

Myōju

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Soto Zen Buddhism in Australia

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Collective Effort

Selflessness

A Dharma talk by Ekai Korematsu

Ino Ryo

Members of the Ino ryo share their experiences.

Tenzo Ryo

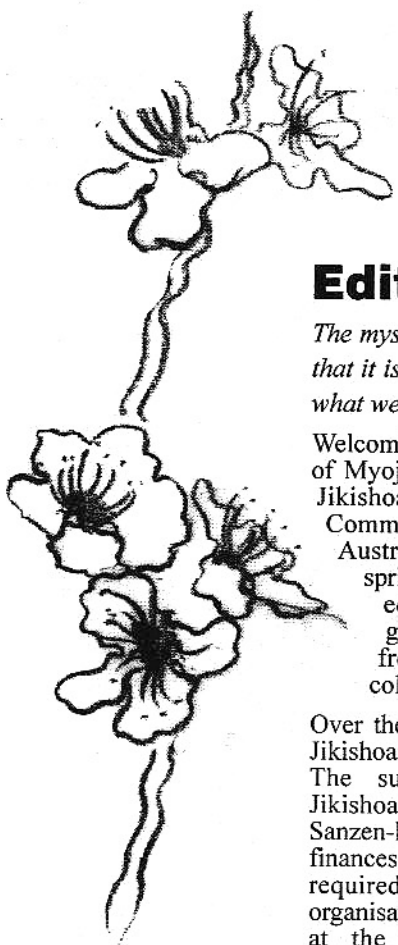
An article about the Tenzo

Fusu Ryo

Jikishoan treasurer talks about her role

Collective Effort

A Dharma talk by Ekai Korematsu



Editorial

*The mystery is
that it is possible to do
what we don't know how to do.'*

Welcome to the spring edition of Myoju, the magazine of the Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community in Melbourne, Australia. Given that it is spring, the theme of this edition is the new growth, which comes from combined, or collective effort.

Over the last three years or so Jikishoan has grown in size. The successful running of Jikishoan's activities: Sunday Sanzen-kai, retreats, magazines, finances and membership, has required more and more organisation. This edition looks at the new growth within Jikishoan—the ryo groupings that carry out all of these tasks. Its aim is to highlight the value of collective effort, as a complement to the individual effort we make when seated on our zafu.

Ekai describes the practice as a 'body based practice' which 'gives us experience through action'. Working as part of a ryo provides a wonderful opportunity to live out the practice dynamically, to learn to just do rather than to over-think things, and to reduce the separation between the practice

and 'ordinary life'. Integrating the practice with everyday living is an ongoing task. Transferring the sense of balance and centredness that can arise from sitting to dealing with problems such as burning the toast, missing the train, dealing with customers and colleagues and so on can be difficult. In the Dharma talk entitled 'Selflessness', Ekai points out the centrality of selflessness to all Buddhist teaching and practice. He says that 'selflessness manifests when you forget about your body and just act' (p. 6). Ringing the various bells as part of the Ino ryo has taught me the truth of this—they are a great indication of self-consciousness. Things go best when there is just bell ringing, not 'Gary ringing the bell'.

Cooking as part of the Tenzo ryo, or timing the rounds in the zendo as part of the Ino ryo provides an opportunity for us to work with others. Biggi writes that 'ryo practice for me has been practice in relationship to others' (p.7). Hannah realised that her role as Tenzo wasn't about food, 'it was about dealing with people' (p.9). Julie comments that ryo practice is 'about people practicing as individuals and practicing as a sangha at the same time ... if we lose sight of one or the other then we can find ourselves getting stressed needlessly' (p.13) Working as part of a ryo group allows us to integrate the practice into everyday activities. It complements the more passive activity of sitting, and as such provides a balance.

In the Dharma talk 'Collective Effort' (p.14) Ekai points out the importance of practicing together. He says that rather than getting 'spaced out' when sitting, 'thanks to the ... helping power of practice communities ... our feet are still on the ground and the ground is a very solid ground based on reality'.

Thank you to all who have contributed ideas, articles and artwork to this edition of Myoju. This publication is the result of the work and contributions of many, many people—it is an example of the collective and active aspect of the practice. Thank you in particular to Georgia and Leesa for their proofreading and suggestions, and to Karen for her tireless work in design layout. And as always, thank you to Ekai for sharing this practice.

Gary Youston



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Diacritical marks on Japanese words and names, such as Dogen Zenji, are not included in this issue, due to their not being able to be accessed through the software package and typefaces used for production.

Brushwork illustrations by Anthony Woodward.

1. Brown, Edward Espe, Tassajara Cooking, Shambhala Publications, Boston, 1986.

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 Bendoho, the original way of practice as prescribed by Dogen 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. Workshops 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 USA 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 there with his wife Deniz and young sons Sunao and Shoan. Ekai is the spiritual leader at Jikishoan and is also Zen practice instructor for Antioch University's study program in India and Japan.

Community Positions

Ekai Korematsu	<i>President (Docho)</i>
Jinesh Wilmot	<i>Vice-President (Ino)</i>
Julie Martindale	<i>Treasurer (Fusu)</i>
Alison Hutchison	<i>Secretary (Shoji)</i>
Rod Hanton	<i>Ballarat Zendo Coordinator (Kansu)</i>
Hannah Forsyth	<i>Head Cook (Tenzo)</i>
Leesa Davis	<i>Archives (Chizo)</i>
Biggi Spiro	<i>Guest Manager (Shika)</i>
Peter Watts	<i>Property Manager (Shissui)</i>
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Selflessness

The relationship of our individual practice and community practice can sometimes raise questions for lay Zen practitioners. In this Dharma talk on Selflessness, Ekai Osho Korematsu talks about putting aside the idea of an 'I' that does things and entering into action wholeheartedly. Attempting to actualize this understanding is one of the foundations of sangha practice which gives us an opportunity to see each and every ordinary function in the world as being an extension of practice. Dogen Zenji detailed the manner for carrying out community practice in his 'Eihei Shingi' and this forms the basis for Jikishoan's ryo practice roles and groupings. According to Ekai's master Ikko Narasaki Roshi, these forms are the essential function of the Buddha Dharma, and community practice, based on these forms, is 'critical to the purpose of embodying Dogen Zenji's Zen'. Ekai's teaching on Selflessness is therefore a good starting point for our exploration of 'Collective Effort'.



Selflessness is central to all Buddhist traditions. Without tapping selflessness all other aspects of Buddhist teaching and practice are peripheral; you may talk about compassion, you may talk about wisdom but if selflessness is not in the center of the whole thing then these things are just peripheral. From the beginning of Buddhist teaching and practice the teaching of no self and the practice of no self has been central, without selflessness there can be no genuine compassion or genuine wisdom. That is very clear as far as tradition is concerned

In earlier times in the West people couldn't connect with this idea of no self and took it as a very negative idea, an idea of self denial or something like that. In those times Buddhism itself seemed to be very negative. Of course as long as our ideas or practice are based on the self or on a strong sense of ego then when we hear something about selflessness and no self it clashes with that, goes against those strong ideas of self and seems very negative. The tendency then is for us to try to grasp selflessness or no self as a kind of idea or understanding and we end up with difficulties—you just can't get it! So again we have a kind of clash, from this point of view we can't get it and we can't grasp it but we make a tremendous effort to try to figure it out. People generate ideas about it and start to talk about it and once again it's not true selflessness it's just peripheral.

How do we overcome this? We're not actually interested in ideas or in the concept of selflessness, what we are interested in is how that is possible, how to actually do it, that is what's most important. Trying to understand by words, trying to figure it out by definitions or through somebody else's experience is very difficult. We may get some good ideas about it and gain some knowledge about it but those ways will never get into the core of it, to the heart of it.

So how are we to overcome this dilemma? We put ourselves into practice, we engage with practice and in this way this central point is directly pointed out. We need to understand, however, that human beings are 99% selfish! You are selfish. I am selfish and as soon as you forget this there are problems.

So the approach that we take to the practice of selflessness is very important. What kind of approach? Of course, any attempt to get into the practice of

selflessness or no self can only start from consciousness levels. This very self is what your consciousness is, you don't need to worry about getting totally unconscious about it. But as long as you remain in the domain of consciousness you never get out from self: self-seeking-self or self-affirming-self. You may have good intentions but it's always I. I that's doing it. I'm doing it. I have a good heart. I do that. Of course this doesn't work and sometimes people get upset. In this approach self is always the doer, it's always self that is doing and it's very, very difficult. The question is how do you overcome that difficulty?

