

ZEN TRACES



THE ZEN CENTRE

Volume 33 Number 4 September 2011

ZEN TRACES

VOLUME 33

NUMBER 4

SEPTEMBER 2011

OBJECT

The object of ZEN TRACES is to encourage the practice and study of Zen Buddhism. Practice and study need to balance each other. It is hoped that this journal will be of use to all interested in the subject.

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Price £1

Subscription for one year (incl p&p) £5.00

Abroad £7.00

Airmail £10.00

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FROM THE SAYINGS OF THE BUDDHA

“The Venerable Ananda spoke thus; Punna, friends, the venerable son of Mantani, was very helpful to us when we were novices. With this instruction he instructed us:

“Owing to a cause comes this ‘I am’ friend Ananda, and not without a cause? Owing to body it comes, owing to feeling, perception, impulse configurations and consciousness it comes, and not otherwise.”

Samyutta Nikaya III. 105

EDITORIAL

The Greek myth of Prometheus stealing the fire from heaven is well known and in fact many similar fire-stealing myths appear all around the world.

The story goes that Zeus employed Prometheus to help him create humanity. However this king of the gods feared that one day mankind might rise up against the gods and so left them in darkness. Prometheus was moved by the pitiable state of humanity condemned to wander in perpetual cold and darkness and so stole the fire from heaven and gave it to man to warm him and to light his way.

Light and fire are age-old symbols of consciousness and wisdom and the story can be read in this way too. In particular when we understand that the name 'Prometheus' can be translated as 'foresight' and that he had a brother called 'Epimetheus' which means hindsight, we realise that these two are components for Wisdom.

The Buddha in his teachings carefully laid down a map of the Heart/Mind showing how different states come to be and cease to be and invited us to explore. The teaching of karma points out that our actions of body, speech and mind create what we will become in the future. In some ways these truths are self-evident; take for example the Five Precepts. These, which Ven. Myokyo-ni used to say are just the common human decencies, are not by any means exclusively Buddhist. If we choose not to obey them in time the result will be unhappiness for both the individual and society at large. This is why the Chinese called them 'The Protections.' So from this we can see that using hindsight we can predict the outcome of different ways of acting (foresight). In acting judiciously and employing skilful action we can avoid unnecessary suffering and bring about harmony between oneself and others.

The same is true also for our daily life practice. It is also one reason for having regular breaks from practice over holiday periods. At the end of the Spring term students engaged in practice were advised to take ten to fourteen days off the practice and to see what happened. No doubt at first there was a welcome relief from the constraint of zazen and the timetable; but as time wore on there was a growing sense of things spilling over, a dilution of energy which is no longer focussed but now hopping about from one thing to another. By the end there is a sense of relief to be able to return to a little bit of structure to contain 'me' with all my restless coming and going.

We remember in the story that Prometheus was rewarded for his actions by being chained to a rock and having his liver pecked out by an eagle. The Swiss psychologist Carl Jung points out that as consciousness grows the individual must suffer the fact that he can no longer hide his true motivations from himself and must face up to the fact that his self-image is often a very one-sided view of

himself. This facing up to the truth can be painful to bear and those with some experience of working with the fires will know this first hand. The benefit however outweighs this ‘suffering out’ because now, the pitfalls can be more easily negotiated and the wisdom of hindsight employed to make the walking easier in the long run.

Selected Sayings of Master Daie Soko

THE TEXT

“If people who study transcendent wisdom abandon this expedience and go along with passions, they will certainly be controlled by the demons of delusion. And while yielding to sense objects to impose theories, and say that affliction is itself enlightenment, and ignorance is itself great wisdom; acting in terms of existence with every step, while talking of emptiness with each breath. Without admonishing oneself for being dragged along by the power of habitual action, to go on and teach others to deny cause and effect, the vicious poison of misguided delusion has entered the guts of people who act like this. They want to escape from passion, but it is like trying to put out the fire by pouring on oil – are they not to be pitied? Only having penetrated through can you say that affliction is itself enlightenment, and ignorance is identical to great wisdom. Within the wondrous heart of the original, vast quiescence which is pure, clear, perfect illumination there is not a single thing that can cause obstruction. It is like the emptiness of space, even the word Buddha is alien to it, to say nothing of there still being passions or afflictions as the opposite. This affair is like the bright sun in the blue sky shining clearly, changeless and motionless, without diminishing or increasing, it shines everywhere in the daily activities of everyone, appearing in everything. Though you try to grasp it, you cannot get it; though you try to abandon it, it always remains; it is vast and unobstructed, utterly empty like a gourd floating on water, it cannot be reined in, or held down. Since ancient times since when good people of the path have attained this, they have appeared and disappeared in the sea of birth and death, able to use it fully. There is no deficit or surplus, like cutting up sandalwood, each piece is it.”

VEN. MYOKYO-NI'S COMMENTS

‘If people who study transcendent wisdom’, Prajna that is, ‘abandon this expedience’, we heard last time what these expedients are – not to give oneself airs, not to talk greatly, not to use language that is difficult to understand, to be

quite ordinary, skilful means which fit, and this expedience within the skilful means are the important thing. If therefore, those ‘who study transcendent wisdom abandon these expedient means’ – one can very easily run off at the mouth, having read a little bit, thinking one has grasped it, and talking one’s head off as if one knew what it was all about, not even giving oneself airs, quite running away by itself.

I remember vividly, in the mid-fifties in father’s Zen class, after the class was over we were reading whatever book was available, and then we would go to the nearest coffee house, or tea-room as it was then, and then we would talk and talk of how we understood it, and how we saw it, and then we would be thrown out because it was closing time, and we would go to the next one which was open a bit longer. And we couldn’t contain ourselves. Well, this is out of ignorance, not only just wanting to show what one knows.

But, ‘If people who study transcendent wisdom abandon this expedience’, at that time nobody knew any better and it didn’t come to much anyway, but nowadays it is a little bit different and at the time when Master Daie was talking there were, and there have always been, those who really said, ‘this is how it is’, and gave great examples and didn’t really know what it was all about. So, ‘If people who study transcendent wisdom abandon this expedience and go along with passions, they will certainly be controlled by the demons of delusion.’ If we go along with passions, when the Fires flare up, when the volcanoes erupt, then we certainly are controlled by the demons of delusion. Because then, whatever comes up in that eruption, we take for real, and we believe it and we believe it with that same fierceness with which the eruption comes.

