
O N E N E S S

Quarterly Newsletter of the Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose Dharma Legacy

Vol. 7 No. 2 Summer 2003

TURTLE IN THE GARDEN

Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose

A student saw a turtle sunning itself on a rock in Daizu's garden. The student asked the teacher, "All beings cover their bones with flesh and skin. Why does this turtle cover its flesh and skin with bones?" Master Daizu took off his sandals and covered the turtle.

In this story the student was determined to make discriminations—flesh and bones, inside and outside. Discriminating can be carried as far as one likes—is mind inside of body or is body inside of mind? But this

attitude always results in arguments and explanations. Life is neither. Life is an organic, living totality. Of course there are systems of thought that can be rational, or philosophical. But life is not philosophy. Life is not rationality. Life is dynamic. Buddhism says, "Don't compare." Inside or outside doesn't matter. Be your true self. A flower is a flower. A turtle is a turtle. The turtle doesn't ponder, "Bones inside or outside."

Daizu covered the turtle with his sandals to indicate to the student that

he must get in touch with his true life and not just try to understand reality by simply explaining the phenomenal world. Of course we could propose many reasons for Daizu's actions, but the important thing is to live your true life from within. You live twenty-four hours a day. How many hours do you live a real, genuine life? You are always pushed around and influenced. You become upset when things are not going well. You become greedy when things are going well. You are always influenced by the environment, never living your true life. Buddhism teaches you to live your true life.

(The Center Within; Pgs 74-75)



Inside

President's Message	p. 2
Book Reviews	p. 3
Spirit Rock Retreat	p. 4
Service Schedule	p. 4
Spiritual Resources	p. 4
Lotus	p. 5
Dharma Glimpse	p. 5
Words of Wisdom	p. 6

Dial-the-Dharma
(One minute taped talks)

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President's Message

By Rev. Koyo Kubose

Not knowing quite what to say for this issue, I thought I'd tell you about a book I'm working on. For the past five years or so, I've been kicking around several ideas to write about but never could really get started. I just accumulated articles, scraps of notes I jotted down, etc. Friends gave me encouragement, books on writing, a tiny new-fangled tape recorder, etc. Yet, it was like I couldn't get my car's engine started. Every once in awhile I'd turn the key and the starter would crank, but the engine didn't start. My main problem was that I didn't have a good format or structure to unify or thread together the separate stories/teachings I wanted to write about.

Then about a year ago, my muse whispered an idea in my ear. (I thought I'd better check if I was using the word "muse" correctly, so I looked it up in the dictionary: "spirit that inspires a poet, composer, writer, etc.; source of inspiration.") Actually, I don't know exactly where the idea came from but as soon as it came to me, I got excited. Sometimes a new idea initially sounds great but it just fades away after a few weeks. However, this idea was solid and I knew I had something.

For some time now, I've been doing some early morning running along the lakefront in Evanston. Lake Michigan is a large body of water and looks like an ocean. Since Chicago and the northern suburbs are west of the lake, the sunrises over Lake Michigan are often spectacular. My idea was that I could use my early morning routine as a format/structure for what I wanted to write about. Now, my book had a beginning, middle, and end. The beginning was my getting out of bed, washing up, and driving to the lake. All of these aspects could have teachings associated with them. The middle was running on the lakefront path. Teachings could be related here to seeing the sky, waves on the lake, and certain trees and special spots along the path. The end or climax was seeing the sunrise, the bright dawn. I might mention that my father's Buddhist Name "Gyomay" means "bright dawn." So, going to see the sunrise is a way of remembering and honoring my late father.

