

FACING IMPERMANENCE

By Ed Oasa



I struggle with my illness and wonder, "Why is this happening to me?"

In Shinran Shonin's text, *Kyogyoshinsho*, he wrote about the difficulties of accepting the Dharma through one's efforts. I'm experiencing this firsthand as I face my doctor's most recent and bleak medical diagnosis. I feel Shinran's writings are true and real.

A year ago, I wrote an essay titled "Facing Humility," about my embrace of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Before, I wasn't very religious, but soon looked forward to embarking on the Buddhist path.

Four years ago, I began

treatment for blood cancer. Two years later, I suffered a near-fatal bout of pneumonia. After recovering, I began studying Jodo Shinshu.

My illness happened over a short period and left me disabled and dependent on supplemental oxygen. It forced me to retire from my profession as a private investigator, which I enjoyed for more than 20 years.

How does this happen, I asked, and in such a short time... to me? I was in total awe of change, wondering how these events came out of nowhere. This awe I felt was humbling, and in my down moments, humiliating.

Jodo Shinshu teachings of humility and selflessness, challenging my delusional, ego-based self, helped me come to terms with my illness and disability.

I wouldn't come to this acceptance without listening to the Shin teachings. These teachings manifest the great Dharma truth of impermanence. As Rev. Ken Yamada said in his Buddhism class, Dharma truth is spelled with a "big T."

In the book, *River of Fire, River of Water*, the late Shin scholar Taitetsu Unno shared a popular Shin saying: "Illness,

too, is my good friend." Dr. Unno understood there's something liberating about humiliation.

Earlier this year, I felt pretty good about life. I was less dependent on my portable oxygen and my pulmonary function readings improved. Doctors told me I probably don't have to worry about cancer returning. I was in remission nearly three years.

In June, another diagnosis came as a shock. Cancer had returned with a vengeance. It wasn't merely a relapse, but a progression of my first disease. It's probably the disease that blood cancer patients fear most.

I was told there's no cure. But if I didn't receive treatment, I'd only live another eight to twelve weeks. With chemotherapy and maybe with new drugs in clinical trials, I could prolong my life. I know chemotherapy's efficacy declines over time. Surviving another three years, as a doctor said, is "rare."

You can imagine, those same ego-driven questions as before filled my head with a vengeance, like a cancer. How could this happen again? I could hardly believe it. I was deflated. I felt robbed of life. I felt the same in 2016 when first diagnosed with cancer, but back then, doctors

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 2020



Date	Day	Time	Event
1	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Shotsuki service (Daylight Savings ends)
		11:15 a.m.	Dharma School Halloween Party (zoom)
8	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	HO-ONKO SERVICE
		11:30 a.m.	WBA meeting by ZOOM
15	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	BETSUIN HO-ONKO SERVICE
17	Tuesday	7:30 p.m.	Temple Board meeting
22	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Family service
26	Thursday		Thanksgiving Day
29	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Family service

December 2020

6	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Bodhi Day service
		11:15 a.m.	Dharma School Bodhi day party (zoom)
13	Sunday	10:00 a.m.	Shotsuki Service Last / Dharma school

Please check out the calendar on our website for the latest schedules and information. <https://www.bombu.org/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER TOBAN
(group #1) *Janice Adachi, Wendy Adachi, Nina Costales, Satoko Davidson, Grace Goto, Alice Horio, Doreen Imada, Elsie Lum, Denice Nakano, Diane Nishioka, Michi Takata, Miyoko Truong.*

Mochitsuki CANCELED
Unfortunately, due to the ongoing COVID 19 situation, we will not have "Mochitsuki" this year.

SUNDAY SERVICE
We will continue live-streaming our Sunday services via Facebook. You DO NOT NEED

a Facebook account in order to view the live-stream. Just go to the link on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. You will also be able to watch the service later if you miss the initial 10:00 a.m. broadcast. Here is the link: <http://www.facebook.com/berkeleyhigashi/live>.

SHOTSUKI MEMORIAL SERVICE
We will hold the Shotsuki monthly memorial service on Nov. 1 at 10 a.m. The following families will observe memorials for loved ones this month: Chio Tominaga, Isono Hiratsuka, Joe Goto, Kaz Yanaba, May Yamashita, Minoru Higuchi, Sataro & Kinuyo

Hiwano, Shigeru Morita, Yoko Sugiyama, Tamaye Nakano, Umemoto.

