



VOLUME 50
ISSUE 11

Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple

GEPPŌ

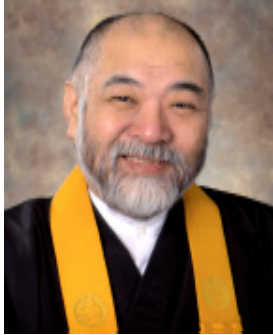
Website: www.fresnobuddhisttemple.org



NOVEMBER
2015

2015 BCA Theme: "Live a Real Life" - Makoto no jinsei wo ayumon

Rev. Kakei Nakagawa, Rinban



Holiday Jokes

Recently, we are hearing good Buddhist jokes from everywhere. And through these jokes, we are surprised to learn that many people in America already understand Buddhism well.

I've chosen a few here, including a 'classic'.

- The owner of an apartment complained.

"Why couldn't those Buddhist monks vacuum under the sofa?" A neighbor replied. **"Because they had no attachment."**

- One High-monk visited NYC and was giving a lecture on Buddhism one day. He found a hotdog food stall right corner of the building. This Buddhist monk was curious and wanted a hot dog, so he went to there at lunch time. The vender asked, **"What would you like, sir?"** The monk straightened himself to answer, **"Well, make me one with everything."** (story continues..) The monk gave the vendor a 20 dollar bill and waited for his change. After a moment of waiting, he asked, **"where is my change?"** The vender replied, **"Sir, the change must come within."**

There are two famous Dalai Lamma jokes and these are the real conversations.

- Dalai Lamma received a present that was beautifully packaged but someone forgot to put it into the box. (We sometimes make same mistakes, anyhow.) Dalai Lamma opened the package and said, **"Wow, it's empty! That is what I always wanted!"**

- Dalai Lamma was asked about his 'reincarnation'. He answered, **"Do I remember my past time? To tell the truth, recently, I don't remember what I did yesterday."**

In the end, there is one bad joke.

- **"Why are there so few Buddhist rhythm & blues band?"** **Because they have no soul.**

It's better not to mention "no soul", "no God" anymore, because these comments are not appropriate from Buddhists. Yes, we carry a soul within, otherwise any soul cannot be eternal. Our soul is changing moment by moment, as is any existence in this universe. That is why our soul continuously grows until it reaches the state of Buddhahood. So, **"When R&B would know Buddha-dharma, a new music will be born."** by Beastie Boys

Rev. Alan Sakamoto



The Golden Buddha

Located in the temple of Wat Traimit, in [Bangkok, Thailand](#), is a Golden Buddha that weighs 5.5 tons. The origin of this statue is uncertain, but believed to have been made in the 13th or 14th Century. At some point, the statue was completely plastered over to prevent it from being stolen, then covered with a thick layer of stucco and painted with inlaid bits of colored glass. Some

scholars believe that this was done to protect the statue from being stolen by Burmese Invaders in 1767. It remained covered with stucco until the 1950s when it was moved to a new temple in Bangkok. One story is told that the monks would repair this clay, as cracks would appear now and then. One day, one monk looked deep into a crack and saw something shiny and reflective. He took a flashlight and was amazed to see gold. When all the plaster was removed, a beautiful golden statue was discovered. The temple monks knew that this statue of the Awakened One was covered as a means of protection from not only the marauding Burmese Army, but from social disruptions, thieves and those who would harm this beautiful statue. It is now a pilgrimage site as thousands and thousands of Buddhist flock to this temple to see the world's largest solid gold Buddha statue.

This statue is a representative of you and me. The clay or stucco represents the afflictions, defilements, destructive, disturbing, and negative emotions that poison our minds. In Mahayana Buddhism, ignorance, attachment, and aversion are identified as the root or source of all those afflictions like fear, anger, jealousy, desire, depression, etc.

But our true nature, Buddha Nature, is just like the gold statue found underneath all that clay. It is luminous, shiny, beautiful, free, unselfish and golden. Sakyamuni Buddha noted that one does not become noble by one's birth or caste, but this nobility shines from the heart of each person.

This brings me to the true story of "The Tire Iron and the Tamale," by Justin Horner. He described a terrible year where he had three instances of car trouble, and each time as he was stranded on the side of the road, he was disgusted with the way people didn't bother to help.

continued... See "Buddha", page 2

Rev. Matthew Hamasaki



The weather in the Valley is starting to cool down (finally!) and it gives us an opportunity to look at how we can all “cool down” from when we get “hot.” Last month, Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto spoke about the parable of the two rivers and the white path. One river was made up completely of fire and one was made up completely of water. The traveller in the story was terrified of going out onto the path from fear of falling into one of the two rivers.

In my opinion, and perhaps I have not fallen into enough rivers to make a good judgment, I felt that falling into a river of fire seems a lot worse than falling into a river of water (if anything, falling into a river of water would probably sound pretty good after you fell into a river of fire).

Anyways, the point that I am trying to make is that we see this idea of being burning hot as being generally negative. And the emotion that gets associated with the feeling of being hot is anger. We tell people who are upset to “simmer down” or if they are easily agitated we call them a “hot head”. So how can someone go from being boiling hot to a light simmer?

Oftentimes, it is taught that our ego and delusions are the source of our suffering. When we get angry and fight, it is because something is challenging our ego, whether it is because we have to be right or that someone else is critical of us. Our delusion is that we are the only one that is perfect, the only one that is correct, and we hang on so tightly to that idea. The remedy would be, first, to be aware that we are getting upset (not as easy as it sounds) and secondly to try to move beyond our selves (no typo) and try to see through the other person’s eyes. Our limited view is of our own world and each person has this too. By realizing this truth and trying to put ourselves in another’s situation, we can begin to find a middle path of understanding and douse the flame of anger.



**HAPPY 27th BIRTHDAY,
REV. MATT!!**

“Buddha”, continued

Tow trucks and cars would fly by, seemingly ignoring him. The people at the gas stations wouldn’t lend him a gas can “for safely reasons,” but would be willing to sell him a one-gallon can with no camp for \$20. And, each time, immigrants came to his rescue, Mexican immigrants who didn’t speak English. One time a van with a family of four pulled over to help. The man got out of the van and looked over the situation, and called his daughter to come over since she spoke some English. He started to help take off the flat tire, and the tire iron broke. He waved to not worry. His wife drove the van down the road, and in fifteen minutes, returned with a new tire iron. Soon the spare tire was on the car. Justin tried to give the man \$20 for his effort, but the man refused to accept it. Justin then gave it to the wife as quietly and sly as possible. Soon, the daughter returned and asked if Justin was hungry. He was, and she gave him a tamale. Justin was embarrassed as the family was obviously poor and were a seasonal workers where time is money. Justin returned to his car, got in, and began to open the tamale and noticed the \$20 bill snuck inside. He ran out to catch the van, yelling “por favor, por favor (please, please).” The driver lowered his window, shaking his head and said, “today you, tomorrow me.” After that Justin has often stopped to change a few tires, give a few rides to gas stations, and all without accepting a single dollar.

Sometimes, our fear prevents us from stopping to help someone in need, or perhaps, it’s our perceived need to get somewhere important on time, or maybe we just don’t want to be bothered by something like that. Whatever the case may be, you can see that our fear, greed and/or ignorance had covered our true “golden” nature with “clay.” It takes effort, a lot of, and consistent effort to remove our own “clay.” But, we can do it; there is no better time to start than now.

I go to the Buddha for guidance. I go to the Dharma for guidance. I go to the Sangha for guidance.

Rev. Alan Sakamoto