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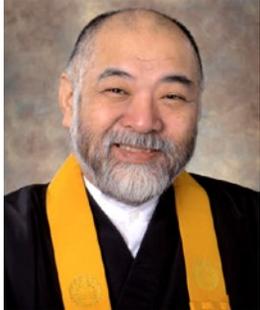
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DECEMBER
2020

"THERE ARE FAR, FAR BETTER THINGS AHEAD THAN ANY WE LEAVE BEHIND."
C.S. LEWIS

REV. KAKEI NAKAGAWA, Rinban



A New, but the Original Dharma Wheel

What truth/reality did Úâkyamuni Buddha experience under the Bodhi tree? Actually, what he realized there often shocks the believers of other religions. After his enlightenment, we do not need to set up an idea of eternal being outside and unchanging soul inside anymore, that because these delusional ideas really messes us up.

Buddhism describes Buddha's enlightenment by the concept of "dependent origination". In short, dependent origination means "all existence consists of interdependence".

"Dependent origination" is based on the idea of "relation generates existence", which is opposite of the traditional Western notion of "existence is what generates relation".

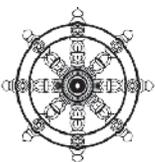
Modern Buddhism blew apart the idea that "relation is generated from existence" which is the hypothesis of Judaism, Christianity, Muslim, Taoism, Confucianism, Brahmanism etc.

Relevance of Buddha's idea was validated later by modern mathematics and physics in 20 and 21st century. It's because modern mathematics, physics and philosophy validate "no determinacy of existence" after success of incompleteness theorem in mathematics or after the success of quantum physics in the world of physics.

Modern science already proved that Buddha is correct.

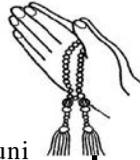


Recently, an original Dharma Wheel of Buddhism as known as the 'Aúôka Chakra' was to be used as the official Logo in the Buddhist world after the long absence. We at BCA are, of course, no exception.



The so-called Eight-fold Dharma Wheel the crest of the oldest monastery in Sri Lanka which we have been using for many years as a substitute Dharma Wheel, because 'Aúôka Chakra' the original Dharma Wheel became not be able to used 200 years ago.

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Good news! The teaching of Impermanence reminds us that things will not continue forever!

REV. KAZ NAKATA



Hello, all Central California Sangha friends! We only have one month till 2021! Time goes swiftly by! Under the guidelines of the County Health Department, we are still not able to have temple/church gatherings in the Hondo and social hall buildings. Rinban and I discussed how we can conduct a New Year's Eve Service (traditionally called "Joya-e"), and we decided to have a short outdoor service. Jo means "reset", "wipe out" or "clean up." "Ya" means "night." "e" means "gathering." So, Joya-e means "let us try to refresh our minds on New Year's Eve, and prepare to welcome the New Year with a fresh mind", or simply we can say Joya-e is a night gathering for reflection.

The current schedule is 2pm at Parlier, 3pm at Kingsburg, 4pm at Visalia, and 6pm at Fresno. If Reedley conducts service, they will have a guest speaker. Fowler and Hanford continue to suspend their church activities. We will chant Juseige together (socially distanced & outdoor) in front of the Kansho (big bell) and all participants are welcome to gong the bell to welcome the New year. The service will be about 15 minutes. I look forward to seeing you.

As I mentioned in my last article, for the last two months, I proposed at Central Cal Temple/Church board meetings the idea of hosting a Drive-Thru Food fundraiser to benefit their temples. Both Reedley Buddhist Church and Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple raised their hands to host fundraisers. I don't know how to make traditional Japanese food, but I am familiar with contemporary Japanese food which I cook and serve for my family. I decided to produce Yakisoba at Reedley in October, and Curry at Fresno in November. Under the pandemic condition, I assumed I had to make these foods by myself without help, and I limited myself to serve up to 250 plates. But my assumption was wrong!

At Reedley, many Sangha members generously helped my fundraiser project and added more food to the Yakisoba Bento Box. You can view pictures of these "Deluxe" Bento Boxes on Twitter!

