

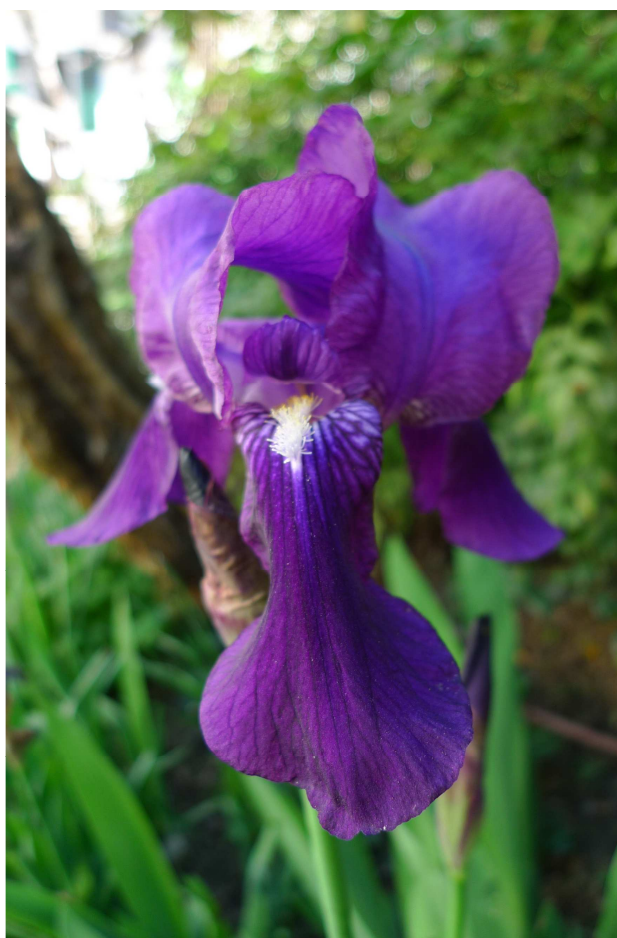


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EKIZEN

SHINNYOJI SANGHA NEWSLETTER

Spring 2017 - n. 30 year VIII



Shinnyoji Sōtō Zen Temple

Italian Branch of Tōkōzan Daijōji Monastery in Kanazawa, Japan

Via Vittorio Emanuele II n.171 - 50134 Firenze

+39 339 8826023 info@zenfirenze.it www.zenfirenze.it

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EDITORIAL

Lecture *"We take care of the Earth Together"*

A talk by Rev. Iten Shinnyo Roshi at the conference on 13 December 2016:

"We take care of the Earth Together" -

Interreligious cooperation in order to protect life on the planet.

" Good evening everyone and welcome to each of you to this meeting, with the hope that after listening to the talk about this topic "We take care of the Earth Together" - a most important topic for all beings - some more attention and some new thinking will flourish in our mind, not because something was not already present, but because something more was awakened at the level of consciousness and awareness.

I am also grateful for having been invited to this meeting, although Zen, which is the last fringe of Buddhism, the more bare and more concise expression, it is said that cannot be represented by words, because it is not something you can explain through writings and speeches, but it simply has to be experienced in everyday practice.

It is a point of view and an approach to life and existence that is contemplated and sought by every sentient being, animated and unanimated, as part of a single large body, the only One.

Each event in the Universe, is regarded as a colour, a part of that Buddha Nature. The Great Mind of the Buddha includes all things, therefore, starting from this principle, both recognising the interconnection and the interdependence of all beings and respecting and being grateful for all that is manifest in the entire Universe are essential.

Our job is to be of service to others by listening compassionately to their sufferance and helping them overcome it.

Our path is to deepen the knowledge of our mind to awaken the Buddha nature, to overcome the barrier of the dual mind that leads us constantly to judgment, discrimination and perceiving the Other different from ourselves, in order to take place in the Absolute, where there is no separation.

Since we recognise all parts as a single One, respect, kindness, cooperation with all beings and the movement to seek harmony manifest spontaneously - a constant correspondence that respects all that is around us, and from which the spirit of gratitude for all those who contribute to our very existence develops.

Today we are present here in an inter-religious meeting. We believe that every road, every path, if walked with a pure heart, is equally valid, that there is no privileged path, better than another, but that simply each of us, for our specific way of being, for the color , the tone of our own nature, resonate in his heart with a language, an affinity, a way of understanding, rather than another.

Anyone can practice Zen, regardless of their religious faith, of their political conviction, of their sexual orientation. Ours is a journey of awakening, for the knowledge of our mind and of our human nature, and of going beyond suffering.

Regarding the specific topic of this meeting, religious communities and spiritual guides, definitely have the task of spreading seeds of peace and preservation for our earth. Especially now, in a time so critical and complex, each person in her field, must necessarily help to cultivate the spirit of brotherhood among all men, regardless of their affiliation.

We are all travellers in the same earth. If each of us in his own actions is trained to cultivate a life that is open to the respect of the Other - which according to our Zen tradition is not different from Us but just a different manifestation of the same One - then we can actively contribute to a perspective of peace and well-being.

It is necessary to highlight and focus the attention on the individual responsibility and commitment, which then have implications in all the collective.

