



Buddhist Thoughts

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Cultivating the Buddha Dharma, Buddhism and Agriculture

Rev. Jerry K. Hirano

"O Brahmin, I too plough and sow," replied the Buddha. "And having ploughed and sown, I eat."

The puzzled Brahmin said, "You claim that you plough and sow, but I do not see you ploughing."

The Buddha replied, "I sow faith as the seeds. My discipline is the rain. My wisdom is my yoke and plough. My modesty is the plough-head. The mind is the rope. Mindfulness is the ploughshare and the goad. I am restrained in deeds, words and food. I do my weeding with truthfulness. The bliss I get is my freedom from suffering. With perseverance I bear my yoke until I come to nirvana. Thus, I have done my ploughing. It brings the fruit of immortality. By ploughing like this, one escapes all suffering."

~Kasibharada Sutra

(This is the Dharma Talk I gave at the BCA National Council Meeting on March 5 in Visalia, CA.)

Good morning, everyone. It is truly an honor and pleasure to have been asked to speak this morning at our BCA's National Council morning service. I want to begin this morning with a confession, "I love BCA!" If you are here as a representative of your local temple you should feel the same way.

This morning, I began my talk with a passage from the Sutra named after the farmer Kasibharadavaja. In this sutra the Buddha was in the village of Ekanala, in Magadha. It was planting season and there was a large farm belonging to a Brahman named Kasibharadavaja. Just before noon the Buddha went with his begging bowl to the place where this farmer was planting seeds. It was about lunchtime and the farmer said to the Buddha, "I work hard plowing and because of that I eat. My workers work hard and that is why they eat. I don't see you plowing so why should you eat?" And the Buddha replied with the quote I began with.

This passage reminds me of things I have heard regarding BCA. This sutra comes to mind when discussing no cost of living raise for BCA staff; during long discussions about adding three dollars to the BCA member's assessment. As Mr. Glenn Kameda tries to establish a guideline for ministers' salaries and only gets criticized or ignored. On behalf of the BCA ministers we are so appreciative of Mr. Glenn Kameda's years of work on behalf of we the ministers.

In this sutra, Kasibharadavaja is basically saying to the Buddha, “What do I get from feeding you or why should I feed you? It’s not fair, for you to eat without working.” If the Buddha were here at this National Council meeting, he would have to lead a workshop entitled “What do I get from Buddha.” Or “How much should I put in the Buddha’s Begging Bowl,” but since he is not here we have workshops entitled, “What do I get from BCA.” or “BCA Ministerial Affairs workshop”.

Ministers must take some responsibility for these difficulties, maybe we have not been skillful enough in showing you what we do and the value of the Buddhist teachings. In this sutra the Buddha was able to show Kasibharadavaja how he too was a farmer working the fields of life. I believe that what the Buddha would say to BCA is that we are all farmers, working this life, this society, to grow and harvest the fruit of the Nembutsu teachings. Namo Amida Butsu is all around us, but we must grow the temples and maintain our temples, so that we can all partake of the harvest.

I could not be a real farmer; I have absolutely no talent in this area. I’m proud just to be able to ride my lawn tractor without messing up my yard. I don’t even like to touch dirt! However, not having the skills or ability to be a real farmer doesn’t mean I don’t admire farmers and feel a deep gratitude for their work. Farmers have been the backbone of BCA. The theme for this conference is “Cultivating the Buddha Dharma: Buddhism and Agriculture.” I really like this theme, because I BELIEVE ALL OF BCA SHOULD THANK AND EXPRESS DEEP APPRECIATION FOR OUR ISSEI AND NISEI FARMERS.

BCA has survived many difficult years - the Great Depression, World War II and the internment of Japanese Americans, and we have done remarkably well. I believe this is in large part because of the farmers in BCA. For example, my temples in Honeyville and Ogden, Utah, in communities with 80 to 90 percent Mormon populations built Buddhist temples. Much like the farmers who built the temple I was assigned to in San Jose. Like the farmers who built the temples of Central, Northern California and the Northwest Districts of BCA. Southern District also had many farmers. These farmers built the foundation for this amazing organization we call the Buddhist Churches of America.

