

Myōju

Soto Zen Buddhism in Australia



March 2022. Issue 87

HARMONY: SELF-CARE

HARMONY – SELF-CARE

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MYOJU IS A PRODUCTION OF JIKISHOAN ZEN BUDDHIST COMMUNITY



Editorial

To be called a student of Zen you have to demonstrate this harmony through your practice, through your life. No separation. Connect with everything you meet and make the best of it.

Ekai Korematsu Osho

Welcome to the March 2022 issue of Myoju magazine. Each year Ekai Oshō chooses a theme for the Jikishoan Community, a focal point for practice and training throughout the year. This year's theme is Harmony, and the sub-theme for this first quarter is Harmony: Self Care.

Ekai Osho's Dharma Talk, *Harmony: Self-care* was given at Bansan (formal entering ceremony) at Thursday evening Sanzenkai at Quang Minh Temple in Braybrook. He speaks of the importance of bringing one's "best possible physical condition and good energy to the practice (then) your mind can work beautifully, resuming its own natural, original way".

In this issue of Myoju we have reflections by students of Jikishoan's Integrated Buddhist Studies Program (IBS) on their past year of practice and training. Tony Crivelli is training as Benji (attendant to the Head student) in the current Shuso Ryo. He writes about his experience chanting the *Vow of Samantabhadra*, during *Shitsunai Kankin*, one of the Shuso Ryo's weekly practice activities.

Retreat practice is the focus of the Main Course C study program and for the last two years Jikishoan has hosted three online retreat periods each year. Ruth Brunt has written about her first year of practice in the Main Course C program, exploring how best to approach long term practice; the pitfalls she has encountered, and the lessons learned.

Naomi Richards contribution is taken from a report written as part of her training as an assistant coordinator in the Main Course A program during 2021. She writes on using memorisation as a way of embodying the practice.

My deepest thanks to everyone who has contributed to the production of this issue.

I hope you enjoy Myoju.

Margaret Kokyu 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 Equinox, June 2022. 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 24 April 2022, and the theme is **Harmony: Unity & Diversity**

Welcome to Jikishoan

Jikishoan is a Zen Buddhist Community based in Melbourne, Australia. Throughout the year Jikishoan runs an active learning program under the guidance of Ekai Korematsu Osho, Abbot of Tokozan Jikishoan Temple in Melbourne, and Director of the Zen and Integrated Buddhist Studies program.

Ekai Osho has taught Soto Zen Buddhism in Japan, USA, India, Australia and New Zealand for 40 years. He established Jikishoan in Melbourne in 1999. Tokozan Home Temple was inaugurated in 2018 and is the first Soto Zen temple in Australia.

The name of the community, Jikishoan, encapsulates its spirit: 'Jiki' means straightforward or direct; 'sho' means proof or realisation and 'an' means hut. The practice is the proof—there is no proof or realisation separate from that. It is direct, here and now.

Jikishoan offers a range of Zen practice activities based on *Bendoho*—the original way of practice introduced by the 13th century Japanese Zen Master, Eihei Dogen. Information about courses, workshops, retreats and weekly meditation can be found in the teaching schedule on the last page of this magazine and on the website at Jikishoan.org.au. Any enquiries are warmly welcomed.

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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 Zen Master Dogen's *Shobogenzo*, 'Ikka-no-Myoju' (*One Bright Pearl*)

Harmony – Self-care

Ekai Korematsu Osho

This is the new-normal, isn't it? Physical—in person activity and online activity coming together. Both require energy so you can have a joyful, meaningful, more engaging practice. Bring the best possible condition to your practice; don't bring your problems. Zen practice is not therapy. In therapy you bring your problems, working on your issues. That is not our practice. Practice means to live our lives as best we can.

Where is this energy coming from? It is coming from your physical body, from the harmony of the body. Harmonise your physical body so the energy is there. If energy is there, then life is there. The breath represents your quality of life, the breath is you. The Chinese character for breath is made up of two characters; one is the character for *self*, and it sits above the character for *heart and mind*. So, breath is the original term for the 'I' or self. To ask, "How are you?" is to ask, "How is your breath?"

In the West the sense of self is ego driven. This is not the same self the Buddha is talking about. The Self as an island or lamp means the original Self, not the ego self. Clarity is not there—always talking about I and me, "I did this, and tomorrow I am going to do that". It is a language problem—the Western model of the ego driven self. The Self the Buddha is talking about is the original Self.

