

#6

Tenboring

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

Témoignages

5 angos au japon

Enseignements-ressources

Karma et liberté



MARS AVRIL MAI JUIN 2019

Edito

A NEW SPIRITUALITY?

By Guy Mokuhô



*The New Year wishes
from Tenborin in
January suggested
« creating a spirituality
that speaks to our
children, our families,
our friends and
enemies, our disciples,
without stopping at
the slightest obstacle,
responding to that deep
aspiration towards the
mystery that expresses
itself in and
through us ».*

What spirituality does our world need today? It is an unimaginable challenge to try to innovate by oneself without relying on personal ideas, our preferences or dislikes. Every personal opinion is limiting for others, but also for oneself. Every evolution must be inspired by a true mind of compassion, that is to say free of all traces of ego.

Zazen is a spirituality which is always new, beyond fashions, which gives immediate access to oneself, and as Master Deshimaru would often say, is the essence of religion. However, the Zen tradition also uses a lot of ritual to accompany and transmit the practice, and this really upsets a lot of followers and sympathisers. The question of whether ritual is well – founded or necessary must be asked, as it seems that its use is discouraging people who aspire to a spirituality that is free from traces of the past.

The collection of rituals practised by a group comes under the term liturgy, which means ‘service for the common good of all.’ The life of a group, a nation, a sangha, structures and organises itself by adopting a form, a religious or lay ritual, put in place via group meetings or practised on the occasion of certain life events (birth, death, marriage, changing seasons). In the West, it seems that our system of reference, based on a cartesian and scientific approach, alongside the residual image of the ‘christian’ religion of our parents, has become an obstacle and constraint to our spontaneous acceptance of zen.

However, whether we realise it or not, we are always subject to personal or group rituals which continually reaffirm our life choices. This is how we do our morning rituals, brush our teeth, get dressed, take coffee, arrange our affairs, and even satisfy our addictions.. Everything is a ritual ! And in our collective life, how many rituals there are in school, the army, a football stadium, any group, the boy scouts, wine lovers... all of which lead us to formalise a secure group identity.

Zen rituals, whatever the intention guiding their appearance over the course of time, have for their goal to affirm the non

separation of essence and form (Ku soku ze shiki) The practice of ritual in an awakened mind continually reaffirms this non separation between the 'me' and the ten thousand things, between me and the whole universe. Our essential truth resides in total adhesion to the present moment, the only reality of our existence. So , whatever we do, what we practise with a free heart is what we are. The 'me' disappears to reveal the Buddha, the Reality of all things.

The conscious implication, free and fully accepted, of a liturgy filled with meaning, helps to realise this non-separation from the essence. Everyday life manifests in a disinterested form which helps our mind to come back to the source. It is like a meditation which continues right into the activity of the body and the thoughts. This is how rituals and ceremonies become pure presence which transforms the

totality of ourselves. This is what it is to create a new spirituality which lives in the everyday.

*« Is there anything outside the instant?
Acting without considering their
confidence, forgetting all self interest, the
person who, with full attention, with a
simple gesture places a stick of incense in
the bronze pot at the foot of the Buddha,
manifests the truth of the awakened
ones. »*

Nan Shan

This is zen in its completeness. It is with this mind that we can create a spirituality that speaks to all beings. ●

Agenda

DATE	LOCALITÉ	ORGANISATEUR	THÉMATIQUE
23-24 mars	Girona (ES)	Girona	Sesshin
31 mars au 2 avril	Centre zen de Lanau	Tenborin	Sesshin
4 au 7 avril	Centre zen de Lanau	Tenborin	Séminaire « Méditation et neurosciences »
13-14 avril	Londres (UK)	Caledonian road dojo	Sesshin
9 au 11 mai	Centre zen de Lanau	Tenborin	Sesshin Tenborin + AG
17-19 mai	Sion - Les Collons (Suisse)	Sion	Sesshin
24-26 mai	La Gendronnière	AZI	Première sesshin
15 et 16 juin	Lancieux (Côte d'armor)	Dinan	Sesshin
2 au 7 juillet	Centre zen de Lanau	Tenborin	Découvrir, pratiquer et approfondir la tradition zen Sôtô
12 au 20 juillet	Centre zen de Lanau	Tenborin	Camp d'été
9 au 17 août	Centre zen de Lanau	Tenborin	Camp d'été
7 au 12 septembre	Centre zen de Lanau	Tenborin	Découvrir, pratiquer et approfondir la tradition zen Sôtô
21 et 22 septembre	Asquins (Yonne)	Asquins	Sesshin
28 et 29 septembre	Centre zen de Lanau	Clermont-Ferrand	Sesshin
1 ^{er} au 3 novembre	Centre zen de Lanau	Tenborin	Séminaire
4 au 6 novembre	Centre zen de Lanau	Tenborin	Sesshin
2 au 8 décembre	Centre zen de Lanau	Tenborin	Rohatsu sesshin

