JAPANESE LESSONS

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INTRODUCTION

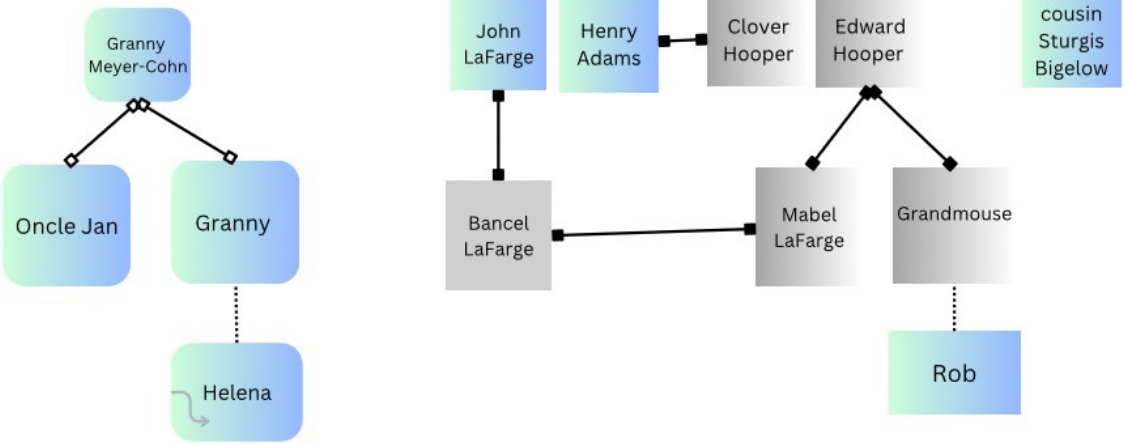
THE KAMAKURA BUDDHA

KANNON

UNCLE HENRY

PEACE STUDIES

Blue/green the relatives who were in Japan for extended visits



FOUR GENERATIONS — TWO FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION

Research into our family histories is revealing intriguing patterns in the tapestries of Rob's and my lives today — our professional work, our similarities and differences from relatives, and even the house where we live right now — specifically some patterns that connect directly to our great grandparents' generation. They are patterns that derive from time spent in Japan, from the places we and our ancestors went there, and the lessons and the objects that came back with them and with us. Three objects for which particular responsibility sits with us for the moment also raise issues beyond the family, matters more widely spiritual and political. Learning about each piece is tying us more closely to these ancestors' values and experiences.

My recent LEGACIES pamphlet, which covered the last half of the last century, featured a single painting and just one part of our ancestry: my mother and her German relatives. Working from that one portrait did in fact also get us focused on matters political though with little spiritual resonance. This group of essays spans Rob's family and mine. There are sculptures as well as paintings, more than one. Our families' adventures reach back more than 150 years. Japan is the unifying thread throughout: tourism and work in Japan; encounters with Buddhism and Japanese aesthetics; engagement with cultures far, far distant from the places where each of us came to adulthood. The bonds between past and present turn out to be surprisingly strong, made much more interesting because of the values and aspirations each of these pieces elucidates.

Who experienced these Japanese lessons?
Collateral relatives on Rob's mother's side in the 1880s — Henry Adams, John LaFarge and Sturgis Bigelow — leading for Bigelow to a profound and intimate immersion in Japanese Buddhism.
My mother's mother and her mother in 1913 on a trip to visit my great uncle Jan, who was employed in Kobe in support of German commerce and trade.
Rob and I, in 2001 on the first of more than a dozen trips, when, coincidentally, we too were also in Kobe, to teach a course and do research at a Japanese university. What began for the two of us as a "why not" whim persuaded us, as it had Bigelow, to get involved in immersive "Japanese lessons" which continue to this day. Our next time there is scheduled for early 2025.

Three art objects came into our lives thanks to our long ago ancestors, which continue to offer lessons today. The objects are 1) an everyday souvenir of the great Buddha in Kamakura, 2) a watercolor of the Bodhisattva Kannon by the painter John LaFarge and 3) a funerary sculpture by Augustus St Gaudens, whose design was finalized in the late1880s, in the aftermath of the first of the family encounters with Japan. There will be one essay about each of these and then a closing essay which shifts from family history to "matters political and spiritual," a rather more abstract meditation on core issues at the heart of peacemaking in these times.

Rob and I both have strong bonds with Japan, though in these essays I serve as writer most of the time. However the experiences, the Japanese lessons have been transformative for both, so I am happy to say you will see a couple of longish descriptions of our first time in Japan that were written by Rob.

THE KAMAKURA BUDDHA

This eight inch tall Buddha and I have almost always lived in the same house. In my childhood it was the door stop to keep our kitchen door from closing. As my father arrived home from work, our parents let that door close, a bit of privacy while they caught up on the day's events. In my memory, the sign that dinner was ready was that the Buddha was back in place, holding the door open once more. In 1968 my mother, by then a widow, sold our London house and, while the contents scattered, the Buddha went with her. After Rob and I married I mentioned how much I loved it so she brought the statue to the USA. For years in Olympia it lived a rather refined life among a number of ornaments and vases, on the top of a Chinese-style chest. Here in Berkeley it's back as a doorstop, though out in the sun and overlooking the garden.

