



“Online Services and Living Temple”

by Rimban Katsuya Kusunoki

In keeping with the “Stay home Stay safe” campaign during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Seattle Betsuin has not had in-person services since of March 8. In its place, we have been offering online services since then. Virtual Sunday Services have been broadcast on YouTube every week. In addition to the Sunday services, some of you may not know, the Seattle Betsuin also offers a variety of additional online services and programs. They include: daily live-streaming morning services, weekly joint memorial services on Saturdays, Meditation weekly, Book Study group monthly, weekly Sutra Chanting and Dialogue, weekly Dharma School, and Sangha Award classes. I would like to take this opportunity to review and share my thoughts on online services.

First, I would like to express how impressed I am with the innovation and usefulness of online services. I believe online services have a lot of potential to spread the Buddha Dharma. It allows for new methods and ideas to propagate Shin Buddhism. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, our temple primarily focused on delivering the Buddha Dharma to people who physically came to the temple. At times, when we received requests to share the Buddha Dharma outside the Temple, we did so at different locations. For several years now, we have been using social media to spread the Buddha Dharma. We also started live-streaming Sunday Service a few years ago. At that time, the focus was to plan service programs and temple events for people who come to the temple; preparing online services came in second.

However, with the Covid-19 pandemic and to control the spread of the virus, we cannot have any in-person services. It became critical to consider



how to have service remotely and virtually. Frankly, I used to hesitate putting my weekly sutra chanting and Dharma messages online. But now, I conduct live-streaming services almost every day! Through these online services, we have been able to deliver the Buddha Dharma to our Sangha who live near and far, but also to those who normally are not able to come to the temple for Sunday services.

Seattle Betsuin’s online service is unique. Most of the BCA temples’ online services are conducted by just one minister. You only see one minister in their online service. In comparison, our service is different. Beside myself, Rev. Castro, Minister’s Assistants (MA’s), and Young Adult MAs also deliver their Dharma Talks and lead the readings. In addition, instead of a regular Dharma Talk/



June - What’s Inside	<u>p.#</u>
Rimban’s Message	1-3
Betsuin Tea Talk with Leanne	3
SBBWA, Walk for Rice	4
Hatsubon, Membership	5
Women’s Conference	
Temple Closure Update	6
Musical Notes	6
Dharma School News	7
Donations to Seattle Betsuin	8
Betsuin Calendar for June	9
Cover Page, Contact Info	10
On Betsuin and Sato’s translations of Rennyō Shonin’s letters: essays by Joe Gotchy	pages 11 - 16

continued on p. 2

Rimban's Message continued from p. 1

sermon given by the Minister, we have “Minds of Ministers” which is a gathering of Northwest Ministers engaged in informal religious dialogue. Opening and closing remarks by our temple president and Gathas are included in every service. Northwest District Ministers Association also has had unique and great programs. Recently, the Northwest Ministers Association got together online and jointly conducted the Hanamatsuri service in April and Gotan-E service in May. I don't believe there are any other BCA districts which have done this before. Not just relying on one person, we work together, and many get people involved in our version of online service.

Everyone is encountering this difficult situation caused by COVID-19. At the same time, this difficult situation creates conditions which allow us to use our creativity and to use more technology and launch new programs. Of course, there are many things that can be improved. However, I believe that it gives us more opportunities to spread the Buddha Dharma in different ways. Even after the temple reopens to the public, it is my hope that we rely on these experiences and continue offering these online services and programs regularly.

Next, I would like to share some factors regarding our Online service. At the beginning of March, before the “Stay home, stay healthy” directive, members were becoming increasingly concerned about the COVID contagion where fewer than ten people came to the temple to attend Sunday Services. We live-streamed the service on Sundays. The COVID situation got worse and public gatherings were prohibited. This was when we switched our online service from live streaming to a pre-recorded Sunday Service. Members involved in the service were asked to make video recordings of their segments from home (Dharma Talk, Sutra Chanting, Gatha, Opening & Closing remarks) and send it to the person at the temple who edits and manages the recordings. At that time, we decided to video-record Sutra chanting segments once and reuse them for subsequent Sunday services. For those of you who are observant, you may have noticed that the flower arrangements in the Naijin did not change. However, we video recorded Dharma Talks and other segments every week.

When I consider how much time and effort an

editor spends every week to put all segments together to make the video, it is much easier to reuse the same videos of Sutra Chanting. I understood and agreed with it. At the same time, there was something that bothered me when the Sutra chanting was repeated. That's when I decided to conduct daily live-streamed morning service at 10:00 AM. There are several reasons to do the live-streaming daily morning service. It is a good reason for me to wake up in the morning and not to be lazy. It is an opportunity for me to speak and practice my English (because I only speak Japanese at home). Besides that, the most important reason that I recite and deliver live Sutra Chanting is to show the temple's living Naijin (Buddha's altar). It is the minister's job to keep the temple and Naijin alive for the Sangha.

As a daily ritual, in the morning, first, I start cleaning. Then, I offer incense and prepare for the morning service. My wife Ayano arranges flowers for the Naijin once a week, now that the flower arrangement toban team cannot come to the temple. We are Jodo Shinshu followers. *Jodo* means Buddha's Land (Pure Land). Our goal is to be born in *Jodo*. *Jodo* is the embodiment of Amida Buddha's vows and compassion. We rely on the “active working” of *Jodo* to learn and to live our daily lives. The physical representation of *Jodo* is expressed in the Naijin. The Sutra teaches us and describes the appearance and beauty of *Jodo*. Sutras describe *Jodo* where lights are brilliant, flowers are blooming, and the lovely fragrance of incense surrounds everything and everywhere in *Jodo*. Most importantly, *Jodo* is filled with the sounds of the Dharma.

These are the reasons why Ministers wear robes and Okesa and chant Sutras in the Naijin. It is the actualization of the Pure Land which is actively working to lead us. We learn from the living Naijin how *Jodo* is working towards us now. It is the important aspect of the living temple where the Dharma, the teachings of the Buddha, are delivered.

