



# Buddhist Thoughts

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

## Memories and Hopes for the Holidays

J.K. Hirano

"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach."

Ebenezer Scrooge

This time of year is usually filled with anticipation and reflection. From about the week before Thanksgiving to just after the first of January our regular schedules are thrown off balance. As a result it can be a chaotic and stressful time of year. The holidays are a time of year to enjoy the life you have. It is a time to express appreciation to those around you. I love this time of year and as I have said many times, I am a Buddhist that celebrates Christmas as much as he can. Yet some of us forget about the reason for celebration in the first place. Stress, chaos and feelings of anxiety supersede the season of Joy.

These stresses are not only felt in America and western countries. In Japan this is also a time of year for anticipation and reflection. The Oseibo, literally "end of year gift" is sent between December 5-20. It may be given on or around the 27<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup>, but generally not after the 31<sup>st</sup>. The department stores are filled with a variety of food stuffs and other items for giving and it has nothing to do with Christmas. Oseibo is traditionally a type of gift exchanged within business relationships. For example, employees to bosses, companies to employees, students to teachers, etc. During December many companies and organizations hold "bonenkais" – literally

parties to forget the past year in anticipation for the new.

However, it isn't just businesses that are busy during this time of year in Japan. Families are also very busy preparing for the New Year, where most businesses close from January 1 to the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Homes are being cleaned, such as "susuharai" (soot cleaning). They are cleaned inside and out in anticipation of making a clean start in the new year. On New Year's eve, families watch television or visit temples to ring the "Joya no kane" (Last Night bell). On the first day of the New Year many people begin with a service in their homes or visiting a nearby temple or shrine. This is why we have the customs of Joya E (Last Night Gathering) and Shusho E (New Year's Day gathering). By this time, most businesses, other than entertainment-related and basic service agencies such as transportation are closed and their employees have gone to their home towns for the holidays. The custom of "Nenshi" (yearly visits) visiting neighbors and friends is a ritual at this time of year. "Otoshi dama" (New Year's treasure) is given to the children in the form of money. "Nengajo", year celebration cards, similar to Christmas cards are sent to family and friends. As in the United States, there are many customs and rituals associated with the end of December.

Do you remember when you were a child and this was the most exciting time of year? Personally, I try to bring myself back to that time in my life when the holidays were a time of joy, anticipation and reflection. My rituals are to have a beautiful Christmas tree, set up my Disney Christmas village, put my ipod playlist to Christmas songs and try to catch the various versions of "The Christmas Carol" on T.V., although I can't decide whether I prefer the original version with Reginald Owen or the newer version with Patrick Stewart as my favorite. In this way, I am reminded of why I loved Christmas as a child. I try not to stress about the preparations during that time. I do my best and if that's not good enough, at least I can enjoy my rituals with my family.

Christmas was a time for my family to get together. As a child, it was a time to try and be as well behaved as possible because of Santa. It was a time to try to find presents for my friends and family and to find the presents my parents had hidden around the house. However, what I remember the most from that time, is the gathering of our family. I don't remember what we ate other than it sure tasted good eating it with my family around. I do remember some of the toys Santa brought, but in all honesty, those are secondary memories. The strongest image is that our family laughed and enjoyed ourselves at this time of year.

If we take the time to remember why we have such fond memories of the holidays past, we can create new memories for our families. We can make the holidays enjoyable or stressful. Try to remember that you aren't perfect and that you are not responsible for the happiness of everyone around you. Your children will enjoy you being happy and laughing more than receiving the largest present on the block. Your family will remember your gracious nature more than whether or not you personally baked the Christmas cookies, turkey or ham. If you don't have time to cook yourself, don't feel bad about store bought. You and the time you have to spare for your family, are more important than any material item.

We live in a country and society which on the surface is very comfortable. Of course we have many problems such as homelessness, racism, war. From the perspective of our average citizens, the members of our temple, I would dare to say that most of us are quite comfortable in our living circumstances. I believe that there are no members of our temple that worry about where their next meal will come from or whether they will have a warm place to sleep tonight. Of course, we all have friends or family that may have physical problems. In Buddhism, these are usually listed as birth, sickness, old age and death, the basic human condition. Yet materially most of our membership have been blessed with material things.

However, there are those that do worry about where their next meal is coming from or if they will have a warm place to sleep. There are mothers and fathers that are wondering if Santa will hear their children's wishes. Homelessness, racism and war may not affect us as individuals at this time, yet it does affect our humanity. Our temple is great at helping our members, our goodie bags filled during this time of year and distributed to our elders and shut ins by the Dharma School is a first step. From here maybe each of us can reach out to help someone we don't know. If each of us can do this, maybe the true special nature of this holiday season may begin anew. Homelessness, racism and war are huge problems to combat as individuals. However, when we take little steps, we can make a difference.

