



# Sangha In Motion

Bimonthly eNewsletter for RK Members in the US

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 3

MAY 2015

Buddhism for Today:  
Cultivating the fields of  
the heart and mind

## HIGHLIGHTS

Birthday Ceremonies

May Day

Lots of news from the  
Sanghas!

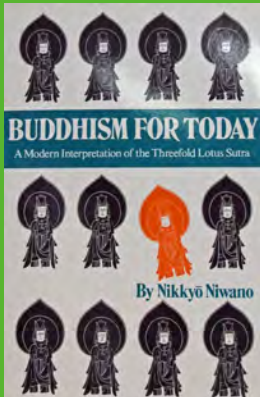
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## Headlines

# Celebrating Buddha's Birthday in Fort Myers!





# Guidance from Founder Niwano

## The Paramita of Meditation

"Makes a distracted one raise the mind of meditation": to calm one's mind and not to be agitated. *"Buddhism for Today,"* p. 37.

"If our thought and conduct are in harmony with our surroundings, sufferings and worries cannot trouble us. This mental state is true peace of mind; it is the stage of 'Nirvana is quiescence,' the absolutely quiet stage in which we cling to nothing. This state of mind is not limited to a passive mental peace. Our consciousness of being enlivened by this great universal life force gives us great hope and courage. Energy springs forth from this consciousness so that we advance to carry out our daily lives, our work, and our bodhisattva-way for the benefit of others in this world." *Buddhism for Today,* p. 206.



## Commentary

by Mary Tracy Sigman



For members of Rishso Kōsei-kai this fifth perfection, meditation, is perhaps a bit different than other Buddhist traditions. For most people, meditation conjures up thoughts of sitting quietly, focusing on the breath, trying to clear one's mind.

However, what Founder

and the Lotus Sutra are telling us is that meditation should be a part of our daily living, a part of our activities, not separate from them. It is when our mind and action are in sync, working together, that true peace is achieved. This means that every moment of our lives is an opportunity for meditation. Every moment should be approached with awareness and calmness, and only in such a condition can peace happen. The challenge, of course, is to maintain this state of mind and action during those times of trial and suffering. Can we maintain a meditative state while driving in rush hour traffic, when things don't go the way we would like, when the doctor gives us bad news, when we lose our job? If we can't, then we are not "in harmony with our surroundings." But when we maintain that calm awareness, we approach nirvana. And how wonderful it is to know that this nirvana can be achieved during our lifetime! Once again this may differ from other Buddhist traditions, where nirvana is a state achieved after death. For RK members nirvana is a goal for our lives, our living. And the closer we get to this nirvana stage, the more we live in harmony with all living beings, working to make the world a better place.

I am writing these words to you as I sit in the waiting room of a hospital in Florida, awaiting news of my cousin's surgery and cancer status. I must confess I am not in a nirvana state right now, but I do definitely recognize that I am much closer to calmness than I would have thought, and I have been amazed at my clarity of thought throughout this ordeal. I also realize that I will need to maintain this, since in all likelihood this is the beginning of a long process for my cousin. But I am most grateful to the Buddha that I am here for her at this time. Again, Buddha's arrangement.

This is the fifth of the six perfections. As we look back upon the previous four and add this fifth, perhaps we can see the Buddha guiding us gently in our conduct, with each perfection being a different jewel on a six-beaded chain. Each jewel is individually precious and beautiful, but when looked at linked together, they reveal a great treasure.

Next time we will examine the last perfection, the jewel of wisdom.





# Oklahoma City

by Rev. Kris Ladusau



Shibucho Kiiiko Scott and Machiko Babe enjoy good food and conversation at the recent pot luck lunch at the Oklahoma Dharma Center. The luncheon was part of the annual celebration honoring the Founding Mothers of the Oklahoma Dharma Center.



*OKC  
On the  
Move!*

Rev. Kris Ladusau was one of the guest speakers for this year's Lenten Series of lectures at the First Christian Church in Oklahoma City. The topic was "Similar Concepts at the Heart of Christianity and Buddhism"



Rev. Kris Ladusau was invited to attend the Annual Islamic Dinner this year in Oklahoma City. This photo is Rev. Ladusau with Buthaina Jawayyed, a friend and also the principal of the Islamic High School in Oklahoma.



