
O n e n e s s



Quarterly Newsletter of BRIGHT DAWN Center of Oneness Buddhism

Vol. 16 No. 2 Summer 2012

HOW IS YOUR GARDEN GROWING?

By Dharma Dan



We planted Japanese turnip seeds in the garden this spring. It's always a thrill when you see the tiny green sprouts sticking up out of the dark earth. A few weeks later, the plants were growing nicely, with big green leaves... and with white turnips poking out of the soil surface. Hey, wait a minute, there's one plant not like the rest in the straight row of plants but is all by itself to the side. Wow, look at the size of that turnip! I immediately knew there was a Dharma lesson here. I asked Adrienne to take a picture of the large turnip for this newsletter article.

When you read the back of most vegetable seed packages, the planting instructions advise you to thin out the seedlings after the seeds germinate and grow to be little sprouts. If you don't do the thinning, the plants will be crowded and will compete with each other for nutrients, resulting in stunted size and lower productivity. Might this lesson from Mother Nature also be applied to one's spiritual growth?

If you are a busy person who often multi-tasks, you might want to slow down and do one thing at a time. This is easier said than done. Sometimes you think you are focusing on one thing when actually your mind is filled with thoughts that have nothing to do with the present moment. For example, it may look like you're quietly enjoying a cup of tea, when actually you are not tasting the tea at all because your mind is filled with thoughts of the NBA basketball play-offs.

A great aid to present-centered awareness is mindful breathing. Pausing to take a long slow breath does wonders to stop extraneous mental activity so you can be more aware of how you are functioning and what's going on around you. This is the pause that not only refreshes but also brings clarity into what you are doing. There is a lightness of being and you do not feel crowded or rushed.

Remember that you reap as you have sowed. Weed out your extraneous priorities, then when your spiritual life ripens, there will be a huge "turnip!"

However, remember that the turnip doesn't say "Wow!" about its own size. There is no self-centered pride in nature. So this is Dharma Dan with advice to just live a natural life nourished by organic fertilizers like sincerity, humility, and gratitude.



Inside

2012 LM Conference	p. 2
Conference Pictures	p. 3
Personal Impressions	p. 4
Crocheting	p. 5
TV Dharma: Monk	p. 5
Why Memorial Donationa	p. 6

2012 BRIGHTDAWN LAY MINISTER CONFERENCE

by Morris Sekiyo Sullivan

June was a historic month at Bright Dawn, where Lay Minister Senseis attended, in person and on the internet, the inaugural Bright Dawn Lay Minister Conference on June 2 and 3, 2012.

To be able to come together like this and to spend time with Rev. Koyo and Adrienne Kubose in the beautiful foothills of the Sierras was, in itself, significant. Being able to spend time learning about the traditional art of tea, making okesas, discussing plans for Bright Dawn's future, and sharing meals with family and board members, however, made the conference very, very special.

Bright Dawn LM Senseis David Nichiyo Abatangelo, Gio Sayo Shenphen Sugranes and Morris Sekiyo Sullivan, along with photographer/videographer DJ Morris, spent the weekend at Bright Dawn headquarters in Coarsegold, and several other LMs attended conference sessions via online-streaming video.

To date, four groups of lay ministers have been inducted beginning with the 2008 class. Abatangelo was one of six inductees in 2009; LMs Sugranes and Sullivan were both inducted in 2010.

Sensei Sayo chaired the event, which began at 9 a.m. Saturday and ended late afternoon Sunday. The conference began with an opening ceremony that included playing the recorded Bright Dawn theme and silent meditation, along with a recording of San Bujo, several readings and recitations and opening remarks by Rev. Koyo Kubose.

It was a hot weekend, but it was not too hot to spend time outdoors Saturday morning observing the dharma of nature at Altar Rock and to explore the Bright Dawn grounds. The assembly also met at the site of a future sanctuary and performed a formal dedication of the grounds. A site plan had just been created for the structure, so Rev. Kubose was able to share his vision, in very tangible form, with the LM Senseis present.

During the lunch break, Rev. Kubose took the group out to the garden, where everyone got a chance to try

their hands at archery. It wasn't a traditional Japanese bow and no one threatened to out-shoot any Zen archers, but everyone had fun aiming at a stack of hay bales and makeshift dharma-wheel targets.

Saturday afternoon, the group had a chance to learn how to make an okesa, and also got to see a collection of historic *okesas* that had belonged to Rev. Gyomay Kubose and his teacher, Rev. Haya Akegarasu.

