

Myōju

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Spring 2000



Soto Zen Buddhism in Australia

First Thing & Last Thing

Direct Realization Hut: An interview with Ekai Korematsu

Beginning Practice is both simple and difficult

Dharma talk: All the Universe is One Bright Pearl

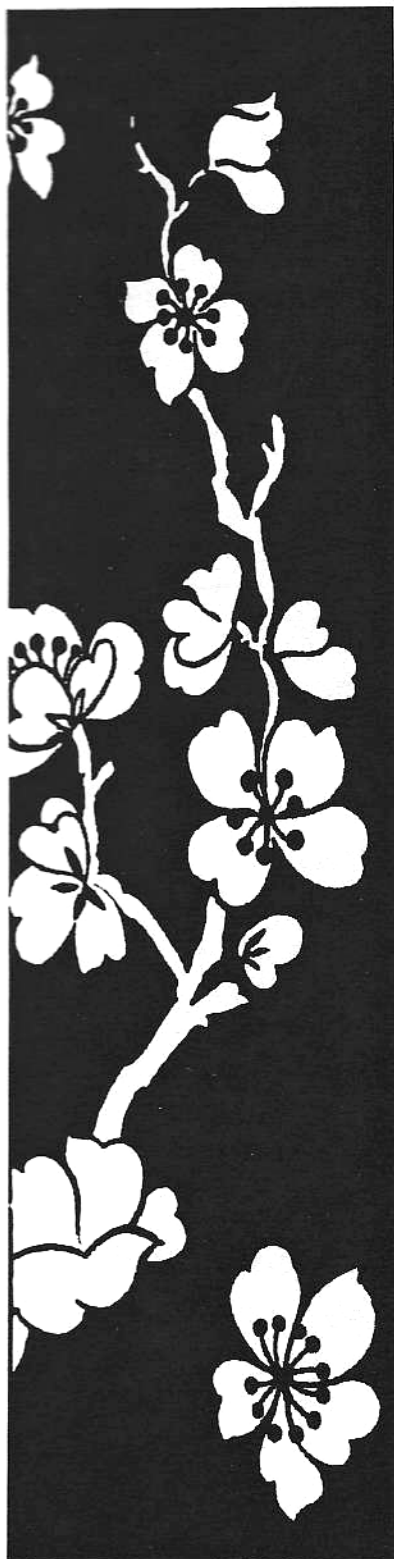
Beginning It's the ABC of Zazen *Beginning*

Bowing is not easy

Beginning Life is Zazen, that is the title

“Petals of the peach blossom
Unfolding in the spring breeze,
Sweeping aside all doubts
Amid the distractions of leaves and branches.”
Dōgen Zenji

Editorial



Welcome to the first issue of **Myōju**, the magazine of the Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community in Melbourne, Australia. The seeds for this magazine were germinated in the small zendo Ekai Korematsu Osho built in his garage when he came to live in Melbourne in April 1998. The sangha has steadily grown from those attending Orientation and Deepening Practice courses with Ekai, and there is now a solid core of members who practice together regularly at Sunday Sanzenkai, member's practice meetings, workshops and retreats. An interview with Ekai about the beginning, and the developing structure of Jikishoan begins on page 4.

The theme chosen for this first issue is **Beginning**. The term “*Beginner's mind*” is well known to Zen practitioners, and Ekai emphasises, like Suzuki-Roshi who coined the phrase, the importance of maintaining a beginner's view in one's practice. When asked about this theme of **Beginning**, Ekai said:

“It is a characteristic of the Sōtō school that the first thing is the last thing. Zazen is the first thing. Everyone thinks to themselves, “I am a beginner, so I am receiving zazen instruction, Fukanzazengi - I am just a beginner, I have just started to practice, to receive instruction”. That's the last thing! But we don't know it till we come to that point. Bowing is like that. The first thing is to enter the room, meet with the people, bow in meeting, that's the first thing and the last thing.”

The choice of a name for this magazine came from the combined effort of sangha members. The Japanese word **Myōju** was preferred to its English translation, **Bright Pearl**, which does not carry the same sense of pearl-like translucency. Ekai's dharma talk *The Universe is One Bright Pearl* on pages 10 and 11 gives insight into this choice.

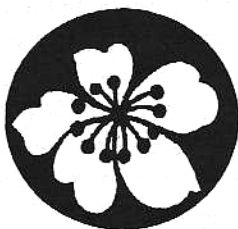
Many monks and teachers have brought Zen teachings and practices to Australia before, but Ekai is the first Zen monk to come and stay, and to teach purely in the Sōtō tradition. Jikishoan is the beginning of an Australian branch on the Sōtō tree, a branch that is deeply nourished by the solid trunk and ancient roots of teachings and practices of the Buddhas and Patriarchs in this lineage, but a branch that is also already developing its own characteristic shape and perfume. In a way reminiscent of how Shunryu Suzuki established Sōtō Zen in America, Ekai, by his clear and subtle guidance is giving us a sense that something has started that will grow and last.

Congratulations to everyone involved in the beginning of **Jikishoan** and of **Myōju**. Ekai for bringing us the teachings and practices of Soto Buddhism, Alison for all the newsletters she has previously produced and her contribution to this effort, and all the members and friends of Jikishoan, including the Ballarat Zendo who are giving their best effort to our individual and group practice.

Georgia, Leesa, Gary
The Publications Group

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Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community

Jikishoan is a growing community of Zen practitioners under the guidance of Ekai Korematsu Osho. All Jikishoan programs are conducted in the spirit of Bendōho, the original way of practice as prescribed by Dōgen Zenji in the 13th Century. Jikishoan activities in Melbourne are centred around a small Zendo in Essendon, and a weekly Sunday Sanzen-kai in Collingwood. A group also meets weekly in Ballarat. Work-shops and retreats are held in Hawthorn, Mt Eliza and at Dean, near Ballarat.

Ekai Korematsu Osho has practiced and taught Zen Buddhism in Japan, the U.S.A. and India for over 25 years. He trained with a number of teachers, including Ikko Narasaki-Roshi, deputy Abbot of Eiheiji Temple in Japan, his dharma transmission teacher. Ekai founded Friends of the Lotus -the International Zazen Network in 1996. In February, 1998 he moved to Melbourne and now lives here with his wife Deniz and young sons Sunao and Shoan. Ekai is the main teacher at Jikishoan and is also Zen practice instructor for Antioch University's study program in India and Japan.

