



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

#### HIGHLIGHTS

Memorial  
Celebration

Lots of news from the  
Sanghas!

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# Sangha In Motion

Bimonthly eNewsletter for RK Members in the US

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 2

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2015

In Memory of RK-LA Founder and  
the First RK Church on the Mainland

## Rev. Mitsuko Nakamura



Article on page 6.

# New Year Guidance from President



Niwano Nikkyo  
Howa Senshu  
[Selected Dharma  
Talks of Nikkyo  
Niwano], special  
volume, p. 144.  
Found in  
**The Buddha in  
Everyone's  
Heart**, p. 78.



"Make a lazy one give rise to the mind of diligence." Sutra of Innumerable Meanings, Ch. 3, Ten Merits, revised version

Words from the Founder:

"This means to proceed straight toward an important target without being distracted by trivial things. We cannot say we are assiduous when our ideas and conduct are impure, even if we devote ourselves to the study and practice of the Buddha's teachings. Even when we devote ourselves to study and practice, we sometimes do not meet with good results or may even obtain adverse effects, or we may be hindered in our religious practice by others. But such matters are like waves rippling on the surface of the ocean; they are only phantoms, which will disappear when the wind dies down. Therefore, once we have determined to practice the bodhisattva-way, we should advance single-mindedly toward our destination without turning aside. This is assiduity." Buddhism for Today, pp. 37-38.

"Training is no more, and no less, than the effort you put into developing the strength of spirit that keeps you from being discouraged no matter what sorrows or ill fortune befall you and allows you to correctly overcome whatever problems you may encounter."

## Commentary

by Mary Tracy Sigman

How many of us have the best of intentions, maybe even do all the right things, but then troubles and sorrows come our way? How many of us think that if we do our practice we will be saved from troubles in life? What Founder seems to be telling us in his words above, is not only are we not guaranteed a life without sorrow, it is exactly when those hard times come around that we must keep on doing our work, our practice. It is those moments that allow us to show our commitment to the bodhisattva-way. If things don't go the way we like and we say, "I'm out of here!", we are acting like petulant children. Like a wise mother we must look into our hearts and say, "Everything will be all right. You must keep on going. Don't give up, little one." The easy way is to quit and return to the world of delusion. It takes effort to maintain the steady course when the waves start churning, as anyone who has tried to paddle a canoe or kayak can attest. But you can never reach the other shore of enlightenment if you don't keep hold of the paddles or rudder and keep going. Otherwise you will be tossed around in circles, going nowhere. To make progress requires effort.

But there is another aspect to our practice of effort. That involves not being lazy. As seductive as getting discouraged during the hard times can be, even more alluring can be idleness. Keeping our practice is hard work, and our old habits want us to take it easy, to skip sutra recitation today, to put off a duty we have at our dharma center, and so forth. One of the things that may take a great deal of effort is to just listen to another person. We may want to ask ourselves how much effort we put into doing that-- in hoza, in our homes, while conducting business.

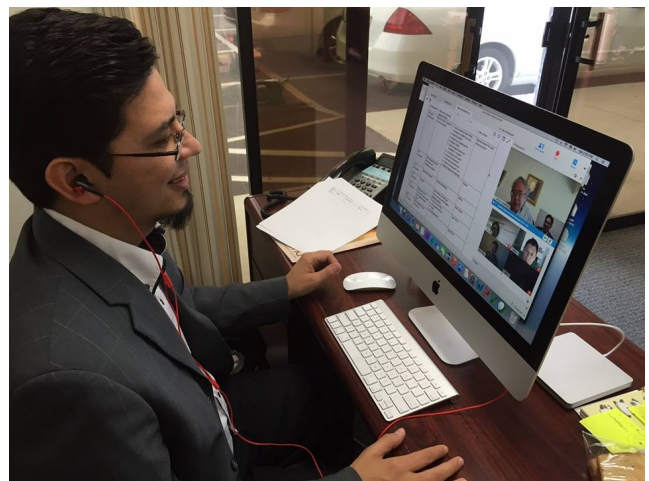
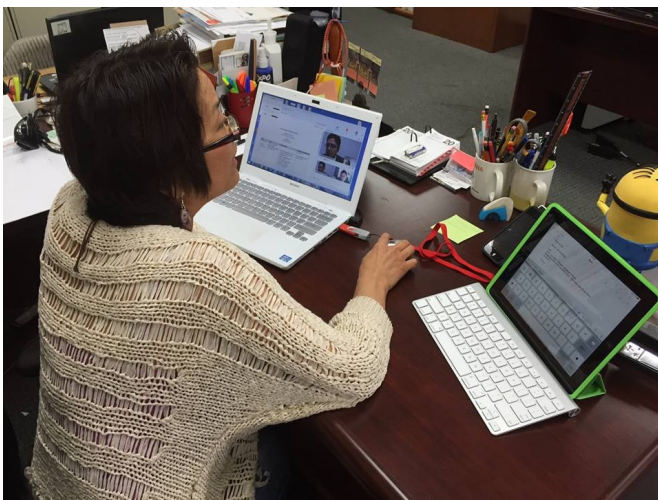
We have now looked at four of the six perfections that help us to become good bodhisattvas.

