

# SEVEN THUNDERS

newsletter

www.seventhunders.org

September 2018



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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.

## GRATITUDE AND THANKFULNESS

by Leonard Marcel



The journalist and author, Melody Beattie, has written:

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order; confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.

Something strangely wonderful begins to happen when we greet life and the world in a new way. When, through our contemplative practice, we open to the life of God within and all around, a change of perspective, a shift of perception occurs. We notice things that never mattered before. We see the extraordinary in the ordinary, the divine in the mundane. And with that change of perspective, that new way of seeing, comes gratitude.

Think back to the time when you looked up at the night sky and saw – really saw – for the first time the numberless stars in the black dome of the sky. Do you remember the wonder, the awe? When the poet and playwright, Eugene O'Neill (1888 –

1953) had such an experience, he wrote: "For a moment, I lost myself – actually lost myself. I was set free! I dissolved.... I belonged, without past or future within peace and unity and a wild joy, within something greater than my own life, to Life itself, to God." Perhaps your experience was similar. Perhaps in that moment you had a glimpse of "something greater" than your limited self – and you were completely one with it.

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## SEVEN THUNDERS 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 next 6 months:

- October 6, Sr Joan Saalfeld
- November 3, Leonard Marcel
- December 1, TBA
- January 5, 2019, TBA
- February 2, Leonard Marcel
- March 2, Leonard Marcel

### RETREAT SCHEDULE

- September 28 - 30 – Zen kosesshin at Stones and Clouds, co-led by Leonard Marcel & Lee Ann Nail. Fully subscribed.
- December 4 - 9– Zen Rohatsu sesshin at Stones and Clouds, led by Leonard Marcel. Registration information on page 12.
- January 17 - 20, 2019 – CIR at Mary's Woods, led by Sr Joan Saalfeld. Registration information on page 12.
- April 12 -14, 2019 – Palm Sunday CIR at the Abbey, led by Leonard Marcel. Registration information in the next newsletter.



### SEVEN THUNDERS LOCAL SITTINGS

#### 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

#### 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. ✎

## 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 Jenny Brausch at Livinggreen@comcast.net. 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) are not received by March, you will be sent an announcements-only version of the newsletter. Please send membership dues to: Jenny Brausch, PO Box 3119, Albany, OR 97321. ✎

### ZAZENKAI

Held at the Stones and Clouds (*Rai'un*) Zendo in Lake Oswego, led by Leonard Marcel. Details on page 7. Upcoming dates:

- October 20
- February 16, 2019
- March 16, 2019 ✎

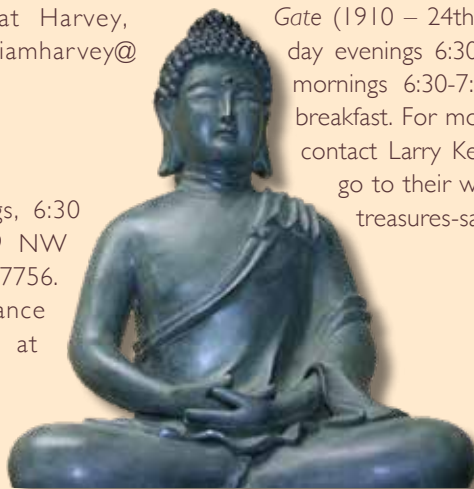
### OTHER PACIFIC NORTHWEST DIAMOND SANGHA GROUPS

#### NO SANGHA, PORT ANGELES

■ Teacher: Kristen Larson. Zazen: Saturday mornings, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. For more information, please contact Kristen 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, 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 Gregory Smith

For at least this issue's column, I feel moved to take a different tack. With the fires and smoke of the past two summers, my brother's evacuation of his Cloverdale, California home in October, and a friend's near loss of his home in Santa Barbara to last winter's mudslide, I've been thinking a lot about climate change.

