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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. 3 No. 2 Summer 1999

## FREEDOM

By Ven. Gyomay M. Kubose

All men seek happiness, peace and freedom. Where freedom is, there is happiness and peace; therefore, freedom is the basic desire of man. Freedom is the opposite of control, limitation, bondage, and ignorance.

Buddhism teaches the way of freedom, which is Enlightenment or Nirvana. The purpose of Buddhism is the attainment of Nirvana, which is a life of freedom. Man is not free as long as he is bound by time and space.

Everyone fears death and does not want to die. Yet, we all die without exception. Why do we fear death? Death is a natural thing. It is a process of life just as much as birth is. We need not fear death. When flowers are past their bloom, it is only natural for them to scatter. When leaves are matured in their growth, they turn color and fall. If you transcend death, then you are free from birth and death. In the life of truth we do not die. Death does not hinder our true life. There is no fear of death in the true man. Man is free from birth and death when he attains Nirvana. Nirvana is the world of freedom.

Man fears punishment or consequences. Punishment or consequences is the law of karma. No one can escape from karma. It is a natural consequence. If you are born, you will die. Birth includes death. All that is made is subject to decay. Man tries to avoid or escape from inevitable things. This is evidence of ignorance. Accept the inevitable things, not unwillingly, but willingly and naturally. When you accept willingly, when it is not forced upon you, you are free. Acceptance is your freedom. Acceptance is transcendence. Transcendence means accep-

...tance. Transcendence and acceptance are not two things but one and the same. Here exists freedom. When you are born as a woman, be a woman. If you are short, accept the shortness and do not let anything hinder you. You can excel in many things. If one is born as Japanese, be a good Japanese. Roses are red, the sky is blue, snow is white, sugar is sweet, and pepper is hot. That is the way it should be. All things are good and all are free as they are. You need not compare. Everyone has his place in the world. So be it. Flowers are red and leaves are green. This is the world of suchness—the free and natural world.

Buddhism teaches Enlightenment, which is the opposite of ignorance. Enlightenment is freedom, and ignorance is bondage. Enlightenment is to see things as they are. Upon seeing a rope on the road in the evening, and thinking it is a snake, you become scared; but if you are able to see the rope as a rope under better light, there is no fear. If one is able to see things as they are, he is free. Ignorance is the cause of all troubles. We do many stupid things because of our ignorance. To be greedy, to get angry, to have idle complaints—all these causes of suffering are the results of ignorance. To be free or to attain freedom is to overcome ignorance, and that is enlightenment.

We often think that others hinder our own freedom. The wife blames her husband and the husband blames his wife. Often we blame society and condemn the “system.” But it is not the environment that makes you miserable or deprives you of your freedom. No matter how good the environment is, unless your mind is free, you cannot be a

free person. One person said that he wanted to be free; however, when a red light signal at a crossing stopped him, he felt that he was not free. To me, the red light is not a hindrance. I do not want to go against the light because it is dangerous. I work because I want to work, not because I have to work. I help people because I want to help, not because I have to help.

This world is free. Our life is free. This world is the world of Nirvana. Nirvana is not something we attain or grasp. Rather, we discover ourselves in the world of Nirvana, the true free world in which we are living. Nirvana is right here, now. Heaven and hell are not places we go after we die. They are here now. They are the contents of our own life. We create a heaven-like or hell-like place. We are responsible. It is our ignorance that makes our whole world dark. When we are enlightened, the whole world becomes bright.

It is not the devil that brings darkness and misery, nor gods that bring happiness or brightness. It is up to us to make our life bright or dark, to be free or to be in bondage. Freedom exists in us. Freedom does not exist in the relative and comparative world but only in the world of oneness, the absolute. Only when subject and object become one, is there freedom.