The point is to learn about ourselves, to recognize that we have limitations, we are 99% selfish. You know, as soon as we become conscious of what we are doing our egos start operating, our activities become ego orientated but even so, we can come close to selflessness, near to selflessness or no self, near to it, not exactly 100% but near.

It's interesting at the Buddhist Summer School a Tibetan teacher from Denmark, the Venerable Tarab Tulku, was talking about nearness and that is usually something that a human tries to do, we try to do—to get close, to get near, but as long as you have some kind of understanding, some kind of idea about what selflessness is, as long as we are operating from that basis then you never get into the nearness, it is just the self operating. It is your own self moving forward against reality. Thinking 'this is selfless action' or 'I am practicing selflessness' is no help either, thinking like that is just delusion.

Nearness. If we can point to a deeper place in practice, not at consciousness levels but more toward the level of the breath then nearness occurs. In just taking a breath, in that moment the ego that abides in consciousness levels is removed. The natural act of taking a breath is outside of the cycle of consciousness. It's a very simple thing when you think about, in the sitting meditation, in practice, you may be thinking 'I'm doing good' or 'No, I'm doing bad' and so on but when you just rest your mind, just breathe naturally and if you're able to do so, suddenly some sense of peace, some sense of quietness arises in your body and mind even in the midst of the pain. And because this natural sense of peace feels like something is happening, that you are getting some sense of what practice is, then sometimes you push harder, thinking that you are somehow near but expecting more and pushing harder does not bring you to nearness. On retreat you notice when you sit for seven days all you can do is work the breath and all that the breath can offer is nearness but you expect more than that and push it. That is—you forget that the breath functions as nearness naturally and you push away from that nearness.

Finally, selflessness becomes clear, if you're able to just sit, just do it then no self becomes actualized and breath goes deeper. Actually, in sitting you don't consciously know what you are doing but if you your spine is clearly aligned, back straight, and your hands are making a circle with thumbs joined, resting easy, naturally, then breath goes deeper to the body level, to physical action. Through that practice selflessness is

already there, at this time the notion of ego is not present and ideas of good and bad are dropped.

Sometimes you are distracted in practice and sometimes more elevated realms of consciousness appear and you think 'this is not what I'm supposed to be doing' and you return to the breath, to the spine, but at other times it feels too exciting, too good, 'this must be enlightenment!' 'I'm getting close!' 'I must push harder!' As soon as this happens it is ego operating, as soon as you start to feel good about it, it is the 'I' operating but if you don't follow that then you are already perfectly practicing no self.

So in the midst of consciousness arising if you continue practicing with no self at the center then things are slowly integrated. So how we are meditating, how we are approaching the sitting is very important. If you are meditating to solve some problem you are totally in the realm of the selfish, this belongs to the 99% and you have very little chance to be selfless but as soon as you drop this, take a deep breath and start to breathe naturally then nearness comes and nearness has nothing to do with good and bad this is just the way it is. Just here, just breathing, there's no why or how involved just nearness.

From the beginning everyone is already gifted, everyone has the full potential to actualize it but very few people see that selflessness is a kind of treasure that we have, that is the source of freedom, freedom from self clinging. Everybody without exception works on self. So when we talk about selflessness first we need to talk about what it means to you as an individual person then this sitting practice starts to make sense. The relationship between self and selflessness doesn't get mixed up and you don't get confused 'Am I being compassionate by sitting like this?' When you clarify what it means to you as an individual person you don't mix things up. This individual sitting space of absolute value is like your own home, your home, you can relax you can be yourself, relax settle down. You don't need to say I, I, I. At home you don't need to say anything but out there

you have to say 'Shall I do this? Do you want me to do this?' and so on.

Sitting practice should not be

mixed up with something you do, with activity that you do outside. Outside is in relationship. However, if we develop the right understanding about practice and the way that we practice, we practice in this kind of very limited way, settling ourselves, then no self can easily apply to various situations, various activities. The center is being held, the core of it, which is selflessness, is not being missed. But if you are busy with something like 'I caused a problem to the other person, I was so selfish' or something like that then you are caught up with that kind of stuff and you always go into the viscous circles of ego driven activity, sometimes you feel good about it 'I was very compassionate, I was so selfless' sometimes you feel bad and on and on.

Those are the things that the ego, the self does. We need to know those things and if you are too busy with your own self dealing with mundane stuff then you have very little chance to know about your own self.

From the beginning of Buddhist teaching and practice the teaching of no self and the practice of no self has been central, without selflessness there can be no genuine compassion or genuine wisdom.



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Dogen Zenji speaks about the way in Shobogenzo Genjokoan 'To study the Buddha Way is to study the self, to study the self is to forget the self' So to learn the self we need to forget the self and as long as you are interested in thinking about whether I'm doing good or bad or all those things you will never get to the place where you can talk about these things. This can be overcome by practice, you can come to nearness very quickly if you just learn to yawn. In yawning you are very near, not too far, yes it's that simple! Then the arguments stop, some thoughts may come but no one continues to argue after yawning! It's too silly to do something after it. In that sense animals are much better than us, they know, they put themselves back into position, they tune their position and they can resume their life after taking a nap, on a warm day a cat takes a nap, wakes up, stretches as if nothing had happened, right back in the spot, very near.

So we are not trying to become like a cat but the example of an animal is just to point out that way. If you are not quite sure about the body part, the physical part, then at least you can pay attention to the breath. Breath is important—if we just reach pure breath, just breathing without operating your consciousness then it's wonderful. On retreat, towards the end of three or four days, you start to think it's wonderful to breathe! I feel wonderful just being able to breathe because you are so near to it. Ultimately, if you put your body into practice, if you put the practice forward it doesn't matter what your mind is telling you. When the body acts in accord with selflessness, in a selfless mode everything is revealed.

And so to be truly selfless, even this body is thrown away, this body itself is offered. That is the final thing. Throughout history spiritual teachers have pointed this out and have shown examples of offering their very own bodies in the practice and also in social action. People who don't know anything about spiritual practice see it as a self sacrifice but the practitioner doesn't think of it as his own body, that part is dropped.

Not only in Buddhist traditions but in any spiritual tradition you can find good examples of selflessness in social action. Buddhist traditions tend to go into the meditation room to try to touch selflessness, you know sometimes they don't do much about it but in Christian traditions through social actions they offer their body, they dedicate their body, it doesn't matter what you believe in when that happens it's selflessness in action.

One of the Christian stories that impressed me very much was a novel based on a true story that I read when I was about 20. It was about a ferry boat that sank between the northern part of Japan and the main island. The trip between the islands is very long—9 or 12 hours and the ferries were huge, they carried railway engines, trucks and so forth. It was typhoon time and a typhoon struck and the ferry began to sink. Of course the officers were helping people onto the lifeboats but the ship was sinking very fast and they couldn't get everybody. In the midst of that scene there was a Christian priest helping people get into the boats and he remained until the very last, helping, not trying to save himself.

This story had a powerful impact on me. It's the ultimate thing. 'Wow! Could I do it?' A ship starts to sink or a plane begins to have problems, 'Where's the parachute?' What would I do?

This selflessness manifests when you forget about your body and just act, those kind of things are just dropped and activity takes over. It's very difficult to be

completely selfless but we can at least be near and if you become comfortable enough with nearness, if you practice nearness then your breath becomes naturally comfortable because you are not making a conscious effort do this or to do that then you become comfortable in nearness and there is the practice of no self. So put the emphasis on your body, throw your whole self into this posture.

Here, I'm talking about meditation but of course it's different when we go out in the market place or to work, in those situations there are actual relationships taking place but still the attitude is the same. We can't act selflessly if we are operating with calculative thinking, measuring, calculating what's good, what's bad, getting caught up in ideas of right and wrong instead of acting. The sequence in Buddhist practice is not the mind-consciousness, breath or speech and then the body but always first the body, speech and then mind/consciousness. We need to understand this, if this is very clear and it is applied then selfless qualities are naturally developed.