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Georgia Nicholls	(Shoji/Gaisho)
Leesa Davis	(Chizo)

Zendo Address:

2/23 Raleigh St, Essendon, Vic. 3040
 Postal Address :P.O. Box 234, Essendon, VIC.
 Australia 3040
 Tel: (03) 9370 5847
 Email: jikishoan@aol.com

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DIRECT REALIZATION HUT

AN INTERVIEW WITH EKAI KOREMATSU OSHO

Ekai-san, let's begin with a big question, How did Jikishoan come about?

Ahh [laughter] That is a big question! Out of nowhere, actually. It's interesting. It started from the garage zendo in Pascoe Vale, a space was created without any knowledge or understanding of the environment - without any knowledge of interested people - it was just something that pointed out the direction that I wanted to work in. Later, when people began to come, it was quite surprising to find that there were a number of very interested and experienced practitioners around.

Was this in 1998?

Yes, in September 1998. The first zendo was built in April 1998 when I first came to Australia, before our son Sunao was born. In the three months before he was born I just worked on building the zendo in the space that we had in the garage. Then I went back to Japan to lead the three month retreat at Zuigakuin Temple and while I was in Japan, Deniz asked me if she could put up some flyers with some information about the kind of activities that I was planning for the zendo. Nothing very specific or concrete, just a general framework. And many people responded. It was like a chain reaction. There was enough interest to book two orientation to Zen practice courses before I returned from Japan. That really surprised me!

I made an interview a prerequisite to the course. I wanted to know what kind of practice people had - what kind of Zen practice. Zen is a big word; meanings vary - it can be anything. When it comes to Sōtō Buddhism it is very clear. The focus is Zazen. The Sōtō school is the school of Zazen, and the practice of Zazen is the foundation of the practice. Whatever the integrated

forms are that have developed, and Sōtō Buddhism has 800 years of history so a lot of elements came into the practice, if the zazen part, or practice part is removed then there is no Soto school. And the introduction of Zazen to a new culture is always emphasizing the essential part and that's the way the roots of the teaching practice take in different soil.

Essential practice is literal practice, Zazen itself, sitting itself. Integrated form is after Zazen, or before Zazen, it is what we do. Each person's interest or career becomes an expression of Zazen, or a function of Zazen. In true integration there is no separation between ordinary life and this essential life. By practicing zazen integration can naturally happen



"My primary interest and commitment in life is to the practice and transmission of the teaching of zazen."

Zazen needs to be clearly understood in the context of daily activities, especially the form. And the form of the practice is not different from the context, context is not different from the form. That is another way of integration. Often Zen practitioners think that you use the form to attain the context, and that there is a distance between them. In that kind of practice, enlightenment is far away from where one is. You may be doing intensive sitting, sesshin for twenty years, thirty years (laughing). So that's not the kind of practice that we are trying to convey.

People need to be more familiar, intimate.

The interviews worked very well and I had a busy time that August - I met so many people! The courses were in September and as soon as they finished I went to India to teach. When I came back to Melbourne in mid November 1998 there was enough interest to start another orientation course and most of the people from the previous orientation courses moved into deepening practice courses. So, again I was busy! After the

the previous orientation courses moved into deepening practice courses. So, again I was busy! After the deepening courses finished the question was then what do we do? I just had a vision of how things might progress, how regular activities could unfold and we had a first meeting to find out peoples interest and which way to go. About 18 people came to that meeting.

And what kind of ideas did you outline at that meeting?

I don't remember clearly! [laughing] The thing that I wanted was that member practice should be kind of self-organizing with everyone taking a role. It wasn't like the orientation and deepening courses where I teach and do everything but rather to be a collective effort with different roles and responsibilities.

In order to develop this kind of practice, I suggested two categories of membership: practice membership for one who wants to be really involved in establishing and maintaining this practice; and for general interest, and more individual kinds of reasons, associate membership. Then I had to really clarify a very important point that

associate membership was in no way inferior to practice membership. I explained this by saying that these two categories are like host and guest roles. If people are committed and have time to take a host role, then they take practice membership, without that host role

m e m b e r s h i p
practice, regular practice doesn't develop and cannot be maintained. At that stage everyone was a guest, at the beginning we are all guests, but once the group started

to form someone has to be a host. So the idea was to make a kind of core, a spine and people who were interested in developing the core or spine of this community would be the practice members. Member practice, sangha practice. In other words people who like to work! [laughing]

At that time we met quite often until we clearly laid down the roles, and people asked me to define the various roles. Then people had all kinds of questions

and I presented a plan, a ten year plan actually [laughing] but what was essential to this were the orientation courses, deepening courses, weekly activities, workshops and retreats and the different coordinators needed to work as a team to run these. In April 1999 we started Sunday Sanzen-kai at the Okido center in Carlton and that was a very good start to sangha practice, to community practice. That was an exciting period, much discussion and activity.



Can you now give your ideas on Jikishoan as a sangha - of course anyone who is interested is welcome to attend most Jikishoan activities without being a Buddhist or becoming a member - but let's talk a little about the sangha aspect. Membership is primarily about joining a spiritual organization

Yes, that's true.

After the last retreat a few people said that it felt like sangha

That's wonderful. That's the meaning of sangha. Sangha is the manifestation of completeness - completeness in the person

and in the group. That is sangha, completeness. Completeness in concrete ways like the existence of the person who practices, that is the sangha, and in a community sense, a dojo, a practice place then appears naturally. Sangha means a temple actually - we have a

saying that a monk walking on the street is a temple walking. Embodiment of the practice.

So when it comes to structure, the organization, to have this place, these activities is a manifestation of sangha.

A place where people who feel a belonging can go. You don't need to be a member to go to a temple, if there's a temple there you can go, walk toward the temple, spend some time and then leave, you're not a member but you have a feeling for what the environment offers. And the source of that environment is that there are some activities going on, some maintenance of those activities going on and that is the activity of members, the involvement of the practice members. Individual membership, associate membership is like making a

"Jiki is a single word that usually means straight forward or direct, and sho is proof, or satori. So what it is pointing out is actually enlightenment itself, direct realization, direct enlightenment. The practice is the proof, there is no other proof that is split from that. The proof doesn't come after you've finished - it's direct."

