

Aspiration Delivered at the 2022 Nagasaki Peace Bell Gathering

Bishop Eric Matsumoto

August 9, 2022

As we gather today, regardless of national origin, ethnicity and religious affiliation, let us reflect and rededicate ourselves to world peace and harmony, to a world that is free of nuclear weapons of destruction and there is deep respect for human life. May we be guided and inspired by Enlightened Wisdom and Compassion.

Today, I would like to share some insights and a famous Buddhist parable from the Pure Land Buddhist Tradition known as the "Parable of the Two Rivers and the White Path." Our predicament is described as a lonely lost traveler walking alone where I find myself trapped between two raging rivers of fire and water which are engulfing me. Our reality is that many are not even aware of the raging waters of greed and the raging fires of anger which threaten all of us. Some people are aware of it, but don't know what to do and thus in deep despair. According to the Parable, the Historic Buddha (Sakyamuni Buddha) is encouraging us to seek refuge in an All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion (Amida Buddha) which calls out to each and every one of us especially to those of us who are living in these Latter Days when 1) wars and natural disasters abound, 2) there is a confusion of values, 3) there is increased anger, greed and ignorance, 4) inferior quality of human life including egotism, and 5) the wasting and shortening of human life.

Does this not sound like our world today with all the racial discrimination, political chaos, natural disasters including the Pandemic, wars including gun violence related to mass shootings etc. which are affecting all of us very negatively. So many people, in general, are reacting to all these situations with such intensity, division, and hate. My thought is how crucial it is for all of



Photographs by Rev. Daido Baba

us, instigators, and victims, to respond and not react to people and situations. Here is where Buddhism with its teachings of being mindful and reflection including reflecting on oneself to see how easy it is for the "ugly" side of me to appear becomes really meaningful and relevant. So, we can, as much as possible, respond and not react.

Further, let us not lose hope. As one source explains, although it is the Latter Days, "typically this was not a cause for despair, because this scheme was accompanied by teachings that the Buddha, having foreseen the coming of this dark age, had provided beforehand... (that) which were suitable for the time." Our rescue is a Wisdom and Compassion which includes everyone and everything in its

embrace and tempers our negativity with awareness and where in gratitude of Great Compassion and deep lament of my limited self, we respond to it by embracing the aspiration for peace and harmony in the world for both self and others by awakening to True Reality.

May we all be guided, nurtured and embraced by All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion so that as another sutra states, "The land is prosperous and people live in peace, so there is no need to use soldiers and weapons. People respect virtue, cultivate benevolence, and diligently observe propriety and humility."

Entrusting in All-Inclusive Wisdom & All-Embracing Compassion/ Namo Amida Butsu.

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

Peace Day 2022 Highlights



Temple photo taken during 2019 Peace Day



Members of the Buddhist Women's Association busy at work folding origami cranes for Peace Day.



The Sewing Hui volunteer group and Women's Association members standing with their completed curtains and Peace Day origami projects.

Kohala Hongwanji Mission



As a way to spread the word about Peace Day, a total of 204 hand-crafted origami Peace Cranes were colorfully arranged in four baskets that were distributed to local grocery stores in the Kohala region on the island of Hawai'i for shoppers to take home and enjoy.

The cranes each included a message introducing the annual observance, a resolution that was submitted by the Hawaii Hongwanji Young Buddhist Association, that has made Hawaii the first state in the nation to recognize September 21 as Peace Day.



Puna Hongwanji Mission



The unveiling of the Peace Pole took place on September 25th, following the Peace Day service.



PEACE WALK WITH THE MAYOR



In commemoration of Peace Day, 4,000 cranes folded out of recycled paper were strung and made into mobiles for the Mayor's Office.

Peace Day Photo Contest



- 1st Place –
Kanoë Arai
- 2nd Place –
Alison Sato
- 3rd Place –
Theavy Sok
- 4th Place –
Sloan Adkins

Peace Day Drawing Contest



- 1st Place –
Aloha McGilway, 10
years old
- 2nd Place –
Bruce McGilway,
9 years old
- 3rd Place –
Kian Ikeda –
8 years old

