

HORIZON

“A Meeting in Your Mailbox”

[not an official SGI publication]

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WHAT'S NEW

by Sandi Monica-Pier

How to Be Happy: Here's a wonderful article that tells you everything you need to know about happiness, written by the great bodhisattva and brilliant thinker **Shin Yatomi**.

http://shinyatomi.com/PDF/how_do_I_become_happy.pdf

STIMULUS PACKAGE HAPPINESS CHECK		Do Gongyo #1
Together with SGI. Pres. Daisaku Ikeda		
	Date	March 16, 2009
Pay to the		
Order of	My Happiness, America's Happiness and World Peace	\$ Unlimited Fortune
Single: One Shakubuku*** Married: Two Shakubuku*** Head of Household: One Family		
Daimoku Bank 2901 N. Cambell El Paso, Texas 79902		
Memo	Renew My Vow for Kosen-rufu	Your Signature:
Chant Nam-myoho-renge-kyo: Study the Goshu		

Taking Buddhism to the Streets:

Hip-hop artist **Da'Mone Batease**, who performed at the New Year's Day celebration in Portland, sent us this link to some fellow hip-hop Buddhists in New York City.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtpayM5e08c>

Happy trails...

MAYANS, MAYHEM, MAPPO

by Linda Segall Anable

On January 21, 2010, the Supreme Court of the United States awarded ownership of this country to Corporations (which, presumably, must now be capitalized), ruling that “corporations” are the same as “people.” LOL! Essentially, this ruling means that America is becoming North Korea, with Corporations in the role of Kim Jong Il. Seems like another telltale

sign that the world is hurtling to an end. Is this what the Mayans predicted?

The Mayan calendar famously ends on December 21, 2012. Unfortunately, there is no explanation for why there is no December 22, 2012 or any days after that. No “doomsday” circled on the final date—it simply ends. It's fascinating and unnerving to imagine what might happen in 2012, especially since whatever it is, it's coming right up. Some envision a global cataclysm, like the recent film, *2012*. Others expect WIII. Most people are probably unconcerned about the Mayan calendar and assume 12-21-12 will be much like 12-20-12.

“Buddhism explains this age of the Latter Day of the Law as a time filled with people who oppose the heart of the Lotus Sutra, an age where views and teachings that run counter to life's inherent dignity prevail.” (www.SGI-USA.org). That sure sounds like our current times. But while no one would disagree that we are knee-deep in the defiled age called *Mappo*, Buddhism does not foresee an apocalyptic doomsday and certainly doesn't give dates. Just the opposite—Buddhism is about creating *kosen-rufu*. Buddhists not only believe that peace is possible, but that we are creating it molecule by molecule with every daimoku we chant.

Does that mean we will achieve *kosen-rufu* in 2012? Although the times, they are ‘a changin’, for peace to happen in 34 months, the changin’ would be have to be on the scale of Krakatoa east of Java. It would require every man, woman and child on the planet to chant 24 hours a day, every day. (It would work though!). The last “world-ending” fear, Y2K, seemed little more than a publicity stunt that few took seriously. But I think there is some validity to the Mayan calendar, and considering the profoundly wacky times we're in, some dramatic, life-altering milestone may well be in the offing. Beliefs are

self-fulfilling prophecies and if enough people believe something is going to happen in 2012, it probably will. On the other hand, exposing a prediction alters its energy, so in that respect, the more consensus there is about 2012, the less likely that consensus will be correct. But not to worry, as there seems to be little agreement of what, if anything, will happen.

Personally, I don't believe that Armageddon is just around the corner; I think we're in the middle of it *right now*. Still, my fervently held prediction is that the world will not end in 2012, but will change in a way that makes all the other changes we've seen in the past look like kid stuff. World events keep vying with each other to push the boundaries of sensationalism. Things are accelerating so quickly, I'm certain there are now fewer hours in the day and that the Earth is spinning faster. In this ever-wilder climate, anything could and probably will happen.



The Mayan Calendar...looks a little ominous...

Short of the world exploding (technically, humanity—Earth will still be here), what could possibly happen so monumental it could cause a calendar that dates back to the 6th century BC to come to a screeching halt? Perhaps by 2012, the concept of time itself will become obsolete and people will have an innate understanding of “rengé,” the truth that all time is contained in the present moment—there is only now. In that case, who needs a calendar?

