
O N E N E S S

Quarterly Newsletter of the Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose Dharma Legacy Vol. 4 No. 4 Winter 2000

LIVING LIFE

Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose

Living life is everyone's concern and is the most important concern. I wonder how many people are really living life. Are you living or merely existing? The real joy and peace of life are based on living life. As we welcome a new year, I would like to look into this important matter of life.

As I see it, many people who are impatient, nervous, always complaining, tired, bored, and indifferent are not living life. On the contrary, one who is living life is bright, vibrant, creative and unfolding from within, and he feels the meaning of life and enjoys his work.

One day Buddha came to a certain village where he saw three bricklayers working. He asked one, "What are you doing?" The answer was, "I am laying bricks." Buddha then asked the second man what he was doing. He answered, "I am making money." When Buddha went to the third man and asked him what he was doing, the third man looked at the Buddha and said, "I am building a temple." His face was bright and full of hope. He was living.

Only when one lives his life does he know its meaning, and compensation for his work is not necessary because work itself is the compensation. The work is fulfillment of life

itself; therefore, there is meaning and joy of life regardless of the condition, time, and place.

All must live life – his own life. But this very personal life is not just isolated and independent. The true life is always one with the universal life, yet is uniquely independent at the same time. The true life is never sacrificing nor being sacrificed. The true life is always creative and unfolds from within. Therefore, it is an art of life. One is an artist of life whatever one's occupation is.

In a garden there are roses, gladioli, marigolds, lilies, and cosmos. They are all independently beautiful; yet together, in harmony, they also make the whole garden beautiful and in each separate season. Some grow tall, some climb and others creep; all have their places and each is beautiful in its place. There is no superiority complex or inferiority complex. There is no envy or jealousy. Life just fulfills itself. Life is sometimes tough and sometimes soft. Life just is. Be it.

Red flowers have red light; yellow flowers have yellow light; green flowers have green light; and white flowers have white light. When life is put on canvas, it becomes beautiful art; when it is manifested in

rhythm, it becomes inspiring music; when put into words, it is a beautiful poem.

Capital and labor are both important in industry. One cannot say which is more important. Both are equally important. Piano and wastebasket, parlor and bathroom, all are equally important. Garbage collector, street repairman, doctor, and merchant – all are important. All must respect each other. Each one must shine where he is and as he is. Each one must be the best without any comparison. Each one must live his life.

Do not be impatient; forget self-pity. Live life. Be the artist of your own life. When we live life, there is no argument, no discussion. There is only life – living and shining.

(*Everyday Suchness*, p. 109-112)

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President's Message

by Rev. Koyo S. Kubose

The 2000 U.S. presidential election caused the hottest topic of controversy on the American political scene in decades. The media coverage of the voting situation in Florida opened up Pandora's Box. Questions were raised about the vote-count validity in other states too. Even the results of past presidential elections could be viewed in a different light. What a mess! The nation's eyes were opened to how problematic the voting system could be. Like noses, everyone had an opinion, and what fun it was to spout off with 20/20 hindsight!

The moral is that once again what we assumed was a simple, straightforward process was revealed to involve complex complications. Isn't this how life is? This reality pertains not only to a national election but to the politics of power on all levels, right down to an individual's everyday life. Things go along okay but with changing conditions, difficulties develop due to self-centered interests. When things don't go the way we want, we humans often make things worse by reacting negatively, even engaging in self-destructive behavior, as well as blaming others, becoming cynical, and so forth.

When things go wrong, we may use euphemisms like, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger," or "It's a character builder!" However, it really is true that difficulties do provide opportunities for learning experiences that good experiences do not. So, it's because of the flaws that were revealed in the election process that leads to reform and improvements. On the personal level, it's the irritating people that reveal one's impatience, and it's the trying people that challenge one's compassion. In Buddhism, it is said that such people are Bodhisavattas or teachers in disguise that offer opportunities to learn about and improve oneself.

Yet, as human beings we always feel like yelling, "Help! There are way too many Bodhisavattas running around out there!"

Yet, life goes on and it is important to realize and remind ourselves that it is possible to learn from our mistakes and difficulties. We should indeed have the attitude to view problems as opportunities or challenges. Of course, whenever we do learn from a particular mistake or difficulty, this does not mean that we will be able to avoid other kinds of mistakes or difficulties in the future. Experience is a great teacher that teaches us in many ways. Wisdom is a constant journey.

Adrienne and I journeyed to Las Vegas in November to attend the annual Chicago All-Clubs Reunion. Did I gamble? Yes. Did I win? No. Experience is a great teacher, yet some fools never learn. Hey, wait a minute... maybe it was because I didn't bring my lucky frog!

