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Remembrance Day Altar - Lions Gate Buddhist Priory

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Spiritual Adulthood

Rev. Margaret Clyde

— *Shasta Abbey, CA-USA* —

This is a transcript of a Dharma talk given at Shasta Abbey in June 2021

I'd like to welcome all of you whether you're here in person or online. It would be nice to see everyone face to face – perhaps one day...

Today I'll be talking about spiritual adulthood. The other day while walking to the meditation hall it occurred to me that, you know how children ask each other, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" – and that a six year-old would have said "I'm going to go sit alongside an active volcano and an interstate highway so I can learn to meditate and train myself for the benefit of all beings." Can you imagine anyone saying that? But some of us grew up, we met someone who showed us the Truth – in my case, Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett – and lo and behold here we are, sitting alongside a volcano, looking at a wall.

As it turned out, what I wanted to be when I grew up was a spiritual adult, and I'd like to talk today about what this means. Rev. Master Jiyu used to describe Buddhism as "a religion for spiritual adults," and I'd often wonder – with anxiety – whether I'd ever "grow up" spiritually in the way

she meant. I'd like to explore what spiritual adulthood means and how we can practice it. Notice that word, practice. Not how to have it or be it, but how to *practice* it.

So what is spiritual adulthood? Think about ordinary human adulthood. How do we recognize when someone has become an adult? There are certain signs: the person has reached their full growth; maybe they've finished their education; they're no longer dependent on Mom and Dad but provide for their own livelihood; perhaps they've even started a new family. There are milestone ages: eighteen and twenty-one, when the person has certain legal and social rights granted only to adults.

But what about spiritual adulthood - are there any signs by which we realize that a person has reached spiritual adulthood? Is spiritual adulthood a "stage of life" that once reached is permanent; or rather is it an attitude of mind that includes certain qualities of temperament and modes of conduct. I lean toward the latter view. As I see it, the emergence of this mature attitude of mind is what characterizes a person as a spiritual adult. Rev. Master Jiyu was a spiritual adult. She left home and went to Asia in search of Truth; she found what she knew to be True; she then devoted her life to sharing that Truth with others. She knew who she was and what needed to be done, and she did it.

Rev. Master Jiyu was an extraordinary human being. However, the qualities that form the attitude of mind of a spiritual adult are available to all of us. Two of the qualities of this mind are responsibility and self-reliance. I'll look at each of these with some examples and explanation.

First, responsibility: This to my mind is the primary attribute of a spiritual adult.

In Rev. Master Jiyu's words, "Buddhism teaches responsibility: you are responsible for you; you are responsible for everything you do; there is nobody who is going to take the fall for you. You have to be an adult, you have to be responsible."

The word responsible means a few things, including: "able to answer for one's conduct and obligations." Rev. Master Jiyu's teaching on spiritual adulthood in *Roar of the Tigress* centers on the importance of knowing that our actions carry consequences: helpful actions bring positive consequences or merit; harmful actions bring suffering. This is due to *karma*, the law of the universe governing moral cause and effect. The law of karma is so profound that only a Buddha can understand it completely, so don't worry if you find it puzzling. Ordinary daily life shows us how it works – take a moment and think of a time when you've done something helpful, and recall the positive feeling that came from it. Or think of a time when you acted in haste or anger, and recall the remorse you felt or may still feel.

Rev. Master Jiyu often advised us to "do your own training." Part of the meaning of this is not to worry about what other people do, but to take extraordinary care of what we ourselves do. This sounds obvious – is obvious – but just look at the news or go to a cafe for a while and observe. Can you catch yourself caught in thoughts of what the governor or president should do or what was that woman thinking when she put on that purple-and-chartreuse polka-dot shirt?

Doing your own training doesn't suggest standing by, observing from a window while someone in the street below is being mugged and not calling the police because

it's none of your business. It means that each of us is responsible for cleaning up our own mess, not that we should never offer help.

So, what to do when something isn't right. Anything – injustice, abuse, a slight from a co-worker – that strikes you as wrong. Another meaning of the word, “responsible” is the ability to choose for oneself between right and wrong. The scripture *Rules for Meditation* instructs us to “think of neither good nor evil, consider neither right nor wrong.” This means not using the judgmental mind – the mind that judges harshly – to determine right or wrong. Instead, from the stillness of the mind of meditation, we use wise discernment to know for ourselves – to be responsible for – ceasing from evil, doing only good and doing good for others. Rev. Master Jiyu taught that being a Buddhist doesn't imply being a “doormat” as she put it. When the feeling of something being wrong arises, instead of reacting we can stop for a moment and consider whether it is *good* to respond in some way; and if so, what response would be helpful. Is it in keeping with the Precepts? Does it help the situation or those involved? Will it cause suffering or remorse?

Blame is a habit of mind that doesn't contribute to spiritual adulthood. Blame is in fact an obstacle to spiritual development, as it stands in the way of seeing what we need to do about ourselves. As Rev. Master Jiyu taught, “you made the mess of you; you have to clean it up.” This isn't in any way a putdown – everyone has a mess to clean up and the ability to do it. Here's an example of blame: I have a younger brother and when we were children he knew well – in the way of younger brothers – how to tease me to the end of my tether and beyond; and, sometimes I'd react with a kick or a slap. When the consequence would

come in the form of a reprimand from Mom, I had a habitual answer: But *he made me do it!* I truly believed that *he* was the one responsible for *my anger and my action*. This is child-mind. The focus on my brother's wrong action blocked the ability to feel remorse for having hit or kicked him. The remorse we feel from doing harmful acts can serve to block future impulses to repeat them, helping us to respond rather than react in the future. When we cast blame, it obstructs our ability to feel that remorse and see what *I* need to do about *myself*.

A story from the *Dhammapada* concerning a jealous teacher and a female lay disciple illustrates the Buddha's teaching on blame:

At one time, there was a certain female lay disciple of a naked ascetic teacher named Pathika (naked asceticism was one of the practices done by ascetics at the Buddha's time). This woman began to hear her neighbors describing the wonderful teachings of the Buddha, and desired to hear him preach the Dharma herself. Repeatedly she asked Pathika, "May I go to hear the Buddha speak," and each time he replied that she was not to do it. Finally she was able to have her son invite the Buddha to their home. The son, however, reported this to Pathika. The next morning early, Patikha and the son hid in a back room of the house. The Buddha arrived in due time to receive dana (alms) and to offer teaching. When Pathika heard his female disciple praise the Buddha, he burst into the room saying "Hag, you are lost for applauding this man thus." After reviling both the Buddha and the lay disciple, he then ran off.

The lay disciple became so embarrassed by her former teacher's conduct that her mind became distracted and she

was unable to give her attention to the Buddha's teaching. The Buddha then instructed her in the following verse:

Let not one seek others' faults, things left done and
undone by them;
But consider one's own deeds done and undone.

Another translation goes:

Dwell not on the faults and shortcomings of others;
Instead seek clarity about your own.

Clearly the jealous teacher was in the wrong and yet, as the Buddha pointed out, the woman too was wrong to focus on another's misconduct, removing her attention from her own. She was reacting rather than responding.

Then there is the other main aspect of spiritual adulthood – I'd say it's a sub-heading of responsibility – is self-reliance. A point of caution here: the term “self-reliance” means reliance upon the True Self, Buddha Nature. It doesn't mean rugged individualism. It doesn't mean one can do whatever one wants without regard to consequence. Buddhists take Refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Buddha is Great Truth that permeates the Universe; Dharma is the teaching that expresses that Truth; Sangha is those who practice that Truth. In order to practice reliance on the True Self, I strongly recommend commitment to a steady meditation practice and the Precepts in order to help us hear the still, small voice of Truth.

Continuing to consider self-reliance I'd like to begin by reading a verse from Great Master Tōzan Ryōkai:

Truly I should not seek for the TRUTH from others
For then it will be far from me;
Now I am going alone,
Everywhere I am able to meet HIM.
HE is ME now,
I am not HIM;
When we understand this,
We are instantaneously with the TRUTH.¹

This verse points to the “self” that is meant in mature spiritual self-reliance. It is the True Self, True Nature, Buddha Nature, Lord of the House or whatever you choose to call it. This isn't our self-centered self or child-mind that sits at the center of the universe knowing everything and wanting things its own way.

We seek for the TRUTH from others out of ignorance – ignorance of the fact that we already have or indeed *are* what we're seeking. Instead of recognizing and expressing our True Nature, we create a duality between self and others, thinking they have something that we lack and that we can get it from them. If only I read the right book, listen to the right Dharma talk, follow the right diet... After banging our head against this wall for some time, with any luck we stop to see if there might be some other way.

HE is ME describes surrender of the selfish self to Something greater, the recognition that Something greater is in charge and the willingness to follow It. What Great

Master Dōgen has called “dropping off of body and mind.” And even while yielding the individual self-centered “me” to that Something, I am not IT. I’m still me and not me at the same time, and if that seems contradictory, remember, we can understand in the mind of meditation. As Rev. Master would say, “I am not God, and there is nothing in me that is not *of* God.” There’s no separation. And the minute I start seeking again, there’s the ‘small self’ thinking that it lacks something and that it’s in charge, and once again I have to give it up. Although this momentary surrender of the ‘small self’ isn’t a “happily ever after” finish – what is ever finished??? – it opens a door through which we can catch a glimpse of the Infinite, and each glimpse serves to bring us toward the cessation of suffering, the bliss of Nirvana.

