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*New cupboards in the Buddha Hall at Shasta Abbey*

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*Kwan Yin statue at Lions Gate Priory*

## The Life of Training

Rev. Master Daizui Macphillamy

*Head of our Order from 1996 to 2002*

*A transcription of part of a talk given during Jukai at Shasta Abbey in the 1990s, edited by Rev. Master Hugh.*

When do we start Buddhist training? When do we keep on training? You start training – at least I did – when you see someone else training. Because, well, how else am I going to know it’s possible! Reading books is great, but... (sigh) for me at least, it takes seeing someone else walking the path. So that’s how I know, when I see someone else walking the path. And we’ll come back to that point.

There is a saying that, “When the student is ready the teacher appears.” Unfortunately a number of people take this as something magical: that somehow the teacher knows, and is just waiting for you to be ready, then they will magically manifest themselves. I don’t view it that way. I view it that there are teachers walking by all the time. “When you’re ready” is when you can start to see that. It is said that “When you look with the eyes of a Buddha, you see Buddhas,” and you see them everywhere; it’s true. The teacher may be the

Teacher (capital T) in one sense: they may be a particular person who you wish to take as your teacher for this time in your life, or even for this lifetime, and they may look like a monk, they may look like a teacher. Or the teacher may be your dog, wagging its tail without any reservations, just wagging its tail because it's glad to see you: something so simple. I love dogs because there's something so simple about them, so uncomplicated. Greed is there, yes, you bet. But there's also a very uncomplicated sort of love. And they're just happy to see you. That can be your teacher, too. The teacher can be your co-worker, they can be your spouse, they can be your kid.

One of the stories Reverend Master Jiyu tells about children is that, many years ago, she was talking with someone who was a student of hers who had a very young daughter, and the mother was asking how to introduce her to meditation. Reverend Master Jiyu said, "Well, perhaps you can refer to it as your secret place, your still place, 'I'm going to my secret place now.'" Not that you meditate secretly. You're just sitting down and a kid is saying, "What are you doing, Mommy?" "Well, I'm in my secret place, I'm in my still place." Now the mother came back a few months later and said, "It worked, but I think maybe it worked a little too well. I explained this to my daughter, (the daughter was maybe three years old) and then there was a day the other week when I was late for work, and I burned the oatmeal, and I was really pretty grumpy; and my daughter came up to me, tugged on me a little bit and said "Mommy, I think you left your secret place." Gotcha! Hmm: the teacher appears!

So, we walk the path when we see that it is possible to walk the path, and we see it is possible because we see others walking the path. There is also a decision to make. “Am I going to set aside what I am doing now and walk the path, or am I not?” I remember one Jukai when I was serving as Sacristan, and we were setting up for a ceremony, and there was Reverend Master Jiyu starting the ceremony! “Oh, aaaargh! Now what do I do?” Well, you’ve got to decide what’s most important. What’s most important is to walk the path. You have to set aside what you are doing, what you would like to do, whether the altar looks absolutely perfect, or whatever it may be. You have to put training first. Now, that doesn’t say you have to be a monk. Heaven forbid, if we were all monks. It does say that if you want to do this wholeheartedly and completely, Buddhist practice has to come first: it can’t be second. You have to put down other things and walk the path. It doesn’t mean that other things are not to be done; they are to be done.

Before I became a monk, my previous calling in life was as a psychologist, and I was a lay student of Reverend Master Jiyu’s for some five years or so before I came here as a monk, and it was not easy, particularly because I was in graduate school. Perhaps there will be some wan smiles from those who’ve been in that position in life. It takes a lot of time. And I kept fighting this, I kept fighting, fighting, “Oh my gosh, I don’t have time to even meditate, I don’t have time to do this, I don’t have time to do that.” I also didn’t have time to ‘smell the flowers,’ as it were, in life, and Reverend Master Jiyu gave me very cold advice, she said,

“Doug, you’re going to have to decide what comes first.” And I said, “Eh, but, but, but ...” Now at that point, I was a graduate student who was a Buddhist. It was after a sesshin, a retreat here, and getting this advice, that a few months later I had a new idea, “Oh! You know, I could do that the other way around.” I wondered what it would be like to be a Buddhist who happened to be a graduate student. “Hm. Okay, I think I’ll try that.” You know what? It worked. I still got my work done. I passed; I got my ‘union card.’

And it was a whole lot easier, because I knew what my priorities were. My priority was training. I was following the Buddha’s way; I was a trainee ... who was a graduate student. Fine, nothing wrong with that. There’s nothing wrong with any honest attempt to be helpful in this world. You can do those things. And, if training comes first, then all the rest of life falls into place a lot easier. So, the decision has to be made: “Am I going to put aside x, y, and z, and walk the path?” even though it may not be convenient at the moment. Even though, as in the case when I was the Sacristan and the altar was half complete, “I’m going to look like a damn fool, but am I going to walk the path, or am I not?”

In starting out to walk the path, there is a certain amount of trust, a certain amount of faith, because you don’t know where all this is going to end up. Different people are strong in different dimensions of religious training. I don’t think of myself as a faith type, perhaps because when I was young I was taught a type of religion which said, “First you must believe.” And I said. “Uh uh, sorry, can’t do that.” It’s one



of the things that got me to Buddhism, because Buddhism said, “Okay, you can take this as a working hypothesis. You don’t have to believe it first, you can try it first.”

But even the trying, I later found out, is an act of faith because you don’t know what’s going to happen. But you’re willing to try, and you’re willing to suspend judgement, and to walk on into the unknown and see what happens. And yes, as you walk on, when you look back, if what you see seems good, then it gives you increased courage and faith to continue to walk on. And you still don’t know where the next step is going to be. And, you know what? That doesn’t change. Sorry to dispel any illusions on that, but this isn’t going to change: Buddhist training is always walking on in the darkness; it’s always an act of faith to take the next step.

One of Dōgen Zenji’s teachings is, “Always we must be disturbed by the truth.” Not disturbed, as I understand it, in the sense of ‘upset by,’ ‘dithering about,’ or ‘worried about,’ but “disturbed” in the sense that always there is more, never is it that all is known, all is safe, all is clear. Always there is more to learn, more to do, more to be. So it’s always an act of faith: taking the next step, walking the path.

And then we find ourselves following in each other’s footsteps, and sometimes in the footsteps of a teacher. Now, do we have to do that? No, you don’t have to. You can ignore two thousand five hundred years of the evolution of this religion if you wish to. You can ignore the experience of all those generations that have gone before you, if you wish to.

Why would you wish to? “Well, I want to do it my way!” Believe me, you’ll do it your way. Because, although you walk a path that has been trodden by many, many footsteps, the next footstep is yours and yours alone, and you must make that foot move, you must take that footstep. Oh, yes, it will be your way all right, but not necessarily the way you want it to be. It will be the way it is for you, the way it must be for you, the way it can be for you: not necessarily the way you would like it to be, the way you think it ought to be. Thus, we can learn from one another, and we can learn from the generations that have gone before.

