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# O N E N E S S

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

Vol. 9 No. 4 Winter 2005

## DHARMA OF FAMILY DYNAMICS

By Rev. Koyo S. Kubose

The strongest emotions within a family are usually between spouses, between parent and child, and among siblings. We constantly need to remind ourselves not to take these relationships for granted. It behooves us to use the Dharma teachings to strengthen these important relationships. One's family should be the central place where we try to apply such teachings as the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Six Paramitas, etc.

I know some real-life stories of how the Dharma teachings have helped couples and families. I want to share some of these stories with you. I am inspired by their introspective sincerity and application of right understanding. I hope you too are similarly impacted.

One couple stated simply that if it were not for the Dharma, they surely would have divorced. Being together over twenty years took its toll; they were busy with their careers and raising three children. Without realizing it, their relationship took a back seat to just about everything else in their lives. They found themselves without a vibrant, fulfilling marriage. Their relationship seemed to alternate between being critical of each other and simply tolerating each other. They were close to separating many times but what kept them trying and not giving up on their marriage was something like, "As Buddhists, what good are the teachings if I cannot sincerely apply them to my own life and marriage?!"

There is no external power that can make one's relationship work; one has to dig deep within oneself and do the work. And the self that does the work is the self one finds at the very core of one's being. It is beyond the ego self that is always pitting itself against others. It wasn't easy, but this couple was able to regain a closeness that was missing when jobs, kids, and hobbies made them so busy. They came to realize, "When it comes right down to it, few things in life are more important than your relationship with your spouse."

How about sibling and parent-child relationships? Each of us has our own "sad" story of our place in the family constellation. Who got picked on; who had to take care of the younger one; etc. These are family stories that are told many times at family gatherings. In most cases, the family is not dysfunctional and there are no traumatic childhood events causing significant adult problems. Within the context of an average upbringing, we still sometimes play the victim, as a way of feeling sorry for ourselves and, at the same time, take a "pot shot" at our siblings or parents. Maybe this can get out of hand and start to be taken seriously when one is going through a rough time. When one feels weak and vulnerable, he or she might tend to look around for someone to blame. A handy scapegoat is the selective perception of one's childhood. For example, that one

was not nurtured properly— daughters feeling they were too sheltered and overprotected, or sons feeling they never received fatherly approval. There are numerous other classic parent-child or sibling rivalry syndromes.

Although one's past is factual, the important thing is how one interprets one's past in the present. "Use the past; don't be used by the past!" First of all, remember that you were not, are not, and never will be, a perfect child, sibling, spouse, or parent. There are so many ways one can view oneself as failing in some way.

Family Dynamics continues on page 2

## HAPPY NEW YEAR of the DOG

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# A BUDDHIST BABY BLESSING

By Rev. Koyo S. Kubose

Recently a family had a baby blessing upon the occasion of their baby being 100 days old. Family members gathered together and one activity was for each person to write down a wish for the baby and then tie the piece of paper onto a small tree in the living room. This is a variation of an ancient Japanese Shinto ritual. I think that wishes and blessings can effectively function in a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy manner. This is all well and good. However, in Buddhism there is no blessing ritual in a superstitious sense of thwarting off misfortune from some evil source or asking for future good fortune from deities or some divine source.

In a Buddhist context, I feel that what is called saying a prayer for someone or for something (e.g. for world peace), or giving a blessing, is an expression of the speaker's deep wish. It is a "Thought Wave" that is sent out into the universe. In Japanese Buddhism there is the term "Innen" which refers to all the direct causes and indirect conditions that contributed to a person's present state and/or influenced the present state of things and events. This dynamic interactive flow is Reality and can also be called Suchness or Universal Life.