Another aspect of self-reliance is contained in a teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha to the Kalamas. These were people who lived on a busy trade route – as we at Shasta do - which brought many religious teachers to their door, each offering their own religious views. This confused the Kalamas. Not knowing which teaching to follow, they asked the Buddha for his advice. This was his teaching to them:

Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumor; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher.' Kalamas,

when you yourselves know: 'These things are good; these things are not blameable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness,' enter on and abide in them.

And that goes back to that definition of responsibility, the ability to know for oneself what is right and what is wrong.

And those are some teachings and reflections on spiritual adulthood. May you find them helpful in your own lives.

Homage to the Buddha,
Homage to the Dharma,
Homage to the Sangha.

Notes

1. *The Denkōroku: The Record of the Transmission of the Light*, Zen Master Keizan Jōkin. Rev. Hubert Nearman O.B.C., translator. Shasta Abbey Press, 1993.

Stand Up Straight and Begin to Walk

Rev. Master Oriana LaChance

— *Eugene, Oregon—USA* —

In a recent Sunday morning Zoom gathering of the congregation, I was speaking about walking the spiritual path. I am not comfortable with the idea of a path with a goal reached at the end—what I think of as the “rainbow fallacy”—so what is this walking I am talking about? Dainin Katagiri, founder of Minnesota Zen Meditation Center, tells us that if you wish to realize the truth, all you need to do is “stand up straight and begin to walk.” In legend, Shakyamuni Buddha took seven steps immediately after he was born, lotus flowers springing up in his footsteps. One way to understand this is as an expression of the universal, or universal consciousness, and as recognition that both before and after birth, the Buddha was not separate from this vast emptiness. He was “standing up straight and beginning to walk,” offering his life with each individual step. Years later, when Shakyamuni awakens under the bodhi tree, he underlines this universal awareness saying, “I was, am and will be enlightened, together with the whole of the great earth and all its sentient beings, simultaneously.” Before your individual thoughts, feelings,

or perceptions arise, in fact, before you arise, something is already present: the particular and the universal walking together. In this way, we are both unique and universal, both alone and interwoven with all beings.

Great Master Dōgen speaks of this in the *Shōbōgenzō* fascicle, *Mountains and Waters Sutra*, saying that if you think that walking just means walking around on two feet, you don't fully understand walking. Walking is wholehearted participation in coming and going, beginning and ceasing. Walking is mind, body and heart. It is also an expression of transience, an acknowledgment of impermanence. Waters, always in motion, reflect this truth, as do mountains, which rise and fall and flow in their own way.

Dōgen expresses it like this:

The mountains lack none of their proper virtues; hence, they are constantly at rest and constantly walking. We must devote ourselves to a detailed study of this virtue of walking. ... Those outside the mountains do not sense this, do not know it. Those without eyes to see the mountains, do not sense, do not know, do not see, do not hear the reason for this. To doubt the walking of the mountains means that one does not yet know one's own walking. It is not that one does not walk but that one does not yet know, has not made clear, this walking. Those who would know their own walking must also know the walking of the blue mountains.

In his book, *The Mountains and Waters Sutra*, Shohaku Okumura writes about this: “If we really know our walking, if we know that our whole life is walking, moving, and changing, then we can see the blue mountains’ walking. Dōgen is asking us to clearly see our own selves. Then we can see the world outside of ourselves. Both are walking.”

Continuing with Dōgen:

If walking had ever rested, the Buddhas and ancestors would never have appeared; if walking were limited, the Buddhadharma would never have reached us today. Stepping forward has never ceased; stepping back has never ceased. Stepping forward does not oppose stepping back, nor does stepping back oppose stepping forward. This virtue is called, “the mountain flowing, the flowing mountain.”

Life is walking. Stepping back to Original Mind before our individual thoughts and predilections limit our view of the mountains and waters walking, and our view of our own walking, does not stand against stepping forward. Can walking back and stepping forward be one continuous movement—the Circle of the Way?

For myself, I wish to relate to this Sutra ‘without prejudice,’—that is, to walk with it as the mountains and the waters walk with it; to say, “yes,” to let the words of the Sutra carry me along, like life, like the Buddhadharma.

Recently, I received an email in which the writer describes walking a marathon while reciting Thich Nhat Hanh's, "Peace is every step. It fills the endless path with joy." The endless path—the path of Buddhist practice that leads nowhere and brings us back to 'here.' 'Endless,' not as in, "Will I ever get there?" but as in the joy of walking step-by-step in harmony with the universe that neither begins nor ceases. They go on to describe other walks and write, "The thing about all those experiences was discovering that I was walking step-by-step with others and in a sense with the vastness of the universe. It's quite humbling, also encouraging." Our puny self is not so important, and we are encouraged by this encounter of self with self.

They continue:

"A different metaphor, but somehow similar, is feeling I'm out on a vast ocean of grief. At first I felt so alone and adrift. Then there was a moment where it turned into a sea of lotuses. Now I'm still out there, but because of the Sangha and Buddhist practice, ...dear family and friends, I now have oars and even sometimes a sail! I don't know where I'm headed or whether I will ever reach another shore, but somehow it doesn't matter. Now I see the vast ocean is full of millions upon millions of other boats all out there together."

Perhaps understanding that reaching the other shore doesn't matter is reaching the other shore—out here in the

boat with oars, a sail, and sometimes even wind, and with trust that you are carried by something greater than your individual efforts. Again, the particular and the universal walking together with the mountains and the waters and all beings.

In *The Light that Shines through Infinity*¹, Katagiri says that, “standing up straight under all conditions is right acceptance.” Standing up straight and walking. You can depend on this walking, this deep acceptance of life. It allows you to reside in your thoughts and feelings and to respond to them straightforwardly, with compassion—no drama, no soap opera. The phrase “Meditate inside the life that you have” comes to mind.

In speaking about right acceptance, Katagiri goes on to say:

When wisdom becomes actualized in practice, it is called samadhi—one-pointedness. Samadhi means ‘right acceptance.’ It is to accept something, but not by discriminating from a dualistic point of view. It is to accept your life as a whole and keep walking. Whatever happens, you proceed straightforwardly and just go on with your life. So whatever you think, whatever opinion you have, let it go and let your true self proceed through itself. This is the real practice of spiritual life.

“. . . Accept your life as a whole and keep walking.” This is walking through the Buddha, through the Dharma

and the Sangha, walking through the self, walking through the mountains and the waters. No division.

Notes

1. Katagiri, Dainin. *The Light that Shines through Infinity: Zen and the Energy of Life*, (Shambhala Publications, 2017).

Dōgen quotations are from the Carl Bielefeldt translation in *The Mountains and Waters Sutra: A Practitioner's Guide to Dōgen's "Sansuikyo"* by Shohaku Okumura, Wisdom Publications, 2018.

Going Deeper into Meditation

Rev. Master Alexander Hardcastle

— *Telford Buddhist Priory, 22 June 1997* —

In remembrance of Rev. Master Alexander who died in November (see the obituary following this article) we are publishing a transcript of a Dharma talk he gave whilst he was Prior at the temple in Telford. With gratitude to Chris Hughes for transcribing it.

I thought I'd talk today a little bit about going deeper into meditation. Although we all start off with fairly comprehensive meditation instruction, it's useful from time to time to review what it is we're doing and some of the aspects of meditation that are helpful. Now we already trust that by keeping up our practice, our True Nature, which is compassion, love and wisdom, will be able to manifest itself more completely. That's in a sense part of the trust that we have when we undertake and continue our practice. And we trust that the meditation will facilitate the process of transformation which we undergo as a result of our practising of the Preceptual life. Now, that trust and that willingness to keep going is enough, because it's the basis on which we, if you like, re-establish our contact, re-establish what, on some intuitive level, we have always

known: that we are not separate from That Which Is, from the Eternal. But because meditation can sometimes, especially when one's been practising for a number of years, become a bit foggy and fuzzy as a result of what's going on, it's useful to relook from time to time at the whole process, and to look at what some of the things are that we can characterise meditation by, and I'd like to deal with four of those today. The first is alertness, the second is stillness, the third is non-engagement, and the fourth is unfolding. And the question is, how do we relate to these four things: alertness, stillness, non-engagement and unfolding?

Well, part of the reason why, when we give meditation instruction, we place great emphasis on posture is that it has an enormous effect on alertness. Poor posture, as we've probably discovered by now for ourselves from time to time, quickly leads to fatigue, and fatigue leads to drowsiness, and drowsiness leads to a loss of alertness, a loss of awareness, and that usually ends up in uninterrupted dreaming. Now dreaming is effectively what I call participation: we've totally, basically, lost the meditation, we're totally dissolved into the background stream of the mind, what's going on in the mind. Now I've called it 'participation' just for want of a better word, but it sort of describes what's really going on when we've lost totally the awareness, the alertness that needs to be present in the meditation, and we're just basically dreaming, we're daydreaming in effect. Now in a sense we don't want to participate in the background of the mind, we want to spectate. But we have to be very careful about what we mean by spectating, because any such thoughts as "I am

watching myself meditating” is spectating, and we want to avoid spectating in that sense, because if we’re participating in the sense that we’re just daydreaming, or if we’re spectating in the sense that “I am watching myself meditate” then we’ve gone too far in either direction. In effect, “I am watching myself meditate” is also participation, because we’ve lost ourselves in the self, in that which thinks that it’s watching itself, and as we know from the basic teachings of the Buddha, that which thinks it’s watching itself, that which thinks it’s doing anything, is delusive. In other words, any arising of *I*, *me* or *mine*, or anything to do with this thing which I normally think of as *me*, represents the onset of participation, the onset of losing the alertness of the meditation in the mental processes that are going on in the background. And if we don’t let go of such thoughts, then immediately we’re into participation.

