

INDRA'S NET-WORKING



Last weekend Roshis Tenkei and Myoho, Senseis Senko and Jifu, and eight other Zen River members went to La Gendronniere, the mother temple of the AZI (Association Zen International), created by the late Deshimaru Roshi in France in the seventies. There they participated in the preliminary memorial ceremony for the 700th anniversary of Keizan Zenji's passing, organized by the European department of the Soto School. Altogether, one hundred and fifty Zen teachers and students from many different countries and lineages came together to join this grand event – an excellent opportunity to see old friends and make new connections.

One of the most striking and also moving parts of the ceremony was the recitation of sutras by so many people. It created a magical atmosphere. In this case the sutras were dedicated to our great ancestor Keizan Zenji. But there was also a special service dedicated to European members of the Soto School who passed away over the years. And Jifu Sensei was part of a small group that performed lovely Baika songs. This gathering put our practice in a world-wide and historical context, and enabled us to repay our debts of gratitude to those who to have been instrumental in keeping the Zen tradition alive. Indra's net, the fabric that ties everything and everyone together, was fully operational.

PASTA WITH MUSHROOMS & GREEN ONIONS

250 g tofu
250 g mushrooms
2 cloves garlic
1–2 green onions
A small bunch of flat-leaf
parsley

300 g pasta
Oil for frying
2 tablespoons extra
virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons soy sauce,
divided

- * Medium-dice the tofu.
- * Clean and slice the mushrooms.
- * Peel and mince the garlic.
- * Slice the green onions lengthwise and then mince.
- * Roughly chop the parsley tops and mince the finer stems.
- * In a non-stick frying pan, heat up some oil and stir-fry the tofu. When it becomes crispy add a tablespoon of soy

sauce and stir-fry until it evaporates. Set aside.

* In the same frying pan, heat a little more oil and fry the garlic. When the garlic turns light golden, add the mushrooms and stir fry for a few minutes until they begin to release their juices. Add a little salt to bring out their flavour and release more juice.

* In a pan of boiling salted water, cook the pasta according to package directions. Drain and rinse.

* Combine the pasta with the extra virgin olive oil and soy sauce. Stir in the green onions and then fold in the tofu and mushrooms. Just before serving, add the parsley. Season to taste, adding more olive oil and soy sauce as needed.

* Serve with parmesan cheese.

* *Tip: As a variation, add some steamed broccoli florets to the pasta.*

KANZEON CALLING

BY TENKEI COPPENS

KANZEON – *Kanzeon.*

NA MU BUTSU – *At one with Buddha.*

YO BUTSU U IN – *Related to all Buddhas*

YO BUTSU U EN – *in cause and effect.*

BU PO SO EN – *And to Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.*

JO RAKU GA JO – *Joyful, pure, eternal being!*

CHO NEN KANZEON – *Morning mind is Kanzeon.*

BO NEN KANZEON – *Evening mind is Kanzeon.*

NEN NEN JU SHIN KI – *This very moment arises from Mind.*

NEN NEN FU RI SHIN – *This very moment is not separate from Mind.*



The Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo (Lit. *Life Extending Ten-Line Kannon Sutra*) has always been close to my heart. Ever since I first heard and recited its lines, it felt like it radiated a very reassuring energy. Short though the sutra may be, it nonetheless provides a grand spiritual home that we can enter any time: Joyful, pure, eternal being! In other words, reciting it can help us connect with the timeless unconditioned quality of our life. Usually, we only see our human existence as a very temporary affair—which it is, of course. Yet during this brief existence, we do represent—and can discover within us—something that goes far beyond all space and time. Realizing this opens our life to the lives of others and enables us to connect with the world around us, sometimes in most unforeseen and mysterious ways.

