

CONTINUOUS CONNECTIONS



In the second week of May, Tenkei Roshi made a flying visit to Japan, mostly to offer incense at the grave of our beloved master Hojo-sama who passed away in November 2021. This trip also gave him the opportunity to talk with Hojo-sama's successor Yodo, and to see many other old friends—all to keep our connections going. Shuho, who spent three years training at Zen River and now lives in Japan again, was Tenkei's perfect host and navigator.

Together they went to visit Koichi Isoda and his family in Fuji City and had dinner with Yamamoto Roshi, Yodo, and Doi in Tokyo. Tenkei had also been invited to give a Dharma talk and a guided meditation at Yuko Wakayama's temple *Shogakuji*, which were very well received. Our good friend Hojun joined too, and could translate (see picture).

In *Tosen-in*, the temple of Shuho's father in Otawara, Tenkei attended a Daihannya ceremony and was invited to partake in 'revolving the sutras'. Afterwards, he went with Shuho to *Koshinji*, the 'mother temple' of the Kuroda family—also in Otawara—where Hojo-sama and Maezumi Roshi grew up. There, they met Taiko, the current abbot, who lived with Tenkei and Tammy in Amsterdam in the early nineties.

Altogether it was an action-packed visit that will help to maintain our connections with the Japanese part of our lineage for the next generation.

SEAWEED SOUP

10-15 g (3-4 tbsp) dried cut wakame seaweed (kelp)	1-2 tbsp sesame oil
125 g plain tofu	1¼ litres (5 cups) of light vegetable stock
3 green onions	3 tbsp soy sauce
3 cloves garlic	Dash of salt
Dash of ground chillies	1tbsp sesame seeds

- Cover the dried wakame with plenty of warm water and soak until it unfurls - about 15 minutes.
- Drain the wakame, rinse, press out all the water and chop them into bite-sized pieces.
- Medium-dice the tofu.
- Cut the green onions into rings.
- Peel and mince the garlic.

- In a stewpot or deep frying pan, heat up the sesame oil and stir-fry the garlic and half the green onions.
- Add the tofu and carefully stir-fry until the tofu heats up, then put in the seaweed and stir-fry for a few minutes more.
- Add the stock, the soy sauce and ground chillies, and bring them to the boil over a medium flame. Turn down the heat, and simmer for 15-20 minutes.
- While the stock is simmering, toast the sesame seeds in a dry frying pan.
- Season the soup to taste with soy sauce.
- Garnish with the remaining green onions and sesame seeds.

YUIBUTSU YOBUTSU

BY TENKEI ROSHI

Yuibutsu Yobutsu (唯佛與佛) is the title of an intriguing undated text by Dogen Zenji that was only later added to the standard version of the Shobogenzo. This title has been translated in different ways, such as 'Only Buddha and a Buddha', 'Only Buddha, together with Buddha', 'Only a Buddha can transmit to a Buddha', 'Each Buddha on his own, together with Buddhas', and 'Buddhas alone, together with Buddhas'. It refers to a line in the second chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* that is usually rendered as: 'Only a Buddha together with a Buddha can fathom the reality of all existence.'

The main point that Dogen Zenji seems to emphasize in this fascicle is the transmission of the Buddha mind seal. This seal can only be passed on from one Buddha to another Buddha, which means that both parties need to have come to the realization of their own innate buddha quality. So, this counts not only for the one who passes it on but also for the one to who receives it. This implies that before our realization can be confirmed by somebody else, we first need to confirm it for ourselves.

However, we may easily miss this important point, or even get it completely the wrong way round. Out of lack of confidence in ourselves, we often ache for signs of confirmation by others. And many of us go to great lengths trying to receive those signs. But that does not really work here. However much Zen masters may wish to transmit their realization to others, ultimately, we are on our own in this regard. Masters can point us in the right direction, but they cannot give us what we are all already generously endowed with. So, the fact that they cannot give it to us is, in fact, not bad news at all but very good news!

It makes one wonder what it actually is that has been passed on over the ages. It may take time and continuing practice, but one day we may find out that this realization is totally ungraspable. No eye, ear, tongue, nose, body, or mind will ever be able to perceive it. Yet, the Buddha mind seal can be recognized deep within our very own consciousness. If we truly see through all the illusions that we have about ourselves—positive as well as negative ones—and discover our intimate connection with everything and everyone, this mysterious seal automatically reveals itself.

