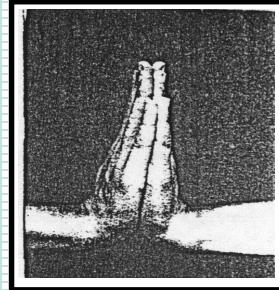


GASSHō

March 2017

Issue No: 3-17

"Hands together in reverence & gratitude"



INNER AND OUTER SELF

by rev. k. tatsuguchi

According to Shinran Shonin, to have undergone an awakening of "true and real faith" (*shinjin*) involves two simultaneous "realizations." The two are seamless and inseparable as are waves to the ocean.

The first realization is that one is unmistakably a mortal being riddled by transgressions and desecrations undergoing from moment to moment "ceaseless births and deaths" meandering in the "six realms of transmigration."

The second is the awakening that "just as the mortal one is," one has, is and yet continues to be fully embraced by Amida Buddha's Primal Vow that is the Light of Selflessness that is his Sacred Name manifested as the Reality Togetherness. This Light and Life has never rejected or abandoned any sentient being that has trusted and taken refuge in their powers and virtues that especially grasps human beings hopelessly riddled with transgressions and desecrations. They are recipients of Amida's beneficence and benevolence.

The first realization is referred to as *ki no jin shin*, which is about the "rude awakening" that one is not the person that one keeps pretending to be, nor an individual who is perfectly moral, upright, religious, virtuous, filial or pious. For, the majority of human beings constantly gloss over their wrongdoings and desecrations, especially of things sacred and spiritual. We shall cover this aspect of *ki no jin shin* through two Shin Buddhist terms, *jiriki* (self-power = self centrisim) and *hakarai* (to be calculating, scheming and contriving). Both terms connote

MONTH'S THOUGHT



Hypocrisy is the art of affecting qualities for the purpose of pretending to an undeserved virtue. Because individuals and institutions and societies most often live down to the suspicions about them, hypocrisy and its accompanying equivocations underpin the conduct of life. Imagine how frightful truth unvarnished would be.

—Benjamin F. Martin, "France in 1938," 2005.



the proclivity in human beings to be crafty, manipulative, unscrupulous and so forth.

The second is the awakening called *hō no jin-shin*, which is the realization as to why a Bodhisattva called *Dharmakara* appeared from the Treasure Ocean of Oneness (*Dharma-lokhadhatu*),

"... who, through establishing the unhindered Vow as the cause, became Amida Buddha. For this reason Amida Buddha is the 'Tathagata of fulfilled body.' He has been called 'Buddha of unhindered light filling the ten quarters.' This Tathagata is also known as *Namu-fukashigikō-butsu* (namu-Buddha of inconceivable light) and is the 'dharmakaya as compassionate means' ..." SBT-Series. *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-calling*. p. 46.

This bodhisattva appeared not only because human beings are riddled by deceptions and

REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVICES FOR MARCH 2017

1st SUN MAR 5th

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

2nd SUN MAR 12th

SPRING O'HIGAN
9 A.M. English Service
Dharma Talk
for Children & Adults
with guest speaker

Rev. Sandra Hiramatsu

3rd SUN MAR 19th

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

4th SUN MAR 26th

MONTHLY
FAMILY WORSHIP
Dharma Talk
for Children & Adults

2017 Memorial Service Schedule

2016	1 Year	2015	3 Year	2011	7 Year
2005	13 Year	2001	17 Year	1993	25 Year
1985	33 Year	1968	50 Year	1916	100 Year

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

BON DANCE CLASS some Sundays*

*Time on back page – Joyce Gushiken

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

Mrs. Taeko Nakamura 82 yrs. Dec. 26, 2016

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pretensions and falsehoods. He manifested himself to disperse the total darkness obscuring the Truth of Selflessness and its Reality of Togetherness to make known that all things and forms of life are seamless and inseparable.

Shinran referred to this Light of Selflessness and Life of Togetherness. According to Shinran:

"Compassionate means' refers to manifesting form, revealing a name, and making itself known to sentient beings. It refers to Amida Buddha. This Tathagata is light ..." *ibid.*

Then he clarified that this:

"Light is none other than wisdom; wisdom is the form of light. Wisdom is in addition, formless; hence this Tathagata is the Buddha of inconceivable light. This Tathagata fills the countless worlds in the ten quarters, and so is called 'Buddha of boundless light.' Further, Bodhisattva Vasubandhu has given the name, 'Tathagata of unhindered light filling the ten quarters' ..." *ibid.*

Shinran Shonin makes it undeniably clear that Wisdom is the Light of Selflessness that is simultaneously the Life of Compassion in which all things and life forms throughout the spacious cosmos ("ten directions") keep appearing and disappearing like waves "rising and subsiding" from the very waters of the ocean.