CENTRE ZEN DE LANAU

MÉDITATION ET NEUROSCIENCES

SESSHIN AVEC GUY MOKUHŌ MERCIER
DU 31 MARS AU 2 AVRIL

SÉMINAIRE AVEC LILIANN SHU REI MANNING
DU 4 AU 7 AVRIL

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PREMIÈRE RETRAITE DE MÉDITATION ZEN

First zen meditation retreat

Du 24 au 26 mai 2019
From 24 to 26 may 2019

Enseignement / *Teaching*
Guy Mokuhō Mercier

L'enseignement sera traduit en anglais
Teaching will be translated in english



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Ango

« Abiding in peace » is the translation of the word **ango**, describing the retreat which would bring the monks together around the Buddha or a senior person, during the rainy season. By extension, it has become the training period that monks and nuns must follow after ordination (Tokudo) to learn the rules, ceremonies and rituals belonging to the Soto school. It is a period of time totally dedicated to practice and in the Japanese tradition it forms part of the curriculum by means of which a monk takes charge of a temple, a function, or role as educator amongst Zen practitioners.

Completing one or many angos isn't obligatory for us, as European zen practitioners. But it has the benefit of allowing our multiple European sanghas to co exist better together, by harmonising the exterior aspect of practice and rituals.

Some believe that these angos are useless and even that they are opposed to the teachings transmitted by Master Deshimaru.

But can we really know what an experience will produce in us before we have actually done it? Beyond for and against and also beyond all forms, in an inevitable geographical, cultural and even religious distancing, habitual landmarks, ideas, our own importance are all shoved aside without recourse in our crowding together with others, the inexorable daily grind and even from time to time, the absurdity of the way a monastery is run in Japan.

And yet, for all of those men and women who have lived through such a period, a profound inner questioning of themselves seems to happen of its own accord. In the repetitious nature of daily life, beyond the context and even the religious tradition, each one is led to overtake their own personality and to unconditionally accept everyday reality. The famous reply of Nansen **Hejoshin Koredo**, 'ordinary (daily) consciousness is the way' becomes deeply meaningful.

Here are some thoughts and recollections by members of the Tenbôrin sangha who practised these angos in 2018 at the temple of Toshôji in Okayama prefecture.

Guy Mokuhô

Tosho-ji

Monastic life for foreign monks and nuns.

By Sebastian Volz

Shinto priests had seen for a long time, in the hollow of this amphitheatre of hills with luxuriant vegetation, a place protected from typhoons, a calm and propitious place for minds to meet. In 8th century Japan, the place was naturally chosen to shelter the first nippon buddhist temple, which survived the ages, belonging successively to Shingon Buddhism and since the 17th century, to the school of Dogen and Keizan.

Its spread was immense, with its 1200 affiliated temples and the protection of the great clans of Mori and Tokugawa, despite their otherwise mutual enmity. It sheltered the great poet monk Ryokan and more recently, its abbot has been the most prolific composer of chanted Baika poems, the musical art of our School.

About fifteen years ago, the temple of Tosho -ji, fallen into disrepair, was taken up by Suzuki Roshi, with the aid of affiliated temples, to construct a Sodo, a place of training for monks. His time spent in America and Australia meant that monks and nuns came from many parts of the world and for some years now a number of French practitioners from the great sangha of Master Deshimaru.

