



# may peace and TRANQUILITY prevail



This has always been an elusive goal throughout recorded history. There has rarely, if ever, been a 100 years of peace anywhere in the world – and as a single unit, the world has never known peace and tranquility for even 10 years. Nor is it true that we have progressed towards a more peaceful world. The 20th century was one of the most brutal, cruel, mindless, war-like centuries in history. It was a century that had to create the terms “genocide”, “cultural genocide”, and “ecological genocide” to describe our most prominent activities. How is it then that for all our protestations against war and war-like activity and our universal longing for peace, we have been such colossal failures at this business of peace?

From a Buddhist perspective, it might perhaps be because of our colossal disregard of the three poisons which are seen to make the world of suffering and sorrow come into being and go round and round in seemingly endless cycles. The three poisons are: greed, anger, and ignorance (including stupidity). The three poisons are interconnected and create the worlds of

man, from hells up to and including the heavens. This is called Samsara, the human worlds of instantaneous birth/death, the realms of deluded suffering and sorrow. Greed is perhaps the most fundamental of poisons as is evidenced by our country's present state. Corporate greed, rich men's greed and poor men's greed are all insatiable – the more one gets, the more one needs to get. In America, power is acquired through possession of wealth, of things – “You can never have too much money you know!” – and such like statements. Even our food is rated by how much you can get for how little, with almost no attention paid to taste, health, or presentation. Personal comfort and convenience takes precedence over communal well-being, and what we know is best for us is set aside for what we want. Such values do not value peace when war is so infinitely more profitable. When greed is not satisfied, anger arises. And when anger arises, clarity of thought diminishes, with the resulting ignorance and stupidity paving the way for increased greed.

In short, the three poisons lead to a

love of things, an attachment to labels, brands, famous things and famous people. – the *Hollywood syndrome*. People are not as important as what people have, or what they can do for you. Human relationships and the deeply meaningful act of getting to know another human being are secondary considerations. Americans, and the Japanese for that matter, can be categorized as Gaki cultures. Gaki are described as hungry ghosts. They have enormous bellies and mouths the size of the head of a pin – symbolizing an enormous, insatiable hunger. They are the quintessential consumers. The term ghosts implies that living only to consume things is not quite human – a shadow human.

How then do we move toward a more peaceful and tranquil world? We do so by reminding ourselves, and the world, that the three poisons are ever present in every person and in every circumstance, so that we can no longer get away with being wolves in sheep's clothing. The more we ponder the three poisons, the more difficult it becomes to hide our greed in a cover of doing good and benefitting others.

The more we look on our dark side, the more the light becomes apparent. The more we see our own three poisons moving in our thought, speech, and actions, the more we are able to move away from the love of things and toward the love of relationships – be they animal (including humans), vegetable, or mineral – a peaceful ecology where man does not have the right to manipulate the earth as he pleases, or for his benefit only. Gaki societies are profoundly self-centered societies – that ironically cannot see what that self is. It looks for the positive by denying the negative. It looks only at the exterior hope without looking at the ulterior reality. You cannot have light without dark, no left without right, no life without death. We cannot have peace unless we look seriously at our ulterior reasons for our warlike actions. War is, even at its justified best, a breakdown in human communication

and human values. “A good war” or “the war to end all war” is all too familiar a cry that has been repeated and re-repeated ad nauseum. Without seriously looking at our darker three poisons side, the light of peace remains a cliché. When left un-analyzed an unchecked, human greed and lust for power and control make war inevitable. It is not so much “How do we make peace?” as “How do we look at the real causes of war on a world, national, and, most important, personal level?” It always comes back to the three poisons, in the world, in the nation, and in me – and the latter is the hardest nut to crack.

*Rev. Masa*



## TEMPLE UPDATE

Sangha Welfare – Condolences to the family of Peter Lugo who passed away in March. Get well wishes go to Michele Kammerer in Bellingham, Washington. Congratulations to the family of Misao Matsuda, great-grandmother, Kathy & Martin Umemoto, grandparents, at the birth of baby Jaryn Ito.

Hondo Clean-up – The group met with the specialists who did the renovation work of the onaijin to review the proper method of cleaning the onaijin. They learned how not to rub the lacquerwork, but only to carefully remove the dust. Finesse, not elbow grease, please.

Kinnara – There will be a celebration of its 40th Anniversary at Senshin in October for Senshin temple members only. Details to follow.

Chicken Teriyaki - It's coming May 17th! Get your orders in! Deadline is May 10th! See Nell Sawada for tickets and work assignments. Sauce-making will take place on May 8th.

BCA National Council Meeting – Senshin received acknowledgment from the BCA for the donation of Don Peterman's paintings for the silent auction.

Religious Committee – Information helpful to caregivers is available in the library.

Planning Committee – This committee is hard at work putting together a framework for the future of Senshin, including long-term planning of programs, logistics, funding, with input from past group discussions. A report to the board is forthcoming.