

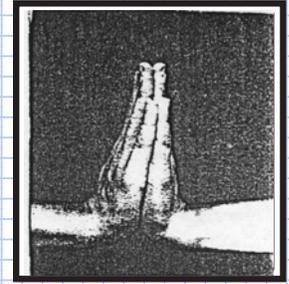


# GASSHO

“Hands together  
in reverence & gratitude”

February 2013

Issue: 02-13



## PATHS AND FINGERS

by rev. roland k. tatsuguchi

According to Buddhism, regardless the color of their skin, human beings are constantly being besieged by 84,000 kinds of self inflations because of their blinding desires (*bonno*). So, there are, according to Buddha, also 84,000 paths leading to the Dharma's World of “unobstructed freedom” from such desires and vanities! (*Tannisho* VII). This Dharma World of “unobstructed freedom” is often erroneously mistaken for a “heaven” above separate and removed from a hell believed to be somewhere below (*naraka*). However, the Dharma World (*nirvana*) cannot be seen even by persons on the highest of mountaintops. Shinran says, however, even the people living in the valleys below are constantly being illuminated by the same “Dharma Sun” which disperses even the darkest of shadows in the valleys under the darkest of clouds below.

There are all kinds of human beings ranging from those who are capable of scaling up the steepest of cliffs right up to the topmost peak. There are also those not even capable of leisurely walking up to the mountaintop. Shinran Shonin, after trying to get to the mountaintop, realized that he was actually a spiritual invalid who could only be carried on a stretcher called Amida's Vow of Unconditional Compassion by his two attendants, Bodhisattvas *Seishi* of Infinite Wisdom and *Kannon* of Boundless Compassion. *Seishi* personifies the Dharma's Truth of Selflessness. *Kannon* embodies the Dharma's Reality of Togetherness.

Now, however, people who do get to stand on the very peak of a mountain tend to see those unable to do so as their moral and spiritual inferiors. It was Shinran who clearly pointed out that even people on the highest of mountaintops themselves are unable to see the Great Unknown Beyond beyond the clearest of blue skies even in daylight. Much less can they see beyond the night sky's darkness full of blinking stars.

## MONTH'S THOUGHT



“That hand is not the color of yours, but if I prick it, the blood will flow, and I shall feel pain. The blood is of the same color as yours. God made me, and I am a man. I never committed any crime. If I had, I would not stand here to make a defense. I would suffer the punishment and make no complaint.” — What Chief Standing Bear said to a judge as he held up his right hand in court while being tried for having left his reservation.



Now, the parable of “the many fingers pointing to the full moon in the dark night sky” has much to tell us concerning self proclaimed visionaries claiming that their finger is the only finger pointing to the full moon while those of others are merely pointing to virtual images of the moon reflected on a pond's surface. The moon, however, is not the sun. The Dharma Sun of Wisdom shining makes bright and visible the Dharma Moon of Compassion. Both shine on all things, the Dharma Sun by day and the Dharma Moon at night. Both are without favoritisms or condemnations. The light of the bright sun or the radiance of the moon cannot be monopolized by any one person, race, culture or institutionalized religion.

Then, on the other hand, a visionary's finger may be pointing only at his own “spiritual egoism.” Shinran Shonin experienced such a “dilemma” in his seeking a good friend and teacher. This was exactly why he came to the “realization” that even the person standing on the highest of mountain peaks was only a mortal being still incapable of seeing what was actually beyond the very blue of the skies which at night becomes a total pitch black darkness.

# REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY 2013

### 1st SUN FEB 3rd:

9 A.M. English Service  
Dharma Talk  
**NIRVANA DAY**  
for Children and Adults  
Rev. Tatsuguchi  
"Circle w/o a Circumference"

### 2nd SUN FEB 10th:

9 A.M. Eng. Service  
Dharma Talk  
for Children & Adults  
Rev. Tatsuguchi  
10:30 A.M.  
**Annual  
General Membership Meeting  
& New Year Party**

### 3rd SUN FEB 17th:

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

### 4th SUN FEB 24th:

MONTHLY FAMILY WORSHIP  
Dharma Talk  
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.  
Shihan - Walter Nishioka

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

*With Deepest Sympathy*

Mrs. Margaret M. Tanna 90 yrs. Dec. 6, 2012  
Mrs. Yukie Nakasu 88 yrs. Dec. 6, 2012

