

OZENESSES



Quarterly Newsletter of BRIGHT DAWN: Institute for American Buddhism

Vol. 13 No. 4 Winter 2009

IT'S ALL RELATIVE

Rev. Koyo Kubose

Adrienne's mother, Michi Kimura, is 94 years young and in good health. She is living with us and we have had some interesting conversations. Her long-term memory is good but her short-term memory is limited.

When we are driving and she notices the gas prices, she exclaims, "Almost three dollars a gallon?!" She always follows this with, "Why, I remember we thought it was high when the price increased to eighteen cents a gallon!" She doesn't remember saying this because sometimes she'll repeat the same thing several times during the same drive. However, it is repeated with such feeling that we all have to laugh together.

There are other questions that she tends to repeat. For example, since we live on a five-acre property, she'll often ask, "Are you growing anything?" Usually we answer, "No, not yet, but we plan to." Our property has a lot of boulders on it so once, to break the familiar routine, I answered, "We're growing rocks and they're doing well." With a smile, she replied, "And you don't have to

fertilize them!" Her sense of humor is alive and well.

When we go for a drive, she sits in the back seat of our Honda Odyssey van. It's easier to get in the back seat than the front seat because of a handle on the back of the front seat. Still, getting in takes her some effort because the seat is higher off the ground than with a regular car, plus she is only about five feet tall. I had to admire her spirit when she got in one day and said, "Yup, I can still get in!" I thought of how things are so relative. How we see things depends upon one's frame of reference. Adrienne's mom doesn't compare her present physical ability to her better agility when younger. Nor does she complain about the effort it took to get seated. She lives in



Michi Kimura at Glacier Point

the present, with cheerful acceptance. Every time we sit down for supper, she looks at the prepared meal and says in Japanese, "Gochiso!" which can be translated as, "What a feast!" She really means it and is not just being polite. Indeed, when you look at the salad, and the large plate with servings of several different foods, it is a feast! We tend to take our everyday meals for granted.

I learn so much from my mother-in-law. She teaches a lot by her example. I hope I can age as gracefully as she has. And I hope Adrienne will treat me with as much gentle patience and good humor as she does with her mother. Gassho.

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GOOD INTENTIONS

by John Miyo Wylder

Last week, I was in charge of setting up for the Buddhist meeting at the local Unitarian Church. The meeting was scheduled for 7:00, but because of my daughter's hectic adolescent life, I had to be dropped off before 5:00. I set up for the meeting, and by 5:10 had everything ready to go. Thinking ahead, I had brought a couple of books with me, including a graphic novel (big comic book) and *Ethics of Enlightenment*. But before I started reading, I decided to "Dial The Dharma" on my cell phone and listen to Sensei's brief Dharma talk. The talk that day was about the practice of *chodai* (I hope I got that right), of putting an important object, such as a Dharma book, to your head and bowing before opening it, and again before closing it. I was moved by this talk, and decided to start putting it into practice.

I reached over to my satchel where I had my books, opened it up, took *Ethics of Enlightenment* out, opened it up, and started reading. Almost immediately I realized that it had taken me **less than twenty seconds** to break my intention to practice *chodai*. I knew going into it that there would be slips, times when I forgot, when I allowed myself to be distracted or just acting out of habit without awareness, but I didn't expect it to be quite so bloody soon.

I was appalled, and decided that I'd put the book back in the satchel and start all over again, do it right this time. Practice makes perfect. So, making this commitment to myself that I'd begin this practice right, and right now, I closed the book and put it back in the satchel **without performing *chodai***. I had achieved near *perfect simultaneity* between making a vow, and breaking it. I'm good.

I don't mean to brag, but this is world class mindlessness. Most people have to go through motorcycle accidents without wearing a helmet to achieve this sort of EEG flatline.

So, what can I learn from this? First, there's the obvious humbling involved, a quick, brutal reminder that I have a lot of work to do. Second, there's the more gentle reminder that this kind of thing happens to people. I need to remember this moment the next time someone runs a stop sign in front of me, or doesn't lock the restroom door. I have no business getting angry because the kettle is black. And finally, third, it's just a reminder to simply accept reality. I don't want to be a space case, but I am. I can work on it, and I do, but progress is really, really slow, and I can't let that frustrate me. These are the moments when I'm glad that Sensei is such a good teacher of Hahayana Buddhism, so I can learn how to laugh at myself. There's no sense in getting upset that the pot's black, either.



