

—Portobello Buddhist Priory—



A Temple of the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives



*Statue of Great Master Dogen, Eiheiji Monastery, Japan
(with thanks again to Robin Baker)*

Newsletter & Calendar of Events May-August 2016

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— Welcome to all —

Portobello Buddhist Priory, a ground floor flat in the Portobello district of Edinburgh, opened in 1998. It is one of a handful of temples in Britain which are affiliated to the Community of Buddhist Contemplatives. The training monastery of the Community at Throssel Hole near Hexham in Northumberland was founded in 1972 by Rev. Master Jiyu-Kennett, an Englishwoman who trained within the Soto Zen tradition at one of its main monasteries in Japan. The resident Prior at Portobello is one of the senior monks from Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey.

The purpose of the Priory is to offer lay training within the Serene Reflection Meditation tradition (Soto Zen) to anyone who sincerely seeks to undertake it, and the prior's role is to support such training. The prior and members of the congregation are also involved in activities such as religious education, hospital and prison visiting.

All are warmly invited to join in the Priory's programme of lay practice, the purpose of which is to come to know and live from our True Nature, whose expression is our wise and compassionate living.

With kindest wishes from Rev Master Favian, Prior

(For details of the day-to-day schedule at the Priory, please see back page)

- Weekend events at the Priory -

May 2016

Sunday 15th Renewal of Precepts 11am

June

Sunday 19th Renewal of Precepts 11am

July

Sunday 17th Renewal of Precepts 11am

August

Sunday 14th Renewal of Precepts 11am

The Priory is open to visitors as well as trainees every day from
6.45am - 9.15pm
except Mondays, Thursday afternoons, and Sunday pm.

*(Visitors—please phone beforehand, and please note when the Prior
is holding retreats elsewhere: see inside back page)*

— Prior's Notes —

"If you want to see the brave, look at those who can forgive. If you want to see the heroic, look at those who can love in return for hatred"

Bhagavad Gita

I once heard that in a certain African tribe, when someone caused suffering to another, they are put into the centre of a circle around which the people gather and sing the ‘song of their birth’ to remind the person of their original beauty. The tribe seemed to enact a ceremony that recognised that love, not just punishment, is a remedy for losing one’s way.

During Jukai we have a ceremony called Sange which seems to offer a similar enactment. Essentially we take our dharma position in the Sangha journey, where expressions of our true relationship with the world are enacted as compassion, love and wisdom.

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Surrounding and grounding such ceremonial forms is the ongoing meditation practice. Here we notice the ways habitual thoughts drive our impulses in the present. When these thoughts are based on suffering and confusion we lose sight of our ‘original beauty’ which is our interconnected life, and we stumble forward dominated by fear and clinging. It’s important when seeing this in meditation that we don’t generate a judgemental self and so add to the confusion. We can sit still with these memories and stories of hubris and self-doubt without getting pulled off our ‘mountain seat of freedom’.

A compassionate awareness recognises we were trying to do the best we could then, to the extent we could see what was driving us karmically.

Not feeling our own ‘beauty’ we tried to grab it from the world – we ‘carried the self forward to the world’ instead of allowing the world to deliver itself to us, as us.

So every time we don’t simply identify with the ‘me’ dramas but let them come and go, arise, be accepted and let go of, we strengthen the capacity for presence to fully respond to what is good to do. To look into the eyes of those with whom we have difficulty and sense the same presence there which is beyond their words and actions.

A helpful piece of graffiti someone reported seeing states:

“The holiest spot on earth is one where an ancient hatred has become a present love.”



(Upon seeing what looked to be an impending conflict during a recent protest in Brazil, the commanding officer made a simple request; “Do not fight, please. Not on my birthday.” The protesters responded by not fighting, and went a step further and made him a birthday cake.)