There is an excellent gauge which might be worthwhile if you haven’t done it, and that is to get yourself a tape recorder – everybody has one nowadays – and either your spouse, or a very good friend, anyway someone who knows all the weaknesses that we have. And then tell them what the thing is about, and start talking about it, and you get a bit niggled. And you get just to the point where you always react, and let the tape recorder run, set for quarter of an hour, and then it has to shut itself off, you can’t do it anymore. The other, no doubt, by that time is also a little bit high, but it clicks off. And then for a week you let it stand there. And then you listen to that tape – you will not believe it, when you hear your own voice suddenly rising higher and higher, and with unctuous conviction the greatest platitudes come out. It is one of the more sobering experiences, and if you haven’t done it yet, I strongly suggest you do it. That is when the demons of delusion run away with us. ‘And while yielding to sense objects’, being carried away by sense objects, and please remember that these are not just outside objects, but also mental objects – yielding to these, being carried away by them, and yet nevertheless in spite of them, or using them, to ‘impose theories, and say’ ‘it is

this, I know it!', or what I know and have read and understood, that 'affliction is enlightenment, and ignorance is itself wisdom', that is what it says in some of the books, 'I have read it myself!' And act therefore, also, according to that with every step, and yet 'talking of emptiness with every breath.' 'Without admonishing oneself for being dragged along by the power of habitual action'. As we are dragged along by the power of habitual action we can't keep the demons of delusion down, we've never tried it.

And so this is where we need the practice, where we need the strength to really hold together, rather than going on and talking to 'others, to deny cause and effect.' 'The vicious poison of misguided delusion has entered the guts of people who act like this.' 'The vicious poison', he calls it, 'of misguided delusion.' With no training and no framework, the whole thing explodes. And yet, 'They', such people, 'want to escape from passion', but how can you escape from the passions if you allow them to carry you away again and again? 'It is like trying to put out the fire by pouring on oil.' What happens if there is a fire and you pour oil on it? 'Aren't such people to be pitied?' This, and Master Daie really lays it on, is a careful warning, not only in our talking, but in our thinking that we have to keep to the practice, to the framework and not continuously allow our own ideas, our own passions, our own weaknesses, to obstruct and rule us. 'Because,' says Master Daie, 'only having penetrated all the way through can you say that affliction is itself enlightenment, and ignorance is identical to great wisdom.' 'Only having penetrated all the way through.' Although it is true, if you tell it to somebody else then it is likely to be another snare. This is why it is so important that the talk matches and is on the right level.

If you talk to a child who is learning his multiplication tables – I don't know whether people still learn multiplication tables nowadays, or whether they go straight on the computer, I don't know – but in my time at least we had to learn multiplication tables, and then more and more mathematics, and when we came to integral calculus, it was a natural progression; but if you talk about integral calculus to a child who is just learning multiplication tables, he will think you are off your rocker, or that there is something magnificent, magical about it. And so this matching is an important thing. 'Only having penetrated all the way through can you say that affliction is itself enlightenment, and ignorance is identical to great wisdom.' And it is not only in talking, it is also in our reading; having just read that affliction is itself enlightenment, ignorance is identical to great wisdom, 'Now I know! Now I'll have no more trouble!', and then I wonder where the trouble and obstructions come from when, after all, I know it. I have only ensnared myself even more.

But Master Daie tells us, 'Within the wondrous heart of the original, vast quiescence', that wide, open emptiness, 'which is pure, clear, perfect illumination,

there is not a single thing that can cause obstruction.’ You remember the sixth Patriarch, ‘Before thinking of good and bad’, before thinking, when there is nothing – we must not misunderstand that nothing either, it is not that there is nothing, but there is no obstruction because there is just one, Master Daie calls it ‘pure, clear, perfect illumination,’ and being one, and having become one with it, there is not a single thing that can cause obstruction. It is like the emptiness of space, and even the word Buddha is something alien to this vast emptiness, like space. The word Buddha doesn’t belong to it. That’s only made up by us. To say nothing of there still being passions. How can there be passions or afflictions as the opposite of that vast quietness. There is just nothing.

And Master Daie then continues, ‘This affair is like the bright sun in the blue sky, shining clearly, changeless and motionless, without diminishing or increasing.’ Like the bright sun in the blue sky, shining clearly. It does not change, it does not hop about. It shines without diminishing or increasing, and it shines everywhere. It does not shine more on this, or less on that. It doesn’t even want to shine. Shining is its nature. And it shines everywhere in the daily activities of everyone.

Master Daie is very careful in really trying to point the finger towards it. ‘It shines everywhere, in the daily activities of everyone’. It cannot be hidden. The Sixth Patriarch again said, ‘The peasant uses it all day long, but is not aware of it.’ The daily activities of everyone, whatever we are doing, it shines through it, and appearing in everything, like the sun shining clearly. Though you try to grasp it, to see it, to hold it, to look at it, you cannot get it. The knife that cuts but cannot cut itself, the eye that sees but cannot see itself. And this is the delusion of I, thinking that it can grasp it, and look at it as if it was something extra, something separate. But that - if you want to call it the True Face, because we are mostly concerned with that - cannot be seen, it cannot be grasped, but it works. You cannot get it. And though you try to abandon it - this is the other side of it - it always remains. You cannot see it, and you cannot get rid of it either. It is in the oneness, in the total union with it, and the functioning in that union, which takes the body in as well as the mind and the thought and the heart and the whole lot. But it has no I with it, as observer.

You can learn typing exactly - with which finger you press which key - you can have it perfectly in your head. And when you are then put in front of a typewriter, will you be able to type? No, because you haven’t got that physical skill, which needs to be trained. And when really used to it there is a oneness with it, you don’t need to think about it any more. As long as you have to think about it, it is not yet truly at one. And Master Daie uses the old analogy: ‘Like a gourd floating on water, it cannot be reined in or held down. Since ancient times when good people of the Path have attained this, they have appeared and disappeared in

the sea of birth and death, able to use it fully.’ Since ancient times when good people of the Path have attained this, this insight, this oneness with it and acting with it, within it in response to the situation - because there is no I that wants to do this, that, and the other - then they have appeared and disappeared in the sea of birth and death, able to use it fully. Able to use it fully, smoothly, in response to the situation, in obedience to the situation, and to the benefit of all concerned.

The other day I had a letter from somebody who has been doing the practice for quite some time. And she is in a job where the money was running out, and there was great talk about what could be done, and how the employment could continue, and there were very heated opinions. And she said she suddenly realised that it was no good having her own opinion on that, that everybody was having them, and she was talking to the manager, and suddenly saw his point so completely that she could only nod. And at that moment, he looked at her and said, “Yes, but it could go in a much simpler way,” and the whole situation defused itself.

It’s very important that we realise that this unity is not a conking out, but is the full smooth going with the situation, and it has a habit of defusing situations, because it touches everything.

