



Buddhist Thoughts

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Rev. Hirano's contact numbers: Office: 363-4742
home: 299-8727, emergency 718-5755

Happy New Year
Year of the Fire Dog
Buddhist Year 2569



丙戌



The buoyant and self-assured fire Dog has great magnetic charm and can convince others to follow his lead. His independent spirit and courage will see to it that he is never afraid of getting involved with others. He will constantly thrill to new experiences and adventures.

Fir makes him more creative and pure in expression. His outgoing character combined with the Gog's basic faith and idealism will help him to succeed in ambitious endeavors and to overcome great barriers.

Calligraphy by Masami Hayashi

Why do I need to believe in God?

J.K. Hirano

Those who insist on salvation by faith and devote their minds to nothing else, are bound all the more firmly by their single mindedness, and fall into the hell of attachment to their own salvation. Again, those who are passive and stand to one side waiting to be saved, consider that they are already perfect and rely rather on Buddha than on themselves to purify their hearts-these, too, have failed to find the secret of genuine salvation. The question then remains-how do we find it? But the answer, fortunately, is not difficult.

We should do far better to put this vexing problem of our salvation out of our minds altogether and place our reliance neither on faith nor on personal virtue, but surrender ourselves completely to the will of Buddha. Let him do as he will with us-be it to carry us to heaven or to hell. Herein lies the secret.

Once we have determined on this course, we need care nothing for ourselves. We need no longer ape the busy spider by stretching the web of our desire across the earth, nor emulate the greedy farmer by taking extra water into our own fields at the expense of our neighbors. Moreover, since our minds will be at peace, we need not always be saying our prayers with hollow voice, for we shall be entirely under the benevolent direction of the Buddha.

This is the salvation-this the peace of mind we teach in our religion. Blessed be the name of the Buddha."

Issa (shin buddhist priest and poet) Buddha of Infinite Light D.T. Suzuki

Living in Salt Lake City, Utah, maybe this is true for any Buddhist living in the United States, one of the most common questions asked me by non buddhists is, "Do you believe in God?" It seems that this question is of paramount importance for them to understand the differences between Buddhists and the followers of the other great religions of the world. As stated in the quote I began this month's article with, this need for definitions or in grasping to concepts is really not important in Jodo Shinshu. It is the idea of entrusting myself to Amida Buddha, which we define as great compassion, that is the central question. Not necessarily who or what Buddha is.

Kacie and Taylor when they were very young, never asked me about God. Yet, now that they are in school, the question has arisen a number of times. "Daddy do we believe in god?" It seems that it is a question that they are asked by their friends, not a question that came about from their own religious or spiritual inquiry. Within Buddhism, I can't think of anything that tells you

not to believe in God. Yet, in answering Kacie and Taylor, I explain that it depends on what your friend's concept of God is. They usually reply that their friends say God is the creator. In that regard, I tell them, "I don't know. I wasn't around when the world was created. But my question to the creator would have to be, "Who created the creator?" I then go on to say that I believe in a great love in the universe. Yet this love and compassion is not something I necessarily pray to for things. This love and compassion is always with me, like my love for them is always with them. This seems to answer most of their questions. Yet I believe some want a deeper definition. So I have tried to provide some of that in the following.

The need to believe in God is not a problem for me, it is more of a problem for the non Buddhist wanting to know me or define me. God or the belief in God poses neither a threat to my belief in Amida Buddha, nor my existence. It seems that it is more of a need for Christians to

know or understand me or other Buddhists, than for ourselves. So here is what I believe about God.

God: The question of a definition is fundamental to our understanding of our Buddhist view of the Universe in comparison to our Christian neighbors and friends. This question or need for definition is constantly being called upon, whenever we are asked, "Do you believe in God?" The first tenet that must be addressed is that in Jodo Shinshu we understand that as human beings we are limited in our ability to understand such a broad concept. If God is the beginning and end, the supreme force in the universe. How can we understand such a concept when we have difficulty in understanding such small ideas and concepts, as basic Algebra or English grammar? If as human beings we are able to grasp or understand the Ultimate reality or truth in the Universe, i.e., God, we should rationally be able to understand something as simple as basic mathematical rules or English grammar, shouldn't we? How many of you can even remember the phone numbers of all your family members.

