

Myōju



Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Australia

JIKI042
Summer, Volume 10 Issue 2, December 2010

Balance: The Zero Point

The following is a dharma talk given by Ekai Osho to the Melbourne Sangha at Sunday Sanzenkai on 12th March 2007.

Transcribed by Pauline Koe, edited by Renata Salajić.

Summer has come to an end and you can feel the change - change in the climate, in the season. This time of year is usually very comfortable and a good season for our practice. A good season for our practice means that we can enjoy ourselves. The practice of meditation doesn't necessarily mean you enjoy it every time you sit down and meditate. Sometimes you have got to work, the conditions can be a problem, there can be a lot of trouble for the body and mind to function harmoniously, in balance. Our surroundings are like this, everything effects our body and our mind, when it comes to Summer we appreciate it. Some seasons, especially toward the equinox (Winter to Spring too) are very conducive to practising Buddhism, practising the Buddha way. Conducive because everything is coming to a sort of balance.



Photo: Wouter Van Voorde

Buddhism is the teaching of this balance - hot and cold, right and wrong, good and bad, everything starts to balance. Finding the equilibrium, zero point. It's not a date, it's not closed, don't misunderstand the zero point! It is an equation, do you know what an equation is? This is a very, very basic point that Buddhism emphasises, the same as sunyata



Photo: Johann Montet

(emptiness). It's all about this, everything comes to this equation of plus, minus, zero. Everything is upheld, held alive in this way, it's not dead! If you hear the teachings of Buddhism, you begin to wonder in the usual way about emptiness, you get confused - 'there's nothing there?' Whenever we hear the expression of emptiness we cannot easily understand it intellectually. It is like the expression of 'no self' means there is no you, when what you really have to do is apply the balancing effect and come to the equilibrium.

The notion of self is the same as the balancing of good and bad, right and wrong.

That's why when we say there is no self; it doesn't actually mean there is no self! This can all be kind of confusing, but people who understand Buddhism through this experience and engage in this kind of life activity can debate and understand Buddhist teachings. If you don't have this connection to life (your life) and you try to study Buddhism through books, trying to understand definitions, you will just make yourself more confused!

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Fundamentally, there is no good and bad. A statement such as this may cause you to think, *'oh my God, I can get away with everything and anything if there is no good or bad!'* It's not like this however, everything you find in life as a human is not always altogether balanced, it's always slightly off, whether happy and having a good time, or having a bad time and depressed or sick, it's all out of balance. This is a characteristic of existence, being human, and we need to accept this fact. When you start to accept this you begin to wonder what the meaning of this life is. After working hard for so many years, accumulating wealth and position, some people feel very empty. A person who is successful can sometimes feel like this, like it's meaningless, they consider everything they have but nothing works for them.

**There is always an up and down, up and down.
During the up and down moments
however, there is a point of balance which we
can miss so fast.**

You feel good and suddenly you find yourself in a bad place, everything looks bad and gloomy, you complain and get angry, fight, accept it or try to cope by switching your mind to something else. You forget about it and then boom, you go up, straight up to a high place! You never really experience the place of balance, the hour, the moment – 'moment' meaning life activity. Generally we tend to think of everything in black and white, good and bad. You want something good, positive so you come to meditation and you're feeling good today, so the meditation is good and therefore you must be getting something out of it [Laughing]. It can also happen that you're not getting anything good out of it; sometimes you can actually get a lot of pain in your back! When this happens, lots of confusion and worries start to come to mind because you are instructed not to think too much about things, but with the pain all the thoughts start to come! [Audience laughs] Usually you try to forget about it and sit there, preoccupying yourself with trying to think of something else.

So you see, meditation is no different from life's other activities. All ups and downs – sometimes there is pain and you try to cope and sometimes when you sit you feel good. If you think meditation should give you only a peaceful mind, sorry, that is not Zen meditation. Meditation offers you real life, real life experiences without prejudice, or taking away of your prejudices. We pick and choose, we focus on one particular thing because you like it, or I like it, or I don't like it - we are full of prejudices. That's how we carry out most of our day-to-day lives, but meditation offers a totally different ground, where whatever you're experiencing (especially when practising sitting meditation) is just the direct experience of life itself. Whether it is something you like or you don't like it doesn't matter. Through the continual process of sitting with like and don't like, your body and mind become settled and the likes and dislikes become subtler and subtler. You then understand the movement of your life and you're not confused. This is the point of the 'moment', our equilibrium, our

balanced place. That's life.

Often, however, we don't think of this balanced place. We only think of the positive and discard the negative, but life does not function fully in this way. Even electricity needs just the right balance of positive and negative to function, there is no power if you have only positive, or if you have only negative. If you have very strong negatives and very strong positives, you may then have a lot of electrical power which you think is good, but how then can you accommodate this power? So again, going up and down, up and down, up and down, up and down, hoping some day for it to find the right balance. Sorry, with extremes it won't [Laughs], not in this life; it must be after this life! [Audience and Ekai Osho laugh].