*The Legacy is online*

[www.brightdawn.org](http://www.brightdawn.org)

**See page 5**

# President's Message

by Rev. Koyo S. Kubose

What is your view of cause and effect in the world? I consider myself to be an educated, intelligent person who is comfortable with a scientific view of the natural world. I would call this "just having common sense" as opposed to holding supernatural or superstitious beliefs. The long historical road to "just having common sense," is filled with many battles between science and religion. I don't feel such battles apply to Buddhism. I think Buddhism attracts people whose world view is that of natural laws. My opinion is that Buddhism should not be associated with the stereotype of religion as being characterized by blind faith and the kind of emotionalism that is contrary to rationality and common sense.

The definition of religion should not be exclusively equated with a belief in a supernatural omnipotent being. Such a definition is one reason some people have a distaste for anything to do with religion. Unfortunately, this can result in an unnecessary impoverished spiritual life. At its worse, what is left is a deep-seated cynicism and arrogance. Another option is to keep one's religious beliefs compartmentalized from one's scientific view of the world. Is such compartmentalization necessary or desirable? Buddhism is not the kind of religion that requires such a separation. Instead, Buddhism is compatible with a unified view that encompasses both personal spirituality and the scientific world of natural laws.

Such a unified view is what I find exciting about a new book, *The Sacred Depths of Nature* by Ursula Goodenough (Oxford University Press, 1998).

This book was reviewed by Barbara Smuts in *Scientific American* (May, 1999). One of our Oneness Newsletter readers sent me a copy of this review. She felt the book would be of interest to other Newsletter readers. I agree and I feel strongly enough to reprint the review almost in its entirety in this current issue of our Newsletter.

## Oneness Newsletter Summer 1999

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# Dharma Glimpses

## A Tattered Cover Bookstore Close Encounter

By Bob Doi

Being among the first to enter Tattered, I am like an early bird darting, pecking in random curiosity, being drawn to the colorful book jackets with captivating titles. Eventually meandering into the Zen section I start reading "Essays in Zen Buddhism" by D.T. Suzuki. Absorbing his wisdom reminds me of a Tai-chi centering movement from the *yin* to the *yang* position. Closing my eyes to imagine a one thought/movement in unison, I am aware of the full cycle of one breath, the effortless next breath; my body is now a vessel sitting erect.

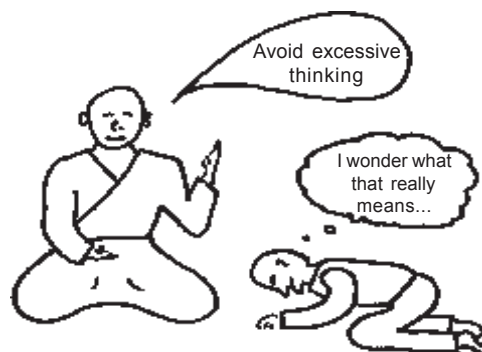
As I slowly open my eyes a woman in a Lotus posture seems to be levitating a foot above the carpet. Her eyes sear a path through the back of my eye sockets. As I look intensely into her eyes this focal point retreats to a point between us. The hairs on my body prickle with this overpowering current. This sudden rapport, mysterious yet natural, has its own language. Is she testing me? Unruffled, she sits tall, graceful, so serene.

She has found the elusive Middle Way, centered in her true nature, being effortlessly present. Experiencing this level of awareness is a rare opportunity to tune into my true nature.

We meditate facing each other in deep consciousness until someone says, "Jung? Try lower level, first." She rises, smiles through me while stretching, turns and disappears before I can react. That pit in my stomach loneliness hits hard, suddenly leaves just as quickly.

I didn't lose a soul-mate, I gained an insight. Something unique, beyond words happened. An energy was felt, one that came to fruition as a powerful entity. I know she will be back in many different forms if I let go of her present one. She is pure energy, the Ch'i power in all of us!

## Comical Karma



by Kanon and Koyo Kubose 1999

## Book Review

The Sacred Depths of Nature by Ursula Goodenough  
(reviewed by Barbara Smuts)

### NATURE'S POWER TO EVOKE AWE AND GRATITUDE

Several years ago I took a day off from research on wild dolphins to walk miles of remote Australian beach. To the west, the meeting of sea and sky was barely discernible; to the east, searing desert extended 2,000 miles. For hours I walked through this exquisite but barren landscape in utter silence, mourning a recent personal loss. Suddenly, with no warning, the hollow feeling within merged with the emptiness all around into a singular, stunning void that engulfed me with dizzying speed. I collapsed to the ground, reduced to a tiny isolated speck in a vast, impersonal universe. I struggled to a sitting position, blinking in the midday glare, searching for something, anything, to bring me back to my ordinary self. Nothing. Despite the sun's heat, I felt cold and I was afraid.

