



# Sangha In Motion

Bimonthly eNewsletter for RK Members in the US

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MAY 2012

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

## HIGHLIGHTS

Book Review

Buddhism for  
Everyday Life

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## Current Events



On Sunday, March 18, 2012, RKINA held a Higan-E ceremony service. Members gathered to celebrate this season and to pay remembrance of our ancestors. Members lit candles to offer the sincerity of gratitude they bear in their hearts and minds for their ancestors.

\*Higan is a Buddhist holiday exclusively celebrated in Japan during both the Spring and Autumnal Equinox. People who normally worked in the fields had more leisure time to evaluate their own practices, and to make a renewed effort to follow Buddhism. Today, special services are usually observed in Japanese Buddhist temples, and Japanese temples abroad, based on the particular Buddhist tradition or sect. The etymology of higan means "the other or that shore of Sanzu River", which is a common euphemism used in Buddhist literature to refer to Enlightenment. One crosses from this shore of ignorance and suffering to the other shore of Enlightenment and peace. Emphasis on Ohigan is the teaching of the Six Perfections, as well as a renewed resolve to reach Enlightenment. (\*Source: Wikipedia)

## Online Education - Cultivating the Buddhist Heart

RKINA 101 Cultivating the Buddhist Heart, Basic Buddhism Course will be offered online August 1—September 19, 2012. Live lectures will be given for 8 weeks through WebEX. Each Wednesday at 9:00 EST, 8:00 CST, 7:00 MST and 6:00 PST an hour lecture will be presented on the topic of the week.

Rev. Nick Ozuna will be the instructor for the lectures and Jane Perri will be the instructor for the online portions of the program that will be run through [www.nfomedia.com](http://www.nfomedia.com). This will be the fourth year the course has been offered. You will be able to sign up for the course at [www.rkina.org](http://www.rkina.org) by the end of the month.

# Guidance from Founder Niwano



**Nikkyo Niwano**  
Founder of  
Rissho Kosei-kai

Excerpt from  
**Cultivating the  
Buddhist Heart:**  
**How to Find Peace and  
Fulfillment in a  
Changing World**

*Preparing and  
maintaining so that  
one and all flourish*

*Kimberly Littleton*

## The fertile field of the heart

The agricultural philosopher Ninomiya Sontoku (1787-1856) wrote, “If you till the field of the heart, tilling the wilderness is easy.” In other words, tilling the wilderness is an arduous task, but if you can till the field of the heart you will have no trouble tilling the wilderness.

Buddhism includes the concept of the field of merits (also called the field of blessings). The field of merits is the field that generates virtues, the greatest field of merits being the Buddha. The Threefold Lotus Sutra likens the Buddha to “the blessings-field for gods and men” and “the great field of blessings for all living beings.” An old Japanese maxim runs, “Cultivate virtues in the field of merits.”

We too are fields that generate merits. As the Sutra of Innumerable Meanings says, “Pouring abundantly the supreme Mahayana, they [the bodhisattva-mahasattvas] dip all the good roots of living beings in it. Scatter the seeds of

goodness over the field of merits, and make all put forth the sprout of buddhahood.” This passage teaches the order in which the buddhas awaken the aspiration for buddhahood in us. This field of merits is none other than the field of the heart within everyone.

Each of us has a distinctive inner landscape. Of course it also shares features with others’ inner landscapes, but since we are all discrete beings, our fields of the heart put forth a wide variety of sprouts; compassion, warmth, flexibility, respect for life, and so on. When a field is tilled, its soil is loosened and it yields a rich harvest. In the same way, as we till the field of the heart our stiff and unyielding self-centeredness is loosened, we are released from suffering, and we are reborn as compassionate people imbued with respect for life. The more we till the field of the heart, the richer the harvest we reap. If we give the field water and light, it will yield an abundant harvest. The key is the way we till it. The field of the heart holds boundless potential; originally it is rich and fertile. (Page 142-143.)

## What does the meaning of “The fertile field of the heart” mean to you?

Let’s look at the three words tilling, field, and heart.

