

# Myōju

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## Soto Zen Buddhism in Australia

Volume 3 Issue 2 Summer 2003/4

A publication of Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community Inc. (A0037927K)



### Zaiko tokudo—lay ordination

*Excerpt from a dharma talk given by Ekai-oshō at Sunday Sanzenkai 29 June 2003  
Transcribed by Robin Leong, edited by Peter Watts*

In early Chinese Buddhist tradition there was no lay ordination as such. When Buddhism became established in Japan that changed and the Soto Zen School recognised both monastic and lay ordination. So we are talking about lay ordination and a lay context.

I think in the Christian tradition, ordination means to go through much training and study over many years. After reflecting on one's own practice, one finally decides to get married to God. (Laughs) It is a marriage with God through a particular religious order. Soto Zen ordination really means making a connection. It's not a temporary connection, but for the whole of life, even after death. (Laughs)

In the Zen Buddhist tradition, to make that connection with the spiritual path was very important and once made, was given much significance. Not so important was being able to remain on the path, because the habit or karma of lay life might interfere with that pathway. Sometimes one is unable to maintain the path and gives up, but, in Buddhist tradition, not continuing along the path up to seven times is OK. I think the Christian tradition differs here from the Buddhist one. In both cases however



*zaiko is 'being at home'  
toku is 'to obtain'  
and do is 'other shore,  
or Perfection'.*

ordination generally means monastic ordination and the move towards lay ordination requires a different mindset or understanding.

Catholicism was rooted in a monastic environment and not easily accessed by ordinary people. With the introduction of the King James version of the Bible, everyone could better access the word of God. Prior to this time, only those who were able to study in Latin and read classics and theology could understand. The King James version made a significant change in the Christian traditions. The broad community was able to contact more sources of the Bible which encouraged this movement further, so not only was there a monastic context but now a lay context began to flourish.

As Buddhism progressed in Japan, around the 13<sup>th</sup> century, beside the monastic ordination, lay ordination was also recognised. Later still in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, monks were able to be married. It should be understood that much value is placed on the monastic form with the Soto Zen school. A lay life without temple practice could result in losing one's credentials as a priest.

*continued on page 3*

*We join spokes together in a wheel,  
But it is the centre hole  
That makes the wagon move.*

*We shape clay into a pot,  
But it is the emptiness inside  
That holds whatever we want.*

*We hammer wood for a house,  
But it is the inner space  
That makes it liveable.*

*We work with being,  
But non-being is what we use.*

From Tao Te Ching  
pocket edition translated by Stephen Mitchell



### **Summer issue of *Myoju* 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-oshō – Inspiration

Karen Threlfall – Co-ordinator

Ben Sheppard – Design, layout and production

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Bob Brown – Web update

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Alison Hutchison – Mail-out co-ordination

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

continued from page 1

In order to become a priest, you have to go through monastic training and maintain temple practice. The *zaike tokudo* (lay ordination) means: *zaike* is 'being at home' *toku* is 'to obtain' and *do* is 'other shore, or perfection'. Monks ordination is *shuike tokudo*. *Shuike* means 'home leaver'. It implies the monastic order or one who has left home. In traditional Japanese domestic life, a family usually belongs to a temple. At home is a *Busudan* (altar), a kind of miniature temple. In this context lay ordination makes sense, because you have a temple or shrine for your daily observances. This might involve making an offering of incense, chanting and maintaining a strict vegetarian diet during equinox periods. Offerings of freshly made tea and rice are presented to the Buddha and to plaques of deceased family members along with chanting and offerings of candles and so forth. In this environment, lay ordination is possible and makes sense. If one's practice has this level of maturity and intimacy, one's life and practice are not separate. This level of practice creates a monastic context, like when we gather for Sunday *sanzenkai*, collectively we become a temporary monastery. At home in our regular life we may feel more strongly about having a place to chant and make offerings. I am happy to offer lay ordinations. As spirituality grows, intimacy grows and our practice develops the way of the heart. After ordination, I don't become different to anybody else (laughs) just because I have a certificate. It's about a person being called Sangha, yourself as the embodiment of the temple. That is the whole point of it really. My feeling about Jikishoan practice is that any member who starts to feel a strong close connection, who begins to feel a sense of ownership, becomes kind of married. For that person, lay ordination will become a meaningful step to take.

I want to give a quick explanation of what it means to be ordained. Our Buddhist approach to ordination is very generous—there is an open entry and no examinations (laughs). To complete this process, and to be one with the practice is not so easy though. It does take consistent practice. A public ceremony takes place and everyone agrees this person is now ordained. As with marriage, however, anyone can get married, even strangers, but to truly become husband and wife means living together. Knowing what it is to live together and work together over time, this is like Buddhist practice.

So making a connection is most important, as with the majority of paths. If you don't begin by making a connection, then there is simply no possibility. Through contact with the practice you begin to make the connection. That connection becomes clearer and stronger. The Sangha is an

embodiment of our spiritual practice. For an individual, lay ordination practice can be difficult. When the family at home find you putting up a shrine, bringing in a Buddha statue and chanting they might start to freak out (laughs). Jikishoan is able to provide a basis with structure, clarity and meaning, which offers a point of connection.

