

Reflections
By Satsu

My mother's family has long been involved in the Buddhist temple; my father's, with the Methodist church. Growing up, I attended service and Dharma School at the Mo'ili'ili Hongwanji. Around age fourteen, interested to explore my father's faith, I began attending Unity Church of Hawai'i. Their services, while radically different from those at the temple, preach to the same core values: treat others with kindness and respect, be the change you wish to see, and have patience.

This past February, I celebrated my eighteenth birthday. As I have come to realize, adulthood carries much more weight than simply accountability to the law. Adults are fully responsible for every aspect of their being, in particular, their moral and spiritual compasses. During my first few months of adulthood, I came to several definitive conclusions about myself and the manner in which I will lead my life. During a recent reflection, I bemusedly realized that the majority, if not all, of these conclusions involve a Buddhist teaching. Buddhism, it seems, is intrinsic to a healthy moral and spiritual lifestyle.

Treat others with kindness and respect. In difficult situations at school, at work, in the community and even with friends, I remind myself to follow this principle. I have learned that respecting others' perspectives and acting with kindness almost always leads to a positive resolution for all parties involved.

Be the change you wish to see. Experience has taught me a valuable lesson: unless I have personally worked to change a situation, I have no right to complain about it. If I wish something accomplished, I should do it, because I have control over no person except myself.

Have patience. This conclusion was the easiest for me to reach--and the hardest to practice. Yet when I feel impatient or annoyed, I remind myself to evaluate my life. As I reflect upon the gifts I have received and the experiences I have enjoyed, I remember that my life has followed a beautiful course. I have no need to be impatient; as proven by my life thus far, everything will fall into place by itself.

As I finished reflecting, I felt amazed. I had had no idea that the colorful Dharma School lessons of my *hanabata* days held such importance in the decisions regarding adult character. I wondered whether every member of the Sangha had experienced the revelation I had. Spiritually, I am a pretty practical person. I glean the most from sermons that integrate the teaching into everyday situations. Hence, as a change to Mo'ili'ili Hongwanji's services, I suggest incorporating this "practical Buddhism" into the Sunday lesson.

This August, I will head to Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. I currently plan to double major in Foreign Language, with an emphasis on Japanese and French, and Performance. One day, I hope to be a freelance interpreter with credentials at the United Nations and embassies around the world, as well as a seasoned performer with many Broadway and international credits to her name. Although Indiana is, in many senses, worlds away from Hawai'i, I have a strong foundation to keep me grounded. By continuing to live in a morally and spiritually conscious manner--by following the Buddhist teachings that are inherent in a healthy, positive lifestyle--I will continue to grow both as an adult and as a spiritual person.