



What are you – Snake or Dragon?

Dharma talk given by Ekai Osho during Sanzenkai on 6th January 2013.

Welcome everyone to our first Sanzenkai meditation session for 2013. Please be comfortable and face this way. Happy New Year to all!

In our traditional practice the beginning is important. If we are off even a little bit at the beginning, then the more we practise, the more we deviate. So we do not take the beginning carelessly. Just bring everything back to the beginning, so there is no mistake – no deviation. Returning to the beginning is one of the fundamental characteristics of Zen traditional practice. Beginning is also ending. If you get such understanding right and put it into practice, in due course your practice deepens and becomes more and more grounded, and also starts integrating in your other activities.

However, some of you may come to Zen meditation with a different understanding. You begin something and explore creatively and think you are creating something of your own. That is the first possible deviation. Sooner or later you find yourself lost.

We do not aim to change anything about ourselves. It is a delusion to think you can change yourself into something else. As you are is all right. Just continue with your practice, and wondrous magic happens. Transformation – real transformation – naturally evolves. Just nurture your practice and throw yourself into the programs.

This is quite different from the ordinary way we think of progress. It's very hard for us to be able to think differently. It's hard because we are all conditioned – our ideas of progress are hard-wired into our heads. It's the way we are raised. Our ideas of education are that we 'progress' from early childhood education,

crèche and primary education – that we build on that for secondary school, and that is preparation for tertiary undergraduate education and so on to postgraduate study.



Illustration: Jimesh Wilmot

This culture is a very strong influence – so even when we learn a different way of study, this old habit returns. You end up deviating from your practice and start chasing after progress.

**Zen practitioner –
you as you are is all right from the start.**

In Zen practice, we are not trying to change anything
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In this Issue: With no Teacher, Schedule is Teacher, Zen – A Slow Process, Zen and Excitement, Wind and Rain are smooth in the Year of the Snake, On Sewing a Rakusu, Reflection on my Practice as Shuso, Poems, Soto Kitchen...

Editorial

In this special Winter edition of Myoju, Ekai Osho's engaging Dharma talk, *'What are you – Snake or Dragon?'*, explores the transformative power of the snake. Indeed, as the Year of the Snake is unfolding and progressing, so is Jikishoan as a practice community. This 51st Myoju is celebrating this time of transformation, with a wide range of contributions that paint a beautiful picture about what is happening in our community.

From an account of the Easter Retreat, to feature articles on *'Zen – a Slow Process'* and *'Zen and Excitement'* to various IBS contributions; from membership news about the recent changes in membership structure to an overview of the implementation of our Harassment Policy; from an array of Sangha news to poetry and a special centre-spread of photographs from the 28th April Foundation Day – there is much to explore in this 51st issue of Myoju.

Complementing Ekai-Osho's Dharma talk is *'Wind and Rain are smooth in the Year of the Snake'*, a Dharma talk given by Tsugen Narasaki Roshi, Abbot of Zuioji and Shogoji, to school children to mark the beginning of this year, and *'The Serpent's Teaching'*, a poem about change and the transformative power of spiritual development.

'You are as you are' was chosen as the theme for this edition. *'Being as we are'* requires us to be aware, from moment to moment, of our thoughts and feelings as they arise. It is about knowing how to quieten our mind and abandoning our search for something illusionary. When we keep practising like this, we allow the presence of the moment to be revealed and we find ourselves as we are – in our utter nakedness, in our way of being. This is connecting with our essential self, and as we continue practising being true to ourselves, we realise that we, ourselves, are our own answer to whatever questions we so impatiently wanted to ask.

You are as you are, always, and for all kinds of reasons. The very perception of what you are in each single moment brings with it freedom and a sense of life being completely realised as it is. Sri Ramana Maharshi so beautifully said that:

'Life of man is what is. That which is, is. All the trouble arises by having a conception of it. Mind comes in. It has a conception. All trouble follows. If you are as you are, without a mind and its conceptions about various things, all will be well with you. If you seek the source of the mind, then alone all questions will be solved.'

When reading this Myoju, I invite you to take your time exploring the variety of expressions and to enjoy the breath and depth of all the contributions – each single one reveals a picture about being as we are in this moment.

Christine Maingard

On behalf of Ekai Korematsu
and the Jikishoan Editorial Committee

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The views expressed in Myoju are not necessarily those of the Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community or its Abbot, Ekai Korematsu Osho.

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Next Issue

The next issue of Myoju will be posted around the Spring Equinox, 22nd September 2013. Contributions that support our practice are most welcome, including articles, book reviews, interviews, personal reflections, artwork and photographs.

The content deadline is Sunday, 21st July 2013 and the theme for the next edition is *'Seeing things as they are'*.

If you would like to contribute or advertise in the next issue of Myoju, email publications @ jikishoan.org.au. For article contributions, please use the template and the advice in the style guide that will be sent by return email.

Bright Pearl (Ikka-no-Myoju)



From Dogen Zenji's Shobogenzo, Book 1, Chapter 4

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.'*—Dogen Zenji

With no Teacher, Schedule is Teacher

Jikishoan has just passed another milestone in its quest to 'promote the teachings, practice and realisation of Shakyamuni Buddha in Australia for the welfare and peace of all'.

We held our forty-second retreat at Easter while at the same time Ekai Osho made a flying visit to Japan for an important ceremony. This meant that for the first four days he was not present in body at the retreat. His vision, that this was an opportunity for the community to present itself as more adult, was matched by his meticulous planning for the event. As it happened, this was the largest retreat we have catered for – forty-seven people – thirty-four of whom were full-time participants.

In the absence of a Teacher, the daily schedule itself is the Teacher. During the weeks prior to the retreat, Ekai Osho had several meetings with the *Shuso Ryo* and presented his ideas and plans as they evolved into an extremely comprehensive daily schedule. By the time we arrived at Adekate Centre, everyone had been assigned to a role and function within a *ryo* and the lines of communication had been made very clear. *Kyomu* Naomi Richards and *Shoki* Hannah Forsyth were assigned to be co-directors, maintaining the daily schedule and dealing with any problems that might have arisen, while *Shuso* Shona Innes and *Benji* Julie Martindale were the spiritual models for the community, leading the practice in the *zendo*.



Easter Retreat Autumn 2013

Ekai Osho dedicated the retreat to the memory of Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, who first brought Zazen training practice and the teachings of Zen Master Dogen to the West. Chapters from *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind* were chosen for each of the student talks. The *chosan* talks in the mornings were lead by

Hannah and Shona, and student talks in the afternoon were given by Shona, Naomi, Hannah and Michael Ewing (Tenzo). Michael used a chapter from *Tenzo Kyokun* by Dogen Zenji to discuss the important role of *tenzo* in the community. The community was most supportive, enthusiastically offering many comments and questions. Lively discussion abounded.



Photo: Vaughan Behncke

Zendo Entrance /Easter Retreat Autumn 2013

Ekai Osho was invited to Japan to participate in the Mountain Seat Ceremony for his younger Dharma brother, Rev. Shozen Noguchi, Abbot of Chukoji Temple. Tsugen Narasaki Roshi, brother of Ekai Osho's Teacher, Ikko Narasaki Roshi, was invited to officiate at this public abbot installation ceremony. This wonderful opportunity for Osho Sama to be present at such an important event also meant he was able to meet several of his remaining Dharma brothers – all students of the late Ikko Narasaki Roshi, the founder of Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community.

Osho Sama returned to Melbourne on Easter Monday, was met at the airport and driven straight to the retreat. That evening, we held *bansan* after supper when he said hello to the community and shared tea and sweets with us.

Once he returned, Osho Sama immediately started *dokusan* - personal interviews – with all students, and for the *teisho* (Dharma talk) in the afternoons he taught on 'Bendowa – A Discourse on Doing One's Utmost in Practising the Way of the Buddhas' from *Shobogenzo* by Zen Master Dogen.

It is most exciting to see the development of Jikishoan's growing ability to present itself at both a local and an international level at the same time. We were able to build on the experience of having conducted forty-one retreats with numbers growing steadily over the years. But we would be unable to continue with this work were it not for the very clear leadership and guidance from Ekai Osho. Our thanks to you, Osho Sama, for bringing your vast experience and wise teaching to us here in Melbourne, Australia.

Shudo Hannah Forsyth

Zen – A Slow Process

I have just completed my ninth consecutive retreat. Why am I so motivated you may ask? Three years ago I was diagnosed with the re-occurrence of a brain tumour. I say re-occurrence because almost fifteen years ago I was diagnosed with a brain tumour in the same place in my head. Last time I had radiation treatment and I did several programs with Ian Gawler of the Gawler Foundation. This was my introduction to meditation and I found it to be extremely beneficial for my state of mind and ultimately for my state of health. Two years after that diagnosis, I was given the all-clear and told there was no need for further treatment or monitoring. As I was given this wonderful news, the thought arose that 'it (the tumour) can't be gone, I haven't finished'. It appears the thought had some validity. I wasn't finished.



Five years ago I underwent open-heart surgery to repair a massive dissection of my aorta. I was in surgery for twelve hours and was lucky to survive. After the surgery I was completely physically depleted. I could walk no more than a few meters at a time. I think this physical depletion created the physical circumstances for the tumour to re-occur. An interesting consequence of having my heart, literally re-connected, was that all the felt memories of my childhood became available to me again. These memories (mostly feelings) had been completely obscured and forgotten over my years of growing up and entering the workforce. All the thinking seemed to have covered up the feelings, and now they were back. And most of them weren't very pleasant; after all, who buries a pleasant memory?

What was I to do with all these memories? I did my best to ignore them, the same as I did as a child. Then in April 2010, the new brain tumour diagnosis arrived. This time I was told they couldn't radiate me a second time. I could have surgery or we could monitor it and see what happened. I chose to monitor it and I started to look for a place to do a supported retreat. I found Jikishoan. My belief was that I could stabilise the cancer and perhaps eventually cure myself through meditation. This was, after all, Ian Gawler's story. He had done it; perhaps I could too.

My first retreat was in August 2010. My initial entrance to the *zendo* was something of a shock as I was admonished – by none other than the Teacher – for wearing a beanie. I didn't know it wasn't allowed. I took the beanie off as instructed but I would not have survived long in the cold of an August retreat without it. Fortunately Ekai Osho, in his kindness relented when he heard of my medical condition and gave me a special dispensation, which has survived to this day.

For the first couple of days of that retreat my whole body ached. For the next two days I felt physically ill. For the remainder of the retreat I felt better than I had for more than two and half years since the heart operation. And I took this relative well-being home with me together with a resolve to attend the next retreat.

That was the start of my journey with Jikishoan. It's obvious that Buddhism was not really on my mind at that time, it was all about 'me' and getting over cancer. And where has this journey lead me? While my meditation practice doesn't appear to have cured me, the cancer has not progressed, or if it has, only minimally over nearly three years. And on the way the teachings have begun to seep into me.

