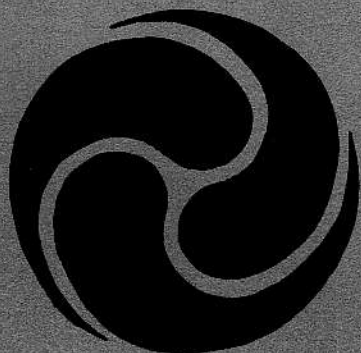


# ZEN NEWS



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Compiled and published by the members of the Tyneside Zen Buddhist Association to foster the practice and study of the Dharma.

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Readers are invited to submit items of news, articles, poetry, artwork, photographs and other material to be considered for publication. Opinions expressed in the items published do not necessarily reflect the editor's own views or the practice of the Newcastle Group. It is hoped that by sharing our experience and understanding we may learn to live together in a positive and harmonious way. In this way Dharma may flourish.

It is intended that Zen News will continue to be published at two monthly intervals. Please ensure that the editor is notified of changes of address. If you have a friend who would like to receive this publication, please send their name and address. No charge is made but your financial support is invited. Payable to; Tyneside Zen Buddhist Association.

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\* \* \*

A Morning Prayer

And yet another day unfolds  
To veil the now dead past  
May I hold each moment with serenity  
An inner calm  
Yet strike as lightening should need arise  
To accept and give love  
Learn from each new situation  
Create as it wills  
Live this day fully  
Sleeping peacefully until the next.

- Tony Henderson

### Zen and Fear

To me Zen training consists partly of facing up to my fears, or trying to. You know, those little things that seem monstrous at the time, like getting up in the morning, especially when its dark and cold. The ego says its nice here, no movement, no effort, just doze, its cold and nasty outside and you need energy out there. Then that little Buddha, who often seems small says get up and train hard, face up to yourself, build up your resilliance. Then you look at the day ahead and it looms in front of you dark and enormous. So you look at the Buddha, he says look at the moment, grasp your will now, throw yourself into each moment. So mostly I get up and find to my surprise the energy is there, and with some cold water on my face things aren't so bad. Then there is fear of sitting but just throw yourself in and sit, it seems to work. Then breakfast and the fear of ending it, because it is so nice and the thought of going outside in the cold. This is the hardest part of the day having to go out in the cold and work hard. Any distraction seems to hold me back, but I must face it, so eventually I go, I feel better if I go straight away because I've faced my fear and seen it for what it is, just a distraction. Then as the day goes on, thoughts invade and frighten me by producing over-blown images and false situations. Sometimes I beat them by putting more energy into what I am doing, sometimes I wallow. But I always remember the training is each moment, so when I fail I must get up and try again or start sliding. The harder the training the better I feel, so I sweep the fears aside and start again. Trying to work harder because then the mind is in the here and now and things are more real, less images and less bodily tension because of the awareness of each action.

Then there's the fear of gain and loss, the fear of having to make enough money to live, but I always get more than enough food, warmth and clothing, and people are always around. Its just an image I fear, and in obeying this image, I am closing myself to the here and now. Failing to take part and witness in life's great transformations each moment, failing to learn from each action, failure to give out. Instead all I have is a racing mind, chasing an illusion, putting undue strain on body and mind, building up a wall around me. So what should I do? Do what I feel best in the long run, face it, feel it and follow the way and take up the joy which sometimes comes with insight.

- Charles Fletcher (Blackpool)

### Pelaw Boot Boys

A tin can rolls in the summer breeze,  
Silence from the disused factory,  
Traffic roars past on the main road,  
Dust covers sunny house fronts.

- Robert Dunnett

Shasta Abbey  
Headquarters of the Soto Zen Church, California

Those who are reading this in order to stimulate within themselves a desire to see 'the Buddhist sights' need read no further. There is a lot happening on the west coast of America, but I made it my discipline to take in only what came into my path, and not to seek or grasp at those sights as they came and passed on. Sights are not important enough to allow them to interrupt training, they only have value as aids to training.

Like Jonathan Sutton visiting Sojiji (Zen News, No.7), I did not forsake my seat to travel to other dusty countries; my meditation stool travelled with me to Shasta! Throssel's carpentry was noted. Nearly everyone used zafus in the zendo, although benches and stools were used occasionally. Sleeping, eating, and zazen took place on the tan.(1)

Tea was also drunk in zazen positions. American 'tea' is an excellent koan for the visiting English.

