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Achalanatha painting by Rev. Master Myfanwy at Throssel

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Understanding the Source of our Delusion

Rev. Master Jishō Perry

—*Shasta Abbey, CA–USA*—

Transcription of a talk given at Shasta Abbey in 2018.

I saw a ‘flash bomb’ performance of Beethoven’s Ode to Joy ... It starts with a blind cellist standing out in front of a European Cathedral and a young girl, about 8 years old, coming up with her recorder and playing the first part of Beethoven’s Ode to Joy. The blind cellist adds to it. And then, within a couple of minutes, an entire orchestra and chorus have assembled, and they’re all playing and singing the Ode to Joy. And it’s really beautiful, but it was a set up. It was all arranged in advance but appeared to be spontaneous. And I think the *Surangama Scripture*¹ I’m going to be talking about today is also a kind of setup.

The Buddha could not have spoken all of that ... all of the entire book, 460 some odd pages, in one afternoon ... One of the quotes I’ll be quoting today is the Buddha saying: “All words are false.” What I’m trying to do is to tell you however, that the source of our delusion (which is also false)

is also the source of our salvation or liberation. This is a major part of what the *Surangama Sutra* is talking about.

I was invited to go to Europe next summer to give some little talks on this, and so was looking at it while on retreat at the Hermitage recently. It was then I realized just how much I did not know. So now, I'd like to give you a little introduction to the *Suragama Sutra*.

It begins with Ananda, the Buddha's chaplain and the only one of his disciples who had memorized everything ... all of the scriptures (which seems quite outrageous that anyone could actually do that). Anyway, Ananda was invited over to someone's house for a meal and the next day while on his way back to the monastery, he was invited to another house where there was a very beautiful young courtesan who was chanting some sort of mantra to try to seduce him. And he was getting very interested indeed. The Buddha, with his wisdom eye was able to see that this was going on, so he asks Manjusri to learn the *Surangama Litany* and go to where Ananda and this young courtesan were sitting together on the bed. The *Surangama Litany* was strong enough to break the spell that she had been spinning. By the time they all get back to the monastery, the young woman has already become a bhikkuni. Now that was fast! By the end of the scripture, she has become an Arahant. And Ananda still has another 20 years to go after the Buddha's death ... She's one quick learner!

So, in the first chapter of the Sutra, the Buddha asks Ananda, “Where is the mind?” And Ananda is thinking about the intellectual mind, and physical space, but the Buddha is talking about the Buddha Mind. And as Reverend Master Chushin defined the Buddha mind in a poem that he wrote, “That which fills and contains all things ... there is no place where the Buddha Mind does not exist”.

The next chapter in the sutra is about awareness, because awareness is what doesn't die and isn't born. Awareness is the Buddha Nature. We all come fully equipped with the Buddha Nature. One of the teachings of the scriptures is that we don't have to get something, we have to let go of something in order to understand what the Buddha is saying. We have to let go of our delusion and our delusion is the delusion of the self. The heart of the scripture is trying to explain to Ananda how to convert that ignorance into understanding.

One of the delusions our society sells us is that we are basically inadequate. We need more money, a better partner, newer cars, a computer that never has any problems ... that we have to have something else. Baso³ said that we have to look through the eyes of the Buddha and not consider whether the self is adequate or inadequate. And that is what the *Suragama Sutra* is primarily about. It's explaining that we already have the Buddha nature, we have everything we need ... we are fully equipped. We're so fully equipped that we actually believe the self is real. The self is actually the

source of our delusions! And letting go the self of that self is no easy task.

But Ananda is able to ask a really good question and he gets a really good answer. I'm quoting here and I might make a couple of editorial changes as I go along. So this is Ananda asking the Buddha:

“I only hope that the Greatly Compassionate one will be moved to deeply pity us who are drowning in the sea of suffering. The sea of our afflictions. How the knots of our bodies and minds are tied and where do we begin to untie them so that we and the suffering beings of the future may be freed from the cycle of death and rebirth and fall no longer into the three realms of conditioned existence.”²

Having spoken that, he bowed to the ground, as did all the others in the assembly. He shed tears as he eagerly awaited the sublime instructions given by the Buddha, the World Honored One. We need to appreciate the depth of sincerity of his question here, and his willingness to break into tears trying to get the answer to it ... how do I untie these knots? Then the World Honored One took pity on Ananda and all the others of the future:

“And all in the assembly who needed instructions, wishing that, for the sake of the future, they might transcend the conditioned world and become guides for the time yet to come. As he circled his hand above

the crown of Ananda's head, his hand shone with the light that was the color of the purple tinted gold of the Jambu river. Then throughout all the ten directions, every world in which Buddha's were dwelling, shaped in six ways, each one of the numberless Buddha's of those worlds admitted resplendent light from the crown of his head. Those beams of light shone down upon the crown of the Buddha's head as he was seated in the grove. No one in the assembly had ever witnessed such an event.

Then Ananda and all the others in the great assembly, heard the numberless Buddhas throughout the universe speak in one voice, although with different tongues saying:

“Well done Ananda. You want to understand the ignorance that you were born with, the source of that knot. What causes you to be bound to that cycle of death and rebirth is your six faculties of perception and nothing more. Also, since you wish to understand the Supreme Enlightenment, you should understand that it is through those very same six faculties that you can quickly gain bliss, liberation and stillness, wondrous and everlasting”.

Although Ananda heard these words of the Dharma, he did not understand them. He bowed his head and said respectfully to the Buddha, “How can it be that nothing more than the six faculties bind us to the cycle of death and rebirth, while at the same time, they can cause us to gain wondrous and everlasting bliss?”

The Buddha said to Ananda, “The faculties and their objects come from the same source. What binds and what unbinds are one and the same. The consciousnesses are, by their nature, illusory, like flowers seen in the sky. In response to objects, Ananda, there is perception and in response to the facilities there are objects. Neither the objects nor perceptions of them have an essential nature. They are all dependent on each other like intertwining weeds. Know therefore, that the establishment of perceived objects such that they exist separately from our awareness is the foundation of our ignorance.”

So that is what I’m trying to explain today. And the explanation is quite simply that we see things through the eyes of the filter of self. So we don’t see things as they truly are, we see things as we twist them through our likes and dislikes, “my” fears “my” greed, angers, all of “my” karmic conditioning is what distorts that perception; the perception itself is the Buddha nature. That awareness is what doesn’t die. It isn’t born. We all have it. But we twist it because we see it through our old habits. Neither the objects nor perception of them have an essential nature. Everything that exists is falling apart and being reborn again. All these things. They are all the Buddha nature in that they don’t have anything that is real. If you think of It as emptiness, Reverend Master Jiyu used to say, It’s the fullest emptiness you’ll ever know. It’s the emptiness of pure awareness. Know therefore that the establishment of perceived objects such that they exist separately, within our awareness, is the

foundation of ignorance. What we are saying here is that by looking through the filter of self, you create a self and you create an 'other'. And that duality is the basis of our delusion of a self. It's how we see things. When objects are not perceived as separate from awareness, that itself is nirvana, which is the true purity, free of outflows. Why would you allow anything else to be added to it?

Well ... because we come with old karma. What I want to talk about is the conversion of that karma by understanding ourselves. I guess Socrates was absolutely right in terms of Buddha's practice when he said we have to know ourselves. We have to see when "ourselves" are getting in the way. We see that because we experience suffering. Suffering has purpose. It's there to show us where we don't know something. That's our ignorance. And when we see things through this filter of self ... Reverend Master Daizui used to talk about it in terms of having very dark sunglasses, layers of them. And so the way in which we perceive things does not allow for the recognition that it is actually our perception of things that is distorted.

I tried to turn on a light switch yesterday and the 14 lights I was trying to turn on didn't work. I guess I had the wrong light switch. But maybe it wasn't the light switch, maybe it was the person turning on the lights. And that is exactly what we have to look at. What are my habits? If we can sit still in the midst of not knowing something and allow that feeling to go through us without either repressing it or indulging in it, then we have a good chance of cleaning up

the karma by simply allowing it to pass through. Because we are just karmic washing machines. Just try to work through those feelings of frustration. I tried to make a Skype call yesterday and I couldn't get my Skype program to work. I ended up just talking on the telephone. I couldn't get it to work this morning either. But the point is that the last time I worked on it, I wasn't bothered by it. If it doesn't work, even if it never works, it's not a problem. In fact it would probably be a great joy! But we have computers ... and learning patience is how this work of conversion is accomplished. It is what Thich Nhat Hanh says about patience; it's "opening of the heart in the midst of things that are difficult."

So when you have a strong emotional reaction to something, instead of just acting out of impulse, if you can, open your heart to that and see what it is that you need to do to change yourself to find out how to make the situation work. And very often, you can't make the situation work. There are some situations that just aren't going to work. And that's okay because you can't fix everything. But you can open your heart to the greed, anger, frustration and fear. You can see, for example, when you look at something really nice – really nice food – your greed arises, but do you have to take more than you really need? So when we look at something like smoking, it's an addiction. But because it's a habit, we don't see how not to do it. Alcoholism, or whatever the addiction is, drugs, whatever, it's our willingness to be still in the midst of having a strong desire or aversion to something. And just take a good look at that. Explore it. See where 'self' is there. Because only when we can see it with

the eyes of compassion can we do something about it. But we have to understand that the nature of this delusion is the self ... and it is weak ... and we're the only ones who can change it. The Buddha insisted that he wasn't a savior because he cannot do that work for anyone else. All of us have to do this for ourselves. And we have to do it because we're compassionate, we have to treat ourselves with kindness. We have to realize that, oh dear, if I act out of impatience or fear, I just create more suffering for myself. It's that stepping back for a moment in the midst of those illusions, of that delusion itself, when we can realize that those really strong emotions are really not us! They are just habits. And being able to separate ourselves from this sense of separation of person and object.

The way Dōgen explains it is in terms of the Precepts, he says: "Within these Precepts dwell the Buddhas enfolding all things within our unparalleled wisdom. There is no subject or object for any who dwell herein. All things....earth, wooden bricks, stone, become Buddhas."⁴ And that is how you see things through the eyes of the Buddha. If you are looking through the eyes of the Buddha you see the Buddha nature in everything. You see that in the cat and the dog.

