



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

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Bimonthly eNewsletter for RK Members in the US

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2012

US Gets a New Director

This past November, President Niwano shuffled the administrative and spiritual directors around a bit. Our own Rev. Shoko Mizutani has been recalled to Tokyo to become the new Executive Director of Rissho Kosei-kai International. Read the interview with Rev. Mizutani on page 2. Rev. Takashi Yoshizawa was elevated to the Executive Director of RKINA.



Congratulations on your new position Rev. Yoshizawa. I am sure that everyone is very happy for you and eager to hear your thoughts.

What is your vision of RK in the US?

Very positive. My vision of RK in the US is to someday be able to truly prosper in terms of our membership and organization. I foresee that more people from this country will try to become Dharma Teachers or leaders within their Sanghas and the spirit of the Lotus Sutra will spread.

What do you see as your biggest challenge and how do you intend to meet it?

I think the biggest challenge would be coming up with a practical and effective way of growing in membership despite being in a country that hasn't had a long relationship with Buddhism. I would like to introduce the spirit of the Lotus Sutra here. I feel the most practical way of accomplishing this task is to increase local participation and further develop capable RK leaders within our communities. They need to spring up from the earth, if you will.

What are your plans for developing growth experiences for current members?

What we can continue to offer is the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. We take refuge in the three treasures, so members enshrine the image of the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni within their homes in order to establish a home practice of sutra recitation in the morning and evening. This creates the perfect environment for deeply studying the Dharma which is the Lotus Sutra as interpreted by the Founder. As an individual's understanding deepens, closer connections can and will be formed with other members, which means the establishment of a true Sangha.

What are your plans for developing new dharma centers in the US?

There currently are no specific plans to develop new Dharma Centers. However, it is my objective to further nourish and support the existing Sanghas throughout the US. I feel that the issue of whether new Dharma Centers develop, does not solely depend on us, but because of interconnectedness, it depends on the Buddha and on many causes and conditions.

Do you have any ideas on how to better bring our various dharma centers together?

In order to bring our various Dharma Centers together, I feel that we should encourage our existing members to visit other RK Centers whenever possible or whenever events come along at those other centers. That way, they get a feel for how the different Centers operate similarly but because of various conditions, differently. Secondly, I feel that when we begin to establish common goals or objectives such as hosting the Lotus Sutra Advanced Seminar, people from different Sanghas can work together, get to know each other and bridge the gap between the Centers. Lastly, oneness can come from modern technology, especially the internet where we have begun offering web-based classes. When we learn together, we grow together.

What is your vision for the new online sangha?

As stated, the online sangha plays a very important role in bringing the various Dharma Centers and members who live far from centers together. It also works to introduce and connect new people to RK teachings, allowing more opportunity for people to taste the Dharma. However, one challenge that may confront us is the alienating effect the internet can have on people. I hope that participants in the online sangha not only come away with a scholastic understanding of Buddhism, but also build and create genuine Sangha using the vehicle of the internet.

RK International Gets a New Director

Rev. Shoko Mizutani took over the leadership of RK International December 1st. He served as Director of Rissho Kosei-kai International of North America since 2008. Born in Japan, Rev. Mizutani has been walking the Buddhist path in the Rissho Kosei-kai (RK) tradition for over 30 years.

After completing RK seminary study, he was engaged in various international humanitarian works, including emergency assistance for children in Iraq (1991) and a reforestation project in Ethiopia (1993) as an RK staff-member. Rev. Mizutani came from Japan to the US, to serve as minister of RK Los Angeles in 2001.

Rev. Mizutani has a master's degree in Biology from Birmingham University in the UK. He has a second master's degree in International Development from Cornell University in NY. He married Tomoko in 1986, they have two daughters and two sons. He likes reciting the Lotus Sutra, and enjoys sharing the Dharma and applying the teachings in his everyday life. This interview took place as he was in the final stages of his move back to Tokyo from Irvine, CA.

Rev. Mizutani, your guidance was an inspiration to us all. As you move into your next phase of service to RK, what is your vision of RK internationally?

Firstly I would like to thank all of you for your friendship and support in my 11 years of living in the US. I really learned a lot from you, and my understanding of the Dharma is now much deeper and more substantial.

What is my vision of Rissho Kosei-kai internationally? It is not Rissho Kosei-kai which guides you to happiness. But it is you, yourself, who guides you to happiness, as the Buddha said, "Make yourself a light; Make the Dharma your light." In this regard, the Dharma is the key. I would like to deliver the Dharma to as many people as possible in the world, so that people can live in happiness. As the Dharma is most effectively transmitted from people who deeply understand the Dharma, my focus is on raising people who understand the Dharma and who can deliver the Dharma to others. Rissho Kosei-kai has a great potential to be able to accomplish the mission of the Buddha, the awakening of all.

Thanks to Rev. Suzuki, my predecessor, the Second International Dharma Mission Plan has been formulated. I find its main foci are three. They are; Developing and nurturing people. Developing and nurturing Sanghas. Developing and nurturing financial stability. I would like to pursue this Dharma Mission Plan with all the Sangha members in the world.

What do you see as your biggest challenge and how do you intend to meet it?

At the beginning of 2012, President Niwano shared his view of the long term plan, by referring to a traditional Chinese poem, "If you are thinking a year ahead, sow a grain. If you are thinking ten years ahead, plant trees. If you are thinking a lifetime ahead, develop people."

Raising people is the most important work. During my work in the US, I became convinced that American leaders can lead fellow Americans very naturally and effectively. The US Dharma mission should be led by Americans, and Thai Dharma mission by Thai people. I would like to focus on developing leaders of each region.

