
O N E N E S S



Quarterly Newsletter of BRIGHT DAWN: Institute for American Buddhism

Vol. 14 No. 3 Autumn 2010

MY BIRTHDAY

By Patti Milligan

Sunday is my birthday. Since joining the Bright Dawn Lay Ministry Sangha, the principles of Buddhism are always floating through my mind, and as the day approaches, I realize that I have at some point changed the way I feel about my birthday.

Around the age of 50 or so, birthdays, the annual mark of the progression of time, had become a dreaded reminder that I was closer to the end, closer to taking the trip to that “undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns,” as Shakespeare put it.

I’m also reminded of when Reverend Koyo said, “Cause of death: birth.”

In Buddhism, the concept of impermanence is an undeniable and inescapable fact of human existence, and this particular impermanence can give us a sense of urgency about our lives as we draw closer to the end. My focus has been on my inevitable loss: that this independent one-of-one stand-alone entity will be gone forever; that when I’m done, it’s all done.

This year, I think more through a Dharma filter, and my focus shifts to another “I” in Buddhism: Inter-

dependence. Alfred Bloom said: “Interdependence is a positive teaching aimed at curbing our deep-rooted egoism. It teaches that we cannot live simply for ourselves or without regard to others who make our lives possible.” Now I’m thinking it’s egoistic to feel that it all ends with me. If life is impermanent and interdependent, then why not death?

Interdependence — a whole depends on its parts and it cannot exist in an autonomous or independent manner. A birthday, replete with visitors, calls, and greetings, is a good reminder that I do not exist in an autonomous manner. I’m a part of everything and everything is a part of me.

As I think about interdependence, I think what a privilege it is to be acknowledged and greeted by friends and loved ones on this occasion. Rather than dwelling on what little time is left, this is an opportunity to express to those who gather around me, my gratitude for participating with me in this life.

During this previous week, the very air around our house has changed as my dear family prepares for my birthday. Can you imagine such sweetness? My daughter is

searching the Internet for lowfat birthday cake recipes. I walk into my husband’s office only to disrupt some covert activity involving tissue paper. The in-laws call: “When can we come over?”

I used to be uncomfortable with this kind of attention, and now I see it as an opportunity to acknowledge the ongoing dynamic process of interdependent life around me by expressing my humble gratitude to the people that have willingly woven their lives into the fabric of my life and are an integral part of me. We do not travel this journey alone.



**NEW PHONE NUMBER FOR
DIAL-THE-DHARMA
(847) 386-8836**

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WELCOME DHARMA DAN

By Rev. Koyo Kubose



I can't remember when and from where Dharma Dan came into my life but he has been with me for many years. He was the first hand puppet to become a good Dharma friend. He has given many talks to Dharma School children and has accompanied me on guest speaking trips. Dharma Dan makes a high pitched sound that for some reason only I can interpret. When he gives a talk, I do the translating for the audience. It never fails that after a talk, a child comes up and asks, "How does he make that sound?" I usually smile and say that the Dharma speaks in many ways.

The last few years Dharma Dan has been Tao and Zen (now and then) squeaking at me to have a column in our Oneness newsletter. To relieve the nagging, I am finally relenting. I hope I don't regret it... here is Dharma Dan:

Hi everyone! I am so glad finally to be given a voice. Being a part of Rev. Koyo and Adrienne's lives and Bright Dawn doings, I have witnessed their adventures as well as their everyday activities. All the shared experiences have led to many Dharma teachings that I want to share with you through this newsletter column. I am privy to the inner workings of Rev. Koyo's mind, and sometimes feel I know him better than he knows himself.

Once he was working in the laundry room, which is located off the kitchen. A wall cabinet is over the washer and dryer and one of the cabinet doors was half open. Rev. Koyo was leaning over doing something with small parts spread out on top of the dryer. Needing a tool, he quickly straightened up to get it, The

sharp corner of the cabinet door happened to be right above his head. There was a loud, "Ouch!"

Adrienne came over to see what had happened. Even the dog, Easy, peeked his head into the laundry room, with a concerned look in his eyes. Both Adrienne and Easy made a quick retreat as Rev. Koyo slammed closed the cabinet door, shouting, "Keep the cabinet doors shut!" Holding his head, he staggered into the kitchen. He saw an open cabinet door, which he proceeded to bang shut. His yelling was not directed at anyone in particular but was due to the pain. He himself was probably just as guilty as anyone of leaving cabinet doors open.

In any case, the frequency of cabinet doors being left open decreased drastically after this incident. Rev. Koyo himself, after getting a cup or dish out of a cabinet, would stop as he was turning away, remembering to close the cabinet door gently but firmly. The cabinet doors seemed to give off their own aura of awareness that after being opened, should be closed. This is how cabinet doors in the Kubose household gained Bodhisavatta status.



