



The Journal  
of the  
Order of Buddhist  
Contemplatives

*Serving Members and Friends  
of the Order Worldwide*

---

Volume 36 Number 2  
2564 B.E. (Summer 2021)  
ISSN 0891-1177

---

Copyright © 2021 Order of Buddhist Contemplatives  
All rights reserved



*Manjusri Bodhisattva statue at Shasta Abbey*

Summer 2021 issue

*Editor:* Rev. Alina Burgess

*Proofreading help:* With thanks to Eldridge Buultjens, Chris Hughes, Eric Nicholson and Julius Welby.

## CONTENTS:

<a href="#"><u>Grief and Impermanence</u></a>	5
<i>Rev. Master Leandra Robertshaw</i>	
<a href="#"><u>Four Kinds of Doubt</u></a>	16
<i>Rev. Master Oswin Hollenbeck</i>	
<a href="#"><u>Love out of the Box</u></a>	25
<i>David Sease</i>	
<a href="#"><u>What is This?</u></a>	35
<i>Rev. Master Favian Straughan</i>	
<a href="#"><u>Thus Have I Heard</u></a>	38
<i>Rev. Master Seikai Luebke</i>	
<a href="#"><u>Renewal</u></a>	42
<i>Rev. Master Mugō White</i>	
<a href="#"><u>News: Europe</u></a>	52
<a href="#"><u>News: USA &amp; Canada</u></a>	65
<a href="#"><u>Temples of the Order</u></a>	73
<a href="#"><u>Further information</u></a>	76



*Wesak Altar at Lions Gate Buddhist Priory*

## Grief and Impermanence

Rev. Master Leandra Robertshaw

—Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey, Northumberland—UK—

*A transcript of a talk given at the Segaki Retreat at Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey in 2019.*

Don't we all experience grief? For me there are times when grief is very powerfully felt, yet even then, I watch it coming and going in intensity. There are periods of life, of days, of moments – when it is always there in the background and others when it is not. Not seeing grief as good or bad – not judging it as appropriate or inappropriate at any particular moment, it is allowed its own helpful presence. Not only human beings grieve, all living things do, even trees and plants.

I have on other occasions spoken of how Buddhist practice has led to the wide, deep love that I have for my son becoming a more universal love for all beings. This can be so for all of us and here.

I use the words of Alex Reed in a Journal article entitled *Imperfect Grief* which points in a similar direction:

As training intensifies and matures, it is possible that relationships become wider and more inclusive – less ‘personal’. Love and compassion may no longer be directed quite so exclusively towards a lover, partner, children or friends, but might perhaps fan outwards, towards all beings.<sup>1</sup>

Does the death of a loved one, or even the death of a stranger whom we bumped into at a chance meeting, end a relationship? What lingers in the mind and appears unbidden in the space of meditation? Why are we often returned to grief? It may seem to be a particular grief, yet it may be a universal grief that is attached to no individual object. Both can at times feel unbearable but if allowed the space to breathe, the emotions and thoughts shift and transform. Emotion/thought or thought/emotion (habitually bound together) are always transient unless we are determinedly, desperately, clinging to them in spite of knowing that in doing so we are causing ourselves unnecessary suffering. If we can change tack and come at grief in a different way, we will find there is much to be learnt in the world of loss and sorrow. By allowing the bones of loss to show through, we can in the tangled web of sadness learn more about our humanity. This can stand us in good stead as we discover pieces of our life that we had forgotten: instances of bravery, of accepting and letting things be as they evidenced themselves, rather than immediately trying to alter them; of letting go of how we defined ourselves in the face of contrary evidence that much has changed. We begin to realise that we have been defining a solid self which is unreal, for the truth

is there no such thing for we are constantly changing. We learn to not say “I am like this”; rather, we tune in to the non-personal nature of experience.

When we are dying we may grieve for all we are losing, and we may regret that we haven’t made more of our lives; offered more to others; been clearer about how to find the heart of a worthwhile life for a human being; known a real sense of purpose. Perhaps we realise too late that our fear of dying has never been truly accepted and penetrated and that we are still trying vainly to hold on to our disappearing abilities by means of which we used to define ourselves. This is challenging and painful when in our lives, until death is knocking at the door, we have felt we needed to build up a sense of self of which we are rather proud, or at least satisfied with. In our culture it is not only material possessions that we are conditioned to possess and not to let go of but, perhaps more poignantly, the trappings of what we consider our self. There may be a strong sense of a loss of freedom, a loss of self-definition, that leaves us naked and vulnerable. We are having to accept that we can’t bring back that which is already lost; the irrevocability of this can make us feel helpless and very troubled.

Here is an important question: can we accept grief as a gift? Let it work for us? To deny grief is to rob ourselves of the heavy stones that will eventually be the ballast for the two great gifts of wisdom and compassion. I met somebody walking down to the abbey carrying two large stones which

he described as his ballast, alluding to the ballast which is placed in the bilge of a ship to ensure its stability.

Grief is not a weakness or failure but a vital part of our very humanity. Grief can open us to compassion. It is an important phase of our maturation as it gives our life of practice the profundity of humility. We are offered the experience of grief to be able to find what life and death are. A chance to scour the heart out with sorrow. What C.S. Lewis described in *A Grief Observed*: “No one told me that grief was so much like fear. I am not afraid but the sensation lies in being afraid.”<sup>2</sup> Afraid of what? Of being overwhelmed, undone?

Grief can call us into an experience of raw immediacy that is often devastating. We have to enter this space by ourselves, nobody can really tell us how to do it. We have to work it out ourselves. We have to learn to swim in the waters of sorrow rather than drown in them. The sorrow of great and small losses is a river that runs underground in all our lives. The river of grief pulses deep inside us, maybe hidden from view most of the time, but admitting the truth of its presence, it is free to inform our life at every turn. We are brought face-to-face with our own humanity. What a gift!

Zen nun Rengetsu wrote:

The impermanence of this floating world  
I feel over and over.  
It is hardest to be the one left behind.<sup>3</sup>



I found this in a diary I wrote last summer during a retreat at our hermitage in Wales:

Can there be too much of a good thing? I had been longing for opportunities to sit outside in the sun and do nothing but after a while I am satiated and sad realising this can't be the true path to contentment.

Why? The door to living a bodhisattva life is not about fulfilling desires. Being truly still doesn't depend on circumstances for the stillness to be grounded; it must exist in the reality of whatever is going on around us, even if the circumstances are very much not what we would have chosen - violence, fear, anxiety, conflicts between people and their ideas about each other.

Yet to sit here in the sun watching the birds and the sheep, this is a delight. And there is more that surrounds the delight for delight is always fleeting.

There is a beauty in knowing that everything we hold dear will eventually slip through our fingers. When we acknowledge and embrace this, we can appreciate the interconnection inherent in impermanence. We are allowing ourselves to be grounded in cherishing what is here and now and appreciating what rises to take its place. Change constantly unravels what we know; yet it also ties us together.

I used to be so pleased with myself and my practice because of the appearance of joy! Almost wallowing in it and

adding an extra element by imagining it was evidence of progress. Now it is different. I could still name it as joy but I think contentment is a more apt description. Contentment is immovable; it is Unchanging, Unborn, whereas joy flitted in and out. Contentment is more able to naturally sit side-by-side with grief and loneliness whereas these emotions are more likely to decimate joy.

Shortly before he died Uchiyama Roshi wrote a poem *Samadhi of the Treasury of the Radiant Light*:

Though poor, never poor.  
Though sick, never sick.  
Though ageing, never ageing.  
Though dying, never dying.  
Reality prior to division –  
Herein lies unlimited depth.<sup>4</sup>

Here is my version:

Though ageing, never ageing.  
Though joyful, never joyful.  
Though grieving, never grieving.  
Though confused, never confused.  
Reality before separation of impermanence and  
eternity.

Impermanence and death can facilitate us realising the old moment is lost and a new moment arriving. Not

calibrating one moment with another, for as Dōgen says one thing is not juxtaposed with another thing.<sup>5</sup> It is the undivided universe where things are not aligned in space and there is thus no comparison. Impermanence offers liberation and we are simply totally immersed in each moment of our life. With every breath, the old moment is lost and a new moment arrives. Not calibrating one moment with another, simply accept with open hands what next appears, even when tempted to hold on to the last moment and push away the next moment as not what we want.

Change is far more than a fact of life we have to accept and work with. For to feel the pain of impermanence and loss can be a profoundly beautiful reminder of what it means to exist. To understand impermanence at the deepest possible level (we do all understand it at superficial levels) and to merge with it fully is the whole of the Buddhist path. The Buddha's final words were impermanence is inescapable. Everything vanishes.

This is awesome for me. Death – absence – disappearance. The longer I contemplate life and death the less sense I make of them. Might they be no more than a conceptual framework with which we confuse ourselves? Do the dead really disappear? What about ghosts, visitations from the dead, rebirth, and so on? Is death eternal life; what do we mean if we glibly say death is eternal life, unthinkingly copying Rev. Master Jiyu without penetrating this for ourselves? Is Parinirvana understood as full

extinction, something other than death? Already too many questions for me and I expect for you!

We are an ageing community (both monastic and long-term laypeople) in spite of bright new monks and lay trainees, so no wonder death and impermanence come up again and again. All conditioned things pass away. Nothing remains as it was. I am finding Rev. Master Alexander's failing health a profound teaching. We have been spiritual friends since we both came to our first to Jukai in 1987. Although I am older than Rev. Master Alexander he is likely to die before me. Tears can flow contemplating this. Is this expressing an unhealthy attachment? Not really, more along the lines of total immersion in this human life of relationships and risking the sorrow that comes with deep love and reverence for another precious being. AND there is at the same time equanimity and gratitude for the opportunity to find the spiritual friendships that our lives offer.

All bodies change and weaken, no one is exempt. Mind also changes; for example, we may become more forgetful, think with less agility, less able to express in words what we wish to say. And our views change; that is to say, the way we construct what we think and feel about life and the world. Thoughts and feelings from one's youth and middle age take on a different flavour. When we are young we know death comes but it doesn't feel imminent so it doesn't fill our minds. No need to be concerned with it now. But do any of us really know what we are talking about? Can we tolerate

the thought that death may be the ultimate loss. The ultimate impermanence?