*General Membership  
Meeting & New Year Party*

February 10, 2013  
10:30 AM at Social Hall

**THANK YOU**  
*for YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS !!*

## 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

continued on p. 7

For these reasons, the Dharma Sun (Truth of Selflessness) and its reflection, the Dharma Moon (Reality of Togetherness), are not the monopoly of any one person, race, ethnicity, culture, ideology or institutionalized religion, especially a sect of zealots or fanatics driven by blind faith and burning convictions following a cult leader. The Dharma, because of its universal Selflessness and all-embracing Togetherness, cannot be the sole possession of Buddhists. For the principles of causation, conditionality, interdependency and karma are universal verities that in everyday life are actualities that apply universally, uniformly and equally to all living and non-living things throughout the "ten boundless quarters of the universe" that is itself unfathomable as well as all-embracing.

This is why Sakyamuni Buddha said:

Whether the Tathagatas were to arise in this world, or whether the Tathagatas were not to arise in this world, this fact or element [of causality], this causal status, this causal orderliness, this relatedness remains. That the Tathagata understands and realizes, having understood and realized, he declares it, preaches it, makes it known, establishes it, reveals it, analyses it, and shows it up saying: "Look." *Samyutta-nikaya* 2:25.

In other words, the facts of *anitya* and *anatman* also come under the orderly, uniform processes of causality, conditionality and interdependency that karmically govern and apply especially to human thought, passions, desires, vanities, words and actions that comprise what is the arena of human behaviors and interactions. No one is exempt from these verities.

This is why Buddhism talks of religions being merely but fingers pointing to the full moon in the night sky's total darkness. The various religions are like 84,000 different paths around the base of a mountain leading to the highest peak. Therefore, religions are like persons on different mountaintops proclaiming that their finger is the only one pointing to the Dharma Moon in the night sky. However, the fact remains, followers of a given religion still are unable to see what lies undeniably beyond the darkest of nights beyond the glistening stars.

Now, when Shinran proclaimed: "Only the nembutsu is true and real," he was not claiming that the Dharma's Truth of Selflessness and its Reality the Moon of Togetherness were the sole monopoly of Jodoshinshu Buddhists alone. Such claims of "exclusiveness" and "exceptionalism," said Shinran, are born of a presumptuous spirituality lacking in gratitude, especially a heartfelt humility

## WORDS OF 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. ... When has it ever been said that one should act in accordance with one's mind and heart, which are evil? ... SBT-Series. *Letters of Shinran*. No. 16. pp. 51-52.

and penitence. Such people and religions, paradoxically, tend to spawn a sense of exclusivism and feelings of exclusion that are offensive to others labelled as heathens and idol worshippers. This is because their faith is oriented outward in terms of "converting" others over to their religion and not inward in terms of "transforming" one's ingratitude into gratitude and arrogance into humility that overcomes one's anxieties, fears and doubts with a serenity and an assurance that embraces all without excluding any.

This is why, said Shinran:

One who recites the Nembutsu walks the True Path of [Absolute] Freedom. For to such a man of Faith, the devas of the heavens and of the earth bow down in awe. Maras and base heretics [*tirthakas*] cannot hinder him, nor can evil bring to fruition any corresponding karmic effects, and no other good is equal to his [act of] uttering the Name. R. Fujimoto. *loc. cit.*, Ch. VII. p 19.

"Reciting nembutsu in unobstructed freedom" can never be the monopoly of any one person, race, culture, especially an institutionalized religion.

This fact was confirmed by Shinran as follows:

I, Shinran, have no disciple of my own. If I were to induce others to recite the Nembutsu by virtue of my own effort, I might claim them as my own disciples. It is quite obtrusive [however] that I should claim as my disciples those who, through the Wisdom of Amida alone, came to recite the Nembutsu. R. Fujimoto. *loc. cit.*, Ch. VI. p. 18.

This is why Shinran called himself "a burr-headed simpleton" (*gutoku* Shinran) because he was made "awake" that he, undeniably, was merely a human being riddled with implacable transgressions and desecrations. He was not the monk living on a

mountaintop aloof from worldly concerns or a householder in the valleys below embroiled in sensual and worldly things. Because he was a mortal full of blind passions and self vanities, he experienced an "awakening" that he was and yet continued to be grasped by Amida. For this very reason, he enjoyed a serenity that he would be never, ever abandoned.