To use another metaphor, when I want to go to Vancouver, B.C. in Canada, I get in my car and I go up Interstate 5. And yes, I’m breathing all sorts of other people’s exhaust, but I’m a lot more likely to get there than I am if I just walk out that door and head generally northwards, sort of, you know, wander northwards: “It’s up there somewhere, I know it’s up there somewhere.” Well, I might make it to Vancouver that way, some day, eventually. Chances are not terribly good that I would, however. I don’t find anything demeaning about following in others’ footsteps: I can use all the help I can get!

So, generally speaking we’re following another’s footsteps. And that too, is an act of faith. You’re following others, following a teacher. And when you see the teacher go by, metaphorically speaking, they may not look like much. And they will definitely be human. And they will blow their nose and they will burp, and they will make missteps: they

are walking the path. But it takes an act of faith to follow along, and to have a sense that you can follow this path in good conscience, in good faith, and relax a bit: because these generations have gone before, it's probably a safe path to walk. I say, "probably", because we can never be absolutely sure. This is a risky business. Life is a risky business. And the teacher too is walking the path. Buddhist training is something which continues, and it always continues. It's not a case of an absolute perfection that you can see and revere and bow down to and that will somehow magically get you there. It's a case of someone else (and other people, not just one), who has been practicing perhaps a bit longer, who has worn the path, and has followed in the footsteps of their own teacher throughout the generations. They're human, they always will be, and following them is an act of faith.

And when we do follow, there's this unbroken line of people walking the path. Metaphorically speaking, this training has gone on for generation after generation and the line goes on to infinity. There is no beginning; there is no end. It all comes from the Source, and it all returns to the Source. It is a circle; where is the beginning and the end of a circle?

The Way of Buddhism is very broad; it has evolved many different forms throughout the centuries, and we in this particular tradition have no claim on you: we wouldn't want one. You are free to walk the Buddha's path in whatever tradition is best for you. If it be this tradition over the long haul, great: glad to walk beside you. If it be another Buddhist

tradition in the long haul, great: walk beside them. As I said, it makes more sense to walk beside someone, to follow a road, than to wander north hoping to hit Vancouver. The road doesn't have to be I-5, you can go up Highway 101: the coast road is quite beautiful, too, Okay? There is no obligation here.

Right, we walk together. This also means that we're less likely to get lost because we have each other. Not only do we have a road and a teacher, but we can help each other along the way. If someone stumbles, their friends can help them get back on their feet. If someone wanders off into a manzanita bush, we can help each other get unstuck. If someone's clothes get caught on a branch, we can stop and wait a moment and help them get uncaught, etc. It's also easier to do, in the sense of faith: we have each other to support one another as well. And that's Sangha: doing this together, walking on together, supporting one another, helping one another, and yes, enjoying each other's company. That's part of Sangha, as well.

And, the next step can only be taken by one person, and that's you. No one else can move your foot for you. You have to take your own next step. So you are both alone and together at the same time. And this is true in training as well, and it is not easy sometimes, this business of being both alone and together. Sometimes the alone is scarier and sometimes the together is scarier. But both are true. And so, because you do have to take the next step in your way, 'in your shoes' as it were, you will walk in your own way. That's

why I said a little bit earlier that Buddhist practice may not be what you think of as the ‘perfect’ way that you would like, but it will be the way you can do it. And that too is an act of faith and trust. You have to trust yourself that you can indeed take the next step, and the next, and the next.

And if you walk in a way that doesn’t look like the way the person in front of you or behind you is walking, you have to trust yourself in this also. “Okay, I can’t copy their style of walking. I’m on the same path, we’re next to each other, but I can’t make my body act the way their body acts, because it isn’t their body, it’s mine, it’s what I have given to me. It’s what I have to work with. And so, I must use what I have and what is presented to me to the best of my ability. And I will walk in my own way.” Again, we are together, and we are alone.

It’s not always straightforward, it’s not always clear cut. And, it’s not always easy. We would like it to be both. But it isn’t, sorry. And there are not always signs for when you are going the right way. Least of all is “it being easy” a sign. One of my little pet musings is to wonder where in the world in this culture we got the idea that if it’s not easy, somehow we “weren’t meant to be doing it.” I don’t know where we got that one from, but I’m pretty darn sure it’s not in the Buddhist scriptures, because I’ve read a whole lot of them and so have some of the others that I’ve met, and so far none of us have found the Buddha saying that. In fact, experience suggests that it’s quite the opposite. Sometimes

it is darned hard, and sometimes one has to keep going despite the fact that it's hard, if one's going to get anywhere.

So it's not always straightforward, and it's not always easy. It also doesn't always make sense. There's more to all this than I know, I'll tell you that much. The more I do this Buddhism, the more I realise the less I know about it. And the more I know that it is bigger than anything I know. And it doesn't always make sense. Again, it's not written anywhere that I know of in the scriptures that it always will make sense. I mean, sometimes it will make sense. But it won't always make sense, because there's more to you and me than a logic system. Thank goodness! There's more to us than simply a logic system: you've got a heart, as well as a mind. You've got an intuition. And you have to trust all the bits of you, and not just the mind.

There is a point here which sometimes gets lost, I think. We read the Buddha talking about the end of suffering, nirvana, and then we read people like Master Dōgen saying, "Always going on, always being disturbed by the Truth, enlightenment is training, etc." And you say, "Huh? What? What's going on here? Are these people talking the same language; are these people in the same religion?" Because there are those who say that Zen is only marginally related to Buddhism, but I don't believe that. I would say they're both right. There is the end of suffering. The Four Noble Truths are true. But it says the end of suffering; it doesn't say the end of training. It doesn't say sitting back and eating chocolates! It says the end of suffering.

And look at what the Buddha Himself did. Throughout His entire lifetime from the time of His Enlightenment onwards: He got up in the morning, He put on His robe, He meditated, He went out for His alms round, He sat down, ate His meal, and washed up His bowl. Then He took a little rest, did a little teaching, meditated some more: he did training, a form of practice very recognizable to us Zen people. He didn't stop His practice.

Always going on. That is the training, that is the enlightenment; and that doesn't make sense. But it grows on you, Okay? It grows on you. And by putting it into practice, you unknowingly teach all beings. Remember what we said in the beginning about the fact that we only start on the path when we see others walking the path. If you walk the path, you will pass this on; without trying to, without thinking, "Oh, now I'm a Buddhist teacher." Heaven help you if you do that; don't do that: just put it into practice, and by so doing all beings who meet you will benefit, for you will be passing it on. And it is up to you to do that; no one can do it for you. All those generations before have done what they could, and it is now up to you.

# From Great Compassion comes forth the Pure Dharma Body

Rev. Master Mokugen Kublicki,  
*--Great Ocean Dharma Refuge, Pembrokeshire-Wales--*

*From a Dharma offering at Great Ocean on Wesak Day 2019*

‘From Great Compassion comes forth the Pure Dharma  
Body - Unborn, Uncreated.’<sup>1</sup>

Great Compassion has always existed, always is, and  
always will be. It is the nature of existence.

