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of the Order Worldwide*

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*The story of the offering of this Kanzeon statue is in  
[Lions Gate Priory news](#)*

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# Reverend Master Jiyu Speaks of Ceremonial

Reverend Master Jiyu-Kennett

*Founder and former Head of the Order and former Abbess of  
Shasta Abbey*

*An extract from 'The Wild White Goose' Volume I, based on Rev. Master Jiyu's diaries of her time of training at Sojiji temple in Japan.<sup>1</sup>*

IT IS REALLY WONDERFUL TO HAVE SO MUCH TO DO; performing ceremonies, going to meditation, looking after the Director, making sure that his assistant cleans his room properly and making sure that everything is done to keep his robes clean and mended. There is a tremendous amount of teaching that he gives every time I walk into his room. We were celebrating an important ceremony today, one of a whole collection of memorial ceremonies since it was his memorial duty day; there were something like forty of them.

Just before it he turned to me and said, “By doing ceremonial we can see that meditation is in all things, in all work, in all places. As we walk around in the nenge<sup>2</sup> always clockwise, always going in one direction, never going backwards, always going on, we can understand the ‘Hannyashingyō’ (*The Scripture of Great Wisdom*, the Heart Sutra). As we stand still to recite the Scriptures we can know that, whether we are lying down, standing up or sitting still, that which is within us can be still and complete. Always the movement and the stillness are one thing; always the going,

going, going on. Sometimes a priest places incense on the altar and sometimes he smells a cabbage in the pot. Sometimes he is in the meditation hall and sometimes he goes to the toilet. Whatever he does must be a religious act; an act of Buddha; for all work is the work of Buddha. If he can see any difference between the secular and the sacred then he does not understand Buddhism at all. We can know this by how flustered he gets when he assists at a ceremony. If others frighten him, if the form of the ceremony is all that matters, if what counts is doing the ceremony exactly right as opposed to doing the ceremony, allowing it to do itself, if he in any way embarrassed, he does not understand the ceremony. He who works from the centre, he who lives within his centre and radiates therefrom, can do all the ceremonies without doing ceremonies and all ceremonies are needed. All of everyday life is a ceremony of gratitude. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Reverend Director."

"You do," he said, "I watched you this morning. There were several people who were grumbling under their breath, hissing at you for not standing correctly or not holding the incense correctly or not putting it absolutely straight in the bowl. And I noticed what you did. Every time you made the gasshō, put to rights what they had complained about and, when they had nothing to complain about, you made the gasshō and did nothing more than just stand or sit. That is to live from the centre. I am pleased with you."

"Yes, Reverend Director." I bowed and the procession started again.

*Notes*

1. Jiyu-Kennett, Rev. Master. *The Wild White Goose*, 2nd edition (Shasta Abbey Press, 2002) page 231 – 232.
2. This expression could be interpreted in various ways. ‘Nenge’ can mean flower, and is often part of an expression which refers to the Buddha holding up a flower and Makakashyo smiling in recognition. Here it is more the expression of the gasshō in activity, which the Director describes in the last paragraph.



*Reverend Master Jiyu at her Kessei ceremonies at Umpukuji temple in 1964.*

# Why Do Ceremonial?

Rev. Master Meian Elbert

—*Abbess, Shasta Abbey, Mt. Shasta, CA—USA*—

IN ALL MAJOR BUDDHIST TRADITIONS THERE IS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CEREMONIAL. In some it is the main focus of daily practice, in others it is minimal, but it is always there in one form or another. Here in the West, many Buddhists don't see the point of doing ceremonies. For some people it is a strong reminder, whether positive or negative, of their former religion. It may be seen as irrelevant and outdated, as superstition, or as cultural baggage that can be left behind. One may wonder, why waste time with ceremonies when we could be meditating or listening to a Dharma talk? When I looked in some of the popular Western Buddhist magazines for articles on ceremonial, I found none.

Actually, most people do like a certain amount of ceremonial, though they may not think of it that way. People like weddings, they will go to some trouble to attend the funeral of someone they care about, many people will bury a beloved pet in the back yard with a little ceremony of their own, national events are often marked with ceremonies, and so on.

Why do people like these kinds of ceremonies? Ceremonial is a very direct, powerful way of expressing

something. Weddings express the commitment between two people in a way that just filling in a form would not. At a funeral or memorial the very formality of the occasion allows people to open up and grieve. Any ceremony worth its salt has an impact on those who participate, whether it is a special festival for a momentous occasion or simply a regular service that is done every day with care and mindfulness.

In Buddhism, the most important ceremonial thing we do is to bow, whether we are simply bending at the waist with our palms together, or making a full prostration. “As long as bowing lasts, Buddhism will last.” In looking at bowing we can see all the elements of ceremonial, why it helps us, and how we can understand and practice it.



*Bowing during a festival at Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey*



First of all, we can only understand bowing by doing it. We can talk about it and ask why people do it, but in the end the only thing that makes any sense is just to bow. We understand it with our body and our heart, not with our mind. The more we do it, the better we understand it. And this is true of any ceremonial: it has an effect on us that is beyond any words to describe, just as meditation does, and this effect is often subtle and cumulative.

At different times we are expressing different things when we bow, whether collectively or individually. Sometimes we are full of joy and gratitude for the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, we see how much they help us in our lives, and we just want to bow. At other times we may be worried or in distress, and we are asking for help. Bowing is a way of doing that very directly, beyond words, beyond asking for some particular resolution or outcome. It is a way of letting go, of offering up our problem or our suffering, and simply asking for help. Again at other times, we may be bowing in repentance of our karmic mistakes, whether something from the past that haunts us, a character fault that we are trying to correct, or a big mistake we just made today that hurt somebody. To bow at such a time brings comfort: we honestly recognize our mistake, say we're sorry, and resolve to change.

At this point, of course, one may ask, "Who are we bowing to? Who are we asking for help? Who are we saying we're sorry to? What is going on?"

Different Buddhists in different traditions, and even within the same tradition, may see the answer to this question in different ways. For some there is a “Who,” for some there is more of a “What.” In any case, there is definitely Something to bow to. As the Buddha said, “Monks, there is a not-born, a not-become, a not-made, a not-compounded. Monks, if that unborn, not-become, not-made, not-compounded were not, there would be apparent no escape from this here that is born, become, made, compounded. But since, monks, there is an unborn, not-become, not-made, not-compounded, therefore the escape from this here that is born, become, made, compounded is apparent...”<sup>1</sup>This is what Great Master Bankei calls “The Unborn,” and which many people call “Buddha Nature.” Some people call it Thusness, or Suchness, or our Original Face, or That Which Is, or the Dharmakaya, or one of a host of other names. In some Buddhist traditions they talk about what it is, and in others they talk about what it isn’t. One thing is clear, however: whatever it is, it’s a lot bigger than we are.

Buddhist ceremonial helps us to open up to this Something that is bigger than we are. We bow to it, we open our hearts to it, we turn towards it, we entrust ourselves to it. All the different aspects of ceremonial help with this: bowing, offering incense, processing, chanting or singing the Scriptures, the music itself if we have music. Each of these aspects is an offering that we are making, something we are giving. Intuitively we know that this helps both ourselves and other beings. Ceremonial transcends the intellect, just as

bowing does, and it works on a deeper level than our brain. Like meditation, it is a way of opening up to the unknown, of letting go of our little self that thinks it knows and that wants to be in charge. It helps us to deepen our faith and reverence for That which is greater than we are.

Every ceremony is doing something, whether we are offering merit to other beings, doing a memorial, blessing a house, expressing gratitude, or doing our daily morning service. We make offerings, usually of incense, with candles, flowers and fruit on the altar, we make bows and recite Scriptures, we incorporate the essential purpose of the ceremony, and we offer the merit of all this to somebody else, we don't keep it for ourselves. This is the basic form.

Ceremonial is not magic. It is not some formula that you have to get right or it won't work, because that would just be superstition. That is what the Buddha rejected, having been brought up in a society in which strict adherence to ritual was considered very important. Sometimes you can't do the ceremony in a formal way, but you can do the essential part in a very simple way, such as blessing a dead animal by the roadside or giving the Precepts to a dying person. The important thing is that you do the deed, as sincerely and wholeheartedly as you can. Sometimes we don't get it quite right, we might miss something out or do it in the wrong order, and then we have to be flexible and make it work. It is our attitude that makes the ceremony.

One of the most important aspects of ceremonial is that it expresses the harmony of the Sangha. We all do the ceremony together, and that gives it a lot more strength, in the same way that meditating together helps us. Reciting the Scriptures together, making the offerings together, bowing together, all of this is much stronger and bigger than each of us alone. If we are chanting or singing, we try to do it in harmony, so that it will sound beautiful. In our actions we have to work together in harmony, each with our part to play. We do it together, not insisting on our own way or our own pace. If someone makes a mistake or does something unexpected we need to be flexible and attentive, not blaming or insisting, and make it work. It is a wonderful practice for letting go of our own view, our own self, and being willing to follow. Thus we practice harmony of body, speech and mind.

Ceremonial is meditation in action. It is a bridge between sitting meditation and daily life, and, indeed, it often comes between the two: you sit, you have a ceremony, then you go to work. In many ways it is just like condensed, vivid daily life without a lot of the distractions. We are moving, we are doing something with other people, we have our own part to play, and we are trying to be mindful, sincerely doing our best. When we cultivate the mind of reverence and gratitude that is the essence of ceremonial, this mind begins to pervade our daily life just as the mind of meditation does. Everything can be seen as a kind of ceremony, from cooking a meal to driving to work. We try to be mindful and keep the Precepts; we want to treat other

people with kindness and respect; we try to treat the things we use with care and gentleness, not roughness or indifference; and when we find ourselves rushing and grabbing in a hurry we are more likely to notice and say, “Wait a minute, that’s not the way to do it.”

