

## PLEASE STAY ON THE PATH

By Tate Kubose

For some time now, I've been trying to work on my "personal growth." This covers a lot of dimensions, such as trying to be more aware of my emotions and reactions to events that occur in my life, trying to find peace, etc. There are a lot of aspects to this task of "growing," but it all boils down to trying to find some balance in life. I often think of this quest for balance as trying to "walk down the right path." This metaphor allowed me to have yet another Dharma Glimpse.

Recently, I was visiting Portland, Oregon's Japanese Garden. It's a beautiful place and I highly recommend visiting it if you are ever in the area. As is the case in many parks and gardens, there are areas upon which walking is

permitted and also areas where it is not. As I approached an area where patrons were not supposed to walk, I saw a sign that said "Please Stay on the Path." I had to chuckle because I thought how wonderful it would be if a sign like this could magically appear whenever I stray from my desired path or start to get unbalanced in my emotions, thoughts, or attitudes.

I liked the sign so much that I took a picture of it. There were signs like that all over, so I took pictures of several of them. I actually took more pictures of the signs than I did of the garden itself. I loved that the signs were always there when needed, asking people to stay on the path. Not demanding that you stay on the path, but rather asking that you

do. It was polite and almost supportive in its phrasing. Instead of being aversive or aggressive, the signs instead served as gentle reminders to walk in the appropriate areas.

I've found that the times when I need the most reminding to keep on walking down the desired path are when things are going well. When life doles out hard or unhappy times, it's an aversive but obvious reminder to try and find peace and balance. But when things are going fine, there isn't much to remind you to keep on being introspective, to keep on being empathetic, to keep on being forgiving of yourself and others. It would be so nice if, every once in a while, a sign presented itself and reminded you to "stay on the path."

Path continues on page 2



### Inside

A Dog's Purpose	p. 2
Listen to the Flowers	p. 3
Happy Spring	p. 3
Tiger Woods and Forgiveness	
A Buddhist View	p. 4
Dear Sensei	p. 4
Live Dharma Sunday	p. 5
Gatherings	p. 6
Poems by Royce	p. 6

## A DOG'S PURPOSE (from a forwarded email).

Being a veterinarian, I had been called to examine a ten-year-old Irish Wolfhound named Belker. The dog's owners, Ron, his wife Lisa, and their little boy Shane, were all very attached to Belker, and they were hoping for a miracle.

I examined Belker and found he was dying of cancer. I told the family we couldn't do anything for Belker, and offered to perform the euthanasia procedure for the old dog in their home.

As we made arrangements, Ron and Lisa told me they thought it would be good for six-year-old Shane to observe the procedure. They felt as though Shane might learn something from the experience.

The next day, I felt the familiar catch in my throat as Belker's family surrounded him. Shane seemed so calm, petting the old dog for the last time, that I wondered if he understood what was going on. Within a few minutes, Belker slipped peacefully away.

The little boy seemed to accept Belker's transition without any difficulty or confusion. We sat together for a while after Belker's death, wondering aloud about the sad fact that animal lives are shorter than human lives.

Shane, who had been listening quietly, piped up, "I know why."

Startled, we all turned to him. What came out of his mouth next stunned me. I'd never heard a more comforting explanation. It has changed the way I try and live.

He said, "People are born so that they can learn how to live a good life — like loving everybody all the time and being nice, right?"

The six-year-old continued, "Well, dogs already know how to do that, so they don't have to stay as long."

Live simply.

Love generously

Care deeply.

Speak kindly.

Remember, if a dog was the teacher,  
you would learn things like:

When loved ones come home, always run to greet them.

Never pass up the opportunity to go for a joyride.

Allow the experience of fresh air and the wind in your  
face to be pure ecstasy.

Take naps.

Stretch before rising.

Run, romp, and play daily.

Thrive on attention and let people touch you.

Path continued from page 1

I have to admit that until the moment I saw that sign, I never really, fully understood the purpose of religious or spiritual rituals. Essentially, rituals are intended to serve the same purpose as the sign – to remind you to "stay on the path." I have been trying to find a ritual for myself that can serve the same function as the "Please Stay on the Path" sign. I have yet to come up with a good ritual, so in the meantime, I keep a photo of it on the display screen of my cellphone. Now, whenever I open my phone, it reminds me to "Please Stay on the Path."



Avoid biting when a simple growl will do  
On warm days, stop to lie on your back on the grass.  
On hot days, drink lots of water and lie under a shady tree.

