
O n e n e s s

Quarterly Newsletter of the Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose Dharma Legacy Vol. 5 No. 1 Spring 2001

AWARENESS

Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose

Buddhism is awareness. In our lives, unless we are aware, we will not see the truth: the truth about ourselves, other things, and the truth about other lives.

It is our tendency to always look outside—around us. We forget to look deep within. When we practice self-inspection, we can see all kinds of things. Yes, we have capabilities and virtues. But also our ego is strong and we have many ugly things within us. When we are serene and quiet we are able to see much deeper into all things.

All around us are many wonderful things. Basho, the most famous of all Japanese poets, wrote many poems which were expressions of his life. He saw universal life—the pure life—deeply within himself and in all things around him. One of his well-known poems is:

Yoku mire ba
Nazuna hana saku
Kaki ne kana

Look carefully.
The *nazuna* blooms
Along the fence... Ah!

The *nazuna* is a most insignificant, small flower. Unless one looks very carefully, one will not see it. Unless one understands life deeply, what significance can the *nazuna* have? Wild flowers bloom everywhere. What of them? Perhaps Basho had walked along that fence many times and had been totally unaware of that small, white flower until he saw it that particular morning. It was blooming with every petal, every leaf. How beautiful! When the sun comes, the *nazuna* opens up one hundred percent. How about me? Am I living like the *nazuna*? I have so many complaints—no inspiration. But look at this small, insignificant wild flower. No one looks at it; no one praises it. However, it lives fully. Basho was inspired to live like the *nazuna* and crystallized his understanding into a 17-syllable haiku poem. Basho received a great lesson from the *nazuna* and this expanded his awareness.

Unless we are aware, we do not learn anything. We have no inspiration and no teachings. Teachings are everywhere—all around us—if only we open the mind's eye to see. Awareness of life is what makes life special. To learn

Buddhism is to change one's life. Regardless of how much we learn, unless your life changes, nothing is learned—it is just another day and another place. To learn Buddhism is to become aware of life, which means to become aware of oneself.

(*The Center Within*, p. 1-2)

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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.

President's Message

I would like to tell you about an interesting experience I had. Last year I was invited to give two Dharma talks at a local Zen Center during their Fall Intensive Practice Period. I spoke at the beginning of the Practice period in October and then at the end in December.

What was interesting was that a few days before my talk in December, I received a reminder postcard from the resident Sensei. After mentioning some things, the postcard ended with, "See you on December 10th for your final teaching to us." I knew the context of what this referred to—that is, my last talk to them at the end of their Fall Practice Period. However, my wife saw this postcard on the kitchen table and laughingly exclaimed, "Your final teaching?"

Well, several months have gone by and I am happy to report that I am still alive and still giving Dharma talks. But upon reflection, isn't life such that who knows when my final teaching will be? My most recent Dharma talk might turn out to be my final teaching. Perhaps it is not a bad idea to give each Dharma talk with the feeling that it is one's final teaching. It has been said that dying things teach best. Awareness of the reality of impermanence can give a vibrant immediacy to sharing the Dharma.

There is a Japanese tradition of writing an annual New Year Day's poem. If a Buddhist teacher were to die during the year, his poem could be considered his final Dharma teaching. These poems are called *Yui Go* in Japanese or "death verse." I wondered, "If I really were to give my final teaching, what would it be?" What teaching would I want to be remembered for?

Recently I have been saying, "Keep going, keep going..." This is more than just a simple expression of encouragement. Sometimes simple things are the most profound. Life is simple but we make it complicated. What is the meaning of life? What is the secret to happiness? Likewise, the Buddhist path is simple but we think it is complex. What is the Buddhist Way? Where is it? Beyond any complications and complexities, "Walking the path is the Path." It's the journey, not the destination. No success or failure—just do it.

When we ask older folks what keeps them going, they often say, "You just have to keep getting up in the morning." Beyond plans and hopes; beyond achievement and progress; just live life. Don't worry about evaluating, judging, concluding—just keep on going. Let go and grow. Let go of whatever thoughts are holding you back. Just keep going.