It is greater than anything we can imagine or dream of  
with our ordinary mind.

It is not mine or yours. It is not his or hers.

Yet, we can search for it within ourselves.

It is Eternal.

And, we can find it within ourselves.

It is Pure Love. Not the kind that wants to covet or  
measure or fears to lose.



Pure Love is the dance of Compassion and Wisdom itself.

It is from This we emerge, and to This we return. We are of its very nature and can rest there any time, any place, unconditionally.

Why is this important? It is joyous that this Truth is so. And it is the key to help suffering and the need in our hearts and in this world.

‘By accident the wheel of karma is rolled, it is not intentionally set in motion.’<sup>2</sup> From a spark of ‘saddened love’<sup>3</sup>, - a confusion - a structure is built that obscures our True Nature and the Truth, causing us to doubt its existence, or judge ourselves and others.

These shadows are in our gift to dissolve with the help of Great Compassion and Buddha Nature. We have the full capability to help them on their way with charity, tenderness, benevolence and sympathy.

The seeming separation that wishes to defend and justify the self and selfishness takes on as many shapes and colours as we allow it to. Its scope is endless, till we sit still and allow the swirling clouds be, without judgment or discussion or hanging on to, or pushing away. In this acceptance we allow ourselves to reconnect with Great Compassion. With acceptance comes seeing things as they are. Then we need our courage, our resolve, our faith. The ‘yes’ in the heart of our own being allows us to be carried along the Dharma path. This is beyond the bemoaning of

ourselves, or others or circumstance. This is beyond judging ourselves or others. The judgmental mind holds us back. A tender heart opens the floodgates of Great Compassion.

This is not always easy to do. And yet, we *can* look up with willingness, rest in the Bodhisattva Heart which is always there, and gently take on the work that comes to us. Not counting time or results, or comparing ourselves with others. Great Compassion then flows through us. And from Great Compassion comes forth the Pure Dharma Body.

Even though Great Compassion is infinite, we can find Its waters within ourselves this very moment, and feel healing benevolence wash over all existence.

Even in the depth of the deepest anguish we can find these soothing waters and allow them to pour over ourselves and all beings.

Especially in the depth of deepest anguish, Great Compassion is there if we open our heart and look carefully.

With a straightforward mind and heart we can find the bow and the ‘yes’ in our Heart and follow the Path of Great Compassion and Wisdom, the existence of which we are celebrating with gratitude today. ‘The Treasure House’ then opens naturally and our gratitude knows no bounds.

#### *Notes*

1. From the Wesak Offertory
2. Paraphrased from Reverend Master Jiyu’s commentary on the *Kyōjukaimon* in *Zen is Eternal Life*, (Mt Shasta, CA: Shasta Abbey Press, 1999) p.111-114.

3. Reverend Master often used this phrase when teaching. For example:  
*The Journal of Shasta Abbey*, Sept-Oct 1981, “*The Law of Dependent Origination*”.

## We are Free

Rev. Master Baldwin Schreurs

—*The Dharmatoevlucht, Netherlands*—

*A transcription of a dharma talk given by Rev. Master Baldwin Schreurs during a 4-day retreat at the end of May 2019 in Wolk-en-Water Hermitage in The Netherlands.*

Any of us is completely free. In a way freedom is our true name. You are free and you were free before you were given your name and became a person in this world. Having been given a name and becoming a person, an individual with a personality, does not at all detract in the slightest from you being totally free. You are in your own individuality completely free. And complete freedom also means complete openness because there is nothing that binds you, nothing that keeps you closed. You are completely open and because of that, completely receptive. Look for yourself. This moment, as it is, shows itself completely in the receptiveness of your freedom. This, as it is, fills you totally.

And this, as it is, is not static. Because this moment doesn't have a beginning and an end, it always flows. It flows constantly so your freedom, your openness and

receptiveness is being constantly filled with this moment as it is. We could also call it ‘experiencing this as it is’. It’s flowing like water, always moving on from here to here to here.

We are completely free to insert images into that flow: images of ourselves, of others, of the world. Images of the future: how I will be later on, how my life will be tomorrow, how I will be doing in ten years’ time. Or images in the past: how I was then, the difficulties I have experienced, my broken relationship. But know that the future and past are experienced in one place alone and that is this now. And because the now is flowing, every image is devoured by it and no trace of it remains. So if we want to cling to an image, we have to recreate it again and again. No wonder our minds so often come up with the same old stories about the future, the past and even the now because this flowing now doesn’t leave anything intact. No image survives in it.

Creating images and projecting them into the future, the past or the now is an expression of your freedom and there is nothing wrong with that. But see that clinging to an image of oneself, of one’s life, or of someone else, which means inserting that image over and over again into time, has side effects because everything in time immediately becomes subject to cause and effect. When I place myself in the future through an image, immediately some stress, tension, fear or sadness will join the image, depending on what kind of image you bring in. “How will my life be next week?” That question already carries with it an anxiety. There is an image

and anxiety. But it is your freedom to do so, so carry the consequences within your freedom. It is not bad to experience some fear, stress or sadness because the experiencing itself is the result of your freedom, your openness and receptiveness. Also looking back on ourselves in the past is thus placing ourselves in that time. And perhaps some sadness arises about what has been lost, or hasn't been achieved. That too is freedom; the experiencing itself of that sadness. When you don't attach yourself to the images and cling to them, 'this as it is' will absorb them all and consequently they all will vanish into the freedom, openness and receptiveness of your beingness.

Your freedom also gives you the opportunity to let images soften and dissolve in this now. What remains is a freedom that doesn't stand within time but in timelessness. Here there is no cause and effect. It is not separated from time because the experiencing of this as it is simply continues. But you stand within the imageless freedom, openness and receptiveness, completely free to respond to whatever comes to you in the way you see fit, at your own free discretion.

The Buddha once gave a lecture in which he only smiled and held up an open flower. His disciple Makakashyo was the only one who understood. The other disciples were probably wondering why the Buddha was not saying anything. Cause and conditions – a lecture is going to be given – and for those who are within time there is the expectation of words to be spoken. But the Buddha

employed his freedom and indicated that freedom through a smile and an open flower. And Makakashyo recognized this freedom within the Buddha as well as within himself.

Within a few hours our retreat will come to an end and everybody will return to their own home and tomorrow perhaps to their work place. Maybe later today you will be with your partner or friend again, and tomorrow with colleagues. Our life within time simply continues – but don't forget your freedom. The scripture we sang this morning, the *Most Excellent Mirror – Samadhi*, starts with “The Buddhas and Ancestors have directly handed down to us the Dharma of This as it is, preserve well for you now have”<sup>1</sup>. One could also read the last part of the sentence as “honour well ...” that is the insight of this as it is, which is your freedom, openness and receptiveness. Preserve well, honour that insight. How do we do that?

Yesterday during our dharma discussion somebody already hinted at this by saying “to slow down a bit”. There are so many instances during the day in which we can take a step outside time and rest within our beingness so that we can realize again that the experiencing of this as it is, is in itself our complete freedom, our openness and receptiveness. Have the courage to take up your freedom and to employ it by truly looking to see what is good to do. Yesterday we were also talking about a painter's palette of colours in that regard. Which colour do you choose?