I can understand why people say that we can reuse the same chanting video over and over again. But, if we continue doing this, some people may start thinking that there is no need to have the temple and Naijin, and that it is enough to have just the recorded image of the Naijin. If so, the temple becomes just a building and the Naijin becomes just a showpiece. People could just learn Buddhism online without visiting the temple. Of course, people can learn Bud-

continued from p. 2

dhism and get a lot of knowledge online. Besides going to the temple, there are so many ways to learn Buddhism such as taking online classes, reading books, and taking Buddhist classes at college, etc. But the Buddhist Temple is not only a place to gather to study Buddhism. Buddhist temples are places for people to assemble and come together, to listen to the Buddha's guidance and, together, deepen their appreciation of the Dharma as a Sangha. The Hondo becomes the physical place of practice and the Naijin becomes the center of the temple.

If people stop coming to the Temple and substitute their attendance by watching the recorded service and recorded image of the Naijin, I believe they will not be able to experience and cultivate their full appreciation of the Buddha Dharma. The full learning experience cannot be achieved by studying Buddhism through books or classes at schools as subject matter. Therefore, it is critically important to keep the physical temple alive for people to come to fully experience using all human senses to listen to the Buddha Dharma. Finally, it is my solemn belief that it is a minister's duty to keep the temple as a "living entity" where all are welcomed as a "place of practice" to further their study of Buddhism.

Due to COVID-19 most, if not all, BCA temples remain closed. Some ministers are not able to go to the temple. They just broadcast online service from their homes. Each temple's services, activities and events may not be the same as before even after the temples are reopened. I would like to ask your help to think about what other services and programs the Seattle Betsuin can offer after this pandemic is over. Whatever the resulting services and activities are, we must always remember and keep in mind the significance of the real purpose of our Temple and the Naijin. The temple's Naijin expresses *Jodo* which is the goal and essence of our path. I would like to work with each of you of the Seattle Sangha to enhance the Betsuin as a healthy and living entity. Gassho, Rev. Katsu



“Betsuin Tea Talk”

with Leanne Nishi-Wong

“Impermanence”

Jodo Shinshu Buddhism teaches us that “impermanence”, such as changes in life that shift in a blink of an eye, are inevitable. Spring is progressing into Summer, the rain will start to lessen and the sun will shine. The flow of the seasons are predictable while the transitions in our lives are not. We are now moving from the lives we once led to unclear transient paths. May the Nembutsu teachings be of comfort to you on your journey.

The Seattle Betsuin services and programs continue to evolve, due to the “stay at home, stay healthy directive”. On-line services are shown on YouTube. If you have not been able to watch the livestreams, they will be available for view at a later date.

The Kids Summer Program (KSP) is cancelled. This annual week-long camp features services, cultural learning, crafts and social activities for 1st - 8th grade students.

Dharma Exchange via Zoom will be held in June. Information is forthcoming.

Obon Odori will not be celebrated in-person, at the temple this year. The Obon Committee is working behind the scenes to present a virtual event. Odori practices, workshops and services will be posted on-line, beginning July 1. Hatsubon will be held virtually on July 12th. The official Obon virtual event will be held on July 18th.

Obon is the largest fundraising event for the Betsuin. Proceeds from Obon are used for the Seattle Betsuin's operating budget, which includes salaries, Temple maintenance, livestreaming, workshop speakers and Dharma outreach. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor/donor, please write to bonodori@seattlebetsuin.com or visit the temple website.

Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji of the Tacoma Buddhist Temple will be leaving the Northwest and moving to California. He will be a part-time Kaikyoshi Minister at Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church and a part-time faculty member at the Institute for Buddhist Studies. His positions tentatively commence on

continued on p. 4...

Tea Talk continued from p. 3

August 1, 2020. Rev. Dr. Miyaji has been a frequent guest at the Seattle Betsuin, both in-person and in the Betsuin’s streaming services. Rev. Dr. Miyaji, his wife, Kaori and their son, Keisai will be missed. The Betsuin wishes them a safe journey.

Tacoma Buddhist Temple will welcome Rev. Tadao Koyama as their new Minister. His position begins in August. The Seattle Betsuin looks forward to meet-

ing and working with Rev. Koyama.

“All things are transient and without self
Like the moon on water, lightening, shadow or dew.”
Translated from Junirai

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please write to me at chairperson@seattlebetsuin.com.

Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Women’s Association

submitted by Janie Okawa

SBBWA celebrated and “met” our five newest members:

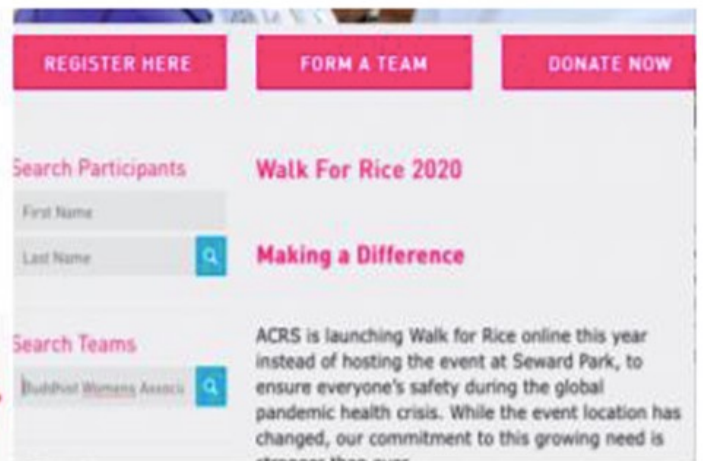
Jan Keltner, Bonnie Dussler, Marie Johnston, Kristen Beifus, and Janice Deguchi via a Zoom New Members Installation and Tea. We sipped beverages from the comfort of our homes while SBBWA co-president, Kanako Kashima, and advisors, Rimban Kusunoki and Ayano Kusunoki gave welcome messages. Vice Presidents, Susie Yamane and Tina Zumoto-Ko organized, de-

signed the invitations, and provided tea and scones to Jan, Bonnie, Marie, Kristen, and Janice! We are so happy to welcome you to the SBBWA!

We are still participating in the ACRS Walk for Rice which will be a virtual walk this year. We haven’t met our goal of last year, so if you can, please visit the website to donate, or if you prefer, just mail in your check to ACRS:

Walk for Rice, 3639 Martin Luther King Jr. Way South, Seattle, WA 98144
with our team name: **Seattle Buddhist Women’s Association SBBWA**

Walk for Rice - The SBBWA has supported the ACRS Walk for Rice each year, raising over a thousand dollars. This year the walk has been cancel, but the need is even more important. Go to the registration site:



http://acrs.walkforrice.org/site/TR?fr_id=1130&pg=entry and look for the title on the left side under the picture that says **Search Teams** and type in: Seattle Buddhist Women’s Association SBBWA.