This is difficult because we think this and that, we learn to think calculatively. To meet with a person that you had a big argument with yesterday is not easy, today you meet again and you don't feel good about it because you are thinking all those things that happened yesterday but learn to drop it, just be able to meet and shake hands. That simple action already overcomes the ego problem you have. What the mind is doing is not so important, the mind has its own functions, just allow it to have its own functions, sometimes the mind is upset, sometimes the mind is happy but we shouldn't take it too seriously. We can take it like saliva, you know, something the body produces naturally but we don't often see it like that.

Selflessness is an important topic and I hope that you are interested in how to practice it, how to deepen, how to deepen nearness. Ultimately, if a selfless action takes place you don't know what is happening, actually if you are acting selflessly you don't have the slightest idea about how selfless you are, what you did or anything like that, you just forget about it and life goes on. If you had a good sitting or the engagement in sitting was very good you forget about it as soon as the sitting period is over, you know you go from that space on to the next, you don't think, 'Oh that sitting was so good I should bring that kind of samadhi or concentration into day to day life' that's not necessary. But our small minds try to fix those kind of ideas. Suzuki Roshi simply said 'develop non-gaining ideas'. Develop non-gaining ideas and in day to day life we learn to keep the same attitude to give our whole body in action and hopefully in the practice of non-gaining, the body and action come together. This kind of body based practice, gives us experience through action and we slowly learn to express what that is and later on we realize 'Oh I wasn't that bad'.

Edited and transcribed by Leesa Davis

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Ino Ryo

'The ino job is called the delight of the assembly in China. [In caring for the assembly] the ino is just like the rudder of a boat crossing the great river or a long rainy spell after a drought.' Here members of Jikishoan's Ino ryo, share the experience of working with each other, and with the community, in their collective role of caring for the zendo and sangha.

'Ino'

Ino is a term derived from the original Sanskrit and means 'Supervisor of Monks Affairs'. In China the Ino was called the Giver of Joy to the assembly. I believe the reason for the latter term is that when the Ino ryo works together in a smooth and unobtrusive way then this can help to create an atmosphere of support in which the members of the community can practice together. I think it can be said that in such an atmosphere there is joy.

Here in the Jikishoan Community, which is of course predominantly a lay community, the Ino's role or function is to co-ordinate the zendo based activities of Sunday Sanzenkai as well as the various retreats held throughout the year.

This is done by working together with other members of the Ino ryo, or group. The Ino ryo is at present comprised of: the Ino, the Doan (assistant Ino), the Fukudo (assistant Doan), and the Jikido. Generally the Ino, Doan and Fukudo are responsible for leading the chanting and maintaining the format appropriate to the activity at hand. The Jikido ensures that zazen and kinhin periods are timed and that the various signals are clear and performed in such a way that the practitioners are in no doubt what the next activity is. The Ino ryo also works closely with the other ryo, especially the Tenzo (kitchen) ryo, and of course receives instruction from Ekai sensei.

As no two Sanzenkai or retreats are ever the same our task, I believe, is simply to be aware, moment by moment, of what is needed and to perform the appropriate action when that need arises.

Our individual and group capabilities continue to grow as the ryo expands and changes to accommodate the practice needs of the community. Although it can be difficult at times to fit everything into our busy schedules, I think everyone in the ryo enjoys the process of learning and unlearning that we go through along the way.

I would like to offer my thanks to Ekai, the members of the Ino ryo and the Jikishoan community for their support and friendship over the past few years.

Gassho

By Jinesh Wilmot



Ryo Practice

I have been practicing in the Ino ryo for some time now. Strictly speaking my role is called Fukudo or assistant Doan, which is also the one who hits the mokugyo during chanting. However within the ryo, we work as a team and each one of us has to learn everything: how to set up the zendo and the altar, how and when to ring the various bells and to be able to do the lead chanting. The transition of the various roles between us should be seamless, so that the activities in the zendo will run smoothly at any time.

In the beginning there is so much to learn, always something new to remember. Even something simple, like ringing a bell, seems to be a major undertaking—the mind always coming up with another obstacle.

Apart from learning all the little details, ryo practice for me has been about practice in relationship to others. Whatever you do affects everybody and everybody else affects you. I find this difficult at times and often challenging, but I am always grateful to have this opportunity to practice with everyone.

By Biggi Spiro

1. Dogen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community. A Translation of Eihei Shingi. Translated by Taigen Daniel Leighton and Shohaku Okumura. State University of New York Press, 1996.



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Doan

For the last year or two I have been part of the Ino ryo, the group of people responsible for creating a space that we can practice within. My role is as Doan, the Ino's assistant. As such, I am constantly learning how to set up and maintain the zendo, how to strike the bells, and how to chant the sutras.

At the start I found this role difficult. I had trouble remembering what happens when, and produced a wider range of clunking and dinging sounds from the various bells than was required. The zendo is a very quiet and still place to be, and most of what you do is seen and/or heard. I would inwardly cringe as I broke the silence of the zendo with one of those awful half-hit bell sounds. It was amazing to watch my mind/ego rise and fall depending upon how well I struck a little bell!

Being part of the Ino ryo has given me the opportunity to examine my overly developed self-consciousness. Learning to let go of worries about whether I did such and such a thing right, and what others will think of me since I mucked up the bells during the chanting, is an ongoing practice for me. Dogen's famous lines that 'to study Buddhism is to study the self, and to study the self is to forget the self' are certainly true. When there is just the practice, things tend to go smoothly. When Gary enters the scene things have a tendency to go off the rails a little!

The Buddha taught that nothing is permanent, and you know this to be the truth when you join the Ino ryo. Just when you think you've got a handle on things they are changed, with or without notification. In order to learn the role of Doan I constructed in my mind a rigid plan/system of what happened when. As time went on I realised that the plan/system had to go. My current metaphor for understanding the Ino ryo practice is that it is like pieces of Lego. At the start you have to learn the size, shape and colour of each piece, and how the pieces fit together in a certain way. Then you realise that this is just one of many ways to fit them together, and that the important thing is to be ready to build whatever the particular situation requires. Being ready to adjust to circumstances as they present themselves. Ekai suddenly wants Fueko — no problem. 10 more people than there are zafus and zabutons — not a worry. The candle on the altar suddenly goes out and won't light again — panic! I'd like to be able to say that I can now always respond to the situation with skill and deftness, but I would be lying! Fortunately the Ino ryo is a group, and when one of us freezes, panics or just has no clue about what to do next, another steps in.

I am extremely grateful to Ekai for sharing the teachings with us, and to those people who share this practice on Sundays and during retreats. I am grateful to the members of the Ino ryo for their warmth, support and sense of fun. In particular I am grateful to Jinesh, who has the trust, patience and the kindness to allow me to flail around whilst learning to swim.

By Gary Youston



Being in the Ino Ryo

Sitting ... wondering, what next,
then 'ching ching!' stand up and start to move.
This is how it was when I started in Jikishoan ...
just sitting with everyone else,
all wrapped up in my own little world of folly ...
until 'ching ching', ... the bell ring.

Sitting ... wondering, what time,
check the watch, can't drift too much
or everyone suffers,
in the Ino ryo now, responsible for ringing that bell,
here we go, 'ching, ching!'
Stand up, start to move, ...
That's how it was when I started in the Ino ryo,
just sitting with everyone else,
all wrapped up in my own little world of folly
— with more responsibility! ...
synchronise watches! ... 'ching ching'

Sitting ... the sweet perfume from incense burning ...
dissolves, and settles upon many bowed heads ...
'ching ching' we all stand, we all walk ...
birds, wild and untamed, give voice to the ecstasy,
as the sun rises,
golden light explodes upon the glory of it all ...
we walk ... soft footsteps shuffling along,
what next ...

Karen Threlfall

Tenzo Ryo

'The tenzo's job is to manage the great assembly's meals. The tenzo must activate the mind of the Way, altering the food in accord with the time, to bring the assembly satisfaction, peace, and joy.'

'Providing water in the bucket and rice in the bowls is just like turning this food wheel or turning the dharma wheel. The tenzo has the job of offering the Way to the Way.'

