

The Dewdrop Digest
Connecting Children, Youth and Sangha
Clouds in Water Zen Center
Sunday, January 6, 2008

HAPPY NEW YEAR! HAPPY NEW HOUR! HAPPY NEW NOW!

**Thank you for supporting and seeing
the youngest members
of our Whole Sangha.**

Read me !

The Dewdrop Digest is here to support the Whole Sangha in learning and practicing together. The students and teachers who are active in the Children's and Youth Program would like parents, and other sangha members and friends, to know about their activities. So, often the *Dewdrop* will include:

- our teaching theme for the year and the quarter
- details about the teaching message and activities that day

The *Digest* will often offer suggestions for home practice that complements our class activities. Sometimes there is a mini-Buddhism 101 to explain the underpinnings of our studies. Contributions from students, teachers and parents are very welcome.

Coming later in 2008: We hope to publish the Dewdrop online and to offer a platform for networking and dialogue about a variety of topics related to the Buddhist practice and children, youth, families, parents, grandparents and more. We will also offer a structure that we are calling "pods" which will enable mini-communities – such as the community of Preschool teacher and parents - to dialogue about both practical and abstract issues involved in running the Clouds in Water Preschool Group.

Six Principles of Enlightened Living: Wisdom and Compassion in Action

Our theme this year is *The Six Principles of Enlightened Living: Wisdom and Compassion in Action*. We spent all of Fall Quarter living out the first principle, or *paramita*, – Giving and Receiving. Today we begin to look at how the *paramitas* as a whole embody the path of the bodhisattva:

To cherish, love, protect and help all beings, including ourselves, just for the sheer joy of doing so. Or perhaps, Feel good by doing good.

The flip side of *The Dewdrop* gives a thumbnail summary of the *paramitas*. Post on your refrigerator and use as a basis for reflection, discussion, & practice exploration.

Home practice

- 2nd grade on up: Parents and children memorize the basics of each of the six principles. You could make a chart or flipcards with English and Sanskrit names.
- Everyone: Notice your life and experiences, and listen to the stories of others – including in books, movies. Look for bodhisattva action. Bring examples to class.

Six Principles of Enlightened Living: Wisdom and Compassion in Action

Common meaning	Sanskrit	Interpretations that we will explore this year
(1) Generosity , giving, openness.	Dana	Giving and receiving with attention and from the heart. Cultivating a generous view of ourselves, others and the world.
(2) Virtue, morality , ethical conduct, self-discipline, impeccability. Not harming, integrity, honesty.	sila	Upholding the precepts. Speaking and acting with compassion and integrity. Helping, not harming... <i>Three Wonderful Precepts for Young Children: 1. Protect life. 2. Act with generosity. 3. Speak honestly and listen deeply.</i>
(3) Patience , tolerance, acceptance, endurance. The strength of mind and heart that enables us to face the challenges and difficulties of life without losing our composure and inner tranquility.	Kshanti	Relaxing. Cultivating the ability to relax, to exhale, to be loving and compassionate -- in the face of challenges such as criticism, aggression, misunderstanding. Patience is <u>not</u> denying or repressing anger (or other “negative” emotions and thoughts). Patience is returning to trust, to a peaceful feeling and a generous view of ourselves, others and the situation.
(4) Effort , energy, enthusiasm, diligence, perseverance, courage, vigor, vitality.	Virya	Joyous effort. Applying oneself to one’s (spiritual) goals with energy, enthusiasm, diligence and courage... <u>and</u> with joy, lightness, laughter, and playfulness.
(5) Meditation , presence, awareness, mindfulness, concentration, contemplation	Dhyana	Awareness. Cultivating the ability to be focused, centered and aware in the present moment, to see what is going on, to calm the mind. E.g., paying attention to ones senses, body, breath, reactions, emotions, and thoughts; sitting meditation, walking meditation; chanting; visualization; yoga; martial arts; prayer; connecting to nature, cooking, eating and cleaning with reverence.
Wisdom , the supreme wisdom that knows the interconnectedness of all things, pranja paramita	Prajna	Understanding life. Seeing the truth of connectedness behind the illusion of separateness. Knowing that I am not separate, that I am deeply connected to all beings. Knowing that the universe holds me, with perfect love and complete acceptance, every moment. Cherishing, caring, helping and protecting others comes naturally, knowing that “my” happiness and “their” happiness are not separate.

Question, idea, concern? Your feedback is very welcome, appreciated and important! Contact Children's and Youth Practice Coordinator Katharine Krueger at 651-222-6968 x5 or cp@cloudsinwater.org