
O n e n e s s



Quarterly Newsletter of BRIGHT DAWN Center of Oneness Buddhism

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SANGHA DHARMA

By Rev. Koyo Kubose

Sanghas function best when the members take care of one another. This holds true even when the definition of Sangha is extended to include all kinds of groups; e.g. one's household, circle of friends, neighborhood, nation, or global community. Of course we need good leaders, yet there are different types of leaders. A good leader empowers others, sharing both responsibility and the satisfaction of a job well done. It may even be possible to have a Sangha where all the members function in their own way as leaders and there is a genuine feeling of joint ownership.

I'd like to share two stories that illustrate how the Dharma teachings can influence how a Sangha functions. One story is set in rural Japan where a village is looking for a new leader. The villagers think of an ingenious test. They fill a large, shallow stone basin, measuring about twenty feet in diameter, with very hot water. They ask their two candidates to demonstrate their abilities in some fashion. The first candidate is a powerfully built man who has undergone rigorous martial arts training. He strips down to his *fundoshi* (Japanese-style underpants) and with a determined attitude, slowly steps into the water. Beads of sweat appear on his face as he lowers himself deeper and deeper in the hot water. Whispers are heard among the villagers, "What courage!" "What discipline!" The man then steps out of

the water, refuses an offered towel, and calmly sits down on a nearby rock.

The second candidate is a middle-aged woman known for her marital ability of fostering a harmonious household. As she stood before the basin of steaming hot water, her two children cry out, "Mom, don't go in!" She hesitates and after a moment of thought, smiles and signals her husband and his two brothers to bring tubs of cold water from the nearby stream. She asks for the tubs of cold water to be poured into the stone basin. She then takes her two children and steps into the water. As her children are splashing and laughing, she calls out for all the villagers to join them.

At a later village meeting, the villagers admired the strength of the first candidate but thought, "What about after he is gone? Is it wise to depend upon an individual leader when considering the long-term welfare of the village?" They decided in favor of a leader with a sharing attitude who fostered co-operation.

Upon finishing the above paragraph, I leaned back, only to hear Dharma Dan (my favorite animal puppet) singing from his perch above my desk, "Splish, splash, I was taking a bath..." I laughed out loud (LOL) and he shouted in Japanese, "Harakambo, bocha,



bocha." I didn't know he could speak Japanese! I almost wished I had a hose that I could douse him with. He has such a mouth! I had better move on to my second story.

This story is adapted from a sermon I heard given by a Unitarian minister that was about how the idea of the coming of the Messiah influenced a monastery. I have put the story into a Buddhist context by using the idea of Maitreya, the future Buddha. The story is about a dysfunctional monastery where the monks, being human beings, fell into complaining and criticizing each other for every little thing. The nearby village started reducing their support of the monastery and over time, the very continuance of the monastery was in danger. The monks held another meeting. Grievances were aired, suggestions made, but as usual, no resolutions were forthcoming. This time they had invited a leader from the village, an old woman known for her wisdom. The monks asked her for

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Climbing to the Top

by Rod Moriyama

July 10, 2012 was our 41st Wedding anniversary. It was a beautiful day and we just wanted to spend it together.

Cheryl decided that she wanted to climb Koko Head Crater and I was up for it. We didn't have any idea what to do or where to go but it sounded like a reasonable adventure. We'd climb as far as we could.

There's actually a parking lot there and when we arrived about 9:30, it was already about 40% full. Some people were jogging down to the parking lot after having successfully gone to the top. Of course they were all young and athletic. We didn't see too many people our age...actually none! I thought, "Is this a crazy idea?"

Earlier I had called friends who live in Hawaii Kai and they never even thought to do it. They had walked part way up to the base and saw how steep the climb was and decided this wasn't for them. Looking up from the base, it really looks steep. Just getting to the base requires a short hike up a dusty trail that can be slippery.

At the base, there is a dramatic staircase all the way up the crater... over 1100 stairs that go straight up. The steps are part of an abandoned railroad system that took supplies up to the top of the crater look-out point used by the military. It must have been a tram that was pulled up and lowered down with supplies as it did go straight up.

About half the people going up were tourists. There were quite a few local students as well as young families making the attempt. People were very friendly and encouraging. Just

starting a conversation was very easy as there is this inherent mutual goal. "It's a very tough climb, but it is doable!" "You can do it, just take your time!" "It's well worth it!" We had no idea how much time it would take.

At the bottom, the incline is relatively low. The first 100 steps are exhilarating as you stop, turn around, and take a look at the beautiful view below. It was a perfect day. The railroad ties were further apart so Cheryl was struggling a bit in trying to step from tie to tie. We saw a beautiful girl with a dramatic green dragon tattoo pass us on the way up.

