

# Myōju



Soto Zen Buddhism in Melbourne

Autumn  
Volume 5 Issue 3  
March 2006  
#K1007

## Dragons, elephants and snakes

This is a Dharma talk given by Ekai Korematsu Osho to the Melbourne sangha at Sunday Sanzenkai on 29 May 2005. Transcribed and edited by Georgia Nicholls.

Welcome dragons and elephants. Dragons and elephants is a traditional Zen expression, although he sometimes used the expression dragons and snakes instead. The difference between a dragon and a snake is that a dragon has a lot of energy, and creates lots of movement with the healthy energies. Snakes are supposed to be, in the Eastern traditions, a manifestation of wisdom, but they are really wiggly.

Interestingly, Dogen tells us not to discriminate too much between the wiggly snakes and dragons. The two are different, but they come together when we do not discriminate. The criterion for being a dragon is too let the whole system work – to let the whole of body and mind work. When we talk about our practice in terms of the whole, you know, the whole self, the body and mind work, this means to simply erect your spine straight, as if you are supporting or pushing the sky with the back of your head. That is the criterion to be a dragon.

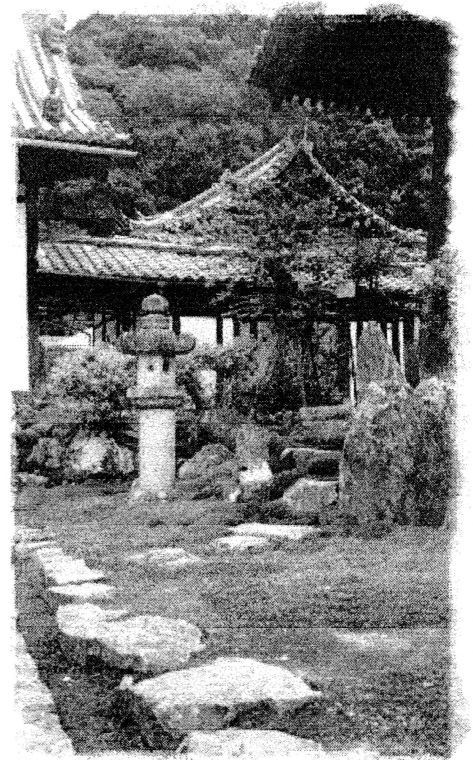
Not to discriminate means that naturally it comes. For a human being, making such an effort with your practice, it is not always possible to do it this way. Sometimes you will get wiggly. But your practice is to support. So at this point, you are not quite sure whether you are a dragon or a snake.

Snakes try to find out what they are doing and what it is for, all the reasons. So the criterion for our practice, basically, is to push to the sky or ceiling with the back of your head, just like a Buddha. It is quite simple - there isn't too much to talk about, or too much to interpret.

Innumerable interpretations are possible you know, according to your particular position or practice. That is alright. Everyone comes to practice from a particular individual position. But nevertheless, we come together and make the same effort. Interpretations vary. You do not need to say, 'your interpretation is wrong' to any other person.

For example - from the point of view of a person who is preoccupied with the health and the energy of things, such as a physical therapist – for them it is very important to have your back straight, they see that as the key point of practice.

From another point of view, let us say, of a philosopher, everything has to be given a philosophical kind of perspective, you know. There can be no ambiguity. Everyone has to be able to rely on your ideas and the philosophies and come into agreement with them so you can talk about practice.



*You have to be patient. You may do tremendous work perfecting your practice, but if you don't have patience it is just hard work*

## Dragons, elephants and snakes continued

You can come to practice from many different ways, such as from very physical levels and approaches and from more philosophical levels and approaches.

Are there any questions? Yes, please?

Q: *What about the elephant?*

Oh, the elephant. The elephant is an example of the fully integrated - when practice is active and fully integrated. All the virtue is within that movement, that integration.

