



o n e n e s s



## THE EARLY YEARS

by Rev. Koyo Kubose

It is late February and I am sitting at my desk, preparing the Spring issue of our Oneness newsletter. My attention keeps focusing on the theme of spring. My memory brings up many notable events that occurred in past springs. Let me share some of them with you.

It was in the spring of 1998 that we (the Kubose family) held a Dedication Ceremony for a new organization that twenty years later finds itself in Coarsegold, California as the Bright Dawn Center (BDC). The founding mission or purpose of the BDC is to carry on the lifework of Rev. Gyomay Kubose's approach/expression of the Dharma teachings. It was in the spring of 2000 that Rev Gyomay Kubose passed away, at the age of 95.

In the spring of 2004 my book "Bright Dawn: Discovering Your Everyday Spirituality" was printed. One reason the book was titled "Bright Dawn" is because my father's Dharma name, "Gyomay" means "Bright Dawn." The book pays tribute to the bright dawn theme by describing my early morning ritual of seeing the sunrise over Lake Michigan and how aspects of this ritual can relate to life teachings.

In the spring of 2006, we started a Lay Ministry Study Program, which is a two-year program of weekly reading assignments and

discussion sessions that emphasize Rev. Gyomay Kubose's books and sutra translations. This LM Study Program is a non-residential, internet-based program that culminates in an LM Induction Ceremony that participants attend in person. In the planning period before the actual start of this program, we introduced the lay ministry concept by honoring four persons from our local Sangha, who for many years provided active leadership. I'd like to give special recognition to the first person, Richard Brandon, who received this honorary lay ministry status.

It was in the spring of 2002 that Richard formally established a retreat center in Plymouth, Wisconsin. To honor Rev. Gyomay Kubose, Richard named it "Bright Dawn Homespread." It was at this retreat center that we held our first LM Induction Ceremony in the spring of 2008 because it was that spring that we moved our organization from Illinois to California and it took a while to get unpacked and established at our new home in Coarsegold. I'd like to mention that as I write this article, it is almost exactly three years since Richard passed away in early spring, 2015. His faithful wife Maryann and son Forrest have taken over the responsibility of running the retreat center.

It was also in the spring of 2015 that my brother Don also passed away. He was a core supporter of all my efforts in developing our Bright Dawn Center (BDC), including the building of our new Sierra Sanctuary. An Opening Dedication was held in the spring of 2015, a few weeks after Don's passing.

Later this spring, our tenth LM Induction Ceremony will be held in our Sierra Sanctuary. A decade has flown by since our move to California. As I reflect on the early history of both the BDC and then my own personal journey, I am at the age where my memory of time divides itself into decades rather than years.

In fact, I think I will outline a timeline of memorable events according to decades, starting with the 1940's when I was born and moving through to the present decade. I might even make some projected plans for the 2020's and 3030's. Why not include even the 2040's? Like I say, "Keep Going!"

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# DON'T COMPLAIN; DON'T EXPLAIN

by Dharma Dan



I'd like to expound on the title of this article. I don't remember where I first heard this quote but the origin is not as important to me as providing a context that involves a life teaching. For example, consider the context of a business leader. In fact, the quote has been attributed to Henry Ford or one of his descendants. How might the quote can be used as a philosophy for business success?

When business is not good, the successful leader does not complain about how his workers need to shape up or work harder. Instead of laying blame, a leader looks for actual solutions to problems. Blaming and criticizing others only leads to a toxic work environment.

With regard to his own executive decisions, a leader should not feel defensive about having to rationalize his major actions. In other words, he doesn't have to always be explaining himself to others. If one is afraid of criticism, that's a sure way of suppressing creative problem solving.

To summarize, the first part of "Don't complain; don't explain" refers to refraining from complaining to or about others when there is a problem. The second part refers to not being overly defensive about one's major decisions; that is, you do not always have to be explaining yourself to others. In both cases, there is a shift away from judging people, whether others or oneself, and directing attention to how a problem is being handled.

The quote "Don't complain; don't explain" is not only a good philosophy in business but also for life in general. One implication of "Don't complain; don't explain" is the importance of respecting others and oneself. This means not being overly influenced by stereotypes and by "shoulds." The uniqueness of individuals and their absolute value without comparative judgment is the attitude behind "Don't complain; don't explain."

In contrast, a dualistic attitude of right and wrong can often lead to the use of labels that a person is lazy, stupid, selfish or mean. Such an attitude lends one to view individual differences in a negative light. We need to challenge this kind of attitude. How are

individual differences considered in the context of nature?

When you walk into a forest and look at trees, you don't complain that the trees are growing crookedly, twisting this way and that way. When you go to a beach and look at the waves, you don't complain how waves are imperfect. So, when humans get together, why do you see each other in such judgmental ways? This is Dharma Dan and I have good ears... I don't seem to hear any answers coming from my human audience!

