

Myōju



JK027

Soto Zen Buddhism in Melbourne

Autumn, Volume 6, Issue 3, March 2007

The Four Seasons in Practice - Autumn and Winter

This is the second part of a public talk given by Ekai Korematsu Osho at the Tibetan Buddhist Festival held at Yuroke on Sunday 6th November 2005. The first part of this talk, 'Spring and Summer', was published in the Summer (December, 2006) Issue of Myōju. Transcribed by Haydn Halse and edited by Georgia Nicholls.

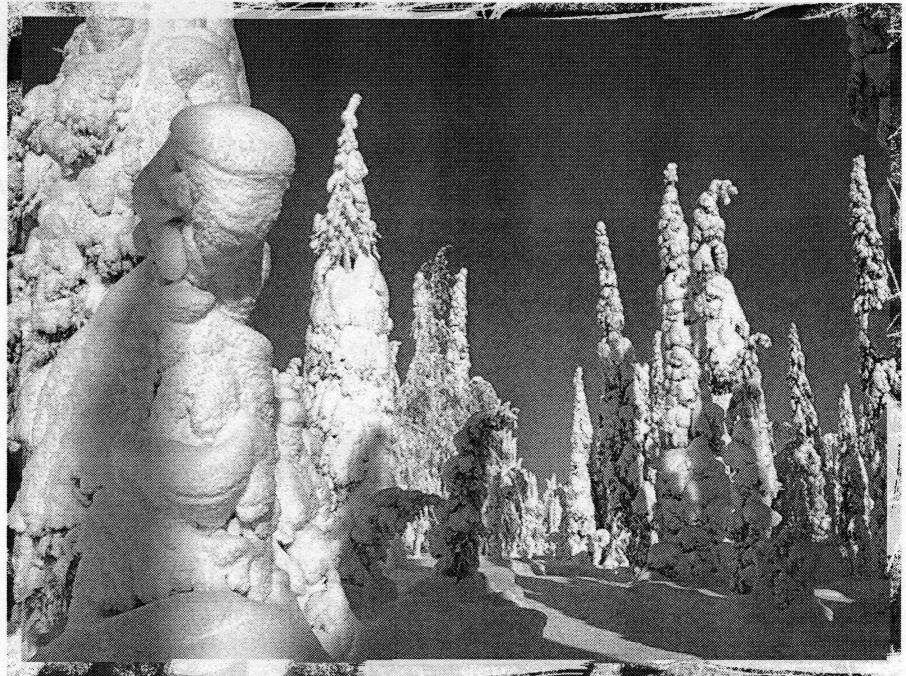
'In Autumn there is the moon.' Some people may comment that the moon is present in all seasons, not only in autumn. The autumn moon, however, for Japanese people, has a specific meaning. In Japan, the climate is not like that here in Melbourne.

In Japan it is quite humid throughout the year. There is a lot of rain, and thanks to that, most of the country is green and water is abundant. Only in the period from summer through autumn does the air become crisp and clear. It is then, at night, you can really appreciate the moon, especially the full moon.

A big thing was made of the clarity of the autumn moon in ancient times. In modern times, not so much is made of it - sometimes a group of people may still enact a traditional ritual. In ancient times the lunar calendar was used to calculate the full moon in October or November. People would decorate an altar, offer food and some flowers and enjoy drinking tea and eating. That was the time to compose some poetry - everything is clear.

Appreciation is characteristic of autumn - appreciation of things - as it is. There is a clarity, a joy in appreciating what it is. It is very obvious.

In the West, autumn is the time of harvest festival. As in Japan, there is a period of reflection, of appreciation of what has been gone through in the past - the hard work, hard practice and hard life of summer, without which there is no harvest - no moon. Without a beginning, without spring, it doesn't lead to this. In Japan, in ancient times, the people were engaged in rice farming and they had this kind of seasonal awareness. So you might say, in Buddhist



terms, that the moon is a metaphor for this autumn phase of practice or realization.

Spring has a flower

A cuckoo bird sings in Summer

In Autumn, there is the moon

In Winter, the snow, glittering with refreshing coolness.

Dogen.