Freedom: nobody can take it away from you because you are it. But hold on to an image of yourself in time and your freedom seems to disappear behind the clouds. It seems to recede into the darkness but only because you put an image centre stage within the light. However, that is your freedom and due to that freedom you can return to imageless beingness. Only you can engage your freedom. It rests fully within your open hands.

*Notes*

- [1.](#) This is the English translation of the Dutch text of the scripture.



## Practice makes Perfect

Be Careful what you Practice.

David Sease

—*South Carolina–USA*—

Where I'm from in South Carolina, churches often have billboards out by the road. Many of the billboards have quotes on them that are often funny or witty and they almost always point to some religious teaching that takes place within the church or within their church's tradition. Until recently, one of my favorites was "Sign broken, message inside". On the way to work the other day, I saw a message on the billboard of a Baptist church that really resonated with me. It said, in big, black, plastic letters, "Practice makes perfect. Be careful what you practice". I have thought about that quote almost every day since I saw it and it has really inspired my Buddhist practice.

I grew up hearing the saying that practice makes perfect. As a kid, it meant that I needed to practice my piano for an upcoming recital or something like that. Later in my teens, twenties, and thirties, it meant that I needed to get together with the band that I played in so that we could

practice for an upcoming concert or tour. It made perfect sense. If I wanted to play well at the recital, I needed to practice a lot so that during the performance, I could easily retrieve the parts that I needed to play. If the band wanted to play a good concert, we knew that it would be helpful to have hours of practice so that no matter what happened during the show, we could at least play our songs well. For years, that is what practice meant to me. Review, review, review, review, and review so that when the “big event” took place, it’d go smoothly. I kind of separated this part of life into two parts; practice and “big event”.

Since I’ve been training in Buddhism though, the idea of what practice is has changed, and it is not limited to just focusing on “the big event” like it used to be. It reminds me much more of my experience skateboarding, where I’d go outside and “practice” doing a trick for what seemed like hours. There was never a “big event” for which I was preparing. I wasn’t going to be in a competition or anything like that. I was just trying to learn tricks. The practicing of a trick is what skateboarding is for me. It is fun in and of itself. As a novice triathlete, I do a lot of training for upcoming races. I swim, run, and ride my bike for miles, over and over, hopefully building up enough strength to complete whatever race I signed up to do. I am learning though that even the race itself (the big event) is a type of practice for future races. In other words, there is an element of practice in the daily training and in the race itself.

Looking back through my life, whether it was practicing piano, guitar, math, skateboarding, being a friend, or whatever, it was always like this. I was always practicing for more than just the recital, concert, or math test. I was actually practicing being a human, one that had hobbies, relationships, and responsibilities! This is the wonderful thing about looking at life from a Buddhist perspective. In a spiritual sense, our lives are both the “big event” and the practice. We always get a chance to look at what we are doing at any moment, recognizing the gravity of the situation (since it is the “big event” of life) and at the same time, realizing that we are just learning every step of the way, seeing each moment as an opportunity to practice doing whatever we are doing. This brings me great relief because it means that there is room for mistakes. I have to take on the responsibility to look at these mistakes and learn from them, but I am not going to mess anything up by making a mistake.

For a while now, I have appreciated the verses and scriptures that we recite during our ceremonies. I have also always appreciated the verses that we have around the Priory. For example, whenever we brush our teeth, we pray that all living things may profit and understand the truth quickly. We pray that we will avail ourselves of purifying patience when we wash our hands after using the restroom. Since I use the restroom and brush my teeth every day, I have a wonderful opportunity to recite these verses multiple times a day. These verses remind me to train. They remind me to bring my mind back to whatever it is that I am doing. I often wished that I had a little verse like these for more things that

happened in my daily life. And then, one day, on the way to work, a Baptist church gave me the verse I was looking for. “Practice makes perfect. Be careful what you practice”.

Among many other roles I have in life, I am a father and a husband. Now that I have learned this wonderful quote, I can put it into practice all the time. For example, when my son or wife is explaining something to me or telling me a story and I hear my phone beep because a text message has come in, I think “practice makes perfect, be careful what you practice”. Do I want to perfect being a distractible person who habitually checks his phone the moment it beeps or do I want to practice being present in the conversation that is going on by sitting still within the urge to check my phone? When someone at work does something that irritates me, I think, “do I want to perfect being a person who attaches to irritation and expresses it when someone does something I don’t like or do I want to practice patience by trying to be open to working on sympathy and tenderness instead? Do I want to perfect the skill of hardening my opinions by holding on to them by conducting real or imagined arguments with other people with whom I disagree or do I want to practice purifying patience and understanding and learning how to conduct positive discourse?”

By choosing to follow the impulse to grab the phone, become irritated with a co-worker, or to harden my opinions, I am indulging in these habits. I give energy to them and in a sense, perfect them. On the other hand, by choosing to sit still within these very temptations, I am practicing letting go

of these inclinations. Reminding myself of this quote helps me to practice letting go. After all, it is an easy decision. Of course, I would rather be good at being sympathetic, tender, charitable, and benevolent than I would being irritable, distractible, and opinionated. So, like the sign says, I need to be careful of what I practice, lest I perfect being irritable, opinionated, and distractible.

Reminding myself that practice makes perfect has been helpful in noticing the relationship between cause and effect. When I practice something, I give it attention and energy. That attention and energy will likely propel whatever is being practiced into a future existence that I will have to deal with, even if it is just the “me” of five minutes into the future. If I practice being greedy, angry, or deluded, the effect is that I will be more likely to retrieve the skill of being greedy, angry, and deluded in the future. These are not states of being that I want to perfect. On the other hand, if I can remind myself of what it is that I am practicing, the purpose for which I am training, I can choose to try to do things that will limit suffering for myself and others. I can choose to live from a place of stillness.

Because I am not a fixed, solid, unchangeable self that is unable to grow and learn, I can look at life as a series of opportunities to practice the Buddha Dharma. If I don't do it perfectly in one moment, it is ok because after all, this is just practice. I think that there is merit in the process of making that mistake as long as I am willing to look at it and practice being still and following the Precepts the next time that

opportunity comes along. It is important though, for me, to remember that I need to be careful of what I practice! I don't think it is necessary for me to perfect following the path of the Buddha, it is just important that I practice following it.

# Taking Refuge in the Three Treasures and giving Them Expression in our Lives

Rev. Master Alicia Rowe

—*Sitting Buddha Hermitage, Cromford–UK*—

*Transcription of a talk given at the 2007 /2008 New Year retreat  
at Throssel Hole Abbey*

As Buddhists we take refuge in the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Taking refuge in the Three Treasures is common to all schools of Buddhism. In fact it is the central and defining act of a Buddhist – taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha is what makes one a Buddhist.

