Buddhist Churches of America
1983 Ministerial Association
Dharma School Committee

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Buddhist Churches of America Endowment Foundation
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My Offering Program

Mr. Isao Tanaka — Photograph

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In gassho,

Etsuko Steimetz
Materials Coordinator
Buddhist Churches of America
Ministerial Association Dharma School Committee
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PREFACE

Two years ago the Dharma School Division of the Buddhist Churches of America Ministerial Association published JISHIN KYO NISHIN, a guide for ministers and Dharma School teachers. To be published now is Phase II, the grade-level lesson plans.

The grade-level plans help integrate curriculum to intensify a progressive course of study for each grade. For abundance and variety they were integrated from among old materials stored at Buddhist Churches of America headquarters, new materials from Dharma School conferences, and material I have written. Aims and objectives for each grade level are outlined in general terms to preserve flexibility and to accommodate individualized needs in various temples.

For these lesson plans to succeed, teachers must understand the Teacher’s Guide for their particular grade level; and they must understand grade-articulation. I suggest that each teacher have all the grade level books to facilitate articulation and enrich lesson-content. All temples do not divide into each grade category, but a grade level scheme can be combined out of a system of individual-grade lesson plans.

Repetition of materials from one grade to another may be noticed. This is by design, for reinforcement. Teachers will freely tailor to the needs of their particular situations. Flexibility and creativity will open ideas to be shared at conferences, and the lesson plans will undergo continuing improvement and adjustment.

It is hoped that all due freedom and creativity, these Dharma School lesson plans will provide a basis for system-wide unity of curriculum and communication on a firm foundation of Buddhist doctrine and Jodo-Shinshu insights. The aim is fulfillment for teachers and all students, and a happier, more knowledgeable Buddhist community.

Some aims of the Grade Level Lesson plan books are to:

1. help students discover their true selves
2. help students realize Amida’s wisdom and compassion
3. help students to acquire knowledge of Buddhism generally and Jodo-Shinshu in particular
4. help students develop character
5. help students feel gratitude in the nembutsu
6. help students apply Buddhism to the needs of daily life
7. help students to make decisions and develop critical thinking
8. help students to be confident as Buddhists in a Christian society
9. help students to work with family, friends, temple and community.
10. help students develop awareness of and sympathy for the entire world and universe in which they live.

Etsuko Steimetz
THREE TREASURES

Leader:

Hard is it to be born into human life. Now we are living it. Difficult is it to hear the Teachings of the Blessed One. Now we hear it. If we do not deliver ourselves in the present life, no hope is there that we shall be freed from suffering and sorrow in the ocean of birth and death. Let us reverently take refuge in the Three Treasures of the Truth.

Leader and Sangha (in unison):

I TAKE REFUGE IN BUDDHA. May we all together absorb into ourselves the principle of Your Way to Enlightenment and awaken in ourselves the Supreme Will.

I TAKE REFUGE IN DHARMA. May we all together be submerged in the depth of the Doctrine and gain wisdom as deep as the ocean.

I TAKE REFUGE IN SANGHA. May we all together become units in true accord in Your Life of Harmony, in a spirit of Universal Brotherhood, freed from the bondage of selfishness.

Leader:

Even through ages of myriads of kalpas hard is it to hear such an excellent, profound and wonderful doctrine. Now we are able to hear and receive it. Let us thoroughly understand the true meaning of Tathagata's Teaching.
INTRODUCTION

Purpose Of The Guide

The purpose of Buddhist Education is to find the path that leads to personal awareness. This curriculum guide is designed to encourage teachers to provide meaningful lessons on religion for students, to develop positive attitudes in students, and to develop further the religious awareness of the teachers. Guidelines for teachers, and study guides and materials, are developed so that the educational goal of Buddhism can be achieved. Buddhist education guidelines are “experiences under guidance, consciously planned to attain specific objectives.”

This publication is designed to aid Dharma School teacher by providing:

- Study materials on Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu
- Information on methods, materials and lesson planning
- Examples of Jodo Shinshu teaching methods and curriculum materials

How To Use The Guide

This guide is designed as a teaching reference. A good Dharma School teacher develops a personal relationship in emphasizing the student's needs. It is important to creatively relate the lives of the students to the teachings of Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu. The Dharma School has fulfilled its obligation to the students when guides and materials can be used to focus on the life situation of the students.

The KEY is a sound study program for the teachers will awaken the Buddhist concept of education.

- Need indepth religious instruction for teachers
- Need personal understanding of doctrine
- Need personalization of the teachings within the life of the teachers themselves

The educational success of the program is dependent on active participation by MINISTERS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS.

MINISTERS conduct the study classes. Ministers, with their continuing experience, study of life and knowledge of doctrine, will be able to guide the individual teachers through the process of living—study.

TEACHERS will be given the opportunity to personalize the meaning of doctrine to their life experiences in close study with the ministers. With this personal understanding of the teachings, they will be able to share their thoughts, knowledge, and feelings with the students in the classroom.

STUDENTS will have a better feeling for Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu because they will be able to see the class-time as an opportunity to personally grow and find meaning in their lives as Buddhists.
GRADE LEVEL LESSON PLANS

Aims and objectives of Buddhist Education in the Dharma School:
1. To help students to discover their true selves
2. To help students to realize Amida’s Wisdom and Compassion
3. To help students to appreciate and learn about Buddhism and the Jodo Shinshu Sect.
4. To help students to develop character
5. To help students to live and practice the Jodo Shinshu teachings with feeling of gratitude in the Nembutsu.
6. To help students to apply their Buddhist lesson to their daily lives
7. To help students toward decision-making and critical thinking process.
8. To help students to be confident as Buddhist in a Christian Society
9. To help students to work together with family, friends, Temple, and Community.
10. To help students become aware and sensitive of the world and universe in which they live.

III. Grade Level Focus

Pre-School: Buddhist Etiquette
Kindergarten: Buddhist Teachings
First Grade: Thankfulness
Second Grade: Gratitude
Third Grade: Our Temple
Fourth Grade: Study of Gautama Buddha
Fifth Grade: The Ways of a Buddhist
Sixth Grade: Buddhist Heritage
Seventh Grade: Shinran Shonin
Eight Grade: Nembutsu
High School: Buddhism/Jodo Shinshu
Assistant Teachers

What The Guide Can Do For You
Help you decide which lesson plan and supplementary material will best serve your purpose and students.
Guide your selection of content and appropriate material to fit the needs of your students.
Facilitate short-term and long-term lesson planning.
Help you to seek religious growth.