Disappearing and appearing in the sea of birth and death, able to use it fully. There is no deficit or surplus in that use. Master Daie compares it to ‘cutting up sandalwood, each piece is it.’ Like cutting up sandalwood. You cannot increase it, you cannot decrease it, it just is, neither more nor less, it just is. In everything, in every action. In cutting a piece of bread, in lifting a finger, in whatever it is, in response to the demands of the situation. Like cutting up sandalwood, each piece is it. And when it comes to that, then the thing works together in harmony. And this is where the Buddha’s teaching points us, to this harmonious working together. Can we please take this to heart and ponder it down in the zendo?

MEMORIES OF SOKO ROSHI

A talk by Daiko Iizuka - Head Priest at Ichibata Yakushi Temple

It was more than 20 years ago that I came and stayed here at Shobo-an for a year. It was the first time I had stayed in such very distinguished circumstances at Shobo-an. Everything that happened to me here is a lasting very sweet memory in my life.

It was in June 2004, I came to Fairlight for the ordination ceremony of Myokun, Myosui, and Sochu. The last time I came here was in January 2007, when I was told that Ven. Myokyo-ni was quite near her death. I expressed my gratitude from the bottom of my heart and said good-bye to her. Now I think I

should have come again soon after when I was informed she had passed away. But I couldn't and therefore didn't which I really regret.

I thank you so much Ven. Myokyo-ni, and thank you all friends here tonight. I didn't expect at all to have to give a talk! But I'm going to introduce to you some of my wonderful memories of Soko Roshi.

Soko Roshi died in June 1995. We have just had the memorial ceremony for him on the 12th of June in Daishu-in, his temple in Kyoto. Because the 17th memorial ceremony is a rather special occasion for Japanese people, many people, about 100 who really remember him well, got together on that day. We chanted Daihishu (Dharani of Great Compassion), once very slowly and steadily altogether, and made three prostrations. After this we went to his tombstone and chanted again and had lunch together. This is the usual format for the memorial ceremony. He had more than 20 disciples, some of them have now died some others didn't come, but about 15 disciples came from as far away as the United States.

It is such a good thing to meet again not only with Dharma brothers but also with many people who used to come and see Soko Roshi, or used to stay at Daishu-in for some time. We remembered each other, we talked to each other and we missed the good old days. When I came back to the temple next day, I opened the memento box which Soho, the current priest of Daishu-in, gave us all. There was a piece of paper in a frame, a copy of Soko Roshi's hand-writing, it looked like a poem saying,

Don't pursue things of the past.

Don't desire things of the future.

The past, it has already gone.

The future, it hasn't yet arrived.

Then, just be carefully at one with what you are doing at this moment.

While not being shaken, nor influenced by, any other thought,

Just completely be at one with and do it.

Simply practice what you should do at each moment.

Nobody knows if death will come tomorrow, does he?

Actually, nobody can get away from the vast force of death.

A person who is completely at one with it

Just practice what should be done day and night with no negligence. A person who behaves like this is called "a wise man", "a composed person".

I was deeply impressed by this. There is no better gift from Soko Roshi's memorial than this warm-hearted memento.

In Japan, when given a gift we normally give something back in return, which costs about half the price of the original gift given. A piece of paper costs nothing; and yet Soho, the current priest of Daishu-in did not care about this at all.

He gave us the best gift from Soko Roshi to us. I am very proud of him, such an excellent Dharma brother!

This poem is one from “Agama sutra”, which was directly translated into Japanese from Pali. Most of the sutras we chant in Japan are actually from the Chinese language, not Japanese. So we can hardly understand the meaning. But this poem is written in Japanese, not even modern Japanese, but we can still understand quite well when we read it just once. What is more, it is Soko Roshi’s hand-writing. It’s so good.

Everybody easily says that “the most important thing is now”, but Buddha teaches us it is not enough simply to say that it is important. Buddha taught that we do not deny the past, but not to become attached to it. We do not deny the future, but we do not indulge in daydreams about it. What we do is observe carefully. It is happening just in front of you. Observe it carefully.

We are always shaken by others. We worry about what people say. We are often influenced by any other thought, apart from this moment. However, we just watch clearly and thoroughly. And we just do what we should do. This is very difficult though; even if it is easy to say so. We start thinking different things when we are supposed to be listening to someone’s talk. We think other things even when we talk to people. We don’t do it, even when we have to do it. We watch TV, listen to music, talk on the phone, send an email, read a paper, and eat a meal but we are not at one with any of these things. We go to work, but we don’t believe this is my work. We do chores, but we don’t believe they are the most important thing at this moment. We come and sit zazen, but we still worry if it is useful or not. Whilst we are doing zazen we debate with ourselves whether we should be doing it nor not? It is easy to say that “the most important thing is now”, but it is difficult to really do so.

I think one of the most important points about this poem is death. Buddha teaches us consciousness of death. When you are conscious of your own death, then you will clearly be aware of what is going on in front of you. I remember when I was in Daishu-in nearly 30 years ago. It was early in my Zen practice with him; it was the morning tea time after breakfast, a student making tea for all of us, suddenly said to Soko Roshi while he was shaking his hand with a bamboo tea whisk forward and backward in a tea bowl in order to make powdered green tea. “Now I can clearly understand what the most important thing is for myself, it’s study. Because I’m a student, not a Zen practitioner.”

Soko Roshi said, “What are you doing now?” “I’m making tea” he answered.” “Just do it, do carefully what’s happening in front of you” Soko Roshi said.

I think we tend to put particular things such as studying, working, doing something special first and leave daily life matters as trivial routine chores. But it is not true. Daily life practice is equally important as particular things. Whatever

we do is the most important at each moment. If we really do it, we are fulfilled and will be happy.

Another story. One day a student talked back to a senior monk in the kitchen. He was always talking back when he was told to do something. Soko Roshi rushing to the kitchen, slapped the student on his cheek with his hand. The student fell down. Roshi said "Stand up!" Again slapped. And said, "you were not fighting with your backs to the wall, were you?" The next morning at tea time, Soko Roshi asked the student who had a swollen cheek, "go to a pharmacy and get a cold compress." The student answered, "I still have pain in my cheek." Suddenly Soko Roshi said, "It's not for your cheek, but for my hand." Don't you think he was warm? He was strict, but he was really warm.

Another story about the US spaceship Apollo, it was NASA's manned spaceship programme to the moon in the 1960s. Soko Roshi suddenly asked us his disciples one morning tea time,

"Why do you think Apollo was able to reach the moon and peacefully come back to the earth?"

"Because science has made remarkable progress."

"Because human beings invented computers."

"Because computers can calculate such complicated things easily."

There were several answers. He teasingly smiled and said that, "It is not success of science, not success of computers, not success of calculations. The computer has become aware of its mistake and has the ability to revise it on its own. That is the answer." It was a very interesting simile with his playfulness.