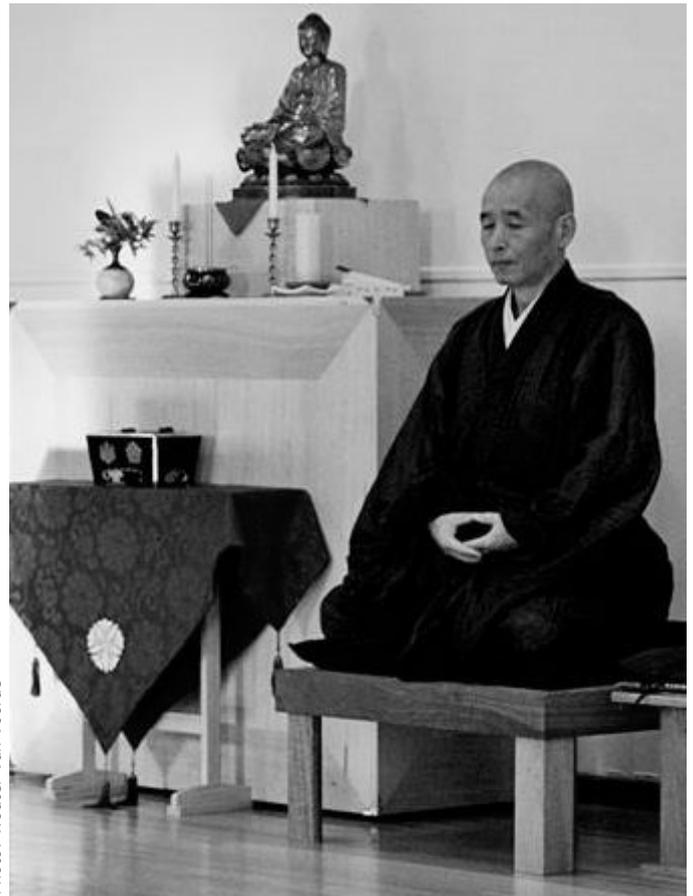


Photo: Wouter Van Voorde

Anything arising naturally is okay. Arising for the ordinary human being usually means in the psychological sense, within your head. Often you think the rest of the world is responsible and not yourself, however what arises within ourselves are bubbles of our personal reality. It may not only be a psychological experience, it could be physical also, like experiencing pain. Pain too is a personal reality, it's arising, you cannot say you're imagining it. You've got back pain, you're not imagining this, no one else is responsible for this. You think if you sit long enough in meditation it will disappear. The practice of meditation is quite simple, but because you cannot hold you back straight you experience pain. You have to take care of yourself, relax or stand up and bring yourself to equilibrium - zero point. This is not good or bad. This is how to enter the Buddha way – the beginning point and the ending point.

This zero point is how we arrive in this life.

That is the starting point, the ending point is like that too. Don't worry, without exception we always go

**Before we are born and conscious of ourselves
we don't have the slightest idea whether
something is good or bad, it is quite neutral.**

back to the beginning point. Between this, there is arising – up and down, up and down. To feel the beginning point and that ending point is the anchor of our life, the reference point of our life. That's how Buddha's teaching works for you. When you practice meditation this way, you are approaching your life directly and honestly, honest to yourself, to others, without prejudice. To qualify as an ordinary human means to have prejudice, there's nothing wrong with this, it just is that way. The human life is made up of joy, excitement, pain, everything. It's confusing and my point today is that this is the season conducive to practice, it's a wonderful thing.

Talking and lecturing can be like adding something extra unnecessarily, like putting an extra head on top of your head, or putting arms and feet on a snake. It's not necessary; the snake is alive as it is, why create a monster? But often we do this because if something is just as it is it is not enough; like an activity on its own is not enough. Meditation is simply activity, but you think that's not enough, so you put a lot of extra stuff into your meditation. Meditation is sweeping (all-encompassing), but being human we have a habit of putting extra stuff into it. So why not develop the habit of getting rid of the extra stuff, so again and again it becomes clearer and clearer.

Thank you very much, thank you.