JODO SHINSHU CREED

I affirm my faith in Amida’s Infinite Wisdom and Compassion. Reciting his Sacred Name, I shall live with strength and joy.
I shall look up to Amida’s Guide Light. As I reflect upon my imperfect self, I live with gratitude for His Perfect Compassion which surrounds me at all times.
I shall follow Amida’s Teachings. I shall understand the Right Path and resolve to spread the true Teachings.
I rejoice in Amida’s Wisdom and Compassion. I shall respect and help my fellow men and work for the good of my community.
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**PLANNING FOR THE CLASSES:**
Each child has basic needs for love, security, acceptance, belonging, and recognition.
Provide a climate that will allow all children to feel secure and wanted.
Help each child to feel that his/her contributions are important.
Develop a positive self-image in each child.
Provide each child with a better understanding of Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu teachings.
_The child’s learning comes from experiences._
Provide each child with opportunities for exploration, investigation, experimentation, observation, discovery, listening, discussion, critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making skills._
LESSON PLANNING SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Long Range Planning May Include:

Use of room, monthly and yearly plans, establishing goals and planning experiences throughout the year so there is sequence of learning appropriate timing. Consider the Buddhist observance to focus each month’s planning.

Specific Weekly Planning:

Material gathering for use, lessons well planed, enrichment resources and supplies, opportunities for children to participate in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning activities. Be aware of the Temple Calendar so your lesson will not be cancelled.

Preparation For First Meeting:

Arrange the room so it is warm and pleasant looking, introduce the students, name tags for children, present your lesson plans and subject to the students or children, make booklets for children to keep year’s work. Familiarize children with the Buddhist adornments in the room.

Staff:

In order for the staff to work effectively with the students, we must be able to work effectively with each other. The Dharma School superintendent should meet with teachers to discuss the overall plan and thrust for the year, assigning of children to classes, overall policy for the year, and the religious education material to be presented and covered.

Parent Involvement:

To help classes—at home, clerical, transportation, visiting classroom, assisting with classroom projects, telephone tree, and to reinforce the religious practice at home.

To plan and prepare potluck, class picnics, parent-teacher parties, family picnics, special outings, etc.

To assist with the Dharma School fund raising projects, services, curriculum material.

To consider becoming Dharma School teachers.

Extra Activities:

Debate teams—religious topics, panel discussions, book review, film making, inter-class sports events, inter-class student teaching, retreats.

Art:

Art Experiences Should Bring to Children Opportunity for:

Stimulation of imagination, exploration and experimentation, satisfaction of the need to be original, development of originality in expression of ideas in visual form, growth in awareness of environment, sense of personal achievement, appreciation of the visual expression of others, expression of joy.

Role of teacher:

Set the climate of the classroom, provide an atmosphere which encourages exploration and discovery, assure adequate time for children to plan, discuss, experiment and complete, select appropriate materials, help children to develop realistic goals and expectations, and offer guidance, support, encouragement, warmth, acceptance, and appreciation, and most of all relate the expression to religious education.
THE THREE VEHICLES OF LEARNING  
(The Path of Practice of Buddhism)

(1) Precepts  
By following the precepts we learn to control the body and mind.

(2) Meditation  
Through meditation we learn to unify our minds.

(3) Wisdom  
Wisdom is attained by the practice of the above two, and through this wisdom all ignorance and passions are severed, and the true state of Enlightenment is then realized.

LESSON PLANNING

Oral Expressions:
Discussions/exchange of ideas/sharing time/stories.
Give each child an opportunity to participate.

Written Expressions:
Poetry, story writing, publication, plays, letters
Journalism: Japanese newspaper contracts
See: Individual lesson units for instructions.

Drawing:
Keep a booklet of all the work completed in Dharma School. Expression through art.

Foods:
Baking or cooking lessons to coincide with monthly or seasonal activities.

Music:
Print new gathas, write lyrics and music as a class project. Build a Temple choir.

Cultural Projects:
Attend field trips to other Temples, neighboring Temples, and attend the local community cultural events.

Resource Speakers, Presentations, Special Guests:
Invite people in your community to share their talents with your class.

Buddhist Observance Presentations:
Hanamatsuri or Bodhi Day programs, choose a presentation for each month.
First Is Preparation:

What is the aim in this lesson?
What materials will I need?
How will I present this lesson?

Preparation of general knowledge of the topic and intended direction is very important. It is important for the teachers to work through one’s own thoughts as well as what the students may be thinking. Flexibility in terms of the process is very important, but it must be a controlled flexibility. If you need assistance with the Buddhist material, please consult your Temple ministers.

Second Is How To Start:

Class can begin with an introduction—name tags for young children, discussion of interest for older students. The class session can begin in a number of ways. Much will depend on the topic under consideration. It can begin with a story, music, or quotation. After the introduction of the topics, time should be allowed for reflective thinking. Then, begin the lesson or discussion by involving the children or students. Begin and end class with Gassho.

Third Is To Listen To Response:

Let the students know that you are interested in the responses and are keeping track of important points. After key responses are put on paper or noted, discuss the general trend of the thinking of the class. Reach a consensus and incorporate the religious point of view. The process requires a summary lead by the teacher or student so that an understanding can be developed with the lesson. Give clear and concise instructions.

Fourth Is How To End:

If the intent of the topic is achieved, it is time to stop. Always keep in mind the goal or target of the project, reach a conclusion by the end of class time. In order to hold student interest, the topic must consist of social concerns, human circumstances, and student preferences. The response is generally kept within the context of the student’s own experience.

After this is completed, the Buddhist and Jodo Shinshu perspective is introduced to see how the teachings apply to the lives of students. Every avenue possible is explored for the enhancement of thoughts and feelings.

The topics can be introduced by the use of visual aids, stories, current events, and role-plays. At any time, if students wish to present a topic for consideration, they are free to do so.

Remember: your lessons are presented every seven (7) days and should always be reviewed and repeated.

ROOM ARRANGEMENT

A. Buddhist Library Corner: An area for printed materials
B. Interest Centers: Select a Buddhist concept and show an example of it.
   Karma. Plant a seed; explain the significance of the seed; show how the plant illustrates karma.
   Interdependence. Show that a common everyday object is dependent upon the efforts of hundreds of people and upon many resources provide by nature.
   Craft. Select a very simple craft which is related to Buddhism which will not take more than a few minutes to make. Remember you meet only once a week.
C. An area where the Dharma School teacher can meet with the entire group.

D. Conference areas:
A place where a child and the Dharma School teacher can discuss what he has learned, what can be done in the future, or how the child feel about Dharma School.
An area where small group conferences may be held with parents/teachers/ministers.

What Buddha preaches in his language, people receive and assimilate in their own language as if it was specially intended for them. Buddha’s horizon surpasses human thoughts; it cannot be made clear by words or examples, it can only be hinted at in parables.