Working out how my family came by this souvenir was a narrative I pinned down just a few years ago. I have always known however, that its auras had strong hold. So in our first visit to Japan back in 2001 I was genuinely anxious to see the original. On our very first night I asked a kind friend and neighbor how I could get to see Japan's giant Buddha. Rather startled, he asked me "which one?" I had no idea there might be more than one. Indeed there are . . . an ancient and famous one in Nara and a modern and completely unknown one a short subway ride away in Kobe, down by the port. Japanese lesson number 1. Giant Buddhas in Japan are not all ancient and we were off to see the Kobe Buddha within days.

It took me a whole month plus to get to Kamakura and interestingly in our letters home there's not a word about the trip though every bit of it is a clear today as it was 23 years ago.

I went alone. Passport and Japan Rail Pass in my purse, a carefully prepped itinerary featuring several temples and a hilltop hike, and a booking at a Women Only guest house in Hase. Hase is on the sea and the Buddha generally described as in Kamakura is actually in Hase.

Japanese lesson No. 2: Safety and kindness, attributes of Japanese society in the late 21st century, came to the rescue more than once in support of this foreign woman traveling alone. I had traveled alone once already, to Hiroshima on a day trip by "bullet" train from Kobe, but this was a bigger deal, to go overnight. Despite that I set off with confidence in my sense of physical safety, of ease and peace, the like of which I had never experienced before . . . not in London, nor Paris, not in Florence, not Berlin, certainly not Philadelphia or Seattle or even Olympia, Washington. Women in Japan are safe enough to doze, really snooze on trains. Women do that everywhere every day. They don't clutch their handbags tight. On the Hiroshima trip, by mistake I had left a video camera on the train. I rushed down to the station office where I was assured by staff it would be found and that the terminus would send it back to Kobe, COD for the postage. They did. It arrived the day after I did. I

sent back the COD money using Japan's well established, digital payment system, equivalent to Venmo but much safer. All done by machines in convenience stores.

So, in Kamakura when a group of women in a minivan offered me a ride back to the station instead of my having to wait for the bus, I didn't hesitate for a minute. The next day when I realized I had left my wallet and rail pass on a table at a temple, (do I sound rattled? perhaps a bit) I was alarmed but kindness was instantaneous again. Another woman bought my two dollar train ticket back to the police station in town. They called the temple. Sure enough the wallet had been turned in already, so the same woman paid my train fare back, and on I went. Relieved. Seen through Japanese eyes this outcome need not have been surprising: That very morning, in a forest hill-top shrine to Benzaiten I had done what everyone else was doing, dropped a coin (500 yen in my case, much more than the others were tossing) into a pool in hopes of a good financial fortune. Also the walk, which began on the hill behind the Buddha, ended at an unusual temple, one that by tradition is a sanctuary for women in danger. Our ancestors 150 years ago went to Kamakura, where they were met with curiosity because foreigners were so rare. I passed unnoticed except when I needed help, but when I did, I was visible and was helped.

The Buddha himself? Near the sea as I said, within tsunami range of the beach so these days there's no temple building. Two early buildings were washed away and wisely the monks decided not to try again. The Diabutsu sits under a tree-covered hill. Equanimity embodied. His eyes, the angle of his head, that posture. I reach back to it if rattled. Yes that still happens. The Buddha also inspired me to mount a formal gallery show of my work on peaceabilities, an "art installation" with embroidery and photos of the statue. The photos now hang at Lake End, just below the portrait of my grandfather.

The Daibutsu in the family.

We knew that Rob and our kids visiting Japan that summer had to see it too, so Kamakura is where we spent our last night. With the Daibutsu and watching surfers on the beach. Though we didn't know it, that is exactly where Uncle Henry and John LaFarge found themselves 150 years ago, on their last day before they set off on the return voyage to the United States, admiring the Daibutsu and on the beach. LaFarge was in awe of the

statue's contemplative presence, so vivid the expression on the Buddha's face and in his downward glance that the artist felt required to remind himself the statue was human made, nothing more than a piece of "art." The miniature Buddha on our doorstep, in ways that now seem almost uncanny, managed to awaken in me a quiet echo of that astonishing original. I feel so very lucky to have been in Kamakura again and again in the years since that first visit — wonderful though the souvenir is, there really is nothing in this world like the original.

My grandmother and great grandmother will have been in Kamakura only once . . . my uncle Jan's memoir, our source of information about their trip doesn't give specifics:

> Jan [my Jan's own uncle and namesake] chose banking as a career and after his year of Military Service did his apprenticeship with Schroeders Bank in London. . . . His principal recreation in London was rowing on the Thames. He joined a club, rowed in a four in regattas and enjoyed sculling. He also had a boat built which he took with him to Japan. When he joined the Ost-Asiatische Bank he was posted to Kobe. There he joined the British Sports Club, and continued to row. . . In 1913 he was visited by granny and my mother, their outward journey by TransSiberian Railway and home by sea. I remember seeing their trunks with special markings. In those days there was no shortage of porters. Mother discovered a liking for Japanese prints and brought some back as well as 2 ceremonial swords which were displayed on the wall of my bedroom in Löepten. [He doesn't mention the Buddha of course. It was just a souvenir. Rob and I now also have two of the woodblock prints.]