# RKINA

by Rev. Nick Ozuna

## Internet Ministry Meeting

On Feb. 21st, RKINA held its annual U.S. Internet Ministry Meeting online. Representatives from each Dharma Center in the U.S. gathered online to discuss the new and effective ways of sharing the Dharma through use of the internet. It was another great learning experience for all who attended!



# Los Angeles by Rev Nick Ozuna



## Bean-Scattering Ceremony

**Setsubun Ceremony** - On Feb. 1, RKLA finished the Mid-Winter Sutra Recitation Training and held a ceremony for a bright new year (Chinese New Year). The traditional "bean-scattering" ceremony was also held to bring in good fortune and remove bad fortune. Rev. Yoshizawa offered an interpretation of the fortune for the members through the 9-star system, offering guidance on how we should approach this new year. Finally, leaders for different respective areas of Dharma mission were announced in front of the sangha, where they pledged their commitment to their new roles.



# Los Angeles

**Youth Exchange with Tenrikyo** - On Feb. 2nd, RKL youth members gathered together with youth members of our neighboring Tenrikyo Church for a dinner and exchange. The RKL youth group looks forward to building on this relationship and creating more interfaith discussions and activities.



Rest  
Now  
and  
Thank  
You!

## Los Angeles

by Rev. Nick Ozuna

**Funeral Service for Rev. Mitsuko Nakamura** - On Feb. 7th, a funeral service was held for the late Rev. Mitsuko Nakamura, the first minister of RKLA. As the Founder of the first Dharma Center in the mainland U.S., her influence spreads far. About a hundred family members, friends, sangha members, and special guests attended the funeral service, offering deep gratitude to Rev. Mitsuko Nakamura. Special guest Rev. Satoru Hayashi, the 2nd RKLA minister, from Japan was also in attendance, paying his deep respects.







## Interfaith Activities

Article is an adaptation of one that appeared in the Oklahoman newspaper

# Oklahoma City

by Rev. Kris Ladusau

## Rev. Kris Presented at Cooperative Spirituality Symposium



Cooperative Spirituality was the topic of a new Lenten series at the First Christian Church of Oklahoma City. “Too often, religion is seen as a divisive force in society with claims and counterclaims, accusations and even physical attacks are made against this religion or that,” said FCC-OKC Associate Minister Jeff Hamilton.

“This Lenten Series was designed to give time to explore the common spiritual ground found in three major religious traditions that influence our lives. Hopefully the spirit of learning from each other can increase religious understanding and goodwill,” he added.

The topic of Buddhist Spirituality was discussed by Rev. Kris Ladusau, Spiritual Leader of the Dharma Center and member of the Board of Directors of the Interfaith Alliance Foundation of Oklahoma. Rev. Kris’s theme was Interconnectedness as she shared the teachings found in the Buddhist tradition, “ones that easily blend with wisdom from other spiritual paths,” she said. There is a bond of love found in all the Great Teachings. Here we find Universal Wisdom – applicable to anyone, anytime, anywhere. We learn the Truths of the heart, the beautiful fragrance of virtue, the spirit of generosity, the power of awareness and mindfulness and the contentment found in living the balance of wisdom and compassion.

“Just as the overall theme for the symposium sets the tone, we looked deeply to see the touchstone for us all,” Rev. Ladusau added. Rev. Kris presented on Monday, March 16 and on Wednesday, March 18, 2015.

Hamilton says the purpose of the series is to help people learn that deep spirituality is a touchstone for all religions – and that cooperation and not competition is the core value of serious spirituality. “For this series we thought that Jewish, Christian and Buddhist would offer an accessible similarity.” Hamilton said. “For example, there are several Buddhist books that talk about Jesus and Buddha as brothers. One excellent book is titled: Living Buddha, Living Christ.