So, in reality, nothing gets passed on from anybody to anybody else. Yet, when realization happens, it can very much feel like that. The experience is that we receive something so wonderful that it completely outweighs all our expectations, and this raises deep gratitude to whoever and whatever helped us along the way. Masters can recognize this experience because they had the same happen to them. And they are very happy to confirm it. This means that passing on the Buddha mind seal is just a figure of speech—yet a very apt one, because gratitude is the most natural response.

While this so-called passing on can only occur in this very moment, it takes place on many different levels. We may be able to forget the self for two or three minutes and then our teacher, who has also forgotten the self, can recognize and confirm that experience instantaneously. But often the self jumps back very quickly, and we find ourselves back at square one again. Yet, over time we begin to see how little we lose and how much we gain by dropping our attachments to dualistic ideas of self and others. And this raises our bodhi-mind, the wish to go further and further, and to accomplish the Way to the best of our ability.

Following the translation 'Only Buddha, together with Buddha', I find the word 'together' highly relevant here. An online article by Bhikshu Kongmu, that I came upon some time ago, addresses the vital importance of 'relation' in the practice of Buddhism: we are inextricably related to everything and everyone. In fact, 'we' only exist in relation to 'others'. True realization is therefore not so much a realization of the 'self' as a realization of the 'other', the complete acknowledgement of our total and intimate interdependency.

Mahayana Buddhist teaching asserts that we are all essentially one with the whole universe. And there are many reports of people who had some insights into this, the sense of the self expanding in ever-wider circles of body-mind awareness. But such insights can easily solidify into dualistic concepts, and one may end up thinking of oneself as a big, bigger, or best 'self'—with all the dangers that this implies. These are just words, of course, but we should watch out. Master Unmon was highly critical even of Shakyamuni Buddha who, according to legend, right after he was born took seven steps, pointed to the heavens with one hand and to the earth with the other, looked in the four directions, and declared, 'Above heaven and below heaven, I alone am the dignified one.' Apparently, for the World-honoured One there was still a lot of growing up to do after this great insight. That means that we too should at some point be ready to take the next step and to realize and include the 'other.'

The word 'other' emphasizes that we are in this 'together', so we had better use the word 'others'—in the plural. According to the teaching of the five skandhas, we are basically all agglomerations of cause and effect without any fixed substance, intimately connected with countless other agglomerations—friends and foes, all creatures great and small, and indeed this whole earth and its highly mysterious workings. Rather than only projecting 'myself' onto these things, it would be better to also allow them to inform me about their 'otherness'. They will then reflect their qualities onto me—including onto parts of myself that I do not understand or may not even know about. In the process, I may start to learn things that never entered my

LLAMADA INTEMPORAL, RESPUESTA PUNTUAL



This is the Spanish title of Tenkei Roshi's book *Timeless Calling, Timely Response*. The book has been translated by Liliann Shurei Manning and was published last month by Galaxia Gutenberg. Pablo d'Ors, a Catholic priest with Zen experience and a good old friend of Tenkei, read the book in Liliann's translation and was so impressed that he decided to write a prologue to it, and to recommend it to his own publisher. Pablo is the founder of the meditation community 'Amigos del Desierto', and well-known as an author, especially since the release of his *Biografía del Silencio* (available in English as *Biography of Silence*), which describes his experience of meditation.

At the invitation of Marisa Emyo and our Spanish sangha, Tenkei went, together with Tammy, to Madrid to present *Llamada intemporal, respuesta puntual* at a grand book fair that takes place there every year. To the surprise of the publisher, so many sangha members showed up and bought the book that the stock of copies that was brought for that day sold out in just one hour. Next on the programme was a Zazen-kai at Concha Eisho's place and a visit to her spectacular new meditation retreat centre in the mountains nearby. The world is vast and wide!

consciousness before and receive valuable messages that I would otherwise have missed out on completely.

In this respect, it is noteworthy that Dogen Zenji uses the plural in his Genjokoan when he says, 'forgetting the self is to be enlightened by the ten thousand dharmas.' And linguistically, it helps that the kanji Butsu (佛) can be translated as a singular or a plural noun, as 'Buddha' or 'Buddhas'. So that is why we find in some translations of Yuibutsu Yobutsu, 'together with Buddhas.' And that makes total sense to me. When we have even the faintest whiff of the Buddha mind and subsequent seal of confirmation from a certified master, it is like being born into a whole family, in this case the family of 'all Buddhas.'

This leads to an interesting link to chapter eleven of the *Lotus Sutra*, often illustrated by the image of two Buddhas happily sitting next to one another. This image exemplifies the intimacy with 'the other', or 'others' in many different dimensions, as we will see. A recently published commentary on the *Lotus Sutra* by Donald Lopez and Jacqueline Stone even bears the title 'Two Buddhas Sitting Side by Side', a phrase, they explain, that refers to a defining moment in the sutra.

