

# Golden Chain



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**FEBRUARY 2022**

*I am a link in the Buddha's golden chain of love that stretches around the world. I must keep my link bright and strong. I will try to be kind and gentle to every living thing and protect all who are weaker than myself. I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts, to say pure and beautiful words, and to do pure and beautiful deeds, knowing that on what I do now depends not only my happiness or unhappiness, but also that of others. May every link in the Buddha's golden chain of love become bright and strong, and may we all attain perfect peace.*

## Awakening to True Humanity

The temple has yet again been forced to keep its doors closed to the public due to the Omicron strain that has taken a hold on this country. It seemed like we were out of the woods for a while, but things started to get bad again after Thanksgiving of last year. We continue to see a nation that is divided on the issue of the vaccine. It saddens us to see the many people that are forced to go to the hospital and have to undergo such a scary and awful illness.



I am going to go out on a limb here and guess that most of the readers of the Golden Chain are those who have vaccinated themselves and firmly agree that we should follow the guidance of the latest scientific research in an effort to keep ourselves safe. I myself am vaccinated and took my booster shot. To many of us, who live in the Bay Area, we wouldn't even bat an eye when it comes to trusting the science and getting a vaccine to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe. In fact, we have the intention of wanting to keep the greater community and the world safe. We believe that we can do that by taking the vaccine and following the guidelines for safety protocol.

But what is equally true is that those who are against the vaccine also have the same intentions. They, too, want to keep themselves, their families and the world safe—only they have come to the conclusion that the best way to do that is to not take the vaccine. Despite the fact that scientific research and objective facts are not on their side, they still have this firm stance.

What are we to do as Buddhists?

There are many ways to think about how best to approach this issue from a Buddhist perspective. But I would like to consider one approach. It is very easy for us to get angry and yell at the tv screen (or nowadays our smartphones), point our fingers at the anti-vaxxers and say to them, "It's because of you guys that we are still in this!" I myself do this almost on a daily basis...admittedly. But there are a couple of points about this.

First, this shows the limitation of human compassion. This is what Shinran Shonin is referring to as the *bonbu*, the ordinary and foolish person. Yes, we might have the scientific facts on our side and we might be in the right. But from a spiritual standpoint, what we are failing to see is the humanity that we are all a part of. They might be misled in terms of the scientific facts surrounding this issue, but their intentions are completely the same as ours. The inability to see passed our views of what is right and wrong is precisely what this religion is trying to drive at when it uses the term *bonbu*.

It shows the limitation of our compassion. Ironically, in many instances, the more logical and rational we believe we are, the less we are inclined to accept the views of others. This is because we often use logic to help fuel our egocentric selves. The more logical we become, the less we see our egocentric selves.

This is nothing against logic, scientific research, or rationality itself. Science is objective—it's when our egocentricities mix in with that, that science and logic get corrupted because we exploit it for our gain. For example, the very logic that got us nuclear energy to power our homes, making our lives much more convenient to live, is the same intellect we used to create the atomic bomb, which unleashed untold amounts of devastation and suffering to innocent people. Nuclear energy is not the problem—it's how we use it for our gain that corrupts the science.

The second point is to see that now, more than ever, do we need the teachings of Amida Buddha's Great Compassion. The teaching of great compassion is the anchor that keeps the boat from being tossed about in the seas; it is the tent pegs that keep the tent from flying away in a storm. When we don't have this kind of grounding, we are left to think that *our* definition of life is the only right view of life. This is the danger of egocentricity that the Buddha warns us about. It has led to countless wars and acts of aggression throughout the history of human kind.

So, do we just let the anti-vaxxers have their way and not disagree with them? No. I think it is appropriate to continue our approach to try and persuade those people with a different view from ours with scientific research. But the point is to not lose sight of the humanity in those who disagree with us. Whether we like it or not, we are all in this together, because that is simply the truth. All things are interconnected—to deny this is to deny the truth of the Buddha Dharma. This is the teaching of the Great Compassion of Buddha. When people die in droves at the hospital because they did not get the vaccine, perhaps our reaction should not be, "Well, what did you expect?" but rather, "How unfortunate that these people have to suffer in such an excruciating way. I would never wish this upon even my worst enemies." Rather than to say, "We are right and you are wrong," and demanding that people quickly adapt to the situation, that maybe we can look at it more like humanity's slow and reluctant progression towards accepting the ever-changing world.