## BACH'S SOCKS

By Renee Seiyo



The other day, my little dog, Bach, greeted me at the door when I came home, as he always does, and followed me into my bedroom, as he always does. He can't wait for me to take my socks off so he can grab one and run down the hall with it. I don't really want to take my socks off sometimes because it's cold, but I really have no choice as he is jumping up and down and all around. He's on me like a monkey on a cupcake! He is beside himself with the most joy and happiness that I can't help but give him both socks. He can't run away with it fast enough with it hanging out of his mouth and then a split second later he is back for the other one. Still with no pause in his joyfulness.

Well, this time, I said out loud to myself, as I watched him race down the hall "I wish I could get excited about a sock!" Then it hit me, after all these years of watching him. Why don't I get excited about a sock? Maybe I should be that excited about a sock. Maybe I take my socks for granted. Maybe, I should be more grateful for the little things I never give thanks for. Is a sock really a little thing? Not really. There are no differences in illusions, remember.

I mean, what if I didn't have a pair of socks and it was really, really cold and I wished I had a pair of nice warm socks. Socks would then be high on my priority list and my gratefulness practice. So why do I need something that I am uncomfortable without before I make the connection that I should be more grateful for, well, everything in my life.



## ORGANIC?

By Dharma Dan

Hey, there was space in this newsletter issue for more copy, so I was asked to contribute another little article. I thought I'd write a few lines about the word "organic." One of our LMs Gio Sayo (LM3) wrote us an email about this word. He had visited us for a few days last November and during his stay, he and Rev. Koyo had conversations about our Bright Dawn approach and how best to present it to the public. Sayo recalled that the word "organic" was used quite a bit; the connotation being "alive, down to earth, natural," etc. Sayo also mentioned that he enjoyed planting garlic with Rev. Koyo during his stay, and of course, our garden is organic. In his email, Sayo wrote that the dictionary definition of organic is "... food produced without the use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or other artificial agents; also, denotes a relation between elements of something such that they fit together harmoniously as necessary parts of a whole."

He went on to say that what stood out for him was "without the use of artificial agents." He said he was working with, Let Life Be Organic, free of artificial agents, letting it all fit together harmoniously. He's experimenting with ways to fit these ideas into his morning gassho as a reminder to be organic and harmonious, without the use of an artificial self. He closed his email with "Organic is Oneness!"

It's the start of the spring season and this is a time when nature really makes a big impact on us. Related to the theme of organic and spring is a gift I received recently in the mail. The package was addressed to me and there was no return address, other than our own address; so I don't know who sent me this gift. A note said that the enclosed was a girlfriend for me, Shirley Squirrel! (See photo!) This was an ORGANIC gift! Thank you!



## NO FIXED WISDOM

By Alex Chong Do Thompson\*

*\*Alex is a member of LM10 which will have their Lay Ministry Induction Ceremony this May. This article is from one of his class reports on the Heart of Wisdom Sutra text as translated by Rev. Gyomay Kubose*

When Gyomay Sensei made the comment about there being, "no fixed wisdom", I literally had to put the book down for a while and let that soak in. I'm what most people would call a "Type-A" personality. I want things done in a certain way, that was planned out weeks in advance, with a very clear idea of what the end result will be. Yes, something unexpected might happen, but that's why my Type-A personality insists on having well thought out backup plans just in case!

I say all of that to say that a big part of my practice has been learning how to "go with the flow" when necessary, and accept the fact that life rarely moves in straight lines. Sometimes it loops, sometimes it circles, and sometimes it comes to a dead stop before heading in a completely unexpected direction. When Gyomay Sensei made the comment about there being "no fixed wisdom" I believe he was referring to life in that way, however, he was also referring to the dharma.

As I continue to study, I realizing more and more that the Dharma is a living and breathing thing. It's not a stone tablet so much as a garden with different plants growing in different amounts as karma allows. There are times when it shrinks and seems to die away because of cold weather, and there are other times when it explodes with freshness and wholesome food. If I'm skillful in my study and application of the Dharma then it will grow and transform into whatever I need it to be in a given situation. One day it may manifest as several minutes of seated meditation, another day it may be a chant or sutra, or perhaps simply a favorite quote. As Gyomay Sensei tells us there is no fixed wisdom or fixed version of the Dharma. There is only whatever we need in that moment to save both our selves and others from suffering.

Nugget: The Dharma is a transformer!

