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Buddhism came to Japan in the 6th century A.D. Jodo-Shinshu was founded by Shinran (1173-1263). It is often referred to as „Shin-Buddhism“. This „Shin“ comes from „Shin“ (真) in „Jodo-Shinshu (浄土真宗)“ and means truth (真実). Jodo-Shinshu teaches, that Buddhism exists for all human beings without discrimination or condition...

Greetings

Yuka Komatsu

It is a pleasure to meet you all. My name is Yuka Komatsu and I am a member of Hoju Group. With the following words I would like to introduce myself.

What is “Religion”?

I think this is a big question. Religion in Japanese is “Shukyou(宗教)”. This is written with Kanji (originally from China). Therefore I looked it up in a Dictionary. There it says: Shukyo is “Faith in/praising God or Buddha or Holy things”. Originally in Buddhism it referred to a teaching, which should be praised as a grand foundation. I think, the Dictionary definition may be easier to understand. As an example, I would like to present my own experience.

From childhood until about my teenage years I strove to believe in a religion, which spread from Europe. I think back on how I was back then. First I remember often praying to God. Contents of these “prayers” always were “my own wishes”. I prayed for “peace” or “for others”, but those were also “my own wishes”. And with these “own wishes” I wanted to appeal to God and have them fulfilled.



Sermon under the tree (2)

Gautama Siddharta was of high and noble ancestry. Despite having a materially rich life, he left everything behind to devote himself to Religion.

In order to overcome all human suffering, he trained hard. Through meditation, fasting, bodily exercises and asceticism did he try to achieve enlightenment. He endeavoured to walk this extremely hard path in order to achieve enlightenment, overcome human illusions and erroneous ways.

This I thought to be “prayer”. And in order for God to fulfill these “prayers”, I thought having to be a “good child”.

“What is a good child”?

In a childrens’ book of this Religion I sort of learned the following: “Do not Lie”, “Devote yourself to others selflessly”, “Value and care for living Beings”, etc..., morally easily understandable things.

And very important: “Believe in God”, “Have reverence”, “Apologize for your sins”, “Confess”, etc...

If I were able to fulfill all that, “God” would classify me as a “good child”, fulfill my “prayers”, protect me and maybe even reward me. Because of that I always wanted to be “pure”, which was also due to the influence of the depiction of female figures in childrens’ books of that religion. I received very strong impact from the story of a Holy woman, who was able to perform miracles through pure prayer and thereby save humans.

I wanted to be just like her, only dressed in black and white, wanted to let go of my desires, only devoting myself to god praying for the world and other humans.

But suddenly one day I thought to myself: “I was born into this world and I want to experience it fully in all its aspects, good and bad!”. And after that I quickly and easily gave up the way to “God”.

Later I discovered that maybe some power having created the universe and not being able to be explained by science could be “God”. I was also very interested in Esoteric things and this state continued until I met Mr. Hideo Okamoto.

At my University in Japan there was also a course in Religion. The first year Mr. Okamoto was the one who taught this course.

He explained the Buddhist meaning of “Shukyou(Religion)”. “Shu(宗)” is centre/middle. And “Kyou(教)” is teaching.

Therefore “Shukyou(宗教)” is “Teaching of centre/middle”. (In this case middle is spelled “Chuushin(中心)”. “Chuu(中)” is “middle” and “Shin(心)” is “Heart”. Therefore it also means “middle of heart”. “Religion(宗教)” is “Heart teaching”).

I was very surprised, because as a child I only wanted to be accepted by God. After I quit trying to believe in God, I called “floating” things like the Universe “God” and I thought that to be Religion.

“Shukyou(Religion)” is a teaching for us living beings, enabling us to live independently and allowing us say from our heart “My life is good”. I felt that I was floating in the air up to that point but then I felt both feet standing firmly on the ground.

Afterwards I met many teachers and other companions of Jodo-Shinshu (Shin-Buddhism), continuously received lectures of this teaching, and from my heart I think this is good and I am very grateful.

Therefore I sincerely wish that as many people as possible may encounter this teaching.