About a year ago, my brother was visiting from California. One day we took a daytrip somewhere

and when we were driving home, I mentioned the idea I had for my book. He replied, "Now you have a pot to hold all your ingredients." What an apt way to put it. It certainly helps when cooking, to have a good pot. From that point on, I really started "cooking." The first draft of my manuscript was not that long. I thought it would make a nice small book. I distributed copies of the manuscript to our Legacy family board members. Based on their feedback, I made some revisions. Then I thought I'd send the manuscript to some of my Buddhist colleagues. Many of them had good suggestions and ideas. I added new material, re-wrote some sections, and in the past few months, the writing kicked into high gear. As it is said, "The writing took over with a life of its own." The whole process was very exciting and rewarding.

We are now in the midst of designing the cover and doing the necessary technical preparations of the manuscript for publication. We decided to publish the book under the imprint of "Dharma House" which is the press name my father came up with when he published his first book "Everyday Suchness" in the 1960's. To be a successful publisher, we have to sell books. I suppose a writer has to get involved to some extent in the business end of things. (Hey, I just realized that I called myself a "writer!" My new identity! On second thought, how does "best selling author" sound?) In the industry it is said that the writing is the easy part. Even though a book may have something worthwhile to communicate, it can't do this unless it reaches people. The real hard work is the marketing and promoting of the book. Too bad Oprah doesn't have her book club anymore. Getting on that list is all that would have been needed!

You can look forward to my book. The working title is "Bright Dawn: Discovering Your Everyday Spirituality." Yet, I also have some other important advice for you. My advice is to be an active producer and not just consumer of life teachings. Listening to Dharma talks and reading about spiritual teachings are fine, but then relate what you have consumed to your everyday life. By actively doing this, you will begin to produce your own insights. You will discover new ways to experience the teachings. Not that you necessarily have to write a book, but you will find the whole creative and learning process to be very exciting and rewarding.

BOOK REVIEWS

COFFINMAN

A Book Review by Ruth Tabrah

“Coffinman” by Shinmon Aoki is that rarity, a translation from the Japanese that reads as if it were written by a native speaker of English. The style is reminiscent of Hemingway, a tribute to Wayne Yokoyama, probably the most adept contemporary translator of our times. The subject is startling at first – the journey of a young man who has ambitions to be a writer. He enjoys running a bar frequented by poets but that fails, he suffers bankruptcy, and is unable to succeed at anything. Desperate to find a job where he can make enough money to buy formula for his newborn son, he answers a help-wanted ad and much to the disapproval of his family clan becomes a ‘coffin man,’ an outcast who washes and prepares the corpse for being viewed. His ‘journal’ of his experiences as a mortician is a novel that grabs and keeps your interest from page one.

In its powerful sweep of narrative the novel gives a sensitive portrayal of the taboos surrounding death in Japanese society. In a remarkable mixture of poetry and the beauty of the Toyama region Aoki gives the essence of Shin Buddhism and Shinran’s view of life/ death, here and now, nirvana and samsara. Few books of either fiction or non-fiction have so clearly depicted the heart and essence of Shin Buddhism or captured with such understated eloquence the enlightening transition of dying when, as Shinran and Aoki remind us, each one of us, unconditionally, becomes a Buddha.

Remarkable too is how this beautifully translated novel came to be published. Reverend Marvin Harada of Orange County Buddhist Church encouraged his sangha in their decision to publish it. A committee from the church’s Buddhist Education Center did the editing and prepared the book for publication. Most books edited by committee are not successful, but this one is – eminently so. Cover and book design by Arlene Kato, calligraphy by Reverend Akio Miyaji, and the stunning cover photo by ZEFA/Photonica enhance the professional quality of “Coffinman” and deepen the profound insights of Shinmon Aoki’s text as translated by Wayne Yokoyama.

“Coffinman” was originally published in Japanese in 1993 and again in 1996 as “Nokanfu nikki.” Dr. Taitetsu Unno’s foreword to this 2002 English translation bears witness to the quality of this remarkable book. (From *Metta*, the newsletter of the Buddhist Study Center, Honolulu, Hawaii)

SHIN BUDDHISM:

Bits of Rubble Turn Into Gold

By Taitetsu Unno

Interest in Buddhism continues to grow throughout North America, and more and more readers are moving beyond the familiar Zen and Tibetan traditions to examine other types of Buddhism. In *Shin Buddhism*, Taitetsu Unno explains the philosophy and practices of “Pure Land” Buddhism, which dates back to the sixth century C.E., when Buddhism was first introduced in Japan.