Nathaniel's Rich's 30,000 word article in the New York Times in early August, "Losing Earth," seemed to validate my growing belief that by waiting until the signs of global warming have become inescapably evident, humanity has missed its chance to respond effectively to a threat that matches the last ice age in its environmental and social consequences. Then critiques of this article in *The Nation*, *Jacobin*, and Naomi Klein's take on it in *Intercept*, identifying Rich's avoidance of the role of the capitalist world system in the creation of this crisis, pulled me back from the temptations of fatalism and forced me to look again at what contribution I might make to address this situation. When Rich's article came out, I sent a link to a good friend who is aware of the precariousness of our current circumstances, and he raised the question: "What does Buddhism advise in times like these?"

I've been mulling over his question without coming up with an answer that felt sufficient given the depth of both of our concerns. Then last night I encountered a short article in the fall issue of *Lion's Roar* by Joan Halifax (who directs the chaplaincy program from which our own Matt McTigue has recently graduated) that specifically addresses this issue. In her article, Halifax differentiates conventional hope from what she calls wise hope:

As Buddhists, we know that ordinary hope is based in desire, wanting an outcome that could well be different from what will actually happen. Not getting what we hoped for is usually experienced as some kind of misfortune. Someone who is hopeful in this way

has an expectation that always hovers in the background, the shadow of fear that one's wishes will not be fulfilled. This ordinary hope is a subtle expression of fear and a form of suffering. Wise hope is not seeing things unrealistically but rather seeing things as they are, including the truth of suffering—both its existence and our capacity to transform it. It's when we realize we don't know what will happen that this kind of hope comes alive; in that spaciousness of uncertainty is the very space we need to act.

After reading this, I forwarded the link to the article to my friend ([https://www.lionsroar.com/yes-we-can-have-hope/?mc\\_cid=762481a1fb&mc\\_eid=ab7bdf6796](https://www.lionsroar.com/yes-we-can-have-hope/?mc_cid=762481a1fb&mc_eid=ab7bdf6796)).

Halifax's words remind me of something I read years ago that Matthieu Ricard, the French scientist who has studied with the Dalai Lama for decades, had written about our moment on the clock of the universe. He said simply that we can't predict the future. We don't know what will happen with regard to climate change, human overpopulation, resource exhaustion, nuclear weapons. These realities of our current lives are indeed serious and threaten our species, but the outcome is not foregone. I suspect that he would agree that "in that spaciousness of uncertainty is the very space we need to act."

That uncertainty is not something people are anxious to consider or discuss, but if our membership of Buddhist and Christian contemplatives is to act, and act wisely for ourselves and for others, it seems important to acknowledge the challenges currently facing humanity and bring them more intentionally into our collective life as a spiritual community. It heartens me that we are beginning to take steps to do so. ⚡





## JUNE 2018 CONTEMPLATIVE INTENSIVE RETREAT AT THE ABBEY: TWO PERSPECTIVES

The recent CIR was a chance to go deeper into silence in a setting that proclaims God with every blossoming flower and every ripe cherry fallen on the ground. The glory of the infinite is touched in the cool morning air, while eating homemade bread and peanut butter; even in the sounds of the ridiculously loud bullfrogs croaking every night.

The retreat started with an orientation. As we were sitting in a circle, Mike said "Look!" There was a large stag, staring through the window with intense brown eyes. So curious! What are those people doing? It was an auspicious beginning to the start of silence.

It had been many years since I attended a CIR, so it felt like a brand new experience. The setting at the Abbey is beautiful, and the weather was perfect. There is a different rhythm when liturgy and mass are part of each day. I loved it. There is something so timeless in the slow prayers and chants of the monks. Sinking into that timelessness allows thoughts and worries to fall away. I was enchanted by one particular monk who was

always smiling. The smile seemed rooted in joy, and the joy was contagious! Oh to hang onto that joy, that awareness that we are living in the Presence with every breath we take! To take the retreat back into the world when we step away! Each moment is the opportunity to do just that.