A TRUE GIFT

by Gio/Sayo Sugranes

On Christmas morning I was gifted by presents from a dear and close friend of mine. I felt a sense of emptiness. I was grateful for them, but it felt empty. I thought to myself "Wow, my Dharma practice must really be going well. I'm not at all excited about these gifts."

Later that morning I went to the gas station before going to visit family. As I was making my purchase the attendant stopped to ask me what I was going to do for Christmas. I told him I was going to visit family. He asked if I was going to have a big feast and eat a lot. "First I have to cook everything, but yes." I replied. He continued by sharing with me how he and his family were up all night until six in the morning cooking and preparing their feast. He was late to work because he had only gotten one hour of sleep. However, his face was lit up. He was really happy. After he finished with my purchase he said "Merry Christmas!" I replied the same and that I hoped he enjoyed the food.

When I got back into my friend's car I stopped for a moment. I realized that I had a conversation with a complete stranger, even though it didn't feel that way, and how funny it was that he was so interested in what I was doing on Christmas. And he then shared with me what he was going to do. He was also the first person, in a very long time outside my family and friends, to wish me a Merry Christmas.

I suddenly felt so good. A warm feeling of joy and unity arose. It didn't seem like I was talking with a stranger, but a close friend I met again. His smile and our conversation truly demonstrated the concept of Oneness. That there are no strangers or others. That we all want happiness, free from suffering. There was no concept of "who is that stranger?"

I was a bit shocked as to how this simple, yet profound, moment had affected me. We never know how we will

True Gift continues on page 3

affect those around us. Even a simple smile can bring about great joy and change within one.

For me, this is what the holidays have been all about. Sharing a kind moment, or sharing a warm smile with others. To treat all as if they were a part of your family.

Especially to those whom we call “strangers.” The exchange of compassion as opposed to material goods.

So, I told my family this story and told them that this moment, for me, was a true holiday gift.



DHARMA-TO-GO

By Wendy Shinyo Haylett

A core group of Bright Dawn Institute for American Buddhism Lay Ministers recently started developing a new spiritual outreach program, “Dharma-to-Go” (DTG).

The concept of DTG emerged from a desire to continue to work together after induction and – most importantly – to ensure that Bright Dawn continues to thrive and grow by communicating the teachings of Rev. Gyomay and Rev. Koyo Kubose to an ever-widening audience.

DTG is envisioned as a network of Bright Dawn Lay Ministers functioning as partners to help Americans further their spiritual growth. The guiding principle is Rev. Gyomay Kubose’s vision of an American Buddhism: not one that converts people to Buddhism, but offers simple teachings and practices that are universal, everyday, and that can be used by people of any religious background.

The concept of DTG is spiritual friendship and mentoring, offered in typical American style, as the name implies. A Dharma “to go” outreach will be prepared at the request of an individual or group and delivered in the way requested (virtually, via the Internet or phone, or personally) – with no dogmatic or religious-label strings attached.

Stay tuned! We are hard at work planning the details and hope to have more to share in the coming months.



THE WINTER FLU

By Gio Sayo Sugranes

I have had a very interesting few months. From having meetings with Tibetan Lamas, creating a Mandala, to completion of a meditation retreat. One thing I was not ready for was getting the flu. Some would say it’s Karma, but I don’t see it like that. Instead it’s all about causes and conditions. When I left Florida it was about 90 degrees. When I arrived at Maryland it was 50 degrees! A huge temperature change that my body was not ready for. To say nothing of all the traveling I did! Two trains, two flights, and a six-hour car ride.

So at the end of all these virtuous activities I have ended up with the flu. But for the first time in my life I am actually happy to be sick! As crazy as that sounds, I am really serious.

Even as I write this Dharma glimpse I am feeling the full force of this flu. The funny thing is that even though my body is achy, cold, and uncomfortable, I feel happy. I see how what I feel is natural. It is impermanent. I also think about how I am embraced by Amida and all the Buddhas even when I’m sick. Then I remembered a Tibetan prayer I was taught a while ago. “If I am to get sick, let me get sick. Through this sickness may I relieve the sickness of all beings.” This made my illness a practice of compassion. This sickness was not just something I felt victim to, but instead transformed it into a method to free all beings from suffering and enjoy this illness. I gave purpose to this moment in my life and didn’t just lie around complaining and moaning, “Oh poor me.”