Then, as if from a great distance, I heard a faint, familiar sound that brought immense relief. A few hundred yards away a dozen cormorants were gathering at the sea's edge to dry their wet, oily wings, squawking and scrambling as they settled into their places on the sand. I drew closer, hoping fiercely that they wouldn't rise up in flight, and beheld the luminous surface of their dark feathers. Those birds could have been anywhere, but instead by some miracle they were right there, then, with me. I felt wave upon wave of gratitude for their existence and for the existence of all sentient beings.

In *The Sacred Depths of Nature*, Ursula Goodenough, one of America's leading cell biologists and a professor of biology at Washington University, gives voice to many such moments of communion with nature. The recognition of nature's power to evoke emotions such as awe and gratitude is, of course, not new, as Goodenough acknowledges in her introduction. Two aspects of her approach, however, are novel. Continued on next page...

**A BIOLOGIST'S DEFINITION OF SPIRITUALITY: RELIGIOUS NATURALISM**

First, Goodenough's "nature" encompasses not just our direct experience of the natural world but also our scientific understanding of it. She argues eloquently that such understanding, far from provoking detachment or despair, can be a wellspring of solace and joy.

The second novel aspect is Goodenough's definition of religious experience. For her, experience qualifies as religious if it entails emotions like awe, wonder, gratitude, or joy, regardless of whether or not the person associates such emotions with traditional religious creeds, deities or supernatural phenomena.

Goodenough, who professes no belief in a god, describes a profoundly religious relationship with the cosmos rooted in her detailed understanding of phenomena such as atoms and stars, the complex workings of a cell, and the astonishing evolutionary emergence of a mind capable of inquiring into its own nature. Such understanding can give rise to what she calls "religious naturalism," a scientifically based reverence for every aspect of the natural world, including ourselves.

**REFLECTIONS ON NATURE'S PHENOMENA: REVEL, NOT RETREAT**

Goodenough aims to "present an accessible account of our scientific understanding of Nature and then suggest ways that this account can call forth appealing and abiding religious responses." She does this by beginning each chapter with a factual description of a phenomenon critical to life, such as how DNA codes for proteins or how natural selection works, and concludes with a briefer section labeled "Reflections," in which she shares the thoughts and feelings this scientific knowledge stirs in her.

In the first set of reflections, she shares her own encounter with nihilistic despair when, as an adolescent, she pondered the night sky. She thought about how each star is dying and the fact that "Our sun too will die, frying the Earth to a crisp during its heatdeath, spewing its bits and pieces out into the frigid nothingness of curved spacetime." Such thoughts overwhelmed her: "The night sky was ruined. I would never be able to look at it again.... A bleak emptiness overtook me whenever I thought about what was really going on out in the cosmos or deep in the atom. So I did my best not to think about such things."

How she came to terms with such feelings reveals the personal foundations of her religious naturalism:

*But, since then, I have found a way to defeat the nihilism that lurks in the infinite and the infinitesimal. I have come to understand that I can deflect the apparent pointlessness of it all by realizing that I don't have to seek a point. In any of it. Instead, I can see it as the locus of Mystery... Inherently pointless, inherently shrouded in its own absence of category. The clouds passing - across the face of the deity in the stained glass images of Heaven.... The realization that I needn't...seek answers to the Big Questions has served as an epiphany. I lie on my back under the stars and the unseen galaxies and I let their enormity wash over me. I assimilate the vastness of the distances, the impermanence, the fact of it all. I go all the way out and then I go all the way down, to the fact of photons without mass and gauge bosons that become massless at high temperatures. I take in the abstractions about forces and symmetries and they caress me like Gregorian chants, the meaning of the words not mattering because the words are so haunting.*

