



GASSHO

January
2015

Issue No: 01-15

“Hands together in reverence & gratitude”



HAPPY NEW YEAR 2015!



photo by Russell Mukai

Panorama of the church and dormitory includes the Shinran Shonin statue *at right* installed for the 2014 centennial.

MONTH'S THOUGHT



One should respond to hatred with kindness; he should treat little affairs as though they were important. All the world's difficulties arise from slight causes, and all the world's great affairs have risen from small beginnings.

— Lao Tzu, *Tao-Te-Ching*



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

by rev. roland k. tatsuguchi

As our centennial year 2014 now has “seamlessly” connected to this year 2015, I take this humble means to express my and my family's Best Wishes to you and all your loved ones for a HAPPY NEW YEAR!

As I enter my eighty-fifth twilight year of life, I ask for your continued good will and support of our temple's activities and programs to spread the teachings of Shinran Shonin concerning a life of gratitude and humility based on a self-reflective penitence illuminated by Amida's Light of Wisdom.

REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2015

THURS Jan 1st

New Year's Day

10 A.M. English Service
Rev. Roland Tatsuguchi

1st SUN Jan 4th

9 A.M. Eng. Service
Dharma Talk for Children & Adults
Rev. Tatsuguchi

2nd SUN Jan 11th

9 A.M. Eng. Service
Dharma Talk for Children & Adults
Rev. Tatsuguchi

3rd SUN Jan 18th

GOSHOOKI HOONKO

"9 A.M. Eng. Service
Rev Shigeaki Fujitani

4th SUN Jan 25th

MONTHLY FAMILY WORSHIP
for Children & Adults
9 a.m. Eng. Service

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

KARAOKE SINGERS CLUB Mon 7 – 9 p.m.
Mr. Nelson Yoshioka

KARATE CLASSES Tues & Fri 6 – 8 p.m.
Int'l Karate League – Walter Nishioka

KARATE CLASSES Thurs 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Hawaii Shotokan Karate – Alan Sekiguchi

FUJINKAI LADIES' FELLOWSHIP GROUP
Tuesday 9 a.m. – noon

With Deepest Sympathy

Mrs. Fumiko Yonemoto 96 yrs. Dec. 10, 2014

THANK YOU

for YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS !!

2015

Memorial Service Schedule

2014	1 Year	2013	3 Year	2009	7 Year
2003	13 Year	1999	17 Year	1991	25 Year
1983	33 Year	1966	50 Year	1914	100 Year

continues on p. 5

Once again, our best wishes to you and a "Happy New Year" to you all! May your lives be in good health and full of happiness! May you all have a safe year full of joy.

Rev. Roland K. Tatsuguchi
Resident minister

MY HOW TIME FLIES!

by rev. roland k. tatsuguchi

Our centennial year 2014 now is history. We are now living in the year 2015 as time without missing a step keeps seamlessly marching onward! As I look back and recall especially those years before WWII, I often wonder where all those yesteryears of my idyllic childhood and carefree adolescence have gone and disappeared to. They have become but memories, nothing more than faded recollections, some painful, others full of unforgettable joy.

Then, upon deeper self reflection and contemplation, they turn into thoughts of what should have been, could have been, and never should have been. As one progresses into the twilight years of one's life, all the more do one's failings, imperfections and shortcomings come to the fore in one's deepest consciousness, or what is one's conscience. For it is there where one's failings are illuminated by the Dharma's Wisdom's Light that have been embraced in its all-embracing Life of Compassion that is without judgments, condemnations or rejections. Under their brilliance and warmth all bitterness and misgivings are transformed into pure gratitude and penitence full of joy.

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WORDS OF SHINRAN

Dharmakaya-as-suchness (Oneness) has neither color nor form; thus, the mind cannot grasp it nor words describe it. From this Oneness was manifested form, called dharmakaya-as-compassion. Taking this form, the Buddha claimed his name as Bhikshu (Monk) Dharmakara and established the forty-eight great Vows that surpass conceptual understanding. *Notes on the "Essentials of Faith Alone."* p. 43.

