



## HAPPY PANELS

Hurrah, we generate our own energy! The solar panels on the south-facing side of the roof of the main building are fully operational. Relocating the skylights to the north side of the roof made it possible to install even more panels than we initially thought. There are 51 of them now, covering 93 square meters of the roof. Each of them generates a maximum of 370 watts of electricity per day. This means a total of 19 kilowatts at noon when the sun is out. To put this in perspective, a regularly laundry session uses about 2 kilowatts and an electric kettle 1.5 kilowatts. Altogether, the expected yearly electricity production is about 17,000 kilowatt-hours, which is 94% of what Zen River uses at present.

In order to make ourselves less dependent on gas for our heating systems, we will continue to research other options that are more ecologically friendly, and ultimately also less costly. These include heat pumps, like the one we have already installed outside on the east side of the dining room. So, we will keep working on this matter. Meanwhile, thank you so much for your generosity. Half of the installation costs of the solar panels were covered by last year's fundraiser. So, feel very welcome to visit our newly energized temple!



## FRESH THAI-STYLE VEGGIES

250 g (1½ cups) tempeh	1 red chilli
1 tablespoon each of soy sauce and balsamic vinegar	2-3 tablespoons oil
1 medium courgette	180 ml (¾ cup) water
1 red bell pepper	4 tablespoons brown sugar
125 g (½ cups) snow peas	8-10 lime leaves
2 stems green onions	3 tablespoons lime juice
250 g (small head) broccoli	1½ tablespoons corn starch
20 g (2 tablespoons) ginger	4 tablespoons soy sauce
3 medium cloves garlic	1½ teaspoons lemon zest

\* Thin slice the tempeh, then cut into bite-size pieces. Marinate with the soy sauce and vinegar.

\* Cut the courgette into 4 cm (1½") batons. Deseed and cut the red bell pepper into medium-sized triangles. Trim the snow peas and keep them whole. Slice the green onions into thin diagonal arrows. Cut the broccoli into bite-sized florets and peel the broccoli stem and cut into 4 cm (1½") batons. Peel and mince the ginger and garlic. Deseed and mince the chilli.

\* In a small saucepan, bring the water, sugar, and lime

leaves to a scant boil. Simmer for 5 minutes. Mix the corn starch with a tablespoon of cold water, and whisk into the sauce until it thickens. Add the soy sauce, lime juice, and lemon zest. Turn off the heat, season to taste, then cover.

\* Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a non-stick frying pan on a medium flame and stir-fry the bell pepper until caramelized on the edges. Add the ginger, garlic, and chilli, and stir-fry until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir into the sauce. Next, add a tablespoon of oil to the frying pan and stir-fry the tempeh. When it starts to blush, turn down the flame and occasionally toss until crisp and golden, about 10 minutes.

\* Bring a large pot of salted water to a rapid boil. Drop in the courgette, and return to a scant boil. Scoop out with a slotted spoon and put in a colander to drain. Next, drop in the snow peas, cook for about 30 seconds, scoop out and set aside with the courgette. Finally, drop in the broccoli florets and stems, return to boiling and simmer for a few seconds, until crispy-tender. Scoop out with a slotted spoon and set aside with the rest of the vegetables.

# WHICH MASTER?

BY TENKEI ROSHI

Some time ago, I looked into a text that we have dealt with before on several occasions and always found highly inspiring. But this time it hit me more strongly than ever. Suddenly, implications opened up that I had not considered before. The text is called Discourse on Zen Training and was composed by the 17th century Chinese Chan master Yuanyun Jiexian. This master is not very well-known in the West and this discourse was translated into English just sixteen years ago\*. And he is not the only Chinese master who has escaped our attention for such a long time.

In the Soto Zen tradition, we follow the lineage of Dogen Zenji (1200-1253) who, after he returned from China, passed on the Dharma to his successors in Japan. Since then, the later Chinese masters were not much studied in our lineage. It was even said that Chinese Buddhism went into such a decline that the true Dharma had been lost, as if Dogen Zenji had saved it from extinction. This notion was eventually brought from Japan to the West and survived until quite recently. But today many scholars and practitioners have discovered the wealth of teachings that survived in China after the time of Dogen Zenji.

Master Yuanyun's discourse is particularly interesting because it directs itself not so much to Zen students like us but more to Zen masters like himself. It is a unique document in that it records very precisely how Zen (or Chan) was taught in 17th century China. Rather than a practice manual, it is a teaching manual, which provides valuable suggestions to Zen masters on how to deal with their students. One chapter of the discourse starts with the following lines:

Turning practitioners around is indeed difficult, but when it comes to cutting through the layered barrier and opening people's eyes, only those with dragon's eyes and the ability to unfurl the great banner are able to do it. This the most difficult thing of all [...] As for the secret of successfully cutting through [various layered] barriers, the work lies in pressing and pushing the practitioner; the abstruse subtlety lies in turning the practitioner around, and the power depends on giving the practitioner guidance and spurring on his development.