Thank you.



*'Our Buddhist approach to ordination is very generous— there is an open entry and no examinations'*



Myoju means 'bright pearl'

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## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mark Summers, Shoji

A routine of agendas, minutes, reports and meetings is gradually infiltrating my life. The task of remaining the objective observer at the committee meetings is my biggest challenge—that and discovering that typing involves more than index fingers. The discussion often becomes, for me, irresistible. It is at such times that "...a secretary can only report accurately if not directly involved", at least that is what the other committee members remind me (joking). Someone once said.

*'To see God in beauty and to experience him in the mundane.'*

So I strive to experience him while typing, resist the urge to plunge recklessly into committee discourse, and too rarely see God in the beauty that is the moment. Committee meetings are a wonderful opportunity to talk, share and grow, and to participate, in some small way, in the direction, shape and growth of the Sangha.

For members wishing to receive copies of committee minutes via email please contact Mark on +613 5428 4859 or email [marks@ssc.net.au](mailto:marks@ssc.net.au).

## BALLARAT ZENDO REPORT

Lorraine Collishaw, Kansu

*'I can get ecstatic about nothing!'*

Someone said this to me this week and I thought it was such an inspiring comment that I wanted to share it. Getting ecstatic about nothing seems a goal worth aspiring to. Speaking of aspiring, the Ballarat Zendo continues to meet on Thursday nights for regular Sanzen-kai. A small but dedicated group keep the Sangha alive and contribute to the functioning of our group. You have to be fairly resilient to survive the 'probationary' period at the Ballarat Zendo. People often receive five to ten minutes orientation (we are trying to change this) and then get thrown in the pool to sink or swim. If they manage to cope with this, they then often get thrown in the deep end again when asked to do bells, tea or chanting with little or no training. Most of us have learned this way. If you do tea, you cart water up and down a steep and narrow flight of stairs and try to keep calm and look unflustered. In the absence of our teacher three weeks out of four, you listen to someone read something that often doesn't make much sense or requires a good deal of concentration to extract a gem of wisdom. You often have to brave near zero temperatures in winter and 30 degrees in summer as Ballarat has a very erratic climate. Because we're a small group, you almost always have to help sweep the zendo and set up before sanzen-kai and pack up afterwards. No-one is exempt, new or old.

Those who survive this and master their bewilderment to stay long enough, find something special in coming together to practice. Is it the peacefulness of being still and quiet, the support of others, the predicability of the ritual, or just time to be? Eventually, if you stay around even longer, closeness and friendship grows amongst the members of the Sangha and you feel this when you see the familiar faces on Thursday nights. It's like coming home in an often uncertain world. I guess practice mirrors life: if you survive the difficulties, you'll get the rewards or maybe even reach the state of 'being ecstatic about nothing'.

On a practical note, we have now established a library (thanks to Wendy), have new sutra books (thanks to Peter and Gareth), have an attractive wooden *han* stand (thanks to Peter) and have a number of people able to take on special roles. We are advertising more widely (thanks to Patrick) and Lucy is exploring the issue of orientation of newcomers.

We have celebrated our 4<sup>th</sup> birthday with a restaurant dinner attended by 20 people who had a relaxing evening.

What will 2004 bring for the Ballarat Zendo? Hopefully 'ecstasy about nothing'! We meet upstairs at 44 Armstrong street north on Thursdays, 7.30–9.30pm (7pm for newcomers). Best wishes.

## KOHO REPORT

Karen Threlfall, Koho

As this year draws to a close and we anticipate the joy of the coming seasons for 2004, the Koho Ryo would like to take this opportunity to thank the many generous members of Jikshoan's growing community for their assistance with the various activities associated with the publicising of Jikshoan's activities. Without this support, many of the projects would have been a much more difficult undertaking, but, as such, this year has seen the consolidation and steady sailing in the co-ordination and production of publicity related activities — thank you to you all. Your contributions, no matter how small, have been gratefully received.

Gassho.



## SATURDAY MORNING ZAZEN IN McCRAE

Shoboan, 33 Bowen Street, McCrae  
9.30–10.45am

Two 20 minute zazen periods and one 10-minute kinhin  
Formal tea and sutra chanting  
All welcome

For more details, please contact Mark on +6 13 5986 3102

## JIKISHOAN VISIONS

### 'HEARD NOT HERD'

A desire exists within Jikishoan to gather as a group and focus attention on our present and future. The intention is to provide a structured format, and lunch, so all views can be communicated. Interested? Let's set a date, first half of 2004. Please contact me if you would like to attend.

