

70-04-12

BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

April 4, 1970. San Francisco.

April...April 8th is the day we celebrate Buddha's birthday in China and Japan. As you know, Buddha was born as a prince of...Shakya tribe, a king of Shakya tribe and when he was born in the Lumbini Garden, nags poured sweet tea. That is why we pour the sweet tea, but actually we don't know the historical origin about this because we have not much record about the sweet tea, but we have record about the festival we have, we had right now. Maybe in Japan they started to mix this kind of tea for the infant Buddha. And in China and Japan, the infant Buddha statue is very lovely and very tiny. The largest one in Japan is maybe fifteen inches high, which is in Todai-ji Temple where the big Buddha is as...the Vairochana Buddha in Todai-ji_____, the infant Buddha is also big, but usually infant Buddha for this ceremony is as small as this.

In Japan...nowadays we celebrate around eighty-eighth of April on Sunday. Here in America, Japanese people celebrate his birthday mostly also around eighth on Sunday. The other day when we have _____ we had beautiful cake for the birthday and some of them celebrate Buddha's birthday right ere, singing "happy birthday." I think that is the first happy birthday song for the Buddha. Many things is happening here! Zen group in America, including Zen Center, developing so rapidly and after painting the hall and decorating flower shrine and cleaning up various rooms and hallway, we have this ceremony. This is, I think, very meaningful thing. The flower shrine and altar we have right now is very tentative one. Not permanent one. I think this is very meaningful. The Soto practice is something like this always...always...has been something like this. We are trying to improve the way we celebrate Buddha, the way we decorate altar, but if we lose the spirit this is...maybe in this way we decorate altar, but if we lose the spirit this is...maybe in this way we could be very, you know, awful thing...to just decorate without taking care of things. Like _____ after goes around various places without not much artistic sense, but if we practice continuative practice, like we have been practicing our way in America, something which is very meaningful and beautiful will result.

Celebrating...our Zen Center effort. Headquarter of Soto School in Japan promised us to give us another maybe \$3000and they allowed me to wear yellow robe. That is the robe I wear for the first Buddha's birthday in Zen Center. I don't know why, but I do not like that kind of beautiful...some things too beautiful, but today I felt something quite different feeling. I appreciate their appreciation of our effort to develop Buddha's Way, which was, which has been transmitted more than 2,500 years. This is the most meaningful thing. In this way if we make our effort something will result in this country. And as the Buddhist, Bodhisattva vow is to continue our way forever, if so, ...Buddha's teaching something which was told by Buddha will be developed forever. With this spirit we should celebrate Buddha's birthday, even the way we celebrate is not perfect.

Thank you very much.

EZT – early SFZC transcript – 70-04-12
