

Honolulu Diamond Sangha

Winter 2018

RECORD OF EASE CASE 20 DIZANG'S MOST INTIMATE

By Michael Kieran

Excerpt from Teishō presented at Summer Sesshin, July 2017

The Case:

Dizang asked Fayan, "Where to, esteemed monk?" Fayan replied, "Touring around on pilgrimage." Dizang said, "Undertaking a pilgrimage—why do so?" Fayan said, "I don't know." Dizang said, "Not-knowing is most intimate." With this Fayan suddenly experienced profound awakening.

Hongzhi's Verse:

Now, having investigated to the full,
it's just like before —
Completely casting off even the slightest
covering, arriving at not-knowing.
Let the short be short, let the long be long—
stop cutting and patching;
In accord with the high, in accord with the low—
it is self-leveling and at peace.
The abundance and scarcity of the house
is used according to the occasion;
Roaming the land, trusting
where the feet go



Hiking Zazenkai, Waimano Ridge Trail

The purpose of thirty years of pilgrimage—
Clearly a failure to live up to
one's pair of eyebrows.

Let's look at the verse, line by line:

**Now, having investigated to the full, it's just
like before —**

Back at the dawn of Zen, the master Qingyuan
Weixin famously said:

Before I had studied Zen, I saw mountains as
mountains, and rivers as rivers. When I ar-
rived at an intimate understanding, I saw
that mountains are not mountains, and rivers
are not rivers. Now mature and living in ac-
cord with the Way, I see mountains as moun-
tains and rivers as rivers.

Though Hongzhi says: "Now, having investigated
to the full, it's just like before," still, there is no go-
ing around the middle step. Still, we must
"investigate to the full." To simply have the idea
or to believe that mountains are not mountains, or
that form is emptiness, or that there is no self, just
isn't very helpful.

We must, as the next line says:

"Completely cast off even the minutest covering"

"Completely casting off" here is "*gedatsu*" in Sino-
Japanese, literally to loosen, untie, release and
peel off or strip away. In Zen writings the term is
synonymous with awakening and liberation.
This is the same "*datsu*" as in Dōgen's well known
phrase *shinjin datsuraku* — *shinjin* is body and
mind; *datsuraku* means to shed, peel off and fall
away. Completely casting off even the slightest
conceptual overlay, and arriving at not-knowing.
When Dizang said to Fayán, "Touring around on
pilgrimage— why do so?" the question penetrat-
ed straight to the ground of Fayán's heart and
mind because he had been and was investigating
the matter fully. Forgetting himself, absorbed in
his practice, he was ready ... and the readiness is
everything.

**Let the short be short, let the long be long—stop
cutting and patching;**

This is not just a cool slogan, not a simple "hang
loose, go with the flow" philosophy. It is very
precise and practical instruction in how to do za-
zen, and how to live in accord with the Way. Let
the short be short, let the long be long, trusting
high, low, short, long. Stop fiddling with it; no
more cutting and patching needed.

This line of the verse alludes to a passage in the
Daoist classic, the *Zhuangzi*, from a chapter titled
Webbed Toes. The chapter begins speaking of
various so-called deformities like two toes grown
together or a sixth finger branching off from a
hand and says:

The truly true and unskewed way is just not
to lose the uncontrived condition of one's in-
born nature and the allotment of one's life. In
this, what is joined is not so because of *extra*
webbing and what is branched is not so be-
cause of additions. The long is not excessive
and the short is not deficient. The duck's neck
may be short, but lengthening it would surely
afflict him; the swan's neck may be long, but
cutting it short would surely bring her sor-
row. What is long in its inborn nature is not to
be cut short, and what is short in its inborn
nature is not to be lengthened. For there is
nothing there that needs to be excised or wor-
ried over.

**In accord with the high, in accord with the low,
it is self-leveling and at peace.**

This line refers to a story about the masters
Guishan and Yangshan.

One day Yangshan joined Guishan in plow-
ing the rice field. Yangshan said, "Master,
this place is low. How can I level it with the
higher place?"
Guishan said, "Water is level so why not use
water to make the entire field level?"

Yangshan said, "Water is not necessary, Master. High places are level as high. Low places are level as low."

