

Myōju

Soto Zen Buddhism in Australia



December 2020. Issue 82

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BEGINNING: RETURN

TEISHO

Ekai Korematsu Osho

LEARNING BUDDHA'S WAY

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QUANG MINH TEMPLE ZENDO

Karen Threlfall

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Christine Maingard

BOWING TO THE ZEN ZOOM THEATRE

Annie Bolitho

MYOJU IS A PUBLICATION OF JIKISHOAN ZEN BUDDHIST COMMUNITY INC

Editorial

Welcome to this edition of Myoju magazine. Our theme for this issue is **Beginning: Return**.

This has been a remarkable year for the Tokozan-Jikishoan community. All of Jikishoan's practice activities and programs were suspended in March due to COVID-19 restrictions. Soon after, Ekai Osho launched the Online Home Learning and Retreat Program. In the same way as we practice kinhin—walking meditation—the community has moved ahead, one small step at a time, to arrive to the close of the year, having completed three six-week long online retreats.

The sangha has learned many things over the last eight months, and we have grown in strength as a result. Online technology has enabled the growth of our regular practice community, which now includes students from interstate and overseas. Tokozan Temple's daily early-morning and evening zazen practice is now firmly established. Teachers and visitors have joined us from overseas. Our small home-temple have helped nurture our collective practice.

The cover photo of the Tokozan entrance gates, taken by Lachlan Macnish, reflects the spirit of this issue—return to Temple. There is writing on endings and new beginnings: the closing of Shogoin Temple and the relocation of Thursday evening Sanzenkai to Quang Minh Temple in Braybrook. Marisha Rothman shares her experience in taking on the role of Shuso in her talk *Being the Shuso*. The Shuso ryo will lead the community into the next practise period starting in February 2021.

Hopefully we will soon be able to return to some form of in-person practice while also offering online programs and activities. We will wait to see.

I wish to thank everyone who has contributed to the production of this final issue of Myoju 2020.

Gassho,

Margaret Kokyu Lynch — Coordinator
On behalf of Ekai Korematsu Osho — Editor

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Myoju

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Cover Image: *Returning to Tokozan Home Temple*—photographed by Lachlan Macnish—22 June 2019

Abbot's News Image: *Ekai Osho, Tibetan Buddhist Society*—photographed by Lachlan Macnish—10 November 2019

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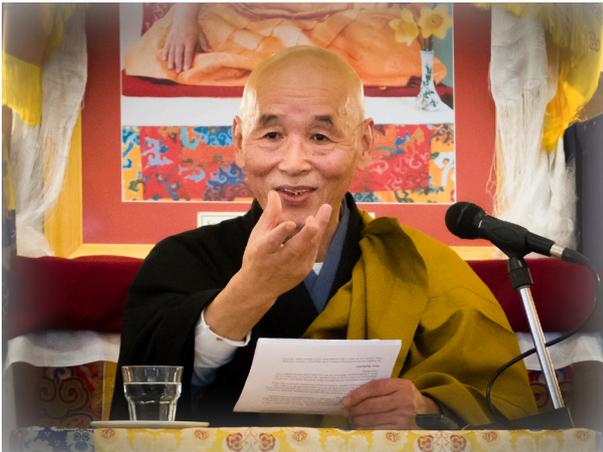
Next Issue

The next issue of Myoju will be posted **March 2021**.

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 **17 January 2021** and the theme is **Listening: Attention**.

Abbot's News



Throughout these months, Ekai Osho continued to lead the online Home Learning Program and a six weeks retreat. Jiho Marisha Rothman was appointed the Head Student for the retreat period.

Ekai Osho attended over three hundred scheduled events. His activities included staff meetings, chosan, administration, monastic meetings, sanzekai and MCA classes; a total of 106 events.

Shogoin's closing meeting was held online on 27 September. Ekai Osho then organised the dismantling of Shogoin, and the zendo was moved to Quang Minh Temple, Braybrook, in the western-suburbs of Melbourne. The new zendo was furnished with new meditation platforms.

Ekai Osho and the Thursday Sanzenkai coordinators met three times for trial-runs at the new zendo.

We have taken this opportunity of a new start to make Thursday sanzenkai consistent with Sunday Sanzenkai.

Retreat #65 participants studied *Shinjin Gakudo: Learning the Truth with Body and Mind* at five formal lectures presented by Ekai Osho.

Altogether there were 30 *dokusan* (personal interviews) with Ekai Osho.

Retreat #65 closed on Sunday 29 November with Chosan, and participants shared their *gatha* composed from their experience.

Ekai Osho hosted guests from overseas on two separate zoom sessions:

Rev. Eisho Uemoto of Gyokusenji Temple and Rev. Zuiko Redding, Teacher at Cedar Rapids Zen Centre in Iowa, USA observed Tokozaan's daily morning service. Rev. Zuiko is a Dhamma heir of Tsugen Narasaki Roshi, founder of Tokozaan (Jikishoan Home Temple).

During the interim period following retreat, Ekai Osho worked on the IBS program for 2021.

The new program has the unique feature of combining face-to-face physical activity with streaming online.

Zen training and practice within Australia and beyond has been enhanced through Ekai Osho's steadfast guidance and member's commitment in this challenging year of changes.

*During the blazing, poisonous heat of summer
I vow that sentient beings
Will leave all afflictions behind them
And completely put an end to them*

— Pure Conduct Chapter — Avatamasaka Sutra

Shuzan Katherine Yeo

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Committee News

The last 9 months, during the COVID-19 lockdowns, have presented some challenges and opportunities for the committee and, with Ekai Osho's guidance, we have managed to make the most of the situation. Monthly Committee meetings have been held online, as well as a weekly Committee ryo meeting on Friday mornings.

Special General Meeting — In early 2021 (15 Jan) the Committee of Management will call a Special General Meeting to amend Rule 35 of Jikishoan's rules (*please see notice opposite*). The proposed change will allow voting to be valid at online meetings including AGM and monthly general meetings.