“If the structure of the organisation reflects the practice then you can feel it and taste it, and this is the working of actualized sangha.”

connection with these activities whereby you can go and join in and leave. This kind of involvement is extended to those who are not members but friends of Jikishoan. To draw a line between members and non members contradicts Buddhist teachings. It's inclusive not exclusive. And this overall inclusiveness has to be made clear. Those who can make this clear are the coordinators, the core. Inclusive, open energy must come from the spine, the core of Jikishoan - it all depends on that. If we form a rigid core - “This is the way we do things! We don't do that!” then naturally it becomes closed but if it's fluid then it transcends those kind of barriers and this is very, very important.

Can you say something about individual practice and group practice and the relationship between the two?

At the beginning there is a division like that. It depends on where you are in the practice but as practice proceeds, continuous practice, those divisions dissolve and that is the natural way. You don't even think about it [laughter] it's just working, total dynamic working - working with the group works for the individual and the individual works for the group - it's two ways. But at the beginning it's not so, it's coming from a separate place but it eventually shifts to the place where there aren't any divisions. This is not meant in an absolutist sense - you know that there is one solid thing, there is just a kind of difference that merges. It's a natural course - in a way inevitable. It's like coming into contact with this world - myself, yourself then starting to merge with everything else then becoming free in that situation. That is how the practice evolves and the organizational structure is based on this, based on incorporating this understanding into ways that allow that the practice to evolve.

It is a learning process. At the beginning there is separation, committee, members, etc, and there is a protective attitude, that is natural we can't deny that - but if the group remains closed and protective it doesn't grow. Actually there's nothing to be protective about! [Much laughter]

Perhaps the kind of energy, the feeling that seems to be unfolding in the zendo, both on retreat and at Sunday Sanzen-kai is indicative of how things are unfolding - practice somehow does feel supported

Yes I've noticed it too. It's shifted in quiet ways. That kind of energy is evident when you go to very solid

practice ground and you feel that. We say “one taste” - no separation.

The spirit of sangha, the structure of sangha, and the meaning of sangha is one taste. In Indian traditions they say that the Ganges River splits into branches and then returns to the ocean. One who practices, who joins a sangha, one who is associated with a sangha becomes a member of a family, the Shaka family, Shaka is the surname of the Buddha so in sangha we are all part of Shakyamuni Buddha's family. Many traditions use this expression “one taste,” it doesn't matter which way we come to practice, to sangha, whether we come from the various branches and ends of the river we eventually merge into one. That is the meaning of sangha, the meaning of sangha is not to split into pieces - members, host members, associate members, not to make all kinds of categories - the actual meaning of sangha is coming into one taste, no matter where you are or where you come from. If the structure of the organization reflects the practice then you can feel it and taste it, and this is the working of actualized sangha. The task is to create that space and then to maintain it. Creation is exciting, people come together for individual reasons but once it's set maintaining a lasting sangha is the difficult and important thing.

Are we at the maintaining stage now?

I think so. The first year is working in the dark getting to know what we have. After that period we learn where we are, and from there we can naturally unfold. At the beginning it is very tight because in the darkness you have to work close but when experience starts to show, the group expands and sangha naturally unfolds. With more people comes the Ryo groupings, the division of roles and responsibilities into groups. Specialized yet still open and fluid - with all aspects, zendo, kitchen, teaching, administration and so on, in relationship.

The first year is now over, and according to my vision the next two years will be to find a more solid, permanent place for this practice, to manifest sangha activities in a concrete form. Meanwhile we are working on the internal structures - practice wise - so that we have something to put in the box when it comes! [laughter]

Bowing is not easy!

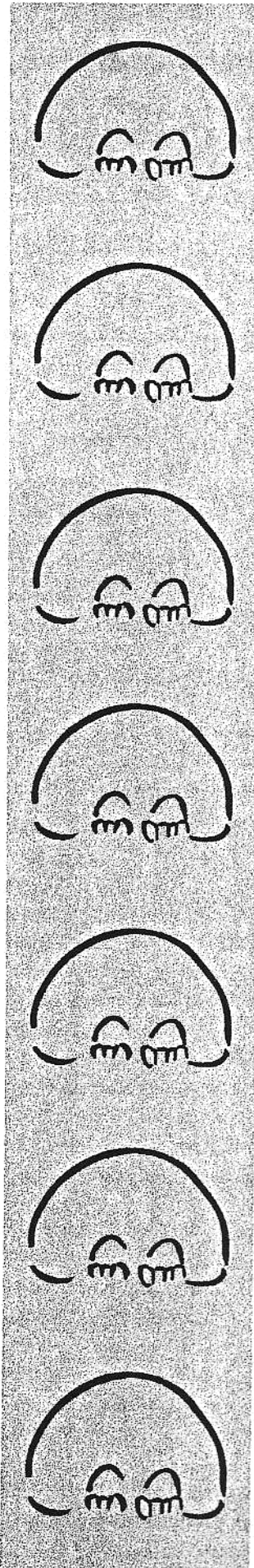
So about zen practice. The core of this is sitting. Sitting is the anchor, and then there is walking, walking practice and bowing. In that bowing, when your mind is free and fluid then you have no problem, but if your mind is locked, then bowing is just a form. Or if you are resisting the form, then bowing is not easy! So become more and more intimate, become intimate and your mind becomes fluid. Sitting everyone understands - sitting everyone feels the experience, but bowing is very difficult. I received an email from a person who had attended here for the first time, and he wrote, "Sitting is O.K., I enjoy that, and walking is fine, but bowing I have trouble with. Is that alright? I want to continue the practice but I don't want to do bowing".

There is a barrier there, and that barrier is one's own thinking. Even if you avoid it, that barrier is still there. When you become intimate with it then it loses its ground and mind becomes free, but if you believe it then it becomes locked, "This is the ultimate way we need to bow! [laughing] I believe in it!" Just doing it like that, mechanically, is going the other way around, making it just a kind of form from which flexibility doesn't come. When your mind develops flexibility and intimacy with the bowing practice it becomes formless. Everything else you do becomes bowing. Bowing is meeting, meeting one another, meeting at a particular place, a practice place, a zen practice place, so we bow. This ultimate expression, this ultimate bowing includes our whole body, so through our body our mind also bows - full prostrations.

