

Golden Chain



Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church
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www.SACBC.org

February 2024

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.

My Hidden Skill



The other day I came to the realization that there are many things that I am really bad at, but there is one thing where I am the best. I am so confident about this that I can easily challenge anyone to this particular

skill that I have. That one thing that I am the best at: choosing the longest and slowest line at the grocery store.

I don't know what it is about me. I think it has been through the years of conditioning. I carefully select which one is the fastest moving line, and then I choose to go to that line only to have the register computer go down right as I am getting to the counter. I have an intuition of knowing when it is someone's first day on the job to work at the register. I have a sixth sense of knowing when the person in front of me is going to need a price check on the particular brand of pepper found tucked away in the aisle furthest from where we are standing. I have a skill. I have a keen eye that is built on years of experience.

I heard a very thought-provoking Dharma message the other day through the Ho'onko service lecture series given at Nishi Hongwanji headquarters. The speaker was Rev. Ashihara. She was talking about just this kind of scenario as I have mentioned above. She is also one of the best at choosing the longest lines. However, she

mentioned, "It is interesting. When we are standing in line waiting for our turn, we are always looking ahead of us. How many people are in front of us? What are they buying? We try to analyze and assess how long each party is going to take. We are quick to make judgments about these people in front us. But do we ever look behind us? Do we ever notice those people that are waiting as well? Do we scrutinize them just as we do the people in front of us? Probably not." To make a long story short, sensei goes on to mention that we are all in this together, that we are all dependent on one another for our lives to be possible.

Sensei is right, I never look at who is behind me. What for? Little do I realize that I am not the only one who is waiting. I am not the only one who is in a rush, even though I don't have any particular place I need to go after my shopping. Nevertheless, it is not just me who is being inconvenienced. As a matter of fact, in my head I am the best at choosing the slowest and longest lines at the grocery store, but that isn't really the case, is it? In everyone's head they, too, are the best at choosing the longest and slowest line. Which is to say that thinking that I am special in some way, or that I deserve some kind of recognition for my peculiar way of suffering is my egocentricity speaking. When I live in my ego bubble, I fail to see that others are going through their struggles as well. I only give *my* needs special attention, and everyone else should care about *my* needs as well. And everyone else's needs? Well, they can wait. Hence, I don't bother to look behind me.

So, is the Buddhist lesson to learn to look back? Yes, but more importantly, we should understand that the ego self has an incessant nature that seeks to prioritize one's needs, desires, concerns, and goals over that of others, even in situations as petty as standing in line. For this reason, Shinran Shonin tells us that the true path to spiritual liberation lies in reliance not on the ego self, but rather, Amida Buddha's boundless Wisdom and Compassion. He explains, "How can I hope to break free from the world of delusion when I am the very source of that delusion?" For this reason, Shinran Shonin needed Amida Buddha's grasp to pull him out of the world of suffering. So too, can we have something to rely on. The Buddha abandons no one. Let us reflect on Shinran Shonin's teachings and seek to walk on the Nembutsu path. Gassho.

私の特技

自分が苦手なことはたくさんあるけれど、この間、一つだけ一番得意なことがあることに気づきました。それはスーパーで買い物を買う時に一番長いと遅い列を選ぶ事です。

私になぜこのようなことばかり起きるのか、本当に不思議です。例えば、どの列が一番早く進んでいるかを慎重に見極め、その列に行き、やっと私の順番だと思ったら必ず何か問題が起きます。レジが突然動かなくなったり、レジ打ちの人が研修生であったり、あるいは、商品のバーコードに問題があり値段が分からず、他の店員さん呼んでその値段を調べてこないといけなくなることもよくあります。ここまでなりますと、運が悪いというよりも、不思議すぎて自分に運が良いように思うようになりました。経験上の鋭さだと思います。