These days, the temple is inhabited by a mixed international and Japanese sangha, mostly of mature years, who follow an age appropriate monastic life, which also takes account of their differing nationalities. Many who were once disciples of Master Deshimaru have done their Ango there, many foreign monks and nuns, including some from our sangha spending a year or more. So what does this monastic life consist of?

-Together with a single body- mind, manifesting Shikantaza, chanting and playing the instruments.



Offering our respect, eating, working, studying, washing, resting. By the collective and regular rhythm of this operation, what Master Dogen called 'the pure assembly' is born and lives.



An angos in Tosho-ji

Experience of Sebastian Voltz

Three months of monastic life can be summed up in a single day.

Waking up to the drum, the day gets started with a long zazen, followed by a ceremony, Oryoki, housekeeping, tea, Samu, lunch, siesta, another Samu, another tea, a rest, dinner, bath and zazen before bed.

Of course the tasks and the responsibilities vary, the seasons and the sangha change, new events and ceremonies punctuate the months. But every day, by the rhythm and the actions performed together, our attention is held from rising to bedtime, the thoughts calmed by the fluidity of the day, where no choices need to be made. From day to day the invisible purity of our daily life silently transforms our body and mind.

Our 'person' rebels, negative thoughts spring up – boredom, complaints, tiredness, criticism of others, and of the 'system', the body sometimes finds it hard to adapt to practice, voices are raised from time to time, conflicts can arise. But more often than not, these negativities are carried away by the continual and powerful flow of the rhythm of the days.

I arrived in the last part of the spring Ango and I stayed through the summer to complete the official period of three months. The Ango period is intense, with the presence of 20 participants in the Ango as well as occasional visitors. At the end of the Ango, the rhythm relaxes, although the activities remain the same. The months of July and August are hot and humid, as well as being the season of typhoons. This year, the typhoon was exceptional, the river burst its banks, and there we were with our shovels and wheel barrows, off to dig out an affiliated temple.

The month of August also holds the big event of Obon, ceremonies for the dead. Jean Marc Genzo and myself were able to help in the organisation and attend many ceremonies in the temples. We also went round from house to house, in the middle of rice fields and mountains, or in the deepest valleys, to chant Daishu and Kanromon before the ancestral altars. Three months – I had never spent such a time cut off from my everyday life. Once I got back, the welcome varied between curiosity and surprise at my



slimmed down body, with its clear, smiling face. By repetition, these three months can finally be summed up in a single day, and that day has evaporated in the course of continued attention. All that remain are a few dreams, with the bright colours of reality, and life in Tokyo continues as if virtually nothing has changed.



An angos in Tosho-ji

Experience of Jean-Marc Delom



The heat was suffocating when I began this Ango to live what appeared to me to be an experience. In my little room tucked away from everyone, I reminded myself of the reasons that had brought me to this temple. A mixture of anguish, doubt, but also pride that I had managed to overcome my fear of the unknown. I felt I was absolutely in the right place for me. I had left my family, work, habits and comfort for three months, and this had produced in those around me a mixture of incomprehension and questioning. For my part, I just followed one thing ... my intuition.

I came out of the period of isolation (Tankario) quickly and after an entry ceremony into the sodo (the meditation room) being presented to the Roshi and the Tokudo (monks and nuns) the daily activities were soon put in place. Get up at 4 am zazen, ceremony, samu, tea and teaching, samu, ceremony, meal, rest, samu, rest, ceremony, meal, shower, zazen and bed at 9pm. Continuous practice was established, time had no hold over us, the days were punctuated only by the sounds in the monastery. I had the impression that I had been there for months and others felt the same.

We lived together in a restricted space. We slept in the sodo, but denuded of everything, where nothing truly belonged to us, just a suitcase and the things we needed to practise. I had an impression of just having the essentials, but everything too. A simple coffee and a bit of cake created a subtle and total inner happiness. In this space, we also met our egos, seeing ourselves in the mirror of the scrutiny of others. The intense rhythm of the days and exhaustion worsened frictions and tensions... But the continuous practice would re-establish itself and everything would become smooth, fluid and gentle.

This Ango also allowed me to create strong links with Sebastian Mokusen and to get to know him better. Our common activities, ceremonies, long discussions, little strolls before evening zazen, were also moments of sharing and exchanging views. An Ango is a time where we can go deeply into the functioning and construction of 'me' via this 'other' by the observation of differences, similarities and all that is deeply human : consciousness, emotions, words



that create meaning and creative intelligence as the means of transformation and change.

