
O N E N E S S

Quarterly Newsletter of the Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose Dharma Legacy Vol. 1 No. 2 Winter 1997

PURPOSELESS PURPOSE

by Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose

Our way of life in American culture is purposeful and goal oriented. If there is no purpose in something we judge it useless. In today's modern life a purposeless action is considered meaningless.

However, in addition to purposefulness, there is another side to life: purposelessness. Both aspects are true. Being purposeful is well suited to our materialistic society; in order to accomplish things, we must have purpose. Yet the purposeless way is also a beautiful way: a flower blooms, a bird sings, a child plays. A biologist might claim that a flower blooms to attract insects which then spread the pollen. But the flower cannot help but bloom as it does-- there is no intention. Life itself is purposeless. Water flows effortlessly. It cannot help but flow-- that is the way it is. Effortless effort, purposeless purpose, this is the real way of life. Although nothing can be accomplished without effort, the Buddhist way is effortless effort.

When you love, you love. There is no purpose. Why do we ask for meaning? Of course in our social

life we do ascribe "meanings" to things and events; but with regard to the essence of life, it just is. If we do something from the beginning with purpose and meaning, then it becomes quite rigid. Meanings and reasons may be given later but the doing is the purpose itself. If we continually live in the midst of purposeful, directed activity, soon we feel pressured and "must" enters our lives. There is no naturalness. This is the very reason Buddha taught that the essence of life just is, as it is.

We should learn the purposeless way of life-- purposeless doing. A utilitarian person would say, "That is nonsense!" However, nonsense is important in life. Too much intelligence or too much efficiency can create trouble. So, we must learn non-intelligence, which is super-intelligence. True life is purposeless. To realize this truth of life is Buddhism. In one sense life has purpose, in another sense it is purposeless. Life is always like that; it is inclusive. If we analyze it, it becomes two, but the reality is always one. Here and now-- time and space-- this very point is all

inclusive. Only when we analyze do we have different directions. True reality is natural and purposeless.

Why not enjoy the naturalness of life? The doing itself is the end fulfillment. In this state everything is at ease. This is the state of meaningless meaning. It has no meaning and yet in another sense it has tremendous meaning. It is life itself. When one just is, one forgets all other things, one forgets the self. It is said, "To learn Buddhism is to know oneself. To know oneself is to forget oneself." One just is. This state is perfect naturalness. A state of meaningless meaning and purposeless purpose. This is what the Buddha taught.

Inside:

- ❖ Dharma Snowflakes
- ❖ Ring out the 108 Bonno
- ❖ Views of "Suchness"; *book excerpts*
- ❖ Dear Sensei: *Do Buddhists pray?; Comparing religions*
- ❖ Events: *1998 Here we come!; The Feeling Buddha Seminar; Legacy Dedication Ceremony*

President's Message

by Rev. Koyo Sunnan Kubose

The outside winter weather may be cold, but there is a warmth within me from the friendship and support so many of you have shown the Legacy. I had been so preoccupied in helping prepare the Legacy's first issue of the Oneness Newsletter that I never paused to project what reactions we might expect from those receiving the newsletter. When your letters and contributions began coming in, I was very moved. Many times I couldn't help but raise up the letter and bow my head in gratitude. On behalf of the Legacy I feel privileged and honored to receive your expressions of support. It makes me realize more and more that the human relationship we share with each other is what life is all about.

Since our lives are constantly changing, I do not know exactly how the Legacy and our Oneness Newsletter may be of benefit to you. However, I do know it is important to be in touch with each other. By staying in touch there is always the opportunity to give and receive something of value-- whereas if we lose contact, there is no opportunity at all. I believe many small influences have effects in one's life whether a person knows it or not. For example, just seeing our Oneness Newsletter come in the mail (even if it's not read), keeps a person reminded that there are teachings about life and that we are con-

nected. This kind of subconscious influence is working in one's life all the time, laying the groundwork to make future changes possible. In addition, staying in touch allows one to have access to resources to help others. If a relative or friend is ever struggling in a time of difficulty, one would be able to say, "I know about these books," or "Here's a number to call."