Birds fly in the sky, fish swim in the ocean; the horse gallops, the snake crawls. Wonderful. Wonderful. All comparisons are absurd. Like you, self-actualizing, self-ordering, just as you are. Complete. Great peace and contentment is not found somewhere else. And by peace and contentment I don't mean just settling for less, just accepting your so-called defects. In an asymmetrical smile is the configuration of the stars in the Milky Way, in a limp is the contour of great mountains and valleys— really! Self-actualizing, self-ordering, self-fulfilling.

**The abundance and scarcity of the house is used according to the occasion;
Roaming the land, trusting where the feet go.**

Again this is such precise and practical advice. When you are tired and have only 5 or 10% of your energy— you use that 5 or 10% for practice— *that* is your treasure. When your zazen is focused and expansive, you have focused and expansive zazen— *that* is your treasure. When you are angry or frustrated, use that condition for your practice. There's no need to try to change it to something else. When conditions are blissful and easy going, there's no need to stop practicing and try to hang on. Trust where you are; practice where you are— to trust is to practice. The land is vast with 10,000 peaks and valleys, but they all are contained in a single step.

**The purpose of thirty years of pilgrimage—
Clearly a failure to live up to one's pair of eyebrows.**

Even Shakyamuni failed. Why? You can't turn gold into gold. But what an absolutely brilliant failure. I am forever grateful.

We bow in veneration to the most exalted one.
Who is that one?



Awakening As Sangha Dharma Study, September 2017 Reflections and Review

by Bruce Triplett

"Sangha" was originally applied to Buddhist practitioners living together in close-knit communities, e.g., in monasteries or nunneries, settings that have been conducive to effective practice for centuries. But we don't live that way in the Honolulu Diamond Sangha, so how, then, do *we* advance our practice? How do we achieve the result expressed in the title for this year's Dharma Study?

To begin this year's sessions, Nelson and Michael led a group discussion of our past experiences as members of a community. (A paper by the social scientist, Robert Putnam¹ on "Social Capital" had been sent out earlier, to inform our discussions.) Examples of these experiences were: we knew everybody's name; we covered for each other during breaks, and the like. What came to me was my time as a resident physician at the University of Virginia. I began to see how the resi-

dents, medical students, faculty, nurses, orderlies, and patients (shouldn't forget them!) existed as a community: the networks we were, how we were interconnected, one with another, and the actions that marked our interconnections.

That such a community, or any community, has value, is a given, but how might we clarify that value? Mr. Putnam focuses this question, and orients our exploration by using the phrase "social capital" as a descriptor of the "value" of a community. "Social capital," he writes, is "... the collective value of all social networks." Social Capital "... refers to features of social organization such as networks of individuals who know each other, and the tendency arising from these networks to do things, one for the other. Trust develops, norms of reciprocity develop that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit." One example of social capital in action is neighborhood watches. ^{ii, iii}

All well and good. So, how do the members of a community bring "social capital" about? Confucius had something to say about this, in his Analects, ^{iv} but before studying them, Michael presented some key words as an aid to understanding them. ^v

A key virtue in Confucian teachings is *ren* written as 仁, a Chinese character combining the character for "person" with the character for the number two. The implication here is that one cannot fulfill one's potential as a human being by one's self. Michael reports that *ren* has no good equivalent in English. It's sometimes rendered as "benevolence" or "goodness" or "human heartedness," but these terms don't come close. *Ren* ... "is one's entire person ... cognitive, aesthetic, moral and religious...; *ren* is what constitute[s] one as a ... social person. *Ren* ... is physical as well: one's posture ... comport-

ment, gestures and bodily communication." ^{xiii}

In the language and understanding of Confucius, a person is more an ongoing "event" than an entity separate from its actions. Such "events" were defined by their action(s), as well as by the order and manner of their performance; codified even to the point of ritual; and carried out according to role and relationship within the family, e.g., and within other community networks. ^{vi} That is to say, for a given role, there is a proper action or series of actions to be performed—and a proper manner of performance—which stem from the familial and/or societal relationships of the "eventer" involved. ^{vii} "Ritual" here, is used, not in a "default" sense, or a "going through the motions" sense, but in the sense of "intentional." Ritual has the power to focus attention on what's happening, for all involved.

