

# Myōju

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## Soto Zen Buddhism in Australia

Volume 2 Issue 4 Winter 2003

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



### Growth and practice

*Excerpt from teisho given by Ekai-oshō at the Easter Retreat 22 April 1999.  
Transcribed by Peter Watts.*

The core of our practice is sitting and everything grows or evolves out of this. Each one of us can be likened to a bud or seed of a tree, full of potential and beginning to sprout. As we begin to grow taller our roots become established and grow deeper. The growth of a tree is measured by the growth patterns that form during a yearly cycle. These rings are an expression of growth in response to the experience of the seasons. Periods of good rainfall and sunshine produce rapid growth, the same with our zazen practice. It feels good when we are experiencing fine conditions, for example, enough sleep, good food, exercise and so forth. These, however, are not the conditions we always encounter as each day, month or season has its unique qualities. There are times when we feel stressed out and are receiving no reward for our efforts. [Laughs]

So the growth and expansive period is over, it's contractive time. In order to continue we may have to lighten our load and, like the trees, shed fruit, leaves and branches in response to the conditions. We concentrate our energies on the core and keep going, keep practising. These can be seen as internal growth periods: the strength



The growth rings and buds of *Acer pensylvanicum* (Pennsylvanian maple) enlarged five times.

of a tree is determined by those growth-rings that form during difficult times. Of course, both types of growth have merit; they represent our inner and outer growth, outer growth being out in the world, for instance, developing friendships, having openness and courage, and so on.

Continuing practice in the midst of these constantly changing conditions brings about growth that is the strength of our practice. It takes courage to learn how to enter the way of the practice, and we begin by sitting. We start to harmonize the body and mind, beginning with the body, just sitting. This is an important point: by sitting we enter the way and gradually develop awareness, seeing things just as they are, accepting all, good and bad, without discrimination.

With experience of the practice we can become healthier, more content with who we are—life becomes a bit easier.

Jikishoan has members who have enjoyed many seasons with us, many summers and winters. It's not been all rosy and springtime, and it's not been all hard going either. With continued practice over the years the core becomes hidden as new growth rings develop.

*continued overleaf*

*from previous page*



In Japan the bamboo known as *madake* (lit. true bamboo) is the most prized of all species. *Madake* is a symbol of strength through adversity, as it grows in only the very coldest conditions. This arduous life gives it an incredibly fine and durable fibre structure. It is used in only the best kendo shinai (training swords), the finest shakuhachi (pictured above), and was even the source of the filament in the first light-bulb ever made. Its botanical name is *phyllostachys bambusoides*.

## Winter 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 and art direction  
Karen Threlfall – Co-ordinator  
Ben Sheppard – Design, layout and production  
Johanna Verberne – Proof-reading  
Peter Watts – Transcriptions  
Barbara Eliasz – Typing  
Ingo Bojak – Typing  
Veronica Pradel – Mailout coordination  
The team at Kinkos – Photocopying

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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*.*

Our practice evolves each year—not just formal practice but informal activities as well. We begin to sprout branches that support our families, children, and so on. Branches grow that form as a response to community needs. It's possible to lose touch with our core and become stressed out as we respond to the many branches in our lives. In the midst of all this we come to retreat and recover a sense of our core and an appreciation of zazen practice.

This pretty much reflects traditional Soto Zen ways. Dogen-zenji reminds us to respect those among the practice who are senior. Not in the ordinary sense of a seniority system, but based on the practice, as rings of growth in our community.

When it was incorporated in 1999, Jikishoan had an initial growth ring of maybe ten people. Perhaps four or five of these remain, they are the present core—respect that. In the second year of Jikishoan another ring began, maybe

*the strength of a tree is determined by those growth rings that form during difficult times*

twenty or twenty-five dedicated people. Four years later they become another ring, another core. By their support for this practice, others are able to come into a provided space and begin. The core people who remain are the ones who continue both external growth and inner growth.

So, with continued practice, we receive strength with each passing year. This process is not revealed in a day or so, it takes time for things to become clear. Actual life situations may be hard, but if you put yourself into the practice wholeheartedly you find peace, strength and a sense of belonging.

Two birds  
One pond  
Splash  
No horizon

Soshin  
Easter Retreat



# Celebrating this life

The final Easter Retreat teisho, given by Ekai-oshō on 23 April 2003.  
Transcribed and edited by Peter Watts.