This is why Shinran Shonin "realized,"

... There is no difference [whatsoever] among those who make their living by catching fish, using a line or a net, in rivers or the ocean or those who eke out an existence by hunting game or fowl in the fields or mountains or those who live from day to day by engaging in trade or tilling the soil. ... Ryukyo Fujimoto. *loc. cit.* Ch XIII. p. 32.

This is why even a person who has gotten to and stands on the highest of mountain peaks is no different from someone toiling in the valleys below. (See *Shoshin Ge* lines 29-34).

Now, documentation of Eurocentric history begins with the Greeks, then focuses on the conquests of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.), then on Columbus (1451-1506), then especially on the colonial period during the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and the early 20th centuries. European nations then were taking over the countries of Asia Minor, the Near, Middle and Far East, and much of Africa's Mediterranean coasts, then South Africa. These were times when Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) said: "*East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet!*" These words are in his poem "*The White Man's Burden*" published in 1899. This poem came to be a basis for justifying Western expansionism and imperialism in establishing a "New World Order" as being a "noble enterprise."

The rest of the world, as of consequence, came to be perceived as being the "White Man's Burden" because European civilizations were deemed to be superior because of their higher visions of freedom, equality, liberty and justice as backed by their guns and steel implements. This Eurocentrism was based on biblical verses such as "go therefore and make disciples of the nations" (*noblesse oblige*). A point especially to note here is that the Muslims up to this time had ruled India and Asia Minor for almost a thousand years even before the colonial era began in the 17th century. Great Britain (Kingdoms of England, Scotland and Wales) by then had become a super power nation with a formidable naval armada and had taken over India as one of its many colonies, as well as Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, Ceylon and so forth.

Then, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the belief in American exceptionalism took hold proclaiming that the United States was destined by divine providence to expand across the west of Mississippi to the Pacific coast ("Manifest Destiny"). This presumption was fired by "a messianic sense" to redeem "Old England" by establishing a "New England" as the basis for a "new heaven," a "New World Order" (*NOVUS ORDO SECLURUM*). Thus the rest of the world, either consciously or unconsciously, was to be based on American cultural standards and values based on an individual's right to pursue life, liberty and happiness.

The notion of Anglo-Saxon preeminence has its roots deep in Judeo-Christianity. The first Pilgrims and Puritans in America believed that they were being guided by a divine providence that had destined them to lead the other nations of the world. The "City on the Hill" they built in Massachusetts Bay Colony was to be a model for the rest of the world. The divine mission of the Founding Fathers was to defend and spread democracy and the rights of human beings as individuals throughout the rest of the world.

Joseph Campbell, in his *The Inner Reaches of Outer Space*, asserts that this legacy of American imperialism, colonialism, exceptionalism and expansionism were promoted by certain deists who were aware that:

... in the Old Testament, as in the post-Galilean sciences, there is in nature itself no divinity. There is no god in all the earth but in Israel (2 Kings 5:15), and the gods of the Gentiles are devils. The texts of Christian missionaries to this same point in justification of their labors are legion. Satan himself being there recognized as even literally present in the idols, sacraments, sorceries, and miracles of every worship but the mission's own. ... p. 85.

Thus, Campbell says that, in the process of branding the mythologies of primitive peoples and non-Christian religions such as Buddhism to be the works of the devil, they, therefore, came to be seen as abominations to the Judeo-Christian God.

Campbell, therefore, concluded:

Such uninspired literalism in the understanding of mythological metaphors is difficult to match in the whole great field of the history of religions. In popular beliefs there is everywhere, of course, the notion of gods as living entities inhabiting a mythological zone beyond time. But that

timeless zone is everywhere conceived to be the ground of the informing spirituality of the visible world itself. In dream and vision one enters into it, and on waking returns. Moreover, as such inward experiences have let us know, its apparitions are of a self-luminous substance revelatory of the vital energies, not only of ourselves but of all living things. ... *Loc. cit.*, pp. 85, 86.