Impermanence isn't later: it is NOW. Not that something, whatever that thing is, will vanish later. RIGHT NOW everything is revealing its impermanence, vanishing before our own eyes. That can feel too scary to truly acknowledge without some sort of dodging or rationalisation. Squeezing through the narrow doorway of now, we don't know whether we are coming or going, living or dying in any moment. The truth is BOTH coming and going, living and dying together, no separation, no gap.

As Dōgen said “One thing is not juxtaposed with another thing.”

Take heart, for impermanence is also change, which is not necessarily only about loss. Change can be refreshing, renewing even, though it always entails loss of some sort. This is unavoidable but when accepted, despair and equanimity can co-exist. Nothing new is given the space to appear until something old ceases. Dōgen says “Impermanence is Buddha Nature.”<sup>6</sup> That is to say there is no problem in impermanence if we fully embrace it. Impermanence is not something to attempt to overcome by diligent practice on the path. Rather, fully appreciate impermanence and fully live impermanence. For to live out your life is to live the entire world.

Dōgen again:

If you want to understand Buddha nature you should intimately observe cause and effect over time.

When the time is ripe, Buddha Nature manifests. <sup>7</sup>

The time is always ripe.

Dōgen seems to be saying that practice isn't so much a matter of changing or improving the conditions of your inner and outer life; rather, it is a way of fully embracing both impermanence and loss and simultaneously appreciating the conditions of your life, fully embracing impermanence and loss as they reveal themselves.

Present time is ungraspable. As soon as it occurs, it immediately falls into the past. As soon as I am here, I am gone. Unless the first me disappears, the second me cannot appear. So my being here is thanks to my not being here. There is in reality no me anyway; there is only the flow of time.

All states: existence – being-time – appearance and disappearance – are included in the Unborn. Being-time is all inclusive. We are all in this together. Buddha Nature is never alone, never isolated, constantly flowing, always One. You will find help in understanding the immensity of what IS when you let go of the endless chore of trying to improve yourself; of being brutal to yourself by putting yourself under unnecessary pressure. As we recite in *The Most Excellent Mirror– Samādhi*: “Preserve well for you now have; this is all.”

To end with something Okumura wrote:

How can I manifest the constant, peacefully abiding reality of life, with the reality of impermanence, which is always changing? How can we live awakening to both sides of reality? I have to find how I can use the rest of my life to express this reality, the reality before separation of impermanence and eternity.<sup>8</sup>

#### Notes

1. Reed, Alex. *Imperfect Grief* in the Spring 2017 Journal of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives pp. 35- 42.
2. C S Lewis. *A Grief Observed*, (Faber and Faber, London: 1966) p.1.
- 3.. *From A Buddhist Perspective on Grieving* by Roshi Joan Halifax at: <https://www.pbs.org/thebuddha/blog/2010/mar/11/buddhist-perspective-grieving-roshi-joan-halifax/> or <https://www.trudygoodman.com/healing-great-sadness/>
4. *Samadhi, Treasury of the Radiant Light: a poem by Uchiyama Roshi* from *Dōgen's Genjō Koan: Three Commentaries*. (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint LLC, 2012) p. 137.
5. Paraphrase of Great Master Dōgen, Kazuaki Tanahashi, Ed. *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye: Zen Master Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō*, (Shambhala, Boston and London, 2010) Ch. 23 Buddha Nature, p 237.
6. *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye: Zen Master Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō* Ch. 23 Buddha Nature, p 243.
7. *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye: Zen Master Dōgen's Shōbōgenzō*, Ch. 23 Buddha Nature. p. 237
8. Okumura, Shohaku. *Mountains and Rivers Sutra: A Practitioner's Guide to Dōgen's "Sansuikyo"* (Wisdom Publications, 2018. Massachusetts, US) or <https://terebess.hu/zen/mesterek/mount.pdf> p 89.

## Four Kinds of Doubt

Rev. Master Oswin Hollenbeck

—*Shasta Abbey, CA–USA*—

*This writing was adapted from a talk and discussion given at Shasta Abbey offered for lay residents and local sangha members. I've tried to retain the informal style of the original talk.*

I wish to talk about and discuss four kinds of doubt. You won't find this list among various 'Buddhist lists' because it's one of my own making. Upon reflection after going through a challenging time myself with a bout of doubt, these are the types that came to mind: negative doubt, positive doubt, personal self-doubt, and great doubt.



First is **negative doubt**. This is looking down or askance. It's looking for a problem, a difficulty, a fault, or someone to blame, or fostering disharmony. Its crudest manifestations are sarcasm, ridicule, and cynicism. This kind of doubt is one of the 'ten fetters', and one of the first three which are necessary to convert for 'entering the stream'. This doubt is not evil, it's simply that which binds or limits;



it ties us up and prevents the flow of training and Buddha nature. Its opposite is not belief, rather faith/trust/confidence (more on this below).

What can we have doubts about? According to Rev. Master Jiyu, being a Buddhist entails faith in the Three Treasures and the law of karma; it is doubt about the first three that is traditionally considered a ‘fetter’. As for accepting the law of karma, it’s usually covered in the third of the ‘three fetters’. Essential for understanding are the Precepts, the Four Noble Truths, and the law of dependent origination. Breaking free of doubts about the law of karma is sometimes expressed as ‘no dependence on rites and rituals’, but that is not saying to jettison the practice of Precepts and ceremonies. It refers to any attachment to rules and social conventions, any belief or refuge we hold which we confusedly think can circumvent the law of karma.

I want to say just a word about the Precept on defaming the Three Treasures. This is spreading doubt about the Triple Gem. It took me a long time to comprehend this Precept. Then one day I happened to read an article by a former monk who was ridiculing our master (‘the Buddha’) and I intuitively understood the grave harm this causes, for it made my physically ill. This Precept specifically concerns giving verbal expression to doubt in order to influence others, and it’s variously translated as ‘blame,’ ‘slander,’ ‘decry,’ ‘insult’, ‘speak ill of’ or ‘spread doubt about’. I have found it to also be the case that causing doubt in the minds and hearts of those in other religions can be a case of breaking

this Precept. I learned this painfully when recently going through the rough patch described below. I eventually realized that my terrible doubt could be the effect of causes which I set in motion many years ago when ridiculing other people's faith and perhaps influencing their decision to give up on their religious vocation.



**Positive doubt** is inquiry and is a good thing. It means we've engaged with the teaching. Taking refuge in the Dharma entails first seeking instruction, then listening and studying, but perhaps most importantly, practicing what we've been taught. Thus we allow true learning to manifest. The Buddha himself instructed his disciples, "Don't take my word for this. Prove it true for yourselves."

When we wish to learn, it is with a bright and open mind and a trusting heart. It's faith seeking understanding and moving toward certainty. We begin with what we can trust and grow our confidence from there. This trust or confidence is a continuum; it is not a system of belief with black and white alternatives. Buddhists do not profess a creed as in some religions. Buddhist practice does require faith in the four subjects mentioned above, although we need to keep an open mind and be willing to trust. Part of taking refuge in the Buddha is trusting in his enlightened state. That state is our own true nature, it is true reality, and we can realize the same. We don't depend on an old Indian teacher of 2500 years ago: his true life, and ours, are always present. What

worked for the Buddha will work for us. Accordingly, that confidence implies a strong conviction in the law of cause and effect, for it is by understanding and practicing his method ourselves that we can accomplish the same aim.

It only takes a seed to start the process of trust or confidence in our hearts and lives, and it usually grows in small increments. It's helpful to remember that Buddhism is big. Buddhist doctrine – doctrine simply means 'teaching' in its details – is vast, so there is a lot to learn and assimilate. Any field of knowledge requires time, effort, and patience, so again it's good to start small and go from there: we're in this for the long haul. One of my favorite cartoons is the old, wizened guru telling the new aspirant at the foot of a long and winding path up the mountain, "You'd better pack a sack lunch."

Rev. Master Jiyu employed the phrase "the back burner method" to describe this process of not rejecting any of the teaching outright, rather placing what we presently can't accept on the 'back burner' of our 'stove-top' and allow it to simmer. Then when the time is right, we bring our 'pot' to a 'front burner' and turn up the fire under it, i.e. train actively with a given aspect of practice. In this way we don't turn away in the present from what may someday be valuable. I've added to the analogy by saying some things may have to go in the 'deep freeze', the point being not to throw anything away entirely. Someday it may be time to thaw out and cook a particular teaching.

A practical application of this method is to take one Precept and concentrate on it for a given week, then take another the next week, and so on. And one can do this with other qualities we cultivate: the Four Wisdoms, the six Paramitas, steps of the Eightfold Path, etc. In this way we gain experience which confirms our faith and enables us to trust more.



Next is **self-doubt**. This kind of doubt is a spiritual problem, a koan. Great Master Dōgen teaches that the koan, our spiritual issue, arises naturally in daily life. We don't have to create a problem or a question in the life of religious practice, the challenges are already there. When we awaken the Buddha-seeking mind, the universe seems to respond to our invitation by presenting us with ample material to work on.

This kind of doubt can be considered a 'hindrance,' one of a traditional set of five states of mind that hinder the development of mental concentration in meditation. I view it as an aspect of the inadequacy koan.<sup>1</sup> It is sometimes called indecision, or indecisiveness.

Reminding oneself of the fifth law of the universe, that all beings have an intuitive knowledge of the Buddha nature, can be helpful. Cultivate faith in yourself, your own Buddha nature, and your ability to train – and act on that. The traditional Buddhist remedy for this doubt is to cultivate

overconfidence, but I don't recommend that for those who have a complacency koan, in which one feels that one doesn't need to practice.<sup>1a</sup> In popular psychology and therapy this overconfidence is sometimes advocated as "Fake it till you make it". That's a coarse way of putting it, but it's applicable. However, stepping out on truth doesn't mean we won't make mistakes and incur matching negative karma. That's how we learn.