RK Dharma Teacher, Ann Rinehard visited Oklahoma and gave a speech on "Seeing Compassion for the World in the Midst of Terrorist Activities". Her talk was followed by a very interesting group discussion.



.Members enjoy the Dharma Circle



## San Antonio

by Kevin Roche



### Updates from RK San Antonio

The Sangha at RK San Antonio has enjoyed a busy Spring! Reverend Okada and his wife Keiko have been staying at the Dharma Center as our guests. Reverend Okada has been extraordinary in his compassionate practice (and patience) here in San Antonio. He is spending his well deserved retirement time in San Antonio, guiding us with his wise council. It has been so exciting getting to know Keiko. She is a warm, friendly, and happy presence in our sangha, and I am sure she is a comfort to Reverend Okada on his 3 month stay in San Antonio. She has adopted our cats, fish and deer as her own and feeds them all every day.

We were able to enjoy some time with the Okadas, traveling in the Texas Hill Country for a Spring Wildflower tour. Reverend mastered his “cowboy” skills and climbed up on a Longhorn steer named “Tumbleweed” ! Unfortunately, The Okada’s will be returning to Japan in just a few weeks. Hopefully, we will see them again in September.

In April, Reverends Yoshizawa, Ladusau, and Ozuna accompanied the Advanced Sutra Study group to our Dharma Center for a long weekend of learning and enjoying the beautiful spring weather of San Antonio.

In April, while Reverend Yoshizawa was visiting, we held an outdoor Sunday Service/Hoza. We were visited by a few deer and a hawk family during our time in the beautiful outdoors. It’s pretty easy to feel the interconnectedness of all things when you are chanting together outdoors on a beautiful Sunday morning.

Morning service on the lovely grounds of the center.







.Advanced Lotus Sutra Seminar at Work and Rest



Kevin Filipek, known as “K2” around the San Antonio Dharma Center, became a member of RK about 16 months ago. K2 was raised in Minnesota but has lived in Texas since the 90’s. Kevin has battled depression much of his life. He had a period in his life where he was self-medicating with drugs and alcohol. In 2005, he entered Alcoholics Anonymous. He has been sober ever since.

After gaining sobriety, K2 reached out to several Christian churches and a Christian Motorcycle Ministry, but he says “I just couldn’t find the God I needed.” In late 2013, he walked into RK San Antonio. Soon after arriving, and listening to the teachings of the Buddha, K2 “felt like I had found a home.” He feels the Dharma has helped him maintain sobriety and live a more stable and joyful life.

Kevin has become an essential member of our Sangha. He donates long hours of labor performing much of the building maintenance, pond maintenance, and landscaping at the Dharma Center. Recently, K2 has begun performing altar duty during Sunday Service.

We are fortunate and grateful to have “K2” in our midst.



Spring Wild Flower Tour in Texas Hill Country





# Dayton

by Jane Perri

Our Dharma Center celebrated May Day on May 16th, along with the rest of our community of Oakwood. We invited the neighborhood in to share frozen treats, drumming, potlatch (garage sale where everything is free), conversation, and great fun!

We partnered with We Care Arts which is an organization that offers creative opportunities for people with special needs. Bruce, the director brought lots of fun things to make, decorate, draw, color, and just be creative.

There was a slight drizzle of rain all day but no one even noticed.

MAY DAY!!

Our Contribution to the Citywide Celebration

Prettying up the landscape for the big day.

Potlatch!







# Street Art Frozen Treats!





# Dayton

by Jane Perri

Bruce—the ART GUY



MAY  
DAY!

With  
We  
Care  
Arts







# It's all about the kids! Big and Small





Dayton

by Jane Perri

# Guess which one won



MAY  
DAY!!

Drum-  
ming on  
the  
Street





# Serenading the neighborhood



Everybody got in the act.





Happy  
Birthday  
Buddha!

