



Buddhist Thoughts

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Horace the Hoonko Hippo

J.K. Hirano

One day while I was reading the Letters of Rennyō (Gobunshō), I began to feel very sleepy. This isn't uncommon when I am studying and reading passages that require a great deal of thinking. However, suddenly I noticed a Post Script in the letters that I had never noticed before, it was in one of Rennyō's letters about Hoonko. It read as follows:

PS

On the eve of the founder's memorial service the great Hoonko Hippo Horace will rise up from the depths of the jeweled ponds of the Pure Land to shout Namo Amida Butsu, as a reminder to all the children of Nembutsu followers that they are embraced by Amida Buddha, never to be abandoned. Thus this passage may also be known as Hoonko Hippo no sho, (The Letter on the Hoonko Hippo)

Listen to these words, Listen to these words

The story of Horace the Hoonko Hippo.

In the deepest darkest reaches of Africa, lived a rather grouchy Hippo named Horace. Horace was just dissatisfied with his lot in life. He didn't like having to live in the river all the time. It really affected the reception on his television. He really liked the Animal Planet station, but was extremely jealous of the elephant and the white rhinoceros, because of how wonderful these programs made them out. They were big like him, yet they didn't have to live in the river. He was also jealous of the whale his other cousin, for the whale was big, but had the entire ocean to swim in. Horace wasn't happy with anything about his life. On Christmas, he also didn't get everything he thought he needed.

Well one day, as Horace was thinking all these negative thoughts, he popped his head out of the river and guess who he saw? It was Santa Claus, who was watering Rudolph and the rest of the reindeer after a practice run around the world. Santa noticed Horace and naturally shouted out with glee, "Ho Ho Ho Horace, Merry Christmas!" When Horace heard this he shouted back,

“What do I have to be merry about? And besides, Christmas was just over with and you didn’t bring me that toy I wanted. Is that why you are here? If not, you are either way early or late?” Santa just smiled at Horace and walked over and patted him on the head. Horace continued his complaints, “You know Santa besides you letting me down, I don’t get any respect from the world. I can run 19 miles per hour. But have you ever heard anyone say, “As swift as a Hippo?” I don’t think so. On these nature programs you always hear about the majestic elephant or the rare and wondrous white rhinoceros, I’ve never been called majestic or rare and wonderful. They always just show me yawning and hanging out in the river.” Santa smiled and then suddenly said, “Horace, I have a job for you! You know there was a time when my lead reindeer Rudolph didn’t get to play in any reindeer games. He was treated as a freak because of his big red nose, but look at him now. He is the most famous reindeer of all. Each of us is special and has a purpose in life. Horace, in life you are embraced by the river, just as you are. The river doesn’t ask anything of you, even though you may complain and wish you didn’t have to live in it. The river continues to support you and accepts you just as you are. We all have a place in this world and just as you are embraced by the river, all sentient beings are embraced in Amida’s compassion. So Horace with your mouth so wide, won’t you teach all the children about Amida Buddha’s compassion and the Nembutsu? And the reason you didn’t get that one toy you saw in the commercial is that you haven’t been the nicest hippo, have you? And do you really need a fushigi ball? You don’t even have fingers.”

Horace suddenly began bellowing “Namo Amida Butsu. Namo Amida Butsu. I get it, I get it!” And as he did this, he rose slowly into the air, as light as a feather. Santa then led Horace to the jeweled ponds in the Pure Land where Horace now lives. It has been written that on Hoonko Eve, he rises up out of the jeweled ponds, shouting out the Nembutsu to remind us of all we have to be grateful for. Some have even said that on Hoonko Eve Horace the Hoonko Hippo visits certain good girls and boys on who have been especially grateful. He gives them all the things they saw in a commercial on television during the Christmas season that they needed but didn’t get. So if you are reading this and didn’t get all that you wanted, it means that you have all that you need. So let’s join Horace in spreading the word, Happy Hoonko, Namo Amida Butsu!

On behalf of Carmela, Kacie, Taylor and myself, I want to thank you for all the support and kindness you have shared with us. We hope that you were able to have a healthy and Happy Holiday season. This year for our Hoonko service on January 16, Rev. Kodo Umezu, Director of the BCA Committee on Buddhist Education will be our guest speaker. I hope you can join us to listen to his dharma talk.

President’s Message

Dot Richeda

As the end of the year is fast approaching, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the sangha, family and friends for your support during the year. After the completion of the Temple renovation, we started our regular busy schedule. As I reflect back to 2010, I have many happy memories of this year and look forward to next year. Arigato to all who supported the Temple.

The Temple Board consists of 25 members serving a two year term. These are the 2011-2012 members:

David Black, Stan Endo, Shelley Doi, Bruce Fong, Dean Hirabayashi, Ernie Kyed, Reiko Matsuura, Mark Minaga, Reiko Mitsunaga, Dot Richeda, David Sekino, Ivan Van Laningham, Jeff Watanabe.

