

Myōju



JJKI 026

Soto Zen Buddhism in Melbourne

Summer, Volume 6, Issue 2 December 2006

The Four Seasons in Practice - Spring and Summer

Today the topic of my talk is four seasons in practice. Practice, what kind of practice? We need to ask that question. If you can identify the practice as your meditation, then that's fine. If you can identify the practice as taking care of daily life ... that's fine. If your practice is maintaining a good relationship with your husband or wife.... that's fine. You don't need to define it so much - practice or life... that's fine.

However, it may be helpful to understand the unfolding of practice in four ways, which is why I called this talk 'The Four Season's in Practice'.

You don't need to be a Buddhist. You don't need to be a devout Buddhist... meditation, meditation, meditation... Sometimes it causes a problem doesn't it? If you like something very much, you may start to limit yourself, limit the boundless meaning of practice. You may say to yourself that you are not doing practice because you aren't doing meditation.

Or, they may think, 'I am doing meditation, I am doing practice, I am a good student.' That kind of limitation - it confuses people. People carrying on day to day life, taking care of their life and their families, no matter what happens, doing their best - they may start to think 'I am not doing my practice!'

That kind of understanding limits our practice of the Buddhist way. Basically Buddhism is boundless, a huge thing, a universal thing. But by turning it into pocket size you can carry it around, as long as you are doing it, it is in your pocket. 'I am practicing.' But you have a problem, you know, if you are away from it. 'I am not practicing because I haven't done the meditation, the daily meditation.' (laughs). This causes a problem. It is a very limited view.



So four seasons.....in order to understand and make sense out of it. If you just use one thing to define it, it means you are turning that practice into 'pocket size'.... But if you define it with four aspects, your start integrating,....four is a very auspicious number, a perfect number in the Greek tradition. Three is the foundation of numbers; four is the perfect number. So are you able to see your own life and practice in the four aspects, four ways.

I would like to introduce a poem of Zen master Dogen.

Spring has a flower

**A cuckoo bird sings
in Summer**

**In Autumn, there is
the moon**

**In Winter, the snow
glittering with
refreshing coolness**

I like this poem - how about you?

Poetry is always nice isn't it, going away from a mechanical understanding, very complicated stuff, it transcends that. Here is an expression of the four aspects, the four seasons.

Spring has a flower

Spring has a flower - it's wonderful isn't it?! You found something! Can you relate this to your life experience? You found something! Exciting. Congratulations! and you start to take care of that. In a more complete sense you found your practice. That's why you get married!

Marriage is a practice of course, it's exciting - congratulations - a lot of possibilities and dreams, a lot of futures and a lot of joy. Spring is like that, a beginning

You made up your mind that's why the flower blooms!! If you are confused the flower doesn't bloom. If you made up your mind, decide to go back to



meditation again or back to your life again, back to your work again that's why the flower blooms. The mind recognizes something important and starts to take action with joy and without necessarily needing to know the consequence. Don't you think so? Some of you are probably parents - it's a happy thing - you make effort without knowing the result of the effort you make. Exhausted!

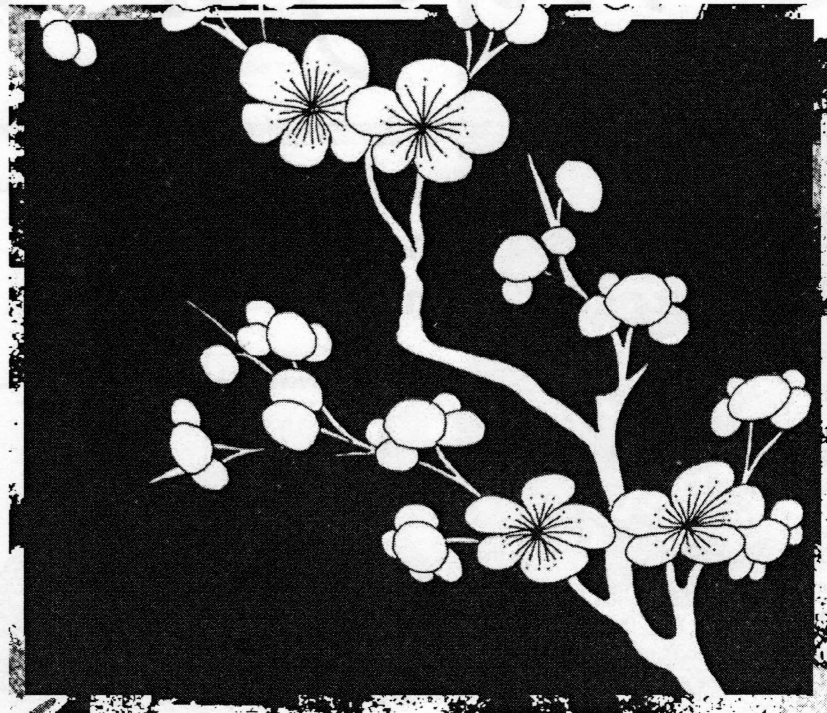
What is summer? Spring has a flower. A cuckoo bird sings in summer.

