



The Journal  
of the  
Order of Buddhist  
Contemplatives

*Serving Members and Friends  
of the Order Worldwide*

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Volume 30, Number 3  
2558 B.E. (Autumn 2015)  
ISSN 0891-1177

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*Garden at Pine Mountain Buddhist Temple in May*

Autumn 2015 issue:

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*Dōgen watching the moon.  
Hōkyōji monastery, Fukui prefecture  
(image from Wikipedia, in public domain)*

# At the Crossroads

Rev. Master Meiten McGuire

—Victoria, British Columbia—Canada—

*An extract from Returning to Stillness: Zen Training in Everyday Life*<sup>1</sup>

WHEN WE'RE AT A CROSSROADS AT TWILIGHT, UNFAMILIAR WITH the terrain, it can be difficult to see which way to go. If a storm is signaling its arrival, there may be dark clouds hovering about which further obscure our view. And yet we have to go on because we're on a journey and there is no stopping place, no wayside inn where we can take shelter for the night. Life has handed us this predicament over and over again—we have to get on with our life by making countless choices. We really can't be sure of the outcome because we can only see a bit of the distance down the two roads. As Robert Frost wrote, "Two roads diverged in the wood and I—I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."<sup>2</sup> He took the one "less traveled by." To me that means he was willing to try something different, something seemingly less sure.

Until we come to some kind of spiritual practice, we take the road *more* traveled by. This is the road of our old conditioned programs. As habits solidify they become less and less noticed. I won't say less and less 'noticeable' because they can be quite obvious *once we develop a new*

*habit of paying attention.* These old habits are like the darkening clouds before a storm at twilight: they make it more difficult to see where different choices might be appropriate. Maybe we don't even see that there is a choice, that we may be at numerous crossroads, even during a single day. It's too unnerving and unsettling to really recognize what we're doing right now, at this moment of this day. We like to deal in generalities, which is another obscuration we add to the pot. Life is both more complicated and simpler than we have learned. We've been taught such a large amount by life—by our parents, our schooling, our friends, our activities—that there could be no way that this huge register were instantly available to our beck and call. We aren't aware of how our seeming choices have been influenced. Our very way of being in the world is built on a premise, an assumption that isn't examined. Our conditioning has made what we perceive and how we perceive so 'obvious' that we don't notice there may be other ways. It may seem as impossible to examine all of this as the centipede found when asked how it was able to manoeuvre its many feet so as to move. We can act, but *how* we're acting and what we're doing at any given moment may seem impossible to examine—we'd just have to stop.

Now, of course, this is just what we're advised to do when we're on this spiritual journey. We already may recognize to some extent that there is something potentially unsatisfactory about life, which may have more to do with 'us' than with what's 'out there'; that *we* are the common denominator to all our experiences. This is sobering, and many of us are unwilling to see this truth without many,

many disappointments. Finally, this recognition propels us to look more deeply. This is the requirement for finding a more satisfying solution to life's unsatisfactoriness. We are taught, and find more and more true for ourselves, that we must *train in awareness*. We have to be willing to stop and examine life instead of going on in the semi-darkness of old habits of body, speech, and mind. There is a strong resistance we can feel to doing this. But Life repeatedly teaches us that if we want to be more balanced and harmonious in our everyday living, then we must stop and take a look at how *we* influence and in a very real sense *are* creating our world. We have to go beneath the surface level of old habitual responses which are so ingrained we often don't even recognize their powerful influence at this moment. We tend to gloss over the particular event because we may be required to see the unskilful means of our behavior, much preferring to generalize about what's wrong. This is a way that 'little self' tries to wriggle out from under the uncomfortable scrutiny otherwise required. *We don't want to do it.*

This 'I don't want to do it' is an expression of a third hindrance<sup>3</sup> to our spiritual journey. A hindrance obscures our making more wholesome choices. The third hindrance is usually translated as 'sloth and torpor.' The Buddha is using strong language to make his point, giving the most extreme aspect of the condition pointed to. One translator gave the translation as "physical and mental laziness," which for me is more easily identified in my own unwillingness at times to simply get up and move, i.e. to make a choice to change direction. A humdrum example: I'm sitting in my

comfortable chair and have had my cup of green tea. It's time to move on to something else but I'm not exactly sure *what* to do next, so there I sit. Sitting there is not that comfortable anymore and there is this nudge to get on with the day. When we're 'listening' to our inner state, which is the practice of our awareness in whatever situation we find ourselves, we don't have to perpetuate such an unrewarding way of being: we don't have to be ruled by our physical and mental laziness. Physically, it may seem more comfortable to prolong sitting and, mentally, it's not easy to choose what to do next. The hindrance here is obvious. At some point, earlier better than later, we can confront the hindrance and move on to the next step that is good to do.

When we are working to free ourselves from simply going down old grooves, we can feel stumped on what it is good to do. We're at a crossroads now and we're willing to see that we don't have to respond from old conditioned habits. The twilight is lifting, though it may not feel that way initially. We have to be willing to try the Unknown. That is what is happening when we make a non-habitual choice. This allows us to come in touch with our own humanity in a rather raw way—we experience how vulnerable we can feel. We can experience the sense of *helplessness* that has been hidden under a false assurance of knowing just what to do. If this sounds vague, we can find out for ourselves simply by doing it.

There are wonderful, exciting discoveries waiting for us when we take “the road less traveled by.” It does make all the difference because we see more and more how very binding and blinding the old programming was and how

freeing it is to find other options to life's challenges. So, let's get down to work and stop being ruled by the physical and mental resistance to examining our lives to see where going down a different road would serve us best. The Buddha taught that we have to *reject laziness*, and we find that we can do this. As is said, *we must make the effort, Buddhas can only point the Way*. Truly just taking that one next step willingly into the Unknown by exploring the hidden recesses within our own minds is possible, moment after moment. An ancient Chinese proverb goes, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with but a single step." Let's not be daunted by little mind's ideas about how difficult or impossible this could be. Let's just get on with it right now because each step does lead us to our Goal. It's a process that is unlocked by our *willingness* to just keep going, doing our dedicated practice faithfully and with sincerity. Making wiser choices in this way is our little part and the process itself carries us. That's just the way it is.

#### Notes

1. McGuire, Rev. Master Meiten, *Returning to Stillness; Zen Training in Everyday Life*, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed., (Canada: Vancouver Island Zen Sangha, 2014) <http://www.vizs.org>.
2. *The Road Not Taken* is a poem by Robert Frost, from the collection *Mountain Interval*, (Pub. Henry Holt, 1916.)
3. The Five Hindrances are sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, doubt. From *Selected Texts from the Pali Canon and the Commentaries* trans. Nyanaponika Thera, (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka, Publication No. 26, DharmaNet Edition, 1994)

# Journey through Paranoia and Quality

Val Liloff

—*Gattonside, Scotland*—

A BOY IS BORN EARLY IN WORLD WAR II. AFTER FOUR YEARS as the war ends, his widowed mother remarries and has another child, a boy. It is necessary. The emotional impact on the elder son marks him for life.

Early in the war the elder son invents a game which gives him solace and escape from the carnage around him. Wherever he goes he imagines people are watching him, and he performs for them, strutting his stuff, excellent stuff and he knows they are applauding him.

As an adult he only uses the game when he needs to and exercises a fair conceit in his dealings with the world at large.

Navigating through the vicissitudes of life, scarred in body and mind, he reaches old age.

An opportunity arises to completely give up his game. One obstacle stands in his way. A part of his game evolved into a profound distrust of people. How can he abandon his game when the deep need of trust is missing?

At this time he also realises a link between his game and a more positive outlook towards which he feels compelled to travel. The quality of his activities now becomes a focus. He learns to reflect on his activities and almost simultaneously can reject his game and act on the

positive.

He finds spirits kindred to his own interests but with a much, much broader respect for all living things. From this time come his only recorded words which are quoted here in full:

“Of course things are not entirely out of my hands. I did the best I could but I did not always behave, like a diamond geezer.”<sup>1</sup>

*Notes*

1. Diamond geezer is cockney slang for ‘a jolly good chap’.

# Notes on Some of the Ways Scripture Appears in Daily Life

Rev. Valeria Allison

—*Lions Gate Buddhist Priory, Litton, BC—Canada—*

I FIRST MET THE WORDS OF *FUKANZAZENGI*, OR *RULES FOR Meditation*<sup>1</sup> while reading them aloud, along with other people, all of whom were strangers, the first Saturday afternoon of my first retreat at Shasta Abbey. Meditation halls, monks with shaven heads, Buddha statues that seem to have a twinkle in their eyes: all was new to me (at 19 years of age). Most unusual were the words coming out of my mouth; or, actually, the concepts.

It was 1972 and there were plenty of aphorisms around, about letting the sunshine in, etc. But those were lullabies in comparison to the surprise questions, statements and practicalities that mixed together in *Rules for Meditation*, then called *Zazen Rules*. Between being stunned and being self-conscious, hearing the words or concepts for the first time as I spoke them, I didn't have time to decide if I knew what they meant. This was the beginning of a multifaceted relationship of unfolding recognition; sometimes instantly penetrating, sometimes slow-dawning, sometimes evolving. Something true could actually become truer.

