



o n e n e s s



GO ENSO

By Virginia Geiyo Parkum

What's an Enso? Whoa! A Zen circle? The moon? A painted rice cake? Timelessness or infinity on paper? An easy yet legitimate way to avoid the question would be the Buddhist reply: "I don't know." But I do, sort of, and Koyo Sensei asked me to "say a word." So let's enter the center, the vibrant space between know and don't know.

Formally, ink brush circle paintings were mentioned in Buddhist writings as early as the 9th century, naturally enough in the form of a koan, a Zen teaching riddle. Much earlier, enlightenment was symbolized as a bright full moon, and round mirror references were common in texts and even as ritual implements.

Chinese, Korean, and Japanese masters practicing Zenga, spontaneous ink brush painting, adopted the Enso as a major teaching "method." The simple brushed circle was both a self (or no-self!) expression of the painter's "beingness" at the moment the brush and ink met and left the paper and as a koan itself, something for the viewer to engage with, to bring into her or his own life. Note: the viewer is an active participant in the Enso's ongoing energy. Often, but not always, calligraphy accompanied the circle.

Today, Enso brushing thrives in monasteries and also among lay practitioners. Some use the traditional ink stick and brush. Others have explored the many mediums available today, such as oils and acrylics on canvas. Ad agencies have latched onto the Enso, too, as you have likely noticed.

I first encountered a dynamic circle on the form of a rodeo cowboy's trick lariat. Joe Phillips could make the loop open wide, spin along the ground, and keep circling as he jumped in and out of it. He invited little kid me to jump in, too. How cool! Little did I know that fifty years later I'd be reading tales of Zen masters drawing circles on the ground and inviting their students to jump in!

When I formally began studying with a Buddhist teacher almost twenty years ago, he knew I was an artist and also wrote poetry. As part of my study, we developed a new interpretation of the Zen Ox Herding Pictures, with me doing the paintings and poems to accompany his text. He chose a horse rather than ox, as it was more familiar to Westerners. The paintings were to be my own concepts, but in the tradition of earlier ink versions.

Knowing nothing about the story or the ink brush idea, I plunged

into wonderful books on Zenga and fell in love with its freedom and spontaneous energy. I'd only ever painted in acrylics, but the expressionist style I had fit perfectly. I'd always been drawn to the eastern works in the Philadelphia Art Museum when I took classes there as a kid, so another latent seed began to bloom. The Enso is part of the traditional Ox pictures, and for whatever reason, I kept with it as a practice after the pictures for the horse series were done.

I love using acrylics in their flowing, liquid form. Being water based, they can be used brilliantly strong or very diluted, like ink. They can retain their brilliance even when flowing, depending on what you mix them with. They dry fast and are very compatible with the Zenga idea of no correction, no changes, no additions, done-is-done idea. You can add all sorts of things to the liquid...sand, grasses, light-bending mediums.

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What Goes Around Comes Around

by Dharma Dan



I see we have an article in this issue on Enso, the Zen circle. I want to tell you about something I find very interesting.

First, consider the two photos below: One photo was taken in our Sanctuary and shows a hanging door curtain (called Noren in Japanese) that features a traditional Zen Enso. The other photo is of a Oneness calligraphy done by Rev. Koyo. Look closely at the Enso circle and the “O” in Oneness. How do they differ?

The Enso circle is drawn starting from the bottom and goes clockwise, while the “O” starts from the top and goes counterclockwise. I have found these differences to be typical of a cultural difference between the East and the West; that is, between how a Japanese and an American draw circles, regardless of whether they are writing an “O” or the number zero. The Japanese starts from the bottom and goes clockwise and the American starts from the top and goes counterclockwise.

You can check this out the next time you are in the company of both a Japanese and American friend. Without explaining to them the reason, ask them to copy you when you write a number that has a zero in it or a word that has the letter “O” in it. Watch them carefully and observe how they draw the circle; that is, where they start from and in what direction they go in completing the circle. Their drawing or writing should be part of a natural flow so it’s a good idea for the circle to be part of a number with zero in it and part of a word with the letter “O” in it because then the focus is not solely on the circle itself.

What do the differences in how circles are drawn mean? I don’t really know. What do you think?



Does it have something to do with the artistic nature of calligraphy having cultural differences? Could the differences be related to handedness; that is, being left or right handed? What does it mean when you find the rare person who does not show the typical difference? Might it mean such a person is likely

to be a creative, artistic person?

