



Cultural Spiritual Bypassing

*An Online Meditation Workshop
with*

**Brian Lesage & Sebene
Selassie**

March 13-14, 2021



What gets left out of our spiritual practice? And why? “Premature transcendence” or spiritual bypassing has been described by John Welwood as unskillfully using a spiritual practice to avoid addressing psychological wounds and unresolved personal issues. This is usually discussed only on the personal/psychological level, yet a spiritual practice can be used to avoid or “bypass” unresolved collective/cultural issues as well — this is what we are calling cultural spiritual bypassing. We will look at how cultural spiritual bypassing manifests both collectively and individually, especially within some contemporary convert Buddhist traditions. We will use practice, study and discussion to investigate often bypassed explorations including nature, culture, creativity, ritual/devotion, the body and the feminine. We will come together in a multicultural community to explore how to expand our understanding of practice, community, and freedom.

Learning Intentions:

To understand one's location both as an individual (race, class, gender, etc) and as a practitioner (lineages, practices, etc); understand the multiplicity of locations within the Buddhadharma; cultivate an appreciation for, and experience of, various practices including chanting, bowing, and devotional practices; develop an appreciation for the role of the the body, the natural world, and unseen beings/mystery in practice; and cultivate an awareness of power and oppression and how those impact the expressions of the Buddhadharma (especially as related to race, gender, sexuality and class).

Experience Level: Suitable for practitioners with at least some initial sense of Buddhist practice.

WHEN: Sat, March 13 10am to 3pm MST, with a lunch break from 12pm to 1pm MST
Sun, March 14* 10am to 3pm MST, with a lunch break from 12pm to 1pm MST

**Daylight Savings time in other time zones begins at 2am on Sun, March 14. Arizona will not have a time change.*

COST: \$40 for the retreat. Scholarships are available. These fees only cover retreat and monthly expenses. Brian Lesage and Sebene Selassie receive no compensation from co-sponsoring organizations. You will have the opportunity to offer Dana donations to the teachers, a Buddhist tradition of generosity. In the Buddhist tradition, teachings are given freely because they are considered priceless. Dana is not payment for goods and services; it is a gift for the teachers from your heart in gratitude.

WHERE: Online via Zoom (link to be sent out prior to the retreat). To register, please complete the online registration at [HERE](#) OR send check payable to TCMC, along with your name, phone number and email address to: TCMC c/o Cultural Spiritual Bypassing Retreat, PO Box 43415, Tucson, AZ 85733

CONTACT: Melanie Knapp – mmknapp19@gmail.com (812) 760-3759

About the Teachers:

Sebene Selassie is a teacher, author and speaker who explores the themes of belonging and identity through meditation, creativity and spirituality. Born in Ethiopia and raised in Washington DC, Sebene began studying Buddhism 30 years ago as an undergraduate at McGill University where she majored in Comparative Religious Studies. She has an MA from the New School where she focused on race and cultural studies. She has been teaching classes, workshops and retreats for the past decade.

Brian Lesage has practiced Buddhist meditation since 1988 and has taught meditation since 2000. He has studied in the Zen, Theravada and Tibetan schools of Buddhism. He was ordained in the Rinzai Zen tradition in 1996. His training in Vipassana Meditation includes doing extended meditation retreats in Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, and India as well as numerous retreats in the U.S. He leads retreats and teaches meditation courses nationwide. Brian also has a private practice in Somatic Experiencing, which is a naturalistic approach to healing trauma.