The Confucian expression for this is *observing ritual propriety*, ^{viii} and what comes of it is *harmony*. ^{ix} Note that *observing ritual propriety* is grounded in the *harmony* of which it is a function. For Confucians grounded in harmony, observing ritual propriety over time enriches harmony over time, providing for firmer grounding in harmony, and so on. This is one way to characterize social capital and its growth—in Confucian terms anyway.

My medical training came to mind again, specifically the "events" of my role as an anesthesiology resident in an operating room on any given day, where we worked, grounded in the care of our patients. An operating room manager calls for a patient to be medicated and then brought to the operating room; a nurse identifies the patient, and verifies all paperwork. Meanwhile orderlies prepare the operating room; nurses set up surgical instruments (verifying the sterility, the type and correct number of instruments needed); the anesthesiology resident (me) checks the anesthesia

machine for proper functioning, draws up medicines into properly labeled syringes ... and much more. There was a ritual feel to it, even back then. We attained not “harmony” so much as an ability to work well together for our patient’s good outcome. Confucius’ sayings, some of which we discussed with Nelson and Michael in our Dharma Study, might have informed me then, if I had had ears to hear them.

Here are a couple of passages from the Analects we discussed in session:

The Master said, "Noble people don't esteem others because of their words, nor do they disregard words because of who spoke them." (15.23)

Confucius said, "When you meet persons of exceptional character think to stand shoulder to shoulder with them; meeting persons of lesser character, look inward and examine yourself." (4.17)

Our leaders for this year’s Dharma Study presented the question: How can our sangha develop community further, how do we integrate more completely the various particulars we contribute, the varied particulars that we are?

Michael and Nelson reminded us, not excluding themselves, of difficult areas of our practice—responding to gossip, for instance, or “triangulation”^x that might occur within our group. Gossip, we are reminded, fulfills a need. Gossip can establish and maintain a relationship. It can provide the intimacy of a shared secret. Gossip may also erode a community and its sense of unity, so we must correct it. But how?

During our discussions (more so, as I prepare this review) I see that we can view our Honolulu Diamond Sangha through this lens of “social capital,” this value^{xi} built up through the varied activities and forms of practice we take up together. We are dedicated to wisdom and compassion; we seek to

ground ourselves there. We aspire to be a “sangha,” not a social club or mutual aid society.

How *does* a member of the Honolulu Diamond Sangha, with its mostly horizontal, “egalitarian” organization offer correction for gossip? What “event” would a person “be” that corrects gossip? Michael encourages us to hold a frame of respect for the person who gossips. To find—and deliver—effective, kind, and timely words for this, as Michael and Nelson urged, doesn’t seem easy. But it seems a project well suited to expanding our sense of community, and deepening our sense of unity.

Finally, we are asked, looking outward from our sangha, how do we work with our own community? How do we “sangha” relationships with those who don’t share our goals? How do we “sangha” a home for local folks in our community? What we have discussed together in this year’s Dharma Study may give us some actions for addressing such questions. Should our sense of community grow, should the social capital of the Honolulu Diamond Sangha increase, it will be a function of the actions we take together.^{xii}

Notes:

ⁱ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital*, *Journal of Democracy*: 6.1 Jan 1995, 65-78

ⁱⁱ <http://robertputnam.com/bowling-alone/social-capital-primer/>, passim

ⁱⁱⁱ Robert D. Putnam, op. cit. passim

^{iv} Ames, Roger T., and Rosemont Jr., Henry, *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*, Ballantine Books 1998

^v *ibid.*, Introduction.

^{vi} Using the phraseology of Putnam’s paper.

^{vii} Ames, Roger T., and Rosemont Jr., Henry, op. cit., Introduction.

^{viii} 禮, *ibid.*

^{ix} 和, *ibid.*

× New term for me. A person, A, has a problem with B, and talks to C about it (!). Should C realize that, in actuality, A is talking about A, there is no triangle formed. Should C not realize that A is talking about A, a change happens: C may think differently about B.

