

Sangha in Motion

U.S. Dharma Centers - Staying Connected



SPRING 2017

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Spring has arrived even in Hawaii. The flowers on the “rainbow shower” tree are beginning to show their beautiful vibrant colors. As I take a walk, the tropical wind also is bringing the scent of Spring.

As Spring arrives, we are also reminded of Buddha’s birthday. On April 8, we celebrate the birthday of Shakyamuni Buddha. It is said that Shakyamuni Buddha was born about 2,500 years ago in Lumbini Garden. According to the legend, upon his birth, Shakyamuni immediately stood up and took seven steps in each of the four direction (east, west, south and north), and with his right hand raised toward heaven, his left hand extended toward the earth, proclaimed *“I alone am honored, in heaven and on earth. This threefold world is full of suffering. I will liberate all from suffering.”*

This declaration has been handed down through legends.

Founder Nikkyo Niwano said that the Buddha appeared in the world for one

single great cause: to open up the Buddha Way so that everyone may become Buddhas. For this to happen, our hearts must first be open.

We practice and learn the teaching because we want to find happiness. However, there are many challenges and difficulties that become the seed of suffering. There are many different types of practices, but first I think it is important to know that everything will be alright. All consequences are the gifts from Buddha. And believe that Buddha is always with us.

We all come from different cultures and backgrounds. We have our own past, present and future.

During one hoza session, there was a member who shared his childhood experience. He was unable to receive the love from his mother as a son should receive. For many years, he carried this burden and even though he was practicing he was unable to let go of this fact. Through our dialogues, he realized that because he was not receiving; he was able to learn to begin giving his love and compassions to his own family. He realized he really loved his mother and that she had tried her best to raise her family and son to the best of her knowledge. By truly seeing the Buddha nature in himself, he was able to see the true Buddha nature of his mother.

By changing our own views and by accepting, we are able to change our lives to be warm, cheerful and bright. I believe we are able to find happiness in our present situation.

It is here and now in our present situation that our true treasures lie.



Rev. Laura Meya
Minister, Rissho Kosei-kai of Hawaii

Rissho Kosei-kai International of North America



RKINA has been involved with a number of projects this season, including the upcoming Advanced Seminar and National English Leaders Training, as well as support for local events such as Sakura Matsuri and the Hawaii Matoi Camp. In March, all of the ministers and board-chairs gathered for their annual meeting in Seattle and received a special lecture on the *Dos and Don'ts* for Board Members from Mr. Junji Suzuki, an attorney for RKINA.

In April, RKINA supported Dharma Mission efforts in Tampa Bay, San Antonio, Seattle, and Chicago for their Buddha's Birthday Celebrations. Great energy resonated with the springtime, as many members were eager to come out and greet the sangha on the auspicious occasion of the Buddha's birth.





Contributed by Rev. Nicholas Ozuna
Risho Kosei-kai International of North America

RK Buddhist Church of Hawaii



Contributed by
Bradley Tom
Rissho Kosei-kai
of Hawaii

In March, RKK Hawaii had their Spring Higan service at which several members presented offerings of candles and flowers on the altar to remember our ancestors. During the service we read the posthumous names of our departed ancestors. We also had two members present their Dharma journey to the congregation. After the service the members had a chance to burn incense for their loved ones.

RKK Hawaii is going to be having a Matoi Camp this June to teach our youth members the history and art of twirling the matoi and other instruments we use in our parades. The camp involves teaching the use of the matoi in Japanese history and how it comes to be part of the Rissho Kosei-kai parade events. The training will include the care, holding and symbolism of the matoi in RKK culture. The training culminates with a chance for each of the participants to show their skill during the Pan Pacific Festival Parade that marches down Waikiki. We can see here the members practicing the flute, drum and bell used to keep rhythm for the matoi groups and Jarred Serrano showing the parts of the matoi.

For further information about the event visit www.RKHawaii.org.



Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of Los Angeles



Rissho Kosei-kai of Los Angeles is having a very active spring season so far. We hosted a university student from Rissho Kosei-kai's Gakurin Koju course in Japan. He joined in many Dharma Center activities throughout the month, including gatherings with the youth group. The youth group gathered for dinner and a karaoke party, which left the Japanese student many wonderful memories to take back to Japan.



Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of Los Angeles (cont'd)

For the Buddha's Birthday, it has been tradition in LA for the young ladies to dress in saris and make offerings to the altar. This year was no exception, and we also had a few children take part as well. The members all bathed the statue of the infant Buddha with sweet tea while making their resolutions for a "spiritual rebirth" from this day.



Contributed by Rev. Nicholas Ozuna
Rissho Kosei-kai of Los Angeles

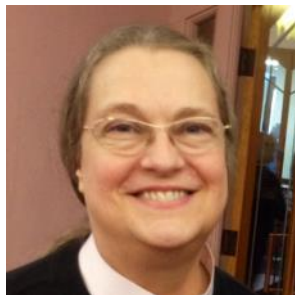
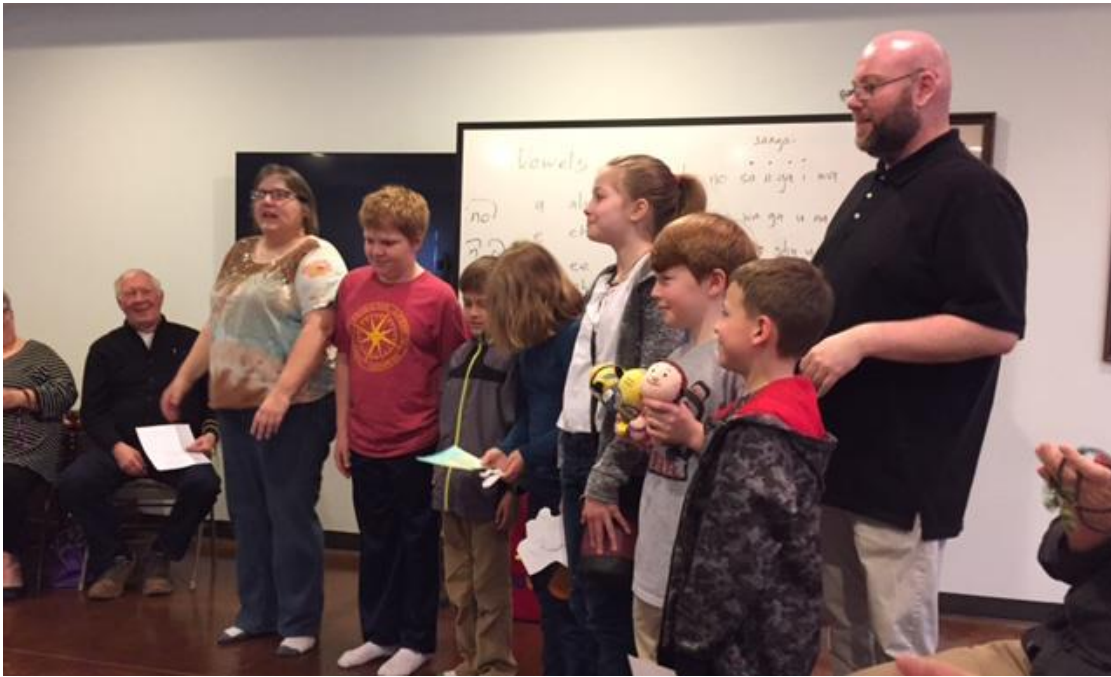
Dharma Center of Oklahoma



Rissho Kosei-kai of Oklahoma was very active this Spring. One event we held was a fun children's class at the Dharma Center. They really enjoy doing the art projects associated with the Dharma lessons. Winds were too high to have a fire pit so we opted for cooking hot dogs and s'mores at the Dharma Center.

Dharma Center members also attended an interfaith women's coffee night sponsored by the Turkish Raindrop House in Oklahoma City, as well as participated in an "Amazing Faiths" dinner with leaders of various religious organizations to bring togetherness sharing of traditions.





Contributed by Rev. Kris Ladusau
Rissho Kosei-kai of Oklahoma

Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of San Antonio



This has been a very busy Spring at RKSA! We are taking advantage of the guidance and friendship provided by Reverend and Mrs. Okada, who are staying once again at the Dharma Center. They have been graciously spending a significant part of their retirement time with us, and our Sangha is deeply grateful.

Attendance at each and every event at our Dharma Center is going through the roof; so much so that we are in the planning phase of an expansion of our building. In response to our expansion plans, the Center is in the midst of a Fundraising drive. Our annual Garage Sale was a smash hit fundraiser, and that money will go straight to our building fund.