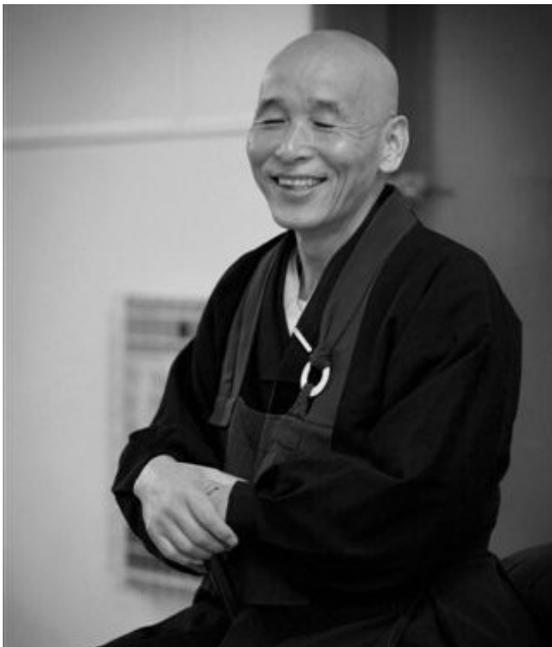


Photo: Wouter Van Voorde

Myoju – Summer 2010

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

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Next Issue

The next issue of Myoju will be posted at the Autumn Equinox, 20th March 2011. Contributions that support our practice are most welcome, including articles, books reviews, interviews, personal reflections, artwork and photographs. The content deadline is Sunday 6th February 2011. If you would like to contribute or advertise in the Autumn 2011 edition of Myoju email publications@jikishoan.org.au.

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

Committee News

From the President "Walking forward – one step at a time."

In the short time since the election of the new Committee in early September and the Committee Workshop on 12 September the community and its representative committee has moved into its 2nd year of working on ways to accommodate and promote Jikishoan's development and growth during the next five to ten years.

This year with more nominations than positions available on the Committee an election was held at the Annual General Meeting. Election to the President role was contested for the first time and there were more nominations for Ordinary Committee Member roles than there were positions. This was an important step for Jikishoan as Members were able to exercise their right, under our constitution, to vote for individuals they have confidence in to represent them and work on their behalf to manage Jikishoan's activities, both practice and organization related and take Jikishoan forward.

This year a number of new members were elected to the Committee; Richard Mydleton as Secretary, Renata Salajic as Publications Manager and Niall McShane as General Affairs Manager.

There were also some changes of roles for people who had served on the 2009/10 Committee with Mark Summers elected as Vice-President, Naomi Richards as Treasurer and some roles remained unchanged with Kiyoko Taylor being re-elected and remaining responsible for Welfare, Jinesh Wilmot for Education and Annie Bolitho for Personnel and I was re-elected to the role of President.

You may recall in the Spring edition of Myoju last year that Jikishoan was compared to a small fleet of ships – with a mother ship in Melbourne, a smaller ship in Ballarat and a then new addition to the fleet in Canberra.

The fleet is still sailing in the same direction. However like all fleets, sometimes one of the ships develops engine problems or some of the crew members have to take a rest or a long holiday. Then it is time for that ship's crew members to work together to see if their ship is sea-worthy enough to continue the voyage.

One of our ships – Ballarat, has recently experienced the stepping down of a number of key people who held leadership roles. As a result, the Ballarat group met and decided to suspend their regular Sanzen-kai practice activity until February 2011 when they will make a decision about their future.

The first three months for the new committee is a period of change and re-adjustment with people handing over and transitioning between roles and new members being assisted to find their way into their roles.

It is also a time during which we begin to learn to adjust to each other's styles, personalities and the skills and experience each bring to their roles – it is somewhat like a dance – when one steps back and the other steps forward – gradually synchronizing their steps so that the dance gets smoother. And it is progressive, changing partners as we connect with all the various roles – like a progressive barn dance. It is a time for forgetting about ourselves and focusing on the flow of the dance.

In a big picture sense the Committee has as its focus how to build stronger connections with our Members who are the essence of our community - and how to facilitate their involvement to sustain this lay community, to the degree to which they are able to be involved, in the development and growth of the Sangha.

At this level there is also the aim of moving from a process of 'consent' to a processes of 'consensus' in the community so that members can become involved in the strategies, discussions, deliberations and decisions that impact on them.

It is true that our Members are our Temple and that a representative and effective committee is central to the workings of this Temple.

At this stage, we do not have a physical temple or home to speak of and are, in a way, a "virtual temple". In this situation it can be a challenge building a real sense of community where everyone is involved. We all understand the sense of place and what it is like to come home to the refuge of the place we call home.

One way we can enhance our sense of community is to encourage each other and seek more involvement by a broader range of members in the community and being flexible in our willingness to involve them according to the time they have available.

The process that the Committee embarked on after the 2009 AGM; to identify the issues that are critical to the flourishing of the practice and the streamlining and development of consistent processes is continuing and we would welcome and be grateful for the involvement and contributions of any Members who could assist us.

Jikishoan is our community and if you are able to assist the community and its representative committee in any way please explore how you could do this with one of your Committee Members.

My fellow Committee Members and I are honoured to serve you and we will dedicate ourselves to sustaining and building Jikishoan for the period that we hold office and represent you.