Another way in which ceremonial is like condensed daily life is that our own particular form of “the self” can arise mightily during a ceremony, especially when we are not used to it. We may feel we should be filled with joy and gratitude and in fact sometimes we may feel resentful, or bored, or just indifferent. We may be tired, or distracted, or impatient, or we may experience massive resistance. If we have an active part to play in a ceremony, we may get all worried and confused if we are thinking about what happens next instead of concentrating on what we are doing now, or we may be self-conscious and think everyone is looking at us and criticising us. We may think “I’m rather good at this” and next moment miss our cue, or think “I’m terrible at this” and make it more difficult for ourselves. This is exactly like daily life. Because it is a ceremony, it is easier to notice these things and let them go than when we are at work, for example. Very often our fatigue will lift, our irritation will dissipate, our resistance will soften or disappear. We may start with grumpiness and end with joy. This is one of the ways in which we work on the aspects of ourselves that cause us suffering. The ceremony itself helps us to gain a perspective of compassion and acceptance, and to renew our faith and willingness.

Ceremonial has effects that are beyond our capacity to understand. The offering of merit, for example, is a very powerful force for good that works in ways we cannot comprehend. Any ceremony done with a sincere heart helps all beings as well as ourselves. When we ask for help from the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas we allow their aspects of compassion, wisdom and goodness to manifest and blossom in ourselves. It is because a ceremony is an act of faith, of generosity and giving, and because we are doing it together that it has such effects.

Above all, ceremonial is a very human activity. We are just human beings, doing something together, making it work together, and stretching upward to greet That Which is greater, not because we are separate from It, but because It is greater than we are, and greater than we can imagine. We cannot control It or figure It out. All we can do is venerate It. We open our hearts to It, entrust ourselves to It, and do the very best we can, in faith. We are expressing the harmony of the Sangha Treasure, and the harmony of ourselves with That Which Is, because we are part of It and It is the whole of us.

*The one who bows and the One who is bowed to are  
by their nature tranquil, devoid of all desire,  
For Thou and I, we are not two.  
May all us sentient beings together free ourselves  
from our suffering and delusions  
As we give rise to our supreme intention to realize the  
Truth.<sup>2</sup>*

## *Notes*

1. Udana: Verses of Uplift in The Minor Anthologies of the Pāli Canon, Part II, trans. F.L. Woodward, M.A. (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p98.
2. A Traditional Soto Zen verse, 'Raihai No Ge' 'When Bowing in Deepest Gratitude'. Translation by Rev. Master Hubert Nearman of Shasta Abbey.



*An offering at a festival at Reading Buddhist Priory*

# Twelve Points Concerning Ceremonial

Rev. Master Oswin Hollenback

—*Shasta Abbey, Mt. Shasta, C-UK*—

1. Ceremonial expresses gratitude—for human life and the opportunity to encounter and practice the Buddha’s teaching.

2. In ceremonies, we create and offer merit, the good that arises naturally from meditation and training. We dedicate it to all beings, and depending on the occasion, to specific people or purposes.

3. Try viewing ceremonial as the art of dance, except that with ceremonies, there is no performance that others observe; there is no division between performers and audience. Everyone participates, as in folk dancing or American country square dance.

4. One senior monk, called a ‘celebrant,’ leads the ceremony, but everyone plays a part. The celebrant makes offerings at the altar on behalf of everyone. Your presence of mind affects others and the whole and is part of your offering.

5. We bow to express with our whole body our confidence in the Buddha—our own potential for awakening to Reality, our True Nature—as well as in the Dharma, the path that leads to awakening, and in the Sangha, the community that practices the Buddha’s way.



6. Ceremonies are structured around scriptures—teachings of the Buddha. One way we familiarize ourselves with the scriptures of our tradition is by participating in ceremonies together.

7. Our religious order sets scriptures to Western plainsong chant, a form of religious music dating back to ancient Greek and medieval times that is familiar to our Western musical ear. Music assists with memorizing the scriptures, which is of great value in religious training when life becomes difficult. Music also adds to the aesthetic enjoyment of doing ceremonies.

8. At the risk of sounding disrespectful, try viewing ceremonies as a non-conceptual, ‘right-brain’ experiential way to learn the Buddha’s teaching, like the ‘holodeck’ (a simulated reality facility) in the Star Trek television series. Ceremonial is the temporary creation of a Pure Land, in which we can see, hear, sense, be, act, and live like Buddha. One is ‘in’ the Dharma and receives it through all the senses, similar also to the practice and experience of total immersion in a foreign language.

9. The details in ceremonies foster mindfulness and concentration. However, the attitude of mind and heart, not performance of the movements and forms perfectly, remains paramount and vital.

10. There are no mistakes in ceremonies. Simply continue as you would as part of an athletic event or a musical performance—just go on. This is a model for life. There’s the ideal—we have a plan or blueprint—and then there’s the actual—what results.

11. Ceremonies build community by everyone relinquishing their preferences and doing things together in a harmonious way. Chanting and reciting in parts add another layer of complexity, harmony, and working together as one. The results are inward joy and outward beauty.

12. Ceremonies offer the opportunity to cultivate faith and devotion, which gradually transforms into certainty and strength. Some resistance in the beginning is normal for modern Westerners. An appreciation and understanding usually grow over time if we continue to make the effort.



*Rev. Oriana censes an offering during a Festival at Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey*

# Thoughts on the January Sangha Retreat at Throssel, and Myself

Jenny Rookes

—*Northumberland—UK—*

I SPENT THIS JANUARY AT THROSSSEL FOR THE WINTER Sangha retreat. I have been training for years but had never had a chance to stay for such a long period. I have generally just been for sesshins and weekends, which are very valuable, but I have wanted a chance for sustained sitting and for the quiet supportive training there to deepen my training.

I have also become conscious, as my training progressed, of a deepening sense of gratitude to Rev. Master Daishin and all of the monks and lay people at Throssel, who, since 1970, have built, dug, planted, cooked and cleaned—and made an ocean of assam tea!

So, when a combination of things meant I could be free for January, I took the opportunity to be part of the community. I bought a lot of baggage—in both senses—and expectation, and fully expected to have loads of time to knit, draw, read and go for long walks. Instead I found what I wanted to do was not what I expected; ‘spare time’ was used in a more reflective way, actually appreciating how rare an opportunity it is to just sit, look out of a window and contemplate.

Leaving work for a month had been challenging. I expected to worry and stress and feel guilty about my

colleagues carrying my workload as well as their own—and was amazed to discover that I barely thought about it at all, and certainly didn't worry about it or them (and consequently saw how I could feel guilty about this instead). Though there was one period of meditation when I suddenly remembered an un-posted important letter which I then spent the rest of the sitting trying strenuously to telepathically remind my colleagues about! (And of course it was still there when I returned to work!)

As anyone who has stayed at Throssel knows, life there throws a kindly but unsparing light on all these old habits of mind and body we bring with us. Being there, doing the same thing day after day, in different moods, with different people in their different moods allows that light to pick out first one of our patterns, then another. Sometimes something is just so clear, we see the suffering we carry around and create for ourselves. This can be triggered by a simple thing, a good word spoken at the right time, a cause of suffering suddenly understood in meditation—and life is changed for ever.

Rev. Master Jiyu said that all we have to do is our best—our very best—and then let the result go. The part of this which was most vivid for me over the month was the 'do our very best'. The thing that had to be done, whether it was soft boiling 30 eggs in one go, or sitting in meditation, could only be done by this person, now, with whatever baggage is there. And I am certainly not an ideal trainee, (however much I add that imaginary character to the baggage).

Doing the thing that needed to be done, to my very best, and then letting it go always had those two aspects—the soft-

boiled eggs and the complaining thoughts; “I’ve taken so much trouble to get them perfect and now this person is causing a delay—they’ll be ruined.” Or “Oh, I laid out the bread just right, I do hope someone notices.” The fact that it was all over something so trivial, so unnoticed in the rush of lay life, is exactly the reason why we go to Throssel to train there. “Nothing ever happens here”, I said to Rev. Wilfrid as the two of us tried (unsuccessfully) to pull a tree over. “You think?” he said.

The sense of training within a community was very strong—particularly as this year there was a core group of lay trainees who stayed for nearly the whole retreat together, as well as others who could only stay for a shorter time or who came towards the end. We didn’t know one another beforehand and there was much to learn about each other, our individual strengths and weaknesses and the dynamics of how we worked as a group. This was the single most important thing that made the month such a success—that we lay trainees found a way very quickly to make ourselves into a true team. We shared experience, pooled knowledge, let one person lead where their skills were, and another when that was best. We recognised everyone’s desire to train for ourselves and others. I’m not saying there weren’t tensions and some (but not a lot) of moaning behind the scenes, but it worked because we were all training for self and other, we wanted it to work.

This was also an opportunity to explore the relationship between monk and lay person—sometimes a thorny issue when our opinions conflict with “the way we do things here”.

