



# GASSHO

*“Hands together  
in reverence & gratitude”*

**December 2013**

Issue: 12-13



*Season's Greetings*

Dedication of  
the *judo-ba*  
annex temple  
and  
*tsukizome*  
ceremony  
(Katsumi  
Kaneshige)

## NEW YEAR'S EVE MESSAGE

by  
rev. roland k. tatsuguchi

As the year 2013 is coming to its end the New Year 2014 is rapidly rolling in. Shinshu Kyokai Mission then will have entered its centennial year. Members are reminded that the beginnings of "Shinshu Kiyokai" began when a mere handful informally gathered in January 1914 to hold their first outdoor religious service under the shade of a lichee tree on the lawn of a Mr. Wakamatsu Dote's home on Ahana Lane, an offshoot of Aloha Lane. Both lanes then were unpaved dirt lanes.

Hawaii became a Trust Territory of the United States in 1898. Vast tracts of land then came under the ownership of the "Big Five" families comprised of missionary descendants and American

## MONTH'S THOUGHT

"Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us." —Hal Borland

and European businessmen. The "Big Five" families also were in control of Hawaii's industries and political institutions. Therefore, their influence was felt also in its social and cultural life. The first *Issei* who came as contract laborers were trying to escape the economic and social turmoil of the Meiji Era back in Japan because it had become an industrial and imperial nation based on hierarchical

# REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **SERVICES FOR DECEMBER 2013**

### **1st SUN Dec 1st**

#### **Shinshu Kyokai's BODHI DAY SERVICE**

9 A.M. English Service:  
"SAKYAMUNI and AMIDA"

### **2nd SUN Dec 8th**

SKM Services Cancelled  
Please Attend  
**HBC BODHI DAY SERVICE**

### **3rd SUN Dec 15th**

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

### **4th SUN Dec 22nd**

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

### **5th SUN Dec 29th**

MONTHLY FAMILY WORSHIP  
9 A.M. Eng. Service  
"Dharma Talk"  
Rev. Tatsuguchi

### **TUESDAY NIGHT DEC 31st**

**New Year's Eve Service**  
10 P.M. English Service

### **WED. MORNING Jan 1st, 2014**

**New Year's Day Service**  
10 A.M. English Service

## **WEEKLY ACTIVITIES**

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

**KARATE CLASSES** Tues & Fri 6 - 8 p.m.  
Shihan - Walter Nishioka

**FUJINKAI LADIES' FELLOWSHIP GROUP**  
Wed 9 a.m. - noon

## **THANK YOU**

*for YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS !!*

### **Donations**

\$300.00  
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Viki Nakamoto

### **Bon Service 2013**

\$50.00  
Matsue and Patrick Fujioka

### **Bon Dance 2013**

\$10.00  
Dorothy Aoki, Joe Doi, Matsue Fujioka, Iris Gardner, Ms. Hayashi, in memory of Alexander PK Ing Sr., Warren Itamura, Robert Kinjo & Marian Fujimoto, Matsuko Kobayashi, Betty Misaki, Sarah Miyasaki, Harriet Muramoto, Amy Murata, Setsu Murata, Toshie Murata, Mr. Nagata, Toshiharu Nakao, Walter Nishioka, Edwin Nomura, Herbert Ogasawara, Mildred Okayama,

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## **2013 Memorial Service Schedule**

2012	1 Year	2011	3 Year	2007	7 Year
2001	13 Year	1997	17 Year	1989	25 Year
1981	33 Year	1964	50 Year	1914	100 Year

relationships. They huddled themselves in plantation camp houses segregated by ethnicity. Other *Issei* arriving later settled in ethnic neighborhoods bound by their common language, cultural traditions, prefectural associations.

Then on April 23, 1914, twenty-five members in the lower "Aloha Lane" neighborhood met at a Seisuke Yamashita's home in Liliha to establish "Shinshu Kiyokai" as a formal nonprofit religious organization with a charter and duly elected officers. Seven months later, in November of 1914, a temple annex to the back of the Shun-yo-kan Judo Hall at the dead end of Aloha Lane was built just about where the Pagoda Hotel and Restaurant now is on the mauka Ewa-side of the intersection of Rycroft and Kaheka streets. Lower Aloha Lane then ended there. This temple annex was used for religious services between 1914 and 1916.