I was greatly encouraged to find out that the Inuit people of far north, also in Greenland, don't have separate words for 'he' and 'she' in their language. And they don't have a separate word for animals and people. This conditions how they think about things. And if you realize that you're

conditioned to think in terms of ‘he’ and ‘she’ – you are conditioned to think about animals and people – then you create this separation. We have to see how our language, how our culture, how our personal karma that we inherit all have this innate subject/object duality; and we have to see that when we act on that, we’re acting on delusion, we’re creating more suffering. But we have to see that we actually do act on that. And we also have to see that we make judgments and judgments prevent us from understanding what it is that we are actually looking at. Because the judgment is ‘bad’ for us ... For instance “I don’t like this or that person” or whatever. Then there simply isn’t anything more to learn. So we have to see when we are judging, we have to see when we are angry, we have to see when we are fearful.

I don’t think of myself as somebody who worries very much, but I was out at the Hermitage and suddenly began to worry about things. And I thought, oh, that’s interesting, I can just jump in and start worrying about stuff if I want to. Well, I don’t want to do that. If we can see ourselves going to those places, where we are acting out of habit, where we’re acting out of judgment, where we’re acting out of fear; when you can see that and say, no, I don’t want to go there, then you can help yourself. You’re getting to the source of the delusion. But you have to see it in a gentle, kind way. You have to see it with compassion. You also have to take yourself not too seriously. Because acting on this delusion of self is really stupid! And the stupidity isn’t because we are stupid, it’s because we don’t understand what it is we are

doing at the time. And when we look more closely at ourselves, we see we are doing these things that are simply ridiculous. And when we can laugh at ourselves a little, we don't take that ridiculous stuff quite so seriously. And that is really important.

But we also have to understand the scriptures. Even if we don't understand it all in one afternoon – this entire book – it doesn't mean that there isn't something helpful to learn from It.

So this is the Buddha, continuing: “In our true nature, all conditioned things are seen as empty. That which arises from conditions is illusory. That which is unconditioned is not born, nor does it perish. It too has no reality, like flowers in the sky.”

One of the earlier chapters in the sutra is about visual awareness and the Buddha started out the day having his meal with King Prasenajit. That is where he was when he saw that Ananda was in trouble. The king's question to the Buddha was that there were other teachers who teach that there is nothing after death. So the Buddha asks the king, “When you first saw the river Ganges, how old were you?” He says, “Three years old, I knew it was the river Ganges.” Well, when did you see it next?” “When I was thirteen.” Buddha asked, “Did it change?” “No, it's still the same.” “Did you change?” “I was very different. Now I'm 62”. The river still looks the same. The awareness of the river is the same thing. But the king is getting old and wrinkled. The

Buddha was trying to tell him that that which doesn't change is the Eternal. That which does change is karmically conditioned stuff.

Though we use words to try to speak the truth, all words are false. In other words, you can't explain the Buddha Nature in words. You have to experience the truth for yourself. Not only words that aim at truth but also false words – they are all false! All that is called true and all that is called false, is false! How can there be, therefore, the observer and what is observed? The perceiver and the perceived ... there is nothing that is real. They are like vines that only stand by twisting around each other. Entanglement and liberation share a common basis. The path of sages and of common folk is one path only. And everyone has to do this for his or her self.

You should consider now; these vines that twist around each other, they have no existence and they do not lack existence. The darkness of confusion is our basic ignorance. The light of understanding brings about liberation. A knot must be untied according to a certain sequence. And when the six have been untied, the one will vanish too. So choose one perceiving faculty and realize your break through. Enter the current. Realize true enlightenment!

“From subtle agama is the storehouse consciousness.⁵ The energy of habits can burst forth into a torrent, lest you confuse the true and what's untrue. I rarely speak of this, but when your mind grasps hold of your own mind, that's not illusion.

Then it becomes illusory, and if you don't grasp hold of what is called illusion and what's not... illusion too will not arise. How could what is illusion be established?"

The story given for this is of Yajnadatta, who looked in the mirror and didn't see his head; he thought he lost his head!⁶ He went running around the town screaming that he had lost his head. Well, there was nobody that could put the head back. It was still there. That's the nature of our delusion in that we think in ways that create this self and other separation. And we need to change how it is we perceive things by doing our meditation, by keeping the Precepts, by seeing how it is that we create our own suffering.

“This dharma may be called the wondrous lotus flower. The royal, indestructible, magnificent awakening. This practice of Samadhi, though likened to illusion can quickly bring you past the ones who need no further training. The peerless dharma is the road that all Buddhas, the world honored ones, use to reach the gateway to Nirvana.”

What he is talking about here is choosing one of the senses and going inwards. At this point, Ananda still thinks that Buddha is going to zap him with a hidden transmission and he doesn't have to do the work of changing himself. Buddha realizes this and so he has twenty five Arhats and Bodhisattvas describe their understanding. And everyone has a different way of getting there. The last one is

Avalokitesvara who speaks in terms of turning the sound inwards and listening to silence, which is essentially what our meditation is. And going into that ... and to keep going deeper, into it, and to come to as full an understanding as the Buddha. Well, maybe just a little bit less. What we have to realize is that our meditation and our commitment to the Precepts and our willingness to look kindly at ourselves and other beings has that effect.

Somebody was noting that there has been some progress made with some of the juniors and Reverend Master Meian said, yes, training works. And it does work, but we have to do the work. We have to learn to sit still and see when we are experiencing suffering and realize that we have created this out of a misunderstanding. And if we open our hearts to that misunderstanding, there may be room for us to understand a little bit more deeply. But this is an ongoing process, it may take a couple of lifetimes. I'm currently reading the Jataka tales, and there are over 500 of them! So we don't have to expect all of this to go away soon and, time doesn't matter.

It matters that we make the effort on a day to day basis, to get out of bed and do the best we can for that day. Even when we are trying to explain something and not doing it skilfully, and I speak for myself, because these things are very difficult both to understand and also to live by. The more we can be patient with ourselves and our meditation, the more we can open our hearts to whatever reality we are dealing with.

Especially with getting older. I don't walk as well as I used to walk...I stumble around, I don't remember as well as I thought I remembered. What I thought I remembered is just an illusion, a story that I told myself. What we have to do is to take our reality and realize that we don't have to have it any other way. We can just have this reality now today, and that is, in fact, the Buddha realm. You know, sometimes the weather is good and sometimes the weather is not so good. Sometimes I remember my car keys or I empty my pockets properly and put the stuff back in and sometimes I don't.

Having some kind of sense of honesty that we have this opportunity as human beings to know the same things that Buddha knows. And that our vows to keep the Precepts and our vows to practice meditation is what eventually will lead us to deep understanding. But those vows transcend birth and death and the practice transcends birth and death. And the deeper we go into the seeing where we are keeping the Precepts and seeing where we are not keeping the Precepts, the more the heart opens. Just because we are opening ourselves up to whatever the reality is.

There is a lovely poem written by Mary Oliver in a whole book on dogs that I was just given the other day.⁷ There is a great one about a junkyard dog who wasn't even lucky enough to be born on an old car seat. He was born on the dirt. But when he could open his eyes, he saw there were grass and trees, and in the night, he looks up ...and he's got these worms gnawing at him, but he looks up and sees one

star, not a whole bunch of stars, but just one star. And he falls in love with this star. It's a lovely poem; it says: "When you're just there, and you're loving yourself and you're loving something, that's where you're at." And you can be a junkyard dog seeing only one star, but loving it. Loving your situation, whatever you happen to be in and saying you don't need something more than that. You can deal with computer problems or the car that doesn't start or the flat tire on the freeway. Whatever those things are.

I was sent recently, a picture of a man in Somalia; his four year old son had just died of cholera. He was homeless. He was living in a makeshift tent. But somebody had gotten him some fresh water. He was sitting there with both his grief and his fresh water and his makeshift tent ... and he was okay. Suffering does exist ... and we have it pretty good here, when it actually comes down to it. We are not refugees and we are not waiting for somebody to provide us with some clean water so our kids don't die of cholera. And at the same time, this is what human existence is like; some people are in very, very difficult situations. Anything we can do to help these people, please do it. But realize that you can't solve all the problems of suffering. But you can do something about yourself and that is right here, right now. Today is your opportunity to do that. And when you get an opportunity to help someone please do it.

Because the kindness that we have to give and our concern for the suffering of others is enormously helpful.

Notes

1. *The Sūrangama Sutra*. Trans Lu K'uan Yü (Delhi: B I Publications, 1966).
2. *The Sūrangama Sutra*. [as above] p.115.
3. Baso, Dōitsu (Ma-tsu Tao-i) 709-788. Source of quote unknown.
4. Zen Master Dōgen. *Shushogi: What is Truly Meant by Training and Enlightenment*. in *Zen is Eternal Life* by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, (Mt. Shasta, CA: Shasta abbey Press, 1999) pp. 94 – 103.
5. 'Agama' literally means 'sacred work' or scripture and refers to early Buddhist texts, and possibly practices mentioned in those scriptures. Storehouse consciousness (*alaya-vijnana*) is like a repository of the mind that stores things outside of our conscious awareness as impressions, or 'seeds' which can manifest in awareness as mental formations. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agama\(Hinduism\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agama(Hinduism))
6. *The Surangama Sutra*. [as above] p. 98.
7. Oliver, May. *Dog Songs* (London: Penguin Press, 2013).

Finding our Fearless Heart

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Right now we are in the midst of a new scary situation, a worldwide pandemic. It is frightening to think of the possible serious illness that we and all our family and friends and the whole world are facing. Another aspect of this pandemic is not just fears and worries about our health but also fears for our finances as we face this severe economic upheaval which threatens or eliminates many jobs, reduces savings and creates an uncertain future. However, as they teach in Buddhism, “the Dharma is the real medicine for all suffering”. Buddhist training is really about how we can better relate to all the various difficult conditions that life offers us. In the *Litany of the Great Compassionate One*, we chant “Om to the One who leaps beyond all fear”. Buddhist training is pointing all of us towards finding this place in our hearts that knows there is nothing to fear.

The arising of fear is a normal and functional way of relating to whatever threatens us. This self, this body of karma, is very vulnerable and can easily be hurt and damaged. Our fear is pointing us to the First Noble Truth, suffering exists. As long as we live, we will often be given conditions that we find threatening. My little self, this little me called Kinrei, is very vulnerable and so are all our little selves. The Second Noble Truth is that all our fear and suffering is due to attachment, and our main attachment is to ourselves, the way we make this little me into the center of our world. The Third Noble Truth is, there is a freedom from fear and suffering, that Nirvana exists, that we all can find freedom from all fear and suffering. The Fourth Noble Truth, the Eightfold Path is the way to finding this freedom from suffering and all fear. The Eightfold Path starts with Right View and having Right View of our fears is that which will point us to how we can find the freedom from all our fears.

