

SEVEN THUNDERS

newsletter

www.seventhunders.org



February 2024

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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.



SHOBOGENZO CASE 44 TREASURY OF THE TRUE DHARMA EYE

by Leonard Marcel

Guishan sat on the teaching seat. A student monk approached and said, "Master, please expound the Dharma for the assembly." Guishan replied, "I have already exhausted myself for you." The student monk bowed.

mission from his teacher, Baizhang (Hyakujo). Thus empowered, he retires into the mountains, builds himself a hut and does nothing there other than train himself further for several years. He builds no buildings, offers no teachings, has no students. Only after seven or eight

Continued on page 6

Subtly Manifesting The Truth

The master in this case is Guishan Lingyou (Jp: Isan Reiyu, 771-853), who was a student and Dharma heir of Baizhang Huaihai (Jp: Hyakujo Ekai, 720-814) and the master of three important successors, including Yangshan Huiji (Kyo-zan Ejaku, 813-890), who was known as Little Shakyamuni, Xiangyan Zhixian (Kyogen Chikan, d.898), who became enlightened when a pebble he swept struck bamboo, and the woman known as Iron Grindstone Liu (Ryu Tetsuma, n.d.), who was formidable in Dharma encounters.

We first encounter Guishan (Isan) in case 40 of the *Wu-men Kuan* (Jp: *Mumonkan*) when he kicks over the water jug and receives teaching trans-

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SEVEN THUNDERS RETREATS & EVENTS

FIRST SATURDAY SITTINGS

Monthly "First Saturday" sittings are returning to the Abbey, with an online option. Links to join the sitting online can be found on the Seven Thunders website at seventhunders.org. The format remains much the same, with formal group sitting beginning 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, the Abbey and Seven Thunders are gratefully accepted. The schedule for 2024 is:

- February 3, Leonard Marcel
 - March 2, Leonard Marcel
 - April 6, Leonard Marcel
 - May 4, Sr. Kathleen Pruitt
 - June 1, Sr. Kathleen Pruitt
 - July 13*, Sr. Kathleen Pruitt
 - August 3, Leonard Marcel
 - September 7, Leonard Marcel
 - October 5, Sr. Kathleen Pruitt
 - November 2, Leonard Marcel
 - December 7, Sr. Kathleen Pruitt
- (* = second Saturday)

SEVEN THUNDERS REGULAR SITTINGS

PORTLAND AREA SITTINGS

■ Monday evenings at Stones and Clouds Zendo, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., zazen & dokusan. Hybrid events with both in-zendo attendance and online via Zoom. Further details at: seventhunders.org ✨

SALEM SITTINGS

■ For Salem Zen Center's online offerings, email for the Zoom links: SalemZenCenter@gmail.com. Teacher: LeeAnn Nail. Tuesday evening meditation & dharma talk from 7:00 to 8:45 p.m. and a Saturday morning meditation & poetry share from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. ✨

RETREAT SCHEDULE

- March 22 - 24, 2024 – Palm Sunday CIR at the Abbey, led by Leonard Marcel. Registration information on page 11.
- April 12 & 13 – Bend Retreat, led by Leonard Marcel. For more information and to register, please contact Denise Fainberg at 541.213.8001 or dsfainberg@yahoo.com
- July 9 - 13 – Summer Sesshin at Stones & Clouds, led by Leonard Marcel. Registration information on page 12.
- December 3 - 8 – Rohatsu Sesshin at Stones & Clouds, led by Leonard Marcel. Registration information in a later newsletter.



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 SevenThunders.treasurer@gmail.com. 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 no longer receive 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. These will be hybrid events from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with full in-zendo attendance available upon reservation. More details on page 10.