Membership Although services and programs at the temple have been suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many of the temple's operating expenses continue while new expenses have arisen due to streaming of weekday, Saturday and Sunday services. Sustaining Membership is one of the largest sources of income for the day-to-day maintenance and operation of the temple. While we realize not everyone is able to contribute at this time, please consider making your 2020 Sustaining Membership (Ijikai) contribution today. Temple dues are \$400 per adult, \$350 for members 70 years or older. New and renewing membership can be completed online from the temple's website (www.seattlebetsuin.com) using the "Become a Sustaining Member" link. Checks can also be mailed to the temple office.

Gassho,
Tyler Moriguchi, Membership Committee

Hatsubon or "The First Obon Service" will be held in conjunction with the annual Obon Memorial Service on Sunday, July 12, 2020, at 10:00 AM. This service will be pre-recorded and streamed on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/seattlebuddhisttemple>.

The Obon Memorial Service is held each year to remember and honor our deceased family members and ancestors. As part of this service, Hatsubon, which is the first Obon Service after the loss of a loved one, is also observed.

Those who passed away since the last Obon service and were honored in a funeral/memorial service officiated by the Betsuin, will be included in the Hatsubon Service, as well other loved ones whose names are submitted by family members or friends. All names must be submitted by July 1, 2020, along with a photo, if available, to office@seattlebetsuin.com. Please include your name and telephone number in your e-mail message. Names and photos will be displayed during the virtual service on July 12, 2020.

ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE...

We would like to "thank" the following for contributing their 2020 sustaining membership dues - the basic dues towards Temple maintenance/operations and programs. The minimum for individual membership is \$400 (for under 70 years of age), and \$350 (for 70 years of age and over).

Janet Baba, Connie Ozeki-Chinn, Harrison Chinn, Steve & Lori Chisholm, Burke Dykes, Gordon Habu & Mae Yamasaki, Peggy Hanada, Dale & Shizue Kaku, Kinue Kuwahara, George & Irene Mano, Julie Mayeda, Craig & Joan Nakano, Dennis Shibata, Gary & Debbie Shibata, Kiyo Takashima, Grace Tazuma, Miyoko Tazuma, Ronald & Suzuko Terada, Yvette & Calvin Terada, Don & Amy Tokunaga, Dennis Yamashita & Elaine Aoki, Dennis Yasukochi & Lynn Goodrich, Fukuyo Yee, Kevin & KarinAnn Yokoyama, Nobuo Yutani, Jeremy Zimmerman, Jim & Tomi Zumoto

(Compiled by Howard, Joan, Pauline & Steph)

Changed to video conference!

Women in Buddhism Conference "Tools for Spiritual Wellness, Part 2"

Saturday, Sunday - October 3, 4, 2020



Carmela Javellana Hirano, MD
"Radical Humility: Jodo Shin-shu Path to Gratitude and Joy" Psychiatrist in private practice, Salt Lake City, UT; ordained Shin Buddhist minister.

Nembutsu



Bonnie Duran, PhD
"Mindfulness and Dharma to undo internalized negative stereotypes" Learned Vipassana in Bodh Gaya India; professor of Social Work & Public Health, University of Washington.

Vipassana



Sharon A. Suh, PhD
"Healing from Trauma through Meditation and Yoga" Professor of Buddhism, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Seattle University.

Yoga



Sheri Mizumori, PhD
"Brain Health and Everyday Mental Well-Being" Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, University of Washington.

Brain Health



Tara Tamaribuchi, BFA
"Self-renewal through art" Artist and mother, expresses Buddhists concepts through art making.

Healing with Hands

Presented via video conference by
Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple
Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Women's Association
Center for Buddhist Education

SeattleBetsuin.com/2020WiB

Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple Will Remain Temporarily Closed

While there is much discussion regarding the importance of reopening religious institutions, the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple will continue to be closed to in-person gatherings, until further notice. The Betsuin will continue to follow the guidelines set by King County and Washington State to minimize the spread of COVID-19, and take the necessary steps to protect the Sangha and community. Services, workshops and events will continue to be streamed on the Betsuin's YouTube channel with organizational meetings and classes being conducted virtually. The temple is extremely grateful for the support of Sangha members and the community during this challenging time.

Gassho, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple

Musical Notes

submitted by Kemi Nakabayashi

We remain grateful for all the participants contributing to the service music for the online service productions. Thank you to Megumi Azekawa from Tacoma Buddhist Temple, who worked with Donna Sasaki and me to provide recordings of *Life of Shinran* and *Shinran Sama* for our Gotan-E service music last month. Megumi is a music therapist who works at a mental health facility in Milton. As we continue to complete audio recordings of Linda Castro's gathas with *Master Ganjin's Journey* and *A Special Place* done last month, Rev. Castro remarked how appropriate the gatha lyrics of *Master Ganjin's Journey* are for current times: "...children all of one mother now in need of care..."

For the All Sangha Memorial Service on June 7, *Namo Amida Butsu* by R. R. Bode will be featured to include the lovely lyrics of the third verse written by Nancy Hashimoto from Sacramento Betsuin. We anticipate additional recordings by Maya, Macy, and Misa and also hope to use other formats to include more instrumentalists, so please stay tuned....

Dear Dharma School Student,

Thank you for your card that I received a few weeks ago. I was happy to receive it! With your drawings and words of encouragement I can feel your gratitude for our temple and for your life. I, too, am looking forward to seeing you in person at the temple. Until then, you be safe, too, and enjoy your family.

In gratitude and gassho, Your Old Temple Friend

Dharma School News

As our DS year comes to a close, we would like to encourage our students and each other to continue watching the Sunday services during the summer and reaching out to our extended sangha and communities. Thank you to the parents, students and extended sangha for supporting DS and our temple during these unprecedented times.

Classroom Reports

Pre-K/K The Pre-K/K teachers continue to miss their students and stay in touch with them by sharing the Dharma thru weekly online lessons and activities.