I often hear "how can my single action, proactive and compassionate, be helpful compared to the degradation in which we are living? It certainly has no relevance." Living in the illusion that our small contribution has no relevance becomes simply an excuse for our laziness, our selfishness and for not caring.

Lately again, after years in which it had been eradicated, the meningitis virus reappeared particularly virulent in our Tuscany, but also in other parts of Italy. A dangerous virus, up to being lethal, still contagious. As viruses are harmful and contaminate the community, in the same way the merits of small individual actions are propagated in the world and contribute to the salvation of all beings.

In our school we say: "Just do what you need to do, without worrying about getting recognition or results that follow."

Every human life is worthy of respect, and I'm sure that all Ways lead to the same peak.

We must learn not to be afraid of diversity, and certainly a good way it is to go and learn about it, meet it closely, so as to realise that it is not so scary, that it is not so different from us. Even if it belongs to another religion there is room for everyone in this world.

If my heart is open to understanding and loving compassion, in any discipline it operates, whatever faith it practices, I will work to cultivate the seeds of peace, promoting personal growth on the basis of an act of universal consciousness, rather than reacting and following impulses of revenge or oppression.

We must open our minds to the universal rather than the individual, to activate an altruistic vision, not a short-sighted or sectarian vision. We are all passing on this wonderful earth and we received the great gift of this existence, which we enjoy and that we can put to good use not only for our own good, but for the good of all beings.

I always say: "When you hear someone screaming and being angry, do not only listen to his voice and his words, but place your ear with compassion to the cry of sorrow that lies behind."

We should always be thankful to God, Allah, Yahweh, to the gods, the universe, or to those who we wish, for the precious gift of life that we have received and we should continually cultivate this spirit of gratitude.

After the carnages of the jihadists, as well as after the death of 25 worshipers in the copto-orthodox church on Sunday in Cairo, the Zen temple of Florence has devoted our Meditation not only to the victims and their families, but also to the authors of the massacres and their families.

So to all the victims and the perpetrators of this ongoing wars and their families.

So for the preservation of the planet I bring a concrete example, because I don't want to be a sterile demagogue. There is always a big controversy about waste disposal, because we do not have the certainty that the differentiation (plastic, glass, organic, etc.) that we operate with care in our homes is later honoured at the decisive moment. It is often and rightly questioned.

However, we do not have to lack social commitment. It is by teaching us to respect our planet and by being faithful to the principles of conservation that slowly the conscience of society will grow. In this way it will become natural for us to feel as an active part in the care of the planet.

So, even individually, the sensible use of paper, starting with the use of recycled paper whenever possible, not indulging in printing documents whose printed version we can easily do

without, becomes another tangible example of our effort to protect the trees, which in exchange will transform carbon dioxide into oxygen, protect the land from landslides, as well as giving flowers and fruits and shade and shelter for birds.

It is important not to forget, with humility, not with leadership ambitions, that each of us, for his part, is an active architect in preserving the health of our earth, without thinking to delegate to others our contribution and our participation.

The planet's survival is something that concerns all of us personally, as well as maintaining peace among peoples and discouraging hatred and resentment.

Especially today, I think this is a crucial problem to solve. With technology advancing and with the virtual world that increasingly overlaps with our wonderful labour of human beings, it is easy to lose the sense of contact, the sense of the matter. Lose the sense even with our being productive, active parts in this world, and with the tangible reality of the interdependence of all beings.

When interconnection and interdependence seem to be theoretical postulates of spirituality, we simply should reflect and become aware of how many people and how many things concur in the production of a slice of bread. The bread is made from flour, which originated from the grain of wheat planted and cared for by the farmer, powered by the sun, water, and humus soil. Then there was the harvest work, the operation of the dough, cooking, distribution, until it arrives on our table.

If we think that we are alone and that our life has a value in itself, absolutely intrinsic, independent from any other condition, let's reflect on the life of a slice of bread so we can experience through our rational mind how strong is the bond that connects us to every phenomenon in the universe, and how superficial it is to consider ourselves separated and apart from all the others. From here, we can reflect about our respectful behaviour towards mother earth, and we can activate the spirit of gratitude for all those who work toward our very existence and livelihood.

It is important to pay attention to our movement on this earth, respecting every being in our daily pace, sowing seeds of peace and acceptance, and remembering that we are a mesh of one large network.

We can thus contribute to the achievement of a better world, working together with all beings toward the custody of peace between peoples and the protection of our planet and of the entire universe. Not taking sides in the pros and cons, just working to the best that is in our possibilities, free from egoism, attachment, arrogance and illusions. ”



POEM

Primizie del deserto – 1952 (First Fruits of the Desert)

Written by Mario Luzi, poet born on 20 October 1914 in Castello, in the province of Florence, and died on 28 February 2005 in Florence. In addition to the complex poetic production, Luzi has also carried out intense essay activity. In 1997 he received the Legion of Honour from the President of the French Republic. On his 90th birthday on 14 October 2004 he was appointed Senator for life by the President of the Republic Carlo Azeglio Ciampi.