Therefore, in Buddhism *nirvana* and *samsara*, Buddha and sentient beings, time and space, light and darkness are inseparable opposite actualities. In monotheistic theocentric religions, eternity and time, heaven and hell, God and Satan, saints and sinners, "good" and "evil," they are permanent irreconcilable adversaries in which sin and sinners are to be completely obliterated.

All Dharmic religions (Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism), as do other universal religions, prescribe a minimal of Five Precepts. But there is, however, a basic difference in the Five Precepts of Buddhism, for they are based on the facts of *causality, conditionality, interdependency*, especially on the facts of *karmic* consequences. In Judeo-Christianity, God's commandments are iron-clad rules set up by God based on the fear of being punished and finally cast into a fiery incineration by his final judgments. The Five Precepts in Buddhism, instead, are based on a life of self responsibility and accountability to others. Buddhist precepts are not based on the fear of "a personlike deity" who rewards the "righteous" for obeying his will and punishes the "unrighteous" for breaking his commandments.

To make the Dharma one's only refuge and source of Truth is to cease in thoughts and agendas that trigger hurtful words and harmful activities. Therefore the words of Sakyamuni:

"All the Buddhas teach the same truth. They point out the path to those who go astray. To cease from evil; to cultivate the good; to cleanse our own thoughts; to help others. This is the teaching of all the Buddhas." (Dhammapada 4. p. 157. *Praises of the Buddha.*)

To become a responsible and accountable person is like "turning" an upside down cup right side up instead of "crushing" or "pulverizing" it into oblivion because it happens to be upside down or full of cracks and holes.

The original thirteen colonies declared independence from Great Britain in 1776. The notion of Manifest Destiny as entertained and pursued by Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), the

## SHINRAN'S WASAN

Evil tendencies indeed are  
most difficult to resist!  
One's mind and heart are  
like vipers, scorpions!  
For even one's good deeds are  
tainted venom and poison.  
Our acts of good lacking in  
sincerity are false.

*Shozomatsu Wasan* No. 96  
rkt trans.

third President, was to establish the U.S. as a preeminent nation based on liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism and *laissez-faire* in which there was to be a distinct separation of Church and State by limiting the powers of ecclesiastical religion. During this era, the lands of Native American Indians, because they were "unfenced," were seen by the colonists to be unclaimed virgin lands full of promise, potential and opportunity provided by a "divine providence" for them as a "chosen people" to settle and establish a "New England" in a "new-found-land."

The Pilgrims first landed in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Then the Puritans came to Provincetown, Massachusetts, and moved to Plymouth because it was more sheltered. Both believed in the teachings of John Calvin. According to Calvin, neither the teachings of the Catholic Church nor the Anglican Church addressed God's true will. By the end of the then Queen Elizabeth's reign, England had become a nation of many different and conflicting sects and denominations. The goal of the Puritans in coming to America was more economic and political rather than spiritual. Fed up with the ceremonial Church of England, the Pilgrims with the Puritans sought to recreate a society in the manner they believed God truly intended it to be, a "Shining City on a Hill" much like a man standing on the "highest mountain peak," thinking that his finger was "the only finger" pointing to the bright full moon in the pitch darkness of the night sky.

The New England colonists, therefore, were motivated and compelled by the words of Jesus: "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14). Consequently, much of American pre-eminence and exceptionalism is rooted in Pilgrim pride and Puritan heritage as guided by God's divine providence and miraculous interventions. So when

Andrew Jackson (1767-1845) became the seventh President, the Democrats in the 1840s believed that the United States was all the more "chosen" by God to spread the ideals of a democratic "republic" that was for and by the people. Thus took hold the notion of America's Manifest Destiny based on the "inalienable" rights of an individual as a human being to pursue life, liberty and happiness, especially freedom.

Where else but in a land appropriated from the "unfenced" ancestral lands of Native American Indians could such a golden opportunity be found? The Native American Indian lands the first Pilgrims came upon was unspoiled, unfenced virgin land. Children could be raised without the corruption of old English religious ideas and the theocracy of the Catholic Church. The chance to create a perfect society on a "new-found-land" was there for the taking either by fencing it in, through negotiation or by force of arms. As more and more settlers came to America, Native American Indians were more and more decimated and displaced.