先日、西本願寺で厳修された報恩講の法話で、とても心に残る法話をいただきました。ご講師は熊本の葦原師で、彼女はまさにこのようなシナリオについて話しておられました。彼女もまた、スーパーで長蛇の列を選ぶのが得意だそうで、このようにおっしゃいました。「列に並んで順番を待っているとき、私たちは常に前を見ている。前に何人いるんだろう？何を買っているのか？それぞれのレジの列がどのくらい時間がかかるかを分析し、見極めようとする上で、私たちは、前にいる人々を常に批判しているのだ。しかし、私たちは後ろを見たことがあるだろうか？同じように待っている人たちに気づいたことがあるだろうか？前にいる人たちと同じように、その人たちを精査しているだろうか？おそらくないだろう。」つまり、葦原師は私たちはみんな一緒であり、私たちの人生が成り立つためには、みんな互いに依存しているのだと仰ったのです。

葦原師の言うとおりに、私はレジに並ぶ時、自分の後ろにいる人を見たことはありません。しかし実際、待っているのは自分だけではなく、急いでいるのも、苛々しているのも、自分一人ではないのです。となると、頭の中では、スーパーで一番長くて進むのが遅い列を選ぶのは私だけだと思い込

んでいます。実際はそうではないのではないのでしょうか？みんながみんな、頭の中で同じことを思っているのでしょうか。「自分はいつも一番遅いレジを選んでしまう。貧乏くじを引いてしまう・・・」と。つまり、自分が特別な存在であるとか、自分の特異な苦しみが評価されるに値すると

思っているのは、自分のエゴ中心主義を語っているのです。つまり、なんでこんな苦しみと合わないといけないのだと思ひ込むことこそが自己中心的な考えなのです。エゴの世界で生きてると、他の人たちも同じように苦しんでいることに気づくことができません。私は自分のニーズだけを特別扱いし、他の人は私のニーズも気にかけるべきだと思っているのです。他の人のニーズは後回しだと思っているからこそ、わざわざ後ろを見ることをしないのです。

では、仏教の教えは後ろを振り返ることを学ぶことなのでしょうか？ そうかもしれませんが、もっと重要なのは、エゴである自己は、何かの列に並ぶというような些細な状況でも、他人のことよりも自分のニーズ、欲望、懸念、目標を優先しようとする絶え間ない性質を持っていることを理解することなのです。だからこそ親鸞聖人は、エゴの自分を頼るのではなく、阿弥陀如来の限りない智慧と慈悲に頼ることが、真の解脱への道であると説かれるのです。そして、「自分こそが迷いの問題なのに、どうして自分がその迷いから抜け出すことができるのでしょうか」と説かれます。だからこそ、親鸞聖人は阿弥陀如来の救いの手がなければ、苦悩の世界から抜け出せなかったのです。だから、阿弥陀如来様こそが私たちが依るべきものなのです。仏は誰も見捨てることはされません。親鸞聖人の教えを聴聞し、お念仏の道を歩んでまいりましょう。合掌。



Services for February 2024

February 4, 2024 – 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 Shakyamuni Buddha's death.

Rev. Dr. Takashi. Miyaji will officiate this hybrid service.

February birthdays will be celebrated.

Dharma School will follow service.

February 11, 2024 – Family Service & Pet Memorial Service 10 A.M.

Rev. Dr. Takashi. Miyaji will officiate this hybrid service.

If you would like your pet remembered, please send a picture or the name to Emily by Feb 6. If later than that, best efforts will be made to include your pet.

Dharma School will follow service.

February 18, 2024 – Family Service 10 A.M.

Rev. Dr. Takashi. Miyaji will officiate this hybrid service.

Boy Scouts will chair this service to honor **National Boy Scouts Day!**

February 25, 2024 – BCA Eitaikyo Service

Across the BCA will be an Eitaikyo Service online. All are encouraged to attend this service at our SACBC hondo where it will be Zoomed.



**February
29
Leap Day**

CORRECTION: In printing Rev. Miyaji's January message in Japanese, the last paragraph was omitted. This is now printed in its entirety. The Office Manager apologizes for this error.