I feel the Legacy has something to offer everyone. Some of you are already members of your local temple. A temple serves its members through traditional Buddhist rituals and services. Whereas the Legacy is an educational organization focusing on applications of the teachings in an individual's everyday life— via audio/video cassettes, telephone taped talks, computer Internet services, books and other material dealing with daily spiritual practice. Thus, we consider Legacy to be a resource to complement and not compete with local temples.

Some of you may not identify with being a Buddhist. To me this is not a problem because I feel that Buddhism is a universal way that goes beyond the "ism" in Buddhism. There is no necessity of a label; that is, whether one has to call himself a Buddhist. There never is an emphasis on converting anyone. If anyone ever feels

threatened by the Dharma teachings, he is misinterpreting what Buddhism is all about. Buddhism always gives and never takes away. Through the teachings, a person can become a better Christian, a better Jew, or even a better atheist!

Others of you may not feel you are religious at all. Actually, I don't feel Buddhism is really "religious" either. Buddhism simply is about life itself. When it comes to the essence of Buddhism, forget the stereotype of religion as— rigid, dogmatic, pious, righteous. There are no should's or ought's in Buddhism. Buddhism is to simply understand, really understand, yourself as you are. Don't judge others. Have utmost respect for the absolute uniqueness and value of individuals. Buddhism goes beyond being called religious or not religious. Buddhism is a religion that is not afraid to negate itself. The bottom line is to live a meaningful, creative life— living with inner peace and in harmony with others. Live joyfully 100% in the here and now— full of genuine acceptance of life's realities and with deep gratitude for all one receives.

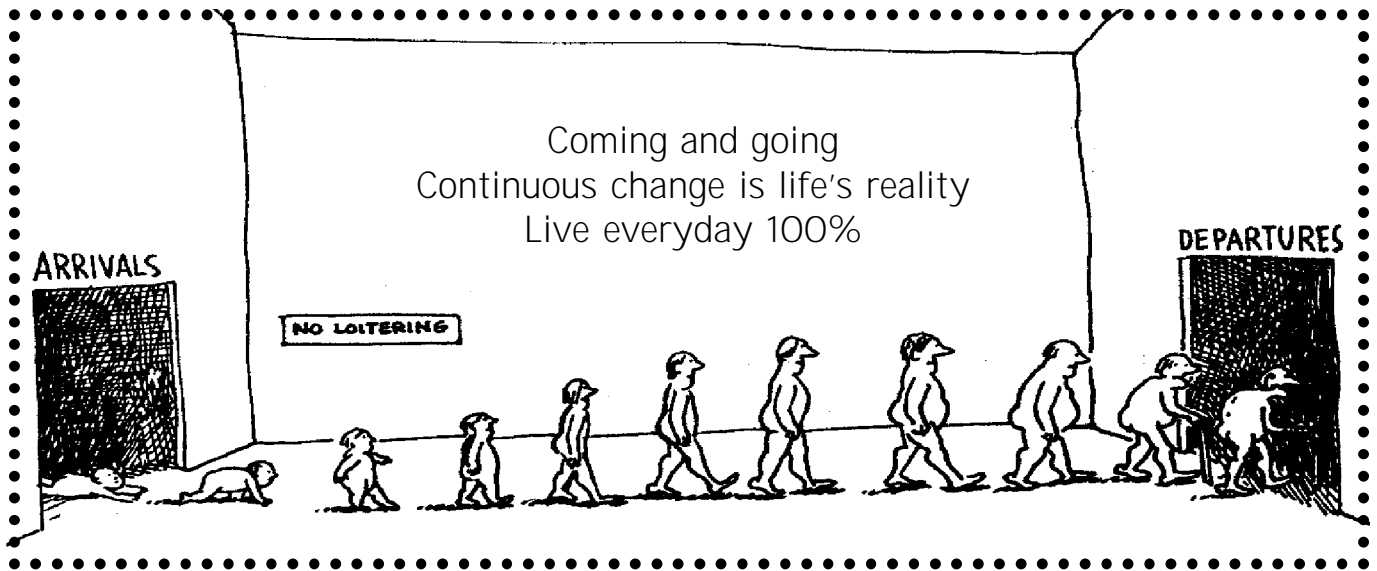
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Oneness Newsletter Winter 1997

Please send:
Comical Karma ❖ Poems ❖ Seasonings ❖ Dear Sensei
Spring issue deadline: Feb. 10

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Dear Sensei By Koyo

Dear Sensei,

I have been studying different religions for quite some time. However, I seem to uncover more problems than I solve. The deeper I go, the more questions crop up. When I was growing up, my parents took me to many different churches; and the more I went the more unhappy I became-- basically because there are so many contradictions. For instance, if each church says that it and it alone has the answer, how can they all be right? And if they're not all right then who's wrong?