The first question flew by; “Why are training and enlightenment differentiated since the Truth is Universal?” What? If Buddha Nature is everywhere and all are already

enlightened, why do we train? “The separation would be as that between heaven and earth if even the slightest gap exists.” What does that separation look like? My daily life brought me an answer, as I received my various karmic comeuppances: life without training is hell. To not receive the Truth through the senses, to block it via my greed, hate, and delusion, is to live to some degree in hell.

An acquaintance of mine expressed it as: “I’ve seen a thousand lives, and worlds drifting apart and coming together, all at once. I don’t need to schedule or try to make myself meditate. All I have to do is wait and sooner or later things get so bad I have to meditate.” Each time I hit bottom though, and sometimes before, another odd statement served to help: “When the opposites arise, the Buddha Mind is lost.” This was a phrase that served as a key, from the beginning. I never knew how I understood it, it just acted as a key, like a key turning in a lock, the result of which was to let go. In an obvious mess of greed, I would remember: “When the opposites arise, the Buddha Mind is lost”. Didn’t get what I wanted? Friends underestimating me? When the opposites arise, the Buddha Mind is lost. At the bottom of all suffering moments it was possible to recognize the opposites, and let go of them.

Another way of phrasing this was in an impromptu poem of Bankei’s—the way I remember it is:

Good is stupid,  
bad is stupid  
and stupid is stupid, too.

Over time, statements that started out as true, such as “Do not travel to other dusty countries, thus forsaking your

own seat,” turned out to be also true in a deeper way; the quality of a truth can deepen. When I first heard it I was actually travelling a lot and even when we weren’t travelling we were often going out to this event or that, not knowing quite what we were looking for. So the saying gave some comfort at that level; it made sense that you don’t have to go collecting events, ‘fun’, etc, when you can enjoy the ‘lawful gateway to carefree peace’ any time.

Many years later, as a monk, the statement came back to me again, with the emphasis on how forsaking your own seat can happen. At the monastery, when the monks sit facing a wall in the morning, the Abbess, or representative of the Buddha, circles the hall, going by each monk. As she goes by, barely visible out of the corner of your eye, it is symbolic of the Teaching being offered, and each monk, expressing the wish to learn, raises their hands in *gasshō*. One morning as I sat there, looking like I was meditating, mentally I was off sorting out some problem to be dealt with. I didn’t notice her passing until she had already gone by. Of course no one scolded me for not making *gasshō*, but it struck me: the Buddha was here, and I was so busy puzzling that the moment escaped me. What a shame! It reminds me of that cartoon I saw some years ago, where the character is saying, “I had a near-death experience. My whole life passed before me, and I wasn’t there for any of it!”

The recitation of *Rules for Meditation* happens nearly every day at the monastery. A person can be lulled into thinking that it is ordinary, just instructions to sit upright, put your hands like this, and so on. Unwittingly treating it as if it is just ordinary, not that important, can mean that, day by

day, it works its way into the weave of training. A trainee might relax with it, thinking nothing in particular, and then be surprised with meaning. For example, I can't remember ever asking "What the heck is a Buddha Seal, anyway?"! I remember initially wondering if it was actually a secret sacred item of some sort. Day after day I said the words as if I might know what they mean. After some decades I turned toward this saying and thought about it. How could it be "preserved by both the Buddhas in the present world and those in the world of the Indian and Chinese ancestors"? Beyond time? And "thus spreading the Truth"? It must be something intangible. A seal, an imprint of authenticity. Mudras, flows or positions expressing aspects of meditation, are referred to as seals. And there are the four seals of Buddhism, anicca, anatta, dukkha and nirvana.<sup>2</sup> I saw a card with an image that struck me, the image of a Buddha's smiling face, but just above the eyebrows it faded and blended with the image of an ocean. At some point I learned that there is a samadhi called the ocean imprint samadhi, an ongoing meditation, sometimes called a waveless sea of Buddha Nature.<sup>3</sup> And I heard someone read a few phrases of a poem that included words from the Buddhist tradition, I did not hear where, only that this was part of the definition of the samadhi called ocean imprint:

The imprint of the heart floats in space  
untarnished, the moonlight shines...  
without beginning without end without past  
without future...<sup>4</sup>

So currently, for now, putting all that together, my guess is that the Buddha Seal is enlightenment. One of the wonderful aspects of the flow of Truth is that there is always more; clarity can deepen. “The Treasure House can open naturally and we can enjoy it fully” and yet there is still more. A flashlight of logic can be helpful and then again it is completely outshone by the light of the Dharma that unfolds from within. Pure being is already here for us. We can’t hurry it up.

I will conclude with these words from a Dharma talk of Rev. Master Daizui in 2000:

In the end, there is really no difference between life and practice, so be thorough. Let the training be the life and let your life be training. And above all I say this to encourage you to keep going, simply and honestly, doing the best training you know how at this moment. To do that will lead to everything else; moment by moment, day by day, year by year.

#### *Notes*

1. This was Dōgen’s first work, written on his return from China to Japan in 1027. He was 27 at the time. He refined it and reworked it several times. This text is available as part of a booklet of Scriptures and Ceremonies in all Order temples and meditation groups.  
(Full text is available [here](#))
2. The four seals in Buddhism are anicca (impermanence), anatta, (no fixed self-nature) dukkha (suffering, unsatisfactoriness) and nirvana (that which is realised at the time of enlightenment.)
3. In *Kaiin Zammai*, on page 107 of *The Roar of the Tigress*, Vol. II. (Mt. Shasta: Shasta Abbey Press, 2005) Rev. Master Jiyu, after

quoting Dōgen, then says, “In other words, the Great Ocean of Meditation is the Buddha Itself.”

4. A translation of this quote can be found here (Ed.) Willhelm, Richard, *The Secrets Of The Golden Flower: A Chinese Book of Life*. (Routledge, 1999) p. 77.

## Rules for Meditation:

### Dōgen's *Fukanzazengi*<sup>1</sup>

*This is the translation recited in OBC temples and at affiliated meditation groups, in the booklet Scriptures and Ceremonies.*

WHY ARE TRAINING AND ENLIGHTENMENT DIFFERENTIATED since the Truth is universal? Why study the means of attaining it since the supreme teaching is free? Since Truth is seen to be clearly apart from that which is unclean, why cling to a means of cleansing it? Since Truth is not separate from training, training is unnecessary—the separation will be as that between heaven and earth if even the slightest gap exists FOR, WHEN THE OPPOSITES ARISE, THE BUDDHA MIND IS LOST. However much you may be proud of your understanding, however much you may be enlightened, whatever your attainment of wisdom and supernatural power, your finding of the way to mind illumination, your power to touch heaven and to enter into enlightenment, when the opposites arise you have almost lost the way to salvation.

Although the Buddha had great wisdom at birth, He sat in training for six years; although Bodhidharma Transmitted the Buddha Mind, we still hear the echoes of his nine years facing a wall. The Ancestors were very diligent and there is no reason why we people of the present day cannot understand. All you have to do is cease from erudition, withdraw within and reflect upon yourself. Should you be

able to cast off body and mind naturally, the Buddha Mind will immediately manifest itself; if you want to find it quickly, you must start at once.

You should meditate in a quiet room, eat and drink moderately, cut all ties, give up everything, think of neither good nor evil, consider neither right nor wrong. Control mind function, will, consciousness, memory, perception and understanding; you must not strive thus to become Buddha. Cling to neither sitting nor lying down. When meditating do not wear tight clothing. Rest the left hand in the palm of the right hand with the thumbs touching lightly; sit upright, leaning neither to left nor right, backwards nor forwards. The ears must be in line with the shoulders and the nose in line with the navel; the tongue must be held lightly against the back of the top teeth with the lips and teeth closed. Keep the eyes open, breathe in quickly, settle the body comfortably and breathe out sharply. Sway the body left and right then sit steadily, neither trying to think nor trying not to think; just sitting, with no deliberate thought, is the important aspect of serene reflection meditation.

This type of meditation is not something that is done in stages; it is simply the lawful gateway to carefree peace. To train and enlighten ourselves is to become thoroughly wise; the kōan appears naturally in daily life. If you become thus utterly free you will be as the water wherein the dragon dwells or as the mountain whereon the tiger roams. Understand clearly that the Truth appears naturally and then your mind will be free from doubts and vacillation. When you wish to arise from meditation, sway the body gently from side to side and arise quietly; the body must make no

violent movement; I myself have seen that the ability to die whilst sitting and standing, which transcends both peasant and sage, is obtained through the power of serene reflection meditation. It is no more possible to understand natural activity with the judgemental mind than it is possible to understand the signs of enlightenment; nor is it possible to understand training and enlightenment by supernatural means; such understanding is outside the realm of speech and vision, such Truth is beyond personal opinions. Do not discuss the wise and the ignorant, there is only one thing—to train hard for this is true enlightenment; training and enlightenment are naturally undefiled; to live in this way is the same as to live an ordinary daily life.