“There are many faith traditions that have a common spirituality,” Hamilton added. “No one tradition is seen as superior to the other.”



# Ft. Myers

by Mary Tracy Sigman

Our Fort Myers sangha began the new year of 2015 with the special Words of Respect and Guidance from President Niwano. We reflected on having a goal for this year. On January 18 we were blessed with another visit from Rev. Fujita and Yasuko Vendley of RK NY Church. Besides giving me leadership guidance, they beautifully expounded the significance of our unique RK Gohonzon. Our sangha was most grateful. Some of our members participated in the Winter Sutra Recitation in their homes. We also had a visit later that month from my good friend, Dr. Joan Durlacher, an RKK member from Chicago branch. She spoke to our sangha about Managing Anxiety Using Mindfulness.

February was also busy for us. We served refreshments after another UUCFM Memorial Service. We had a special celebration for Buddha's Nirvana Day when we Skyped with NY Church. Together we shared testimonials, as well as hearing Rev. Fujita's dharma talk for that day. How wonderful to share that day together! As an added bonus to this wonderful day we got another new member, Ian Wymbbs. He is a member of UUCFM, but has been visiting us for some time. We look forward to his monthly visits with us. We concluded the month by continuing our study of President Niwano's book, **Cultivating the Buddhist Heart**.



Rev. Fujita and Yasuko Vendley from RK NY



Dr. Joan Durlacher from RK Chicago giving a talk on Managing Anxiety Using Mindfulness.



Nirvana Day Skype with RKNY

# Family Matters

by Jane Perri



Story by  
Joanna  
Macy

## Just a Fly in My Tea

"On this particular afternoon a fly fell into my tea. This was, of course, a minor occurrence. After a year in India I considered myself to be unperturbed by insects -- by ants in the sugar bin, spiders in the cupboard, and even scorpions in my shoes in the morning. Still, as I lifted my cup, I must have registered, by my facial expression, or a small grunt, the presence of the fly. Choegyal Rinpoche, the eighteen-year-old tulku leaned forward in sympathy and consternation.

"What is the matter?"

"Oh, nothing," I said. "It's nothing -- just a fly in my tea." I laughed lightly to convey my acceptance and composure. I did not want him to suppose that mere insects were a problem for me; after all, I was a seasoned India-wallah, relatively free of Western phobias and attachments to modern sanitation.

Choegyal crooned softly, in apparent commiseration with my plight, "Oh, oh, a fly in the tea."

"It's no problem," I reiterated, smiling at him reassuringly. But he continued to focus great concern on my cup. Rising from his chair, he leaned over and inserted his finger into my tea. With great care he lifted out the offending fly -- and then exited from the room. The conversation at the table resumed. I was eager to secure Khamtul Rinpoche's agreement on plans to secure the high-altitude wool he desired for the carpet production.

When Choegyal Rinpoche reentered the cottage he was beaming. "He is going to be all right," he told me quietly. He explained how he had placed the fly on the leaf of a branch of a bush by the door, where his wings could dry. And the fly was still alive, because he began fanning his wings, and we could confidently expect him to take flight soon.

That is what I remember of that afternoon -- not the agreements we reached or plans we devised, but Choegyal's report that the fly would live. And I recall too, the laughter in my heart. I could not, truth to tell, share Choegyal's dimensions of compassion, but the pleasure in his face revealed how much I was missing by not extending my self-concern to all beings, even to flies. Yet the very notion that it was possible gave me boundless delight."

-- Joanna Macy

<http://www.ic.sunysb.edu/Clubs/buddhism/story/justafly.html>

# Healthy Living

by Jane Perri

## Asleep Standing Excerpt from forthcoming book Critical Actions to Change Your Life

Sometimes when we are feeling exhausted, we might find that there are periods when we lose memory of events. For example, we drive home but upon arriving, we do not remember the actual drive. We put our bodies on automatic pilot while we do mundane tasks. We walk through our day asleep, in a fog – day, after day, after day.

Sometimes it can be blamed on sleep deprivation but the most likely reason is deprivation of purpose. For when we are living “in purpose,” we are awake! Awake to the task at hand; awake to the meaning of our actions; awake to the thoughts in our minds.

When we live with purpose, it becomes easier to see the true reality of our experiences without the shroud of ego coloring it. We are less likely to set up a confrontational situation because of misreading the situation.