Sunday Sanzenkai — A transition for Sunday Sanzenkai back to practice at the Australian Shiatsu College is proposed for the first half of 2021 and the committee will keep you informed about this by email.

Thursday Sanzenkai — To accommodate our Thursday Sanzenkai, the Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan has generously made a space available for us at the Quang Minh Temple at Braybrook. During November–December, we have been in the process of establishing the practice there after the closing down of the Footscray zendo (Shogoin).

IBS Practice — In the first half of 2021, Marisha Jiho Rothman will continue her training in the role of Shuso (Head Student) for two 7-week practice sessions. At least some of this activity will be held online and we hope members and students can plan to take up this unique opportunity.

After such a huge and challenging year for everyone, the Committee hopes that your time with family and friends over the festive season brings you much joy.

We wish you and your family a very happy and safe New Year holiday and send our best wishes to all for 2021.

Gassho,
Shona Innes
President

22nd Committee of Management

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

Committee of Management

Friday 15 January 2021

10.30 am

Tokozan Temple
Heidelberg West

Amendment of Rule #35

Proposed change to allow voting to be valid at online meetings, including AGM and monthly general meetings.

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*.

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Avalokiteshvara, Jikishoan Tokozan

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BEGINNING: RETURN

“It’s not about thinking. It’s not about not thinking either. You just sit with the breath, and eyes open, to see things as they really are.”

What is Buddhism? This is a very good question. Can you answer? Can you answer without thinking too much? First response! Constructing an answer in your head is the conditioned response—the intellect does that. Suzuki Roshi said, “Buddhism is to see things as they really are”. Two sides to it: to see things as they really are is one side.

You cannot see things as they really are if you are busy thinking. Stop thinking. Then things as they are is revealed directly to you. If you don’t do any intentional activities—not thinking, to see things as they really are—then experience comes in.

You can relate this to your practice of zazen. It’s not about thinking. It’s not about not thinking either. You just sit with the breath, and eyes open, to see things as they really are. It’s not within the realm of like or dislike, convenient or not convenient. There’s no room for discrimination. That is the first part—not thinking. To see things as they really are, stop thinking. Then you can see. Then you can hear. Sound comes to you; everything comes into your view. It’s not that you are seeing it—it is something coming to you. You can feel it—the same thing. There is no time-lapse—immediate. If you start to think about it, there is a time-lag—a delay. Thinking cannot catch up with the so-called present—now.

To see things as they really are is the foundation of Buddhism, but the function of Buddhism is to make the best of it. So, what you did yesterday may not be the thing you do today, because each time you see things as they really are and respond to make the best of it, you cannot fix anything.

Each year we have a theme for the practice. The overall theme for this year is **Beginning**. There is also a seasonal sub-theme—four aspects. The first sub-theme was **Discovery**. To truly discover, you don’t think—continuously discovering—it is awesome. You never get tired of it. Nothing is the same. Out from nothing—discovering—

to see things as they really are. That is experience. We are not repeating anything in that way. Reality doesn’t repeat patterns. That sense of awe or discovery was lost when we grew up, particularly when we started to speak a language. We start to see things filtered through language. You’re not seeing directly. You’re altering; processing. We have been mentally eating processed food—so-called language. Processed food is so convenient. You can name it. Ultimately there is no name, but you name it. It makes it easier to handle. Discovery. That is the beginning.

The second theme for the year is **Life**. When something is directly discovered—directly experienced as it is—then there is life. Life lived through it. I think that is wonderful. Life. It becomes lifeless if it is conditioned—processed. You are living in the jungle of the word, never meeting with the experience of it. Looking for a pretty word—for something you like. Constructing things which are not yours; things someone else has implanted in you and you believe is your idea. Is there any true life to be lived?

The third sub-theme is **Truth**. Transformation. Real life finds its reality through the discovery of nature, and we can connect to truth—Buddha’s truth. The nature of reality. The truth we harvest. Discovery is very important—the quality of openness. You become interested in everything life offers. Not only something which is convenient for you, but also the inconvenient—giving full credit to life as it is, connected with truth—the nature of reality. Overcoming self-obsession: me, me, me.

And the fourth sub-theme is **Return**. Make sure that when you start something you can come back to where you started. You take a posture for zazen. It’s a beginning—discovery. Reality is revealed in the form of the activity of the mind; in the form of the sensations of the body; in the form of your breathing. It reveals. Discovery.

There’s not anything special about it. You simply practise not-thinking. Not-thinking is not blocking your mind. Actually, you rest your mind from the ordinary way we

operate the mind. You can hear very subtle sounds. When you are not busy thinking, the subtle sounds come in—dharma, phenomena—undistorted; not processed. There, in the quality of your being, life emerges, and the brain starts to function normally. The truth is harvested. Something started needs to return to where it began—not thinking. If you know where to return to you don't have much problem. If you don't have a place to return to, that is a big problem—forever tossed around, wandering here and there.

So as Zen practitioners we need to think differently, almost opposite to the way we think. What is the basis of our life? Not thinking. Nothingness is another term. You could tentatively say sleeping is the basis. Out of nothing—nothingness—you wake up—discovery—and nature reveals itself all day long, one thing after another. But then you need to return to the source. At night everything is done. You go back to sleep, not thinking. Nothingness. You cannot have an idea of time. You cannot gauge it, but surely you are returning to nothingness. Put reality as a basis and rise from that to discovery, beyond our intellectual grasping. *Enso* is an image of returning. Make a circle. Begin and return to the place you started, returning to the same point as the beginning. Hopefully, within this circle, within these seasons, the mind starts to function, and you can reflect upon what this cycle is about, and you are able to harvest truth.

People who have just started doing zazen are probably harvesting a lot of compost, nourishing the foundation. It is good to cultivate the soil. You can think in these terms for the first three years, and then you become clear about what you want to plant. The product you have planted can be harvested, along with the compost, the weeds.

