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Gassho Worship

(Ame ni mo Makezu) Be not defeated by the rain.

Hello, my name is Yugen Saito.

Today I would like to talk about "Mutual Adoration".

Mutual worship means to bow and worship one another.

We tend to be so preoccupied with the form of things that we miss the truth that is hidden in them.

Conversely, in our desire to see the truth, we may develop self-centeredness.

The "me" and "only me" mentality is what is known as exclusive selfishness.

The 21st century is said to be the era of symbiosis. Symbiosis means harmony.

We must understand that all living things and all life coexist in harmony.

Life exists in nature.

There must always be a mind of compassion for mutual offerings and mutual worship.

Gassho Worship is the act of putting aside the self-centered ego, and realizing the purity of mind that is inherent within us, or in other words, the "Buddha nature of oneself," "Buddha nature," and "Buddha nature. It is a beautiful way to bring out one's Buddha nature and give comfort to others.

Gassho means to clasp the hands together.

There is nothing more beautiful, more peaceful, or more encouraging to the human mind than the gesture of bowing with one's palms together.

Here I would like to introduce the last verse of Kenji Miyazawa's "Ame ni mo Makezu," which you may be familiar with.

In times of drought, shed tears of sympathy.
In summers cold, walk in concern and empathy.
Stand aloof of the unknowing masses:
Better dismissed as useless than flattered as a "Great Man".
This is my goal, the person I strive to become.

(Hidorino toki hanamida wo nagashi
Samusa no natsuha orororo aruki
Minnanidekuno boat yobareru
Homaremo sezu kunimosarezu saifu mono ni
Watashihanaritai)

This phrase may sound familiar.

The dekunobo in this phrase is said to be the "ever-light Bodhisattva" of the Lotus Sutra. The phrase "jyoufukyou" is written as "always not light. What kind of Bodhisattva is Jyoufukyou Bodhisattva?

In the olden days, Buddhism had fallen into disuse, and monks who were inexperienced yet overbearing became the norm.

Even against such evil monks, the Bodhisattva said, "I respect you. I will never take you lightly. You are all people who have trained to become Buddhas".

The monks were even more hostile to him, accusing him of lying about his worship.

But he did not change his attitude, and so they gave him the nickname "Jofukyo" (always light).

In Sanskrit, it means “a man who is always scorned”.

Rather than chanting scriptures or meditating, the "Jofukyō" usually practiced the art of worshipping with folded palms, respecting people, and treating them with courtesy.

Whenever there were evil monks to criticize or persecute him, he would flee from the place, but from a distance, he would worship again with all his heart.

The Buddha described such "everlasting lightness" as "the practice of a bodhisattva or practitioner.

The Buddha cited him as an example of how a bodhisattva or practitioner should conduct himself, and told his disciples that this is what ascetic practice is all about.

When Jofukyō was about to die, he obtained the merits of the Lotus Sutra, his life was prolonged, and he spread the Lotus Sutra among people. Seeing him, the monks who had previously mocked him as a dekunobo prostrated themselves.

When his life was over, the Buddha said, "That Buddha is me.

We can create a better society if we mutually worship and help each other, even if it is not "always light. Let us all worship each other's Buddha nature, let us all nurture the buds of our Buddha nature, and let the beautiful flower of the human world bloom.

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