



# Buddhist Thoughts

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## The Compassionate Moon

J.K. Hirano

*Although the wind  
Blows terribly here,  
The moonlight also leaks  
Between the roof planks  
Of this ruined house.*

Izumi Shikibu

With the beginning of the New Year, we all have an aspiration that this will be a "Happy New Year." There are many ways that people try to divine the nature of the upcoming year. There are Chinese horoscopes, Greek Horoscopes and a miscellany of divinations. However, how is it that we determine good, bad, happy or sad?

The end of last year was difficult for our temple and the country in general. The death of our dharma friend Chad Tohinaka in a tragic boating accident saddened our Sangha and his many friends and family. The unthinkable killing of the children and teachers of Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut shocked and brought on a collective grief to our nation. However, does this make the year a bad year?

There is really no way to console or rationalize these deaths. Both of these experiences are sad and must be grieved by family and friends. If we cannot recognize our own life's sadness, can we recognize happiness? Without the dark how do we understand the light? To experience grief is just as important as the experience of happiness. This is the teaching of impermanence.

In Buddhism, we try to teach how life is death and death is life. The moment we are born, we begin to die. This life, our life is often characterized as a burning house. Within Rennyō's *Letter on White Ashes*, he says that there is no way of knowing who will die first, the young or the old. However, we hope that the old will die before the young or at least we will die, before our children. When our lives do not go as we want, we often define them as "Bad." This experience of death is just life, it is neither good nor bad, it is our ego that wants to define the experience as one or the other.

I came across this poem written by Izumi Shikibu translated by Jane Hirschfield that reminded me of what I had been experiencing with these sad events. Izumi Shikibu was born in 976 and one of the Thirty-six Medieval Poetry Immortals of Japan. This poem called "Although the Wind" expresses our life in this old burning house. Life is filled with incredibly joyous occasions that we enjoy and hope to celebrate with our friends and family. Our life is also a time we experience sadness that "blows terribly." It is often a result of those terrible winds of difficulty that we are allowed to see the moonlight of compassion.

It is with a deep sense of joy and gratitude I greet 2013 and hope to see each of you. I know it will be filled with many new experiences. May you meet each day of 2013 with an appreciation to a wide variety of experiences, a discovery of a different shade of meaning and sensitivity to the subtle taste of life, as Amida Buddha, Namo Amida Butsu, embraces us all.

# January Shotsuki Hoyo

January 18, 10:00

<b>Deceased</b>	<b>Date of Death</b>	<b>Next of Kin</b>
Akita Uheiji	1/21/62	Janet Thomas
Hirota Harry	1/28/97	Mitsuko Hirota
Honda Nobuyoshi	1/18/95	Honda Family
Inouye Kinsaku	01/2/94	Tom Inouye
Inouye Sashichi	1/18/75	Sharen Carmichael
Iwamoto Sei	1/19/57	Takeo Iwamoto
Iwamoto Masakichi	1/19/72	Takeo Iwamoto
Kaizumi Hannah	1/15/93	Craig Kaizumi
Matsuda Ei	1/5/96	Matsuda Family
Mayeda Tadao	1/5/72	Yoshiko Kido
Mitsunaga Buntaro	1/7/67	Tomio Mitsunaga
Mori Carol	1/10/88	Asako Mori
Mori Masakiyo	1/27/80	Ko Mori
Nakamura Tane	1/16/75	Takae Nakamura
Namba Matsuno	1/8/56	Kaz Namba
Ninomiya Yasaeuemon	1/11/41	Yoshiko Ninomiya
Oishi Ginzo	1/31/62	Victor Oishi
Oishi Yoshino	1/11/83	Victor Oishi
Kanekichi Okino	1/3/48	Masako Imamura
Saito Masano	1/24/54	Yoshiko Ninomiya
Saito Yoshinaga	1/10/59	Yoshiko Ninomiya
Seo Tommy	1/25/93	Paul Seo
Shiba Miyoe	1/15/92	Shiba Family
Shimada Shoichi	01/2/92	Yoneko Shiba
Takata Raisaku	1/18/86	Teruko Takata
Takehara Sumiko	1/19/93	Dick Takehara
Taketa Shintaro	1/16/85	Shizuko Taketa
Tsutsui Kiyoshi	1/12/91	Tsutsui Family
Nakai Yoshiko	1/23/98	Lily Havey
Imada Shizuko	1/26/02	Helen Mitsunaga
Miyake Mary	1/14/04	Jim Miyake
Matsue Kasubuchi	1/7/07	Robert Kasubuchi
Yasuzo Minaga	1/11/78	Karie Minaga-Miya
Sachi June Minaga		
Kadowaki Schneider	1/22/09	Karie Minaga-Miya
Ruth Mitsuye Aoki	1/15/11	Sharen Carmichael
Akiko Kawata Sugino	1/18/13	Bob Sugino