Lifestyle is secondary. How we choose to live our lives, the form we choose, is the expression of the refuge, not the refuge itself. My refuge is not in being a monk. One's refuge cannot be one's career or one's relationships. All these things are transitory and if clung to as a means of making one feel complete, they can only lead to suffering. We are extremely fortunate to live in a country where we can openly practise our religion, but if Britain was ever invaded and I was no longer allowed to live as a monk, I could still take

my refuge in the Three Treasures. The Three Treasures are eternal; they do not depend on conditions.

Our fundamental delusion as human beings is that we are separate, limited individuals. This causes us to feel that we are lacking something, that we need to acquire things to complete us – relationships, vocations or careers, possessions or experiences. So we grasp at these things, hoping for satisfaction, but they can never fulfil us because there was no lack in the first place. We are barking up the wrong tree. We are inherently complete because we are not separate.

What we need to do, in fact, is turn our view around 180 degrees. Instead of looking for what we can gain from any particular situation, we should look at what we can *give* to it. And what we can give is ourselves, wholeheartedly. And the paradox is that when we give in such a way what we receive back is infinitely more satisfying than anything we could have gotten by our previous strategy of self-interest. If we do the best we can in whatever job, friendship etc. that we are in, then what is best will arise naturally as part of that. Yes, we have choice and if we can choose a vocation, a house, a friendship that we especially enjoy then that is very good. And if we can't, nothing is wrong.

If you are stuck in a job you can't change or an obligation you can't get out of, or you have to sit on the train next to someone who is really annoying you, again, turn your view around and look at what the situation is giving you, at



what it is teaching you, what it is showing you about your own mind, rather than thinking that you are diminished or harmed by it in some way.

Traditional Japanese temples were built around a central pillar which penetrated through all the levels of the temple so that when there was an earthquake the building shook, but the presence of the central pillar prevented the building from being shaken apart. The Three Treasures are like our central pillar, anchoring us in this life. So it matters not whether one is a lay trainee or a monk, single or in a relationship, whether one has a career or a family or both or neither. What matters is that we make the Three Treasures our refuge and that our life expresses them in everything we do.

Don't be put off by the word 'refuge'. It does not mean running away from life. A refuge is a safe place, and that safe place exists for us in every moment, in every situation. The Three Treasures are our pillar of strength in every storm.

Our understanding of the meaning of taking refuge deepens in the process of doing it. Taking refuge may be marked by significant events or stages in our lives, such as coming to Jukai, or making a decision to give up an unethical job or relationship, or committing to a daily meditation practice. Or perhaps there are no specific markers for you, but looking back you can see how the central axis of your life has moved towards the Three Treasures and you are now more concerned with Truth than with your own comfort.

So let's take each of the Three Treasures in turn and look at what each one is and what it means to take refuge in each.

### **The Buddha Refuge**

The Buddha refuge comprises both the historical Buddha Shakyamuni and the Eternal Buddha, or Buddha Nature, which is our own true nature.

We can take refuge in the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, even though he died some 2500 years ago. We can take refuge in the fact of his life and his enlightenment because he was an ordinary man, albeit rather special, but a human being like us nevertheless. The Truth that he realised was discovered through his own efforts – not through divine revelation. So we too can come to knowledge of our own true nature by following his teaching. And we can have confidence that it is possible because of his example.

The Buddha Refuge also includes all those who are our teachers at the current time, who are for us as the Buddha was for his disciples.

So when we bow towards a statue of Shakyamuni Buddha, we are expressing our gratitude and respect for his life and Teaching. And this is so even if you are not aware of feeling these things at the time. Body and mind are not separate: the attitude of mind affects the attitude of body and vice versa. When we bow the posture of our body influences our mind, as I say, whether we are conscious of it or not.

But actually, the statue we bow to most here at Throssel, the statue on the ceremony hall altar, is not Shakyamuni Buddha, but Vairocana, the Cosmic Buddha, who represents the eternal and infinite aspect of Buddhahood, the Buddha Nature, our own true nature. So when we bow to this statue we are respecting and honouring the true nature of each and every one of us – including ourselves. We are giving ourselves respect.

So we take refuge in the Buddha Nature, the Eternal Buddha, whenever we make the effort to be still, to let go of all our grasping and pushing away, the greed, anger and delusion, the thoughts, opinions and fantasies – in other words, when we bring our minds into meditation.

### **The Dharma Refuge**

Put simply, the word Dharma means Truth, and the ways that Truth can be communicated to us are infinite. The Dharma can be communicated with words, and when we think of the Dharma we mostly think of the teachings of the Buddhas and Ancestors as they have come down to us in the scriptures. Our teachers of the present day also communicate the Dharma to us both in their words and the example of their practice.

The Dharma becomes a refuge for us when we study it in such a way that it can resonate with our own experience and insight. This is not academic study. When we read a Buddhist scripture or, for example, the writings of Great Master Dōgen, we should choose a short section, a paragraph

or a page, and read it without analysing it, simply letting the words wash through us. Then sit quietly and perhaps reread the section after a while. This is a meditative way of reading which allows the scripture to work on us rather than the other way around.

Singing or chanting scripture is another way of absorbing it which engages us physically, in the singing, as well as mentally.

In fact the whole universe is expressing the Dharma and we can take refuge in it by taking refuge in the truth of this moment, turning towards it, immersing ourselves in it. We resist by tensing in body and mind, armouring our bodies with muscular tension, and telling ourselves stories. In meditation we relax the body and let go of the stories, i.e. we let go of the resistance to the truth of this moment. The Buddha discovered the Truth and he pointed others toward it. The Truth is something you have to realise for yourself. There are many ways of communicating it, but it is not truly understood until we have made it real for ourselves. The Truth is not a doctrine of belief; it is a knowledge beyond intellectual knowledge, a knowing in the depths of one's being.

### **The Sangha Refuge**

When we take refuge in the Buddha we are taking refuge in our own Buddha nature. When we take refuge in the Sangha we are taking refuge in the Buddha nature of others and, since all beings have Buddha nature, we are saying that the

Sangha is all beings. This is much wider than the commonly accepted definition of sangha as all those who take refuge in the Buddha and Dharma, and it has some interesting implications for taking refuge.

If we are fortunate enough to have contact with fellow Buddhist trainees and Dharma teachers, the common spiritual commitment provides the basis for a mutual exploration of the Truth which can open up our understanding often far more quickly than reflecting on it alone.

This can happen through spiritual counselling, when we seek the advice of a teacher, and it can happen through spiritual conversation with fellow trainees and it can happen through simply being together and practising seeing the Buddha nature in each other, which we do by accepting that, whatever the other person's behaviour may be, they are doing their best to train and we accord them respect for that.

However, when we take the wider definition of Sangha as all beings, then it is not essential to have regular contact with fellow trainees. We can practise recognising the Buddha nature in all beings by treating everyone with respect and kindness and always looking for the best in people and relating to them on that basis. In that way we are taking refuge in the Sangha.

# News of the Order

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## Europe

### Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey

—Northumberland, England—UK—

**Monastic news:** On July 2<sup>nd</sup> we were delighted to welcome Rev. Master Haryo from Shasta Abbey. We are deeply grateful for all that he does and it is a pleasure to have him with us.