The ability to commit seems to be a big hurdle for many of us raised in a Western educational system which emphasizes the analytical mind and the acquisition of intellectual knowledge. We sometimes jokingly comment that commitment is the 'big 'c' word' in Buddhism, just as cancer in the 1950s was never referred to explicitly but always indirectly. It can be the thing we're deeply afraid of and don't even want to face or discuss. It's the thing we've been taught to discount and even disparage because it's outside the boundaries of empirical and conventional knowledge.

This doubt can frequently go hand in hand with fear and despair. I had an experience recently while on retreat when I was facing a huge wall of doubt and despair and didn't see any way that I could go on in my practice. I had been out walking in the woods and had to muster the courage and determination to go on anyway, regardless: I went into the meditation hall and sat cross-legged, which I don't normally do, because I felt I needed that extra strength of stability. And after a lengthy sitting period, the doubt vanished. This

happened more than once, but afterwards I felt refreshed and strengthened and had the insight mentioned above about causing doubt in others. It's sometimes said that when we don't want to sit is when we may need to the most.



And then there's **great doubt**. This is Dōgen's "always be disturbed by the truth." In the Zen Meditation tradition it's one of three qualities often presented as necessary for practice: great doubt, great faith, and great determination or courage. Great doubt can be the awareness of impermanence which fuels our determination to practice. Dōgen and other eminent masters often awakened to practice early in life through a direct confrontation with impermanence, frequently by the death of a parent: Dōgen awakened the Buddha-seeking mind by observing the incense smoke rising from his mother's funeral pyre. The Buddha himself was motivated to renounce the world by encountering old age, disease, and death. Theravada Buddhism often stresses *samvega*, dissatisfaction with life and an urgency to train, while Tibetan Buddhist teachings frequently emphasize the preciousness of this human rebirth and the rarity of encountering the Dharma.

Dōgen makes the same points in the first chapter of *Shushogi*: "It would be criminal to waste such an opportunity by leaving this weak life of ours exposed to impermanence through lack of faith and commitment."<sup>2</sup> Included in this teaching are the two qualities we need for transforming this

kind of doubt: faith & commitment. This is the entrustment of our lives to “always going on, always becoming Buddha” which concludes the *Scripture of Great Wisdom*. It is the determination and strength of Achalanatha, a Wisdom King of Light, who embodies the bright-minded attitude of “I will not be moved.” It is learning to make good use of the hardships and adversities that greet the sincere practitioner of meditation. In this way these difficulties become the fuel and substance for our training. They are opportunities, not obstacles. As Rev. Master Jiyu determined in Japan, “I will take everything as happening for my good.”

This great doubt is also the “training as if our hair were on fire.” This teaching is offered by Dōgen, as well as by Nagarjuna, our great Indian Ancestor, and can be traced back to the Buddha himself. Note that when we seek to put out the flames we do not go running madly screaming that our hair is on fire. That kind of response can only feed the flames. No. We quietly, quickly, determinedly put out the fire with a blanket, water, or our hands if necessary.



So, four kinds of doubt. Doubtless, there may be others. These four are not distinct categories – in most people’s experience, they may likely blend and morph into each other. With all of them we train quietly and brightly with strength and determination: great doubt, great faith, and great courage. Each and every day we make the commitment with

the Kesa verse after morning meditation, “I wish to unfold the Buddha’s teaching that I may help all living things.”



### *Notes*

1. & [1a](#) Buddhist trainees are sometimes grouped into two categories according to the two ‘koans’ of inadequacy and complacency. The former looks to externals for a refuge and confirmation of their completeness, while the latter usually feels conceitedly that they lack nothing, that they are entitled to the best of everything, and thus have no need to search for a deeper purpose in life. Most of us probably have a mixture of both. See Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom*, 2nd ed. (Mount Shasta, CA: Shasta Abbey Press, 1993) p. 2.
2. Great Master Dōgen, *Shushōgi (What is Truly Meant by Training and Enlightenment)* in Jiyu-Kennett, *Zen is Eternal Life*, 4th ed. (Shasta Abbey Press: 1999) p. 94.



## Love Outside the Box

David Sease

—*South Carolina–USA*—

I have always enjoyed Mel Tormé’s version of the Cole Porter song, “What is This Thing Called Love.” In his version of the song, after a bit of ‘scat singing’, he and a handful of background vocalists ask in close harmonies, what this thing called love is. They then wonder if anyone can solve the mystery of what love is. The rest of the lyrics continue as many jazz standards do, emphasizing the fleeting nature of love and how the lover is left to struggle alone with their feelings once the spark of love in the other person is gone.

The question in this song is a good one! I realize that there are many uses of the word and depending on the context, love can mean different things. People use the word love to describe objects of their enjoyment, like a certain food, activity, or hobby, and it can also be used to describe the feelings involved in a romantic relationship, a familial relationship, a friendship, and countless other situations. I seem to have been asking myself the question “what is this thing called love” for a long time now.

In my younger years, to understand what love was involved a sort of mental and emotional categorization strategy. There were things that I loved, and then there were things that I did not. The things that I loved had some similar characteristics. They might have been attractive, comfortable, enjoyable, easy, fun, and they were things that I preferred. The things that did not warrant the privilege of being “loved” were things that were, difficult, no fun, unattractive, unacceptable, and caused friction or uneasiness in some way. These things, I did not prefer.

I created a mental box, putting those things that I loved inside the box and the things that I did not love outside of the box. The things that I loved had an exclusive privilege that the unloved things were denied. It was the borders of the box, the line separating those things inside and outside of the box, and the distinction between the two categories that helped me define love. In a sense, to love something also required to not love the other thing, because I believed that there needed to be some exclusivity reserved for the “loved”.

This mental construct seemed to make sense. It was pretty easy to put things into categories. There may have been sub categories and in reality, the box may have been a little less rigid than perhaps it may sound, but this mental construct was basically how I experienced love in my life. It seemed completely rational and acceptable that I would spend my life gravitating towards those things that I placed inside the box and denying, running away from, or in some way avoiding those things outside of the box. Why would I

ever want to experience or work with something that wasn't easy to do; something that caused friction or tension; or even be around something that I did not find attractive in some way if I did not have to? It seemed perfectly reasonable to draw a clear, mental and emotional border separating things that I wanted to experience or engage with and things that I did not.

Although this mental and emotional construct was a simple design, there was something about it that was deeply problematic. I often realized that coming along with the things, people, experiences, relationships, and other situations that I put inside the box, were other negative qualities that I could not separate from them. For instance if a person was easy to get along with, attractive, fun, or encouraging, I might give them and the relationship the distinction of being worthy of going inside the box of love. But many times there were some other feelings that accompanied them inside the box. There might be a level of hankering, or a longing to somehow preserve the person in some way, not allowing them or the relationship to change from what I prefer. There might be a yearning to be with that person and a great fear of being separated from them. There might even be a level of greed associated with them and the relationship, where I wanted to keep them and our relationship to myself, not sharing the qualities that I recognized as attractive in them with anyone else. In short, somehow, the way I was defining love involved attachment, and it didn't always feel good. It was confusing and I

couldn't understand why love hurt sometimes. I felt a little like some of those forlorn jazz singers.

I remember feeling pretty down one day because I was questioning a relationship that I was in. I was talking about it with a Christian acquaintance of mine and I essentially asked her "what is this thing called love?" I was trying to determine how I could be feeling all of these mixtures of emotions in a relationship that I had placed inside the box. She replied with a pretty simple and often quoted scripture from 1 Corinthians, where the Apostle Paul said:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Years later, I now realize that she was correct; that Paul was correct. But, at the time, I considered this scripture within the same mental and emotional framework that I had already created to help me understand the nature of love. So, I looked at the relationship I was in and I estimated that there was boasting, there was rudeness, there was impatience and anger, there were records of rights and wrongs being kept, and there was not always kindness. With that estimation, I figured that the relationship was not love and I began pushing it and the other person outside of the box.

Years later, I started to learn a bit about Buddhism. The books I was reading emphasized the importance of

compassion, love, and non-attachment. Though these concepts sounded interesting to me, I was not really able to digest them and to put them into practice. Honestly, some of what I was learning from the books, particularly the way that I understood ‘non-attachment’ and the idea that a Buddha could radiate love to all things with no discrimination seemed scary to me. It was scary because it challenged my very notion of what love was. Were these Buddhists saying that I could not somehow hold a love for my family above the love of a stranger? Did I have to give up discriminating between things worthy of being loved and things that were not worthy of being loved? How would my box look if I tried these things? I was not sure about what those answers would be, but it did seem that to love the way the Buddha did would mean to dismantle my entire mental and emotional construct of how I understood, defined, practiced, and experienced love.

Sometime later, I was fortunate enough to find a teacher who taught me how to meditate and about the Buddhist Precepts. For years, I attended services and meditations at our Temple. I participated in the ceremonies and workdays, asked questions, and contributed to our discussions. Not all these things were easy to do. For example, it was not always fun, natural, or enjoyable to do manual labor at the Temple and some of the ceremonies felt a little strange to me somehow. I did not always feel comfortable and at ease participating in our discussions about the Dharma. I also found that trying to follow the Precepts and to meditate “in real life” was challenging and could be uncomfortable. But,

I continued to show up to the Temple and to practice on some level.

Slowly, I began to see that while all of these things were not necessarily easy and comfortable, meditating, trying to follow the Precepts, practicing with our group, and training with a teacher was of real benefit to me. It started to dawn on me that reflecting on and working with my irritations, fears, struggles, insecurities, and preferences might be worth doing. It was strange, but it seemed like I was realizing that some of the things that I had historically placed outside of the box, might be worth looking at, considering, and being dealt with on some level.

