

True Heart of Compassion

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Rev. Kazunori Takahashi

As you know, there were severe thunderstorms and heavy rain on Kauai from April 13 to 15. Floods occurred in various parts of the island and caused serious damage, especially to some North Shore communities.

Were you, your family and your house okay after the heavy rain? Lihue Hongwanji Mission, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii and the Committee on Social Concerns would like to know if there are any members who were affected. I sincerely hope that you and your family are all safe, but if you were affected, please contact Lihue Hongwanji Mission.

It rained a lot even in Lihue on that weekend. Early Sunday morning, I was woken up by the sound of thunder and rain and flashes of lightening. The rain let up in the morning, so we were able to have Sunday Service on that day. However, when I watched the news, I was deeply shocked. Some areas were flooded. Some people were forced to evacuate. Some houses were severely damaged or destroyed. I watched the news with great sadness and was reminded of the following words of Shinran Shonin:

There is a difference in compassion between the Path of Sages and the Path of Pure Land. The compassion in the Path of Sages is expressed through pity, sympathy, and care for all beings, but rare is it that one can help another as completely as one desires. The compassion in the Path of Pure Land is to quickly attain Buddhahood, saying the Nembutsu, and with the true heart of compassion and love save all beings completely as we desire. In this life no matter how much pity and sympathy we may feel for others, it is impossible to help another as we truly wish; thus our compassion is inconsistent and limited. Only the saying of Nembutsu manifests the complete and never ending compassion, which is true, real, and sincere.

(Tannisho: Taitetsu Unno, Tannisho, p.

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Buddhism teaches us the importance of compassion. Compassion is a state mind that benefits others by removing their sufferings and giving them happiness. We can express compassion for family members, friends, those suffering from sickness, those who encountered accidents, those affected by natural disasters, etc. Needless to say, that is something that is very important for us. However, as Shinran Shonin said, it is very difficult for us to completely help others. Especially when I see natural disasters and their effects, I feel how powerless human beings are in such situations. Shinran Shonin then teaches us that we must become a Buddha by the Nembutsu teaching and save all beings completely. He emphasized that this is the true compassion.

At first sight, it seems Shinran Shonin gave up helping others in his life. However, his words show that he deeply considered the whole way of saving others and what the true heart of compassion is. Through sharing this teaching with others, he emphasized that Amida Buddha's true compassion is always directed to all beings.

When Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani delivered his message about "A Way of Living as a Nembutsu Follower," he said: **"It is indeed true that we are imperfect with our selfish desires and cannot act in complete**

purity like the Buddha can. However, by trying to live according to the Buddha Dharma, let us make an effort to consider other peoples' joy as our own, as well as other peoples' suffering as our own. In this way, we can live to the best of our ability, aspiring to live up to the Buddha's Wish."

Let us live our everyday lives remembering Amida Buddha's true heart of compassion. In closing, I would like to express my heartfelt sympathy for all those who were affected by the heavy rain. Namo Amida Butsu.