Amida Buddha teaches us that our understanding of compassion is limited and pales in comparison to the true compassion of Buddha. Let's let our actions reflect the principle that underlies this world; a principle that so many people fail to realize. Gassho

ヒューマニティー（人間性）」  
—それはあらゆる考えの人々を含む—

最近、オミクロンが蔓延したためお寺が再び閉まりました。昨年のサンクスギビングの週末からこの問題が拡大し始めたそうです。そして、国民の間でワクチンの話題が続き、果たしてワクチンを接種する方が良いか悪いか熱く語られています。それにしても毎日、何千人という方が死亡していくことが非常に残念に思われます。心より哀悼の意を表します。

この「ゴールデンチェーン」の月報を読む方はワクチンに関して打つべきであるという意見が多いかと筆者は勝手に思うところです。なぜなら、科学研究の結果から導き出される事実は確実であり、その情報に沿って行動をしていくべきだと考える傾向がより強いのではないかと思うからです。私自身もワクチンとブースタ・ショットを受けています。この地域で住んでいる多くの方々はそのように思っており、家族と友人、または世界中の人々・人類そのもののために科学が勧める新しいワクチンを接種するべきだと当たり前のように思っているでしょう。

しかし、ワクチンを反対する人たちも同じく家族や友人、または世界中の人々・人類そのものために反対しているのだと強く主張するでしょう。ですから、科学研究の成果は別として、ワクチン派・アンチワクチン派共に同じ目的で自分の考えを主張する訳です。

この問題に関して仏教徒はどう考えるべきでしょうか？

色々な解釈ができますが、一つ提案してみたいと思います。私を含め、ワクチンを勧める人たちはテレビの画面に向けてワクチンを反対する人たちに対して怒ることがよくあります。「お前たちのせいでコロナが長引いているのだ」と思いがちです。しかし、浄土真宗の教えからみてみれば、これに関して2点ほどの重要なポイントを考えねばなりません。

一つ目は、人間の慈悲の限界ということです。親鸞聖人はこのことに関して「凡夫」という言葉をお使いになります。確かに、ワクチン派の人たちは科学の研究によって正当であるかも知れませんが。しかし、その正当性の中で相手の「ヒューマニティー」つまり人間性というものを見失っていないでしょうか。これはどういうことかといいますと、私たちが「人間性」という場合、それは全ての種類の人間を含む真実の世界というものを本当の「ヒューマニティー」と言います。それを見失うと、その真実の世界から背いているということになります。つまり、悟りの世界を拒否することになります。自分たちだけの正当性を主張すればするほど、真実の世界の本当の正当性を見失う、または見逃すことになります。ですから、衆生の慈悲というものに関して限界があると言わざるを得ないとなります。この限界があるということを親鸞聖人は凡夫といわれたのです。

二つ目は、現在に至ってまさに阿弥陀如来の大慈悲の教えを聴聞していく必要性です。阿弥陀如来の大慈悲は私たちの拠りどころとなります。この教えがないと私たちは煩惱に惑わされ自己中心的な考えから離れることができず、自分以外の考えを持つ人たちを認めることができなくなります。仏様はそのために、私たちに自己中心的な考え方の危険性を教えてくださったのです。

さてそうすると、私たちは何をすればいいのでしょうか。アンチワクチン派の主張する考え方を取り入れるべきなのでしょうか。そうではなく、やはりあくまでも科学的根拠に基づいて、その人たちの考え方の誤りに気づかせることは大事だと思います。しかし、その時私たちの意見に反対する人たちの思いと我々の思いが共に人間であるという「ヒューマニティー」に立っていることを見失ってははいけません。ワクチンを打たない人たちが病院で命を落とすのに対して「ざま見ろ」と思うよりも、その人たちが息ができなくて苦しんでおり、孤独の恐ろしさと闘っているのだと分かっていることが大事です。それが共に人間であるというヒューマニティを理解することにつながり、より仏教的な理解になるのではないかと思います。また自分が正当であり、相手が間違っているとあくまで主張するよりも、世の中が常に変わっていく中、それに対する人それぞれの対処の仕方が多々あるのだと分かる方がより仏教的な見方なのです。

私たち衆生の慈悲というものは如来の大慈悲に対して全くちっぽけのものであります。真実の世界は無量の大慈悲であり、私たちは実はその中に含まれております。ですから、私たちの力には限界がありながらも、無量の大慈悲という真実の世界の実現のため、私たちの行動をそれにあわしていこうとする心が大切であります。 合掌

## **Checkout the Podcasts Channels!**

### **1. My Personal Podcast Covering Jodo Shinshu Buddhism**



<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/no-doubt-a-shin-buddhist-approach/id1511351502>

### **2. Our Weekly Sunday Services Can Be Found Here:**



<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/shin-buddhist-sangha-services/id1517181914>



## Joint Celebration of the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth and 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching

In conjunction with the

17th World Buddhist Women's Convention

Scheduled for May 10-12, 2023 in

Kyoto, Japan!

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Interested in going to Japan and seeing the wonderful Buddhist sites, being with other wonderful Jodo Shinshu members, and being a part of a once in a lifetime opportunity with your fellow sangha members? Well, this is your chance!