One of the very basic things to know about Buddhist practice is that it is fundamentally a celebration of life. We came into this world as human, which amongst all life forms is very precious and rare. When we lose sight of this life being a celebrated one, we lose everything. Not only are we born into human form, but most people receive a healthy body, with healthy breath and brain. Unfortunately, some people enter this world incomplete and never function fully as a human. Most are very fortunate being born human; it is both rare and precious. If we miss this point, we can waste our lives looking for another life in some other place. Appreciating how fortunate we are, no matter what the circumstances look like, makes our problems dissolve automatically. This is part of the universal message of Buddhism.

For the Buddhist practitioner, learning to be more awakened and aware has another kind of preciousness and celebration. One has the chance to meet the Buddha-dharma teachings. These teachings speak of six realms. The human realm is characterised by feelings and emotions that form a basis from which the other realms appear. The world appears differently depending on how we feel about it. When we feel terrible, we create a world for ourselves, where there is no future and only emotional pain. We move toward complaint. When we are feeling happy, everything is wonderful with a complete absence of pain. The basis for these perceptions is within our emotional feeling centre. So you don't have to wait for the next life to experience heaven; you don't have to worry about hell, either, because you have already experienced it. [Laughs] One who is celebrating life sees that each of these qualities is what life is all about: sometimes pleasure, sometimes pain, everything is included.

We are trained to think, however, that our lives should be a certain way. Life should be free of problems, comfortable and easy. We are taught to distinguish between conditions—for example, this is great, this is no good, that is much better, and so on. We find situations change swiftly; we are

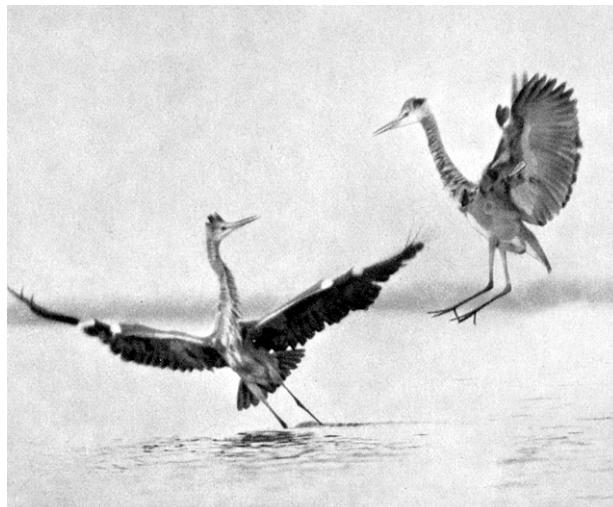
satisfied briefly while conditions continue, but there is no guarantee.

Buddhism talks about meeting with the Dharma, which means meeting with the reality of existence. This is the message of enlightenment, recognising the nature of things as impermanent—everything changes. The traditional approach to studying Buddhism is to recognise the impermanence of all things, and this really is the door to the world we live in. The Theravādan tradition regards meditation as the key to that door and, through study of objects, we recognise that they exist because of our consciousness. Dharma is really about objects that sustain our consciousness. The ordinary view is that these things are all separate, subject and object. They are, however, all connected! A traditional meditation exercise was to sit by an open grave and meditate on a corpse.

In witnessing the decay, you can experience a strong impact on your own being and the realisation of impermanence.

A less dramatic way to understand this same quality of impermanence is to carefully observe nature. With the change of seasons, growth and decay, rebirth and so on, we find the basic laws of nature. This method of study is called the *Shirabaka* way or *Pratiaka* Buddha. The impermanence of things leads to emptiness; the two are the same, actually. Everything is in a state of change although we are unable to perceive this. Reality simply 'is as it is'. The technical term for this is in Sanskrit, *tathata*—'as is' or 'thus' or 'suchness'. The Buddha functions this way, coming then going, thus comes from truth then contradicts this, thus returns to truth. *Tathagata* is the representation of this phenomenon. The impermanent nature of the objective world is understandable but becomes more difficult when it comes to oneself. So realising self-nature is to recognise there are innumerable selves coming and going.