Now, of course, you may wonder, how could this ever apply to me? I am far from being a Zen master, and probably will not be teaching students any time soon. What could this discourse mean to me? But that is exactly where we can make a shift that gives this precious text some surprising dimensions. According to the Mahayana scriptures, we all have everything it takes to live this life to the full. We all are generously endowed with the wisdom and virtues of the Buddha, and ultimately we are all our very own Zen masters, but of course, this needs to be realized. And according to the Zen tradition, we can all do this.

In fact, there have been great luminaries such as Huangpo Xiyun (Obaku Kiun) who criticized his students for looking for others to teach them. He famously told them,

*"Don't you know that in all the land of T'ang there is no Zen teacher?" And when an attending monk objected, saying, "But surely there are those in all regions who reform monks and govern assemblies of disciples," Huangpo retorted, "I didn't say that there is no Zen, only that there is no teacher of Zen!"\*\**

The point is that the essence of Zen cannot be taught by anybody to anyone. It does not attach itself to any particular person and can be communicated only by someone who forgets the self to someone else who also forgets the self. So why then even use the term 'master?' Perhaps we could say that the master is an upaya – a skilful means or a temporary device – that can help us unlock our innate wisdom and allow it to function freely in bodhisattva activity. So, however useful this upaya might be, we should be careful not to objectify the master as someone outside of ourselves. That is why we sometimes use the term 'inner master', although that is risky too, as we will see later.

Following that line of thought for the time being, we could say that most of us need to find a so-called outer master in order to discover the so-called inner master, and that ultimately the inner master is the only one we will be left with. You can follow an outer master – perhaps for a long time – but he or she may pass away before you do. Who else can you then rely on?

Somebody once asked Maezumi Roshi if there was anything he truly regretted. And his answer was simply that all his teachers had died: the Roshis Baian Hakujuun, Musa Koryu, and Yasutani Haku'un. So, Maezumi Roshi had no other option than to continue by himself, pioneering in new directions. However, he was not acting all on his own. I have always been impressed how he maintained close connections with other teachers, not only from the Zen school but also from other Buddhist traditions. I was lucky enough to see and hear many of these teachers during my stay at ZCLA.

Meanwhile, he used the scriptures of the old masters as his primary compass, and Dogen Zenji's writings in particular kept bringing him to great heights of inspiration. In fact, it seemed to me that he saw himself primarily as a live conduit for this favourite master of his. But Dogen Zenji clearly passed away quite some time ago, so it would be hard to ask for his personal advice on how to deal with students! Ultimately, Maezumi Roshi had to follow the voice of his own inner master (if we want to put it that way).

Fortunately, he did follow that voice and, in principle, everybody can. We can all turn to our inner master. In fact, this master tries to speak up quite regularly. But most often we do not hear what is being said: the connection is too weak, there is too much static in our ears, or the message is continuously interrupted by distracting ads.

In another analogy, the inner master is described as the CEO of a company who has fallen asleep in a room somewhere in the back of the office behind a closed door and is forgotten about by his employees. Meanwhile, the

receptionist at the front desk is doing all the work without any advice or feedback from the CEO, trying harder and harder to keep everything under control, getting totally exhausted and starting to make serious mistakes. The receptionist can pretend to be the boss, but often suffers burnout as a result.

Do you ever feel tired? Well, most likely it is not you who is tired, but this receptionist.

Without the vision and the orders of the director, the receptionist easily loses track. But the director is sound asleep, and you may not even know in which room he or she is sleeping. And, even if you do know, the door of that room is locked. Perhaps the director's room has many doors, but you are always knocking on the wrong one. We are desperate for a better map of the building and preferably also a living guide who can lead us to the right door and open it for us. So, as I mentioned already, most of us need an outer master to find the inner master.

According to the scriptures, some students need to visit many teachers before they find the right one. There needs to be a karmic link, and it is a matter of mutual commitment. That means that even the best teacher may not be good for everybody, and even the worst one may be good for somebody. Also, the time a student should spend with a teacher is not fixed. One famous example is the Chinese master Yongjia Xuanjue (Yoka Genkaku), the author of the 'Song of Enlightenment' (Shodoka). He went to visit our Sixth Ancestor Dajian Huineng (Daikan Eno), and had his profound enlightenment confirmed after he stayed at Huineng's temple for just a single night. So he is known as the 'one night guest'.