In Britain some of us have problems with the idea of 'serving', which is all tied up with the class system, and if we have ingrained resentments of old unfairness, we are prickly at the whole idea. It is easy to criticise—the pull of our opinions is very strong and the monks' way of doing things is not always the most efficient (or what I think is the most efficient) but then I think, "Am I actually here to boil eggs in the most efficient possible way?" The critical mind can be put in the background. And yet, sometimes we need to recognise that the best offering in that particular situation may be to speak up, not being caught up in the outcome, but neither are we giving up responsibility for the outcome.

What else was there? Time every night to gaze at the stars and moon behind the racing Northumbrian clouds; the deer, becoming almost as tame as the famous Throssel rabbits; the male pheasants strutting and posturing on the lawn; evening sittings with the owls calling from the woods outside; the drumming of rain on the skylights and the sudden unexpected stillness when it stops.

Looking back, I see it as a very happy, peaceful and productive time in my life and it has certainly had an impact on my training. It has given me confidence in my own practice and great respect for the sincere training of the monks and other lay people.

# The Question of Meaning

Rev. Berwyn Watson

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

I WAS TALKING TO SOMEONE RECENTLY WHO WAS feeling depressed about the value of their life. Having cancer that seemed like it may spread brought a review of “What is it all for?”

The question of meaning—whether this life has meaning or not—seems to go beyond questions about whether we need religion or not. It seems to be even more fundamental. After all we can find meaning through entirely secular, non-religious beliefs, such as seeing the value of supporting our family or the pursuit of scientific truth, but it seems fundamental to us all that we seek meaning in what we do.

The main question for me is how this fundamental search for meaning fits in with what we call faith. Many discussions around the value of religion these days seem to focus on the question of whether we can have faith in something for which there is so little evidence. The author Philip Pullman wrote recently:

The main reason I don't believe in God is the missing evidence. There could logically be no evidence that

he doesn't exist, so I can only go by the fact that, so far, I've discovered no evidence that he does: I have had no personal experience of being spoken to by God and I see nothing in the world around me, wherever I look in history or science or art or anywhere else, to persuade me that it was the work of God rather than of nature.<sup>1</sup>

I personally think it is not a bad thing to question the value of some religious beliefs if they cause harm. For example, Great Master Dōgen didn't hesitate to severely condemn the religious custom of his time that there were “secluded areas” where women should not go—including some temples.<sup>2</sup> But I am not sure if this same way of questioning, based on the demand “show me the evidence, and then I'll believe,” can be applied to the more fundamental need it seems we all have to see meaning in what we do. Just because the structures of religion may often fail to satisfy the need for meaning, doesn't mean that the attempt is not valid or worth attempting.

This is where a closer look at what we mean by faith seems relevant. I say this because I sense that we have to choose to give meaning to our life, and this choice is founded on something that is the most important aspect of faith—that is perhaps the essence of faith—that we can transform our view of the world by an act of will that doesn't depend completely on what we think we know about this world.



One way this is expressed in Buddhism is through the metaphor of the pure Land. In Pure Land Buddhism, there is the faith that those who call on Amida (Sanskrit Amitābha) Buddha's name will be reborn in the western pure land. This is based on the vow of the Amida Buddha of the past, who proclaimed that anyone who calls on his name will be reborn in a place where essentially there are no obstacles to training. Typically the land is flat, decorated with jewel trees, and heavenly scents and flower petals are raining down.<sup>3</sup> In the Zen tradition this image is often used to make it clear that this very place is the pure land. This is a long tradition: at various times in the *Lotus Sūtra* for example, the Buddha shows the congregation visions in which all those beings who are practicing sincerely in various ways are revealed.

The pure land is deliberately ambiguous: is it another place, or a place in the future, or this place now, if we had the eyes to see it?

In *The Scripture on the Immeasurable Life of the Tathagata* (a chapter in the *Lotus Sūtra*), the Buddha says, “My Pure Land will not be destroyed, even though sentient beings see it as utterly consumed by fire”.<sup>4</sup> The Buddha can see existence as the Pure Land, and acts accordingly. Sentient beings see it as samsara—the realm of suffering, but sentient beings can become Buddhas. But how can a sentient being become a Buddha? Part of the answer is: “To see the world as the Pure Land, and live accordingly.” In a way it is saying, to become a Buddha we have to act and live as Buddha—be Buddha. This seems impossible, and if we only

had knowledge and rational thought to rely on, it would be. If we could only choose to live in the Pure Land if we had reliable evidence it was the Pure Land, we could never live in the Pure Land. If we have the idea that we can only have faith in that which we are convinced is true, how can we ever even start having faith?

It seems like there has to be a movement of faith that comes from nothing. There is after all very little evidence that this world is the Pure Land—it can seem as if it is run by greed at times. It can seem there is not much reason to believe in a benevolent deity or even to believe that the universe is benevolent.

We are not spiritual children: from our experience of life, we know that the actions of individuals can cause immense long-term suffering; we should know there are no easy fixes or pat answers. And yet we still seek for meaning. Especially in times of crisis we ask about meaning, and that itself is the movement of faith. A movement that can be cultivated, not by fobbing our intellect off with 'reasons to believe in something good', but by honing down and delving into that question about meaning itself.

We must treat the question of meaning with respect. This is not the same as getting into a panic about it. It is to be with it and utilize it in the most effective way.

For me this is part of what zazen is. It is the question of meaning embodied. But it isn't just a question. In completely accepting the question, not turning away from what is the most important choice—zazen becomes much more than just

an anxious or demanding questioning.

It is as if we have to just choose to live in the Pure Land without any reason to. Instead of looking outside for reasons why we should do so, zazen focuses the power of the question inwards: what is it that seeks meaning? Who is it that sits?

This is the real question of life and death, because to live a life without meaning is not to be really alive, and at some point we sense this on a visceral level that cannot be ignored. Yet to live a life based on unexamined assumptions is to live in a fantasy. I think that some of the points those who call themselves antitheists make are correct. We cannot justify believing in things just to make ourselves feel good. Especially if those beliefs involve dividing ourselves off from others—saying “our religion is better than yours”, and justifying intolerance and violence on that basis.<sup>5</sup>

Our practice should not encourage a vague belief in nice-sounding new-agey concepts that are such an eclectic mixture they end up more like a soporific background music than real faith. Zazen does not accept fantasy. Conceptions are just conceptions, thoughts are just thoughts—they don't necessarily apply to reality. We can be clear about the times we are just projecting our own wishes onto things, in both the positive and negative sense: seeing the world as ugly or beautiful. And yet beneath these thoughts and conceptions, what is it that sits? 'This'—'this' that is doing the zazen, can choose to live in the Pure Land. In fact by turning within, by choosing to do zazen, we are already making this choice.

The simple instruction, “neither trying to think, nor

trying not to think” (from Dōgen's *Rules for Meditation*) is key. We are not sitting there generating a nice fantasy world to live in so we can soften our sense of suffering. Neither do we hold onto feelings and thoughts of hurt or pain. In the sitting there is already the asking of the fundamental questions: “What are these thoughts and feelings? Who is it that is feeling them?” I call this choosing to live in the pure land, because what seems to come out of this process is a sense of liberation, of non-obstruction. It is pure in the sense that training and enlightenment is pure. “It is not that there is no training and enlightenment, it is just that it cannot be defiled.”<sup>6</sup>

The pure land is just an image or metaphor that describes how it is to live in the world whilst seeing clearly. There is no pure land and samsara in the end. It is not about changing anything external, but it is a completely different view of the world that allows for a deep appreciation and gratitude and respect for others. You could say that the pure land is the place where we appreciate what we already have. I was struck recently, reading Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett's *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom*, about the Eightfold Path, in which she says the first step, right understanding is “simple faith, gratitude and humility”:<sup>7</sup> when we take this perspective on life, life is really transformed. We may never have a 'good reason' to take this attitude to life, but we can choose to take it nevertheless, and this is choosing the pure land, choosing to be Buddha. Right understanding is seen as the foundation for other aspects of the Eightfold Path, such as right morality, effort, livelihood and speech. To live with gratitude

and humility, allows us to learn from existence—which is one reason why we can say this existence is the Pure Land. In being able to learn from reality other aspects of the path can blossom.

To choose to make this life the Pure land, is expressed in many of the forms of training we have. We can recite the toothbrush verse, “I take the toothbrush that all living things may profit, may they understand the truth quickly and become naturally pure,” before cleaning our teeth. We can see this as a means to be mindful, and see it as effective because by being more mindful we are becoming more aware of what we are doing and more able to help others. This is valid and is an explanation we sometimes give, but it is still open to an intellectual interpretation and the challenge: “Prove to me that saying the toothbrush verse makes you a better person.”

We do it because this is the Pure Land, and it becomes the Pure Land through the doing of it. It is not a question of means to an end. It is not a question of before and after, but of living now in the Pure Land.

In some ways the antitheist criticism of some religious beliefs are valid, and can help us to clarify our understanding. There is no means of justifying even an act such as saying the toothbrush verse if we are looking for results in the usual way; if we are saying, “Because I do this act, I expect there to be this good result in the future.” Such a link could never be proven in those terms. But practice is

much more than trying to achieve results. When Dōgen talks about 'doing good' he makes it clear that the doing in the moment is the good, and “at this very moment of doing wholesome action, there is no wholesome action that does not come forth.”

This point is made by Dōgen in his *Shoaku Makusa* chapter of the *Shōbōgenzō*, translated by Tanahashi as, 'Refrain from unwholesome action'.