*Mystery generates wonder, and wonder generates awe. The gasp can terrify or the gasp can emancipate.*

**THE SCIENTIST VS. MORTAL BEING**

Goodenough's emancipation, through what she calls "a covenant with Mystery," represents her very personal, hard-won ex-

perience of the Divine. One prime reason Goodenough's covenant with mystery is so emancipating is that it allows her to revel in, rather than retreat from, the paradoxes she encounters everywhere as both a scientist and a mortal being. Her articulation of one such paradox, in the chapter on "Multicellularity and Death," offers a striking example:

*...it is here that we arrive at one of the central ironies of human existence. Which is that our sentient brains are uniquely capable of experiencing deep regret and sorrow and fear at the prospect of our own death, yet it was the invention of death, the invention of the germ/soma dichotomy, that made possible the existence of our brains... Does death have any meaning? Well, yes, it does. Sex without death gets you single-celled algae and fungi, sex with a mortal soma gets you the rest of the eukaryotic creatures. Death is the price paid to have trees and clams and birds and grasshoppers, and death is the price paid to have human consciousness, to be aware of all that shimmering awareness and all that love.*

*My somatic life is the wondrous gift wrought by my forthcoming death.*

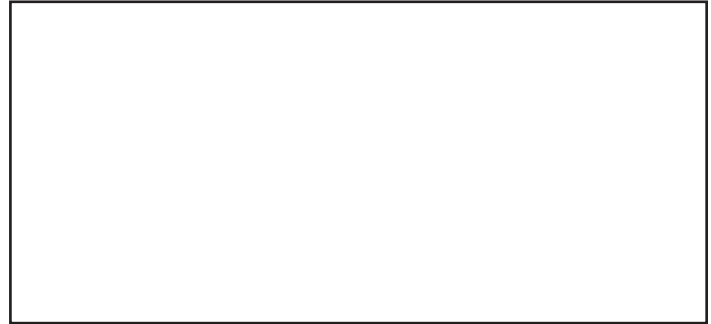
Goodenough's religious naturalism is inspired by the scientific account of cosmic evolution, a story that has important things to say about the universe, where we came from and our place in the larger scheme of things. This particular story is brand-new in the time scale of human life on earth, but, as Goodenough points out, all people feel compelled to develop accounts of the cosmos that tell them "how things are" and which things matter. Although we refer to such stories as myths, in a prescientific world these accounts did exactly what science does for us today: they provided a conceptual framework within which people could comprehend and relate to a mysterious universe. But myths were not just helpful stories; they also served to sanctify the cosmos and our place in it, thereby eliciting a direct experience of the sacred.

Perhaps an imperative to experience our world as numinous lurks deep within us all, a legacy of tens of thousands of years of ancestral religious practice.





The Kubose Dharma Legacy is pleased to announce its arrival onto the internet. Our website allows anyone to tap into the Dharma from anywhere, at anytime. It is a resource that provides up to date information about Legacy events. A picture of the website index is to the right. The following will give you an idea of what our website has to offer:



## WHO WE ARE

A spinning 3-D photocube with pictures of Rev. Haya Akegarasu, Revs. Gyomay and Koyo Kubose. Included with biographies are inspirational "I Remember When" stories by family and friends. You are welcome to submit remembrances to be included on this page.

## WHAT WE DO

Describes 3 main branches of the Kubose Dharma Legacy: Publications, Services (like Dial the Dharma) and Personal Development Programs (like retreats, book discussion groups, lectures).

## OUR APPROACH

Includes Rev. Gyomay Kubose's vision of Buddhism in America, and describes his approach, "The Way of Oneness." You are welcome to email comments/questions to Rev. Koyo Kubose.

## BOOKS

Includes catalog of books written and translated by Rev. Gyomay Kubose.

## NEWSLETTER

Print out and read past issues of Oneness Newsletters. You are welcome to email submissions for an upcoming newsletter.