Therefore, starting with this premise, that we as human beings are limited in our ability to comprehend such a broad concept as God. Let's try to describe what we can know. Within the Catechism of the Catholic Church, under IV. How Can We Speak about God?

It states:

39 *In defending the ability of human reason to know God, the Church is expressing her confidence in the possibility of speaking about him to all men and with all men, and therefore of dialogue with other religions, with philosophy and science, as well as with unbelievers and atheists.*

40 *Since our knowledge of God is limited, our language about him is equally so. We can name God only by taking creatures as our starting point, and in accordance with our limited human ways of knowing and thinking.*

41 *All creatures bear a certain resemblance to God, most especially man, created in the image and likeness of God. The manifold perfections of creatures—their truth, their goodness, their beauty-*

all reflect the infinite perfections of God. Consequently we can name God by taking his creatures' perfections as our starting point, "for from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator."

42 *God transcends all creatures. We must therefore continually purify our language of everything in it that is limited, imagebound or imperfect, if we are not to confuse our image of God—"the inexpressible, the incomprehensible, the invisible, the ungraspable"—with our human representations. Our human words always fall short of the mystery of God.*

43 *Admittedly, in speaking about God like this, our language is using human modes of expression; nevertheless it really does attain to God himself, though unable to express him in his infinite simplicity. Likewise, we must recall that "between Creator and creature no greater dissimilitude"; and that "concerning God, we cannot grasp what he is, but only what he is not, and how other beings stand in relation to him."*

Knowing that the Catholic Church is but one interpretation among many, I would still like to use this definition as the basis for my perspective. For I feel in a general sense, most of the other great religions of the world, Judaism, and Islam would agree with this definition. In addition, the late Pope John Paul II in his book Crossing the Threshold of Peace was rather critical of Buddhism therefore using the Catholic Catechism as a basis I would like to show my personal view of God in comparison.

If this definition alone were used in asking me, "Do you believe in God?" I would have to think about the details of the statement and answer "No. I do not believe in this definition of God." For in my belief, God is not transcendent, but immanent in the universe and we sentient beings are manifesting the divine glory, just as much as the myriad of other sentient and non sentient beings. However, there are points within this definition that I can believe in as example:

“40 Since our knowledge of God is limited, our language about him is equally so.” I cannot fully comprehend the magnitude of God. As I stated earlier, the starting point for Jodo Shinshu is to understand my limited nature.

I would also agree with this statement: *The manifold perfections of creatures—their truth, their goodness, their beauty—all reflect the infinite perfections of God. Consequently we can name God by taking his creatures’ perfections as our starting point, “for from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator.”* Within each of us is Buddha nature, the potential for achieving Buddhahood. We recognize this within each sentient being. However, it is because of our human nature that we can recognize this potential.

42 God transcends all creatures. We must therefore continually purify our language of everything in it that is limited, imagebound or imperfect, if we are not to confuse our image of God—“the inexpressible, the incomprehensible, the invisible, the ungraspable”—with our human representations. Our human words always fall short of the mystery of God. Within this statement, it begins, “God transcends all creatures,” as I stated, I do not believe God transcends the Universe. However, god is more than the sum of sentient and non sentient beings in the universe, even if the Universe as we know it were not here, God would still exist. As you can tell, there are points that are similar, but different. Therefore, it is difficult to merely compare religions.

However, in addition to the above points of contention, there is one large area that separates our beliefs from the ideas of Christians, Jews and Muslims. Within these other three great world religions, God, keeping aloof from his creations, sends down his words or commands through specially favored personages. Jesus, Allah, Moses and the other prophets, even Gordon Hinckley the president of the Mormon Church is defined as one of these specially favored personages. This special selection is not within my belief. God is within each of us. Religion is not to go to God by

forsaking the world, but to find him in it. Our faith is to find our essential oneness with this Ultimate Truth or Reality. We call this “Namo Amida Butsu.” This is an acknowledgment of gratitude for the essential oneness.