The chapter is a subtle one, and should not be oversimplified. Firstly Dōgen says: “Although there are many varieties of wholesome action, there is no wholesome action that is already actualized and waiting for someone to practice it.”<sup>8</sup> In other words we cannot simply say the nature of existence is already good and all we are doing is expressing this. This sort of belief, based on the belief in 'original nature', led to all sorts of problems in Dōgen's time. There were those who said, “As we originally all have Buddha nature, we don't need to practice.” Or even worse, “If we have Buddha nature from the beginning all our thoughts are manifestations of Buddha nature, so 'anything goes'.”<sup>9</sup>

Dōgen found a way out of the passive interpretation of the doctrine of original nature: the goodness of existence cannot be said to exist prior to actualizing it; we have to make the first move. But this does not make goodness dependent on us: “Wholesome action does not arise due to causes and conditions, nor does it cease due to causes and conditions...Causes and conditions, as well as wholesome actions, equally begin in completeness and end in

completeness.” So Dōgen seems to be saying, 'goodness' is neither prior to our acting on it, nor dependent on our acting on it. The key is the stress Dōgen places on the *doing* in the present moment, and the connection between time and existence, that he elaborated in his chapter of the *Shobogenzo* called *Uji*.<sup>10</sup> From the point of view of *Uji* (in which existence and time are inseparable) nothing 'exists' prior to the doing of it in the moment, and there is the continuous doing of good expressed through practice-enlightenment: “Wholesome action is neither existent nor non-existent, neither form nor emptiness. It is just do. Actualizing at any place or actualizing at any moment is inevitable do.”

Behind this is not a philosophical discussion, but an emphasis on the doing: the primacy of faith. To be Buddha is to do Buddha, to live in the Pure Land. In a sense we cannot know (or have evidence) that the Pure Land exists prior to the doing of good; and we cannot deny that faith is part of our being, so it makes some sense to say there is something 'good' there already. The point is to act on trust, moment by moment.

Part of the point of *The Scripture on the Immeasurable Life of the Tathagata* is that the truth is not limited by our conceptions of time and causality. But to live in the Pure Land can only be an act of faith. The Pure Land “that cannot be destroyed” is seen when “sentient beings in faith and humility, honest and forthright in manner, gentle in thought, wholeheartedly yearn to see the Buddha not begrudging even their own lives.”<sup>11</sup>

## Notes

I recognise I am not consistent in capitalising Pure Land. I use Pure Land to describe the place beyond the opposites that faith can bring us to. When I am using the pure land more as a concept, I use lower case. It seems good to use capitals at different times for the sake of emphasis.

1. Quote from Philip Pullman in: *New Statesmen*, *Faith no More*, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011.
2. Great Master Dōgen, *Shōbōgenzō, Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, Kazuaki Tanahashi ed., (Shambhala, 2012) p. 81. “There is one ridiculous custom in Japan. This is called a “secluded area” or “a Mahayana practice place”, where nuns and laywomen are not allowed to enter....Having wondrous enlightenment is an unsurpassable stage. When women become buddhas of this stage, what in all directions cannot be thoroughly experienced...What is the point of keeping a secluded area?”
3. From Wikipedia entry on Amitābha: According to *the Larger Sūtra of Immeasurable Life*, Amitābha was, in very ancient times and possibly in another system of worlds, a monk named Dharmakāra. In some versions of the sūtra, Dharmakāra is described as a former king who, having come into contact with Buddhist teachings through the buddha Lokeshvararaja, renounced his throne. He then resolved to become a buddha and so to come into possession of a buddhakṣetra (“buddha-field”, a realm existing in the primordial universe outside of ordinary reality, produced by a buddha's merit) possessed of many perfections. These resolutions were expressed in his forty-eight vows, which set out the type of buddha-field Dharmakāra aspired to create, the conditions under which beings might be born into that world, and what kind of beings they would be when reborn there.

In the versions of the sūtra widely known in China, Vietnam, Korea and Japan, Dharmakāra's eighteenth vow was that any being in any universe desiring to be born into Amitābha's Pure Land and calling upon his name even as few as ten times will be guaranteed rebirth there. His nineteenth vow promises that he, together with his bodhisattvas and other blessed Buddhists, will appear before those who call upon him at the moment of death.

4. Hubert Nearman, Rev. Master, trans. *Buddhist Writings* (Shasta Abbey Press, 1994) p. 36 (not currently in print).



5. Christopher Hitchens offers an example of this approach in *Letters to a Young Contrarian* (2001), in which he writes: “I’m not even an atheist so much as I am an antitheist; I not only maintain that all religions are versions of the same untruth, but I hold that the influence of churches, and the effect of religious belief, is positively harmful.” Other writers, who I believe make some good points (this doesn’t mean I agree with what they say or their approach) in this area, are Daniel Dennett and Sam Harris.
6. When Dai-e first went to train with Daikan Eno, Eno asked him “What is it that comes like this?” Dai-e sat with this question for many years, and eventually said: “It is not that there is no practice and enlightenment, but that it is unstained.” Great Master Dōgen, *Shinji-Shōbōgenzō*, pt. 2, no. 1, Nishijima & Cross, trans. (London: Windbell, 2003) p. 137. Also in *Shōbōgenzō*, Book 1, Nishijima & Cross, trans. (London: Windbell, 1994).
7. Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett's, *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom*, (Shasta Abbey Press, 1993 p. 155).
8. Op. cit. Great Master Dōgen *Shōbōgenzō*, *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye*, pp. 99 – 100; the following quotes are all from this translation.
9. See Eihei Dōgen: Mystical Realist by Hee-Jin Kim, (Wisdom, 2000). See article on the OBC Journal website here: <http://journal.obcon.org/articles/putting-dogen-on-the-map/>
10. See article on the OBC Journal website on this area here: <http://journal.obcon.org/articles/time-to-live/>
11. Op. cit., *Buddhist Writings*, p. 35.

# The Wisdom of an Open Mind

Rev. Jishin Kinson

—Reading Buddhist Priory, Northumberland—UK—

*From a Dharma talk given at the Priory in March 2014*

TALKING OF AN OPEN MIND AND WISDOM MAY SEEM TO western thought to be predominantly concerned with the functioning of the brain. To a Buddhist these terms have a broader context, all of what we are being involved. Perhaps 'The wisdom of an open heart/mind' would be a more inclusive way of speaking.

A monk of our Order said recently in a talk; “One cannot understand with the judgemental mind”. When the mind is set, or holding strong opinion or judgement, it is tending towards being closed. It is unable to take in, or to really understand what is going on.

Dōgen said: “To study the Buddha Way is to study the self.”<sup>1</sup>...to get to know the self. We don't have to ratchet up this 'study'. Zazen, practised regularly, puts us there naturally through awareness, including awareness of ourselves. To be able to be aware of ourselves is a wonderful gift and somewhat curious; I mean it is curious that the mind can be aware of itself; we engage because it's interesting what we find and it draws us.

Of course, we will always have various views and ideas, notions and theories. They are part of our human nature and are useful to us, but a more open mind is less controlled by them. The view that we insist upon, that we are fixed upon, that appears time after time is the one asking for attention. Sooner or later Serene Reflection Meditation and our compassionate wish draws us to see it. We begin to meet it when it arises, we begin to get to know it. This may require some patience and compassion. The very 'issue' itself is developing our compassion and patience with ourselves—and who wouldn't want that! We may have a sense of being on to something 'right'.

Somehow in all of this, whether we identify a specific result or not, the habit energy of the fixed position is weakened. The view is softened; we might, in the split second, let it go, or feel it dissolve; we might see what we couldn't before. Certainly in my experience, something of me was changed and I was glad of it.

It always seems to come back to relinquishing our hold, of letting go, of being willing...time after time. Soon that becomes the very thing we want to do, so marvellous are the results and so welcome the adventure of discovering that there is more to you than you had settled for before.

You can only find this by doing it. The really tricky part is the first acknowledgement of a resistance, of a fixed position, of a fixed notion, of a controlling judgement. It is

tricky to recognise BECAUSE YOU BELIEVE IT! You came to believe it as a result of experience/circumstance and yes it is perfectly understandable that you went the way you did. But do you have to believe it and follow it, inside, now?

An opening heart/mind is freer, has space—to allow our natural wisdom and insight to present themselves. And the adventure can continue to unfold.

Below is a poem written by Lao Tzu, the renowned Chinese mystic and philosopher of the 6th Century BC. The poem speaks of the activity of an open heart/mind.<sup>2</sup>

A good traveller has no fixed plans  
And is not intent upon arriving.  
A good artist lets his intuition  
Lead him wherever it wants.  
A good scientist has freed himself of concepts  
And keeps his mind open to what is.

Thus the Master is available to all people  
And doesn't reject anyone.  
He is ready to use all situations  
And doesn't waste anything.  
This is called embodying the light.

What is a good man but a bad man's teacher?  
What is a bad man but a good man's job?  
If you don't understand this, you will get lost,

However intelligent you are.  
It is the great secret.

For me personally, two things stand out in the teaching in this poem: In the second stanza: the “doesn't reject anyone” (or anything) which seems so crucial to compassion, love and wisdom. In the third stanza: the impersonal view of the possible causality of “good” with “bad” which one can arrive at when judgement is absent.

*Notes*

1. Great Master Dōgen, in *Moon in a Dewdrop, Genjōkōan*, Kazuaki Tanahashi, (New York: North Point Press 1985) p 69.
2. The Tao Te Ching is a Chinese classic and is attributed to Lao Tzu (his name means “old master”). The translator of this version was S. Mitchell. Publisher, Harpercollins. (Ebook 2009) This poem is no. 27 out of 81.