In 2018 Rob and I along with Jenny, the cousin who is Jan's daughter, got permission to have lunch at the Kobe British Sports Club. The building's exterior is modern. Inside, the silver cups arrayed in the display case are a mite tarnished and the team banners suggest that athletic triumphs lie back in the past, but the atmosphere in the dining room would likely seem quite similar to, if more modest than what it was when my great uncle ate there over 100 years ago.

Japan is expert at importing ideas and ways of being from other countries without ever losing its own way of interpreting and using those imports. At the same time as Kobe established a British-style Sports Club, the Japanese Imperial Family and leading national politicians imported Edwardian formal dress for official occasions. Top Hats. Tail Coats. White ties. Unlike Europeans today, they still dress in that style on formal occasions.

In return for our gift of formal dress, which in fact does still seem "natural "in official Tokyo, Japan has given back to those of us who visit the Daibutsu an opportunity for unforgettable encounters with the sublime as well as trips to the beach. Encounters with the sublime do not protect against losing a wallet or bigger difficulties, but remembering that there was such an encounter can help restore equanimity no matter the trouble. A souvenir on the doorstep makes it rather easier.

KANNON

In 1968 my sister Joanna and her husband Peter traveled via Japan on an extended, west-bound return trip to the UK after three years in the USA. Peter learned we were were headed there so he gave us an old Japan guide, with this face on the cover. It would take another five years before I saw the original but this image, so quietly reflective, drew me in, in its own way as powerfully as our Daibutsu souvenir. I have no memory of mentioning Kannon in that first night in Japan in the conversation with our kind neighbor. Perhaps I showed him the guidebook to which he could have said "Kannon? Oh there are a lot of great sculptures of Kannon in Kansai — our part of Japan." No matter why, Rob and I set off to look for Kannon the very next weekend.

That face, that book cover, is one reason I looked forward to being in Japan optimistically, with interests of my own to explore, despite having encountered a "wives are not professionals" assumption among some high officials at our host university. In fact once the semester got underway, I lucked into great collegial relationships in Kobe. Even more important, this picture, this image of Kannon became the impetus for what later evolved into a core scholarly pursuit: mercy's role in hard times . . . how and when it contributes a steadying foundation for recovery and peace. More later in the last essay. For Buddhists Kannon has many names and manifestations — Avalokiteshvara, Chenrezig, Quan-yin, Dalai-Lama — whether male or female, this Bodhisattva is present across every part of Buddhism's complex and varied world.

The sculpture of Kannon on the book cover spends all but a few weeks of every year behind closed doors in a small cabinet at Hokke-ji, a temple near Nara. Perhaps coincidentally this too is a women's temple. The monastics there take pride in their gardens, but unlike the austere rock, moss and sand in Kyoto, Hokke-ji has a blooming array, some parts of it grown for medicinal benefit. By tradition the Abbess makes 4cm ceramic dogs for visitors, as tokens to confer "sound" health on their owners. Sadly mine seems to have disappeared. Sublime to ridiculous? Not really. Just ordinary care for human beings.

I didn't manage even to identify, let alone visit my totem face till our second teaching semester in Kobe, but we found plenty of other ways to engage with Kannon's special place in Japan's Buddhist practices. Gender various, from clearly female to mustachioed and male, Japan boasts two 33 - temple Kannon pilgrimage routes established centuries ago, in Kansai and on the island of Shikoku. Kyoto and Ofuna among other places are home to a giant Kannon bust sheltering the town. Ofuna built theirs during the depression, to sustain community solidarity.

KANNON

The plaque on the site acknowledges that its construction was also intended to contribute to the intense and regrettable solidarity essential to Japan's Pacific Wars of 1931-45.

That first visit to Kyoto started in an astounding encounter with Kannon. This is how Rob put it in our letter home:

> "Kyoto is set in a bowl of low hills. The center is largely commercial and not very prepossessing at first view, though no doubt there are jewels to be found there, too. Most of the famous sites are in or near the hills, and we headed for the nearest. This was Sanjusan-gendo (Hall of Thirty-three Bays), which has a thousand images of Kannon. Understand "thousand" to mean 'very many,' not literally 1000 by count. The number doesn't matter. The sight of ranks and ranks of standing, golden, calm-faced Kannons in the long hall is the kind that slows you down and makes you understand the sweep of what Kannon meant to the temple builders. The bodhisattva of compassion is said to hear all cries and see all suffering. To walk past this many statues of the same figure, each with multiple arms holding symbols of various aspects of healing and help, was to feel how much suffering there is, and at the same time, how capacious is the vision of a figure which can take it all in. [The academic in me considers that for Kannon the words "healing" and "mercy" are more apropos than the generic "compassion." The tools in their hands are there to DO something about the suffering. More on that in the last piece]