The technical term *tariki* (other power — "by power of another") indicates a reality in which no thing or form of life has ever been

WORDS OF SHINRAN

"Under the influence of our karmic past we human beings will do anything."

—T. Unno. *Tannisho*. XIII p. 24.

excluded, rejected, abandoned or obliterated. This power of *tariki* needs to be understood as follows:

"Buddha-nature is none other than Tathagata. This Tathagata pervades the countless worlds; it fills the hearts and minds of the ocean of beings. Thus, plants, trees, and land all attain Buddhahood." SBT-Series. *Notes on "Essentials of Faith Alone."* p. 42.

As of consequence, Buddha-nature:

"Thus appearing in the form of light called 'Tathagata of unhindered light filling the ten quarters,' it is without color and without form, that is, identical with the dharmakaya-as-suchness, dispelling the darkness of ignorance and unobstructed by karmic evil ..." *loc. cit.* p. 43.

These words of Shinran Shonin clearly point us to a dimension in and of our lives that is beyond human comprehension, understanding and knowledge. In other words, there is more to life than what pleases the senses or what the eyes see, the ears hear, the nose smells, the tongue tastes or what one touches and is touched by. And most certainly there are certain things in life that cannot be bought with money such as verities that are of a sacred and spiritual nature.

There are now people talking about attaining to levels of spiritual consciousness of cosmic proportions. They are talking of stepping out of the "third" and "fourth" dimensions of consciousness into a so-called "fifth" dimension consciousness. When one starts entering the spaciousness of such cosmic consciousness, one begins to experience peace, bliss, love and joy. No effort is required on one's part to

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: Feb. 26, 2017

remain in this state. It occurs naturally and automatically. It is said that all dissonant energy is automatically filtered out by the Light of Selflessness and Life of Togetherness. This sounds very much like what the Yogacara School of Buddhism speaks of as having attained to the "highest consciousness" called *Amala-vijnana* or "Taintless Consciousness" (Junjiro Takakusu. "The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy." p. 83).

So let us look into the significance of a person mired in the muck of his *jiriki* (self-confidence) and *hakarai* (personal agendas) stumbling as he keeps meandering about in the total darkness of the "six realms of transmigration" due to his spiritual ignorance (*avidya*). Briefly, *jiriki* concerns a person's unwarranted confidence in his moral, ethical, and religious capabilities when, in fact, they are tainted by subtle greediness, jealousies, resentments and self vanities tinged often by proclivities that easily explode into anger, rage, hatred and violence, given the provocation.

Hakarai, meaning calculating and scheming, is better understood perhaps as one's illusory ego involved in ways based on cunning and deviousness in the most shameful and embarrassing ways. One's ego working can be also understood as a self "acting on a stage" pretending to be what it is not in order to get its way and what it wants.

Concerning the world of man and his pretensions, William Shakespeare wrote as follows:

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players: they have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts, his acts being seven ages." *As You Like It*. Act II, Scene VII.

He also said:

"This life, which had been the tomb of his virtue and of his honor, is but a walking shadow; a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more: it is a tale told by

an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." *Macbeth*.

These words clearly describe and also help us to understand the significance of the "strutting, prancing rooster" in the innermost circle of the "Twelve Interlocking Links of Causation" crowning its vanities and self importance. They also help us to see the "wild black boar" full of lust and greediness and the "venomous slithering snake" full of resentments and envy lurking in all of us in our deepest consciousness.

Hiroyuki Itsuki in his *Tariki: Embracing Despair, Discovering Peace* is most helpful in understanding that "the original vow of Other Power" (*tariki hongan*) does not mean "leaving things up to others, or depending on the largesse of others — that is the opposite of being self-reliant through self effort." Itsuki explains: "the original meaning of *tariki hongan* most definitely was not dependence on others or refusal to accept responsibility for one's actions or fate."

According to Itsuki:

"*Tariki hongan* is a philosophy that transcends time; it leaps over all boundaries, and in chanting the Buddha's name past and future are one, practice and attainments are one, suffering and enlightenment are one...." p. 89.

And most importantly,

"It is not a philosophy of passivity and irresponsibility...." *Ibid*.

The reason why is because:

"It is a philosophy of radical spiritual activity, of personal, existential revolution." *Ibid*.