In the beginning of September, we also welcomed Rev. Master Oriana for a five month stay while Rev. Master Hugh covers for her as Prior at Eugene Buddhist Priory. Rev. Master Oriana was resident here for the first 20 years of her monastic life and it is lovely to have her with us again for this time.

For our July Introductory Retreat, Rev. Bridin came with two of the congregation at her temple in Latvia. It was good to have them with us for the weekend.

**Open Day:** We held our first open day for many years on a gloriously warm and sunny July 6<sup>th</sup>. We welcomed a steady stream of visitors throughout the Saturday afternoon. It was wonderful to meet so many local people and strengthen our bonds with the broader community in our beautiful rural area. We were also pleased to meet Ven. Trinley, a monk in the Tibetan Buddhist Monastic tradition, who drove over from our neighbouring monastery Samye-ling in Eskdalemuir. He presented Rev. Master Leandra with gifts from their Abbot.



*Ven Trinley and Rev. Master leandra*

**August training period:** After some years, we offered an August training period again this year. This began after the Introductory Retreat and continued until the end of the August Sesshin. The usual daily schedule included classes by senior monks every afternoon and we offered the opportunity to train to be precentor and chaplain at Evening service. Local congregation joined a good turnover of other guests during the month.

**Sesshins:** Our first summer sesshin was led by Rev. Alina in July. Her article ‘Meeting the Moment’, from the recent OBC Journal, was the starting point for the talks this retreat. Rev. Master Willard led the August sesshin this year.

**Carrshield Picnic:** We were invited to a Picnic organised by ‘Carrshield Connections’ at Barney Crag Mineshop, which is along the valley from Throssel Hole, to celebrate the opening of a community centre in the refurbished buildings there. It was attended by a few monks who enjoyed taking part in ‘Plastic Duck racing’ on the stream. The event was reported in our local newspaper, the Hexham Courant which included this photo:



*Duck race in progress*

**Preparing for the Gathering:** We have begun preparations for hosting the Order’s biennial gathering of monks in September. We very much appreciate the opportunity to come together and renew connections with fellow monks, many having trained together for decades. We will also have the chance to discuss common issues facing us all.

**Building work:** We had some much needed restoration work on two of our porches; outside the Abbots House and the Novices Common Room. A local builder came to render and plaster the walls and fit new double glazed windows. We also refreshed the outside of the Abbots House with a coat of whitewash.

*—Rev. Alina*

## De Dharmatoevlucht

*—Apeldoorn, The Netherlands —*

The move to our current location last year has turned out to be very beneficial; the Sangha has grown and the temple is well visited. We now have a spacious zendo and common room and the property has a lovely quiet feel. Several local newspapers have recently published some nice articles about our relocation, who we



are and what we practice. We have regular visits from pupils and students of different ages from various local schools and colleges for an introduction to Zen practice and meditation. It is always wonderful to see how easy it is for young children to settle and become inwardly still, often to the surprise of the adults that accompany them during their visit. One school principal even remarked, whilst leaving the temple, that she plans to have the kids starting their school day with a short meditation. For more mature teenagers and adults this simplicity of our practice does seem to recede so if kids could be offered some meditation practice in schools at an early age, how wonderful that would be!

**Ordinations:** Two sangha members have recently received lay ordination: Roel van der Hoek and Monique de Haan. We wish them all the best in their training.

**Relocation of the temple:** Around two years ago we were hoping to buy an old fire station, with financial help from the local city council. Because serious soil contamination was discovered, the sale of the building was postponed to a later date which meant that we had to move to our current beautiful location. In the meantime soil clearance has happened but also a change in the political composition of the city council who decided to sell the fire station to a commercial enterprise. Buying another property is presently not feasible due to the extreme shortage of properties on the Dutch housing market, the high prices and the very strict rules with regard to obtaining mortgages. However, I don't doubt that this will become a possibility in the next 5 to 10 years' time.

The owner of the building we are located at, whose wife recently suddenly passed away, has decided recently to put the property up for sale at the beginning of March next year, which means that we will have to relocate the temple once again. This is a shame but the fact that the Buddha himself travelled extensively and mostly sat and taught whilst sitting under a tree is a consolation and gives us the confidence that whatever new premises we'll find, it will be fine. We have already found a

promising new location that could work very well. As it is a large open space some inner walls need to be constructed, some refurbishing needs to take place and a kitchen needs to be installed. We hope that within a few weeks' time it will be clear if and when we can move to this new location.

As we have received many kind donations for acquiring and refurbishing the old fire station, we will contact each donor to ask if they would like us to return the amount given or if we may use it for the further development of the temple.



*Wesak day*

*—Rev. Master Baldwin*

## Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory

*—Norwich—UK—*

**Recent events:** On 5th May, we celebrated Wesak, the Festival of the Buddha's Birth. Several people came along to meditate and take part in the ceremony, which was a joyful Sangha occasion. A Dharma talk and discussion afterwards focussed on

Wesak as an opportunity to express our gratitude for the practice that has come down to us from the Buddha.



*Wesak Day*

In mid-May, we heard of the death of Ralph Ostler, a member of the Cambridge Sangha. Ralph was 95 when he died and he had been attending group meetings until a couple of years before. He inspired us all by his determination to make the 20-mile journey from his home to the meetings by public transport, as well as even longer journeys to attend day retreats at Wymondham and the first anniversary celebration of the Priory in Norwich. Ralph's crematorium service included a Buddhist contribution from Cambridge Sangha members. At the Priory, several of the Norwich Sangha came along to attend a ceremony marking Ralph's passing and to meditate together. When I next visited the Cambridge group, on 25th June, we held a memorial ceremony for Ralph at the start of the group meeting and later shared our memories of him as we had tea.

Our Summer Party in Erpingham on 30th June was a very enjoyable event.

The tranquil North Norfolk setting, the beautiful gardens and orchard, the pleasant weather and a bring-and-share lunch enabled us to be together as a Sangha in a relaxed and informal way. A large and delicious vegan cake made the gathering even more special. Thank you to all who contributed to the success of the day, by offering their hospitality, good food and lifts from the Priory.



*Summer party*

On 11th August, we had a lay ordination ceremony at the Priory, as Jane Leggett received the Precepts and formally became a Buddhist. The ceremony was attended by several Sangha members, who were able to renew their commitment to base their lives in the Precepts. It was a pleasure to enable Jane to take this important step and we congratulate her and wish her well as her life of training unfolds.



*Jane with Rev. Master Leoma*

**Garden Buddha statue:** The Priory now has a lovely stone Buddha statue in its garden, a gift from the Sangha. Thank you very much to everyone who contributed to it. The Buddha has been positioned so that he is clearly visible to everybody leaving the house, while being shielded from the road. He is already a serene presence in the garden and will undoubtedly become a much-loved feature of the Priory.



*Buddha statue in the garden*

**Thanks:** I am very grateful to have had the opportunity for a week of retreat time in Blakeney in July. A big thank you to those who enabled that to happen, by offering me a place to stay and by looking after the Priory and keeping it functioning while I was away. As always, I am also grateful to those people who offer their time to help with keeping the Priory and its garden tidy, well maintained and welcoming.

