

SEVEN THUNDERS

newsletter

www.seventhunders.org

May 2016



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FAITH & PRACTICE

by Leonard Marcel

In the epistle to the Hebrews, we are told that faith is "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Heb 11:1) As such, faith is a way of knowing and understanding distinct from our culture's scientific paradigm. Images of faith are often drawn from the vocabulary of extreme and infinitely extendable dimensions, such as the mustard seed, the spark, and the moving of mountains. Why are such symbolic hyperboles called forth when faith is at stake? That the faith of a mustard seed is enough to move mountains is a way to suggest that faith defies familiar proportions, precautions and expectations. The immensity of the divine and the smallness of the human mysteriously converge in faith. The meeting of extremes that faith invites not only occurs as a striking convergence but also involves a mysterious reciprocity. The divine spark of faith is like a miniscule dot hidden from sight, but its core essence actually embraces all that is. In one of the Upanishads, we read that faith is "within the heart, smaller than a kernel of rice, smaller than a kernel of barley, smaller than a mustard seed... or the kernel of a canary seed. (The divine) is also myself within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all the worlds." In a similar vein, God told Abraham that "heaven and earth contain Me not, but the heart of My faithful servant contains me" (Islamic

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Hadith). Faith, the heart, the divine, such is the chain of knowing and being that links the small things to immense realms and then cancels them all in the sheer unity of being and nothingness. In faith, the infinitely small and the infinitely large meet.

We have been told that nothing is possible without faith and nothing impossible with it. However, how many of us have embraced this mystery wholeheartedly? The Latin verb *credo* (I believe) is from a root meaning "giving the heart." In all cases, faith amounts to giving one's heart, not just lending it; and this given 'heart' is all that we have

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Many thanks to all who contributed their time and talents to this publication. Articles may not be reprinted without permission from the author.



SEVEN THUNDERS LOCAL SITTINGS, RETREATS & EVENTS

FIRST SATURDAY SITTINGS

Monthly "First Saturday" sittings continue in Bethany House at the Trappist Abbey just north of Lafayette, OR. Orientation is offered at 8:15 a.m. and formal group sitting begins at 9:00 a.m. A talk by the teacher begins at 10:00 a.m., which is followed by opportunities for private interviews with the teacher. Formal sitting ends at noon. There is no charge, but donations for teacher support and for the Trappist Abbey are gratefully accepted. Here is the schedule for the remainder of 2016:

- May 7, Leonard Marcel
 - June 4, Brother Mark Filut
 - July 9*, Brother Mark Filut
 - August 6, Leonard Marcel
 - September 10*, Leonard Marcel
 - October 1, Brother Mark Filut
 - November 5, Leonard Marcel
 - December 3, Brother Mark Filut
- (* indicates second Saturday of month)

RETREAT SCHEDULE

- June 23 - 26 – CIR at Our Lady of Guadalupe Abbey with Sr, Joan Saalfeld. Registration information on page 10.
- July 12 - 16 – Zen sesshin at Stones and Clouds led by Leonard Marcel. Registration information on page 11.
- July 16 – Seven Thunders General Meeting. See page 5 for details.
- October 21 - 23 – Zen kosesshin at Stones and Clouds co-led by Leonard Marcel and Lee Ann Nail. Registration information on page 12.
- December 3 - 8 – Zen Rohatsu sesshin at Stones and Clouds led by Leonard Marcel. Registration information coming soon.



GENERAL MEETING

The Seven Thunders annual meeting will take place on Saturday, July 16 at Stones & Clouds. More details on page 5.

ZAZENKAI

Held at the Stones and Clouds (*Rai'un*) Zendo in Lake Oswego, led by Leonard Marcel:

- September 17

Zazenkai, followed by a study group, take place on Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. In addition to formal zazen, there will be sutra service, teisho, and dokusan. Bring a brown bag lunch (eaten in silence). Teas and water will be provided. Please contact Teresa Marcel at tdmarcel@mac.com or 503.636.9009 if you are planning to attend and for more information about zazenkai and the study group. While there is no fee for zazenkai, a donation of \$20 will be much appreciated to help cover costs. ✎

PORTLAND AREA SITTINGS

- Monday evenings at Stones and Clouds (*Rai'un*) Zendo, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., zazen & dokusan. Contact: Leonard Marcel at 503.636.9009 or marcellj@hotmail.com.