There is a story behind why I started to say "Keep going, keep going." Early one morning I was jogging in my neighborhood. I know I jog slow because other joggers pass me. As they go by me, I look at them and some of them look like they are barely shuffling along. I would think, "Man, if they're passing me, I must be going super slow." I smile and say to myself, "Just call me rabbit!" So any way, this one morning I'm jogging along and an elderly man walking his dog sees me and as we pass each other, he says with a smile, "Guess you just have to keep on going!" I smiled back and kept on going. As I continued to plod along, I thought, "That's right, there are no short cuts or deep insights about running or about life either. No secret insights or fancy teachings for motivation. The most important thing is to just keep on going.

Ever since then, no matter what is going on in my or someone else's life, I say with conviction, "Keep going, keep going..." I think this expression of "Keep going, keep going" is similar to such teachings as, Shunryu Suzuki's "Beginner's Mind" and Seung Sahn's "Only Don't Know Mind." Kosho Uchiyama's favorite saying was, "Atamaga tebanashi" which can be translated as, "Don't grab on with your head." So, in other words, you don't have to try and achieve the expert's mind or feel you have to really "know" or attain something. Don't grab onto whatever it is that you think is necessary or desirable. Life/truth/reality is dynamic and always moving. So, keep going, keep going...

I suppose this expression of "Keep going, keep going" can be considered my possible 'death verse' as of January 1, 2001. So if I happen to pass away during the coming Millennium, please consider it my final teaching and the extent of my understanding of the Dharma.

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Dharma Glimpse

Fly-Fishing Meditation

By Darren Kubose

I knew from the moment I gripped the cork handle on my very first fly rod that there was something special about this 'sport.' I wasn't quite sure what it was, but I knew there must have been something about fly fishing that attracted many great people to it, even past presidents of the United States of America. There are so many legendary waters that I read about in books, such as the unparalleled fishing in Montana and Wyoming (even the Upper Kings River in California!).

Recently, during my trip to Chicago to say good-bye to my Grandfather, I believe I finally realized what was so magical and special about fly fishing. Fly fishing is a great form of meditation! I really don't know what it means to meditate, though. I've never had my legs crossed, eyes closed, and hands in the 'OK' position but I do have an idea of what I think meditation is.

A long time ago, I was probably around 10 years old, I remember Grandpa and Uncle Sunnan would come back from meditating at the temple. I was very curious as to exactly what they were doing. Uncle Sunnan told me they sat around and thought about 'nothing.' Wow, what a concept, 'nothing.' He even went on to say that while sitting, every once in a while, someone would come over and whack them on their shoulders with a stick to make sure they kept thinking about 'nothing.' I asked my dad to explain. All he said was that while sitting there, you are suppose to empty everything out of your mind—all of your daily distractions, thought, stresses, everything. You try to concentrate on only one thing, maybe a 'black dot.' This sort of made sense to me, but I was still a little confused. I think I considered it a way for the 'adults' to clear their minds.

Later on, when I was around 20 years old, I remember my dad and I talking about motorcycles. I remember him telling me why he enjoyed riding motorcycles so much. He said it was a great way to relax your mind, similar to meditation. I distinctly recall him saying that riding a motorcycle forces you to think only about one thing—riding. You focus on shifting gears, the clutch, the brakes, and the road ahead of you. If you don't, you will crash. So, I figured that this was my dad's way of meditating.

Recently, while lying in bed one morning shortly before our trip to Chicago, I was thinking (dreaming) about fly fishing. I realized that just like getting whacked on the back

and riding a motorcycle, fly fishing was my way to leave all other thoughts behind and just focus on one thing. I believe there is a Buddhist teaching that says, if you do something, big or small, do it to the best of your ability. Focus on the one thing that you are doing. Even if it is something as simple as taking out the trash, or doing the dishes. Fly fishing is a natural way for me to relax my mind and 'meditate.' While I stand in the middle of the river, water rushes around my legs, beautiful mountains and trees are on both sides of me, I cannot help but enjoy the moment. If I see a rising fish, all I am thinking about is getting a perfect drift of my fly. I am so focused on my presentation and fly selection that there is no room for any other thoughts. I am not thinking about the stresses of my job or the need to mow the lawn. The only thing that breaks my focus and concentration is the 'splash' of a beautiful rainbow taking my fly. It may only be 4 inches long but it is a perfect wild rainbow trout. A quick release of the fish and I am back looking for the next 'rise.'