Outer Isles Retreat, September 2016



View from retreat house, Isle of Harris

A residential retreat on the Isle of Harris will be held from Saturday 17th to Wednesday 21st September 2016 (four nights). There are places for eight lay trainees and Rev. Master Finnán, a senior monk from Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey in Northumberland, will also be attending.

The retreat is open to all those who are familiar with our practice and who have visited Throssel Hole Buddhist Abbey or any of the priories or meditation groups affiliated with the Abbey.

The schedule will include a formal retreat day with meditation and ceremony as happens at Throssel Hole (and the affiliated priories) and another day in which we explore Harris as a group. The gentle emphasis is on sharing our practice and time together so we aim to eat, work (prepare meals, wash up and so on), relax and take part in formal practice (meditation, ceremony, talks) as a group. There will be set periods of meditation, time to rest and the opportunity to get to know each other throughout the retreat.

We try to arrange for those attending from the mainland to travel together which helps to minimise costs and also enables everyone to meet each other before the retreat. For previous retreats, this has involved meeting at a central place (Inverness for the past two years) and travelling together, in shared cars, to Uig in Skye (about 3-4 hours from Inverness) to catch the ferry to Harris (about 90 minutes). From here, it takes another 45 minutes by car to reach the accommodation.

We aim to arrive at the accommodation at about 9pm on the Saturday evening and leave on Wednesday around mid-day, to catch the early afternoon ferry back to Skye. If you would like to see the accommodation, you can visit the website at www.milesgeir.co.uk If you would like to know more about Harris, the website www.explore-harris.com is a good start.

We share the costs of the retreat amongst the attending lay trainees and estimate that this will be about £120-£130 each (based on 8 lay trainees), although this may change slightly. This includes accommodation, food and ferry fares (passengers and up to two cars) as well as Rev. Finnán's expenses. It doesn't include individual spending money e.g. for drinks and snacks on the journey and day out in Harris, or a contribution to the cost of petrol, so you should bring extra for these. Please let me know if you would like to attend. If you think you will struggle to pay the full amount, we may be able to help with your costs.

**If you have any questions, please contact Martin Hall on (01851 870014) or
martinp.hall@btinternet.com**

The good in others —

I recently lost my wallet in the street on two occasions. Both times it was returned to me complete with everything in it, including all the cash. The first time, someone who lives near me found it and recognised me from a photocard in the wallet. The second time, a stranger handed it into the police anonymously. I was struck by the kindness of these acts. Perhaps I was lucky, but it caused me to reflect on the strength of the drive within us to do good. We can see it expressed in things like charitable work, caring for disabled people and the desire to resolve world crises. Rev. Master Daizui wrote of how “each person is somehow touched by truth and drawn towards it”¹, while Rev. Master Jiyu expressed it as: “the intuitive knowledge of Buddha Nature occurs to all people”.

So what about all the harm that gets caused in the world? It is always helpful to start by looking at oneself. I know how easy it is to inadvertently ‘buy into’ a line of thought which seems very attractive but which subsequently proves to be misguided. I have allowed some need in me to draw me into a line of thought, and sometimes action, which is unhelpful. Fortunately zazen enables us to gain insight into these states of mind, and with continued practice, a refining of our thoughts and actions occurs. Also, I have had the benefit of much wise counsel and the good example of others in my life. There are many others who live in difficult circumstances and who are influenced by misguided people or suffer from various types of abuse. It is not, perhaps, too surprising that these people can cause harm, but it seems that even then, people are trying to do the best they can from the perspective in which they find themselves.

In zazen, we can see beyond the surface activity of the mind to a deeper truth, and the same can occur in interactions with others. In my therapeutic work, I met many people with afflicted states of mind, some of which were bizarre, but it was possible to ‘look under’ this to see the real person. When I could do this, there was a sense of meeting them intimately which was meaningful for both of us. More generally, I find that the more I connect with my own wish to do good, the more I see that in others, too.

