



# Buddhist Thoughts

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## Buddhism is for Poor, Stupid People Too!

J.K. Hirano

*This, then, is the true teaching easy to practice for small, foolish beings; it is the straight way easy to traverse for the dull and ignorant. Among all the teachings the Great Sage preached in his lifetime, none surpasses this ocean of virtues. Let the one who seeks to abandon the defiled and aspire for the pure; who is confused in practice and vacillating in faith; whose mind is dark and whose understanding deficient; whose evils are heavy and whose karmic obstructions manifold-let such persons embrace above all the Tathagatas exhortations, take refuge without fail in the most excellent direct path, devote themselves solely to this practice, and revere only this faith.*

*Preface to The True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way: CWS 3-4*

I had just picked my daughter Taylor up from school and in our conversation about how her day had gone, she said, "You know Dad, in one of our classes we talked about our religions and I mentioned that I was Buddhist."

When she told me this, I thought to myself, "Here we go." Expecting to hear a list of semi derogatory or belittling comments she had probably been subjected to by her classmates. Having been born and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah, I remembered what it was like to grow up, in a very different religious tradition than my classmates. What she told me next really surprised me. I asked her, "Did your classmates say something mean?" She replied, "No, they thought it was cool."

"That's good, isn't it?" I tentatively asked.

"No, it actually bothered me. Why can't they realize being Buddhist isn't just for the "cool people" but for normal people like themselves? It seems that everybody thinks that if you are Buddhist, you sit around meditating or listen or read books by the Dalai Lama and stuff. Can't they see that I'm no different than they are?"

Although it's great that people love the Dalai Lama and there are now a number of celebrity and supposedly "cool" people that have come out as Buddhists, millions of Buddhists in the world, go about their business in their communities and societies, no different than anyone else.

This conversation led me to thinking, “What’s happened to Buddhism in the West?” I would never call my daughter or members of my Sangha poor or stupid, however, Buddhism is followed by millions of people. You do the math. Buddhism has been accepted as a way to alleviate suffering in their lives, for millennia, rich, famous, smart, poor and stupid.

The Buddha had a disciple by the name of Cuuda Pantaka. Many people have the mistaken notion that all of the Buddha’s disciples were brilliant men of immense concentration and abilities. This was not the case. Cuuda was a devoted disciple of the Buddha but he was not especially gifted in his mental abilities; we may even consider him mentally disabled. Cuuda had a brother named Maha Pantaka, who in contrast, was a brilliant disciple of the Buddha, and the other disciples often teased Cuuda for not living up to his brother’s example. This always made me think of Rudolph the red nosed reindeer. The Buddha’s disciples not letting Cuuda play in any reindeer or monk games.

Cuuda would often get very discouraged in his lack of ability, especially in comparison to his older brother. He was thinking of leaving the Sangha and went to the Buddha for guidance. He asked the Buddha if he should leave the Sangha and the Buddha explained that the Sangha was not just for the gifted and that there was a place for Cuuda as there was for his brother. He gave Cuuda a broom and instructed him, “Cuuda, as you sweep the leaves in the compound, repeat this mantra, ‘sweep, sweep, sweep away the leaves’. In this way you will do a great service to our Sangha.” It was said, that as Cuuda swept the leaves and recited “sweep, sweep, sweep away the leaves.” Just as he was able to clear the leaves, his mind soon began to clear of its defilements. In this manner Cuuda was able to reach enlightenment, before his brother, with the higher initial potential.

I have been a Buddhist priest for over 25 years and I studied Buddhism for many years and I have met brilliant, amazing Buddhist men and women. However, I would never consider myself one of them. As a priest, I would definitely fit into the poor category economically. Intellectually I would probably fall under the stupid heading as well. However, this probably isn’t a very good marketing technique.

It seems that in the West, Buddhism has become a marketing tool for the “cool”, hip” lifestyle of the rich and famous, I remember seeing a billboard here in Salt Lake City, that just had the word “nirvana” on it. For months I wondered what this was about? Finally they finished the billboard and it was for some new checking account system for a local bank. Buddhism has definitely come to the west. However, it is not only for the rich or cool people. I believe Buddhism is not just for an elite class of people, but for humanity; where there are just as many stupid and poor people, as well as smart and rich people.

There was a time, when Jodo Shinshu Buddhism was considered “Immigrant Buddhism”. When I heard my religion saddled with that unfair moniker I bristled. I thought to myself, “In comparison to what?” There were no Catholics on the Mayflower. Was Catholicism, “Immigrant Christianity?” The only form of Christianity that we should consider native to the United States is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons). The only native religion would be the religions of the first nation people and even they were said to have crossed over from Asia. In the United States and most of the Western world, the religions followed have all been immigrant religions. As a Sangha, I would like us to see the beauty of Jodo Shinshu, the religion for foolish beings, such as myself.

