

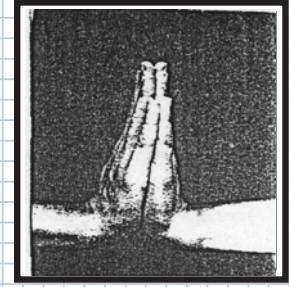


GASSHO

“Hands together
in reverence & gratitude”

June 2013

Issue: 06-13



“One’s Eyes Looking Into the Distance And Not Seeing What is Right Before One’s Own Feet”

A translation of Kenryo Kawasaki’s *Hiyu Monogatari*
(Parables and Stories). No. 3. pp. 12-17.

Once, the young wife of an elderly millionaire became pregnant. Up to that time she was unable to conceive a child. Therefore, the elderly husband’s joy was beyond all bounds. Awaiting the birth of their first child, the two began imagining as to who their baby would look like, the husband or the wife. They began thinking of the possible names for it, both for a girl and a boy.

Then, one day, wondering if it would be a boy or girl, they decided to ask Sakyamuni Buddha. After making offerings and bowing to the Buddha they asked him whether the baby would be a boy or a girl. Sakyamuni Buddha then answered:

The child will be a boy. Furthermore, his appearance and person will far outshine that of others in his bearing, person and character. Upon reaching adulthood, he will have a life of good fortune and happiness. Furthermore, he will attain enlightenment.

So said the Buddha through his powers of seeing into the past lives of sentient beings based on the uniform facts of causality, conditionality and interdependency that governs a person’s karma.

The elderly husband, upon hearing these words, was overcome with great joy. However, he became doubtful of the Buddha’s predictions. So, he also began to consult other shamans, diviners, astrologers and psychics for further confirmations of the Buddha’s prediction. However, many of them

MONTH’S THOUGHT



We should be particularly careful when we hear things second or third hand. We should not accept what we hear just as it is said. What we hear about others is tinged with the color of the speaker’s feelings. Not only that, some people use words to tempt others, and others make up stories to separate people. Yoshitaka Tamai. *ICHINYO*. p. 72.



were non-Buddhists. As of consequence, they performed all kinds of magical incantations and mystic séances to see if the baby would actually be a boy. However, because they saw the Buddha as an adversary to be disparaged, they predicted that the baby would be a girl instead of a boy. Their intention was to discredit the Buddha as a spiritual teacher with powers of clairvoyance. They did not realize that the Buddha’s prediction accorded with the orderly and uniform laws of causality, conditionality, interdependence and the consequences of a person’s karma.

Consequently, these rival *gurus* were not about to confirm anything that the Buddha taught, said, did, recommended or predicted. Thus, they were regarded as teachers of wrong-mindedness and practices advocating ways not in accord with causation, conditionality, interdependency and especially in defiance of the consequences of karma (or heresies = falsehoods). This is what the term *gedo* means, “a Path outside of” (or contrary to) to the *Dharma’s* Truth of Selflessness and Reality of Togetherness.

REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVICES for JUNE 2013

1st SUN Jun 2nd:

9 A.M. English Service
Dharma Talk
for Children & Adults
Rev. Tatsuguchi

2nd SUN Jun 9th:

9 A.M. Eng. Service
Dharma Talk
for Children & Adults
Rev. Tatsuguchi

3rd SUN Jun 16th:

Father's Day 9 A.M. Service
Dharma Talk
for Children & Adults
Rev. Tatsuguchi

4th SUN Jun 23rd:

9 A.M. Eng. Service
Dharma Talk for Children & Adults
Rev. Tatsuguchi

5th SUN Jun 30th:

Bon Service
9 A.M.
Guest Speaker
Rev. Ryoso Toshima

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

KARAOKE SINGERS CLUB Mon 7 - 9 p.m.
Mr. Nelson Yoshioka

KARATE CLASSES Tues & Fri 6 - 8 p.m.
Shihan - Walter Nishioka

FUJINKAI LADIES' FELLOWSHIP GROUP
Wed 9 a.m. - noon

THANK YOU

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2013 Memorial Service Schedule

2012	1 Year	2011	3 Year	2007	7 Year
2001	13 Year	1997	17 Year	1989	25 Year
1981	33 Year	1964	50 Year	1914	100 Year

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Therefore, to intentionally disparage the Buddha, these non-Buddhist teachers then explained to the couple that their child would be a girl instead of a boy as follows:

We predict that a girl will be born instead of a boy because if a boy is born into your family, he will become the most abusive and violent of persons. As an adult, he will create much chaos and devastation everywhere. Furthermore, he will bring you and your next of kin unbearable pain, misfortune and especially disgrace to your family. This is why we predicted for your sake that a girl would be born instead of a boy. We wanted to prevent such a tragedy from befalling you and your loved ones.