Then, "Shinshu Kiyokai" was relocated to upper Aloha Lane between King and Young streets to become a more permanent independent Jodoshinshu Temple. The relocation to 1014-1020 Aloha Lane on the Ewa-side of the lane was made in three stages. Then when my father, Rev. Goki Tatsuguchi, arrived in 1927 as the sixth minister, the home next door on the mauka side was purchased and renovated into a parsonage in anticipation of my mother's arrival a year later. My father and mother were the first husband and wife team to serve the Shinshu Kyokai congregation. The first four ministers after their short stays returned to their families in Japan. Only my uncle, Rev. Zenkai Tatsuguchi, the fifth minister, being a bachelor, remained to be joined later by my father, the sixth minister. So, that makes my wife and I the second husband and wife team to serve Shinshu Kyokai. I am the seventh minister to serve Shinshu Kyokai.

Then, on December 7, 1941, Japan attacked

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## WORDS OF SHINRAN

"... It is the working of blind passions which suppresses the heart that would rejoice and prevents its fullest expression. All this the Buddha knew and called us foolish beings filled with blind passions, thus, when we realize that the compassionate Vow of Other Power is for beings like ourselves, the Vow becomes even more reliable and dependable." T. Unno. *Tannisho*. IX. p. 14.

Pearl Harbor and suddenly World War II erupted. It was all chaos in Hawaii. Martial law was declared immediately. By evening, all the Buddhist ministers, Shinto priests and Christian ministers who were Japanese aliens were arrested as potential saboteurs. They were temporarily incarcerated on Sand Island and finally shipped off to the mainland to be incarcerated in various internment camps. So too were all prominent influential *Issei* Japanese community leaders of influence. They were already on the FBI list well before the outbreak of W.W.II.

On the continental United States, by contrast, all Japanese, regardless of whether they were *Issei* or *Nisei*, were herded into internment camps enclosed by barbed wire fences with armed guards on the ground and in the towers watching over their every movement. So it becomes interesting to note that some five to six weeks even before Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Military were already recruiting Japanese speaking *Nisei* as MIAs (military intelligence agents). Especially *kibei-Nisei* who were knowledgeable in Japanese recruited and trained in a secretive Japanese language program in San Francisco in anticipating a war with Japan that was seen as imminent.

When my father finally returned to Honolulu, the long arduous process of reorganizing, relocating and rebuilding Shinshu Kyokai began. After negotiating a bank loan and holding endless fundraisers, the the property on 1631 So. Beretania Street was purchased. On June 3, 1951, a ground breaking ceremony to begin building was held. The temple was finally constructed on August 26, 1951. However, the social hall was still unfinished though it was usable. The temple sanctuary and installation of the upper altars were completed, but the social

hall and kitchen areas below were still incomplete. The temple dedication, however, was held from February 9 and 10 in 1952. For many years the outer temple remained unpainted and was the color of gray concrete.

Then in 1961, despite the difficulties of meeting overwhelming monthly mortgage payments, another bank loan was negotiated to begin constructing the Shinshu Kyokai Student Dormitory. The dormitory was completed in 1961. Its dedication and celebration was held in June of 1961. Its tenth anniversary celebration was held in December of 1971. Then Shinshu Kyokai's 70th anniversary was held in October of 1994. My father passed away on August 1, 1978. My mother passed some ten years later on October 27, 1988. These years of hardship and sacrifice before, during and after WWII up to their passing are now but mere faded memories.

Today, substantial problems confront all our Buddhist temples established by immigrant *Issei* during the plantation era and the Great Depression Years. The first *Issei* were marginalized because they were non-English-speaking immigrants who worshipped idols and graven images. They were seen as heathens of an inferior culture. The *Issei* that now have passed on into the Great Unknown Beyond! The *Nisei* in their twilight years are now quickly following in their footsteps. The *Sansei* and *Yonsei* have become completely Americanized and assimilated.