There have also been standout mini-enlightenment moments, such as the time I found myself thinking 'I am "something" or "other"', and noticing the thought so clearly that I asked myself 'who is this imposter' calling himself 'I'. There have been many more, less dramatic, 'light bulb' events and along there has been the slow and gradual release of both tension in my

body and long held disquiet in my mind. There hasn't been a retreat without progress in this regard. I am also supporting my retreat practice with a daily practice of two to three hours a day. Or perhaps the retreats are supporting my daily practice. I suspect it is both.

The slow process of releasing the tension from my body has coincided with the release or letting go of many old emotions and some dysfunctional beliefs and relationships. The emotions are the feelings I experienced for a second time (the first being as a child) when I had the heart operation. Ekai Osho used the phrase 'Dig, Dig, Dig' in an early *dokusan* I had with him. And it has been like that - dig, dig, dig - as I sit on my chair with the tension. Over time, slowly, the pain or tension has revealed itself to be this long held emotion, which I experienced as a child but didn't understand. I understand it only a little better now. It is as if it just needs to be felt before it can leave. Sometimes it seems to be endless but then I haven't been digging for that long in relation to how long it has been sitting there.

After nine retreats, I have also started to notice other changes in my life after. Towards the end of more recent retreats I have noticed that when I look at the trees I see them in a new light; they have a depth I can't remember seeing before. I suspect this may be how I saw the trees as a child, before the thinking mind began to put its labels on everything. The world has, at these times, a vibrancy too that I haven't seen since childhood. I find myself laughing at things, which I didn't find funny not long ago (might be just copying Ekai Osho here) but I think not.

My recent brain scans have given me some cause for concern with confusion about whether the tumour has grown or not, and there are visits to a surgeon and the possibility of the need for surgery. After this, my ninth retreat, it occurred to me that maybe it's possible that it is not about the cancer anymore. Maybe there is a bigger picture. Is it possible that it is now about freeing myself from 'myself' and ending the suffering? Dare I say, the possibility of some sort

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Welcome to Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community

Jikishoan is a growing community of people learning and practising Zen meditation under the guidance of Ekai Korematsu Osho. Ekai has practised and taught Zen Buddhism in Japan, the USA 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 other proof separate from that. The proof, satori or awakening does not come after you have 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 or on the website at www.jikishoan.org.au. We warmly welcome anyone who would like to know more about Zen Buddhism to attend any of these activities.

How to Contact Us



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of enlightenment? It is an enticing thought and a goal, which seems to be 'almost impossible'. A perfect goal, in Ekai Osho's terms. And with this new goal comes the possibility of leaving behind all the 'gaining' thoughts that naturally come with wanting to cure myself of cancer using meditation.

Jikishoan and Zen, a map to achieving an *almost impossible* goal. Enlightenment.

My profound thanks go to Ekai Osho and all at Jikishoan who have made this journey possible.

John Walsh

Zen and Excitement

When Shona gave her talk a few weeks ago, she drew our attention to the fact that 'Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind' is divided into three sections – 'Right Practice', 'Right Attitude' and 'Right Understanding'. We look at these three aspects separately for the purpose of practice and study, but in fact all three parts are part of one theme and I feel that Shona expressed it rather beautifully when she said, 'with entry through one aspect you find the other two'. So though we might see them as separate, these three aspects are simply facets of the one way.

In Zen practice, the quality and the attitude with which we practise are integral to our practice – it isn't separate from it. This is actually true of everything that we do in our everyday life, but I think that it is particularly important for us to remember this when we come to Zen.

Sometimes when we arrive and embrace the practice of Zen, we do so with a lot of excitement. We come along and we say, 'Oh, that was wonderful! The Teacher really spoke to me. He understood everything in my heart and soul... this is the place for me'.

We come to the *zendo* and we see the beautiful ceremony and we listen to the chanting – this is fantastic! We meet people and may feel that they think just the way we do. And sometimes we forget in our excitement of embracing Zen that we are actually the same person that we were before we met it and that we are bringing to the practice a lot of our habits. What we are given in embracing the practice is an opportunity to look at these habits. Zen is a unique practice, I think, in many ways for us to see and examine ourselves.

Shunryu Suzuki uses a phrase, which he repeats several times when he talks about building our character. When I read it, I paused to think, 'What does he mean when he is talking about building our character?' He explains this when he talks about repetition and says, 'The enlightened person is some perfect, desirable character, for himself and for others. Buddha wanted to find out how human beings develop this ideal character – how various sages in the past became sages.' It is interesting to be reminded that we are here for that task – to build ideal character.

You want to be able to see yourself as you are in your practice and the concern is that you can only see that on reflection. Come back to the anchors that we have in our practice, just as we do in *zazen*, where we have the three major things to return to: the spine, the mudra and the eyes – keep coming back to those very simple things. Then we have an anchor and we have more chance of being able to open our eyes and see things as they really are.

I think that this is what Suzuki Roshi was saying when he talked about building character. It is not something that we can expect to happen quickly or without discipline and training – it is study and practice that is required in order to have this awakening. Although having said that, I think that the last line in our reading is very interesting and important: 'In fact, this is the sudden way, because when your practice is calm and ordinary, everyday life itself is enlightenment.' He is not talking about gradual attainment, even though he is saying that when we build character and move towards enlightenment, we do so slowly; we mix the bread and are careful about cooking it at the right temperature.

But that is not to say that if you are fully present in an activity that enlightenment cannot arise immediately. It can do so in your everyday life – it can do so here in the *zendo*, wherever, once you are engaged in the practice.

What does Suzuki Roshi mean when he is talking about excitement? There is that excitement when we are talking about something new or when we have hope. What is it when we get excited about something? What do we actually do? Usually we are telling a story of some sort. We are expecting it to be some way and usually it is fabulous in an exciting way – which is perhaps why we are excited about it.

The other word he is using is 'busy' – excitement in terms of creating noise and clutter and something

getting in the way. He talks about your mind getting rough and ragged – as if the noise of excitement is getting in the way. Sometimes I read this and think about our habits of mind. We don't think that we have a habit to get excited, but usually we have a great tendency to create drama and excitement wherever we go.

I don't know what you experience when you face the wall, but it is amazing what the mind can do or come up with and what it keeps generating. It is that sort of habit of the mind to keep on generating that 'drama' that I think we have the opportunity to watch and consider in our practice.

Without this 'drama', practice can be rather plain and unexciting and sometimes you don't want to tell people when you go home from a retreat what you have been doing for seven days. You elaborate a little bit – you tell them about *oryoki* meals – so exciting!

There is another part here that I think is very important. Shunryu Suzuki says in the 'Right Attitude' section of his book that 'The point we emphasise is strong confidence in our original nature'.

When Shunryu Suzuki talks about building character he is also saying that we know exactly what we need. We know what the right temperature is for ourselves. He says that when we are carrying something, we know our way and our state of mind, and we also know not to carry too much. This confidence, he is encouraging us to remember and to find in ourselves. I think this is a very important point, and again it is something that only you really know. I might have a guess about how much you need to carry or how much you need to do or what temperature is right for you. And your teacher might do this too. But in the end, it is you who knows what that is, and it is a great opportunity that we have in this practice to engage and come to an understanding of that aspect of ourselves.

It is a wonderful human quality that we are able to get inside of these things and can have that sort of energy for something. It is what brings us to something and keeps us going and engaged. It is knowing the place for excitement within our life and within our practice, and how this can inspire us and make us want to continue searching. The trick is not to follow it down a track and find ourselves quite lost.

Suzuki Roshi talks about constancy, the idea about practice being constant. It is not very glamorous to enter into that discipline of doing something repeatedly. Same time, same place, day after day but

some of that constancy actually helps you develop your practice.

The first student talk this year was given by Hannah about 'Right Effort'. It takes effort to keep a constant and calm approach in your practice. Sometimes it is much easier to follow the energy of excitement because we want to do this since it is so fabulous. It is harder when it does not appear so glamorous. This is not so easy to explain to people but by making the right effort, we find that we can develop our practice.

Naomi Sonen Richards

Transcribed by: **Vaughan Daisen Behncke**

This article is a student talk given by Naomi Sonen at Sanzen-kai on 17th March 2013. The text that Naomi chose for this talk is a chapter called 'Zen and Excitement' in the second part of 'Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind' by Shunryu Suzuki.

Membership News

Changes in Membership Categories as approved by Special General Meeting

On Sunday 19 May, a Special General Meeting of Jikishoan members was held at the Footscray zendo. This meeting had been called by the Committee of Management following extensive discussions at committee level regarding the need to reinvigorate our membership base.



Photo: James Watt

From left – Back Row: James Watt, Peter Donnelly, Robin Laurie, Liam D'hondt, Christine Maingard, Karen Threlfall, Lorraine Collishaw, Shona Innes, Hannah Forsyth, Vaughan Behncke. Front Row: Naomi Richards, Katherine Yeo, Mark Summers, Ann Alexander

Since 2005 there has been virtually no growth in our membership with new members simply replacing those who have either resigned or not renewed. Last year the Committee undertook the 'ghost project' to

make contact with past members who had neither renewed their subscription nor resigned from the community. Early this year we recognised the need to be well prepared for 1 July 2013 when membership renewals were due. As part of these discussions, Ekai Osho proposed that we return to the original spirit of membership where members were committed people who wished to actively participate in community activities and clearly subscribed to the Aims and Objectives of Jikishoan. The amendments to the rules proposed were the outcome of these discussions.

Both members and IBS students were invited to this meeting. Since the beginning of the Integrated Buddhist Studies (IBS) program in 2010, there has been increased participation and commitment in Jikishoan activities by IBS students and it was felt that their presence was very important in charting the future direction of the community.

Fourteen Jikishoan members attended the meeting (13 of whom are also IBS students). The main agenda items for this meeting concerned changes to the membership structure, that is, restoring the structure to its original spirit so to enhance Jikishoan's vision and purpose according to the Aims and Objectives of Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community.

In addition, there were two other amendments proposed, the first concerning the Aims and the second concerning finances. All the resolutions were passed unanimously.

The resolutions that were passed are as follows:

Amendment to Clause iii, Rule 4 (*Aims*), page 2, in the Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community

Incorporated Rules:

iii) To promote, encourage, develop and assist the study and practice of Zen Buddhism in Australia with special emphasis on the teachings and methods of Eihei Dogen Zenji and Keizan Zenji, the founders of the Soto Zen School in Japan.

