



# GASSHO

April  
2017

Issue No: 4-17

*"Hands together in reverence & gratitude"*



## JOKES AND HOAXES

by rev. roland k. tatsuguchi

To utter "*namaste*" and to put our hands together and bow in reverence to a fellow human being is to acknowledge what is sacred and divine in him. This is also the same as uttering *Namoh-amida-butsu* by "putting one's hands together" and bowing in reverence to acknowledge the Mind of Buddha (*bus'shin*) and Buddha-nature (*bus'shō*) radiating in all things and forms of life.

This gesture and posture enable us to express our "good will" and feelings of "non-violence" (*ahimsa*) to our fellow human beings without favoritisms, discriminations, rejections or by exclusions. In Hinduism putting one's hands together in reverence and bowing one's head low in humility to a fellow human being is called *añjali mudrā* or *pranamasana*. In Shin Buddhism it is called *gassho*.

Since the 1700s, Americans have been playing harmless pranks and jokes on each other on the first of April, or April Fool's Day. Historians have tried to find the origins of this tradition but have been unable to do so. Did primitive man smile, laugh and have a sense of humor? Was he mischievous? Surely, in some way and fashion the most ancient of primitive peoples must have teased and taunted as well as laughed and smiled at each other.

Today, social psychologists and psychiatrists inform us that because of the sophisticated advances in modern communication technologies there is danger in trying to fool people into believing in falsehoods for "actual reality." For there is a difference between "a

## MONTH'S THOUGHT



"All men tremble at punishment, all men love life; remembering that thou are like unto them, do not strike or slay." —Irving Babbitt. *The Dhammapada*. X. v. 129, 130.



practical joke" and "a deliberate hoax." A "hoax" entails intentional lies calculated to secure unfair advantage or unlawful gain through fraudulent means. It also involves schemes designed to deprive a victim of his possessions. A hoax is nefarious for it also deprives human beings of their sense of dignity, integrity and privacy.

In popular thinking the two terms "joke" and "prank" are synonymous. Normally, people use the two interchangeably. But, let us be very clear, a "hoax" involves elaborate scams designed by a dishonest person, a group, a company or an institution (political or religious) utilizing unscrupulous methods designed to defraud unsuspecting persons. A hoax, therefore, is a deliberate misrepresentation and obfuscation. The goal is to obtain money or some valued thing through devious and deceptive means.

When a tabloid newspaper knowingly prints "sensational" and "salacious" stories to arouse a reader's lurid, vulgar or prurient interests, it becomes a money-making racket. When a television channel keeps broadcasting "breaking news" based on allegations that

# REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## SERVICES FOR APRIL 2017

### 1ST SUN APR 2nd

#### HAWAII BUDDHIST COUNCIL'S HANAMATSURI SERVICE

9 A.M. at Palolo Higashi Hongwanji  
Guest Speaker: Rev. Noriaki Fujimori

### 2ND SUN APR 9th

#### Shinshu Kyokai's HANAMATSURI SERVICE

9 A.M. English Service

### 3RD SUN APR 16th

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

### 4TH SUN APR 24th

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

### 5TH SUN APR 30th

MONTHLY FAMILY WORSHIP  
9 A.M. Eng. Service  
Dharma Talk for Children & Adults  
Rev. R. Tatsuguchi

## WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

### BON DANCE CLASS

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

## SHINSHU KYOKAI MISSION GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING DONATIONS

### Memorial Services

### Other Donations

### New Year

### Special Services

### Hoonko

### Rice offering

### Gojikai

### Fujinkai

## 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

*continues on p. 5*

cannot be proved to be fact, such a news media participates in slanting and embellishing what are the facts and the truth. We know now that Hillary Clinton's defeat was accomplished through President Trump's "spreading" intentional lies about her that were outright falsehoods. So now concerned psychologists and psychiatrists have and continue to assess Trump's persona and psyche to be that of a narcissist who is a habitual liar.

Generally speaking, a "practical joker" does not destroy the person's career, reputation or dignity. By contrast, a "hoax" always entails the deliberate scam designed to make people believe in something patently false as fact. The resulting harm and hurt is not only devastating but also lasting unseen since they leave emotional scars. For this reason perpetrating a hoax is not the same as playing a simple practical joke. For the lies and falsehoods in a hoax are vilifications. They involve words that destroy a person's reputation, credibility and character. Where does President Trump fare on this scale between a harmless prank and a deliberate hoax? The critiques of Trump, so far, have shown that his denials and denigrations are based not only on outright falsehoods, but more importantly, involve hidden schemes to enrich the "rich" while the "poor" get poorer.