'To study the Buddha Way is to study the Self', not the ego self. But the key to the study of this original Self is the ego self. You have to face this ego-self straight-on without fixating or solidifying the Self. Locking into ideas and opinions solidifies the Self. You cannot get out from that, preoccupied, chasing after something you can gain. That is the path of delusion, the path of a human life without training, discipline or clarity—ego driven with no idea of this true Self or the nature of Self. Buddhism clarifies this.

The story of the Buddha's birth tells of his declaration. As the story goes, as soon as the Buddha was born, he was able to walk back and forth in all directions, from the centre outwards and back again and pointing up and down. What did he say? He declared, "*Tenjo tenga yuiga dokuson*". *Tenjo* means above the heavens. *Tenga* means below the heavens—earthly things. *Yuiga dokuson* – "Only I, alone, am the most honoured". This 'I' the Buddha is declaring is the original sense of Self. Like that of a newborn baby. So, if we are studying the Buddha Way and especially Zen Buddhism, we really need to shift our thinking, particularly in relation to the sense of self. From the point of view of the Self

there is no place for the egoistic self, it is delusion. That is why I say *no-Self*. No-Self is not the ego-self, fixation doesn't exist. The ego-self is fixated, dead—no flexibility, no change.

Why am I speaking about this? Each year I suggest a theme for practice and study, a theme to reflect upon. This year's theme is harmony. You and me and the space are in harmony—no demarcation. You are just as you are: clearly, organically, holistically. That is harmony. That is the theme. That is the basis of original Self. You are me; I am you; there is no such thing as a separate you and me. When we use words there are two things going on, but harmony overcomes this.

We also have a sub-theme for each of the four seasons. The first is 'Self-care'. When you bring your best physical condition and good energy to the practice your mind can work beautifully, resuming its own natural, original way. If not, your mind resumes its habitual patterns, no spontaneity at all, just the same repetitive, mechanical way. There is no life.

Harmony—you must really dig deep into this. As a student of Zen, you demonstrate this harmony through your practice, through your life—no separation. Connect with everything you meet and make the best of it. Where we learn to practise and embody this is at *Sanzen-kai*. *San* means to study and practise, and it also means the number three. Three in one, one in three. Self-care takes place at home; in your own place—your own body, breath and mind consciousness. Don't worry so much about other people—always concerned with what other people are doing. There is no ownership in that, there is no nourishment of the Self. Ultimately, you have no control over what other people do or don't do. But you do have some control—you can make effort with something you want to do.

A characteristic of Zen is *Koji kyu mei*. *Koji* means a matter of the self, *kyu mei* means to examine or investigate—to clarify. That self is Self-nature. The key is your ego self. There is a place for it. Without it, there is no study. The more you realize what your ego is doing the more you learn. So, there is no need to dislike your habits, just become aware of your errors and the mistakes you make. If you learn something, it's not a mistake. If after three times you are still doing the same thing, that is really a mistake. When things don't work out the way you expect, or the way other people expect, then you call it a mistake. That is not a mistake, it is just the way things unfold. Don't be too quick to judge yourself.

Dharma Talk

Our program—particularly Sanzen-kai—is a platform for cultivating the Self, to open to a more holistic Self. A way to prepare yourself to be in your best possible condition to intermingle with others. We cannot open by ourselves. We open up through our encounters with different people and new situations. Thanks to the second and third-person self and the environment we become more aware.

When we open up the entire world becomes enlightened. That is the Buddha's legendary statement. When he awakened—enlightened—everything in this world; stones, pebbles, trees, everything was simultaneously enlightened. This was his expression of harmony, no demarcation.

That is the vision. The image of this vision is Indra's net; interpenetrating, pearl-like jewels, each reflecting everything. Everything is very clear and special. In the words of the Buddha "I am the most honoured". Each one of you is very special. Each thing is also like this; absolutely equal. This absolute equality is not based on comparisons of high and low, not based on a dualistic way of looking at things. It is the Buddha's way of looking. Today's *Bansan* is the formal start to this year's activities. It looks like everyone has good energy. Energy gives life. Harmony is very important. Self-care is important.

An edited transcript of a Dharma talk given by Ekai Osho at Bansan, Thursday Sanzen-kai, Quang Minh Temple, Braybrook, on 3 February 2022.



Sunday Sanzen-kai, Australian Shiatsu College, 25 April 2021– Photo by Katherine Yeo.

My Notes from Ekai Osho's Teaching

Teishin Shona Innes Intern teacher

Notes from Ekai Osho's teachings at the Auckland Buddhist Summer School—10 - 12 February 2022

Shastra of the Importance of Entering the Path of Sudden Enlightenment

Ch'an Master Hui-Hai (Ocean of Wisdom)

When the root cause is clear then balance comes, and we learn to live fully.