On behalf of Carmela, Kacie, Taylor and myself, we thank you for all your support during the past year. Thanks to all of you, we are comfortable and we will do what we can to help others this holiday season. Namó Amida Butsu, Merry Christmas and Best wishes for a healthy New Year.

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## President's Message

Paul Terashima

**A**nother year is coming to the end. I hope everyone had a great year. I hope everyone will have a wonderful holiday. Kathy and I will be spending Christmas in the bay area, since all our kids will be celebrating Christmas there.

Next year, there will be new officers leading our Temple. I hope the Sangha will support these new officers, in their quest to make our Temple a better place to learn the Dharma. I enjoyed all the years of your support you have given me during presidency. Thank you for all your support and help. I will be spending a lot of time in the bay area, but I will be around.

Winter and the Temple has uninvited guest sleeping in the office building carport. If any of our Sangha members see someone staying in the carport, leave them alone and call the police. The number to call is 799-3000. This is a non-emergency number. It may take sometime for the police to come, but that is what the police want. This way none of our Sangha members will be injured.

Special Awards winners for this year are January-Linda Omori, February-Byron Watanabe, March- Tom Akimoto, April-Lisa Imamura, May-Dru Sueoka, June-Mark Minaga, July-Setsuko Schook, August-Hiroshi & Mary Aramake, September- Raymond Uno and October-Bruce Aoki. Thank you for supporting this Fundraiser Good Luck for November. Tickets for the 2007 Special Award are being sold. If you want some to buy or sell, please come and see me.

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## Dharma School News

Laverne Kyed

**T**he Dharma School students, guests and parents enjoyed the annual Halloween parade, luncheon and

games on October 29<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to **Tina Munson** and **Karen Tohinaka** for organizing the event, along with **Troy Watanabe and the Sr. YBA** for providing the entertainment. We appreciate all who came early to help set up and stayed after the event to clean up.

The Dharma School classes have been busy decorating the goody bags for the 80-years and over to be presented during the Bodhi Day luncheon on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

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## YBA

Maya Chow

The officers for the 2006-2007 year for our YBA are the following:

President:	Michael Fong
Vice Pres:	Emily Iwasaki
Secretary:	Nick Sueoka
Treasurer:	Jennifer Fong

On Dec. 3, they will be going bowling after the service.

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## Jr. YBA

Christy Fong

**T**he Jr. YBA would like to thank everyone who participated in our Appreciation Breakfast on November 5<sup>th</sup>. We hope you enjoyed the breakfast and our look back over our trip. We'd like to thank the Ogden YBA for joining us and participating in our sleepover the night before. We especially would like to thank the following for their very generous donations:

Tom & Fran Akimoto  
Ruth Aoki  
George & Ruby Doi  
Ichiro & Takeko Doi

Maxine Furubayashi  
Jeanne Konishi  
Kay & Chic Terashima  
Robert Tokita  
Reiko Watanabe  
Anonymous  
Paul and Karen Seo

If you need help with your holiday shopping, the Jr. YBA is here to help! We will be taking two Scrip orders in time for Christmas on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup> (Bodhi Day). Orders are available for pick-up the week after they are submitted.

We will have a Christmas Gift and Craft table following the Bodhi Day service. Stop by to pick up any last minute gift items for neighbors, teachers and friends. We will also be taking chocolate/caramel pretzel orders that same day. They will be priced at 2 for \$1.25 and 4 for \$2.25 and will be ready Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you for your continued support!!

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## Special Report

Yukie Okubo

I must admit that I have been too preoccupied with my own busyness. Recently however, the article By Carmella Javellena Hirano M.D. In the recent Buddhist Thoughts triggered my mind and heart.

2. Then the hard copy of the article from our daughter Noreen, in Denver about New York Times(N.Y./Region) BUDDHISM with a NEW MIND SET also got me thinking.

3. The Sunday morning message from Our SENSEI Rev. JERRY HIRANO. He always surprises me with a different angle of looking at the truth, that really makes sense and applicable to my daily life here now.

We are Human Beings First. Do not dwell on differences, we are not better than others.

I see America as a melting pot of immigrants from countries all over the world. Each with their own strong cultural and religious traditions.