The basic needs of the Christian religion are different than we Buddhists. There is no need for proof on our part for Amida Buddha to love us. In that way, there is no need for us to have that definition. As Issa states, if we can merely give up or own ego centered need for control and just accept that we are and that we are embraced as we are. That is enough. There are those that have a need for more, but it is unnecessary. If you do need more, I hope you will join us for meditation and services in the new year.

President’s Message

Paul Terashima

Happy New Year 2006. I hope everything went well for you last year. Hopefully this New Year will be everything you expect and want. 2005 was a very challenging year for myself and the Temple. It seem as if we survived another year.

There were many of us that thought that the Salt Lake County owned and ran the Multi-Ethic Senior Citizens High-rise. WRONG- Utah Non-Profit Housing Corporation owns and manages it. Since, the Temple is not moving, the Building Committee thought we should buy the North driveway and parking area west of the Temple's office building. I wrote a letter to the Utah Non-Profit Housing Corp. telling them about the Temple's interest in buying this property. I received the answer that they could not sell the property because the mortgage holder is the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and they would disallow such a sale.

The Temple Officers for 2006 are President-Paul Terashima, Vice-Presidents-Lynne Doi and Bruce Fong, Secretaries-Karen Tohinaka

and Reiko Matsuura, Treasurers-David Sekino and Reiko Watanabe, Corresponding Secretary- Reiko Mitsunaga, Auditors-Maya Chow and Rick Spehar. The new members on the Temple Board are Maya Chow, Ichiro Doi, Stan Endo, Christy Fong, Mitsuru Fujinami, Brenda Koga, Brent Koga, Kyle Matsumura, Dot Richeda, Jane Sakashita, Paul Terashima and Reiko Watanabe. These board members will be serving two years. Lynne Doi Ernie Kyed, Tomio Mitsunaga, Jeff Watanabe, Jim Eng, Reiko Matsuura, David Sekino, Bruce Fong, Mark Minage, Paul Seo, Wesley Koga, Reiko Mitsunaga and Kathy Terashima are in their last year as Temple board members. The Temple will have installation of officers and board members at the Hoonko Service, January 15, 2006. I would like to thank all the Temple Officers and Board Members for all the hard work and effort in directing the Temple's business.

This year's "DANA" Award will go to Yukie Okubo and Henry Hirano. They both have served the Temple for many years. Without people like Yukie and Henry, the Temple's businesses and activities would be very difficult. This is a way the Temple can say THANK YOU for all your years of hard work.

At every December board meeting, the board has two important items that need to be resolved. First Temple Officers and second Sensei's salary. Officers are chosen and the B.C.A. has guide lines for Sensei's salary. B.C.A. guide lines recommends a 3 per cent annual raise. This year Sensei told the board that he did not want a raise. The board thank him for his decision, but decided that he deserved something. No raise in salary, but the board will put \$1,000.00 into his retirement fund.

The Temple officers and board members all volunteer their time for a better Temple. I hope we get some Sangha members to chair our two fund raisers this year. Bruce Fong and David Sekino chaired the Obon for the second straight year. Mark Minaga chaired the Food Bazaar for the second year also. He was helped by Dot Richeda. They all did a wonderful job. I hope we will have

some new Sangha members to chair these events this year. Please come forward to chair our two most important fund raisers.

The General Meeting will be held January 29, 2006. I hope to see all of you there, If you have any questions or suggestions about Temple activities or policies, this is the time to let us know about your ideas.

We are selling the 2006 Special Award Ticket, if you want one see me. 2005 winners were Jan-Richard Matsuno, Feb-Dr. David A. Lusty, March-Al Tokunage, April-Richard Sekiguchi, May-Reiko Mitsunaga, June-May Matsuda, Jul-Andrew Kyed, August-Ruby Doi, Sept- Marian Hori, Oct-Mark Minaga, Nov-Elsie Doi and Dec-Aimee Kyed. Thank you all for supporting the Building Fund.

