



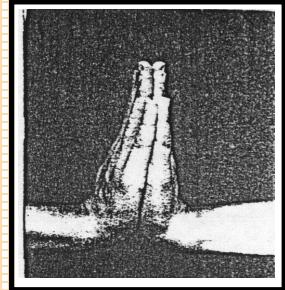
GASSHō

January

2016

Issue No: 01-16

"Hands together in reverence & gratitude"



Happy
New Year!



courtesy PDPhoto.org

All ordinary mortal beings, good or evil, upon hearing, trusting and taking refuge
In the Tathagata Amida's Vow of Compassion
Become beings of superior understanding, called lotuses blooming in a swamp.
Shoshinge Ge lines 36-40, a translation.

REVEREND'S MESSAGE FOR THE YEAR 2016

by rev. roland k. tatsuguchi

Once again in a blink of an eye the year 2015 has become the year 2016. Hoping that you all had an enjoyable holiday season, Sumiko and I wish you a happy, prosperous, and most importantly, a meaningful 2016. May we continue to depend on your support and generosity in our temple's projects and activities.

Chinese Astrology has a 5,000 year history and perhaps even more. The answers and predictions provided by Chinese zodiacs have proven to be accurate since they entail both positive (*yang* — masculine) and negative (*yin*

MONTH'S THOUGHT



"The environment can absorb a man's organic wastes, and even turn them to good use; and as to his psychic pollution, what difference do fantasies make? ... The danger arises when a man's psychic excretions are given material form — when his projections appear as physical objects."

—Philip Slater. *Earthwalk*. p. 11.



— feminine) elements and energies. Chinese horoscopes are also based more on earthly elements rather than on celestial ones.

REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVICES FOR JANUARY 2016

FRIDAY Jan 1st

NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE

10 A.M. English Service

1st SUN Jan 3rd

9 A.M. Eng. Service

Dharma Talk for Children & Adults
Rev. Roland Tatsuguchi

2ND SUN Jan 10th

GOSHOOKI HOONKO

9 A.M. English Service

Speaker:

Rev. Sandra Hiramatsu

3RD SUN Jan 17th

9 A.M. Eng. Service

Dharma Talk for Children & Adults
Rev. Tatsuguchi

4TH SUN Jan 24th

9 A.M. Eng. Service

Dharma Talk for Children & Adults
Rev. Tatsuguchi

5TH SUN Jan 31st

MONTHLY FAMILY WORSHIP

9 A.M. Service for Children & Adults
Rev. Tatsuguchi

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

EXERCISE CLASSES Wed 5 – 8 p.m.
Natural Healing Research Foundation

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

With Deepest Sympathy

Mr. Saburo Fujimoto 90 yrs. Nov 28, 2015

Mrs. Edith Kuwana 103 yrs. Dec 3, 2015

Mrs. Harumi Char 105 yrs. Dec. 10, 2015

SHINSHU KYOKAI MISSION GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING DONATIONS

2016 Memorial Service Schedule

2015	1 Year	2014	3 Year	2010	7 Year
2004	13 Year	2000	17 Year	1992	25 Year
1984	33 Year	1967	50 Year	1915	100 Year

continues on p. 5

According to the Chinese Zodiac, 2016 is the year of the Fire Monkey. In the traditional Chinese mind, a monkey is seen as a hyper-active primate, quite intelligent and strong willed. He represents a person whose mind is free of inhibitions and unfettered by guilt. Monkey-type persons exhibit problem-solving abilities. What is possible, they do right away; what is impossible takes a little longer.

In the Chinese horoscope, monkeys, much like human beings, are portrayed as having a shadowy side. Should you patiently study monkeys as primatologists do, you will see that their affections can suddenly turn into wrath and even deadly violence. (Note: Chimpanzees have been documented to form a pack to hunt down other monkeys and cannibalize them, even of their own kind who are seen as their rivals.)

A close scrutiny of the other animals of the Chinese Zodiac reveals that they all also have been attributed with positive and negative human characteristics. Unlike human beings, monkeys are unfettered by a guilty conscience. What this means is that they are not aware and could care less about the long term consequences of their actions (karma) for they are unable to visualize their indebtedness to their deceased ancestors. Nor are they capable of envisioning their obligations to their progeny who are yet to be born and yet to live in the ever unfolding future.