*È incredibile ch'io ti cerchi in questo
o in altro luogo della terra dove
è molto se possiamo riconoscerci.
Ma è ancora un'età, la mia,
che s'aspetta dagli altri
quello che è in noi oppure non esiste.
L'amore aiuta a vivere, a durare,
l'amore annulla e dà principio. E quando
chi soffre o langue spera, se anche spera,
che un soccorso s'annunci di lontano,
è in lui, un soffio basta a suscitarlo.
Questo ho imparato e dimenticato mille volte,
ora da te mi torna fatto chiaro,
ora prende vivezza e verità.
La mia pena è durare oltre quest'attimo.*

*It's amazing that I search for you in this
or anywhere else in the world where
it is very much if we can recognise each other.
But it is still an age, mine,
which is expected by others
what is in us or does not exist.
Love helps to live, to last,
love nullifies and gives principle. And when
who suffers or langue hopes, if he also hopes,
that a rescue announces far,
it is in him, a breath is enough to arouse it.
This I learned and forgot a thousand times,
now you come back to me clearly,
now takes vivacity and truth.
My punishment is to last beyond this moment.*



ACTIVITIES

Spinea Meeting



A.S.D. Budo Yama-Arashi



Tempio Sôtô Zen Shinnyoji

Conosci lo Zen?

Un incontro per conoscerlo e praticarlo

SABATO 21 e DOMENICA 22 GENNAIO 2017

A.S.D. Budo Yama-Arashi
VIA BENNATI, 13 - SPINEA (VENEZIA)

Anna Maria Shinnyo Marradi: Maestro del Tempio Zen Shinnyoji di Firenze, allieva diretta di Ryûshin Azuma Roshi 72° Abate del Monastero di Daijôji a Kanazawa in Giappone, *Fokussai Fûkyôshi* insegnante missionario incaricato dalla Scuola buddhista Sôtô Zen per la diffusione del Dharma in Europa.

Silvio Fortunato Sensei: Insegnante del Budo Yama Harashi Dojo di Spinea (VE), allievo della Shihan Renata Carlon 8° Dan della Scuola di Aikido Ki No Kenkyukai attualmente diretta dal Doshu Kenjiro Yoshigasaki.

Sabato 21 gennaio 2017
17:00 - 19:00 Incontro con lo Zen

Domenica 22 gennaio 2017
9:30 - 12:00 Incontro con lo Zen

Prenotazione necessaria: 393.0515483 (Fortunato Sensei)
Per posti sul tatami portare cuscino proprio o zafu.

Dalla collaborazione fra Silvio Fortunato Sensei e Shinnyo Marradi Roshi è nata l'idea e la volontà di promuovere un'occasione per incontrare la Pratica Zen.

L'incontro vuole essere un primo approccio alla realtà dello Zen e dello Zazen (meditazione seduta), aperto a tutti coloro che desiderino entrare in contatto, o approfondirne l'esperienza.

Le tematiche affrontate sono volte a chiarire cosa è e cosa *non* è lo Zen e a descrivere **Zen come vita quotidiana**, in un'unità che trova la sua manifestazione nel linguaggio e nell'azione di tutti i giorni.

Sarà illustrata la **storia della Trasmissione dello Zen** attraverso il tempo, *al di là delle parole e delle Scritture*, in una dinamica interiore che si rivolge alla più autentica e profonda natura dell'essere umano.



On 21 January, Shinnyoji once again took to the road this time for Veneto to the Budo Yama-Arashi Dôjô in Spinea for a Zen seminar with Silvio Fortunato Sensei and Daniele Sensei, and their students and guests.

On Saturday evening the Master held a lecture to introduce Zen to the participants and then we practiced Zazen all together.

Generously hosted by Fortunato Sensei in his B&B, we spent the night in Spinea. The next morning, the Master talked about our Zen Tradition, this time with some newly arrived people. At the end of her speech, we practiced Zazen together, followed by a small ceremony completed with the Hannya Shingyo recital.

With the hope of having someone in Spinea interested in the Zen Practice, we got in the car to return to Florence.



Master talks to the guests



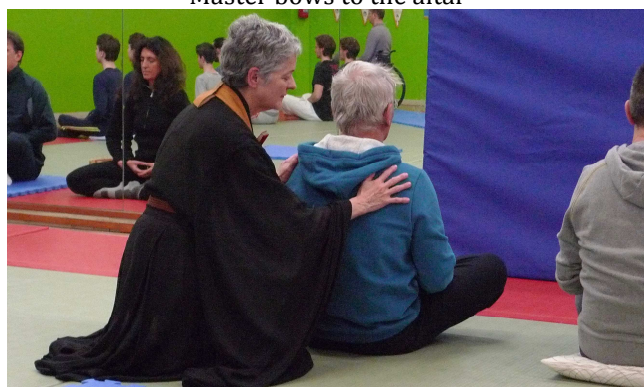
Master and Daishin talk about the meeting



Master bows to the altar



Walk of Dharma



Master helps in the posture



Everyone in Kin-Hin

"What this meeting gave me: the awareness of how heavy the burden of our thoughts is. How hard it is to get rid of the mind obstacles that wander superficially without really resting on anything, generating energy consumption that takes oxygen from understanding. Understanding myself, the people living next to me, the world around me. Accepting my limits and those of others. Having stopped for a while, during meditation, from running and from pre-organized schedules, having allowed for a moment that silence to enter the mind, was an unusual, fascinating experience - though in my total ignorance of what profound meditation means. And the thing that surprised me the most was that this break I took from myself, instead of taking something out of my mind by creating a white page out of it, made me enter into that page. As if in that moment, facing so much white, I could create a new myself. I like it and it scares me at the same time. Awareness arouses a vertigo that has to be accepted.