Vaughan Daisen Behncke
President

Committee Workshop No.5

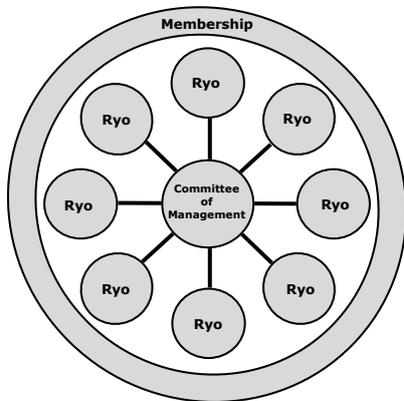
On Sunday September 12, 2010, eleven members of Jikishoan met at the Footscray zendo for the fifth Committee Orientation Workshop. Ekai-Osho conducted the following presentation on **Governance and Communication**.

Committee Structure and Functioning:

The Members are the temple. At a time when the community does not have a "physical" temple, this is an important point to consider. At the centre of the workings of the temple is the Committee (See diagram below).

Education, in the function and processes of the committee and ryos, enables community members to make the election process at the AGM meaningful (i.e. so their decisions are based on real understanding).

THE TEMPLE



Ryos

In each Ryo, one person manages the functioning and has one or two assistants. The Ryos function like muscles, their manager like tendons.

Members are important. They must be actively engaged in both the functioning of the temple and within a Ryo (each Ryo being like a mini-temple).

We are moving from a process of "consent" to a process of "consensus".

Pay attention to the **process** of the Committee (i.e. agenda and minutes). The Committee operates at a formal level using a **consistent** oral and written format (e.g. indicated in Ryo Reports: the attendance and volunteer hours demonstrating the health of Ryo members and of the Ryo as a whole).

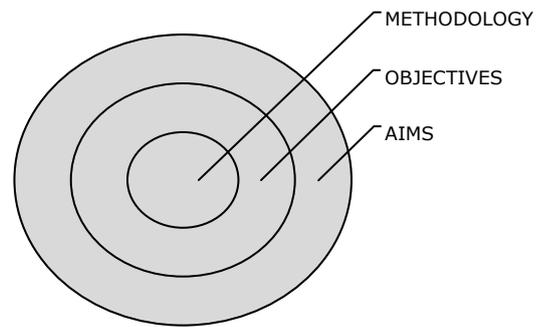
Different individuals will have different needs in terms of the ratio of Attendance/Sitting to Samu/Volunteer hours. Attendance consists of: Committee workshops (3 hrs.), Sanzenkai (2hrs.), Retreats (calculated @ 10 hrs/day). Samu/Volunteer consists of: time spent in "support" activities to Attendance. (e.g. preparing reports by Committee or Ryo coordinators, zendo set-up by Ino Ryo members etc.,) A newer member would require more time sitting than doing volunteer work).

AIMS & OBJECTIVES.

The Aims and Objectives underpin the effective functioning of the temple and the Committee within it. The tripartite aims relate to: Buddhism, Zen and Soto are mutually inter-dependent.

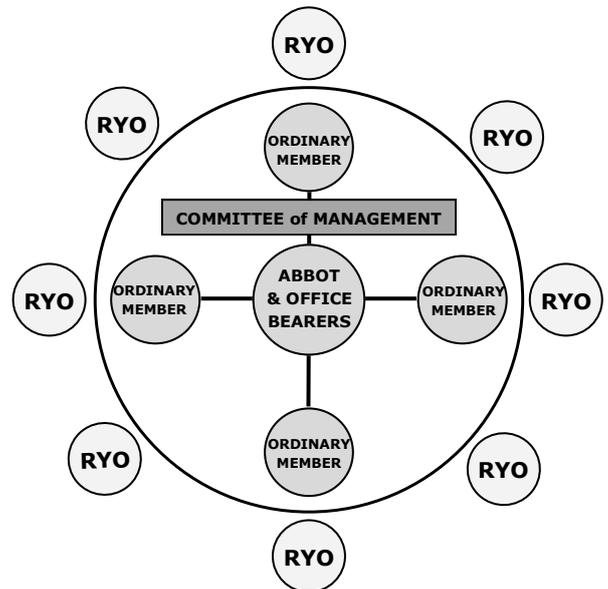
The first objective of installing an Abbot is important. As of the next AGM, there should be a vote of confidence in the Abbot.

The Secretarial functions of archiving, membership details, correspondence and minutes must be shared. The secretaries should not accumulate unnecessary information; **rather**, be clear about what information is important.



COMMITTEE STRUCTURE (with Ryos functioning outside of, but in relation to it).

The Office bearers and Ordinary members are like the left and right hand working together.



Ryos function on a roster based activity and should include quarterly meetings which should be documented. These assist with the health and functioning of the ryo and serve as a basis for reporting.

Reports should be created using a standardised template. Then information from across the ryos can be collated. POLICY needs to be further developed.

CONCLUSION:

Know where we are, and start from there.

Mark Summers (Vice-President)

Canberra Bun-in News

Since our 2nd Annual General Meeting on 19 September there have been two main areas of activity in the sangha – continuing with Sunday Sanzen-kai practice and settling our Committee and its members into their respective roles.

Since September the average weekly attendance at Sanzen-kai has been 10 people, comprising members, regular attendees and newcomers and we have recommenced monthly Sanzen-kai suppers.