This particular picture graces the cover of the temple's paper guide:

There is a Kannon in Hase. It is up a hill instead of at sea level and indoors, unlike its neighbor the Daibutsu. A giant as well, the Hase Kannon is like these ones in Kyoto: Gold and quietly contemplative. At the Enkaku-Ji in Kamakura 100 very small stone Kannons line a courtyard at the temple, each one soft, greenish and moss covered. "National Treasure" sculptures of Kannon sit or stand in many museums. Others that were once hidden in monastic treasure houses are now on display at their home temples: Leading examples of the once-hidden include the Kudara and Yumechigai Kannons at Horiyu-ji outside Nara. The latter specializes in chasing away bad dreams. "My" Hokke-ji Kannon remains hidden all but four weeks a year.

In 2001, Rob stayed in Kobe teaching, while I could be gone if I wanted to be and I was, leaving in early June for an NEH seminar in Global Ethics at Columbia University. Note the year. I was in New York just

KANNON

weeks before the World Trade Center towers fell and attitudes on all sides suddenly turned terrifyingly merciless. My original rather amorphous project for the NEH had been about cultural variations in the ethics of peace. By that June, with Kannon in mind I arrived with a much clearer focus . . . mercy in global ethics. Christianity of course lauds God as merciful, so I was guessing there was likely a rich trove of material about mercy in other ethical and religious traditions. The six weeks of the seminar sped by. By the time I was back in Japan, the question: whether there is evidence that shows how mercy is linked to peace and to the repair of injuries from war and conflict, had become a primary research concern.

The relevant family artifact connected to mercy and to Kannon is a painting that hangs beside our dining table: a watercolor by John LaFarge, a relative — see the chart — an American water-colorist and stained glass artist. You will meet him for the third time in the next piece. LaFarge is a collateral relative of Rob's. His son Bancel was married to Rob's great aunt Mabel, a skilled water colorist in her own right. The LaFarge Kannon became our responsibility after Rob's mother passed it on just before she died in 2003. She knew, perhaps almost better than I, that Kannon had profoundly transformed my professional life.

LaFarge's Kannon is gentle and soft and from it emanates a feeling quite distinct from those gilded beings with many arms and tools. For one thing, this Kannon is clearly female and floating above or at the edge of rough waters. How did she get there? Kannon stories describe her rescuing fishermen from rough seas. She is sometimes seated on an island, the site of her first moment of enlightenment. A LaFarge scholar sent us an image of a widely known Meiji-era painting this scholar believes was an influence on LaFarge. The Meiji Kannon stands on a dragon's head, balanced on the waves. A few years ago we bought a small Ming era Guanyin bronze, this one also among the waves, hers made of wood.

Buddha images, all clearly male, are almost all unadorned, standing straight up, seated or lying down. By contrast Kannon of many names is impermanence embodied, male/female, standing/sitting, helping mothers/fishermen, holding tools/empty handed, thousand arms/just two, eleven heads/just one. Whatever the form, Kannon has opted to remain a Bodhisattva. Unlike the Kamakura Buddha, Kannon eschews a transition into the eternal equanimity of Nirvana and instead still hears the sounds of suffering, ready actively to bring relief.

UNCLE HENRY

Rob and I set off for Japan in 2001 with a letter pressed on us by Rob's mother. It described a Kyoto area temple and an ancestral gravesite recently visited by cousins whose name we no longer remember. Rob's mother Faith was hoping, I think, that we would make a similar pilgrimage.

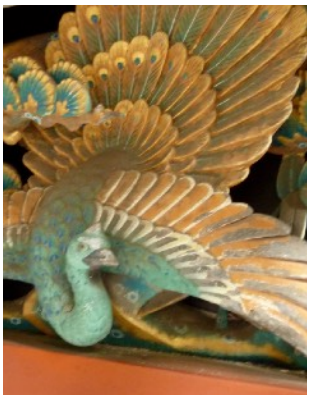
The ancestor's name, Sturgis Bigelow, was a familiar one to Rob. His mother had talked often enough about an older "cousin" Sturgis. Sturgis as a name also cropped up in other people . . . in Faith's favorite first cousin and as Rob's brother's second name. Back then I had no idea who Bigelow was and anyway Rob's family is huge. His mother's mother was one of five sisters so there are a ton of second cousins in our generation. On his father's side Rob was one of sixteen first cousins. To say the least I had doubts that this one cousin, three generations back would add much to either of our lives.

