



Rinzai Zen Mission Newsletter

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120 Alawai Rd, next to Baldwin Beach Park, Paia

Issue 22

We are only in March and Rinzai Zen Mission has already done so many things! New Year's mochi-pounding, our annual membership meeting, Lunar New Year service and celebration, and most recently, our hosting of Nanrei Yokota Roshi for two events and the two celebrations following them. In March we will be busy preparing for our early April Hanamatsuri and for our Bazaar on April 26. After that, we point our sails toward August and our obon service and dance. With attendance at these events growing, we so appreciate all who jump in to help with set up, clean up, and everything else in between. This is how we Sangha. Sangha is one of the three treasures in Buddhism and often not given the attention it deserves. None of our events would happen if members of our Sangha didn't volunteer. At Rinzai Zen Mission I learned that all of the active members are active in everything--including attending services, volunteering for obon, bazaars, receptions, and cleaning. Being part of this Sangha introduced me to the jewel that is Sangha-ing. Long-time members of the Sangha show up for everything and work until everything is done. This selfless way is such a wonderful teaching and one I vow to embody fully. My deep gratitude for the Rinzai Zen Mission Sangha for helping me give my time more generously. I and all beings benefit. I invite you all to avail yourself of this treasure and join us in working here to make these wonderful events happen.

Susan, President of Rinzai Zen Mission



Hanamatsuri is coming soon!

What is Hanamatsuri?

Hanamatsuri, or the Flower Festival, celebrates the birth of Siddhartha Gautama, who became Shakyamuni Buddha. Observed on April 8 in Japan, the festival includes a ceremony where a statue of the baby Buddha is bathed in sweet tea, symbolizing the rain that fell at his birth. Temples are adorned with flowers, and events such as chanting, Dharma talks, and gatherings take place. Hanamatsuri is a time for gratitude, reflection, and honoring the Buddha's wisdom and compassion.





Hanamatsuri Celebration – April 5th (Sat)



We warmly invite all RZM members and longtime supporters of Rinzai Zen Mission to join us for this special Hanamatsuri event. This year, we will celebrate Hanamatsuri together with our neighboring temple, Mantokuji. We are honored to welcome Rev. Chisaka and Rev. Hoshi from Japan. Rev. Chisaka will stay from April 1 to 6, and Rev. Hoshi from April 4 to 6. The service will begin at 10:00 AM on April 5th (Sat), with Rev. Hirasawa from Mantokuji also participating.

Schedule: April 5th (Sat)

10:00 AM – Hanamatsuri Service; Dharma Talk following the service

11:30 AM – Lunch & Game

Lunch will be catered by the temple rather than a potluck. **To help us order the appropriate amount of food, we kindly ask those planning to attend from the RZM side to inform Sen by March 22.** (Sen: 808-268-4216 | Email: k.haga0412@gmail.com)
We look forward to celebrating with you!



Rummage Sale – April 26th (Sat) 8AM



RZM will hold a Rummage Sale on Saturday, April 26, from 8AM to 12PM. As in previous years, the event will feature a rummage sale, food sale, and plant sale.

Event Details

Setup: April 25th (Fri), from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

(It's fine if you can only help during the time you're available.)

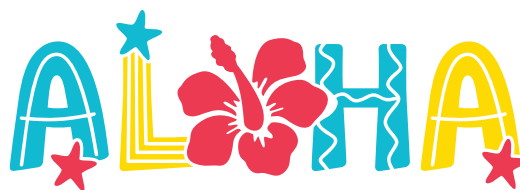
Rummage Sale: April 26th (Sat), from 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Volunteers Needed: We greatly appreciate any help on both April 25 and 26.

Contacts

Rummage Sale: Julie Higa – (808) 264-2765

Food & Plant Sales: Alan Nago – (808) 281-7181



Appreciate your Donation

Rummage Items

Donations will be accepted from April 20 (Sun) to April 24 (Thur), 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM, and on April 25 (Fri), 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Sen will be at the temple during these hours to receive donations. If these times do not work for you, please contact Sen (808-268-4216) to arrange an alternative time. Please note that we cannot accept clothing or glassware.

