

Sangha in Motion

U.S. Dharma Centers - Staying Connected



WINTER 2017

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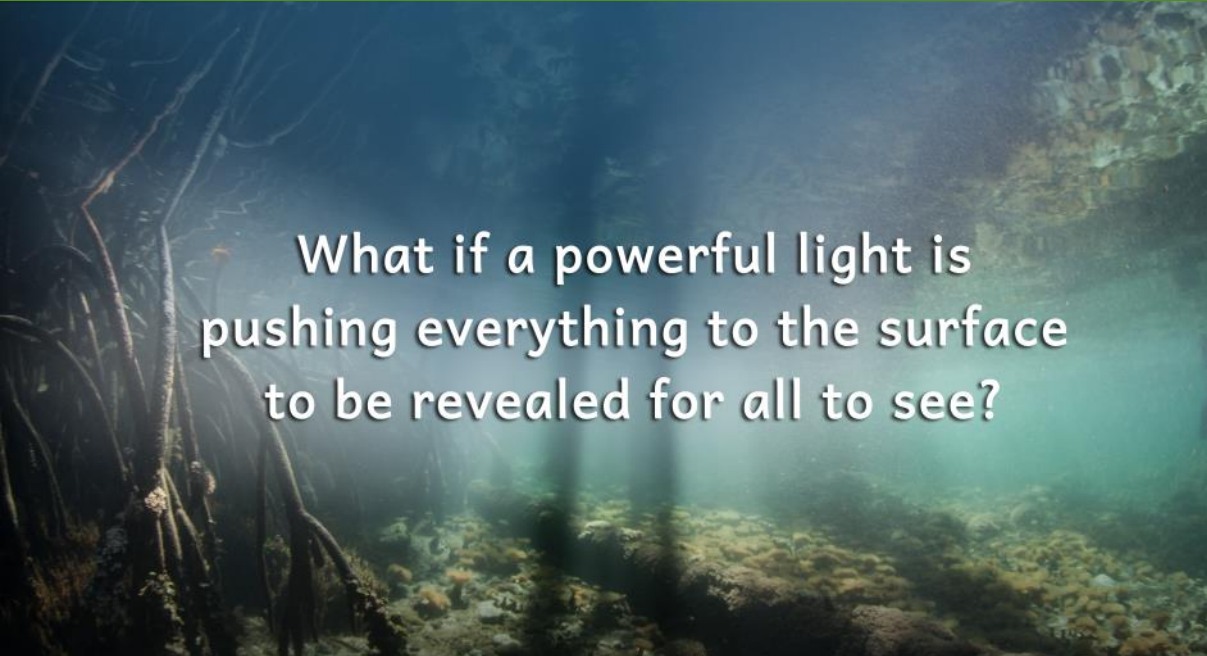
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What if a powerful light is
pushing everything to the surface
to be revealed for all to see?

As we all reflect on the events of 2016 and look forward to possibilities for 2017, I would like to share some of my thoughts with you. If we look at things from the ground level, we realize there is a lot needed to rebalance the world. Anger and fear have penetrated both sides of the extreme polarity we are now seeing and experiencing. These realms of thought are insidious and they rob us from living a joyful and beneficial life in harmony and respect for each other. Fear and anger are very low vibrations that do not have the ability to benefit our current situation, or the future world.

When we study Buddhism, we learn about the layers of thought within us that are both conscious and subconscious. We learn that our Buddha-nature exists underneath all the junk in our store consciousness and that by following the Dharma in our lives, we bring this junk to the surface (into the light) to be acknowledged and transmuted through the practices. It is at this point of purification, that our Buddha-nature rises up and begins to shine.

I would like to draw a similarity with the world at this point. What if we can see

that a powerful light is pushing everything to the surface that needs to be revealed for all to see; to be rebalanced, transmuted, purified? Are we being called to step up our practice and make a broader spectrum of *bodhisattvaing* in the world than we have been doing? I think so. To create Buddha-land in the *saha* world, we must first have the Dharma anchored within us on a deep level.

The Teachings provide us with the tools for the task and this is paired with us providing the physical vehicle to manifest the Dharma in the world. To complete the process, it takes energy and effort infused with compassion for ourselves and others. We all have our special skill sets and natural abilities to lend. Stay vigilant; it is easy to slip and get wrapped up in the drama. If that happens, just acknowledge it and get back on track.

There will be times when we will grieve in sadness and at the losses we experience as humans. We will see people hurting each other in ways that we do not understand. Please nurture each other through the difficult times and when there are joyful moments, hold each other close and celebrate. We were born for these times. Let's finish what we came here to do.



Rev. Kris Ladusau
Minister, RK - Oklahoma



RK Buddhist Church of Hawaii

On December 4th, Oahu members decorated the altar with flower offerings for the Bodhi Day celebration. We had thirty members attend our special service that day and celebrate the Buddha's enlightenment.



Contributed by
Bradley Tom / RK Hawaii

Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of Los Angeles



On December 4th, Rissho Kosei-kai of Los Angeles celebrated the Buddha's Enlightenment Day, or Bodhi Day. On this occasion, Dr. Lori Meeks, Director of Religious Studies at the University of Southern California, offered a special lecture on the Lotus Sutra, focusing on the Shantideva and the Bodhisattva Way. Following her lecture, we held a Q&A session where members gained deeper insight into the aspects of her lecture and the Lotus Sutra as a whole.

On January 14th, we held a funeral service for one of our founding members and very first shibu-cho (branch leader) in the United States, Mrs. Kinuyo Grimmitt. Nearly 110 people attended the service honoring the life of this wonderful leader who dedicated herself entirely to Rissho Kosei-kai and guided many members to the Dharma. The beautiful service was presided by Rev. Hosoyama and facilitated by Rev. Nagata. Mrs. Grimmitt's enduring influence lives on in our hearts.



