



Buddhist Thoughts

Salt Lake Buddhist Temple: 211 West 100 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101, volume 21 issue 11
web site: slbuddhist.org

December, 2014
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Home for the Holidays

J.K. Hirano

Each of you has come to see me, crossing the borders of more than ten provinces at the risk of your life, solely with the intent of asking about the path to birth in the land of bliss. But if you imagine in me some special knowledge of a path to birth other than the nembutsu or of scriptural writings that teach it, you are greatly mistaken. If that is the case, since there are many eminent scholars in the southern capital of Nara or on Mount Hiei to the north, you would do better to meet with them and inquire fully about the essentials for birth.

As for me, I simply accept and entrust myself to what my revered teacher told me, "Just say the nembutsu and be saved by Amida"; nothing else is involved.

Tannisho: Chapter two

I am beginning this article on the day after Thanksgiving. The turkey carcass, onion and celery are simmering on the stove for the leftover turkey soup. The house is bathed in the warmth of Thanksgiving 2014 and family. I have begun to take out the Christmas ornaments for decorating. I have written in the past that these holidays of Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year and Hoonko are my favorite time of the year. In a way I feel somewhat guilty about having a favorite time of year. There really shouldn't be one favorite time of year. Everyday should be filled with gratitude. I was reminded of this as a result of a 30-year reunion I had while in Japan. As many of you know, Taylor and I were in Japan to meet Carmela after she received Tokudo ordination from Hongwanji. A friend of mine, Rev. Tomiko Tomii, had arranged a dinner with my family and some of my classmates and teachers from my student days in Kyoto. I had the good fortune to meet with one of my favorite Dharma teachers at this dinner. His name is Horin Yamamoto, my Dendo teacher. Dendo is the class where you learn how to give Dharma Talks. He is now 82 years old and still drives around Japan to the many temples he is invited to give Dharma Talks at. It has been over 30 years since we had seen one another.

Upon seeing him so many memories flashed through my mind. Physically he had aged. I realized that when I was a student, he was younger than I am now. He was a vigorous man, with jet black hair and a booming voice. Now all his hair was white and I learned from his son Makoto that he had a variety of physical ailments. However, the thing that had not dimmed in all these years was his enthusiasm for the Dharma. I had talked with his son Makoto when I was in Japan both 30 years ago and now about Yamamoto Sensei's inability to have a

conversation without bringing in some aspect of the Dharma. This had not changed in the least.

On seeing him, we embraced and he immediately said what a perfect year it was for me to meet him again. In Japan, it is a yearly tradition for people to send out New Year's cards. The New Year's card usually has a picture or some greeting associated with that particular year's animal from the Chinese Zodiac. However, Yamamoto Sensei would usually have a short Dharma message. This year, his Dharma message was about me. He wrote about one of our Dendo classes 30 years ago and I had asked him why Japanese say, "Goshinnen akemashite omedetou gozaimasu." This means, "Congratulations on the opening of a new year." I had asked, "If Japan is such a Buddhist country, shouldn't they make a reference to being grateful for everyday of the year, rather than just one day?" I have heard from other students that he has spoken about this to other classes he taught. I am touched that he had felt that I was a good student. However, I was definitely grateful for this occasion that I had been able to meet him again, after thirty years.

Over these past thirty years, since I had been Yamamoto Sensei's student, I have probably given hundreds, probably thousands of Dharma talks and his influence has been a part of each and every talk. The underlying theme of Yamamoto Sensei's life and teachings is that the Nembutsu is at the heart of our true and real life. I have learned that although thirty years have separated Yamamoto Sensei and my meeting, we have always been together within Namu Amida Butsu. This is a lesson that is relevant in America, Japan or any place in the world, as Shinran states in the Tannisho, "As for me, I simply accept and entrust myself to what my revered teacher told me, "Just say the nembutsu and be saved by Amida"; nothing else is involved."

As I prepare for the upcoming, Christmas and New Year's holidays, I will not forget this important message. For each of us, our true and real home that joins us all together within the past, present and future, is the nembutsu. I will soon begin watching my collection of Christmas Carol movies. Whether it is the version with Seymour Hicks, Reginald Owens, George C. Scott or Patrick Stewart I love them all. The short story originally written by Charles Dickens and first published in 1843 reminds me of the true meaning of Christmas and although not spoken explicitly, reminds me of the Nembutsu in our life. When Ebenezer Scrooge cries, "I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach!" In this declaration I hear Nembutsu in the place of Christmas. "I will honor Namu Amida Butsu in my heart and try to keep it all the year."

