

In the year when Russia invaded Ukraine
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Wisdom Passed Down to Us in Order to Become Better Ancestors
《Notes on Buddha Dharma》

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Everything and everybody are related with and dependent on each other.

Light from the sun
The air, the ocean, and the earth
Grass and trees grow
Birds and butterflies fly

The sky, the earth, and the water
In their connections people also live.

Lives are passed down from generation to generation.
There is a father; there is a mother; they receive a life, and it is born.
In the vast connections and relations
Through causes and conditions
We are here now.

Everything and everybody arise,
Their causes and various conditions being related with each other,
Depending on others they arise, which is called “dependent origination”
(*pratītyasamutpāda*).
Nothing stands alone.

In the world where everything arises depending on others,
Everybody lives a life that also arises depending on others,
In other words, everybody is made alive by others.

The fact that [everything] arises depending on [others] (*pratītyasamutpāda*)
We declare to be emptiness (*śūnyatā*) [of everything] ...
Nothing arises without depending on [others].
Therefore, there is nothing that is not empty.

(*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* of Nāgārjuna, translated from the Japanese version by Shōryū Katsura)

There is no room for human thoughts of good or bad to enter.

We call the fact that all the phenomena arise depending on others “emptiness.”
Nothing arises without depending on something.

There is nothing that is not empty.
Therefore, there is no unchanging substance, shape or form.
There is no room for attachments based on our thinking
Good or bad, joyful or sorrowful.
There is nothing to gain, nothing to lose.

“……Oh Kaccāyana, if some one says ‘everything exists,’ that is one extreme view. And if some one says, ‘nothing exists,’ that is another extreme view. The Buddha avoids these two extreme views and expounds the Dharma based on the middle way.”

(Samyutta Nikāya, Kaccāyanagotta-sutta, translated from the Japanese version by Kiyotaka Goshima)

The truth lies in the middle way that is free from
The two extreme views of existence and nonexistence.
There is no room for thinking that we have our own “inalienable rights.”

Apart from the reality of dependent origination,
There is no unchanging substance, shape or form.
There is no attachment or evil that denies the reality of dependent origination.

The universe, all living beings, and all natural phenomena
Arise depending on others and are empty,
They dwell in this truth of dependent origination and emptiness.

“These things of various kinds
Are all characterized by emptiness.
Namely, in the phenomenal world
Various forces seem to cause
Things to arise and cease.
But from a higher point of view
There is only one great truth that nothing arises or ceases.
There is only one great truth.” (Hajime Nakamura)

Things as they really are before our discriminating mind starts
functioning

Everything arises depending on others and is empty.
But staying on this side, we discriminate ourselves from others.

Before our objective mind starts functioning,
Things exist as they really are in the realm of non-discriminating wisdom.
That is the realm of the truly absolute and unlimited truth,
Being free from all relative or fixed frameworks,
Where everything is one, thus there is neither confrontations nor obstacles.
It is vast, grand, and boundless.

From our daily cognitive activities up to scientific thinking,
There is nothing but objective thinking.
Since it is thinking with the brain, in more ordinary terms,
We may call it the discriminating mind.
Holistic thinking, however, is the thinking in which
The brain, the mind and even the body all work together as one.
It is called holistic thinking because the mind and the body become one.
Not just 'the thinking-self' and 'the self that is thought of' become one,
But the thinking-self becomes one with the whole world and the whole universe.

Without distinction between the subject and the object and
Without any objective thinking and attachment whatsoever,
Things become manifest just as they really are, just as they originally are.
It is here. It is now.

“This life-and-death is just the life of Buddha.” (Dōgen Zenji)
Since both life and death are empty,
They are not distinguished, nor divided, but non-dual.
Truth is here and now.

The Buddha is one who, having accumulated practice,
Awakens to the reality, the truth, the Dharma of this world.
Anyone can become a buddha.
The Buddha is not the creator of this world.

Dharma goes beyond the realm of discriminating thinking
And manifests itself in the whole person of the Buddha.
Through the holistic thinking and being devoted to meditation,
The Buddha awakens to the Dharma,
Truth that underlies all existents,

That is the ultimate state and the foundation of practice,
The true basis for establishing ethical values.

When the Buddha sees,
When seeing is done through Buddha Dharma,
There is just one truth, just emptiness.

Not “Buddhism” but “Buddha Dharma”
Dharma consists of things as they really are,
Which is beyond our objective thinking.
Being neither an -ism (i.e., an ideology) nor an opinion
Produced by discriminating mind,
It transcends the realm of good and bad.

When we are awakened to the truth
That all phenomena arise depending on others and are empty,
We will be liberated from all bondage and become free and happy.
“One who is liberated from the ties of all bondage do not have any worries.”
(*Dhammapada*, translated from the Japanese version by Hajime Nakamura)

Therefore, relying on the Dharma, we live.
For the world to become a better society,
And for us to be able to die just as we are, foolish as we are,
It is crucial.

In a corner of a park, something of wonder happened……

In a corner of a park, there stands rising straight from the ground,
Bending at a right angle, then growing upwards, an old wisteria tree.
Children climb up and shake it vigorously with their whole being,
Shouting happily.

They seem to enjoy shaking the branches and the wisteria trellis
And shake them even more.

Just when I was about to cry out, “Stop it!”

The trellis could not withstand the weight of the children and the shaking.
The pillars of the trellis broke.
The entire trellis collapsed.

The children are in a sheer panic, like a frog in front of a snake.
However, in that very moment,
Something of wonder,
Induced by the view of this collapsing scene,
A direct insight……

(Oh, I see, this must be transience.)

And in that same moment, in an instant,
The body, the heart, the mind, and any posturing of mine,
The self up to now was falling off as a whole, totally.

The collapsing scene spread rapidly
The wisteria trellis, I, the ground beneath me, the surroundings,
All of them became one.
There was no opposition of self and others,
Everything being vivid as ever and full as ever,
There were no obstacles whatsoever.

Things became manifest as they really are
And as they are by nature
Before our daily cognition begins to function,
which takes them as its object and is attached to them,
And judges them good or bad.

Profoundly moved by an event never experienced before,
I simply just stand still.
I just cannot express it in words. It is beyond words.

Children were stunned and expecting to be scolded.
However, no emotions arose in me to scold them in the least,
Nor is there any self-satisfaction that I am lenient for not scolding them.

There is only the exquisite totality of the untouched.

Eventually with masterful skills,
The wisteria trellis was restored.

“When we have the wisdom and see that everything is impermanent,
Then at last we will leave suffering far behind. This is the path to purity.”

(*Dhammapada*, translated from the Japanese version by Mitsuyoshi Saigusa)

Purity is the state of mind without any attachment, which is completely pure.
The path to purity is the path to enlightenment.

Relying on the truth of emptiness, living in order to achieve peace
for self and others

Though dwelling in the ever-changing world of dependent origination and emptiness,
“Our selfish ego” manifests itself and makes us attached to everything.

I don't want to lose my things. I want to have more.
I am depressed if I fail.
I hate. I adore.
I like. I dislike.
I rejoice. I get angry.
I don't want to get sick or old.
I don't want to die.

I want to live just as I want.
“Our selfish ego” manifests itself.
We are just foolish beings.

“The agent of an action and the action itself are both empty.
Since they are empty, even if you try to obtain them, they are ‘unobtainable.’
It is this truth of ‘unobtainability’ that Buddhas rely on.” (*Buddha-Avatamsaka Sūtra*)
Because of dependent origination and emptiness, there is nothing we can obtain.
This truth of ‘unobtainability’ is what Buddhas rely on
And what we human beings should rely on.

“Rely on yourself. Rely on the Dharma.

Do not rely on anything else.” (*Mahā-parinibbāna Sutta*, translated from the Japanese version by Hajime Nakamura)

We cherish our lives until our causal connections with this world come to end.
Even though our minds are not pure and we are driven by self-interests and attachments,
Being in the truth of dependent origination and emptiness,
We try to imitate the Buddha even a little bit.
Being guided by the teaching of the truth of things as they really are,
We endeavor to live in this way every day.

Striving to make effort as much as possible
While not being attached to the form of each moment,
Not denying it,
Not having satisfaction or pride in it,
Not complaining about it.

Abandon the idea that things one has are “my things”
And give them to others without attachment.
Do not hold in mind things done for others,
Do not boast or seek for something in return.

When we do attain the pure state without attachment,
Without opposition of self and other,
We become able to take the joy of others as our own joy,
The sorrow and suffering of others as our own sorrow and suffering.
We become able to practice compassion.
In this way we endeavor.

Contain the tendency to divide self and others,
To always be guarded, and to be combative.
Strive to be friendly and live in harmony.
“See others as yourself. Do not kill or cause others to kill.” (*Dhammapada*, translated from the Japanese version by Hajime Nakamura)

Even though we are all the result of dependent origination and emptiness,

We foolishly adhere to our positions, compete; and kill each other.
There is nothing sadder than this human darkness.
Even words and actions
Can harm others, so be careful.
Gentle countenance and kind words.