Upon hearing these unexpected words, the elderly husband was naturally stunned and overcome. He began trembling with fear and anxiety because the Buddha had already predicted that his young wife would give birth to a boy who would bring good fortune and happiness instead of a girl who would bring misfortune and unhappiness. Upon seeing the fear in the eyes of the husband, one of the heretical teachers then instantly took advantage of the old man's fears and said:

I have a way to help you out of this dilemma!

Obtaining the husband's consent, this *guru* took the young pregnant wife back to his abode.

The *guru* then began to push down on the wife's abdomen from top downward with great force and determination. The intent was to abort the boy child. However, such a strategy ended horribly. The child was born but, instead, the young wife died in the process. Undaunted by what he had done, the *guru*, without any remorse, then cremated both the mother and the baby to hide his hideous doings. The legend was born and continues that the baby survived the funeral pyre

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WORDS OF SHINRAN

... how lamentable that people who have not fully awakened from drunkenness are urged to more drunkenness and those still in the grips of poison encouraged to take yet more poison. It is indeed sorrowful to give way to impulses with the excuse that one is by nature possessed of blind passions—excusing acts that should not be committed, words that should not be said, and thoughts that should not be harbored—and to say that one may follow one's desires in any way whatever.... SBT-Series. *LETTERS*. No. 20. p. 61.

and was saved from the fires to live on. Furthermore, his person, appearance and character, as Sakyamuni Buddha had predicted, developed into an adult most superb, excellent, and so radiant that his brilliance surpassed that of all others around him. Such a legend expresses the importance of one's past karma.

At age sixteen, this boy child was already an outstanding young man. Then one day, this young man and his elderly father invited their immediate family and next of kin to a great feast for an occasion of celebration. The *guru* who had been the cause of the young mother's death was also invited to the feast. However, this *guru* suddenly burst out in laughter as though he had lost his senses. The people asked the reason for his laughter and seemingly derisive jeers and gigglings.

The *guru* then replied:

I am laughing because beyond those mountains several thousands of miles away, I was looking at a monkey trying to descend the steep bank of a river to get a drink of water. He began slipping and fell into the river. The way he was frantically trying to grasp hold of the slippery river bank to get out in vain was very funny. That's why I was laughing giggling so loudly.

The rich old man's son then thought,

How blatant of this heretical *guru* in claiming to possess such clairvoyant powers that he

doesn't really have! He feels no remorse for what he did to my mother. I will now expose him for what he really is!

So, when a pot of sumptuous delicacies was placed before each of the guests to enjoy, the contentious *guru* alone refrained from eating. Instead, he placed his bowl of rice on top of the dish of many delicacies to show his disdain and rejection of worldly pleasures since he was an ascetic. He did this so he would not see the food that was so tempting. The other guests began eating and enjoying all the tasty morsels on their plate of delicacies with the beverages that were also served. But the *guru* with his arms folded in a gesture of disdain, refrained from eating or drinking. For, he had vowed not to partake of such earthly pleasures of this world. He pretended that he did not see the food and drink right before his eyes! He remained silent while the others ate and conversed.

The elderly host and his son then asked the *guru*:

Why aren't you eating?

To which the *guru* arrogantly retorted:

What is delicious for everyone is not a delicacy for me!

Whereupon, the son of the elderly man, whose mother's life was lost because of this ascetic's doings (karma), immediately said:

Although you claim to have eyes capable of seeing things beyond the mountains several million and even billion of miles away, why can't you see the plate of delicacies right under the bowl of rice that you placed over it so as not to see it? Why cannot you see and taste how delicious they are?