Each day it snowed a little. Many of the 24 other laypeople had just come from lowland California spring temperatures in the 70s. After rather fruitlessly seeking warmth in extra layers of clothing, American had to come to terms with the cold in a similar way to my coming to terms with 'tea'. Although not suffering from temperature change, the nine hour time lag took its toll. My wife Anne telephoned the afternoon before Jukai started (just before I took an essential afternoon nap). It was after midnight in Edinburgh!

Ceremonies

The five Jukai ceremonies are documented in Roshi's book 'Selling Water By The River'.(2) I had reread the whole book through on the 15 hour flight from Gatwick to Los Angeles and discovered some sections I had not read before!

Roshi presided at all ceremonies. I was there: I was not observing them as an outsider: I cannot give more than a small part of the action. That small part was me.

I was one of the twelve who had not received lay ordination. As each one knelt at Roshi's feet my involvement deepened. I was the third and pitched forward into Roshi's chair when kneeling on the collapsible foam kneeler. If I had needed bringing down to earth, that did it.

Perhaps the most helpful ceremony for me was Sange (approx translation: sincere confession). Jitsudo had given a short talk in the afternoon about the necessity of each person to concentrate on the one precept with which he has the most trouble. His had once been pride. I knew mine had to be anger, since I had even been surprised to find

- 1 Platform raised about 18" from zendo floor, along length of walls. Sleeping mats stowed below.
- 2 Selling Water By The River, Jiyu Kennett, Allen & Unwin, 1972. Hardback available from Throssel Hole Priory, £2.

that one of the ten precepts specifically mentions it. It is easier for me to pick one like 'Do not kill' and think 'I'm all right, I haven't murdered anyone, and I don't eat meat. I do kill vegetables and fruit to eat and kill microbes to breath, but that's necessary to stay alive'. With 'Do not be angry' I could not find any cause for satisfaction. When a student I was called an Angry Young Man. I thought the phrase was a necessary part of me. It stayed with me. But now I am relieved to find that I can give up anger without disappearing into thin air.

#### Fun and Games

Although a timetable for the weeks ceremonies was on display, only the first was as scheduled. Perhaps the rapid advance was to leave time to play Roshi's game, adapted from the floor of the temple she stayed at in Malaysia, and translated into American. A further translation into English is vital.

The game is totally centred on being an aid to meditation. The initial pieces are a pig, snake and cock symbolising greed, hate and delusion. My piece was a snake. Each move in the game can pin-point aspects of training if played in the attitude of meditation. It is great fun. Progress through different states is possible through 'grasping the will'.

#### What's the use of training?

This and many other distracting questions can come into the mind. At Shasta emphasis was clearly placed on the positive approach.

1. All the monks wore pendant manjis symbolising the positive and clockwise direction of mind and body.
2. In Roshi's 'game' the uncertain or divided approach clearly shows itself to each player.
3. During the Sesshin (searching the heart) vague questions such as 'What's the use of training?' can only be asked in sanzen (private talk with a senior monk).

- Robert Dunnett

#### Symbols

Acquisition does not come  
From striving,  
Nor achievement without  
Effort!  
For what can be acquired  
Or achieved,  
When words are merely symbols  
Of experience?

- Cyril Patterson

### Zen in Paris

Stopping off at London for a day on my way to Paris, where I was going to study for a few months, I found out the address of the zendo of Teisen Deshimaru Roshi from the Buddhist Society, and once my professional arrangements in Paris were settled, I set off one evening armed with meditation stool. At the other end of the 'Metro' I found myself looking in the window of a rather nice, but closed, 'Zen shop'. On my third visit I found the shop open and obtained a copy of the time-table for zazen and kusen (oral instruction during zazen), and then the following Friday I had my first taste of continental Zen.

Friday evenings are just straight zazen, the master not attending, and so apart from the novelty for me of more traditional surroundings zazen was carried out in much the same way as practiced by the groups I know at Durham and Newcastle. A couple of things did strike me in particular; firstly, kinhin was done much more slowly and I later discovered the reason for this; secondly, at the end of zazen the 'Scripture of Great Wisdom' was chanted three times in Japanese, each time faster than the previous time. Quite an entertainment, with bells and drums (wooden ones in the shape of a frog) and the ensemble of voices producing a most peculiar, and pleasing harmony. So far, so good.