When we live each moment with purpose, instead of pushing for a future goal or reliving past experiences, we are more effective. When we block out sabotaging self-chatter that reduces our self-worth we become free to be, free to do what is called for at the precise moment it is needed. It is only by living with the single purpose of focusing on this very moment that we succeed in moving along on our path to becoming awake.

We are awake when we live each moment easily without intent, without forcing thoughts or actions – just being awake and seeing what the true nature of our existence is at every moment. We are awake when we do not judge the situation we just live it. We are awake when we live in full gratitude for each moment regardless of the events that are occurring.

To be awake is our natural state of being. Our ego self is the culprit that tries to obscure from view, the truth – the connectiveness of all things and all people. When we see the world through our ego’s eyes, we see a very different place. No longer do we see in gratitude, but instead the world is veiled in entitlement. This sets us up for disappointment and suffering that is self-inflicted, and it doesn’t have to be so.

If you want to change your life – it is within your power to do so. In fact, only you have this power; no one else can change you. When you change your perspective point, see the moment through eyes of gratitude, things become clearer. You are more likely to see the true reality of the events unfolding.

When we see through eyes of entitlement, clarity will always be displaced by delusions. Therefore, if you want to live with less suffering – it is simple. Change how you see. Do what comes naturally and just be – be in each moment with gratitude.



# Dear Abhidharma

by Rev. Kris



## The Five Remembrances

Dear Abhidharma –

I feel so stuck at this time in my life. I am getting older and beginning to have serious health issues. My husband is also experiencing his share of physical suffering, too. I try to be a good Buddhist, but sometimes I have difficulties managing my thoughts. I would appreciate any Dharma guidance that you can share with me.

Depressed in Des Moines

Dear Depressed –

I know how uncomfortable it can be to have that "stuck" feeling... At this time in the universe there are so many things happening I sometimes feel that we are all just doing what we can to get through. It is interesting that as human beings, we sometimes lose sight of the very things that will help us the most. When stressors hit me, I remind myself to once again, go back to the basics and reflect - Impermanence... Interconnectedness... These Five Remembrances are also good to post on your mirror and read every day.

### The Five Remembrances

1. I am of the nature to grow old. There is no way to escape growing old.
2. I am of the nature to have ill health. There is no way to escape having ill health.
3. I am of the nature to die. There is no way to escape death.
4. All that is dear to me and everyone I love are of the nature to change. There is no way to escape being separated from them.
5. My actions are my only true belongings. I cannot escape the consequences of my actions. My actions are the ground on which I stand.

Please continue to do your personal practice along with me and we will have a positive effect on those around us.

Keep breathing...

Dear Abhidharma –

My problem might sound silly, but it is still nagging at my brain. I just recently tried to connect with the rest of the world by joining Facebook. I discovered that I really enjoy posting pictures of family and sharing my life events. I received a private message from one of my younger relatives telling to stop posting pictures of her on my Facebook page. I thought I was doing a good thing and creating peace and harmony in the family. When I got that message, I was very upset. How do I deal with it? I thought about blocking her on Facebook... I don't like having these feelings...

Flabbergasted in Flagstaff

Dear Flabbergasted –

I can see how you were surprised to receive the private message. I know that your intention for posting pictures is a positive expression of joy for life, family and friends. I'm sure it was a shock to hear that she didn't want her pics posted. Thoughts of blocking her are perhaps a normal human reaction - "I will hurt your feelings, since you hurt my feelings"... but that isn't really a Buddhist perspective. Once we get over the initial shock of what someone says or does, we can make conscious choices (instead of automatic reactions). I think it would be fine to acknowledge her request and not post her pictures. But please don't close your heart. Just take a deep breath and accept what is - then re-establish peace in your own heart and continue walking the Bodhisattva Way. When we choose to live with an open heart, every now and then we take what can be perceived as a "direct hit". It doesn't feel good, but we will get over it and not only survive - but we will continue to grow with wisdom and compassion for ourselves and others.

Gassho.

Dear Abhidharma –

I just returned from a family gathering that was extremely uncomfortable. All my siblings were complaining about everything and there were arguments, name calling and tons of blaming... I tried my best to be a good bodhisattva, but I found myself constantly seeing everyone's arrogance. All of these people claim to have strong religious beliefs, but I was not seeing it in action. I wonder if I should still try to attend family functions in the future.