Carmela, Kacie, Taylor and I would like to thank all of you our Dharma friends, our family, for the support you have shown us this year and each and every day of our lives. This past year, I have had the opportunity to travel to various parts of the U.S. and Japan. I have met with my friends from the past, present and hopefully the future. With the warmth of the holidays upon me, I can honestly say that my true home is not about place or time, but about where I find the Nembutsu. Therefore, I am always able to be home for the holidays. May each of you find the true meaning of Namu Amida Butsu in your lives.

Bodhi Day Seminar, Service and Luncheon

Guest Speaker: Rev. Jon Turner

(Orange County Buddhist Church)

Seminar: Ogden Buddhist Temple December 13: 3:00 pm

Services: Dec. 14: SLC 10:00 Ogden 1:30

DHARMA SCHOOL

Stephanie Sueoka and Sherrie Hayashi

The days are just flying by and the cold and snow have finally arrived and we're heading towards the holidays. It's hard to believe how quickly time flies.

Thank you to all of the Dharma School teachers and kids for making items to be sold at the Boutique. Every little bit helps in our fundraising for the Temple and we appreciate everyone's support.

For December, we will have classes on **December 7th** and **21st**. There will be no classes on December 28th. The next Dharma School Board meeting is after class on December 7th.

Bodhi Day will be on Sunday, **December 14th**. **Dharma School parents are asked to bring a main dish.** We hope to see everyone there!

Shotsuki Hoyo December 14, 10:00 am

Deceased	Date of death	Next of kin
Aramaki Yasu	12/8/86	Hiroshi Aramaki
Hideshima Hideji	12/28/90	Tad Hideshima
Hirano Kiyoshi	12/18/73	Jerry Hirano
Ikari Hideyoshi	12/31	Sachiko Tohinaka
Ikegami Akitaro	12/2/60	Ikegami Family
Iwasaki Bunjiro	12/11/65	Paul Iwasaki
Katsuki Yoshio	12/9/87	
Kawaguchi Sato	12/1/83	Bill Kawaguchi
Kida Kiyoji	12/9/65	Jeff Kida
Komatsu Fumie	12/30/88	Judy Komatsu
Matsuno Albert	12/21/93	Yuriko Matsuno
Mitsunaga Kiyoshi	12/16/94	Helen Mitsunaga
Mori Michiko	12/3/87	Asako Mori
Nodzu Kentaro	12/22/70	Ken Nodzu
Okubo Riyo	12/24/83	Harry Okubo
Omura Roy	12/22/87	Terry Omura
Osako Sadao	12/16/88	Yaeko Osako
Sasaki Omatsu	12/15/92	Shigeru Sasaki
Shimamura Michiko	12/14/94	Geraldine Chappell
Suyehiro Fusa	12/6/46	Greg Matsuura
Sueoka Joanne	12/1/83	Dru Sueoka
Sueoka Lillian	12/17/88	Dru Sueoka
Usui Yoshio	12/1/83	Beth Usui
Yakumo Chijun	12/13/91	Kazuko Yakumo

Yakumo Aya	12/1/82	Kazuko Yakumo
Frank Nishimura	12/31/2000	Setsuko Nishimura
Hamamoto Kiyoko	12/20/01	Aiko Okada
Shigemi Mori	12/5/08	Asako Mori
Kenny Mitsunaga	12/17/08	Tomio Mitsunaga
Henry Kawa	12/23/08	Bob Kawa
Mary Nakai	12/31/09	Marianne Nakai
Akiko Takenaka	12/31/09	Gary Takenaka
Mary Sasaki	12/17/11	Sasaki Family
Ayako Tohinaka	12/21/11	Ray Tohinaka
Hideo Morinaka	12/29/12	Glen Morinaka
Yuriko Iwamoto	12/12/13	Iwamoto Family

Tentative 2015 Schedule

Jan

1 Shusho E
 24 Hoonko Seminar Rev. Harry Bridge (Oakland Buddhist Temple)
 25 Hoonko

Feb

21 Nehan E
 27-Mar 1 BCA minister's and National Council, San Diego, CA.

Mar

13-15 Rev. Hirano, Hilo Betsuin Ohigan Seminar and services
 22 Ohigan

April

5 Ogden Hanamatsuri
 12 SLC Hanamatsuri

May

17 Gotan E, Hatsumairi

June

7 Lagoon Day
 14 Last Day of Dharma School, Graduation service

July

11-13 Salt Lake Obon/Hatsubon
 18-19 Ogden Obon/Hatsubon

September

13 Dharma School Picnic
 20 First Day of Dharma School/Ohigan

Oct

15-19 Parliament of World Religions
 15-19 BCA Minister's Continuing Education Seminar
 25 Halloween Party Salt Lake