Jr. YBA

Christy Fong

The Jr. YBA had a very productive and busy December!

On December 4th, we went shopping to buy gifts for the Candy Cane Corner (our first service project for the year). The Candy Cane Corner provides clothing, toys, and necessities at Christmas to 1,000 homeless or abused adults and children. Each student was given money from the Jr. YBA account and brought some of their own money to spend on teens in need. When leaving the center, Merissa Nakamura said "Wow! We need to bring things here every year!" We all agreed!!

On December 11th, we had our craft sales after the Bodhi Day service. Thank you to all the members that supported our efforts. We hope the recipients of your generosity enjoyed their gifts.

On December 18th, we arrived bright and early at 8:00 am to fill pretzel orders. Again, thank you to all the individuals that purchased our treats! Special thanks to Jr. YBA members and their parents, YBA'ers Keith Chow, Michael Fong and

Cory Sakashita, Sam Chow, Brenda Koga, & Connie Sakashita for helping us get the job done. Scrip orders will be taken on the following Sundays:

- January 15
- February 12
- March 26
- April 9
- May 14
- June 11

We also want to thank all the members that supported our Scrip sales this past year. Our success is because of all of you.

We wish everyone a wonderful holiday season and all the best in 2006!

Saito Masano	1/24/54	Yoshiiko Ninomiya
Saito Yoshinaga	1/10/59	Yoshiko Ninomiya
Seo Tommy	1/25/93	Suzue Seo
Shiba Miyoe	1/15/92	Takataro Shiba
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	Hisae Tsutsui
Nakai Yoshiko	1/23/98	Lily Havey
Ishimatsu Frank	1/19/01	Chizuko Ishimatsu
Imada Shizuko	1/26/02	Helen Mitsunaga
Miyake Mary	1/14/04	Jim Miyake

January Shotsuki Hoyo

10:00 am, January 15th

Deceased	Date of Death	Next of Kin
Akita Uheiji	1/21/62	Ruby Ushio
Hirota Harry	1/28/97	Mitsuko Hirota
Honda Nobuyoshi	1/18/95	Mitsuko Honda
Inouye Kinsaku	01/2/94	Tom Inouye
Inouye Sashichi	1/18/75	Ruth Aoki
Ishimatsu Harry S	01/2/76	Chizuko Ishimatsu
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	Richard Matsuda
Mayeda Tadao	1/5/72	Yoshiko Kido
Mitsunaga Buntaro	1/7/67	Hiroshi Mitsunaga
Mori Carol	1/10/88	Shigemi Mori
Mori Masakiyo	1/27/80	Ko Mori
Nakamura Tane	1/16/75	Takae Nakamura
Namba Matsuno	1/8/56	Kumeno Namba
Ninomiya Yasaeuemon	1/11/41	Yoshiko Ninomiya
Oishi Ginzo	1/31/62	Tai Oishi
Oishi Yoshino	1/11/83	Tai Oishi
Kanekichi Okino	1/3/48	Masako Imamura

Major memorials for 2005

If your loved one passed away in one of the following years, you may wish to schedule a memorial service. For more information, please call Rev. Hirano.

Year of Death	Service
2005	1 st Year
2004	3 rd Year
2000	7 th Year
1990	17 th Year
1982	25 th Year
1974	33 rd Year
1957	50 th Year
1907	100 th Year