HO-ONKO SERVICE (SHINRAN SHONIN ANNUAL MEMORIAL)
Literally the most important service in our Jodo Shinshu tradition is Ho-onko, the annual memorial service for Shinran Shonin. In Japan at the main Higashi Honganji temple, thousands of people will attend Ho-onko services. In Berkeley, **we will hold the service on November 8th at 10 a.m via Facebook.**

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Los Angeles Betsuin HO-ONKO (SHINRAN SHONIN ANNUAL MEMORIAL)
Let's watch and attend Los Angeles Betsuin's live-streaming HO-ONKO Service on November 15th at 10 am. There is no online service from our temple on that day. <https://www.facebook.com/hhbt.la/live/>.

TEMPLE BOARD ELECTIONS
Ballots will soon be sent out to elect our temple's board of directors for 2021. The board oversees the general management and administration of the temple. If you are interested in serving on the temple board, please contact the temple office.

2020 FUNDRAISING T-SHIRTS & MASKS The deadline for ordering has been extended to Nov. 15th. Please see the form in the Oct. Bombu or contact Patti pbaba@berkeley.edu

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
Although not officially a Buddhist observance, the Thanksgiving holiday reflects the Buddhist teachings, the Buddha Dharma. The words "Namu Amida Butsu" express this interdependence and sense of gratitude. That's why before eating, it's nice to put our hands together and say the Nembutsu. And don't forget to say "itadakimasu" (I respectfully receive life of this foods. And I gratefully receive this food.) .

DHARMA SCHOOL VIA ZOOM
Our Dharma School meets weekly on Sundays via Zoom at 11:00 a.m. and is open to all youth through the 8th grade. For more details, please email mdbeppu@gmail.com.

PLEDGE REMINDER
Only two months left to make your 2020 pledge donation. The upkeep, repair and maintenance of our temple, as well as various

programs and activities depend on the support and generosity of our members. Unlike other organizations, we don't require membership dues, however we rely on voluntary pledge donations from our members. If you haven't yet made your pledge for this year and would like to do so, simply send a check in the amount of your choosing, marked "2020 pledge" to the temple, payable to Berkeley Higashi Honganji. To everyone who already pledged, we thank you very much.

YOU CAN REQUEST FAMILY SERVICE
Rev. Ryoko Osa can conduct special online services for you and your family via Zoom. Weddings, Funerals, and Memorial Services are still happening. Please don't hesitate to contact Rev.Osa.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BIG THANK YOUS TO THE FOLLOWING

DENNIS MAKISHIMA his students and the Aesthetic Pruners Association for pruning and shaping trees and generally enhancing the Japanese-style of our temple garden, (hauling) *Jimmy Kihara*, (helpers) *Tom Morioka, Kenta Hasui, Rinako Osa*, (Lunch Donation) *Kevin, Christine & Peter Sullivan*

Thank you everyone for your donations, time, energy and support. Because of you, our temple exists for us and for future generations. Help us by calling or emailing the temple if names are inadvertently omitted from acknowledgements or donations. Domo arigato gozaimashita!



RECOGNIZING AND REMEDYING THE AGGREGATES OF ATTACHMENT IN A TIME OF UNCERTAINTY

by Carlo Barlaan

These are exceptional times. America faces its most challenging public health crisis since 1918, its most serious economic crisis since 1929, and its most violent civil unrest since 1968. In times of political, economic, and social uncertainty, it is easy for society's members to make sense of their situation in a black-and-white, dualistic, moralizing lens. The most common lens: that we are involved in a struggle between good and evil. How many leaders and experts have utilized the language of struggle to lead or even mislead their constituents? How many ads, press briefings, news reports, and even office memos refer to beating, fighting, war, enemies, and justice? The most expedient way for society's leaders to mobilize public opinion and allocate resources on a grand scale is to harden people's sense of righteous self and wrongful other. In Buddhist terms, this means to radically enhance their attachment to form.

With all the uncertainty around us, we see the consequences of attachment; we see each of the five aggregates of attachment at work. In the case of the pandemic, we have forms such as the virus itself, media images from abroad of the sick and dying, and shortages of sanitizing supplies. The other four aggregates – sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness – come into play immediately. Citizens feel threatened, assume the worst, point fingers, perceive each other as enemies, hoard supplies, price-gouge, and engage in displays of national fervor and even outright ethnic discrimination.

