



Buddhist Thoughts

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Soo desu ka? (Is that so) Namo Amida Butsu

J.K. Hirano

"Of all the gin joints in all the world, you have to walk into this one."

*A billion cold rocks, scarred and pitted, hurtle through space. Given the odds,
Aren't we lucky, so unfathomable, incomprehensibly lucky, Just to be alive.*

*A stray beam of light careens from one of these rocks. Hits something, Bounces to something else in a
thing called my eye.*

*Behold –a magnolia in full bloom- hanging like an apparition above the San Francisco Bay- a lotus field
from a Buddhist paradise.*

*How can I say I am not lucky? When a billion years of intergalactic accidents have conspired to bring me
this gift.*

Indecision. Right? Left? Right? Left? I walk through a door and there is the love of my life.

How lucky, how unfathomably, uncharacteristically lucky, that I just didn't blow it.

*Her face reddens and strains she screams. Another minute surely she shall die. Or I will. Then the
baby's head emerged, tiny tired perfection, weary as an old man, radiant as an angel.*

How can I say that I'm not lucky? Just to be alive.

*A doctor walks in. She need say nothing. The answer is etched in her eyes. Those shadows on your liver
are cancer, metastatic cancer.*

But how can I say that I'm not lucky? Just to be alive. Like you.

Rick Kohn (1948-2000) The Best of Inquiring Mind

This Summer has been very busy. When things get hectic in my life, I forget how good my life is. There was a period of about a month, beginning with our Salt Lake Obon to about August 18 when it felt like I was on a rapidly moving treadmill and beginning to fall behind.

During this time period I had: visited 12 cemeteries throughout Utah and Nevada, performed and spoke at four Hatsubon/Obon services, four funerals, two weddings and a number of memorial services. I went on a Bus trip throughout Northern California with our Jr.

YBA and a Bus Trip with our BWA to the Las Vegas Obon. I flew to the Jodo Shinshu center in Berkeley for three separate meetings and seminars. After the Fong Family hosted the BWA Japan exchange students, Carmela and I hosted them at our home. Just as I began writing this article and I thought I would get a slight break, I had to prepare for two funerals in Honeyville and the Mt. States District conference is in a week and I'm still struggling with this month's article. During this time we also moved everything from the main temple building (yes, including the naijin) to the west wing building and I moved the temple office to my home. Along the way I also had a bout with the flu. Whew! It has been quite a Summer.

As I was recovering from my flu and having come down with a slight case of self pity, I began talking with my daughter Taylor. I don't know where it comes from, but Taylor has an extremely deep side to her nature. Out of the blue, she sometimes amazes me with her insights into life and she has only been alive for ten years. I really hope that I get the chance to see what another twenty or so years will do to her. She was talking to me about her teacher for the new school year. She said that since Kindergarten, she has never gotten the teacher that her older sister Kacie has told her would be the best teacher for that particular grade. However, every teacher she has had has been wonderful and she feels very lucky to have been in their class.

I asked her how she thinks this happens. She explained that it had to do with her attitude towards the teachers. She admitted that she always has a certain teacher she would like, but she has never gotten one of those teachers. In fact, she usually not only doesn't get the teacher she hopes for, she usually gets the teacher that Kacie tells her is the worst teacher in that grade. I asked her if that's the case. Why do you think they turn out to be so good?

She explained that once she finds out who her teacher is, whether or not it is the teacher she wanted, she doesn't think of it as

good or bad. She said, at least she has a teacher and a good school to go to. If she were to think one way or the other, she could be disappointed either way, so she remains neutral and lets life work itself out. She says it never fails that if she thinks in this way, things usually turn out good. She told me that she has always been happy about how her school year turns out. I was just amazed listening to her rationale and realized how true her explanation was. And maybe this is just how I needed to look at my Summer, not good or bad, just the way it was.

One of the most famous of all Japanese Zen masters was a man named Hakuin Zenji. He is considered the father of the modern Japanese Rinzai Zen tradition. There is a story about how on one occasion, a young woman in the village gave birth to a child out of wedlock. She told her parents that Hakuin was the father of her baby. This girl's parents were furious and came to him with the baby. They called him all kinds of names and said that he was responsible for the baby and would have to raise it. Hakuin only said, "Is that so?" I read this story in English and this is the way it was translated, I can imagine him rubbing his chin, nodding his head and saying, "Ahh... soo desu ka?" which can be translated as "Is that so?" They left the baby and Hakuin gently and lovingly took care of the baby, never complaining. After a few months, the young woman finally confessed that it was not Hakuin, but a young man in the village who was the real father. The girl's parents immediately went to Hakuin, apologized and asked for the baby. Hakuin rubbed his chin and said, "Ahh, soo desu ka?" He went and gave the baby back to the couple.