Current members (2010-2011):

Maya Chow, Christy Fong, Sherrie Hiyashi, Brent Koga, Brenda Koga, Karie Minaga-Miya, Jane Sakashita, Paul Terashima, Karen Tohinaka, Reiko Watanabe, Troy Watanabe, Phillip Sakashita..

Thank you to the outgoing board members and welcome to the incoming board members.

The Officers for the 2011 year will be as follows:

President: Dot Richeda

1st Vice President: Bruce Fong

2nd Vice President: Ivan Van Laningham

Corresponding Secretary: Reiko Mitsunaga

Recording Secretary: Karen Tohinaka

Treasurers: Maya Chow, David Sekino

Auditors: Karen Seo, Dean Hiyabayashi

Thank you for your time and effort to serve on the Temple Board.

The General Membership Meeting will be held on January 30th after service.

Temple membership dues are now. Please turn the forms in to Maya Chow.

If you have any concerns, questions, comments, please see me or one of the board members. We will be glad to discuss the matter.

Again, I ask you for your support to make 2011 a memorable year.

Thank you,

In Gassho.

BWA NEWS

Brenda Koga

Hard to realize that the holidays have passed and the new year is upon us. The year has passed by very quickly and elections for the 2011 BWA board and officers have concluded. Congratulations to our new board: **Maya, Chow, Yuriko Dennison, Lynne Doi, Takeko Doi, Christy Fong, Terry Fujinami, Maxine Furubayashi, Sandy Iwasaki, Brenda Koga, Sherrie Koga, Reiko Matsuura, Gail Minaga, Karie Minaga-Miya, Junko Mitsunaga, Setsuko Nagata, Dot Richeda, Connie Sakashita, Jane Sakashita, Karen Seo, Kathy Terashima, Yo Uno, Judy Watanabe, Reiko Watanabe, and Kazuko Yakumo.**

Thanks to the nominating committee for organizing the ballots, mailing them out and tallying the final counts. The members of that committee were: **Kathy Terashima, Carmela Hirano and**

Reiko Watanabe.

Elections were held in December with the officers for the BWA for 2011 as follows:

President: **Brenda Koga**

1st Vice President (Pres. Elect): **Christy Fong**

2nd Vice President (Historian): **Reiko Matsuura**

Recording Secretary: **Karie Minaga-Miya/Maya Chow**

Treasurer: **Reiko Watanabe**

Auditors: **Gail Minaga and Connie Sakashita**

Thank you to all who donated warm clothing and bedding to The Road Home, and also all who donated items for the Candy Cane Corner store. The Buddhist Women's Association was able to contribute a significant donation of very needed items to both causes.

December 5th was the annual Bodhi Day luncheon with the BWA responsible for the main entrees. The BWA women contributed a variety of delicious dishes for the event, and the attendees appreciated the great spread for the event. Thank you to **Reiko Matsuura, Sherrie Koga, Setsuko Nagata and Reiko Watanabe** for spearheading the planning and preparation and all who provided menu items.

Then on December 12 the BWA reorganized the kitchen equipment and items. Thank you to **Reiko Mitsunaga** for donating the use of her labelers. Please return all items to their respective places.

With the end of the year drawing to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the officers, committee members and the BWA general membership for all their time and efforts in keeping the temple operating. Thank you for all your help with not only the many functions that are major fundraising events for the temple, but also the continual activities for which you all support and participate.

Dharma School

Christy Fong

Thank you to all the volunteers who signed up for various activities throughout the year. We are still looking for someone to oversee the Bowling party in February with **Faye Eng**. Please let Christy Fong or her know if you are willing to help!

Thank you to the **second** grade students for helping lead the Golden Chain and Promise during services in January and February.

The Bodhi Day service and luncheon was held on December 5th. Thanks to **Ryoko Okamoto and Tammy Fukushima** for their help with Dharma School's responsibilities for the luncheon.

We are asking each family to donate 3 dozen items for the Goodie Bags to be distributed in January

at the Ho-onko luncheon.

Have a happy holidays and we wish you every success in 2011!

YBA NEWS

Maya Chow

Our new officers for the 2011 year are --

Co-presidents Michael Fong / Keith Chow

Vice president Kenny Fong

Secretary Merissa Nakamura

Treasurer Kelsi Tohinaka

A very late "thank you" to those who helped with the Halloween party.

We will be hosting our midnight Laser Tag event on Dec. 29 --see you all there!