Master Hakuin strongly advocated the recitation of the *Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo*. In fact, it was he who added the word *Enmei* to the title, because he believed in the sutra's healing and life-extending effect. In one of his scriptures (*Yaegumura* or *Wild Ivy*), he included a long chapter describing spectacular miracles that occurred when somebody repeatedly recited the sutra. That Hakuin should recommend this practice is also somewhat ironic because, in principle, this is quite similar to the *nembutsu*, the repeated calling of the name of Amida Buddha, that was popular in the Pure Land schools that he so fiercely criticised. Now, there are many ways to recite the *nembutsu*, and what he had seen may indeed not have been the most inspiring examples. Moreover, Hakuin was also highly critical of the Zen school, which he considered to be in a sad state of decline, and he worked hard to revitalize its quality of aliveness.

In any case, up until today the *Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo* has been chanted extensively in Rinzai temples, and I am very happy that Maezumi Roshi decided to include it in our daily Soto-style liturgy. As an ode to Kanzeon, it has of course also special relevance for us since Genpo Roshi first named our international Zen community 'Kanzeon Sangha'. So, this short sutra is almost our anthem. I remember one occasion when we recited it one hundred and eight times together during sesshin, which was a very powerful experience. It brought forth a devotional aspect to Zen practice that, in my opinion, does not often receive enough attention.

In general terms, while we Zen practitioners are usually encouraged to look into our own mind and realize our true nature for ourselves, Pure Land school adherents call upon the help of Amida Buddha to do so, and this approach consequently has a much more devotional character. My dear old friend Rev. Jerry Hirano, abbot of the Jodo Shinshu (True Pure Land) Buddhist temple in Salt Lake City, with whom I would often engage in lively discussions regarding this subject, often talked about *tariki* (他力) meaning 'other power', 'outside help', in contrast to *jiriki* (自力), 'self power', 'one's own strength'. Following the general outlook of the Pure Land schools, he believes that in this degenerated age it is impossible to come to the realization of Buddhahood all by oneself. The next-best thing, then, is to be reborn in Amida Buddha's Western Paradise from where it is much easier to attain such a realization. And reciting the *nembutsu* with one's whole heart can secure you a place there: Amida will hear you and accommodate your entry into his paradise.

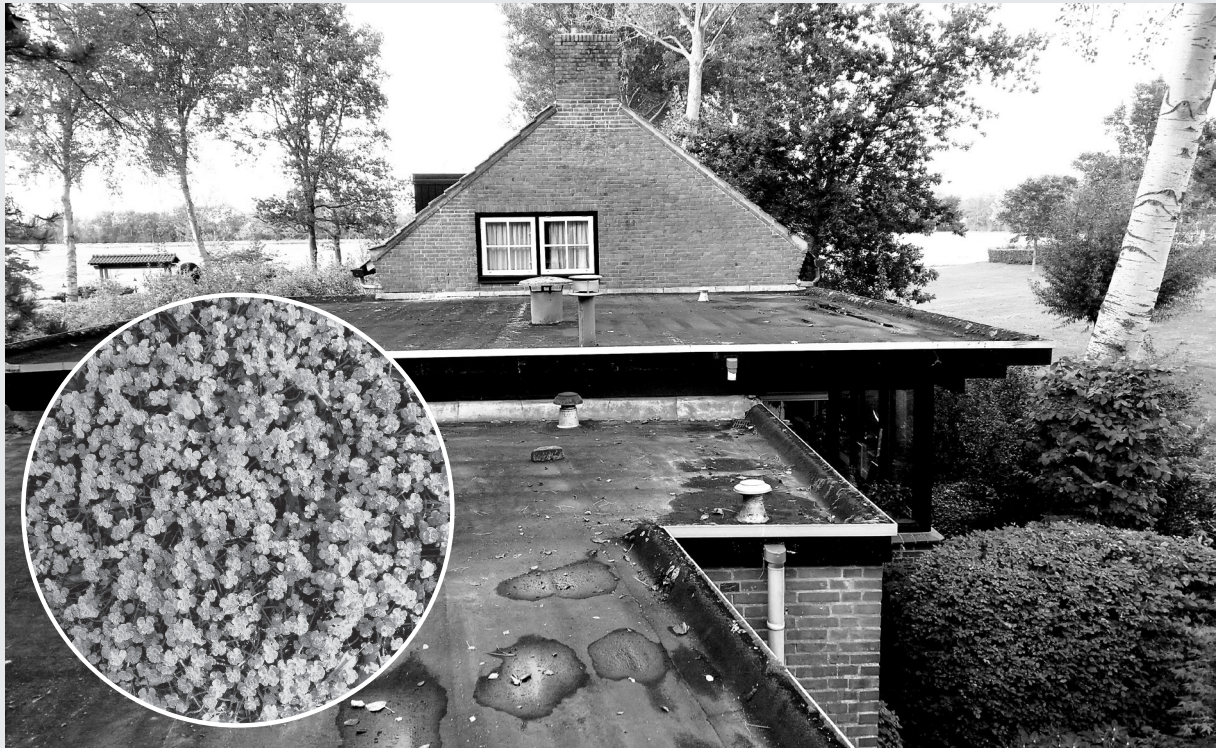
The one question that we often investigated was where this paradise is actually located. Is it somewhere far away from our present world, to be accessed only after one's demise, or can it possibly also manifest itself right here, right now? As we will see, some of the great Pure Land masters would assure us that both options are open to us: it all depends on the trust and determination of the practitioner. To quote Prof. Aaron Proffitt in an interesting essay published last year in *Lion's Roar* magazine: *While some Mahayana Buddhists may aspire to be reborn in the Pure Land in the next life, others conceive of the Pure Land as a symbol for nirvana that is in some sense present within this world. Others may hold both positions at the same time. As the Contemplation Sutra says, "the mind that creates the Buddha is the Buddha."*