For master Zhaozhou Congshen (Joshu Jushin) it all worked out very differently. He lived and trained with his teacher Nanquan Puyuan (Nansen Fugan) for about forty years and stayed with him until he passed away. Even then he could not quite leave him alone and tended to his grave for another few years. Finally, he took off and went on a long pilgrimage, visiting a great number of other masters to verify his understanding. Because of this thorough education, he became one of the greatest Zen masters who ever lived. His inner master had woken up completely and could respond freely to the needs of anyone who approached him, whether they were Zen students or not.

So, it would be best not to be too easily satisfied with whatever realization we may have had. Upon waking up, our inner master will realize that there is a lot of work to do. We really need to pick up the slack. There are hordes of 'inner students' that desperately need attention. Many of them even require serious re-education, as greed, anger, ignorance, unprocessed painful memories, and countless hiccups that occurred while we were asleep in the back office have created a real mess in our company. It often feels to me as if for a long time there were only receptionists at the desk, and they often disagreed with each other. Meanwhile, there was nobody around to do the actual work.

Master Yuanyun continues his discourse as follows:

*If the master does not give the practitioner guidance, then he may travel a path that leads off in the wrong direction. If the master does not spur the practitioner's development, then*

**HARD TO BELIEVE!**

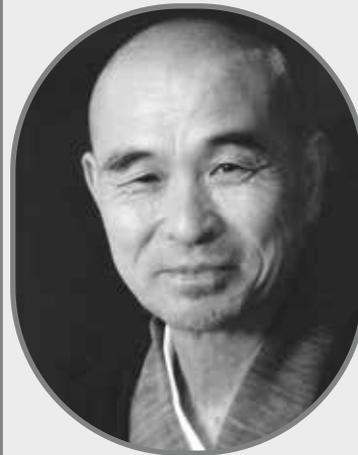
**20 YEARS ZEN RIVER TEMPLE!**

**A DATE TO REMEMBER:  
ON SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 25**

**WE PLAN TO CELEBRATE  
THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF  
ZEN RIVER TEMPLE!**

**EVERYONE WELCOME.**

*More details to follow soon*



**HOJO-SAMA**

**JUNYU KURODA**

**ROSHI**

**1940-2021**

**WE'LL KEEP  
YOUR LIGHT  
SHINING!**

## **ONLINE LECTURES WITH GUEST TEACHERS**

Our ongoing series of online lectures are meant to maintain and strengthen our worldwide connections. This not only broadens our perspective but also clarifies our place in the development of Zen Buddhism in modern times. We particularly make an effort to find a good balance between traditional and more modern approaches.

Since the last New Year's sesshin during which no fewer than seven teachers from abroad gave highly appreciated presentations via Zoom, we have been able to welcome other speakers about once a month, including Coen Roshi from Brazil, Saikawa Roshi and Yamamoto Roshi from Japan, and Professor Layne Little from USA. And there is more to come.

## **MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM**

Live-stream Zazen Sundays and Tuesdays  
Right Speech Class via Zoom, Sat. 16:30 hrs  
Study Class on YouTube, Sundays 11:30  
River of Zen Class on YouTube, Mon. 20:10  
Dokusan via messenger or Skype, weekly  
Access to all Dharma talks during sesshins 11:30  
Online Lectures with guest teachers

*the fire [of his determination] will not burn hot enough. If the master does not press and push him, the practitioner's discriminatory faculty will not be cut off. If the master does not turn the practitioner around, his thieflike sentiments will not come to an end.*

At the end of this quote, master Yuanyun mentions our "thieflike sentiments." As you may know, in Buddhism the senses are often seen as thieves. They are conditioned to observe things in a dualistic manner and create a separation between self and others. By doing so, they block our spiritual eye and rob us of the information we need to deal effectively with the circumstances we encounter. By turning our own light inward, we can purify our senses and cut through these conditioned patterns. This seems to be what Yuanyun means when he speaks about 'cutting through layered barriers' and 'opening people's eyes'.

Further on in this discourse, he also stresses the importance of maintaining a balance between the 'killing sword' and the 'life-giving sword' – in other words, between disapproval and approval of any of the students we have to deal with. At times, some may need to be told off, while others need words of encouragement and inspiration. And master Yuanyun admits that it is much harder to apply life-giving methods than killing methods. So, we should pay close attention and keep in mind our ultimate bodhisattva vow to liberate all beings.

