

Radio Wave

By Reverend Kazunori Takahashi

Do you like listening to the radio? Before I came to Kauai several years ago, I had a precious experience of editing the radio program which shares Dharma messages on the air at Hilo Betsuin. At that time, I experienced interesting incidents which gave me some lessons. One day, some person asked me, "Sensei, I couldn't listen to the radio program this morning. It was not broadcast. What happened?" I got similar comments from others. When I asked the radio station, I discovered the reason. They temporarily broadcast the program on FM radio instead of AM radio because they were constructing to extend their service area. Therefore, some people missed the radio program.

Another day, another person asked me the same question. She said to me, "Sensei, I couldn't listen to the radio program. I tried to tune in to both AM and FM, but I couldn't get it. Did you hear something about the program?" Then, I thought that they may be doing construction work again. However, other people didn't say anything about the problem. They said, "I could listen without any problem". Later, that first person apologized to me as follows. "Sensei, I figured out why I couldn't listen to the program. It was because my radio was broken." A few weeks after that, she told me that she bought a new radio and enjoyed the program.

After these incidents, I thought how we can compare the radio wave with Amida Buddha's working. We can listen to the radio without any cable because of various frequency radio waves sent from radio stations around us. A radio catches the sound waves and converts the waves into sound, so we can listen to the radio. Therefore, if a radio station doesn't send a wave, or if a radio doesn't work, we cannot listen to the radio program.

About Amida Buddha's working, I sometimes hear questions as follows. "It is difficult to understand what it is," or "It is difficult to entrust my heart to Amida Buddha because we cannot see Amida Buddha." I think this is similar to the radio wave. Although we cannot see the radio wave with our own eyes, the radio wave exists. When we turn on the radio and tune in the station properly, we can catch the radio wave. Likewise, although we cannot see Amida Buddha, we can learn that he exists. His compassionate power is certainly working. However, if our switch is not on, in other words, if we have a doubt, we cannot perceive him, like not having the radio turned on.

In Jodo Shin Buddhism, it is very important for us to continue listening to the Dharma. It is not easy for us to always tune in the station of Amida Buddha's guidance. On the contrary, we tend to tune in different kinds of stations, so we sometimes have suffering in our lives. Listening to Dharma enables us to know that Amida Buddha is always working for each of us. When we tune in to his guidance, Amida Buddha's vow is certainly brought to our hearts. He is telling us that he will save us. He will make us Buddhas without fail. Shinran Shonin talked about this as follows: **When sentient beings in the various forms of existence throughout the ten quarters, on hearing Amida's Name of transcendent virtues, come to attain true and real entrusting, they greatly rejoice at what they have heard.**

(“Hymns of the Pure Land, *Collected Works of Shinran*, p.331”)

According to Shinran Shonin, we can live and rejoice at Amida's working through hearing Amida's Name. However, there are some differences too. Amida Buddha's working is for the ten quarters; in other words, for all of us in this world and not for a limited area. To listen to the radio, we

need a radio which converts the wave into sound. When we listen to Amida Buddha's guidance, we don't need to prepare anything. Amida Buddha's working is converted through our voice saying, "Namo Amida Butsu." Therefore, through saying "Namo Amida Butsu", we are notified of Amida Buddha's wisdom and compassion. Fortunately, Amida Buddha's signal has already reached us and made our mouth utter his name. Let us live our everyday lives reciting the Nembutsu. Namo Amida Butsu.