We of course realised that he was not simply talking about Apollo, but talking about us. He was talking about our Zen practice, or talking about the most important matter of our life. Ability to find out a problem, ability to solve a problem, is also a very important ability in business society. Many enterprises in Japan say that they want to have new members of staff who have such ability. In other words, it is strength of recovering, strength of overcoming difficulties. It isn't important to do something properly without any mistakes. Making mistakes or ending in failure is not shame; not being able to get over them is shame. Just believe yourself you have already got the strength.

Soko Roshi loved this country so much. He liked the people, culture, way of thinking, landscapes, and so on. It seems to me that he liked almost everything in this country except some food. I clearly remember whenever he came to summer school, he would walk long in green fields, which he had never done in Japan. I thought he was always trying to enjoy or share good customs of people in this country. When he walked, the people of the Zen group also walked with him. When he stopped because someone started talking to him seriously, the people stopped. He talked, people heard him. He started to walk again, they started to

walk again. It was so good. That is very much English, which never occurred in Japan.

He used to say that, “I like this green field, gentle this hilly countryside is beautiful, which we can never see in Japan. What is more, Daiko, don’t you think it is so good to think that people of the country wish to sleep in this green field one day. I can understand that very well.”

Wherever you are, whenever you are, whatever you do, just be carefully at one with what you are doing at each moment.

Now I remember Soko Roshi, Ven.Myokyo-ni, and very good old days I was allowed to spend with them.

FROM WITHIN THE TRAINING — Members’ Contributions

I lived in the Caribbean (in Barbados) – I took a teaching job in a boarding school and ended up staying there for 3 full years, between 25 and 28 years of age. It was a great experience that taught me very much about life and about myself and was certainly not easy! I remember how I was horrified that many local people didn’t ‘do’ much. It was often quite normal for people to sit around for what seemed unreal and abnormal amounts of time, as I’d always worked towards keeping busy, keeping active and moving forwards or progressing. After 3 years, I was worried I had become a little too ‘laid back’ and worried it would affect my teaching ability when I decided to return to the UK. I packed in the job and got myself back to London to work in a difficult, inner-city school. I suppose to catch up was what ‘I’ thought was needed for ‘I’! But what I actually learned is that you appreciate the one when you lose the other and that we always think that we should be doing what we’re not – a vicious circle (fighting demons!)

Caroline Wickham

I have become more aware this last year of not liking the thought of ageing and the changes it brings with it. Which I guess is natural in late 50’s and my own mortality has come into my mind so that is another change which I am attached to at the moment. I want my body to be physically fit with no aches and pains. But I am trying to accept this different stage of my life - it is part of the cycle of life - with some grace. I sit and look at the flowers in my garden emerging and coming into full bloom; the beauty of the flower at its peak then it wanes and dies off; only to re-emerge again next year. So my garden is a good example of acceptance of the changes in the cycles of life. Every year I see the new season of birds born and hopping around in my garden; without any effort it all takes place.

Wendy Donoghue

The problem is a subtle one. It came particularly to my notice several times while gardening during the month. Now, that is an activity where it should be easy to be wholly absorbed. But I have caught myself not actually being wholly in the moment, but looking at things with a little thin veil of what I think about the situation: not great thoughts but a little stream of consciousness which is more connected to "I" than to the actual situation. It is a tricky problem because it is so subtle. One method seems to be to open the eyes wide, momentarily; that seems to break the stream of thoughts and get one back into the moment. I suppose that anything else to do with the body would suffice: momentarily giving myself to the feel of whichever gardening tool is being used. But the trick with the eyes has the advantage that it can be done anywhere, e.g. on a country walk, and it does not require a gardening tool in the hands. (Perhaps coincidentally, a similar trick can be used when singing: raising the eyebrows somehow changes the vocal tone subtly - obviously by some mental rather than vocal process - not that it matters how it works, as long as it works!).

Ian Gatenby

The conjuring of the "fevered" imagination describes me well at the best of times, but certainly describes specifically my worries and depressions of late! Importantly, as you said, the signs in the body were apparent. As thoughts began their spiralling ascent from human into agitated state, I have found my body actually shaking, as if with cold or with terror. Certainly it became plain that the thoughts circling in that state were indeed "heated" and that to stop, bow if possible or take a breath could bring things back down to earth. To discover oneself so carried away like this is quite a humbling experience, and that sense of humility felt appropriate and also strangely encouraging. A place from where one can "begin again" with the practice. I remember when I was working at Glastonbury Abbey, as part of my job I read *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, and found that there was a whole chapter on humility. Also, there is much emphasis on obedience, and I remember the words "the first step to humility is unhesitating obedience", which always struck me as another way of saying "give yourself into what, at this moment, is being done". Obedience to things as they are. As you would expect, there is quite a lot of the Daily Life Practice in *The Rule of Saint Benedict*!

Jesse Budd

DHARMA TALK – DHAMMAPADA 11

BY ALAN SIDI

“Those who mistake the unessential to be essential and the essential to be unessential dwelling on wrong thoughts never arrive at the essential.”

If I try to figure this out my head goes into a spin. What is it that’s essential and what unessential?

Recently our boiler broke down and it being the middle of winter it was clear that heating and hot water and a roof over our heads are amongst the essentials. Food, medicine and clothing also feature but these sorts of things are not what this verse is about. Human beings are unique in that apart from the survival essentials we do have a consciousness that is able to look at life itself and asks questions. What is important, what do I do with my life, why am I here and so on.

I did once try to figure this out. Like in Gilbert and Sullivan’s Mikado, I drew up a little list of life’s essentials. What was essential in life I reckoned was a bit of time for family, a bit for work, a bit for sports, a bit for hobbies/holidays and a bit for spiritual life. This would give a healthy ‘balanced’ life and throw in for good measure some consideration for community like recycling and not being wasteful and doing some voluntary work. What was unessential was the chase for accumulation of the material, the superficial, the overtly sensual, the self-centeredness. And did it work? Quite simply, no. Why not?

On the surface it all sounds good but it all hinged on me making judgements between what was ‘good’ and ‘bad’ and being in control of everything which is characteristic of the delusion of ‘I’. I feel that for things to happen I have to make them happen and they can’t happen without me. However it doesn’t work like that. What happened was that work demands suddenly went up and I had to spend evenings or a weekend doing extra work, then my family or hobby time went out of the window. Then I got a bad injury doing sports and I had to stop for 6 months until it got better. Then family demands came in and I couldn’t go to a Dharma talk I wanted to attend. My beautifully balanced life was unachievable. Then I asked myself, well in my list of essentials perhaps there were things that were more essential than others? What amongst the essential was perhaps a little less essential and what more essential and I began to chase my own tail.

We need to look at this not from a reference point of I but from the reference point of the Dharma.

I divide my conscious world into two parts, that which I want and like and that which I don't want and dislike; the good and bad, the dark and light, the essential and the unessential. Wherever there is something set up in opposition to something else we are witnessing the delusion of I functioning, like the wanting of quietness and over noise and activity for example.