I would greatly appreciate any advice you could give me-- I need someone to guide me.

TW

Dear TW,

From what you wrote, here is my advice- the more one studies, the more questions arise. Then the time comes to go beyond studying. It appears you are at that point. Although there are contradictions in our thoughts and concepts, there are no contradictions in life itself! You must live life without being victimized by views of right and wrong. You must live the true life-- your life. Find the teachings (from whatever source) that are 'right' for you. There is only one true religion for you and it is called the T.W. religion. The only prerequisite to finding it is sincerity; and because only you can find it for yourself, once you have it, no one can take it away from you. Truth cannot be labeled; respect but do not depend upon external authority. Don't waste time cataloging your "un-truths." Keep going forward-- walking the path IS the way.

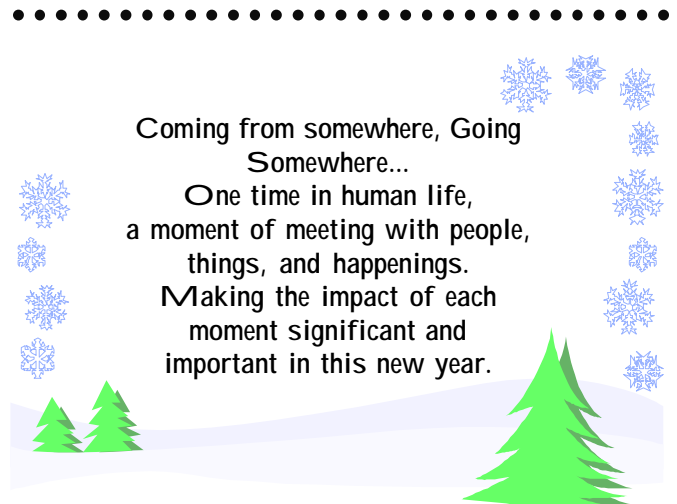
Dear Sensei,

Many people are still under the impression that Buddhists pray. After all, we do put our hands together carrying the ojuzu, bow our heads, and then recite the nembutsu. To the average person this should very well denote a prayer. Please elaborate on this misconception.

Help

Dear Help,

According to the dictionary, "prayer" is the act of asking very earnestly, making supplication. When Buddhists put their hands together using the ojuzu and bow their heads, they are showing their appreciation for the teachings of the Buddha or they are being aware of the Teachings and how the teachings relate to their lives. They are not "asking" for anything. Although the sight of Buddhists in gassho looks identical to Christians in prayer, what is going on in their minds is quite different.





Views of Suchness

Absolute knowledge constituting Enlightenment is the knowledge of the Absolute which is absolute truth. In Buddhist terminology it is the knowledge of Suchness (Tathata in Sanskrit and Shinnyo in Japanese). "Suchness" may sound strange to the Western mind, but Buddhists think it most expressive. What is Suchness? It is to see things as they are in themselves, to understand them in their state of self-nature, to accept them as themselves.

This seems easy, for when we see a flower before us we know it is a flower and not an inkstand or a lamp, but our knowledge is always coloured with all kinds of feelings, desires, and imaginations, and no such knowledge is pure and free from subjective "defilements." Mahayanists go even further and declare that this knowledge itself is the outcome of the self-asserting subjectivity of the knowing mind. To the Buddha's mind the flower is the inkstand and the inkstand is the lamp.

To see things as they are, i.e., in this state of suchness, means to go back to a state of mind before the division of the knowing and the known takes place. The dividing mind is the result of discrimination, and discrimination is going to the other end of suchness, which is grasped only when no discrimination takes place. The knowledge of suchness is therefore the knowledge of non-discrimination. When we discriminate, a world of dualities ensues, and this polarization

clouds the mirror of Prajna (wisdom).