It’s funny how when I told people that I am sick and really enjoying it, they laughed and thought my fever has taken over and I was hallucinating. But I feel that these are the moments in our lives in which we can see if our practice and Dharma studies as well as realizations are true and a part of us. These are the moments we can truly see if we have a simple understanding of Universal Reality or true realization.

This is the true Thusness of all things. Good and bad as one and not separate. Sick and healthy being one and not separate.

I hope that if any of you are visited by the Flu Buddhas, you are able to enjoy it as much as I have.



Oneness Newsletter Winter 2009

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The purpose of the Bright Dawn Institute is to offer a non-sectarian, non-dualistic approach, the Way of Oneness, to deepen individual spirituality in everyday life for people of all backgrounds.

ZEN NOIR

A movie review by Rev. Liz Stout

“Where were you at the time of the murder?” the nameless detective (Duane Sharp) asks of a Zen student at the temple. “What do you mean by time?” is the reply. And so it goes with smartass Zen (the filmmaker’s term) verbal and nonverbal communication. The movie’s motif is a fascinating flaming orange, and sometimes this signature is run backward. In various states of deterioration, oranges appear everywhere, the best ones being mindfully eaten or held up in front of the face like binoculars.

Our protagonist was called to investigate a death, and learns about his miserable self and Death itself. There is a love story, of course. Dick falls in love with Jane, although he painfully misses his deceased wife. Pain and suffering. Life is full of it.

Be aware that there are compromises. The master-teacher (Kim Chan) uses a backrest and never has his legs in the correct lotus position because in real life he is over 90 years old. When Jane, the mysterious bald renunciate, receives the *keisaku* (precursor to slapstick), the S & M effect is emphasized, as she leans forward dramatically, showing her cleavage. The *kanji* on the dead wife’s forehead is missing a stroke. You just have to get over it.

Our hero is puzzled that none of his time-tested techniques of interviewing and collecting evidence work in this

world. Some people simply keel over and die, and “Anything you believe contains its opposite.” As our hero is whacked with a lime-green nerf toy bat by the teacher who shouts “Wrong!” over and over again, he finally gets the crazy wisdom, or some of it, anyway.

As to tradition, *Zen Noir* has Rinzai and Soto Zen with a dash of Tantra, koan study (called bite-size understandings), Thich Nhat Hanh, Yoda, Star Trek, and Vaudeville wisecracks, all rolled into one. The story, if you track it, is a koan for the audience.

This low budget picture nevertheless has an excellent sound track including chimes, flutes, drumming, smoky-room slow jazz, and visuals of upside down heads, red walls, black cushions, blood-spattered buddhas, a corridor of doors, flashbacks, and reappearance of the dead.

For special features, the film can be seen with voiceover commentary by filmmaker Marc Rosenbush and Buddhist teacher and writer Brad Warner (author of *Hardcore Zen* and *Sit Down and Shut Up*). *Zen Noir* was a winner at festivals in Washington, DC, Rhode Island, Moondance, Indiefest, and others. “No pigs or oranges were harmed in the making of this film,” state the credits, and master Chan exclaims, “Bloody marvelous!” Probably never came to a theater near you. [Magic Lamp, 2006 72 min.]

Beating Robin’s wings
Cuts nature’s silent passing
The world speaks Dharma

Warm air awakens
The red sky breaks horizon
Splendid is Dharma

Golden falls decay
The pumpkin spice lingers
Eternal Dharma

Ice wind cuts deeply
The temple walls a relief
My refuge Dharma

Just a poetic reminder that the Dharma is everywhere, it is brilliant in its teachings, it last forever, and it gives shelter to the spirit.

Jeff Ward (AR)

In my best moments I am neither
proud nor humble.

I AM

That is enough.

Anything more would be less.

by Beverley Kiyō Manley (NM)

Rev. Koyo on YouTube

After learning several lessons about making a video (keep our dog Easy quiet, don’t let the phone ring, hide the cluttered office background, etc.), we have posted two ten-minute Dharma talks on YouTube video: “Buddhist Hell” and “OK ness.” To view them, go to www.youtube.com and enter “koyo kubose” in the search box.