Insight meditation is like that. Whatever you see in insight meditation is very obvious, is as it is - there is no confusion with it. Appreciating each moment, each thing you have overcome - all the entanglements of human stuff. Emotions settle, and finally you have finished the period of hard practice, of

hard life. You don't need to exert yourself, can just be yourself with everything around - the moon - appreciating. You want that phase don't you? - to always be harvesting, picking the fruits. And often people want a shortcut - are looking for the method, for how to take a shortcut. (laughs)

It doesn't work like that. Practice, like life, consists of three fundamental aspects. You are born into this world, you grow and age. Ageing is growing. Ageing and sickness - you miss the point if you understand these expressions in a dualistic way, saying, 'I don't like sickness, I don't like ageing' and ignoring them. But if you really settle into that phase, you appreciate life. When you are sick you need to stay relaxed. Sickness is an opportunity to harvest. I was so grateful when I was healthy. I did this, I did that.' If you are relaxed, there are a lot of

realizations - you are able to reflect. If you don't have that opportunity, it is very difficult to reflect upon things. When you are in the midst of the exertion of ongoing activities, something stops, and you can reflect, harvest, appreciate and be settled.

So in Zen you can interpret each expression, even a negative expression, in both negative and positive ways. If you can learn to do this freely, then you come to understand what Zen teaching is. But if we don't have this understanding, and are always looking for a so-called positive something, as separate, as negating of the other side, then it is very difficult to appreciate Zen and Buddhist expressions.

I think most of you know what the first teaching of the Buddha was - his proposition.



A big thing was made of the clarity of the autumn moon in ancient times. In modern times, not so much is made of it - sometimes a group of people may still enact a traditional ritual. In ancient times the lunar calendar was used to calculate the full moon in October or November.

He presented four aspects and the first one was that of suffering.

He didn't want to muck around, so in order to point out what suffering is, he used what seemed like negative expressions - birth, ageing, sickness. Oh wow!

There is equality in life you know. You may think that life is unfair - that I am doing this and that and I don't get this or that when other people do. But when it comes to death - there is equality - ultimately.

The harvesting season is settled. It's like your lifetime. Birth is exciting - a baby is born. Everyone starts as a baby, that is the starting point. If that doesn't happen, nothing happens. Then there is the growing season. You grow strong, receive an education, exert yourself. You have to take an exam, get married, work hard, raise a family, you know, according to your choices.

After the period of exertion is over you can retire. You then have a settled life. You are not busy anymore. You are able to reflect on what preceded autumn - so clear, so free, you become wise. So you can compare autumn with insight meditation. Insight comes in like that.

Winter is the fourth season, fourth phase. People's preference for summer or winter changes according to which of the seasons they are in. In summer, it gets so hot,

almost to the point that it is hard to sleep, and people say, 'I hate summer. I need air conditioning. I like winter.' But when winter comes, and it is cold, they say, 'I hate winter. I am definitely a summer person.' It fluctuates - that is the reality of humans.

There is equality in life you know. You may think that life is unfair - that I am doing this and that and I don't get this or that when other people do. But when it comes to death - there is equality - ultimately.

What is winter? Zen master Dogen says, 'In Winter the snow, glittering with refreshing coolness.' This is quite neutral, isn't it? It is saying something very obvious - as it is - what is to come. There is no liking and disliking, but can you see the sense of appreciation? 'In winter the snow, glittering with refreshing coolness.' It no longer swings this way or that way, like and dislike, negative and positive. It is quite reconciled. That is the middle path - two extreme opposites - reconciled. Winter... snow glittering... refreshing coolness.

When it happens, 'you' are dead. If you take this expression literally, it sounds abrupt or violent and you miss the point.

'Death' means seeing ordinary human activities and not being swung by emotions, like and dislike, thinking this and that. That is seeing. It happens like this!

So, in other words, winter is a metaphor for a particular phase of practice - when you return your attention to the details of your daily routines. This practice phase is winter - is nothing special. When it is time to get up, you get up. When it is time to eat, you eat. When it is time to go to school, you go to school. When it is time to pack up your toys, you pack up your toys. When it is time to go to sleep, you go to bed. That is the daily routine - nothing special - 'you' are dead.

'I want this, I don't like this' - this is basic. All these human expectations of this and that, all of those things are left behind, are taken care of. The practice of nirvana is like that - nothing special. And life is not automatic either. You are not carrying out your day to day activities automatically, meaning without awareness. Then you are really brain-dead. (laughs)

Engage each moment, each time, with full attention to the details, to basic things. If we practice like that, enlightenment is always with you. You are always pulling the cart, whatever you do. You may not know, but enlightenment is very clear. It is benefiting not only you, but the people and environment around you.