Now the term hoax is said to be derived from the verb *hocus* which means "to deceive someone." So the term "hoax" means "to con" and "to defraud" a person. A hoax then is also a scam calculated to make money by deceiving people to invest in something too good to be true. Practical jokes, by comparison, are intended to be lighthearted with no lasting

## WORDS OF SHINRAN

"For human life is such that a person should consider each day that this may be his last, each minute that this may be the end. ... and there is no escape anywhere for even a single person, whether wise or foolish, from the extinction of breath and the draining away of life. ... we should wonder how it is that we are still alive today, and whether this very instant will be our last in the world." SBT-Series. *The Clarification of Once-calling and Many-calling*. pp. 51, 52.

negative impact on a person. So, the question again is, "how is President Trump's public rhetoric and demeanor to be taken so far?" "Are they something to be taken lightly or seriously?" Will his policies affect the lives of future generations?

As far back as 2007 Trump's had the "odd fixation" of taking back the oil in Iraq. When pressed by the interviewer Matt Lauer how this was to be accomplished, Trump replied the United States would have to "leave a certain group behind and you would take various sections where they have the oil." Then he said: "You know, it used to be to the victor belong the spoils." Then he said "I always said: Take the oil." What do these words reveal concerning America's historical beginnings and its current subsequent involvements in the Middle East regions?

Today's historians and political analysts have shown and are showing that such a view was the justification for the sort of things European colonial empires began to do in the 15th century as did the U.S. in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. Such a view as "to the victor belongs the spoils" has been denounced as imperialism. Lance Janda, a military historian at Cameron University raised the question:

"Are we the good guys or not? Because if we are and if we want to convince the world we are, then we can't go around

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: March 26, 2017

invading countries and stealing their oil. The long-term damage to our reputation would be irrevocable."

Let us therefore reflect once again on the words of Sakyamuni Buddha. The verses are taken from Irving Babbitt's *The Dhammapada*. Only the chapter and verse numbers will be indicated.

"They who imagine truth in untruth and see untruth in truth, never arrive at truth, but follow vain desires." I. v. 11. p. 4.

"They who are ashamed of what they ought not to be ashamed of, and are not ashamed of what they ought to be ashamed of, such men, embracing false doctrines, enter the downward path.

"They who fear when they ought not to fear and fear not when they ought to fear, such men embracing false doctrines, enter the downward path.

"They who see sin where none exists, and do not see it where it does exist, such men, embracing false doctrines, enter the downward path." XXII. v. 316-318.

"Whatever a hater may do to a hater, or an enemy to an enemy, a wrongly-directed mind will do us greater mischief." III. v. 42. p. 9.

"As long as the evil deed done does not bear fruit, the fool thinks it is like honey; but when it ripens then the fool suffers grief." V. v. 69. p. 13.

"Whosoever offends a harmless, pure and innocent person, the evil falls back upon that fool, like light dust thrown up against the wind." IX. v. 125. p. 21.

"If a man has transgressed a single precept, if he speaks lies and scoffs at another world, there is no evil he will not do." XIII. v. 176. p. 28.

"If a man looks after the faults of others and is always inclined to take offense,

his own evil propensities will grow; far indeed is such a man from their destruction." XVII. v. 264 p. 39, 40.

Sakyamuni Buddha long ago deduced that the fundamental problems of conflict need to be assessed through the Four Noble Truths and resolved through a life of "non-violence" based on the Noble Eightfold Path that are governed by the orderly and uniform principles of causation, conditionality, interdependency and karma. The reason why is because no thing or person exists in isolation independent of others and reliance on things of environment.

When you come to see the various inseparable triadic structures in the Eightfold Path such as between your thoughts, words and deeds and the connections between your mind, body and spirit, you will then see the Truth of Selflessness and Reality of its Togetherness to be pervading in all things and forms of life throughout the universe.

This is the reason why Lama Surya Das said:

"The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. It should transcend a personal God and avoid dogma and theology. Covering both the natural and the spiritual, it should be based on a religious sense arising from the experience of all things natural and spiritual as a meaningful unity. Buddhism answers this description.... If there is any religion that could cope with modern scientific needs, it would be Buddhism." *Awakening the Buddha Within, Eight Steps to Enlightenment*.