I am always asked about how big the fish are that I catch. Size really doesn't matter in this sport. Similarly, riding a motorcycle does not require you to travel 85 mph to get the enjoyment. You can go 15 mph and have just as much satisfaction, not to mention being able to see the beautiful world around you. Finally, I think I have at least a small understanding of what Uncle Sunnan and my dad were talking about. Even when I am in a traditionally perfect meditative environment, I am unable to attain the desired 'state of mind.' For me, it is only through fly fishing that I can 'whack myself' with my fly rod.

(Darren is the grandson of Rev. Gyomay and Minnie Kubose and the son of Don and Joyce Kubose of Fowler, California. Darren is a math teacher at Clovis West High School. He, his wife Tina, and daughters Kamryn (6 years old) and Emiko (3 years old) live in Fresno, California.)





Book Review

By Koyo S. Kubose



The Complete Guide to Buddhist America edited by Don Morreale (Shambhala Press, 1998) lists over a thousand Buddhist Centers. This book is more than just a directory. Introductory articles by Jack Kornfield and Joseph Goldstein give a good overview of the emerging nature of Buddhism in America. The contents of the book is described on the book's back cover, "The book is divided into four parts, the first three representing the major Buddhist traditions that have taken root in America: 'Theravada, The Path of Insight'; 'Mahayana, The Path of Compassion;' and 'Vajrayana, The Path of Devotion.' The fourth part covers nonsectarian groups. Each part begins with several essays by leading Buddhist teachers, scholars, and long-time students to introduce the philosophy and practices of that particular school. Then follow listings of hundreds of centers and meditation groups identified with that tradition, with brief descriptions of each center's facilities, the schedule of regular practices and special retreats, information about teacher lineages, and full contact information. The listings are enhanced by over a hundred photographs of the centers and their teachers, as well as by sidebars highlighting their unique features, practices, and events."

This book is a good resource that can come in handy when checking on the availability of centers across the United States. However, don't neglect to read the informative essays and highlight sidebars. This material is a big plus and is what makes this directory especially interesting.

(Note: Our "Dial-the-Dharma" taped-talk telephone service is included as one of the highlight sidebars.)



Dial the Dharma

(847) 677 - 8053

Call to hear a recorded 2-3 minute teaching.
Tapes changed daily.

American Buddhist Services

The Heartland Sangha holds services on the first and third Saturdays of every month at the Lake Street Church, 607 Lake Street, Evanston (use courtyard entrance). Service starts at 11:00 a.m., with optional meditation sitting at 9:30 a.m. (For more information, call Heartland Sangha at 773-545-9972).

As a regular speaker, Rev. Koyo Kubose's upcoming Dharma Talk titles are:

- March 17** Kshanti Paramita: Patience
 - April 7** Live Like a Flower Blooms
 - April 21** Spiritual Poverty
 - May 5** Deafness & Dharma Ears
 - May 19** More Than Memorialize, Carry On!
 - June 2** No Service
- Visakha Celebration to be held at Lake Street Church.

Dharma talks of earlier services are available on video tape for interested persons (e.g. shut ins; incarcerated prisoners; people without a nearby Sangha; or to those who simply wish to hear Dharma talks.) Contact the Kubose Dharma Legacy to receive a tape on loan. Return the tape and another will be sent to you.

WOW

(Words of Wisdom)

Here are some gems from the Dhammapada Sutra, Sayings of the Buddha:

"The farmer channels water to his land;
The carpenter turns his wood;
So the wise shape themselves."

"Overcome evil with good;
Anger with gentleness;
Falsehood with truth."

"Live with peace, even among the troubled;
With contentment, even among the greedy;
With love, even among those who hate."

"As a mountain is not shaken by the wind,
So the wise are not moved by praise or blame."

Reader Replies

The following letter was shared with us by the author's aunt:

Dear Aunty,

Early this morning around 1:00 A.M., I tossed and turned in bed, and thought to myself, "Here comes another sleepless night." I got out of bed and went downstairs to stretch my short stubby legs, and on my way back to bed stopped at my bookcase. I reached up to grab a book to read, and my random choice was a book you sent to me when _____ got into the accident in June of 1994.

The book, "The Center Within," by G. Kubose, I am afraid to admit, was initially glanced at when I first received it from you. I tried to remember why I never started reading this book, with the intention of finishing it, and concluded, that maybe the focus of _____'s tragedy made me look in a direction other than religion. Although I am only into a few chapters, it significantly impacted my thought patterns, which sometimes I hate to admit, are extremely negative.

