



# Last month's events

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## WAILUKU HONGWANJI OBON



The photo shown here is 'borrowed' from the Internet. The camera-person was too caught up with dancing and eating and shirked the photography duty. Auwe.

The Lahaina Hongwanji group of 19 carpoled to the bon festival. After all, the taiko beat, the captivating music, the ono kaukau are difficult to resist.

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## PAIA RINZAI ZEN OBON



The Lahaina group of 20 bused over to Paia for Rinzai Zen's bon festival. It is always a special experience to see the Okinawan costumes and to watch the dancing. The entertainment at intermission this year was provided by a group of young men and women from Okinawa. Their costumes were brightly colored and unique. Their dancing was very energetic – with a lot of jumping and wide-arc movements.

[The following information is from Wikipedia on the Internet.] "Eisa is a form of folk dance originating from the Okinawan islands, Japan. In origin it is a bon dance that is performed by young people of each community ... to honor the spirits of their ancestors. However, it underwent drastic changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is today seen as a vital part of Okinawan culture. Eisa as we see today is danced by 20-30 young men and/or women, mainly in a circle to the accompaniment of singing, chanting, and drumming by the dancers, and folk songs played on the *sanshin*. Three types of drums are used in various combinations, depending on regional style: the *odaiko*, a large barrel drum; the *shimedaiko*, a medium-sized drum ...;

and the *paranku*, a small hand drum similar to ones used in Buddhist ceremony. The dancers also sometimes play hand gongs and *yotsutake* castanets. Eisa dancers wear various costumes, usually according to local tradition and gender of the dancer; modern costumes are often brightly colored and feature a characteristic, colorful knotted turban. Special vests and leggings are also popular."

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## Set-Up for Lahaina Hongwanji Obon



Are you sure we did it like that last year?



Let there be light ...



The temple lanterns are a 'puzzlement' every time ....



Finishing touches on the dance ring.

Watchful figure.

# 'PREP' WORK for OBON 2013



CARROT CHOPPERS



IMO 'ITCHERS' ?



TAKENOKO THREESOME



GARLIC GROUPIES



KATSU KREW 1



KATSU KREW 2



KATSU KUTTERS

Each year, it takes two or three 'villages' to produce the Obon Service, Obon Festival and all the accompaniments. A big MAHALO goes out to all who contributed in any and many ways: donors of funds and goods / shoppers for ingredients / 'prep' crews / set-up crews / clean-up crews / takenoko gatherers (just two did it all this year – Tom & Florence Kunishige / imo gardener Nakamura-san / daikon supplier Henry Koja / cabbage supplier Harold Okumura / Nelson Okumura & Paula at VIP / our top-yagura announcer, Sherman Thompson / Maui Taiko / Okinawan dance group / Waiola Church for parking / Obon dancers and attendees ..... and more ...

More of Obon 2013 ...



Top Nishime Chef 'Herbie' Nishijima



The Bento Packers

Missed photo-ops: Somehow, the camera can't be at all places at a prime time for photos. Other hard workers not pictured: the sushi preppers / andagi makers / teriyaki grillers / chowfun tossers-seasoners-mixers / food preppers for feeding workers and bon dancers / Hatsubon Service VIPs - Rev. Hironaka, Rev. Sol Kalu, Sylvia Neizman, Aileen Cockett, Alyce Yoshino. **ARIGATO!**



The Hondo, all dressed up, reverently awaits the Hatsubon Service.



"I'll have two of these and .... What's that?"



"Oh, no ... You mean the andagi is all gone ?!! "



Ayumu-chan

Minori-chan and Koko-chan

"Where's your brother Hoken?"

Ahh ... that alluring beat of taiko, and the rhythmic dancing ...



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### Obon Festival 2013

Obon 2013 has come and gone. Sunday morning, after the cleanup and having put things away, it suddenly struck me – “Was there really Obon odori last night?” No more yagura, boxes of supplies and helpers of all ages cooking, packing and selling. But then I thought, “Hey, the memories of the Friday and Saturday night dances, the Obon service and the memories of the loved ones we had gathered to pay homage to were probably more firmly etched in everyone’s minds.” For many who had journeyed to attend the Obon this year, those memories were renewed, perhaps even expanded, through conversations with ohana and friends. Joyful, the dancing was joyful and lively, just as it should be; a marvelous expression of gratitude to those who so influenced our lives, making us who we are.