“Tilling” involves work, hard work. Tilling is our daily practice. This work must also be continuous. The farmer tilling his fields can never rest and feel his work is done. There is always another task to do. But there is a joy in those moments of brief pause when one can look back and see the progress that has been made and then continue to work some more.

“Field” means the world, our sphere of practice. There is no place in this world

that cannot be tilled, that cannot be a place of practice. Like Kannon, we must be able to practice anywhere and everywhere and be a light to the world.

And finally, “heart.” Heart is our Buddha nature. Through our daily practice, our hard work in the world bears fruit in our heart. Our tilling involves weeding out those parts of our self that do not nourish the heart, the Buddha nature. The tilling involves planting and nurturing those buddha seeds that we plant during our practice. This can be seen most clearly as a result of a disciplined daily sutra recitation practice.

Mary Sigman, Ft. Myers

## Hawaiian Style New Year's Car Blessing

On January 14, 2012, Reverend Shigemasa Hironaka celebrated the new year with the annual blessing of the cars of members



### A thought on suffering and happiness in life Rev. Masamichi Kamiya RK NY

This month, I'd like to talk about "suffering" and "happiness" in one's own life. I'll do so by referring to a problem that my friend was experiencing, and which she asked me to help her with.

My friend's daughter had been suffering from a chronic internal disease since birth. She said that, as a mother, she felt great pity toward her daughter, and worried that her daughter's successful business career would soon be ruined by this disease.

I replied to her, "As the mother, you are naturally worried about your daughter. But since she has to live under these circumstances, you might try instead to fully embrace the reality of the situation, acknowledging that your daughter will have to face the challenges of this disease for the rest of her life." Then I referred to Mr. Hirotsada Ototake, who was born with almost no arms or legs, and who later became a famous commentator and writer, very active in Japan. I told my friend that Mr. Ototake has accomplished a great deal because he has been living his life in a very positive way, fully accepting and embracing his physical handicap as it is.

After I had this conversation with my friend, I deeply pondered the meaning of "suffering" and "happiness" in our daily lives. It seems to be a fact that people can easily sink into total despair and unnecessarily cling to suffering, which can cover their minds like a dark cloud. But, if these people would try to look around them with a fresh, pure perspective, they may well find something to make them smile, or something to be proud of, or something that may make them feel gratitude, even in the midst of suffering.

Mr. Nobukazu Kuriki, a promising young mountain climber, has figured out three dimensions of suffering through his experiences in climbing mountains with no oxygen cylinder, reaching heights are over 8,000 meters: first, suffering becomes heavier if people fight against it; second, suffering follows people if they try to run away from it; and third, suffering will someday transform to joy.

In addition, Ms. Hideko Suzuki, a devoted Christian, pointed out that all happy people have learned how to be satisfied with what they currently possess, instead of seeking something extra, which one doesn't own now. She further said that to find happiness doesn't necessarily mean to turn one's eyes away from suffering; instead, a person will they find happiness if he or she is brave enough to face suffering and even embrace it with gratitude. Ms. Suzuki emphasized then that as long as people have a mind of gratitude, they can recognize that the seeds of happiness do exist near them. (The comments of Mr. Kuriki's and Ms. Suzuki's are shown in the Japanese monthly magazine called "Chi Chi", March 2012 issue).

Referring to the well-known idea of a "a half empty glass of water" and "a half full glass with water," Rev. Nichiko Niwano, President of Risho Kosei-kai, once stated in his Dharma guidance that there is the third premise for the simile, namely that one can feel, "I am thankful that somebody who left half a glass of water for me".

These valuable words introduced above clearly tell us that a mind of "gratitude" is a "formula", which can miraculously transform suffering to happiness (or joy) in our lives.

It is true that we quite often experience suffering and happiness in life. But, let us try to see the happiness that we already possess, but may not have recognized, rather than clinging to suffering, which may overwhelm us. As we nourish our sense of gratitude day by day, we will entertain more the wonderful flavor of happiness, while lessening the bitter taste of suffering.

