ever be able to overcome. Oftentimes there is confusion there.

Mindfulness; people talk about mindfulness practice without knowing anything about it. Mindfulness is not to forget. Remember things. That is one of the eight signs of an

enlightened person. The eight signs, the last teaching of the Buddha. We think mindfulness is control of the head—no!

So, all you need do is remember the instruction which you received the first time. The three points: the prime point is most important - straighten your back. Then we are very close, we have access to what the Buddha, the so-called Enlightened One, experienced. We don't know exactly what kind of change he had, but the framework you provide is conducive to that. Just by aligning the spine all kinds of conscious activities start to subside. Conscious activity is to see with the eye, to hear is another, to smell, to taste or to feel. You are not doing any of those, so all those conscious doors open up just by adjusting and straightening your back. Once it is opened up you can give life. It is not about fixing into any point, if you fix it, it becomes dead.

Giving life – just bring attention to the breath, simply breathe – inhale and exhale and naturally your body and mind resumes its own activity, free from self-attachment. Because it is free, all kinds of habits and conditions pop-up. A lot of things happen for beginners, you are carried away and you don't even realise you're carried away because you are in it. At some point you realise, and that point is a kind of awakening. And then what do you do? You can practice enlightenment, or you can practice delusion. If you bring yourself back to what you are supposed to be doing, it is practice enlightenment. Again and again you do that. Because we fall off, because we lose our balance, we have the practice.

It is not practice, it is not cultivation, if you are thinking, "I am very quiet and at peace. I had that for twenty minutes in the last period. In the next period I will improve to twenty-five minutes." That is how we often think, the longer the better. No. It is the same value, awakening and sleeping, or delusion and realisation, they have the same value. One doesn't exist without the other. But realisation and practice enlightenment comes when you make a choice to return to where you are, to what you are supposed to be doing.

We are talking in the context of seated meditation, zazen, but it is no longer the case if you are eating or working in the kitchen. "While working in the kitchen I realised I was wandering, so I went back to zazen." That is useless in the kitchen. Mindfulness, remembering, memorising something important, that is the only way you can bring yourself back. Mindfulness practice is nothing more than knowing where to return to . You know where to return to after finishing retreat. Right? If you don't know that, you have a big problem.

"Mindfulness practice is nothing more than knowing where to return to."

Edited by Jessica Cummins

Feature article

Begin at the Beginning

Illustration: Sally Wain

BY TEISHIN SHONA INNES

It is the beginning of the year, and that always has a particular flavour I think, a good flavour. Because I am the Main Course B coordinator and I look after this event (Sanzenkai), it's usually my job at the beginning of the year to say something about what we are doing and so on.

This talk tonight will be more like an orientation talk – coming to something fresh. That is not always easy, but we are assisted at this time of year because most of us have had some kind of break over the Christmas and New Year period, so there is assistance from those conditions to give us a sense of freshness and of beginning again.

I've actually used this quote before, a couple of years ago. It is a quote from *Alice in Wonderland,* written by Lewis Carroll, which I'm sure you're all very familiar with.

> The White Rabbit put on his spectacles. "Where shall I begin please Your Majesty?" he asked. "Begin at the beginning" the King said gravely, "and then go on until you come to the end and then stop".

I like the sense of ordinariness in that. That is what we are doing too, coming back to the beginning. It's not a true beginning unless there is a sense of purity there, purity meaning nothing extra. We talk about beginner's mind quite often. When you go to something for the first time there is a sense—like Alice or a child, a sense of expectation or excitement or just wide-eyedness, the simplicity a child brings to a new thing. They might get a bit excited but if they have to listen to an instruction they will listen intently, if it's something they want to do. Having that quality at the beginning keeps things quite open. When we talk about beginner's mind it's not about bringing all your stuff to it; what you know, what you have done before. We all have that mental baggage, it's natural, but what we are doing here is becoming conscious of what we are doing and then just dropping it.

So you have that chance, when you sit on the cushion, to simply sit there and follow the instructions one after the other. That is the aspiration. That's not exactly what happens of course, you know that. You sit down and it's all right for about a moment and then it all starts, the cogs start turning, which is quite funny, really. We're not trying to sit and not think, we're letting the mind go, not grabbing onto every single thing and running some kind of tape—the loop. Knowing that, you can say to yourself, "begin at the beginning".