Awaken to the fact that we ourselves, family, society, and nature
Depend on each other and are related to each other.
Help and support each other.
Transcend the walls of ethnicity and national borders to live together.

“Don’t you see that even a flower, though it may fall tomorrow,
Blossoms a while with all its might?” (Takeko Kujō)
“In each field of inquiry, with all our might, we strive to live
For the realization of peace and happiness of oneself and others.” (Jitsuen Kakehashi)

The world is one. There should be no dictatorship.

All phenomena depend on others and are empty.
Therefore, the world is one; without any border.
There is no special place.
Everyone and everything are equal; there are no special people or things.

There should be no dictatorship.
If any specific individual becomes a special person,
Then political freedom and equality, peace and co-existence, will be disrupted by force.

Awakening and action based on the truth of emptiness,
The very act that is inspired and prompted by the Dharma,
Shall bring true peace, equality, and co-existence for human society,
Shall bring liberation and freedom from the limitations of human intelligence and actions,
Shall bring peace of mind and happiness for people.

There is nothing more dangerous than justice that people insist upon.
There are many forms of justice in response to the time and people.
“You are not necessarily a sage and he is not necessarily a fool.

We are all mediocre people.

Who would be able to decide whether this is right or wrong?"

(Prince Shōtoku)

"Government is a sacred trust of the people;

The authority for which is derived from the people;

The powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people;

And the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people." (*The Constitution of Japan, Preamble*)

The people as sovereigns are responsible for the politics of the country.

However, no organization or nation can function without power.

Power should be strong, of good quality, and stable,

So as not to succumb to mob mentality.

However, it brings the pitfalls of arrogance and dictatorship, corruption and stagnation.

The exercising of power always requires responsibility.

Therefore, a system of monitoring and evaluation has to function effectively.

Freedom and democracy always require time and effort, and even invite mob rule.

People or their representatives must fully debate an issue

And bring together collective wisdom.

When people do not reach a consensus, then people should follow the majority,

But listen to the voices of the minority as well.

Refrain from injustice and violence.

If someone fails or makes a mistake, that person should apologize

And correct the problem without being stubborn.

The Buddha stated,

"This Dhamma (Dharma) that I have realized

Is profound, difficult to comprehend and to realize,

Beyond the realm of the discriminating mind,

Therefore, it should be known by the wise."

(*Vinaya*, translated from the Japanese version by Kōshirō Tamaki)

The Buddha stated,

"Ordinary people, however, find joy in *ālaya* (attachments, clinging),

Find pleasure in *ālaya*, find rapture in *ālaya*.

For the very people who find joy, pleasure, and rapture in *ālaya*,

They can never comprehend the Dhamma.”

He then became silent.

(*Vinaya*, translated from the Japanese version by Kōshirō Tamaki)

Sexual love is the ultimate form of *ālaya*, bound by objective thinking.

From the very moment of conception, human beings live with attachment.

The state in which the Dharma is revealed,

And the natural state of human beings, are polar opposites.

People find joy in *ālaya* (attachment) and are pleased with *ālaya*,

And cannot comprehend the Dharma at all.

In that very reality lies the root cause of why we are not liberated

From the suffering, sorrow and conflict of life,

And from the impasse of various difficult problems that human society faces.

To the extent that the world goes no further than objective and fixed thinking,

It is difficult to fundamentally break from the status quo.

As long as we are under the control of our cognitive functions,

Which bind us to attachment based on objective thinking,

We cannot overcome the sense of opposition between self and others.

We are stuck in the world where discriminative knowledge and power govern.

We cannot go beyond thoughts of winning and losing and the vicious cycle of hatred.

The most difficult issue is,

Even if the international community makes efforts and cooperates

To succeed in banning or eliminating nuclear weapons,

Knowledge and experience to produce nuclear weapons cannot be erased.

Politicians are responsible for pursuing ideals

As well as real national security at the same time.

Human beings have already taken the poison that they should not take.

Leaders should awaken to the Dharma and make appropriate policies

If the world does not realize and act according to

“The true way of life that conforms with the principle (Dharma) that is open to all people,
by awakening to the principle (Dharma) that governs the universe and all human existence,”
(Hajime Nakamura)

It will be difficult to ensure the peace and safety of the world.

Guided by the teachings of dependent origination and emptiness,
It is imperative that we continuously strive to not be bound by the sense of opposition.

Human peace and co-existence will be brought about
By the two incompatible elements of power and dependent origination, or emptiness.
Leaders must awaken to the Dharma and must have exceptional skills and use of power
To make appropriate policy decisions and then carry them out.

It probably will not be easy to fundamentally reform the United Nations.
Five specific nations are given special treatment
With veto rights on the Security Council.
How can we contend with the reality that the Security Council is not functioning as the
“guardian of peace”?
At the very least, each country must restrain itself
From adhering to its own narrow national interests
And agree to cooperate for the sake of sustainable peace and co-existence.
To bring about these things, an effective reform of the system needs to be undertaken.

However, as long as people go no further than oppositional thinking
Without noticing the harm caused by human cognitive functions,
Essentially the thinking self remains.
Hence, we cannot overcome our attachments to our own positions, opinions, and interests.
If we cannot share a truly universal world,
It will be difficult to create and maintain a new framework for world peace.

To create an international organization
That will be accepted by the whole world and can maintain world peace,
The Buddha Dharma should be transmitted throughout the entire planet,
Correctly, intelligibly, and continuously.
However, the future of humanity does not depend solely on words.
It depends on how many people in their real lives

Learn the Dharma even a little bit and sincerely practice it.
It depends on simple, steadfast practice day after day.
Mahatma Gandhi, who paved the way to India's independence from the United Kingdom
through non-violence and disobedience,
Is a great example of a assiduous practice by a leader who shows us the way.

“Such is the benevolence of the great compassion of the Buddha,
That we must strive to return it, even to the breaking of our bodies”

These are the words of Shinran Shōnin,
Who took refuge in the unconditional salvation of the Dharma.
Compassion and emptiness are virtually the same.
Shinran says that we must strive to return the benevolence of the compassion of the Buddha,
“even to the breaking of our bodies.”
This is a very impressive declaration.
Indeed, emptiness is the truth that underlies everything,
The ultimate state, the foundation for practice,
The true basis that establishes our ethical values.

Awakening to the truth of dependent origination and emptiness,
continuously returning to it

Even at this moment, people in the world, including myself,
Regard everything objectively, find joy in *ālaya* (attachments, clinging),
And are not liberated from the life of pleasure in *ālaya*.
We must not forget this reality.
Therefore, we should know that suffering in our lives and difficult issues in the world will
not disappear easily.
Awakening to the truth of dependent origination and emptiness
And continuously returning to it,
This is the only way we have to advance, step by step, never giving up.

From the bondage of cognitive function that divides self and others,
Regards things objectively and causes our attachments,
Shall we be liberated and transcend conflict

To restore and maintain world peace,
Various approaches from multi-disciplinary and global viewpoints are essential.
“Strictly understanding” the reality and adding the worldly “wisdom”
As we move toward an appropriate goal,
We can only try our best every day to improve the situation.
There is no end to all the ways we can become better ancestors.

“May the world be safe and peaceful, and may the Buddha Dharma spread.” (Shinran Shonin)

May human beings be peaceful and calm under Buddha Dharma.
May our society be sustainable and harmonious,
Since the earth and all phenomena are interdependent and empty.

“May all sentient beings be happy, safe, and joyful.”

(*Sutta Nipāta*, translated from the Japanese by Hajime Nakamura)

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Supplementary Explanation to «Notes on Buddha Dharma» and Sustainable Peace

Not “Buddhism” but “Buddha Dharma”

This section starts with an unfamiliar phrase: Not “Buddhism” but “Buddha Dharma.” The Japanese word *bukkyō* 仏教 is commonly translated into English as “Buddhism,” but as a result it may be understood as a mere -ism or an opinion. Is *bukkyō* a specific -ism or an ideology?

This question entails something very important for those who wish to create a sustainable global society and lead a peaceful life. Properly understood, if interdisciplinary study concerning “the significance and potential contribution of Buddha Dharma towards the solution of the problems of the modern world”⁽¹⁾ were promoted, Buddha Dharma might become an indispensable guideline for the way of thinking and living for the future of humankind.

