



BUDDHIST CHURCH OF MARYSVILLE

125 B STREET P.O. BOX 1462 PHONE (530) 743-6426
MARYSVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95901-1462



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Rev. Tim's theme for 2021 is simply: BE YOURSELF!

In the last Hiking article, I wrote about this Ohigan time of year and who and what can help us move from this shore of life and death to the other shore of enlightenment.

There are so many who help us each and every day, but often these efforts go un-noticed with our Dharma eyes closed. The truth is that our lives are not simply ours alone. That although we may think that we've got everything under control and that we can take care of ourselves and everyone around us. In reality, it's the ocean of great caring, love and sacrifice, an ocean of other people's patience and efforts that surrounds us. This is what is actually keeping us afloat every moment of every day.

This month I am thinking that it is now April (as I write this message) and April 8th to be exact. April 8th is Hanamatsuri, a day we set aside to remember and celebrate the birth of the historical Buddha, Prince Siddhartha.

Prince Siddhartha's life and journey to enlightenment is such an important story. As he realized his enlightenment to the ultimate truths of impermanence (change) and interdependence (oneness), I think it must have been so overwhelming for him. I am sure for a brief moment, he wondered if enlightenment was something that he should keep to himself or something to share with others? In the end, due to his willingness to ease the pain of others, Prince Siddhartha decided to share and teach what he had attained to anyone who was willing to learn and listen.

Once he attained enlightenment, Prince Siddhartha was called the Shakyamuni Buddha. This name simply translated to the wise person from the Shakya Clan who has attained enlightenment. After attaining enlightenment,

the Buddha spent the rest of his life simply sharing his thoughts with others. Since there was no written language in his time, the Buddha shared through words spoken to his followers.

Maybe the most important words that the Shakyamuni spoke were on this death bed. "After I leave this world, make the Dharma your place of refuge. Make yourself a light...all things in this world are impermanent. Follow the Dharma diligently."

These words were so important because it re-emphasized what he had taught for years. The Dharma, the truth that surrounds us is the true teaching and NOT the teacher. Don't focus on me, but focus on the truth that surrounds each of us every single day. Don't put me on this pedestal, look to the Dharma as the true teacher. I may pass away but the truth, the teachings will continue long after my death.

To me, it is truly amazing that 2,600 years later, our Jodo Shinshu practice is based upon the core teachings from someone who lived so long ago, far away in India. This is an impactful reminder of our teaching of interdependence...our lives have a direct link to Prince Siddhartha. Happy Birthday Prince Siddhartha!!!

Until we can all be together, let us all remember those around us who care and support us each and every day, and together let's take a hike as fellow travelers!!!

In Gratitude,

Namo Amida Butsu

Keep on Hiking!!

Team Castle

