

INAUGURATION OF THE ZEN BOAT, GRONINGEN



An auspicious event
Buddhas and bodhisattvas
Appear in great numbers

How wonderful, how wonderful
The River of Zen entered
The canals of Groningen City
And a perfect Zen Boat appeared

So let's celebrate together
The inauguration
Of this precious place of practice.

On May 13th Tenkei Roshi officially inaugurated the Zen Boat in Groningen as a branch temple of Zen River. The ceremony was dedicated to our dear late sangha member Janneke Guermonprez who so generously donated her house boat to us. A festive reception followed. Senseis Senko and Jifu now live on the Zen Boat as resident teachers while Doin and Ranka also conduct classes regularly. Congratulations to everybody who made this all happen!

SOBA NOODLES IN HOT BROTH

200 g (7 ounces) soba noodles, or thin spaghetti
300 g (1 block) silken tofu
20 g fresh ginger
3 stems green onions
1 medium carrot
100 g snow peas or sugar snaps
100 g mushrooms, preferably enoki
Dashi (broth):
1 litre (4 cups) water
8cm (3") square of good quality dried kombu
(kelp) seaweed
6-8 dried or fresh shiitake mushrooms
2 tablespoons mirin (sweet cooking rice wine)**
2 tablespoons sake (rice wine)*
4 tablespoons soy sauce
Ground red chillies to serve (Togarashi)

* In a large pot, bring about 2 litres (2 quarts) of water to a boil on a medium flame. Sprinkle in the soba noodles and stir well. Return to a boil and simmer until al dente, usually about three-five minutes (or follow package directions). Add a little cold water if it starts to boil over. Drain and rinse well with cold running water, rubbing the strands together gently to clean off any excess starch and stickiness. Set aside.

* Carefully unpack the silken tofu without breaking it. Medium-dice and slide onto a serving plate.

* Peel and grate the fresh ginger.

* Slice the green onions as fine as possible.

* Peel and fine-julienne the carrots and snow peas.

* Separate the enoki mushrooms into small clusters or use regular mushrooms thinly sliced.

* Make the dashi by combining the water, mirin, and sake. Bring to the boil on a medium flame. Wipe the surface of the kombu. Add it to the pot with the dried mushrooms. Simmer on a low flame for about eight minutes, or until the shiitake have softened. (If using fresh shiitake simmer for just three minutes.) Remove the mushrooms and kombu and slice thinly when cool. Set aside.

* Next, drop in the carrots, snow peas and mushrooms, and return to a boil. Scoop out and set aside in a colander. Cover to keep warm.

* Remove the dashi from the heat and add the soy sauce. Season to taste.

* Before serving, reheat the soba noodles by covering them with boiling water and carefully reheat the dashi without boiling it.

* To serve, scoop out a spoonful of soba noodles from the hot water with a slotted spaghetti spoon and drop them into individual soup or noodle bowls. Pour a ladle of dashi over the top. Top with mixed vegetables, mushrooms, kombu, tofu, a little grated ginger and green onions. Sprinkle with ground red chillies and enjoy slurping the noodles down using chopsticks, then finish by enjoying the dashi like a soup.

Tip: In summer months, serve everything chilled. Pour ice-cold water over the noodles and let the dashi and vegetables cool in the fridge before serving.

***You can substitute both sake and mirin with vermouth, white wine, or dry sherry sweetened with a little sugar.*

CALLING UPON THE INNER MASTER BY TENKEI ROSHI

*Everyday Master Zuigan Shigen used to call out to himself, "Oh, Master!" and would answer himself, "Yes?" "Are you awake?" he would ask, and would answer, "Yes, I am." "Never be deceived by others, any day, any time." "No, I will not."***

Zuigan Shigen was a ninth century Chinese master and one of the successors of Ganto who, in turn, was a successor of the famous master Tokusan. Zuigan was quite a character and could often be found sitting on a big rock calling out and answering himself – as if he was a total idiot. He became very popular and was at some point invited to become the abbot of a big monastery.

When Zuigan first came to Ganto, he asked him, "What is the Eternal Truth?" And Ganto immediately replied, "You've missed it." Zuigan then asked, "What is it when I miss it?" to which Ganto replied, "It is no longer Eternal Truth." This dialog had a deep impact on Zuigan and he ended up training under Ganto for a long time. Finally he attained great realization, and kept his practice alive by calling out to his inner master, over and over again. So to whom or what is Zuigan calling? That is the question this koan presents to us.