Ekai Osho

Root Cause

The root cause of human suffering is that we are born into this world—to the life of birth and death. Gautama Buddha taught everyone without discrimination—sage, thief, householder, child, murderer, king. He provided ways for the individual to tap into the root cause. However, most people are not concerned or interested in this. The entry point to the path is to accept the truth of suffering. The Buddha knew that humans need help with this.

Individual Remedies

He provided expedient means for teaching individuals—a way to work with particular difficulties while at the same time providing a path to practice, leading to awakening. He presented the appropriate teaching for the individual to go step by step in a journey of continual transformation.

Emotion

Emotion affects us all, and without clear understanding of the root cause we are tossed around by our feelings. At the ordinary level, humans are seeking more joy, but without a recognition of the truth of the imperfection of life, humans are continually searching for the fruits and flowers.

Quality of Life

The circumstances of life fall into three categories—favourable, unfavourable and neutral. Approximately a third of the time for each category—sleep time falling in the neutral category.

To try to alter these categories is not the way, and only means one cannot accept suffering or change. You may be having a good and prosperous time, but an unexpected change will come, and everything shifts suddenly to the other side. The point is to make life meaningful.

Commodifying Buddhism

People often say, "If you practice Buddhism your life will get better". This just puts Buddhism into the same category as everything else. It commodifies your engagement with Buddhism and doesn't do anything to deal with the root cause, which was Gautama Buddha's main point.

The Enquiry

The forum topic at the Buddhist Summer School was 'Can you define what it is to be open-minded in terms of Buddhist spirituality?'

Ego-self is the support for the enquiry into the root cause. You need to have a problem (self-attachment) in order to transcend. The human predicament is that we are born this way. Each person needs to work on that at a personal level.

To find a definition that is helpful it is good to look at the question from three aspects or find three words that can apply. One is *innocence*—no idea; another is *non-bias*; a third, *self-detachment*—forget "me, me, me". When innocence is lost there are only two ways: *the path of delusion*—conventional ways or when you realise you don't know—then you go with *the path of awakening*.

Path to Sudden Enlightenment

This means to *live* in enlightenment. Directly able to see as it is. "Anything is possible" means you live in the reality. "Refresh" it, drop everything. Drop the obstacles in your head. The sudden path is the direct path.

Buddha's method of teaching was how to make life most meaningful. He was not so interested in abstract ideas like *who created the world?* To receive the full value of life, each moment needs to be refreshed. Without the Buddha's teaching there is no way to deal with the human predicament.

How to cultivate the direct path is through Buddha's meditation, Dhyana "open minded meditation". This method has no demarcation, no high or low, no positive or negative. Setting aside one's pre-occupations is necessary to return to wholesomeness—including everything, coming back to the beginning, the root.

Reflections on the Shuso Ryo Practice of Shitsunai Kankin

Tony Crivelli

Over my last 12 years as a practicing member of the Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community, I have become increasingly involved with the practices and the formal roles of the Soto Zen tradition, as taught in Australia by Ekai Korematsu Osho, its Abbot and Teacher. A particular role, in which I have been training since June 2021, is that of *Benji*, the assistant to the *Shuso*, the Head student.

I thought it would be of interest to hear about a particular practice that the Shuso Ryo is engaged in, the weekly *Shitsunai Kankin*, (*shitsunai* means literally 'inside room'—to receive meditation instructions and *kankin* means sutra reading). This service supports both the Shuso in her/his role, as well as the well-being and empowerment of the Shuso Ryo. It does that by bringing the group together through chanting and recitation of essential Soto Zen chants and verses.

Starting at *Soshin zazen* time (8.30am), we follow the *sajō*: one period of *zazen* and *kinhin*, followed by the chanting of *Sanki Raimon*. We then start the chanting service with *Eihei Koso Hotsuganmon* (Zen Master Dogen's Vow), *Sange Mon* (the Repentance verse), *Eihei Koso Bendoho* (The Model for Engaging the Way) followed by the *Lineage Chant*, the *Eko* (dedication) and *Shigu Seigan Mon* (The Four Vows of the Bodhisattva). These are like an introduction to the last chant: *The Vow of Samantabhadra*.

When I first joined the Shuso Ryo I was impressed by the whole service and how it supported the group, but especially by the Vow, which I had not encountered until then. I feel it would be of benefit to all practitioners to become aware of its value to inspire us in our practice. For the purpose of this short essay, I will give a very succinct description of the Vow and some comments on how it has affected my own practice.

