



BUDDHIST CHURCH OF MARYSVILLE

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February 2021

Hiking the Path, with Team Castle Hiking at home, Number 11.

Theme for 2021 is simply: BE YOURSELF!

In the last Hiking article, I wrote about simply living our lives as honestly as possible by simply living a life of "Be Yourself".

Recently, as I often spend time on FaceBook, I found a post from the Jikoen Buddhist Temple in Honolulu. The post simply said:

BE YOURSELF.

This is the easiest thing to do if you do not judge yourself. It is the most difficult thing to do if you are always judging yourself. You are neither good nor bad. You simply are. Accept that and be enlightened.

I will do my best to listen to this advice. I hope that we are all able to simply be ourselves, and I sincerely hope that we can be ourselves together very soon.

With 2020 behind us, Happy New Year everyone!!! Welcome to 2021!

Normally at the end of the year I think that we all have our individual excitement and anticipation for the new year. This year as 2020 was winding down, I found myself thinking that for the first time in many years, there seemed to be a shared global sense of anticipation and hope for what is to come in this new year.

While the pandemic has reached all over the world, there is a collective and global hope that vaccinations will bring about a sense of safety and security that we currently do not have. I think we also hope that there is a slow and gradual return to normalcy, or at least we can return to some of our normal routine.

In our Buddhist teachings, the Four Noble Truths teach us:

1. Life is Difficult.
2. Life is difficult because we focus on ourselves and don't like change.
3. Life would be easier if we did not focus on ourselves.
4. The way to not focus on ourselves is to follow the Eight-fold Path.

I would like to focus on the second of the Four Noble Truths in that our lives are made difficult because we are selfish. Another way to re-word in a more PMA thought is simply we don't like change, we want to hold on to things just as they are.

COVID has impacted the world with a very quick and life altering change. Many, if not all of us by now know someone who has been infected with COVID. Many, if not all of us, know someone who has become very ill because of COVID. Many, if not all of us, have known the pain of losing someone due to COVID.

With the impact of all this change, I think to myself, self, is it OK to sometimes be focused on myself and feel the negative impact of change?

The Four Noble truths absolutely would tell us, "Be Yourself!" This self-awareness is crucial to our lives as Buddhists. The Four Noble Truths don't teach to negate these feelings, but require us to check in with ourselves and provides us a path to off-load some of these feelings so we can feel better about ourselves and our lives.

Stay-at-home orders, not being able to gather with our friends, seeing illness around us, feeling the pain of loss is all the reality of our lives. Feeling emotions and the impact of these emotions give life to our humanity and allow us to have empathy to others. In a way, I feel teachings like the Four Noble Truths ask us to simply acknowledge how we are...how we feel...how we are reacting, and then help us tie our shoes to continue our hike on this path of life. And if we are fortunate, we can all help each other walk together, not alone.

In Gratitude,

Namo Amida Butsu

Keep on Hiking!!

Team Castle