THE REQUIREMENT OF DEVOTION

But, for sure, in Pure Land practice, devotion is an absolute requirement, and this is what I would like to focus on. It was only after my training in the US that I had a chance to visit Japan, China, and other Asian Buddhist countries, and what really struck me time and time again was the

ZEN RIVER ANNUAL FUNDRAISER 2023

A GREEN ROOF



Thanks to the annual fundraisers over the last few years, we have been able to improve the insulation of the whole Zen River property and move towards greener energy resources.

Solar panels have already been installed on the roof of the main building, and many of the old windows have been replaced by new ones that feature double glazing—including the large windows in the kitchen. Alarming climatological issues and the soaring energy prices have made all of this more urgent than ever. And, obviously, the work is not finished yet...

In summer, all the cavity walls of the property were filled with mineral wool insulation material. Fortunately, these costs could be included in our annual budget. But for the next move we would like to ask for your help again.

This year, we would like to focus on the flat roofs of the kitchen and the glass hallway that connects the old and new wings. Interestingly enough, those roofs were renovated just over twenty years ago because they were leaking, and that was covered by our very first fundraiser appeal. We were assured that they would be good for another ten years. That means we should count ourselves lucky they held out for twenty! Yet, now is the time to get into action.

The plan is to not only make sure that the roofs stay waterproof, but to also insulate them efficiently. Right now, there is a lot of heat loss; and in spite of all the new windows, it literally goes through the roof!

As an added beneficial feature, we plan to cover the new roofs with sedum—small fleshy-leaved succulents that spread like a mat and require hardly any maintenance. Sedum has many advantages. One is that it collects rainwater and temporarily stores it; much of the water is absorbed by the plants and later returned to the air through evaporation. Sedum also functions as a habitat for birds, bees, butterflies etc. In other words, while protecting the roof, it benefits the environment.

The total costs for this project are estimated between 10,000 to 15,000 Euro, and we would like to ask you kindly to help us getting it going as soon as possible. All donations, great and small, are highly appreciated!

In gassho, *Tenkei*

Bank account number (IBAN): NL72 TRIO 0212 4970 30, bic/swift: TRIONL2U

Account name: Zen River; Triodos Bank N.V., Nieuweroordweg 1, 3704 EC Zeist, The Netherlands

or via PayPal to office@zenrivertemple.org (tick the box 'to a friend') and the online fundraiser @Zen River on Facebook

devotional attitude of practitioners. At first it was almost disorienting. I had learned to rely primarily on *jiriki*—my own spiritual energy—and to see zazen as the pure and authentic Dharma door to direct realization. From that standpoint, Asian Buddhist devotional culture was often seen as somewhat spineless and was even criticized for its lack of attention to meditation. I was shocked to witness very inspired colourful devotional forms of Buddhism practiced widely by thousands of people. Especially the festive Vesak celebrations I attended in Thailand, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka, were a total eye-opener on this aspect. Almost none of my ‘modern’ criteria for Buddhist practice seem to fit the situation there. And I felt the need for a complete shift in my value system, as if I had to redefine what practice actually entails and what it is really geared towards.