## Legacy Website Contest

To enter:

1. Visit our website ([www.brightdawn.org](http://www.brightdawn.org))
2. Find our GAMES page where you will find 3 trivia questions
3. Email your answers using our CONTACT page or mail answers to:  
Kubose Dharma Legacy; 8334 Harding Ave.; Skokie, IL 60076.  
(one entry per person)

To win:

Once we receive 500 entries, Reverend Gyomay Kubose will randomly choose a winner.

The Winner will receive an original Tanzaku by Rev. Gyomay Kubose (See above photo). The Japanese calligraphy reads "Nichi Nichi Kore Ko Jitsu" which means "Every Day is a Good Day." In Buddhism, a teacher's writing is considered an embodiment of the teacher himself. To have Rev. Gyomay Kubose's writing displayed in one's home is to be in his presence.

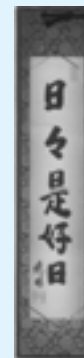


Photo of a Tanzaku by Rev. Gyomay Kubose



The Rev. Gyomay Kubose Dharma Legacy is an American Buddhist organization established to perpetuate and develop Rev. Gyomay Kubose's non-dualistic approach to Buddhism.



## Dial the Dharma

(847) 677 - 8053

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

## Seasonings

*sayings to add a little flavor to life*



The winds and waves are  
always on the side of the  
ablest navigators

The mind, like land, does not care  
what we plant.

Good or bad, it returns what's  
planted

## Reader's Replies

From a friend's calendar:

"The bellows blew high the  
flaming forge, the sword  
was hammered on the anvil.  
It was the same steel  
as in the beginning,  
But how different was its  
edge!" Genro

JL (IL)

Here's some verse for  
the Oneness Newsletter:

"coming with an  
open hand,  
leaving with an  
empty hand-  
Dharma!"

JP (NY)

**Buddha Drives You Home**

Roadway storms ... Focus circle vision  
Hot rodders ..... Bend with compassion  
Riot crowds ..... Find esoteric calm  
Caution zone ..... Return to middle way  
Repair slowdown ..... Empathy with crew  
Arriving ..... Home with gratitude

GDI (IL)

## Acknowledgements with Gratitude

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# LEGACY CATALOG

## 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

**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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American Buddhism		\$ 5.00	
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Heart of the Wisdom Sutra		\$ 6.00	
Invisible Eyelashes		\$12.00	
Ocean		\$15.00	
River of Fire, River of Water		\$12.00	

Shipping - \$3.00 first two books and 50c per item thereafter. **SHIPPING** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Not only is making a memorial donation a way to remember and honor a loved one, but it is a karmic action that fosters awareness of the two main teachings of Interdependency and Impermanence. Acknowledging one's "roots" nurtures a feeling of gratitude, which is the foundation of a spiritual life. A memorial donation does all this and at the same time helps support the mission and activities of a worthy organization of one's choice.

For those who wish to make a memorial donation to the Kubose Dharma Legacy, the above form may be used.

# Kubose Dharma Legacy

## Oneness Newsletter

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### Your Everyday Spirituality

<b>JUNE</b>	<b>Theme: Patience and Courtesy</b> <b>Purpose: To let others in or go before you while driving, waiting in lines, etc.</b> <b>Method: "Letting-in Gassho:" Start with 'half' gassho of one hand in front of you; extend hand out at 45 degree angle as signal for the other person to go ahead. Smile.</b>
<b>JULY</b>	<b>Theme: Gratitude</b> <b>Purpose: To increase appreciation for simple everyday things.</b> <b>Method: "Drinking Water Gassho:" Every time you drink water, think how fortunate you are that such life-giving water exists and that you are able to swallow it. With a feeling of not taking simple things for granted, bow your head slightly in gratitude</b>
<b>AUG</b>	<b>Theme: Deep Hearing</b> <b>Purpose: When things get too 'noisy,' restore perspective by talking less &amp; listening more.</b> <b>Method: "Listening Gassho:" Cup one hand behind your ear and slowly move your hand up and down as if scratching an itch. Consider your moving hand as a rotating antenna to 'catch' or 'hear' the silence behind the sounds of daily life.</b>