謹賀新年

新年明けましておめでとうございます。今年もどうぞよろしくお願い致します。2023年、西本願寺の本山で、親鸞聖人のご生誕（降誕とも呼びます）の850周年、並びに立教開宗の800周年を迎えました。SACBCが所属している桑湾教区から約40名の代表者が京都の本山へ参拝させていただきました。京都、東京、及び九州の地域を巡って、各地の美しい名所を見学することができました。2023年は楽しい年であり、パンデミックから回復しつつ雰囲気が楽観的になってきていました。COVID-19に関する恐れもだいぶ治まってきたようです。短い時間の間に色々な変化が起きる可能性があることが改めて感じさせていただきました。

しかし、もう一方では2023年は大変な年でもありました。世界中に起きている問題を見ていきますと、色々な混乱、心配や、不安もありました。ウクライナで起きた問題や、パレスチナとイスラエルの問題が深刻化していき、解決が見つからないことが念頭に残ります。自分が何もできないという絶望的な考えに陥ることがよくあります。

そしてさらに、アメリカでは経済的格差や、ホームレス問題が深刻化し、政治的・社会的な面でアメリカ人の間にある緊張感、さらに政府機関や私たちの生活様式に対する信頼が損なわれています。インフレと犯罪の増加は、人々を互いに孤立させ、他人同士お互いに信頼しづらくなっていることも感じます。このような状況の中で、私たちはどのように対処すればいいのでしょうか。

現代社会において、私たちの心の精神的・宗教的な部分が軽視されるようになってきたのではないのでしょうか。最新のピュー・リサーチによれば、ここ数年の間、宗教団体に属する人々の数値が圧倒的に減少してきました。この事実に関して筆者は分からないものでもないのです。私は1980年代に生まれ、子供の時ファミコンやディズニー等の映画をたくさん見てきました。このように楽しい時間を過ごす中で、宗教に対して全く興味はありませんでした。私の友人や少し年下の知り合いを見ても、やはり同じようなパターンです。宗教は私にとって関係ないと思っているのが普通です。しかし、少しずつ歳を重ねていながら、いつも飲んで暴れていても大丈夫なのでしょう。いつまで映画を見たり、旅行に行ったり、お笑いの番組をテレビで見たりしているのでしょうか。人生にはこれだけなのか？私はただたくさんものを消費し、たくさんものを所有し、年老いて死ぬだけなのだろうか？これが人生の意味なのだろうか？

仏教は、この人生はそんなに甘くないものだよと教えていただくためのものです。そのお伝え方は厳しくと優しく教えてくれる二つの方法がございます。我々浄土真宗は後者の優しい教え方です。そして、この人生には目の前にあるもの以上のものがあると教えてくれます。人間の自己中心的という変わらない性質は、自分と他人にどうしようもない苦難を起こします。阿弥陀如来様は、その自己に頼るのではなく、無量で変わることのない真実のものに頼れと教えてくださるのです。つまり、阿弥陀如来様の限りない智慧と慈悲を拠り所としなさいと優しく呼びかけているのです。そして、この新しい世の中の見方によって、どんな苦難なことが起きても、決して自分の精神の土台が崩れず、希望と感謝の生活を送ることができるのです。皆さんと共に、2024年にこんな念仏の道を歩んでまいりたいと思います。合掌。

What's up Dharma School?

February, 2024

Dharma School started back up the first week back from the holiday break. We shared our holiday break with each other and discussed the lunar calendar. In celebration of dragon of the year, students made 'moving' dragons.

For Hoonko, we discussed Shinran Shonin's life and where he traveled in Japan to promote the Jodo Shinshu. The students noticed a walking stick and hat in the statue of Shinran Shonin in the hallway of the temple which led to the discussion of the use of a walking stick and was given one each to decorate.

We will be continuing on with our "Inside Out"-emotions and will be working on our upcoming Hanamatsuri presentation. Below are our remaining dharma class dates:

- Feb.4 (Nirvana/Shotsuki/birthdays)
- Feb.11 (Pet memorial)
- March 3 (shotsuki/birthdays)
- March 17
- April 7 (Hanamatsuri/birthday)
- April 21
- May 5 (shotsuki)
- June 2 (Shotsuki/graduation)



In Gassho,
Cathleen and Betty



WELCOME NEW MEMBER!

SACBC wishes to extend a warm welcome to new member, **Cindy Fujiwara**.

Open to all SACBC Members

Please bring a family favorite dish to share along with copies of the recipe and drop off in the Reception Room before service. Everyone will have the opportunity to taste each other's foods at this event and take home the recipes of the dishes they enjoy. All recipes will be submitted for the new SACBC cookbook currently in the works.