# NEWS OF THE ORDER

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## Europe

### Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey

— *Northumberland, England – UK* —

#### **Ten Precepts Retreat (Jukai):**

We enjoyed a joyful Jukai week retreat with 21 taking the Precepts for the first time and receiving lay Ordination: Peter Brooks, Amanda Butcher, David Dyer, John Evans, Alan Frame, Philippe Huelin, Trinity Jordan, Dipendra Kothari, Paul Ledger, Amanda Levy, Donald Macleod, Gavin Mitchell, Tim Pearce, Alaric Pether, Fred Schofield, Stephen Smith, Michel Tillie, David Valencia, Philip West, Barry Wharton, Mariette Wolfenden-Heaney.

We congratulate them on this step of commitment to a Buddhist life and wish everyone well with their ongoing training. We deeply appreciated Rev. Master Haryo's presence and teaching as Preceptor for the Jukai ceremonies.

#### **Wesak celebrations:**

We celebrated Wesak, the festival of the Buddha's Birth at the beginning of May. It was a joyful occasion as always, with Rev. Master Leandra as Celebrant and with 8 children joining the procession and offering lotuses to the baby Buddha. This year we created a bower for the Buddha in front of the main altar and decorated it with flowers and ribbons as you can see in the photo below;



### **Monastic news:**

Rev. Andreya has been granted a leave of absence and is currently away from the monastery staying with her family in Germany. She expressed her gratitude for this opportunity for reflection.

In May, Rev. Aiden left for a three-month retreat at Shasta Abbey, in the US. We wish both monks well. Rev. Master Hugh will be covering the role of Bursar in Rev Aiden's absence. He is already familiar with accounts as he is the Order's North American treasurer.

On 6<sup>th</sup> June, we welcomed a new postulant to the community, Dipendra Kothari. Dipendra was born in India, lived in the USA, then moved to London where he made contact with Reading Priory. We offer our good wishes to him as he takes this next step in his training.

### **School visits:**

We have a regular number of requests from schoolteachers, asking if they can bring along their pupils to find out about Buddhism, meet monks and see the monastery. Summer term seems a popular time as we have had several visits lately. We have recently had visits from Wearhead primary school and Allendale Primary School, both very local. It was a delight to see the interest and enthusiasm of the children as they are so appreciative. Following their visit the Wearhead primary class children all sent personal hand-drawn thank you cards, and Allendale School sent an offering of food from our local co-op store.

### **Rev. Master Daishin's books:**

We are pleased to announce that Rev. Master Daishin's two books, *Sitting Buddha* and *Buddha Recognises Buddha* have been converted to a digital format and are now available as ebooks in Amazon's Kindle bookshop. They can be found by searching Amazon with the name Daishin Morgan.

You may already know that *Sitting Buddha* is also available as an audiobook. It has now been optimised for use on MP3 and smartphone. You can find it on our website: <http://www.throssel.org.uk/sitting-buddha-book> with thanks to Scottish congregation member, Shooie Lucas, who made the recording of the entire book for us.

### **Drainage work:**

In the early summer 2013 it was decided to do a major overhaul of our land drainage because of excessive flooding which was causing problems not only for us but also our near neighbours.

We are now able to report on the completion of phase one of this work. This involved digging out old stone clad drains running across the property which are called, in the local vocabulary, cundys. Some of these were still in working order but others had



collapsed and blocked up which was partly causing the problem. The public footpath has been opened up and this now has a 3metre by 680mm pipe buried beneath it. It is estimated that approximately a quarter of a mile of open drainage has been created. The water is now directed away from the road and buildings and leaves the property via the cleugh near the ‘S’ bend in the road. We notice a significant difference when we have heavy rain. Further work this summer is planned, tidying up and landscaping.

—*Rev. Alina*

## Dharmazuflucht Schwarzwald

— *Gutach (Black Forest) – Germany* —

Since we moved our temple to its new location in the central Black Forest over half a year has passed. We are very glad and grateful to be here. The new temple location is working very well for us, both for the guests coming on an individual retreat as well as for group retreats, since it is more spacious and offers more private room to everyone. Already we have had a variety of lay guests and monks visiting us.

The first monastic to come and spend time with us this year was Rev. Veronica—Rev. Master Jishō’s disciple—who came for a month from Shasta Abbey. It was a joy having her here. In April, Rev. Master Mugō came to stay with us for three weeks. Her visit coincided with congregation member Susan Sting becoming a Lay Minister. Susan is originally from Seattle and has been living in Germany for about thirty years. She has been a congregation member for many years, and it will be very good to have her in the already existing group of German Lay Ministers. Congratulations to Susan and warm good wishes for her future training, and a big thank you to Rev. Master Mugō for her bright presence and hard work in planting many seeds and plants on our property!

Much work has been done both in the house and on the property since our arrival here. We also made a twenty year contract with the forest farmer who owns the strip of forest immediately opposite our house, which will entail him felling the fir trees when they reach a certain size, so as not to pose a security problem for our house. The relationship with our closest neighbour, who lives at the end of our small valley, is very good. He has told us that periodically some of his large fir tree trunks are being shipped all the way to Japan for making memorial tablets! It has been moving for us to witness the hard life the forest farmers in this region live.

In early May we had a weeklong Sangha-retreat for our lay congregation, which we shall now be holding again once in spring and once in autumn. It was good for our congregation members, some of whom have known each other for many years, to be able to train together for a whole week here in our new temple. Renee Brons from Holland joined our German speaking congregation for this retreat and stayed on for a little while after the end of it. Towards the beginning of the retreat we also celebrated a small Wesak ceremony, to express our deep gratitude for the appearance of Buddha in this world.

While Rev. Master Mugō was with us, we also had a visit from a photographer who is hoping to produce a book and organize an exhibition with photos of about 40 priests from a variety of religions. He was particularly interested in taking photos before and after a ceremony, so we had a memorial ceremony for Carla Roncoroni, Rev. Master Fuden's beloved aunt who died at the end of 2013.

As always, we cordially invite both monks and lay trainees who would like to be on retreat for a while, to come and spend some time with us in our forest temple. It is always a privilege to have monastic or lay guests train alongside us.

—*Rev. Master Fuden*

## Great Ocean Dharma Refuge

— *Pembrokeshire, Wales – UK* —

Spring at Great Ocean Dharma Refuge has brought the promise of new life and new beginnings—a situation we always find ourselves in, but especially apparent at this time of year with its glorious show of greenery and blossoms bursting forth from bare branches. We have welcomed both lay and monastic guests for visits and retreat stays during this time, and in early March we remembered with gratitude the life of Reverend Master Chūshin, as we celebrated a memorial on the anniversary of his passing.

On the bright full moon day of the fourteenth of May, our small local congregation gathered here for a joyous Festival of the Buddha's Birth. Reverend Master Mokugen gave an inspiring Dharma talk in the meditation hall; encouraging faith in Buddha Nature, reminding us that even Shakyamuni had to persevere through difficulties to find the Truth, and that all “the Buddhas and Ancestors were as we are now, and we shall be as They in the future”. During the ceremony that followed we sang the scriptures and Reverend Master Jiyu's beautiful invocations. Afterwards we enjoyed a tasty potluck lunch together.

With gratitude to all those who kindly responded to our maintenance appeal, as well as to those who have been able to offer some expertise, we can report that so far this spring we have been able to make some progress with a few necessary maintenance projects. We have bought a large load of stone to maintain our lane (which was badly denuded by the winter rain), and replaced the rotten fence blown down in the February hurricane. We have also completed some minor plumbing repairs, and had our chimney flue upgraded—the exterior work remains to be done as we carry on with our maintenance plan. We are also pleased and grateful for a new ramp to enable Dewi, our dear aged dog, to climb some otherwise impassable steps.

We continue to welcome lay trainees to residential and day retreats, and the local Sangha meets here for a half day retreat each Wednesday. You are very welcome to write or phone regarding retreat opportunities.

—*Reverend Caitlin Clark*

## The Place of Peace Dharma House

—*Aberystwyth, Wales – UK*—

This April marked the 13th Anniversary of The Place of Peace, a venture that remains as filled with wonder and opportunity as it did from the day we arrived in Aberystwyth. Thank you to those who have helped along the way: Catherine Artindale who for over a decade has offered so many hours of skilful and careful work on our accounts and to lay minister Jim Gore—Langton for donating his professional expertise by doing our independent examination, to Gordon and Ceri Jones for always being willing to assist where needed, to Steve Roberts for so patiently helping out with computer matters, to Heather Bennett for assisting with the Dharma Reflections project and to all those who offer financial support. Appreciation is also offered to Reverend Masters Jishō and Saidō for their time, thoughtful consideration and spiritual insight as fellow trustees. A temple is always so much more than just one person. Thank you all for being part of it.

On the 14th of April Reverend Master Myōhō celebrated her 35th Transmission anniversary (when a novice monk becomes a Buddhist Priest) and bows of gratitude were offered to Reverend Master Jiyu for her great generosity of spirit and for all that she has made possible. A talk was offered on being able to recognise and receive the opportunities to deepen practice that life brings to us.

March saw guests coming from Scotland and Huddersfield, as well as the local area, for both private and group retreats. It was good to take time, within a contemplative setting, to reflect and allow a deeper opening up to unfold. A temple offers a spiritual sanctuary where matters of the Heart are understood and can reveal themselves within the safety of that understanding.