## Ft. Myers Activities

by Mary Tracy Sigman

We enjoyed some lovely, albeit brief, spring weather in our part of Florida this year, and it made our two special spring events even more beautiful. We began the month of March by celebrating the 77th anniversary of the founding of Risho Kosei-kai, especially reflecting upon President Niwano's Words of Respect for that day. The following Sunday we read and discussed President Niwano's March guidance from *Living the Lotus*. His focus on appreciating seasonal events seemed most appropriate for our lovely spring season. We ended the month with our other big event, the Spring Higan-e ceremony. This year we all brought one object from one of our ancestors to place on the altar during the service, and then during hoza we shared our story about that object and ancestor. It helped us all to learn about and appreciate each other even more than before.

April began with our reading and discussing the April guidance from President Niwano, and we all agreed that seeing ourselves as beginners can be very helpful in our practice. The big event of the month was certainly celebrating the birth of baby Buddha. Every year we are again filled with joy and wonder as we pour the sweet tea over the baby Buddha statue. Our flower table is simple and humble, but everyone brought flowers and shared in placing them beautifully around the baby Buddha. As we concluded our water ceremony, a brief and gentle shower of rain fell upon us, and one member remarked it "was the sweet dew of dharma rain" falling on us. We concluded the month of April with our study of *Cultivating the Buddhist Heart*, chapter 2.







“Sweet due of Dharma rain”



# Tampa Bay

by Lonni Fain



Lonni Fain was one of the speakers for a Vesak ceremony presented by the Dharma Wheel Meditation Society. She spoke on the second of the Three Seals of the Dharma and how we should be aware through our lives of kindness to those whose story we do not know. There were dancers, blessings given by monks., bathing of the Buddha, international vegetarian dinner, Dharma talks, and chanting for world peace. The event was on May 30 2015. The pictures are of the monks, Indian dancers and people being blessed, Lonni speaking and Rev. Tony of the UUC.

## Vesak Ceremony







Lonni Fain and Rev. Tony from UCC



Dancers





# Free- Floating Anxiety

## Dear Abdhi-Dharma by Rev. Kris Ladusau

Dear Abhi-Dharma -

I feel so strange these days. Like I can't find my balance and my thoughts and body are in strong cycles of flux. Besides chanting/meditating, I continue trying to practice the Eightfold Path and the Six Perfections. Do you have any recommendations to help me through the strangeness in the world right now?

Anxious in Alabama

Dear Anxious -

I think many people are sensing a sort of "free-floating" anxiety these days. I really like that you are staying consistent with your chanting/meditation and are striving to follow the 14 practices. I know these are beneficial for you.

Rev. Nikkyo Niwano also recommended that we go outside, take our shoes off and get our feet in the grass/on the earth. This "grounding" is very valuable for us in many ways - mental, physical, emotional and energetic. In some ways, we have lost touch, haven't we? We talk about knowing "interconnectedness" in our study of Buddhism, but perhaps we have distanced ourselves from our connection with the earth itself. This is also seen in the ecological issues that humanity is facing.

What if the earth has been patiently waiting for us to get back in touch - to plug-in and re-connect, to help us resolve our issues? Could the earth be a huge "being of service"; a bodhisattva for us all?

Gassho,  
Abhi-Dharma





## Healthy Living—Meditation

by Kevin Roche



Meditation (Samadhi), the fifth of the Six Paramitas, was revealed by Shakyamuni Buddha to be the essential tool for gaining insight into the essence our true nature. The Buddha taught us to use the meditation practice to bring the mind into a state of awakened consciousness, allowing us to see into the true nature of the self.

Two thousand five hundred years later, Western culture is beginning to see that the meditation practice involves a synthesis of body and mind; that there is not one without the other. Initially perceived as a method for its utility as a “mental relaxation” exercise, meditation is only just now being recognized by medical science as the extraordinary mechanism for binding mental, spiritual and physical health into a holistic entity.

Studies from prestigious institutions, such as Harvard Medical School, are identifying vast new areas of benefit within the “physical” self. These studies have determined that there is a genetic response to behavior and mood, and that meditation practice can stimulate genes that influence inflammatory processes, cancer-fighting cells, and fertility. In addition, meditation has been shown to have profound effects on the parasympathetic nervous system, lessening the secretion of stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline, lowering blood pressure and heart rate. Studies have also noted positive effects that meditation has on the secretion of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that greatly influences mood balance, digestion, sleep, sexual desire, and memory. One interesting aspect of many of these studies is the awareness that the positive effects of meditation increase with the frequency of the practice.