I am proud to be the President of such a vibrant organization that carries on the tradition of our Hongwanji Temple. I am especially pleased that we are collectively able to stage such an important event as the annual Obon Festival. I am humbled by the many who work tirelessly, many of whom work for weeks planning and doing all the things we need to do to make Obon a success and a joyful experience for everyone. This year there were at least three generations of helpers – grandmas and grandpas, mothers and fathers, and children and grandchildren who pitched in to get the work done. Lahaina Hongwanji and the entire Sangha are grateful for all the help and support. It is my personal hope that our annual Obon celebration continues forever. With everyone’s willing support we can make it last forever.

Namo Amida Butsu.

Richard ‘Noosh’ Nishihara

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Hawaii State Federation of Honpa Hongwanji LAY ASSOCIATION Celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The Lay Association will meet **September 6<sup>th</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013, on Oahu.** Quoting Lay Association President, Keith Fukuda:

*"We toiled to get here and it wasn't easy. Going from here is even more difficult as we address the changing dynamics of our membership, society, and religious convictions. For these and many other reasons, we have selected "Discover the Future Through Our Past" as the theme for our Association. As our Association converges on the crossroads between shedding our plantation mindset and developing new dimensions, we too, wonder like the caterpillar when she thought her days were over, will we turn into a butterfly?"*

*Join us as we set sail for new horizons and set new benchmarks. Join us as we lay out programs that will excite our membership and recruit others. Witness with us as we generate enthusiastic and supportive programs for our temples. Today you and I will keep the Jodo Shinshu faith alive as we plot our course into the next century. Be with us and enjoy the journey."*



### VIDSTA Camping

This year's main event for the Valley Isle Dharma School Teachers' Association will be camping at Camp Olowalu.

The camping, which is scheduled for **SEPTEMBER 14/15**, is to be in place of the annual VIDSTA Picnic.

### Nembutsu Seminar

"Jodo Shin Buddhism – The Easy Path to Buddhism?"



Lecturer: **Rev. LaVerne Sasaki**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Buddhist minister in North America
- B.A. Social Science, Sacramento State University

- M.A. in Japanese Buddhism, Tokyo University
- M.A. in Religious Education, University of the Pacific
- Served as minister with Buddhist Churches of America, 1959-2000.

- Now retired, he keeps busy as guest speaker at BCA churches as well as community churches.

*[Continuation of UPCOMING EVENTS: Nembutsu Seminar]*

### Nembutsu Seminar

When: **SEPTEMBER 28 / 29, 2013**

Where: **Makawao Hongwanji Mission (808)572-7229**

Cost: \$20.00

### TOPICS:

1. Jodo Shinshu Buddhism: A historical / doctrinal evolution of Indian, Chinese, and Korean Buddhism "founded" by Shinran.
2. The central practice is "Shinjin faith" gained from "Monpo" (true hearing).
3. Jodo Shin Buddhism teaching and practice is summarized in Jodo Shinshu Creed.
4. Jodo Shin or Nembutsu Buddhist way is personal awareness and experience which enables one to assist in difficulties in life in various ways.

Question & Answer discussion sessions will follow each lecture.

*If you wish to attend the seminar, clip and fill in the Registration Form at the top of page 7. Send form and \$20 to Makawao Hongwanji. For folks who attend church on Sundays, or Craft Club on Tuesdays – sign up on the list (temple porch board or social hall board) and remit payment to Shirley Tobita or Carol Inaba.*



### News from related links

From the Website of Vancouver Buddhist Temple, Canada:

### Change

One of the basic teachings of Buddhism is that of impermanence or change. We are able to see many changes in nature especially now that it is spring time. Ikkyu (1394-1481) was a famous Zen monk and poet who was a contemporary of Rennyu, the 8<sup>th</sup> patriarch of Jodo Shin Buddhism. Ikkyu had a very quick mind and it came in handy for him in a well known story told about his youth. As a young monk, Ikkyu got himself in trouble one day when he accidentally dropped his master's tea cup. This was very serious since the tea cup was the master's favourite. The cup was a rare treasure, beautifully crafted from a precious clay. Of all the master's possessions, it was probably the one thing he cherished the most. Ikkyu felt very guilty and before he could formulate a plan of

escape, he heard footsteps approaching. He swept the pieces together and blocked them from view behind his body. He turned to face the door just as the master entered.

When he came withing speaking distance, Ikkyu quickly asked, "Master, why must people die?" The master replied, "It is perfectly natural. Everything in the world experiences both life and death."

"Everything?"

"Everything!"

"So it is not something we should feel upset about?"

"Definitely not!"