Albert Einstein, a mathematician and physicist, agreed and felt that a new religious perspective was needed. For he was well aware that our world was in great trouble because so much of humankind subscribes to blind beliefs (falsehoods), baseless myths (superstitions) and irrational behaviors (idiosyncrasies) that are destructive of our "living planet" called Mother Earth. We see this now in rising temperatures, rising waters, non-biodegradable wastes and polluted air.

As Shin Buddhists, let us not forget that it was on April 8th that a prince was born in India (Hanamatsuri Day). Instead of deifying him in mythological terms, we need to ponder as to why Siddhartha Gautama was born some two-thousand five hundred plus years ago of royal parents, and why, at age 29, he left the comforts of a privileged royal life, and how, after some five years of grueling self-asceticism, at age 35, that he finally attained enlightenment to be regarded as the World's Most Enlightened One in the land of many wandering *sramanas* (ascetics and wise men).

Then, to further ponder and contemplate as to why, for the sake of ordinary common folk, Sakyamuni Buddha revealed the Truth and Reality of the *Bodhisattva Dharmakara* who, in having consummated all his vows to liberate all sentient beings without rejections, became the ultimate Buddha Amida who saves not only "good persons" but especially those who are "unsavable" without rejections or condemnations.

This is the reason as to why a Prince was born in India who finally became Sakyamuni Buddha who explained why the *Bodhisattva Dharmakara* appeared from the Dharma-world of Clear Light and Pure Life to especially liberate and free human beings trapped in the cycles of "ceaseless births and deaths." For sentient beings are still endlessly meandering and wandering in the "six realms of transmigration" and suffering. Ascending to Buddhism, a transmigrating being who is reborn as a human being is blessed with the opportunity to trust in Amida Buddha and begin uttering his Sacred Name, whereby he undergoes an "awakening of true and real faith."

*continued on p. 6*

## Donations

*continued from p. 2*

## SHINRAN'S WASAN

Since my heart is full of  
vipers and scorpions,  
Impossible on my own  
efforts to be good!  
Without Tathagata's virtues,  
my life would end  
without shame  
or remorse!

*Shozomatsu Wasan No. 99*  
rkt – trans.

---

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.

## BUDDHIST VERSES & PASSAGES

"Before long, alas! this body will lie on the ground, despised, bereft of consciousness, like a useless log." Irving Babbitt. *The Dhammapada*. III. v. 41 pp. 8, 9.

According to Shinran Shonin, "the evil person who entrusts himself to Other Power is truly the one who attains birth in the Pure Land" (T. Unno. *Tannisho III*. p. 8). According to Shinran a person riddled by karmic transgressions and desecrations upon trusting and taking refuge in Amida, is instantly "grasped" never to be abandoned by Amida's Light and Life. When he takes his final breath of life and he enters Nirvana Without Blemishes and Impediments. The metaphor of ice melting turning into water best illustrates this "transformation" by "true and real faith." The ice in melting is not destroyed or has become extinct. It has turned into free flowing water.

Such a person of transformed faith, as long as he lives, brims over with a penitence full of inconceivable joy for his birth in the Pure Land then is assured and a certainty. Such a person is not arrogant, overbearing or outspoken or impertinent. Such a person is praised by all the innumerable Buddhas throughout the universe as a person "of superior understanding"; he is also named a *Pundarika* (RKT-Series. *Shoshin Ge*. p. 26).

Namoh-amida-butsu.



We are asking the Family or Friends of  
**GIJURO HIGUCHI**  
**HISASHI MIYAKE**  
**CHARLES SATO**

Please contact Shinshu Kyokai  
as soon as possible. This is regarding their  
niche/Nokotsudo. Phone 973-0150.

**Shinshu Kyokai Mission**  
1631 South Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96826  
[skm@ShinshuKyokai.org](mailto:skm@ShinshuKyokai.org)  
[www.ShinshuKyokai.org](http://www.ShinshuKyokai.org)

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

*Return Service Requested*

**Please join Membership (Gojikai)**  
**Support Shinshu Kyokai**

### QUESTION & ANSWER KORNER

QUESTION: What is the significance of Rennyō Shonin's "*Epistle on White Ashes*"?

ANSWER: The epistle says we should not take our lives for granted, for like "a bolt of lightning out of the clear blue sky," the "wind of impermanence" can at any moment end our lives. So, one should take refuge in Amida's Life of All-embracing Compassion by trusting in his Light of Selflessness that enables us to live each precious passing moment of our lives in the Life of Togetherness with in deep gratitude, humility and penitence.