I don't know if any of you have done a Vipassana International course, which can be seven days or ten days. Mr Goenka was the head of that organisation and when I did it, he was still alive. He lived in India but in Australia they used tapes and video of him inducting everybody at the start of

“‘The White Rabbit put on his spectacles. “Where shall I begin please Your Majesty?” he asked. “Begin at the beginning” the King said gravely, “and then go on until you come to the end and then stop.”’

each day. So you would get up at four o'clock in the morning, and go into the hall, and everyone would be there and then you would hear Mr. Goenka saying, “start again”.

It was fabulous, in some way, just to have someone say “start again”, meaning drop it all and just start again with an open, blank page. Just fantastic. Each morning I would look forward to hearing him say that. Some people found it quite morbid, but I loved it. It was so hard to do, no talking, just relentless sitting. I can't remember whether we walked or not, we may have done a little, but it was mostly this full-on sitting all the time, for hours and hours each day. People were having all sorts of traumas. It was a very interesting thing. In a way, ‘begin at the beginning’ is the same thing, just coming with a sense of purity to what you do.

There is one thing that happens quite a lot, within myself and in my observation of others. What prevents ‘begin at the beginning’ from happening is that people rush into the next thing before they have actually finished what they are doing. That happens quite a lot during the entering into the zendo, which is one of the three forms. People come in, and they are thinking about what the next thing is, and they miss that moment. The form gets blurred and cut-off and just doesn't happen. So that is something, at this quieter time of year, which you can pay attention to – what you are doing as you enter the zendo. Let yourself be fully in it, there is no rush at all, take your time. Take the time that is given here, fill it up with your own practice. Bowing on entering is very important, it acts as a kind of conditioner, conditioning what you do next, which conditions what you do after that. There is plenty of time here for you to completely embody the Buddha's practice and take each thing as it comes. So begin at the beginning.

One of the things which is quite good about the way Ekai Osho has designed what we do on the cushion, are the exercises. He has asked us to do these exercises before we sit still. You don't just rush in and sit down, you take your time coming in. You walk to your seat and then you do the gentle exercises which gradually brings you into still-ness. You approach it slowly and let everything come together, so your mind and your body are working together. So that when you do come to that stillness it's not a shock, it is just a continuation of what you have already been doing. We don't do that usually – we do this, and then we do that, and then we do zazen. Some of us are practising when we walk in the front door of this building. So it is a continuation—to the seat, into the exercises, into stillness.

As Ekai Osho says, there is no demarcation, it is a continuity of activity. It's like the changing of the light. The light is changing now, and there will be certain point where we will say “Ah! We're in the twilight”. In terms of beginnings and endings, it is like wheels within wheels. There is a beginning (demonstrates *gassho mudra*) and then we have the end of that. There is the bigger thing which is Sanzenkai, and then there are many small actions going on within that, which hopefully have some sense of completion about them. But as you know, it's not like being a robot. It is more natural than that, the naturalness of the practice. It may seem quite strange and formal when you first come across it - some people certainly experience it that way - but the more you do it, the more natural it becomes. It's very, very basic and also beautiful.

That sense of continuity, of slowing down, brings a sense of purity into what you are doing, no extra stuff. Just each thing, with everybody else, together. We are looking for a sense of harmonising the body, breath and mind consciousness, and bringing your practice and your life outside of the zendo into agreement. So when things get shaky you are not thrown off your seat. So you can start to teach yourself. Ekai Osho is a guide for us, as is the Buddha's teaching. It is all guidance. There is no one telling you what to do, there's no one making you come here. We are doing this because we want to, engaging ourselves at whatever level we can. The courses are there, the practice, the framework is there for people to enter as they want to. Teach yourself and begin at the beginning.

ANNUAL SANGHA PICNIC and TEA
8 March at the Darebin Parklands and Tokozan, Heidelberg

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Photographs: Lachlan Macnish, Katherine Yeo and Sangetsu Carter

OPEN BASKET: SANGHA NEWS

SFZC Visit Tokozan

L to R: Kim Hart, Ekai Korematsu Osho, Robin Morris and Krista de Castella
Photograph: Katherine Yeo

On Wednesday, 4 December, Ekai Osho welcomed to Tokozan four visitors from San Francisco Zen Center: Krista de Castella, Assistant to the Abbot of Tassajara, who had also attended Jikishoan's November retreat; Robyn Morris, Assistant to the Director of Tassajara; Kim Hart, a Priest at San Francisco Zen Center and Jim Fox.