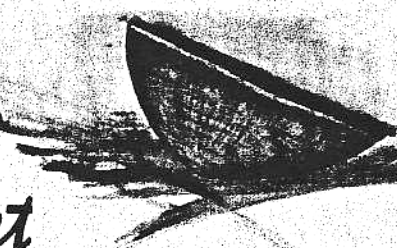
If you go outside the practice place and meet friends who have never heard of zen practice, if you start bowing [laughing] it doesn't meet with the situation. The spirit is the same in meeting, a wholehearted greeting takes place when you meet. This is intimacy. One of the Sōtō School's ways is that practice is very intimate, very finely woven throughout life, like fabric, like very finely woven cotton. So practice doesn't end here. After sitting it takes different forms but it is still practice, and practice is not totally separate from our activity.

Dharma talk by Ekai Korematsu, July 9, 2000.

"When your mind develops flexibility and intimacy with the bowing practice it becomes formless. Everything else you do becomes bowing."



The Open Basket Sangha News



Ekai gently impresses on us that being involved in Sangha is an essential part of our practice. It has not been that easy for those of us used to practicing alone, or in local zen groups without a resident teacher, to adjust to being involved with others in such an inter-active, inter-dependent sangha experience. But slowly, slowly, and with some mutual mindfulness, we are dissolving like ice blocks in the warm water of regular interaction and sharing of our practice.

As Jikishoan sangha-building has now moved into a new phase, Ekai has set up Ryo groups so that members can participate in the activities of different Ryo groupings as they become more involved and integrated into the sangha. (See page 2 for a list of Ryo group Co-ordinators). Increasing the number of Committee members to include all the Ryo Co-ordinators is one of the items proposed for the **Annual General Meeting**, to be held on November 14. All members are invited to this meeting.

Sunday Sanzen-kai has become the central weekly activity of the sangha. We are fortunate to be able to use the Australian Shiatsu College as the venue, the ambience very conducive to our practice and to the preparation and enjoyment of the meal we share together afterwards. The August 5-day retreat had 16 participants, many of whom had participated in a retreat with Ekai before, and there were comments about the ease of

extending the quality of practice in the zendo into other areas and activities. The next **5-Day Retreat** will be held at the Adekate Centre at Dean, near Ballarat from Friday November 24 to Wednesday 29 November.

The garage zendo at Ekai's has been filled to capacity with people attending Orientation and Deepening Practice courses and Members' Practice on Thursday nights. Ekai has also been running regular sessions at Bouyancy (a recovery centre for addicts) and in early August gave a presentation at the Catholic Education Centre to a group of primary school teachers who responded with great enthusiasm to his explanation of the Zen approach to teaching which allows, *"the minds of children to find openness, open space in which there is more and more possibilities."*

Ekai will give a public talk on November 5 on **Zen in Daily Life**, an opportunity for people who are interested in Zen practice to meet Ekai and the members of Jikishoan. On the first Saturday of December, a **Sangha picnic** is planned for members, their families and all friends of Jikishoan. The following Sunday, Dec 10 is **Sangha Day**, when Ekai will conduct a Jukai ceremony for those who are ready to receive the Buddhist precepts.

Ekai will be in Japan and in India for much of September and October, fulfilling his annual commitment as

Ballarat Zendo

The Ballarat Zendo was established through the interest and effort of Srecko Radman, a member of Jikishoan who moved to Ballarat in early 1999.

Ekai gave a public talk on Zen in Ballarat on July 22, 1999 attended by 18 people. Space for a regular Thursday evening Sanzen-kai was then found and the first practice meeting held on August 19, 1999. Ekai agreed to come to Ballarat once a month, and now 10 to 15 people attend regularly. A 5-Day Retreat with Ekai will be held at the Adekate Centre at Dean, near Ballarat, from November 24 to 29.

Ballarat Zendo Co-ordinator
Srecko Radman
Tel: 5332 2355

Zen practice instructor for Antioch University's Annual Buddhist Study Program. Srecko and Leesa will be going to India with him this year. Here in Melbourne, regular weekly sangha activities will continue, with a member of the sangha giving the talk at Sunday Sanzen-kai.

The Open Basket

The Open Basket was submitted as a possible name for this newsletter by Jerry Gordon, a friend of Jikishoan living in Japan.

Jerry wrote: *"an open basket is a perfect image of the site of transferring, the meeting..of receiving and offering. It accepts everything without hesitation and offers everything freely. The word also has a welcoming tone, which is good for any sangha to abide in"*

The Open Basket has now become the name of the regular Sangha News page of our newsletter. Thank you Jerry.

Practice is both Simple and Difficult

Members of Jikishoan write about their own experience

About 20 or so short months ago I saw a flyer, I forgot where, that said something about Zen, a monk named Ekai, and to call Deniz if I wanted more information.

Well, little did I know that making that call would be like testing the river with my toe - and end up 20 miles downstream....Soaking wet! The Jikishoan journey so far has been so rapid and with such a feeling of natural evolution that it almost seems as if it happened by itself.

Of course this is not the case, it's been a combination of Ekai's vision and teaching and leadership, Deniz's creativity, common sense and tenacious spirit, and the readiness of all those involved to take a jump!

To have a Zen teacher like Ekai reside in Melbourne, rather than visiting once or twice a year, is a new experience for many of us. One that at times tests our endurance and commitment - but also is full of great potential. The soil Ekai and Deniz encountered here was ready to be planted.....I wonder what will grow.

There is a Japanese term: "zenzai". It's commonly used to name a sweet bean dessert but in Buddhist terms means "Well done!" I hope all of us can look back one day and say - Zenzai!

Jinesh Wilmot



I first met Ekai at a weekend workshop where I clearly remember him saying that Zen practice is about the essential thing - simply erect your spine again and again and that which is behind all conditioning will be slowly clarified. My involvement with Jikishoan is an attempt to put this deceptively simple instruction

into practice. Connecting with a practice, a teacher and a sangha has its challenges and difficulties but in the midst of that I am deeply appreciative of what is unfolding here.