What are your plans for developing growth experiences for current members?

I hope more people enjoy the taste of the Dharma and the joy of the Dharma. Even though you may hear the teaching, you will not really taste the Dharma if you do not walk the Way. What do I mean by walking the Dharma? President Niwano always shares the three basic practices, i.e. Sutra Recitation, caring for and guiding others, attending hoza, and study/practice/reflect on the Dharma. Please try. It really works.

What are your plans for developing new dharma centers in the internationally?

We already have 24 RK Dharma centers in the US and 40 more centers internationally outside of Japan. Although some centers are still small, the overall number is growing year by year. And I can see more centers emerge and grow. This is wonderful. The key to developing a Dharma center is a leader who has aspiration to share the Dharma with others. Without a leader, Dharma centers cannot emerge or grow. We need to have good programs to develop and keep supporting leaders who can joyfully share the Dharma with people in their communities.

Do you have any ideas on how to better bring our various international dharma centers together?

The quilt project we worked on last year is an excellent example of a project that brought international centers together. Media such as the web, social media, and Shan Zai, play an important role. International leaders training programs are also a good example. Through interacting with other Sanghas and learning from them, we will be able to further grow and develop.





Nikkyo Niwano
Founder of
Rissho Kosei-kai

Excerpt from

Buddhism for Everyday Life

Memorable Dharma
Messages from a Long
Spiritual Journey

Quote from book

HOW TO BE

LOVED BY

OTHERS

P. 156-157

Guidance from Founder Niwano

A certain village is known for the longevity of its residents. A study to find the secret of their long lives revealed that the elderly villagers spent each and every day doing things for others. Their primary concern in life was to be useful to other people: their families, their children and grandchildren who had gone off to work in the cities, and their neighbors.

Longevity is often attributed to diet. If we eat more kelp and keep our meals simple, we are told, we will add years to our lives. The truth is, however, that the secret of longevity is not so much in our diet as in our world view.

The way to ensure a long life is to give ungrudgingly of our time and energy, always smile, and offer cheerful greetings to those around us. There are two broad categories of the elderly: the old man or woman who is always smiling and is liked by everyone, and the grouch who is disliked by one and all. The person who is warmly regarded is the one who always puts others first, while the one who is disliked is the selfish person who has lost flexibility.

In his book *Oi e no Chosen* (The Challenge of Growing Old), nursing authority Dr. Shigeaki Hinohara classifies the elderly into four types. The first is mellow, self-effacing, and open to the ideas of the young. This kind of person is a good advisor and generally attracts admirers.

The second type is tense and guarded, as if clad in armor. This kind of elderly person is prone to complain that “things weren’t so easy in my day.” Such people are set in their ways and are unforgiving of those who even suggest other possibilities. As they get older, they become more tense and guarded. The third type is offended by whatever she sees or hears and is always indignant. These are the old people constantly criticizing everything, from the government to today’s teenagers. Others tend to keep their distance from people like this. The fourth type is the elderly person who leaves everything up to others and becomes a burden.

What type of elderly person each of us will become depends on our attitude. We can either sit back and decide that others should be doing things for us because we are old or make a positive effort to serve others instead of being served by them. The more we demand, the less satisfied we will be. The self-centered person finds fault with everything, is always irritated and does nothing but complain.

Clearly, the older we get, the more important positive thinking becomes. This is the key to a fulfilling old age. Our golden years are when we attain maturity as human beings and when we can and should be our most productive. It is such a waste to fail to savor the rich harvest that is possible in old age. Nothing is so sad as those who demean themselves with unfounded complaints.

Announcing a New Online Sangha

Rissho Kosei-kai Online Sangha, the brainchild of Rev. Shoko Mizutani, will be launched March 1, 2012. The goal of the online ministry is to allow members who live too far from a land based center, to still participate on a regular basis. It is also designed to spread the teachings and attract new members. The site will have something for everyone, including live broadcasts of services and hoza, discussion rooms, teachings, store and much, much more. After March 1st, go to <http://www.buddhistonlinesangha.org/> to see what it is all about. Send your friends too!

Dear Abhidharma

By Rev. Kris Ladusau

My eldest sister has not spoken to our mother in well over 5 years. At the time, my sister was not speaking to her son and refused to go to the birthday party of his 4 year old daughter. She wanted Mom to boycott the party too, but she refused; so my sister stopped speaking to her, too. A few months later, my sister reconciled with her son but to this day, she will still not speak to mom or accept her letters or phone calls. Mom, who is 90 has a serious health issue. She refuses to get treatment because she says that the situation with my sister has destroyed her. She no longer wants to live. I know if my sister, who is aware of the situation, would just stop this nonsense, Mom would get treatment. Time is running out, what should I do?

Your family situation is a daily life example of “interconnectedness,” a very important component of the Buddha’s teachings. We see that all things are woven together – not just joy and positive interaction but also sadness and suffering, as in your family’s current case.

When giving Dharma Guidance, I am only able to address the suffering/discomfort of the person requesting the guidance. If other family members don’t request, I don’t have the opportunity to interact and guide them to ease their suffering. I am sorry - I know you are genuinely seeking resolution for your entire family.

My primary focus is to work with you in discovering a way to release your discomfort surrounding your family dynamics. First, I want to tell you that I can easily see your deep compassion for your family members and their suffering. That is your Buddha-Nature coming through. Compassion for ourselves and others is the gateway to liberation from the cycles of discontent we experience. When we are trapped in self-focused thought patterns and behaviors, we roll around in suffering that manifests from anger, greed, fighting, etc. And *without* open communication, deep understanding and full knowledge, we are prone to create stories in our minds, simply because we are hurt and we want justifications for our behavior toward others. I see this happening among your family members. I too, join you in great compassion for how hard it must be for them on a daily basis.

