



# ONENESS



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF BRIGHT DAWN CENTER OF ONENESS BUDDHISM

VOL. 23 NO. 1 SPRING 2019

## HOW'S THE WEATHER?

By Rev. Koyo Kubose

Happy Spring! Although I am writing this article in mid-February for the printing of our Spring issue, here in Central California it is sunny and in the 60's. I am sure that in other parts of the country, spring is roaring in like a lion!

My sister lives in Chicago. Just last week they had record-breaking cold weather... 30 degrees below zero! Add the wind-chill factor, and it felt like minus 50 degrees! I emailed her that the Polar Express Vortex paid them a visit. She said everything closed down... the airport, schools, and she had to cancel her chanoyu tea classes. Another amazing thing was that in just a few days later, the temperature warmed up to 50 degrees; it was an 80 degree shift!

Whenever extreme weather events occur, I say it's Mother Nature telling us that we humans are not in charge of everything. Then I am reminded that our emotions, like the weather, are often unpredictable too. In one moment we may be smiling and feeling great but then something happens and in a flash, we get angry and start cussing a blue streak.

Actually, we should not blame our feelings as the cause of our reactive negative behavior. Although it may be difficult to control how one feels, it is helpful to realize that we can learn to control



how we respond to one's emotions. Suppose anger occurs, regardless of what gave rise to your anger, it is not inevitable that you have to react by hurting others or destroying property. It is important to realize that you can learn positive ways of responding to one's anger. You are not automatically forced to project or rationalize maladaptive, negative reactions. You also do not have to think you should never get angry. There is a big difference between trying not to get angry and learning how to respond to anger in positive, constructive ways.

A helpful analogy is to consider your emotions being like the daily weather conditions. Although one may not be able to control the weather, we can learn different ways to deal with, say stormy weather. We do not have to allow bad weather to make us shake a fist and swear or to get so depressed you stay in bed all day. Stormy weather does not mean you have to have a stormy day. You do

not have to let the weather prevent you from taking care of your daily important business. An alternative way to greet bad weather is to say to yourself, "Well, I get to use my new umbrella!" or "I think I'll stop and buy my favorite hot drink on the way to work today."

Suppose the weather is not just stormy but extremely bad like a tornado? Although such rare events may dictate taking extreme measures, it is your accompanying attitude that will determine whether a tragedy crushes you or deepens your character in positive ways. As expressed by the French existential philosopher, Albert Camus, "In the midst of winter, I discovered within myself an Invincible Summer."



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# BUDDHIST TAIKO

By Rob Kanyo Mican

On April 14th, 2018, the Mountain View Buddhist Temple in Mountain View, California, hosted the first Buddhist Taiko Gathering. Taiko drumming is a traditional Japanese style of drumming that has now taken hold in the U.S. Many taiko conferences have been held in North America over the years, but this was the first conference developed specifically for taiko drumming groups that are associated with Buddhist temples.

There were over 90 participants representing 17 different taiko groups. Most participants were from temple taiko groups in or near the San Francisco Bay Area. Several came from other groups across California. Representatives of one group came from as far away as San Diego, and one individual came from a temple group in Chicago, Illinois.

The Gathering was headlined by three special guests: Johnny Mori, George Abe, and Reverend Mas Kodani. Johnny, George and Rev. Mas were all founding members of Kinnara, the oldest North American taiko group to be affiliated with a Buddhist temple. Kinnara was founded at Senshin Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles in 1969. All three of them are considered to be pioneers in North American taiko.

A special service opened the Gathering, with Reverend Mas as the keynote speaker. He gave an inspirational talk about Buddhist taiko, with an emphasis on not letting your ego get in the way of your playing. “Embarrassment and pride,” he said, “both come from our screwed-up sense of ‘self.’” This sense of self is what interferes in our ability to play taiko. The feelings of embarrassment that we feel when we drop one of our sticks or forget the next line of the song, or the feelings of pride when we start to believe that we are taiko superstars – all of that comes from the self, which in Buddhism is a delusion. That’s not how Buddhist taiko should be played.

He pointed out several times that we, as Buddhist taiko players, are not professional musicians. We should not be feeling embarrassed or prideful on stage; instead, we should be having fun. “We play for the fun of playing. We are meant to have fun in life. If we are having fun playing taiko on stage, the audience will see it and sense it, and we will connect



to the audience that way.”

Many times in his talk, Reverend Mas used young children as examples of how adults should play taiko. “Children,” he said, “up to the age of two are examples of selfless playing. They play naturally without the ego getting in the way.” These young children are not concerned with self-conscious embarrassment or self-absorbed pride. We can learn a lot from the way they play.