*continued on page five*



Myōju means 'bright pearl'



## TENZO-RYO UPDATE

Hannah Forsyth, Tenzo

The recent Easter retreat at Greyfriars gave the Tenzo-ryo another opportunity to practice our oryoki cooking. Ekai-oshō cooked the breakfasts and Peter Watts as Tenzo, with Fukuten Bev Cowan, Patrick Callanan and Lisa Jacka assisting, kept everybody well fed and content.

At the Sanzen-kai suppers we have some welcome contributions from newcomers Graham Cameron, Toni Morton, Kiyoko Taylor and Jennifer Timms. This is just as well as the numbers of people staying for supper is increasing—we often have between twenty and twenty-five members and guests eating. And a special thank you to all those who stay and help clean up.

The cosiness of a retreat kitchen :

*Roasting sesame seeds*

*One pops out*

*Warm winter*

Mitsu Suzuki

Winter 1975

San Francisco

## SHIISUI-RYO UPDATE

Peter Watts, Shissui

Aside from repairs to notice board and altar, energies these past few months have been focused on forward planning. A productive meeting was held with our accountant to discuss setting up a capital endowment fund and also receiving deductible gift-recipient status from the Australian Tax Office.

Some very tentative steps have been taken toward setting up fee-for-service meditation sessions in the corporate sector. Formative discussions are in progress regarding establishing a ryo to grow food at a community garden or plot. This food could be used by the Tenzo-ryo, as well as being distributed to people in need or used in a soup kitchen. If you are interested in assisting with any of these projects, please give me a call on 5470 5923.

## BALLARAT ZENDO UPDATE

Lorraine Collishaw, Kansu

*'Learn from life's oldest living things: trees. They impressively break forth with buds and colours—but know innately when it's time to shut down and be unimpressive.'*

When this issue goes to print it will be winter, but, as I write this, it is still autumn—a fairly impressive time in Ballarat with its beautiful autumn colourings, magnificent sunny days and crisp clear nights. However, winter in Ballarat can be decidedly unimpressive—grey and cold and often bleak!

When I write this report there is always a feeling of wanting to make it impressive, but sometimes there is nothing impressive to report, except that we still sit, walk, chant and drink tea on Thursday nights at the Ballarat Zendo. People come and people go, and some stay to keep the Sangha alive—and it is good.

As we approach our fourth birthday, we have many people to thank for their support—but none more than Seizan Radman. It was he who established this group and continued to put great energy, commitment and love into its development. We are planning a thank you dinner for him in recognition of his gift to us (and also to have some fun).

Each month we look forward to Ekai-sensei's visits and are very grateful for the wisdom and guidance he brings. In his busy schedule we are aware of the huge commitment he makes each month to be with us.

We were very happy to welcome David Skene, who visited us one Thursday night from Hamilton. David and a small group here have been practicing together at Hamilton and we hope they all can visit us sometime.

And so, whilst we often don't appear to be doing anything very impressive here, just being here, being unimpressive is pretty impressive—especially when the temperature drops to below zero on a Ballarat winter night.

Everyone is very welcome to attend Sanzen-kai—Thursdays, 7.30pm (7pm if you're new) at 44 Armstrong Street, North Ballarat. (Sandy tells us we are soon to be moving across the road to a bigger and brighter Zendo!)

## GUEST SPEAKER

*Manjusiddha (Peter Mitchelson)*

Sunday Sanzen-kai

20 July 2003 5.30–7.30pm

Manjusiddha is an ordained member of the Western Buddhist Order in Brunswick.



## ANNUAL DINNER

The Inaugural Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community Annual Dinner will take place on Saturday, 12 July 2003. The time will be 7.00 pm for 7:30 pm start. The venue will be:

Wild Yak Restaurant

97 Smith Street, Fitzroy

Phone: 9417 6661

(Booking under "Jikishoan")

Cost: \$20/\$15 (concession)

Please RSVP to Oscar Roos on 9326 6756 (BH) or by email [oscaroos@ozonline.com.au](mailto:oscaroos@ozonline.com.au)

RSVP by Sunday, 6 July 2003.

## FIFTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will be held on Sunday 10 August from 7pm, after Sunday Sanzen-kai. Reports on the year's activities will be presented and committee members elected. Please note that only fully paid financial members may vote at the AGM.

## MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Julie Martindale, Fusu

The committee would like to express its thanks to all members and friends who have made it financially possible to continue our activities this year, through membership commitment, friend subscriptions, general donations, dana and active support in other areas. Membership/friend subscriptions are a substantial part of our income, almost \$5000, and we depend on this generosity to continue. We hope that Jikishoan's activities have been helpful to you this year and invite you to renew your membership for next year.