Hannah Forsyth is the Tenzo, or head cook in the Tenzo ryo, for the Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community. When Hannah applied to join Jikishoan, people were asked to fill in membership application forms. Those forms also asked, 'What are you good at?' and provided helpful prompts like 'Computers' and so on. Hannah felt she 'couldn't do any of that stuff!' All she could do was drive the car, and cook a little bit! So she put down those two things. She was soon asked to bring along a plate of sandwiches to different activities, and then a few weeks later, if she'd like to cook for Sunday Sanzenkai. Hannah (with some apprehension) thought to herself 'Ohhh!' but said 'Oh sure'. She had never really cooked for more than 4 or 6 people. At that time there was only about 10 or 12 people sitting, and only about half a dozen stayed for a meal—so it was very relaxed.

As Jikishoan started to grow, Hannah went to Ekai and asked, 'What do you want us to do?' He said something to the effect that he wasn't so interested in having perfect food turn up all the time, but that the Tenzo group develop a sense of community.

At first Hannah thought that she'd be able to play around with food in the kitchen, and that was it. And that was quite nice! Then she realised it wasn't about food, it was about dealing with people. This was a different thing altogether, much more difficult than just sitting around playing with food on her own.

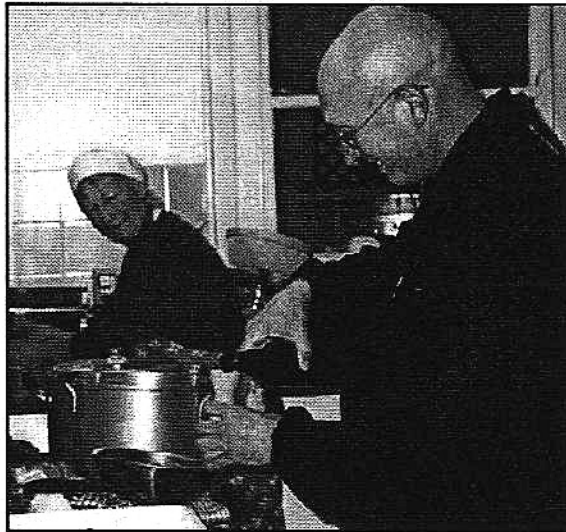
In the Tassajara cookbook, Ed Murphy talks about the cooks they've had, and asks them what the difficulties of the job are. They also say that it's not the food, it's dealing with people. The food takes care of itself, but working in the Tenzo ryo brings up all sorts of things about working with others. This, and being organised in advance are the most challenging parts of working in the Tenzo ryo.

However, the direction was set, and Hannah was determined to do her best. The fruits of all the ryo members' efforts are certainly blossoming, in that they can now cater for large numbers of people with delicious meals and 'no worries'.

Ekai also asked that a card system be developed for the

compilation of recipes. This is now in place, with people contributing the recipes they're good at—like Peter's (delicious!) chocolate cake and Marg's (equally delicious!) dhal. There are separate books for Sunday meals, for oryoki meals, for the grains, pickles, soups and veggie dishes. In the future it is hoped this will help new people easily integrate into the group.

The Tenzo ryo supports the community in many ways. When a bulk order comes from spiral food, there is usually extra, so people buy little bits. Hannah has found that she has become more conscious of her own diet. For example, noticing the difference and quality between organic and non-organic food has seen her introduce more organic vegetables into the Sunday meals. She hopes that these meals help others in a similar way.



Hannah and Srecko cooking at the August Retreat.

Members of the ryo are not trained cooks, nor do they have any commercial catering experience. In this way they are similar to the San Francisco Zen Centre, where there is only one person believed to have had prior experience before becoming a cook for a Zen community. Everyone is learning as they go.

The first Tenzo was Jinesh Wilmot, who cooked for the initial retreats. Paul Hepperlin then took on the task of cooking for the following retreats with Hannah's assistance. She then assisted Srecko

Radman, and suddenly, there she was, in the deep end, a Tenzo herself!

The central core, or work group consists of Hannah, Margaret Lynch and Peter Watts. Peter is also a sculptor and crafted Jikishoan's Unpan. They all live in Melbourne, and cook each week for Sunday Sanzenkai on a rotational basis, so that each individual learns what is involved and can take over if needed.

There are several other people involved who live further away. This can make it difficult for them to assist on Sundays. Millicent Easter and Paul Geil live in Ballarat and help out at retreats.

Other assistants include Mark Denovan and Janice Brown, who both live on the Mornington Peninsula, and Fern Ockerby who lives in Apollo Bay. It's very



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spread out. Where possible these people are drawn together at retreat time. Everyone brings something to the overall experience. Millicent, for example, has visited the San Francisco Zen Centre, and was able to share with the other ryo members what they do there. Mark, who has lived in Japan, is quite familiar with making miso soup, and was able to cook some of the miso soup for the last retreat.

The meals at Sunday Sanzenkai provide an opportunity for people to get to know each other. It's a little moment of time each week where people can socialise and sit around the table, very much like a family. It also lets the budding cooks practice the meals they might use at retreats and it's nice for new people coming along as they can stay for a meal and be included. It has a lovely feeling. Hannah looks forward to Sunday evenings now more than any night in the week. She says, 'It's like going home' and thinks that Peter and Margaret feel that way too. Peter has expressed to Hannah his astonishment at how much he's learnt from this practice, and what he can now do at home. That's exciting! Through plenty of hard work on Sundays the Tenzo ryo has also become quite self-sustaining.

There are about three or four retreats a year,—a different kettle of fish altogether! There are two oryoki style meals, and a much stricter timetable. Everyone has to be very focused. It's quite a challenge to have the meals ready precisely on the dot, so that they've finished their chanting, and everything is prepared and waiting for the servers. This is also important so that people aren't left sitting in the zendo, thinking, 'Oh, when's that bell going to ring?' and 'When can we get breakfast?' Hannah says that if things in the kitchen are running behind schedule, she thinks, 'Oh, those poor little things are sitting there with aching knees and we're fluffing around here', and maintains that to have everything done on time, so that it's ready, and nourishing, is quite a challenge!

She finds that by staying focused, keeping with her breathing and not talking too much, things go smoothly. But if everyone gets a bit sidetracked, things don't happen so smoothly, which can be a good indicator of how focused people are. Hannah says that what she has to find within herself is how to stay calm, and not lose it when things go wrong. This is a huge learning process.

Another interesting challenge, especially during retreats, is dealing with the pressure cooker—'that little monster that sits on the stove'. Ekai was keen that the pressure cooker be used to cook the rice, but Hannah had childhood memories of her mother cleaning mashed potatoes off the ceiling and was not keen to repeat that! Providence had other ideas, as is often the case, and she did just that, at a weekend workshop. An half hour wait is required before opening the pressure cooker, but Hannah had only left it for fifteen or twenty minutes before taking the lid off, and pssswwwf—instant rice roof décor. Hannah would say to Ekai, 'Do you *really* want us to use the



pressure cooker?' It would then turn up at the following retreat, sitting there on the stove, waiting for it's next gastronomical adventure. Last retreat it didn't. The Tenzo ryo was very grateful!

At retreats, those working in the kitchen are often unable to participate in some of the sitting, and in particular the morning service. At the last retreat, after everything was prepared, the Tenzo ryo and the servers, performed their own service, which for them was fantastic! It was the first time they'd been able to do so comfortably. Up until they hadn't been smooth enough in their preparation to have the luxury of time for chanting. Usually people would be flying around the kitchen at the last minute, saying, 'Where's a pot. WHERE'S A POT?' or waiting for something to finish cooking. With better preparation there was enough time.

As Jikishoan started to grow, Hannah went to Ekai and asked, 'What do you want us to do?' He said something to the effect that he wasn't so interested in having perfect food turn up all the time, but that the Tenzo group develop a sense of community.

O f t e n
Hannah sits
down at the
evening meal
during a
retreat and
watches
everyone
coming
through the

door. Their faces are looking a bit drawn, and some look like they are in pain—they're really feeling it. After they've eaten, they start to relax and their faces soften a bit. They usually look much happier—and for her, this is the highlight.

Hannah acknowledges that they are very fortunate to have Ekai, who, having had the experience of living in a Japanese monastery and being involved in a traditional Zen kitchen, has set up the Tenzo ryo in Jikishoan, Melbourne in a similar way. They are hoping to stay as close to that model as possible. She commented that everyone is very fortunate that he's here, because who else (in the group) would know? Izumi Yuko Inadera, who teaches Oki-do yoga and



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cooking in Melbourne, has also been extremely helpful and kind. Her knowledge of cooking and the properties of food is immense, and she has been very generous in the way she has shared this knowledge. Her advice and help has influenced many of the dishes and food preparation for retreats.