Everything Sister Joan said resonated with truth and that feeling of how did she know what I needed to hear? That in this time of great uncertainty, our simple desire to be part of turning the world toward the peace and love the world so desperately needs is already a step toward that healing. This touched me because it is so easy to feel useless and impotent, overwhelmed by all the indecency and suffering in our world. Everyone's contributions have meaning both in intent and in action.

There were many commuter retreatants attending along with the over-nighters. The room was full, and the silence was deep. So much spiritual nourishment! I can't wait for the next CIR! ✨ Lisa Rosser



**Above:** commuters attending CIR, from left to right: Brad Hess, Denise Hess, Caryl Thomas, Jenny Brausch. Not shown: Matt Mctigue and Nancy Roberts.

A complete compliment of retreatants attended the June 2018 CIR at Our Lady Guadalupe Abbey. Nine resident participants were joined by seven commuters, making for a very solid contemplative gathering. Special thanks to Ed Glad, who hosted two of the commuters at his home nearby the Abbey.

Sister Joan Saalfeld was our teacher. She established a rich grounding as we embraced the great silence on the first evening by placing before us the wisdom of the poet Rainer Maria Rilke:

"These very days of your transition are perhaps the time when everything in you is becoming God. And I think that the least we can do is to make God's becoming not more difficult than the earth makes it for Spring, when Spring wants to come."

Our community of silence, in seasoned fashion, indulged the well-worn path of the CIR schedule incorporating from the monastic horarium Lauds, Mass, and Compline each day. The environment without was clear with perfect temperatures supporting our individual journeys within. In the evening, the

*Continued on page 10*



**Above:** 1st row left to right: Sister Sandra Lincoln, Mary Ettel, Anna Lyons-Roost, Lisa Rosser. 2nd row left to right: Nick Doversberger, Sister Joan Saalfeld, Jim Mishalani, Eric Roost. 3rd row: Mike Seely, standing: Ed Glad. All photos by Mike Seely.



## OFF THE CUSHION: PRACTICE IN THIN AIR

by Dan Dickinson



Over the past few years, I have been heading to the mountains of Wyoming after summer sesshin. There, I will spend two weeks alone. The areas I go generally are between 10,500 to 11,500 feet altitude and within a mile of the Continental Divide. During my time in the mountains, it is rare for me to see another person. I have begun to notice some similarities between sesshin and being alone in the mountains.

There are few distractions. In sesshin we face the wall, limit our movement, and focus on a single thing. This might be breath, sound, or koan. We also maintain silence. In the mountains, there are few distractions. Above tree line there are few colors: rock, sky and water. It is not silent, but the wind is a constant howl as it moves through the peaks and crags.

In sesshin and the mountains I go through a similar physical process. In sesshin I generally begin to get stiff and sore about halfway through the second day. In the mountains, this

also occurs during the second. No matter my physical condition, the weight I carry in my pack, the awkward footing on the rock, the dehydration and the altitude take their toll. Both sesshin and the mountains extract what seems to be a necessary price. "The price of admission." In both activities, my body accepts and settles into the pace on the third day. At the end of each day, sesshin and hiking, I lay on my back and look at the night sky with an unusually deep focus. Stars and moon become brighter.

In both sesshin and the mountains there is a structure which must be followed. In sesshin it is stillness, back straight, and diaphragmatic breathing. Backpacking alone requires constant attention to what you are doing. Where is the wind coming from? What do the clouds say about the weather? Always, always being aware of how your feet meet the ground. A trip in the back country can lead to problems. Lack of balance in sesshin can also create concern.

Away from sitting periods at sesshin I must maintain a practice of awareness. I need to monitor what I eat and get rest when I can. If my strength is not maintained, my mind and focus soon begin to weaken. Backpacking requires monitoring my eating and hydration. Often I do not want to eat or drink. If I miss a meal, the result might not be immediate but it will occur within 24 to 48 hours.

I am ultimately my own guide when on the bench or in the mountains. It is I who decides how much I invest and how far I am willing to go. Can I deal with the emotional and physical discomfort? There is always a point in both where I want to quit. Can I? Yes. That choice is always there. Do I? That is the question in both.