When you're happy, dance around and  
wag your entire body.

Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.

Be loyal.

Never pretend to be something you're not.

If what you want lies buried, dig until you find it.

When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by,  
and nuzzle them gently.

**ENJOY EVERY MOMENT OF EVERY DAY!**

Note: The sender of this email prefaced this article saying that her trainer told her that her dog should be trained as a therapy dog. She replied that her dog was already a therapy dog. He was her own personal therapy dog. We feel the same way about Easy, our Labrador Retriever, who constantly expresses his unconditional love.



**Best Dog-Gone Dog in the Whole World**

## LISTEN TO THE FLOWERS By Joyce Prosis

I practice chanoyu, the Japanese tea ceremony. Many of the traditional Japanese arts are an important part of chanoyu, and flower arrangement is one of them. In chanoyu it is called chabana, tea flowers. Chabana is different from ikebana, the formal art of flower arrangement. Chabana is more simple and has only a few guidelines in how to arrange the flowers. The over-riding guideline is to “arrange the flowers as they are in the field.” Flowers that are most favored are wild flowers and flowers that last only a day. They should not have a strong fragrance or have thorns. When they are arranged, they should all come from the same point in the vase and the number of flowers and the number of leaves should be an odd number. The Japanese favor odd numbers as they suggest the idea of becoming, as opposed to being settled or complete.

One teacher said that when you are out gathering flowers, think about your arrangement and choose your flowers mindfully. Don't just cut a lot of flowers and later pick and choose. I remember this teaching whenever I am picking flowers because to me this means to value the life of each flower. Before I cut each flower I think

about the harmony of them together, their size, shape, color, and texture, and in my mind I begin to form my arrangement.

When I first began arranging tea flowers, I tried to arrange the flowers according to the image that was formed in my mind as I chose the flowers. I wanted the flowers to face a particular way, to have a particular relationship with each other, and to match that image in my mind. After many arrangements, I realized that I could not make the flowers do what I wanted. I would turn the flower to face a certain way, but it would not stay. No matter how many times I would try, it would not do what I wanted. And, if I cut off a leaf to make some space or because there were too many leaves, then the flower would often become out of balance and would only lean to one side. It was so difficult.

After many years and many arrangements, I have finally begun to see that it is not so much my making an arrangement, as it is looking at the flowers and listening to how they want to be arranged. It is being respectful to the flowers, being in harmony with the flowers; it is not about making the flowers do what I want. I feel I have begun to understand the true meaning of “arrange the flowers as they are in the field.”



## HAPPY SPRING! by Rev. Koyo Kubose

Spring is such a powerful, inspiring time of the year. It is also the time of Siddhartha Gautama's birth and when Easter is celebrated. What a significant confluence for this season when trees wake up and come to life. Trees have played an important part in the Buddha's life. He was born in Lumbini Garden as his mother Maya was reaching for a blooming tree branch. He was enlightened under a tree, which became known as a Bodhi (wisdom) tree. At his death he was resting between two Sala trees.

Speaking of trees, last year I planted some fruit trees: a Washington Navel orange, Mandarin orange, Meyer lemon, Mexican lime, and Fuyu and Hachiya persimmon trees. This year I plan to plant avocado, walnut, almond, apple/pear (*nashi*), cherry and blueberry trees.

When I view a bud or blossom, I see a glittering gem of nature's wisdom. In the words of Katagiri Roshi, “How does the cherry tree blossom? The cherry blooms in the spring, but do you think the cherry blossom ignores winter, fall, or summer? When the cherry blooms in the spring, it is able to touch our hearts with its beauty, because the spring in which the cherry blooms includes winter, fall, and summer.”

He points out that the same teaching applies when you look at an individual's life. The reality of one's life extends into the past and future. The significance of one's life has to be viewed in a broad perspective, beyond some idea in the present. This is the beauty of human life. One's life is not just one's own, but includes the life of the whole universe.



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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.



# TIGER WOODS AND FORGIVENESS: A BUDDHIST VIEW

By Dr. Alfred Bloom, Professor Emeritus,  
University of Hawaii

Widespread attention has been given to the suggestion by Brit Hume that Tiger Woods should turn to Christianity for forgiveness and redemption said not to be present in Tiger's Buddhist background. Some Buddhist responses have asserted that Buddhism is quite adequate to deal with his spiritual and social problem, without commenting on the difference between Buddhist and Christian approaches.