In the past, the word *buppō* 仏法 (Buddha Dharma) was used, not *bukkyō* (Buddhism). The term *bukkyō* was rarely used in the Japanese classics. It was not until the Meiji period (1868-1912) when Japanese people learned of other religions such as Christianity and Islam that they adopted the term *bukkyō* to distinguish it from other religions, which were called *kirisuto-kyō*, *isurāmu-kyō*, etc. Prior to that, it was called *buppō*.⁽²⁾

To call it *buppō* (Buddha Dharma) is very reasonable. Dharma (Dhamma in Pali and Dharma in Sanskrit), translated into Chinese as *fā* 法, has many meanings, but one of its original meaning is “truth.” A person who has awakened to this truth, i.e., Dharma, is called a *buddha*. We ordinary humans are dreaming or slumbering in a state of delusion that is called “ignorance” (*avidyā*). But when we see the truth, we awaken from the dream. A Buddha is one who has had such an experience.⁽³⁾

Buddha Dharma is the truth to which the Buddha awakens.

The Buddha is not the creator of the world. Anyone can become a buddha. One becomes a buddha when he or she has awakened to the reality and truth of the world by improving his or her own character and by practicing meditation with the aim to become a buddha.

It is said that when some 2,500 years ago Gotama Siddhatta (Gautama Siddhārtha) attained enlightenment and became a buddha in Bodh Gaya, India, he was completely liberated from the bondage of everyday thoughts that merely vacillated between moments of joy and moments of sorrow, and from the reality of suffering that is aging, illness, and death. Within Buddhist literature, the *Sutta Nipāta* is regarded as “one of the sacred texts collecting the sayings closest”⁽⁴⁾ to the original words of the historical Buddha. There we find the following words:

“Abandon greed, aversion, and delusion, and walk alone single-mindedly like the horn of a rhinoceros, without fear of losing your life.”⁽⁵⁾

The state of mind, transcending thinking by the brain and attachments, manifests itself

How did the Buddha attain enlightenment? There are various ways to explain this. According to Prof. Kōshirō Tamaki, who was engaged not only in the rigorous philological study of Buddhist texts but also in diligent practices to approach the essence of the Dharma, the Buddha realized enlightenment when the Dharma was manifested through his practice of holistic thinking, in other words, through his devotion to meditation.

Holistic thinking differs from objective thinking. Our ordinary thinking is objective thinking. It takes places when the “thinking-self” faces the “object of thought.” Even if we think about ourselves, it is still objective thinking because the “thinking-self” faces the “self as object of thought.” There is nothing but objective thinking in our activities from our daily life up to scientific thinking. When it comes to thinking, everything belongs to this mode of thinking.⁽⁶⁾

While objective thinking is, so to speak, thinking with the brain, holistic thinking is the thinking in which the brain, the mind, and even the body all work together as one. There the whole person sits and meditates as “one.” Since the whole body and the mind become one, it is called “holistic thinking.” There, not only the “thinking-self” and the “self as object of thought” become one, but also the “thinking-self” becomes one with the whole world and the whole universe.⁽⁷⁾

Objective thinking is thinking in which the subject faces its object. Holistic thinking, however, is thinking in which the subject is the object, the object is the subject, and the subject and the object become one.⁽⁸⁾ While the former has been called “conceptual cognition”, since ancient times the latter has been called “non-conceptual cognition.”

Objective thinking in the field of science and technology has brought about increased convenience and affluence. It has also given us prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases, various surgical treatments, and vaccines against the new coronavirus. On the other hand, it has also produced the means of mass killing, including nuclear weapons. Furthermore, in our daily life, we inevitably fix the objects of our cognition and cling to them, which normalizes the sense of conflict between self and others and creates strife, which creates various causes of sorrow and pain, such as gain and loss, likes and dislikes, good and bad, and jealousy, causing people to suffer endless anguish and pain. As long as

objective thinking prevails, we cannot secure true freedom, equality, and peace. Grasping objects in a fixed and static way, we will be separated from the true state of mind.

For example, for most people, love is joy and brings warmth and comfort. It is the source of life. At the same time, however, love is an attachment. It is also the beginning of suffering and sorrow.

The first words Gotama spoke after attaining enlightenment are recorded in the *Udāna*. The third *Udāna*, a verse on the dawn, says:

“When Dhamma (Dharma) is revealed to the diligently meditating practitioner, crushing the demon army, he stands, as if the sun were shining in the sky.”⁽⁹⁾

Regarding enlightenment the Buddha said: “Dhamma is revealed to the meditating practitioner.” This is the origin of enlightenment. What is important here is that he calls Dhamma the state of mind in which, having crushed the army of the demon (Māra), i.e., mental defilements (greed, hatred and ignorance, or the mind of attachment that afflicts our mind and body), one is established in peace. The Dhamma, therefore, is a state beyond objective thinking, and it is a “word beyond meaning and thinking.”⁽¹⁰⁾ In fact, the Buddha himself in his meditation declared:

“This Dhamma that I have realized is profound, difficult to comprehend and to realize, calm, ... and beyond the realm of the discriminating mind.”⁽¹¹⁾

The Dhamma is profound and difficult to realize because, as the Buddha himself stated, it is “beyond the realm of discriminating mind.” The declaration that the Dhamma is beyond the realm of discriminating mind means that it is prior to the operation of objective thinking or daily cognition that divides the thinking self and the object of thought. It is a state of mind where there is no distinction between the subject and the object, which is free from thinking by the brain and attachments, and where things manifest themselves as they really are and as they are by nature. That is Dhamma. Things as they really are, which transcend discriminating mind, are revealed to the Buddha’s total being.

Kōshirō Tamaki has stated, “Dhamma cannot be captured by those words. If we penetrate into the Dhamma in accordance with the Buddha's teachings, we can only express it as none other than life without form.”⁽¹²⁾

Dhamma is the world of truly absolute and unlimited truth, which is beyond the reach of linguistic expression, and which is free of any relative, limited, or fixed frameworks.⁽¹³⁾ This is precisely the reason that throughout the long history of Buddhism of some 2,500 years, we have endeavored to accumulate knowledge to clarify that truth by means of various

terms such as ‘impermanence’, ‘no-self’, ‘dependent origination’, ‘emptiness’, ‘naturalness’ (*jinen*), etc.

“Impermanence” never says either “I am happy” or “I am sad”

We humans beings are the same as the flowing clouds and the running rivers, conventionally using one and the same name. “Everything changes with time,” said Leonardo da Vinci. The modern scientist Rudolf Schoenheimer reports that even body fat is within this dynamic “flow,” and that “the flow itself is ‘alive.’” That is to say, “Change is the true form of life.”⁽¹⁴⁾

Nothing exists as an unchanging, fixed thing. The wind of impermanence blows at all times and in all places. That is a fact of this world that needs no proof. However, human beings, mistaking that things stay unchanging in defiance of change, become attached to them as they are then and there and end up with grieving or rejoicing. On the other hand, flowers do not boast of their beauty, nor desire to bloom forever.

The wind of impermanence blows imperceptibly and dramatically. That is the simple truth. Impermanence itself never says either “I am happy” or “I am sad”. The cognitive function of human beings that divides self and others, and objectifies and perceives them as static, makes it difficult to see the truth. For example, we cannot stop crying when we say goodbye to a loved one who passes away.

The *Dhammapada* states,

“When we have the wisdom and see that everything is impermanent, Then at last we will leave suffering far behind. That is the path to purity.”⁽¹⁵⁾

Purity is the state of mind without any attachment, which is completely pure. The path to purity is the path to enlightenment. According to the Buddhist scriptures, when we are able to correctly observe the fact that all phenomena are changing, we will be liberated from suffering; in other words, we will be able to attain enlightenment.

For those who mistakenly believe that things are unchanging here and now and who wish that there are no change, change becomes a source of suffering and sorrow. For those who practice holistic thinking, such misfortunes do not occur. It is because things as they really are, in their original nakedness, manifest themselves to such persons in toto. Since we cannot see Buddha Dharma and cannot live as we really are, we cannot be at ease. This is the result of our own doings.

Leonardo da Vinci was aware of the changes in all things. I wonder if he was ever able to go beyond objective thinking. There is no way of knowing.

“No-self” does not mean that “I” do not exist. It means that there is no “I” that is an unchanging, fixed, entity.

If we have not realized the reality and truth of this world, when a doctor tells us something frightening, our stress will increase and we will become anxious and worried. Since the ever-changing reality that conflicts with our thoughts crushes our self-interest and self-desire, we suffer. We mistakenly understand that life is ‘my own life’ and cannot immediately accept that this precious ‘my own life’ will be taken away or lost. Suffering, sadness, and anxiety conceal our "attachment to permanence" which goes against the truth of this world.