The *guru* could not respond to this point blank question that had clearly exposed his claims of possessing supernatural vision and prophetic powers. He became so enraged that he, suddenly, without saying a word, stood up and stomped out of the festive gathering to which he had been invited.

- - - - -

To forget to deal with matters needing immediate attention and concerned only with matters of the future; neglecting to do things that

need to be done promptly by saying they can be taken care of later, these traits generally characterize people today. For, they accept the newer things as they keep discarding the former things as outmoded because of the newer things. Today, there are many individuals living as though they were programmed by time schedules and controlled by newer things that keep coming out. As of consequence, their lives themselves are being replaced by more and more efficient machines that have no thoughts or feelings.

However, each person over the passing generations an individual human being basic needs matters. So too is a home that is not merely a rooming and boarding house but a house that is also a home for a family. The home today is much like a house full of robotic individuals who are more like zombies. They have become like machines without much thought of caring by sharing responsibilities and being accountable to each other. Responsibility and accountability to solidify human bonds are the foundations for holding individuals, peoples, societies and nations together.

The reality today, however, is that society and nations have become like branches lopped off and disconnected from a tree. So, one of the fundamental requirements of each individual as a member of the human family is for her or him to first discipline and center herself or himself as a human person. There is no other way for a nation, society, family or an individual to prosper if the home where a family lives is just a boarding and rooming house.

To follow and live the Buddhist teachings, this most certainly is not to be a person whose mind is only imagining things while her or his heart is drowning in falsehoods and deceptions. This Buddhist story is telling us to face and resolve the actual problems of life and death right before our own eyes, and not be misled by things momentary and passing, or in a bygone past or future that are merely imagined and full of baseless imaginations.

Indeed, like the defiant *guru* many give only profess to have the ability to "see things far beyond and above the mountain, millions and billions of miles away," while they are unable to see the reality of life right before their feet, right before them to see. As of consequence, many fail to see the very things right before their very eyes. Many as of consequence do not see or acknowledge the many blessings of life they already are enjoying. They are like the *guru* who placed his "rice bowl" to

cover the pot of delicacies of Mother Earth out of sight, refusing to see and eat and enjoy them.

CONCERNING MEDIUMSHIP

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Mediumship is defined as the practice of certain people—known as mediums—to mediate communication between spirits of the dead and other human beings. While no evidence has been accepted by the scientific community in support of the view that there has been communication between the living and the dead, some parapsychologists say that some of their research suggests that such communication may have taken place. The practice is associated with several religious belief systems such as Spiritualism, Spiritism....

There are several different variants of mediumship; the best known forms are where a spirit takes control of a medium's voice and uses it to relay a message, or where the medium simply "hears" the message and passes it on. ...

There is a difference between a prophet and a seer. A prophet is one who speaks for God. A seer is one who can see hidden things such as future events.

Attempts to contact the dead go back to early human history. Mediumship gained in popularity during the 19th century. Investigations during this period revealed widespread fraud—with some practitioners employing techniques used by stage magicians—and the practice started to lose credibility. Nevertheless the practice still continues to this day and high profile fraud has been uncovered as recently as the 2000s. ...

Lewis Spence in his book *An Encyclopaedia of Occultism* (1960) wrote:

A very large part is played by fraud in spiritualistic practices, both in the physical and psychical, or automatic, phenomena, but especially in the former. The frequency with which mediums have been convicted of fraud has, indeed, induced many people to abandon the study of psychical research, judging the whole bulk of the phenomena to be fraudulently produced.

Others have shown how every Victorian medium

SHINRAN'S WASAN

Amida's Original Vow, Nembutsu
is for beings perverted by
arrogant, blatant evils,
Difficult however for them
to believe and trust Amida.
Nothing is more difficult
than this difficulty of
taking refuge in Amida!
Shoshinge lines 41-44
rkt trans.

investigated had been exposed as using trickery.