Plants

Alan is generously donating his wonderful plants, and we welcome additional plant donations from others. Please bring them on April 25, between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

Food Sale

We will be selling Pig's Feet Soup, Andagi, and Chow Fun, along with baked goods and pickled items. We kindly ask for donations of baked goods and pickled items on April 25, between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

RZM Schedule - March to May

March

March 9: Cleaning Day, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM (Potluck Luncheon to follow)
March 16: Monthly Service, 10:00 AM (Potluck Luncheon to follow)

April

April 5: Hanamatsuri, 10:00 AM
April 13: Cleaning Day, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM (Potluck Luncheon to follow)
April 20: Monthly Service, 10:00 AM (Potluck Luncheon to follow)
April 25: Preparation for Rummage Sale, 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
April 26: Temple Bazaar (Rummage, Food, and Plant Sale), 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

May

May 11: No Cleaning Day (due to Mother's Day)
May 18: Monthly Service, 10:00 AM (Potluck Luncheon to follow)

Calligraphy Schedule

March 16: 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
March 20: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM
March 22: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

April 13: 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
April 17: 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
April 20: 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM



Okinawan Corner No.3: Nuchi gusui ぬちぐすい

Okinawa is known as the island of longevity, and at the heart of this is the concept of nuchi gusui ("medicine for life"). This term goes beyond mere healing; it represents wisdom for nurturing life and maintaining physical and mental well-being. The people of Okinawa have sustained their health through a traditional diet rich in nutritious ingredients like bitter melon, seaweed, and tofu, emphasizing low-calorie, high-protein meals. Strong community ties also play a vital role in nuchi gusui. Through the spirit of yuimaaru (mutual support), Okinawans prioritize social connections with family and neighbors, preventing loneliness and fostering emotional stability. Additionally, harmony with nature is another key factor. Engaging in farming under the sun or finding peace by gazing at the sea contributes to their longevity. Nuchi gusui is more than just a source of comfort; it is a philosophy of cherishing life, promoting well-being, and living a fulfilling existence through food, relationships, and connection with nature.

Yokota Roshi Dharma Talk: What is Zen?

I came today from a place called Kamakura in Japan. I am from Engaku-ji temple. In 1893, a Zen master from Engaku-ji named Sōen Shaku attended the World's Religious Summit in Chicago and gave a lecture. Because of this connection, Dr. Daisetz Suzuki later traveled to the United States and introduced many Zen books in English. This helped spread Zen throughout the world. Zen originally comes from the teachings of the Buddha in India. When these teachings were brought to China, they developed in their own unique way, and this became Zen. And about 800 years ago, the teachings of Zen were then brought to Japan.

So, what does Zen teach? What does it try to share? The founder of Zen was Bodhidharma. What did Bodhidharma teach? He taught this: "Each of you, every single person, your own mind is Buddha. This mind itself is Buddha. Believe in this." Buddha is not something outside of you. Your mind is Buddha. The teaching of Zen is to share the preciousness of this mind.

How is this mind shared? It is passed down through Zen dialogues. Here is one such dialogue. It is between Zen master Baso and the disciple Hyakujo.

Zen Master Baso was once traveling with Hyakujo. As they walked, they saw a wild duck flying by. Baso asked, "What is that?" Hyakujo answered, "It is a duck." Baso then asked, "Where did it go?" Hyakujo said, "It flew away." At that moment, Baso grabbed Hyakujo's nose and twisted it. Hyakujo cried out in pain. Baso said, "How could it have flown away? It is right here!" The pain Hyakujo felt when his nose was twisted--that is his mind. And this mind is Buddha. This mind is also life itself.



What is the mind? What is life? These are difficult questions. But we all know whether life is present or not, whether the mind is present or not. As we saw in the Zen dialogue, when the nose is twisted, it hurts. This is proof of life. This is proof of mind. There was even a Zen monk who attained enlightenment when he stubbed his toe on a rock and shouted, "Ouch!" Because we are alive, because we have a mind, we feel pain. And because we can feel our own pain, we can understand the pain of others. This precious life is right here in our bodies. It allows us to see with our eyes, hear with our ears, smell with our nose, and taste with our tongue. Yet, people think that Buddha is somewhere outside and look for it. But if we can cut off this searching mind, we will realize that we are already the same as Buddha. This precious mind is already fully within each of us. The Zen master Linji clearly said, "You who are listening to my talk right now--you are Buddha!"

Then, what is it that is listening right now? What exactly is hearing this talk? Even if there are ears, ears alone cannot hear. Even if there is a body, if life is gone, it cannot hear. Even if there is a head, if there is no consciousness, it cannot hear. The reason we are hearing this talk is because life is working within us, consciousness is present, and the mind is here. Life exists. Consciousness exists. But what does that really mean? When called, we answer like, "Yes." When struck, we feel pain. When a sound occurs, we hear it. Yet, when asked what life, consciousness, or mind truly are, the answer is not so easy. These are not things we can see or hold in our hands. Yet, we cannot say they do not exist, for without them, we would not be here listening to this talk.