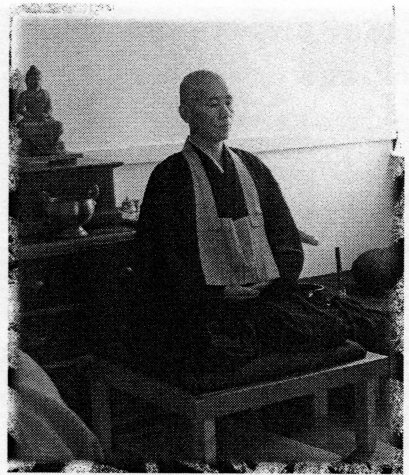
Welcome to Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community

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.

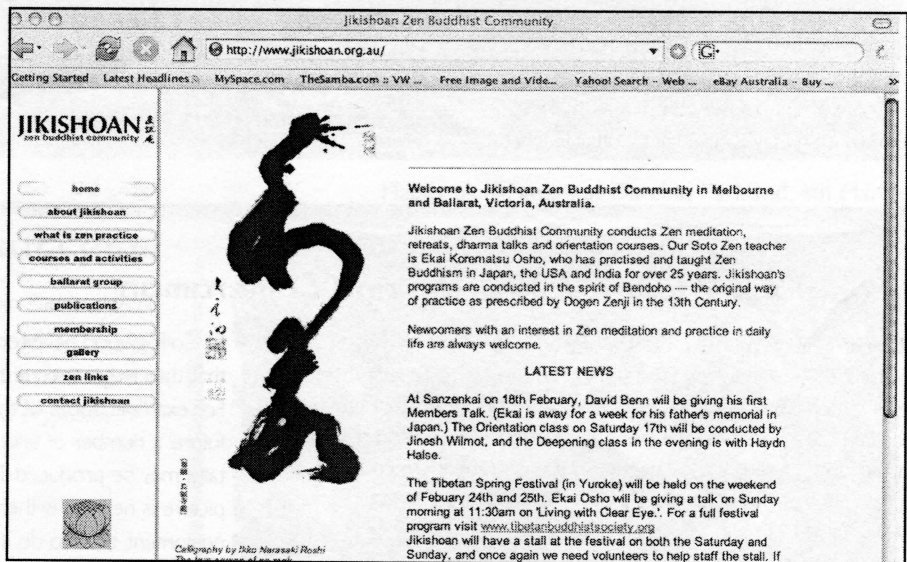


Jikishoan on the web

Have a look at the Jikishoan website: www.jikishoan.org.au

If you haven't had a look at this recently, please take time to do so. Many people have worked hard over the years to create and maintain a look and feel that represents Jikishoan.

It is recommended to regularly check the website front page for latest news and information that may have changed since 'Myoju' was printed, for example. The current calendar can also be accessed from there, if you have misplaced your copy. Additional pages have been added with how-to hints on Zazen, the Ryos, a photo gallery and so on. It is planned to add some of the Sutras, a Lineage chart, a catalogue for our Footscray library of Zen and Buddhist books, and perhaps a facility to order Zafus, incense and other items. The website's purpose is to provide you,



Members and Friends, as well as the interested public, with the latest news as well as general background information about

Jikishoan and our activities. It tries to be useful and interesting! If you have any constructive comments, or suggested additions, please contact publications@jikishoan.org.au



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



Precept Ceremony, Member's Ceremony, and Sanzenkai Pot Luck

At a recent committee meeting, it was agreed that, in general, the "Precept Ceremony" would be deleted from the Quarterly Event Calendar due to the irregular holding of this event. The Precept Ceremony will be notified to the community in advance by announcing at Sanzenkai or by e-mail when scheduled. Not necessarily through the event calendar. (Precepts can be taken at the precept ceremony and can be arranged upon request.) Ekai-Osho suggested establishing Jikishoan's new event which focuses the members. Its prime intension is to introduce and formally acknowledge "new members" to the community by inviting them to a Sunday Sanzenkai to offer incense.

This ceremony would be named "Member Ceremony", and would be for introducing new members, new Ryo members, family members related ceremonies that may arise such as exit and returning for members, blessing for new born and children. It was then agreed, by the committee, that the "Member's Ceremony" be included in future Calendars of Events, on the last Sunday in June and the second Sunday in December.