There are two kinds of elephant in the traditions. In the Indian tradition, the elephant is the most sacred mother of all the manifestations of God. The elephant is the goddess - is very holy and sacred. In this sense it is incorporated with integration. In the Buddhist tradition, the elephant refers to practice, integrated practice, and the elephant appears, symbolically, in the Mahayana tradition, as a vehicle of the Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, who rides on a white elephant with six tusks. Can you imagine what are those six tusks are?

The six tusks represent the six Paramitas - practice points - perfection of practice. These are integrated.

The Dana Paramita, the first one, is the basic one. This is to do the rough work, the kind of work a farmer does before planting a seedling, cultivating the soil by deeply ploughing it. The first Paramita is like that. That is the beginning.

The next Paramita is Patience. You have to be patient. You may

*Erecting your spine straight, supporting your back like a Buddha, to the point you forget yourself, that 'I am doing it'. Intimacy of these two is 'to kill the Buddha'.*

do tremendous work perfecting your practice, but if you don't have patience it is just hard work. The Patience Paramita. It has to be the continuous practice of patience.

The third Paramita is Endurance. These are the first three. We go through all the virtues of the perfection of practice when we start zen practice. To be patient with whatever you get from that and to keep continuing, that is rough work, the first three Paramitas.

Q: *What did Dogen mean when he said: 'To study seated meditation is to study the seated Buddha. To study the seated Buddha is to kill the Buddha.'*

A: 'To study' is like you get the ideas, like an analytical understanding. Dogen Zenji usually uses the kind of context where 'study' means 'to copy'. So to 'study' zazen, to 'copy' zazen is to 'copy' a buddha.

What happens if you kill the Buddha? Then there is no Buddha. If there is still a Buddha, our study, our copying is not complete. It is like, lets say, a



### 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*

theatrical artist, copying, in a way, through a performance, to the point where it has become so close, so intimate that there is nothing left to copy. As long as there is something to copy, there is something. But if there is nothing to copy there is no Buddha other than you - no you other than Buddha. That is the kind of intimacy being expressed.

So practice is very important. Erecting your spine straight, supporting your back like a Buddha, to the point you forget yourself, that 'I am doing it'. Intimacy of these two is 'to kill the Buddha'.

Dogen Zenji's teaching is very direct and simple. When you become one with whatever you encounter, you have done it.

Q: Talking about the Paramitas, what are the other three?

A: After doing the heavy duty rough work, finally you come to be able to relate to the perfection of the meditative mind.

Before that, the Precept Paramita, which is observing all kind of rules,

of mindfulness, to make yourself. Then there is the Meditation Paramita, the Dhyana paramita, often translated as Zen Paramita - meditative mind. That is the time zazen practice becomes your practice - you become you. That is the season, the day that you forget yourself.

It is like a subtle product or attachment when you come to the Prajna Paramita - wisdom. That's how it works. But sometimes our intellectual mind doesn't think so. Instead you think you have to study the Prajna Paramita first, or

something like that, to put in the knowledge. That is far away from Prajna. That is objective knowledge and there is no meeting of objectivity and subjectivity.

There is a meeting of objectivity and subjectivity when the Jnana Paramita comes into reality. What happens is that objectivity and subjectivity meet. You cannot hold yourself - there is no place. It is not, 'I am doing', or a question of what he is doing, or we or doing, or no-one is doing or everyone is doing. The whole works.

Thank you very much.



## Welcome to Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community

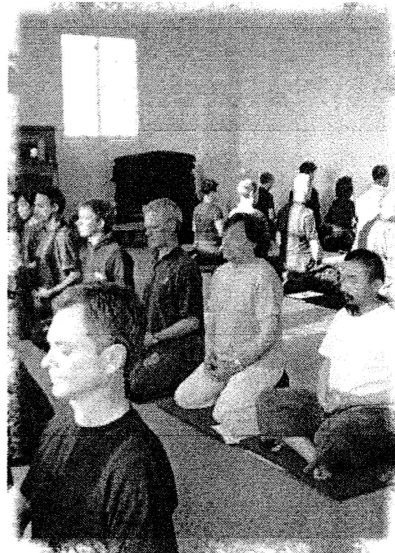
Jikishoan is a growing community of people based in Melbourne, Australia, learning and practising Zen meditation under the guidance of Ekai Korematsu Osho. Ekai Osho has practised and taught Zen Buddhism in Japan, the USA and India for over 25 years and has been developing the Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community in Australia for the past six 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](http://www.jikishoan.org.au)

We warmly welcome anyone who would like to know more about Zen Buddhism and attend any of the activities.