The Buddha Seal has been preserved by both the Buddhas in the present world and by those in the world of the Indian and Chinese Ancestors, they are thus always spreading the Truth—all activity is permeated with pure meditation—the means of training are thousand-fold but pure meditation must be done. It is futile to travel to other dusty countries thus forsaking your own seat; if your first step is false, you will immediately stumble. Already you are in possession of the vital attributes of a human being—do not waste time with this and that—you can possess the authority of Buddha. Of what use is it to merely enjoy this fleeting world? This body is as transient as dew on the grass, life passes as swiftly as a flash of lightning, quickly the body passes away, in a moment life is gone. O sincere trainees, do not doubt the true dragon, do not spend so much time in rubbing only a part of the elephant; look inwards and advance directly along the road that leads to the Mind,

respect those who have reached the goal of goallessness, become one with the Buddhas, Transmit the wisdom of the Ancestors. If you do these things for some time you will become as herein described and then the Treasure House will open naturally and you will enjoy it fully.

*Notes:*

1. This is Dōgen's first work, written on his return from China to Japan in 1027. He was 27 at the time. He refined it and reworked it several times. This text is available as part of a booklet of Scriptures and Ceremonies in Order temples and meditation groups.

# Dōgen's *Rules for Meditation*<sup>1</sup>

Rev. Alina Burgess

—*Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey, Northumberland—UK—*

*From a talk given at Reading Buddhist Priory in 2013.*

ON THIS RETREAT WE ARE STUDYING DŌGEN'S RULES FOR *Meditation*. The version we are familiar with is just one way to receive this teaching, the version Rev. Master Jiyou brought back from Japan; it express Dōgen's teaching in one particular way. Downstairs there are copies of other more recent translations; looking at them can be a way to draw out other aspects of Dōgen's teaching to help us as we sit together this weekend, to give us another view in. It is not that one translation is better than others; no words are going to be 'right'—even if Dōgen himself was here speaking to us, his words would just point to what is already here, and show us how to look.

What is zazen? We recite every day here at the Priory:  
“It is simply the lawful gateway to carefree peace”.<sup>1</sup>

Other translations say:

“Zazen is things as they are in suchness...Zazen is a principle prior to human knowledge or perception”<sup>2</sup>

“Sit immovably in original stillness”.<sup>3</sup>

All these express in different ways one vast and far-

reaching principle, if I can call it that. Sitting still within this actual moment, with all its many aspects, as it is. Nothing to do, nothing to correct, nothing to seek. Inadequate words can only point to what is beyond words and concepts; to this that is already here, not hidden, but difficult to see beyond our expectations, concepts and conditioning.

“Zazen is things as they are—in suchness”. The words ‘in suchness’ add something here which is difficult to define, but important. It is not just “Well, that’s the way it is then”. Part of this is that it refers to things are as they are—not as we may perceive them to be, but as they are in their actual, true nature, within a picture greater than our limited perception. No matter that habitual patterns: fears, thoughts etc. may arise; zazen is to just sit with these, as with everything else, not trying to add to what we experience, to change it, to hold it, to deny it. There is a deeper ‘awesome presence’ which is here ‘prior’ to human knowledge or perception, to all that we think we know, think we are. ‘Prior’ does not mean *before*, with everyday things coming after; nor *beneath* the everyday appearance; prior in this context is not about time or space, my sense is it is more of a way of speaking about what everything originally, actually is, its true nature, now.

There was someone here yesterday who has been practising elsewhere, and she said with feeling “I’ve been doing this for years and I’m not there yet.” Her teacher had said to clear her mind of thoughts and she finds she can’t do this—and yet she clearly trusts her teacher. Thinking of her and her struggle with thoughts; what a shame. If she does not come back again, I hope she talks with her teacher after

being here.

In our tradition, we are given clear instructions;

“Neither trying to think, nor trying not to think, just sitting with no deliberate thought is the important aspect of zazen”<sup>1</sup>

Another translation says;

“When thought arises, do not get involved with it; let the mind dwell in the depth beyond thought”<sup>3</sup>.

The mind is a thought processor, it is what its function is; it may quieten at times but this is unpredictable and cannot be fixed—and is not the point of meditation. Sitting is not about reducing thoughts and distractions and increasing ‘being present’, as though there were two things to work with. This is difficult to grasp, but all we are asked to do is simpler; thoughts and distraction are seen and allowed to pass, or change as they do, without being added to or concerned about. When we let go of focussing on this or that, we can dwell with all that may be present.

When we first sit down in meditation, we find the physical posture we have learnt works for us, settle, then we leave the body be; it does not need our attention. We may find something that can’t let go, a knot of tension. If so, just let it be so and see that this cannot ‘be fixed’ by our mental efforts. As the body continues to sit with all the organs and structures working; so in the same way, the mind continues its function at some level, which involves thoughts. It does not need our interference, we can leave it be, though this is not easy! Thoughts create views, beliefs, ideas, concepts, feed fears and hopes, they occupy a major place in our lives. Our difficulty with thoughts shows us something of the way

we are entangled with them; when seen, this is not a problem either. Thoughts may distract us, but on the simplest level, we always come back. And when I say ‘come back’ were we actually anywhere else? We were just busy thinking, then our actual connection in the present becomes apparent again.

To sit is to let go of everything, including our sense of how we are doing. It is a sadness that our visitor yesterday saw her years of practice, her sincere wish, and all that must have come from her commitment to this in her life, as ‘failure’. If we come to meditation carrying expectation (or fear, or hope) then what we encounter as we sit are expectation, fear or hope. This limits our capacity to see in another way. Expectation and disappointment go together, first one, then the other; expecting, then disappointed as we don’t ‘match up’—but hoping and expecting again because of a deep wish to do this. Sometimes there may be spaces in between when we seem to be doing OK. (I think we don’t tend to give these times much attention; when we are just getting on, with our evaluating mind not active.)

How does insight, realisation come?

“Understand clearly that the Truth appears naturally, then your mind will be free from doubts and vacillation”.<sup>1</sup>

“Know that the Dharma emerges of itself, clearing away hindrance and distraction”.<sup>4</sup>

Zazen is more than, greater than, human knowledge and perception; it doesn’t matter how intelligent we are, how much we know. That is how we can sit right from the start—and every time we sit, no matter how we are. In my experience, small insights can become apparent quietly, ‘Oh,

I see.’ The words Dharma uses give us a pointer: realising, recognising, awakening.

Another quote says;

“You must know that right there, the authentic dharma is manifesting itself.”<sup>2</sup>

There is something much bigger than entanglements in thoughts and feelings, which is already here. When we let go, it is revealed, it doesn’t come from our efforts directly—and the elusive effort of zazen and practice is always needed to become aware. If we sit trying to do meditation, we are missing the point; that small sincere effort of trying can relax, it is not needed as we sit (or is it ever, as we live?).

There is a kind of complex misunderstanding that places ‘me’ in a central position, which has views of what is OK and what is at fault, or should be improved. From the point of view of sitting (if it is possible to speak of this) there is nothing at fault, it is just like this, and is already changing.

Our lives are complex but are, at any moment, just *this* configuration; there are consequences of what we have done and something needed to be done, or not done. Here are four translations;

“To live in this way is to live an ordinary daily life.”<sup>1</sup>

“Practice realisation is not defiled with specialness, it is a matter for everyday”<sup>4</sup>

“As you proceed along the way, you attain a state of everydayness.”<sup>2</sup>

“Practice has naturally the purity of enlightenment and enlightenment will increasingly penetrate your everyday life.”<sup>3</sup>

These quotes speak for themselves. There is a great

depth to the practice of meditation—and also to our willingness and commitment to do this. Don't doubt this, it is evident in your keeping going. More than this, there is a great depth to life.

Dōgen says that there are never two things—training and enlightenment are one. The practice we are doing here in the Priory today and the bigger picture are not two separate things. There is much to explore, and no obstacle to doing so.

#### *Notes*

1. Great Master Dōgen. *Rules for Meditation*, available as part of a booklet of Scriptures and Ceremonies, in all Order temples and meditation groups. Also see [link](#)
- 2 Waddell, Norman and Abe Masao. *The Heart of Dōgen's Shobogenzo*, (State University of New York Press, 2002) pp. 2-6.
3. Barnhard, Rev. Master Hakuun. *Translation of Rules for Meditation*, web page [http://www.unsui.eu/?page\\_id=50](http://www.unsui.eu/?page_id=50). Her full translation and an article of commentary were published in the Summer/Autumn 2011 Journal. <http://journal.obcon.org/files/2012/08/R-M-Hakuun-Fukanzazengi.pdf>
4. *Enlightenment Unfolds: The Essential Teachings of Zen Master Dōgen*, trans. Kazuaki Tanahashi, (Shambala, Boston and London, 2000) p.32–34.

# Rev. Master Jiyu, Ryokan, and Dōgen

Bill Kembo Wyatt

—*Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex—UK—*

In the spring, cherry blossom,  
In the summer, the cuckoo,  
In autumn, the moon, and in winter  
the snow, clear, cold.

DŌGEN (1200-1253)<sup>1</sup>

What shall be my legacy?  
the blossoms of spring,  
the cuckoo in the hills,  
the leaves of autumn.