SALEM SITTINGS

- Wednesdays at the Salem Zen Center: 'On the Way Home' zazen from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. and an evening program (chanting, zazen, silent tea and Dharma talk) from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. (504) 949-3188. SalemZenCenter.com

CORVALLIS SITTINGS

- Monday evenings, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. (except Labor Day) at CMLC, 128 SW 9th St, Corvallis. Contacts: Jane Huyer, 541.752.6597, ahuyer@comcast.net, or Glenna Pittock, 541.752.6139, gpittock@yahoo.com

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS

Published three times a year, our newsletter is a benefit of Seven Thunders membership. Prospective members who would like to receive the newsletter can be added to the mailing list by contacting Nancy Roberts at nroberts@peak.org. Complimentary copies will be sent for up to one year or until January dues requests are mailed. After that, if membership dues (full membership currently \$30 per year, associate membership \$15 per year) are not received by March, you will be sent an announcements-only version of the newsletter. ✎

OLYMPIA SITTINGS

- Monday evenings, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., and every Saturday morning from 6:00 to 8:00 a.m. in the Chapel at St. Michael Church, 1021 Boundary St. SE, Olympia, WA 98501. Three rounds of sittings (from 6:00 to 7:30) are followed by a reading from contemplative writers and a questions and comments period. Contact: Pat Harvey, 360.357.8401 patriciamharvey@comcast.net

REDMOND SITTINGS

- Monday evenings, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at 529 NW 19th, Redmond, OR 97756. Contact: Richard Lance or Leanne Latterell at 541.923.7607. ✎

OTHER PACIFIC NORTHWEST DIAMOND SANGHA GROUPS

NO SANGHA, PORT ANGELES

- Teacher: Kristen Larson. Zazen: Saturday mornings, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. For more information, please contact Kristen & Bill Larson at 360.452.5534 or NOSangha@aol.com.

THREE TREASURES SANGHA, SEATTLE

- Teacher: Jack Duffy. Zazen at *Dharma Gate* (1910 – 24th Ave S.) on Wednesday evenings 6:30-8:30 p.m. and Friday mornings 6:30-7:30 a.m., followed by breakfast. For more information, and for a schedule of zazenkai and retreats, please contact Larry Keil at 206.322.8759 or go to their website at <http://three-treasures-sangha.org/> ✎



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Greg Smith

The February 20, 2016 Board of Directors meeting raised a number of issues that seem worth reporting back to Seven Thunders members and friends. The first is our gratitude for the generosity that many of you have demonstrated in response to the fundraising appeal that went out with our holiday card and membership renewal form. To this date, more than \$3,200 have been contributed. We are a small organization, and this kind of support helps to undergird our long-term health and vitality.

One of the hopes of the original Gilhousen grant several years ago was that Seven Thunders members would get into the habit of regular giving as they are able to. We are fortunate that we do not have to deal with rental or purchase costs of a meeting space nor the living expenses of a teacher, yet we receive all of the benefits associated with other religious centers that must pay for these essentials. Thank you for recognizing this and your willingness to give so that the expenses we do incur can be covered in a fair and equitable way.

The next matter is one that will affect all members and is something the board hopes we will take into consideration as we renew our membership in the organization. Maintaining a rolling membership list based on when people pay their annual dues is proving to be difficult. Since these payments affect retreat fees, it is an issue that is important to people but time-consuming to track. The board agreed that from now on membership dues will cover the current calendar year only, so that dues paid in July, for example, will extend through December of that year but no further. Also, money received will be considered a donation unless it is specifically identified as in payment for membership dues. We believe that this new policy will simplify the work of our volunteer treasurer considerably.

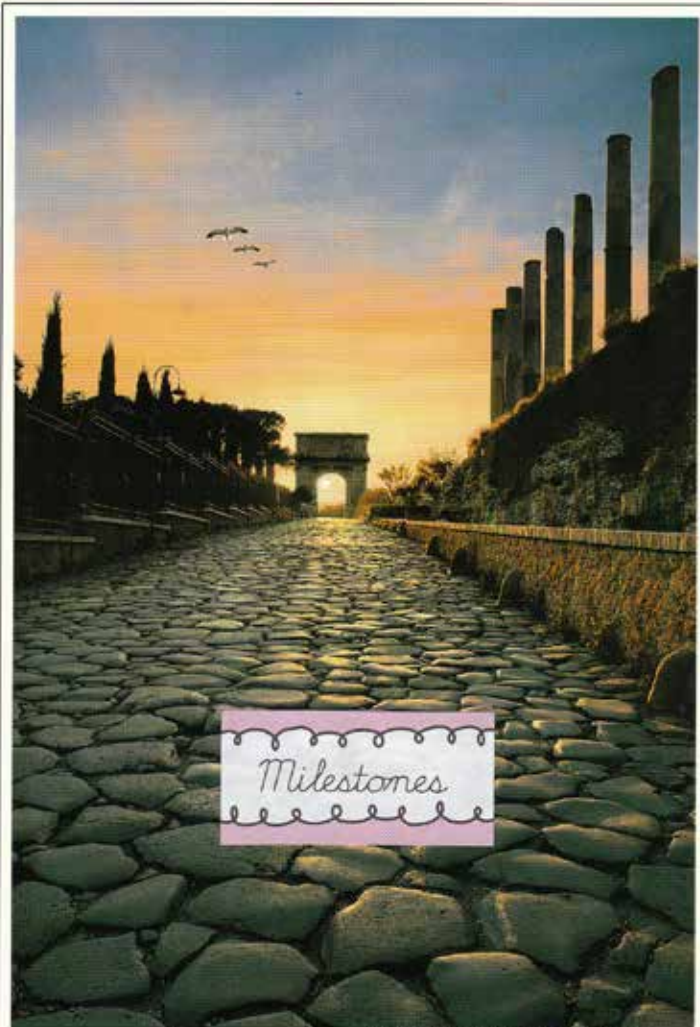
The board also took up the issue of teacher stipends for both Stones and Clouds and CIR gatherings and retreats. Stipends have not been increased for over a decade, and

