

"NOTES ON THE PATH LEADING FROM 'THIS SHORE'  
to the "Other Shore" (Higan)."



September 16, 2017  
WLA Buddhist Church  
Resident Minister: Rev. Fumiaki Usuki  
Lecturer: Rev. Tetsuo Unno

THIS SHORE (SHIGAN)

- A. I want and need this or that to be fully satisfied; i.e. "happy."
- B. Yes, I'm mad; i.e. angry; nothing seems to go my way
- C. I'm almost always right in what I say but no one believes me.
- D. With regard to Amida's Primal Vow which Vows to save me, let me think about it.
- E. But it's all right, I take good care of myself and so I'll remain in good condition. I'll age very gradually and so will have lots of time to think about the Primal Vow etc.
- F. I won't age; at least as fast as others, stay in good shape, and not get sick.
- G. I'm going to do my very best to stay alive; i.e. to not die. With nanotechnology, medicine, ~~SCIENCE~~ after all, affirm that man's lifespan will be extended to 120 and even 200 years.

OTHER SHORE (HIGAN)

- A. Basically, all my "wants" are, at any given moment, being fully satisfied.
- B. All things are going perfectly, in accord with the Law Of Karma; i.e. of "cause-and-effect"
- C. Buddhistically speaking, I'm always wrong, even when I happen to be right in an objective sense. Why? Because we assert our "rightness" with egoic and therefore, blind self-righteousness.
- D. In a life that is unpredictable, I really have no choice. I must respond to the Primal Vow at this very moment, Now.
- E. I'm aging and aging quite fast. And therefore, while healthy, must try to deepen my understanding of the Primal Vow.
- F. When the karmic conditions come together in such a way that I'm to get sick, I'll get sick. Before this happens, I must deepen my understanding and experience of the Primal Vow.
- G. But eventually, I have to die and so, more so, I must truly hear the Call of the Primal Vow.

THIS SHORE (SHIGAN)

- H. All right, if life ultimately ends in death, then what I'll do is to enjoy life to the fullest. That is, "eat, drink, and be merry" at home, on cruises, at sporting events and so on and so on.
- I. Then, I'll change my ways and seek a more lasting way to "happiness." For example, I'll go to the aid of those who need help. As the great Francis of Assisi said, "It's in the giving that one receives (a sense of well-being or happiness)."
- J. Then, I'll turn to those wise men known as "Lovers of Wisdom" or "Philosophers."
- K. Let me then turn to Psychologists and seek their help.
- L. I don't want to be UNhappy and so, maybe I'll read the works of writers such as Dostoyevsky, of whom the brilliant philosopher Nietzsche said no one taught him more about life and human beings than Dostoyevsky.
- M. Left with no choice, at last, I might turn to Buddhism; specifically to Zen.

OTHER SHORE (HIGAN)

- H. That, however, I realize leads, in the end, to boredom. E.g. how many times can you go to an expensive sushi restaurant and still enjoy it? 2 days in a row? Once a week? (Restaurant Urasawa in Beverly Hills charges \$300.00 as soon as you sit down.)
- I. I find that I can't give in the selfless manner that is required. And in rare instances, I'm able to give selflessly, how long can I sustain this? Not long...
- J. There I find hundreds of Philosophers presenting hundreds of different ways to and definitions of the Truth, which supposedly sets me free from suffering. Suffice it to say, there is no definition of Truth that all Philosophers accept as being acceptable. So what is one to do?
- K. Again, there are hundreds of different Psychological approaches to "happiness." Dr. Freud, the Founder of Modern Psychology flatly says that the most that one can hope for is "ordinary unhappiness"
- L. Though writers are geniuses, I find, in their attempt to describe the Dukkha or suffering that is inherent in life, they provide no Answer or a Way leading to the Answer.
- M. Only to learn that its Founder\*assert that without a Teacher, the odds of attaining Enlightenment is 1 out of a 1,000,000. For me, then, Zen, it turns out, is hopeless
- \*Bodidharma.

The Conclusion: At the point in which all attempts to save oneself through one's Own Power ("Jiriki") have ended in utter failure, one entrusts oneself to the "Other Power" ("Tariki") which is One with the "Power of the Primal Vow (to Save Sentient Beings" ("Hongranriki").

Or to state it another way, at the point described above, Amida Buddha or the "Other Power" or "The Power of the Primal Vow" (all are identical in meaning) manifests itself in the person of the failed being.

Gassho,

Rev. Tetsuo Unno