As long as we live, fear will arise as it is helping us to protect ourselves from whatever we perceive as posing a danger. The feeling of fear is just giving us information that there is something that we really need to pay attention to. The arising of the fearful feelings is fine and is a normal and functional way of relating to a changeable and uncertain world. It is the way we cling to these fearful feelings that is the problem. We can easily live our lives with an undercurrent of fear and worry. We can hold onto our fears and identify with these fearful feelings and thoughts. In Buddhism we free ourselves from fear by looking at the fear with Right View. The Dharma teaches us that the fear is just

a passing feeling, like a cloud blocking the sun. Our True Self is like the sun, no clouds can affect its radiance. When we stop grasping our fearful feelings and thoughts, there is within us, a still and boundless place which knows there is nothing to fear. The less we allow our fears to fill our minds, the more our hearts will find this fearless heart.

The word ‘Buddha’ means awakened and Buddhist teaching is telling us to wake ourselves up from our fearful dreams. What we are experiencing is not a dream in the sense it is not real but it has a dreamlike aspect in that it does not have the meaning and we are giving it. Frequently I meet people who tell me that what they feared most had happened and often, to their amazement, despite the hardships and difficulties they had undergone, it turned out that the real problem was their fear and was not those difficult conditions. Often they experienced a sense of liberation by realizing that the real problem was the fear filling their minds and they no longer needed to maintain this fearful mind. People go through dreadful bouts of cancer, they lose their job, they become disabled, and yet they tell me with great sincerity, they are fine and they are actually doing much better than before this disaster. Our encounters with what we deeply fear, can be a gift rather than a problem. Experiencing our deepest fears can be liberating, as it can help us to see through this fearful mind and find, to our amazement, a heart and mind filled with gratitude.

Often people will look at fear as something they need to conquer. In Buddhism, we are not battling with fear, we

are just accepting it as a feeling which has no substance and will just arise and pass. Suppressing fear, telling ourselves that we are not afraid, does not work. It will just be there, under the surface, ready to bubble up and overwhelm you. Much of Buddhist training is allowing all our feelings to be fully felt and acknowledged but then allowing our thoughts and actions to be driven not by our strong feelings like fear, aversion, or desire, but rather, to be driven by the Buddhist Precepts, by what is right action, by what will bring a good result into our life and the world.

The proper way to deal with fear is not to judge it, or reject it or embrace it. Just be still with it and be aware of how it generates a tense feeling within ourselves. When we are not mindful, we can easily be overwhelmed and consumed with fearful thoughts. The Dharma is telling us to be mindful and try to see clearly whatever it is that seems threatened when we are afraid. There is a profound teaching in Buddhism that all we need to do is see all our fears and desires clearly and they will eventually dissolve. The Dharma teaches us that there is nothing to fear. It is seeing with deluded eyes that has us grasping our fears. The Second Noble Truth is: suffering is due to desire. When we are afraid, what underlies all fear is some desire. All fear is being generated because our desires are being threatened. It is important that we see that desire and fear go together, that they are inextricably joined. All you have to do to clearly see this intimate relationship is think of any time your desire was strong, you really wanted this relationship, this job, this

medical diagnosis and if the outcome seemed uncertain, you would automatically have the arising of fear.

To live without fear means to live without desire yet that can seem to be not humanly possible. It will also seem impossible when we look at desire and fear in absolute terms, as if they should never arise. It is a deeply mistaken view if we think we can live without desire and fear arising. They will always arise since they are one of the ways we need to relate to the world and the conditions in our life. But the liberation comes from learning not to cling to them so they can flow through our life like the weather. Buddhist training will fail if we try to make the self into something perfect, such as having no desires. Instead we have to accept whatever desires we are experiencing and then work at letting them go. This will lead to having less and less desire and this, in turn, will lead to having less and less fear. This is something we all can do.

For instance, in Buddhism there is the teaching that we should not get caught up in the Eight Worldly Conditions: gain and loss, fame and disgrace, pleasure and pain, praise and blame. Yet every day, I have the natural arising of my normal desires for gain rather than loss, for fame rather than disgrace, for comfort and pleasure rather than pain and discomfort, for praise rather than blame. And this preference is generally true for all of us. Yet the arising of desire and the arising of fear are not the problem anymore than the arising of all our preferences and desires. However, we can try to be mindful and work at not cultivating and clinging to

these preferences and desires. Can we find our still and peaceful heart in the midst of fear and desire? Can we point ourselves to a deep spiritual trust, that in a deeper sense, all these preference and desires have a dreamlike aspect, and they do not matter, in a deeper and more fundamental way?

The reason we practice meditation is so that we can cultivate a stillness that can allow all our difficult thoughts and feelings to be present without us being driven to react. Within this still and open mind, we can experience the unreal nature of our fears and desires and find that there is something solid within us that is not being affected by these waves of strong karmic emotions.

Suffering always involves getting lost in the difficult conditions we are experiencing, whether it is pain, loss, criticism, failing at something, making mistakes, etc. One way I use Right View to help me deal with the suffering is to just tell myself, it is good to be here. This is true for whatever this present situation is. And if I am not feeling it is good to be here, it just means I am looking at these present conditions with deluded eyes. The Buddha can be found in all places, at all times and in all situations. When I am afraid, the problem is not the fearful condition, it is my deluded views and perceptions.

It is normal that we want better conditions in our life, because all sentient beings want to be happy. The Dharma points us to a peace and happiness that is unshakeable, one that is not dependent on getting life the way we want. This

is the liberation that Buddhism promises if we follow the Buddhist path, a peace and a joy that cannot be taken away from you. We can face old age, disease, pain, mistreatment, criticism and still have a heart that is not being bound by these conditions. When our mind and heart are not feeling bound by difficult conditions such as fear, this means we can open our hearts to the world and embrace ourselves and everything in our life with deep compassion.

A Soft & Flexible Mind

Rev. Master Oswin Hollenbeck

—Shasta Abbey, CA–USA—

This writing was adapted from a Dharma talk offered at Shasta Abbey on 1 September 2019, available at <https://shastaabbey.org/audio/rmoswinASoftAndFlexibleMind.m>
[p3](#)

I want to talk this morning about ‘a soft & flexible mind’. This phrase is said to have been coined by Great Master Dōgen when he was asked what he had brought back from China to Japan. Dōgen lived at a time when Japan was still looking to China for the importation of ‘civilization’. Since the 9th century, Japanese Buddhist monks had been making the dangerous journey by sea to acquire the latest Buddhist teachings then available in the ‘Middle Kingdom’. These monks usually brought back crates of stuff – scriptures & commentaries, paintings, statues, scrolls, religious implements, etc. – all the items deemed necessary to practice the new teachings. Therefore it must have been quite a surprise to hear Dōgen say that all he had brought back was “a soft & flexible mind”.

Was this adage original to Dōgen? In the *Hōkyōki*, a diary of sorts of Dōgen’s initial attribution of this phrase to his Master, Tendo Nyojō, in a conversation about compassion: [Nyojō] “In [the Buddhas’ and Bodhisattvas’] vow to save all sentient beings, they transfer their every merit to the salvation of all sentient beings...[and thus] attain a flexible mind.” When Dōgen asked: “What is this flexibility of mind?” his master replied, “The will of the buddhas and patriarchs to drop the body and the mind leads to the attainment of this flexible mind.”¹

In studying the *Lotus Scripture* recently, I found several lines which may have inspired Nyojō and Dōgen. We know how devotedly Dōgen esteemed the *Lotus Scripture*, even calling it the ‘king of Scriptures’. Its words and phrases emphasizing compassion would have easily come to mind.

The first instance is in the Skillful Means chapter. The Buddha is explaining the myriad ways people connect to the truth – skillful means – and how even the smallest act of devotion to the Dharma assures one’s eventual full realization – and even already is full realization.

After the extinction [nirvana] of buddhas,
Humans with good and soft minds for the truth,
Such living beings as these
Have all realized the Buddha-way.²

This soft compassionate mind for the truth is what Nyojō and Dōgen are pointing to. It may help to remember

that in Chinese and Japanese the same character *xin* (*shin*) can be translated as ‘mind’ or ‘heart’ depending on context. Here it is clearly referring to the heart-mind, not the intellectual or discriminative mind.

We find references to this soft or gentle mind as well in the *Immeasurable Life of the Tathagatha* chapter:

When these sentient beings in faith and humility, honest and forthright in manner, gentle in thought, wholeheartedly yearn to see the Buddha...³

This reference can also be seen as an echo of that quality advocated in the *Metta Sutta*: “straightforward and gentle in speech”.

