

自 信 於 Kyo 人 Nin 信 Shin



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PREFACE

The Dharma School Division of the Buddhist Churches of America published a series of reference books "Jishin Kyo Ninshin," a guide for Ministers and Dharma School Teachers.

The series published:
Jishin Kyo Ninshin - Teacher's Guide
Pre-School Guide and Workbook
Kindergarten Guide and Workbook
Grades 1, 2, 3 Guide and Workbook
Grades 4, 5, 6 Guide and Workbook
and the final level Grades 7, 8 Guide.

We hope the teacher's and students will benefit from the series of publications.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The grades 7th and 8th Guide is published under the direction and guidance of the Buddhist Churches of America, Department of Buddhist Education Committee.

This Dharma School Grade Level Lesson Plan is developed from the accumulated writings of ministers and Dharma School teachers, research findings and materials developed at conferences and workshops.

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Jishin Kuo NINSHIN RADE 7

> IV BCA FDSTL 2017

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- —A Place to Play Volume II

Buddhist Festivals

BUDDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA DHARMA SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Grade Level	Focus	Aims and Objectives
Seventh Grade	Shinran Shonin	Study the life of Shinran Shonin
	Buddhist Observances	Study the Six Paramitas Relate the studies to every day
	Activities	life and to each student's needs

First is Preparation:

What is the aim in this lesson? What materials will I need? How will I present this lesson?

Preparation of general knowledge of the topic and intended direction is very important. It is important for the teachers to work through one's thoughts as well as what the students may be thinking. Flexibility in terms of the process is very important, but it must be a controlled flexibility.

Second is How to Start:

Class can begin with an introduction—name tags for young children, discussion of interest for older students. The class session can begin in a number of ways. Much will depend on the topic under consideration. It can begin with a story, music, or quotation. After the introduction of the topic, time should be allowed for reflective thinking. Then, begin the lesson or discussion by involving the children or students.

Third is to Listen to Responses:

Let the students know that you are interested in the responses and are keeping track of important points. After key responses are put on paper or noted, discuss the general trend of the thinking of the class. Reach a consensus and incorporate the religious point of view. The process requires a summary lead by the teacher or student so that an understanding can be developed with the lesson. Give clear and concise instructions.

Fourth is How to End:

If the intent of the topic is achieved, it is time to stop. Always keep in mind the goal or target of the project, and reach a conclusion by the end of class time. In order to hold student interest, the topic must consist of social concerns, human circumstances and student preferences. The response is generally kept within the context of the student's own experience.

After this is completed, the Buddhist and Jodo Shinshu perspective is introduced to see how the teachings apply to the lives of students. Every avenue possible is explored for the enhancement of thoughts and feelings.

The topics can be introduced by the use of visual aids, stories, current events, and roleplays. At any time, if students wish to present a topic for consideration, they are free to do so.

Enhancing Self Image

Explain to the student that they are going to do a positive evaluation of their classmates. They should evaluate their friends in a way that it will bring out the best in them.

Procedure:

- 1. Pass out a sheet of paper to each student.
- 2. Have each student write his name at the bottom of the paper.
- 3. Have the students scramble to change seats.
- 4. Pass the paper to the student to his left.
- 5. Each student writes a sentence making a positive comment about that person. Fold down to hide the statement.
- 6. Pass the paper to the student to his left and continue procedure #5 and #6 until each student gets his own paper back.
- 7. Students may evaluate himself.
- 8. Student should go back to his original seat.

Who Am I?

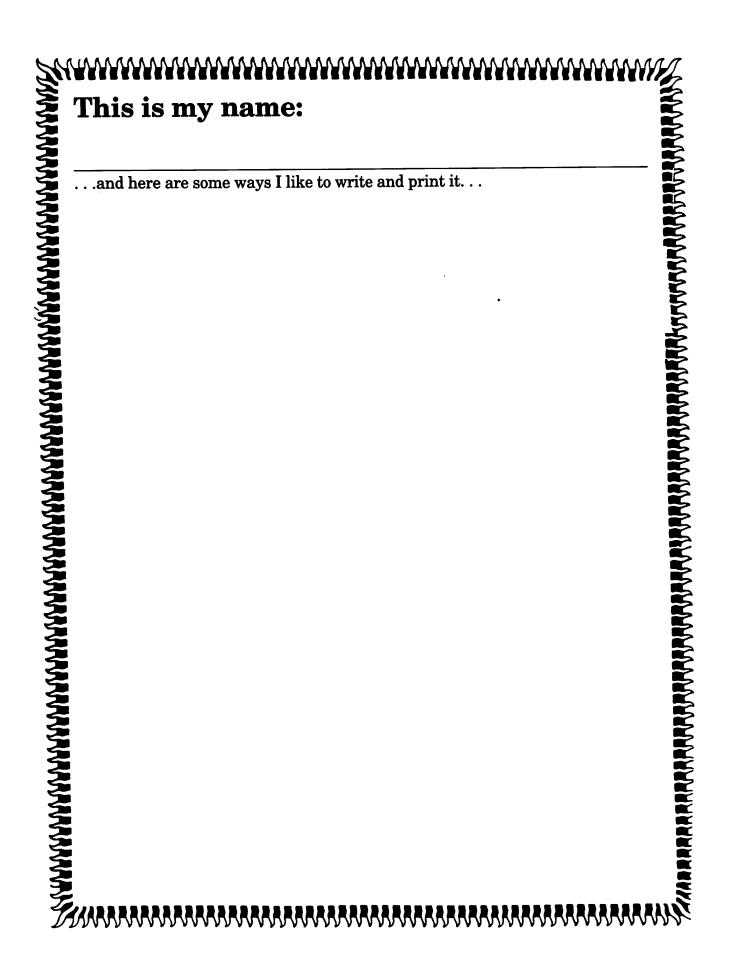
Write a paper about yourself without mentioning your name or physical characteristics.

Write about:

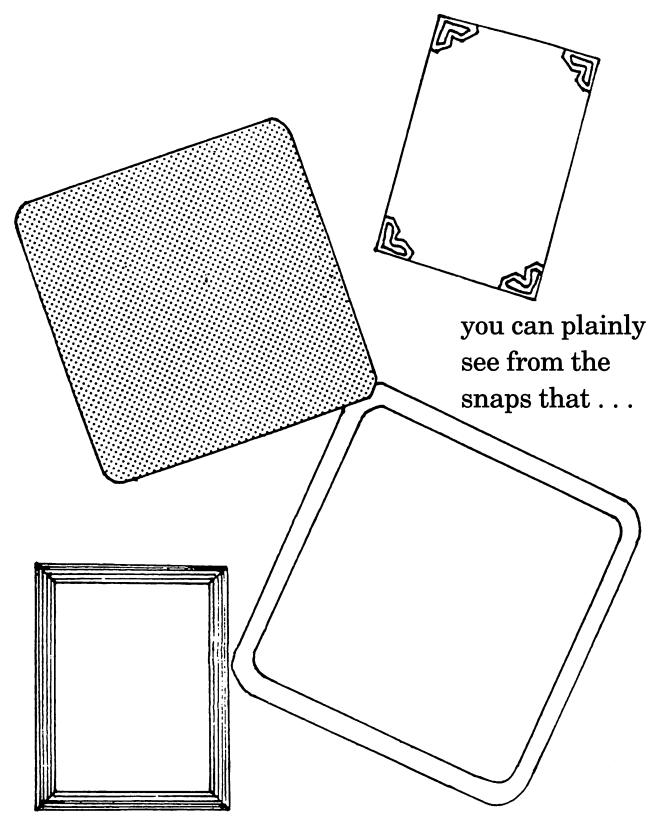
Your likes/dislikes Your feelings Things you do well. Something you did this summer

Hand in your paper.

The teacher reads each paper and the class tries to guess who is being described. The teacher should also write a paper.

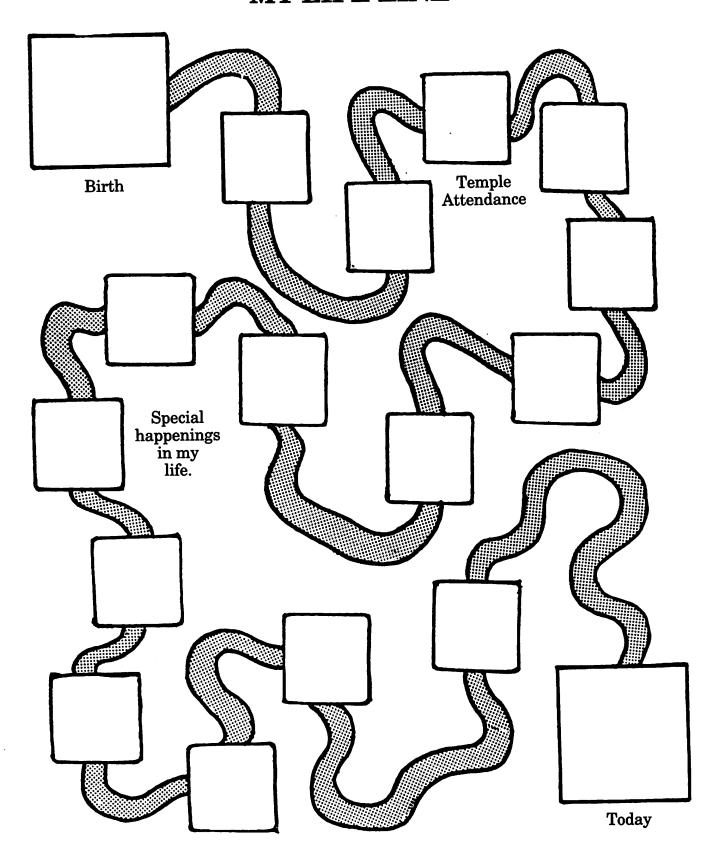


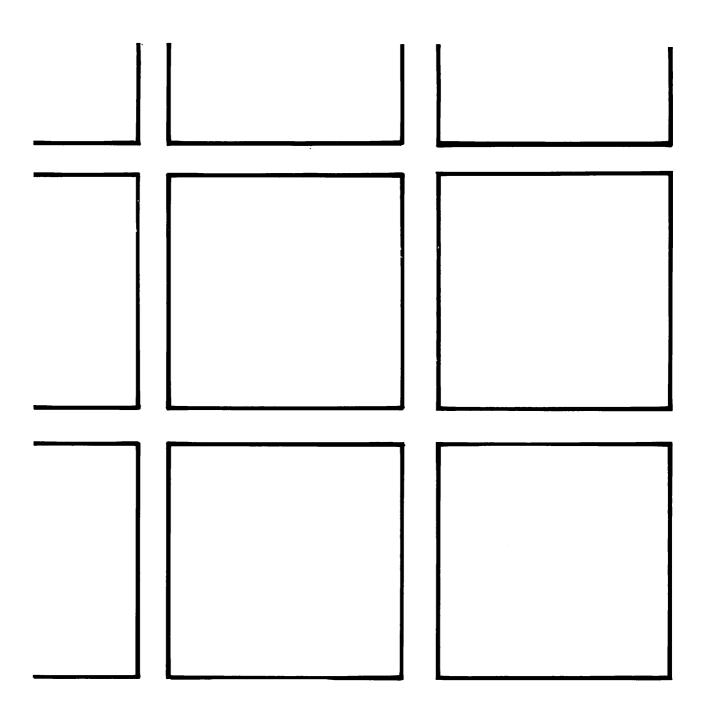
This is me.



This is ME!

MY LIFE LINE



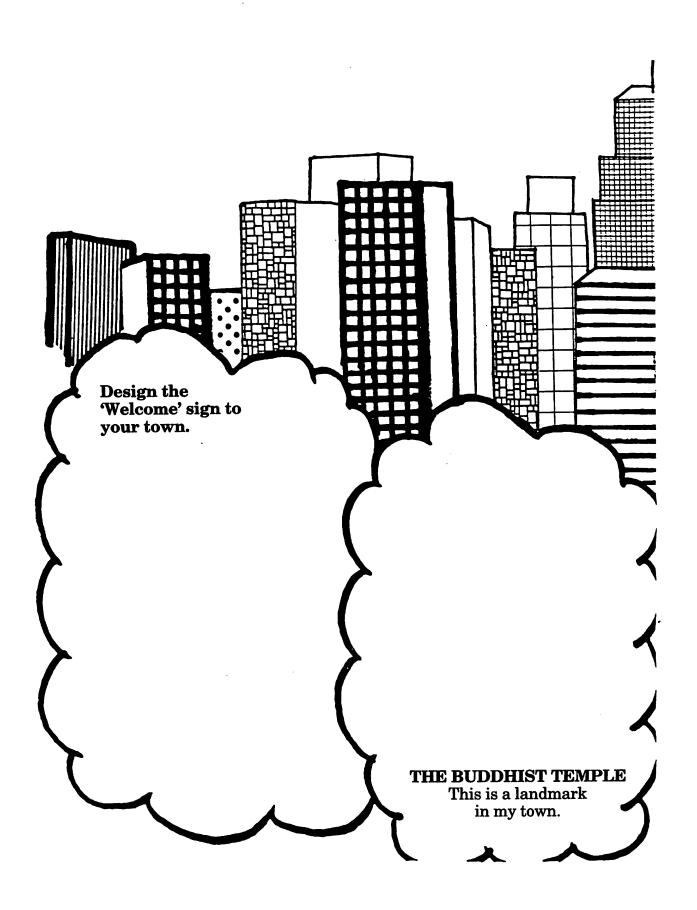


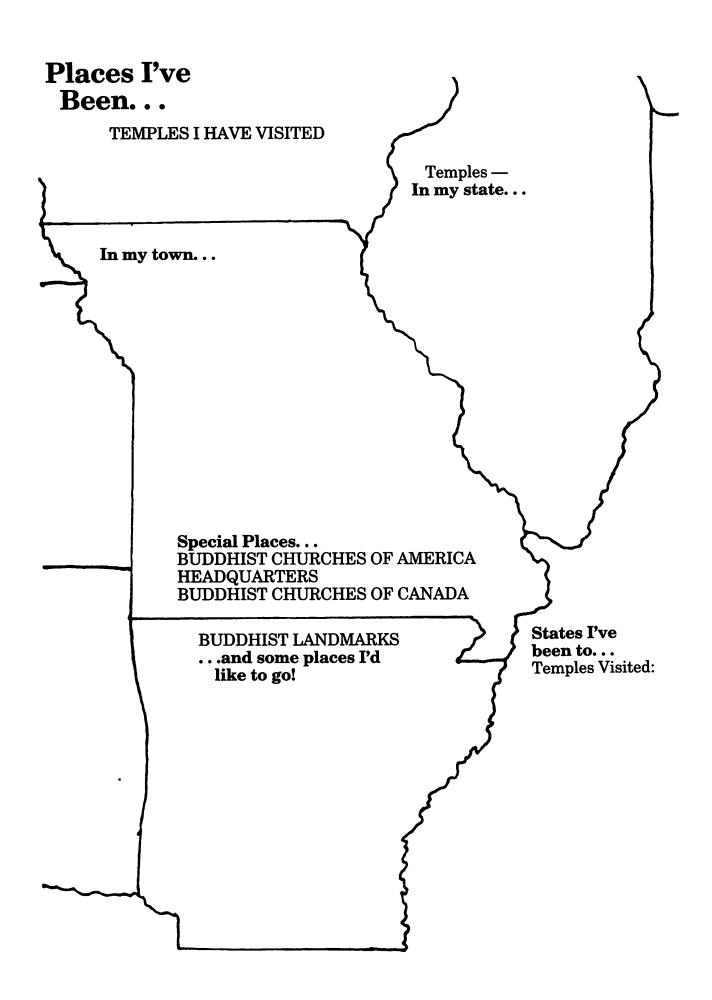
MY NEIGHBORHOOD Indicate Where Your Temple Is:

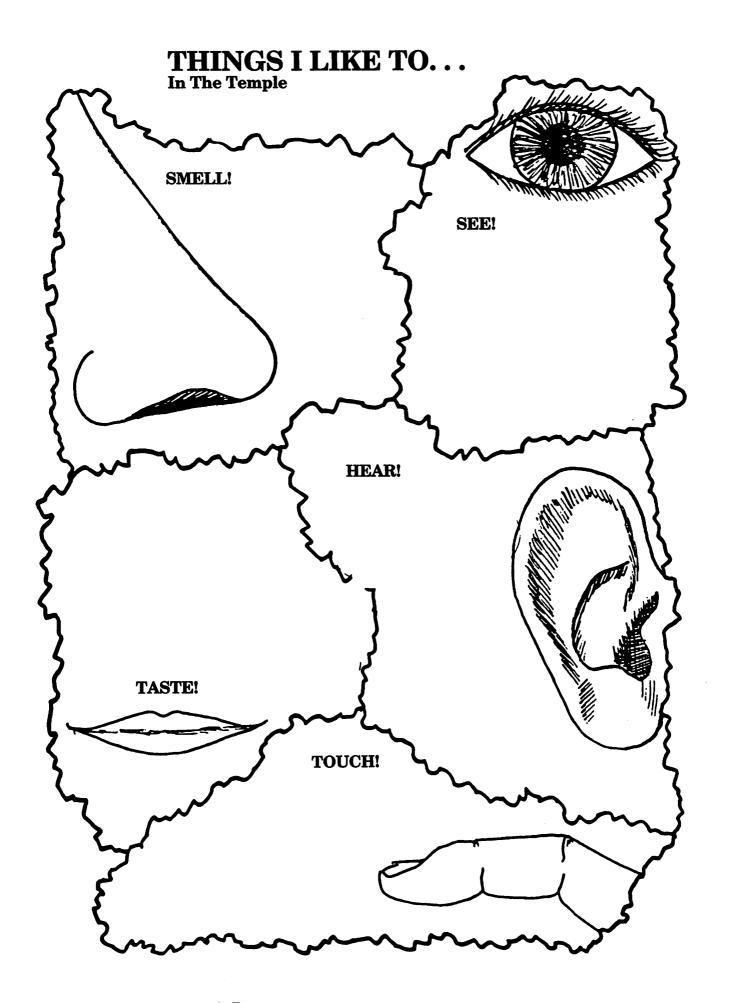
MAP YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Place your house first. Then label streets and other houses. You may even want to add trees, bushes, street lights, telephone poles, etc.

MY HOME TOWN

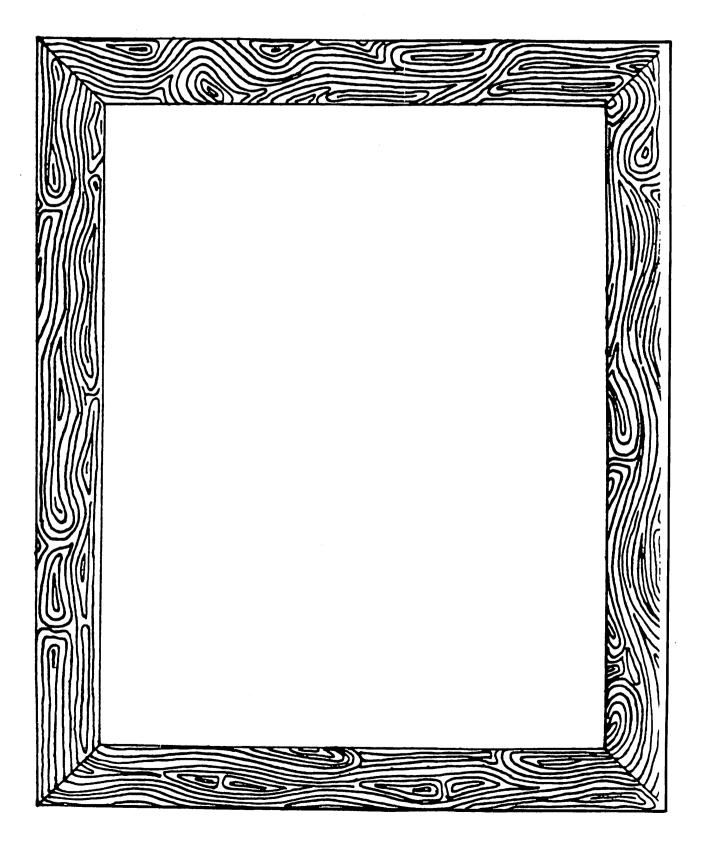


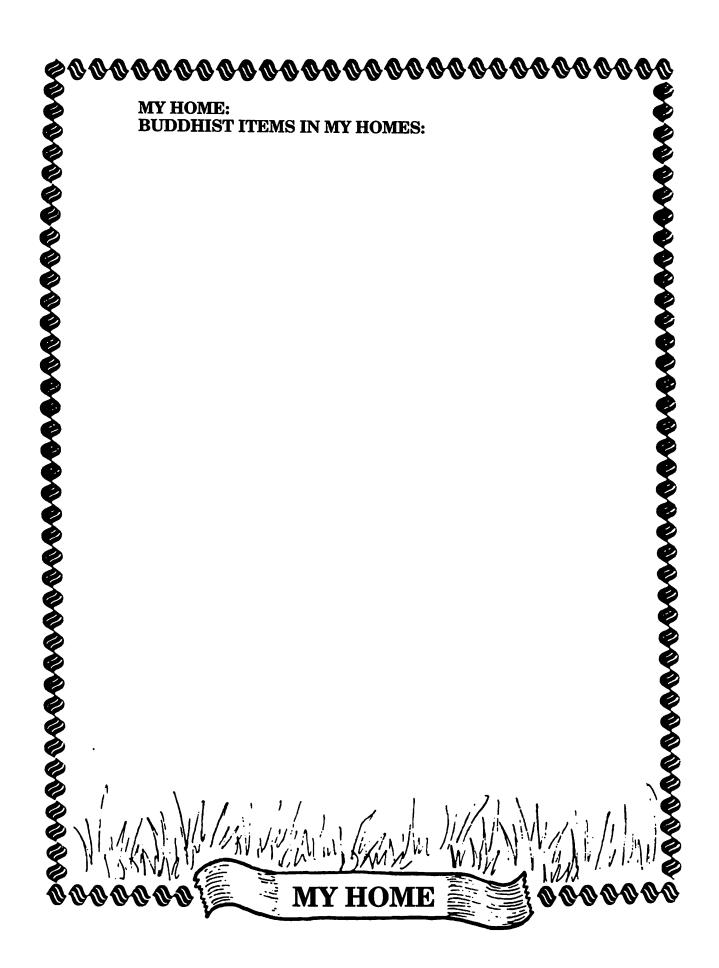






A friend of mine drew this picture of me.







I am happy when
I get angry when
I hope that
() I am good at
I am afraid of
I am ashamed of
I feel sorry for
I am really good at
I get excited when
I feel safe when
I need
I am thankful for
I am lonely when
I am proud of

Note To The Teacher

In your own research of Shinran's life, you may find books that may seem to disagree, not so much on the year, but on the month and day in which significant occurrences took place in the life of Shinran. These differences are not due to disagreement among historians.

Rather, the differences in dates occur depending on whether the author is writing according to the old tradition following the lunar calendar or the modern custom following the solar calendar.

For example, tradition establishes Shinran's birthday on the 1st day of the 4th month according to the lunar calendar. The nearest corresponding date according to the solar calendar is believed to be May 21st. The two dates are correct as long as notation is made whether the date is according to the lunar or solar calendar.

Confusion occurs when the 4th month of the lunar calendar is arbitrarily interpreted as April. It must be remembered by all teachers that the fourth month of the lunar calendar is not necessarily April. It must also be remembered that teachers should be very careful in interpreting dates, because information concerning the life of Shinran comes from various sources written long ago in Japan. These sources, most usually, base their dates according to the lunar calendar; and to this day, only Shinran's birthday and death have been changed to follow the solar calendar.

Therefore, in order to avoid confusion, this lesson book for the seventh grade Dharma School students is not concerning itself too much with detailed reporting of dates except for the two dates (birth and death) that are followed today by the Buddhist Churches of America. Other important events in the life of Shinran have been noted only by the year in which they occurred.

A Better Appreciation of Shinran Shonin

Present him as an inspiring person who can live in children's lives. Too often in the past he has been represented as a person so remote as if he were a person of a completely different world from that of the children.

The following outstanding character traits of Shinran Shonin should be pointed out to the students:

- 1. Strong will-power and decision
- 2. Effort constant study (his outstanding writings and correspondence with his followers)
- 3. Courage and fearlessness
- 4. Kindness and Gentleness
- 5. Firm Faith
- 6. Patience (his twenty years of devoted study on Mt. Hiei)
- 7. Respect for teacher (his devoted love and respect for Honen Shonin)
- 8. Self-reflection (his sharp inner-reflection)
- 9. Humbleness
- 10. Democratic philosophy (He never regarded himself as a teacher but a child of Amida Buddha, the same as anyone.

Shinran Shonin (1173-1262 A.D.)



Introduction

We are Buddhists of the Jodo Shin Shu.

The founder of the Jodo Shin Shu was Shinran Shonin.1

Who was this great man who explained Buddhism so all people may understand and follow the Buddha's teachings? Why is the way of Shinran called the true religion? What incidents in his life made him what he was?

¹Shonin is a title of respect and veneration given to a great religious teacher or leader of Buddhism in Japan by the people themselves and not necessarily conferred on a person through ecclesiastical action. Shonin is rather difficult to translate and perhaps the only approximate word in English may be Saint.

Important Events in the Life of Shinran Shonin

1. **BIRTH**

Historical evidence proves 1173 A.D. as Shinran Shonin's year of birth. The exact date is unknown.

A long tradition established and authorized by both Honganji places the date of his birth on the 1st day of the 4th month of the lunar calendar. Therefore, there is no need to deny nor correct this date for the children.

In 1887 (20th year of Meiji) Nishi Honganji translated this date of the lunar calendar into May 21 of the solar calendar. Thus, May 21, 1173 became established by tradition as Shinran Shonin's birthday.

DEATH OF HIS PARENTS 2.

There are three opinions regarding his father's death.

- a. When Shinran was 4 years old his father passed away. This is a most unreasonable theory, for it is historically known that Shinran had four younger brothers.
- b. When Shinran was 8 years old, he lost his father.
- c. Shinran's father retired from society and lived longer, possible more than ten vears.

Shinran's mother is said to be Kikko but she is only a legendary personage. This legend can be told to children.

ORDINATION

According to Shinran Den'e by Kakunyo, Shinran was ordained in the spring of the first year of Yowa (1181) at Sho-ren-in of Jichin. However, history proves that Jichin did not become the chief abbot of Sho-ren-in until November of that year.

The literal translation of "Toku" is "bald head" or "short hair."

MONASTIC LIFE ON HIEI 4.

The date of Shinran's entry into the monastery is unknown. But this date is not important because Sho-ren-in belonged to the Tendai sect and Jichin himself became the chief abbot of Hiei four times. The story of "Shokoin no Monzeki" is not more than a legend transmitted to the later generations to emphasize Shinran's intelligence. All we know from the historical point of view regarding his position in the monastery is that he was a "Doso" (a priest practicing the Nembutsu in the Hall) at the Jogyodo (literally meaning — Hall of constantly walking samadhi).

Shinran's confinement at Rokkakudo for hundred days and his reception of a divine suggestion from Prince Shotoku (regarded to be the incarnation of Bodhisattva Kannon) can be acknowledged through Eshinni's letters.

ENTRY INTO YOSHIMIZU 5.

This took place in 1201. This year is very clear because Shinran mentions it in the Kvogvoshinsho.

SHINRAN IN OKAZAKI

Okazaki is a place located near Yoshimizu and is the present site of the Okazaki Betsuin, belonging to the Higashi Honganji. Therefore, it might be assumed that Shinran lived around this site. However, since no details of his life there is known, it does not have to be especially emphasized.

MATRIMONY WITH TAMAHI 7.

This is a completely legendary episode. The name — Tamahi — appears for the first time in the story book entitled "Shinran Shonin Inen Hidensho" which was published about 180 years after Shinran's death.

Historically, Shinran's wife was Eshinni. Whether Shinran was married before he married Eshinni is subject to further study. Modern historians are inclined to deny Shinran's previous marriage.

EXILE TO ECHIGO IN 1207

This is a historical fact.

REMOVAL OF THE BAN IN 1211

This is also a historical fact. According to Shinran's words in the Kyogyoshinsho, Honen was pardoned on the 17th of the 11th month of 1211. It is presumed that Shinran was also released from exile at the same time.

10. SETTLEMENT AT INADA (Hitachi Province)

It is difficult to establish the year as 1217. It can be traced historically that he stayed in Sanuki of Kozuke Province in 1214 and entered Hitachi Province, thence possibly he proceeded to Inada via Yokozone, Takata, etc. It is impossible to say exactly when he started writing the Kyogyoshinsho.

11. THE NAME OF SHINRAN

According to the appendix of the "Tannisho," he began to use the name, Shinran, as well as "Gutoku," after he was banished to Echigo.

12. WRITING OF THE KYOGYOSHINSHO

It is probable that Shinran completed a rough draft of the Kyogyoshinsho in the year 1224. However, recently many different theories have appeared among the scholars. For the present, we can adopt the 1224 theory.

13. RETURN TO KYOTO

There is no evidence for the theory that he returned in 1232. His return is usually presumed to be sometime after he was 60 years old (60 sai amari de). His arrival in Kyoto in 1235 is also groundless.

14. DEATH

Shinran passed away on the 28th day of the 11th month of 1262 (Lunar C.)

Example:

Various Names of Shinran Throughout His Life

Matsuwaka Maro

Boyhood name.

Hannen

Name given to him by Abbot Jichin. This name was also used

during his stay at Mt. Hiei.

Shakku

Name given to him by Honen.

Zenshin

Name conferred upon him by the vision of Prince Shotoku.

Yoshizane Fujii

Secular name given to him when sentenced to exile by the gov-

ernment.

Toku¹ (Gutoku)

Shinran

Kenshin Daishi

Posthumous name bestowed upon Shinran by Emperor Meiji

meaning "Great Master, Seer of the Truth."

Chart of significant dates in the life of Shinran. Begin this chart, too, with a blank piece of paper with only the heading.

Example:

- The year of birth (May 21st Solar calendar).

 Ordered into the prince the age of nine. Soon after the
- Ordained into the priesthood at the age of nine. Soon after the ordination rite at the Sho-ren-in Temple, he was taken to Mt. Hiei.
- 1201 He left Mt. Hiei to become a pupil of Honen in Yoshimizu, Kyoto.
- The priests of the Kofukuji Temple at Nara who were jealous of the popularity of the Nembutsu movement presented a resolution to the Imperial Court in Kyoto demanding that Honen and his disciples be severely punished.
- 1207 Exiled by the government to Echigo province.
- 1211 Pardoned from exile.
- 1224 Completed the first draft of "**Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho"** (Analects concerning Teaching, Practice, Faith and Attainment).
- 1232 Theoretical year of his return to Kyoto.
- 1262 Passed away in Kyoto (Jan. 16, Solar calendar).

Detailed Explanation of the Various Names

Shinran Shonin is the name of the founder of the Jodo Shin Shu. However, this was not the only name he used throughout his life. Significant happenings during his life caused his name to be changed either by someone else or by himself. Since the changing of his name was for definite reasons, it would be well for the teacher and the students to understand the implications of the different names for a better appreciation of Shinran's life.

Legend tells us that at birth, his parents named him Matsuwaka Maro. Upon entering the priesthood at the age of nine, the head monk bestowed the name of Hannen upon him. The name, Hannen, was also used while he was at Mt. Hiei for twenty years.

When he became a disciple of Honen, he recieved the name Shakku from his master. With the approval of Honen, the name Shakku was later changed to Zenshin which was the name conferred upon him by the vision of Prince Shotoku.

Exiled by the government, he was denied his priestly rank and given the secular name, Yoshizane Fujii. However, the surname he chose for himself was Toku. By adopting the last name, "Toku," he declared that he was neither a monk nor a layman. The declaration that he was neither a monk tied down by the church and government nor a layman who knew nothing about Buddhism was significant in that he put himself in the free position of a real seeker of truth.

The name "Toku" was usually preceded by "Gu" which means "ignorant." Thus the name Gutoku was formed. While still in Echigo, he added the name Shinran formed from the name Seshin (Vasubandhu) and Donran, two great Buddhists, to whom he felt sincere regard.

For the remainder of his life, he used the full name Gutoku Shinran.

Today, we call him Shinran Shonin or by its approximate English translation St. Shinran.

Early Childhood

Shinran Shonin was born in the village of Hino near the capital city of Kyoto.¹ He was born in the year 1173 on May 21st.¹¹

Since his parents were of the nobility, he was given the best of care. A legend tells us that after much thought, the proud parents named him Matsuwaka Maro after the pine tree of unchanging freshness and green. They, like all other parents, hoped that the little one would enjoy full happiness and prosperity. For awhile, the future did seem indeed bright. Matsuwaka Mara was loved by everyone and his childhood was filled with happiness.

However, while he was still in his childhood, tragedy suddenly came his way. He and his brothers were parted from their parents. Alone without anyone to care for them, they were sent to their uncle, Lord Noritsuna, for their upbringing.

Being raised in the beautiful surroundings of his uncle's home did not render him immune from the pangs of loneliness. He missed his parents dearly. He was constantly thinking of how he might be able to meet them again. At such times, his heart would be filled with a great longing for the peaceful world of the Buddha.

Finally, when he was nine years old, he said to his uncle, "Dear Uncle, I have a favor to ask of you. Please let me become a monk. Please let me become a disciple of the Buddha. I want to learn about the eternal teachings and meet my father and mother again.

At first the uncle did not know what to do about Matsuwaka Maro's request, but seeing how earnest and determined the boy was, he said, "Very well, I will speak to the head priest of Shoren-in Temple about you."

Kyoto was the capital city of Japan for a number of years before it was moved to the present site of Tokyo.

¹¹ This date, which is used by the Buddhist Churches of America, is Shinran's birthday according to the solar calendar.

Joining the Priesthood

When the head priest, Jichin, heard of Matsuwaka Maro's determination to become a monk, he was deeply moved. It was customary in those days to wait until a person was fifteen years old before being admitted into the priesthood, but impressed by Matsuwaka Maro's eagerness, Jichin said he would make special allowances for the boy.

"Tomorrow then, we shall have an ordination rite," said Jichin.

Matsuwaka Maro, who should have been happy to hear the words of the head priest, was gazing at the floor in deep thought. Sensitive to the uncertainties of life, he got a piece of paper and wrote the following verse:

> Tis vain to wait until tomorrow; Life is like the glorious cherry blossom Which ere morn might all be gone, Night winds as soon might blow them off.

Jichin read aloud the poem Matsuwaka Maro had written and nodded his head many times.

He quickly beckoned to his assistants. Though the hour was late, candles were lit and the words of ordination rang out clearly. Lord Noritsuna grew misty-eyed as he watched his earnest little nephew promise to abide by the strict rules of the order. The boy was given the name of Hannen and soon led to a small, cold bed.

Thus began for a nine year old boy, his lifetime of hard work, long hours of study and experiences which he never dreamed.

Advanced Study at Mt. Hiei

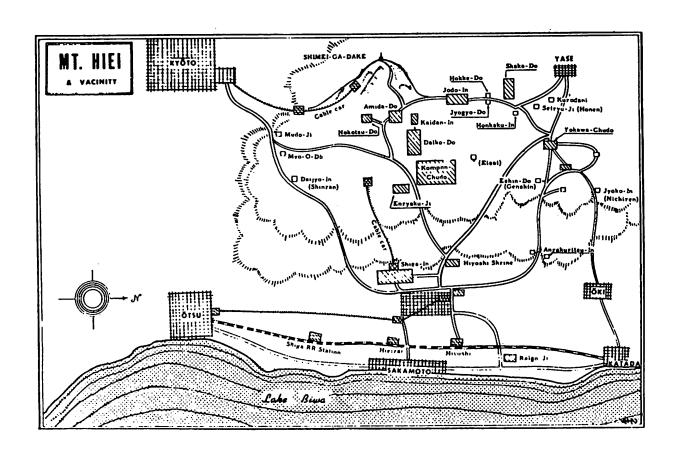
For several months, the head priest, Jichin, tested the ability of the young boy. Seeing that Hannen seemed to possess natural inclinations for the priesthood, Jichin brought him to Daijo-in Monastery on Mt. Hiei.1

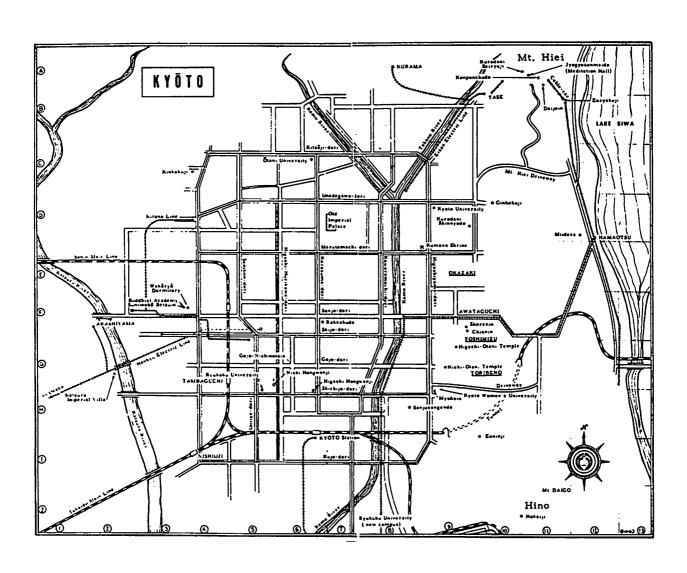
Hannen's progress in his studies there was remarkable and his future was becoming a very promising one. Though many monks on Mt. Hiei would have found great joy to be in Hannen's position, Hannen did not find satisfaction in the gain of higher rank. His goal was not to occupy a conspicuous place as a high priest, but to seek enlightenment.

As the years went by, he studied harder than ever and performed religious practices which would lead him to the supreme goal. By exerting himself as far as possible, he thought that he could attain enlightenment. Fired with religious fervor, Hannen labored unceasingly, only to come to the conclusion that after twenty years at Mt. Hiei, he had not come closer to the realization of enlightenment.

The more he tried, the more he realized his own imperfections and inadequacies. He is said to have said of himself, "Though I try to see clearly the moon of one-mindedness, the clouds of passion still come to intercept."

Mt. Hiei, which towers high to the northeast of Kyoto had been the center of Buddhism ever since 805 A.D. Most of the great teachers who played an important part in the history and growth of Buddhism in Japan spent all or part of their lives studying on Mt. Hiei.





Seeking the Confinement at the Rokkakudo Temple

Hannen, who was now twenty-nine years old, felt that he had failed miserably in his search for enlightenment. Believing that there was no other way to save himself, he decided to confine himself at the Rokkakudo Temple in Kyoto for one hundred days to seek the divine guidance of Kannon.

At dawn on the ninety-fifth day of his confinement, Hannen, as if guided by the merciful hands of Kannon, received a divine suggestion. The vision of Prince Shotoku¹ appeared before him and whispered, "Nembutsu is the only path through which you can be saved. You will soon meet a great teacher who will teach you the way to eternal peace through the Nembutsu."

"Was it a dream?" he thought to himself. "But what a strange dream. Who could be the great teacher of the Nembutsu? Where could he be?"

As the master spoke of his own experiences and how he came to believe in the Nembutsu way, Hannen knew that here was a teaching that was also meant for him. He became a disciple of Honen and received the name Shakku.

Thus in the year 1201, a new disciple named Shakku joined the group at Yoshimizu. Here under the guidance of his beloved teacher, Shakku began to lead a new spiritual life. Here also developed a beautiful relationship between teacher and pupil working as one in faith, heart and purpose.

By 1205, Honen's confidence in Shakku had grown to such an extent that Shakku was allowed to transcribe Honen's main work, "Senjakushu." Shakku was moved to tears in being permitted to copy his master's work, for a privilege of this nature was not granted freely to all disciples.

Just about this time, Shakku with his master's consent changed his name to Zenshin.

¹ The vision of Prince Shotoku rather than Kannon appearing before Shinran at the Rokkakudo Temple is not strange at all. The people of that time believed Prince Shotoku was an incarnation of Kannon.

Becoming a Disciple of Honen

Through a friend, Hannen was introduced to Honen Shonin who taught the way of Nembutsu at Yoshimizu.

Master Honen very gently explained, "No matter how wise a man may become, it is very difficult for man with all his inner contradictions to attain enlightenment by his own power. I, too, have studied at Mt. Hiei for thirty years and have gone through much suffering. Yet I found to my great sorrow, that no matter how I tried, I was far from attaining enlightenment. I asked the advice of many priests and scholars, but they could not help me. Finally, I went to the temple library and read the holy books at random. It was in Zendo's book that I came upon the following passage:

> To call on Amida's Name with one's whole heart, at all times and in all places. and never to give up so doing throughout one's life, this is the true decisive cause of rebirth in his Pure Land. for it is in harmony with his divine will.

After reading the passage from Zendo, I was filled with bright hopes. I knew, now, there was a way open for people like myself to attain the perfect peace of enlightenment. I realized that I was unable to find enlightenment because I was relying solely upon myself. How could I, with all my human weaknesses, hope to gain enlightenment through my own powers? As Zendo states, "I must rely on this great virtue of Amida Buddha and call his holy name, Namu Amida Butsu, for my enlightenment."

Sentenced to Exile

During the time that Honen was at Yoshimizu, civil wars were constantly being waged between rival clans which made life and property in the city very uncertain. Many people came to Honen to seek rest and consolation in his preaching. Honen's preaching which was always straight-forward, simple and plain was readily understood, deeply affecting the hearts of all who listened. All classes of people such as court nobles, warriors, accomplished scholars and the common people came to Yoshimizu to hear about Amida Buddha and the Nembutsu.

As time went on, the followers of the Nembutsu faith increased so rapidly that the scholars of Mt. Hiei and Nara became jealous of Honen Shonin. They feared that the center of Buddhism which was believed to be at the city of Nara and at Mt. Hiei was gradually being moved to Yoshimizu in Kyoto.

The jealous priests approached the Imperial Court and claimed that the way of the Nembutsu was not according to the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha. They denounced Honen Shonin so severely that the Imperial Court could not drop the matter and was forced to take action against Honen Shonin and his disciples.

In 1207, an order was issued whereby Honen Shonin and seven of his foremost disciples (including Zenshin) were deprived of their ecclesiastical standings, given secular names¹ and sentenced to exile: Honen to the island of Shikoku; and Zenshin to the province of Echigo.¹¹

When the order of exile became known, no words of complaint issued from the lips of Honen and his disciples. No sorrow or bitterness were shown, although they had been falsely accused. The aging master was seventy-five, and Zenshin who was thirty-five looked upon their exile as an opportunity to spread the teaching among the people in the remote areas of Japan.

