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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. 6 No. 3 Autumn 2002

## How the Buddha Taught By Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose

Although it is important to know *what* the Buddha taught, in another way it is more important to know *how* he taught. I talked about this recently to our temple's high school students. I started out by saying, "Today I am not going to tell you about the Buddha's teachings. These things you can read about later. Instead, let's look at how the Buddha taught. He never gave answers on a silver platter. He never said, 'This is the truth; you should believe it and follow it.' On the contrary, the Buddha said, 'Do not believe something just because I said it. Do not follow teachings until you test them through your own experience.' The Buddha always said to look into one's own life."

Then I asked the students, "What is the most important thing in your life?" One girl said, "My parents." We talked about the importance of parents. Another student mentioned money. I asked, "Is money the most important thing?" Everybody said, "No." However, I countered that we can't deny that money is very important. If we did not have money, we could not function in today's society. Another boy said, "Life itself is most important." "What do you mean life itself?" I asked. He must have taken

biology because he answered, "Life is composed of cells." I commented, "It is important to keep your body alive and healthy." "Yes," he replied, "without a healthy body, we cannot help others." This led into exploring the value of altruism. We continued to consider many other different answers to the question of what is the most important thing in life. Although many aspects were discussed, we did not arrive at one final answer. I explained that we each have to think things out for ourselves. This is the Buddhist approach.

The Buddha never handed out teachings like a pill saying, "Here, swallow this." Instead he always asked, "Is that right? What do you think?" He offered teachings so that you could try them in your own life. He did not tabulate his teachings. His teachings were not static or statistical in form. His teachings were dynamic and always dealt with value in one's life. For instance, what is real happiness in your life? Many children are happy when their fathers give them a weekly allowance. However, when that allowance is gone by the middle of the week, they are sad. Happiness that is created by friendship lasts only as long as your friend

is present. When your friend is gone, you are sad.

Does real happiness come from external things? What is the real happiness in your life? These are the kinds of challenges that the Buddha always asked. He never commanded people. In Buddhism, there is no dogma; there is no set of formal teachings. The teachings are always put within the context of an individual's experience. Understanding should come from living, not from the head. This is the Buddhist way. This is how the Buddha taught. (*The Center Within*; pgs. 52-53)

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

# President's Message

By Rev. Koyo Kubose

I would like to discuss the Buddhist teaching called *Innen* in Japanese. *Innen* means causes and conditions. Buddhist doctrine states that all things or results are due to the combined effect of direct causes and indirect conditions. For example, how is it that a person has food to eat? One immediate cause or primary reason for food being on the table is that there is a "bread winner." The head of the family worked hard and his or her wages provided the means to purchase food. In addition to this direct cause, there are indirect conditions that are necessary for food to be on the table; e.g. an economy that provides jobs, good weather for crops, a food distribution system, etc.

Let's consider another example. How did a person become a famous musician or great athlete? One might say it was due to his innate ability combined with long hours of practice. However, in addition, there are some indirect conditions that had to be involved. For example, in order for one's innate abilities to be manifested, one needs good physical health and all the factors that contributed to such good health. In turn, one's health is related to that of his parents, grandparents, and other relatives. In like fashion, what are the conditions that influenced a person to practice and work hard? Obvious factors are things like the support and encouragement of family and friends, societal role models, etc.

It is said, "No man is an island." Life is more complex than simply "A caused B" or "I (he) did that." Many problems in life result from an over simplification in taking or giving credit and blame when trying to understand why things are the way they are. The reality of *Innen* is at the core of Right Understanding, which is the first of the Buddha's Eightfold Noble Path.

The Opening Dedication Ceremony of a new retreat center was held on June 22, 2002 in Plymouth, Wisconsin. How did this retreat center come to be? What are the causes and conditions? Richard Zenyo Brandon is the founder of this center. He named the center, "Bright Dawn Home Spread." "Bright Dawn" was chosen in honor of his teacher, Rev. Gyomay Kubose; the translation of Gyomay is "bright dawn." Whenever Richard is asked how he became interested in Buddhism, he says it all started when he heard Rev. Kubose's talk when Rev. Kubose was a guest speaker at a Unitarian church. Thus, there is a line connecting the hearing of an inspiring talk and the establishment of a retreat center some 30 years later.