This is the blessing I gave to the baby:

*It will be easy to deal with your successes and joys. How about when things do not go as you wish, and you encounter difficulties ranging from common daily irritations to major setbacks? I wish for you the blessing or teaching of Takkan, which is a Japanese word meaning to take the long view of things; i.e. to view things with philosophical eyes. Takkan is the gateway to enlightened living. Armed with Takkan, you will have the flexibility (wisdom) to handle anything life throws your way. Even tragic events will not defeat you. Having a Wide Perspective gives you the strength and serenity to go forward boldly regardless of how the causes and conditions in your life unfold. This is how you can live life 100%, with no regret. There is no need to panic, or be miserable. A path will always open for you. To help you remember the teaching of Takkan, every morning face east and greet the morning sun. Basking in the light of the Dharma, you can have a mind and heart as wide as the sky.*

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## DIAL-THE-DHARMA LIVE!

Here's a new idea we're going to try. When Rev. Koyo Kubose gives a Dharma Talk (See Service Schedule on page 6), he will establish a TeleConference that anyone, no matter where they live, can call into, hear his talk live, and say hello afterwards. Current technology, with low long-distance rates and even free weekend minutes on some plans, makes TeleConferencing feasible.

Family Dynamics from page 1

Let me tell you about one experience a friend had. He was driving along one day, thinking of his parents, both having passed away a few years ago. He broke out sobbing, "Dad, forgive me!" Then he immediately felt his father's calming presence and he said to his father, "I know you do (forgive me)." Now the gates were opened— "Mom, forgive me!" (For all the times I was mean, not patient, took things for granted, etc.) Again he felt soothed and said, "I know you do (forgive me)."

Despite the intensity of his emotions, he knew that if he had the chance to relive things, he probably could not help but still act in similar imperfect ways. He simply felt that his humanness was understood and accepted... and thus he could also understand and accept the humanness of others. Guilt, and perhaps also other "negative" emotions, can be healthy when they lead to understanding and accepting oneself as one is.

Ironically, such acceptance allows one to change and deepen one's spirituality. To deepen one's spirituality means to become a little bit more humble and grateful, and to act with a little bit more loving kindness. This kind of change is the Dharma in action. No where is this more intimate and powerful than in the sphere of family dynamics.

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Dial-the-Dharma Live! continued

Here's how it will be set up. First, to get some idea of who and how many might be involved, we ask that interested persons contact us and say they want to register for **Dial-the-Dharma Live!** Please contact: Rev. Koyo Kubose, 8334 Harding Avenue, Skokie, IL 60076; 847-677-8211; [brightdawn@kubose.com](mailto:brightdawn@kubose.com). And let us know your name and contact information, including e-mail address, if available.

Then we will let you know the dial-in telephone number and conference ID number to use when you call in. These numbers do not change and can be used to access all future TeleConferences. You can turn on your speaker phone if more than one person is listening. All participant phones will be muted during the talk, but after the talk the lines will be unmuted for live interaction in an Open Dharma Forum.

The TeleConference will begin at 11:00 A.M. (Central Time) on the first and third Saturdays of each month. Since the Dharma talk is part of a live service, the exact time when the Dharma talk will begin is approximate, perhaps about 11:15 A.M. In any case, when participants call in, they will hear an on-going live service. The service should conclude by noon, and allowing for 15-30 minutes of live interaction after the service, the TeleConference will conclude by 12:30 P.M. Participants can join and leave the TeleConference at any time

## CALLING ALL PARENTS

We extend an open invitation to all interested families, regardless of where they live, to join in a TeleConference at 11:00 A.M. (Central Time) on Sunday, January 15, 2006. The purpose of the TeleConference is for families to share their experiences practicing the Mindfulness Bell exercise at home.