It was also the memorial day of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, who had died on that day in 1971.

Following zazen and tea ceremony, Ekai Osho conducted a chanting service which included *Sandokai*, (Harmony of Difference and Equality) a favourite of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi.

Incense was offered by all in attendance. Ekai Osho then hosted the visitors to a delicious lunch in the *kaisando*, prepared by Rev. Isshin Taylor.

Gassho,
Shuzan Katherine Yeo

The Beginning of a New Discovery

BY HELENA JODO ZORKO

Helena's home in Slovenia.

It's been a year and a half since I moved back home after spending some years in Australia. I now live in our small family house in Slovenia, in a village not too far from the capital. Ljubljana, a city of a few hundred thousand people, feels like a country town, and on a sunny day the Alps are so close you could touch them. It feels like everyone here lives in the countryside.

I left my practice, my teacher and many of my friends behind, and the question, "What's the meaning of my being here now?" was on my mind. It turned out to be cleaning. While I was emptying the house of what had accumulated over the years, I developed a real expertise in how to get rid of stuff. The attic now has new insulation and proper lights, which bring out the beauty of the structure. Light and spacious, it now stores a few boxes and some paintings; memorabilia for the next generation.

I feel lighter also. I stopped working just before Christmas. At the start of my new life, my daughter gave me a brooch in the shape of Ged's Boat. For those who haven't read Ursula LeGuin, Ged is a wizard whose boat is guided by powerful magic, with an eye to see ahead. My daughter stayed with me for the New Year's break and during our long walks and talks, cooking and seeing friends, we started to realise how we have moved away from our past. We observed how our new relationship is taking shape, when 'mother-and-daughter' is not a defining moment anymore. Through the magic of being together on a Christmas Eve we discover how every year the child is born to offer us the possibility of a new beginning.

I feel as if the fires that are devouring Australia have become part of my body. I listen to Gurrumul's music – *Rrakala*. My children and I spent long periods in Australia, and we love it dearly. People say this should be the turning point. For me it is a shake-up. How shall I do my part? High on my (not) to do list is a need to reduce flying. This is easier said than done. My family lives far away, my teacher and sangha even further. Last time I saw my teacher was in autumn in India, and I don't know when we will meet again.

While Australia is burning, days here are cold and sunny. We go for walks through the hills and to the river behind the fields; beautiful but threatening with its high waters. We have had some serious floods in the past and it is not going to get better. I talk to people I meet on my walks and I enjoy going back to the ways and networks of my village. I learn where to get good seeds for my garden, how to bake bread and how to make a really good apple strudel. The secret lies in the dough, which is alive, and having someone to teach you how to feel it and, at the end, tell you that you have to practise.

My question now seems to be, "What is my practice and how do I keep with it in these new circumstances?" The *sajō* for the New Year has started to appear. My retirement means more freedom in dealing with my time. I bought my ticket to Japan for this Autumn. I will stay for three months, most of that time in Toshoji. To my teacher I'm deeply grateful for this opportunity.

Thank you, sangha, for sharing your time with me.

Gassho.
Helena Jodo

Reflection on Jukai

BY SALLY DONEN WAIN

Back row from L: Teishin Shona Innes, Viola Rosario, Anita Hustas, David Spratt, Keryn Tole, Shudo Hannah Sensei. Front row from L: Sally Donen Wain, Ekai Osho, Helen O'Shea, Caleb Mortenson. Photo: Katherine Yeo

I have followed my heart when making decisions relating to the spiritual path that I have chosen. Ask me why, and my answers have always been, it felt right for me at the time. Attending Sanzenkai at Shogoin, becoming a member of Jikishoan, and taking the precepts were no different.

The thought of *Jukai* coinciding with Rohatsu was a little nerve racking for me. It almost felt like a lot of expectation had been placed on my path (a small amount of delusion here), some self-imposed pressure, causing some anxiety and some excitement: hard to distinguish at times, especially as the time drew closer.

Leading up to the ceremony, I began to sew my rakusu. Stitch by stitch, "I take refuge in the Buddha", recited in English and in Japanese. It felt fitting and it calmed me.