So it is an error to characterize Jodoshinshu teachings and faith as a nihilism, negativism, pessimism, fatalism and so forth.

Because:

"*Tariki* has the power to move all of us whether or not we believe in the existence of God or the Buddha, whether or not we accept the existence of a world we can't see, a realm transcending all national and ethnic boundaries...." p. 90.

Here, Itsuki is pointing us to what is beyond the fifth dimension of consciousness, or what is to have attained the state of "Taintless Consciousness" (*Amala-vijnana*).

Furthermore, Itsuki reminds us that Rennyo Shonin unequivocally declared: "Shinran's teaching of *akunin shoki* does not mean that it is all right to do evil" (p. 112). *Akunin shoki* means the "basic intention" of Amida's Vow is to effect the enlightenment of such an evil one, a "being burdened with the weight of karmic evil and burning with the flames of blind passion" (Unno, *loc. cit.* I p. 5 & Ch III p. 8).

Shinran then said:

"Now, whether you accept the *nembutsu*, entrusting yourself to it, or reject it, that is your own decision." Unno, *op. cit.* II p. 7.

In other words, "you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make him drink it." So, it's up to you whether you entrust yourself to the Truth of Selflessness and make its Reality of Togetherness the basis and substance of your life. Such a life permeated by Selflessness and Togetherness is characterized by nonviolence (*ahimsa*). This principle transforms what we are thinking, feeling, intending, speaking and doing by trusting and taking refuge in Amida's Wisdom and Compassion.

In the spaces remaining, I would like to reflect on Ferdinand Tonnies' distinction between two kinds of human relationships. His concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* will help us to see how President Trump's person and personality more in terms of a psychosocial pathology rather than "politics as usual." I will then end with Yoshifumi sensei's understanding of "utility values" and "truth values" in which the sensory world (*samsara*) is fully and seamlessly embraced in its entirety by and

SHINRAN'S WASAN

Sages striving on the Path
with their minds
of self-presumptions,
Encountering Other Power,
realize then it is
beyond comprehension,
To realize "no selfworking"
is "true self working!"

Shozomatsu Wasan No. 55
rkt trans.

within the spiritual world (*nirvana*), much like the sun shining on both "good" and "bad" people without favoritisms or condemnations.

In brief, human relationships, according to Tonnies, can be basically categorized into two kinds of social bonds. The first develops out of primary human contacts, such as when a newborn infant begins to suckle at its mother's breasts for life-giving nutrients that then develop into lifetime bonds. These basic humanizing connections, Tonnies called *Gemeinschaft*, or what are intimate, personal and socializing relationships. Such bondings are focused more on common human interests and values rather than on one's own self-interests and personal advantages. The focus is on the "will of all" such as seen in a closely knit family. In other words, they are "core truth values" which money cannot buy. A surrogate mother, for example, is not one's biological mother.

By contrast, *Gesellschaft* relationships are secondary relationships characterized by the words of Shakespeare quoted above. Tonnies described such impersonal relationships to characterize especially individuals residing in very large cities whose primary focus is on their own practical interests, individual advancements and personal advantages. Division of labor, instead of being generalized, becomes specialized and technically complex. This, in turn, according to Tonnies, results in complex legal transactional and contractual relationships lacking a human face. This social-psychological situation results in *Gesellschaft*, or impersonal

relationships based mainly on knowledge of facts and technical skills rather than on personality and character.

The Jodoshinshu concept of "self-benefit as being simultaneously the benefiting of all things and others" (*jiri-rita en'man*) is one in which both *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* are melded together in a "Selfless Togetherness." The individual and group, or self and others, become of one mind, heart and body. So far, we do not see this in President Trump's presidency and policies that are becoming more and more divisive and conflicted rather than conciliatory. We see, instead, a blatant self-centrism on the part of President Donald Trump, especially in his off-the-cuff right in your face comments and tweets in which he easily pivots from one falsehood to another.

Yoshifumi Ueda sensei, in his *Mahayana Buddhism*, explains that the world of "utility values" and that of "truth values" are inseparable and seamless. In past issues of GASSHO I have explained the Shin Buddhist view that "blind passions are also the very substance and essence of enlightenment" (*bonnō soku bodai*). Once again, this is much like the substance of waves and oceans being of water. This reality of inseparableness is also expressed as "samsara at once is also the substance of nirvana" (*shaba soku nehan*). This is like when ice melts and becomes water. The ice in melting disappears but is not being destroyed or becomes extinct or a sheer "nothingness." It becomes water from which it was originally formed. This is also true when water in freezing turns into ice.