In the Buddhist tradition there are three returns: returning to Buddha, returning to Dharma, returning to Sangha. Buddhas are the awakened ones, going beyond the grasping of the ordinary mind. Returning to Dharma is returning to the truth of reality. Dharmas are mental and physical objects that sustain our consciousness. There is no real life without the phenomenal world. It is the same thing. Buddhas are the awakened ones but it takes an awakened one to connect with the universe. Sangha is a person or group of people who practise or study the Dharma.

In terms of our practice, where we return is seated meditation—the anchor point—the three forms of the practice—and that is where it begins. That is not where we

are stuck, you need to understand. Life has to reveal itself, doing daily chores, one thing after another all day long. Make sure you return. This is the practice of dharma on two wheels. Two wheels are very stable, like a cart. One wheel is not thinking. The other wheel is the thinking aspect—think and attend. The day's activity is like this. But if the quality of thinking doesn't mature, there isn't cultivation of not-thinking and the quality of direct experience.

If there is too much thinking, too much information, it's like two wheels of the cart—one wheel is too big and the other wheel is too small, so instead of going ahead it's just going around and around. People who are engrossed in intellectual study and grasping at ideas, but who have very little experience, nothing moves forward.

For some Zen practitioners, practice is most important—there is no thinking and they are stuck there. The experience wheel is so big, but the thinking wheel is so small, just going around and around, digging a hole, making a cave and getting stuck in that cave.

So, two wheels of the practice—not thinking and thinking—both are turning. A holistic approach. The holistic way is the only way you can go straight. Only the Zen tradition brings the practice first and then understanding second. Practice and understanding correspond. We tend to revere, to respect, experienced people. They may say a simple thing, but there is very deep meaning. The more experienced, the less words they use, less linking with something else because they have done the work—the in-depth learning.

The beginning is the point of returning. We came from somewhere. It's called *garbha*, the womb. Everyone comes out of the womb of the mother and returns to the womb of the mother. The womb is a metaphor for the universe, or you could say truth. It's wonderful. You don't need to worry about judgement. Buddhism is like that—giving life from nothingness and returning to nothingness, it is the womb world. Returning to zendo practice is like the womb. It nurtures, and when it's nurtured you pop out and life begins. When it has popped out it is called *vajradhatu*, the world of *Vajra*, and we skilfully practise the karma of body, the karma of speech and the karma of mind. When the three are unified it is holistic. Pure conduct, non-dualistic. It is very simple. Good posture and to simply breathe. But don't sleep! You can sleep later.

This is an edited extract of a talk given by Ekai Osho at Sunday Sanzenkai, 6 September 2020

LEARNING BUDDHA'S WAY

Ekai Korematsu Osho

You know how to practice because you have been instructed, but you don't know what's actually happening. The practice is nourishing the roots; you feel good and content. That is the basis. It doesn't matter whether you are just beginning—just starting to practice—or whether you have been practicing many years. I started to practice in 1971 or 1972 and I'm still nourishing the roots.

We have three forms of practice in the meditation hall: *zazen*—seated meditation, the walking form—*kinhin*, and bowing. You don't expect anything more than that, or less than that, but you bring the quality—the potential—to your practice. You need to trust. You need to have faith. You cannot justify it in an intellectual sense, but it becomes clear the more you practice this way, “Yes, this is important, this is it”. That kind of faith. Developing confidence in oneself. The rest is about what you do after you stand up—what you do after you finish practicing inside the zendo.

The external world is a different setting. It's not about thinking. It's about not-thinking. Not-thinking means being fully engaged into activities. Of course, you need to remember how to do it. There is an element of memory or thinking—instruction needs to be in place, but basically it's not about thinking—trying to figure it out. When you start as beginners it's all about thinking and interpreting your experience—the experiences you are having in the course of sitting. It can be emotional, it can be an image, all those things.

We cannot avoid these things because we are conditioned in that way, trying to make sense of our so-called experience. But, actually, it doesn't make any sense. The next thing is always different. It is often like that—comparing yesterday's sitting to today's—“The future will be better” or something.

For me, in a sense, there's no progress. Forty-five years! Of course, there are some fringe benefits. I can sit a little longer. I'm not bothered too much by the scenery I experience in the course of sitting—arising and disappearing. I don't make a big deal out of it.

If you say that is improvement, it may be so, but nothing has changed. But for people who are new it is different, always gauging, trying to analyse or see things in terms of positive or negative, in terms of beneficial or not beneficial. The conditioned state of mind does that. Anything conditioned is not reliable. That condition is destined to change. It was relevant yesterday, but not today, not anymore.

By practicing—by nourishing the root—you clearly know what's happening with the weather. You don't need to compare yesterday's weather to today's weather. You become intimate with the present reality, moment after moment, without making a judgment about it. Living in that way, you don't get confused.

Everything is changing—uncertain. We want to have something certain to latch onto. That habit is so strong, that clinging. But by practicing in this way, as we are, it's okay; no other place, just to live in this way. To live this way, connected with reality in all directions. It's not connected in terms of “intellectually I feel connected” or something. It's not necessarily like that. Actually, you don't know, but you are not sleeping. You can respond very quickly to what appears in front of you.

The Buddha practiced for six years with the wrong understanding, trying hard to get somewhere else. The form of the practice was okay, but he wanted to achieve something other than reality as it is. He made a full effort for six years and then realised his attachments, his delusions—which is enlightenment, pre-enlightenment. You need to have that. One needs to realise one's own misunderstanding. That is the enlightenment factor. That is preliminary. If we don't have that, there's no way to correct things—to align with the nature of things. Then comes the conviction. That is what happened under the Bodhi tree.

The opportunity is there when you sit. Don't you think we waste a lot of time? Bring harmony—harmonising the body and mind—into the practice. That is the criterion for entering into the Buddha's Way. The meditative state is the state of balance. What the balanced state means is that your physical body is looked after, and the breath, and the mind is not so busy. The balanced state.