TEACHER’S RECORD KEEPING MATERIALS

1. Teacher’s monthly reports
   Classroom activities
   Comments:

2. Dharma School registration of each child enrolled in your class
   If a child is absent more than twice in a row, make an effort to contact the family and inquire about the child.

3. Dharma School Class List/name, address, telephone numbers

4. Dharma School Calendar for the whole teaching year—include church activities

5. Dharma School Teacher’s Directory

Suggestions:

Write letters to parents as to what the child will be learning throughout the Dharma School year.

Dear Parent:

Welcome to our Dharma School. We are happy to have your child join us in sharing the Dharma. Dharma School is scheduled to open __________, time: __________ and will be for the religious training of your (child) - (children). While we try to make the experience enjoyable, it is not a gathering place just for fun.

Each new Dharma School year begins in September and ends in June. Children range in ages from 2 years old - Pre-School through Seniors in High School. The following will be the course study for your child, ______________for this Dharma School year.

It is our hope to give a basic, well-rounded background in Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu together with a firm faith the child can carry with him/her throughout his/her life.

We welcome any suggestions from you and hope to see you often. The teacher assigned to your child/children is/are ______________

In Gassho

In Gassho

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BCA FDSTL 2017
TEACHER'S MONTHLY REPORTS

NAME: 
MONTH OF: 

Classroom Activities:

Responses to needs of Teachers, Parents, and Students:

Individual work with children:

Parent calls or home visits:

Religious meetings, conferences, lectures, or services:

Field trips:

COMMENTS:
Dharma School Registration

Name of Child: 

Address:  Telephone: 

School Attending:  Grade: 

Birth Date  M.  F.  

Mo.  Day.  Year

Entrance Date:  Attendance Record: 

No. of Brothers  No. of Sisters: 

Name of Parents: 

Address: 

Home Telephone:  Work Telephone: 

In case of emergency and parents cannot be contacted, call:

Name:  Address: 

Telephone 

Parent Participation

Name: 

Address:  Telephone: 

Name of Children (Child): 

Please indicate interest: 

Date  Signature: 

XVI

BCA FDSTL 2017
CHILD DEVELOPMENT CHART

by
Dr. Wilbur Dutton
Assistant Professor, School of Education, U.C.L.A.

THREE YEAR OLDS

Characteristics:

1. active, ready and eager to explore environment.
2. plays with others, but joins and braves groups at his own pace.
3. has a growing awareness of other people. Make attempts to play with others but still follows his own spontaneous interests.
4. play groups are fluid at this stage.
5. quarrels and conflicts quickly settled and readily forgotten, often settled by the child himself.
6. has vague sense of time.
7. begins to carry on conversations and exchange ideas with adults and peers.
8. expresses ideas through bodily activity.
9. learns by doing; learns through first hand experience; learns through plays; learns through experimentation and exploration.
10. enjoys realistic stories about things familiar to himself, home, family, pets, etc.
11. creative efforts exploratory and not necessarily representative.

Needs:

1. experience as a member of a group.
2. play with children of own age.
3. small group experiences with opportunity for individual play.
4. socialization beginning; therefore, understanding and skillful adult guidance needed to help foster satisfying groups relationships.
5. No insistence on conformity to group relationship, activity.
6. opportunity for experimentation and exploration in a challenging environment.
7. many first hand experiences.
8. to feel, touch and smell what he sees.
9. contact with living and growing things.
10. vigorous bodily activity, climbing, building and constructing.
11. balance between quiet and active play.
12. rest and nourishment.
13. opportunity to express self creatively with variety of sensory materials.
14. flexible program to meet his ever-changing interests and needs.
15. consistent adult personnel.
FOUR YEAR OLDS

Characteristics:
1. active, social, enthusiastic.
2. enjoys being with others.
3. enjoys carrying on conversation with adults.
4. more imagination shown in use of play materials.
5. play activities carried on for longer period of time with greater complexity.
6. play grouping apt to carry over from day to day.
7. play carried on in small social groups in a cooperative way.
8. interests of boys and girls similar.
9. independent in caring for own needs. Solve problems more often on his own, without appeal to adult for solution.
10. apt to show aggression as he learn to become a working member of a group.

Needs:
1. freedom to experiment and explore his environment.
2. ample opportunity to express himself creatively with raw materials.
3. opportunity to develop concepts and ideas through dramatic play.
4. opportunity to develop his independence in carrying out his own ideas; in caring for his own physical needs.
5. large equipment to aid in development of large muscles (hollow blocks, wheel toys, climbing apparatus).
6. help in growing in sensitivity to other's feelings.
7. help in learning to take turns and to share.
8. self-respect and self-reliance developed through recognition of small successes.
9. consistent adult personnel.

FIVE YEAR OLDS

Characteristics:
1. physical growth slowing down.
2. has developed independence in caring for his own needs.
3. leadership developing, child learning to direct activities for small group of his peers.
4. good sense of humor.
5. wants information about things, and people he knows.
6. play is essential, serious work to him.
7. interest widening to take in life in community around him . . . beginning to see the relationship between the community and his home.
8. motor coordination well developed.
9. ready to act and respond as a member of a larger group. Longer attention span in listening to stories.
Needs:

1. time to complete their projects.
2. greater variety of accessory materials to carry out desire for greater detail in play activities.
3. ample time for dramatic play.
4. approval of adults to develop self-confidence.

SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT YEARS OLDS

Characteristics:

1. interest begins to move to adults outside homes.
2. vacillate between working for common end and intense personal rivalry.
3. beginning to be selective of friends . . . very social.
4. observes needs and desired of other children.
5. shows independence by unkempt appearance and ways of talking.
6. secrets, giggles, boast, complete.
7. strive for group acceptance and independence.
8. fears of imaginary creatures, being alone, events not understood.
9. take self seriously, cautious.
10. not interested in opinions . . . literal (something is or is not).
11. short attention span.
12. drawings gradually growing from symbolic to realistic.

Needs:

1. personal interest and approval of adults and peers.
2. motor activity.
3. dramatic and rhythmic activity.
4. love and affection from adults.
5. to work in small groups.
6. to feel they are contributing to that group.
7. recognize own role, to belong.
8. recognize difference between own and others’ property.
9. discriminate between truth and fantasy.
10. short periods, varied activity.
11. help in bringing formal instruction and real life experience on their level.
12. direct experience and dramatization.
13. free conversation.
14. to develop friends.
EIGHT, NINE, TEN YEAR OLDS

Characteristics:
1. begin to like team competition but of type that displays individual skill.
2. group loyalty develops.
3. social contacts widen.
4. foolish capers, silly, rough-housing, practical joking.
5. keen sense of right and wrong.
6. little interest in other sex.
7. beginning to recognize value of money.
8. argumentative, but alert, friendly interest in people.
9. greater responsibility and dependability.
10. begins to evaluate own behavior, desires, interest, skills.

