



O n e n e s s

Quarterly Newsletter of BRIGHT DAWN CENTER of Oneness Buddhism

Vol. 17 No. 4 Winter 2013

Heart of Wisdom Scroll

By Rev. Koyo S. Kubose

There is a scroll hanging on a wall just inside the front door of my house. I'd like to tell you the background of how this scroll came to be here. I have to start with my growing up on the Southside of Chicago. One of my childhood friends, Gerald, was exactly the same age as I was; as we shared the same birthday. We were in the Boy Scouts together and we both played the guard position on a local basketball team, the Vikings.

Later, as a minister at the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, I conducted the funeral services when his parents passed away. Gerald's parents had been living at his younger brother Glen and his wife Charyn's home. When Gerald passed away at the

young age of 60, Glen asked me to do Gerald's funeral service. I was also able to take care of the services when other family relatives passed away.

When Glen and Charyn retired to Hawaii, I visited them when I went there on a speaking tour in August of 2012. In the autumn of that year they sent me a beautiful scroll of the famous Heart of Wisdom sutra. The enclosed note said that they had a bonsan (Buddhist monk) in Japan ink it, and requested that I hang it in memory of Glen's parents. This is the background of how this scroll came to be hanging in my home.

As I look at the scroll, I think how monks in Japan, as a form

of spiritual practice, copy sutras using traditional brush and ink calligraphy. With a sense of awe, I admire the precise written characters done with such great concentrated mindfulness. What a precious gift to receive!

I made a vow to be inspired and to study this sutra in more depth. In fact, my father, Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose, wrote a translation and commentary on this Heart of Wisdom Sutra, which is called Hannya Shingyo in Japanese. Quoting from the book's introduction:

The Hannya Shingyo is the heart of the Maha Prajna Paramita Sutra. As the heart is the essential part of the human body, so this Hannya Shingyo is the essential part of the Great Wisdom Sutra. In Chinese translation it has

Scroll continues on page 4



Inside

Everyday is a Holiday	p. 2
Happy New Moment	p. 2
Dharma Dan	p. 3
A Fun Monastery	p. 3
Matters of the Heart	p. 4
Daruma Santa	p. 5
Snow	p. 6

Everyday is a Holiday....

By Sayo

This morning I prepared to upload my Dharma Glimpse and report only to discover that my computer had suffered a major crash. Even as I write this report I am wondering how I can recover my system. I searched around for the needed disks in hopes that they may be able to fix the problem. Without a solution to this issue, I would not be able to recover both my report and glimpse.

I took a moment to pause. Actually I took a moment to laugh at the situation. Instead of “this always happens to me” I laughed and actually said, “I’m glad this happened to me”. It made me feel alive. When problems arise, I feel, they are good moments to put the Dharma to work. Even though I knew that I would have to rewrite my report and glimpse, this situation broke me out of my usual Sunday schedule. Now I had to change my schedule around and try to rewrite my glimpse and report.

I took another moment of pause. This time I decided to relax for a moment and listen to a record I had found.

The record was from the musical Mame. This musical and movie have always been, at least to me, very inspirational. My favorite line in the musical/movie is one spoken by the main character of Mame Dennis.

“Live, live, live... Life’s a banquet and most poor sons of bitches are starving to death!”

This line always makes me laugh at my problems. So I have has always kept it in mind. Especially in times of trouble.

I decided to watch the movie version starring Lucille Ball.

In the first scene Mame and her guest are celebrating. When asked by a guest: “Mame, what the hell are we celebrating?” she response by saying “A holiday! One I just invented.”

Then she continued to sing the song: “It’s Today”. These are the opening lyrics:

*Light the candles,
Get the ice out,
Roll the rug up,
It's today.*

*Though it may not be anyone's birthday,
And though it's far from the first of the year,
I know that this very minute has history in it, we're here!*

And this made me think that today is a holiday. Not Christmas or Hanukah, but my own Computer Crash Day!

I celebrated and rejoiced in this new idea. So much so that I stopped thinking about the computer issue and was inspired to write this new Dharma Glimpse.

Mame is right. Every day should be a Holiday. Why? “We’re here!” Do we really need any other excuse to celebrate life to the fullest? To enjoy the present.... Do we need special or government sanctioned holiday to rejoice and celebrate? NO! We should celebrate everyday like it was a holiday.... Your special Holiday.

So when life gets you down, your computer crashes, plans are not working out like you wanted, stop for a moment and celebrate your own Holiday! Because this very minute has history in it... and we’re here!



Happy New Moment!

