Statement in Support of Black Lives Matter and in Opposition to Racism

Today we find ourselves in a time of deep unrest and pain. There is no justification for the killing of George Floyd, of Ahmaud Arbery, of Breonna Taylor. These and other countless racially motivated misuses of force against Black people are a travesty that must not continue. The pain and anguish of the Black community is resounding throughout the United States and the world, and is touching the hearts of many more people, including our own ministers and members.

Amida Buddha is said to have the “Wisdom of Non-Discrimination.” This is manifested in the Great Compassion that embraces ALL beings. Amida Buddha does not reject anyone based on age, gender, class, race, or any other basis. Although it is difficult for us as unenlightened beings to manifest this Wisdom of Non-Discrimination, this radical equality is an ideal in our tradition. Although it is difficult for us as foolish beings to manifest the all-embracing Great Compassion, this kindness and caring is our model to strive for. However, this equality will never be reached until Black Lives Matter.

Buddhists are not immune from racism. The insidious influence of racism is learned from many sources, usually unconsciously. It is important for us as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists to engage in self-reflection, and to be open to finding this racism within ourselves, as well as within our temples.

With the Buddha Dharma as our guide, let us help with the work to dismantle systemic and institutionalized racism, both within ourselves and our organization and in the community around us.

Harry Gyokyo Bridge
On behalf of the Buddhist Churches of America Ministers Association