



JIKŌJI
慈光寺

Report of Activities 2012

Table of Contents

1	Real Estate	2
2	Library and Publications	2
3	Internal Contacts	2
4	Participation of jikōji Members in the Activities of other Sangha's	3
5	Other External Contacts	4

1 Real Estate

Despite the fact that we are not able to complete the entire **renovation file** for our building within the two years' time frame, the Department of the Environment Historic Buildings Bureau (*Monumentenzorg*) grants us part of the subsidy. We will use this grant for the next renovation stages... Finally, we augment the insurance value of our building, so that it complies with the real market value (according to the estimates by real estate agents): from 2013 on our insurance premium and the real estate taxes (due to government agencies) will almost double the amount we used to pay yearly. This way, on the occasion of an incident, we will at least be able to rebuild more of our beautiful temple building...

In July, because of the sustained rains, a severe **water leak** occurs in the ceiling of the third floor. During the next couple of months, we repair several square meters of the roof, and replace parts of the ceilings. Only painting is left for 2013 – all this by energy *in house*...

2 Library and Publications

The new **classification** system for the library has already been discussed in 2009, but only at the end of 2012, we are able to launch a task group to reorganize the complete library – beginning in 2013. Therefore we are planning to acquire the necessary equipment (laptop, printer, scanner, internet connection) in the near future.

We elaborate several **dharma talks**, according to the monthly scheme (see paragraph 3), several of them accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation and/or written notes. Our intention is to make this information available for the general public via our website and partly in printed form too. Our **website** is constantly enhanced with new documents: this year we add more than 20 pdf-files concerning our chantings, not only for the weekly services, but also for special services like sambujō, ryōgemon, White Ashes, ..., plus the complete Shinran Denne (Go-eden and Godensho) – some in other languages as well. We also publish on our website a complete overview of the courses for the year 2012, with a new information leaflet just a couple of weeks before the start of each course.

As a member of the Education Commission of the BUB (Buddhist Union of Belgium) we collaborate in the organization of a (*post-*)*Bachelor Buddhist Philosophy and Ethics*: training sessions for **future teachers Buddhism** in the regular schools (the training sessions started in January 2012). Our website contains the complete information leaflet.

Our quarterly magazine **Ekō** reaches its 35th volume: while the paper version is distributed to 160 subscribers, the electronic version is sent to 47 subscribers. Several numbers of the magazine contain beautiful color pictures at the inner pages.

Our monthly **Newsletter** reporting about the activities of our sangha and its friends, reaches its seventh volume and is sent to 60 readers.

3 Internal Contacts

ESC16 – 16th European Shin Conference

The *16th European Shin Conference* is a very important event in the year 2012, containing the following activities:

- 03/29/2012: participation in meeting in Anjin-Do, concerning ESC16;
- 08/18/2012: visit from Toshikazu Arai (Japan), Frank Kobs (Germany);
- 08/28-09/07/2012: visit from Chewang Palden Bhutia (Nepal), joining us for ESC16;
- 08/30/2012: participation in discussion with/about *European sangha issues* in Anjin-Do, Mönchengladbach (Germany);
- 08/31-09/02/2012: participation in ESC16: European Shin Conference: *The Importance of Sangha* (Ekō-Haus, Düsseldorf);
- 09/04/2012: visit from Ken Tanaka (USA) and his wife, and from Hisako Tokunari (Japan); guest teacher Chewang Palden Bhutia is giving a dharma talk: *The Importance of Sangha* (from Sikkim [India] via Japan into Nepal).

It's always so enriching, meeting friends from so many countries and cultures, and speaking so many languages! We can only keep on learning...

Services

- each Tuesday we have a weekly service with a dharma talk: 52 services, with roughly between 7 and 15 participants each Tuesday;
- 10 Buddhist holidays (on Sunday) with a special service and dharma talk: 7 *normal holidays*: Nehan-E (02/12), Ō-Higan (03/18), Temple day (05/06), Gotan-E (05/20), Ō-Higan (09/23), Jōdo-E (12/09) and Joya-E (12/30). Some members who can only join the service now and then, we stimulate to come on the three so called **red holidays**: Hanamatsuri (04/08), Ō-Bon (08/12) en Hōonkō (11/18);
- 03/11/2012: we join the special commemoration service for the victims of the disasters in East Japan, at the Ekō-Haus, Düsseldorf;
- 12/09/2012: visit in group to a sangha member who has been ill for a long time.

Extra opening hours

- Almost each Saturday: permanence in the temple from 13 to 18 h.

Association (Centre for Shin-Buddhism)

- 02/12/2012: Annual General Meeting (8 members participate, 18 proxies).