Tenzo Ryo could announce Pot luck dinner in advance at special occasions such as AGM, Precept Ceremony, Member's Ceremony, and Ordination so Tenzo member also could participate. Pot luck could also happen accordingly when Tenzo ryo decide it when appropriate and other necessity arises within the ryo. Those who attended Sanzenkai on 17th December 2006, witnessed the inaugural Member Ceremony which included: introduction of new members who joined

in the second half of 2006, the blessing of the children of some members, the exit ceremony for Alison Hutchison, and returning for Bev Cowan. On the 10th December, Julie Martindale received Lay Ordination and



New members being welcomed, 17th December 2006

Mark Summers received his Rakusu. The next Member ceremony will be at Collingwood on Sunday 24th June.

2 Positions Vacant– Librarian and Cameraman

Librarian – Jikishoan has a Library of Zen and related books at Footscray. We are looking for a person to receive requests for books, bring them to Sanzenkai for example, return books to Footscray, maintain the catalogue and borrowing register, recommend new books and so on. If we put the catalogue on the website, there could be an increase in borrowing activity. If you can help or are interested, please talk to Haydn, Hannah or Richard.

Cameraman – Currently, we record the Dharma talks on an iPod for later transcription, however members unable to regularly travel

to Collingwood have requested that we video some of the talks so that they may continue to enjoy and learn from the regular talks. For example, some of the talks may be put on the website. In the future, a number of talks could be combined and a CD or DVD of talks may be produced. To do this, a reasonable quality of sound and picture is needed. Is there someone with knowledge of how to do this, equipment, time to do it occasionally, or teach someone? If you can help or are interested, please talk to Jinesh, Mark or Richard. Jikishoan is also investigating the purchase of suitable AV equipment.



November Retreat above: A successful retreat was held in November, with 32 happy attendees.



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Happy picnic goers at Darebin Parkland, 4th March

Annual Picnic a great success!

The Annual Sangha (community) Picnic at Darebin Parkland was a great success on 4th March, with sunny weather and 30+ people and 3 dogs attending. The food on the communal table was wonderful as was the conversation. Thanks to organiser, Mark Summers, and others who helped on the day.

Japan Festival

Is on Sunday 20th May at the Box Hill Town Hall and TAFE, 10-5pm. Jikishoan will be holding a stall at the Festival. Any volunteers to assist on the Stall for an hour or two? Please contact Emma Edmonds, 03 9844 4463 or 0439 41 31 41 email: info@ceremoniesbyemma.com.au



100th Committee Meeting

The January 2007 Committee meeting was Jikishoan's 100th meeting. Ekai, Jinesh, Richard, Mark and Hannah are pictured at the Footscray Zendo.



Membership

During the last quarter, we were pleased to welcome the following new member of Jikishoan:

Richard Henderson

Debbie Kot

Rhonda Henderson

Robin Quinn

(Apologies if anyone was missed. Please let me know, Richard.)

Ekai Korematsu Osho and the Jikishoan Committee



Serving Suggestions

by David Benn

At a recent Adekate retreat, I had the privilege to serve in the Sogyu Ryo. Although practicing in a community environment, my two previous retreat experiences had been still rather insular in that my practice was still primarily private. Being part of the serving team at this last retreat was certainly a new experience and in a way led to a deepening of my appreciation of the practice. I can remember mentioning to Peter Watts, the Ryo coordinator, "What's all the fuss about!" After observing the servers at previous retreats, it seemed to me a pretty straight forward task, just get the food on and off the table and everyone is happy. Peter gave me a look in his inimitable style expressing not only a suppressed disdain but also embedded with a degree of benevolent compassion, as if to say "Well, you'll find out".

Well I certainly did, the degree of attention to detail to carry off this task is phenomenal. Under the impeccable tutelage of both Peter and Oscar, I developed a much deeper understanding of Zen as a participant in group practice. My participating with fellow servers in this process gave me an insight into another level of practice. When practicing with others interpersonal cooperation and respect are developed. Participating in this Ryo has led me to appreciate the attention to detail and an intuitive sense of timing which are all necessary in the smooth running of a retreat.