RYOKAN (1758-1831)<sup>2</sup>

In 1971 I heard of an English Zen teacher who had studied and practised Sōtō Zen in Japan. Rev. Master Jiyu had gone to America where she established a Zen training monastery, Shasta Abbey. She came over to England to conduct a couple of retreats and I was fortunate to catch the tail end of one. I became so impressed with her that I undertook lay ordination.

During April 1973, Rev. Master Jiyu arrived at the Priory for a second visit, accompanied by three monks. Later on during the summer more monks arrived from the U.S.A. All in all during this period there were eleven monks, both male and female. Four intense sessions were held during the

summer and thirty-five people took the Precepts as lay Buddhists.

I wrote these haiku reflecting on this time:

A face appears  
Through the zendo window—  
Full moon of autumn

Afternoon zazen —  
Late autumn snow turns to rain —  
This dream within a dream

What's it all about?  
Samsara and nirvana  
Nothing but snowflakes

In between retreats we had a day or two relaxing. During one of these periods Rev. Master Jiyu showed us a copy of *Dew-Drops on a Lotus Leaf* by J. Fischer<sup>3</sup> which she obtained in Japan whilst training at Sojiji. It contained stories and translations of Ryokan's poems. Rev. Master Jiyu kindly let me and another monk make copies of the book. At this time there were not many translations available in English—a few scattered in anthologies. On re-reading it now it appears somewhat dated and quaint, but it offers a wonderful insight into the life and poems of Ryokan.

For some time I ruminated on writing something about Ryokan and finally knuckled down and did some research.

At the age of eighteen Ryokan was ordained by Genjo Haryo, abbot of Koshoji and given the name Daigu Ryokan (Great Fool, Good and Broad). Four years later he met Haryo's teacher, Tainin Kokusen, who was visiting Koshoji to undertake an ordination ceremony. Ryokan was very much taken by Kokusen's humility and personality. Kokusen was in the Soto line and studied under Manzan, and followed the practice of Dōgen's teachings. Once Ryokan asked his teacher what the practice was and Kokusen replied "gathering stones and putting soil on top".<sup>4</sup>

It was during this period that Ryokan was shown a copy of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzo* by his teacher. This was indeed a rare opportunity as at this time the *Shōbōgenzo* was seen only by a few privileged priests. He also had access to another work, the *Eihei Koroku*, a copy of which was found at Koshoji, the temple where Ryokan first studied and bears notes thought to be in Ryokan's hand. This work originated in China during the 1260's. Ryokan was taken by one particular section on loving words (or tenderness) which he copied out and carried with him wherever he went. This text may well have been taken from Dōgen's chapter *Bodhisattva Shishoho* (The Bodhisattva's Four Methods of Guidance), which emphasizes charity, tenderness, benevolence and sympathy. This section later became incorporated into the *Shushogi*<sup>5</sup>, a distillation from several chapters of the *Shōbōgenzo* in the late 1880's, and in 1892 it was declared by the abbots of both Eiheiiji and Sojiji to be the sect's manual for both lay people and monastics.

Ryokan wrote a moving poem entitled *Reading the Eihei Record*. In this, as he reads, he laments that Dōgen's

teachings were lost in obscurity for centuries and weeps. Next morning, when a neighbour asks him why the book was wet, Ryokan replied that “last night’s rain came in and soaked all my books” <sup>6</sup>.

Ryokan trained with Kokusen for some ten years. At the end of which Kokusen wrote of him “When I was taken ill in bed for a long time he kept taking care of me till I was eventually cured. Really I owe much to him; how can I pay back the genuine kindness he has completely shown me?” Kokusen eventually bestowed inka (transmission) to Ryokan, who was then thirty three years old. He also gave Ryokan a wisteria staff, which symbolized Zen teaching, together with a poem that included the words ‘good’, ‘fool’ and ‘broad’, representing the ideograph in Ryokan’s name:

Like a good fool, your way  
is broad and beyond measure.  
Free and easy, things take their course  
so I entrust this wisteria staff  
and whenever you find a wall  
that's the place to take a nap.<sup>4</sup>

In his heart Ryokan was a devout follower of Dōgen, and this is reflected in his poems and writings on Buddhism, together with reflections from his contemporaries that have come down to us. We can all learn from him.

I live in a social housing complex now, with some 30 residents; folks with many problems, both mental and physical (mostly ageing). I like to think of it as being like a

monastery, with all its ups and downs, teaching coming from all directions. I often have dreams in which Rev. Master Jiyu appears; on waking, they leave me with the feeling that all is well.

Half blind old geezer  
Chewing my pen—a haiku  
As the moon appears

Gatha  
I vow with all beings  
to look for the treasure within  
that we'll work things out  
via the meditation cushion

*Notes:*

1. Heine, Steven. *The Zen Poetry of Dōgen*, (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 1997) p. 12.
2. Tanahashi, Kazuaki. *The Life and Poetry of Zen Master Ryokan*, Shambala (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 1997)
3. Fischer, J. *Dew-drops on a Lotus Leaf*, 2nd edition (Tokyo, 1950).
4. *Great Fool—Zen Master Ryokan*. Trans. Abe and Haskell. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996)
- p. 164. I am very grateful to this study, from which I have culled information for this article.
5. Jiyu-Kennett, Rev. Master. *Zen is Eternal Life*, (Shasta Abbey Press, 2nd Ed. 1976) p. 160. Section on tenderness;

*To behold all beings with the eye of compassion, and to speak kindly to them, is the meaning of tenderness. If one would understand tenderness, one must speak to others whilst thinking that one loves all living things as if they were one's own children. By praising those who exhibit virtue, and feeling sorry for those who do not, our enemies become our friends and they who are our friends have their*

*friendship strengthened: this is through the power of tenderness. Whenever one speaks kindly to another his face brightens and his heart is warmed; if a kind word be spoken in his absence the impression will be a deep one: tenderness can have a revolutionary impact upon the mind of man.*

6. *Moon in a Dewdrop*, trans. Kazuaki Tanahashi, (North Point Press, 1985) pp. 223-224.
7. Recommended reading: *Kakurenbo Or the Whereabouts of Zen Priest Ryokan*, by Eido Frances Carney, (Olympia, WA: Temple Ground Press, 2013) Eido trained and received Dharma Transmission from Niho Tetsumei Roshi of Entsuji Temple in Japan.

# NEWS OF THE ORDER

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## The Americas

### Shasta Abbey

—Mt. Shasta, California—USA—

#### **Festival of Wesak:**

Wesak is the most significant and joyous holiday throughout the Buddhist world as it marks the birth, enlightenment, teaching, and death of Shakyamuni Buddha. It also marks the new year of the Buddhist Era, 2558.



*Wesak 2015, Shasta Abbey*

Our ceremonies began on Saturday, May 16 with the Wesak Vigil Ceremony, during which Rev. Master Meian Elbert vowed to continue serving as Abbess for the coming year. That evening, some 30-40 local congregation and friends joined us for the Eve of Wesak ceremony. During the two final readings from *The Light of Asia*, rain began falling—lightly at first, then building to a brief, heavy downfall—a true blessing in this time of drought. We all came together after the ceremony to enjoy a social tea. Several families with children joined us for the Festival of Wesak on Sunday morning, followed by a Dharma talk, the ringing of the Great Bell 108 times, and a potluck picnic. We enjoyed our picnic in the Buddha Hall, as the grounds were still wet from the previous evening’s rain. Rev. Master Ando Mueller showed an animated film on the life of the Buddha to eleven children and young people in the Dharma School.

### **Retreats:**

Fourteen lay ministers joined Rev. Master Haryo Young, head of the Order and Rev. Leon Kackman, lay ministry advisor for North America, in a May retreat on the topic of *Seeing and Being Buddha within Birth, Old Age, Disease and Death*.



*North American Lay Ministers Retreat 2015*

Rev. Master Oswin Hollenbeck led a retreat on *Jewels from the Shōbōgenzō* from June 7-14. We were glad to welcome 23 retreatants who gathered to study Mahayana Buddhist themes such as Awakening the Buddha Mind and Taking Refuge in the Three Treasures as presented in the *Doshin* and *Shoji* chapters of Great Master Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*.

Rev. Master Kōdō Kay offered a retreat in July on *The Offering of Lay Training*. Thirty-six guests attended. Retreatants and the monastic community found inspiration in the depth of open-hearted training evident during the retreat.

### **Ceremonies:**

Rev. Master Andō was the Celebrant for a memorial ceremony for Abba, Rosemary Dyke's old dog, on May 22.

On May 27, Rev. Margaret Clyde was the Celebrant for a memorial ceremony for Eunice Kurt, Linda Jameson's mother, who had been devoted to spiritual practice during her life. Afterwards Linda and some of her mother's good friends shared photos and reminiscences at tea with Rev. Master Andō and Rev. Margaret.

Rev. Master Shikō Rom was the Celebrant for a memorial ceremony for Bradley Bassi, a dear friend of Nuria San Mauro and her husband, Vanston Shaw.

