



O n e n e s s

Quarterly Newsletter of BRIGHT DAWN CENTER of Oneness Buddhism

Vol. 17 No. 3 Autumn 2013

5 WAYS HOW NOT TO BE A BODHISATTVA AND OTHER CONFESSIONS OF A DHARMA PRACTITIONER

by Wendy Shinyo Haylett

(Dharma Glimpse for Live Dharma Sunday, August 18, 2013)

1) I thought if I became a Buddhist it would profoundly change me and I would get all spiritual ... better ... different ... then I would change the world.

Becoming a Buddhist did NOT profoundly change me. Studying the Dharma did NOT profoundly change me, directly. Imitating practitioners doing Buddhist practices did NOT profoundly change me.

But I was profoundly changed by, "looking carefully" as Rev. Gyomay Kubose wrote, and finding the truth of things as they are, of suchness—finding universal life, "deeply within [my]self and in all things around me." He wrote, "To learn Buddhism is to become aware of life, which means to become aware of oneself."

I am profoundly changed by not becoming different or more spiritual, but becoming intimate with who I am, in all my foolish, ego grasping, judging thoughts. In that intimacy, I learned to develop compassion for myself for being this foolish being, which creates space to change a bit by not blindly acting on the foolish thoughts. And, with compassion for myself, compassion for others increased, because I saw how we

were the same in our foolishness.

2) I thought if I studied ALL the Buddhist texts I would become wise.

I studied the Lam Rim, the Prajnaparamita, Buddhist epistemology and Buddhist logic, the Abidharma, Madhyamika philosophy, the Vinaya, Lojong, The Way of the Bodhisattva, Nagarjuna's Seventy Stanzas, and on and on.

Although I learned much that I have been able to take inside and examine in my life, I did not become wise. I became wiser when I tried to apply what I learned and watched how my mind worked, with no "rigid expectancies and no self-conscious intentions," as Rev. Gyomay wrote.

Rev. Gyomay wrote, "To learn Buddhism is to change one's life. Regardless of how much we learn, unless your life changes, nothing is learned—it is just accumulated knowledge." He also wrote, "When there is too much 'mind' in our activities we become artificial, and our lives do not flow smoothly. Life must flow out from within and not for external reasons."

I'll still study, meditate on, and refer to the texts of the masters, but not to become wise. Not to become

anybody, but to better understand myself. And in understanding myself, my need to become anything has lessened, because I see that I already am. In the confidence of being what I already am, I can genuinely meet and be with all others—with no desire to be more wise. Maybe that's wise and maybe it's foolish, but I know it's things as they are.

3) I thought if I met a great teacher or lama and get a Dharma name, my being would somehow be altered and I would cease to be my old stupid self.

I met and took teachings from a lot of wonderful teachers, some of whom may be enlightened. I am also the proud "owner" of four Dharma names:

I am Tenzin Chödrön, or "Dharma Lamp of the Teachings," my first ordination name received from

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DHARMA GLIMPSE

Adapted by Muyo Swanson using excerpts
from JOURNEYS ON MIND MOUNTAIN

By G. Blue Stone

(who generously granted permission)

The journey on Mind Mountain can be taken at any time. It is a journey on which no photographs are taken, no journal is necessary, no souvenirs are collected. Unlike other mountain journeys, your burdens seem to lighten with each passing day. The traveler on Mind Mountain understands that the moments of standing still are as important as the moments of movements. To journey in this way is to fall into a state of non-compulsion and from there observe your surroundings, both interior and exterior. It is to fall awake.

Though you travel far on Mind Mountain, paradoxically you go nowhere at all, for you are already there. One journey's end is the next journey's beginning. In contemplation of the perfect moment, you explore by stopping rather than going, breaking the cycle of action and reaction so that you may simply be. This is a sightseeing adventure of a most profound nature. When you are motivated by the love of truth and a desire to see clearly, un-foreseen vistas open before you. An expedition to know yourself encompasses memory as well as anticipation, yet is grounded in the present. This awareness has the power to transform the mundane into the mystical. To journey on Mind Mountain is to be reborn, not just once, but continually. It is the journey of a life of inspiration.