The Six Paramitas or Perfections, are vehicles for our use in reaching the “other shore”; transcendent practices identified for us by Shakyamuni Buddha. Here in San Antonio, we are inspired to meditate by the elucidative description used by Reverend Okada : “to see without thinking”.

Our purpose should be to utilize these tools in our daily practice, to awaken our consciousness, and live a more enlightened and healthy life. We demonstrate our gratitude for our lives by respecting our bodies through our practice of meditation.



## Family Matters—The Old Hen Who Set The Alarm

The Buddhist Children's Stories  
White Cloud Cultural Centre



Once upon a time, in China there lived a person whose surname was Kung. Once Mr. Kung paid a visit to a relative whom he had not seen for a long time. They talked and talked until nightfall. Warm-heartedly the relative invited him to stay for dinner. Since they rarely saw each other, the relative attentively prepared the dinner. He wanted to slaughter the

old hen whom he had been keeping for years and cook it for Mr. Kung. Off he went to the hen-coop and seized the old hen. The old hen drew out her throat and cried like anything when she knew that she was faced with imminent disaster.

Upon seeing the pitiful scene, Mr. Kung's sympathy was aroused and so he quickly told his relative, "Please don't kill the hen!"

"But this will make up a dish for you!"

"Don't worry, I'll eat anything you give me."

"I should try my best to serve you since we rarely have a chance to get together."

"Really, you don't have to... I, I..."

"C'mon, don't say 'I... I...'. Please make yourself at home."

Mr. Kung gave a gaze at the hen. He saw that her eyes was sad and tears were on the verge of falling off. Suddenly Mr. Kung determined to make a lie of "good-will". "The case is,... I have been on vegetarian diet recently."

"Oh! Really? Why haven't I heard you say that before?"

"You've forgotten. We haven't seen each other for a long time. Really, please don't kill the hen."

"Alright! Since you are on vegetarian diet, we might as well join you for a vegetarian dinner!"

It was late after dinner. The relative asked Mr. Kung to stay overnight. Because Mr. Kung was tired, he was in his "dream world" as soon as his head hit the pillow. He was sleeping soundly, when suddenly, he felt a peck on the face which woke him up. He opened his eyes and had a look. There he saw the old hen whom he had saved that evening. Mr. Kung could not help but be annoyed. "My old hen, don't disturb me, I want to sleep." Then he went to sleep immediately after he said that. However, the old hen did not listen to him. She again pecked him and woke him up. Mr. Kung was becoming very annoyed. So he raised himself and sat on the bed and said to her, "My old hen, you are so ungrateful. I've saved you from being killed today. Yet tonight you aren't even kind enough to allow me a good night's sleep."

After rebuking the old hen and as he was just about to lie down on the bed he unexpectedly heard a tremendous noise. He was so shocked that he broke into a cold-sweat when he was able to look at what had happened. A heavy block of stone had fallen off from the rotten roof beam onto his pillow! Had he been lying down on the bed he would have been killed. Gratefully, he saw the old hen leave and he understood the reason for the old hen's behavior.

After this event Mr. Kung really became a vegetarian. He also constantly told people about this story to persuade his relative and friends to avoid killing.

Extract of The Buddhist Children's Stories, page 1-4, published by The White Cloud Cultural Centre, Taipei Taiwan, Ming Guc (R.O.C. Year) 76 Oct. Translated and proof-read by Forest, Buddhist Calendar 2536 1st Lunar Month the 3th(1993/01/25)01:00 Sydney.





OKC

Artist

Dave  
Rose

## Art from the Sanghas by Rose Cirigliano

1. What inspired you to express yourself in photography?

I grew up with photography. Even though it was just a hobby, I remember as a little kid my Dad with his Leica or Rolleiflex hanging around his neck on vacations. We still have boxes of the slides that he took. It is a good fit for someone with both a creative and mechanical inclination. In addition to loving the photographs, I love the technical intricacies of the camera and solving the puzzles of light and focus to produce an image I and others can enjoy.

2. Is there any one event that started you on the road to taking your beautiful photographs?

It is just something I grew up with. My Dad was an Air Force pilot who had a love for photography and I have followed in both of those pursuits.