Please RSVP to Emily (SACBC office) by February 18th. If you would like her to make copies of your recipe, send a soft copy to her by this date as well. We hope everyone will come out and participate at this Winter activity.

In Gassho, Cindy Sakihara

FAVORITE RECIPES – WANTED !!! for Cookbook #3

It's time to update our recipes! In 1975, the (then) Fujinkai produced "Favorite Recipes – Book I" [of SACBC]. In 1987, "Favorite Recipes – Book II" was made. In 2020, a few members began working on Book III. Time has come to continue working on Book III as a fundraiser for the church. Much needed are funds to replace the leaky roof on Sangha Hall as well as other maintenance projects.

Book III will have recipes from Book I & Book II as well as your latest, greatest, and tastiest ones.

Categories: Appetizers, Beverages, One-dish Meals, Meat-Fish-Poultry, Bread-Rolls, Desserts, Miscellaneous (Popcorn Mix, jams & jellies, snacks, etc.), and Asian. Also, please submit any "tips" or "hints" you have for cooking, baking, storing ingredients and food, removing stains, etc.

When the first books were made, the committee thought having a section specifically for Japanese and other Asian recipes would be a way to pass down family recipes and be a marketing attraction. Please include your Japanese/Asian Fusion recipes. Even submit the notes you wrote when your mother or grandmother said, "Add a hand full of this and a pinch of that" which resulted in the most delicious thing to eat or drink!

Please send your favorite recipes by email to Emily at SACBCOffice@gmail.com OR mail or drop off hard copies. Emily has graciously agreed to lead this project.

Be sure to include your name or the name of the person whose recipe is being submitted.

Deadline is March 1, 2024. The goal is to have Book III printed and ready to sell by Bazaar 2024.

If you know someone who has coordinated a cookbook project or a publishing/printing company that prints books, please let Emily know. 510-471-2581

Start cleaning out closets, cupboards, garages, attics, yards, bedrooms, basements, kitchens for the

SACBC Rummage Sale

Saturday March 2, 10:00am-3:00pm

Sunday March 3, 2024, 11:00am-3:00pm

Last day we are accepting donations is February 23, 2024.

Suggested items for donation:

Clean, wearable clothing, items in good working order: TV's, microwaves, radios, lamps, sewing machines, musical instruments, books in good condition, jewelry, picture frames, old wedding gifts you never used, antiques, Asian dishes that just sit on the shelf, games, toys, puzzles, old tools, futons, kitchenware: kitchen gadgets, pots and pans, dishes, utensils, vases, fabric you meant to use but never got around to using, yarn, records, cd's, audio tapes, self-help books and tapes, humidifiers, tote bags, purses, framed paintings, gardening tools, dolls, ukeleles, kimonos, wall hangings, scarves, organizer items, etc.....

We cannot accept donations from non-members.

BWA – report by Karen Suyama.

Our Bay District Buddhist Women’s League will be having a Panda Express Fundraiser on Friday February 9th, see attached flyer. Please support the fundraiser as we are raising money to help defray registration fees so everyone can attend the conference on May 18th at Enmanji. Rev. Kodo Umezu is the guest speaker.

Consider becoming a member of the SACBC BWA. Dues are only \$15.00 per year and we look forward to having some exciting activities for 2024. Please let me know what you would like to do. How about a cooking class? Or a card making workshop. What about planning an outing to see a Japanese Garden, or take a train ride. Think about it and let me know what activities we should do.

Please stay tuned for announcement about a recipe exchange. The recipe exchange will showcase your specialty dish by bringing a finished product for us to taste, along with a copy of the recipe for people to take. Then we’ll keep the recipe for the new recipe book we are trying to complete by March 10, 2024.

Please join us at our next meeting on February 11th at 9:00am.

Upcoming activities:

Rummage Sale – March 2-3, 2024

IN MEMORIAM

Jane Rice passed away on December 31, 2023. Services have been held. Expressions of sympathy can be sent to her daughter:

Julie Rice Thall
1828 Cordilleras Road
Emerald Hills, CA 94062

Maureen Nakano passed away on November 12, 2023. Private services have been held.

In lieu of koden or flowers, kindly consider donations to Alzheimer’s Association. These gifts are being made in memory of Maureen F. Nakano and are intended to support Alzheimer's research in her honor.