# Rissho Kosei-kai Members

Send in biographies and photos of your new members!

## Kauai, HI

Aloha!

Much mahalo to Reverend Hironaka, Mae Takamoto, Mary Fujiyoshi, Joyce Manalo and to both Uncle Raymond and Aunty Pearl Awana and to everyone who attended our family enshrinement here in Kauai.

In 1993, I was fortunate to learn about the teachings of Buddha through a family friend, Norma Kabazawa Takeshita. Norma instilled in me the teachings of the Buddha way and how to combine and balance life through the teachings. I, along with other friends, would go to her home very early on some mornings before we went to work, on Saturday mornings, and after work, to learn and recite the teachings. When she passed away in 1999 we did not continue to meet and study together. Since that time it became a long-time search and desire of mine to continue to learn about the dharma. Then, my prayers were answered.

In 2010, I connected with Aunty Pearl. Then in 2011 Aunty Pearl shared with me her journey. I became inspired. So, it came full circle on December 11th, 2011. It was a very exciting and happy time for me. I felt complete and empowered to start on the path again. It was rejuvenating and very uplifting. My husband Rocky was happy and very supportive in every way to see this process through. I am very grateful for his utmost support for me to continue on this personal endeavor of mine. Rocky and all my children have been my rock and foundation.

I look forward to learn as much as possible so that I too, along with fellow members of Rissho Kosei Kai, continue to blossom and flourish in the teachings of Buddha.

Adeline and Rocky Refamonte  
Hanamaulu, Kauai, Hawaii

quote

President Nichiko  
Niwano

Cultivating the  
Buddhist Heart





# Youth Leaders Web Meeting

On Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup> youth leaders from Dharma Centers in Hawaii, San Antonio, and Orange County gathered online in different time zones for the first Youth Leaders Web Meeting. Facilitated by U.S. Youth Coordinator Rev. Nick Ozuna, the youth leaders discussed a range of topics based on the theme "Inspiration to Action". Leading with the question of how to inspire youth members and raise commitment in youth leaders, the participants shared their thoughts on local Dharma Center youth sangha development. Topics discussed included creating educational programs for youth and children, organizing monthly activities and connecting online. One of the major affirmations that came from the meeting was the necessity to enhance outreach efforts for youth members and be creative in having them involved in Dharma Center activities. The Participants were inspired to work to implement concrete programs to encourage the growth and commitment of their respective youth groups. One of the projects from the meeting was the creation of a new Facebook page was created for Rishho Kosei-kai U.S. Youth. The page can be accessed at: <http://www.facebook.com/RishhoKoseiKaiUsYouth> Please visit this page to encourage sharing and promotion of the Dharma among young adults and those young at heart!





# San Francisco Cherry Blossom Parade

On April 22, the Rissho Kosei-kai San Francisco Dharma Center helped celebrate the San Francisco City parade Cherry Blossom Festival.

Rissho Kosei-kai's Matoi group participated in the parade, and included members not only from San Francisco, but also the Seattle and Los Angeles buddhist centers.







# Ft. Myers Dharma Center

On April 8, 2012, the day of celebration of Shakyamuni Buddha's birth, a new Dharma Center was born and