The ceremonies of obon were not only the chance to go out and meet the local people and understand the meaning of the ceremonies, but also the chance to live in the present moment in its simplicity and authenticity. Without much rehearsal, we learnt to do them by observation and simple continued attention. Mistakes were unimportant, the only thing that mattered was the harmony between us.

Living an Ango goes well beyond living an experience. After Sebastian Mokusen left, I experienced 'silence' as there was a sesshin and also because I couldn't communicate very well in English. This meeting made me gradually realise 'bodily' rather than 'mentally', the illusion of my previous knowledge and things that I was sure of for a brief time. In this solitude and seeing the reflection of things, life appeared to be just in the present moment.

When I arrived at Toshoji, I felt I had lived there before. The day I left, I felt as if I had lived there for ever.

Three months can be summed up in an instant. An instant of silence in that 'peaceful abode.'



An angos in Toshō-ji

Experience of Javier

« In the field , only straw remained. Then they burnt that tooAnd now, new green shoots appear here and there. This is the chance to see what rises from the ashes... »

JMR Kōzan

From a subjective point of view, the effect of this three month angos has had a devastating effect on my sense of 'me', my preferences and dislikes. I felt stripped of all will to distinguish myself from others, even in very simple and basic personal gestures. During these 85 days in the temple, everything is organised so that we forget ourselves. It doesn't matter 'who' is cutting bamboo during samu, 'who' did meal service, 'who' chanted the sutras in the Hatto, or 'who' meditated sitting in the Sodo. There was only the evidence of being present to each moment and the key word was to be totally available.

I was merely the observer of the life that was being lived through my physical body. There was no time for more, as quite simply 'it was what it was.'

Without a doubt, it was one of the most intense and profound experiences of practice in my life. Everything was filled with intensity, fervour and also devotion: the ritual of ceremonies, the sutras in the morning, at midday and during the afternoon, the ceremony of repentance, every fifteen days, the daily bath....

Every occasion was a unique opportunity to bring the mind of awakening , the Bodhicitta, to life, with internal energy, whether in devotion, surrender, or the process of continually questioning oneself...

Leaving the temple and returning home, I felt as if I 'd been living in a dream. Or perhaps it was the exact opposite : is my present life a dream?



An angos in Tosho-ji

Experience of Pere

Dear friends of Tenborin,

If I were to sum up the experience of my Ango in Japan, I would say that it was an intense, enriching and profound experience, but also a little difficult. I am still digesting it, 6 months after my return.

Two points have struck me, the first concerning the presence, compassionate attitude and savoir-faire of the abbot of the monastery, Docho Roshi. I think about him often, as a reference point for myself, and he has remained in my heart ever since. The second point, the rigour, the respect and the depth of the first four hours of the morning practice in the Sodo (zazen, kinhin, genmai) and in the Hatto (ceremonies.) To express this in an energetic way, I have to say "everything was perfect."



The responsibilities both in the Sodo and the Hatto are complex, long and rich in detail. They would often unfold during a large part of the day. It's the continual practice of full attention. At the beginning, I found this really difficult, but I gradually became accustomed to the rhythms and forms, to the point where I felt fine with them. I must say that the moment when you feel at ease with certain rituals, that's the moment to change them, when the time has come to do something else. Now, from a distance, I realise the point to which all this had become important for centering, rooting my practice and for using the understanding, acceptance and gratitude which flowed from this.

Finally , I would like to express the strong experience of what it means to allow everything to fall away for three months : family, family name, friends, the stimuli of modern life, personal opinions, ordinary clothes, hair, flavours without fat, sugar, only a little salt.... There is no place for identifying with one's ego. I felt a deep emotional fragility. I had nothing to lean on except the practice and myself. I perhaps still don't see it very clearly, but I feel in myself a new space of patience and humility.●

Karma and Freedom

Teaching - ressources

By Florian Demont

Karma. We often take it as synonymous with fate or determinism. Karma, then, is a result and we are damned to experience it. We can find something along these lines (even though in a much more sophisticated form) in Vedic culture, the Upanishads, but also in Western culture, especially in Scientific Materialism, according to which we are indeed damned to experience the mechanical play of cause and effect as described in our best scientific theories—and there is, according to this view, no other experience possible.