Meanwhile, the *Gosei* are faced with an uncertain future by a technological society. The values, language, traditions and beliefs of their *Issei* forefathers are no longer thought to be viable. One's practical knowledge and technical skills are more important. For these reasons the dimensions of sacredness and spirituality of yesteryear have become obfuscated by utility values. It seems that the matters of the mind and body (psycho-physical concerns) in terms of one's physical well-being and prosperity have taken precedence over the matters of one's heart and spirit, or what the Japanese refer to as "the world of *kokoro*." It is where one's inner calm, serenity and peace reign supreme over erotic and sensual matters without nullifying or denying their underlying sensate realities.

When the Japanese speak of *kokoro*, they imply an "inseparability," "interdependency" and "interconnectedness" between what is a

person's mind-body-heart complex constantly being permeated by an all-embracing spiritual consciousness that embraces all non-living and living things. Therefore, the sense of *kokoro* entails an aesthetic sense of wholeness rather than an intellect that fragments the things of environment as this or that something to be analyzed, classified then manipulated. Such a process of dissecting things apart is valued more than one's inductive reasonings and spiritual inspirations that puts them back together. This is like seeing only the nose or tail of an elephant and not seeing the elephant itself.

Therefore, for my New Year's Eve Message I would like to present some select words of Sakaymuni Buddha and Shinran Shonin to guide your *kokoro* for the year 2014 as follows.

### Sakyamuni Buddha's Words of Significance

In the *Dhammapada* ("twin sayings"), Sakyamuni Buddha is recorded as having said:

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the wagon."

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him."

*The Dhammapada*. p.3. Irving Babbitt (trans).

Clearly these words are not commandments of an omnipotent God whose anger can be easily aroused. In fact, these verses in tandem underlie the importance of the first two paths of the Noble Eightfold Path as follows: Right Knowing (or true knowledge) and Right Thinking (pure intentions).

Therefore concerning one's thoughts and feelings Buddha said:

"They who imagine in untruth, and see untruth in truth, never arrive at truth, but follow vain desires.

"They who know truth in truth and untruth

in untruth, arrive at truth and follow true desires." Babbit. *loc. cit.*, p. 4.

These words of Sakyamuni Buddha are based on the Dharma's Truth of Selflessness and its Actuality of Togetherness that are universal verities as governed by the orderly and uniform laws of causality, conditionality, interdependency, inseparability and karma. These verities apply to all things and forms of life.

For these reasons, as I often repeat, the Dharma's Truth of Selflessness and its Actuality of All-embracing Togetherness are not the monopoly of any one man, race, creed, ideology, religion, specific geographical site or specified point in historical time.

Therefore, the goal for a Buddhist is "to keep herself or himself free from prejudice, superstition, and self delusions, and to seek to understand the true nature of life," and thereby, "to turn away from the evils of the world and direct one's mind toward righteousness" by "refraining from pointless and harmful talk and by speaking kindly," and "to see that one's deeds are peaceable, benevolent, compassionate and pure," which is to live the eightfold path daily." This also means that a person needs to "earn her or his living in such a way as to entail no hurtful or harmful consequences."

These goals of Buddhism are clearly supported by the truth of the following twin verses:

"All men tremble at punishment, all men fear death, remembering that thou art like unto them, do not strike or slay.

"All men tremble at punishment, all men love life; remembering that thou art like unto them, do not strike or slay."

"He who, seeking his own happiness, injures or kills beings who long for happiness, will not find happiness after death.

"He who, seeking his own happiness, does not injure or kill beings who also long for happiness, will find happiness after death."

"Do not speak harshly to anybody; those who are spoken to will answer in the same way. Angry speech breeds trouble, thou will receive blows for blows.

"If like a shattered gong, thou speakest not, then thou hast reached Nirvana,

## SHINRAN'S WASAN

The ninety-five heresies\*  
but only defy and defile  
The Buddha Path to Oneness!  
Only by attaining the Bodhi-Mind  
are those in this "burning house"  
of natural necessity benefited  
by True Light and Real Life!

*Shozomatsu Wasan* No. 12. p. 12.

rkt-trans.

\*teachings denying causation and karma.

contention is not found in thee."

Babbit. *loc. cit.* p. 22.