HAIKU

by A. C. (Louisville, KY)

*Does bombu fish know
He is swimming, swimming in
Amida ocean?*

(This 5-7-5 haiku came to me the other night before I went to bed.)



Whale Shark with other fish

AIR

by John Miyo Wylder

I like air; it's very important to me, and it's an essential part of everything I do. But I don't think about it often. It's colourless, so I don't see it, it's odorless, so I don't smell it, I can't taste it, and unless it's blowing hard I don't even really feel or hear it.. I like that about air. I think that's good.

My first thought when I wake up in the morning isn't, "Ah, there's air today." I don't plan my day around the air—"Can I arrange this meeting, will there be enough air for all of us?" I just have faith that the air will be there when I need it. And it is. I can share it freely—people come into my house, they *ask* me if they can have a glass of water. Nobody *ever* asks me if they can breathe my air, they just do. And I don't care. Breathing air is such an intimate, important part of who I am, that I just don't think about it; I don't define myself by it.

At a job interview, when I'm asked, "Tell us something about yourself," I don't go, "Well, I'm an air breather." At a party, chatting up some girl, I never went, "Hey, babe, ever try sucking oxygen through your nose?" It just doesn't happen.

However, sometimes there are problems with the air, and I need to be aware of them. And believe me, I notice. **That's** when I think about the air, and *that's* when I do something about it. I don't like to admit this, but I have ten cats, and I'm allergic to each and every one of them. Sometimes one of them climbs on me and rubs against my face, and my nose shuts off, closes completely. I take action—I take psuedophed, or, easier, breathe through my mouth. Sometimes I get sick, and have to take medicine to get stuff to come out of my lungs so that the air can go into my lungs. As you know, miners used to take canaries down into the mine shafts so they had warning that the air was no good and that they had to get out.

Sometimes, even when I think I'm doing something that good for my air supply, I end up messing it up. A couple of summers ago I joined the Decatur Bicycle Club.

I bike to work everyday when the weather allows, and I like to go on bike rides with my daughter, so I joined the club. I stopped going to meetings because I just didn't fit in. For the people there, bicycling was a Significant Lifestyle Choice. Everybody would be there on bikes that cost more than my car, with four different mirrors on the bike or their helmets so they could see different angles behind them, and wearing brightly colored Lycra riding clothes. Frankly, I always suspected the main function of the clothes was to tell other people that the wearer was a Serious Bicycle Enthusiast and hadn't just lost his driver's license to a DUI. One of the things they suggest in the club is keeping a record of you mileage every month, and sometimes I'd try to go on long (for me) rides on a weekend; I'd get some aerobic exercise and increase my lung capacity, right? I'd inevitably end up on my back on the side of some hill gasping for breath.

When you're not getting enough air, things go wrong, you notice, and try to fix it. It's just natural.

I want my Buddhism to be like the air. Religion can be a Significant Lifestyle Choice, a way of defining yourself. But when you do that, it becomes something external to yourself, something limiting. I am a Buddhist, therefore I have this \$500.00 crystal mala. I am a Buddhist, therefore I go on week-long retreats twice a year. I am a Buddhist, therefore I don't eat meat. I am a Buddhist, therefore Iwhatever.

I want my Buddhism to be just something I do, like breathing, all the time, without thinking about it. But not be a definition I can apply to myself, compare myself to. Like air, I want it to surround me and my family all the time supporting us, without us having to stop and think about it. I don't want to be sitting with my wife and daughter watching TV and say, "As a Buddhist, I refuse to watch that show." I'd rather say, "I don't like the way that show treats people; let's see what else is on." Natural as breathing.

Air continues on page 5

Oneness Newsletter Autumn 2010

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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.

Reader Replies

In marking the recent 100th anniversary of the birth of Mother Teresa, there's a wonderful sign in the lobby of her orphanage in Calcutta:

People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centered. Love them anyway. If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Do good anyway. If you are successful, you'll win false friends and true enemies. Succeed anyway. The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway. Honesty and frankness will make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway. People love underdogs but follow only top dogs. Follow some underdogs anyway. What you spend years building may be destroyed over night. Build anyway. People really need help but may attack you if you help them. Help people anyway. Give the world the best you have and you may get kicked in the teeth. Give the world the best you have anyway.

R. S. (Palos Heights, IL)

My elderly friend said good bye to his daughter at the airport departure gate, "I love you and I wish you enough." The daughter replied, "Dad, our life together has been more than enough. Your love is all I ever needed. I wish you enough too." After they parted, my friend said to me, "I am old and she lives far away. The reality is that the next trip back will be for my funeral." I asked him what the words, "I wish you enough" meant. He smiled, "That's a wish our family has always used; it's a wish for the other person to have a life filled with just enough good things to sustain them." He continued:

I wish you enough sun to keep a bright attitude no matter how gray the day seems.

