

Treasure Mountain  
By Reverend Kazunori Takahashi

Once I heard the interesting story that reminded me of something important. I heard this is a true story. Long time ago, one farmer lived in Africa. He always worked hard on his farm. One day, he heard about a millionaire who fortunately found the diamond mine. Since he was so excited, he was determined to try to find a diamond mine because he wanted to be a wealthy person. He sold his property and earned funds for his project. However, unfortunately he couldn't find a diamond mine. His funds ran out, then he got into difficulty in his life.

After he sold his property, another farmer came to own the property. In that property, there is one small river near his house. One day, he found a beautiful stone when he was walking along the river. Since the stone looked so nice, he picked it up and displayed it in his living room. After some time, his friend visited his house. He was curious to know what kind of stone he displayed. Then the two of them asked an expert to identify the stone. As a result, they found out it was a diamond! Eventually, his property became a really big diamond mine, because there were so many diamonds in the river.

What do you think about this story? In the story, there are the two farmers. At first, the both of them didn't know many diamonds were near the house. Then the first farmer sold the property and went to different places to discover a diamond. Fortunately, the second farmer found the stone, but he didn't know its value at first. However, thanks to the professional advice, he noticed there are so many treasures around him.

This story would give us some lesson. It is said that, even if we are in a treasure mountain, it would be hard to notice that. Somehow, we tend to think that valuable things are somewhere. We would try to discover it. However, the story teaches us that there are many precious things around us.

In Buddhism, there is a saying, "Don't return empty-handed from a treasure-mountain". The treasure means Buddha Dharma. Fortunately, we have many opportunities to listen to the Buddha Dharma. However, many people miss precious opportunities of listening to it in their life. It's really wasteful or *mottainai*.

In Jodo Shin Buddhism, it is important to continue listening to the teaching of Buddhism. We always hear that Amida Buddha is always working for us with his wisdom and compassion. We have learned this fact because we have chances to listen to the teaching of Nembutsu. If we didn't have a chance to hear, we never know this fact, just like the first farmer never noticed diamonds.

Shinran Shonin said: **Master T'an-luan teaches that we reach the Buddha-land of happiness solely with the Name - the unsurpassed gem - and true entrusting, for those born there follow no other way.** (Hymns of the Pure Land Masters: *Collected Works of Shinran*, p. 372)

In this passage, he said Namu Amida Butsu is like the unsurpassed gem. However, some people might wonder why Namu Amida Butsu is so precious and important. They may think there are many other important things.

When we listen to the Nembutsu teaching, we would learn that Amida Buddha is always working for us. Our lives are supported by immeasurable life and light. Namu Amida Butsu would enable us to be aware that each of us is considered as the greatest treasure by the Buddha of immeasurable life and light. Through listening to the Buddha Dharma, we would receive the new viewpoint to our life. Therefore, the Buddha Dharma and Namu Amida Butsu are regarded as the precious treasure.

Actually, we always hear that Buddha Dharma is the treasure. We recite, "I go to the Buddha for guidance. I go to the Dharma for guidance. I go to the Sangha for guidance." As you know, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are called "Three Treasures." Let us remember that we are in the treasure mountain and continue listening to the teaching of Nembutsu. Namu Amida Butsu.