As we can see from this story, Hakuin had the ability to just see life as life. Allowing our life to flow just as it is and not judge it as good or bad is how we can open ourselves to happiness. One of Hakuin's famous poems is called "Song of Zazen" sometimes called "In praise of Zen".

He writes,

*Boundless and free is the sky of Samadhi!
Bright the full moon of wisdom!
Truly is anything missing now?
Nirvana is right here, before our eyes,
This very place is the Lotus Land.
This very body the Buddha.*

From the mouth of my child, I have heard the insight of the great Zen master Hakuin. Maybe I should have called her Taylor Zenji? In retrospect this has been a very good Summer. I became a minister because there was a time when I believed there was no other profession that I would be allowed to be a part of the important and transitional times in the lives' of others, both happy and sad occasions. There are times when I foolishly forget about how lucky I am. This Summer I have truly been blessed to take part in the life of our Sangha. Namō Amida Butsu!

Although we still don't know when we will be able to have services in the Hondo, we will continue to have services in the West Wing. Somehow we will make it work. As for dharma school classes, we will discuss this at the Dharma School picnic on September 13th. Thank you everyone for your wonderful work in getting our temple refurbished. I hope all of you will continue to support our temple. Namō Amida Butsu!

President's Message

Dot Richeda

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Reiko Watanabe and her committee for a job well done at Obon and to the many individuals who worked behind the scene. It takes all of us to have a successful Obon. Thank you everyone. Arigato.

We had so many dancers coming out to

Obon practice this year, I felt we needed a larger gym. I know everyone had a fun time. Thank you to our dance teachers, Maxine Furubayashi, Sandy Iwasaki, Tracy Akimoto-Roberson, Emily Iwasaki for instructing us. We learned two new dances that we performed at the Las Vegas Obon.

Thank you to May Akiyama, Sherrie Koga and their crew for taking care of the refreshments at intermission. I know all the dancers appreciated it.

What can I say but THANK YOU to everyone who came out and helped with clearing out the Temple and moving the boxes to the West Building. With everyone's help we finished ahead of schedule. Thank you Breda Koga for heading this project. Thank you to Maya Chow and Laverne Kyed for preparing lunch and dinner for the workers.

We had a wonderful time at the Las Vegas Obon. Thank you Jane Sakashita for arranging this bus trip. Maybe we can plan another trip next year?!

The Temple Board voted to cancel our annual Food Bazaar this year due to the construction in the Temple.

I hope to see all of you at the Mt States District conference on Sept 5th and 6th. Thank you to Reiko Mitsunaga for heading this conference. Thanks to the Ogden Temple for letting us use their Temple.

As of today, we are still waiting for the permit to start the construction on the Temple. A few minor details needs to be taken of and Ernie Kyed is working on it. Thanks Ernie.

Next Board meeting Sept 17th, 6:00 PM

SALT LAKE DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

Chris Munson

The annual Dharma School Back to School picnic will take place on Sunday,

September 13th, beginning at 11:00 a.m. The picnic will be at North Canyon Park on Bountiful Blvd., Bountiful, Utah. The Salt Lake Dharma School families are asked to bring a salad/side dish and Ogden families will bring desserts. The Jr. YBA will have games for the younger children. Mark your calendars for an afternoon of fun!

2009-2010 Dharma School Board members, last year's Dharma School teachers and anyone interested in teaching this year are asked to attend a Board/Teachers' meeting at 10:30 a.m. at the Park. If you have any questions, please contact Tina Munson (801) 582-0765.

STATE OF THE BWA

Jane Sakashita

July and August were extremely busy months for the BWA. The Obon Festival food preparation was a huge responsibility for co-chairs Reiko Matsuura, Junko Mitsunaga, and Setsuko Nagata. To them and the many ladies who worked so diligently from early morning hours to late evening I extend my deepest gratitude. Brenda Koga deserves accolades for countless hours she puts in working on the Building Committee. The exchange students, Tomoko and Keiko, from Japan were hosted by Bruce and Christy Fong for several days, along with Reverend and Carmela Hirano. The BWA had a dinner at the Pagoda Restaurant for these girls, who were overjoyed with the gifts selected by Susan Furubayashi and Joni Sueoka. They in turn gave each of us "Megumi" charms. They seemed to have had an enjoyable time chatting with the Hiranos, the Fongs, the Chows, Mitsunagas, and others.