I wish you enough rain to appreciate the sun even more.

I wish you enough happiness to keep your spirit alive and everlasting.

I wish you enough pain so that even the smallest of joys in life may appear bigger.

I wish you enough gain to satisfy your wanting.

I wish you enough loss to appreciate all that you possess.

I wish you enough hellos to get you through the final good bye.

(Adapted from an email sent by J.M.)

LAST

Dharma Glimpse by Jeff WaYo Ward who just completed our Bright Dawn Lay Minister Program

So I found myself ready to write my last Dharma Glimpse for class; thinking whatever should I do? I thought perhaps one last poem or maybe a discourse since this is my last; but what topic? This is the last one, and then it hit me, Last should be my topic. It's a simple little word. We all know the definition. If we put it under the metaphorical microscope we expose the subtext. It stretches way back into our childhood; nobody wanted to be the last picked for any team, it was a badge of shame. No one ever receives a trophy for Last Place. This of course expresses the presence of the Ego self, always concerned with appearance the Ego doesn't desire to be labeled the loser. Look at a box of cookies, the last one is the most desired. We don't want to be last, but we willingly take the last of something. That is attachment at its bluntest example. When the chance arises that maybe something will escape us, perhaps some other will seize it before we can; we greedily snatch up our precious little treasure, the very last one before it is too late.

Society is very caught up in the illusion of last. The grinding wheel of our growing mechanized world is overly concerned with what happened last week; month; year; election, etc. Yes we should experience and let come to fruition the lessons of the past, but to so desperately cling to that which has passed, causes us to suffer and can cause us to bring suffering to others. To be mindfully in the Eternal Now, that which was before must be left to its own time.

Addressing the idea of the dreaded state of last place, we witness the modern world's emphasis on competition. We are constantly bombarded with the image that First is the only state worth a mention; second and third are barely noticed, poor last is often the target of ridicule. But if we really tear it down and examine it, even the one who came in last, at least made an attempt. He did not quit, or refuse to start, he just kept going until he had finished. Those on the sidelines should cheer his effort. Last may not get a fancy medal or a picture in the newspaper and all the glory that goes with such, but should keep in mind an accomplishment was attained from start to finish. So even if the gold escapes us we should put our feet to the ground; and just keep going. And that is my Dharma Glimpse.



Air continued from page 3

And there are things I do so I can breathe better. I get some aerobic exercise; I take an antihistamine because of the cats. No big deal. And there are things I do so I can take in the Dharma better. I meditate, I read, I take this class. No fuss.

And sometimes, just like with breathing, I have trouble with it. A couple of weeks ago I had a stressful week at work. I have one employee who spends four hours a day driving around town emptying our drop boxes. He was off on vacation, so I had to spend four hours a day emptying drop boxes. And so I had meetings and the rest of a full work week squeezed into just afternoons. And that Thursday I had to work a twelve hour day because Thursday nights are when the bookmobiles are out late, and I had to make a special evening trip to an elementary school's Family Night in the spare bookmobile.

Late Wednesday morning I get a phone call from one of my drivers—the house next to his has burned down, his has received some damage, and he wants the afternoon off to check out his house. Reasonable enough, so I called and cancelled all my appointments and cleared my afternoon to drive for him. And I went upstairs to inform Administration about all this, and I start telling them what's up, and that the driver's going to miss work the rest of the day. But I go on about how he'll "probably miss tomorrow. He's an emotional wreck—I have to plan my vacation around his birthday because he always goes on a two day crying jag every year and makes himself sick. Same thing's going to happen today. He's going to make himself sick and call in tomorrow, and I've got to go to Family Night. And now I'm going to have to call and cancel, and I won't even know for sure until after noon, so I can't give them much warning, and I have an employee evaluation due Friday that I was going to finish tomorrow afternoon that now I won't be able to, and on top of all that, my canary just died so I'd better get out of this mineshaft and stop bitching about people and especially about **things they haven't even done yet.**" And he did come to work Thursday, and everything was fine.

That's my goal for my relationship with the Dharma. I want it to be such an intimate, essential part of every aspect of my life that I don't even notice it, until I've cut myself off from it. And then, just like with breathing, *as soon* as I notice the problem, I take the steps I need to reestablish harmony.

Thank you.



THOSE GOOD OLE COLLEGE DAYS

By Rev. Koyo "Sonny" Kubose

During the last two years of my college undergraduate days at the University of California in Berkeley, I stayed at Euclid Hall, which was a co-op type dorm that had been established by Japanese American Nisei's. Euclid Hall housed about twenty guys, who shared in the work of running the place. We participated in intramural sports leagues, played a lot of bridge and poker, and of course hit the books as necessary.

