
OZENESS

Quarterly Newsletter of BRIGHT DAWN: Institute for American Buddhism

Vol. 12 No. 2 Summer 2008

PAYING HOMAGE

By Rev. Koyo Kubose

When I reflect on our recent move from the Midwest to Central California, I think about the many karmic influences and interpersonal connections that came into play. I can only bow my head and pay homage because we can never re-pay what so many people did for us. Lives interact and when we look at one life, we can't help but see many other lives there too.

Friendship is a special treasure in life. In the present context, this means farewell luncheons and gifts; cards and telephone calls—one card simply said, “Impermanence stinks!” A telephone message left by a salty friend, “What’s this I hear about you moving? You can’t move! I’ll kick your ‘oshiri’ if you leave!” I had to call back and say, “I’ll kick your ‘oshiri’ if you don’t come visit me in California!”

Once started, big life events have a way of quickly gaining momentum, like a boulder rolling downhill. Once it became certain we were going to move, we had only three weeks to pack. Yet, the universe took such good care of us. I am filled with awe and grateful reverence and I feel the need to pay homage to so many things.

I pay homage to Craigs List through which we were able to get over a hundred free moving boxes, including great wardrobe and kitchen dish pak specialty boxes. I listed our '97 Camry and it sold in literally half an hour! We were able to sell or give away several dozen household items that we decided we didn't need, including bicycles, waterbed, picnic table, sofa, TV, plants, dining table, tent and camping equipment.

I pay homage to the hard-working crew of friends and family who helped load up the two rental trucks. We rented the largest size available, a 26 footer but within an hour, it was apparent that we would need another truck so we also rented a 16 footer. In spite of this, we still ended up donating five van loads of stuff to the local Salvation Army thrift shop.

Even with eight people, loading the trucks was hard work. The job was the equivalent of moving three households. First, was the Bright Dawn Institute's office files and equipment, not to mention over 70 boxes of book inventory (up the basement stairs!). Next, was my parents' historical material which had

been archived in our basement – photo albums, things from my father's study reflecting his ministry of over sixty years. Lastly, was our personal things from 42 years of marriage and 25 years of living in the same house. From my library alone, there were over fifty boxes of books, which had to be carried down from the second floor.

There was a point in the move, perhaps mid-way through, when I felt overwhelmed by how much there was; I couldn't see the end. I felt bad for what I had asked the hard-working crew to get involved in. I hope it helps them to know that their efforts were not just for me but were a tribute to my parents' lives, and for the future of the Bright Dawn Institute.

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I pay homage to Glen Sunahara, our realtor, who not only helped with the moving but he later worked on the house in so many ways for over a month getting it ready for the housing market. All the preparation paid off, and we began receiving offers soon after the house was listed. Negotiations are currently underway.

I am grateful that the cross-country drive went smoothly. Every time I saw our insect-splattered windshield, I thought of how many insects gave their lives during our move. I have to pay homage even to these insects. Our son Tate and nephew-in-law Richardson came from California to help with the move. They drove the two rental trucks while Adrienne, I, and “Easy” our new puppy followed in our van.

We are fortunate to have such a supportive family. When we arrived in California, there was an eager crew of relatives to help unload the trucks. They even supplied the cold drinks and bento lunch—which of course included *shoyu* weenies and *onigiri* with *ume* inside and *nori* on the outside!

I cannot take for granted all the help of my sister Joyce and her husband Robert who are still back in Chicago. I secretly hope that after Robert retires, they too may join us in California. I miss playing Texas Hold ‘Em with a “wild” player like Robert. Speaking of poker, there is an Indian casino and resort, Chukchansi, only ten minutes north of us on Highway 41. Great restaurants and name entertainment, and Yosemite National Park close by too—something for everyone! We really hope we will get a lot of friends coming to visit us.

It is amazing how things came together to make our move possible. During our driving trip to California last summer, we were able to check out numerous Bay Area properties. We got a good feel for what was available in the area ranging from Sebastopol, Santa Rosa, and Napa-Sonoma to the north, SW to Santa Cruz, and eastward to Vallejo, Antioch, and even Grass Valley.