For it is as Shinran Shonin said of himself in his "awakening of faith":

"... in this foolish being filled with blind passion, living in this impermanent world of burning house, all things are empty and vain; therefore, untrue. ..."

Whereupon he realized that this very "awareness" and "awakening" on his part was possible because:

"Only the nembutsu is true, real, and sincere." Taitetsu Unno. *Tannisho*. Epilogue. p. 36.

For it was in that very moment that he entrusted himself and took refuge in Amida Buddha that he "awoke" to the reality that Amida Buddha

"... grasps us never to abandon, ... regardless of whether we commit evils for incomprehensible reasons, and even end our lives without saying the nembutsu, And when we spontaneously say the nembutsu our trust in Amida becomes stronger and our gratitude to Tathagata deepens as we approach the moment of supreme enlightenment. ..." Unno, loc. cit. XIV. p. 27.

Such an "awakening" also "awakens" one to the deeper significance of the Four Noble Truths,

especially the last of which is the Noble Eightfold Path. If the Eightfold Path is followed through, the Path of Right Contemplation brings one to one's "awakening of true and real faith" (*shinjin*) wherein one's Ultimate Enlightenment attained and one's Ultimate Buddhahood is assured. For to Right Contemplation ultimately means trusting and taking refuge in Amida Buddha's powers of Wisdom and virtues of Compassion that decisively settle one's attainment of Buddhahood. For Wisdom's Light lays bare and naked one's transgressions and desecrations. Compassion's Life embraces them all to transform them into a life of penitence full of joy and gratitude. Once again, this like all icebergs melting in the ocean becoming its very waters and currents.

Concerning the passing things of this world Sakyamuni Buddha said: "All things are transient" (*sarva dhamma annica*). So he prescribed a life of "no-self" (*anatman*) which is to live one's life illuminated by the Truth of Selflessness which is to be embraced by its Reality of Togetherness, or what is to begin living one's life without traces of one's overbearing ego full of self assertions, self justifications and self vanities that keep affecting things and people in a negative way that scalds and therefore scars the good one may do.

Like all Buddhists, Shinran Shonin fundamentally agreed with Sakyamuni Buddha that "Every thought, word and deed leaves an indelible trace or karmic effects and affects that are either harmful, helpful or neutral." Though the consequences of what we have thought, said and done cannot be reversed, we can learn from our past mistakes by not repeating them again and again like a person addicted, obsessed or indoctrinated. Like Sakyamuni Buddha, Shinran Shonin also realized that the karmic consequences of one's past thoughts, words and deeds cannot be escaped. This is because their effects keep affecting our ongoing thoughts, words, responses and reactions. For example, the invention of the atom bomb to this day has put all mankind under the dark clouds of self-extinction. And this now will be the reality as humankind continues.

Sakyamuni Buddha speaking to the Brahmins of his time put it this way:

"Short is the life of human beings, O Brahmins, limited and brief, it is full of suffering, full of tribulation. Thus one should wisely understand. One should do good and live a pure life; for none who is born can escape death."

Shinran Shonin agreed when he said:

"It is indeed sorrowful to give way to impulses with the excuse that one is by nature possessed of blind passion — excusing acts that should not be committed, words that should not be said, and thoughts that should not be harbored — and to say that one may follow one's desires in any way whatsoever...." SBT-Series. Letters of Shinran. No. 20. p. 61.

Clearly, Shin Buddhist teachings are not, as some intellectuals and academics say, an observance of ethnic religion by Japanese immigrants who perpetuated Japanese Buddhism based mainly on funeral and memorial services, characterized by Japanese traditions, festivals and observances.