At this point Ikkyu stepped aside to reveal the shattered pieces of his precious teacup and said, "Master ... your cup has experienced its inevitable death."

In Gassho,  
Rev. Tatsuya Aoki



News from related links  
(continued)

## Honpa Hongwanji

BOOKSTORE UPDATE, continued.

**"Embraced by the Buddha ~ from Christian to Buddhist" by Toshiko Kawamura (\$2.50)**

The author, who passed away in Jan. 2013 in Yamaguchi, Japan, at the age of 92 grew up in a Christian family. She graduated from a university in Tokyo and soon after her marriage, she had to move from Tokyo to her husband's hometown of Hagi in Yamaguchi. The book is her story of how she turned from Christian to Buddhist. In it she praises her mother-in-law who devotedly took refuge in the teachings of Amida Buddha.

*To order any items, please contact Bookstore clerk, Yoshiko Umitani (808)522-9202 or e-mail [hqbooks@honpahi.org](mailto:hqbooks@honpahi.org).*

## Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

HEADQUARTERS UPDATE

### PEACE DAY RELATED EVENTS

- **7<sup>th</sup> Annual Parade & Festival for the United Nations International Day of Peace** – SATURDAY, SEPT. 21, 2013 at 4 p.m. in Honokaa, Island of Hawaii. Festival to include entertainment and 40+ vendors and exhibitors – including an appearance by Mr. Masahiro Sasaki, brother of Sadako Sasaki, and Mr. Yuji Sasaki, nephew of Sadako.
- **2013 Peace Day Interfaith Service**  
*When:* FRIDAY, SEPT. 20, 2013, 7:00 pm  
*Where:* Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin  
*Sponsored by:* Pacific Buddhist Academy  
*Program:* Speakers & musical performanes from a variety of religious and spiritutal traditions.  
*Featured speaker:* Mr. Masahiro Sasaki, brother of Sadako Sasaki, whose extraordinary life was recounted in the children's book, "Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes."

### HEADQUARTERS BOOKSTORE UPDATE

Items for purchase:

- Small Uchishiki for Family Altar (Butsudan)
  - Red with Sagarifuji - \$10
  - White with flowers - \$1

### September is FOODLAND Give Aloha Month

Hawaii Kyodan will participate in the **Foodland Give Aloha Program** as a means to grow the **Ministerial Training Fund**. Hawaii Kyodan humbly asks that you make a donation to the Ministerial Training Fund; here's how to do it:

1. Go to FOODLAND or SACK 'n' SAVE with your Maika'l Card between SEPTEMBER 1 & 30. Only donations made with a Maika'l Card will be matched.
2. Tell the cashier you would like to make a **Give Aloha** donation.
3. Give the cashier our **Organization Code 78644**, or they can look up Honpa Hongwanji.
4. Tell the cashier the AMOUNT of your donation. You can make a donation of any amount, but only donations up to \$249 per person will be eligible for matching. (*Don't let this confuse you. In other words, any amount you donate WILL be matched unless you donate \$250 or more.*)
5. You may also donate to **Pacific Buddhist Academy (78393)** and **Hongwanji Mission School (77603)**.
6. When the transaction is complete – you will receive a RECEIPT for tax purposes. If you wish to have your donation acknowledged by Hawaii Kyodan, please send your receipt to the Kyodan office.

CLIP this Foodland section out and keep it in your wallet – to help you remember to DONATE.

Nembutsu Seminar Registration

**“JODO SHIN BUDDHISM – THE EASY PATH TO BUDDHISM?”**

Saturday: September 28, 2013; 8:30 am – 4:30 pm (Lunch included)

Sunday: September 29, 2013; 9:00 am – 11:30 am

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Please send registration form and \$20 payable to: MAKAWAO HONGWANJI MISSION, P.O. Box 188, Makawao, HI 96768, by SEPTEMBER 20, 2013.

**For Your Information ...**

**Lahaina Hongwanji Bereavement Committee**

Did you know that the Temple has an appointed Bereavement Committee? Well, we do. This committee works tirelessly to assist families who have lost a loved one and want to have a funeral or memorial service to pay its last respects to the deceased.

When a family member passes away, the situation is at the very least chaotic. So many questions arise during such a family crisis. The Bereavement Committee at Lahaina Hongwanji was established to help families during this stressful time by helping talk through the “what needs to be done” to arrange for a service and other related activities. Aileen Cockett, Violet Nishijima, Phyllis Nakamura, and Sharon Nohara are the Temple’s Bereavement Committee. They work closely with the family to arrange for cremation services, visitation and funeral services and death anniversary services. Above all, the committee is very flexible in their attempt to meet the family’s needs and timing. The committee also works very closely in a coordinated effort at scheduling with the Reverend Ai Hironaka, Resident Minister. The committee will go a step further to arrange for flowers, refreshments and other accoutrement that the family may request.