Buddhism and Christianity operate with differing understandings of spiritual reality. Many Christians believe fervently that God is the supreme judge and savior. Our human problems come about because we violate God's laws. Without accepting the salvation offered by Jesus, the incarnation of God's love, we stand under his judgment with its attendant consequences. If we do not accept his love, we will receive his wrath. The dilemma is how can we love someone we fear?

In the Buddhist approach we are fundamentally ignorant and deluded about our true natures. We are caught up in our egoism, misunderstanding our lives and the world. We believe that we are independent beings, charting our own course of life. We fail to see that we are consumed by lust, greed and hatred arising from our own egos. Consequently, we blindly cause suffering to ourselves and others.

Buddhism does not view salvation is given by a God, but is an emancipation or liberation from the egoism, fundamental ignorance and delusion that engulf and enflame their lives. Not sin, but ignorance, spiritual blindness is the issue in Buddhism. We do not rebel against God so much as violate our true nature as human beings. The consequence for error is interwoven with the error itself and called the law of karma or cause and effect. Here the punishment fits the crime.

Therefore Buddhism does not talk about forgiveness for violating the law of God or Buddha, but rather that the Buddha accepts us as we are and guides us through meditation and spiritual discipline in the direction of fruitful or beneficial actions to help ourselves and others, by creating good karma. Acceptance is not condoning an act. Things are wrong for Buddhists as they are for Christians. Further, punishment and retribution from a God are not always the most effective means to prevent wrong actions.

Forgiveness is a-symmetrical. The forgiver is always superior to the forgiven, standing above the forgiven. Acceptance recognizes that the difference between the

## Dear Sensei

Dear Sensei:

I was trying to explain to a friend the Buddhist term for "Life Mission" or "That which you can do no other." I believe I remember your father calling it your "Gan." Is that the term? I can't find it in any of the books. Maybe I'm mistaken – wrong word or spelling. Please advise me.

JM (GA)

Dear JM:

The complete term you are referring to is "hongan" where "hon" means fundamental and "gan" is vow. So hongan refers to the working of a fundamental vow in one's life; or it also has been called Primal Vow or Wish; but I really like the expressions you used too... "Life Mission" and "That which you can do no other."

It gives me a warm feeling when persons, such as yourself, share some teaching that they recall my father talking to them about. It reminds me that the spirit of his life and teachings are still alive in the lives of others.



perpetrator and myself are the life conditions that brought about the opportunity for evil. We all have the same potentiality for evil. By acceptance, we acknowledge the essential equality of the person and judge with fairness and understanding in dealing with the crime.

Tiger Woods' seclusion from the public is acknowledgement of his error. Acceptance by the public would indicate that any of us could be in that position. Therefore, we should express our hope that Tiger can return to society through self-inspection with a teacher and direct his life positively toward restoring his family and benefiting society, rather than pursuing his own egoistic goals.

Buddhism, as well as Christianity, is capable of bringing about the inner transformation which Tiger requires to set him on a new path. Hopefully he will receive adequate spiritual and personal counseling that will renew his life.

(Editor's Note: This article appeared in the Honolulu Advertiser on January 16, 2010; and in the Jan/Feb issue of Metta, a publication of the Buddhist Study Center, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii; and is reprinted with permission of the author.)



## LIVE DHARMA SUNDAY

Bright Dawn Institute for American Buddhism has started a new weekly show called “Live Dharma Sunday.” This half-hour show is presented every Sunday at 8:00 AM (Pacific Time) and features a guest giving a Dharma Glimpse and a Dharma message by Rev. Koyo Kubose. Prior to these talks, the show begins with prelude music, followed by introductory host comments called “Talk Story” which is a term used in Hawaii for sharing personal experiences.

There are two ways to access the show: telephone or computer. Auditory quality seems best by computer but is acceptable by telephone. Some telephone callers find a land-line is better than using a cell phone; while for others, a cell phone works fine. Individual callers can experiment to find out what works best for them for their specific reception conditions.\*

- **By telephone**, dial **(347) 945-7953** (a long distance call). Cost can be contained by getting a calling card. Most calling cards charge about 2 cents per minute which would be 60 cents for a 30 minute call. Many cell phone calling plans include free weekend minutes.
- **By computer to listen ONLY:** go to **brightdawnsangha.ning.com** and click on the start button in the BlogTalkRadio box.
- **By computer and also join in the conversation** at the end of the broadcast: you will have to either call on the phone or use Skype (see below).