(Mahayana Buddhism A Brief Outline; Beatrice Lane Suzuki, Collier Books 1963 pg. 42)

Zen is in close touch with Reality; indeed, Zen takes hold of it and lives it, and this is where Zen is religious. Those who are acquainted only with the Christian or some Indian Bhakti forms of religion may wonder where really in Zen is that which corresponds to their notion of God and their pious attitude toward him; Reality sounds to them too conceptual and philosophical and not devotional enough. In fact, Buddhism uses quite frequently more abstract-sounding terms than Reality, for instance, "suchness" or "thusness" (tathata), "emptiness" or "void" (sunyata), "limit of reality" (bhutakoti), etc. And this is sometimes what leads Christian critics and even Japanese scholars themselves to regard Zen as the teaching of a quietistic, meditative life. But with the followers of Zen these terms are not conceptual at all, but quite real and direct, vital, and energizing-- because Reality or Suchness or Emptiness is taken hold of in the midst of the concrete living facts of the universe, and not abstracted from them by means of thought.

(Zen and Japanese Culture; D.T. Suzuki, Princeton University Press, 1959 pg. 347)

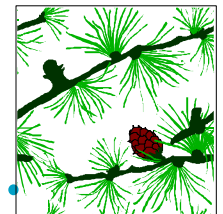
The all-inclusive Reality, the unconditional Absolute, is called Suchness. When it engages the realms of being, it is expressed in terms of Mind, i.e., One Mind, the Mind of sentient being, the essential nature of Mind, etc. The Mind, therefore, represents the Absolute as it is expressed in the temporal order. The Mind necessarily contains within itself two orders or aspects-- the transcendental and the phenomenal, the universal and the particular, the infinite

and the finite, the static and the dynamic, the sacred and the profane, the Absolute and the relative, and so forth. The Absolute order therefore, does not exist apart from the relative order; rather, they differ epistemologically but not ontologically. Man is presented as being located at the intersection of these opposing orders.

(The Awakening of Faith Attributed to Asvaghosha; Translated with Commentary by Yoshito S. Hakeda, Columbia University Press 1967 pg. 12)

Dependently co-arisen things as such signify emptiness, just as empty beings indicate the dependent co-arising of being. This identity is what constitutes the middle path and is also referred to as the suchness of being. The suchness of being is basically suchness (tathata) and because being, just as it is, is reality and truth, in later times this phrase, "the suchness of being" (bhutatathata) became popular, especially in East Asia. The term "suchness," as the word itself suggests, means simply "being such," "being as it is." It does not mean some ground of "reality" existing substantially in the form of either subject or object. The idea of a substantial substratum cannot carry the meaning of suchness, which refers to the flow of transmigration just as it is. In its deep meaning, then, suchness is emptiness identified with dependent co-arising just as it is.

(The Foundational Standpoint of Madhyamika Philosophy; Gadgin Nagao, State University of New York Press 1989 pg. 14)



Dharma Snowflakes

Many kinds of unique experiences happen in the course of sharing life together. Since our experiences are unique-- this means that each of us, as individuals, are also unique. In this sense each of us is like a snowflake. No two snowflake designs are exactly the same.

When a snowflake is being formed, the changing conditions of temperature, humidity, air pressure, wind and so forth, create a unique snowflake crystallization. Each snowflake falls to earth in its own unique path too-- according to dynamically changing environmental conditions. Our human lives are also like this, reflecting INNEN-- the Buddhist teaching about causes and conditions.

I remember receiving a holiday card from a fellow Buddhist minister in which he wrote, "a snowflake flies in exactly the right time and space and lands in exactly the right place." He went on to say that we humans recall all kinds of experiences that happened to us during the past year-- whether they be good or bad, right or wrong, happy or sad. Some experiences may have led to fears



sayings to add a little flavor to life

If we use the Dharma as a steering wheel and not as a spare tire, we will get where we want to go.

and anxieties. We might ask ourselves, "Why have these things happened to us?" When we look deeply into the things that have happened in our lives, we will see the karmic path of each person's life and accept the things that have so exactly happened.