Three other video series are being planned: (1) “Sensei Says” videos for children using hand puppets; (2) “Three-Minute Dharma” a series of talks each lasting three minutes; (3) “Daily Gassho” a series of short one-minute videos based on the Gassho’s from past issues of this newsletter.



2010

JANUARY

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DECEMBER

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Bright Dawn Institute wishes that every day of 2010 be filled with wisdom and compassion.

American Buddhist Gatherings

Heartland Sangha holds 11 A.M. Saturday gathering on the first and third Saturdays of every month at Lake Street Church, 607 Lake Street, Evanston, Illinois (use courtyard entrance on Chicago Avenue).

Each gathering is uniquely planned by a chairperson volunteer from the local Sangha. Music and readings from a variety of sources are used. Gratitude offerings of rice, flowers, or other innovative offerings often replace traditional incense burning and sutra chanting. The Heartland Sangha is to be commended for their "cutting edge" efforts in creating these progressive American Buddhist gatherings.

For more information, go to www.heartlandsangha.org or call

Asayo Horibe, Heartland Sangha President, at (847) 869-5806.

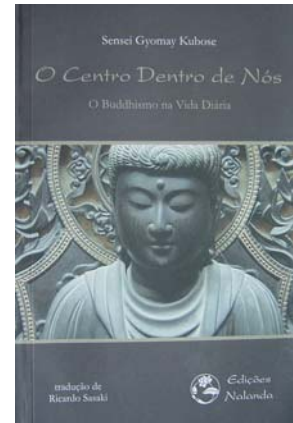
New Dawn Sangha meets the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm in Decatur, IL. For more information or directions, contact Sensei John Miyo Wylder at bassho@sbcglobal.net or (217) 429-1883

Eastern Sun Sangha gatherings are held at 1173 West Boylston Street, Worcester, MA 01606 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. They are scheduled for December 6th and 20th, January 10th and 24th, February 7th and 21st. Contact Toyo Teru Katamori by email at:

eastern_sun_sangha@yahoo.com or go to www.easternsunsangha.org.

Center Within Update

Center Within has been translated into Portuguese by Bright Dawn Lay Minister Ricardo Sasaki. It's titled *O Centro Dentro de Nós*. If you'd like to buy a copy, please contact Sasaki Sensei who lives in Brazil; his email is: nalanda@nalanda.org.br.



Acknowledgements with Gratitude

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*In honor of Willie, Diane & Family
 Upon visiting Bright Dawn Institute*

In Celebration of

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 Masaru & Helen Yamasaki (CA)

*Hisa Chino's 102nd Birthday
 Baby Mina Akiko Lockett
 Yuji Okano's 77th Birthday
 Yuji Okano's 77th Birthday*

(When submitting donations, please list your name exactly as you wish it to appear in the Oneness newsletter. Acknowledgments are current as of **November 17, 2009**. Donations received after this date will be listed in the next issue. If we have missed an acknowledgment, please let us know.)

Book List

Book by Rev. Koyo Kubose

BRIGHT DAWN: Discovering Your Everyday Spirituality. Describes the author's daily morning ritual and how ordinary things and activities can deepen one's spirituality. 152 pages.

Books by Rev. Gyomay Kubose

EVERYDAY SUCHNESS. A classic collection of short articles first published in 1967, hailed as one of the most significant books in Buddhism because of its simple explanations and reference to everyday life. 142 pages.

THE CENTER WITHIN. Continues the approach of "Everyday Suchness." Collection of 58 essays of down-to-earth teachings for a richer, more meaningful life. 134 pages.

THE CENTER WITHIN audio cassette; 3 hours.

AMERICAN BUDDHISM. Covers a brief history of Buddhism in America, problems in terminology and misunderstandings common to Westerners. 29 pages.

ZEN KOANS. Commentary on over 200 classical and modern koans. Insights and life teachings applicable to all Buddhists. 274 pages.

Translations by Rev. Gyomay Kubose

THE FUNDAMENTAL SPIRIT OF BUDDHISM by Haya Akegarasu (Rev. Gyomay Kubose's teacher). Translated by Rev. Kubose. 99 pages.

TAN BUTSU GE. (Translation and commentary). This sutra tells the story of Dharmakara who became Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Life and Light. 56 pages.