For our trip home we planned to take the Southern route, taking in Sedona, Santa Fe, and a few National Parks. We started out from Adrienne’s sister Eimi’s place in Palo Alto, visited relatives in San Luis Obispo, and then stayed at my brother’s place in Fowler, near Fresno. My brother suggested checking out the area near Oakhurst, which is an hour’s drive north of Fresno. I have roots in the Fresno area. My mother grew up in Fowler. Although I have often visited my relatives in the Fresno area, I didn’t realize the kinds of properties available in the nearby Sierra Nevada foothills.

I have to acknowledge my brother Don’s initiative and foresight. I was in a hurry to start our return drive home, but he kept saying, “Why don’t you stay an extra day? I always wanted to check out Coarsegold and the area south of Oakhurst. It’s only an hour away. Let’s pack a bento lunch and take a drive!” One of the early properties we visited later came to be called the “boulder house” because of the many moss-covered boulders on the property. Although we ended up visiting over a dozen places, Don kept saying, “I really like that boulder house.” We all agreed that it was number one of all the properties we had seen.

Actually, we had only walked around the outside of the house, which was vacant. A few months later, when we followed up on our interest in the boulder house, Don visited the property several times—reporting on the results of a professional house inspection, and serving as our *liason* in many ways. He took pictures of the rooms inside the house and sent them to us. The property has a well and septic system; the heating is fueled by propane gas. The four-bedroom ranch style house was built in 2004 and has three bathrooms. The previous owners converted the double garage into a family room. This large room makes a great office/work area for the Bright Dawn Institute.

The house sits on five wooded acres and there is plenty of outside work that can be done. Whenever I prune tree branches, I feel my father’s presence. He always loved working in the yard. Much of my daily activities involve outdoor projects. There are a lot of possibilities in developing this property for a great future of the Bright Dawn Institute. Every morning I take the dog and we “walk the land.” I can’t help but pay homage to nature as I begin to feel its sacred depths as never before. As my father said when I asked him if he was concerned about death, “No, there’s nothing to worry about; nature will take care of everything.”

We just reprinted my father’s book *Zen Koans*. In the introduction he points out that Buddhism, with its origin in Eastern culture, always emphasizes harmonizing and becoming one with nature. There is no conception of “conquering” nature. In art and poetry, the human being always disappears into nature. I remember seeing a bumper sticker, “God is Nature” or maybe it was “Nature is God.” Either way, it is an identity and not a relationship like “God is in Nature” or “Nature is part of God.”

I start every day, facing the morning sun, and say to our dog Easy, “Yup, it’s a Buddha-full day!”



Zen Koans Book Reprinted!

Zen Koans by Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose has been out of print for many years. We have reprinted it and it now can be ordered from the booklist in this newsletter or from our webpage www.brightdawn.org. First published in 1973, the book contains Rev. Gyomay Kubose's comments on a collection of over 200 classical and modern koans. It is beautifully illustrated by the late sumie artist Ryozo Ogura. One does not have to be interested in or familiar with Zen Buddhism and/or koans to receive personal insights and deepen one's spirituality from reading this book.

Zen Koans is one of the books assigned for our Lay Minister Students to read. The following is a Dharma Glimpse received from Ricardo Sasaki of Brazil.

First thing that drew my attention was Rev. Kubose's statement in his Introduction, "commentators frequently dispute the koan itself or another's commentary. But this matters little since any one koan can have a hundred different comments, none of them 'wrong.'" Very often we are introduced to koans as riddles to be solved. In a secluded place of an interview, the "master" tells us whether we got it or not. It always seemed a bit artificial to me, more of a theatrical scene than insight or an enlightened "solution." I was glad that Kubose-sensei opened this door to free us from "correct" interpretation.