The students learned about Shinran's childhood and his desire to become a monk at the age of 9. Insisting that the Tokudo ceremony be held right away and comparing the situation to cherry blossoms which may not last 'til tomorrow, Shinran received his Tokudo without waiting. Students were asked to decorate a tree branch with cherry blossoms as a reminder of the Buddha's teaching of impermanence and doing what we can do now because it may be too late if we wait.

The students learned how Shinran Shonin finally found peace by placing his trust in Amida Buddha. They were sent a picture of hands to color, cut and glue together, and an onenju to cut and place around the hands. Students were reminded to put their hands together in gassho to thank Amida Buddha for his never-ending love and compassion for all.

The students learned about Gotan-e – celebrating the birth of Shinran Shonin, the founder of Jodo Shinshu. They were sent a pattern so that they could make their own Shinran Shonin to remind them about Gotan-e.

To celebrate Mother's Day, the children learned about gratitude. One of the most important people to have gratitude for is your Mother. To recognize her on her special day, the children drew a picture of their Mom and themselves, decorated a Mother's Day Card, and put together a Mother's Day Coupon book that their Mom can use throughout the year.

3/4/5 Class The 3/4/5 team enjoyed our first year as dharma school teachers, getting to know the students, and learning together with the class. We definitely did not expect to end our year physically apart, but during "Stay Home, Stay Healthy," we have been excited to see each other during our Zoom DS class get togethers. We have written letters and haiku, created various crafts and played Jodo Shinshu games using Kahoot and BINGO these last few months.

submitted by Joyce Tsuji

On behalf of the Dharma School Board and Superintendents, I would like to thank our Dharma School teachers. These 15 men and women volunteer their time and energy to create Buddhist learning experiences for temple children every week during the school year, except at New Years and for the annual Dharma School teachers conference. Many of our teachers started out as parent volunteers and have continued on, even as their children have grown up, attended college, and joined temple leadership as members of the Board. Our teachers plan lessons in which students use or create graphic novels, videos, cooking, storytelling, games and discussions about world issues all through the lens of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. We thank you, Dharma School teachers, for taking the time to be steady adults in our children's lives, modeling learning the Dharma and taking refuge in Amida Buddha.

We would especially like to thank and honor Steph Ojima, who retires this year after 25 years teaching Dharma School and mentoring the kids in the Junior YBA. Steph is loving and straightforward with our kids. She counts on them to take responsibility for their actions and she trusts them to take care of business. She works alongside our kids at temple events and she never talks down to them. One of Steph's former students says, "I think Steph's dedication as a Jr. YBA advisor and DS teacher has helped many young Buddhists learn and appreciate the Nembutsu teaching. Her compassionate leadership is something I know is appreciated by all of us at the Betsuin." Steph, thank you for teaching so many of our kids for so long. Your successors have big boots to fill.

We would also like to acknowledge our three graduating seniors, Janay, Nick, and Souma. We know you will do well in your future endeavors, and we will always be here to support you!

Yvette Terada and I, as superintendents of the Dharma School, would like to thank the parents who serve on the Dharma School board. You do so much planning, shopping, dishwashing, accounting, meeting, serving, showing up early and staying late, all while parenting your wonderful children.

Thanks also to the parents and kids of the Dharma School. You are what makes this fun, necessary, and rewarding. Thank you to Rinban Kusunoki for his belief in the importance of the Dharma School and his thoughtful support. Finally, thanks to the Seattle Betsuin sangha. Many of you have had children in the Dharma School, been teachers in the Dharma School and attended Dharma School yourself. The children see your kindness, your service, and your gratitude, and we hope they grow up to be just like you.

- Claire Murata on behalf of the DS Superintendents

The Seattle Betsuin Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Donations April - May 2020

Funeral / Memorial / Nokotsudo:

Given by:

Krista Nakano – 1 st Year Memorial	\$ 300.00	Craig, Joan & Quinn Nakano
Kenneth Yoshio Enomoto – In Memory of	\$ 100.00	Erika Enomoto
Miso Kaneko In Memory of	\$ 100.00	Kemi Nakabayashi & Jim Norton
Ryoto Yabuki – In Memory of	\$ 50.00	Munehisa & Akiko Yabuki
Masayuki Shimada – In Memory of	\$ 30.00	Shirley Shimada

Memory of:

Given by:

Alan Kishi	Donald & Karen Akira; Janet Baba
Krista Nakano	Annemarie Chidiac and Skyline Girlfriends; Connie Ozeki-Chinn; Maya Koga Chow; Fujimoto Family; Howard Luke & Marie Kosai-; Richard & Nancy McManigal
Michiye Ohtani	Donald & Karen Akira
S. Stanley Okamoto	Stephanie Ojima
Sunako (Sunkie) Oye	Fumie Taniguchi
Sachiko Ozeki	Donald & Karen Akira; Stephanie Ojima; Sonoe Taketa
Teruyo (Terrie) Tanino	Janet Baba; Betty Hirano; Jeffrey Ko & Tina Zumoto-; Paul & Takako Kogita; Kenneth Kubota; Stephanie Ojima; Teruko (Terrie) Shigaya; Roy & Kazumi Shimizu; Sato & Darlene Shimizu; Masao & Frances Tamekuni; James & Tomiko Zumoto

Endowment:

Rev. David Fujimoto (Gatha Books)
 Donald & Karen Akira
 Buddhist Temple of Stockton donation to HM Kaneko Music Fund

General Donations:

Donor:

For:

Shizue Yahata	General Donation
Kiyoko Takashima	General Donation
Grace Tazuma & Bruce Brundige	General Donation
Suzanne Fujinari	Donation for Gatha Book
Anonymous	General Donation
Mariko Soejima	General Donation
Calvin & Yvette Terada	General Donation – Calvin's Birthday Observance
Ron & Karen Murakami	Donations for purchase of Equipment for Live Streaming
Stephen Sorakubo	Appreciation for Live Streaming
Sheri Mizumori	Appreciation for Live Streaming
Jean Paul Deguzman	Appreciation for Live Streaming
Tami Arinobu	General Donation – Costco Employee United Way Campaign