Now there’s a real need for stillness: stillness which is the second of our characterisations of meditation. Because in the true stillness there is neither participation nor is there spectating. We’re not lost in our thoughts and we’re not artificially observing ourselves, because we’re not daydreaming, which carries with it the total loss of focus, the total loss of alertness, and nor is there the tension that comes where we’re holding ourselves very stiffly and thinking “I am meditating, I am doing this, I am doing that” or alternatively “I am not doing this” or “I am not meditating” This is a sense of “I am in control”, which we have to let go of. In other words, it points us to Dōgen’s “neither trying to think nor trying not to think”. And the true stillness that we’re aiming for only really comes out of the alertness that arises from balancing that point of

awareness where it's kept right in focus: we're kept totally alert and aware of what's going on, without participating or spectating.

Now the stillness grows out of this alertness only when there's non-engagement. Non-engagement is the third of our characteristics. Non-engagement, or to put it another way, letting-be: letting alone what's actually going on in the mind. We always need to be aware of the scenery of meditation, as Rev. Master Daishin calls it. The scenery of meditation is basically everything that arises in meditation: we have to be aware of it, but we mustn't engage with it, because that's how we get drawn into participation or into spectating.

Now enlightenment is not a reflection of what we know; I mean, we all start usually with some preconceived idea of what enlightenment is or what it might be, but one of the things that it is not is 'what we know', or the sum total of 'what we can know'. We need to beware of our exclusivity of viewpoint about what it is that we know. We need to be very much aware of a kind of particular view of the truth: "The truth isn't like this," or "It's like this" or "It's like that.," that's not the way it is. If you think about it, we can never know everything because we can never experience everything. Therefore our knowledge, such as comes out of our own stream of experiencing, is always partial, is always incomplete, and no matter how deeply we've gone into meditation, no matter how long we've been meditating, no matter how clever we are in a rational or intellectual sense, there's always further to go. We quite often hear the phrase "perhaps there is more... whatever it is

we know, perhaps there is more”; well, from this perspective it’s not really the case that perhaps there is more, it’s actually *certain* that there is more, because we can’t know everything, and therefore there is always more to come into our stream of awareness. In other words there is always further to go. And when there is always further to go, that means there is never an arriving, we never arrive anywhere and we can never say “that’s it, I’ve arrived, I know it all, I’ve done it, there’s no more to do”. And this is actually one of the great safeguards of our practice: because there’s no arrival we are, if you like, protected from the pride that can arise in a sense of achievement; this is delusory. And in effect, the fact that we don’t arrive somewhere, and we can’t say “that’s it, I’ve done it”, acts as a very good safeguard, it shows up the pointlessness of pride: what is there to be proud of? There is simply the going on, the putting into practice, the everyday practice, of our meditation, and our Buddhist practice, and the life of the Precepts. This is very important.

Another way of looking at non-engagement, or letting-be, in meditation, is that we don’t assert anything and we don’t deny anything. Whatever arises in our meditation, we neither assert it nor deny it, because both assertion and denial are actually aspects of duality. As it says in the scripture, “when the opposites arise, the Buddha mind is lost”; assertion and denial, in any of their forms, are the arising of the opposites, and we lose the Buddha mind. In other words, if desire has arisen, for example, in meditation, it’s pointless to try to deny it; if one is sitting in the midst of desire, there’s no point in trying to deny it, but neither do we want to engage with it. Another classic

example is that if anger arises towards somebody who we love for whatever reason, we must not try to deny that either, because that's trying to pretend that what is, is not. We have to be very still, *whatever* arises in meditation, and simply let it be there. This is where we need the correct use of the will: the will to stillness. If we gradually cultivate this will to stillness, we can allow things to be there, we can go beyond the fear of what might come up in our meditation, let it be there, just see it for what it is, and go beyond it.

Another way of looking at this is that it's the compassion of all-acceptance, the willingness to say that whatever comes up, whatever I need to look at, I will look at it, I will not be afraid to look at it. Because that's in a sense what the Eternal, what the Unborn, offers to us, that compassion, of which we are a part and not separate; that all-embracing compassion which basically sees and accepts whatever arises in meditation, and allows it to just be there, without rejection, without judgement, without trying to deny or assert, without in any sense trying to manipulate it. We have to really see what's there, absolutely as it is, without judging, so that it can be enfolded in compassion and healed. That is the process of transformation, the process of healing. To use our previous terminology, we don't spectate by seeing it as something separate; and we don't participate by indulging in it. So when greed, hate and delusion arise in our meditation, we neither keep trying to step back and separate it off and say this isn't me, nor do we indulge it in such a way that we lose ourselves in daydreaming. The kind of indulging that can happen, for example, is, if hatred for a person or anger against a

particular person keeps coming up in my meditation, and then saying: “well, I must be a nasty person, because I keep having hatred come up in my meditation”, that isn’t helpful. What we need to do is let the hatred, or the anger, or the fear, or the desire, just be there, and then see what’s truly going on. And we can only see what’s going on if we let it be there without indulgence, without participation, without separation. So we can summarise by saying that non-engagement is neither asserting nor denying, it’s the actualising of the will to stillness. We allow that which is to unfold, because it’s pointing us to something.

And this unfolding is the fourth characteristic of meditation that I spoke of – the alertness, the stillness, the non-engagement, and the unfolding - because it is precisely by allowing that which is to unfold, without trying to manipulate it, without getting lost in it, without trying to categorise it, that our meditation actually deepens of itself. That’s why we always stress it’s important to keep up a steady practice, we don’t have to go in for excesses, we don’t have to meditate for hours and hours at time, what we need to do is just keep up a steady practice, whether it’s five or ten minutes, if you can do it twice a day, that’s much better than doing long rafts of meditation once or twice during a weekend then leaving it for the rest of the week. It’s the steady allowing of that which is to unfold in our lives which actually has a transformational effect. That way the layers of delusion are gradually peeled off. Our understanding gradually encompasses more and more of the connections between what we choose to do and how we experience life, what is the quality of our experiencing of life. If you like it’s a direct looking into the Four Noble

Truths: the truth of suffering; the truth of the cause of suffering; that suffering can be ended; and the ways in which we can bring suffering to an end.

Another way of describing it is a gentle vigilance, the constant, steady, not forcing but persevering of vigilance. And that leads us naturally deeper into the Truth. We don't have to make these titanic efforts, we just have to be willing to be open, to be honest with ourselves, to keep the Precepts, and to keep steadily going at our meditation. And if we do this we gradually discover that we are in fact not bound, not shackled, by fear, or hatred, or desire, or anger. These things can arise, firstly in formal seated meditation when we offer an environment where we can let these things arise without trying to grab them, indulge them, or push them away. And then if we keep up this practice we will find that later on, we are more comfortable when these things arise in everyday situations because, as soon as we notice these things, we have been accustomed to being still, to bringing ourselves back to the centre, the mental *gasshō*, when we notice these things arising. And it's because we catch them early that we then find that we can respond, rather than react, when these kinds of things come up. When someone says something that makes us angry, we can respond because we see the anger arising, and then we don't react immediately, we can just notice that there's anger coming up, we can be still, we're much more likely then to see what's truly going on and make appropriate responses rather than reacting in an angry kind of way. And it's through this process that we discover that there's actually always a choice: we do not have to react in old ways, we always have had a choice, it's only by

perpetuating the habit of instantly reacting in a certain way, that we get into the situation where – we’ve heard the expression so often – “he made me do something”; that’s not true! It’s simply that we *chose* to react in a certain way.

Now by paying attention to these factors, these four factors which help us to remain alert, by seeking the stillness that we can find in our meditation, the stillness that lies naturally in each one of us when we can let go of the greed, hate and delusion that arises, by choosing not to engage with the scenery of meditation, all the things that keep arising in the mind, we allow the life of Buddha to unfold. We discover that we are in fact part of the life of Buddha. We can allow the compassion, love and wisdom that we actually are, to arise naturally in our lives. We can go more deeply into our true being, and explore it more deeply, because the one thing that meditation is *not* is that it’s not boring: there is so much going on if we’re only willing to sit still and be aware of what’s happening. And everything that’s happening is actually pointing us to what we need to look at, to cleanse, to purify that which we are, to transform that which we are. And eventually we can know a place which is actually beyond words, it gets increasingly difficult as we go into meditation to describe what we experience. But the point is that we find, by this process, the place of true adequacy, the place where we don’t need to be defensive, the place where we give naturally, we respond naturally to the situation in front of us. It’s a place where we know gratitude for the value of our training. It’s a place where the love which is part of our natural being can manifest spontaneously, it just gives, it’s not always looking for something in return, it is our

natural being to manifest compassion, love and wisdom. We can let go of the greed, hate and delusion that arises over the top of this, and which we can sometimes smother it with. So if we keep these four things, alertness, stillness, non-engagement, and unfolding, in our minds – not thinking about them, but bearing them in mind as we see things arise in the mind during meditation – it will help us to get the most out of our meditation, and then by practising our meditation regularly, by really having a good commitment, a clear idea in our minds what our practice is about, why we want to practice, we can take our practice in this way deeper and deeper. And that's very much a part of what being a Buddhist is about.

The Refuge and our Humanity

Rev. Master Fuden Nessi

— *Dharmazuflucht Schwarzwald, Germany* —

This article is based on an online Dharma talk to the German congregation in October 2021.

May we not let anything, past or present, get in the way of our taking refuge in Buddha within our heart.

There can be times when aspects of our inner life and of our humanity seem to convince us that this refuge is not accessible for us anymore. That we have lost our access to the Buddha-heart, or even that it was never there for us. This is a deception, an illusory perception. It is important that we counter it when it arises. It is about this I would like to speak here.