I love both experiences. They are difficult, and I always learn something new about myself and my relationship to my surroundings. This year in the mountains I learned about my relationship to writing.

I usually write each day. In the mountains this summer I did not write a word. What I realized is that for me writing is a reflective practice. It is an activity in which I ask questions and maybe generate answers. In the mountains there were neither questions nor answers. It was all there in the moment. All I needed to do was pay attention: look, listen, smell, taste and feel. I needed to do nothing with it. The deeper my senses were involved, the more all was connected. Maybe writing is an indication of separation. This is the koan I brought back from the mountains of Wyoming.

Summer sesshin is now a three-week process for me. I realize walking in the mountains is an extension of what I begin in the zendo each summer. Dharma Gates are truly countless and within them I take refuge. *~*

### 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](mailto:gasmith@clark.edu). *~*



## SUMMER 2018 SESSHIN AND TRANSMISSION CEREMONY AT STONES & CLOUDS

by Paul Birkeland

It was an exploration to be sure. Once again, we came together from never being apart, to renew our vows, inhabit the dharma, and explore the path of the Buddha. Stones and Clouds was our vessel and held us as we navigated the bells and chants and teachings and, most of all, the silence of summer sesshin.

Each morning's shuffle from cars to ante-room to zendo in the cool pre-dawn ended with the densho bell settling us into our places. Each day's sun rose into the zendo during morning rounds bringing a pulse of heat that would grow more intense through the day. Breakfast and dokusan and outdoor kinhin in the sun-baked garden, ambrosian meals (the work of many people!) and teisho from roshi prescribed a familiar container to fill with our practice.

And fill it we did.

We filled each day with the baritone thrumming of sutras punctuated by skittering harmonics around the zendo. And each day, each round, the slow vocalization of the bell and the pointedness of the clappers recalled us to our places. And finally, we filled the zendo with the always-present, unvoiced potential of stillness that only the roshi's voice dare trespass.

The last day, the close of sesshin, drew us into a circle as Lee Ann Nail, one of our own, received transmission from Leonard Marcel Roshi. Her dharma grandfather, Pat Hawk Roshi, and her dharma great-grandfather, Robert Aitken Roshi, looked on from picture frames beyond the incense smoke on the altar. A series of mondo gave evidence of her experience, and we sat as honored guests for her first public teisho before she received congratulatory gifts (including a profoundly impermanent box of chocolates) from sangha members. The dharma wheel continues to turn! ⚡



Top photo: The new teacher receives her kotsu.  
Above: Shosan with Ted Fontaine.



**Above:** Leonard Marcel and Lee Ann Nail.

**Below:** Summer Sesshin attendees. From left to right, standing: Josh Shindler, Greg Smith, Dan Dickinson, Ted Fontaine, Lisa Rosser, Eric Roost, Paul Birkeland, Jack Sattler. Front row, left to right: Kailyn Kent, Teresa Marcel, Leonard Marcel, Leanne Latterell, Richard Lance, Lee Ann Nail. Photos by Teresa Marcel.



## ZAZENKAI & STUDY GROUP AT STONES & CLOUDS

**Z**azenkai are an opportunity for intense practice with the Sangha in a shorter time-frame than either a Kosesshin or a Sesshin, as they are limited to one day only.

There will be one more zazenkai in 2018, on Saturday, October 20. See page 2 for early dates in 2019.

Zazenkai take place from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. In addition to formal zazen, the day includes a sutra service, teisho, and dokusan. Please bring a brown bag lunch, to be eaten in silence. Teas and water will be provided.

You are asked to wear plain conservative clothing of dark or subdued color – 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.

While there is no set fee for zazenkai, a **donation of \$20** is requested and much appreciated to help cover costs. Simply leave your donation in the dana basket in the hallway.

Zazenkai is followed by a study group, to which all are invited. Study group lasts approximately one hour, and is centered on a reading agreed upon at the end of the previous meeting.