To begin seeing a situation from a new and fresh perspective is a very key point of the Buddhist Path.

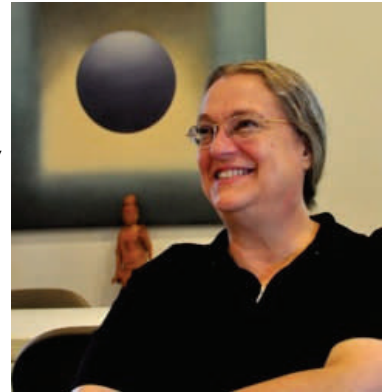
It is often easy to see selfishness in others, but it is more

difficult to spot it in ourselves. Yet, it is always found at the core of our discomfort. When my life is going well, but my friends or family members are behaving badly (of course I want everyone to be happy and to be free of the emotional rollercoaster), my selfishness becomes apparent to me when I think such things as, “If everyone would just get it together and make peace, I wouldn’t have to worry about this... I don’t want to go through this... It doesn’t have to be this way...”

All human beings long to have things the way WE want them. It is human nature. We can simply acknowledge this without ascribing blame or shame. There is no need for judgment. Both you and your family members are just wishing things were different than the way they are. All, wishing that things were “my way”... It can be humorous if we see the absurdity of it. (This is of course, a dispassionate view from above, looking down as the “observer”.)

As I view my own personal life, I know that I cannot force others to change their thoughts and behavior; I am only able to change how I think and act myself. Knowing this, I choose to set a positive example with my own thoughts, words and actions. I can be a bodhisattva every day of my life; available to serve others appropriately. Often, it is appropriate to just provide “deep listening” without offering solutions – letting them know that you truly hear what they are saying – without agreeing or disagreeing. When there are difficulties, I choose not to succumb to “drama,” but instead pray/chant/meditate and transfer the merit of those spiritual practices to those in suffering. Just as the ripples go out from a stone dropped in the water, my actions will go out with a positive influence. For us to find peace within ourselves is the best path.

I can see you doing this – I believe in you. Let go of all restricted thought – always move in a positive direction and you will help more than you know.



New Rissho Kosei-kai Members

Send in biographies and photos of your new members!

Ft. Myers FL Jerry Stopper

Mary Sigman, leader in the Ft. Myers Dharma Center sent in information about two new members.

Jerry Stopper (my life partner) has joined! In his words, "I convinced him and made him the 'Buddha Baker' for our group" Thank you, Jerry! I guess it proves the adage of the Founder, "If you change, others will change"



Jerry Stopper

Judy Burget, of UUCFM, joined as a friend, and subscribed to Dharma World to show her support for our group. She has been a constant attendee as well as helper when needed. (No photo, maybe next time)

We have the return of several snowbirds to our group for the winter months, among them Jan Hatton & Jo Nell Phillippe from the Dayton RK group. Marlaine Bernier from Connecticut has also returned to us. It is great to have you with us for a while!



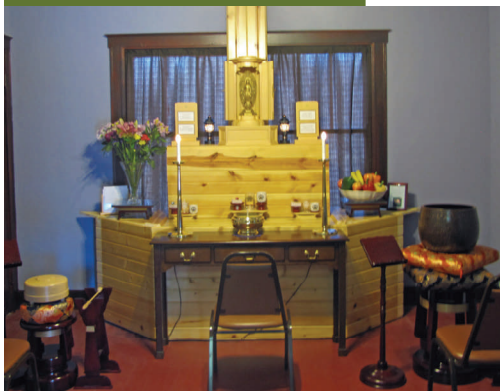
Mary Sigman

"If you change, others will change."

Founder Niwano

Dayton Center Receives Gohonzon Installation

On January 8 2012, Rev. Kris Ladusau visited the Dharma Center of Dayton, Ohio and installed the Focus of Devotion. The Dayton center originally opened March 21, 2010. "The membership is growing slowly but steadily. We had just moved into our new building two days before the big event. Several members Danny Mangelsdorf, Ashley Jones, and Jerry Skinner all pitched in and quickly patched up holes in the walls, and painted the sanctuary. Even Rev. Kris helped out with mopping and cleaning." said Dharma Teacher Jane Perri. "We are extremely blessed to have obtained our new site. It will take a lot more work to make the entire facility useable. Having the Buddha in place to watch over and guide us is a wonderful encouragement for us to continue to strive to spread the teachings. Thank you Rev. Kris for recommending us for this great honor."



Enshrinement Ceremony in Kauai for new member Taneil Refamonte

Pearl Awana brought Taneil Refamonte and her family into the RK family. Taneil talked about the enshrinement ceremony that took place in her home in Kauai HI.

“It was quite an experience for me and my family to become Rissho Kosei-kai members. I felt a sense of unity and with prayer from everyone I could feel the power of the Dharma. We are all excited in this path that we are taking and have opened our hearts to what is to come. There is a peace in my home and a sense of security after the blessing. We are grateful for the enshrinement and give thanks for what was done and given to us. It was a very enlightening experience.”