Modern Niigata prefecture.

The secular name given to Zenshin was Yoshizane Fujii.

Echigo

Zenshin Becomes Gutoku Shinran

Zenshin's place of banishment was called Kokufu in Echigo Province.

For anyone used to the life in the city, the first experience of winter in such a place must have been terrible. Ryosetsu Fujiwara describes Echigo in winter, "The sky hangs low and the angry waves of the Japan Sea beat against the rocky shores like fearful beasts. Sometimes the snow is so deep that the houses are buried under it."

Echigo was indeed a bleak place, but Zenshin did not mind. Since he was not required to be confined to his home, he traveled wherever he could to tell the people of Amida Buddha.

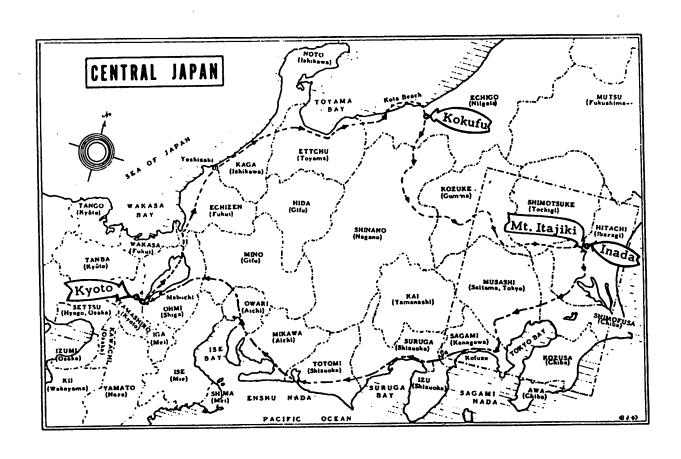
It was here in Echigo that he began to be known as Shinran. Although he was given the secular name Yoshizane Fujii by the government, he adopted the name Shinran for himself. He probably derived the name by putting together the last syllables of the names of two great teachers whom he admired...Seshin¹ (Vasubandhu) of India and Donran of China. Shinran also used the surname, "Toku" or "Gutoku" meaning "Simple short-haired One." From this time until he died, he referred to himself as Gutoku Shinran.

Shinran had a purpose when he chose to call himself Gutoku. By calling himself Gutoku Shinran, his intentions were to make clear and, at the same time, impress upon the people that there was no wall separating the priest and the layman. As it was in those days in Japan, Buddhism was a religion practiced only by the priests. People who lived the ordinary life were left ignorant of the Buddha's teachings because it was felt that the common man tied down to the everyday world of making a living and raising a family had no time for religion. Shinran's hopes were to break away from the prevailing tradition and to open wide the gates of religion for all people.

"Amida's compassion," said Shinran, "is boundless and unlimiting. As you can see, I am no longer a priest living a monastic life. Still, I am able to enjoy religion even as I live among you."

While detailed accounts concerning Shinran's movements in Echigo are not known, we are able to know that his personal influence had brought some achievement in converting the people of the surrounding area. It seems, also, that it was during his stay in Echigo that he was married to Eshinni, and in time had a family.

[&]quot;Seshin" is sometimes called "Tenjin." The former is a new translation while the latter is an old translation from China.



Pardon from Exile

In the winter of the year 1211 after four long years of exile, both Honen and Shinran were pardoned by the government.

Shinran was very anxious to see and pay his respects once again to his venerable master. As the weather was not suitable for traveling, he waited eagerly for the passing of winter for this return to Kyoto.

With the first thawing of the snow in the spring, he hopefully left Echigo only to learn that his beloved teacher had passed away after a brief illness.

How great were Shinran's sorrow and disappointment. He wondered what he should do. Finally, he decided that instead of going to Kyoto, he would turn in another direction to the district of Kanto. It may be said that his decision to go into the Kanto District came from his desire to carry on with the unfinished work of his master.

Many Years of Wandering in **Kanto District**

The district of Kanto (the present day prefectures around Tokyo) was in the days of Shinran a remote region far from the culture and refinement of Kyoto. Shinran spent about twenty years in Kanto moving from province to province. His longest stay was probably in Hitachi province in the village of Inada.

During this period he became a friend of the poor, the illiterate, and the ignorant.

"Sakyamuni," he said, "came into the world—to teach the masses." Shinran believed this statement completely and made it also his purpose to help all people. With the kindest heart he taught the way of the Nembutsu to those for whom the path seemed closed. With firm faith and devotion he dedicated himself to the purpose of helping the common people. As a result of Shinran's untiring efforts, the Nembutsu followers increased rapidly in this district.

Whenever he was not busy preaching to the people, he studied in the privacy of his home. Living in peace and quiet among the villagers, Shinran had the opportunity to analyze and to meditate upon the doctrine he had learned from Honen Shonin at Yoshimizu. While in Hitachi province, Shinran worked on the writing of his most famous work in six volumes entitled, KYO-GYO-SHIN-SHO (Analects concerning Teaching, Practice, Faith and Attainment) and probably finished the first draft of this important work in 1224

Going Home Again to Kyoto

It is presumed that sometime after his sixtieth birthday, Shinran decided to return once again to Kyoto. Since there was no particular hurry to reach the capital city, it is believed that Shinran made many frequent stops along the way to preach to the people whenever he could.

A legend remains even to this day that if the people were too busy to come to him because of their work, Shinran went out amongst the workers to be with them. In the fields as the farmers planted rice, Shinran would sit nearby and preach to them.

"My brothers, the rice seedlings you are now planting will surely produce for you a crop in autumn, if you take care of them by watering and weeding. Even so will the faith in Amida Buddha planted in your hearts lead you eventually to the Pure Land where you will receive the full glory of Enlightenment. Repeat the Nembutsu with gratitude for his loving kindness."

He would then sing hymns of his own composition to the tune of a rice-planting song to which farmers could easily join in chorus.

By preaching directly to the people, wherever they were gathered, Shinran found it unnecessary to have any special or grand place of worship. He was at home wherever he went as long as he was able to brighten the lives of the people by telling them of Amida's compassion.

Kyoto and the Remaining Years

The remaining years of Shinran's life were spent in Kyoto.

During this time he lived a secluded life under needy circumstances. However, he gave little thought to the matter of securing the necessities of life, but remained content spending his days mostly in scholarly pursuits.

Many of his books were written during this last stage of his life. He also wrote numerous letters to his followers in Kanto giving them spiritual aid in time of need. Time and again he pointed out the right path for them as heretical views arose among the followers. He continued to write as other Buddhist sects persecuted the practice of the Nembutsu. To these attacks, his answer was always kind but firm, "As for myself, I believe that salvation by Amida Buddha is the only way. In gratitude, I repeat his sacred name. This teaching concerning Amida Buddha has been handed down to me from Gautama Buddha, and venerable masters such as Zendo and Honen. This is the true teaching for me."

For about thirty years he went on explaining his faith until he felt no longer equal to the task. At the age of ninety he passed away in the year 1262.1

So closed a life simple and humble in its outward expressions, yet one full of profound spiritual influence upon succeeding generations.

Six hundred fifteen years after his death, the Emperor Meiji honored him with the title of "Kenshin Daishi"—Great Master, Seer of Truth.

¹January 16th, according to the solar calendar, is the date used by the Buddhist Churches of America.

Introduce the life of Shinran with the following questions and share the answers.
1. Buddhism started in(India)
2. It travelled through different countries such as and came to Japan.
3. We are Buddhists of the Sect. (China, Korea) (Jodo Shinshu)
4. Who was Shinran Shonin?
(Shonin means someone with the attributes of a sacred person. He was the founder Jodo Shinshu).
Do Activity "Think of Someone" and share answers.
Encourage students to give reasons for their choices. It may be necessary to clarify the meanings of some of the words.
After doing this activity explain to the class: Shinran was the founder of the Jodo Shinshu sect and he had all of the traits that you have just discussed. As you study about his life hopefully you will think of him as a real "living" person who went through much studying, frustration, and hardships to give us his own understanding of Buddhism which we call Jodo Shinshu.
Think of Someone
1. Strong will: power and decision
2. Effort: constant study
3. Courage, fearlessness
4. Kindness & gentleness
5. Firm in what one believes
6. Patience
7. Respect for teacher
8. Self-reflection
9. Humbleness
10. Democratic

What's In A Name?

Shinran had many different names during his lifetime—each one depicted a stage in his life. Give a definition for each name and tell why you think that name was given to him.

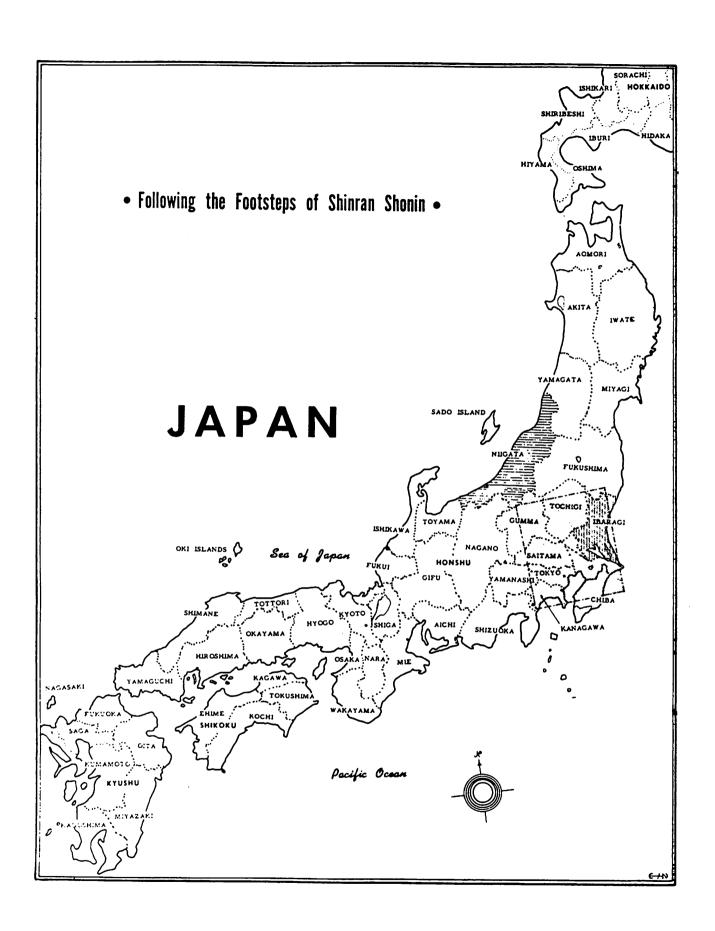
Matsuwaka Maro		
Hannen		
Shakku		
Zenshin		
Yoshizane Fujii	·	
Toku (Gutoku)		
Kenshin Daishi		

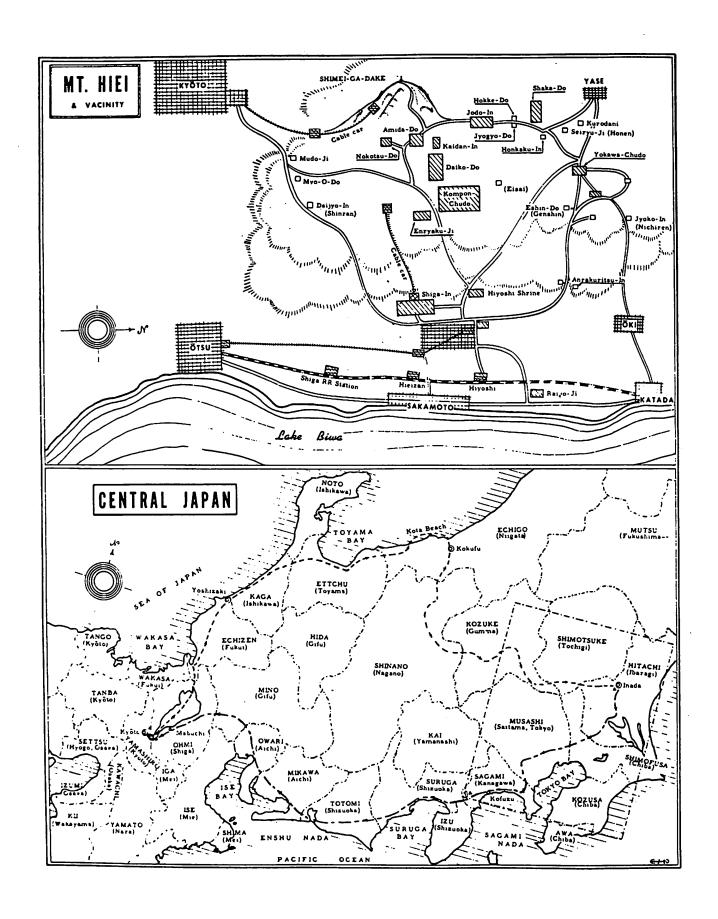
Think of Shinran Shonin

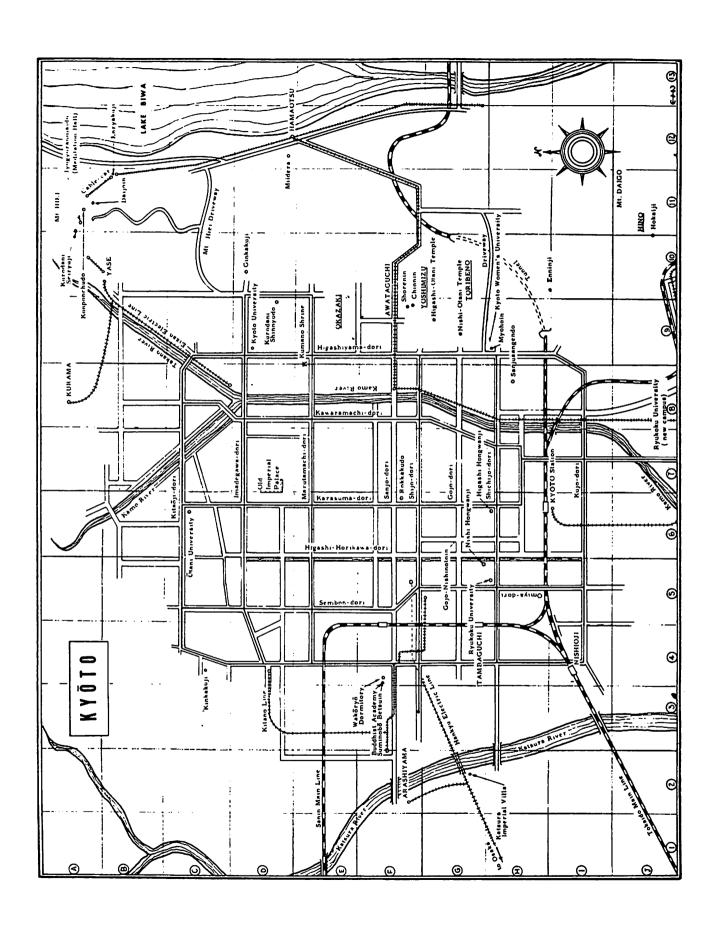
In your own words give examples of incidents in Shinran's life that showed these character traits. 1. Strong will: power and decision _____ 2. Effort: constant study _____ 3. Courage, fearlessness _____ 4. Kindness & gentleness _____ 5. Firm in what one believes _____ 6. Patience ______ 7. Respect for teacher _____ 8. Self-reflection _____ 9. Humbleness _____ 10. Democratic _____

Put Shinran's Life In Order

	Shinran told his uncle that he wanted to become a monk.
	Sometime after 60 years of age he decided to return to Kyoto, the capital of Japan at this time.
	In Echigo, Shinran married Eshin-ni.
	He passed away on January 16, 1262 at the age of 90.
	Shinran was born in the village of Hino near Kyoto on May 21, 1173.
	He was an outstanding student and became a scholar at Mt. Hiei, the center of Buddhist studies.
	After 4 years Shinran was pardoned but he did not return to Kyoto right away because he heard that his teacher, Honen, had passed away.
	He gained many followers in Kanto which is now the Tokyo area.
	He became a disciple of Honen.
	The vision of Prince Shotoku came to him and said that the Nembutsu was the only path.
	Some priests became jealous of Honen's popularity and had Honen and his disciples (among them Shinran) exiled to different parts of Japan.







Games

Objective: To review the Life of Shinran Shonin

1. Have students write questions and answers based on the Life of Shinran on pieces of paper. Place them in a box. Divide the class into as many groups as is practical and have a quiz. The teacher pulls out one question at a time and reads it out loud. Each team is allowed one chance to answer the question. A correct response gets 1 point, if incorrect the next team has a chance at the same question.

2. Gameboard

On a manila folder lay out enough footprints to cover questions students came up with. Put answers on a separate answer sheet. Decorate game board with your sketches or pictures from old calendars.

To play game: Role die, move number of spaces indicated. You must answer correctly before moving on. Hopefully someone else gets on same question and knows the answer. Whoever reaches ultimate goal first will win.

Important Events in Shinran's Life. Various areas can be stressed depending on the student's background knowledge. Have students relate to Shinran's life events and discuss how they would react to similar situations.

- 1. Birth on May 12, 1173; nobility; four younger brothers; comfortable loving happy home.
- 2. Loss of Parents; by age 8 lost both parents; great loss; Deep grief; went to live with Uncle and Aunt who loved him.

(Ask students if they lost any loved ones, pets, and how they felt at the loss. They are 12-13 years old, how much more lost a younger child might feel.)

3. Ordination at age 9; uncle tried to dissuade him; determined to join priesthood because of great loss of parents. Urged priest to ordain him late at night; wrote poem;

> "Tis vain to wait until tomorrow Life is like the glorious cherry blossoms which ere morn might all be gone Night winds as soon might blow them off."

Shinran lost the love and stabilizing force in his young life and sought the positive aspect of life through the teachings of Amida.

(Ask students if they know of any 9 year olds that would be willing to give up a comfortable life for a life in the monastery. What would they hate to give up the most.)

- 4. 20 years on Mt. Hiei; brilliant scholar; could easily have reached high rank. Very frustrated at inability to reach Enlightenment through his own efforts; Until Honen, the sects in Japan all stressed own Power or effort to attain Enlightenment.
- (How long have you gone to school, how many hours spent studying? 175 days years of school required today. Shinran's 20 years would be like your studying for of study 40 years. How many hours do you spend meditating?)

How does it feel to try to solve a math problem you just can't get to jel; frustration What frustrates you the most? Perfecting a baseball swing/swimming against a current. Banging head against a brick wall.

- 5. Descent from Mt. Hiei; realizing inability and human weakness in frustration sought guidance at Rokkakudo Temple; vision of Prince Shotoku- propagator of Buddhism in 7th century Japan. Made perilous descent at night-significant proof of utter abandonment and frustration.
- 6. Meeting of Honen Shonin; most learned of the time; also studies at Mt. Hiei 30 years. It taught reliance on Amidas compassion as a way to salvation through Nembutsu. Shinran elated and became ardent disciple. Popularity of the school grew among the population. Geared to common folk. "Come as you are" concept.

(Have you ever felt this feeling of Shinran's of great relief- everything begins to fall into place. Has anyone ever helped you to understand something better?)

7. Exile to Echigo in 1207; rising popularity, jealousy of other sects led government to exile Honen and Shinran; great civil turmoil at that time. Shinran and Honen took this negative event and viewed it in a positive Buddhist attitude. This will give them an opportunity to spread teachings.

(Have you ever had something bad turn into something good?)

During Exile married Eshinnin and emphasized no difference between lay and priest. Gotoku Shinran- simple bald headed man. Brought religion to all people.

Ban lifted after 4 years. Saddened by news of Honen's death.

- 8. Spent 20 years spreading teaching in Kanto District, (vicinity of Tokyo); started systematized compilation of the studies of the 7 masters into one systematic teaching to support his doctrine. Quoted thousands of sutras; Kyo Gyo Shin Sho contained in 6 volumes; Scholars are amazed at Shinrans recall ability.
- 9. After 60th birthday spent last 30 years in Kyoto writing books and letters explaining his faith. Died at age 90, Jan. 16, 1262 after a physically difficult life.

In Reviewing- other points to cover

Determination **Brilliant** mind Humility and Compassion for all (story of Bennen) Human- marriage-children-frustration- ate meat and fish Deep Faith

His life exemplifies seeking the positive aspects of situation.

Supplementary Activities for "Life of Shinran"

Very little is mentioned in history textbooks of one of the most important influences in Asia- Buddhism. Put Sakyamuni Buddha and Shinran into the time frame of **Eurasian History.**

2500	\mathbf{BC}	Pyramids of Egypt
550	\mathbf{BC}	Birth of Buddha
560	\mathbf{BC}	Birth of Confucius
440	\mathbf{BC}	Height of Greek Civilization
100	\mathbf{BC}	Birth of Julius Caesar
0	\mathbf{BC}	Birth of Christ
100	$\mathbf{A}\mathbf{D}$	Greatest Extent of Roman Empire
1000	-	
1200	$\mathbf{A}\mathbf{D}$	Crusades
1173	$\mathbf{A}\mathbf{D}$	Birth of Shinran (Unrest in Japan)
1400	-	
1600	$\mathbf{A}\mathbf{D}$	Renaissance
1492	$\mathbf{A}\mathbf{D}$	Columbus

Family Crest

Objective:

To give the students an opportunity to (1) find out Shinran's family crest, which is the Jodo Shin Shu crest; (2) to find out what their own family crests are. (3) Make their own crest.

- a. Excellent opportunity for grandchild to talk with their grandparents to help them research together.
- b. Awareness of their "roots."

Procedure:

- 1. Discuss how families used crests to identify themselves by name.
- 2. Goes back to the 11th Century (Fujiwara Clan), when the courtiers wanted to put a design on their formal costumes. Handed down through generations.
- 3. Heian Period came to an end, warrior class took over the government at the end of the 12th century. Warriors used their own emblems on banners, flags, weapons. Copied what the courtiers used.
- 4. During Muromachi Period in 15th century, wars made family crests useful for identifying opposing factions.
- 5. Edo Period 17th century. Family crests were widely used.
- 6. Meiji Period (1868-1912). Crests were of various designs. Chrysanthemums were symbol of the Imperial family, so families did not use this crest.

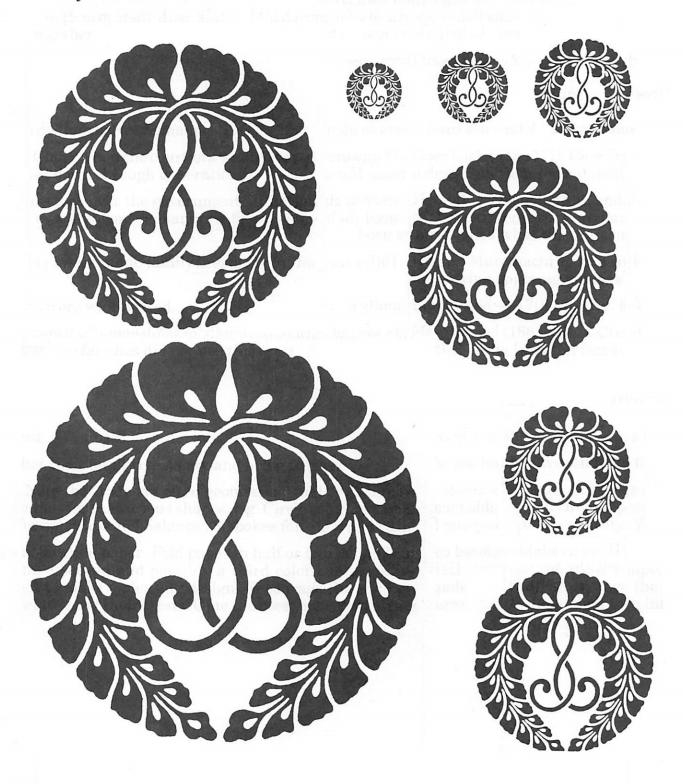
Activity:

- 1. Show Shinran's family crest. (Wisteria)
- 2. Have students find out what their family crests are and bring to class.
- 3. Show examples of crests. Note that they are often geometrical and/or symmetrical. Discuss possible meanings for the various shapes. e.g. Circle could stand for oneness unity; Yin-yang for opposites and balance.; 8-spokes for the 8-fold path.

Have available colored construction paper. Fold paper in half or fourths and cut out the basic shape. Using a second and possibly a third color cut out other shapes. Arrange the shapes to make a pleasing design. Encourage the children to make their own interpretations of their crests. Glue the crest on a contrasting colored paper.

Wisteria

The wisteria blooms with its head hanging down from a trestle. Thus, the wisteria crest symbolizes humble reverence before Amida Buddha.



Shinran Shonin

MATSUWAKA-MARO — EARLY CHILDHOOD

Picture drawn from the picture in The World Book Encyclopedia Volume 11 — Japan / arts.

Materials:

Picture of Matsuwaka-maro paper plates — 9 inch gold foil wrapping paper spray paint for plates, gloss black spray adhesive gold elastics or soda rings for hangers

Direction:

Have students color the picture and cut the outline. The rims of the paper plates should be painted before bringing to class so that it will be dry. Cut the gold foil paper about 8 1/4 inches in diameter and spray adhesive on the back and press to the paper plate, leaving an even margin around the plate. Press the wrinkles out. After the students have colored and cut out their picture, spray the back of the picture and have them press it onto the gold foil on the plate.

Use Elmer's glue to hold the picture hanger in place.

SHINRAN - IN EXILE - BLOCK PRINTING

Materials:

Picture of Shinran 9×13 rice paper styrofoam blocks, 1 inch thick black poster paint, green and yellow for leaves 1/4 inch dowels, cut in 12 inch length — paint black black yarn for hanging

Direction:

Draw outline picture of Shinran on the Styrofoam and cut the styrofoam, leaving the outline needed raised. Put the paint into a flat plate or pan large enough for the block to fit flat. Dip the block into the paint, scraping the excess paint off, and press onto the center of the paper. Fold down about 3/4 inch of the top edge and spray adhesive. Wrap it around the dowel. Tie yarn on both edges of the dowel for hanging.

GUTOKU SHINRAN — ETCHING ON GOLD FOIL

Materials:

Picture of shinran — From the picture in "Nembutsu" BCA Course Outline for 8th Grade — Japanese characters - Na-mu-a-mi-da-butsu. gold foil wrapping paper paper plates - painted around the rim in black black paint paint brushes spray adhesive gold elastic or soda rings for hangers

Direction:

Cut foil into 8 1/4 inch diameter. Center the picture over the gold foil and trace lines pressing the pencil so the lines will be indented on the foil. Paint the lines on the foil carefully. Spray the back with adhesive and press smoothly onto the paper plate.

Matsuwaka Maro

About 800 years ago in a village called Hino, near Kyoto in Japan, a child was born. The parents and the whole village were very happy. His parents named him Matsuwakamaro.

It is said that when Matsuwakamaro was 2 years old, he was looking at the moon and spoke his first word. The word as Namu Amida Butsu.

When he was very young, he lost his father and mother. He was very lonely for his parents, as they were a very happy family and had many blessings.

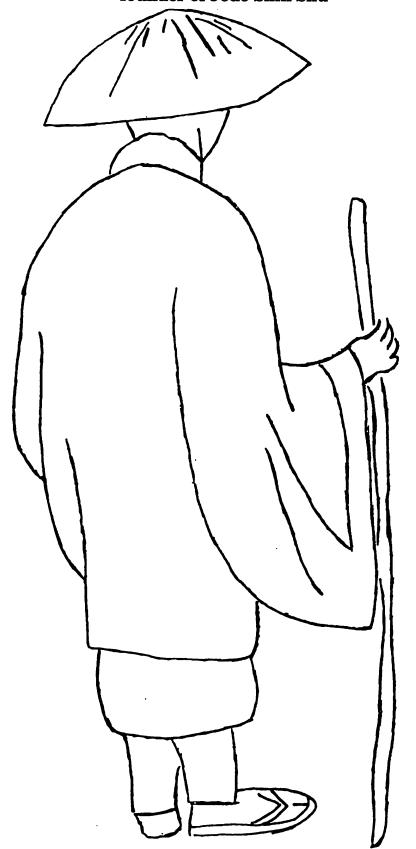
One day his uncle took him to the temple where he could study the Buddha's teachings. So, at the age of 9, he became the youngest boy to become a Monk.

This boy grew up to be Shinran Shonin.

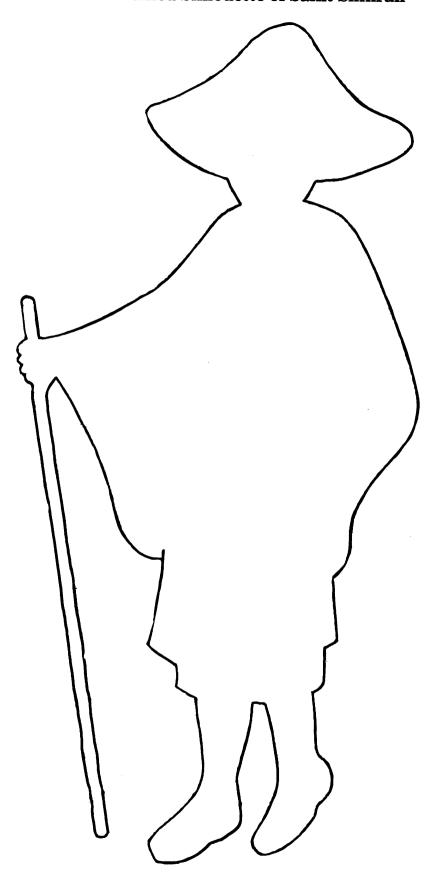


Shinran Shonin (1173 - 1262 A.D.)

founder of Jodo Shin Shu



Pattern: Framed Silhouette of Saint Shinran



Shinran Shonin and Bennen

Most of the twenty years that he spent in Hitachi province went into fruitful work. He dwelt in the village of Inada most of the time, but his missionary efforts took him to many of the outlying villages. To reach some of these villages, Shinran had to take either the dangerously steep path over the mountain called Itajikiyama, or the dark and gloomy path that skirted the base of the mountain. Shinran used to cross over this mountain on his journeys, never dreaming of any danger. He confidently held that one who believed in Amida always moved in his sight where no danger could obstruct his way.

So great was his success in converting the people in the villages that a mountain priest named Bennen, who had been in this region before him, became jealous and began to plot the death of Shinran. For several days in succession, Bennen, with a long sword at his girdle, and bow and arrows in hand, lay in ambush. But when Bennen waited in the valley, he would sight Shinran on the mountain path. When he waited on the high ridge, he saw Shinran far below.

He finally decided to go to the hermitage of Inada and kill Shinran at one blow. Imposingly attired and well armed, he appeared at the cottage of Shinran and demanded a meeting. Though his disciples warned him to stay indoors, Shinran went out calmly to receive his visitor.

At first sight, Bennen was overcome by Shinran's noble and peaceful manner. When repentence struck him, Bennen implored Shinran's forgiveness. Converted by Shinran's ministry, he became one of the most loyal disciples.

Shinran Shonin in the Blizzard

Once on his preaching tour, Shinran Shonin and his disciples reached a small village in Hitachi in the late evening. It was a cold wintry evening and the approaching blizzard made it extremely difficult to walk. They came upon a house where a warm fire was seen through the window. They asked for a night's lodging. But the host of the house was a heartless person who coldly refused the request. The disciples of Shinran became furious at the man as they worried over their master who had to stay outdoors over-night in the blizzard. But Shinran rested calmly beneath the eaves of the house as the disciples rubbed the tired body of the master to keep him warm and to ease the tiredness. Shinran recited the Nembutsu softly and soon the disciples joined him in reciting the Nembutsu. The night was dark and cold but their hearts were warm with Amida Buddha's compassion.

During the night, the owner of the house was awakened by the reciting of the Nembutsu. As he watched, he saw a strange scene of the master and his disciples trustingly reciting the Nembutsu heedless to the bitter cold of the night. He suddenly felt ashamed of his meanness. Hurriedly he went to the door and invited Shinran and his disciples to the fireplace. The man and his wife bowed deeply and asked forgiveness for their unkind action.

Shinran continued to recite the Nembutsu — no self-pity, no anger, only infinite gratefulness for the belated hospitality. And into the night Shinran Shonin, with deep understanding, quietly explained the compassion of Amida Buddha to the couple who became devoted followers of the True Religion.

ONDOKUSAN

NYO RA I DA I HI NO ONDOKU WA, MI O KO NI SHI TE MO HO ZU BE SHI. SHI SHU CHI SHI KI NO ONDOKU MO. HO NE O KU DA KI TE MO SHA SU BE SHI.

TRANSLATION

The benevolence of the Tathāgata's great compassion, Even if we must crush our bodies, should be returned in gratitude. The benevolence of the masters and teachers, Even if we must break our bones, should be returned in gratitude.



An Incident At Kozu

Having reached the age of 60, Shinran Shinran's thoughts turned to going back to Kyoto.

Along the way, Shinran went on preaching the words of Amida Buddha. While staying at Kozu, a town near the seat of the Military Government, the Regent Hojo Yasutoki invited him to help bring the holy Buddhist Tripitaka up to date.

The Regent, on occasions, entertained the priests by inviting them to dinner. Because meat and fish were placed on the long tables, all of the Buddhist priests removed their "kesas" before coming to the table; all, that is, except Shinran. The Regent's little son wondered why Shinran was the only one who wore his kesa. He persisted in asking, until Shinran answered.

"My boy, your question is well put. You see, all living creatures instinctively desire to enjoy their lives. To kill and devour them should be an idea intolerable to any human being. How much more so for the priests whom Gautama Buddha forbade so to do. Yet like the laymen, I am accustomed to eating both meat and fish. I feel, therefore, that I should do something to benefit those creatures in return for the nourishment they give me. For that purpose I wear the sacred "kesa" while I dine, in gratefulness for their sacrifice."

"Shinran Shonin and Bennen"
"Shinran Shonin in the Blizzard"
"An Incident at Kozu"

These incidents in the life of Shinran could be made into impromptu skits by small groups.

Discuss the qualities portrayed by Shinran in all of these — Single-mindedness, Courage, Conviction, Gratitude.

A more formal play called a "Night's Lodging Denied" is found in **Buddhist Plays** for Children (p. 125). Students could read the parts as a class activity or tape it with sound effects.

How Jodo Shin Shu Became an **Independent Religion**

Today, all Buddhists recognize the name Jodo Shin Shu as the name of an independent religion. However, this was not the case in Shinran's time. While Shinran was living, there was no special denomination called Jodo Shin Shu.

Although Shinran often used the Jodo Shin Shu in his writings, he did not mean to imply that his way of teaching should be established into an independent order. Whenever he used "Jodo Shin Shu," he meant "true teachings" as it was taught to him by his master, Honen. Shinran's feelings were that he was not teaching anything new, but merely carrying on the work of his master.

Shinran claimed no disciples for himself. He said that everyone was a beloved child of the Buddha; everyone was Buddha's disciple.

The followers of Shinran were comforted by his words, and they were ever-grateful to Shinran for awakening them to the religious life.

After Shinran's death, his youngest daughter Kakushinni, with the aid of the faithful followers, helped keep the group together and kept Jodo Shin Shu traditions alive. Thereafter, descendants of Shinran from one generation to the next took the lead in keeping contact with the followers. As time went on, they gradually began to think of Shinran as the founder of a new religious school. It was in this matter that Jodo Shin Shu grew from the hearts of the people who wished to see Shinran's way of Buddhism preserved and perpetuated.

It was Kakunyo, the great grandson of Shinran, who firmly established Jodo Shin Shu in the form of an order.

The head temple in Kyoto was given the name Honganji which means the Temple of the Original Vow. Jodo Shin Shu—literally translated as the True Pure Land Religion - was the name used by the new Buddhist Order. Shinran Shonin who had never given any thought to founding a new school for Buddhism was proclaimed the founder. The Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho written by Shinran became its fundamental text and 1224—when the first draft of this valuable book was completed — became established as the founding year.

Many Are the Ways to Enlightenment

Jodo Shin Shu originates from the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha. As we recall from the fifth grade lessons, the doctrine of Amida and the Pure Land originates from sermons delivered by Sakyamuni Buddha.

In the sixth grade, the development of the teaching concerning Amida and the Pure Land was traced. It was learned in that course that although Sakyamuni Buddha taught the Truth as one, he left behind many teachings because he interpreted the truth in numerous ways according to the needs and capacities of the listeners. As Buddhism traveled from one country to another, certain points of the Buddha's teachings were emphasized more than others, which resulted in the many divisions of Buddhism which exist today. These divisions may outwardly seem as though all Buddhists do not seek the same goal, but this is not so. All Buddhists seek Enlightenment (Truth, Oneness, Buddhahood, Nirvana, Satori) that delivers them from the sufferings of this world. They all follow the Buddha's teachings. They differ only in the way they seek Enlightenment.

In Buddhism, it is said that there are 84,000 gates. In other words, there are 84,000 ways to attain Enlightenment.

Many are the gates, but they all lead to the same lofty goal.

The Two Paths of Mahayana Buddhism

In Mahayana Buddhism, there are basically two paths¹ — the **Holy Path of the** Saints and the **Pure Land Faith.**

The **Holy Path of the Saints** adheres strictly to one's own self effort. Here, enlightenment is attained through meditation and good works following in the Noble Eightfold Path, the Six Paramitas, etc.

The **Pure Land Path**, on the other hand, does not rely on accumulation of good works to attain enlightenment. Realizing the limited powers of man, followers of the Pure Land Path rely on Amida Buddha. Needless to say, Jodo Shin Shu follows the Pure Land Path.

Shinran Shonin, while on Mt. Hiei, followed the Holy Path of the Saints, but was in despair so he realized that no matter how hard he tried, he could not find himself coming closer to enlightenment. Speculating deeply into his own nature, he found it shrouded with so much darkness that he no longer felt he could rely upon his own efforts to gain enlightenment. It was then that he decided to confine himself at Rokkakudo. A divine suggestion from Kannon at the Rokkakudo led him to Honen Shonin, who opened the gates of the Pure Land Path which changed his whole outlook on life. He was no longer depending upon a mere mortal like himself but relying on the infinite wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha.

The two paths (commonly known as) correspond to the "difficult path" and the "easy path" proclaimed by Nagarjuna, and also the "self-power" and "other power" classified by Donran.

"Following the Footsteps of Shinran Shonin"

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CLUES

S		Buddha (clan name).
H	-	In Mahayana Buddhism there are 2 of these.
I	-	Shinran claimed none of these.
N		All Buddhists seek this.
R	-	Another word for Enlightenment.
Α		This also means Enlightenment.
N		Shinran's teacher.
s	_	Also known as the "difficult path."
H		The center of Buddhist studies during Shinran's time.
Ο		True teachings.
N		The8-fold Path.
I		The fundamental text of Jodo Shinshu.
N		Also means Enlightenment.

Answer sheet to "Following the Footsteps of Shinran" - PT II Jodo Shishu

SAKYAMUNI

PATH

DISCIPLES

ENLIGHTENMENT

TRUTH

NIRVANA

HONEN

SELF EFFORT

MTHIEI

JODOSHINSHU

NOBLE

KYOGYOSHINSHO

ONENESS

The Documental Source of Jodo Shin Shu

(The Three Sacred Sutras on the Pure Land)

Honen and Shinran believed completely in the Pure Land Path. Their own faith never gave way to doubts, but others who were less believing became skeptical. In order to avert the prevailing skepticism and to support the doctrine of the Pure Land Path, they made a thorough study of the sutras. Honen Shinran then carefully selected three sutras as the documental source of authority coming directly from Sakyamuni Buddha.

The sutras selected were the Three Sacred Sutras on the Pure Land: (1) Larger Sutra, (2) Meditation Sutra, (3) Smaller Sutra.

The Larger Sutra is the most important of the three. In this sutra, Sakyamuni Buddha tells of the wondrous compassion of Amida Buddha and Amida's forty-eight vows, particularly of the Eighteenth Vow, which clearly promises salvation of all sentient beings through pure faith and Nembutsu.

The Meditation Sutra explains that Amida's boundless love extends especially for the weak and the helpless. Although enlightenment can be attained through correct meditation and good works, Sakyamuni Buddha points to the way of the utterance of the Nembutsu for those who cannot attain enlightenment through their own powers.

The Smaller Sutra explains and describes the beauties of the Pure Land of Amida Buddha.

Names of the Three Pure Land Sutras in different languages				
Sanskrit	Japanese	English		
Sukhavata Vyuha	Dai muryoju kyo	The Sutra on the Buddha of Eternal Life		
Amitayur Dhyana Sutra	Kan muryoji kyo	The Sutra on the Medita- tion on the Buddha of Eternal Life		
Sukhavati Vyuha	Amida kyo	The Sutra on Amida Buddha		

(in abbreviation) Dai kyo Larger Sutra Kan gyo **Meditation Sutra** Sho kyo Smaller Sutra

The Seven Spiritual Masters and Their Contributions to Jodo Shin Shu

The Three Pure Land Sutras were not by any means as brief and simple as stated in the previous lesson. It took many religious geniuses to expound and clarify the true meaning implied to Sakyamuni Buddha's teachings. Through reading the writings of many Buddhist saints and scholars, Shinran Shonin selected seven outstanding men for their commentaries on the Pure Land Path.

These seven masters devoted their lives to the intense study of salvation through Amida Buddha as explained in the Three Pure Land Sutras. These masters had firm faith in the original vows of Amida Buddha and actively advocated the teaching of Amida Buddha for others. They devoted their lives to the study of the original vows and made great contributions in propagating the teachings through their writings. Successively, they unfolded the doctrine of Salvation through faith in Amida Buddha.

Two of these men were from India, three from China, and two from Japan.

1. 2.	Nagarjuna Vasubandhu)	-	India
3. 4. 5.	T'an-luan Tao-ch'o Shan-tao)	-	China
6. 7.	Genshin Genku)	-	Japan

	Name	THE SEVEN SPI Country & Period	RITUAL MASTERS Most Important Book	S Teachings
1.	Nagarjuna (Ryuju)*	India c150 c. 250 A.D.	Book of Easy Practice (Igyobon) 1 vol.	He was taught that Enlightenment through one's own power was a "Difficult Path", but when one relied on Faith in Amida it was an "Easy Path."
2.	Vasubandhu (Tenjin)*	India c. 320- 400 A.D.	Discourse on the Pure Land (Jodoron) 1 vol.	He stressed a single hearted Faith in the Original Vow of Amida, which will bring salvation to all sentient beings.
3.	T'an-luan (Donran)*	China 476-542 A.D.	Commentary on Vasubandhu's Discourse on the Pure Land (Ojoronchu) 2 vols.	He taught that salvation through Jiriki or Self Power was a difficult path while enlightenment through Tariki or Amida's Power was more suited to the ordinary man.
4.	Tao-ch'o (Doshaku)*	China 562-645 A.D.	Commentary on the Peace and Bliss of Pure Land (Anraku- shu) 2 vols.	He classified the way to Enlightenment into two—Path of the Holy and the Path of the Pure Land. For holy men the difficult path may be followed to attain enlightenment but for those who are weak and sinful, the only way was the Path of the Pure Land.