directors felt it important to take into account the impact of inflation as well as the need to appropriately honor and value the work of our teachers. While costs for retreats will be adjusted upward at some point, we decided that a good interim stipend increase would be 30% across the board effective immediately, something the Gilhousen grant and increased giving will allow us to do.

In conclusion, it is easy to forget that practical issues like these are also part of the life of an

organization like Seven Thunders. Just as we combine zazen or contemplation with doing our taxes and balancing household expenses and income in our daily lives, our weekly or monthly sittings and retreats at Stones and Clouds or the Abbey require attention to financial details, as well. I'm grateful for the other directors who are willing to take up these concerns and respond with thoughtfulness and care. And I'm grateful for the time and energy and good spirit all of you commit to our common life and practice together. ⚡

FROM BROTHER MARK



—IMMAGINE DI GIANCARLO GASPONI



SPRING SESSHIN: A DIFFERENT VIEW

by Dan Dickinson

Dates: April 13-16, 2016
 Location: Stones and Clouds Zendo
 Teacher: 1
 Participants: 11
 Blocks of Meditation: 15
 Teishos: 3
 Sutra Services: 4
 Meals: 11
 Periods of Zazen: 55
 Minutes of Zazen: 1,320
 Sets of Kinhin: 42
 Laps of Kinhin: 252
 Steps of Kinhin: 15,120
 Sets of Long Kinhin: 3
 Minutes of Long Kinhin: 75
 Densho Strikes: 1,486
 Inkin Strikes: 470
 Shijo Strikes: 286
 Umpan Strikes: 91
 Taku Claps: 100
 Mokugo Strikes: 3,224
 Keisu Strikes: 247
 Han Strikes: 76
 Drum Strikes: 33
Total: 0

Note: Numbers may not be exact in all cases.. ⚡



Above, top: one of the 3 long kinhins.

Above, bottom: Sesshin attendees: Standing, left to right: Nahhed Brown, Dan Brown, Lisa Rosser, Dan Dickinson, Paul Birkeland, Greg Smith, Ron Paisley, Eric Roost and Phil Smith. Sitting: Teresa Marcel, Leonard Marcel Roshi. Not pictured: Nancy O'Connor.

Below, left – taking a rest break in the garden, with Mt St Helen's in the distance.



SEVEN THUNDERS GENERAL MEETING JULY 18

The Seven Thunders annual meeting will once again be held at the Marcells' home in Lake Oswego, starting at noon on Saturday, July 16, 2015.

All members are invited! It is an opportunity come together and break bread, catch up on the activities of the organization over the last year, and have a voice in the annual business meeting.

- Location: Stones & Clouds Zendo, Lake Oswego
- Date: Saturday, July 16, 2015
- Time: Noon - 3 p.m.

Please bring your favorite potluck dish and join the conversation.

For directions, and to RSVP, please contact Teresa Marcel at 503.636.9009 or tdmarcel@mac.com. ⚡

JOIN SEVEN THUNDERS – MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership is open to all persons interested in developing and continuing their contemplative prayer or Zen practice, regardless of religious affiliation. We encourage you to renew your membership – or join us – if you have not yet done so this year. Dues are \$30 per year for Full Membership and \$15 per year for Associate Members. For those who can afford it, the Board encourages one-time or periodic contributions beyond the basic dues amount.

SEVEN THUNDERS 2016 MEMBERSHIP AND MATCHING GIFT DONATION

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPE

Full Member (\$30) Associate Member (\$15)

I am unable to send money at this time, but am an active participant and wish to be a full member.

I am unable to send money at this time, but wish to be an associate member.

MATCHING GIFT DONATION

I am pleased to be able to include an Matching Gift Donation of \$_____

Total enclosed is \$_____



Please address this form with your check to Seven Thunders Treasurer Nancy Roberts, 3830 NW Polk Ave, Corvallis OR 97330

Although payment by check is preferred, you may also utilize the Seven Thunders website to pay utilizing Paypal/credit card.

Simply go to www.seventhunders.org and click on the **Contribute** tab.


FAITH & PRACTICE, *continued from page 1*


and all that we are. Whole heartedly.

Faith is certainly the indispensable condition for any sort of spiritual process, including this contemplative path, but it is also a limitless fulfillment of that process. Faith is the gift of divine light, and faith is also necessary to receive this mysterious gift of the interplay of light and darkness. No human effort, by itself, can make up for faith. And still there is no end without a beginning, no flight without an opening of one's wings. Faith runs through the circle of life that takes one from the beginning to end and beginning again. It bears witness to the presence of the divine in the human.