Thanks,  
Peter Watts  
Shissui

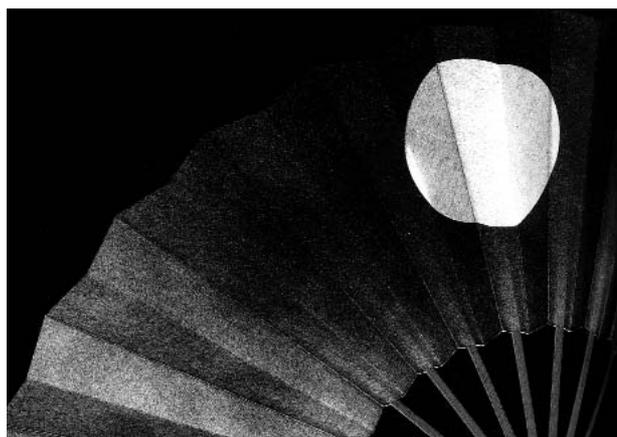
### SANGHA DAY PROPOSAL

The idea of an another Sangha Day was recently discussed at a committee meeting. At this early stage, it is envisaged that this event would be held outdoors, in the warmer months, between February through April 2004. Invitation would be open to all members, partners, children, family and friends ... did I miss anyone?

Activities, Location, Food and Drinks, are yet to be decided. It is hoped that a Sangha Day is both an opportunity to 'open up' the sangha, to the other people in our lives, as well as to meet and talk with other members, outside of our normal Zen environment and activities.

A survey sheet will be developed to gather ideas and determine support, from the membership for a Sangha Day. The survey will be available at both Ballarat and Melbourne Sanzenkai, and the Essendon Zendo.

If you would like further information please contact Mark Summers on +61 3 5428 4859 or email [marks@ssc.net.au](mailto:marks@ssc.net.au)



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### We welcome your participation!

The following is a guide to the application process for becoming a member of Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community.

1. Ask for a membership application form from a committee member, either at Sunday Sanzenkai in Collingwood or at the Moonee Ponds or Ballarat zendos.
2. Complete the questions and return to the committee member.
3. Next will be an informal meeting with the committee member to discuss your application.
4. Then the application is presented at the next committee meeting.

The Membership Secretary will advise you of your application's approval.

Upon receipt of your subscription you will become a member of Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community.

Your subscription entitles you to:

- \* a year's subscription to 'Myoju'
- \* vote at the AGM
- \* nominate for a committee role
- \* volunteer for Ryo membership
- \* member discounts at Sanzenkai, workshops and retreats,
- \* access to Jikishoan's library

In supporting Jikishoan's aims, objectives and activities, you become part of a community committed to a compassionate life ... for all.

Gassho

# Summer Kitchen

## Vegetarian Shephard's Pie

By Toni Morton

This is a recipe from Sundays at Moosewood Restaurant. It is my favourite cookbook because all the dishes work. They all come from a working restaurant so they have all been tested. The book also has very specific instructions on how to cook every dish. Great for me because I can't cook without them!

The most interesting thing about this dish is the base. The base ends up with a wonderful texture because of the frozen tofu and the walnuts.

The shepherd's pie has three layers: a tofu base, a mushroom gravy and a potato layer. The following recipe serves four but I usually try to adapt it to whatever dish I am using. Usually I end up using two cakes of tofu rather than the one.

For the tofu base you need to freeze your cake of tofu over night. I always keep some tofu in the freezer so it is ready. It then needs to be frozen solid and then thawed out before you want to use it. The freezing process changes tofu from its usual fall-apart-at-a-touch texture to one that is firm and a lot like cooked mince. You then need to squeeze the water out of the tofu and either crumble it or grate it until it has the consistency you want. Put it aside.

Saute one chopped onion in oil with one teaspoon of thyme, one teaspoon of coriander seeds and black pepper until the onion is translucent. Stir in the shredded tofu, one cup of toasted and chopped walnuts (I have sometimes used almonds and this works okay), a tablespoon of lemon juice and two tablespoons of soy sauce, until heated through. Put this layer into an oiled casserole or baking dish. Boil four large potatoes (use more if you want the base layer to be really thick). Meanwhile make the mushroom gravy by sautéing about one kilo of mushrooms with three tablespoons of soy sauce and some black pepper. Add two cups of water and bring to boil. Slowly stir in two tablespoons of cornflour dissolved in one cup of water until the gravy becomes clear and thick. Once this is ready you can layer this on top of the tofu mixture. (I have never managed to get the gravy 'clear and thick' but I pour it over the tofu mixture anyway! It all adds to the flavour.)

While you have been making gravy, you should have your potatoes boiling away so that you can make mashed potato. Just add some butter or marg and milk to the boiled potatoes. If you want it to be dairy free, just leave out the butter and milk and use water. Then mash! You then spread the mashed potato on top, dot the top with butter if you like and put in the oven for about 20 minutes, until the top is golden, at 200 degrees. Yummy, warm and filling!

Gassho.