The next time I went was the following Tuesday. I saw that with only twenty or so people, Friday night was quiet, Tuesday night, the master being present, there were at least forty to fifty. The master's kusen usually takes the form of advice and comments on zazen and posture during the first period of zazen and then remarks of a more general, philosophic but no less practical nature in the second, often in the form of commentaries on a poem or mondo. Sometimes nothing is said during the first period except instructions to wield the big stick, but this particular Tuesday evening a lot was said about posture, occasioned by my sitting on a stool. That he did not like. Although his rebuke was directed at no one in particular, I suddenly felt as if the central heating had been turned up a few score degrees. No doubt it was my acute embarrassment and apprehension that made me feel he was looking daggers when I caught his eye for a second as I rose to do kinhin. I nursed my injured self-assurance with the limp consolation that at least I would no longer have to cart my miniature toboggan (as one of the disciples afterwards called it) along with me through the metro.

Since then I have been sitting on a cushion in Burmese posture and am gradually beginning to settle into it, although my knees and shoulders would far rather I chose a more sensible past-time for my leisure hours. The slow kinhin helps a good deal here. We are told to move forward one half step on every exhalation and to put all our body weight on the leg that has just moved and to stretch the knees. In this way aches and pains are soon relieved, and half-way through kinhin we close up for collective massage. Massaging and being massaged vigorously for three or four minutes really loosens and wakes you up.

On Sunday mornings there is kusen followed by mondo, question and answer. The first time I went I was still somewhat intimidated by what I took to be a most severe and stern man. Imagine my surprise to see how the atmosphere changed in an instant from formal ceremony at the

end of zazen to completely informal and relaxed gathering around a broadly grinning Deshimaru. The humour of the man came out well in a reply to a question about Zen and daily life (so why monasteries?) in which he took obvious delight in describing how a Zen monk needs at least five minutes to go to the toilet ('pour faire pipi'), by the time he's taken off and put back on his clothes, correctly folding them and performing gassho after each action!

Deshimaru doesn't speak French and so delivers his kusen in English, pausing for the translation into French from one of his disciples. However, it would be as well to understand French if what Deshimaru says is to be understood for it takes time to become accustomed to his English. He has at least four books readily available in France, in French, including a sumptuous edition of some "Sacred texts of Zen" with his commentary, and his most recent work, in collaboration with a Frenchman, called "Zen and Brain". All his kusen are taken down and available shortly afterwards on request from the office, the most recent series being a discussion of Christianity and Zen.

The zendo is a court-yard at the back of the block of flats and offices where the Zen shop is and has a different address.

The address of the dojo is: 50 Rue Pernety, Paris 75014.  
The address of the office and shop is: 46 Rue Pernety, Paris 75014.

There is also a European Zen Association which would welcome new members to support Deshimaru's mission in Europe, information is available from the office in Paris

- Robin Price

## **Retreats**

Throssel Hole Priory Week Sesshins will be held on July 31 to August 7 and August 28 to September 4, and week-end retreat on June 3 - 4. Those wishing to attend the priory should apply in writing to the Guestmaster, Throssel Hole Priory, Carr Shield, Near Hexham. Northumberland

Tyneside - 19th June A day retreat will be held at 15 Hallington Mews, Killingworth, led by Daiji Strathern, Prior of Throssel Hole Priory. Reservations in advance please to Rycharde Apps at the same address (N'cle 682610). The cost is £1.25 payable on the day.

Spode House There will be an inter-religious retreat at Spode House, Hawksyard Priory, Rugeley, Staffs. between 16 - 23rd July. For bookings please contact the warden at Spode House (Armitage 490112). The cost in previous years has been about £25.

London Zen Priory One weekend retreat is held every month and there is a week sesshin planned for committed meditators of the priory and Throssel between August 7 - 13. For further information contact the priory at 8 Radford Rd. Lewisham, London SE 13. (01 318 4699)

# News

We have changed editors. Our thanks to David Brazier for all his efforts as editor of Zen News and it's predecessor Zen Newsheet.

On June 16th David will be speaking at an international seminar at the National Institute of Social Work in London. The subject is Zen and Marxism: Two Approaches to Social Work. David will be putting forward a Zen viewpoint.

Mike Childs is leaving us in June to take up a post as a Landscape Architect with the Local Authority at Bolton.