^{xi} Beware the creeping subconscious transformation of “social capital” to “social merit!”

^{xii} We may even observe that what Robert Putnam writes is true: Social capital creates value for the people who are connected and— at least sometimes— for bystanders as well. <http://robertputnam.com/bowling-alone/social-capital-primer/>

^{xiii} Ames, Roger T., and Rosemont Jr., Henry, op. cit., Introduction, passim

PZC 's New Administrator

by Corinne Chun

I'm an island girl— with heart connections to this land.



My great-grandfather, an only child, emigrated to the “Golden Mountain” and settled in San Francisco with his parents at the age of five.

After marrying, he moved to Hawai'i with his parents and settled here as a merchant on King Street. Hawai'i was still a kingdom and Lili'uokalani was reigning monarch. I learned the family later lived on Miller Street adjacent to the Queen's own personal residence, Washington Place.

East and West— from diverse backgrounds, my parents were drawn to each other and also to the other's home and heritage. My father's most joyful memories were of times spent in Germany. My mother at 88, still runs around barefoot, *char*

siu is a kitchen staple and “home” is none other than these islands, halfway around the globe.

For the past 25 years, my home has been Punalu'u where I live with my two poi dogs, Ihu and Kea on land in the ahupua'a of Wai'ono. Recently, I've been dividing my time between the country and town (Mānoa) where I grew up and where my mother still lives along with her dog (some of you have met “Maxi”) and my sister. ⁱ

I have a curiosity about people—their lives, individual journeys and the intricate web of relationships we share through karmic connections.

The Tibetan adage, “all beings have been our mothers” first piqued my interest and later drew me towards Tibetan Buddhism. I've practiced in the Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism since 1996.

From Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, one of my teachers:

All beings have been your father and mother
Knowing this you train your mind in

love and compassion

This makes you stop worrying so much
About your own comfort and happiness
When you give rise to supreme bodhicitta—
This is what it means to be lucky. ⁱⁱ

My professional life spanned more than 30 years in the museum field in Hawai'i. I served as Curator at 'Iolani Palace and Washington Place working with collections and building restoration during significant periods of development when the groundwork for both historic and cultural preservation was laid.

The quest for clarity, for clear-seeing informs the way I look at the world these days.

This encompasses some of my other interests: Tibetan medicine and *kahuna la'au lapa'au*, traditional Hawaiian medicine— and the healing that occurs on the physical, emotional and spiritual

planes. I hope to further pursue *lujong*, Tibetan yoga and contemplative photography, with the aim of cultivating this greater clarity.

From the Honolulu Diamond Sangha I've received heartwarming kindnesses (even before my hire as Administrator.) I look forward to working and practicing side by side with all of you as sangha, as brothers and sisters.

Notes:

i. Since this article was written, Corinne's mother entered hospice at home and died on December 8, Bodhi Day.

ii. An extemporaneously created verse (7 of 13) from, *What it Means to be Lucky: The Excellent Path Laid with Precious Gems*, composed by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso. For the complete *doha* or song of realization: <http://www.ktgrinpoche.org/songs/what-it-means-be-lucky-excellent-path-laid-precious-gems>

Isn't this Social Capital?

by Kendra Martyn



Early Saturday morning, November 4, twenty-two people showed up at PZC to participate in a Path Party. The goal was to set in place over a hundred puka lava pavers to create a much needed, safe walking path from the parking lot to the zendo and kitchen. These people were sangha

members from the Honolulu Diamond Sangha and Vipassana Hawaii. It was clearly a social network and the norms of hard work contained in the framework of laughter and respect were certainly adhered to. In addition, the norm of preparing and serving delicious and nutritious food for all volunteer workers was honored by a network of talented cooks buzzing around the kitchen like bees in a hive.

It was organized and publicized weeks in advance through social networking—word of mouth, email, Facebook. Rocks and sand showed up a few days in advance—someone ordered it, delivery trucks delivered. People that couldn't come dropped off tools. And we got a new path, while planning, lifting, digging, shoveling, talking, laughing, cooking, looking, admiring, testing—we were an “event in progress,” with a great outcome.

Mahalo to all who participated!!!