An attitude of not-seeing is at the essence of faith. Our perceptual experience is normally of things seen. The experience of nothing (no-thing) can be terrifying. The loss of objectified, represented things can seem like an abyss, like darkness rather than light. In our fear, we can feel stripped, abandoned. To receive the gift of faith requires openness, acceptance, listening – listening to a silence emptied of all expectations and projections, an attitude of not-seeing.

Consider, during this Easter season as we approach Pentecost, the story of the Apostle

Thomas. Easter Sunday evening, Jesus appears to his disciples and shows them his hands and side. Thomas, for some reason, is absent and refuses to believe what he has not seen. He wants to see and touch the wounds for himself. He wants a direct experience. Eight days later, when Thomas is present, Jesus returns and asks Thomas to touch and feel his wounds. Contrary to what most of us remember, Thomas does not actually do so, but simply cries out, perhaps on a wave of love: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). Jesus uses this moment to teach us about faith: "Because you have seen, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Not-seeing is at the core of contemplative practice, but Jesus here shows us that it is necessary for there to be great faith as well, the faith of not-seeing.

The story of St Therese de Lisieux (1873 – 1897), called the "Little Flower," who experienced the journey from seeing to not-seeing, to living out of the wound, provides a paradigm of what faith might mean. She died at the age of 24, tuberculosis having led to gangrene of the intestines and excruciating ulcers. Subject to pointless medical treatment, her pain and suffering were overwhelming. Yet, she remained selflessly available. She

said: "I am convinced of the uselessness of remedies to cure me, but I have made an agreement with God to bring profit from them to the poor and the sick who have neither the time nor the means to take care of themselves. I have asked God to cure them instead of me through the medicines and the rest that I am obliged to take." During her final months, she experienced a trial of faith in which fog and darkness surrounded her like a wall and left her bereft of all certainties. Yet she maintained throughout her dying an overriding concern for others, continuing to write and to talk, always cheerful and witty, full of puns and jokes, welcoming and consoling all who came to her bedside. Despite what she experienced as the continuous temptation to disbelief, uncertainty and nihilism, she lived already in heaven. As she put it, "It is all the same to me whether I live or die. I really do not see what I shall have after death that I already do not possess in this life. It is true that I shall see God, but as far as being in God's presence, I am totally in it here on earth."

In her contemplative prayer, as in her life, she held that nothing was needed more than to embrace faith and love. All that was necessary was to trust and love with every breath and in every act in each moment. Doing so, one needed only to offer each act and breath to become the means whereby love, compassion and grace might be manifested. It did not matter to her how ineffectual one's efforts might be. In this regard, she said: "God already sees us in glory and rejoices that we are blessed forever."

As a child, she had enjoyed deep meditative states in which the mysteries of time and space, divinity and eternity, heaven and earth were revealed to her. All of these were facts to her; and she lived intimately in their reality. Yet, as she continued on her path, as often happens, she entered a great desert of aridity. The revelations and consolations ended, but this did not discourage her. If God had not intended her to realize her contemplative calling, God would not have given it to her. As imperfect, small and ordinary as she

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FAITH & PRACTICE, *continued from page 6*

felt, she therefore sought a way appropriate to her and to other little souls, "a way that is very straight, short, and totally new." Elevators had just been invented, and she realized that was just what she needed. She wrote: "I wanted to find an elevator that would raise me to God, for I am too small to climb the rough stairway of perfection. I searched in the scriptures for some signs of this elevator... and I read these words, coming from the mouth of Eternal Wisdom: 'Whoever is a little one, let him come to me.'"

Something more is at work here than merely the power of simplicity, humility and selflessness, as powerful as they may be. The depth of her contemplative practice has been called by some "heroic compassion" or "the Divine fire of unconditional hospitality"; in other words, the way of living selflessly and unconditionally for others. Faith had come to have no other meaning for her than this. And although more often she no longer experienced the "joy of faith," she found herself making more "acts of faith" than ever before. She understood, in the words of the great

teacher of her Carmelite order, John of the Cross (1542-1591), whom she embraced as her own guide on this path, that "the power to look at God is, for the soul, the power to do works in the grace of God."

St John of the Cross wrote a longish poem on the experience of God through faith. A few excerpts:

That eternal spring is hidden,
but I know well where it has its rise,
although it is night.

I do not know its origin, nor has it one,
but I know that every origin has come
from it,
although it is night.

I know that nothing else is so beautiful,
and that the heavens and the earth drink
there,
although it is night.

Its clarity is never darkened,
and I know that every light has come
from it,
although it is night.

I know well the spring that flows
from this spring,
is mighty in compass and power,
although it is night.

This eternal spring is hidden,
in this living bread for our sake,
although it is night.

This living spring that I long
for,
I see in this bread of life,
although it is night.