Chapter eleven records the sudden appearance of a huge and highly decorated treasure tower. It emerges out of the earth and ends up hanging in the air right in front of Shakyamuni Buddha and his great assembly. From within the tower a loud voice starts praising the Buddha for expounding the *Lotus Sutra* so eloquently. It is the voice of Prabhutaratna, or Abundant Treasures Buddha, who lived

an inconceivably long time ago in a place inconceivably far away. Once, when still a bodhisattva, this Buddha made a vow that if he heard someone expounding the *Lotus Sutra*, he would appear in his treasure tower to listen and to testify to the truth of this sutra. So here he is!

All those present are struck by awe but also confused, and they would like to see this mysterious Buddha. To make that happen, Shakyamuni Buddha first has to call upon all Buddhas throughout space and time so that they can witness the event. Then he opens the door of the treasure tower, and Abundant Treasures Buddha is there to be seen by everyone. The ancient Buddha looks very happy and alive—even though this treasure tower is in fact his funeral stupa. Full of praise, he kindly invites Shakyamuni to sit right next to him.

The assembly is overjoyed by this amazing spectacle, but since the treasure tower is hanging high up in the air, many devotees cannot see the two Buddhas very well. In a surprising move, Shakyamuni lifts them up, so they are all on an equal level. He then encourages the whole assembly to keep the *Lotus Sutra* alive by reading and reciting it so that the sutra can do its enlightening work after his passing away. He also mentions that this can be very difficult because the sutra may meet strong resistance in people who cannot accept its grand vision.

The scene of two Buddhas sitting side by side, and on equal level with so many others, is an image with profound implications. At the time the *Lotus Sutra* came into being, there was a common agreement among Buddhists that only

one Buddha can appear at any one time. And today there are Buddhist schools that would also adhere to that view. But, according to this sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha is not alone. In the story above, he is one of two Buddhas—which means he also embodies and personifies the ‘other’ or ‘others’—meaning you and me, and every one of us. The sutra’s claim that we are all fully endowed with the qualities of the Buddha, and that these qualities just need to come to light and be developed, was—and remains—a revolutionary teaching. And Shakyamuni Buddha, seeking to raise faith in this almost unbelievably optimistic vision, makes various prophecies concerning the awakening of the members of the congregation who were listening to him.

So, since you and I are now looking into the *Lotus Sutra*, we may at some point also be asked to enter a treasure tower and sit right next to him. That leads to another important message of the treasure-tower scene. As already mentioned, Prabhutaratna had passed away a very long time ago and the treasure tower is his funeral stupa. Many people would believe that he had entered nirvana, and that the stupa would contain only his relics. But here he appears in the flesh and shows that he is full of life! This demonstrates that the true essence of Buddha will never die: it is a timeless quality that can be discovered and cultivated at any given moment.

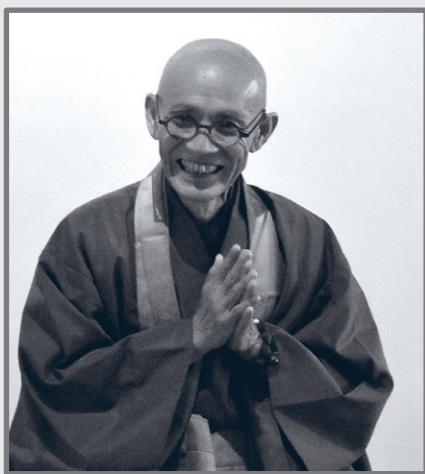
A similar teaching can be found in the ‘Lifespan’ chapter (chapter sixteen) of the *Lotus Sutra*. There, we find the Buddha on his deathbed, consoling his disciples by saying that he will not really go into extinction and that his passing away is just an expedient means. He will only be out of sight for a while, so that we should not take his enlightening presence too easily for granted. Meanwhile, he assures that anyone who sincerely calls out to him will receive his compassionate response.

There is something so grand about this. And it can easily be felt right under our own skin. Every time we adopt the posture of the Buddha, something can start to dawn on us. The more we dare to question what is really sitting on that zafu, the more we seem to open up to all ‘others’ who are sitting somewhere else at that moment, and to all ‘others’ who have been sitting like this before we were born and who will be sitting like this after we die. The usual limitations of time and space just do not apply here. But, to realize this, we have to be completely present in this very moment—and then the present will open up seamlessly in all directions of time. I also see the two Buddhas sitting side by side as an inspiration for addressing past and future and to find the best way to experience them in the present.