How about our future path?

We are living in a fascinating era. The Buddha Dharma is too valuable to be kept for ourselves alone. That's why, from January 1st 2012 on, we slightly adapted our weekly services and accentuate still more the Buddha dharma: *"Each Tuesday evening everybody is welcome at 20:00 h for the dharma talk. If you want to join the ceremony too, please come at 19:30 h."* On top of that, we also pinpoint the dharma talks to one of five themes (T1..T5), and announce several topics already in advance. This way, anyone can precisely pick out the subjects that fall into his or her interest. Each month 4 or 5 themes are chosen als subject for the dharma talk at 20:00 h. *For 2013 the sequence changes into:*

- T1 - general theme from the Buddha dharma
- T2 - re-translating the teachings into the reality of today: here and now
- T3 - theme from Jōdo-Shinshū (basic texts, chantings, ceremony, ...)
- T4 - questions and answers (*please send in the questions in time*)
- T5 - evaluation: How can we advance further on our path?

4 Participation of jikōji Members in the Activities of other Sangha's

- 01/17/2012: visit from 6 members from our colleagues of Amida-trust, Lier;
- 02/05/2012: participation in opening ceremony of the temple Anjin-Do, Mönchengladbach (Germany);
- 02/17/2012: visit from Koen Vermeulen, secretary general of the BUB, about future personnel requirements;
- 02/28/2012: visit from 3 members from our colleagues of Ehipassiko, Berchem;
- 03/10 and 03/24/2012: presentation of Pure Land Buddhism for future teachers Buddhism in the regular schools, in Samye Dzong Institute, Brussels, in Dutch respectively in French language;
- 03/11, 06/03, 10/28 and 12/09/2012: participation in General Meetings of the Buddhist Union of Belgium (BUB) in Brussels;
- 03/21/2012: visit from 6 members from our colleagues of Triratna, Ghent plus Metta Vihara;
- 04/28/2012: participation in the initiative of Fo Guang Shan (FGS) & the BUB for the different sanghas in Antwerp: *Day of the Buddha*;
- 05/24/2012: joining the visit of Dalai Lama in Yeunten Ling, Huy;
- 06-07/06: participation in symposium *A Lighthouse in a World in Confusion*, in Metta Vihara retreat centre, organized by Triratna Ghent;
- 09/09/2012: participation in BUB-activity *Festival of Buddhism* in Huy;
- 11/17/2012: separate preparatory meeting with the two representatives of our sangha in the

BUB, concerning several standpoints;

- 11/23-25/2012: participation in *Hōonkō Autumn Seminar* (speaker Esho Nasu, Japan) and Annual General Meeting of *Ekō-Verein*, Ekō-Haus, Düsseldorf;
- 11/29/2012: visit from Koen Vermeulen, secretary general of the BUB, about functioning of BUB work groups and communication with member organizations;
- 12/07/2012: presentation in Ehipassiko, Berchem: *How can you recognize someone who already made progression on his/her path? – The four brahma-vihara's: Buddhist Virtues*. 2012 is once more a year where we engage in several (socially relevant) e-mail actions of Avaaz.org and other initiatives like Earth Hour (03/31/2012).

5 Other External Contacts

Courses

1 Introduction Buddhism; 2 Safety at home; 3 Nepal-cycle (2 movies & trip report); 4 Basic text Pure Land Buddhism: *Ichimai kishōmon* (Hōnen Shōnin: 一枚起請文); ~~5 Greeks and the Buddha (cancelled)~~; 6 Theravada-Buddhism: Karaniya Metta Sutta; 7 Thus I have heard; 8 The silent power of Buddhism; 9 Sutra study based on the Sutra of the Great Mass of Stress (Maha-dukkhakkhandha Sutta) & sutra suggested by the students; 10 Buddhism and wellbeing; 11 Letters of Eshin-ni; 12 Buddhism in the contemplative landscape in Belgium. Total number of students for the working year 35 - 2012:

135 participants for the 11 courses on 20 Saturdays, with 598 student-hours.