There have been some changes of roles on the Committee with Martha Sear moving into the role of Vice-President, Bret Cooper in the role of Treasurer and Tony Crivelli and George Quinn being new Ordinary Members. Vaughan Behncke continues as Secretary, Takako Mizogami continues as an Ordinary Member and I was elected to the role of President of Jikishoan Canberra.



Photo: Wouter Van Voorde

On 17 October we had our first committee meeting for 2010/11 and George Quinn travelled from Sydney for this and has committed to continue do so on a regular basis. The long term matters focused on at this meeting were, beginning to plan for the development of formal Ino, Tenzo and Jiroku ryo structures during the next year - which was a goal that Ekai Osho, at our AGM, recommended that we work towards.

The other matter was the identification and documentation of all operational and functional tasks that have, during the 21 months since our incorporation, been primarily carried out by the Secretary because of the experience and knowledge he gained during his time with Jikishoan in Melbourne. These are ongoing tasks that support the practice and four One Day Meditation Workshops each year as well as our obligations under the Charter Agreement with Jikishoan Melbourne and our legal and financial obligations as an incorporated organization in Canberra.

Over the next few months, as a Committee, we will delegate these tasks among committee members and will work with Vaughan through the handover and training processes.

Another item of news is that Jikishoan Canberra was approached by Hawker College – a year 11/12 college - with an invitation to address a group of students about the Zen tradition and its influence in Japan. These students were completing a study unit on medieval history in Japan and China. On 26 October Vaughan visited Hawker College and talked to a group of 20 students on this topic and having taken some zafus and zabutons with him, gave them a basic demonstration of zazen and kinkin in which some of the students were keen to participate.

The wonderful news is the birth of twin sons to Martha Sear on 15 October at Calvary Hospital in Canberra. For a while after their birth, because they were in a special care unit and she wasn't having much opportunity to connect with them, Martha was undecided how to name them and called them B1 and B2. Now she has named them Callum and Oliver. Congratulations Martha and welcome Callum and Oliver.



Ferro Fabbri (President – JZBCC)

Myoju Printing Costs

Previous colour issues of Myoju were possible due to the generous contribution of the former editor, Paul Harris. Donations to assist with the cost of printing Myoju are welcome from members and friends wishing to support the publication.

Gassho, Renata

publications@jikishoan.org.au

Welcome to Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community

Jikishoan is a growing community of people learning and practicing Zen meditation under the guidance of Ekai Korematsu Osho. Ekai has practiced and taught Zen Buddhism in Japan, the USA and India for over 30 years.

The name of the community encapsulates its spirit: "Jiki" means straight forward 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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Ballarat

For information about Ballarat, please contact the president, Vaughan Behncke on 0427 319 378 or email: contact@jikishoan.org.au

Canberra

Post: PO Box 105, Jamison Ctr, Jamison ACT 2614
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Developing a Prototype The First Year of the Integrated Buddhist Studies Program

At the beginning of 2010 Ekai Osho introduced us to the new Zen Meditation and Integrated Buddhist Studies Program. Term 1 was somewhat challenging - a small boat heading out into the breaking waves - but the challenge galvanised our effort as a ryo (Shuso ryo) and we made it into the second term.

We have now completed a full 4 terms with our teacher's guidance and help.

Thank you to all those students who have participated so wholeheartedly in this first year of study. Your presence and commitment has helped to create a stability of practice which has benefited your fellow students and also the members of Shuso ryo, who have been coordinating and administering the program.

The main difference in this IBS program, compared to the previous years' Orientation and Deepening courses, has been the process of formalization. This is a process of creating an environment where the student is invited to enter with a degree of seriousness - an education rather than a recreational activity.

All aspects of the program have been influenced by this more formal approach: introduction of the study of basic Buddhist concepts, creation of a ryo to administer and maintain the courses, formalizing the curriculum into practice, Zen perspectives and Integrated practice units and the reading of set material from prescribed texts.

In addition, a recording system to register student participation has been established and attendance certificates are also offered, both with the aim of encouraging regular, stable and developing practice for all interested students.

Community Practice 2011 – Main Course B

Zen and Integrated Buddhist Studies

In 2011 we embark on the next stage of development for the Integrated Buddhist Studies Program with the establishment of Main course B. The practice for Main Course B will be centred in Sanzen-kai practice ie, the community level practice which takes place on Sunday evenings in Brunswick. At the time of writing, with Ekai Osho's guidance, we are working with the questions of how this practice and training will be formalized both structurally and practically. The invitation is open to all Jikishoan members to deepen their practice commitment by registering as students of the IBS Main Course B.

More details and information will be available to the Jikishoan community in coming weeks. If you have any enquiries in the mean time please contact –

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The Shuso ryo wishes to thank Ekai Osho for his great generosity, wisdom and unshakeable practice.