While Zen Buddhism flourished in remote monasteries, the Pure Land tradition was adopted by the common people. With a combination of spiritual insight and unparalleled scholarship, the author describes the literature, history, and principles of this form of Buddhism and illuminates the ways in which it embodies this religion’s most basic tenet: “No human life should be wasted, abandoned, or forgotten but should be transformed into a source of vibrant life, deep wisdom, and compassionate living.” As a practice that evolved to harmonize with the realities of everyday life, Shin Buddhism will be particularly attractive to contemporary Western readers.

(From the back cover of the book)

Oneness Newsletter Summer 2003

Editors: Shauna Fleuridor, Adrienne Kubose,
Rev. Koyo S. Kubose

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The purpose of the Kubose Dharma Legacy is to offer a non-sectarian, non-dualistic approach, the Way of Oneness, to further individual spiritual growth in everyday life for people of all backgrounds.

American Buddhist Services

The Heartland Sangha holds 11 A.M. Saturday services at Lake Street Church, 607 Lake Street, Evanston (use courtyard entrance on Chicago Avenue). For more information, please call Heartland Sangha at 773-545-9972. Rev. Koyo Kubose's upcoming Dharma Talk titles are:

Jun 21	A Buddhist Hammer
Jul 5	Freedom
Jul 19	Turning Words
Aug 2	The Four Wives
Sep 6	Dharma Oil

Legacy Resources for Individual Spiritual Practice

Please send me information on (mark choices):

- Ti Sarana Confirmation Ceremony Video Loan Program
 Words of Wisdom Series Home Religious Services

NAME: _____

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Do-It-Yourself Guide for having services in your own home (e.g. pet memorials, appreciation services, etc.)



WORDS OF WISDOM SERIES

One-page essays suitable for framing. Topics include: Lotus Flower, Oneness Meditation.



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Free loan program.

SPIRIT ROCK RETREAT

by Adrienne Kubose

During a recent visit to California, my sister arranged for my mother and me to go with her to a retreat at Spirit Rock. It was a wonderful day. The weather was beautiful, but more than that, the vibes resonating from the retreat were so peaceful and pleasant. There were several periods of sitting and walking meditation. I had never done walking meditation outside before. We walked out under the trees. The path was uneven, covered by leaves and twigs. I concentrated on each step as we were instructed to do. Shifting weight from left to right. I could feel my feet adjust to the unevenness of the ground. Suddenly, I realized that each step was completely unique! For some reason I got really excited about this realization. Later I thought about it further and connected it with a talk I had heard about the present moment. The present moment is here...no, that's gone, it's here. No, that's gone. Here it is! No! And all this makes up the eternal Now. I experienced each step as significantly different and new, just as is the present moment. We only have now and it's gone immediately and each now is different. How precious each moment is! How precious it was to spend the day with my sister and mother.



P.S. The gift shop at Spirit Rock is on the honor system. Items have price tags. When you buy something, you put what you owe into the cash box. The cash box sits out in the open. WOW. I'm from Chicago. That would never work in Chicago, or would it?

LOTUS

The Buddhist Flower

The Buddha taught “Live like the lotus.” Although growing in a muddy pond, the lotus remains pure and undefiled by its environment. All of us are in a muddy pond. What is your muddy pond?

Some might think the muddy pond is the world they live in. Our society certainly is filled with people we don’t care for -- ranging from vicious criminals and crooked politicians to reckless drivers and rude store clerks. Maybe our muddy pond involves certain people at work, in our social circle, or among one’s own family and relatives. For many of us, our muddy pond is our everyday life that is filled with situations and conditions that we do not like. Why can’t I find a better job? Why is our family so poor? I don’t like getting old! I have so many health problems. Our honest questions and list of heartfelt complaints are endless.