We all get hurt by people sometimes. When this happens, I find it helpful to focus on my own reaction. Often, I find that there is some perceived internal need that has been thwarted in some way. This realisation may or may not

cause the hurt to go away, and it does not necessarily excuse the other person's behaviour. Whether such insight occurs or not, allowing the hurt to be there without trying to change it provides an opportunity for inner transformation.

I have now taken steps to try and ensure I don't lose my wallet again.

Neil Rothwell

¹ *Buddhism from Within*, Shasta Abbey Press, 2003, p.97.



Sanjusangen-do Buddhist Temple, Japan:

With thanks to Pam Strachan. Other photographs from her visit to Japan follow later in the Newsletter

Taking our place –

Empty handed willing to be shown
Openly listening, unknowing. The stage is set for a meeting.

A dragon arises in the eternal flowing of the incoming buddha
In silent reception the price is paid, Its jewel reveals a knot of need.

Show me where to release
One knot at a time, in non-doing there is natural release and
in this moment we are resolved

And once again
We take our place with all things.

Supported

Elliot Forsyth



Autism Support and Zen practice

For the last six years I have worked as a part-time autism support worker. Recently, I have been reflecting on how the work has provided many opportunities to continue and deepen a meditation practice. There are a few main aspects that stand out. For example, the challenges of seeing beyond difficult behaviours and of respecting the underlying logic to others' 'strange' behaviour. Of course, there is the obvious opportunity to practice patience with others but also the opportunity to look at when it is appropriate to let go of 'my way is the right way' thinking. Though it is an on-going process with lots of stumbles on the path.

The first three years I worked in a supported housing service for autistic adults, all males with challenging behaviour. People with autism experience the world differently and although they have a broad range of talents and skills they have difficulties with communication, social interaction and/or inflexible patterns of thinking. Challenging behaviour can be emotional and psychological as well as physical, but such behaviour is usually for a reason – for example, a heightened sensory awareness to noise may

trigger a need to escape from a busy environment, or difficulties with communication may cause confusion and anxiety if expectations are not met. Support workers are trained to identify underlying causes in order to anticipate challenging behaviour and, if possible, to prevent its arising.

Initially I found it to be an intimidating work environment as the job involved dealing with frequent incidents of physical aggression and also of self-harming. However, my understanding of these behaviours began to change as I became familiar with proactive support procedures. I became more aware that my judgements of people displaying 'non-normal' and challenging behaviour had been quite

harsh. In time there was a gradual softening of these fearful attitudes in my mind and, although fear would still arise, increasingly it was accompanied by a more accepting and respectful attitude – labels such as 'scary volatile brutes' were transformed into 'the guys'. It was a shift which allowed closer relationships to develop, built upon mutual trust. I would even forget the autism label altogether, they were simply people with specific support needs and differences. From this per-



spective autism can be viewed as an logic. One form of routine is to break alternative way of being rather than a down activities into predictable steps. disability or something 'wrong' to be For example one man has a precise corrected. Through questioning my way of crumpling each garment into a beliefs and assumptions about what it ball as he returns his washed clothes to is to be 'normal' in this way, I began to drawers. Crumpling is an important appreciate that I had taken for granted many complex functions of my everyday neuro-typical mind, such as the self independently. As a support ability to make choices, to plan ahead worker it can be a challenge to fold the and to separate fantasy from reality.

Routine is an important aspect of supporting people with autism. The structure and predictability of routines can be helpful in managing difficulties with communication, understanding and sensory awareness. This might involve having meals at precise times for example.

Sometimes, when the pressure is on to deliver a meal on time, I am struck by similarities to my experience of work up. I have found that cutting corners in the structured rhythm of life at the Zen practice seem to resonate on other occasions too, when everything has to be dropped instantly in order to respond to an incident and 'to act as if your hair is on fire'!