I also started noticing a slightly different perspective I was developing on the things that I had historically put inside the box. I began to see that trying to arrange my life in pursuit of things inside the box and avoidance of things outside of the box was a very limited, frustrating, and ultimately impossible way to live. I was learning that what the Buddha taught about impermanence was unavoidable, and that the things inside the box would change and would ultimately be taken away from me. I was starting to see that my attachment to those things inside the box and avoidance of the things outside of the box was causing me to suffer. Although I was not sure that I could love all beings in the way that I had understood that the Buddha and Bodhisattvas could, I realized that I could expand my understanding of what love was and perhaps even change the way I tried to love. I started to realize that the mental construct of my box itself was a

barrier for me to actually love and it needed to be re-examined and possibly let go of.

Over the years, I have learned a few ways to actually let go of this construct, and my understanding of love has changed to be more positive, generous, inclusive, and authentic. Rather than trying to chase things inside the box so I can feel or experience love, more and more these days, I try to practice and express love by reminding myself to be generous in thought to myself and others. I am learning that love does not just live inside the box and that to begin dismantling the box, I need to increase kindness, patience, tolerance, humility, and generosity by not actively looking for differences or faults in others (people, animals, things, experiences etc...) and not trying to spend so much time drawing lines of distinction. I try to remember that we are all doing our best on some level, even the person that is outside of the box! I try to consider how it would feel to be on the receiving end of my thoughts, actions, and emotional vibrations. I hope to recognize gratitude in situations rather than shortcomings. I remind myself of a simple phrase of “not different” when I see someone acting in a way that I do not like. I ask myself how I might be of service to a person or in a particular situation. I often remind myself of the Precepts of not speaking against or devaluing others. These things that I am trying to do require action, they require reflection, and they require practice. They are aspects of love as a verb! In doing these things, the box begins to dissolve. Love becomes bigger and more inclusive. It is also amazing to see that when the box begins to dissolve, much of the

mental and emotional baggage that might accompany the things I used to try to put inside the box can also dissolve.

Practicing and training with love seems very similar to any kind of practice or training. If I want to train to run a marathon, I am going to have to run further than I am comfortable running. If I want to learn math, I am going to have to encounter and grapple with things that I do not understand and might find frustrating. Loving requires a similar willingness, discipline, and faith to be open to the idea that I may need to do things that I do not want to do and that I may need to experience things that may be difficult. If a person irritates me, and although it may be uncomfortable, I need to try to offer kindness and consider the perspective that that person is no different than I am in wanting to be heard, understood, and loved. Although it may be difficult and contrary to my initial impulse, can I try to not actively search for the differences between that person and myself?

Thinking back to my reaction to hearing the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Corinthians, I realize that I was defining love as a noun, and that was how I interpreted Paul's words. For me, love had to *BE* a static state of being. For there to be love, there had to *BE* patience, kindness and the rest, and if it was not present, there was not love. I now see love as a verb. If I want to express, feel, and experience love, I need to practice patience, practice kindness, practice generosity and humility. I need to consider my actions, thoughts, and words and how they may affect myself and others. Love as a verb is not a state of being, but rather a constant becoming.



After going to countless weddings in my 20s and 30s and hearing this same scripture, I was delighted to learn that when Paul wrote what became these lines in 1 Corinthians, he was not talking to a couple about to get married, but to people who were experiencing deep division among one another; people who needed to practice loving!

It seems to me that to love is to try to follow the Precepts and to really do my best to respond to a situation by doing what is good to do regardless of how attractive, unattractive, easy, difficult, fun, or boring the situation is. It seems like love is a response, offered with generosity, to a situation or a person. Because of the shifting nature of life, I never know exactly what a situation will be, thus I do not know what the response needs to be necessarily. So, although I do not know what will come my way, I do know that if I can cultivate stillness, generosity of spirit, and a wish to do well, I can love everything. There is nothing outside of the box. In fact, there is no box at all!

I have started to recognize some qualities that I associate with the expression of love. Words that come to mind are perseverance, openness, acceptance, faith, humility, and generosity. I am also learning that I do not need to rely on emotions, feelings, ideas, constructs, or categorization strategies to know what this thing called love is, but I do need to practice trying to be willing to see all situations and beings as being lovable.

So, what is this thing called love? I'm not sure if I'm any closer to defining it. I don't think that I want to because to do so would mean that there is something definite that could be described as love, and it could be limited to that description. In other words, love could be put into a box. It is starting to seem that love is boundless and that our capacity to love is greater than we can imagine or define.

## What Is This?

Rev. Master Favian Straughan

—*Portobello Buddhist Priory, Edinburgh–Scotland—*

*From Portobello Buddhist Priory Newsletter, September –  
December 2019.*

It has been recommended that when we sit in Zazen, we bring to mind the question: What is this? Not as a mantra to continually repeat or as a question to think about and produce a conceptual answer, but as a way of settling us into the body/mind experience of the present moment, with attention and open looking or seeing. Meditation is generally said to involve two aspects: 1. Concentration or attention and 2. Insight or Open awareness.

It is necessary to develop a capacity to concentrate, which has been likened to strengthening a muscle over time, hence the importance of regular sitting which gives a momentum to our practice. Without some capacity for giving attention, the mind tends to drift into habitual patterns of thinking which get identified with and help generate a separate self-sense. ‘What is this’ helps to focus attention, not just on any particular object of mind or body, but also on

their moment to moment presence, as flowing and changing experience. With this comes a ‘knowing’ awareness which offers a holding and grounding space for whatever arises in the present moment. This knowing awareness is integral with concentration and what becomes ‘known’ is the empty nature of phenomena – as a direct recognition. This insight which can clarify and deepen, releases the mind from its clinging to notions of permanent separate objects; and with a deeper self-reflecting movement, produces a disenchantment with the belief that what I am is also a permanent separate self, behind or at the heart of this flow of ever-changing experience.

This recognition is one of the reasons why Sōtō Zen teaches that the goal of practice and the path of practice are one and the same. Nothing is gained or added to what is, but ‘what is’ is uncovered or recovered as the truth of this moment: the undivided nature. This practice is called a ‘path of liberation’ because it frees the clinging mind which has reacted in self-defence to the perceived dissatisfactory nature of life and has sought relief again and again by grasping and rejecting in a desperate attempt to find permanency, security and wholeness. This is why the bald instruction for Zazen meditation encourages us to neither grasp hold of nor push away whatever arises. With practice, these moments of ‘liberation’ leave us where we’ve actually always been, at the heart of this moment and one with the flow of this life. Dissatisfaction comes to an end in such moments, not because sensations of discomfort cease to arise but because they are not impacting a constructed sense of self. In penning

these few paragraphs, it might be easy to assume practice to be a straightforward progression from delusion to liberation but of course as those who practice know, it is multifaceted and a sense of progress often dissolves in the face of a need to keep going in unknowing, a stepping forward in the dark.

Faith becomes an important feature of training now. Faith arises from the growing intuition of what we might call the ‘unconditioned nature of mind’ which we could say is recovered from behind the screen of addictive thinking. While empty of self – so not being grasped at and set up as ‘I the subject’ – it expresses the non-grasping sufficiency of being, one with this moment and this life. As Zen Master Mumon put it: “Though you stand at the brink of life and death, you have the ‘great Freedom.’”<sup>1</sup>

1. *Zen Master Wumen Hui-k’ai* (Chinese) *Mumon Ekai*, (Japanese) 1183 – 1260, *The Gateless Gate*, Collection of koans. Case 1, Joshu’s dog. (There are various translations.)

## Thus Have I Heard

Rev. Master Seikai Luebke

—*Pine Mountain Buddhist Temple, Ventura County, CA–USA*—

*These lyrics were written by Rev. Master Seikai in 2019 for the Wesak Festival held at Pine Mountain Buddhist Temple. They have been set to music by Rev. Helen of the Redding Buddhist Priory in Redding, California.*

Thus have I heard: The World-Honored One descended from  
the Tushita Heaven;

To be born one final time into the samsara realm, this world  
of patience.

In order to realize full awakening and preach the Dharma of  
a Buddha;

Showing the Noble Path which leads beings out of the  
darkness of their ignorance and into enlightenment.

His mother, Queen Mahamaya, who lived in the Jambudvipa  
Continent of India, near to the greatest of snow-covered  
mountains, the Himalaya;

Stopped on her homeward journey to rest in Lumbini's  
Garden, and there gave birth to her son.

This child of the Shakya Clan, who was named Siddhartha—  
he whose wishes are fulfilled—;  
Was heir to the kingdom of Kapilavastu should he choose to  
rule.

But as a black-haired warrior in the prime of life;  
His heart was pierced by sorrow at witnessing the aging,  
suffering and death of this transient world.  
Thus he cut off his hair and entered the homeless life of a  
wandering monk;  
And for six years endured austerities, extreme discipline and  
hardship.

In his quest to find the truth of human life, the answer to the  
cause of suffering;  
He finally uncovered the Middle Path, avoiding extremes of  
self-inflicted pain and the dissolute life of pleasure.  
Seated under the Bodhi Tree, he realized the Four Great  
Truths of human life:  
The existence of prolonged suffering through many lives; the  
ignorance and craving which turn the Wheel of Rebirth;  
the cessation of birth and death which is called Nirvana;  
and the Noble Eight-fold Path of virtue.

He beheld the great cycle of existence:  
That beings are reborn according to their karma generated in  
previous lives;  
That beings may follow an upward path by means of  
generosity, loving kindness, patience and meditation;

Refraining from causing harm, practicing equanimity, and  
showing compassion to all living things.

Thus he established the Buddhist Way;  
And his uncountable followers formed the Four-fold Sangha  
of monks and lay devotees, male and female, young and  
old.

For forty-five years he wore the robes of a monk, carried his  
alms bowl and taught all around him;  
Turning the Wheel of the Dharma, and bringing innumerable  
beings into the path of awakening.

The great sage of the Shakya Clan, Shakyamuni;  
Was as a beacon of light to a world where beings stumble in  
the darkness of ignorance and confusion.  
With great insight, clarity, compassion and wisdom;  
He illuminated the Path leading out of never-ending strife,  
hatred and warfare, suffering and despair.