In recent years, scientific research has been undertaken to ascertain the validity of claims of mediumship. In an experiment undertaken by the British Psychological Society, the conclusion was that the test subjects demonstrated no mediumistic ability. Other experiments which have seemingly found evidence of paranormal activity have been criticized for not establishing thorough test conditions. An experiment considered by parapsychologists to be one of the most compelling involved taking electroencephalography readings of twelve test subjects, most of which were found to have abnormal readings, with some readings bearing similarities to those found in epileptics even though the subjects had never experienced fits and had no family history of epilepsy. While mediumistic ability is neither confirmed nor denied by unusual brain activity, the findings of the experiment were that parapsychological phenomena are at least partly a function of the brain.

In Spiritism and Spiritualism the medium has the role of an intermediary between the world of the living and the world of the dead. Mediums claim that they can listen to and relay messages from spirits, or that they can allow a spirit to control their body and speak through it directly or by using automatic writing or drawing. ...

In Spiritualism, psychic senses used by mental mediums are sometimes defined differently than in other paranormal fields. A medium is said to have psychic abilities but not all psychics function as mediums. The term *clairvoyance*, for instance, may be used by Spiritualists to include seeing spirits and visions instilled by spirits. The Parapsychological Association defines

"clairvoyance" as information derived directly from an external physical source. ...

Many 19th century mediums were discovered to be engaged in fraud. While advocates of mediumship claim that their experiences are genuine, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* article on spiritualism notes in reference to a case in the 19th century that "... one by one, the Spiritualist mediums were discovered to be engaged in fraud, sometimes employing the techniques of stage magicians in their attempts to convince people of their clairvoyant powers." The article also notes that "the exposure of widespread fraud within the spiritualist movement severely damaged its reputation and pushed it to the fringes of society in the United States." ...

Michael Shermer criticized mediums in *Scientific American*, saying, "mediums are unethical and dangerous: they prey on the emotions of the grieving. As grief counselors know, death is best faced head-on as a part of life." Shermer wrote that the human urge to seek connections between events that may form patterns meaningful for survival is a function of natural evolution, and called the alleged ability of mediums to talk to the dead "a well-known illusion of a meaningful pattern."

[From further Wikipedia entries:]

John Edward McGee, Jr. (born Oct. 19, 1969), known professionally as John Edward, is an American television personality and self-proclaimed professional psychic medium. He is best known for his TV shows *Crossing Over with John Edward* and *John Edward Cross Country*. ... Critics of Edward assert he performs the mentalist techniques of **hot reading** and **cold reading**, in which one respectively uses prior knowledge or a wide array of quick and sometimes general guesses to create the impression of psychic ability. ...

In **hot reading**, the reader uses information about the person receiving the reading (for example, from background research or overhearing a conversation) which the receiver is not aware that the reader already knows. Hot reading is commonly used in conjunction with **cold reading** (where no previously gathered information is used) and can explain how a psychic reader can get a specific claimed "**hit**" of accurate information. ... Choosing the first reading from a two hour tape of edited shows as a sample, magician and skeptic James Randi found that just three of 23 statements made by Edward were

confirmed as correct by the audience member being read, and the three statements that were correct were also trivial and nondescript.

VEGETARIANISM AND NON-VIOLENCE Buddhist Influences on Hinduism

Through its effect on the thinking of the general population, the rise of Buddhism also dealt a **severe jolt to the Vedic religion**. Many practices which became characteristic of later Hinduism were a result of this jolt. The Hindu insistence on vegetarianism was the most important one.

As discussed in the chapter on the fire sacrifice, **Yagna** could have been a ritualization of the cooking function of the tribal period of early Aryan society in which the **yagna fireplace** was the central fire (hearth) of the common tribal kitchen. (Refer to the chapter on the Rise and Fall of the **Caste System**, and the section on **Brahmins** — Those Baptized by Fire.) That mostly meat must have been cooked (roasted) on the central fireplace of the Aryan tribe is evident as **meat was the main item of food available** and essential to conserve energy in those days of collective hunting. The logical corollary of this is that meat eating must have been associated with the original activity which later got ritualized in the **Yagna fire sacrifice in the post Vedic days** when **hunting was no longer the main occupation and its place was taken by pastoral and agricultural activities**. But even after the Yagna had become a ritual in the post Vedic times, the **sacrificing of animals must have been an essential part of the Yagna ritual**. Even the eating of meat during a Yagna was an established practice in those days. This is borne out by the statement in the Manusmriti according to which "**He who performs the Yagna but does not eat the sacrificial meat is condemned to be born as an animal whose meat he refuses to eat for 21 future rebirths.**" But in the changed circumstances, **with agriculture** becoming the main occupation, the continuing practice of slaughtering the **much needed livestock** in the Yagnas put a **heavy strain** on the agrarian economy. Thus a **new ethic** was needed to curb this practice. The emergence of **Buddhism** and **Jainism** fulfilled this need.