Sometimes we may identify more with the past, sometimes more with the future, yet it is clear that we need to learn how to navigate the trajectory between them. And, apparently, we can! We all have the inborn ability to find out what direction we must take in order to experience personal fulfilment and simultaneously benefit all beings. Toward the end of *Yuibutsu Yobutsu*, Dogen Zenji uses the example of birds knowing exactly where to go, migrating over huge distances without any road signs. This mysterious ability has long puzzled scientists. According to recent research, birds have a magnetic compass in their eyes that enables them to follow tracks invisible to us. Could our buddha quality be a similar faculty that leads us into the direction of Buddhahood almost automatically?

On a practical level, I think that we can at least learn from the birds. They are probably not aware of their incredible expertise regarding directions; they just trust the way they are going. As we find ourselves easily going out of whack, would it not be nice to be able to do the same? Fortunately, we have been handed down training methods

VISIT OF ZEN MASTER SOKEN DANJO



On May 5, we were happy to welcome Rinzai Zen master Soken Danjo, abbot of Saikoji, a fifteenth-century mountain temple in Hiroshima. He was joined by his friends Teizo Suzuki, Ingrid Shugetsu, and Molly Ackerman, who arranged his travel schedule.

In 2009, Master Danjo was invited to participate in the celebration of the ‘400 Year Relationship Japan / Holland’ in Leiden, and since then he has returned several times for meditation workshops, tea ceremonies, exhibitions, and musical performances. He has worked together with many spiritual leaders and artists in the international Interfaith Council.

He has become quite popular in Japan, especially since 2022 when one of his friends, the Swedish scholar Svante Pääbo, received a Nobel Prize for his research on human evolution. During the years of this research, Pääbo would often stay at Saikoji to study and write in the quietude of the mountain temple.

Master Soken Danjo participated wholeheartedly in our programme, treated us to some expert drumming, and gave a very endearing Dharma talk—elegantly translated by Harumi Sakiyama. In poetic wording, he expressed great appreciation for Zen River: he said that he could see how the attention given to the building and grounds over the years shines back and inspires anyone sensitive to it. And to select just one sentence worth remembering: “It is not the Buddha who got enlightened under the Bodhi tree; it is the Bodhi tree that enlightened the Buddha.”

WHITE PLUM ASANGA MEETING 2023



The White Plum Asanga (WPA) consists of those Dharma teachers who have received transmission in the lineage of Maezumi Roshi and are officially registered as such. Starting with his twelve direct successors, the Asanga has grown exponentially over the years and today numbers around two hundred teachers. It has also become a very international community.

From its inception, White Plum Asanga meetings have been held annually, mostly in the US and, during the years that Covid-19 made travelling and physical meetings difficult, the members convened online. Last year, the meeting took place at a German retreat centre and attracted many members from various European countries and from the US.

This year the meeting was organized differently. To reduce carbon footprints, in-person meetings were held in two American Zen centres and two European ones—Zen Mountain Center in California, Great Vow Zen Monastery in Oregon, Stone Water Zen retreat centre in England, and Zen River in the Netherlands. On both days of the meeting, we all communicated for about one hour via Zoom—and were thus able to also include members who could only join online.

At Zen River, we were with fourteen WPA members of six nationalities, and it became clear that while online meetings have their advantages, they will never be able to substitute for in-person attendance. The general theme was how to ensure the Dharma legacy of Maezumi Roshi for future generations, and the overall atmosphere was really inspiring—for both the guests and the residential community who catered for them. In the evening, the two groups intermingled and shared the alive quality of sangha—which again proved to be such a precious treasure.

that can help us gain confidence in our secret inner compass: zazen and koan investigation, reciting and studying scriptures, following through on our vows, making bows and other offerings, working closely together with teachers and groups of fellow travellers, and building and maintaining places that can accommodate these elements of training. All in all, this begs for a healthy sense of tradition and a happy dose of creative imagination—on an individual level, and on a worldwide sangha level.