The LMs also got to see a collection of *ojuzus* (Japanese style "malas" or prayer beads) of different lengths and vintages, and then to create their own using beads and beading twine. Being able to share the experience of creating something new together while acknowledging the connection to tradition was a profoundly moving moment during the weekend's events.

The conference closed that day with a dinner break, a quite sumptuous feast featuring mostly raw and vegan dishes created by Adrienne, who proved herself to be quite a chef-sensei in the raw-healthy foods arena.

Sunday's session began with another ceremony, this time with an Homage to the Bright Dawn founders. Afterward was one of the highlights of the weekend, Rev. Kubose's sister, Joyce Sosho Kubose, gave the LMs an introduction to *chanoyu*, the Art of Tea. Joyce Sosho is an instructor in the Urasenke school of tea, which traces its origins to the 16th century.

Commonly (but not accurately) known as the "tea ceremony," the word "chanoyu" literally means "hot water for tea," but it refers to a mindful process of preparing and serving tea along with foods prepared for the occasion.

In this case, the purpose is not just to serve tea and snacks, however. Rather, it is a spiritual process that incorporates the principles of harmony, respect, purity and tranquility. It was a beautiful event which other LMs were able to experience online.

After the lunch break, Rev. Kubose gave a live talk on the subject of Oneness—a talk full of meaning and

CONFERENCE continues on page 5



Altar Rock Meditation



Sanctuary Dedication



Archery



Renewal of Vows



Chanoyu

Oneness Newsletter Summer 2012

Editors: Adrienne Kubose, Rev. Koyo S. Kubose

Phone: (559) 642-4285
Email: brightdawn@kubose.com
Website: www.brightdawn.org

Dial-the-Dharma: (847) 386-8836
Live Dharma Sunday (347) 945-7953
brightdawnsangha.ning.com

Please send Poems, Readers Replies to:
28372 Margaret Road, Coarsegold, CA 93614

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.

PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS FROM COARSEGOLD

by Morris Sekiyo Sullivan

To say, “I sat on a rock and meditated” would be technically accurate. However, the statement falls far short of the reality. On the first day of our conference, Rev. Kubose took the group of LM senseis around the Bright Dawn grounds to show us what had changed and what was planned. After a time, he pointed out what he called the Dharma Throne and suggested we each take a few moments to sit there and see if a turning word arose.

I took my turn at the rock. In this case, it would be more accurate to say “in the rock” than on it. Time and the forces of nature have indeed formed it into a very comfortable throne, but its curves and hollows seemed to wrap around me, almost like an egg, as if the earth itself was protecting me from the darts and dangers of my meandering mind.

I did meditate, turning my attention to the breath for a moment to quiet my thoughts before opening up to whatever arose in my inner and outer environments. The property in Coarsegold gives one a lot of spiritual input: There is the earth itself, which takes dramatic forms with rocks that seem to have struggled against the clinging ground to rise toward the sky, for instance, and a pine tree which, seeking a foothold on the hard ground, managed to grow its trunk out of a solid rock.

Then there is the Kubose family, Rev. Koyo and Adrienne, Easy and Raku (who besides my own dogs are perhaps the best dogs ever), and the family and friends who come to visit at times like this one.

And there is the wildlife—the wavelike rise and fall of whirring wings as dozens of indefatigable hummingbirds making the rounds of the feeders; the inscrutable ways of the apparently unconquerable gophers; and the tracks and other relics left by everything from deer, rattlesnakes and countless other beings who come to visit or even make Bright Dawn their home.

Home. That word arose in my mind as I sat within this rock, feeling the connection, the conduit between earth and sky. Of course, this was not my home in the

physical sense—I reside in Florida. Yet I realized this was my home—my spiritual home.

I had experienced a similar feeling several months earlier when visiting India. There, where the Buddha gave his first sermon, I sat with my eyes closed and listened to the chanting of Buddhists from around the world, and suddenly felt myself buoyed up by the flowing river of practice. Now here, listening to the simple poetry of the wind in the treetops, I felt myself firmly grounded upon my path.

There is an old saying, “You can never go home again.” I imagine that’s true if by “home” you mean a place in which your past resided. But a spiritual home—that’s another matter. You don’t have to “go home again” to a spiritual home; like a tortoise, you carry that refuge with you.

