

## Formation and Supervision in Buddhist Chaplaincy

Tina Jitsujo Gauthier

When a Zen student receives the Bodhisattva precepts, they take refuge in the three jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Taking refuge in the Buddha is taking refuge in the formless awakened nature of all beings. Taking refuge in the Dharma is taking refuge in differences, the multitude of diverse forms. Taking refuge in the Sangha is taking refuge in harmony, the integration of formlessness and forms, the interdependence of all creation. Receiving the Buddhist precepts is vowing to both maintain and embody them.<sup>1</sup> To symbolize this vow, Zen students make a *rakusu*<sup>2</sup> before the precept ceremony and a *kesa*<sup>3</sup> before the ordination ceremony. Both *rakusu* and *kesa* represent the field of interconnection. They are made by sewing many pieces of fabric together. I wear my *kesa* over my ordination robe and my *rakusu* over my everyday clothing. There is a ritual for putting on the *kesa and rakusu*, along with a verse:

*Vast is the robe of liberation  
a formless field of benefaction  
I wear the Tathagata teaching  
serving all sentient beings.*

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Tina Jitsujo Gauthier completed her CPE resident training in New York City and later served as a chaplain in San Diego. She has a PhD in religious studies from the University of the West and was ordained as a Zen Buddhist priest in 2010. She currently serves on the faculty in the Buddhist Chaplaincy Program, University of the West, Rosemead, California. Email: tinag@uwest.edu.

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*Tathagata* is the Enlightened Buddha and also means *thusness*.<sup>4</sup> Remembering that I am wearing *thusness* is a way of seeing interconnection in my life as a gift. Pastoral or spiritual care happens in a field. The role of the chaplain is being formed through working in the field. These days the field appears urban, containing walls, buildings, transportation, and technology. The people in the field walk around carrying cell phones and satchels instead of hoes and chisels. We live in a field of interconnection.

After the Buddha awakened under the Bodhi Tree, he developed the Four Noble Truths: (1) life is suffering, (2) suffering is caused by craving, (3) there is a cessation of suffering, and (4) the way leading to the cessation of suffering is the Eight-Fold Path. The Eight-Fold Path combines meditation, ethics, and insight.<sup>5</sup> Practicing this path enlightens the fundamental nature of mind. Buddhist masters, teachers, scholars, and practitioners have followed, studied, and reinterpreted the path of enlightenment for over 2,500 years. Buddhist canons, such as Pali, Chinese, Tibetan, Korean, and Japanese, offer many ways to practice the internal and external ethics of body, speech, and mind that lead to enlightenment. I understand the three-fold training of meditation, ethics, and insight as formation and supervision of mind.

Few articles have been written about Buddhist ministry, supervision, and spiritual formation.<sup>6</sup> This article will explore the interconnection of these three approaches through the formation and supervision of a Buddhist chaplaincy department, Buddhist chaplaincy students, and a Buddhist chaplaincy professor. This is one approach based on my own experience as a chaplain resident in Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), training as a Zen student and priest, and working in academia as a professor of Buddhist chaplaincy. This article has three sections. The first section describes the formation of the department by providing background information, a chaplaincy model, and a curriculum map of the Buddhist chaplaincy department at University of the West, where I currently work. The second section describes the formation of Buddhist chaplaincy students by outlining standards of spiritual maturity from the field, the spiritual formation of a UWest chaplaincy student, and a framework in which spiritual formation is taught. The third section conveys the formation of a Buddhist chaplaincy professor by describing my personal spiritual formation in relation to the oxherding pictures.<sup>7</sup>

## FORMATION OF A BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY DEPARTMENT

The Buddhist chaplaincy department at University of the West (UWest) owes many thanks to all who have contributed to its formation. The teachings of Master Hsing Yun, founder of the Hsi Lai (西來) Temple, UWest, and the Taiwanese Buddhist tradition Fo Guan Shan (佛光山) emphasize core teachings in the Early Buddhist canon that inform Humanistic Buddhism for all beings.<sup>8</sup> In 2007 the Hsi Lai Temple attempted to develop a Buddhist seminary grounded in Humanistic Buddhism, but this program never received Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation and was therefore discontinued. In 2008 Dr. Daniel Clarkson Fisher, together with UWest Religious Studies Chair Dr. Kenneth A. Locke, set out to devise an accredited Buddhist chaplaincy program. Fisher drew from his training at Naropa, and Locke drew from his training at Trinity College in Dublin to create a master of divinity (MDiv) degree in Buddhist chaplaincy at UWest. This program received WASC accreditation in 2009.