From the outside some routines can have the appearance of obsessive rituals but there is always an underlying

'— cutting corners in one area makes it easier to cut corners in others —'

thinking that clothes should be folded? Here, experience of Zen practice has been helpful in developing an appreciation of the value of thoroughness in taking care of all things, in this case t-shirts and jeans which are about to be scrunched up. I have found that cutting corners in one area makes it easier to cut corners in others and then, perhaps because there is some background awareness that I am not doing the job to the best of my abilities, the mind of dissatisfaction and complaint (why am I doing support work?) never seems to be far behind.

Training with patience/ impatience is a thread running through my experience

¹ Reference to Zen Master Dogen who advised his monks in 12th century Japan; '*Do not waste time but practice zazen (meditation) as if your hair was on fire!*'

of support work. Often the support role requires putting familiar ways of doing things to one side and doing things according to another logic. For example one client washes his own dishes but not very thoroughly and so everything needs to be re-washed afterwards. How tempting to go ahead and wash them for him, particularly when I am tired or near the end of a shift. However it would be de-skilling and depriving him of an opportunity to do things according to his abilities and standards. Who is to say my way is right? And how far do possible health and safety issues override building confidence? Offering choice is viewed as an important aspect of empowering the individual in person-centred support and here, again,

Another area requiring patience is the way of expressing oneself. Usually clear and slow speech is required when communicating with autistic people. Periods of silence can allow time for them to process information, thus avoiding confusion and frustration. Often using single words or phrases are the most effective way to communicate along with visual aids such as photos, symbols and gestures.



Spring daffodils on the Priory altar

it can be tempting to cut corners by loops of questions concerning that subtly influencing the choice-making artist's work. For example symbol cards (for activities or food items) can be used to enable a client to make a choice from two options offered. However, on a couple of occasions when I have been tired, I have found myself offering 'choice' by presenting the symbol card for a relaxing activity with somewhat greater enthusiasm than the symbol card for a walk, similar to a magician 'forcing' a playing card.

Listening and responding, too, can be big challenges. Sometimes, inflexible thinking associated with autism will manifest in repetitive verbal patterns. One client was fixated on a well known artist and without appropriate redirection it would be quite possible to spend hours going round endless loops of questions concerning that subtly influencing the choice-making artist's work. For example symbol cards (for activities or food items) can be used to enable a client to make a choice from two options offered. However, on a couple of occasions when I have been tired, I have found myself offering 'choice' by presenting the symbol card for a relaxing activity with somewhat greater enthusiasm than the symbol card for a walk, similar to a magician 'forcing' a playing card.

Both parties but, when energy levels were low, the repetition could become extremely wearing and considerable effort was required not to close down as a coping mechanism. On such occasions, I have found it helpful to remember that there is only an appearance of endlessness, that no two questions can ever be exactly the same, as conditions and context are always

changing. Often this was enough to hook my curiosity, enabling me to press the refresh button and respond with humour perhaps rather than irritation.

The work can be demanding but it is often rewarding. Currently I work in a smaller and quieter service. It is a relief not to be dealing with full-on challenging behaviour any longer, valuable as that experience may have been. The

Sometimes active support is required and at other times being more passive allows a client space and time to do things comfortably in their own way. It can be a tricky balance to gauge, as the needs of clients can vary from day to day. It is important to be flexible. Occasionally I may have an inner prompting that I am acting from a place of impatience and end-gaining to get something done more quickly. It may be as I offer a hand to help a client step in/out of the bath safely for example – am I gripping and leading/controlling to get the job done more quickly? Or is my hand relaxed and spacious, responsive to the pace of what is comfortable for this person today? With clients living in close proximity behaviours can ignite in a flash - a balance is required between keeping everyone safe (active) but also not adding fuel to an already volatile situation (passive). There have been occasions when a still but responsive presence seemed most helpful in allowing adrenaline levels to subside rather than spiral into turmoil and panic. Active listening, paying attention to body language and tone of voice, all can have a noticeable positive effect.