On the day, I arrived at Brunswick with my stomach in knots, but once my robe was on I felt steadier. The feeling of following others who had taken the precepts was not lost on me that day. The nerves, coupled with excitement were there, but fixed in the background as instructions were given and followed. Doing made everything easier.

The ceremony is a little foggy, as was the description of my Dharma name as it was given to me. But the heartfelt phrases, have been present with me ever since:

Returning to Buddha as the Great Teacher,

Returning to Dharma as the good medicine,

Returning to Sangha as the excellent friend.

I am grateful to be a part of Jikishoan. I am grateful to Helen and Caleb for taking the precepts with me. Even though it was Rohatsu and the 50th Jukai ceremony, the day was made special by the people who were there. My heartfelt thanks to Ekai Osho and to the community who sustain me.

Deep Gassho

Distances and Difference

BY MICHAEL COLTON

Everyone who's been to India knows that, after a while, not much surprises you on the town streets. They are a chaos of tooting vehicles, cows, people walking, getting hair cuts, making food, doing mechanical repairs, begging and trading, through which you have to wind your way while scanning for hazards; like holes in the sewer covers, sleeping dogs and cow patties. But this woman did surprise me.

As I walked out the gate, leaving the refuge of the Burmese Vihara, I saw her. There seemed to be a sense of simple purpose to her movements. She wasn't off to beg but, I thought, just doing her daily shopping. She looked like so many working women in India, dressed in a colourful sari, but there was something contorted about her hips, perhaps a congenital impairment. Yet there she was, making her way up Gaya Road on all fours, crab-like, in bare feet and with rubber thongs on her hands. I slowed down behind her, arrested by, but drawn to, what was in front of me.

Taken aback, I gradually recovered and thought of her, as I would have in Australia, as being a 'disabled' person. There she was, seemingly just carrying on with tasks in her own way. I wanted to make some kind of contact or to at least smile, however, though she was only a few meters away, something made me hesitate. How distant we seemed, each of us so different, so separated by our culture and circumstances! It would be impossible to relate to each other, I thought, falling further behind her. Watching, siloed in my thought, I felt the difference that the privilege and protection of being a white man from the 'developed world' afforded me. And though I had always thought of myself as worldly and educated, able to relate to a broad variety of people, and had grown up one of nine children in the rough and tumble world of working-class Boston, how was it that I was now so immobilised?

She was only a few meters in front of me, yet it was a distance I could not cross. Despite this, or because of it, I was full of questions. I could see that getting around as she did would have taken a lot of effort, but did she regard it as a painful chore or just a normal part of life? Did she feel oppressed or disadvantaged? Was she known to the shop keepers and greeted as a familiar neighbour or as an undesirable pest? Did she go home to her family or did she live alone? I wanted to reach out and to make some kind of connection with her but, if I did, what could I say or do? And in doing so, despite my good intentions, might I cause more harm than good? Swimming in my uncertainty, isolated in my own self-reflection, I resigned myself to the fact that I had no way of answering my question of what life was really like for her and what the best way to act was.

But then again perhaps I was wrong.

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Waiting for the Fire

BY HARRY LAING

Monday night, 30 December was our time. Monga National Park, which our 115 acres adjoins, had been burning for more than a week. Historically it was never thought fire would come from the east but this was now considered inevitable. Nicola was in Braidwood with Bon the dog. I had come out in the morning to continue preparing the place. It was going to be thirty-eight degrees with north-westerly winds. More raking up of bark, filling gutters with water, all that. You could see the smoke puffing up in the forest (magnificent tall forest that hasn't burnt for eighty odd years). It was hard to tell how close the smoke was, but then it would darken in colour and feel very near indeed.

About 2pm I needed to know exactly where it was and walked up the back to find it creeping down into our farthest gully. 'Creeping' makes it sound less scary that it was. I got spooked and rang triple zero. They asked if I could see flame. I said "no" and in their wisdom they decided I didn't need any resources. Just after that, an amazing cavalcade of about seven unofficial firefighters (mosquitoes) roared up – utes with water tanks and pumps on the back. Locals and neighbours. I didn't know most of them and hadn't asked any of them. A very heartening experience. But the fire was on a slow timetable and after a couple of hours they all drove away again. More waiting. So much waiting... and now it was dark. The mosquitoes' idea was we should all get some sleep. I tried lying down on the bed but after ten minutes felt, "no this isn't a good idea" and went outside to see the whole place bathed in an orange glow (this being about 11pm). Rang triple zero to get a fire truck which duly arrived, and a couple of mosquitoes turned up and on we waited.