As adult taiko players, we have to get to the point that the children are already at. That is how we connect not only to the audience, but to everything else. Reverend Mas continued, “It’s all about connecting to what’s around us. Ego/self gets in the way of those connections. Ego/self gets in the way of having fun.”

In closing, he said “we all have to get to the point where you are playing unconsciously, or naturally. If you’re thinking while you’re playing, you lose that connection.” The hallmark of Buddhist taiko, according to Reverend Mas, comes down to one simple line: “You do not play the taiko. The taiko plays you.” 🙏



**Spring is Nature’s way of saying “Let’s Party!”**

-Robin Williams



## A HOUSE DIVIDED

By Charlie Dickinson

It seemed like a reasonable idea at the time. My close associate, Nanci, felt our eight-year-old cat, Hannah, was bored. She slept a lot. A “little playmate”--as in kitten--might help. But suppose, I said, ‘tude-y Hannah will not welcome the stranger. Still, I was soon perusing daily the Oregon Humane Society’s website to see who was up for adoption. Then I was at OHS when doors opened. I wanted a ginger kitten. My experience has been they have lots of energy. Yet I wasn’t “connecting” to a kitten of any color.

One Saturday morning with an OHS volunteer, Nanci and I “interviewed” a red-and-white kitten called Winston. At six months, he was older than the hold-in-your-hand kitten who would be perfect. Still, he seemed alert, not needy, and intent on figuring out how to get out of the room. After the volunteer stepped outside, Nanci said, Why don’t we take him? He’s a red cat after all. Winston had done nothing to win me over, but maybe I was tired of website thumbnails and driving to see cats in real life. We left with Winston. Winston, aboard our hatchback, was mute as we drove away. We’d gone a quarter mile when I also noticed my chest muscles tighten. Was that from the cat?

At home, we set up Winston in his room. He seemed unnaturally passive. For the next twenty hours, not the feeblest of meows from him. He just stared out the windows of the French doors. Hannah, though, was vocal. She growled and hissed. Winston was unimpressed. He stared vacantly, as if studying a nutcase. I decided Winston was ready for a new name. I settled on Rosko, with a suggestion of rascal. When Rosko finally spoke, it was like a gusher. Before feeding time, he was as insistent as an air horn. For weeks, we kept the two apart, ready to use a squirt bottle if needed. At times, they would be in the same room, but it was always an uneasy standoff.

Rosko must have thought Hannah a bluffer: He’d slowly approach her, as if testing. But once, she made a big mistake. She ran away. The two tore up the stairs to the second, to the third floor? We heard blood-curdling screams from Hannah. When we finally separated them, loose fur was everywhere. And Rosko--seemingly demonic--calmly ate the gray fur he’d ripped off Hannah.

We again resolved to give each their safe space; but with a sliding door, or a swinging door, or French doors. Meanwhile, I noticed I couldn’t spend much

time near Rosko: My chest muscles would tighten. A sensitivity? Objectively, I wasn’t wheezing, but still a black mark against him. In the next few weeks, more cat fights followed, with blood-curdling screams. Rosko had “got loose.”

Maybe I’d had enough. Despite Nanci’s growing attachment to Rosko’s kittenness--he especially liked fetching a green doggy toy he’d carry in his mouth--I told Nanci a return made sense for all of us. We agreed, as a youngster, he’d be adopted in days. A return was relatively simple. We filled out a form online, mentioning the intractable behavior problem. I printed out the form with which I was to take in Rosko the next day between 10 a.m. and 12 noon.

I also confirmed Rosko’s special attachment to the green doggy toy meant I could bring that in a Ziploc bag too. I planned to leave the house twenty of ten. During the half hour or so I had to get ready, I decided to take pictures of Rosko. He was as passive as when we first brought him home. He sat inside the door of his Pet Taxi. The dozen or so “last” pictures were all the same. I put the stuff on the front car seat. His papers and the green, Ziploc’d doggy. I went back in the house to get Rosko.

Then an odd thing happened. I could not get out of my head one overwhelming thought: I can change my mind! I had no real appointment. And I had a sense Rosko knew what was at stake. I called Nanci to say, We’re going to make it work. Yes, two cats--bitter antagonists--would have a home. Even if it were split in two by a doorstopped sliding door.

Off the phone, I sat down with Rosko. We spent something like half an hour enjoying each other’s company. My sensitivity to Rosko? Gone in a blink of an eye. The next day I saw a bumper sticker on a car. Beside a cat pawprint, the words: WHO SAVED WHO?

Editor’s Note: Accompanying the essay was a letter from the author in which he says he remembers Rev Koyo mentioning when “Oneness” was misinterpreted as “Onemess” and how “Onemess” seemed to apply to his current two household cats. He also wrote, “The solution to the ‘I hate your face’ antagonism has I think some Buddhist value of saving both cats. Some people may think we’re doing too much, but I will mention we once lived with four cats; two were indoor only and two were indoor-outdoor (leaving through a cat door the others couldn’t get to). We did that for five years.”