Needs:
1. to be members of a group of peers.
2. finds responsibilities, with support and guidance of adults.
3. to grow in self-reliance, independence, self-government.
4. praise, encouragement, social approval adults... to retain his confidence in them, even though he is asserting independence.
5. develop followership as well as leadership.
6. gain self-confidence by developing one skill.
7. planned after-school activities.
8. opportunities for creativity through art, drama, rhythm, music.

TEN, ELEVEN, TWELVE YEAR OLDS

Characteristics:
1. wide range of individual differences.
2. find satisfaction in participating in community services.
3. begin to like teams, competition.
4. always in hurry to do things of interest of them.
5. awkwardness, laziness due to rapid growth.
6. embarrassed to show affection.
7. influenced by praise, especially parental.
8. feeling of martyrdom with younger children.
9. much teasing, seeming antagonism between sexes.
10. may be untidy, uncooperative, self-assertive.
11. rapid progress in intellectual skills.
Needs:
1. warm affection and sense of humor, understanding, patience in adults.
2. no nagging or talking down.
3. to act and dress like rest of gang.
4. different kinds of plays and activity for both sexes.
5. participation in decisions and chance to face consequences of mistakes.
6. help in harmonizing conflicting loyalties and standards.
7. group security and solidarity, organized group activity, clubs.
8. adjustment to opposite sex, through working in complementary groups.
9. varied program to meet different maturity levels.
10. opportunities for independence, responsibility without pressure.

TWELVE, THIRTEEN, FOURTEEN YEAR OLDS

Characteristics:
1. slavish to gangs.
2. docile or rebellious to family.
3. try many new experiences.
4. fads.
5. careless in work.
6. extreme devotion of special friends; these change overnight.
7. resent teasing or criticism.
8. unstable, restless, moody, lack of confidence.
9. become unusually confidential at times.
10. spend more time alone.
11. ignore adult help, but need indirect guidance.
12. sudden crushes.
13. hero worship.
14. embarrassed about sexual development.

Needs:
1. help in developing power to concentrate.
2. guidance in how to study, plan day, etc.
3. recognition of individual differences, responsibilities.
4. channels for natural energy.
5. understanding of vacillating affections.
6. emancipation from family, but security and understanding.
7. intense friendships—exchange of experience.
8. balance of freedom and security.
9. constructive recreation.
10. a “worthy cause.”
POINTS TO CONSIDER IN STORY TELLING

I. AUDIENCE ADAPTATION

When choosing stories for a particular group, the following factors should be considered:

1. Sex and age of the listener
2. Economic status of the audience
3. Hobbies and interest of the group

II. AGE GROUPS

A. Age of Repetition (3 to 6 years old)

1. Stories for this age group should be based on concrete, familiar concepts. Stories should be within the child's limited experience. *Trips to the zoo about dogs, cats, toys.*
2. Much of the child's experience is based upon his five senses.
3. Repetition is enjoyed by children. Children within this age group do not have the attention span of an adult, so constant repetition gives them a sense of assurance and pleasure of recognizing events and characteristics.

B. Age of Fancy (6 to 9 years)

This is the magical period for story-telling. Much creative thinking can be developed. This is a period where generosity is rewarded and evil-doing and selfishness is punished. This is the age of making-believe.

C. Age of Hero-Worship (9 to 12 years old)

Children in this age category are in want of danger, and daring action. Here, they are interested in the exploits of Babe Ruth, Robin Hood, King Arthur, and of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. Here again, the choice of stories must be based on how the stories will satisfy the desire for adventure and instill high ambitions and ideals as well.

D. Age of Idealism (12 to early teens)

This is a period of lofty ideals. Stories which point up the value of good manners, social adequacy and healthy boy-girl relationships are important. Boys and girls in this age group are interested in stories which explore vocational and professional areas. Stories of athletics are important to the boys of this group. Stories about girls of the same age will be appreciated.

POINTS IN PREPARING STORY TELLING FOR THE CHILDREN

1. Know The Story

Read the story and be familiar with the main theme. Try to make the story a part of your life as well as relating to the children on a personal base.

2. Analyze The Story

Make sure the children will understand the language usage. Add your personal interest to the story.
3. Telling The Story

Spontaneity and adaptability are key to your presentation. Be exciting. Have the children participate whenever possible.

4. Evaluation

How effective has the story?

1. Ask the children to repeat the story; carefully listen to each child and respond to their interpretations.
2. Ask the children to draw the character or scene from the story.
3. Question and answer period. Make sure you allow enough time for the question and answer period. Perhaps, you can review its points at the beginning of the lesson on the following Sunday.

TEACHER

Those who wish to teach the Buddha’s Dharma acceptably must be concerned about four things: - First, he must be concerned about his own behavior; second, he must be concerned about the people he will approach and teach and what words he will use; third, he must be concerned about his motive for teaching and the end he wishes to accomplish; fourth, he must be concerned about the great compassion of Buddha.

* * *

As one little candle lights another, so the light of Buddha’s compassion will pass from one mind to another mind endlessly.

COMPASSION

Buddha’s compassion embraces all people and his never lessening desire is for their happiness. He loves people as parents love their children and he wishes for them the highest blessedness, namely, that they might be able to pass beyond this ocean of life and death.

* * *

Just as rainfalls on all vegetation, so Buddha’s compassion extends equally to all people; but just as different plants receive particular benefits from the same rain, so people of different nature and circumstances are blessed by different methods.

WISDOM

Faith, humility, shame, sincerity of effort and wisdom are great sources of strength to him who is seeking enlightenment; among them wisdom is the greatest and all the rest are but aspects of wisdom.

* * *

As the stars of the heavens are reflected in a calm sea, so peoples’ thoughts, feelings and circumstances are reflected in the depths of Buddha’s Wisdom. This is why Buddha is called, The Perfectly Enlightened One. Buddha’s Wisdom refreshes the arid minds of people, enlightens them and teaches them the significance of this world, it causes and its effects, appearances and disappearances. Indeed, without the aid of Buddha’s Wisdom, what aspect of the world is at all comprehensible?
Chapter I

GRADE LEVEL LESSON PLANS

OUTLINE OF BUDDHISM
FOR DHARMA SCHOOL TEACHERS

I. SANGHA: Objective of the Dharma School, methods of teaching, etc.

II. Dharma: The contents of Four Noble Truth, Four Characteristic of Life, Eightfold Noble Path, Six Paramita, their relationships, etc.