Do you know anything about the cuckoo bird? Maybe there isn't the same bird in Australia. Here, the poetry is about the cuckoo bird in Japan, particularly around the monastery where Zen master Dogen was residing. In Japanese it is called hototogisu and it's translated as the 'cuckoo bird'. I'm not quite sure if it's the same bird or not.

In Japan, this particular bird sings very early in the morning. At dawn, it is one of the first birds to sing, even prior to dawn in darkness. It sings with a very, very loud and penetrating voice. You may think someone is screaming. "Pii...Pii" Screaming. Some people think it sounds as if it's almost losing its voice in the exertion. And sometimes it sings after sunset, before it gets dark.

The cuckoo bird sings in Summer, not in Spring!! So what does that mean to you? You cannot stay in Spring. Life moves on. Summer is the season for growth - tree growth - sunshine. Life is like that, when the honeymoon period is over, life sometimes enters into a Summer period. You have to exert yourself, you have to work hard on something important, a nourishing relationship, a difficulty. I want to do this! Struggle. Exert yourself. Don't give up! Meditation is the same in that kind of circumstance. When you sit in meditation a lot of stuff comes in your head. Very difficult to sit and meditate and very difficult to go to work too. And very difficult to get up in the morning! You need to exert yourself. That is Summer.

In Summer, you are fully engaged in activity as much as you can - coping or enjoying whatever it is. It's a growth period - without knowing the



"The mind recognizes something important and starts to take action"

consequences !! When you are in the struggle to get out of the trouble you are in, actually you have no idea of whether you can do it! Summer is like that.

So, in Spring there is a flower. In Summer, the flower transforms into the cuckoo bird and there is exertion, effort. If you give up ...then there is no potential, no consequence. 'I give up it's too hard!' 'Working on this relationship is so tough!' 'Conflict is so great!'

For you, Summer may be about working on your relationship. For the next person, Summer may be different. It may be about taking care of their child, working on a project they have, for some people it may be their meditation practice. One of the things that makes things difficult, it helps to understand, in Zen when you have become caught up in particularities. Often you step aside from the way of Zen.

"when the honeymoon period is over, life sometimes enters into a Summer period. You have to exert yourself, you have to work hard on something important..."

But it goes the other way around too, if you ignore it - you miss that point. So this may be the koan: what is the cuckoo bird for you?

If you identify that and quietly think about it - it doesn't stay the same, it changes all the time too. One phase of life it was a relationship, in another phase whatever comes you make a full effort when needed. OK?

Summer! I don't know how many of you feel like you are in Summer in this context. Some people are more in Spring! Some people start to enjoy something new you know, enjoy the possibilities and take joy from it. Usually people who are in the mode of Summer are a little bit more advanced, or experienced, past that stage. Really working on a real thing, it's not abstract, it's a real thing, a very obvious thing. 'You've got a problem.' 'No. no. no. I'm fine,

my meditation takes care of me.' 'Look your wife is screaming and your kids don't get to eat breakfast. You've got a problem in front of your eyes' 'I'm fine. I go to meditation for

peace of mind. I need to have a meditation' In the Summer of practice, probably one is in a sense, satisfied - in your own joy, your personal joy.

This is the first part of a public talk given by Ekai Korematsu Osho at the Tibetan Buddhist Festival on 7 December 2005.. Transcribed by Haydn Halse and edited by Alison Hutchison. Some of the introductory remarks and some questions from the audience haven't been included. The remaining part of this talk, about the Autumn and Winter seasons of practice, will be printed in the next issue of Myoju.

Postcard from our August Retreat

About seventeen people attended the five-day Winter Retreat in August at Casa Pallotti Centre in the Yarra Valley. Only three people were newcomers to Jikishoan retreats and so, with many experienced attendees, there was a settled quality very quickly. Peter Schreiner was Tenzo and, during the retreat, he had a visitor who, without speaking, let him know that they were clearly very interested in what the kitchen had to offer in the way of food-scrap!



