



Buddhist Thoughts

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What is True Life?

J.K. Hirano

Many things occur in our human lives. But, whatever difficulties or sadness that we may have experienced, if we can look upon our lives as being rare and wondrous events, then we truly will have lived. If we are able to realize this realm of gratitude, in which we are able to live-and-die in gassho, then what else could we need?

Jitsuen Kakehashi, Bearer of Light; The Life and Thought of Rennyō

Each day when I begin my day, I think about my daily schedule. What do I have to do today? What am I going to have for breakfast? Should I make something for lunch or go out? First I check my blood sugar level and I think about whether or not I have to take Taylor to school that day. I then convince myself to get on my elliptical trainer for my daily cardio. I then look at my phone to see what schedule I have for that day, what meetings, etc. It is a fairly boring ritual of life. Something I take for granted.

However, there are occasions that force me to wake up to true and real life. To realize every moment is precious and not routine. The majority of these types of events are gifts to me, a result of the great sacrifice of another. Although my daily life and rituals are centered on me, me, me, which is the reason they become boring and monotonous, true and real life is a gift. I am allowed to experience this through the grace of another. I believe that this month I have been the recipient of just such a lesson, because of the life and death of Ethan Cone-Uemura and the experience of his family, Karen, David and Keila.

In a religious sense, I know that there are people who believe that to be a follower of a religion or faith, you go to the church or temple for service and volunteer to work for the welfare of others, help out at the homeless shelter or make up goodie bags for shut-ins. This type of activity, while good and worthwhile, is kind of like my getting on my exercise machine and looking at my daily schedule. It is done without an awareness of true and real life and more about routine rather than gratitude.

I feel comfortable in saying that attendance at service and volunteer activities are common to most religions. Some do it better than others. When I hear people say, "All religions

are the same,” this is what I think of. There are people who criticize Buddhism for being pessimistic because of all the funerals and memorial services conducted at temples and the emphasis on these rituals. And I know that many temples are trying to change this image. Funeral services are often called celebrations of life rather than the sad and difficult experience of losing a loved one. Funerals and memorial services are actually where we learn our greatest lessons. And they are not meant to be happy occasions.

Ethan Cone-Uemura should not have died. In our everyday mindset our everyday routine, he was far too young. It is the ultimate nightmare that any parent must face. However, in true life, life is not too long or short, it just is. Each one of us, no matter how young or old, is subject to death. This is when our true and real life shines a light to wake us up. As Rennyo pleads in his *Letter on White Ashes*, “The fragile nature of human life underlies both the young and the old. We should therefore, all the sooner, turn our hearts to the singularly important matter of True Life.” He ends this letter with the Japanese phrase, “*anakashiko, anakashiko...*” It has been translated as “thus were his words or in reverence I remain...” However, as Rev. David Matsumoto has said, it is Rennyo pleading with us to see true life as he says, “Listen to these words, please listen to these words.”

This past week, one of my mentors, Rev. Masao Kodani spoke at the Eitaikyo service at the BCA Minister’s Association and National Council Meeting. He shared the experience of losing his wife. He was comforted by his Sangha coming up to him and saying “*Samishiku narimasu...*”, this translates to “You will be lonely.” In our everyday life, we may think, what a cold thing to say. A man loses his wife of many decades and someone tells him, “You will be lonely.” However, in true and real life, it is an affirmation and acknowledgement that life is impermanent. It is sharing the suffering he is experiencing and letting him know they will be there with him during this difficult experience of true life. I believe that this is true compassion.

To David, Karen and Keila, I am so sorry about Ethan’s dying and I will be lonely with you and I will be there to support you, where I can. I hope you will realize all of the Sangha feels your loss and wishes you well and feel the same. This time of profound loss and great difficulty in going on can also bring meaning and purpose. As Gordon W. Allport wrote in the Preface to Viktor Frankl’s “*Man’s Search for Meaning*,”

To live is to suffer; to survive is to find meaning in the suffering. If there is a purpose in life at all, there must be a purpose in suffering and dying. But no man can tell another what this purpose is. Each must find out for himself and must accept the responsibility that his answer prescribes. If he succeeds, he will continue to grow in spite of all indignities.