Please contact Teresa Marcel at [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com) or 503.636.9009 to reserve a place for Zazenkai, and for more information. ✎



## GRATITUDE & THANKFULNESS, *continued from page 1*

When we lose ourselves in an experience of something greater than our small ego-self, there is a joy of limitless belonging, a cosmic kinship with all other creatures and things of creation and with the very stardust from which we all come. All gratitude celebrates belonging. In that moment, the world is accepted just as it is. Psychologist Abraham Maslow, who coined the term "peak experience," wrote: "The cognition which comes (as part of a peak experience)... can best be described as non-evaluating, non-comparing, non judging... Evil itself is accepted and understood and seen in its proper place in the whole, as belonging there, as unavoidable, as necessary, as proper... (Such) universal understanding would never blame or condemn or be disappointed or shocked. Our only possible emotions," he wrote, "would be pity, compassion, kindness, perhaps sadness or amusement." In other words, the fullness of life has been unlocked. Denial has become acceptance. Chaos has become ordered. Confusion has become clarity.

Such is the way it is in that peak moment of unity. In the next moment you may have thought or felt or even called out, "Thank you!" That first moment of union is the moment of gratefulness. The next moment is the moment of thankfulness. The first moment of union and belonging is gratefulness, because it is full of appreciation for something entirely unearned, completely grati-

itous – existence, life, belonging, union. This is the literal meaning of grate-full-ness, the fullness of gratitude. In a moment of gratefulness, there is no discrimination. One fully accepts the whole of this given universe and complete union with it. The next moment, when the fullness of gratitude overflows into thanksgiving, there is movement back into the realm of thought and dualities. There is thought about giver, gift and receiver. Gratefulness has become thankfulness. It is a different kind of fullness. Gratefulness is complete awareness; thankfulness is thoughtfulness. And both expand into a generosity which reflects the boundless generosity of God. The Bible, and especially the Psalms, are filled with verses of thankfulness. With this new perspective, a meal has become a feast, a house has become a home, a stranger has become a friend.

In our lives, gratefulness needs to flow into thanksgiving in order to give meaning. Our moments of ultimate belonging determine the extent of our ultimate meaning. If we are not joyfully alive with gratitude and thanksgiving, what barrier impedes us? Perhaps it is that the gratefulness in the depth of our hearts sings with a "still, small voice" which is so easily drowned by the noise we endure around us and the noise we create ourselves. Or perhaps the barrier is our own willfulness. St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) said: "...those refusing to be ruled by

God's gentleness will have the misfortune of being ruled by their own selves; whoever voluntarily throws off the gentle yoke and light burden of charity and gratitude will be obliged to carry the unbearable burden of their own will." So, on this path we need more letting go, more getting out of the way, more silence, more stillness, more awe. We need more often to lose ourselves and our willfulness by simply gazing at the silent stars or sitting more often in contemplation.

The more we do so, the more we realize that all of life is a gift. Ste. Therese de Lisieux (1873 – 1897) said, "It's all grace!" The gifts or blessings of life are always there, but we are most often inattentive to them. Every moment of every day we have an opportunity to be grateful for many things, for everything. Most people just do not notice. Most of us go through our days in a daze.

The poetess, Mary Oliver (1935 - ) helps us here. She writes:

(For what are you grateful?)

The dew-snail;

The low-flying sparrow...

The tin music of the cricket's body...

The thrush greeting the morning;

The salty talk of the wren;

The deep cup of the hour of silence....







## GRATITUDE & THANKFULNESS, *continued from page 8*

The oaks letting down their dark and hairy fruit...

Queen Anne's lace, with its parsnip root...

The sea, and its wide shoulders...

The first snow.

So, God wakes us from our sleep.