Nov

7-8 Mt. States District Conference (Ogden)
 21-22 Holiday Boutique

22 Eitaikyo
 Dec
 13 Bodhi Day
 31 Joya E

2014 OCTOBER-NOVEMBER DONATIONS

(October 21 – November 23, 2014)

Dana Campaign for Foundation Fund

Hiroshi & Mary Aramaki	100	Tomiye Ishimatsu	200
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Eitaikyo

Ichiro & Takeko Doi	25	Jane Sakashita	25
Mits & Terry Fujinami	25	Nancy Takagi	25
Maxine Furubayashi	25	Robert & Tami Tokita	25
Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga	25	Hiroshi & Mary Aramaki	25
Setsuko Nagata	25		

Shotsuki Hoyo

Brian Fukushima & Tammy Park	50	In Memory Of: Frank Fukushima
Sherrie Hayashi	100	Bunzo Fujii and Ritsuko Hayashi
Masami Hayashi	50	Ritsuko Hayashi and Bunzo Fujii
Karen Tohinaka	50	Chad Tohinaka
Fred & Judy Tamagawa	50	Frank Tamagawa
Jane Sakashita	25	Fumi Hasegawa
Tom & Fran Akimoto	30	Genevieve Akiyama
Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga	20	Kazuo Mitsunaga
Patti K. Iwamoto	25	Kiyotoshi Iwamoto
Maxine Furubayashi	25	Masato Furubayashi
Bob Sugino	25	Mitsuye Sugino
Eleanor Naomi Kobayashi	25	Naoki Kobayashi
Jim & Faye Eng	25	Ruth Mitsunaga
Helen Mitsunaga	25	Ruth Mitsunaga
Robert & Tami Tokita	50	Ruth Mitsunaga and John Imada
Kazuko & Arthur Yakumo	25	Ryujin Yakumo
Amy Tomita	25	Shigeno Fujii
Nancy Takagi	50	Tami Takagi and Toma Hachisuka
Nobue "Nancy" Sudoku	25	Taro Sudoku
Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga	25	Tsurukichi Mitsunaga
Elaine Fukushima	100	October Memorial

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Tomoko Moses	75
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Temple General

James & Marisa Aoki	25
Corey & Ellie Roach	85

Tracy Akimoto	50	
Ivan Van Laningham	150	
Melissa Zehner	50	
Rebecca Jackson & Sean Clegg	10	
Austin & Rachel Elliott	300	Wedding
Jessica Florez	15	
Osamu Hideshima	200	
Jim Miyake	100	
United Way of Salt Lake	25.16	
Tom & Fran Akimoto	150	Holiday Bountique Donation
Hiroshi & Mary Arimaki	25	In Memory of Margine "Muts" Nagasawa
Tomoko Moses	25	Manual

2015 PAID MEMBERSHIPS

(Received November 1 – November 23, kids not listed)

Remember! Pay by December 31, take advantage of 2014 rates

Hiroshi & Mary Aramaki	Chizuko Ishimatsu
Cookie Chappell	Tomiye Ishimatsu
Aki & Neil Chow	Bill & Shigeko Mizuno
Ichiro & Takeko Doi	Jane Sakashita
Elaine Fukushima	Bob Sugino
Mits & Terry Fujinami	

2015 Membership Dues and 2014-2015 Donations

Just a reminder that 2015 membership dues are increasing but if you pay your dues in full by December 31, 2014, you can pay 2014 prices. If you are mailing your dues, envelopes must be RECEIVED by Wednesday, December 31. I recommend you mail by Saturday, December 27. On or after January 1, 2015, pay 2015 prices.

We are introducing the concept of a "Sustaining Membership." Sustaining Members will donate \$1200 (or \$100 per month) for such a membership. The names of Sustaining Members will be printed in every issue of Buddhist Thoughts.

Donations

We have received our first couple "Dana Campaign" contributions. The purpose of the Dana (selfless giving) Campaign is to help replenish the Foundation Fund, which we've dipped into for five years. The duration of the Dana Campaign is still to be decided. The way we will honor donors (plaque, website posting, combination, other) is also being decided.

If you can give, **ANY amount is appreciated!** It will certainly help us sustain our Temple, built and sustained with thousands of donations over the last 60 years.

The new membership/donation form is double-sided. The front side collects names, address, phone numbers and e-mail addresses. The back side collects dues and donation information, and gives details about paying by check or credit card. If paying by credit card, you can choose to split dues and Dana Campaign donations into quarterly or monthly payments in 2015.

If you have questions, see Robert Tokita at the 10:00 a.m. Family Service on Sundays.