
O N E N E S S



Quarterly Newsletter of BRIGHT DAWN: Institute for American Buddhism

Vol. 14 No. 4 Winter 2010

ACCEPT/CHANGE PARADOX

By Rev. Koyo Kubose

The well-known Serenity Prayer goes something like, “May I have the serenity to accept what I cannot change; the courage to change what I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.”

I’d like to comment on what might be called the Accept/Change Paradox. In the spiritual realm, acceptance is considered to be an essential aspect of wisdom itself. How can such spiritual acceptance; that is, acceptance of life’s realities, be reconciled with the value we put on progress and change? Our basic motivation for improvement applies to both our materialistic and spiritual aspirations. In the spiritual realm, we continually want to deepen the virtues of wisdom and compassion. Even when we feel we are becoming increasingly aware of our own self limitations, it is easy to consider this as progress and change. Being dissatisfied with the status quo (of one’s spirituality) seems incompatible with having the peace of mind associated with spiritual acceptance.

I would like to discuss this Accept/Change Paradox in the context of our Bright Dawn Lay Study Program. Our students work hard taking courses in our curriculum. For example, in the

course on *Naikan* (inner reflection), students work on improving their awareness of how much they have received from others, what little they’ve given back, and how much trouble they’ve caused others. In a course using the book *Practicing the Power of Now*, students devise Action Plans to change how their notions of time affect their daily lives. In another course, students use the same Action Plan approach to work on themselves in the area that can be called Green Dharma, using the book, *Hooked! Buddhist Writings on Greed, Desire, and the Urge to Consume*.

One “answer” to the Accept/Change Paradox is that one can do both at the same time. One can accept the basic “Is-ness” or Suchness of life and at the same time, direct one’s motivation and activity to constantly change how that reality is being expressed or manifested. In other words, realize and accept the Absolute, while still working for change in the relative world. This relative world of *Samsara* is filled with hindrances and dualistic comparisons such as right-wrong; fair-unfair, etc. The goal of Buddhism is to live an absolute life in the relative world...or as it has

been put, “be in the world but not of the world.”

A paradox is when it is difficult to understand how two aspects are related to each other. However, this does not mean that the two things are necessarily contradictory to each other. Wisdom or “Right Understanding” means to have a wide perspective that encompasses different aspects and contexts. This wide perspective goes beyond seeing things dualistically as either-or, as in either right or wrong; either good or bad, success or failure, win or lose, etc. Something might be considered right or good in certain conditions and be considered the exact opposite in a different time or

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**NEW PHONE NUMBER FOR
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DHARMA DAN

Hi everyone! I want to let you know about some behind-the-scene stuff that goes on when articles for our newsletter are being written. As you know, our Oneness newsletter is a “seasonal” quarterly, with Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter issues. When it comes time to gather and prepare material for the next newsletter, Chief Editor Adrienne starts the ball rolling. Rev. Koyo is a slow starter but once he gets going, it’s full steam ahead.

One of my vantage points is on top of a bookcase that sits above Rev. Koyo’s large wooden desk. I was watching him as he worked on the YES (Your Everyday Spirituality) that appears on the back cover of the newsletter. As usual, he was talking to himself—or as he puts it, “talking to the universe.” Sometimes his comments are nice elaborations of what he’s writing about. For example, here’s some comments on the Gassho’s for December, January, and February of this Winter newsletter issue.

December is a season to emphasize the spirit of giving. Instead of having a close-fisted, grasping hand, we can have an attitude like an open, relaxed hand. We do not have to victimize ourselves by rigidly clutching at either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ emotions. Negative emotions, if clung to, can eat us up. Even positive emotions, if clung to, can lead to greed and being too full of ourselves. Usually the teaching of non-attachment is seen as relating to negative emotions but as Rev Koyo commented while writing about this, “this also applies to positive emotions.” So I thought this was a good insight and worth mentioning to you readers.

For the month of January, I thought the “Washing-hand Gassho” was kind of corny but I suppose it is nice to “wash one’s hands” of the past year and start the new year fresh. Our hands do get dirty from working and we do make it a point to wash our hands when we finish a job. When starting a task that requires special neatness or involving food, we often wash our hands even though our hands were not particularly soiled. As a mindfulness tool, cleaning one’s hands is a reminder to clean one’s mind; that is, to empty the mind. In this way, we can meet the new moment, task, or situation with an fresh, open attitude.