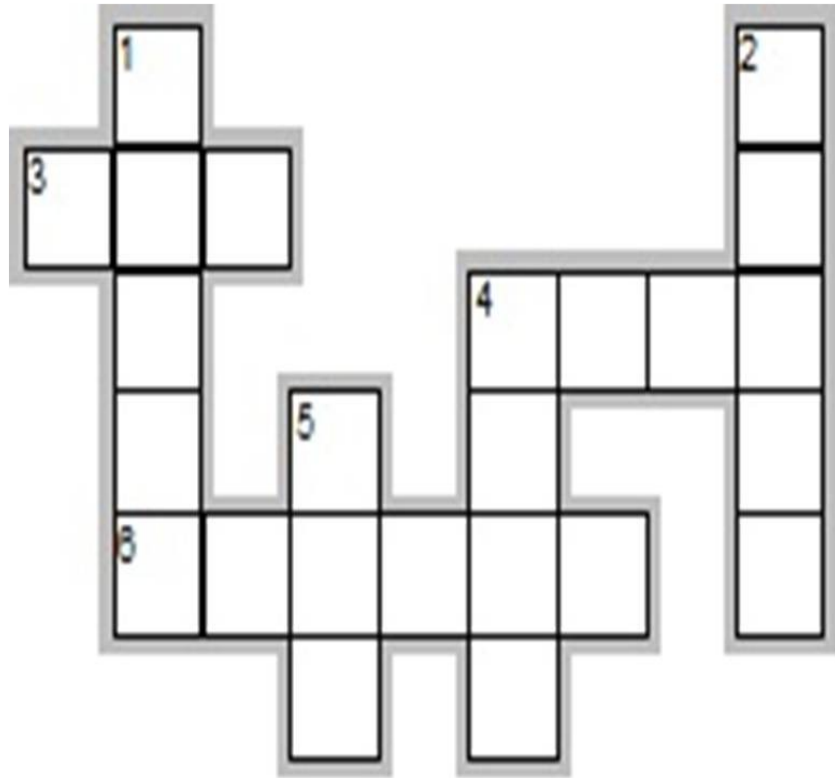
welcomed into the RKINA family. The RK group in Fort Myers, Florida, formerly under NY Church, is now officially part of RKINA. Leader Mary Tracy Sigman and all of the RK Ft. Myers group are most happy!





Basic Teachings

# Activities      The Numbers Game!



## Across

- 
3. The \_\_\_\_ Perfections
  4. The \_\_\_\_ Noble Truths
  6. The \_\_\_\_ Causes

## Down

- 
1. The \_\_\_\_ fold Path
  2. The \_\_\_\_ Treasures
  4. The \_\_\_\_ Excellent Powers
  5. The \_\_\_\_ Suchnesses



## Family Matters

### The Golden Plate [Greed and Honesty]

Buddhist Tales for Young & Old  
Prince Goodspeaker [www.buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net)

Once upon a time in a place called Seri, there were two salesmen of pots and pans and handmade trinkets. They agreed to divide the town between them. They also said that after one had gone through his area, it was alright for the other to try and sell where the first had already been.

One day, while one of them was coming down a street, a poor little girl saw him and asked her grandmother to buy her a bracelet. The old grandmother replied, "How can we poor people buy bracelets?" The little girl said, "Since we don't have any money, we can give our black sooty old plate." The old woman agreed to give it a try, so she invited the dealer inside.

The salesman saw that these people were very poor and innocent, so he didn't want to waste his time with them. Even though the old woman pleaded with him, he said he had no bracelet that she could afford to buy. Then she asked, "We have an old plate that is useless to us, can we trade it for a bracelet?" The man took it and, while examining it, happened to scratch the bottom of it. To his surprise, he saw that underneath the black soot, it was a golden plate! But he didn't let on that he had noticed it. Instead he decided to deceive these poor people so he could get the plate for next to nothing. He said, "This is not worth even one bracelet there's no value in this, I don't want it!" He left thinking he would return later when they would accept even less for the plate.

Meanwhile the other salesman, after finishing in his part of town, followed after the first as they had agreed. He ended up at the same house. Again the poor little girl begged her grandmother to trade the old plate for a bracelet. The woman saw that this was a nice tender looking merchant and thought, "He's a good man, not like the rough-talking first salesman." So she invited him in and offered to trade the same black sooty old plate for one bracelet. When he examined it, he too saw that it was pure gold under the grime. He said to the old woman, "All my goods and all my money together are not worth as much as this rich golden plate!"

Of course the woman was chocked at this discovery, but now she knew that he was indeed a good and honest fellow. So she said she would be glad to accept whatever he could trade for it. The salesman said, "I'll give you all my pots and pans and trinkets, plus all my money, if you will let me keep just eight coins and my balancing scale, with its cover to put the golden plate in." They made the trade. He went down to the river, where he paid the eight coins to the ferry man to take him across.