I had on a backpack with water to keep hydrated. As people pass you either going up or down, words of encouragement are expressed. *It occurred to us that as in life, enjoying the journey along the way is just as important as reaching the top.* This was our rationale to justify stopping if we just couldn't do it. 30 minutes later and steeper, we reached the "half way point" which is a short bridge of open ties. There is nothing underneath this bridge to stop a potential fall.

Because it is steep, the ties are about 2-3 feet apart. Many people were crawling along the side next to the rail just in case they had to grab something should they slip. Some of the ties were worn but we tried not to think about that. There is an alternate route up that segment of the climb but it looked overgrown and slippery. The distance is only about thirty ties but what a challenge! I kept telling myself, "FOCUS on the next tie; it'll be OK!" It was tempting to look through the ties and see the shear drop underneath. Of course stopping was NOT an option as FEAR would take over.

Before you knew it, the bridge crossing was over. I looked behind and Cheryl was still following me. When she caught up, Cheryl said she would stop and wait for me. We were at the half way point. I told her I just wanted to see how far I could go, and then return to her. We had our phones so we could call each other.

This second half was a LOT steeper and every 20-30 steps I had to stop and take a breath, and enjoy the beautiful scenery. Looking down I noticed that Cheryl was about 100 steps away and she started climbing again! I called to encourage her as she slowly made her way up. The last 200 steps are like climbing almost straight up like a ladder. With thighs ("quads") aching and shaking, our lungs are bursting. The end of the journey is in sight as people up there are cheering their friends to be with them. It's like the little train that could..."I think I can, I think I can, I think I can..." One step at a time.

When I finally reached the end of the ties, I did the same, looking down and shouting encouragement to Cheryl as she made her way up. The girl with the dragon tattoo was





beginning her journey down as Cheryl made it to the top! Wow, what a feeling! It took about 75 minutes to get to the end of railroad ties. We walked further up to see the other side of the ridge where Sandy Beach is visible. Hanauma Bay, Hawaii Kai, Aieahaina, all the way to Diamond Head were clearly in sight! We talked with two gentlemen as they started their way down. They looked younger but they said they were over 70... and they did this TWICE A WEEK!! It was a good way to exercise and not spend a lot of time and money playing golf! Wow...what a lesson!

The way down was also challenging but a lot easier. It took us about 45 minutes to get down. It was a time for reflection and enjoying the view. We also met the girl with the dragon tattoo coming up AGAIN! What was it about this young woman to do this twice (?), maybe more, in a day? Maybe it was the pure adrenaline rush of finishing. Maybe it was just the really nice and friendly environment of having positive attitudes all around you. How lucky to experience this!

Reverend Koyo Kubose in his book, Bright Dawn, writes about "Keep going" and enjoying the journey.

"Keep going" means to take a wide view of life. Like the vast open sky that keeps going from horizon to horizon, we can take in all things wanted and unwanted. "Keep going" means to alter our usual attitude or approach to life. We have to change our understanding of the nature of purpose and the meaning of life. We might ask ourselves, "Well, if we take this wide view of always "keep going," how can we accomplish anything? Shouldn't we have goals in life?" Being goal-oriented is okay in that it provides a direction or an impetus for our actions. Yet, an important teaching in life is, "The means equals the end." That is, the real joy is in the doing itself. A similar saying is, "Don't concentrate on the pursuit of happiness; instead, concentrate on the happiness of pursuit."

How important it is to enjoy the journey along the way, not only the goal...as in life! Namu Amida Butsu.



Oeness Newsletter Autumn 2012

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

advice but she said she had nothing to add. As she was leaving she said, “I have no answers for you but one thing I do know is that one of you is Maitreya.” After she had left, the monks all felt that what she had said was rather strange but in the following days they began to give it more thought. Each one thought something like, “Well, I know I am not Maitreya. Who could it be? Could it be monk Yamada? Naa, he’s too quiet and unassuming. Wait, who says the future Buddha has to be assertive and an active teacher? Maybe what we really need is a leader that teaches by example.” Another monk had eliminated most of his fellow monks as being the Future Buddha and said to himself, “That only leaves monk Tanaka who is uneducated and has fun joking around all the time. He can’t be the coming Maitreya... unless, he’s giving us the lesson that we should all loosen up from the overly pious seriousness that pervades the monastery. He’s the one who joked that the worst translation error in our sacred sutra was that the main word was not “celibate” but “celebrate!” All the monks upon further reflection started looking at their fellow monks in a different light. Not only did they start giving each other the benefit of the doubt but actually began appreciating the very traits that used to be irritating. Harmony prevailed as the monks began to understand others rather than clamor to be understood. As a result, relations improved with the villagers and the monastery prospered.