This is not to ignore all the factors that influenced Rev. Kubose's sincere expression of the teachings nor all the factors that influenced Richard's persistence and determination in following his dream of starting a retreat center. The main point is that all things are interrelated and therefore all things are important. This is the reality of *Innen*.

It should also be pointed out why Richard used the words "Home Spread" in naming his center. Richard found a "home" in the Buddhist teachings. To find one's home is a significant thing. Richard hopes his center will help others to find their "home." Richard wants such a "home" to spread to many people. The action of spreading is due to karmic forces. This karmic spreading is often illustrated by how the perfume of incense spreads.

As part of the Bright Dawn Home Spread Dedication Ceremony, an incense burner was passed around by everyone. When incense is lit in one place, the perfume spreads to all nooks and corners of the building. This is the physical law of entropy. Just as the perfume of incense spreads all over, the perfume of one's actions also spread all over. This is the spiritual law of karma. For example, when a teacher influences a young mind, we never know where that influence will end because that young person will influence others and so forth. When you do something good in the community, you never know where the effects will end. When you smile at a stranger you may make that person's day and indirectly influence many others too. One's actions "spread out" all over. The spread of karmic effects is *Innen* in action.

It is not necessary to know exactly how things influence each other. The main point is to appreciate that every little thing we do is important and that every little thing we receive is a great gift. *Innen* and right understanding help one to live with a genuine sincerity that makes each moment full of meaning.

Congratulations on the establishment of the "Bright Dawn Home Spread." Its birth is the result of many causes and conditions. We put our hands together in Gassho. Let us not forget that the very reason for the existence of a retreat center is that it be used. The retreat center has been established for the benefit of all of us.

**For Bright Dawn Home Spread information:  
call (920) 528-1364 or (773) 583-5794**

# Bright Dawn Sunrise Walk

You and your friends are invited to join Rev. Koyo and Adrienne Kubose at sunrise on Sunday, September 15 for a lakefront walk. The sheer beauty of viewing a sunrise over Lake Michigan is itself worthwhile but in addition, seeing the bright dawn can be a spiritual experience. The sun as a “giver of life” is a universal symbol of the affirmation of life. Watching the sun break over the horizon can inspire us to live 100% with no regret. Even with our deepest inadequacies, the grace of nature embraces each of us unconditionally.

Most of us don't have a chance to really look at a sunrise. When we do see a sunrise, it might be by accident through a bedroom window or we may just get a glance while driving somewhere. Rarely do we get out of bed for the special purpose of seeing a sunrise and quietly reflecting on life. Getting up early is part of what makes the occasion special. Here are some other ways that we hope will enhance the experience for you:

- ❖ Bring a pebble or small stone from around your home (some will be provided if you forget). During the sunrise walk, when we reach Inspiration Point, you can throw your “Pebble Offering” into the lake as an expression of gratitude for the wonders of nature, to reinforce the release of regrets, to make some kind of affirmation vow, to remember and honor a loved one, etc.
- ❖ Incense sticks will be provided to light and carry during the walk. The burning stick getting shorter and shorter is a reminder of the Doctrine of Impermanence. Life is dynamic and always changing. Be mindful and aware of the preciousness of life.
- ❖ After viewing the sunrise at Inspiration Point, we will hear a short Dharma talk by Rev. Koyo. Then we will head back to the starting point, completing a two-mile route taking a total of about 45 minutes.

**DATE: SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2002**

**TIME:** Please arrive between 5:45–5:55 A.M. Walk will begin at 6:00 A.M.

**DIRECTIONS:** The starting point is at Greenwood and Sheridan Road in Evanston. Greenwood is one block north of Dempster. The best route is to get to the intersection of Greenwood and Chicago Avenue and then proceed east on Greenwood towards the lake. One block past Forest Avenue, turn left on Sheridan Road (which T's into Greenwood) and park your car. Looking east towards the lake, you should see a restroom building and a Honda mini-van with a “BRTDAWN” license plate.

**NOTE:** If inclement weather, bring an umbrella; the walk will take place rain or shine.

**AFTER-WALK OPTION:** Breakfast at Clarke's Restaurant, 720 Clark St in Evanston. The restaurant is between Orrington and Sherman on Clark St. which is one block north of Church St. Best route to take is Orrington north to Clark and turn left.