In the case of civil unrest, we have forms such as police, victims, and video imagery of brutality. Again, feelings of anger and the perception of threat to the individual and collective self are heightened. Demonstrators turn out on the streets and freeways. Confrontations erupt between them, the police, and passing motorists. Property is vandalized. Businesses are looted. Buildings are set on fire. People die. Retribution is rationalized. It's good vs. evil, systemic victims vs. systemic oppressors, justice vs. injustice, absolute right vs. absolute wrong. State actors, social agents, and other participants live in the illusion of their own justification and reality, and the suffering goes on and on... How do we extricate ourselves from this seemingly unceasing cycle of suffering, from this realm of human misery?

We free ourselves by exercising wisdom and compassion – the wisdom to recognize the emptiness of the forms that surround us, and the compassion to treat all sentient beings with as they live in a state of interconnectedness. Wisdom and compassion cut through all notions of independent reality. All minds, now freed of form and illusion, settle in a land of purity.

When I see representations of Shakyamuni Buddha, Amida Buddha, and the Bodhisattvas Manjushri and Avalokiteshvara, when I hear or read the words of our teachers, I am reminded that by freeing our minds and practicing wisdom and compassion, the pure land can be here and now in our minds and hearts, in spite of all the uncertainty and passions that have arisen around us.



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talked about a potential cure.

Nowadays, fear and deep sadness ebb and flow throughout my house. For the past four years, my wife has been my caregiver. I feel guilty about the burden I've been to her, and now also, about the pain of eventually leaving her behind.

I feel this is classic dukkha. It's the friction between my desires and the Truth of impermanence. As Dr. Nobuo Haneda of the Maida Center of Buddhism in Berkeley poignantly wrote, suffering is the struggle between the self and Dharma.

Whatever it's called – friction, suffering, conflict – it doesn't disappear. Ego drives people to be easily offended, hurt, envious, jealous, and angry. Knowing this truth provides little relief.

Since my diagnosis, I've stepped up my Jodo Shinshu studies. I've no choice but to deepen my understanding of Dharma through teachers

I've met along the way. Why? Because Jodo Shinshu is about liberation from my ego and delusional thinking. Facing my illness ultimately means facing Truth by challenging and examining this self to see how temporary and impermanent it is—just like life.

Alone, I read Shin writings and Shinran's Kyogyoshinsho. I attend virtual Sunday services and listen to Dharma talks by Rev. Ryoko Osa of Berkeley Higashi Honganji Temple. I participate in her weekly Shoshinge study class. For over a year, I've absorbed Haneda-sensei's weekly lectures at the Maida Center on Shinran's writings and the Larger Sutra of Infinite Life. I also view talks about Buddhism on the Buddhist Churches of America Youtube channel.

I learned Buddhism is not an easy religion. Rev. Osa's words forced me to reflect on the self. Haneda-sensei stresses Buddhism is "hard on you," demanding we realize and face Truth. The Buddhist teachings truly are humbling.

Haneda-sensei says of the Three Treasures, Sangha is most important. It's impossible to arrive at Truth by oneself. Life is full of temptations and distractions filling the mind of the ego self.

The Sangha has been invaluable to me. I'm grateful to everyone I've met. Reciting the Nenbutsu, "Namu Amida Butsu," represents to me, hearing the Buddha's call to abandon my ego self.

My time is limited. Shin teachings are really about having a reverence for the Truth. I find solace in what Buddhist teacher Manshi Kiyozawa calls "religious conviction," which means entrusting to Truth. Belief in the Tathagata, he said, means "truth to be believed." I'll continue on this path towards accepting Dharma Truth.

Namu Amida Butsu

LIVING THROUGH A PANDEMIC

We now have a chance to listen to the Buddhist teachings of "impermanence." Everything is constantly changing. In this pandemic, we have a responsibility not to judge people based on class, race, sexual orientation, religion, income or occupation for posterity

BUDDHISM LEARNING GROUP

What does it mean to recite "Namu Amidabutsu"? I talk about "Amida's primal vow" in my Dharma talks. Those words are very important for us to live by. But do you know the origin of them? For a deeper understanding of Buddhism, please join me and others to read Shoshinge and discuss the meaning behind Shinran's words. Take a late lunch break and learn together. The online class runs from 1:00-1:45 pm every Monday. Also, there is a Japanese Buddhism Gathering on Thursday 5 pm-6pm. If you have family and friends who want to speak and listen to Japanese, please let them know. Please contact me. Reverend Ryoko Osa: ryoko.osa@gmail.com.