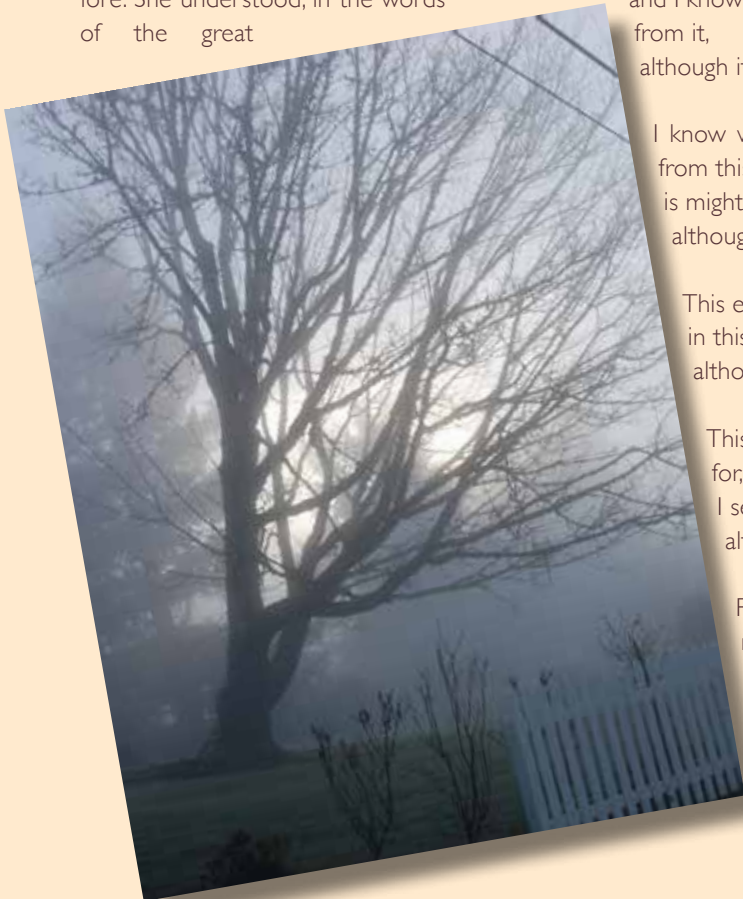
From the darkness and nothingness (no-thingness) of contemplative practice, we are led by faith to an experience of that Ultimate Reality beyond all categories we call God.

This union with the Divine is not something acquired, but rather, realized. The reality to which the term "union" points is already the present. The unfolding in our lives of this fundamental union is what St John of the Cross called "the union of likeness." He called God the center of the soul, echoing the anonymous author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, who tells us that "God is your being." God is, indeed, our being and the ground of all being. If we are to discover for ourselves who we truly are – that innermost being, known before it was formed, ever hidden with the spirit of the Anointed One in God (Ps 139:13, Col 3:03) – the discovery is going to be a manifestation of the ineffable mystery we call God. Those who have traveled along the contemplative path are often aware that any sense of separation from God is the result of the accumulation of the thoughts and feelings and self-centered attitudes to which they have become attached. When the mind comes into its own stillness and enters the silent land, the sense of separation can disappear. Union is then seen to be the fundamental reality and separateness only an artificial mental condition. It is the realization, this side of death, of the fundamental mystery of our existence as the creation of a loving God. Once this depth dimension of life is realized, we can say with Paul that "...it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (Gal 2:19)

So, during this Easter season, it is important to remember this reality that we *already participate* in the resurrection. If the Christ-spirit is not already alive within us in this very moment, there has been no resurrection; and if it is, then we are *already present* with the Anointed One in God. Heaven touching earth and earth touching heaven.

And, as we approach Pentecost, we can resonate with St Augustine (354 – 430) who in one of his Pentecost homilies said: "You yourselves are the mystery that is placed on the Lord's table. Come and receive the mystery that is yourself. To that which you already are, you need only respond, 'Amen.'"

Amen. ⚡





OFF THE CUSHION: BEYOND BARRIERS

by Naheed Brown



Esther, right, and her mother Nurjahan Begum. Photo by Naheed Brown.

Leap, and a net will appear. I had come across this saying a while ago and it has been my motto ever since. My encounter with my newly found sister and what ensued in the next few months were just that. We took a leap and a net did appear!

"She is from Bangladesh and she is a runner too, just like us!" That was how I came to know about Esther. My younger sister, who lives in Phoenix, "met" her on Twitter as they exchanged comments after one of their recent races four years ago. Esther's Twitter name is @BengaliBeauty, and that is what caught my sister's curiosity. My sister and I left our birth country in our early twenties as newlywed brides. Esther left our birth country at 18 months, sold by her birth father for less than \$10, brought to Oregon via Vancouver BC through a Christian missionary. She had never met anyone from Bangladesh since she arrived here, never had any experience with

her birth culture, language or traditions. A week after my sister told me about her, Esther and I met at a coffee shop in Downtown Portland. Esther is 38 years old now, a mother of three boys, each named after a US President. She told me on our first encounter that she had always wondered about her family, why they gave her away, and that she wanted to find her mother.