## Oneness Newsletter Autumn 2002

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

Please send Dharma Glimpses,  
Poems, Readers Replies to:  
8334 Harding Avenue  
Skokie, Illinois 60076

Phone: (847) 677-8211  
Dial-the-Dharma: (847) 677-8053  
Email: [brightdawn@core.com](mailto:brightdawn@core.com)  
[www.brightdawn.org](http://www.brightdawn.org)

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:

Sept 21	Five Daily Life Guidelines
Oct 5	The Dharma of Verbs not Nouns
Oct 19	Oneness: Living in the Hyphen
Nov 2	My Karma Ran Over Your Dogma
Nov 16	Make Your Peace
Dec 7	The Darkness of Enlightenment

## Book Review

I was asked to review the book “Awakening the Buddha Within” written by Lama Surya Das. I have always wanted to read a concise book about Buddhism that would help me to understand what “enlightenment” meant and how to live a life of freedom. I have found in this book so many insights and breakthroughs that have impacted my life. It was like the light switch was turned on so that “I got it” about life. My view of life and the importance of the people in my life have forever transformed. I want to share with you a letter to the two most important people in my life, my daughters Marika (5) and Karissa (2). I hope you can gain a deep understanding of how this book has impacted my life through reading this letter. They have really impressed upon me how one can live a life of freedom and peace.

The words that have been bolded are key words that are used in the book and they highlight key ideas about Buddhism.

-- Kristine Kubose Perry

Dear Marika and Karissa,

You are the truest of life **treasures**. You are the two most important people in my life. My view of the world and my place in it took on a new meaning when you both were born. Through you I have come to know what depth life can give. I have developed further **inner awareness** and **realizations** since you have been in my life.

Taking the time to be **present** to you has given me the opportunity to see life. I have been **mindful** to sit on the floor and roll a ball back and forth, seeing and feeling your laughter. I look forward to listening to how your day was and seeing the flow in your eyes. I enjoy the **presence** of your hugs, feeling the warmth and love of your arms around me and I love when we turn up the music and sing at the top of our lungs, seeing your happiness. It brings me great **pleasure** to snuggle in the mornings with you so I can feel your love...that is what life is about.

I **appreciate** the time you give me. We sit at the dinner table to talk and laugh, we go to the park and play on the swings and slide, we enjoy going to the beach and collect shells, we sit and read books, we go to museums, we love to camp and we have traveled the world together and much much more.

I appreciate and **concentrate** on the love you give me. I am **consciously aware** of the affection you share. I **acknowledge** that you say I love you many times and that you write me cards. I completely enjoy your pictures you draw for me.

May you live a life of **integrity** and **compassion** for those around you. I want for you to **experience enlightenment**, to gain **insight** on the reward of being **authentic** and to live a life of **right intentions**. I am proud of both of you for sharing your love and sharing the challenges that arise in this life. Remember that you can do anything you put your mind to, you can experience **completeness** with the **right effort** and with the **right action**. Your view of the world will transform by continually using **wisdom**, **clear vision**, and **freedom** of acceptance. May the choices you make bring **honesty**, **communication** and **giving of yourself**.

In these final words may you remember I will always be here for you, to support you and love you. Remember to choose your friends wisely, be **unselfish** so there is more room for others, and accept responsibility for being interdependent and know when you make a decision you affect everyone else around you. Be **proactive** instead of reacting to situations and at the end of the day reflect upon the choices that you made to see if you trotted on the **eight-fold path to enlightenment**.

Loving you as always,  
Mom

Konical Karma  
by Shauna Fleuridor



Chant-o-lantern



Karmal apples



Boooodha





## Dharma Glimpse



My own philosophical approach to Buddhism is somewhat humanistic. I do not take a literalist view. I am not concerned with the historical accuracy of the sutras (such as whether they were actually said by Shakyamuni), or the actual existence of Amida Buddha (which I more or less view as a metaphor for Oneness and the interdependency of life), or the Pure Land (which I see as a metaphor for enlightenment), or doctrinal hair-splitting between Buddhist schools. I am even agnostic on the notion of rebirth—since it is not primary to my practice. What is primary to my own personal practice is my recognition of my own egocentrism and arrogance (my own tendency to want to make the universe revolve around me) and to become grateful for all of those things in my life (those interconnected forces, people, events, etc.) that have made my life what it is. My enlightenment/liberation is not the product of my own effort but is the result of these interconnected forces when I submit to that realization. Also, what do we really have in our lives that are solely the result of our own efforts? Of course, this realization (that cannot be separated from the practice itself) should be manifested in engaged action (maybe a practical application of the Bodhisattva vows) for the betterment of the community of life.

