



Dharma Lei

Bishop's Office Newsletter

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Bishop's Message: **Bishop Shugen Komagata**

Happy New Year from the Hawaii Soto Mission Bishop's Office. I wish for a bright and happy 2019 for everyone.

2019 is the Year of the Boar. The boar is the last of the twelve Japanese zodiac symbols. According to legend, when the zodiac symbols were summoned for the first time, the boar outran the ox but didn't stop at the finish line. By the time the boar returned, it was twelfth, the last of the zodiac symbols.

People who are born in the Year of the Boar are said to be honest, helpful, and full of a fearless pioneer spirit. They emphasize fair play and do not like to play tricks on others. Conversely, though, they are said to be short tempered and often view things in black and white.

Boar people are said to be most compatible with rabbits and sheep. Together, these three zodiac symbols generate great positive energy. They are also compatible with those born in the Year of the Tiger. Snakes are the least compatible with boars.

Looking ahead in 2019, I invite you to join other Soto Mission members and supporters at the 9th U.S. Soto Zen Members Conference to be held on October 26 in Las Vegas, Nevada. This gathering, hosted by the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office, will be held at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In closing, I would like to thank all the Hawaii ministers, members, families, and supporters of the Hawaii Soto Mission. I look forward to another exciting year in 2019!

In Gassho,

Bishop Shugen Komagata



Blueberry “Buddha” Muffin

The “Courage” to change the toppings

By Rev. Hirosato Yoshida



Aloha Hawaii Soto Mission Ohana

I was asked to write an article introducing myself and my family as a new minister at Betsuin. But to think of it, I am not that new and most of you already know me, my wife Aika and my son Skyler. So, I decided to write about my aspiration for the future instead. But before I start writing my aspiration, let me just cheat my way by writing just a little about how I came to Hawaii in the first place, so I can say it's also a greeting.

My life in Hawaii began many years ago. When I was 7, my father became the resident minister at Hilo Taishoji. At that age, I had no idea where I was going, the only thing I was told by my parents was, we are going to a town called Hilo. As a 7 years old, I was really excited because I was going to a town with the same nickname as me. Hirosato “Hiro” Yoshida. Of course, when you write it in English, spelling is different but when you write in Japanese, they are pronounced same. The “R’s” and the “L’s.” But since that moment, I have been living here longer than I have lived in Japan. Never did I thought that I would be calling this place “Home.”

Okay so enough talking about my past, what is more important is about the future of our Hawaii Soto Mission. There are long history and tradition that we valued and treasured for the past 100 years. It is important to keep what we all know and how we do things so that the next generation of people know the value of our tradition. But the reality is, when Buddhism crossed the land from India to China, the form of Buddhism changed. When it crossed the sea to Japan, it also changed. When Buddhism crossed the Pacific 100 years ago, it also changed. But once it arrives, it shouldn't or can't change? I think that we need to constantly update our Buddhism. This leads me to think about the importance of what the new generation of people value.

In the 18th Century and 19th Century during the Industrial age, the world value was based on 3 things. That was “**Human resource, Material resource, and Money.**” The world judged individuals on these three things. So, if you were to become a successful entrepreneur, one needed a hard-working individual to work for them, how your business outcompete other rivals based on the product quality you could produce, and to show your wealth and to grow your business, you needed more money. As we approached the end of 20th century, there was another thing added to this list. That was “**Information.**” Sometime, information became more important than any other things.



This became prominent during this age, having the information became the key ingredient to success. Companies bought information as they tried to expand their network. However, when internet became public in 1990's, another revolution took place. This time, they added "**time**" as a necessary ingredient to success along with the other four things. If you could get the same amount of information accurately with less amount of time, customers were happy. If a client sent you an email, if you could respond to the email within that day vs few business days, your company would be much reliable than your competition. With the current younger generation, their way of thinking is very spontaneous. Every minute, every second needs to be considered and valued. This is why, when we ask the younger generation what they are doing, most often they are using their smartphones to check Facebook, Instagram or Twitter for constant update of information. This is the world we live today, a very spontaneous and a very speedy world. In such world, how can our temples keep the tradition and values to fit the way younger generation accepts to be efficient.

What do we need and what direction do we need to point for the future? Maybe it is time that we get rid of old tradition that is outdated. But before I make any conclusion, let me say that in 2016, when apple released their new iPhone 7, they removed the headphone jack and they said this was "**Courage**." At that time, many could not understand why they took away that important traditional style. However, today, there are over 20 smartphones without a headphone jack and no one complaints when they released another model without a headphone jack. It became the global standard. But let me say that it wasn't that they just took away the whole experience of not having any private music/sound environment, they just switched from analog to digital. A physical cable tying the phone and ears together to wirelessly tying the phone and the ears together. They still kept the traditional value of listening to music but made it a whole new way of experiencing the same thing.

I think that we need to change the way we present ourselves. We can still keep the tradition and have a strong base foundation. I am not suggesting to start fresh by getting rid of the way we are. Think of it this way, let's say we are making blueberry muffins from our grandma's recipe. 10 years ago, we all enjoyed having that chocolate sprinkles but maybe it's time to change things around because we are getting bored of the same taste. We can still keep the foundational elements like the batter and how we cook the same muffin, but maybe what we need to do is just change the toppings from chocolate sprinkles to whip cream instead.

As we race in this competitive world, I hope with the support of my wife and my son and the guidance of our temple member ohana, to create a new topping for our temples. We can still keep the traditional value but present it in a new way. It will take "**Courage**", but for us to find a peace of mind that our tradition will continue to live on, **we need to change the toppings on our blueberry "Buddha" muffin**. To express the same tradition in a whole new way.