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# Tug-of-war on the way to the zafu

Alison Hutchinson



*One voice would say how important zazen was—it really is what you want, it really is 'good' for you—and the other voice would find so many reasons why sitting on a zafu was inconvenient, unpleasant or just plain unnecessary.*

After so many years of Zen practice, why was it so hard for me to establish a daily schedule of zazen each morning? In the early years the sense of novelty had made practice so inviting. There was the sense of expectation and the occasional wonderful experience which encouraged regular practice.

Now, sitting zazen at home on my own was more like a game of chance. Whether I ended up on my zafu first thing in the morning seemed to depend upon the outcome of a tug-of-war between two voices inside my head. One voice would say how important zazen was—"it really is what you want, it really is "good" for you"—and the other voice would find so many reasons why sitting on a zafu was inconvenient, unpleasant or just plain unnecessary.

In the end, in absolute frustration at practising irregularly, I decided to go for the jugular. I wanted to take these voices on and get to the bottom of their differences! I was so fed up! I decided to get inside every argument and manipulative technique they used and see them for what they were!

And what an interesting experience this has been! It is as if, outside of zazen, I called the voices together to have a conversation and dispute mediation session. One voice seemed like a 'parent' wanting the best for me through discipline, hard work, regular practice and an early morning zazen schedule. This voice was proactive and positive. The other voice seemed more like a

'child' or a shadow, wanting to be comforted and cared for, wanting not to be hurt or tired. This voice was negative and reactive—it objected to getting up early and felt uncomfortable in the cold meditation room with its austere, unadorned surfaces.

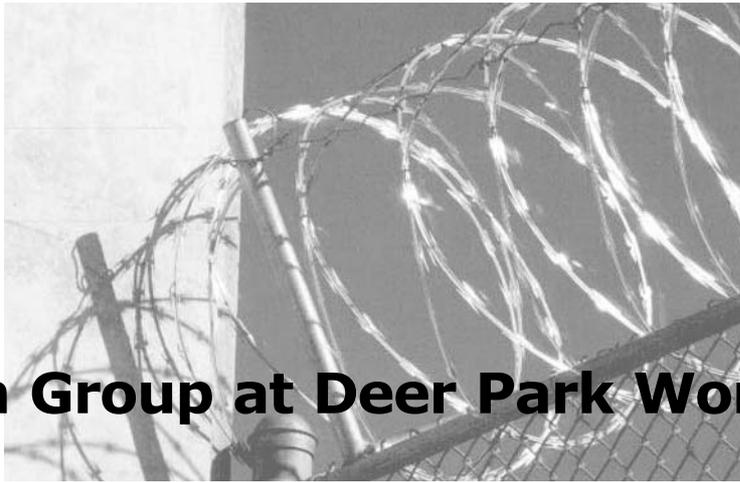
So I listened carefully to my two new friends and wondered whether they were such opposites after all. On reflection, I saw that they had much in common: they both had my best interests at heart. Both voices cared very much but expressed it in different ways.

The 'parent' voice wanted me to practice regularly but was also pretty realistic that there would be no instant happiness or gain: just doing zazen regularly was all that was required. The 'child' voice did have some justifiable concerns about my window-walled meditation room being cold and uninviting, especially at 5.30am on winter mornings! In response, I put a rug on the floor, a calligraphy on the wall and bought a light shade for the light globe. Then I re-set my alarm clock so that I had enough time for a warm drink first thing.

And, so it was, in late winter, that regular early morning zazen resumed effortlessly. And, as an aftermath to the tug-of-war, it is as if there are now three of us: a first voice who seems like a real self; a second voice who seems like a shadow self—an awareness or witness. So, all three come together on the zafu. It's a bit squashed of course, but great fun to be in such good company!



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## Zen Group at Deer Park Women's Prison

### UPDATE

Over the last three months, the Jikishoan Prison Chaplaincy Project has continued to develop at a steady pace with the support from a growing number of interested members. A detailed written proposal has now been put together, endorsed by the Jikishoan Committee, and submitted to the Buddhist Council of Victoria. The next phase will be to seek authorisation from CORE, the administrator of public prisons in Victoria, and to establish a working relationship with the Dame Phyllis Frost Correctional Centre (aka Deer Park Prison) itself. Based on our projected timeline, a Deer Park Zen Group could be up and running by the middle of next year.

The plan is for initially fortnightly meetings of two hours that are to be co-facilitated by two trained Jikishoan members, with Ekai-osho also attending on a monthly basis. Members interested in extending their individual practice as group facilitators will receive relevant training and should be available to co-facilitate one meeting every four weeks. With added time for travel, setting-up, debriefings, etc, the required time commitment from facilitators will be about five hours per month.

Interested members who may not wish to be involved as facilitators, or are not sure about it, are encouraged to be part of the working group and in that way become active in the project's further development. Starting from February 2004, regular working group meetings will be held on the first Sunday of every month, following Sunday Sanzekai, and all Jikishoan members and friends are welcome to attend. For more information, or to have the current project document emailed to you, please contact Martin ([veromartino@bigpond.com](mailto:veromartino@bigpond.com), phone 9480 3082) or Jinesh ([jineshwilmot@hotmail.com](mailto:jineshwilmot@hotmail.com), mobile 0411 289 679).