Finally the front started to come to the top of the slope behind us, sometime after midnight. One of the 'firies' went to look at Nicola's writing space, a wooden octagon, and reported the fire was working its way 'round it (we had both decided this structure probably wouldn't survive). Then they decided to light a little back-burn from the containment line east of the house, which went very gently up the slope and met the fire. The fire truck stayed around 'till the 'firies' it was safe for them to go and then I was on my own again – not the best feeling when the fire is working all 'round you.

I rang my trusty neighbours and they came out at 4am and helped hose down some massive trees and we worked hard making sure my writing hut was OK. And so on till dawn. By morning it was only the adrenalin keeping me on my feet, having had no sleep whatsoever. The wind had moved round to a gusty sou-easterly and several fire trucks turned up about 9am (local guys I knew, as I'm also in the Rural Fire Service: they were certainly aware of this place and worried about it... proximity to forest and a wooden house not being a good combination!) They then put back-burns into action to secure the containment line north and south of the house. So by mid-morning it was looking a lot better and the immediate danger had passed. Truth is, we were beyond lucky that the wind was blowing north-west all night and the fire was moving east-west, so it had been coming slowly and not at maximum ferocity. Some folk have had to face 30 to 50 metre flames which would have been impossible to fight here. All the ember was being blown back over the fire and we didn't have any landing round the house and causing spot fires.

After the 'firies' had gone, I went up to have a look and found Nicola's writing hut had survived, and that a giant tree had fallen into our main water tank so we now had no running water – a minor irritation.

Then Nicola rang up mid-morning to ask if I'd eaten anything. I said not really, (truth was my mouth had been too dry!). She thought I sounded pretty much like a zombie so came out with some food. She was met at the bottom of the road by a fire truck and they escorted her up the lane. The fire was looking pretty ugly either side of the road and they were worried it was about to run hard out of the forest with the wind blowing south-east. She managed to drop off the food and got out fast.

The neighbour reported a couple of spot fires on our northern fence which I checked out. No problems there.

I chainsawed a tree that had fallen over the containment line. Around 2pm I was having a cup of tea and thought I'd maybe check what was going on. I had the water tank on my trailer at least. I discovered fire racing across our paddocks. I'd been oblivious to the fact that it had screamed out of the forest lower down on our place – where they had been worried about it – and I was encountering the northern edge of that. I couldn't believe I had to have another go. Luckily other folk and a grader materialised out of the smoke and dust and it wasn't hard to get on top of it.

I drove out that evening with one gate post turned to charcoal. When I came back next morning the other had gone the same way.

The truth is if the fire had come through on the night of the 30 December the way it came through the next morning we probably wouldn't have saved the house and huts.

As it is, we are lucky enough to look out at some unburnt country, our garden and big ribbon gums, but the forest behind us has all been burnt. Many huge old trees are gone, there's no under-storey left and the forest floor is dirt and ash. We still have some green canopy but further south, where the fire roared through, everything is cooked, black to the tips of the trees and there are no leaves on the trees. Our wombats seem to have survived amazingly well, birds are flocking in from the burnt areas and we're putting out plenty of food for all of them.

The forest will take decades to recover, if indeed it ever does. People also will take time to recover. Just about everyone in Braidwood has been affected one way or other and the level of care and connection in the community has been frankly amazing. If there's anything positive to have come out of all the destruction it's that sense of connectedness.

Harry Laing
Braidwood, Southern Tablelands of NSW

Photograph: Margaret Lynch

Nicola's writing hut. Photograph: Harry Laing

Shogoin News

BY SHUDO HANNAH FORSYTH

After a busy and successful 2019 we moved into 2020 with a celebration dinner, *Osoji* and New Year's Eve Zazen. **Thursday Sanzenkai has been suspended from 18 March to 17 April.** We hope to resume activities soon, after this period is over.

Integrated Buddhist Studies

Term 2 A1 classes will commence **18 April - 20 June**, on Saturday mornings 9-11am.