Thich Nhat Hahn suggests using a Mindfulness Bell in a designated “breathing room” in one’s house, a place where one can go to be alone, to just breathe and smile, especially in difficult moments. If you do not have a spare small room, use a small table in a corner of a room, or make what we call a SPOT (Special Place of Tranquility). At the SPOT, you can have a candle, vase with a flower, and a small bronze bell on a cushion, with a wooden striker

Thich Nhat Hahn says that the small room (or SPOT) “should be regarded as an embassy of the Buddha. It should not be violated by anger or shouting, but should be respected. When a child is about to be shouted at, he or she can take refuge in that room. Neither the father or mother can shout at him or her anymore. He or she is safe on the grounds of the Buddha. Mommy may also need that. Sometimes she wants to take refuge in that room, sitting down, breathing, smiling, and resting herself. Daddy also. If in the family there is one person who practices mindfulness, then that person can help the whole family to practice.”

Any time someone is upset and feels nervous or worried, he or she can go to the “breathing room” (or SPOT); sit down, begin to breathe, strike the bell and listen to the sound—the sound that brings one back to one’s true self. The sound of the bell helps not only the person at the SPOT, but it helps other persons in the house. Thich Nhat Hanh gives an example, which is paraphrased as follows:

Suppose your husband is irritated. Since he has learned the practice of mindful breathing, he knows the best thing to do is to go to the SPOT. You don’t know he is doing this as you are cutting carrots in the kitchen. You are suffering also, because you and he have just had some kind of altercation. You are cutting the carrots a bit strongly, because the energy of the anger is translated into your movements.

Suddenly you hear the bell. You stop cutting and breathe out and in three times. You feel better, and you may feel proud to have a husband who knows what to do when he gets angry. A feeling of tenderness arises, and you resume cutting the carrots again, but this time quite differently.

Your child, who was witnessing the scene, knew that a kind of tempest was going to break. She was expecting that tempest, which is why she withdrew to her room. Suddenly she heard the bell. She knows what it means. She feels that her daddy is wonderful, and she wants to show him how she feels. She goes to the SPOT, and sits down quietly beside him, to show her support. This helps the husband very much. He already feels

ready to leave the SPOT, because he is able to smile now. But since the daughter is sitting there he wants to invite another sound of the bell for his daughter to breathe.

In the kitchen, you hear the second bell and know that maybe cutting carrots is not the best thing to do now. Maybe you should go and sit with him, to show your own peace now. So you put down the knife and go to the SPOT. Since you have come, your husband stays on and invites the bell for you to breathe. This most beautiful family scene is the practice of peace and reconciliation.

In addition to using a Mindfulness Bell at a SPOT, opportunities for practice are all around us. How to organize dinner and say grace, together with mindful breathing is a nice family ritual. Families can do a gratefulness practice while eating dinner, with each person sharing what he or she feels grateful for during that day. With mindfulness, everything becomes different and life is lived in a much deeper way.

It is easy to read about using a Mindfulness Bell, and to say, “That’s a good idea!” However, it can be difficult to implement, follow through, and actually do it. This is why we’d like to form a loose **Family Sangha Network** to support and encourage one another on working in the home on various practices such as using a Mindfulness Bell. Through a TeleConference, families can call in, share experiences, and interact with each other via speaker phone.

We will arrange and communicate the TeleConference calling procedure to all interested families (or just couples are welcome too). If interested in participating, please contact us and say you want to register for the **Family Sangha Network**. Please contact: Rev. Koyo Kubose, 8334 Harding Avenue, Skokie, IL 60076; 847-677-8211; [brightdawn@kubose.com](mailto:brightdawn@kubose.com). Please don’t forget to give us your name, children’s names and ages, and your contact information, including e-mail address, if available.

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### MINDFULNESS BELL AVAILABLE



Using a Mindfulness Bell at home is a simple but very effective spiritual practice. You can order a Mindfulness Bell from our On-line Sangha Store at [www.brightdawn.org](http://www.brightdawn.org) or mail a \$37.90 check (includes postage) to:

Kubose Dharma Legacy  
8334 Harding Avenue, Skokie, IL 60076

# Everyday Suchness: A journey from darkness to light

By Laura Kamoku

(from May 2004 issue of *Goji*, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii newsletter)

The year is 1999 and I am sitting in a “crack house.” It is an abnormal moment as far as moments in a crack house go. It’s quiet and there is little sound of movement which is another abnormality. No one is shouting or asking for a front or a trade; in fact, I don’t think anyone else is around. I am in the downstairs portion of the house and amazingly, this house still has running water and electricity. I have been to places where every ‘amenity’ was cut off or shut down because no one paid the bill or because the companies/owners were trying to rid the place of people like me. Drug dealers/drug addicts.

