



## News letter 2018 nr. 3

### Zen Heart Sangha Nederland

17 July 2018

#### **Me Myself and I (a.k.a. Michel Sensei)**

In the beginning of June Helen and I were in the South of France for a week's vacation. While there, I was having a severe pain in my back (a torn muscle) and I was reading "Pure and Simple" by Upasika Kee Nanayon (1901-1978). Also, the weather in France was not what we are used to there. It was overcast and rather cold from time to time. And the muscles in my back were tight and painful with a sharp spot between the shoulder blades. My mood was a bit grumpy. Grumpy about the weather, and actually down right pissed off with the back ache. But thankfully, there was Kee Nanayon to make short work with the whining. Kee Nanayon was an Upasika from Thailand, a female lay follower of the path. Although formally she was not a nun nor a teacher, (there hasn't been womens ordination for centuries in Thailand) even now, forty years after her death, she is deeply revered as a teacher in and indeed outside of Thailand.

Her teachings are hyper-direct, practical, no-nonsense, simple without simplifications. She pulls no punches. She pointed out to me clearly, that eyes, ears, nose, mouth and skin, the physical sense organs, are just gates, doorways through which experiences enter into awareness. And the same is true for feelings and thoughts. These too I can perceive as experiences arising in awareness through the gate of the mind's eye. If they are stopped at the gate, they can be recognised and accepted without being split up into "unpleasant", "pleasant" or "indifferent". And therefor also without any need for rejection, clinging or ignoring. When they are just stopped and not clung to, they soon dissipate and are replaced by new experiences. They turn out to be transient, impermanent and without and separate substance, without Self.

It reminded me of a saying by Master Mazu. When the previous thought, the present thought and the next thought are no longer connected, then between these thoughts the space behind them becomes visible. The heaps of experiences, the skanda's, then no longer have a solid core, because the I-maker is not indulged any more in taking all the space and claiming everything.

Meanwhile, the pain and the weather weren't getting any better. Pain is pain. The body, consisting of blood, bones, muscles and (a little too much) fat, feels the warmth of the sun when it shines and the wetness of the rain, when it falls. It is what it is. Warm is warm and cold is cold.

But when the MeSelf inserts itself and starts claiming all experiences as MY experiences, then the cold becomes MY cold and the pain MY pain. And MeSelf is the one that stands solidly alone and has an opinion about everything. This I want. That I don't want.

It gives a lot of power and solidity to ME and to MY experiences. It creates a big distance between ME and MY life. Then I can curse my life, suffer from it, be afraid of it.

While the sun was setting I looked at the sea from the terrace and thought: Does the sea call itself The Meditaranean? Does a tree call itself Cypress or Oak? They are very precisely and uniquely themselves and

at the same time do not separate themselves from the oneness. When there is no I-making the battle stops.

There is a wonderful koan about Master Tokusan. Tokusan is old and dying, and a monk asks him: "Master, you are very ill. Is there also one who is never ill?" Tokusan replies: "Yes, there is." The monk asks: "What about the one who is never ill?" Tokusan replies: "Oh! Auw!"

## **Announcements**

### **Sesshin, 17 – 24 August, 2018**

As announced, there will be a week-long sesshin in Holten, during which there will be two Jukai ceremonies: **Thursday 23 August, 5.00pm (Franca Nijman) and Friday 24 August, 12.30pm (Ineke Zuidema)**. If you want to participate in this sesshin, please sign up via email to [info@zenheart.nl](mailto:info@zenheart.nl). Of course, you are welcome to come and join in the Jukai ceremony. Please register for these ceremonies too in advance.

### **Absence of Michel Sensei, September sesshin**

Starting from the end of September, Michel Sensei will be traveling with family and friends through Northern India for a month. Therefore, the sesshin that was planned for 28-30 September is cancelled. During this period of absence, the zendo will be opened on a number of days (yet to be determined).

### **Scroll for the Hazy Moon sangha (Scott Williams)**

Last April a scroll (pictured above) was given to the Scott Williams from the Hazy Moon sangha on behalf of our sangha. Scott is a student of Genno Roshi. The scroll was found by Jeroen Bosch on the occasion of Scott being appointed Hoshi (teacher in training), together with Joao Rodrigues by Genno Roshi.

### **Events in 2019**

The new agenda with events in 2019 has been published at the Zenheart website. There will be 10 sesshins, two of which in Holten (May and August). A new element in 2019 is the inclusion of two Zazenkai Sundays in June (theme: the precepts) and November (theme: Koan practice).

### **Agenda**

16 July 2018 – Summer closure

17-24 August 2018 – Week-long sesshin, Holten

27 August 2018 – Start of normal program

26 October – 2 November – Week-long sesshin, Holten

### **Colophon**

This newsletter from the Zen Heart Sangha will be published three to four times a year.

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