**Skype to Skype** can be used and it's a free call.

- You'll have to register at **blogtalkradio.com/brightdawnsangha** ahead of time.
- Just before the broadcast is scheduled, open your Skype
- Go to **blogtalkradio.com/brightdawnsangha** and sign in.
- Under “Upcoming Episodes” will be a description of Live Dharma Sunday. When the broadcast begins at 8:00 a.m. Pacific Time, watch for a “play/chat” button and press it. A Skype logo followed by “click to talk” will appear. Click on it (this will not appear until the show has begun broadcasting).

If you find the broadcast is “buffering” too much, try refreshing your page.

\*Please note that regardless of how you access the show, reception may suffer on particularly busy Sundays like Super Bowl Sunday, Mother's Day, etc. when there is a lot of “traffic.” If this happens, bear with it, and continue to call in next Sunday!



< Rev. Prasada Caroline Brazier and Rev. Koyo relax after the Feb. 7th broadcast of Live Dharma Sunday. Ms. Brazier was the first guest Dharma Talk presenter on Live Dharma Sunday. You can listen to the Feb. 7th broadcast and her Dharma talk by going to [brightdawnsangha.ning.com](http://brightdawnsangha.ning.com) and clicking on the “02-07-10” broadcast of Live Dharma Sunday. Also featured is a Dharma Glimpse by Joyce Prosisie, daughter of the late Rev. Gyomay and Minnie Kubose.

## American Buddhist Gatherings

**Heartland Sangha** holds gatherings in Evanston, Illinois. For more schedule information, email [asayohoribe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:asayohoribe@sbcglobal.net) or go to [www.heartlandsangha.org](http://www.heartlandsangha.org).

**Eastern Sun Sangha** gatherings are held at 1173 West Boylston Street, Worcester, MA 01606. Contact Toyo Teru Katamori by email at: [eastern\\_sun\\_sangha@yahoo.com](mailto:eastern_sun_sangha@yahoo.com) or go to: [www.easternsunsangha.org](http://www.easternsunsangha.org).

**New Dawn Sangha** meets in Decatur, IL. For more information, contact Sensei John Miyo Wylder at [bassho@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bassho@sbcglobal.net) or (217) 429-1883

**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 info, please visit [boundlesslight.webs.com](http://boundlesslight.webs.com) or email [boundlesslightsangha@yahoo.com](mailto:boundlesslightsangha@yahoo.com)

Haiku by Royce - continued

### Peace

Look at the next step

To leave behind a few clues

Of who you really were

(Royce Taniguchi passed away recently but her generous and loving spirit lives on.)

## Haiku by Royce Taniguchi

### Boating

Life aboard a boat

Minimizes your spaces

Expanding your mind

### Seeking Serenity

For our inner peace

Gazing across the water

Calms our true self

### Heron

A feathered body

A stately stance conceals

A sharp, ready bill

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*Mother, Father, and Brother*  
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### In Honor of

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*Kristopher, Jennifer, Riley, Kate, and Aaron*  
*Yuji Okano's 77th Birthday*  
*Rev. Seishin Yamashita*

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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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**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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**YES YES**    Your Everyday Spirituality    *YES YES*

<b>MAR</b>	<p><b>Theme:</b> A Morning Routine  <b>Purpose:</b> Using the sky as a spiritual tool  <b>Method:</b> <i>Sky Smile:</i> Upon stepping outside each morning, pause to smile and look up at the vast sky. Remind yourself to give mental space and compassionate understanding to whatever “weather” the day may bring.</p>
<b>APR</b>	<p><b>Theme:</b> A Morning Routine  <b>Purpose:</b> Using physical stretching to promote mental flexibility  <b>Method:</b> <i>Stretch Gassho:</i> After smiling at the sky, put hands together in Gassho, then raise arms above head and out to the sides, arching backwards a little. Remind yourself to be flexible and not stubborn when dealing with everyday irritations and unmet expectations.</p>
<b>MAY</b>	<p><b>Theme:</b> A Morning Routine  <b>Purpose:</b> Calming and slowing down  <b>Method:</b> <i>Walk Mindfully:</i> After your Sky Smile and Stretch Gassho, consciously walk slowly (to your car, to get the paper, etc.). Have a calm, open mind. Do not rush or have a distracted mind. Breathe deeply and encourage the teachings of your morning routine to extend into the rest of your day.</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](mailto:brightdawn@kubose.com) or indicate below and send to: Bright Dawn Institute, 28372 Margaret Road, Coarsegold, CA 93614.

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