

Let's Dedicate This Life to "Altruism"

Hello, my name is Yugen Saito.

Today, I would like to talk about Rita no gyo or altruism.

The word Rita of (ri) means profit, and (Ta) means others, and (Gyo) means the practice of self discipline.

"Altruism" means giving benefits to others and praying for their happiness, even at the cost of one's own.

We all imagine that as culture and industry develop and life becomes richer, a peaceful and joyful society will emerge.

We all imagine that the development of culture and industry and the enrichment of our lives will lead to a peaceful and happy society.

However, the world of the mind is not so simple. The richer we become, the greedier we become, and with this greed comes wickedness. We would rather satisfy our aroused desires even if it means deceiving others.

In addition, as short-term wisdom develops, the religious mind fades away, and the mind of self-reflection disappears.

Then, thoughts and actions that are only good for oneself emerge.

The philosopher Socrates said, Civilization that forgets religion, affluence that forgets religion, makes demons.

When I was a baby, I was totally helpless, and I don't even remember being helpless. How hard my parents must have worked to raise me.

The teachers who educated me when I knew nothing. My friends who encouraged and comforted me when I had a hard time. Nature, which provides us with air, water, and food. Religion teaches us to be aware of

these things and to be grateful for them.

The number of people who have devoted themselves to altruistic acts throughout history is long, but the nightingale who established modern nursing and Mahatma Gandhi who devoted himself to non-violence come to mind.

I am sure that all of you have thought and acted to make your family and friends happy.

In Buddhism, this is called altruism.

Haruo Obata of Oita Prefecture, who attracted media attention by rushing to many disaster-stricken areas, was close to the affected people and maintained a thorough volunteer spirit and participated in recovery efforts in various areas, despite his advanced age of nearly 80 years.

And even when living at home, he seems to be leading an inconvenient life, just as he did when he was volunteering.

I am humbled by Mr. Obata's good deeds, which are difficult to imitate, even if I wanted to.

In Buddhism, the act of being thoroughly close to the hearts of the victims, putting oneself in the same position as the victims, and putting the other person's needs before one's own is called "self-interest and altruism.

Self-interest is to benefit oneself, in other words, to practice for one's own enlightenment.

Altruism is to serve others in order to benefit or save them.

When Buddhism is divided into two major schools, there is Theravada Buddhism, which was created in the early days and is for ordained

believers, and Mahayana Buddhism, which aims to save all sentient beings. Mahayana means "to get on a big boat" in the hope that everyone will get on a big boat to a peaceful and happy world.

After the Buddha attained enlightenment, he went around preaching his teachings widely, so there is no doubt that the main line of Buddhism is Mahayana Buddhism.

It is natural that one's own happiness should be combined with the idea that one's happiness is because of the happiness of those around him, and it is important what functions one fulfills for those around him and for society.

Like Nightingale, Mahatma Gandhi, and Haruo Obata, I believe that the path to happiness is to always be aware of altruistic conduct.

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