Gassho

Seikan Alesh



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*The Buddha's true Dharma-body*

*Is just like space.*

*It manifests its form according to things,*

*Like the moon (reflected) in water.*

From Dogen Zenji's Shobogenzo  
translated by Gudo Nishijima and Chodo Cross

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### Next Issue

The next issue of Myoju will be released at the autumnal equinox on 20 March 2004. The deadline for content for the next issue is 8 February 2004. If you would like to contribute or advertise in the Autumn 2004 edition of Myoju, please contact Karen Threfall on 0148 342 674 (AH) or email [chakradesign@ozemail.com.au](mailto:chakradesign@ozemail.com.au)

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# Jikishoan's five year anniversary



On 22 April 1999 Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community celebrates five years since its inception. In that time, a growing community of lay practitioners have gathered regularly to practice zen meditation as taught by the community's founder, Japanese Zen Master Ekai Korematsu-oshō. Although we are celebrating the 5th anniversary of the official incorporation of Jikishoan, the true birth of Jikishoan was when the first garage zendo was constructed in early 1998 and the first group of people gathered for a zendo dedication ceremony in Pascoe Vale in September 1998. Ekai-oshō has worked tirelessly as the founding and main teacher of Jikishoan. This has been an enormous role. In addition to his formal teaching programs, his presence and availability in the community has shown us the essence of the teachings in so many everyday situations. Sincere and heartfelt thanks to Ekai-oshō and his family from the sangha—the members, friends and the many hundreds of people who have been touched by his teachings. Three of the original members, Jinesh Wilmot, Gary Youston and Alison Hutchison have contributed their reflections upon their time with Jikishoan to commemorate this wonderful occasion.



## How to put five-and-a-half years of experience on an A4 sheet? Difficult!

Jinesh Wilmot

In mid-1998 I arrived back in Melbourne, 'fresh' from a four month stay at a temple in Japan. I was wandering in Acland Street, St Kilda, wondering what the next step would be when I found Deniz Korematsu's flyer advertising her husband's presence in Melbourne.

The journey from that initial, seemingly synchronistic happening to the establishment of activities such as retreats three times a year, weekly Sanzenkai, monthly one day workshops, and precept ceremonies to celebrating Jikishoan's five year anniversary has gone by in a finger-snap!

I personally have experienced and learned much from my involvement over the years with Jikishoan, working together with the other ryo and committee members towards a more 'seamless' expression of our practice and ourselves.

Ekai-oshō's years of experience, both in monastic and lay Buddhist environments, helped to guide us through some of the pitfalls normally encountered by committees, reminding us of the practice aspects of what we were attempting to accomplish.

I'm grateful to Ekai-oshō and the members of Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community for the teachings over the years (some of them difficult to swallow!), and for the opportunity to be a part of Jikishoan's conception, birth and early years.

A teacher in the Indian yogic tradition once described the spiritual community as a big 'cooking pot'. It seems clear that Jikishoan is simmering nicely, waiting for the next ingredients ... cooking, cooking.

Gassho

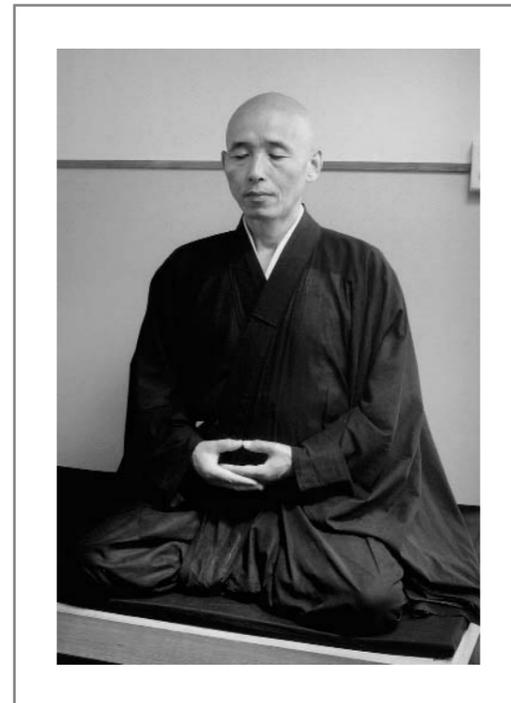
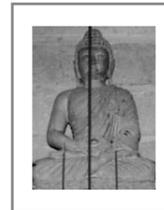
## Reflection on five years of Jikishoan

Gary Youston

Just over five years ago I sat in Ekai-oshō's garage zendo in Pascoe Vale, learning to 'just sit'. Since then I have done likewise at the garage zendo in Essendon and, more recently, in Moonee Ponds. Perhaps we should have been called 'Direct Realisation Garage' instead of 'hut' – it does have a tougher, hands on, workmanlike ring to it. Marketing angle: Direct Realisation Garage – the nuts 'n' bolts of life.