## DRIVING TO THE TEMPLE

By Michael Saiyo

I drive to the nearest Jodo Shinshu Temple once a month. It is a two hour drive. I seem to be more mindful when I am driving there. I notice all of my little attachments. I first notice that I was unsure of what I was wearing because I didn't have time to change. Then I thought about a story of Shoma and how when he went into the temple and just lay down. I don't remember exactly how the story went, but others criticized him for doing so and his response was that he was at home. It also made me think of my grandfather, who was a preacher for the Church of Christ, and how he said that what you wore to church was not important.

I notice how easily my mind wanders and how I think about things being good or bad. I notice little frustrations with the condition of the road. It is rough with a lot of curves. The way others drive not like me. The price of gas. I even start to wave at others on the road just to see who waves back. I realized that it doesn't matter and I wave without concern. I saw a ground squirrel on the road and worried that I would run it over. Looking closer at the road, I saw a lot of grasshoppers. I notice a lot of bugs splattered

on the windshield. Itadakimasu. But it is just as easy to become attached to the "good" things. The beauty of the landscape, hills, yellow wildflowers, and a deer walking near a river.

Halfway there, I stopped at a gas station to get something to drink. There was a lady at the counter engrossed in lottery tickets. I patiently waited for her to finish. When it was my turn at the register, the clerk was still trying to figure out what to do with the lottery tickets. He was a high school student and it seemed that it was his first day on the job. I didn't rush him, but the two boys that were behind me heckled him for being so slow. I figured this was a good time to practice patience.

All these thoughts were just in one two-hour drive, Can you imagine being mindful all of the time? It seems ridiculous to have such a wandering mind. But don't be afraid or discouraged to look into your mind. Just watch your thoughts and then let them go. I realized from this that mindfulness is not to be done only on occasional drives because we are driving on the road to the Pure Land every day.

## CATCHING THE WIND

By Andy Jiyo

I often thought, in my childish days,  
That I could catch the wind and hold it  
In the fist of my small hand:  
Feeling it swirl like a captured fly,  
And then set it free ...  
Such a foolish child I was.

I still often stand, in my maturing years,  
On sidewalk and in woodland,  
Breathing in the cold mintiness of Winter,  
Inhaling the moist earthiness of Spring,  
Feeling it swirl deep within these old lungs...  
Such a foolish man I am.



## Komical Karma

LIFE ISN'T ABOUT WAITING  
FOR THE STORM TO PASS



IT'S ABOUT LEARNING  
TO DANCE IN THE RAIN

UNEARTHEDCOMICS.COM 2017 ©SARA ZIMMERMAN



# TRUST YOUR INTUITION

By Dharma Dan

Do you know why an evolutionary diagram has humans at the top? Right, because it is humans that drew the diagram! Their evolutionary diagram is based on the importance of conceptual intelligence. If the diagram were based on the sense of smell, other animals would be at the top of the diagram. If the criterion were speed, the cheetah would be on top.

Humans consider themselves superior to other members of the animal kingdom. You humans value conceptual logic to deal with problem-solving situations and look down on those animals that lack so-called higher cognitive skills. Although nature has endowed non-human animals with adaptive behavior called instincts, humans usually consider such instincts to be inferior to human reasoning.

I like to think that humans still do have instincts but that such instincts have been weakened and driven underground by over reliance on conceptual reasoning. Humans may consider instincts a negative word when applied to themselves. If so, my suggestion is to use the word intuition. I hope you humans can become more balanced and whole by trusting and developing your intuitive ability.

Why don't you take a lesson from your pets? They stay present-centered and can pick up subtle cues to act quickly without prolonged unnecessary "thought." To illustrate, consider the following Dharma Glimpse by Michael Shinyo (LM3):

I'm sitting on the front porch, sipping on a cup of coffee. It's a nice, quiet morning and I'm gathering my thoughts and planning my day. My cat buddy, Finn, always joins me on the porch on my days off. Suddenly, Finn runs to hide in the bushes. I look around to see what he sees. There's someone walking down our street from almost a block away. I wonder what he knows? I begin thinking about how animals seem to have intuition that we humans do not.