Namo Amida Butsu.

Bonding with a Draft Horse

Rev. Masami Hayashi
(Dharma Talk March 2)

One of the three characteristics of the Dharma is that everything is impermanent. The meaning of impermanent is that all living things and all phenomenon in this world are constantly changing. What we see as solid and unchanging is actually in a constant flux; the flowers that bloom today will wither tomorrow. Impermanence is a law of the universe from which nothing can escape from the mightiest of astronomical system to the microscopic forms of life.

Namo Amida Butsu

This morning, I would like to discuss impermanence by telling you of my experiences with a draft horse working on a truck farm raising all kinds of vegetables. There was an issei farmer with no children looking for help on his farm for the summer months. I was a 10th grader in high school and needed a job so that I can have some funds to go to college. My father operated a restaurant and couldn't use me there so I decided to work on the farm where there was plenty of work.

Farm work is difficult. You get up early every morning and work all day doing back breaking jobs. We had to prepare the field by plowing, harrowing, and leveling. After planting the seeds, we had to cultivate, make ditches and irrigate the plants, keep weeds out by hoeing and finally harvest the crops for marketing. But there was one bright spot. I worked with a draft horse. This horse was large, weighed about 1000 lbs. It was bred to do heavy farm work. It had great strength, was patient, and had a docile temperament. Every day we would go out to the field and cultivate and make irrigation ditches. This big horse was gentle and smart. It didn't need much command, it knew what it had to do. When we cultivated or made ditches, the horse would pull the equipment one row at a time. It just needed a slight pull on the reins, then it would turn around and go into the next row. During harvest time it would pull the wagon alongside us. All we had to do was say "giddhi-up" or "whoa," and it would pull the wagon and stay close to us so we can harvest without interruptions. The horse was patient and never complained. When you follow a horse, there is one thing that you must know. When the horse has a bowel movement, it follows the natural way and relieves itself,. We should carefully avoid stepping into the droppings. When rain was about to come down I'd unhitch the equipment and jump on the bare back of the horse and gallop to the barn.. Boy, it was fun riding on the large rounded back of the horse. After dinner I would usually go to the barn to pet the horse and occasionally give it a carrot. In time we created a bond of friendship. It made my working day fun, by being close to the horse.

This working relationship with the horse lasted only two years. There a change took place. The horse was replaced by a gasoline powered cultivator and eventually by a tractor that could cultivate six rows at a time This progress eliminated the use of horses on the farm. At the same time I felt that I had lost a friend. This is sadness caused by a change to economize the farming operation. This change was inevitable, and we understand it to be known as the law of impermanence.

By understanding the truth of impermanence, we do not fight change with our desire to keep things the same. Our ego needs to allow life to flow forward. Every moment is the unfolding of life and different from the moment before. Every encounter in our life is special.

In a world where everything is constantly changing and where those who earnestly seek the truth become disillusioned and cry in sorrow as a result, we must become aware that only Amida Buddha is true and eternal.

Namo Amida Butsu

BWA News

Elaine Endo

This past year, the BWA was lead by two committed and compassionate individuals, Karie Minaga Miya and Gail Minaga. We thank them for a fantastic job well done! These two ladies,

along with food committee chairs Reiko Watanabe and Reiko Matsuura, organized the delicious Hoonko luncheon held in January. Thanks as well to our BWA members who provided a variety of tasty main dish items for this event.

