

Donation Request for a Monk's Hall at the Konnondori Monastery

We respectfully make this announcement to all buddhas in the ten directions, to sages and monks in the heavenly and human worlds, to the eight types of guardians in the dragon realm, and to generous men and women. We wish to construct a training hall with donations, however small they may be, from people's pure heart.

The Bodhisattva Precepts Sutra says, "*Children of the Buddha, you should guide sentient beings by constructing monasteries and building stupas in the mountains, forests, gardens, and fields. You should establish training halls for holding winter and summer practice periods for zazen and all other practices. You would be negligent if you failed to do so.*"

All temples and monasteries are practice places of buddhas. Buddhist monasteries in China are modeled after those in India. Japanese monasteries should follow these examples. Constructing a monastery is of great significance and its merit is profound; it has much to offer to people.

For some years now, ever since I returned to Japan from China, I have vowed to establish a monastery. But there has not been a place suitable to support monks' formal practice using bowls and robes. Now we have acquired an excellent place. It is located in the compound of the Gokuraku Temple near Fukakusa. We have named this place the Kannondori. Although it is still covered with weeds and not yet functioning, we plan to build a training monastery here.

The primary components of a monastery are a buddha hall, a dharma hall, and a monks' hall. We have a buddha hall and we do not have a dharma hall. But we urgently need a monks' hall. We plan to build seven ken [about 70-feet] square sacred with no interior walls. We will set up long platforms on which we will reside, practicing day and night without fail. A sacred figure of Manjushri will be enshrined in the center of the hall, to be surrounded by the practicing monks.

The ancient practice of formally taking refuge in the three treasures together as a group in one hall is still alive today. Its merit is enormous and its effect is broad. We will thoroughly engage in each activity in order to cultivate fertile conditions to transform the ten directions.

We will acknowledge the gifts by installing the donors' names inside the sacred image of Manjushri. The enshrined names will form myriad syllables as seeds of wisdom illuminating everyone. Those who attain the way in this hall will be guiding masters of the people, and will not only reach the human realm, but beyond. They will transform beings in the heavenly realm and in the dragons' palace. Those in the realms of invisible and divine will also listen. Thus this dharma wheel transmitted from Shakyamuni Buddha will reach everywhere.

Respectfully yours,
Abbot of the Kannondori Monastery

*The twelfth month,
the first year of the Katei Era
(1235 C.E.)*

(Enlightenment Unfolds: The Essential Teachings of Zen Master, Dogen, ed. Kaz Tanahashi)