

## inside your Jushin

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## Annual Membership Meeting January 27

The Board of Directors will hold its Annual Membership Meeting 9am on January 27. If you have paid your \$60 Gojinkai dues for 2019 by then please plan to attend to elect the board of directors and vote on measures. Non-members may observe. Our temple service will be held at 10am followed by our Annual Luncheon.



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## An Introduction To Pure Land Shin Buddhism

In general, in our modern society, we aim to be good people. Usually, we are expected to be helpful in this society and to others. Basically, morals and religions, including Buddhism, teach us similar things such as being kind to others, not speaking ill of others, not being lazy, being diligent, staying healthy, behaving well, and so on. However, can we really do these especially when we are having difficulties in our lives? Don't we feel stressed out trying to be positive, or a good person? I do.

Reflecting upon what I have been doing and thinking in my life, it is really difficult to achieve these righteous things. Actually, it's impossible for me. Especially when I was in Japan, that was so difficult.

Morals and religions in general tell us to "do" the right things. Generally speaking, one who can actually accomplish these righteous things is regarded as "a good person," and one who cannot is regarded as "a bad person." Also, in our society, people usually admire a good person and criticize a bad person. I feel that this is a natural human reaction. However, it is also true that "so-called" good people hurt "so-called" bad people's feelings. People criticize or blame others who cannot do right things or who do wrong things. When I was a teen and up until my early twenties, I was confident and at the same time, I often blamed others who couldn't achieve their goals. "I am doing the right thing. Why can't you?" was my basic thinking, and I still often find myself thinking like that. But if I were in their shoes, I would probably be just like them.

Can I say that I am absolutely right if somebody is hurt by

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## Minister's Message

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my action? I should say that we harm ourselves and others by holding this idea tightly; "I am right and you are wrong."

My father was like that.

Looking back, his words were logically true, and I was a bad child, but I didn't want to become like him. However, it was very shocking to know that I was

doing the same thing to others.

I don't know

whether it's good or bad, but I have grown up to be exactly like him. I hurt others, forgetting my bitter experiences.

I guess one of the most important teachings of our denomination is to realize our true self. In the name of justice or righteousness, we might hurt others. In that sense, doing right things could unconsciously make others suffer. We are very unconscious about our actions and words, especially when we are not thinking about Buddhism. Buddhism is not only for when we hear the teachings. Rather, Buddhism is integral to our daily lives. Through the Nembutsu teaching, we realize the unconscious part of

ourselves.

Let me share another aspect of Pure Land teaching; Other Power.

Our Pure Land Buddhism is also called the gate of Other Power. Other Power is the working of Amida Buddha's vow. The Self Power way of thinking is like training or exerting ourselves in order to improve or to become enlightened. Through

*"Through the Nembutsu teaching, we realize the unconscious part of ourselves."*

enlightened if we could really continue this. It's easy to understand this logic; if we do something good and train ourselves, we will be enlightened. However, this way is totally difficult. Especially, 2,500 years have passed after the death of Shakyamuni Buddha, our era is called the Latter Days or the Age of Decadence. It is said that most people cannot follow this difficult way. I really cannot put additional pressure on myself. I used to suffer more through doing so.

As we know, in our modern society, it's totally difficult not to get distracted. The era when Shakyamuni Buddha was alive is utterly different from the era we live

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## Mochi Making is Way Fun



Please join us on December 29, 10am, and let's have fun making unflavored mochi for your Butsudan (altar) and yummy, flavored mochi for your family (or for yourself). But wait! You'll need to do some important things first. Please wash then soak your sweet rice covered with water from Thursday night or Friday morning! Change the water every 12 hours. Please bring your drained rice in a gallon-sized zipped plastic bag and your favorite peanut butter, jellies, chocolates, or fruits for the filling. You'll be taking home what you make.



## '19 Calendars Are Here

Our Hawaii District's full-color 2019 calendars are in! It lists events for all five Higashi temples, features beautiful calligraphy, thoughtful Buddhist messages and colorful photos for each month. Available at our temple, it's great for every room of the house!

## Minister's Message

*Continued from page 2.*

in. I guess, in those days, it was less difficult to concentrate on meditating. Last month I went back to Japan - I really felt stressed with the polluted air, dense population, too many cars and buildings, too much information, excessive entertainment and so on. There are innumerable distractions to disturb our mind.

I guess that is why the ideology of Pure Land teaching espoused by Shinran Shonin 800 years ago became popular with followers because the way of Self Power is very difficult for people to follow in this age.

The Nembutsu teaching is for one who cannot meditate, who doesn't have time, and who realizes his or her own weakness, evil nature or limitation, ego-self. Our Pure Land way is also called the easy path. We just recite the Nembutsu. We entrust all of our existence to Amida Buddha. Let our mind and body give to Amida Buddha. I know that's the hardest part. We realize ourselves who can't even give up, who can't truly believe in Amida Buddha. That's why we are the object of Amida's liberation.