We started having the Ogden STANDARD EXAMINER delivered (now called Davis STANDARD EXAMINER) a few years ago because it was good to read editorials from diverse contributors. Recent few years I have noticed that the educators, teachers on all levels of Davis County Schools and Weber State College have been, more in tune with getting the people, to appreciate the differences of multi ethnic community that we live in today. There were several reports of increase of violent crimes in Utah this summer. Then an account of decrease in such crimes in Davis County. They are not happening on the West side of Salt Lake City, which was considered the bad area, but farther West and South in Utah.. So it seems like public awareness of people needing to get to know each other and appreciating the rich traditions of each other's, ethnic background is working.

Children are very human and love each other. It seems to be their basic nature to respond to loving care and give love, unless early experience teaches them otherwise. I saw this when I was in Montreal as an RN working my rotation on the long term care unit, with post polios, rheumatic Fever etc. during WW11. We used to move all the beds out doors on the veranda. for fresh air and sunshine for a short period every morning weather permitting. All the children wanted their bed near the only black boy, they all loved him.

Our children were the only non white in the Bountiful Elementary School District when we moved out here in 1961. There was no discrimination. I feel that if Jodo Shin Shu is going to meet the needs of people in America, we need to step back and look at the BROADER PICTURE. as Our Shocho (Bishop) Koshin Ogui envisioned and a few other Ministers of BCA have also realized and working on changing the mind set.

What can we as BWA do toward this vision

for growth of Jodo Shin Shu in America in the 21st  
 century. What can I do?? do now??

**Shotsuki Hoyo**  
 10:00 a.m. December 10

**Tentative Schedule for 2007**

January:	
1	Shusho E
21	Hoonko/Shotsuki Hoyo
22-3	Rev. Hirano vacation
February:	
11	Nehan E, Pet Memorial service, Shotsuki Hoyo
March:	
18	Ohigan, Shotsuki Hoyo
April	
10	Hanamatsuri, Shotsuki Hoyo
May	
20	Gotan E
June	
3	Lagoon Day
10	Last Day of Dharma School/ Eshinni ko
July	
14	Obon Dance
15	Hatsubon/Obon, Shotsuki Hoyo
21	Honeyville, Hatsubon/Obon, Ogden Obon Dance
22	Ogden Hatsubon/Obon
September	
9	Dharma School Picnic
16	First day of Dharma School
23	Ohigan/ Fund raising breakfast
29	Bazaar
October	
28	Halloween Party/ Shotsuki Hoyo
November	
17	Holiday Boutique
18	Eitaikyo Holiday Boutique
December	
9	Bodhi Day/ Shotsuki Hoyo
31	Joya E

**Deceased Date of death Next of kin**

Aramaki Yasu	12/8/86	Hiroshi Aramaki
Hideshima Hideji	12/28/90	Tad Hideshima
Hirano Kiyoshi	12/18/73	Henry Hirano
Ikari Hideyoshi	12/31	Sachiko Tohinaka
Ikegami Akitaro	12/2/60	
Iwasaki Bunjiro	12/11/65	Fujio Iwasaki
Katsuki Yoshio	12/9/87	
Kawaguchi Sato	12/1/83	Bill Kawaguchi
Kida Kiyoji	12/9/65	Taka Kida
Komatsu Fumie	12/30/88	Kiyoshi Komatsu
Matsuno Albert	12/21/93	Yuriko Matsuno
Mitsunaga Kiyoshi	12/16/94	Helen Mitsunaga
Mori Michiko	12/3/87	Tami Mori
Nodzu Kentaro	12/22/70	Ken Nodzu
Okubo Riyo	12/24/83	Harry Okubo
Omura Roy	12/22/87	Jane Sakashita
Osako Sadao	12/16/88	Yaeko Osako
Sasaki Omatsu	12/15/92	Shigeru Sasaki
Shimamura Michiko	12/14/94	Geraldine Chappell
Suehiro Fusa	12/6/46	Doris Matsuura
Sueoka Joanne	12/1/83	Rhu Sueoka
Sueoka Lillian	12/17/88	Rhu Sueoka
Usui Yoshio	12/1/83	Beth Usui
Yakumo Chijun	12/13/91	Kazuko Yakumo
Yakumo Aya	12/1/82	Kazuko Yakumo
Frank Nishimura	12/31/2000	Chiyoko Nishimura
Hamamoto Kiyoko	12/20/01	Aiko Okada

**BWA Donations**

Otome Hasegawa	\$100.00	Special
Suzue Seo	\$100.00	Special
Chizuko Ishimatsu	\$25.00	Special