This particular house usually has a lot of activity. If you want to buy drugs, or if you have drugs you want to sell, this house is the place to go. Everybody knows about it, even the normal people. It’s “smack dab” in the middle of a decent neighborhood. When I first started going there, I used to feel shame because I didn’t want anyone to look at me the way I once looked at them. I would pull in and out as quickly as I could. I would grab what I wanted and had no intentions of hanging around. I didn’t want my car to be seen ‘there.’ In fact, I recall times before my addiction began, where I would pass this house and see all the ‘losers’ lingering around, all the ‘buss-up’ cars in the yard and I would think, “Don’t they have any sense of pride or decency? How can they live like that? I would never be caught dead being seen here!” After all, how could anyone choose to live like that!

And here I was, seeking, I don’t know what...oblivion, refuge, anesthesia, a good night’s sleep, no more nightmares, answers that were illusive and obscure.

I look around me and spot a junk box on the dirty floor in the corner. It looks like it has been sitting there forever; like someone meant to take out the trash but took a hit of cocaine instead. The box is full of books and magazines, old newspapers, junk mail, etc. I decide to browse through the box because I can’t stand the stillness...the stillness causes me great ‘dis-ease’ and I think I will freak out if I have to take another minute of this. (I can’t embrace the memories and experiences of this time...to do so, I think, will kill me—if they catch up to me, I will die.)

So, I am rifling through the box and see an unusual title that catches my eye. I read the title, “Everyday Suchness” and I see that the author’s name is not *haole*...that it was written by an Asian and my interest grows. I thumb through and see words like happiness / self-introspection / transcend suffering / the mind’s eye / oneness / and enlightenment. I take the book with me and look for a clean and comfortable spot to settle into. I am totally drawn to this book and compelled to read it.

I was amazed with what I was reading. The book gave words to the unidentifiable thoughts and feelings that were deep within me. The words spoke to my very core... A place I had not visited since I was a little girl, instant recognition occurred. A familiarity with something obscure, and always just out of my mind’s reach. I now understand, and I mean this in a literal sense. I had been searching in the external world for something that was in my heart all the time. Of all the great lessons that I received through this book, I truly believe that the greatest of all is understanding that it is my internal condition, my own awareness of who I am that determines all other aspects of living life.

My journey of recovery began with the turning of the pages of “Everyday Suchness.” However, I was still caught in the grip of a sickness that was progressive and, potentially, fatal. While the readings had re-awakened parts of me, I had to go further down the road of addiction to understand suffering. Later on that same year, I got ‘busted’ for Promotion of a Dangerous Drug in the Second Degree and was sentenced to ten years in prison. During my incarceration, I received glimpses of “Everyday Suchness” in my being. I was in a place where I could cease the self-destructive nature of addiction; I was able to practice stillness and self-introspection.

I found out that the prison allowed inmates to order books from the publisher if they had money in their ‘inmate account.’ I made a conscious decision to forego buying cigarettes in order to have enough money to buy a copy of “Everyday Suchness.” I finally had enough money to order the book. When I received my copy, I then made the commitment to further self introspection by enrolling in the prison’s newly developed treatment program that was a 9 to 15 month program. “Everyday Suchness” helped me to make that decision. There are over 300 women at WCCC and the majority of the women have distorted thoughts about getting well, just like me. I went into treatment and began sharing readings from “Everyday Suchness” with other clients through classes, groups, meetings or just one on one with others in the program. I witnessed shifts of perceptions happening and felt humbled by the experience. Just recently, I received a letter from a fellow inmate who is currently in Oklahoma doing time (Hawaii inmates are sent there due to overcrowding of Hawaii’s prisons). She asked me for the name of the ‘little purple book’ that I used to read to them from. So, the messages have traveled and they have opened minds and hearts in places where it was never before possible. The simplicity of Buddhist teachings simplify healing for the wounded souls that suffer

Journey from Darkness continues on page 5

from the disease of addiction. It simplifies understanding one's recovery process from addiction.