March also saw the first year anniversary of the deaths of Reverend Master Chūshin and lay minister Jill Barlass. Memorials were held and time was spent reflecting and honouring their lives. Both have permanent memorials here in the form of their photographs being displayed on our Founder's Altar. The altar has a beautiful blue lamp that was offered for that purpose by Jill, who was, and remains, very much part of The Place of Peace.

On May the 1st we will have been in this house for one year. How quickly it has passed, how fortunate we are to be out of the rental market and have a roof over our heads. Merit was offered to Dilys Harris, Reverend Master Myōhō's mother, who made it possible for us to be in our own property and who wished her old home to be a place of refuge and training.

When we embark upon a life of faith so many help us along the way and their kindness was remembered at our Wesak Ceremony as we begin another year of this great and wondrous journey of discovering what it means to have a human life.

—*Rev. Master Myōhō*

## Portobello Buddhist Priory

— *Edinburgh, Scotland – UK* —

The Priory continues to offer, among other activities, Dharma evenings on Wednesday and Friday and the Sunday meditation morning with a ceremony. The ceremony is usually

short morning service, but on May 4th we celebrated Wesak with a festival ceremony. The photo was taken after the ceremony:



We then had a “bring food to share” meal. During the meal, Debbie Sheringham showed us some photos of Eihei-ji and other temples she had taken on a recent trip to Japan.

Many Scottish sangha members make regular trips to Throssel Hole for retreats, and at Jukai this year, Philip West and Aleric Pether took lay ordination. We wish both of them well in their future training.

The Highland Meditation Group had its second residential weekend retreat in March, led again by Rev. Finnan. The plan was to hold this on the Isle of Harris, but poor weather prevented the sea crossing. Thanks to some quick re-arranging, a new venue on the mainland was found and the retreat went ahead.

The wider Scottish sangha is holding its annual weekend retreat in early June. Bob McGraw is once more offering his house near Aberdeen as the retreat venue, and there is space for around 12 retreatants. Rev. Master Favian will be leading this.

—Neil Rothwell

## Sitting Buddha Hermitage

— *Wirksworth, Derbyshire, - UK —*



*The Buddha by the lake at the Sitting Buddha Hermitage*

Sitting Buddha Hermitage opened its doors to retreat guests in April this year. The retreat facilities comprise a caravan and a guest room for those who wish to stay for a number of days or weeks for a retreat in relative solitude, and a Kanzeon shrine which is available to those who live near enough or are visiting the area and would like to come and do an individual day retreat.

I arrived here at the end of February to take up the lease on this property. Rev. Master Mugō drove the hired transit van with all my things in, including donated items of equipment for the Hermitage, and I drove down in the car. Kind Sangha friends from the Leicester SRM Group came over to help unload the van and unpack some essentials such as food and cooking pots.

The property is in very good condition, recently repainted throughout, so during March and April I was working out how best to use the available space and hunting out the furniture and equipment needed to get the place up and running. I have also enjoyed visits from many Sangha members and invitations to visit some of the meditation groups in this part of the country to talk about the Hermitage.

I am particularly pleased with the conversion of the summerhouse into a Kanzeon shrine. It is large enough for a person to comfortably spend the day in meditation and contemplation. The path around the lake makes a great walking meditation path.



I'm also very pleased with the second-hand caravan I found and particularly grateful to the Sangha friends who towed it here and positioned it for me.

The house, caravan and shrine all look out on the lake, which is home to goldfish, ghost koi, carp, rudd and barbel along



with ducks and moorhens. Each morning after meditation I offer incense at the outside altar and take a slow walk around the lake. I really am incredibly grateful to be here and to be able to offer to others the opportunity to come and practice in such beautiful and peaceful surroundings.

—*Rev. Alicia*

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## The Americas

### Shasta Abbey

— Mt. Shasta, California – USA —

Our flowering trees and shrubs having been offering colorful blossoms over the past several weeks: apricot, cherry, plum, apple, dogwood, forsythia and lilac have been showing white, pink, lavender and gold. Each day seems to bring a fresh floral offering for the joyous ceremonies of our monastic life. Best of all, some spring rain. We have made the difficult decision to discontinue watering some of our gardens due to the severe drought in our region, and rain is a blessing.

*Ceremonies:* Rev. Master Kōdō Kay ordained Rebecca “Beckie” Giordano on April 5, giving her the religious name Houn Vera, meaning “She who seeks the Truth within the Dharma Cloud.” Rev. Vera's mother, father, sister and friend, and aunt attended the ceremony and offered delicious Italian foods including cannelloni for a festive meal afterwards. Some of Rev. Vera's Sangha friends from the Portland and Berkeley Buddhist Pories made the trip to the Abbey for the ceremony, and we were also delighted that Rev. Master Meidō Tuttle was able to make the long journey from Wallowa Buddhist Temple to be with us for this joyous occasion, as well as many members of our local congregation.



*Rev. Vera with Rev. Master Kōdō after her Ordination Ceremony*

Rev. Valora Midtdal completed her term as Head Novice. On April 27 during the spring monastic retreat, she offered tea and triple chocolate espresso cookies for the Head Novice's Spring Tea, followed by the Head Novice's Presentation of a Fundamental Doctrine. Rev. Valora gave an uplifting talk on the

subject of “Training with Despair,” offering practical examples of ways in which she has been able to apply the Buddha's teachings in dealing with negative mental conditions.

Later that day, Rev. Valora successfully answered questions in meditation during the Head Novice's Dharma Ceremony. Her chosen theme was Tozan Ryokai's poem, from Great Master Keizan's *The Denkōroku*: Truly I should not seek for the TRUTH from others/For then It will be far from me;/ Now I am going alone,/ Everywhere I am able to meet HIM./ HE is ME now, I am not HIM;/ When we understand this,/We are instantaneously with the TRUTH.

We are most grateful to Rev. Valora for her patient and encouraging leadership during the Spring Term as well as these offerings of teaching, and we wish her the best as she continues in her monastic training. Our thanks also to Rev. Dilys Cromack who served as Head Novice's Assistant and Rev. Enya Sapp, who provided advice and support as Head Novice's Zealator.



*Rev. Master Meian with Rev. Valora*

Rev. Master Daishin was the celebrant for a memorial ceremony for Lucky, devoted German shepherd friend and companion of R.J. Silverwolf-Dillon, on March 15. Lucky had been a trained search and rescue dog. Our sympathy goes to Mr. Silverwolf-Dillon and his family.

*Jukai:* We were pleased to welcome 39 guests for the annual Keeping of the Ten Precepts Retreat (Jukai) during the week of March 22-29. Eight of our guests took the Precepts for the first time: Joseph Allbritten, John Anderson, Sam Hart, Stephen Lloyd, Cy Lynn Phillips, Susan Rathbun, Charlie Violich and Gabriela Voskerician. We wish to express our appreciation to the many congregation members who joined us to renew their commitment to the Precepts and to share their training as well as practical skills in assisting with the ceremonies.



*The newly ordained retreatants with monks and guests in Shasta Ceremony Hall*

*Travels & Visits:* At the invitation of San Francisco Zen Center, Rev. Masters Meian, Daishin and Serena attended an Induction Ceremony for a new Abbot of their City Center and Abbess of Green Gulch Farm. Rev. Master Kinrei offered his

usual kind hospitality during their weekend at the Berkeley Buddhist Priory, and they all shared a donated meal at a local Thai restaurant. On March 2, the three Abbey monks attended the the Induction Ceremony in San Francisco. Rev. Master Meian reported that it was good to have been present for this important occasion of transition following the death of Zen Center's Central Abbot Myogen Steve Stucky and to have renewed Dharma friendships within the western Soto Zen Sangha.

Rev. Helen traveled to Eugene Buddhist Priory on April 28 for two weeks to assume the responsibilities of Acting Prior in the absence of Rev. Oriana. Although we miss Rev. Helen and her many contributions to the life of our community, we appreciate this opportunity for a senior monk to experience the life of a prior in an Order temple.

*Monastic Visitors:* A skillful driver manoeuvred his large bus into our parking lot on March 10, bringing twenty-five female monastics including the Abbess, Master Dam Luu, and twenty-six lay practitioners from Duc Vien Temple in San Jose. Monks from various regions of the U.S. had gathered at Duc Vien to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the death of their founding teacher, Ven. Master Dam Nhat, and they all stayed for three days to experience our form of practice. They had tea with the senior monks and an informal question-and-answer session with all monks and lay trainees. Tempting aromas drifted through our kitchen windows as they prepared delicious Vietnamese meals, enjoyed by all.

Rev. Sun Moon of Kamrosa Temple in Dea Jeon, South Korea arrived on April 18 for a three-month stay, arriving just in time for our spring monastic retreat. Rev. Sun Moon has been a monk in the Korean Seon (Zen) tradition for more than twenty years and has also studied Zen Buddhism and history at Dongguk University as well as obtaining a Master's degree in Social Work. This is Rev. Sun Moon's second stay with us, and we are grateful for her wholehearted participation in our monastic life.

Nyingje Gongpel, a female monk in the Tibetan tradition from Gampo Abbey in Nova Scotia, visited on Sunday, April 20 and joined in the Festival of Great Master Keizan and tea afterwards. It was delightful to see Korean and Tibetan monastic vestments during the ceremony, reminding us of our connection with the worldwide Buddhist Sangha.