Achieving the meditative state is liberation. You can be with reality. You don't waste time unnecessarily creating extra suffering or hardship. You are able to connect with reality. So, we are learning these things in zendo activities. We are learning Buddha's Way. The Bodhisattva's way is another thing. Bodhisattva's are enlightening beings. The practice brings that quality. First you need guidance from one who has experience. In other words, faith in the Buddha. Faith in the three treasures. And that itself becomes a pre-condition—becomes the precept. Faith is the pre-condition. Without that things don't come together.

Talk given at A1 class, Term 3, Week 10, 5 Sep 2020.

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BEING THE SHUSO

MARISHA JIHO ROTHMAN

I'd like to give a brief overview of my family life. My parents migrated to Australia during World War 2. They met here, married and had five children. I am the oldest. We were raised as Catholics. In the early days my parents did not have many friends so, when it came time for me to be baptised, the Catholic priest who baptised me became my godfather. I'd like to think that his prayers helped propel me on the spiritual path that my life has taken. I went to a Catholic school and was taught by nuns, and later became a nurse, also trained by nuns. So, my spiritual journey started as a Catholic. I later met my husband Irwin, and he led me to Buddhism, where I took refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha in the Tibetan tradition. Now I am a Zen practitioner.

I'm like a tortoise, slowly plodding along, day by day, month by month. I have been practicing for many years now and continuing to learn and transform myself—well I hope I'm transforming myself, otherwise I have been wasting my time! Let's see what happens in the future.

I have been preparing for the Shuso role, head student, for a few years now. During each practice period there has been a Shuso. I started in 2018 as the personal assistant to Shuso Christine Maingard. My role was the Benji; someone who keeps an eye on the Shuso, assisting them in any way. In 2019, I took up the role of Shuso-in-training, supporting

Isshin-san, who was the monastic Shuso that year. I had the same duties as before plus others focused around Sunday Sanzenkai and retreat.

My membership on the Committee of Management and my role as Membership Secretary have also helped set me on the path to Shuso training. As Membership Secretary I get to know who is in our community, a very useful thing for the Shuso.

At the beginning of this year, in preparation for the Shuso role, it was decided I needed further training in all aspects of the Jikishoan Zen Community. I was preparing to spend three months in the Tenzo ryo learning the logistics of the kitchen. Then I was due to spend three months in the Ino ryo; learning about the zendo and time signals for all the different activities. Finally, three months in the Jiroku ryo, training on the front desk and orienting new people at Sanzenkai.

January started out well, but then all of a sudden COVID stopped everything. All the great plans for my training went down the tube. Then Osho sama moved into action and developed the Online Home Learning Program—it's amazing to see his level of energy, vision and foresight. This meant my training and practice could continue within the Zoom format. This was all experimental, we hadn't practiced zazen online before, so there was a lot to learn.



Shuso ryo

Top (L-R): Katherine Yeo—Shoki, Marisha Rothman—Shuso, Rev. Koun Vincent—Shuso-ho
Bottom (L-R): Brett Hope—Benji-trainee, Tony Crivelli—Benji
Absent: Shona Innes—Shoki-ho

As the Shuso, my role has been to be a presence, to practice with the community and keep the practice going, driving the practice with my energy and enthusiasm (of which I have a lot to spare). I'm usually juggling lots of balls in the air and taking on a lot of tasks. Over the years I've lowered my expectations of how much I can do. As a Zen practitioner I'm learning to let go and get rid of anything extra.

I'm not practicing alone in the Zoom format. There is a Shuso ryo team supporting me in my role. I have Katherine Yeo as my mentor and trainer—the Shoki. Shona is supporting the Shoki. Koun-san is the Shuso in-training, Tony Crivelli is Benji and Brett Hope is Benji-trainee.

The Shuso role is more difficult than I expected. Earlier I mentioned that I am like a tortoise, moving slowly, step by step each day, but this year I have felt more like an elk, needing lots of stamina and learning to pace myself for the long distance. I have just finished three online retreats and March to November has felt like a long stretch of time, attending so many sessions. But it is much harder to practice alone, you need a team and a community to practice with. It's been wonderful seeing everyone online at the various sessions.

The Shuso role also helps keep the focus in the direction of practise, to encourage people to practice. If I'm there,

maybe other people will also attend, and if I'm the only one there—that's also okay. Consistency is an important part of the Shuso Ryo's practice, one of us will always be present at every session.

I keep a journal of my practice experience, which is helping me keep track of my journey, of how I am going in the Shuso role. Also, this year Ekai Osho has introduced the practice of writing *gatha*, four lines expressing how you are feeling, what you see, what you are noticing during training.

I've been reflecting on why I want to be the Shuso. I want to reach my full potential and also to support Jikishoan's vision of "offering transformative Buddhist learning, experience and cultivation for everyone". I want to be part of the team working to achieve that vision. At the moment the causes and conditions are such that I can spend the necessary time. I have the opportunity. I have a supportive team around me and a supportive husband.

Being the Shuso is nothing special, but at the same time it is wonderful. We are all together, ensuring the Buddha's posture and the teachings continue into the future for everyone. I see this as the role of the Shuso.

This talk was given at Sunday Sanzenkai, 22 Nov 2020.