- February 10, 2024
- March 9
- September 14
- October 19 ✨

OTHER PACIFIC NORTHWEST DIAMOND SANGHA GROUPS

PORTLAND SITTINGS

■ Ring of Moss Sangha. Zazen: Wednesday evenings, 7:00-8:30 and Sunday mornings, 7:30-8:30; virtually on Tuesday mornings, 6:00-7:00. Contact: Teacher Andrew Mason at andrewmasonpdx@gmail.com. ✨

OLYMPIA SITTINGS

■ Contemplative Community at St. Michael's. 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. Contact: Mary Solberg, 360.250.6362 or msolberg2@gmail.com ✨

PORT ANGELES SITTINGS

■ NO Sangha. 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. ✨

SEATTLE SITTINGS

■ Three Treasures Sangha. Teachers: Jack Duffy and Lee Shields. 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, go to their website at: www.three-treasures-sangha.org ✨



PRESIDENT'S REPORT: ADAPTING TO OUR TIMES

by Mike Seely

As I turn the page of 2023 to yet another New Year, I find myself reflecting on the fact that Seven Thunders has managed to emerge from the height of the pandemic very whole and well adapted to a new landscape. During the last year, the hybrid model for gatherings and retreats galvanized nicely, creating a good working construct. Examples can be found in the well-attended Summer Sesshin and the fall zazen gatherings that followed. Though we had a lower attendance for Rohatsu, we experimented with officers onsite with other participants online. This worked well as a work-around, and a rich experience was had by all.

Our contemplative gatherings have gained good momentum as the hybrid model has been refined for First Saturday gatherings at the Abbey. In person and online attendance has grown steadily along with the resolution of a variety of technical challenges. The

January 2024 First Saturday had a solid attendance of 19 people. We are fortunate to have the continued gifts of Leonard's and Sister Kathleen's teachings. More contemplative opportunities will be back in play in the coming year.

I want to extend my thanks for the ongoing work of the Board of Directors. We have a solid group of seven who are very attentive to the oversight of the organization. This dedication to the mission of Seven Thunders is very important. We are a small-in-number organization overall, but the depth of our retreat opportunities remains in balance with our means and capacities.

You recently received our annual appeal letter reminding everyone of membership dues and the opportunity to make an additional donation. Donations are important and welcomed as they allow us to maintain a func-

tional budget balance that supports our retreats and allows for an ongoing scholarship fund. If you have not had a chance to make a donation, I encourage you to consider Seven Thunders in your annual giving. Thank you!

Finally, I have no doubt that the upcoming year will likely hold even more potential challenges due to the deep divides and polarizations that seem to be abounding across the world. I am not naive to the fact that these myriad distractions, concerns, fears, and anxieties will sadly weave themselves into everyday life. This makes the need for daily consistent practice both on and off the cushion ever more important. As our teachers so graciously remind us, "please persevere!!" Thank you for your practice and your ongoing support of Seven Thunders.

Faithfully,

Mike Seely

SEVEN THUNDERS MEMBERSHIP: TIME TO JOIN OR RENEW!

Seven Thunders is an organization formed to support growth towards a deepening spiritual awareness and appreciation of life. We believe each of us has a unique path and we benefit from teachers and companions along the Way.

Your membership is a vital part of this vibrant organization and a gift to all others in this faith community. Our practices support and sustain each other as we proceed on the path of an awakened and compassionate life.

If you haven't already done so, now is the time to renew your Seven Thunders membership for 2024. If you have been receiving complimentary copies of the newsletter this past year, and have not yet joined Seven Thunders, this is the last full newsletter you will be receiving.

Full membership dues are only \$30 per calendar year. With your membership renewal, please also consider any additional donation to help support the offerings of Seven Thunders.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

Membership Type:

☐ Full member (\$30 per person)

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

☐ I am pleased to include a donation of \$ _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____

Please make out your check to SEVEN THUNDERS and send it with this form to Seven Thunders Treasurer:

Jenny Brausch
P.O. Box 3119
Albany, OR 97321

Though payment by check is preferred, you may also go to <https://seventhunders.org/asp-products/donate/> to renew your membership and/or make a donation utilizing a credit card.



ROHATSU 2023

by Greg Smith



Above: Top row: left, back row from L to R: Dan Dickinson, Jared Taylor, Mike Seely, Greg Smith. Leonard Marcel in front. Center: Teresa Marcel. Right: Katy Bain. Middle row, L to R: Pam Evans, Sheila Molnar, Paul Birkeland. Bottom row: Marian Morgan.

