

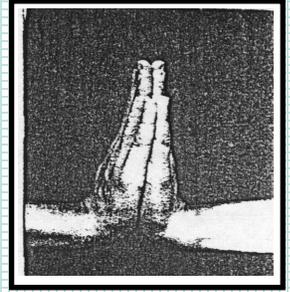
GASSHO

January

2017

Issue No: 1-17

“Hands together in reverence & gratitude”



“Oneness” (ichi-nyō) means seamless and inseparable because all things, living and non-living, are interconnected. May 2017 bring us all together as one big family free of racial conflicts and violence. May felicity and good will bring peace and serenity to all beings and mankind!



courtesy Alexa's Fotos / Pixabay

Reverend's New Year's Message

by rev. roland k. tatsuguchi

In this issue of GASSHO, I hope to continue ruminating on how newscasters and political pundits have and continue to assess the election of Donald Trump who will be inaugurated as the 45th President of the United States on the 20th of this month. His election not only stunned the Democrats but also put many Republicans in a quandary who once vehemently denounced his candidacy. His election already has and continues to have a boomerang effect on those who voted for as well as those who voted against him!

This is because the karmic consequences

MONTH'S THOUGHT



O GREAT SPIRIT
help me always
to speak the truth quietly,
to listen with an open mind
when others speak,
and to remember the peace
that may be found in silence.

Cherokee Prayer



of what Trump has said and done (and yet keeps saying and doing) are not going to

REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2017

SUNDAY Jan 1st

New Year's Day
10 A.M. English Service
"Ahimsa and Five Precepts"
Rev. Tatsuguchi

2ND SUN Jan 8th

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

3RD SUN Jan 15th

GOSHOOKI HOONKO
9 A.M. English service
with Rev. Ryoso Toshima

4TH SUN Jan 22nd

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

5TH SUN Jan 29th

MONTHLY FAMILY WORSHIP
9 A.M. Eng. service
Dharma Talk
Rev. Tatsuguchi

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

BON DANCE CLASS 2nd & 4th Sun
from 1:30 – 3 p.m. – Joyce Gushiken

KARATE CLASSES Tues & Fri 6 – 8 p.m.
Int'l Karate League – Walter Nishioka

KARATE CLASSES Thurs 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Hawaii Shotokan Karate – Alan Sekiguchi

EXERCISE CLASSES Wed 5 – 8 p.m.
Natural Healing Research Foundation

FUJINKAI LADIES' FELLOWSHIP GROUP
Tues 9 a.m. – noon

With Deepest Sympathy

Mr. Sasao Matsunaka 93 yrs. Nov. 22, 2016
Mr. Gilbert Yabusaki 98 yrs. Nov. 29, 2016

Our church secretary

Mrs. Darlene Kawashige
passed away Nov. 21, 2016
Shinshu Kyokai was blessed to have her
warm heart and generous service

SHINSHU KYOKAI MISSION GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING DONATIONS

2017 Memorial Service Schedule

2016	1 Year	2015	3 Year	2011	7 Year
2005	13 Year	2001	17 Year	1993	25 Year
1985	33 Year	1968	50 Year	1916	100 Year

continues on p. 5

disappear just because the right-wing media such as the Fox channels suddenly have begun to gloss over his crass verbal vulgarities, falsehoods and actions as "bygones be bygones," for it is now time to focus on a new world order (*Novus Ordo Seclorum*). However, the karmic effects of Trump's serrated style of speaking and demonization of non-white minorities, his accusations that Washington, D.C., is a quagmire of corruption, have triggered a divisiveness between white supremacists and non-whites that will haunt him throughout his presidency.

Many Republicans are now reveling in his victory. Many are cozying up to him since they have won a majority in the House of Representatives and Senate. But many fear he has also aroused white Anglo-Saxon Protestant supremacist sentiments that go all the way back to European-style ethnocentric nationalism, especially in their nationalistic pride in their Pilgrim and Puritan forefathers and heritage. This can be seen in Trump's choosing the likes of Steve Bannon as his chief strategist and counsel who claims he is a "patriotic nationalist" and not a "racist white nationalist." Instead of "draining the swamp" in Washington, D.C., as he promised, he, instead, is filling it even more with the same kind of players, the very insiders he pledged to get rid of.