Hearing this, I found myself, a mother of three children, telling her "bring me whatever you have – adoption papers, passport, names, anything, and I will see what I can do." Faded and hard-to-decipher paperwork, frustrating dead ends, and numerous false starts made me even more determined to try another route each time. Two years and about 200 phone calls later, my husband and I accompanied Esther to her birth home last summer. The first time Esther talked with her mother was on Christmas Eve, via Skype. I used FaceTime on my iPhone with Esther on the other side with her phone, and called her mother on Skype video chat, thousands of miles away,

through my laptop. Thanks to modern technology, a long lost child spoke to her long lost mother. The daughter spoke no Bengali; the mother spoke no English. Yet both smiled through tears; the mother reassured the daughter not to be sad anymore, that she had a houseful of family waiting to shower her with love. Esther told her mother about her three sons and that she would come to see her family. All the while, as I translated back and forth, I cried and laughed at the same time, seeing the mother and her child, snatched from her lap when she was only five days old. I noticed the uncanny resemblance between Esther and her mother

Nurjahan Begum: the same cheekbones, the same forehead and the same strong smile. Roots can be that strong. Roots can unearth feelings from the deepest of cores, beyond barriers of all kinds.

Leap, and a net will appear. We wanted to be certain that Esther and Nurjahan were truly biologically related. A DNA kit was sent from here. Anticipating possible negative results, my mother told Esther that she was officially adopting her as her third daughter. Once we got the sample back, Esther sent the packet for testing, along with her own. A week later, the results came back – 99.99% match between the Esther and Nurjahan Begum.

The day we landed in Bangladesh, a year later, was Esther's birthday. Esther was born on June 24, 1979. We arrived on June 24, 2015. The heat, humidity, noise, and chaos were all overwhelming for her. It was the first time she had traveled overseas since her arrival in Oregon 38 years ago. Three days later, Esther met her mother and siblings in the midst of

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curious women and children, local newspaper reporters, TV journalists, and village elders, who surrounded them, wanting to be a part of this beautiful experience. Mother and child embraced each other, crying hysterically. There was not a single dry eye at that moment. Language was not a barrier anymore. Love can speak in any language, when given the chance. Esther met her two sisters, her brother, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and an entire village of cousins. They fed us with utmost care and attention a feast of rice, chicken curry, fried eggs, spinach, and lentils, which probably cost them an entire month's salary. Esther's brother is a rickshaw puller and earns about \$15 a month. Her sisters break bricks at the brickfield. Her mother catches baby shrimp with a shallow net on the banks of a river and sells them to the fisheries, fetching about \$10 a month. We became huge celebrities throughout Bangladesh, with people recognizing us at shopping malls, bus stations, and airports. Esther soaked it all in, drenched in soupy summer heat. As she bid

goodbye, Esther choked up saying she had not experienced so much love before. Esther did make her mother promise not to go fishing again. She now sends \$50 every month to her mother and gets to talk regularly on the phone, with me still as the translator. Esther has brought back several books on Bangladesh; one of them is *How to Speak Bangla*, of course! Esther and I plan to go visit next year, this time in December, to avoid the soupy summer heat, humidity, and relentless mosquitos.

When people ask me how I got them reconnected, I can only say that I just happened to be present at the right place at the right time. I was a mere catalyst, connecting the dots, putting the puzzle pieces together. There was certainly a Higher Power working from behind, or else how can one explain all these beautiful coincidences? During a morning talk show on TV, the host

ABOUT "OFF THE CUSHION"

Off the Cushion is a regular feature of our newsletter. We invite you to submit articles about what your practice means to you, of activities off the cushion which feel like an extension of your practice. Please e-mail your submissions to newsletter editor Greg Smith at gasmith@clark.edu. ⚡

thanked me for my generosity and asked why I had helped Esther. What was in it for me? I said I did it because it was just the right thing to do. As a mother I could not imagine losing a child and not knowing where or how she was. The talk show host asked me if I had anything to say to the audience. I paused for a few seconds, and thought about Rishi Leonard Marcel and his teachings. So I said, looking at the camera, "Just be present, at every moment, with every breath, and do all the good you can." Just this breath, just this moment. Just this breath-moment.

Today, we are three sisters. We talk every day, check in on each other, we laugh, we tease, we cry, we visit, we celebrate together. Esther found her birth family, and as she says, she also found her "Deshi" American family. She calls her birth mother "Ma" and she calls my mother "Amma," just like I do. We all connected beyond barriers. Leap, and

a net will appear. ⚡



Above: Esther and her mother, Nurjahan Begum, surrounded by family and villagers.

Photo by Naheed Brown.



CONTEMPLATIVE INTENSIVE RETREAT (CIR) AT OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE ABBEY, JUNE 23 – 26, 2016

Sr. Joan Saalfield, SNJM, will lead our Summer Contemplative Retreat at Shalom Prayer Center at Our Lady of Guadalupe Trappist Abbey, Lafayette OR, June 23-26. Sr. Joan is a member of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary currently living and working in Portland, Oregon. She has studied and practiced Zen and Contemplation for 35 years, first with Robert Aitken, then with Fr. Willigis Jaeger, OSB, and most recently with Fr. Pat Hawk, C.Ss.R., who encouraged her to teach in CIRs.