Delving into this a little more, I was surprised to find out that many of our revered old Buddhist masters were closely associated with Pure Land teachings, and even recommended a combination of zazen and nembutsu (*nianfo* in Chinese). For example, the great Chinese master Zhiyi (538–597)—founder of the Tiantai tradition, whose clear articulation of Buddhist doctrine and meditation influenced the whole of East Asian Buddhism including Chan and Zen—recommended the recitation of Amida Buddha’s name as a way to maintain one’s focus during meditation. And one of my favourite Chinese Zen masters, Yongming Yanshou (904–975), claimed that it is more effective to combine Pure Land practices with Zen meditation than to practise Zen meditation alone. Master Zhuhong, whose teaching we will discuss later, made a distinction between Amida Buddha as a ‘mind only’ principle to be realized by oneself and Amida as a Buddha who literally resides in the Western Paradise. According to him, both interpretations are valid, although he was critical of too much focus on ‘mind only’ as this could easily lead to pride and arrogance.

In this context it is also interesting to note that from a long time ago many Chinese and later also Japanese

monasteries have featured both a meditation hall and a hall for reciting the Buddha’s name. And I couldn’t be happier that we were able to follow that example at Zen River Temple. In a way, we already combine Zen meditation with the devotional practices of bowing and chanting that are more common in Pure Land Buddhism. One could say that in the Zendo we find ourselves on our own and rely on our personal *jiriki*, while in the Hatto we put more trust in *tariki*—meaning that we learn to operate together with others and even to direct ourselves to all Buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout space and time. This is perfectly in line with the basic Mahayana standpoint that we can all attain realization in this lifetime, but only because we are able to receive the help of everyone and everything.

Another way to look at this is that the one who attains realization is not the one I usually identify with—in fact, to attain any degree of realization, the one I know has to surrender to something totally unknown. And, if we really do, the self opens up to the whole interconnected world which is vividly alive and wishes to communicate with us in even the most humble details. Personally, while bowing, I primarily bow to the floor and thank her for being there so generously. But it can help to have a clear object of veneration—like Amida Buddha, or as we will see, Kanzeon bodhisattva.

Lately I have been studying the works of the Chinese master Hanshan Deqing (1546–1623), one of the great reformers of Chinese Buddhism. And he has become an inspirational example for me. Living during a time that was marked by a sad decline of Buddhism, Hanshan almost single-handedly managed to redefine what practice entails and came up with an innovative training programme that has influenced generations of practitioners right up to the present day. One thing I particularly appreciate is that he eschewed any form of doctrinal belief and saw all the different Buddhist methods as skilful means to cure our greed, anger, and ignorance. And this meant that, rather

DHARMA SISTERS

This last September we were happy to welcome Rev. Tenmyo Dojima to Zen River for one month. She is practicing at Toshoji, the Japanese training temple that we are most closely related to; Myoho Roshi and most of Tenkei Roshi’s successors have attended the traditional Ango training there required for official Soto School registration.

The abbot of Toshoji, Seido Suzuki Roshi, who visited Zen River in 2013 as Jokeshi (official witness for Jifu Sensei’s Hossenshiki) encouraged Tenmyo to visit Europe to practise at different temples, starting at Zen River.