AWARENESS

Yoku mire ba
Nazuna hana saku
Kaki ne kana

Our teachers can be anyone, with the realization that we are all students in life, and life is our classroom. Unlike a student in school, who is aware of his

environment, we go through life, not realizing that the events we experience, whether tragic or blissful, indeed are lessons, that are to guide us into our enlightenment..... Namu Amida Butsu.

Thank you for the lesson, aunty!!!

Love,
CC

Dear Oneness Newsletter,

I attended a 'retreat' with the Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose, a long time ago.

I met Rev. Koyo Kubose at Gathering 2000 and loved his 'bathroom gassho.' (I use it every day.)

I'd like to sit next to 'Tate' Kubose on the bus-ride of Life!

I feel the 'Oneness' newsletter is being written for me! I love it!! (It is highlighted on every page!)

The ego shows here with the many I's? Yet, I hear it is not necessarily a negative word?

F.M.N. (Hawaii)

P.S. I'd like to read more about your 'non-dualistic' approach.

Acknowledgements with Gratitude

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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. This continues the approach of "Everyday Suchness" and speaks directly to the ordinary layperson. The collection of 58 essays reflects Rev. Kubose's unique, down-to-earth presentation of the Dharma teachings which offer 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.

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.

Highly Recommended Books

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.

INVISIBLE EYELASHES by Rev. Nikkyo Niwano. Combines time-honored Buddhist teachings and stories with examples from modern life to show how attitude affects happiness and how flexibility of mind helps us grow spiritually, making us more productive at work and better able to relate to others. 175 pages.

OCEAN: AN INTRODUCTION TO JODO-SHINSHU BUDDHISM IN AMERICA by Rev. Kenneth K. Tanaka. Uses a question and answer format to present Jodo-Shinshu Buddhism and to answer questions frequently asked by non-Buddhists. This book can help Jodo-Shinshu Buddhists understand their own religious tradition and also help in communicating it to others. 270 pages.

RIVER OF FIRE, RIVER OF WATER by Taitetsu Unno. Introduces the Pure Land tradition of Shin Buddhism using personal anecdotes, stories, and poetry. The Pure Land practice is harmonious with daily life, making it easily adaptable for seekers today. With spiritual insight and unparalleled scholarship, this book is an important step forward for Buddhism in America. 244 pages.

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ZEN THERAPY by David Brazier. "A potent source of inspiration for anyone interested in the therapeutic potential of Buddhism...offers readers in the West a fresh perspective on Buddhist psychology and demonstrates how Zen Buddhist techniques are integrated into psychotherapy... and with the help of vivid case studies, clearly demonstrates how a Buddhist approach can provide a practical path to personal growth." 280 pages.

THE MONK WHO DARED by Ruth M. Tabrah. A historical novel of Shinran, the founder of Jodo-Shinshu Buddhism. Set in 13th century, this story covers the drama and crucial inner changes of Shinran's life. 329 pages.

Kubose Dharma Legacy

Oneness Newsletter

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YES YES YES YES YES	
Your Everyday Spirituality	
MAR	<p>Theme: Tolerance and Understanding</p> <p>Purpose: When thinking about an interpersonal conflict, remind oneself to soften and warm up one's cold-hearted attitude or hard, rigid stubbornness.</p> <p>Method: "Warm-Breath Gassho:" While putting hands together in Gassho, blow a warm breath on your hands and reflect on the melting warmth of tolerant understanding.</p>
APR	<p>Theme: Broaden One's Gratitude</p> <p>Purpose: It's easy to feel grateful for food or desired things. We should widen our gratitude to include many other things.</p> <p>Method: "BM Gassho:" After a bowel movement, Gassho to your BM before flushing and say, "Thank you my stinky BM for doing your part in keeping me healthy." (Note: BM can stand for "Buddha Movement.")</p>
MAY	<p>Theme: Perseverance</p> <p>Purpose: Encouragement to endure and keep going when feeling discouraged.</p> <p>Method: "Keep-Going Gassho:" Put hands together in Gassho, then extend hands in front of oneself in a series of small forward motions. Breathe deeply and nod your head yes. Repeat and experiment with different kinds of forward hand movements.</p>