5.	Shan-tao (Zendo)*	China 613-681 A.D.	Commentary on the Meditation Sutra (Kan- gyosho) 4 vols.	He went a step further than Doshaku and classified the Path of the Pure Land even further. He stated that those who are ignorant and sinful have only to rely on the Original Vow of Amida and recite the Nembutsu.
6.	Genshin	Japan 942-1017 A.D.	Note on the essentials of Rebirth into Pure Land (Ojoyoshu) 6 vols.	He first pointed out the evils of superstition prevalent in Japan during this time. He taught of a Temporary Pure Land where those who have not the true faith are born and a True Pure Land where those who have True Faith are born.
7.	Genku (Honen)	Japan 1133-1212 A.D.	Notes on the Nembutsu Se- lected in the Original Vow (Shenjaku Shu) 2 vols.	In these corrupt days he stressed that the only way for sentient beings to be born in the Pure Land was through the utterance of the Nembutsu selected in the Very

^{*}Name of the master as he is referred to in the Japanese language.

lected in the Vow.

"The Seven Spiritual Masters and Their Contributions to Jodo Shinshu"

Explain to the class the significance of the Seven Masters. Look at the chart on pp. 28-29 (Following the Footsteps of Shinran) to see the seven at a glance.

Using "Nembutsu Through the Ages," assign each student one of the Seven Masters. Have the student assume the role of the Master and have him tell or write his own story and share it with the class. Be sure to include his particular contribution to Jodo Shinshu.

The Fundamental Text of Jodo Shin Shu

(Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho)

We owe much to the contributions made by the Seven Spiritual Masters. Through their writings, they made clear the true meaning of the Three Pure Land Sutras.

However, it was Shinran Shonin who integrated the studies of the Seven Masters into one systematic teaching as followed today by the Jodo Shin Sect of Buddhism. He accomplished the task of organizing and summarizing aspects concerned in the Three Pure Land Sutras by writing the **Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho.** In this great work of six volumes, he collected passages from the Sutras as well as discourses and commentaries by the masters to support his doctrine. Throughout the Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho, Shinran repeats over and over his sincere belief in Amida and the Pure Land.

The main portion of the **Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho** consists of four parts under the headings (1) Teaching, (2) Practice, (3) Faith and (4) Attainment exactly as implied in the title in Japanese.

The section on "Teaching" mentions the "Larger Sutra" as the true meaning of Amida Buddha. Also we read that Sakyamuni came into this world to teach the Vow of Amida Buddha.

The section on "Practice" teaches that Namu Amida Butsu is the means by which Amida calls to us and we answer. The Nembutsu is the True Practice for common mortals without the strength to attain enlightenment by themselves.

Note - Also included in the **Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho** is the "Shoshinge" (The Hymn of the True Faith in the Nembutsu). The "Shoshinge" is a gatha composed of 120 lines which summarized the essence of the Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho. Many year later, Rennyo Shonin made the "Shoshinge" very popular by authorizing it as the chant for lay follow-

The section on "Faith" gives us the true meaning of faith: that is, faith in Amida's Vow is the cause for rebirth and Enlightenment and futhermore, our faith itself is originated in Amida's sincere mind and his desire to lead us to his land. The recitation of the Nembutsu which follows the faith is solely to express our gratitude to Amida.

The section on "Attainment" teaches that those who receive faith from Amida will be born in the Pure Land and unfailingly attain Enlightenment. In this section, he also describes the positive side of Buddhahood for benefiting others.

THE SIX PARAMITAS

One of finest ways to build a solid spiritual foundation is to practice the Six Paramitas, which means the six other shores.

The six different steps in the Paramita are followed in an effort to reach the shore of the Pure Land...or unity with Amida Buddha. We follow these steps in a deep spirit of gratitude to try to show our good will...our sincere faith...that we are putting forth an effort.

These six shores which we try to reach are known as Dana (Giving), Sila (Morality), Ksanti (Patience), Virya (Energy), Dhyana (Meditation), and Prajna (Wisdom). Now that we know what our goal is, we shall try to explain what these six steps represent in order for us to fully understand their meanings.

1. Dana (Giving)

I will share my possessions, love and faith.

Giving can be expressed in many ways. Today we read and hear about wonderful charity drives, funds and organizations being formed. These are well represented by such organizations as the Red Cross. There is a great need to help others, for millions of people are cold and hungry as we sit here now. We must never hoard things we cannot use. We must give as generously as we are able.

One way is by giving encouragement to those who are in trouble or suffering, give a little of your time to help the old, and to give knowledge and peace to the ignorant. We must be generous in our attitudes towards others. Some good examples are giving of yourself, a gentle smile, soft spoken words, kindness and understanding. When you think of *Dana* try to answer the following questions.

- 1. Do we see things around us from preconceived notions of what we think right or wrong?
- 2. Do we judge others by their race or color?
- 3. Are we generous in forgiving and forgetting?
- 4. Are we generous in giving of our good thoughts and deeds?

Dana means to give in the right ways.

2. Sila (Morality)

"May my thoughts, words, and deeds be pure and beautiful. Kindness is the fountain of happiness."

To practice Morality we earnestly try to do good and to keep away from evil. If our thoughts are truly pure, it won't be too hard to avoid doing what is harmful to ourselves and others. It is true that all people have their own moral standards, but one must be careful not to simply avoid wrong actions through fear or to wish to sparkle before friends. We must try to face evil because it is best for all. It gives us a chance for our true nature to shine forth.

3. Ksanti (Patience)

I will be patient and kind to every living thing.

Those who have learned the art of being patient have also discovered a more genuine joy to life. They can have fun, they can laugh at themselves and with others. They don't give up. They aren't demanding and exacting. They can understand that all beings live by causes and effects and some learn quickly, some more slowly. With an understanding of the law of Karma, we will find it easier to be patient. It is better to understand why we are miserable and then to smile through our troubles, lest we add to the burdens of another.

4. Virya (Energy)

I will strive with earnestness to follow the teachings of the Buddha.

It takes enthusiasm, perseverance, and energy to accomplish anything worthwhile. As the little kindergarten verse says, "If you mean to do a thing and mean to do it really, never let it be by halves, do it fully, freely." Energy means to constantly strive with a full heart to promote that which is good for oneself and life in general.

5. **Dhyana** (Meditation)

"The mind is hard to check. . .swift, it flits here and there, a controlled mind is conducive to happiness."

Each day I shall be thankful and recite the Nembutsu.

We are experiencing vast changes in life. Discovering the moon, seeing pictures of our world as never before in history. We will witness many more scientific changes in swift order. Yet, we must stop and reflect that all life is change, and truly, the greatest trip, the longest journey, is to know our own selves. . .our true selves, to look within. To know that we, and all beings, are already one with Amida Buddha is to be able to be truly thankful and to genuinely feel for others. This takes consistent reflection. The Buddha said, "The Control of the mind is good Meditation — to keep away confused and wandering thought. To set quietly each day with a thankful heart. To dwell upon the wondrous love and compassion of Amida Buddha will bring true peace of mind."

6. **Praina** (Wisdom)

"May the wisdom of the compassionate one so fill my heart that the mists of error and the foolish vanity of self be dispelled." Namu Amida Butsu.

Knowledge is of great value in eventually earning a living. It is good to learn and use our minds. Knowledge without wisdom, however, is one-sided. To be wise in knowing why we live and what Amida offers us is better still. The light of Buddha's Teachings brings wisdom. With a sincere practice of the five above Paramitas, our minds will truly grow in wisdom. Our minds will be better able to see life from the right viewpoint. Our minds will grow clear and serene . . . our faith will deepen and from deep within we will hear the Holy Name.

So that we may better understand the true meaning of Dana, we have put in a written version of a sermon our sensei, the Reverend Junjo Tsumura, delivered while at Watsonville Buddhist Church. We believe that it expresses the true meaning of Dana in a way in which all may understand it.

Dana

Dana is the Sanskrit word for charity-giving in the form of material alms and also in the mental and spiritual giving. Whenever we perform Dana, we must remember that Lord Buddha is always with us. It is through Amida Buddha's power that we can do Dana.

All of you know what hospitality, cordiality, and loyalty means. True hospitality means to make your guest feel that he is really welcomed. If you were inviting a friend over for the weekend, I am sure you will have the house all cleaned up. You will have the bed freshly made up, too. None of you will invite someone to stay in a dirty house and sleep in an unmade bed. You will see to it that your guest has enough to eat and drink. You will talk pleasantly to him and not pick a fight. You will make your guest feel at ease.

What will you do if an uninvited guest happens to drop by when you are almost ready to eat? Will you ask him to stay and have dinner with you, or will you ask him to wait while you eat?

Some Japanese have a bad habit of not asking you to stay until you are all ready to leave. When you stand up to go, they say, "Why don't you stay and have something to eat?" You know that you are really not welcomed so you reply, even though you are hungry, "I'm full because I have already eaten before I came." Both of you are lying for the sake of formality. This is not hospitality at all. To say things for the sake of formality is not true Dana at all.

It was said that during the time of the great famine in India, Buddha's disciples advised Lord Buddha not to go out and preach to the people because he would receive no alms. Lord Buddha replied although the people were poor in material wealth, they need not be poor spiritually. He said that it was in times like these that people needed spiritual aid to make their hearts richer in order to endure their suffering. He said by preaching Dana he could make the people happier by helping one another.

You know that cordiality means to be friendly and courteous. I am sure all of you greet your friends with a friendly "Hi," but how many of you would stop to say a friendly word to some stranger who has come to your class or church for the first time? A few pleasant words of introduction would make a world of difference to this stranger. In fact, he would no longer be a stranger but a new friend for you. I hear many Niseis and Sanseis say that Buddhists are very unfriendly. They say we are cliquish and do not welcome strangers to our group. We should try to be friendlier to newcomers because giving of yourself is one form of Dana.

Another bad habit that some of you have is ignoring the older Isseis. Many of you pass them by everyday without a word of greeting. I have heard many Isseis think that so and so is a real snob because he or she never says a word of greeting to them. A friendly word of greeting is another form of Dana.

If more of us would learn to say "thank you" and I'm sorry" from the bottom of our hearts, the world would be a better place to live in. If we admit our faults and egoism, we would be performing more acts of Dana in our daily lives.

I know all of you are courteous and helpful to your friends, but how often do you extend the same courtesy and helpfulness at home? Are you cordial and polite to your parents and brothers and sisters, too? Or do you treat them like second-class citizens? Do you always do what you want to and not what others in the family would like to do? Do you talk back to your parents when they try to make you aware of your bad habits? Do you say, "There goes my old lady again, always harping on me about this and that. I'm getting sick and tired of listening to her." If you really listened to the teachings of Lord Buddha, you will be thankful that you have someone who cares for you enough to try to make you a better person.

At home you should make Hotokesama the center of your daily activities. You should remember to gassho in front of the family shrine every morning and night. You should try to keep the altar beautiful with fresh flowers.

Do you say Itadakimasu and Gochisosama with every meal? A good Buddhist expresses his thankfulness to everything that he does. By making Hotokesama the focal point of your home, you will lead a much happier life.

By showing your respect and reverence to Hotokesama, you will learn to respect your parents, friends, teachers, and everyone else you come in contact with. You will learn to study harder in school and make yourself more useful at home. I even help my wife with the dishes sometimes and even vacuum my home. I am an expert in bathing babies since I have an experience with my own.

Loyalty is another form of Dana that we must not forget. We show loyalty to our friends by not talking behind their backs. We show loyalty to our country by not breaking any laws. If you become a delinquent, you are disloyal to your family, church, and the community. Since we are a minority group, our every action is more noticeable to others. If you follow Buddha's teachings with many acts of Dana, you will become outstanding members of your community. By living a life of Dana we can show our loyalty to our religion — Buddhism.

In conclusion, I should like to tell you one of my favorite stories. It was written by the Russian author, Ivan Turgenev.

This story is about a man walking along a street one cold wintry day. He came upon a beggar asking for alms. The beggar was old and dirty and was shivering in the cold. The man felt so sorry for the beggar that he searched in his pocket for something to give him. Since he was penniless at that time, he couldn't find anything to give the old beggar. He felt so ashamed that he had nothing to give that he took a hold of this dirty beggar's hand and offered his sympathy to him, apologizing for his lack of funds. The beggar replied that the man had given him a gift worth more than gold. His warm handclasp given him sympathy was the best gift he could ever receive.

To me this story illustrates the true meaning of Dana. To give from the heart is the best form of Dana. Dana does not mean giving in the material sense only — it means to give with all your heart.

In the Samyakta-ratna-pitaka Sūtra there is the teaching of the "seven gifts of spiritual dāna."

- 1. The dāna of kind eyes. Looking upon others with compassionate eyes, treating all things with loving kindness are priceless forms of dāna.
- 2. The dana of a pleasant face. Greeting our fellow men with a benevolent smile, gentle appearance, and friendly disposition brightens the hearts of those we meet.
- 3. The dana of affectionate words. Speaking to each other with true affection, saying "thank you" and "I'm sorry" from the heart brings peace to our world.
- 4. **The dāna of the body**. Treating people with good manners shows respect for them. Sadāparibhūta Boddhisattva greeted all peoples with gassho. What a noble attitude!
- 5. **The dāna of the heart**. Serving others with compassion is both one's joy and happiness. On the other hand, selfishness and greed injure the life of community living.
- 6. The dana of the seating place. Sharing of one's seat or standing place and controlling one's desire benefits others.
- 7. The dana of the home. Keeping one's home clean and extending hospitality to visitors and making them "feel at home" provides them with a peaceful feeling.

It is, therefore, desirable that we live together in the spirit of dana — receiving gifts with pure hearts and offering them to all beings for their benefit.

The Buddhist Bodhisattva Way Of Life

The Buddhist Bodhisattva way of life is our way of spiritual living. Bodhisattva by definition, Bodhi means enlightenment, sattva is one who is seeking — seeker of enlightenment. Bodhisattva is, therefore, a seeker of Buddhist enlightenment. Now that's simple, but the usage of the term from the Shakyamuni Buddha has a different connotation. Bodhisattva in the Buddhist setup has been usually thought right next to the Buddha in rank of enlightenment. Buddha as you know means the Enlightened One. He is enlightened. The one who is almost enlightened or darn near there, not completely, is usually considered a Bodhisattva. So you don't usually call your next door neighbor Bodhisattva in the Buddhist sense. Now, there are three or four types of definitions that go with Bodhisattva. Bodhisattva generally speaking means those who are seeking enlightenment. So, under that category, you and I will be Bodhisattva. Why? Because we are all really seeking happiness. Happiness is what the Buddhist religion is teaching in the end. We talk about the Pure Land and becoming a Buddha. That's equated to true happiness. Nobody wants to become Buddha and sit under a lotus throne way out in a far western land as it says in the Sutra. Literally speaking, no one wants to go out there and sit by himself in a lotus throne. What it means is it symbolizes — it is the perfection of happiness. That's the Pure Land or Pure Realm. That's the kind of situation that we want to get ourselves into. Perfect happiness, lasting eternal happiness, not a temporary one — the real permanent happiness. Bodhisattva is one who is seeking to attain that. So anybody who is on the path or seeking it is in a sense a Bodhisattva. So in a very general way, we are all Bodhisattva. But in a special definition, Bodhisattvas are a high ranking person in the wisdom of the teachings so it almost is becoming a Buddha. So we have that type of differentiation.

In the Mahayana Buddhism, a Bodhisattva is a top ranker. Nobody claims to be a Buddha except Buddha himself, but anyone of us can attain Bodhisattva in our life. In the Theravada Buddhism, it is arahat. Top ranker of the human being near enlightenment.

The thing about Bodhisattva, there's a characteristic thing about it I want you to know and you should know. Let's go through the technical one first. Bodhisattvas are those who want to enter into the way of the Buddha. To become a Buddha. He's doing this with great will; he's not just sitting around; he's going at it to become a Buddha and he practices the Six Paramitas and strives to attain enlightenment, to save all sentient beings. They pass through all the 51 stages leading to the enlightenment after an infinitely long term of attempt and study. These are all philosophical ways of looking at it. The Bodhisattva ideal is that he wants to attain enlightenment with a will and then to save all sentient living things along with him. That's the characteristic point about the Bodhisattva. Not only for me but you along with me. This is what you have to remember, this is going to come out over and over again. The Bodhisattva ideal is to attain enlightenment, you and me both, not me alone, you. In fact, Bodhisattva is so ideallike that I will not become a Buddha unless you do, too. Unless you become a Buddha, I won't. That's really the highest of ideas. But this particular Bodhisattva ideal is expressed in another way. In Mahayana Buddhism, Bodhisattva indicates one practices the teachings of Buddha in both secular and non-secular ways. Non-secular means just like us, daily living, and doing something else, like businessman, farmer, shopkeeper, etc. While we're doing that, we practice the teachings of Buddha. Instead of becoming a Buddha immediately, he vows to save all beings and work with compassion for the sufferings of others, working with others and benefitting others as well as himself.

This particular fault about the Bodhisattva and his wish is expressed in the Four Great Vows of Bodhisattva. Shikuzeigan means Four Great Vows of the Bodhisattva.

- Vow #1 However innumerable sentient beings may be.
 In other words, no matter how many guys there are I vow to save them all, not leaving anyone out.
- Vow #2 However inexhaustible passions may be, I vow to extinguish them all, no matter what kind of basic passion that instinct business, it may be. No matter how many I may have, I vow to extinguish them all, erase them all.
- Vow #3 However limitless the Dharma may be I vow to study them all. To study the whole business, to master it.
- Vow #4 However infinite the Buddha Dharma may be I vow to attain it and in doing so, save everybody else also along with me.

It's a very very noble vow. Practically speaking then, we come to how does Bodhisattva go along doing all this in our daily living. What kinds of thoughts do they have? Naturally they have pure thoughts, but for us practicing Buddhists, in the so-called secular world, we're not ministers, we're ordinary laymen. What do we do? What can we do? To follow this Bodhisattva ideal — spiritual living to attain true happiness, how do we go about that? Being Buddhist sutras, they look at it from different angles, say the same thing over and over again from different angles. We have to stick to some angle, so we stick to the one we call the **Six Paramitas**.

I think you're all familiar with it — what it means is the six perfect practices which take us to this world of happiness from our world of imperfection to the world of perfection. Incidentally, the March equinox, the first day of Spring, is Ohigan. We have the Spring and Fall Ohigan. The Ohigan is based on the practice of the Six Paramitas, so we're very timely here. The Six Paramitas practice keeps us on the path to the Bodhisattva in the attempt to reach real happiness. (I'm going to go through the Six Paramitas very briefly:)

1. **Dana Paramita**. Dana means the perfect practice of selfless giving. The giving part everyone knows, but the selfless part is the catch that stops us. Everybody knows the word charity, merciful giving. Charity and mercy type of giving involves "me." I am the one being charitable to someone else. "I" capitalized. You gotta darn well remember who is giving. That type of charity is not a self-ful type of giving. I'm giving ten bucks to the temple, but I want all of you to really know that I gave it. In our giving and in our receiving the gift and so forth, we tend to be selfish giving or self-ful giving. Somebody gives someone something; ten years later this guy says, "Remember what I gave you such and such ten years ago." "What! You forgot that I gave you such and such a thing ten years ago! What in ingrate." That's the usual. The giver remembers, the recipient forgets. The receiver forgot because we're self-ful. I hate to be bound to the guy's giving all time so you shove it out of your mind and soon you forget it. We say we're human, which means we're selfish.

Shinran Shonin, on the other hand, said the other way around, "Never remember that you gave something. Just forget it. But never forget that you received something." He never forgets what he receives, but he always forgot what he gave. See this is in philosophical theory. The giver in our life wants to be remembered that he'd given, recipient forgets and gets mad about it. If you can learn to give and forget and then when you re-

ceive you remember, then you're on the path. Why? Because that's a practice of selflessness. Selfless giving. No ego. It's very easy to say but so hard to practice. People want to be recognized. It's very human. All human means is we're all selfish. We're acknowledging the egocentric self. Practice of all selfless giving will tend to make us go back to the 4 Noble Truths — remember the suffering, imperfections of life are caused by self, of which egocentricity is the basis. We said if we can get rid of that egocenter, in #3 Noble Truth, then we can achieve real happiness. The Six Paramitas, selfless giving is one of the ways to try to erase that self-centeredness. That is why it's a terrific practice. That is why Buddha places it number one. It's the toughest because we all want to get credit for what we give. We get hurt when our name is left out. Why do we feel hurt? Our ego wants recognition. In other words you don't know whether you're giving to get recognition or you're giving it because you want to give. You say a little of both. Lots of cases, it's lots of recognition, little bit of giving. You don't have to go into the Buddha sutra and study all about it. All you have to do is just look at yourself and see how you act. Six Paramitas sound like terrific things, foreign words and such. Selfless giving - very simple English. Supposedly very simple to do but try. Bodhisattva ideal — I will help all, come one and come all. The second guy that comes for help, I'm too busy, I got other things to do. My family is first. We say, that's how it should be, our family first - you're self-centered. Bodhisattva will take off his shirt, he'll take off everything and give it to the guy if he needs it. You say if we do that we can't live. That's exactly it. We won't be able to live meaning we won't be able to exist in this world under classification #2, rational living. If we're really in classification #3, spiritual living, sure take my house, take this; theoretically, nobody does that. This is Bodhisattva as an ideal is very simple, beautiful, and we're all Bodhisattva and we feel like we're all one. Just try to practice it. That's the only way to tell whether or not you're even on the right path. Remember that according to the sutra, those 51 elevation of steps before you become a Bodhisattva you have all that to climb to spiritual enlightenment. Dana Paramita — selfless giving; we should all try it.

You can be the poorest guy in the world, don't own anything, but still there is a way to give dana. One of the most famous disciples of Buddha, you know Buddhist monks go around with an alms bowl to receive food, came to a rich guy's place where the door was slammed in his face; the rich man saying, "Get out of here — don't hang around here. Don't bother me." "Thank you very much," the monk said, as he started to leave; he wasn't mad. This rich guy opened the door and said, "You thanked me just now." "I certainly did." "Why are you thanking me? I kicked you out; I didn't give you anything." "Thank you for that." "What do you mean?" "You gave me the gift of your words. You spoke to me and I want to thank you for that." This really struck this person, and he said, "My goodness, the goodness in this man's heart is really beyond me. I should learn." After that, he always gave alms or offerings of food to the Buddhist monks.

In the same line of thought, some kid had Babe Ruth as a hero, and this kid went up to bother him for an autograph. Babe Ruth was so busy planning his strategy of the coming game, and he said, "Get out of my way kid." "Gee, he spoke to me." Same line of thinking—he spoke to me. Recipient is receiving the word. Let's give kind words when you give, not sarcastic words. If they come for offerings and you don't have it, "Gee, I really want to give, but I'm sorry I just don't have anything at the moment." Apologetically turn him down. That's better than saying, "Get the heck out of here." Those are words too but the kind of words that come from the heart are the words that are free. Before that you can give with your eyes, meaning the looks that you give a person. You don't say, "My, how beautiful your hair is" and your eyes can tell you don't mean it at all. Eyes are known as the windows to your soul. So what you're thinking inside shows up in your eyes and it shows in your face, too. Eyes and face expressions are free. Where do they come from—inside of you, mind and the thoughts. If the thoughts are good, kind,

then your expressions are kind. If your thoughts are not kind, then your expression tries to be kind, but you can see through them. Because your face and eyes give your insides away. Give of your kind heart, give of your kind words, give of your kind eyes, kind face, these are all free. You don't have to own anything.

Also, you can give personal service. That's called bodily gift. You can help move the person, help this, help that. These are all bodily gifts you can do and it doesn't cost anything. If you want to get technical about it, you use up about five calories of energy doing it, but you can afford that. That goes for helping the temple; that's all dana, without any material gift.

Then there's a gift of position. By that, it is meant someone visits your place, there's no furniture—only an orange crate—no place to sit except on that crate. You offer that to the guest—the best seat in the house. The orange crate that you offer your guest is the best you have in the house and that's a dana. These are things you give without owning anything. You don't have to have a nickel, a dime, property, goods, but inward spiritual goods that you can give are real dana.

Now, after going through all that, the best way to find out if you're on the way to happiness and if you think you're almost there to enlightenment is to see if you can do this one dana paramita. See if you can just live this life of dana paramita. That's the only way to find out, and I'm telling you from the experience of others who tried it's a terribly simple thing to say, but terribly, terribly difficult thing to do. Occasionally, we can get into the mood, shall we say, and we do dana. Maybe the real dana. By the way, you can do a fast dana and still might help a person. In other words, you can give a material good to a person who needs it and even if you don't like the person, even if it's not from the heart, you still can give the goods if the person can use it. It's a false good, but still to the recipient he can use it so it's better than nothing. But we're talking about the guy who is on the road to happiness. It's me—how am I doing. So much for dana.

2. **Sila Paramita.** This is discipline, this is precepts. This is what you do to another person—between another person. The rules of society, the rules of good giving, the rules of good conduct. People have to get along in society, when there are more than one people. When there's two people, there has to be some kind of rule. Otherwise, you can't get along. The rules of society are few for the so-called laymen. Five, and these are not mandatory, not command type.

These are the rules to be observed:

Precept #1 - Do not take life unnecessarily

Precept #2 - Do not steal

Precept #3 - Do not commit unlawful sex acts

Precept #4 - Don't tell lies and engage in idle and worthless gossip

Precept #5 - Don't take intoxicating liquor and drugs

Let's go back to Precept #1, don't kill. That stops us right there. Dana Paramita. You want to practice that perfectly, you would be dead and I would be dead, too. Why? Because taking of life if the only way we could live, and we're so self-centered that we have life first before the other things. You talk like you sympathize with other people but when you come down to a showdown, you and me, then it's me that wants to live. You have to die. Don't say that you don't feel like that. A lot of people talk like that when its peaceful and calm and well and well-fed but when you start running short of food or are in a predicament in which you may die or the other person may die, by golly you plan it so it's the other guy. That's how self-centered we are. I like to express that peculiar self-centered ego, this expression "I'll live me above anybody else." Let me give you an example. There's a lady from Culver, a patient of mine. She went to Japan, this elderly lady

who was wobbly on her feet. She was taking the ferry across an inland sea in Japan. I read about it in the newspaper that some excursion boat was overloaded and capsized and many lives were lost. I didn't think anything about it, but a couple months later this lady came back and I said, "How was your trip to Japan?" She said, "Wonderful, but the boat overturned." "Oh, was it the one I read about in the paper?" "Yes." she was on that. Holy mackerel. She said she was putting on her life jacket—there weren't enough life jackets because the boat was illegally overloaded, which is typical in Japan. If it says only 200 maximum, they got 350 passengers. Anyway, she said a young guy came dashing by, grabbed her life jacket off her back, and wore it himself and ran off, left her without a life jacket. Remember the boat was capsizing. It's you or me. That's the way I love me acts. Probably that young fellow might have said later in his life, "What did I do—I wonder what happened to that lady? She might have drowned because of me." Instinctively the first instinct of human beings is self-preservation. It's nothing but I love me, we learn that in Biology. So when we come to self-preservation, that's me.

Now these are the kind of things that happen in human life, in ordinary circumstances, it doesn't show up like that but when something happens, it's liable to show up. We act like that. We think we are doing a nice job of living, giving money to church like everybody else. We compare, we look around to see how much he gives, if he gives less, I can give less. If he gives more, I can give more, I have to give more, let's put it that way. This is the kind of thing we do because we are self-centered.

Silas Paramita is the precepts, the killing, we can't live without killing. Everything that we eat is made up of life, even the vegetables. Vegetarians eat vegetables, vegetables are life, too. It's just that they don't move around like animals. You have to eat life to sustain yourselves, you can't eat sand. We're not made that way. So in order to have ourselves live, we sacrifice all living things. We are all living because of them. If it weren't for the animals, the plants, we will be long gone. The fact that we are living is because we take their lives. Now how great does that make us? Dana Paramita.

We steal things, not the kind where we rob a bank, but we steal in our thoughts. Lots of things. Oh, he has that, gee, I wish I could have that. Boy, if I have the chance, I'd get it. Because of society you don't reach out and grab it. If it weren't for society you might fight for it and get it. That's the kind of instinct we have. So we tend to steal and steal and waste time without realizing it. We steal other people's time. We do that and think nothing of it. So when you talk about stealing it isn't only robbing banks, it isn't that kind of stealing, it's the little tiny things that you don't even think about.

I need not dwell on unlawful sexual thing, that thing is getting pretty wild nowadays. They think it is all right, but it's just the ethics of the time, probably comes a time when it will change again. They are going through a terrible cycle now. Evidence of that now is the increase in gonorrhea, syphilis, and all venereal diseases among young kids. It's rampant.

Next, don't tell lies and idle gossip. Gee, boy that's another rough one. Supposed to be a very simple one, but don't we talk about someone else. But on ourselves, we just like to hear the nice part, never bad things, which means they can't say anything nice. So we have to keep quiet. Only way you could say it is to tell a lie. Even then if it's a lie you like to hear nice things about yourself. Makes you feel good. That's how vain we are. I love me. So try not to tell a lie, it's awfully hard, we rationalize, meaning we say it's okay by saying little white lies. White lies, blue or red, lie is a lie. But, in our society we use little white lies, which still is a lie. According to the five precepts, you're doing wrong already.

The next one, intoxicating liquor and drug. I don't think I have to dwell on that one. Everybody boozes it up in the Buddhist Church — beginning with the ministers. Excuse me, some of the ministers. But what Sakyamuni Buddha meant by that he didn't want his disciples to be drinking and raising heck and come home drunk and listen to his lectures and hear nothing. This is why he gave this precept. Everyone should retain a sharp mind, you can't have a dull mind by drinking alcohol and taking drugs, this is what he meant. So these are the five precepts.

- 3 and 4 **Ksanti and Virya Paramitas.** Endurance and endeavor. I need not dwell on those, endurance is to keep on at it, endeavor is try to improve yourself, always with Buddha's teaching in mind.
- 5. **Dhyana Paramita** Contemplation. This is important. Buddhists always talk about meditation and contemplation. When you hear the word meditation, you think of the word yoga, or go sit in a lotus position. It isn't meant by that kind of meditation. This meditation means to think things over, stop, look, and listen. This is why Dhyana or meditation is pointing to. We go bumbling around, so busy all day long, from morning to night, get the kids up, feed them breakfast, off to school, meanwhile the husband comes around, "What time is it?" "Time to go off to work." "Okay." Rush, rush, rush, wow, you sit down. But now it's the laundry, the shopping, and so forth. Next day, it's the same thing again, no time to think. But, there should be time. When will you stop, look, and listen and contemplate, "Am I on the right track in practicing the paramita, or am I off some place?" "Have I done something that wasn't just right that I could have done right? Did I make an effort?" These are the contemplation that is done in this Dhyana Paramita.
- 6. The last one, **Prajna** Wisdom of the Buddha. We want to partake of the wisdom of the Buddha. Buddha's wisdom, Buddha's wise heart. This we try to make into our own. Not that we can become a Buddha, no, but the things the Buddha has observed in his wiseness we should be able to use it, or to use that to see things clearly. Which brings to mind its hard to know whether we did things right or wrong. We have to use a mirror or reflection or some standard to judge it against—to compare. In our human world, we usually compare with another person, that way we become a little bit better in this sense. I am better than she is, or, he is. This is not the true comparison, not for those who are seeking real happiness. In other words, he robbed five banks, I only robbed one, therefore, I'm four better than he is. That's the kind of standards that we use—not that ridiculous. Human standards, imperfection standards. What we have to do is to use perfection standards, which is the Buddha's standard. The Buddha's paramitas. This is what leads to true happiness. The reflections of our acts mirrored on the teachings of the Buddha, now where do we stand? Are we really as selfless in giving as we ought to be? Are we really practicing the precepts like we ought to be?

This then brings to the point why we are all doing this. Remember always, bear in mind we are trying to reach real happiness equated to Pure Realm, or Buddha's world. Buddha's world, not some place way off where you sit down and get bored stiff. That's not the kind of Buddha's world. Buddha's world is true happiness perfection. Anything you can think of, that's really perfect, perfect—that's it for human existence. This is what we are aiming for. Shinran Shonin points the way to that in his own way. There are several ways in getting at it. Zen meditation is one way, Theravada way is to keep piling up the merits, keep doing the good, so that not only in your lifetime but the next lifetime and the next. Shinran Shonin's way couldn't wait that long. He wants it as quick as possible before his life is snuck away. So, in order to get on Shinran Shonin's teachings, Shinran says, "Simple one, when one does wrong is one that is best saved." If the good people are saved, then all the more the bad people. Tannisho says it too, in so many words. Gee

whiz, if the bad guys are saved, then of course the good ones are. It seems like common sense, but it's the other way around. If the good people are saved all the more the bad ones are saved. People take that wrong. This is one of the key points of the Tannisho. If that is the case the more simple you are, the more crime you commit, the more you can get saved then. That is the danger of the Tannisho — it's called the two-edged sword because of that. What does that mean? It means this - the true meaning, in my estimation, is that those who practice the Six Paramitas not the whole six #1 Dana Paramita, even part of it. See how perfectly you could do that, the selfless giving, at any and all time. If you can't then you begin to find out that you're not as good as you thought you were.

You're not as good as, maybe not that bad, but you thought you were pretty darn good. I could teach others, but no one could teach me anything. Now I find I can't do the simple things they say I ought to be doing to reach happiness. Can't even do the one, let alone two, three, four, five, and six. That's the time when realization comes. Gee whiz, who am I? Where am I going? Here I thought I was on the way to true happiness, instead of that I can't even practice the thing you're supposed to be doing ordinarily. Can't even do that. Now how in the heck you can be expected to take care of Buddha and the Pure Land with the imperfection completely wiped out in the perfect happiness when I'm as lousy as I am?

This realization is of the most important in Jodo Shinshu. Without that realization this Buddha surrounding us, gee you feel kind of warm with Buddha around me, basking in the glory of Buddha. That alone is a false step. Without a realization of what I am, the true nature of myself, what am I really. How good am I? Without realizing that particular part the idea of Buddha saying that I am here to help you, I have been here all the time doesn't mean a thing. Just so many words. You don't feel it. Wisdom of the Buddha with me is to hear about the teachings of the Buddha.

Somebody said, "I have attained faith. Is that right? How do you feel?" "I feel that way." "Is that right?" So you say, "That's what faith means." So you feel, therefore, I got faith. He told me so, it's something like he has, so I am of the faith, too. Baloney. Faith is an individual thing. What we call faith awakening is the word. Awakening to the true nature is a deep-seated thing each to his own. Not to the other guy. It's me, myself. I'm the one that is awakening. If I'm not, I'm no good. No matter how many books I read. To know that means to inwardly feel it and experience it yourself. And it's a deep feeling, not a superficial two-minute thinking. If I thought about it this long it will be plenty.

You people know about flowers, beautiful flower of awakening, blooming some place. You cut the flowers, bring it home, and now I got the faith in my hand. Two days later, the flowers shriveled up, gone. No root. True faith is root in the ground. Roots in the ground, and it grows from there. You cut the flower and another flower comes up. It has to be that type of awakening. Not a cut flower you borrow from someone and say, "I got it." Sure you got it for the time being. Next day it shriveled up. What am I going to

No root, it's not a true faith. It's not your own awakening. Somebody else awakening. You swiped it. So this is the key point. When you get that awakening and then follow on the path, then we are going to have the first step, not the final one, but the first step taken toward the true happiness. And this is what I think the Shinshu teaching is all about.

Six Perfections

Objectives: To teach the students the application of the six perfect practices in our daily life in a way of expressing our gratitude to Amida Buddha.

Procedure I In Shin Shu the practice of the Six Perfections is simply the expression of our gratitude to Amida Buddha for awakening us to his boundless compassion and wisdom. Our part is to put into action the compassion which comes to us vertically from Amida and to apply it horizontally in our relation with man and other living beings on this earth. This application in our daily life is the Shinshu way of expressing our gratitude and thanksgiving for the wondrous blessings extended to us unconditionally and equally for all just like the sun's ray which falls on the earth.

Procedure II Ask: What are the practices selfless Buddhists try to live up to? List on chalkboard. Try to illicit responses similar to the following:

CHARITYPure Giving

I will share my possessions, love and faith.

MORALITY..... Right Behavior

May my thoughts, words and deeds be pure and beautiful.

PATIENCEEndurance

I will be patient and kind to every living thing.

ENERGY Effort

I will strive with earnestness to follow the teachings and promote that which is good for oneself and all life in general.

MEDITATION...Concentration

Each day I shall be thankful and recite the Nembutsu

WISDOMI will grow in body and mind, in spirit and in heart.

With sincere practice in the five Paramitas, our minds will grow clear and serene. Understanding with love — Wisdom with Compassion.

Extended Experiences:

1. Make a collage. Get Pictures out of various magazines which Exemplify any of the Six Perfections. This may be a group project or done individually.

The Six Gates

Jiro gave the pillow a shove and stared into the darkness. Was it a dream? Somehow, awake or in a dream, this is what he had experienced.

He had been walking in a forest when he came to a huge gate. On it were the words, "ONLY THOSE WITH CHARITY IN THEIR HEARTS, DARE ENTER." Jiro stepped back. Charity? What was that? He felt a deep misgiving but unlatched the gate and entered. He saw a rugged trail, broken by five more gates. Without a single thought about "Charity", he hurried on to the second gate. There he read the inscription, "ONLY THOSE WHOSE DEEDS AND WORDS ARE PURE, DARE ENTER THIS GATE." Pure deeds? Pure words? What's that? He hesitated and felt frightened. Vague regrets came and went, as he made his way to the third gate. With a long stick he pushed aside the vines and read, "IF THY HEART IS PATIENT, GO FORWARD." Charity? Pure words and deeds? Patience? What did it all mean? He wanted to turn back but something kept him going. At the fourth gate were the words in gleaming gold letters, "THOU HAS COME THIS FAR, FALTER NOT." Now the air was biting cold and it took every ounce of energy to take even one step forward. Time and again he wavered only to find new strength to continue. His patience wore thin. Fears and anger welled in his heart. He barely crept to the fifth gate, where words etched in silver shone out brightly... "STOP. OH TRAVELER AND REFLECT." Reflect. . . reflect about what? This awful journey? Why did he struggle so. Where would it all end? He did reflect. How long, he had no idea. Finally he cried out, "What shall I do? Can no one help me? I can't possibly make my way to the last gate."

No sooner had he spoken, when he heard a Voice from within his heart, a Voice of Power, Gentleness, compassion, saying, "DO NOT BE AFRAID. I AM WITH YOU. ARISE, O WEARY TRAVELER. TRUST IN ME." A vast calm dwelled in his heart. He was able to make his way to the last gate, over which the Light of Truth had written the words, "MY LOVE, MY WISDOM, MY COMPASSION WILL BE THINE."

Jiro smiled. Of course, it wasn't a dream. It was life in action. The six gates meant the Six Paramitas, the great moral path of the Buddha; the path of Dana, Sila, Kshanti, Virya, Dhyana and Prajna. Only when man has struggled along through these gates and felt a enormous need for help, does he welcome it. Only then can he truly put his hands together in deep thankfulness. Jiro smiled. In 1965, a new world of happiness would open its door and he would walk forward with a serene heart.

PERFECTIONS**PARAMITAS

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FIND THE UNDERLINED WORDS.

DANA

Giving

Offering from the heart

Charity

Unselfishness

Helpful

SILA

Morality **Behavior**

Consideration for others

Make others happy

KSHANTI

Forbearance Understanding

Tolerance

Endurance Patience

Kind Heart

VIRYA

Perseverance

Effort Endeavor Steadfast

DHYANA

Meditation Concentration

Keep **Mind** on

Teachings

PRAJNA

Wisdom

Wisdom Acquired

Insight

Look to Light of Amida Buddha

A BUDDHIST'S WEEK

Sunday. Generosity. Service-Day

Give: Materially - - - Money, Flowers,

Personal service.

Spiritually - - - Teaching, Sympa-

thy, Loving-kindness.

Monday. Remembrance. Morality-Day

Remember. The Eight-Fold Path.

Right Understanding, Right Purpose,

Right Speech,

Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right

Effort,

Right Thought, Right Meditation.

Tuesday. Practice Patience-Day

Forebearance and Self-control. Forgive the faults of others.

Make no complaints, do not become

angry.

Wednesday. Thanks. Thankfulness-Day

Give thanks to Lord Buddha, to parents and teachers.

Repeat the Nembutsu and make resolutions for the

betterment of yourself and mankind.

Thursday. Effort.

Endeavour-Day

Make special effort to understand and

Lord Buddha's Teaching.

Make effort to help others in a friendly way

Friday. Calmness. Meditation-Day

Practice Tranquility.

Set special time for meditation and Nembutsu.

Saturday. Study.

Wisdom-Day

Read a Buddhist book and study the Teaching.

PARAMITA WEEK

Paramita is a guide which you try to use every day until Buddha's teachings become a part of you.

Worship with feeling of gratefulness. Go out of your way to establish a cordial, loving family life.

(Write in what you did)

Do one thing with right attitude.

(Write in what you did)

Try and really listen to others. Are you really listening?

(Write in what you did)

Give dana not so much in material things but give of yourself. When was the last time you gave a helping hand to someone?

(Write in what you did)

When you have a goal, it helps you to try your best.

(Write in what you did)

Concentrate on clearing your mind and try to see good points of others. Stop complaining!

(Write in what you did)

Practice of the Paramita Week will enable you to understand the Buddha's teachings with love and compassion.