This is the mistake. This picking and choosing itself is the mistake, is the unessential referred to in the verse. It is not some object, situation or some idea that I mistakenly thought to be essential when in fact it is unessential, that I have made the wrong choice of object or idea. That is not the mistake. The mistake is in thinking that if I can have what I want and get rid of what I don't want then happiness will surely follow. I actually believe I can have what I want and get rid of what I don't and even further I think it is my right to have what I want and get rid of what I don't want.

It is the process of choosing, the process of rejecting and grasping that is the error. This is the source of our suffering. The things on my list were absolutely fine in themselves. The problem arose in the attachment or grasping of them. When I couldn't have it how I wanted, when I couldn't have the variety of slices I had deemed essential then I was unhappy and suffered.

This desire to arrange things as I want them and my attachment to them expresses itself according to two extremes. This is another of the characteristics of the delusion of I, either it's too much or it's too little.

There are basically two approaches and there can be a mixture of these although at times one may dominate or within people one may dominate all the time. One approach is the 'now-now' approach – life is short, let's get the maximum we can out of it. That which is essential is that which is good and desirable but also importantly that which is available right now.

At the basis of now-now is me-me over here, separate and apart – I do what I want and you do what you want and with it the belief that there is no connection, that our thoughts, speech and action have no real consequences. With this approach it appears life can be really fun and to be with people like this can be very enjoyable as all is very spontaneous. However it is very precarious because the now-now can easily be diverted and so cannot be relied on. They may fail to show up for an appointed meeting or outing because something or someone more interesting has appeared on the scene.

The opposite approach is the under the mattress approach. I squirrel away the present for the future. I am constantly restraining for some future benefit. Waiting for some great change when finally then things will be fine, my lottery number will come up, my promotion, some cherished idea come to fruition or even enlightenment perhaps may come to be. The problem is of course with this approach that I miss so much, I miss this present, I miss that liveliness of the

present, and even when things hoped for arrive they are either disappointing or I am already projecting to some other thing in the future because that has always been my pattern of behaviour.

Both approaches are mistaken because both are trying to grasp something. I mistake the essential for the unessential. What is it then that is essential? Once again we can look at the Dharma. The Buddha has a fine list for us. The Six Paramitas; giving, restraint, patient endurance, effort, meditation and wisdom. The first four providing the foundation for that last two.

The essential characteristic flowing through these Paramitas is the Giving. Restraint is giving up what I want because it's not appropriate at this moment, patient endurance is giving in to the situation, effort is giving out the energy into this moment, meditation is giving oneself into the moment and wisdom is giving up my ideas and listening to that inherent wisdom.

All the Paramitas are familiar to us because when we want we can give and restrain and endure and so on but it is always conditional and because of this it is weak. I have great difficulty giving, restraining and enduring when circumstances aren't right for me personally so even though it may be the appropriate response to the moment I just can't pull it off.

Our training is so that the Paramitas can function unconditionally, so there can be an appropriate response to the moment which is not necessarily how I judge it.

There is a story of a beggar who used to travel from village to village begging in each place then moving on. One morning having arrived at a place he went round from house to house as usual. By the end of the morning he had managed to collect a good few handfuls of rice. He had settled himself down on the pavement on the main high street for a rest when he saw the dust of an approaching carriage in the distance. As it got nearer he was astonished to see the carriage was actually covered in gold, bedecked in jewels and was being pulled by four magnificent horses. Riding the open carriage was no other than the King himself. Pulling himself up the beggar thought this was his day, the best begging opportunity ever. Holding his palms up he waited for the carriage to pass. To his further astonishment it actually stopped in front of him and the King leaned over towards him. The beggar was very excited now as to what the King was going to give him. However rather than give him anything the King simply stretched out his own hand to the beggar in a gesture of asking for something. The beggar remained confused not knowing what to do. The King insisted still stretching his hand out and the beggar finally took out a single grain of rice out of his bag and put it in the King's hand. The King thanked him and the chariot went off.

At the end of the day the beggar sat down to cook his evening meal and in preparation emptied out his bag of rice onto a cloth. What he saw made him cry out. There in amongst the rice was a single golden rice grain.

It is in the unconditional giving that we receive not in the taking of things according to what I want. What is it that holds us back from this? It is fear. Fear of not having what I want, of losing what I have, of being conjoined with what I do not want. This fear gives rise to this picking and choosing which is the source of all our problems.

What is essential is the giving. There are two aspects of this giving.

When we give ourselves into this moment, into what is being done then we re-connect with that Oneness. The delusion of I is characterised by feeling separate and apart. With the giving the artificial sense of being apart falls away and so that at-one-ment can respond appropriately to the moment.

The other aspect of the giving is the emptying of the heart. A heart that is empty has no limit. In either giving or receiving it is unconditional.

At its base giving has compassion, the consideration for others. With compassion this giving can come about. Without compassion we can never arrive at the essential. With compassion that natural human warmth can then flow out like the bubbling water of a mountain stream for the benefit of all.

SIX PARAMITAS – PRAJNA BY VENERABLE MYOKUN

The Heart Sutra outlines the Prajna Paramita and captures the essence of the longer and more detailed Prajna Paramita Sutras. In Zen Monasteries its importance is reflected in it being chanted a number of times each day, before the breakfast and midday meal, as well as in the morning chanting and after the evening zazen. While we chant it in sino-japanese, it is important to also be thoroughly familiar with it in English. The first words are “Makka Hannya” meaning Great Wisdom, followed by “Haramita”, meaning Paramita, “Shin” for Heart and “Gyo” for Sutra. Gyo also has the connotation of the eternal.

Eric Cheetham, in his book the Great Way, points out that of all the Paramitas this is the only one that is given the title Great. He says that normally it arises from working with the previous five Paramitas, but it can also be the result of a determined focus on just one. The Bodhisattva path does not end here; it comprises ten bhumis or stages, with a Paramita to be perfected for each stage. There are four additional ones necessary for completion of the path, which are resolute effort, skilful means, deep aspiration and knowledge. The latter concern

both a cultural knowledge of the times necessary for showing the Way to others, as well as the insight into the teachings.

The Sutra continues with “When the Bodhisattva, Avalokitesvara practised the profound Great Wisdom Gone Beyond (Prajna Paramita) he clearly saw that the Five Aggregates (Skandhas) are all empty and thus passed beyond suffering”. It is significant that Avalokitesvara is the one referred to, as she is imbued with compassion. She is sometimes depicted with 1000 arms as a reflection of her limitless compassion. Wisdom and compassion go hand in hand and one cannot function effectively without the other. Wisdom without compassion and warmth tends to harshness and compassion without wisdom slides into sentimentality.