The Las Vegas Obon trip over the August 7th-9th weekend was enjoyed by 51 passengers on LeBus that was arranged for us by George and Toke Yoshimura. The riders participated with songs and jokes, making the over 400 miles

from Salt Lake City seem shorter than they were. The 16 members, led by Maxine Furubayashi and Sandy Iwasaki, in red happi danced to the music that permeated the Cimarron-Memorial High School. There were groups from several California temples, and we were recognized several times by the Las Vegas chairman –especially Emily Furubayashi who celebrated her 21st birthday that day. Many of us feasted on sushi at the Todai buffet restaurant, and the California Hotel was most accommodating to us. We have been urged to make this an annual trip.

The BWA steak fry that is chaired by Yuriko Dennison is being held this Sunday, August 23, and Ruby Doi graciously made reservations at Sugarhouse Park. There will be many Japanese side dishes that are delectable to the taste.

Now the upcoming Mountain States District Conference, chaired by Reiko Mitsunaga, that is being hosted by the Salt Lake Temple in Ogden on September 5th and 6th is upon us, and the Salt Lake BWA is in charge of the Saturday luncheon.

How can one adequately express gratitude to all the people involved in the multitude of activities of our temple? On the Buddhist calendar, in Japanese, it says:

“SUMI MA SEN - OKAGE SAMA -
ALIGATOH NO HI GURASHI”

“DAILY, WITH GRATITUDE - WITH
HUMILITY - WITH OPENNESS OF
HEART” This, I truly feel.

Jane S.

Jr. YBA
Christy Fong

The Jr. YBA journeyed out to the Bay Area for their Bus trip starting on July 30th at 10:00 pm. After a non-stop 5 days of activity and fun, we arrived safely home on August 4th at 11:00 pm.

We express our deepest gratitude to the

San Jose Temple, Oakland Temple, San Mateo Temple, San Francisco Temple and Palo Alto Temple for hosting our stays, providing meals or socials, and the opportunity to meet new YBA friends at each visit. Special thanks to the Jr. YBA advisors, **Larry Handa** and **Lucy Santo** at San Jose, **Bonnie Okamura** at Oakland, **Susan Bottari** at San Mateo, **Rev. Ron Kobata** at San Francisco and **Carl Yanari** at Palo Alto. Arigato to **Glen Kameda** for accommodating our special request and tour of the Jodo Shinshu Center. Thanks also to **Chiz Ishimatsu** and the **Salt Lake Dharma School** for their generous monetary donations towards our trip.

Many, many emails were received following the trip complimenting our Jr/Sr. YBA kids. "We love the energy they brought to our Obon dancing!" "We were so thankful for the helpfulness of your kids with our Obons!" "Your YBA kids are the most courteous and polite group we have ever hosted!" The Ogden and Salt Lake students represented our temples in the most positive ways!

Each student was asked to reflect on the trip during the long ride home. They were asked to share what their favorite memory was and three things they were most grateful for the trip. Number one of the favorites was the Obons and the dancing! What they were most grateful for was the opportunity to meet many new YBA friends but most importantly, become closer and better friends with one another.

It has been a privilege and pleasure to work with the Jr. YBA over the years and we are extremely pleased that Jim Eng and Mark Minaga have agreed to step up as advisors to the group. Please continue to support their efforts with the kids.

Obon 2009 Reiko Watanabe

The 2009 Obon is over and hopefully it went well. All of the comments that I received

were positive. Maybe that is because they didn't want to hurt my feelings. Please let me know if you have any comments.

I really want to thank everyone who did the work. The BWA, especially Reiko Matsuura, Junko Mitsunaga, & Setsuko Nagata who headed up the Sushi and Somen dishes. And all of the BWA who came out to help with the chop chop on Friday and with the rolling of the sushi on Saturday morning especially those who arrived at 4:00 a.m. to get the rice on.

All of the comments on the chicken this year were very good. Everyone said that it was moist and tasty. Thank you to Bobby Kasubuchi, Craige Mayeda and Richard Doi for mixing the marinate and for Glen Watanuki for heading up the barbeque group.

Thank you also to Kari Minaga-Miya for heading up the Meatballs with her special recipe. To Brenda Koga for taking care of the Gyoza and Christy Fong and Yo Misaka for taking care of the salads and Troy Watanabe for his special sauce for the Spam Musubi.

The chapel tours were well attended and we would like to thank Sherrie Hayashi and Stephanie Sueoka for taking care of that department also for scheduling the bussing with the children and the hostessing. We saw some new faces as hostesses and we would like to thank them too. The dishwashers also had some new faces involved and would like to thank Jeff Watanabe and Gary Okamoto for this thankless job.