Membership subscriptions for the next year (July 2003–June 2004) are due on the first of July. Subscriptions are \$100 or \$80 concession, and half yearly instalments can be made. Please note that the former associate member rate is no longer applicable. Friends subscriptions are \$20. Membership renewal notices will be issued shortly.

New people wishing to join as members can collect an information sheet and membership application form from the Jiroku, front desk, at Sunday Sanzen-kai.

There are a few people with outstanding subscriptions for this year ending 30 June. Please check with the Jiroku, or phone Julie on 9499 2141 if you are not sure if you're paid up.

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# Winter Kitchen

## Oven roasted tamari root vegetables

Hannah Forsyth

500g pumpkin  
small red onion  
baby carrots  
parsnips  
small beetroot  
2tbsp tamari  
2tbsp vegetable oil

Heat the oven to 200° C

Wash and scrub pumpkin,  
cut into thin wedges  
and bevel edges.

Cut washed and peeled parsnips into  
quarters.

Peel and halve  
beetroots if small,  
quarters or chunks if large.

Wash and scrub baby carrots  
— leave whole.

Peel and quarter onions.

Put vegetables into large flat pan or on a  
baking tray, combine 2tbsp tamari,  
2tbsp oil,  
sea salt and pepper,  
add to vegetables  
and toss to coat.

Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, shaking the  
pan and stirring vegetables from time to  
time.

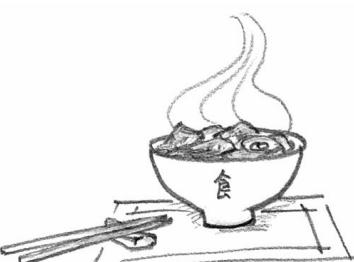
### Sauce

2tbsp rice vinegar  
1 finely chopped pickled garlic clove  
1tbsp olive oil  
1tbsp sugar  
sea salt and pepper  
1tbsp chopped coriander leaves  
(ginger 'needles' if  
weather  
is cold)  
dash of ponzu

Combine vinegar, garlic,  
oil, sugar, salt and  
pepper in a pan and  
heat slowly until  
sugar dissolves.

Allow to cool then add  
coriander, ginger if desired  
and ponzu.

When cooked remove from oven and  
drizzle sauce over the top before serving...  
yum!



## Celebrating this life

*continued from page three*

One of the basic stances of Zen practice is not to bother too much about outer things, people, and so on, but to turn inward to study oneself. We find here that we have both subject and object. We think of self and other; Zen practice, however, emphasises dual nature in one. No object, no subject! So body and mind is self, revealing that self-nature is constantly aware of all types of selves. Not becoming stuck with one self is very important. Allowing all selves to come and go is a very revealing process. This is beginning to sound very sophisticated, but really you only have to sit with a healthy body and mind, allowing the garbage to come and go [Laughs]. The nature of *shikantaza* (just sitting) is whole-hearted engagement, without having to put any extra in your practice. Just be yourself with your body and breath. Do this without trying to grab onto it, you don't 'know' what you are doing but continue to do it—wholeheartedly. It can be very difficult to explain one's practice to someone who is not



*...really you only have to sit with a healthy  
body and mind, allowing the garbage  
to come and go.*

practicing [Laughs]. As we continue to directly realise the whole, we realise words do not convey the experience. We may also notice we are enjoying life more and, if we are having a difficult time, it's an opportunity to clean up our body and mind. If we are feeling positive, we are experiencing growth. As we learn to give more credit to each experience, we eventually give full credit to the experiences in our lives.

Born into this life, whether receiving something favourable or unfavourable, we are moving towards our own death. Suzuki-roshi said 'when I die, I suffer'. There is no confusion about death, it is simply not a problem. So you don't have to change anything. As a matter of fact if you change anything, it's not working. Everyone proceeds into life with their own conditions as life's way of revealing itself. Small self becomes identified with larger self and no longer troubles us. We return to sitting, locating one's core in sitting. Everything else is related to integration, dealing with more complex realms of self and others. Separation may come along—then life is unable to reveal itself. The Buddhist practitioner promotes enlightenment, being in accord with reality, sitting on a cushion with body, mind and breath.