Fortunately, Yuibutsu Yobutsu provides us with inspiring role models: Yuibutsu, “Buddha alone”—or all-one—

meaning the realization of myself as the self of all others throughout space and time, and Yobutsu, “together with Buddhas”, meaning the realization of all others in their endless variety throughout space and time as surprising aspects of myself. Being altogether Buddha, we are also Buddhas altogether. Both realizations are absolutely essential for engaging in fruitful bodhisattva activity. So, we had better be prepared for treasure towers to suddenly appear right in front of our very eyes, and for invitations to sit next to a Buddha from a completely different realm. And who knows in what direction this will take us? ❀

ZEN RIVER TEMPLE



SUMMER ANGO 2022–2023

June 3–8.....Gyōji Week
 June 16–18.....White Plum teacher's meeting
 June 23–25.....Taiko workshop w/Marco Lienhard
 July 8–13.....Young Minds Seminar
 July 22 – Aug. 19.....Summer Month-Long Sesshin
 July 22–27.....Sesshin Part 1, 5-day
 July 29 – August 3.....Sesshin Part 2, 5-day
 August 5–10.....Sesshin Part 3, 5-day
 August 12–19.....Sesshin Part 4, 7-day



FALL INTERIM 2023

September 9–14.....Gyōji Week
 Sept. 22–24.....Clown workshop w/ Moshe Coen
 Sept. 29 – Oct.1.....Weekend Sesshin
 October 21–26.....Falling Leaf Sesshin
 November 4–9.....Gyōji Week



WINTER ANGO 2023–2024

November 25 – Dec. 2.....Rohatsu Sesshin
 December 16–21.....Gyōji Week
 December 20.....Tutti Cantano Choir concert
 Dec. 27 – Jan.1, 2024.....New Year Sesshin



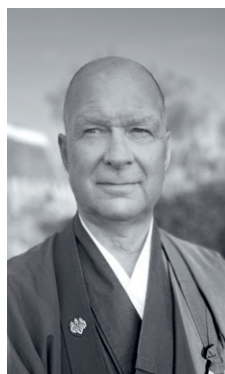
ZEN BOAT GRONINGEN

Study & Speech, Introduction classes, etc.:
www.zenrivertemple.org/zen-river-boat-groningen

AT OTHER LOCATIONS

June 11–15.....Holterberg, Sesshin Kanzeon
 Rotterdam, led by Jifu Sensei
 June 30–July 3.....Holterberg, Sesshin Zentrum
 Utrecht, led by Senko Sensei

SUMMER ANGO SHUSO



We are happy to announce that Tenkei Roshi appointed Willem Jan Senko Hop as Shuso during the upcoming summer Ango month-long. This position implies taking on several responsibilities in the temple and learning how to conduct services. The Shuso entering ceremony will be on Saturday, July 22, and the concluding Hossenshiki ceremony on Saturday, August 19.

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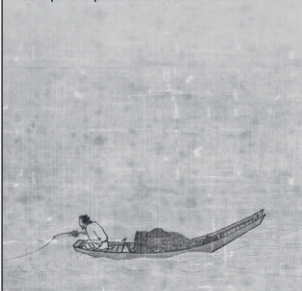
In his professional life, Senko works as an adviser to young representatives of established family businesses and assists them in expanding on a future vision for their companies. He is also a certified yoga teacher and in recent years, began offering mini-retreats for entrepreneurs to help them manage the stress of working in the competitive business world.

Senko started his Zen practice with Niko Tenko Roshi in Amsterdam in 2004, and he received Shukke Tokudo from him in 2015. Over the years that followed, Senko often came to Zen River to participate in sesshins and developed a strong connection with Tenkei Roshi and the Zen River community. Since 2019, he has led Zen meditation classes regularly in Amsterdam and Haarlem. We all wish him an inspiring Ango!

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

Live-stream Zazen Sundays and Tuesdays
 Right Speech Class via Zoom, Sat. 16:30 hrs
 Study Class via Zoom, Sundays 11:30
 River of Zen Class via Zoom, Mon. 20:10
 Dokusan via messenger or Skype, weekly
 Access to all Dharma talks during sesshins 11:30
 Online Lectures with guest teachers
 Registration: office@zenrivertemple.org €25 MONTHLY

Anton Tenkei Coppens
 Llamada intemporal,
 respuesta puntual
 Guía para la práctica del budismo zen



ONLINE
 &
 BOOK STORES



TIMELESS CALLING,
 TIMELY RESPONSE

A GUIDE FOR ZEN BUDDHIST PRACTICE

IN THE ZEN RIVER SHOP
 &
 ONLINE AT AMAZON

Recipes from a Western Zen Temple – volume 2

Zen River Cookbook



Tamara Myoho Gabrysch

VOLUME 1&2
 ONLINE AT AMAZON

Zen River Cookbook Essentials



Tamara Myoho Gabrysch

25 ZEN RIVER FAVOURITES
 ONLINE AT AMAZON

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