This is reflected in several anecdotes Venerable Myokyo-ni told concerning her teachers. She spoke of an occasion when she was scolded by Sessō Rōshi for something she had not done. (When the opportunity presents itself, this is a teaching device that is used to test a disciple.) She was confused wondering how he could think she would do such a thing; and looked up at him to find his face full of compassion. When Venerable Myokyo-ni started training with her second teacher, Kannon Rōshi, she was somewhat concerned because of his reputation for sternness. Then early one frosty winter morning when the sun was just rising, she was walking behind him unobserved as he approached the Shrine Room. Before entering, he turned around to look at the garden and his face softened as he saw the beauty of the frosty morning. She was then reassured, as she knew then that he also had the warmth.

Wisdom reflects a total response to a given situation, which may require a firm hand or a more gentle approach. In a Zen teacher the ability to produce one or other and to move freely from one to the other can be very moving. Many of us will have experienced Venerable Myokyo-ni’s ability to scold heartily one moment and then be light and good humoured the next. Sometimes all that is required is reflected in a small physical gesture.

Manjusri, who sits on a lion, symbolically represents wisdom. The lion represents tremendous life-giving energy. It is said that when the lion roars the other animals in the forest tremble. For those fortunate to be with Ven Myokyo-ni towards the very end of her life, her ability to be full engaged and converse wholeheartedly even if lying down and in some pain, having hardly slept the previous night, was awesome. Manjusri holds the teaching on a lotus in his left hand and a burning sword with which to cut off ignorance in his right.

The Sutra goes on to explain the emptiness of all dharmas, and goes through the various aspects of the teachings – the five skandhas, the twelve links of the Chain of Dependent Causation, and the Four Noble Truths – explaining that they are in practice empty of self-nature. Emptiness in this context does not mean “nothing”, but rather emptiness of I, that is having no independent self-nature.

Of course we would like to understand and grasp what this nothingness really is. We are like the tadpole in the pond, which asks the frog what it is like on dry land. The frog replies to the insistent questions “no dry land does not have fish”, “no it is not wet”, “no you cannot swim in it”, until the tadpole thinks dry land is really an unfathomable nowhere.

The Sutra goes on to say that “The Bodhisattva relies on the Great Wisdom Gone Beyond and so his heart is free of hindrances. Because his heart is free of hindrances he is free of fear”. In the same way we very gradually and with repeated effort learn to live out of that spacious roominess that is cultivated in the previous Paramita, meditation, and to declutch from our personal preoccupations.

Of course, we often fall down along the Way and become once again focused on our plans and concerns. This is a necessary part of cultivating that sense of warmth and compassion towards others and ourselves that functions alongside wisdom. As a humorous reminder, we have the story of the temple boy who was sent on an errand. Zen teachers encourage their young pupils to outsmart each other in battles of wits. The temple boy met a second boy and asked him where he was going. The second boy replied, “wherever my feet take me” and the first boy could not think of anything to say in response. On reporting the incident, his teacher told him on the following day to ask where would he go if he had no feet. So on the next day the first boy went prepared and on meeting the second boy again asked, “where are you going?” and the second boy confounded him by replying “wherever the wind blows”. Again the first boy reported the meeting to his teacher who told him on the following day to ask where he would go if there was no wind. On the following day the first boy again met the second and asked where he was going and the second replied “to market”!

The Sutra ends with “Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha!” which means “Gone Gone Gone beyond, Gone altogether Beyond, Enlightenment fulfilled”. In reflecting on the Heart Sutra, the Dalai Lama suggests these reiterations be seen as the various levels of practice and can be used as a benchmark, which spurs us on not to judge our attainments, but to continue diligently walking.

COLLECTED STORIES BY VEN. MYOKYO-NI

The Zen texts are full of such seemingly contradictory sayings. The great Master Joshu was asked by a monk whether a dog has Buddha-Nature. Joshu said, 'No'. Asked the same question by another monk, Joshu said, 'Yes'. Why? 'As fits the need' — of the one monk who thought he knew and of the other who genuinely

wanted to know. The Buddha himself said, 'All the Tathagata's wisdom and power is inborn and inherent in all beings!' And Master Joshu, seeing what suited the need of that cock-sure monk, looked him straight in the face and said, 'No!' What is it? Is Master Joshu contradicting the Buddha? The monk never had a real problem — the Buddha asserted and Joshu contradicted. Perhaps it does not mean all that much to us, 'the Buddha said', but for a monk at that time, who had dedicated his life to the realisation of the Buddha's teaching, what the Buddha had said meant a great deal — and now a great Master contradicted it.

Whereas on another occasion another monk, worried about Buddha-Nature — is it human beings only that have it? Or do all beings have it? He also came to Joshu and he asked, 'Has a dog Buddha-Nature?' And Master Joshu said, 'Yes!'

Now, we have that same Master Joshu — to one he says, 'No', to the other he says, 'Yes'. What does he mean? Can't he make up his mind? Has he changed his outlook? Why? Is this not showing how to benefit all beings as suits their needs? However, to do so one has to see what the question really asks, where it comes from and what the real need is or the answer would not 'fit'.

Then the Eight Types of Deliverance and the Six Supernormal Powers 'imprint the heart'. We tend to be fascinated by ideas such as 'Supernormal Powers'. On my return from Japan twenty-five years ago, I was for some years librarian at the Buddhist Society; much has changed since then but there were some hundred titles that started with 'Secret'. Anything 'Secret', 'Occult', 'Hidden' or 'Powers' supposedly developed by meditation, etc., seems to exercise an irresistible attraction. The great Zen Master Rinzai puts these 'Powers' into perspective. No doubt his followers also, as we are now, were attracted by these 'Powers'. So he told them that when the great Demon King with his host made war with the Devas (Heavenly Beings), the Demons were vanquished. Fleeing, the Demon King by Supernormal Power made himself and his army of 80,000 vanish and hide in the hollow stem of a lotus but surely that did not make him Buddha. The real Supernormal Powers of a Buddha are rather, in the eyes not to be deceived by seeing, in the ears, not to be deceived by hearing, in the nose, not to be deceived by smells, on the tongue, not to be deceived by taste and in thinking, not to be deceived by thoughts. And we, are we not deceived by thoughts of 'I', 'my' notions, 'my' opinions, 'my' convictions, as 'I know you/he/she/it should be. Or as 'I know I should be but then am not and then I get frustrated and depressed. But mostly it is notions of how you should be, and the next stage then is how the world should be.