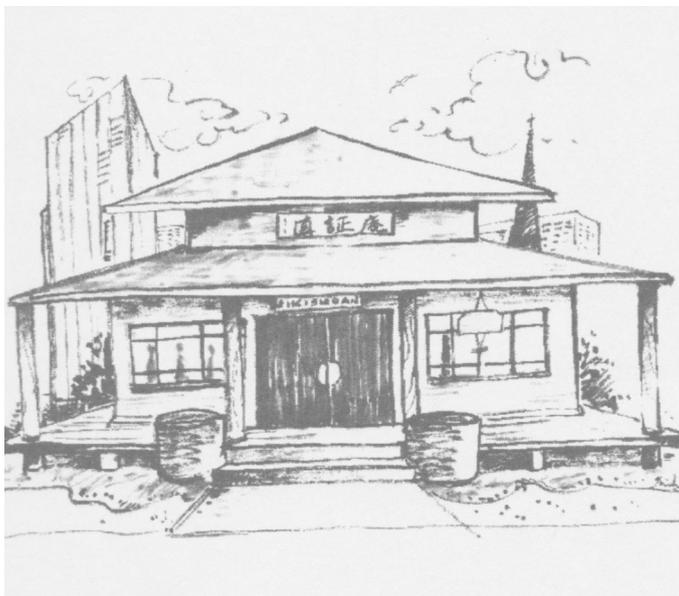
Shona Innes
Secretary (Shoki)



Photo: Wouter Van Voorde

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' P.O. Box 475, Yarraville 3013 Victoria, Australia. Please provide a stamped self addressed envelope for a receipt to be mailed to you.

Fundraising Offer

Shona Innes is offering half price Alexander Technique lessons to members and friends of Jikishoan in January 2011 (from the 15th to 31st). All proceeds go to the Building Fund. Please contact Shona if you are interested on 0421 285 338

After ten years of apprenticeship, Tenno achieved the rank of Zen teacher.

One rainy day, he went to visit the famous master Nan-in. When he walked in the master greeted him with a question.

"Did you leave your wooden clogs and umbrella on the porch?"

"Yes" Tenno replied.

"Tell me", the master continued, "did you place your umbrella to the left of your shoes, or to the right?"

Tenno did not know the answer and realized that he had not yet attained full awareness. So he became Nan-in's apprentice and studied under him for ten more years.



A First Retreat

I would not have thought of writing something for 'Myoju' if I hadn't been asked. What can a first-timer usefully contribute? Putting pen to paper (literally) is like going to the retreat itself: venturing beyond my comfort zone to find meaning in a time of confusion.

So what did that first retreat in August mean to me?



It meant levering myself out of bed at 4am without time to shower before braving the cold (and sometimes wet) darkness outside to reach the Zendo; and knowing that others had got up even earlier to light that great glowing fire and ring the wake-up bell. It meant sitting and walking and sitting again until morning began to dawn and the deep sonorous tones of the first chant broke the silence.

It meant stiff joints from sitting and cold feet walking, in an un-insulated building where the glorious fire was of mainly psychological benefit; but being encouraged to relax and look after myself and vary my practice intelligently rather than strictly following the routine and being lent warm tights and socks. It meant cleaning toilets and washing pots and pans as part of a team willing to do necessary jobs well. It meant carefully prepared delicious Japanese food shared in a formal ritual, which included a way of dealing with the mess when I knocked a bowl on the floor.

I was surprised at Chosan when Ekai Osho smiled at us and asked how we were, as if he really wanted to know; and we could relax on our cushions and ask the naïve questions beginners need to ask with their 'beginners' minds'. There was a lot of laughter. At first I didn't get the jokes, especially in the Teisho sessions when the paradoxes of the Genjo Koan were too challenging and the explanations too elliptical; but when I stopped trying so hard it all began to make a little more sense. The idea of Dokusan was terrifying until I found myself actually sitting on the cushion opposite the Teacher and he was friendly and interested and encouraging and completely non-judgmental. I loved the language of the Umpan and Han and the Kesu and Inkin

reminding us of where to go next without the help of words or watches.

I appreciated the rule of silence, especially in retrospect, and understand now why some of us were reminded of this when we chatted over the washing up – even if we felt like naughty schoolchildren at the time. And there were angels hovering around us (with black wings flapping in the chill wind) doing all the many things that made this complex process seem simple.