Challenge: Working with an ever changing Dharma



## DISCOVER THE WAY OF ONENESS

Presented by

Bright Dawn Center of Oneness Buddhism

Our twelve week Discover The Way of Oneness course allows participants to gain both an introduction to Buddhism but also a deeper look at the Way of Oneness as presented by the Bright Dawn Center. The goal of the course is focused more on developing a personal spiritual journey rather than scholarly study. Whether a seasoned practitioner or completely new to Buddhism, this course will be engaging and can surely add to your everyday spiritual practice.

- The course is comprised of two texts: Everyday Suchness and The Center Within
- The course will consist of select chapter readings and an end of week report submitted on Sundays for review by other participants as well as our Lay Minister facilitators. A special online discussion group will be set up in our online community for the class where participants will be able to upload reports and engage in lively discussions.
- These reports are a way to reflect on the readings and develop a brief comment or statement about how that teaching made an impact on you.
- The course will be facilitated by Bright Dawn Center Lay Ministers, who will also be available for questions, comments, or friendly dialogue.
- There will be also be two teleconference calls for each course. One will take place at the third week mark to discuss Three Points that stood out during the first three weeks.
- The second call will be at the end of the course and focus on the Overview and Five Points or “nuggets of wisdom” from all the readings.

You will be presented with a Syllabus for each book breaking down the reading assignments, and an Order of Reports for the call in session. Upon successful completion of the reading and assignments, participants

## BOOKS BY BRIGHT DAWN CENTER LAY MINISTERS



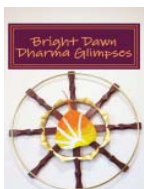
**DANDELIONS: Glimpses of Life** by Michael G. Lawrence (Shinyo). Collection of short Dharma essays and simple practices for cultivating gratitude in everyday life. Some brief glimpses into the extraordinary that are part of our ordinary lives. 103 pages. \$7.50 plus shipping/handling.



**GLIMPSES OF DHARMA: Teachings from Everyday Life** by Sayo Shenpän. Collection of Dharma Talks and teachings from everyday life by the author. Sharing Dharma in a manner everyone can relate to, awakening the reader to a life filled with everyday spiritual teachings. 97 pages. \$5.00, plus shipping/handling.



**WISDOM - COMPASSION - SERENITY: First Steps on the Buddhist Path** by M. Sekiyo Sullivan. Helps us understand concepts like the Noble Eightfold Path, the Four Seals of the Dharma, and gives commonsense guidance on how to put these teachings into practice in everyday life. 83 pages. \$10.00 plus shipping/handling.



**BRIGHT DAWN DHARMA GLIMPSES - A Collection of Teachings from Everyday Life.** Co-edited by Adrienne Kubose and Tamu Hoyo Ngina. Consists of Dharma Glimpses by Bright Dawn Lay Ministers. 219 pages. \$12.00 plus shipping/handling.

(To order see booklist on page 7)

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will receive a Certificate of Completion from the Bright Dawn Center of Oneness Buddhism.

Please email us ([brightdawnsensei@gmail.com](mailto:brightdawnsensei@gmail.com)) to join our course or if you have any questions regarding the course.

Course books are available from our bookstore! Discover the Way of Oneness course will be offered twice in 2018. First class begins March 25th and the second class will be held in the Fall of 2018.

### Oneness Newsletter Spring 2018

Editors: Adrienne Kubose, Rev. Koyo S. Kubose

Phone: (559) 642-4285  
28372 Margaret Road  
Coarsegold, CA 93614

Live Dharma Sunday (347) 945-7953:  
Call 8AM Pacific for talks by Rev. Koyo  
and a guest Lay Minister

[brightdawnsangha.ning.com](http://brightdawnsangha.ning.com)  
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The purpose of the Bright Dawn Center 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



## THE BLANK CANVAS

By Renée Seiyo

I recently read a blog written by an artist whose work I admire. She talked about our fear of the blank canvas. I guess it's a fear we all have as an artist. The fear of putting down the first mark on that blank canvas can be overwhelming sometimes, and we often use distractions to prolong our journey into the unknown.

Lately I've been experimenting with new materials and methods in pastels. Treading into uncharted territory, but feeling the creative urge to expand my creativity. My new distractions that prevent me from actually going to my studio and paint have been watching YouTube demo videos of different methods, used by artists, whose style I love.

Oh, and I'm spending plenty of hours researching the new and latest materials. The different papers, and of course the need for more of the finest and softest pastels on the market. I really have to try that acrylic ink everyone is using as well. Of course this takes many hours of research and looking at on-line art catalogs for the best prices.

I can't go to my studio and paint until I have made sure that I am totally prepared for my new adventure into the latest realms in the world of pastel. My new and different paper has already arrived but my new box of luxuriously soft handmade pastels won't arrive for another week, so how could I possibly use what I have in my studio. I better wait for them to arrive before I start a new painting.