# DHARMA SCHOOL

Stephanie Sueoka & Sherrie Hayashi

The Dharma School year has finally come to a close. It has been a fun-filled year with a lot of activities and events and best of all, memories and hope that the students have enjoyed another year of learning the Dharma.

We also hope everyone will join us the Ogden Buddhist Temple at Lagoon on Sunday **June 7<sup>th</sup>**. If you are interested in discount tickets, please see **Judy Watanabe**. Tickets are \$38 and checks need to be made out to Ogden Buddhist Church. Gates open at 11:00am. We are in the Willow Terrace. Ogden will provide Chicken, rice, salads and drinks. We would appreciate if Salt Lake could bring desserts.

## **DHARMA SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AWARDS:**

Students are recognized for having 75% attendance for Dharma School Classes.

Alayna Elliott - 1 year

Garrett Furubayashi – 1 year

Nathan Shiba – 1 year

Samantha Shiba – 1 year

Marcus Nishikawa – 2 years

Kara Smith - 2 years

Nathan Smith – 2 years

Kira Joko – 3 years

Darla Mejia – 3 years

Diego Mejia – 3 Years

Noa Fukushima – 4 yaers

Olivia Hirabayashi – 4 years

Kimiye Jessop – 4 years

Mariko Jessop – 5 years

Miye Masters – 6 years

Jordan Roberson – 7 years

Alex Tokita – 8 years

Cameron Sueoka – 9 years

Anna Fukushima – 10 years

Ethan Hirabayashi – 10 years

Justin Roberson -11 years

Max Watanabe – 11 years

Josh Watanabe – 11 years

Maile Fukushima – 11 years

Samantha Sueoka – 14 years

Eric Tokita - 14 years

Taylor Hirano – 15 years

Kyle Eng – 10 years

Haley Watanabe – 19 years

**GRADUATION:** We would also like to recognize our High School and College Graduates for their tremendous accomplishments. We wish you the very best!

#### HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Delaney Black  
Seiji Hayashi  
Kobi Ikegami  
Mitchell Imamura  
Henry Munson  
Samantha Sueoka  
Haley Watanabe

#### COLLEGE GRADUATES

Merissa Nakamura	B.A. University of Utah
PJ Nakamura	M.A. Yale University
Lisa Endo	M.A. University of Utah
Stephan Wallace	B.S. University of Utah
Chen-Han Wilfred Wu	PhD. University of Utah

Stephanie and I want to say a very special thank you to the Dharma School Board, teachers, parents and students for a wonderful year. We could not do it without all your help and support!

In Gassho,  
Stephanie and Sherrie

## Shotsuki Hoyo

June 21, 10:00 am

<b>Deceased</b>	<b>Date of death</b>	<b>Next of kin</b>
Akiyama Uhichi	6/12/67	Francis Akimoto
Fujimoto Kanta	6/7/56	Grace Oshita
Fujinami Tomakichi	6/12/68	Mitsuru Fujinami
Harada Tsuyono	6/2/85	Harada Family
Imai Fujii	6/28/91	Aoki Family
Kobayashi Tsui	6/20/43	Kobayashi Family
Mayeda Buntaro	6/5/89	Fumio Mayeda
Muraki Sakae	6/24/87	Nakamura Family
Nakamura Chogoro	6/28/45	Takae Nakamura
Noda Ben	6/29/92	Noda Family
Sakinada Kathleen	6/4/89	Sakinada Family
Sasaki Nobuko	6/22/34	Charlie Sasaki
Shiba Eiji	6/30/85	Shiba Family
Suzuki Kiyoji	6/11/69	Suzuki Family
Tadehara Mary	6/30/84	Rose Kamaya
Tani Hatsuye Mary	6/17/84	Eleanor Nakamura
Yokome Roy	6/26/95	Ray Uno

Araki Aiko	6/16/98	Aoki Family
Aoki Fred Toshio	6/17/98	Kay Aoki
Niwa Teruchiyo	6/11/00	Pat Ninomiya
Karen Haruko Shiba	6/17/00	Tosh Shiba
Kiyo Nakamura	6/10/04	Phil Nakamura
Fusano Mayeda	6/21/76	Yoshiko Kido
John Kasubuchi	6/8/10	Robert Kasubuchi
Floyd Okubo	6/22/10	Byron Okubo
Kenneth Kobayashi	6/10/11	Jean Kobayashi
Misuko Shimada	6/3/14	Lynn Shimada

## Obon Dance Practices

June 29,30

July 1, 2,3, 6, 7, 8, 9

7:00 pm

Salt Lake Buddhist Temple

## SUMMER SERVICES

10 A.M. Sundays on the following dates:

June 7 (no services: GLBTQ Pride parade),

14, 21, 28

July 12\*, 19, & 26

August 2, 16, 23

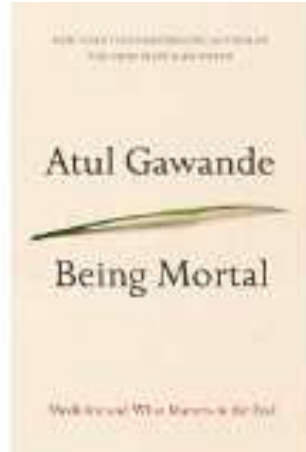
\*No 10:00 am, Hatsubon Service starts at 1:00 p.m.