Dissatisfied in Detroit

Dear Dissatisfied in Detroit –

So sorry that it was a difficult family time. I think you put out a good effort - but it is always easier when everyone is "looking the same direction." As Buddhists, our practice is to simply see how WE are inside, after dealing with difficult times. We can watch our responses and see how we interact during uncomfortable situations. My hope is that each one of your family members achieves happiness in their lifetime, but you and I know that we can't force that to happen. All we can do is "keep our own balance" and dedicate our practice to the benefit of our family and all beings. All interactions are simply opportunities to learn and grow. If you choose to attend in the future, you know what your practice will be... if you choose to stay home, you can always chant for your family members and continue to send them love and blessings.

Gassho

Dear Abhidharma -

I am in a mental crisis of sorts - I have recently studied the Buddhist teaching of transience and I am having some difficulty. I love someone very much but now every time I am with them, I feel this deep love and at the same time, a great sadness knowing eventually in some form or fashion, we will be separated. How am I supposed to practice the Dharma of non-attachment? Do I fool myself into

not caring? Force myself to create an emotional separation? Please shed some light on this for me.

Darkness in Dallas

Dear Darkness in Dallas -

When it comes to the subject of transience - the Buddhist concept of non-attachment is sometimes misunderstood. It is not apathy, avoidance, or separation from what is - rather, it is through **acknowledging** the temporality of everything in this world, that we can accept it as it is. This total **acceptance**, liberates us. Now we are free to be fully present - with the wonderful opportunity to cherish each moment (because we know it won't last forever). Then when we must let it go, we do - with gratitude that it happened.

The flip side of this is - when we are going through a difficult time or painful situation - the teaching of transience becomes a message of hope - so even though it is rough right now, we know that eventually things will change. Sometimes that message alone can help get us through...

I think the final lines of a poem by Mary Oliver sum this up.

To live in this world  
you must be able  
to do three things:  
to love what is mortal;  
to hold it against your bones knowing  
your own life depends on it;  
and, when the time comes  
to let it go,  
to let it go.

- Mary Oliver





# Art from the Sanghas by Rose Cirigliano

## Ft. Myers Artist Mary Tracy Sigman

This month I decided to interview Mary Tracy Sigman from our Fort Myers FL chapter of the New York Buddhist Center. Mary completed copying the Lotus Sutra. I think it's an amazing piece of Art work in a conceptual way and demonstrated the 4th Precept, Assiduity and effort.

Mary Tracy first I would like to thank you for consenting to be featured in this month's Sangha in Motion.

RC: What inspired you to copy the Lotus Sutra?

MTS: I was inspired to copy the Lotus Sutra because it is one of the 5 basic practices of a Dharma Teacher, along with receive and keep, read, recite, and expound the sutra. I felt I wanted to attempt to do it, not knowing if I would finish. Of course I am blessed with having the time to be able to attempt this.

RC: Did you have a particular ritual that you followed? For example, did you do it at a certain time of the day, morning, evening.

MTS: I would save an hour to an hour and a half during the late afternoon to do my copying. I considered it a form of meditation, which not only calmed my mind but also imprinted the words of the sutra in my heart. I believe I usually did this on M-F, but would do it basically on whatever days I could fit it in.

RC: In total, Mary how long did it take you to complete?

MTS: I began my copying in mid-2013, and got about halfway through the Lotus Sutra. I think it was about the time we had many visitors and such that I stopped doing it for some time. Then in mid-2014 when I learned I would be going to headquarters to receive the Dharma Teacher title, I felt I needed to finish before I went to Japan. I worked quite diligently M-F to complete the copying. I was very happy to finish it in time. I think it was the best preparation I could have done for receiving Dharma Teacher. I now think I may do it again at another time. I will know when that time is right. I encourage others to do this practice. You will connect with the Lotus Sutra in a deeper way than before.