Shushogi, Chapter 1 : Verses 4 - 6

By Rev. Myoshin Kaniunoe



Aloha everyone!

Rev. Fukugawa discussed Shushogi Chapter 1-Verses 1-3 in the last edition of the Dharma Lei so this time we would like to continue that discussion and talk about the next 3 verses from Chapter 1, numbers 4-6.

From Shuhogi . . .

4. Avoid associating with deluded people in this world who are ignorant of the truth of causality and karmic retribution, who are heedless of past, present and future, and cannot distinguish good from evil.

Dogen often stresses the shortness of life, how precious it is and how we should not waste it. In Fukun Zazengi he tells us: Do not pass your days and nights in vain. You are taking care of the essential activity of the buddha-way. Who would take wasteful delight in the spark from a flintstone? Besides, form and substance are like the dew on the grass, the fortunes of life like a dart of lightning - emptied in an instant, vanished in a flash. Associating with deluded people who do not understand the truth about causality and karmic retribution is a cautionary note so that we don't get ourselves caught up or influenced by the results of their misguided actions and resultant unfortunate karma. Do you really want to be around people who do not know the difference between good and evil? This is not about judging others but about making choices that lead to better outcomes.

The principle of causality is obvious and impersonal; for inevitably those who do evil fall, and those who do good rise. If there were no causality, the buddhas would not have appeared in this world, nor would Bodhidharma have come from the west.

This statement would seem like common sense but how often do we overlook the obvious in our lives? The principal of cause and effect is really evident for all to see and not some closed off secret. Doing good deeds results in good things happening and likewise when we do evil deeds the result is an evil outcome. This principle does not discriminate. Rich or poor, whatever station in life you are at, where ever you come from, if you endeavor in good or evil there will be a karmic result to your actions. The principle of causality shows that we are all connected, the interconnectedness of all things and all beings. Great teachers have appeared through time because they understand about causality and interconnectedness and wish to follow the bodhisattva path to save all beings thus Bodhidharma came from the west to teach in a country that already started to receive the Buddhadharma.

5. The karmic consequences of good and evil occur at three different times. The first is retribution experienced in our present life; the second is retribution experienced in the life following this one; and the third is retribution experienced in subsequent lives. In practicing the way of the buddhas and ancestors, from the start we should study and clarify the principle of karmic retribution in these three times. Otherwise, we will often make mistakes and fall into false views. Not only will we fall into false views, we will fall into evil births and undergo long periods of suffering.



Here Dogen is not speaking about reincarnation. To be clear when he speaks about different lifetimes he is still referring to our one and only life. Dogen is saying that a "lifetime" can be understood to mean the lives one has as a child, a teenager, a son or daughter, a young man or woman at work, a father or mother, or as a senior citizen. These can all be considered to be our various lifetimes. The mistakes we make as a younger person are often repeated as we get older unless we take the time to step back and observe why this is so and endeavor to change our behavior. By realizing the truth and reality of this principle of cause and effect we can go along way to living a life that is free from the effects of karmic retribution. Conversely if we develop a habit of doing good deeds the world will experience the benefit not just ourselves.

6. Understand that in this birth we have only one life, not two or three.

How regrettable it is if, falling into false views, we are subject to the consequences of evil deeds.

Because we think that it is not evil even as we do evil, and falsely imagine that there will be no consequences of evil, there is no way for us to avoid those consequences.

Even though we may speak of living different lives as described in the above comments, we really only live this one life. In Genjo-koan Dogen very clearly explains what he means about living this one life when he is describing the life of firewood. "When firewood becomes ash, it cannot become firewood again". In the life cycle there is clearly a "before" and an "after" but one cannot go from the beginning to the end and back to the beginning again.

If we do not grasp and come to see the truth of cause and effect we can certainly come to feel that we are above its effects. However, no matter what we falsely believe the truth of this matter will always teach us that we cannot avoid the consequences.

When Dogen wrote the fascicles of the Shobogenzo from which these 3 verses were taken I think he could see clearly all around him and in his own life the very real consequences of cause and effect about which he so clearly writes about.

Today in our society we see result of our inaction in decades past with climate change, the widespread drug addiction problem as well as other health issues. Science has shown us that there are consequences to despoiling the Earth's ecology. The suffering in Flint Michigan and around Chernobyl are a direct result of our actions. If we allow the Earth's temperature to rise over the 2 degree Celsius mark future generations will be dealing with the consequences of our lack of foresight and some might even say outright greed.

Many people, myself included are dealing with a delay in karmic retribution. Those of us who smoked cigarettes in our younger years are now coming to grips with all kinds of lung ailments including emphysema, asthma and lung cancer. When you are young you think you are invincible and can do whatever you want with no consequences only to find out that the thing that made you seemingly look cool and feel good only served to make you very ill and shortened your life. Dogen's words about cause and effect are extremely wise and all we have to do is look around us to see that.



In Memoriam: Faye Naomi Komagata

By Rev. Shinsho Hata



It is with great sadness we announce the passing of Mrs. Faye Naomi Komagata, on Monday, November 5, 2018. She passed away peacefully, surrounded by family and friends at Saint Francis Hospice in Honolulu. She was 72 years old.

Faye bravely fought pancreatic cancer for over two years, undergoing numerous rounds of chemotherapy and radiation. With her strong will and determination, she continued to do the things she loved, traveling to the mainland and the neighbor islands, teaching taiko, and remaining active in the many activities at the temple.

Faye's funeral service was held on Saturday, December 15, 2018 at the Soto Mission of Hawaii. Nearly 1000 people went to Betsuin to pay their respects and offer condolences to Bishop Shugen Komagata.

With hands together in gassho, Bishop Komagata expresses his deepest appreciation to everyone for all the love and support the family has received during this difficult time.