Next Issue

The next issue of Myoju will be released at the Autumn Equinox, 21 March 2007. Contributions that will support our practice are most welcome, including articles, book reviews, interviews, personal reflections, artwork and photographs. The content deadline is Sunday 14 January 2007. If you would like to contribute or advertise in the Autumn 2007 edition of Myoju, please email publications@jikishoan.org.au

Membership

We are pleased to welcome the following new member of Jikishoan:

Andrew Holborn Dean Munday
David Benn Ashley Oliver

Ekai Korematsu Osho and the Jikishoan Committee



Bright Pearl

(Ikka-no-Myoju)

An explanation of the newsletter's name, Myoju or 'Bright Pearl'

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 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 replies, '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





Ballarat Sangha News

Lorraine Collishaw

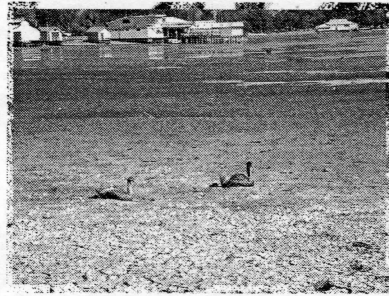
Co-ordinator

Spring has arrived in Ballarat and with it unseasonably high temperatures and a continuation of what has become a very serious, now ten year, drought. Who would have ever thought to see the day when Ballarat would be severely drought stricken? It just shows all things are subject to change!

I have a secret feeling this is designed to teach us something about getting back to basics and the simpleness of real life. Becoming more mindful of life is such a joy. Few things are more basic than water. Now no longer do we stand under the shower for 20 minutes thinking and dreaming of other things; no longer do we turn the sprinkling system on without a thought, as we head for Level 4 restrictions, or let the tap run mindlessly as we clean our teeth. Every drop of water is now treated respectfully for its great contribution to our lives.

Another significant change in rural and regional life is the high cost of petrol. One now thinks twice about hopping in the car two, three, or four times a day and begins to become more mindful of one's movements. It certainly slows down the pace of life when the car is not so accessible.

Mind you, these changes don't come without their share of grumbling. Waiting half an hour for a bus can be a nuisance when you're used to taking instant action by hopping in the car. And it can be quite a drag carrying the tenth bucket of water out to the garden after a bath! I am quite attached to my comfortable habits.



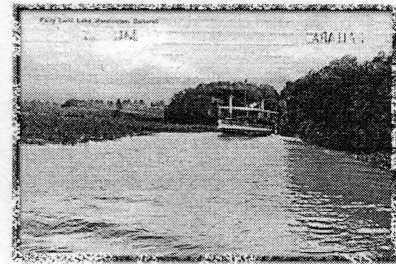
All of this takes me back to my zafu. When we sit alone or at Sunday sanzenkai, it's back to basics, mindfully just sitting, just breathing and being glad to be able to do just that. When all else fails there is always that. To reconnect to the basic rhythms of life, the breath, the heart beat, the rhythms of nature, is so exciting. Many of us know the feeling of moving too fast and doing too much in too short a time. Most of us don't like it and if body, mind and soul gets too far out of kilter then dis-ease appears. Life in the fast lane is pretty dangerous!

This is a long way of saying, 'slowing down and reconnecting with the basics', is a great challenge – and a great joy when you achieve it, even if for only a short time. Sunday sanzenkai is one such opportunity.

In Ballarat, our new Sanzenkai time is working well and we still love our 'new' zendo. On average six to seven dedicated people and occasionally a newcomer or two, come together for two hours to get back to basics. Sometimes, making time to get there, or the feeling of discomfort in the knees or back is a bit like bucketing the water out of the bath. It's the bit we would rather avoid, but the joy of the simple act of sitting is similar to the joy when one sees the bath water bring your plants to life.

The basic things of life are so simple and yet often so difficult to reach, when we put so many things in the way. Your body automatically slows down when you take the time to breathe mindfully.

Happy sitting and best wishes from all at the Ballarat Sangha.



The state of the lake says it all!

Lake Wendouree: : From paddle-steamers in the early 20th century to swans high and dry in the early 21st century.

Welcome to Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community

Jikishoan is a growing community of people based in Melbourne and Ballarat, Australia, learning and practising Zen meditation under the guidance of Ekai Korematsu Osho. Ekai Osho has practised and taught Zen Buddhism in Japan, the USA and India for over 25 years and has been developing the Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community in Australia for the past seven years.