“All that we are is the result of our thoughts;  
If a man thinks and acts with ill-will in his heart, pain follows  
him like a wagon wheel behind the foot of an ox.  
All that we are is the result of our thoughts;  
If a man thinks and acts with loving kindness in his heart,  
happiness follows him like a shadow that never leaves  
him.

For never does hatred cease by hatred here in this world;  
Hatred ceases only by love: this is an eternal law.”



The self which seeks for an advantage, to gain or to dominate  
others, is without reality or substantiality;  
All component things have a time of coming into being, a  
time of existing, and a time of disintegration.

To cling to changing phenomena is the cause of unending  
misery and affliction;  
Search therefore for what is not-born, not-created, not  
changing—the tranquil abiding of Nirvana.  
When Shakyamuni died, he urged his followers to make his  
teachings the light of their lives;  
Cultivating the Precepts of good conduct, for they eliminate  
defilements caused by seeking for fame or gain.

Further, to practice contentment by knowing when you have  
enough;  
By knowing your own capacity and not exceeding it, and not  
to engage in too much bustle.  
Strive onward in diligence to touch true liberation from birth  
and death;  
Relinquishing grasping and aversion for all things:  
awakening to lasting peace of mind and heart.

Blessed be the World-Honored One, the One Who Preached  
the Truth, the Tathagata;  
The breaker of the cycle of births and deaths.  
The Knower of Worlds, the Unsurpassed One, the Self-  
enlightened One;  
India's greatest sage, our real teacher Shakyamuni Buddha.

## Renewal

Rev. Master Mugō White

—Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey, Northumberland—UK—

*The following was written in 1985 and reflects the language style used at that time as well as the thinking and understanding of a relatively young monk of four years standing living at Shasta Abbey, California. It is published now since there is relevant teaching and guidance on what continues to be a tricky aspect of religious practice; namely to tread the middle way, neither becoming overly zealous nor too lax in following the Way. The text below has been extensively edited. Rev. Master Mugō.*

Currently (2021), at Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey, twice a month the resident guests and monks join together for a ceremony called The Renewal of the Precepts. When this article was first published this ceremony was not part of the liturgy and was only adopted a number of years afterwards.<sup>1</sup> The closest we came in the early 1980s to a public Precepts ceremony was during the annual Lay Ordination Ceremony at Jukai. All present renewed their commitment to keep true to the Precepts as well as vowed to be contrite while reciting the contrition and confession verse.<sup>2</sup> The ceremony during Jukai continues to be a deeply

significant one for new ordainees, for those who already have received lay ordination and for the monks as well. With the advent of the twice monthly Renewal of the Precepts ceremony which highlights the necessity to regularly rededicate oneself to training, the broader religious meaning of ‘renewal’ is brought to the fore. In the context of the ceremony, to keep true to the teachings of the Buddhist Precepts.

Currently the weekly schedule allows for a more relaxed time typically scheduled on a Monday and during Thursday afternoons called ‘renewal days’. It occurred to me recently how very valuable renewal days are in training, for renewal works on many levels and is an example of where the kaleidoscopic view<sup>3</sup> can be exercised with great benefit. There is much about renewal days that can be taken up and used by lay people training at home. Simply by setting time aside, even an hour each week, one is saying to oneself, via one’s actions “Yes, I’m human. I need to remind myself to turn towards that which is most important in my life. To dedicate myself to the mind of meditation in all that I do.”

For each person what is good to do during those dedicated times of practice, ‘renewal time’, will be different. The practical aspects and the inner spiritual needs of one’s renewal times will also change as one goes on in training. For example, whereas once it was good to be out digging holes in the garden, now it is good to sit quietly sewing or reading. And again in the future, it may be good to be digging holes! One must always keep in mind both the underlying

purpose of renewal – to recommit to one’s intention to know the Truth – and also the kaleidoscopic view, thus allowing the teaching in Rules for Meditation<sup>4</sup> “all activity is permeated with pure Zazen” to become a reality.

I will outline the renewal day schedule I first experienced. (This has evolved over the years and what is described here is not exactly the schedule in 2021 at Throssel). Rising time is later than usual with no formal meditation period. There is a shortened morning service, followed by a clean-up period. It is useful to note what is done; while a crew prepares brunch, individuals and departments catch up on work they would not normally be able to do during the rest of the week, the not-absolutely-necessary-jobs which are, nevertheless, good to get done: building storage shelving in the new, enlarged Main House attic, overhauling a piece of well-used kitchen equipment, spring cleaning an office or room.

For a brief period before coming to Shasta Abbey I worked and lived with my parents. We seemed to work all the time. Gradually, however, I noticed that on Sundays things were different and, on reflection, not unlike our renewal days. My parents would get up later and take a hot bath; the linens would be changed. My father often could be found during the day mending a door hinge or putting up a long awaited cupboard. My mother would take time out from the garden to dust her beloved collection of porcelain or bake a batch of cakes to see us through tea time the following week. The point is they set aside a day to ‘make new’: to

renovate, clean and relax. Though much of the day looked like work, it was, in fact, a day of renewal.

On our monastic renewal day after brunch there is a formal shaving ceremony for the younger monks after which there are no more scheduled activities until dinner at 6:05pm. For the most part monks and lay guests are free to follow their own personal schedule until then. Often there are a number of conflicting needs to be attended to and, since one can easily be overwhelmed by these loose ends (especially if too many have been left for too long), it is helpful to have a plan, making sure that physically/mentally relaxing is included, since the latter tends to be relegated in the face of pressing practical needs.

Since many of us have busy lives to lead, there is the temptation to try to do six things at once. Continued over time this has an erosive effect on one's daily practice. Armed with a list of things to do, I was pleasantly surprised recently to rediscover the simple teaching of doing one thing at a time, thus reacquainting myself with 'Every-Minute Zazen'<sup>5</sup>. What, at first sight, appeared to be hours of hard work to 'get through' changed into work permeated with the peace of meditation: the work became a means of spiritual renewal. I am sure lay trainees can identify with having a seemingly endless list of things that need to be done. Experience shows that, on the practical level, projects left undone gather momentum: the longer they are left, the more work they require to make 'as new' again. On the spiritual level, the longer one has allowed various and sundry 'wants'

to creep in, the more difficult (and painful) it is to cut through the attachments that have formed. On whatever level, it is good to catch them quickly, and renewal time can be used as a period of grace when we can do just this. The important thing, whether it is a renewal day or not, is always to consult one's heart by asking, "What is the most important thing to do?" and then do it, single-mindedly.

Relaxing while keeping up one's training may seem like a contradiction in terms. So often to relax has meant to indulge or overindulge, which usually has meant to break the Precepts. Understandably we approach relaxation with caution and frequently there is fear mixed with guilt. To overcome this we have to work at relaxing in much the same way as we work at any other aspect of training. We have to push into our particular historic relationship with regard to relaxation. A senior monk mentioned recently that he had at last learned how to relax with a book. Pressed for further information he said he had simply 'pushed it,' first reading one chapter then another, pushing to read just a little more. People with another kind of temperament will have to watch themselves carefully with regard to an activity such as reading for relaxation so as not to get caught up in it and continue reading when it would be good to stop and do other things. In any activity there is always the potential for falling one side or the other of the razor's edge into indulgence or fear. In finding the middle way we will inevitably fall from the razor's edge many times; 1000 times down, then 1000 times we pick ourselves up.

Understanding the place of letting go can be especially difficult for those new to training. The sincerity of purpose and often sheer desperation to relieve what one perceives as ‘my suffering’ can lead them to spend all their spare time doing formal meditation and see relaxing either alone or with others as a slackening of the vigilance of training. *The Most Excellent Mirror Samadhi*<sup>6</sup> says “never come too close nor put yourself too far away.” It is helpful to keep in mind that meditation in daily life is not something one has to look for or find; in truth it is that which is always there, within, and simply that which one keeps in touch with.

One needs to be prepared for a bit of a rough time during renewal days as finding one’s way with the problem of what to do next is likely to arise quite strongly on a more relaxed schedule. When one trains, the distinction between work and leisure, common in our culture, begins to fade and past tendencies will arise in order to be dealt with. Feelings of despair, boredom, restlessness, greed, and the like will arise and each of us has to find a way of ‘pushing through’ them. My way of dealing with the feeling of ‘nothing satisfies’ (greed) is to look to my belongings: clothes, shoes, books, etc. to see if anything needs mending or cleaning. In the process of caring for my belongings, the unrest tends to dissolve; for it reaffirms that giving and receiving are one movement: giving with open hands, one receives; taking with closed hands, nothing satisfies. One does, however, have to make a deliberate decision to deal with troublesome states of mind on the spot, even on renewal days. When they are particularly difficult or chronic, then some extra formal

meditation is in order. When mending and ‘making new’, one can also find a tendency to get involved to such an extent that the activity takes on an addictive quality; it tends to take on a life of its own, driving one on when those ‘inner promptings’ indicate it is better to stop. Any project – sewing, woodworking, and gardening – can also take on this addictive quality if one is not very careful.

We don’t have to look far to realise that there is great commercial potential in leisure-time activities; relaxation has become a highly marketable product. On close examination, however, what is being sold are the ‘favourable conditions for relaxation,’ not relaxation itself. There are specially designed furniture, clothes, and equipment, as well as that which falls under the general heading of ‘entertainment,’ all of which have their value and place as long as we don’t mistake favourable conditions for relaxation itself. Commerce has also helped shape a commonly held view that relaxation ‘just happens’ and that one will somehow miraculously ‘slip into it.’ Clearly, most of the time we have to organize and plan in order to create the favourable conditions for relaxation; as with all aspects of training, a deliberate decision is usually needed. For example, I know of one person who, on certain renewal days, dons a particular sweater which has the effect of putting them into ‘relaxation mode!’ For another, skilful means may mean going out and buying a warm pair of slippers. One can employ skilful means in all aspects of training, including relaxation.