Amendment to Clauses i (a), i (b), i (c) and Clause ii (a) of Rule 6, (*Categories of Membership and Affiliation*), page 4, in the Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community Incorporated Rules:

6. Categories of Membership and Association

Jikishoan has four categories of membership.

i) Practice Member *The Practice Member category is for the core membership of Jikishoan. The Practice Member category is intended for people who have undertaken introductory training programs as prescribed by the Committee from time to time and who have indicated an intention to further their practice of Zen Buddhism by participating in*

Jikishoan's program of activities on a regular basis. Applicants for Practice Member shall be persons who support Jikishoan's Aims and Objectives as prescribed in Rules 4 and 5. Practice Members have full voting rights within Jikishoan and may nominate to become a member of the Committee.

ii) Associate Member *The Associate Member category is for people who are prior Practice Members of Jikishoan. Associate Members are able to participate fully in Jikishoan activities. Associate Members do not have any voting rights within Jikishoan. Associate Members may not nominate for ordinary membership of Committee.*

iii) Ordained Member *The Ordained Member category is reserved for a member of Jikishoan who has taken the sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts, Kesaya and Oryoki given by Jikishoan's main teacher or Abbot to the novice monk or lay teacher trainee.*

iv) Honorary Member *The Honorary Member may be conferred by the Committee on Zen Buddhist teachers or any other persons who have rendered outstanding services to the cause of Zen Buddhism, as determined by the Committee. Honorary Membership may be conferred for life or for a limited period of time as decided by the Committee. Any Zen teacher who is an Honorary Member of Jikishoan shall be entitled to participate in meetings of Jikishoan and in meetings of the Committee. An Honorary Member shall have the same voting rights as a Practice Member.*

Finally, the Amendment to Clause ii, Rule 13 (*Funds*), page 8 in the Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community Incorporated Rules, which was a resolution for practical and business reasons to allow a quick response to the urgent needs and responsibilities of the Treasurer of Jikishoan:

ii) All cheques, drafts, bills of exchange, promissory notes and other negotiable instruments must be signed by two members who may be members of the Committee, or any other members of Jikishoan as nominated by Committee from time to time.

Prior to the Special General Meeting all Jikishoan members and IBS students received notice of the meeting with detailed rationale for each of the amendments proposed. The overarching intention of these changes was to restore to Jikishoan the original spirit of being a practice member and to strengthen Jikishoan's vision and purpose. If you are interested in receiving a copy of this background information please contact the Secretary of the Committee of Management, Jeremy Maher at jikishoansecretary@gmail.com.

Naomi Sonen Richards

Committee News

Review of the Jikishoan Harassment Policy

Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community is committed to sustaining a healthy spiritual community that conducts itself within the boundaries of an ethical code of the highest possible standards. Our guidelines are in accordance with those outlined in Federal and State legislation.

In November 2012, as representatives of the Jikishoan Management Committee, Christine Maingard and I attended a workshop run by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) to provide training for community organisations on their obligations under the Victorian *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. This legislation includes a positive duty to eliminate discrimination, which obliges organisations covered by the law to take proactive, reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation.

Following the workshop, the Jikishoan Management Committee agreed to ask the VEOHRC to review the Jikishoan Harassment Policy and provide feedback on any improvements that could be made. The VEOHRC was willing to conduct a review as part of providing further training to Jikishoan on developing best practice policy in this area. Ekai Osho supported my undertaking this further training as part of a special IBS project and provided the necessary funds from the Abbot's Support Fund. After the training session, I prepared a report for the Management Committee and some of the key points from the report are summarised below.

Jikishoan may not actually be required to comply with legislative requirements under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, given it is not an employer and does not clearly fit the definitions in the Act relating to other areas such as 'education', 'goods and services' or 'clubs'. However, the VEOHRC commended Jikishoan for seeking to adopt a best practice approach and develop policy which applies the standards established by the legislation.

Overall, the Jikishoan policy is seen by the VEOHRC as comprehensive and covering the main points recommended for an equal opportunity policy. However, the review process identified three main ways in which the Jikishoan policy could be improved so it is more user-friendly for someone seeking information about how to resolve an issue.

Broadly, these three ways involve: (i) providing a clearer and more comprehensive set of definitions of the kinds of behaviour covered by the legislation; (ii) including a clearer set of options for resolving issues, with stronger emphasis on informal approaches rather than a formal complaint process; and (iii) providing a stronger reference to Jikishoan's underpinning ethical framework.

A copy of our policy is available upon request – contact @ jikishoan.org.au or by writing to: PO Box 475, Yarraville, Victoria, 3013.

The Community Workshop, held on 19 May 2013, discussed the findings of the review in greater detail. See page 16, 'Community Workshop No 9' by James Watt.

Ann Alexander

Jikishoan Management Committee

Notice of 15th Annual General Meeting

Members and Friends of Jikishoan are warmly invited to attend the Fifteenth Annual General Meeting of Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community Inc. which will be held at 7 pm on Sunday 8th September 2013 at the Australian Shiatsu College, 103 Evans Street, Collingwood, immediately after Sunday Sanzenkai Service.

Full details will be provided in agenda papers, which will be sent to members of Jikishoan. Financial members are eligible to vote in person at the AGM; there is no provision for proxy voting. As part of the proceedings, Ekai Osho will present a report about Jikishoan's activities, its growth in membership over the past year and goals for the coming year.

The term of office of existing Committee members expires at the AGM. Members are invited to nominate for the Committee, which consists of four Office Bearer positions (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer) and up to five other Practice members. Please email jikishoan.secretary@gmail.com if you are interested or would like to know more about the organisational arrangements for Jikishoan.

Jeremy Maher

Secretary

Membership News

We are pleased to welcome the following new member to Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community:

Takako Mizogami

*Ekai Korematsu Osho and the
Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community Committee*

Just Meet

'You need to meet people where they are, not where you want them to be.' – Issan Dorsey

I recently attended a short course run by the Buddhist Council of Victoria for Buddhist practitioners interested in Clinical Pastoral Education. Along with twenty-seven others, I participated in two all-day workshops led by BomHyon Sunim.

We were all Buddhist practitioners from various traditions and cultures – a great cross-section of different experiences. During the workshops, we broke up into small groups and acted out various scenarios – with a 'patient', a 'listener' and an 'observer', giving each other feedback about how we felt as the 'patient'. Some participants had many suggestions to offer the 'patient', while some were concerned about how to advise someone so that they could 'obtain a good rebirth.' Sunim gently reminded us that our role was to listen to the people and that our opinions about what should or should not happen were not relevant.

Since then, I have been reflecting about meeting others. How does it feel to be really heard? What does it mean to listen deeply and carefully to another, without leaping in with comments, advice and suggestions? Does anybody want your opinion? Probably not.

It is often that I find myself not being attentive to another – when a chatty friend telephones me at 4pm, I am distracted and only too aware of a busy schedule – walk the dog, cook supper, get changed, leave for work – and I look at the clock. How long before I can say, 'I'm sorry I have to go'?

Too often I am too busy with my own story to really take the time to listen to that of someone else. My dog, Pete, listens better than I do. He just watches me patiently and quietly with his big brown eyes – he does not make suggestions, comments or criticisms. He just accepts what I have to say – and I know he will not repeat it.

These questions have brought me back to my practice with Ekai Osho and our Jikishoan community, and I realise that the teaching learnt here includes so much about how to meet another and how to simply listen.

I find the attention I receive from Ekai Osho during a *dokusan* profound. He sits quietly in *zazen* posture while I bow to Buddha and arrange myself on the cushion. He raises his hands in *gassho* and we gravely bow in silence to each other. He waits – and waits – until I am ready to speak, and then receives what I have to say without interruption. I wonder – would he just continue to sit and wait if I said nothing at all? He probably would. I am met with consideration, humour and very wise advice.

In our tradition when we chant, we are taught to '*chant with our ears*'. Likewise I realise that I must also learn to *listen with my eyes as well as ears, listen with the breath and listen with my heart*. In other words – learn to meet another with Body, Breath and Mind. Then I may be able to be present – not only for my wonderful chatty and not-so-chatty friends, and Pete the dog – but indeed, I may also be able to be present with all those whom I meet in everyday life.

Shudo Hannah Forsyth

Two Memorable Moments at Toshoji Monastery

Shunryu Suzuki said, 'At Eiheiji monastery, when we had to sit, we sat; when we had to bow to Buddha, we bowed to Buddha. That is all... For us, the monastic was the usual life, and the people who came from the city were unusual people.'

I was the 'unusual' person coming and going from Toshoji Monastery; to me everything was not the 'mountain'. The 'mountain' was intoxicating, breathtaking and overall metaphysical. So, it's rather funny to read the passage 'Study Yourself' from '*Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*' – as we hear, touch, smell and see new experiences, one can express it into the 'frog flying' or something of that nature. But, having to write something about it?

Tenzo

A cooked meal for myself means a chance to get really creative and seventy percent of the time ends in disaster. This outcome is welcomed, as I know that the only one who has to endure the meal is yours truly.

For the first three days, I was placed as *tenzo* and then – to my amazement – was asked to keep on cooking for the *sangha*. Whilst learning what *dashi* means and what *1tbls* is, I was reminded by none other than Isshin-san (former Tenzo at Jikishoan) on the importance of beginning and how to bring things to a meaningful conclusion.

The scenario – Nitichu Fugin (Lunch) five minutes before:

I look at the clock and notice that it's almost time to hit the *umpan*. I create a mental checklist – rice is ready, check! Salad in bowls, check! Soup taste, check! Tastes like water? Why? Ahhh, forgot the miso. Table set, check! At this point I am very pleased with myself, as all food is prepared and ready for serving.

I am smiling as Isshin-san walks in and says, 'Did you forget to clean up?' My smile deflates as I look around at the big mess that I have left. Quickly I begin washing the many dishes, completely neglecting time and food. In my state of fixation, Isshin-san says, 'The most important thing is when you cut or touch

something, is to wash and place it back where it came from'.

Master Dogen said, 'Clean the chopsticks, ladles, and other utensils; handle them with equal care and awareness, putting everything back where it naturally belongs. Keep your mind on your work and do not throw things around carelessly.' (Zen Master Dogen. Uchiyama Roshi, *How to cook your life: Zen Kitchen to Enlightenment*, Shambhala, 2005.)



Contentment

On my last day during *shijo* (zazen), *hozen-sho* was sounded at 5.10 in the morning. This was unusual as *dai-kaijo* – the duo between *han* and *umpan* – had not sounded. *Shuso* addressed us and said 'soto samu', 'weeding shimasu', meaning something like, 'Work is outside. Weeding'. I was shocked for two reasons: first, it was freezing outside and the ground would be two to three degrees below zero; second, I had packed away all my thermals as I was departing on that day.

Heading outside, I began picking the weeds. Thirty minutes went by and the sun began to rise as my hands became inactive and subjected to patting the weeds rather than pulling them out. I kept looking at the other monks who were breathing white smoke and shivering. They too had packed away their winter robes. I noticed that I could not keep myself from fidgeting and thinking about silly things such as, 'Why do I have to do this on my last day? When is breakfast? Why am I here?'

As I glanced over my shoulder and noticed that Seido Suzuki Roshi was weeding as well, something struck me as tears began to fall. I looked upon a man who was just pulling the weeds, as one is just pulling the weeds. Nothing else was added. Do you relate? Here was me: a person finding the reason to dislike, not to do and resisting the resistance. At that moment I answered to 'Why am I here?' with 'to seek contentment'.

Throughout my time at Toshoji, Roshi-Sama was present in all activities, if it was time to sit, Roshi would already be there, if it was time for samu, Roshi would start and finish with his *sangha* and if it was time for weeding, Roshi would be just weeding.

In conclusion, I sincerely thank Seido Suzuki Roshi

and the Sangha for having me as a guest at Toshoji monastery, and I further offer my appreciation to Ekai Korematsu Osho and Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community for giving people like myself a chance to seek their passion(s).