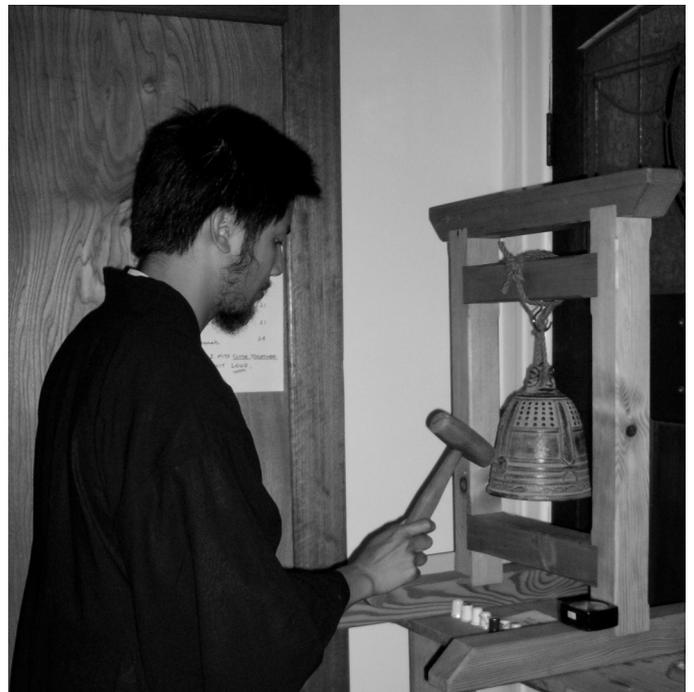
I wish I could say that this first retreat has changed my life, but it's going to be a slow process. It's good to have the Canberra group to return to. I'll continue to ponder and ask questions: is it really helpful for 21st Century Australians to be involved in an ancient Japanese monastic regime? Is the complexity really worth all the effort it entails? Is 4am really a good time to start the day? And could we please have more time to rest and read and think?

Perhaps the fact that I am writing about 'a first retreat' is some kind of answer to such questions.

Nicky Coles

No Dust New Year's Eve Zazen

The end of the year is galloping towards us, and 2011 beckons. Our New Year's Eve Zazen has become a regular and enjoyable part of our years activities and this December 31st will be our twelfth occasion for this practice.



We will be starting our celebration by cleaning the zendo at Chatham St, based on the traditional monastic practice in Japan. We usually start at 4pm, supervised by Ekai Osho, and give the zendo the most thorough cleaning you could possibly see in

your life. Everything is taken out of the zendo, the walls and floors are swept and washed, the light fittings and curtains are taken out and cleaned, the Buddhas carefully dusted, the zafus and zabutons all vacuumed – and then it is all put back again. Afterwards it just gleams. You do not realize how dusty life has become until it is not there any more.

We have an informal tea for those who stay and rest for a while before the Zazen practice commences at 8:30pm. The first period is the standard 40 minutes, after which we have kinhin and tea ceremony. Thereafter we just sit, and kinhin outside is left to the individual to do when they want.

Shortly after 10 pm a bell starts to ring – every minute, 108 times. The last bell is struck as midnight arrives, whereupon we chant the Heart Sutra – slowly and quietly. After incense offering from all participants and some words from Ekai Osho, we adjourn to the garden for a party.

If you would like to take part in either the cleaning or the Zazen please contact Hannah on 9687 6981 – so that we have an idea of numbers of zafus required. If you plan to stay for the supper afterwards some food to share would be welcomed.

Hannah Forsyth

Numerous years pass by –
Three generations of yore.
Was it a weeping gate willow
Merely rapping
At the window ?

*The Buddhist nun Rengetsu
Translated by Sayumi Takahashi.*

2010 Bodh Gaya Visit with Ekai Osho - 2010

How can I explain my experience there? In two words "A LOT"!



I experienced a lot in Bodh Gaya. Everyday I learned so many things from the people there, the customs there, the temples there, the nature there, etc. Sometimes, I learned from myself, too. It is very hard to explain to others about my visit in the limited space here on this page, you have to experience it for yourself one day.



The centre of the town is the "Maha Bodhi Temple" where Buddha was enlightened. It is very special place for many different traditions, not only Buddhism. Indian, Tibetan, Burmese, Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, Japanese monks, nuns and their followers are from everywhere! Their traditions are different (clothing, chants and prostrations) but they are united so harmoniously, which is very incredible. We had a morning sitting there on the last day.



Ekai Osho was teaching Zen to the students of Antioch University in Bodh Gaya, they were keen and listened positively to his talks. Everyday, we had morning sitting at the Burmese Vihar (the monastery where had our accommodation) from 5:30am and evening sitting at the Japanese Temple from 5:00pm. Some people chose also to go to the Tibetan Root Institute to take part in a one-day retreat during the second weekend. It was also a great place to visit.

Moreover, I should not forget to tell you about Ekai Osho's human network there, he has a lot of friends and is highly respected. Everyone was very helpful and we too were very welcome and respected.

What a great experience!

So in summary, A LOT of things happened there for me! I really encourage you to visit Bodh Gaya one day and support Ekai Osho's work there, in order to have your own first-hand experience which I can say is really quite amazing.



Gassho, Nobukazu Kobayashi

Zazen in Action

After having served as a Tenzo ryo member on three retreats, I wanted to share my thoughts on such a wonderful practice.

During the November retreat, I was given the role of Fukuten trainee under the guidance of Kiyoko Taylor and Renata Salajic and enjoyed every moment of it.

