

August 2020



Hello, everyone!

How have you been?

We had planned to reopen our Dharma Center in August. However, considering the present condition, we would like to be cautious and monitor the situation for another month. At this time, we are looking at the possibility of reopening in September.

Our Headquarters in Tokyo, with the Great Sacred Hall as the focal point, extended the closing of the facilities until November 30th.

Yet, the Memorial Day Services were held in front of the empty seats at the Great Sacred Hall, with greetings given by the leader of the sutra recitation for that day. And for the Urabon-e Ceremony, President Niwano gave his greetings. The members were able to participate in the services through the internet.

We pray for all the people who were inflicted by the virus and have passed away during this continuous coronavirus pandemic that their spirits may rest in peace. We also pray for the speedy recovery of those who are presently receiving treatments in the hospitals.

Furthermore, let us never forget our gratitude for the dedication of everyone in the healthcare industry as well as to all the people who are supporting our daily lives.

Instead of just thinking of what is happening throughout the world as “this a terrible situation,” I believe it is important for us to take this as an opportunity to pause for a while and look deeply into the way we should be.

In that sense, let us take this occasion to think about how we can approach that process from the Buddhist point of view.

We human beings now exist 40 billion years after beginning of life on this earth, having developed from hunter-gatherer culture, agricultural society, livestock farming culture, to monetary society. Presently, with the advances of science and technology, we live in the midst of the capitalist society.

At a glance, our lives seem like a life of convenience and abundance. But is that the total picture?

If we can perceive this as an opportunity to humbly reflect whether all is fine as is, that should lead us to the next level of our personal growth.

Human beings had lived in harmony with nature, but in course of time, had conquered • controlled nature with human-centered environmentally damaging developments, creating comfortable urban societies. Within such a setting, the human desire seems to have increasingly become excessive, falling into the chain of wanting more and more.

Civilization and science and technology developments are by no means a bad thing. However, such developments must not be limited only for the people but must expand to a broader viewpoint of mutually benefiting the great nature and human beings.

From thinking of human beings as conquering • controlling everything on earth, are we not standing at a turning point of thinking of human beings as one of the members of the great nature living in harmony with other members.

Fortunately, we have received the Buddhist teachings and have had many occasions to learn about the Buddha's wisdom.

"To live together (tomo iki)," is a way of such thinking

Ways in which human beings mutually and interdependently live with nature as one, is indicated here.

"Trees, grass, and nature all possess buddha nature (soh moku koku do shikkai jyobutsu)"

This is a Tendai sect • Saicho's teaching. A very important idea on world view in Japanese Buddhism with the meaning that all things vigorously carry out their respective roles.

"Small desires and contentment (shoh yoku chi soku)"

Not to deny desire, but the importance of knowing contentment at the same time, by controlling desire is taught here.

Through the Buddha's viewpoint such as these, I think each of us is being asked to cultivate the attitude to reflect on the present life, put the teaching into practice, aspire for self-transformation, and share the teaching with as many people as possible.

Each person's practice may be a modest one, but we are given assurance that the first step will connect to a greater flow.

From now onward, full-fledged summer has arrived. The summer's sunshine while wearing a mask can be quite harsh, so please be careful to avoid heatstroke. Let us keep our hearts and minds refreshed and take positive steps forward.

Gassho

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