—*Rev. Master Leoma*

## The Place of Peace Dharma House

—*Abersytwyth, Wales*—

For the last 15 years Catherine Artindale has given countless hours, and great care, to looking after our book keeping and preparing our accounts for the end of year Independent Examination. She has now stepped down, and John Adams, of the Teesside Meditation Group, has very generously offered to take

over. The trustees of our charity, The Life of Faith, which supports The Place of Peace, would like to thank both Catherine and John.

This summer we have welcomed retreat guests from Totnes and Australia. In July Moira Pagan, came from New South Wales for private retreat time. She has been part of The Place of Peace Sangha from the beginning, and maintains a strong connection with us. It was good to sit with her again. Moira, who is an artist, donated a beautiful painting which expresses the spirit of compassion and wisdom in human form.

—*Rev. Master Myōhō*

## Reading Buddhist Priory

—*Reading, England–UK—*

**Festivals and Ceremonies:** The festival for Great Master Dōgen was celebrated in early June, and that of Manjusri in August. Each was followed by a Dharma talk given by Reverend Gareth, and discussions over tea and celebratory cake. The regular program of Festivals continue to be well supported and attended.

A special ceremony was held at the Priory on July 5<sup>th</sup> with Paul, a sangha member, taking the Precepts. He had been unable to join Jukai earlier in the year, and we were fortunate that Reverend Gareth was able to conduct the Taking of the Precepts ceremony, (lay ordination) at the Priory. A local sangha member presented, and a small number from the regular Friday afternoon group were present to witness the ceremony. A strawberry meringue tea followed, which was appreciated on this lovely occasion.

**Retreats at the Priory:** Day and half-day retreats were held in June, and a drop-in weekend retreat took place in July. These were attended by sangha members from the wider community of south east England as well as local members.

**Group Visits:** Reverend Gareth has visited groups in London, Milton Keynes and the Isle of Wight for day and half-day

retreats. As well as receiving the benefit of a visiting monk, the retreats also provide the opportunity to strengthen ties between local and wider sangha members when travel is practicable.

**Refurbishments:** A new boiler was installed in early July after the previous one, having given many years of faithful service, finally limped to its end. The Prior was very grateful to benefit from a bequest which considerably helped towards the cost of the boiler.

**Social Events:** On a hot sunny Saturday in late June Rev. Gareth was very pleased to accept an invite from four sangha members for a very pleasant day out to the Gilbert White Museum, a well-known attraction in nearby rural Hampshire.

A Film Night was held in July after one of the regular Friday afternoon sessions. Martin Scorsese's 'Silence' proved to be a gripping, thought-provoking and at times, harrowing exposition of the nature of belief and faith.

—Gina Bovan

## Wolk-en-Water Hermitage

—*Vinkeven—The Netherlands*—

On 28th July we had a festive day at Wolk-en-Water Hermitage with a dedication ceremony for the new meditation hall.

It was at the tail-end of a very hot week and although morning, we measured 30 degrees Celsius in and outside the hall.

Even so, the 16 people who graciously came for the celebration had bright spirits and took the right steps where the ceremonial choreography was unusual.

After the ceremony Rev. Master Hakuun spoke about paying Homage to the Buddha, for which one needs to be awake and aware (“Adoration to all the Buddhas”) and about the simple



but profound Kanzeon chant of Chinese origin: the open and aware heart of compassion and gratitude.

Rev. Master Saido spoke among other things about the establishing of a new temple and the aptness of our temple's name in this particular region: Water from a huge inland lake flows out to the land and returns when it rains; responding to conditions like the flowing in and out from the source.

It was appreciated by all that Rev. Master Saido came to join us on this day and that Rev. Master Baldwin was present as well.

People brought lovely home-made meals to share. Thank you all.

—*Rev. Master Hakuun*

# News of the Order

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## Canada and USA

### Shasta Abbey

—*Shasta Abbey, CA–USA*—

**Community members:** On 19<sup>th</sup> April Rev. Trahearn received Dharma Transmission from Rev. Master Meian. On 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> June we had postulant entry ceremonies for Mike Summers and Arunima Dhar. We wish all three well in their training.



*Rev. Trahearn; Mike & Arunima*

In mid-June Rev. Vivian returned from a six-month stay at Throssel Abbey, and at the end of June she left Shasta Abbey, first to lead a retreat at the Bear River Meditation Group, and then to

spend some time in retreat at Wallowa Buddhist Temple. We had a farewell community tea in which we expressed our gratitude for her many years of training with us. We wish her all the best as she takes this next step in her training.

**Monastic Guests:** Rev. Valeria Allison of the Lions Gate Buddhist Priory in Canada spent several months with us over the summer, and for three weeks in June we welcomed Ven. Woo Sang Sunim, a monk in the Korean Zen tradition. She is presently enrolled in the chaplaincy program at the University of the West, affiliated with Hsi Lai Temple in Los Angeles. We appreciated both monks' help in various monastic offices.

**Ceremonies:** On 25<sup>th</sup> May we had a blessing ceremony for Susan Rathbun's new service dog, Drake. She and her partner came from Klamath Falls for the event. On 8<sup>th</sup> June we held our annual Great Compassion Vigil, to which we invite our local Mount Shasta community. The ceremony offers prayers for peace and harmony in the world; Rev. Helen, the Prior at Redding, played the organ and brought several Priory members with her for the service.

**Retreats:** Our summer retreat program began on 16<sup>th</sup> June with Rev. Master Meian's week-long Teachings from the Lotus Sutra Retreat. Each day she offered a talk on a theme from the Scripture: faith, skillful means, parables, prediction of Buddhahood, Buddha Nature, and the Bodhisattva. July saw the third year for our three-week lay intensive: we had seven to eight guests who joined our lay residents for a total of 12-14 participants. All seemed to find it meaningful and helpful and expressed a wish to return. During the lay intensive Rev. Master Kōdō offered an extended week-end retreat on The Merit of Lay Training in Troubled Times, which was well-attended. Then in August Rev. Master Serena along with Rev. Master Oriana from the Eugene Priory jointly offered a week-long retreat on The Mind that Seeks the Way.

**Group Visits:** We hosted several group visits over the summer. In June Saul Bardofsky and the international Dervish Healing Order of Sufis took a break from their summer camp at College of the Siskiyous in Weed to join us for lunch. As usual on their annual visit, they chanted the Heart Sutra and danced around Rev. Master Jiyu's stupa. As Saul was instrumental in helping Rev. Master Jiyu locate and acquire the Abbey property, the group feels a strong connection to the monastery.



*Sufi friends at stupa*

On 20<sup>th</sup> July we were visited by long-time friend Rev. Heng Sure, four monks, and forty lay people affiliated with Berkeley Buddhist Monastery and City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. The group stopped in for lunch on their way home from a summer camp in western Oregon.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> August we hosted an annual visit of Vietnamese devotees from the San Francisco Bay Area. As usual they brought an abundance of offerings and the sheer joy of being here. We joined them in chanting and bowing in the Buddha Hall, Rev.