Dinner on renewal days is informal; instead of the usual silent meals we have during the rest of the week, we eat and talk, relaxing the guideline of doing one thing at a time. Instead of formal meditation there is a period of spiritual renewal when the Meditation Hall is available for monks to do extra seated meditation. At tea, which starts earlier than usual, we are offered a variety of television viewing; sometimes there is popcorn and, on festival days, perhaps a special dessert. One of the favourite ways monks relax at community teas and gatherings is to crack jokes and exchange interesting ‘facts’. If there is a saving grace in training it is retaining a sense of humour, for it helps one keep a sense of proportion in the face of sometimes overwhelming appearances.

Although the renewal day is an essential part of training and a time set aside from one's usual weekly round, it is still a mistake to cling to it. Daily practice and spiritual renewal embrace each other, for at the very heart of training is a heart in repose; there is no room here for distinctions between ‘rest time’ and ‘work time’. Proving this true for oneself is an endless process and can take some interesting twists and turns. For example, I remember well an incident a few years ago which taught me the painful consequences of clinging to an idea of ‘rest time’ and ‘work time’. One day I found myself working through a long, post-brunch, kitchen clean-up encouraged by the thought of a mug of hot tea at the end. Just as the mug was about to touch my lips, the Head Novice arrived and enlisted several of the novices, including me, to

do some extra cleaning work. There are times such as this when the opposites arise in one's daily life with such clarity that one is propelled into the third position, or another way of putting that, beyond the opposites. The above event, while painful, had just such an effect on me, for I remember realising clearly that THE important thing is to be present where one is and to 'answer the call', in this case, to go and do some cleaning.

I was once taught that in order to test a piece of fabric to see if it is silk one balls it up into a closed fist and then releases it, palm up. If it springs up brightly out of the opened hand, then it is indeed pure silk. So often we hold ourselves as if in a closed fist. Relaxing the fist of our fondly held selves we allow our original enlightenment to spring up, full of life. This kind of relaxing is at the heart of renewal.

#### *Notes*

1. Found in *Serene Reflection Meditation*, by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett and members of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives. pp 51- 55. <https://shastaabbey.org/pdf/SRM.pdf>
2. Confession verse from the *Shushōgi* "All the evil committed by me is caused by beginningless greed, hate and delusion: all the evil is committed by my body, in my speech and in my thoughts: I now confess everything wholeheartedly." (The *Shushōgi* is a compilation of Great Master Dōgen's teachings, put together by the Sōtō Zen School in Japan at the end of the nineteenth century.)
3. The expression a 'Kaleidoscopic view' has been used to describe a multifaceted and rapidly changing mind which is able to move freely from one viewpoint to another. (Based on the kaleidoscope toy consisting of a tube containing mirrors and pieces of coloured glass or paper, whose reflections produce changing patterns when the tube is rotated.)
4. Great Master Dōgen, *Fukanzazengi: Rules for Meditation* (a chapter

from the *Shōbōgenzō*). Read as part of daily services in OBC temples and available in booklets *Scriptures and Ceremonies* and online here <https://www.shastaabbey.org/pdf/IntroSRM13.pdf> p.17.

5. Rev. Master Daizui MacPhillamy, “Every-Minute Zazen,” *The Journal of Shasta Abbey*, Volume XII, nos. 5 & 6 (May-June) 1981: 18-22.
6. *The Most Excellent Mirror Samadhi* is a much revered poem written by the Chinese Master Tōzan Ryōkai which is recited regularly in Sōtō Zen temples worldwide. See <https://throssel.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/03a4mostexcellentmirr.pdf>

# News of the Order

---

## UK and Europe

### **Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey**

*—Northumberland, England—UK—*

**Monastic News:** On the morning of April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Rev. Chandra successfully completed a Dharma ceremony at which she responded to questions from members of the community on a passage from the Precepts she had chosen:

After completing the ceremony the community shared cake and tea together to congratulate her and at a community meeting afterwards, Rev. Master Leandra presented her with her parish priest and teacher's certificates. We congratulate Rev. Chandra on passing this milestone in her life as a monk, and offer thanks for her many years of training.



*Rev. Chandra with Rev. Master Leandra*

**40<sup>th</sup> Ordination Anniversary:** On 17<sup>th</sup> May we were delighted to celebrate the occasion of Rev. Master Mugō's fortieth ordination anniversary with a special meal to express our thanks for all she offers both here and to many others, including her role with lay ministers.



*Rev. Mugō*

**Monastic visitors:** We welcomed Rev. Master Daishin for a one-month stay in May-June; it is a pleasure to have him with us and also to see Rev. Master Alicia who drove up from Derbyshire for a few days at the end of May.

**Festivals:** Our program of Sunday Festivals has continued, with joyful ceremonies and teaching for Achalanatha, Great Master Keizan and our Festival of the Buddha's Birth celebration. In June we held a Festival we have not done for some years – for Nagyaarajuna, offering our gratitude for his unique teaching and insights. Later we enjoyed a summer barbecue on the Hall of Pure Offerings lawn.

**A generous donation of a Thanka:** We are most grateful for a generous donation bequeathed to us recently of a beautiful hand painted Thanka showing scenes from the life of the Buddha. It came with a covering cloth which has preserved the vibrant colours to look as new.



**Opening up:** We are following the government's guidelines and are opening up possibilities for sangha visits as we are able, with individual guests able to stay in our Guest Cottage and use the Ceremony Hall and work in the grounds.

The community are receiving COVID vaccinations with many monks now having had two doses. Once the younger monks have had their first vaccination, we hope to open further. Our website has the most up to date news. <https://throssel.org.uk/> Last year's marquee is up again outside the Guest Department which is being used for spiritual guidance and Tuesday classes; it is a pleasure to welcome local sangha in person. Our online dharma offerings and retreats will be continuing.

**Online School event:** In May, Rev. Kyōsei offered our first online session for a local school, Cotherstone Primary, meeting with a group of 4 – 7 year olds and their teachers. She spoke about a day in the life of a Buddhist monk and displayed large prints of the Ceremony Hall and side shrines as well as showing the gongs and bells we use for ceremonies which the children then drew. They sat for five minutes and in the questions session afterwards described this as “very peaceful, it felt warm, and enjoyable”. It was good to see we could offer such an event.

**New doors installed by a local contractor:** After a long delay due to problems with their supply chain, a local double glazing company was able to complete an order we had placed with them several months ago to replace four doors around the temple which were showing the inevitable effects of being exposed to the weather.

**Website/blog :** It is now possible to receive an automated email notifying you whenever there is a new Throssel Blog post. Becoming a subscriber will mean that you won't need to remember to make a routine visit to our website to see if there is anything new there. The latest post, or an excerpt with a link to it, will be delivered to your inbox automatically whenever there is new content.

You can sign up to receive these emails by visiting the blog page: <https://throssel.org.uk/category/throssel-blog/> and looking for the 'Blog email signup: Subscribe' message, where you'll find a box to type your email address into.

—Rev. Alina

## Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory

—Norwich, UK—

**Our new Priory:** At the end of March, after various delays and setbacks, we eventually completed the purchase of a property

to be a long-term home for the Priory. The move went smoothly and I am very grateful to the people who helped with all the work that was needed around that time. The property is an ideal priory, which couldn't have been designed much better for the purpose. It is bigger than our previous rented properties and we shall be able to offer overnight stays. Its location is wonderful too, being peaceful and quiet, just across the road from a river – perfect for meditation and contemplation. It's to the west of Norwich, about two miles from the centre of the city, easily accessible and with plenty of parking available.



*New Priory*





*View from the front door*

All is going well with settling in. There has, however, been a lot of work to do, as the house had been rather neglected. Various repairs have been required, and there are plumbing, electrical and roofing issues to be sorted. A major problem uncovered by the electrical inspection resulted in the driveway and patio having to be dug up. In addition to all that, Japanese knotweed has been discovered growing by a side wall of the house.

But this is all “behind the scenes” work. There are going to be many challenges during the settling-in period, which is likely to last through the summer, but these can be overcome. The house already feels very much like a priory and the meditation room feels like it has been serving that function for years.



*Meditation room*

A gardening group has come together to take care of planning and maintaining the Priory's gardens, which are currently a blank slate. The group usually meets up on a Tuesday afternoon and they are undertaking various jobs, from weeding, mowing and planting to installing gutters and drainpipes for the garage, to feed into water butts. It has been a joy to see Sangha members able to work together in person again, creating the environment that will support us in our training over the coming years.

It is certainly a major step forward in the life of our Sangha to now own a property that is our Priory and to be building for the future, after years of renting.

**Opening the Priory to visitors:** As the country follows the roadmap out of lockdown, we have been able to start welcoming visitors to the Priory for our meetings and other events. It has been lovely to have people come along for meditation and services once again. Our Zoom meetings will be continuing as usual, even when

people are attending them in person. The plan for the future is that, for all of our events, there will be the options to come along in person or to join online.

Since our move, the Priory has a new phone number: 01603 219464.

**Thank you:** I just offer one big “thank you” to everybody who has played a part in enabling our Sangha to find and settle into a long-term spiritual home.

—*Rev. Master Leoma*

## The Place of Peace Dharma House

—*Abersytwyth, Wales*—

This April marked the 20th anniversary of The Place of Peace Dharma House. Thank you to those who have supported us during this time, and to those who continue to offer support. A temple is always more than one person, and help has been offered in various, and generous, ways.

There are many who have come and gone, as their journey through life brought them to our sitting place, and there are those who have stayed, and who see this as their place of refuge. Their commitment is a gift to the temple, and we look forward to many more years of walking this great Buddhist Way together, as the life of faith continues to unfold, day by day, step by step.

The regular Zoom meetings are going well.

We recently welcomed Heather Walters, who has trained with Rev. Master Myōhō for more than twenty years, as a new trustee, and thank her for taking on this responsibility.

—*Rev. Master Myōhō*

## Reading Buddhist Priory

—Reading, England—UK

Our annual Spring retreat with Telford Priory resumed this year after a short hiatus due to the pandemic. It was held online from 12-14 March and was very well attended, with around thirty people joining in at various points throughout the weekend. Our online Priory welcomed guests from both Priors' congregations as well as wider sangha members from Germany and France. Reverend Master Saidō and Reverend Gareth gave dharma talks which were followed by lively discussions. The retreat concluded with a social lunch which worked well online.