Nishi Hongwanji, our mother temple in Kyoto, Japan, will be holding an observance for the birth of our founder and the beginning of this religious school. In conjunction with this, the World Buddhist Women's Association will hold an international conference. This will all take place during the week of **May 10-12, 2023**.

We will also be taking a tour directly after the conference. More details are to come as Rev. Miyaji determines the package details with the travel agency Kintetsu.

BUT FIRST, we need to know who is interested in going! So, if you are thinking about going, or are still on the fence and try to feel out this whole Covid business, no problem! We just need a tentative headcount to see what our numbers are. If we do not have enough people, we might extend this trip out to the other Bay district chapters. But I will say that seats are limited....so go take a look at your Google calendar NOW 😊

All I need is a "YES" or "I'm considering going," and send that reply over to me. I will include your name on future emails pertaining to this!

[Gishin.tmiyaji@gmail.com](mailto:Gishin.tmiyaji@gmail.com)



## Services for February 2022

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### **February 6, 2022 – Shotsuki Hoyo & Nirvana Day Service** 10 A.M.

At this monthly memorial service, we will honor those loved ones who passed away in the month of February.

Nirvana Service is the observance of Shakyumuni Buddha's death.

Rev. Dr. Miyaji will officiate this service on Zoom.

February birthdays will be celebrated.

Dharma School will follow service.

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### **February 13, 2022 – Family Service & Pet Memorial Service** 10 A.M.

Rev. Dr. Miyaji will officiate this service on Zoom.

If you would like your pet remembered, please send a picture or the name to Emily by Feb 2. If later than that, best efforts will be made to include your pet. See article in the Golden Chain.

Dharma School will follow service.

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### **February 20, 2022 – Family Service** 10 A.M.

Rev. Dr. Miyaji will officiate this service on Zoom.

Boy Scouts will chair this service in honor of National Boy Scouts Day!

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### **February 27, 2022 – Eitaikyo Service**

Rev. Dr. Miyaji will officiate this service on Zoom.

Or

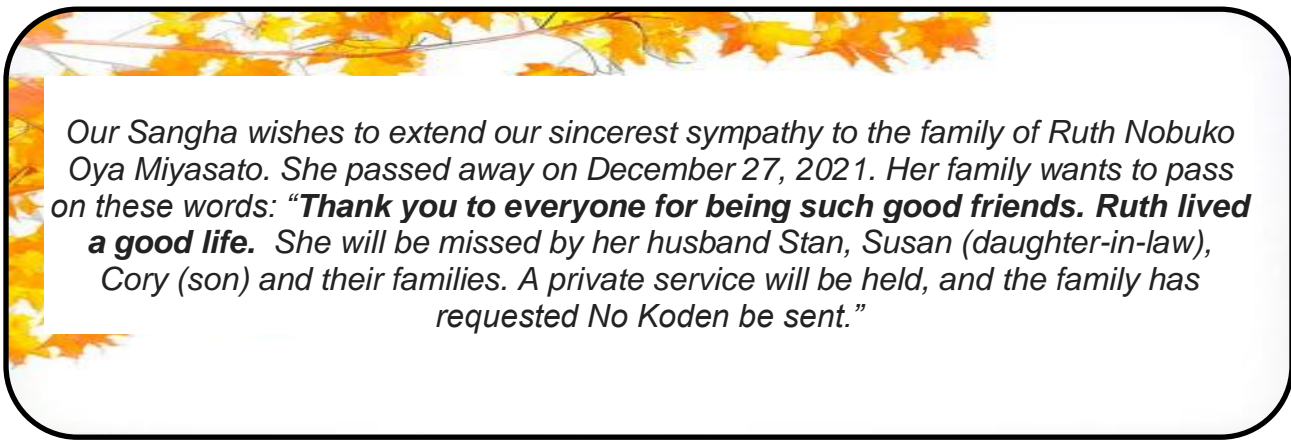
This will be hosted by the BCA for all temples.

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# OBITUARY



*Our Sangha wishes to extend our sincerest sympathy to the family of Ruth Nobuko Oya Miyasato. She passed away on December 27, 2021. Her family wants to pass on these words: **“Thank you to everyone for being such good friends. Ruth lived a good life.”** She will be missed by her husband Stan, Susan (daughter-in-law), Cory (son) and their families. A private service will be held, and the family has requested No Koden be sent.”*



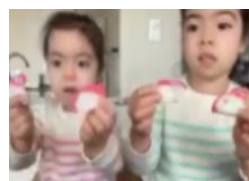
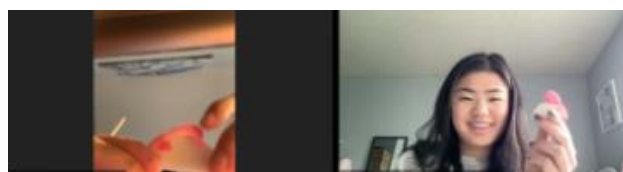
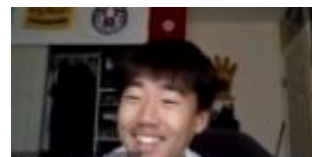
## What's Up Dharma School?