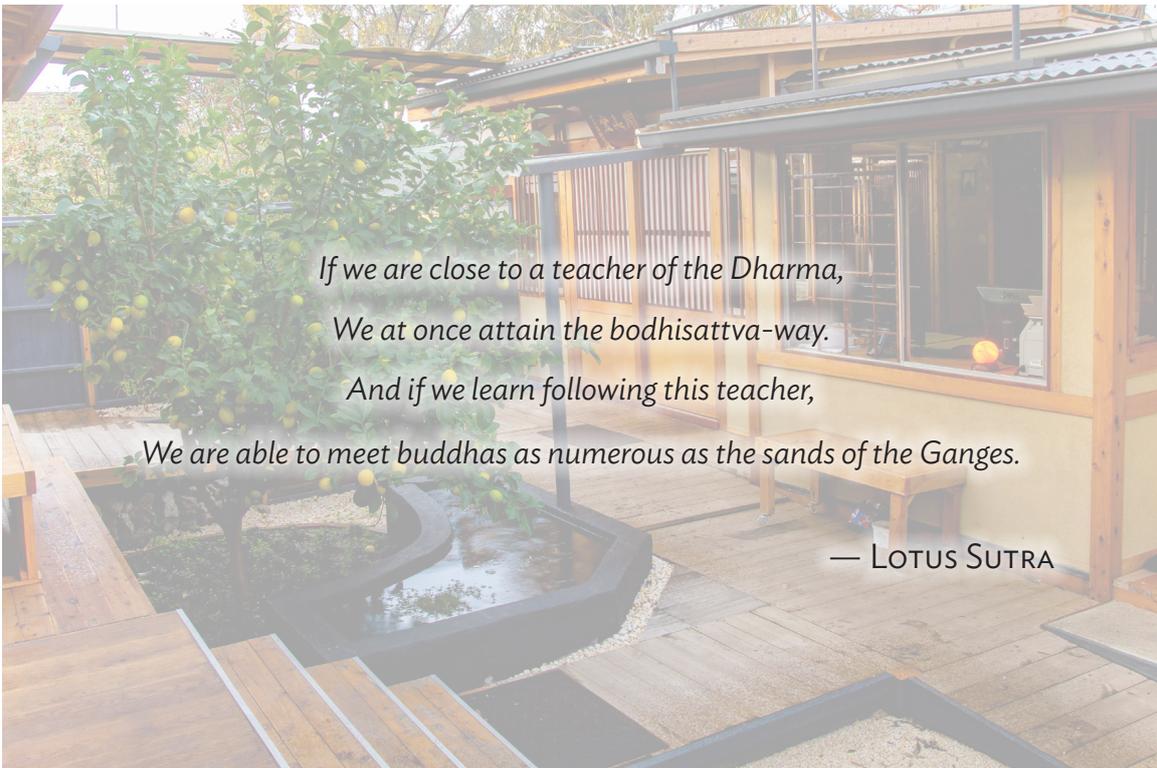
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TOKOZAN
KAISANDO — FOUNDER'S HALL ENTRANCE



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TOKOZAN
JIKISHOAN ZENDO



Thursday Sanzenkai Moves to Quang Minh Temple

KAREN THRELFALL



Thursday Sanzenkai zendo altar — Quang Minh Temple, Braybrook

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*Statue of Quang Minh at the temple entrance
Quang Minh Temple, Braybrook*

On Wednesday 28 October, Ekai Osho, Shona, Brett, Isabelle and myself arranged to meet at the Quang Minh Temple in Braybrook—our first visit to the small portable that will become the new practice space for Thursday Sanzenkai.

How good it was to see each other face-to-face once more after months of lockdown in Melbourne. This day was a happy one for another reason—it was also the day Melbourne came out of its second lockdown!

As we reached the door of the self-contained portable, the sounds of chanting could be heard coming from the main temple building. Inside, we found an altar, a kitchen, a small laundry and bathroom. After initial greetings, we assisted Ekai Osho with unpacking the practical items needed to set up the new zendo. For the first time, six zafus and zabutons were set in place.

Osho-sama discussed the practical aspects of setting things up, and we asked questions. Shona asked, “Why is the Buddha facing the window?”. Osho-sama laughed and said, “It’s obvious!”. We made some tea; sweet with a very distinctive flavour.

Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan arrived and I listened with quiet gratitude as the spiritual leaders of the two Buddhist communities exchanged ideas; what was needed, where things would go, and what could be done to bring the dream to life. Venerable also answered Shona’s question. There was a lot of laughter and kindness amidst the practical aspects of the visit.

Deep gratitude to Ekai Osho and Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan for our first visit to Thursday Sanzenkai’s new home.



*Ekai Osho and Ven. Thich Phuoc Tan
Quang Minh Temple, Braybrook*



*Thursday Sanzenkai zendo
Quang Minh Temple, Braybrook*

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Shogoin Reincarnating

JOHN CHADDERTON

LONGING

*How I long to sit again amongst the mountains
To follow a well-worn path
To feel the seasons passing
And grow old with friends.*

—Zenzan

At 2pm on Sunday 4 October, with COVID permits in-hand, five people met at Shogoin to begin the process of packing up the Shogoin Temple. The Shogoin community have already moved to practice online, which will continue until further notice. The Shogoin Temple was located in Footscray at the home of Shudo Hannah Forsyth and had been operating there since October 2004. Hundreds of practice sessions across those years provided many people a beginning and a home for their Zen practice. Some of these people met on Sunday 27 September via Zoom to reflect on their experience at Shogoin and express their gratitude and expectations. It was a very moving experience—expressing sadness about the Temple closing, thankfulness for Hannah and Osho-sama’s generosity, and hopes for the future.

The contents of the Shogoin Temple needed to be deconstructed, packed up and moved into storage or to other places. Many practitioners would be unaware that stored under the seating were many years of Jikishoan’s historical records. These records, along with the library books and equipment, were inventoried and loaded into Osho-sama’s car and trailer. The bookshelves were taken down and the seating disassembled. Over the coming days, with assistance from various other Jikishoan members, the contents were removed, the walls were repaired, and the room was repainted and cleaned. The space became empty, awaiting the new owners to fill it with their own belongings—a reminder of Shunryu Suzuki’s exhortation, “When you study Buddhism you should have a general house cleaning of your mind.” – *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind*, p.110, ‘Emptiness’.

We wish Shudo Hannah well in beginning a new chapter of her life in Berwick and look forward to the next reincarnation of Shogoin.



Hannah’s garden outside former Shogoin Zendo, Footscray



Final sitting in former Shogoin Zendo, Footscray

Shudo Hannah

My Teacher and Friend

CHRISTINE MAINGARD



It was in 2006 when I met Hannah during my first Bendoho Retreat. Then, sitting on two *zafus* and propped up by four more—two under each leg—I felt like a zen-pumpkin. I could barely sit straight. I was in pain. Whenever my pain got stronger than my ego, I quietly left the zendo to stretch my legs. Some time on day three, Hannah said to me that she had observed that my *kinhin* was just as it needed to be and looked beautiful. This was the encouragement that kept me going till the end of the retreat. And this is the encouragement Hannah has always given me in her subtle and quiet ways. She so skilfully points out what is right practice. Through this, I gradually and slowly learned what was not.

