

Learning the Buddha's Great Compassion

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"To Accept Your Own Karma"

There is absolutely no falsehood in the statement, "All will be taken up and none left behind!" The Right Dharma is indeed something wonderful, transcending things of this world! Let us, therefore, feel no hesitancy in listening to it and reflecting on it. (Preface of "Kyogyosho-Monrui" by Shinran Shonin, translated by D.T. Suzuki)

People enjoy playing the game of poker. It is interesting to watch the players' faces during the poker game. Players change their faces when they have gotten a good (or bad) card. Some become tense, and others make smiles, or some players intentionally show their disappointment as if they did not have good cards. Some never change their appearance no matter what hand they have. Even if some people do not have a good card at all, they act like that they have the best cards. In our lives, it seems that we use many different faces as in the poker game. A face when we get out of bed, a face when we are at work, a face when we are at the party and a face when we go to the temple are all different. Which is the true face? Or is there a real face? Or are all the faces true and real?

In Buddhism truth and reality with no falsehood is the essential foundation where the Buddha's Enlightenment is rooted. The truth, or no falsehood, in Jodoshinshu Buddhism is expressed through the Buddha's Compassion of "*All will be taken up and none left behind*" and Wisdom which is "*something wonderful, transcending things of this world.*" Compassion of "*All will be taken up and none left behind*" means to embrace all the beings without discrimination. The Meditation Sutra on the Pure Land of Amida Buddha says "Each light shines universally upon the lands of the ten directions, embracing, and not forsaking, those who are mindful of the Buddha." Once encountering the Amida's Boundless Compassion, all are embraced and not abandoned. It is an experience of total acceptance by the Buddha.

Encountering the compassion of Amida Buddha means to realize that I am accepted by the Buddha as I am. Isn't it nice that you don't have to be somebody else or something else, but to truly be yourself. Then we don't need to compare ourselves to others without feeling superior nor inferior. We can be honest to ourselves without deceiving and pretending. With the Buddha's compassion of acceptance, we can face and accept our own karma instead of denying and trying to erase some of our unpleasant past and/or present. It is very important to be truly ourselves. We no longer have to pretend to be a good student of life all the time, but to live our own life sincerely and doing our best.

The compassion of the Buddha gives us a secure ground where our seeds of enlightenment may be nurtured and grow. Then, we also realize the Profound Wisdom of Amida Buddha (*something wonderful, transcending things of this world*) which makes us aware of the true nature of ourselves and the universal truth of the Dharma.

**As you are,
Come and join the assembly of the Buddha.
Come without any gifts
Entrance is open to any one**

Poker faces are no longer needed.

Truly be yourself and enjoy your life with the Dharma.

(by Shaku Kenjitsu)