I was hired to work full-time in the UWest chaplaincy department in 2014. Due to the loss of co-founder Danny Fisher and arising interpersonal and ethical issues amongst the students, the president of UWest asked Chaplaincy Department Chair Rev. Dr. Victor Gabriel and myself to re-envision the Buddhist chaplaincy program. Together we began to utilize what Gabriel calls the appreciative inquiry methodology.<sup>9</sup> One day Gabriel approached me with an idea for a new chaplaincy model for our department that combined the academic, practitioner, and caregiver approaches. This model integrated the three modes of chaplaincy I had experienced in CPE, Zen Buddhist meditation and priest training, and the study of Buddhist scriptures and texts in graduate school. In using this chaplaincy model, the department intends to address gaps in the fields of spiritual/pastoral care, practical theology, Engaged/Humanistic Buddhism, Buddhist studies, Buddhist psychology, Buddhist theology, and lay/ordained training at Buddhist temples, monasteries, and dharma centers.

In 2014, the department also formed a Program Development Committee consisting of Rev. Dr. Gabriel, myself, and a selected group of second- and third-year chaplaincy students. Using appreciative inquiry, the Program Development Committee began to re-evaluate the structure, mission, and vision of the department to make content changes to strengthen 'what is working well' in the program. MDiv classes are currently interdisciplinary in approach; ethics is integrated into classes beginning in the first

semester; a cohort system is developing; students are expected to engage in 180 contemplative hours per semester; the shared-leadership model brings students into departmental decision-making; and a tiered peer counseling model is emerging.

The current MDiv curriculum consists of classes in religious studies, business, psychology, and chaplaincy. MDiv chaplaincy classes are arranged in a progression during the three-year program to enhance spiritual formation. The curriculum incorporates educational areas from the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) and structures from Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and aligns with CPE competency standards. It is designed to focus on formation of (1) self, (2) self in relation to other, and (3) self in relation to community. After a 2015 UWest faculty conference, the department also has aligned formation of self, other, and community with UWest values of character, commitment, and community, along with institutional learning outcomes, i.e., be, know, and do. The department currently sees the course progression and learning outcomes as a curriculum map for spiritual formation. This curriculum map thus brings together CPE competency standards, APC educational areas, ATS educational structures, UWest institutional learning outcomes and values, and the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

#### FORMATION OF BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY STUDENTS

Five universities offer MDiv degrees in Buddhist chaplaincy—the Institute of Buddhist Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Harvard Divinity School, Naropa University, Maitripa College, and the UWest—and four programs offer Buddhist chaplaincy training—New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care, Rigpa Spiritual Care Programme, Sati Center for Buddhist Studies, and Upaya Zen Center. Many individuals from these organizations have gathered at conferences over the last few years to discuss our retrospective programs, collaboration, and standards for the field. Last year the group met at Naropa. One of the focuses was on spiritual formation and how to assess the spiritual maturity of a Buddhist chaplaincy student. I took away six elements from our group process and discussions that reflect spiritual maturity.

This is how I have come to understand the six elements of spiritual maturity formulated by my colleagues in the field of Buddhist chaplaincy:

(1) the student has a developed and practiced meditation technique, (2) the student has a practice of ethics that guides their ministry and social engagement, (3) the student values a ritualized life, (4) the student is able to see an issue from multiple perspectives, viewpoints, dimensions, and lenses, (5) the student is willing to recognize and investigate edge states within their own practice, e.g., helpful/harmful, healthy/sick, skillful/unskillful, safe/dangerous, and to reach out to others for help discerning areas of pathological altruism, self-care, addiction, countertransference, silent bystanding, power abuse, spiritual bypass, etc. (note: spiritual bypass is when prayer, meditation, or ritual is used to bypass emotional, psychological, or spiritual suffering of self and other), and (6) the student sees the value in the academic study of Buddha-Dharma and is able to relate this study to their training as a chaplain.