Only this time around, in Trump's case, we are now witness to his unabashed sexism and offensive vilifications. Paradoxically, these characterizations eerily reveal Trump's own chameleon character and unpredictable nature.

What is most tragic is the fact that the Latinos were the biggest losers. And even more

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Reverend's New Year's Greeting

Sumiko and I wish you all a Happy New Year with our Best Wishes beginning with this year's January, followed by a dazzling February, a peaceful March, an anxiety free April, a sensational May with a joy that keeps prevailing from June to November, and then a December full of good will that rolls into the years that continue to bring the same.

Namoh-amida-butsu.

bitter was the blow dealt to the everyday hard working class of liberal middle-class educated whites who had overwhelmingly voted for Clinton who was rejected by the evangelical white supremacists who had voted for Trump. So also were the 50% of whites in the "lower-middle" and "lower" classes, the "Forgotten White Americans," who never were on the radar of the top uppermost class of the elite 1% of multi-billionaires and the opulent 4% multi-millionaire peers.

Let us, however, not forget that the beauty of our nation is based on the Constitution authored by the founding founders who were deists of the Enlightenment Era and not monotheists of the Dark Ages. They designed an alternative system of governance as a bulwark against a singular authority, such as in an oligarchy, plutocracy, especially a kakistocracy.

Though the founding fathers like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and others set up the original building blocks of a blossoming "New World Order," we also need to be reminded that they were also well-educated men of wealth and slave owners. The Constitution they ratified in 1788 survives to this day with all its shortcomings as times and circumstances have and keep changing over the passing generations.

Though the generations of mankind keep passing on, we need to remember that in the short three hundred or so years in the history

WORDS OF SHINRAN

"... you should not disparage the teachings of other Buddhas or people who perform good acts other than *nembutsu*. Neither should you despise those who scorn and slander people of *nembutsu*. ..." SBT-Series. *Letters of Shinran*. No. 2 p. 25.

of the United States, countless Native American tribes were decimated, that Africans were exploited as slaves as were other non-white people who were exploited as sources of cheap contract labor as justified and rationalized through Judaic and Christian presumptions that White people are a "chosen people" with a mandate to convert the rest of the world.

Our Constitution was ratified in 1788 by the founding fathers. Their descendants eventually came to refer to themselves, of all things, as "Bostonian Brahmins" to distinguish and set themselves apart from the uneducated, non-literate, less sophisticated peoples of Europe who they first recruited as "indentured servants." The Blacks and Asians came later. This is why the folkways and mores of America to this day are predominantly of Judaeo-Christian culture.

Stated another way, our nation is said to be based on the principle of "diversity in unity" and "unity in diversity" and centered on the rights of a human being to pursue "life, liberty and happiness." But this democratic presumption is not based on the Buddhist principle of "Oneness" (*Ichinyo*). For, it is evident that in the first two chapters of Genesis, man is set above all of God's creations authorized him to use the rest of creation for his food, clothing and shelter (anthropocentrism).

The Buddhist view of "unity and diversity," on the other hand, is based on the actuality that all things, both living and non-living, are interdependent, therefore, inseparable, one from all others, be it flora or fauna. Everything is connected and interdependent and subject to the laws of cause and effect. This principle of unity undergirded by causation is most difficult

to grasp and understand because it is an unseen principle and complex actuality. However, causality is also inseparably connected to the very things we say and the things we actually do.

According to Noam Chomsky, the United States is a limited democracy because it "has been drifting substantially toward plutocracy," or a nation controlled and governed by a minority of wealthy elites at the very top. We are now living in times in which the majority of working-class people are constantly under pressure and stressed out about "not making it in an economic-political system" controlled by the very few at the top who keep becoming richer and richer at the expense of the majority below who continue to become poorer and poorer. We see this happening even now in Trump's choosing of who he wants on his cabinet.