III. ONENESS: Reality in Buddhism, differences among sects, Buddha-nature, enlightenment, etc.

IV. TRIKAYA: Three aspects of Buddahood, Dharmakara Bodhisattva, idea of God, etc.

V. FAITH: Meaning of Namu Amida Butsu, contents of faith, etc.

VI. KARMA: Buddhist concept of karma, soul, life after death, sin, etc.

VII. A Comparative Outline of General Buddhism and Shin Buddhism

Buddhist Education

Teaching Dharma School
1. Worship for the young
2. What is teaching
3. What makes a good teacher
4. Two schools of thought in Religious Education
5. Teaching methods of Dharma School
6. How to Plan for A Dharma School Session
7. The Dharma Class Session
8. How can we help Children Learn
9. Teaching Shin Buddhism to children
10. Cooperation at Home
11. Psychological Characteristics of age groups

APPENDIX: Recommended Buddhist Books for beginner
Significance of Sanskrit.
Guide for Superintendents.
I. SANGHA

A. What is the objective of the Buddhist Dharma School?

The objective of the Dharma School is to develop individuals who will live in accord with the basic aspiration of the Buddhist tradition throughout history. The basic aspiration consists of the following vows:

1. To help alleviate the suffering of all people and all forms of life. Since interdependence, beginning with the most obvious and extending to the profoundly subtle, is the fundamental reality of life, each of us is involved in the well-being of all others. Therefore, as long as there is one unhappy being in the world, no one's happiness is complete. Thus, the Buddhist strives for the happiness of all people, regardless of race, country, or ideology, and of all forms of life, regardless of how mighty or insignificant they may be.

2. To recognize clearly the limitations of self, characterized by self-centered ignorance and destructive passions, and to work tirelessly for their transformation into energies for good and positive action.

3. To learn, master, and realize as much as possible the accumulated wisdom of the ages, so that one may be successful in fulfilling the dual vows of helping all people and transforming the self.

4. To follow the path of the Buddha, so that one may enter the stream of becoming to eventually attain the highest realization of Buddhahood as the final conclusion to the purpose of life.

The Buddhist is not deterred by the immense challenge of his aspirations, for he knows that the practical approach to their fulfillment is to take each step, one at a time, however small they may be, for he knows that what is more significant is not the ultimate goal but the process leading to that goal. The first steps must be taken from the earliest period conscious childhood.

B. How can we teach Buddhism more effectively?

Parents and teachers can teach Buddhism to others effectively, if we keep in mind the following points and constantly try to perfect ourselves in each of the three ways:

1. Faith: First of all we must understand and appreciate the teachings in order to impart it to others. Shan-tao, the Fifth Patriarch of Shin Buddhism, expressed this thought in a very famous statement:

"First to believe in the teaching oneself; then endeavor to teach others to believe." Faith is awakening to the truth of Buddha's teaching. It is ultimately the process of becoming the Buddha. When we realize its significance, we will desire to share this understanding.

2. Gratitude: In the Dhammapada there is a well-known passage which reads:

"The gift of religious exceeds all gifts; the sweetness of religion exceeds all sweetness."

As we receive the gift of Buddha's teaching and realize the "sweetness" of its truth for daily living, we become deeply grateful. This gratitude, arising spontaneously from faith, is the motive for teaching Buddhism to others.

3. Sincerity: Parents or teachers must be, above all else, sincere. Techniques of teaching and knowledge of subject matter are insufficient when sincerity is lacking. Natural sincerity should be nurtured as an outflow of faith and understanding.
We must develop faith, gratitude, and sincerity until they become a free and spontaneous expression of our lives. Only then can there be any effective teaching of Buddhism to others.

C. Which is better to teach first, general Buddhism or Shinshu?

First, it must be remembered that general Buddhism and Shinshu are not two different teachings. Buddhism is one, and they are merely emphasis on different aspects of an integrated whole, although it is true that the emphasis that is expressed in Shinshu is more closely related to everyday living.

Second, as a Shin Buddhist we must appreciate Shinshu awareness of compassion of Amida Buddha. If we understand this we can explain Shinshu through various means: life of Sakyamuni Buddha, parables and Jatakas in the scriptures, fables and stories taken from books, and current events and daily happenings.

Third, it can be easier for children to understand concrete events that occurred in history. For this reason for life of Buddha and general Buddhism might be taught before Shinshu. The understanding of Shinshu requires a certain amount of maturity of both life-experience and background in Buddhism.

Fourth, the important thing, however, is to realize that the compassion of Amida Buddha can be understood by every one, especially a child. This understanding is not necessarily conveyed to the child by words; rather, it may be conveyed by the attitude of the teacher and the atmosphere in which the child is being taught. Both the attitude and the atmosphere must be expressive of the compassion of Amida Buddha.
II. DHARMA

FOUR NOBLE TRUTH:

In order to solve the problems that arise in our life, we must have RIGHT VIEW of what constitutes our personal, human life.

1. The Noble Truth: Duhkha. Life is essentially discontent.
3. Third Noble Truth: Nirvana. Life is peace and fullness.
4. Fourth Noble Truth: Way. All the teachings of Buddha show the way to uproot blind desire, so that duhkha will vanish and we will live in the peace and fullness of Nirvana.

FOUR CHARACTERISTICS OF LIFE:

In order to live in accord with the nature of things and improve society, we must have RIGHT VIEW of the world in which we live.

1. Impermanence: things and conditions in life are constantly changing and shifting.
2. Non-substantiality: change is possible because nothing has a permanent substance, such as form, ego, soul, etc.
3. Duhkha: there arises duhkha in life when we believe that there is permanence and all things have substantiality.
4. Nirvana: to live in accord with (1) and (2) is peace.

![Diagram of Dharma]

SIX PARAMITA is the same as the Eightfold path, but expressed in relation to other people. It is the social practice of Buddhism.

EIGHTFOLD NOBLE PATH is a personal quest for meaning in life; it is the personal practice of Buddhism.

RIGHT EFFORT is most important in both the Eightfold Path and Six Paramita. Without Right Effort nothing of value is accomplished.
A. What is the simple interpretation of the word “Religion”?

In its broadest sense “religion” is the object of our ultimate concern. The equivalent term in Buddhism, shukyo (in Japanese), means “clarification of the fundamental.”

Generally speaking, however, the word “religion” is a Western concept, derived from the Latin “re-ligare”, and in Christian terms “religion” means reuniting man to God, since human troubles began with a fall. If the word “religion” is used in this sense, it does not apply to Buddhism.