Hannah, on behalf of the Tenzo ryo, wishes to extend heartfelt gratitude to both Ekai Korematsu and Izumi Yuko Inadera. She summed it up in saying 'We are only a community because we have a teacher, if we didn't have a teacher things would be very different'.

Karen Threlfall

1. Dogen's Pure Standards for the Zen Community. A Translation of Eihei Shingi. Translated by Taigen Daniel Leighton and Shohaku Okumura. State University of New York Press, 1996.

Lentil Tomato Soup

Serves 20

10 tbsps olive oil

4 red onions finely diced

8 cloves garlic peeled

5 cups red lentils

1 cup dried apricots—chopped

2 x 800 gm tins tomatoes

3 tspns cumin seeds toasted and finely ground

2 tspns coriander seeds toasted and finely ground

2 tspns sweet paprika

1 bunch coriander leaves chopped (optional)

Sea salt and pepper

4 to 5 litres water or stock

Sweat onions in the olive oil for a few minutes, then add ground cumin and coriander seeds, chopped apricots and saute for a few more minutes. Add lentils and stir, coating them with the onions, oil and spices. Add water or stock and bring to the boil, then simmer for 20 to 30 minutes.

Make a paste in a mortar and pestle of garlic cloves, sea salt, paprika and oil to blend.

After 20 to 30 minutes add tinned tomatoes to the soup and when warmed through, add the paste. Continue to cook for another 20 minutes, adjusting seasoning and flavours. Lemon juice is a good addition, or you may want to add a pinch of brown sugar to counter-act the acidity of the tomatoes. You may also add some tamari or shoyu to give a more 'meaty' flavour.

An interesting variation, which gives a smokey flavour, is to substitute raw garlic cloves with charred! Pierce the unpeeled clove with a long fork and toast over a gas flame until charred and the flesh is soft. Cool enough to handle, peel and drop into the mortar. Combine garlic cloves with salt, 1 teaspoon of sweet paprika, half a teaspoon of hot paprika and 2 teaspoons of smoked paprika, and a dash of oil to make a paste.

This soup is very quick and easy to prepare, and tastes even better the next day. Serve this with some good bread and a green salad for a meal.

This recipe is also good for those people wishing to assist the Tenzo ryo by preparing a meal for Sunday Sanzen-kai.

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Unpan

The unpan is a gong struck by the Tenzo. Traditionally this alerts meditators that the rice is cooked. The Japanese word unpan translates as cloud plate. The cloud symbolises the dynamic nature of the kitchen area during retreats and throughout monastic life. Kitchen staff (Tenzo ryo) are very active and constantly on the move, just like the clouds!

The plate is simply descriptive of the cast iron gong which is circular and flat. This gong is designed in the form of a stylized cloud ... a careful look at most clouds will reveal its ancient origins.

The inspiration for making the Unpan arose as an expression of thanks to Ekai Korematsu. Meditating with Ekai has helped me cultivate a practice that hitherto has alluded my best efforts. As part of the Tenzo ryo, we are able to provide meals and a structure in which an active form of meditation is practiced. During retreats there is a beautiful moment after morning meditation when a duet is performed between the zendo han and the kitchen unpan. It could be said this duet shifts the community focus from personal meditation to the dynamic meditation of daily life.

I am delighted that our unpan provides a voice both symbolic and practical, as hungry meditators are alerted to the sweet sound of 'come and get it'. May it happily function thus for a long, long time.

Peter Watts



Recipe for a Soto Treat

Prepare a space,
gather together ingredients,
essence of Ekai is essential,
light candles and incense,
pre-heat zendo to cosy,
turn to Dogen's ancient recipe.
Begin by doing zazen,
settle on zafus.
arrange neatly on zabutons,
gradually combine together,
hopes, complaints, insights,
good intentions and delusions,
marinate in communal silence,
continue until nothing else remains.
As participants become enlightened,
garnish gently,
sprinkle with tears of joy,
and tears of suffering,
serve with humility and love,
then invite Buddha to lunch.

— Fukaten
Mt. Eliza August 2001

Fusu Ryo

The Fusu ryo handles the financial aspects of the Jikishoan Community. Julie Martindale, Jikishoan Fusu, talks about aspects of being involved in this challenging ryo.

Since the beginning of the year there has been an increased focus on the development of the Fusu ryo. At present it includes Ekai (who guides us according to the overall scheme of things for Jikishoan), a general Treasurer (responsible for the combined accounts of Jikishoan), and the Ballarat Group Treasurer (responsible for Ballarat). Representatives from other ryos and other individuals also contribute to the Fusu ryo.

Fusu work is divided into four areas:

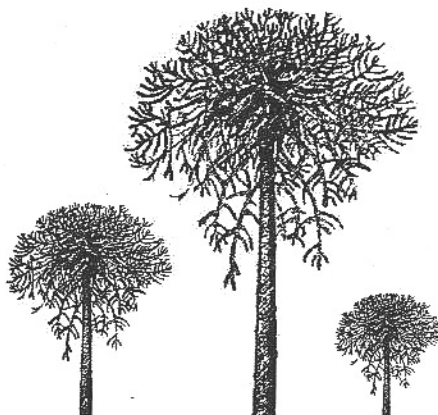
- * Money collection and handling.
- * Receipt practice.
- * Book keeping.
- * Financial statements.

We are working towards establishing uniform book keeping procedures so that all members of Jikishoan who are collecting and handling money and writing receipts will be able to do this without too much confusion about what figure to write down where. If the book keeping at the front desk, or at a fundraising stall or concert is clear at the beginning, this makes it easier at the other end, when the money and paperwork is passed along to be banked and later recorded. Needless to say we are trying to maintain a transparent system so that people can be confident that their money is handled properly.

Much of the Fusu work takes place behind the scenes, with a lot of formal and informal communication between people. As with all the ryos, it's about people practicing as individuals and practicing as a sangha at the same time. If we pay attention to both and keep them in perspective then the point of it all becomes clear. My personal experience is that if we lose sight of one or the other we can find ourselves getting stressed needlessly.

Gassho

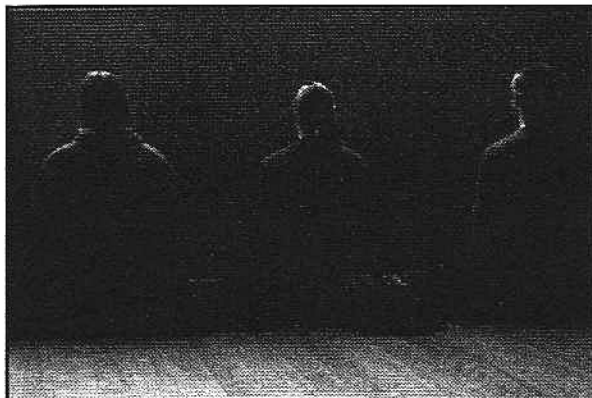
Julie Martindale
Myoe



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Collective Effort

Closing Dharma Talk by Ekai Korematsu Osho Bendoho Retreat April 2001



It's been a whole week, seven days and it feels like it has passed so fast, quickly but at the same time it's been a long time! Don't know which is which—both actually! What seems to be a contradiction, what seems to be so fast, seven days, can also feel so long—a long time. When what seems to be contradictory, when a contradiction doesn't contradict that means that you have rich experience. When there is a contradiction and you split those two, long and short, fast and slow then the experience is not as rich or it's not full experience. When we experience something fully it seems like it goes so fast but at the same time you feel like you have been doing it for a long time! You can't tell which is which! The context is not fully completed if you feel it's been so long, so boring! 'I have been counting the days until this will be finished!' If we are always thinking something opposing, something contradictory then practice is split. There is a separation. Here we can feel what Zen practice means—what seems to contradict, what we think should contradict, doesn't contradict that's the way of Zen practice. So negative and positive no longer clash! It's kind of a good balance! You can't even tell whether these seven days have been a good experience or a bad experience—

someone asks 'Did you have a good time?' If you say no it's not exactly correct but to

answer yes is not quite right either! If you try to answer something sensible it just makes other people confused! Better not to think too seriously about it! So we don't know which is which but it doesn't cause a problem often we think 'I don't know. I have to understand! Was it a positive experience or a negative? I want to be happy, I want to be peaceful!' We can't just let things be the way they are, just the way they are, we always try to figure things out. Zen practice just goes beyond that, before that, and allows everything to be there. To say that it is simple is easy but to really understand that it is simple takes some time and once you have experience it's not so difficult at all.