As 2000 comes to an end (the year has flown by almost as fast as my money did in Vegas!), I reflect on my blessings and realize that despite losses of all kinds and personal shortcomings of all kinds, I am so fortunate in many ways. I am tremendously blessed with fulfillment in the two major areas of life: work and love. Having a loving family that supports me in my Dharma work is a combination that defies all conceptions of good fortune.

I send out a great 'thought-wave' to share my blessings with all of you. The Kubose Dharma Legacy will be dedicating our efforts in the new millenium to Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose and his wisdom in teaching Buddhism for ordinary people in their everyday lives. May the year 2001 bring all of us deeper understanding of the Dharma. May we all learn to soften our judgmental nature and thus experience the peace within and harmony with others that characterized Rev. Gyomay Kubose's life.

Oneness Newsletter Winter 2000

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Please send:
Dharma Glimpses - Poems - Reader Replies
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New Year's Eve Party

An open invitation is extended to Oneness Newsletter readers to join in our annual New Year's Eve Potluck gathering on December 31. One highlight is a hot sake toast at midnight. Another highlight is everyone takes turns striking a bell for a total of 108.

New Year's Eve bell ringing is a traditional Japanese Buddhist ritual that focuses awareness on the 108 "bonno" or human "limitations" such as anger, greed, ignorance, envy, hatred, arrogance, etc.

Everyone should write down a bonno to work on for the year 2001. This could be a bad habit, attitude, grudge, etc. We will have a "Bonno Burning" where you throw your bonno paper into the fireplace as a statement of your wish to get rid of that bonno.

Festivities begin from 8:30 p.m. at Reverend Koyo and Adrienne Kubose's home: 8334 Harding Avenue, Skokie, Illinois. Harding Avenue is one block east of Crawford, and the house is 1/2 block south of Main Street.

Please RSVP by December 28, 2000. Call (847) 677-8211 and let us know what kind of pot-luck dish you will be bringing.

Any Year 2001 Resolutions?

By Rev. Koyo Kubose

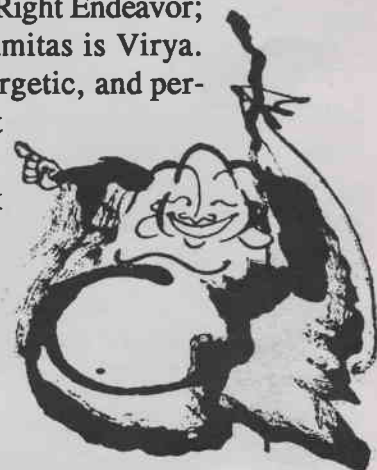
In last year's Winter issue, I invited readers to share their Year 2000 resolutions with me as part of a procedure to help them actualize their resolutions. The 3-part procedure consisted of sending me: (1) a Statement of Intention (stating clearly what one desired to accomplish); (2) an Action Plan (detailing exactly how one planned to verify or measure one's success); and (3) subsequent Progress Reports (specifying an accountability or reporting schedule).

In last year's article, I also said, "If desired, be anonymous— don't use a return address, use a code name, etc. I will just put everything in a file labeled 'Year 2000 Resolutions.' Unless requested otherwise, my role will not be to offer advice but simply be the repository of an accountability procedure to facilitate your resolution."

Several people participated in the Year 2000 Resolution program. Most people sent in quarterly progress reports and consensus feedback was that the program was helpful. One person wrote, "Are you going to continue this, to have 'Year 2001 Resolutions?' I find it effective; this is the longest I can remember keeping any new year's resolution. Maybe you could let us know in the next Oneness Newsletter?"

Okay, no problem! I will be glad to receive your Year 2001 Resolutions. Let's personally challenge ourselves and go forth confidently into the New Millennium! By the way, my Year 2000 resolution to do some writing was partially successful. I thank those of you who encouraged me in various ways. I will intensify my efforts in the Year 2001. After all, one of the Eightfold Paths is Right Endeavor; and one of the Six Paramitas is Virya. May I be strenuous, energetic, and persevering for the benefit of all beings!

(Note to "Black Leopard:" a book which you will find very helpful with your Year 2000 resolution is, "Writing Down the Bones" by Natalie Goldberg.)



Seasonings

sayings to add a little flavor to life



When a person's willing
and eager, the Dharma is
always on his side.

Enthusiasm is like having
two right hands.

Every calling is great
when greatly pursued

Dial the Dharma

(847) 677 - 8053

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

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.

WISCONSIN RETREAT REPORT

In October, I attended a retreat held by Heartland Sangha at the Plymouth Institute, a retreat facility located about 40 minutes north of Milwaukee. Prior to the retreat, one of the organizers suggested that a good topic I could address at the retreat would be something that dealt with people's tendency nowadays to be so "down on life." He said there is an increase in complaining, blaming, and seeing the negative side of things. It seems many people are not able to let go of such things as regrets and resentments.