The Vow of Samantabhadra

Samantabhadra is the Bodhisattva associated with practice and meditation—the active aspect—and along with Shakyamuni Buddha and Manjushri Bodhisattva (the Bodhisattva associated with Wisdom—the absolute aspect), forms the *Buddhist Triad*.

The Vow is a description of both the practice of Realization and the way of life of an enlightened being:

1. *Honouring the Awakened Ones.*
2. *Prostrating before the Awakened Ones.*
3. *Presenting vast offerings to the Awakened Ones.*
4. *Repentance before the Awakened Ones.*
5. *Being joyful in the accomplishment of others.*
6. *Requesting the Awakened Ones to turn the wheel of the teachings.*
7. *Beseaching the Awakened Ones to live long.*
8. *Learning continuously from the Awakened Ones.*
9. *Liberating all beings.*
10. *Dedicating all activities into Realization.*

No comment of mine can possibly do justice to the power of these ten vows. One needs to recite them many times to appreciate their intent and their place in the practice of Mahayana Buddhism. However, even the preamble can give a sense of their power:

'The Noble Sovereign of Vows: The Activity of All-Pervasive Richness'

Then Samantabhadra, being in Vast Openness, set forth an elucidation of eons and of the movements of times as the points of inexpressible Fields of Awakening and of worlds one after the other in the form of this Vow.

This is the beginning of a series of mystical statements by an Enlightened Being, a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva, as well as instructions on the activities that lead to the realization of All-pervading Richness (Reality, Awakening, Enlightenment). For me, as a long-term meditation practitioner, but also as I go about my everyday activity in the world, mindfully recalling these ten vows is inspiring and encouraging. They emphasize the importance of repentance and the need for constancy in the practice.

As I recite them and keep them in mind as much as possible, I am better able to engage with life *as it comes* and appreciate Shunryu Suzuki Roshi's view of Zen practice: *'Strictly speaking, for a human being, there is no other practice than this practice; there is no other way of life than this way of life.'*

IBS Reflection for 2021

Ruth Brunt

The 2021 practice year started in a similar way to most. A little slow after the holidays; in fact, I didn't jump back into the Jikishoan schedule until the middle of February, beginning with the 1000th Sunday Sanzen-kai celebration. It was a fun way to start this year's practice.

Having been so moved by the experience of the Online Home Learning Program of 2020—the year the Pandemic lockdowns began—I was inspired to commit to continuing the practice. I wanted to do a lot of practice, as much as I could. So, for online retreat period #66 beginning at the end of February, I committed to way too much. I had hoped to attend 53 events, but in reality, I managed to attend 34. It was quite a big difference.

I was encouraged to be more realistic in my planning for retreat #67 but I was very stubborn and insisted on committing to the same high number of events. Again, the reality was that I couldn't manage it, not even close. Finally, for the third retreat of the year, retreat #68, I settled down, accepted my limits, and committed to attending about the right number of events. This felt much better.

On reflection, I can laugh about it. It's funny to look back and see how idealistic and ungrounded I can be. I'm now grateful to have overcome that stubborn desire to try and fit too much in. It took a while, and I can understand and sympathise with that part of myself.

Sitting Zazen, practising the chants and being with the Sangha always leaves me feeling a little high. Not really 'high' as in euphoric, but it's the high of feeling the muddy, dark, anxiety-laden fog that usually weighs me down, clearing somewhat—freeing me to be more focused and calmer, and sometimes even joyful. Not a

forced joy, just a simple, contented feeling of being at ease. This was a sensation I wanted more of. A lot more! In short, I was excited and being greedy.

Throughout retreat #68, the regularity of practice is starting to feel like a natural part of life. I feel it must be training me to not be so panicked and start relaxing. Each Zazen session is an opportunity to calm down. Just calm down. It seems so simple. Some mornings it's so easy to think, "I've done it before, I did it yesterday, I've been there, I know what it's all about. I don't need to practice this morning". I think this is 'playing in the entranceway' so to speak. All the while, the fog returns, and then I lose my way. Dogen Zenji's *Fukanzazengi* is inspiring:

Consider the Buddha: although he was wise at birth, the traces of his six years of sitting can yet be seen. As for Bodhidharma, although he had received the mind-seal, his nine years of facing a wall is celebrated still. If even the ancient sages were like this, how can we today dispense with wholehearted practice?