Lucia "



All of the participants on Saturday



Carlo puts away the instruments



All of the participants on Sunday

“Dearest Master,

with this message I would like to thank you for the two beautiful days we spent together at the dōjō of Sensei Silvio.

It was a rich experience full of novelties and surprises, which left in my heart unexpected serenity and at the same time a slight excitement.

Your sweet words have awakened in me new thoughts and hopes for a better world.

I seem to perceive many similarities with Zen and the practice of ki-aikido - the path that I am following - and having the opportunity to look at my practice through a different perspective was a gift that I have deeply appreciated.

*With immense esteem,
Piergiorgio Ciavatta ”*

*“Dear Sensei,
a heartfelt thank you for the Saturday and Sunday Meeting. My and our thanks to you
not only for the impeccable organisation but also for the warmth of your welcome.
Please also give my appreciation to Daniele Sensei and his wife Morgana Sensei. We had
a good trip back and at 4.30 pm we were back in Florence at Shinnyoji. The hope is that
the small seeds planted together will sprout in the hearts of the participants for their
good and for the good of all beings.
See you soon.
With esteem and affection,
Shinnyo
Gasshō ”*

*Conosci lo Zen?
Un incontro per conoscerlo e praticarlo*



SABATO 21 e DOMENICA 22 GENNAIO 2017

A.S.D. Budo Yama-Arashii
VIA BENNATI, 13 - SPINEA (VENEZIA)

*“Thank you Maestro:
the opportunity to hear special people is unfortunately very rare and on Saturday and
Sunday many people had this opportunity. I know that the commitment I asked you to
come to visit us was not so easy and I feel bad because I would have liked to offer you
much more. Listening to you has been a great gift, many things have remained within
myself and I will guard them with gratitude. In the end, indeed, everything went well and
I felt relieved.*

*I hope that young and not so young students had been able to take a glimpse into the
vastness of Zen. Who knows if tomorrow Zen will be able to help them with their lives.*

I send you a warm greeting and a goodbye until next time.

With warmest regards,

Silvio Fortunato ”



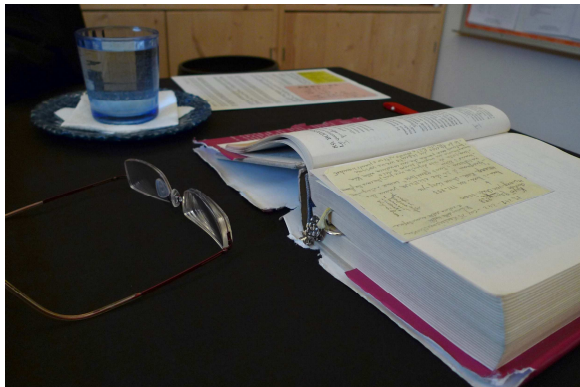
January Sesshin



At the start of the Sesshin



Master gives a Teishō



Master's notes



At the end of the Sesshin



Celebration of the Nehan-e Anniversary

Like every year at Shinnyoji we celebrated on 13 February Nehan-e, the anniversary of the entrance into Nirvana by Shakyamuni Buddha.



From Rome to Florence

On a Friday in January Taigō Spongia Sensei with some of his students came from Rome to share Practice with us, thus linking Rome and Florence.



Taigō Spongia sensei



Everyone in Kin-Hin



At the end of Zazen



February Sesshin



At the start of the Sesshin



Master enters the Zendo with the incense



At the end of the Sesshin

“To say Enlightenment: language and absolute in the chapter *Dōtōku* of Dōgen”



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Via Vittorio Emanuele II n.171 - 50134 Firenze
info@zenfirenze.it - www.zenfirenze.it - tel. 339.8826023

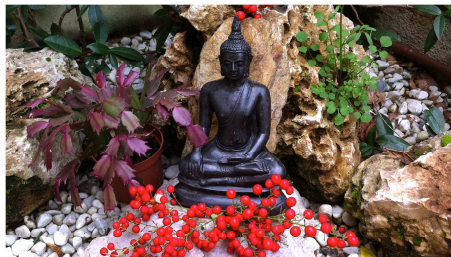
*“Dire l’Illuminazione: lingua e assoluto
nel capitolo ‘Dōtōku’ di Dōgen”*

Sabato 18 febbraio 2017 ore 16:00 - Tempio Zen Shinnyoji
Conferenza aperta al pubblico tenuta dal Prof. Aldo Tollini

Aldo Tollini Professore Associato di Lingua Giapponese Classica Università
Ca' Foscari di Venezia - Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia Orientale.