Since my release from WCCC, I have pursued education in the chemical dependency counseling field and am currently in the internship phase of my education. I work with a diverse population of chemically dependent men and carry the teachings with me into this facility. Although there are various theoretical perspectives and approaches to utilize with such a diverse population, I have found that the approach that is best received and related to are the simple teachings from "Everyday Suchness." There is a non-duality-ness that appeals to most people who have been living and existing in a black or white reality. I am asked by clients, "Where do you get this stuff from?" and I offer the philosophy as I understand it. The teachings offer a way of life that is extremely freeing for a person who has been imprisoned through their substance abuse and I am a witness to growing awareness in these individuals. It is as if the light has been turned on from the dwellings of darkness. I do not claim to know more than I do about Buddhism. I am only able to share "Everyday Suchness" with others. It is truly the beginning of many journeys, not only for myself, but for others, too. I now understand 'right livelihood', for I have found mine.

I now understand that my experiences were necessary, and in that understanding, I find acceptance and non-attachment. I understand attachment with compassion and this allows me to interact free from judgment. I see myself in a grain of sand and the grain of sand in me...and in the same breath, I see myself in the vast night sky and the vastness of the night sky in me. I have learned that there is life in each breath I experience. I have not yet grown into a constant awareness but, I have conscious moments today. I am free from the bondage of active addiction and truly believe that empowerment lives within if I so choose to see it.

*Editor's note: This article shows how when someone is "ready," the Dharma teachings can really have an impact. We don't know the exact fortuitous circumstances that led to Laura Kamoku's encounter with the Everyday Suchness teachings of Rev. Gyomay Kubose. The point of reading her account is for you, the reader, to constantly try and make yourself "ready" to be impacted by the Dharma teachings. It is said, "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear." It is also said, "Great teachings require great listening." While it is important to seek out the teachings, it is more important to be a good listener. That is, to be so motivated and inspired that you can hear and receive a great teaching right in the midst of any present moment.*

## YEAR OF THE DOG

2006 is the Year of the Dog. Those born in the year of the dog turn 12, 24, 36, 48, 60, 72, 84, or 96 years of age in 2006. A common listing describing people born in the year of the dog states that they have a deep sense of loyalty, are honest, and inspire other people's confidence because they are good keepers of secrets. They care little for wealth; yet somehow always seem to have money. A faithful friend, they will sacrifice themselves for others and will never abandon their post. A genuine listener and confident, they make good leaders. Some famous people born in the year of the dog include: William Clinton, Sally Field, Mother Theresa, Linda Ronstadt, Shelly Winters, Candice Bergen, Andre Agassi, and Elvis Presley.

The above may be interesting and even entertaining, but what is of more value than discussing whether one should believe in such things or not is to make connections of the dog theme to teachings that can help us become better human beings. This is how I use the animal themes of the Chinese calendar at the beginning of every year. At the first service in January, instead of a usual Dharma talk, the congregation and I share experiences, ideas, and stories about how the animal theme for that year can be used as a teaching. What kind of teachings might we receive from the dog theme? If you're a local person, join us at Lake Street Church at 11 AM on Saturday, January 7th for the first service of 2006. What kind of teaching might the dog be saying to us? Bow Wow! Wan, wan (Japanese). How is the dog's bark expressed in other languages? Just curious.



