



Buddhist Thoughts

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“Listen to the birds”

J.K. Hirano

“When you look for something wonderful in Buddhism, you miss hearing the singing of the birds.”

Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

The question I have been asked most often when I have been asked to speak on Buddhism, is about what happens to us when we die. I don't mean to be flippant, but religion should focus on our living, not on what happens after we are dead. At least I believe this is what Buddhism has taught me. Even though I know it is part of my job to answer these questions about what happens after we die, I cringe a little when I am pressed for an answer. When I answer the most truthfully, saying, “I don't know, I haven't died yet,” there is always a nervous laughter in the room. Yet I am being perfectly honest. I don't know. I'm still alive.

I believe that even Shakyamuni Buddha didn't know exactly what happens when we die. That is why his answer to the question of what happens when we die is called the “thunderous silence.” Buddha didn't say anything. After that he proceeded to follow with the parable of the poisoned arrow, which in essence is a teaching about living in this moment, not wasting our time worrying about death. As far as I know, most of the various Buddhist theories and explanations of what happens after we die developed after Shakyamuni Buddha's death. I'm sure that while he was alive, he wouldn't have allowed his disciples to sit around wondering what would happen after they died and develop theories

concerning it. That is definitely something you can only do if you have lots of time to waste. Do you have that kind of time? If so, I have a garage that could use some cleaning.

Most of the people I have met who are dying don't spend the time they have left worrying about what is going to happen when they die. They know that their time is limited and want to use that time with the matter of living. I remember a very kind man from San Jose, I will call him Mr. S. When I met Mr. S. he was a very healthy and active senior, probably in his early seventies. I then found out that he had been diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). Over the next year, I saw him quickly lose his physical vitality, from a weakening in the limbs, to not walking and finally not being able to get out of bed. The last time I saw him alive, he still cheerfully greeted me and I asked him, “Mr. S, is there anything you are worried about?” I took his hand and he looked me straight in the eyes and said, “Is there something I need to worry about Sensei? You always said that if I just leave it up to Amida Buddha everything will be fine. That's still true isn't it?” I squeezed his hand and said, “Exactly! You have it exactly right, there is nothing to worry about, just trust in Amida Buddha and everything will be fine. You just concentrate on living the best you can.” He replied, “Then there is nothing I am worried

about.” Although that was the last time I saw Mr. S. alive, he has always been with me and I can see his face when I am asked about death.

Last month I went back for my one year scan to test whether my cancer was still in remission. I had put it off for over six months, but I realized that it was best to just get it finished and out of the way. It’s just that I hated the pre-test period of not eating anything with salt or from the sea for 7 days. The test turned out fine, so it feels like I’m good for at least another year, when the doctor says I have to come back. However, it brought back a lot of memories of when I was first diagnosed with cancer.

There are so many fears associated with cancer, yet during the time of diagnosis and treatment, I didn’t worry about what was going to happen to me after I died. My biggest worries were about my family and friends and how they would be affected by my death, if I were to die from the cancer. Thoughts like, “I hope my girls will be okay.” Or “I hope I’m missed a little, but not too much.” In fact, when I was in isolation for the radiation, there was only one time, when I thought I might die. I remember waking up and not being able to feel the bottom half of my body. My first thought was, “This is really strange, I guess I’m dying from the feet up.” I then thought that if I shouted for Carmela, she would probably be upset and start crying or something and there wasn’t anything we could do if I was dying and I didn’t want to worry her. So I laid back down and thought, “Well, I hope it doesn’t hurt too much and I wish I could have seen my girls one more time.” I fell back to sleep and woke up the next morning. As Carmela likes to say, “You think cancer is fatal? It’s life that’s fatal!”

I really don’t think that when we are confronted with our death, we would waste the time we have, worrying about what’s going to happen to us after we die. It is with the knowledge that we only have a short time, that most of us really begin to live. We each have had friends who have died way too early. They become our greatest teachers. Yet, what is too early? My grandmother

died at 92. When I told her, “Bachan, it’s still too early for you to die, so get better,” she chuckled and said, “I hope that even if I am 100 you would feel the same.” Which is true; I would still have felt the same. Each of us rationally knows that we are going to die; why do we live as though we might be the one exception?

The passage I began with is attributed to the Zen Master Shunryu Suzuki. I believe that he is telling us not to waste our time in trivial albeit seemingly deep and heavy thoughts at the expense of living our lives. Buddhism has a great deal to teach us about living, dying, listening and appreciating the birds. Namō Amida Butsu.

President’s Message

Paul Terashima

On January 29, 2006, the Temple's General Meeting was held. I was very encouraged about the number of Sangha members attending this meeting. It shows me that you are interested in the running of the Temple. I hope after this meeting, the Sangha has a better idea about the business side of the Temple. If anyone has questions of Temple Business, please call me.

The Japanese Community Preservation Committee (JCPC) has been working with the Japanese Church of Christ and the Buddhist Temple to help alleviate the impact of the Salt Palace Extension on the two churches. It also wants to establish a Japan Town on 1st South. With the support of the two churches and the three JACL chapters, we are working with the City, County and State to make a Japan Town. Salt Lake County has come to several of our meetings and is encouraging us to give them a plan of Japan Town. This is very hard for JCPC since we do not have money to hire anyone to design or plan Japan Town. JCPC has a dream, but no way to make it come true. The Urban Land Institute (ULI) are a group of professionals that advances land use policy and real estate development practices worldwide. Their project

analysis session for the spring meeting on May 11, 2006, at the Salt Palace has selected Japan Town. ULI will be coordinating with JCPC, Salt Lake County and City to make this plan a reality. We should all help as much as possible to ensure ULI gets all the information they need. A special thanks has to go to Tim Jessep for getting JCPC in contact with Gerry Tully, who got ULI to select Japan Town for their project analysis. Many thanks Tim and Gerry.