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Rev. Nakagawa, continued from page 1

For many years, 'Aúôka Chakra' use by the Buddhist group was not permitted by the Indian Government because of it has been a part of National Flag as well as National Emblem. But in recent years

Buddhism awakened from more than 1000 years sleep in India and Buddhists population increased dramatically. Some survey resulted more than 50 million people officially declared Buddhist and numbers is still acutely growing.

It was the reason why they could request to the Indian Government to using 'Aúôka Chakra' as Buddhist symbol. Their request finally accepted in 2007.



The design of 'Aúôka Chakra' consists of 24 Wheel spokes and a circle of center. The center circle represents our individual, and the 24 wheel spokes surrounding it represents all of the temporal and spatial conditions surrounding the existence. According to the Indian civilization, the number "24" symbolically means "All".

Without exception, we were born from parents who as an evolved mankind from "original life-form" born to the earth 3.6 billion years ago. And we have each different individual now after received the conditions of education and the environment. From the edge of the universe to the earth of this planet, there is a chain of interdependency beyond imagination. Even when you look your body inward, you can understand that you exist by an interdependency of 60 trillion cells. If even one of these boundless conditions is lacked, a result is that we do not have our identity right now. In other words, it is 'Aúôka Chakra' that expresses each individual existence living by being supported by countless other powers other than oneself (Interdependency).

When thinking like this, the circle of the center supposed to be me, but in reality there may be the boundless and myriad dependent originations in existence, which we call 'Kuh = Void-ness as dependent origination'.

The well-known "Circle of Life" by the Lion King movie is the meaning of "Wheel of Life" originally, which is based on the Truth of Interdependency symbolized by this 'Aúôka Chakra'.

In closing, I want to share a following poem that one Buddhist poet wrote:

A Bell, A Bird and Me (English Translation)

Even if I spread out both hands,
I cannot fly at all in the sky,
But the bird that can fly
Cannot run fast on the ground like me.

Even if I shake my body,
It doesn't make beautiful sounds,
But the ringing bell
Doesn't know as many songs as me.

A bell, a bird and me,
Everyone is different, everyone is good.

Rev. Kaz, continued from page 1

I was supposed to cook Yakisoba by myself, but two great chefs came to help and cooked all the Yakisoba. Reedley closed their Church right after their famous Crab Dinner on March 14 and the Yakisoba fundraiser was their biggest event since. All of the helpers were socially distanced and enjoyed talks with "long time no see" friends at their home church. After all Bento Boxes were filled with Yakisoba and side dishes, I walked to a popup tent where the Reedley president greeted those who came to pick up their order. Many people were pleased to see each other while picking up their meal. I sincerely appreciate the Reedley Sangha members help for the fundraiser and I was glad to see everyone.

At Fresno, Sangha members planned the monthly food fundraiser, and my "deluxe" Curry Bento Box fundraiser was set as their kick-off event. With the current pandemic and the guidelines from the Health Department changing frequently, please stay tuned for the next food fundraiser!



For the Curry, I acted as "Master Chef", and a Sangha member kindly made a chef's hat (white starched hat). You can watch on Twitter, how I cooked curry (7 hours a day) in the Fresno Betsuin kitchen. Before the pandemic, "Fresno Betsuin - Strength in Sangha" T-shirts were produced and were worn by all volunteers during this event. During the curry cooking, I really sensed that kindness and willingness of the Sangha. I think what I sensed was "Strength in Sangha".

In both Reedley and Fresno, I was so grateful to work with such wonderful people!

One of the universal truths of the Buddha is the teaching of Impermanence. At the New Year's Eve Service, I always remind everyone that what happened in the current year does not always reflect what is going to happen in the coming year. I assume the pandemic condition will continue in 2021, but all things that began in the past will end in the future. We need to be careful, but not scared.

When we gong the bell at the New Year's Eve Service, we reset our mind to welcome the new year with fresh minds. As long as we walk on the path of Buddhahood, we can continue enjoying our life with gratitude under any circumstance.

Gassho