These farmers loved our Buddhist Churches of America. They loved their temples and realized they were a partner in the dream of BCA. Mr. Calvin Doi stressed at his informative talk at the IBS symposium, “Farmers are able to see the interconnectedness of it all. Farmers are able to act upon the basic Buddhist teaching of the interconnectedness of all life.” Our local temples are BCA and BCA is our local temples. I am so grateful for these farmers and their sacrifices.

However, I have a deep concern for the future of BCA, not because of the lack of ministers. I was blown away by our new BCA ministers. Listening to their Dharma talks yesterday at the Dharma-thon made me so proud of Revs. Shibata, Hamasaki, Sekiya, Quon and Wondra. The future as far as the talent of ministers looks very bright. It is also a bit of a relief, for many years ago, my teacher and mentor, Rev. Russell Hamada told me that one of the main goals and responsibilities of becoming a Kaikyoshi is to work towards molding future BCA ministers. It is our responsibility to ensure that the future generation be better than our generation of ministers, in training and compensation. Yesterday’s Dharma-thon showed me that one part of Rev. Hamada’s directive has been accomplished; the new ministers are definitely better trained than my generation. However, what worries me is that these new ministers who have dreams for the future of BCA, just as my young Minister self once did, almost 30 years ago, may not have such a bright future. They too love the Buddhist Churches of America or they would not have jumped through so many hoops to become BCA ministers.

However, as a result of the success of the Japanese Americans, we have lost the farmers within our Sanghas. The farmers didn't want their children to have to labor as hard as they did. These farmers wanted their children to go to college and become professionals, engineers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, something other than farming. Although this dream was realized. It is rather disappointing that so many of these children of the farms not only left the farms but have lost the *attitude* and *spirit* of the Farmers of previous generations.

This is what I mean by a Farmer's Attitude and Spirit:

*Self-sacrifice and perseverance for an outcome that they could not immediately see, but believed in;

*Generosity, optimism and strong work ethic for their family's future well-being;

*Vision and Investment in the future, and less concern about immediate rewards;

*Taking risks in the face of hardship and uncertainty; "gambling" was a part of their life.

I once asked my Honeyville members, "Why do farmers love to gamble?" One Nisei member from Honeyville, Tets Okada, told me, "Hell Sensei, this casino gambling is just kid's play compared to our lives as farmers. Try putting a couple of hundred thousand dollars on seed, not knowing what the weather will be like that year, now that's gambling!" These same farmers built our temples, built our national organization and sowed the fields of this country for the Nembutsu teachings to take root and grow.

These farmers took a gamble and hit the jackpot!

They provided a place for their families and communities to listen to the Nembutsu teachings. BCA is an amazing organization, with temples, education centers, a graduate school. We are the envy of every other Buddhist sect in America. However, now I find many of the children and grandchildren of the farmers passing on the bet.

Where the Issei and Nisei would have raised, their grandchildren prefer to pass. My Sansei generation, is acting like Kasibaradavaja, "What am I getting from my membership dollars?" It is no longer about creating a Sangha for the future generations' welfare. It is about me, me, me! What do I get now! And if it's not about me, I don't really care, or care to find out what's going on.

BCA and local temple organizations are just looking to maintain what they have. The legacy of the Issei and Nisei was not about playing it safe – they went for broke! All because of love and concern for their families and future generations.

I hope members of BCA can learn to love what we have, and take pride and great care in what we have. For if you really love something, you want to see it grow. I love my daughters, and because of my love for them, I want them to grow. It hurts, emotionally and financially to send them to college, for them to leave my home, but for them to grow, that's what I have to do for their benefit. In the long run, when they benefit, so do I.

We are living in a time when our Japanese American community has grown and prospered financially beyond the dreams of our Issei forefathers. However, when that financial dream of "getting what I want" is accomplished, many people become disillusioned with life. They begin to think, "Is that all there is?" It's interesting that the Issei and Nisei backed up their bets, on our temples, for the Dharma is the one solution for this existential angst, that their

children may now be experiencing. Namo Amida Butsu is all about *entrusting* our self-centeredness to Amida Buddha, not to the stock market.