Please contact Katherine Yeo on 0422 407 870 for enrolment in Term 2. Members and previous students may attend class by *dana*.

One Day Workshops are part of the Main Course A program. Please contact Katherine Yeo to attend.

Date: April 5 (**cancelled**) Sunday 7 June

Tokubetsu Zazenkai – Special Zazen Day

This is an opportunity for a whole day of community practice. Jikishoan members IBS students are welcome to join us for Zazen practice on **Sunday 14 June from 10am to 4pm**. Morning activities consist of zazen, kinhin and formal tea. A shared lunch is followed in the afternoon by further zazen and reading from *Not Always So* by Shunryu Suzuki, discussion and chanting. Admission is by *dana* (according to one's means) and a contribution of food for lunch. Please contact Hannah on 0408 100 710 for any enquiries.

Rakusu sewing practice

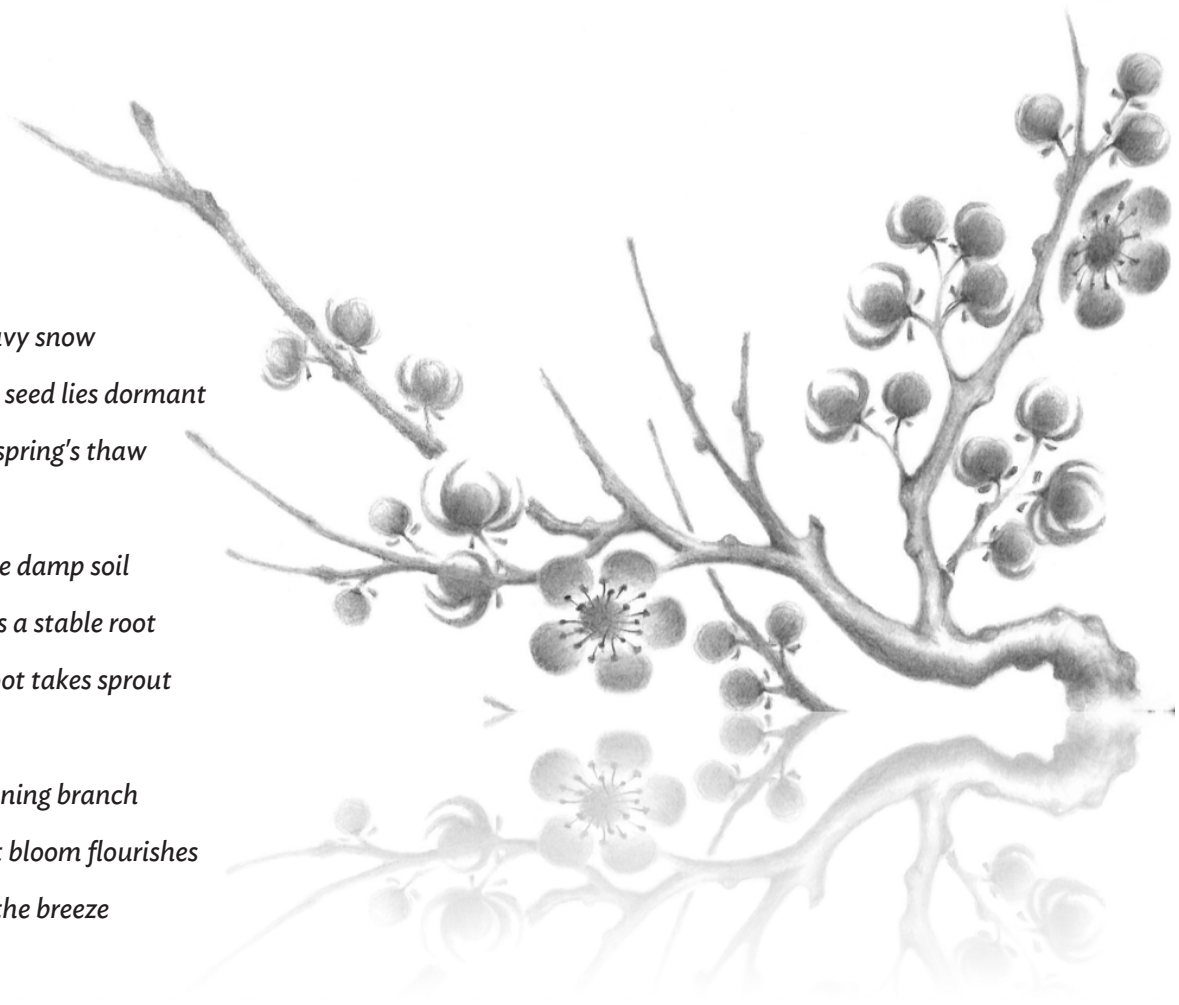
Although I do not have any group rakusu practice sessions planned for this quarter, I am happy, as part of my practice, to work one-to-one with those wishing to make their own rakusu. Please contact me on 0408 100 710 to discuss and make a plan.