Leesa Davis



I had come into contact with Buddhism whilst traveling in Asia and Zen whilst in Japan, though I had no real idea what it was about at the time. It was only when I met my partner that I developed a serious interest, mostly due to her influence. I started hanging around various Buddhist events, warily looking them over. It took years before I committed to Buddhism and that opportunity came first in the Tibetan tradition, though I felt that it was not an exact fit for me.

I came across a flyer for a Zen monk newly arrived in Melbourne and decided to ring the contact number. I was quite nervous the first time I met Ekai, but he soon put me at ease and I had the instinctive feeling that I had found the teacher I had been looking for. I went to the early meetings about forming Jikishoan. They seemed like a nice enough bunch of people and I signed up. I figured I must have some karma with them that overrode my natural disinclination to get involved in groups and even more so in committees!

As far as the practice is concerned, it has often been a struggle to balance it with family and other commitments. The balancing act is easier at some times, harder sometimes. When I return to my practice and am pleasantly surprised how refreshing it is.

Chris Leach

The Magnet Room

I have a room set aside for sitting at home. My own zendo, of sorts. What a luxury. Now I will sit more regularly.

Unfortunately someone has polarised my zendo. It is like the North end of a magnet. My plan to sit regularly, each morning for between 15 and 30 minutes has fallen to pieces. Some weeks I am the South end of a magnet and I sit every day. Other weeks my polarity is in a state of constant flux and I sit a couple of times. And some weeks I am North, and I can't seem to get near the zendo no matter how hard I try.

It is interesting that when I think that I have settled into some stability in my practice, and that I might be able 'to get somewhere', I stop sitting. As soon as I notice my 'Southness' it quickly shifts to 'Northness', and I'm left wondering what happened!

Is it okay not to sit every day as I had planned to? Does this mean that I am not making a full effort? Am I lazy and slack? A bad Buddhist?! Is there a middle way for a magnet? I don't know. I used to worry about this, but now I just try to sit when I can.

So practice is simple and difficult, and I have this horrible suspicion that it always will be.

Gary Youston



All the Universe is One Bright Pearl

Dharma Talk by Ekai Korematsu Osho in Melbourne on July 9th, 2000

Sometimes in zazen our focus is very clear. Each time we remember what we are here for, what we are doing, our focus appears again and again. It appears instantly, but that doesn't mean it becomes fixed or frozen and we have to struggle to concentrate. It's the nature of mind to open and start to wonder about something, and that naturally happens. But by maintaining this posture, by keeping still, our effort continues and our minds are free and not fixed. Practice looks rigid and formal, but even though the posture is formal, our minds are not rigid. The mind is fluid within that formality because there is true intimacy, intimacy with this posture. Mind and body are totally one, you don't feel any boundaries.

At the beginning, of course, we feel boundaries, otherwise we cannot make effort. We make an effort to come to a particular spot, our spine, and in that way we develop the center of our practice. Of course the center is the spine, but it's not the kind of spine we think. Actually it's just a feeling about the spine, developed again and again, coming back, coming back and settling into that center. And that spine is not a solid, rigid spine, there is a fluidity to it. This fluidity comes when practice becomes intimate. By sitting intimately with the body-mind in this form, without boundaries, then this spine, this center will work for you wherever you go. Then there is a spine, a center, in all your activities.

So this practice is sometimes called a formless practice, a formless practice within form. This is very difficult to understand if we get stuck on the idea

of form. How can form be formless? But the meaning becomes vividly clear when we continue to practice. When sitting in this way, I maintain this posture, I feel my body. But when the sitting becomes so intimate that the boundaries are lost, then there is form and formlessness with no boundaries between them.



“This expression “one bright pearl” can only be uttered when there are no boundaries between zazen posture and the fluid mind within.”

Sometimes teachers use the term “*the ten directions*”, north, south, east, west, those in-between plus up and down. “*The ten directions*” signifies the whole universe. One who really sits, sits, sits, and whose practice has become intimate, experiences “*the ten directions*”, the whole universe. There are no boundaries and nothing to obstruct. A Chinese Zen Master called Gensha Shibi, had an expression for this intimacy. Dōgen Zenji talks highly of Gensha in his writings. There weren't so many Zen teachers that Dōgen Zenji talked highly of. There are only a few, and Gensha Shibi is one of them.

Gensha Shibi was a fisherman, just living his life catching fish, just following the trade of his father. One night, father and son were on their boat fishing and a beautiful full moon was reflecting on the water. Suddenly Gensha's father fell into the water. He made motions seeking Gensha's help, and Gensha tried to help by giving his father the oar. But suddenly he did a crazy thing, and instead of helping his father he began hitting him, drowning him. That is a crazy thing to do, don't you think so? Your own father is drowning and you hit him rather than help him. Gensha gave up fishing and went to seek the Way. His starting point in searching



"The whole universe, the ten directions, the one bright pearl is the true, unobstructed human body. When nothing obstructs, the teaching is free and dynamic, one is not stuck in ideas of teacher and teachings. Dharma just flows."

Myoju: Bright Pearl

for the Way was like that. Maybe in the moonlight he had gone crazy, but he totally gave up the life of a fisherman and left his home to intensely search for the Way. He sat, sat, sat under the guidance of a teacher. He didn't talk, he didn't question, he just sat, sat, sat.

And his teacher didn't mind him not asking any questions, but after a while Gensha had an idea that there may be something more than sitting. He thought, "I should look for some other teacher because this teacher doesn't teach anything! He's just happy that I'm sitting!" And he asked permission to go and study with other teachers, to look for the Way. Of course his teacher didn't mind. "Yes, yes, go ahead", he said.