Buddhism is essentially a way of life which teaches us to cultivate RIGHT VIEW of life, so that we can live peacefully in harmony with the natural order inherent in life. There is unhappiness, because of wrong view—we are out of focus with reality. In order to attain happiness, fulfillment, and meaning in life we must cultivate RIGHT VIEW, the “right idea”, of what life is all about.

B. What is the basic teaching of Buddhism?

The basic teaching of Buddhism is contained in the Four Noble Truth. It is found in the First Sermon of Sakyamuni Buddha immediately following his Enlightenment.

**First Noble Truth:** Life is Duhkha (dukkha in pali). Duhkha means “not getting what one wants”. Duhkha describes in one word the human predicament, and we know it through experiences of frustration, unrest, agitation, anxiety, anguish, pain and suffering. Life, as we know it, does not move according to our wishes.

“Not getting what one wants” also implies its reverse: “getting what one does not want”. One does not want to become ill, or old, or die, yet these are the promises of birth. The four basic duhkhas are:

a. birth  
b. illness  
c. old age  
d. death

The four additional duhkhas of universal experience are:

e. separation from loved ones, whether in life or death  
f. necessity of having to live with people we dislike, whether at home or at work  
g. unfulfillment of one’s desires  
h. the physical and mental limitations of the human body

**Second Noble Truth:** Cause of Duhkha is blind desire. Desire itself is neutral, but when it is propelled by selfishness, desire become blind, destructive, and leads to unhappy consequences.

The selfishness of blind desire does not only mean “wanting something”; it goes deeper, it is the basic of “not wanting something” as well as “wanting something.” Selfishness in this sense is not something one acquires after birth; rather it is the life-force which thrusts one into this world. It is existential ignorance.

In the LIGHT OF ASIA Sir Edwin Arnold expresses this as follows:

Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels,  
None other holds you that ye live and die,  
And whirl upon the wheel, and hug and kiss  
Its spokes of agony,  
Its tire of rears, its nave of nothingness.
Third Noble Truth: Nirvana is perfect peace. Life is Dukkha, because life is woven from our blind desires and selfishness. Dukkha is the unnatural state.

Life in its true and natural state is perfect peace. There is an inherent order in life which, if we are in tune with it, will grant us the fulfillment we seek.

Fourth Noble Truth: the Way to Nirvana. After the Buddha analyzed the problems in life (First Noble Truth), he discovered the cause of the unnatural state (Second Noble Truth). He then proceeded to explain the conditions of the ideal, natural state (Third Noble Truth).

In the Fourth Noble Truth the Buddha taught the way to achieve the perfect peace of Nirvana by eliminating blind desire; and by uprooting the cause of dukkha, vanish its various implications.

The first path that the Buddha taught was the Eightfold Noble Path, but he also taught many paths to people of different capacity. The history of Buddhism down through the centuries in various countries is the rich expression of the range of paths taught by the Buddha.

C. What is a simple way to remember the Eightfold Path?

The Eightfold Noble Path is a general principle that is followed in every effective human activity. When we read a book and gain knowledge, listen to music and enjoy it, take a vacation and learn to relax, etc., it is because we have the "right ideas" in doing these things. If we had no purpose in reading a book, listening to music, taking a vacation, etc., we would not enjoy them, and achieve results.

When we enjoy anything we do, unconsciously the pattern of activity falls into the pattern of the Eightfold Noble Path.

When we take life as a whole and begin to seek meaning and value, the most effective way would be to follow the Eightfold Noble Path. The Buddhist consciously attempts to apply the pattern of the Eightfold Noble Path to his life, so that by gaining the "right idea" about life, he can order his life to give greater happiness and richer fulfillment.

1. Right Views: this means to have the "right idea" about life. In order to correct our vision which is out of focus with the natural order, Buddhism teaches the way to adjust our wrong view to the natural state, so that our vision will be in accord with reality. It is necessary for us to gain the Right View of two truths: first, the Four Noble Truth as a realization of the meaning of life; and second, the Four Characteristics of life as recognition of the actual state of the world. The Four Characteristics of life are:

   a. Impermanence: Nothing in life remains forever. Everything is in constant change: dreams are realized, hopes are crushed, people die, mountains shift into valleys, the flowers bloom, the seasons swiftly pass.

   The impermanence of life has two implications for us:

   (1) Impermanence in the forms of sudden tragedy, business failure, illness, and fatal events which upset our commonplace world presents opportunities for self-reflection. From self-reflection we consider the real values of life, and aspire to seek timeless truths which will not change with the shifting conditions of our external world.

   (2) Impermanence also implies that we can make our world according to our thoughts and deeds. That is to say, situations in life are not "set", they can be changed depending upon the will and effort of the individual. The fortunes of one and the status in society are subject to change, and this possibility is the motivation for earnest people to rise beyond their given lot through patience and effort.
b. All things are without permanent substantiability: the natural world about us and the conditions of human life are subject to change — creation and destruction, birth and death, appearance and disappearance — simply because nothing is permanent in terms of form, entity, ego, or soul. Thus, to believe in the permanence of any existence, the self or external world, leads to thoughts and action not in accord with reality. The ideal action is action in accord with non-substantiability, selflessness and non-attachment.

c. Life is Dukkha: people who live against the truths of (a) impermanence and (b) non-substantiability must suffer the consequence of possessing wrong view of reality: dukkha which may be classified into three types.

(1) physical pain which arises from injury and illness.

(2) emotional disturbances which arise from the destruction or loss of precious things, such as loss of prestige, the end of happiness, failure in business, death of a loved one, etc.

(3) existential anxiety which questions the whole value and meaning of life and becomes a channel through which we realize ultimate enlightenment.

d. Nirvana is perfect peace: The state opposite to dukkha is nirvana of perfect peace. One lives in complete awareness of (1) impermanence and (2) non-substantiability; he is in oneness with the natural order inherent in life.

2. Right Thoughts: When we realize that the purpose of Buddhism is RIGHT VIEW of reality attained through constant RIGHT EFFORT, then our thoughts will always be turned toward fuller understanding of what constitutes RIGHT VIEW, and all distracting speeches will be avoided: gossip, slander, frivolity, and untruth.

3. Right Speech: Speech which is the verbal aspect of thought will express only those thoughts conductive to cultivation of RIGHT VIEW, and all distracting speeches will be avoided: gossip, slander, frivolity, and untruth.

4. Right Conduct: Behavior which is the physical aspect of thought will reveal actions which are in consonance with RIGHT THOUGHT aiming at RIGHT VIEW. Actions which tend to increase understanding, such as love and understanding, will be practiced, and those which hinder it will be abandoned.