If you find yourself in a situation where you need help to sort through all of the logistics of a funeral or the often-accompanying 7<sup>th</sup> Day Memorial Service, please contact a member of the Bereavement Committee.

Rev. Ai Hironaka – (808) 661-0640  
Aileen Cockett – (808) 268-3542  
Violet Nishijima – (808) 661-0184  
Phyllis Nakamura – (808) 661-4032  
Sharon Nohara – (808) 661-9388



Maka’ala Mynah is fluffing his feathers and sneaking away. WHY? Because he made a few goofs in his reporting last month. AUWE.

He missed reporting that Vivian Ichiki has been bringing flowers from her garden for the temple altar – in fact, she’s been doing that longer than the other folks he spotted. GOMENASAI and ARIGATO.

Maka’ala also messed up by omitting Jane Agawa from the list of Monthly Newsletter people. Not only does Jane work each month with the rest of the crew – she’s the important link that gets the newsletters mailed out correctly. GOMENASAI and ARIGATO.

**Preventing Alzheimer’s Disease & Dementia**

[This article appeared in **METTA**, newsletter of the Buddhist Study Center on Oahu.]

**UCLA Study**

“The idea that Alzheimer’s is entirely genetic and unpreventable is perhaps the Greatest misconception about the disease,” says Gary Small, MD, director of the UCLA Center on Aging. Researchers now know that Alzheimer’s, like heart disease and cancer, develops over decades and can be influenced by lifestyle factors including cholesterol, blood pressure, nutrition, sleep and mental, physical and social activity.

The big news: Mountains of research reveals that simple things you do every day might cut your odds of losing your mind to Alzheimer’s. [continues on next page]

In search of scientific ways to delay and outlive Alzheimer's and other dementias, I tracked down thousands of studies and interviewed dozens of experts. The results in a new (2010) book by Jean Carper: 100 Simple Things You Can Do to Prevent Alzheimer's and Age-Related Memory Loss (Little, Brown; \$19.99)

Here are 10 strategies ...

1) **Have coffee:** In an amazing flip-flop, coffee is the new brain tonic. A large European study showed that drinking three to five cups of coffee a day in Midlife cut Alzheimer's risk 65% in late life. University of South Florida researcher Gary Arendash credits caffeine: He says it reduces dementia-causing amyloid in animal brains. Others credit coffee's antioxidants. So drink up, Arendash advises, unless your doctor says you shouldn't.

2) **Floss:** Oddly, the health of your teeth and gums can help predict dementia. University of Southern California research found that having periodontal disease before age 35 quadrupled the odds of dementia years later. Older people with tooth and gum disease score lower on memory and cognition tests, other studies show. Experts speculate that inflammation in diseased mouths migrates to the brain.

3) **Google:** Doing an online search can stimulate your aging brain even more than reading a book, says UCLA's Gary Small, who used brain MRI's to prove it. The biggest surprise: Novice Internet surfers, ages 55 to 78, activated key memory and learning centers in the brain after only a week of Web surfing for an hour a day.

4) **Grow new brain cells:** Impossible, scientists used to say. Now it's believed that thousands of brain cells are born daily. The trick is to keep the newborns alive. What works: aerobic exercise (such as a brisk 30-minute walk every day, aqua-aerobics), strenuous mental activity, eating salmon and other fatty fish, and avoiding obesity, chronic stress, sleep deprivation, heavy drinking and vitamin B deficiency.

5) **Drink apple juice:** Apple juice can push production of the "memory chemical" acetylcholine; that's the way the popular Alzheimer's drug Aricept works, says Thomas Shea, Ph.D., of the University of Massachusetts. He was surprised that old mice given apple juice did better than mice that received water. A dose for humans: 16 ounces, or two to three apples a day.

6) **Protect your head:** Blows to the head, even mild ones early in life, increase odds of dementia years later. Pro football players have 19 times the typical rate of memory-related diseases. Alzheimer's is four times more common in elderly who suffer a head injury, Columbia University finds. Accidental falls doubled an older person's odds of dementia five years later in another study. Wear seat belts and helmets, fall-proof your house, and don't take risks.