We had an organizing meeting in February to outline our yearly calendar. Upcoming events to look forward to are:

- Saturday, March 15: Naikan Day of Retreat 8:00-5:00. BWA will help with the lunch and snacks.
- Sunday, March 30: Omigaki (cleaning of the alter) after service and BWA meeting. Experienced BWA members will share their knowledge with the rest of us on how to properly clean, polish, and shine the alter.
- Sunday, April 14: Hanamatsuri. BWA members will provide two dozen musubi.
- Saturday, April 26: Nihonmatsuri. BWA will be preparing some new items as well as old favorites such as Spam Musubi. We will be prepping on Friday, April 25 and cooking on Saturday. We need help from anyone who can help cook on either or both of these two days.

A reminder that the 2015 World Buddhist Women's Convention titled "Embraced by the Oneness of Life" will be held in Calgary, Alberta Canada on May 30-31, 2015. This is still over a year away, but registration is due in early May of this year. Consider whether you are interested in attending and we will discuss this in our future meetings.

We are always looking for new members to join us in our efforts to support the temple. Anyone is invited to attend BWA meetings/events that may be of interest to you. If you have questions, a BWA member will be happy to help you out. Dues are \$15 and will be accepted at any time throughout the year.

Please join us for our next meeting on Sunday, March 30 after service. See you all there!

March Shotsuki Hoyo

March 16, 10:00 am

Deceased	Date	Next of kin
Adachi Henry	3/11/97	Fujii Adachi
Brouwer Mayeda Emiko	3/4/96	Fumio Mayeda
Endo Nobuzo	3/16/93	Stan Endo
Ikegami Mitsuko	3/2/72	Yuta Ikegami
Imada Matsuyo	3/12/91	Tsukamoto

Iwata Miya	3/11/91	Imai Family
Kano Setsu	3/14/40	Victor Oishi
Kida Uwano	3/16/67	Jeff Kida
Koseki, Iseko Ada	3/17/92	Kathy Terashima
Kumagai Hyozo	3/11/86	John Kumagai
Maeda Matsuzo	3/18/64	Koga Family
Matsumiya Chiyo	3/12/90	Jeanne Konishi
Matsumiya Jinzaburo	3/19/64	Jeanne Konishi
Matsuura Kame	3/25/54	Francis Akimoto
Muraki Tomekichi	3/1/75	
Nakano Tokuyo	3/3/91	Atsumu Nakano
Namba Makiji	3/2/57	
Nishikawa Emily	3/20/95	Nancy Wayman
Sasaki Yvonne Katsuyo	3/16/56	Haruto Sasaki
Shimizu Toshi	3/24/88	Kerry Lee
Tachiki Tetsu	3/18/83	Steve Tachiki
Uyeda Hisashi Harry	3/7/85	Uyeda Family
Kobayashi Sakae	3/17/00	Kobayashi Family
Shiba Takataro	3/10/01	Helen Nakashima
Igata Toshizo	3/2/02	Tomi Igata
Kasai Seiko	3/20/02	Grace Kasai
Taketa Shizuo	3/1/04	Nanae Taketa
Shizuye Nakagiri	3/6/12	Howard Nakagiri
Grahame Leach	3/1/12	Leanne Leach

With Deepest Condolence and Gratitude

Our Temple offers our deepest sympathies to the family and friends of :

Masako Suzuki
Jean Nagao
Yuriko Iwamoto
Masako Imamura
Yoshiko Ninomiya
Dora Iwasaki
Ethan Zachary Cone-Uemura

We hope that through the nembutsu teachings and the strength and compassion of your family and community, you will find comfort in this difficult time. Namo Amida Butsu

Salt Lake Buddhist Temple Spring Retreat
211 West 100 South (Japantown St.), Salt Lake
City 84101

Gratitude for the Body through *Naikan*

Saturday, March 15, 10-5



Self Reflection (*Naikan*) on the physical body may be uncommon practice for most of us. Often, in our busy-ness we forget this most precious instrument in our daily work. One day of silent meditation, gentle exercise, and nutritious sustenance may renew our commitment to our health and appreciation for life.

Please bring a yoga mat or blanket, and wear loose and comfortable clothing. www.slbuddhist.org

Suggested Donation \$ 25