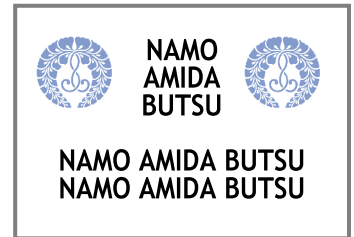
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JUNE 2020 SEATTLE BETSUIN SCHEDULE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p align="center">1</p> <p align="center">Please visit http://www.youtube.com/seattlebuddhisttemple to view all services</p> <p align="center">Please contact office@seattlebetsuin.com to join the weekly Thursday Sutra Service and Dialogue on Zoom</p>	<p align="center">2</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p>	<p align="center">3</p> <p align="center"><i>Rinban's day off</i></p>	<p align="center">4</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p> <p align="center">11 am Sutra Svc & Dialogue on Zoom</p>	<p align="center">5</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p>	<p align="center">6</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Joint Memorial Service</p>	
<p align="center">7</p> <p align="center">10 am ALL SANGHA MEMORIAL SERVICE Adult Service Japanese Service</p>	<p align="center">8</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p>	<p align="center">9</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p>	<p align="center">10</p> <p align="center"><i>Rinban's day off</i></p>	<p align="center">11</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p> <p align="center">11 am Sutra Svc & Dialogue on Zoom</p>	<p align="center">12</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p>	<p align="center">13</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Joint Memorial Service</p>
<p align="center">14</p> <p align="center">10 am Streamed on YouTube GRATITUDE & RECOGNITION SERVICE <i>Last day of Dharma School</i> Adult Service Japanese Service</p>	<p align="center">15</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p>	<p align="center">16</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service and Shinran Shonin Memorial Service</p>	<p align="center">17</p> <p align="center"><i>Rinban's day off</i></p>	<p align="center">18</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p> <p align="center">11 am Sutra Svc & Dialogue on Zoom</p>	<p align="center">19</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p>	<p align="center">20</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Joint Memorial Service</p>
<p align="center">21</p> <p align="center">10 am Streamed on YouTube BISHOPS' / RINBANS' MEMORIAL SERVICE Adult Service Japanese Service</p>	<p align="center">22</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p> <p align="center">8 pm Newsletter deadline</p>	<p align="center">23</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p>	<p align="center">24</p> <p align="center"><i>Rinban's day off</i></p>	<p align="center">25</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p> <p align="center">11 am Sutra Svc & Dialogue on Zoom</p>	<p align="center">26</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p>	<p align="center">27</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Joint Memorial Service</p>
<p align="center">28</p> <p align="center">10 am Streamed on YouTube KSP SERVICE Adult Service Japanese Service</p>	<p align="center">29</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p>	<p align="center">30</p> <p align="center">10 am livestream Morning Service</p>	July 2020: Major Events TBD			

Seattle Buddhist Church
1427 S Main Street
Seattle, WA 98144

June 2020
Wheel of the Sangha
A Monthly Newsletter of
Seattle Buddhist Church



Scroll Up for Newsletter

The Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple Will Remain Temporarily Closed

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Gassho,

Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple

"Respect" 敬

Sundays... Please confirm at www.SeattleBetsuin.org "coming events" or call the temple office 206.329.0800

9:00 am - 9:40 MEDITATION in Memorial Hall Chapel east wing

10:00 am - 10:35 SERVICE - in *hondo* (main hall)

10:35 am - 10:45 SANGHA GATHERING - offer incense, "meet and greet"

10:50 am - 11:30

CHILDREN'S DHARMA SCHOOL classes during the public school year

JAPANESE PROGRAM in *hondo* (main hall) with a message in Japanese

DHARMA EXCHANGE - a mix of discussion and educational programing; downstairs dining room.

PARENTS' DHARMA EXCHANGE in Memorial Hall Chapel - discussion among young adults and parents while children are in class.

TEMPLE TOUR and an opportunity to ask questions

11:30 - 12:00 REFRESHMENTS and Social in dining room downstairs

Wheel of the Sangha Editors
Irene Goto, English: newsletter@seattlebetsuin.com
Machiko Wada, Japanese: newsletter-jpn@seattlebetsuin.com
Deadline is the third Monday each month at 8PM

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Translating Rennyo Shonin's Gobunsho as an Act of Dana

When Margaret and I began attending Sunday services at the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple in late 2014, we sat on the left side of the Hondo, toward the middle of the sixth row from the back. From where I sat, I could see most of the important artifacts and spiritual elements in the Naijin. Directly in front of me and to the left of the Buddha's statuary was a portrait hanging on the back wall. At the time, I did not know who the man was, or why he deserved such a place of prominence within the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist tradition. Even after hearing his name, I did not fully understand why Rennyo Shonin deserved to be among the pantheon of Buddhist luminaries who accompanied Amida, Shakyamuni, Shinran and the Seven Patriarchs of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, including Honen, on their voyage from Japan to Seattle almost six-score and nineteen years ago.

Between Dharma messages, book study group sessions, classes and seminars, Rennyo became less of a mystery man and increasingly a person of interest. At the beginning of 2019, I attended the multi-day chanting of the Larger Sutra that Reverend Kusunoki led at the Betsuin. That prompted me to attend Wednesday services, and that is when I was introduced to the Shin Buddhist Translation Series book, "Letters of Rennyo: A Translation of Rennyo's Gobunsho" (2000), a compact volume that includes thirty-three letters numbered in sequential order. There was a letter for every day of the month plus letters for special occasions that included White Ashes and The Annual Memorial Service for Shinran Shonin. During the Wednesday services, we read and discussed the numbered letter that corresponded to the day of the month. Reading the letters with others gave me a deeper appreciation of Rennyo's thinking.

About that same time, Reverend Kusunoki encouraged Sangha members to include chanting in their personal services to begin and end each day. I told him that chanting the Sutras, whether Sambutsuge, Juseige, or Junirai, in a language that I did not understand would not help me develop an understanding of their content. Could I read them aloud in English? Reverend said yes, and before long, I was starting and ending every day by reading a Sutra aloud in English and one of Rennyo's letters aloud as well. As the months rolled along, the letters were becoming like old friends. Every time I read a letter, I learned something new about Rennyo, myself, or the times the two of us lived in.