Do you know what would be extremely rare? I have never seen a person draw a circle starting from the side; that is, not from the top or bottom but from the nine or three o’clock position. If you ever see a person draw a circle like that, you should exclaim, “Wow! You must really be a creative person!”

We have been talking about drawing a circle, not when a circle is produced by a printer or a computer. In the latter case, there is no starting or ending point, which means you can travel around a circle forever, into infinity. It is said that it was the Chinese who invented the number zero, the concept of nothing. Circles are fascinating symbols that can represent all kinds of ideas.

It has been said that an Eastern philosophy of life is like a circle, while the Western attitude is like a straight line. A straight line embodies the dualistic notion of having clear, definite and separate beginning and end points; that is, the line starts here and ends there. The line can represent a journey/trip or a task/project activity. If you are stopped at some point in the middle of the line, you did not successfully reach your goal or destination; there is a clear-cut dualistic dichotomy of success and failure.

Whereas with a circle, any point on the circle can be a starting and ending place. Wherever you are, can be a starting point. Furthermore, wherever you stop or end is also the beginning of a new journey. The logic of such changes is a very dynamic process and not just an abstract kind of logic devoid of the reality of life. Successful completion of a goal can occur at any point on a circle; fulfillment can be in the present moment and not in some distant future.

You may be surprised to hear such “deep stuff” coming from me. Sometimes I surprise myself! Well, you heard it from me; this is Dharma Dan signing off!



Buddhist Thoughts About Stardust

By William Toyo Holland
2017 Trailblazer President

I have always been fascinated with our galaxy, stars and our own moon. We often find reference to all the above in Buddhist texts and sutras and from the Buddha himself.

If you were looking to space for extra-terrestrial life, maybe it's time to look in the mirror.

"We are stardust," Joni Mitchell famously sang in "Woodstock." It turns out she was right, was she ever! Everything we are and everything in the universe and on earth originated from stardust, and it continually floats through us even today. It directly connects us to the universe, rebuilding our bodies over and over again over our lifetimes. We really didn't realize how impermanent we are, and that our bodies are made of remnants of stars and massive explosions in the galaxies. All the material in our bodies originates with that residual stardust, and it finds its way into Rev. Koyo's garden and all other plants, and from there into the nutrients that we need for everything we do-think, move, grow. And every few years the bulk of our bodies are newly created.

Watching the Seven Ages of Starlight on BBC a while back reinforced my Buddhist belief that we are at one with the Universe, being literally made of stardust. The elements of Hydrogen and Helium, which are involved in the fusion taking place in a star, such as our sun, are the building blocks of all other elements, created as the star collapses under the force of gravity.

This process sometimes creates what we now call a supernova, a huge, intensely bright, but very short lived source of light. This in fact may have been the source of the 'star' that guided the Three Wise Men in the Christian religion.

Our bodies are made up of a collection of the same elements as those created in the stars: iron, and carbon even a little gold. But in essence, we are all stardust. When we die, those elements are returned to the Universe and the cycle goes on.

The Universe is around 13.5 billion years old and the cycle of birth and death has been going on for much of that time. We have come from the Universe, we will go back into the Universe; science facts for the last few years and Buddhists beliefs for more than

two millennia. As I say, science is finally catching up with Buddhism.

Perhaps the deepest spiritual connection to the vast Universe that science has given us is awareness that ancestral stars are part of our genealogy. We can now know and feel our connection to the heavens, for stars are among our ancestors. I actually keep a small vial of stardust (shaving from a meteorite) next to my altar.

A quote from Deepak Chopra's book,
The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success

"We are travelers on a cosmic journey, stardust, swirling and dancing in the eddies and whirlpools of Infinity. Life is Eternal. But the expressions of life are ephemeral, momentary, and transient. Gautama Buddha once said, 'This existence of ours is as transient as autumn clouds. To watch the birth and death of beings is like looking at the movements of a dance. A lifetime is like a flash of lighting in the sky, rushing by like a torrent down a steep mountain.'"

A quote from Neil deGrasse Tyson, Cosmos
"There's as many atoms in a single molecule of your DNA as there are stars in the typical galaxy. We are, each of us, a little universe."



Dial-the-Dharma Has Gone Digital!

Dial-the-Dharma, a collection of audio recordings made by Rev. Gyomay Kubose and Rev. Koyo Kubose will now be made available directly on our website, brightdawn.org titled "NEW-Daily Dharma Online." (see image below)

Instead of calling in to hear the recordings, you'll be able to hear a new Dharma message everyday on our website. You can also choose to listen to these messages via the Podbean App on your tablet or other devices.