We don't forcibly do or act things in order to be good or improve. We just follow Hongan (our deepest aspiration), which resides deep inside our minds. We listen to the teaching and realize what we have in our deepest mind. We listen to what our mind says. We realize that there is Amida's great compassion underneath anger, hatred or whatever our self-centered thinking is.

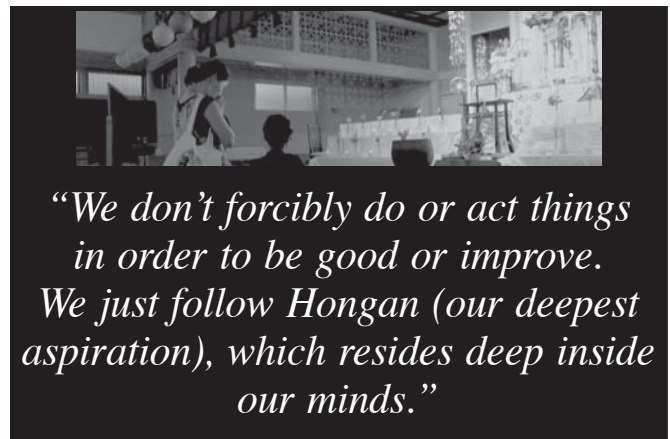
At the risk of being misunderstood, I would say, we do nothing. To do nothing means realizing that we are already alright or precious without doing anything. Through realizing Other Power, we notice that we are unconsciously doing things with Self Power.

Shinran Shonin realized that trying to be good, or trying to attain enlightenment is one of our worldly desires. He discerned that his desire to get enlightened made him suffer and obstructed his path of enlightenment.

Simply saying, he sought serenity in his mind, but he found that his seeking serenity actually made him suffer. It may sound weird, but this seemingly contradictory logic is a critically important essence of Shin Buddhism. My revered teacher, Rev. Akihiro Sano said, "Being not liberated is the liberation." Shinran also said, "hell is decidedly my abode whatever I do." In our denomination, this mindset is called "The two deeply entrusting mind" (二種深信).

So, simply put, Shinran stopped trying to be a good person. He realized his true self. He realized that he had innumerable worldly passions which he could never erase. That was the moment he was liberated by Amida Buddha. Amida Buddha saves us unconditionally. Shinran realized that he didn't have to get rid of his sufferings. We cannot simply say that sufferings are bad. Rather, sufferings are something that makes us grow mentally. This is another aspect of Pure Land teaching from my perspective.

In Gassho



*"We don't forcibly do or act things in order to be good or improve. We just follow Hongan (our deepest aspiration), which resides deep inside our minds."*

# Jushin 樹心

## Temple Service & Activities Calendar

### DECEMBER 2018

- 9 Sun 9am Kaneohe Bodhi Day Service
- 16 Sun 9am Sunday Service, Temple Band concert. Board Meeting.
- 18 Tue 3pm OKO at Betsuin
- 19 Tue Ann Pearl Care Facility Visit
- 23 Sun 9am Sunday Service
- 23 Sun 11:30 Betsuin's volunteer effort to clean and polish the Ehime Maru Monument at Kaka'ako Waterfront Park. Meet at park. Please check with Aki Sensei about lunch details.
- 29 Sat 10am Mochi Tsuki (mochi machines)  
*Bring your pre-soaked sweet rice and fixings. See page 2.*
- 30 Sun 9am Sunday Service
- 31 Mon 5pm Joya-e Year's End Service  
Tolling the bell 108 times, Rev. Aki will make Soba.

### JANUARY 2019

- 1 Tue 9am Shusho-e  
New Year's Day Service
- 2 Wed Ann Pearl Care Facility Visit
- 6 Sun 9am New Year Family Service
- 13 Sun 9am Sunday Service
- 16 Wed Ann Pearl Care Facility Visit
- 20 Sun 9am Sunday Service
- 27 Sun 9am General Membership Meeting  
Followed by Sunday Service  
and Annual Luncheon.
- 29 Tue HaleNani Care Facility Visit

**Editor's note about our calendar:** Because the Jushin is printed every 2 months, events and dates appearing on our calendar may change or might not be ready in time for our printing deadline. Please check our website for current information, or telephone our temple at 247-2661. Mahalo.

## Ring-Out 2018 and Mochi-In 2019



Ring-out 2018 on Dec. 31, after service we'll ring our bell 108 times and end the year with Rev. Aki's soba!

Greet 2019 (on Jan. 1, of course) and enjoy hot ozoni soup with us in genki spirits!