Refamonte Family



Front row left to right
Terrece Refamonte
Josephine Refamonte
Reverend Hironaka

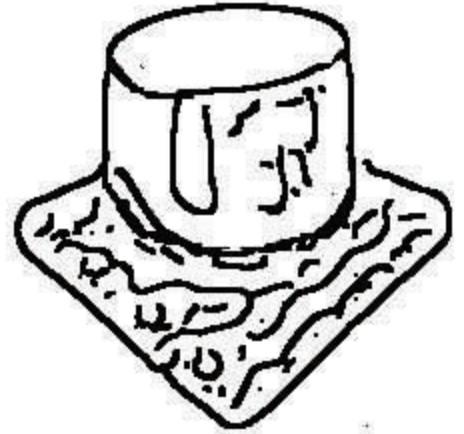
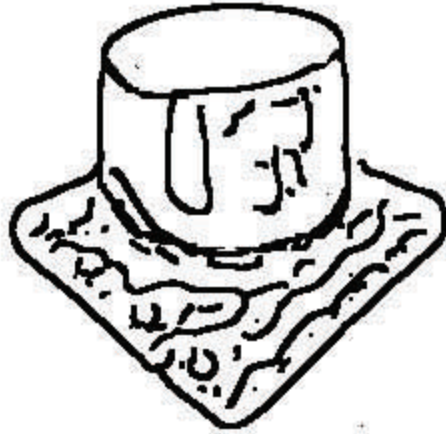


Back row Left to right
Mae Takamoto
Tomas Refamonte
Mary Fujiyoshi
Pearl Awana
Raymond Awana

Activities

GAME

TIME!



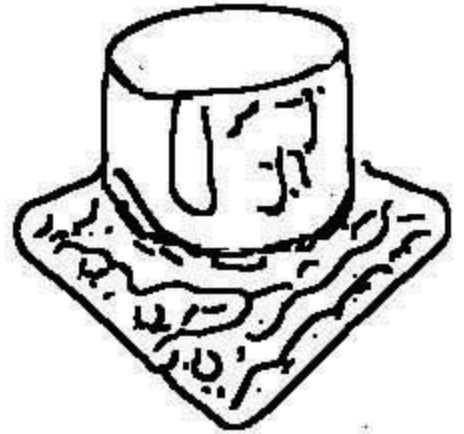
Which bell and cushion image is different from the other four?

What does the ringing of the bell indicate during our chanting of the Kyoten?

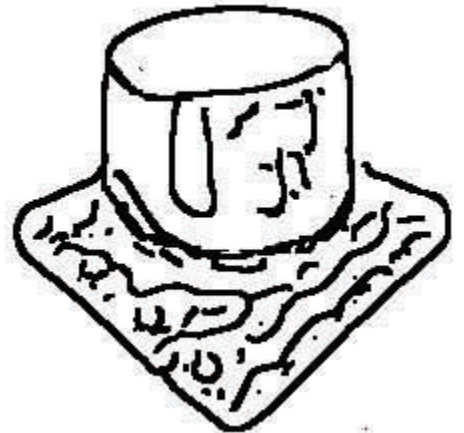
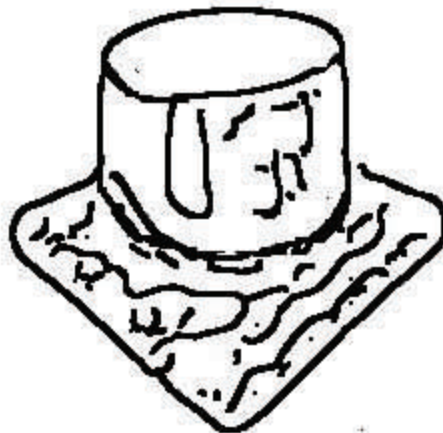
Who can play the bell during a service?

What is the name of the bell in Japanese?

Don't forget to download and color the bells!



**Ring the
Bell!**



Family Matters—Demons in the Desert

Buddhist Tales for Young & Old
Prince Goodspeaker www.buddhanet.net

The Correct Way of Thinking

Once upon a time there were two merchants, who were friends. Both of them were getting ready for business trips to sell their merchandise, so they had to decide whether to travel together. They agreed that, since each had about 500 carts, and they were going to the same place along the same road, it would be too crowded to go at the same time.

One decided that it would be much better to go first. He thought, "The road will not be rutted by the carts, the bullocks will be able to choose the best of all the grass, we will find the best fruits and vegetables to eat, my people will appreciate my leadership and, in the end, I will be able to bargain for the best prices."

The other merchant considered carefully and realized there were advantages to going second. He thought, "My friend's carts will level the ground so we won't have to do any road work, his bullocks will eat the old rough grass and new tender shoots will spring up for mine to eat. In the same way, they will pick the old fruits and vegetables and fresh ones will grow for us to enjoy. I won't have to waste my time bargaining when I can take the price already set and make my profit." So he agreed to let his friend go first. This friend was sure he'd fooled him and gotten the best of him—so he set out first on the journey.

The merchant who went first had a troublesome time of it. They came to a wilderness called the 'Waterless Desert', which the local people said was haunted by demons. When the caravan reached the middle of it, they met a large group coming from the opposite direction. They had carts that were mud smeared and dripping with water. They had lotuses and water lilies in their hands and in the carts. The head man, who had a know-it-all attitude, said to the merchant, "Why are you carrying these heavy loads of water? In a short time, you will reach that oasis on the horizon with plenty of water to drink and dates to eat. Your bullocks are tired from pulling those heavy carts filled with extra water—so throw away the water and be kind to your overworked animals!"

Even though the local people had warned them, the merchant did not realize that these were not real people, but demons in disguise. They were even in danger of being eaten by them. Being confident that they were helpful people, he followed their advice and had all his water emptied onto the ground.