One day a monk came to visit Master Gensha, a dharma cousin to Zuigan. Master Gensha asked him, "Where do you come from?" The monk said, "I come from Zuigan." And Gensha said, "Ah, Zuigan, that's interesting! What is his teaching nowadays?" The monk reported how Zuigan would often sit on a rock, calling out and answering himself. Gensha asked, "Why did you leave?" The monk replied, "Well, he happened to pass away." Then Gensha asked, "If you would call him now, 'Hey Master, hey Master', how would he answer?"

How would we answer? Can we identify with this monk – or with Master Zuigan for that matter? Can we really answer with the voice of our own inner master? Where can we find him or her? When we turn our own light inward, we discover that our mind is vast and boundless, and that it includes everyone and everything; there is nothing that can be objectively established outside of it. So this mysterious inner master is everywhere or nowhere, however you wish to phrase it. It cannot be defined through any kind of conceptualization, yet this doesn't mean that we can't experience its functioning. The more we look in, the less we find, and the more room there is for our inner master to freely respond to our ever-changing life situations.

*All that is experienced and your own mind
are the unique primary reality.
They cannot be conceptualized according to
the cause and effect systems of thought.
Investigate your mind's real nature so that your pure
and total presence will actually shine forth.***

So, the inner master cannot be seen, heard, felt, or understood by our usual channels of perception. It can only

be experienced directly with our whole being. Of course, that's difficult because we want to understand, we want to take control and be secure; but we can't. What is the Eternal Truth? You've missed it! Oh... what is it then? If you miss it, then it is no longer Eternal Truth.

If we really want to identify with master Zuigan, we have to be willing to loosen up from our view of ourself and dare to question who and what we really are. And that may bring up all sorts of reservations. Am I not the one living this life? How could I not be the expert? But let's face it; if we are the experts on ourselves, we might as well be totally happy, fulfilled, enlightened beings since according to the Buddha, we all share in his wisdom and virtues. So how can we manifest those qualities? The interesting thing is that even when we are miserable, we may still think that we are the expert; we know better than the Buddha. Could it perhaps be that we don't see things right and that our perspective is not correct after all? Let's just take on the position of master Zuigan who sits on a rock talking to himself. It's funny and kind of sweet. Could we at least give it a try?

When was the last time that you heard from your inner master? Can you recall a situation where things suddenly worked out – perhaps against all odds? You just happened to be at the right place at the right time, followed a deep intuition and made the right decision. Perhaps there wasn't even much time to think or pay attention to your feelings. You just did what seemed right, and it turned out to be right.

Recently, I gave a public talk in a cultural center in Madrid and asked everyone to sit still for a few minutes to do some inner research on this issue. There were seventy or eighty people in the room and the responses were quite strong. Many spoke up or nodded in agreement. Then I asked if there were any artists in the audience, and at least one third of the people raised their hands. The inner master can manifest in every area of our lives; but in my experience, art totally depends on his or her presence. An artist may plod along for days, and suddenly 'know' what to do.

Incidents like this, great or small, can have big impact. We then say "it just had to be that way", or "things fell into place". The construction of our Zendo was definitely like this. We had been looking at various designs and locations in the garden for quite some time, until we just knew: the Zendo had to be exactly where it is now. It almost seems to have spontaneously dropped out of the sky, and yet it feels as if it has always been there. Apparently, the building fulfills a need and it's hard to imagine that there was a time when it didn't exist.

Our intuition may not always be so reliable, though. In fact, such incidents seem to happen only on rare occasions, as if by sheer chance. Also, mistakes can be made. What looks right at first can prove to be wrong over time. The voice of our inner master can get lost in the noise and confusion of many other calling stations. How we can make the connection stronger so that important messages get

through to us more often, without any static? The answer is quite simple: meditation. I never forget Maezumi Roshi saying, "Zazen is indispensable." In zazen we have a chance to penetrate into layers of the mind that are too deep to be accessed by any of our sense faculties.

According to Indian Yogacara teaching, which forms an integral part of our Zen tradition, the mind has eight or nine levels of consciousness. The first six are basically the senses, including the cognitive faculty: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Western psychology usually limits its research to these six levels of consciousness, while Yogacara recognizes three more. Those three levels go largely unnoticed by most of us, and yet they have a great influence on our character and life-style. They are claimed to be so strong that they survive even physical death; reason enough to give them more attention.