Why is that? Finn came to us as a feral kitten a few years ago. We used to watch him sneak out every night. He was very careful. He would wait until almost dark and, as a black cat, blended into the shadows very well. He would look and then run from behind a building to a bush to a car and so on until he was on our porch. Somehow he knew he could trust us. He was right. Three years later and he runs the place. Still today, he is very selective in who he trusts. Some people, he'll go right up to. Others will never even see him. One specific instance was with a neighbor boy. He lived across the street and two houses over. Anytime Finn saw him, instantly, he dove into the bushes. Well, it turns out this kid ended up trying to carjack a woman just a block from here. He even threatened to light her on fire. How did Finn know to avoid this kid? I think it's more than instincts. Animals in the wild rely on instincts, but I think there is some intuition at play too. Finn, even though he is very domesticated and spoiled now, still seems to have great intuition. If this is something natural, when did humans lose it and how do we get it back? I think it comes down to awareness. Animals tend to be more aware of what's going on in their environment. We, on the other hand, tend to run around with too much on our minds or we are multitasking. This causes us to lose track of other things going on around us. Could intuition be improved through mindfulness meditation? It might be a start. Whether intuition is a concern for you or not, awareness, in general, can improve our way of life. May it be so.



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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

## BOOK REVIEW

by Rev. Koyo Kubose

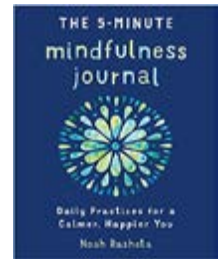
Congratulations to our Dharma friend Noah Rasheta on the publication of his latest book, "The 5-Minute Mindfulness Journal." This book can help you live mindfully with quick, thought-provoking practices and writing prompts to bring peace, calm, and joy to your day. The book provides 5-minute prompts and exercises with space to write down your reflections. Also included are insightful quotes to inspire you on your mindfulness journey.

Noah Ma-Yo is a member of

our Bright Dawn family and he was inducted as a Lay Minister as part of the 9th graduating class of our Lay Ministry Study Program. His podcasts at @Secularbuddhism on Facebook and Instagram, have been responsible for attracting many new applicants to our Lay Ministry Program; nothing beats word-of-mouth recommendations!

When I looked over a pre-publication copy of his latest book, I said, "Wow! This is going to be a great success!" The book is laid out in such a simple, user-friendly

fashion. I said to myself, "This is a shining example of a Bright Dawn sunrise." Let me comment on the word "shining." All Bright Dawn Lay Ministers are given a Dharma Name; Noah's is MaYo which means "Shining Sun." Keep shining so brightly, Noah Sensei!



## Acknowledgements with Gratitude

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Fujii Family: Parents Shizuo and Mitsuko; brother Toastie; nephew Craig; niece Chris; niece Karen; sister-in-law Chizue; brother-in-law Ted  
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When submitting donations, please list your name exactly as you wish it to appear in the Oneness newsletter. Acknowledgments are current as of Feb 20, 2019. Donations received after this date will be listed in the next issue. If we have missed an acknowledgment, please let us know by email at: [brightdawn@kubose.com](mailto:brightdawn@kubose.com).

# 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, a 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.

**THE ART OF TAKING ACTION** by Gregg Krech. Draws on Eastern philosophy, Buddhism, Japanese psychology, Zen, and martial arts to offer an approach to ACTION that goes beyond productivity and time management. 216 pages.

**GLIMPSES OF DHARMA** by Sayo Shenpän. Collection of Dharma Talks and teachings from everyday life by the author. Sharing Dharma in a manner everyone can relate to, awakening the reader to a life filled with everyday spiritual teachings. 97 pages.

**5-MINUTE MINDFULNESS JOURNAL** by Noah Rasheta. A few minutes is all it takes to transform your day. The 5-Minute Mindfulness Journal helps you live mindfully with quick, thought-provoking practices and writing prompts to bring peace, calm, and happiness to your day. 136 pages.

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<b>YES YES <u>YOUR EVERYDAY SPIRITUALITY</u> YES Yes</b>	
<b>MAR</b>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Early Spring  <b>Purpose:</b> Realizing Potential  <b>Method:</b> "Germinating-Gassho:" Begin with the traditional Gassho position of palm-to-palm together in front of the heart. Then mindfully and very slowly raise your hands upward a few inches, signifying the emergence of a new plant shoot. Let that image foster the germination of new Bodhi (wisdom) seeds in your spiritual journey.</p>
<b>APR</b>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Mid-Spring  <b>Purpose:</b> Strong Growth  <b>Method:</b> "Kiss-the-Sky Gassho:" Start with the previous Gassho position and keeping hands together, stretch both arms above your head in a quick, dramatic movement. Relate the vigorous feeling to helping your inner Bodhi plants reach toward the sky.</p>
<b>MAY</b>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Late Spring  <b>Purpose:</b> Completion  <b>Method:</b> "Blooming-Gassho:" Starting with your hands stretched above your head, spread your arms out, like a flower in full bloom. Think how your spiritual blooming can add beauty to the world.</p>

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