We often take our mental constructions at face value, to be solid realities without questioning them. We can observe this quite well when it comes to images that our mind projects about ourselves. These mind-images often get very solidified over time, and we tend to take

them as the definitive truth about ourselves. Many factors underlie these images that we then carry around with us. For example, remembrance of our past actions and of how we responded to particular situations in life, the feelings that certain habitual ways of thinking left in us, and so forth.

These representations that our mind keeps projecting can leave behind a certain seemingly permanent ‘flavour’ in us. In Southwestern Germany, where our temple is located, there is the expression of a ‘Gschmäcke’. This word literally means “a little taste or flavour”, but in a figurative sense it is often used to refer to a persistent little aftertaste, usually an unpleasant one, that someone’s actions leave one with. We can perceive our humanity in a similar way, as being imbued with a subtle, yet almost all-pervading negative flavour, that can then appear to us as a hindrance, preventing us from being in touch with our true nature. We tend to take this even further. Every time we look at ourselves, we do it in a judgmental way that is based on this ‘flavour’. If we keep this up, it can lead us to a very dismal inner landscape.

Of course, all the above doesn’t mean that we can just disregard what the mind reflects back to us about ourselves. These reflections can contain some very important information we really need to look at. The problem though, is when our looking is done from the position of the judgmental mind. The mind that judges, constructs a fixed reality out of everything, and our

resulting perception of things then tends to be quite distorted.

* * *

Thankfully, there is another way to approach our humanity: when aspects of it are reflected back to us, we can learn to look at them with an open heart, a heart that is non-judgmental and does not turn away from what it perceives, even if it is something quite unpleasant. This involves an unconditional “Yes” of the heart. This “Yes” is a jewel in our spiritual life, because looking at what the mind projects with this all-accepting openness tends to bring forth in us a very positive and important intention. In words, this heart-intent could be expressed as something like: “It is my deep wish to be here for whatever needs help, I am willing!” This “Yes” and the willingness are an essential prerequisite for that within ourselves which is pained to receive the help that it needs.

In the *Invocation of Achalanatha* that we recite every evening it says: “May we within the temple of our own hearts dwell, amidst the myriad mountains”. In relation to what was said so far, these mountains could represent our solid and fixed views of things and of ourselves, which can then seem to us as unsurpassable obstacles and a hindrance that keeps us from having access to our true nature. Or they can become a precious gateway into the Dharma. The “Yes” I have been referring to is a living, dynamic expression of the temple of our own heart.

So, for the gate into the Dharma to open more fully, we need to learn to look at all the facets of our humanity that we find troubling with that all-accepting heart that simply wishes to help. Our perception will then change. Our human traits that we used to find disturbing are then perceived as something much more provisional than the solid realities we took them to be. And, we perceive them as being within the precious stream of our spiritual effort, not as something we have to battle with. Above all, at times something in us recognizes that our humanity is not separate from our true nature (more on this subject later on).

Looking at our humanity with an open heart of all-acceptance is an important step for moving beyond the self. And, as we step beyond our fixed views, likes and dislikes and judgments of aspects of ourselves, our heart tends to also open more widely with empathy and understanding for others and for their suffering.

Here is an example from my own life, in the hope that it will reflect aspects of what I have been trying to explain. At some stage, I would regularly have a painful memory arise, particularly at times when inwardly I was “at the end of my tether” for one reason or another. The memory had to do with the feeling of not having been there for someone I was very close to, when they really needed help. At the time, I had often contemplated how to concretely help the person, but I couldn’t find a way to do

this. When the person then died, over and over I kept on reproaching myself. This had a great potential for creating and recreating a lingering negative self-image, on top of the deep regret.

I can remember how later on, when turning for help to Buddha in the heart with the pained feelings evoked by this memory, a turn-around would often take place. When looking with an open willingness and with an inner *Gasshō* at the memory – including my omissions – after a while this used to give rise to an upward-turned movement of the heart that left me with great gratitude for what is now and the wish to give of myself in whatever way I can.

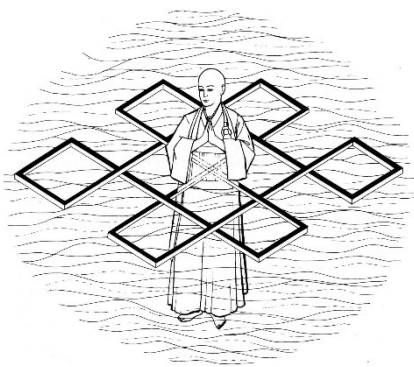
So, rather than being continuously involved with the question of whether I had done everything I could to help the dear person back then, I found there was now mainly the wish to offer the merit of my training to her. It is very important to look closely at our past mistakes and omissions, and to understand and repent of them, but then we need to move on. This reminds me of a passage in the *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra*, where Vimalakīrti tells Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva that we should repent our past wrong deeds and omissions, but avoid slipping into the past.¹

As I have already said, it seems to me that, when the full and willing “Yes” of the heart is there whenever we meet that which is still pained in us, our heart also tends to open more fully to other beings. Thus, the effort of not turning away from difficult aspects of our humanity is not

just done for our own sake – in time it opens the gate to a deeper embracing of the suffering of other beings, and to an offering of merit.

* * *

By approaching what is pained and unresolved with openness and a refuge-taking heart, in time something in us comes to recognize that, what seemed at first separate from our true nature, is not separate from it, but is embraced within it. This reminds me of a very precious teaching Reverend Master Jiyu passed on to us. In her book *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom* there is the illustration of a person (in this case a monk, but it could be anybody) standing in Gasshō in the midst of the Knot of Eternity.²



While realizing that Reverend Master Jiyu's explanation of the meaning of this chart goes much deeper than my explanations here, for me it could also relate to what I have been trying to express:

In this context, the person standing upright and in Gasshō also represents the “Yes” of the heart and our turning towards Buddha within our heart, in the middle of all the seeming uncleanness caught in the Knot of Eternity and the aspects of our humanity that appeared to us like a hindrance to orienting ourselves towards the true Refuge.

When we abide in this way inwardly, we come to realize that what previously seemed separate from the immaculate nature of existence and eternal Love – which is here depicted as the Knot of Eternity – is in reality not separate from It.

May we not exclude anything from our effort in training, may we not turn away from anything.

Notes

- [1.](#) *The Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra*, translated and edited by Charles Luk, Shambala Publications 1972, page 52.
- [2.](#) *How to Grow a Lotus Blossom*, by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, Shasta Abbey Press 1993, plate LVII.

“This I Offer ...”

Rev. Master Zenshō Roberson

— Sandpoint, Idaho – USA —

Based on a talk given to the Sandpoint Meditation Group on November 6, 2021. At the memorial for Rev. Master Jiyu that preceded this talk we recited the Sandōkai and The Most Excellent Mirror–Samādhi.

Oftentimes during a retreat, through the process of meditation and the kind of things that you’re sitting with in your kōan, there will be a teaching that comes out. What came out of a retreat that I did recently was very simple. It was the last line in the *Sandōkai* that says, “This I offer to the seeker of great Truth, do not waste time.” As I’ve been turning this over, the first thing is that it’s easy to glide past the initial part of the sentence, “This I offer to the seeker of great Truth... .” These words are quite important because they convey a sense of gentleness and kindness. The Precepts, and all of the Teaching, is an offering. Training is voluntary. There’s no implication of being forced to do it by some outside agency; it’s not a command. While the offering is kind, at the same time, “do not waste time” is clear and direct; the two balance each other. Even as the

words are understandable enough, it's important to sit with them and ask yourself, "What am I doing with the time that I have?" So it's not just knowing what the words mean, it's also digesting them, "How am I making use of the time that I have?" None of us know how long that will be.

Many of you have seen a video and a book both entitled death is but a dream. It's notable that the title is uncapitalized. The message I get: death is normal even as it is a grave event not to be ignored or avoided. This video and book are very useful. As Buddhists it's important to pay careful attention to what they're saying, and to who they are speaking to since they are not addressing a Buddhist audience, or speaking in Buddhist terms; further, they are speaking of people who are knowingly and unavoidably in the process of dying. These people are in a hospice care center so they have already had time to come to terms with the fact that their lives are ending. The nurses, social workers and doctors working with them have discovered that the majority of their patients have dreams or visions that give them peace as they are dying. The dying people say that these are a different kind of dream than they would normally have, and that these dreams are as real to them as their presence in this life. Through the video and book the caregivers are speaking to a public that is accustomed to a scientific, medical outlook that doesn't usually believe that such dreams and visions have any value. The message that they want to get across is, first, that these dreams do really help people at the time of dying, and, if their professionals will listen to them and take them

seriously, these dying people are glad to talk about their dreams and visions. The dreams not only help them, they also help those around them, including their families and caretakers.

For most of us, it's important to remember that we are probably not in the same situation where we know that we have only a few months, or a few weeks, to live. We don't know; maybe that is the case, but maybe we have twenty, thirty, or more years. It certainly doesn't hurt to be aware that we don't know how long we have; at the same time you can go too far in dwelling on death and constantly fearing that it's right around the corner. It's much more important to simply get on with living your life, your practice.