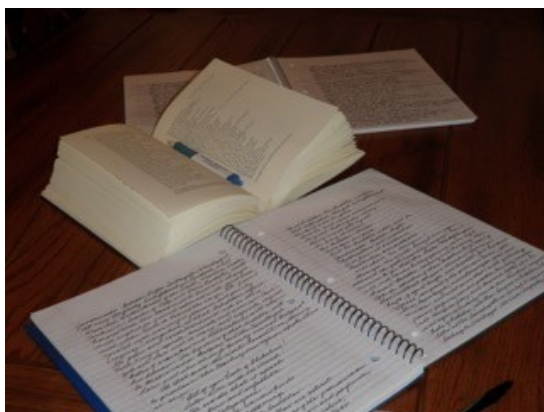
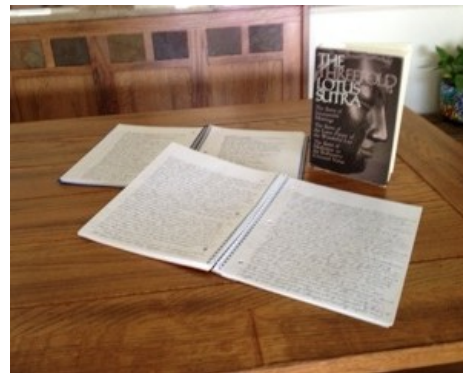
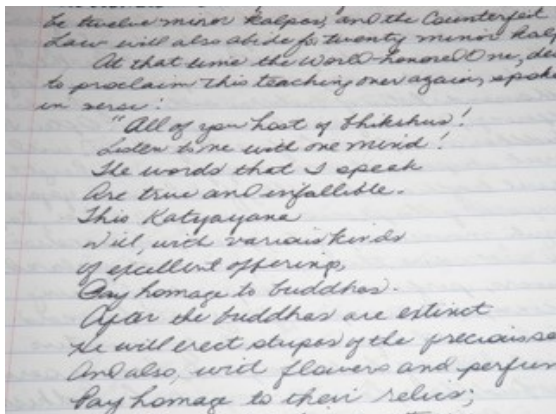
RC: Obviously your goal to complete copying the Lotus Sutra took a great deal of effort, which is the Fourth Perfection, Assiduity. You mentioned you copied it from Monday to Friday, nonetheless, how many hours a day did you devote to it? Would you tell us how you accomplished in a little more detail?

Copying the  
Dharma

MTS: In order to make progress it seemed that if I devoted 1 to 1 1/30 hours/day, M-F, I could do it. So that is pretty much what I did. Depending upon the amount of prose vs. poetry in a particular chapter, I might have done only an hour. I tried to copy about 4-5 pages of the Lotus Sutra each time. Of course there were exceptions. Sometimes I had to do less, sometimes I felt compelled to do a bit more.

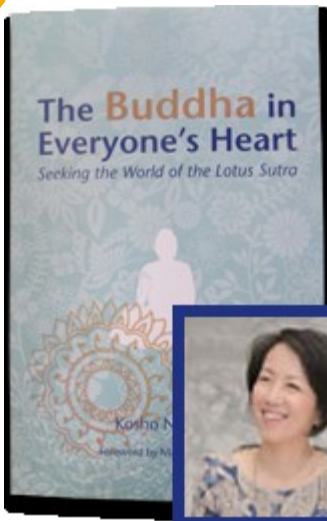
RC: Do you have any advice for those of us who are thinking of following on your admirable path?

MST: Yes, taking on this practice does require effort and tenacity. Believe me, there were a few times I wanted to quit. But having the goal of finishing before I went to Japan for Dharma Teacher really helped. That kept me on task. So I guess my advice is, try to set a goal for yourself for when you want to be completed. If you give yourself all the time in the world, it will never get done. Set an important date for yourself--an upcoming significant birthday, coming birth of a child, before an important Memorial Day, etc.

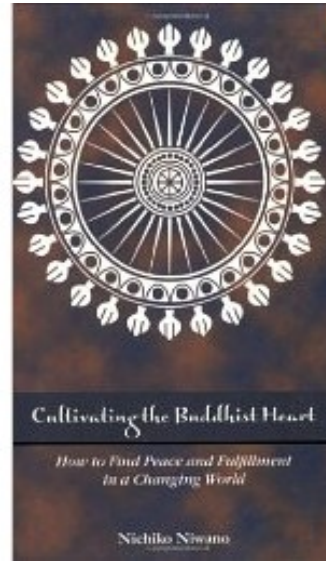


Silk scarf wrap for the copy

# Bulletin Board



**Rev Koshi 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 Abhidharma   | 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>       |
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**Published by**

Rissho Kosei-kai International of North America, Los Angeles CA  
Chief Editor—Rev. Takashi Yoshizawa Editor—Jane Perri



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)  
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Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of Las Vegas (NV)  
Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of San Antonio (TX)  
Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of Colorado (Denver)

**Rissho Kosei-kai of San Francisco (CA)**  
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)**  
Rissho Kosei-kai of Chicago (IL)  
Rissho Kosei-kai of Ft. Myers

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Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Denver (CO)  
Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Klamath Falls (OR)  
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