

Great Compassion  
By Reverend Kazunori Takahashi

Once I heard an interesting episode on TV. This story was about an ordinary Japanese family's episode. In that family, there are father, mother, and two young children. The father goes to work everyday. The children attend school. The mother does a lot of housework such as cooking, washing, cleaning and so on. She supported the family very well. However, the father and the children often complained to her. For example, she cooked the dinner for the family every evening, but, one day, she was late for preparing for the dinner. Then, the father said to her, "Why were you late in preparing dinner? I'm hungry." Thus, he complained. Also, she sometimes asked her children to help around the house. But, they didn't help. They said, "Oh, I'm now watching an interesting TV program. I'm busy" or "I'm busy doing my homework." Thus, they hardly helped their mother. But, that mother never complained and worked hard silently for the family. However, their attitudes were suddenly changed one day. They started listening to their mother. Can you guess why their attitudes were changed?

The reason was that one incident happened in that family. That mother was in a traffic accident. Fortunately, her life was not in danger. But, since she was seriously injured, she had to stay in a hospital for a while. Therefore, in their house, the father and the children had to live by themselves. Then, one problem occurred in the family. Without the mother, they couldn't do anything because they had hardly helped the mother. Nobody knew how to use the washing machine. It took a long time to prepare meals. They had a really hard time. Then, while they were doing housework, they gradually came to realize that how hard the mother's work is. They gradually came to appreciate the all mother's work. Afterwards, she recovered and went back home. Then one thing surprised her. The behavior of the family members was totally changed. They came to help her all the time. Through the mother's accident, they became aware of what she has brought to them.

In the story, they didn't realize her thoughts at first. After she stayed in the hospital, her family realized that she always worked hard for them. If we become aware of what others did for us, we would be able to appreciate for them naturally. I think this is same as the relationship between Amida Buddha and us.

Shinran Shonin said as follows: **My eyes being hindered by blind passions, I cannot perceive the light that grasps me; Yet the great compassion, without tiring, illumines me always.**

(Hymns of the Pure Land Masters: *Collected works of Shinran*, p. 385)

According to Shinran Shonin, it is difficult for us to notice Amida Buddha's compassion, but he is always working for us. He also said: **When sentient beings think on Amida just as a child thinks of its mother, they indeed see the Tathagata, who is never distant, both in the present and in the future.**

(Hymns of the Pure Land: *Collected works of Shinran*, p. 357)

It is said that Amida Buddha is always thinking about us. If we accept his compassion and we think of him just as a child thinks of its mother, we can certainly see Amida Buddha. Parents take care of a child before a child recognizes parents. Amida Buddha thinks about us even if we don't notice his existence. Through remembering wishes of Amida Buddha, we can firmly live our daily lives. Thinking about such things, I cannot help but recite the Nembutsu. Namo Amida Butsu.