In summary, the year of practice with Jikishoan has taught me many things. Mostly it's taught me that this is a training which takes time and regular practice. Part of this practice is devoted to untying the knots that make it hard for me to even come to this practice. Like being too idealistic and demanding too much of life, and too much of myself, so that I'm too exhausted or too busy or distracted or even arrogant to practise.

I look forward to continuing to practice with Jikishoan in 2022 and seeing what the year ahead reveals. Mostly I pray I can be disciplined enough to stay committed, so that my family and all those around me benefit from this training.

The Practice of Memorisation

Naomi Richards

An edited extract of a report by Naomi Richards about the experience of Main Course A assistant coordinator training.

Method

Each week in preparation for class I read the chosen text three times. On the third occasion I read the text aloud, and practise my chanting, sound signals and memorisation. I use the voice recorder on my phone to record my practice and check my memorisation. Even once a chant is memorised, I repeat this each week. I begin my practice by recording what I remember of the chants, without any review of the text. In this way I can gauge how much of the memorisation is sticking, testing long-term rather than just short-term memory.

Review

At the first review by the Main Course A (MCA) co-ordinator, I failed to recite *Sanki Raimon* correctly. I was encouraged to use a deeper voice. She was encouraging me to find a pitch at which I could sustain a long period of chanting. Unfortunately, the comfortable low pitch is not one at which I can achieve the fourth interval at the end of the title of a chant, so my pitch tends to vary between the title and the body of the sutra.

At our second review meeting during the year the MCA co-ordinator spoke about memorisation as embodying the practice. I have a long way to go to achieve this but am changed in my attitude towards doing so. Since enrolling as an MCA student, I am content with small improvements. If the whole thing is awful, I just think, "Oh that is interesting. I must be in poor condition if I am forgetting something so simple or making such an ugly sound."

Reflection

Initially during chanting practice, I had difficulty maintaining a quiet and still demeanour. I wanted to move about in time with the rhythm, and my eyes kept wandering, searching to find the words in my memory. My breath was not as much a problem as the production of saliva and the need to swallow.

I practise in a small room adjacent to two neighbours, the walls are very thin, and I restrain my voice self-consciously. Listening to the recordings of my chanting was not pretty but gave me very direct feedback. As I was mostly concerned with memorisation and not beautiful sound, I was not too worried. Although I did think of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi's words, '*At least we should be interested in making bread which tastes and looks good!*'

One of my main motivations in returning to Main Course A was to force myself to say something about Buddhist practice. I find Buddhist practice and theory very difficult to talk about; one either says something trivial and bland or personal and irrelevant. Each week in class I find this a challenge but something about memorising, particularly the Heart Sutra, supports this effort of expression. Phrases randomly float through my mind, '*Far beyond all inverted views one realises nirvana*'. Then the topic is the Seals of Buddhism and suddenly I have a new resource as I ponder the relationship between samsara and nirvana.

In engaging with the practice of memorisation, the question of right effort emerges. There is a seemingly endless need for improvement but how much effort is 'right effort'? Undertaking this project involves a lot of repetition and how does one maintain a spirit of repetition that is 'careful, and alert'? Can I keep my beginner's mind as I recite the Prajna Paramita Sutra multiple times? By committing to a concrete practice, the concepts we discuss each week gain life and meaning. Their contemplation is not just an intellectual exercise but a reflection on actual practice as it happens here and now.

Acknowledgement

My sincere gratitude to Shuzan Katherine as the Main Course A Co-ordinator, for her support and mentoring and to Hojo-sama for sitting behind the black screen at each class, watching and listening.

FACTFULNESS

Ten Reasons Why We're Wrong About The World—and Why Things Are Better Than You Think

Shona Innes

By Hans Rosling with Ola Rosling and Anna Rosling Ronnlund. Great Britain, 2018, Sceptre.

Last year during one of our morning IBS Administration meetings, Ekai Osho recommended we look at a book he had come across called 'Factfulness'.

As you can see from the title above it is essentially an optimistic book. Though Rosling says he is not an optimist, he is a "possibilist: *It means someone who constantly resists the overdramatic worldview. As a possibilist, I see all this progress, and it fills me with conviction and hope that further progress is possible. This is not optimistic. It is having a clear and reasonable idea about how things are.*"

I write this review in the context of Jikishoan's theme for this first quarter of 2022, Harmony: Self-care. This book is a penetrating look at how human beings think and react and for this reason it has so much to offer to those of us who worry about the world based on our feelings. It turns out that in many cases these feelings do not actually align with how things are at all.