The work has helped me to develop at a personal level too. For example, I tend to be more confident in negotiating situations that previously would have caused personal embarrassment, perhaps a client is being loudly vocal in a busy supermarket. There is something about the responsibility of being in a support role that causes my normal shyness and self-consciousness to diminish and even disappear, the primary focus is not on me.

Getting up on a dark December morning can be a struggle. I can experience considerable resistance and doubt the value of support work. Recently, on such occasions, the word *giving* has come to mind. Not giving in the sense of giving things away, but more a sense of opening to the situation and allowing things to be as they are – including darkness, resistance, complaint. Sometimes this has been enough to relax and soften the contraction (of self) a little and begin to move into morning routines. It is more like pointing in a direction or setting a compass. Then, as the day begins to unfold there has tended to be a clearer, brightening sense that the work is a worthwhile offering, to support an

other person in daily activities in order for them to live as full a life as possible.

Often it doesn't feel like work at all. Yesterday, supporting a man involved having lunch together in a cafe followed by a walk on a beach - we danced around chasing our shadows and throwing seashells into bright bottle-green waves. I would have been happy to be there anyway. It really has been a privilege to work with autistic

people. Beyond labels and -isms each person is strikingly unique and, thanks to their refreshing and non-conventional approach to the world, my everyday eyes have been opened in quite unexpected ways.

A sangha member —

Some details have been changed to protect the identity of individuals in this article.



— Spring snowdrops in a Fife wood —

'Keeping Quiet'

Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still.

For once on the face of the earth,
let's not speak in any language;
let's stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines;
we would all be together
in a sudden strangeness.

Fisherman in the cold sea
would not harm whales
and the man gathering salt
would look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,
wars with gas, wars with fire,
victories with no survivors,
would put on clean clothes
and walk about with their brothers
in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused
with total inactivity.
Life is what it is about;
I want no truck with death.

**If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness**

**of never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves with death.**

Perhaps the earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead
and later proves to be alive.

Now I'll count up to twelve
and you keep quiet and I will go.

Pablo Neruda

—from *Extravagaria* (translated by Alastair Reid, pp. 27-29,
1974)



The 1001 life-sized Buddhas of Sanjusangen Temple, Kyoto, Japan —

Last October I went to Japan with my husband, Martin. We were there for the Shintu wedding of his niece, Emily to Toru, a Japanese student that she had met in Singapore.

After the wonderful Shintu wedding we went for two days to Kyoto and were lucky enough to visit the breathtaking Sanjūsangen-dō Buddhist temple, which is famous for its 1001 life-sized Buddhas.

Started in 1164, the temple and Buddhas were completed in the 13th century. They are made of Japanese cypress clad in gold leaf. The main deity of the temple is Sahasrabhuja-arya-avalokiteśvara or the Thousand Armed Kannon.

I was quite unprepared for the scale; the stillness and the beauty. The hall was dark and dusty and silent. And it had stood in silence for a long time.

I would have liked to stay there for a long time, but we had to keep moving through. Even so it still took nearly 30 minutes to pass by. None of the pictures can catch the internal length of the hall - they all show less than half of the statues.

We saw some beautiful sights in Japan, but this surpassed all.

Pam Strachan





Emily & Toru



The 1001 Buddhas —

Started in 1164, the Buddhas were completed in the 13th century. They are made of Japanese cypress clad in gold leaf.

Being a benign innkeeper —

In our increasingly complex and interdependent world, there's been growing awareness of the different types of problems which confront us. One distinction is between what are called 'tame' and 'wicked' problems. 'Tame' doesn't necessarily mean easy – finding a solution may be difficult and the solution may be complicated – but 'tame' problems can usually be defined, analysed and resolved step by step, in a methodical, planned sort of way. There's usually an existing knowledge-base of tried and tested solutions that can be studied and applied. A simple example might be building an Olympic Centre – difficult, expensive & complicated, but on one level it's straightforward.