Stillness

By Rev. Koyo Kubose

I was giving a visitor a tour of our small orchard behind the main house. The visitor was talking a mile a minute and not really taking in the nature around her. Near the orchard area is a five-foot wide boulder. On the back side of this boulder is a naturally carved bench. I used to call this sitting place a Dharma Throne but later thought this might be misleading, so I now call it a Dharma Seat. A person can sit here and receive a Dharma Teaching.

I explained the above to the visitor and told her that many visitors sat on this Dharma Seat and in just one minute could receive a one-word teaching. I said to her, "Try it if you'd like." So she did and after one minute, arose and said, "The only word I could think of was 'stillness.'"

I immediately said, "That's great! Right in the midst of hectic life, you can always touch the quiet center within you." I was continuing our walk on the dirt path, but the visitor had a look of amazement on her face. It was obvious that she had been talking about the physical quietness of the outdoor place she was in rather than any kind of inner quietness. As she stood there for a few seconds, I could "see" her processing what I had said.

Our Dharma Seat is a tool that helps such experiences to occur. Although external surroundings can provide optimal conditions, the cause of an insight is generated from within. A seed was planted within the very fertile sub-conscious of the visitor. A few weeks after she had returned home, she emailed me that she often found herself taking mindful breaths while visualizing a stillness at the center of her being. This still center was not passive but was dynamic, like a perfectly balanced spinning top. A few weeks after that, as she was enjoying a still moment, she realized that there was a time dimension; stillness was still working within her, telling her that it was still working, still available... like a loyal friend. And a few months after that, she shared that she felt very grounded and empowered by this place of stillness in her that could not be unsettled by anything that happened from the outside. It was her eye of the tiger, or

Stillness continues on page 5

KIDDING AROUND

By Dharma Dan



What a joy it is when friends kid around, joke, and laugh together. When seen with a spiritual eye, such sharing of life is a deep and precious richness that should not be taken for granted. Here are some recent examples of kidding around that took place in and around the Bright Dawn Center.

At a family get together, Rev. Koyo was sitting at a card table with four children, ranging from age four to ten. They were eating ice cream and cake. Someone broke wind; it was a short sound and not very loud, barely audible. Looking back and forth at the boys, Rev. Koyo said, "Say, did you hear that?" The four-year old smiled and said, "It wasn't me!" Apparently everyone had heard the sound; it seems the human ear is programmed to be very sensitive to the sound of breaking wind. It was amazing that for the next half an hour, the boys talked about who might have done it. "Let's see now; the sound came from which direction..." "You're denying it too much; you must be the one!" When things died down, Rev. Koyo would instigate things again by looking at the four-year old and saying, "Well, I think _____ did it." This would bring forth laughter and protests of innocence. Rev. Koyo was having a great time. He later admitted to only me that he was the one who had done the deed. I don't think that adults would have generated such a long conversation about such an incident.

There is another type of gathering that does generate a lot of kidding by adults. This is when the guys get together for a game of Texas Hold 'Em poker. The women are in another room socializing together in their own way when at regular intervals they hear a

loud roar from the guys. Rev. Koyo told me that he rarely goes to a casino to play cards, but he loves the kidding around at a game among friends. The buy-in is only five dollars, so it is not a serious game. Yet, it's not the amount of stakes that is the issue; it is the braggin' rights.

When several guys have good hands, there is a lot of action and sometimes an unexpected card is turned over at the end (called the "River"), turning a loser into the winner. These are the rounds when a loud roar occurs. "Oh, the humanity of it all..."