To start with, the seventh level of consciousness, "Manas", is said to be located right underneath the cognitive mind. It is the energy that keeps our ego together without us having much of a say. The eighth level, "Alaya", or "Storehouse" consciousness, is a huge repository that stores all our experiences over countless lifetimes and keeps a very exact record of positive as well as negative actions. In the Alaya, we are also interconnected with all other life forms. The ninth level, or "Anmora" consciousness, constitutes the most basic level of our mind and can be equated with buddha nature.

Considering these different layers of consciousness, we may wonder where our inner master is hiding. Obviously, not in the cognitive faculty. When used wisely, our capacity to think is very useful in many life circumstances. But its reach is clearly limited. It can draw upon the first five senses, connect the various data they provide, and help us to understand the phenomena that are being produced by the mind. But it cannot scrutinize the true nature of the mind itself. So if we want to call upon our inner master, we have to turn away from what we know and dive to deeper levels of consciousness. Then, the chance of sudden intuitions coming up more often surely increases. Wouldn't it be nice to have one "Aha!" every day? Even the greatest artists have a hard time making one masterpiece after the other. I think that Vincent van Gogh managed during the last two years of his life. He must have had a very deep intuition; it's almost unbelievable. Most of us are just lucky every now and then. So, again, is there any way to make intuition feel a bit more welcome?

When you really turn your own light inward, you can start to recognize the spaciousness of your mind. And, you may also see what blocks it most of the time. According to Dogen Zenji, to study Buddhism is to study the self, and to study the self is to forget the self. So what do we need to do in order to unblock our vision? As we've seen, the self has many different layers, but we usually only focus on the surface levels. We identify with what we know and we have hardly any awareness of deeper levels. To go deep is actually quite scary because we lose our bearings. The harder you look in, the less you see. In fact, if you find anything, you haven't looked hard enough! So, what Zuigan is doing is a bit tricky: calling upon a 'master' as if there were a little



MEMORIAL POEM BY JUNYU KURODA ROSHI

Taizan Hakuyu's holy relics have not
reached the eternal rest yet
Being always present here
Shining brightly over the rooftop of
the Zen River Dharma Hall

- timeless Dharma today keeping the warmth,
Like the sun setting in the west
And water flowing in the east.

Today in Zen River Temple, with the
utmost reverence I pay respects
To Maezumi Roshi
during the 23rd memorial service.

With the whole gathering
We offer incense, flowers, candlelight,
sweet cakes, hot water, and tea.

I hold this honor to officiate this service
being called upon by Tenkei Roshi
The abbot of this temple.

Together with the sangha and all the
merits accomplished through
the recitation of the holy sutras
I am privileged to offer and burn
incense to Maezumi Roshi with
The prayer in my heart.

Repaying the limitless debt of compassion
Rising up to the heaven like a seep mountain
and reaching the bottom of the deepest ocean.

I express this word;

The Old Buddha manifests himself
here on this riverside
And the spring of pure Dharma
continuously plays high.

Embracing this very moment.

person deep down in our consciousness who knows everything. Of course, that is not the case.

The master is impossible to observe simply because you cannot take any distance. Receiving messages from him or her is not like listening to some kind of entity separate and apart from yourself. It is rather that you get hit by fruitful intuitions a little more often than usual, and may suddenly find yourself saying things you've never said and doing things you've never done before. And since we don't usually understand this, we need somebody to keep an eye on us, and to check whether we're on the right track. Hearing from our inner master can feel so odd, we won't trust it. That's why we need a teacher. I remember that for a long time I relied only on the faith of my teacher. It was as if he had more faith in me than I had in myself. I had tried relying on ideas of myself for years and years without any lasting success. So I took a risk, a big risk. And I was lucky. My teacher didn't have much faith in me personally, of course, he just trusted my inner master.

Do you know what is now claimed to be the biggest living organism? It is not an elephant or sequoia tree, but the honey fungus. Mushrooms of this kind live together in great numbers as one organism that covers up to three or four square miles. If you looked at them, you would probably not see anything special. But underneath the soil, there is a whole network that connects all the mushrooms. If something happens to one of them, the others notice and respond. It is just like when one of our fingers hurts, the whole body can feel it. In Buddhism we go one step further and believe that the world itself is one organism. Everyone and everything is intimately interconnected. On the surface we may not realize that, but the inner master does – and responds accordingly.

Unfortunately, for most of us that doesn't happen very often. Imagine that you play the violin. You practice every day and at some point, it starts to sound pretty good. You get really inspired and love to play more and more. Now, imagine that you are so absorbed in your playing, you don't notice that you are actually a member of a grand orchestra. You have no idea what the others members are playing. How would that sound? In brief, that's our samsaric situation.