The theory of no-self destroys our hidden attachment and liberates us from our fixed thoughts of “I” and “mine” and allows us to realize “the self as it really is”.⁽¹⁶⁾ We must not forget that both “impermanence” and “no-self” are ideas to be understood in the context of the truth of “dependent origination”.⁽¹⁷⁾

The fact that all phenomena arise depending on others is called ‘emptiness’

If things were unchanging and ever-lasting, they would not arise, exist, or perish. This is because birth, existence, and extinction are nothing but changes. In other words, everything has no intrinsic substantiality or nature; therefore, everything is empty. Things come into existence by causes and conditions, and they simply cease to exist when the causes and conditions cease to exist.⁽¹⁸⁾

There is no such thing as unchanging substantial entity, and precisely because there is no substantial entity, things are able to take new forms.⁽¹⁹⁾

“When the rain starts to fall—that’s when the rice planting really gets lively.” (Shūsei Nagayama)

We live and are made alive in our relationship with the sky, the earth, and the water. Everything arises in the mutual relationship of causes and conditions and arises depending on them. In other words, everything “arises depending on others.” There is nothing that is independent and self-existent.⁽²⁰⁾

In the *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*, chapter 24, verses 18 and 19, Nāgārjuna explains:

The fact that [everything] arises depending on [others] (*pratītyasamutpāda*)

We declare to be emptiness (*sūnyatā*) [of everything]. ...

Nothing arises without depending on [others].

Therefore, there is nothing that is not empty.⁽²¹⁾

(*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* of Nāgārjuna, translated from the Japanese version by Shōryū Katsura)

The fact that all phenomena arise depending on others is called “emptiness.” There is nothing that arises without depending on something else. Therefore, Nāgārjuna declares that there is nothing that is not empty. Hence, there is no fixed substantial entity, form, or shape. There is no room for attachments by objective thinking as well as thoughts of good or bad and joy or sorrow. In emptiness, there is nothing to gain, nothing to lose.

This is the state of mind in which there is only truth, if seen from the perspective of Buddha Dharma or seen by the Buddha:

“……Oh Kaccāyana, if someone says ‘everything exists,’ that is one extreme view. And if someone says ‘nothing exists,’ that is another extreme view. The Buddha avoids these two extreme views and expounds the Dharma based on the middle way.”⁽²²⁾
(*Samyutta Nikāya*, Kaccāyanagotta-sutta, translated from the Japanese version by Kiyotaka Goshima)

The truth lies in the middle way that is free from the two extreme views of existence and nonexistence.

We think that what we see and experience is a fixed substance, but there is nothing that is permanent and unchanging as something tangible with form.⁽²³⁾ That is to say, everything is empty. Emptiness is synonymous with dependent origination that grasps the absence of fixed substance from the view point of causality. There is no fixed entity apart from the fact of dependent origination.⁽²⁴⁾ There are no attachments or evils that interfere with dependent origination. “Dependent origination is the basis, and emptiness is the consequence. Emptiness is based on dependent origination.”⁽²⁵⁾

This is that very emptiness as taught in the *Heart Sutra*, “Form is none other than emptiness; emptiness is none other than form.”

Both life and death are empty, so they cannot be distinguished, they are not two.

You and I are all living our lives that arise depending on others in the world where everything arises depending on others, and we will die in the reality of dependent origination. Two seemingly opposing things such as life and death are essentially non-dual (indistinguishable) because they are both empty.

Emptiness inevitably leads to the truth of non-duality. If A has no substance and B has no substance, then both A and B are indistinguishable and indivisible since they are empty of substantiality. In other words, they are non-dual. Two seemingly opposing things such as defilements and enlightenment are essentially non-dual because they are both empty. The cycle of birth and death and the liberation from that cycle, i.e., nirvāṇa (the state of enlightenment where all human defilements and delusions have disappeared) are also indistinguishable and non-dual.⁽²⁶⁾ From old times, it has been said that “birth and death are none other than nirvāṇa.”

A wise person who has penetrated into the Dharma speaks of it as follows.

“These things of various kinds are all characterized by emptiness. … Namely, in the phenomenal world various forces seem to cause things to arise and cease, but from a higher point of view there is only one great truth that nothing arises or ceases. … There is only just this one great truth.”⁽²⁷⁾

The truth of emptiness is the state that is to be attained through holistic thinking. When the aspirant is inspired and awakened by dependent origination and emptiness, is freed from all fixed cognitive functions and attachments, and is completely free from the everyday body and mind and any posturing of mine, then the things as they really are, beyond the realm of discrimination, manifest themselves. There is only one great truth.

When it comes to Buddha Dharma, there is no option of acceptance or non-acceptance. There is no room for such arguments. The Dharma of emptiness is the state of things as they really are, before the intellectual discrimination by objective thinking begins to function. But the functions of ordinary cognition and the discriminating mind get in the way, so we cannot see things as they really are. It is simply that we cannot comprehend them.

The Zen Master Dōgen, who went to China during the Song dynasty (960-1279) to correctly learn about the Dharma and who became the founder of the Sōtō Zen school in Japan, wrote, “This life-and-death is just the life of Buddha.”⁽²⁸⁾ All phenomena are none other than the Dharma. One of his poems reads, “The colors of the mountain and the echoes of the valley are all the voice and form of our Shakyamuni.”⁽²⁹⁾

Emptiness is not nothingness but the foundation of practice

Emptiness does not mean nothingness. Emptiness is the principle that makes everything possible. It is the ultimate state of being and the foundation of practice. It is the true basis for establishing ethical values.⁽³⁰⁾

Thus, the basis that governs the conduct of those who live in accordance with Buddha Dharma is clear. The *Buddha-Avatamsaka Sūtra* (*Kegonkyō*) states:

“The agent of an action and the action itself are both empty. Since they are empty, even if you try to obtain them, they are ‘unobtainable’. It is this truth of ‘unobtainability’ that Buddhas rely on.” (*Buddha-Avatamsaka Sūtra*)⁽³¹⁾

Since the reality of this world is dependent origination and emptiness, there is no fixed substance, so there is nothing that we can obtain. The proposition that Buddhas rely on the truth of ‘unobtainability’ due to emptiness, simply and directly teaches us the essence of the Buddha's Way. It represents the thought that since the truth of this world is dependent origination and emptiness, both the agent and the action itself must be consistent with this view of dependent origination and emptiness, or they cannot be correct. This is the basis that governs the conduct of those who live by relying on the Dharma. Therefore, there is no room for thinking that we have our own “inalienable rights.”

When one's words and actions are guided by the view of emptiness, one thinks without attachment to anything and acts accordingly.⁽³²⁾

The *Diamond Sūtra* teaches, "A Bodhisattva (one who seeks the path of enlightenment) should practice ‘generosity’ (*dāna*) without attachment to anything.”⁽³³⁾

‘Generosity’ is the act of giving one's own things for the sake of others. Aspirants should not conduct ‘generosity’ with attachment to things; they should, instead, give their own things to others without attachment. As long as you still think, “I did such and such thing for that person,” you are still attached to it. As long as you think that she or he should be grateful to you, and you calculate returns, it is not a genuine practice of ‘generosity’. We should not keep thinking of what we have done for others. Therefore, we should give without boasting about our deeds or seeking something in return.

When you encounter another person, you have a sense of conflict as long as you think that she or he is different from you. You will always be you, and I will always be me, so there is a separation between you and me. But isn't the separation only a temporary thing? We are both born from the aggregate of causes and conditions, and this person appears in this way and that person appears in another way. Since we are both the results of causes and conditions, when we are awakened to the inconceivable causes and conditions (to the truth of emptiness and dependent origination), the sense of conflict between self and others disappears. Only when we reach such a pure state of mind that is free from attachments will we be able to practice compassion.⁽³⁴⁾

We will then be able to make the joys of others our own joy, and the sorrows and sufferings of others our own sorrow and suffering.

“The saver, the saved, and the state attained by being saved are all empty.”

The ultimate act of compassion reaches all suffering people as the message of absolute and unconditional salvation by the Buddha. It reaches them equally. Shinran Shōnin understood that message as, "Since he saves and does not abandon, I respectfully call him Amitābha (Infinite Light),"⁽³⁵⁾ and "The truth is the heart of Amitābha Buddha."⁽³⁶⁾ It is Amitābha Buddha that saves and does not abandon those who sincerely believe in him, even though they are ordinary and ignorant people. In the first chapter of the *Tannishō*, it is stated, "Do not fear evil, for there is no evil that can obstruct the Buddha's primal vow (of compassion)."⁽³⁷⁾

“The saver is empty, the saved is empty, and the state attained by being saved is also empty.”⁽³⁸⁾

Emptiness means that things arise depending on others. All the phenomena are right now arising, depending on others. The truth of emptiness saves us and will never abandon us.

When our causal connections with this world come to an end, it is fine for us to pass away just as we are at that time. There is no need for us to try to look better, which is just impossible. “You are fine just as you are.” That is the message of salvation that comes to all of us equally from the truth.

We may be crushed in an earthquake. We may be swallowed by a tsunami. We may be put in an ICU due to an infection of coronavirus. We may not be able to utter *nembutsu* or words of prayer. In such a situation, let it go in the way it goes. There is nothing to worry about.

