

Tenboring

• Le bulletin d'information de l'association Tenborin •

Rétrospective

Visite de
Okumura Roshi

Enseignements-ressources

Sutra et cérémonie
du repentir

Se reposer dans
le NON-NE



Edito

Reflection on the practice of zen!



*« The peak reached
Lonely I stand
The winds of autumn. »*

Master Ryokan

The seasons go by!
Summer is already
far away.
The sangha came
together during the
summer sessions in
silence, and then we
all went back to our
occupations, work and
cares and sometimes to
forgetting the way
of zen.

Now it's autumn with its gorgeous colours. The earth is covered with dead leaves, the soil for new roots. Impermanence doesn't really do anything new, yet doesn't stop for an instant. This is the teaching of emptiness, where beings and forms manifest, the immobile Presence, beyond the world, where everything appears and disappears without trace.

« Without beginning or end' wrote Master Dogen, proclaiming the Truth which breathes at each moment, in each cell of our bodies and in our own heart. Truth which creates itself and reveals itself as « pure consciousness » in our goalless meditation. Isn't zen just awakening to this?

To know this awakening implies letting go of the idea that life has to be a particular way, to plunge into the mystery of the present moment, to consider gain and loss with equanimity, just marvelling at what is here where we are and uniting ourselves with the mystery of the silent Presence.

There is no path to awakening. The path is itself the goal and at each moment we walk, we experience, we practise, not to reach a goal, but to collect what presents itself to us, without choice, without seizing or rejecting.

If Master Ryokan talks of reaching the summit, it is to say that he is not separated from the present moment and all that is there. The present moment is the summit! Everything is contemplation in the pure autumn sky.

We never reach the summit, the heart of our heart, by some path or other. There is no summit that we can reach. The way, the practice, is just to go one step at a time, whether large or small, pleasant or painful, to arrive, alone, in the infinite space of Presence, the sky of the seasons of Impermanence.

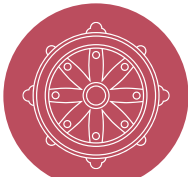
This perpetual and unpredictable impermanence is difficult to live and impossible for the illusory me to control. Obstinate seeking the happiness that would make this world a paradise, reaching out for a definitive awakening, the me is constantly seeking to avoid the truth of impermanence. Those who are

aware of this evasion try, by adopting a spiritual quest, to find an answer, a path. Zen teaches that we must forget the need for an answer and the path itself in the space it holds beyond language and thought. Thought and language which, however clear they may be, can never grasp the Truth which reveals itself to a mind free of thought.

The truth of awakening dissolves the idea of separation which the me constantly maintains, but doesn't end this me, as past conditionings are always potentially active and our karmic memories can reactivate if they are not observed, accepted and liberated. How can we see our dark places if we don't bring them into the light? The hardest thing is to recognize all the facets of our personality, particularly the most dark and selfish. That's the work! It starts in the presence of simply sitting without a goal, consciously welcoming, where the me disappears in the space of silence, where our vision can be clear. Beware! The me will constantly seek to collect the fruits of practice, maintaining its illusory existence with our doubts and fears.

To abandon oneself body and mind to this sitting, the zazen of the buddhas and patriarchs, this is the path of the heart which alone will lead us to the summit of our own Heart●

Guy Mokuhô



*« In the autumn wind
Alone
A shadow. »*

Ryōkan

The life of the association

Program 2019

The Zen Centre of Lanau has been for sale for some months now. That is not to say that activities there have come to a halt. Daily practice continues for the remaining residents and visitors. You are very welcome for a retreat or visit!

We have prepared a programme for 2019 of attractive sessions and seminars. We will let you know the programme before the end of the year.

We invite you to take advantage of the sessions and sesshins we will organise in 2019 in this spacious building where we can practise together in healing calm.

Thank you for your presence and your support of Tenborin.
With all my good wishes ●

Guy Mokuhô



Find all the latest news about Tenborin on tenborin.org
and on social networks.



CentreZenDeLanau



CentreZenLanau

You can also help us greatly by joining the Tenborin association for the year 2019. The membership fee remains fixed at 20€.

