



# Buddhist Thoughts

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SALT LAKE BUDDHIST TEMPLE

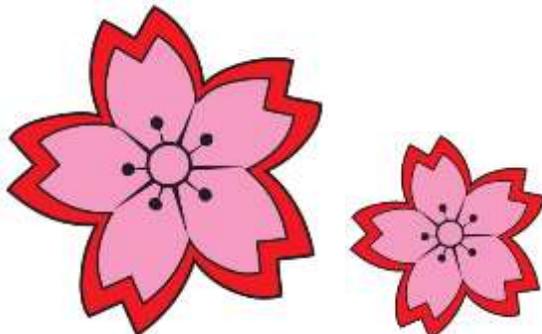
# Japanese Food Bazaar

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2015**  
**211 West 100 South, SLC, UT**

**Food Served from 1:00 - 8:00**

**Sushi \* Teriyaki \* Gyoza \* Beef Bowl \* Tempura**

**Chapel Tours, Raffle, Silent Auction Baskets**  
**Gifts for Sale**  
**Public Welcome!**



# Understanding Amida Buddha through Heavenly Mother and Heavenly Father

J.K. Hirano

*In the heav'ns are parents single? No, the thought makes reason stare! Truth is reason;  
truth eternal tells me I've a mother there. When I leave this frail existence, When I lay this mortal  
by, Father, Mother, may I meet you in your royal courts on high?  
[Hymn no. 292](Oh my Father) Eliza R. Snow*

*An exalted and glorified Man of Holiness (Moses 6:57) could not be a Father unless a Woman of  
like glory, perfection, and holiness was associated with him as a Mother. The begetting of  
children makes a man a father and a woman a mother whether we are dealing with man in his  
mortal or immortal state*

Mormon Doctrine Bruce McConkie

I know that there are many members of our temple that have a very strong opinion about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons). It is very difficult to live in Salt Lake City or anyplace in Utah without some opinion. Personally I feel extremely grateful for the Mormons. Its unique form of Christianity has without a doubt, made me strongly question what I believe. I personally believe that a strong spiritual life is essential in living a meaningful human life. This month, I wanted to comment on a very unique aspect of the Mormon religion. I know that I am writing for a predominantly Jodo Shinshu readership, but I believe that it is often through understanding other religions, that we can better appreciate our own. This month, October 15-19, Salt Lake City is hosting the Parliament of the World Religions. I wanted to show how one religion can help us better understand our own.

The two quotes I began with are from examples of the inferred but not often talked about Mormon concept of Heavenly Mother and Father. The Mormon doctrine is unique in its belief in a Heavenly Father who works alongside a heavenly Mother. First of all, although born and raised in Salt Lake City Utah, I was born and raised a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist. I am currently the resident priest of the Salt Lake, Ogden and Honeyville Buddhist temples. I have devoted my life to Jodo Shinshu in America. However, I grew up across the street from Whittier Ward in Salt Lake City and my backyard was next to the South High School seminary. One of my closest childhood friend's father was the Bishop of the Wilson Ward a few blocks from my home. As a child I attended the LDS Church's Primary and Mutual programs along with their Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and was a participating nonmember of the Ward's softball team. At the Mormon churches I attended, I always felt welcomed. I still feel the warm welcome of Bishop Smart of Wilson Ward and Bishop Cazier of the Whittier Ward. The way these men and these churches welcomed a non member child inspires me to welcome all to my own Buddhist temple. To this day, I strongly believe that the Mormon Church has deepened my own faith as a Buddhist. With this as a long-winded introductory statement (after all I am a minister and being long winded is a professional hazard), I wanted to speak to my feelings about the Mormon concept of Heavenly Father and Mother.