Master Meian gave a short Dharma talk, and then we all had a meal together in the picnic area. We are always touched and humbled by their devotion, faith, and long-time commitment to the Buddha Way.

**11th Global Buddhism Conference “What’s After Mindfulness?” Urban Retreat:** Several Abbey monks participated in this event held on the University of California Berkeley campus 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> June. This was the first time the Conference has come to the US and was envisioned as “a big Dharma and Sangha Dana offering to our diverse greater Buddhist community and seekers...” Berkeley Buddhist Priory and Shasta Abbey shared an information booth; Rev. Master Andō, with Rev. Dilys’s assistance, led a workshop on “Buddhist Chanting to Western Sacred Music”; and Rev. Master Kinrei offered a short talk on meditation and led a meditation period afterwards. Both events were well received and attended.



*Chant workshop at global conference*

**Shasta Abbey Press Announcement:** Shasta Abbey Press is pleased to announce that Rev. Master Jiyu’s book *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom* is back in print. It is available through Lulu.com, [here](#).

**Buddha Hall Cupboards:** In August we installed new beautifully crafted cupboards on the south side of the Buddha Hall. These enable us to offer lay trainees the opportunity to stay at the monastery in a fashion similar to monks living in the meditation hall. As part of a driveway widening project at the Fugen Hermitage, Rev. Master Chosei felled the trees and milled them for lumber to construct the cupboards. Entailing many hours of finish work, Rev. Master Jishō and a number of lay sangha helped complete the project.



*Buddha Hall cupboards*

—Rev. Master Oswin

## Lions Gate Buddhist Priory

—Lytton, British Columbia—Canada—

On Saturday, June 22, Rev. Master Kōten, Rev. Master Aurelian, and several congregation members attended a 49th-day memorial at Kagyu Kunkhyab Chuling, a Tibetan temple in Burnaby, BC, for our dear friend Lama Tsewang. Afterward

people from many various places talked about how Lama Tsewang had helped them during his lifetime. On Sunday, June 30, we held simultaneous memorial services for him during our regular meditation meetings in Lytton and Vancouver.

In June, Reverend Valeria left for Shasta Abbey to spend a few months training with the monastic community. Also in June, Rev. Master Kōten and Rev. Master Aurelian traveled to Wallowa Buddhist Temple, a temple of our Order in Joseph, Oregon, to visit Rev. Master Meidō, Rev. Clairissa, and the congregation there. During our travels, we had the opportunity for a short overnight visit with Rev. Master Leon, Prior of the Portland Buddhist Priory. In Joseph, Rev. Master Kōten offered Dharma Talks, a day retreat, and private spiritual counseling to the congregation members, many of whom have been introduced to him through the recorded Dharma Talks that we offer online. We are grateful to the monks and congregation of Wallowa Temple for their warm and gracious hospitality.

Two projects have occupied our attention this spring. The first is the building of stairs and a platform around the Kwan Yin statue on Fearlessness Peak with bricks. To facilitate this, we hired our neighbour in the valley to haul gravel in order to improve access on the road leading up to the site. We hired our neighbour and friend, Dave Turley, to do the brickwork, which he finished on July 12. We think the statue looks very good with its new surroundings, and we invite everyone to come and see it.



*Kwan Yin at Fearlessness Peak*

The other project is the finishing work on Mandala Hall. The crew from Skeetchestn came to erect and paint the siding. We have offers from congregation members to finish around the windows and doors, and to paint the interior, and we are hoping this work will be completed by early September. Later this fall, Dave will install brickwork around the outside perimeter of Mandala Hall. We are hoping to have the building ready to use before the winter comes.





*Mandala Hall at Fearlessness Peak*

We planted a vegetable garden on the east side of Bodhidharma Hall, with tomatoes, parsley, carrots, beets, radishes, beans, lettuce, peas, etc. We also planted several fruit trees and berry bushes around the building. So far everything has been growing very nicely, and the copious spring rain we received has helped a lot.

We have had many visitors this spring, from Vancouver, Kelowna, Ontario, Taiwan and California, and our schedule of summer retreats has gone well. On Sunday, June 23, we celebrated the June Kanzeon Festival ceremony at the Chinese Museum in Lytton. About 15 people attended, and we had a festive meal afterwards.

*—Rev. Master Aurelian*

## Wallowa Buddhist Temple

—Joseph, Oregon – USA –

We have been blessed this summer with mild weather and a calm local wildfire season, as well as many drop-in visitors and friends.

A highlight of our summer was the week-long visit in June from Rev. Master Kōten and Rev. Master Aurelian from Dragon Flower Mountain near Lytton, B.C., Canada. While here, Rev. Master Kōten generously offered a day-long retreat for the congregation with individual spiritual counseling, as well as the teaching for our regular Sunday morning retreat. The Dharma talks he gave for both are titled *Real and Unreal* and *Before and After*, and can be downloaded at the Lions Gate Buddhist Priory website, [www.lionsgatebuddhistpriory.ca/Dharma Talks - Recent.htm](http://www.lionsgatebuddhistpriory.ca/Dharma_Talks_-_Recent.htm). It was a delight to welcome these two monks into our daily lives here at the temple, and enjoy this rare opportunity to be together. The congregation have been listening to Rev. Master Kōten's recorded talks for many years, both at home and occasionally also at the temple, and very much appreciated being able to train with him in person.

**Ceremonial:** On June 2<sup>nd</sup> over a dozen people attended a joyous Wesak celebration, followed by a potluck for the congregation, family, friends, and neighbors. Rev. Master Meidō was celebrant on July 25<sup>th</sup> in a memorial for Cooper, beloved dog friend of our neighbors Christina and Steve.

**Retreat Guests:** In July, we were pleased to welcome another monk of the Order, Rev. Vivian, who will be here for a three-month retreat. Ernie Rimerman, a long time lay minister from Eugene, Oregon, also came for six days in July, during which time he kindly offered the wisdom of his many years of experience in training in his talk during our Sunday morning retreat, focusing on the verse “With the ideal comes the actual,” from the *Sandokai*. Five other retreat guests were gladly welcomed this summer: two

from our local area, one from Bend, Oregon, one from Seattle, Washington, and Corrinne Allyson from Victoria, B.C. Canada.

**Individual Retreats:** One of the Wallowa Buddhist Temple's main purposes is to offer a place where both monks and congregation from our wider Sangha can come for individual retreats. Those interested in arranging such a retreat are welcome to call or write for more information.

—*Rev. Master Meidō and Rev. Clairissa*

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**ID:** Sandpoint

**MT:** Whitefish

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Edmonton, Alberta  
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**UK:** Aberdeen, Aberfeldy,  
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Carmarthen, Cirencester, Cornwall,  
Dundee, Galloway, Hexham,  
Huddersfield, Inverness, Jersey,  
Lancaster, Leeds, Leicester,  
London, Matlock, Milton Keynes,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, North  
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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.

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