January Shotsuki Hoyo

10:00 am, January 16

Deceased	Date of Death	Next of Kin
Akita Uheiji	1/21/62	Janet Thomas
Hirota Harry	1/28/97	Mitsuko Hirota
Honda Nobuyoshi	1/18/95	Honda Family
Inouye Kinsaku	01/2/94	Tom Inouye
Inouye Sashichi	1/18/75	Ruth Aoki
Iwamoto Sei	1/19/57	Takeo Iwamoto
Iwamoto Masakichi	1/19/72	Takeo Iwamoto
Kaizumi Hannah	1/15/93	Craig Kaizumi
Matsuda Ei	1/5/96	Richard Matsuda
Mayeda Tadao	1/5/72	Yoshiko Kido
Mitsunaga Buntaro	1/7/67	Tomio Mitsunaga
Mori Carol	1/10/88	Asako Mori
Mori Masakiyo	1/27/80	Ko Mori
Nakamura Tane	1/16/75	Takae Nakamura
Namba Matsuno	1/8/56	Kaz Namba
Ninomiya Yasaeuemon	1/11/41	Yoshiko Ninomiya
Oishi Ginzo	1/31/62	Victor Oishi
Oishi Yoshino	1/11/83	Victor Oishi

Kanekichi Okino	1/3/48	Masako Imamura
Saito Masano	1/24/54	Yoshiko Ninomiya
Saito Yoshinaga	1/10/59	Yoshiko Ninomiya
Seo Tommy	1/25/93	Paul Seo
Shiba Miyoe	1/15/92	Shiba Family
Shimada Shoichi	01/2/92	Yoneko Shiba
Takata Raisaku	1/18/86	Teruko Takata
Takehara Sumiko	1/19/93	Dick Takehara
Taketa Shintaro	1/16/85	Shizuko Taketa
Tsutsui Kiyoshi	1/12/91	Tsutsui Family
Nakai Yoshiko	1/23/98	Lily Havey
Imada Shizuko	1/26/02	Helen Mitsunaga
Miyake Mary	1/14/04	Jim Miyake
Matsue Kasubuchi	1/7/07	Robert Kasubuchi
Yasuzo Minaga	1/11/78	Karie Minaga-Miya
Sachi June Minaga		
Kadowaki Schneider	1/22/09	Karie Minaga-Miya

DECEMBER 2010 DONATIONS

Masako Imamura	25.00	Nov Shotsuki Hoyoy
Kathy Terashima	25.00	Nov Shotsuki Hoyoy
Phillip & Connie Sakashita	25.00	Seminar
Reiko & Byron Watanabe	50.00	Special
Ivan Van Laningham	50.00	Special
Hisa Minaga	20.00	Eitaikyo
Eleanor Kobayashi	25.00	Special
Kimiyo Kobayashi	25.00	Special
Ivan Van Laningham	50.00	Special
Ken Nodzu	500.00	Year end
Daniell Okemoto (CA)	100.00	Special
Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga	100.00	3 yr memorial for Ken
Masami Hayashi	100.00	Denver Bus trip

DECEMBER SHOTSUKI HOYO

Kazuko Yakumo	25	Bob & Akiko Sugino	20
Ida Watanabe	25	Henry Hirano	25
Grace Oshita	25	Yukie Okubo	100
Maxine Furubayashi	25	Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga	100
Reiko Mitsunaga	25	Helen Mitsunaga	50
Merry Nakamura	20	Karen Tohinaka	25
Reiko & Byron Watanabe	25	May Akiyama	25
Hiroshi & Mary Aramaki	20	Terry Omura	100
Ken Nodzu	50	Gary & Kathleen Takenaka	50

BODHI DAY

Brent & Sherrie Koga	25	Elaine Fukushima	25
Gary & Ryoko Okamoto	20	Phillip & Connie Sakashita	50
Setsuko Nagata	25	Grace Oshita	50
Richard & Lynne Doi	25	Terry & Mits Fujinami	25
Paul & Kathy Terashima	25	Chic Terashima	25
Yuriko & Carl Dennison	30	Jeanne Konishi	50
Jane Sakashita	20	Lisa Matsuda	30
Dot Richeda	25	Ivan Van Laningham	50
Kristine Clifford	25	Gerald Iseda	25
Chie Sugaya	25	Maxine Furubayashi	25
Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga	30	Hisa Minaga	15
Ichiro & Takeko Doi	25	Yoshiko Uno	20
Tracy Akimoto	25	Ruby Doi	25
Tom & Fran Akimoto	30	Brenda Koga	25
Dave Sekino	30	LaVerne & Ernie Kyed	50
Jerry & Carmela Hirano	100	Christine Munson	100
Reiko & Ken Matsuura	30	Troy & Judy Watanabe	30
Bruce & Christy Fong	30	Reiko & Byron Watanabe	25
Chizuko Ishimatsu	50	Masako Imamura	20
May Akiyama	25	Karie Minaga-Miya	30

BUILDING FUND

Setsuko Nagata	200
Christine Munson	500
Ken Nodzu	500
Masami Hayashi	200
Koyo Restaurant	100

BWA

Ken Nodzu	500	Year end donation
Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga	100	3 yr memorial for Ken

DHARMA SCHOOL

Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga	50	3 yr memorial for Ken
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YBA

Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga	50	3 yr memorial for Ken
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JR YBA

Christine Munson	100	Year end
Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga	50	3 yr memorial for Ken

Major memorials for 2011

2010 1st Year

2009 3rd Year

2005 7th Year

1995 17th Year

1987 25th Year

1979 33rd Year

1962 50th Year

1912 100th Year