That Jikishoan has refrained from such lame advertising and promotion relates to what has really stood out to me over the last five years. The patient and deliberate manner in which Ekai-oshō has overseen the development of Jikishoan has been a wonderful lesson. There has been no rush to drum up people to come along to workshops, courses and activities. Rather, Ekai-oshō has worked patiently with those that have shown interest. The result is Jikishoan as it presently stands—a group that has a very strong and committed core of members and friends. The establishment of the Jikishoan committee (and Ekai-oshō's recent stepping back from the role of president), the development of strong ryo (work) groups, and a growing ability to be of benefit within the wider community (through such activities as the Prison Chaplaincy Project) are all indications of our growing stability and maturity.

On the 'metaphorical lotus scale of development' we are up and out of the muddy pond bed, and growing up towards the sunlight that is now glimpsed on the surface of the water. On the 'Ekai-oshō as metaphorical father and us as metaphorical children scale' we are just about ready for our first day of school. The other kids might think our oryoki lunch a little unusual, but at least we'll be used to all those bells.



Resident teacher and co-founder of Jikishoan, Ekai Korematsu-oshō

## Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community celebrates its fifth anniversary

Alison Hutchison

The following article has been written specifically for submission to 'Zen Friends' which is the quarterly newsletter of Sotoshu Shumuchō, the administrative headquarters of Soto Zen Buddhism in Japan. The article is intended to provide an overview of Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community, the organisation, on the occasion of its 5th anniversary. It is intended to describe Jikishoan as it is now. As 'Zen Friends' has an international audience, a fairly formal style has been used, along the lines of other articles in that newsletter. Even though the article has been written on the occasion of Jikishoan's fifth anniversary, the article is not intended to be an account of Jikishoan's development and hence does not refer in detail to Ekai's unique and immense role, with support from Deniz, in establishing Jikishoan from early 1998.

In March and April 2004 Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community held celebrations to mark its fifth anniversary as a Soto Zen Buddhist organisation in Melbourne, Australia. In just a few years the organization has grown from its origins in a small suburban garage zendo into a vibrant community with a comprehensive teaching program and associated activities.

The original zendo was built by Rev Ekai Korematsu shortly after he arrived from Japan in 1998 to make his home in Melbourne with his Australian wife. Melbourne is the capital city of Victoria, the most Southern state of mainland Australia.

Jikishoan's fifth anniversary celebration is a time to celebrate the work of many people involved in establishing the community. It is also a time to reflect on the nature of the organisation and the factors that have shaped its growth and development to this point.

A significant feature is that the community has grown and thrived without a temple or clearly identified home base for its activities. The strength of the community arises not from a connection to a building but through the sangha and its connection with its teacher; through the stability of the teaching program; and through the group's relationships with other organizations.

### A comprehensive, structured teaching program

A very active teaching program has been established by Rev Ekai Korematsu, Jikishoan's main teacher, since the first Orientation Program was held in September 1998 in his suburban garage zendo. Before coming to Australia Ekai practiced and taught Zen Buddhism in Japan, the USA and India for over 25 years. He trained with a number of teachers including Ikko Narasaki-roshi, deputy abbot of Eihei-ji Temple in Japan, his dharma transmission teacher.

Over the past five years Jikishoan has held regular orientation and deepening practice programs for newcomers; one day workshops; and Bendo meditation retreats for five to seven days, three times each year. This very busy schedule provides many opportunities for person to person contact with the teacher. Since early 1999, over one thousand people have been registered as attending the community's activities and teaching program.

There is a strong interest among members in taking precepts and Inmyaku Jukai-e precept ceremonies are now held four times each year. Even in such a young community there also is an emerging interest in lay ordination, with several members having expressed interest or having started training. Ekai also provides formal Soto Zen ceremonies for Japanese visitors and Japanese residents in Melbourne, such as for weddings and funerals.

Several of Jikishoan's members have connections with temples in Japan and spend time there, bringing strength to the sangha through their experiences. Ekai returns to Japan each year and in September 2001 Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community was recognised by Sotoshu Shumuchō.

### A geographically dispersed community

In order to understand Jikishoan's growth and development it is worthwhile to consider its context. Melbourne is a city of 3.5 million people spread over a very wide geographic area around a beautiful bay and port river. It is a multi cultural population including, more recently, migrants from South East Asia. There are 120,000 Buddhists in Melbourne, and Buddhism is reported to be the fastest-growing religion in Australia. These demographic factors have contributed to the acceptance and ongoing interest in the Jikishoan's Soto Zen Buddhist teachings.

# Jikishoan's Five Year Anniversary

The geographic landscape of Melbourne is very flat, allowing suburbs to sprawl up to 50 kilometres in all directions from the city centre around the bay. In this environment there is an accepted culture of travelling long distances by car: some of the people on the Jikishoan committee live over 150 kilometres apart. This is a challenge to the administration and organisation of the group when it does not have an established home base.

Associated groups were established very early in regional centres as result of the connections and circumstances of individual members. In Ballarat, 120 kilometers west of Melbourne, a zendo has been established for four years with a small but very committed core membership holding regular weekly Sanzenkai sittings and receiving regular visits from Ekai.