These words of Sakyamuni once again clearly indicate that the minimal Five Precepts are also admonitions to refrain from killing, stealing, lying, sexual improprieties and harmful foods and drinks because the karmic consequences of doing otherwise are hurtful and harmful. They are not based on a fear of some omnipotent deity's wrathful or angry punishments. The Japanese word "bachi" conveys such a fear of some god's or goddess's, demon's or evil spirit's punishments.

### Words of Shinran to Live By

The significance of Shinran Shonin's words are based on an awakening of "true and real faith" (*shinjin*). Such an awakening that transforms one's ingratitude into gratitude is appreciated by "reading" and re-"reading" the following Letter written by Shinran at the age of 83 as follows:

"... **self power** is the effort to attain birth, whether by invoking the names of Buddhas other than Amida and practicing good acts other than the nembutsu ... endeavoring to make yourself worthy through amending the confusion in your acts, words and thoughts, confident of your own and guided by your own calculation. **Other Power** is the entrusting of yourself to the 18th among Amida Tathagata's Vows. The **Primal Vow** of birth through **nembutsu** which Amida Buddha from among all other practices. Since this the the Vow of Tathagata, Honen said, 'In Other Power, no selfworking is true working.' Other Power is **entrusting**

ourselves to the Primal Vow and our birth becoming firmly settled; hence it is altogether without selfworking. Thus, on the one hand, you should not be anxious that Tathagata will not receive you because you do wrong. A **foolish being** is by nature possessed of blind passions so you must recognize yourself as a being of karmic evil. On the other hand, you should not think that you deserve to attain birth because you are good. You cannot be born into the true and real Buddha Land through such self-power calculation. I have been taught that with a shinjin of self power, a person can attain birth only in the **land of indolence**, the **borderland**, the **womb of the Buddha Land**, or the **castle of doubt**." SBT-Series. *Letters of Shinran*. No. 2. pp. 22, 23.

Though these words of Shinran are involved and difficult to grasp, they flesh out the significance of what is the inseparability and interconnectedness between hopelessly karma riddled persons from Amida Buddha who has never or will ever abandon them until the last one of them finally attains Buddhahood.

Such then is the twofold significance of true and real faith in which Amida and a person become inseparable. Such a faith is based on the principles: "two and yet one" and "one and yet two," meaning that the world of Buddhas and the world of sentient beings, though distinctly two in essence are paradoxically inseparable and of one reality. In other words sentient beings are like "icebergs" melting in the boundless ocean constantly becoming its very waters and free flowing currents by power of sunlight and virtue of moonlight. This is the meaning of being reborn into the Pure Land of Inconceivable Light and Immeasurable Life.

Icebergs melting in the ocean water also can be likened to a fetus developing in the darkness of its mother's womb destined to be become a complete, intact human baby with a conscience capable of making choices and decisions. This is the significance of the term "Tathagata-garbha," or the Womb of the Tathagata, in which all sentient beings and things are being sustained and nurtured by Amida Buddha all destined for final Buddhahood.

For this reason Shinran said,

"The depth of the Buddha's benevolence is

such that even with birth in the land of indolence, the borderland, the castle of doubt or the place of womb which is brought about only through the compassion revealed in Amida's 19th and 20th Vows, we meet with a happiness that surpasses understanding. Thus, the depth of the Buddha's compassion is without bounds. But, how much more should we realize the benevolence of the Buddha with birth into the true and real land and attainment of the enlightenment of the supreme nirvana. *Ibid.*, bold and underlining for emphasis.

To be born in the border lands of indolence is to be still enclosed in the darkness of one's assumptions and presumptions. This state of being also has been likened to a pupae in its chrysalis yet to break out to soar freely in the open skies above as a magnificent butterfly. This is like being at the door of one's home and yet remaining in the yard.

So, if we are to be so transformed and liberated by Amida Buddha are we then to squander our lives away in excessiveness and wastefulness based on the mistaken assumption that since Amida has especially vowed to save especially karma riddled persons it is okay to say or do whatever we want since we're going to be saved anyway?

The answer of course is an emphatic no!

This is why we should also carefully read and re-read the following words of Shinran:

"If a person, justifying himself by saying he is a foolish being, can do anything he wants, then is he also to steal or to murder? Even the person who has been inclined to steal naturally undergoes a change of heart if he comes to say the nembutsu aspiring for the Buddha Land. Yet people who show no such sign are being told that it is permissible to do wrong; this should never occur under any circumstance.