In the animal kingdom, as compared to the human realm (although technically, humans are animals too!), we “lower” animals are much better at living in the present. We live in more harmony with nature. My friend, the owl, is a symbol of wisdom and is also seen as a protector because his sharp eyesight can see far into the distance, and this can protect us from future problems. The owl has been used as an ecology symbol as in, “Give a hoot, don’t pollute.” In addition to the physical world we live in, ecology can apply to reducing inner pollution as well. Keeping a fresh, clean mind is essential for our spiritual well being.

In writing about February’s Gassho, I overheard Rev. Koyo commenting that we can send ourselves a mental Valentine to show that we love both ourselves and the natural world we live in. We need to preserve our physical environment so we can have clean water and healthy food. Even we “lower” animals know better than to poop in our own living quarters. In the same way, we need to think, speak, and act in wholesome ways that benefit ourselves and others. “Give a hoot, don’t pollute!” As the comic character Pogo said, “We have met the enemy; he is us.” With greater self awareness, let us root out self-defeating attitudes.

LET’S TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES!



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place. A person might succeed or win in one context, yet that same outcome might be considered a failure or loss in another context.

Truth always depends upon context; that is, one’s frame of reference. For example, consider what is called embedded concepts or multiple classification. To a young child his mother is only his mother. It is difficult for the child to understand that this one person, his mother, is also his grandmother’s child. Similarly, if a young child is taught that he lives in Chicago, he will protest when told that he also lives in Illinois, saying “No, no, I live in Chicago.” To the young child, he cannot live in both places.

So, in one’s spiritual journey, one can come to accept oneself as a human being, with all that that entails, and at the same time, constantly work at changing how his

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FIVE REMEMBRANCES

By Andy Bondy

I don't quite recall when I first read the Five Remembrances- likely from something in a Thich Nhat Hahn book. At first it struck me that while honest— a true reflection of the way things are — it didn't speak to me about what to do about it. There were no verbs... In thinking about impermanence I had become comfortable with the balance that it provides. I think I have noted before that I think about behavioral impermanence or response variation- I will forget things, I will make mistakes, I will miss shots in sports. But impermanence also leads to understanding that response variation is the stuff of learning, growth and development- I will succeed at some things, I may even be creative, and I will sometimes make shots. So how would impermanence relate to the Five Remembrances? Here's one suggestion:

This body is of the nature to get old...I will get old.

So I will enjoy this day based on my many experiences.

(If I were not this old, I wouldn't have all the experiences that allow me to fully enjoy today.)

This body is of the nature to get sick...I will get sick.

So I will enjoy today based on my relative good health.

(I can focus on my cranky right knee or focus on my pain-free left knee. I also should remember that I can see, I can hear, I can taste, I can smell, I can feel sensations.)

This body is of the nature to die...I will die.

So today is a good day because I am alive.

(Only by being alive can I worry about dying- even worrying is better than no-thing.)

This body is of the nature to lose connection with all friends and relatives...I will lose connection with all friends and relatives.

So I will cherish my connections with my friends and relatives today.

(This one is hard 'cause I realize I won't always have the joy of my grandson- something will happen to me or him at some point in time and we will no longer have a connection. So today (not tomorrow) is the day to do things and today is the day not to make any friend or relative guilty about what I perceive they have done (or not done) to me...)

This body is of the nature to be responsible for its actions...I am responsible for my actions.

So I will choose my actions carefully and monitor the impact of all my actions, both intentional and unintentional.

(All my actions have rippling effects- some I may foresee, most I do not. Some I may aim for, many I do not. But I must take responsibility for what happens- including when others 'misinterpret' what I've done or said (or not done/said). Remembering this one has helped me recognize that while I think I may not have intended to said/do something that hurt someone, it still leads back to me and my actions...)

This is part of what I remember every morning and try to recall during the day. I'm getting old, gonna get sicker, gonna die, lose contact with everyone and everything I love and hold dear...so today is a good day! (And yes I have that phrase on the bottom of all my emails.)

I hope everyone is enjoying and cherishing this day too.



Oneness Newsletter Winter 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.

WHO AM I? WHO ARE WE?