That is how I appreciate master Yuanyun's discourse. He calls upon all of us as Zen masters, invites us to find out that we have many students, and gives very valuable suggestions as to how to work with them to the best of our ability. And as we become more experienced at speaking with the voice of the master, our lives will start to change. Distinctions between inner and outer master, inner and outer students, inner and outer circumstances fade. Ultimately,

there is only calling and responding, without any fixed person or situation being involved. That is why it is tricky even to use the word 'master.' It tends to solidify somebody or something that has no real substance. And that goes for the inner master just as much as for the outer master – they are both basically just hot air. They are certainly not meant to be objectified as some kind of entity or person.

This reminds me of the famous koan about master Zuigan. Every day he would call out to himself, "Oh, master!" And he would answer, "Yes?" "Are you awake?" he would ask, and would answer, "Yes, I am." Then he would say, "Never be deceived by others, any day, any time." And he would answer, "No, I will not." We often add a few words to this koan, "Don't be deceived by anyone, especially by myself!"\*\*\*

But we must remember that Zuigan is not a person that calls out to another person. In a beautiful commentary on this koan, Shibayama Roshi\*\*\*\* makes that very clear. He points out that there is only calling out and responding; that is the alive presence of the master. In fact, this is the only way we can directly experience the magical workings of the master. We will never find out who or where the master is. For that reason, we use different words to refer to this master, so that we do not get stuck on one that tends to solidify our notions. It has been called 'true nature,' or 'Buddha nature,' or our 'original face.' Master Linji Yixuan (Rinzai Gigen) calls it 'the true man of no rank.' Personally, I prefer 'the forever unnameable it.'

So, you will never be able to identify any master – but that does not mean that there is no master. We can all definitely feel the energy of what we can call 'the master' at some point. As we turn our own light inward and call upon this master over and over again, something can start to happen that makes us function in often unexpected and

## CHICKEN BEAUTY QUEEN 2022

Ever since Zen River was established in 2002, chickens have been honourable members of our residential community. We decided to give them some extra attention with a chicken beauty contest. All five ladies worked hard on their looks, taking numerous sand baths, rustling their feathers, and eyeing us up, one eye at a time. The undisputed winner was Fluffy, a Silkie hen. Who could resist those downy snow-white feathers against an almost black skin, those pearly blue earlobes, and that wobbly gait? Is it the long neck? The extra toe? We don't know, but it's adorable! Don't let her cute appearance deceive you though. This little lady rules our brood with an iron claw. She pecks hens twice her size on the head and snatches away their food to assert her dominance. Also...she growls. We don't know where she gets these manners from, as the Silkie breed is generally known to be docile. Miss Congeniality she is not, but then again, this is not a personality contest. Congratulations Fluffy!



## A NEW GENERATION

The passing away of our dear Hojo-sama last November and the sudden death of Maezumi Roshi's widow Martha Ekyo in April leave a tremendous gap in our international White Plum family. Quite a few other senior members have left us over the years, but now it suddenly feels as if a whole generation is gone. The best way to repay our debt of gratitude is to make sure that future practitioners can benefit from the precious Dharma we received from them. And that is quite some responsibility.

Fortunately, we have seen already a new generation of youngsters who, like the bodhisattvas in a famous chapter of the Lotus Sutra, suddenly seem to have emerged out of nowhere. At Zen River, the Young Minds Seminars have been very fruitful in that respect. The participants showed great enthusiasm for practising the Buddhist Dharma together, and they often made lasting connections. Also, the general age of the residential community went down as several young people decided to stay for a longer period of time. Here are some examples:

Niels Kangen van Henten (27) who finished his philosophy studies in Nijmegen has just started his second year as a Zen River resident. Looking for other ways to deal with life than the ones he has learned so far, he follows the training programme assiduously, loves to work in the garden, and is also developing great cooking skills under Myoho Roshi's guidance. Nowadays he actually substitutes for her quite regularly.

Hori Yudai (21) is a professional glass fitter from Japan, who, after a few emails, suddenly appeared on our doorstep. Surfing the internet, he found information about Zen River and decided to

buy a plane ticket. He is here on a three-month visa and plans to enter Chigenji training temple in Japan upon his return. Hori is fairly new to Zen but fits right in: he sits, bows, and works like a real training monk. Moreover, his beatboxing is high-class..

highly creative ways. In other words, we can recognize the master only in our actual functioning. When this happens, our life suddenly makes more sense and things that were at odds with each other fall into place.

Shibayama Roshi refers to the master as 'absolute subjectivity,' a kind of subjectivity that has no object. So, strangely enough, the master is a master of nothing in particular. Since situations continuously change, it is best to not respond from a fixed position or by following set guidelines. And if we pay close attention, we notice that the calling already includes the response. Since the calling happens in this very moment, the master can only respond

in this very moment.