Hele Mālie, Ka'u Forms

by Michael Buxton

Paths, then no paths to find.
Ahu stacked mind,
slung by beefy trail masons
who wish us well and imagine
our thirsty demise in the desert.
Samantabhadra summons us from below,
we tripforth cliffwise,
meager packed dragons
of inquiry.

The Sun high as a hundred foot pole
spotlights us practicing uphill kinhin
emerging from the ocean, emerging
from ticklish cockroach zazen. The Sun
bakes us slowly, evenly the way an oven
would heat two love muffins shy of a dozen.
We climb like furtive savannah cats
through wind-blowing Ka'u grasses,
the Sun our canopy
and we its weary,
luminous understory.

Sitting in a wobbly circle
as one atop
beach balls in their pajamas,
what is this in our cups?
Goji bean morning surprise. We verify
together that tart and scarlet is the medicine
to forget toe blisters.
Most intimate oatmeal adheres
to Serving Spoon unlike lotus to water
and is shaken violently to cut off all evil.
It fills our bellies for the day,
consummating eternal.....happiness.

In darkness our teacher is properly embosked and
amassed with the gates we toss —

from *Pu'u O'o* comes

“From what are you wore down?”
“What are the dimensions of your original heated
stone?”

Oh our elemental possessions,
distributed safely now
upon the tilted Southern Cross, hung
where all beings alike can share the nourishments
of shy *naupaka* halved flowers. Michael's forehead
a ricochet of Kilauea orange firelight,
his shoulder full of meteor entrance flame,
his eyes Apua Point.

What did Dōgen taste? Littoral
cached waters tubbed darkly,
we bent our body backward
to enter clarity, finding
unforgettable immersion still to be born,
we washed our naked bowls with this water
and revived as if with smelling salts.
Salted sea, salted tea,
salted green mountains walking.

Lava porches with volcano spewed portraits
invoke silences
unique to the year of their pouring,
we travel an angled earth.
Stone woman births us at midday
after groaning; she cools at night.
Unborn twenty booted feet
remember the bones and marrow,
recall their mother creation,
her thorough examination, her innumerable
dharma feedings. She searches
our bodies for exiting wounds
and touches each one.
East Mountain turns into scars,
scars into Four Blessings, Four Blessings
belonging to those who enter
and love green mountains.



Retirement for Susan



Susan Brandon, after several years of beautifully performing PZC administrative duties, has stepped down to enjoy retirement with her husband.

Thank you, Susan, for all your wonderful work!

Shakuhachi Benefit Concert

Riley Lee and Christopher Blasdel provided a mesmerizing shakuhachi concert as a benefit for the Palolo Zen Center's renovation fundraising effort on December 9th. It was held at the Arts at Mark's Garage in downtown Honolulu. Food and good company were enjoyed by all. Thank you Riley and Christopher, and all who attended!



Christopher Blasdel (left) and Riley Lee (right)

Photo credits: Kathy Ratliffe, page 1; William Albritton, pages 7 & 8; Susan Shimokawa pages 7 & 9; Clark Ratliffe page 9 & 10.

Our Youngest Sangha Member

by Kendra Martyn



We are so pleased to introduce our youngest Sangha member, Arthur Merritt Ritter, born June 24. He is the son of sangha member and recent PZC resident, Laura Ritter, and was named after the New Zealand Zen teacher,

Arthur Wells. When asked why, Laura said, "That is harder to explain. Essentially he is one of the most humble and compassionate people I have met."



Baby Arthur sat zazen with Laura all through her pregnancy, so he was right at home on the cushion in mom's arms shortly after his birth. He is equally at home sitting in Nelson Foster's arms after his first Dharma Study.

When you see him, please stop by to say hello and marvel over his cuteness and sweetness. The Sangha and Laura are so blessed to have him and the joy he brings.

Residential Hall Renovation Fundraising Update

HDS has now raised \$16,000 for its PZC residential hall renovation project. Volunteers will begin calling on members and friends for their support to raise the remaining amount to meet the \$120,000 estimated cost. Generous donors have committed to match \$40,000 of donations, dollar for dollar. If you would like to make a tax deductible donation or receive further information about this renovation project, please contact the office at info@diamondsangha.org.