Dōtōku - Parlare della Via

*Nel capitolo dello Shōbōgenzō Dōgen Zenji tratta della capacità di
“parlare della Via” attraverso l’uso delle parole, del silenzio, della
Pratica, dello Zazen. Il Maestro Dōgen svolge il suo insegnamento
commentando le parole espresse dal Maestro Jōshū e dal Maestro Seppō.*



Prenotazione necessaria
via mail info@zenfirenze.it o telefono 339.8826023
Ingresso a offerta libera

On Saturday the 18th was held the annual conference of Prof. Aldo Tollini in front of a large audience who filled the Room of Studies of the Temple. Expression of a consolidated collaboration, the lecture was offered at the end of the usual monthly Sesshin in which the same prof. Tollini have participated.

This year’s topic, “To say the Enlightenment: language and absolute in the chapter *Dōtōku* of Dōgen” was introduced by the Abbot of the Temple, Master Shinnyo Roshi, who stressed the importance, but also the extreme difficulty, to express the inexpressible, to speak about the Way (what literally means *Dōtōku*). Such topic in a reality like the Western one, in which is researched almost exclusively the intellectual understanding released from Practice, it plays a central position for the practitioner who, being distant in time and space from the words of the Patriarch, needs of this tools for his journey. Prof. Tollini then explained how Master Dōgen makes use in his works of the

language, of silences and metaphors to communicate to his disciples the Way: an Enlightened does not communicate but expresses the Enlightenment, this is the core point expressed by Tollini in conclusion of his important speech.

At the end of the conference many questions were asked to the Professor, sign of the alive interest that the topic aroused in the practitioners and also in who is not a practitioner, but has in any case an interest in the Way, a further proof of the high flow rate of the topic.



During the lecture



UBI Assembly

Our Master Shinnyo Roshi, accompanied by Chiara Keishin, took part on Saturday 25 February 2017 in the Meeting of the Centers associated with the Buddhist Italian Union, at the new UBI headquarters in Rome, vicolo dei Serpenti 4/A.

Among the other points on the agenda: the approval of the previous meeting's minutes, the President's announcements, the budget for the year 2017 and the updating of the work of Strategic Commission OPM. During the meeting, the document "State of work progress" prepared by the Strategic Committee was presented.

The Assembly closed with a discussion and definition on the requirements of the Ministers of Worship and the Assistants.

The Reunion opened with a prayer from monks of the Theravada tradition from Santacittarama monastery, in the province of Rieti, as a blessing for the inauguration of the new UBI Roman office.



From Florence to Rome: A Zen encounter at Tora Kan Dōjō

" From the encounter with Taigō sensei and his students at Tora Kan Dōjō there always flourishes an intimacy and a silence coming from the same Root and from a same timeless Practice which unites us on the Buddha Way. Great Respect, great Heart, great Faith.

Gasshō

Rev. Shinnyo Roshi "

Tora Kan Dōjō
Sezione di Studio e Pratica Zen

Zen

Incontro con il Maestro
Iten Shinnyo
Abate del Tempio Shinnyoji di Firenze
Sabato 25 Febbraio 2017

ore 18:00 Zazen, Cerimonia
e incontro col Maestro Shinnyo
Si prega di arrivare non più tardi delle ore 17:45.
Introduzione principianti Ore 17:30
L'incontro avrà termine alle ore 20:00

Comunicare la propria partecipazione
telefonando allo 06-61550149
oppure via e-mail: segreteria@torakanzendojo.org
entro le ore 21:00 del 22 Febbraio.

Contributo di partecipazione 10 Euro
Le quote raccolte verranno interamente devolute al Tempio Shinnyoji

" Rev. Shinnyo Roshi,

I am certain that consolidating and updating the bond between Shinnyoji and Tora Kan Dojo will only bring precious fruits and will be the occasion for maturity and greater awareness of their practice for the students of Tora Kan Dojo.

I intimately feel that we are part of a single family with the same horizon.

As I have repeatedly expressed, I have a deep respect and admiration for you, for your Practice and Mission. I also hope that the relationship with Tora Kan Dojo will be fruitful and supportive for you and Shinnyoji.

Taigō "

“ Every time I see Shinnyo Roshi it is a great emotion... can a person express at the same time so much sweetness and firmness, determination, in a gaze, smile, in the way she stands? Each time the meeting is a pleasant rediscovery of this spirit. Thank you very much for this precious opportunity of practice. I hope for many more to come.

*Gasshō
Alessandro ”*

“ Master, I was unable to thank you with words yesterday... I do so little with words, practically since forever.

An encounter, a life. It is simply like this...

it is wonderful to directly live your bond, it touches me deeply, it warms my heart... It connects us all and concerns us closely, secretly...

yesterday, I had to hold back the tears for joy and devotion during the meeting... the power of a smile and two sincere eyes have no price...

A simple Thanks from me is not enough...

I often wonder if I really deserve to live all this. Do I really deserve so much joy? I answer myself exactly like this: I am a very lucky person... and I would like to say it to anyone who faces me... it's stronger than me.

I have 'found' the key to a precious treasure... the key to the heart of the world.