The Founding Fathers of the United States of America, as Campbell pointed out, were anti-clerical deists. They did not believe in "original sin" or in the "divinity of Jesus." They had a secret agenda. This hidden agenda can be seen in the vested interests, various backgrounds and professions of the Founding Fathers. Like many of our present legislators, they were lawyers, statesmen and judges who themselves were involved in land speculation and business enterprises. Many were owners of plantations or were managers of large scale farms. Many themselves like Jefferson were slave owners. Several, at the same time, were also speculators and investors in large scale securities. The average American does not know the Native American Indians were also sold into slavery.

Though they were Christians, the Founding Fathers were Deists characterized by a hybrid rationalism and natural religion in which science, nature and humanism were predominant. Their religious views were based on deductive as well as inductive reasoning based on direct observations and empirical experimentations. They did not base their convictions on blind faith or divine revelations or mystical experiences of any kind. Many of them had knowledge of Asian religions such as Hinduism, Brahmanism and Buddhism. C. G. Jung (1875-1961), for example, was a European psychologist very knowledgeable in Taoism, Tibetan mandalas and Yogacara Buddhism (Buddhist psychology).

Deists, therefore, consider the mysteries of Christianity to be nothing but the manipulations of

the clergy or a patriarchal ecclesiocracy. Deists say that truths are reached through reason and not through mystical revelations. The difference between "natural" and "revealed" religion is seen as "... the distinction between a supposed set of divine truths specially communicated by God in history and a real system of truths available to all by the use of the unaided reason" (Peter Byrne. *Natural Religion and the Nature of Religion: The Legacy of Deism*).

American poets like Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) and Henry Thoreau (1817-1862) were Deists who were very much acquainted with Brahmanism and Buddhism. For instance, Thoreau, who like Basho (1644-1694), said: "to understand a flower you need not pluck it" (Harding, Walter. *Thoreau's Ideas," Bloom's BioCritiques: Henry David Thoreau*. Ed. Harold Bloom. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2003. 97-138). Thoreau, like a Zenist also said: "Happiness is like a butterfly; the more you chase it, the more it will elude you, but if you turn your attention to other things, it will come and sit softly on your shoulder." Do not these words echo *ahimsa* and *metta*, (non-violence and kindness).

The so-called Boston Brahmins were wealthy families living highly discreet and inconspicuous lifestyles. The term Brahmin refers to an "upper class." In the East Coast establishment, it referred to the upper old crust of New England families influential in the development and leadership of arts, culture, science, politics, trade and academia, especially as centered in Harvard University.

Now, during Thomas Jefferson's presidency, well before Andrew Jackson's presidency, the Native American Indians were allowed to stay east of the Mississippi, that is, as long as they could be assimilated into the ways of civil society ("brainwashed"). The problem, however, was that Jefferson, like the other Founding Fathers, was an owner of slaves. They also hoped to turn the Native American Indian, who was basically a nomad, suddenly into a farmer or a laborer or a domestic on their plantations. This was not to be for a people accustomed to centuries of freely roaming over their "unfenced" native ancestral lands and open plains as hunters dependent on nature's seasonal bounties. Clearly, their ancestral lands and the creatures of the wild were not properties fenced in by wooden fences, stone walls, barbed wire or in barns.

As to just how Native American Indians were to be brought to and sell their ancestral lands, and how they were to be utilized as laborers, this hidden agenda was clearly outlined in a secret letter to William Henry Harrison (1773-1841) the ninth

President. It is surprising to know that Jefferson wrote it as follows:

... When they withdraw themselves to the culture of a small piece of land, they will perceive how useless to them are their extensive forests, and will be willing to pare them off from time to time in exchange for necessities for their farms and families. To promote this disposition to exchange lands, which they have to spare and we want, for necessities, which we have to spare and they want, we shall push our trading uses, and be glad to see the good and influential individuals among them run in debt, because we observe that when these debts get beyond what the individuals can pay, they become willing to lop them off by a cession of lands.