'Wicked' problems don't mean problems which are somehow bad or evil. It means problems of a different order of complexity and difficulty. They are the kind of problems where, while people may agree on the goal they want to achieve, they will have different views even on what the nature of the problem is, what may be causing it, and how to resolve it. They are sometimes described as having multiple root causes, being poorly understood, and having no known solution. Examples would be climate change, large-scale migration, drug-trafficking, the multiple consequences of our ageing population, or terrorism. The more you look at any of these, the more complex and baffling they seem to become. Much heat is generated in discussing them, but sometimes, it feels, not very much light. Which doesn't detract from the continuing need to continue searching for progress towards their resolution.

It's beginning to be recognised that one necessary element in tackling wicked problems is what is known as 'system leadership'. Nelson Mandela is widely regarded as an example of a system leader. The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, for example, was a radical innovation which enabled emotional healing of the country by bringing together many people across what had been the racial divide, to confront the past and join in shaping

the future. The idea of bringing together those who had suffered with those who had caused the suffering, to face one another, tell their truths, forgive and move on, was not only as someone said, '*a profound gesture of civilisation but also a cauldron for creating collective leadership*'.



One of the requirements for system leadership is what is called ‘suspendfulness’: the ability to suspend assumptions, attitudes and beliefs about the problem, so as to create space for other possibilities to emerge.

Thinking about this, I began to wonder whether on one level we ourselves might be seen as ‘wicked’ problems. Complicated organisms with a propensity to create suffering (although not only suffering) for ourselves and others we certainly are; and not easy to understand, even for ourselves. ‘*What is this that sits*’ does not have a simple answer. We know our training is a lifetime commitment –

So what for us in our training is ‘suspendfulness’? What came to mind was Rumi’s poem ‘The Guesthouse’:

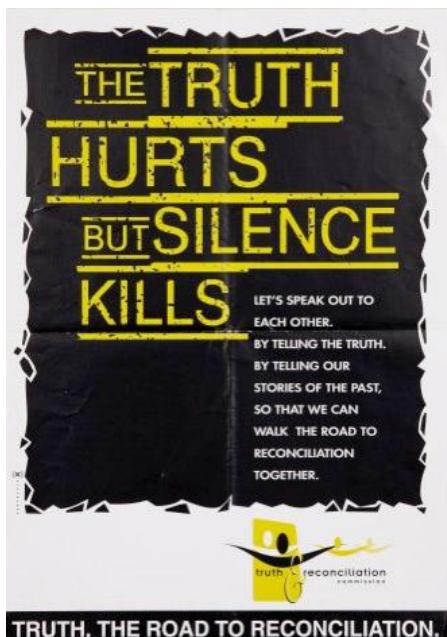
*This being human is a guest house
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still treat each guest honourably.
He may be clearing you out for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.*

This feels to me, to some extent, like our meditation practice. As we sit, neither trying to think, nor trying not to think, all kinds of thoughts and feelings arise, which we might see, in one sense, as ‘guests’ who come through our door, and who we simply see and acknowledge – neither getting absorbed in, or rejecting. Simply seeing, as a benign innkeeper might see his guests, with a kindly noticing, making sure there is space for them, but not getting caught up in their dramas.

And as practice continues, sometimes – just sometimes – there’s a sense of ‘seeing through’ that which arrives or appears. There’s a kind of transparency, a thinness like a mist, where the insubstantiality of that which arises becomes clearer in our awareness, despite the apparent drama or compellingness of it.

And seeing through to what? Who can say – this seems the terrain of faith; of perhaps what Rev Master Haryo once described as a ‘dimly sensed, impersonal vastness’ in which there is acceptance, and a depthless stillness.

Willie Grieve



*Official poster for the
Truth and Reconciliation Commission*

Everything matters —

I came to realise clearly that mind is no other than mountains and rivers and the great wide earth, the sun and the moon and the stars - Dogen

An uninterrupted flowing of thought, liquid night gently enveloping day, self-awareness dropping off like a child in his original home intuitively

responding to the expansive metaphysical abstraction of place and time, open to the limits of colour, texture, sound and form, accepting everything.