5. Right Livelihood: Human activity is covered by thought, speech, and action. When the three are guided by RIGHT THOUGHT, RIGHT SPEECH AND RIGHT CONDUCT, the total result will be RIGHT LIVELIHOOD. This leads to a healthy body and mind, permits the full functioning of one's potential. The Eightfold Noble Path leads not only to spiritual realization but also to psychophysical and equilibrium. RIGHT LIVELIHOOD also covers the kind of work we engage in occupations which do not tend to benefit people are avoided, and those which contribute to the happiness of all people are preferred.

6. Right Effort: The idea of RIGHT LIVELIHOOD and its realization is not easy; therefore, extra effort and patience are required. Quick results and easy solutions are not to be expected. RIGHT EFFORT, in the direction of realizing RIGHT VIEW, is strongly emphasized in all forms of Buddhism.

7. Right Mindfulness: effort alone will not be effective; there must be constant awareness of the goal towards which RIGHT EFFORT is applied. Effort which is misdirected is fruitless and sometimes harmful.

8. Right Meditation: The good results of following the Eightfold Noble Path will reveal themselves gradually only in meditation, because they appear to us through the inner unity and center of peace which can be recognized only in RIGHT MEDITATION. On the other hand, the object of meditation is RIGHT VIEW; again the cycle of following the Eightfold Noble Path is inaugurated. As the cycle is repeated there is progressive growth in the well-being that is attained through approaching RIGHT VIEW.
D. What is the relationship between the Eightfold Noble Path and the Six Paramita?

The Eightfold Noble Path is the personal practice of Buddhism whose objective is cultivation of RIGHT VIEW of life. This personal approach becomes the Six Paramita in contacts with fellow men. This is the social practice of Buddhism which aids man in progressing on the Eightfold Noble Path to RIGHT VIEW.

1. Dana: Charity and kindness to others. The closer we approach the RIGHT VIEW of life, there is dana, a spontaneous giving of self to others, for we come to see the Oneness of life. The highest form of dana in Oneness is characterized by Three Purities:

   purity of the giver: the giver is free of selfish motives. Giving ends at the moment of the act; one is no longer tied to the objects involved in giving. Any gesture whatsoever of appreciation from the receiver is not expected.

   purity of the gift: all attachments to the relative value of the gift, whether it be material goods, a helping hand, kind words and smile, etc. is no more.

   purity of the receiver: the giver sees no receiver in the sense of attachment of any kind. in interdependence the giver becomes the given.

2. Sila: personal discipline. Personal discipline is the mastery over self, not in the sense of suppression, but as a free and spontaneous expression of a mature individual. Compassion is incomplete until personal discipline no longer becomes an effort. We cannot help others, unless we are able to help ourselves.

3. Kshanti: patience. The practices of dana and sila, which are the external and internal disciplines of the way, cannot be accomplished overnight. They require patience which is the key to the successful attainment of meaningful goal. In Buddhism patience, fortitude, and perseverance are stressed, because the timeless value of an act is determined by the length and depth of patience put into an act.

4. Viriya; effort. Patience and effort go hand and hand, and one cannot do without the other for successful results. Nothing in life of value is accomplished without a struggle.

5. Dhyana: meditation. Meditation means to reflect on RIGHT VIEW, its meaning and its relationship to daily life. Through meditation in solitude, the Buddhist sees the deepening center of peace within himself as the result of constant effort.

6. Prajna: wisdom. Prajna is the eye of wisdom which develop RIGHT VIEW to its most perfect vision. It is seeing things, including the self, as they are devoid of self-centered ignorance and blindness. When prajna expressed in action is dana; therefore the cycle of the Six Paramita is repeated once again until there is a spiral progression to absolute RIGHT VIEW where prajna and dana become one, and every expression of the one who has attained becomes prajna and dana is one. Prajna is supreme wisdom, and dana is supreme compassion; together they form the perfection of personality, the Buddha.

   The original Sanskrit terms for the Fourth Noble Truth, the Way, is “marga” which is a noun derived from a verb meaning “to seek, to strive.”

The Eightfold Noble Path and the Six Paramita possess significance for all the diverse schools and sects of Buddhism, for their primary purpose to awaken man to the fact that he must “seek” and “strive”, if he wishes fulfillment in his heart, peace in here and now, and a lasting happiness beyond time and space.
III. INTERDEPENDENCE

RIGHT VIEW
IS TO REALIZE AND LIVE IN

Absolute world of EMPTINESS, meaning "empty" of selfishness, attachment, and illusory belief in the permanence of things. THEREFORE, not having wrong view but RIGHT VIEW of reality, EMPTINESS.

INTERDEPENDENCE
Wisdom = Compassion

The quest.
Following the 4 Noble Truth, 8 Fold Path.

The technical term for interdependence is CONDITIONAL ORGANIZATION, this interdependent existence is made possible by EMPTINESS. People and the world in which we live are created by CONDITIONAL OBLIGATION.

The Buddha: Person of RIGHT VIEW whose heart is ONENESS.

To men seeking in the relative world.

From a person in the relative world.
A. What is reality in Buddhism?

The reality of life is interdependence, beginning with the most obvious and extending to the profoundly subtle. Right view and prajna is to see this truth clearly by fully realizing that:

1. When we live, disregarding the vast interdependence of life there is unhappiness, and when we live in full awareness of its complete workings, there is happiness (Four Noble Truths).

2. Impermanence and non-substantiality are integral aspects of interdependency, and when we live in harmony with this reality, there is smooth functioning of life. (Four Characteristics of Life).

3. The purpose of Buddhism is to achieve RIGHT VIEW or prajna regarding interdependency, and the teachings are guidepost to attaining the realization. (Eightfold Noble Path).

4. Positive action in interdependence is dana and that this is the only meaningful action which has timeless value (Six Paramita).

Interdependence as the basis of Buddhism was analyze by Nagarjuna the Father of Mahayana Buddhism, as follows:

1. Interdependence in one aspect is known as Emptiness (sunyata). Emptiness does not mean non-existence or nothingness; rather it is the logical development of the view of nonsubstantiality. It means that all things are devoid of permanence, thus making change and progress possible. If things had a permanent characteristic, life would be static and barren and sterile. It is because of Emptiness that life is dynamic: birth and creation, new happenings daily, dreams realized, unheard of achievements possible. At the same time, because of Emptiness we experience old age and death, values change, memories fade away, dreams come to an end. Emptiness is the basic of the interdependence of life, because when all existence is “empty” of an isolating characteristic, all life and things are organically related. We fail to see this when we set up false distinctions of self and others; creating barriers and hindrances, we establish the illusory world of manyness on false grounds.