One’s muddy pond is not limited to people and conditions in one’s environment. The real muddy pond is within oneself; it is one’s own greed, anger and ignorance. Although it is true that to the extent one can control or deal with this muddy pond, one’s life can blossom beautifully -- it is also true that all the “muddiness” in life is life itself; it is the reality of what a human being is.

Not only is the muddy pond an actuality of life, we need the pond in order to live -- just like the lotus needs its muddy pond. No pond, no lotus. The roots of the lotus are in the mud and actually gets its nourishment from the mud. It is the same in human life. If not for hunger, we wouldn’t eat and enjoy food. If not for hard work, we wouldn’t enjoy the rest. No challenge, no satisfaction. We don’t need to get rid of muddiness like hunger and hard work. At the same time we don’t need to be victimized by such muddiness. Right in the midst of life’s muddiness we can blossom with all our might. Throw open your arms to the sky and take in all that life brings.

Flowers are beautiful because they blossom with all their might. With no feelings of superiority or inferiority, regardless of whether in the center of the garden or in a forgotten corner, the flower blossoms 100%. It does not matter if anyone is watching or



appreciating. The fulfillment of blossoming is complete in itself. Such a strong life! Such a life of oneness; no this or that -- just life flowing out, like an underground spring gushing out of the earth. Without complaining where it fell, the seed roots itself and grows 100%. With no envy, no comparing -- live an absolute life.



I started learning Kendo (Japanese fencing) a month ago. I was inspired by Miyamoto Musashi’s book, “The Book of Five Rings.” Though I understood what I read, I really did not understand what Kendo was about until my third class. One of my training partners said, “You’re doing it all wrong. The goal of this exercise is to kill your opponent but the only way to do that is to die yourself.” My immediate thought was, “That’s stupid.” However, I then realized that this was how the samurai really lived back in the feudal era of Japan. Now I know what people mean when they say, “Live as if today is your last day on earth.” Understanding that I might die at any moment has taught me to truly appreciate being alive.

by Richardson Fleuridor

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WORDS OF WISDOM

Awakening or enlightenment is not attained,
but is received as a compassionate gift.

Impermanence is a cause of suffering,
but impermanence understood overcomes suffering.

(Read in a Buddhist newsletter, but can't remember which one— Editor)





Kubose Dharma Legacy

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YES YES Your Everyday Spirituality YES YES	
JUN	<p>Theme: Everyday Spirituality Purpose: Lunchtime mindfulness Method: "Dharma Wheel Sandwich:" Use mustard squeeze-bottle to make circle on bread slice; then make four intersecting lines to form an 8-spoked wheel. Finish making sandwich; eat; smile. (Courtesy of Elizabeth Bahe)</p>
JUL	<p>Theme: Oneness with Nature Purpose: Expanding one's perspective Method: "Out-to-the-Sky Gassho:" Start in traditional gassho position of hands together in front of chest. Slowly look up while raising arms up and out fully. Make your mind and heart as wide as the sky. End with "Sky-in Gassho" (see below).</p>
AUG	<p>Theme: Oneness with Nature Purpose: Bringing in a wide view Method: "Sky-in Gassho:" Looking up at the sky with arms stretched up and out, slowly bring arms down and into traditional Gassho position. Imagine you are bringing in the sky's vastness to widen your perspective of things.</p>

Mailing List Update

Our mailing list has welcomed new additions from many sources and referrals. We are happy to continue sending our newsletter to all interested persons. One reason for staying on the mailing list is to find out when new books come out. Also, you never know when you might want to order a book for a relative or friend in a future time of need. If you know someone who would like to be added or removed from our mailing list, please indicate below and send to:

Oneness Newsletter, Kubose Dharma Legacy, 8334 Harding, Skokie, IL 60076.

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