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Retrospective

Okumura Roshi's visit to Lanau

Octobre 2018 - Centre zen de Lanau

By Odile Hoog



About forty people from our sangha and elsewhere had the opportunity to participate to the seminar « Living according to our vows » and to meet Okumura Roshi at Lanau. Okumura Roshi is 70 years old, but seems twenty years younger. As soon as you meet him, you see his kindness, openness and joy. In reply to the question « what were you expecting when you agreed to come to Europe ? » his response was just to smile and say « to share my good karma and have a good time ».

Lanau was his last stop before going home to Bloomington, Indiana, after a three week visit to Europe to see his disciples. He accepted Guy's invitation and really gave us so much.

Okumura Roshi is very erudite. Trained in a university, he is nevertheless discreet and simple, and it is only when very penetrating questions are asked that one can see the depth and breadth of his knowledge.

So what he essentially talked to us about is practice and our commitment in everyday life, and the illusion of me. He shared his personal experiences and his understanding of the Dharma with us, with humour and sincerity.

From the age of 17, he wanted to know the meaning of life. By chance, he came across Master Dogen's writings, but said he didn't really understand much! Then he met Uchiyama Roshi, who became his master and to whom he has remained faithful to this day. He speaks of him with emotion and respect, and we could understand what transmission means to him.

It was his master, Uchiyama Roshi who insisted that he learned English and go to the USA. He accepted and that was his 'first mistake' as he says, laughing at himself. First of all he was in Massachussets, where he contributed to building a hermitage by hand, which had a big impact on his health, then he was in California and then finally in Indiana.

Okumura never says « according to Dogen » whose teachings he has studied for 50 years, but

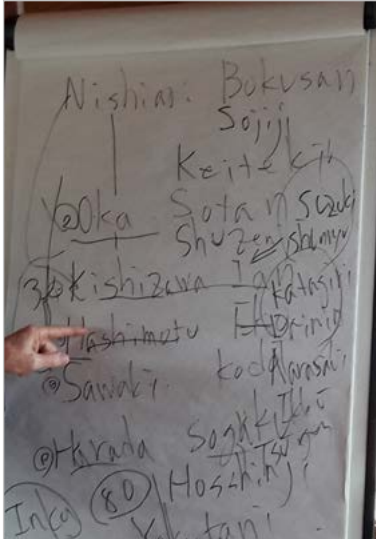
« according to my understanding of Dogen » This is not just posturing, as this man is truly humble. He admits that even after all this time, there are things he doesn't understand, and the more he climbs up the mountain, the further away the summit becomes. A great metaphor!



Okumura Roshi presented his latest book « Living by Vow » We were fortunate to meet his translator and disciple, Madame Shoji Malher, who participated in the seminar. In this book, Okumura Roshi shows that all the zen sutras that we chant in the dojos have the bodhisattva vows as their foundation.



He explains that at the heart of the four bodhisattva vows there is an insurmountable contradiction. How is it possible to save all beings, how can we overcome all our illusions, how can we manifest the way of Buddha along with all beings and understand all his teachings? Okumura Roshi explains that we must understand that these vows are endless and practice is limitless. This is the meaning of these vows that are impossible to achieve for an ordinary being. He also asked this question : in this life, what is truly the vow we choose in order to commit fully ourselves as bodhisattvas? We should all ask ourselves this question ; and Okumura Roshi added, that the world needs different sorts of people showing their creativity by different means. **It's our life and our vow¹.**



He explained that his own vow which he has maintained for 50 years is a double one : to study and understand Dogen Zenji in order to share his work and make it accessible, particularly to westerners in the 21st century, and to practise according to the teaching of his master Uchiyama Roshi : shikantaza without ritual, without kusen: to simply **reliquish the body-mind, let thought fall from our hands : practise shikantaza which allows us to be freed from our past karma, and also to be freed from creating more : a transformation that begins with zazen.**

Understanding that the five aggregates create an illusory me : abandoning body and mind and giving up our identity without losing it. That's our zazen.

All Okumura's teachings are of course the same as those of our masters...thank goodness!



But the clarity of his explanation in simple and precise english meant that most of us could understand without needing too much translation (although many thanks to Mickael for translating for us) being based on the kanjis themselves, plus his kindness and humour made these days a unique experience. Thank you M. Okumura, you make us want to understand

¹ Vow in the sense of commitment , not wish ; 'voeu' can be translated as either of these.