**Join us**

**Dharma Discussion at 11:00 a.m.**

Open to the Public \* "Come as You Are"

## July Book Club



Monday, July 13 at 7 p.m.  
Salt Lake Buddhist Temple  
West Wing Library, 100 S. 215 W.

A surgeon grapples with the inevitable: human death, and the ethical, financial and emotional – *and human* – perhaps misguided attempts of Modern Medicine to prolong life, but at what cost?

20% off at Lumbini's Garden 5/1 - 5/31/15

## 2015 MARCH-APRIL DONATIONS

(April 22 – May 25, 2015)

### Gotan E

May Akiyama	25	Sandy Iwasaki	30
Hiroshi & Mary Aramaki	50	Tomio & Junko Mitsunaga	30
Ichiro & Takeko Doi	25	Setsuko Nagata	25
Stan & Elaine Endo	25	Jane Sakashita	25
Mits & Terry Fujinami	25	Byron & Reiko Watanabe	25
Maxine Furubayashi	25	Kazuko Yakumo	25

### Hanamatsuri

Thomas Endo	100	Gary & Kathleen Takenaka	25
Koyo Restaurant	100	Eleanor Naomi Kobayashi	25

Nobue "Nancy" Sudoko 25

**Shotsuki Hoyo**

Stephanie Sueoka 20

Maxine Furubayashi 25

Sandy Iwasaki 25

Phil & Merry Nakamura 25

Charlie Sasaki 25

Dru & Joni Sueoka 25

Chiyoko Terashima 25

Paul & Kathy Terashima 50

**In Memory Of:**

Fujie Kunimoto  
(correction to May Buddhist Thoughts)

Ikuye Hirano

Kiyoyuki Terashima

Kiyoyuki Terashima

**BWA, Dharma School, YBA, Jr.**

**YBA**

Donations to be reported next month

**Buddhist Thoughts**

Christie Jenn 25

Jean Shiba 30

**Temple General**

Anonymous \$1000 Eitaikyo – Mary Doi

Ivan VanLaningham 100

Noriko Shimada 20

Christopher & Shelley Taketa 50 Hatsumairi - Corey Taketa

Jamie Doi Slade 50 Hatsumairi - Miya Slade

Richard & Lynne Doi 50 Hatsumairi - Miya Slade & Corey Taketa

Chad & Kelly Farr 50 Hatsumairi/Infant Presentation

Bob & Shirley Farr 50 Hatsumairi – Rose Mariko Farr

Henry & Tammie Kuramoto 40 In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Misao Doi

Cindy Yamada Thomas/Ted Yamada Family 100 In memory of Shige and Misuko Shimada

Janice & Sylvan Christensen 20 In memory of Yuriko Matsuno

Jerry & Joyce Endo 40 In memory of Yuriko Matsuno

Jane Sakashita 25 In memory of Yuriko Matsuno

Tom & Jane Watanuki 25 In memory of Yuriko Matsuno

Eleanor Naomi Kobayashi & Kim Kobayashi 50 In memory of Yuriko Matsuno

Mary Doi Rev. Trust 500 Mary Doi Service

Shimada & Associates, LLC 50 Memorial Service

Brent & Jolene Shimada 50 Misuko Shimada – 1 year, Shige Shimada – 7 years

Ichiro & Takeko Doi 100 Nepal Earthquake Relief – to be sent to BCA

Mits & Terry Fujinami 100 Nepal Earthquake Relief – to be sent to BCA

Hiroshi & Mary Aramaki 100 Nepal Earthquake Relief – to be sent to BCA

Sandy Iwasaki	50	Nepal Earthquake Relief – to be sent to BCA
Robert & Tami Tokita	25	Nepal Earthquake Relief – to be sent to BCA
Kazuko Yakumo	50	Nepal Earthquake Relief – to be sent to BCA
Bob & Ida Okada	20	Osanae Shimada Family

## 2015 PAID SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIPS

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

Richard & Lynne Doi	Dot Richeda
Carmela Javellana Hirano	Dave Sekino
Craige Mayeda	Paul & Kathy Terashima
Reiko Mitsunaga	Ivan VanLaningham
Kenneth Nodzu	