The twenty-four MDiv students and six doctorate of Buddhist ministry students at UWest come predominantly from Asia and the United States, and they are monastic and lay, conservative and liberal, and traditional and interreligious Buddhists. The department currently has two full-time faculty and three adjuncts. Currently, the full-time faculty do all of the academic and spiritual advising. This ratio of thirty students to two full-time faculty makes it impossible to adequately offer one-to-one counseling in spiritual formation for each student. Therefore, supervision includes encouraging students to seek and develop a contemplative practice, begin creating relationships with Buddhist sanghas and spiritual teachers, utilize the UWest wellness center for short-term counseling, seek outside therapy, participate in various types of support groups, and develop peer relations both within and outside their cohort.

In 2015 Rev. Gabriel and I began to observe and articulate the challenges and supports students should attain insight into during each year of the program. Last semester we reflected on our observations with the second- and third-year students in order to get their input. Through a process of shared-leadership discussions, we have begun to shape the formation of Buddhist chaplaincy students throughout the program.

**Formation of the first-year student:** Many first-year students come to UWest with ideas about what a chaplain is, how to be a competent chaplain, and what they intend to do when they graduate, whereas others have little to no idea about the role of a chaplain or how they might embody this role to obtain right livelihood. Students learn about chaplain roles and com-

petencies and sacred Abrahamic texts as well as the history, theories, and communication skills involved in spiritual care and counseling. In a sense, first-year students learn to see what they are carrying in their chaplaincy cup. They learn a new language of spiritual care and counseling and let go of their misconceptions and expectations about how to be a chaplain.

**Formation of the second-year student:** Second-year students are emptying their chaplaincy cup. They may suddenly find themselves having the experience of *being empty* of the misconceptions and expectations they brought into the program. Conditioned patterns may arise as they sit in this emptiness, which may cause the fight-flight-freeze response. In fight responses, students may act in— thinking they are not good enough—or act out—stirring up drama, arguments, getting entangled in other people’s crises, or becoming freedom fighters for all the injustices happening around them. In flight responses, students may want to run away to get more monastic training or leave the program all together. They may also just be “busy.” I often overhear conversations such as, “Where is [a student’s name]?” . . . “Oh, they’re busy at work” or “They’re busy at the temple.” In freeze responses, students may go numb, feel tired or foggy, experience depression, and question their capability to be a chaplain. They tend to move slowly and have a wide-eyed look, and yet they tell you that everything is fine.

**Formation of the third-year student:** Third-year students are learning to accept their chaplaincy cup *as is*. Somehow, after the second year a shift seems to naturally occur. I am not certain whether students realize that there is only one more year left so they might as well finish up and graduate or whether real insight has, in fact, transpired within them. It is amazing to witness their transformation. Third-year students begin to look comfortable in their own skin, and they value encouraging both themselves and others. They begin to see their growth and capabilities. There is a sense of confidence and faith in their path. Graduation culminates in more awareness of their behavior patterns, actions that instill acceptance of their internal and external shortcomings and the insight that the integration of academic, practitioner, and caregiver is a life-long process.

The spiritual formation course at UWest uses Fowler’s *Stages of Faith*,<sup>10</sup> along with Buddhist texts and secondary works, in order to help students bridge the gap between Buddhist formation and Buddhist meditation, ethics, and insight and a Judeo-Christian-based approach to spiritual forma-

tion. When I teach this class, I look at Fowler's stages as archetypal energies,<sup>11</sup> facets of mind, or aspects of formation that guide the understanding of self and of self in relationship. Similar to Fowler, I do not see spiritual formation as linear, though I think it helps to have stages, steps, or states to orient our introspection and communication. There is a lot here to explore and learn with the students in terms of Buddhist spiritual formation. Buddhism offers many ways to bring awareness to actions of body, speech, and mind that cause suffering.<sup>12</sup> Through Zen Buddhism I have learned to count and follow my breath.<sup>13</sup> The practice of counting and following my breath trained my mind, which, over time, resulted in my spiritual formation.