Too often we are asleep to the gifts of our daily life. The perspective which enables us to see all of life as a gift is also the perspective which produces a grateful attitude. Gratefulness makes us aware of the gift and creates a feeling of quiet joy. Gratefulness is the key to happiness and is at the very core of the spiritual life. A spiritual person with a contemplative eye sees it all as grace and is grateful, and thankful, for all of it. In the desert of Palestine in the sixth century, St. Barsanuphis (d. 540) said: "(One who) endures everything with gratitude is welcomed into the Kingdom."

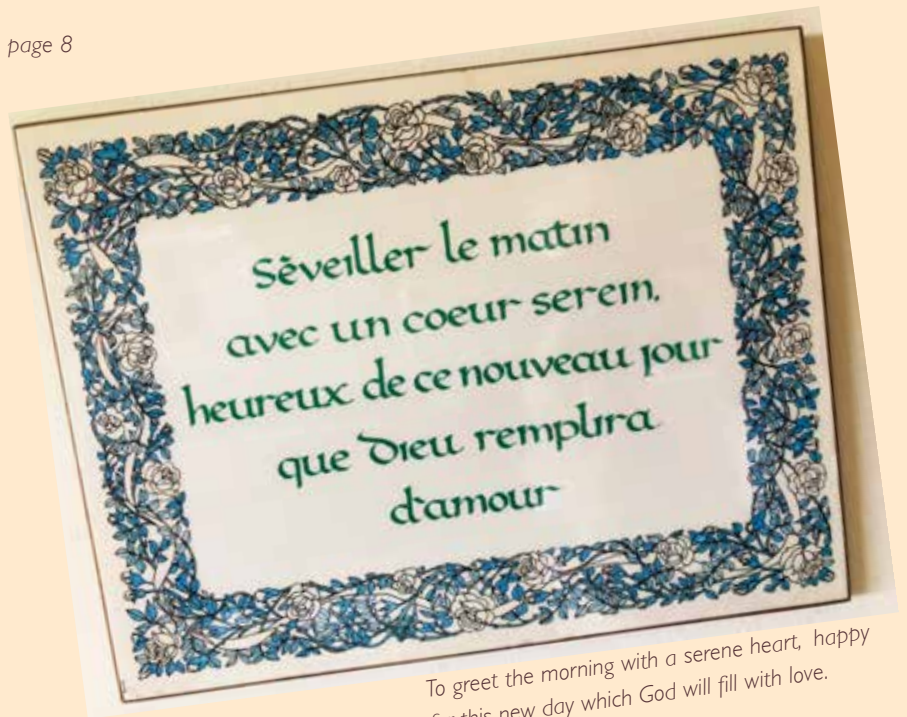
In this he echoes St. Paul's famous exhortation to "rejoice always, pray continually and give thanks in all things." (1 Thessalonians 5:16 – 18). We do not have to like everything that comes to us, nor even to understand it, but if we can receive what comes with an open and prayerful attitude, we shall see whatever comes as an opportunity to practice, as an opportunity for gratitude, as an opportunity for grace. We need to wake up to whatever the moment brings and respond to it just as it is, with the "non-evaluating, non-comparing, non-judging" attitude of the contemplative life.

The literature of the Desert Fathers tells us of the meeting between St. Paul of Thebes (228 – 341) and St. Anthony the Great (251 – 356). Paul is generally regarded as the first Christian hermit and Anthony as the father of the Desert Fathers and the originator of Christian monasticism. After they had each been in the desert for many, many decades, Anthony walked two days to visit Paul, shortly before Paul died at the age of 113. St. Jerome (340 – 420) tells us that they met each other with joy and, after breaking bread, they spent the night in prayer together, giving

praise and thanks to God and being grateful for the blessing of their meeting and of their hermit lives. They knew and remembered, as St. Therese and St. Barsanuphis knew and remembered, and as we need to know and remember, that all of life is a gift, all of it grace, and in doing so we come to an awareness that God's nature is generosity and mercy.