Shunryu Suzuki said, 'When we hear the sound of the pine trees on a windy day, perhaps they are just blowing, and the pine tree is just standing in the wind... But the people who listen to the wind in the tree will write a poem, or feel something unusual. That is, I think, the way everything is.'

Mind Weeds

A field of weeds stand before,
Choosing one's place,
Discriminating between big and small.

Do not miss a single root,
As the big confusion is put to rest,
The company of little weeds sprout.

Much is the mind of delusion,
Tranquilly; the mind of weeding.
As it is put, 'Flowers fall even though we love them,
Weeds grow even though we dislike them'.

Look behind,
The weeds of suchness are picked,
DID YOU LEAVE NO TRACE?

Liam D'hondt

Some Things I have noticed so far and that are in my Mind

The value of routines and repetition. Reading the same chapters in the two IBS books every term for two years has been a constant reminder of the fickleness of memory, the frailty of attention and the selective, shifting nature of points of view. Not to mention impatience and the lust for novelty. Having two new chapters this year is like an explosion of information. My Auntie Midge, at 95, painstakingly washed the dishes every night before she went to bed. I see her nightly action anew in the light of Dogen's instructions on *How to Cook Your Life* and the necessary clearing of the decks ready for the next day.

So many ways to attend to new things. Jikishoan is the first place I ever heard anyone nominated for a committee because they are kind. On the recent retreat I see for the first time the softness of Hannah's hands in *gassho* and transform how I do it

now, and I remember Shona saying in a one-day workshop that 'learning the forms is forever'.

The slipperiness of words, which I love, the slipperiness and the words. Osho Sama saying, 'Hope is a very emotional word, try finding an abstract one and a practical one that mean the same thing for you'. When I was stuck on 'Right' and its ever present shadow 'Wrong', in my A2 class Shona saying that maybe 'appropriate' is a better way of looking at it. Ah yes... appropriate effort, appropriate action. Osho Sama suggesting passion may be another, more useful, word for desire and that 'awakening' is something we do every day when we wake up from sleep and that taking precepts is like joining a footy club. Given the mental and physical commitment it's probably Collingwood!! After my second retreat I thought maybe I am too excitable to be a real Zen practitioner. Then I wondered if enthusiastic might be a more practical word and I felt much better.

Our pasts, each other. Naomi says we all use things from the paths we have travelled to be here: Katherine's lively and detailed research for leading our class; the idea of constraints from my Feldenkrais practice invoked in my actions, and on retreat the great levelling power of silence. Liam, of the apparently firm conviction and tireless energy and commitment, saying cheerfully one day, 'I am lost!' gives me courage for a while when I need it.

Delusions. Reading a story on the end of the Buddha's life, I am shocked to read of two old men shuffling along the road. I never imagined the Buddha as old and decrepit. I think of him as that beautiful tranquil image we see in all the statues. Delusion within delusion! One of the ones I didn't know I had! Ambushed! No cinematic-wafting-serenely-into-the-sunset ending! Pity!

Distractions. I still suffer from all six distractions but mostly excitability, anxiety and fear. I am a worrier as well as a laugher. Despite that, I have somehow eliminated the knotty question of 'faith', not because I've solved anything - I've just given up the necessity of wrestling with it.

Practice Period. My personal *zazen* practice is often inconsistent and I take comfort from Shunryu Suzuki saying if you can only do it once a week that's okay. I am experimenting with 'Resolve'. My A2 class has become, as James says, 'something I do.' The Practice Period this year surprises me in its capacity for ongoing revelations, working in various *ryos* gives me responsibility for attending to myself and others and makes tangible the process of transmission. It also connects me to people in the Sangha I had no previous contact with.

Sometimes when I sit I feel like I have come home.

Robin Laurie

Nothing added to my Practice and (Baby) Sitting

How does one take the stillness and quiet of *zazen* into the activity and noise of everyday life? I share some of my experience as my wife and I share our lives with our four-year old daughter and ten-month old son.

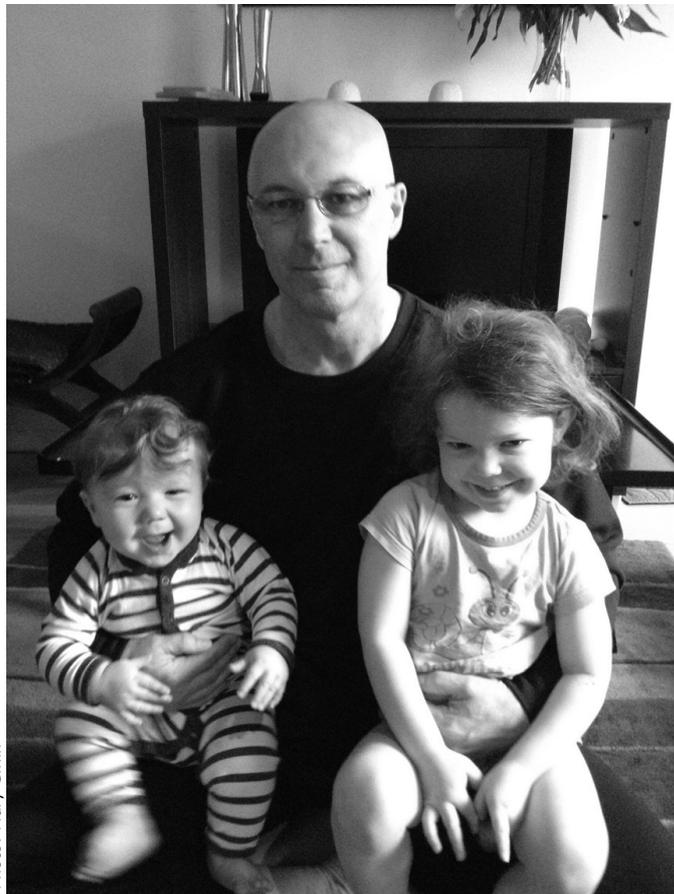


Photo: Mary Giffin

We usually wake at five, as this is the best time for us to find time. The house is quiet and the children are sleeping, meaning my wife heads to the gym and I head to my cushion. I light incense, place it before the Buddha and then turn to my cushion. My breathing settles as thoughts arise and pass away. Some thoughts want to take me on a journey but I let them travel on alone. It is a good time of day to be sitting.

In *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, Suzuki Roshi says that 'Right effort is to get rid of something extra.' I am just sitting when I hear the sounds of my son crying. Will he settle himself? No. I rise and by the time I get to his room he has fallen asleep again. I watch for a few minutes, then return to my cushion. I do what I need to do. Nothing extra added.

My son cries out again. I wait for him to settle himself. He doesn't, so I stand once again and head to his room. He is sitting up crying so I pick him up, give him a hug and reassure him. He puts his head on

(Continued on page 17)

Wind and Rain are smooth in the Year of the Snake

I wish to express my humble congratulations for the New Year, Heisei 25th to you.ⁱ I am very grateful to you, every bodhisattva here, for the generous support you have given us last year.

Owing to your kind support, here at this *bukkoku-san* (Zuioji Monastery) we made it through to New Year. As we do every year, we conducted at this temple various New Year events – solemnly, such as chanting Maha Prajna Paramita Sutra, and we prayed for your happiness and safety. I would be very happy if you also pray yourself.

According to the twelve signs of the Chinese and Japanese zodiac, this is the year of the Snake. For my New Year's greetings, I would like to talk about the year of the Snake.

The symbol of 巳, according to the dictionary, is placed in the 6th place of the twelve signs and means snake. Most people dislike snakes. As for the other large animals in the twelve signs, such as ox, tiger or horse, people think they are dignified and fine. Mouse or rabbit are cute. But when people hear of the snake, they tend to feel that snakes are horrible, even though they don't look that way.

These days, I hear that children are taught that a snake is dangerous because it is poisonous. Not only snakes, but also some insects or other animals are not to be approached too closely because they are dirty and carry germs, they say. But when you think of that, snakes protect themselves by giving warnings to anything approaching them. Humans have to think from the snake's point of view and judge them properly.

In some dictionaries, snakes are cited as a symbol of bad omen. In some religions, a snake is the incarnation of evil. How we 'see' a snake differs, depending on cultural background, religion, where we live, or the times we lived in. In Japan, however, the snake is not such an evil object.

People of old-time Japan valued the snake. It had been told that snakes protected ancestors. In fairy tales, snakes sometimes appear as the embodiment of God. There are many places where snakes can be seen worshiped in festivals.

The snake can be the embodiment of God or his messenger. Among the characters for 祀 (worship, enshrine), there is 巳 for snake and there is 示 (showing, expressing). 示 on the left side in the worship-character has also a meaning of the 'god of ancestors'.ⁱⁱ

As for New Year's prayers at our temple, and as I mentioned at the start, in praying for Buddha Dharma we ask for the 'world and rain to be smooth'. Although we say, it is fine today, or rainy, or there are clear skies, or it is good, bad, useful or useless, and so forth – these are selfish human speculations. First of all we must realise that we exist today here as

we are, owing to the enormous power of invisible gods and Buddha. In the world of Buddha we behave, there is no 'up and down', no 'right and left' and no 'front and back'.

We pray for this year that 'wind and rain are smooth' and that 'heaven and earth and all nature are smooth'. We also pray for this year to be safe and without any disaster, not only by our effort, but also by the protection of gods and Buddha of heaven and earth.

Tsugen Narasaki Roshi,
Abbot of Zuioji and Shogoji

Translated by: **Isshin Taylor**

This transcribed Dharma talk was given to local high school students and appeared on the front page of the 776th issue of 'Icho' (Zuioji's monthly newsletter). Tsugen Narasaki Roshi is the brother of the late Ikko Narasaki Roshi, Ekai Osho's Dharma transmission teacher.



Photo inside Suzuki Roshi's cabin: from left – Rev. Sojun Mel Weitsman, Ekai Osho, Tsugen Narasaki Roshi, Rev. Zenkei Blanche Hartman, Rev. Tenshin Anderson.

Tsugen Roshi's visit to Tassajara to officiate the Special Teacher Training program (Tokubetsu Sesshin) by the Soto School (Sotoshu) in 1988. Ekai Osho accompanied Tsugen Roshi as his personal attendant and his interpreter.

ⁱ Heisei era started in Japan on 8th January 1989, with the 25th Year being 2013 – 平成25年.

ⁱⁱ The pronunciation of 巳 is [mi] for snake and represents the snake symbolised as god, so together with 示, the combined character 祀 stands for 'to worship god'.



Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community



Foundation Day 2013

Special Role Assignments for the Shuso Ceremony during Foundation Day

Docho Ryo:

Abbot Teacher (Docho)	Ekai Osho
Attendant 1 (Jisha)	Naomi Sonen Richards
Attendant 2 (Jiko)	Vaughan Daisen Behncke

The Shuso Ryo side (West Wing):

Head Student (Shuso)	Shona Teishin Innes
Mentor (Shoki)	Shudo Hannah Forsyth
Attendant (Benji)	Julie Myoe Martindale
Guest Manager (Shika)	Christine Jonen Maingard

The Kannin Ryo side (East Wing):

Ino's Attendant (Doan)	Annie Egyo Bolitho
General Administrator (Tsusu)	Mark Myoshin Summers
Kitchen Manager (Tenzo)	Michael Kakuzen Ewing
Zendo Manager (Ino)	Liam Tosen D'hondt

Others:

Assistant Doan (Fukudo)	Katherine Shuzan Yeo
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Community Workshop No 9

This year I attended my first Community Workshop, which was held on Sunday the 19th May from 9am to noon at the Footscray zendo. These yearly workshops are organised by the Committee of Management, and are open to all members, interested friends and enrolled IBS students. They are provided to orient, inform and update people on the organisational aspects of the Jikishoan Community. My decision to attend came out of my growing curiosity about the behind-the-scenes activities and the work that goes on within Jikishoan to secure its future and to keep the community ticking along. After studying the email invitation carefully, I decided it was safe for me to attend, as this wasn't going to be a painful corporate style workshop with butchers paper, post-it® notes and high-octane facilitators. Fortunately I was right!



Photo: James Watt

From left: James Watt, Naomi Richards, Joe Wong, Katherine Yeo, Liam D'hondt, Mark Summers, Christine Maingard, Lorraine Collishaw, Ann Alexander, Jinesh Wilmot, Karen Threlfall

With Ekai Osho being away in Japan for the celebration of the 650th anniversary of Daichi Zenji, this year's workshop was run by the Committee of Management. The day commenced with *zazen*, *kinhin*, tea ceremony, incense offering and chanting. The eleven attendees were warmly welcomed to the workshop by our president Mark Summers. Naomi Richards then outlined the aims, objectives and rules that underpin the operations of Jikishoan. Ann Alexander had the task of presenting the project she had undertaken as part of her IBS study regarding the Jikishoan Harassment Policy. This had involved attending training at the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission and receiving specific feedback from the Commission about Jikishoan's Harassment Policy. Ann's presentation stimulated interesting and lively discussion. The final part of the workshop was Katherine Yeo's presentation of the Committee's perspective on the proposed changes to Jikishoan's membership structure. Katherine's presentation set the scene for the separately run, but inter-related, Special General Meeting in the afternoon (see page 7 – Membership News).

The workshop highlighted for me the importance of Jikishoan's Aims and Objectives, the history of

Jikishoan's membership framework, the awkward position religious and community organisations may find themselves in when ensuring compliance with various pieces of legislation and whether in fact they need to, and how hard-working our Committee of Management is. I also got to see technology intersect with tradition with a laptop computer sitting atop a zafu – a new experience for me – and did you know that laptops can bow by half closing then opening their screens? The workshop was successful in its brief, which was to 'orient, inform and update'. I was glad I attended and would strongly recommend the experience to others.

James Watt

BOOK REVIEW

Old Path White Clouds: Walking in the Footsteps of the Buddha



Paperback: 600 pages
Publisher: Parallax Press; 1st Ed. (May 1, 1991)
ISBN-10: 0938077260
ISBN-13: 978-0938077268

'Old Path White Clouds: Walking in the Footsteps of the Buddha' is a wonderful book written by Thich Nhất Hạnh, a famous Zen Buddhist monk, teacher, author and peace activist.

It follows the life of the Buddha from his conception through to his death near Kushinagari 80 years later.

The author has based his writing on Pali and Chinese sutras and at the end of the book is a detailed reference to those sources.

The life of the Buddha is recounted through the eyes of Svasti, a young buffalo boy, who will later become a bhikkhu (monk), the Buddha himself as well as people close to the Buddha.

It not only presents the Buddha as a great spiritual teacher but also as a man encountering and overcoming many difficulties in his quest to discover a way to end all suffering and to subsequently share the fruit of his enlightenment with the rest of the world.

Most of the Buddha's core teachings are present in many different forms, changing according to the audience in attendance during his teachings.

This book is very accessible to anyone, even without prior knowledge of Buddhism, children and adults alike.

Johann Shogetsu Montet

(Continued from page 12)

my shoulder as we go downstairs together. He cuddles me, I cuddle him back. I give him his bottle. He drinks it.

In the *zendo* I stand or sit when the bell rings. I chant when required. When tea is offered, I accept it. When I serve tea, I serve tea. I do what I do, when I am doing it. Nothing extra added.

At home, I sit when I need to sit and attend to my son when he needs me. When I sit, I don't get upset if I am interrupted, I just do what needs to be done. Nothing extra added, except perhaps more love and affection. I bring my *zazen* to this part of my everyday life.

Do I always manage to practise with this spirit? 'Not always so', as Suzuki Roshi says. I can be tired, frustrated and irritable, but I have kids to love and care for so I love and care for them. In the future, I will look back and wish I could relive this time with my children. These moments are right here, right now. I remember that *every* moment is unique. Be present, embrace *every* second. Pay attention. Here and now. It's only going to happen once.

Sitting *zazen*
Leaves falling – Children's needs
I am here

Steven Giffin

On Sewing a Rakusu

The meaning of a *rakusu*

A *rakusu* (絡子) is a garment worn by Zen Buddhists who have taken the precepts. It is a miniature version of a standard *kasaya** – and represents the clothes Buddha put together to wear as he was seeking enlightenment.

For a disciple of Buddha there are three considerations concerning the wearing of the *kasaya*. First, it is its practical use as clothing, second it is its ceremonial use as a religious garment, and third, it is receiving it as the Buddha's body and mind.

A *rakusu* can only be worn once the precepts (ethical guidelines in Buddhist practice) have been received. Indeed, sewing and wearing the *rakusu* is one of the more visible aspects of receiving or having received the precepts.

Dogen-zenji says, 'The *kesa* that someone dons when taking the Precepts is not necessarily of cotton or of silk, for indeed the Buddha's edifying influence is difficult to comprehend. The precious Jewel within is beyond anything that those who calculate grains of sand are capable of finding.'¹

The *rakusu* is symbolic of *The Three Treasures* that we acknowledge when we take the precepts: the

historical Buddha, his teachings, and the community of his followers. We take refuge in *The Three Treasures* by vowing to 'take refuge in the Buddha' as our true teacher, to 'take refuge in the Dharma' as the medicine for suffering, and to 'take refuge in the Sangha' as a place of safety, trust, compassion and wisdom.



Photo: John Chadderton

L-R: Christine Maingard, Jeremy Woolhouse, Liam D'hondt

Sewing the *rakusu*

The *rakusu* consists of 18 pieces of cloth that are sewn into one. It is said that the pieces are transformed just as we transform the parts of our life through our practice. The aim of sewing is not to do it quickly but to do each step in deep mindfulness. While sewing, we should chant silently with each stitch, '*Namu kie Butsu*' ('I take refuge in the Buddha').

It is important to learn from someone how to sew the *rakusu*. Shudo Hannah kindly offered her time and skilful assistance in getting me started and in giving instructions all the way through. Much of my sewing was done together with Liam Tosen. Liam didn't only sew one *rakusu* – he started off with two and then added a third one. When he was almost finished, his fourth *rakusu* was under construction. Impressive! And not only that, he decided to give away one or two to others who had already received the precepts but had not yet had the time to sew for themselves.

We received from Shudo Hannah the '*Study of the Okesa Nyohoe-e (Buddha's Robe)*' text². This provided us with information about the traditional Buddha's robe as well as the instructions on how to sew. Starting to sew was a little bit like starting *zazen* and realising that reading about it actually means nothing. Doing it is an entirely different matter. Without the help we received, the instructions would have been difficult to understand and to follow. So it is essential to learn from someone.

Sewing the *rakusu* is an irreplaceable experience. Before I started, I fleetingly wondered about the purpose of cutting up a piece of cloth into little pieces and then sewing them back together again. But then, when I started, I found the act of sewing immensely relaxing and purposeful. Joining and sewing the

pieces of cloth together, we need to follow a pattern and a certain order and eventually it all turns into an integrated whole. It reminded me somehow of how we are trying to integrate our own relationship to ourselves and to the world around us.

Interestingly, I also experienced a very familiar inner critical voice that judges me. As the *rakusu* was taking shape and as I kept looking at the irregularities in my sewing and the pieces themselves that sometimes didn't quite come together as beautifully as I had envisaged, there were moments of dissatisfaction and of not being good enough with what I was doing. A few times it felt as if I was looking at myself and seeing my own flaws and shortcomings. But as I knew that I was putting great care into the sewing, I came to realise that this was okay.

The act of sewing may be a practice of simple joy, of discovery, of faith or enquiry, of love or of all sorts of other emotions. Whatever it is, it is always a practice of great determination: one stitch at a time and not fussing over mistakes, but welcoming them and simply undoing the stitches and starting again.

Sewing the *rakusu* doesn't mean we do it to attain some goal, nor does it mean we need to make it perfect. The point is to do it mindfully and wholeheartedly, just like attending to our lives as it offers us continuous opportunity for endless practice. When we look at a completed *rakusu*, we can't really see where we started sewing and where we stopped. Continuous practice, where there is no beginning and no end! It reminded me of Dogen-zenji where he talks about doing one's training through ceaseless practice while 'keeping to the precepts'.

'As a result, the practice is not done by forcing oneself to do it and it is not done by being forced to do it by someone else: it is a ceaseless practice that is never tainted by forcing.'

*The merits from this ceaseless practice sustain us and sustain others. The underlying principle of this practice is that the whole universe in all ten directions receives the merit of our ceaseless practice. Though others may not recognize it, though we may not recognize it ourselves, still, it is so. As a result, owing to the ceaseless practice of all the Buddhas and Ancestors, our own ceaseless practice has clearly manifested. And, owing to our ceaseless practice, the ceaseless practice of all the Buddhas clearly manifests, and the Great Way of the Buddhas pervades everywhere.*²

Receiving and wearing the *rakusu*

Once the *rakusu* is completed, it is given to the teacher, who, before returning it during a ceremony, puts a teaching or a chant on the reverse side to commemorate the recipient's initiation. I received my *rakusu* from Ekai Osho during Jikishoan's 38th Precept Ceremony on 3 March 2013.

Later that evening, I reflected on how easy it was when I had committed myself to *The Three Treasures* back in 2009, but how much more challenging it then became to sustain that commitment. Between then and now, there were times when I became restless

and distracted, and when I let the shadow of a not-yet-clearly articulated vision almost fade away. And then there were times when I became comfortable in my practice to a point that I rarely reflected on my commitment. However, sewing the *rakusu* and then leading up to this ceremony and now that I have started wearing it, I feel a renewed sense of commitment and progress, and a feeling of joy that is impossible to put into words.

Ultimately, receiving the *rakusu* means that we receive it from the hands of Buddha.

But we should remember that it is not enough to receive a *rakusu*, '...the recipient must also accept it and what it implies; likewise, the robe is not to be stored away, but is to be put to use. "Putting it to use" implies keeping to it and what it stands for, just as one keeps to the Precepts and what they stand for...'⁴

Receiving the *rakusu* is also a practice in non-attachment. In order to receive it, you first have to let go of it. And when you receive it from your teacher, you then should let go of it again in your mind. There should be no clinging to it otherwise the *rakusu* may become a useless attachment, rather than a small robe of true Zen practice. Instead, because of what the *rakusu* presents, there should be a taking-care-of-it and a protecting it more than you would guard your own personal belongings.