Thanks to you, to Master Shinnyo, to the Sangha. Thank you so much ... once again.

Monica ”



Week of Zen Practice

This March was held in Shinnyoji the first Spring Week of Zen Practice. A week of deepening in our Practice, practicing together in harmony.

Shinnyoji was open 24 hours a day, except for a few hours of sleep, with the purpose of welcoming anyone who entered the Temple to spend valuable time of their life.

During the week we received old practitioners, disappeared practitioners, present practitioners, practitioners in Florence, practitioners elsewhere, and as always newcomers.

The week started in calm and quiet and with an important and valuable Teishō. With an intense and rigorous programme ahead of us there was nothing else to do than to dive deep into Practice.

The vigorous Practice begins. Wake up at 06:30 for Zazen at 07:00. A noon Zazen followed by Ōryōki at lunchtime. A few hours of Samu and then we refuel with a community dinner open to everyone. Evening Zazen with newcomers and old practitioners. A tea. Rest at 22:30. The programme repeats in the following days.

Gasshō

Carlo.



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info@zenfirenze.it - www.zenfirenze.it - tel. 339.8826023

5-11 Marzo 2017 Settimana di Pratica Zen

Il Ritiro prevede il soggiorno per una settimana nella Foresteria del Tempio ed è APERTO A TUTTI, con il prerequisito di un colloquio con il Maestro, da prenotarsi telefonicamente o via mail. Nei medesimi giorni il Tempio rimane aperto anche per visite e informazioni.

	ATTIVITA' PARTECIPANTI AL RITIRO	ATTIVITA' APERTA A TUTTI
PRATICA INTRODUTTIVA Domenica	domenica dalle 9:00 alle 22:00 lunedì dalle 6:30 alle 22:30 - lezioni di Forma - - istruzioni sulle modalità di Pratica - - pasti informali -	domenica dalle 16:00 alle 18:00 - Teishō (insegnamento di Dharma) del Maestro Iken Shinnyo - - Zazen -
Lunedì	PRATICA COMUNITARIA (lunedì) dalle 18:30 alle 22:00 - cena informale - - Zazen della sera -	(dal lunedì al venerdì) ZAZEN mattina - ore 07:00 mezzogiorno - ore 12:00 sera - ore 20:00
PRATICA IN SILENZIO Martedì	dalle 06:30 alle 22:30 - Zazen - - Ōryōki (pasto formale) - - Samu (lavoro) - - Studio -	PRATICA COMUNITARIA dalle 18:30 alle 22:00 - cena informale - - Zazen della sera -
Mercoledì	PRATICA COMUNITARIA dalle 18:30 alle 22:00 - cena informale - - Zazen della sera -	E' necessaria la prenotazione della cena almeno 24h prima
Giovedì		ZAZEN mattina - ore 07:00 mezzogiorno - ore 12:00 sera - ore 20:00
Venerdì		ZAZEN mattina - ore 07:00 mezzogiorno - ore 12:00 sera - ore 20:00
PRATICA CONCLUSIVA Sabato	dalle 06:30 alle 14:00 - Zazen - - pasti informali - - riordino generale -	ZAZEN mattina - ore 07:00 mezzogiorno - ore 12:00 sera - ore 20:00

Offerta minima 120 € per l'intero Ritiro oppure 20 € al giorno con l'obbligo di partecipazione ai due giorni di Pratica Introduttiva

Per maggiori info consultare il nostro sito: <http://www.zenfirenze.it/zen-ritiri-di-pratica.asp>



Listening to the Teishō given by the Master and taking notes



At the start of the Week of Practice



Tenzo sounds the umpa



Ōryōki Sutra



Ōryōki



Taking measurements for monks robes



Two future monks,
Shinkai and Keishin



One last push of work towards the end of the Week



A concerto given by Master and by Carlo

Practitioners' Testimonies

Keishin

"Yesterday the spring-retreat-week ended. When last September we decided to schedule another retreat-week, it was not sure we would have made it. Today we can say that our effort worked! It has been a busy week, under many points of view and today I realise it even more. Today I am not in the Temple, I'm at home, I cannot say that I miss something, but I can say that something has remained with me. The walls that surround me are other walls, but I still feel within myself the atmosphere of the Temple. It has been hard to get up at 6.30 each morning with the loud-ringing of Daishin or Carlo. I have washed more dishes and pots during this week than in a year of life. If they gave us one euro for every time we took the stairs we would be rich. Much fatigue! But the tired faces kept on smiling. The atmosphere was very peaceful and pleasant, and there have been moments that we laughed so hard the tears were pouring. Many have entered the door of the Temple and several have returned several times during the week. The Tenzo initially had a meal-attendance program, but most of the time we had sudden and pleasing variations with additional guests. Our Tenzo, with his English humour and Italian heart, never got perturbed. What about the opportunity to be near our Master for a whole week? Her example, her strength, her words, her affection for the Sangha were with all of us, throughout the entire week. Thanks to her determination we have created something that could have just remained an idea. Thank you Master for everything you do and give to us all. Thank you!