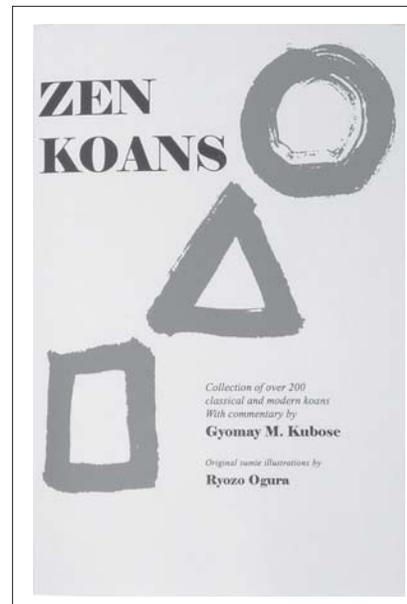
A brilliant comment next was: "The commentary in this volume is completely new and, like the book itself, intended to make the koan's *question* clear — not to provide an 'answer' in the sense of a solution." The more I walk on the path, the more I become convinced that the key is in the questions and not in the solutions. The spiritual path is about being able to question/investigate and learn to make the right questions appropriate to the present situations. There is not an absolute and ultimate "answer," certified and "official." Kubose-sensei then proposes more questions about the traditional koans, inciting us to ask more instead of finishing the exercise of koan because we got the right answers.

The third and last point is the translation Kubose-sensei gives for koan, "public record." What I understand from this is that being "public" means that the koan really is for everybody. He says it is not "private or mystic in any sense." How wonderful! Koans are not a secret science, whose "answers" are accessible only to the rare gifted ones. Koans are "public," they are for you and for me, to ponder, to learn, to change ourselves through the understanding we get personally from them.

From back book cover:

The Zen koan is, essentially, a problem that cannot be solved by the intellect. In trying to understand the koan, the student learns the limitations of thought -- and can experience "satori," a direct, non-verbal awareness of reality. Used by Zen Masters from ancient times to the present, koans are famous guideposts in the quest for enlightenment -- Nirvana.

To render the koans more intelligible to contemporary readers, the Venerable Kubose, an American-born Buddhist priest, has provided his original commentary. Thus the Western reader can relate the koans to modern life and gain some understanding of Zen teachings.



Oneness Newsletter Summer 2008

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The purpose of the Bright Dawn Institute is to offer a non-sectarian, non-dualistic approach, the Way of Oneness, to deepen individual spirituality in everyday life for people of all backgrounds.

MOVING TO COARSEGOLD

By Adrienne Kubose

It all started while on a road trip to California after I retired. We drove across country from Skokie, stopping leisurely at points of interest along the way. When we arrived in California, we visited our relatives in the Bay Area, San Luis Obispo/Arroyo Grande, and Fowler. Having retired, we were open to making changes but had not made any decisions about what our life would become with me retired. I was raised in California and most of my relatives live there so we were curious about what housing was available near them and looked around checking out prices. When we visited my brother-in-law, Don, he showed us properties that were available near him.

One property in Coarsegold caught our eye but it was asking too much for us even though the properties in the Central California area were much less expensive than in the Bay Area. My thought was that we probably wouldn't be able to consider moving because we couldn't afford it. This property kept coming to mind and so several months later



we asked Don to see if the property was still on the market. He found out that not only was it still on the market but the price had been reduced which made it possible for us to consider it.

Deciding to move was a very difficult decision. We have lived in the Chicago area for 24 years and have made and re-established so many good friendships. Rev. Koyo has enjoyed serving as minister to many families. Taiko drumming has been a big part of my life and brought me a lot of joy and friendships. What drove our decision was the future of Bright Dawn Institute (Kubose Dharma Legacy). Just about all of Bright Dawn Institute's board members reside in California. We realized that Bright Dawn Institute would benefit from being physically closer to them. Ideas for Bright Dawn Institute would be more forthcoming as we would be able to more easily and more frequently get together with them. Up until now Bright Dawn Institute has been functioning almost solely from Skokie.