The gentle or soft mind is the mind of tenderness highlighted as one of the Four Wisdoms in the *Shushogi*, based on Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō* discourse “*Bodhisatta Shishōbō* (The Four Ways a Bodhisattva Benefits Sentient Beings)”: “Beholding all beings with the mind of compassion and speaking kindly to them is the meaning of tenderness.”⁴ This tender mind is the parental or nurturing mind which Dōgen also teaches in the “*Tenzo-kyōkun* (Instructions to the Chief Cook).”⁵ Like the love of a parent, it is not sentimental, patronizing, or indulgent. This deeply caring mind genuinely wishes for the welfare of the child, just as we do when we treat other beings as if they were our own children. Dōgen says that this kind of mind can have a “revolutionary impact upon the mind of man.”⁶

Now let's examine the flexible mind, which is also described in the *Lotus Scripture*. A different translation of the above quote from the *Immeasurable Life* chapter reads:

When living beings have believed and [surrendered],
Being simple and straight, and flexible in mind,
And they wholeheartedly want to meet Buddha...⁷

In Zen, the strength of the bamboo has always been held to be superior to that of the oak. The bamboo bends, it's flexible. We're not talking here about bamboo fishing rods, but bamboo that can grow to the size of a person's arm. Although the oak tree is magnificent and has a deep tap root, it can be blown over by a high wind. In contrast, the bamboo bends, this way and that, depending on the direction of the wind. Likewise, a flood will uproot and wash away the oak, but it can only bend the bamboo. This is the sort of mind that we wish to develop in meditation, one that accords with conditions and does not see them as separate from the Way.⁸

I view this flexible mind to be that which Rev. Master Jiyu translated as the 'kaleidoscopic mind' in the "*Tenzokyōkun*." The valuable feature of this translation is that it describes a mind which in its nature—continually shifting and changing—accords with the nature of reality. All is in flux (*anicca*, or impermanence), and all is brilliant in color and form. A more literal translation of 'kaleidoscopic mind' in this writing is "to minutely observe from different viewpoints without absentmindedness."⁹ I don't know if

kaleidoscopes existed in Dōgen’s day, but I feel that this image surely captures what he meant. Dōgen teaches,

The chief cook must be so kaleidoscopic that, from only a stalk of cabbage, he seems to produce a sixteen-foot-long body of the Buddha. Even in the present day and age it is possible for him to develop a kaleidoscopic nature to such a degree that he helps all living things thereby.¹⁰

As in Dōgen’s monastery, the kitchen is still a prime place to learn moving or active meditation. Once when as a novice monk I served in the kitchen at Shasta Abbey, the chief cook asked me to do five things at once, including watching a pot about to boil and going outside to fetch something. All were equally important, some impacting the other trainees working in the kitchen, and we also had the press of getting lunch out on time. My mind had to be one-pointed, single-minded, whole-hearted, quickly responding to each activity. This was not multi-tasking, as there was a still core of meditation that enabled me to intuitively sense which thing needed immediate response, and then the next thing, and so on. The mind had to be empty of any self-concern or self-preoccupation. As the *Scripture of Great Wisdom* teaches, this is not a negative emptiness, but also not a ‘something’ either. Practicing in this way develops *prajna*—wisdom, or wise discernment.

This flexible mind is also traditionally taught to monks through ceremonial. The instructions for each ceremony are

a blueprint which needs to be adapted to the occasion. For example, how one performs a given ceremony in a small temple is going to be of necessity smaller in dimension and possibly shorter in length. And outside the instructions and order of ceremony is the challenge of following a given celebrant on each occasion. Particularly when one is a chaplain (assistant), one has to remain on the alert and sensitive to any unforeseen needs or wishes of the celebrant. The celebrant may wish a window or door opened, ask for an extra stick of incense, give instructions for adding or deleting a scripture, or make an unexpected visit to the Founder's Shrine. And different celebrants may do things slightly differently. Rev. Master Jiyu taught us that we never do the same ceremony twice, and it is especially the responsibility of the celebrant to make the ceremony live. This is moving or dynamic meditation. Given the same shared root word as dynamite – Greek for 'power' – the term 'dynamic' can give one the sense that the ceremony should be powerful, not necessarily loud, but vigorous. Even if one is simply chanting the scriptures for morning service, one puts one's whole heart and energy into the activity.

In a recent senior monks' tea discussing the pros and cons of changing the schedule and calendar to make it more rigorous, this quality of adaptability and flexibility is what came up strongest for me as the central teaching regarding daily life we wish to impart to younger monks. It's much more important than how early we get up or the specific activities we take part in. In daily monastic life, this practice is constantly necessary. It's a *vinaya* or discipline centered

on the heart of meditation rather than rigid adherence to an external set of ancient rules and regulations.

Rev. Master Jiyu gave us many examples of this soft and flexible mind. One can view her whole teaching life as devoted to manifesting this quality. She taught us to do what needs to be done, without attachment to personal wishes or ideals. In my novice years at Shasta Abbey, each term would have a different focus: sometimes helping a dying monk, other times constructing a building, yet again once publishing our liturgy book, learning new ceremonial, or just simply doing a lot of formal meditation. And when Rev. Master was old and dying, we learned how to train with the ever-changing vicissitudes of chronic and disabling illness. She gave us a memorable example from her own experience while training at Soji-ji Temple in Japan. During one of the monks' sesshins, a week normally devoted exclusively to intense meditation and a sacrosanct monastic activity if ever there was one, the monks spent the entire week matching up body parts of victims of a nearby train wreck. I took away from these experiences the importance of responding to the needs of the situation and bowing to circumstances. And these teachings stood me in good stead when I later served as the prior at a small temple where I was continually called upon to respond creatively to a variety of changing conditions.

A soft and flexible mind is of course relevant to both lay and monastics and is one of the greatest gifts we can learn through practice in a temple setting. Who does not have a

life buffeted by circumstances? Who does not eventually face the changes of illness, aging, and death, when our bodies (and sometimes our minds) do not conform to our expectations?

This soft and flexible mind is also the heart of ‘perfect faith’, as Rev. Master Jiyu once explained in a Dharma talk:

Perfect faith is full of lightness and acceptance. It is softer than a cloud yet harder than a diamond. It is all these things law of anicca applies as well as the law of no-self....Perfect faith is always changing and always the same, always interesting and always joyful, never seeing an opposite because it has indeed gone beyond the opposites. Opposites can only exist when we have not yet transcended them; when they have been transcended, every day is a good day, as Keizan says, and all work is the work of the Buddha.¹¹

I’ll close with a final admonition Dōgen offered the chief cook: “All day and all night things come to mind and the mind attends to them; at one with them all, diligently carry on the Way.”¹²

Notes

1. Kusa, Michiko, *Dōgen and the Feminine Presence: Taking a Fresh Look into His Sermons and Other Writings* (Bellingham, Washington: Western Washington University, 2018) p. 21. <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/9/8/232/htm>

2. *The Threefold Lotus Sutra*, trans. Kato, et al. (New York: Weatherhill/Kosei, 1975) p. 67.
3. *The Scripture on the Immeasurable Life of the Tathagata*, trans. Rev. Hubert Nearman, *Buddhist Writings for Meditation and Daily Practice* (Mt. Shasta, CA: Shasta Abbey Press, 1994) p. 35.
4. *Shushogi: What is Truly Meant by Training & Enlightenment*, trans. Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, *Zen is Eternal Life*, 4th edition, (Mt Shasta, CA: Shasta Abbey Press, 1999) p. 100.
<https://www.shastaabbey.org/pdf/bookZel.pdf>
5. *Zen is Eternal Life*, pp. 145-161.
6. *Shushogi, What is Truly Meant by Training & Enlightenment*
7. *The Scripture of Brahma's Net, Part 1*, trans. in *Buddhist Writings for Meditation and Daily Practice*, p. 70.
8. "Lotus Sutra References," in *Master Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō, Book 1*, trans. Nishijima & Cross (London: Windbell, 1994) p. 314.
9. *Instructions for the Tenzo (Tenzo kyōkun)*, in *Dōgen's Pure Standards for the Monastic Community: A Translation of the Eihei Shingi*, trans. Leighton & Okumura (Albany: State Univ. of New York) p. 35.
10. *Tenzo-kyōkun, Zen is Eternal Life*, p. 150.
11. *Perfect Faith in An Introduction to the Tradition of Serene Reflection Meditation*, 5th ed. (Mt Shasta, CA: Shasta Abbey Press, 1997) pp. 38-39. This is available at:
<https://www.shastaabbey.org/pdf/IntroSRM13.pdf>
12. "Instructions to the Tenzo," *Dōgen's Pure Standards*, p. 36.

What Is It that We Are Doing with Our Minds?

Rev. Master Oriana LaChance

—Eugene Buddhist Priory, Oregon—USA—

In putting together something for the journal, it occurred to me that it might be helpful to put these two short essays from Eugene Buddhist Priory's blog, "Walking the Buddha Way," side-by-side. Although written a year or so apart, they both look at the question, "What is it that we are doing with our minds (and how helpful is that)?"

Flexible Mind

The more years of meditation and Buddhist practice I experience, the more I am aware of the essential nature of flexible mind. Is there acceptance without flexible mind? Can we act with compassion and wisdom without flexible mind? Can we actually *listen* without flexible mind? In the end, the lack of flexible mind appears to be a large stumbling block to giving up the idea of separation of self and other and to spiritual awakening.

In studying how we learn, scientists sometimes use the term "cognitive flexibility," which has been broadly

described as “the ability to adjust one’s thinking from old situations to new situations, as well as the ability to overcome responses or thinking that have become habitual and adapt to new situations.” We do not need to carry old habits and old stories and old views on right and wrong, good and bad, intelligent and stupid around with us. These habits and views are not “fixed,” though it may sometimes feel like it.

In Zen, cognitive flexibility is akin to *shoshin*, original mind or beginner’s mind, or the mind that doesn’t already have everything figured out “That’s my story and I’m going to stick to it.”

What I see here is rigid mind and the truth of impermanence working at cross purposes. All things are in flux all the time, and our rigid mind wants things to be *like this*. Since we cannot control *like this*, frustration and unhappiness result. We have a choice: we can be immovable (and unhappy) or we can accept the transience of all things and move along with everything else.

A key difference I have experienced between flexible mind and rigid mind is that rigid mind tends toward resistance and “no,” while flexible mind is curious and open. Rigid mind says “I know what I know.” Because we won’t let anything into our life that may challenge us, the world where we “know what we know,” the world we live in each day, becomes smaller and smaller.

If having a flexible mind is one of the key elements in moving toward the end of suffering, then why is it so difficult to come by? *Self is entrenched in self.* When we talk about letting go or dropping something that comes up in meditation or in our daily practice, it occurs to me that it isn't the thought or feeling so much that we are letting go of—it is the self. Over and over again. And that is hard work. Self wants its own way and is most comfortable going along as it always has, even though this only heightens our inability to relate to others and our sense of separation.

In being aware of my own “entrenched self,” I have found that the following help me to encourage flexible mind:

1. See the rigidity, the hardening, the tightness when it arises. Watch what it does to your body, your heart. Let your body teach you.

2. Don't act or shut down. *Slow down*, be still, turn inward rather than reacting. When you have the option in difficult situations, wait at least 24 hours until rigid mind has softened a bit before speaking or acting. (Do hold off on those instantaneous, reactive texts and emails.)

3. Turn toward the feeling or thought that has triggered rigid mind and observe it. What is this feeling or thought? What is it doing for me? My personal favorite: Is any good going to come from this? If not, do your best to cease and desist.

4. Understand that what has arisen is only a feeling or thought. It's not you and it's not "the truth." It is a cloud passing through a clear sky. No big deal.