Gasshō "

Shinkai

*"The week of practice was very important to me.
Unfortunately I could only attend one part of it.
In this period I live everything very intensely and every moment counts.
The fact that I will shortly be receiving the vows of a Monk, certainly sharpens my every moment.
Not a day goes by that I do not think about 20 May.
Other practitioners have greatly helped to give value to my practice and I thank them from the bottom of my heart.
I cannot forget my Master who honours me by accepting me as one of her students. It is a pleasure practicing with you. Your still, strong, careful presence is always a strong teaching. With you, I made a journey of personal, intense, spiritual and decisive growth. I'll never stop thanking you for your patience and kindness. You are always a stimulus for me to improve myself for the good of all beings.
Every moment lived in Shinnyoji is a constant reminder of mindfulness, to realise our Buddha Nature. Here all these concepts are not words, but they are something you live.*

Gasshō

Shinkai "

Richard

“ My time at the Temple was one of the few times I felt a sense of belonging without looking for it and the sense of connection and belonging I felt took on a life of its own. ”

Carlo

“ Practicing seriously does not mean not to laugh. We laughed to tears all in good faith and in all seriousness. Can you laugh seriously? Of course you can! What a week. Really intense. Intense in the sense of full. Full of Practice. From waking up to going to bed. The program said "rest at 10.30 pm." It never happened. I worked a lot. But not only by himself; with the Master, with fukuten-tenzo. We all worked a lot together. What a joy. And with a few hours of rest, sleep, we did not feel tired at all and never wished to stop. We have brought back to life the ōryōki who unfortunately had been kept away for a while from Shinnyoji. How beautiful; a dance at the table with beautiful lyrics that remind us that we are not alone in this world. On the contrary, they remind us that we are all dependent on each other. I have been at the temple from the beginning to the end. Powerful experience. I am grateful I was able to participate for the entire week. Hard work but not without pleasure. I was seriously practicing this week but with a smooth ease. Sometimes we take life too seriously and forget to live. But as I said, we seriously laughed.

Gasshō ”

Daishin

“ During the recent retreat-week and intense practice that took place at the Temple from March 5 to March 11 including today, I could participate only partially due to my work commitments.

I was present in full for two days during the opening and the ending of the Sesshin, and also each early morning - but one - for Zazen and Sutra practice.

I lived moments of serenity and intensity within the practice. A particularly bright and joyful practice. Arriving at the Temple shortly after sunrise and integrating in the respectful silence and subsequent clarity and concreteness of the actions to be smoothly performed, has always been a return home.

I have experienced gratitude in recognising gestures and steps from the morning rituals as something of its own and valuable. Entering and leaving that atmosphere without space and meditation time, always feeling in harmony and in connection with the heart and actions of the Temple, with the Master and with the Sangha, has been a simple and precious gift.

The few moments of fragmentation due to myself and to my tasks as ordained, occurred only in relation to my coming and going between the Temple and the outside world of the town, with its responsibility towards work and external relationships.

It has been a beautiful, profound, useful and practical experience, no doubt to be repeated and possibly to be organised in the future with a more continuous and orderly participation.

*Gasshō
Daishin ”*

Elena

"Only recently did Zen become part of my life. At the" right "moment, a moment when I was ready and looking for a severe, practical, rigorous discipline, silence, direct confrontation with myself and with a Master who represents that practice.

I did not participated in the week continuously, but, unexpectedly, it turned out to be a very intense experience. A journey with a definite beginning, an evolution and a very special ending - analogically representative.

The protagonist is a book.

I start from here, from a book of poems by Carducci that the Master was holding during Teishō on Sunday March 5 - very dear book to her.

But to my eyes - a restorer of books – I could not fail to be struck by the precarious state of conservation of the same, I cannot help it, each has its own professional bias.

For the moment the story of the book ends here, or rather opens a succession of events and states of mind definitely intense.

I felt very strong on Sunday when I arrived at the Temple but a meeting with the Master arrived as a sudden gust that moved me and forced me to confront myself with a part of me very precise and that I clearly do not meet willingly.

I did not let myself be put off, I held myself together and moved on, and the Master remained there, present and correct. The next day she called me and she gave me the poetry book that belonged to her parents, asking me to restore it. Here that book returned as an opportunity, bringing with it a great, practical and humane lesson.

That book arrived in a way on the first day and it transformed itself on the last day in a vehicle of awareness, humility lesson and practice. Wonderful!

A heartfelt thanks to the Master and to all the Sangha. "



Yūshin

"I'm glad I could take part in some of the retreat days. Indeed the Practice, with a longer and more relaxed timing, allowed me to integrate more closely with the Sangha life, tightening the bonds of collaboration and knowledge among practitioners. This event was for me an "appropriate way" that allowed me to feel closer to the Master, the Temple and Sangha at a time where I am forced to be physically distant.

*Gasshō
Yūshin "*

Alessandro

"Good evening, I obviously feel I wish to offer a little feedback on what has been my brief experience of these days of practice.