On July 9, Rev. Master Jishō Perry was the Celebrant for a memorial ceremony for Betty Larson, Steve Larson's mother. Lay residents, monks and several family members shared tea and cake afterwards.

On July 4, we offered a morning ceremony in gratitude for the lands and people of our country, especially for the ability to practice our religion freely and openly. In the afternoon, friends and sangha members from the local community joined us for a convivial picnic. Thanks to all who brought food offerings and helped us to prepare for the meal.

## **Work Projects:**

We offer bows of gratitude to the Friends of Shasta Abbey for their work in recent months to help improve our recycling areas. This includes donating and making clear labels for blue plastic bins for many different types of materials the Abbey recycles. These bins have been placed near the Kitchen, the Vimalakirti Hall, and the Samantabhadra Hall, where the Extern Sacristans added a coat of stain to the recycling sheds. For many years the Friends have provided not only support for our community, but a living example of the offering of lay training. We would like to take this opportunity also to thank the many congregation members from as far distant as Ashland, Oregon and the San Francisco Bay Area who continue to transport and process recycling that can't be handled by local facilities.

Our Library project is moving ahead. During a visit in May and June, Rev. Leon continued to organize the monks' Library, including the building of new shelves, a desk and a book cart. Our thanks to Rev. Leon, Rev. Helen Cummings, and all those who have helped with this essential ongoing project over the past few years.

This spring and early summer, Extern Sacristans and others have been working with a skilled heavy equipment operator to clear and improve the road leading to the Fugen Hermitage. After learning that firefighters would be unable to defend the hermitage because the road was impassable for their equipment, we realized that this project needed top priority and got to work on it.

Fire safety clearance also continues on the Abbey grounds, where several more dead trees have been taken down, to be converted into firewood and lumber. Although monks did much of this work, we hired A Cut Above, a local firm of arborists, to cut trees that were close to buildings or the road.



*Rev. Master Daishin, Rev. Master Chosei  
& Rev. Allard gather firewood*

### **Monastic Visitors and Travelers:**

In late May, Rev. Vivian Gruenenfelder traveled to Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. where she had been invited to participate in a panel discussion by the organization, Monastic Inter-religious Dialogue. Rev. Vivian reported that it was good to have representation from a Buddhist monastic practitioner as a balance for the academic presentations.

Also in May, Rev. Master Jishō Perry was one of a number of male and female Buddhist monastics who attended a conference at Gethsemani Trappist Abbey, also sponsored by Monastic Inter-religious Dialogue.

Rev. Master Haryo departed on May 30 for Throssel Hole Abbey in northern England. As head of the Order, Rev. Master Haryo divides his time between Shasta and Throssel and travels to visit smaller temples. He will also lead the Monastic Sangha Gathering scheduled for September at Throssel. We look forward to welcoming him back in January of 2016.

Rev. Master Oswin Hollenbeck and his disciple, Rev. Allard Kieres, departed in June for a stay of several months at Throssel Hole Abbey and possible visits to other U.K. and European temples of the Order.

We had the pleasure of a visit from Rev. Master Meidō Tuttle and her disciple, Rev. Clairissa Beattie of the Wallowa Buddhist Temple, who arrived with two members the temple's lay sangha for *The Offering of Lay Training* retreat in July. It was delightful to see them and to hear about their recently completed retreat house for guests.

Brother Troi Tai Sinh, a monastic member of the Order of Interbeing founded by Ven. Thich Nat Hanh, stayed with us from mid-April until late June, when he departed for the Bay Area to begin a course of study in hospital chaplaincy. We enjoyed visiting with Brother Tai Sinh and hearing about his life at Plum Village Monastery in France and Deer Park Monastery in southern California, and we wish him well as he takes this next step.

We also enjoyed a visit of about six weeks in June and July from Ven. Geum Sun, a nun in the Korean Buddhist tradition from Mountain Spirit Center in Tehachapi, California. Her bright presence was a constant source of inspiration, and we were sad to say goodbye. Both Br. Troi Tai Sinh and Ven. Geum Sun joined in our daily schedule and were a great help to us.

Rev. Master Jishō and Rev. Vivian joined Rev. Master Kinrei Bassis of the Berkeley Buddhist Priory at a memorial ceremony in Santa Rosa, California for lay minister and longtime friend Edie deChadenedes, who died on May 31. Rev. Vivian, who had first learned about Shasta Abbey through her connection with Edie in Washington State, offered a eulogy. We will miss Edie's vigorous dedication to our practice, and we offer our condolences to her family.

—Rev. Margaret

## Berkeley Buddhist Priory

—Berkeley, California—USA—

Edie de Chadenedes, a lay minister who had been practicing at Shasta Abbey since the 1980's, died in Santa Rosa on May 31. Many people in the Priory Sangha knew Edie very well from attending retreats with her over the years. Edie lived on her own, in her home on San Juan Island, which is northwest of Seattle, until she was 90. She then needed a more supportive living situation and she moved into Friends House, a retirement community in Santa Rosa, which was near her daughter, Lucy. This winter, Edie's health declined and she moved to another facility in Santa Rosa, which provided more care.

I regularly visited Edie and her Buddhist training was clearly evident in the positive way she dealt with her mental and physical deterioration. Edie died peacefully, surrounded by two of her children and other family members and friends. We had a short but very moving ceremony at her bedside shortly after her death. We held her funeral at the Priory on June 12. On July 17, there was a large memorial for Edie at her former residence, Friends House, in Santa Rosa. Her four children attended, in addition to many other family members and friends, including Rev. Jishō and Rev. Vivian from Shasta Abbey. It was very moving to hear people memories and gratitude for Edie's very full 91 years of life.



*Edie*

The Priory has work days every second month and our work day on July 25 was well attended, providing the temple with much needed help. The front porch rails were painted, many of our trees were trimmed, front and back yards weeded and trimmed. Our neglected brass door knobs were polished, the dragons on the gate were washed and much of the Priory received a thorough cleaning. All the help given to the Priory, both on work days and at all other times, is a generous and much needed offering which helps keep the temple well cared for and functioning.

—*Rev. Master Kinrei*

## Eugene Buddhist Priory

— *Eugene, Oregon-USA*—

### **Visit to Wallowa Temple:**

At the end of May, Ruth Scott, a lay minister from Canada, and Peter Hulley, a long-time congregation member at Throssel Hole, came to the priory for a visit. They spent several months visiting Shasta Abbey and some of the priories and temples connected to the OBC, ending with a two-week stay for Peter at Lions Gate in British Columbia.

Rev. Oriana, Ruth, and Peter visited Rev. Master Meidō and Rev. Clairissa at Wallowa Temple in Joseph, Oregon for a week during this time and enjoyed the lovely new guest house at the temple and their time exploring the surrounding area. It was a treat to reconnect with the congregation and friends at Wallowa on a Sunday and to have some relaxed time with Rev. Meidō and Rev. Clairissa.

### **June Wedding:**

On June 27, Rev. Oriana was celebrant for the wedding of Laura Dowsing and Tygh English. They had a quiet wedding at the priory with parents and several friends, followed by a visit and celebratory drinks. Later in the afternoon there was a reception at

their home with treats and good conversation. It was enjoyable to visit with many of the congregation at a social gathering.

Laura and Tygh have kindly offered to help with the priory garden and with maintenance and repairs. This offering of time, attention, and skills is very much appreciated.



*Tygh and Laura*

—*Rev. Oriana*

## Lions Gate Buddhist Priory

—*Lytton, British Columbia—Canada—*

The summer at the Priory has been one of much activity. We have had pleasant weather. (We're grateful that a heat wave in July with temperatures as high as 41 C (105F) was fairly short-

lived). We have enjoyed seeing our animal friends such as deer, elk and bears.

This spring Rev. Master Aurelian gave the Buddha's Precepts to Charles Chan and Yan Cui in the Ceremony of Lay Ordination at Prajnatarā Hall. Then in July Andrew Fundytis received the Precepts from Rev. Master Kōten. We congratulate everyone and wish them success as they walk the Buddha's path.

Our May week-long retreat went very well. People came from Victoria, Kelowna, Edmonton and Fonthill, Ontario and enjoyed the spring flowers and new growth as they walked the land. We ended the retreat on Saturday, May 23, and the following day we celebrated Wesak in Prajnatarā Hall, which was brightly decorated with flowers and streamers. Following the ceremony we had a festive lunch at Bodhidharma Hall.

In response to several requests from local residents we have begun to offer weekly meditation instruction and sitting periods in Lytton, and we are seeing a small number of people each week.

Our annual Kwan Yin Festival ceremony was held on the last Sunday of June at the site of the Chinese Joss House (temple) which stood from 1881 to 1928 in Lytton and was dedicated to Kwan Yin. Many people attended from the village and from Vancouver, including Rev. Danny Whitehead and several members of the local Anglican Church congregation. Afterward we had a festive potluck lunch at the Parish Hall. We're grateful to all who attended and to the parish congregation for their support,

This summer we purchased a venerable (1993) Dodge Dakota 4WD truck with a flatbed deck and a snowplough. It is in excellent working condition and was sold to us by our neighbours Rainer and Sherry, who let us have it at an extremely reasonable price. It should be a very handy tool for work on the land in all seasons.