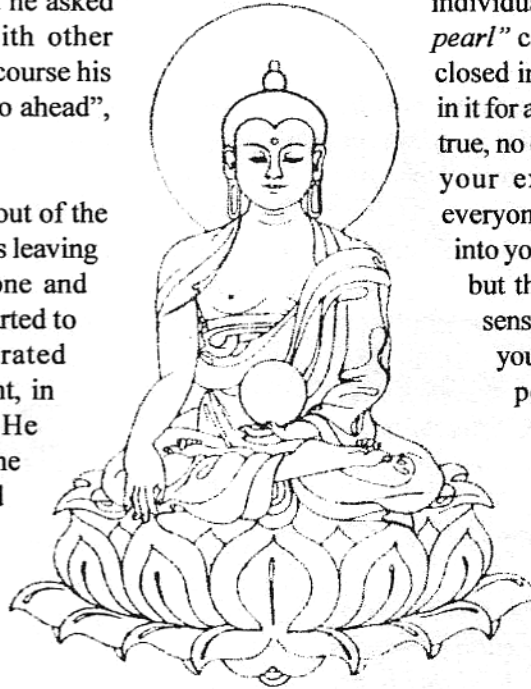
Gensha was so happy he ran out of the monastery, and just as he was leaving the temple gate he kicked a stone and stubbed his toe, so hard that it started to bleed and terrible pain penetrated through his body. At that moment, in that pain, he was awakened. He realized through the pain, and he returned to his teacher, who asked "Why have you come back?" And Gensha answered, "Bodhidharma didn't come to the East. The second patriarch did not go to the West."

His teacher said "What is all this about?", and Gensha said "one bright pearl." Now this expression is very particular, this expression can only be digested by a person whose practice has become so intimate, body and mind have become so intimate that there is no distinction. This expression can only be uttered when there are no boundaries between zazen posture and the fluid mind within.

When Gensha realized this intimacy for the first time, when he realized what it's all about, his answer was just "one bright pearl." And from this answer, his teacher really understood that Gensha's practice was alright. After that time, when people came

to ask Dharma questions or to seek teaching, Gensha's teacher sent them to him and Gensha taught them by saying "All the universe is one bright pearl." The whole universe, the ten directions, the one bright pearl is the true, unobstructed human body. When nothing obstructs, the teaching is free and dynamic, one is not stuck in ideas of teacher and teachings. Dharma just flows.

Zazen is based on the individual. Each person becomes grounded, intimate, and then nothing hinders. Because it's coming from a very individual place, the expression "bright pearl" can give a very closed impression, closed in a way that there seems no room in it for another person to enter. That's very true, no one can enter into your realm, into your experience. You can embrace everyone else, but no one else can enter into your one bright pearl. It is complete, but this doesn't mean complete in the sense that you have a hard shell around you. There is no shell, your one bright pearl is open, translucent. The whole universe, the one bright pearl is the true human body, unhindered, unobstructed.



That is the kind of zazen Dōgen Zenji is presenting. Just settle down into your true human body. There's nothing very special about it, it's just you, just as

you are. Each person is sitting on the center of the universe. That's the kind of confidence of the true human body, of the whole universe.

So in our practice, if we search for something other than what we are, if we search outside of our own home - we become a servant of something that's not there. It is a human kind of reality to search for something other than ourselves. We are like that in day to day life, we lose ourselves and we need to learn to come back. That is what each one of us has to do, no one else can do it for us. Zazen is nothing but settling down, having our own body and mind in harmony. That is the starting place and the coming back place, always.

Its the ABC of Zazen

The idea for an ABC of Zazen came from an interview with Ekai in which he talked about the foundations we learn at the beginning of practice, foundations that allow our practice to continue, about which he said "Its the ABC of Zazen". Quotes from teachers in the Sōtō lineage related to specific points of zazen practice will be included in this series. As Ekai has recommended Shunryu Suzuki's "*Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*", and Kōshō Uchiyama's "*From the Zen Kitchen to Enlightenment: Refining Your Life*" as books to read for "beginning", quotes from these teachers, as well as from Ekai have been chosen for this issue. This series will continue through each issue of Myōju.

A

Aim: *"The essential point when doing zazen is to aim, full of life, at the posture of Zazen with our flesh and bones while at the same time leaving everything up to the posture and letting go of thoughts"*

Kōshō Uchiyama

Activity: *"Zazen practice and everyday activity are one thing. We call Zazen everyday life, and everyday life Zazen. But usually we think. "Now Zazen is over, we will go about our everyday activity." But this is not the right understanding. They are the same thing. We have nowhere to escape."*

Shunryu Suzuki

Attainment: *"If we expect anything from sitting or bring anything to sitting, it is not pure sitting. Perhaps you are meditating for some reason, if so this is not Buddha's sitting. This is the difference between meditation and the Sōtō School's attitude towards Zazen. Even if what you want to attain is the experience of satori...of enlightenment... Zazen is probably not what you are looking for, because Zazen is not a way of attaining enlightenment but the practice of enlightenment itself."*

Ekai Korematsu

Attention: *"Very clear and unwavering attention is what is most important. Any thoughts that you attach to move you away from the body. Moving away is not the required effort, the effort is to return. So how to return? Not by thinking, no, just by paying attention to the spine, coming back, returning."*

Ekai Korematsu

B

Beginning: *"The goal of practice is always to keep our beginner's mind.....In the beginner's mind there is no thought, "I have attained something." All self-centred thoughts limit our vast mind. When we have no thought of achievement, no thought of self, we are true beginners. Then we can really learn something."*

Shunryu Suzuki

Body: *"It is very straight-forward - just sit with a straight back without sleeping, without closing your eyes. Adjusting the spine, proper posture allows the phenomena to happen within your body. Actually that's the way it works"*

Ekai Korematsu

Breath: *"The area about two inches below the navel is called the tanden. If you are maintaining the correct zazen posture, the centre of gravity of your body and mind will naturally fall to the tanden. In regulating the breath, the centre of gravity should fall to the tanden by means of maintaining the correct posture. Other than that, just breathe naturally."*

Kōshō Uchiyama

C

Calmness: *"When you are doing Zazen, you are within the complete calmness of your mind; you do not feel anything. You just sit. But the calmness of your sitting will encourage you in your everyday life. So actually you will find the value of Zen in your everyday life, rather than while you sit. But this does not mean you should neglect Zazen. Even though you do not feel anything when you sit, if you do not have this zazen experience, you cannot find anything; you just find weeds, or trees, or clouds in your daily life; you do not see the moon."*

Shunryu Suzuki

Centre: *"Zazen is not just sitting and watching the scenery. There is a deliberate effort in entering into the core, the centre, and as soon as it is entered, it opens up. It is dynamic. So what is most essential about this whole process is returning, coming back to the centre. Just sit with your back straight, this is the closest explanation you can be given."*