This brings up the question about Karma and roots. The texts often mention superior, middling and inferior. These days we do not like such terms. So we better have a good look at their meaning. Buddhistically speaking, the superior man has worked up good Karma, and has for many lives followed the Path. So

now he has the strength, the will and the determination to settle it once and for all. A Samurai had practiced Zen for some time to no avail but had all the physical training and stamina of a Samurai. He lost his patience, jumped into his bath tub — the old-fashioned Japanese type like our old cast-iron laundry tubs used to be — slammed the wooden lid shut on him and there he crouched without food and without drink and continued crouching. There was no room for him to move but he carried on — and after three days and nights something gave and insight arose. But body and heart must be trained sufficiently for this giving over. The superior man has practiced this over many life times, it is said. So he can 'settle it once and for all.' 'The middling and the inferior learns much, but believes little'. That is still so today. We hear the message and it seems quite interesting, but we don't quite believe it, not really; so we cannot live it. And when it comes to the practice of it, we don't quite believe that either. We are willing to do a little or to go that far — but not further! It is like somebody who cannot swim and someone has said, 'Now try! There is nothing to it. Just let yourself go into the water!' But on the seashore even if the sea is quiet, there come waves, however small, and by the time the non-swimmer is up to the knees in the rippling water, he does not like to go any further. Experiment! But be careful, because there is also fool-hearted experimentation and that is not the purpose of the exercise. This is why we usually need a guide and follow very careful instructions which derive from experience and take into account all the possibilities that our own silliness can perpetrate.

If I cannot swim, I do not like to go more than knee-deep into the sea because I am frightened of the water as the waves come at me. They might throw me over; I can't let go. And I cannot let go because I do not trust the water until I can swim. It is not that the water does not carry me if I hand myself over but while frightened and/or unsure, I tense myself, become stiff, and so go under.

So it is not that I have to learn to swim; what I have to learn is to become familiar with the water. Which means that by physical experience I have to overcome my fear of drowning. This is the crucial point and therefore the approach has to be gentle and gradual, to do it slowly and follow exactly as told. The same with our training — to 'follow exactly as told'. In a way, yes, I want to but I either overdo it or I want to take a rest and have time 'for myself' again. So familiarity and trust do not develop and I remain tethered to 'I'.

Long ago I had to have an operation. Due to shortages they did not have the anaesthetic beforehand and I was asked, would I object to being given ether straight. I, never having had anything like this and not knowing anything, blissfully said, 'Yes, all right!' So I was wheeled in and the ether mask was put on my face. All I knew about it was detective stories where you sit in a car and your assailant suddenly slaps the chloroform pad on and you pass out. And that is what I expected. But it did not go quite like this. I found that I had no air, so politely I

asked, 'Can you please take it off, I need to breathe!' But it wasn't taken off. So more urgently, 'Can you please take it off!' But instead it was held on a little tighter — they must have known what to expect. For involuntarily but with all my might I shoved, 'TAKE IT OFF!' Down the mask pressed and that was the last I knew.

So, 'Yes', we say in the beginning, not really knowing. And then it comes to that first little bit of bother — 'Well, perhaps not today. I'll have to think a bit more about it' or whatever it might be. And next time I procrastinate, 'It's unwise.' Finally, approaching the nitty-gritty, I shy away if I can. If I cannot, then, as with the Samurai, something gives.

When I came to Japan in 1960, soft beds were still preferred and sleeping on a futon on tatami floor took a couple of days to get used to. Ruth Sasaki always consoled, 'Do not worry, it is good for the back — and good for practice; something must give — and it is not the floor.'

'The middling and inferior learns much.' We read the Buddhist scriptures and more and more about things — we are great learners and information gatherers. 'But they do believe little.' 'Yes, maybe. Maybe.' Try it!

Our Founder President, Christmas Humphreys, became interested in Buddhism in his late teens and in his mid-twenties, already the founder of the Buddhist Society, with the Pali texts being published, he asked to meet one of the great scholars whose translations he had read to find out how to practice these teachings. He arrived for the appointment. The scholar eyed him doubtfully, 'You are Mr Humphreys?' This being affirmed, he asked reproachfully, 'But how can you be a scholar? You are far too young!' 'No, I am not a scholar — I have come to find out how to practise these teachings.' The famous scholar was dumbfounded. 'What! Do you mean this can be practised?'

That was in the mid-twenties. A good bit of time has gone since then. Now we know how to practise it. But that does not say that from the moment 'Go' we can really do so — we have to learn, little by little . . . and still more . . . and still some more. And we have to be patient.

A superb example of not shunning fanciful thoughts is the story of a Japanese Samurai, who after years of faithful and loyal service to his liege lord began to feel a tremendous draw towards Buddhism and the Zen training. He fought it because to leave his liege-lord and enter a monastery instead would be the most despicable thing, unthinkable for a Samurai.

After having grappled with it for five years, he could no longer bear it. We are here reminded of the Buddha who also could no longer bear his problem and left palace, wife and child. Anyway, one night, with his heart at breaking point, he crept out and joined a Zen monastery. After twelve years of formal training and having nothing further to seek, he left the monastery to go on pilgrimage, as they

usually do. And as the Dharma and the Karmic connections usually arrange it, hardly had he left the mountain monastery and walked along the valley, towards him on horseback came a Samurai. They recognised each other, had been serving the same liege lord. The mounted Samurai looked at that beggarly figure, 'Unbelievable! Despicable! Not really human! How could a Samurai leave his liege-lord?' and drew his sword to lop off his head, when he thought, 'No! The sword of Samurai is noble and honourable, not to be sullied with the blood of such a creature!' He sheathed his sword again and on riding past spat full into the monk's face! In the act of wiping off the spittle, the monk had a 'fanciful thought', a memory of what would have happened and how he would have responded, emotionally as well as physically, if that had happened twelve years ago! And realized at that moment what a tremendous change had taken place! He turned round and did three full prostrations towards the mountain monastery which he had left and made a little poem:

The mountain is the mountain,
And the Way is the same as of old;
Verily what has changed is my own heart.

It is this change of heart which is the important thing. Fanciful thoughts come up naturally with memory but have no more power; so he neither shuns fanciful thoughts, nor seeks for the truth; he has nothing further to seek!

ADVICE ON STARTING OUT WITH DAILY LIFE PRACTICE

Sometimes people are referred to the Zen Centre who have read or heard about the Buddha's teachings and understand that these teachings are to be put in to practice. The question is, however, how is that done in the Zen tradition? So this short piece is an attempt to outline the basic Buddhist practice in daily life to get the student started.

Students are expected to be versed in the basic Buddhist Teachings such as the Four Noble Truths, Three Signs of Being, Skandas & Dhatus, and the 12 Linked-Chain of Dependent Origination. In addition they will need to acquire and read two books, *The Zen Way* and *Gentling the Bull*.