To name things (tendencies) can be very helpful. In this case, identifying the factors which lead humans to view the world and events in a particular way. Rosling calls these things 'instincts'. Perhaps to emphasise how fundamental they are, how powerful and how hidden.

There are eleven of them altogether: for example, the Gap Instinct, the Negativity Instinct, the Generalization Instinct, the Single Perspective Instinct, the Urgency Instinct. Fundamental to Rosling's whole discussion is data. This data he has sourced from agencies such as

the World Bank, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNESCO, WHO and many other sources including government and non-government agencies. And with some wonderful stories, he brings his own personal experience to bear on the whole question as well. He talks in detail about his work of exposing these phenomena of human 'instincts', "*This book is my very last battle in my lifelong mission to fight devastating global ignorance...to change people's ways of thinking, calm their irrational fears, and redirect their energies into constructive activities... This is data as you have never known it: it is data as therapy. It is understanding as a source of mental peace. Because the world is not as dramatic as it seems.*"

Our recent experiences with the global pandemic have demonstrated how vulnerable human beings are, not only in terms of the virus itself, but in terms of our own reactive tendencies. With so much 'so-called' information so easily available through the internet we are often not clear about the actual processes we go through in accessing this information.

In the chapter on the Fear Instinct, Rosling talks about the 'Attention Filter', "*None of us has enough mental capacity to consume all the information out there. The question is, what part are we processing and how did it get selected? And what part are we ignoring? The kind of information we seem most likely to process is stories: information that sounds dramatic.*"

So, in the interest of self-care, I highly recommend this book and trust that it will stimulate some healthy discussions and bring a new perspective on human behaviour, both personal and global.

Abbot's Activity

Harmony is the quality of individualism transcending itself. When practised at the level of the Sangha it is the fulfillment of an Awakened one. Having a Buddhist Sangha is the ultimate goal of Buddhism; it requires buddhas. Each person is responsible, and there is a sense of collective non-separation. This practice is possible when self-care is met.

—Ekai Osho, Sanzen-kai 13 February 2022

Each year Ekai Osho chooses a theme, “to give you some focus” for training and practice. “The theme is a common platform for everyone’s practice, instead of just coming and going.”

This year’s theme is ‘Harmony’, and the sub-theme for the first three months of the year is ‘Harmony: Self-care’.

Throughout the first three months of the year Ekai Osho attended 201 scheduled activities. In early January Ekai Osho taught at the E-Vam Institute 39th Buddhist Summer School. He led the opening Forum with his reflection on the topic, ‘How can Buddhism help build resilience in the face of personal and societal challenges?’. Osho then taught four sessions on the Sandokai – Harmony of Difference and Equality by Zen Master Sekito Kisen.

Ekai Osho then led the Jikishoan Community in Bansan, (the formal entering ceremony for the year) at Sunday

Sanzen-kai on 30 January. In February Ekai Osho taught at the Auckland Buddhist Summer School (via Zoom), held by Traleg Kyabgon IX Rinpoche’s New Zealand centre. Once again, Ekai Osho led the opening Forum with his reflection on the topic, ‘Can you define what it is to be open-minded in terms of Buddhist spirituality?’ Over two sessions, Osho taught on the text, ‘Shastra: On the Importance of Entering the Path of Sudden Enlightenment’ by Ch’an Master Hui Hai.

In February Ekai Osho conducted initial practice interviews with Main Course C and other full-year students who have committed to taking part in retreat practice, helping to guide their practice and training plans for the year.

Ekai Osho continues to guide and train the IBS Program Coordinators at various weekly administration meetings.

On March 6 Ekai Osho hosted the Annual Sangha Picnic at the Darebin Parklands.

Ekai Osho led the first five-week online retreat for 2022 beginning on Sunday 13 March. It had been hoped that a residential retreat would be held in the final week. Unfortunately, due to Victorian State Governments COVID-19 requirements the residential retreat has been cancelled but a full week of intensive online practice will be held in mid-April.

Sangha News

大晦日 Ōmisoka New Year's Eve at Tokozan Home Temple in Heidelberg West

Toni Osborne

On the beautiful summer morning of December 31st, we gathered at the Tokozan Home Temple in Heidelberg West for Ōmisoka, New Year's Eve. First, we sat Zazen to the calming vibrations of the air conditioner. Our numbers may have been small due to COVID restrictions, but our effort was mighty as we participated in the traditional cleaning of the temple called Osoji. As the temperature reached a high of 38 degrees, we not only cleaned the altar and the inside of the Zendo but also scrubbed the outside walls, the decking, and weeded the garden. Then as a small community we shared mild vegetable curry and refreshing orange juice.