Other contacts

- apart from the above mentioned weekly services, holiday services and the courses, in 2012 we have 28 other contact moments, totalizing some 281 extra visitors (excluding the regular sangha members);
- again, we welcome several groups of students and pupils – with or without their teacher(s) (most of them within their assignments about world religions or Eastern/Japanese culture, several in the branch of journalism, some for simple interest in Buddhism or in Japan). 2012 is really special: not only do we welcome a class of young children from 6-8 years old (a first in the history of jikōji!), but also a group of autistic youngsters;

In total, we take part in 12 external activities, mainly with Buddhist impact, but also with non-Buddhist initiatives like:

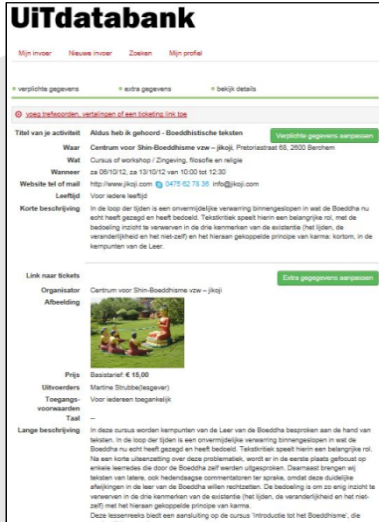
- 03/17/2012: participation in the Cultural Council of our district of Berchem (administrative subdivision of the City of Antwerp);
- 04/15/2012: a large group of our members participate in the special activities around *20 Years Japanese Garden* in Hasselt;
- 04/21/2012: participation in Concert Jewel of Dechen Shak Dagsay, Tibetan singer, in Arenschouwborg, Antwerp;
- 04/28/2012: participation in Spring Cleaning in our street, Pretoriastraat;
- 05/22/2012: participation in *Meditation Flash Mob* in Central Station, Antwerp, organized by Ehipassiko – some 200 participants;
- 06/09/2012: participation in the action *Sending a letter to Asako House*, Japan, to protect her family from being expelled from their house;
- 09/24/2012: participation in meeting from KMS (Kerkwerk Multicultureel – *Church Work Multicultural Coexisting*) in preparation of the *Week of the Religions & Life Philosophies 2013*;
- 09/30/2012: participation in *Moon Festival* in Japanese Garden, Hasselt;
- 10/21-22/2012: participation in *Spiritual Weekend* Antwerp, together with 12 other religions and life philosophies, with a Unity Celebration in the *catholic church* Holy Trinity;
- from 11/12/2012 on: participation in a special 6 sessions course about Japanese history and culture *Forever in the Shadow of the Fuji* by Etienne Hauttekeete, in Berchem;
- 11/15/2012: meeting with two candidates for kekkonshiki ceremony (early 2013);
- 11/28/2012: participation in evaluation meeting concerning *Spiritual Weekend* Antwerp.

To conclude this paragraph, we like to mention that many of our sangha members continue to engage themselves in their *more private* circles – long before they even joined jikōji – each

according to their own interests and available time schedule: paying visits in hospitals, prisons and homes for elderly people, guiding youngsters, distributing food to men, women and children of the so called fourth world, assisting neighbors, and so on.

PR on the internet and in journals, magazines

- We use more and more the **internet** to make publicity for our activities: on our own website, but also on <http://www.uitdatabank.be/>. This database forms the most elaborated source of information for the regular written press, as for several other websites as well...



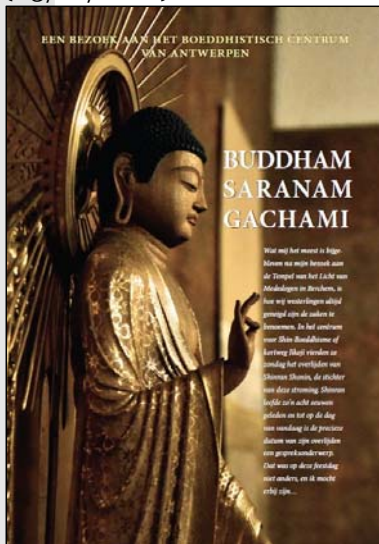
<http://www.uitdatabank.be/>

www.dna.be/

www.uitinvlaanderen.be/

www.vormingplusantwerpen.be/

- Some visits and interviews end up in articles published in magazines, like Petra Jacobs's assignment in *World of Wonders Magazine* – or an article in the *Westdeutschen Zeitung* (03/12/2012) about the commemoration service for the victims of the disasters in East Japan.



We would like to say that we try our best to run our sangha with the utmost precaution, so that the previous investments would still be adequate to spread the dharma as good as possible, and that the impact on our society can gradually become more and more visual, for the current and the future generations...

We would like to conclude this Report of Activities 2012 addressing a word of thanks to all sangha members who have continually invested their energy in the functioning of our temple, and especially to our late temple founder, Rev. Ōchō-in (Shitoku) Adriaan Peel and to all our friends in Belgium and in the many other countries who actively support us!

Antwerp, February 10th, 2013

In the name of jikōji-sangha

The Board members:

Rev. Daijō Fons Martens
president

Karel Van Campenhout
secretary

Brecht Van Deuren
accountant