We have been busy with various projects throughout the summer. Visitors and residents turned their hand toward constructing a spacious and convenient storage shed and a good sturdy woodshed. For the late summer and autumn we are planning to build a small residential cabin as well as doing various jobs needed to prepare for winter such as gathering firewood and winterising structures.

We have been happy to welcome many visitors to the Priors this spring and summer, from various parts of Canada and UK. We welcome visitors any time, for day visits or longer stays.

—*Rev. Master Aurelian and Rev. Valeria*

## Pine Mountain Buddhist Temple

—*Ventura County, California—USA—*

On August 30 there was a flash flood in Lockwood and Ozena Valleys. A series of thunderstorms dropped several inches of rain in a couple of hours, and the enormous amount of water that came down the Lockwood Valley Road turned to the north and completely flooded our temple grounds, leaving behind a thick layer of mud and sand. The houses are raised and were not affected, but our workshop and barns were flooded, roads and paths washed out, irrigation systems destroyed and the Stupa court and gardens covered in sand and mud. In other words, 15 years of landscaping was wiped away in a few hours, like a Tibetan sand painting.

Fortunately no harm came to people or pets, but the ground squirrels and rabbits and probably snakes that live underground suffered badly. We are planning clean up parties for the next few months, and any help will be greatly appreciated.

If anyone would wish to offer donations for hiring help, replacing irrigation systems and gutters, this would be much appreciated. Details of how to do this can be found on our website <http://www.pinemtnbuddhisttemple.org/donations.html>



*The Buddha garden in May*



*The Buddha Garden now*

*—Rev. Master Phoebe*

## Portland Buddhist Priory

—Portland, Oregon—USA—

Looking back over these past few months there have been many comings and goings, Buddhist events and the preparation of the priory for a new prior, Rev. Leon Kackman, who will be arriving in Portland in late Autumn. These months have been exceptionally hot, breaking records of temperature in this city, which usually has much rain and overcast days during the summer season. In the midst of this, Rev. Master Meikō with others have been walking the neighborhood streets to offer a presence of safety and concern for the well-being of those who live here. As with most large cities crime tends to be an everyday activity, so it is hoped that the presence of a Foot Patrol will discourage those who do not wish to follow the Precepts.

In early May on a very warm evening, Rev. Meikō had the honor of co-officiating at a wedding for a priory practitioner, Mark Ferguson and his partner Fred Beal that ended with the new partners reciting the Marriage Contract that is used in our Tradition.



*Reciting the Marriage contract*

A number of the priory's lay sangha attended with Gary Fear assisting Rev. Meikō during the ceremony. The ceremony took place outside in a friend's back yard with much joy and celebration.



*Joyful occasion*

*Mark in the foreground, Fred behind*

The following two weeks after the wedding Rev. Meikō took some time away from the activities of the priory to rest at a cottage on the Oregon Coast. This is a place where we have been able to do a few weekend retreats over the past few years. While there she celebrated her birthday with a group of lay people joining her in a day of good food and walks on the beach. To be surrounded by the sangha for this event was truly a blessing and a joyful time.

On returning to the priory we had a work day that allowed us to prepare the priory's back yard garden for the coming months. We weeded, pruned and mulched the entire yard with a number of hands helping out. Joining us mid-day were visitors Ruth Scott from British Columbia, Canada and Peter Hulley from England, a good addition to our group to quietly finish the project up. This all was followed by some snacks and a cup of tea! Ruth and Peter

stayed on for a few days joining us in services and a few walks in the neighborhood.

In mid-June Rev. Leon Kackman arrived at the priory for a week stay in order to introduce himself to the lay Sangha. He is the proposed new Prior and if all unfolds he will be coming to Portland to live in the Autumn. While he was here he had the chance to celebrate Morning Service, to meet with the Priory's Advisory Council, attend a greeting tea in the priory's backyard, and visited a number of people who had invited him to their homes for tea and food.

In late June we had a visit from Marilyn Kratt who used to attend the priory for retreats and visits a number of years ago. She was traveling with her daughter Karen from Eugene to visit family up North. It was wonderful to see her again and know that she is doing well. Also this summer, Chris Tower, a former monk known as Kinsei, moved to the Northwest and came to the temple to visit, and offered meals to Rev. Meikō a few times, along with Ambrose who is an old college friend of his. It was good to see him. He now has settled in Eugene, Oregon where he is going to set up a counseling practice.

We also had a visit from Rev. Master Meidō, Rev. Clairissa and two of the lay people from the Wallowa temple on the return from a retreat at Shasta Abbey. They had a lovely overnight stay on a very warm evening so a scoop of ice cream sent us all to bed with gratitude. After these guests left for eastern Oregon, Rev. Oriana arrived for a two day stay. She and Rev. Meikō were able to take a few walks and had a cool hike in one of the forested areas right in the heart of city of Portland.

Late in July Rev. Meikō with a number of lay sangha attended the Maitreya Loving Kindness Tour (Buddha's Relics), an exhibition of ancient and sacred relics from the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, and many other Buddhist masters from Tibet, India and China. This event took place a few blocks from the priory at the Buddhist Daihonzan Henjyoji Temple. The Priory

Dharma School families were in attendance and Rev. Meikō was able to offer the children a blessing along with others who were at the event. The following weekend the Priory participated in the Annual Chant for Peace at Great Vow Monastery in Clatskanie, Oregon. This was an interfaith event with participants from various religions offering chants, mantras or songs from their particular tradition throughout the 24 hours this event takes place. Rev. Meikō led the chant for an hour with several lay people accompanying her, including a guitar in the back ground. The chant we offered was the *Gyate, Gyate* Processional, which is the Mantra from The Scripture of Great Wisdom;

O, Buddha, going, going, going on beyond:

And always going on beyond, always BECOMING

Buddha. Hail! Hail! Hail!

—Rev. Master Meikō

## Wallowa Buddhist Temple

—Joseph, Oregon—USA—

Throughout this bright, pleasant summer we have welcomed a steady flow of retreat guests from around the Pacific Northwest, Canada, California, Hawaii, and the U.K. In May, Ruth Scott of Vancouver, B.C., and Peter Hulley from England visited the Wallowa Buddhist Temple as part of their tour of a number of O.B.C. temples in North America, driving over from the Eugene Buddhist Priory with Rev. Oriana for a week's stay.

For the first time since the guest house opened, all three guest rooms were in use at once.



*Rev. Clairissa, Rev. Master Meido, Ruth Scott, Peter Hulley,  
and Rev. Oriana at the Wallowa Buddhist Temple  
(photo by Ruth Scott)*

While here, Rev. Oriana gave a very helpful Dharma talk on “The Three Refuges” during the Sunday morning gathering with the local congregation. Also among the summer’s many retreat guests was Pamela Bruce, a member of the Vancouver Island Zen Sangha, who flew down from Victoria for a 10-day retreat in June. We are grateful to a neighbor and two of the congregation who have kindly made the drive to and from the airport in Walla Walla, WA, transporting retreat guests traveling by air. Three of this summer’s individual retreat guests were from the local area. Also, we were pleased to share a 10-day retreat with Rev. Clairissa’s mother, Harlene Adams, and long-time family friend, Donnette-Gene Wilson.

In July, Rev. Master Meidō and Rev. Clairissa traveled to Shasta Abbey with two of the local congregation who wished to attend Rev. Master Kōdō’s retreat “The Offering of Lay Training.” This was a precious opportunity for all of us to connect with the wider Sangha; we offer our thanks to Rev. Master Meian and the community of Shasta Abbey for welcoming and hosting us, and to Rev. Master Meikō and Rev. Oriana, priors of the

temples in Portland and Eugene, for their hospitality to the four of us en-route to and from that retreat.

In late May the congregation gathered for a joyous Wesak replete with ceremonial, song, cake, floral decorations, and potluck. In July, at Monte Alto Lusitano Ranch in Lostine, Rev. Clairissa offered an ordination ceremony for the horse Honroso, a three-year-old Lusitano, just before he was shipped to a new home in the stables of a Buddhist horsewoman who had requested the ceremony.



*Rev. Master Meido, Rev. Clairissa, Honroso, and Eric Carlson just after ordination (photo by Carolyn Lochert)*

On August 1st, Rev. Meidō held a memorial for Erin Donovan's cat Fafnir who died in May shortly before his 18th birthday; the ceremony was attended by ten people and the temple's two cats and was followed by an outdoor potluck dessert tea on the temple grounds.

Work began in August on a new temple project to install a well manager system in the crawl space of the main temple

building. Thanks to the help of a neighbor who drove over on his John Deere tractor to remove a section of earth from along the concrete stem wall, our contractor was able to cut an access opening through the concrete into the crawl space. This opening will facilitate our digging out by hand during the coming weeks a deep enough space for the new system. Hopefully, no huge boulders will be encountered as we dig.

Throughout the summer, we have welcomed many drop-in visitors, received generous donations of fresh garden produce, responded to a number of requests for meditation instruction and spiritual counseling, and continued the temple's weekly public schedule. We are grateful that our new facility offers retreat guests a quiet space, even while such varied activities are taking place in the main temple building.