We should also remember not to separate the *rakusu* from *zazen*. It is not just about the sewing, it is not just about sitting in silence and in isolation from the rest of the world while you progress stitch-by-stitch, it is not just about seeing your mistakes. The *rakusu* is not only the Buddha's robe in miniature – the *rakusu* itself is *zazen*. It is part of our daily practice.

*How great the robe of liberation,
a formless field of merit.*

*Wrapping ourselves in the Tathagata's teaching,
we free all living beings.*⁵

Christine Jonen Maingard

² A *kasaya* is a Buddhist robe. In chapter twelve of *Shobogenzo (On the Transmission of the Kesa)*, Dogen explains the significance of the robe in spiritual and daily life.

¹ Eihei Dogen, *Shobogenzo: The Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching, On Ceaseless Practice. On the Spiritual Merits of the Kesa (Kesa Kudoku)*. Shasta Abbey Press, California, 2007, 1st ed, chapter 84, p 937.

² Katagiri, Tomoe. *Study of the Okesa Nyohoe-e (Buddha's Robe)*. Minnesota, 2001, 3rd ed.

³ Eihei Dogen, *Shobogenzo: The Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching, On Ceaseless Practice (Gyoji)*. Shasta Abbey Press, California, 2007, 1st ed, chapter 29, p 374.

⁴ *ibid.* *On Ceaseless Practice On the Transmission of the Kesa (Den'e)*. Translator's Introduction to Chapter 12, p 119.

⁵ *Takesa ge (Robe Chant)*.

A reflection on my Practice as Shuso, Practice Period 2013

At the time of writing, Jikishoan has just had its 14th Anniversary celebration at Foundation Day, 28th April 2013.

The highlight event of the day was the Shuso Ceremony and I have had the great good fortune to take this role of Shuso in this second of Jikishoan's practice periods.

The ceremony called *hossen shiki* (Dharma Combat Ceremony) was presided over by the Abbot, Ekai Osho, and attended by IBS students, committee members, Jikishoan members and guests. The centre of my text study for this practice period was a koan – *Zazenshin* – taken from Chapter 26 of Master Dogen's *Shobogenzo*. During the ceremony the Shuso presents the koan formally and then questions on it are posed by a selection of members who have roles within the Jikishoan community. The formality of the occasion gave weight, clarity and meaning to the activity not only for those directly involved but also for those watching and listening.

While I was overseas last year, staying at the San Francisco Zen Center, someone there said to me that being Shuso would change my life. I think he was definitely right though I would also say that taking the role has added to a life already changed. Ekai Osho has used the word 'empowerment' not only in relation to the Shuso's practice but also to the Shuso Ryo as a whole – the four people who are engaged in currently leading the community through this six-month practice period.

It is clear after Sunday's ceremony that the benefit is shared not only in this ryo but through the Jikishoan practice community and into the wider community as well. My four close friends who came to the ceremony were very moved and affected by it and from what they have said to me that effect is still reverberating for them. I am very happy to hear this.

One of the very significant elements of Shuso's practice in this practice period is the daily routine of personal practice at home, centred on bowing and chanting. The effort required for me to make this part of my daily schedule has been like putting the bread dough in the oven each day and turning up the heat.

One of the other central personal practice elements which is having a profound effect on my experience is that of reading aloud. Ekai Osho has encouraged 'out-loud-reading' of the text I have been studying. At this point in time I have read it 22 times and my plan is to read it at least once a week till the end of the practice period on June 30. The effect of this practice is subtle and quite powerful. Each reading brings out Master Dogen's voice and the voice of the tradition itself.

Preparing for the ceremony, doing it and now continuing to practise in its wake has been an education in the true sense of the word. 'Education' has been one of my personal 'soap box' topics since I was at high school, culminating in my bitter disappointment of the experience of studying and learning at university. I felt that it just wasn't helping

me to live on a day-to-day basis as well as the fact that I had no idea how to study and the advice I did receive was of little or no help. So to find myself in a situation where I am offered the chance to experience the meaning and practice of study is like finding a missing link or answering a question that has been hanging around in the background for a long, long time.

As Shuso I would like to thank all those who took part in the Shuso Ceremony either by being audience or witness to the event or by being directly involved with the performance, preparations and pack-up. It was evident that the success of the celebration was dependent on the fact that those who were directly involved extended themselves in order for this whole event to go well. I thank them for all their extra effort. Thank you to Karen Threlfall for stepping in to help with documenting the event and to James Watt also for his adaptability in assisting with photography, performance and Tenzo Ryo activity. To Katherine Shuzan my appreciation of her invaluable help with the IBS administrative activity, and to the Shuso Ryo – Shudo Hannah, Julie Myoe and Naomi Sonen – your support is tangible and beautiful practice. My sincere gratitude goes to Ekai Osho for the chance to take this role and study in this way. It is a rare and wonderful opportunity.



Auspicious

Golden full moon rising
On Root Case Tea,
Questions form in company
And clouds drift past.

Shona Teishin

Shuso
Practice Period 2013

For Robin

Ekai Osho and the Jikishoan Community extend their condolences to Robin Leong on the death of his mother, Betty Yock Sham Leong, on 21 March 2013. She was 78 years old.

Robin has been a member of Jikishoan for eight years. He is also a very committed and generous member of the Tenzo Ryo, in the position of *Fukuten* (Assistant Tenzo).

Robin organised for Ekai Osho to conduct a private service at Betty's grave, on April 21. All present offered incense and chanted 'The Heart Sutra'. Robin shared stories of his mother and read a few poems. It was an intimate gathering on a warm and sunny autumn day.



Betty Yock Sham Leong

2013 Sangha Picnic

There was a great turnout to this year's Sangha picnic held at Darebin Parklands on Sunday 10th March. We were fortunate to have a hot and sunny day with which to enjoy everyone's company and culinary creations. People started arriving from midday although a few dedicated members had come early to secure our usual spot in the shade. Thirty adults and twelve children turned out. Members, friends and family enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people and catch up with everyone else. The food was colourful and abundant, with people bringing everything from the standard picnic fare to Japanese dishes and various signature creations.

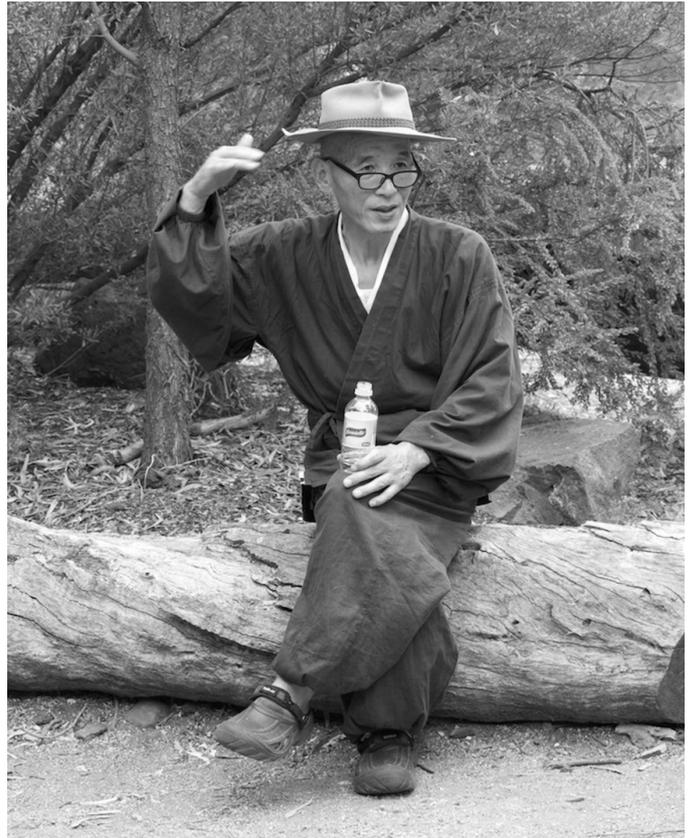


Photo: James Watt

Ekai Osho took great delight in gathering all the children together in a large circle under a tree to get to know each other – his dharma talk kicked off with an important lesson on keeping well hydrated in such hot weather! Several hours of eating and talking were brought to an end with some outdoor chanting, thank-you speeches, and the obligatory group photos. In a final effort to cool down, the leftover ice was then thrown about between some willing and not so willing picnickers. In conclusion, another very successful Jikishoan annual picnic – see you all next year!



Photo: James Watt

James Watt

Practising at Toshoji

Going with the flow – that’s as poetic as I can get about my two-month stay at Toshoji last year. It was an immersive experience in the most scenic surroundings. It brought out the best and worst of my Practice, but I learnt to go with it and accept it.

The daily schedule was very similar to a Jikishoan Bendoho Retreat, so settling in wasn’t too difficult. The most noticeable difference I would say is that Toshoji has a lot more bells and whistles to play with. Every day we would wake, sit zazen, eat and work together. What made practising there so enjoyable was that most of the time something would always come up and change everything, even though the daily schedule was quite strict. We constantly had to adapt to the situation at hand, which usually came in the form of receiving guests. But as long as I kept going with the flow everything became simple.

It was amazing to have the opportunity to observe Zen in the traditional Japanese culture.

Steven Kotoku Nguyen

Foundation Day: My Experience



What struck me during the Foundation Day celebrations was the joy and beauty I experienced from all the VERY different forms. From world-class classical music to the ‘zendroids’, from the beating of our new (gigantic) drum to

Shuso’s stern and commanding pronouncements; not to mention a stick that can transform into a jewelled sword!

Throughout the day I found myself smiling deeply on how our practice is so open and available to everyone, regardless of where they are coming from, what they believe, or how long they have practised. For me, Foundation Day demonstrates that Jikishoan is a truly inclusive community that embodies the idea that everyone ‘gropes for the elephant’ (searches for their own answers) in their own way and that it is ‘ok’ for each person to perceive their reality from where they are.

I see our system of training providing the container within which both the formal and informal aspects of our lay-practice can interact; this was clearly the case on Foundation Day.

On a personal note, not taking myself too seriously is something that I have been working on for a number of years and the Foundation Day certainly encouraged this for us all.

In conclusion, I came away from this community event energised and excited but also humbled by the effort of those involved in making the day the great success that it was.

Niall McShane

Practice in Castlemaine

There is an intimacy particular to living in a regional town, an intimacy that extends to practice with the Castlemaine Zen Group. Practice can’t be as clearly defined by the specifics of time, place or people, as it can in a large urban centre such as Melbourne.

With a *sangha* of three, personalities loom large and it is difficult to avoid engaging with the *sangha* on a personal level – whether one feels inclined or otherwise. Frequently it is with a sense of relief that I hit or hear the *han*. It is then that silence irons out our wrinkles. Practice comes to the foreground and our personalities dissolve into the background.