Many UWest MDiv students have difficulty distinguishing which aspects of formation are specifically spiritual. The spiritual is not a separate aspect of the body. For example, it is difficult to discern where exactly the breath is separate. The body is porous, taking in oxygen even through the skin. By focusing on the breathing of the body, I see that not only does the breath permeate the body but also the body permeates the breath. In Buddhism, what is considered to be *me* or *you* consists of five aggregates: (1) form, which is matter or body; (2) sensations, which are pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral feelings within the body; (3) perceptions, or the formation of ideas or object experiences; (4) mental formation or volition, which is a conditioned response to an object of experience; and (5) consciousness, which is awareness or mind.<sup>14</sup> These aggregates are in constant flux. From this perspective, there is no fixed self; therefore, what I call *you* or *me* is constantly impermanent.

#### FORMATION OF A BUDDHIST CHAPLAINCY PROFESSOR

In 2009, after a 90-day *Ango* meditation intensive that culminated in my Head Trainee *Hossen* ceremony,<sup>15</sup> I lived in Chengdu, Sichuan, China for a year. The experience of being a foreigner, learning a new language, facing cultural differences, and enculturating and becoming flexible within difference had a tremendous impact on me. This impact informs my work as a professor. One weekend my professor Dr. Darui Long, a native of Sichuan, took me to visit Dàfowan in Dàzú (大佛玩在大足石刻), a religious site of rare stone carvings in the neighboring province of Chongqing. There are more than 50,000 religious sculptures located in the countryside of Dàzú, and more than 10,000 of these are at Dàfowan (Great Buddha Curve). I walked



Figure 1. Oxherding overview

around the mountainside of Dàfowan in awe. I was amazed at the scale, attention to detail, storytelling, and visceral effect of these Buddhist sculptures. Around one corner of the walkway, I was stuck by a series of oxherding pictures and verses (See Figure #1 ). Buddhist monk Zhào Zhìfèng carved this series of sculptures directly into the side of the mountain between 1179 and 1249 CE.<sup>16</sup> The ancient story of the ox and the herder can be traced back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, to the early Buddhist canon and the Agama scriptures.<sup>17</sup> Chan and Zen Buddhist scholars, teachers, and practitioners<sup>18</sup> are continuously revitalizing these oxherding pictures and verses to convey the spiritual journey.

The ox, also called the bull, water buffalo, or cow, is a prevalent theme in Chinese religions. In folk religions, the ox is considered to be sacred and to have life-giving powers. In the I Ching, which predates Confucianism and Daoism, the ox is hardworking, receptive like the earth and the mother, and representative of the multitude in relation to the ruler. The Confucian ox is symbolic of pastoral life and returning to nature.<sup>19</sup> The Daoist ox is a metaphor for freedom. In Chinese Chan Buddhism, the ox, or mind-ox, represents the enlightened mind, and the oxherding pictures and verses are a method of pedagogy and praxis for attaining enlightenment. I will use this story of the ox and the herder to convey my spiritual formation through



meditation, chaplaincy work, and academic study as well as explain how I learned to herd my ox by describing Zhào Zhifèng's carvings at Dàfowan.

The first carving, entitled *Untamed Ox*, depicts a herder grabbing hold of an ox and the ox pulling away. The first time I meditated was at the Village Zendo in New York City. I was 32 years old. Before this moment, I was like a wild animal, living in 'the Big Apple' and causing harm through my own greed, anger, and ignorance. I was completely ignorant of my wildness, that I was causing harm, or that I had a mind that could be tamed. During this first 30-minute meditation period, I gained awareness of my mind. I had no idea what was happening. I did not exactly see my mind as a wild animal, but it felt incredibly

wild inside of me, completely unmanageable, and sitting still in this wildness was one of the most intense experiences of my life. I was also baffled by the people around me sitting perfectly still and quiet, showing no indication of any wildness lurking about. I left this meditation and instantly lit up a cigarette attempting to calm all this wildness that had arisen. This was the only way I knew how to tame my ox. Nonetheless, I had grabbed onto something that I could not let go of.



