

Buddhism is the experience of our everyday life as a painful one due to our attachment to our everyday life as legitimate and real. It tells us that our everyday life is Samsara, from the hellish realms to the heavenly ones; and that if we take these realms to be all there is, the delusion and pain which results from that blind attachment will continue unabated.

"How can I apply Buddhism to my daily life?" then, is really asking, "How can I apply Buddhism to reinforce the delusions I already have?" To this the answer must be, "You can't use Buddhism to reinforce the delusion you already have, you can only use it to see that delusion." In other words, the primary value of Buddhism and especially Jodoshinshu is in its Truth-value, not its Utility-value. The Nembutsu will not help you avoid illness, avoid accidents, strike it rich in Vegas, pass exams, get you a date, cure you of cancer, etc., etc., ad nauseum. And yet it is precisely these things that we look to religion to achieve for us. We want to manipulate delusion, not see it. This deep-seated need to manipulate reality is called *Jiriki* – the power of the ego-self. It is this power that makes the world go round. It creates good thoughts and good deeds as well as evil thoughts and evil deeds, it creates gentility as well as coarseness, and all the good moral qualities which make life heavenly as well as the immoral qualities which plunge us into hell. All this, Buddhism calls *Samsara*, the world of constant birthdeath, the world of delusion. In our moments of not being able to see anything else, we call this the *real world*.

HOW CAN YOU APPLY Buddhism to your everyday life?

But Buddhism posits another reality called *Nirvana*, lit. "blown out, no blowing". It refers to the condition where the old attachment to the idea of the Samsara world as the ultimate reality is blown out. The turbulence that causes waves on the surface of a lake is no longer blowing, and the lake becomes calm and placid. When the violent winds of attachment to the self are not blowing, we connect with the *real world* – which to our utter astonishment, is the world of Samsara without ego-control. This is called *Tariki* – the power of truth-reality seen without the ego-lens. In Jodoshinshu that truth-reality is called Amida Buddha – the *truth-reality that transcends time and space*. Namoamidabutsu means *I take refuge in the truth-reality that transcends time and space*.

In terms of Samsaric life, you must cultivate the more positive aspects of the ego-self to create a more gentle, amicable, comfortable and meaningful society. In terms of Nirvanic life, you must see *Jiriki* for what it is and give in to *Tariki*, give in to true and real life, which includes the Samsaric world. I take refuge in the Light, I take refuge in the Pure Music.

Gassho,

Rev. Mas