Shinran Shonin

Process of Meditation

- 1. Life struggle suffering
- 2. Nembutsu
- 3. Wisdom understanding life compassion
- 4. Oneness myself Shinran

Children's Point of View

My struggles My suffering

What Nembutsu means to me

Sila: Remembrance

(Morality, Behavior, Consideration)

Introduction: Explanation/Definition/Meaning of Sila

Discussion: Morals

Question/Answer Period:

- 1. A. Drugs What would you do? Caught brother/best friend on drugs, tell parents? Stay quiet? Discuss or confront with person
 - B. Stealing
 - C. Smoking
 - D. Cheating
- 2. Role Playing
 - A. Set up situation with students
- 3. Discussion of role playing activity

Prajna (Wisdom)

- 1. Definition: What do YOU think it means (Students)
- 2. All students participate in the definition
- 3. When I was your age:
 - A. Knowledge of everything
 - B. Allow time for discussion
 - C. Wisdom is still learning
 - D. Listen to ojisan and obachan
 - E. Life is education
- (1) Learn through experience
- 4. What is happiness
 - A. Get response from students
 - B. Tie with Buddha's definition of wisdom and happiness

Patience (Kasanti)

Planning an outing

- 1. Definition
 - A. Ask class
 - B. Expand on ideas
- 2. Deciding where to go and what is needed
- 3. Awareness of feeling within oneself
 - A. Anger
 - B. Attachment
 - C. Jealousy (complaint)
- 4. Concluding thought
 - A. What did you learn
 - B. How would you have planned it next time

Examples: Trip to cemetery

— Growing flowers

Dana

- 1. Introduction
 - A. Definition
 - B. Example parable "Nanda's Lamp"
- 2. Class discussion
 - A. Seek student ideas
 - B. Seek student perceptions
 - C. Implement student/teacher ideas
- 3. Focus ideas on above
 - A. Pass out magazines, etc. and pick out an article to work on
- 4. Class project
 - A. Field trip (rest homes, etc.)
 - B. Collages

Virya (Action)

Mode of Presentation — Basketball

Definition of terms/establish parallels

- A. Team action
 - 1. Team work (good? bad?)
 - 2. Giving of each player
 - a. Interdependency
 - b. Gratitude, appreciation
 - 3. Sportsmanship (win or lose)
 - a. Gratitude
- B. Results
 - 1. Oneness
 - 2. Sharing and friendship
- C. Class discussion/questions
 - 1. Feelings
 - a. Satisfaction
 - b. Accomplishments
- D. Interpretations
 - 1. Interdependency
 - 2. Golden Chain: Living in Amida's compassion
 - 3. Harmonious peace

On Recycling (Paramitas: Morality)

In Buddhism we learn to make use of everything as part of our training. It means seeing the Buddha in all things. This seeing is not a mysterious vision we develop but an awareness that allows us to actively participate in the endless transformation, the flow, of which we are all a part.

An excellent way to deepen one's training is to seriously begin to recycle. We start out with bottles, newspapers and cans. With the water shortage, many of us have been forced to take a closer look at how we use this precious fluid which we have always taken for granted. But as Buddhists our recycling must go much farther than this because what we are about is recycling ourselves. That is, not rejecting those aspects of ourselves we're not proud of but 'through our own wills and vigilence' transforming them into their positive counterparts, much like the furniture dealer whose signs reads "we buy junk, we sell antiques".

This recycling attitude of mind has been a part of Buddhism since the very beginning as evidenced by the following tale:

When Syamavati, the queen-consort of King Udyana, offered Ananda five hundred garments, Ananda received them with great satisfaction.

The king, hearing of it, suspected Ananda of dishonesty, so he came to Ananda and asked what he was going to do with the garments. Ananda replied: "Oh, King, many of the brothers are in rags; I am going to distribute the garments among them."

"What will you do with the old garments?"

"We will make bed-covers out of them."

"What will you do with the old bed covers?"

"We will make pillow-cases."

"What will you do with the old pillow-cases?"

"We will make floor-covers out of them."

"What will you do with the old floor-covers?"

"We will use them for foot-towels."

"What will you do with the old foot-towels?"

"We will use them for floor-mops."

"What will you do with the old mops?"

"Your Highness, we will tear them into pieces, mix them with mud and use the mud to plaster the house walls".*

Although the details of our recycling activities may differ from Ananda's, the attitude of mind is identical. A natural rhythm develops when we allow the world to move through us and a recognition grows that we too are sharing in this wondrous process of transformation.

Five Precepts

Objectives: To teach the students to follow the Five Precepts and discover that it is difficult to follow. Once they realize that it is difficult to follow, they will seek the strength of Amida Buddha.

Procedure I: These are the five "don't's"

Five Precepts

1. I shall not harm any living thing.

- 2. I shall not take what does not belong to me.
- 3. I shall not do anything impure.
- 4. I shall not tell falsehoods.
- 5. I shall not take harmful foods and drinks.

All living things, both plants and animals, need each other. We are all inter-dependent.

Discuss the Five Precepts as they are related to this age level.

Brainstorm each precept. List ways that we tend to break each precept.

We need to continually strive to follow the 5 precepts, however, we realize the difficulty of following them. For this reason we seek the strength of Amida Buddha. We show gratitude for the lives that are given for our nourishment.

Procedure II:

Have the students memorize the Five Precepts, and apply it to their daily lives.

Paramita

Along with the Four Noble Truths preached by the Buddha and compiled in the early sutras, the paramita or the way leading to the shore of Enlightenment was compiled in the famous Wisdom Sutra. Although the paramitas are ways of practices for the Bodhisattva. (devout followers in Mahayana), they have been taken into many shores of Buddhism.

(1) **Dana** (Giving, offering). The Buddhist act of Dana is well known to all Buddhists.

The essential things about Dana that all Buddhists never fully understand are:

(a) Dana is the act of giving which must come from the heart of the person involved. This means once the act of Dana is enacted, there must be no concern as to what was given, to whom it was given, or even why it was given. The act of Dana was done because there was a definite need for it; and once it was over, all concern over the act itself as well as the object or service offered must be forgotten. This is often spoken of as the state of "ku," or impersonal purity achieved by the agents involved who are the giver, the receiver, and the object or the service offered.

(b) Dana is offered either in material form or sincere services. In other words, the common belief that there must be some kind of material involved is a mistaken concept of Dana. Dana can be made through voluntary services and even directing thoughts of sincerity. In one of the sutras called "On the Miscellaneous Treasures in the Dharma," the Buddha listed seven non-materialistic offerings. Some examples of the seven are: "extending kind eyes;" "greeting others with a smile;" "using words of kindness;" etc.

(2) Sila (Precepts, Morality). The second of the way to perfection is the observing of the many precepts laid down by the Buddha. This problem has been dealt with

under Three Learnings . . .

(3) **Ksanti** (Forbearance). Forbearance means the spiritual fortitude to withstand the wrongdoings and mistakes of others with deep understanding and sympathetic attitude towards the wrongdoer, and rather than retaliate, to devise means to lead such people away from such actions.

What is commonly said today, such as, trying to see the other party's standpoint, is the modern version of Ksanti. The attitude of withstanding is not negative but constructive, with sincere intent being to help others where help is needed even if one has been

wronged by the other's misinterpretations or mistakes.

(4) Virya (Perseverance). The sincere effort of the Buddhist should be directed to the realization and practice of the other five paramitas. It means to train one's physical self and cultivate one's spiritual fortitude to carry out the teachings of the Buddha as shown in the other five ways of practices. Besides these areas mentioned, it is expected that a Buddhist would direct his effort in all areas, both religious as well as secular.

(5) **Dhyana** (Meditation). The purpose of this practice is to pacify one's mind and to reach a state of perfect peace and quietude. Many types of practices are taught

to reach this high level of mind concentration.

(6) **Prajna** (Wisdom). Wisdom is the highest level of spiritual attainment, the level which is so high as to enable men to reach the goal of Bodhi. It was indeed this level of attainment that enabled Prince Siddhartha to become the awakened Buddha. This level of attainment can only be known to the devoted who manage to reach this goal.

The traditional interpretation of the paramita or the six ways leading to perfection has been given above. The first four are relatively easy to understand; i.e., giving, observing precepts, tolerance, and perseverance. However, the remaining two are indeed very difficult to understand. Moreover, as it has been mentioned, it cannot be known

through intellect but has to be experienced bodily through one's actual practices. It is because of this difficulty that the Shin Buddhist interpretation of the six ways leading to perfection must be clarified.

Introduction

In the calendar of the Buddhists there are two religious observances which have their origin in Japan. They are the Ohigan, held twice annually, once in the spring and again in the autumn, and the Obon (Memorial service for the departed) held between July 15th and August 15th.

The spring Ohigan is held in Japan for one whole week from March 19 to 26. The autumn Ohigan is held from September 21 to 28. During these times the length of the day and night is said to be equal and the weather is neither hot nor cold, thus making it ideal for contemplation and spiritual awakening to the boundless wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha.

Different schools of Buddhism other than Shinshu place their emphasis on "Self-Power" on the part of the devotee. The Ohigan observance, according to their school, means the opportune moment for an all out individual effort to be directed toward the attainment of Nirvana in this life. The Six Paramitas or Dana, Sila, Ksanti, Virya, Dhyana and Prajna are the gates through which the devotee enters and crosses to the Buddha land.

In Shinshu the observance of Ohigan is simply the expressing of our gratitude to Amida for awakening us to his boundless compassion and wisdom. Our part in this observance would be to put into action the compassion which comes to us virtually from Amida and to apply it horizontally in our relation with man and other living beings on this earth. This application in our daily life is the Shinshu way of expressing our gratitude and thanksgiving for the wondrous blessings extended to us unconditionally and equally for all just like the sun's ray which falls on the earth.

The Six Paramitas

CHARITY Pure Giving

DANA I will share my possessions, love and faith.

MORALITY......Right Behavior

SILA May my thoughts, words and deeds be pure and

beautiful. "Kindness is the fountain of happiness."

PATIENCEEndurance

KSANTI I will be patient and kind to every living thing.

ENERGY Endeavor

VIRYA I will strive with earnestness to follow the teachings

of the Buddha.

MEDITATION...Concentration

DHYANA Each day I shall be thankful and recite the Nem-

butsu

WISDOMI will grow in body and mind, in spirit and in heart.

PRAJNA May the wisdom of the Compassionate One so fill my

heart that the mists of error and the foolish vanity of

self be dispelled.

1. Dana • Charity

In the world today we hear and read constantly of Charity — the Red Cross appeals, the Community Fund, Poppy Day and so on. We must never hoard things we cannot use. We must give as much as we are able to. Yet there is another way to give. We can give encouragement to those in trouble and suffering, time to the old, knowledge and peace to the ignorant. Dana Paramita can be shown by the seven ways of giving without owning property or materials.

Giving by eyes — no sharp looks. Giving by face — a gentle smile. Giving by mouth — soft spoken words (kindness). Giving by heart — (basis for giving) kind and understanding. Giving by body — render service when needed. Giving by position — give up seat, share honors. Giving by hospitality — offer the best to your guest.

There are so many wonderful acts of charity going on every day of the year, it's hard to keep informed of them all. Sometimes we read about them in magazines, in books, and in newspapers, but there are many more that we do not even know. It's these little acts of Dana that make this world a better place to live in.

There are great men and women who have lived the life of Dana. For example, men like Albert Schweitzer, with whom most of the children are familiar. Along the same line is the late Dr. Tom Dooley, with his medical work among the primitive natives of Laos. There are women like Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt who always worked for peace and Helen Keller who works to make this world a better place to live in for the blind. Our most recent hero is the astronaut, John Glenn. He gave himself to science, for he did not know whether he would be returning home to his family and children when he blasted off in the space capsule. What is their reward for their acts of Dana? Very little material wealth, to be sure, but a great reward from the happiness and welfare given to others.

2. Sila • Morality

The second Paramita is Sila (Morality). Behave, improve behavior, obey rules of parents and teachers.

I will respect myself and others and all living things. First you must evaluate yourself. Are you respectable, honest, obedient? If you can truthfully say that you are, then others will respect you. Who is the best liked girl or boy in school? Who is the least liked girl or boy in school? Whose fault is it if he is not liked by his fellow students or friends?

Sakyamuni Buddha said that we all have Buddha seeds within us. We are like brothers and sisters. How is it that one person is so different from another? If we all start with the same seed how is it that one seed does not receive the love and care that it needs such as sunshine, water and fertilizer? (Discuss these points. Buddhist children will try to nurture their seeds so that it grows strong with love and compassion and fruitful with happiness, courage and respect.)

3. Ksanti • Patience

The third Paramita is Ksanti (Patience). With an understanding of the law of Karma we will find it easier to be patient. It is better to understand why we are miserable and then to smile through our troubles lest we add to the burdens of another.

The law of Karma (Cause and Effect) is one of the most important teachings of Buddhism. By understanding the cause of an illness we are better able to take care of it and with patience, we hope to cure it. If it is an illness that took a long time to be noticed then it will take longer to be cured. By worrying and being afraid will only tend to make matters worse.

Example:

Let us say that it is your mother's birthday and you are going to make a cake. We must do exactly as the recipe says. We must use the right pans and the right amount of ingredients. The oven has to be turned on at the right temperature. Turning the oven higher will not have the cake done any sooner. It may burn it. If it says that it must be baked at 375 degrees for 30 minutes, then that is what we must do. No use trying to hurry it up, for you want to get the best cake you ever made. When the cake is done, you must cool it for the required amount of time before you ice it. PATIENCE, patience.

4. Virya ● Diligence, effort

The fourth Paramita is Virya (diligence - effort). This means to constantly strive with a full heart to promote that which is good for oneself and all life in general.

This means that we are always trying to become good Buddhists. A good Buddhist will always work to better themselves and all their surroundings. This is not forgotten, at home, at school and at church.

Good manners are not actions that we can put away in a box and bring out whenever we find it convenient, or when we find that it is to our advantage. It is very hard to remember all the good things that are expected of us. We want to shout when we are not supposed to such as in a classroom, a movie theatre, or in church. We want to say "no" when a "yes" is expected of us. We want to be opposites sometimes, but we must remember to control ourselves.

Our mothers often say "Watch your table manners children, for if you are not careful you will do it when you are invited to a friend's house." Disgraceful table manners, impolite language, even facial expressions such as frowning, pouting, scowling, etc. should be checked before it becomes a habit. It takes **effort** but we must practice **good habits** and not bad habits.

5. Dhyana • Meditation

The fifth Paramita is Dhyana (Meditation). The Buddha said: "The control of mind is good." To keep away confused and wandering thoughts, to sit quietly each day with a thankful heart, to dwell upon the wondrous love and compassion of Amida Buddha will bring true peace of mind.

To control the mind is a very difficult task.

Can we watch television or listen to a record player and do our homework or carry on a conversation at the same time? We may be able to do all these things at the same time but it is certain that the result will not be our best. Our mind will be trying to do two things at one time. "Oh, who is singing now?" "10-4 leaves 5." "Wow, that was a close one." All these things cannot be going through your mind at once and still be able to result in good homework. The only solution is to do only one thing at a time and concentrate on that one particular thing.

As we put our hands together in quiet meditation, how difficult it is to keep our minds from wandering here and there. A second seems like an hour. Your thoughts are everywhere but on meditation. When our minds wander in this way, we must try to concentrate our thoughts on Amida Buddha. Try to take time out to sit quietly for a few moments each day. Do this with a thankful heart. There are many things that we can be thankful for.

6. Prajna • Wisdom

The sixth Paramita is Prajna (Wisdom). With sincere practice of the five Paramitas, our minds will truly grow in wisdom. We will be able to see life from the right viewpoint. Our minds will grow clear and serene. Our faith will deepen and from deep within we will hear the Holy Name.

In Buddhism, Wisdom and Compassion are two words that most always go together. One without the other is incomplete. Wisdom without compassion is just being wise without the feeling of Amida's Love and Compassion. If we take Compassion alone it sounds like pity, or just feeling for another. But when we speak of Wisdom and Compassion we know that we have taken into consideration the Six Paramitas and put them into practice to feel the Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha.

It is hard to remember all the teachings of the Paramitas, but if we try, at least, it is a step forward. We are not perfect. If we were, we would all be Buddhas, but the most important fact is that we realize our responsibilities as young followers of the Teaching and do all we can to follow it and bring it to the attention of others.

Higan Services

The Higan Services are observed twice a year, i.e., once in spring and once in autumn. The word "higan" means "that shore" or "other shore" denoting Nirvana, the goal of Buddhism, as in contrast with "shigan" or "this shore" but which is implied the mundane world or the world of transmigration.

The Higan is an abbreviation of "to-higan" or "to reach that shore" which is the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit term "paramita." Although the concept of Higan is of Buddhist origin, its observance was originated in Japan with first recorded observance going back as far as 806 A.D. when Emperor Kanmu issued an edict ordering priests throughout the Empire to read the Kongo Hannya Kyo in the vernal and autumnal equinox weeks.

During these Higan weeks, when the days and nights are of equal length and the weather is neither too warm nor cold, Buddhists gathered before the shrine of Amida Buddha and listened to the teachings. As these unique observances became so popular among the people, they have eventually been made important entries in the Japanese calendar.

In 1878, the Meiji Government designated the two equinox days as national holidays. Among the existing national holidays of present-day Japan, only these two holidays have religious significance (as of January 1, 1969).

Why the equinox observance was expanded to seven days is explained by some as in accordance with the word of Buddha in the *Amida Kyo* or the *Smaller Sutra* that, "Those who call on the Buddha's Name for seven days will attain birth in the Pure Land."

However, as the name Higan denotes, this is the time to remind within each and every one of us the Bodhisattva practice of Six Paramitas or the Six Perfections, i.e., dana-paramita (offering or charity), sila-paramita (observance of Buddhist precepts), ksanti-paramita (forebearance, perseverance), virya-paramita (effort, assiduity), dhyana-paramita (meditation), and prajna-paramita (wisdom). It is the Bodhisattva's practice to accomplish these paramitas and thereby cross the ocean of birth and death in the Six Realms, and reach Nirvana. The Six Realms are as follows: naraka-gati (hells), preta-gati (the realm of the hungry ghosts), tiryagyoni-gati (the realm of animals), asura-gati (the realm of Asuras, or spirits or demons), manusya-gati (the human realm) and deva-gati (the heavenly realm). The number seven, therefore, symbolizes crossing over of the Six Realms.

In Shin Buddhism, our crossing over the Six Realms of birth and death is assured in the moment of Faith. Through the Vow Power of Amida Buddha we will be "carried" across from this shore to the other shore. The Nembutsu or the recitation of Buddha's Name is the expression of gratitude for the Buddha's Infinite Wisdom and Boundless Compassion, and at the same time our determination to fully do our best in contributing whatever we can to mankind. The Nembutsu is the realization of our true self, and from this realization, can we truly endeavor to do the best of our ability to accomplish the Six Paramitas.

Six Paramitas - Illustrate (by words or pictures)

CHARITY-DANA Pure Giving

MORALITY-SILVA Right Behavior

PATIENCE - KSANTI Endurance

ENERGY -VIRYA Endeavor

MEDITATION - DHYANA Concentration

WISDOM - PRAJNA

Make Your Own Story

"SIX PARAMITAS"

Shinran's Life Of Nembutsu

Objective: To teach the children of Shinran's life of Nembutsu.

Introduction:

Shinran found a way for all people to embrace the Amida's great compassion, wisdom and love by reciting the Nembutsu. This teaching is called Jodo Shinshu.

Material: Any book that has a moral to it. For example: The Ugly Duckling, The Emperor's New Clothes, Cinderella, Pinocchio; etc.

Song: "If your Happy and you know it clap your hands"

"Your friends are my friends"

Picture of Shinran Shonin Flannel material (squares)

Strings glue

Procedure:

Read the story of any book with a moral.

For example: The Ugly Duckling

Point out that Amida's love was with the Ugly Duckling, if he were a Shinshu Buddhist he would have understood that looks are not important,

More important is what a person feels about himself. A Shinshu Buddhist knows he is a kind, thoughtful, and loving person and that "goodness" is far more important than how a person looks.

But we are not critical of the duckling for feeling hurt and ugly. For Shinran has taught us that we all will feel hurt and ugly but we have Amida Buddha's compassion, wisdom, and love with us always to help us overcome that hurt or ugliness.

And when we see someone feeling hurt and ugly like the duckling do we make fun of him? Do we think we are better than him? No....We feel a compassion, a love, an understanding for him. Just like the Amida Buddha feels for us...and so you can see how easy it is for us to say Namu Amida Butsu...thank you Amida Buddha for your teachings and love. And thank you Shinran for showing us the Nembutsu way to feel close to Amida and understand sorrow, pain, greed, conceit, ugliness and other unpleasant feeling and to also feel and understand compassion, love, wisdom, gratitude, kindness, sharing and etc.

You are very much like the ugly duckling and as you grow like the ugly duckling, you will feel sadness and happiness, but unlike the ugly duckling you will have the faith of Amida Buddha with you all the time. Just say the Nembutsu and know Amida loves and cares for you no matter if you are ugly or feel sorry for yourself.

At the end of the story the duckling discovers he is a lovely swan, and is very happy and thankful to live with the other swans. Do you think Amida Buddha's love has reached out to him. It can and will if would reach out and call the Nembutsu....

Aren't you happy the duckling found happiness with friends?

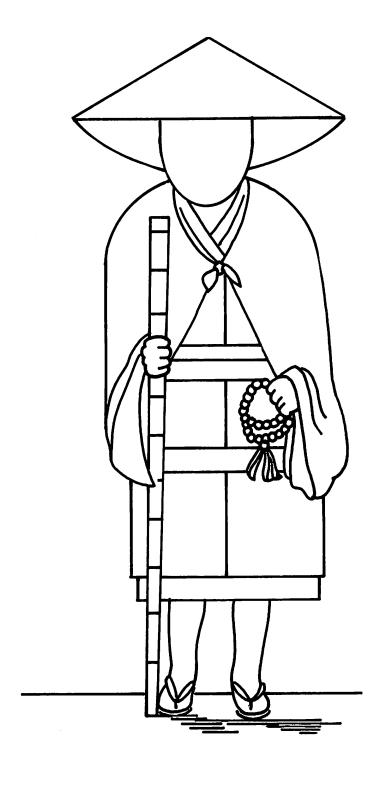
Let's sing "If you are happy and you know it clap your hands"

Okay, now let's sit down and do a simple project....of....Who is the founder of Jodo Shinshu and the Nembutsu way? SHINRAN SHONIN, yes, we are going to make a wall hanging of him.

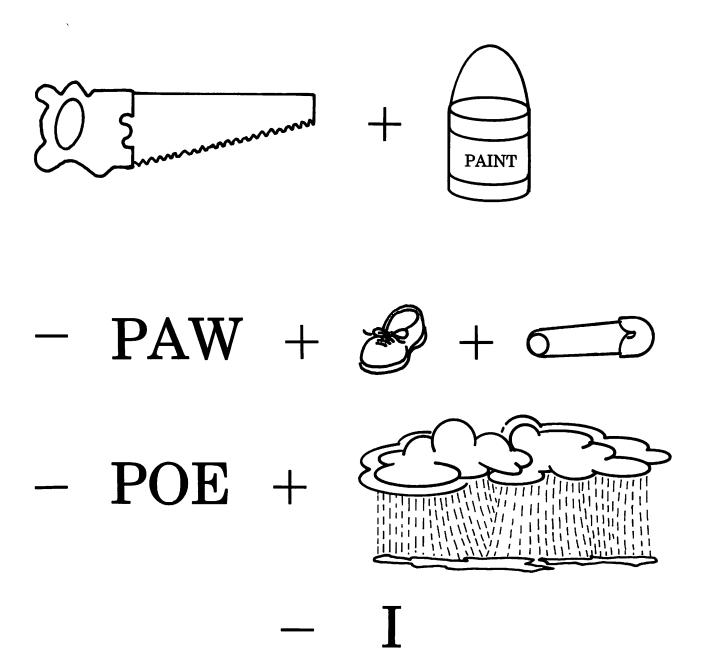
Students or mothers can help with this project.

Shinran Shonin

What kind of expression do you think Shinran Shonin would have on his face? Draw how you think Shinran Shonin's face would be.



What Does This Spell?



Spell the words for each picture and minus the letters and see what it spells.

Gotan-E

Purpose:

To observe the birthday of Shinran Shonin.

Procedure:

World map or globe Picture of Shinran Shonin (identify) Time line Worksheet (Activity)

Procedure:

Shinran Shonin, founder of the Jodo Shinshu Sect, was born on May 21, 1173, near Kyoto. Early in his life, Shinran Shonin lost both of his parents and was moved to enter the Buddhist priesthood. He endured the most difficult of medications and practices at Mt. Hiei, where he studied for 20 years. Shinran Shonin, a humble man, spent over 50 years of his life teaching that we can seek happiness and enlightenment through faith in Amida Buddha's teachings.

Site the locations of Kyoto and Mt. Hiei (Japan) in relation to the location of your temple. Show how far Jodo Shinshu has reached.

On the time line, show relationship between the births of Gautama Buddha, Shinran Shonin and the students. Also, cite the differences.



Worksheet - Gotan - E

ľ1 W(ll in the missing words. Write the circled letters in the boxes below to find the mystery ord.						
1.	When I $_$ $_$ $_$ $_$ $_$, I put my hands together and say, "Namu Amida Butsu" (gassho)						
2.	In celebrating Gotan-E, we are recognizing the of Shinran Shonin (birth)						
3.	, founder of Jodo Shinshu, was born May 21 1173, near Kyoto. (Shinran Shonin)						
4.	Shinran Shonin's teachings show a way of by which one can seek happiness and enlightenment through faith in Amida Buddha. (life)						
	Mystery word:						
	Answer: Gotan-E						

Buddhist Observances

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	Buddhist Holidays	Dates	Titles	Descriptions
Sept.	B.C.A. Founding Day	Sept. 1 Sept. 23	Higgs F	B.C.A. Founding Day Autumnal Equinox
Oct.	Higan E		Higan E	
Nov.				Thanksgiving
Dec.	Joya-E Bodhi Day	Dec. 31 Dec. 8	Joya-E Bodhi Day	New Year's Eve Enlightenment
Jan.	New Years Shinran Shonin Memorial	Jan. 1 Jan. 16	New Year Shusho-E Hoonko	New Year
Feb.	Nirvana Day	Feb. 15	Nehan-E	Passing of Shakyamuni into Nirvana
Mar.	Higan	March 21	Higan-E	Spring Equinox
Apr.	Buddha Day	April 8	Hanamatsuri	Birth of Gautama Buddha
May	Shinran Shonen Day	May 21	Shuso- Gotan E	Placed his faith in Amida's power Mother's Day
June July	Obon	June July August	Obon	Graduation Obon Festivals Father's Day

Holidays And Festivals

SHŪSHŌ-E- 修正会 - "observe-new year-gathering": NEW YEAR'S DAY SERVICE

JANUARY 1st

The Japanese Buddhists, with a few exceptions, have adopted the western calendar. Even those dates still based on the old lunar calendar have set dates which do not fluctuate as they do according to the lunar calendar.

The observance of Shusho-e originated in the Nara Period and lasted for seven days in all the temples throughout Japan. Homes are cleaned and debts paid before the new year. Oshogatsu (お正月) or New Years customs vary from prefecture to prefecture but the foods and decorations all have to do with symbols of long life, happiness, prosperity, and fertility.

The Shusho-e begins the cycle of those holidays and festivals which root one ever deeper in the Buddhadharma. Three special traditions associated with Oshogatsu are:

SHŌCHIKUBAI - 松竹梅 - "pine-bamboo-plum"; The traditional floral arrangement of pine, bamboo, and plum branches in homes and as altar offerings is of relatively recent origin. Pine branches were used in New Year's Day ceremonies from the middle of the Heian Period. The pine, being an evergreen, is symbolic of long life. Bamboo was added to the pine branches in the Muromachi Period. The bamboo is the symbol of endurance and resiliency since it bends but never breaks. The plum was added in the Tokugawa Period and the term Shochikubai was coined as the floral symbol of the new year. The plum tree is the first to bloom in late winter and is the symbol of hardiness.

KAGAMI MOCHI - 作mirror-mochi": This offering is also referred to as Kasane Mochi (堂舞 - "piled-mochi"). Mochi, a rice cake made from glutinous rice, has been served on all festive occasions since Heian times. Kagami Mochi is so named because of its resemblance to the traditional metal mirrors. It is also called Kasane Mochi since the Oshogatsu offering of mochi on the altar is made up of two cakes of mochi one piled on top of the other. An orange or tangerine is then placed on top of the piled mochi. The fruit was originally a citrus called Bitter Orange or Daidai (大変) in Japanese. The Bitter Orange is a tree whose fruit are yellow in winter but turn green again if left on the tree until spring. This seeming return to youth came to represent the prosperity of children from age to age. The term "from age to age" is also pronounced "daidai" (人代代) in Japanese, hence the use of the Bitter Orange. Temple offerings of Kagami Mochi are often Kohaku Mochi (紅 白 傑 "red-white-mochi") where one of the two cakes is colored red and the other left white.

ZŌNI - 雜 本"mixed-boil": Zoni is a clear soup containing mochi, a green vegetable, and kamaboko. Traditionally it is the first thing eaten on New Year's Day. The eating of mochi on the first day of the new year appears in the earliest records and most probably began in prehistoric times. Zoni is often served after the Shusho-e Service.

HŌONKŌ - 御正尽 報 息 講 - "honorific-death anniversary-repay-in-GOSHÖKI debtedness-observance:

Hoonko, meaning a gathering to express our indebtedness and gratitude, is a memorial service in memory of Shinran Shonin, and is an occasion to express our gratitude to Amida Buddha for having awakened us to life's supreme meaning. Hoonko is the most important Jodoshinshu observance in Japan. At the Honzan (本山 - "main-mountain") or mother temple in Kyoto, Hoonko is a week-long observance from the 9th

According to the western calendar, Shinran Shonin was born on May 21st, 1173 and died on January 16th, 1262. According to the traditional lunar calendar, this memorial service began with Shinran's disciples gathering on the 28th day of each month in memory of their master. The 3rd Gomonshu (作序 主 "honorific-gate-master") of the Hongwanji, Kakunyo (美 40), some 33 years later, set the regulations for this ceremony called Hoonko Shiki. Later, the 4th Gomonshu, Zonkaku (表 20) set the observance for once a year. The ceremonies were started on the 21st and concluded on the 28th of the 11th month according to the lunar calendar. In 1872, the Hongwanji-Ha (Nishihongwanji) changed to the western calendar, setting the date at January 16th. The Otaniha (Higashihongwanji) observes Hoonko according to the old lunar calendar but has set the day as the 28th of November.

Hoonko is one of the principal holidays in which one participates in the art of "hearing the light" (骨光-monko) through listening to sermons, talks, ritual, and Sangha

fellowship.

NEHAN-E^ラ呈 模念-"Nirvana-gathering": NIRVANA DAY

FEBRUARY 15th

The Sanskrit word Nirvana comes from the root "va" which means "to blow", adding the verb stem "ana" which means "to make", and the prefix "nir" which means "off" or "out". Hence, Nirvana means "the blowing out" or "the extinction". It is understood to

mean the blowing out or extinction of the flame of personal desire.

When Shakamuni Buddha attained Enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree, he had achieved this Nirvana. However, since he still was in his earthly form, he had not achieved complete Nirvana. When he died at the age of 80, he entered into complete Nirvana. His disciples then gathered from all directions and divided his cremated remains into eight parts. They enshrined these parts in stupas or reliquary mounds in order to preserve the memory of the Buddha. Over the centuries, the ashes were divided and redivided many times. The stupa of the San Francisco Temple enshrines a small portion of the Buddha's remains which was donated to the BCA by the king of Siam (now Thailand) in 1935.

The Japanese Buddhists and the Mahayana Buddhists in general observe the birth, enlightenment, and death days of Shakamuni on three separate days. The Theravada tradition observes all three events as having occurred on the first full moon day of the fifth month, a major holiday known as Wesak.

SHUNKI HIGAN-E - 春季彼岸会 - "spring-season-other-shore-gathering":

SPRING HIGAN GATHERING

MARCH 21st

SHŪKI HIGAN-E 秋季 (水季) - "autumn-season-other-shore-gathering":

AUTUMN HIGAN GATHERING

SEPTEMBER 23rd

SANBUTSU-E - 該 排 会 - "praise-Buddha-gathering":

Higan, which means the "other shore" of Nirvana or Enlightenment as opposed to

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"this shore" of Samsara or Delusion, is observed by Japanese Buddhists during the spring and autumn equinox of each year. In Jodoshinshu, the Higan observance is also called Sanbutsu-e or Gathering in Praise of the Buddha, which is one of the two purposes of ritual gatherings — the other being to listen to the teachings. During these two times of the year in Japan, the days and nights are equal in length and the weather is neither too hot or nor too cold. It was a time for Buddhists to meditate on the harmony of nature which pervades the universe and to devote oneself to the realization of this harmony in ones own inner life.

The Higan observance is not mentioned in India or Chinese records and is believed to have originated in Japan in the time of Shotoku Taishi. The two times of the year are described in the Meditation Sutra as appropriate to the first meditation of facing the setting sun in the west, the symbolic direction of the Pure Land of Amida. Traditionally Higan is a week-long observance from March 18th-24th and September 20th-26th with the 4th day as the main day of observance. During the week-long observance of study and meditation, emphasis is placed on the observance of the Six Paramitas which brings us to "the other shore". Paramita is the Sanskrit for "other-shore".

- 1. The Path of Giving Dānā
- 2. The Path of Right Behavior -Sīla
- 3. The Path of Endurance and Patience Ksänti
- 4. The Path of Endeavor or Effort Vīrya
- 5. The Path of Meditation Dhyana
- 6. The Path of Wisdom Praiña

The Jodoshinshu emphasis is upon the basic harmony of all elements of the universe as represented by the virtues of Amida Buddha.

KANBUTSU-E - 滩 佛会 - "bathe-Buddha-gathering":

HANAMATSURI - 花 祭 -"flower-festival";

BIRTHDAY OF THE BUDDHA

APRIL 8th

Hanamatsuri or "Flower Festival" is a service of rejoicing in which we commemorate the birth of Shakamuni Buddha with the decorating of a flower pavilion and the rite of Bathing the Body of the Buddha (Kanbutsu).

The Buddha was the only child of King Suddhodana Gautama and Queen Maya of the Sākya Kingdom. Ruling from the capital city of Kapilavastu, the King and Queen were childless for some 20 years. Then one day, after having a dream of a white elephant with six tusks entering her side, the Queen became pregnant. According to the custom of the time, Queen Maya was returning to her parent's home to await the birth of the baby when she stopped to rest in a garden called Lumbini. In the middle of the summer season, the garden was mysteriously in full bloom. As the Queen reached up to touch the blossoms of the Asoka Tree, the baby was born from her right side. The earth shook in six directions and a light, sweet rain fell from the sky to bathe the body of the baby. Flowers bloomed everywhere and fell from the sky. The newborn baby took seven steps, pointed his right hand to the sky and his left hand to the earth, and spoke the following words:

"Above and below the heavens, I alone, am the World-Honored One."

The joy of the King was great and he named the child Siddhārtha, which means "every wish fulfilled". Sadly, queen Maya died seven days thereafter. The date is given in the Mahayan tradition as April 8, 565 B.C. In the Theravada tradition, it is on the full moon day of the fifth month 623 B.C.

When Prince Siddhartha was 19 years old, he married Princess Yasodhara, a cousin.

When the Prince was 21, a son named Rahula was born. In spite of this happiness, and the luxuries of palace life, Prince Siddhartha was very "restless" over the sorrows of life of old age, sickness, and death. He decided to leave his family to seek a solution to this "restlessness". After six years of ascetic practices, and after having rejected them, he found the path to Enlightenment while sitting in meditation under a tree. The tree has henceforth been called the Bodhi Tree, the Tree of Enlightenment. A descendant of the original tree still grows at the site of the Enlightenment at Bodhgaya and is the world's oldest documented tree. The Buddha, the "Awakened One" was then 35 years old. For the next 45 years, he went about the countryside teaching the way to the ending of this "restlessness". He is also referred to as Śakyamuni or "the sage of the Śakya Clan" (Shakamuni in Japanese).

For the service, a flower-decorated shrine known as a Hanamido 术学 or "flower pavilion" is set up in front of the Naijin, representing Lumbini Garden. The Hanamido is often set upon the back of a figure of a white elephant, recalling Queen Maya's dream. In the center of the flower-decked shrine is placed a small statue of the infant Siddhartha in a bowl of Amacha (甘 茶) or "sweet tea". The Amacha is made from the dried leaves of the Hydrangea hortensis, a bush found in abundance in the mountain regions of the orient. This is the original sweetener of the Japanese before the introduction of sugar. Before pouring the sweet tea over the image, the Kanbutsuge () () or

"Gatha of Bathing the Buddha" is chanted.

"We now bathe all the Tathagatas, whose Pure Wisdom is adorned with innumerable virtues. They cause sentient beings of the Five Periods of Decay to be separated from their sufferings and together attain the Pure Dharma-Body of the Tathagatas."

The bathing of the Buddha image was a popular festival ritual practiced in India and China. It has been practiced in Japan since the Nara Period but was not observed by Jodoshinshu until Meiji era.

SHŪSO GŌTAN-E - 宗祖隆能会-"sect-founder-birthday-gathering":

BIRTHDAY OF SHINRAN SHONIN

MAY 21st

Gotan-e celebrates the birthday of Shinran Shonin, the founder of Jodoshinshu, the True Pure Land Sect. Shinran was born in Hino near Kyoto to Lord and Lady Arinori Hino and was named Matsuwakamaro. Matsuwakamaro lost both his parents at an early age and it is said that because of this, he decided to become a priest. At the age of 9, young Matsuwakamaro was ordained at Shōren-in Temple in Kyoto. He studied for 20 years on Mt. Hiei, enduring the most difficult of study and practice, but he found it impossible to attain Perfect Enlightenment through his own efforts. At the age of 29, he was led to the Way of the Nembutsu by Honen Shonin and found the true path to the attainment of Buddhahood through the Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha. He spent many years in exile, spreading the Nembutsu teaching in the distant provinces. In his later years, he was pardoned and eventually returned to Kyoto where he spent his days writing and communicating with his many disciples near and far. Until he died at the age of 90, Shinran's life was lived simply and humbly — a life of profound spiritual depth.

In November 1877, the Emperor Meiji honored Shinran Shonin with the title of

Kenshin Daishi or Great Master, Seer of Truth.

KANGI-E - 微表会 - "joyous-gathering": URABON-E - 孟南金会 - "Ulambana-gathering": OBON 未合

JULY 15th

The origins of Obon can be traced to the Ulambana Sutra which relates the story of Mahamaudgalyayana (Mogallana in Pali), the most gifted of Shakamuni Buddha's disciples in the area of extraordinary sense perceptions. A very filial son, Mahamaudgalyayana one day used his extraordinary powers to visualize the whereabouts of his mother who had died. Searching all the realms, from the highest of the heavens to the lowest of the hells, he was surprised and horrified to find his mother suffering the torments of the realm of Hungry Ghosts. With his powers again, he filled a bowl with food and sent it to his mother. The food burst into flames each time she put it to her mouth. Finding himself helpless in aiding his mother, he ran to the Buddha seeking help.

The Buddha tells Mahamaudgalyayana that he needs the combined help of all the monks to help his mother. He was told to bring offerings of food from land and sea, and sweets piled on a platter to the Sangha at the end of the Pravarana. The Pravarana was a period of retreat for the Buddha and his disciples during the rainy season in India. This was from the 15th of April to the 15th of July by the western calendar. Monks were forbidden to travel in order to avoid the killing of insects which multiplied greatly during the rainy season. They were to stay in one place to listen to the Buddha's talks, study, and meditate. This tradition of study and meditation continued in China and Japan and was known as the Uango (**T*** -"rain-quiet-stay":) or Ango. Mahamaudgalyayana made the prescribed offerings and his mother and seven generations of his ancestors were relieved of their sufferings. Mahamaudgalyayana was so overjoyed that he clapped his hands and danced for joy. This is said to have been the beginning of the Bon Odori.

Since that time, offerings of food and clothing were made to the monks at the end of their retreat on the 15th day of the 7th month. This custom was first observed in China in 538 A.D. by the Linag Emperor Wu-ti.

In China, the date July 15th was particularly auspicious since it was also the important Taoist observance of Chung Yuen (中元 - "middle-beginning") a midsummer Lantern Festival. This was an important harvest festival with offerings of food and lights to the spirits of the earth. The offering of lights was added to the Obon observance which was then transmitted to Japan. Chung Yuen in its Japanese reading of Chūgen is still observed as a time of gift giving, especially of seasonal foods.

In Japan, outdoor dancing called Bon Odori was added to the Obon observance and "welcome" and "sending off" lanterns or lights in various forms were lit for the spirits of ones ancestors. Jodoshinshu again does not look upon Obon as the time when the "soul" of ones ancestors return, and that the services, offerings, dancing, lights, etc. are for the benefit of ones dead relatives. It is rather a time to remember and honor all those who have passed on before us. It is to appreciate all that they have done for us and to recognize the continuation of their deeds upon our lives. Obon is a time for self-reflection - an important Buddhist practice, for it is only when man becomes aware of his imperfections and insufficiency in contrast to his ideals that religion becomes a matter of personal concern.

Obon is also called the Gathering of Joy by Jodoshinshu Buddhists. It is not the happiness of getting what you desire, but the joy of being shown the Truth of what one is, no matter how damning that truth is to the image of our ego-self. It is the joy of the awareness of being embraced in the Truth, in Amida Buddha, in Namuamidabutsu. Bon Odori too is not a dance of happiness, but rather a Dance of Joy.

PERPETUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE

USUALLY IN NOVEMBER

Eitaikyo is a Japanese Buddhist observance. Each temple has an Eitaikyo Book which is kept on the altar. It is a calendar book in which the names of deceased persons are entered on the day of their death. Donors to a special Eitaikyo Fund have the names entered in the Eitaikyo book. The morning service is dedicated to the memory of those persons entered on the page for that day. Thus sutras were chanted yearly for those names entered in the Eitaikyo Book in perpetuity. The Eitaikyo Fund is a special fund that is to be used for the support of the temple only when it is in extreme circumstances. In addition, a special memorial service is held in memory of all those listed in the Eitaikyo Book once a year, usually in November. The relatives and friends of the deceased are notified of the special service. Again, in Jodoshinshu the observance of Eitaikyo is not for the benefit of the dead, but indeed for the benefit of the living.

SŌCHŌKI - 總長於 - "Bishops'-memorial":

BISHOPS' MEMORIAL SERVICE

ONCE A YEAR

The Sochoki is a yearly memorial service in memory of all the past Bishops of the Buddhist Churches of America. It is held in grateful memory of the efforts of the succeeding Bishops in behalf of the Buddhadharma.

JŌDŌ-E - 炭道会 -"attaining-Enlightenment-gathering":

BODHI DAY DECEMBER 8th

Bodhi Day is the day that the Prince Siddhartha became the Buddha at the age of 35. Siddhartha left his home in search of Truth, even though he had every material thing he could desire in life. Yet he was not satisfied with his life. After diligently practicing all manner of ascetic disciplines, including starving himself to the point of death in order to gain control over his body, he rejected the ascetic path and took food again. He realized that one could not think clearly and have a healthy mind without a healthy body. Siddhartha instead turned to a middle ground of meditation. According to the Mahayana tradition, in the early morning hours of December 8th, Siddhartha became the Buddha the Awakened One, the Perfectly Enlightened One. By his example, he showed us that it was possible for a man to become a Buddha, a fully enlightened person. We are therefore in possession of this potentiality, this Buddha-nature, which, when awakened and cultivated, will enable us to achieve the same Enlightenment.