Alzheimer's Association
Northern California & Northern Nevada
Chapter
2290 North First Street, Suite 212
San Jose, CA 95131
(408) 372-9900

Memo Line: In Memory of Maureen F. Nakano for Alzheimer's research

FUNDRAISER FOR

Bay District Buddhist Women's League

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY FUNDRAISERS



When

Friday, February 09, 2024

Place your order for pickup or delivery on Friday, February 09 !

Where

Available at Panda Express locations nationwide www.pandaexpress.com

How

Online orders only

Apply code **920242** in the Fundraiser Code box during online checkout at www.pandaexpress.com or via App

33% of sales will be donated to: Bay District Buddhist Women's League

Our Goal is to raise money for our May 18, 2024 BDBWL Conference.

Order Now

Valid for online orders only. Panda Restaurant Group reserves the right to cancel any and all fundraiser events, if the Panda Restaurant Group Virtual Community Fundraiser guidelines are not followed. Panda Restaurant Group will donate 28% of all purchases made, pre-tax and before fees, at your local Panda Express when purchased with designated code at check-out. Purchase(s) of gift cards do not count towards the fundraiser, but purchases made with gift cards will count. No portion of purchase is tax deductible.



FEBRUARY 2024

LEAP YEAR, events subject to change

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WED	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 6am O-Jinjo 11am-1pm JLS teacher prep 6-9pm AA 7pm Kendo	2 6am O-Jinjo	3 8:30-Noon JLS Classes
4 10am Shotsuki Hoyo Nirvana Day Service	5 6am O-Jinjo 8:30am Qi-gong 3-5pm Taiko 4-5pm Taiko (beginner) 6-9pm AA	6 6:30 pm Scouts	7 6am O-Jinjo 3-5pm Taiko 6-9pm AA	8 6am O-Jinjo 11am-1pm JLS teacher prep 6-9pm AA 7pm Kendo	9 6am O-Jinjo 6-9pm AA	10 8:30-Noon JLS Classes
11 10am Family Service & Pet Memorial	12 6am O-Jinjo 8:30am Qi-gong 3-5pm Taiko 4-5pm Taiko (beginner) 6-9pm AA	13 6:30 pm Scouts	14 6am O-Jinjo 3-5pm Taiko 6-9pm AA	15 6am O-Jinjo 11am-1pm JLS teacher prep GC article deadline 6-9pm AA 7pm Kendo	16 6am O-Jinjo 6-9pm AA	17 8:30-Noon JLS Classes
18 10am Family Service	19 6am O-Jinjo 8:30am Qi-gong <i>OFFICE CLOSED</i> 3-5pm Taiko 4-5pm Taiko (beginner) 6-9pm AA	20 6:30 pm Scouts	21 6am O-Jinjo 3-5pm Taiko 6-9pm AA	22 6am O-Jinjo 11am-1pm JLS teacher prep 6-9pm AA 7pm Kendo	23 6am O-Jinjo 6-9pm AA	24 8:30-Noon JLS Classes
25 10am Eitai-kyo Service	26 6am O-Jinjo 8:30am Qi-gong 3-5pm Taiko 4-5pm Taiko (beginner) 6-9pm AA	27 6:30 pm Scouts	28 6am O-Jinjo 3-5pm Taiko 6-9pm AA	29 6am O-Jinjo 11am-1pm JLS teacher prep 6-9pm AA 7pm Kendo		

Southern Alameda Co. Buddhist Church
32975 Alvarado-Niles Rd.
Union City, CA 94587-3165

FEBRUARY 2024 EVENTS

4 TH – SUN	SHOTSUKI & NIRVANA DAY SERVICE
11 th – SUN	FAMILY & PET MEMORIAL SERVICE
18 th – SUN	FAMILY SERVICE
19 th – MON	PRESIDENT'S DAY OBSERVED — OFFICE CLOSED
25 th – SUN	BCA EITAIKYO SERVICE

SUNDAY SERVICES START AT 10:00 AM

Join Zoom Meeting for Sunday Services:

<https://bit.ly/499Dg8l>

Zoom Meeting ID: 818 7869 6300
PASSCODE: 549504



FEBRUARY 19TH