5. Give rigid mind some space and compassion. Reside in it when it arises but don't *be* it.

6. Relax and loosen your grip. Rigid mind generally comes from wanting something or someone to be a certain way. Relax and look around rather than being lost in your story. What is actually going on? What are we covering over or hiding from when we invite in rigid mind? Do we believe/act as if rigid mind will protect us, keep us from harm? Will it? *Study that.*

7. Say, "I don't know." I don't know how things are now; I don't know how things should be. What would it be like to allow the future to unfold without striving to know and control everything?

When our mind is empty—flexible mind, beginner's mind—we are ready to be aware, to observe, to learn, to invite and to not-know. This is where separate self begins to dissolve and where awakening arises.

Life Is Happening: A Work in Progress

This has been a year of "many things" coming from left field to disturb whatever equilibrium I might have. I recently remarked to a congregation member that sometimes I feel

that all I do is “trouble shoot.” In the midst of a “stress attack,” I said to another monk that my first response to everything that comes up needing my attention is, “How much of my time is this going to take?” Lately, I have begun to carefully watch how frequently and easily I feel overwhelmed by the circumstances of my day. And what occurred to me—and as time went on what became more and more clear—is that whatever is arising in my life, no matter how busy I might be, “busyness” is not the issue. What is at issue is my own mind (not again). I have had a basic attitude of everything that comes up that I cannot control (like most things) is a problem. And, yes, I am doing this with my mind. The problem part is only my particular spin on things. It is not by nature a problem; I see it as a problem. I have an opinion about it and am actually, if I look closely, a bit outraged. At what, for what? Because once again I am not in control?

Okay, so I began to entertain the idea that whatever arises is just *life happening*. This is what needs my attention now, so do this. Can I see that whatever arises is inherently neutral—neither good nor bad? Isn't this what we learn from sitting zazen? It's all scenery. We don't need to use it as feed for our ongoing storyline about how overwhelmed we are. We don't need to make judgments about whether we like it or dislike it. Just get on and do the next thing. Know—from experience, know—this stressful thing that is being asked of you will generally seem minuscule and insignificant in a very short time, if you even remember it.

This brings up another question I have about stress. Am I able to do what needs to be done without that push, push energy? Always pushing. It isn't the activity that exhausts us. It is the pushing to get it done or get it right or get it, get it, get it that exhausts us. Aware of this, now when I see myself pushing, I do my best to back away, slow down, ask myself, "Can I do this without pushing?" Yes, you can and more smoothly, more happily, and even more efficiently. When the thought arises, "I can't do this anymore," stop. Right here, right now, when you feel that urge to push, stop.

Here's a simple example. A year or so after I came to Eugene Priory, I noticed that before I set out to do errands in town I would look at my watch and determine that I should be back by a given time. This meant that all the errands had a rushed, desperate quality. No relaxing here. When I saw this I realized that I usually came home tired because of the pushing, the trying to accomplish, not because of the errands themselves. So I stopped predicting when I should return and the whole quality of the errands went through a change. Just do this now, then do this now. When I caught myself looking at my watch or rushing, I would stop for a moment, relax. It is mind that trips us up, not the number of errands. You don't have time to slow down? It is interesting that it generally doesn't take any longer to do errands with this new mind set. You can even come home refreshed from having been out for a while.

Am I giving you a lesson in mindfulness training and stress? Well, partly. But let's take it a bit further. Really, I

am giving you an example of how we create our own suffering with our mind. That understanding has Buddhist underpinnings.

Let's look at Shantideva's, *The Way of the Bodhisattva*. Writing in the 8th century, Shantideva tells us: "Wandering where it will, the elephant of mind will bring us down to pains of deepest hell. No worldly beast however wild could bring upon us such calamities."

No worldly beast—no external thing—can bring us to such dire consequences as our own state of mind. The good news is that we can do something about this. We can't do anything about many of the things that happen in our lives, but we can stop contributing to our own suffering with the ideas, beliefs, expectations, prejudices and limited perspective of our mind.

Shantideva continues:

"If with mindfulness' rope, the elephant of the mind is tethered all around, our fears will come to nothing, every virtue drop into our hands. Tigers, lions, elephants and bears, snakes and every hostile beast, those who guard the prisoners in hell, all ghosts and ghouls and every evil phantom, by simple binding of this mind alone, all these things are likewise bound. By simple taming of this mind alone, all these things are likewise tamed. For all anxiety and fear, all sufferings in boundless measure, their source and wellspring is the mind itself."

Who can we blame? Only ourselves and our rampaging minds. And don't forget the good news: this is in our hands. We *can* stop adding to our own suffering. We can tame our minds.

Noise

Garrett Olney

—*Meadow Valley, CA–USA*—

I'm semi-retired and have the good fortune to be able to spend two months each winter in a little hamlet in Mexico. I've been doing that for about a dozen years now. One day in my first winter there, I happened to be going for a walk on a street above the town and I was able to look down onto a number of houses. A well-known local elderly lady had died. As is the custom in Mexico, chairs had been set out in front of the house under a canopy. About half of the chairs were occupied by mourners from the town who were attending this wake. They would sit in vigil for one or more hours until the funeral the following day.

I did not know the deceased lady; I only knew of her. As I was walking along, I suddenly heard an extremely loud explosion. It sounded like a very large firecracker. Calling upon the experience of my youth in California, when I was familiar with those kind of devices, I guessed it might have been what we called an M80. When we think of firecrackers, we usually think of those strings of things that go “pop, pop.”

This was not like that at all. It was like a small bomb. It must have rattled windows.

The immediate thought popped into my head: How dare someone set off such a large explosion like that right in the middle of a wake? Had they no respect for the dead? Had they no respect for their neighbors? I taught English to the dozen or so students who attended the local secondary school. I thought of two or three of them who would be excellent candidates for such mischief. I thought of the most likely vendor in town who would have supplied them with this loud explosive device. I found myself growing more agitated. I tried to push my angry thoughts away and focus on the nice hike and the lovely scenery. This effort was unsuccessful.

About 20 minutes later, I was returning on the same path when yet another equally loud explosion went off from close by where the wake was taking place. Before, I had been just a bit agitated. Now, I was quite upset. This was outrageous! Shame on those kids, or whoever they were, who were setting off those huge explosions. I started walking more rapidly. I could feel my face flushed. Something needed to be done.

I knocked on the door of my landlady, who lived on the ground floor below me. Had she heard those explosions? Weren't they incredibly loud? Was she going to do anything about it? She smiled at me just a little quizzically and said she planned to go to the wake in about an hour. "But what

about the explosions?” I asked. She then explained to me that such explosions are commonplace during a wake. Their purpose is to “crack open” the gates of heaven so that the recently departed can enter.

Oh.

It seems to me that noise can be quite effective in creating fear or anger. For me, strange noises coming from the motor of my car, the sound of a falling tree on a dark winter night, the all-too-frequent phrase ‘Breaking News’ on the radio can all create instant fear in me. The barking dog, the squeaky door, the pesky critter trying to attack the garbage can at night, and the sound of firecrackers can all make me angry.

But a noise is a noise is a noise. That's all it is. It doesn't matter if it's a firework, a barking dog, a snoring spouse, loud talking in the library, flatulence, or a creaking meditation bench. It's just noise. It's our head that interprets the noise. We think it is the noise that is somehow ‘at fault’, or ‘the cause’ of our anger/agitation/distress. “Each sense gate and its object altogether enter thus into mutual relations, And yet stand apart in a uniqueness of their own, depending and yet non-depending both.”¹

If, as I sense my emotions being aroused, I can say to myself “It's just a noise,” and take a deep breath, then I can remind myself how embroiled I had become with non-existent mischief-makers. The current noise is just a noise.

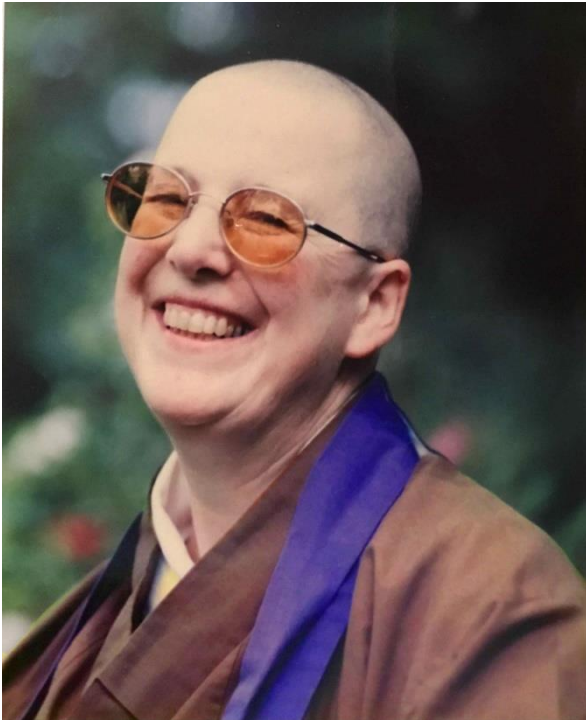
Sense sensations are just sense sensations. I can accept the noise, and I can let it go. I can then return to my breathing. Like so many experiences in life, the noise has then wonderfully transformed itself from a mere sense phenomenon into a meditation tool.

Notes

1. From *Sandokai* by Shitou Xiqian (Sekito Kisen, 700–790). Available in *Scriptures and Ceremonies* booklets at OBC temples and meditation groups. A number of translations are available.

In Memoriam for Rev. Master Myfanwy

25th May 1949 – July 2nd 2020



It was with great sadness that we learned of the sudden and unexpected death of Rev. Master Myfanwy on July 2nd, aged 71. She died at Dragon Bell Temple in Tiverton, Devon. A memorial service was held locally, followed on

July 26th by a funeral service and burial at the graveside in Throssel's monastic cemetery. A report and photos of the service can be seen in Throssel's July newsletter here: <https://throssel.org.uk/throssel-blog/funeral-for-rev-myfanwy/> A few of her long-term sangha, relatives and friends were able to attend: we will hold a full public memorial when circumstances allow.

Rev. Master Myfanwy was born on 25th May 1949 and named Lizzie. She grew up in Loanhead, a small mining town in Scotland, where her father worked in the local mine. She went to Art College, taught as an art teacher for a time and later lived in Laurieston Hall, a community in Southwest Scotland.