With gassho from **Shudo Hannah**

Photograph: Vincent Vu

Four Seasons

BY THOR STONE



under heavy snow
a resilient seed lies dormant
awaiting spring's thaw

among the damp soil
a seed sets a stable root
a new shoot takes sprout

on burgeoning branch
a fragrant bloom flourishes
pollen to the breeze

blustery winds gust
a resolute trunk sways and flexes
leaves fall enrich soil

Thor Stone

Illustration: Donne Soukchareun

Soto Kitchen

BY KAREN THRELFALL

Great Zen Master Dogen in the *Tenzo Kyokun* (Instructions to the Cook) says:

"Among the ten thousand dharmas, most honoured are the three jewels. Most excellent are the three jewels. Neither the ord of heaven or a wheel spinning king can compare to them".

On Sunday December 8, three Jikishoan members received the Buddhist precepts in a *Jukai* ceremony conducted by Ekai Osho. It was a beautiful ceremony, not only for those receiving the precepts but also for those of us who attended and were refreshed by participating in the chanting and witnessing of the participants' recitations. There were carefully arranged posies of flowers on the altar and the familiar scent of incense in the air. Afterwards we gathered around the kitchen table where the pot luck meals were waiting to be shared.

One dish had been made by Helen, one of the participants in the ceremony. With delight, she told me it had been made without garlic or onions.

So here is Helen's delicious chickpea and spinach recipe minus the garlic and onions, with just a few instructional tweaks. She suggests serving it with a radicchio salad and pickle. I tried it on a bed of organic black rice with a dollop of plain yogurt, along with some sourdough bread and fresh butter.

CHICKPEAS WITH SPINACH

Based on a recipe provided by Jikishoan member Helen O'Shea

Ingredients (serves 4)	Quantity
Can of organic chickpeas	1 (or 225grams chickpeas pre-prepared)
Baby spinach	100 grams
Olive oil	2 tbs
Can of organic tomatoes	1
Cumin seed	1 tsp ground (or whole toasted and ground)
Sea or Himalayan salt to taste	
Freshly ground black pepper	
Greek or natural yoghurt	150ml
Finely chopped mint	1 tsp
Paprika to sprinkle (optional)	

Method

1. Heat the olive oil in a pan and add cumin, fry briefly to bring out the flavour.
2. Add tomatoes, chickpeas and a small amount of salt and cook for around 10 minutes or until the chickpeas start to become soft and the tomato liquid has slightly reduced.
3. Add the spinach in batches, stirring until wilted. Add a little more water if needed.
4. Mix together the yogurt, a little salt, pepper and mint.
5. Serve the chickpeas and spinach with a dollop of minted yogurt and a sprinkle of paprika on a bed of rice or straight onto a plate with a side of salad and crusty bread.

Photograph: Karen Threlfall

Calendar of Events
April – June 2020

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES - **All weekly activities suspended 18 March – 17 April**

DAY	DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	CONTACT
Sundays	Weekly	5.30 – 7.30pm	Sanzenkai	Brunswick	Robin/Shona
		7.45 – 8.30pm	Supper		Michelle/Karen
Thursdays	Weekly	7.00 – 9.00pm	Sanzenkai	Footscray	Hannah/Karen

APRIL

Tuesday	14 April	7.00 – 9.30pm	Committee Meeting #265	Tokozan	President, Vice-President
			EASTER RETREAT #63		CANCELLED
Sunday	26 April	5.00pm – 9pm	Foundation Day Special Sanzenkai	Shiatsu College	Shona/ Katherine

MAY

Tuesday	12 May	7.00 – 9.30pm	Committee Meeting #266	Tokozan	President, Vice-President