Within the Buddhist tradition, and I believe you will find similar beliefs in most religions of the world, the concept of balance in life is extremely important. Although my personal belief in God may be different than those of my Christian friends, I believe true balance is what it means to know God. Of all the Christian beliefs of Trinity and Godhead, I like the Mormon belief in Heavenly Father and Mother. I believe it is the expression of the balance of the divine. The trinity would be much more understandable if it were explained as Father, Mother and Son in Heaven rather than the typical definition of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Is not the Holy Ghost the spirit of warmth and understanding that can be seen in the spirit of Motherhood? I wonder why the LDS church does not actively promote this aspect of their religion. I have seen the Mormon Church change in many ways since I was a child, attending primary at Whittier ward. I have seen Mormons move more and more into the American mainstream. Which is good and positive in many ways. However, moving into the mainstream does not mean to give up on your unique identity.

We have hosted the Ordain Women Movement meetings at our temple. I am aware of their desire to have the Mormon and Catholic churches ordain women into their priesthood. I believe that in understanding this idea of heaven as Mother, Father and Son, would theologically explain the gender roles within the Mormon Church. If the Mormon Church has any resemblance to my temple organizationally, I believe that women in many ways are the foundation and backbone of our religious organization. It was through emphasizing the important role of women in religion as Rennyō Shōnin (1415-1499) did, that Jōdo Shinshū moved from being a small obscure Buddhist temple in the eastern foothills of Kyoto, Japan, to become the largest sect of Buddhism in Japan. Although my form of Buddhism does ordain women, our central object of worship is not male or female. The Buddha Amida is often called “Oyasama.” This Japanese word has no gender within it, but focuses on parental love in general. This reflects the balance of Universal Wisdom and Compassion. Within the current Mormon Church I believe that a reemphasis on the belief in Heavenly Father and Mother would bring about a similar balance.

As a Buddhist, I view the Christian concepts of the Godhead as “Upaya” - a Buddhist concept often translated to mean “expedient means”; a way to explain a very difficult thing in an acceptable and understandable manner. Whether it is explained as the orthodox view of trinity or the Mormon view of Heavenly Father and Mother, I see them as no different. People often question whether Buddhists believe in God. I would have to say, it depends on your definition of God. The basic teaching of Karma would probably exclude my belief in a creator God or first cause of the Universe in general. However, personally I would have to put that whole creation question into the category of unknowable. However, if by God you mean a Universal Truth beyond words or concepts, endowed with great wisdom and compassion, I would answer, “Yes, I guess I believe in God.” With the Christian belief in a Heavenly Father in a literal sense and human beings as the spiritual children of God, isn’t it only logical that there must be a Heavenly Mother. This points to why Jōdo Shinshū does not use the term of Mother or Father in reference to Amida Buddha.

The parental metaphor that is most often used in Jōdo Shinshū “Oya” is neither mother or father, but of the balanced love and compassion that parents use for their own children. This same ideal can be seen in the attendant Bodhisattvas to Amida Buddha, these are Seishi and

Kannon. Seishi represents wisdom and Kannon represents compassion. This balance in life as well as the universal is necessary for us to understand our lives and the wisdom and compassion that we are embraced in. Whether we are Mormon or Jodo Shinshu, balance in life is essential to understanding who we are. To understand who we are is to see the world around us and understand our place in it. As Nietzsche the German philosopher had said, "He who has a why to live to live for can bear almost any how." For myself, this means that if I can understand balance in my life, no matter the religious context, the how to live my life will reveal itself. Heavenly Mother, Heavenly Father, Amida Buddha, Seishi Bodhisattva, Kannon Bodhisattva, whatever you use to realize universal balance is of the most important things you can do. As a Buddhist living in Salt Lake City, Utah, Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother helps me to understand how my Mormon friends, find balance in their lives, just as I strive to find it in mine. Namu Amida Butsu

## Dharma School

Stephanie Sueoka and Sherrie Hayashi

Welcome Back Dharma School! This year brings many new and exciting opportunities! It will be a great year and we hope you will join us and share our enthusiasm.