The first reality to which one awakens in the contemplative life is the generosity of God – gratuitous, superabundant, without return: a God of boundless generosity. The encounter with God, the living Holy One of the universe, does not only put one in the presence of the absolute, but it also completes and transforms one's life. Gratitude and thanksgiving are the response to this progressive and continual grace. The entire life of Yeshua (Jesus) was an incessant thanksgiving, which sometimes was made explicit and solemn – as at the Last Supper. The word eucharist comes to us from the Greek and means gratitude which is the source of giving thanks. Jesus was aware in each moment of the boundless generosity and mercy of the Father. So must we be aware as well.

It is so because we never start to be grateful unless we wake up, wake up to the wonder of life as it is given to us in each mo-



To greet the morning with a serene heart, happy for this new day which God will fill with love.

ment. The recipe for joyful and grateful living is simple: stop, stop at the moment, stop at this moment, breathe and wake up. Look and be aware of what you see. Then, with full attention and mindfulness, respond to what the moment requires of you. The recipe is simple, but simple does not mean easy. Some of the simplest things have become difficult, because we have lost our childlike simplicity and have not yet found our mature one. Growth in gratitude is growth in maturity.

Gratitude is like a pair of glasses that gets progressively sharper. The more grateful, and thankful, we are, the more we see what there is for which to be grateful and thankful. Gratitude is the lens which reveals God's grace at work, even in the most minute details of life. Gratitude does, indeed, make sense of the past, bring forth today, and create a vision for the future. And it is the cornerstone of ongoing, deep daily joy.

Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) said that the only true prayer is "Thank you."

And St. Thomas Aquinas (1224 – 1274) said, "Live and work with grace and gratitude."

May each of us do so – every moment of every day. ✎



## HAIKU

by Naheed Brown



A bud knows and waits  
Promises possibilities  
A bundle of hope

A dragonfly sees  
Sitting on a blade of grass  
Still, joyful, mindful

A furtive bee lands  
A chrysanthemum unfurls  
The circle of life

A tiny acorn  
A giant sequoia tree  
The mountain echoes

Breathe, be present, breathe  
Let each moment see your best  
Life's lotus unfolds

Swirls of purple clouds  
Irises paint the fields blue  
I stay on the path

Stay balanced, mindful  
Like the hummingbird perches  
Life's nectar seeps in

## JUNE 2018 CONTEMPLATIVE INTENSIVE RETREAT AT THE ABBEY: TWO PERSPECTIVES, *continued from page 4*

deep-voiced cacophony of bullfrogs in the two ponds seemed at first to be a racket that ensured the death of any reasonable sleep. But, with each breath, each acceptance of what is, this choir of "pond monks" created their own monastic canonical hour as they perfected their antiphonal patter.

Sister Joan provided two conferences and interviews during the course of the retreat. On the first day, she spoke of the "Breath of God." This involves attending to our breath when we sit in contemplation. It is not simply an exercise that helps us focus; rather, with faithful and loving practice, it is the abandonment of our being to the Breath and Being of God. As Hafiz, the Sufi mystic states: "become the hole in a flute that the Christ's breath moves through."

On day two, she shared a beautiful conference entitled "An Orientation of the Heart." She encouraged us to notice, in times of in-

ternal or external chaos, that it is important to distinguish between optimism and hope, and to realize that hope does not depend on rational predictions, but on our belief in the faithfulness of God.

Finally, it became very clear that the participation of commuters enriched the entire experience. Their attendance contributed greatly to the flow rather than distract from it. It is our hope that this tradition grows in the CIRs to come. Our time sitting before the icon of Christ the Teacher, written years ago by our own Jim Mishalani, who was in attendance, was very special indeed. ⚡

Mike Seely



Altar Icon, written by Jim Mishalani.



**ROHATSU SESSHIN AT STONES AND CLOUDS ZENDO DECEMBER 4 - 9, 2018**



The 2018 Seven Thunders Zen Rohatsu Sesshin will be held at the Stones and Clouds Zendo in Lake Oswego, OR, from Tuesday, December 4, at 5 p.m. until Sunday, December 9, at 10 a.m.. Sesshin will be led by Leonard Marcel. Registration deadline is November 20. Registrations will be accepted on a first come basis. As this sesshin is usually well subscribed, early registration and payment are 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 \$270 (member rate \$240) and includes all meals (vegetarian). 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.