In the evening there was Kokon (evening) Zazen which included the chanting of Rakan Pai as part of the Service. After, we companionably slurped iced Toshikoshi soba (year crossing soba noodles), using chopsticks to dip them in the dashi. When the evening finally began to cool, New Year's Eve Zazen began. We were joined online by many people sitting Zazen in their homes. It was great to see so many smiling faces on the screen.

We sat silently, occasionally startled by the odd fireworks being let off in the Heidelberg neighbourhood. From 11:00pm to midnight those in the Zendo each took turns to strike the Zendo bell every 30 seconds while participating in a sequence of prostrations. Finally, at midnight the bell at the front of the Zendo was rung out loud and clear to announce the arrival of the New Year. We all said "Akemashite omedetou gozaimasu", which means Happy New Year of course! Finally, we shared glasses of iced umeshu—sweet Japanese plum wine.

Perhaps this New Year you may like to reflect on...

From the emptiness, the wondrous being appears.

—Shunryu Suzuki, 'Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind'.



*The 108th bell is rung by Shona Innes, President
31 Dec 2021—Photo by Katherine Yeo*

Committee News



Shona Innes—Jikishoan President

Return to the Australian Shiatsu College

On 23 January we returned to the college for face-to-face practice at Sunday Sanzen-kai. There were 19 people in attendance and 7 people joining online. This 'hybrid' practice will continue for the foreseeable future.

In many ways the Sanzen-kai practice is the centre of Jikishoan's activity and as such its importance goes beyond the individual people who attend. It is also dependent on the support and engagement of Jikishoan members to ensure that it continues as a vehicle for connecting with the wider community.

Foundation Day will be held on the 1 May at the Australian Shiatsu College. The Hossen-shiki (Head Student Ceremony) for Marisha Jiho Rothman will also be part of the Foundation Day celebrations. We warmly invite the Jikishoan Community to attend in order to bring out the true meaning of this day.

Fundraising

We will be holding the Online Auction again this year. Funds raised will go to the Building Fund to enable Jikishoan to purchase its own property in the future. Last year's auction went very well and stimulated some

serious fun between bidders. We hope to build on this success this year and look forward to your enthusiastic participation. You will receive more information and instructions soon.

Jikishoan Members' Workshop #28 will be held on 15 May. It is quite likely this event will be in hybrid mode and so it will be possible to attend online. The workshop is an opportunity to understand how Jikishoan functions and the structure of the organization, offering a different view on practice. Please get in touch with me if you have any questions or would like to attend.

I hope that 2022 has started well for you and your family and that the benefit of COVID-19 offers a new perspective on daily life and the meaning of practice.

The Committee looks forward to seeing you soon at Sanzen-kai, Foundation Day or the Members' Workshop.

Gassho,

Shona Innes

President

22nd Committee of Management

Soto Kitchen

Brett Hope

SMOKY SPANISH TOMATO SOUP

This simple recipe makes a delicious soup, which is great as an entrée or a wonderful main course meal.

Ingredients

1 x medium red capsicum
1 x medium green capsicum
1 x medium yellow onion
¼ cup olive oil
1 tsp pimentón (smoked paprika)
1 x 800g tin diced tomatoes
1 x 400g tin diced tomatoes
500ml (2 cups) vegetable stock
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp ground cumin



Method

Over medium heat, cook chopped onion and capsicums in olive oil with ½ tsp of salt until soft, stirring occasionally. Use the same saucepan/pot that you will use to cook the soup.

Add pimentón to saucepan, cook for 30 seconds, then add vegetable stock and tinned tomatoes with ½ tsp salt. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to low to medium, stirring occasionally for 20 mins.

Whilst the soup is cooking, crush garlic and then stir together with ground cumin.

Once soup has cooked for 20 mins, remove from the heat. Stir in garlic and cumin mixture. Blend the soup using a stick blender. If you do not have a stick blender, cool the soup and mix in a normal blender.

Return the soup to the pot, adding more vegetable stock if required, depending on the consistency that you prefer. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve with crusty bread or garlic bread.

Variations

Like your soup a bit spicy? Add ½ to 1 tsp chilli flakes when you add the pimentón to the onion and capsicum mix.

Like your soup a bit creamy? Add a splash of cream when you are blending the soup.

Brett served this delicious soup at Sunday Sanzen-kai supper on 20 February 2022.