Another thing to keep in mind is that the kind of dreams that most of these people relate are of family members or friends who have died—in one case, a young girl met her dog who had recently died—and these people and animals come to greet them, to assure them that they need not fear. The sense is that death is a change, that it's ok, and that there is that which goes on. For sure, there is nothing wrong with this. From a Buddhist point of view, experience of meeting family who have died may point to rebirth in a positive realm of existence that is not necessarily a matter of going fully to the Unborn, as our Exhortations for the Dying show that we can do. So, in that regard, there may be a difference between what a good person who has little religious training may experience and

what a person with a regular practice, and perhaps some religious experience, may find. But I don't want to lessen the value of what this video and book show. The brightness of these people in their last weeks is clearly evident, almost beyond what the caregivers and film makers talk about, and it's a grounded brightness that these dying people gladly share. It's clear that some of them have serious issues to sort out before they die; in coming to terms with that, some of their dreams are initially nightmarish, and ultimately valuable. For those who meditate, or who have a daily religious practice, there may be an opportunity to go deeper than what this film focuses on. And for those of us who are not aware of being on the brink, it's important to keep in mind that we don't need to wait until we are dying to clean up our lives, find the Unborn and know this brightness.

When Sekitō says, “This I offer to the seeker of great Truth,” he's speaking to each of us. In a way, he's speaking to everyone. At heart, every living thing wants to know what is True, even if they're not aware of it, and even if it may not be the first thing on their list. So he's making an offering, “do not waste time,” make the effort to pay attention to where you are now, don't let your life go by unnoticed. The whole *Sandōkai* is about the senses and learning how to be still within them without chasing after this, or avoiding that. That's how we find the Unborn here. As it says in *The Most Excellent Mirror-Samādhi*, “A baby of this world is such as this, possessing all his five sense organs, yet goes not and neither comes, neither arises nor yet stays, has words and yet no words.” We can find that

uncomplicated outlook of a child and live from that center day to day. That's what it means not to waste time.

Take your practice seriously. I encourage you to reflect on your training and see how you are using your time. Each of us can ask ourselves this question looking in the mirror of meditation.

Finally, remember Rev. Master Jiyu today, she is the founder of our Order and of our meditation group. This is the twenty-fifth anniversary of her PariNirvana. She did go completely to the Unborn when she died. And we can do that also. That's what the Exhortations are about, going completely, wholeheartedly.

Notes

The video is *death is but a dream: a film* by J. J. Sicotte and Monica De La Torre, Lights Film LLC, 2021. The book *death is but a dream: Finding Hope and Meaning at Life's End* by Christopher Kerr, MD, PhD with Carine Mardorossian, PhD, 2020. www.deathisbutadream.com.

Sange – Recognising Our Mistakes and Learning From Them

Rev. Master Berwyn Watson

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

This is a transcript of a lecture given at the Jukai retreat at Throssel in September 2021 when, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the usual Sange Ceremony did not take place.

Already during this retreat, at each ceremony, we have all said a verse:

“All wrong actions, behaviour and karma, perpetrated by me from time immemorial, have been, and are, caused by greed, anger and delusion which have no beginning, born of my body, mouth and will; I now make full and open confession thereof.”

It refers to an aspect of practice often called ‘Sange’. The term Sange is untranslatable. In Japanese it has the connotations of revelation, patience and forbearance and also forgiveness and purification.

‘San’ means regret, and ‘ge’ means ‘resolve’. So it can be called ‘contrition and conversion’. They go together, there is no point in just wallowing in the mistakes of the past, we need to learn from them and use them to increase our resolve and understanding. In Dōgen’s *Shushōgi*, it is also called a gateway of liberation.

What I’d like to do here is put Sange in some sort of context, place it in a kind of roadmap of training. Each person will have their own way, but there are similarities we all share, and it allows us to learn from each other. Although this is based on my experience, I hope it will be useful.

Dōgen’s *Shushōgi*, starts with a section called ‘The reason for training’:

The most important question for all Buddhists is how to understand birth and death completely for then, should you be able to find the Buddha within birth and death, they both vanish. All you have to do is realise that birth and death, as such, should not be avoided and they will cease to exist for then, if you can understand that birth and death are Nirvana itself, there is not only no necessity to avoid them but also nothing to search for that is called Nirvana.

Later, Dōgen talks about how our experience of impermanence pushes us to consider the importance of birth and death:

Life, which is controlled by time, never ceases even for an instant; youth vanishes forever once it is gone: it is impossible to bring back the past when one suddenly comes face to face with impermanence and it is impossible to look for assistance from kings, statesmen, relatives, servants, wife or children, let alone wealth and treasure. The kingdom of death must be entered by oneself alone with nothing for company but our own good and bad karma.

As a young man I came to training after going through a period of desperately searching for meaning. I worried about everything, but there were very few jobs after I left University and I was unemployed for a year, which gave me time to reflect on things.

All of us search for some kind of truth which is not subject to the changing fortunes of life and fashions. As Dōgen puts it, “It would be criminal to waste the opportunity [of a human life] by leaving this weak life of ours exposed to impermanence through lack of faith and commitment.”

This is the mind that seeks the way, and is naturally pure. This truth we seek can be given many names: peace or stillness for example, Rev. Master Jiyu called it ‘the still small voice’. I only became more aware of it when I came to Throssel on retreat.

What I noticed about the monks at Throssel was that they were not afraid to say that we all have ‘Buddha nature’. They affirmed that all of us have our own spiritual compass, and the particular words for this – like Buddha nature, Lord of the House – were less important to me than the great relief that there was something I could rely upon – a True Refuge. I felt I was in touch with something much deeper, that did not depend on my fickle emotions and thoughts.

And, it is important to trust your own perceptions of what this ‘spiritual compass’ is – you do not have to use the words of others: for some it is gut sense of what is right, for others it is more like listening to a voice; none of these is better than another.

What is common to all of these experiences though, is a sense of limitless compassion and trust. It is a bit like finding a friend that will never judge you. And just as Kanzeon does not judge us for making mistakes, our spiritual compass will always point us away from blaming others or ourselves, and just prompt us to do what we can.

Also, we need to understand that the Refuge will never ask us to break the Precepts. As Rev. Master Jiyu puts it in a very important footnote to her commentary on the *Kyōjukaimon* in the booklet *Serene Reflection Meditation*, when we ‘ask’ “What is it good to do?” we must also carefully consider the consequences of our actions and especially consult and ask for the advice of the Sangha.

Once I had the sense of finding a Refuge, I also realised I needed to work on myself. This is where Sange comes into it.

The version of the *Kyōjukaimon* that I bought in the 1980s had an introduction that said:

“We are, in fact, taking the Precepts simply by the act of looking honestly at ourselves and deciding wholeheartedly to do better. For this is the decision to truly listen to and follow the teaching of our True Nature.”

If I was to summarise ‘Sange’ in one sentence, it would be this: “the act of looking honestly at ourselves and deciding wholeheartedly to do better.” Although words like repentance and confession sometimes get used in translations, there is actually no need to add concepts such as guilt and repentance to the mix. Having realised there is a true Refuge, we also see how we may have ignored this in the past and it’s natural to feel some regret at this time. But this regret is founded on an affirmation and commitment, and I believe this is why at Jukai, when we have been able to do all the ceremonial, the Sange ceremony follows Ordination.

The point is that looking honestly at ourselves comes from a recognition of our true wish, a place of sufficiency rather than doubt or guilt. If we woke up one morning and, looking out of the window, realised that everything had

been given to us, the sky, trees, mountains and rivers, even the carpets and chairs in the room – that we were and had never been separate from ‘this’ – we may naturally feel foolish and regret that we had never noticed this great gift of existence before.

In many parables such as those in the *Lotus Sūtra* there are instances where someone has been working very hard all their lives and suddenly finds with joy, that they already have a great treasure. In one parable a man goes through great difficulties in life, having to take the most menial jobs, but then meets a friend who admonishes him, saying that when they last met, the friend had sewn a priceless jewel in the sleeves of his jacket. He had wealth all the time without realising it. Sange is based on a realisation of our deep potential and a sense of gratitude for the treasure we have been given. We do not wish to waste “the exceptional gift of a human body”, as Dōgen puts it.

In the second section of *Shushōgi*: “Freedom is gained by the recognition of our past wrongdoing and contrition therefor”, Dōgen talks of the way to make an act of contrition – encouraging us to say:

“May all the Buddha and Ancestors, who have become enlightened, have compassion upon us, free us from the obstacle of suffering which we have inherited from our past existence and lead us in such a way that we may share the merit that fills the universe. For they, in the past, were as we are now, and we will be as they in the future.”

Another way of expressing this would be to say: to free ourselves from the obstacles of suffering, we need to cease from making clouds in a clear sky. Something knows of the nature of the clear sky, we have something of the aspiration of the Buddhas and Ancestors already. This is reflected in Rev. Master Jiyu's commentary on the Precept 'Do not be angry':

“Just there is that going on which causes us to see unclearly; but if we truly look, if we look with care, we will see that the true and beautiful sky is shining behind the clouds.”

Part of the natural sadness I sometimes feel about past actions is that much (perhaps all) of the suffering I created in the past was not necessary. The truth was actually there in the past, but for whatever reason I wasn't able to see it clearly enough. But this sense of sadness is not the same as guilt. Guilt is the further creation of unnecessary suffering. It is more like a mental recycling of past mistakes – rather than blaming others, I blame myself: the point is to cease from blaming altogether.

Although we have not been able to do the Sange procession this year, the teaching of Sange is something we can still learn from. And we hope to be able to do this at future Jukai retreats. Do not feel that you are missing something essential. The ceremonies reflect something that is already going on within us – the real Sange is internal and comes upon us naturally at different times.

In the procession we first go to the shrine where Kanzeon gives us the piece of paper with the confession verse on it. This reads:

“All wrong actions, behaviour and karma, perpetrated by me from time immemorial, have been and are, caused by greed, anger and delusion which have no beginning, born of my body, mouth and will; I now make full and open confession thereof.”