However, if we see Karma as a result, this might not be due to a particular theory we endorse. From the Buddhist point of view, there are psychological reasons for fatalism. If we feel isolated, misunderstood and humiliated then we are held hostage by what we experience. If we see ourselves as victims of our circumstances, of our past, of our character or of other people then we really do feel damned to experience what we experience. Such fatalistic mindsets are the basis of life entangled in suffering.

Buddha's own teachings on karma are meant to show a way out of suffering. It is meant to break the spell of fatalism. He did this by focusing on the meaning of the word *karman*: action. So, for Buddhists, karma is all about actions and much less about results. How does that work? First, we must understand the power of our mental, verbal and bodily actions. By judging as we do, by saying what we say and by doing what we do, we continuously shape our reality. If we reduce our actions to repeating the same old patterns we always followed, our reality

will be a boring, stupid reproduction of what it always was—eternal recurrence of the worst sort. But if we open our minds, consider the options at hand and then attentively shape our actions, reality will be rich and satisfying. Indeed, it must be, because that is the law of karma. Results are still inevitable, but for calm and wise minds actions are fully malleable and that makes all the difference.

So, the Buddhist take on karma makes us realize that we are not hostages nor victims. Such fatalistic mindsets are the very core of our entanglement in suffering. It is the very core of the wrong perception Buddhists call ignorance. Realizing the full potential of mental, verbal and bodily actions means seeing reality as it is: interdependent malleability.

There are many varieties of Buddhism, but all of them seek to correct our perception and give us direct access to reality. All teach ethical discipline, some add love and compassion, some teach through the body, others utilize visualizations and mantras and all of them ascribe full, direct access to reality to a serene, clear and sharp mind for which suffering is at most a distant memory from the past. All these methods teach us to focus on our intentions, the will behind our actions. We learn to identify intentions behind our judgments, what we want to achieve through our speech acts and all the little wishes, drives and needs behind our bodily actions. The more clearly we see how intention works, the more we can influence actions. This is the main point and we can clearly observe it during Zazen: intentions,

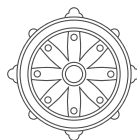
wantings, drives and needs appear and call for action, but we do not move.

So, freedom in Buddhism comes down to this: you do not always have to do what you want to do. And this, once realized, gives us enough leeway to influence actions. This influence on action, in turn, allows us to consciously shape reality. And this is how, ultimately, we will be able to abandon all suffering.

Note how different this is from Western conceptions of free will. All theologians, philosophers and scientists interested in free will were very much aware of fatalistic mindsets and worldviews based on them. They felt threatened by them, because they either found such mindsets inevitable, highly probable or just extremely widespread. But instead of shifting the focus of their investigation onto the present moment, where it becomes clear that we are not simply victims and hostages, always damned to experience what we experience, they tried to reason their way out of the problem. They sought to fight fatalism with conceptual thinking. More particularly, they sought to find out what sort of conscious control we have over ourselves and the world. They wanted to find out whether it is possible to grasp phenomena and to give them a different direction.

Looking at people on the streets, on public transport, at work, at home and elsewhere, while observing their eyes, the color of their skin and their posture, we must conclude that such investigations on free will did not do much good. If we are entangled in suffering, trying to grasp a bothersome phenomenon in order to give it a different, better direction, is not a viable strategy. It does not work. All we get is more frustration, more isolation, more suffering and we really end up feeling that we are victims and hostages of others, our circumstances, the world.

Buddhism all forms of Buddhism offer us a way out. Focus on what you can do. Realize that you do not always need to do what you want to do. Explore the interdependencies right in front of you. Explore their malleability. And most important of all: relax a bit and do not take everything so dead serious. Give everybody a break and turn your inner cynic to mute. After all, all this suffering is the illusive play of distorted perception. In reality, we and the universe are basically well, things change and we all can shape reality freely as we wish. It is in your hands.●



Tenboring

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

Tenboring #6
Bulletin d'information de l'association Tenborin
Mars avril mai juin 2019

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.