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# Connections with Temples in Japan

Alison Hutchison

It may not be obvious to newcomers to Iikishoan that it is run like a monastery, but this is indeed the case! Under the guidance of our resident teacher, Ekai Korematsu Osho, Iikishoan has established a training program and community structure based upon Dogen Zenji's pure standard for Zen communities, transmitted through Japanese monastic traditions since the 13th Century.

As Iikishoan's activities are centred upon a lay practice, it is necessary to adapt some of the monastic standards to meet local conditions and modern times. So it is not surprising that from time to time, some of Iikishoan's members seek to visit temples in Japan in order to be a little closer to the original place of this practice.

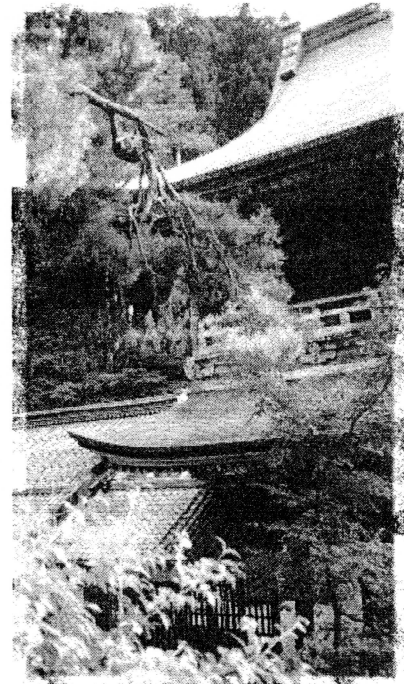
Some simply wish to visit the temples in order to appreciate the beauty and history of the temples and perhaps glimpse how the practice compares with Australia. Others stay to practice zazen for short periods and a few go for more extended periods or special events such as sesshin (periods of extended zazen practice), rohatsu (7-day sesshin leading up to the morning of Dec 8th when Buddha attained enlightenment), takahatsu (begging practice) and ango (three month intensive training/practice period). One or two have taken precept ceremonies or have

undertaken formal training programs leading to ordination.

The individual connections with Japanese temples have been many and varied and, in order to provide some insight into these contacts, I thought it may be useful to map just some of the temples that have been visited by members of Iikishoan's Committee and Jisha Ryo – that is some current and recent Ryo coordinators.

The map necessarily includes Eihei-ji and Soji-ji as they are the two head temples of the Soto Zen sect. Eihei-ji\* (in Fukui Prefecture) is the home temple of Dogen Zenji. The characters of ei (eternal) and hei (peace) in the temple name symbolise eternal peace and happiness. With approximately seven and half centuries of tradition, Eihei-ji is still the scene of devout, day-and-night discipline for more than 200 priests-in-training. Ekai Korematsu Osho returns to Japan each year and always visits Eihei-ji. Ekai undertook novice training at Eihei-ji between October 1980 and August 1981 and subsequently undertook training and practice under the direction of Ikko Narasaki Roshi, then Eihei-ji's Vice-Abbot, from October 1994 to September 1996.