Shinran Shōnin explains, “The ultimate Buddha is without form. Since formless, it is called *jinen* (naturalness).”⁽³⁹⁾

When our causal connections with this world come to an end, we will be freed from the fetters of our daily life, in which discriminations never stop, will have no more attachments, and will be welcomed into the world of *jinen* (the realm of as-it-is) in accordance with the law of dependent origination.

No matter how many times we hear this, we may not feel at ease. It is difficult for us to feel relieved, for we do not want to die. But we will be reassured when we hear the compassionate voice of the Buddha, “You are fine just as you are, and I will save you just as you are.” I have no choice but to die as the foolish person that I am. “That is all right” is the ultimate message of compassion that comes from the truth of emptiness.

Compassion and emptiness are practically the same. From a philosophical standpoint, it is emptiness, but from a practical standpoint, it is compassion.⁽⁴⁰⁾

The fact that all phenomena arise depending on others is called “emptiness,” and there is nothing that arises without depending on something else. Therefore, there is nothing that is not empty. Since birth and death are both empty, they are essentially indistinguishable and indivisible.

When our causal connection with this world comes to an end, we will be without attachments and we will be all welcomed into the “Pure Land of *jinen*”⁽⁴¹⁾ in accordance with the law of dependent origination.

In this way, Buddha Dharma that transcends the difference between the ‘Easy Path’ and the ‘Difficult Path’ teaches the path to the ultimate solution for the fundamental problems of human beings. It is our own problem, whether or not we can be aware of it, whether or not we can awaken to it, and whether or not we can listen to it correctly. We need to correctly and deeply learn about the Dharma, and to continue to diligently practice or listen to it.

The Buddha was pessimistic about human beings

It is said that having attained enlightenment, Gotama Buddha was hesitant to preach to people what he had realized, but at the urging of the god Brahmā, he resolved to preach for the sake of the world. There are a few important events leading up to that point that deserve our attention.

As mentioned above, the Buddha declared, “This Dhamma that I have realized is profound, difficult to comprehend, ... and beyond the realm of the discriminating mind.” But it did not end there. He continued to say that the Dhamma attained by him is “subtle and should be known by the wise,” and added, “Ordinary people, however, find joy in *ālaya* (attachments, clinging), find pleasure in *ālaya*, find rapture in *ālaya*. The very people who find joy, pleasure, and rapture in *ālaya* can never comprehend the Dhamma.” He then became silent.⁽⁴²⁾ The following verse is said to have come to his mind at that time:

“What need is there for me to preach now what I have realized? It is not easy for those who are obsessed with greed and hatred to realize this truth. ... it is too profound to see, and it is so subtle that those who are greedy and covered by darkness [of ignorance] cannot see it.”⁽⁴³⁾

He said, “it is not easy for them to realize the truth and they cannot see it” because ordinary people are greedy and covered with the darkness of ignorance.

The life in which we find joy and pleasure in *ālaya* (attachments, clinging) is one in which we cannot go beyond the realm of objective thinking and become attached to everything. It may be said that we lead a life in which we cannot forget ourselves but constantly think of ourselves. Sexual love, in particular, is the ultimate form of attachment that is bound by objective thinking. Moreover, it is instinct itself, which means that we are with *ālaya* from the very moment of our conception. Most people are not wise. It is difficult for us to be free from attachment until the very moment of death.

Thus, we know that the state in which the Dharma is revealed is exactly the opposite of the state of human nature,⁽⁴⁴⁾ that they are polar opposites. Most of us are ordinary people filled with defilements. We should not be overconfident in ourselves.

The Buddha was already pessimistic about human beings at the time of his enlightenment. It can be said that the reality that ordinary people cannot understand the Dharma is the root cause of our inability to escape from the impasse of various difficult problems that human society faces.

We must begin by realizing the reality that in our daily lives we are constantly involved in *ālaya*. Our inherent foolishness—the reality of human beings that, though in the midst of Buddha Dharma, we lead a life in which we find joy in *ālaya* that is its polar opposite, and the foolishness of each person that prevents us from fully grasping the truth of ‘unobtainability’ based on emptiness that underlies all phenomena—causes not only our individual sufferings and sorrows but also poses the greatest threat to the peace and coexistence of humanity.

Our intellectual thinking, even if well employed, has its limits.

We have advanced in science and technology, making full use of our intellectual abilities based on objective thinking, and we have reached an age in which we can go to outer space and return safely to the earth. On the earth, however, we human beings are still unable to go beyond national boundaries and ethnic lines. We live in a place where we cannot overcome the sense of opposition between self and others.

Ideologies and opinions abound and there is no end of conflicts. There is violence, unilateral use of and threats by force, exemplified by Russia's military invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. In addition to the growing inequality and division among people, climate change threatens our very survival. The present world is not free, nor equal, nor peaceful. We seem to be at an impasse, with no solutions to the difficult problems that threaten the sustainability of human life.

On May 27, 2016, Mr. Barack Obama became the first sitting U.S. president to visit Hiroshima and gave a speech at Peace Memorial Park after laying flowers at the Cenotaph for the Atomic Bomb Victims.⁽⁴⁵⁾

The President said, “Technological progress without an equivalent progress in human institutions can doom us. The scientific revolution that led to the splitting of an atom requires a moral revolution as well.” Unfortunately, throughout his speech, there was no firm commitment or vision for a world without nuclear weapons. He concluded the speech by stating that Hiroshima and Nagasaki “will be known as the start of our own ethical awakening,” but there was no mention of any new content to this “ethical awakening.”

After World War II, there have been regional conflicts and wars, but world war has been avoided. Although nuclear weapons have been criticized by some as an absolute evil, as a result of Hiroshima and Nagasaki their existence may have been functioning as deterrence. Nuclear deterrence is a policy of the threat of nuclear force that causes us to abandon embarking on a nuclear attack because we must be prepared for an unacceptable nuclear retaliation. However, since it relies on highly precise mechanical systems and human judgment, there lies the risk of nuclear weapons being used due to accidents, mistakes, miscalculation, or unforeseen circumstances, with the possibility of tremendous destruction.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Recently, it seems that space blackout can be achieved through cyber-attacks and jamming without physically destroying satellites such as early warning satellites, reconnaissance satellites, and communication satellites. The vulnerability of the entire system of nuclear weapons and their supports is increasing. This means that, at least for the time being, assuming the existence of nuclear weapons, the biggest challenge is how to create an environment in which nuclear deterrence can function and how to reduce the various risks that might arise from miscalculations and the unexpected events that might accompany them.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Why is the world unable to let go of nuclear deterrence? It is because, at present, human beings have yet to share an international system by which we are fundamentally free from mutual distrust and confrontation, which is the basis for us to be united into one, and which brings the international security that makes peaceful coexistence possible.

Can we create true peace by sticking to the idea of “inalienable rights” ?

In the latter part of his speech, former President Obama introduced the opening words of the United States Declaration of Independence: “All men are created equal and endowed

by our creator with certain unalienable rights including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”⁽⁴⁸⁾ He admitted that realizing that ideal has never been easy but stated, “It is an ideal to be strived for, an ideal that extends across continents and across oceans.”

Not only the United States Declaration of Independence but also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁽⁴⁹⁾ begins its preamble with the phrase: “Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,” and it continues, “Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.” Pope John Paul II also asserted in 1982, during the Cold War, when tensions rose dramatically with the direct confrontation of intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe, “Unconditional and effective respect for the inalienable rights of each person is a necessary condition for peace to prevail in a given society.”⁽⁵⁰⁾

The key word common to these declarations and opinions is “inalienable rights.”

However, we would better have a cynical view of the idea of “inalienable rights” as the basis for freedom, justice, and peace. If human rights are inalienable, then when they are suppressed or violated, people must “have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion,” which will lead to conflict. A recent example is the 1999 conflict over the autonomous province of Kosovo in former Yugoslavia, in which NATO forces carried out air strikes to prevent “ethnic cleansing” against the Albanian population. In fact, the military aggression was justified under the guise of “protection of human rights.”

The idea of human rights has its light and its darkness.

If we remain within the paradigm of conventional thinking, we will never be able to surpass a civilization based on power. From the perspective of Buddha Dharma, there is no opposition between self and others. Everything is indistinguishable and indivisible as empty, which is essentially the world of non-duality. As long as we are bound by the objective thinking that adheres to self and others and engage in conflict against each other, there is no way we can create peace and coexistence on earth with a solid foundation.

Since they are “inalienable rights,” anyone who violates and harms our inalienable rights must be eliminated. If the other party violates or oppresses with force, we have no other choice but to resist with force. Because they are inalienable rights, they must be protected. Ukraine is resisting Russia’s armed aggression with force.