As in all practices, experience is paramount and is often a great teacher. After a few days I thought to myself, yes this is going pretty well, then just as I allowed myself to settle into a relative comfort zone, sticky rice brought me on to an another level. It was my turn to serve the Bhuddha bowl of rice to Ekai Osho at the midday meal. I was all keyed up for this, not a problem, then as I was attempting to transfer this rice into the most auspicious of bowls the texture of the remaining rice at the bottom of the serving dish suggested otherwise. This particular batch of rice was



Sogyu Ryo members, ready for action.

rather gluggy especially at the bottom of the container and, in attempting to perform this seemingly easy task, the need to adjust to a more neutral emotive reaction was presented. With a shake of the

servicing spoon to dislodge a recalcitrant dob, it splattered all over Ekai's hand. Shattered. Ekaias always seemed not to be too fussed and as I continued on round the table I realised the meaning of Peter's look.

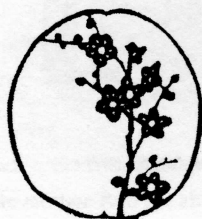


David Benn serving with Zen mind

Our Autumn 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. Mikel Doomernik and B&B Design Australia, Graphic design. Kinkos, Printing. Julie Martindale, Mailout coordination. Richard Henderson, Myoju and Website coordinator. David Benn and Georgia Nicholls, Transcriptions and editing.



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Swirling Clouds

During my teenage years at secondary school, a nurse who was teaching our class remarked that the role of a first aider could be compared to a duck swimming. On the surface it appears peaceful, however underneath there is a great deal of activity. This contrast may be compared to the functioning of the Jikishoan Buddhist Community.

My initial impression of the community when I first arrived at Sunday SanzenKai three years ago revealed a collective, yet singular entity of people efficiently going about their roles. As time passed, I joined the Tenzo Ryo through the encouragement of the previous coordinator, Bev Cowan. Involvement in the Tenzo Ryo resulted in a transition from passive to active participation and an understanding of the operational aspects of the community.

At my first retreat I had been participating in the Tenzo Ryo for over a year, however it is customary within the community for first time attendees to join the Shu Ryo (General/ Cleaning/ Gardening). During the retreat, Peter Watts the Shu Ryo coordinator explained some of the customs and details to us newcomers. Peter described the function and detail of the Umpan, a type of gong that lets the Zendo know when meals are

ready. Adorning the Umpan is the symbol of swirling clouds that are synonymous with the active nature of the kitchen. Thereafter, I have remembered this metaphor whenever I am preparing food.

At the subsequent retreat, I participated in the Tenzo Ryo. In contrast to cooking occasionally on Sunday, preparing food at a retreat presents an ongoing challenge of nourishing the Sangha at specified times. I am always amazed that no matter how busy we get, somehow the meals are finished on time. This requires a great deal of coordination between members of our group and although it is possible to panic, our sitting practice serves as a grounding reference point. For me this is an important point of awareness in my practice whether it is within

I am always amazed that no matter how busy we get, somehow the meals are finished on time.

Jikishoan or the broader aspect of everyday life. On some occasions, usually when things become hectic, my sitting practice brings stillness and clarity to situations where limitations are realised and feelings liberated. As the Tenzo Ryo evolves within Jikishoan, each member voluntarily devotes their time



Jikishoan's Umpan (Gong)

to the community. Since life changes for each member their level of involvement fluctuates. However when reflecting on the history and lineage of the Tenzo Ryo it is evident that many have passed through kitchen and countless meals have been made. Like the swirling clouds it is not fixed, but a continuum of effort and activity. As the community grows, the Tenzo Ryo members share the administrative roles. The backbone of the ryo is Kiyoko Taylor who is the anchor point for our activities. Some of the more important and time consuming tasks that Kiyoko undertakes is retreat planning and shopping. Additionally Kiyoko has hosted social functions for our group where surprisingly, we talk little very about food.

As well as retreat planning and shopping, is the preparation of a roster by Toni Moreton. Other tasks include finances and monthly reports. Further invaluable contributions are provided by: Annie Bolitho, Luke Menzel, Helen Brooker, Robin Leong and our newest member, Kim Ooi. The level of commitment and contribution within the Tenzo Ryo is mirrored across all the ryos within the community. What lies beneath the graceful duck are the collective efforts of our practice.