We had our annual Back to Church Picnic on Sunday September 13th. We want to thank and express our gratitude to Hirano Sensei and Carmella for hosting and sharing their beautiful home. It was a perfect day of food, friends, family and fun! We had our first Dharma school board meeting of the year. Welcome, Haley Watanabe and Kobe Ikegami, they will be teaching the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade class. Due to the construction in the west wing we will be holding classes in the main building.

We would like all Dharma School Parents to sign up on the activity calendar; we have an event every month and need a chair person for each event. The sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. We appreciate everyone's help. If you have questions on expectations please see Sherrie Hayashi or Stephanie Sueoka for details.

Our first activity is the annual Food Bazaar on October 3, 2015. It is a major fundraiser for our church and volunteers are key to its success. Dharma school is responsible for bussing. We need and hope that all Dharma school students will sign up for a shift. Please see Tammy Fukushima to sign up. Parent volunteers to supervise are also needed.

The Parliament of World Religions is coming up on October 15-18, 2015. The Dharma school students will be singing with children of different faiths on Sunday October 18th. There will be a rehearsal with the music director on September 27 and on October 11 immediately following service. Stephanie has the list of students who have signed up to date. If you are interested in singing please see Carmela. We hope many of our students will support and attend the conference.

There will be a luncheon on Sunday, October 18, 2015 after the Special Service, Dharma school students should bring for a salad or side dish. Please see Sherrie Koga to sign up.

The Annual Halloween Party will be Sunday October 25, 2015. Dharma school will provide the main dish and parents should bring side dishes and salads. This traditional event is always fun for the kids and memorable for the parents. Wear your costumes for the unforgettable

Costume Parade and please bring a bag of candy for the Piñata! It is always fun to see the creative costumes and to watch the competitive but fun musical chairs.

Ogden is organizing the 2015 Mountain States Conference in Moab, Utah on November 6-8th. There is a flyer on the bulletin board with details or Stephanie can email you the link to register. There are many fun activities planned, including a hike to Delicate Arch where Service will be conducted by Sensei. We would love to see everyone there.

Please join us in another wonderful year of Dharma School. We hope everyone participates in our many events. We welcome all kids to join us for class each Sunday. Please see Stephanie for questions. Welcome Back!!

## Salt Lake Buddhist Temple Welcomes Parliament of the World Religions

*Seminars and Services at the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple  
Seminars sponsored by Buddhist Churches of America (BCA)*

### **Friday, October 16:**

4:00 pm Introduction to Buddhism

*Instructor: Rev. Marvin Harada, Co-Director BCA Center for Buddhist Education and Head Minister Orange County Buddhist Temple*

5:00 pm Introduction to Jodo Shinshu Buddhism

*Instructor: Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Co-Director BCA Center for Buddhist Education*

6:00 pm Introduction to Chanting

*Instructor: Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, Adjunct Prof. Institute of Buddhist Studies, Resident minister Lodi Buddhist Temple*

### **Saturday, October 17:**

10:00 am Introduction to Buddhism

*Instructor: Rev. Henry Adams, Adjunct Prof. Institute of Buddhist Studies, Resident minister San Mateo Buddhist Temple*

11:00 am Introduction to Jodo Shinshu Buddhism

*Instructor: Rev. Harry Bridge, Adjunct Prof. Institute of Buddhist Studies, Resident minister San Mateo Buddhist Church*

4:00 pm Introduction to Chanting

*Instructor: Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, Adjunct Prof. Institute of Buddhist Studies, Resident minister Lodi Buddhist Temple*

### **Sunday, October 18:**

9:00 am Meditation Service:

10:00 am Family Service: Dharma-thon, Kieshiki (Receiving Buddhist Name)

*Guest Speakers: Bishop Kodo Umezū, Buddhist Churches of America, Bishop Eric Matsumoto, Honpa Honganji Mission of Hawaii, Bishop Tatsuya Aoki, Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada*

11:00 am Panel Discussion:

