

Eugene Buddhist Priory
Temple of Boundless Compassion
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Dear Friends,

Good day to you as we enter February. As spring starts to push through the soggy ground up here at the Priory, I'm reminded of Rev. Master Jiyu's death poem:

When I am gone,
And the house seems empty,
Do not thou, O plum tree by the eaves,
The Spring forget.

One interpretation: the dark and empty house is our period of difficulty, disappointment, and despair – the dark times that arise in training and sometimes as we approach death. The plum tree is our own body and mind, our Buddha Nature. The Spring is the Unborn. Our Buddha Nature longs for the spring, to be reunited with it and to blossom joyfully. It is up to us to retain the memory of the spring by keeping up our meditation and practice. How easy it is to forget the importance of training, of the guarantee the Buddha held out to all of us that we shall become as He, that eternal life exists right here in the midst of a life and a world torn apart by pain and confusion. The plum tree often used as a Buddhist symbol is a red-blossomed variety in East Asia that is the first harbinger of spring: it blooms in the bitter cold of winter when snow is still on the ground. It represents the promise that spring shall come, and we do our part by keeping our true life alive through active waiting – patience and perseverance.

This month offers a members meeting on Saturday, February 18th at 2:00pm. This will follow a short work morning beginning at 10:30am (after morning service) and a potluck lunch. Please come for just the meeting if you can't make it for the whole day. Items to discuss include our Sangha Care Committee, grounds maintenance and landscaping, April alms round, May Wesak preparations, and summer work projects. The work morning will focus on indoor maintenance & handy person jobs. We could use a volunteer to help organize the work and ensure we have appropriate tools on hand. Weather permitting, there will be some outdoor work, most likely transplanting & mulching. There's always something for everyone. Please come. Doing things together as a sangha is one of the ways we build trust and harmony.

The **calendar in brief** consists of our usual Wednesday evening meetings at 7:00pm, Saturday morning meditation & service at 9:30am, and Sunday morning meditation, ceremony, Dharma talk & tea from 9:30am till noon.

Additional events include:

Saturday, February 4: **Orientation** for newcomers at 8:45am

Sunday, February 5: **Transfer of Merit Ceremony**

Saturday, February 11: **Retreat 9:30am till 4:30pm**; bring simple lunch item for meal.
 Sunday, February 12: **Buddha's Parinirvana Ceremony**
 Thursday, February 16: **Meditation instruction** at Koinonia Center at 7:00pm. (No activity at the temple that evening.)
 Saturday, February 18: work morning, potluck lunch, **members meeting** (see above)
 Sunday, February 19: **Dharma school** for children; scripture practice for adults.
 Wednesday, February 22: **108 Names of Avalokiteshvara Vigil at 7:00pm**
 Sunday, February 26: Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva Festival Ceremony

Daily meditation & services Wednesday and Friday morning at 7:30-8:30am; Thursday and Friday evening at 7:45-8:30pm.

Transfer of Merit: Please offer merit for Perry Cramblit and Cary English, both of whom are training with life-threatening cancer. Also for their families, Wendy Cramblit and Lisa Raney.

Dharma talks this year: Since in November we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of Rev. Master Jiyu's Parinirvana (entering eternal meditation), this year's Dharma talks will emphasize her written teachings. On Sunday mornings we will cover topics from *Roar of the Tigress*, Volume 1, and *The Wild White Goose*. On Wednesday evenings, we will focus on *Roar of the Tigress*, Volume 2. If you will begin reading or re-reading these wonderful writings, you will get more out of the talks. We have copies available at the Priory if you do not have your own.

Scriptures to Learn: Please devote effort this year to memorizing the three short Scriptures we use most: *The Scripture of Great Wisdom*, *The Litany of the Great Compassionate One*, and the *Adoration of the Buddha's Relics*. We chant the *Scripture of Great Wisdom*, also known as the *Heart Sutra*, every day at the temple because it expresses the reality that all things are "void, unstained and pure" – we can come to know in our hearts through meditation that Buddha nature is the True Existence. The *Litany* is recited as part of our morning Founder's Ceremony and as our Evening Office. It is also used at memorials and funerals, and is the prayer that one wishes to have in one's heart at the time of death: we seek to open our hearts to the Great Compassion of the Unborn, and we cry for help in "dropping off body and mind" to realize that Truth. The *Adoration* is also part of the Founder's Ceremony, and used at memorials and funerals, too. The "relics" we honor are not just the physical remains after cremation, but also the teachings, spiritual good, and love that a Buddha, a great master, or any person offered during their life – their meritorious deeds and being that expressed Buddha. Knowing these scriptures by heart can help in deepening one's meditation at ceremonies, in daily life, and in difficult situations.

Meditation Instruction at Koinonia Center: On the third Thursday of each month, meditation instruction will be offered at 7:00pm at the Koinonia Center, the Presbyterian student center at 15th & Kincaid. We hope this gives younger people the opportunity to connect with the Dharma. There will be no meditation at the Priory that evening.

Dharma talks online: Shasta Abbey now offers Dharma talks by its abbot, Rev. Master Eko Little, at its website, www.shastaabbey.org. A recent addition is the 60-talk series on *The Awakening of Faith*, one of the most important writings of East Asian Mahayana Buddhism. If there are volunteers who would like to copy these talks for the Priory library, let me know.

Please take care. May you all be well and truly happy. *Rev. Oswin*