To address this topic, I used the theme of "Let go and grow." At the beginning of the session, I started with some yoga breathing and stretching. Breathing exercises have a calming and centering effect. Stretching as a way of letting go of tension and muscle tightness is a good precursor to mentally loosening up and letting go of unnecessary thoughts.

I then talked about how aspects of "letting go" can be related to Buddhist teachings. Most of us have the need to feel we are in control of our lives as much as possible. Isn't a major part of one's life oriented toward trying to control situations and others so that things go as one wishes? This might seem to be a natural, adaptive quality that is a good way to be. However, it is like a two-edged sword that is both a good tool but also a dangerous instrument that can cut oneself if used improperly or carelessly. It is hard to be balanced as expressed in the Serenity Prayer, "May I have the courage to change what I can; the serenity to accept what I cannot change; and the wisdom to know the difference." In contrast, most of us try to control more and more aspects of one's life; delusion and desire overwhelm truth and reality.

It is hard to "let go," trust others, and accept how one's life unfolds. Our assumptions and expectations are mental constructions that interfere with creatively being in the present moment. As a sensory illustration of how we can let go of our preconceptions about ordinary physical objects and how we can directly experience the sensory aspects of such objects, we did an exercise called "Blind Object Exploration." Next, to illustrate interpersonal trust and letting go of one's sense of control, we did a "Blind Walk" exercise in which one person took a blindfolded partner on a walk exploring the physical surroundings.

Lastly, we did an exercise to facilitate a spiritual letting go, where the purpose was to loosen up one's attachment to

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 am, with optional meditation sitting at 9:30 am. (For more information, call Heartland Sangha at 773-545-9972.)

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

Dec. 16	HO! HO! HO! The Dharma Holiday Season
Jan. 6, 2001	Year of the Snake
Jan. 20	ONENESS: Two, yet one; One, yet two
Feb. 3	Arrogance & Humility
Feb. 17	Nirvana Day
Mar. 3	Bad Karma, Good Karma

excessive self centeredness, and thus open up a sense of grace in one's life. In a private exercise, each person could look honestly within oneself to see what unwanted things one might let go of... things like, fear of death, traumatic childhood experience, inferiority complex of some sort, a deep regret or resentment, or a hidden narcissism and hubris (an arrogant self love). Why is it hard to let go? Does having that attachment do something for you, perhaps give you an excuse to stay the way you are? Do you really want to let go and change?

Even if you really do want to let go, there is no guarantee that willing oneself to let go of something will automatically result in a real letting go. In addition, letting go is a continual process that needs periodical revisiting and is not necessarily a once and for all, yes-no type of thing. However, the first crucial step is an increased awareness or raising of one's consciousness to establish clearly one's intention of wanting to let go, and that it's okay to let go. This intention is at the very core of a spiritual journey. One's sincere spiritual intention is indeed a sacred thing. The purpose of religious rituals is to consecrate or make sacred such spiritual intentions. We ended our session with a simple consecration ritual of coming forward to the retreat altar, ringing a bell and doing Gassho. (Rev. Koyo Kubose)

Keeping Your Balance on the Bus-ride of Life

By Tate Kubose

Despite having around 34,000 students, the University of California, Los Angeles has about 12 parking locations. And recently, they decided to knock down a couple of the few parking structures that they do have, which lowered the number of parking locations to about 3. Unfortunately, I was not one of the lucky people who were able to get one of those precious parking spaces. So, I had to leave my car at home and started to take the bus to school. It was on the bus where I gained a little bit of understanding about how to deal with the bumps and turns on the road of life.

I had never really ridden on a bus before, at least not on a regular basis, so it was a learning experience for me. As with most things in life, it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be, and it was actually quite nice to be able to sit back and read, instead of having to fight LA traffic. However, I learned quickly that keeping your balance on the bus is not as easy as it is in your car. When you're driving, you know when you're going to turn, how hard you are going to turn, when you're going to brake, and how hard you're going to break. Knowing these things in advance makes it quite easy to maintain your balance. On the bus, you never quite know how sharply the driver will turn, or when or how hard he or she will accelerate or brake. This can lead to a very unstable ride.

While sitting on the bus during my first few rides, I would try to anticipate the bus driver's next moves, and compensate for them, in an attempt to keep my balance. So, if we were going to turn right soon, I would push on the floor with my left foot, trying to fight the swaying momentum of the bus as it veered around the corner. Likewise, when the bus was slowing down, I would lean hard on my toes, so that I wouldn't fly forward into the seat in front of me. For days this went on, me fighting the bus, trying not to bump into the person sitting next to me, and trying not to get knocked off balance. It made the rides quite difficult. Then one day, I looked around at the other people on the bus. No one else seemed to be having such a difficult time with the sudden stops, starts, and turns of the bus. Everyone else looked quite relaxed as they dozed, read their books, or gazed out the window. No one else seemed to fight the bus as I had been doing, yet they did not topple over when the bus turned or stopped.