America, in other words, has become basically a meritocracy in which individuals have been reduced to robotic tools bereft of human feelings, moral sensibilities and spiritual aspirations. The lowest of the lower-class whites, the original descendants of European indentured servants, are now living under chronic disadvantaged economic and social conditions. Like other socially and economically disadvantaged non-white minorities, they have no political clout or voice in Congress. Trump has called it a swamp of corruption.

This means that in order to get to the top of the economic or political heap, one has to have been born either into an inordinate amount of wealth, or become the best of technicians and/or professionals money can buy. In other words, a technician or a professional is like any machine that can be replaced and displaced at any time by a more efficient and productive machine. This is why two of the main goals of the Republican Party is to be rid of the "tenure system" that supports ineffective workers and a "welfare system" that has become a chronic way of life for many.

These are only some of the reasons as to why many evangelical Christian white supremacists feel that they have been "robbed" of their "inalienable rights" by their hyphenated non-

white American peers who are Blacks, Latinos and Asians, especially if they are illegal immigrants. So, while millennial Whites may be progressive and liberal on issues of "social justice" and "equal opportunity," those who are blinded by their deep-rooted white supremacist notions continue to utter racist remarks that suddenly explode in acts of violence, given the provocation and situation.

According to Shin Buddhism, human beings universally are unpredictable and scary because in the depths of their unconscious being lurk constantly urges of a basal instinctual nature. This is why it is so difficult to deal with our feelings and thoughts. Unseen, they trigger the very things we say and do. This is true not only of jihadist Muslims but also of politicians as well as theologians who intentionally play the game of "divide and conquer." They are adept in spouting off populist platitudes that conceal their real intentions and goals.

So, for the year 2017 let us heed the admonitions of Sakyamuni as follows:

"Beware of bodily anger, and control thy body! Leave the sins of the body, and with thy body practice virtue."

"Beware of the anger of the tongue, and control thy tongue! Leave the sins of the tongue and practice virtue with thy tongue!"

"Beware of the anger of the mind, and control thy mind! Leave the sins of the mind and practice virtue with thy mind."
The Dhammapada VII p. 231-234.

Shinran Shonin confirms what the Buddha said as follows in the *Tannisho*:

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Donations

continued from p. 2

SHINRAN'S WASAN

"When people enter
the Age of Five Corruptions,
Discord breaks out between
what is sacred and profane!
Persons of nembutsu faith
are seen suspiciously
and viciously slandered!"

Shozomatsu Wasan No. 13
rkt translation.

Due to limited space due to Postal restrictions, if your donation is not listed in this GASSHO, it will be listed in a following edition. For any inadvertent misspelling of names, please accept our apologies.

BUDDHIST VERSES AND STORIES

"Now this, *bhikkhus*, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering."

Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

"Where there are arguments, various kinds of blind passion are awakened; the wise should avoid them..." (T. Unno. *Tannisho* XII. p. 21).

May the words of Sakyamuni Buddha and Shinran Shonin guide us through the first year of Trump's presidency which already is full of controversies and contradictions. This is because on April 14, 2015, Trump began chanting his political mantra: "I will make America Great Again," which means, "he wants to take everything back which America has given to the rest of the world."

There is, however, something deeply troubling and wrong in this way of thinking that "America has been robbed," when in fact it was the Spanish and Portuguese who first began plundering the Americas, followed by the Puritans who began displacing Native Americans in President Andrew Jackson's relentless Westward expansion, followed then by streams of immigrants, initially from Europe and finally from the world over, all hoping to pursue a life of freedom, liberty and success. Jackson himself was a slave owner.

Indeed, that all beings past, present and future be truly happy and safe wherever they are, this is the ultimate goal of Buddhism!

Namoh-amida-butsu.

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February 12

General Membership Meeting

and **Shinnen Enkai**

10:30 A.M.

QUESTION & ANSWER KORNER

QUESTION: What is the age of five corruptions?

ANSWER: They refer to times when
1) wars and natural disasters are rife;
2) life-spans are cut short; 3) people's
minds are debased and bodies demeaned;
4) greed, aversion, pride, doubt, indifference,
etc. prevails; and 5) misguided
opinions and perverse views prevail.