3. Have you ever developed your own pictures? Or, had a desire to do so?

I took a long break from photography because I never had a darkroom for developing my own pictures and I was getting overrun with negatives. Computers and digital imaging have completely changed that. I have not touched film in decades and now have my own darkroom sitting on my desk with my Macbook Pro running Lightroom and Photoshop. I got back into photography seriously with the digital age in 2008 and have been reveling in it since.

4. Is there any other media in which you work? For example, video? drawing? painting? If not, why photography?

I have done some woodworking, a little drawing and taken a watercolor class, but photography seems to be a better fit. Especially in the digital age as I am fascinated by technology. I have not yet played with video, but the modern cameras are very good at it. Something I may look at in the future

5. I know that you were a captain for Southwest Airlines and spent many hours in the air. Was there any particular time while flying that you felt a close connection to Buddha and the Universe? Or, at any time while flying, after you became a Buddhist did a particular phrase from The Lotus Sutra give you pause to meditate on our 21st century connection to Buddha?

It was not while flying, but one evening at the hotel the night before a trip I was contemplating while observing out the window. From the window I could see the planes arriving and departing the airport, several major thoroughfares and a freeway all crowded with traffic. I suddenly felt a profound sense of connection, first seeing my own body as many different part working together and then the traffic flowing within the 'veins' of the city keeping it alive and functioning. I could imagine the same connection on larger and larger scales eventually connecting all of humanity. It became for that moment easy to feel the connection we have to each other and all things.

Thanks so much, Dave for allowing us to take a peek into photography through your piercing lens.

# Art from the Sanghas by Rose Cirigliano



Dave  
Rose

*OKC*

*Artist*

*Dave  
Rose*



Reflection



Boats





OKC Museum



Clouds on Lake Yellowstone



Contemplation



Dynamic Earth



Alley

# Turning Within for New Perspective

Chris  
Peters

OKC

Hello, my name is Chris. My wife Sara and I found a neglected old house in 2005 when we were expecting our first child. The price was great for the neighborhood and we were excited about breathing some life back into the neglected property. The list of renovation needs were extensive and the yard was an overgrown jungle. In spite all the needed work we were not worried. We were very excited about getting started and we were thrilled about our future together. Fast forward 10 years and the renovation list had been completed. Not surprisingly, life had sped by at a blinding pace. Keeping up with two careers, marriage, and now two sons, I perceived life as much more rushed and complicated than it was back in 2005. During the fall of 2013 I began a journey of studying Buddhism and meditation. One chilly night in early 2015, mediation practice and a water heater "problem" intersected to offer a learning opportunity about perspective.

We had replaced the original tank water heater with a tankless unit. A tankless unit is more energy and cost efficient and heats water as needed so you don't run out of hot water. The tankless unit was expensive but with advantages over old technology, the tankless option sounded great. The water heater required only brief annual maintenance that I did not neglect. The new unit worked well for five years and then started providing inconsistent shower water temperatures. The hot water temperature did not suddenly change from hot to cold but slowly degraded over a year. The unit showed warning signs but I did not look more closely until one night when the unit completely stopped working. My sons had just finished soccer practice on a school night and needed showers before going to bed. I was not pleased about the timing of this inconvenience.

I unplugged the unit and opened the case. The inside of this thing looks like a tangle of

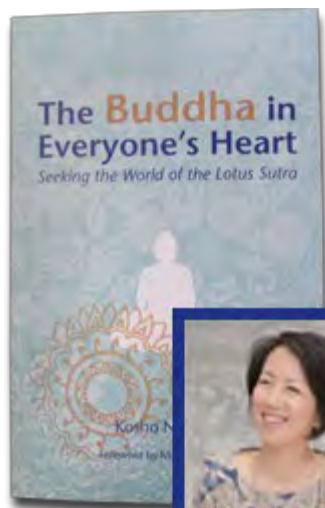
small water lines, tiny wires, a computer circuit board, and a small box approximately the size of a loaf of bread. The small box is a heat exchanger where natural gas burns, heating cool water that flows into the unit. I looked inside the case and said to Sara: "I'd prefer the simple dependable tank water heater again". I seriously considered trading out our tankless unit for the old style. This was not the first time for me to look inside the water heater case but earlier views came without the perceived urgency this occasion had to offer.