Let me admit at once that I was wrong. Just the challenge of finding our way to the tomb was an enjoyable lesson in adventuring and also an education in Japanese culture. Along the way we learned that in a large Japanese temple complex, different sub-temples each have their own name. One of the names we knew, "Mii-dera" was plenty for maps to get us to Otsu, a small town on Lake Biwa, near Kyoto. It was enough as well to get us up the hill to some temple gates. But Bigelow (or Bigerow as one pronounces it in Japanese) was associated with Homyo-in, a Mii-dera sub-temple still further up the hill. As Rob's 2001 note puts it:

> "When we asked about Homyo-in, the man in the entrance booth muttered "difficult, difficult" and "mountain path", but he fished out a little Xeroxed map of the vicinity and drew in a line to indicate the way. Homyo-in was a kilometer or so away, on a path that went along the hillside toward the north. My Japanese was good enough to understand the "difficult, difficult" part, but nowhere near the level of asking the man to explain things fully in words. Still, we could see features like those the map seemed to show, so we started off. Not quite that easy. After the candidate path expired in the woods, and neither another path nor any person could be found in that corner of the grounds (behind the lumber and spare parts storage yard), we went back and asked again. A different man produced a different map, which seemed to send us out of the temple and a couple of blocks along the city streets to find the start of the mountain path. OK, try again. A friendly guard spotted our uncertainty at a critical point and walked us to the trail head. From there, navigation was not hard.
>
> At Homyo-in itself, there was a hand-lettered sign with Fenellosa's and Bigelow's names, and there we were. The memorials are set in a stand of tall, thin pines, with a number of other memorials along a walkway of stepping stones. Looking out, there is a view of the lake, but the main sense is of quiet enclosure. Bigelow's stone is in English, briefly describing his activities and the sort of person he was. Much more than the name-and-dates terseness of the typical American gravestone. It was very worth coming."

Finding that gravesite, just like my first visit to the Kamakura Daibutsu soon after, gave us confidence that adventuring in Japan would be rewarding, regardless of language weaknesses. We are, I suspect, rather more USA than Japan in our willingness to strike out to unknown destinations, at least that's what our Japanese friends seem to say as they comment that we have seen more of Japan than they have. Almost certainly true, but

one of them has visited every single US State Capital which we have not. Where the cultural norms differ is likely in our tolerances for an uncertain outcome.



On another Japan trip many years later, there was Bigero's name again, this time on a poster in the Kobe Subway, its dominant image recalling the complex and stunning carvings at the Tokugawa tombs in Nikko. Kobe City Museum was to have on display a small part of Bigelow's collection of Japanese art, a vast collection, thousands of objects, all donated to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. This was no cry for "repatriation." The opposite. This was a Japanese museum proud that a major US museum placed such a high value on Japanese art.

Between our first Bigelow sighting and the second we had come to appreciate Rob's family's significant participation in a great surge of US interest in Japan that arose over150 years ago, bursting visibly into view in the throngs at the Japanese Pavilion during the 1876 Centennial exhibition. Back then Japan had on display a startling new aesthetic, one part unusual images and designs, the other part truly astounding craftsmanship. Tiffany quickly began imitating their styles with great success. Edward Morse's 1881 Lowell Institute lectures on Japan, riveting talks ranging from Japanese domestic architecture, to natural history to Japanese mores in every day life, deepened the fascination. Morse's lectures were the proximate impetus for Bigelow, enervated by Bostonian social life, to try visiting Japan. He arrived in 1882 and didn't leave again for over seven years. He committed himself on two contrasting fronts, immersive studies in Tendai Buddhism and collecting his "treasures," by which were meant sculptures, lacquer, ceramics, prints and paintings, far too many of which Japanese society, itself smitten by US modernisms, seemed ready to jettison. It was those treasures that ended up in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

Bigelow wasn't the only one of Rob's relatives who found Japan intriguing. Uncle Henry, similarly fascinated made plans to visit Sturgis with his wife Clover, for whom Bigelow was a favorite cousin. They were to buy furnishings for their brand new and completely empty house. She never went, just Henry, in 1886. His traveling companion? John LaFarge, he of the Kannon painting.

So who was "Uncle Henry?" Rob's great, great uncle, regarded with genuine devotion by Rob's grandmother and all four of her sisters. A lovable and generous elder with charming dogs and an endless willingness to provide house and hospitality to the young.

Uncle Henry's other name is Adams. He is the famous Henry Adams, the historian, the cultural critic, his the waspish pen that crafted the Education of Henry Adams. My first attempt to get into the Education lasted no time at all . . . the third person voice did not invite. It was even less inviting to learn that the Education leaves a void where the twenty years of Henry Adams' marriage and his time in Japan should have been. And yet . . .

UNCLE HENRY

Uncle Henry went to Japan without his wife because she was dead, had died by suicide the year before. The third piece of art to which this family is closely connected, though not of course in any official sense responsible, is the memorial to his wife that Adams commissioned. The artist: Augustus St. Gaudens, his commission finalized the day before Uncle Henry and John LaFarge set off for Japan. Seeing the Kamakura Daibutsu was consciousness changing for Rob and for me. Visiting the Adams Memorial was as well. We went because we had newly come to value the ancestral heritage that is one part of our connection to Japan. Seeing the memorial changed my standpoint on Adams too: The man and the marriage shifted, no longer disturbing, perhaps alien, the Memorial itself so clearly an intriguing invitation of a quite mysterious kind.