This is the same as the verse we said at the Reading of the Precepts and at Ordination, so Sange is always included in the process of taking the next step forward. We are willing to see that we've made mistakes and take responsibility for them. We have to receive the paper from the celebrant.

We next go to the shrine of Samantabhadra who represents the activity of love, patience and forbearance: i.e. we have to offer our mistakes and move on. Samantabhadra receives the slip we offer. The slip of paper is later burned in a cauldron by the three celebrants who say:

“Now, by the guidance of the Buddhas and Ancestors, you have discarded and purified all your karma of body, mouth and will and have obtained great immaculacy. This is by the power of confession.”

This is not destroying our mistakes; fire represents the immaculacy of emptiness, ‘non substantial liberated existence’ as Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett called it. There is no self in our mistakes, they were only caused by beginningless confusion, and in recognising this we can acknowledge they always were immaculate.

The basis of Sange is compassion and acceptance – there is no judgement. Blame, or trying to find who or what caused suffering is an unnecessary indulgence. As the confession verse says there is just "beginningless greed, hate and delusion", it is not originally caused by anything or anyone, but we just take on the responsibility for dealing with it when we see it.

Rev. Master Jiyu in her commentary says: “By accident someone made the course of karma; it is not intentionally set in motion.” Rev. Master Daizui – the former head of the Order – spoke of going for a walk in the woods and seeing someone had left some trash lying around. If you have a bag with you, you can just pick up the cans and paper and bring them back to put in the recycling: it doesn't matter who left the trash out there, there is no point in grumbling about the sort of people that left it there. You see it so you deal with it.

This brings me to the section following the confession verse:

“By this act of recognition of our past behaviour and our contrition therefor, we open the way for the

Buddhas and Ancestors to help us naturally. Bearing this in mind, we should sit up straight in the presence of the Buddha, and repeat the above act of contrition, thereby cutting the roots of our evil doing.”

It is by sitting up straight in the presence of the Buddha, that we see clearly and are able to let go and move on. Sitting up straight in zazen is not just the posture, but points to the straightforward mind, that does not veer left or right.

We do not get stuck in existence or non-existence, praise or blame, right or wrong. There is just the direct seeing and acknowledgement: “Yes, I did this and it was unnecessary, and having seen, I don't need to do it again.”

In sitting up straight, there is also the sense that this is not so much about 'me and my mistakes'. Yes, we look inwards, but once we are willing to just pick up the rubbish and deal with it, questions of “Is it my rubbish, or someone else's?” are not so relevant. It is just dealing with what is there.

So, we just keep sitting up straight in the presence of the Buddha. Being willing to look at ourselves with this sort of clarity is already an expression of confidence in our true nature; we can follow that; there is something we can trust.

We don't need to worry about the details of our life. We have the confidence to face things as they arise. We are willing to sit up straight in the presence of the Buddha, and

that is all we need to do, moment by moment. This is expressed in the *Kyōjukaimon*, the reading of the Precepts:

"The Great Precepts of the Buddhas are kept carefully by the Buddhas. Buddhas give them to Buddhas, Ancestors give them to Ancestors. The Transmission of the Precepts is beyond the three existences of past, present and future; enlightenment ranges from time eternal and is even now."

We have aspiration, the wish to train, to do something about ourselves, which is expressed in the *Shushōgi*: "They in the past were as we are now and we will be as they in the future." Even though we may naturally feel ashamed of some things we have done in the past, that is no excuse to get bogged down because "Enlightenment ranges from time eternal and is even now."

In each step of the path we can also sense a completeness, a rightness, and there are still steps to take. There is something that can be trusted – something that you already have. This becomes clearer when we sit up straight in the presence of the Buddha and are willing to be straightforward with ourselves, and straightforward with others.

Obituary

Hōun Alexander

1 September 1943 — 5 November 2021

Rev. Alexander was born Geoffrey Hardcastle in Ryde on the Isle of Wight, off the south coast of England. He had a keen interest in science when young which developed into a career, ultimately leading to him working in the then growing world of computer technology. This included at one point his being European technical support manager for International Computers Limited based in Bracknell, Berkshire.

He entered the postulancy at Throssel in 1987 and was ordained the following year at the age of forty-five by Rev. Master Daishin Morgan. He became a familiar and welcoming presence in the guest department in his novice years, and later helped the bookshop to flourish, aided by his great fondness for reading.

He was also a skilled woodworker, and created several fine pieces for the temple's ceremonial furniture.

He was appointed chief priest at the newly-established Telford Buddhist Priory in 1997, a few months after which he was sadly diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease which resulted in his having to retire from prior's duties early in 2000 when the progression of the illness affected his ability to fulfil the role.

He returned to Throssel and served for many years as the temple librarian and archivist. His condition meant he needed more support over the years. Monks have fond memories of going for walks with him, and sharing afternoon teas and evening meals together in a room specially adapted for his use. He was named a master of the Order in 2001.

Rev. Alexander had two children, Rob and Debbie, and four grandchildren, all but one of whom attended the burial of ashes ceremony, along with his sister and ex-wife.

The celebrant Rev. Berwyn gave the following dedication at his funeral:

“Dear friend, you taught us a lot over the years:
Your bodhisattva wish taking you to Telford
Facing Parkinson’s, you soldiered on
A smile breaking out amidst the many
Pains and humiliations of living.
Even though it was never easy,
Something shone through regardless:
In the hospital waiting rooms
In the care home
Buddha could be found
This very life and death as the Buddha’s own life.”



News of the Order

UK and Europe

Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey

— *Northumberland, England–UK* —

In late October we learned that Rev. Alexander was probably dying, so in the following week we arranged for multiple visits from monks to sit with him in the care home near Hexham where he had lived for just over two years. He died on November 2nd, and a funeral was planned for the 25th. Members of his family viewed the webcast of the cremation and also came to Throssel for the interment of his ashes on 1st December.

Rev. Master Saidō from Telford Priory and Rev. Master Alicia from Sitting Buddha Hermitage made the journey to Throssel for the funeral, and dozens of monks, lay trainees and family members joined via video link.

After the funeral, the celebrant Rev. Berwyn thanked everyone present for their support, and gave a particular message of appreciation to the staff of the care home, two of whom attended.



On the day following the funeral, a fierce winter storm (Arwen) struck our part of northern England and damaged the power infrastructure such that we had no electricity for a full week. Fortunately our gas stoves continued to work well so we were able to cook and boil water, but we had no heating, and only candle and torch lights until the third day when a generator was bought which supplied some heating and lighting to the Hall of Pure Offerings.

The four-day retreat scheduled for the first weekend in December sadly had to be cancelled. The electricity, and our internet connection, was finally fully restored on the tenth day, bringing considerable relief as well as a very welcome resumption of our central heating.

We were lucky in that no structural damage to our buildings occurred, though one spruce tree near our entrance gate was snapped in two - fortunately when no-one was nearby.



We were pleased to be able to hold several retreats in the Autumn, including Jukai at which three trainees received lay ordination, and Segaki in October which was led by Rev. Master Leandra and Rev. Wilfrid.

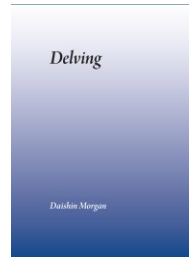
In October Rev. Kanshin received Dharma Transmission from Rev. Master Daishin at the Hermitage in Wales. We



congratulate Rev. Kanshin on making the continued commitment to training which the Transmission ceremonies represent.

Some of our affiliated meditation groups have resumed holding retreats since Covid restrictions were eased earlier in the year, and monks were able to join them for events in Bath & Cirencester, Jersey, Lancaster, Leeds and Sheffield. It was good to renew these connections and train together after so long.

Our former abbot Rev. Master Daishin has published his third book. Titled *Delving*, it follows on from his teaching in *Sitting Buddha: Zen Meditation for Everyone*, and *Buddha Recognises Buddha*. It is available to visitors at Throssel's Bookshop, or via online ordering c/o lulu.com. Full details can be found [on Throssel's website](#).



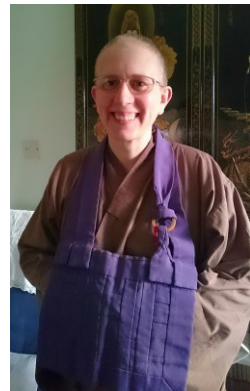
— Rev. Master Roland

Great Ocean Dharma Refuge

— Pembrokeshire–Wales —

In mid-September it was a joy to have Reverend Caitlin return from her extended stay at Shasta Abbey and we thank all those who assisted Reverend Caitlin with her travels and helped make her time there a fruitful success.

In late September Reverend Master Mokugen was able to visit the community at Throssel, and extends thanks to all those who helped with the logistics of the



journey and made her visit welcoming and fruitful. She was particularly thankful to have been able to visit Reverend Master Alexander in his care home, and to be able to meditate and be with him for a short while just days before his passing away. We remember Reverend Master Alexander with great fondness and gratitude for his example in training, and for his great fortitude and heartwarming smile.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to congregation member Beth Barry whose dear husband Nick passed away in September, and have dedicated our regular prayers, meditations and ceremonial to her and all the family. Nick's gentle hearted kindness is remembered with gratitude by us all.

We also extend our sympathy and prayers to the family and friends of Ian Pearson who passed away in October. Ian has been a friend of Great Ocean and a long time trainee within the OBC over many years. We treasure a wooden bowl which Ian had skillfully made and offered on his last visit here, and remember with fondness and gratitude his bright heart and generosity

The Autumn brings a quieter time to West Wales and the Temple, and the life of the Dharma continues here with ongoing opportunities for teaching, quiet retreat and joining in with the temple's daily schedule. We welcome you to please contact us by phone or writing for current opportunities.