Visit brightdawn.org for more information or to listen to Dial-the-Dharma.

Santa Claus and Smiles

By Michael Saiyo Saint

Happiness is a subjective thing, money, power, greed, love, Nature, all these things could be the magic button that makes one happy, but smiles truly do make a difference.

I recently decided to stop taking one of my medications that I have been taking for 20 years for my insomnia. I have had several surgeries for sleep apnea over the years but nothing seemed to help other than prescription drugs. So after about a week of no sleep, let's just say I was in a grumpy mood!

I decided to go to the beach a few weeks ago (this was scribbled in my journal while setting on the beach that day). Driving through New Smyrna Beach before reaching the Canaveral Sea Shore Park, looking to the right of my truck I see a man in a handicapped motorized scooter driving down the sidewalk. Fully dressed as Santa Claus (it was 88 that day) I could tell he had some serious physical things going on but he had a great smile on his face and that simple smile was infectious and wow, there went my bad mood and my Happy face arrived, and Mr. Grumpy face disappeared. Continuing on my way to the beach many more smiles of happiness would occur.

Driving up to the ranger station to check in and show my senior citizen card [free pass to all national parks, another cause to smile] there was a new ranger at the station. With a wonderful smile on his face, he said "Good Morning. What a beautiful day this is (another big smile) Enjoy the sunshine and enjoy your day."

So the rest of the day I read a book by Thicht Nhat Hanh, worked on my Zen Koans, snapped photos, took some video footage and watched the various coastal birds, dolphins, sharks, and sea turtles being just Happy.

A reminder to be in the present moment and to overlook what little troubles I have and just be happy!

A Bodhi Day Carol

Rob Kanyo Mican

(To the tune of "Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!")

*Oh the weather outside is frightful
But the koans are so delightful
We'll cut our minds like Seppo
Let it go! Let it go! Let it go!*

*It's all about non-attachment
Which is different from detachment
And Gensha just answered "No"
Let it go! Let it go! Let it go!*

*We cannot escape life
Be one with your problems instead
Use the koans just like a knife
And your mind is like a loaf of bread*

*The ego is slowly dying
And the self is now untying
Don't let your tea cup overflow
Let it go! Let it go! Let it go!*

*Oh it doesn't show signs of stopping
Chosei's ax will keep on chopping
Let your life be one and flow
Let it go! Let it go! Let it go!*

(With profuse apologies to Sammy Cahn & Jule Styne.)



Oneness Newsletter Winter 2017

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Call 8AM Pacific for talks by Rev. Koyo
and a guest Lay Minister

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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

I developed an ongoing series of large Enso on canvas. They are more "one process Enso" than "one brush stroke" Enso. I'll work the paint round and round, over and over, drops falling, splats splattering, all in one energy phase, no stopping...though the phase may be an hour or more. But like traditional Zenga, when the energy moment is done, it is done. I have been so fortunate to have been able to attend small workshops with three major Enso painters, Stephen Addiss, Kaz Tanahashi, and John Stevens. Each brings something totally different to Enso painting, and each shared their way most generously.

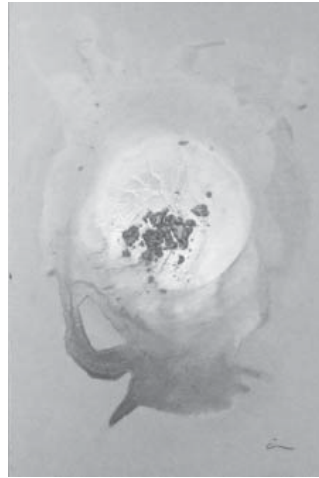
Enso: Bright Dawn was done several years before I found Bright Dawn and Koyo Sensei's wonderful way of presenting the Dharma, or, rather it found me. It never had a real name, however, until I began the ordination program. I'd even forgotten I'd done it until Koyo Sensei mentioned in Oneness that this would be his year to study aspects of gold as his spiritual growth path. Wow! I remembered the gold Enso. It had come into being when I was working with the color gold in spirituality, especially the old Italian paintings from Siena and the gold Amida Buddha's and glittering Shin altars (quite a change from my Presbyterian plain upbringing). How might Amida's infinite light shine in an Enso? How do you "capture" the light at earliest dusk, what cinematographers call the golden hour? As with Zenga, when the time was right, down went the canvas on the floor, and for several hours gold acrylic, clear gesso, and odd inks dripped and circled until the energy was finished. The right name didn't appear until Bright Dawn shone on my life.

