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Thankfulness 1365

Hello, my name is Yugen Saito.

Today, I would like to talk about "thankfulness".

First of all, I would like to introduce a sentence from the "Ho-Ku-Kyo Sutra".

The Chinese characters for "Hokkukyo Sutra" read "Hokkugyo," which means "law of composition," or "haiku," or "phrase".

In Pali, it means "words of truth".

It is a sutra that conveys Buddhist teachings in the form of short verses of poetry, and is a sutra in which the words of the Buddha were handed down in a relatively primitive form.

We will read a sentence from that Dhammapada.

The word "katakū" in the sentence means difficult.

It is difficult to be born, it is difficult to have a life, and it is difficult to be in the world.

It is difficult to be in this world, and it is difficult to hear the teachings of the Buddha.

Life is not always as we would like it to be.

Whenever something happens to us, we feel sorrow, grief, pain, and worry.

What should we do if we were born into this world to be happy?

The Buddha's teachings can help us to be positive.

We can only move forward with our lives, and there are many things in life that we cannot avoid. When we encounter the inevitable, we have no choice but to view reality as the reality of impermanence.

It is impermanent, which means "always without."

Everything in the world changes, and nothing stays the same forever. This is called "impermanence of all things".

In this world where things are always changing, and nothing is constant, do we take it for granted that we were born as human beings, or do we resent or regret being born as human beings when we are in pain or sad?

However, we are very grateful to have been born as human beings.

One day, the Buddha said to his disciple Ananda;

How do you feel about being born as a human being?

Ananda replied, "I am very happy".

Then the Buddha told him this story.

There is a blind turtle at the bottom of the endless ocean. It is said that once every hundred years, the tortoise peeks out from the surface of the sea. There is a log floating in the vast ocean. There is a small hole in the middle of the pole. The log pole drifts eastward and westward, southward and northward, carried by the wind and ocean currents.

Do you think, Ananda, that this tortoise, which floats once in a hundred years, could ever, on the spur of the moment, put its head into the hole in the log-pole?

When Ananda was asked, he was astonished.

Buddha, such a thing is inconceivable! Ananda replied, "How can you be so sure?" Can you be sure that it will never happen? The Buddha reminded him, "How can you be absolutely sure?"

In the billions and billions and trillions of years, there may be a chance of putting one's head in the sand, but it is so difficult to say that there is no such thing.

And when Ananda replies, the Buddha says

"O Ananda, it is more difficult and thankful for us to be born as human beings than for this tortoise to be able to put its head in the hole of a log pole".

The word "thankful" means "difficult to have," and it is something that rarely happens.

It is a word that expresses our gratitude for the fact that being born as a human being is such a rare occurrence and a miracle that we should rejoice in.

Furthermore, if we are fortunate enough to encounter the teachings of the Buddha, we can stand at the threshold of a world that leads from reality to the ideal world, from a world of worries and troubles to a world of peace and enlightenment.

I am grateful for this and hope to live each day with a positive outlook.

The postcard sermon series was given by Rev. Yugen Saito of Hagyu-ji temple . Translation and voice in English by Hirokazu Kosaka.