

The Lakes Zendo

From Dave Scott

The Zendo in the Lakes is now almost finished. Decorating and buying beds etc. is all that is left to do. It is a lovely space and just right for 10 folk to sit, do kinhin and, together with original building, sleep and cook. At the moment I have run out of steam (6 months dust and builders takes recovery time! Thank you to those folks who helped on weekend clean up.) but once I have got energy back my plan is to run some long weekend retreats and also make space available to sangha members who may wish to use it for solo or other retreats.

Big Mind

In April **David Scott** led a workshop in Liverpool utilising the **Big Mind Process**. This is a simple, facilitated process that allows practitioners to experience a shift in consciousness from an ego-centred perspective to a universal perspective, discover the True Master within, and learn how to effortlessly tap into innate wisdom and compassion.

Look out for further dates for Big Mind workshops in Liverpool.

Cartoon of Dave Scott by Kevin Garnett

David Scott has been a Zen practitioner with the Kanzeon Zen Buddhist Sangha since 1982 under the guidance of Genpo Merzel Roshi. In 2002 he was given Hoshi (dharma holder) by Genpo Roshi, and in 2004 permission to lead Big Mind workshops for up to ten people. He is the author of many books including: *The Way of Zen, The Elements of Zen, Simply Zen: Interiors and Gardens, Three Bowl Cookbook: Secrets of Enlightened Cooking from a Zen Kitchen*

Chester sesshin 25-29 July 2005

This is now almost fully booked. For details about the last few places, contact Jez

Lovekin, 01974 282686, jez@lovekin.club24.co.uk
The sesshin will be led by Ken Jones and Dave Scott. The theme this year is 'Taking the Backward Step' on the teachings of Dogen, the greatest Zen master.



Liverpool Zen Group News

NUMBER 1 MAY 2005

WELCOME to the first issue of what we hope will be a regular series of newsletters to keep you informed about what's happening in the Liverpool Zen Group. And there's a lot happening! Since we moved out of meeting at Dave's flat less than two years ago, the group has expanded considerably. We now have a regular group of around 20 people sitting on Wednesday evenings and the Tuesday and Thursday morning sittings are supported by around half a dozen regulars. This expansion means that further changes will be necessary.

Extra evening and morning sittings from the autumn.

The size of the Wednesday evening group makes it difficult for Dave to see everyone who wants a private interview and the extra evening will give more time for interviews as well as giving us more time to meet and sit together to strengthen our practice. We also plan to add an extra morning sitting for the early birds.

New Board

The group's expansion means that there is now far more to be done and we need to increase participation by group members. Recently a small group met to divide up the work, as a precursor to setting up a more formal board. The group agreed to divide the work as follows:

Dave Scott is the boss! *Paul Evans* will oversee the induction of new members and remind us of "the form" to be followed in services. *Andy Scott* is Zendo manager and will be responsible for publicity, *Miranda Forward & John Kenworthy* are 'service managers', i.e. they will allocate the jobs to be done during the services. *Alasdair Gordon-Finlayson* has volunteered to help with publicity and to set up a library. *Jenny Best* has volunteered to be membership secretary.

New Premises

In the longer term we are planning to set up our own permanent Zen centre in Liverpool. This will give us a lot more options to support the sangha locally and nationally, and provide the possibility for extra activities such as study groups, small retreats, a library etc. Obviously this is a major undertaking which is why we are thinking of setting up our own...

Charity

This will enable us to get access to funding for the new Liverpool Zen Centre. We are looking into this now but if anyone has experience of the legal, financial, and administrative aspects of setting and running a charity, please let us know.

New Membership Forms

These are enclosed with this newsletter and are one way of identifying groups' skills and experience, and also help us to maintain the membership database so that we can keep in touch with everyone. PLEASE COMPLETE THESE NOW AND RETURN THEM TO JENNY.

Crosby Sesshin

Each Easter we hold a 7 day traditional Zen sesshin at Crosby Hall with Tenshin Fletcher sensei, Abbot of Zen Mountain Center, California. This years sesshin, our twelfth, was very well attended with over 40 people coming for at least part of the week. The week ended with John Kenworthy receiving the precepts at a jukai ceremony (congratulations John). In fact Crosby this year was overbooked and for the first time people were turned away. The message for next year is BOOK EARLY. For information, the Crosby sesshin is always the week before Easter, ending on Easter Saturday.

The dates for Crosby 2006 are 8-15 April so put these in your diary now.

Standing Orders Needed!