Uncle Henry was adamant that no words be associated with the memorial. There are words of course, pages and pages of them written by art critics and biographers, some by the National Park Service at the St. Gaudens Historic Park up in New Hampshire. Henry Adams even offered a few lines himself. The memorial was installed in 1891 while he was out of the country and, as he puts it in the "Education" in what I used to think of as his "uninviting" third person voice:

> His first step, on returning to Washington, took him out to the cemetery known as Rock Creek, to see the bronze figure which St. Gaudens had made for him in his absence. Naturally every detail interested him; every line; every touch of the artist; every change of light and shade; every point of relation; every possible doubt of St. Gaudens's correctness of taste or feeling; so that, as the spring approached, he was apt to stop there often to see what the figure had to tell him that was new; but, in all that it had to say, he never once thought of questioning what it meant.

Although acknowledging Adams' resistance to adding meaning, let me nonetheless bring us back around to Kannon.

** The commission, though made after the death of a woman was always conceived as a memorial that would one day rest over both of their graves. Henry Adams is buried there too and the background in marble has carved into it a pair of interlocking rings. The draped robes may encourage people to describe the figure as "she" and the posture as "hers." It never did strike either Rob or me that way. Like Kannon the gender is inclusive not binary. Adams did write something explicit about this: "the figure is sexless."

UNCLE HENRY

** Situated in a cemetery, the memorial is often casually given the name “Grief.” That word was neither spoken nor recorded while the artist was at work. St. Gaudens’ notes are said to contain the words “Buddha” and “repose” but in those same notes there is no reference to loss or mourning. On seeing it myself, I felt more attuned to its outward awareness. Inwardness? Grieving? Not so much.

** It seems likely that the form was influenced by the fact that Henry Adams and John LaFarge were setting out for Japan just as St. Gaudens began working on the commission. There is an oft repeated story, attested to both by Adams and by Lafarge that, as their train sat in a station in Omaha, a journalist asked why Japan? He was told they were in search of Nirvana. To which the quick-minded repost came “Are you not rather late in the season?” The sculpture was not completed until nearly five years later, long after the travelers had returned. LaFarge was preparing for publication his book of “Letters From Japan” while simultaneously serving as intermediary for Adams over the memorial still in the artist’s studio in New York, because Adams was in Washington. LaFarge opened that book with a note of thanks directed at Adams, and also a reminder: they did not in fact find Nirvana.

** Kannon eschews Nirvana, opting to remain a Bodhisattva so as to ease the sufferings of living beings here on earth. That this sculpture in a cemetery in the NE quadrant of Washington DC might also ease suffering seems entirely possible.

PEACE STUDIES

Japanese Lessons: The teachers: Japanese people who are now friends, Japan's major Buddhist "icons," the Japanese government's unusual history of relationships with other nations, Rob's and my families' travels in and relationships with particular places in Japan, my own NE Asia-oriented research and teaching: each has enabled me to learn about peace. Some lessons were readily visible right when we arrived in Japan; others I purposely instigated over the years.

The Syllabus – Matters political

The different components of that curriculum, were each one reduced to the length of a course descriptor, as in a college catalog, might look something like this.

* Japan and the USA 1876 —1892: Elite encounters between strangers
* Kobe enthusiastically hospitable to foreigners for more than a century: 1913 to today
* Tokyo and Yokohama: gateways to the outer world . . . perhaps, but still utterly Japanese

* Japan's national moral education curriculum (including local options): Aiming to shape group ideals about relationships and ethics in all schools
* Japan, China and the two Koreas: Heritage and historical memory management via school field trips whose agendas replicate the official national consensus on relations with neighboring countries

* Japan's international agenda: militarist and aggressively expansionist 1870 —1945, explicitly, purposefully pacifist and commercial ever since
* Japan Pacifist 1945 — present: behind a shield of US troops deployed there to this day

* 1603 - 1854. Japan's Long Peace: Sakoku 鎖国 / 鎖國, "locked country," their name for the Tokugawa-dominated period of relative isolation in international relations
* 1870 — to the present: Japan, China, North Korea and South Korea each failing to develop a strategy for authentic and durable regional interdependence and reconciliation
* 1985 Japan Airlines/Boeing 747 crash, 1995 Kobe earthquake, 2011 Earthquake/Fukushima reactor meltdown: Japan employs unusual strategies in disaster repair and recovery

As you can imagine I could write, and indeed have written page after page on a number of these issues. This one document would expand into dozens of pamphlets were I to cover them all here. Instead, we will move on to "matters spiritual," the information and wisdom about peace embodied by the Kamakura Daibutsu, Kannon and the Adams Memorial. You will see very quickly that I do not consider the political and spiritual neatly divisible.