Since around 1977, Brezhnev's Soviet Union deployed SS20 medium-range nuclear forces on the European front, and the West negotiated but at the same time took countermeasures to balance the SS20 threat with the deployment of nuclear weapons such as the Pershing II from the U.S.⁽⁵¹⁾ It is a policy of force that defends the West and its

inalienable rights with nuclear weapons. To defend and carry out one's ideologies and opinions in the face of threats by force, one must be prepared to make sacrifices and take risks.

In fact, Pope John Paul II, in his statement to the Second Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament in 1982, made it clear: "In current conditions, deterrence based on balance may still be judged morally acceptable as a step on the way to gradual disarmament."⁽⁵²⁾

The "current situation" here refers to the political situation in Europe during the Cold War, in which the East and West directly confronted each other over the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear forces. It is important to note that although the Pope recommended "negotiations," he declared that nuclear deterrence based on balance is "morally acceptable." The Pope helped shape Western public opinion in favor of nuclear deterrence. To tell the truth, the Vatican gave priority to the protection of religious freedom, a right that is vital to the existence of the Church, rather than to the domination of the then Soviet Union, even with the risks of a nuclear war. By accepting nuclear deterrence, albeit on a conditional basis, the West has consistently adhered to its own claim that "respect for inalienable rights is a necessary condition for peace."

The conundrum of not being able to eliminate the knowledge and experience of producing nuclear weapons

D.T. Suzuki, focusing on Zen, introduced the Buddhist view of truth to the world and noted, "People in the West sit down to think about things in a world in which things have been divided into two. In the East, on the contrary, we begin to think from a place where things are not yet divided into two."⁽⁵³⁾ He then warned: "The exclusiveness and egoism that arise from dichotomy are highly undesirable characteristics. If are able to transcend dichotomy and, even further, comprehend it, then we can understand each other; otherwise, there will be constant quarrels."⁽⁵⁴⁾

The Larger Sutra on Amitāyus states: "Wherever the Buddha walks, there is no place where people are not guided by his teachings. Therefore, the world will be governed peacefully, ··· and there will be no more fighting with weapons."⁽⁵⁵⁾ When we are taught and guided by the Buddha Dharma and freed, even if only gradually, from the attachment to self and others, there will be no foolishness such as dividing self and others, posturing, confronting and fighting each other to the end. We will be freed from the cycle of hatred.

"In fact, in this world, if we repay grudges with grudges, grudges will never cease. Only when you let them go, grudges will cease. This is an eternal truth."⁽⁵⁶⁾

We must be mindful not to be defeated by grudges, but we must also be careful not to create others who succumb to grudges. But how can we create and maintain a free and peaceful world without weapons until the Dharma is widely recognized and spread across the globe? This is a conundrum for human beings for which there is still no easy solution.

The biggest challenge is that even if the international community succeeds in banning and eliminating nuclear weapons through its efforts and cooperation, it will not be able to eliminate the knowledge and capability of creating new nuclear weapons. The question is how to deal with this reality, and whether it is even possible. Politicians, while pursuing their ideals, are also responsible for national security, which always includes all forms of contingencies. We human beings have already taken the poison that we should not take, i.e., nuclear weapons.

The conundrum is whether we humans are able to escape from this impasse in order to establish peace on a firmer basis.

Russia and Ukraine—Destruction and carnage between nations heighten in 2022.

With no clear resolution of this conundrum, on February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation launched a military invasion of neighboring Ukraine. Experts have warned, “If a country that possesses nuclear weapons starts a military invasion of a non-nuclear country with a firm intent including the threat of nuclear weapons, it may be impossible for anyone to stop it.”⁽⁵⁷⁾ The impotence and confusion of international society have been exposed.

However, no matter what claims or reasons are given, violent acts to unilaterally change the present situation by force cannot be tolerated. War is killing that involves innocent people. It is hell.

At an emergency special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) with 193 member nations, on March 2, 141 member nations voted in favor of a resolution condemning Russia and calling for its immediate withdrawal from Ukraine. The resolution considered the incursion into Ukraine as an “invasion” and declared it to be “in violation of the UN Charter.”

The UN is an organization that was created in the 20th century in order “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, ···to maintain international peace and security” (Preamble to the Charter).⁽⁵⁸⁾ Article 2-4, Chapter I, clearly states: “All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or

political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the UN.”⁽⁵⁹⁾ Russia (the former Soviet Union), a responsible member at the time of its creation, has openly trampled on this.

At a press conference in Amur, Russia, on April 12, President Putin claimed, “The objective was to save the people of the Donbas region of Ukraine; there was no other option to save them from the neo-Nazis and to ensure Russia's security.”⁽⁶⁰⁾

In the UN it is the Security Council that alone has the power to make decisions that legally binds member nations. But even that “guardian of peace” failed to stop the military invasion. This is because the adoption of a resolution calling for unconditional withdrawal was rejected under the prerogative of the veto power of Russia, a permanent member of the Council. Russia has defied and invalidated the UN objective of maintaining peace and security.

Referring to this point, Mr. Hisashi Owada, who is the first Japanese to serve as president of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) after having served as the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs and Japanese Ambassador to the United Nations, stated the following in his inaugural lecture for the Owada Chair at Leiden University, the Netherlands, on May 24.

“Russia's invasion of Ukraine has completely destroyed the international community's trust in the permanent members of the UN Security Council, which is entrusted with the legitimacy of the collective security of the world under the UN Charter. This destruction of the international community's trust is, in my view, the most serious permanent damage to the innovative management system created under the UN Charter.”⁽⁶¹⁾

As of April 19, the number of Ukrainian refugees who have fled the country due to the ravages of war has exceeded 5 million, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, in his press conference after the closing of the National People's Congress, did not condemn Russia's aggression. Not only that, he opposed the sanctions against Russia, saying that “the reasonable security concerns of each country should also be valued.”⁽⁶²⁾ China prioritized its own national interests over the UN Charter.

On April 7, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kleva, invited to a meeting of NATO foreign ministers, stated, “I have only three demands,” and strongly appealed, “weapons, weapons, and weapons.” He expressed the determination to fight and defend his country by taking up arms himself. Overseas media reported that NATO member countries have raised the level of weapons they will provide. Ukraine released a video to thank the countries for their support. Since the battle must be won on the battlefield in order to defend one's territory and independence, equality, freedom, and other inalienable rights, what counts is weapons.

On May 25th, three months after the military invasion, in an exclusive interview with NHK, President Zelenskyy stated clearly that he shall “fight for independence and freedom.”

A sustainable way out of conflict—A response from the Buddha Dharma

The world has entered a vicious cycle in which force against force is the only way out. Destruction and killing among nations are increasing and will not stop until they go as far as they can.

Masaru Sato, a former chief analyst at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an author, reported that the government, parliamentary leaders, and intellectuals who appear on Russia's government-affiliated TV Channel 1 “sincerely believe that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is for a good cause. The situation is extremely serious. They are beginning to think like President Putin. Russia is rapidly becoming a different world from ours.”⁽⁶³⁾ A month later, he observed that “even if the West provides Russia with the correct information, Putin's power base will not crumble.”⁽⁶⁴⁾

On the other hand, Chancellor Scholz of Germany, who had been cautious about the use of military force, announced on February 27, three days after the Russian invasion, that he would immediately raise defense spending to more than 2% of GDP at the request of NATO, of which Germany is a member. Sweden and Finland, which had maintained their neutrality, have now decided to join NATO.

Each country may have its own position and arguments, but in the words of the Buddhist scriptures, the world today, in the 21st century, is the “evil world of five turmoils” (an evil world filled with the defilements of starvation, disease, war, etc.).

Is there any way out of the conflict? It would have to be a solution that prevents further confrontations of armed forces and makes the maintenance of world peace and security truly sustainable. This is currently one of the most urgent and difficult issues as the international order has been severely damaged after the post-Cold War era when the world tried to integrate authoritarian countries such as Russia and China into the global economy to achieve prosperity.

The Buddha Dharma responds that we will be able to find the *basis for the fundamental way out* of the present situation only when we all share this same principle that makes us realize the truth and reality of this world that nobody can deny. We must change the way we perceive and grasp things, and the way we live. We must seek for the path that leads not to a

civilization that uses its discriminating mind to create force but to the salvation of mankind through the Dharma.

We must first strive to be able to cognize things as they really are, their source and their way of existence through cognitive function that is not tainted by anything artificial. For wisdom thus gained, together with non-discriminating wisdom, shows the way to nip off the buds of conflict and strife. We must change and act accordingly. Even if we cannot do it perfectly like the Buddha, it is vital and essential that together we strive to do so. We need to realize that such awakening and action would be truly peaceful and constructive.