HEART OF THE GREAT WISDOM SUTRA. (Translation and commentary). This sutra deals with the teachings of non-self and nothingness. 35 pages.

Other Recommended Books

BUDDHIST SYMBOLS. Handy brochure explaining common Buddhist symbols. quad-fold.

BUDDHISM: Path of Enlightenment. Simple, concise introduction to basic Buddhism. Teachings are superimposed on beautiful full-color photographs of nature scenes such as water ponds, rock gardens, bamboo grove, etc. 20 pages.

COFFINMAN by Shinmon Aoki. This diary of a mortician invites the reader into the fascinating world of Buddhist spirituality which sees the extraordinary in things ordinary, mundane, and even repugnant. 142 pages.

ENGAGED PURE LAND BUDDHISM: Essays in Honor of Professor Alfred Bloom. Challenges Facing Jodo Shinshu in the Contemporary World. Edited by Kenneth K. Tanaka and Eisho Nasu. 360 pages.

OCEAN: AN INTRODUCTION TO JODO-SHINSHU BUDDHISM IN AMERICA by Ken Tanaka. Uses a question and answer format to present Jodo-Shinshu Buddhism and to answer questions frequently asked by non-Buddhists. The book can help Jodo-Shinshu Buddhists understand their own religious tradition and also help in communicating it to others. 270 pages.

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Address: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

General Donation: \$ _____

Memorial Donation: \$ _____

In Memory of: _____

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Everyday Suchness	\$12.00		
Center Within	\$12.00		
Center Within Audio Tapes	\$18.00		
American Buddhism	\$5.00		
Zen Koans	\$17.95		
Fundamental Spirit of Buddhism	\$8.00		
Tan Butsu Ge	\$7.00		
Heart of the Great Wisdom Sutra	\$6.00		
Buddhist Symbols Brochure	\$0.25		
Buddhism: Path of Enlightenment	\$5.00		
Coffinman	\$14.95		
Engaged Pure Land Buddhism	\$9.00		
Ocean	\$14.95		
River of Fire, River of Water	\$19.00		
The Feeling Buddha	\$15.95		

Shipping - \$3.95 first book
and \$0.50 for each additional book

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	Shipping	\$ _____
	TOTAL	\$ _____

For questions regarding quantity discounts and shipping, contact
Bright Dawn at 559-642-4285 or brightdawn@kubose.com.

RIVER OF FIRE, RIVER OF WATER by Taitetsu Unno. Introduces the Pure Land tradition of Shin Buddhism using personal anecdotes, stories, and poetry. With spiritual insight and unparalleled scholarship, this book is an important step forward for Buddhism in America. 244 pages.

THE FEELING BUDDHA. by David Brazier. A lucid account of how the Buddha's path of wisdom and loving kindness grew out of the challenges he encountered in life. 207 pages.



BRIGHT DAWN
Institute for American Buddhism
 28372 Margaret Road
 Coarsegold, CA 93614



Change Service Requested

YES YES Your Everyday Spirituality YES YES	
DEC	<p>Theme: Awareness Purpose: More insights in the kitchen Method: “Kitchen-Knife Gassho:” When using a kitchen knife, pause to lift the tip up before beginning to cut. Let the lifting pause speak to you—any insights regarding what you’re cutting or the act of cutting?</p>
JAN	<p>Theme: Dynamic cycle of opposites Purpose: Using the breath as a spiritual tool to experience the balancing of in-out, coming-going, receiving-giving, etc. Method: “Breathing Gassho:” With both arms extended out horizontally at shoulder height, inhale while bringing arms forward, and hands together in Gassho position in front of your nose. Reverse the movements on the exhale.</p>
FEB	<p>Theme: Gratitude Purpose: Not taking common things for granted Method: “Using-Water Gassho:” As you turn on the water faucet, use your other hand as a one-handed Gassho, even if it holds a utensil or vegetable. Increased awareness of receiving water can elicit teachings; e.g. about water itself, how water is used, etc.</p>

Mailing List Update

If you are already on our mailing list and wish to remain on the list, no action is necessary. We are happy to continue sending our newsletter to all interested persons. If you know someone who would like to be added or removed from our mailing list, please indicate below and send to: Bright Dawn Institute, 28372 Margaret Road, Coarsegold, CA 93614.

Please add to your mailing list Name: _____
 Please remove from your mailing list Address: _____