At some point, I discovered that the thirty-three letters with which I was familiar were actually a subset of more than 200 letters that were discovered at various point after Rennyo Shonin's death. Much to my delight, I found that Rennyo's grandson, Enryo (1491-1521), had compiled a collection of 80 letters that were divided into five groups or fascicles. After some preliminary searching, I found that a husband and wife, Minor L. Rogers and Ann T. Rogers, had translated all 80 letters into English, and published "Rennyo: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism" (1991). I bought the book, and began reading each daily letter twice: once in the Shin Buddhist Translation Series volume, and once in the Minors' volume to compare the translations. That was both interesting and instructive. While the first volume is very accessible and easy to read, the Rogers' version is more scholarly, and includes extensive and extended footnotes. Every time I read the letters, my understanding, respect, and gratitude for Rennyo continue to grow.

When I mentioned this to some of my Betsuin Book Study Group colleagues, I was told that the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple had undertaken its own translation of the complete five fascicle version of Rennyo's letters. That caught my attention and piqued my interest, so, I set out to find a copy if one existed.

I did not have to look very long. With help from Ben and Etsu Shimbo, Irene Goto, Leonora Clarke, Reverend Castro, and others, I laid my hands on a pristine copy of the temple's translation in our recently remodeled library. Putting my hands on the translation was tantamount to Indiana Jones finding the lost Ark of the Covenant.

Now that might seem a little over the top, but I had a sense that this translation was something special. And about a year after the discovery, I am more convinced than ever that the temple's translation is a treasure that should be recognized, used, and celebrated.

To the best of my understanding, the project was started in 1948 and completed, re-edited and published in part or whole between 1963 and 1976. As it turns out, 1976, was both the Bicentennial of the American Revolution and the 75th Anniversary of the Founding Day of the Seattle Betsuin which was celebrated in November of that year.

While there was an abbreviated “Chapel Volume” that included twenty of Rennyō’s letters published in 1963, the entire five fascicles and separate volume that included his “Letters of Summer” and “Biographical Letter” were published in 1976, and were followed by “The Words of Shonin Rennyō Heard and Recorded During His Lifetime: A Translated Version of the “Rennyō Shonin Goichidai Kikigaki” Book I in 1978 and Book II in 1986.

The twenty letters included in the Chapel Volume were selected in conjunction with “the Mother Church in Kyoto”, and were considered both “representative” and “an indispensable part of the Church Service accessories.” The Chapel Volume was “dedicated to all Shinshu ‘pilgrims’ with hopes that it may serve as a ‘way station’ offering ‘sustenance and lodgings’ along the path of that long pilgrimage.” In a project that rarely associates names with the work, the Chapel Volume is an exception. In its Forward, the book credits Reverend Koyo Okuda, a former minister of the Seattle Betsuin, as the “primary consultant-translator”, and credits him along with unidentified members of the Seattle Lotus Central Religious Committee “with rough-draft translations.” Based on what I have read, the committee went so far as to translate the Japanese to English, and then had it translated from English to Japanese by different people to make sure the English translation was accurate.

This project, undertaken by the Seattle Lotus Central Religious Committee, and carried on by the Seattle Betsuin Religious Department spanned nearly four decades. That begs the question: Why would our temple ancestors undertake such a rigorous and demanding project?

Part of the answer can be found in the Betsuin’s written history, “Mukashi Mukashi: First Century of the Seattle Buddhist Church” written by Ronald E. Magden (2008). Magden wrote this about the people and project:

“As chairman of the Lotus Religious Committee, John Kusakabe directed the translation of the six volumes of the Gobunsho, the writings of Rennyō Shonin, the Fifteenth Century father of the restoration of Jodo Shinshu. The Gobunsho was kept in the Naijin (the altar area of the Hondo). Since the beginning of the Seattle Buddhist Mission in 1901, Rennyō Shonin’s letters had been read in Japanese during services. Don Hale, who worked with Kusakabe on the...project, has detailed why the Religious Committee Chair put so much time in translating the Gobunsho:

‘John Kusakabe was impressed with the beauty of the Gobunsho. He believed that they should be available for English services as well as the Japanese-language sermons. So, he made the translation of the writings his own personal project. The Lotus Religious Committee as a whole agreed on translating the Gobunsho. We spent years typing, correcting, and reading the document over and over again to each other. We were trying to straighten things that seemed fuzzy or strange in English. We wanted to come up with the best way to translate classical Japanese, or classical Chinese, into American English.’” (pp. 192-93)

In his Acknowledgements to the 1978 edition of “The Words of Shonin Rennyō: Heard and Recorded During His Lifetime,” Mr. Kusakabe provides additional credit to people who were instrumental in making his vision a reality.

“In the translation efforts published by the Seattle Buddhist Religious Department over the past three decades, there have been three individuals who have always rendered invaluable assistance as collaborators and colleagues. The typing of the manuscripts has been done by Mrs. Yuki Miyake: The printing, collating, etc. has always been done by Mr. T. Jack Matsui: Thirdly, there has been my wife, Kishiko, who during all this time has never once demurred or showed irritation for reasons of her busy-ness from assisting me in understanding the correct meaning, feeling, and nuances of any particular passage. She has always been of particular assistance in back-translations from English to Japanese when accuracy checks were made. When fatigue encroached and energies flagged, it was, my wife, that ever so gently reminded me of the dire need for English translations of Shinshu works at this present time.”

With credit being given to Mrs. Miyake and Mrs. Kusakabe, I would be remiss if I did not mention the photo of the 1954 Lotus Research Committee that can be found in Mukashi Mukashi (p. 191). The photo is of nine women who played pivotal roles in the temple's translation and publishing efforts during the early years of the Gobunsho project. Their names: Marian Matsushita, Mrs. Masunaga, Grace McLeod, Nobue Shimizu, Sachi Iwami, Fumi Uyeda, Masako Shimada, Irene Yamauchi, and Yuki Miyake.

Now that we know some of the people responsible for the project, let us allow the text to further introduce the project, who inspired it, and why it was undertaken. (It should be noted that the translation was created prior to the computer age when manual and electric typewriters were in use. All upper- and lower-case letters are presented in their original form to show emphasis where it was intended.)

The translation is titled: "The Epistle: A Translated Version of the 'GOBUNSHO' OF SHONIN RENNYO".