Over the years, I watched Hannah's gracefulness in the zendo—her quiet and gentle ways of correcting me and others and, sometimes, her direct way of pointing to what could not have been learned through gentleness. Long before I became a regular attendee on Sundays, I often attended Thursday *sanzenkai* in Footscray. This small zendo became my refuge as I slowly untangled myself from the business of the world I was moving in. Then, Hannah's guidance and teaching helped me through a difficult period of physical and emotional pain.

Hannah encouraged me to take *jukai*. In her Footscray zendo, she helped with sewing my first *rakusu*, and, much later, my *zagu*, in preparation for becoming head student. Fast forward, Shudo Hannah taught me how to properly sit, walk, bow and prostrate; and how to carry out various roles during Thursday *sanzenkai*: preparing and serving tea to our teacher and the students, *jikido*, chanting, reading and reflecting during Main Course A classes. All things I put

into practice—not just at Shogoin, but also during Sunday *sanzenkai* and all of the Bendoho retreats that I attended till 2019. There, apart from my teacher Ekai Osho, Shudo Hannah was my most consistent and ever-present mentor.

When I was Shuso in 2018, it was Shudo Hannah who was not just my silent *shoki*, but also my refuge when things became relentless and tough. Between 2013 and 2019, Shudo Hannah hosted early morning *zazen* as well as regular half-day *sesshin*, many of which I attended—particularly during my *shuso* period. I also recall the beautiful New Year's Eve *zazen* which always filled the zendo and living room at Shogoin.

Shogoin continued to be my refuge and has remained so to this day. Close to where I live, Shogoin was physically convenient for me. If I was coming directly from work before *Sanzenkai*, committee and other meetings, Hannah offered dinner or tea. It is Hannah the friend, who to this day rings and asks me how I am, or who drops in at my place with some food. She allows me to empty my mind when I struggle a little with my body.

For the time being, my only *Jikishoan* practice is on Saturday mornings for the one-hour *soshin zazen* that is facilitated by Shudo Hannah via Zoom. I am grateful that, right now, I can continue with my practice in this way, even though Shogoin no longer exists under Shudo Hannah's caring guidance.

My deepest gratitude to Shudo Hannah as my teacher and friend. Thank you also to Ekai Osho and the *Jikishoan* community.

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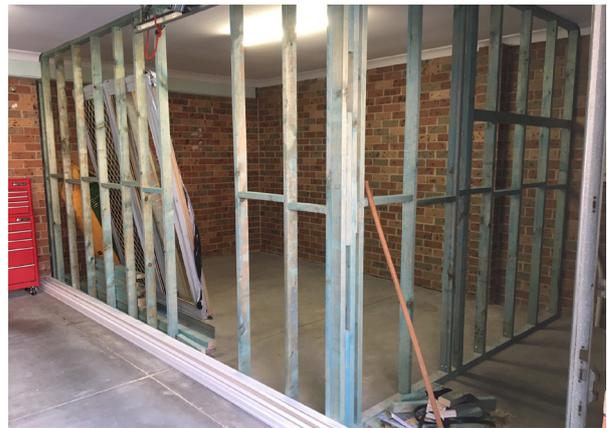
Returning to the Garage Zendo

CANDACE SCHREINER

In July of this year, works commenced on transforming half of our two-car garage into a home zendo. Previously, I had been using our small lounge room to participate in the Home Retreat #63 Program. Using the lounge room to attend Gyoten practice at 5am had proven to be a challenge for my family. My 12-year-old daughter would often complain that the chanting noise had woken her up too early, and my husband was very noisy as he was getting ready for work. By the end of August, towards the end of the Home Retreat #64 program, our garage zendo was completed, without too many challenges!

My husband Peter did a wonderful job of painting the walls and attaching a shelf. Part of a brick wall was knocked down and a sliding glass door installed, allowing a beautiful view into our courtyard. The garage zendo is now used regularly for the Home Learning Program – Retreat #65. It is a peaceful space, and my family cannot hear me when I am in there!

Ekai Osho has referred to the zendo as being an ‘anchor-point’—a place to return to again-and-again. The garage zendo is a space that always feels new to me each time I return. Spiders and ants often visit the garage zendo. I am improving in my practice of removing the spiders — unharmed.



Garage Zendo—Beginning



Garage Zendo—Return

Bowing to the Zen Zoom Theatre

ANNIE BOLITHO



Readiness. No matter what. Even if the sun rises from the west. As Zen students of Ekai Korematsu Osho we learn to put our hands together and bow—to face whatever comes. Including COVID-19.

On 28 March 2020 Jikishoan's Home Learning Program began, using the online platform Zoom, following intensive work by practice coordinators.

But how ready was I? Not very. My friend was very ill. I'd lost work opportunities and social contact. I bemoaned 'virtual'. In the awkwardness and *virtualness*, I asked, "Can I, and do I want to practice in the online format?" Now I almost take it for granted. It's become a habit. Yet sometimes I shake my head in amazement at the concrete and incomprehensible Zoom platform our community is constantly engaging with.

In some ways it's like entering a theatre when I go on Zoom for a practice activity. As I've often done in taking my seat at a theatre performance, I find myself looking around at the start. Who's here? Do I know everyone? Wow, there's Helena, in the Slovenian morning time! Wow, the whole Shuso ryo is here!

Over the years Ekai Osho has often spoken of Zen practice as theatre, especially drawing attention to quality execution of roles and sequences. At retreats, he's commented on the Shu ryo's serving as a beautiful performance. Over and over he's highlighted the importance of timing and practising our roles. At the Root Case Tea Ceremony we've heard him describe it as 'Act I' of the shuso ceremony, itself a 'theatrical' performance.