When I got married, my best man was Tetsuden Kashima whom I had met at Euclid Hall. Tets now teaches Asian American Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. Euclid Hall alumni include actor Sab Shimono; Hollywood cinematographer Tak Fujimoto; congressman Bob Matsui; plus many engineers and architects.

Recently about a dozen of former Euclid Hall guys got together for an informal luncheon reunion in Cupertino, California. I was able to attend; I hadn't seen these guys in over forty years. We had all gained weight and lost hair, some more than others. As a group picture was being taken, someone quipped, "Use PhotoShop to put some hair on us!"

I reminisced with guys about their cars. Keith had a souped-up Ford. Once we went to the Frontage road next to the Freeway at University Avenue and had a drag race against Roy's 650 BSA motorcycle. Roy popped a wheelie and then flattened his body horizontal with his legs pointing straight back, to reduce wind resistance. My buddy Tets had a green MG sports car. George had a white Corvair. Bob's car had a '54 Ford body and a Pontiac engine; the door opened when the Ford emblem on the side post was pushed. Victor had a '61 Chevy. Who could forget the classic '57 Chevy? The '58 had small curved rear fins which morphed into the gull wings in '59, and then got bent in '60. The wings flattened against the sides of the car for '61, narrowed and moved up in '62, and then dropped down in '63.

Some overheard comments: "Remember when we went to S.F. to see Carol Doda?" "The upper class guys were always trying to RF us younger guys." "We rigged the hallway pay phone to make free calls." Phil said my favorite word that I used to say all the time was, "Marrone!" Wow, I hadn't heard that word in a long

College Days continues on page 6

time. I later mentioned it to my brother and he immediately recognized it as a common slang Italian exclamation but we couldn't remember what it meant. A few weeks later the word "Maddrone" was used in a newspaper article. We looked up various spellings in on-line dictionaries but to no avail. Then my brother found it; the spelling is "Mahrone" and means "Holy Shit," in a good way.

I am always receiving great teachings and new personal mantras. Now I understand how years later I came to invent the Toilet Gassho, coin the phrase, "BM is fertilizer too!" and have a poster and T-shirt that depicts the world religions' views of "Shit happens." The line for Buddhism is, "When shit happens, it's not really shit." Mahrone!



American Buddhist Gatherings

Boundless Light Sangha offers weekly American Buddhist services every Sunday from 2:00pm-3:00pm at the Buddhist Cultural Center, Phap Vu Temple in Orlando, Florida. For more information go to their website at www.boundlesslight.webs.com or boundlesslightsangha@yahoo.com (email).

Eastern Sun Sangha gatherings are held at 1173 West Boylston Street, Worcester, MA 01606. For more information, contact Toyo Teru Katamori Sensei by email at: eastern_sun_sangha@yahoo.com or go to: www.easternsunsangha.org.

Heartland Sangha holds gatherings in Evanston, Illinois. Email asayohoribe@sbcglobal.net or go to www.heartlandsangha.org for more information.

Live Dharma Sunday broadcasts live Dharma message by Rev. Koyo Kubose and Dharma Glimpse by Sangha members. Tune in every Sunday at 8:00 a.m. Pacific Time by calling (347) 945-7953 (long distance call). Or free on computer at <http://brightdawnsangha.ning.com/--look> for the BlogTalkRadio player on the Home Page. Refresh page at 8:00 a.m. Pacific if older broadcast starts playing instead.

New Dawn Sangha meets in Decatur, IL. For more information, you can email John Miyo Wylder Sensei at bassho@sbcglobal.net or call him at (217) 429-1883.

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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.

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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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: Gratitude gas Purpose: Perfuming flatulence awareness Method: When passing gas, do a one-handed Gassho and think or say, "GAS-sho" in appreciation that your lower GI tract is clear and functioning. (From a prim and proper member of a temple women auxiliary group)</p>
OCT	<p>Theme: Bedtime gratitude Purpose: A child's lesson for adults too Method: "Nen ne (a child's Japanese word for sleep) Gassho:" When going to sleep, put hands together palm to palm between your cheek and your pillow. Feel safe in your bed, your home—and all that that involves. (From a young child in Hawaii)</p>
NOV	<p>Theme: Happy thanksgiving, anytime Purpose: Mealtime celebration Method: "Somersault Gassho:" Before a festive meal (or whenever feeling festive before any meal), start with hands together palm to palm in front of you, playfully flip hands over in a somersault, then enthusiastically say, "Itadakimasu!" which is a Japanese word expressing appreciation for what is being received. Then with a big smile, start eating. (Creation of five-year old Keizo Fleuridor of Fowler, California)</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 email us at brightdawn@kubose.com or indicate below and send to: Bright Dawn Institute, 28372 Margaret Road, Coarsegold, CA 93614.

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