Actually time is neither long nor short and this space is neither small nor large it can expand and contract. Time is not limited to this present, it is not cut off from

the future and the past, it is both, always opening, opening everything opening, no problem! All inclusive, includes everything, you receive this kind of world in a sense of time in our practice and enjoy it! Jijuyu zanmai, self enjoyment samadhi. Practice is the entrance to this awareness or samadhi. The correct entrance gate is to sit, sitting brings this opening, this entrance and once it's open, once it's opened up then naturally it fades away, it recedes, so back to the entrance again, repeatedly. So just enter forever, always back to entering.

There is no such thing as once you enter you get this awareness and it lasts forever! It's not keeping that state that's important, it's coming back, maintaining the practice that is important. Buddhas and ancestors maintained this method—the practice of enlightenment. So after Buddha's realization, great awakening under the Bodhi Tree he didn't finish sitting practice he continued all his life. We often think, once one is enlightened why continue? Very strange! It's a good question. If you are Buddha why do you have to practice? But practice is to enter and to rise from that every day, every day.

Collective effort makes this practice possible and this is traditionally called the divine power of assemblies, of practice communities.

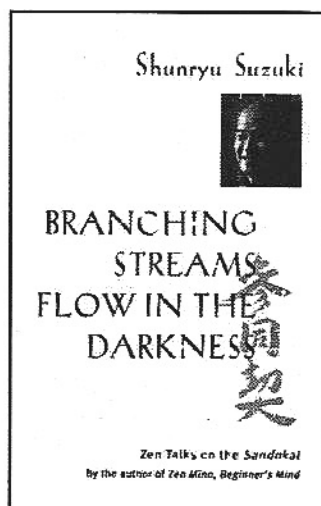
When we put ourselves in accord with the dynamics of the process, of the practice, with no trace

of the past then practice opens up. Returning to this position is the true gate. Just stop thinking too much about it, just rest paying attention to your own spine and rest in the breath but it's so fast so fast extremely fast. You may think 'yes I got into the original spot!' If you try to imagine those things then you are totally off! Often when we hear about this kind of phenomena, how it happens we start to visualize it! Unfortunately it's not in the realm of human perceptions. Then we begin to wonder why Dogen talks about it and if it's not in the realm of perception then he's talking bullshit! Very funny! But actually it is so. Once our minds and all the activity, the busy activity are rested, things start to reflect, something seems to become relevant that's all. Or else you don't know, you don't even know where you are or if the reflection is you or



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Book Review



which is which. So after sitting seven days body and mind somehow settle and we begin to feel, to taste the kind of fundamental realities that are not separate from our own consciousness. We always have a feeling of separation, I am here reality is there and it is always difficult when we separate things but, in sitting, those separations no longer cause a problem you still have pain in the legs but you don't need to fight with it you don't need to push so much you don't need to decide this way or that way, just allow that and you are still able to work with it, it's the same thing what seems to be a great contradiction before is no longer so—it's not like that. It's a kind of relief you know 'oh I have a pain. Finally I've found friends! A reliable source because of that my attention is kept alert I can't go to sleep! Without the pain I get so comfortable that I go to sleep!'

Collective effort makes this practice possible and this is traditionally called the divine power of assemblies, of practice communities. So just being here, alone and together with people we somehow receive the benefits of this practice. Certainly it's different if you spend the time alone, you may make up your mind, resolve to sit seven days straight but it can never be the same. If you happen to be able to sit alone for seven days the result would be that you are totally spaced out! You no longer see the outside world with the same eyes—you think 'where have I been? Have I been in a cave or something?' but thanks to the divine power, the helping power of practice communities we are still, our feet are still on the ground and the ground is a very solid ground based on reality that is quite solid and fundamental. From solid ground we can go to the marketplace, from shaky ground we get confused 'Is this real ground?' This is the real kind of test, when we come to the point that is the real basis, the real foundation of our life, realities as it is, that is where we feel at home and now after ending this retreat you go to the marketplace. If you are shaky then you have to dance and sometimes you don't want to dance and that is hard. Practice is endless, kind of like a foundation of a small universe, the foundation of this community is created here. Chaos is part of it, we cannot exclude it but always, always coming back, coming back to realities. In busy day to day life if we can just structure to sit, coming back to the point, coming back to the still point, put light in your heart and body and come back.

Edited and transcribed by Leesa Davis

Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness

Shunryu Suzuki

*Edited by Mel Weitsman and Michael Wagner
University of California Press, California, 1999*

'Branching Streams flow in the Darkness' was put together from a series of talks by Shunryu Suzuki Roshi on the Chinese text Sandokai.

The Sandokai was originally written in poetry form in the seventh century by Sekito Kisen Zenji. Today, in the Soto Zen lineage, it is used daily in the morning chanting, or at other special services.

The book gives the Chinese character version and the romanized Japanese reading of the Sandokai as well as a translation into English by Kazuaki Tanahashi. Suzuki Roshi explains the text directly through the Chinese characters, an approach that overcomes the unavoidable problems that arise through translations.

He introduces the poem to us firstly by putting it into a historical context and then by looking at its title. The title contains the essence of the teaching, what follows, the actual text, then repeats this meaning in different ways and different images.

The Sandokai is a beautiful poem about the two aspects, light and dark or absolute and relative and where they meet. 'Darkness and brightness—absolute and relative—are a pair of opposites like front and back feet, when we walk ... If you stop walking and think about it, sometimes the right foot may be ahead and the left foot behind. But when your feet are actually walking, when you are actually practicing the way, there is no light or darkness, no foot ahead or foot behind.'

Throughout the twelve teishos Suzuki Roshi explains this in many ways, using different examples and often relating his explanations to our practice and our perceptions of daily life. The end of each chapter also features a short discussion with some interesting student-teacher dialogues.

This is a very enjoyable book. The commentaries are insightful and easy to read. In gentle ways, they bring the teachings of the Sandokai closer to us. 'We study Buddhism like this, just as we arrange our food in different dishes and appreciate its color and form. But eventually we must eat it and then there is no teaching whatsoever.'

Biggi Spiro

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zen buddhist community

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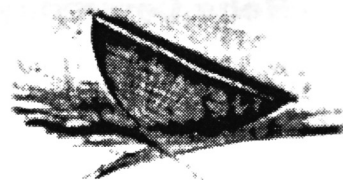
'Zen practice is endless, kind of like the foundation of a small universe, the foundation of this community is created in practice. If the structure of the organization reflects the practice then you can feel it and taste it and this is the working of actualized community, of actualized sangha.'

Ekai Korematsu Osho

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The Open Basket

Soto Zen Buddhism in Australia -- Sangha News



Volume 1, Issue 5, Spring 2001

Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community Inc. Newsletter (A0037927K)

Once again, the winter quarter (which has actually been pretty warm!) has been an active time within Jikishoan. The regular activities of Orientation courses and Practice Study Meetings at Essendon, Sunday Sanzen-kai at the Australian Shiatsu College in Collingwood, and Member Practice in Coburg have continued.

The move towards One Day Workshops to orientate and refresh practitioners continued this quarter, with a workshop held at Glanmore Estate in Hawthorn on July 22nd. The 12 or so attendees thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to spend the day learning more about practice. Sadly Ekai's little blue car, which had given it's very best up until that day, blew itself up on the way there — it had revvved it's last rev! This posed some extra challenges, but happily everything worked out, the workshop continued, and not long after, a suitable car was found to replace the little blue one that had gone to car heaven. The next One Day Workshop is scheduled for Sunday November 18th, and all are invited and encouraged to attend.

Likewise, the first Saturday of each month has offered practitioners the opportunity to sit for an extended period at the Half-Day Zazen-kai's. These sessions, held in Coburg, will continue in the coming quarter.

The calender of events (back page) provides dates for the next Half-Day sits.