We are also not that welcoming to the non-Japanese coming to our temples. The reason I most often hear is, “They don’t donate.” However, “How many of our Japanese American families are really donating to their temples?” How many of your temple members donate over \$1000 a year to BCA or your temple? I’m quite sure that a thousand dollars a year is less than cell phones, Internet and cable bills. We have close to 14,000 BCA members, and if they donated \$1000 a year to BCA, that’s 14 million dollars a year for us to work with! If it was only half to BCA headquarters and half to the local temples, that’s \$ 7 million each. With the Farmer’s spirit of Dana, we would not have the financial problems we have now. We balk and complain about BCA receiving less than 150 dollars a year (about 10 dollars a month per member). Ten dollars is less than what I’ve spent at Starbucks for coffee during this conference.

It is my wish that when we talk about our agrarian past, of our Japanese American legacy, that we do not forget to talk about the values of generosity, hard work and willingness to take a risk. We all still go gambling at the casinos to this day, don’t we? Why aren’t we taking a risk at investing in our own temples called BCA? The Issei and Nisei had to risk their comfort for the future of their families. The Issei were willing to sacrifice for the sake of their grandchildren, this generosity and selfless giving, “DANA”, was at the heart of this sacrifice. A stark contrast to **“What do I get for my money?”**

In addition, when we talk about non-Japanese coming into our temples, and we act as though they are invaders encroaching onto our territory. I want you to take an honest look at your own families. If you are Japanese American, how many of you have non-Japanese relatives? Do you treat them like strangers and invaders? The same strangers and invaders are not only your future family members; they are also our Dharma family members.

To the non-Japanese, I ask, “Are you sacrificing for the benefit of all with Dana?” You are the first generation, the new Issei pioneer farmers coming to the temples. I’m sure it was difficult coming and adjusting to this new Buddhist landscape. Like the Japanese Issei adjusting to a new country. You are now sowing “seeds” for future generations. Are you willing and able to love and sacrifice for it?

My hope, my aspiration, for when we love someone or something, is that we share our hopes and dreams about our future together. (Nobody really knows, except my wife, that I’m a romantic at heart...I may look grumpy on the outside, but don’t be deceived; I’m a grumpy romantic on the inside.) I have this dream for our BCA. That dream is for all of us to try and be farmers of BCA. Let’s once again grow our Sanghas, make material sacrifices that will have benefits for our future generations and let go of the selfish clinging to what we have had.

All things are constantly changing - this is a basic Buddhist teaching. However, this also means all things are possible. Our Buddhist Churches of America is evidence of this incredible teaching. We have met and surpassed the dreams of the Issei and Nisei farmers. We hit the jackpot. Now what do we do? I would like each of you here this morning to honestly ask yourselves, “What will be my legacy; what will my generation sow?”

SLBT President's Message

Stan Endo

The Temple clean-up day will be held on April 23. As there is no scheduled Toban crew for this month, we will clean the inside and outside of both the Temple and West Building. Some maintenance and repairs will be done at this time which will further save money. We will also be trimming the trees and bushes plus general cleanup of the grounds and building exterior. Bring your garden tools, gloves and please come and support this activity. A light lunch will be prepared and served by the Building Fund.

The Finance and Funding Committee is in the process of creating an action plan with the objective of increasing revenue by 10% and reducing spending by 5%. Our goal is to get to a balanced state of spending and revenue by raising \$100,000 within three years and replenish reserve funds in 5 years. Problems that have gotten us into this situation have been identified and solutions are being developed. I will provide the elements of our approach as we continue with this plan in future Buddhist Thoughts articles and perhaps separate presentations after services.

Buddhist Women's Association (BWA) News

Elaine Endo

April is going to be a busy month for the BWA because three big events are coming up. Hanamatsuri will be on Sunday, April 10, Temple clean-up will be on April 23, and Nihonmatsuri will be on Saturday, April 30.