Being part of the Tenzo ryo means spending a lot of time preparing 3 meals a day for the community. Chopping vegetables, cooking, planning the daily meals. Not only taking into consideration the number of participants but also dietary restrictions, the weather conditions (temperature seems to affect the appetite...), sticking to the retreat schedule etc... All these tasks being performed in a relatively tight space by a group of 3 to 5 ryo members.

Most people would know that working in a commercial kitchen can be rather stressful and quite often temper can be an issue, creating tension within the group of people involved.

Nevertheless after three retreats, I can not recall one moment of friction or inkling of anger being vented at any time. Everything ran smoothly in complete harmony.

Following Dogen Zenji's teaching, the first thing our beloved Tenzo (Kiyoko Taylor) reminds us of at the beginning of each retreat is to always maintain the three following minds (Sanshin) whilst in the kitchen:

Kishin: Joyful Mind

Roshin: Nurturing Mind

Daishin: Big Mind



Calligraphy by Jinesh Wilmot

As Kiyoko mentioned in one of the Chosan periods, when you mindfully chop carrots, there is no longer a knife, a carrot and a person chopping. All that is left is the action of chopping. This is such a wonderful and liberating experience.

While not sitting often in the Zendo, one feels like one is practicing Zazen in Action. Due to space and to a lesser extent time limitation, the presence of extremely sharp knives, live flames and hot pots as well as the continual movements of the participants, one has to constantly remain alert and present despite the growing fatigue.

No time for the inner chatter inside the head. A momentary lapse could mean cutting a finger, burning skin or pushing someone off balance. Everything points to 'Here and Now'!

Seemingly simple tasks such as using the Umpan and Taku to mark points in time was also a wonderful and humbling experience which taught me a lot because of its immediate feedback.

Even though we barely know each other, great bonds were formed between ryo members.

I would encourage anyone having the opportunity to join the Tenzo ryo to do so and experience what words can hardly convey.

I am very grateful to Kiyoko, Renata, Kathy and Sally for their advice/support and look forward to meeting them again.

My gratitude also goes to everyone involved in making the retreats possible and to our beloved and much respected teacher Ekai Osho Sama.

Gassho, Johann Montet

Sōtō Kitchen

The Tenzo Ryo offers you two refreshing salad recipes for Summer

Rice Salad

Ingredients (Serves 10)

<i>Cooked rice (any type)</i>	<i>4 to 6 cups</i>
<i>Currants</i>	<i>1/2 cup</i>
<i>Grated apples</i>	<i>1 to 2</i>
<i>Finely chopped green capsicum</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Grated carrots</i>	<i>2 to 3</i>
<i>Finely sliced Spring Onions</i>	<i>1/2 a bunch</i>
<i>Sugar (any type)</i>	<i>2 level teaspoons</i>
<i>Dressing</i>	
<i>Wine Vinegar (red or white)</i>	<i>1/4 cup</i>
<i>Curry Powder</i>	<i>1 teaspoon</i>
<i>Salt</i>	<i>To taste</i>

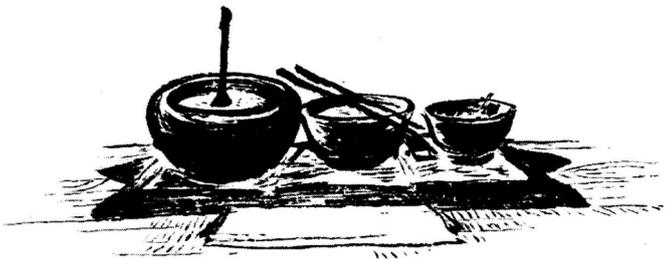
Method:

1. Salad:
Combine all ingredients
2. Dressing:
Mix together and pour over salad, mix well

Quantities are approximate, makes plenty for 10 people.

See how you feel when making this salad as to what exact ingredients to use depending on the season.

This recipe was provided by Tenzo member Renata's mother.



Zucchini Salad

Ingredients (Serves 8)

<i>Small zucchini</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Avocados</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Salt</i>	
<i>Chopped coriander leaves</i>	<i>2 tablespoons</i>
<i>Feta cheese, crumbled</i>	<i>100 g</i>
<i>Dressing</i>	
<i>Olive oil</i>	<i>6 tablespoons</i>
<i>Vinegar</i>	<i>3 tablespoons</i>
<i>Salt</i>	<i>1 teaspoon</i>
<i>Sugar</i>	<i>1/2 teaspoon</i>

Method:

1. Rinse the zucchini well, steam them whole until tender but still firm, then slice them
2. Peel and slice the avocados
3. Arrange zucchini and avocado slices in a salad bowl
4. Salt to taste
5. Sprinkle with coriander, cheese and dressing

To make the dressing: place ingredients in a jar with a tight fitting lid. Close lid and shake well.

From *Frida's Fiestas: Recipes and Reminiscences of Life with Frida Kahlo*, Guadalupe Rivera and Marie-Pierre Colle 1994.