Calendar of Events

April June 2022

DAY	DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	CONTACT
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WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Sunday	Weekly	5.30 – 7.30pm	Sanzen-kai	Brunswick	Shona
Thursday	Weekly	6.20pm – 8.45pm	Sanzen-kai	Braybrook	Karen

APRIL

	13 Mar – 17 Apr		Retreat #69 – Online Home Retreat	Online	Margaret
	7 – 14 April		Retreat #69 – Residential	CANCELLED	Margaret
Tuesday	19 April	7 – 9.30pm	Committee Meeting #289	Online	President/VP

MAY

Sunday	1 May	9am – 4pm	Foundation Day/Hossen-shiki	Brunswick	President
Tuesday	10 May	7 – 9.30pm	Committee Meeting #290	Online	President/VP
Sunday	15 May	9am – 12pm	Jikishoan Members' Workshop #28	Online	President/VP

JUNE

Tuesday	10 June	7 – 9.30pm	Committee Meeting #291	Online	President/VP
Sunday	26 June	5.30 – 7.30pm	Bansan – Sanzen-kai B1	Brunswick	Shona
Thursday	30 June	6.30 – 9.00pm	Bansan – Sanzen-kai B2	Braybrook	Karen

ADDRESSES

Brunswick

Australian Shiatsu College
103 Evans St Brunswick
VIC 3056

Post

JZBC Inc.
PO Box 196, Heidelberg
West VIC 3081, Australia.

Online

jikishoan.org.au
contact@jikishoan.org.au

Publications (Shuppan)

publications@jikishoan.org.au
webmaster@jikishoan.org.au

CONTACT

General Enquiries

0421 285 338
contact@jikishoan.org.au

Sunday Sanzen-kai

Zoom Host & MCB
Coordinator: Shona Innes
0421 285 338

Thursday Sanzen-kai

Coordinator (Tr):
Karen Threlfall
0418 342 674

Online Home Learning/Retreat

Coordinator:
Margaret Lynch
0415 889 605

23rd Committee Of Management 2021-2022

Honorary Members:
Ekai Korematsu Osho,
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
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

Assistant Committee Members:

Naomi Richards, Michael Colton

Myoju Coordinator:

Margaret Lynch
0415 889 605



JKISHOAN 直証庵
zen buddhist community

Teaching Schedule – Mar – May 2022

*Teachings are directed by Ekai Korematsu Osho.
Please check the website or contact one of the IBS
coordinators listed at the bottom of this page.*

SANZENKAI

Sunday Sanzen-kai: Zendo in person & online (5:30 – 8:00 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 5:15 pm.

Donation – Dana Box

Bansan (Exit Ceremony): 26 June.

Thursday Sanzen-kai—Zendo in-person & online (6.30 – 9.00 pm)

Zazen (sitting meditation), kinhin (walking meditation), incense & tea offering, chanting service and reading.

Bansan (Exit Ceremony): 30 June

INTEGRATED BUDDHIST STUDIES

Main Course A1 – E-Vam Institute & Online
Ten classes, 10 – 12pm Saturdays
Term 2: 23 April – 25 June

Main Course A2 – E-Vam Institute & Online
Ten classes, 5 – 7 pm Saturdays
Term 2: 23 April – 25 June

Main Course A3 – Online only
Ten classes, 7 – 9 pm Wednesdays
Term 2: 27 April – 29 June

Cost is \$105 Annual Student membership, \$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 – 8:00 pm Sundays
Semester 1, 2022: 30 Jan – 26 June
Bansan (Exit Ceremony) 26 June
Venue: Australian Shiatsu College & Online

Main Course B2 6.30 – 9 pm Thursdays
Semester 1, 2022: 3 Feb – 30 June
Bansan (Exit Ceremony) on 30 June
Venue: Quang Minh Temple, Braybrook & Online

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

Main Course C

Retreat study: three five-week retreats per year.
R#69, R#70, R#71 – Home Learning Program Online
For further information see IBS Outline 2022 on website www.jikishoan.org.au

ONE DAY WORKSHOP - MC A, B and C

13 February *Cancelled*

RETREAT #69

ONLINE HOME LEARNING RETREAT

13 March – 17 April 2022

RETREAT INTENSIVE – 10 – 17 April 2022

An online Zen retreat experience, including daily zazen and weekly Chosan, Dokusan (interview with the Teacher), and Teisho (Formal teaching of a Dharma text).

IBS COORDINATORS

General enquiry, Home Retreat and Main Course C:
Margaret Lynch: 0415 889 605
C-course @ jikishoan.org.au

IBS Student Secretary and Main Course B:
Shona Innes: 0421 285 338
B-course @ jikishoan.org.au

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