In the past, the BWA has provided musubi's to go along with the Kentucky fried chicken Hanamatsuri luncheon. This year we are changing things up and asking BWA members to provide one of the following: tsukemono, green salad (such as Chinese chicken, spinach, cabbage, etc), or a side dish. Rice will be made in the new 55 cup gas rice cooker the BWA purchased for the Temple.

BWA members can support the clean-up by deep cleaning, sanitizing, dusting, and decluttering the myriad of areas inside the Temple and west building that need our attention. Bring your rubber gloves, cleaning cloths, elbow grease, etc. and support us in this endeavor.

This year, the Temple Nihonmatsuri food booth will be supported by the Dharma School, YBA, and BWA. Dharma School and YBA students and parents are in the process of signing up for shifts in the food booth or donating a variety of food items. BWA members and others will provide the kitchen support. We need help making spam musubi, chopping fruits, veggies, and chicken, washing dishes, etc., etc., etc. Please set aside some time on that Saturday, April 30 to help up us make this annual event successful.

Because April is such a busy month, our BWA meeting will not be held. We will plan on meeting in May and will contact everyone as soon as the date is chosen.

Dharma School

Sherrie Hayashi and Stephanie Sueoka

It's hard to believe spring is here. We made the most of a good snow year by getting outdoors and on the snow in a fun activity for everyone – tubing!! About 60 Salt Lake and Ogden Dharma school students and parents slid down the hills at Soldier Hollow. We thank everyone for bringing lots of wonderful food and joining us in this fun event. Thank you to **Mary**

Misaka for coordinating this event. Also, many thanks to **Faye Mitsunaga** for coordinating our annual Dharma School Bowling event on February 28th at Bonwood Bowl. There was a terrific turnout and everyone had a lot of fun.

Hanamatsuri will be held on **April 10th** this year, we hope to see all of our students in attendance during the month of March to practice and prepare for our Hanamatsuri program. The Dharma School will be providing Kentucky Fried Chicken. **We ask the Dharma School parents to bring a side dish or salad.** The next **Dharma School Board meeting** will be held on **April 17th** after class.

Nihonmatsuri is coming up on **Saturday, April 30th**. Historically Dharma school has not participated as an organization. This year we have been invited to be a part of a joint BWA, YBA and Dharma School food booth. This is a great fundraising opportunity for Dharma School as well as the temple. In order to be successful we need everyone's help. **Dharma school is asking parents of students in the nursery to 6th grade age groups to volunteer in the booth.** We are asking parents to sign up for one shift per student. The shifts are 90 minutes and they start at 8:30 am and end at 4:00 pm. **Please visit this web page to sign up.**

<http://tinyurl.com/zpyth5e>

Jr. YBA and YBA students need to sign up directly with Troy to help in the food booth. It would be greatly appreciated if the Parents of YBA and Jr. YBA students were available to help, they would also sign up on the above web page. We know everyone is busy and understand if you are unable to volunteer your time. **For those who cannot volunteer for either organization we are asking for a food donation. We need cans of spam, bags of rice and cans of whipped cream (Costco!!). Please bring your food items to the temple and give them directly to Elaine Endo by Friday April 29th.**

All of these events help foster a sense of community and friendship among our dharma school students, teachers and parents. We appreciate everyone for supporting our events.

Special Awards

Paul Terashima

Another year and we have failed to sell 200 tickets. We would like to thank all the Sangha Members that sold tickets. The Temple appreciates your hard work...thank you very much!!

The winner for January is Greg Sueoka and February is Tracy Sudoku. "Good Luck" to all of the people that have not won yet.

PLEASE COME AND HELP TEMPLE CLEAN-UP AND REPAIR

**APRIL 23, 9AM START
LIGHT LUNCH SERVED
BRING YOUR TOOLS AND GLOVES**

Infant Presentation (Hatsumairi)
May 15

On Sunday May 15, we will be holding an infant presentation service. This service is for any child born into our Sangha over the past year. This service is to help begin the child's first steps along the Nembutsu path. The child is presented before the Buddha and the Sangha. They are presented with a gift from the Temple. Those interested please fill in the form and return it to Rev. Hirano

Infant's name

Date of birth

Parent's names

Address

Phone

Temple member Yes No

Shotsuki Hoyo
April 10, 10:00 a.m.

