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June 2022 Newsletter

Hello everyone, how are you doing?

As we enter June, the first half of the year 2022 is about to fly by in no time at all.

According to a recent WHO report, the number of deaths worldwide due to COVID 19 is estimated to be nearly 15 million, far exceeding previous estimates, and the number of deaths in the U.S. is also estimated to be 1 million.

Probably due to the recent progress in vaccination, the number of people wearing masks on the streets has been decreasing and the mandatory use of masks seems to have been eased. However, the situation has not yet been brought under control and we must not let our guards down.

The Russian aggression in Ukraine has not lessened, and the neutral countries of Northern Europe have expressed their desire to join NATO. Things are getting more and more confusing.

We would like to express our deepest condolences to those who lost their lives due to COVID 19 and to the victims of the conflict in Ukraine. We would also like to express our deepest gratitude to all the medical personnel who are giving their utmost in this Coronavirus disaster, and the government agencies officials and the essential workers who are supporting our daily lives.

On April 7, the Buddhist researcher Hiro Sachiya, who was deeply familiar with our organization, passed away. In his prolific writings, Hiro explained Buddhism in a way that is easy for people of today to understand. This month, I would like to introduce what Hiro mentioned as a viewpoint on how to look at things. It is a way of thinking that is connected to the understanding of the Buddhist teaching, “the ultimate reality of all things,” and to see things as is.

He uses the story of an airplane pilot flying in the sky as an example. The pilot always keeps two perspectives in mind. The first is the outside view from the cockpit, paying attention to the distant mountains, horizon, clouds, etc. This is the outside view from the inside and is called the “INSIDE OUT” perspective. The second is the view from the outside of the airplane that is constantly aware of the attitude, orientation, and tilt, etc. of the aircraft, called the “OUTSIDE IN” perspective, and is considered important for flying the airplane safely to its destination.

As this story suggests, it is important in our daily lives to have both perspectives of looking at the outside from within us and looking at our own selves from the outside. However, we tend to judge our position based solely on what we see outside from within us. Without knowing how to see ourselves from the outside, we often make judgments based on our own convenience and only our own thoughts, and therefore, we often act thinking we have the best of intentions.

If we look from a perspective separate from ourselves, we start to see ourselves in a different way, and we can understand how those around us might view our existence. I think this is connected to the difference between a subjective and an objective view.

Even so, it is difficult to look at oneself objectively.

Therefore, I believe it is in the Hoza that we practice and learn such things.

When we share our thoughts and feelings with our fellow sangha members and ask them to share what they notice and feel, we will discover things we could not have known on our own and deepen our awareness of

ourselves. Furthermore, the discussion is not an exchange of mutual subjective perspectives, but rather a mutual learning opportunity to see how things are in accordance to the teachings (Dharma), which leads to an “OUTSIDE IN” perspective.

Buddhism is said to be about "wisdom and compassion," and that “wisdom” is the viewpoint that simultaneously perceives the differences and commonalities of things. For example, you and I have different personalities, physical forms, ways of feeling, and ways of thinking, but at the same time, it is important to perceive that we are both irreplaceable human beings who live together in this world. Therefore, there is no need to compete or fight with each other for superiority, but rather, by acknowledging and respecting our differences, we can discover our commonalities and live in harmony. This leads to a way of life with wisdom.

In addition, emphasis on the perspective of finding only each other’s differences can be a source of conflict and lead to a discriminatory point of view. Let us keep in mind the importance of a properly balanced "middle way" viewpoint that is not prejudiced toward either point of view.

To this end, it is important to have thoughtful compassion for others. We are taught that "wisdom comes from a heart of compassion." I think it is important to have ‘warm wisdom’ that comes from a sincere heart that cares for others, rather than ‘cold intelligence’ that comes from insufficient consideration.

The NY Center’s renovation project was finally approved and now the adjacent streets and sidewalks have been fenced off. The entire exterior of the building will be completely renewed by September, in time to celebrate the 40th anniversary of RKNY.

The chilly days of the recent past will be completely replaced by the coming hot season. Please be careful not to become ill due to the sudden change and continue your efforts this month.



Gassho

Rev. Tomokazu Hatakeyama

Minister RKNY