The determined support which these new faiths received from society at large, but especially from the **mercantile community** which was the **rising class** of that age, gave these religions a **strong social base**. The Vedic religion had to change to adapt itself to the new material conditions, if it was to survive. The **Mitakshara treatise** by the **law giver Vidnyaneshwara** written after the practice of meat eating had fallen into disgrace, **forbids the regular eating of flesh in Kaliyuga (dark age), but simultaneously concedes permission for meat eating during performance of the Yagna**. This represents the **ambivalent attitude of the later Vedic religion toward meat eating**. Gradually came the taboo on meat eating, **initially** on those animals which were important for the agrarian economy — **the cow and the bull**. This was later made into a **general ban on eating meat as well as fish and eggs**. But **an exception** was made for milk and **milk products**. This process reached its **climax with the deification of the cow (Gomata) and bull (Nandi)**. But such deification or at least glorification is **not peculiar to Indian society alone**; it had existed

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continued from p. 2

Donations

in many agrarian societies. It seems to have existed even in the **pre-Aryan Indus culture** as is brought out by the appearance of the bull on many Indus seals. But the acceptance in the Dharmashastras of an **attitude prohibiting animal sacrifice and meat eating** was inevitable for the Vedic religion if it was to stem the tide of the propertied merchant and agricultural classes toward Buddhism and Jainism. If the Vedic religion was to survive in a changing society, the support of the dominant classes had to be retained. And for which those practices which violated the interests of this class had to be dropped.

In place of the actual sacrifice of living creatures during the Yagna, what was now done was the symbolic breaking of a coconut and the offering of small figures of bulls and horses (Pista-Pashu) representing the animals that had formerly been sacrificed during a Yagna. Consumption of beef was replaced by the consumption of the five elements issuing from the cow, viz. the cow dung, cow's urine, milk, curds and clarified butter mixed together in a liquid (slurry) called Pancha-Gavya. The constituents honey and sugar later replaced cow dung and cow's urine when vegetarianism was further refined, to give us the Panchamrita of today.

The acceptance of the Buddhist and Jaina doctrine of ahimsa by the Vedic religion with the continued Yagna ritual characterized the later Hindu religion. The Yagna ritual in an altered version was a combination of convenience. This peculiar but convenient combination became characterized of later Hindu theology. So much so that today we have forgotten that **the ideals of non-violence and vegetarianism came into being as a reaction against animal sacrifices of the early Hindu religion of the Vedic period.**

BUDDHIST PASSAGES & STORIES

Sakyamuni said ... The result of one's karma must be born by oneself alone and no one else can take one's place. This is the natural law. Misfortune follows evil deeds as their retribution, which is impossible to avoid. Good people do good deeds, and so enjoy pleasure after pleasure and proceed from light to greater light. Evildoers commit crimes

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and so suffer pain after pain and wander from darkness to deeper darkness. No one, except the Buddha, knows this completely. Hisao Inagaki. *THE THREE PURE LAND SUTRAS*. pp. 300, 301.

QUESTION & ANSWER KORNOR

QUESTION: How does one deal with a person involved in a religion trying to impose its beliefs and teachings on you?

ANSWER: The Buddha teaches that if an innocent child is playing with a sharp knife or matches, the infant might injure and even kill himself or set fire to the things around him and endanger his as well as the life of others. In such instances, Buddha teaches that it is better to get the child to stop playing with a knife or matches by offering him a better and even more attractive toy like a flashlight.

In the case of an adult, Buddha teaches to first to "listen" and "hear" out the person's reasons for his words and actions. Only then can the actual causes and real reasons for his errors, contradictions and inconsistencies be pointed out without being judgmental or condemnatory. Only then can the proper solutions or cure be found.