By Bev Kiyō Manley

1944 – early summer – the first summer after Mama had died in August of forty-three when I was only seven. My sixteen year-old sister, June, and two of her girlfriends were sprawled around our living room floor chatting. This was my first time to be present at a gathering of June’s “peer group” as she called it, and I recalled how bitterly she resented it when Mama made her take me to the movies with these same friends. She had made my unwelcome status painfully, embarrassingly clear, so I sat quiet as a mouse feeling lucky not to be ejected from this august conclave.

They talked about boys, other girls, their classes, their teachers, especially the sexy Mr. Gatsby who gave undeserved high grades to that siren, Veronica. What amazed me was their anguish, sarcasm, and envy veiled as moral outrage. So much passion and misery that the wished for teens lost their luster.

But amazement turned into shock when I heard my sister say, “I don’t know who I am.” Worse yet, Elenor and Donna agreed. That was all I needed to throw off my cloak of invisibility and pounce right in with a supremely stupid pronouncement. Pointing at each girl I announced to each one her name.

Outrage! “How stupid do you think we are? What an insult!” my sister hurled at me.

My face burned with embarrassment as I sputtered, “I really do think you know your names. It’s – it’s just that I couldn’t imagine what else you could be talking about.”

So it was that the teens began to explain selfhood to the child who had never felt the need to have a “self.” Relieved at not being evicted, I listened deeply.

Following is the essence of their joint teaching.

Who we are is something that each person must decide for themselves with the obvious exception of attributes that are given like gender, race, nationality. It was the non-given aspects of self that was driving them mad, because they had to decide what those aspects really were. They had to examine all their likes, interests, beliefs, desires, attitudes and determine which were the strongest – the ones that comprised their true identity or “self.”

They explained that since they were soon to become adults they felt a painful urgency, backed by their psychology teacher, to know exactly who they were.

So many things were vital to the self: tastes, preferences and aversions to everything from music to art to literature to fashions to the types of people with whom they would associate. Add to all that politics, philosophy, religion, career, education, hobbies, sports, and more.

All the time I listened, what they were saying felt unaccountably wrong. Something about this picture was askew.

Upon completing their description of the self, they turned away from me – I sat as far away as I could get – and began their tortured deliberations.

Each one piecing together a picture of her true self for life. Their efforts sparked a humorous analogy in my mind. I pictured them putting on heavy suits of armor and face masks. The unwieldy armor clanked as they plodded through life. What a heavy load! A mobile prison! How could a person grow, change? We cannot know what life will bring – new forms of music and art, new fields of study, not yet invented careers. We must be free to change with life – free to surprise ourselves.

My eyes fashioned on the black and white piano keys across the room. Each girl sees them from a different angle, I mused, and no two viewpoints can ever be the same. Each girl has a consciousness that looks out of no eyes but her own. I felt like I was getting closer to an idea of selfhood, something more valid than those external attributes the teens were putting on like clothing.

My mind was tired. I became quiet inside – keenly aware of simply EXISTING. I slowly matched my breathing to the languid rise and fall of sheer white curtains to the left, and felt my weight pressing into the couch. Was I breathing the summer-scented air or was it breathing me? Settling deeper into my core – my pure existence or being-ness – I experienced who I was and am; who we all are.

The thrill of this discovery compelled me to blurt out, “I’ve got it! I know who we are!” The thunder of silence.

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INTERNET MINDFULNESS: Practicing in the 21st Century and Beyond!

A Dharma Glimpse by Sayo Shenphen

Many of us today are unable to dedicate much time to sitting meditation. We come home after a hard day at work and the last thing we think about is going to our S.P.O.T. (*Special Place Of Tranquility*) and sitting for five or ten minutes. Most of us tend to quickly log on to the internet to check our emails or to chat with friends and family. There is nothing wrong with that. But we can turn these activities into one of mindfulness and awareness. Yes, the internet can be a great spiritual tool!

We live in an Internet world. We get our news from the net. We send letters and communicate through chats and forums. When we get on the net, we should do it fully aware and present in the Eternal Now. As Gyomay Sensei mentions in his texts, when we do something, we should do it a hundred percent! When blogging, only blog. When sending emails, simply focus on what you're typing. Nothing more. In this way you are being aware, mindful. You are meditating.

Some people worry that they cannot visit a local temple or Sangha to learn Dharma because they live too far away from one. But thanks to the internet we can hear Dharma right from our computers. We can download teachings to listen to and reflect on. A great example of this would be the Bright Dawn Online Sangha. Using the Bright Dawn Ning site can be a very powerful, spiritual tool. One can listen to past Dharma teachings by Koyo Sensei and Dharma glimpses from members of the Bright Dawn Sangha. You can also watch Koyo Sensei's fun "Sensei Says" youtube videos. There are also blogs from members that we can read. We can even set up time to chat with other Bright Dawn Sangha members.