According to Ueda, "the benefits derived from utility value (such as proselytized by prosperity religions) are at best temporary and passing ..." (p. 5). This is because "the practical value of a given belief changes with the historical situation and needs of people" (p. 7). So, "Even if we grant that religion is essential for ethics, that argument is not relevant to the truth or falsity of a given belief" (*ibid*). For this reason, there is a difference between a deliberate lie and believing a falsehood. For a lie entails a deliberate intention to tell an untruth, while a falsehood is an untruth erroneously

believed to be the truth.

Deliberate lies are the tools used in pulling off scams and hoaxes. Falsehoods in false religions, when they become hard-set beliefs, become obsessive convictions, and inviolable dogmas. Such obsessions make for hypocrisy and bigotry.

This is why Ueda said: "from the stand-point of utility value it is impossible to make any distinction between true religion and pseudo-religion" (p. 9). We human beings usually are not aware of the falsehoods we live by. We also tell white lies to get what we want. This is basically what is meant by the term *avidya*, which is "to be living in the total darkness of false beliefs and superstitions."

So Ueda says:

"In order to clarify the difference between true and false religions, we must use another standard — what we have called the truth values. This is crucial for the proper understanding of Buddhism and its implications for life." p. 9.

Then Ueda sensei warns:

"When we see religion from the stand-point of its utility value and confuse it with its truth value, we conclude that whatever is useful is true." p. 10.

What Ueda sensei is pointing out here is that when one believes and lives by a lie or a falsehood, one's thoughts, words and actions, as Shakespeare says, become that of an actor on a stage, "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Put another way, a life based on the rationalization that the "ends justify the means."

Though "utility values" are derived from "truth values," since human beings are "basically self-centered," this means that in human sense perceptions, or what makes sense, "anything useful for life must stand apart from the use, from life itself, to be manipulated and utilized" (p. 11). Do not the words "manipulated"

and “utilized” show how President Trump’s thoughts, feelings, words and actions are blemished by *jiriki* and *hakarai*?

So how does President Trump fare when assessed through the words of Shinran as follows?

“I do not know what the two, good and evil, really mean. I could say that I know what good is, if I knew good as thoroughly and completely as the Tathagata; and I could say I know what evil is, if I knew evil as thoroughly and completely as the Tathagata. But in this foolish being filled with blind passion, living in this impermanent world of burning house, all things are empty and vain; therefore, untrue, Only the *nembutsu* is true, real, and sincere.” Unno, *loc. cit. Epilogue.* p. 36.

continued on p. 8

Donations

continued from p. 2

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BUDDHIST VERSES OR PASSAGE

Through practice "we can get to the point where some disturbance may occur but the negative effects on our mind remain on the surface, like the waves that may ripple on the surface of an ocean but don't have much effect deep down." —Dalai Lama XIV, *The Art of Happiness*.

According to Shinran Shonin, the words "only the *nembutsu* is true, real, and sincere" means that "evil need not be feared, for there is no evil which can obstruct the working of Amida's Primal Vow" (T. Unno. *Tannisho*. I. p. 5).

So I conclude with the following words of Shinran that explain why:

"The Sutra of the Treasure Name states: 'The *nembutsu* of Amida's Primal Vow is not our practice, it is not our good; it is simply keeping the Name of the Buddha.' It is the Name that is good, the Name that is the practice. When we speak of practice, we mean doing good. The Primal Vow is clearly the Buddha's promise. When we have understood this, then we see that the Vow is not our good, nor is it our practice. Hence we speak of Other Power.

"The Name fulfilled in the Primal Vow is the active cause of our birth, in other words, it is our father. The radiant light of great compassion is the receptive condition for birth; it is our mother." SBT-Series. *Letters of Shinran*. No 22. p. 64.

May these words of Shinran deepen your understanding of what Jodoshinshu faith or *shinjin* is all about. May they lead you to live a life based on Right Contemplation on Amida that enables one to reflect correctly on one's actual self, being and person.

Namoh-amida-butsu

Shinshu Kyokai Mission

1631 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96826

skm@ShinshuKyokai.org
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QUESTION & ANSWER KORNER

QUESTION: What is hypocrisy?

ANSWER: Hypocrisy can be explained as *hakarai* (計らい). *Hakarai* is to present a false appearance of being virtuous and upright, while concealing one's faults and shortcomings. In a general sense, hypocrisy can be seen as a person's dissimulations, pretenses, shams, etc.