The 2023 hybrid Rohatsu Sesshin took place at the Stones and Clouds Zendo between December 1-5, 2023. Attendance was small, with four people sitting in the zendo in addition to Leonard and Teresa, and four people joining us on-line. In-person attendees included Dan Dickinson, Mike Seely, Greg Smith, and Jared Taylor, who shared among themselves the roles of tanto, jiki, jisha, and ino. Katy Bain, Paul Birkeland, Pam Evans, and Marian Morgan beamed in from Washington State, Virginia, and Great Britain. Holding a sesshin with such a small number in the zendo was an experiment which proved to be successful.

Proceeding in this way meant that the responsibility for fulfilling the different tasks associated with an intensive retreat was shared among a group of experienced sitters rather

than falling on Leonard and Teresa alone, as was the case during the pandemic. Scheduling the first sitting period at 9:00 meant eliminating the need to prepare and clean up after breakfast, and a simplified menu (still remarkably tasty and satisfying) streamlined meal preps. With luck, attendance at future sesshin will not be as sparse, but we discovered that regardless of our small numbers, the impact of our time with one another—both those in the zendo and those online—was powerful and rich.

Leonard bookended the sesshin with teisho exploring the first case in The Blue Cliff Record and the account of the Buddha's enlightenment experience in The Transmission of the Lamp, grounding our sitting in the founding stories of our tradition from India and China. Greg offered a dharma talk about

case 2 from The Blue Cliff Record regarding the stance of Zhaozhou, another central ancestor, on what it means to avoid picking and choosing. In between was the silence, the bells and clackers, the calls to dokusan, the sutra chanting, the mealtime gatha. That silence drew us deeper and deeper into a sense of intimacy with one another and our practice, highlighting the value of these times taken out of the daily routine, times that provide an invaluable opportunity to reconnect with the fundamental and to recharge. Our next sesshin will be in early July. We hope you will be able to join us. ⚡



Can We Find Love in What is Left?

by Tom Hampson, note by Greg Smith

Note: Tom Hampson and Greg Smith have been friends since they were eleven, growing up in Medford, Oregon. Tom introduced Greg to Zen and the poetry of Gary Snyder when they were teenagers. Tom's wife of more than 50 years developed early onset Alzheimer's a half-dozen years ago and now lives at Touchmark in Beaverton. Tom wrote this poem a month or so ago looking forward and back as they traverse this journey of aging together. He is pleased to be able to share it here.



I want to explore the notion of love
as a force, a vibration
a stirring of atoms
a fullness in the emptiness

There's a love that sings
the birds to sleep
wakes them up
fills their songs

It shakes the trees
scatters the leaves
it hums and rings
a buzzing kind of harmony

Like the chimes out our backdoor
a pentatonic melody
of love and loyalty
loss and discovery

Our arms around each other
like baby raccoons
like a bundle of kittens
in a nest of old shirts

Like twins hugging after a long time gone
that's how we are together
that's how we are apart
even then I feel her next to me

That's how the world can be
oh my what we had to lose
to be this close
to sing these blues

Would we choose if we had a choice?
to give it all up for love
to feel the atoms dance
around the edges of ourselves

Do we have to be sad to feel it
to find the joy without boundaries
to touch and feel the universe
pulse within and between us

Tom Hampson
December 2023

BEND RETREAT NOVEMBER 2023

by Leanne Latterell

The Central Oregon Contemplative and Buddhist practitioners had their annual fall retreat with Leonard Marcel, Roshi.

The Contemplative Christian talk focused on Philippians 2: 5-11 which tells us to "make our minds the mind of Christ Jesus." Central to this is the process of kenosis, an ongoing process of self emptying. Anchored in a silence, this process potentiates our deeper connection to God and each other.

The Buddhist talk found us being invited to notice the calligraphy on the altar behind Leonard's teaching place. It means Makoto

which speaks of truth, devotion and a sincere commitment to practice that finds an intimacy with no gap. This is Zen.