Before COVID-19, buildings, including the Australian Shiatsu College and the Adekate Community Hall, housed the theatre of Zen and its company. We experienced stillness in, and movement through, shared space. Now a virtual platform with a grid of faces, all set up in their own rooms, is the place of practice. The sajo—provided in the Zoom invite—and the sound signals, are a constant.

It seems we've erected a new theatre. I get a ticket—Meeting ID 81791701678 Password 650018. I ordered it by registering in a program, handing over money, and filling in an attendance plan.

For a good show, you need good sound and appropriate lighting. Now we expect the sound-check moment, and requests for improvements to lighting. But at the start it took persistence on Osho-sama's part to get this aspect right.

Chanting on Zoom is a different kind of performance from a different standpoint. Home. Computer screen. I get stage fright when I'm the Jikido in Main Course A. In Main Course B, instruments sound from different homes. Yet it's polished thanks to the commitment and practice of the Ino ryo.

We're encouraged to strive for quality. Roles are clear: host, co-host, coordinator, facilitator, Jikido. Many participants come in costume, taking the trouble to wear *juban* and robes. Ekai Osho invites all of us to listen to our own voices, and I notice a change in the sound of the chanting and in sangha members' way of speaking.

As an immature Zen Zoom practitioner I was sometimes curious, with videos off, about what was going on 'backstage'. This settled. In this practice the only backstage is my own backstage. "There is always room for improvement," echoes in my mind. It's my practice I must pay attention to.

In Retreat #65, I attend *Gyoten*. It's beautiful at Gyoten-zazen to see Tokozan Temple lit up in the emerging dawn. Quality theatre must be well staged.

By practising and making the best effort, step-by-step, a powerful and professional production has come about. Now and then someone mentions that Zoom isn't their preference for Zen practice. "Bow to Zoom for its convenience," says Osho-sama laughing.

What began in March returns week-by-week. There were painstaking preparations by Osho sama and the leadership group. For the rest of us, we didn't have rehearsals. We came as we were, and climbed-in. I felt very unsure and uncomfortable, but there I was. Now, here I am, not knowing what's next, practising according to the plan I set, and nurturing faith with the community.

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Sitting in One Place

LACHLAN MACNISH

In the beginning, working from home—sitting every single day in the same chair. Same room. Same window. Work, Zoom, Myoju, bills, email, shopping. I couldn't wait to get out of this chair and away from this view, and avoided returning as much as possible.

But the truth of sitting seems to be something that unfolds over time and with repetition, returning over-and-over again until you see.

I've watched a fig tree dwindle through autumn, sit bare through winter, and bud—seemingly returning to life—in spring. Sage, seemingly dead, now radiating purple—abuzz with bees. Where I could see, now obscured by thick growth.

But what truly changed was that autumn, winter and spring came and went and the world changed—every day something different—but where once I saw the seasons, now there was no distinction.



*A tree sits in view.
Its seasons came one-by-one.
Now undivided.*

Return: Three Mudras

CALEB MORTENSEN

I had not taken the time to draw for a few years, but in anticipation of a change-of-heart I had previously purchased a new drawing book, which had since been sitting in my drawer. Not wanting to waste such beautiful paper I realised that I had to start making marks.

I did a series of drawings of the *mudras*. The drawing pictured is of the cosmic mudra. This is what I see when I look down—the position of the thumbs obscuring the middle-finger.

I took these drawings as an aspect of my practice. In late-September 2020, I had acted as class leader for Main Course A, week-one, which was focused on Right Practice—the three forms, three mudras and meditation exercises. My drawings are related to that practice.



Cosmic mudra—thumbs together

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Gatha Selection

HOME ANGO RETREAT
SPRING 2020

A BLESSING

Two friends on a cliff top.
A gull hangs against the wind.
Heads craning back, all still.
Marvellous evening.

John Doshin Bolton
25 November 2020

UNTITLED

Sitting in zazen
Body light as a feather
Mind still as a calm lake
Just for a moment

Marisha Rothman
26 November 2020

RULE 35

When I follow the thread of an argument
I vow that sentient beings
Will not be drawn into a forest of concepts
And see all dharmas clearly and without confusion

Shona Innes
20 November 2020

UNTITLED

Over a hundred Adekate Teisho afternoons
The large eucalyptus shades the old green shed
The gutters and rusty roof full of sticks and dead leaves
No need to take notes

George Quinn
26 November 2020

UNTITLED

An old Moon, (a)rising in night sky
Morepork sings, the bush rejoicing
Quiet darkness, enveloping, us, all.
A light, still, the Tatagatha. Shining.

Rajan Gupta
29 November 2020

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Illustration—Donne Soukchareun

Soto Kitchen

BY KAREN THRELFALL

“On all occasions, when the temple administrators, heads of monastic departments and the tenzo are engaged in their work, they should maintain joyful mind, nurturing mind and magnanimous mind. What I call joyful mind is the happy heart.”

Great Zen Master Dogen’s instruction in the Tenzo Kyokun

Every now and then, when the Tenzo ryo have no one available to cook for Sunday Sanzenkai, pizzas are ordered from the local Pizza restaurant instead. As much as the sangha enjoy the beautiful home cooked meals provided by the Tenzo ryo on Sunday evenings, they also enjoy the treat of having the occasional pizza meal whilst sharing each other’s company after Sunday Sanzenkai. And there is usually not a single slice left! We hope you enjoy this simple, healthy and delicious pizza recipe—a nourishing treat for Zen practitioners from the Tenzo ryo.