7) **Meditate:** Brain scans show that people who meditate regularly have less cognitive decline and brain shrinkage – a classic sign of Alzheimer's – as they age. Andrew Newberg of the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine says yoga meditation of 12 minutes a day for two months improved blood flow and cognitive functioning in seniors with memory problems.

8) **Take D:** A "severe deficiency" of vitamin D boosts older Americans' risk of Cognitive impairment 394%, an alarming study by England's University of Exeter finds. And most Americans lack vitamin D. Experts recommend a daily dose of 800 IU to 2000 IU of vitamin D3.

9) **Fill your brain:** It's called "cognitive reserve". A rich accumulation of life experiences – education, marriage, socializing, a stimulating job, language skills, having a purpose in life, physical activity and mentally demanding leisure activities – makes your brain better able to tolerate plaques and tangles. You can even have significant Alzheimer's pathology and no symptoms of dementia if you have high cognitive reserve, says David Bennett, MD, of Chicago's Rush University Medical Center. <http://brain.it/>

10) **Avoid infection:** Astonishing new evidence ties Alzheimer's to cold sores, gastric ulcers, Lyme disease, pneumonia and the flu. Ruth Itzhaki, Ph.D, of the University of Manchester in England estimates the cold-sore herpes simplex virus is incriminated in 60% of Alzheimer's cases. The theory: Infections trigger excessive beta amyloid "gunk" that kills brain cells. Proof is still lacking, but why not avoid common infections and take appropriate vaccines, antibiotics and antiviral agents?

**SHARE** information that would benefit everyone. **SHARE** interesting facts and thoughts about Shin Buddhism. **SHARE** your own anecdotes about how Jodo Shinshu works in your daily life.



HOW to share it?

1. Hand it over to anyone on the Newsletter team.
2. Send it to: Lahaina Hongwanji Mission  
P.O. Box 458  
Lahaina, HI 96767
3. Call Phyllis Nakamura, 661-4032.

## DHARMA MESSAGE from Rev. Ai Hironaka – “Zenjo”

Welcome to our Sunday Service. Today, also Shotsuki Monthly Memorial Service. Some of you may come to this service because of your mother or father or other beloved ones. My Sensei said that, *“No matter how many times you hold or attend the Memorial Services, if you do not reflect upon the relationship between you and Amida Buddha, it is called a waste of your time.”* Let us use this opportunity to reflect upon ourselves through today's service.

When my grandpa was alive he once said, *“the human death rate is 100 percent.”* And if you heard this directly from him, probably everyone would think about it first and then realize that it is truly so. Because he was so serious. Every one of us knows well enough that someday I must die. But, we keep thinking it will not happen today or tomorrow and we do not worry.

Rev. Ehan Numata, who is head of Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai, he shared this with us in his book. There was a Ota Nampo (April 19, 1749 – May 16, 1823) who was a late Edo period Japanese poet and fiction writer. He wrote primarily in the comedic forms of kyoshi, derived from comic Chinese verse, and kyoka, derived from waka poetry. His last poem before death was:

*Until now, I thought it was a matter for other people,  
But – oh! I am dying! This is unbearable !*

Another poem I would like to share is written by Ariwara no Narihira (825 – July 9, 880), who was a Japanese waka poet and aristocrat.

*I have heard previously that I was on a path which eventually would reach the end. I never thought  
it would be today, but it was.*

No matter how many people die around us, if they are not immediate relatives, we are not concerned about own Death seriously. But, if someone close to us or a member of our family dies, we panic and lament. When we approach death ourselves, we can imagine how much more fearful it is. And, there is no way to run away from death, and death does not wait. Therefore, we cannot find the truth of human life by our own power. Living together, looking at our life and death with the Working of Amida Buddha – to us this is the only way that we can depend on. So, how Amida Buddha works with you and me is a very important thing in our daily life.

Amida Buddha says, I will certainly, definitely save you. Whenever, wherever, whoever. And, I will not abandon you. But, it does not mean Amida Buddha loves people who act badly. How about your case? Do you like to go out with a person who does not behave nicely? Do you like to play with someone who uses bad words all the time? Do you like to talk to someone who does not respect you? I would say NO. As human beings, we calculate about people – those who are nice to me or not, those who value me or not, those who make me happy or not. I once asked a Japanese school teacher this question, *“I know teacher should be equal to all the students, is it possible to do that?”* She said, *“Yes it is very important and that's the way it should be. But, teacher is also human ... to be honest with you, I have students that I like and students I don't like. I know it is not good. But, it does not affect their scores OK !?”* It is the same for temple minister too I assume. Oh, Kahului Hongwanji has a new minister ... is he better than our sensei? Hahaha ... I have to work hard !!! Anyway, I too don't like people who cause big trouble for me.