In early May the Priory celebrated its first Wesak festival since the pandemic lockdowns began. It was held online, with a sangha member presenting from home.

Now, since May 18<sup>th</sup>, following on from the easing of restrictions on indoor gatherings, the Priory has at last opened its doors to a limited number of guests. As a result of feedback from sangha members to maintain online participation through the opening up process, Reverend Gareth is trialling the combining of practice online with in-person attendance. So far, it is working well.

—Gina Bovan

## Turning Wheel Buddhist Temple

—East Midlands—UK—

**Completion of our Building Project:** The builders completed the alterations to the temple on time at the end of March, after four full months of work. It was great to have it all done, but it was also a significant disruption to the life of the temple as the work affected virtually every room, including the kitchen, Common Room and Meditation Hall. It has taken a while to clean up the bulk of the dust and other debris that is the

inevitable result of this kind of project, but we are now gradually getting the rooms back in order again.

Once the building work was completed there was a lot of redecoration to do, and so far we have managed to repaint and carpet the Common Room. The photo below shows it before and after the building work, which included removing the chimney breast on the left-hand side.



At the moment the main altar is in the Common Room, together with the Founder's Shrine, whilst the Meditation Hall is being redecorated. A picture of the Meditation Hall before the work, and during redecoration is shown below.



You can see that the doorway to the kitchen on the left-hand side has been blocked up, and the patio doors in the right-hand corner have been converted to a window, with an additional radiator in front of it. We have also changed the direction of the stairs, which no longer go up from the back of the hall. All of these changes have made a big difference to the feel of the Meditation Hall, as we now don't need to go through it in order to get to other rooms. Redecoration will take a while, as it is quite a large room, but we hope it will be completed by the time we are able to

welcome visitors to the temple again, perhaps in late June or early July.

**Celebrating Wesak Together Online:** It was lovely to have so many people join our online celebration of Wesak, the Festival of the Buddha's Birth, on Saturday the 8th of May. This is the second Wesak that we have not been able to meet together in person due to the coronavirus restrictions, and 18 of us met online to celebrate the festival. We started the morning with two meditation periods, followed by the festival itself and then a Dharma talk and discussion. Rev. Aiden was celebrant for the festival, which took place in our newly redecorated Common Room, and an image from the ceremony is shown below.



We are very grateful for all the support we have received during these challenging times, and it is lovely to have people join our online events throughout the week, so that we can support each other in our practice. We look forward to seeing each other in person again once the current restrictions are lifted.

—*Rev. Master Aiden*

# News of the Order

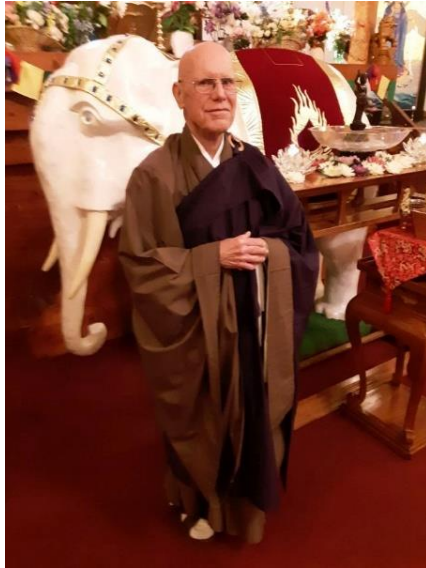
---

## USA & Canada

### Shasta Abbey

—Mount Shasta, CA—USA—

The spring season remained relatively quiet, given Covid-19 restrictions were still in place. A highlight was a special meal in honor of Rev. Master Jishō's 50<sup>th</sup> ordination anniversary on 14<sup>th</sup> May. He has touched many hearts, and we are grateful to him for his many years of practice and teaching.



*Rev. Master Jishō—50 years a monk*

We welcomed several lay trainees who stayed for several months after undergoing quarantine for two weeks. One, Zach Saghayan, received lay ordination and a bloodline certificate from Rev. Master Meian on 2<sup>nd</sup> April. We also welcomed Rev. Quang Tue, “Bright Wisdom,” a Vietnamese novice monk, who is



training with us. And in late May we hosted short visits by Rev. Master Oriana and Rev. Veronica.

We continued our calendar of festivals, including those for Samantabhadra and Manjusri (see photos), as well as Wesak in May. For the latter, 10 members of our local lay sangha joined us. It was our first experiment in opening up after the pandemic. Everyone had been vaccinated. All were delighted to see each other and spend time in one another's presence.



*Manjusri Bodhisattva*



*Samantabhadra Bodhisattva*

Other ceremonies included a spring blossoming blessing and a naming ceremony. On 17<sup>th</sup> April Rev. Master Andō and Rev. Caitlin celebrated a “Blossom Blessing” ceremony at Hunter Orchards in Grenada, CA, about 22 miles north of the Abbey (see photo).



*Hunter Orchard*

Erik and Julie Erickson, the new orchard farmers, requested the blessing; all the different owners over the years have been generous donors. The monks led the couple in procession throughout the Orchard, chanting the *Invocation of Sambo-kojin* and asperging the trees with holy water. We closed with the *Litany of the Great Compassionate One* and the following dedication:

“We offer the merit of the recitation of this Scripture for the peace, success, and safety of this family, the orchard and farm. In particular, we offer the merit of this ceremony for the benefit of, and in gratitude to these blossoming fruit trees. Just as these blossoms have come forth as a result of the goodness of the elements, the earth, and the kindness of those who work and tend this orchard, may all beings be inspired to bring forth the blossoming of their True Nature through practicing kindness of body, spirit, and mind.”

On 16<sup>th</sup> May, right before the Wesak Festival, Rev. Master Jishō, with Rev. Veronica as chaplain, celebrated a Naming ceremony for a nine-month old child, Chhatrapati, son of Aake Vaestermark and Hiromi Ichikawa. Aake had visited Throssel Hole Abbey a few times when he was a teenager. We were able to offer the short ceremony outdoors in front of a Buddha statue near the Visitors' Gate. The child's father appreciated being able to reconnect with monks of our Order.

In April we had a visit from A Cut Above, who removed a number of trees which were endangering buildings. Given their proximity to structures, several trees required the use of a crane (see photo).



*A Cut Above and crane*

*—Rev. Master Oswin*

## Lions Gate Buddhist Priory

—*Lytton, British Columbia—Canada—*

We experienced a fairly cold and snowy winter this year, and our snowplow saw much work. The propane furnace that we installed in Mandala Hall kept us warm even during the coldest weather.

We kept busy this winter with various projects: clearing underbrush along the roads and burning the wood piles, preparing and cutting firewood for next winter, as well as the various small maintenance and repair jobs that continually arise. Spring has now arrived, and we are all glad to see the new green growth, wildflowers and songbirds. Rev. Master Kōten and John painted the repaired lotus blossoms and the plinth around the large Kwan Yin statue, and the colour that we chose matches and blends in with the colour of the granite quite nicely. We have planted our vegetable garden with tomatoes, potatoes, radishes, carrots and lettuce. Our “second-year” crops of onions, parsley, and parsnips are flourishing.

We are still closed to overnight visitors. Following government guidelines, we have recently begun to welcome a few local congregation members for evening meditation and Vespers three times a week. On Sunday, May 30, three people came for our Wesak Ceremony. Chanting and singing during religious services are still prohibited, so we played a recording of Wesak hymns while circumambulating three times, each person offering incense and pouring water over the Baby Buddha.

Our bi-weekly Zoom meetings have been well-received, and we plan to continue them even after the pandemic is over. If you are not on our email list and would like to receive invitations to the Zoom meetings, please contact us.

Our new website is up and running. Here is the link: <https://lionsgatebuddhistpriory.ca/> We have been working on this for many months. Thank you to Rev. Master Leon, the Prior of

Portland Buddhist Priory, who has been indispensable in helping us with this, and also to Dharmamitra Aksentsev, who has been tirelessly transferring the old files into a new, easily searchable format. We are very grateful to Victor Stepan, who has maintained the website for over a decade.

On Sunday, January 17, we held a merit ceremony for peace in the USA following the violence and unrest in Washington, DC earlier in the month. And on Saturday, April 10, Reverend Master Aurelian gave the Buddhist Precepts in the Ceremony of Lay Ordination to Kun Wang, who lives in Calgary, Alberta. Because of the pandemic restrictions, this ceremony was done via Zoom over the internet, the second time we have done a ceremony in this way. Our congratulations to Kun for taking this important step in training.

—*Rev. Master Aurelian*

## Still Flowing Water Hermitage

—*Meadow Vista, CA–US—*

With the arrival of spring, along with the COVID vaccination, we at Still Flowing Water Hermitage and within the Bear River Meditation Group are finding new hope arising, a freshness appearing in the midst of fatigue brought on by the circumstances of the last year. We are delighted to be able to begin considering meeting together in person. On 22 May we met outdoors at the home of Sangha members for the first time since last November, this time without masks or social distancing. We have decided to return to our Monday night venue, the Applegate Community Center, on the second and fourth Mondays of June, inviting all who are vaccinated (which is almost all of us). The first and third Mondays we will continue on Zoom so that we can include those far away who have joined us since the pandemic began. We will try this for June, and then reconsider our options beyond then. Applegate does not have internet access, so we are unable to provide online and in-person events at the same time,

though we are looking into how we might be able to bring internet into the community center in the future. We are delighted to be able to finally be together safely. What joy!

We continue to be grateful for all the support offered to us in all its forms. The commitment of the Sangha to the practice of the Buddha Dharma is especially inspiring and wonderful. Thank you.