Jikishoan runs a range of programs throughout the year, which are

conducted in the spirit of Bendoho – the original way of practice as 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 and attend any of the activities.



Zen and Excitement:

"Zen is not some kind of excitement, but concentration on our everyday routine"

From Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind,
by Shunryu Suzuki

Returning to the Monastery

This is the second part of an interview with Ekai Korematsu Osho, the first part of which was printed in the last issue of Myoju.

I am interested in a passage from 'Zen Mind, Beginners' Mind' where Suzuki Roshi speaks of returning to the monastery.

There is a serene, peaceful way of living in a monastery, a fulfilling of one's own being is expressed there. People in the monastic life settle into that. It is similar to the level of routine and practice set by the end of a retreat. People from outside relate differently – they look for the exciting things, the stimulating things. If they stay at the monastery long enough, they are bored. Just like people from the outside say about a Zen retreat: You are doing this for a week?!! It requires a certain training and mindset to appreciate.

Suzuki Roshi returned to the monastery after becoming part of society. Now he comes from the lay world and recalls that. He appreciates both sides. He expresses this. Mixing up inside and outside is very difficult.

A monastery is a training institution. There are strong entry requirements, physically and mentally. It is intense. The basic period is for three to six months, learning basic routines. Then, at the novice level, monks are assigned to sections for three to six months. A challenge. Then they change sections. A challenge. Thus there is a spiral development. The training establishes ground, over one year. In the second year they are assigned at a different level. In the third year, they come to the junior position. At that time the person settles, and trains novices themselves. At every stage, there is challenge.



There is a serene, peaceful way of living in a monastery, a fulfilling of one's own being is expressed there.

Jikishoan translates the monastic qualities which develop in a pure monastic context into the lay context. Anyone who takes part in retreat has the opportunity to get a feel for it just by being there. There isn't anything you have to do.

Unanimity supports continuance of cultures and practices, and a monastery could be seen as a stereotype of this. What about disagreement? How does this contribute to monastic life?

It's related to the standard of practice. That doesn't come first. Zazen is the basic form. The standard of community is established slowly over the years. In the case of China, at the time of Bodhidharma, transmission was almost individual – monastic community establishment took six generations. By the time of Hyakujo (Pai-chang), it was clearly documented.

By sharing practice day to day, year to year, it establishes how things are done, incorporated into forms. On the basis of the essential practice anchor - disagreement comes when you bring ideas first: 'It has to be this or this way'.

Fundamental principles and method need to be agreed on – that's where things start. Jikishoan has a structure to allow basic aspects of practice to be integrated into standards of practice developing. Deepening courses and workshops are where people come to learn. Sunday Sanzenkai works on basic form, the development of a community culture you might say. Retreat is a place where a monastic element is translated into this culture.

You cannot separate culture from unanimity. You cannot say individuals doing different things without uniformity is a culture. It is what is appropriate in a culture that is important. It is a matter of experience interacting, working with experience. The more diversity the better. And the more everyone is clear on the basic principle which makes things come together. It is the anchor point – being settled in form – which is very important to everyone, and that helps for those who come later. People can contribute. It is more workable than something based on ideas.

This is the limitation of majority democracy. People cannot relate with it. There is no clear anchor point. Here at Jikishoan we have three-in-one, one-in-three integration. One is the Deepening courses. Two is the Member community level practice. Three is Retreat. Newcomers can settle in. The culture is there. It is accommodating. We can answer two important questions: 'Who will do it?' and 'How did it come about?'

Thanks Ekai Osho, and I hope we can talk further soon.

Annie Bolitho

Member of Jikishoan

Takesa Ge



Vast is the robe of liberation

*A formless field of
benefaction*

*I wear the Tathagata's
teaching*

Saving all sentient beings

At one point in my practice I had an aversion to all chanting, dharma talks, ritual; in fact anything except sitting. I would always leave straight after meditation; this went on for several years. Then one day I decided to sit through these rituals without participating in any way: I was tempted by cooking aromas to stay around! Gradually over time, in spite of my firm intention to resist, something began to soak into me, imperceptibly. Slowly little flames of recognition began to arise.

One of the first things that this occurred with was the robe chant, which we chanted in English. Some time after I got used to it, I noticed one day that it was cycling through my mind of its own volition and had been for the whole period of sitting. This sometimes continued in subsequent sitting periods. This was a surprise to me as it had taken some effort in the past when I had tried to hold or focus a single thing such as a mantra or visualisation in my mind.