When a universal religious principle or spiritual truth becomes appropriated by a given racial group, it becomes ethnicized by that people's likes, dislikes, hopes, fears and aspirations and also by their folkways and mores. When Buddhists, however, refer to the Dharma Truth of Selflessness and its Reality of Togetherness they see them as being timeless and all sustaining, as truths transcending race, culture and creeds. They do not see the principles of causation, interdependence and karma to be peculiar or unique to any one person, race, culture or religion. For the Dharma itself, being universal, all pervading and all permeating cannot be appropriated and monopolized by any one person, race, culture, religion, special geographical location or point in historical time. The Buddha Dharma is not a cult, sect or denomination for it has no shape, form or color.

On this point, the Dharma in terms of spatial relationships means that all things living and non-living are seamless and inseparable, one from all others whether they are animate or inanimate. In terms of time, the Dharma means that the past, present and future also are seamless and inseparable one from the other two. The past and future are forever in the ongoing present. Karma then comes to mean that one should learn from one's past mistakes by making the necessary corrections in one's ongoing present life to ensure a better future for all concerned, especially for those who are yet to be born and yet to live in an ever unfolding future. This then is the significance of living one's life so as to "leave no trace" of one's pride and vanity in one's thoughts, words or deeds that blemish one's efforts of doing good and avoiding evil.

continued on p. 6

Donations

continued from p. 2

SHINRAN'S WASAN

Since this Light's illumination
is constant and continuous,
It is called and named:
"Buddha of Ceaseless Light!"
Since it is "a Light that is heard,"
it is "Buddha's Mind" always
Enabling us without fail
to be reborn!

Jodo Wasan No. 12
rkt trans.

General Membership Meeting & New Year's Party

Sunday, Feb. 15, 2015
10:30 A.M.

Lunch \$5.00 each person
80 yrs-up and 12 yrs-younger are free!

BUDDHIST VERSE OR PASSAGE

... while Essence of Mind in all alike is of one pure sameness, that because of the fumigating power of Ignorance it has become differently defiled and therefore manifests its defilement in different ways and different degrees, so that their number is incalculable. So Great is the variety of their personalities, their experiences, hindrances and suffering that only Buddha can comprehend them and embrace them all in perfect compassion. —The *Mahayana Shraddhotpada Shastra* (The Awakening of Faith)

Excerpts From BDK's "THE TEACHINGS OF BUDDHA" (Japanese-English Edition)

Enlightenment exists solely because of delusion and ignorance; if they disappear so will Enlightenment. And the opposite is true also. There is no Enlightenment apart from delusion and ignorance; no delusion and ignorance apart from Enlightenment. (p. 116)

As long as people desire Enlightenment and grasp at it, it means that delusion is still with them; therefore, those who are following the way to Enlightenment must not grasp at it, and if they reach Enlightenment they must not linger in it. (p. 118)

People cherish the distinction between purity and impurity; but in the nature of things, there is no such distinction, except as it rises from false and absurd images in their mind.

In like manner: people make a distinction between good and evil; but good and evil do not exist separately. Those who are following the path to Enlightenment recognize no such duality, and it leads them to neither praise the good and condemn evil, nor despise the good and condone the evil. (p. 122)

Shinshu Kyokai Mission

1631 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96826

skm@ShinshuKyokai.org
www.ShinshuKyokai.org

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Water is round in a round receptacle and square in a square one but water itself has no particular shape. People often forget this fact. (p. 138)

QUESTION & ANSWER KORNER

QUESTION: What does *esho funi* mean?

ANSWER: The term translates "not two-ness" meaning "inseparable," "interdependent" and "linked together." Buddhism sees all things and forms of life throughout the universe as being inseparable and dependent one upon all others. Therefore *esho* means one thing or form of life is supported by other things and forms of life. *Funi* means "two and yet not two." At the most fundamental level of life this means there is no separation between ourselves, environment and the universe that comprises a myriad of things and life forms in an inseparable, seamless relationship that is beyond human calculations and conceptions.