Dogen better and his message for modern times, and thanks to Guy for organising this precious moment. ●



[VIEW ON YOUTUBE](#)



Teaching/ resources

The sutra and ceremony of repentance

By Lana Berrington

In zen we chant this
verse of repentance on
some occasions:

*Ga shaku sho zo sho aku go
Kai yu mu shi ton jin chi
Ju shin ku i shi sho sho
Issai ga kon kai san ge*

**This means: All my past
and harmful karma (or
ancient twisted karma),
born from beginningless
greed, hate, and
delusion, through my
actions of body, speech,
and mind, I now fully
avow.**

It's the verse of repentance, and it turns up from time to time in our zen way. It comes from Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. We don't talk much about Samantabhadra whose name means Universal Virtue or Universal Goodness. Whereas Manjushri Bodhisattva (Monju Bosatsu) exemplifies wisdom, and Avelokiteshvara Bodhisattva (Kannon or Kan ji zai bosatsu) exemplifies compassion – Samantabhadra (Fugen Bosatsu) represents wisdom in action – he says that there can be no wisdom if it doesn't benefit beings – wisdom must be practiced – So, Fugen bosatsu symbolises practice. I like to think of Samantabhadra as being the bodhisattva of just being an all round good person.

Maybe the reason why we don't hear a lot about him is because one of the features of Samantabhadra's practice is doing "hidden good deeds". He is mentioned in the Lotus sutra, the Avatamsaka (flower garland) sutra, our meal sutra, and influences a lot of our ceremony. Samantabhadra is well known for his 10 vows,

mentioned in the last chapter of the Avatamsaka sutra. Vow number 4 is the vow to repent. The words of the vow are "From beginningless time I have acted unskillfully, with craving, hatred, and ignorance, in actions of body, speech, and mind. Determined now to begin anew, I repent." It's very easy to see how we get our verse of repentance from this; the words are almost the same.

It is Repentance, our verse and our ceremony of repentance, that I want to talk about today. The word repentance brings a lot of things up for some, maybe of people preaching in the street, shouting "Repent Sinner !" or of a Catholic confessional with a priest to whom you confess your sins and seek forgiveness.

But in Buddhism, we don't have the same idea of "sin" that we find in Christianity. In Christianity, sin is an immoral act considered a transgression against divine law, rather than a natural law. It is also something for which you can be encouraged to feel shame, and guilt. Additionally it is a system that relies on the benevolence of an "other

power" – in this case Christ, God or a Saint, to facilitate your redemption. In Buddhism, "other power" is called TARIKI" – and we see other power redemption particularly in the Pure Land school of Buddhism. The opposite of Tariki is Joriki – or 'self power' – this is applicable to zen.

Another part of the idea of 'sin' in Christianity is the guilt and shame we can be encouraged to feel. Guilt and shame are about keeping us stuck in the past. Keeping us, in our minds, inside some past story that we have created; a story that is all about how horrible we are. "I'm so terrible, my god, I'm the worst person, I will beat myself" - It's a very self-centred attitude, it turns a situation into something that's "ALL ABOUT ME!". Guilt and shame are about NOT Continuing, not letting go, being unable to return to the present

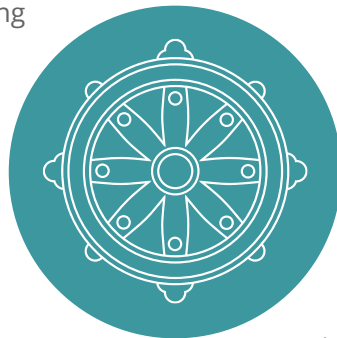
In Buddhism, repentance is not about shame or guilt. It is about acknowledging the role that we play in this world, and seeing it clearly. We can express our regret – which is a way of addressing the suffering we have caused, we can apologise, if it's appropriate, we can accept responsibility and then we can move forward. We WANT to recognise and acknowledge what we have done, so we can return to the present and meet what is right here, right now. Recognise is a great word. I looked up the English word recognise, and found out that it is taken from the Old French world *reconnoistre* – which means to RE THINK – to recall to mind – to know again.

So, there is an element of wisdom in recognising our misdeeds

Whatever the consequences of our actions – whether wholesome or unwholesome –

whether good or bad – in Buddhism, we own them. They are ours – and one of our jobs is to recognise that. This is the English word "avow". "I now fully avow" means to acknowledge, to look again with eyes open. To think again, and then MOVE FORWARD from this place - that is to say – to let go and return to the present.