バークレー東本願寺会報

2020年11月号

11月お寺の行事予定

すべての日曜礼拝はオンラインでの放送になります。

<http://www.facebook.com/berkeleyhigashi/> live このリンクからご参加ください。

Facebookのアカウントは不要です。

1日(日)	午前10時	祥月法要
8日(日)	午前10時	報恩講法要
15日(日)	午前10時	別院報恩講
17日(火)	午後7時半	仏教会定例理事会
22日(日)	午前10時	日曜礼拝
26日(木)		感謝祭休日
29日(日)	午前10時	日曜礼拝

12月

12月6日 午前10時 成道会法要

今年のお餅つきはコロナ感染予防のため中止になりました。

11月当番(当番1): あだちジャニース、あだち ウェンディ、Costales ニーナ、Davidson さとこ、ごとう グレイス、堀尾アリス、今田ドーリン、Lum エルシー、中野デニース、西岡 ダイアン、高田みち、みよこTruong (敬称略)

<http://www.facebook.com/berkeleyhigashi/> live このリンクからご参加ください。

祥月法要: 11月1日(日)午前10時より、祥月法要が勤められます。今月の施主は、ゴトウ、肥和野、森田、中野、永利、樋口、富永、ウメモト、高田、柳場、山下、杉山の諸家です。お誘い合わせお参り下さい。

報恩講: 来る11月8日(日)午前10時より、「報恩講」が厳修されます。浄土真宗の年中のお勤めとして、今日まで最も大切に受け継がれてきている法要が「報恩講」です。宗祖親鸞聖人のご命日を偲び、お念仏のみ教えが私たちの生活の力となっていることを感謝し、聖人の恩徳に報いる法要です。皆様でお参りしましょう。

 <http://www.facebook.com/berkeleyhigashi/> live このリンクからご参加ください。

日本語法話会(ズーム): 毎週木曜日午後5時からオンライン日本語法話会を開催しています。どなた様も大歓迎です。ご興味のある方は長開教使までご連絡ください。

和顔愛語

長 良子

皆様お元気でお過ごしでしょうか？コロナウイルスの流行から7ヶ月以上も経ちました。パークレーでは、飲食店の屋外での営業が始まったものの、まだまだ日常生活に戻っていません。コロナ感染予防のため外出時のマスクの常時着用も義務付けられました。日本ではコロナの前からマスクを着ける人が多かったのですが、ここアメリカで着けている人を見たことがありませんでした。しかし、今やマスクをしていない人の方が珍しくなっています。

先日、娘と買い物に行った時、お店に赤ちゃんがいました。わたしは赤ちゃんが大好きで赤ちゃんがいるといつも自然と見つめてしまいます。「お母さん、そんなに見ていたら変な人に思われるよ」と娘から注意されてしまいました。マスクの内側は微笑んでいるのですが、それは他人からはわからないことなので、確かにこれからは気をつけねばなりませんね。

赤ちゃんや幼児はマスクをしてないので、その笑顔に余計に惹きつけられるのかもしれませんが。犬の散歩中もそうです。たまたま目があつた知らない人と挨拶したり笑顔を向け合ったり、そんな小さなコミュニケーションも人間として必要なことだったのだと、顔のほぼ半分が隠れてしまいお互いの表情が読み取れなくなった今、改めて実感しました。

仏説大無量寿経に「和顔愛語」という言葉が出てきます。和やかな顔と思いやりの言葉で人に接して相手の気持ちをいたわるという意味です。

言葉のコミュニケーションだけでなく「和顔」つまりやわらかな表情は相手を和ませます。「和顔」となるためには、自分自身が穏やかな落ちついた気持ちでいることが大事だと思います。

コロナ禍の中、不安に過ごされている方も多いと思います。そんな時こそ、お友達やご家族に電話したり楽しめることをしたり自分自身をいたわって心も体もお健やかに過ごしていただきたいと思います。不安や孤独を感じたらどうぞお気軽にお寺にお電話ください。



Words of the Month | 今月の言葉

The 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shōnin's Birth and
the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jōdo Shinshu.

Theme: 南無阿弥陀仏 人と生まれたことの意味をたずねていこう

Namu Amida Butsu—To Discover the Meaning of Being Born as Human Beings



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Address Correction Requested