Deceased	Date of	Next of kin
Akimoto Landon	4/12/92	Tracy Roberson
Akiyama Kiyoshi	4/28/39	Francis Akiyama
Arishita Ayako	4/23/00	Sam Arishita
Fujimoto Rae	4/20/97	Grace Oshita
Hachisuka Shiroku	4/4/69	Nancy Takagi
Imada Shizuye	4/24/51	
Iwasaki Kamesaburo	4/13/67	Dean Iwasaki
Iwasaki Toshimasa Koga	4/9/98	Dean Iwasaki
Ichizo	4/16/62	
Koga Shigeichi	4/20/62	
Konishi Toraye	4/30/88	Jeanne Konishi
Masuda Tatsuro	4/6/91	Hatsuye Masuda
Matsuura Chotaro	4/4/50	Francis Akimoto
Minakawa Harushige	4/13/70	Dean Iwasaki
Mitsunaga Shizuko	4/14/90	Tomio Mitsunaga
Oda Fumi		Shigeru Sasaki
Oda Hayano		
Sakashita George	4/2/75	Jane Sakashita
Sugihara Yoshio	4/12/86	Dorothy Sugihara
Tachiki Kayo	4/?/27	Steve Tachiki
Takenaka Yoso	4/9/95	Takenaka Family
Taketa Shinobu	4/18/82	Nanae Taketa
Okada Hito	4/5/84	Aiko Okada
Terashima Kiyoyuki	4/29/66	Paul Terashima
Mayeda Chieko	4/6/99	Craig Mayeda
Shizue Adachi	4/8/01	Tamiko Adachi
Hasegawa Miyuki	4/7/02	Hasegawa Family
Chow Choy Lan	4/8/02	Chuck Chow
Sekino Lillian	4/17/02	David Sekino
Aoki Eva	4/2/03	Nob Aoki
Oishi Tai	4/25/03	Victor Oishi
Shigeru Shimada	4/9/09	Lynn Shimada
Kozo Minaga	4/2/10	Hisako Minaga
Larene Yamashita	4/7/11	Becky Tachiki
Lois Crook	4/5/12	Kathleen Takenaka
Fujie Kunimoto	4/1/12	Karen Sato

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2016 DONATIONS

(February 23 – March 21, 2016)

Dana Campaign

Sanctuary for Healing & Integration (Carmela Javellana Hirano)	200	Jeanne Konishi	255
Troy & Ashley Holbrook	100	Roberto Toro	8.33
Aaron Froemming	10		

Ohigan

Tom & Fran Akimoto	50	Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga	25
May Akiyama	25	Setsuko Nagata	25
Nobuo Aoki	25	Charlie Sasaki	20
Richard & Lynne Doi	25	Nanae Taketa	25
Takeko Doi	25	Robert & Tami Tokita	25
Stan & Elaine Endo	150	Byron & Reiko Watanabe	25
Jim & Faye Eng	25	Troy & Judy Watanabe	25
Mits & Terry Fujinami	25	Kazuko Yakumo	25
Mark & Gail Minaga	25		

Shotsuki Hoyo

Nanae Taketa	25
Paul & Kathy Terashima	25
Craige Mayeda	50
Elsie Matsuda Doi family	100
Tom & Fran Akimoto	30
Pamela Koike-Stillman	25
Yutako & Yaeko Ikegami	100
Eleanor Naomi Kobayashi	25
Stan & Elaine Endo	100
Eleanor Naomi Kobayashi	25
Noreen Okubo	100

In Memory Of:

Ada Koseki	
Chieko	
Elsie Matsuda Doi	
Kame Matsuura	
May Koike & Kazuyoshi Oike	
Mitsako Ikegami	
Miyuki Hasegawa	
Nobuzo Endo	
Sakae Kobayashi	
Yukie Okubo	