Photograph: Karen Threlfall

ROAST VEGGIE AND FETA PIZZA

<https://www.taste.com.au/recipes/roasted-vegetable-feta-pizza/5b1e30c5-900e-434b-9fee-363cf4c6bf8a>

Ingredients (serves 4)	Quantity
Pizza base	1 pre-made or your recipe
Butternut pumpkin	1/4 peeled and cut into cubes
Red capsicum	1/2 cut into 1.5cm pieces
Yellow capsicum	1/2 cut into 1.5cm pieces
Red onion	1/4 sliced
Zucchini	1 sliced into rounds
Tomato paste or passata	About 2 or 3 tbsps
Feta cheese	120g
Basil leaves	1/3 cup
Optional:	
Mozzarella cheese	Shredded
Mixed dried herbs	1/2 tsp
Salt	Pinch to taste
Balsamic vinegar	2 tsps

Method

1. Pre-heat oven to 180 degrees Celsius.
2. Line a baking tray with baking paper and spread pumpkin, capsicum, onion and zucchini. Spray or brush with a light layer of olive oil. Optional: sprinkle with ground salt and dried mixed herbs.
3. Roast for about 10 minutes, then remove onion and zucchini and set aside.
4. Roast the remaining vegetables for another 10 minutes or until the pumpkin pieces are tender.
5. Optional: Add zucchini to the balsamic vinegar and set aside to marinate.
6. Increase oven temperature to 200 degrees Celsius. Spread tomato paste or passata on the base and sprinkle the mozzarella cheese if using. Top with vegetables and feta cheese and bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until feta is a little golden. Toss basil leaves in a little more balsamic vinegar and scatter over pizza to serve.

Calendar of Events

January–March 2021

WEEKLY ONLINE ACTIVITIES

DAY	DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	CONTACT
Sundays	Weekly	5.30 – 8.00pm	Sanzenkai	Online	Robin/Shona
Thursdays	Weekly	6.30 – 9.00pm	Sanzenkai	Online	Karen/Shona

JANUARY

Sunday	10 January	5.30 – 8.30pm	Sanzenkai Resumes	Online	Robin/Shona
Thursday	21 January	6.30 – 9.00pm	Sanzenkai Resumes	Online	Karen/Shona
Tuesday	19 January	7.00 – 9.30pm	Committee Meeting #274	Online	Shona/Marisha
Sunday	31 January	5.30 – 8.00pm	Bansan (Entering Ceremony)	Online	Robin/Shona

FEBRUARY

Thursday	4 February	6.30 – 9.00pm	Bansan (Entering Ceremony)	Online	Karen/Shona
Tuesday	16 February	7.00 – 9.30pm	Committee Meeting #275	Online	Shona/Marisha
Sunday	21 Feb – 11 Apr	7 weeks	Retreat Online #66	Online	Margaret

MARCH

Sunday	7 March	12.00 – 3.00pm	Annual Sangha Picnic	Darebin Parklands	Shona/Marisha
Tuesday	16 March	7.00 – 9.30pm	Committee Meeting #276	Online	Shona/Marisha
Sunday	21 March	9.00 – 12.00pm	Community Orientation Workshop #26	Online	Shona

ADDRESSES

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Myoju
Margaret Lynch
0415 889 605
Coordinator

CONTACT

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contact @ jikishoan.org.au

Sunday Sanzenkai
*Zoom Host and
IBS Coordinator*
Shona Innes – 0421 285 338

Robin Laurie
Zendo Coordinator
0438 351 458

Kitchen
Michelle Harvey
Jikishoan Tenzo
0412 330 854

Thursday Sanzenkai
Shona Innes
0421 285 338

Karen Threlfall
0418 342 674

Online Home Learning/
Retreat Coordinator

Margaret Lynch
0415 889 605

22ND COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 2020–2021

Honorary Members:
Ekai Korematsu Osho
Shudo Hannah Forsyth

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

Annie Bolitho
0407 648 603

John Bolton
0428 188 220

Helen O'Shea
0425 742 173

Brett Hope
0433 859 339

Assistant Committee
Members:

Naomi Richards
Sally Richmond
Michael Colton





Teaching Schedule — January–March 2021

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.

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

Retreats #66, #67 and #68 — Online

For further information see IBS Outline 2021 on website jikishoan.org.au

SANZENKAI

Sunday Sanzenkai: Online — 5.30 – 8 pm Sundays

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

Newcomers, please arrive by 5.10 pm. Attendance by online donation (according to one's means).

Bansan (Entering Ceremony): 31 January 2021

Thursday Sanzenkai: Online — 6.30 – 9 pm Thursdays

Zazen, kinhin, incense & tea offering, chanting service and reading. Attendance by online donation.

Bansan (Entering Ceremony): 4 February 2021

INTEGRATED BUDDHIST STUDIES

Main Course A1 — Tokozaan Temple + Zoom platform

Ten classes, 10 – 12am Saturdays

Term 1: 30 January – 10 April

Main Course A2 — Tokozaan Temple + Zoom platform

Ten classes, 5 – 7pm Saturdays

Term 1: 30 January – 10 April

Main Course A3 — Zoom platform (online-only)

Ten classes, 7 – 9pm Wednesdays

Term One: 3 February – 14 April

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 – 8pm Sundays, Online)

Semester 1, 2021: 31 January – 27 June (Intro — 10, 17, 24 Jan)

Commences with Bansan (Entering Ceremony) 31 January

Venue: Zoom platform.

Main Course B2 (6.30 – 9pm Thursdays, Online)

Semester 1, 2021: 4 February – 24 June (Intro – 14, 21, 28 Jan)

Commences with Bansan (Entering Ceremony) 4 February

Venue: Zoom platform.

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

RETREAT ONLINE #66

An online Zen experience, including daily zazen and weekly Chosan, Dokusan (interview with the Teacher), and Teisho (Dharma talk).

Introductory period — 21 Feb – 28 Feb

Home Retreat #66 — 1 Mar – 11 Apr

Venue: Zoom platform

ONE-DAY WORKSHOPS

7 Feb 6 Jun 3 Oct

IBS COORDINATORS

Main Course C and Retreat Online:

Margaret Lynch: 0415 889 605

C-course @ jikishoan.org.au

Main Course B and IBS Student Secretary:

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

Phone 0421 285 338 or email: contact@jikishoan.org.au

jikishoan.org.au