* * *

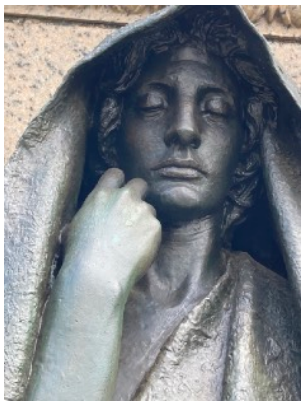
The Syllabus –Matters Spiritual

Encounters with these three objects have illuminated for me core facets of peace and peacemaking. Making no assumption that they would have a comparable impact on others, three values stand out: Forbearance in the context of the Adams Memorial. Mercy as Kannon's work. Equanimity emanating from the Kamakura Buddha.

PEACE STUDIES

Forbearance

Decades of work on peace-making, on ways that wars came to an end, got me to set down a list of attributes, a list of skills and talents, vital to those who seek to make or to stabilize peace. Peaceabilities, I named them, even though the word doesn't appear in the dictionary. (Full list on the back page.) Among the abilities on that list is Forbearance, holding back, not doing. Is that an unconventional standpoint in our USA "Can do" society? It is different, but not far from stoicism. According to Iyeasu Tokugawa, (1543 - 1616), the leader who brought Japan's Senkaku, long years of civil war to an end: "When ambitious desires arise in the heart, recall the days of extremity you have passed through. Forbearance is the root of all quietness and assurance forever."



My claim that forbearance is significant in peacemaking is a result of research of course. That I associate it with the Adams Memorial is more individual, derived in part from Adams himself. The refusal to attach any meaning, any name, any purpose to the monument I take to be a demand, almost, that we and he practice forbearance in its presence. In return we are given the capacity to experience life's moments as each one is happening; "Naturally every detail interested him; every line; every touch of the artist; every change of light and shade; every point of relation . . . he was apt to stop there often to see what the figure had to tell him that was new."

I associate the Memorial with forbearance also as a comment on my own social tendencies. I am the type who should slow down when I make assumptions about motivations and actions, if I make them at all. Before Rock Creek Cemetery, I was burdening my private version of Uncle Henry's life story with labels and judgements that lacked both evidence and compassion. The Memorial seemed to urge: "go slow, rethink, start afresh," the hand and the face a reminder of forbearance to this day.

And in the wider world these days? Forbearance, holding back in times of loss, suffering and struggle, in war and in conflict perhaps offers a chance, an opening for peacemaking where there might seem to be none. Another word for forbearance in war is ceasefire. It continues to be wise to work and hope for a ceasefire in Gaza and likewise in the West Bank. Ceasefire is not the same as peace, nor even for sure a path to peace. Regardless, if weapons go quiet, it is more likely that the myriad cries of agony will actually become audible, bringing out a response.

Mercy

Kannon in Japan and the Global Ethics seminar in New York opened up new research questions that occupy me to this day. What makes a wise response when terrible things have been happening? How should "the world" deal with war crimes and human brutality? What place does apology have in other cultures? Is mercy heroic or weak? These were the questions that arose in my project for the seminar in 2001. Its immediate focus: the agreement to create an International Criminal Court which was then a year away from coming into effect. The enabling "Rome Statute" was signed in 1998; the opening of the

court planned for July 1. 2002. My summer's research was on the ICC and, without my expecting it at all, led me to real doubts about whether a 'World" response to war through law is even tenable.

It was clear back in 1998 in Rome that some nations, most significantly China, India and Saudi Arabia would never give the ICC jurisdiction. As seriously for us today, given the wars underway right now, four other 1998 signatories withdrew: Israel as well as the United States in 2002, Sudan in 2008 and Russia in 2016. That such key nations repudiate the court is clearly critical.

Just as seriously though, this hypothetical "rule of law" for war has no capacity for clemency. There is no setting, no person, no leader with the authority to take responsibility for clemency, by tradition the prerogative of Queens, of Presidents and Governors. No one, I assume, dreams that the Secretary General of the United Nations ought to have that power. Even in our relatively multi-faith world, neither the Pope nor the Dalai Lama would be considered qualified.

And yet, recent history offers tangible evidence for the notion that an offer of mercy can be a vital part of ending conflict. In South Africa in 1994, former enemies Frederick DeKlerk and Nelson Mandela, eschewing vindictiveness, joined in a collaborative, albeit short-term governing coalition. Without it they could not have built any bridges from the violence inherent in Apartheid to a new multiracial governance. In the North of Ireland, whose details were markedly different, peace also required mercy as a pre-requisite. Their Good Friday peace elevated Gerry Adams to an official governing position, ignoring all those years when the governments in Westminster routinely defined his actions as "criminal." In Chile, Pinochet consented to surrender power, but only under a personal amnesty. He lived for years outside the country, unpunished for his government's undoubted crimes. That the South African and the Ulster governments today are as tangled and complicated as any does not diminish the essential role mercy played in their capacity to bring internal violence and injustice to an end. Chile's government ultimately did agree to Pinochet being held accountable, but only after their peace was once again secure.

Mercy takes more than one form. Kannon of the many eyes and ears senses suffering on all sides. Kannon with many different tools offers specific resolutions for different times and different places. In Tuscany, where churches often display paintings or sculptures of Mary, she is commonly not just mother but also an intercessor. Sometimes her cloak is sheltering sinners from divine condemnation. In US criminal justice probation reports do not overturn convictions but can mitigate a harsh sentence. Even medical people on that intangible boundary between recovery and the end of life face choices. The question confronting them and the families involved is often phrased as "which option is the merciful?"