Its dedication reads:

"This humble work is dedicated to the memory of REVEREND MR. TATSUYA ICHIKAWA (1903 -1968) a, 'GOOD-TEACHER-OF-THE-WAY' who, transcending barriers of language, opened the portals of Shonin Shinran's, JODO SHINSHU, to a young new generation of American Busseis in the City of Seattle, and, thereby, created the initial impetus, inspiration, encouragement, and commitment to commence this translation project in the year, 1948. Gassho, SEATTLE BETSUIN RELIGIOUS DEPARTMENT 1976".

(Reverend Ichikawa is the father and father-in-law of Satoru and Grace Ichikawa, who are current temple members and related to other current Sangha members.)

In 1976, a version of the project was distributed to temple members. The following letter was wrapped around each set of five small paper booklets:

"To the Recipient of These Translations,

It is with pride and a certain amount of awe that the present members of the Religious Department of the Seattle Buddhist Church have the privilege of presenting this complete translation of the Epistles of Rennyō (GOBUNSHO); The Letters of Summer (GE NO OFUMI); and The Biographical Letter on Shinran Shonin (GOZOKUSHO). To the best of our knowledge, this is the only English translation of the entire collection of these letters of Rennyō. Rennyō Shonin, the Eighth Abbot after Shinran the founder, is known as the "Restorer" of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. He devoted his life to re-establishing the clarity of Shinran's insight which is the basis of the Shin Buddhist experience. These letters have been codified into the daily ritual of Shin Temples but their true value exists when their meaning floods our consciousness and gratitude fills our being.

The work of translation has taken almost three decades, and involved dozens of individuals. It is virtually impossible to give full credit where it justly belongs. Perhaps in a more academic project, credits would have been obligatory; this has been a work of DANA and the reader is urged to accept it on those terms.

In gassho,
Don Hale, Executive Chairman 1976
Religious Department, Seattle Betsuin"

And from the Foreword:

"...The immediate acceptance by the common people of these simply-written letters (by Rennyō), triggered an exceedingly powerful resurgent movement of the Jodo Shinshu Sect wherein people by the thousands flocked to the Honganji to seek deliverance through Faith.

...The committee hopes, humbly, that this work may be found worthy of perusal by the English-speaking followers of the Nembutsu as they expand their examinations into the depths of JODO SHINSHU. Gassho, Seattle Betsuin Religious Department, 1976."

As Mr. Hale so eloquently stated in his letter, “...this has been a work of DANA and the reader is urged to accept it on those terms.” As a current member of the Betsuin, I not only accept this work as a form of DANA, but I would also like to encourage others to read it, and celebrate the treasure left to us by our Sangha ancestors.

Three years after the Minidoka War Relocation Center was closed, and three years before I was born, Sangha members at the Seattle Betsuin undertook the daunting task of translating the entire five fascicle version of Rennyō Shōnin’s “Gobunshū” that includes eighty important messages from the man whose portrait I have seen every time I have entered the Hondo at the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple.

In my preliminary research, I have yet to find any evidence that contradicts my belief that the temple translation of the “Gobunshū” was the first time Rennyō’s letters had been translated into American English. In 2020, some seventy-two years after the project was started, I am grateful for an incredible display of DANA to make sure that non-Japanese speaking Nembutsu followers like me have equal access to the same sacred texts that the founders of the temple had in 1901. That is why I think the translation and the people who inspired and worked on it deserve to be honored and celebrated.

(*As a relatively young Buddhist whose timeline with the temple is limited, the author welcomes all comments, corrections, additions and suggestions that would help develop his understanding of this project, the people who worked on it, as well as thoughts about how the translators and translation might be celebrated and used to share the Buddha Dharma with our temple and other Jodo Shinshu Buddhists.)

Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple
June 2020 Newsletter Submission
Joe Gotchy

Kemmyō Taira Sato’s “Living with Thanks: The Gojō Ofumi – The Five Fascicle Version of Rennyō Shōnin’s Letters (The Buddhist Society Trust, London, 2018, 535 pages)

The Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple’s translation of Rennyō Shōnin’s *Gobunshō* may well have been the first Japanese to English translation of its kind in the Americas. Starting in the late 1940s, a group of dedicated Sangha members began the task of translating all 80 of Rennyō’s letters. By 1986, the Betsuin had translated and published the complete five fascicle version of the *Gobunshō*; a *Chapel Volume* of 20 letters selected by “the Mother Church in Kyoto”; a short set of *Letters of Summer* and separate *Biographical Letter* (Gozoku Shō) about Shinran Shōnin’s life; and *The Words of Shōnin Rennyō Heard and Recorded During His Lifetime: A Translated Version of the Rennyō Shōnin Goichidai Kikigaki* (two books with 314 comments attributed to Rennyō).

Five years after the Betsuin completed its monumental project, Minor L. Rogers and Ann T. Rogers completed their book, *Rennyō: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism*. Published in 1991, the book is a scholarly look at Rennyō Shōnin’s life (pp. 1-136); a new translation of the five fascicle *Gobunshō*’s 80 letters (pp. 137-259) complete with annotated footnotes; and a fresh appraisal of Rennyō’s legacy (pp. 260-372). The text is followed by a chronology of Rennyō’s life, a complete list of his wives and children, and selected bibliography of primary sources, secondary sources in Japanese, and secondary sources in English as well as an extensive index. The book is a seminal work that is authoritative and accessible for the lay public.

Started in 1998 to commemorate the five hundredth memorial of Rennyō Shōnin, the Shin Buddhism Translation Series volume, *Letters of Rennyō: A Translation of Rennyō’s Gobunshō*, contains 33 of the five fascicle’s 80 letters. The book, which was published in 2000, features short letters that can be incorporated into temple and home services. The book’s introduction, bibliography, glossary, and index are exemplary. Although it lacks the explanations found in the Rogers’ book or the commentary that accompanies the latest Japanese to English translation of the *Gobunshō* (see below), this is an excellent resource and starting point for Jodo Shinshu Buddhists who want to know more about Rennyō Shōnin.