Ekai Korematsu

Conditions: *"In Zazen habitual patterns and conditionings are naturally undone. Everyone, without exception, is made up of all kinds of habits or patterns, past conditions, all the packaging. Putting oneself in sitting naturally unfolds this, unpacks these conditionings, but it doesn't mean that these conditionings go away. That is wrong. Rather, they become free floating instead of fixed and solid. The mind becomes dynamic and flexible. Dōgen Zenji simply said that this kind of mind knew nothing."*

Ekai Korematsu

Confirmation: *"If we practice sitting sincerely for 3 to 10 years, hopefully some kind of confirmation will grow within ourselves.....inner confirmation about the way, about practice, based on our realization in practice. In this way, we are experiencing the same experience as the Buddha's experience."*

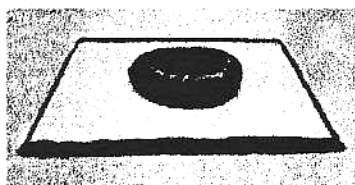
Ekai Korematsu

Cooperate: *"It is important that every one of us cooperate with each other to protect and maintain an atmosphere conducive to practicing together. There is no-one who can claim to always embody bodhi-mind, the mind that aspires to practice and attain enlightenment. Each of us gathers and contributes his or her own little bodhi-mind to the general effort."*

Kōshō Uchiyama

Correct: *"Everything Dōgen Zenji talks about is in the phenomena of just sitting in the right posture, nothing else. It's not like he is talking about trying out different things. Sitting in the correct posture is the prerequisite, and then all his use of words, all his pointing out of realities becomes clear. Understanding that is affirming using Zazen, correct Zazen."*

Ekai Korematsu



Life is Zazen, that is the title.

What happens in the beginning sessions of some teishos, is that the Roshi is talking about just the title, just the title part of the sutra, just talking about it. (much laughter) You come for the teisho, and he just talks about the title. That is a very important characteristic of the lecture. Wanting to emphasise one very particular part that includes everything, everything contained in that one particular part. Oneness and manyness. But by talking about the oneness we cultivate the ground of the manyness. One is many, many is one. Absolute is particular, particular is absolute. By talking to the absolute (and a title is absolute, you can't change the title, right?), by talking to the absolute, we begin to understand the particular.

So this is almost the reverse attitude towards study from a Western thinking viewpoint. The Western viewpoint goes from the more general to the particular, particular, particular, particular, dividing it - there is no end to it. But the zen approach is one, and by doing this one activity, you integrate the particular into it. One is many, many is one -starting to find.

This attitude is like returning to sitting, correcting your posture, coming back to your sitting, and from sitting your life reveals, and you go out to other activities and then return to sitting. That is the title, makes sense? So life is Zazen. That is the title. This title clarifies the particular, and the particular is relative and absolute, but the emphasis is one, one.

Excerpt from a teisho given at the first retreat conducted by Ekai Korematsu in Australia in April 1999



*Mine no iro
Tani no hibiki mo
Mina nagara
Waga Shakamuni no
Koe to sugata to.*

Colors of the mountains
Streams in the valleys;
One in all, all in one,
The voice and body of
Our Shakyamuni Buddha.

One in All, All in One: The Zen Poetry of Dōgen Zenji.

by Leesa Davis

In the spring of 1223, a young Japanese Buddhist monk in search of a true teacher and the authentic transmission of the Dharma, arrived in Sung, China. Almost immediately upon arriving, the young monk, Eihei Dōgen, had an encounter with an elderly Chinese monk who was the tenzo, the cook, in a large monastery. Although Eihei Dōgen was already an accomplished scholar, he soon realized that this tenzo was a living example of the non-separateness of practice and activity and asked for his instruction.

In his *Tenzokyōkun* (Instructions to the Cook) Dōgen Zenji recounts how this tenzo instructed him in the role of language in practice. When Dōgen asked the significance of “characters”, (Dōgen’s term, the Japanese *monji*, has the meaning “words and letters”, but in a broader sense it could be referring to all phenomena as well) and the meaning of practice, the tenzo responded “*One, two, three, four, five,Nothing is concealed throughout the entire universe!*” This teaching is echoed in Dōgen Zenji’s own Shōbō-genzō *Sesshin Sesshō* (Disclosing mind, disclosing nature) in which he stresses the role of “disclosing”, “preaching”, or “explaining” the Dharma:

The essential function of all Buddhas and patriarchs is disclosing mind, disclosing nature. Their everyday life is disclosing mind, disclosing nature; walls, tiles and stones are disclosing mind, disclosing nature....there is no disclosing without nature, and there is no mind without the function of disclosing.

In contrast to some approaches in Zen, which regard verbal communications as unnecessary or inherently misleading, Dōgen Zenji does not seek to reject or abandon language. Rather, he views language as part of the transmission of Dharma, hence all forms of oral and written communication - sutras, epistles, sermons, sayings, poetry and philosophy - are part of the continual unfolding of the awakened mind.

It is important however, to remember that Dōgen Zenji is talking about language that has no fixed point - language that points out reality from all sides and viewpoints. In the Instructions to the Cook, Dōgen Zenji tells us that “*future students must be able to see that side from this side as well as this side from that side.*” Also, in the poem below, he points to the function of language in the expression of Dharma by the poem’s suggestion of a twofold meaning; i.e., that Dharma is not limited to any one particular form of expression, nor can it be reduced to language alone.

Furyu monji
*li suteshi
Sono koto no ha no
Hoka nareba
Fude ni mo ato o
Todome zari keru.*

No reliance on words and letters
Not limited
By language,
It is ceaselessly expressed;
So, too, the way of letters
Can display but not exhaust it.

The translation comes from *The Zen Poetry of Dōgen. Verses from the Mountain of Eternal Peace* by Steven Heine, Tuttle Publishing Company, North Clarendon, NJ, 1997.

Book Reviews

by Gary Youston

Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind

Shunryu Suzuki, John Weatherhill Inc. New York, 1970.

This presentation of some of Shunryu Suzuki's talks on Zen practice is a beautifully written and thoughtfully constructed book. It is appropriate that it is the first book to be reviewed in Myōju, being the book that Ekai recommends to all 'starting' practitioners.