Attendees were: Joe Barrett, Pam Evans, Denise Fainberg, Casey Hagan, Richard Lance, Madeleine Landis, Leanne Latterell, Sue Moir, Nancy Roberts, Rom Roberts.

The **next retreat in Bend** will be in-person, on April 12 & 13, led by Leonard Marcel. For more information and to register, please contact Denise Fainberg at 541.213.8001 or dsfainberg@yahoo.com ⚡



TREASURY OF THE TRUE DHARMA EYE, *continued from page 1*

years does anyone notice him. Students then begin to gather round and soon a large monastery comes into being. A good model for all teachers.

Guishan (Isan) had a very strong lineage known for its subtleties, a lineage that continued over several generations for more than a hundred and fifty years after his death.

One of the cases in which we can see such subtlety is case 15 of the *Shoyoroku* (*Book of Serenity*) where he asks his principal student, Yangshan (Kyozan), "From where have you come?" Yangshan (Kyozan) replies, "From the fields." Guishan (Isan) enters further: "How many people are there in the fields?" Yangshan (Kyozan) plants his hoe in the ground, clasps his hands and stands erect. Guishan (Isan) tests further and says, "On South Mountain there are a lot of people cutting thatch." Yangshan (Kyozan) takes his hoe and leaves. The commentary says: "Teacher and apprentice join ways. Father and son complement each other's actions. The subtle family style is a guide for a thousand ages."

The family style is again apparent in case 24 of the *Hekiganroku* (*Blue Cliff Record*) when Iron Grindstone Liu, who was living at the base of the mountain, walks uphill to visit her teacher. Guishan (Isan) greets her by saying, "Old cow, you have come!" The Grindstone tests him by saying, "Tomorrow, there will be a great communal feast on Mount Tai. Will you be going, teacher?" Guishan (Isan) relaxes his body. The Grindstone immediately leaves.

Do you understand the subtlety? Just opening to what these two are doing is the first step. What does it mean to arrive? "Where do you come from?" A teacher asks the student, "Who are you? From what do you emerge? What is your origin?" When you enter a Zen space, coming into the zendo or standing before your place, you bring your hands together in the position known as *gassho*. As part of arriving, you practice this gesture of two becoming one, yet remaining two. A gesture of intimacy. You have arrived. Iron Grindstone Liu "came" to Guishan. She came out of emptiness, the world of realization. She presented him with 'mu'. From the ultimate essential point of view,

is there any arriving? Any departing? Any teacher on the mountain? Any woman visiting?

A capping phrase here might be: The Heart Sutra embodied.

Guishan (Isan) is also in the world of realization, where there is neither coming nor going, but he wants to examine her state of consciousness, so he responds from the phenomenal (conventional) point of view. He says, "Old cow, so you have come!" When the student arrives, the teacher meets the student where the student is. "Old cow," he calls her. Not very cordial but yet affectionate. Yamada Roshi and Aitken Roshi translate this as "old buffalo" (as in "enlightened one"). "So, enlightened one, you have come out of emptiness." Here he is like a probing staff, checking her depth. A grindstone meeting the Grindstone. She is not thrown off balance. She tests him herself, saying, "Tomorrow there is a great communal feast ... Are you going to go?" Now you need to understand that this feast, about which she is speaking, is six hundred miles away.



Yet that is not the only point to pay attention to in this sentence. The other important point is the communal feast. In the "Song of Zazen," Hakuin (1686-1769) reminds us that "singing and dancing are the voice of the law." True enough, as far as it goes, but also compassion, tolerance, understanding and patience are the voice of the Dharma, as well. Do not miss the importance of the communal feast, of Nirvana in the world, of singing and dancing as celebration, the importance of being there. She is asking because it is important that there be attendance at this communal feast six hundred miles away. It is important that there be involvement in the great drama of life.