Blogging and sharing blog posts can also be a spiritual tool and practice. If you had a rough day at work ...blog about it! Through the actual practice of blogging we release a lot of our afflictive emotions, daily frustrations, and tensions. We begin to see our issues through a different angle. And by writing things out we spend time reflecting on that particular situation, whether happy or sad. We may even inspire others through what we write, our situation, and how we learned from them. Sharing and expressing are very good ways to engage in spiritual practice and awareness.

It is for these reasons that I personally love and enjoy visiting the Bright Dawn Ning site/online Sangha.

Visiting the site is like spending time in meditation, in reflection. As I write my blogs I see things differently. It is a source of inspiration. Also, sharing our stories and teachings is exactly the main function of a Sangha. I can also play recordings from past Live Dharma Sunday broadcasts. Listening to them more than once allows me to get a different perspective every time.

So, the next time you're on the computer, on the internet, be sure to put some of these ideas into practice and see what comes up. Be fully aware and One with those moments.



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Mouths falling open. Imperious disdain. Condescending tolerance. But, the underling was too fired up to be deterred by the royal blockade. "We are consciousness!" Hoots of derision. "Yes, we are. Each one of us is consciousness. We are not our roles or careers. We HAVE these things but they are not US. We are consciousness itself and not the things we are conscious of. We are not even the things you say are given."

Words exploded, pelting me like rocks—"You stupid kid! You're crazy! Not one thing you said made any sense." With a shrug my sister summed it up – "What do kids know!" As one they turned away from me and became one solid thing like a big round stone.

How fortunate I am that my sister and her friends asked that question long before I was ready to ask it. Like all children I was closer to the essential nature of existence than adults are. Children do not have as many blind spots, nor masks, nor armor, nor vested interests.

Were it not for the unfolding of that gentle summer day I could have fashioned a self – a mistake that would have precluded direct experience and genuine response, the very stuff of life. I could have fought against impermanence instead of embracing it as that which makes life possible – not only possible but filled with possibility. I could have existed with a pervasive Humpty-Dumpty-like anxiety. One false step and – splat!

So I thank June and her peer group for allowing me to remain when they addressed the question that caused me to turn inward while I was still pure – the ideal time to look deeply and ask, "Who am I? Who are we?"



IT'S NOT TOO LATE

Would you like to take your individual spiritual growth to the next level? Would you like to be a part of the emerging history of Buddhism in America? Check out our Lay Ministry non-residential, year and a half study program. Join fellow students from across the country in weekly Sunday evening small group tele-conference sessions discussing written reports on assigned readings. No financial tuition required. Sweat equity and sincere commitment necessary. Email inquiries to: brightdawn@kubose.com. Telephone: 559-642-4285.

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humanness is being manifested. This is an on-going process; one never is completely finished. There is no place for egotistic self satisfaction in this journey. There is only humble gratitude to pay forward for all the help one has received.

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.

Volusia Buddhist Fellowship led by Morris Sekiyo Sullivan, meets in DeLand, FL. For information go to www.volusiabuddhist.org.

Acknowledgements with Gratitude

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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 **November 17, 2010**. Donations received after this date will be listed in the next issue. If we have missed an acknowledgment, please let us know.)

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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Coffinman	\$14.95		
Engaged Pure Land Buddhism	\$9.00		
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River of Fire, River of Water	\$19.00		
The Feeling Buddha	\$15.95		



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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	
DEC	<p>Theme: Non-attachment Purpose: To learn the importance of mentally letting go Method: “Open-fingers Gassho.” Put hands palm-to-palm, with fingers slightly spread apart, as a reminder to let go of self-victimizing thoughts— just like letting water go through a sieve.</p>
JAN	<p>Theme: Beginnings Purpose: Clean up the old and welcome the new Method: “Wash-hands Gassho.” Make a ‘washing-the-hands’ motion, then do Gassho. Do this whenever you want to transition from one moment to a new moment.</p>
FEB	<p>Theme: Love Purpose: Appreciate and respect yourself Method: “Heart Gassho.” Put both hands over your heart, then bow. Optional: give yourself a hug. Extend your warm feeling towards others.</p>

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