Suzuki Roshi was the first monk of the Soto School to promote practice with a strong emphasis on Zen Meditation (Zazen) in the United States where he taught for 12 years (1959-1971). In that time he established a number of Zen Centres in California and the first Zen training monastery outside of Japan.

The title of this book is taken from Suzuki Roshi's assertion that "*in the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert's there are few*". The book is divided into 3 sections: Right Practice, Right Attitude and Right Understanding, and the chapters in these sections cover topics all practitioners find very relevant such as posture, breathing, bowing, right effort and mistakes in practice. Suzuki Roshi's everydayness and clarity of explanation are themselves exemplifying 'beginner's mind'.

Suzuki Roshi talks about going about one's activities "*like a good bonfire. You should not be a smoky fire. You should burn yourself completely*". Like most Buddhist practice, it sounds simple enough, but when you attempt to actually do it..

So we try (as Ekai would say, "*We make effort.*") Amongst the demands of work, family and friends we sit. Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind not only assists us with *how* to do this, but also reminds us *why*.

From the Zen Kitchen to Enlightenment: Refining Your Life

Zen Master Dōgen and Kōshō Unchiyama, Weatherhill, Inc. New York, 1983.

This book is a combination of Dōgen Zenji's **Instructions for the Zen Cook** and Kōshō Unchiyama Roshi's commentary upon this text.

In Dōgen's **Instructions for the Zen Cook** he explains the duties and responsibilities of the Tenzo (zen cook) and the mind-set and approach with which the Tenzo should carry out his/her duties.

Uchiyama Roshi points out that this set of instructions "*deals not only with the handling of food, but also with our attitude towards all matters and people we encounter in our day-to-day lives. It is a text that shows us concretely how to prepare and manage our personal lives.*" His commentary is thus appropriately titled **How to Cook Your Life**.

Unchiyama Roshi's commentary contains necessary explanations of Dōgen Zenji's terminology, anecdotes and analogies. This is extremely useful if, like myself, you are unsure of the significance of Luling rice, have never heard of the *Chanyuan Qinggui* and couldn't quite work out what Dōgen meant when he wrote "*the dragon's jewels are found in every wave.*"!

Uchiyama Roshi provides us with more than just background understanding and explanation. His commentary also successfully links this thirteenth century instruction for Japanese monks to our everyday modern lives and experiences. He does this by using meaningful anecdotes from his own life, clear modern examples and disarming and insightful humour.

This is an excellent book for lay practitioners as it provides numerous clues on how to integrate Buddhist practice with the demands and responsibilities of a busy life.

Jikishoan Library

Jikishoan is in the process of developing a library of Dharma books at the Essendon Zendo. There is currently a small collection available for loan to members.

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September and October

Sunday Sanzen-kai	Every Sunday at 36 Cambridge St, Collingwood	5.20pm - 7.30pm
Member Practice	Every Thursday at 23, Raleigh St, Essendon	7.00pm - 9.30pm
Ballarat Zendo Sanzen-kai	Every Thursday (Contact Srecko on 5332 2355)	6.45pm - 9.30pm
Practice Study Meeting	Tuesdays: Sept 19 & Oct 17 (Contact Michael Colton on 9350 5570)	7.00pm - 9.00pm
Committee Meeting	Tuesdays: Sept 5, Oct 3 & 31 at 23, Raleigh St, Essendon	7.00pm - 9.30pm

November

Public Talk (Zen Seminar)	Sunday Nov 5 at 36 Cambridge St, Collingwood	5.30pm - 7.00pm
Annual General Meeting	Tuesday Nov 14 at 44 May St, Coburg	7.00pm - 8.00pm
Bendoho 5-Day Retreat	Friday Nov 24 to Wednesday Nov 29 at Adekate Centre, Dean (near Ballarat)	Starts at 6.00pm Ends at 2.00pm
Sunday Sanzen-kai	Every Sunday at 36 Cambridge St, Collingwood	5.20pm - 7.30pm
Member Practice	Every Thursday at 23 Raleigh St, Essendon	7.00pm - 9.30pm
Ballarat Zendo Sanzen-kai	Every Thursday (Contact Srecko on 5332 2355)	6.45pm - 9.30pm
Orientation Course A	Saturdays: 11, 18 at 23 Raleigh St, Essendon	9.00am - 11.00am
Orientation Course B	Sundays: 12, 19 at 23 Raleigh St, Essendon	9.00am - 11.00am
Deepening Practice 1-5	Saturdays: 11, 18 at 23 Raleigh St, Essendon	4.00pm - 6.00pm
Deepening Practice 6-10	Wednesdays: 8, 15, 22 at 23 Raleigh St, Essendon	7.00pm - 9.00pm
Practice Study Meeting	Tuesday Nov 14 (following AGM) (Contact Michael Colton on 9350 5570)	8.00pm - 9.00pm
Committee Meeting	Tuesday 28 at 23 Raleigh St, Essendon	7.00pm - 9.30pm

December

Sunday Sanzen-kai	Sundays 3, 17 at 36 Cambridge St, Collingwood	5.20pm - 7.30pm
Sangha Picnic/Get together	Saturday Dec 2 (venue to be advised)	To be advised
Sangha Day/Precept C'mony	Sunday Dec 10 at 36 Cambridge St, Collingwood	5.20pm - 7.30pm
Orientation Course A (cont)	Saturdays: 2, 9, 16 at 23 Raleigh St, Essendon	9.00am - 11.00am
Orientation Course B (cont)	Sundays: 3, 10, 17 at 23 Raleigh St, Essendon	9.00am - 11.00am
Deepening Practice 1-5 (cont)	Saturdays: 3, 10, 17 at 23 Raleigh St, Essendon	4.00pm - 6.00pm
Deepening Practice 6-10 (cont)	Wednesdays: 6, 13 at 23 Raleigh St, Essendon	7.00pm - 9.00pm
Member Practice	Thursdays: 7, 14, 21 at 23 Raleigh St, Essendon	7.00pm - 9.30pm
Practice Study Meeting	Tuesday 12 (Contact Michael Colton on 9350 5570)	7.00pm - 9.00pm
Ballarat Zendo Sanzen-kai	Every Thursday (Contact Srecko on 5332 2355)	6.45 - 9.30pm

General enquiries may be made at Sunday Sanzen-kai, or by contacting:

Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community
P.O. Box 234,
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