The latest development on 'looking for a zendo' is that we are now looking for a house to let, rather than vacant offices. We hope to start a residential centre as near to Newcastle city centre as possible. Such a centre will have many advantages, enabling daily group meditation, morning, evening and lunch hour, and allow further expansion of the groups activities. We need a minimum of a two bedroom house or flat with one large room for a zendo. If you know of anything suitable or names and addresses of landlords in the area please contact the editor.

Thank you to all who bought zafu covers, you managed to raise over £14 for the Throssel Hole Priory Zendo Appeal. We will not be making any more over the summer months, but if you wish to make your own, please send a stamped addressed envelope to the secretary for the pattern.

Members of the group would like to express gratitude to Cyril Patterson for donating several books and so starting a library.

The Buddhas birthday was celebrated on May 8th at Whitley Bay. Adults and children intermingled between the house, promenade and beach on the warm sunny Saturday afternoon. Daiji joined us at six at the house for a ceremony, after reading scriptures and all singing the Scripture of Great Wisdom and Adoration to the Three Treasures, Daiji closed the ceremony with the Offertory to the Buddha (P.243 Selling Water by the River). Then came the festive meal (Etty had prepared and outstanding trifle). In the cool of the evening after the children had departed we sat for meditation.

## Marriages

Stewart McFarlane and Anne Ward are to be married in August. The Buddhist ceremony will be held in Durham and be conducted by Reverend Daiji Strathern. Anne is a Classics graduate at Lancaster University and Stewart is continuing post graduate research in Buddhist studies at Durham University.

Richard Zahler and Margaret Larkin are to be married on the 26th of June at Throssel Hole Priory and at Hexham. Richard has just spent 7 days at the priory to satisfy the registrar that he is a resident of the Hexham area, so permitting the second wedding in Hexham registrars office instead of in Edinburgh.

Let us wish Anne and Stewart, and Margaret and Richard well.



# Meetings

Aberdeen Weekly meetings. Contact Chris Roberts, 5 Richmond Terrace.

Edinburgh Weekly meetings and occasional day retreats. Contact Richard Zahler, 8 Starbank Road, Edinburgh 6 (031 552 3272).

Tyneside Wednesday meetings at 7pm as follows:

7	Mardale, Albany Village, Washington	Jun 16	Jul 14	Aug 11
31	Grafton Road, Whitley Bay	Jun 23	Jul 21	Aug 18
15	Hallington Mews, Killingworth	Jun 30	Jul 28	
16	Sunderland Road, South Shields	Jul 7	Aug 4	

These meetings include periods of sitting and walking meditation, the reading of one or more short texts about meditation practice, and an informal period for refreshments and discussion. Beginners are welcome and basic meditation instruction is available.

A Tuesday meeting will be held 7 - 10.30pm at 7 Mardale, Washington on July 27. The evening is run on a more demanding schedule, refreshments are served, but there is no period for discussion. The proceedings are for the most part, in silence.

For further information/organising lifts, contact Robert Dunnett, 7 Mardale, Washington, (N'cle 466294) or Rycharde Apps, 15 Hallington Mews, Killingworth, (N'cle 682610).

Durham Zazen meetings continue in the Quiet Room, Van Mildert College, on Mondays at 8pm until June 21. Information from Jonathon Sutton, Littleton House, Littleton, Near Durham.

Cleveland Contact Mrs. Joyce Shaw, 103 Overdale Road, Middlesbrough for correct information.

Bradford - Leeds Contact Helen Percival, 31 Harrogate St., Bradford.

Nottingham Meetings every Monday at 8pm at 26 Millicent Rd., West Bridgeford, Nottingham. Information from Alan MacCormick at the same address (813351).

St Annes - Blackpool Information from Charles Fletcher, 107 Blackpool Road North, St Annes on Sea, Lancs.

North Staffordshire Information on meetings in Newcastle, Staffs from Alan Clayton, West View, Blackenhall, Nantwich, Cheshire.

South Staffordshire Information from Nick Churchhill, 154 Netherstone Lane, Litchfield, Staffs.

Northampton Weekly meetings at 93 Lutterworth Road, Northampton. Contact Mrs. Carol Cooley of the same address for information.

Dublin Current information from Moira Jones, c/o I.S.P.G.C., 20 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

At all the above groups it is possible to practice Soto Zen meditation. This does not necessarily mean that all the groups follow this practice exclusively.