As they continued on their way they found no oasis or any water at all. Some realized they'd been fooled by beings that might have been demons, and started to grumble and accuse the merchant. At the end of the day, all the people were tired out. The bullocks were too weak from lack of water to pull their heavy carts. All the people and animals laid down in a haphazard manner and fell into a deep sleep. Lo and behold, during the night the demons came in their true frightening forms and gobbled up all the weak defenseless beings. When they were done, there were only bones lying scattered around—not one human or animal was left alive.

After several months, the second merchant began his journey along the same way. When he arrived at the wilderness, he assembled all his people and advised them— "This is called the 'Waterless Desert' and I

have heard that it is haunted by demons and ghosts. Therefore, we should be careful. Since there may be poison plants and foul water, don't drink any local water without asking me." In this way they started into the desert.

After getting about halfway through, in the same way as with the first caravan, they were met by the water soaked demons in disguise. They told them the oasis was near and they should throw away their water. But the wise merchant saw through them right away. He knew it didn't make sense to have an oasis in a place called 'Waterless Desert'. And besides, these people had bulging red eyes and an aggressive and pushy attitude, so he suspected they might be demons. He told them to leave them alone saying, "We are business men who don't throw away good water before we know where the next is coming from."

Then seeing that his own people had doubts, the merchant said to them, "Don't believe these people, who may be demons, until we actually find water. The oasis they point to may be just an illusion or a mirage. Have you ever heard of water in this 'Waterless Desert'? Do you feel any rain-wind or see any storm clouds?" They all said, "No", and he continued, "If we believe these strangers and throw away our water, then later we may not have any to drink or cook with—we will be weak and thirsty and it would be easy for demons to come and rob us, or even eat us up! Therefore, until we really find water, do not waste even a drop!"

The caravan continued on its way and that evening, reached the place where the first caravan's people and bullocks had been killed and eaten by the demons. They found the carts, human and animal bones lying all around. They recognized that the fully loaded carts and the scattered bones belonged to the former caravan. The wise merchant told certain people to stand watch around the camp during the night.

The next morning the people ate breakfast and fed their bullocks well. They added to their goods the most valuable things left from the first caravan. So they finished their journey very successfully, and returned home safely so that they and their families could enjoy their profits.

THE MORAL IS: One must always be wise enough not to be fooled by tricky talk and false appearances.

Discussion questions:

1. How can greedy desires cause you problems in the long run?
2. What are some demons in your everyday life? How do you identify them?
3. When confronted, what is the best way to deal with your demons?

Senior Living—Moving to Retirement

*"Each morning,
I do not know how
my day will turn out,
but I always
remember the
teachings
"Everything
changes" and
"live in the
moment."*

*Rev. Yasuko
Hildebrand*

Many of you know Rev. Yasuko Hildebrand. She has been a major influence in helping many of our Japanese and English speaking members on their Buddhist path. You may not know that Rev. Yasuko retired recently and turned the leadership of the Oklahoma City Dharma Center over to Rev. Kris Ladasau. We asked Rev. Yasuko to talk about her experience in moving into retirement. Here is what she had to say.

Rev. Yasuko Hildebrand:
The reasons why I retired from my duty were, I felt that Rev. Kris was ready and my dear Harry was needing more of my care. I firmly believe that my timing was right. Since my retirement, besides Harry, two Japanese members wanted my help; one is experiencing the onset of dementia and the other is in dire need of help in taking care of her money matters. Both of them no longer drive. Harry quit driving due to his Parkinson's Disease. So, I do lots of things for them all.

Each morning, I do not know how my day will turn out, but I always remember the teachings "Everything changes" and "live in the moment." I am fine and luckily I have no problems with my current

life style. Harry stays home most of the time, so I limit my activities to the mornings and some early afternoons. He is a quiet person and finds things to do. He never complains. As you know, he had been so good to me while I was active with our Dharma Center, so it is my time to be with him closely and take care of him. I sometimes have difficulties accepting his changes, but that golden teaching draws me back to the center. I am still in charge of the Japanese members simply because Rev. Kris has limitations with the Japanese language.

I am so grateful to be blessed with good health so that I am able to serve others. Anyway, that is one of the very reasons why I came into this lifetime. I am still cultivating my spiritual field, although the progress leaves a lot to be desired. I like my life now.

I am very grateful to have encountered Rissho Kosei-kai in my life. The great teachers Shakyamuni Buddha, founder Nikkyo Niwano, president Nichiko Niwano, and Oklahoma Dharma Center's sangha have been so wonderful in my life. I sincerely hope and wish that I will be able to meet and manage any situation that may come my way.

Highlighting an International Sangha

UK Cousins Reflections at New Year. Submitted by John Gisbey

The turning of the year 2011 into 2012 causes us all to look back over the past year and also to reflect on previous years.

Our Sangha in Britain is fairly widespread. It consists of individuals living many miles apart. Meetings are few and thus are very precious. Yet when we all meet together, Japanese and non-Japanese, there is a sense of unity in our worship of the Eternal Buddha Shakyamuni and of our following of the guidance, of Founder Niwano.

I have taken this opportunity to gaze at photographs of gatherings, of the UK Sangha from past meetings and fondly remembered events. There is a sadness when one sees again the faces of friends no longer with us and an amazement at the small size of the babies, who have now become young men and women.

When the offices of the International Association for Religion and Peace in Oxford closed, our Japanese RK representatives Megumi and Hiroko returned to Japan. We are currently guided by Rev. Taketani Naoki from Geneva, Switzerland. We meet at the home of Mrs. Yoko Phillips in St Albans which is just to the north of London. There is always a warm welcome and after the ceremonies, a feast of the most delicious Japanese food.

I had hoped to train as a leader and become the first English Buddhist Reverend in the RK. Unfortunately, a medical problem has made international travelling impossible for me so I was unable to gain the training at Tokyo Headquarters.