Once we determined that moving to California would re-energize Bright Dawn Institute, the whole thing developed a life of its own and moved very fast. Before we knew it a price was agreed upon and a closing date set. We were thinking we would be moving in June and had plenty of time to get things done. But then our nephew Richardson said he would be able to help us with the move if we could move in mid-March when he would be going to a meeting in the East and able to come to Chicago afterwards. If we did this, we only had 3 weeks to move! On the other hand if we didn't, just the two of us (maybe three if son Tate could come) would be driving across to California. It was a difficult decision. We would have liked to give our family and friends more notice because it was such a big change for all of us and we definitely could have used more time to pack. Nevertheless, we felt that having help with the move/drive was important and as it turned out essential.

The following weeks were a whirlwind of packing, getting rid of things through Craig's List on the internet, and notifying/getting together with family and friends. We were so fortunate to have help from family and friends. Without this help we could not have made the move. In the end it took two rental trucks to hold our possessions so a minimum of three drivers were needed. Friends and family helped pack up the trucks in Skokie and unpack in Coarsegold. Our son Tate was able to take off work and help with the packing and driving. We packed up Saturday March 15, picked up nephew Richardson from the airport Sunday around 5:00 p.m. and took off with the van and two trucks. With some determined

driving, we arrived in Fowler, California for dinner Wednesday March 19. The next day we drove one truck 45 minutes to Coarsegold to unload and see the inside of our house for the first time. When we saw the house last year, we were only there briefly and looked only at the outside of the house and the area around the house. We feel so fortunate that the house and property have turned out to be better than we ever imagined. It will make a wonderful residence for us and Bright Dawn Institute. As we walked around the property we couldn't help but hear the voices of Rev. Gyomay and Minnie in our heads exclaiming "WOW! How wonderful and beautiful this is."

We plan to develop a nice path around the property that will take advantage of its beauty and serenity. There's a little playhouse in the back yard that we plan to convert to a meditation or individual retreat room.

We have already had several visitors. And are hoping many of you may be able to visit some day also.



Future Meditation House



Future Outdoor Chapel

Lay Minister Program Update

The first group of Lay Ministers is finishing up the program and will be inducted May 25th at the Bright Dawn Homespread in Wisconsin. They have worked hard for two years and with the induction will receive a special *okesa* (Buddhist stole) to indicate they are Bright Dawn Institute Lay Ministers. They will go on to spread the Dharma through speaking engagements, forming small Dharma groups, and any other creative ways they come up with. They will be able to perform weddings and funerals.

Our second group is finishing up their first year work and a third group is waiting in the wings to start in September.

We have found that the Lay Minister Program is beneficial for both the students and ourselves. The assignments foster wonderful discussions and focus both the students and the program administrators on the Dharma. The immersion in the Dharma opens us up for Dharma Glimpses that may not have been possible otherwise.

There is still room for a few more candidates starting in September 2008. If you are interested, please email Adrienne Kubose ASAP at brightdawn@kubose.com

New
Dial the Dharma
(559) 642 - 4290

American Buddhist Services

The Heartland Sangha holds 11 A.M. Saturday services on the first and third Saturdays of every month at Lake Street Church, 607 Lake Street, Evanston (use courtyard entrance on Chicago Avenue).

Each service is uniquely planned by a chairperson volunteer from the local Sangha. Music and readings from a variety of sources are used. Gratitude offerings of rice, flowers, or other innovative offerings often replace traditional incense burning and sutra chanting. The Heartland Sangha is to be commended for their "cutting edge" efforts in creating these progressive American Buddhist services.

For more information, call Heartland Sangha President Asayo Horibe at (847) 869-5806.

Dharma Glimpses

I've always thought about birth and death. Those mysteries whole religious movements develop around ... to explain, come to grips with.

I still think about those events that bring us to life, end it. I've witnessed them close up many times since I first became aware of them. Birth is always seen as a joy ... death as a sorrow.

But it appears to me, as I've walked in those mysterious shadows, holding hands with the blurry figure that always seems to be there: to see it through ... it seems to me we kinda' got things a little wrong.

Christians got a little handle on death when they say it's a JOYOUS occasion, after all, the dead go into the welcoming arms of Jesus, and he'll take care of them 'til we get there. 'course, ONLY

if you remember to live the CHRISTIAN way. That puts a bit of a damper on it, though.