Since then I have watched with curiosity this chant that seemingly has a life of its own. Sometimes it would come sometimes not, sometimes lasting for a long while and sometimes not. At times insights would arise. When I thought I had penetrated it, it would flow into a different form, continuously changing. It seems to flutter through endless space like a butterfly. I fear fixing it or grasping at it, as if its life could be lost. Nevertheless here is the form it took one day.

"Vast is the robe of liberation": as this reverberated through my mind I saw a robe flowing and rippling through the entire cosmos of stars and rainbow galaxies.

"A formless field of benefaction": the robe faded into and penetrated, and was, the cosmos, and then this disintegrated into a sense of complete support.

"I wear the Tathagata's teaching": I saw the patched robe on me; then I felt the dharma become my mind, speech and body.

"Saving all sentient beings": body and mind gone, becoming pure dharma, supporting all beings, beings gone, self and others gone, dharma gone, all gone. Free.

"Vast is the robe of liberation": Vast universe both solid, pulsing, alive and completely empty.....

I am in awe of the power of this poem. Knowing the great difficulty of translation I am astonished how someone has translated poetry and successfully retained the essence without falling into prose. The great difficulty with translation is that a literal attempt loses the essence, it is necessary to sense the mind of the author and bring this out. With poetry it is even more difficult. Besides tapping the essence of the thought it is helpful to utilize the various techniques of poetic construction to successfully approach the effect of the original.

Then there is also the almost insurmountable difficulty when translating from Chinese ideograms of conveying their multiple and layered meanings.

My greatest difficulty in life has always been the challenge of rote learning. I seem to have a congenital deficiency in this area. Rhyme, rhythm, meter and so forth have been of some assistance to me, without these I would have had no chance. When I look at this chant I see why I managed to pick it up.

Some things stand out for me. The vivid images. The rhyming of the last word in each line as well as the identical syllable count. The alliteration.

I also find it fascinating as each line alternates from form to emptiness and emptiness to form. The heart sutra embedded in it. The four noble truths and the lions roar of the Buddha on his enlightenment. It seems as if all the dharma is present in this chant and in the robe.

Did I allow an unconscious programming to take place? I don't think I did. When I first listened to it I decided it was not harmful even though I chose not to chant it. When I later decided to chant, my thought process was the same. Some time later, understanding its purity I chose to surrender to it. This I think is the process of any conscious training.

"Shakyamuni said 'Be a torch for your life'. In other words depend on yourself and be responsible for yourself, not as what you think you are but rather you as the dharma. This is very important. You cannot depend on your complaints, or your greed, anger and ignorance."

Wayne Diamond

Member of Jikishoan



Sangha News

Easter Retreat Venue

Please note that the seven day Retreat over Easter 2007 will be held at Adekate Fellowship Centre in Dean (Near Ballarat) as the Casa Pallotti Centre in the Yarra Ranges is not available. Myoju Coordination

Myoju Help

As mentioned in the last issue of Myoju, Alison Hutchison has stepped down as Koho Ryo Coordinator for 2006-07. Recently, Richard Henderson and David Benn have generously offered to help and are now assisting with the Koho Ryo and the production of Myoju with a view to Richard taking over the Koho Coordinator

role. However, additional help is always welcome, so if you would like to contribute please talk to Richard or David at Sunday Sanzenkai or email Richard on: richard_g_henderson@yahoo.com.au

Help is particularly required with transcribing and editing Ekai's dharma talks.

Zen Friends Newsletter

The new electronic journal 'Dharma Eye' is available at Soto Zen International website: <http://www.sotozen-net.or.jp/> Follow the prompts for "English" and "Dharma Eye Journal"

DHARMA EYE



法眼

News of Soto Zen Buddhism: Teachings and Practice

Our Summer Issue Support Team

Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community would like to thank and acknowledge the following people for their wonderful contribution to the production of this issue of Myoju.

Ekai Korematsu Osho, Dharma talk, photographs and inspiration. Members and friends of Jikishoan, Articles and content support

Mikkel Doomernik and B&B Design Australia, Graphic design. Kinkos, Printing, Jinesh Wilmot: Artwork, Gilbert Van Hoeydonck and Bob Brown: Web update. Julie Martindale: Mailout coordination, Peter Watts: Mailout support, Alison Hutchison, Myoju coordinator. Richard Henderson and David Benn, Myoju support.