By then the greedy salesman had returned, already adding up

huge imaginary profits in his head. When he met the little girl and her grandmother again, he said he had changed his mind and was willing to offer a few cents, but not one of his bracelets, for the useless black sooty old plate. The old woman then calmly told him of the trade she had just made with the honest salesman, and said, "Sir, you lied to us."

The greedy salesman was not ashamed of his lies, but he was saddened as he thought, "I've lost the golden plate that must be worth a hundred thousand." So he asked the woman, "Which way did he go?" She told him the direction. He left all his things right there at her door and ran down to the river, thinking, "He robbed me! He robbed me! He won't make a fool out of me!"

From the riverside he saw the honest salesman still crossing over on the ferry boat. He shouted to the ferry man, "Come back!" But the good merchant told him to keep on going to the other side, and that's what he did

Seeing that he could do nothing, the greedy salesman exploded with rage. He jumped up and down, beating his chest. He became so filled with hatred towards the honest man, who had won the golden plate, that he made himself cough up blood. He had a heart attack and died on the spot!

**THE MORAL IS:**  
**"Honesty is the best policy."**



Discussion questions:

Oftentimes, when children are close in age, sibling rivalry occurs. One child might tell an untrue story to a parent in order to get his or her sibling in trouble.

1. If a child does this, he/she is probably feeling insecure about sharing or receiving parental attention. What can be done to counter this insecurity?
2. What can be said in a discussion regarding lying that does not further increase the child's anxiety about being loved?

*“Liberation from suffering will occur if you sincerely release any connection you have to wishing things were different than they are.”*

*Rev. Ladusau*

## Dear Abhidharma By Rev. Kris Ladusau

Dear Abhidharma,

What’s the best thing to do when someone insults me for being myself? I have worn my hair in dreads locks for a year now and I like it. I’m young, and my family is letting me express my “wild” side while I’m in college. I am a good student and they understand my need to be an individual.

My family, my friends and most of my teachers think it’s OK. But my boyfriend’s mother calls me dirty and worthless because of them. I shower daily and keep them clean. My boyfriend actually likes them. I really like him, but I cannot handle the way his mother treats me and we see her a couple times a month. What should I do when insults me every time we meet?

Wooly but not wild

Dear Wooly

People sometimes have difficulty when others are not as they want them to be. This is especially true when it comes to parents. I can tell that you care about school and that you have good personal hygiene. Both of those are important and a reflection of healthy self respect.

I can only image how difficult it is to hear criticism from your boyfriend’s mother every time you see her. I am sure that you would rather have her focus on the fact that you are a good student and that you care about her son. If you have the opportunity to share with her, what you have shared with me, that would be a start. She may not be receptive but it would give you a chance to be honest with her.

From the Buddhist perspective we know we can’t change other people, we can only change our own hearts and minds. Our suffering or discontent in life situations is released when we choose to see things from a new perspective.

Liberation from suffering will occur if you sincerely release any connection you have to wishing things were different than they are, acknowledgement of what is, can be the first step. Doing the best we can each moment, is the second step. Forget about the outcome. Have compassion for yourself and for his mother. Be true to yourself and shine like a light in the world. Be kind and courteous, you will be a good example for everyone.

Gassho  
Rev. Kris Ladusau

## Living Life Naturally Organic Growing

As stewards of the land it is important to realize that the soil we live on is alive. The living organisms in the soil represent the key to plant health and to human health. Soil microorganisms are the essential link between mineral reserves and plant growth. Ecological soil management aims at assisting all soil organisms instead of substituting them with a simplified chemical system. When synthetic chemical fertilizers are applied to the soil, Nature’s delicate balance becomes interrupted as essential microorganisms

become eliminated, compaction of the soil occurs and weeds become prevalent. (<http://www.arbico-organics.com>)

Use of high quality organic fertilizers, soil amendments, micro-nutrients, and foliar spraying materials will enhance soils and plants for traditional, transitional and organic gardeners and farmers.