When we perform repentance rituals, or chant the repentance verse, the point is not to ask forgiveness from someone for what we've done. It is not "Bless me father for I have sinned", which is 'other power'. It's important that we don't think in this way, ultimately there is no gap between ourselves, the person who we might be asking forgiveness from / or whom we may have harmed, and the actions we have committed.



Finally, when we move forward, there is also an element of repentance that encourages us to try not to create harmful consequences again. Repentance doesn't mean we should keep causing harm. Just because you can mend a broken leg, doesn't mean you should break your legs.

Guy often speaks about giving and receiving - that the giver, receiver and gift are not separate – are one. This is the same. The one who acts, the consequences and the aggrieved party, are not separate – they are one. Real repentance can't rest in "wrong view", in thinking we are separate. In Buddhism, the purpose of "right view" is to clear one's path from confusion, misunderstanding, and deluded thinking. It is a means to gain right understanding of reality.

So, we do 2 kinds of repentance in Zen. Formal and Formless.

Formal repentance is when we own up to something, usually something specific – like when we apologise for hurting someone. Our verse of repentance is formal, except that it's non-specific.

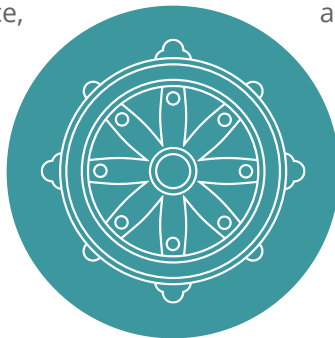
We chant the repentance verse before ordination ceremonies (tomorrow), before we receive the precepts (also tomorrow), and the beginning of our Ryaku Fusatsu ceremony (our repentance, or purification, ceremony) – where our commitment to the precepts are re-affirmed. Ryaku» means, «abbreviated,» or «simple», and «fusatsu» means «to continue good practice,» or, «to stop unwholesome action». Our ceremony that we'll do later is even more abbreviated than the ones commonly done – a very abbreviated resolve to continue good practice, or to uphold Samantabhadra's wise practice.

This ceremony is similar to a ceremony done in the Theravada and some other kinds of Buddhism, where traditionally, the monks and/or nuns in the sangha meet twice a month (on the full and new moon) and confess openly all their specific transgressions of the 227 (311 for women) Prātimoka rules of the vinaya which they broke over the past fortnight. Each rule broken exacts a prescribed penalty, a specific punishment from the community. This punishment could be anything from simply apologising, to being kicked out. But, don't worry, we don't do that, we don't normally confess or repent specific actions in front of the community, or even to a third party, nor do we have any prescribed penalties. Our repentance is much more broad and all encompassing. It is non-specific, we own up to ALL of our harmful actions of body speech and mind from the beginning of time. Acknowledging our regret for harmful actions

is done internally, with the awakened quality of our own mind.

The idea is that we chant this verse before we take on something very important - it's like moving forward with a clean slate, like washing cloth before we dye it.

That's Formal repentance. The other kind of repentance that we do in Zen is "Formless Repentance". Formless repentance, is repentance in the ultimate realm. It is absolute/ supreme, it is beyond any idea of good or bad, of wholesome or unwholesome, of helping or harming. It is letting go completely. Zazen is formless repentance exactly.



Daikan Eno (Huineng) – the 6th Chinese ancestor talked a lot about formless repentance in the Platform Sutra. He stated that formless repentance will annihilate the sins of past, present, and future, enabling you to attain purity of thought, word, and deed. Formless repentance happens in each instant. Master Eno wrote:

«From the preceding moment of thought, the present moment of thought, and the following moment of thought, from moment of thought to moment of thought I will not be affected by folly or delusion / conceit or deceit, Jealousy or envy; I repent of all previous folly or delusion, conceit or deceit, Jealousy or envy and other faults due to them, may they disappear all at once and never occur again.»

Formless repentance is manifesting your true self, in this moment.

In the reality of our lives, where we live, in this relative world, we have to make choices every day. We use our discriminating mind all

the time, it's unavoidable. We have to decide what is good, what is bad - but in zazen - we just let thought pass - no discrimination, no judgement, only pure presence, we are totally free from discrimination. Repentance is letting go of our past, and zazen is letting go completely. So our practice of zazen is also the purest, most complete, form of repentance.