Don't put money on it. Such a high level of enlightenment seems unlikely, since in 2010 there are still people who believe the Earth is flat

and many more who hold equally incredulous ideas. I'm pretty sure we won't be tossing away the construct of time in such short order. Besides, every year for the past 25 years I've sent my Uncle Howard the “365 Sports Facts-A-Year Page-A-Day Calendar” and he'd be upset if that tradition ended. I'm confident I'll be sending him the 2013 edition.

So here's my hunch—or maybe it's my fantasy: on December 21, 2012 Earth receives a welcome-wagon visit from some of our more technologically and spiritually advanced extra-terrestrial neighbors. Now that would be a headline-and-a-half. I'll bet it would eat up more news cycles than the death of Anna Nicole Smith.

Of course, they would have to prove it. They couldn't get away with a few tricks, or risk being dismissed as James Cameron's latest CGI brainchild. It wouldn't be enough to go on Larry King and Oprah. They would have to convince people beyond a reasonable doubt. Of course, some would never be persuaded no matter how compelling the evidence, because emotion trumps logic every time. Those who believe that Earth is flat don't want to be confused by the facts. But that's okay.

I think the reason aliens haven't been here before—at least not openly—is because they don't want to land in war zone. Earth probably isn't one of their most popular vacation locales. So while they might not come here for fun, they might come in charity, the way much of the world has come to the aid of Haiti. Maybe they were watching their cable news, saw what was going on Earth and realized they had to intervene before it's too late. A neighboring planet destroyed by its inhabitants can't be a good thing for the rest of the universe. Perhaps other civilizations have a vested interest in keeping our world in tact. They probably understand inter-connectedness much better than we do.

The universal language of chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo spans the galaxy. Surely there are curious beings out there who have tuned into our vibration, who understand Nam-myoho-renge-kyo. Maybe they've sent out a reconnaissance team to check us out. Which somehow arrives on 12-21-12. Hey, if they're smart enough to get here, surely they'd know that 12-21-12 would be an awesome time to show up.

Imagine the implications. Many of our Earthly comrades—like those who subscribe to a conventional Earth-based war mentality—would be thrown for a loop. What to do? Stop fighting each other and go after the foreign intruders? Band together in unity, suddenly realizing we

have more in common than we have differences? That alone would be a sufficient miracle, plenty of justification for a helpful visit from the Way-Out-of-Towners.

My guess is that it would be even more far-reaching than that. I don't think they would come all the way here just to say, "Hey kids! Stop all that fighting!" and then go home. Hopefully they'll give us some ingenious and fast-acting solutions to our many vexing problems; like war, health care, racism, global warming, pollution, poverty, the economy... and of course, the Supreme Court. Giving us a hand with those few things would make a big difference in the lives of many Earthlings.

So let the Supreme Corporation of the United States make its dangerous, catastrophic rulings. I've sent out the cosmic bat signal—NMRK—to the ET cavalry. The Mystic Law is infinitely more powerful than a court of law.

Citizens of peace across the universe—can you hear me now? I'm sending you an invitation to visit Planet Earth ASAP. Make sure you bring the heavy equipment. And don't believe everything you read about us. No, you can believe it—it's all true. But we love our planet. It's absolutely gorgeous, and Buddhists, at least, believe peace can happen here. Just asking for a little help from our friends. So come on down!

Also, here's a parking tip. If you land at an SGI community center, you can be assured of a warm and friendly greeting from enlightened Earthlings. After that, it's up to you. Good luck! Nam-myoho-rence-kyo.

DEFEATING FUNDAMENTAL DARKNESS

by Daniel Espiritu
Portland, OR

President Toda used to say, "Become individuals who are strong physically, intellectually and spiritually. To be strong in all three areas is the ideal. Many people may be strong in one or two of these areas, but only when all three are combined can we enjoy a well-balanced life, a life of resounding victory. Those who cultivate such all-round strength are never defeated."

I first began practicing Nichiren Buddhism in Santa Cruz in the spring of 1996. Through chanting Nam-myoho-rence-kyo, I've developed as a person and have become more refined but my fundamental darkness manifested in addiction to alcohol. I've waged

a war with this addiction for ten years and currently have ten months of sobriety. Keep in mind this is the third time I've had at least ten months of sobriety. At other points I've had two years and a-year-and-a-half of sobriety.