JUNE

Tuesday	16 June	7.00 – 9.30pm	Committee Meeting # 267	Tokozan	President, Vice-President
Thursday	18 June	7.00 – 9.00pm	Bansan (Exiting)	Footscray	Hannah/Karen
Sunday	21 June	5.30 – 7.30pm	Bansan (Exiting)	Brunswick	President
Tuesday	30 June		Membership Renewal Due		Marisha Rothman

ADDRESSES

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Brunswick VIC 3056

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Myoju
Margaret Lynch -
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Coordinator

CONTACT

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03 9440 5597
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Sunday Sanzenkai
Zendo Coordinator
Robin Laurie – Jikishoan Ino
0438 351 458

Shona Innes
IBS MCB Coordinator
0421 285 338

Kitchen
Michelle Harvey –
JikishoanTenzo
0412 330 854

Karen Threlfall –
Roster Coordinator
0418 342 674

Thursday Sanzenkai
Hannah Forsyth
0408 100 710

Karen Threlfall
0418 342 674

21ST COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2019 – 2020

Honorary Members:
Ekai Koremastsu Osho
Shudo Hannah Forsyth

President *(Tsusu)*
Shona Innes
0421 285 338

Vice President (*Kan'in*)
Marisha Rothman
0400 939 698

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

Michael Colton
0434 664 829

Sally Richmond
0413 302 463

Annie Bolitho
0407 648 603

Assistant Committee Members:
Naomi Richards
0407 839 890

JIKISHOAN 直証庵
zen buddhist community

Teaching Schedule April—June 2020

All Sanzenkai and Main Course A&B Classes Suspended 18 March—17 April

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 below in the contact information section 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 5.15pm. Attendance by donation (according to one's means). Participants are welcome to stay for an informal supper.

Bansan (Exiting Ceremony): 21 June.

Shogoin Zendo, Footscray (7–9pm Thursdays)

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

Bansan (Exiting Ceremony): 18 June.

INTEGRATED BUDDHIST STUDIES

Main Course A1 – Shogoin, Footscray.
Ten classes, 9 – 11am Saturdays
Term Two: 18 April – 20 June

Main Course A2 – Tokozan, Heidelberg West
Ten classes, 5 – 7pm Saturdays
Term Two: 18 April – 20 June

Main Course A3 – Australian Shiatsu College, Brunswick.
Ten classes, 7 – 9pm Wednesdays
Term Two: 22 April – 24 June

Cost is $70 admission fee, $640 per year (4 terms, 40 classes), $200 per term (10 classes), or $110 for 5 classes (for returning students). Members by donation for casual classes.

Main Course B1 (5.30 – 8.30pm Sundays, Brunswick)
Semester 1, 2020: 26 January – 21 June
Concludes with Bansan (Exiting Ceremony) on 21 June
Venue: Australian Shiatsu College, Brunswick

Main Course B2 (7 – 9pm Thursdays, Footscray)
Semester 1, 2020: 30 Jan – 18 June
Concludes with Bansan (Exiting Ceremony) on 18 June
Venue: Shogoin Zendo.

Cost is $290 per year (2 semesters) or $200 per semester.

Main Course C – Retreats and overseas study. Jikishoan holds three seven-day retreats per year.

For 2020: 9 – 16 April (R#63), 21 – 28 August (R#64), 20-27 November (R#65).
Cost: $1580 / 3 retreats 2020, or $4410 / 9 retreats 2020 – 2022

FOUNDATION DAY

This year Jikishoan's 21st Foundation Day celebration will be scaled down to a three-hour event, using the Sunday Sanzenkai format. It will be held at the Australian Shiatsu College on 26 April from 5 - 9pm.

ONE-DAY WORKSHOPS: INTRODUCING ZEN MEDITATION

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 Zendo, Footscray. Includes morning and afternoon teas and lunch.

5 April (**cancelled**) Sunday 7 June

Non-members $105. Members and IBS students by donation.

BENDOHO RETREAT #63 - Cancelled

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

IBS COORDINATORS

General Enquiry and Main Course C:
Hannah Forsyth: 0408 100 710
contact @ jikishoan.org.au

IBS Student Secretary and Main Course B:
Shona Innes: 0421 285 338
shona.innes @ gmail.com

Main Course A: Katherine Yeo (Coordinator)
Contact: 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