The Liverpool Zen Group is entirely self financing and receives no outside subsidy or support. It would be great if we didn't have to charge anything but this simply isn't realistic. With our recent expansion and our plans for the future, it is more important than ever that group members should donate what they can to support the group. We now have to pay for premises (though at a subsidised rate) and money is now needed to buy a new set of bells and drums etc. for the services (the current set is Dave's and is needed for the new Lakes Zendo). This will cost at least £250. Donations at each Wednesday evening of £2 or £3 (or more), and £1 for each morning sitting are welcome. It would be great if this was given by everyone automatically without the need for constant reminders. Or even better, why not support the group with a standing order? This makes a big difference to our financial planning and stability. The suggested minimum is £10 per month. Please ask for a form.

Who is Kanzeon Bodhisattva?

Kanzeon, as you may know, is the Japanese name for Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva - also Kannon (Japanese) or Kuan Yin (Chinese). Kanzeon is the manifestation of the compassion within us. 'Kan ji zai bo' at the beginning of the Heart Sutra means manifesting deep Prajna Paramita (wisdom) within us. Kanzeon is each one of us, and all things, manifesting compassion and wisdom for the sake of the whole world and all beings. This is a wonderful name and foundation for our newly formed sangha. The name Kanzeon will continually remind each of us to be loving and compassionate in all our relationships with family, friends, partners, the earth, rivers, seas, mountains, plants and animals. Our koan as a sangha is 'Who is Kanzeon Bodhisattva?'. How do you allow him/her to manifest as yourself and everyone around you? Kanzeon is neither male nor female, young nor old, large nor small. Kanzeon however manifests as a young child, an old man or woman, a dog, a cat, or the ground we walk on. How does each of us respect, appreciate and take good care of oneself, everyone and everything else?

Genpo Roshi, 1985

Genpo Merzel Roshi is President of the White Plum Asanga, creator of the Big Mind process and author of: *Beyond Sanity & Madness, The Eye Never Sleeps, 24/7 Dharma, The Path of the Human Being.*

Liverpool Zen Group News produced and edited by Andrew Scott.

ORDINARY MIND IS THE WAY

This has been the theme of Dave's recent talks after the Wednesday evening sittings. Here's a selection of quotes on the same theme.

To study the Buddha way is to study the self.

To study the self is to forget the self.

To forget the self is to be enlightened by the myriad things.

To be enlightened by the myriad things is to free one's body and mind and those of others.

No trace of enlightenment remains, and this traceless enlightenment is continued forever.

Eihei Dogen, 13th century

The Infinite Ground is not for one second apart from the ordinary world of phenomena. If you look for it as such, you will find yourself cut off from the ordinary relative world, which is as much your reality as everything else. When you hear me speak of emptiness, don't become attached to it; especially don't become attached to any idea of it. Merely "sitting" still with your mind vacant, you fall into notional emptiness. The boundless emptiness of the sky embraces the "ten thousand things" of every shape and form - the sun, moon, and stars; mountains and rivers; bushes and trees; bad people and good; good teachings and bad; heavens and hells. All these are included in emptiness. The emptiness of your original nature is just like this. It too embraces everything. To this aspect the word "great" applies. All and everything is included in your own original nature.

Hui Neng, Sixth Zen Patriarch

ZEN & FOOD

The Zen emphasis on the commonplace arises from the understanding that since unborn Buddha-mind is the true nature of our ordinary minds, it must follow that it can be found in ordinary life. In fact, in our very own lives. This last point is most important. You don't have to be a monk to follow Zen - enlightenment is just as likely to come in the kitchen as in the meditation chamber.

A pragmatic outcome of having even partial realisation of one's true or Buddha-nature is that for many it leads to a greater and more active acceptance of ordinary life and, paradoxically, a recognition of its extraordinary quality. Everyday activities such as doing the dishes or chopping vegetables, become delightfully invested with a sense of wonder.

Dave Scott

Though our modern lives are full of comfort, we have gradually become distanced from our natural environment. Living in homes with heaters or air conditioners has isolated us from the changes in the four seasons. We tend to forget the gentle breeze in the tree tops and the warm rays of the sun. Shojin cooking emphasises rather than hides these delights. On a cold and snowy day in winter, one sits hunched over, warming the tips of ones fingers on a steaming bowl of soup. And in the summer's heat there are cold noodles on a bed of ice and deep green leaves. Or one can enjoy cold, white tofu as it floats in clear water.

Soei Yoneda, Abbess, Sanko-In Temple from an interview with Dave Scott