I used to consider myself a pretty functional drinker. I kept to myself and did not involve anybody else, but when I was alone I'd make poor decisions, like deciding to get behind the wheel of a car and drive. Thankfully, *shoten zenjin*, the protective functions in the environment, were fully functioning when I wasn't, as nobody was ever hurt.

I got my fourth DUI in the summer of 2005. Yes, four. It sounds unbelievable. At that time, I was in the middle of graduate school training to become an acupuncturist. Though I had a lot of positive momentum, I was also feeling isolated, defeated and depressed. At school I strived to be better, then came home, isolated and drank. I wasn't chanting much nor doing gongyo. It felt like I was living a total lie.

Drinking impacted me in other areas of my life. When I was the Columbia River Area YMD Leader, I met with another YMD at a bar and got drunk. As a result I was asked to step down from my leadership position. I felt shame and disgust and for a few years wasn't very active in the SGI.

Fundamental darkness is a real aspect of Buddhahood. I now realize that the root of my fundamental darkness was and still is, addiction.

After the fourth DUI I felt tremendous shame and regret. I didn't see myself as a Buddha. Fortunately, I was referred to a great DUI lawyer, one of the best in the state. He advised me to do nothing; simply to wait it out. That was fine with me as I was vulnerable, traumatized and scared. I felt broken. I was faced prison time, huge fines and losing driving privileges for life.

Doing nothing meant I stopped drinking and kept studying. I graduated in 2006 and



was ready to become a licensed acupuncturist. However, the DUI prevented me from getting a license. My lawyer still told me to wait and do nothing so, I did.

I got a job in a restaurant and focused on medicine on the side. By the fall of 2008 I was still waiting to take care of the DUI. My girlfriend at the time broke up with me and moved out. I began to spiral out of control. Again I returned to drinking, isolating and feeling depressed. I was in a complete state of hell... At times I would reach out to my YMD leaders in a desperate plea for help, but I hit rock bottom. Finally, I got sober, with the support of my family and close friends.

In the past when I got sober I did it on my own terms. I didn't like to go to AA meetings and didn't want to admit that I was powerless over anything. My Buddhist views seemed to be completely contrary to those of the 12-Step communities. I had the Gohonzon, my Buddhahood and the power to do my Human Revolution. I felt superior to other addicts who did not have these same tools. So, instead I chanted, exercised and basically did my own thing, which was short of a complete overhaul of my life and a commitment to sobriety.

This time I did not resist. I "let go and let God," as they say in AA. I've just changed some of the words like God and Higher Power and other things I didn't mesh with to mean Mystic Principle and Gohonzon or Buddha Nature. Also, I got a sponsor who I work with and talk to almost daily. I go to meetings and am working through the steps. I'm basically doing all the things that one is supposed to do when they get sober. I've realized that 12-steppers who are working a strong program are essentially doing their own human revolution; they just aren't using NMRK or the Gohonzon to do it. It's quietly amazing to feel the courage, strength and hope of the people in these groups. And yes, we are all Buddhas and have the ten worlds working in and through our lives.

I also revitalized my Buddhist practice. I began chanting regularly and got involved in activities. I accepted every invitation to participate in a gosho study or a district meeting. I said yes to everything.

This past summer, the Daimoku First/Unity First Campaign was initiated which included going to the SGI-Portland Buddhist Center and chanting from 6am to 8am Tuesdays through Fridays. Within a week

or so, I found myself going nearly every morning. I've experienced so much benefit and have become more focused and determined to win in life and be victorious over all obstacles. Of course, having such a heavy weight hanging over me gave me plenty to chant about.

The biggest benefit I received through chanting two hours morning after morning, month after month, was a greater sense of courage, confidence and conviction. Regarding my legal issues, my lawyer wasn't able to tell me with any degree of certainty what was actually going to happen. I realized it was up to me to decide my fate. So I *demand*ed the result I wanted from the universe. I literally was demanding that I win. Win, win, win for two straight hours!!!!

Some people close to me were very cautious and others maybe even a bit cynical about the potential outcomes of the court case. For me, only optimism! I had the Gohonzon and I was in direct relationship with the Mystic Law, fully in rhythm with the Universe and in total control. I developed 100% conviction that I would win in court and all charges would be dropped. That's all I was willing to accept and to envision.