Of course, discovering this involves continuous practice. As masters, we are all works in progress, and we had better get on with it. Koan training is a tremendous asset in this respect. Usually, koans involve an encounter between a student and a master that can spark a true awakening. As we address such an encounter in our zazen, we most often start off identifying with the student. But to really get to the core of the koan, we need to shift our position and dare also to identify with the master—with all the responsibility that comes with that.

Traditionally, the relationship between master and



*With thanks to Pascal Tetsuko van der Knokke for his help in installing four skylights on the north wing.*

Recipes from a Western Zen Temple – volume 2

# Zen River Cookbook



Tamara Myoho Gabrysch

## VOLUME 2

NOW AVAILABLE TO ORDER IN THE SHOP

student is seen as being most effective when the two can take on four different positions: 1) the student as a student and the master as a master, 2) the student as a master and the master as a student, 3) both master and student as students, 4) both master and student as masters. When they do, their relationship becomes very fluid.

One day, one may just lose track and not bother anymore about any particular position. There is just responding to the needs of the constantly changing situations. Which master, or which student, is at work better remains a mystery. It keeps our awareness fresh and open.

That also means that the master does not have to be perfect, nor the student for that matter. Yet, what is communicated can be perfect. In fact, responding to what really calls you is the most precious thing you can ever hope to discover. It can change your life completely and give you guidance in the most challenging situations.

*\*Attaining the Way: A Guide to the Practice of Chan Buddhism, by Master Sheng Yen (Shambhala, 2006) p. 60-62.*

*\*\*Hekiganroku case 11, White Plum translation.*

*\*\*\* Mumonkan case 12, White Plum translation.*

*\*\*\*\*The Gateless Barrier, Zen Comments on the Mumonkan, by Zenkei Shibayama, (Shambhala, 2000) p. 92-93.*

## ZEN RIVER TEMPLE

### SUMMER ANGO

June 4–9.....Gyōji Week  
June 17–19.....Weekend Sesshin  
July 2–7.....Young Minds Seminar  
July 9–14.....Gyōji Week  
July 23–Aug 20.....Summer Month Long  
July 23–28.....Sesshin Part 1  
July 30–August 4.....Sesshin Part 2  
August 6–11.....Sesshin Part 3  
August 13–20.....Sesshin Part 4

### FALL INTERIM

September 10–11.....Intro Weekend  
September 10–15.....Gyōji Week  
September 16–18.....Weekend Sesshin  
September 24–29.....Gyōji Week  
September 25.....20th Anniversary Party  
October 22–27.....Falling Leaf Sesshin  
October 29–November 3.....Gyōji Week  
November 12–17.....Gyōji Week

### WINTER ANGO

November 19–26.....Rohatsu Sesshin  
December 10–15.....Gyōji Week  
December 27–January 1 2023.....New Years Sesshin

## ZEN BOAT GRONINGEN

June 4.....Zazenkai, w/ Senko Sensei  
September 3.....Zazenkai on the beach  
October 1–2.....Sesshin weekend w/ Senko  
October 9.....Zazenkai, w/ Senko Sensei  
October 16.....Workshop on 'Climate Change'

### INTRO COURSES

[www.zenrivertemple.org/zen-river-boat-groningen/](http://www.zenrivertemple.org/zen-river-boat-groningen/)

### AT OTHER LOCATIONS

July 2.....Zazenkai, Oshida, Nijmegen, w/ Jifu Sensei  
Oct. 9.....Zazenkai, Kenkon, Wageningen w/ Senko Sensei  
Nov. 3–6.....Sesshin Centrum Utrecht w/ Senko Sensei

## SUMMER ANGO SHUSO

By the time you read this, the Summer Ango will have already started. It will conclude with the traditional month-long sesshin which is scheduled from July 23 to August 20. Because of unforeseen circumstances, the Hossenshiki ceremony will take place in the middle of this month-long, on the morning of Thursday, August 4. Sokan Minegishi Roshi will come over from Paris to take on the position of Jokeshi (official witness of the Soto School), and Tenkei Roshi has appointed Peter Shoryu de Rooden as Shuso.

As you may remember, Shoryu was Shuso and did Hossenshiki two years ago. But at that time, Sokan Roshi was unable to attend because of Covid-19 restrictions. This meant that the ceremony could not be officially registered by the Soto School administration. So, now Shoryu has another chance. He will join the first two weeks of the month-long to prepare himself to face all dragons and elephants in Dharma combat.

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