One of the temple's main purposes is to offer a place where both congregation and monks of our wider Sangha can come for individual retreats. Those interested in arranging such a retreat in our new guest house are welcome to call or write for more information.

—*Rev. Master Meidō and Rev. Clairissa*

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## Europe

### Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey

—Northumberland, England—UK—

#### **Monastic news:**

We have been fortunate to have several monastic visitors these last few months. We warmly welcomed Rev. Master Haryo on 1<sup>st</sup> June and appreciate his presence here. He will be with us for several more months.

We held our trustee meeting on Wed. 17<sup>th</sup> June and were joined by our two external trustees, Rev. Master Saidō (from Telford) and Rev. Master Peter (from Rochdale Zen Retreat at Preston). They arrived early and joined the community for our morning tea together. We are grateful for their continuing support to all of us at Throssel.

On 19<sup>th</sup> June, we welcomed two American monks from Shasta Abbey: Rev. Master Oswin who was formerly Prior of Eugene Priory and is now Executive Officer of the OBC, normally resident at Shasta Abbey. With him came Rev. Allard, his disciple, a novice on his first visit to Throssel. They are with us until November and are well settled in to community life.



*Rev. Master Oswin, on the right and Rev. Allard*

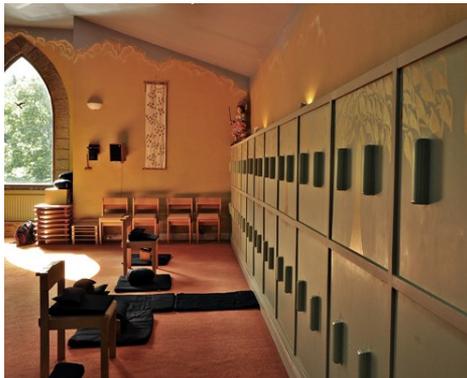
Rev. Master Mugo is also here at present and Rev. Caitlin of Great Ocean Dharma Refuge joined us for a stay of several months too. We very much appreciate the presence of all these monks.

### **Sesshins:**

We hold three lay sesshins each summer, silent weeklong meditation retreats. This year these were led by Rev. Master Adelin, Rev. Master Hugh and the summer one pending at time of writing, by Rev. Master Leandra, with Rev. Finnán. Monks join in for Evening Service and sit with the lay trainees for Dharma talks too.

### **Dharma weekends and festivals:**

We continue our monthly Dharma weekends, which end with a festival morning of meditation, festival, Dharma talk and social lunch. These were for Acchalanatha in May, Bhaiṣajyaguru, the Buddha of Healing in June, and most recently, our annual Dōgen festival in July. This latest Dharma weekend and festival were led by our visiting monk, Rev. Master Oswin, who gave a dharma talk after to a full dining hall of guests and monks. It was a splendid occasion.



*A quiet moment in our Ceremony Hall before a festival  
(photo by Billy Barnett)*

## **Two funerals:**

In June, we were saddened to hear of the death of Betty Crix, one of our oldest sangha members at 93. Betty lived just outside Reading and was a regular and committed visitor to the Priors there, as her health and travel allowed. She also had been here for visits on numerous occasions and will be much missed. Rev. Master Olwen who knew Betty well during her 11 years as Reading Prior, offered a memorial ceremony here, as well as a funeral service and memorial at Reading.

We were sorry to hear of the death of Phillippe Jan, who died peacefully in mid-July after a short illness. He was 45. Phillippe was a member of the Lancaster group and had taken lay ordination some years before. Funeral services were conducted in Lancaster, and a memorial is planned for Throssel, as Phillippe was well known here. Our condolences go to the families and friends of both Betty and Phillippe.

## **Northern groups sangha day:**

Approximately twenty lay trainees attended the annual Northern Groups' Day on 20th June which was held at All Hallows in Headingley, Leeds. It was a valuable opportunity to meet again and share experiences with fellow sangha members most of whom have been training for many years.

Three monks from Throssel attended along with Rev. Master Saido, Rev. Alicia and Rev. Aiden who travelled up from their temples.

After meditation and morning service to begin the event, we split into discussion groups covering such topics as whether it is necessary for a Buddhist to be a vegetarian, news reports about conflict involving Buddhist monks in Asian countries, and supporting elderly or disabled sangha members who are less able to attend retreats.

Following a shared lunch, options in the afternoon included going for walks, playing the 'Training and Enlightenment' game,

more meditation and time for informal conversations. The day ended with a most enjoyable sharing of tea and cakes.

**New website:**

At the end of July, we changed our website platform to Wordpress so that it is easier to update, keep secure and manage generally. We used this opportunity to choose a responsive layout so it adapts automatically to the screen size of the device people use to view our website. It should now be much easier to read the text on smartphones and tablets.

Now that it is easier to update we have improved our photo galleries with a bigger selection of images, and also included an obvious download button for most of the recent Dharma talks we put on the web. (Our thanks to Rev. Mugo for helping with the photos).

We hope the updated site works for most people but do contact us if you are having problems with it; <http://throssel.org.uk/contact/>

—*Rev. Alina*

## Dharmazuflucht Schwarzwald

—*Gutach (Black Forest)–Germany*—

In early June, our friend Peter Cross died from cancer. Peter, an Englishman who lived in Frankfurt for the last years of his life, had been to Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey in its early days and more recently again, and had then come to our temple over the last two years. In mid-June we had a funeral ceremony at the temple, and after my return from Britain in mid-July, we travelled to a forest cemetery near Frankfurt, where we buried the urn with Peter's remains under a tree during a small ceremony (see photo below).



Peter had last worked for an organisation helping young people with drug and other addictions, and many of his German and English friends made moving spoken or sung contributions at the burial site.

In early summer, Rev. Master Leandra came from Throssel, and stayed with us for several weeks.



*With Rev. Master Leandra in front of the temple*

It was a great joy for us to have her here and to be able to spend some time with her. Shortly after her departure, I travelled to Britain for three weeks, during which time Rev. Clementia looked after the temple. In Wales, I had the privilege to spend over two weeks with Rev. Master Mokugen at Great Ocean Dharma Refuge. On my arrival in Britain and again before my flight back, I was able to spend a little time at the Telford Buddhist Priory with Rev. Master Saidō, who very kindly picked me up at Birmingham airport and drove me back there at the end of my stay. Before returning to Germany, I also had the opportunity to visit Rev. Master Daishin, which I very much appreciated.

We are expecting a variety of visits from abroad this summer: Lay Minister Paul Taylor will be coming from Lancaster, England, and staying with us in early August, and shortly after that Rev. Master Oswin and his disciple Rev. Allard will be coming from Throssel for about ten days. In early September, Rev. Master Jishō will be arriving at our temple, coming from the US, before we travel with him to the monastic gathering at Throssel. After the meeting, we shall be travelling back to Germany with Rev. Master Rokuzan, who is staying with us for almost two weeks before he flies back to his temple in the US. We look much forward to all these visits.

Over the last months, we had several groups of students come to our temple for a morning, together with the local pastor who is their religious education teacher. Another local school invited us to give an introduction at the school itself, as part of their curriculum. Rev. Clementia has generally been introducing the students to our practice and answering their questions.

—*Rev. Master Fuden*

## North Norfolk Sangha

—*Norfolk, England-UK*—

We continue to meet monthly for meditation mornings. On May 2nd, we met together for our annual Wesak festival

celebration. After a shared lunch, the ceremony room was set up for a lay ordination ceremony and Nigel Shaw received the Precepts from Rev. Master Jigen, rededicating himself as a lay Buddhist. The simple and moving ceremony was witnessed by lay minister Chris Yeomans and by Nigel's wife, Fiona.



*Fiona and Nigel*

Both Fiona and Nigel became Buddhists in another Order some years ago. Since then each has wished to formally take lay ordination again within the OBC, as a way to both recommit themselves as lay disciples of the Buddha and to recognise their commitment to practising as part of our Order. Rev. Jigen has been most happy to do this.

We wish Nigel all the best in making this commitment and thank him and Fiona for all they bring to the sangha. Fiona is particularly skilled at baking and, on that special occasion, sharing/enjoying a cake she had offered made a happy ending to the day.

—*Rev. Larena*

## The Place of Peace Dharma House

—*Aberystwyth, Wales-UK*—

The steady contemplative life of the temple continues. Meeting and sitting with others, seeing trust in the practice grow, as this little house holds us all, and sits with us.

Offerings of fresh organic vegetables and sweet pea cuttings were gratefully received from Gordon and Ceri Jones. Ceri also kindly drove Reverend Master Myōhō to an appointment in Swansea.

A local window cleaning team have been washing the one high window that cannot be reached from inside the temple, as an offering, generously refusing any payment, saying they like to help people.

Reverend Master Myōhō enjoyed and benefited from a brief visit to the Great Ocean Dharma Refuge.

—*Rev. Master Myōhō*

## Portobello Buddhist Priory

—*Edinburgh, Scotland-UK*—

All is well here if from a rather soggy grey summer in Scotland.