**Figure 2. Initial Adjustments**

The second carving, entitled *Initial Adjustments*, (see Figure #2) shows a herder offering food and raising a whip to the ox. After grabbing hold of my mind-ox, I basically became willing to do anything and everything—from reward to punishment—to get my mind's attention. Most of my initial adjustments in meditation were trying to find a comfortable sitting posture. My body felt very uncomfortable sitting still, and this discomfort seemed to make my mind crazy and my thoughts very loud. The two sitting positions that worked were kneeling or sitting cross-legged with my knees supported

by cushions. Eventually, I was able to feel physically supported, sit erect, keep my chest lifted and my head straight, and allow my shoulders to hang from my spine. I could then focus on my breathing. My initial physical and mental adjustments took years to work through. Finding the middle way of rewarding my mind for coming back to the sensation of my body breathing, and punishing my mind each time it wandered off from the breath became my practice. I still begin every meditation, every meeting, every class, and every day with these initial adjustments.

The third carving, entitled *Restraining the Ox*, depicts a herder raising a whip in one hand and holding a lasso in the other. Author Mark Epstein refers to the herder as the observer mind.<sup>20</sup> When I clearly saw the wildness of my mind and the skills I lacked as its herder, the training of both ox and herder began. This carving reminds me of how I entered CPE. My struggles and successes on the meditation cushion reflected my struggles and successes during my CPE residencies with patients, supervisors, and peers. Reflecting back, I was basically an embodiment of the five hindrances. The five hindrances<sup>21</sup> in Buddhism are (1) sensual desire—I was filled with thoughts like, “I thought this was supposed to feel good!”; (2) doubt—“What am I doing wrong? Why can’t I do this?”; (3) restlessness—“I want to get out of here! This is terrible. Why won’t they ring the *bell*?!” “Why won’t they stop talking?!”; 4) sloth and torpor—I don’t tend to get sleepy because I’m so uptight, so for me, sloth and torpor is not wanting be uncomfortable or to enter into difficult or sharp places; and 5) ill will—this is where I begin to “should” on myself and others by judging, blaming, shaming, elevating, and dictating. When I saw how much suffering I was causing myself and others, I decided to make a vow. My vow is that the moment I start to judge or yell within my mind, I will change my meditation posture; I will take a chair, kneel, lie down, or take a break. This practice of inner kindness allows me shift and find postures that I can maintain without these five hindrances running wild in my mind. This is not just how I restrain my ox; there is also a connection between the way I supervise my mind and the way I supervise others.

The fourth carving is entitled *The Ox Turns Its Head*. The carving depicts a herder and ox facing each other, with the ox turning its head. The herder has the ox harnessed, and although the ox is pulling a little, they stand together. Keeping my mind-ox on a short leash and staying close to my body breathing develops concentration. However, attending to my mind while maintaining connection is difficult. I crave the experience of connec-

tion. At the same time, this craving for connection terrifies me. Mark Epstein writes that psychoanalyst Otto Rank sees our basic suffering as “rooted in a kind of original separation anxiety, which he called a ‘fear of life’—we fear what has already irrevocably happened—separation from the greater whole—and yet we also come to fear the loss in death, of this precious individuality.”<sup>22</sup> I often wonder what it was like for my baby body and mind to be cut off from my mother. What died in that moment? And what became alive? A P Míng verse that illustrates this is: “the wild madness of its will is slowly softened.”<sup>23</sup> How can resistance include connection? How do I maintain healthy boundaries and intimacy?