At other times, when someone complains that he has not been getting any cards all night, someone else usually pretends to start playing a violin. Certain phrases develop and take on special uses at the poker table. For example, the Japanese word "Kane-mochi" means a rich person. At the poker table, the word is used to poke fun at the guy who is winning and has a lot of poker chips in front of him. "Hey, it's kane-mochi's turn; hurry up; stop counting your money." "Call the bet; you're kane-mochi." Another interesting phrase is "sui-te ka?" which means, "Are they attached?" "They" referring to cajones. When a big bet is made and one player hesitates and can't decide if he should call the bet or not, sometimes someone says, "Sui-te ka?" This is usually accompanied by a particular hand gesture of the palm up and the thumb and fingers together. And all the guys laugh; there is no room for stuffy maturity at the poker table. I could go on and on, but suffice it to say that a great time is had. There is no other activity that provides such healthy catharsis. Rev. Koyo told me that he should write a book on the Dharma of Family Poker.



Oneness Newsletter Autumn 2013

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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

Venerable Drupon Jorphel Rinpoche, a Drikung Kagyu Lama, who proclaimed that now my life would have meaning.

I am Könchog Zangmo, or "Noble Triple Gem," ordained by His Eminence Garchen Rinpoche, also a Drikung Kagyu Lama, who is respected by many lamas as a pure and realized master.

I am Könchog Pema, "Three Jewels Lotus," ordained by Venerable Khenpo Sherab Özer Rinpoche, a Drikung Kagyu Lama and accomplished scholar who exudes love.

I am Shinyo, "Heart Sun," through my Tisarana with Koyo Kubose Sensei, a meeting with a teacher given to me by the loving and compassionate grace of Amida's light, of life. I did not seek this teacher, but the teachings called to me.

Each teacher did alter me somehow. A little seed was planted by each. And each name pointed me toward the Truth. Each name, a signpost pointing toward where I needed to go:

Tenzin Chödrön: Dharma Lamp of the Teachings ... a bit of rebel name for within the Drikung Kagyu lineage, pointing to where I had come from: from some years studying Gelupa teachings through the Asian Classics Institute. Pointed me toward continued study and to hold the Dharma as my compass, my rock.

Könchog Zangmo: Noble Triple Gem. The Könchog, or triple gem part, is the lineage name, which I also share with Sayo Sensei. The Noble part tripped me up when I first received it, puffing me up at the thought of getting the name Noble—a wonderful teacher, indeed, Garchen Rinpoche. The challenge to me was to see what that meant. And it wasn't about me.

Könchog Pema: My Bodhisattva name, given when taking the Bodhisattva vows. Again the lineage name of Könchog, or the Three Jewels, but then Pema, the lotus. The perfect signpost to begin on the path of the Bodhisattva. It's all about being in the muddy pond with the whole world ... or even just your neighbor. You can't work as a Bodhisattva without getting a little muddy.

Shinyo: And of course Shinyo, Heart Sun. Kokoro, as Rev. Koyo explained to me, has many meanings: essentially heart, mind, or center/essence. When Rev. Koyo gave me the name, he mentioned a warm heart. This has been the path of the Dharma revealed to me by

Bright Dawn: the heart-mind, not just the mind. Rowing with both oars—wisdom and compassion to get to the essence of the Dharma, the essence of myself.

Each teacher, each name, planted the seeds. But I had to water the seed and make sure it was planted in good soil, had plenty of water and sun, and to continue to tend the sprout so as not to be choked by weeds or eaten by insects. Teachers can plant seeds in us, but we have a choice whether to nurture them or let them die. To live the truth they teach and model to us.

Gyomay Kubose Sensei wrote, "Unless we are aware, we do not learn anything. We have inspiration and no teachings. Teachings are everywhere—all around us—if only we open the mind's eye to see."

I haven't ceased to be my old stupid self. I am Wendy Shinyo now, and taking that name as my guidance keeps me pointed in the right direction, to the heart of who I am. That name enabled me to embrace my bombu nature, as the heart or source of wisdom and compassion. As Rev. Gyomay wrote, "We have to be ourselves.... Each of us is unique and perfect."

4) I thought that if I studied and practiced to become a teacher or minister, only then would I have the qualifications to help the world by spreading the Dharma. I thought that becoming a teacher would make me better.