Rev. Koyo Kubose

After reading Sayo’s article “Everyday is a Holiday...” I was reminded of a haiku written by Nichiyo, one of our Bright Dawn Center’s lay ministers. Some years ago, he sent me this haiku and I taped it to my desk lamp. His original haiku was about Buddha’s birthday but we can consider it to refer to Buddha’s Enlightenment Day, since the latter, December 8th, is more seasonally current. Although we annually celebrate birthdays and religious holidays, in another everyday-ness sense, any present moment can have relevant significance. What is concretely before us often dominates the abstract. The everyday-ness of celebrations and holidays can have spiritual impact at any time. This emphasis on everyday-ness can also be seen in the meaning of Nichiyo’s Dharma name which means “Everyday Sun.” Here is his haiku:

*In the midst of things
He sings Happy New Moment
Blows out the candles*



My Squirrely Friends

By Dharma Dan



There are two kinds of squirrels here at the Bright Dawn Center. One is the Western Gray Squirrel who builds nests high in the trees. They run easily on overhead branches, using their bushy tails like a counterbalancing rudder. Their food comes mainly from the plentiful oak and pine trees on our property. In addition to gathering acorns, they cut open the pine-cone scales one by one to get at the seeds. Seeing stripped pine cones on the ground are a sure sign that squirrels have been feeding. If you want to give them a real treat, just grow some sunflower plants.

The other kind of squirrel common to the Sierra Nevada foothills is the California Ground Squirrel. These ground squirrels are a little smaller than the tree squirrels and they do not have bushy tails. They have a distinctive patch of white coloring on the back shoulder area. Scattered all over our property are 3-4 inch diameter holes in the ground. The extensive underground tunnel and burrow systems serve for safety retreats, food storage, hibernation, and the rearing of young.

In addition to seeds of grasses and other wild green vegetation, ground squirrels love most crops grown in our home vegetable garden. Rev. Koyo has learned to share the fruits of his labor; such sharing reminds him that Dana (generosity, charity, sharing) is the first of the Six Paramitas. He also says, "As long as they leave me some!" It's a good thing that our garden is a large one. Not only do we learn how

to co-exist with our squirrely friends, we can receive other teachings from them. These small creatures are an example of how to live in harmony with the cycles of nature. During the warmer months, they "squirrel away" seeds and nuts to prepare for the winter months when food is scarce.

This can be a reminder for humans to set aside a portion of existing precious resources as a future investment. Of course, financial aspects fall into this category but you can also conserve other kinds of assets for your mental and spiritual health. How are you spending your time and energy? What kind of daily choices are you making? Your thoughts and actions can nurture you in the present as well as sustain your future well being. How you live now is also an affirmation of abundance yet to come.

Enlightened living is to live in joyful accordance with natural causes and conditions. Do you hear what I'm saying? Hey, I'm not called Dharma Dan for nothing!

Squirrels know how to enjoy life's adventures. They are great communicators and by helping each other watch for danger, they do not allow worry to drain their zest for living. Instead, they allow their curious nature to lead the way, they stay alert to opportunities and live fearlessly. Following their example, we can enjoy the journey of life's cycles as we prepare for a bright future, taking time to learn and play along the way. A wise person once said, "There are only two things to remember in life: 'Always be sincere, and don't forget to laugh.'"

A Fun Monastery

The senior monk was closely examining an ancient scroll. He was reviewing the translation of a sutra central to his sect. His monastery was the authority specializing in sutra translation. Suddenly he shouted, "We've made a terrible mistake; it's not celibate, it's celebrate!"

Oneness Newsletter Winter 2013

Editors: Adrienne Kubose, Rev. Koyo S. Kubose

Phone: (559) 642-4285

Email: brightdawn@kubose.com

Website: www.brightdawn.org

Dial-the-Dharma: (847) 386-8836

Live Dharma Sunday (347) 945-7953

brightdawnsangha.ning.com

Send Poems, Reader Replies To:

28372 Margaret Road

Coarsegold, CA 93614

The purpose of the Bright Dawn Center 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

only 632 characters, the shortest of all sutras, but it explains the essence of Buddhism which is KU, or Emptiness.

All things are empty. This is the doctrine of Nothingness. But Emptiness, or Nothingness, does not just mean nothing. It is based on that which is called EN GI. EN means indirect cause or conditions, and GI means arise. All things arise and subside, appear and disappear, according to the direct and indirect causes and results. Just as water at a certain temperature becomes steam, and steam under conditions of reduced temperature becomes water, water under other conditions becomes ice, ice melts. So all things in this world appear and disappear; nothing is static and unchanging. According to causes, conditions, and results, all things continuously change. There is no static, unchanging thing as such. Life is not something you possess. This very dynamic state, continuously changing, continuous becoming, is called life. So everyday is a new day and new life. Our life, the whole universe, is continuous flux, and there is nothing about which you can say, "This is it." It is continuous change. You cannot grasp life,

our life, because it is continuously becoming. There is no life as such. So this Hannya Shingyo explains the doctrine of Emptiness. It is called KU. KU means empty. Philosophically it is called Nothingness... no static thing as such, a continuous state of constant change. This very dynamic state of emptiness or nothingness is the reality of all things, the essence of life.