The fifth carving, entitled *Taming the Ox*, (see Figure #3) shows a few herders, each with their ox, relaxing; two herders are arm in arm, smiling and laughing while their oxen are resting. One herder stands at ease. All the herders hold their ropes in a relaxed way. The struggle appears to be over, so they can enjoy each other. I cannot imagine that Zhào Zhìfèng carved all these pictures alone. He must have had help. There is no way I could have developed my meditation practice, chaplaincy role, and academic understanding without the help of everyone around. Innumerable people have been a part of my formation. There is a Zen story that likens the sangha to



Figure 3. Taming the Ox

a bag of sharp rocks rubbing against each other, which over time softens all their edges. After my third *Ango*, a gentleness and confidence arose between my inner ox and herder, and fluidity evolved in my meditation practice. I also learned to be softer with others and stand more at ease in relationship. I began to see and accept that there are many facets of mind, many types of herders, and many perspectives on herding.

In the sixth carving, entitled *State of Nonhindrance*, the herder sits at the rear of the ox as it grazes. They are facing away from each other, but no hindrances separate them. There is no desire, no restlessness, no sloth, no ill will, and no doubt. My meditation mind was trained when it naturally wandered off and gently came back to the breath with little effort. I began to focus on expanding my awareness, sometimes letting go of the rope that tied me to my mind altogether. I became more at ease *being with* this unfolding life, experiencing interconnection and intimacy.

When I think about Zhào Zhìfèng, I wonder what motivated him to chip away at this mountain every day. He spent seventy years of his life carving these oxen and herders. Why did he do this? How was he being formed through the carving? What was being carved away within him? I imagine he made a great vow. I am continually stuck by his devotion. What am I carving every day? What is it that a professor of chaplaincy carves? As I teach formation, I am being formed. I am often teaching what I need to learn. When I maintain this, the dynamic in the classroom is alive. I draw much from the teachings of Parker Palmer in his book *Courage to Teach*<sup>24</sup> and feel grateful to practice teaching and learning in community at UWest.

The seventh carving is entitled *Harmony between Herder and Ox*. The herder plays the flute while the ox feeds on grasses. Zhào Zhìfèng committed his entire life to carving these oxherding pictures. Perhaps this harmony reflects a deep realization about sangha, the interrelation of formlessness and forms, and the interdependence of all creation. I experience interconnection with life when I practice not rushing, honoring privileges freely given and making mistakes in order to gain insight into what causes suffering. During our departmental pilgrimage to India last summer, I noticed that when I would close my heart to the Indian beggars, I would kill any possibility for life to arise between us. Therefore, I began to practice keeping my heart open and allowing beggars to walk alongside me without over-identifying or denying that these beggars are me.

The eighth carving is entitled *Herder and Ox Forgotten*. The herder is leaning back, arm overhead, in a blissful rest, while the ox is gazing at the moon. Many years passed and Zhào Zhifèng settled into his role as carver. After carving eight stone reliefs, he must have mastered the technique, developing a rhythm and a single-minded focus in his work. There is a Daoist story of ox-carver butcher Ding who, when praised for his superior state of mind, replied, "That which your servant takes delight in is *Dao* [The Way]—



Figure 4. Solitary Illumination

it goes beyond [mere] skill."<sup>25</sup> Forgetting the self is finding delight in doing. I utilize approaches to spiritual care in the classroom that value taking different perspectives, relational boundaries, empathy, deep listening, and meeting in mutuality.<sup>26</sup> Pamela Cooper-White describes meeting in mutuality as a form of complex interrelation called intersubjectivity.<sup>27</sup> Herder and ox are forgotten in intersubjectivity. This an active place where power dynamics, transference, and countertransference are operating on conscious and unconscious levels. Self and other are intertwining within a web of sociocultural interconnection.<sup>28</sup> The Zen peacemaker's approach in intersubjectivity is a practice of (1) not knowing, giving up all fixed ideas about ourselves and the universe; (2) bearing witness to the joys and suffering of the world; and (3) taking actions that arise out of not knowing and bearing witness.<sup>29</sup> When I serve the moment, there is no higher, no lower, no labels of good or bad, no hesitation, just direct responsiveness.