At our trading houses, too, we mean to sell so low as merely to repay us cost and charges, so as neither to lessen or enlarge our capital. This is what private traders cannot do, for they must gain; they will consequently retire from the competition, and we shall thus get clear of this pest without giving offence or umbrage to the Indians. In this way our settlements will gradually circumscribe and approach the Indians, and they will in time either incorporate with us as citizens of the United States, or remove beyond the Mississippi. The former is certainly the termination of their history most happy for themselves; but, in the whole course of this it is essential to cultivate their love. As to their fear, we presume that our strength and their weakness is now so visible that they see we have only to shut our hand to crush them, and that all our liberalities to them proceed from motives of pure humanity only. Should any tribe be foolhardy enough to take up the hatchet at any time, the seizing the whole country of that tribe, and driving them across the Mississippi, as the only condition of peace, would be an examples to others, and furtherance of our final consolidation. Prucha,

Francis Paul. *Documents of United States Indian policy*. University of Nebraska Press. p. 22. Underlining mine.

Clearly, the strategy and tactic as secretly proposed by Jefferson was to first offer peaceful terms, and if rejected, then to wage war. Jefferson wrote several other such secret letters to others as well. This duality concerning the Native American Indians was later clearly symbolized by the bald eagle on the back of a dollar bill holding an olive branch in its right talons and arrows in the left. Clearly an eagle is a predator with piercing eyes, a sharp beak

that can tear and rip to pieces, and pitchforklike talons that stab to instantly kill its prey. An eagle is not a dove with placid innocent eyes that feeds on seeds and grains.

So when Andrew Jackson became the seventh President, he became the first to openly and aggressively implement Jefferson's secret agenda. Jefferson in his presidency was already removing Native American Indians. Jackson, as of consequence, conflated the notion of Manifest Destiny into what has evolved into today's notion of "American exceptionalism" backed by its arsenal of superior military weaponry. It was on May 26, 1830, that President Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act into law that even more aggressively implemented Jefferson's original plan to gradually displace Native American tribal peoples into less desirable and unproductive lands. It is to be noted that the U.S. is a nation that is only 237 years old.

As of consequence, in the colonial period the lands west of the Mississippi became the next American frontier full of promise and opportunities for adventurous pioneers, settlers, and especially for unscrupulous entrepreneurs. Thus arose the romantic legacy of the rugged self-reliant American

*GASSHO continues on p. 8*

## Donations

*continued from p. 2*

pioneer conquering the so called "wild, wild west." In this westward expansion the Native American Indians always got the shorter end of the stick.

This legacy of European and later American expansionism has been explained by Jared Diamond in his *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. As of today, this gap between the "have" and "have not" nations continues to become a canyon of global ramifications. It now has become a problem of people being "so close" and yet "so far apart" even within a nation, a community and even in a family. This outcome is not because of a person's genetics or the color of her or his skin. It is the outcome of denying equal educational and economic opportunities that mentally and materially stifle human potential. The economically powerless and educationally disadvantaged are condemned to a life of material, economic, educational, cultural and spiritual deprivation. Let us then all come together in All-encompassing Selflessness and All-embracing Togetherness by avoiding ways of excessiveness and wastefulness with the very resources that give and sustain life.

This is what Shinran Shonin actually meant when he said: "in this impermanent world that is a burning house, all things are empty and vain; therefore, untrue. Only the nembutsu is true, real and sincere." Please be steadfast in living the life of O-nembutsu, a life avoiding ways of harm and hurt and, instead, to live a life based on helpfulness and healing.

## **BUDDHIST STORY & PASSAGE**

Not by birth does one become high caste, not by birth does one become a low caste. By deeds one becomes high caste, by deeds one becomes a low caste. Dhammapada 7. Praises of Buddha. p. 162.

## **QUESTION & ANSWER CORNER**

QUESTION: What was the Buddha's position on war?

ANSWER: The Buddha always laid great stress on non-violence (*ahimsa*) through developing the moral and spiritual foundations for a happy, peaceful and contented society. Shinran realized that this was impossible if people did not become grateful, humble, reverent and truly penitent in seeing how their individual excesses and wastefulness with the very things of life were exacting a heavy toll on the very things and living forms in our surroundings in harmonious

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co-existence and relationships that are sacred and spiritual.

The Buddha said "there is nothing that can be called a 'just war' — which is only a false term circulated to justify and excuse hatred, cruelty, violence and massacres" (Walpole Rahula. *What the Buddha Taught*. p. 84.). The Buddha, therefore, did not accept the position: "Our war is always 'just,' and your war is always 'unjust'" (*ibid.*).

### **Schedule Changes for 2013**

Bon Service will be Sunday, June 30  
Practice night Tuesday, July 9  
Bon Dance July 12 & 13

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