Continued on page 7



TREASURY OF THE TRUE DHARMA EYE, *continued from page 6*

Guishan (Isan) demonstrates his response. He relaxes his body and lies down. What is he doing? Do not take his lying down as unconcern. On one level he may be saying that he no longer has need of such a meeting; but on a deeper level, there is more. Lying down on Mount Gui is connected to dancing on Mount Tai. How? How does one disappear in the south and emerge in the north, without barriers, without obstruction? How is a word spoken in New York heard in Portland? If you think that this is just fanciful Zen hyperbole, you have not yet awakened to the ultimate dimension of reality. How do we live with true freedom?

Here Guishan (Isan) shows the connection by relaxing his body and lying down. The Grindstone immediately leaves. She is fully present and she acts in a moment. Gone. One calls, the other responds; the other acts, the first responds. First one is guest and the other host; then the roles reverse. First one gives life and the other takes it away; and again the roles reverse. Action to action they complement each other. Phrase to phrase, they are in complete accord, two bodies supported by a single staff. Two arrows meeting in mid-air. Free to appear and to disappear. A capping phrase here might be: They leave no gap where even a needle might enter.

In the case before us, the subtlety to be appreciated is Guishan's (Isan) comment, "I have already exhausted myself for you." To all appearances, he has not done anything yet. Has not raised a finger. Yet he says he has given everything he has to give. What is he saying here? What kind of giving has taken place? We think of giving as an overt action of some sort, but we may not understand the subtleties of giving.

Giving is not always obvious. Frequently its presence can easily be missed. Giving



love, for example, can often be subtle. It may simply take the form of an openness that permeates the atmosphere, or it may be just a look, a gesture, a touch. So much is communicated that is beyond the verbal. We tend to cling to words and become blind to other forms of communication.

The only information we have about the setting of this case is that Guishan (Isan) is sitting on the teaching seat when the student monk asks him to expound the Dharma. How are we to get a sense of what he does or how he exhausts himself? Note here the subtlety that expounding the Dharma is not necessarily limited to expression in words, nor does wordlessness imply lack of expression. The Buddha taught for forty-seven years and said at the end that he had never uttered a single word. What then was his teaching? There are endless numbers of sutras that have come down to us? Are they not the Buddha's teaching? Perhaps looking at another case will help us here.

The priest Longtan (Ryutan, n.d.) was making rice cakes for a living when one day Master Daowu (Dogo Enchi, 769-835) passed his stall, bowed and said, "Be my attendant and I shall teach you the essential dharma gate." So, Longtan (Ryutan) agreed and joined Daowu's (Dogo) assembly. A year passed. Finally, Longtan (Ryutan) complained, "When I came here you said you would teach me the essential dharma gate. As yet, I have not received any instruction from you." Daowu (Dogo) replied, "When you greet me, I join my palms together in gassho. When I sit, you stand beside me. When you bring me tea, I receive it from you." Longtan (Ryutan) was silent for a while. Then Daowu (Dogo) said, "When you see it, you just see it. When you think about it, you miss it." At that, Longtan (Ryutan) attained realization. What did he realize? What was the subtle teaching he received? If you say that it was greeting someone with courtesy or serving and receiving tea appropriately, you are wide of the mark.


TREASURY OF THE TRUE DHARMA EYE, *continued from page 7*


In the opening lines of the fascicle, *Expressing the Way (Dotoku)*, great master Dogen (1200-1253) writes: "The buddhas and ancestors are the expression of the truth. Therefore, when buddhas and ancestors are deciding who is an authentic Buddhist ancestor, they always ask, 'Does this person express the truth or not?' They ask this question with the mind. They ask this question with the body. They ask this question with a staff and a whisk." So how do we ask with the body? How do we ask with the mind? How does the Way subtly express itself?

In order truly to embody and express the awakened reality, effort and meticulousness of practice are required. To complete a koan or to grasp a point of the Dharma is not considered complete until it is fully absorbed and embodied. People tend to intellectualize all the time. It is almost inevitable that as soon as people gain some insight on this path, they begin to intellectualize about it, to intellectualize the Dharma. When they do that, they are not embodying it. It needs to be fully absorbed and become part of embodied living in order to be fully realized. This is called *kyogai*, when the truth of that point of the Dharma or of that koan or that

realization has been manifested in every aspect and relationship of one's life.