Nevertheless, said Shinran, because when human beings become:

"Maddened beyond control by blind passion, we do things we should not and say things we should not and think things we should not. But if a person is deceitful in his

relations with others doing what he should not and saying what he should not because he thinks it will not hinder his birth, then it is not an instance of being maddened by passion. Since he purposely does these things, they are simple things which should never have been done. ...

This is why, said Shinran,

"... One must seek to cast off the evil of this world and to cease doing wretched deeds. This is what it means to reject the world and to live the nembutsu. ... we should be careful to keep our distance from those people who are given to evil. When has it been said that one should act in accordance with one mind and heart which are evil. ..."  
SBT-Series. *Letters of Shinran*. No. 16. pp. 51-53.

These words of Shinran clearly are admonishments to refrain from the natural tendency to shamelessly and appallingly indulge in our instinctual proclivities and whimsical self vanities.

Therefore, in another Letter, Shinran said:

"... the person who purposely thinks and does what he should not, saying that is permissible because of the Buddha's Wondrous Vow to save the foolish being, does not truly desire to reject the world, nor does he consciously feel that he himself is a being of karmic evil. ..."  
*Op. cit.* Letter No. 19. p. 57.

Therefore, allow me to conclude with the following words of Shinran's lament,

"... 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 to any

*GASSHO continues on p. 8*

*continued from p. 2*

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way whatever. It is like offering more wine before the person has become sober or urging him to take even more poison before the poison has abated. ..." *Loc. cit.*, No. 20 p. 61.

**Shinshu Kyokai Mission**  
1631 South Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96826  
email: skm@flex.com  
www.ShinshuKyokai.org

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As the year 2013 ends and the year 2014 begins without missing a "tick" or "tock," it is hoped that these words of Sakyamuni and Shinran as quoted above will always be in your total person and consciousness, or *kokoro*. Hoping that the New Year 2014, which is our centennial year, will bring better things for your family and our temple. Namoh-amida-butsu.

*Return Service Requested*

## **BUDDHIST STORY OR PASSAGE**

"Impermanent are all component things,  
They arise and cease, that is their nature;  
They come into being and pass away,  
Release from them is bliss supreme."

*Maha-Parinibbana Sutta (DN 16)[1]*

## **QUESTION & ANSWER KORNER**

**QUESTION:** Why did Shinran refer to this world as an "impermanent world of burning house" in which "all things are empty and vain?"

**ANSWER:** Because the facts of impermanence show that all things are constantly arising and subsiding like the waves of the ocean. Therefore, to understand the facts of constant change and process is to become a person fully aware that life is full of suffering. In so becoming aware, one then will be lead to realize that there is a suitable remedy for each problem to be found in human existence. That there is always a way of liberation is to be found by applying the Noble Four Truths to one's life. In Jodoshinshu, this happens when one entrusts one's karma riddled self to Amida Buddha's Great Vow by taking refuge in the powers of her Wisdom and virtues of Compassion!

According to the teachings of the Buddha, living one's life involves a series of different moments much like the rippling waters of a river continuously flowing. The waters flowing appear to be the same and unchanged. However, the river's waters are constantly flowing by and returning to

the sea to become its very waters from where they first came. Each life is like a dewdrop that becomes a raindrop falling and returning to the ocean to become its very waters.

So too is a newborn baby physically not the teenager it becomes who then becomes the aged person about to exit this life in her or his final moments.

What it is to be living and alive therefore, is to be ever changing from moment to moment according to the effects of one's past thoughts, intentions, words and actions. These changes in turn effect and affect one's future thoughts, words and actions that keep becoming the reality of one's future and karmic history. Each life comes from lives before it to connect with lives yet to be born.

Because an ordinary mind perceives things and life to be unchanging and staying the same, it lives in the darkness of its own self ignorance. But in truth everything is constantly changing within the Boundless Dharma's Truth of Selflessness and its All-embracing Togetherness as governed by the orderly and uniform laws of causality, conditionality, interdependency, inseparability and karma.