We need both kinds of repentance in order to move forward in each instance. Formal repentance cleans the slate, and softens the consequences of our self-centred actions of body, speech, and thought. Formless repentance deals with the roots of these actions. Formal repentance prepares us for zazen. Formless repentance is zazen itself.

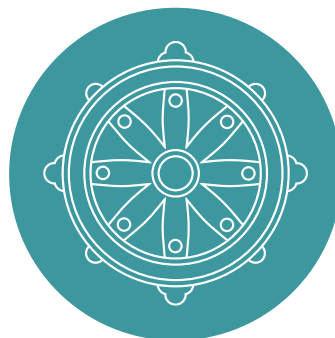
In the Sutra of Forty-two Sections:

The Buddha said: «If a person has many offenses and does not repent of them, but cuts off all thought of repentance, the offenses will engulf him, just as water returning to the sea will gradually become deeper and wider.” - So... it's good to repent - it's good to recognise our misdeeds, it's good to let them go, and to try to do better in the future. In Zen, whether we are working with the precepts, sitting in zazen, or engaging in daily activity, what is emphasized is returning - returning to our original nature before any thoughts of separation.

Dogen Zenji wrote: « We should reflect on it. This is the exact point of a realized buddha. With repentance you will certainly receive invisible help from buddha ancestors. Repent to the buddhas with mind and body. The power of repentance melts the roots of unwholesomeness. This is the single colour of true practice, the true heart of trust, the true body of trust ».

In the Samantabhadra sutra « The ocean of all karmic hindrances arises solely from delusive thoughts. If you wish to make repentance, sit in upright posture and be mindful of the true

reality. All misdemeanours, like frost and dew, are melted away in the sun of wisdom ». ●





Teaching/ resources

Resting in the unborn

New Kusen collection of Guy Mokuhō Mercier

By Liliann Shu Rei Manning



NEW

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RESTING IN THE UNBORN is the 3rd collection of Guy Mokuhō Mercier's kusen. This booklet consists of five groups of kusen, delivered on various occasions, and a teisho on samsara, the wheel of life. The subject of this teisho has interested Guy Mokuhō for a long time and his enthusiasm is infectious!

As with the two previous collections, this 3rd booklet offers us a unique meeting between the subjects traditionally taught in zen and the particular way in which the author approaches them. To read Guy Mokuhō's kusen is to enliven and invigorate our practice! Thanks to his teachings, we become particularly aware of the need to be conscious of our sensations. The booklet has about sixty paragraphs, in which Guy Mokuhō refers to sensations. Here are two examples, which illustrate this perfectly. They appear in the first pages of the booklet 3.

"Bringing your awareness to your sensations, following them as they spread out, and then disappear, is an instruction which allows us to come back into the flow of life, from moment to moment. The present moment is as it is, neither good nor bad."

And a little further on:

« The more we become One with sensation, the more we feel life, which flows in heat, energy,, tension, waves, and the more our field of consciousness widens until it simply disappears in the sensation of being, which is not bodily. It isn't an exercise which we can do just by personal will. We must let ourselves be. The sensation of being -or to take up the Buddha's expression: pure consciousness of the presence of self ».

Throughout the kusen, Guy Mokuhō transmits the stages of his own experience. And his advice proves itself a precious aid in bringing us closer to the path that leads to the sensation of being. Reading these kusen over and over again allows us to deepen little by little the richness that is the present moment.

What is more, coming back to the first quote, reading his kusen allows us to acknowledge that the present moment can only be pure: nothing is added, and it can only be felt, so, it cannot be willed.

If I could sum up in one sentence what I felt after reading this collection of kusen, I would say that knowing that these teachings are available whenever I want to read them again means that I can ensure a constant source of spiritual nourishment. ●

Previous collections

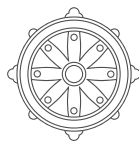


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Tenboring #5
Bulletin d'information de l'association Tenborin
Octobre novembre décembre 2018

Le bulletin Tenboring est édité par l'association loi 1901 Tenborin dont le siège social est situé à
Centre zen de Lanau – 15260 Neuvéglise
afin de communiquer sur son activité auprès de ses membres adhérents.