Realization needs to become a fluent aspect of our behavior, of how we act, of how we treat ourselves and each other. It needs to be displayed in every action without deliberate effort or self-consciousness. It needs to be present in the body so that the body itself teaches without words, without explanation.

There is a period of time in our training on this path, after one has been sitting for years and after hopefully some understanding has occurred and been deepened, when it becomes obvious that the Way has become embodied. Then, in their very ordinariness, Zen practitioners express the Buddhadharma in their every action. The practice expresses itself. The Way subtly expresses itself.

As our practice and realization deepen, the way we see, the way we respond, the way we create are all changed and deepened as well. If we are practicing diligently and embodying what we are practicing, it will show

in the way we walk, the way we listen, the way we hear and speak, the way we love, the way we take care of relationships, possessions, the environment and things in our lives. That is what it means to bring the teachings down from the top of the mountain and back into the marketplace. Unless and until they are manifested in everything we do, the process is not yet complete. And so, we practice...and we continue the circle of moment-by-moment daily practice.

Dainin Katagiri Roshi (1928-1990) had this in mind when he penned this verse:

From my human eyes
It seems really impossible to become a Buddha.
But this "I," regarding what a Buddha does,
Vows to practice
To aspire
To be resolute...
Just practice right here, now
And achieve continuity
Endlessly
Forever.
This is living in vow.
Herein a peaceful life is found.

We need to realize that the teachings are not limited to zazen, to liturgy, to precepts or to koan. We are surrounded by teachings. Moment after moment the universe exhausts itself teaching us. We are constantly nourished by this Dharma, if we are alive and awake enough to receive it. Moment after moment, day after day, week after week, month after month, we encounter and engage this Dharma. Engage it with your whole heart-mind and with your whole body. In his subtle way, Guishan (Isan) and his descendants are encouraging us to see this. They and Katagiri Roshi are encouraging us to take meticulous care with our practice. It is truly a treasure. ✨

**JANUARY 2024 CIR***by Nancy Roberts*

We sat down at home during a stressful week of very cold weather and freezing rain to share and hold silence. We refreshed our contemplative sitting practice with the support of our teacher, Leonard Marcel, and timekeeper, Teresa Marcel.

This online winter Contemplative Intensive Retreat included two conferences on the theme of being called and seeking. On Friday, Leonard expanded upon the New Testament story of Jesus calling his first two disciples, saying, "What do you seek?" and "Come and you will see," an invitation to relationship. It is not so easy being called, because while we may feel radiant and hopeful, we also feel resistance to the change in ourselves, accompanied by conflict, fear, and doubt. We must accept this tension as we seek the experience of union with God, the ultimate reality. When our

culture encourages us to keep our attention on outer noise and believing we are separate from God, we must be attentive to experience that union in everyday life, where Jesus reveals himself. The Way is so close, it is in us.

The conference on Saturday highlighted attempts to find a way to return to the Father. Examples of such seekers can be found among early Desert Fathers such as St. Paul of Thebes and St. Anthony. Like them, we must move from the transitory and inconclusive to the unknown, to silence, and then to the holy, the meaning of existence immersed in the Source. Meister Eckhart of the 14th century wrote that the heavy penitential tradition in Catholicism at that time crippled seekers of God's forgiveness and love by preventing them from seeing that God forgives utterly, completely, and all at

once. There is no need for ongoing guilt or pride, a sign of an ego attachment. Seekers of God will find joy and love. We are kept from God by our own ideas and possessions and by believing we are separate from God. In reality, we are transient, attempting to return to the original innocence at our core where we are most truly alive. Father Willigis Jager, one of the early teachers in Seven Thunders, said we are like a wave in the ocean – not the ocean, but inseparable from the ocean, or like the gold in a ring – not the ring, but part of the ring.