She was ordained in September 1983, the second disciple of Rev. Master Daishin. She was an integral part of the early development of Throssel as a training place and of the forming of the community of monks and sangha that grew alongside this. Over the years, Rev. Master Myfanwy demonstrated courage, kindness, humour and directness in living her monastic vocation. She fulfilled many roles over the years with her fellow monks and among the lay sangha. Part of her legacy as a trained artist has been a range of beautiful artwork, most of which can be seen in Throssel's Ceremony hall. This image of Achalanatha which she painted has been a significant help to many in their training:



Achalanatha in Throssel's Ceremony Hall

In 2002, Rev. Master Myfanwy left Throssel, empty handed, drawn to establish a training place on her own in the South West of England. She founded Dragon Bell Temple and a sangha grew around her and through several moves of rented property, she came to the site at Tiverton.

Following the announcement on Throssel website of Rev. Master Myfanwy's death, the many messages of condolence, memories, expressions of respect, love and gratitude show how her teaching and presence lives on in people's lives and hearts: she is much missed.

Biography of Rev. Keidō Chisan Kohō Zenji

Edera Robinson & Bob McGraw

In 2005, Rev. Master Mugō together with Iain Robinson visited Raigaku-ji in Nagano Prefecture, Japan. They were each kindly given, by the Chief Priest, Rev. Misawa Chishō, a copy of the Japanese edition of a work entitled *The Biography of Rev. Keidō Chisan Kohō Zenji*. This visit was part of a pilgrimage made by Rev. Master Mugō to ancestral temples in Japan and China.

Iain's wife Edera translated an initial section into English in 2007 and, together with Iain, thought it would be good to make a complete translation to offer to people with an OBC connection. Sadly, before they had a chance to work on this together, Iain suffered a heart attack and died. Following Iain's passing, Edera developed the wish to complete the translation as a memorial and wrote to Emeritus Professor Shimizu Fumiko (Zenji's great niece), to seek her support. Professor Shimizu, who through her parents, had family connections with both Raigaku-ji and Fukuju-in, and had played an important part in the arrangements for Rev. Mugo's and Iain's temple visits, offered strong support for the translation. Through Iain's friendship, Edera had got to

know Bob McGraw, and asked him to help with checking the English.

The biography was edited by Rev. Matsu'ura Eibun, who served Zenji as his personal attendant at his residence. It was sponsored by Rev. Iwamoto Katsutoshi, the 19th Abbot of Soji-ji and was printed for the occasion of Zenji's seventh memorial ceremony in autumn 1973. As far as we understand, the work was not published, in the sense of being made available for sale to the public, but was distributed amongst Zenji's friends and dharma descendants and the temples associated with him. It is a bit like a family history, a way of sharing and preserving the memories of a highly respected and much-loved teacher, with those who have a connection to him.

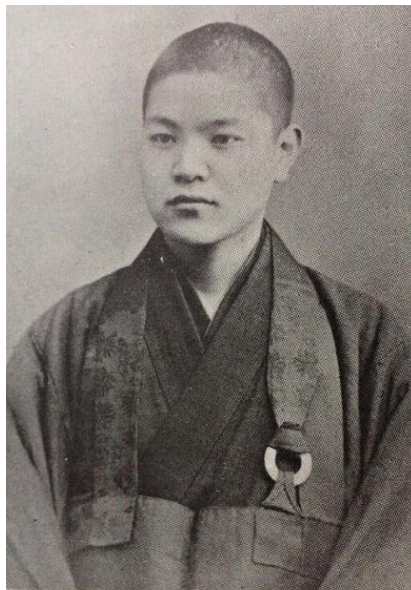
The work tells the story of Zenji's life in chronological form, with the early chapters including extracts from his diaries and some of his poetry. Sadly, many of his papers were destroyed by fire during World War II. The later chapters contain recollections of those who knew him, as well as reflections by the editor, Rev. Matsu'ura. He describes himself as editor because there were a small team of people who contributed, by collecting material and talking to people who knew Zenji.

The translation is now about thirty percent complete, and it seems good to share this material with Iain's OBC friends. We have created a website for the chapters that are now available, and plan to add further chapters as they

become available. The chapters on the website are still in draft form and undoubtedly contain typographical mistakes, as well as points where the translation could be improved. We intend to review all the chapters again before final publication, so comments are welcome. When the translation is complete, we intend to self-publish it using one of the web-based applications that enables people to obtain a copy in book form.

The website can be found here:

<https://kohozenji.blogspot.com/>



第一中学林時代

Keidō Chisan while at high school

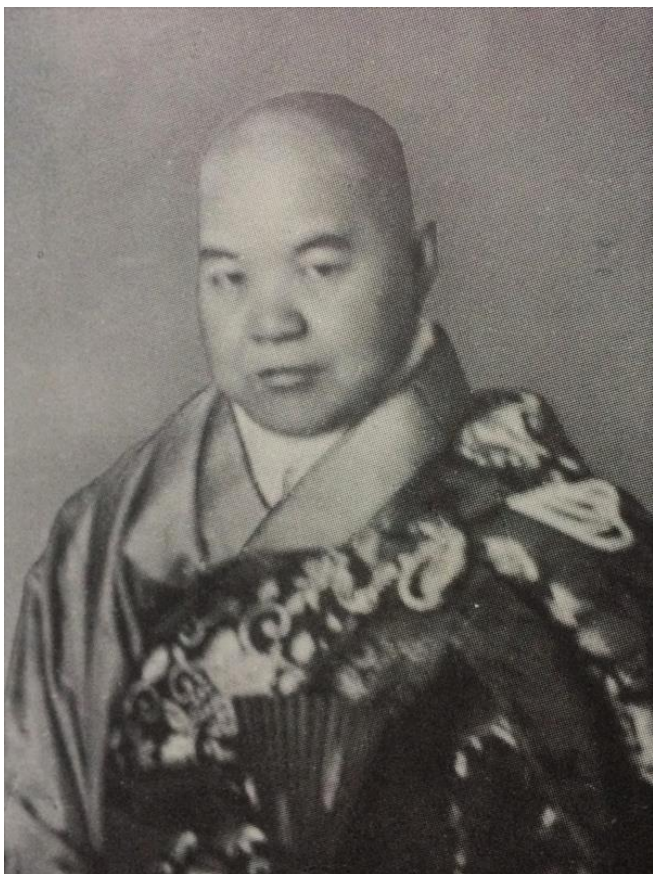
Extract from Chapter 7

Young Hōjō¹ at Raigaku-ji (1907 – 1918)

In his writings, Rev. Misawa has left us a description of how Zenji went about teaching his disciples at Raigaku-ji:

“...When Zenji was at Raigaku-ji, he was in his 30’s, the prime of his life, and I was one of his disciples. At that time, I went to junior high school with porridge in my lunch box.

In my boyhood I saw Zenji as someone like a lion, active and fierce just like the descriptions in the *Kegon sutra* (*the Avatamsaka Sutra*). There gathered lots of keen energetic monks at the temple. Zenji taught them through meditation and lectures, leading the very traditional Zen monastic life, with just porridge, rice, then porridge² to eat. When the reconstruction of the Main Hall and Kaizan-dō started, Zenji literally ran around controlling and supervising the builders on-site. As he had lots of danka families [*temple supporter families Ed.*] he had to meet many visitors and he also had to visit with them to hold memorial ceremonies. It would have been hard enough just to do his own work at the temple, but still he taught soldiers and lay people in the area. He also made trips to give talks at other temples as a missionary teacher and to do ceremonies. In addition to all this, he helped with women’s groups and young people’s associations.



Keidō Chisan Kohō Zenji while at Raigaku-ji

He was busy, but he still created time to persist in studying the history of Zen, his favourite subject. I remember once helping him by carrying Ōbaku versions of the sutras from the storehouse to his room for his reference whilst he was writing a huge volume on Zen history. He wrote this book at a lacquered papier-mache desk in his plain and simple office.

Looking back, it must have been quite difficult for him to keep studying like that in a temple in a remote area far away from the academic centers. Now that I am much older than he was at that time, it sinks deeply in my heart the difficulty Zenji must have had in those days.

Notes

1. Hōjō originally means a room of 1 hōjō square (Approx. 9 m²). It also refers to the head priest of a temple in Sōtō tradition. Usually the head priest is a senior older monk, so the title suggests how the unusually young head priest, Kohō Zenji, got on at Raigaku-ji.
2. This probably means porridge as breakfast, rice for lunch and porridge again for supper.

News of the Order

UK and Europe

Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey

—Northumberland, England—UK—

Monastic news: Rev. Kōjō started her term as Head Novice on 8th September, we wish her well with her new responsibilities. When Rev. Master Daishin was here this summer he confirmed Rev Daigen and Rev Sanshin teachers; we congratulate them both and wish them well as they continue their training. Dharmatoevlucht's new postulant, Sandra, came to Throssel on 11th September to train here for four months. It is a pleasure to welcome her and have her with us. Rev. Lambert left for a visit to Great Ocean Dharma Refuge in August.

Death of Rev. Master Myfanwy McCorry: It is with great sadness that we heard of the death of Rev. Master Myfanwy on July 2nd at Dragon Bell Temple in Tiverton, Devon. Rev. Master Willard and Rev. Elinore conducted a funeral memorial service for local congregation and friends. Back here at throssel, we held an evening vigil and the next day Rev. Master Daishin conducted a funeral and burial service at the graveside in Throssel's monastic cemetery.

A few of her long-term sangha, friends and relatives were able to attend as it was an outdoor event. A report and photos of is in our newsletter: <https://throssel.org.uk/throssel-blog/funeral-for-rev-myfanwy/>.



At the graveside: the banner was designed by Rev. Master Myfanwy

Rev. Master Willard as one of the temple trustees stayed on to take care of her affairs and caretake the temple. We would like to thank everyone who offered their remembrances on our website blog posting announcing her death.

Death of Norman Trehitt: Earlier in the year we received the sad news of the death of Norman Trehitt, a long-time lay trainee, lay minister and stalwart member of the Lancaster Meditation Group who passed away on the 26th of May. At the end of a long-standing illness which became untreatable, he spent his last days in the local Hospice where family, friends and local sangha members were able to come and say goodbye. His Cremation Ceremony on Monday 8th June at 2.30 pm was conducted by lay ministers Paul Taylor and Kate Shirra-Gibb and was ‘live-streamed’.

Keeping in contact: Like most temples, we have been using Zoom to keep in touch with our congregation, offering classes and discussions and retreats. Attendance has been steadily high; this service is clearly much appreciated. We have also videod some talks and ceremonies, in addition to our usual

recordings. To enable us to offer visits to the monastery, we bought an airy marquee which has enabled local congregation to come for talks and to speak with monks outdoors – while providing some protections from our inclement weather! It was a cool and wet August. We also opened our ceremony hall for sittings with limits and safety protocols.