Not long after I realized that becoming a Buddhist wasn't going to make everything different, I had the thought that studying all the Buddhist texts might be the ticket. Soon after I knocked off 18 courses through the Asian Classics Institute and saw that my life hadn't profoundly changed, I thought that it must be taking refuge and getting ordained and a new Dharma name. Then after taking teachings and getting empowerments from one teacher, seeing that I hadn't changed that much for the better, and being no closer to enlightenment, I thought I must need to connect with another teacher—maybe my heart teacher—and get a new teaching for things to change.

And then, even though I found what I felt was the true teaching and my life DID begin to change, I thought I was still not quite ready to share what I knew—somehow not made of the right stuff—or not possessing the right credentials. Maybe another course, maybe another title, maybe... maybe...

But, as Rev. Gyomay Kubose wrote, in our culture

it's all about purpose and goal-orientation. He said purposeless action is considered meaningless. Yet, he stressed, in addition to purposefulness, the other side of life is purposelessness. "Both aspects are true," he wrote. To accomplish things we must have purpose, but there's purposelessness too. "A flower blooms, a bird sings, a child plays..." The flower cannot help but bloom as it does—there is no intention. Water flows effortlessly.... When you love, you love."

Sensei wrote, "If we do something from the beginning with purpose and meaning, then it becomes quite rigid. Meaning and reasons may be given later but the doing is the purpose itself. If we continually live in the midst of purposeful, directed activity, soon we feel pressured and 'must' enters our lives. There is no naturalness.... Buddha taught that the essence of life just is, as it is.... If we analyze it, it becomes two, but the reality is always one.... Only when we analyze do we have different directions. True reality is natural and purposeless.... When one just is, one forgets all other things, one forgets self." Sensei quotes Dogen, "To know oneself is to forget oneself," and he adds: "One just is."

5) *I thought I could help the world by spreading the Dharma through teaching, blogs, and writing ... if only I had hours of time each day to devote to nothing else but that. I thought everyday life was preventing me from spiritual realization. I thought the people in my life were somehow not the "all beings" I vowed to save.*

Yep, it's always something ... you sit down to meditate and the dog needs to go out ... You were going to write that Dharma talk and you need to go to your mother-in-law's house to fix the TV ... you pop in your ear pods to listen to a talk you've been waiting to hear for weeks and your neighbor runs up behind you and asks to walk the block with you ... you save the evening to write a blog and your partner begs you to watch a movie with her.

Man, if these people wouldn't keep delaying me, maybe I could do my Bodhisattva work!!

Rev. Gyomay Sensei wrote that the "purpose in Buddhism is to overcome the self, overcome the duality of things, overcome multiplicity and become one's true self." He said that "one should become totally selfless" and went on to talk about how a half-full bottle of water makes noise when you shake it, but if it is completely full, there is no air space and no noise. He taught that

selflessness is when we are filled to the top and then you become selfless.

He writes, "You should attain complete fullness" and that this is Buddhist selflessness. He says, "You are the one who occupies the whole world.... There is no small, petty self to be disturbed. Even if you are shaken, there is no noise.... Forget enlightenment. Forget Buddha.... You become one with the whole universe. This is enlightenment; this is selflessness."

And I will leave you with the same thing as stated in the Prajnaparamita Vajracchedika Sutra (The Diamond Cutter or The Diamond that Cuts through Illusion). In the dialogue between Subhuti and the Buddha, Subhuti asks how to create the most awakened mind. The Buddha answers that no matter how many species of beings there are, that when we lead them all to liberation—to Nirvana or the Pure Land—in fact, when an infinite number have been liberated, we will know there will not be a single being who is liberated, if we are thinking with an enlightened mind.

May it be so. Namu Amida Butsu.



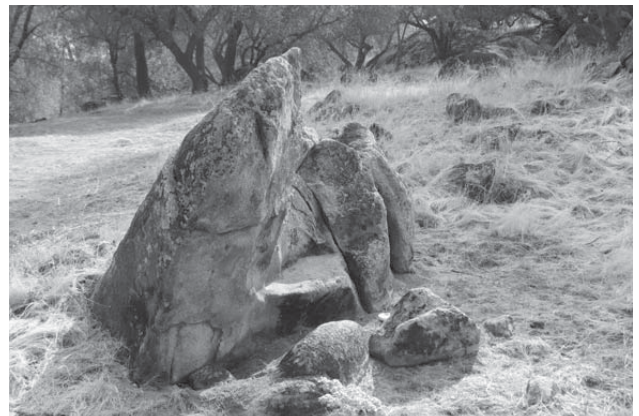
Stillness continues from page 2

like the eye of a tornado. I wrote to her that she had discovered how to live an absolute life in the relative world.