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## Teaching schedule June to August 2003

Teachings are given personally by Ekai Korematsu-oshō. Brochures providing more information are available. For addresses and contact information, please see overleaf.

### Orientation course

For beginners and those with some experience. Five sessions.

9–11am Saturdays  
7, 14, 21, 28 June, 5 July

9–11am Saturdays  
19, 26 July, 2, 9, 16 August  
Moonee Ponds  
non-members: \$60  
members: donation

### Deepening practice course

An extension of the Orientation course. 10 sessions.

#### Course A (sessions 1 to 5)

5–7pm Saturdays  
7, 14, 21, 28 June, 5 July  
7–9pm Wednesdays  
23, 30 July, 6, 13, 20 August

#### Course B (sessions 6 to 10)

7–9pm Wednesdays  
11, 18, 24 June, 2, 9 July  
5–7pm Saturdays  
19, 26 July, 2, 9, 16 August

Moonee Ponds  
non-members: \$60 for five sessions  
members: donation

### One-day workshop

An intensive orientation workshop for beginners and those with some experience. Cost includes lunch and morning and afternoon tea.

Sunday 15 June  
Sunday 20 July  
Hawthorn  
non-members: \$60  
members: donation

#### Advertising Space

Now available in Myoju.  
Minimal rates for the box ads as shown in this edition and for line advertising. Please call Karen on 9859 6329 (AH) or email chakradesign@ozemail.com.au

### Bendoho Retreat

An intensive residential Zen experience, including daily chosan (morning tea) teaching and teisho (afternoon Dharma talk). Cost depends on the venue and the number of days you participate and includes meals and accommodation.

Five days  
6pm Friday 22 August  
to 2pm Wednesday 27 August  
Mount Eliza



### Sanzen-kai

Zazen and kinhin meditation, tea ceremony, chanting service and Dharma talk. For beginners, members and friends.

5.30–7.30pm Sundays except 24 August  
Newcomers: please arrive by 5.15pm  
Collingwood  
non-members: \$7  
members: \$5  
Participants are welcome to stay for an informal dinner: \$5

7–9.30pm Thursdays except  
Newcomers: please arrive by 6.45pm  
Ballarat  
non-members: \$7  
members: \$5

### Member sitting

Zazen and kinhin meditation, tea ceremony and chanting service for members.

7–9pm Thursdays  
Moonee Ponds

### Tuesday evening practice

Zazen and kinhin meditation, chanting service and informal tea.

7–9pm every Tuesday except committee meeting dates—please check calendar.  
Moonee Ponds

Uh - Oh

Zafus and zabutons  
Meditation supplies  
Incense sticks  
Please contact

Julie  
9499 2141



DAY	DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	PLACE	CONTACT
<b>Weekly Activities</b>					
Sundays	weekly	5.30–7.30pm	Sanzen-kai (except 24/8 - retreat period)	Collingwood	Jinesh
Tuesdays	weekly	7–9pm	Tuesday Practice Study/Zazenkai	Moonee Ponds	Jinesh
Thursdays	weekly	7–9.30pm	Sanzen-kai Ekai-oshō present 10/7, 14/8	Ballarat	Lorraine/Rod
Thursdays	weekly	7–9pm	Member Practice	Moonee Ponds	Biggi

**JUNE**

Sunday	22	9am–5pm 5.30pm	One-day workshop Member talk at Sanzenkai	Hawthorn East Collingwood	Biggi
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**JULY**

Tuesday	8	7pm	Committee meeting	Moonee Ponds	Mark
Thursday	10	7–9.30pm	Ekai-oshō Dharma talk at Sanzen-kai	Ballarat	Lorraine/Rod
Saturday	12	7.30pm	Inaugural annual dinner	Fitzroy	Oscar
Sunday	13	5.30–7.30pm	Jukai (precepts) ceremony	Collingwood	Ekai
Sunday	20	9am–5pm 5.30–7.30pm	One-day workshop Guest speaker at Sanzen-kai	Hawthorn East Collingwood	Biggi Biggi