There is a Japanese proverb that says, “If you are in a hurry, go ’round the long way.” It means that if you are in a hurry to get results, it is better to adopt a tried and true method over an uncertain shortcut, even if it seems it might take longer at first glance.

Conveying the essence and way of life of Buddha Dharma to the people of the world in a correct and easy-to-understand manner is the beginning of all things, and is indispensable. Although I am aware that I am not fully capable of accomplishing this, I have done my best while consulting the works of others to pen the «Notes on Buddha Dharma»: *Wisdom Passed Down to Us in Order to Become Better Ancestors*, as well as this *Supplementary Explanation*.

Thus have I heard. At the conclusion of the «Notes on Buddha Dharma», I wrote:

May human beings be peaceful and calm under Buddha Dharma.

May our society be sustainable and harmonious,

Since the earth and all phenomena are interdependent and empty.

However, the peaceful coexistence of human society cannot be achieved merely by words and wishes. The Buddha said, “Let go of greed, hatred, and delusion, and walk single-mindedly like a horn of a rhinoceros, without fear of losing your life.” These are the words of the Buddha. Under Buddha Dharma, each of us must move forward, step by step. It is even better if the circle of our friends expands as we do so. *There is no end* to the actual efforts we can make to become better ancestors to our future descendants.

Chiko Iwagami

I am grateful to Dr. Shōryū Katsura (D.Lit. Kyoto University), President of The Society for the Promotion of Buddhism (Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai), for reviewing my understanding of the Buddha Dharma that forms the basis of this article, particularly with regard to my view of dependent origination and emptiness. I am deeply grateful to him. Without his guidance, I would not have been able to complete this project. I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to him. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Kenneth Tanaka, Professor Emeritus of Musashino University. When I was the President of the Japan Buddhist Federation, I was invited by Pope John Paul II to participate in the “Day of Prayer for Peace” in Assisi, Italy, on January 24, 2002. At that time Dr. Tanaka served as my academic advisor. We both participated in a forum of the representatives of world religions, entitled “The Contribution of Religions to World Peace,” at the Vatican the day before the Day of Prayer for Peace. I have had the pleasure of working with him many times since then. I would like to thank him again for his support in translating the Japanese text into English. Without his efforts, my article would not have reached the world. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to him.

As of October 2022, I am serving as Governor General of the Jōdo Shinshū Hongwanji-ha (Nishi Hongwanji) denomination of Buddhism and as Chancellor of Ryūkoku University. The thoughts expressed above are my personal views and do not represent the views of the denomination or Ryūkoku University.

Notes on Supplementary Explanation to «Notes on Buddha Dharma» and Sustainable Peace

(1) Musashino University Educational Corporation, Musashino University 100th Anniversary Projects - Camphor Tree Village Project, Rules of Operating Committee, Article 1, Paragraph 2, (Purpose of Establishment and Project) states, “This project is established in accordance with the university's founding spirit of Buddha Dharma and is intended to study the significance of the Dharma and its potential contribution to solving the problems of the modern world and propose it to the world, so that it will contribute to the peace and tranquility of the world.”

(2) Hajime Nakamura, *Introduction to Buddhism by Hajime Nakamura*, (in Japanese), Shunjū-sha, 2014, p. 5. Regarding "Examples of the use of the term '*bukkyō*' are new," he states, “In modern India, the term 'Buddha-Dharma' is used to refer to Buddhism,” in Sri Lanka, it is called ‘Buddha-dhamma’ or ‘Buddha-śāsana’. In these cases, there is a strong awareness that the religion they believe is in contrast with various religions that have come from outside. ...The use of the term '*bukkyō*' is surprisingly new, and coincides with Japan's attempt to bring in Western "modernity" during the Meiji period (1868-1912). And at the same time, the term '*tetsugaku*' (meaning ‘philosophy’) was newly coined. The meanings of

the newly coined terms ‘*bukkyō*’ and ‘*shūkyō*’ (meaning ‘religion’) have been changed from their original meanings. They are now used as common words but they do not necessarily encompass, nor fully express, the original concepts. When what had been called ‘*buppō*’ in the past was named ‘*bukkyō*’, it was already subject to the transformation caused by Western thought. The common use of such fundamental and abstract terms as *bukkyō* and *tetsugaku*, however, has increased the risk of the amplification and transmission of misunderstandings of those concepts. Typical examples are the terms ‘*shūkyō*’ and ‘*bukkyō*’.” (Nakamura, Hajime and Mitsuyoshi Saigusa, “Buddha Buddhism”, (in Japanese), Shōgakusan, 1996, pp. 14-15.)

However, it is to be noted that the Chinese expression ‘*bukkyō*’ (仏教) frequently appears in Chinese version of Buddhist Tripiṭaka in the sense of ‘the Buddha’s words’ or ‘the Buddha’s teachings’.

(3) *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6 and 69-70. For a detailed discussion of "Dharma," see Hajime Nakamura, *Reading the Early Buddhist Scriptures*, (in Japanese), Iwanami Shoten, 1985, pp. 197-217.

(4) Hajime Nakamura, *Buddha's Words: Suttanipāta*, (in Japanese), Iwanami Shoten, 1984, p. 433.

(5) *Ibid.*, p. 22. The original text reads, "Abandon greed, hatred, and delusion, break the knot, and walk alone like the horn of a rhinoceros without fear of losing your life."

(6) See Kōshirō Tamaki, *Enlightenment and Liberation*, (in Japanese), Hōzōkan, 2021, p. 17.

(7) *Ibid.*, pp. 11 and 18.

(8) *Ibid.*, p. 21.

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 31.

(10) *Ibid.*, p. 32.

(11) *Ibid.*, p. 32.

(12) *Ibid.*, pp. 13 and 32.

(13) Hajime Nakamura, *Dictionary of Buddhist Terms*, (in Japanese), Tokyo Shoseki, 1975, vol. 1, pp. 278-279.

(14) Shinichi Fukuoka, *Between Organic and Inorganic Matters*, (in Japanese), Kōdansha, 2007, p. 164.

(15) Here I have quoted the translation by Mitsuyoshi Saigusa, *The Thought of Dependent Origination*, (in Japanese), Hōzōkan, 2000, p. 83. But another translation by Hajime Nakamura (*Buddha's Words of Truth and The Words of Delight*, (in Japanese), Iwanami Shoten, 1978, p. 49) reads: "When one sees with clear wisdom that all causally produced things are impermanent, one is far away from suffering and leave it. This is the path for a person to become pure."

(16) Akira Hirakawa, "Ethics in Early Buddhism", (in Japanese), *Course on Eastern Thoughts, Vol. 5, Buddhist Thought I: Indian Developments*, University of Tokyo Press, 1967, pp. 56-58.

(17) *Ibid.*, p. 50.

(18) Yūichi Kajiyama, *Awakening and Transference of Merits*, (in Japanese), Kōdansha, 1983, pp. 18-19.

- (19) Keiko Yanagisawa, *Wisdom to Live and Die*, (in Japanese), Shōgakukan, 2004, p. 7.
- (20) See Hajime Nakamura, *Dictionary of Buddhist Terms*, vol. 1, p. 118.
- (21) Shōryū Katsura and Kiyotaka Goshima, *Reading the Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā by Nāgārjuna*, Shunjū-sha, 2016, p. 96.
- (22) *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.
- (23) See Hajime Nakamura, *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, Modern Translation of Mahayana Buddhist Scriptures 1*, (in Japanese), Tokyo Shoseki, 2003, p. 44.
- (24) See Hajime Nakamura, *Dictionary of Buddhist Terms*, vol. 1, pp. 118, 278-279.
- (25) See Hajime Nakamura, *The Logic of Emptiness" (Nakamura Hajime Selected Works [Definitive Edition], Vol. 22)*, (in Japanese), Shunjū-sha, 1994, pp. 258-266.
- (26) See Yuichi Kajiyama, *Awakening and Transference of Merits*, p. 19. Yuichi Kajiyama's original text reads, "The thought of emptiness inevitably leads to the thought of non-duality" but I put "Emptiness inevitably leads to the truth of non-duality." As I quoted above, with reference to emptiness, Hajime Nakamura explains, "If we look things from a higher state, there is only one great truth, and nothing arises or ceases. ...There is only one great truth". Therefore, I thought that the ultimate state of emptiness is the absolute state in which there is only truth and which is beyond everyday objective thinking, and that it would be better expressed without a smell of concepts, if I write, "Emptiness inevitably leads to the truth of non-duality," rather than mentioning 'the thought of emptiness' or 'the thought of non-duality'. Kōshirō Tamaki also explained the Dhamma, "Dhamma is that very thing in which one's total being has been shattered; hence, it is the term that transcends meaning and thinking. If we get an insight into it, following the Buddha's teachings, we will find no expression other than *life* without form." (*Enlightenment and Liberation*, pp. 31-32)
- (27) See Hajime Nakamura, *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, Modern Translation of Mahayana Buddhist Scriptures 1*, p. 48.
- (28) Kōshirō Tamaki, *Modern Japanese Translation of the Shōbōgenzō (6)*, Daizō Shuppan, 1994, p. 391.
- (29) Dōshū Ōkubo (ed.), *The Complete Works of Meditation Master Dōgen*, Vol. 2, (in Japanese), Chikuma Shobō, 1970, p. 411.
- (30) See Hajime Nakamura, *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, Modern Translation of Mahayana Buddhist Scriptures 1*, p. 135, above.
- (31) See University of Tokyo Bukkyō Seinenkai (ed.), *Newly Revised Edition of the Modern Buddhist Scriptures*, (in Japanese), Daihōrinkaku, 2016, p. 234.
- (32) See Hajime Nakamura, *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, Modern Translation of Mahayana Buddhist Scriptures 1*, pp. 62 and 86, above.
- (33) *Ibid.*, p. 210.
- (34) *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.
- (35) "Jōdo Wasan" in *Jōdo Shinshū Seiten, Annotated Second Edition*, (in Japanese), Hongwanji Publishing Co., 2004, p. 571.
- (36) *Ibid.*, p. 678, "Ichinen tanen bun'i."
- (37) *Ibid.*, p. 832.

