



O n e n e s s

Quarterly Newsletter of BRIGHT DAWN CENTER of Oneness Buddhism

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GORGED AND PANTING

By Morris Sekiyo Sullivan

Source: Live Dharma Sunday,
March 17, 2013

For the past several weeks, I've been facilitating a unit of the Bright Dawn Lay Ministry Program. These senseis-to-be were working with a book about consumerism, society's preoccupation with the acquisition of consumer goods. During our first meeting, one of the participants said he liked the book, but he worried that it might be, for many people, like reading a diet book.

A lot of people who buy the current best-selling diet book will read it but won't put its advice into practice. And of the people who do follow the diet, most probably quickly go back to their old habits. Even if the book is full of good advice and you understand and agree with it, you won't realize any benefit from it unless you incorporate the diet guidelines into your lifestyle.

His comment reminded me of the Donapaka Sutra, which means "A Heavy Meal." It's also sometimes commonly referred to as "King Pasenadi Goes on a Diet." It seems King Pasenadi ate an entire bucketful of food and then went to see the Buddha. The Buddha, noticing he was "gorged and panting" from overeating, took the occasion to say this verse:

*When a person is constantly mindful,
And knows when enough food
has been taken,
All their afflictions become more slender
— They age more gradually,
protecting their lives.*

The king was so moved by this verse that he engaged someone to come recite it to him at the beginning of every meal. And over time, the king ate less and less. He lost a lot of weight, and he felt a lot better for it.

Notice the Buddha said that when a person is constantly mindful, all their afflictions become more slender. He wasn't just talking about weight loss, but about the many forms taken by greed and clinging.

I think you might say our society is a lot like King Pasenadi—not just because of our well-publicized relationship to junk food and things like that, but because we are "gorged and panting" in other ways, too. Climate change, mounting piles of waste and chemical by-products, the pressure placed on emerging societies by the imperative for high profits, and many other global problems are related to our cultural urge to seek happiness in possessions and material comfort.

Many people, once they recognize their role in this mechanism, make an effort to change their habits, but

quickly become overwhelmed. You find out how chickens are treated by factory egg producers, for example, and you swear off eggs forever. But then you find out the harm that's caused by producing the rest of your food—so what do you do? Starve? And then what about your carbon footprint? The goods you use that are produced by exploiting third world workers. And so on—it can be paralyzing.

But notice, the Buddha didn't tell King Pasenadi to starve himself, to become Vegan, to go on the Paleo diet, or anything like that. He said to be mindful and to know when he'd taken enough. That will mean shifting your attention from the thing you desire to the desire itself.

As long as we are convinced that our well-being—and our stress—come from outside ourselves, from our possessions, our relationships,

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our circumstances and so on, then we never have “enough.” But once we realize our spiritual progress comes about when we recognize craving and deal with it skillfully, then we always have what we need, and we can experience the freedom that comes with contentment.

After he had lost a lot of weight, King Pasenadi said this of the verse he used to change his consumption habits:

*Indeed the Buddha has shown me
Compassion in two different ways:
For my welfare right here and now
and also for in the future.*

By the way, since my last name is Sullivan, I'd probably be violating some universal law if I didn't at least briefly mention St. Patrick's Day. It's been a long time since I drank any green beer or Guinness Stout, but I have to say the idea of a big plate of bangers and mash still has its appeal, and I may very well go find a pub today and order some.



So if you observe it, I hope you have a happy St. Patrick's Day. And whatever we do to celebrate it, we should remember to know when we've taken enough. That way, we can keep ourselves safe from harm and heartburn in the here and now, and keep the extra pounds and hangovers out of our futures.



READER REPLY

Emailer: Is there a written transcription available for the Feb 27th Dial the Dharma message on Freedom? I very recently found your Bright Dawn web site and I'm so excited by all the Dharma teachings available for me to absorb. In spite of my excitement, I can only absorb a thimble of the Dharma at a time it seems. Yesterday, the Dial the Dharma message on Freedom felt very important to me. In spite of listening to it several times it hit me like a fire hose rather than a thimble.