On Saturday, April 22, 2006, we will have Temple Spring Clean-up. Please note this on your calendar. The more Sangha members we have the quicker and especially easier it will be to get our Temple repaired and cleaned. Please come out and help make our Temple beautiful.

My phone at home rings quite often, but I haven't gotten a call about volunteers to chair our fund raising events--the OBON on July 8th and FOOD BAZAAR on September 30th. Both of these events are in desperate need of chairs. Please set my mind at ease by calling to volunteer!!!

The new year is here and the lucky winner for the Special Award for January is Linda Otori and for February Byron Watanabe. Thank you for Supporting this Fund Raiser.

MARCH TOBAN: Masami Hayashi and Nob Aoki, Ritsuko Hayashi, Alan Aoki, Christine Munson, George Doi, Ruby Doi, Neil Chow, Akimi Chow, Misao Doi, Elsie Doi and Sherrie Hayashi.

BWA Membership List

Aki Chow	Yuriko Dennison
Elsie Doi	Lynn Doi
Mary Doi	Ruby Doi
Takeko Doi	Christy Fong
Terry Fujinami	Maxine Furubayashi
Otome Hasegawa	Carmela Hirano
Mitsuko Hirota	Reiko Imada
Masako Imamura	Yuriko Iwamoto
Grace Kasai	Matsue Kasubuchi
Sadie Kato	Brenda Koga
Maya Koga-Chow	Jeanne Konishi
Tammie Kuramoto	Renee Matsuura
Rose Mayeda	Helen Mitsunaga
Junko Mitsunaga	Setsuko Nagata
Shizue Nakagiri	Takae Nakamura
Yoshiko Ninomiya	Aiko Okada
Yukie Okubo	Grace Oshita
Dot Richeda	Jane Sakashita
Donna Sato	Chie Sugaya
Nancy Takagi	Nanae Taketa
Shizue Tamagawa	Chic Terashima
Kathy Terashima	Ayako Tohinaka
Yoshiko Uno	Ruby Ushio
Cassandra Van Buren	Ida Watanabe
Silvana Watanabe	Kazuko Yakumo
Eunice Yamane	Takako Young

BWA Donations

Maxine Furubayashi	\$50	Husband's Mem.
Otome Hasegawa	\$20	Hoonko
Matsue Kasubuchi	\$30	Hoonko
Silvana Watanabe	\$10	Hoonko
Chic Terashima	\$10	Hoonko
Shizue Tamagawa	\$70	Special
Yoshika Hattori	\$50	Special
Maurea Terashima	\$20	Special
Carmela Hirano	\$20	Special
Ken Nodzu	\$50	Year end
Masaji Imai	\$25	Special

Jr. YBA

Christy Fong

The Jr. YBA will be taking Scrip Orders March 26, April 9 & May 14. If you need gift cards, certificates or a special surprise for a friend, Scrips make a great choice. Orders taken will be ready the following Dharma School service.

The next Jr YBA meeting will be March 12 following class.

March Shotsuki Hoyo
March 26, 10:00 am
Guest Speaker Rev. Marvin Harada

Frank T. Nakai
4/16/1913 - 2/15/2006

Deceased	Date	Next of kin
Adachi Henry	3/11/97	Masayo Adachi
Brouwer Mayeda	Emiko 3/4/96	Toshi Mayeda
Endo Nobuzo	3/16/93	Stan Endo
Ikegami Mitsuko	3/2/72	Yuta Ikegami
Imada Matsuyo	3/12/91	Tasukamoto
Ishimatsu Otoichiro	3/21/48	Chizuko Ishimatsu
Iwata Miya	3/11/91	Tsuruko Imai
Kano Setsu	3/14/40	Tai Oishi
Kida Uwano	3/16/67	Taka Kida
Koseki, Iseko Ada	3/17/92	Kathy Terashima
Kumagai Hyozo	3/11/86	John Kumagai
Maeda Matsuzo	3/18/64	Sachiko Koga
Matsumiya Chiyo	3/12/90	Jeanne Konishi
Matsumiya Jinzaburo	3/19/64	Jeanne Konishi
Matsuura Kame	3/25/54	Genevieve Akiyama
Muraki Tomekichi	3/1/75	
Nakano Tokuyo	3/3/91	Atsumu Nakano
Namba Makiji	3/2/57	Kumeno Namba
Nishikawa Emily	3/20/95	Nancy Wayman
Sasaki Yvonne Katsuyo	3/16/56	Haruto Sasaki
Shimizu Toshi	3/24/88	Keiko Shimizu
Tachiki Tetsu	3/18/83	Steve Tachiki
Uyeda Hisashi Harry	3/7/85	Ray Uyeda
Kobayashi Sakae	3/17/00	Ken Kobayashi
Shiba Takataro	3/10/01	Helen Nakashima
Igata Toshizo	3/2/02	Tomi Igata
Kasai Seiko	3/20/02	Grace Kasai
Ogata Bert Sakae	3/27/02	Takako Ogata
Taketa Shizuo	3/1/04	Nanae Taketa

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

With Deepest Sympathy

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

David Eric Lew
8/30/66 - 2/14/06