The same teaching is in a poem I composed a few years ago:

**Pile of fresh snow
Collecting on a pine branch
Sliding off... plop!**

Falling snow collects on a tree branch and when the pile of snow becomes heavy enough, it simply slides off. What more can be said of such naturalness!? The pile of snow does not have to ponder, "Shall I slide off now?" For you and I too, there are no real choices. "Shall I do this?" "Shall I be that?" Whatever you do, you cannot help doing. Sometimes you are content; sometimes you are worried. Sometimes you feel weak and

passive; sometimes you are active and full of vigor. You and your life, with all its causes and conditions, are continually unfolding in a very unique fashion. You are yourself. In any given moment, how can you possibly be other than who you are? In this sense you are perfect. You are a perfect you, just as you are. There are no other standards or comparisons. This kind of perfection is in the absolute sense of who you are and how your life is moving along. You are always in exactly the right place.

The teaching of INNEN tells us that the causes and conditions for what we do is so vast as to be inconceivable. Life is not so much something to be analyzed as it is a mystery to be lived. So each of us is a unique Dharma snowflake, flying in exactly the right time and space and landing in exactly the right place. How perfect! How absolutely perfect!



COMING EVENTS

SPOT Workshop

In December, the Legacy is hosting a pilot workshop in Fowler, CA. This workshop involves creating a personalized SPOT (Special Place of Tranquility). Participants will make incense holders and customized journal books.

The Feeling Buddha

In January 1998, Legacy, ABA, and BTC are hosting a workshop titled *The Feeling Buddha* by David and Caroline Brazier. See attached flyer for details.

Legacy Dedication Ceremony

A formal ceremony dedicating the establishment of the Rev. Gyomay M. Kubose Dharma Legacy is being planned for April 4, 1998. It will be a public event open to all interested persons from the community at large. Save the date-- invitations to come.

1998 Here We Come!

An annual Legacy event of Board Members and friends is a New Year's Eve gathering at Rev. Sunnan and Adrienne's home. People take turns striking a bell a total of 108 times. This New Year's Eve activity is a traditional Buddhist ritual done in many temples in Japan. It symbolizes getting rid of the 108 human "bonno" (passions, defilements, limitations) which bind us to the world of Samara; i.e. world of ignorance and delusion. This engaging ritual is a teaching that reminds us to free ourselves from the entanglements of our self-centeredness as we prepare to face the New Year. When you are counting down the final minutes of 1997, wherever you happen to be, join us in spirit by visualizing the ringing out of the 108 Bonno. Happy New Year!

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Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

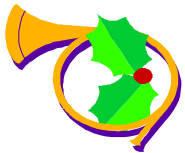
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I'D LIKE TO ORDER THE BOOK MARKED BY _____

Title	QTY	Price	Total
<i>Everyday Suchness</i>		\$ 12.00	
<i>The Center Within</i>		\$ 12.00	
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Order books as holiday gifts!

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

 **Payable to: Kubose Dharma Legacy**

8334 Harding Ave. Skokie, Illinois 60076

Books by Rev. Gyomay M. 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. (Eleventh printing, 1994); 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 unique, down-to-earth presentation of the Dharma teachings which offers to all people a richer, more meaningful life. 1986; 134 pages.

THE CENTER WITHIN audio cassette; 3 hours.

AMERICAN BUDDHISM. Covers a brief history of Buddhism in America, the Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path, problems in terminology and misunderstandings common to Westerners. 1976; 29 pages.

TAN BUTSU GE. (Translation and commentary). This sutra tells the story of Dharmakara who became Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light. 1976 (Second Printing, 1991); 56 pages.

HEART OF THE GREAT WISDOM SUTRA. (Translation and commentary). This sutra deals with the teachings of non-self and nothingness. 1975 (Second Printing, 1991); 35 pages.

THE FUNDAMENTAL SPIRIT OF BUDDHISM. by Haya Akegarasu (Rev. G.M. Kubose's teacher). Translated from Japanese by Rev. Kubose; gives an idea of Rev. Akegarasu's life (1877-1954) and teachings. 1977; 87 pages.

Reader's Replies:

Contemplation

The trailing morning glory, finding its way through the decaying fence. The Rhubarb thrusting strong sheaves, of ruby stalks and rippling leaves. The sound of distant waves along the shore, as pigeons defy passing traffic patterns. Now I know, when searching within, to question the glory of the day. To walk in the home of the butterflies, as they cling to their scaly branches. To relive the walks on the sacred path, the joy of days of discovery. To know and strive for a balance of giving, This is the dance of eternal living.