The fact that Jikishoan does not have its own home has meant that it uses facilities belonging to other organisations. It has made connections with a range of other Buddhist groups and community organisations including a Tibetan Buddhist order, a Vietnamese Buddhist order, a shiatsu training college and a yoga centre. Jikishoan has used over eleven different venues for its teaching programs, which has had the benefit of allowing the teaching programs to be presented in different parts of the state.

Jikishoan is now considering how information technology could best be used to support the core administrative activities of the group to overcome geographic separation, without taking away the importance of person-to-person communication in the sangha.

## A strong sangha practice

Just like a baby learning to stand and walk, Jikishoan has needed to develop a strong backbone or core organisation structure before taking its first steps.

The first key element of that structure was the establishment of regular weekly Sanzenkai services. The late Sunday afternoon service provides an opportunity for the sangha to practice zazen, to participate in a devotional ceremony together, to listen to the teacher or an invited speaker and afterwards to share a light meal. Attendance at weekly Sanzenkai has grown steadily and now about 25 to 30 people attend each week and over five thousand have attended in the first five years. Held in rented facilities, the zendo for Sunday Sanzenkai is created and packed away each week, a ritual in itself that is a reminder of the impermanence of all things.

The sangha has a membership structure that has two categories defined in its legal constitution: Members and Friends. The Member category is for the core membership and the Friend category is for people with a general interest in Zen Buddhism who would like to support Jikishoan without necessarily being committed to Zen Buddhism in their own daily life. Sixty members and fifty friends are now registered and there is a steady growth in numbers.

Another key element to the backbone of the sangha has been the gradual development of ryo groups similar to the organizational arrangements in temple communities. The main ryo groups that have been established and are aligned with the committee structure are: Tenzo (kitchen practice); Ino (zendo/ member practice); Fusu (treasurer); Shoji (secretary); Kansu (assistant director, Ballarat zendo); Shika (guest manager); Shissui (property manager); and Koho (publicity).

Over the years there have necessarily been some adjustments to enable the ryo structure, based upon traditional Japanese monastic practice, to function effectively in the lay Australian environment and with a geographically dispersed community. Nevertheless the ryo structures have served the sangha well in its day-to-day activities and in hosting regular Bendoho meditation retreats and workshops. While there is a strong emphasis on traditional ways and staying close to the original form, at the same time the joy of practice is encouraged within the Ryo groups.

The Tenzo and Ino Ryos in particular have undertaken extensive training associated with their practice areas. The Koho Ryo produces a quarterly newsletter *Myoju* which is a very important element in developing the identity of the sangha and in communicating with members and friends. This ryo work is undertaken with others and yet valued as an important part of individual practice

As the backbone strengthens, Jikishoan is able to look beyond its own internal needs towards making a contribution to the wider community. For example, members are currently developing a proposal for a visiting prison chaplaincy program under the auspices of the Buddhist Council of Victoria. In February 2004, Jikishoan supported a conference organised by the Buddhist Federation of Australia called 'Engaging Buddhism in Australia', which examined ways in which Buddhist organisations could play a role in addressing some of the problems of contemporary society.

Jikishoan, as a young organization, is now effectively taking its first steps into the wider community.

## Fifth anniversary celebration

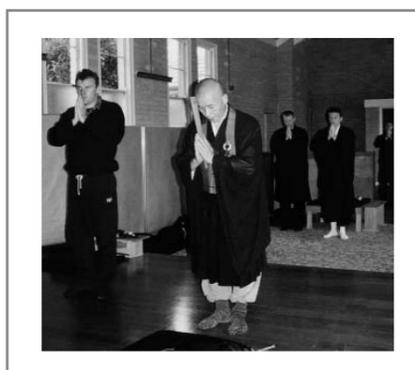
Jikishoan's fifth anniversary recognizes the organization's official incorporation as a legal entity on 22 April 1999. The major celebration was a Sangha Day Picnic and Commemorative Service in an Australian bush setting between Melbourne and Ballarat. Attended by members, families and friends this was a wonderful opportunity to relax and to celebrate.

The fifth anniversary is also a time to reflect on the original plans and aspirations for the community. In the early days Rev Ekai Korematsu prepared and discussed a ten-year development plan that included a vision for a solid place within which to manifest sangha activities in a concrete form. The plan was to have a building centrally located as a base for the zendo and administrative functions of the community.

Whilst this has not eventuated so far, the community has managed to grow and manifest its true nature without having its own building. From 'out of nowhere' a stable organisation has emerged, financially sound, blending organisation structures belonging to Australia in the 21st century with administrative offices originating in Japanese monastic communities in the 13th century.

The name of the community encapsulates its spirit: Jiki means 'straight forward' or 'direct'; Sho means 'proof' or 'satori'; and An means 'hut'. So Jiki Sho An translates as 'direct, realization, hut'. The practice is the proof, there is no other proof that is separate from that. The proof, satori or awakening does not come after you have finished—it is direct, here and now. As it celebrates its fifth anniversary, the community is beginning to appreciate its name just a little!