But the attempt to unthink the unbidden thought is interceded by the familiar small suffering of failure, always more valuable than any conjure of success.

And something of what feels to be right, eludes thought and feeling, slipping away in thin black oil wandering on a field of white canvas.

The unintended result, perhaps a manifestation of the unconscious appears to be a concrete expression of the great optical delusion of separateness that sets us apart from the universe and each other.



David Campbell

Reflections from Jukai

(1) *Thoughts at Jukai about faith —*

After seven years of involvement with the Portobello Priory, I finally did the Jukai Retreat this year. One of the most important themes that came up for me during the Retreat was one that has played a particularly important role in my life recently - the question of faith and what it means. One of the first things Reverend Master Daishin said during the retreat, speaking about Buddha Nature, was that “you cannot lose it, but you can sure lose track of it”. Later, during the Sange ceremony, we were shown that it is Compassion (Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva) who puts stuff - you might call it karma, or you might simply call it life - in our bowl. Much of what is in that bowl is painful, and Jukai participants often find themselves confronting that pain.

In the Ketchimyaku ceremony, RM Daishin said many things about faith (though I don’t think he used that word). We lose faith when we can’t see any sense in the pain we experience, and can’t

believe there is any sense that we can’t see, either. In another way of speaking - when we don’t know why Compassion has put some of this stuff in our bowl, and therefore have difficulty accepting its presence there. If it is Compassion that has put it in our bowl, though, then one might be misled into thinking that compassion is all about pain – that the pain *is* the meaning.

The meaning of the two ceremonies was brought together for me when, in his remarks, RM Daishin seemed to anticipate this thought by saying that we should not think that just because something is painful, that means Compassion is at work. Having begun the talk by saying that if we’re having trouble working out what the red line - the one that links us to all the Ancestors and through them to Shakyamuni Buddha and to Buddha Nature itself - is all about, what it means to follow it and stick with it, then we can “join the club”.

Addressing the confusion that can cause or accompany crises of

faith, he said that when things aren't making sense, we should just stick with them, keep going, unceasingly inquiring, with open mind and soul, "What is this?" and patiently allowing their meaning to unfold. He emphasized how important it is not try to figure out the meaning prematurely, to impose our constructions or evaluations on reality, because in so doing we are only constructing our (false) selves and projecting

them onto what is really going on, rather than allowing it to unfold, and to unfold its truth, and that will only obscure things even more rather than clarifying them. The Universe gives us all we need. What we do with it ... that is where the problems arise, and we lose track of that which can never be lost.

Rick Woodward

Welcome to the world, baby Soren —



— and congratulations to the proud parents, Sarah & Nick

(2) *Jukai Haiku* —

It is now a week and a half since returning from Jukai. It was a wonderful period of meditation, quiet and ceremony, full of deep meaning and change. Any attempt to describe this experience will flounder on the inadequacies of word and thought. On the second to last day, with a feeling of great joyfulness, I began to attempt some Haiku. They are what they are and I offer them to anyone who would like to read them.

Moustache and Grey Beard
cross the border.
Blackthorn's green shoots greet them.

Food comes left to right
With Gassho from the deliverer.
Serve non-self, pass on.

On half moon night
I come awake in the Zen hall.
All is joyfully present.

Snowfall dusts the hills.
She rests within me,
as lichen and birch grow together.

Clouds rip, curlews cry,
and the wooden bench just sits.
Shadows are accommodated.

Sun warmth on my face.
A buzzard shrieks its presence.
A snowflake, there, then gone.

As clouds race and shred
We sit in stillness on the bench.
Quarz dances in the path.

Kneel before the Master,
with your head bowed.
The Wagesa finds its place.