Zuio-ji \*(in Ehime Prefecture) is the home temple of Ekai Korematsu Osho where he completed his novice training, undertook



*Koshō-ji Temple Garden Kyoto.  
Photo by Wayne Diamond*

head monk training in 1982 and completed Dharma Transmission with Ikko Narasaki Roshi in 1986. The history of Zuio-ji goes back to 1448 but the temple's history has not been smooth. It burned down in the 16th and 19th centuries and on one occasion it took 50 years to restore the temple. Today, large numbers of monks train there and many lay people participate in zazen sessions. There is also a kindergarten at Zuio-ji. Jinesh Wilmot visited Zuio-ji on two occasions, including rohatsu in 2002. The current abbot of Zuio-ji is Tsugen Narasaki Roshi, who is also the abbot of Shogō-ji\*

## Autumn Issue Support Team

Iikishoan 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 of Iikishoan, Articles and content support: Miikel Doomernik and B&B Design Australia; Graphic Designers. Kinkos; Printing. Georgia Nicholls; Transcription, editing and images. Jinesh Wilmot; Artwork. Biggi Spiro; Image editing.

Wayne Diamond; Articles and photographs. Ron Moss and Hortensia Anderson; Artwork. Gilbert Van Hoeydonck and Bob Brown; Web update. Haydn Halse; Mailout support. Alison Hutchison; Myoju coordinator and mail-out preparation.



(in Kumamoto Prefecture). Andrew Cawthorn stayed at Shogo-ji between September and November in 2002.

Shobo-ji\* (in Iwate Prefecture) was, in former times, one of the three main temples of the Soto sect of Buddhism, along with Eihei-ji and Soji-ji. It was founded in 1348 and attractions of the temple include its serpentine stone steps and its thatched roof, the largest in Japan. Shundo (Mark Denovan) was ordained at Shobo-ji in October 2002. Shundo returns two to three times each year for further training and he expects to undertake the Head Monk ceremony, Shuso Hossenshiki, in October 2006. Shundo also plans to complete ango training of three months at Soji-ji\* (in Kanagawa Prefecture) in 2006-07. Soji-ji, the second head temple of the Soto Zen sect, is located at Yokohama, the seaway entrance to Japan.

Bev Cowan first visited Antai-ji\* (in Hyogo Prefecture) in September and October 2004 and she has recently returned for an extended period. Antai-ji cultivates the fields around the temple, cutting grass and trees and doing construction work to keep the community self-sufficient. Antai-ji is completely snowed in and not accessible from early December to mid-March each year. The temple has a web site that is oriented towards foreign students: <http://www.antaiji.dogen.de>



Bukkoku-ji (in Obama, Fukui Prefecture) is a Soto Zen temple. The abbot is Tange Harada Roshi who is now 81 years old. His teaching method also includes elements of the Rinzai school of zen. Over the last ten years, Julie Martindale has visited this temple regularly, including a stay of 15 months in 1997-98. She first went there in 1995, took Jukai precepts in 1996 and has been nearly every year since. Jinesh Wilmot also stayed at Bukkoku-ji in 1998 for an ango training period of three months that included three sesshin and frequent takahastu rounds. Jinesh also took Jukai precepts during that stay. Haydn Halse has also been to Bukkoku-ji on two occasions for short periods.

While several members report that they settled into temple life and valued the experience, some found difficulty in adjusting to aspects of

the monastic routines and cultural differences. Overall though, the reports of positive experiences and return visits seem to outweigh the reports of difficult times and misunderstandings. If you would like to know more about their personal experiences, why not speak with the members mentioned in this article?

Thank-you to the members of the Isha Ryo and Iikishoan Committee who have helped me to untangle the temple names and connections at last!

Alison Hutchison

\*The official website of the Soto Zen School is the Sotozen-net website, (<http://www.sotozen-net.or.jp/>) It lists the details of 29 temples or foreigners in Japan. Temples marked with an asterisk in this article are listed on the Sotozen-net website.