Our dog visiting the Sunrise Bodhi Leaf Rock

### *Oneness Newsletter Winter 2005*

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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 deepen individual spirituality 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:

- Jan 7**      **Year of the Dog**
- Jan 21**     **Welcoming the New Year**  
Spirituality of a linguistic analysis of the Japanese New Year greeting.
- Feb 4**      **Dharma Candles**  
Teachings associated with candles.
- Feb 18**     **A New Interpretation of Nirvana**  
Control the "fire" (powerful emotions); do not eliminate or extinguish the fire.
- Mar 4**      **Rallying the Troops**  
Handle a crisis with your inner and outer "armies."
- Mar 18**     **Blue Skies on a Cloudy Day**  
Use the weather as a spiritual practice.

From November thru April, there is sitting meditation led by R. Zenyo Brandon from 9:30 to 10:30 before the 11 A.M. service. May thru October is the season for individual and group retreats at the Bright Dawn Home Spread in Plymouth, Wisconsin. Founder and caretaker is R. Zenyo Brandon, disciple of the Venerable Gyomay M. Kubose. For brochure and more information: 773-583-5794; www.awakenedone.org.

An advertisement for an Audio CD

### Ask an Acupuncture Doctor:

Introduction to acupuncture and herbal medicine.  
3-1/2 hours, 3 audio CDs.

If you would like to know more about acupuncture, this audio CD may interest you. It is part of a listen-and-learn series by AudioTopics developed by one of our nephews. A donation will be made to Kubose Dharma Legacy for each purchase.

From the cover: This "is your chance to find out all about acupuncture and herbal medicine. Inform yourself before you pursue treatment. Or learn more about the treatment you already received. Special guest Dr. Steven Juenke discusses the way an acupuncturist gets certified, how acupuncture works, the energy paths in the body, conditions that can be treated, what to expect from a treatment, herbal medicine, how eastern herbal formulas differ from western drugs and herbs, and much more."

To order:

Call Western Media Products at (800) 232-8902 or go online at www.media-products.com. Please mention or indicate in comments section that you saw this advertisement in this Oneness Newsletter. Price is \$14.95.

## Cookbooks still available!

The deadline for ordering (donation basis) has been extended because our Autumn 2005 newsletter was mailed out so late. Please send cookbook requests to:  
Kubose Dharma Legacy  
8334 Harding Avenue  
Skokie, IL 60076

## Acknowledgements with Gratitude Supporters from Books and Donations

- |                                    |                                |
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| Buddhist Temple of Chicago         | Timothy Murphy (WA)            |
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*On occasion of wedding*  
*On occasion of wedding*  
*Rev. Gyomay Kubose Centennial*

### IN MEMORY OF

Marie Antionette D' Vencets  
Sadako Fujii  
Wayne & Tomiko Fujiwara  
C.J. Herhold  
Nancy Kondo  
Betty Mayebo  
Gene & Yoshiko Mayebo  
George Oya  
David Ralph  
Chihiro Sameshima  
Bruce & Georgia Shimizu  
Yoshi/Lee S. Tanaka  
Tanaka Family  
Tamon Mark Uttech

*Parents*  
*Minnie Kubose's 90th birthday*  
*Eric Fujiwara*  
*Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose*  
*Eunice Yoneko & Raymond Isami Kondo*  
*Cecile Sogioka Ralph*  
*Cecile Sogioka Ralph*  
*Chizu Oya, Jean Miyake, Peggy Kushida*  
*Cecile Sogioka Ralph*  
*Rev. Gyomay & Minnie Kubose*  
*Lillian Shimizu*  
*Miyano Hashimoto*  
*James Tanaka*  
*Harold A. Uttech*

## Book List

### **New Book by Rev. Koyo Kubose**

**BRIGHT DAWN: Discovering Your Everyday Spirituality.** The author's early morning run and sunrise viewing over Lake Michigan are related to simple teachings like "wide view" and "keep going" which deepen one's daily spirituality no matter where one lives. Includes map of actual lakeshore path and over a dozen photographs. 152 pages.