*Projects* : We completed renovation of two guest rooms (former Guest Offices) in time for the Duc Vien visit, and we have been thinning and clearing trees and shrubs in advance of wildfire season. We will burn this wood during for heating during the colder months.

—Rev. Margaret

## Berkeley Buddhist Priory

— Berkeley, California – USA —

During the past few months, the Priory kitchen has had some improvements. We painted the kitchen with a new coat of brighter white paint. We also replaced all the old Formica kitchen counters with butcher-block counters and the old kitchen sink with a new granite sink. It does create a much warmer kitchen, which is a help since everyone coming to the Priory, walks through our kitchen.

We removed the large hedge in the front of the Priory and replaced the hedge with five new bushes. The hedge had gotten too big and it was very labor intensive to maintain. The front of the temple is much more open and that seems to be an improvement.

A Priory Buddhist reading group is now meeting one evening a month, at various members' homes. The first book that they began with is *Buddha Recognizes Buddha* by Rev. Master Daishin Morgan. There is much interest and enthusiasm for the



discussions that are involved in a reading group and for the Dharma teaching.

— *Rev. Master Kinrei*

## Eugene Buddhist Priory

— *Eugene, Oregon – USA* —

### Day Retreat:

In March we held another of our Sunday retreats with 10 people attending. These day retreats give the congregation an opportunity to meditate, work, and have meals together in a way that is a bit different from our usual time together. Another day retreat is planned for August.

### Public Talk:

In February, Rev. Oriana gave a talk on Zen practice and meditation at Eugene Public Library. The library is a lively meeting place for Eugene residents and 35-40 people attended. It appeared that many of them had experience with a meditation practice in other traditions and were interested in a Zen perspective. There was plenty of time for questions and discussion. A handful of those who came to the talk also attended our introductory evening the following week.

### Progress on the Priory Grounds:

This spring we are continuing our work on renovating the back part of our grounds. With the trailer sold, we began clearing out and tearing down the larger of the two sheds. Ernie Rimerman and Rev. Oriana spent a day going through the items in the shed, putting them in “piles”: keep; take to “Bring,” (our local builders’ recycling center); St. Vincent’s charity; local dump. Everything has been cleared away except the actual foundation of the building. Ernie and Bev Schenler are now looking at our tool shed

and pulling out anything that is no longer of use to the priory. Bev has also kindly taken on the task of going through our large pile of gardening pots, taking the majority of them to a local nursery that recycles plastic garden pots. Thank you to Ernie and Bev for taking this on.

Due to an ice storm in February which did quite a bit of damage to the trees on our property, and to a wet spring, we have become aware of several things on priory property needing attention this summer. Our drainage system by the front building needs work. Currently water is not draining well in one area and will eventually do damage to the foundation of the building. Also the gravel drive from Teague Loop to the priory buildings has become more mud than gravel. New gravel needs to be put down and we will also extend the gravel down the “side drive” to where the tool shed now stands. Before the gravel is put down, we’ll take the opportunity to add electric lights along the drive from the mailbox up to the priory buildings so that it is easier for people to see where we are (and where they are going). It will also make it more pleasant in the winter, when Rev. Oriana goes down to open and close the gate when it is still dark.

We have received a bid from Quality Woodcraft to build a 12 x 16 foot storage shed, high enough for a loft which will give us additional storage space. Because of the expenses of work on the drive and drainage, we will hold off on the shed until the drive is completed and then see where we are financially. Hopefully, we will be able to continue on with the new shed this fall.

Looking Ahead to August:

Rev. Oriana will be visiting Throssel Hole during the month of August. While she is here, Rev. Helen will be coming up from Mt. Shasta to be resident monk. Rev. Helen will be following our posted August schedule, as well as adding several choir practices and her own flavor to priory activities. It will be of real benefit to

the community to interact with another monk and her particular slant on Buddhist practice.

Rev. Helen visited the priory for two weeks in May to get to know the congregation a bit and to see how the daily schedule and maintenance of the priory grounds works. While she was here, Rev. Oriana spent a week at Portland Priory and on the Oregon coast to get some rest. Many thanks to Rev. Helen for her presence at the priory during that time, and to Rev. Master Meiko for offering a place of welcome and support.

—*Rev. Oriana*

## Lions Gate Buddhist Priory

—*Lytton, British Columbia – Canada*—

In early March Rev. Master Kōten and Rev. Valeria met with Rev. Master Meidō, who was traveling through Vancouver on the way back to her home temple of Wallowa Buddhist Temple in Joseph, Oregon. All three monks participated in a Blessing ceremony for a building that is being developed by Supriti Bharna for meditation group purposes.

In the same month, Rev. Master gave a talk to a meditation group in the nearby town of Lillooet. The talk, titled “The Mountains Belong to Those Who Love Them” was well-attended and well-received. Thank you to lay ministers Chris and Terry Hurst, who provided transportation, lodging and meals for this event.

In addition, we had a visit from Rev. Danny Whitehead, minister of the Anglican Church in Lytton and surrounding areas. Rev. Danny enjoyed a lunch with us and a long talk with Rev. Master Kōten.

During the last week of March, the monks held their Annual March Monastic Retreat. We were all very grateful for this time of quiet.

The concrete statue of Vaishravana, Guardian King of the North, has done yeoman service in a grove of trees on the road up from the valley. He has witnessed two trees falling around him, but both missed hitting him. He has also been overturned by bears several times and suffered the ravages of several winters. Rev. Master Kōten re-painted him, and we constructed a new shrine for him just at the driveway heading down to Prajnatarā Hall. He is in a more sheltered spot, we have placed him on a large pedestal and put stones and small statues around him.

We held the first retreat of the year from April 17 to April 20. Several people attended, from Merritt, Lytton and Vancouver.

For two weeks in May, Rev. Master Aurelian visited Edmonton Buddhist Meditation Group, offering Dharma talks, individual spiritual counselling, and participating in the meditation group activities. Rev. Master Aurelian gives the following report: “It was a joy to see and train with the Edmonton Group. We held a day-long retreat, and met together as a group several times. Also, some of us visited Lac Ste. Anne, which has been a Roman Catholic pilgrimage site for over 150 years, and attracts approximately 40,000 people each year. We had a lovely visit with the resident priest, Father Les. We also visited Truc Lam Monastery, a Vietnamese temple The Abbot very kindly offered us lunch, after which we were treated to a field trip, visiting a Seniors' Centre built by the Vietnamese Buddhist Community, then onto a lovely retreat centre in the country.”

The Vietnamese temple in Langley, British Columbia, is donating a beautiful 10ft high white marble statue of Kwan Yin to the priory and we intend to offer it to the village of Lytton in memory of the joss house and the Chinese who died in the Gold Rush and the construction of the Railway. The Vietnamese abbot

is very happy with this. If the village accepts the statue it could go in the village square or on the joss house site.

The photo shows the statue including the white marble incense burner that will come with it. The statue weighs 2-3ton.



— *Rev. Master Aurelian and Meredith Midtdal*

## Pine Mountain Buddhist Temple

— *Ventura County, California – USA* —

After the closed period in January, all the February weekends were well attended, and we had one young man (Jared) stay for the month. Jared's parents came to take him back home just in time to get out of our valley as the first real rain in over two years just started soon after they left, and the next day the river was impassable. The rain did not last long, but brought us five inches of water, enough for a lavish display of yellow and blue wildflowers to come out in our fields. In the mountains nearer to the coast there was more rainfall, and this caused some rock slides on Highway 33. Our heartfelt thanks to the Caltrans workers who spent several weeks working 10 hours a day to fix the problems and have the road open as soon as possible. During this time Rev. Seikai and Phoebe did visit the Ventura Meditation group even though this meant taking the “long way”, via Frazier Park. Some of our stalwart supporters did the same to come to the temple, for which we are deeply appreciative.

March 5 was the last day we saw our black cat Pearl; she did not come back from her usual nightly outings. After a few days we held a funeral for her, using a picture on the altar draped with her “cat kesa” (shown below). We give our pets the Precepts when they first arrive at the temple, and then again when they die. Pearl does not have her own little grave, but we plan to put her name plaque with Cinta the dog, who died four years ago.



March 8 and 9 we had a lovely visit of three Buddhist nuns in the Theravada Tradition, Ayya Tathaaloka, Ayya Adhimutta, and Ayya Suvijyana from the Dhammadharini Vihara in Sonoma County, together with one of their lay students. They had a funeral to attend in Los Angeles and broke their journey by spending two nights with us. It is always a pleasure to meet other monastics, make new friendships and refresh old ones. We have known Ven. Tathaaloka for many years.

Our good friends and fellow practitioners Asha and Teresa came for 10 days during March, joining us for the Segaki retreat, members' meeting, and week of quiet practice. As their work project they gave the fish pond its spring cleaning, to the great pleasure of the fish. All plants were repotted and some new ones added to the collection. Once the weather warms up a little we expect many lilies and irises to bloom and cheer up our patio. On March 27 we held a private memorial ceremony for Lillian and George High, Teresa's brother and his wife who had died within a few months of one another.

For the spring Segaki Festival this year we had a small group of long time practitioners which made for a lovely atmosphere of friendship and mindfully being together. No instructions were needed, everyone simply did what presented

itself in front of them and we all felt a deep sense of harmony and joy during the ceremony.