## Next Issue

The next issue of Myoju will be released at the Winter Solstice, 21 June 2006. The content deadline is **Sunday 16 April 2006**. If you would like to contribute or advertise in the Winter 2006 edition of Myoju, please leave a message for Alison on (03) 5426 1383 (AH) and she will return your call, or email [publications@jikishoan.org.au](mailto:publications@jikishoan.org.au)



# Mountain Monastery

Wayne Diamond

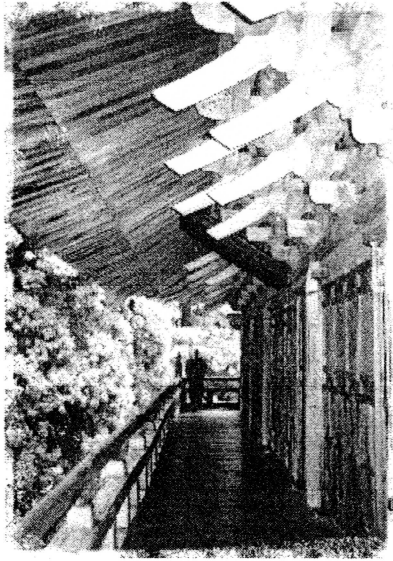
In 1244 Dogen Zenji, the founder of Soto Zen, moved to the remote mountains of Fukui Prefecture to establish his second temple. This monastery is now called Eihei-ji and is one of the two head temples of Soto Zen. In September 2001 Wayne Diamond and Ekai Korematsu Osho visited Eihei-ji.

Ekai Korematsu Osho and I took the Shikansen from Kyoto to Fukui, where we would change trains for Eihei-ji. This was the first time on our trip that we had gone inland and I was again astonished at the beauty of the luxuriant valleys and hills. As we sliced through the verdant forest I recalled my previous trip to Eihei-ji years ago:

*I had left my remote forest home in America where I daily would encounter deer and elk and occasionally moose and lion; the bears always eluded me. After the intensity of Tokyo*

*I was savouring the narrow gauge train journey from Fukui into this remoteness; what awaited me within? The train struggled slowly up to the small village next to Eihei-ji and arrived in the afternoon. I found the hostel and then wandered around the narrow and winding roads, deciding to visit the temple in the morning.*

*I arose in darkness and made my way up to the temple at daybreak. As I approached I was astonished to see several tiny pure white clouds hanging next to the temple. Some were only a metre from the ground. It looked like a Chinese scroll painting. I blinked my eyes in disbelief but they remained, yet moved and changed slightly as clouds are wont to do. Walking slowing along the path, the stillness and calm penetrated me. Wandering through towering green massives, sheltered by close canyon walls, the valley bottom seemed strangely untouched*



*Ekai Korematsu Osho at the Main Gate of Eiheiji Temple September 2001*

*and primeval with the glistening snail path meandering through it. Rounding a bend I was stopped dead by a monolith. The hairs on the back of my neck stood up. It remained motionless. Immeasurable power poured from it. From its fathomless depths came pure intention, indomitable will, wisdom. How did it get here.... how long has it been here.... from what alien place had it come...*

*Opaque obelisk solid slanting  
Falling into fathomless blackness  
Starpoints swirling sparkling*

*I found myself walking again. I came across the creek that flows down this hidden valley. Then the little footbridge. On it Dogen was kneeling down and filling a pitcher from the flowing stream. As always, he poured part back. I watched awhile then wandered on...*

The bus driver braked and brought me back, Ekai and I had arrived at the village. We had taken the bus as the narrow gauge train was not running. Ekai and I immediately walked to the temple. It was late afternoon and many tourists were streaming out. We bypassed

the turnstile and walked into the corridor. Ekai was greeted warmly by the attendant who obviously knew him.

We went to reception and the two monks there joyously checked us in. They were not only completely present but you could see that to them, what they were doing was the most important thing in the world. You instantly felt completely accepted, as brothers. Each item, each action was treated as a great being and was given the same reverence with which they treated all else. Their love flowed out inexhaustively, encompassing everything around with warmth and happiness.