Rev K: My father and I taped these messages over thirty years ago and I am not sure where the original transcriptions are. However, I found an essay on

READER REPLY continues on page 5

RESPECT

By Rev. Koyo S. Kubose

The other day I was looking at a wooden plaque hanging on a wall in our house. Carved on the plaque is the written calligraphy of the Chinese character for “respect.” This plaque was a wedding gift from my parents and has been hanging on a wall in every house we've lived in. Yet, I have to admit that I never gave the plaque much thought beyond, “Of course, couples should respect each other.”

Well, the years have flown by and the past seems like a blur. The plaque evokes memories—my parents are gone, our children are grown, we've moved many times and have lived in Iowa, North Carolina, Japan, Wisconsin, Illinois, and now in California. As I look at the plaque, the present moment opens up and I find myself asking whether I have been respectful in my married life. The word “respect” is much too broad and vague. When one's actual behavior patterns are examined closely, of course I have failed miserably in many ways. In addition, I know that despite my many good intentions, I have been incapable of permanent improvement.

Yet, I have not become cynical. I remain naively optimistic; I still want to do better. I ponder the many ways respect can be manifested in a relationship. Hope springs eternal. Here is my latest plan. I will place the “respect” plaque at our home altar. I will conduct a service on March 20th, dedicating the Spring Equinox to a new growth of respectful behaviors. Perhaps the heavy weight of my past failures will be good fertilizer. As my sincerity is cast out into the universe, may favorable karmic seeds blossom and bear fruit.



DHARMA DAN REPORTING



Here's the scoop on the latest doings at the Bright Dawn Center. A cute baby dragon took up residence in our backyard. His name is Roy which is short for Ryoko-in, which means Dragon Light, a temple in Kyoto, Japan where he was born. This is the same Rinzai temple where Rev. Koyo did zazen meditation under Kobori Nanrei Roshi. This is where Rev. Koyo learned how to say the Nembutsu without opening his mouth.

Another new addition is a large wind chime. There are six metal tubes that are five inches in diameter, and range between six to eight feet long. When a tube is struck, there is a deep bass sound. If you stand under the chime, you can feel the vibration of the sound wave. The tone continues to resonate for a long time which has a soothing effect on the listener.

The chime weighs 200 pounds and it took some planning to hang the chime from a thirty foot high oak tree branch. With the help of his brother Don, Rev. Koyo used a block and tackle and a forty-foot

extension ladder to do the job. When the chime was delivered from the manufacturer in Austin, Texas, it was unloaded onto the back of Rev. Koyo's pick-up truck. The truck was then driven to a position under the tree where the chime was to be hung.

In addition to letting the wind ring the chime, the chime is now rung in the morning as part of a daily ritual. Every morning, Adrienne and Rev. Koyo take their dogs—"Easy" the six-year old Yellow Lab and "Raku" the two-year old Golden Retriever—for a walk around the back of the property. Using a launcher called "Chuck-It," balls are thrown for the dogs to chase. This is their favorite activity. Whenever they hear the words, "It's Chuck-It Time!" they get all excited. Anyway, near the end of the morning walk, as Rev. Koyo passes by the wind chime, he gives a tug on the striker rope. The resulting deep sound, "Boooooooong..." spreads over the property until it becomes a soundless sound that sets the tone for the day.



Oneness Newsletter Spring 2014

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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

OPEN INVITATION

Would you like to become a more respectful person?

Becoming more respectful has many benefits:

- Activate core Buddhist teachings of Impermanence and Interdependency.
- Stop taking for granted significant people in your life.
- Increase appreciation for ordinary objects you use everyday.

Rev. Koyo Kubose will conduct a group TeleConference service centered on the spiritual power of respect.

Date: Thursday, March 20, 2014

Time: 6 PM/Pacific Time; 9 PM/Eastern Time,
3 PM Hawaii Time.