I took guidance directly from President Ikeda, to never be defeated and never give up, no matter what occurs. In a single moment I can change the outcome of my life and alter the course of my own history.

As the court date got closer, chanting daimoku was the only thing that allowed me to summon the conviction that I would be totally victorious.

The morning of the court date, my parents drove in from the coast to be with me. My YMD Leader, Brad Larsen, accompanied us for support. I remember it being a beautiful morning.

At the last moment we were assigned to a different judge and my lawyer seemed a little nervous. I kept chanting in my head and under my breath. I couldn't do anything else. Once in the courthouse, my lawyer asked that only he and I go into the courtroom. Brad and my parents waited downstairs for us, which must have been difficult.

We were in and out of that room in about 30 minutes and won the case hands down. The judge spoke to me afterwards and told me to not ever come back into the courthouse again. I made a vow to follow her

orders and will not ever see her again or that courtroom.

I was elated, relieved and a bit shocked. It was over! I was free! Really free, and I hadn't been free for four years. I felt so much emotion at the time. Of course, I could have relaxed and stopped my vigorous daimoku campaign, but that is not an option for me. I will not rest and I will not quit.

President Ikeda says "Don't let your spirit rest! Give expression to the empathy and humanity you possess. Act! Break loose from the restraints of laziness and cowardice, and begin something new. Only in action is there growth of the spirit. Only in growth of the spirit does one find happiness."

I'm so grateful and appreciative to those who have supported me over the years, who I could talk to when things got bad. I'm working on getting my acupuncture license and soon will begin to practice my passion and my dream of healing with Chinese Medicine. 2010 will be a special year for me in my career and my life and I'm going to continue to strive and never rest in my own human revolution.

"The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion," he said, "it should transcend a personal God and avoid dogmas and theology. Covering both natural and spiritual, it should be based on a religious sense arising from the experience of all things, natural and spiritual, and a meaningful unity. Buddhism answers this description. If there is any religion that would cope with modern scientific needs it would be Buddhism."

The Horizon

<http://www.lindasegallanable.com/horizon/current.pdf>

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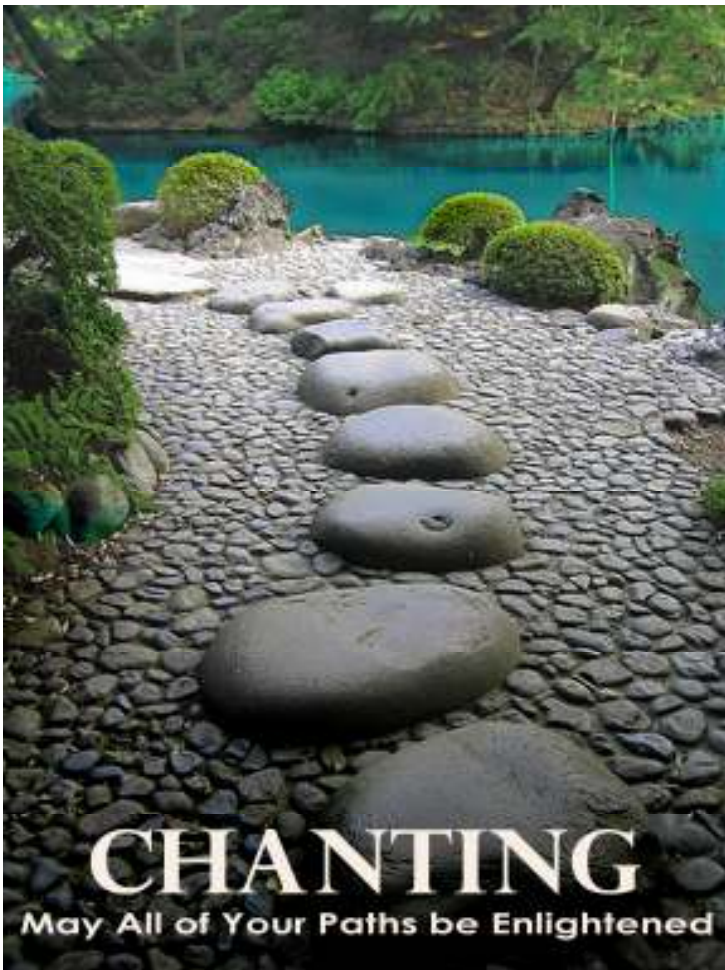


Photo by Steve Danner