If we dive deeply into the mind and go beyond our cognitive and emotional faculties, we may suddenly hear the orchestra. Strong intuitions come up that benefit not only ourselves, but also each and every one of us. The self dissolves, and we naturally harmonize. Suddenly our part is in tune with the music of all the other members, which obviously adds to the quality of the concert. There is no ownership, which is a totally liberating experience. Artists often talk about this experience. When something really creative happens, it is as if you're not there.

Connecting with the deeper layers of the mind implies that we enter rather unfamiliar territory, so we should be grateful for a teaching that shows us how to go there. The deeper we go, the more learn to be in tune with the orchestra of this whole universe. To stay in this analogy, mountains and rivers, people and animals, trees and bushes, down to the smallest blades of grass, all play their parts with

different instruments. The Greek philosopher Pythagoras talked about the "Harmony of the Spheres". He believed that even heavenly bodies – planets, suns, moons, and so forth – together all make a perfectly harmonious sound. This reminds me of how the Avatamsaka Sutra describes the universe as an endless net of precious jewels, stretching throughout space and time with each jewel reflecting all of the others.

If, by any chance, you have learned instead to see our universe as an inhospitable place full of black holes, big bangs, and scary aliens, this vast view may sound unbelievable. But how sure can we be? Perhaps we have to admit that we don't really know. According to Buddhist sources, our life is something very different from what we have come to believe. And opening up to that view is not easy. Some people come to Zen hoping it will help them to figure out their lives. And although that works to some extent, ultimately things don't add up. What seems to happen, through long and hard practice, is that you just become more comfortable with not knowing. Not knowing can actually be very fruitful. Rather than a cause for despair, not knowing becomes a source of creativity. It makes for an alert and open mind, which invites unforeseen things to present themselves. Wouldn't such a breath of fresh air be very welcome? Who knows what is going to happen in the next half hour? Who are you going to be tonight, tomorrow, or next year? Most of us are dreading the unexpected. It feels scary and we aren't sure how we will manage. Perhaps we will do very strange things. Well, that's what we have the dokusan room for; you can be as strange as you want. It is a relatively safe place, and it's well-insulated. Feel free to be somebody you don't know.

Sometimes I think that our whole practice boils down to building up enough confidence to allow ourselves to not know – and then learning how to use not knowing fruitfully. Taking on the posture of the Buddha is an important first step. He attained deep realization in that posture, so basically we just copy him. We fake it till we make it. At some point you find out that you are not the only one doing this, and definitely not the first one. Scores of buddhas and bodhisattvas have paved the way, and they're happy to lend support. So making bows and calling upon them is an integral part of our practice. It builds up a mysterious kind of trust, especially when we do it as a group. Our faith grows as we partake in a celebration of life that transcends space and time.

As you call upon your inner master, you may suddenly notice that he or she has actually been calling you too – and for quite some time! Knocking on the door, you start to hear someone knocking from the other side. It's a strange sound, and it comes from a place that you can't locate; but it is hard to ignore. Sometimes the voice of the inner master comes through very clearly. Yet with so many other voices calling for our attention, it is easy to get mixed up. Before we know it, we are back to the cognitive level, wanting to understand what's going on and trying to take some distance. In a way – and this is actually quite funny – we suffer from a serious authority problem. Our ego just wants to know better and won't take any advice, not even from our

MASTER PAINTER KURODA & MOTOR SLOOP CAPTAIN YAMAMOTO



As expected, the May sesshin turned out to be a very special event. Yamamoto Roshi was in great shape, and gave thundering dharma talks on Hakuin's Song of Zazen and passages of the Record of Rinzai, while Hojun Szpunar served as interpreter. He offered dokusan every day, alongside Tenkei Roshi who delivered inspiring talks on Koun Ejo's Komyozo Zanmai. Hojo-san (Junyu Kuroda Roshi) arrived during sesshin accompanied by Shugetsu Appels and two members of Shakyamuni-kai: Doi-san and Kiriya-san. Hojo-san gave talks focusing on Dogen Zenji's Genjokoan which he illuminated with remarkable calligraphy. Sesshin was concluded with lectures by Doi-san and Kiriya-san.