Have you ever seen the three monkeys at Toshogu Shrine in Nikko carved by Hidari Jingoro. One is covering his eyes (see no evil), the second covering his ears (hear no evil), and the third covering his mouth (speak no evil).

GASSHO is the Monthly Newsletter of
SHINSHU KYOKAI MISSION of HAWAII
1631 S. Beretania Street, Honolulu, Hawaii,
96826-1105. Temple 973-0150.
Editor: Rev. R.K. Tatsuguchi.
Circulation: SKM Staff.

PUBLICATION DATE: December 26, 2015

WORDS OF SHINRAN

"... all beings have been fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, in the timeless process of birth-and-death...."

T. Unno. *Tannisho*. V. p. 10.

Obviously Hidari Jingoro was influenced by the first six paths of the Noble Eightfold Path admonishing right knowing, thinking, speaking, doing, earning of money and persevering. Though monkeys appear in Buddhist folklore and folktales, they are commonly regarded as symbolizing the opposite virtues of these three monkeys.

Shinran Shonin (1173-1263) was born before and lived during the Kamakura Era (1185-1333). This period coincided with the Higher Middle Ages (1000-1500) in Europe. The mass of commoners and peasantry then in Europe and the world over were illiterate and uncultured. Nevertheless, human beings in whatever period of history basically had the same physical and psychological needs. They have to eat, sleep, move about, procreate and go to the toilet. This fact over the passing generations over millennia has not changed.

Today, since wealth and power keeps concentrating in the hands of a few while little is being done to boost the incomes and lives of the poor, affordable housing has become unavailable to some 47 million people in the U.S. living in poverty. Many are becoming homeless.

This is why long ago, Philip Slater noted:

"No one amasses a grossly disproportionate share of wealth or power as a reward for intrinsic virtues. All great fortunes were initially stolen from the people directly or indirectly." *Earthwalk* (1974) p. 96.

As the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, nowhere has the problem of homelessness become more evident such as in the larger

mega cities. Our Honolulu is one of them.

In times of misfortune, conflict and natural disasters, human beings turn to supernatural sources for miraculous cures and divine intervention.

That this also was the case in the times of Shinran Shonin is indicated by his following Wasan (religious poem):

The five defilements are signs
of this age indicating that
People of the Way (monks)
or the world (laymen),
Though outwardly professing
to be Buddhists,
Inwardly believe in
other ways and practices!

Shozomatsu Wasan No. 100
rkt translation

The flourishing of the “five defilements” in our times of post-modernity are indicated mainly by such phenomena as rising temperatures and ocean waters as well as dramatic changes in climate, pollution of the air, toxification of the earth’s soil, especially endless wars in which weapons of mass destruction are becoming more sophisticated and lethal. “Other ways” refers to beliefs, convictions, ideologies, language and practices that defy causal principles, especially those that ignore the karmic consequences of a person’s thoughts, words and actions.

Shinran Shonin lamented and was saddened that people claiming to follow the way of O-nembutsu were subscribing to superstitions and dubious religious practices.

This is indicated by his Wasan as follows:

Lamentable is it
that people of the Way choose
worldly ways in
Determining ‘good luck days’
and ‘propitious times,’
They supplicate celestial divinities
and terrestrial deities.
They are enthralled by

divinations and séances
thought to be magical
and miraculous!”

Shozomatsu Wasan No. 101
rkt translation

Is this not the case with many local born Buddhists who seek out some questionable spiritualist, psychic, psychologist or newly established religion whose proponents claim to do away with their illnesses, fears and bad karma by telling them what they want to hear or through some kind of magical process supposedly scientific?

Another sign of decadence is the utter disregard for things sacred and spiritual. Scholars, researchers and specialists today continue to publish articles that fuel doubts about traditional beliefs and institutionalized religions as science, physics, technology and medicine keep advancing. Their articles especially tell of why in the last sixty years there has been a steady decline in our youth’s affiliation in old time religions and their clerics because of the lack of trust in them.

Ever since the 1960s the questioning of religious authority has become intense. Especially has this been so ever since the exposures of sex scandals and abuse not only by clerics but also by politicians in positions of power. The number of people with no religious affiliation is growing. Fewer people say organized religion is an important necessary part of their lives. Today in Japan where 90 percent of the people are religious, the only time they go to a temple or a shrine is on New Year’s Eve and Day.