This retreat is especially designed for those who desire the opportunity for intensive sitting during a long weekend type of retreat. It begins with supper at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday and ends after clean-up and lunch on Sunday (by 1:30 p.m.). Please arrive between 2 and 6 p.m.

Our daily schedule includes about six to eight hours of sitting contemplation and an hour of assigned work. Sitting contemplation occurs in 25-minute periods separated by 5 minutes of walking contemplation. Total

silence will be observed during the entire retreat. Everyone participates fully in the daily cycle unless prior arrangements are made.

Each of us has a private room, with access to shared bathrooms with showers. Bedding and bath linens are provided. Meals are the same as those eaten by the Trappist monks. The fare is vegetarian, simple, and balanced. It is possible to bring foods that you require for other special diets, but no cooking facilities are available. A refrigerator is available.

Please bring your own cushions or prayer bench, if you desire. Some will be made available. Chairs are available. During the retreat you are asked to wear conservative clothing of dark or subdued color: No shorts or sleeveless tops please. Bring additional clothes suitable for walking outdoors (possibly in the rain) and for work (gardening, washing dishes, cleaning, etc).

The fee for the retreat, including lodging, meals and tuition is \$310, with a \$30 discount for members. A \$75 deposit is required with your registration, and full payment is due by May 23, 2016. All but \$75 is refundable until May 23. Part-time, commuter attendance is possible. If the retreat fee is a barrier to your attendance, please check the box requesting a "scholarship" or contact us. Although

we need to balance our financial books, we also need and deeply appreciate your presence. Donations are appreciated and tax-deductible.

To register for the retreat, e-mail or call registrar **Nancy Roberts at nroberts@peak.org or 541.754.9108** for the registration address. Alternatively, you may e-mail your registration to the registrar and pay the deposit/fee online at SevenThunders.org (Click on the 'Contribute' tab and follow the donation process, leaving a note in the last window saying that this is your June CIR fee payment.). You will receive a confirmation email. Questions? Please feel free to contact registrar.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Thursday will include dinner, an orientation, and contemplation until 9 p.m. On Friday and Saturday, we will rise at 5:30 a.m. for intensive contemplation, breakfast, lunch, and dinner, an optional opportunity for the Eucharist with the Trappist monks, conference, and interviews with Sr. Joan. These days will end with contemplation until 9 p.m. On Sunday, we will rise at 5:30 a.m. for contemplation, breakfast, lunch, an optional opportunity for the Eucharist, and cleanup. We will complete the retreat with lunch at 1 p.m. on Sunday. ✨



**REGISTRATION FORM
CIR AT OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE ABBEY, JUNE 23 – 26, 2016**

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

First Seven Thunders retreat? yes no
 I will bring my own pad (zabuton) and cushion (zafu) or bench.
 I might be able to give someone a ride from Portland _____ or Eugene _____
 I need to borrow: _____

 Other needs (rides, food, etc.) _____

 I request a scholarship of \$ _____ I enclose a donation of \$ _____

Current Seven Thunders members:
 I enclose full payment of \$280
(the member rate).
 I enclose a \$75 deposit
(\$205 balance due by May 23).

Not a current Seven Thunders member:
 I enclose \$310, please apply \$30 to
Seven Thunders member dues.
 I enclose a \$75 deposit
(\$235 balance due by May 23).
 I enclose \$105, deposit & member dues
(\$205 balance due by May 23).

Please make checks payable to Seven Thunders.



SUMMER SESSHIN AT STONES AND CLOUDS ZENDO JULY 12 – 16, 2016



The 2016 Seven Thunders Zen Summer Sesshin will be held at the Stones and Clouds Zendo in Lake Oswego, OR, from Tuesday, July 12, at 5 p.m. until Saturday morning July 16, at 10 a.m.. Sesshin will be led by Leonard Marcel. Registration deadline is June 22. Registrations will be accepted on a first come basis. As this sesshin is usually well subscribed, early registration and payment is encouraged. Part-time attendance will be possible.

Space is limited to a maximum of 16. Additional applicants will be wait-listed in case of cancellations. Sesshin fee is \$210 (member rate \$180) and includes all meals (vegetarian). A member rate is available to regular members at all sesshins and retreats throughout the membership-year. Non-members may choose to join Seven Thunders (dues are \$30). They then qualify for the member rate at this and other Seven Thunders regular retreats and sesshin through the remainder of that calendar year. A deposit of \$80 is required with your registration; payment in full is appreciated. Any balance is due by June 22. Should you need to cancel, all but \$25 is refundable until June 22; after that date all but \$80 is refundable. You will receive a confirmation from the registrar. If for any reason you find the full fee a barrier to attending, please check

the box on the registration form requesting a "scholarship" or contact the registrar. Affordability need not be a deterrent to attendance. Full or partial scholarships are almost always available. Donations for such scholarships are both appreciated and tax-deductible.