"Lower" animals like Dharma Dan or our pets or wild animals live in the stillness of the Eternal Now much more than humans do. They don't over analyze or cogitate on matters; they experience the moment and then go on to the next moment because they naturally know that it's always the Eternal Now.

I better quit writing; I feel myself getting too wordy.

So long for now!



A SKINNERIAN BUDDHA?

By Andy Goyo Bondy

Life has become somewhat hectic of late. I recently spent 32 out of 43 days away from home -- mostly work but some related to family and friends, including going to the UK for funeral services of a dear friend. As dukkha piled up, of course I felt a bit sorry for myself. As in my mind I was trying to take care of everyone around me, I sarcastically thought, "Right -- all giving, all the time," but I immediately realized that this indeed was the goal -- to be that way and happily so.

Some of my selfish thoughts were about how I was essentially due a bit more credit, or reinforcers in my language. But then it hit me -- a Buddha slap integrating my behavioral psychology training and what I think may be insightful. My "need" for additional reinforcement or my need to pick at my cuticles was purely illusionary. I have had a great deal of kind and wonderful reinforcement from all my loved ones and friends -- indeed quite sufficient to get me through the next few minutes. That is, it is my history of reinforcement that yields my current performance, not the next one- it doesn't yet exist. Reality may indeed show that my current rate (my local rate) of reinforcement is lower (or thinner) than in the past, but any "need" for more is an illusion. The same analysis holds for the condition

of my finger skin -- indeed I might have a piece that is dry, split and "hanging by a thread," but any "need" to remove it is purely an illusion. If I were working in front of a group giving a talk, I wouldn't pick. If a fire alarm went off this moment, I'd run and save the grandchildren not pick my skin. Lori's praise for what I am doing (or what I have done) is not the source of why I did what I did or am doing what I'm doing -- that is in the past. So the deep analysis extended by a careful look at the behavioral contingencies (as suggested by B.F. Skinner) yield the same view as offered by the Buddha. Reality is what it is, and it is often painful or lacking in interpersonal nourishment or whatever, but the "need" for something to happen soon to "make the world right/better" is just a trap, an illusion.

So I've added a new line in my daily review:

*Breathing in, there is awareness of the illusionary nature of need.
Breathing out, there is awareness of the illusionary nature of need.*

(Editor's Note: When Rev.Koyo was on the psychology faculty at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the 70's, Andy Bondy was a PhD grad student. They played many games of basketball and touch football together. They had no further contact until thirty years later when Andy enrolled in Bright Dawn Center Lay Ministry Program. The Dharma works in mysterious ways!)



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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, 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.

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SEP

Theme: Self Sabotage
 Purpose: De-fusing maladaptive thoughts
 Method: "Letting-go Gassho" (formal style): Make fists with each hand; bring fists together in 'gassho' position. Squeeze fists tight, as though crushing your unwanted thought. Then release when ready by shooting up fingers of both hands. Finish with a regular Gassho and say "Whew..."

OCT

Theme: Non-attachment
 Purpose: Let go or be dragged (Thanks to email by Bethany O)
 Method: "Letting Go Gassho" (informal style): Whenever you feel "caught" by a thought, squeeze your fists tight with hands by your sides. Slowly open hands and stretch fingers widely.

NOV

Theme: Mental Flexibility
 Purpose: Help in being able to "forgetaboutit"
 Method: Realize that spiritual growth means moving forward and releasing undesired thought patterns. Move hands like you're shaking off water from wet hands. Instead of water, imagine the unwanted thoughts are being released (thrown out) through the tips of your fingers saying, "Let go and grow." Repeat whenever necessary.

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