Our contemplative life is a response to the call to unite with God. We shared this wisdom in the conferences and held the silence as best we could, strengthened as we seek the divine in our daily lives ✨



Above: Left to right, top row: Lisa Rosser, Teresa Marcel, Richard Lance, Leanne Latterell. Middle row: Beth Brenner, Nancy Roberts, Leonard Marcel. Bottom row: Pam Evans, Susan Freisinger, Susan Moir.

**FROG TEISHO***by Paul Birkeland*

I came upon Frog delivering teisho. I furiously wrote down all the wonderful things he spoke. But as he turned to go, he splashed water down my notebook pages turning all my notes into runny blue puddles. "It's better that you not write down what I've told you," Frog said. "It's better to try to remember each time. Your heart will recall things I never said and those will be the most important of all." ⚡

UPCOMING ZAZENKAI

Zazenkai 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.

Zazenkai dates for 2024 are as follows:

- February 10
- March 9
- September 14
- October 19

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.

These will be hybrid events with both in-zendo attendance and online via Zoom, unless Covid circumstances dictate otherwise.

Please contact Teresa Marcel at StonesCloudsZendo@icloud.com or 503.636.9009 **to reserve a place for Zazenkai.** She will confirm your reservation and, if attending online, send you a Zoom link as well as Zazenkai guidelines a few days before the event.

While there is no set fee for zazenkai, a **donation of \$20** is requested and much appreciated to help cover costs. To offer a donation, please either leave it in the donation basket in the zendo hallway, or send a check to Seven Thunders Treasurer:

Jenny Brausch
PO Box 3119
Albany, OR 97321

**Please make checks out to
"Seven Thunders."**

Zazenkai are 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. ⚡



PALM SUNDAY CONTEMPLATIVE INTENSIVE RETREAT (CIR) MARCH 22 - 24, 2024

This retreat will be held at Our Lady of Guadalupe Trappist Abbey, Lafayette, Oregon. Timed with Palm Sunday, it is an opportunity to deepen your contemplative practice by sitting intimately with the experience of Holy Week. Leonard Marcel will lead our retreat, sit with us, present a talk and offer interviews. He has studied both Zen and Christian Contemplation for more than 35 years, and has been teaching since 1996.

The retreat will begin with supper at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, March 22nd, and continue all day Saturday. It will end before mass on Palm Sunday, March 24th, although retreatants are invited to attend the Palm Sunday Mass.

This retreat integrates most of the monastic liturgies into our schedule – from Lauds and Mass (6:30 a.m.), through the Day Hour (12:30 p.m.), Vespers (5:30 p.m.), and Compline (7:30 p.m.). Vigils (4:15 a.m.) is optional. Our normal sitting schedule will begin at 6:00 a.m. and conclude at 9:00 p.m.

The Abbey's guest facilities limit overnight attendance to 8 people. Each retreatant will have one of the two private rooms in a guest unit, the two sharing a toilet and shower. Bed and bath linens are provided. Meals are included; the fare is mostly vegetarian, simple, and balanced. If you are staying at the Abbey, please arrive well before 6:00 p.m. on Friday night in order to check in and get your room assignment at the Porter's Lodge.

Contemplation periods will be conducted in Bethany House, which is big enough to seat about 20 of us, as well as the few monks who will sometimes join us. This means that 10 to 12 additional retreatants can be accommodated as commuters who have a place to sleep outside the monastery and who will provide their own (brown bag) meals. Commuters are expected to attend all sitting periods.

While there is plentiful sitting equipment on hand at Bethany House, 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.

The total fee for the 8 overnights is \$260 for Seven Thunders members, \$290 for non-members. The commuter fee is \$80. Fees are payable in full with your registration. Should you need to cancel, all but \$30 will be refunded for cancellation requests received by retreat coordinator on or before March 8; half the fee (\$130/\$40) will be refunded if received by March 15; no refund in the last week before the retreat. Partial scholarships are available to Seven Thunders members.

