



VOLUME 56
ISSUE 1

GEPPPO

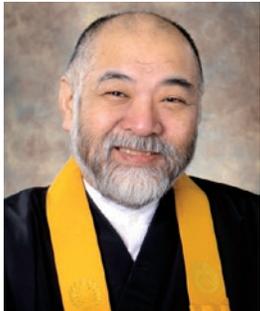
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JANUARY
2021

"HOPE SMILES FROM THE THRESHOLD OF THE YEAR TO COME, WHISPERING,
"IT WILL BE HAPPIER". - Alfred Lord Tennyson

REV. KAKEI NAKAGAWA, Rinban



A Happy New Year to You
~ I hope that this New Year will
be the happiest and the best yet ~

On January 1st, we observe "Shushoh-ye"
(New Year gathering) with a service. The
New Year's celebration is the most important
annual event in Japan's society and lasts
for seven days in all the temples throughout

Japan. Homes are cleaned and debts must be paid before New Year's
Day. "O-Shohgatsu" (New Year's Day customs) exceedingly vary
from prefecture to prefecture, but the foods and decorations all have
to do with symbols of long life, happiness, luckiness, prosperity, and
fertility.

What do you think is the happiest and luckiest life for the Buddha-
dharma followers? It must be our lives knowing the true and real
meaning of our Universe (Buddha-dharma) and living with no delusion.

There are three seals of Buddha-dharma:

*Anitya (in Indian Sanskrit)

Sho-gyoh mu-joh 諸行無常 (in Chinese): <属性> Is-sai kai-ku 一切皆苦

Everything in this Universe is changing moment by moment.

< Attribute > All existence in this universe can never be controlled.

*Anātma (in Indian Sanskrit)

Sho-Hoh mu-ga 諸法無我 (in Chinese): <属性> Is-sai Shoh-ki 一切性起

Everything in this Universe has no entity; so Nothing can exist by itself.

< Attribute > All existence in this universe is originated inter-dependently.

*Nirvāna (in Indian Sanskrit)

Ne-han Jaku-joh 涅槃寂靜 (in Chinese): <属性> Is-sai kai-kuh 一切皆空

Buddhahood is total relaxation.

< Attribute > All existence in this universe is occurring moment by moment in the state of Void-ness as Dependent
Origination.

Once people realize these truth-realities, even in the unconscious level,
their lifestyle turns positive and optimistic. Nothing fictitious could
become an obstacle in their lives.

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REV. KAZ NAKATA



**The teaching of Amitabha
(Namo Amida Butsu)
continuously teaches us how
we can appreciate our
everyday life**

Happy New Year to all Central California
Sangha friends!

I am writing this article in mid-December.

Under the new the "stay at home"

directive for Central Cal since December 7, we have been unable to
conduct in-person service in the Hondo, except Fresno Betsuin. I
sincerely appreciate all CC temple and churches for opening their
church early on Sunday and setting up their altar for our streaming
services for the last nine months. As you know, the vaccine for
Covid-19 has finally launched so I hope we can restart our streaming
service at all CC temples and churches soon.

Over the last nine months, Covid-19 has completely changed the
way we live our everyday lives. I guess the biggest change for most
Americans is wearing of facemasks. In the beginning of the
pandemic, many scientists and medical professionals expressed
various opinions and stood opposite each other on the necessity
of masks. By April, I had started seeing many people wearing masks
in public. The use of facemasks was not in the American culture and
many felt uncomfortable in doing so. I read a psychological research
article published by Hokkaido University and the University of
Glasgow, on why many Americans feel uncomfortable wearing masks.
The article states that one of the main reasons is that American
reads others' mind by seeing their mouth. Blocking and covering
the mouth makes them feel uncomfortable. I personally felt a longing
to see them wearing masks in public. The reason I felt a longing is
because people in Japan regularly wear masks in public. When I
went grocery shopping in Japan, all the customers and workers
were wearing masks. When I entered the store in Fresno, I was
under the impression that I was in a Japanese grocery store in
Japan! It was a weird experience.

When I was in an elementary school, I learned many old sayings.
One of the sayings I learned was "the eyes speak more eloquently
than lips" or "the eyes cannot believe one's true thoughts". This is
how majority of Japanese read others' feelings, and the reason why
they wear masks all that time was no problem.

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