Meanwhile, our resident monastic Tessa Gyosei Overbeek was ready to go to Japan and join the three-month Winter Ango at Toshoji. So this is a perfect exchange. Tenmyo stayed until Gyosei had to leave and could help her with many details for her first trip to Japan; and the two will meet up again in Toshoji at the end of the Ango there. Tenkei Roshi had also arranged that Gyosei could visit Yodo-san at Kirigayaji and Yuko-san at Shogakuji in Tokyo before taking the Shinkansen to Toshoji. So, all in all, these exchanges keep our connections alive and thriving.



than specifying a particular approach as the one and only one, he recommended the combination of various practices including meditation, study, devotional ritual, and precept training. Rather than being divisive, he chose to be highly inclusive—and this struck a chord in the hearts of his contemporaries.

I feel that we are facing a somewhat similar challenge. Most of us are first-generation Buddhist practitioners, living under very different circumstances from those found in traditional Asian cultures. Although we would like to absorb the alive and transmitted teachings to the best of our ability, we also have to be creative and find forms that resonate for us and can inspire future generations. I have lived in Japan long enough to deeply appreciate its profound and highly mysterious Buddhist orientation, which permeates the whole culture. But I am also aware that we cannot just copy what happens there. So, we are forced to be creative. But how? How can we make Buddhist practice a vital and alive quality of our life?

I would then wish to follow Hanshan in being as open-minded as possible, engage in a healthy variety of training elements, and appreciate the Sangha as a global Buddhist community engaged in all kinds of different practices. Therefore, at Zen River we have developed and maintain connections with Buddhist temples and groups all over the world. And we nowadays often welcome people with an Asian background who are curious about our style of training, especially in terms of meditation but also of our latest melodic and harmonic adventures with musical instruments while reciting the sutras.

AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

As I had started to research the combination of Zen and Pure Land Buddhism, I also ventured upon the work of one of Hanshan's close associates, Yunqi Zhuhong (1535–1615). Master Zhuhong is mostly referred to as the eighth patriarch of the Pure Land tradition. And he had a remarkably innovative approach to the invocation of Amida Buddha, something that right away gave me the thrills. Whereas earlier masters such as Yanshou taught that Zen meditation and the invocation of Buddha can mutually complement each another, Zhuhong and some of his contemporaries integrated the nembutsu into their meditation practice. While the continuous and wholehearted reciting of the Buddha's name will help in developing deep samadhi, they recommended asking oneself at some point, 'Who is the one reciting?' They even identified this as *nian-fo gong'an* practice—in other words they used the invocation of the Buddha as a koan to be investigated, raising the necessary momentum of 'doubt' that can prompt one to reach awakening. 'Who is it, or what is it that is calling?' In other words, this procedure functions as just one more inspirational signpost for turning one's own light inward. And, as most of us know, if we really manage to do this, it opens the mind to the extent that we start to pick up mysterious messages as to how to engage most beneficially in bodhisattva activity.

I have been trying this out for some time, but I had to admit that Amida Buddha and his Western Paradise are a bit alien to me. It may be something personal or just because I am not familiar enough with the whole principle and imagery. So, I wondered, could I perhaps use the *Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo* in the same manner? I tried, and to my surprise, dedicating all my attention to Kanzeon bodhisattva, reciting the sutra silently especially during zazen, and after some time asking myself intensely, 'Who is it that is reciting the *Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo*?', feels totally natural to me.

Perhaps it has something to do with my upbringing. St. John's cathedral in my hometown Den Bosch features a beautiful chapel with a medieval statue of Holy Mary. Over the ages, many people have believed that it has a miraculous energy and that praying to her while facing this statue can cure diseases and resolve disasters. There is a great similarity—and even a historical link—between the imagery of Kanzeon and Holy Mary. So, this gives me a chance to include my past in the present. .

VISUALIZATION

Some masters of the Pure Land School recommend visualizing Amida Buddha during the recitation, and visualizing Kanzeon bodhisattva seems to work fine too—using a favourite sculpture or picture of her as a model, and sticking to that for some time. Perhaps it is good to mention here that such visualization can lead to an interesting sequence. To begin with, it might be easiest to project Kanzeon in front of us and become more and more intimate with her. Eventually this can lead to visualizing Kanzeon within ourselves and completely identifying with her in body and mind. Yet at some point you can let go of all visualization (and recitation) and focus on Kanzeon's ineffable essence by turning your own light inward. This stage is, in fact, beautifully articulated in the first lines of the sutra you have been reciting: 'Kanzeon! At one with Buddha!' In other words, ultimately you are facing your very own true nature that is completely beyond any comprehension but can be realized directly here and now!