Special Offer to Jikishoan's Members and Friends - January only

Improve your posture and awareness and help Jikishoan at the same time. Jikishoan member Shona Innes is offering half price lessons in **Alexander Technique** during the month of January as a special fund raising drive for Jikishoan. The cost of each lesson is \$25 and Shona is donating all proceeds from every member and friend who takes up the offer to Jikishoan.

This offer is for the month of January 2007 only. Lessons are held at Newport and information about the technique is available at Shona's website: <http://alexanderthinkingbody.alphalink.com.au/>

For further enquires about appointments or how **Alexander Technique** can assist with your Zen practice, please call Shona on 0421 285 338.

In the Alexander Technique one of the primary notions underpinning the whole approach is that as human beings we have the possibility of becoming conscious of how we 'use' ourselves - how we allow ourselves to be on a moment to moment basis.

Reflections on the Mirror

Oh mirror

shining clear

what a delusion!

*Our grasping after you
like courting emptiness
leads us to darkness !*

Oh dust

to which we cling

particles which we abhor!

*Our solidifying of you
building impenetrable walls
makes us clods !*

Oh dusty mirror

*your imperfect reflection
is perfect and painful !*

*Our stumbling on the path
in flickering awareness
awakens us to who we are !*

"...with mindfulness

endeavour diligently"

Buddha's parting words

Andrew Holborn

March 2006



Soto Kitchen Recipes from the Tenzo Ryo selected by Kiyoko Taylor. We hope that you enjoy them!

Lentil Salad Ingredients (serves 3 to 4)

Dried green lentils	1 cup (200g)
Onion, finely chopped	
Garlic, crushed	clove
Oil	3 tablespoons
Juice of 1 lemon	
Water	2 & 1/3 cups
Salt & pepper	to taste
Ground coriander or cumin	½ teaspoons (optional)
Coriander, chopped	½ bunch
Tomato, chopped coarsely	1-2
Cucumber, chopped	1-2

Method:

1. Cook garlic and onion in oil until softened.
2. Rinse lentils and add them, lemon juice and water (but no salt).
3. Simmer mixture until lentils are tender but still hold their shape (about 30- minutes), adding water from time to time if necessary.
4. Add salt and black pepper near end of cooking time and if desired, ground cumin or coriander. Cook for a few more minutes. Cool to room temperature.
5. Chop cucumber, sprinkle with salt, leave for 5 minutes and squeeze water.
6. Mix coriander, tomato and cucumber with lentils. Season to taste.

Cous-cous Salad: Ingredients (serves 4)

Dry cous-cous	1 cup
Water	1 cup
Extra virgin olive oil	1 tblspn
Red onion, diced	1
Red pepper, diced	1
Capers	1 handful
Fresh lime juice	1 tblspn
Chives, chopped	1 bunch
Sea salt	

Method:

1. Place dry cous-cous in a small glass or ceramic bowl.
2. In a pot, bring water to a boil and add a pinch of salt.
3. Pour the boiling water over the cous-cous, cover with foil and let sit for five minutes.
4. Heat up the olive oil in a skillet and sauté the onions.
5. Add the red pepper and sea salt to taste, and sauté for a few minutes. The vegetables should be cooked, but still crunchy
7. Remove the foil from the cous-cous, fluff up with a fork and mix in the vegetables, using a lager bowl.
8. Add the capers to the cous-cous salad, sprinkle with fresh lime juice and chopped chives and serve.



Kiyoko at the 2006 Winter retreat

Soup – Egg and Cheese (Stracciatella) Ingredients (serves 4):

Parmesan cheese (finely grated)	½ cup
Bread crumb	1 cup
Egg	2
Water	1 litre
Vegetable stock	3 – 4

Method:

1. Boil water and add stock. Adjust the taste as you like and simmer.
2. Mix cheese and bread crumb well
3. Put eggs into the above mixture and mix well.
4. Put the mixture into the soup and stir well with whisk

Summer Fruit Soup (From The Zen Monastery Cookbook)

Ingredients (serves 4 – 6):		Honey	1 tablespoon
Orange juice	3 cups	Berries or summer fruits	4 cups
Fat-free Yoghurt	3 cups	Cinnamon	pinch
Fresh lemon juice	1 tablespoon	Nutmeg	pinch

Method:

- Blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, peaches, nectarines, cantaloupe or a mixture
1. Whisk together orange juice and yoghurt.
 2. Add remaining ingredients- chill until served.

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