So, I changed my strategy. Instead of fighting the changing momentum of the bus, I would sway with it, and lean slightly into the turns or stops. This made the ride much easier. I no longer had to exert effort to maintain my balance. Instead, I became one with the bus, and one with the other passengers, as we all leaned and swayed with the changing course of the bus. My rides became much more relaxing, and I no longer had to pay attention to what the bus was doing. I didn't need to know if it was stopping or turning. When it turned, I turned. When it stopped, I stopped. No more fighting, just a little lean here or there and I was able to achieve a ride as easy as if I were driving the bus myself.

And it was with my new-found peaceful coexistence with the bus that I found a life lesson. Let's face it: life, much like a bus ride, is largely out of our control. We may think we know where we're heading, but it's really not up to us. We can choose which bus to board, but we can't make it go to where we want to go. We can only hope that we planned well and that there aren't any accidents along the way to the next stop. Also like a bus ride, life is not always straight, and not always smooth, and we can't always anticipate what will happen next. Instead of trying to anticipate everything, and instead of fighting the changes in momentum, it's much easier to accept the change as it happens, lean a bit into it, and wait until it passes. And the other people around you on the bus, who I tried so hard to avoid bumping into (for fear of offending them), they all understand that occasionally, the bus will catch you off-guard, and cause you to bump into someone. And like the people on the bus, the people in your life know that you can't help but lean on them sometimes. They don't mind, because there are times when they will lean on you, too.

So, I learned that riding the bus isn't so bad, and you can even learn something from it. Don't fight the changes. Lean into them, and they will pass before you know it. And those people around you who you try so hard not to offend? Well, if they really didn't want to be near you, they'd move. And if you happen to lean on them sometimes to help regain your balance? It's okay, they are happy to help. You may not be able to control life, but trying to fight it only makes it harder. I hope that life doesn't throw too many unexpected changes your way, but if it does, come sit by me. We can lean into them together.

(Tate is the grandson of Rev. Gyomay and Minnie Kubose and the son of Rev. Koyo and Adrienne Kubose. Tate recently earned his Ph.D. in cognitive psychology at UCLA. He is currently a post-doctoral fellow at Columbia University in New York.)

Reader Replies

Mahalo for the Hawaiian Conference Report by Rev. Koyo Kubose. Being a kona girl away from home for decades, I can relate to Kona's gentle Dharma breeze, the blue sky, sunsets, lava rock, saimin noodles, and even the vog and am happy that our special senseis were there to experience the same.

Naturalness as "come as you are," dualities of good-bad, self-others in slash form (or just "suchness"), life being a "Mystery to be lived, not a problem to be solved," not a question of "win or lose" were just the advice I needed to remember when I was briefly "down on life." I may have found these concepts elucidated in works of a Tibetan nun and a rabbi but our senseis have made me realize that they were all there in Shin teaching. Now I find them in the Tannisho. Ignorance is not bliss, one needs to be alert. T.A. (New York)

Thank you to Rev. Koyo Kubose for sharing the Dharma with us at Waikoloa for the Hawaii Conference Gathering 2000. His sense of humor made us look at the Dharma with a different light which was delightful... Your Oneness newsletter is interesting and informative. I am looking forward to receiving more from the Kubose Dharma Legacy. I feel fortunate to have met Rev. Gyomay Kubose when I lived in Chicago from 1956 to 1957. Just listening to his message once converted me from a Baptist to a Buddhist. I felt I really discovered who I was all the time even though I attended Christian Sunday School for about 8 years.

I hope to meet Rev. Koyo Kubose and hear his teachings again soon. With much Aloha and Gassho. R.S.T. (Honolulu, Hawaii)

Acknowledgements with Gratitude *Supporters from Books and Donations*

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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.

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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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.

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.

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Your Everyday Spirituality

DEC

Theme: Celebration

Purpose: To encourage a youthful spirit of expressing exuberance and joy.

Method: "High-Five Gassho." Starting in traditional Gassho position, change to a one-hand Gassho while using the other hand to exchange a 'high five' with someone; finish with traditional Gassho. (Note: High-Five Gassho is an idea from a pre-school child in Hawaii)

JAN

Theme: Flexibility of Attitude

Purpose: Lessen self-victimization due to an "either-or" attitude; instead, think more in terms of adjustable curves rather than rigid straight lines.

Method: When stubbornness causes suffering in 2001, Year of the Snake, encourage attitude flexibility by doing the "Snake Gassho." While doing Gassho, move hands in a flowing S-shape movement. (Smile)

FEB

Theme: Parent-Child Fun

Purpose: To integrate playfulness and spirituality.

Method: "Barney High-Five Gassho." With parent moving Barney puppet's arms, do the 'High-Five' Gassho with child; yell "Hey!" together.