Ultimately, all distinctions between self and the bodhisattva fade. Only the question remains: What or who is calling? Am I calling Kanzeon or is Kanzeon calling me? Is it all me or is it all Kanzeon? Or is there only calling? Didn't many of us always feel some strange kind of calling, something that actually prompted us to engage in spiritual practice in the first place? Now is the time to fully acknowledge it without worrying about any particular answer. Apparently, what is important is the very calling itself. Only total immersion in 'just calling' can lead to a clearer observation of situations we find ourselves in, and to a better sense of what we could possibly do—or stop doing.

At the conclusion of a period of zazen, we usually raise our hands in gassho and then bow forward. While doing that I have recently started to look at my hands with more attention. If these are the hands of Kanzeon, what are they going to do today?

WINTER ANGO SHUSO



Zen River is happy to announce that Marloes Myokan Harkema will be the Shuso (head monk) for the upcoming winter Ango.

Born in a village 15 km away from Zen River, she could have never imagined that one day she would return to live in a Buddhist temple so close to her family roots. She first encountered Tenkei Roshi and the Zen River Community during a sesshin in 2009 and, over the years, developed a strong connection with Zen River. Tenkei Roshi gave her jukai and the Dharma name Myokan (Wondrous Mirror). Over the past couple of years she has been living at Zen River as a resident, balancing her time with periodic visits to Wageningen University for work. In 2022, she received Shukke Tokudo from Tenkei Roshi.

At Zen River, she happily contributes to the kitchen and assists with the online membership programme. In Wageningen, she serves as a student counsellor and communication trainer. Additionally, she plays a role at Spectrum, a student platform and chaplaincy, as a coordinator for Buddhist activities. Through these connections numerous Young Minds Weekends have been enriched by the vibrant energy of Wageningen students.

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

Live-stream Zazen Sundays and Tuesdays
Right Speech Class via Zoom, Sat. 16:30
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

ZEN RIVER TEMPLE



WINTER ANGO 2023–2024

November 4 – 9 Gyōji Week
November 25 Ango Opening
November 25 – Dec. 2 Rohatsu Sesshin
December 16–21 Gyōji Week
December 20, 19:45.. Tutti Cantano Choir concert
December 27 – Jan. 1, 2024 New Year Sesshin
January 3 – 6, 2024 New Year Sesshin Part 2
January 13 – 18 Gyōji Week
January 26 – 28 Bodhidharma Weekend Sesshin
February 3 – 4 Young Minds Weekend
February 17 – 24 Ango Closing Sesshin
February 25 – March 8 No scheduled activities



SPRING INTERIM 2024

March 16 – 17 Rakusu Sewing Sesshin
March 29 – 31 Easter Weekend Sesshin
April 13 – 18 Gyōji Week
April 27 – May 2 Sakura Spring Sesshin
May 11 – 16 Gyōji Week



SUMMER ANGO

May 25 – 30 Falling Flowers Sesshin
June 8 – 13 Gyōji Week
June 21 – 23 Weekend Sesshin
July 6 – 11 Young Minds Seminar
July 27 – August 24 Month-long Sesshin



ZEN BOAT GRONINGEN

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



AT OTHER LOCATIONS

November 2 – 5 Holterberg, Sesshin Kanzeon
Rotterdam, led by Senko Sensei
January 17 – 21 Holterberg, Sesshin Zentrum
Utrecht, led by Jifu Sensei

“ZEN RIVER SONGS”

Some may know that Tammy Myoho Roshi has been chanting and recording sutras and dharanis accompanied by her guitar and posting them on SoundCloud for several years. Now, one of our old acquaintances from the former Kanzeon Zen Center in Utah, Brad Ryūdō Stock – who runs Painted Sky Studios and is a student of Genshin Roshi – offered to mix and produce the tracks professionally for an album entitled *Zen River Songs*. We look forward to hearing the finished result in a few months.



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