In the ninth carving, the carver carves himself in *Solitary Illumination* (see Figure #4). What does it mean to be in solitude yet not in isolation? When

In the ninth carving, the carver carves himself in *Solitary Illumination* (see Figure #4). What does it mean to be in solitude yet not in isolation? When

I deprive myself of feeling alive, when I use unwholesome thoughts to stay in negativity and fear, I not only isolate myself from others, but I also isolate myself from myself. Can I seek comfort within my own silence? Can I pause and allow for uncertainty and not knowing? Before the Buddha entered Nirvana, he said to his disciple Ananda:

Therefore, Ananda, you should live as islands unto yourselves, being your own refuge, with no one else as your refuge, with the Dhamma as an island, with the Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge.<sup>30</sup>

The tenth carving is entitled *Herder and Ox Transcended*. The lotus appears under the moon. The moon represents awakened nature, clear and bright. In Zen Buddhism we chant: "May we exist in muddy water with purity like the lotus." This life is muddy water, messy and chaotic. There is a lot of grief, unexamined trauma, fear, and uncertainty. However still, the seed of awakening grows within our collective consciousness. This potential to awaken is in all of us. Can we practice speaking directly to this potential by encouraging and welcoming others, celebrating successes, and practicing gratitude? Can we take responsibility and transform our suffering into wisdom?

### CONCLUSION

Shakyamuni Buddha sat under the Bodhi Tree in India over 2,500 years ago and made a vow to awaken. We live on this same earth. Although the Buddhist pilgrimage is tough for anyone who undertakes the journey, oxen in India are sacred and roam freely. It is mind-blowing to see oxen standing, walking, or lying in the middle of the street amongst the grit and chaos of contemporary living. At one point in Varanasi, where Buddha taught for many years, my partner turned to me and said, "I think the oxen are here to be received." How am I receiving this mind? How am I wearing this formless field of benefaction? How am I maintaining and embodying the Buddhist precepts? Perhaps, receiving the mind-ox is just like receiving the precepts—undertaking a great vow to maintain and embody both formation and supervision of ox and herder.

Buddhist chaplains are developing spiritual care of self and other in the margins of theistic and secular settings. Their spiritual caregiving and caretaking is informed by their rigorous training in meditative traditions. Buddhist chaplaincy students learn to draw from methods of mindfulness,

self-awareness, reflection, compassion, spaciousness, and deep listening from both theistic and Buddhist sources to articulate the need for a ‘ministry of presence.’<sup>31</sup> They develop a sense of confidence and agency along the path to fully awakening. There are gaps between educational models of formation and supervision utilized by ACPE supervisors and those utilized by Buddhist practitioners and ministers. This paper is a first step in addressing this gap. Formation and supervision in Buddhist chaplaincy occur every day between students and professors, chaplains and clients, practitioners and practitioners, oxen and herders. Together, we are co-creating this field, continuously shifting, coming, going, connecting, and separating and realizing that our interconnection is formation.

#### NOTES

- 1 Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhist Ethics: Foundations, Values, and Issues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- 2 *Rakusu*: a traditional garment made out of discarded or new fabric that is sewn together into a small rectangle with straps. It is worn around the neck of Zen Buddhists who have received the Buddhist precepts. It can signify lay ordination.
- 3 *Kesa* (kāṣāya, kasāva, chougu, 袈裟): a ceremonial shawl worn over a robe by a priest or monastic who has taken refuge through ordination in the Three Jewels of Buddhism. A *kesa* is usually made out of discarded fabric (originally shrouds but nowadays either used or new fabric) that is stitched together in three sections to form a large rectangular cloth.
- 4 Thusness (眞如, zhēnrú): “Things as they are; reality as empty; reality-nature, the nature of existence. The existence of the mind as true reality. As-it-is-ness. . . . The concept is fundamental to Mahāyāna philosophy, implying the absolute, the ultimate source and character of all phenomena. In general Mahāyāna usage it indicates the absolute reality which transcends the multitude of forms in the phenomenal world.” A. Charles Muller, ed., *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* (電子佛教辭典), <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/>.
- 5 Walpola Sri Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (Bedford, England: Diemer and Reynolds, 1959), 76–89.
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