So in today's war-torn world. I am genuinely hesitant when I hear insistent demands for prosecution of war crimes in Ukraine and Russia, equally so as the essential response to the horrifying events on Israeli

and Palestinian land. Specific threats of punishment now loom over leaders in both wars: Putin, Netanyahu and the Hamas leadership for sure; even Zelinsky if there were to be a new catastrophe, for example at a nuclear power plant on Russian soil. Prosecutions looming in the future do not offer any of these men an incentive to find a path to peace.

Equanimity

In Buddhist teachings a Buddha represents many things, the embodiment of equanimity among them.

Bringing this collection of Japanese lessons to an end I found a challenge; I had a hard time trying to find the right words for the Kamakura Buddha. John LaFarge describes it this way: "the figure sits in contemplation of entire nature, the whole open world we feel about us . . . the landscape, the hills, the trees and fields, the sky and its depths, the sunshine playing before the eyes of the seated figure." Equanimity accepts, is open to reality, does not try to escape or evade.

Among my most profound experiences teaching about peace occurred in a course where I teamed up with Jamyang Tsultrim, a geshe-trained Tibetan now living in the USA. To plan our syllabus we walked his meditation paths through the campus woods. We wandered also among words and ideas: where did my political approach and his psychological/spiritual expertise meet? And then we knew. We would teach students how to develop private, mental strategies against their own "over-reactions." Their research papers would address equanimity in contrast to confrontation as strategy and standpoint in either their public or their professional lives. Teaching equanimity, we were teaching peace.

Equanimity however, is also a shifting condition. John LaFarge's "entire nature" is not stuck in one place. Moods and situations are constantly changing as do the seasons and our experiences. The Kamakura Daibutsu, though a static sculpture enables shifting experiences. A tsunami brought the roaring power of the ocean right up to its base. Some days rain comes pouring down. Other days, the crowds press up against it while teaming groups of kids are mustered one after another into straight lines on the stairs for the class photo of their field trip.

Variation is inherent in the Kamakura Buddha, impermanence and interdependence in our encounters with equanimity. The Buddha in Kamakura has its being in the company of visitors, in sunlight and shadow. The Buddha is a reminder that our changing existence need not be a threat to equanimity. Things change. Things end. There is peace in knowing "this too will pass."

Yesterday's world is now behind us. There was a time in the USA, I kept noticing it for decades, when it was easy stir up anti-Japanese reactions, and over-reactions. Newstands, (remember them?) trumpeted **DAY OF INFAMY** every December 7 in commemoration of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Japan's postwar economic recovery, seemingly triumphant in global trade, was selling "too many" cars in the US.

Anxieties flared particularly high in 1989 when SONY was said to be buying "Hollywood" when all it was actually buying was Columbia Pictures.

Those kinds of news stories and feelings seem mostly to have disappeared. I believe I can name the year when it became official US policy that Japan-centered anxieties should be laid to rest. It was 2015, the year President Obama paid an official remembrance visit to Hiroshima, the first ever by an American President. His speech was masterful, touching exactly on the kinds of themes that might enable Japanese people to allow Hiroshima to slide a bit further into the past. Later that year Prime Minister Abe of Japan reciprocated by visiting Pearl Harbor while Japan's Emperor Akihito took the 70th anniversary of the ending of WWII as an opportunity to express remorse about those years and years of war.

There are plenty of places around the world where yesterday's world remains achingly present today, intensely at the moment in Russia/Ukraine, Israel/Palestine and North/South Korea. People from all six of those places of course came together, unarmed, in the very same venues where they opted to compete in the Paris Olympics. Back in their homelands, anguish and hostility both hot and cold, endure.

The Buddha in Kamakura has known war as well as peace. So have all of us. Times do change. The agonies of today will one day end. Rob and I have spent many a joyful day in Japan. Some of the best were in the presence of the Daibutsu, embodiment of equanimity and at the very same time, living proof that today's world will be gone tomorrow.

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My gratitude for the experiences we and our ancestors have been given in Japan is unfathomable.

How lucky we have all been, even Uncle Henry who had to live on after the death of his wife, even my grandmother whose brother died soon after they parted, he in China during World War I. Uncle Henry and Granny came back with new visual sensibilities, and both also with an urge to travel that never faded. Japan and Buddhism gave Cousin Sturgis Bigelow a sense of purpose. I learned for the first time about Kannon and from that developed my own vivid sense of professional purpose. Rob and I made friends for life, friends with whom we exchange expertise in our kitchens and our readiness to eat well in restaurants. Chez Panisse next spring as thanks for years of outings in Tokyo. Sublime and mundane, Japan has shared generously with us all.

PEACE ABILITIES

Craftsmanship,

Good Name, Adaptability,

Courage, Unpretentiousness, Hospitality

Forbearance, Determination, Remembrance,

Generosity Timing