JOYA-E - 跨夜会 - "last-night-gathering":

YEAR END SERVICE

DECEMBER 31st

The year end service is observed to express gratitude for the past year and to reflect on the interdependency of all life, on all the things that have made it possible for us to live this one year.

On this night, temples with the large bell called the Bonsho will ring the bell 108 times. This is called the "Joya no Kane" or "bell of the last night". It is the symbolic ringing away of the 108 passions which afflict man and bind him to the world of delusion. It is a reminder of the need to free ourselves from the entanglements of our self-centeredness as we face the new year. We do not know whether our lives will be fortunate or unfortunate, but in the Nembutsu we can know that whichever it is, it will be all right.

The character "E"(会) is usually read "kai" and means group or association. In the Buddhist reading of "E" it means "a gathering of the Sangha".

MONTHLY

On the first or near the first Sunday of every month, the temple observes a monthly memorial service in memory of those people whose Meinichi or date of death falls in that month.

Higan

Higan Services are conducted twice a year in the spring and fall. It is said that the first Higan Service was held in Japan about 1300 years ago by Prince Shotoku, who is often referred to as the Father of Japanese Buddhism.

The Spring Higan, especially, is that time of the year when the sun begins to warm the cold winter soil. Grasses and trees, human beings and animals, even insects feel the pulse of growth and experience the joy of living.

Higan is an abbreviation of "To-Higan"—literally meaning "to arrive at the other shore." In Buddhism, the world of illusion is referred to as "this shore" and the world of enlightenment is called "the other shore". The river flowing between two banks is referred to as the three poisons of our evil passion (greed, anger, ignorance). Buddhism, indeed, is dedicated to turning illusion into enlightenment, and all the Buddhist practices are directed essentially to this noble purpose.

Various sutras teach that six paramitas or perfections of practice, are the way of reaching the other shore from this shore. The six paramitas consist of the following:

- **(1)** Dāna (selfless giving) – giving of property, giving of Dharma, giving of comfort, giving of friendliness.
- **(2)** Sīla – observing precepts
- (3) Ksānti – perseverance
- **(4)** Virya – efforts
- **(5)** Dhyāna – pacifying our minds in meditation
- **(6)** Prajña – wisdom

Any person who faithfully practices the six paramitas can reach the other shore and attain enlightenment. However, when I consider perfection of the six paramitas carefully, it seems very difficult to practice even Dana paramita. Dana is also called Kisha (喜捨); to willingly throw away or pleasantly offer. In the concept of Dana action, we must offer pleasantly and give willingly. In other words, they should not be concerned or attached to the act of giving or the person or person's action who receives. Yet, we are apt to think "I donated it to someone". Or, for example, we are apt to look for our names first in the bulletin's acknowledgements section. Therefore, even Dana paramita is difficult. How much more difficult is the complete practice of all of those six paramitas to perfection.

In our life of busy days and hardships, we will find it quite troublesome to practice sincere charity, to keep the precepts to not get angry, to meditate calmly, and to attain the wisdom of perfect peace and harmony.

The ones who fully realize the great difficulty of the practice of paramita perfection were the seven patriarches and our Founder in the lineage of the transmission of the teaching of the Jodo Shinshu sect of Pure Land Buddhism. They selected the Nembutsu teaching and bequeathed it to us, we who are sinking in the river of the three poisons. It is also the long succession of our tradition path inherited from Dharmakara Bodhisattva (Amida Buddha in the stage of Bodhisattvahood). Dharmakara carefully examined and practiced the way by which all sentient beings could be led from this shore of the illusion to reach the other shore of enlightenment across the span of an infinite number of Kalpas (Aeons of time). Dharmakara's meditation and practice was crystallized into the heart of 18th Vow, stated in the Larger Sutra of Infinite Life. Amida Buddha proclaimed, "IF AFTER MY OBTAINING BUDDHAHOOD, ALL THE BEINGS IN THE TEN QUARTERS WHO, WITH SINCERETY OF HEART HOLD FAITH AND WISH TO BE BORN IN MY COUNTRY, REPEATING MY NAME PERHAPS UP TO TEN TIMES, ARE NOT SO BORN, MAY I NOT ACHIEVE THE HIGHEST ENLIGHTENMENT."

In order that we can understand this easier, Amida's 18th Vow is often represented in metaphor. Viz, the ship of Amida's Vow, which can carry all sentient beings across the river of our selfish ego-desires and attachment from this shore to the other shore.

The master Nagarjuna disclosed that the way of difficult practices are toilsome, like walking on land, and urged us to believe that the easy practice is pleasant, like sailing on water.

Dharmakara Bodhisattva's meditation and practice have already been perfected for us, and that practice also includes the perfection of the six paramitas. Therefore—when we understand Amida's great labor of love which is all in the Nembutsu and awaken the Faith Mind all in Amida Buddha, the six paramitas and other true practices are transferred to us, becoming our spiritual treasure.

When Shinran Shonin realized that he could not help falling into the hell, at the time he found out the strength of Amida Buddha's work of great wisdom and compassion pulled him out from the bottom of the river of Bonno.

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Ohigan

Introduction

In the calendar of the Buddhists there are two religious observances which have their origin in Japan. They are the Ohigan, held twice annually, once in the spring and again in the autumn, and the Obon (Memorial service for the departed) held between July 15th and August 15th:

The spring Ohigan is held in Japan for one whole week from March 19 to 26. The autumn Ohigan is held from September 21 to 28. During these times the length of the day and night is said to be equal and the weather is neither hot nor cold, thus making it ideal for contemplation and spiritual awakening to the boundless wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha.

Different schools of Buddhism other than Shin Shu place their emphasis on "Self-Power" on the part of the devotee. The Ohigan observance, according to their school, means, the opportune moment for an all out individual effort to be directed toward the attainment of Nirvana in this life. The Six Paramitas or Dana, Sila, Ksanti, Virya, Dhyana and Prajna are the gates through which the devotee enters and crosses to the Buddha land.

In Shin Shu the observance of Ohigan is simply the expressing of our gratitude to Amida for awakening us to his boundless compassion and wisdom. Our part in this observance would be to put into action the compassion which comes to us vertically from Amida and to apply it horizontally in our relation with man and other living beings on this earth. This application in our daily life is the Shinshu way of expressing our gratitude and thanksgiving for the wondrous blessings extended to us unconditionally and equally for all just like the sun's ray which falls on the earth.

THE SIX PARAMITAS

DANA Selfless Giving

I will share of my possessions, love and faith.

MORALITY Right Behavior

May my thoughts, words and deeds be pure and beautiful,

"Kindness is the fountain of happiness."

PATIENCE Endurance

I will be patient and kind to every living thing.

EFFORT Endeavor

I will strive with earnestness to follow the teachings of the

Buddha.

MEDITATION Concentration

Each day I will be thankful and recite the Nembutsu.

WISDOM I will grow in body and mind, in spirit and in heart.

> May the wisdom of the Compassionate One so fill my heart that the mists of error and the foolish vanity of self be dis-

pelled.

THE SIX PARAMITAS

DANA .. Selfless Giving

Giving is pure only when we give without any thought of receiving in return.

We should give as much as we are able.

There are 3 kinds of charity: material, physical, and spiritual charity.

Material....can be money.

Spiritual....encouragement to those in trouble and suffering.

Physical....

eyes....no sharp looks

face....a gentle smile mouth....soft, spoken words

heart...kindness and understanding

body....render service when needed

position....give up seat, share honors

hospitality....offer the best to your guests

2. SILA-MORALITY...Right Behavior

To practice morality we earnestly try to do good and to keep away from evil, ever mindful of the rights and comforts of others.

KSANTI-PATIENCE...Endurance

Let us try to be understanding of others' feelings.

Let us throughout the day not utter words of discontent, dissatisfaction, and untruth.

VIRYA-EFFORT...Endeavor

Effort means to constantly strive with a full heart to promote that which is good for oneself and all life in general.

5. DHYANA-MEDITATION....Concentration

To keep away confused and wandering thoughts. To sit quietly each day with a thankful heart. To dwell upon the wondrous love and compassion of Amida Buddha will bring true peace of mind.

PRAJNA-WISDOM....

We will be better able to see life from the right viewpoint. Our minds will grow clear and serene.

DANA - SELFLESS GIVING 1.

There is a very heart warming story on page 109 in "A Program of Studies for Buddhist Sunday Schools" about a little girl who brought sunshine in a paper bag for her sick grandmother.

2. SILA – MORALITY

To illustrate this give each child 2 beans, and 2 pieces of paper toweling. Wrap the beans separately and put them into a plate or a meat pie plate. Put some water in both. During the week the teacher will go and put more water in one of the plates and let the other dry up. Let the children discover for themselves what has become of the beans.

DHYANA – MEDITATION

Have the children sit in meditation for a short length of time. Let them realize how hard it is to control a wandering mind.

PRAJNA – WISDOM

Since this is the last of the Six Paramitas, review all of them again once more. It might be suggested that the teacher ask the pupils if during the weeks that they have been studying the Paramitas whether they tried to follow any of the teachings. Did it help them at all? Did it affect them and the people around them? At school? It is the teachers fond hope that it has helped the students.

December 8 Bodhi Day

For six long years Gautama put himself through all of these kinds of torment. His body was greatly weakened, thin, and tortured. He finally gave up these practices and went his own way in the quest for supreme wisdom.

He bathed in the clear warm waters of the River Nairanjana. He accepted from Sujata, a maiden from the neighboring village, a bowl of rice milk.

The five ascetics who were accompanying Gautama lost faith in him when he abandoned such practices. They said Gautama had "grown luxurious in his ways and given up the struggle." So they left Gautama.

Gautama then went to meditate under a Bodhi tree. He sat in the "lotus" position. (In this position, the legs are crossed with the soles of the feet turned upward on the opposite thighs; the hands rest on the lap, the left over the right, palms upward and thumbs touching." The "lotus" position was used because it ensured that the hands and the feet will be kept under control and the mind will not wander. It also supposedly "fills King Mara with fear."

"Mara"* was a demon who tempted Gautama as he sat under the Bodhi tree. Gautama was said to achieve enlightenment only after he had overcome the demon leader and his army of followers. The whole process is known in Japanese Buddhism as **goma jodo** or "Conquering Mara and attaining Buddhahood."

Mara first tried to scare Gautama by saying to him, "Emaciated and ashen of complexion, you are on the verge of death. Your chance of survival is one in a thousand. You ought to live, for only when alive it is possible for you to do good deeds...however, your present efforts are vail and futile, for the way to the true Dharma is hard, painful, and inaccessible."

Gautama was also faced with the **sansho shima** or "three obstacles and four devils." The four devils are known as Bonnoma, Omma, Shima, and Tenjima. Bonnoma is the Devil of Delusion, Omma is the Devil of Sickness, Shima is the Devil of Death, and Tenjima is the Emperor Devil who represents the failure to comprehend the truth of human life.

But when these evil forces appeared before Gautama, he faced them squarely and did not move an inch. He said to Mara, "Friend of the slothful, Evil One, you have come for your own sake. I have not the least need for merits. I have faith, heroism, and wisdom. Why do you ask me to live, I who am so intent?...As the flesh wastes away my mind becomes more tranquil and firm. While I live thus, having attained the last sensation, my mind looks not to lusts...behold the purity of my being! Lusts are your first army, the second is called aversion. Your third army is hunger and thirst, the fourth craving. Your fifth is sloth and indolence, the six cowardice. Your seventh honor and glory falsely obtained, the lauding of oneself and condemning of others. This is your army, Evil One. The coward does not overcome it, but he that overcomes it attains happiness. Wearing munja grass shall fight. Better to me is death in battle than that I should live defeated. Some ascetics and Brahmans plunged in this battle and vanquished; they know not the way on which the virtuous, the good, go. Seeing the army on all sides I go to meet Mara arrayed with elephants in the battle. He shall not drive me from my post." In this way, Gautama confronted and struggled with Mara.

Mara finally gave up and withdrew his army saying, "For seven years I followed Gautama step by step. I could find no entrance to the all-enlightened, the watchful one. Just as a crow went after a stone that looked like a lump of fat, mistaking it for a tender morsel, something sweet and delicious, and finding no sweetness there the crow departed; so like a crow attacking a rock, I leave Gautama in disgust and frustration."

Gautama's enlightenment took place on December 8. The Buddha did not go immediately to the people with his teachings. The people only knew him of charms, superstitions, and sacrifices. Most people believed their sufferings were caused by gods who were angry with them. Elaborate ceremonies were held to please the gods.

Compared with these ancient beliefs and customs, the Buddha's teachings were so different. He found that sacrifices and ceremonies were not necessary. Angry gods did not cause people to suffer. People brought on sufferings by themselves through their own selfish desires and misunderstandings. The Buddha's way of teaching was to help people to understand and accept life as it is. To desire more and more from life than is possible is bound to cause suffering. The Buddha wanted people to look within themselves for the reasons for their sufferings. He wanted the people to correct themselves.

The Buddha wondered if the people would accept his teachings. Then he realized that his enlightenment is to help a suffering world.

He decided to go first to Benares, which was about 130 miles from Buddh Gaya, where he achieved enlightenment. It must have taken him well over ten days on foot. He went to Benares first when he learned that the five ascetics that he once knew were living there, and he decided that they should be the first ones to hear his teachings.

In a beautiful forest known as the Deer Park, about six miles to the north from the City of Benares, he found the ascetics. When they first saw the Buddha, they said to one another, "Here comes our pleasure-loving friend Gautama, who gave up his austerities in favor of luxury. We must not get up to meet him or to take his alms bowl and robe. But we will offer him a proper seat and he may sit down with us if he wishes."

But they all changed their minds completely when the Buddha began to speak.

The five ascetics were the Buddha's first disciples. While the Buddha stayed at the Deer Park, the news about him and his teachings spread swiftly among the people. Many came who were eager to hear of the joy and the ending of human sorrow.

After three months, when there were about sixty disciples, he said, "We have a great duty to perform—let us part company and each take a different way so that no two shall go in the same direction—preach the doctrine to all men and declare the truths which I have made known to you."

The followers of the Buddha set forth in all directions to help spread the teachings.

Gautama Buddha, himself, left the Deer Park to travel from place to place giving comfort and happiness to all who heard him.

^{*}Mara is that force which wells up within a person who is going toward enlightenment and truth and who is using every effort to attain that goal and which tries to block such attainment. He is not a mysterious supernatural being.

The New Year and Nembutsu

Objective:

To familiarize the student with the significant events in the life of Shinran Shonin and teach them the deep debt of gratitude we owe our beloved master.

Lesson in class:

On New Year's Day the entire family attended morning services at the Church – the service is sponsored by the Church. The new Board of Directors of the Church are installed into office; the out-going and the incoming Presidents of the Board extend messages to the congregation.

New Year greetings are exchanged by every one to wish each other health and happiness for the new year.

How many of you have made resolutions for the new year? Was one of your resolutions to attend Dharma School regularly? Most of you do attend Dharma School regularly anyway.

Let us review the Buddhist Etiquette so that we can start the New Year right:

- The proper way to gassho;
- b. The proper way to use the ojuzu;
- The proper way to shoko offering of incense; C.
- d. The proper way to use the seiten – gatha books;
- The proper way to enter and leave the Hondo Temple;
- Reciting of the Nembutsu: As Shinshu is based on the realization of the Nembutsu, the importance of reciting it correctly cannot be overemphasized. "Namu Amida Butsu" should be recited clearly and accurately.

In Jodo Shinshu each time we gassho and recite the Nembutsu we are in effect expressing our rededication to live the Buddhist life.

Suggestions:

- 1. Discuss various traditions of the New Year in Japan – visitations.
- Preparation of the home for the New Year flower arrangements; arrangements for the entry way.
- 3. Food preparation – kuro mame, konbu, kazunoko, lobster, mochi,
- 4. Children's games – karuta, hago ita.
- Otoshi dama gifts for the children.

The Passing of Shakyamuni Buddha

Transiency (Change)

Preparation: Read "The Story of Kisagotami."

> In our preparation, the Reverend told "The Story of Kisagotami" in his sermon.

Read "The Four Noble Truths"

Experiment:

Place a stumbling block or barrier in front of Sensei, purposely Sensei stumbles up against barrier; ask the students what was wrong, of course, they reply move the barrier. This opened the discussion on the many, many barriers or stumbling blocks in our everyday life, especially in our mental attitude. What are some of the stumbling blocks or barriers you have faced and have overcome? We can change our grades from bad to good by studying, or we can go from good grades to bad grades by not studying.

Example to use:

Physical Changes

- Bring an ice cube, see it melt to water, heat the water, see it turn to steam and evaporate.
- 2. Place lawn seed on wet sponge and watch seeds sprout (in a week).
- 3. Display pictures of changing seasons of the year.
- Display pictures of different ages of people.
- Bring a tadpole in a jar of water and watch it change into a frog.
- Cut off an inch from the top of a carrot and submerge in a shallow dish (enough water to last one week); cut the top off of another carrot and place in a dry dish. See what has happened next week. This experiment can be made with the lawn seed on wet sponge and a dry sponge.
- 7. Have students make a large drawing of the changing nature of water; i.e., snow falling on the mountain top, melting into rivers, flowing into the vast ocean, sun shining evaporating water to send moisture to form clouds, etc.

Mental changes

- 1. What T.V. programs do you like?
- 2. What kind of gift would you give your friend?
- Have you noticed the change in what kind of food you like?
- How about your taste in clothes you wear, have they changed?
- Do you find that if you talk about your problems they're not so 5. bad?
- Have you ever wanted something so much that it became an obsession with you but once you got it - you wondered was it all that great?
- How did you feel when a relative or friend or your pet died?
- Do you think you are a positive or a negative type person?

Conduct a survey **Project:**

- Pick five age groups
 - Pre-school Fourth Grade or age 9
 - Fifth Grade Eighth Grade
 - c. High School
 - d. Parents
 - Grandparents
- Ask five questions of each age group (one person from each group)
 - What is your favorite color?
 - What is your favorite food?
 - What is your favorite T.V. program?
 - Which season do you like best spring, summer, fall or wind.
 - Who is your favorite celebrity (T.V. actor, actress, movie actor or actress, singer, musician, athlete, etc.)?
- Make a graph of the survey. 3.
- Does the survey show a trend in preferences by ages? 4.
- Each student may wish to select a male and a female from the group.

Applications:

Jodo Shinshu stresses to live in harmony with the changing nature of life.

When Shinran's parents died, he sought some stability in life by turning to the study of Buddhism. At ordination at age nine he wrote...

> "Tis vain to wait until tomorrow; Life is like the the glorious cherry blossoms Which ere morn might all be gone, Night winds as soon might blow them off."

Realizing the negative side of life, he sought his positive aspect, He sought the Wisdom and Compassion of Enlightenment. Knowledge and Love have stablizing influences in a changing world.

When Shinran was sent into exile he viewed this as an opportunity to spread the teachings of the Nembutsu. HERE AGAIN CHANGING THE NEGATIVE TO A POSITIVE – MINUS TO A PLUS.

The Buddha's teachings are said to be able to change us like the bitter persimmon into a sweet fruit.

Shinran's compassionate attitude was able to change the harsh attitude of Bennen.

The Passing of Shakyamuni Buddha

The Story of Kisagotami

Once there was a young woman named Kisagotami, the wife of a wealthy man, who lost her mind because of the death of her child. She took the child in her arms and went from house to house begging people to heal her child. Of course they could do nothing for her, but finally a follower of Buddha advised her to see the Blessed One who was then staying at the temple of Jitavana, so the woman carried the dead child to Buddha.

The Blessed One looked upon her with sympathy and said: "To heal the child I need some poppy seeds; go and beg four or five poppy seeds from some home where death has never entered." So the poor demented woman went out and sought a house where death had never entered but in vain and at last was obliged to return to Buddha. In his quiet presence her mind cleared and she understood the meaning of his words. She took the body away and buried it and then returned to Buddha and became one of his followers.

(1) Life is Impermanent

Nothing in life lasts forever. Dreams are realized, hopes are crushed, people die, mountains shift into valleys, the flowers bloom, the seasons swiftly pass. This fact teaches us three things:

(a) Not to pass time away idly but wisely make use of given time;

(b) Change in the form of tragedies presents opportunities for self reflection and makes us seek real unchanging values;

(c) Since nothing is set permanently in this world, we can make something out of our lives effort and hard work.

The Four Noble Truths

The world is full of suffering. Birth is suffering, decrepitude is suffering, so are sickness and death, suffering. To face a man of hatred is suffering, to be separated from a beloved one is suffering, or to be vainly struggling to satisfy one's needs. In fact, life that is not free from desire and passion is always involved with suffering. This is called the Truth of Suffering.

The cause of human suffering is undoubtedly found in the thirsts of the physical organism and in the illusions of worldly passion. If these thirsts and illusions are traced to their source, they are found to be rooted in the intense desires of physical instincts. Thus desire, having a strong will-to-live at its basis, goes after what is sensed as being desirable. Sometimes desire even turns toward death. This is being called the Truth of the Cause of Suffering.

If desire which lies at the root of all human passion can be removed, then passion will die out and all human suffering will be ended. This is called the Truth of the Ending of Suffering.

The Passing of Shakyamuni Buddha

In order to enter into a condition where there is no desire and no suffering, one must follow a certain Path. The stages of this Noble Path are: Right Ideas, Right Resolution, Right Behavior, Right Vocation, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration. This is called the Truth of the Noble Path to the Ending of Desire.

People should keep these Truths clearly in mind, for the world is filled with suffering and if anyone wishes to escape from suffering they must cut the ties of worldly passion which is the sole cause of suffering. The way of life which is free from all worldly passion and suffering can only be known by enlightenment, and enlightenment can only be gained by the discipline of the Noble Path.

All those who are seeking enlightenment, must understand these Four Noble Truths. Without this understanding, they will wander about for a long time in the bewildering maze of life's illusions. Those who understand the Four Noble Truths are called: "The people who have acquired the eyes of enlightenment." Therefore, people who wish to follow the Buddha's teaching should concentrate their minds on these Four Noble Truths and seek to make their meaning clear. In all ages, a saint, if he is a true saint, in one who understands them and teaches them to others.

When the Four Noble Truths are clearly understood, then the Noble Path will lead them away from greed; and if they are free from greed they will not quarrel with the world, they will not act indecently, nor kill, nor steal, nor cheat, nor abuse, nor flatter, nor envy, nor lose their temper, nor forget the transiency of life; nor will they err in equity.

Following the Noble Path is like entering a dark room with a light in the hand; the darkness will all be cleared away, and the room will be filled with light. People who understand the meaning of the Noble Truths and have learned to follow the Noble Path are in possession of a light of wisdom that will clear away the darkness of ignorance. Buddha leads the people, by only following the Four Noble Truths. Those who understand it properly will gain enlightenment; they will be able to guide and support others in this bewildering world, and they will be worthy of trust. When the Four Noble Truths are clearly understood, the sources of all worldly passion are dried up. Advancing from these Four Noble Truths, the disciples of Buddha will attain all other precious truths, will gain the wisdom and piety to understand all meanings, and will become able to preach the Dharma to all the people of all the world.

Chain of Causation

Objective:

Review previous lesson on change. Changes take place because of causes and conditions; our mere existence is a result of myriads of causes and conditions.

Preparation:

Examine the lawn seed in the wet sponge from last week; then, examine the lawn seed in the dry sponge. What are some of the causes and conditions to make the lawn seed sprout?

Read "Causation" from Daily Readings in the Buddha, Truth and Brotherhood as edited by Ensei H. Nekoda, pages 28-29. Included on subsequent pages for your convenience.

Application:

Ask the class, especially the boys, the outcome of their recent basketball game. How did you do? Were you able to get the plays off so that you could get the ball in the basket for points?

The boys said that "aaay" they didn't do so hot supposed they could have used some more practice — condition themselves for better outcome of their strategies — though they may have been the underdogs they tried their best keeping up their attitude of good sportsmanship.

Other examples to use:

Line up a series of dominoes and see what the effect will be if one domino is caused to topple — exemplifies cause and effect.

Discuss the four seasons of the peach tree — what causes and conditions bring about the effect — a nice juicy freestone or cling peach for a peach cobbler with whipped cream on

By the way, why do you think you are sitting here today in this Dharma School classroom? You just didn't happened to be here. Of course not! If it weren't for your grandparents deciding to come to this country, settling here and raising a family you would not be here. Do you know why your grandparents decided to come to America? The Nembutsu had a great influence on their lives which in turn has influenced your parents and has influenced you.

In Jodo Shinshu:

The causes and conditions were such in the life of Shinran that they resulted in a certain effect. Shinran went to the Mountain to study, subsequently left, then met Honnen as a result of various causes and conditions.

We can control these causes and conditions to some degree. Refer to the Gatha "The Texture of Life".

As Jodo Shinshu Buddhists we accept this changing nature of life. We seek to live in harmony with the changing nature. We strive to have the right attitude — the first of the Eightfold Noble Path — Right View.

Causation

There are causes for all human suffering. There is a way by which they may be ended, because everything in the world results from a vast concurrence of causes and conditions, and everything disappears as these causes and conditions change and pass away. Rain falls, wind blows, plants bloom, leaves mature and are blown away. These phenomena are all interrelated with causes and conditions. They appear and disappear as the causes and conditions change.

A child is born through the conditions of parentage. His body is nourished by food, and his mind is nurtured through knowledge and experience. Therefore, both flesh and mind are related to conditions and are changed as conditions change. Just as a net is made up of a series of ties, everything in this world also is connected by a series of ties. It is a mistake to think that a mesh of a net is an independent thing. It is called a net, because it is made up of a series of connected meshes. Each mesh has its place and responsibilities in relation to other meshes.

Flowers bloom because of a series of conditions that lead up to their blossoming. Leaves are blown away because a series of conditions lead up to it. Flowers do not bloom unconditionally, nor does a leaf fall by itself. Thus, everything is created and ceases to exist because of a series of causes and conditions; nothing remains without change.

Texture of Life. — A. C. Constable

The texture of the life to be We weave in colors all our own; And in the Realm of Destiny. We reap as we have sown.

We make ourselves the joys and fears With which the coming life is made. And fill alone our future spheres With sunshine or with shade.

We live our present lives again With memory warm or coldly dim; The pictures of the past remain, "Man's work shall follow him."

Golden Chain

I am a link in Amida Buddha's golden chain of love that stretches around the world. I must keep my link bright and strong.

I will try to be kind and gentle to every living thing and protect all who are weaker than myself.

I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts, to say pure and beautiful words, and to do pure and beautiful deeds, knowing that on what I do now depends not only my happinesses or unhappiness but also that of others.

May every link in the Buddha's golden chain of love become bright and strong, and may we all attain perfect peace.

Name Amida Butsu.

Nirvana Day

Objective:

In teaching children the great decease of the Buddha, stress the Buddha's last words— "But the true Buddha is not a human body; it is enlightenment. A human body must vanish, but the wisdom of enlightenment will exist forever in the truths of the Dharma, and in the practice of the Dharma."

The Wisdom and the Compassion of Amida Buddha was manifested in the great personality of the earthly Buddha, Shakyamuni. That Wisdom and Compassion of Amida is not a human body but an Eternal Light of Truth that has no beginning and no end.

This spirit was particularly discerned in the life Gautama. He was so kind and merciful to all things — plants, animals and humans that a great multitude mourned the passing of the Buddha as can be seen in the illustration in the Denki Manga.

Special Service:

Nirvana Day (Nehan Ye)

On February 15, 486 B.C., the Buddha passed away at Kushinagra, India, at the age of 80, according to Mahayana tradition. It is believed that He entered into perfect tranquility, or Nirvana, at that time. Therefore, on February 15th each year, Buddhists hold a Memorial Service for the memory of Gautama Buddha. In Japan, Eitaikyo Service (Sutra chanting for the perpetual memory of the deceased) for the memory of those who have passed away is held.

Lesson in class:

As discussed in Topic 1 from the Story of Kisagotami, it was unanimous that each of the students has at one time lost a grandparent or relative or friend; some had lost a pet.

Do you not find that just because your grandparent, for example, is gone, there are many things you remember — a gift they gave you brings back memories of that particular birthday, Thanksgiving dinner together, a picnic, comforting words when you were troubled, though physically gone — your grandparent's wisdom and compassion lives on.

In 1665 Sir Isaac Newton, a famous English scientist, explained the Law of Gravity. Where every body exerts a force on another body; earth's pull on the moon, earth's pull on an apple...he also wrote down the three laws of motion which are still taught in science classes today. They are:

Objects tend to stay in motion or at rest if they are in motion or at rest — inertia.

Amount of acceleration depends on strength of applied force — two people pulling on rope makes object at end of rope go faster.

For every action there is an opposite and equal reaction — balloon bursting, kick in shot-

These laws have been and always will be present.

Buddha's Remains:

After the death of Shakyamuni Buddha, the ashes and remains of the Buddha were divided and placed in stupas (monumental tombs) throughout India.

In August 1935, Bishop Kenju Masuyama, the superintendent of the Buddhist Churches of America at the time, brought to the United States the relics of the Shakvamuni Buddha which are now enshrined in the BCA stupa. These relics were gifts from the Royal Court of Thailand. The stupa is erected atop the headquarters temple in San Francisco.

In Jodo Shinshu:

Although Shakyamuni Buddha taught all people rich and poor, over the centuries the teachings were heard by only the learned. Because of his great Compassion for the masses, Shinran Shonin took the Buddha's timeless teachings and made it understandable to the masses. The literal meaning of Nirvana is the extinguishing the human passions, positive aspect — result in perfect peace.

The Final Teaching of the Buddha.

1. In his final words of his disciples under the sala trees, the Buddha uttered these words: "Make my teaching your light! Rely upon it; do not depend upon any other teaching. Make of yourself a light. Rely upon yourself; do not depend upon anyone else."

"Consider your body; think of its impurity; how can you indulge its cravings as you see that both its pain and its delight are alike causes of suffering? Consider your soul; think of its transiency; how can you fall into delusion about it and cherish pride and selfishness, knowing that they must all end in inevitable suffering? Consider all substances; can you find among them any enduring 'self'? Are they not all aggregates that sooner or later will break apart and be scattered? Do not be confused by the universality of suffering, but follow my teaching and you will be rid of pain. Do this and you will indeed be my disciples."

2. "My disciples. The teachings that I have given you are never to be forgotten nor abandoned. They are to be treasured, they are to be thought about, they are to be practiced! If you follow these teachings you will always be happy."

"The point of the teachings is to control your own mind. Restrain your mind. Restrain your mind from greed, so shall you keep your body right, your mind pure, your words faithful. Always thinking of the transiency of your life, you will be able to desist from greed and anger and will be able to keep clear from all evil.

"If you find your mind entangled in greed and tempted, you must suppress the greed and control the entangled mind; be the master of your own mind. A man's mind may make of him a Buddha, or it may make of him a beast. Being misled by error one becomes a demon; being enlightened one becomes a Buddha. Therefore keep your mind under control and do not let it deviate from the Noble Path."

3. "Under my teachings, brothers should respect each other and refrain from disputes; they should not repel each other like water and oil, but should mingle together like milk and water. Study together, learn together, practice the teachings together. Do not waste your mind and time in idleness and bickering. Enjoy the blossoms of enlightenment in their season and harvest the fruit of benevolence.

"The teachings which I have given you, I gained by following the path myself. You should follow the teachings and conform to their spirit on every occasion. If you neglect them it means that you have never really met me. It means that you are far from me even though you are actually with me, but if you accept and practice my teachings then you are very near me, even though you are far away."

- 4. "My disciples. The end is approaching, our parting is near, but do not lament. Life is ever changing; none escape the dissolution of the body. Now I am to manifest the Dharma by my own death, the body falling apart like a decayed cart. Do not vainly lament, but wonder at the rule of transiency and learn from it the emptiness of human life. Do not cherish the unworthy desire that the changeable might become unchanging. The demon of worldly desire is always seeking chances to deceive the mind. If a viper lives in your room, if you wish to have a peaceful sleep, you must chase it out. You must break the bonds of worldly passions and get rid of them as you would a viper."
- 5. "My disciples. The last moment has come, but do not forget that death is but the vanishing of a body. The body was born from parents and was nourished by food, so sickness and death is unavoidable. But the true Buddha is not a human body it is Enlightenment. A human body must vanish, but the wisdom of Enlightenment will exist forever in the truths of the Dharma, and in the practice of the Dharma. He who sees my body only, is not the one who truly sees me. He who accepts my teachings, is the one who truly sees me. After my death, Truth shall be your teacher. Follow Truth and you will be true to me.

"During the last forty-five years of my life I have kept back nothing from my teaching. There is no secret teaching, no hidden meaning, everything has been taught openly and clearly.

"My dear disciples: this is the end. In a moment I shall be passing into Nirvana."

From Shinran's Later Years in Kyoto.

Toward the latter part of mid-winter in the second year Kocho (1262), Shinran Shonin showed symptoms of a slight indisposition, and after this his words never referred to earthly things, dwelling only on how deeply grateful he was to the Buddha: he uttered nothing but the name of Amida Buddha which he constantly repeated. On the twenty-eighth day of the same month (January 16th of the following year in the solar calendar), at noon, he laid himself on his right side with his head toward the North, and his face toward the West; and when at last his recitation of the Buddha's Holy Name was heard no more, he had passed away. He was then just completing his ninetieth year.

Just before his demise, it is said that he wrote:

"Though I, my life having run its course, Return to the Pure Land of Eternal Rest, Come back shall I to earth again and again Even as the waves of Wakano-ura Bay. "When alone you rejoice in the Sacred Teachings Believe that there are two. And when there are two to rejoice Believe that there are three. And that other shall be Shinran."

Shinran Shonin taught that he who believes in Amida Buddha's Divine Will and surrenders himself wholly to his marvelous Power, though he remains unchanged in form, is actually endowed with the seeds of Buddhahood. As the seed germinates when planted in soil, so the merits contained in the faithful heart are manifested in full glory when the believer is reborn in the Pure Land, to become completely one with Amida who is boundless in Life and Light.

One who is reunited with Amida not only enjoys heavenly happiness in the Pure Land with Him, but also finds joy in helping His holy work of saving his fellow beings from the sea of birth and death.

Shinran Shonin has not vanished into another world: he lives among mankind in order to guide them into the presence of Amida Buddha. And rightly has he said,

> "Although my body will pass away, Forever my teaching shall live; As fresh as the green grass of Wakano-ura Bay, So long as human beings live."

Rebirth (Awakening of Faith)

Objective:

To open their minds and hearts to a better understanding of the teachings of the Buddha through the spontaneous recitation of the Nembutsu.

Preparation:

Have available definitions of the following:

- 1. Pure Land
- 2. Rebirth
- 3. Recite the Nembutsu
- 4. 18th Vow

Lesson in Class:

What does the word rebirth bring to your mind?

Answers were:

- 1. To be born again.
- 2. I am going to be born again as a lion,
- 3. To be born in the Pure Land.

We discussed could it not mean to wake up to a new happening: like from a very sad moment to a most happy feeling.

This happy feeling is the feeling we ultimately feel when we realize the powerful impact the spontaneous recitation of the Nembutsu can give us.

Demonstration. Have the students close their eyes — may have to blindfold them; put a piece of onion on a paper plate and pass it around among the students (yuk!); now put a piece of lemon on a paper plate and pass it around among the students — how much more refreshing the lemon is than the onion — a much more soothing feeling — an awakening. This same type of demonstration can be done with pictures; i.e., show a picture of something very depressing, like a terrible automobile accident, then show a picture of a boy with a puppy both bounding with energy — what effect do these two pictures have on your emotions?

18th Vow

Upon my attainment of Buddhahood, if the sentient beings in the ten quarters, who have sincerity of heart, hold faith, and wish to be born in my land, repeating my Name, perhaps up to ten times, would not be born therein, then may I not obtain the Great Enlightenment. Only those are excepted who have committed the five deadly sins and who have abused the Right Law.

Gratitude

Theme:

"Thank you Mother and Father"

Aim:

To instill in the minds of children the deep gratitude they owe their parents.

- 1. Nembutsu.
- 2. Mother's Day.
- 3. Shinran's Birthday Gotan-E.
- 4. Memorial Day

Nembutsu

Purpose:

To help 7th graders understand and relate the Nembutsu to their daily lives.

Materials:

Dictionary to look up words such as: faith, awaken, ignorance, experience, wisdom, compassion.

Procedure:

- 1. Have students look words up in the dictionary. Share findings. Discuss.
- 2. Put the following diagram on the blackboard:

We are here

Wall of Ignorance

Amida is here e.g.:

- 1. Critical of sermon.
- 2. Critical of someone's appearance.
- 3. Critical of friends.
- 3. Distribute the following cryptogram. Give a hint to the first 2 words by saying that it is a person they have studied. Lost his parents at an early age, studied at Mt. Hiei, etc.

SDK **HERA** ODEJNWJ ODKJEJ PWQCDP PDWP WHH **IQOP** WPPWEJ **BWEPD** EJ PDA LKSAN **KB** WIEZW XQZZDW.

MOTHER'S DAY

Theme:

"Thank you Mother and Father"

To encourage the children's awareness of the gratitude they owe their parents.

Lesson:

In order to get a better understanding of the students' ideas of this topic, the teacher should have each student write a paragraph expressing their thoughts of why they should be grateful to their parents.

Discussion:

After the students have completed the paragraphs, the teacher should read them out loud to the class. After each one, stop and discuss with the students why or how the ideas relate to the main theme of this lesson.

The reason for reading the paragraphs out loud is to let the students pick up the ideas that might have been left out of their own paragraphs or ideas that otherwise might have been left out of your pre-discussion of the topic.

Other Suggested Activities:

- 1. Have a class discussion with the minister about how this topic (Filial Piety) is related to Buddhism.
- 2. Put on an original skit showing what the students have actually interpreted or learned from this lesson.
- 3. Find a story based on the topic and discuss it with the class.

MOTHER'S DAY

Theme:

"Thank you Mother and Father"

Aim:

To encourage and nurture awareness in children of the gratitude they owe their parents.

Lesson Plan: Peer Teaching

Teacher to read the following story to the students. (This is a revised version—the original is from a sutra.) It should be explained first, that the students will have a chance to write a part of the story themselves and add to it. Then the class will turn it into a fable. (Maybe they will need further explanation here what a fable is.) They can write whatever they want to about the snake in the story—really let their imaginations go. After they are finished writing, their stories may be shared with the class.

Story:

Once there lived a snake. When the snake wanted to crawl out of the hole one day, the tail said to the head, "Let me lead you today, please."

When the head heard this, he protested and said to the tail, "No, no. From the time of birth, I was the one to lead you. It is my duty to go first."

The tail said, "You have always been leading me. Please, let me go first today for a change. I want to see what it's like." The head said, "But you have no eyes, how will you see where you are going?" The tail replied, "Oh, it can't be that hard. Besides, if I can't try, I'll be so angry I'll wrap myself around this tree and not budge. Please, just today."

The head decides wisely or foolishly, to let the tail lead...

(Here the children will write and add to the story. Especially, encourage different experiences that the snake might get into while the tail is in charge and leads the way even though he cannot see.)

Discussion:

Before reading the students' papers, the teacher should tie in the meaning of the story with the theme of gratitude to parents. Discuss as fully as possible. Parents and the children form a family and perhaps like our story, the parents are like the head of the snake—they have the responsibility to see the way and guide with care. It may be worth it to mention to the students, that at their age, they are experiencing a natural pull to be more independent. And it is understandable that sometimes, it may be difficult to feel grateful for things they normally would—including parents. But a parent's love is always present and shows itself in many ways, sometimes in ways hard to understand.

Materials needed: Lined paper, pencils and enthusiasm.

Other Suggested Activities:

- The snake story with students' versions be done up as a puppet show. (Sox make nice puppets and are easy.) Possibly presented to lower grades?
- Find another story, and as a corresponding project, write with a felt tip pen on a very large poster board, all the students' comments of things they are personally grateful to their parents for.
- After a discussion on gratitude to parents, have a simple classroom meditation. Possibly, the minister can come in and lead; or a student can do a reading.

Birthday of Shinran Shonin, Gotan-E

Objective:

To make the students aware of why we show gratitude to Shinran

Shonin.

Procedure:

Discuss some of the reasons we are grateful to Shinran Shonin:

- 1. He founded the Jodo Shin Shu sect of Buddhism over 750 years
- 2. He developed the Nembutsu teaching that we follow today.
- 3. He had no discrimination and pointed out that everyone could be saved by reciting the Nembutsu with faith in Amida Buddha.
- 4. Although most of his life was filled with sorrow, and misfortune, he was able to live his life filled with gratitude and set an example for us to follow in our daily lives.

Suggested Craft Project:

Model of Shinran Shonin

There was a period in the life of Shinran Shonin where he was exiled and sent to a remote place called Echigo. For the first part of the journey, he was carried in a palanquin. However, upon nearing the outlying area, the travelling party came to a steep mountain path. Shinran Shonin asked to get off and walk. He said, I am adverse to travel without doing anything, without even preaching to the people in such a remote district." The official in charge was reluctant but Shinran Shonin put him at ease by saying, "I am going to walk, just changing my court headgear to a bamboo hat, and my ceremonial robe to a plain robe, that's all." Along with ojuzu, bamboo cane, and straw sandals, we best remember Shinran Shonin in this outfit as he travelled far and wide to preach the message of Amida Buddha.

Materials:

Picture or statue of Shinran Shonin in the outfit described in the

"Sculpey" molding compound (purchased from a craft store).

Water-based paint; brush.

Procedure:

Using the statue as a guide, the students are to mold their own unique model of Shinran Shonin. The models are baked in an oven according to directions on molding box and cooled and painted.

Other Suggested Activities:

- Outdoor and beach parties with services preceding the fun.
- 2. Folder containing pictures of Shinran Shonin's life.
- 3. Crossword and "find the word" puzzles.

Memorial Day

To make students aware of Ho-On-Ko, Shinran's Memorial Service, **Objective:** held on January 16. This is the day on which we express our deepest thanks to Shinran for showing us the way of Nembutsu.

Procedure:

- A Memorial Service is called Hoji. It is a time when we pay tribute and recall 1. cherished memories to those who have passed away. The service consists of chanting the sutra, offering of incense by members of the family and friends, reading sacred passages by Rennyo and a sermon by the minister.
- 2. These are items that one needs to remember to bring to a hoji:
 - a. Incense
 - b. Candles
 - c. Flowers
 - d. Food
 - e. Chanting
 - f. Gassho

Activity:

Give each student a blank sheet of paper and have them draw the Butsudan and place the following items correctly in the Butsudan:

- 1. Candle
- 2. Flower
- 3. Incense
- 4. Food

Father's Day

Objective:

Put the students into their father's position.