Festivals: We continue with our monthly festival ceremonies, recording some of the dedications, singing of the scriptures and talks afterwards. In June Rev. Kyōsei was celebrant for the Festival of Manjusri Bodhisattva, Rev. Alina for the Festival memorial for Great Master Keizan and Rev. Daigen our annual festival for Avalokiteshwara. Their talks are all now on our website.



Avalokiteswara Festival altar

Maintenance: The change in schedule this summer has allowed more time to catch up with maintenance and decorating including painting Guest rooms in the Hall of Pure Offerings.

New kitten: In August we adopted a kitten needing a home; Sūrya (translates as ‘sunshine’) has her home in the Novices Common Room but is already exploring a wider territory.



Sūrya in the Ceremony Hall

—Rev Alina

De Dharmatoevlucht

—Apeldoorn, Netherlands —

Corona virus update: As the coronavirus is still around and to some degree spreading anew, we are continuing to restrict the number of trainees that can attend meditation or ceremonial events at the temple to five in total, and introductory events to two. Also our guidelines on social distancing and hand washing continue in place. For the coming months we won't be singing the scriptures in the temple but recite them instead as singing in enclosed spaces is advised against by the authorities. It is lovely to see that all this doesn't deter people from coming to the temple so most activities are fully booked these days. We will continue and expand our live streaming of meditations and offer Dharma teachings and retreats online by means of Zoom.

New Ordinees: In the last few months we had two lay ordinations in the temple, one for Erwin Braak and one for Pascale

Aldenhoff. We wish both of them success in deepening their training with and commitment to the Buddhist Precepts.



Erwin



Pascale

Postulancy: On Sunday the 23rd of August Sandra Westhoff started her postulancy in De Dharmatoevlucht. She will be training with Rev. Master Baldwin and will spend part of her postulancy in Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey in the UK. We wish Sandra well for her future training.



Sandra and Rev. Master Baldwin

—Rev. Master Baldwin

Dharmazuflucht Schwarzwald

—Gutach (Black Forest) – German—

After having been closed from the beginning of March onwards due to the Coronavirus pandemic, in early July we decided, after careful consideration, to make it possible again for our regular congregation members to come and stay with us for various lengths of time. At the moment, we are limiting the number of guests staying at the temple to two at the most, and we shall not be having group retreats for the time being.

We keep to a variety of hygiene regulations, as recommended by the health authorities. These include: meditating with open windows in the meditation hall, wearing masks while singing during morning service as well as in the kitchen and in the common room, eating outside while the weather is warm, keeping to the recommended distance between us and regularly disinfecting surfaces and door-knobs. We also ask everyone who comes to phone us shortly beforehand, so that we can question them on their state of health.



Morning Service

This involves quite a bit, but it seems worth going through all this to make it possible for our regulars to come to the temple again. We had people stay at the temple most of July and August, and everyone who came has been very considered and careful. As the weather gets colder in autumn and we can't keep the windows open anymore, we may have to rethink and re-adjust what we are doing, and whether it is good to continue in this way.

In early July we have also started having our regular Sunday meditation mornings again, with max. four guests attending, and some people new to our practice have come individually for meditation instructions. Something that struck us in recent months, is that noticeably more people who feel quite lost in life and in the world have been contacting us. No doubt this is also related to the many difficulties people go through at the moment, due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

While the temple was closed, we have regularly sent out a Dharma-talk or article to our congregation. At the request of the relatives of two people who have died, we had ceremonies for the deceased at the Dharmazuflucht, as we were not able to travel to the funeral home and do the funeral ceremonies there. Our

congregation has been very kind to us when the temple was closed, sending us parcels of food or extra donations from time to time. We are very grateful to them for this.

A big thank you also to lay ministers Susan and Irene for their very generous help with driving Rev. Clementia to the clinic and back on a variety of occasions, for and after the surgery she had to undergo in spring.

Earlier on, when our temple was still closed, we had our annual Wesak ceremony, this year without guests.



Wesak day

This year will be the 20th anniversary of the charitable organization which supports our temple and constitutes its legal framework. It was founded in 2000 by Lay Minister Barbara Lang. We originally had in mind to invite all members of the charity for a celebration at the temple, but due to Coronavirus this will most likely not be possible. We may find other ways to celebrate the anniversary with everyone.

—*Rev. Master Fuden*

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory

—*Norwich-UK*—

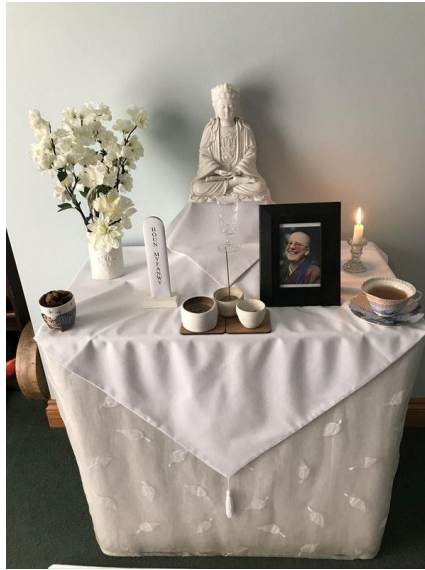
Opening the Priory to individuals: Since lockdown restrictions were eased on 4th July, the Priory has been open to individuals (or two people from the same household). We are taking care with safety, ensuring that social distancing is maintained and that good hygiene practices are in place. Individuals have come along to the Priory to have a cup of tea and a chat, or to sit in the meditation room, or to attend an event in person rather than via Zoom. The Priory has also been offering in-person introductory sessions to newcomers on an individual basis. It has been a joy to be able to meet people in person once again and to connect in a way that just isn't possible online.

Online meetings: Our Zoom meetings have been unaffected by the small-scale opening of the Priory. We have recently decided to add some more meetings to our schedule, to enable people to meditate together more often. So, we'll be holding meditation afternoons once a month on a Saturday, as well as a day retreat on 17th October. To sit together as a Sangha, connected via the internet even while we are miles apart physically, is a special experience that we are fortunate to be able to share. Details of our online events are made known through the Priory's email group. Anyone who is familiar with our practice and would like join the meetings can contact the Priory for more details.

We are grateful that the technology has enabled us to remain connected at this time of physically isolating from others. The photo below shows this interconnectedness in action – it's the view from the Prior's seat in the meditation room during a meditation period, showing the webcam and laptop supporting a Zoom meeting.

Memorial for Rev. Myfanwy: We held a memorial for Rev. Myfanwy on the morning of 26th July, which was the day of

her funeral at Throssel. It was a lovely ceremony, attended by one of our Sangha in person and 14 others via Zoom. This was an opportunity to say farewell and express our gratitude for Rev. Myfanwy's life and training, especially since many of our Sangha had fond memories of meeting her at Throssel before she left to set up Dragon Bell Temple.



Altar for the memorial

Rev. Myfanwy holds a place of affection and gratitude in the story of establishing the Norwich Priory. In 2013, when I was preparing to move to Norwich, she invited me to her temple, which was then in Exeter, for a “field trip”. It was an invaluable opportunity for me to spend some time with a prior who had set up her own temple, to ask questions and to learn as she went about the everyday tasks of running the temple. I came away with many useful tips, good ideas and important pieces of advice. Over subsequent years, Rev. Myfanwy continued to offer guidance during our occasional phone calls.

Thank you: In these challenging times of great uncertainty, I am extremely grateful to everybody who has been supporting the Priory, particularly with online donations. Our income from donations is holding up, despite having very few visitors to the Priory. A truly heartfelt ‘thank you’ for that. I am also grateful for considerable computer help and expertise recently, which has, amongst other things, ensured that our Zoom meetings run more smoothly. Also, the kind loan of an electric fan during the August heatwave was much appreciated.

—*Rev. Master Leoma*

The Place of Peace Dharma House

—*Abersytwyth, Wales*—

We continue to keep a steady pace and to follow the Welsh Covid-19 safety instructions on how to meet with others.

A new altar was made for the Skanda statue, in our kitchen. Known as the Lord of Argument and Disease, he guards the stove and watches over the physical, and spiritual safety of the temple. We will now have a monthly ceremony, asking for protection.



Skanda altar at The Place of Peace

Dharma talks are regularly offered, and anyone who would like to receive them can contact Rev. Master Myōhō on 01970 625402. We are also now on Zoom, and have begun to meet with Sangha to offer talks and question and answer sessions. It is a way to open the temple gates to others, and has been good to see familiar faces again. We look forward to many more such meetings, until all Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. Thank you to Rev. Saido for so patiently teaching Rev. Myōhō how to use the programme.

Some of you have contacted us, asking about the recent floods in Aberystwyth. Thank you for your concern. These were in the town centre, and were some distance from the temple, which is on much higher ground. Merit was offered for those whose homes and shops were flooded. With the outbursts of monsoon like rain that we have been experiencing, the same thing may happen again.

Offerings of home grown veg from Ceri Jones were appreciated, as is Gordon's help with office matters. We thank all who continue to provide support, in many different ways, during this time of pandemic.

—*Rev. Master Myōhō*

Reading Buddhist Priory

—*Reading, England-UK*—

Despite the ongoing restrictions of the Covid-19 lockdown, a regular spiritual life continues to be offered from the Priory. After some experimentation with social media platforms, and with the generous loan of a laptop by a sangha member, Reverend Gareth has been able to put on a full programme of regular sits and services via Zoom. Early mornings are particularly well attended as are Friday afternoons, which include the usual group session, and the congregation has been expanded by the welcome addition

of members of the wider sangha, who are now able to attend virtually. Once a month the Precepts ceremony is conducted during the Friday session.

Reverend Gareth has also provided short daily readings from a variety of the scriptures and other texts, ranging from excerpts from the *Lotus Sutra* to Basho's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, and Hiroshi Kikuchi's *Beyond the Pale of Vengeance*. It was good to hear them read aloud, and added another dimension for those of us who tend to read in solitary silence.

Our study group has continued on a fortnightly basis, and we have now completed our reading of Hui Neng's *Platform Sutra*.

Introductory sessions have resumed, initially on a one to one basis on Zoom.

