

Sangha in Motion

U.S. Dharma Centers - Staying Connected

SUMMER 2018

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What is Buddhism?

People of the world view Buddhism in a variety of ways. Many practice it as a religion, some view it as a philosophy, while others simply see it as “an ethical way of living.” Regardless of how it is perceived, if we choose to deeply encounter the Buddha Way we need to understand that it is an ever-evolving, healthy synergy of reason and intuition meant for daily use.

For those willing to take the first step into application of its wisdom, it reveals a profound journey of experiential learning. Buddhism creates a functional understanding of both our physical body and our spiritual essence, and how these aspects together fully represent us as “human beings.”

This summer, when we spend time and effort studying the lessons the Buddha shared, each word becomes sustenance for our journey, and the Lotus Sutra’s transformative gifts of “creativity and empowerment” become our strengths along the Way.

Gassho,
Rev. Kris Ladusau
Rissho Kosei-kai of Oklahoma

RK Buddhist Church of Hawaii



Harmony over the Ocean, Journey to Peace

The Honolulu Festival Parade was held in March. We had 20 members from Japan assist us in our first time at participating in the Honolulu Festival Parade. The theme this year was “*Harmony over the Ocean, Journey to Peace.*” It worked well for our practice since playing the instruments and waving the matoi is supposed to be done with a relaxed mind. We marched down the one-mile street in Waikiki next to the beach with a crowd cheering us on from both sides of the street. Together with our 30 Hawaii members, we had a great time and look forward to making this a regular spring event.

In April we celebrated with Buddha’s Birthday service with offering of tea to the Buddha by the congregation. We had many children helping with the offerings.

In May we helped our Maui Dharma Center to exhibit for the first time at the Maui Matsuri Festival that they had at the University of Hawaii Maui College great lawn. The event was a culmination of everything Japanese for a 3-day weekend. There was food, anime exhibits, crafts and games that had a Japanese theme to it along with just about every type of entertainment that has made Japan famous. There were several bon dance groups, taiko drummers, musicians, cosplay pageant and martial arts demonstrations. We were there for a taiko performance. We had a handful of musicians march around the grounds and play the beat while the taiko group showed everyone what they could do. The performance was about 10 minutes and culminated with Jordan and Tada performing some acrobatics with the matoi on the stage while the musicians surrounded them.

Oahu members participated with Maui Dharma group for service and hoza while in town for the Maui Matsuri Festival.



Contributed by Bradley Tom
Rissho Kosei-kai of Hawaii



Rissho Kosei-kai of New York



Joint Celebration of 80th Anniversary

The highlight of our recent activities had to be our celebration of the 80th Anniversary of Rissho Kosei-kai. Rissho Kosei-kai of New York (RKNY) held a joint celebration via Skype with its satellite centers, making the day even more special for all members in the branch. Also adding to our joy was a large youth group visiting from Japan.

As part of the service, four leaders—two from New York Dharma Center and two from Florida (Orlando and Ft. Myers)—spoke their Words of Gratitude at the celebration. James Lynch told us of how his practice has helped him in dealing with his son's poor health. Bryce Jones spoke about how his practice has made him a better lawyer. Kayoko shared how her practice has brought her family together. Mary said she is trying to see things as they really are and recognize the Buddha-nature in us all. Then one of the young visitors from Japan spoke about how her practice has helped her in her educational studies.

The Rev. Fujita of RKNY concluded the speeches by commenting upon all of the talks given that day, as well

Rissho Kosei-kai of New York (cont'd)



as giving her own heartfelt words for this occasion, reminding us of the hard work done by Founder and Cofounder.

Hearing the love and appreciation from all of the speakers made everyone feel great joy for being part of Rissho Kosei-kai. Fort Myers then had to sign off of Skype, but RKNY finished their day with great joy as a member, Beverly, led them all in a session of Laughter Yoga.



It was a day we will all remember!



Contributed by Mary Tracy Sigman
Rissho Kosei-kai Dharma Center of Fort Myers

Dharma Center of Oklahoma



Celebration of Buddha's Birthday

This year, Oklahoma members celebrated Buddha's birthday with the traditional offering of sweet tea and birthday cake for the Buddha. The children's class made origami lotus flowers and showed the mudra that Buddha shared when he was born.

Oklahoma also sent five participants to the Advanced Seminar in Chicago this spring. They were: Steven Smith, Catherine Schubert, Eric Russell, Diane Blaney and Mandy Leung. Dharma Teacher Kathy Spengler also attended as an observer.