I live in a town very near to Canterbury in England. Those of you who have received your copy of Dharma World for January and March may have already read the article by Peter Kenny about Canterbury Cathedral being the focal point of English Christianity and a place of pilgrimage. I have often thought that Canterbury would be the ideal location for the first RK Centre in this country. If any members of RKINA are travelling in Europe and would like their own personal guided pilgrimage in Canterbury, just contact me, I will be happy to guide you.

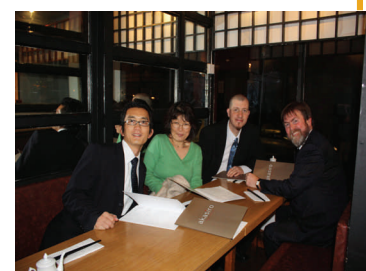
In Wales, that "other" part of the United Kingdom, resides Marcus Staff who holds regular meetings in Cardiff. He has completed the two year International Leaders Seminar for English Speakers in Tokyo, at the RK headquarters. He has been truly determined in his striving to spread the teachings of the Dharma as revealed to us by the Founder. We all wish him continued success in 2012.

Let me share with you some past photographs of the sangha of the United Kingdom. Let us all look forward to the future opportunities in 2012 of our continued friendship, in the faultless teachings of the Lotus Sutra.



London: Rev Sakai and RK International Staff, RK-UK members John Gisbey, Marcus Staff and Yoko Phillips

At Yoko Phillips home for the New Year meeting



Rev Hagiwara RK/HQ gives guidance during hoza with Marcus Staff from the Cardiff Dharma Circle at the home of Yoko Phillips



Rev Naoki, Yoko Philips, Rob Evans and John Gisbey



On that day,
the room was filled
with people from
all faith traditions.
They came
together
out of a sense
of community.

RK in Wales Submitted by Marcus Staff

Rissho Kosei-kai in the UK was established in 1995 by Rev. Yukimasa Hagiwara and several Japanese families. It was organized by 4 trustees and became a registered charity in 1998. Originally based in Oxford, with the departure of Rev. Megumi Hirota in 2007, RK-UK moved to St. Albans near London under the guidance of Mrs. Yoko Phillips Shunin with support from Rev. Naoki Taketani in Geneva, Switzerland. In 2010, a small group was established in Cardiff, Wales, by Marcus Staff with support from Mrs. Phillips and Rev. Taketani.

In the UK, there are no Dharma Centers and Rissho Kosei-kai is very much a grass roots movement, holding regular Hoza Meetings at member's homes and Dharma Services several times a year in SANGHAsANGHA

Sutra chanting is led in either Japanese or English and members chant in their preferred language.

There are approximately 20 members in the UK, a mixture of British, Japanese and other nationalities reflecting the UK's multicultural society. The majority of members live in London and surrounding areas, but others live great distances apart in Kent, York, Plymouth, Cardiff, Llanelli and the Rhondda Valleys. Sometimes it is difficult for all of the Sangha to gather for Hoza Meetings or Dharma Services, so a variety of means are used to keep in contact, such as telephone, email, webcam and letters. UK members wish to share their joy of the Dharma and the teachings of Founder Niwano and Shakyamuni Buddha with others by following the Bodhisattva Path.

There is Something "Right" in OK

In the Buddhist teachings, there is a set of practices called the "Eight Fold Path". The name of each one begins with the term "Right". Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, etc. The word "Right" in this case, means in harmony with Universal Truth. It means the highest choice for yourself and others. The key is to embody these practices so that we live from them naturally, not as something external we constantly have to refer to, or think about in our daily lives. When we function from this perspective, we are highly attuned to another teaching of Buddhism - that of the interconnectedness of everything and everyone.

Recently, a man who had been active with the Interfaith Alliance here in Oklahoma City, passed away. When Orhan Osman who is head of the