We will be having a residential retreat on the Isle of Harris at the end of August, which is quite a pilgrimage across Scotland especially for those travelling from the South. Thanks to Shooie, Martin and Rev. Finnan for making it happen. A Sangha walking weekend took place earlier this summer at Banchory based at Bob McGraw's house which was enjoyed by all.

We will be celebrating 17 years of Priory life in October and we look forward to a visit from our American cousins, Rev. Master Oswin and Rev. Allard during that month.

The summer is also a time when the Scottish Sangha head south to attend the summer sesshins at Throssel, and this year was no exception. A general note of appreciation for all that the monks offer there is frequently voiced on their return.

Finally, we have been doing some necessary paintwork around the front of the property, thanks to Neil and Allan. Also thanks go to Iain for his generous offering of meditation benches to the temple and Sangha members.

—*Rev. Master Favian*

## Reading Buddhist Priory

—*Reading, England-UK*—

Thank you to all who have given support to the Priory in so many ways during the last few months: for offerings of food, gardening, painting the porch outside and the repair of garden furniture. A special thanks to Gavin's dad who generously gave expert advice on plumbing and has offered to take a look at some loose roof ridge-tiles. Another special thanks to Louise and Barney who helped set up a powerpoint for use in school visits.

This year we have had several requests from infant and junior schools to lead an assembly and/or talk to children about Buddhism, which is included on the religious education curriculum. A very fun and uplifting thing to do, the powerpoint providing visuals and music to work with.

As well as the usual organised group activities, it is nice to see a few people coming over in the week to use the Priory individually as a place for meditation and quiet time.

We have had two external weekend retreats this year so far. The Stroud Retreat in April, with the Telford and Reading Sanghas coming together, was held again at The Monastery of Our Lady and St. Bernard and was well attended. This year the theme was compassion, and we had plenty of imagery of Kanzeon in the meditation room to support us. Walking meditation outside is much appreciated as a contrast to sitting meditation indoors and the weather was very cooperative.

We had the second weekend in July on the Isle of Wight at a large old house near Carisbrooke Castle. Just a small group of us; we enjoyed a relaxed and contemplative time together in a beautiful setting.

Betty Crix, a much loved Reading Sangha member whom some of you in Britain may remember, passed away in May. She died peacefully in her care home at the age of 95 years. Several years ago there was a journal article based on an interview Barney had made with Betty in which she described a near-death experience which had left her unafraid of dying.

She was given a Buddhist funeral at Reading Crematorium which was conducted by Reverend Master Olwen with the help of Barney Milner (as organist) and Jan Caulcutt and Alison Prudence. Many sangha members were able to attend. Her ashes

will be scattered at Throssel during Segaki in October. Here is a photo of Betty in the kitchen at Throssel:



—*Rev. Jishin*

## Sitting Buddha Hermitage

—*Cromford, Derbyshire–UK—*

The annual village festival, Celebrating Cromford, took place one weekend in June, with stalls, events, music and drama. It was a good opportunity to get to know people and to see more of the village and learn about its history and heritage. The village was strung with bunting and I joined in by putting up some Buddhist bunting in the courtyard.



In July I travelled to Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey to visit for a few days and have a meeting with Rev. Master Mugō and Rev. Wilfrid, the trustees of the Hermitage, to approve the annual accounts of the charity. (You can see the accounts by going to [Sitting Buddha Hermitage website](#) and clicking on a link at the foot of the Donations page.)

At the beginning of August I spent a very pleasant weekend with Sister Ruth Furneaux at her hermitage in mid Wales. Sister Ruth is a Christian hermit nun also trained in the Zen tradition. We first met on one of her visits to Throssel and it was good to renew our acquaintance and swap our experiences of living and practicing in a resident community of one.

On my return journey I called in at Telford Buddhist Priory and had lunch with Rev. Master Saidō and left with a bag of freshly picked vegetables from the Priory garden.

We have added monthly day retreats to our schedule and held the first one in August, with people coming from Matlock, Sheffield, Leeds and Nottingham. The Hermitage continues to offer individual retreat accommodation in the annexe, meditation instruction and weekly meditation evenings.

With grateful thanks to all who responded to my request for more meditation equipment, and thank you so much to all who support the Hermitage.

—Rev. Alicia

## Sōtō Zen Riga

—Riga–Latvia—

This summer has seen our Latvian roots planted a little more firmly. The temple's practice schedule now includes meditations four weekday mornings, and longer meditation periods on three Saturdays each month. One Saturday is a full retreat day where a vegan lunch is served in traditional bowls, and the other two Saturdays offer meditation instruction plus two hours of sitting in the morning. Participation in temple activities so far is small, but constant.

The temple was really pleased to have Trevor Fenwick here in Riga for almost three months. Trevor, a sangha member from the Portland Buddhist Priory, Oregon, USA, helped with editing a manuscript that the temple is hoping to publish next year, developing the temple's website <http://www.sotozenriga.lv/>, and providing general moral and practical support. His presence here was greatly appreciated.

A master's class of 10 students from Latvia University visited the temple on May 26th to supplement their academic learning with a taste of Zen practice. With Trevor's help, we provided this literally. Trevor, an experienced vegetarian chef, prepared and served an oryoki meal (rice, sautéed vegetables, green tea) to the students and Rev. Bridin gave meditation instruction and a talk about the importance of the ancestors in our tradition.

Translation of scriptures into Latvian is going slowly. So far we have the *Scripture of Great Wisdom*, the *Kesa Verse*, Great Master Dogen's *Rules for Meditation*, the mealtime ceremonial, and *May all Beings be Happy*. Rev. Bridin is working with two sangha members on a Latvian translation of *Buddhism from Within* by Rev. Master Daizui. We are almost done with the first draft. This book is important because there is little information on Buddhism in the Latvian language. There are some books on the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition, but less than a handful on Zen and

other traditions. In deep gratitude for the Buddha's teaching, we are adding a little thread to the fabric of this ancient culture.



*Kanzeon statue at Sōtō Zen Riga*

—*Rev. Bridin*

## Turning Wheel Buddhist Temple

—*East Midlands—UK—*

A couple of months ago a new Buddha statue arrived at the temple. It is just over a foot tall and made of solid marble. It apparently belonged to a Christian missionary who was in India in the early part of the nineteenth century, and so must date from that time or earlier. It was shipped back to the UK after his death, and has clearly suffered a lot of damage during its long life. It is on long-term loan to the temple, and it is nice to give it a home after its travels. At the moment it is sitting at the back of the meditation hall, and we will have to think about where will be a suitable longer term place for it.



At our Dharma Evening on the 27th of May we held a memorial ceremony for David Russell, who several people in the Leicester group knew well. David was one of the founder members of the Leicester Buddhist Society, the first Buddhist organisation in Leicester. In recent years he had been battling with cancer, and died on the 22nd of April.

David's wife Barbara was able to come to the temple for the memorial, and altogether there were 15 of us for the memorial ceremony. It was a very nice opportunity to remember David, to celebrate his life, and to offer our gratitude for his contribution to Buddhism in Leicester. After the ceremony we had tea in the common room with home-made biscuits.

On Monday the 19th June it was a great pleasure to welcome ten people from the Faith Awareness group for a visit to the temple. Faith Awareness is the interfaith programme of

Christians Aware, and the visit was part of their summer term programme, which this year focusses on Prayer and Meditation.

The evening started with Rev. Aiden giving an introduction to the temple and our practice, particularly the areas of meditation and contemplation. We then celebrated evening service together, which our visitors joined in with enthusiastically. This was followed by a short period of meditation with a brief meditation instruction to start. After this we had a discussion in the common room, with tea and cake. There were lots of questions, and our discussions could have gone on much longer than the time allowed. The Faith Awareness group hope to visit again in the future.

Our small garden has been bursting into life over the past couple of months, with many plants and flowers now more easy to identify. All of the roses have started blooming, as has the philadelphus tree at the end of the garden, and we have large numbers of marigolds. Thank you to all those who have helped with the garden over the last few months, and also to all those who have donated plants.



—Rev. Aiden

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Hull, Inverness, Jersey, Lancaster,  
Leeds, Leicester, London, Matlock,  
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*For details of meditation groups in Europe, please contact your nearest priory, or the Guestmaster at Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey.*

*For details of meditation groups in the US and Canada, please contact your nearest priory, or the Guestmaster at Shasta Abbey*

## Further Information

This Journal is published quarterly by the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, which was founded by the late Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett. The Order is dedicated to following the tradition of Serene Reflection Meditation. The main offices of the OBC are at Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey in England and Shasta Abbey in the US.

As Buddhism grows in the West, we wish to share the Buddha's Teaching through our Journal; we also share our experience of practicing the Buddha's Way, thus encouraging and supporting each other's training. Lastly, the Journal helps to keep friends and members informed of activities and events.

The views expressed in these pages are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Order as a whole.

*The Journal of the OBC is administered through the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives Activities Trust (reg. No 1105634 in the UK), and the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives, a non-profit corporation, in the USA.*

*Information on the OBC generally is available on the website: <http://obcon.org/>*

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