Even forgetful people never say, "I forgot my life at home today." If someone did say, "I forgot my life," and raised their hand, that very action would prove their life exists. The ability to hear the question and respond is itself proof of life. So, if someone asks, "What is life?" we can say, "It is the one who just raised their hand." This living body, which sees, hears, and acts, is what Zen Master Linji called Buddha. Another Zen monk, Bankei, explained that when we hear a bird singing outside, we naturally recognize it as a bird's voice. We do not need to try to hear it; we simply do. This is proof that the marvelous Buddha-mind is present in all of us. We cannot grasp life as a tangible object.



People often try to claim, "This is my life," or "I control my life," but life is not something we can capture. Rather, life is the entire activity of our being, functioning as a whole.

Who is listening to this talk? Without life, we could not hear. That much is certain. Yet, we take our life for granted and rarely think about it. It is only when life is threatened or nearly lost that we truly reflect on its importance. We realize its value only when we come close to losing it.

There was a young girl named Yukina Miyakoshi. She was diagnosed with neuroblastoma at the age of five and, after five and a half years of fighting the illness, she passed away at the age of eleven. Four months before her passing, she wrote a poem titled "Life": "Life is very precious. It is like a battery that keeps us alive. But batteries eventually run out. Life, too, will one day end. Batteries can be replaced, but life cannot be replaced so easily. It takes many years, only after a long time that God grants us life. Without life, we cannot live. Yet some people say, 'I don't need my life' and throw it away. Even though they still have much life left, seeing that makes me sad. Life never stops working. So I want to live with all my heart until my life says it is tired."

She compared life to a battery, yet life is not an actual physical object like a battery. It is a culmination of many elements: sunlight, air, water, the earth, the changing seasons, our parents, the many people around us, the food we eat, the clothes we wear. All of these together create life. Everything we receive each day sustains our life. Water, air, food--all are part of life. Including all of them, we can say life. If we call this life "mind," it means the same thing.



An ancient verse says: "If someone asks what mind is, It cannot be seen with the eyes, yet it fills the entire universe." Life is vast, filling the whole universe. Right now, we are expressing this universal life through our bodies, listening with our ears, and speaking with our mouths. Buddha is nothing other than this life, filling all of existence. But life is not a fixed entity that exists somewhere separately. It is the interconnectedness of all things. Poet Kōbun Tsuji once wrote: "Life is connection."

Everything is connected seamlessly, with no breaks in between. This is the Eastern concept of "emptiness." People with disabilities, able-bodied individuals, children, the elderly, the sick, you, and I--we can be distinguished, but we cannot be separated from life itself. Life covers insects, animals, mountains, rivers, the sea, rain, wind, the sky, the sun--even the farthest speck of dust in the universe. Since the beginning of time, life has existed together in an infinite, interdependent flow, and within that great current, we now exist. Everything is alive. More precisely, everything is being kept alive. We are here now, living within this great life. Within this vast web of connection, our life itself exists. Zen teaches us to awaken to the preciousness of this life and to live in a way that honors it. This realization is not for ourselves alone. We want everyone to recognize it as well.

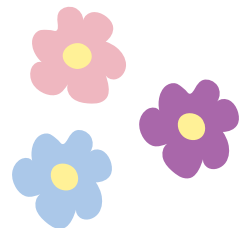
In 1893, Zen Master Sōen Shaku from Engaku-ji Temple spoke at the World's Religious Summit in Chicago. His message was that we must never harm each other's lives: "What does war bring us? Nothing at all. War is nothing more than the strong oppressing the weak. War is brothers fighting and shedding each other's blood. In war, the strong gain nothing, while the weak lose everything. We often say, "All of humanity is one family," but if we stand armed against each other, it is the most troublesome relationship.

But how can we truly realize our wishes for peace? True religion is the answer. True religion is the source of compassion and tolerance. The true essence of religion lies in realizing universal love and the noble aspiration for everlasting peace." To live a life, we should embrace four aspirations:



First, we cultivate a heart that wishes for the happiness of all. In doing so, we let go of selfish desires that prioritize only our own well-being. We then seek to learn broadly and deeply, to make everyone attain happiness. Ultimately, we wish for the path that brings happiness to the entire world. These four aspirations are what we must practice. To awaken to the preciousness of life, to avoid harming others, and to wish for the happiness of all--this is the teaching of Zen.

**However innumerable sentient beings are, I vow to save them all.
However inexhaustible desires are, I vow to extinguish them all.
However immeasurable the Dharmas are, I vow to master them all.
However unsurpassable the Way of Buddha is, I vow to attain it.**



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