However, Amida Buddha is quite different. Of course Amida Buddha does not like someone who does bad deeds, but the Buddha does not stay away from troublemaker like we do. Amida anxiously worries about the person, holds out a hand and does not let go. It is like – mother carries up the child who doesn't listen to the mother at all.

There was a splendid Shinshu Minister, Zenjo (1806 – 1886) in Oita, Japan. He was very kind and gentle and everyone adored him. But, he was not good like that when he was a child. He always did bad deeds and everyone avoided him.

One day, neighbor lady came and jumped into his house with her child who had a cut and bleeding on his head. She said, *“Your son did it !! What are you going to do about it?”* Zenjo's father and mother were able to just say, *“I am sorry. I am sorry.”*

In the evening, Zenjo came back home with his face pretending not to know anything. Father called Zenjo and scolded him severely. But, Zenjo did not respond, sulking and not even giving any apology. The father is usually patient but he lost his patience and said, *"The guy who does only bad things like you, and makes trouble for other people is not child of this home. Do not come back to this home !!"* with his loud voice. The father thought if he scolded his son strictly like this, Zenjo would probably reflect on himself and say. *"I am sorry. I will not make any mistake or bad deeds."* However, Zenjo stood up and ran away from his house. The mother quickly chased Zenjo but father stopped her. *"Don't care about him. Leave him alone."* And he glared at the door.

Little by little it was getting dark outside. Mother was cooking dinner but worried about Zenjo. The father was sitting with folded arms. Dinner was cooked and put on the table for three people. Mother said, *"I wonder where Zenjo went ... What is he doing ... "* Mother was anxiously worried about Zenjo. At that time, what was Zenjo doing? Zenjo was right by the kitchen outside, and was quietly looking and listening for inside the house. Getting dark, getting cold, getting hungry. The bountiful dinner on the table looked delicious. Zenjo began to feel strange feeling because father and mother were not eating the dinner. Thirty minutes had passed, one hour ... They were just sitting on chair. Probably they are also hungry like me, but they do not eat ...

Zenjo could hear the mother's voice, *"I am really wondering where Zenjo went ..."* The father who was just sitting on chair with angry face up until now, he softly says, *"When Zenjo comes back, give him warm dinner. It is going to be cold so make it warm again."* Mother said, *"I will."* Father said, *"Wait until Zenjo comes back to our home, and have dinner with Zenjo."*

Then Zenjo, who was sitting right by the kitchen, instantly stood up and knocked on the kitchen window and yelled, *"Dad !!"* The father was surprised and ran to Zenjo's place. He said, *"Zenjo, you must be hungry. Come inside, come inside."* Zenjo could see tears on the father's face. The late dinner had begun. But, Zenjo felt that he had never eaten such delicious dinner ever in his life. He was more than happy and ate up the dinner.

Zenjo was so bad and always got scolding, but when he realized his parent's heart and mind for Zenjo, he was able to apologize obediently. Since then, Zenjo never could do any bad deeds and actions. He had been changed to nice and kind boy, and had become splendid Shinshu minister.

Regardless of how the father scolded Zenjo, who was bad boy, he could not leave him alone. Amida Buddha is just like Zenjo's father, Amida worries about us, no matter what happens in this life, will never leave us, abandon us.

At this time, please reflect on your parents too. Everyone has grown because of such kind and compassionate heart of your parents. It is only done by your own parents. There are so many beautiful children, who may look better, may be smarter, may be more skillful than own children. However, those children cannot be cuter than own child; own child is the best and only one for the parent. It can never be, I like neighbor's child more than my own child.

Amida Buddha is just like that and the target of his wisdom and compassion is every one of us, you and me. Amida Buddha guides those who listen to his calling voice to the peaceful way. When we receive his compassionate heart, we should try to be more humble and gentle to the other people. Nembutsu teachings do not work after my death, but here and now in this life. Amida Buddha's working is not after my death, but here and now in this life. Because we can receive his wisdom and compassion in this life, we do not worry about after our death.

I would like to conclude my message with Shinran Shonin's Wasan:

*Of those who encounter the power of the Primal Vow,  
Not one passes by in vain,  
They are filled with the treasure ocean of virtues;  
The defiled water of their blind passions not separated from it*

**Namo Amida Butsu**