And of course Maxine Furubayashi, Sandy Iwasaki, Tracy Roberson & Emily Iwasaki for the many hours of learning the dances, teaching us the dances and making this festival a success. There are more and more dancers each year and we thank them for it.

There were many other people who should be thanked who made this Obon a success, behind the scenes people like Paul Terashima who is always in charge of getting all of the permits to make this gathering legal and handling the health inspectors when they arrive. And all of you who worked in the booths to help our customers. To

the YBA for the snack booth and the Jr. YBA for their games.

Again, Thank You to everyone involved with this monumental task. Hopefully from now we will get the help of everyone who is able to help make our future events a success. As you can see we are in the midst of our renovation and will need all of the fund raisers we can handle and all of the help to go along with them.

Building Update

Brenda Koga

I regret to inform the membership that at this time the building process is at a standstill. As of August 23, 2009, construction has not begun due to continued roadblocks that SilverPeak and Cameron Construction confront on almost a daily basis.

We have hurdled the obstacle regarding the ordinance for 40% glass being required for any new construction and have successfully signed a lease agreement with the city to lease the airspace created by a roof overhang crossing the plane constituting the city's property line.

However, for every obstacle we leap over, there seem to be two more that block our progress. Currently, we are seeking advise from several professionals who have experience with the city's permitting process, and are attempting to meet with the Mayor to voice our frustrations and seek assistance to expedite the process.

I realize the membership is eager to hear of progress, and I am sorry to be the bearer of bad news. However, Ernie continues to communicate constantly with the contractors, and we both are spending what time we can to make headway.

If you have further questions, please contact me by phone (466-6552 or e-mail: bnkoga@hotmail.com).

Thank you for your patiences.

THANKS SO MUCH!!!

A huge thank you to all the members who came out to help pack up the temple the week of July 13, 2009. The response was tremendous and everyone worked so hard. We surprised ourselves and pretty much completed most of the task that first day!

Special thanks to Dena Terashima who worked so hard, then caught a plane to fly home...what a memorable vacation experience her parents created for her. Also, a special thank you to **Error! Reference source not found.** for donating some moving boxes, markers and tape.

We are all looking forward to the day when we move back in. We will keep you posted.

Free Course and open to the Public ***INTO THE LIGHT:*** ***The Buddhist*** ***Path to Problem-*** ***Solving***

Study and apply Buddhist teaching to the alleviation of "The Eight Sufferings" that we encounter in the course of living this human life.

This study class and discussion group is taught and facilitated by husband and wife team of Buddhist priest (Rev. Jerry Hirano) and psychiatrist (Dr. Carmela Javellana).

First and Third Thursdays
Sept. 3 – Dec. 17, 2009
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

(Sept. 3 & 17, Oct. 1 & 15, Nov. 5 & 19, Dec. 3 & 17)

Salt Lake Buddhist Temple, 211 West

**100 South
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101 Tel. (801)
363-4742
slbuddhist.org**

No registration required. Come as you are

Course Outline for Into the Light

Basic Concepts:

The 8 Sufferings: Birth, Aging,
Sickness, Death, Loss,
Deprivation, Growth/Transformation,
Difficult People

Discuss case examples / real life situations

4 Noble Truths or “Realities” – direct application
to real-life situations

Eightfold-Path: Prescriptions for Problem-
Solving

Right View – proper perspective
Right Thoughts – cultivation of hope &
optimism
Right Speech – no speech
Right Conduct – sowing karmic seeds
Right Livelihood
Right Effort
Right Mindfulness
Right Meditation

Self-Power and Other Power (shinjin) as ultimate
solution

Limitations of self-power / self-centeredness

Unlimited Wisdom and Compassion

Entrusting singlemindedly ends struggling ->
peace, gratitude, compassion for other suffering
beings

Way of the Bodhisattva

Direct Experience of Wisdom and Compassion –
Naikan

Mindfulness exercises (“tools”)

Meditations on body, breath, generosity of others
-> dana, metta

Ogden Buddhist Temple Course Offering Fall 2009

The Ogden Buddhist Church is offering an introductory course in Buddhism for people interested in gaining a working knowledge of the history and teaching of the Buddha. The course will be held at the Ogden Buddhist Church, 155 North Street (400 North) in Ogden. Weekly meetings will be held on Wednesdays, from 10:00 A.M. until 11:30 A.M. beginning September the 16th and ending November 11th. The selection of a morning time for the class was done to make it more convenient for seniors to attend. Mike Monson will be conducting the course using a variety of resources. The cost for the course is \$30.00 to cover the cost of books and other materials. Interested parties should contact the church via email at ogdenbuddhisttemple@gmail.com or by telephone at 801.510.1911.