Tentative Schedule 2006

Jan.	1	Shusho E
	8	Ogden Hoonko
	15	Salt Lake Hoonko, New Year's Party

29	Temple General mtg.
Feb. 12	Nehan E, Pet memorial
21-26	BCA ministers mtg, National Council, Sacramento
March 26	Salt Lake, Ogden Ohigan, Rev. Marvin Harada
	Fund raising breakfast
April 9	Salt Lake Hanamatsuri
16	Ogden Hanamatsuri
May 14	Salt Lake Gotan E
21	Ogden Gotan E
June 11	Graduation Service, Eshinni Ko
July 8	Salt Lake Obon Festival
9	Salt Lake Obon/Hatsubon
15	Honeyville Obon
16	Ogden Obon/Hatsubon
Aug 14-17	BCA minister's summer fukun, Seattle
Sep 1-10	World BWA convention, Hawaii
10	Dharma School Picnic
17	First Day of Dharma School, Ogden Ohigan
24	Salt Lake Ohigan
30	Food Bazaar
Oct 7	Denver 90 th Anniversary
29	Dharma School Halloween Party
Nov 18-19	Holiday Boutique
19	Eitaikyo
Dec 10	Salt Lake Bodhi Day
17	Ogden Bodhi Day

Nobue Sudoko	\$50	Special
Toshi Mayeda	\$15	Special

Toban 2006

January February
 *Rick Spehar *Mark Minaga *Henry Hirano *Gary Okamoto
 Stan Endo Elaine Endo Scott Furubayashi Ryoko Okamoto, Susan Spehar Gail Minaga Joy Furubayashi Dru Sueoka, Samuel Dean Akemi Dean Susan Furbayashi Joni Sueoka, Tak Iwamoto Sadie Kato Greg Matsuura Sandra Iwaski, Damon Papac Lisa Papac Sharon Matsuura

March April
 *Masami Hayashi *Nob Aoki *Lynn Shimada *Fran Akimoto
 Ritsuko Hayashi Alan Aoki Marilyn Shimada Tom Akimoto Christihne Munson George Doi Dennis Akimoto Tracy Roberson Ruby Doi Neil Chow Fumio Mayeda Rick Ikegami Akimi Chow Misao Doi Bobbie Ikegami Victor Oishi Elsie Doi Sherrie Hayashi Lisa Imamura

May June
 *Jeff Watanabe *Brent Koga *Richard Doi *Henry Kuramoto
 Mits Fujinami Sherrie Koga Lynne Doi Craig Mayeda Terry Fujinami Silvana Watanabe Tammy Kuramoto Shauna Mayeda Mary Doi Merry Nakamura Karie Minaga Miya Marcus Miya Donna Sato Jim Eng Bob Kasubuchi Yoshiko Uno Stephanie Sueoka Faye Eng Diana Mayeda Brian Mayeda

July September
 *Jane Sakashita *Carl Dennison *Paul Terashima *Bryon Watanabe
 Yuriko Dennison Jeff Kida Kathy Terashima Reiko Watanabe Cynthia Kida Shig Nagata May Akiyama Ken Nodzu Rolen Yoshinaga Setsuko Nagata Elaine Fukushima Troy Watanabe Phillip Sakashita Connie Sakashita Judy Watanabe Ken Matsuura Mike Furubayashi Connie Nakahara Reiko Matsuura Dot Richaeda

BWA donations

Frances Akimoto	\$50	Mother's 1 yr m.s.
Sumiko Hattori	\$100	Special
Reiko Imada	\$400	Special
Jane Sakashita	\$100	Fresno conf.
Yuki Okubo	\$25	Year end

October November

*Steve Tachiki *Shirley Farr *Tomio Mitsunaga

*Buster Mayeda

Becky Tachiki Robert Farr Junko Mitsunaga Rose
Mayeda Brent Shimada Jolene Shimada Bill
Mizuno Shigeo Mizuno

Ernie Kyed Laverne Kyed Kyle Matsumura
Kazuko Yakumo Paul Seo Karen Seo Evelyn
Matsumura Reiko Mitsunaga Brian Fukushima
Tammy Fukushima Barbara Mitsunaga Jim Mitsunaga

December

*David Sekino *Brenda Koga

Mike Tohinaka Karen Tohinaka

Chuck Chow Maya Koga-Chow

Bruce Fong Christy Fong

Wes Koga Debbie Koga

Christine Clifford Dean Hirabayashi