On August 12th, the Sunday Sanzen-kai schedule was altered to accommodate the Annual General Meeting of Jikishoan, and the following week the usual format was replaced by a lovely, and moving robe ceremony. (see the following articles for details of these events).

Sunday Sanzen-kai has continued to experience a swell in the numbers attending. Those attending would have noticed some alterations to the format (the addition of new chants etc.), reminding us of the constantly changing nature of existence! The growing number of participants and these changes have been integrated into the practices of the various ryo groupings, who have worked to ensure that every aspect of the practice is smoothly maintained. Newcomers are greeted and made to feel welcome, money is collected

and accounted for, the zendo is appropriately set up and maintained, and tea and food is carefully prepared and served to all. Jikishoan warmly thanks all those who come along on Sunday evenings for their fellowship and support.



Retratees share an evening meal

On August 24 to 29th, a five day Bendoho retreat was held at Mt. Eliza. The photo centre shows the happy participants who completed the five day schedule of zazen, oryoki meals and 4am starts. However there were many others who participated—some for the weekend, and others, as much as they could. A rich experience was had by all.

From September 3rd until October 24th Ekai will be spending about three weeks just outside Kyoto in Japan, where he is the Zen meditation teacher for students as part of Antioch University's Buddhist Studies Abroad program. On September 26th he will return to Australia

for three days, before flying to Bodh Gaya, India. Here he will teach a different group of students from the Antioch University International Buddhist Studies Abroad program. Ekai returns to Australia on October 24th.



As the 5 day retreat concludes, everyone gathers together for a closing pic.

Jikishoan activities will continue as usual in Ekai's absence. During this time Practice Members have been invited to discuss an aspect of their practice at Sunday Sanzen-kai.

Each week a different member will share his or her experiences of combining and integrating Zen Buddhism with Melbourne life.

We would also like to extend an invitation to those people who might be interested in joining a ryo group. Ryo work is challenging, rewarding, and adds another dimension to practice. Please contact Jinesh Wilmot or Alison Hutchison, if you are interested.



Biggi and Paul prepare the tea.

Thank you to all who are involved in Jikishoan's many activities, and to the ryo members for working tirelessly to keep Jikishoan operating. On behalf of the sangha a deep bow of appreciation to Ekai for sharing this teaching.

For information on all of the forthcoming Jikishoan events refer to the calendar on the back page.

Gary Youston and Karen Threlfall

Zen Error Messages: Words of wisdom for those special moments with the computer.

*A file that big?
It might be useful.
But now it is gone.*

*Chaos reigns within.
Reflect, repent and reboot.
Order shall return.*

*Wind catches lily.
Scattering petals to the wind.
Segmentation fault.*

*Aborted effort:
Close all that you have.
You ask way too much.*

Robe Ceremony

On August 19th, Biggi Spiro and Anthony Woodward participated in a robe ceremony, where Ekai Korematsu presented them with their rakusu and in essence, the body and mind of Buddha. The making of the rakusu can be quite an experience in itself, one which Biggi and Anthony can now share with us.

Great Robe of Liberation



In December last year I took precepts with Ekai Korematsu Osho and shortly beforehand I thought that I would like to make a rakusu.

A rakusu is the rectangular piece of cloth that is worn around the neck. It is basically a small version of Buddha's robe and is based on the same principles as the okesa, the monk's robe. Traditionally the robe is made from long and short pieces of discarded materials that are washed, dyed and then sewn together like patchwork, to resemble the pattern of rice fields. The tradition of the okesa has been handed down from Shakyamuni Buddha's time, whereas the rakusu is a much later version, introduced to us from Japan.

Up to now we haven't had the practice of rakusu sewing so it wasn't until some time later that I asked Ekai about it. His response was, as so often: 'Yes, yes, wonderful, wonderful', and 'I will give you a manual for the sewing'. I had looked at some rakusu beforehand and they didn't seem too complicated. My first doubts came as I saw the 'manual'. It was the size of a book! I felt, as so often in practice, you just stretch your baby wings a bit to check the wind and before you know it you find yourself up in mid-air somewhere trying to fly.

The introduction to rakusu sewing begins with: 'Sewing a rakusu is not a difficult task but it will require time, patience and care'. This sentence stayed with me for the entire sewing experience as it exactly sums up what I battled with. I started my rakusu with a mixture of apprehension and excitement.

To make a rakusu you first carefully measure and cut out the exact sizes of all the small pieces that you need. Then you pin them together and start sewing, using a particular and very tiny stitch. In the manual it says: 'While sewing you should chant silently with each stitch,

I take refuge in the Buddha or Namu Kie Butsu'.

Before I started I wasn't too sure whether I would honestly sit at home chanting away while sewing, but as my frustration with trying to keep the pieces straight and getting the stitching right grew, I found it was much better to chant 'Namu Kie Butsu' than to sit there swearing at this suddenly enormous task. As I was sewing with great concentration and even greater impatience, I realized that I didn't actually want to make a rakusu, I wanted to have one, I wanted to have it now and I wanted it to be perfect. I found three different ways to make the same stitch, just to be faster and get it finished quicker. This peaked when I finally made one mistake after another and had to undo half of what I had already done.

It was time to give it a rest. My monkey mind had gotten completely out of control. What is the point, if all you want is to get it over and done with. I realized that just to sit and sew, one stitch at a time is ok and it would take whatever time it takes.

As I picked up the sewing again I looked at the cloth and felt that all the crazy wanderings of my mind were going into this rakusu. I will be wearing my state of mind on my chest, my frustration, restlessness, effort and eventually even enjoyment, all of it, right there, stitched into a rice field pattern. When I finished the sewing, the attachment of wanting to have it was gone, I could have given it away. I gave it to Ekai. The rakusu is not actually yours until it is given to you by your teacher.

On August 19th, Anthony and I had our ceremony where we received our rakusu. In receiving the rakusu we receive the body and mind of Buddha. I had a sudden sense of closeness to the teacher, the community and the teaching that we all follow and was incredibly moved by it all. But the ceremony also brought the process of making the rakusu to completion. Now I will have to wear this 'great robe of liberation' and practice with it and see what will happen with my baby wings next.

*Great robe of liberation!
Virtuous field far beyond form and emptiness
Wearing the Tathagata's teaching
We vow to save all sentient beings.*

Biggi Spiro

On Sewing the Rakusu



Initially I was talking to Srecko and he said, 'I have these instructions for a Rakusu, why don't you have a look and see if you can make sense of them'. Starting the Rakusu was like

turning my practice upside down and giving it a shake.

'What does this sewing mean to me?' I thought, 'Can't one practice without this material object?' This troubled me at the start, so I searched around for some more information on the subject, and came across this quote from Taisen Deshimaru Roshi, which seemed to set it straight,

'The kesa (in this case the Rakusu) and zazen are like two wings of a bird.

The kesa is the symbol of faith in zazen, and the practice of the kesa is the proof of it.'

Having some of these questions answered, I still had the difficult task of actually understanding the instructions! I also had to tame the over-achieving part of me, which kept trying to set standards and outdo itself. Eventually I had to give up the scheming and plotting as to when it would be done, and just do what I could when I could.

It was amazing to see it all come together, even though I was a beginner at sewing. How could I make such a thing? Mainly I had a sense of immense gratitude, for all the Buddhas and ancestors who continued this practice and continue it today.

The culmination of the experience was the robe ceremony where Sensei presented me with the Rakusu. In the ceremony you are given it three times, and each time you recite a small verse. To me this strongly emphasizes the importance of giving and receiving in the practice.

Gassho.