### **Books by Rev. Gyomay Kubose**

**EVERYDAY SUCHNESS.** A classic collection of short articles first published in 1967, hailed as one of the most significant books in Buddhism because of its simple explanations and reference to everyday life. 142 pages.

**THE CENTER WITHIN.** Continues the approach of "Everyday Suchness" and speaks directly to the ordinary layperson. Collection of 58 essays reflects Rev. Kubose's down-to-earth presentation of the Dharma teachings which offers to all people a richer, more meaningful life. 134 pages.

**THE CENTER WITHIN audio cassette;** 3 hours.

**AMERICAN BUDDHISM.** Covers a brief history of Buddhism in America, Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path, problems in terminology and misunderstandings common to Westerners. 29 pages.

### **Translations by Rev. Gyomay Kubose**

**THE FUNDAMENTAL SPIRIT OF BUDDHISM** by Haya Akegarasu (Rev. Gyomay Kubose's teacher). Translated by Rev. Kubose, this book gives an idea of Rev. Akegarasu's life (1877-1954) and teachings. 87 pages. (Temporarily out of print)

**TAN BUTSU GE.** (Translation and commentary). This sutra tells the story of Dharmakara who became Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light. 56 pages.

**HEART OF THE GREAT WISDOM SUTRA.** (Translation and commentary). This sutra deals with the teachings of non-self and nothingness. 35 pages.

### **Other Recommended Books**

**BUDDHIST SYMBOLS.** Handy brochure explaining common Buddhist symbols. quad-fold.

**BUDDHISM: Path of Enlightenment.** Simple, concise introduction to basic Buddhism. Teachings are superimposed on beautiful full-color photographs of nature scenes such as water ponds, rock gardens, bamboo grove, etc. 20 pages.

**RIVER OF FIRE, RIVER OF WATER** by Taitetsu Unno. Introduces the Pure Land tradition of Shin Buddhism using personal anecdotes, stories, and poetry. With spiritual insight and unparalleled scholarship, this book is an important step forward for Buddhism in America. 244 pages.

**COFFINMAN** by Shinmon Aoki. This diary of a mortician invites the reader into the fascinating world of Buddhist spirituality which sees the extraordinary in things ordinary, mundane, and even repugnant. 142 pages.

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**SHIN BUDDHISM: Bits of Rubble Turn into Gold.** by Taitetsu Unno. Brings to mainstream audiences the first comprehensive overview of one of the world's most popular forms of Buddhism. 270 pages.

**THE FEELING BUDDHA.** by David Brazier. A lucid account of how the Buddha's path of wisdom and loving kindness grew out of the challenges he encountered in life. 207 pages.

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<b>YES YES    Your Everyday Spirituality    YES YES</b>	
<b>DEC</b>	<b>Theme:</b> Sharing Silliness <b>Purpose:</b> Dharma Laughter: People who laugh together, stay together <b>Method:</b> "Funny Faces:" With your partner in front of you, have he or she match or imitate each funny face you make. Quickly do at least dozen funny faces. Then reverse roles with you imitating your partners funny faces. This exercise is particularly effective in renewing a sense of fun for couples married for a long time.
<b>JAN</b>	<b>Theme:</b> Golden Silence <b>Purpose:</b> Mute your judgmental tongue <b>Method:</b> "Mute Gassho:" Try to keep silent whenever you over-righteously want to teach others a lesson by pointing out their faults As an aid, push your thumb down on your index finger (just like pushing the mute button on the TV remote) whenever you're tempted to find fault with another person. Note: This mute-button gesture is a reminder to turn off oneself, and is not to be pointed at others!
<b>FEB</b>	<b>Theme:</b> Understanding Others <b>Purpose:</b> To deepen one's empathy of others <b>Method:</b> "Gassho Into Another:" Pick a family member, friend, or co-worker. Put your hands together and Gassho to that person when his or her back is turned to you. As you direct your hands in Gassho towards the person, make a point of not just looking at them but of looking into them; that is, understand how they feel.

**Mailing List Update**

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