It has been an exciting yet creative period involving a lot of work by many, particularly by Rev Ekai Korematsu. It will be interesting to see the next steps for this young community in promoting Soto Zen Buddhism in Australia.



## Significant events in the Jikishoan community

Date	Event
<b>1998</b>	
<b>24 February 1998</b>	<b>Ekai Korematsu-osho arrives in Melbourne with his Australian wife Deniz Yener</b>
March – April 1998	Ekai builds a garage zendo in Pascoe Vale
15 April 1998	Birth of Ekai and Deniz's first son, Sunao
<b>August 1998</b>	<b>Flyers distributed by Deniz about Ekai-oshos presence in Melbourne. Ekai-osho meets potential students interested in Zen practice.</b>
5 September 1998	First Orientation Program (five weeks), Pascoe Vale
<b>20 September 1998</b>	<b>Jikishoan zendo dedication ceremony, Pascoe Vale</b>
21 November 1998	First Deepening Practice Program (12 weeks), Pascoe Vale
<b>1999</b>	
8 January 1999	First Weekend Workshop (two days) for Rye Group
14 February 1999	Inaugural Meeting attended by nine people to discuss the idea of forming a Soto Zen Buddhist organisation with Ekai Korematsu-osho as teacher.
17 February 1999	Ekai-osho's family and garage zendo move from Pascoe Vale to Essendon.
26 – 28 March 1999	First Weekend Workshop (two days), Hawthorn
March 1999	Inaugural meeting of group to vote on Jikishoan's rules
4 April 1999	First Sunday Sanzenkai, Oki-Do Centre, Carlton
<b>22 April 1999</b>	<b>Jikishoan's Official 'Birthday': officially incorporated under <i>associationsincorporation act</i>.</b>
27 April 1999	First committee meeting, Essendon
6 May 1999	First Thursday night member practice, Essendon
<b>14 May 1999</b>	<b>First Bendoho Retreat (five days), Mt Eliza</b>
22 June 1999	Jikishoan's rules amended (s39 Winding Up of Association/Tax-Exempt Status)
30 June 1999	Initial Membership: 12, including Ekai-osho
<b>22 July 1999</b>	<b>Public talk, first meeting of Ballarat Group, Ballarat</b>
12 August 1999	First Ballarat Sanzenkai
22 August 1999	First precept ceremony (Inmyaku Jukai-e)
6 – 7 November 1999	First participation at Tibetan Buddhist Festival, Yuroke 2000
<b>1999</b>	<b>First garage sale (co-ordinated by Deniz Yener-Korematsu)</b>
<b>2000</b>	
Late 1999/Early 2000	Development of Ryo groups
May 2000	Ekai-osho's involvement with Buoyancy Foundation commences
16 May 2000	Birth of Ekai-osho and Deniz's second son, Shoan
27 June 2000	Ekai-osho participates in Federation Celebration of Religions in Australia
July 2000	First web pages developed, hosted through VicNet
September 2000	First issue of Myoju quarterly publication
September 2000	Uh-Oh Zen Products (zafus, zabutons, incense) advertised in Myoju
September 2000	Jikishoan library of Dharma books commences at zendo
21 October 2000	Fundraising stall, Camberwell market
19 November 2000	Jikishoan's rules amended (s 25 Committee Size)
<b>2001</b>	
13 January 2001	First sangha picnic, Heide Park and Art Gallery
Early 2001	Introduction of subscriptions as 'Friend' of Jikishoan
<b>28 September 2001</b>	<b>Recognition by Sotoshu Shumuchō, Japan</b>
<b>2002</b>	
<b>April 2002</b>	<b>First ordination ceremony</b>
23 June 2002	Jikishoan's rules amended (s 6 Membership Categories)
<b>30 August 2002</b>	<b>Website changeover to <a href="http://www.jikishoan.org">www.jikishoan.org</a></b>
10 December 2002	First theatre fundraising event including 'Jumping Mouse', by John Bolton
<b>2003</b>	
6 January 2003	Ekai-osho's family and garage zendo move from Essendon to Moonee Ponds
<b>Early 2003</b>	<b>Moonee Ponds zendo dedication ceremony</b>
<b>12 July 2003</b>	<b>Inaugural Annual Social Dinner, Wild Yak Restaurant, Fitzroy</b>
July 2003	First Tuesday night Zazenkai
Mid 2003	First raffle fundraiser
Late 2003	Cinema fundraiser night
<b>2004</b>	
<b>February 2004</b>	<b>Assistance with promoting 'Engaging Buddhism in Australia', Australian Buddhist General Conference, St Albans.</b>
<b>14 March 2004</b>	<b>Fifth Birthday Celebrations/Sangha Day at Blackwood reserve and tree planting ceremony</b>
March – April 2004	Attendance at Sunday Sanzenkai Service reaches 5,000 people