To begin with students will need to start with the daily life practice which is the beginning, middle and end of the training. Although it sounds easy only a fully-fledged Buddha can carry it out perfectly 24 hours a day! Quite simply it is to – give myself, whole-heartedly into what at this moment is being done anyway. When I give myself into an activity then the feeling of 'me doing' disappears and an open awareness arises. This happens quite naturally when I am doing something I really enjoy, a hobby for example. This is why I enjoy my hobbies

because – given into the activity – it ‘lights up’ and the awareness brings everything alive. ‘I’ believe it is the hobby that works this magic and fills me with joy but in fact it is because I have given myself to it that does the trick. So why don’t we do this all the time? Well, ‘I’ get in the way, with my judgements that this is interesting and that is boring. By doing this I will not give myself into those things that ‘I’ judge as boring and lo and behold they feel boring!

So the first thing is – as much as possible cultivate the habit of giving myself into all activities as whole-heartedly as possible, whenever awareness arises that I have ‘gone off’ into daydreams and thoughts then to bring myself back with a jerk into the activity again. To help us with this we bring the body into the action – you will find it easier to use physical work as a doorway into this giving of myself – try it out and see what happens! The two books mentioned above give more details on this practice. In particular the setting up of a timetable so as to become aware of those moments during the day when something inside (one of my judgements), comes up and says ‘No!’ Once at home in the body then we become aware of just how much of life we refuse in this way and get used to containing these reactions and say ‘Yes!’ to life instead. This is the practice of – working with the Three Fires. In Zen an analogy is used of a Bull gradually being gentled. This gentling process is a life-long one. However in the process we become acquainted with that Bull and realise that in fact it is our own heart that is filled with energy and possesses wisdom I could not imagine. What is more we discover that in fact unbeknown to me I had been searching for this heart all along and there it was all the time – only ‘I’ did not/could not realise it.

Please experiment with that practice of giving yourself, whole-heartedly as much as possible as often as possible. The Buddha said that we should test his teachings as a goldsmith tests gold ‘by rubbing and burning’. Happy experimenting.

ZEN CENTRE NEWS

In July we had the very good fortune to welcome Daiko-san back for a stay at both Fairlight and Shobo-an. It was a joyful re-union for residents and lay members alike. He gave a talk to a packed house at Shobo-an which features in this issue of Zen Traces. It is wonderful that we can renew our links with Japan, Soko Roshi and our Rinzai Zen lineage in this way. It is also reassuring to know that despite our geographical distance a spiritual connection remains.

Another renewal has also taken place on the windows at Shobo-an; our thanks go to all those who have come to help in carrying out this maintenance work. In particular heartfelt thanks go to Patrick Walsh and Paul Gay for their coordination and hard work. In addition quite a lot of sorting out has taken place with the furniture and items at Shobo-an, again thanks go to residents and laity who have taken part in clearing out and re-arranging furniture.

The building work for the basement is at the planning stage; it is unlikely to start before 2012. Notice will be given as and when the regular zazen classes will be relocated upstairs.

A reminder that both Fairlight and Shobo-an have places on their weekend sesshins and that these are recommended as part of practice for all who qualify. In the December issue we will publish our annual events calendar; so take the opportunity to book in advance and put them in the diary for 2012. Opportunities also exist for members settled in the practice and who have made themselves known to residents of Fairlight & Shobo-an for short and long stays. Please speak to Ven. Sogen at Fairlight or Ven. Myokun at Shobo-an for details.

Once again our thanks go to all who have provided dana over the past quarter we rely on contributions for our existence a continual reminder of the interdependency of all things.

Memorial Days:

17 th September	Sesso Roshi's Anniversary
5 th October	Bodhidharma Day
22 nd November	Daito Kokushi's Anniversary
8 th December	Buddha's Enlightenment

There will be a morning service at Shobo-an at 7am on week-days and 8am on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays; all are welcome. Indeed, remembrance of these events is part of our training and those who cannot attend in person might like to observe the occasion at home, having fresh flowers, a candle and incense on their altar and half an hour of quiet remembrance — in gratitude.

Autumn terms starts: 12th September 2011

Zen Centre Activities:

The Zen Centre offers a structured training programme. Familiarity with the basic principles of Buddhism is assumed. Prior attendance at the Buddhist Society's Introductory Course of eight lectures is suggested or taking the Buddhist Society's Correspondance Course, asking for a tutor from the Zen Centre. The Buddhist Society is at 58 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1PH. The study of the Zen Centre's pamphlet *Introducing Buddhism* is required.

A Course of the Fundamentals of Zen Practice — Mondays, 6.30 - 8.00 pm at the Buddhist Society, membership of the Buddhist Society is required. Newcomers are expected to read *The Zen Way*, and to practice as suggested. No meetings on Bank Holidays.

Zazen — Attendance by invitation only.

Twice weekly at the Buddhist Society (membership required).

Twice weekly at the Zen Centre.

Twice weekly at Fairlight.

Sunday Meetings — Periodically at 11 am - 3.30 pm at the Buddhist Society. All are welcome. Participants bring sandwiches, tea is provided.

The Course on Buddhism — at the annual Summer School Week of the Buddhist Society. It is designed to cover most aspects of the Teachings and Practice and should enable participants to carry on at home. Occasional questions can be dealt with by letter or a periodic visit to the Zen Centre's Sunday meetings (see above).

Residential Seminar — In the country. All are welcome but numbers are restricted to 40. Serves as a first introduction to Residential Sesshin.

Sunday Sesshin — Periodically at Shobo-an. Open to those who have attended one Residential Seminar or are settled into the weekly Zazen meetings.

Residential Weekend Sesshin — Periodically at Fairlight. Open to those who have attended one Residential Seminar or are settled into the weekly Zazen meetings.

Residential Sesshin — In the country, for those who have attended at least two Weekend Sesshin and/or regular Sunday meetings.

Applications for the two Priory retreats are to be made in writing to the Zen Centre, for Weekend Sesshin to Fairlight, with the envelope marked 'Sesshin'.

Saturday mornings — At Shobo-an, 9.30 am, a 'work party' followed by lunch, for regulars who wish a closer connection with the Centre. Please notify Shobo-an, numbers are restricted.

Publications:

1. Zen Traces, quarterly (subscription £5.00 p.a., £7.00 abroad) £1.00
2. *Introducing Buddhism*..... £1.00
3. *The Zen Way*, by Myokyo-ni £5.00
4. *The Ceasing of Notions*, by Soko Roshi £5.00
5. *Gentling the Bull*, by Myokyo-ni £5.00
6. *The Bull and His Herdsman*, by Otsu Roshi £5.00
7. *The Discourse on the Inexhaustible Lamp*, by Torei Zenji £15.00
8. *First Steps in Buddhist Practice*, by Tim Blake £6.00
9. *Living Buddhism*, by Myokyo-ni £6.00
10. *A Short History of the Zen Centre* £1.00
11. *Stories From The Old Silk Road*, by Eric Cheetham £3.00