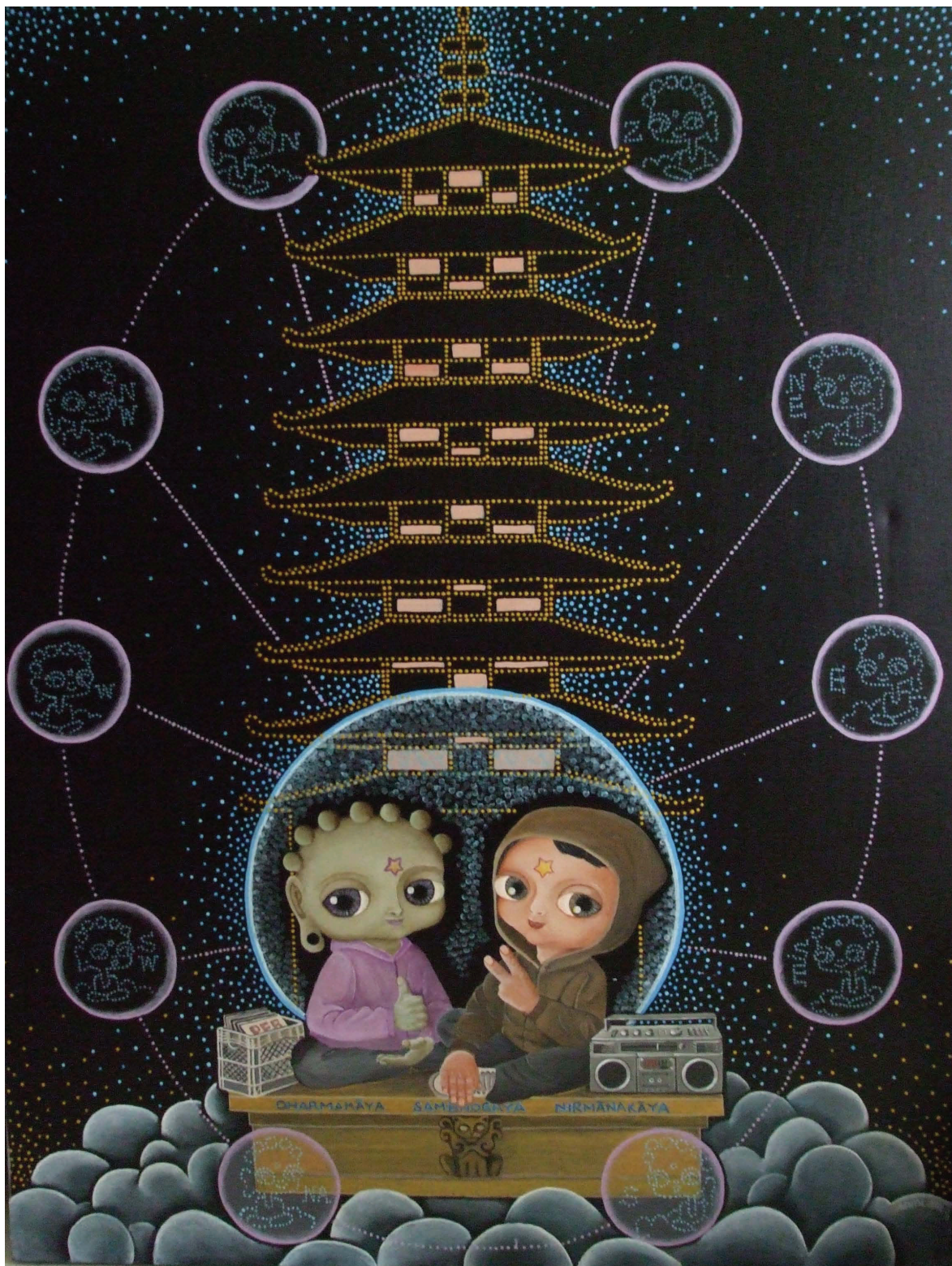
Turkish Community Center heard that this man had no particular church affiliation, he offered to host a memorial service at his Turkish Center. Orhan asked Rev. Mark Davies, a Methodist minister from OCU to officiate the service.

On that day, the room was filled with people from all faith traditions. They came together out of a sense of community. They came together to honor the life of a friend and fellow human being. They came to share in their grief and compassion. They came to share...

There is something very "right" in Oklahoma, when an Islamic Center joins with a Christian minister to lead an interfaith congregation in a remembrance and acknowledgment of the lifetime of an individual from the community in which they all live.

Rev. Kris Ladusau

Art from the Sanghas: Lotus Sutra Chapter 11



*Beholding
The
Precious
Stupa*
By Emi Motokawa
Los Angeles
Member

*Emi has illustrated
all of the chapters
of the Lotus Sutra*

Beholding the Truth

Chapter 11 Commentary by Barbara Dearing

In the beautifully descriptive Chapter 11, Treasure Tower, of the Lotus Sutra, the Tathagata (the "thus come, thus gone from Truth") verifies the authenticity of the Dharma and praises Shakyamuni for teaching the Truth. Abundant Treasures sits peacefully in the stupa signifying the deep tranquility of the Dharma while Shakyamuni provides the earthly energy and movement to transmit these teachings.

Founder Nikkyo Niwano explains that "...erect(ing) a great stupa means to make manifest the buddha-nature of all things. This is the highest form of veneration... ." ([A Guide to the Threefold Lotus Sutra, pg. 82](#))

How do we find the courage and skillful means to protect and teach the Dharma? If we envision the Tathagata Abundant Treasures as our Original Mind housed within the stupa of our physical bodies in the *saha*-world, we can behold the precious metals and gems as tools we need. Gold represents the ability to listen (to the Dharma), silver reflects our belief in the Truth, lapis lazuli reminds us to keep the precepts, moonstone equates with peace of mind, agate reflects the constant need to practice, pearl represents service to others, and carnelian reminds us to seek self-improvement.

Armed and supported with these jewels of understanding, we can emulate the Buddha's energy in transmitting the Dharma, secure in the knowledge that the Truth is authentic, never-changing, and timeless.

(The source listing the jewels and (one) of their meanings is an on-line reference "The Sagely City of the 10,000 Buddhas" with commentary by the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua. <http://www.cttbusa.org/>)

Additional Commentary by Mary Sigman

I was startled when I first pictured the two buddhas sharing the stupa together, as if it should not be.

Then, I realized that if the Buddha equals the Dharma, then the Dharma must be more than just a repository of that knowledge. It must also be a medium for expressing that knowledge.

The two buddhas make sense since Abundant Treasures equals the Truth, the Dharma, and Shakyamuni Buddha, plus the Practice of Spreading the Dharma.

The Abundant Treasures Buddha needs to have Shakyamuni Buddha next to him because Truth needs to have a Teacher. The Dharma cannot spread into the world without teachers. Shakyamuni Buddha is our first and foremost teacher, but we must also step up and be teachers, too.

The stupa lifting up into the sky, draws the attention of everyone in the assembly. It can be said that it also calls all of us to look up, and then rise up, to the task of being teachers and practitioners of the dharma.

Member Milestones

Send us your special announcements!