Procedure:

Ask the students how would they like to be treated as a father.

- 1. At home, by the whole family.
- 2. By the community, small or large group.

Results from this discussion should be their testing ground for their **Activities:** father to see how much they can practice by themselves as they have suggested. (Thoughtfulness, show gratitude, have more communication between father and the children.)

Obon

Purpose:

To help students understand the significance of Obon.

Materials:

Story of Moggallana.

Procedure:

- 1. Discuss Obon dancing during the summer at various churches.
- 2. The following concepts are important in order to understand the significance of the Obon service.
 - a. Offer gratitude to your ancestors. This does not only mean our parents, grandparents. It goes way beyond that, to our "roots."
 - b. Act of Dana, not materially or monetarily, but giving of the Self.
 - c. Self reflection an awareness of one's true Self.
 - d. Identifying with Moggallana. Try to put yourself in Moggallana's situation.
- 3. Explain to the class that the unifying element between the Obon dance and the service is the Nembustu.

Sacred Sayings

In the shoreless sea of Life and Death's suffering
We are submerged ever so long,
Only the boat of Amida's vows shall surely carry us over,
Onto the Shore of the Land of Bliss.

-Shinran Shonin

As a child seeks comfort from his mother, Should sentient beings on the Buddha meditate, Today and in the not too distant tomorrow The Buddha they shall without doubt perceive.

from "Wasan" Shinran Shonin

Open the eyes of the mind,
And break through the darkness of the blind,
And close the roads of all evils,
Then, unto the Good World we will be led.

from the Larger Sukhavativyuha Sutra "The Dai-Muryo-ju-Kyo Sutra"

Hindered by worldly desires,
Our mental eyes cannot see the Infinite Light,
The untiring great love of the Buddha
Embraces us with His boundless Light.

—Shinran Shonin

Father's kindness extends higher than the highest mountain Mother's love reaches deeper than the deepest sea.

—Shichikangyo

If there is no Buddha in this world, Serve your parents attentively, For serving your parents is serving the Buddha.

—Dai ju-kyo

We are thankful to our parents for their loving care of us, We are thankful to our friends and all other life for their help in providing for our well being.

We are thankful to our country for its belief in freedom for all peoples,

We are thankful to the Three Treasures for showing us the way to be born into Amida's Pure Land.

—The Four Gratitudes of a Buddhist

The Compassion of Amida's Boundless Wisdom,
Repay we must, though our bodies be broken,
The gratefulness in our hearts to our spiritual masters,
Repay we must, though our bones be crushed.

-Ondokusan Shinran Shonin

Buddha

Buddha is both mother and father to the people of the world. For many months after a child is born the father and mother have to speak to him in childish words, then they gradually teach him better words. Like earthly parents, Buddha first cares for people and then leaves them to care for themselves; he first brings things to pass according to their desires and then he brings them to a peaceful and safe shelter.

—BTB 22:2

Do not seek to know the Buddha by his form and attributes; for neither the form nor the attributes are the real Buddha. The true Buddha is Enlightenment itself.

—BTB 17:1

Buddha's body is Enlightenment itself. Being formless and substanceless it always will be. It is not a physical body that had a beginning and must be nourished by food. It is an eternal body whose substance is Wisdom. Buddha has no fear, no disease; he is eternally changeless.

—BTB 17:2

Wisdom

Faith, humility, shame, sincerity of effort and wisdom are great sources of strength to him who is seeking enlightenment; among them wisdom is the greatest and all the rest are but aspects of wisdom.

-BTB 111:10

Practice

The training for enlightenment is just like tuning a harp. One cannot attain enlightenment if he is idle, but neither can he attain enlightenment if he stretches the strings of his mind to tightly. One must be considerate and act wisely.

For those who are seeking enlightenment, there are three methods of practice that must be understood and followed, 1) rules for practical behavior; 2) right concentration of mind and 3) wisdom.....

-BTB 105:1

Buddha's Power

The mind of faith is the mind of sincerity; it is a deep mind, an unquestioning mind, a mind that is sincerely glad to be led to Buddha's Pure Land by Buddha's Power and in his own way. Therefore, Buddha gives a power to faith that leads people to the Pure Land, a power that purifies them, a power that protects them from self-delusion. Even if they have faith only for a moment, when they hear the Buddha's Name, that is praised all over the world, it will bring them to his Pure Land.

-BTB 114:5 or 115:5

Faith

On the journey of life faith is nourishment, virtuous deeds are a shelter, wisdom is its light by day and right mindfulness is its protection by night. If a man lives a pure life nothing can destroy him; if he has conquered greed nothing can limit his freedom.

—BTB 124:8 or 125:8

Group Meditation

In order for a class discussion to be successful, one must have the concentrated attention of the whole group. Although this is sometimes difficult, a good way to draw attention and greater awareness from the students is by beginning with some sort of meditation. Meditation can heighten the class' level of awareness and take their minds off otherwise distracting thoughts. In turn, the students will absorb more of the lesson and discussion.

There are many ways to practice meditation with the class. One way is to listen consciously but quietly to music. This only takes a few minutes. Just select a quick piece and ask the class to close their eyes and listen quietly to the music, concentrating only on the sounds and subtle rhythms. After a few minutes, fade out the music and tell the class to keep their eyes closed. With their eyes closed, ask them not to think of anything at all. One might want to repeat the Nembutsu or a quotation which the class can reflect upon.

The following two books of activities will assist the teacher with all of the Seventh Grade projects.

—A Place to Play **Buddhist Things**

—A Place to Play Volume II **Buddhist Festivals**

The activity books will give each student refreshing ideas for classroom and at home

Please contact etc. Dharma School Materials Coordinator for the necessary and important books.

A PLACE TO PLAY

BUDDHIST THINGS





A PLACE TO PLAY

OLUME II
BUDDHIST FESTIVALS



CONTENTS

Think About **OBON** Uchiwa Kachi-Kachi Happi Kanzashi Paper Kanzashi Rick-Rack Kanzashi Hashi-Kanzashi **HANAMATSURI** The White Elephant Buddha in Lotus



BUDDHIST THINGS



CONTENTS

Think About Ojuzu or Nenju The Art of Seeing Bodhidharma Egg Carton Daruma Rock Daruma Perception Manekineko Takuan Noren Paper Noren Felt Noren Fabric Noren



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BUDDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA DHARMA SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Introduction

Grade Level

Focus

Aims And Objectives

Eight Grade

Nembutsu

Buddhist Observances

Activities

Understand as you study the Nembutsu Practice and learn the way of leading a life of gratitude.

Contents:

Nembutsu - a way of life

Lesson Planning

I. Why must I prepare lessons?

A. Teachers should have a "focus" - long-range goal for the entire school year. It is similar to having a road map to follow on a trip - to stay on track to reach a destination.

We strive to accomplish specific objectives toward the "focus".

Example: Eighth Grade

Focus - Nembutsu

Objective - Thankfulness

- B. Specific objectives, will assist teachers to evaluate progress toward the "focus."
- C. Teachers need to choose appropriate techniques to maximize participation.
- D. Key to success is good planning.
- E. Prepared lessons give teachers self-confidence.

II. How to prepare lessons

- A. Lessons should be based on specific objectives toward grade level "focus."
- B. Determine what resource material(s) to use for the lessons.
 - Guest speakers, personal experiences, books, Buddhist Observances, holidays, newspaper articles, TV programs, stories.
- C. Determine how to present lessons to the class, discussions, written, games, field trips, art, group projects.
- D. Prepare lessons which can be evaluated quickly to determine:
 - How far the class has progressed toward the "focus."
 - Whether you are getting across to the students.
 - How you can improve lessons.

Outline Lesson Plan for Dharma School Class

Nembutsu. Gassho Silent Meditation

Roll Call Announcements

Introduction of Lesson Silent for Oral Reading Discussion of Lesson Question and Answer Period **Activity Period**

Gatha

Meditation Sacred Saying (student) Closing Remarks (teacher)

Nembutsu, Gassho

Getting To Know You

Welcome to the Eighth Grade! This being the first Sunday of the new Dharma School year, it is time that you become acquainted with your Teacher. Since there are many students the teacher must get to know, you can help out by answering the short questionnaire that is prepared below:

- 1. What is your favorite sport?
- 2. What is your favorite TV and radio program?
- 3. Who is your favorite personality? (a) male (b) female
- 4. What is your favorite magazine?
- 5. What is your best-liked book?
- 6. What are your hobbies?
- 7. What is your favorite subject at school?
- 8. What country would you like to visit?
- 9. What is your ambition?
- 10. What will make you happiest?
- 11. What will make you saddest?
- 12. Do you have an Obutsudan at your house?

BINGO – Getting To Know You

2	15	13	1
1	22	11	3
5	23	4	10
6	7	9	21

FIND SOMEONE WHO:

- 1. has a name that starts with an A.
- 2. likes pigs feet
- 3. has purple as a favorite color
- 4. has aspirin with them
- 5. is wearing a safety pin
- 6. lives out of state
- 7. lives in Southern California
- 8. lives in Central California
- 9. has an unusual occupation
- 10. is retired
- 11. has the most children
- 12. taught DS the longest

- 13. has riden a motorcycle
- 14. went on an unusual vacation
- 15. lives in a small town
- 16. is a student
- 17. is a jogger
- 18. loves liver or tripe
- 19. has a Japanese name that starts with an E
- 20. read the Teachers Guide completely
- 21. practices Yoga, Shiatsu or Tai Chi
- 22. has moved in the last 2 years
- 23. kissed someone in the last 24 hours

Who Am I?

Topic: Gratitude to others

Purpose: To help students see who they are with respect to others and what a unique

position it is

Gratitude To Others - Wordly Truth

A Buddhist asks for little in life and is grateful for much.

A Buddhist is humble, but grateful to others. He realizes he exists in relation to other people and other things.

For example, ask yourself, "Who am I?"

From my parents' viewpoint, I am their child.

From my sister's viewpoint, I am her brother.

From my teacher's viewpoint, I am his or her student.

And so forth.

What I am, depends on who is doing the asking.

I am not a person all by myself, but I become someone in relation to others.

Similarly, what I do, should not be for myself alone but for others. What little I accomplish is not due to myself alone, but due to others.

As quoted from Rev. Taitetsu Unno, "The fullness of success is realized by the man who can say, 'Thanks to others, I made it to the top.' The businessman who stands ready to serve his customers, the athlete who is honored and yet gives all the credit to his team mates, the scientist who is recognized but pays the first respect to his parents and teachers—the achievement of the highest order becomes alive only in the inner capacity for humbleness."

Activity:

- 1. Have students write about: "Who am I?" with respect to their positions and duties in the family, with friends, in school and in Dharma School.
- 2. Read each of the papers without mentioning names. Have students identify the student whose paper is being read. They should have no problems.
- 3. Discuss:
 - a. the uniqueness of each student
 - b. the preciousness of this uniqueness because it's the result of all the interactions between the student and surrounding people.
- 4. Make a family tree and go back as far as you can. Allow students to take it home and have parents and grandparents help fill in names

Grandparents						
	•		•		•	
_						
Parents						
			•			
Brothers/Sisters		•				
				;		
						•
Dad						
		·				
	•					
Mom						
1110111						
	•					
Me						
			,			

Great-grandparents

Topic: GRATITUDE FOR THINGS AROUND US

Purpose: To help students see who they are with respect to their surroundings (visible and invisible)

Reading:

Gratitude for Things Around Us

There is nothing in this whole wide world that is more regrettable, more wasteful than ingratitude.

Every year around Thanksgiving time we are reminded to count our blessings—and most of us do gratefully recount the personal gains, material and spiritual, from which we have benefited. But even this only seems to be a surface show of gratitude. We acknowledge only the most obvious of our blessings. And then we do so all too infrequently.

The secret of true gratitude lies much, much deeper. It lies in a keen, active, day by day sense of appreciation. The kind of appreciation that you can enjoy and even rejoice at some beauty or good that does not necessarily mean material returns or selfish gain. What a dreary old world this would be if we didn't notice or show gratitude for anything that did not result from actual possession. And we don't have to wander to far places to find beauty to appreciate—if we see with an appreciative eye.

This special appreciation is not just observation. It goes beyond the mere noticing of things. We might call it "observation with a meaning," giving the most commonplace, everyday occurrence a place in our private store of experience or beauty. A place in which it can grow and bloom with each new day.

The beauty of a sunset, a fog, or a sudden friendly smile from a stranger, or of the grandeur of a tree, the marvel of a tall building, the wonder of a big bridge, or the serenity of a familiar neighborhood. To see and to hear them is one thing. To feel and appreciate their meaning is a far greater thing.

A lack of appreciation or gratitude for small things is a terrible waste, a personal waste that will in time affect the whole personality. Its lack will wither a man or woman far more effectively and quickly than age ever could.

Activity:

- 1. Have students write down things in their environment that sustain life (like air)
- 2. List them on board and discuss the list. For instance: air is not just there but is recycled by the green plants
- 3. Have students write down things in their environment that are not essential for life, but for which you have felt appreciation
- 4. Discuss what students have written down and work toward understanding of "quality of life" (e.g. when one can enjoy a sunset, or a smile, how much more pleasant and lovely is life)

Topic: Gratitude for the Nembutsu

Purpose: To help the student understand that once gratitude is total, they will know who they are and recite the Nembutsu naturally

Reading:

RECITE THE NEMBUTSU IN GRATITUDE

Nembutsu is an expression of gratitude, arising from our sense of humility, and the awareness of Amida's Boundless Love for us. In fact, the Nembutsu, when it is heard from our lips, manifests a profound affirmation of his Faith and Salvation, and our humble gratitude. And thereafter, almost by habit we begin repeating the Nembutsu, grateful of the nearness of Amida whose Light is everywhere visible.

Shinran's teaching is that we ought to be humbly grateful for our good fortune. We ought to be grateful for the house we live in, for the food we eat, for the clothes we wear, for the roads we use, even for the piece of paper we read daily.

We ought to be grateful for the flowers that give us beauty, and for the sounds of the music which pleases us.

Our gratitude arises from the realization that it is by these things that we live and advance. 'No man lives unto himself alone.' Everyone and everything lives only in relation to other things. Even our salvation is not of our own making. This realization gives rise to a profound sense of humility.

This sense of humility and dependence upon the Buddha and the world is a result of awakening to faith. Spontaneously, from the depth of our hearts, we pronounce the Name of the Buddha, "Namu Amida Butsu," in gratitude.

All through our lives, the Nembutsu reminds us of our gratefulness, and when death should come we are not regretful or fearful of the end. To the man of the Nembutsu, life is eternal. How else can it be, when Amida is eternal, his Infinite Love is forever, and his Infinite Light is universally everywhere.

Activity:

INTERDEPENDENCE

Have we stopped to think how independent or dependent we really are? Let us make a list of what things we can do independently and what things we must depend on others for assistance.

Independent

Dependent

- 1. Which list is longer?
- 2. Did you realize how dependent on others we really are?
- 3. What one word describes the dependency of one on another?
- 4. How can we show our gratitude?

Readings:

INTERDEPENDENCE

Albert Schweitzer, who is so well known to us as the "Jungle Doctor" once wrote: "Many times a day, I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labors of my fellow men, both living and dead, and how much harder I must work in order to give in return as much as I have received."

INTERDEPENDENCE

A famous organist was once playing at a concert. The audience was completely captivated by his fine playing. Behind the screen, however, was a little boy who was hard at work pumping the organ for the organist. When the organist finished his number, the audience applauded loudly. The organist was overjoyed over his accomplishment.

During the intermission, the little boy said proudly to the famous organist: "Aren't we wonderful?"

The organist turned to the little boy, a little annoyed and uncertain as to what he meant. Abruptly he said: "What do you mean, and what do you mean by 'WE'?"

As the second part of the organ program began, the organist again returned to the organ and went through all the motions of playing, but no music came out. Again and again he began, but no music was heard. The audience could not understand what was happening.

Finally, a little voice from behind the curtain said: "Now, do you know who's WE?"

Read and discuss **Activity:**

A LIFE OF THANKSGIVING

"The fact that we exist means we owe a deep debt of gratitude to many, many things. No individual lives alone. Hence, we must all live a thankful life. To live a life of thankfulness is the way of life set forth by Shinran Shonin. To live a life of thankfulness is to live by striving to repay the debt of gratitude we owe.

A life of thankfulness is the just and moral way of life. To be thankful to everything for our existence will enable us to live without inflicting harm or injury to others, without abuse or slander, or without discrimination. To live in the Nembutsu is to live his thankful life."

And so we say, "Namu Amida Butsu" in gratitude for Amida Buddha's Infinite Love and Compassion.

On Gratitude

There was once a man who found a bag on a street one morning while going to work. Upon opening it, he found that there was thousands of dollars inside. "The right thing to do is to turn it in to the police so that they can contact the rightful owner," he thought to himself. And that was what the man did.

Later the rightful owners were grateful to him for his right action and gave him a modest reward. The finder of the money thought that this was the end of this episode, but he was wrong. Soon, day and night he received telephone calls, he got many letters, and people stopped him in the street to tell him how foolish he was in returning the money. They told him he should have kept it all and not mention it to anybody. Thus, he was tormented night and day for his actions.

Questions:

- If we had found ourselves in a similar situation, what would we have done?
- Did the finder of the money have right actions? What about the people who told him that he was wrong?

Utterance of the Name (Nembutsu)— Expression of Gratitude

If someone we truly trust is the source of our gratitude, our hearts will spontaneously utter that person's name. For example, if a friend sacrifices his time to help us in a crisis, it is only natural that we identify that person and all that he did through speaking his name. With that experience, whenever we think of that name a number of very important thoughts will flood our minds and hearts.

First, we will feel that the sacrifice took a lot of time and effort.

Second, without that person we would not have been able to get through the crisis. In fact, it is because of that person that we were able to get through the crisis.

Third, we will feel humble with the realization that we have such a friend.

Fourth, we will feel the inconceivable nature of the relationship. That is, from within the vast human race we were able to meet with such a person.

The above are but a few of the thoughts that we will have. However, because of these, the friend's name becomes a natural utterance of gratitude for us.

In Jodo Shinshu, the realization of the above feelings in relation to Amida Buddha's Compassion is called Shinjin. The natural utterance of the Name in gratitude is called Nembutsu. Shinran Shonin says: "The True Shinjin is necessarily accomplished by the utterance of the Name."

In Jodo Shinshu, the utterance of the Name spontaneously follows the awakening to Shinjin. Generally, the utterance is termed our expression of gratitude for being endowed with Shinjin and being assured of Birth in the Pure Land of Enlightenment.

Even with the endowed attainment of Shinjin and the Utterance of the Name, we often times think that the utterance is our own practice. We feel the need to do something. Yet, it must be remembered that with our awakening to Shinjin we are assured of Birth; therefore, we need no other practice. Shinjin is the true cause for Birth and Enlightenment; therefore, our utterance is termed an expression of gratitude, that is, Nembutsu of gratitude.

Also, we may think that by uttering the Name we attain virtues; however, this is not the case. One of the unique features about uttering the Nembutsu is that we do not think we attain virtues. Actually, with Shinjin all the virtues are already attained through the Compassion of Amida Buddha. In truth, the virtues are embodied in the Name that is uttered and not in the utterance by us. Yet, because the virtues are embodied in the Name, the Name, coming through our grateful utterance, has the power to embrace other beings still caught in delusion.

Thus we see that the utterance of the Name is the result of the awakened Shinjin endowed upon us by the Compassionate Buddha through the fulfilled Eighteenth Vow.

Previously, it has been said that with the awakening to Shinjin we are assured the Birth in the Pure Land of Enlightenment. Then, what is meant by Birth in the Pure Land of the Jodo Shinshu?

Suggested Projects for Eighth Grade

PROJECT #1

Write a report on **The Nembutsu and I.** It should include:

- a) The meaning of Nembutsu.
- b) How the Way of Nembutsu was introduced into Buddhism.
- c) The practice of Nembutsu.
- d) The Nembutsu as a Way of Life.
- e) Illustrations.

PROJECT #2

Prepare a report on the Four Gratitudes in Buddhism. It should include:

- a) What they are.
- b) An explanation of each one.
- c) Examples from your own experience to clarify your points.
- d) Draw or find appropriate pictures.

PROJECT #3

Naturalness is a very important concept in Jodo Shinshu.

- a) What is its usual meaning?
- b) Give examples from your own experience.
- c) What is its meaning in Jodo Shinshu?
- d) Cite examples in the lives of Shinshu Buddhists.
- e) Draw or find appropriate pictures to bring out your points.

PROJECT #4

Recall our class discussion about the Other Power in Jodo Shinshu.

- a) What are some things that we should do within our own powers? Give examples, and illustrate some.
- b) Meaning of the Other Power.
- c) Expand on the reason why we are dependent on others.
- d) What was Shinran Shonin's conclusion in regards to the Other Power? Do you agree with him?

PROJECT #5

Awakening is a very important concept in Jodo Shinshu.

- a) What is its usual meaning?
- b) Give examples from your own experience.
- c) What is its meaning in Shinshu?
- d) Cite examples of religious awakening.
- e) What changes occurred in the person concerned?
- f) Illustrations, as required.

PROJECT #6

"It need not discourage us if we are full of doubts. Healthy questions keep faith dynamic. In fact, unless we start with doubts we cannot have a deeprooted faith. One who believes lightly and unthinkingly has not much of a belief. He who has a faith which is not to be shaken has won it through a thicket of brambles and thorns."

—Helen Keller (The Open Door)

- a) Give examples when you have been in doubt.
- b) Is it a good thing that we have doubts?
- c) What removed your doubts?
- d) Explain the last two sentences. Cite examples from your own experience.
- e) What can you do to strengthen your faith in Jodo Shinshu?

PROJECT #7

Find (or draw) five or more pictures on how Buddhism helps you in your daily life. Explain each picture.

PROJECTS #8

For Gathas

#531 The Texture of life #559 The Teaching of Buddhas

- a) What are the messages the Gatha is trying to convey?
- b) Make illustrations to amplify your points.
- c) How may you apply them in your daily life?
- d) Cite examples to clarify.

PROJECT #9

Field Trip

Have a good trip!

Trip slips/medical releases Ask the secretary to give you the "permission and medical release" forms that were filled out for the trip, and find out what the school procedure is for children who do not have their forms signed by parent or guardian. Will they remain at school in another classroom, or in the office? If the slips are not in the office, look for them in the classroom as soon as you arrive. It helps to put them in alphabetical order so that you can take roll with them. (You will need to take these with you on the trip.)

Then ask the secretary for the school phone number, and an alternative number to call in case of emergency. Be sure you have change for public telephones.

Rules Let the class know from the start the kind of behavior you expect from them: how important it is to be polite, to throw trash in designated barrels, to stay with their assigned group, to stop talking immediately when you or another teacher signals for attention, and what to do if they get lost or hurt. It's a good idea to keep 40 copies of such "field trip rules" in your sub-supplies. The rules can be written as multiple-choice questions or even cartoons and handed out before the trip.

Identifying your students It is especially important on trips to be able to quickly place names with faces. Using your permission forms, make a list of your students and jot down simple descriptions of each child's looks and clothing next to his or her name. Take special note of class leaders and potential troublemakers, and try to use the names of the latter in a positive manner as often as possible.

Have younger students make brightly colored group identification tags from construction paper. These can take the form of arm bands, headbands, bracelets, or even buttons as long as the children's name are boldly marked on the paper. With very small children, point out that strangers will also know their names, and remind them that they are not to go anywhere with someone else without your permission. Assign two children to help you count heads at every change of location throughout the day.

Lined up and waiting Before your students board the bus, point out the bus number (you could write it on the I.D. tags of kindergartners) and ask if the class can find any other identifying marks to look for when lining up for the return trip. If you are traveling via car or minibus, make sure children are aware of the color of their vehicle and the name of the driver.

If there is to be a lengthy waiting period for, say, a bus or tour guide, introduce a few games. Hand-slapping always is popular. To play this, divide students into pairs. In unison with the others, each student is to slap his hands on his thighs, clap, and then slap palms with his partner, calling the partner's name as the two slap hands. You might also hold a walking relay race. In this race, children form two lines, and the players who are first in line walk swiftly along the outside of their own lines until they reach the back. Taking their places at the end, each slaps the hands of the person in front, who turns and passes the slap forward until it reaches the head of the line. Repeat until the bus driver is ready for the class.

The trip It might be a good idea to take notes for both yourself and the regular teacher for follow-up lessons. But more important, have fun. A field trip is a break in the students' usual routine, and it is all right to be a little lax about talking and other restrictions. Let everyone, including yourself, relax and enjoy it.

What is Etiquette

The whole concept of etiquette in general is concerned with the refinement of human behavior in its relationship with other human beings. Common courtesy, cordiality, grace and beauty, along with tradition, are all involved.

Buddhist Etiquette takes into consideration this concept of etiquette, but it is more concerned with the refinement of our behavior in its relationship with the Buddha, His Teaching and His Brotherhood.

Thus, while it is necessary for the Buddhist to observe the ordinary rules of good conduct toward his fellow men, it is more important that he move with reverence and gratitude toward all things which are related to the Buddha.

Reverence and gratitude for the Compassion and Wisdom of the Buddha form the basis of Buddhist Etiquette. Without this basis, the learning and practice of the outward forms become empty and meaningless. Gassho is meaningful only when it is the Nembutsu in action—when it is the expression of our gratitude and reverence. Therefore, in teaching the forms of Buddhist Etiquette, or in practicing them oneself, it must be to express the spirit of gratitude and reverence.

When Shinran spoke of "Shomyo Nembutsu"—the actual utterance of the Nembutsu-he was saying that it is not enough for man to think about noble thoughts and deeds; they must be expressed in words and action.

In light of this, the purpose of etiquette in the lives of Buddhists becomes clear: we must put into action the reverence and gratitude which we feel for the Buddha. In teaching small children, then, it should be enough to convey this feeling of reverence and gratitude, and the bare basic forms of etiquette. Children will learn through the examples set by their teachers.

For the teachers, however, it is necessary that the details of etiquette are learned and observed so that they may set the proper example.

While it is true that Buddhists in America cannot adopt some of the rules of etiquette as conceived and practiced in Japan, there is still much to be said for the perpetuation of the others. Of these, the more common are included in this guide. With the passing of time, more changes will probably be made necessary, but until such changes are made and adopted, the following is presented to the Dharma School teacher as a guide on etiquette as it is practiced today in Buddhist Churches of America.

Etiquette In The Temple

Gassho

Gassho means to put the hands together. The palms of both hands are placed together with the fingers and thumbs extended and with the ojuzu encircling both hands and held lightly between the thumbs and the fingers. Both elbows should be fairly close to the body and the hands should be at mid-chest level. To bow during gassho, the hands should be held steady, while the body is bent forward from the hips and then back to upright position.

Gassho is the natural expression of reverence and gratitude.

The Ojuzu

The ojuzu should be treated with the utmost respect at all times. At home it should be kept in a special place, such as in a drawer near the family shrine. At other times, the Buddhist should carry the ojuzy in the purse or in the coat pocket so that it will always be available. During the service, the ojuzu should be held in the left hand.

The ojuzu encircles the hands during gassho, symbolizing Oneness.

Oshoko (Offering of Incense)

Walk up to the front of the shrine and bow at a distance of about two steps in front of the Oshoko table. Step up to the table and with the right hand take a pinch of powdered incense and drop it into the burning-incense bowl. Gassho and bow. Take two or three steps backward, bow and return to your seat.

Oshoko is the acceptance of transiency and fulfillment in life.

Use of Seiten (and Gatha Books)

Since the Seiten contains sacred words, it should be handled with proper care. The Issei "itadaku" the book before using, i.e., they reverently hold it with both hands and bow in a gesture of gratitude. It is hoped that such an attitude of reverence will be perpetuated by the younger generations.

Entering and Leaving the Hondo (Temple-Hall)

The Hondo should be entered quietly and with due reverence. Upon entering, gassho facing the shrine. Take your seat and wait quietly for the service to begin.

Avoid being late, but when you must enter the Hondo after the service has started, be especially careful not to disturb the others. Try to find a seat in the back rows. If you enter during a period of meditation, wait until it is over before moving toward the seats.

Before leaving the Hondo, turn to face the shrine and gassho.

Reciting of the Nembutsu

As Shinshu is based on the realization of the Nembutsu, the importance of reciting it correctly cannot be overemphasized. "Namu-Amida-Butsu" should be recited clearly and accurately.

Listening to the Reading of Sacred Writings

The minister often reads excerpts from the "Sacred Writings of St. Rennyo" (Gobunsho) or other scriptures before or after delivering his sermon. The Sangha should sit with heads bowed and listen to the words.

Responding to the Speaker's Bow

When the speaker bows in greeting the Sangha, or when he bows after his talk, the Sangha should return his bow.

Leading the Sangha in Reading

Leading the Sangha in reading, whether it is the "Golden Chain" or excerpts from the Dhammapada, is an honor and therefore should be performed in that spirit. Before beginning the reading, gassho and bow toward the shrine. Hold the book with both hands. Read slowly and distinctly so that the Sangha can follow together.

After the reading, gassho.

Personal Appearance

The manner of personal appearance is another way of showing respect. Neatness, cleanliness, or, in general, "looking one's best" is a good rule to follow, especially in the Temple.

How to Walk in the Temple

Children are naturally inclined to jump and run instead of walking quietly, but they must be taught that in the Temple, they must walk. The teacher walking beside some of the more energetic ones may be able to help them remember this.

How to Sit in the Temple

Again even the best-mannared child will need constant reminding on how to remain seated quietly throughout a service. Instruct the children that "good Buddhist children" sit up straight facing the shrine.

General Behavior in the Temple

Etiquette in general requires children (and grown-ups too) to refrain from talking out of turn; from whispering and chit-chatting when in a large group; and from poking or otherwise annoying their friends. It is even more important that such behavior be discouraged in the Temple. Try to direct their attention to the part of the service being conducted.

Emphasize the need to do everything quietly and reverently; turn the pages of the Gatha Book quietly, close the book quietly, etc. Any necessary movement should be made in a quiet and respectful manner.

It should also be pointed out that it is impolite to the speaker and to everyone else, as well as being disrespectful to the Buddha, to leave the hall during the service. Teach the children that, except for the rare emergencies, they are to remain quietly seated until the service is over.

Dividing into Classes

The system for dividing the Dharma School into classes differs with the individual Temples. In some Temples the children file out in row-by-row order. In this case the children should wait quietly for their turn to leave. In other Temples a more informal dispersal takes place. Whichever the system, supervision by the teacher can keep the process orderly and efficient.

Regarding the Shrine Platform

The shrine is usually arranged and prepared by the minister; but in his absence, these duties are sometimes performed by others. On other occasions, no one else should go up on the platform. Teachers should be careful to prevent little children from climbing up on the platform. Explain that the platform is for the minister's use only.

PRACTICE OF THE TEACHINGS

As the first of the Six Paramitas, and a major virtue in the Buddhist Teachings, the practice and understanding of dana (giving selflessly) should be constantly taught to the Dharma School pupils. The Dharma School and other Temple activities afford various opportunities in which dana, along with the other paramitas, may be practiced.

Osaisen (Offertory)

It has long been the practice of Dharma School children to make small contributions each Sunday to the Temple. The teachers may help their pupils grasp the importance of their acts of dana through stories showing the merits of this act. Money given boastfully is not true osaisen. Teach the difference so that they may appreciate the true meaning of giving.

The method of accepting the contributions varies with the different Temples. The majority of the Temples have "osaisen-bako" (box of osaisen) near the entrance of the Hondo. The children drop their osaisen in this box as they enter the Temple. Some Temples have the system of collecting the osaisen in the separate classes.

Flowers for the Shrine

Those with abundant flowers in their gardens should be encouraged to bring them to the Temple on Saturdays so they may be arranged for Dharma Services.

For Hanamatsuri, every child should be encouraged to bring at least a few blossoms to offer to the Hana-Mido.

Giving of One's Service

Along with the giving of material goods, giving of labor and love for the Temple must be taught to the children. The unselfish concern for the welfare of the Temple, which is necessary for all Buddhists, young and old, must be taught from an early age. Cleaning the Temple and Temple-yard, helping with bulletins, volunteering for child care, lining up chairs or distributing Gatha Books can help the children acquire this unselfish concern.

Receiving with Gratitude

The majority of Dharma Schools give small gifts to the children. These range from the occasional gifts of candy to special gifts as the "graduate's gift," attendance pins, etc.

Receiving with gratitude is as important as giving with a pure heart. In this land of abundance, it is not difficult for a child to think little of a small gift. The teacher must somehow convey to his pupils the feeling of special appreciation for gifts from the Temple.

If the Dharma School pupils can understand this feeling, they will treat the gifts with appreciation. Then, in the case of candy bars, they will not tear off the wrappings in Temple; but rather, they will take the candy home and first present it to their family shrine.

Etiquette at Home

THE FAMILY SHRINE (OBUTSUDAN)

The family shrine is the heart of the Buddhist home. Because this is so, we must pay homage to our shrine in every way possible. It should be kept as beautiful as possible. It should never show signs of neglect or carelessness. The best flowers available should always be offered and each shrine piece kept in proper position. (If a student in the Dharma School has no family shrine, he should be helped in obtaining an omyogo from the Tem-

To prepare the family shrine for a service, the following points should be remembered:

Flowers

See that fresh flowers have been offered. Since flowers are symbolic of transiency, artificial flowers should not be used. Paper flowers are used by some other religious groups, but it should not be confused as a Shinshu practice.

Osonaye (Offerings)

There is a great difference between the Buddhist osonaye and the primitive sacrificial offerings to the gods, just as there is a difference between the gassho and the prayer. The difference lies in the meaning behind the acts: the osonaye is made in thanksgiving while the sacrificial offerings were made in petitioning the favor of the gods. Through the ages the Buddhists have made offerings to the Buddha in this spirit of thanksgiving. In America, too, the practice is not continued.

Rice has become the traditional main offering. As it was the staple food in Japan, it became the practice to offer the first portion of each days rice to the Obutsudan. Other customs regarding offerings of important Buddhist occasions developed. They include:

New Year: Omochi (okagami)

Ohigan: Odango

Hanamatsuri: Sweet tea and Flowers

Obon: Somen and things customarily connected with the Thanksgiving season and harvest such as cucumber, eggplant, peaches, melons, etc. (Kyuri ya nasubi ya momo suika...)

Offerings of Ohatsu are made in the sense of giving the "first of the season" to the Buddha. Other offerings, made to present the best or the most important item, may include the first slice of a birthday cake, presents received, paychecks, letters, and etc.

Candles

Light the candles and douse the match by fanning it (not by blowing).

Incense

Break the incense sticks into lengths which will fit across the incense burner. Hold one end of the incense sticks up to the candle until they glow. Hold the flaming end down and fan the flame out (do not blow). Then lay the incense down in the burner and replace the cover. (Not all burners have covers).

The incense burner should be about half filled with ashes. If for any reason the incense burner is found to be empty (as it is sometimes at outdoor services), it may be temporarily filled with salt.

Gong

The gong is used only when chanting the sutra. There are various other religious groups which use the gong for other purposes, but in Shinshu Temples and homes it is used only to announce the beginning of the sutra and, later in the sutra, to punctuate it. Only those familiar with the sutras and the proper punctuation points should use the gong.

The correct way of striking the gong is to use a wrist action and strike the gong lightly but briskly. Hit the upper part of the gong using a right to left motion (not up and down).

Closing the Shrine

Put out the candles, using either the tool made for this purpose or with a fanning motion of the hand (again, do not blow), and close the doors (if any) of the Obutsudan. Gassho.

DAILY EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE

Morning and Evening Gassho

Morning and evening services should be observed, however short or simple. This may take the form of gassho alone, or the recitation of some words of thanksgiving in gassho. The words one may choose to repeat before the shrine is of personal preference. They are usually determined by the guidance one receives from his Dharma School teacher and his parents. The important point is that the morning and evening orei—the expressing of gratitude to the Buddha—becomes a regular and important part of one's daily life.

Whenever a child finds that his home shrine is not accessible at his bedtime, it is better that he gassho beside the bed, or sitting in bed, than for him to omit the observance.

At the Dinner Table

Let us encourage the practice of giving thanks at the dinner table.

"Itadakimasu" and "Gochiso sama" are two expressions of receiving with gratitude. Even for those who do not understand Japanese, the utterance of "Itadakimasu" before the meal and "Gochiso sama" after the meal could be of real meaning if expressed with thanksgiving in gassho.

"Our Life of Nembutsu"

The way of the Nembutsu was introduced in the following manner—

After attaining His Enlightenment, Sakyamuni Buddha returned one day to His former home to tell His father about the Nembutsu.

When told by the Buddha that he was merely to repeat the name, Namu Amida Butsu, the father asked, "Why do you teach me this easy way of the Nembutsu? Why do you not tell me the other methods which you preach to your disciples?"

Sakyamuni replied, "In order to go through all the numerous practices, you would have to leave your home and your work. The way of the Nembutsu is the easiest way to become Buddha because you can say it at home or wherever you are."

Sakyamuni Buddha was trying to tell His father that He showed the monks the way to become a Buddha, by encouraging them to practice what He Himself had done. But to the ordinary people for whom it is impossible to leave their homes forsaking worldly desires, He taught the way of the Nembutsu.

Sakyamuni Buddha, during the latter part of His life, voluntarily started a discourse with one of His disciples which began:

O, Sariputra, after you have passed from here over a hundred thousand kotis of Buddha countries, there is in the western part a Buddha country, a world called Sukhavati (Pure Land). And there a Tathagata, called Amitayus, fully enlightened, dwells now, and teaches the law-

and so told the story of Amida Buddha and His Pure Land.

This sermon, compiled in one sutra, is called the Amida-kyo. The meaning of this sermon is that no matter how much the wisdom and intellect of human beings may develop, the problems concerning birth, death, old age, and sickness can only be solved by Faith in Amida Buddha through the recitation of the Nembutsu.

As time passed on after the death of Sakyamuni Buddha, the disciples began to have interest in sutras mentioning Amida Buddha and the Pure Land which led to the development of a religion practicing the Nembutsu.

Of all the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha, the ultimate teaching that enables men to be liberated from one of man's greatest fears—death, is His teaching concerning Faith in Amida Buddha. With this Faith, parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, can live peacefully with quiet understanding and assurance that reunion in the Pure Land with their loved ones is possible even after death.

Sacred Saying:

Open the eyes of the mind,

And break through the darkness of the blind,

And close the roads of all evils;

Then, unto the Good World we will be led.

Larger Sukhavativyuha Sutra Dai-Muryo-ju-Kyo

The English word "man" is said to mean "one who thinks." Man differs from the other animals and possesses the wisdom to think of tomorrow. Man thinks of living tomorrow more happily than today, the next year still happier than this year, and he wants to live happily evermore. When such thoughts grew and developed, it visualized the most wonderful world of the next life—Buddha's Pure Land. Amida Buddha made this Pure Land into a reality.

In this world, we have many forces in opposition existing at the same time such as day and night, happiness and sadness, etc., but the Buddha's Pure Land is the bright and enlightened world of no conflicts where one can live without suspicion of things that exist in opposition to each other.

How truly wonderful to think of a future in such a land forever delivered from the suffering of this world.

For Discussion:

Do you carry the hope of a better tomorrow? Do you sometimes wonder about the next life? What do the Buddhists believe will happen in the next life?

Within the realm of human beings, people use other power as their own and in so doing make progress. For example, although a person may not understand the mechanical structure of an airplane, because he believes in the people who make it and in the person who flies it, he rides on it with ease. Moreover, he is transported swiftly and efficiently to far places where he would not have been able to go if he were to depend on his power alone.

Buddhism teaches that we have to depend on our own power to live in this world, but to be born into the Pure Land of Amida Buddha, we must rely on His power; for to strive to become a Buddha while on this earth, is like making our own raft and crossing the ocean all by ourselves.

In order to cross the vast ocean to the other shore of Nirvana, we must board the large ocean liner. The journey will be so much easier on the big ship of Namu Amida Butsu putting our whole trust in the Buddha and leaving everything up to Him.

Sacred Saying:

In the shoreless sea of Life and Death's suffering We are submerged ever so long. Only the boat of Amida's vows shall surely carry us over.

Onto the shore of the Land of Bliss.

Shonin Shinran

Although Buddhism delivers us from suffering, we at times hear comments that Buddhism preaches only of salvation in the future and has little to do with our daily living.

Such a way of thinking has not found the true answer, for salvation in Buddhism is not only for the hereafter. Salvation in Buddhism is the great happiness received in being able to live this present moment with great peace of mind and heart for a way to live forever has been found. The mind which was at one time insecure with the fear of impending illness, death or other untimely tragedies of life is now steady and secure in having found the way to endless life. Buddhism, the religion which saves us in the future is actually saving us in this present world.

When the well-known Japanese writer, Shiki Masaoka was told that his illness was incurable, he remarked thoughtfully, "I have always believed that Buddhism is the Teaching concerning the way to die with a peaceful mind, but now I have found that it the way to live peacefully until I die."

To be able to enjoy religion is a special blessing; for it frees us from prejudice, superstition, delusion, and leads us to the right understanding of the true nature of life.

In the Jodo Shin Sect, we find that to live in this world as well as we can, and to aspire to be born in Buddha's world by having faith in Amida Buddha through the-Nembutsu is the way to salvation forever delivered from suffering.

Questions:

- 1. Does Buddhism help us in our daily living?
- What thought or belief brings to us peace of mind?

Things to Do

Do you know any older person (grandparents and others), someone who is ill who may be troubled in mind and spirit? Try to make it a week of thinking of these people and giving them cheer.

Sacred Saving

Hindered by worldly desires, Our mental eyes cannot see the Infinite Light.

The untiring great love of the Buddha Embraces us with His boundless Light

Shonin Shinran

To enter the Pure Land is the most sublime ideal of all Buddhists. Until such time comes, our happiness in this world should be that of living with the Nembutsu.

Let us understand the true significance of the Nembutsu and let us learn that when we repeat the Nembutsu, Amida Buddha promises to take us to the Pure Land.

The child thinks of his mother and hurries home after playing with his friends, a student is happy to go home during his holidays and the father hurries home after his day's work is done. When at play, at school, or at work, wherever we may be; we are happy because we know we have a bright warm home awaiting our return. When life's duty is done, and we are ready to go to Amida's land, we are happy and at ease because we know that we have our permanent home where we may rest.