I was standing inside a dark utility closet holding a flashlight that suddenly flickered off... No light usually means "no vision", but just the opposite was true this time. I noticed something I had never noticed before. The small box had a tiny viewing window to see the natural gas burning inside. I stood there in the dark calmed by watching this tiny blue gently glowing flame that had been there unseen by me for the last 6 years. I had just seen the unit's Buddha Nature. At first glance, this experience appeared very simple but several realizations ran through me. I was reminded of what I really valued before life felt so rushed and complicated, how fortunate I really was, the power of self discovery meditation had to offer, and of course how to fix the water heater. The unit did not need to be discarded, a very simple \$25 fix resolved the issue. Our family will likely get another 20 years of service out of the unit. The real solution was in seeing simplicity within the illusion of complexity; there was no rush, only calm to be found. Next time I will look sooner, look more closely, and turn within to see the root cause of discomfort and unease in life. The intersection of meditation practice and a broken water heater offered to me a great lesson about perspective. I am full of gratitude for the peacefulness I have discovered. Peacefulness affords me the vision to see opportunities where in the past I could only see problems.

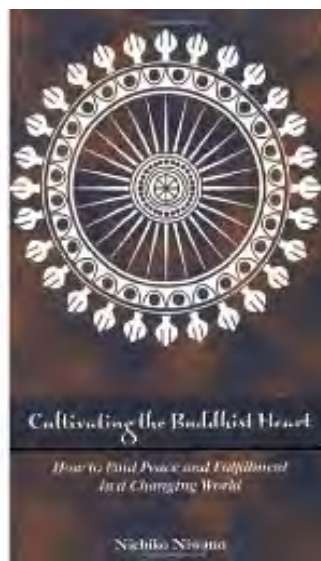
Thank you (Or Gassho),  
Chris Peters  
Dharma Center of Oklahoma



# Bulletin Board



**Rev Koshō Niwano's new book is now available for purchase. To obtain your copy contact your minister or RKINA**



**Cultivating the Buddhist Heart is now available as a Kindle eBook!**

**Purchase your copy on Amazon for \$4.99 and receive your instant download**

## How to Subscribe

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## How to Submit Articles for Publication

Submit articles, calendar events, questions for “Dear Abhidharma” and creative works through your Dharma Center representative. Publication items can also be sent directly to our SIM section editors.

- |                   |                   |  |
|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| Dear Abhi-Dharma  | Rev. Kris Ladusau | <a href="mailto:krisladusau@gmail.com">krisladusau@gmail.com</a> .           |
| Art in the Sangha | Rose Cirigliano   | <a href="mailto:myrosegarden@rcn.com">myrosegarden@rcn.com</a>               |
| Senior Living     | Ann Rinehard      | <a href="mailto:annrrinehard@comcast.net">annrrinehard@comcast.net</a>       |
| Healthy Living    | Kevin Roche       | <a href="mailto:kroche625@gmail.com">kroche625@gmail.com</a>                 |
| Youth in Action   | Rev. Nick Ozuna   | <a href="mailto:nozuna@rkina.org">nozuna@rkina.org</a>                       |
| Family Corner     | Jane Perri        | <a href="mailto:jane.perri@rkina-dayton.com">jane.perri@rkina-dayton.com</a> |

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Traveling ?

Try visiting  
one of your  
sister sanghas!



## Locations and Calendar of Centers

**Rissho Kosei-kai International of North America** (Los Angeles CA)  
Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Tampa Bay (FL)

**Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Church of Hawaii** (Pearl City, Oahu)  
Rissho Kosei-kai Maui Dharma Center (HI)  
Rissho Kosei-kai Kona Dharma Center (HI)

**Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Church of Los Angeles (CA)**  
Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Orange County (CA)  
Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of San Diego (CA)  
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Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of Las Vegas (NV)  
Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of San Antonio (TX)  
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Rissho Kosei-kai of Sacramento (CA)  
Rissho Kosei-kai of San Jose (CA)  
Lotus Buddhist Circle of San Mateo (CA)  
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