— *Rev. Master Mokugen*

Norwich Zen Buddhist Priory

— *Norfolk—UK* —

Lay Ordination: The Priory Sangha came together on 22nd August for the lay ordination of Roberto Molero. It was a lovely occasion, attended by a few people in person and by several online, from as far afield as Brazil and Spain. Whenever

somebody takes the Precepts and commits themselves to living the life of Buddha, it is always a special event. Not only is it a joy to see another person formally becoming a Buddhist, but it is also an opportunity for all of us at the ceremony to reaffirm our commitment to base our lives in zazen and the Precepts. This occasion seemed especially significant as it was the first major ceremony in our new Priory since coronavirus restrictions were lifted. We congratulate Roberto and wish him well as his path of training unfolds.



Priory Blessing Ceremony: On 7th November, the Priory celebrated its eighth anniversary. We used the occasion to do a blessing ceremony for our new property, now that we have settled into what we hope will be our spiritual home for years to come. The occasion saw several people coming along in person and many more joining online. The sun even shone as we chanted during the ceremony, enhancing what was a joyous expression of our gratitude for the Priory and its Sangha, which provide an exceptional opportunity for our training to flourish.

At the start of the ceremony, there was an offering at the Founder's shrine to express our gratitude to Rev. Master Jiyu - the 25th anniversary of her death had been the previous day. Then the wish was made that we would all use this precious gift of a Priory to meditate and practise to the best of our ability, so that we and all beings might come to know the Truth. The Priory was given the name The Place of the Blossoming Lotus and the bloodline certificate was secured in place above the front door. Then there was a procession around all the rooms of the Priory, accompanied by chanting. Incense was offered, the smoke of which could permeate not only into every corner, but also into all the cupboards and drawers, which were opened for the ceremony.



Afterwards, there was coffee and a vegan chocolate cake to accompany an excellent Dharma discussion, which centred around the “desert island teachings” (i.e. the one teaching that we would take with us to a desert island) that several Sangha members had offered.

This was an uplifting coming together of the Sangha to mark a significant milestone in the unfolding life of this Priory.

A big thank you to everybody who helped to have the Priory clean and ready for its big day, as well as to those who ensured that the occasion proceeded smoothly.

Work on the Priory: Ongoing repairs and maintenance jobs continue to be carried out on the Priory, as well as various projects to enhance the house and make it safer and more user-friendly, such as installing outside lights and a hand-rail by the front steps. The garden group continues to be active on Tuesday afternoons and they are currently tackling the ongoing accumulation of leaves that are falling from the three large trees on our property.

Another area where big improvements have been seen recently is with the set-up for the online aspect of our meetings. This process is now much more streamlined and largely wireless, so that the common room is no longer festooned with cables.

Attending meetings at the Priory: We continue to experiment with different options to try to keep people safe from infection when they are at the Priory. If there are more than six people here, we hold the tea and discussion in the meditation room and its extension, rather than the common room. We can easily move the screens that usually demarcate the meditation room area and this provides us with a large space that can be well-ventilated. In addition, we have sometimes worn face-masks, especially when we are chanting. It is lovely to have people visiting in person, but anybody who feels uncomfortable being part of a group indoors has the option to join any of our meetings online.

Thanks: As always, thank you to everybody who supports the Priory, whether financially, practically (by helping with cleaning, maintenance, accounts etc), or by attending events. I am especially grateful for the opportunities that I had recently for some rest and retreat time in Blakeney and in Wells-next-the-Sea.

— *Rev. Master Leoma*

The Place of Peace Dharma House

— *Abersytwyth, Wales* —

On the 6th November we celebrated Founder's Day, with Sangha from the UK and Australia joining in via Zoom. It was exactly 25 years to the day since Reverend Master Jiyu died, and we offered gratitude for her life, her teaching and for having had the opportunity to train with her. We honoured both her human transient life, and the eternal life that sang so clearly through that human form.

The day before, the temple was cleaned from top to bottom, and a meditation vigil was held in the evening.



Founder's Day Altar at The Place of Peace

Remembrance Day: We joined the rest of the country in making offerings for all those who died during times of war, and stood in silent contemplation during the two-minute silence.

On the traditional day of December 8th we celebrated Buddha's Enlightenment. Once again, Sangha in Australia were able to join the UK congregation, and took part via Zoom. Afterwards, Rev. Master Myōhō offered a talk on how it is not just a 'one-off' experience that we celebrate, but how that is part of the continuum that is a lifetime of training.

Changes have been made in our Meditation Hall. By moving the main altar to the other side of the room, we have been able to erect side altars for Achalanatha and Avalokiteshwara. The new arrangement makes the room seem bigger, and having focal points for these two Bodhisattvas, and all that they represent, is welcomed.

In October the hedges were cut back for winter and a number of outside maintenance jobs were finished, making us ready to settle down for winter.

Regular Zoom meetings continue to be held, with Dharma talks and ceremonies. Please let Rev. Master Myōhō know if you would like to take part.

— *Rev. Master Myōhō*

Reading Buddhist Priory

— *Reading, England-UK* —

Although Covid restrictions have been lifted in England for several months now, the Priory has retained the integration of in-person and online attendance at Calendar and additional events (such as mentioned below), since this has proved both popular and effective for the delivery of the Dharma and of practice.

Ceremonies and Festivals: In early September, a Naming ceremony was held for Verity, Danielle's and sangha member Jafer's daughter, and she was given a Buddhist name. It was a particularly joyous occasion, having been a long time in the coming, due to Covid lockdowns and restrictions. It was a sunny, warm day, and we were able, after the ceremony, to extend into the garden for celebratory drinks and cake.

In early November, the Founders' Festival was celebrated, incorporating the 25th Anniversary of Reverend Master Jiyu-Kennett's death in 1996.

Retreats and Classes: As another lifting-of-restrictions 'first', in October a day retreat took place, both in person and online, and it was good to be back practising within the round of meditations, Dharma talk, shared lunch, and afternoon tea and questions.

Reverend Gareth began monthly classes in the essentials of Buddhism, primarily for those new to practice, and who would like to understand more about Buddhist thought and first principles.

Work Days: Fine weather continued throughout autumn, enabling an outdoors Working Party Day to be held mid-October. It was well attended and a lot of work was done towards getting the garden ready for winter. Spring and summer bulbs were planted, beds cleared and bushes cut back. A Bring and Share lunch was enjoyed.

Visits: Reverend Gareth resumed visiting local schools in mid-November, when he was invited to talk to a local primary school's Year 6 (ten to eleven year-old) students. He talked about what he did, and about the Priory, as well as telling the story of aspects of the Buddha's life. Reverend Gareth reported back that this was followed by a lively and interesting question and answer session.

— *Gina Bovan*

Telford Buddhist Priory

— *Telford, Shropshire-UK* —

After over a year of online meetings, August saw the return of face to face meditation and ceremonies, at Telford Buddhist Priory. In order to remain as safe as possible and maintain social distancing, within the priory building, several measures were implemented. Good ventilation has been maintained, Rev. Saidō invested in a meter to measure the carbon dioxide levels in the meditation hall, and people are asked to wear a mask.

Numbers of face to face attendees are limited to six and a booking system is in operation through the Priory website, courtesy of the technical skills of one of our congregation members. The option of online attendance has also continued, as this has proved both popular and practical, especially for those who find physical attendance difficult.

During the lockdown, I was one of two lay ministers who presented at online ceremonies. Whilst I was willing to make this offering to help keep the congregation together and connected, the experience of only being able to hear one's own voice was not a very comfortable one for me. Returning to being part of a group of voices, in the same room, has been a joy and I realise how much I appreciate the physical presence of others, in my training.

Amongst the recent festivals celebrated has been Segaki, the Festival for the Founder, and The Festival of the Buddha's Enlightenment, after which congregation members were treated to some great meals, including dauphinoise potatoes, with gourmet mushy peas and black peas and salad, with peanut butter dressing and apple crumble to follow. Thank you to all those who cooked and contributed such lovely food.

In other news: one of the bay windows in the meditation hall has been replaced with a French window, which has made

the space much brighter. The downstairs windows and back door have been replaced so all the Priory windows are now triply glazed.

Finally, Rev. Saidō gave an online presentation to Year 5, from Ellesmere School. This included a virtual tour of the Priory, a talk on the Four Noble Truths and a question and answer session. Ellesmere School's emblem is a swan and the students were very interested to learn the story of the Buddha and the swan.

— *Karen Richards*

Dharmazuflucht Schwarzwald

— *Gutach (Black Forest) – Germany* —

Segaki: We held our week-long Segaki retreat in the last week of October. Three of our congregation members participated in it, and three more joined us for the actual ceremony on the 29th October.



On the day after the ceremony, the annual general meeting of the charitable organization that supports the temple was held. It has now been in place for over 20 years.

Lay Ordination: On November 6th, Joachim Feigl received Lay Ordination and was given the Precepts at our temple. We came to know Joachim some years back, when he included us in a photo exhibition and a book he published on priests from different religious traditions in Southern Germany. He has been coming regularly to the temple since then and is now a member of our congregation. Warmest congratulations to Joachim!



Weekly memorials: In October, lay minister Irene Mueller-Harvey's mother passed away. For the following 49 days, we have been holding weekly memorials for her, with Irene and her husband Hugh participating in the ceremonies. We are very pleased that Irene and Hugh now live only about 45 minutes away from the temple.

Memorial for Reverend Master Jiyu: The day after the Lay Ordination we held a memorial ceremony to commemorate the passing of Reverend Master Jiyu 25 years ago, in deepest gratitude for her life and all that she passed on to us.