- (38) See Hajime Nakamura, *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, Modern Translation of Mahayana Buddhist Scriptures 1*, pp. 39, 62.
- (39) See “Jinen Hōni no Koto” in *Jōdo Shinshū Seiten*, p. 769.
- (40) See Hajime Nakamura, *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, Modern Translation of Mahayana Buddhist Scriptures 1*, p. 136, above.
- (41) See “Kōsō Wasan & Zendō San” in *Jōdo Shinshū Seiten*, p. 591.
- (42) See Kōshirō Tamaki, *Enlightenment and Liberation*, pp. 69-70. Hajime Nakamura translated the same passage as follows, “This truth that I have realized is profound, hard to see, difficult to comprehend, serene, and exquisite. It is beyond the realm of thought (i.e., the realm of conceptualization), subtle, and known only to the wise. However, the people of this world enjoy clinging to attachment (*ālaya*), indulge in clinging to attachment, and rejoice in clinging to attachment. It is difficult for those who enjoy clinging to attachment, indulge in clinging to attachment, and rejoice in clinging to attachment to see the truth of dependent origination, i.e., “Being conditioned by this, that exists.’... It is also difficult to see the truth of the abandonment of all attachments, the disappearance of delusion, the renunciation of greed, cessation, and peace (*nirvāṇa*). Hajime Nakamura, *Hajime Nakamura Selected Works [Definitive Edition], Vol. 11, "Gautama Buddha I"*, (in Japanese), Shunjū-sha, 1992, pp. 443-444.
- (43) *Ibid*, p. 445.
- (44) See Kōshirō Tamaki, *Enlightenment and Liberation*, pp. 69-70.
- (45) President Obama's Hiroshima speech, May 27, 2016. Found in the morning editions of the Asahi, Yomiuri, and other newspapers on the following day. The Sankei Shimbun covered the full text.
- (46) In my book, *Studies in Buddhism and Social Practice*, (in Japanese), Sekai Seiten Fukyū Kyōkai, 1988, I discussed nuclear deterrence in detail in Volume IV, Chapter 6, "The Catholic View of Peace in the Nuclear Age." The Pope also referred to the real danger of nuclear deterrence.
- (47) Masakatsu Ōta, Nobukatsu Kanehara, Nobushige Takamizawa, Kōichirō Banshō, *Let's Talk about Nuclear Weapons with Real Intention*, (in Japanese), Shinchōsha, 2022, 173-17. 2022, pp. 173-174.
- (48) My own nation's story began with simple words: "All men are created equal, and endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights, including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." For Japanese translation, please see *American Revolution*, American Classic Library 16, (in Japanese), Kenkyūsha Publishing Co., Ltd., 1978, pp. 139-140. Yutaka Morishima, in his *History of the Right of Resistance and the Ideology of Human Rights*, (in Japanese), Kyōbunkan, 2020, pp. 55-56, quotes the "American Declaration of Independence" and the "Pennsylvania Constitution" and states, "The Declaration and the Constitution mentioned above assert human rights on the basis of God who is mentioned in the context of Creation in the Bible. Specifically, they assert, on the basis of the original state of human beings created by God as described in the Bible, the right of resistance against the compelling forces that are contrary to that original state."

- (49) Preamble to the Text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations Information Center (UNIC) website.
- (50) Unconditional and effective respect for each one's unscriptable and inalienable rights is the necessary condition in order that peace may reign in a society. *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response, A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace*, May 3, 1983, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Publication No. 863, United States Catholic Conference, Washington, D.C. 20005, p.22
- (51) See my *Studies in Buddhism and Social Practice*, Volume IV, Chapter 6, "The Catholic View of Peace in the Nuclear Age."
- (52) In current conditions "deterrence" based on balance, certainly not as an end in itself but as a step on the way toward a progressive disarmament, may still be judged morally acceptable. Nonetheless in order to ensure peace, it is indispensable not to be satisfied with this minimum, which is always susceptible to the real danger of explosion. (*The Challenge of Peace*, p.54)
- (53) D. T. Suzuki, *The Oriental View*, (in Japanese), Kadokawa Bunko, 2017, p. 7.
- (54) *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- (55) See 'Butsusetu Muryōju-kyō "in Jōdo Shinshū Seiten, Annotated Second Edition, p. 73.
- (56) See Hajime Nakamura, *Buddha's Words of Truth and The Words of Delight*, p. 10.
- (57) Terumasa Nakanishi, *Ignition Point of World War III* (in Japanese), Bungeishunjū, May 2022, special issue, p. 142.
- (58)(59) United Nations Charter Text, Preamble and Article 2.4.Paragraph 2.4. United Nations Information Center (UNIC) website, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>.
- (60) Regarding this point, President Putin also claimed on May 9, Victory Day against Germany, that he was fighting in Ukraine in order to secure the future of his homeland and to eliminate the room for the Nazis and their allies in the world. He also promulgated, "The danger had increased with the creation of military facilities [in Ukraine] as well as the supply of the latest weapons by NATO countries". In that way he justified the invasion by saying, "It was the only inevitable and right decision." The Executive Office of Ukrainian President responded to this on its SNS, "NATO was not trying to invade Russia, and Ukraine was not planning an attack on the Crimean Peninsula." (Asahi Shimbun, May 10, 2022, morning edition).
- (61) The Russian invasion has completely destroyed the trust of the international community in entrusting this legitimacy to the Permanent Five for enforcing the collective security system under the Charter. This destruction of the trust of the international community is to my mind the most serious permanent damage done to the innovative system of governance created under the Charter.
- Speech by Mr. Hisashi Owada, Leiden University, Owada Memorial Lecture 2022.05.24
<https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/algemeen/oraties/speech-of-the-owada-memorial-chair.pdf> (reference 2022-06-06)
- (62) "Claim," The Sankei Shimbun, March 13, 2022.
- (63) Masaru Sato, *Back Stage of the World*, (in Japanese), The Sankei Shimbun, April 10, 2022.

(64) *Ibid.*, May 8, 2022. The morning edition of the Asahi Shimbun on May 25, three months after the start of the invasion of Ukraine, in the article titled, “The support base of Putin’s regime appears to have begun changing in Russia,” reported the resignation of a Russian diplomat in protest, the complaint of a close ally of Vladimir Putin, the lamentation of an MC of a state-run TV program, and the comment by a military commentator, retired colonel, “The Ukrainian army is highly motivated...the whole world is against us.” The U.S. government announced on May 31 that it would provide the Ukrainian military with new advanced rocket systems with a condition that the rocket systems shall not be used for attacking Russian territory in order to avoid escalating the situation. U.S. President Joe Biden announced in the New York Times on the same day the following points about U.S. involvement in the war in Ukraine.

“America’s goal is straightforward: We want to see a democratic, independent, sovereign and prosperous Ukraine with the means to deter and defend itself against further aggression. ... Ultimately this war will only definitively end through diplomacy. ... We have moved quickly to send Ukraine a significant amount of weaponry and ammunition so it can fight on the battlefield and be in the strongest possible position at the negotiating table. ... The United States will not try to bring about his ouster in Moscow. ... We do not want to prolong the war just to inflict pain on Russia. ... I will not pressure the Ukrainian government — in private or public — to make any territorial concessions. ... Any use of nuclear weapons in this conflict on any scale would be completely unacceptable to us as well as the rest of the world and would entail severe consequences.” (Asahi Shimbun, June 2, morning edition)

Information on the situation in Ukraine, except for those with "Notes," is based on articles in the Yomiuri, Asahi, Sankei, and other newspapers.