So, my primary concern is here-and-now. My Buddhist practice should be a way of life and have an effect on my daily life. Does it make me a better person than I was? Instead of chanting Nembutsu, I should become Nembutsu. My meditation should help me become more aware of my egocentricity as well as the interdependent nature of life. The Dharma works and sutras should not become “scriptures” but mirrors to see how these sacred stories and words reflect processes that take place in my existence and life around me. I need to become aware of the need to live in the present moment and to have that sense of gratitude. I need to become thankful for the problems that I have which cause my life to become what it is. I need to live life as an art. And I need to let go of the “I.”

I have a great interest in participating in the development of an American Buddhism. Many Buddhist temples, for various historical and sociological reasons, serve primarily as cultural centers (similar to the function of many synagogues in American Judaism). This is fine and I am supportive of any people’s efforts to preserve their sociocultural identities as a minority group. However, while I enjoy the tea ceremony and ikebana, I am not interested in trying to make myself Japanese, Chinese, Thai, etc. I have a hard enough time being Cherokee-English-Dutch-French-German. It seems that many American Buddhists have felt that to become Buddhist they must adopt some of the cultural customs that have become integrated with the Buddhist tradition (such as Ch’an, Shin, Zen, Theravada, etc.). I look forward to what new or not so new American approaches we can find.

-- David L. Salyers

(Edited from a Background Statement submitted for Ti Sarana Confirmation Telephone Ceremony)

## Reader Replies

To the Kubose Family:

I just want you to know how much receiving the newsletter means to me. I really appreciate the way you present Buddhism, with simplicity and clarity. It truly speaks to my heart. Please keep those newsletters coming!

Radiant Blessings,  
M.V. (Sterling Heights, MI)



**Mizu kyu ni shite tsuki o nagasazu**

**Though the water runs swiftly  
it doesn't carry off the moon**

**by Seki Yuho Roshi, Former Chief Abbot of  
Eigen-ji**

Beneath the beautiful mountain temple of Eigen-ji runs the Aichi River, its swift waters endlessly flowing. Yet the bright moon reflected on its surface remains unmoved. Unceasing too are the changes of life and the flow of time, yet our essential Buddha-nature is always there, serene and unaltered.

*This calligraphy and translation by Thomas L. Kirchner is from The ChaZen Calendar which is produced with the cooperation of the Institute for Zen Studies, Kyoto, Japan, and is distributed by MATCHAandMORE, Inc.*

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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.



### **TI SARANA BUDDHIST CONFIRMATION**

Special telephone ceremony to confirm your commitment to following the Buddhist path.



### **AMERICAN BUDDHIST SERVICES WITH DHARMA TALKS ON VIDEO**

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M. Sakuma*

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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

**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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**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.



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<b>YES YES Your Everyday Spirituality YES YES</b>	
<b>SEPT</b>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Remembering 9/11/01  <b>Purpose:</b> To quietly reflect on a national tragedy  <b>Method:</b> "Flag Gassho:" Whenever you notice an American flag, put palm to palm together in Gassho or do a one-hand informal Gassho. Slightly bow your head.</p>
<b>OCT</b>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Naturalness  <b>Purpose:</b> To examine the "masks" we adopt in lieu of genuine interpersonal interactions  <b>Method:</b> "Maple Leaf Hand:" Rotate open hand like a falling autumn leaf... showing both front and back sides. Then, gently nod your head in a "yes" affirmation gesture.</p>
<b>NOV</b>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Gratitude/Interdependency  <b>Purpose:</b> To deepen awareness that lives are taken so that we may exist  <b>Method:</b> "Mealtime Meditation:" Pause quietly with a feeling of empathy for lives taken in the food chain. Remind yourself to use in constructive ways the life energy received .</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:

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