On March 29 Thea Mercouffer took the Buddhist Precepts, attended by her husband George, their children Zaha and Omalina and their best friends Liesbeth, Venice and Ever. It's a wonderful thing for children to see their mother take such a step! The whole family stayed for the weekend and participated in various meditation and Dharma sessions, walks in the hills and, best of all, a chance for the boys to drive the tractor and for the girls to drive the golf cart.



*Thea at her Ordination with Rev. Master Phoebe*

For the month of April we had two lay residents here, Nick and Adrian, both in their early 20s. We were grateful for the good company at morning and evening meditation, chanting services and meals. This time of year there is much to do outside, and we are glad for these young energetic helping hands. In the photo below they are clearing up branches from one of four dead pine trees which were felled by our friend Steve McBride, who offers his time and chain sawing skills every year.





*Nick and Adrian at work in the grounds*

Adrian loved to work on trail building in the hills, a project we began a year ago but had to put aside as the ground was too dry and we had to turn our attention to other things in the temple. He almost single-handedly finished the “Ridge Trail”, which makes a loop of a half mile, connecting the top of the Jizo Hill with the East Canyon.

On May 3 Revs. Phoebe and Seikai drove to Westminster, California, in Orange County, to attend a large Wesak celebration held by the Vietnamese Sangha at a local high school. There were several hundred people in attendance, including over 100 monks and nuns, primarily Vietnamese and Sri Lankan. It was a beautiful spring day, and we met and talked with some interesting people.

*—Rev. Master Seikai*

## Portland Buddhist Priory

*— Portland, Oregon – USA —*

We are beginning to move toward summer time with all the trees in full leaf and most of the spring blossoms have arrived and

are on their way making room for the coming seasons. The priory just celebrated Shakyamuni Buddha's Birth with a few children joining us which always brings much joy to the festivities. We had a lovely Birthday cake and the annual reading of the Story of the Buddha's Birth (see photos below).





During the earlier spring time, which offered us much rain and cold weather right alongside the beautiful sun with its warmth, we had a number of visitors pass through Portland. Clyde Chamberlain, who used to live in Portland and now resides in Canada, came by for tea and a chat as he was passing through visiting family, and Ruth Scott with her daughter Meredith Mitdal spent the night then joined us for Morning services the next day on their way to Shasta Abbey for the Ten Precepts Retreat. Aurelia Hadley also joined us for a few days stay as she attended ‘Tai Chi for Arthritis’ workshops in the Portland area. A few monastics also paid a visit. Rev. Master Meidō Tuttle, whose temple is in Joseph, Oregon stayed for a few days on her way to and from Shasta Abbey for a monastic ordination. It was a delight to have her with us! Also, Rev. Oriana La Chance, Prior of the Eugene Priory spent a few days here on her way to spend some rest time at the beach cottage in Gearhart, Oregon.

Rev. Meikō was able to travel to Shasta Abbey in late April for the Spring monastic retreat. On her return she was invited to participate in a Peace Conference that was a collaborative effort by the Mt. Hood Community College Diversity Resource Center, the International Sufi School for Peace and Service and the Women's Federation for World Peace with support from MHCC Associated Student Government. There were four workshops offered at this conference: Peace Within, Peace in the Family, Peace in the Community and Peace in the World. Rev. Meikō opened the Conference with a guided meditation which was followed by the recitation of the *Metta Sutra, the Scripture on Loving Kindness*, and a spoken version of the "Dedication of Merit". It was her honor to be asked to make this offering.

—Rev. Master Meikō

## Vancouver Island Zen Sangha

— Victoria, British Columbia – Canada —

Spring is usually a busy time for the Vancouver Island Zen Sangha in Victoria and this year was no exception. A sale of dharma books and other books of general interest collected over time netted us \$565.00 for continuing projects. This was shortly followed by a welcome visit from Rev. Master Meidō of Joseph, Oregon whose teaching stories are always greatly appreciated by members. On March 16th, Rev. Master Meiten taught another in her series of intensives on the very pivotal '*Scripture of Great Wisdom.*'

April's highlight was the 88th birthday celebration of our teacher on April 8th. This was very well attended by sangha members and friends made through her years here on Vancouver Island. A well-deserved renewal period followed.

Work continues on the selection and editing of Rev. Master Meiten's reflections for her third book 'Returning to Stillness' and electronic publication is anticipated in October. The first two books may be downloaded in several formats from our website [www.vizs.org](http://www.vizs.org) free of charge though donations are gratefully accepted and used for continuing projects. We do have a very limited supply of print copies of the second book, 'Reminders on the Way.'

—Carole Leslie

## Wallowa Buddhist Temple

— Joseph, Oregon – USA —

Here in the Wallowa mountains, we are enjoying a temperate and prolonged springtime. Fresh garden greens flourishing in a neighborhood greenhouse are being generously shared with the monks. The many kinds of birds who occupy the five acres of wooded creek-side temple grounds sing exuberantly as they nest.

*Travel:* In late February, Rev. Master Meidō enjoyed another of her cherished retreats with Rev. Master Meiten and the Vancouver Island Zen Sangha. At the end of her stay there she took the ferry over to Vancouver, British Columbia, where she was grateful for the chance to see Rev. Master Kōten and Rev. Valeria (who drove down from Dragon Flower Mountain), Supriti Bharma, and lay ministers Grant Brusegard and Michele Feist.

In April, Rev. Meidō travelled to Shasta Abbey with lay minister Mary Gray to join the Sangha there for the monastic ordination of Rev. Vera Giordano by Rev. Master Kōdō. This joyous occasion provided a wonderful opportunity to see many fellow monks and congregation members at the Abbey. En route, Rev. Meidō stayed over at the Portland Buddhist Priory, pleased to visit with Rev. Master Meikō, Ambrose, and the Portland

congregation and to join in the Priory's schedule. What a delight it was these past months to come together with the wider Sangha and see each other face to face! Rev. Meidō offers her gratitude to all those who helped make these trips both possible and deeply replenishing, and to Rev. Clairissa who looked after the temple and its congregation in her absence.

*Temple activities:* In April, the monks held a private wedding ceremony at the temple for a local couple who found us through the office of the county clerk; fortunately, our neighbor across the road was able to fill in at short notice when need arose for a second witness. In addition to our ongoing weekly schedule of meditation and services for the local congregation, we were pleased to welcome a number of out-of-town guests. These included a three-day retreat with lay practitioners Ed Florence from Sandpoint, Idaho, and Clyde Chamberlain from Nelson, British Columbia. During working meditation periods, Ed and Clyde carefully replaced and levelled the flooring under the temple's washer and dryer, thereby resolving a number of problems for these machines. Lay minister Helmut Schatz drove down from Teco, Washington, to be together with us for a brief visit not long after the death of his wife, Linda Lucas-Schatz, who had come for a number of retreats at the temple over the years and was very dear to us. Also, a congregation member from the Eugene Buddhist Priory who was in our area on business took time to visit the temple for the first time and have a nice long tea with the monks. It has been a joy to practice with all these Sangha members visiting from afar.

*Guest House Building Project:* In March, we were surprised and delighted when our plumber drove up in his work truck to present a donation of three new sinks for eventual installation in the guest house. Later that month, the drywall crew began installing sheetrock. The job was done very well, and generously offered at cost. A loan from our electrician of a heavy duty heater proved vital during the mudding phase. Thanks to the excellent

instruction, help, and loan of painting equipment by a local friend of the temple who is a retired professional housepainter, we were able to complete the painting of the interior of the building in about a week. Then the electrician and his crew did the final electrical work and turned on the lights. A neighbor who is a retired cabinetmaker recently completed the beautiful alder cabinets for the two bathrooms and tiny utility room, and another neighbor has offered to install the counter tops for these. We have learned a lot about various aspects of the building trades in the course of assisting these and other skilled workers. Their love of their craft is reflected throughout the new building. Our attention is now being turned to flooring, interior doors and trim, and final plumbing. We hope to raise whatever additional funds turn out to be needed to complete the building this year via a variety of fundraising endeavors.

*Individual Retreats:* One of the temple's main purposes is to serve as a small rural retreat center for congregation and monks of our wider Sangha. Those interested in arranging individual retreats are welcome to call (541-432-6129) or write for more information. You may also wish to visit our website at [wallowabuddhisttemple.org](http://wallowabuddhisttemple.org).

— *Rev. Master Meidō and Rev. Clairissa*

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**CA:** Auburn, Chico, Fresno,  
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**MT:** Whitefish

**WA:** Bainbridge Island

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*For details, please contact your  
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at Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey.  
Order of Buddhist  
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## 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 (Chinese: *T'sao-Tung Ch'an*; Japanese: *Sōtō Zen*) and includes both men and women monastics and lay ministers, all of whom are licensed by the Order. The main offices of the OBC are at Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey in England and Shasta Abbey in the US. These monasteries and several of the other priories and temples of the Order offer monastic training for women and men, whilst all temples offer instruction and retreats for lay trainees. Priests and those in training for the priesthood follow the celibate monastic path, while lay members of the Order follow the way of training of the householder. The Order also has a growing number of priories and affiliated meditation groups. The OBC is an international religious organization, incorporated with non-profit status in California, USA. The Ship and Three Drums image on the front cover of the Journal is registered in the United States as the logo of the OBC.

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 within the numerous training places of our Order.

We warmly invite our readers to send letters and articles for the Journal. If at all possible, we appreciate receiving Rich Text Format (RTF) or WORD files emailed to us at: [journal@throssel.org.uk](mailto:journal@throssel.org.uk).

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

We thank you for your interest in, and support of, the Journal and the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives.

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