A week later, my new pastels finally arrive, and I marvel at their gorgeous colors and how silky soft they feel to the touch. Now I feel I am ready to create my newest masterpiece. But wait, I can't paint anything until my acrylic inks arrive. After all, they are an important element in my new technique.

While I wait another week for them to arrive before I begin to paint, I think I'll do more research on line for other supplies I might be needing before I dig in.

My inks come in the mail at the same time a new video demo of my favorite artist comes in my email inbox. I better watch that before I start. I may have missed something in the last video.

In the blog I was reading, about the fear of the blank canvas, the artist leaves us with "just paint." Stop the distractions!" "Ok", I tell myself, "it's time" "just paint something!" So, I'm ready to tackle a new painting. I'm

excited about my new materials and creating a beautiful pastel with them. So, what should I paint? I better look at my reference material and think about this. "Just paint something!" a voice screams in my head.

I've thought about all the ways I distract myself from the blank canvas. This thought made me realize how we are distracted, in many ways, from the blank canvas in our own lives. We often fill ourselves up with meaningless distractions so we don't have to face the blank canvas in our life.

The canvas that is waiting for us to create, to experience. That blank canvas of no thing is the only way to keep rebirthing ourselves. It must be a clean slate without any marks from the past. Every moment is a new moment to rewrite the script, a fresh start, to be reborn anew.

We can't paint over an already done painting. We need a new canvas. Creation always starts from emptiness. The zero still point of no thing. The now moment. The new moment. I can't bring the past with me in a painting. Everything is new as soon as I put the tiniest mark on the blank canvas.

When the first mark is drawn, it creates a momentum. It gives me the green light. The canvas is excited. The pastels spring to life. Something new is being born they shout. And, the outcome is unknown until the last mark is placed on the painting. Every moment is new. No past, no future.

I am always thrilled when I complete a painting. A birthing. Something from nothing. I want my life to be more like that. The natural way, the beauty way, the way we were born to live. After all, we are the creators of our universe. Our natural true nature is creative and spontaneous. Let us forever welcome and embrace the blank canvas.

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### READER REPLY

Here are a couple of neat haiku we received from Joe Hill who is a current member in our lay ministry study program.

*Rain, rain, and more rain  
On the roof drum, drum, drum  
Nature's orchestra*

*Well rested dawn ears  
Woofing notes echo loud  
Canine symphony*

## *Acknowledgements with Gratitude*

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### MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Not only is making a memorial donation a way to remember and honor a loved one, it is a karmic action that fosters awareness of the two main teachings of interdependency and impermanence. Acknowledging one's "roots" also 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 of a worthy organization of one's choice.

## BOOK LIST

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**BRIGHT DAWN: Discovering Your Everyday Spirituality.**  
Describes the author's daily morning ritual and how ordinary things and activities can deepen one's spirituality. 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." Collection of 58 essays of down-to-earth teachings for a richer, more meaningful life. 134 pages.

**AMERICAN BUDDHISM.** Covers a brief history of Buddhism in America, 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. 99 pages.

**TAN BUTSU GE.** (Translation and commentary). This sutra tells the story of Dharmakara who became Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Life and 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, a 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.

**DISCOVERING BUDDHISM IN EVERYDAY LIFE** by Marvin Harada 2011. In commemoration of his 25 years of ministry at the Orange County Buddhist Church, over 40 essays by Rev. Harada were selected from past monthly newsletters. 128 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 ART OF TAKING ACTION** by Gregg Krech. Draws on Eastern philosophy, Buddhism, Japanese psychology, Zen, and martial arts to offer an approach to ACTION that goes beyond productivity and time management. 216 pages.

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**YES YES Your Everyday Spirituality YES YES**

<b>MAR</b>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Marching  <b>Purpose:</b> Walk the Walk  <b>Method:</b> Marching Fingers: When you want to act but find yourself thinking too much, trigger action by moving your index and middle fingers like they are marching along.</p>
<b>APR</b>	<p><b>Theme:</b> April Showers  <b>Purpose:</b> Feel the Feeling  <b>Method:</b> Tears are Falling: when you are so jaded and don't feel emotions fully as you want to, put index and middle fingers below your eyes and make a downward motion as a reminder to really feel your tears of joy or sorrow.</p>
<b>MAY</b>	<p><b>Theme:</b> Setting Goals  <b>Purpose:</b> Sense of Higher Purpose  <b>Method:</b> Make a Wish: When you feel down and unmotivated, state your noble intention to the universe, by saying "May I ..." followed by your vow of desired change. Use the phrase "Mother May I..." if it proves more effective!</p>

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 email us at [brightdawn@kubose.com](mailto:brightdawn@kubose.com) or indicate below and send to: Bright Dawn Center, 28372 Margaret Road, Coarsegold, CA 93614

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