Full payment is due upon registration. Should you need to cancel, all but \$25 is refundable until November 20; after that

date all but \$100 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 available to Seven Thunders members. 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. 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.

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 Rohatsu sesshin fee payment.) Questions? Please contact Teresa Marcel at 503.636.9009 or [tdmarcel@mac.com](mailto:tdmarcel@mac.com) ⚡

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**REGISTRATION FORM**  
**STONES & CLOUDS ROHATSU SESSHIN, DECEMBER 4 - 9, 2018**

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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 \$240

I enclose \$270 – please apply \$30 to

I have paid online

Seven Thunders member dues.

**Please make checks payable to Seven Thunders.**



**CONTEMPLATIVE INTENSIVE RETREAT (CIR) JANUARY 17-20, 2019**

This retreat will be held on the campus of Mary's Woods at Marylhurst in the Historic Laundry building guest house, located at 17383 Holy Names Drive, Lake Oswego, Oregon 97034. The retreat will begin at 6:00 p.m. Thursday January 17th, and conclude after 11:00 Mass on Sunday the 20th.

Sr. Joan Saalfeld, SNJM, will lead our retreat, sit with us, present talks and offer interviews. Sr Joan is a member of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. She currently lives and works in Portland, Oregon. She has studied and practiced Zen and Contemplation for 40 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.

The retreat will be a standard CIR integrating an optional opportunity to attend daily Mass. The sitting schedule will begin at 6:00 a.m. and conclude at 9:00 p.m. This is a short and intense CIR retreat. All retreatants must commit to participating fully in the entire schedule of group sittings.

Space is limited to a maximum of 10. Additional applicants will be wait-listed in case of cancellations. The Guest House offers residential facilities for nine retreatants,

consisting of a private room and full bath. Residential retreat fee is \$330 (member rate \$300), non-residential fee is \$240 (member rate \$210). All meals included. Meals will be prepared and delivered by volunteers. The fare is vegetarian, simple, and balanced. Participants will share setup and cleaning assignments around meal activity.

The non-member rate includes membership in Seven Thunders for the calendar year, which will then qualify you for the member rate at other Seven Thunders regular retreats and sesshin through the remainder of the calendar year. Partial scholarships are available to Seven Thunders members.

The deposit to hold your place is \$150, with the remaining balance due on arrival at Marylhurst. All but \$25 will be refunded for cancellation requests received by the registrar on or before December 1; after that date, all but \$50 will be refunded. Registrations will be made in the order of postmark dates, alphabetically by last name within each date.

Some sitting equipment will be provided on the premises, but you may wish

to bring your own to be sure you have what you need or prefer. Dark, layered clothing is right for this occasion. Distracting jewelry and perfumes are not. Bed and bath linens are provided.

To register for the retreat, complete the form below and send it with your deposit to retreat organizer and registrar: **Mike Seely, 4904 SW SW Orchard Lane, Portland OR 97219**. Please make checks payable to **Seven Thunders**. Alternatively, you may e-mail Mike Seely at **ms452mss@me.com** with your registration 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 January CIR fee payment.) Questions? Please contact retreat coordinator Mike Seely at **ms452mss@me.com** or **503.494.6096** ✉



**REGISTRATION FORM  
CONTEMPLATIVE INTENSIVE RETREAT (CIR) JANUARY 17-20, 2019**

I wish to register as a resident retreatant (\$330 non-member, \$300 member)

I wish to register as a non-resident retreatant (\$240 non-member, \$210 member)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Special needs \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I commit to participating fully in the entire schedule of formal group contemplation.

**Payment enclosed:**

\$330 non member residential fee

\$300 member residential fee

\$240 non-member non-residential fee

\$210 member non-residential fee

Deposit of \$75 enclosed

Donation for Scholarships \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Request a Scholarship of \$ \_\_\_\_\_