BWA

some donations will be listed next month

Dharma School

Dean & Rise Hirabayashi	10	Bowling Party
Troy & Ashley Holbrook	20	Bowling Party
Robert & Tami Tokita	20	Bowling Party

some donations will be listed next month

Temple General

Osamu Hideshima	200	
Dot Richeda	50	In memory of Fred Richeda
Jean Shiba	30	In memory of Kuniko Okuda
Naomi Kageyama	50	In memory of Masayo Doi and Kay Terashima
Rodon Foods	250	parking
Stan & Elaine Endo	300	Special Donation – BCA National Conference

2016 PAID SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIPS

These members contributed \$1200 per member in this premier membership category.

Richard Doi
Lynne Doi
Brian Fukushima
Tammy Park
Carmela Javellana Hirano
Buster Mayeda
Craig Mayeda
Reiko Mitsunaga

Marcus Miya
Karie Minaga-Miya
Kenneth Nodzu
Dave Sekino
Paul Terashima
Kathy Terashima
Roberto Toro
Yoshiko Uno

2016 PAID MEMBERSHIPS

All 2016 paid memberships, through March 21, 2016. Younger kids not listed.

Tom & Fran Akimoto
May Akiyama
Nob Aoki
Hiroshi & Mary Aramaki
David & Holly, Delaney Black
Geraldine Cookie Chappell
Aki & Neil Chow
Carl & Yuriko Dennison
Ruby Doi
Takeko Doi
Rachael Elliot
Stan & Elaine Endo
Jim & Faye Eng
Jeri Freedman
Aaron Froemming
Mits & Terry Fujinami
Elaine Fukushima
Maxine Furubayashi
Richard Gamonal
Hayo & Jeannette Hayakawa
Masami Hayashi
Sherrie Hayashi
Dean Hirabayashi
Troy & Ashley Holbrook
Bobbie Ikegami
Lisa, Trey, Mitchell Imamura
Chizuko Ishimatsu
Tomiye Ishimatsu
Sandy Iwasaki
Bob Kasubuchi
Sadie Kato
Yoshiko Kido
Keizo, Evangeline, Jacqueline Kobayashi
Brent & Sherrie Koga

Tina, Emma, Henry Munson
Jorgen Olsen
David & Julia Nagata
Setsuko Nagata
Torao & Merry Nakagawa
Takae Nakamura
Yosh Nakayama
Ray Nishikawa
Alice Ogura
Lee Oikle
Gary & Ryoko Okamoto
Chris Oki
Jorgen Olsen
Grace Oshita
Dot Richeda
Kiyomi Jo Ryujin
Jane Sakashita
Phillip & Connie Sakashita
Charlie Sasaki
Tom Sasaki
Donna Sato
Walter & Karen Sato
Bob & Setsuko Schock
Steven & Vanessa Shiba
Lynn & Marilyn Shimada
Jamie Doi Slade
Chad & Kim Smith
Rick & Susan Spehar
Jun Sudoko
Nobue "Nancy" Sudoko
Dru & Joni Sueoka
Stephanie Sueoka
Bob Sugino
Nancy Takagi

Kelvin Kojimoto
Jeanne Konishi
Henry & Tammie Kuramoto
Pam Lancaster
Richard Matsuda
Kenneth & Renee Matsuura
Shauna Mayeda
Gina Mejia
Hisako Minaga
Mark & Gail Minaga
Helen Mitsunaga
Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga
Bill & Shigeko Mizuno
Asako Mori
Haruko Moriyasu
Mikio Moriyasu

Gary & Kathleen Takenaka
Christopher & Shelley Taketa
Nanae Taketa
Chiyoko Terashima
Kirk Terashima
Paul & Kathy Terashima
Cindy Yamada Thomas
Sachiko Tohinaka
Robert & Tami Tokita
Ivan Van Laningham
Byron & Reiko Watanabe
Troy & Judy Watanabe
Dallas Weaver
Robert Weitzel & Georgia Geerlings
Arthur Yakumo
Kazuko Yakumo