While researching Rennyō in late 2019, I came across a recently published book by Kemmyō Taira Sato titled, *Living with Thanks: The Gojō Ofumi - The Five Fascicle Version of Rennyō Shonin's Letters*. The book, published in 2018, by The Buddhist Society Trust in London, England, is expensive (\$54.20 @ amazon.com and EUR 60 @ thebuddhistsociety.org). As we know, the latest is not always the greatest, but with more anticipation than trepidation, I ordered the latest Japanese to English translation of Rennyō's letters. At the time, I did not know much about Sato or The Buddhist Society Trust. Since reading the book (twice), I have come to the following conclusions: Sato is the perfect person to translate Rennyō for 21st century readers; Rennyō is as relevant today as he was in his own time; and this translation and commentary are a terrific companion that further advance the work done by the Betsuin, Rogers and Rogers, and Shin Buddhism Translation Series volumes.

Let me address each of the conclusions listed above:

First, why is Kemmyō Taira Sato the perfect person to translate Rennyō for 21st century readers? Reverend Sato "was born in Oita, Japan, in 1939, graduated from Kyoto University and studied with D.T. Suzuki, becoming his last disciple. After an extended career as a university professor, the author resigned to practice Buddhism and enjoy leading spiritual life at his current master's temple, Shogyōji, in Kyushu. At the age of fifty-three, Reverend Sato arrived in London and through his encounter with good friends, British and Japanese, began to serve as Director of the Three Wheels Temple, aided by his wife, Hiroko. Following a period of teaching as a Professorial Research Associate at SOAS (School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London), he is currently a member of the Board of Directors of The Buddhist Society, London. His first book to be written in English, *Great Living – In the Pure Encounter between Master and Disciple*, a volume of essays and commentaries on the Shin Buddhist text Tannishō in a new translation, was published in 2010." Sato is both a scholar and spiritual leader. His command of English is superb. His writing style is elegant, energized, and efficient. Here is what I wrote in my Amazon review back on December 17, 2019: "Simply put, having read three other sets of translations, including two that I would judge pretty exceptional.....Kemmyō Taira Sato's Japanese to English translation of *The Goto Ofumi, The Five Fascicle Version of Rennyō Shonin's Letters*, is in a league of its own. The translation is crisp, lucid, and accessible....a real joy to read....silently or aloud. But the translation, as brilliant as it is, plays second fiddle to the extensive and illuminating commentary that is provided for each of the 80 letters. This book is truly a gift to those of us who want to understand Rennyō, Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism, Shinran Shōnin, and what it means to be a 21st century follower of this particular sect of Buddhism. This is the first volume published by The Buddhist Society Trust, and the first book by Sato that I have read. Bravo....bravo!!"

Second, is Rennyō as relevant today as he was in his own time? Over the past eighteen months, I have read all five fascicles (80 letters) multiple times and the 33 letters in the Shin Buddhism Translation Series volume at least 18 times each. Even though I know they were addressed to people living more than 520 years ago, when I read a Rennyō Shōnin letter, it was as if he was speaking to me. Quite often I will read a Rennyō letter, and think to myself: "That could have happened yesterday." or "That really helps me understand x, y, and/or z." or "I can use that explanation in my own life." Knowing that I have much to learn about Shinran Shōnin, the seven Patriarchs of Pure Land Buddhism, and Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism in general, I am confident that Rennyō will continue to act as a good teacher for the remainder of my life.

Third, why is Sato's book a terrific companion for the other translations? To start with, his commentaries are stellar. Every time I read a letter in *Living with Thanks*, it is immediately followed with a thorough explanation of what I have just read. Like Rennyō, Sato is also a good teacher. In a recent conversation on Minds of Ministers, I had an opportunity to talk with Reverend Kusunoki and Reverend Miyaji about Rennyō's letters, and in particular the tenth letter of fascicle five, most commonly referred to as letter 5-10. In that conversation, which centered around the Betsuin's translation, I was asked about the various terms used by the translators to describe the concept of faith as it applies to Jōdo Shinshū practice, saying the Nembutsu, and Amida's 18th Vow. In my response, I said that rather than pick between the various translations, I would rather get to a point where I can appreciate each translation and be grateful that the translators were so meticulous in their choice of particular words and phrases based on their understanding of their origin, definition, or intended purpose....or some combination of those elements.

To conclude this essay, I would like to close by sharing Kemmyo Taira Sato's translation of letter 5-10 and an excerpt from his commentary about the letter. The translation of this short, but very important letter is elegant, and Sato's commentary, even in its abbreviated form (from two pages to three brief passages) is illuminating. My hope is that you will seek out Rennyo's Gobunsho and think of him as one of your good teachers.

Living with Thanks: The Five Fascicle Version of Rennyo Shonin's Letters

The Essential Teaching of Shin Buddhism: What is Taught by Shonin in this Tradition by Kemmyo Taira Sato

Fascicle 5 – Letter 10 (pp. 405-407)

“What is taught by Shonin in this tradition is that faith is absolutely essential. This is because, when we throw away all the miscellaneous practices and singleheartedly take refuge in Amida Buddha, our birth is assured by the Buddha through the inconceivable working of his Original Vow. Attaining this state of mind is also explained as ‘entering the company of those whose birth is rightly assured, at the time the one thought-moment is awakened.’ Our *Nenbutsu*, or pronouncing the Buddha's Name, that follows should be understood as the *Nenbutsu* of gratitude for the fact that Tathagata has assured our birth by virtue of all that he has done for us.

Most humbly and respectfully

COMMENTS

Brief as it is, amongst all the letters written by Rennyo Shonin, this is one of the most greatly appreciated. Nowadays, in actual fact, it is one of the two letters always read out at the monthly memorial service for Shinran Shonin.

It is said that the two most important points of Shin Buddhist teaching are beautifully expressed in this short letter. These two points are: ‘Faith as the right cause’ (Japanese equivalent) and ‘Pronouncing the Name in thankfulness for all that he has done for us’ (Japanese equivalent). Another important subject included in this letter is ‘Entering the company of those whose birth is rightly assured’ (Japanese equivalent). I myself think this point should be added to the two main ones, but it is usually explained as being an aspect of the first – ‘Faith as the right cause.’

.....All these three points, being closely interrelated, are vitally important for the attainment of Shin Buddhist faith. They are each elegantly summarized in this short letter. Indeed, the concluding passage always makes us feel certain of the embrace of Amida's unconditional love and encourages us to go forward in life with renewed confidence.....”