After reception we were shown to our rooms by a young monk. All the monks were very friendly, courteous and kind. Our room was on the top floor and looked across the valley and through the trees. There was a large Japanese lay group staying in these quarters and we had dinner Oryoki style with them. No sitting mats or cushions. Prior to going into the dining room we lined up outside. When indicated by the resident monks, the visiting monks went in first, and then the lay followed. We had meditation that night in the zendo and a dharma talk in Japanese in the hall, and then meditation the following morning. After breakfast Ekai took me on a tour of the monastery and he took me into out of bounds areas that I hadn't previously seen. For instance we went through the kitchen with metre high pressure cookers and woks almost as big. Ekai gained special permission to go to the top of the main gate. The steps up to it were as steep as a ladder and the whole large structure appeared to be hundreds of years old. On the top was a room full of Buddhas.



It is maintained daily, with a service held weekly with all the monks going up there. We walked around the balcony outside, perched like a nest amongst the towering trees. During the day we visited with the heads of areas such as publications ryo and education ryo. Ekai had previously worked in these sections.

*Sun slanted obliquely through the trees. Cool air caressed my cheeks under the canopy of a massive pine, fingers felt the roughness and solidity of its shaft. A solitary unsui*

*was dwarfed by a giant bell below me. He stood motionless. He bowed to the earth in one fluid motion. Next to him was a tree trunk cradled horizontally on two ropes. Grasping another rope hanging from it he pulled it back. It swung and struck the bell. Waves of sound shook me, shook the tree, shook the ground. Ripples flowed past into the eternity of space, valleys and peaks; echoing back only to be met by another crescendo concentrically vibrating every particle in the ten directions.*



*zazen  
breath and shadow  
deepen*

*as i shift on the zafu  
the lightest wooden tile shines*

*by ron moss and hortensia andersen*

## Choosing a Retreat Venue

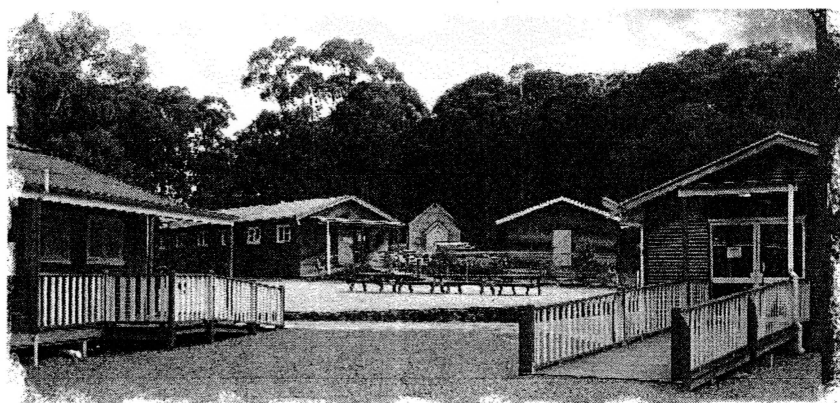
Peter Watts President, Jikishoan

For the general information of the community and those who might be wondering, the Jikishoan Committee has settled on using the Casa Pallotti Centre for both the 2006 Autumn (Easter) and Winter (August) retreats. The Adekate Centre will remain our Spring (November) retreat venue.

Until our needs change or a place becomes available that would serve Jikishoan substantially better than these, we intend to settle on these venues. A decision has been taken to limit the number of participants to a maximum of 35, giving preference to those staying for the full duration of retreats. The reason for this is that Ekai Osho considers that if the number is larger than this then he is not able to provide the quality of care he would like or to have personal contact with each student. The reasons for our choice of venue are many. Perhaps our first considerations relate to the availability, cost and travel time from Melbourne and / or proximity to Ballarat (once a year). Next are the facilities, their size, general layout

and surroundings. Also very high on our list is the functional aspects of the kitchen. There has to be industrial quality refrigeration and cooking equipment; plenty of space for food storage; and space for those working in the kitchen to occupy the area safely. The zendo has to be large enough and be in reasonably close proximity to other facilities. Of course suitable toilets, bathrooms and comfortable beds are all a consideration. All these factors and numerous others have to be weighed up in order to get

an overall picture of suitability. Finally, the Jikishoan community is quite diverse and our activities are made available to all. This includes differences in age, physical capacities, social and cultural values as well as the ability to afford the financial cost. These factors are an ongoing consideration with all the decisions made by the Committee on behalf of the Jikishoan community. We move slowly as a group, allowing us to move together and continue participating with our Zen practice as a Sangha.