Even in Shinran’s times, novice Buddhist monks and nuns were being mistreated as though they were virtual servants and slaves. Shinran’s following Wasan indicates that this was indeed so.

A sign of the age of five defilements
and persuasiveness of evils
Is indicated by conferring the titles
“monk” or “Dharma-teacher”
on those who are no better

than slaves or servants.
In doing so, such lofty rankings
come to be regarded as
menials of low status.
Shozomatsu Wasan No. 105
rkt translation.

These words of Shinran Shonin some 800 years ago are still valid in our times of post-modernity.

According to Jodoshinshu teachings, without one's whole self and being first having undergone an "awakening of faith" while still living in this life, "rebirth" in the Pure Land will not occur upon one's death. For such a person being shackled by his karmic past must continue repeating the rounds of ceaseless births and deaths (transmigration, not reincarnations).

This is why Jodoshinshu teachings are not about "converting" others over to one's religion or imposing one's beliefs and convictions on others with specific intentions of recruiting them over to one's group. "*An awakening of true and real faith*" happens only in a person's deepest consciousness. This is why Sakyamuni said: "No one purifies another" (*Dhammapada*). This is why Shinran Shonin said: "it is impossible to help another as we truly wish" (*Tannisho V*).

Jodoshinshu faith entails two internal simultaneous "awakenings." One is the realization that one is undeniably a hopelessly karma riddled being. The other is the realization that it is because one is undeniably a karma riddled being that one was, is, and continues to be embraced by Amida Buddha who never will abandon one until he finally attains the Highest,

continued on p. 6

Donations

continued from p. 2

SHINRAN'S WASAN

When ordinary mortals receive true faith
awake and aware do they become
that ceaseless births and deaths
are the same with Nirvana.
Such persons unfailingly arrive
in the Land of Immeasurable Light.
Shoshinge lines 81-83.
rkt translation.

Due to limited space due to Postal restrictions, if your donation is not listed in this GASSHO, it will be listed in a following edition. For any inadvertent misspelling of names, please accept our apologies.

SACRED BUDDHIST PASSAGES

"Even if thieves carve you limb from limb with a double-handed saw, if you make your mind hostile you are not following my teaching." *Kamcupama-sutta, Majjhima-Nikkaya I* v. 28, 29.

Shinshu Kyokai Mission

1631 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96826

skm@ShinshuKyokai.org
www.ShinshuKyokai.org

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HONOLULU, HI
PERMIT NO. 231

Return Service Requested

Unsurpassable, Perfect Enlightenment.

I shall be writing about such an "awakening of faith" and other related topics in the remaining eleven issues of *GASSHO* for this year 2016. I hope in some way they will be of help to you to understand that your life is actually a spiritual journey based on gratitude, humility, reverence and penitence that ultimately brings you final Buddhahood.

Once again, Sumiko and I wish you all the best for 2016. May your days and nights be full of joy, especially of life's meanings and spiritual significance.

Namoh-amida-butsu!

In Gassho,
Rev. and Mrs. Tatsuguchi

QUESTION & ANSWER KORNER

QUESTION: The Buddhist principle *ahimsa* (non-violence) stresses loving your enemies no matter how badly they treat you. What about when someone is about to kill you?

ANSWER: Once the Vietnamese Zen monk Thich Nhat Hanh was called a "fool" for unswervingly advocating "non-violence" because Buddhists are admonished from killing, even in self defense. He was asked: "What if someone had wiped out all the

—————★ You're Invited! ———

New Year's Eve service 7 p.m. Dec. 31st
Stay for soba & small plate social!

New Year's Day service 10 a.m. Jan. 1st
Elevator & Nokotsudo open for visiting
from 9 a.m. December 31—10 a.m. January 1

Buddhists in the world and you were the only one left. Would you not try to kill the person from killing you to save Buddhism from becoming extinct?"

Thich Nhat Hanh replied: "It would be better to let him kill me. If there is any truth to Buddhism and the Dharma it will not disappear from the face of the earth, but will reappear when seekers of truth are ready to rediscover it again. In killing I would be betraying and abandoning the very teachings I seek to preserve. So it would be better for him to kill me and remain true to the spirit of the Dharma."