BN (CA)

Finding

Zen: Feel the smiles Grasp the nuances Scramble the heights Join the diversity Embrace the excellence Bounce like clouds GI (IL)



On Reincarnation:

The wave on the ocean simile developed in the Lankavatara sutra refers to an individual's consciousness on his or her ocean; the alayavijnana, which is individual... and transmigrates from life to life. If beings like Mother Teresa and Stalin both melt into or merge into an oceanic alayavijnana which is not individual, no Buddha would ever have accumulated enough merit, meditation, and wisdom for enlightenment.

RC (WI)

On God:

When someone asks me "Do you believe in God?" I reply "no." When they then say, "So you don't believe that God exists?" I reply "that's not what I said. If you believe that God exists then he does. Your actions are dictated by this belief, therefore your life is shaped by this belief. It is the basis of your moral and personal decisions, your every action, your fear of eternal retribution, and the suppression of your free will. You believe because you fear not to believe. Therefore, God exists, for you." But to quote Dennis Miller, "That's just my opinion and I could be wrong."

BB (IL)

OnenessWorkshop:

The thing I liked best about the workshop was the room. The walls were windows overlooking Lake Michigan, and my attention was constantly drawn to water crashing upon the rocks. The video was beautiful and seemed to capture Rev. Kubose's energy for life. It reminded me that great people aren't born great, they live great! SK (NY)

Haiku:

Rain drops slowly fall
like tiny tears from heaven
sun smiles through the clouds
TK (CA)

Legacy Services

Spread the Dharma



The following is a sampling of presentations provided by the Legacy:

- Basic Buddhism
- Short History of Buddhism
- Buddhism in America
- Buddhism and Christianity
- Buddhism & Psychology
- Buddhist Symbols & Rituals
- Introduction to Meditation Workshop
- Daily Dharma Workshop
- Buddhist Standup Comedy Video

For further information, please contact the Legacy.

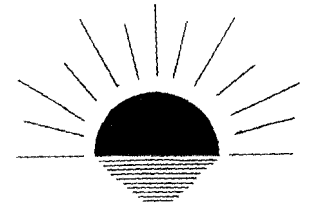
Dial - the - Dharma

(847) 677- 8053

This telephone service began in 1982 with a collection of over 150 recorded talks by Rev. Gyomay Kubose. His wife, Minnie faithfully changed the cassettes in their home until 1995, when due to her health problems, it was moved to Rev. Sunnan's home. Subsequently, over 200 talks by Rev. Sunnan were added to the cassette library and the tapes are currently changed daily as a Legacy service.



Call Dial-the-Dharma everyday to hear a recorded 2-3 minute teaching.



Daily Dharma

The Daily Dharma Program is a personalized "mentor" service that the Legacy offers. It focuses on developing a natural way of expressing Oneness in everyday living.

The program facilitates creating a personal SPOT (Special Place of Tranquility) in your home. Additional enhancement/enrichment activities are provided which build upon the foundation of daily MAGs (Moments of Gratitude). YES (Your Everyday Spirituality) is included in every Oneness newsletter. See next page.

For further information, please contact the Legacy.

Acknowledgements with Gratitude

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YES YES YES YES YES

Your Everyday Spirituality

DECEMBER

Theme: Letting go

Purpose: Flush away self-centered attachments

Method: "Toilet Gassho"

When sitting on the toilet, remind yourself to let go of your life's "waste products" like grudges, resentments, cynicism, arrogance, self pity.

JANUARY

Theme: See beyond your "blindness"

Purpose: Appreciate different perspectives as symbolized by Janus, the Roman deity of beginnings whose head has 4 faces, each one looking in one of the four directions.

Method: "Circle Gassho"

Put hands together in gassho and slowly turn around in a circle, symbolizing your openness to respect other people's views.

FEBRUARY

Theme: Loving communication

Purpose: Promote interpersonal awareness and authentic encounters when greeting others by touching another person's pulse; connect heart to heart

Method: "Oneness Handshake"

As part of a regular handshake, extend your index finger inside the other's wrist.