Holly McFarland and Michael Hofmann selling tickets at the Shakuhachi benefit concert.

PZC Seeks a Temple Keeper

This is a training position for an experienced Zen student with a well-established practice. Preference will be given to applicants from Diamond Sangha centers or in an active teacher/student relationship with a DS teacher. We request a one-year commitment.

The temple keeper leads our small residential program of people who work or go to school while doing daily and weekly zazen and samu together and with the sangha.

The temple keeper coordinates sangha work practice and related programs and keeps the sangha and our Board of Directors advised of our facility's care and maintenance needs, so that together we can maintain the grounds and keep the aging buildings in good repair. We provide a room with private bath, waiver of sesshin fees, and a modest monthly stipend. Depending on the situation, a part-time job in the community may be possible.

To apply, please closely review the description of our residential program on our website, diamondsangha.org, download and complete the residential application form, and submit it with a cover letter describing your qualifications for the Temple Keeper position.

For further information about this opportunity, please call (808) 735-1347, or email inquiries to info@diamondsangha.org.

Contact and Further Information: Honolulu Diamond Sangha, Palolo Zen Center, 2747 Wai'ōma'o Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816; ph: 808-735-1347; email: info@diamondsangha.org; diamondsangha.org or find us on FB.

Administrator, HDS: Corinne Chun
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Highlights from the Calendar

We gather for Zazen most Sundays from 9 to 11 am, and most Wednesdays from 7 to 9 pm, followed by tea. Variations on that schedule, and special events, are highlighted below. Please see, or download, our full calendar from our website, diamondsangha.org.

January 2018

1/2, Tuesday: Gather at 5 pm for Rohatsu Sesshin.

1/3–1/10, Wednesday—Wednesday: Rohatsu Sesshin, All are welcome to attend the Dharma Assembly at 2 pm every day 1/3 through 1/9. Please come 10 minutes early and wait on the lanai. Please don't walk around or go to the rest rooms until the kinhin begins.

1/20, Saturday: Orientation to Zen Practice, 9 am—noon. No preregistration is necessary and there is no fee.

1/21, Sunday: Zazen/Samu, 9 am—noon, followed by lunch.

1/23, Tuesday: Beginner's Mind Forum, 6–7 pm. A time for informal discussion and questions about practice. All are welcome.

1/24, Wednesday: Zazen/Dokusan and Question and Response, followed by tea, 7–9 pm.

1/26, Friday: Board of Directors meeting, 6:30 pm.

February 2018

2/4, Sunday: Hiking Zazenkai, 9 am—4 pm, trail to be announced.

2/10, Saturday: Orientation, 9 am—noon, No preregistration is necessary and there is no fee.

2/12, Monday: Spring Sesshin signup deadline.

2/16, Friday: Board of Directors meeting, 6:30 pm.

2/17, Saturday: Sangha Circle Discussion, 2–4 pm.

2/18, Sunday: Work Party, 9 am—noon. Followed by lunch.

2/20, Tuesday, Beginner's Mind Forum, 6–7 pm. A time for informal discussion and questions about practice. All are welcome.

2/23–3/3, Friday—Saturday: Vipassana Hawaii Retreat. The temple will be closed 9 days. Honolulu Diamond Sangha program will resume Sunday 3/4. Please contact vipassanahawaii.org for registration or retreat information.

March 2018

3/14, Wednesday: Zazen/Dokusan and Question and Response, followed by tea, 7–9 pm.

3/16, Friday: Board of Directors Meeting, 6:30 pm.

3/17, Saturday: Orientation to Zen Practice, 9 am—noon. No preregistration is necessary and there is no fee.

3/18, Sunday: Zazen/Samu, 9 am—noon, followed by lunch.

3/19, Monday: Hele Mālie Signup Deadline.

3/23, Friday: Gather at 5 pm for Spring Sesshin.

3/24–3/28, Saturday—Wednesday: Spring Sesshin, All are welcome to attend the Dharma Assembly at 2 pm every day 3/24 through 3/27. Please come 10 minutes early and wait on the lanai. Please don't walk around or go to the rest rooms until the kinhin begins.

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