Anthony Woodward

Third Annual General Meeting

It was good to have twenty-four members, friends and guests attend Jikishoan's third Annual General Meeting recently. The AGM was held immediately after the Sunday Sanzen-kai service on 12 August and, after the formalities were over, everyone was able to enjoy a great meal in the kitchen afterwards. The growing strength of the sangha was reflected in the election of a new Committee for 2001/2002. There are now nine Committee members each with a designated Co-ordinator or Kanji role, as follows:

Name	Committee Role	Kanji (Coordinator) Role
Ekai Korematsu	President	Docho
Jinesh Wilmot	Vice-President	Ino (Zendo/ Practice)
Julie Martindale	Treasurer	Fusu (Treasurer)
Alison Hutchison	Secretary	Shoji (Secretary)
Rod Hanton	Ordinary Member	Kansu (Assistant Director, Ballarat)
Hannah Forsyth	Ordinary Member	Tenzo (Kitchen)
Biggi Spiro	Ordinary Member	Shika (Guest Manager)
Peter Watts	Ordinary Member	Shissui (Property Manager)
Karen Threlfall	Ordinary Member	Koho (Publicity)

In the coming year the Committee will help to develop the organisation and inter-relationships between Jikishoan's ryo groupings. In fact this was the theme of Ekai's address in his President's Report to the AGM. Ekai noted that there had been a steady increase in membership, dedication and commitment from members old and new during the year, both in Melbourne and at the Ballarat zendo. In particular, the Tenzo ryo and Ino ryos have grown and matured through regular kitchen and zendo activities respectively. The Koho ryo (publications group) also worked collaboratively with considerable effort to produce the first issue of Myoju (in September 2000) and regular quarterly editions since then. Ballarat zendo has celebrated its second anniversary—another important strand in Jikishoan's growth. Ekai indicated that during 2001/2002 emphasis will be placed upon strengthening the Fusu ryo for Treasurer aspects; the Shoji ryo for secretarial work; the Shika ryo for welcoming new comers; and the Shissui ryo for managing physical property and general community work.

Ekai also expressed his appreciation to a number of members and friends in order to give special thanks to them for their exceptional service, development of ryo practice and contribution to Jikishoan's activities in the past year.

At the AGM, Julie Martindale as Treasurer presented the audited financial report for Jikishoan showing that there has been a steady increase in income compared with the previous year and, while there has been a slight increase in administrative and publication costs (associated with Myoju) the net profit essentially doubled in 2000/2001. This sound financial position has been supported by a growth in membership of 25% from 32 to 40 and the establishment of the category of 'Friends of Jikishoan' of which there were 18 in 2001. The number and type of activities conducted by Jikishoan were also recorded at the AGM. This was quite remarkable as there were over 290 individual activities involving members, friends or the general public plus three Bendoho retreats covering a total of 17 days. In this way the AGM was an opportunity to pause and reflect on what has been a very busy year and to consider the directions for the coming year in the context of Jikishoan's aims and objectives.

Alison Hutchison — Secretary

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. A regular Sanzen-kai is held every Thursday night at 7.00pm.

Anyone interested in attending should contact the Ballarat Zendo Co-ordinator Rod Hanton on (03) 5331 1567, or Lorraine Collishaw, on (03) 5341 3549.



By Dokai (Anthony Woodward)

Kinder Ryo

Attention all you big kids!! who'd like to help some other big kids with little kids at Kinder-ryo.

The Kinder-ryo is intended to be a new sub-(working)group within Jikishoan. Its long-term aim will be to explore and organize ways in which we can incorporate child-minding into Jikishoan activities starting initially only with a once-a-month session at Sunday Sanzen-kai in Collingwood. This will give parents the opportunity to attend Sunday Sanzen-kai once a month with their children. I am hoping that this part of the plan can become operative from early next year (2002) onwards and am looking forward to hearing from people (with or without children of their own) who would be interested in either just using the service or would be interested in taking an active role within the working group. Whether this idea goes ahead or not will be entirely reliant on the interest shown by the Jikishoan community so please contact me -- Deniz Yener-Korematsu on 9370-5847 if you think this may be an idea worth pursuing. Thanks.

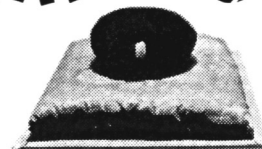
Public Talk

There will be a public talk held on Sunday 4 November 2001, 5.30 — 7.30pm at the Australian Shiatsu College, 36 Cambridge Street, Collingwood.

The speaker, Ven Chi Kwang Sunim from Daylesford Buddhist Meditation Centre, will talk about Community/Sangha practice in Korean Zen Buddhism.

For more information, please contact Alison Hutchison on 03 5426 1383

Uh - Oh!



Zafus and zabutons hand made by Ekai. Incense sticks available. Please contact Ekai or Deniz, Phone: 9370 5847

Jikishoan Library

Jikishoan is developing a library of Dharma books at the Essendon Zendo. There is currently a small collection available for loan to members. Please contact Andrew Cawthorn on 9818 0017 Book donations are always welcome!

Calendar of Events, September — December 2001

DAY	DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	PLACE	CONTACT
Regular Weekly Services					
Sun	Each Sunday*	5.30 — 7.30pm	Sanzen-kai * Excluding Sunday 26 November (retreat); Excluding Sunday 4 November (Public talk)	Collingwood	Biggi/ Alison
Thur	Each Thursday	7 — 9.30pm	Sanzen-kai	Ballarat	Rod/ Lorraine
OCT					
Sun	Weekly	5.30 — 7.30pm	Sunday Sanzen-kai (Practice Member Talks)	Collingwood	Biggi
Sat	6	7am — 12.10pm	Half Day Zazen-kai	Coburg	Jinesh
Tue	9	7 — 9.30pm	Committee Meeting	Essendon	Alison
Tue	23	7 — 9pm	Practice Study Meeting	Essendon	Jinesh
NOV					
Sat	3	7am — 12.10pm	Half Day Zazen-kai	Coburg	Jinesh
Sun	4	5.30 — 7.30pm	Public Talk: Ven Chi Kwang Sunim, Daylesford Buddhist Meditation Centre on Community/ Sangha Practice in Korean Zen Buddhism	Collingwood	Alison
Tue	6	7 — 9.30pm	Committee Meeting	Essendon	Alison
Sat	10	5 weeks	Orientation and Deepening Courses	Essendon	Ekai
Sun	11	11.30am	Public talk by Ekai Korematsu at Tibetan Buddhist Spring Festival Venue: 1425 Mickleham Road, Yuroke. Enquiries: 9333 1770 (Tibetan Buddhist Society)	Yuroke	Alison
Sun	11	5.30 — 7.30pm	Regular Sunday Sanzen-kai Resumes	Collingwood	Jinesh
Sun	18	9 — 5 pm	One Day Zen Meditation Workshop	Hawthorn	Ekai
Tue	20	7 — 9pm	Practice Study Meeting	Essendon	Ekai
Fri	23 - 28	5 days	Five Day Bendoho Retreat	Dean	Jinesh / Alison
DEC					
Dec	1	7am — 12.10pm	Half Day Zazen-kai	Coburg	Jinesh
Tue	4	7 — 9.30pm	Committee Meeting	Essendon	Alison
Fri	14		Myoju Mailout		
Sun	16	5.30 — 7.30pm	Precept Ceremony	Collingwood	Ekai
Tue	18	7 — 9pm	Practice Study Meeting	Essendon	Ekai
Sun	23	5.30 — 7.30pm	Last Sunday Sanzen-kai for 2001	Collingwood	Biggi/Alison
Mon	31	9.30pm — 12.30am	New Year's Eve Zazen	Essendon	Ekai/Jinesh

Jikishoan Venue Addresses

Jikishoan Zendo	2/23 Raleigh Street	Essendon
Australian Shiatsu College	36 Cambridge Street	Collingwood
Michael Colton's Zendo	44 May Street (use side/rear entrance)	Coburg
Glanmore Estate	36 Havelock Road	Hawthorn East
Greyfriars Property	22 Sunnyside Road	Mt Eliza
Adekate Centre	Directions and map provided	Dean (near Ballarat)
Echoes of Y's	44 Armstrong Street North	Ballarat

Jikishoan Contact Numbers

Jikishoan / Ekai	9370 5847	Leesa (Archive)	9387 2346
Jikishoan Fax	9370 5847	Lorraine (Ballarat Zendo)	5341 3549
Jinesh	9480 4849	Rod (Ballarat Zendo)	5331 1567 (AH)
Hannah (Kitchen Practice)	9687 6983	Julie (Treasurer)	9386 6520
Biggi (Member Practice)	94995489	Karen (Publicity)	859 6329
Alison (Membership)	5426 1383 (AH)		

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Please return the completed form to The Secretary, Jikishoan, P.O. Box 234, Essendon 3040. Cheques should be made payable to:

Jikishoan Zen Buddhist Community. Please note that members of Jikishoan receive Myoju as part of their membership and need not subscribe.