With the rapid spread of COVID after the holidays, it was unfortunate Dharma school had to cancel mochitsuki this year. However, in place of our canceled event, we had a zoom "Soba" New Year celebration as a combined class. Students learned some history, symbolism, and did a tasting of soba. Students also did kamaboko art, cutting them as decorative pieces, including a bunny rabbit.

We will continue to have classes via zoom but hope to transition in-person when it is safe to do so. Stay safe and healthy,

In gassho,

Betty and Cathleen



## PET MEMORIAL SERVICE

On **Sunday, February 13**, Rev. Miyaji will include a Memorial Service for the pets who shared their lives with us. It can be your favorite dogs, cats, rabbits, birds or even hamsters!

If you would like your pet or pets remembered during this family Zoom service, please email your loved one's name and a description of your pet to Emily at [sacbcoffice@gmail.com](mailto:sacbcoffice@gmail.com).

Example: "Strawberry, Miye's bunny. 1995 – 2006".

If you have a picture, you can give it to Emily and she will scan it and return it to you the following week. Those who are picking up Wednesday bento meals can also drop off their pictures then (pls make sure they are in an envelope with your name on it). **The names, with or without pictures, should be given to Emily by February 2.** Thank you!



# SACBC Bento Fundraiser by Chef Royce Mori

**To order:** Call and leave a message at church: 510-471-2581 or Email: [SACBCOffice@gmail.com](mailto:SACBCOffice@gmail.com)

**Order deadline:** Mondays at NOON

**Pick Up:** Wednesdays, 3PM – 4 PM SACBC, 32975 Alvarado-Niles Road, Union City, CA 94587

**Payment:** There are five options for paying:

- PayPal or Venmo: [sacbc.treasurer1@gmail.com](mailto:sacbc.treasurer1@gmail.com)
- Credit card: VISA, Mastercard (will be processed onsite during pick up)
- **Check** made out to: SACBC or Cash (Exact amount pls) in a sealed envelope with your name and address on the outside.

## FEBRUARY BENTO MENU

	Meat	Vegetarian/Pescatarian	Notes/comments
February 2nd	<b>Udon &amp; Gyudon</b>  Chopped Green Salad w/Creamy Sesame Dressing Soft Boiled Egg Kamaboko & Green Onions Steamed Broccoli Steamed White Rice  <b>\$18</b>	<b>Soba &amp; Sake Poached Shrimp</b>  Chopped Green Salad w/Creamy Sesame Dressing Grated Ginger Sliced Green Onions Dipping Sauce Steamed Broccoli Steamed White Rice  <b>\$18</b>	
February 9th	<b>Huli Huli Chicken &amp; Chili</b>  Wasabi Caesar Salad Island Style Beef Chili Roasted Mushrooms Sauteed Green Beans Steamed White Rice  <b>\$18</b>	<b>Miso Glazed Salmon</b>  Wasabi Caesar Salad Roasted Mushrooms Sauteed Green Beans Steamed White Rice  <b>\$18</b>	
February 16th	<b>Happy Valentine's Day!</b> (No Bento)		
February 23rd	<b>Roasted Pork Chop w/Nori Puree</b>  Miso Soup Sunomono (Cucumber salad) Braised Kabocha Baby Bok Choy Steamed White Rice  <b>\$18</b>	<b>Roasted Hamachi Kama</b>  Miso Soup Sunomono (Cucumber salad) Braised Kabocha Steamed White Rice  <b>\$18</b>	

Southern Alameda Co. Buddhist Church  
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Union City, CA 94587-3165

## **FEBRUARY EVENTS**

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|---------------|---|
| Sun – Feb. 6  | Shotsuki Hoyo & Nirvana Day<br>February Birthdays celebration & Dharma School |
| Sun – Feb. 13 | Family Service & Pet Memorial Service<br>Dharma School                        |
| Sun – Feb. 20 | Family Service  |
| Mon – Feb. 21 | President’s Day Observed – Office Closed                                      |
| Sun – Feb. 27 | Eitaikyo Service  |

All Sunday services are officiated by Rev. Miyaji online via Zoom

Join our Zoom Meetings for Sunday Services:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81878696300?pwd=VjdpdC8rNmN4U2Y1VFVqdXUrY0xrdz09>