—*Rev. Vivian*

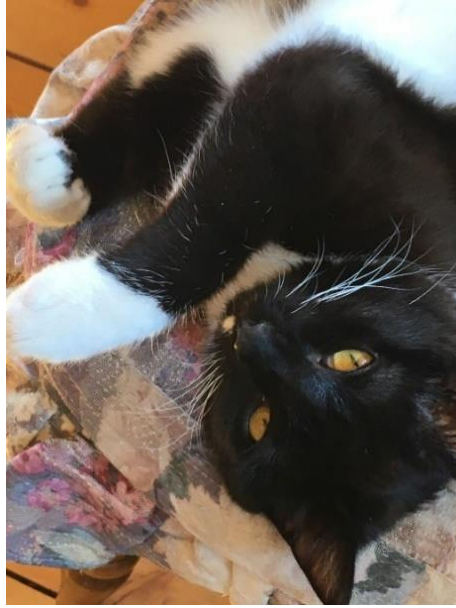
## Wallowa Buddhist Temple

—*Joseph, Oregon –USA—*

This spring has brought renewed activity, with work projects in the forest and around the temple grounds, after a late snow melt followed by quickly warming temperatures. The monks continue to stay in touch with our congregation, and an increasing number of new friends and listeners, by phone calls, emails, and letters. Each week, we send out an email with a newly recorded audio Dharma talk from Rev. Clairissa, and on Sunday mornings we offer merit for all those on our email list and merit board.

For now, the monks meet with individual visitors outdoors on the verdant grounds; meanwhile the temple remains closed for services and overnight guests. We are beginning to anticipate the possibility of welcoming retreat guests again, as we continue to monitor the situation with the pandemic.

**New Kitten:** In early spring, Rev. Meidō adopted a five-month-old kitten from our local Humane Society. We are calling her Mei Mei, which means “little sister” in Chinese. She is very loving and playful, having struggled good-naturedly with a sudden deep inner ear infection which, though treated, has left her prone to losing her balance and falling suddenly onto her left side. Mei Mei is brightening our lives and inspiring a variety of custom-made adaptive cat shelving, toys, and cardboard box mazes.



*Mei Mei*

—*Rev. Master Meidō and Rev. Clairissa*



## TEMPLES OF THE ORDER—USA / CANADA

### **Shasta Abbey**

Rev. Master Meian Elbert, Abbess  
3724 Summit Drive  
Mt. Shasta, CA 96067-9102  
Ph: (530) 926-4208 [Fax: -0428]  
shastaabbey@shastaabbey.org  
[www.shastaabbey.org](http://www.shastaabbey.org)

### **Berkeley Buddhist Priory**

Rev. Master Kinrei Bassis  
1358 Marin Ave.  
Albany, CA 94706  
Ph: (510) 528-1876 [Fax: -2139]  
prior@berkeleybuddhistpriory.org  
[www.berkeleybuddhistpriory.org](http://www.berkeleybuddhistpriory.org)

### **Columbia Zen Buddhist Priory**

Rev. Master Rokuzan Kroenke  
426 Arrowwood Road  
Columbia, SC 29210-7508  
Ph: (803)772-7552  
[www.columbiazen.org](http://www.columbiazen.org)

### **Eugene Buddhist Priory**

Rev. Master Oriana LaChance  
85415 Teague Loop  
Eugene, OR 97405-9536  
Ph: (541) 344-7377  
info@eugenebuddhistpriory.org  
[www.eugenebuddhistpriory.org](http://www.eugenebuddhistpriory.org)

### **Idaho Panhandle area and Sandpoint Meditation Group**

Rev. Master Zensho Roberson  
P. O. Box 74  
Saint Maries, ID 83861  
Ph: (208) 245-4950  
RevZenshoR@gmail.com

### **Pine Mountain Buddhist Temple**

Rev. Master Phoebe van Woerden  
941 Lockwood Valley Road  
Maricopa, CA 93252  
Ph: (805) 633 1143  
pmbt@pinemtnbuddhisttemple.org  
[www.pinemtnbuddhisttemple.org](http://www.pinemtnbuddhisttemple.org)

### **Portland Buddhist Priory**

Rev. Master Leon Kackman  
3642 SE Milwaukie Avenue  
Portland, OR 97202  
Ph: (503) 238-1123  
prior1@portlandbuddhistpriory.org  
[www.portlandbuddhistpriory.org](http://www.portlandbuddhistpriory.org)

### **Redding Zen Buddhist Priory**

Rev. Helen Cummings  
1190 South Street,  
Redding CA 96001  
[www.reddingzen.org/](http://www.reddingzen.org/)  
Ph: (530) 962-0317  
reddingzen@gmail.com

### **Still Flowing Water Hermitage**

Rev. Vivian Gruenfelder  
PO Box 1374, Meadow Vista,  
CA 95722-1374  
stillflowingwaterhermitage@gmail.com

### **Wallowa Buddhist Temple**

Rev. Master Meidō Tuttle  
62916 Hurricane Creek Road  
Joseph, OR 97846  
Ph: (541) 432-6129  
temple@wallowabuddhisttemple.org  
[www.wallowabuddhisttemple.org](http://www.wallowabuddhisttemple.org)

## CANADA

### **Lions Gate Buddhist Priory**

Rev. Master Kōten Benson  
P. O. Box 701  
Lytton, B.C. V0K 1Z0  
Ph: 250-999-3911  
lionsgatebuddhistpriory@gmail.com  
[www.lionsgatebuddhistpriory.ca](http://www.lionsgatebuddhistpriory.ca)

### **Affiliated Meditation Groups**

**CA:** Auburn, Chico, Morro Bay, Ventura

**ID:** Sandpoint

**MT:** Whitefish

### **CANADA:**

Edmonton, Alberta, Lytton BC  
Vancouver BC

## TEMPLES OF THE ORDER—EUROPE

### UK

**Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey**  
Rev. Master Leandra Robertshaw,  
Abbot  
Carrshield, HEXHAM  
Northumberland NE47 8AL  
Ph: 01434 345 204  
gd@throssel.org.uk  
[www.throssel.org.uk](http://www.throssel.org.uk)

**Dragon Bell Temple**  
Rev. Master Willard Lee  
Cross Farm  
Drewsteignton  
DEVON EX6 6PA  
Phone: 07342 200 782

**Great Ocean Dharma Refuge**  
Rev. Master Mokugen Kublicki  
Penwern  
Felindre Farchog  
CRYMYCH, Pembrokeshire  
SA41 3XF  
Ph: 01239 891 360

**Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory**  
Rev. Master Leoma Hague  
NORWICH,  
Ph: 01603 219464  
info@norwichzen.org.uk  
[www.norwichzen.org.uk](http://www.norwichzen.org.uk)

**The Place of Peace Dharma House**  
Rev. Master Myōhō Harris  
P. O. Box 207  
ABERYSTWYTH  
SY23 1WY  
Ph: 01970 625402  
[www.placeofpeacewales.org.uk](http://www.placeofpeacewales.org.uk)

**Portobello Buddhist Priory**  
Rev. Master Favian Straughan  
27 Brighton Place, Portobello  
EDINBURGH EH15 1LL  
Ph: 0131 669 9622  
favian.straughan@homecall.co.uk  
[www.portobellobuddhist.org.uk](http://www.portobellobuddhist.org.uk)

**Reading Buddhist Priory**  
Rev. Gareth Milliken  
176 Cressingham Road  
READING RG2 7LW  
Ph: 0118 986 0750  
rpriory@yahoo.co.uk  
[www.readingbuddhistpriory.org.uk](http://www.readingbuddhistpriory.org.uk)

**Rochdale Zen Retreat**  
Rev. Master Peter Bonati  
The Briars, Grange Lane  
Hutton  
PRESTON  
PR4 5JE  
Ph: 01772 612 112

**Sitting Buddha Hermitage**  
Rev. Master Alicia Rowe  
CROMFORD  
Derbyshire  
Ph: 01629 821813.  
alicia@fieldofmerit.org  
[www.sittingbuddhaermitage.fieldofmerit.org](http://www.sittingbuddhaermitage.fieldofmerit.org)

**Telford Buddhist Priory**  
49 The Rock  
TELFORD TF3 5BH  
Ph/Fax: 01952 615 574  
[www.tbpriory.org.uk](http://www.tbpriory.org.uk)

**Turning Wheel Buddhist Temple**  
Rev. Master Aiden Hall  
7 Chadderton Close  
West Knighton  
LEICESTER  
LE2 6GZ  
Ph. 0116 210 3870  
[www.turningwheel.org.uk](http://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, Nottingham, Sheffield,  
Teesside

## GERMANY

### **Dharmazuflucht Schwarzwald**

Rev. Master Fuden Nessi  
Wonnenbach 4  
77793 GUTACH  
Germany  
Ph. +49 (0)7833 - 96 56 408  
[www.dharmazuflucht.info](http://www.dharmazuflucht.info)

## LATVIA

### **Sōtō Zen Riga**

Rev. Bridin Rūšins  
Sōtō Zen Riga  
Tomsona Street 30-8  
Riga LV1013  
Latvia  
Ph: 1-215-666-5634 (direct line as if in US)  
Ph: 011-371-259-563-40. (Latvia)  
[www.sotozenriga.lv](http://www.sotozenriga.lv)  
elgarusins@gmail.com

## THE NETHERLANDS

### **De Dharmatoevlucht**

**(Dharma Refuge)**  
Rev. Master Baldwin Schreurs  
De Dharmatoevlucht  
Jean Monnetpark 73, 7336 BB  
Apeldoorn, The Netherlands  
Ph: (0031) (0)6 372 68 541  
[www.dharmatoevlucht.nl](http://www.dharmatoevlucht.nl)

### **Wolk-en-Water Hermitage**

Rev. Master Hakuun Barnhard  
Kerkeweg 81, 8484 KB Langelille  
The Netherlands.  
Ph. 0031 561 475 306  
<https://www.wolkenwater.nl/en/>

*Affiliated Meditation Groups:*

### **The Netherlands:**

Groningen, Utrecht.

*For details of meditation groups, your nearest priory, contact 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.

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

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

To subscribe to the OBC Journal newsletter for a quarterly update on when the Journal is available to download, go to: <http://journal.obcon.org/e-newsletter-sign-up>