Enso: Shunyata, also done earlier, grew from working with the thought of expressing pure light. How might you paint pure light, colorless light, another aspect of this infinite, boundless, shining spirituality? It became a Bodhisattva, protecting the fragile surface of Enso: Bright Dawn as it was wrapped, boxed, and mailed to Coarsegold just before the gold year was over. What a thrill for it to be in the Sanctuary now ! I had no idea it was the Kubose's golden anniversary, too.

So, Enso? Maybe Zen teacher Nakagawa Soen said it best:

*Is this the moon?
Is it a sweet cake?
Is it a mirror of your soul?
Or is it a fist to give you a punch in the nose?*

Regardless, enjoy!



Editor's Note: Please excuse the poor quality of the two enso images; we did the best we could, plus our newsletter is not printed in color. The gold enso is shown on the left and the silver Shunyata enso is shown on the right in this article. They have to be seen in person to be fully appreciated. When you come visit Bright Dawn, the gold enso is in the Kubose's livingroom and the silver enso is on the front wall as you enter the Bright Dawn Center Sierra Sanctuary.



HAPPY NEW YEAR OF THE DOG!

May 2018, Year of the Dog, be a time of both appreciating and developing the positive attributes of what dogs can teach us about how to live life.



Photo of Raku & Easy by Joy Taniguchi

ANIMAL WISDOM

By Douglas Kuyo Slaten

“Does a dog have Buddha-nature?”

The other day I was telling my wife, Patti Kayo, about a method of walking meditation I had read about. She listened to me patiently but I could see that in her mind she was rolling her eyeballs. Undeterred, I went out to the back yard with our dogs to try out the technique. First though, I had to watch in amazement as they ran at full speed, leaping, dodging obstacles, crashing into each other and then breaking away for another romp. I never tire of watching their athleticism and natural grace.

After they had settled down I tried the mindful walking. With

my hands clasped behind my back and my gaze directed downwards, I raised a heel off the ground counting “one.” Slowly moving the foot forward was “two,” and then placing it on the ground again was “three.” Then a pause and do the same sequence with the other foot. After a few repetitions of this I was starting to feel that I was really practicing mindfulness.

When I came to the end of the walkway I turned around and noticed that one of our dogs was watching me with his head cocked. Clearly, my curious performance had him puzzled. I continued on with the exercise but at that point, he had

had enough. He gave a couple of scolding barks and jumped up and punched me in the stomach with his front paws. And I’m pretty sure I heard him say “Mu!”



Photo of Tuffy & Blue by Douglas Kuyo

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Not only is making a memorial donation a way to remember and honor a loved one, it is a karmic action that fosters awareness of the two main teachings of interdependency and impermanence. Acknowledging one’s “roots” also nurtures a feeling of gratitude, which is the foundation of a spiritual life. A memorial donation does all this and at the same time helps support the mission of a worthy organization of one’s choice.

When submitting donations, please list your name exactly as you wish it to appear in the Oneness newsletter. Acknowledgments are current as of November 25, 2017. 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.

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.

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 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.

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YES YES Your Everyday Spirituality YES YES

DEC	<p>Theme: Right Understanding Purpose: Gratitude based on reality Method: "Interdependency-Gassho:" Clasp your hands together with fingers alternating with each other; keeping palms together, raise all fingers up. View this "forest" of fingers as representing the dynamic nature of the complex process of reality that supports your life and realize that this awareness is in your hands right in front of you.</p>
JAN	<p>Theme: Balance Purpose: To see both sides of things Method: "In-and-Out Gassho:" Do regular Gassho. Slightly rotate hands toward your face as you inhale. Slowly rotate hands away from face on the exhale. Use the in and out of breathing to represent the importance of balance in your personal life; both work and play; being with others and being alone; of talking and of being quiet; etc. Use this Gassho when things seem to be getting out of balance.</p>
FEB	<p>Theme: Open-ness Purpose: Accepting what is Method: "Empty-Handed Gassho:" Place hands in front of chest about a foot apart, with palms slightly opened in a classic "I don't know" gesture, accompanied by an appropriate facial expression. Use this Gassho as an empowering gesture when approaching confusing or difficult situations. This Gassho means it is okay to not be in complete control all the time. Such an affirmation can actually lead to creative, positive outcomes.</p>

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