

Learning the Buddha's Great Compassion

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"Encouragement" - *Do not hesitate to hear the Dharma* -

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 "Kyogyoshinsho" by Shinran Shonin, translated by D.T. Suzuki)

In our lives, we have experienced a need to be encouraged by others at some time or at many times. An encouraging voice can make us move forward and help us to open the path to solving our problem. Life is full of unknown and strange things. So, we need to be pushed at times to take action. Not to just sit but move! (...Needless to say, whatever the path we choose, we need to be responsible for our action.)

The simple act of coming to the temple and attending the service may require people to have courage. Reading a book about Buddhism is one thing, but actually practicing and living the Buddha-centered life is a totally different matter. If one has not grown up with the Buddhist tradition, one does not know what to expect, so one needs to have that little push of your own will and/or the support of others.

Among the three treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, it is the sangha (harmonious gathering of practitioners) which encourages each all to live the path of the Buddha-Dharma with mutual-respect. One of the key practices of the Sangha is to promote peace, compassion and sincerity among the practitioners, which provides a comfortable and encouraging environment, instead of a discouraging and uncomfortable situation.

For me, it was necessary to be encouraged in order to become an ordained minister, and later to come to the United States as a Buddhist minister. In fact, my living the path of the Nembutsu-Dharma is due to the encouragement that I have received from countless beings including my parents, family, friends, teachers, fellow practitioners, gods, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

The Nembutsu path is encouraged or pushed by the Shakyamuni Buddha, and is offered or draws us from the other shore of Enlightenment by Amida Buddha. As Master Shinran said, "*Let us, therefore, feel no hesitancy in listening to it (Dharma) and reflecting on it.*" In the end, the most reliable words of encouragement are the words of the Buddha, the awakened one to the universal truth.

Everyone is afraid of unknown things,
Not so sure of what to expect.
Calling voice from the land of enlightenment
Out of nowhere, somewhere inside
Unexpectedly but with karmic necessity
Reaches my mindful heart,
And says,
"Go, go, go ahead."
-End your hesitancy.
"Move, move, move forward."
-Enter the path of the Dharma.
"Namo 'follow' the Inconceivable Light-Buddha."
-Trust the urging words of the Buddha, and relax. (by Shaku Kenjitsu)