All such happy assurances we have during our lifetime is called living with the Nembutsu.

Questions:

- 1. What is the happiness of this world?
- 2. What does Amida Buddha promise when we repeat the Nembutsu?

Things to do:

Study this Sacred Saying and discuss

Since we have believed in the Great Compassion We are no more mortals who keep on the wheel of birth and death Altho' we maintain our physical body with worldly desires Yet our mind rejoices in the Pure Land.

Wasan

Through the recitation of the Nembutsu, a feeling will awaken in us that we are together with the Buddha and that the Buddha is watching over us. Having faith in the Buddha's constant presence, we will be able to live a righteous life.

The lotus grows out of the mire but blooms as a pure white flower. The figure of the Buddha standing on the lotus blossom is a symbol of man who withstands the vices and evils of this world aspiring to live a life of righteousness and purity under the guidance of the Buddha.

Those who listen to the teachings of the Buddha, recite the Nembutsu, and truly believe they are with Buddha at all times will not be able to commit evil and recite the Nembutsu at the same time.

True faith and belief in one religion is surely to go hand in hand with a happier way of living.

Together with this happiness will grow a deep inward gratitude for matters hitherto considered indifferently.

1. Gratitude towards the fellow living beings

We are grateful that we are living with the help and grace of all other living beings. It is very shallow thinking to believe that we are living perfectly by our own power. To realize and be thankful that we are living with the help of everything around us is one of the fundamentals of happiness.

2. Gratitude for parental love

We are sincerely grateful for the fact that our parents brought us up to enjoy the Nembutsu.

From the Shinchikangyo is the verse—

Father's kindness extends higher than the

highest mountain

Mother's love reaches deeper than the deepest sea.

3. Gratitude for the country

We are grateful to the country that enables us to enjoy its protection and lets us worship freely. We also extend our loyalty to this country.

4. Gratitude for the Three Treasures

1) The Lord Buddha,

2) His Teachings,

3) Brotherhood

These are called the Four Gratitudes in Buddhism.

The child who was happy to be by his mother's side grows to be a man who finds himself alone, full of doubts and questions. He finds that the true path of living is understood when one discovers that he is alone. He is at last able to open the eyes of wisdom to the word of beyond and not limit his views to things of this world alone. The search for the truth awakens in him a deep, religious feeling. Through religion he finds the answers which he seeks and lives a life of peace and quiet repose.

History of Jodo Shinshu

I. Introduction

'History of Jodo Shinshu' requires certain clarification of its emphasis upon two common meanings to be suited for our purpose.

The first meaning of the subject indicates an emphasis on doctorinal development of Jodo Shinshu which implies the canonical development of Nembutsu teaching in throughout the course of transmission of Buddha-Dharma from India to China and Japan. This phase of the history has been elucidated by Shinran to make the Seven Masters as the succeeding discoverers and exponents of Jodo Shinshu teaching.

The second is the history of Jodo Shinshu Sangha as the record of a development of the people who moved in response to circumstantial changes in the society as the ground of working of Nembutsu teaching.

This phase of the history requires understanding of historical background of Shinran's life and his successors throughout vicissitudes of Shinshu Sangha in the history of Japan.

Both phases of the history, however, are interdependently woven as the result of interactions by the impetus of Nembutsu as the necessary consequences of awakening of faith in Nembutsu. These two emphases, therefore, are interwoven to show the circumstantial reflections of human life in the light of Buddha-Dharma.

History of Jodo Shinshu shows the way of recognizing a development of human life in Nembutsu teaching.

II. Forerunners of Jodo Teaching

When Buddhism came to Japan via Korea (552 A.D.) it was already intricately woven with threads of cultures in India, China and Korea.

The ruling clans of Japan devoured this foreign religion and its accompanying cultures from the lands of great civilization to adopt new principles and concepts of new nation.

The culmination of Buddhist way of life and its application to government after the introduction of Buddhism to Japan became apparent when Prince Regent Shotoku (574-623) wrote the Seventeen Article Constitution founded upon the ideal of Three Treasures as the basic philosophy of making new nation.

This application of Buddhist teaching in socio-political scenes of the country indicates a unique way of acceptance of the teaching of Buddha-Dharma expressed in Sutras and commentaries upon which six schools of Buddhist studies were founded.

Prince Shotoku devoted himself to study three particular Sutras and made their commentaries.

During the scholastic pursuit of Buddhism in Asuka and Nara periods (600-784) Jodo teaching of Buddhism was introduced by Eon who studied in China.

He delivered a lecture on Great Sutra by the imperial order for a traditional celebration of Buddhism in the imperial court (640 and 652).

In Nara period a priest of Sanron School made a commentary on 'Treatise of Jodo' by Vasubandhu (729).

In Heian period (794-1185) Tendai School of Mt. Hiei initiated by Saicho (Denyo Daishi) implemented a Nembutsu chanting practice as a part of Four Samadhi Practices.

One of Saicho's students, Ennin, went to China where he learned to practice Nembutsu Samadhi at Mt. Wu-t'ai. He built a hall for constant practice of Nembutsu after he returned to Hiei. Genshin at Eshin-in monastery in Mt. Hiei compiled a book of Jodo teaching titled 'Ojo-yoshu' or 'Collection of Essential Teachings of Birth in Jodo.'

Kuya popularized chanting Nembutsu among the masses in Kyoto and Ryonin started Yuzu Nembutsu at Ohara, near suburb of Kyoto.

Towards the end of Heian period there appeared several priests in Shingon, Ritsu, Hosso and Sanran Schools who put emphasis on Nembutsu teaching.

These forerunners of Jodo teaching, however, did not regard Nembutsu as an independent school of Buddhism.

III. Independence of Jodo Teaching

Then came Honen in Kamakura period (1185-1333) who initiated Jodo School as an independent school of Buddhism to make Nembutsu for the masses.

His appearance in the history of Buddhism in Japan evolved a new phase of Buddhism to respond to the need of the people who were thrown into miseries and sufferings caused by civil wars. Honen proclaimed the independence of Jodo Shu in 1175 when he perused Zendo's 'Commentaires on Meditation Sutra.'

He gained wide popularity among every class of people from imperial court to bushi, merchants and farmers.

His teaching of Nembutsu permeated among the masses. His popularity, however, created an antagonistic atmosphere in Mt. Hiei which looked down upon Nembutsu as a mere expedience to Enlightenment.

Ban of Nembutsu sent Honen and his disciples to many remote provinces (1207).

Among them was Shinran who also studied and practiced Tendai teachings at the mountain.

He became a disciple of Honen at the age of 29 after twenty years of devotional life in the mountain. Honen highly regarded him as an eminent disciple to whom he granted to copy his book of Nembutsu. Both Honen and Shinran reached every class of people in remote provinces of eastern and western part of Japan.

Shinran underwent three basic historical facts in his life which show his position as well as his reactions to the historical circumstances. When he was thirty-five (1207) the ban of Nembutsu was incited by Kofukuji temple in Nara to stop the spreading popularity of Honen. Both Honen and Shinran were exiled by imperial orders.

The second fact is that Shinran wrote Kyo-gyo-shin-sho when he was 52. Shinran experienced the persecution by the monks of Mt. Hiei who conspired with the imperial court to ban Nembutsu. He displayed his resentment by criticizing their actions and admonished them to "Consider your position and understand your true nature." The third historical fact which shows Shinran's position in relation to the oppressor of Nembutsu is a letter to a group of Nembutus followers who were being persecuted for their strong faith and rapid growth of Nembutsu Sangha. Shinran was in his eighties. His letter encouraged his followers in Kanto not to allow the oppression to conquer their spirit of Nembutsu. He pointed out that it was common for the ruling authorities to be tyrannical. He strongly indicated not so easily compromise with the rulers and surrender them.

These explicite historical facts in his life show his position with the oppressed people. He gave the ultimate ground of Nembutsu life for them to be courageous enough to stand against the rulers and live together as fellow travelers of the way.

IV. Making and Growing of Shinshu Sangha

Shinran did not proclaim to establish a new school of Buddhism. His followers, however, gradually organized as Dogyos of Nembutsu in Hitachi, Shimotsuke, Shimofusa, Kanto, Echigo, Totomi, Kashima, Takada where Shinran traveled and dwelt temporarily during and after this exile.

Dogyos were also called Montos and they used to meet at Nyoraido (Hall of Tathagata) or Taishi-do (Hall of Taishi) or Dojo (Hall of Practice) with Honzon of Myogo (Name and Title of Amidabutsu). In Shinran's time they used to assemble at the halls to commemorate monthly memorial day of Honen on the 28th day. Shinran called them "Nembutsu-shu" or "Nembutsu Sangha."

After Shinran's passing (1262) Montos in various provinces came to Kycto to pay homage to Shinran's grave. In 1272 Kakushin-ni, daughter of Shinran, and Montos moved Shinran's remains to the northern part of Yoshimizu in Kyoto and built a mausoleum with a stone stupa and Shinran's image. This is called "Ohtani Byodo" (Ohtani mausoleum) or Ohtani Eido (Hall of Shinran's Image in Ohtani) to be recognized as the center of Honganji. The site of Ohtani, however, moved to the present location at Higashiyama Gojo when Tokugawa expanded Chion-in temple in 1603.

Kakunyo, a great-grandchild of Shinran, succeeded the caretaking role of Ohtani called Rusu-shiki and began to organize Shinshu Sangha.

Kakunyo emphasized the fact that Nembutsu had been succeeded by him through Honen, Shinran, Nyoshin (grandson of Shinran). He called Ohtani Honganji for the first time. In his writing 'Honganji Shonin' was often mentioned to identify his position with Shinran to make the Honganji known as the central Sangha of Shinshu.

After Kakunyo's passing (1352) four Shushu (Head of the School) succeeded the role of caretaker of Ohtani Mauseleum in about one hundred years.

Then came Rennyo, the 8th Shushu, who made the foundation of future growth of Honganji.

Rennyo (1415-1499) gradually strengthened Honganji by visiting Montos in remote provinces where Shinran and his successors left footsteps of Nembutsu. His unique method of propagation was writing 'Gobunsho' (Epistles) to be circulated among Montos. Despite of the time of civil wars Honganji prospered with the great leadership of Rennyo who was regarded as the Mid-founder of Honganji.

In the midst of Onin Civil War (1467-1477) Rennyo built Yamashina Hoganji in the vicinity of Kyoto when the city was reduced to ashes due to the strife. His aspiration was to rededicate the Hall of Shinran in his time. He fulfilled his wishes and closed the great life of 85 years.

Yamashina Honganji, however, was burnt down during the period of civil wars (Sengoku Jidai) which lasted from 1490 to 1573 after Onin War. Then Honganji moved to Ishiyama (Osaka) where Rennyo built a hall of Sangha in 1496.

V. Ishima Honganji

Shonyo, the 10th Shushu, settled down in Osaka and made it as the center of Shinshu. His effort to maintain an amicable relationship between warlords made Honganji a stable social force in the time of turmoils caused by civil wars. This period is called 'Ishiyama Honganji era' (1533-1580).

When Kennyo, the 11th Shushu, succeeded Honganji, Nobunaga Oda, a leading warlord from Owari (Nagoya) was coming to power. Nobunaga suppressed other leading powers in central and northern part of Japan and his scheme aimed at the western part of the nation. During the expansion of his power, Honganji was directly involved in the conflicts between anti-Nobunaga forces in many areas. Nobunaga gradually subdued them and came to Ishiyama. The location of Ishiyama was strategically ideal for Nobunaga to make it as a stronghold for thrusting his power out against the western part of Japan which was ruled by the Mori clan.

Nobunaga demanded Honganji to retreat from Ishiyama. Kennyo did not give up Ishiyama and proclaimed to fight against Nobunaga in 1570. This is the beginning of Ishiyama Battle against Nobunaga which lasted for 10 years. Kennyo wrote to Montos in Ohmi (Shiga):

"This is the most crucial time for us to sustain the stream of the founder's (teaching of Nembutu). I beg you to be faithful and loyal to the founder at the risk of your life.

Mori clan aided Honganji from the west. Honganji fought well but weakened by Nobunaga's tactics. Towards the end of 1579, the imperial court persuaded Honganji to make peace with Nobunaga. Next year they agreed upon the conditions of peace settlement. Honganji decided too retreat from Ishiyama. Kennyo moved to Saginomori in Kishu province from Ishiyama in 1580.

When Kennyo retreated from Ishiyama in accordance with the agreement between Nobunaga, Kyonyo, his first son, was discontented with his father. He insisted upon staying at Ishiyama against Nobunaga. His intention, however, was denied by his father who left Ishiyama immediately. Despite of his father's decision, Kyonyo staved at Ishiyama for about a month.

Nobunaga then reassured of keeping the agreement between Honganji which was jeopardized by Kyonyo's objection against his father. Kyonyo reluctantly left Ishiyama.

Montos in Saiga played a vital role during the battle of Ishiyama to aid Kennyo. Kennyo first moved to Saginomori from Ishiyama, but he had to move to Kaizuka in Izumi due to restless circumstance in Saginomori in 1583.

After Nobunaga's sudden death by assassination (1582) his successor Hideyoshi Toyotomi became power. He gave a piece of land at Tenma in Osaka to Honganji. Kennyo again moved to Osaka in 1585.

In the same year the Hall of Amida was dedicated and Hall of Shinran was completed next year. Honganji was going to settle down in Osaka. Then Hideyoshi donated another piece of land in Kyoto to Honganji (1591). Honganji returned to Kyoto where the history of Shinshu had begun.

VI. Division of Higashi and Nishi

Kennyo passed away in 1592 and his 4th son, Junnyo, succeeded Honganji. Kyonyo, however, told Hideyoshi that he succeeded Honganji as the 12th Shushu. Hideyoshi who was in Kyushu at that time was not aware of Kennyo's letter of succession possessed by Junyo. Learning of the letter of succession, Hideyoshi told Kyonyo to withdraw his proclamation of Shushu. Kyonyo reluctantly consented to withdraw and retired.

After Hideyoshi's passing (1598) Ieyasu Tokugawa came to power. During the time of decisive war between Toyotomi and Tokugawa, Kyonyo approached Ieyasu who became sympathetic to Kyonyo's position in Honganji. He gave him a piece of land in Kyoto. Kyonyo, then, made himself known as the 12th successor of Honganji. He built Hall of Shinran in 1603.

This is the origin of Ohtani Honganji which divided Shinshu Sangha of Honganji into two.

Since then two Honganjis have been popularly known as Higashi (East) and Nishi (West) Honganji.

Selected Buddhist Teachings

We thank the Lord Buddha for showing us the Way of Freedom. We will endeavor to walk in his Noble Path every day of our lives.

I am a link in Amida Buddha's Golden Chain of love that stretches around the world. I must keep my link bright and strong.

I will try to be kind and gentle to every living thing, and protect all who are weaker than myself.

I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts, to say pure and beautiful words, and to do pure and beautiful deeds, knowing that on what I do now depends my happiness and misery.

May every link in Amida Buddha's Golden Chain of love become bright and strong, and may we all attain perfect peace.

1. Gratitude towards fellow living beings

We are grateful that we are living with the help and grace of all other living beings. It is very shallow thinking to believe that we are living perfectly by our own power.

To realize and be thankful that we are living with the help of everything around us is one of the fundamentals of happiness.

2. Gratitude for parental love

We are sincerely grateful for the fact that our parents brought us up to enjoy the Nembutsu.

3. Gratitude for country

We are grateful to the country that enables us to enjoy its protection and let us worship freely. We also extend our loyalty to this country.

4. Gratitude for the Three Treasures

The Lord Buddha, His Teachings, and Brotherhood.

I take refuge in Buddha

I take refuge in Dharma

I take refuge in Sangha

I promise not to hurt anything, nor take anything that does not belong to me; to keep my thoughts and acts pure and clean, nor to tell what is false, nor to drink things harmful to me.

The Four Noble Truth are the Truth of Suffering, the Truth of the cause of Suffering, the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, and the Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering.

The Buddha declared that this world is full of suffering, that actual existence including birth, sickness, old age, and death is suffering and sorrow.

The cause of human suffering lies in ignorance and Karma. Ignorance and its resulting Karma have often times been called desire or craving.

The extinguishing of all human ignorance and Karma results in a state known as Nirvana.

The Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path.

1. Right Views (Ideas)

To keep ourselves free from prejudice, superstition, and delusion, and to see a right the true nature of life.

2. Right Thoughts (Resolutions)

To turn away from the evils of this world and to direct our minds towards righteousness.

3. Right Speech

To refrain from the pointless and harmful talk and to speak kindly and courteously to all.

4. Right Conduct (Action) (Behavior)

To see that our deeds are peaceable, benevolent, compassionate, and pure; to live the Teaching daily.

5. Right Livelihood (Vocation)

To earn our living in such a way as to entail no evil consequences.

6. Right Effort

To direct our efforts incessantly to the overcoming of ignorance and craving desires.

7. Right Mindfulness (Reflection)

To cherish good and pure thoughts, for all that we say and do arise from our thoughts.

8. Right Meditation (Concentration)

To concentrate our will on the Buddha, His Life, and His Teaching.

- 1. The Practice of Giving (Charity) gets rid of selfishness.
- 2. The Practice of Good Behavior (Morality) keeps one thoughtful of the rights and comforts of others.
- 3. The Practice of Patience (Endurance) helps one to control a fearful or angry mind.
- 4. The Practice of Right Effort (Endeavor) helps one to be diligent and faithful.
- 5. The Practice of Meditation helps one to control a wandering and futile mind.
- 6. The Practice of Wisdom changes a dark and confused mind into a clean and penetrating insight.

We are all Buddha's little children.

We will all follow the Buddha's Teachings.

We will all be friendly to everyone.

What Is The Nembutsu?

The Nembutsu is Namu Amida Butsu, and it means "I go to Amida Buddha for guidance." It means we go to the Other Power for guidance, knowing that our self power cannot guide us to the Pure Land.

Namu Amida Butsu is our way of expressing gratitude to Amida for all His blessings. One of Amida's 48 Vows is that His Name shall be heard throughout the universe. That is His way of saying we will all receive faith and go to the Pure Land. When Namu Amida Butsu is heard everywhere, He will be in the heart of every being.

To recite the Nembutsu is to glorify the Wisdom, Compassion and Power of Amida. His name (Namu Amida Butsu) is His Vow, so if with faith we recite the Nembutsu, we enter the Pure Land according to the Vow.

The Nembutsu can be called "practice" because by practicing the Nembutsu with faith, the Great Assurance of rebirth into the Pure Land comes to us. This Great Assurance is the result of practice, but we must remember the practice of faith comes from Amida. Faith is in us and Namu Amida Butsu comes from our lips, but yet it is entirely the working of the Other Power. Simple repetition of the Nembutsu without faith cannot be called "practice", because there is no real merit in the Nembutsu without faith.

The essentials of the Nembutsu are these:

- 1. It means we trust the Other Power completely, giving up all trust in self power.
- 2. It expresses our gratitude for the saving Power of Amida.
- 3. To be real "practice" it must be accompanied with faith.

Talk with the students about the three great virtues of Amida: Great Wisdom, Great Compassion, Great Power.

Amida's Great Wisdom

Amida's Great Wisdom is pure and undefiled, which means it is unlimited and the essence of truth. Amida's Great Wisdom is so perfect and unlimited it will never fail us. Ordinary wise men in this world have limited wisdom and they make mistakes, often now knowing what is best for themselves and for others. Amida's Great Wisdom is infinitely more powerful and good, so that Amida always knows the best way to make us happy, good and wise. When we have faith in Him our lives in this world can become more meaningful and happy. Amida's Great Wisdom showed Him the best possible way to save all men from ignorance and suffering. So He cannot only help us in this life by giving us faith but also He gives us happy life forever in the Pure Land. It is easy to see why we should be very thankful to Amida's Great Wisdom.

Amida's Great Compassion

Amida loves all living beings with a love so deep and so strong that it is beyond our understanding. This love is called Great Compassion because it has no limit and never fails. Amida's only purpose is to save all beings and He has promised to work for all of us until we have attained Buddhahood. Isn't this a really Great Compassion?

Now you might think that Amida would, love us most when we are good, but not so much when we are bad. However, Amida loves us with Great Compassion and that means His love is always complete and strong no matter what we do. If we are bad, Amida is very sorry for us because He knows we are ignorant and weak. But He loves us just the same because He knows we need help even more when we are bad. When we are good, Amida is very happy for us because we are close to Him. When we are bad, Amida suffers for us and because of His Great Compassion He tries to bring us closer to Him. It is like a mother who protects her baby with her own life when there is danger. That is the kind of love which is more pure in Amida so we call it Great Compassion.

Amida's Great Power

We need Amida's Great Power because we are not strong enough to go to the Pure Land through our own strength. No matter how hard we may try we just cannot make enough good karma to take us to Amida's Pure Land. The more we study the teachings of Buddha, the clearer and firmer will be our trust in Amida, knowing that only He can save us. We also know that we can trust completely and wholeheartedly in Amida because His Great Power will never stop working until all beings are in the Pure Land.

Amida's Call

Procedure:

- Read Amida Calls Through Name
- Play record You've Got a Friend Discuss lyrics

AMIDA CALLS THROUGH NAME

The great compassion of Amida Buddha moves us to say, "Namu Amida Butsu." Namu Amida Butsu is the Buddha calling us.

An incident that occurred during the Second World Buddhist Conference held in Japan in 1952 describes very well the truth of the above statement. The incident was told by Professor Kaneko, a renowned teacher of Shin, in a letter to Rev. G. Kimura.

> There is in Kyushu, the southern most island of Japan, a mountain that is famous for its active volcano.

> When the delegate from India saw the wondrous scenery created by the volcano, he was struck by its grand sight; he gazed in awe at a loss of words. Completely over-whelmed, he extended his arms to the sky and cried into the blue expanse, "Amita."

From this, we can understand that the people of India cry "Amita" when they confront something majestic. It is an exclamation. "Amita" is used when words can no longer express one's feelings.

In the same way when we place pure faith in Buddha and are struck by the great compassion of Buddha, the Name of Buddha comes out spontaneously and naturally. In an exclamation of awe we say, "Namu Amida Butsu."

"Where are the words to express my awe There is an old poem: None is there but to say, 'Ah!"

This exclamation of "Ah!" can perhaps be said to be "Namu Amida Butsu."

As the majestic grandeur of the volcano erupting from the mountain made the visitor exclaim "Amita!" the great compassion of Amida Buddha makes us say "Namu Amida Butsu." Thus, we can say the "Namu Amida Butsu" is the Buddha calling us.

YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND by Carol King

When you're down and troubled and you need some love and care

And nothin, nothin is going right,

Close your eyes and think of me and soon I will be there to brighten up even

your darkest night.

You just call out my name and you know wherever I am I'll come runnin to see

Winter, spring, summer or fall, all you have to do is call and I'll be there,

Yes, I will, you've got a friend.

If the sky above you grows dark and full of clouds and that ol' North wind

begins to blow,

Keep your head together and call my name out loud; soon you'll hear me knocking at your door.

You just call out my name and you know wherever I am I'll come runnin'

to see you again.

Winter, spring, summer or fall all you have to do is call and I'll be there,

Yes I will.

Now ain't it good to know that you've got a friend when people can be so cold? They'll hurt you, yes and desert you and take your soul if you let them

Oh, but don't let them.

You just call out my name and you know wherever I am I'll come runnin to

Winter, spring, summer or fall all you have to do is call and I'll be there,

yes, I will. You've got a friend.

Amida Exists in the Name

A famous episode about a true follower of Shinshu, by the name of Genshichi Mita, explains how Amida and the Nembutsu are one.

Once a non-Buddhist friend heard a sermon given on Amida's Compassion. After the sermon he asked, "You say that you are going to be saved by Amida, but where is Amida who is going to save you?"

Just at that moment a dog barked outside, and Genshichi answered: "Do you hear the barking? Though we can't see the dog, we know that there is a dog. Where there's barking, there's a dog. The barking of the dog and the physical presence of the dog are one." And he explained the nature of the Name. "When you hear the Name, Namu Amida Butsu, there is Buddha. In the recitation of the Name, there is Amida and this is Amida who is going to save me." After this explanation, the inquirer remained silent and asked no further questions.

If we understand that Buddha is found in the recitation of the Nembutsu, it becomes unnecessary for us to ask the whereabouts of the Buddha.

Instead, we seek understanding of the Buddha's heart (Original Vow) and the Name which is the highest expression of Buddha's compassionate heart.

The Creed

We rely upon Tathagata Amitabha with our whole heart for the Enlightenment in the life to come, abstaining from all sundry practices and teachings, and giving up the trust in our powerless self.

We believe that the assurance of our Rebirth through his Salvation comes at the very moment we put our Faith in him; and we call the Name, Namu Amida Butsu, in happiness and thankfulness for his Mercy.

We also acknowledge gratefully the benign benevolence of our Founder and the succeeding Masters who have led us to believe in this profound teaching; and we do now endeavor to follow, throughout our lives, the Way laid down for us.

Nembutsu – An act of Purity

My voice which calls Amida's Name is mine—but in truth, it is Amida calling me.

It is not we, ourselves, who recite the Nembutsu, but Amida himself who, giving us his own Name, obliges us to repeat it.

This is why we say that whereas all our acts (other than Nembutsu) are, more or less, tainted with impurity, the reciting of Namu Amida Butsu is truly an act exempted from all impurity. It is not we that utter his Name, but it is Amida who speaks to himself. It is his own utterance breathed in his breath.

Therefore, lay it well to heart that uttering the Buddha's Name, or paying him homage or thinking of him, is not an act originating in ourselves, but it is doing the very act of Amida Buddha himself.

Faith must be Cultivated

Although Amida is constantly trying to awaken our faith, from our standpoint, faith does not come all of a sudden or at any certain time. Indeed, there is no set pattern. Anything that has to do with change in our personality does not come suddenly—compassion, faith, love—these are all a growing process. The realization of Amida's infinite wisdom and compassion is a continuing process that develops with growth and experience.

Faith in Amida has to be cultivated.

To become conscious of growing in Amida's Wisdom and Compassion, self-reflection is recommended. We must understand our selves and understand the nature of Amida's Great Wisdom.

Unlike the lower forms of animal that live instinctively from day to day, we are human beings capable of reflection. Let us take advantage of this ability to reflect and spend some time looking within.

By looking within, we find out more about ourselves and become aware of the necessity of accepting faith in Amida's Compassion and Wisdom.

Faith is Most Important

After being awakened to faith in Amida, Shinran continued to find deeper meaning and truer interpretation of his faith.

For example, until Shinran's time, the calling of Namu Amida Butsu loudly and repeatedly used to be a religious practice which was supposed to bring some kind of merit to the practicer. Honen Shonin is said to have recited the Nembutsu tens of thousands of times a day. His disciple, Shinran, confessed, "Such a thing is an utter impossibility for me," to which Honen Shonin is said to have replied, "The number of times the Nembutsu is recited does not matter where there is true faith—"

It was upon these words of his master that Shinran based his declaration, "Mere repetition of the Nembutsu without faith is meaningless. No amount of reciting the-Buddha's Name would produce enlightenment. As promised in the Great Vow, faith is most essential." He went on to add that when a person had acquired faith in Amida, but this did not necessarily mean that a person pronouncing the name of Amida had faith.

How can Amida Enter our Hearts?

We must first receive Faith from Amida. Faith is received from Amida when we feel an inward need for him. Amida never enters the heart of those who remain smug and self-satisfied. Faith is always preceded by humility—a sense of unworthiness and help-lessness. Through humility, we realize our nature and our limitations.

As Shinran always said,

"Realization should come from within."

For example, when a child commits mischief, it does no good to tell him or yell at him that he is wrong; it only makes the child feel antagonistic. If the child is led to realize from within, and made to see that it was not right...that was Shinran's attitude of realization.

But, to ask man to cast away reltance on himself (self-power) is asking a great deal of man. This is not as easy as it sounds. Man's nature inclines him toward self-power. It is very difficult for man to be convinced of his inadequacy.

We cannot abandon reliance on "self-power" just by saying, "I shall abandon 'self-power- from today," and sit and wait for the awakening of faith.

Meaning of Life and Death

True joy in the Nembutsu is better appreciated when we understand the meaning of life and death. This is a curious thing, but nevertheless true.

We live from day to day without understanding the purpose of our life. We know that death must be faced sooner or later either in the loss of a loved one or by ourselves. A good question to ask is "What is the Buddhist interpretation of life and death?"

As Buddhists, we believe in the impermanence of all existence. At first glance, this thought may provoke a feeling of sadness. On the other hand, can we conceive of a world without change where things remain fixed? Such a world would be a dead world.

Because of change there is birth and creation and new events occur every day. There is growth and realization of dreams. By the same token, there is also death and destruction, precious memories fade away. There is old age and the end of dreams.

When we come to understand and accept impermanence as part of life, we begin to see things in their totality. A withering flower is no longer thought to be a faded blossom wasting away. A flower, thus faded, is a accumulating energy to reproduce itself again.

We may say that death is the end of things, but when we see it under the light of Amida's Compassion and Wisdom, we know that it is only the beginning of a life that never dies.

To live is to die – to die is to live.

Many are the Paths of Enlightment

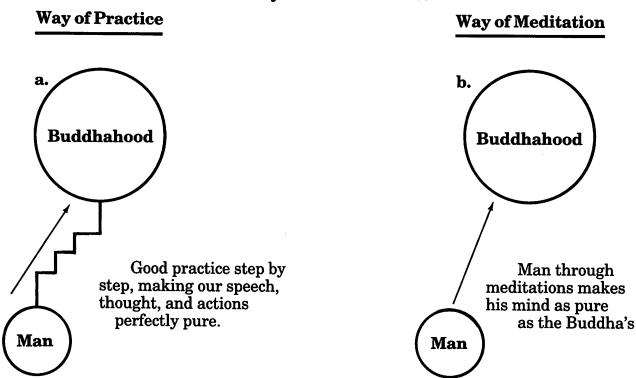
The goal that all Buddhists seek is salvation in Buddhahood, the perfection of personality.

In the seventh grade Dharma school lessons on the development of Jodo Shinshu, it was learned that there were many ways to attain Buddhahood. In Buddhism, there are, specifically, two paths — (1) Holy Path of the Saints and (2) Pure Land Path.

On further study, we find that the Holy Path of the Saints may be divided into two main divisions — (a) Way of Practice and (b) Way of Meditation.

In the diagram showing the two ways of the Holy Path of the Saints, note how the arrow points upward. Man using his own self-power is doing all the striving. Perfect purity in practice and meditation are required to attain Buddhahood. For most people the requirements are so difficult; it becomes an absolute impossibility to gain Enlightenment in this manner.

Holy Path of the Saints



Sudhana Reverently Seeks the Way

Once there was a boy named Sudhana who wished for enlightenment and who earnestly sought the way. He went to many different teachers. From a fisherman he learned the lore of the sea and it suggested the tempests and waves on the great ocean of life and death. From a doctor he learned compassion toward sick people in their suffering. From the wealthy man he learned that saving pennies was the secret of his fortune and he thought how necessary it is to conserve every trifling gain on the path of enlightenment. From a meditating monk he learned that the pure and peaceful mind had a miraculous power to purify and tranquilize other minds. Once he met a woman of exceptional personality and was impressed by her benevolent spirit and from her he learned a lesson that charity was the fruit of wisdom. Once he met an aged wanderer who told him that to reach a certain place he had to scale a mountain of swords and pass through a valley of fire. From him he learned that he must be dauntless on his own journey to enlightenment. Thus Sudhana learned form his experiences that there was true teaching to be gained from everything one sees or hears.

But besides learning from people's words and teaching, Sudhana received instructions from many other sources. He learned patience from a poor, physically imperfect woman; he learned a lesson of simple happiness from watching children playing in the street; from some gentle and humble people, who never thought of wanting anything that anybody else wanted, he learned the secret of living at peace with all the world.

He learned a lesson of harmony from watching the blending of the elements of incense, and a lesson of thanksgiving from the offerings of flowers. One day in passing through a forest he rested under a noble tree and noticed nearby a tiny seedling growing out of a fallen and decayed tree and it taught him a lesson of impermanence. One day in making his way over the high mountains and taking advantage of the contour of the peaks and valleys to make his path as easy as possible, he thought to himself, "In this same manner I must take advantage of the varied experiences of life to find a path for the mind in its search for enlightenment." His mind often became arid and parched from the flaming wish of his heart for enlightenment, but the friendly sunlight by day and the twinkling stars by night constantly refreshed his spirit. Thus Sudhana profited by the experiences of his long journey.

Myokonin

Procedure: The myokonin is the lotus-like person of Shin Buddhism. They are the people who best exemplify the paramitas.

- 1. Explain the lotus as a symbol
- 2. Explain the concept of the myokonin
- 3. Read two or three stories of the myokonin and relate them to the paramitas

Note: The term myokonin is only used by Shin Buddhists and is an important term for the children to learn.

References: Genza-The Myokonin by Rev. Jim Yanagihara Mysticism, Christian & Buddhist by D. T. Suzuki Everyday Suchness by Rev. G. Kubose

Suggestion: Teachers may want to start their own collections of myokonin stories.

Introduction:

"Know that he who directs his thoughts towards the Buddha, is of all men the White Lotus." Amitaus Dhyana Sutra

The Lotus flower is the symbol for Higan.

Out of the patch of mud of ignorance emerges the lotus pure and beautiful. Sakyamuni Buddha like the Lotus, lived as human in this evil world but emerged pure and free of ignorance.

The Lotus is a symbol of spontaneous generation, as the fruit matures at the moment of the blooming of the flower. Just as the "Truth" is preached by the Buddha produces immediately the fruit of enlightenment, of strength, both spiritual and material.

When we listen to the teachings of the Buddha, the Wisdom and Compassion of the Eternal Buddha falls into our hearts like a seed of lotus into the muddy water, and blossoms forth in Faith in the Name of Amida Buddha.

The pure white colored Lotus is ranked the best because it is rare, next the blue Lotus, followed by red and then yellow.

The Lotus design is used at the base of Amida Buddha's image to symbolize his purity and virtue.

Higan means the "other shore", and the "other shore" is Enlightenment, Nirvana or Pureland.

The Lotus is a symbol of spontaneous generation, a divine birth as it reproduces from its own matrix.

While rooted in mire, the Lotus grows forth clean and clear to open purely towards the heavens. Buddhism as Truth is comparable to the Lotus as having inherent in it the power to live above ignorance and a chaotic world.

When we truly realize Amida's Infinite Compassion, there arises within our hearts a natural expression of gratitude for salvation is assured. The Six Paramitas and other practices are transferred to us to become our spiritual treasure. Thus we receive the true and instant cause for our enlightenment in the Pureland through the Grace of Amida. The awakening of faith is like the Lotus, for it blooms and matures immediately.

Shinnyo in the form of Man works on our muddy basin of our consciousness bearing the fruit of faith within us. This faith in turn grows and blossoms into a flower in this life. The flower varies in size, splendor and color according to each individual's karmic life. There are as many kinds of humans as there are Lotus.

The Lotus as a material element has the feminine principle (Kwannon), and is a symbol of mercy and compassion.

The Lotus in a vase represents union of the spiritual and the material.

The red Lotus has rounded petals, fully opened and the center is exposed.

The blue Lotus has all petals erect, or several rows of outer petals bent down and the center hidden.

The Lotus buds are the common form of divinities.

Eight Lotus petals fully opened represents the Eightfold Noble Path, the Teaching of the Buddha.

In Shingon, the Hotoke has 8 petals, Buddhisattva has 6 petals, and the Fudomiyo (protectors of Buddha's teachings) has 4, all others 40 to 50 petals.

At the Nishi Hongwanji Temple in Japan, the Amida Buddha's statue has a Lotus at the base which has blue petals with gold gilt edges.

Where Shinran Shonin's ashes are kept, there is a white Lotus on the base pedestal of the statue of the Amida Buddha. (Otani-Honbyo)

The family shrine usually has a blue lotus on the picture of Amida Buddha and the statue is in gold.

Dr. Ichiro Ohga in Japan, 1963, sprouted a new shoot on Lotus seeds that were over 1,200 years old. Lotus seeds have a hard outer covering, and are a hardy little grain that refuses to die. It can be buried in the ground for thousands of years and retains its spark of life, bursting into germination when opportunity arises, thus shows astounding longevity.

One who has attained faith is called "Biyakulenge" in Japanese.

The white colored Lotus is called "fundarike".

The blue is called "uharake", the red is "Hadonmake", and the yellow "Kumozuke".

Myokonin - Lotus-like person.

The Good and Pure People

The special use of the word "myokonin" to denote the pietists of the Shin sect does not go back beyond the Tokugawa era, and even today this special usage is not understood beyond the limits of those knowing Shin. Shinran Shonin refers to the good and pure people who get the awakening of Faith and peace of mind by the Sanskrit term pundarikah — the "lotus-like person." The lotus grows rooted in the mud and slime of brackish pools, but, pushing its stalk up into the pure air, blossoms forth as a thing of beauty. So too, the lotus-like person with peace of mind stands out as a unique human being. One can see it in his actions and hear it on his lips declares Rennyo, the eight generation descendent of Shinran.

This expression of the myokonin's experience arises as an intense feeling of gratitude which comes welling out of his innermost being. To the Buddha first of all he is grateful for having taught the truths that lead to release, but this gratitude extends to each and every thing in the universe for having aided him to his attainment of streamentry—the awakening of Faith. The Realization that gratitude and egolessness are two expressions of the same inner awakening is Shinran's unique contribution to Buddhist thought.

Its practical application in everyday life far outweighs its philosophical importance; for the lotus-like person, his whole life becomes a great offering. As his gratitude comes bubbling into his consciousness, he is free of self-interest; and, in order to return his thanks to all sentient beings, he practices the paramites.

Shonosuke, who lived several hundred years ago, was one of these good and pure people. He lived in what is now Tokyo; and when he heard that the great Hongwanji temple in Kyoto had burned down, he immediately took his hoe in hand and ran the whole 300 miles to help with the clean up and reconstruction. In those days nails were expensive, and the volunteer crews of Shin believers were carefully picking up each nail they came across in the rubble. Shonosuke, however, picked up only the smallest nails. When he was asked about this, he explained that the little nails were easily overlooked, but he did not want to deprive others of the opportunity to feel they had made their contributions too, so he left the big nails for other persons to gather.

Tales of the Pure and Good People

Hojun

It was the custom of Hojun to visit the Hongwanji each year at the Feast of Thanksgiving and Gratitude. One year the Patriarch Junnyo sent a messenger to tell the aging Hojun that Kyoto was unusually cold that year and it would be better for the old man to come later in the spring. Hojun chanced to meet the messenger in the suburbs of Kyoto, but when he heard the Patriarch's suggestion, Hojun returned to Kyushu to come later in the spring.

Hojun was once on his way to Kyoto with money his congregation had given in offering to the Hongwanji. On the boat he fell in with a thief who pretended to be very friendly. Hojun felt suspicious and tried to be watchful, but when he fell asleep the thief tried to seize the money which was tied about Hojun's neck. As Hojun and the thief struggled for possession of the money, the bag fell into the sea.

Hojun went immediately to the boat captain and explained that through carelessness he had lost his money, and that his "companion" was without funds. He then asked the captain to take the thief to his starting point, and promised that he would pay the captain later. Thus the thief was able to get home on Hojun's credit.

A few days later the money-bag was found inside a fish and, by coincidence, was presented as an offering to the Hongwanji by the finder.

Shotsuke

Shotsuke, of the province of Chikuzen, was a devout Shin believer noted for his honesty and his respect for his parents.

Once, in the dark of night, he chanced to stumble over his father's cane. Shotsuke's eyes filled with tears and he apologized to his father that he had been so careless. Was the cane, he explained, not the same as his father's leg, for without it the elderly man could not walk.

Someone decided to test Shotsuke's honesty, and put money on the roadway where he would find it. When Shotsuke found the money he would not touch it; but instead, he sat down next to it to protect it until the loser, missing it, should return alone the road in search of the money.

Chobei

In a predominantly Zen village in the province of Ki lived Chobei, a prosperous barge-freighter. In spite of his wealth, he worked alongside his employees, always ready to do the dirtiest or the most tiring task himself.

Chobei made it a daily practice to boil the rice which was offered before the Buddha on his family altar, and he would wash each piece of charcoal three times before using it to fire the rice kettle.

When travellers, after stopping at his home, set out on their journey, Chobei made it his practice to go some distance with them if they were not deep believers of the Buddha's teachings. When asked about this custom, Chobei explained, "Since they are not deep believers, I shall not meet them again in the Pure Realm, so I must take this opportunity to enjoy their companionship!"

Whenever a traveller left some money as a gift for Chobei's hospitality, he always treated it as a lost article, setting it aside until the original owner could be found.

It was the custom in Chobei's home that those who did not attend the morning devotions before the family altar would receive no breakfast. Consequently, even the family cat and dog attended the devotions with the family.

Saichiro

Long since, in the province of Sanuki, lived Saichiro who was an extremely devout believer in the teachings of Shinran of the Hongwanji. Each morning he would bow respectfully in the direction of Shinran's mausoleum on the Eastern Mountain in Kyoto and put a bit of money in a tiny collection box which he had made himself. At regular intervals he would then send these offerings to the Hongwanji.

Once one of Saichiro's neighbors happened to wish to sell his family altar to make room for a new one. By chance another friend of Saichiro had told him he wished to buy an altar. Saichiro and his friend went to see the neighbor's altar.

Shortly after their visit, the neighbor came to Saichiro's house to say that some gold, which had been in a drawer in the altar, was missing. Saichiro announced that he had borrowed the gold and forgot to mention it. He said he would return it soon.

The neighbor, returning home, talked about Saichiro's disgraceful action. The neighbor's son, who had in the meantime returned home told his surprised father that he had taken the money to pay a family debt!

The neighbor's whole family, much embarrassed, hurried to Saichiro's home to apologize. Saichiro told them to think no more of the matter, and he declared that, at some time or other, he had perhaps held some doubt about someone in their family, and therefore he should probably be apologizing to them instead.

Zentaro

A stranger once entered the village where Zentaro lived and asked the first person he met, "Where does Zentaro live?"

"I am Zentaro."

"Where is your house?"

"I have no house."

"Do you rent one?"

"The house I live in belongs to the Buddha."

Another time some people who were on a pilgrimage to the eighty-eight famous temples on the island of Shikoku asked permission to spend the night in his home. Zentaro invited them in, and the pilgrims told him they were thankful to him and the Buddha for the joy of their pilgrimage. Zentaro answered that there was a still greater joy. The curious pilgrims asked what he meant, and Zentaro told them that there was a greater joy in the awakening of faith. The pilgrims were interested in his talk, so he went onto teach them of Amida Buddha, and of what had been handed down through Shinran of the Hongwanji. As Zentaro spoke of his own joy at having met with Shin teachings, his guests came to believe in Shinran's message themselves. They abandoned their intention to go on their pilgrimage and returned home happy in their new-found faith.