The situation with Corona: Over the last few months, congregation members came regularly on retreat to the temple. At the moment, the numbers of infections with Covid-19 are unfortunately rising again in quite an alarming way in Germany. Retreats are still scheduled for the coming months – including our annual New Year retreat – and we very much hope that it will be possible to hold these retreats. Once a month we still hold a Zoom Dharma-meeting with those in our congregation who wish to participate in it, and in addition, lay ministers Ute and Irene are still offering a weekly online meditation evening.

— *Rev. Master Fuden*

News of the Order

USA & Canada

Shasta Abbey

— Mount Shasta, CA—USA —

Lay Ordinations. On 13th October Rev. Master Daishin gave Nancine McDonald and Ryan Melanson the Precepts. Both Nancine and Ryan were lay residents with previous experience of Buddhist practice. Congratulations to them both.



Passing of Zady Dog. The Abbey's German Shepherd Zady passed away during the night of Friday, 5th November. Rev. Enya was with her and took her remains to Compassionate Friend Hermitage for burial. Zady was a rescue dog and came a long way in socializing with humans during her many years at the monastery. We will miss her.



Rev. Master Jiyu's 25th Anniversary Memorial. On 7th November we celebrated the 25th anniversary of Rev. Master Jiyu's passing. A group of Vietnamese Buddhists joined us for the ceremony, having arrived the previous day bringing a new statue for the monastery, along with offerings of food, health & hygiene supplies, and treats for Sunday's tea. Rev. Master Scholastica offered the Dharma talk on "Remembering Rev. Master Jiyu."



Memorial for Miriam McLean. Rebecca Wade, a long-time Seattle group member and friend of Miriam's, brought Miriam's ashes on 11th November for enshrining in the Buddha Hall during a memorial the next day. Miriam was a lay minister and hosted the Seattle Meditation Group for many years.

— *Rev. Master Oswin*

Redding Zen Buddhist Priory

— *Redding, CA-USA* —

As the season changed and the welcomed rains came, Redding Zen Buddhist Priory continued to offer on-line ceremonies and opportunities for teachings and Dharma discussions, as well as introductory meditation instruction for those new to our practice.

Rev. Helen was invited to give a presentation at the Redding Center for Spiritual Living on the topic of "What to Do When the Road Gets Rocky". She pointed out to the masked and socially-distanced congregation that Buddha tells us that the road IS rocky and that he gives us teaching and tools to deal with the rocks in the road, including the Buddha's teaching of the Two Arrows.

Rev. Helen meets once a month with a group of practitioners in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada who, in turn regularly attend Priory Zoom meetings and ceremonies. On December 5, 2021 Rev. Helen gave the Precepts to Mary Evin Ludwig of Kaministiquia and Gary William Bellinger of Thunder Bay via Zoom. Congratulations to both Mary and Gary as they take this significant step in their training.

— *Rev. Helen*

Wallowa Buddhist Temple

— *Joseph, Oregon –USA—*

Temperate fall weather made it possible to devote time to several projects around the grounds this past autumn. In addition to the usual seasonal work, such as processing firewood and raking up fallen pine needles, we have concentrated on several other forest projects. The photo below shows Erica and Rev. Meidō clearing pine needles away from the guest house.



Work continues to improve wildfire resistance by limbing up trees, as well as removing “ladder” fuel and dead wood. We are also fencing in areas to encourage aspen groves to grow without the stress of being browsed down by deer. It has been a joy to work together with a number of regular volunteers from the local congregation and community, several of whom have joined us weekly, one-by-one.

New Mural: In late October, a new mural was installed on the exterior south wall of the temple’s meditation hall. Muralist John Michener created the 11-foot by 4-foot artwork on fine quality plywood in his home studio in nearby Enterprise, sealed

it for all seasons, then transported it in three sections and installed it for us.



The images and colors were arrived at over the course of several collaborative meetings with the artist. The mural (seen above) shows red plum branches in blossom on a backdrop of mountain pine forest and lake with full moon. We look forward to holding future outdoor events at our hillside ceremony grounds with this lovely background in place.

Outdoor Segaki and Open Altar: The new mural was installed just in time to feature prominently behind this year's open air altar for our yearly festival ceremony for Feeding the Hungry Ghosts on October 31st. Names for remembrance during the ceremony were invited and submitted by email. A full Segaki ceremony was held privately early in the day, with Erin Donovan and Harold Black assisting Rev. Meidō and Rev. Clairissa during an unexpectedly cold and misty morning. We welcomed this opportunity to include in our offering of merit all those who have died as a result of the coronavirus epidemic.

Over the course of the afternoon, the sun came out a little, and more than a dozen well-bundled people from our area stopped by to offer their respects at the altar individually or in

pairs. Visitors to the “Open Altar” had the opportunity to offer powdered incense silently in remembrance, sit quietly under the pines around the ceremony grounds, speak with one or both of the monks, and receive a cream bun and a small printed scroll bearing the words to the festival offertory.

Sunday Morning Remote Retreats: Each Sunday morning, we offer merit for all those on our transfer-of-merit board in the temple’s Kanzeon shrine, reading aloud the names of those who receive our weekly offering of recorded Dharma. Because of ongoing surges in Covid infection rates, the temple is not yet resuming group activities, nor hosting overnight retreat guests for now.

Open One-to-One: The temple remains open for individual visits, emails, and phone calls, of which there are many on a daily basis. We continue to offer a weekly email with attached audio Dharma talk from Rev. Clairissa, for independent home listening during our suggested Sunday Morning Retreat schedule or as desired. As we are unable to hold online video meetings due to limited internet service, we are glad that listeners continue to join our email list both locally and from afar, and that people are finding it helpful to be in touch on a one-to-one basis to explore many aspects of the Dharma and practice in the midst of present conditions.

One of the main purposes of the Wallowa Buddhist Temple from its beginning almost two decades ago has been to offer individual retreats. For nearly two years now, due to the pandemic, the temple has remained open to individuals in a variety of other ways. We look forward to a time when conditions will allow us to welcome in-person retreat guests again.

— *Rev. Master Meidō and Rev. Clairissa*

Idaho Panhandle area and Sandpoint Meditation Group

— *Sandpoint, Idaho – USA* —

We've been meeting at the Friends' Center in Sandpoint, Idaho this summer and autumn, observing the necessary precautions relating to the corona virus epidemic. When it has been warm enough we've met outdoors. So far we've been very fortunate in that no members of the group have been infected with the virus.

On June 23 we had a Renewal of Vows ceremony for those congregation members who have taken the Precepts. On September 25 we celebrated the Festival of the Autumn Equinox out of doors at the home of Ed and Tricia Florence. On November 6 we celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the PariNirvana of Reverend Master Jiyu-Kennett, our founder.

— *Rev. Master Zenshō*

Lions Gate Buddhist Priory

— *Lytton, British Columbia–Canada* —

In mid-November, after a summer of devastating fire that almost completely destroyed our village and threatened our temple buildings, we experienced a “once-in-one-hundred year” rain event, which meteorologist call an “atmospheric river,” and we have experienced two more such events subsequent to the first one. Our 1.5 km-long driveway has drained well, thanks to all the ditching work John has been doing. All road and rail connections to Vancouver and the coastal areas have been cut off, due to the massive flooding and washouts, with huge sections of farmland, houses, cities, towns and villages under water, and major highways blocked due to mudslides and

washouts. Tragically, several people have died in the slides. We now have access to the closest town of Lillooet and places further east. Some roads to Vancouver are opening as I write this.

Throughout these calamities, we have done our best to continue our monastic practice. We continue with our daily schedule, and we offer Dharma meetings via Zoom twice a week, to which all are welcome. If you are not on our mailing list and would like to receive notices and links to these meetings, just contact us.

We are slowly opening our doors to visitors. Current health regulations do not limit the number of attendees to religious gatherings, and a few people have been attending Sunday meditation and services. This fall on October 31, we celebrated Segaki (Feeding of the Hungry Ghosts), the first time we have held this ceremony in two years. Five people attended. On a bright, cold morning we set up the altar, filled with “good food from the mountains, fields and oceans,” and dedicated the merit to all the dead, especially those who have died in difficulty. In November, we celebrated the Founder’s Ceremony, offering our gratitude to our Founder, Keidō Chisan Kohō, Zenji, and to Rev. Master Jiyu, Founder of our Order and first Abbess of Shasta Abbey. We celebrated Remembrance Day on November 14, and held a memorial on November 21 for Mrs. Margaret Kardell, an old friend and supporter of Rev. Master Kōten, who passed away earlier in the month at the venerable age of 100.

On September 10, Mogi Wong passed away in Vancouver at the age of 95. Mogi was a lay disciple of Rev. Master Kōten, and had been present at Rev. Master Jiyu’s ordination in Malaysia in 1962. Rev. Master Kōten officiated at her funeral the next day, and he was assisted by Rev. Master Aurelian. In late October we did a memorial service for her at Mandala Hall and scattered her ashes around the Kwan Yin statue, as she had wished. She was a blessing to all who knew her.

Throughout the fall, in addition to our daily schedule of meditation, etc, we have been working on getting things ready for the winter, including cutting and stacking firewood, burning brush-piles, landscaping, road-work, and other various jobs around the property. We have enough good wood for the winter.



Five Buddhas, looking out...First snow

— *Rev. Master Aurelian*

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Affiliated Meditation Groups:
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Galloway, Hexham, Huddersfield,
Inverness, Jersey, Lancaster, Leeds,
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Affiliated Meditation Groups:

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

Further Information

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

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

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