Moustache lifts the Wagesa -
as the band pings free,
the plait unfurls

A Nun begins the chant:
Namu Butsu Shakyamuni.
We rise and follow.

Avolikiteshwara
places papers of past mistakes
between our fingers.

Samantabhadra
offers up her bowl.
All mistakes are accepted.

Shakyamuni sits.
He offers incense
And recognizes Buddha Nature.

In the Buddha Hall
sleepers awaken
As the Universe unfolds.

In quiet stillness
Moustache and Grey Beard pass.
Eyes meet, hands greet.

While we walk kinhin,
The black and white cat just sits,
offering Zen presence.

As we pull up sharp,
Dharma tumbles to the floor.
Then is dusted, blessed, restored.

Gyatei,Gyatei, haragyatei,
Harasogyatei,
Bodhi, Sowaka!

In gassho
Jerry Simcock

Kathleen Campbell becomes a Lay minister —

On 30th December 2015 Kathleen Campbell became a Lay minister receiving a robe, kesa and certificate, in a small ceremony involving two of our Lay Ministers and the Prior. We are grateful to her for taking on this supportive role within the Scottish Sangha.



In gassho
Rev. Master Favian



*Thank you to all the contributors to this issue of the Newsletter.
Deadline for next issue is mid-August 2016*





- Events elsewhere in Scotland with the Prior -

May 2016

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|----------|
| Friday 27th | Aberfeldy evening retreat | 7.30-9pm |
| Saturday 28th | Dundee morning retreat | 10am-1pm |
| Sunday 29th | Aberdeen morning retreat | 10am-1pm |

June

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|----------|
| Friday 24th | Aberfeldy evening retreat | 7.30-9pm |
| Saturday 25th | Dundee morning retreat | 10am-1pm |
| Sunday 26th | Aberdeen morning retreat | 10am-1pm |

August

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|----------|
| Friday 26th | Aberfeldy evening retreat | 7.30-9pm |
| Saturday 27th | Dundee morning retreat | 10am-1pm |
| Sunday 28th | Aberdeen morning retreat | 10am-1pm |

For further details please phone :

| | | |
|--------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Aberdeen - | Bob McGraw or Joyce & Gordon Edward | (01330) 824339 (01467) 681525 |
| Aberfeldy - | Robin Baker | (01887) 820339 |
| Dundee - | Elliott Forsyth | (01333) 451788 |
| Highland - | Ann Milston | (01309) 696392 or hzg@inbox.com |

— Day-to-day schedule at Portobello Buddhist Priory —

Daily (Every day except Mondays, Thursday afternoons & Sunday p.m.)

| MORNING | EVENING |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 7.00 Meditation | 7.30 Meditation |
| 7.40 Morning service | 7.55 Walking meditation |
| | 8.00 Meditation |
| | 8.30 Evening office |

Early morning practice

You can come for early morning meditation, followed by short morning service.

7.00am –
8.15am

Evening practice

Meditation, walking meditation, meditation, evening office.
You are welcome to stay on for tea.

7.30pm –
8.45pm

Introductory afternoons

- are usually (but not always—please check dates below) held on the second Saturday of each month. A short talk will be given about Buddhist practice and the Serene Reflection Meditation (Soto Zen) tradition, with meditation instruction and discussion.

2.30-4pm

Saturday 14th May, Saturday 11th June, Saturday 9th July, Saturday 13th August

Wednesday and Friday evenings

Midday service and meditation, followed by tea and a Dharma talk /discussion, 7.30pm–9.30pm evening office.

Sunday mornings

Meditation from 9.30am onwards, followed either by a Ceremony, Dharma discussion or Festival at 11am.

It is fine to arrive or leave at 10.45am

9.30am–
12.30pm

Festival mornings

Priory open for meditation from 9.30am, or come at 10.45am for the ceremony.

*Portobello Buddhist Priory is Scottish Charity no. SC031788
Prior: Reverend Master Favian Straughan*