Dial: 1-641-527-4215; access code: 5765972#

Note 1: This is a long-distance call; so make sure you either use “free” minutes of your calling plan or use a calling card.

Note 2: The service will last only twenty minutes. Call in promptly as the TeleConference will begin with an important five minute introduction, followed by ten minutes of sutra chanting, and with five minutes of concluding comments. All callers will be “on mute” to eliminate distractions.

Note 3: These services are seasonal and will be held on various themes around the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes and the Summer and Winter solstices. The services will be announced in coming issues of this newsletter.

IMPORTANT: Session benefits are commensurate with caller sincerity and involved commitment. Prior to calling, give yourself a “pep talk” and do some mindful breathing. Call in a few minutes early and use the wait time to get your Dharma “game face” on. Post-service processing is also important; in the days following, share any experienced benefits by emailing Rev Koyo, brightdawn@kubose.com.

You can search throughout the entire universe for someone who is more deserving of your love and affection than you are yourself, and that person is not to be found anywhere. You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe deserve your love and affection.

---Buddha

IN THE MOMENT

By David Kakuyo Wisniewski

We have talked about being present at all times and I have tried many times. But the past and future comes into my mind and so the present goes away and worry, fear and past re-actions take over. It sometimes takes a decision to put all those thoughts away and take the plunge. This I did this past week-end. We were with our grandchildren and they were dancing to a dance video and I was asked to join. My first reaction was to say NO (but only to myself) but I got up and started to dance to the song and moves on the screen. BIG surprise! I had fun and I liked laughing with the kids and with Linda. At that time and place I was “in the moment” and the fear of making a fool of myself, of making the wrong moves and of showing the “inner child” was just gone. In it’s place was joy. This joy had no real place and no real time, it just was. After this I got to thinking, was this joy always with me and I never saw or felt it before?

WHY?

I always knew that I had two voices inside me and at times in my life I listened to one or the other. Was the “observer” silent, unknown and unrecognized by me finally coming to the fore and did this feeling of joy a foretaste of what my life can become?

I hope so.

So what did I learn? It is a choice that I make that colors the now. I only have to let the present moment play out and focus on the now, no, not focus but let the now be. Is this possible and if it is, what is it going to do to me? You see; the ego paints with fear and worry. Even now after this gift the fear comes to the front. Isn’t life a wonder? I think I will “take the plunge” again and again and feel the joy. And the fear WILL be left behind. I think the journey will be life long.

EVERYTHING IS BEST

One day Banzan was walking through a market. He overheard a customer say to the butcher, “Give me the best piece of meat you have.” “Everything in my shop is the best,” replied the butcher. “You cannot find any piece of meat that is not the best.” At these words, Banzan was enlightened.

---Zen Koans

A Lesson In Mindfulness and Being In the Present Moment

By Linda Shoyo Wisniewski

About a month ago, I had a “costly” lesson in what happens when I am not mindful or in the present moment. In *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, Thich Nhat Hanh writes: “Our true home is in the present moment. The miracle is not to walk on water. The miracle is to walk on the green earth in the present moment...” We only need to bring our body and mind into the present moment and we will touch what is refreshing, healing, and wondrous.” (pp. 23&24)

He also describes how the wonderful sound of the bell brings us back to our true home.

Well, it wasn't a bell that brought me back to the present moment but the sound of the sheriff's sirens and lights that was the call to awaken and come back into the present.

I really thought I had been more aware of being in the present moment; except on this one morning. I facilitate a monthly book club and I thought it started at 10:30 AM. So, on that particular morning, I thought at 9:30, I still had plenty of time to take a leisurely shower and still get to the book club on time. Then I remembered that the book club started at 10:00 AM, not 10:30.