After sesshin everybody went into different directions. Hojo-san and Shugetsu flew to Sao Paulo to conduct ceremonies in the temples of Coen de Souza and Enjo Stahel, Tenkei left for Bangkok to attend the annual UN Vesak celebrations, Myoho and Doin traveled to La Gendronniere to join a Soto Zen conference, while Yamamoto Roshi went on to give talks in Utrecht and Amsterdam. Chikyo chauffeured him and his entourage around and welcomed them in her house. The whole group also made some interesting excursions. The main attractions were a visit to the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, and a boat trip in Haarlem with Yamamoto Roshi at the helm.

inner master. We may even project this suspicious attitude onto suitable candidates in the so-called outside world.

Of course, there is reason enough to mistrust certain authority figures. But when we're not willing to accept any kind of authority, it causes its own problems. I believe that if we do not recognize our inner master, we will always have authority problems – and that can have far-reaching consequences. It actually seems like a vicious circle. Because we don't have much respect for authority – and often for good reasons – there seems to be little chance to listen to any authority – even the one it would be wise to listen to. There is so much skepticism and mistrust everywhere, it infects our culture like a virus.

Luckily, we have the example of Zuigan. In spite of our deeply ingrained mistrust of ourselves and others – seemingly built up over the last couple of kalpas, lifetime after

lifetime – it is possible to connect directly with our inner master, and we are in the extremely fortunate position to do so. Most of us are relatively healthy, do not live in war-torn countries and do not suffer from poverty. We have encountered the Buddhist teaching and have found the time and the place to practice together. A lot of people are not so lucky, so we have a responsibility to really make sure that this teaching is not lost. So, let's use our time well. Oh, Master, are you awake?

(Based on a dharma talk given on April 22, 2018, with thanks to Wynn Seishin Wright and Tessa Gyosei Overbeek)

*Note * Mumonkan # 12 (From: The Gateless Barrier, Zenkei Shibayama & Sumiko Kudo, p 91)*

*Note** The Jewel Ship, Longchenpa (From: You Are the Eyes of the World, Lipman & Peterson, p 32)*



Above: the inauguration ceremony of the Zen Boat in Groningen.

ZEN RIVER TEMPLE

MAY 26 – AUGUST 25.....SUMMER ANGO
 June 17.....Open House
 June 22–24.....Weekend Sesshin
 July 7–12.....Young Rivers Seminar
 JUL. 28–AUG. 25.....SUMMER SESSHIN
July 28–Aug. 2.....Part One
August 4–9.....Part Two
August 11–16.....Part Three
August 18–25.....Part Four
 August 25 11:00 AM.....Shuso Hossenshiki
 SEP. 8–NOV. 24.....FALL INTERIM
 September 15.....Intro Weekend
 September 21–23.....Weekend Sesshin
 October 20–25.....Falling Leaf Sesshin

NOV. 24–MAR 2, 2019.....WINTER ANGO
 November 24–December 1.....Rohatsu Sesshin
 December 27–January 1 2019.....New Year Sesshin

ZEN BOAT

Jul. 7–8; Oct. 6–7; Dec. 8–9; City Sesshin w/Jifu Sensei.
 Sept. 1–2; Nov. 3–4; City Sesshin w/Senko Sensei.
 Jun. 27–Aug. 1.....6 Week Intro. course w/Senko Sensei

AT OTHER LOCATIONS

Nijmegen...W/E Sesshin w/ Jifu Sensei, June 9–10
 Hengelo.....Zen in Twente September 15
 Utrecht...W/E Sesshin w/ Senko Sensei, Sept. 29–30
 Düsseldorf...Zazenkaï w/Daishin Sensei October 3
 Hengelo.....Zen in Twente October 13
 Lima, Peru...Zazenkaï w/Tenkei Roshi Nov. 16–18
 Hengelo.....Zen in Twente November 10
 Two Arrows Telecourse.....w/Tenkei Roshi Dec. 2

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SHUSŌ SHUHO



We are happy to announce that our Japanese guest student Rev. Shuho Go will take on the position of Shuso (head monk) during this Summer Ango. As most of you know, Shuho-san is a fully certified Soto Zen priest who connects strongly with Tenkei Roshi and the practice at Zen River. He has

been with us now for about a year and plans to stay on for a few more years. Shuho-san was Shuso in Japan a long time ago but welcomes the opportunity to take up the role again as a member of our sangha. The appreciation is from both sides, as we can all learn plenty from his monastic and scholarly expertise. This is the first time that a Japanese monk will perform the Hossenshiki ceremony at Zen River. The recitation of the texts will be done partly in Japanese with the Shoki (Shuso assistant) taking care of the translation in English. In other words, this is a special event, and not to be missed by any dragons and elephants!