Regarding spiritual matters: over the past few months we have added ten new members and in the next six weeks we will be holding five Home Altar Enshrinements.

Our younger members are really beginning to turn up the energy at the Center. Twelve members attended Reverend Ozuna's National Youth Seminar. Two weeks later, 15 youth members held a "bonfire social" in the yard behind the Dharma Center.

In addition, we have incorporated a monthly "hiking day" that has been very well attended. This past weekend 16 members spent a whirlwind day on a Spring Wildflower Tour & hike.

The newest addition to our calendar is a "Women's Group" that Sami Saenz has been leading. The group meets once per month and it looks like it's going to be a great success.

In San Antonio, the Dharma seems to be spreading like wildflowers. We are overjoyed!



Contributed by
Kevin Roche
Rissho Kosei-kai of San Antonio



Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of San Francisco



At RKSF we observed the birth of the Buddha on April 2. Before the chanting began, all members and guests offered candles to the baby Buddha, who was surrounded in beautiful flowers. It is said that the Buddha was born in a meadow that was filled with bright, blooming flowers so each year we try to recreate this breathtaking image with the baby Buddha statue. We also like to update the altar flowers, too.

This month was also the first of a series Basic Buddhism talks led by leaders at the Dharma Center. Reverend Nagashima assigned the *Three Seals of the Law* to Sayoko Lesure and she explained to us how to incorporate them into our lives. As she explained the first law, *All Things are Impermanent*, she reminded us that everything that happens to us is like a wave; it is always changing by swelling up and then crashing back into the water, but it is still part of the great, big ocean.

The month culminated with the Sakura Matsuri (Cherry Blossom Festival), which we attend annually. It is one of the most major events of the year and all the members' work tirelessly leading up to it. This year rain dampened the parade, however, it did not discourage us and along with a large group of participants from Los Angeles, we were able to have another joyful and exciting presentation at the parade in front of hundreds of spectators in San Francisco's Japan Town.



Contributed by Stephanie Meyer
Rissho Kosei-kai of San Francisco

Words from Founder Niwano

Sharing the Dharma

Wishing for a person to somehow find happiness, we wholeheartedly share the experiences we had through the teaching. As we speak mindfully with enthusiasm, the other person will eventually understand and agree. And at the time when we think, "At last the person understand and agrees," that person will start to become liberated. That is the Buddhist teaching.

With heartfelt thoughts for the person, we share our various experiences. When we witness the other person's mind shift its direction toward happiness after hearing what we said, we realize all the more that this teaching is without error – it is the universal law.

Many people seem to think it would be impudent of them to share the teaching with others when they themselves do not know what to do. This may seem like a valid concern. The Japanese have been influence for a long time by Chinese Confucianism, so we are more likely to think as such. But what Shakyamuni Buddha is teaching is something on a different level.

How is it different? Shakyamuni Buddha is saying we human beings were born equally. Therefore, even if it is just one thing, if we think it is good, believe in it, or think it is something that we should do then we should experience them, one by one. He is saying to share our experiences and the teachings with others for their sake. Furthermore, in the process of our sharing, we will understand all the more the meaning of what we were taught.

Rissho Kosei-kai Founder Nikkyo Niwano
Selections from Founder Niwano's Dharma Talks: Volume 3



Past issues of *Sangha in Motion* can be found here: <http://rkina.org/sanghainmotion/enewsletterarchive.html>

Guiding Thoughts

Buddha's Birthday

Mahayana Buddhism celebrates April 8 as a Buddha's Birthday. The birthday is a very remarkable and important occasion for the entire Buddhist world community and also to all human beings. Because of the birth of Shakyamuni, the truth of the universe has been revealed to all humankind. The truth of the universe has been and will exist forever, but to reveal and express it through word is needed through human form. This truth is expressed in Chapter 3 of the Lotus Sutra "This threefold world is my domain," meaning all phenomena in existence are the manifestation of the Buddha.

However, it is very difficult for us to understand how each phenomenon appears and disappears without knowing of the works of the Buddha. The birth of the Buddha provided the opportunity to understand and practice the way to experience the true aspect of all existence with insight.

Furthermore, the Founder made it easier and clearer for us to practice the Lotus Sutra in the modern day. Now, each day is our new birthday and an opportunity to make our new vow to practice.

Rev. Takashi Yoshizawa
Rissho Kosei-kai International of North America
Chief Operating Officer/Minister

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