Tenzo Ryo in action in the kitchen

Next Issue

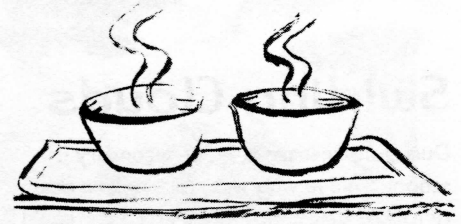
The next issue of Myoju will be released at the Winter Solstice, 21 June 2007. Contributions that will support our practice are most welcome, including articles, book reviews, interviews, personal reflections, artwork and photographs.

The content deadline is Sunday 8th April 2007. If you would like to contribute or advertise in the Winter 2007 edition of Myoju, please email publications@jikishoan.org.au



Soto Kitchen

Here are some more delicious recipes from the Tenzo Ryo selected by Kiyoko Taylor. We hope that you enjoy them! When cooking these recipes, why not use our Biodynamic brown rice. (Following retreats, if we have some left, it is available at Sanzenkai, \$4.00 per kilo.)



Pumpkin - Soup

Ingredients (serves 4):	
Japanese pumpkin	1kg
Onion, chopped	1
Dark sesame oil	1 tablespoon
Mirin	1
Tamari	1
Cumin	1/2 teaspoon
Coriander	1/4 teaspoon
Cinnamon	1/4 teaspoon
Genmai miso (brown rice)	1 - 1 & 1/2 tablespoons
Water	1 litre

Method:

1. Remove the skin and seeds of pumpkin and chop in chunks.
2. Sauté onion with sesame oil in a pot and season generously with mirin and tamari.
3. Add pumpkin and stir well to mix with seasoning. Simmer 5 mins.
4. Pour water into pot and add cumin, coriander and cinnamon. Mix well.
5. Bring to a boil and simmer until pumpkin turns soft.
6. Let cool for a while and make potage with blender.
7. Add miso and stir until well mixed.
8. Season more with tamari and miso if necessary.

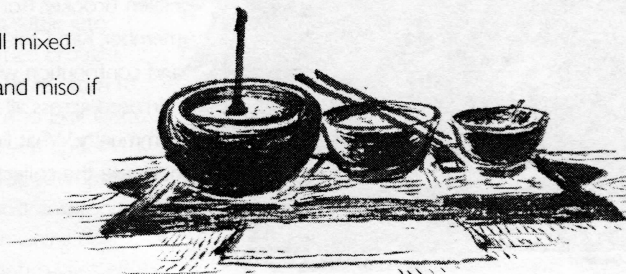
Nondairy Mashed Potatoes

Ingredients (serves 6-8):	
Soft tofu	330g
Potatoes (Pontiac), peeled & cut into 3.5cm cubes	1.8kg
Sea salt	1 tablespoon
Black pepper, freshly milled	

Method:

1. Puree the tofu in a food processor or blender, scraping down the side, until smooth and creamy. Set aside.
2. Place the potatoes in a large pot of cold water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer until the potatoes can easily be pierced with a fork, about 10 minutes. Drain and place in a large bowl.
3. Add the tofu to the potatoes and beat with an electric mixer or mash with a potato masher to the desired consistency. Add the salt and the pepper to taste and beat or mash until thoroughly incorporated.

Note: The mashed potatoes can be refrigerated in a 22 x 33cm baking dish, covered with foil, and reheated in a 180°C for about 20 minutes.



Celery Salad and Apple

Ingredients (serves 10):	
Celery	half (7-8 sticks)
Apple	3
1 Granny Smith	
2 Desert apples (Pink Lady, Fuji or some others)	
Lemon	1
Dry fruits salad	200g
Sultana handful	
Walnuts	optional
Dressing	
Yoghurt	250ml
Mayonnaise	60ml
Orange	1
Honey	2 tablespoons
Cinnamon/Cardamom	a pinch
Salt & black pepper	a tiny pinch

Method:

1. Squeeze lemon and put the juice into a bowl.
2. Cut apples bite size and mix them with lemon juice to prevent to become brown.
3. Chop celery into bite size.
4. Chop dried fruit into small size.
5. Put all the dressing ingredients into another bowl and mix well with a whisk.
6. Mix all of them together well and leave at least 2 hours.
7. Sprinkle with lightly roasted chopped walnuts if available.

Note: They could keep well. This could go very well with toast too.

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