**AUGUST**

Tuesday	5	7–9pm	Committee meeting	Moonee Ponds	Mark
Friday	8		Deadline for content—spring Myoju		Karen
Sunday	10	7.30pm	Annual General Meeting	Collingwood	Peter
Thursday	14	7–9.30pm	Ekai-oshō Dharma talk at Sanzen-kai	Ballarat	Lorraine/Rod
Friday	22– Wednesday	6pm– –2pm	5-Day Bendoho Retreat (start) 5-Day Bendoho Retreat (finish)	Mt Eliza	Gary

**SEPTEMBER**

Sunday	7	5.30–7.30pm	Member talk at Sanzen-kai (ino)	Collingwood	Martin/Biggi
Sunday	14	5.30–7.30pm	Member talk at Sanzen-kai (kannin)	Collingwood	Martin/Biggi
Thursday	18	7pm	Myoju mail-out samu	Moonee Ponds	Karen
Sunday	21	5.30–7.30pm	Member talk at Sanzen-kai (fusu)	Collingwood	Martin/Biggi
Sunday	28	5.30–7.30pm	Member talk at Sanzen-kai (kansu)	Collingwood	Martin/Biggi

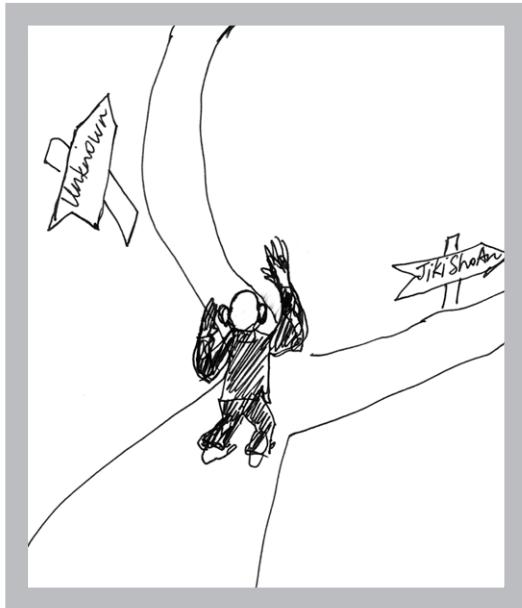
**ADDRESSES**

Ballarat	Echoes of Y's	44 Armstrong Street
Collingwood	Australian Shiatsu College	1st Floor, 36 Cambridge Street
Hawthorn East	Glanmore Estate	36 Havelock Road
Moonee Ponds	Jikishoan Zendo	11 St James Street
Mount Eliza	Greyfriars	Sunnyside Road

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

General Enquiries	Secretary	Publicity
Ekai-oshō/Deniz Yener 9370 5847 (BH)	Mark Sommers 5428 4859	Karen Threlfall 0418 342 674
Abbot/Director Ekai-oshō 9370 5847	Ballarat Zendo Lorraine Collishaw 5333 2063 Rod Hanton 5331 1567 (AH)	Inaugural dinner Oscar Roos 9326 6756 (BH)
Archive and library Bev Cowan 9742 3191 Haydn Halse 9706 0529	Membership enquiries John Bolton 9397 1017	Tuesday member practice Jinesh Wilmot 9480 4849 Karen Threlfall 0418 342 674
Courses, one-day workshops, Thursday member practice Biggi Spiro 9499 5489	Kitchen practice Hannah Forsyth 9687 6983	
Collingwood Zendo/retreats Jinesh Wilmot 9480 4849 Gary Youston 5977 9648	Treasurer Julie Martindale 9499 2141	
	Building and property Peter Watts 5470 5923	

3月  
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*...Let me be like a piece of driftwood, in a winding stream,  
heading into the unknown.  
Stopping by one sand bank, then another,  
caught in the bushes for a while, or trapped by the rocks.  
And then suddenly, pushed onwards again,  
into the flowing stream.*

*Seizan Radman*

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### **Next Issue**

The next issue of Myoju will be released at the spring equinox on 23 September 2003. The deadline for content for the next issue is Friday 8 August 2003. If you would like to contribute or advertise in the 2003 spring 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** 直証庵  
zen buddhist community

#### **Melbourne**

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Essendon 3040                Email: [jikishoan@alphalink.com.au](mailto:jikishoan@alphalink.com.au)  
Victoria Australia            Website: [www.jikishoan.org](http://www.jikishoan.org)

#### **Ballarat**

44 Armstrong Street North  
Ballarat Victoria Australia  
Phone: +61 3 5333 2063 or +61 3 5331 1567 (AH)