Zentaro once had some persimmons hanging in his garden to dry. At night a thief entered the garden and stole the persimmons. Just as the thief was leaving, Zentaro called out, "You're quite welcome! Good night!"

Another time a thief had entered Zentaro's home and was about to leave with the many things he had stolen, when Zentaro, sitting unnoticed behind a screen, called out, "I'm so terribly sorry to put you to so much trouble to get back the things I borrowed from you in a previous life."

Zentaro used to sell persimmons at the temple gate when there was to be a sermon. He put the money he received in a box with three compartments. One-third of the money he sent to the Hongwanji in Kyoto, one-third he gave to the temple, and one-third he kept for his expenses.

Kihei

Kihei had extremely deep faith in the Main Vow, and constantly repeated the Buddha's Name wherever he was. Frequently in the dead of night he would shake his wife, or whoever else might be sleeping near him. If they woke up saying "what do you want?" Kihei, pointing to their heads, would sadly say, "There's nobody home upstairs!" But if they awoke repeating Namo Amida Buddha, Namo Amida Buddha, Kihei would joyfully go back to sleep saying, "Ah! The thought of the Buddha is at home in you. Namo Amida Buddha."

Nembutsu

Giving complete trust and faith in Amida Buddha takes form in the Gassho. Accompanying the Gassho is the utterance of the Nembutsu. In relation to the Nembutsu, we are all aware of reciting it, whether it be before meetings, meals or at services. However, it has merely become a ritual for all to recite it three times. We must remember that in the "tariki" faith (Other Power), there is no limit as to the number of times that one must utter the Nembutsu. If this is so, it is sufficient for us to utter the Nembutsu only once? In discussing the problem of the recitation of the Nembutsu more thoroughly, it is the aim to have everyone grasp the true meaning and understanding in uttering the Nembutsu and to practice it. This objective is the primary emphasis in the "Shomyo" in the Goshogyo of Zendo Daishi. In my own Dharma School, Jr. YBA and other services, I have emphasized the uttering of the Nembutsu. If the recitation of the Nembutsu is properly taught, everyone will learn to utter it automatically and effortlessly. In the Dharma School program, during services, the chairman or minister should lead in the Gassho. After this, it should be instructed:

- Everyone to Gassho and sit in the best posture.
- 2. Everyone gently close eyes.
- To inhale as deeply as possible and utter the Nembutsu as long as the breath holds out. (During this time, the minister should also recite the Nembutsu.)

If this procedure is done twice, the Nembutsu will have been uttered 18 to 20 times. The speed by which to utter the Nembutsu is left to the discretion of the person. The practice I have described has worked well in Dharma School for the children to follow it willingly and earnestly. The remaining questions then are: (1) Why should the Nembutsu be uttered? (2) What is the result in uttering the Nembutsu? (3) Shouldn't the meaning of the Nembutsu and the reason for uttering it be understood before reciting it?

My youngest daughter, at 5 or 6 years of age, was spoiled and constantly cried for her mother. One day, I asked, "You call Mommy, Mommy, but do you appreciate her?" The child answered, "No!" Although the child did not realize why she called for her mother, she did so at all times of need. The reason the baby called her mother without realizing the significance of her act was because the cry is a reflection of the mother's feelings of love toward the child conveyed in the child.

The Nembutsu should be as spontaneous as the child's cry for her mother. The basic feeling of need and appreciation, although not fully realized, is the basis behind the meaning of the Nembutsu.

Nembutsu Give Life its Meaning

The other day I received some carrots from my friend. All of you have eaten carrots before, but have any of you eaten the carrot tops? Although the old leaves are not good, I like to eat the leaves of young, fresh carrots. Prepared like spinach mixed with "goma," (sesame seeds) they make a delicious dish. There is a delicate bitter taste, and it is very good.

But, when I prepared the carrot leaves to be eaten a few days ago, my daughters, Linda and Susan, would not touch them; they said it was bitter in taste.

In connection with this eating of carrot tops, there is a passage, in the Buddhist sutra which says: "That among the many virtues that the Buddha has, and human beings do not have, is the virtue of adding a good taste to food." The virtue of "adding a good taste to food" means that whatever the Buddha eats, whether it is sweet, hot, sour, or bitter, he is able to add a good taste to it and eat it with relish. That is to say, regardless of what the Buddha eats, he is able to add a good taste by the saliva in his mouth acting upon the food. If we had this power to transform any kind of food to a very tasty food, then, we would stop complaining and would be thankful for any kind of food we are able to eat. But, sad to say, we do not have such a power within ourselves, and so if we want to eat a delicious meal, we must add spices and taste to the food.

In thinking about life, I feel that it is similar to the taste of food. In life, we don't have just sweet, happy things all the time. Many times we must undergo bitter, unhappy experiences. In fact, in life, more than the sweet life of bliss and happiness we dream of, there is the life of suffering and misfortunes, the life where we must often wipe away tears, the life which forces us to grit our teeth and endure.

When we think of life as a mixture of sweet things, of bitter experiences and of sour, unhappy things, we realize that what is needed is a good cook of life to add a tasty flavor to the sweet, the bitter, and the sour experiences from which we cannot escape.

The one thing that adds taste in life is the Nembutsu. The Nembutsu adds the right flavor to everything in life, the joys and sorrows, the triumphs and failures, so that we can appreciate each one and be thankful for all of these.

Many people say that religion is of no use, that faith is a waste of time, that repeating the Name, Namu Amida Butsu, in thankfulness is unnecessary in life. Yes, that may be true if there is no need to prepare and cook and add taste to food, and if you can eat the bitter, and the sour, and the sweet foods just as they are. But, then, that is like eating food in the raw, like the barbarians and primitive tribes. It will not do for modern man. To make things edible, we must study and develop cooking so that the food we eat will have a tasty flavor. If we are going to eat at all, we don't want to eat foods that do not fit our taste. What we want to do is to prepare them to fit our taste. It is the same with life. We live this life only once. And if we are going to live this life, we want to add a certain taste to all things in life, happiness and sorrow, success and failures, so that we can swallow them without pain.

The Nembutsu of gratitude and thankfulness adds to the taste of everything in life so that we can take them without being hurt. It is the spice which makes all our moments of joy really beautiful, and our moments of sadness not a thing of sorrow alone. The person who is able to appreciate the meaning of Nembutsu, and apply it to life, just as a good cook is able to make any kind of food tasty, is the one who has attained the art of living in happiness.

Youth's Bill of Rights

- 1. Stand by us, not over us. Give us the feeling that we are not alone in the world, that we can always count on you when we are in trouble.
- 2. Make us feel that we are loved and wanted. We want to love you, not as a duty but because you love us.
- 3. Train us by being affectionately firm. You will really achieve more with us through patient teaching than by punishment or preaching. Say "NO" when you feel you have to, but explain your rules, don't merely impose them.
- 4. Bring us up so that we will not always need you. Teach us how to take on responsibility and become independent of you. We will learn this faster and better if you will let us question you, your ideas and standards.
- 5. Don't act shocked when we do things we shouldn't. It is going to take us time to learn how to grow into life properly.
- 6. Try to be as consistent as possible. If you are mixed up about what you want from us, why shouldn't we be mixed up too in what we give you?
- 7. Don't try to make us feel inferior. We doubt ourselves enough without your confirming it. Predicting failure for us won't help us succeed.
- 8. Say "nice work" when we do something really well. Don't hold back the praise when we deserve it. Praising us will spur us on.
- 9. Show respect for our wishes even if you disagree with them. Respect for you will flow naturally from your respect for us.
- 10. Give direct answers to direct questions. But don't give us more than we ask for or can understand. When you don't know, say so, but find someone for us who does know.
- 11. Show interest in what we are doing. Even though by your standards our activities may not be important or interesting, don't reduce them in our eyes by your indifference.
- 12. Treat us as if we are normal, even when our conduct seems peculiar to you. All children have problems. That doesn't mean we are all problem children.
- 13. Sometimes all of us run into serious difficulties. Should that happen, obtain for us professional counseling. It isn't always easy for boys and girls to understand themselves or know what they want. That's why there are specialists in personal adjustments and vocational selection.
- 14. Teach us by example. "What you are speaks louder than your words."
- 15. Treat each one of us as a person in his own right. Children are people, not carbon copies of grown-ups. Treat all children in your care fairly; that is, as of equal value to yours. That is how we will learn to respect the right of other people and to treat them fairly.
- 16. Don't keep us young too long. We want a chance to prove what we can do as soon as we are ready to give proof. Don't hold us back by love which over-protects and paralyzes.
- 17. We need fun and companionship. Help us share our interests and happy feelings with groups of friends. Give us time to be with them and make them welcome when they come to visit.

- 18. Make us feel that our home belongs to us. We are at least as important as the furniture. Don't protect "things" at our expense by making us feel like intruding bulls in a china shop.
- 19. Don't laugh at us when we use the word "love". The need to love and be loved starts early and never ends. Getting romantic is merely setting to soft music the eternal desire to belong to someone and have someone belong to us.
- 20. Treat us as junior partners in the firm. Democracy starts at home. If you want us to be worthy successors to you, take us into your confidence and let us help you in managing our family, our school and our community.
- 21. Make yourself an adult fit for a child to live with. Prove to us "it ain't so" that parents are the worst persons in the world. Show that home is not simply a place where children learn to get along with disagreeable adults.
- 22. Prepare us to lead our lives, not yours. Find out what we can do or we want to be before you force us beyond our capacity or make us become what you want us to become.
- 23. Give us a right to a major voice in our own lives. Decisions that will affect our whole future should be made with us, not for us. We have a right to our kind of future.
- 24. Let us make our own mistakes. To make wise decisions takes experience. That means we have to try ourselves out and find out for ourselves. We can only learn from our own actions—not yours.
- 25. Permit us the failings of average children just as we permit you the failings of average parents. Let us both break the rules sometimes. We can grow only at our own rate, which means in easy stages. We want to become the best we can become, but we would not be human if we were perfect.

For a Better Understanding of Shinran

The accounts of Shinran's life had been fairly established by Honzan authority until recently old letters written by the wife of Shinran, the Priestess Eshin, were discovered in the old depository of the Kyoto Headquarters. Based on these objective facts discovered, many accounts on Shinran were either deleted or re-written.

The following represent some of the events which occurred in Shinran's time which had considerable bearing on the world outlook and life of Shinran.

(All factual data, Mochizuku Jiten)

The year 1173 (Shinran's birth)

May – The priest Mongaku-bo interned at Izu.

June - Kokubuki group (of priest and laity) burned Buddhist center.

Nov - They were about to engage in battle with Hiei Sangha (bearing holy tree) but Imperial court intervened.

Dec - Kiyomizu-dera, dedicated in 1172 was burned to ground. Also Paramita temple reduced to ashes.

The Year 1175 (2)

Mar – Honen established Nembutsu sect at Yoshimizu.

Aug - Hiei group fights with Kamo Shrine group.

The Year 1178 (5)

 $\overline{\text{Oct }}$ – $\overline{\text{Novice}}$ (student) priests fight with resident priests (of lower rank). The regular priests often rebelled against other temples for power.

The year 1179 (6)

Mar – Zenkoji temple in Nagano burned (unrest was not limited to the capital).

The year 1180(7)

Dec – Taira Shigehira burned Todaiji and Kobukuji, both in Nara.

The year 1181 (8)

Mar – Shinran ordained (Matsuwaka). Kobukuki and Todaiji reconstruction begun.

The year 1198 (25)

Mar – Honen compiled Senchaku-shu and presented to Peer, Kanezane Fujiwara.

The year 1201 (28)

Mar – Hannen met Honen.

Oct - Tamahi and Shinran wed (legendary).

Nov - Hexagonal Pagoda burned for second time.

The year 1202 (29)

Jan – Fujiwara Kanezan ordained by Honen.

The year 1203 (30)

Aug — Hiei group in conflict with Saito (west-pagoda) group.

Sept – Todaiji internal strife (sangha split).

Oct - Todaiji group confine themselves in Kaneko-zan and oppose government forces.

Dec - Mongaku-bo pardoned.

The year 1204 (32)

Early this year action to send Honen on exile initiated.

Nov - Honen sent a seven-article plea for Emperor's understanding. Fujiwara Kanezane advised Mt. Hiei Chief Abbot of injustice in sending Honen in exile.

Dec - Mt. Hiei masses strongly demand Nembutsu ban.

The year 1207 (35)

Early this year Nara and Hiei groups demand Honen punishment.

Feb - Honen sent to Tosa and Shinranto Echigo (kokubu). During this time Shinran was forced to leave traditional priesthood and given name Fujii Yoshizane. This is the time he must have married Eshin-ni, and called himself 'gutoku'

Dec - Honen was pardoned but did not return to capital.

The year 1211 (39)

Nov - Honen passed away although permitted to return to capital. Shinran chose to go to Kanto via Shinetsu. Kamakura was the seat of military governor (shogunate). Why Shinran chose Kanto is not known.

The year 1213 (41)

Apr - Dogen (Soto Zen) ordained at Yokawa (Suragonji temple).

May - Eisai became 'Gen-so-zu' of high rank.

Aug - Hiei group tried to burn Kiyomizu-dera, but stopped by government forces.

Oct - Kokubuji group try to burn Hiei (fearing Kiyomizu-dera would come under Mt. Hiei.) The Emperor intervened.

The year 1214 (42)

Some time this year Shinran entered Hitachi province.

June – Eisai prayed for rain (great famine).

Dec - Eisai and Dogen meet.

The year 1222 (49)

Nichiren was born.

12 entered mountain.

18 ordained a priest.

31 called himself Nichiren.

61 passed away.

The year 1224 (52)

Draft of Kyo-gyo-shin-sho completed. Shinshu Founding Day.

The year 1235 (62)

Apr - Shinran preached at Tenno-do, Kibe Omi province.

May - Kokubuji and Iwa-shimizu group fight.

June - Group invaded Shinjo city and burned 60 homes.

The year 1262 (89)

Nov - Shinran passed away (lunar calendar).

Jan – Solar calendar month.

Reference Notes

Student priests:

There were many state sponsored students who had aspired to become Buddhist masters of huge temples. Besides being a place for religious practices, the high monasteries enjoyed tremendous power, both social and political. This very fact became the basis of corruption in the Tendai School of Buddhism. The Tendai priest training program was quite ambitious, calling for a period of twelve years (of two terms of six years each). The temples of Nara gave Tendai their share of completion in vying for the best candidates for priesthood.

Four Gratitudes

Purpose:

To develop individuals who will live in accordance with the basic aspira-

tions of the Buddhist tradition.

Discuss:

- Interdependence Buddhists strive for the happiness of all people, regardless 1. of race, country or ideology and all forms of life.
- Limitations of self work towards good and positive action. 2.
- Learn, master and realize accumulated wisdom of ages.
- Follow path of the Buddha.

The ordinary man's concept of religion:

studying Buddhist con	playing eating		sleeping	Dharma school
studying	playing	eating	sleeping	Dharma school
NAMU - AMIDA - BUTSU				

Buddhist Family

Purpose: To reinforce for students what makes a Buddhist Family.

Procedure:

Unique features of a Buddhist Family.

- Respect for elders.
- Compassion (discuss definition) 2.
- Greater family unity.

Put comments on the blackboard.

Questions:

- 1. Why are you a Buddhist?
- What kind of family is a good Buddhist Family? 2.
- Is there a difference between your family and the family next door? 3.

What it Means to be a Buddhist

"He abused me, he beat me, he robbed me." In those who do not harbor such thoughts, hatred will cease, for hatred is not overcome by hatred, hatred is overcome by love. This is an Ancient Rule.

Namu Amida Butsu

What does it mean to be a Buddhist? Many people ask this question when they come to church. They say, "What is the purpose of life? Why are we living? What is the purpose of existence? What are we living for?"

Then I always give this example. I say, "What is the purpose of the acorn? What is the purpose of a little seed?" And you can tell me what is the purpose of an acorn...what is the purpose of a little seed. The purpose of an acorn is to become a huge oak tree. The purpose of a seed is to grow into a flower. We say that the purpose of man, the purpose of your life on this earth is to become a Buddha. You have a seed, an acorn in you, called Buddha-nature, and your purpose is to grow into Buddha, flower into Enlightenment of Buddhahood. This is the kind of example we give when we speak about what it means to become a Buddha.

The first thing, the first characteristic about Buddha is that he is selfless. We are selfish, man is selfish, but Buddha is selfless. And the important thing to remember about selflessness is that it does not mean "nothing," but it means less of selfishness, less of ignorance, less of blindness, less of greed, attachment, hate. And one who is less of these things is Buddha, and everyone of us eventually will become a Buddha.

Selflessness is not a hard thing...it is an easy thing to understand. For example, the seed is not selfish, it does not cling to itself. The seed opens up and out comes the plant. This is selflessness. And the plant takes in everything it can from the sun, the air, the moisture, the soil, not for itself, not to keep for itself, but to give everything to the bud. And the bud, too, is unhappy if it cannot give everything to the blossoming of the flower and the flower too, when the time comes, will gradually and quietly fold, fade away, and disappear into eternity. This is selflessness and this is the kind of life we want to lead. By this, I mean, for example, on the first day of grammar school; the first day, you were curious, you wanted to go to school, but you were afraid. You were like the seed that did not want to open up, you were like the seed protecting itself, so you went to school, and you cried, probably. You didn't enjoy yourself although you got used to it. And then you remember the time when you went to a friend's house, a stranger's house, and you wanted to explore the house. You wanted to take the candy, you wanted to do a lot of things, but you were scared that someone might say something to you, and so, you just sat quietly, and even if the man in the house said, "hello," you did not answer. You see, this is selfishness, clinging.

The plant keeping to itself, the bud keeping to itself this is selfishness. To open up, to open our hearts to unfold and to grow—this is the path of selflessness in which we grow up. At school, you are asked to give a very short report to the class. Well, maybe you want to because you know a lot of things; you want to go up and talk, but you get all tight. You get all tight and then you stutter and you can't say the things you want to. This is the clinging to selfishness, and blindness, we say in Buddhism. But if you can go up in front of the class and talk, this is selflessness.

You open up and hold yourself. Now, if you can do this in everyday living, not just at certain times, then you are on the path of becoming Buddhas. And the one who is more perfect in selflessness is Amida Buddha, and because we always remind ourselves that

he is with us, eventually we will become one with Amida Buddha; eventually we will become selfless through the power of Namu Amida Butsu. That is the name of Amida Buddha. So, remember that Buddhahood, Amida Buddha, the first great characteristic is selflessness. Selflessness does not mean "nothing," but it means always being freefree to grow, free to improve yourself, free to become happier, free to enjoy life. That is the first characteristic.

Dependent Origination – III

"After you have learned the teachings, let your purified heart find delight in bringing forth corresponding deeds. Liberality, courtesy, good will and unselfishness—these are to the world what the axle is to the wheel of the chariot." Namu Amida Butsu

We'd like to understand dependent origination in terms of the relationship it has with each of us with Amida Buddha. I want to explain it through a little example that all of you know very well.

There is a very famous poet named Shelley who wrote a few lines which are very Buddhistic. He said, "Worlds, all worlds are rolling ever from creation to decay, like the bubbles on the river, sparkling, bursting, bourne away."

And the Buddha would say, "Who are the bubbles on the river of life?" The Buddha would say, "You are the bubble on the river of life." There is sparkling in youth, but there is bursting and being borne away in old age and death. Your life is like a bubble on the river that is so fragile and so weak that at any moment, it will pop. We call it the great change men call death. Now, this is the world of dependent origination, see? Dependent origination is very simple, it simply says, "Whenever a thing is born, it is destined to die; whenever a new thing is made, it will eventually break down; when you get something new eventually you are going to lose it; when you make a new friend, the promise is that you will part from your friend." And that is why whenever there is death, we think that when the bubble pops, there is no more, when the person had died, and we don't see him, we are sad and we cry.

Well, last night, I went to a funeral and I told them the story about the bubble in the river of life. The shape of the bubble when it pops, disappears. The bubble, the shape of the bubble disappears, but the bubble does not disappear, the contents, the water that goes to make the bubble does not disappear. It's only the eye that cannot see the water in the bubble that goes back to the more real rhythm of life. Dependent origination means that we are like bubbles, we come from the river and we live our lives, 25 years, 50 years, 75 years, and the bubble pops and Buddhism says...in dependent origination, you do not vanish, you do not completely disappear, only your body disappears, the physical form disappears, but you go back to Amida's heart, to the heart of the Buddha, the stream of life and you live forever. This is dependent origination.

Very simply then, the most important thing about dependent origination is that I am a part of the Buddha, just as the bubbles are a part of the water and no matter what happens to me, I will not get lost. I know where I am, I know where I am going. I am just going to a far away place, right there, becoming a more real kind of existence.

And so, if I should die, I shall become one little Buddha, one little glow of life and to be able to understand, not in your brain, but in your heart. This very simple truth, we call Faith and Enlightenment. This is the thing you want to eventually understand be-

cause some day, you will lose your mother, you will lose your father, you will lose your loved ones. But if you have a little understanding of the teachings of the Buddha, you will know that he is not gone, he is there in a more real and more enduring sense.

Goals For Our Future

As we go through life, we find that there are certain short-range and long-range goals that we strive for. We want to become good enough to make the sports team, or we want to become an engineer or perhaps a nurse when we grow up.

In sports, one object or goal of the game is to win the contest. We should reflect that the method or means used in winning is an important part of the game. Those who use questionable or illegal means to win are apt to be the center of much controversy.

Let us imagine the following situation: An adult sponsoring group decides to raise money by some questionable methods to support a boys or girls club camping trip.

- Does the goal or end justify the means or method?
- What are some other ways that the money could be raised? 2.

Activities

- 1. Mobile making
- 2. Music unit
- 3. Ojuzu making
- 4. Scroll making
- 5. Print making
- 6. Puppets
- 7. Map Buddhist Dharma Schools
- 8. Shinshu Catechism

Mobiles

Mobiles, with the movement and changing spatial patterns they produce, are facinating to children. And children are even more delighted when the elements of the mobile are their own. Teacher-made mobiles utilizing children's work can be used as a demonstration. Make mobiles of religious articles made by children.

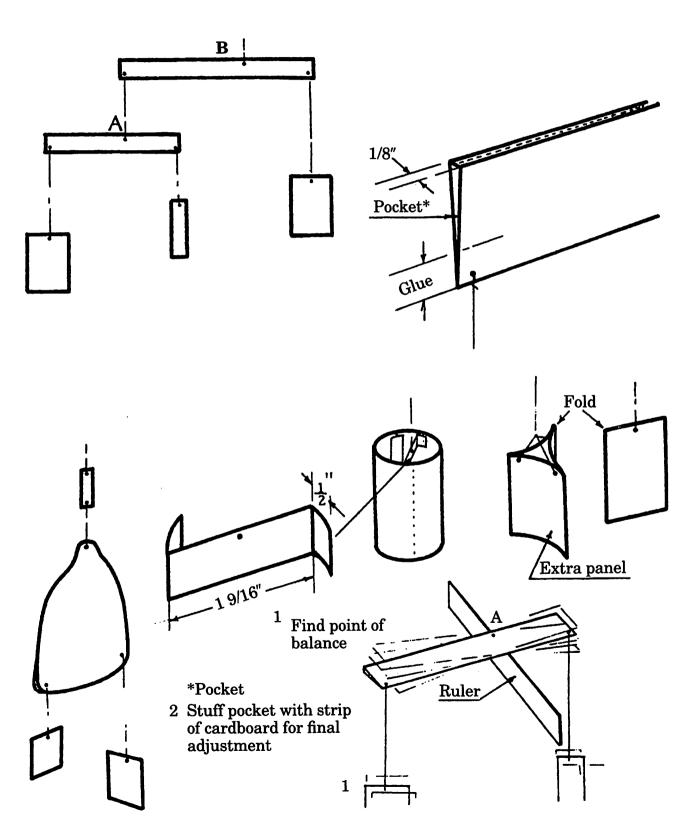
The arms of a mobile may be made from sections of wire coat hangers, 18 gauge galvanized wire, other wire, chopsticks, pieces of bamboo, etc.

In balancing a mobile, it helps to remember that the arms operate like levers. The point of support on which a lever moves is its fulcrum, and a lever balances when the weight and fulcrum distance of each arm are inversely proportional. Therefore, a small weight can balance a large weight, if the small weight is farther from the fulcrum, than the large weight.

Note: you will find it much easier to balance your mobile, if you begin at the bottom rather than the top.

Balancing Mobiles

A simple rule to remember in assembling a mobile is to start with the lowest elements. Find a point of balance A, then B, etc.



Mobile

- 1. Materials needed
 - a. balsa wood (square)
 - b. dowel wood (round)
 - c. white silk span paper
 - d. white sewing thread
 - e. construction paper
- 2. One 15 inch dowel wood, and one 8 inch.
- 3. Cut out desired Buddhist figures such as a Buddhist Wheel, Buddha, Flowers for the Buddha, Lights in the temple, and the Ojuzu.
 - All figures cut from colored construction paper.
- 4. After all figures are cut to desired size, cut the white silk span paper in double thickness. Place the cut figures between the two sheets of silk paper, and paste down. Silk paper can be cut into any shape.
- 5. Now glue the balsa wood around the edges of the various shaped figures.
- 6. Attach string by tying it on the stick and on the figures, and adjust string to make a perfect balance.
- 7. It is best to work from the bottom up.

Circular Three Treasures Mobile

Materials:

art paper scissors black felt pen string

Procedure:

Draw a non-contact, gradually widening and continuous circle.

Cut on lines, rounding off the outside lines.

Print the Three Treasures on both sides of paper starting from the center.

Hang on a string from the center.

Namu Amida Butsu Mobile

Materials:

poster paper of 3 different colors nylon string 3 beads of matching colors glue 2 wooden skewer sticks, 71/4 inches long scissors black felt pen, and/or 3/4" stencil letterings needle plastic ring, optional (i.e., knitting marker)

Procedure:

Cut out 3 fans from each different colored paper.

Print or stencil on each fan the words: Namu, Amida, and Butsu.

Tie nylon string onto the plastic ring, and attach remaining parts according to illustration, threading through fans at points shown. Drop glue on knots to avoid slippage.

Helpful hints:

Pre-cut strings allowing for tying.

Mark sticks and fans at points where they are to be tied.

Tie separate parts of fans first before tying unto the sticks.

Music Unit (Learning and Singing Gathas)

Aim: To provide teachers with basic aids in teaching children to love Amida through music.

Objectives:

To help teachers to provide ways to give pleasure and satisfaction to performing music, and to be a good listener (MONPO). To help teachers to preserve and enhance the naturalness of children.

Can you imagine a world without music?...a parade without music? a dance without music?...a wedding without music?...a day without music is unimaginable. Music is as vital to our life as food. Music gives us a deeper and wider dimension to your life. Hopefully, music should help us to appreciate Amida.

What is Music?

All forms of art require some kind of media. EX: an artist uses canvas, paint, etc. Sculptors need clay, marble, granite etc. Poets uses words. MUSIC uses SOUND. Sound is made by MOVEMENT. All sounds are caused by VIBRATION. Refined sound is TONE. Not everything we hear is TONE.

NOISE — irregular vibrations TONE — regular vibrations

Characteristics of Tone (4)

1. **Pitch** i.e. highness or lowness of tone low tone — long, thick, heavy string vibrates quickly gives high tone.

2. **Duration:** Length of tone, whether tone is long or short.

3. **Timbre:** Quality of tone. ex.: violin and trumpet, both playing same note have an entirely different quality.

4. Dynamics: Loudness and softness, varies according to force or power of a tone.

When all the characteristics are blended in HARMONY, there is MUSIC.

Rhythm: Rhythm is one of the greatest forces in Nature. The Universe is rhythmic. Four seasons return year after year in a never ending cycle. The tides are always in rhythm. Our own body...the rhythm of our heart beat, pulse, and breathing. Rhythm gives music variety, power and motion.

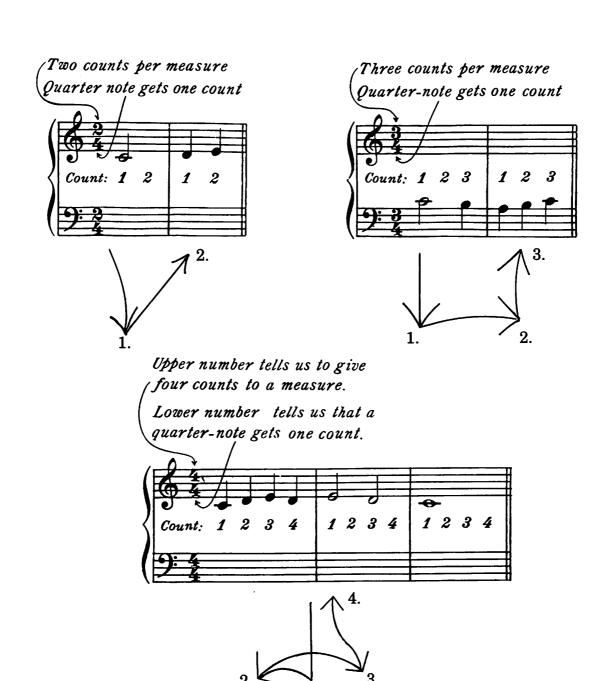
Characteristics in rhythm.

Beats within measures; notes and rests of different length and patterns.

Rhythmic unit measured by TIME, BEAT or ACCENT.

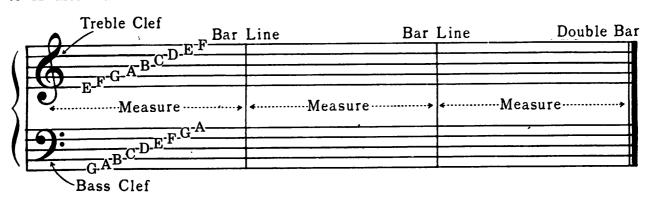
Basic beats:

example: TWOs strong beat followed by weak beat etc.



The Staff:

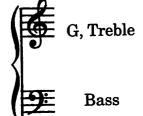
Ordinarily 5 parallel line staff giving 4 spaces are used to read and write music. Each line and space has a letter, just as in the alphabet, starting with "A" and returning to "A" after "G".



Clef: Clef is the only musical character which represents pitch of sound. Staff are only lines but when clef sign is placed, we have an exact pitch.

Most common Clefs.

- 1. The G CLEF or TREBLE CLEF
- 2. The F CLEF or BASS CLEF
- 3. The C CLEF or MOVABLE CLEF (choose line as middle C)



Notes and Rests: DURATION of sound and silence, symbols called notes and rests. Notes & Rests of different values according to their shape:

Whole-4 Half-2 Quarter-1 Eighth
$$-\frac{1}{2}$$

Bars: Vertical lines drawn through the staff. Usually, accent is strongest after the bar. Just as in speaking, we accent or emphasize certain words, certain accents are necessary in certain tones.

Double Bar: Marks the end of a division, movement, or entire composition.

Scale: Scale comes from Latin SCALA, meaning staircase or ladder. The tone of the scale are arranged one above the other much the same as the rungs of a ladder. Different countries have scales with a varying number of tones. Chinese have a five-tone scale called the Pentatonic scale. The Hindus, have a thirty-two tone scale. Our scales consist of seven tones. Most of the simple music we meet is made of the tones of the seven-tone scale. Five of these tones, however, can be altered, that is: raised or lowered, thus dividing a whole step into two sounds or tones. This adds five more tones within the octave.

An **Octave** is the distance from one "**DO**" to the next higher or lower "**DO**" in the same letter name. Thus we have twelve tones at our command, and out of these 12 tones is made the music of the world.

It's how you arrange them makes good music or not.

Major scale has a definite pattern. Memorize the pattern. In any key, the pattern is the same except transposed higher or lower. There is a whole step between all the tones except 3-4 and 7-8, where there is a half step. The second point to remember is the location of the half-steps on the staff. The half-steps on the staff are always between E - F, and B - C. Between all other lines and spaces is a whole step.

Keys: A key is a "family" of 7 tones grouped about a Central Tone, and each having a definite relationship with this Central Tone. Central Tone is called key-tone.

Chromatics:

- 1. Sharp (#)... raises pitch half-step
- Double Sharp (##)
- The Flat (b)...lower the pitch half-step
- 4. The Double Flat (bb)
- 5. The natural ()...restore the note to its original pitch.

Fun Experiments: On Noise and Tone...distinguish sounds into two columns.

Experiment with rubber bands on different vibrations.

Study the inside of a piano

Which vibrates faster...long or short strings? What causes low tone, what about a high tone?

Blind folded, guess different instruments or different sounds. Practice drawing the following: staff, clef, some notes, rests,

later, try singing what you wrote. Making an instrument is a fun thing.

Listening to records of other countries is fun too.

How about studying what instruments might have been used in India during certain eras? What about during Shinran's time?

What can music do for your classroom?

- •It can build group morale
- •It can relieve tension
- •It can make a child feel successful
- •It can create an understanding of rhythm and sound
- •It can create opportunity for creative self-expression
- •It can help the child articulate his voice in speech and song
- •It will help the child recognize music as a source of beauty

How to teach a song

- Sing the song to the children. Rote songs are learned through repetition.
- 2. Teacher will sing the song and have the children sing the phrase.
- Teach the children to clap the rhythmic pattern of the song.
- If the music is difficult, teacher will say the words to the song and have the children repeat the words in phrases. Be sure the children understand unfamiliar words. Have clear diction.
- Teach the children the tempo of the song. Keep the tempo at the correct rate. 5.
- The movement of the hands is frequently used to get the children to feel the high and lows of the tone.
- 7. Discuss the meter of the song.
- The piano is a help in teaching a song.

Child's Voice

Objectives:

to preserve the natural beauty of the singing voices of children. to sing with joy, the praises of Amida. (Nembutsu) to learn to listen with your heart. (Monpo)

Quality of child's voice:

boys and girls in the young years are alike soprano until adolescence vocal chords still short and thin tone is high, light, free, clear flutelike (head voice) encourage to sing in the head and never in the chest

Essential Vocal Habits

1. Posture

Correct posture promotes deep breathing avoids stiffness, tenseness in neck, throat, jaw, tongue area. Stand tall. If seated, do not lean on the chair. Correct posture must become a habit.

2. Breathing

> Combination of the natural respiration of a human being and rib breathing, which is normal means of getting more air as in any physical activity.

3. Right Thinking

Thinking tones (low and high)

Thinking tones produced without physical effort

Thinking or Imagining tones - mentally hearing the ideal tone. Listen to good music.

4. Good singing tone

> Free, resonant - enriched, colored by head and nasal resonance Expressive – thought and feeling stimulated

Let's Begin

1. Select a Gatha

> The purpose for choosing the particular Gatha (Hanamatsuri, Bodhi Day, etc.)

2. Review the Gatha

> Discuss the words in the Gatha, talk about the meaning and purpose for singing the Gatha.

- 3. Relate the Six Aspects of Jodoshinshu teaching to the Gatha
 - 1. Expanding
 - 2. Self-reflection
 - 3. Compassion
 - 4. Shinjin
 - 5. Gratitude
 - 6. Life of Meaning

Illustrations:

- 4. Review the words
- 5. Make sure the children understand the words
- Relate the Gatha to a story or lesson 6.
- 7. Repeat the Gatha over and over
- Sing for pleasure 8.

Japanese Kake-E (Scroll)

Materials Needed:

- Wallpaper (plain or moderately patterned) subdued colors if possible
- 2. Typing paper
- Vegetable oil (linseed second corn)
- 4. Rubber glue or
- 5. Stapler
- 6. Embroidery thread or yarn
- 7. Magazine

All of the paper and material may be discarded material found around the house or stores.

Preparing parchment paper:

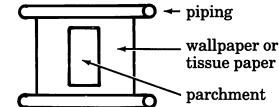
- Saturate with paper towel a sheet of 8" x 11" typing paper (regular) (avoid excess, will cause oiliness)
- 2. Place in oven 400° for about 2 minutes
- paper should be dry but not burned
- 4. When dry, cut paper in piece 7" x 11"

Preparing background:

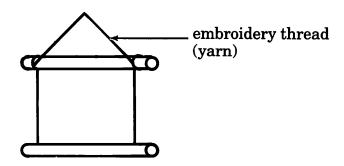
- Cut wallpaper into piece 10" x 18" (for variation use tissue paper)
- Use wallpaper or gaily colored page from discarded magazine. (Page or piece should be approximately 14" x 11") (excess can be cut off)
- Roll this piece diagonally around pencil to form pipe. (make 2) use paste to se-

Final assembling:

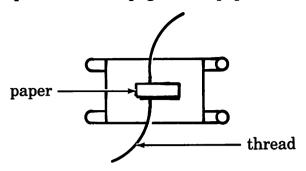
- Roll wallpaper or tissue paper until once around middle of piping and secure (2)
- When both pipes are fixed the product should appear thus:



- Place parchment piece centering it on the wallpaper or tissue paper. 3.
- Print Golden Chain or Promise etc. on parchment piece
- Take embroidery thread and attach to top pipe to form means to hand scroll.



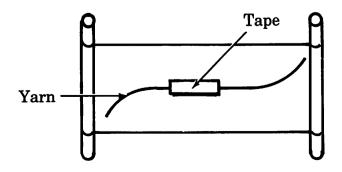
- 6. For added touch roll scroll from both ends until middle is found.
- At this point, cut piece of thread about 14" long and attach across back of scroll 7.
- Cover thread with piece of colored page or wallpaper.



Tie into bow to complete.

Scroll

- 1. Cut any length of rolled type paper towel.
- Tell story, experience, or anything desired on the paper towel with crayon or water color.
- Picture can be drawn vertically or horizontally.
- After picture is finished, roll butcher paper with round object to make a long roll for scrolls.
- 5. Place this rolled paper at each end of the paper towel and tape or paste for
- Tape a short piece of yarn to back (exact middle) of paper towel. This yarn is to tie the rolled-up scroll.



Printmaking

Prints are made by coating items with paint or ink and pressing them on paper.

Vegetable And Fruit Printing

Preparation:

Prepare paint pads and vegetables

Experiment with process before presenting to children. Note: fruits and vegetables with high liquid content, such as lemons and onions, etc. are more effective as printing tools if they can be bottled before being coated with color.

Plan work table with nearby drying area and waste basket.

Process:

Choose vegetables

Press vegetable, coated with paint, on paper. Vegetable will be able to print a number of times before needing more paint.

Materials:

Newspaper for covering table

Cut in half variety of vegetables and fruits (lemons, oranges, bell peppers, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, etc.)

Tempera paint

Paper

Containers for paint pads

Knife for cutting

Paper towel

Variations:

Gadget prints: proceed as above using gadgets

Cardboard or woodprints: collection of wood pieces such as small blocks, dominoes,

spools, sticks, etc.

String prints: Take string and dip into paint and use a stick to help saturate string.

String is blotted in folded paper towel and placed in curlique type pattern inside folded construction paper. Leave end hanging out,

press down on folded paper and pull the string.

String prints: Glue string in any design around roller. Press roller over paint pad

or brush paint on roller. Roll over paper to be printed.

Use whole fish with scales – brush paint on fish and place paper onto Fish prints:

fish. Press and peel off gently.

MAKE GREETINGS CARDS FOR OHIGAN USING THE PRINTMAKING METHOD CARDS AND WITH THE ORIGINAL WRITINGS: poems, stories, notes, - as the verses inside the cards.

Writing:

Read poems, stories and carefully note the writings. Practice writing and save all the writings, so you can compare and choose the one you wish to share with others.

Sponge Printing

Materials:

Tempera paint, of stick consistency

Shallow containers, such as trays-from meat markets, pie pans, etc.

Sponges, fruits or vegetables (potatoes, carrots, apples, etc.)

Cut in desired shapes, paper clips, styrofoam shapes, etc.

Brushes and felt markers if desired

Newsprint of various colors

String or yarn to make a clothesline

Clothespins, newspaper, paper towels

Methods:

- 1. Cover the table with layers of newspaper
- 2. Place several sheets of paper towels inside food containers
- 3. Pour small amount of tempera over the paper towels, allowing time for the towels to absorb the paint. This is your printing pad technique, paint may be applied to a sponge with a moderately dry brush.
- 4. Press the sponge or other printing object on the pad.
- 5. Print the design on the newsprint.
- Hang finished prints on the clothesline.

For best results in any printing process, allow children time to experiment and practice before they attempt a finished product.

Puppets

Stick Puppets Preparation:

paper, crayons, paint or felt pen, scissors sticks 18" to 24" length tissue paper, newsprint, kleenex

Process:

Have children draw outline of animal, person, or whatever on 12" x 18" construction

Color in figure with one of listed media, staple on the outline edge of paper figure with second sheet 12" x 18" behind the drawing and cut along the outside edge of the staples

When stapling, leave an opening so the puppet can be stuffed.

After the figure is cut, color the back of the puppet

Stuff the puppet with kleenex, newspaper or tissue paper

Place stick in puppet (push stick up at least half way into the puppet)

Staple stick to paper sides. Staple closing hole

Fabric Hand Puppet:

Cut fabric into proper size squares.

Have child crumple 4 or 5 pieces of kleenex and place these in center of fabric square (fabric size $18'' \times 18''$)

Loop rubber band around fabric to make head out of wad at top. Hair may be made of yarn and glued on head. Decorate face with cut pieces of felt, beads, pens, etc. Work by placing entire hand under "skirt" of puppet with index finger in the head.

Variations:

Sock puppet, stuffed paper bag puppet

Questionnaire

In order to help our teacher in evaluating the curriculum on the choice of subjects, methods of presentation, etc., it would be helpful if we each would answer the following brief questionnaire:

1.	(a)	Were topics too long?	
		too short?	
		too much detail?	
		not enough detail?	
		about right	
	(b)	Where there	
		enough examples?	
		not enough examples?	
		about right	
	(c)	Were lessons	
		easy to understand?	
		hard to understand?	<u> </u>
	(d)	Was the object of each lesson made clear?	
		Yes No	
	(e)	Did the review at the end of each month help you?	
		Yes No	
2.	Whi	ich lesson did you enjoy the most?	
_	TT77		
3.	Wh	ich lesson did you enjoy the least?	
4.	117L	ot didi 1	
4.	AA 119	at did you enjoy most about classes?	
5.	Wh	at did you enjoy least about classes?	
υ.	44 110	at did you enjoy least about classes?	
6.	Wha	at do you wish you had more of in class:	
	* * * *	Discussion?	
		Lectures?	
		More group work?	
		More individual work?	
		Other?	

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