We needed to repair the fence along the edge of the Dharma Center property. Mike Moffeit, Eric Russell, and Steven Smith were giving it their all!

Lastly, Rev. Ladusau represented the Dharma Center at the Annual Oklahoma Conference of Churches interfaith breakfast. It was a wonderful gathering of over 100 spiritual leaders in the OKC area.



Contributed by Rev. Kris Ladusau
Dharma Center of Oklahoma
Minister

Rissho Kosei-kai Buddhist Center of San Antonio



Construction of Church Addition Underway!

Well, it goes without saying that Rissho Kosei-kai San Antonio is going through a growth spurt of epic proportions! The Dharma Center is busting at the seams and we are doing our best to conduct Dharma Center business simultaneously with the ongoing sanctuary expansion. It's been quite a challenge, but we are up it!

In addition to the construction, we have held a very successful yard sale, a weekly Wednesday evening arts and activities class, and our usual schedule of classes and activities. The Rev. Ozuna visited in May to perform a Car Blessing Ceremony, which was appreciated by our drivers! Several of our younger members participated in the Cherry Blossom Parade in San Francisco in April month and had a great time. Just recently four of our members began their two-year journey at the Advanced Seminar, this time held in Chicago.



Our small but energized volunteer corps has identified 13 large landscape projects to be completed prior to our Grand Opening event in October and they have taken on the assignment of raising all the funds and completing all the work themselves. We just opened our walking trail, which is approximately 1/8 mile. We have built a new playground for our kids, and now we are starting work on the new gardens around the property. It's so encouraging to see some of the younger and newer sangha members adopting the Dharma Center as their place of study, worship, fellowship, and fun!

We hope everyone in Rissho Kosei-kai United States gets an opportunity to visit our new center in the coming years!



Contributed by Kevin Roche
Rissho Kosei-kai of San Antonio



Rissho Kosei-kai of San Francisco



All was in Bloom for the Cherry Blossom Parade

This April we participated in the annual Cherry Blossom Parade in San Francisco. Members from San Francisco, Hawaii, Los Angeles, San Antonio got together to take part in the parade in downtown San Francisco. The weather was perfect as if the day welcomed and cheered for all of us to display our joy in the Dharma in the downtown.

The matoi was flying in to the air, and sound of flute and drums resonated into the audience. Rissho Kosei-kai is always one of the most recognizable groups in the parade for its energetic and lively actions and sounds. The youth members from the various Dharma Center that gathered on this day created new and lasting memories!



Contributed by Rev. Kiyohiko Yoshizawa
Rissho Kosei-kai of San Francisco
Minister

The Founder's Words



Everyone wishes, deep in their heart, for everyone around them to achieve happiness. So we must do all we can to help others. Unfortunately, there is also a troublesome thing in the human heart known as self-interest – a nagging tendency to think first of what we might do to make out own lives easier regardless of the effect on others. Thinking this way, we come to feel that helping others is merely an irksome chore. However, when we look closely at the real situation and set aside this attitude for the moment, we surely comprehend that mutual support is part of human nature.

Closing Message

A Good Driver

One member who had been married for many years lost her husband. She is a steady leader, but she was in mourning for several days.

On the 49th day of his passing, she made a donation of significant amount. She kindly shared what had come to her. She was truly full of joy and gratitude for what she was able to accomplish, and was so sure that her late husband was pleased with her practice.



I sincerely admire her because she turned the loss of one so precious to her into a wonderful memory.

President's Message in *Living the Lotus* volume 153 (June 2018) which is titled "Standing Firm," begins with this phrase:

"The Dhammapada, one of the oldest extant sutras in the Buddhist canon, includes this verse: *"He who can control the rumbling of his rising anger, just as if he were controlling a quickly running carriage, I call a good driver."*

While the sutra describes only the anger, President Niwano adds, "even though we are taught to do so, it is difficult to put the brakes on feelings or emotions, which are hardly limited to outbursts of anger."

I see this member gradually and spontaneously applying her brakes to her outbursts of various emotions such as sorrow and anxiety. Then she came to be able to control them and eventually found joy and gratitude in this experience. This transition is a fruit of her practice of the faith. She is an example of a good driver.

Rev. Takashi Kodaka
Director, Rissho Kosei-kai International of North America

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