Rissho Kosei-kai of Los Angeles had its New Year's Party in the afternoon of January 15, 2017. The afternoon party filled up our auditorium with over 100 people! We had singing performances, skits, and dances from our members and affiliated organizations. COSMOS, senior lady singing choir, opened the party with wonderful nostalgic songs of Japan. Then we had the JSPACC (Japanese Speaking Parents Association for Children with Challenges) children and youth perform "hip-hop" Zumba-type dances. Although the children had many physical and mental challenges, they all performed brilliantly. We closed the party with giving out many raffle prizes. Everyone enjoyed an entertaining afternoon and many lucky ones took home prizes from the raffle.



Contributed by
Rev. Nicholas Ozuna



RK Buddhist Church of New York

Leaders Training last November

On Friday, November 4 through Sunday, November 6, Rev. Etsuko Fujita, invited Boston, Chicago and Ft. Myers leaders to attend a Training Session. The purpose: to hone leadership skills.

Yuri Sugino kicked off the meeting with an explanation and film about the successful Rishso Kosei-kai Program Donate-a-Meal. Yuri encouraged all to either skip a meal, a snack, or a designer coffee and give it to the needy.

Saturday morning focused on Listening and Skillful Means. A few Leaders gave presentations on Chapter 2 of the Lotus Sutra. Rev. Fujita followed with a lecture explaining Chapter 2 in detail. She stressed 1) the Three Vehicles are now seen as the One Buddha Vehicle, and 2) learning from our encounters is important as Buddha since he became enlightened to the 10 Suchnesses in this chapter.

In the afternoon, the 18 leaders gathered into groups of three interchanging and role playing as Hoza leader, a member seeking guidance, or an observer. During this round-robin of Hoza, everyone had a chance to lead, seek and watch.

On Sunday, Yasuko Vendley led a RK-K Member Training Session #1. She asked us to reflect on our own personal suffering, write it down and share our experience if we wished. The final step: review our suffering. However, this time, to try to understand what our purpose is in this life. We were asked if we still felt the same sense of discomfort, ache or hurt.



Feelings had changed. Rev. Fujita closed the weekend by linking our study on Chapter 2 and reminding us of the Seal of the Three Laws, the Ten Suchnesses and most importantly, every Being is able to be liberated through the One Buddha Vehicle.



Contributed by
Mary Sigman / RK Fort Meyers

Dharma Center of Oklahoma



Everyone enjoyed the mochi that Rev. Yasuko fixed to celebrate the New Year at the Dharma Center. She explained Japanese New Year traditions of food and visits to the Temple at midnight to hear the bell ring 108 times. We had a wonderful chanting service to start the new year and we studied President Niwano's message.

A good time was had by all at the children's class. Andrew Bentley led the chant which was followed by a discussion of the Three Treasures. Our resident artist and retired art teacher Karen Stafford taught the kids how to make small books and they created drawings in their books to represent the Three Treasures.



Contributed by
Rev. Kris Ladusau /
RK Oklahoma



Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of San Francisco



Happy New Year everyone! On January 15, 2017 we held our annual New Year's Gathering at our Dharma Center in Pacifica. We had a wonderful turnout as members attended with their family and friends.

Reverend Nagashima's first Dharma Talk of the year was about finding the Shortcut to Happiness. We live in a world where things appear to be about winning or losing: Win = happy, Lose = unhappy. We like the words "Never give up" and "I want justice." Why? Because we want to win!

In Buddhism, there are two kinds of happiness: the conditional type where you go out and get it yourself, like a job or winning a gold medal in the Olympics. The other type of happiness is unconditional, one that you receive from the Buddha. In Buddha's eyes, everything in the universe is as it should be, in balance. If we can remember this, there is no need to be unhappy. Of course, it takes practice to recognize that what appears to make us unhappy is still a gift from the Buddha; Buddha's compassion to guide us to true happiness.

Reverend Nagashima's talk was uplifting and so appropriate to start the New Year off with gratitude for the Buddha's teachings. Our Sangha looks forward to learning and growing together in Buddhism throughout the year. Gassho.

Contributed by Stephanie Meyer / RK San Francisco



Words from Founder Niwano

Founder's Faith

“I believe that life is practice and discipline from beginning to end. By practice and discipline, I mean doing everything wholeheartedly – both physically and mentally – and repeatedly... It is said that the way to master haiku is to compose a hundred a day. In baseball, they say that the only way for a reserve player to become a regular player is by the continued practice of swinging a bat a thousand times a day. Repetition deepens experience and wisdom, and is the fundamental way to build character.

“It is the same way with work. No matter how monotonous the task, if you do it time and again wholeheartedly, each time you will make visible progress. At the very moment you awaken to that improvement, you will feel the will to work... Become aware that the work before you is work that you will never encounter again in your entire life. It is true that, even if you do nothing today, tomorrow will come, but “tomorrow” is no more than a place on a calendar. If, on the other hand, you approach each day with the attitude that “today I will do today’s work,” then you will meet up with fresh work the following day. That day your day will be worthwhile.”



- Founder Nikkyo Niwano

Guiding Thoughts

To Live a Life of Strength

When we face against challenges, we tend to lose how we walk the path. In this issue I would like to share what the Founder instructed us.

1. Face the difficulty honestly and boldly without running away or evading the issue.
2. Discover, analyze, and adjust the causes of the trouble.
3. When a solution is forthcoming from this analysis, devote all of your efforts to carrying it through.
4. When you face a psychological difficulty that seems insoluble, leave it alone and devote yourself to the altruistic service of other people.
5. To live a life of strength, regard suffering steadfastly.

- Rev. Takashi Yoshizawa, RKINA Chief Operating Officers/Minister

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