This is a non-residential retreat. For non-commuter participants, information about local accommodations is available. Limited accommodations in members' homes may also be available. Information about local accommodations and carpooling will be sent to out-of-town registrants upon receiving your registration and deposit.

As always, total silence will be observed for the entire sesshin. All attending are required to participate fully in the daily sitting and work schedule, including cleanup at the end of the retreat. You are asked to wear plain

conservative clothing of dark or subdued color during sesshin. No shorts or sleeveless tops, please. Zabuton, zafu, low and high benches will be provided, but if you have a favorite zafu or bench (no chairs) please feel free to bring it.

To register for the retreat, complete this form and send it with your deposit to retreat organizer and registrar: **Teresa Marcel, 1333 Skyland Drive. Lake Oswego, OR 97034.** Please make checks payable to **Seven Thunders.** Alternatively, you may e-mail your registration to the registrar and pay the deposit/fee online at SevenThunders.org (Click on the 'Contribute' tab and follow the donation process, leaving a note in the last window saying that this is your Summer sesshin fee payment.)

Questions? Please contact Teresa Marcel at 503.636.9009 or tdmarcel@mac.com ⚡

REGISTRATION FORM

STONES & CLOUDS SUMMER SESSHIN, JULY 12 – 16, 2016

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I will be able to provide accommodation for ____ people.

Special dietary requirements: _____

I will bring my own zafu or bench. This is my first Seven Thunders Retreat.

I request a scholarship of \$ _____ I enclose a donation of \$ _____

Current Seven Thunders members:

Not a current Seven Thunders member:

I enclose full payment of \$180
(the member rate).

I enclose \$210, please apply \$30 to
Seven Thunders member dues.

I enclose a \$80 deposit
(\$100 balance due by June 22)

I enclose a \$80 deposit
(\$130 balance due by June 22).

I enclose \$110, deposit & member dues
(\$100 balance due by June 22).

Please make checks payable to Seven Thunders.



KOESSHIN:

Once again this year, kosesshin will be offered in October at Stones & Clouds. This weekend sesshin will begin Friday, October 21, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., continue Saturday, October 22, 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., and conclude Sunday, October 23, 6 a.m. to 10 a.m.

As in previous years, kosesshin will be co-led by Leonard Marcel and guest teacher Lee Ann Nail, Diamond Sangha apprentice teacher and teacher in the Maria Kannon zen tradition.

RETREAT FEE:

Kosesshin: \$75 members, \$95 non-members. Includes all meals (vegetarian) on Saturday and Sunday breakfast.

A deposit of half the retreat fee is required with your registration; payment in full is appreciated. Any balance is due no later than two weeks before retreat begins. Should you need to cancel, all but \$25 is refundable until that time; after two weeks prior to the retreat, \$35 is refundable.

You will receive a confirmation from the registrar. If for any reason you find the full fee a barrier to attending, please contact

the registrar requesting a scholarship. Affordability need not be a deterrent to attendance. Full or partial scholarships are almost always available. Donations for such scholarships are both appreciated and tax-deductible.

RETREAT REGISTRATION:

To register for the retreat, please either pay your fee or deposit online at www.SevenThunders.org or send a check (payable to **Seven Thunders**) to retreat organizer and registrar **Teresa Marcel, 1333 Skyland Drive. Lake Oswego, OR 97034**. Questions? Please contact Teresa Marcel at 503.636.9009 or tdmarcel@mac.com

RETREAT DETAILS:

Space is limited to a maximum of 16. Additional applicants will be wait-listed in case of cancellations.

This is a non-residential retreat. For non-commuter participants, limited accommodations in members' homes may be available. Information about local accommodations and carpooling will be sent to out-of-town registrants upon request after receiving your registration and deposit.

As always, total silence will be observed for the entire sesshin. All attending are required to participate fully in the daily sitting and work schedule, including cleanup at the end of the retreat. You are asked to wear plain conservative clothing of dark or subdued color during sesshin. No shorts or sleeveless tops, please. Zabutons, zafus, low and high benches will be provided, but if you have a favorite zafu or bench (no chairs) please feel free to bring it. ⚡

REGISTRATION FORM
STONES & CLOUDS FALL KOESSHIN, OCTOBER 21- 23, 2016

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I will be able to provide accommodation for _____ people.

Special dietary requirements: _____

I will bring my own zafu or bench. This is my first Seven Thunders Retreat.

I request a scholarship of \$ _____ I enclose a donation of \$ _____

Current Seven Thunders members:

- I enclose full payment of \$75 (the member rate).
- I enclose a \$35 deposit (\$30 balance due by October 7)

Not a current Seven Thunders member:

- I enclose \$95.
- I enclose a \$50 deposit (\$45 balance due by October 7)

Please make checks payable to Seven Thunders.