Wow! I panicked! I was the one that had the questions for the book club and in that moment, I didn't even stop to think that I could call and tell a member that I would be late. No! I just became more and more mindless. I rushed getting dressed and started driving like I was really in an emergency. As I was going down the country highway, I kept thinking Oh, I can get there if I just go a little faster; I thought, wow! I'm almost there. And then I heard the sirens and saw the flashing lights that seemed to come out of nowhere. And the man in blue came to the window and said, “I have to take your license. You were going 80 m.p.h. in a 55 m.p.h. zone and that's the law.” Well, the tears came because I knew I had to officiate at two weddings and I needed to be able to drive. Plus living in the country, there is no way to get around without a car. I guess the policeman had sympathy for me because he knocked the mileage down to 78 m.p.h. so I wouldn't have to lose my license; he also gave me a \$265.00 fine; money I was going to use to spend time with my daughters in Chicago; and I

was given 6 points; 12 points in Wisconsin and you lose your license.

I also had the option to go to court and fight it. But I chose not to. Because, hearing the sheriff's siren was like a bell that quickly brought me back to the present moment; it was an expensive wake-up call for which I was in tremendous gratitude.

The present moment is where I find the peace and joy. It is truly as Thich Nhat Hanh said, refreshing, healing and wondrous.

He then went on to say, on p. 24: to touch this peace, “is not a matter of faith, it is a matter of practice...we need only to bring our body and mind into the present moment.”

Since this incident; I really practice being in the present moment when I am in the car and just notice the beauty around me; I also observe my thoughts and how much still the thoughts are either focused on the past or future and then I bring them back. It is a wonderful practice and as long as I am in the present moment and mindful, I trust I won't lose my license or be stopped by those noisy sirens. The sound of a bell is so much more pleasing and so is just being present.



READER REPLY continues from page 2

Freedom in my father's book *Everyday Suchness* and it contains the same message as the tape, and more. I would like to make a gift of this book to you.

EM: I would very much like one of your copies, but I would have to confess first and let you decide. I have a copy, very dear and given to me by my mother-in-law and signed by your father in 1989. After reading your response, I retrieved my copy of *Everyday Suchness*, raced to the index, found *Freedom*, thumbed to page 105. My mother-in-law passed in 2006 and she is the Buddha that calls to me today. This must have been why when I heard the Dharma message yesterday I became so moved to find it. This vast world feels so incredibly small sometimes. I'm so glad I've found you.

Editor's Note: These are the kinds of amazing karmic inter-connections that make life so rich. The emailer has been added to our newsletter mailing list. He has ordered some books and one of Rev. Gyomay Kubose's tanzaku calligraphy to hang in his home. We are very gratified to be of service.



Acknowledgements with Gratitude **Supporters from Sales and Donations**

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MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Not only is making a memorial donation a way to remember and honor a loved one, but 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 March 1, 2014. Donations received after this date will be listed in the next issue. If we have missed an acknowledgment, please let us know.



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Change Service Requested



YES YES Your Everyday Spirituality YES YES

MAR	<p>Theme: Enthusiasm Purpose: To awaken the Paramita Virya (vigor) Method: Whenever you stand up from sitting in a chair, put your best foot forward with a spring in your step. This will help you avoid doing things mechanically, like a sleep-walking robot.</p>
APR	<p>Theme: Mood enhancer Purpose: To experience the benefits of smiling Method: Whenever you get up from a chair, you usually have some purpose in mind. You are going somewhere to do something. How nice it is to be alive, doing things... so smile!</p>
MAY	<p>Theme: Humor Purpose: To counter a sour, dour attitude Method: Whenever arising from a chair, not only have a spring in your step and a smile on your face, put a silly body shake in your walk. This will promote a light, open-hearted approach to your activities. When one is overly serious, one tends to be too hard on oneself and others. After all, there's no reason not to enjoy oneself and have fun while doing meaningful work.</p>

Mailing List Update: If you are already on our mailing list and wish to remain on the list, no action is necessary. We are happy to continue sending our newsletter to all interested persons. If you know someone who would like to be added or removed from our mailing list, please email us at brightdawn@kubose.com or indicate below and send to: Bright Dawn Center, 28372 Margaret Road, Coarsegold, CA 93614

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