As our Master also tells us: these occasions are important, because going into those rhythms, in the community spirit and concentration, you can really gain an insight into the Practice and recognise its beauty and depth. Thank you so much for your hospitality and also for the many lessons that I have been given by everyone though it was for a

short time. Particularly and definitely to Shinnyo Sensei and to the Tenzō, with whom I had the opportunity to grasp a bit more closely the spirit and the responsibilities that come with such an important role.
Thanks again and see you soon,

Gasshō ”

Michele

*“Retreat Practice Week. I visit the Temple,
in the eyes of the Master, Keishin and Carlo
the effort and joy of Practice.”*



At the end of the Week of Practice



KUSEN

“ This Week of Practice is coming to an end. It was a great experience for our Temple. It was a challenge. A challenge supported by our Great Faith, DaiShin. Whenever we open our hearts and make a leap, the countless merits of the Buddha bloom around us. A week in which we deepened, and we are deepening, the study of Ōryōki. There is a long story about Ōryōki at Shinnyoji. My Master when he gave me the job of growing disciples, he told me, “Transmit Ōryōki in Italy.” But the old practitioners know how much resistance Ōryōki found in our Sangha: “Why do we have to eat with hashi? We are Europeans we must eat with the fork. The Japanese eat rice, like we have to eat pasta! What is all this complicated ceremony that stresses us?” Practitioners who have abandoned Practice, to avoid Ōryōki. People who do not do Sesshin just to not practice Ōryōki. During this retreat, it was a blessing to deepen the study, translating and comparing texts from Japanese to English, with the help of native mother tongue Carlo, and discovering the beauty of the meal sutras. Practicing Ōryōki is like entering the heart of Practice, deeply, intimately. It is to abandon your ego, not to divide. Reciting Shin jin mei: “The Way is not difficult to reach for those who do not discriminate.” When you open your heart and mind, Shin kokoro, and open to the Compassion of the Buddha where everything is One and everything is equally important and has its reason to be, then as the Sandōkai says: “The Way Has No Northern or Southern Patriarchs”, there is no Japanese or Italian rite. There is simply Ichigyo-Zanmai, focus on one Practice, One with the action we are doing, without judgment, without separation. Then everything rises, everything comes to us and we can understand and respond to the call of Kannō Dōkō, the interaction between Buddhas and men, the call and the answer that are met right away, and also the communication between Master and disciple. Then we know what we have to do. We can move lightly in the energy of the moment, flow in the impermanence of becoming, without doubt, without hesitation, without now yes, now, no, maybe, who knows. As we open the Ōryōki bowls so in our Practice we must open our heart, mushin. Few things to do, with humility, constantly. Only then can the barriers drop and new furrows form in our minds in the Way of Compassion and Buddha Wisdom. ”

Rev. Iten Shinnyo Roshi
10 March 2017



WORDS AND WONDERS

A Giant Zen Garden



Although Tenshin was not with us in Florence during the retreat, she was always with us in spirit.

During the week of Practice she sent us a picture of an exhibition held at the Grand Central Station, New York, a Zen garden in the middle of the station.

How wonderful!



Tenshin's Testimony

" The Way of the Buddha is long and slow, sometimes I walk on it with grace and awareness, some other times I jam and I cannot move, but I am always on the Way. In a few months I will be a monk, it is a gift that will be protected and nurtured with love and respect.

I live in a city full of distractions and I am involved in many jobs and activities, it takes so much concentration and dedication to remain on the Way in the midst of the madness of movement, people and political events.

I prepared myself for years to receive the monk's vows, I have reached the point of maturity of my Practice and personal status to receive this responsibility.

I thank Master who always supports me and the Sangha who works in Shinnyoji. See you in May!

*Gasshō
Tenshin "*



BiciZen

BiciZen is website of information, updates, practical contents easy accessible about the world of biking. It is aimed at those who love the two wheels, to those who want to start cycling, to those who already do or would like to do it with a 'Zen' approach, that is in a way more meditative, more relaxed, more joyful.

Comment of Pierluigi, a member who 'lives by bike'

"To go *BiciZen* means you can choose to abandon all unnecessary thoughts and to find again ourselves, our heart beating, [...]"

"but where, in a bin!?"

"To be *BiciZen* means to go by bike just for the sake to enjoy fully the experience and the pleasure of it, without haste, without any particular goal to achieve or a particular result to be obtained... a bit as it was when we were children."

"As a child I liked to run, but do you have the children in your mind, what he is talking about?"

"*BiciZen* is proposed as a house, the more welcoming as possible, where you can feel at easy."

"Go to tell this to those of 'struggle for housing' or with an executive eviction..."



MEETINGS OF PRACTICE

Zazen, Kin-Hin, Zazen, Sutra - Monday from 20.00 until 22.00, Friday from 20.00 until 21.30

Zazen, Sutra - Tuesday from 07.00 until 07.50

Zazen - Thursday from 17:30 until 18:10

Sesshin o Zazenkai – Once at month

Zen Week of Practice – March and September

During every retreat Master Shinnyo offer a Teishō

Opening of Library – the second Saturday of the month from 10.00 until 14.00

Pictures: Fabio Daishin Portera, Chiara Keishin Cetica, Lisa Tenshin Saunders, Carlo Ippolito

Translators: Taigō Spongia, Maura Garau, Alessandro della Ventura, Carlo Ippolito

Editor: Carlo Ippolito