As I was reading over my article, Dharma Dan commented, “Be sure to point out how the teachings apply to one’s own life.” Well, the best place to start is with one’s own family. Stop taking your loved ones for granted. Maybe the saying “Familiarity breeds contempt” is too harsh; but for sure, familiarity does dull admiration. To show respect and appreciation, you should Gassho to your spouse. If you find this difficult to do, start by doing Gassho to the back of your spouse! As Dharma Dan laughed, he added, “Since Autumn O-Higan is coming in mid-September and is a time when spirituality is deepened by reflecting upon crossing over to the other shore, you should emphasize that it’s a time for real change.” I said, “You just did!” And indeed, it starts with myself. So I did Gassho to Dharma Dan and I’ll be darned if he didn’t wink and nod his head.



sunrise at Haleakala. On Kauai, we saw the Napoli Coastline, Waimea Canyon and ate saimin at Hamura’s. On this trip, one of the resident ministers at a temple I spoke at and whose residence I stayed at, served pupu’s and local beers as we kicked back at the end of the day. I always try to sample new micro-brew beers when I travel. I enjoyed beers like Long Board, Fire Rock, Big Wave, Koko Brown, Wailuku, and I hadn’t known that the long-time local Primo beer had been brought back.

I stocked up on dried sea food, Hersey Kisses with Mac nuts, Kona coffee, shortbread cookies, and other local items; some were gifts and others I got at the local Costco, Wal Mart, and Longs Drug. At temple pot-lucks, I enjoyed fruit like papaya, mango, and pineapple.

My eyes feasted on beautiful flowers, plants and amazing trees. I collected and brought home Kukui nuts and some other small nuts from other trees to make nenju (ojuzu) beads. On Kauai I was taken to Spouting Horn where the incoming ocean waves spout up many feet out of holes in the coral shore. In the water and waves between the coral rocks, you could see sea turtles when they came up for air. I love the Hawaii symbol of sea turtles (honu); they are my symbol for “keep going.” From a local vendor, I bought a turtle necklace for my “better half.”

Returning home, I give a big shout-out Mahalo thanks for all the hospitality I received during my visit to the Western Paradise. My lei collection is growing! The greatest gift I brought home was to Live Aloha. I made up a corny acronym for Aloha: A(lways) L(ove) O(ne another); H(ow much?) A (lot!).



HAWAII TRIP

by Rev. Koyo Kubose

I asked myself, “Should I share aspects of my recent trip to Hawaii for a newsletter article? Would readers find it of interest? I decided to write a short article with the purpose of making readers smile and perhaps even laugh. After all, as I have said, I don’t belong to the Hinayana School of Buddhism; and actually not even the Mahayana School. I prefer the Hahayana School!

A most significant part of my trip was seeing old friends and making new ones. I was able to visit with friends from Chicago, whose connections date back over 60 years ago. I re-connected with Dharma friends like Dr. Kenneth Tanaka and Dr. Alred Bloom who were fellow guest keynote speakers



for the Gathering 2012 weekend event held in Honolulu. As we sat together, we indulged in some Buddhist humor like, “Why are there no Buddhist rhythm & blues bands?” “Because Buddhists have no soul.” “Why did the Buddhist coroner get fired?” “Because his answer for cause of death on every death certificate was ‘birth.’” Plus old standards like, “Why can’t you clean under the bed with a Buddhist vacuum cleaner?” “Because it has no attachments.” And ordering a hot dog, “Make me one with everything.” And after paying the hot dog vendor, asking “Where is my change?” and being told, “All change has to come from within.” Some of these jokes can be called puns, but I call them “groaners.”

Next, I’ll tell you a secret. Actually it’s not really a secret but it’s something not many people would know about. It’s the kind of thing that starts out with the phrase, “I’m not superstitious but...” Every time I go to Hawaii I wear an amulet, a necklace around my neck. Even when my son went on vacation to Hawaii, I gave it to him and told him to wear it while he was in Hawaii. Where did I get this amulet? I went to Hawaii in 1999 as the guest speaker for the Hongwanji’s Buddhist Study Center’s ten-day annual Summer Session in Honolulu. Every weekday over a two-week period I spoke to a group of about 40 people who had signed up for this unique lengthy seminar. I really bonded

with this group. On the first day, a lady said, “You seem like a local boy.” If you live in Hawaii, you are called local, or “kamaina.” At the farewell luncheon, one of the participants, looking me in the eye, sang a farewell song in Hawaiian. As a farewell gift, she gave me a necklace, a symbol carved in ivory. I don’t know what it represents and perhaps that adds to its significance. I have shown it to people in Hawaii and have received some answers but nobody seems to know for sure what it represents. There are several similar amulets that represent a shark’s tooth, a wave, or a fishing hook but I have never seen an amulet like mine at any store in Hawaii. I could write and ask the giver and she could probably tell me its meaning but I am in no hurry to do so.