I thought about that again a few days later, when my return to Florida was unexpectedly delayed by bad weather. I sat in the airport, dozing a little off and on, and listening to other waylaid travelers worrying about whether they’d “ever get home.” Naturally, I wanted to get back to my house, but my spiritual home was with me still. I will revisit it, I’m sure. But I’m equally sure I’ll never really leave it behind.



DHARMA GLIMPSE: CROCHETING

By Patti KaYo

For the last few months, I've been learning how to crochet. This is a peaceful, relaxing, portable hobby, and I'm actually getting somewhere with it. There is a practical application: blankets, scarves, and booties for all, and it is also a fact that the world needs more pot holders.

I recently started a slightly advanced scarf project. This scarf has a pattern with a basket-weave effect which involves several twists and turns of the hook and yarn to make a single stitch, so I have to pay close attention.



About 15 inches into my project, which represents about three hours of work, I decided to stop and review what I had done so far. There at the very beginning I noticed a MISTAKE! What? I don't remember doing that. Then I had to decide if I really wanted to undo all my work in order to go back and fix that one wrong stitch. Reminding myself that I'm doing this for fun and relaxation, I decided that leaving in the mistake outweighed the heartache of undoing all the good work. I told myself that it wasn't that noticeable in the grand scheme of things, that I'm still learning, and to just keep going.

And then, oh no, I found another mistake a couple more inches from the beginning! I thought I had been concentrating so hard, one hook and loop at a time. In my mind, I had been "present" the whole time, and I was surprised to see objective evidence that my attention had wandered several times. When I showed the scarf to my husband, Doug, he innocently asked me about a few more areas that looked a little suspicious.

Where was I when I thought I was being so mindful? I wasn't aware of *not* being aware at any point, but here was the proof. As I thought about it, I remembered — I had been slightly preoccupied with several concerns: our injured dog, the pain in my neck, what to do with my mother's belongings — my crocheted scarf had become a timeline of my mental activity. I pointed to the first mistake and told Doug, "This is where I was worrying about our dog, and this is where I was thinking about my neck" and so on.

Although my crocheted scarf shows me when I wasn't "there" for the stitches, how about all the other times in real life when I've just gone through the motions? I don't have a scarf of life to show me that, and I can't unravel what I've done and go back and fix my mistakes in life. But with continued practice I can be more skillful with my crocheting and with living.

By the way, I'm keeping my scarf with all its imperfections as a reminder to stay focused in the present.



TV Dharma: Monk

There's a detective, "Randy," on Monk who's portrayed to be a little dorky and is often not taken seriously and is made fun of. At the end of one show Randy was asked how he dealt with people making fun of him all the time. He said that it used to bother him until he saw a sign "Happiness is a choice."

CONFERENCE continued from page 2

expressive of intention. The LMs were grateful to Kubose for sharing his thoughts on this important topic.

Following that talk, the Senseis returned to Altar Rock, this time to renew their pledge as Bright Dawn Lay Ministers. Many of the Kubose family and friends were on hand for the occasion and for the feasting that followed. Although the conferees all agreed they would like to stay longer, the pledge reaffirmation and the communion shared afterward was a joyous end to a wonderful event.



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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 **June 20, 2012**. Donations received after this date will be listed in the next issue. If we have missed an acknowledgment, please let us know.

WHY MEMORIAL DONATIONS?

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 Buddhist teachings of Impermanence and Interdependency. Acknowledging one's "roots" 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 and activities of a worthy organization.

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.

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.

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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 Center of Oneness Buddhism
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Change Service Requested



YES YES Your Everyday Spirituality YES YES	
JUN	Theme: Self reflection Purpose: Looking honestly at one's mistakes Method: "D for Dork" Gesture: When you do something stupid, make a circle with index finger and thumb of left hand and place on your forehead. This circle together with the vertical line of your other three fingers form the letter "d" for dork.
JUL	Theme: Deep self reflection Purpose: Facing one's character flaws Method: "B for Bonno" Gesture: Do the above described gesture but use your right hand to form the letter "b" for bonno, a Japanese word referring to the reality of human limitations reflected in ego-centered greed, anger and ignorance. (<i>klesa</i> in Sanskrit)
AUG	Theme: Self healing Purpose: Learn how to Keep Going Method: D-B Gassho: Put both a "d" and a "b" on your forehead; then move hands together in Gassho; bow your head, dissolving your dorky bonno into a vow of living a Dharma-centered life of humility and gratitude.

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