On June 26th, a Transfer of Merit ceremony was held, and a dedication was given for the three people who lost their lives in a random knife attack on June 20th in Reading's popular public gardens.

Reverend Master Myfanwy's passing on July 2nd was marked by a memorial service held on July 10th. This was followed by a virtual tea, with reflections and fond memories shared by those who had known her.

With the gradual easing of some restrictions here in the south east of the UK, and the unusually fine weather, some sangha members have been able to visit outdoors at the Priory, and to help with gardening, as well as a visit by Jafer and his nine month old daughter Verity, (whose naming ceremony was postponed due to the pandemic), where they spent an hour in the back garden on a hot day with Rev. Gareth. A small step towards a return to something resembling normality.

Rev. Gareth would like to thank all those who have dropped off food over the past months which has included general shopping as well as freshly baked treats and soups; it has been much appreciated.

—*Gina Bovan*

Wolk-en-Water Hermitage

—*Langelille, Netherlands*—

Because of the coronavirus measures we have not been able to hold weekend or weeklong retreats. But evening meditations have resumed from June. Day retreats happen during the summer now and then when possible.

Because friends from far away have not been able to come, we have met them via zoom. There is a zoom evening meditation with Vespers each Thursday night, with a short English spoken introduction at 8 pm Amsterdam time. Vespers is either in Dutch or in English.

Once a month there is an international meeting with a lecture and an exchange from participants. We have been pleased to see participants from several countries. The meetings are either on Sunday or on Saturday morning at 11 am Amsterdam time (10 am UK). Those interested in joining can request a list of dates of meetings via contact@wolkenwater.nl

During the summer we made use of some extra time to equalize the garden grounds.

—*Rev. Master Hakuun*

News of the Order

USA and Canada

Shasta Abbey

—*Shasta Abbey, CA–USA*—

The summer has been cooler than usual, yet as the Journal goes to press, we are acutely aware of the many wildfires burning in California. Fortunately, none of the fires threaten the monastery, but the smoke is especially thick this year.

During the Covid-19 pandemic we have shifted to online retreats rather than hosting retreats at the monastery. Rev. Master Shiko offered the first one, “The Many Faces of Compassion”, in June. The other week-long online retreat, “Training with the Issues of our Time: Help and Healing from the Buddha's Teachings”, was offered by several senior monks: 65 people participated. Online Zoom and You Tube meditation instruction, Dharma talks, and discussions are also being offered weekly.

In July we saw the Transmission of one monk, Rev. Vera, from Rev. Master Kōdō, and the ordination of a postulant, Arunima Dhar, now Rev. Dalina, by Rev. Master Daishin. We are glad to see both Rev. Vera and Rev. Dalina take these steps in training. We wish both monks and their masters success.



Rev Vera on right with Rev. Dalina

At the request of our lay sangha, we continued the weekly local book group through the summer. They have been studying with Rev. Master Meian *The Book of Joy*, which offers teaching from the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu.

Extern sacristy has been busy, preparing firewood for winter, as usual, reconstructing and filling the lumber rack (see photo) and overseeing the repair and welding of the Vimalakirti Hall's boiler water tank. We've also had several more trees cut down for fire prevention, all of which we burn as firewood or mill into lumber.

We are grateful for everyone's continued support during the pandemic



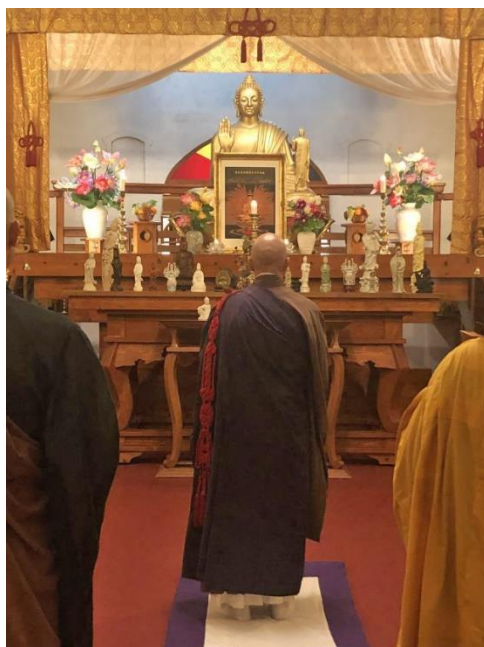
The reconstructed lumber yard



Kwanyin in Avalokiteshwara Shrine



Monthly memorial for Rev. Master Jiyu



Great Compassion Vigil on 13th June

—Rev. Master Oswin

Lions Gate Buddhist Priory

—*Lytton, British Columbia—Canada—*

Since mid-March, the Priory has been officially closed to resident guests. We have had a few day visitors, and a few people from the local area sometimes come for evening and Sunday meditation and services. We are careful to maintain social distancing and observe the recommended protocols. All retreats are cancelled for this year.

One of the ways we are keeping in touch is with Zoom. We first tried some small-scale Zoom Dharma meetings with meditation groups from Victoria, Vancouver, and Edmonton on Saturday afternoons in June. Since then we have been holding Zoom meetings approximately bi-weekly. These are open to everyone on our email list. The meetings begin with a meditation period, followed by a Dharma Talk by Rev. Master Kōten, with questions afterwards. We are grateful to Rev. Master Leon, the Prior at Portland Buddhist Priory, who patiently helped us set up Zoom and advised us on how to use it. Please feel free to contact us if you would like to be included on our email list.

We are pleased to have completed Mandala Hall, except for a few minor issues. Someone donated four large bookcases which work well for storing scripture books, statues, supplies, and other items. We set up an altar in the centre of the hall with a stained-glass lotus base and a large Kanzeon (Kwan Yin) statue as the central image. Recently from Nepal we obtained four statues of the Buddha-Mothers. They were cast in copper with exquisite detail, and we have placed them on the altar around the central statue, one for each of the four directions. Mandala Hall is bright and airy and has a spacious feel to it, and we have begun to meditate and do services there morning and evening.



Interior of the Mandala Hall

Summer was very late to arrive this year, with cool wet weather right into July. Even so, we managed to plant a vegetable garden and some things are doing quite well. Also, over the past couple of years we have planted fruit trees and berry bushes. We have chopped up several large trees that we needed to remove for safety reasons, and they will help provide firewood next winter.

Although during this time it is difficult if not impossible to meet with people in person, we want everyone to know that they are always welcome to phone, email, or write us, whether it is with a specific spiritual problem or question, or just in order to say hello and keep in touch.

—*Rev. Master Aurelian*

Wallowa Buddhist Temple

—Joseph, Oregon – USA –

The Wallowa Buddhist Temple monks and congregation are well. The temple had been re-opened for only about a week following the monks' yearly monastic rest and retreat time in February, when the corona virus pandemic reached our state of Oregon. We are glad we had at least that brief time in early March to be together with the congregation here in the temple, sitting in meditation, enjoying tea and exploring the Dharma as usual, before the temple had to close. It has now been closed to visitors for over five months.

Ever since that first “closed” day in March, the monks have been offering individual spiritual counseling and connection by phone and email throughout the week to those who contact us with news, questions, and reflections. Each Saturday we send out an email and attachments to our congregation and friends who have requested it, including a recorded Dharma talk by Rev. Clairissa, and a schedule for sitting and Dharma listening during our “Sunday Morning Retreat From Home” the following day. Many find it helpful to follow the schedule with us, each in their own home; others are grateful to be able to meditate and listen to that week's Dharma talk at another time, when their work schedules and responsibilities allow it. Throughout the following week, we welcome their questions and reflections. If you would like to be included in these Sunday Morning Retreat mailings, you are welcome to contact the Wallowa Buddhist Temple.

Unfortunately, online video communications are impractical from our location due to issues with connectivity and limited data. We are grateful so many options have become available through the monasteries and other temples of the Order for this way of practicing “live” via the internet, giving our congregation the chance to participate with the wider Sangha in these ways. We, too, have appreciated viewing the creative blogs,

videos and generous Dharma offerings on OBC temple websites, whenever we have had the means of doing so.

Meanwhile, here at the Wallowa Buddhist Temple, the monks post transfer-of-merit requests on the board in the Kanzeon shrine of the temple meditation hall, and each Sunday we offer merit for the benefit of all beings, including those whose names are posted on our board, and for our congregation and friends who join us from home, as we begin our Sunday Retreat. The depth of our connection across the miles becomes increasingly clear as the situation draws on, and we are grateful to experience that connection.

During these past months of warmer weather the monks have taken the opportunity to work on a number of outdoor projects on the quiet temple grounds. In addition to the usual seasonal work caring for the lawns and forest, and building up winter firewood stores, Rev. Meidō has been fencing young aspen and revitalizing landscaped beds so as to encourage and protect them from munching deer, while Rev. Clairissa has focused on planting and caring for the expanded temple produce garden and on building maintenance.

Another interesting ongoing task has been the clearing out of storage nooks, discovering and letting go of all sorts of useful items no longer needed, releasing them back into the flow of objects in the world by finding welcoming homes and making donations to our local charity thrift shops as they reopen. Fortunately, congregation, kind neighbors, and temple friends often leave food offerings on the temple's front porch, and help us out in other ways, so that the monks rarely need to leave the temple grounds.

We have missed welcoming retreat guests these past months. Offering individual spiritual retreats has always been an important function of the Wallowa Buddhist Temple. We hope that if you are considering coming for an individual retreat at some

time in the future, you will continue to explore that possibility and be in touch, when conditions ripen.

—*Rev. Master Meidō and Rev. Clairissa*



Iris at Sunset, Wallowa Buddhist Temple

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Turning Wheel Buddhist Temple
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Ph. 0116 210 3870
www.turningwheel.org.uk

Affiliated Meditation Groups:
UK: Aberdeen, Aberfeldy,
Birmingham, Cambridge,
Carmarthen, Cirencester, Cornwall,
Dundee, Galloway, Hexham,
Huddersfield, Inverness, Jersey,
Lancaster, Leeds, Leicester,
London, Milton Keynes,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, North
Lakes, Norwich, Nottingham,
Sheffield, Teesside

GERMANY

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LATVIA

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THE NETHERLANDS

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Wolk-en-Water Hermitage

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<https://www.wolkenwater.nl/en/>

Affiliated Meditation Groups:

The Netherlands:

Groningen, Utrecht.

For details of meditation groups, contact your nearest priory, the Guestmaster at Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey, or in the US, Shasta Abbey.

Further Information

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

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

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

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