One of our members, Cherry, is elderly and requires a lift to and from *zazen-kai*, extending practice by at least an hour and requiring me to forewarn my partner that I will be home late when I’m on chauffeur duty. *Zazen-kai* is further extended when Cherry attends because with only three sitting, it is courteous to allow the requisite time for her to get up and down, and to balance herself. It also means a weekly phone call to confirm *zazen-kai*. If this isn’t done, Cherry will leave messages on the answer phone from 7 am on Monday morning until she gets a response. It makes no difference that we’ve been sitting together for five years and I have without fail facilitated *zazen-kai* on a weekly basis. That phone call still needs to be made. So practice extends beyond its expected boundaries and at the same time is modified to accommodate individual needs in a way that a larger *sangha* need not entertain.

Eighteen months ago, Peter’s (our third *sangha* member) wife passed away. Peter requested that I participate in the funeral service and sound the *keisu* at designated intervals. From a practice perspective I felt unqualified to perform this role and to do so, I felt, involved a dose of charlatanism. From a personal perspective, I felt that if I could do something to assuage his grief by providing some meaning to a ritual, then I should participate as requested. That is what I did. The boundaries between the personal and practice were more than stretched; they conflicted.

When at *Sanzen-kai* in Melbourne and newcomers are introduced and questioned as to their place of abode, I marvel at the anonymity of it. When a newcomer comes to the Castlemaine Zen Group, they are invariably not ‘new’ at all. They know you from another role that you play within the wider community, and vice versa. Until the *han* is struck, I invariably feel awkwardness as I try to bridge two worlds and two roles.

It is this ‘bridging’ that defines our practice in Castlemaine. *Zazen-kai* as sat would be more or less familiar to all members of Jikishoan. It is the grey area, either side of the *han* being struck and beyond the *zendo* where our practice becomes particular to the Castlemaine Zen Group and acts as a kind of litmus test to ascertain how integrated our practice is with our daily lives.

George Duckett

The Serpent's Teaching

*'And what do I call the Ancient Mirror?
The head of the Dragon, the Tail of the Snake!'**

Swallowing up the entire universe
The dragon consumes itself
Leaving behind uncreated light
From its oblivion, awaiting a new birth:

Two serpents, entwined and coiled
Around the tree of existence
Arise and merge as one that is endless
As it holds on to itself with the tail in its mouth

Resting silently in non-doing
Potential for action
Shedding its layers of arid skin
Naked, illuminated in infinite peace

No being, no non-being
Endless moment seeing itself
The serpent follows its way
In its silent slithering dance

Its face, streaked with its own flame
Its eyes, ringed with wheels of light
Its skin, reflected by glowing heat
Abiding in unattached action

Not giving up in its own shadow
Slowly, surely, obstacles dissolving
Reaching a place where the vision
Rises above and must rest in this instant

Waves of endless movement
From right to left to opposing point
Moving in and out of sight and hidden
Unlocking the thousand gates of its confines

Casting aside the useless flesh of what is left
The faded remembrance of what is spent already
A steady cleansing from repentant guilt
Emerging, again and again, to see the Truth

In confrontation with itself, with radical acceptance
The breath of consciousness flies open
Reborn amidst the rhythm of eternity
The hidden teaching of the serpent reveals itself

Christine Jonen Maingard

* *Eihei Dogen, Shobogenzo: Kokyo (On the Ancient Mirror), p 222*

A Bodh Gaya blackout

candlewick splutters – yet
your glow is enough light
to write a straight line
generously
lighting up the page
sufficient

Katherine Shuzan Yeo



Breath

Summer breeze flutters
Nori curtains of my mind
Inside – outside – still

Shudo Hannah Forsyth

What are you – Snake or Dragon?

(Continued from page 1)

about ourselves. You are all right as you are. You were okay when you were a baby and you are okay now. Do not be deluded about trying to become somebody else. Natural transformation continues all the time. So you do not need to think about how to change yourself. That way you are sacrificing the meat of this moment's practice for tomorrow. Don't you think we sacrifice too much? You are sacrificing too much because you are not okay with where you are now. You think there is something better but it is just in your head – it doesn't exist. We exist every moment whether you like it or not. As you are is okay – but we are hard-wired to be unable to see it that way.

When you start, you receive instruction: This is it! This is the way to practise – but sooner or later ideas pop up. There must be something different! (laughter). That is deviating again. So bring everything back to the beginning. In Zen we often make a circle like this (Ekai Osho gestures.) ... it can be just a spot like this here, or it can be larger. It depends on how broad your vision of practice is – sometimes endless. Through this Zen experience something magical happens – experience and perspective come together. It may look identical to the concepts and ideas that we usually operate with – but it is not. One has juice – life – within it.

Here we are at the beginning of 2013. I'd like to congratulate all of you who are participating. Some of you will have received a brief orientation this evening – twenty minutes – and some of you may repeat this two or three times. By reviewing the basic instructions, we avoid falling into the trap of automatic habitual practice – business as usual. Business as usual is the path of destruction for the Zen practitioner (laughter). You really miss the shift occurring – internally and externally. When you are following a pattern like a machine, your whole body and mind is not working.

Having ideas and thoughts about your practice are good if you have a vision. A vision leads you in the right direction, and then ideas can help. But if you have ideas without a vision, you are like a blind, distant goose – because ideas alone are always insufficient. Sometimes we find our ideas are no

longer valid – things change and you need to upgrade your ideas – like computer technology. Microsoft sends an update on the fourteenth of each month – Apple is a little kinder – they do it for you. But our practice is not like that – you need to do it yourself.

Our practice is always returning to this beginning point. That point is the centre of transformation itself. We think we come back to the same place where we started – but actually, it is never the same. It's real life, it's alive there, and it's really a very simple thing. A simple thing is very difficult to relate to because you get hard-wired into ideas and structures. If you are dependent on ideas and structure – it's even worse and makes life very complicated. I'm talking about understanding the meaning of practice.

So welcome to the New Year – do you know what year this is in the Chinese calendar?

Audience: Snake.

Ekai Osho: Okay, what kind of characteristics does the snake have as a symbol?

Audience: It can be a tricky year.

(laughter)

Ekai Osho: Okay. Can anyone else say something about a tricky year?

Audience: Knowledge

Audience: Shedding of skin.

Ekai Osho: Wonderful. Yes, the snake knows how to take off its clothes (laughter). When you know how to shed your clothes, you find yourself with different clothes. You don't need to buy them – shedding off means you are always wearing new clothes.

So it's a wonderful symbol – you can see it as transformation for the human being. For human beings, transformation is not automatic. We have to put ourselves in a training process. We have to become disciplined through education. Without that there is no education. Education means discipline – either physical or mental. But if you don't receive education, the old hard-wired patterns will start working. Then you are like a machine that someone else designed (laughter). Don't you think there is a

lot of fear living like that? If you never have the opportunity for education, you never learn.

So the Year of the Snake is, in a sense, about transformation. You have the opportunity to experience transformative education. When you utilise this education, you cultivate your own unique life. It's like digging and discovering something you are born with. So it's internal to start with – whereas we tend to think education is something external and that knowledge comes from outside ourselves. But true knowledge is found within and we need to discover it there. If internal learning is there, then you can use the knowledge you receive from conventional education. It's a wonderful thing – the Year of the Snake is a wonderful year. Tricky. Interesting. Why do you say tricky? Have you been bitten by the snake? (laughter)

Generally the snake is most predictable, unless you harass it. Even a poisonous snake, if you don't harass, it will just go by you. I went with the family camping a week before Christmas at the Cathedral Range State Park. We go there every year for a week. We enjoy the many trails – some are hard and some are easy, enjoyable. But while we were walking on those trails, my son told me that snakes are not dangerous. If you just walk slowly, the snake moves away. But if you are surprised or scared, then it might bite you. So it's good to also have a stick. If you move slowly, carefully and mindfully, and plan the way, it works very well. But if you just go carelessly then by accident you may step on the snake. That's very tricky! (laughter)

The snake is very graceful – it never moves fast. There are always exceptions you know. Those may be the tricky ones (laughter). One of the poisonous snakes in Okinawa is called *habu*. This snake is vicious. It just waits on the branch and when someone comes – Pow! – it strikes (laughter).

But usually if you are moving with the right speed, it will leave you alone. Right speed is the speed of the breath. Breathe in and breathe out – and awareness is there. So we are learning the right speed in our sitting meditation and walking meditation. Inhale – exhale. We are learning not to harass everyone! (laughter)

'Do it fast, do it! I have to go fast!' Don't you feel like that sometimes when doing *kinhin*? Right speed is the speed of the breath. When the body finds its breath, you find your place. Where you are is okay.

Transformative experience is already starting. That experience is not the usual sense of stimulation or excitement that we like. So we may not notice as 'we transform'. It is a peaceful place. But if you don't train, you will never truly understand. Intellectually you may be able to speak about it, but that is not knowledge born through your practice. Knowledge born through your own practice and experience is true knowledge. Other knowledge is borrowed knowledge – it is not yours.



Photo: www.photo-aks.com/gallery/animals/reptiles/snake

You need to check when you say 'I think'. When you say 'I really think' – are you really thinking or is it something you are just repeating from your old hard-wired education?

So the Buddhist and Zen tradition is a form of spiritual education. It's quite different from the ordinary way we think about education. It's universal – it is not about Australian education or Japanese education. You could say it is a form – a Zen form prescribed in a certain way. You must have the platform of beginning inside-out.

I wonder if any of you have developed your own vision for this year? Or a resolution or a goal? If you have tried before, you may find your decisions and resolutions do not last. Usually they are broken before January is over and you give up.

Vision is something different. It can be a dream coming from a big space; and it can be something

from deep in your heart. If you have that vision, the plan and strategy to put it into practice finds its own place. Even that strategy does not always work, but it is still valid and you learn something about your vision. But without vision you are blind, and you are just fooling around with strategy to achieve something. Generally in the Buddhist view of the world the blind are leading the blind. Don't you think so? You are one of them! (laughter)

Learn how to avoid this. Develop your own vision and strategy plan. Having a vision is more important than having a plan. Plans require updating – like a computer. Look at the old fashioned cannon. It was fixed on the ship, so the whole ship had to move into a new position to get a clear shot at another. Then they started to develop the turret so that the cannon can reposition – around and up and down. Reposition your plan – as long as your vision is there.

Audience: What is the difference between a vision and a project?

Ekai Osho: It's a simple thing. Vision has a direction and a view, and a project has a timeline. Your vision may be large but your resources of time may be limited. So bringing a plan to a vision enables it to manifest in a concrete form – either a small or a large form. Tiny things manifesting in a concrete form are no longer tiny. For example – you decided to come to Sanzenkai thinking, 'I will work on myself'. This action manifests a vision of making your life meaningful for self and others. Vision is something larger than oneself and demonstrates living with Right View. It's not actually about you – it's about what is around you. If you are acting from the deep place of a vision then you could say your practice has a noble goal. Your life is no longer just a selfish practice and is more meaningful. So set your vision in place.

Vision is very inclusive. Although you are in it, it is not separate from the rest of your world. And if you bring a scope and a set timeline to it, you are creating a project. A set timeline means having a starting point to return to. Shed off – shed off all things so that transformation can take place. Having a vision means it's your world – you can be like a dragon and do anything and everything within that vision. Cultivate your vision by making a plan.