*Adekate Centre, our Spring retreat venue.*

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## Members Abroad

Jikishoan member Rudyard "Rud" Tinker will be living in Japan during 2006. Rud would like to extend an invitation to any of our members and friends who maybe travelling to Japan during this time to call by should you be in Yokohama. Rud is available before 4pm each day and would love to show our members and friends the sights of his city as well as catch up on the latest news from home. If you would like to contact Rud or just to keep in contact with him while he is away, please email Rud via [vinylsamurai@hotmail.com](mailto:vinylsamurai@hotmail.com)

## Membership

We warmly welcome the following new member of Jikishoan:

Makoto Hirano

Ekai Korematsu Osho and the Jikishoan Committee

## Soto Kitchen

Recipes selected by Vaughan Behncke, Tenzo Recipes selected by Vaughan Behncke, Tenzo from the "Japanese Vegetarian Cookbook" by Patricia Whitfield.

### Gingered Fried Tofu

Serves 4

About 285g fresh tofu (soya bean curd)  
Cornflour for coating  
2 spring onions  
10g piece of fresh ginger root  
Vegetable oil for deep frying  
4 Tbsp Japanese soy sauce  
1 Tbsp sugar  
1 Tbsp mirin  
200 ml water

Wrap the tofu in a clean towel and leave for 30 minutes to drain off excess water. Cut tofu into 12 equal sized cubes and coat lightly with cornflour.

Wash spring onions and remove roots. Shred finely diagonally. Cut ginger into matchsticks.

In a large saucepan, heat oil to 170 C or 340 F and deep fry tofu for about 3 minutes or until crisp and golden on the outside. Drain on absorbent kitchen paper. Put soy sauce, mirin, sugar and water into saucepan and bring to boil. Add fried tofu and

ginger and simmer for 3 – 4 minutes. Divide the gingered tofu between 4 small bowls. Sprinkle over the spring onions and pour over a little cooking stock. Serve immediately.



### Shiitake Mushrooms Braised in Sake

Serves 4

8 Fresh shiitake mushrooms  
1 Tbsp vegetable oil  
2 Tbsp sake (fortified rice wine)  
2 Tbsp Japanese soy sauce  
2 Tbsp mirin (sweet rice wine)  
100 ml water

Wash the shiitake mushrooms and trim off any tough stalks.

Slice each mushroom in half.

Heat oil in a frying pan and stir fry mushrooms for 2 minutes.

Add remaining ingredients and simmer until most of the liquid has evaporated. Divide between 4 small bowls.

### Grilled Eggplant with Soya Bean Paste

Serves 4

50g aka miso (red soya bean paste) 1 dessertspoon sugar  
1 dessertspoon mirin (sweet rice wine)  
1 dessertspoon sake (for fortified rice wine)  
½ egg yolk  
2 eggplants (smaller sized ones)  
Vegetable oil for brushing  
Toasted white sesame seeds  
Salt

Mix together the miso, sugar, mirin, sake and egg yolk.

Wash the eggplants and cut into 1 cm thick slices. Sprinkle with salt. Leave for 30 minutes to drain, then rinse and pat dry. Brush the eggplants on both sides with oil.

Grill under a high heat on both sides until the eggplant is soft. Spread the miso over one side of the eggplants and sprinkle with a few sesame seeds. Grill under a moderate heat until the miso is bubbling a little and is dry on top.

Divide between 4 dishes. Can be eaten hot or cold.

Instead of grilling, the eggplant may be barbecued. Barbecue one side and then spread the miso over the cooked side and barbecue the uncooked side until soft.

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