Even so, there is much sorrow. There is a madness in the leaving, the thought of a loved one never coming back, that takes over ... consumes us. Some get devoured, drown in it, and never come back from their grief. Even if death comes around suddenly, too soon, shouldn't be that way. Let us grieve at the taking, carry the sadness of our love around forever ... that's important. That's LOVE, and love only dies when we kill it. Sounds hard of me to say that, but it's TRUE. Shouldn't do that. But let us also smile, laugh even, knowing what they gave us, that, truly, their life meant something, touched us in a way that makes us warm to have known them.

And let joy always attend birth. Joy in the newness of it, in the hope of it. But let sadness always attend to it, too. A sadness in the recognition that this little child will have pains and sorrows you won't be able to do anything about, try as you may. At each new birth in this world let's make a sobering promise, a promise that their coming into this life will mean something, that we'll be there to help them as best we can.

All Children

*I always say that
all children are my children.
I mean that sincerely.
And all deaths are my death.
I mean that sincerely, too.
Each moment: I weep, and
smile, just for them.*

AA (WI)

Acknowledgements with Gratitude

Supporters from Sales and Donations

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Sandra Beaty (FL)	Northampton Shin Buddhist Sangha (MA)
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Many people who come into my office hardly look into my face. The professors grab their mail and leave. The mail-guy barely mutters hello. The kids from the developmentally disabled school (across the street) who recycle our paper just pick it up and leave. But there is this one kid who always looks into my face and smiles when he comes to take the paper away. It is a treat just to have this little bit of contact. It reminds me of that question from the book I read recently, "Who Ordered This Truckload of Dung?" The question was: "Who is the most important person?" The answer: "the person you are with."

JL (IL)



Book List

Book by Rev. Koyo Kubose

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

Books by Rev. Gyomay Kubose

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

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

THE CENTER WITHIN audio cassette; 3 hours.

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

ZEN KOANS. Commentary on over 200 classical and modern koans. Insights and life teachings applicable to all Buddhists. 274 pages.

Translations by Rev. Gyomay Kubose

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

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

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

Other Recommended Books

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

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

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

OCEAN: AN INTRODUCTION TO JODO-SHINSHU BUDDHISM IN AMERICA by Ken Tanaka. Uses a question and answer format to present Jodo-Shinshu Buddhism and to answer questions frequently asked by non-Buddhists. The book can

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River of Fire, River of Water	\$19.00		
The Feelling Buddha	\$15.95		

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For questions regarding quantity discounts and shipping, contact Bright Dawn at 559-642-4285 or brightdawn@kubose.com.

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. With spiritual insight and unparalleled scholarship, this book is an important step forward for Buddhism in America. 244 pages.

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



BRIGHT DAWN
Institute for American Buddhism
 28372 Margaret Road
 Coarsegold, CA 93614

Change Service Requested



YES YES <u>Your Everyday Spirituality</u> YES YES	
JUN	Theme: Morning Ritual Purpose: Begin the day "right" Method: Face East; say "It's a Buddha-full day!" Smile.
JUL	Theme: Bedtime Ritual Purpose: To sleep with the Dharma Method: "Dharma Pillow:" Before getting into bed, use your hand to make an outline of the Dharma Wheel on your pillow; i.e. make a circle, two diagonal strokes dissecting the circle, then horizontal and vertical strokes through the center of the circle. Smile; put head on pillow; go to sleep.
AUG	Theme: Handling remorse and regret Purpose: To mentally let go and make a clean start. Method: "Shower Gassho:" When taking a shower, bow head forward while water falls on the back of your neck. Humbly acknowledge your "mistake," accept your humanness; vow to do better; Gassho. Finish shower, scrubbing self vigorously.

Mailing List Update

If you are already on our mailing list and wish to remain on the list, no action is necessary. We are happy to continue sending our newsletter to all interested persons. If you know someone who would like to be added or removed from our mailing list, please indicate below and send to: Bright Dawn Institute, 28372 Margaret Road, Coarsegold, CA 93614.

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