*"Future of Buddhism in America" - Bishops Umezū, Matsumoto, Aoki*

## October Shotsuki Hoyo

*Service will be October 25*

<b>Deceased</b>	<b>Date of death</b>	<b>Next of kin</b>
Akita Sakae	10/25/36	Janet Thomas
Iwasaki Ritsuko	10/25/61	Dean Iwasaki
Kano Gunpei	10/13/65	Marilynn Shimada
Masuko Kyushiro	10/25	Robert Kasubuchi
Mitsunaga Ruth	10/30/95	Faye Mitsunaga-Eng
Muto Chiyo	10/15/83	
Ninomiya Katsuji	10/20/42	Yoshiko Ninomiya
Nishihara Alice	10/20/90	Greg Matsuura
Oda Mitsuji	10/9/31	Mumatsu Sasaki
Ogawa Fusaye	10/19/31	Bob Sugino
Ogawa Kuma	10/6/19	Bob Sugino
Oike Katsuye	10/14/74	May Koike
Saito Shizuno	10/26/21	Yoshiko Ninomiya
Sasaki Sukeichiro	10/19/68	Charlie Sasaki
Shiba Yoshiro	10/19/52	Yuri Uyeda
Sugiyama Unosuki	10/27/84	
Tadehara Masami	10/9/87	Tadehara Family
Tohinaka George	10/28/95	Tohinaka Family
Tokunaga Shigao	10/27/90	Tokunaga Family
Tsuyuki Ikuzo	10/3	Mark Tsuyuki
Wakayama Gerry	10/7/94	Wakayama Family
Yamamoto James	10/25/71	Eleanor Nakamura
Tamagawa Frank	10/18/95	Fred Tamagawa
Hisae Tsutsui	10/15/01	Geraldine Chappel
Frank Ling	10/02/02	Elaine Fukushima
Betty Yamaguchi	10/8/04	Jeannie Yamaguchi
John Imada	10/24/05	Imada Family
Otome Hasegawa	10/11/10	Roxanne Hasegawa
Takashi Nagasawa	10/21/11	Yaeko Nagata
Masako Morinaka	10/22/2012	Glen Morinaka
Margene Nagasawa	10/2/2014	Craig Nagasawa

## 2015 AUGUST-SEPTEMBER DONATIONS

*(August 21 – September 22, 2015)*

### **Dana Campaign**

Sanctuary for Healing & Integration    200  
(Carmela Javellana Hirano)

**Obon Donations**

Bradley &amp; Amy Mayeda 1000

**Shotsuki Hoyo**

Jane Sakashita	50	<b>In Memory Of:</b> Fukutaro & Etsuno Sakashita
Yutako & Yaeko Ikegami	50	Hiroshi Ikegami
Brent & Sherrie Koga	25	Rhu Sueoka

**BWA**

Nobuo Aoki	50	Steak Fry donation
Ruby&Susan Doi	35	Steak Fry donation
Tammara & Henry Kuramoto	20	Steak Fry donation
Sego Matsumiya	50	Steak Fry donation
Hisako Minaga	20	Steak Fry donation
Marcus & Karie Minaga-Miya	50	Steak Fry donation
Alice Ogura	20	Steak Fry donation
Connie & Phillip Sakashita	25	Steak Fry donation
Cindy Yamada Thomas	50	Steak Fry donation

**Temple General**

Ivan Van Laningham	25	
Henry & Lin Miyake	50	
Steven & Janice Doi	50	In memory of Misao & Elsie Doi
Hiroshima Kenjin Kai	50	In memory of Misao & Elsie Doi
Lizzy Player & Alex Young	100	Lizzy Player & Alex Young wedding
Gary & Kathleen Takenaka	100	Lizzy Player & Alex Young wedding

**2015 PAID SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIPS***These members contributed \$1200 per member in this new membership category.*

Richard & Lynne Doi  
 Carmela Javellana Hirano  
 Craige Mayeda  
 Reiko Mitsunaga  
 Kenneth Nodzu

Dot Richeda  
 Dave Sekino  
 Paul & Kathy Terashima  
 Ivan VanLaningham