Okay, so wearing my amulet, I always have a great time in Hawaii. The food! I love everything! I may not be Andrew Zimmer, but I am an adventurous guy, liking Japanese foods like uni (sea cucumber) sushi, crab guts, natto (fermented soy bean), and “zuru zuru” grated yamaimo (the latter is often equated with runny nasal discharge). I love Hawaiian pupu’s (appetizers), especially poke (marinated raw tuna). I had some Lychee nuts (not really nuts) which I hadn’t had since a trip in 2003. I was taken to a unique restaurant Yuzu which featured vegetarian sushi; using grated carrots for uni, mushrooms for other kinds of fish, etc. Absolutely delicious! In Honolulu, I had local staples like Zip Min at Zippy’s restaurant; for the uninformed, this is a saimin noodle soup dish common to Hawaii. I ate at local places like Big City Diner as well as fancy places with an ocean view like Longhi’s and House with No Key in the Ala Moana Center in Waikiki. I even had a Macademia nut ice cream cone at the Baskin & Robbins that President Obama worked at as a youth.

I told the person organizing my speaking tour to use me like an oshibori towel, which is the hot towel that Japanese restaurants give you for wiping your hands before eating. In other words, to wring me dry, wring me out to the last drop! So, in addition to speaking on the island of Oahu, I spoke on Maui and Kauai. Maui is known for things like boiled peanuts and Maui potato chips. On a previous visits I had done the drive to Hana and saw the



HAWAII TRIP continues on page 4

THE CASINO AS A BUDDHIST DOJO

By Sallea Unger

In spite of the admonitions from “my mother in her condominium in my head” (as a friend expressed it), once a month I board a bus which leaves the senior center for a casino. A wonderful bargain—the bus is contracted by the casino and no fare is charged; we simply give the driver a dollar on return to show our gratitude for the safe ride. Forty-five senior citizens on fixed incomes pleurably anticipating six hours at the casino! Is something wrong with this picture?

The casino is a garish, jangling microcosm of the “real” world, with all its uncertainties and inconsistencies. The purpose of the casino is transfer of my money to itself; yet there are some signs that say “Gamble responsibly” and others giving the phone numbers of Gamblers Anonymous.

I play the slot machines. Initially a casino may seem an unlikely venue for Buddhist teachings and the slot machine a strange-appearing sensei. However, in the course of the day my conviction of the truth of Shinran Shonin’s description of humans as foolish beings is reinforced.

In the midst of the bling and the clang, the bright lights, the roaring lion and howling wolves, is the delicious anticipation of what will come up this time, and if not this time—next time. The glitter and the possibility! If I win with the lowest possible bet, how much might I win with a higher bet? If I don’t win on this machine, maybe I’ll win on that one. And if I win this time, maybe I’ll win again if I stay here. A part of me is standing aside and taking notes on the movements of my mind. Greed: If I win I want more. Difficulty of feeling sympathetic joy: If I leave a machine because it isn’t doing anything, and move to the one next to it, and someone comes to *that* machine and starts winning—it’s impossible for me to be happy for him or her. I berate myself for leaving when I did.

Do I resolve not to go to the casino ever again? To give up Maybe Next Time? (Don’t get me started on the free spins!) What I have learned is reinforcement of the validity of Shinran Shonin’s take on humans as “foolish beings.” I learn from my own experience, as Shakyamuni Buddha said we should do.



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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.

DISCOVERING BUDDHISM IN EVERYDAY LIFE: by Marvin Harada 2011. In commemoration of his 25 years of ministry at the Orange County Buddhist Church, over 40 essays by Rev. Harada were selected from past monthly newsletters. 128 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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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.



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Change Service Requested

YES YES <u>Your Everyday Spirituality</u> YES YES	
SEP	<p>Theme: Affirmation Purpose: Expressing goodwill Method: Hawaiian Shaka: With thumb and little finger up, other three fingers curled down, and palm facing chest, slightly wiggle hands back and forth. Then do a one-handed Gassho with a big smile.</p>
OCT	<p>Theme: Approval Purpose: Showing support when something is done that you want to acknowledge. Method: While making eye contact with another, put hand in front of chest, curl four fingers in and put thumb up. Option: Use both hands, then bring hands together in a thumbs-up Gassho.</p>
NOV	<p>Theme: Aloha Spirit (basic human friendliness) Purpose: Acceptance of pluralism and individual differences Method: "A" is for Aloha: With hands in front of chest, palms facing each other about six inches apart, lean top of hands together so tips of fingers touch; then put tips of thumbs together. Notice that your fingers, hands, and arms form the letter "A." Hands can then be collapsed into an ending Gassho. Use in diverse group settings to foster togetherness.</p>

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