Planting season is upon us. If we want to eat healthy and pay less than what the expensive whole foods store charges, we can grow our own veggies in a natural way.



# Art from the Sanghas

## *Bodhisattvas and the Cosmic Web*

By Emi Motokawa

Los Angeles Member

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



# Book Reviews by Nancy Anderson

## Basic Buddhism Through Comics

by Mitsutoshi Furuya



Hot Off  
the Press!



Nancy Anderson  
Klamath Falls OR  
Member

### Basic Buddhism Through Comics

by Mitsutoshi Furuya

From a western Buddhist point of view, the basic Buddhism in this comic book is rock solid. In it we find clear, concise lessons on the Four Noble Truths, the Eight-fold Path, the Six Paramitas, and the Triple Treasure, and more. It's all there for the learning, and in this way we who have chosen to follow the gentle path of the Buddha are well served.

The comic book format, popular in Japan, is an example of the use of skillful means. Some people prefer to get their information by seeing, some by hearing, and some by doing. Of those who learn primarily by seeing, some prefer linear lines of type and others a more holistic approach, for example, through pictures and movies. This comic combines both linear and holistic visual information delivery.

From the linear, we get conversation and lessons as the comic book characters speak their lines. From the holistic approach we get vivid cartoon snapshots of Japanese life: style of dress, household objects, Japanese screens and lanterns, to name a few. After seeing these pictures, who wouldn't want to call a travel agent to make arrangements to go to Japan for a visit?

There something, quite a lot in fact, about the stories that are universal in nature. Japan is not the only country where there are unhappy families, drunken husbands, squabbling couples and angry neighbors. The USA has its share, and no doubt other countries as well. These problems, in the book, are resolved by applying the principles of Buddhism, and by doing so everyone lives happily ever after, as we would expect.

The principles of Buddhism are the backbone of the book, and yet throughout we find secondary messages seemingly opposite of the principles. One does not have to read between the lines to find what

smacks of violence, sexism and substance abuse and the not subtle but in-your-face messages that these things are okay.

Here are a few examples. Depicted in the early pages, Grandfather Crow, our guide through the book, smacks his female granddaughter on the head for making what he thought an inappropriate conclusion about "taking one's own path..." And then he talks about "the path of spiritual training." This is spiritual training? Somehow hitting a young female on the head doesn't fit with the intended lesson.

The story of the woman married to a drunken husband illustrates a bit of irony as well. She is taken to Grandpa, a wise elder, who smokes a pipe throughout the counseling session where he teaches giving up attachments. Not only that, we have a substance abuser counseling a substance abuser's wife that she is the one who has to change. Is smoking a pipe an addiction, and in doing so is it right thinking, right action, right anything?

And then, toward the end of a story, there is a celebratory feast with a celebratory bottle prominently ready on the table for opening. We assume it is a bottle of alcohol. Is this really congruent with the principles of Buddhism?

Is our journey to the other shore one where we go seriously and soberly? Or is it okay to take the celebratory bottle with us?

*Nancy Anderson, a member of Rissho Kosei-kai in Klamath Falls Oregon, received her Lay Buddhist Ordination at Shasta Abbey Buddhist Monastery. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education from Montana State University and a Master of Arts Degree in Business Management/Human Relations from Webster University. She is a Certified Meditation Instructor, trained in Vipassanā meditation instruction and certified by the University of Holistic Theology.*



Traveling ?

Try visiting  
one of your  
sister sanghas!



## Locations and Calendar of Centers

### **Rissho Kosei-kai International of North America (Irvine CA)**

Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Orange County (CA)

Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Tampa Bay (FL)

Rissho Kosei-kai of Ft. Myers

### **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 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)**

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 Dharma Center of Oklahoma (OKC)**

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)

## How to Subscribe

To subscribe to this newsletter contact the minister at your Dharma Center or visit the RKINA website. [www.rkina.org](http://www.rkina.org)

## 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](mailto:jane.perri@rkina-dayton.com)

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