Making a project requires thinking, reflecting and energy. The work of the dragon manifests. The work we do is step by step, shedding our skin within this vision. That's the metaphor of the dragon and the snake.

So we say in Zen terms – *ryu-ja*. *Ryu* means dragon in Japanese and *ja* means snake. Dragon and snake are united in that kind of reality. People who set forth on education and training have a vision. It's not about whether the dragon is better than the snake, or the snake is better than the dragon, but it's about completeness. People tend to work in different ways. One group tends to be like dragons – with lots of creativity. But if it is done in a dualistic way it lacks consistency. They can do tremendous work in a sporadic way, but find it difficult to set and complete a project. The other group can become full of plans but lack vision. You don't even know why you are doing it! (laughter). The general tendency in the West is the latter – very few develop visions and visionary thinking. It's difficult to work in a fragmented, individualistic way. 'My way, your way! My idea! My personality!' These snakes really need a dragon to shake them up! Fortunately these two groups of people can compliment each other. Last year, the dragon has done tremendous work. Now we have the opportunity for the snake to come here to stage its work!

So this is a good start – thank-you for coming to this first Sunday Sanzenkai. The *koan* I will give you is:

What are you – Snake or Dragon?

We can have both – whether you appear to be a dragon or a snake. It's that relationship with thinking and non-thinking. The dragon is non-thinking – but engaged. Thinking is the realm of the snakes. But do not relate to thinking and non-thinking in a dualistic way. Zen master Dogen said in the Universal Recommendation of Zazen, 'Thinking, not-thinking and non-thinking.' You can be snake or dragon, or simply don't know (laughter). Zen practitioner, as you are is okay.

Thank you very much for listening.

Transcribed by: **James Watt**

Edited by: **Hannah Forsyth**

Sōtō Kitchen

Sweet potatoes and carrots provide this soup and salad combination with a warm orange glow for winter. The Carrot Ginger Salad is adapted from 'The Tassajara Recipe Book' by Edward Espe Brown.



Sweet Potato & Rosemary Soup

Ingredients (Serves 4-6)

<i>Sweet potato, diced</i>	<i>750g</i>
<i>Potato, diced</i>	<i>1 large</i>
<i>Onion, chopped</i>	<i>1 medium</i>
<i>Carrot, diced</i>	<i>1 medium</i>
<i>Garlic, crushed</i>	<i>2 cloves</i>
<i>Tomato pesto</i>	<i>2 tablespoons</i>
<i>Fresh Rosemary, chopped</i>	<i>3 tablespoons</i>
<i>Olive oil</i>	<i>3 tablespoons</i>
<i>Vegetable stock</i>	<i>1 litre</i>
<i>Freshly ground pepper and salt</i>	

Method

1. Heat oil in a large pan, add the garlic, onion and 1 tablespoon rosemary, and cook on medium heat for 3-5 minutes, or until soft.
2. Add the tomato pesto and cook, for a further minute.
3. Add carrot, potato and sweet potato, and cook a further 5 minutes. Add the stock and pepper and salt. Bring to boil, reduce the heat and simmer covered for 30-40 minutes, or until vegetables are soft.
4. Puree the soup in a food processor in batches, return soup to pan, add the remaining 2 tablespoons chopped rosemary and gently heat through before serving. Add extra stock if soup is too thick.

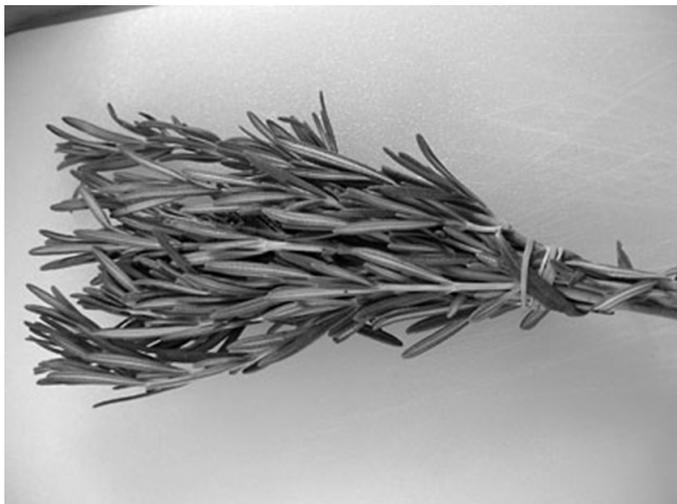


Photo: www.weeatreal.com

Carrot Ginger Salad

Ingredients (Serves 4-6)

Sultanas	1 cup
Ginger, peeled and grated	1-2 teaspoons
Yoghurt	½ cup
Grated zest of one lemon	
Lemon juice	1 teaspoon
Salt to taste	
Carrots, grated	4 cups

Method

1. Cover the sultanas with hot water and let stand for 20 minutes to plump them up, then drain.
2. Mix the ginger with the yoghurt, lemon zest and lemon juice, then add salt to taste.
3. Combine carrots, raisins and dressing. Toss well.
4. Adjust seasoning. If you think the salad is a little sour, you can add some honey.



Photo: www.taste.com.au

Winter rain drops on tin roof

A hot bowl of soup

One spoon

Karen Tokuren Threlfall



Calendar of Events, July to September 2013

Weekly Activities

DAY	DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	CONTACT
Sundays	Weekly	5.30–7.30pm	Sanzenkai	Brunswick	Liam/Annie
		7.45–8.30pm	Supper		Michael/Anthony
Thursdays	Weekly	7.00–9.00pm	Sanzenkai	Footscray	Mark/Katherine
July					
Tuesday	July 16	7.00–9.30pm	Committee Meeting #179	Footscray	Mark/Katherine
August					
Sunday	August 11	9.00am–4.00pm	One-day Workshop	Footscray	Hannah
Tuesday	August 13	7.00–9.30pm	Committee Meeting #180	Footscray	Mark/Katherine
Friday	August 23 to 30	6.00pm	Bendoho Retreat 43	Adekate	Hannah/Julie
September					
Sunday	September 8	7.00–8.30pm	Annual General Meeting #15	Brunswick	Mark/Katherine
Sunday	September 15	9.00am–12.00pm	Committee Orientation	Footscray	Mark/Katherine
Tuesday	September 17	7.00–9.30pm	Committee Meeting #181	Footscray	Mark/Katherine

Addresses

Brunswick

Australian Shiatsu College
103 Evans Street,
Brunswick, VIC 3056

Footscray

Address available upon
application for a course
or program

Publications (*Shuppan*)

publications @ Jikishoan.org.au
webmaster @ Jikishoan.org.au

Website

www.jikishoan.org.au

Email

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via Hannah Forsyth
(03) 9687 6981

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0437 116 517
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Julie Martindale - (03) 9499 2141

Kitchen (*Tenzo*)

Michael Ewing
0431 947 553

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Finance (*Fusu*)

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Jeremy Maher
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Membership Secretary (*Rokuji*)

Katherine Yeo
(03) 9818 2687

Myoju

Ekai Korematsu Osho
Christine Maingard
0430 599 430

Ordinary Committee Members

Sally Richmond
0413 302 463

Christine Maingard
0430 599 430

Ann Alexander
0419 760 780

Peter Donnelly
0411 151 665

Liam D'hondt
0437 116 517

Building Fund

Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community is raising funds to purchase a building to be used as a temple in the Melbourne metropolitan area. The facility will ideally have a Zendo, kitchen and office with room also for accommodation.

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible and can be made in person or by cheque to:
Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community Inc. (Building Fund Account)
P.O. Box 475, Yarraville, 3013, Victoria, Australia

Teachings are given personally by Ekai Korematsu Osho. Brochures providing more information are available. Please check the website or contact one of our members listed in the contact information section on the reverse side of this page.

Sanzenkai

Brunswick

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

For beginners, members and friends

5.30pm – 7.45pm Sundays

Newcomers – please arrive by 5.15pm

Attendance by donation (according to one's means)

Participants are welcome to stay for an informal supper

Footscray

Zazen, kinhin meditation, tea ceremony, chanting service and reading

7 – 9pm Thursdays

Attendance by donation

Integrated Buddhist Studies

Main Course A1 – Footscray

Ten Classes

9 – 11am Saturdays

- Term 2 April 27 – June 29
- Term 3 July 13 – September 21

Extension Course A2 – Footscray

Ten Classes

5 – 7pm Saturdays

- Term 2 April 27 – June 29
- Term 3 July 13 – September 21

Course A3 – Footscray

Ten Classes

7 – 9pm Wednesdays

- Term 2 May 1 – July 3
- Term 3 July 17 – September 25

Course Costs A1, A2, A3

\$495 per course (4 terms) or

\$155 per term (10 classes)

\$90 for 5 classes (casual)

Members by donation for casual classes

Main Course B1 – Brunswick

Practice Period 2013

Semester 2

5 – 8.30pm Sundays

Starts with Bansan (Entering Ceremony) on July 14

Finishes with Bansan (Exiting Ceremony) on December 22

Venue: Sunday Sanzenkai, Brunswick

Main Course B2 – Footscray

7 – 9pm Thursdays

Semester 2 starts with Bansan on July 14

Finishes with Bansan on December 22

Course Cost B1 and B2

\$220 per year (2 semesters)

\$155 per semester

Main Course C – Retreats and Overseas Study

Jikishoan holds three seven-day retreats per year.

Remaining for 2013: August 23 – 30, November 22 – 29

Course Cost

\$1200 / 3 retreats 2013, or

\$3100 / 9 retreats 2013 – 2015

All enquiries: Hannah Forsyth (03) 9687 6981

One Day Workshops – Footscray

Introducing Zen Meditation

An intensive orientation workshop for beginners as well as for those who have some experience.

Includes morning and afternoon teas and lunch.

Sundays: June 23, August 11

9am-4pm

Non-Members \$90, members by donation

August Bendoho Retreat

A seven-day intensive residential Zen experience, including daily Chosan (morning tea), Dokusan (interview with the Teacher), Teaching and Teisho (afternoon Dharma talk).

Cost depends on the number of days attended and includes meals and accommodation.

6pm Friday, 23rd August—2pm Friday 30th August

Venue: Adekate Fellowship Centre

Winter Lectures at Kagyu E-Vam Institute with Ekai Osho

By invitation from Kagyu E-Vam, Ekai Osho will give four talks on Friday nights in July on the topic of *Bendowa* (A Discourse on Doing One's Utmost in Practising the Way of the Buddhas) from *Shobogenzo* by Zen Master Dogen, and reference to *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind* by Shunryu Susuki. 7.30-9pm Fridays July 5, 12, 19, 26.

Venue: Kagyu E-Vam Institute, 673 Lygon St, Nth Carlton
Enquiries: Please telephone Kagyu E-Vam Institute, (03) 9387 0422

Weekend Workshop at Yeshe Nyima Centre, Sydney with Ekai Osho

Ekai Osho will be conducting a weekend workshop on Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th August at Yeshe Nyima Centre in Sydney. The topic will be on *Bendowa* by Zen Master Dogen, and with reference to *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind* by Shunryu Susuki.

Venue: Yeshe Nyima Centre, 49 – 51 High St, Harris Park
Enquiries: Please telephone 0449 579 509