Following this introduction, a character by character translation into English is presented. Although it is interesting to see the literal translation, it is Rev. Kubose's commentary in the next section of the book that provides valuable interpretation of each line in the sutra. This commentary is what gives relevant meaning and impact of the Dharma teachings for living life.

As Robert Kikuchi states in the book's Preface:

The Hannya Shingyo is central to Buddhist thought and understanding of non-self, of conditioned and dependent arising. However, the bare bone succinctness is unintelligible to most seekers without a competent guide. This presentation is made by such a man, well versed in the doctrine, and is a distillation of a lifetime of studies, devotion and reflection of the Dharma.

Editor's Note: Rev. Kubose's translation of the Heart of Wisdom Sutra is available; if interested, please see the Booklist in this newsletter.



Matters of the Heart

By Andrew Jiyo Agacki

*How do
Matters of the heart
Apply
To 'the moment'?*

*Do not
Ignore
What is
Past ...*

*What is
'The moment'
Anyway ...
But memory?*

*The past
Is always
With us
As now.*

*But live
Now ...
Only keep the past ...
Don't live it!*



Daruma Santa

by Rev. Koyo S. Kubose



Bodhidharma (Bodaidaruma), popularly known as Ta-mo (Daruma), was an Indian monk who came to China, bringing the discipline of meditation, founding Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism. He was the third son of the king of Koshi, a country in South India. According to tradition, he came to China in 520, when he was more than sixty years of age, and practiced meditation with his face to the wall for nine years at Shao-lin-ssu (Shorin-ji) of Sung-shan (Suzan) mountain.

Legend has it that Bodhidharma sewed his eyelids open so he would not fall asleep while meditating—and that he meditated so long that his arms and legs fell off. This legend is the origin of the Daruma doll in Japanese culture. The Daruma doll is a bright red, pear-shaped doll and the bottom is weighted so that if tipped, it rights itself. There is a Japanese saying, "Seven times down; eight times up." The Daruma doll is a symbol of resilience telling us that no matter how many times life's difficulties may knock us over, we can always right ourselves.

In a spiritual context, it could be said that Eastern meditation establishes a heavy Dharma weight in one's gut (*hara*), making for a stable spiritual life. Whereas in the West, a premium is put on the head or intellect. In effect, the pear-shaped doll is placed

upside down, resulting in an unstable, top-heavy doll. The stability of one's spiritual life can sometimes be sabotaged by too much thinking.

The Daruma doll is a popular symbol of good fortune that can be seen in Japanese restaurants and gift shops. I would like to make an association of the red, squat Daruma doll with the popular image of Santa Claus. In addition to Santa also being portly and dressed all in red, Santa is always saying, "Ho! Ho! Ho!" Did you know that in Japanese, the Chinese written character for Dharma is pronounced "Ho"? In fact, when Japanese Zen monks do their spiritual practice of begging (*takuhatsu*), they walk the neighborhood streets chanting "Ho..."

So, during the winter holiday season, whenever you see Santa and hear him saying "Ho! Ho! Ho!"—we Buddhists can imagine he is proclaiming the good news of the Dharma! Isn't this great! Let's keep our sense of humor. The Dharma is fundamentally very down to earth. Although Buddhists can usually be categorized into either the Hinayana or Mahayana schools, I like to consider Daruma Santa as belonging to the Ha-Ha Yana school. I wish all of you a very Happy Holiday Season!



Komical Karma

BLONDIE



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Snow in Coarsegold



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 Upon Hisa Chino's 106th birthday

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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.

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.

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.

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YES YES Your Everyday Spirituality YES YES

DEC	<p>Theme: Letting go of negative emotions Purpose: Flush away self-centered attachments Method: "Toilet Gassho:" When sitting on the toilet, remind yourself to flush or let go of your life's "waste products" like grudges, resentments, cynicism, arrogance, self pity. Flush daily! BM stands for Buddha Movement!</p>
JAN	<p>Theme: Seeing beyond your "blindness" Purpose: Appreciate different perspectives as symbolized by Janus, the Roman deity of new beginnings, whose head has four faces, each one looking in one of the four directions. Method: Whenever "bumping heads" with someone you disagree with, take a pause and do the "Look-Around Gassho:" by putting your hands together in Gassho and slowly turn around in a circle and bow as you face in each of the four directions. Your view is not the only "correct" one; be open to respecting other people's views.</p>
FEB	<p>Theme: Authentic Encounters Purpose: Promote deeper interpersonal awareness when meeting and greeting others by using a special handshake. Method: As part of a regular handshake, extend your index finger inside the other's wrist; this can symbolize touching or taking the other person's pulse, and connecting heart to heart. Since your index finger is pointing at the person in front of you, this can remind you that this person is the only and most relevant person to pay attention to in that moment. Editor's Note: Shall we call this special handshake the Buddhist Handshake?</p>

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