Record of births, deaths, graduations, military service, retirements

- A New Year’s baby born to the daughter of Dayton Members Paul Oswald and Jane Perri. Granddaughter Emma Camille Green was born December 31, 2011, mom Amanda and baby Emma are doing well and wish daddy James who is floating round on a battleship somewhere in the Pacific could be with them.

Send your announcement for posting here!

Members Activities

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

Rev. Kris Ladusau was invited by the Mayor to give the opening invocation at the Oklahoma City council meeting.

Because of her involvement with the Interfaith Alliance Board of Oklahoma, she has also submitted the names of the leaders, from many other faith traditions, to be invited to also give the opening invocation for the Council.

The Mayor has now requested that Rev. Ladusau give the invocation on an annual basis.

FT. MYERS FL Submitted by Mary Sigman

1. RK Ft. Myers had its first Introduction to the Lotus Sutra Class which was taught in October. We had 8 wonderful students, some of whom were first time visitors to our group. We all left feeling like we had made a long journey together, and there are now 8 new Lotus Sutras out there in the world!
2. Our group's service to the UUCFM community, was to host the reception following Memorial services for the departed at UUCFM. One member passed away in early November, with another in early December. Our December hosting was

shared with the entire Caring Committee of UUCFM, since a large crowd was expected and materialized for that service. Our RK presence is becoming more well-known and appreciated due to these activities and it was great for our group to have the opportunity to work together.

3. We began working with the "Budding Buddhists," the pre-K group at UUCFM, on January 1st, and will continue, hopefully with others in our RK group, to assist on the first Sunday of every month with the Religious Education Program at UUCFM. Mary hopes to utilize a few of her kindergarten teacher skills in a new way.
4. Nadine Sarlin and Mary Sigman, are on the Research Committee of the interfaith initiative of Lee County, the work of the committee is to improve education for everyone in our county. At our December meeting, it was decided to limit this to two areas: student achievement and bullying. We will be meeting again on January 6th to review our research assignments in these two areas, and a huge rally is set for February, at which time we will be getting ready to present our ideas to local government officials.

OKC Interfaith Activities

Sustaining environmental quality undoubtedly is prudent, but it also has deep roots in our world's religious traditions. Oklahoma Interfaith Power and Light has raised another public reminder of that rich legacy in a public event on the campus of Oklahoma City University (OCU).

The event, "Oklahoma Interfaith Panel on Environmental Stewardship," was held in OCU's Bishop W. Angie Smith Chapel, Wednesday, December 7, 2011, 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Its panel of guest speakers included: Rabbi Abby Jacobson, Emanuel Synagogue, Oklahoma City; the Rev. Dr. William Tabbernee, Executive Director, Oklahoma



Conference of Churches; Imam Imad Enchassi, Ph.D., President, Islamic Society of Greater Oklahoma City; and the Rev. Kris Ladusau, Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Oklahoma.

After each presentation, there was a Q and A segment, followed by some great group discussions. All ideas were welcome and very engaging.



TOPIC

Lotus Sutra
in Cyber-
space

Interesting Hot Links

Zen and the Lotus Sutra <http://nichirenscoffeehouse.net/Ryuei/Zen-LS-I.html>

Mountain Source Sangha http://www.mtsource.org/articles/dogen_lotsutra.html

[Oxford Bibliographies Online](#)

The Lotus Blossom <http://www.tientai.net/teachings/Pundarika/reng.htm>

Lotus Sutra Videos <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r364h19dXio>

The Lotus Sutra—Buddhist Chant <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXYwtQvOCLk>

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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. Suggestions and comments are always welcome. Please send them to Jane Perri jane.perri@rkina-dayton.com

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Traveling ?

Try visiting
one of your
sister sanghas!



Upcoming
Events
In
North
America

Locations and Calendar of Centers

[Rissho Kosei-kai International of North America \(Irvine CA\)](#)

[Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Orange County \(CA\)](#)

3/10-11/ US Board Chairs' Meeting

3/12/2012 Ministers' Meeting

3/24/2012 Youth Leaders Meeting on the Web (Rev. Ozuna)

8/1-9/19/2012 Online Basic Buddhism Study

[Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Tampa Bay \(FL\)](#)

Sunday service - 4 PM Thursday Lotus Sutra Study at 7PM

[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 \(CA\)](#)

9/28-30/2012 Advanced Lotus Sutra Seminar, 2nd session

GOHONZON CEREMONY September or October APPLICATIONS

MUST BE SUBMITTED BY THE END OF JUNE

[Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of San Antonio \(TX\)](#)

Rissho Kosei-kai of Buddhist Center of Arizona (Tucson)

Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of Colorado (Denver)

Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of San Diego (CA)

Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of Las Vegas (NV)

[Rissho Kosei-kai of San Francisco \(CA\)](#)

4/15/2012 Cherry Blossom Parade

[Rissho Kosei-kai of Seattle's Buddhist Learning Center \(WA\)](#)

Rissho Kosei-kai of Sacramento (CA)

Rissho Kosei-kai of San Jose (CA)

[Lotus Buddhist Circle of San Mateo \(CA\)](#)

Rissho Kosei-kai of Vancouver (Canada)

[Rissho Kosei-kai of New York \(NY\)](#)

5/20-22/ 2012 Advanced Leaders Training, 1st Session

[Rissho Kosei-kai of Chicago \(IL\)](#)

Rissho Kosei-kai of Ft. Myers

[Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Oklahoma \(OKC\)](#)

5/18-20/2012 All US Leaders Training, Advanced Graduates

Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Dallas

[Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Denver \(CO\)](#)

[Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Klamath Falls \(OR\)](#)

[Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Dayton \(OH\)](#)

Sunday service 10 am Individual hoza Tues, Wed, & Thurs. 5:30-7:30 PM