Registration process:

1. Please contact retreat registrar
Jenny Brausch at
seventhunders.treasurer@gmail.com



to reserve a place. Please indicate whether you wish to stay at the abbey or will be a commuter:

2. Once she confirms a place is reserved, send the completed form with your check to:

**Jenny Brausch,
P.O. Box 3119,
Albany OR 97321.**

Alternatively, you may e-mail your registration to her and pay the fee online at **Seven-Thunders.org** (Click on the 'Contribute' tab and follow the donation process, leaving a note in the last window saying that this is your CIR fee payment.)

Registrations will be made in the order received. When the 8 overnights places have been filled, all remaining registration applications will be placed on a waiting list. A similar process applies to those who choose to register as commuters.

Please note: since the rooms will be available, the Abbey invites any 8 of us to stay on another night (Sunday night) and leave the next morning by 10 a.m.; Sunday supper and Monday breakfast included for **\$35** total. This opportunity is available to retreat commuters as well as overnights. ⚡

REGISTRATION FORM

PALM SUNDAY CONTEMPLATIVE INTENSIVE RETREAT (CIR) MARCH 22 - 24, 2024

☐ I wish to register as a full-time overnight guest of the abbey.

☐ I wish to register as a day commuter.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Special needs _____

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

☐ Full payment of \$290 enclosed
☐ \$260 (Seven Thunders members)
☐ Commuter fee of \$80 enclosed

☐ Donation for Scholarships \$ _____

☐ Request a Scholarship of \$ _____

☐ I wish to reserve a room for Sunday night, March 24, and will pay then.



HYBRID SUMMER SESSHIN AT STONES AND CLOUDS ZENDO JULY 9 - 13, 2024



The 2024 Seven Thunders Zen Summer Sesshin, led by Leonard Marcel, is planned as a **hybrid event** to take place from 7 p.m. Tuesday evening, July 9 to 10 a.m. Saturday morning, July 13. Both in-person and online attendees will follow the full sesshin schedule (6 a.m. to 9 p.m. on full days).

The fee for in-person attendance is \$210 for members, \$240 for non-members, and includes all meals from Tuesday evening to Saturday breakfast. As this is a non-residential event, accommodations are not included.

If attending via Zoom, you will sit in your own space, access the retreat on your own device and provide your own meals. For online attendance, the fee is \$130 for members, \$160 for non-members.

The extra \$30 of the non-member fee can be applied to your Seven Thunders membership, should you choose to do so, which then qualifies you for the member rate for all other Seven Thunders regular retreats and sesshin through the remainder of the calendar year. Registration deadline is June 18. Should you need to cancel, all but \$30 will be refunded for cancellation requests received by the retreat coordinator on or before June 25; half the fee will be refunded if received by July 2; no refund in the last week before the retreat.

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 may be possible as schedules permit.

Once your registration has been received and accepted, 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.

Silence will be observed in the zendo. For those attending online, please make every attempt to maintain silence to the extent possible, as your circumstances permit.

To register for the retreat, please email registrar at StonesCloudsZendo@icloud.com to signal your intent to attend, and then complete the form below and send it with your fee to:

Teresa Marcel
1333 Skyland Drive
Lake Oswego, OR 97034.

Please make checks payable to **Seven Thunders**. Alternatively, you may pay the fee online at seventhunders.org (click on the 'Contribute' tab and follow the donation process). Questions? Please contact Teresa Marcel at 503.636.9009 or StonesCloudsZendo@icloud.com ✨

REGISTRATION FORM

STONES & CLOUDS SUMMER SESSHIN, JULY 9 - 13, 2024

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Emergency contact name & Phone: _____

☐ I would like to **attend in person**, and enclose full payment of \$210 (the member rate).

☐ I would like to **attend in person**, and enclose \$240.

☐ please apply \$30 to my Seven Thunders member dues.

☐ I would like to **attend online** and enclose full payment of \$130 (the member rate).

☐ I would like to **attend online** and enclose \$160.

☐ please apply \$30 to my Seven Thunders member dues.

☐ I request a scholarship of \$ _____

☐ I enclose a donation of \$ _____

Please make checks payable to Seven Thunders