In modern physics the objects we see in this world are refereed to as mass. This mass is not a substance in the sense of a solid body, but a flow of energy which we give the name paper, pencil, book, house, man, flower, etc. When the time comes these entities undergo changes and we say: “the paper is burned, the pencil is used up, the house is demolished, man dies, flower withers, etc.” Emptiness is equivalent to energy, and the mass evident to our eyes is equivalent to Conditional Organization.

2. Interdependence in another aspect is known as Conditional Organization (pratitya-samutpada). This lack of permanence opens the possibility of infinitely varied combinations of conditions, producing the things and events of the world. To this conjunction of conditions we give the name birth, creation and realization. The dispersal of conditions, on the other hand, we call death, destruction, and annihilation. This is conditional organization.

From the aspect of higher truth there is no birth and death, no creation and destruction, no realization and annihilation: simply the gathering and dispersing of conditions made possible by Emptiness. Based on Emptiness, the world is created by Conditional Organization. To things and events, resulting from the shifting combination of conditions, we project subjective coloring and attach names. We experience duhkha when we create attachments to the name, clinging to it as if it were reality, when in fact it is only a mere shadow of reality. To discard attachment means to discard the clinging to the name, the illusion, and to live in reality, without being swayed by apparent changes which are but changes in the shadows of man’s projections.
The insights of Emptiness and Conditional Organization form the basis of Buddhist thought. They are the contents of suchness (tathata). The Russian Buddhist scholar, Stcherbatsky, expressed the essential relationship between the two in the following manner:

“That the term Sunya is in Mahayana a synonym of dependent existence (pratitya-samutpada) and means not something void, but something ‘devoid’ of independent reality (svabhava-sunya), with the implication that nothing short of the whole possess independent reality, and with the further implication that the whole forbids formulation by concept or speech (nisprapanca) since they can only bifurcate (vikalpa) reality and never directly seize it — this is attested by an overwhelming mass of evidence in all Mahayana literature.” (THE CONCEPTION OF BUDDHIST NIRVANA, Leningrad, 1927, p. 43)

B. Where does the basic difference lie between the different sects of Buddhism?

The basic difference between the many sects of Buddhism appears in the approach to realizing RIGHT VIEW. In the sutras Sakyamuni says: “I teach the truth with One Voice, but men interpret it differently according to their capacities.”

The different interpretations were based upon the diverse needs, temperaments and mental and physical capacities of the direct disciples of Buddha, and of the spiritual geniuses down through the centuries.

The schools variously stress non-ego, prajna, discipline, emptiness, oneness, etc., but Shin Buddhism stresses compassion as the dynamic essence of interdependence. This essence is embodied in Amida Buddha, the Buddha of immeasurable life and immeasurable light.

E. What does Tripitaka means?

Tripitaka is the name for the collection of Buddhist scriptures, which has three main divisions, and, literally means "three" (tri) "collections" (pitaka). Unlike the single volume scriptures of other religions, such as the Bible and Koran, the Buddhist scriptures contain dozens of major sutras and thousands of lesser texts. The three divisions of the collection are:

1. Sutra: the scriptures of Buddhism, containing teachings, philosophical poems, and devotional verses.
2. Vinaya; the disciplinary codes compiled to keep order in the Sangha fellowship of monks and nuns.
3. Abhidharma: the philosophical and metaphysical studies on the teaching which were compiled at a stage later than the sutras and vinayas.

D. What is meant by Mahayana and Hinayana? Why do we follow the Mahayana?

Mahayana and Hinayana are the two general distinctions made in Buddhism by Mahayana Buddhists, and the terms mean literally “Great” (maha) “Vehicle” (yana) of salvation. Today the term Theraveda (school of Elders) is used in place of Hinayana to avoid the latter’s derogatory connotations.

The only difference between Mahayana and Hinayanas is the attitude they respectively took in attempting to correctly practice the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha. The Theravada Buddhism of Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, etc., attempts to follow the words of the Buddha to the letter, believing that this is the the path of the earnest Buddhist. The Mahayana schools, on the other hand, in Tibet, China, Japan and other Far Eastern countries, believe that the true practice is to live up to the spirit of the teaching rather than to the mere letter. Both are, however, complementary.
We follow Mahayana Buddhism, because we believe that the essential intent of Sakyamuni Buddha's life and teaching is found in the Mahayana scriptures which expound the possible enlightenment of all men.

E. What is the difference between Zen and Shin Buddhism? Please give us a simple and direct answer?

Zen teaches a person the way to realize prajna or pure wisdom by shattering the blind ego which alienates him from life. The method used is the transcendence of ordinary reason and logic and attainment of pure wisdom, to see into the reality of life. Pure wisdom however, functions in and through ordinary reason and logic.

Shin Buddhism teaches a person the way to realize prajna which is contained within the experience of compassion originating from the Buddha of Immeasurable Life and Immeasurable Light. The Compassion of Buddha transforms blind ego into the highest good.

Zen emphasizes that the shell of blind ego must be broken from within; Shin that the shell can be broken only from without, as in incubation. Whether the source is within (prajna) or without (compassion), the ultimate experience is to be freed of the hard crust of ego, so one can live freely in everyday reality.

F. What does selflessness mean?

Selflessness is the result of living in interdependence. It means to rid oneself of blind ego, self-centered desire and false self-sufficiency which ultimately set people against each other. Selflessness does not mean to lose one's identity or individuality; rather it means to become increasingly less of the undesirable aspects of self and to become progressively more of the desirable aspects of true life.

G. What is meant by Buddha-nature? What shall we do to cultivate Buddha-nature?

Buddha-nature is the potentiality within each person to achieve selflessness or true selfhood. In order to cultivate Buddha-nature, we follow the teachings of Buddha and practice the basic teachings which will lead to right view.

H. How will we know when we reach enlightenment? Is it possible to reach enlightenment in this life?

Enlightenment is the final perfection of RIGHT VIEW, seeing everything in its true light. It is complete awareness of Interdependence and living a life of selflessness. It is the ultimate stage in the cultivation of Buddha-nature, Buddhahood.

To know what enlightenment is, one must become enlightened. There is a famous phrase in which this is expressed thus; “Only a Buddha can recognize a Buddha.” To know the taste of water, one must drink the water. To know what love is, one must experience love.

However the state of enlightenment is explained in this way; enlightenment means to live in prajna, and the wisdom gained in prajna is turned into compassion for fellow beings who have not attained the prajna. This compassion is a selfless compassion; that is, the concern for others is not based upon self centered motives, but rather it is a spontaneous and creative concern for the well being of all life.

It is possible to reach enlightenment in this life, but it is never a state which is reached where one can say: “I have attained,” or “I am enlightened” Such an enlightenment is already dead, for enlightenment is a process, an eternal unfolding.
IV. TRIKAYA
The Three Aspects of Buddhahood

The absolute aspect: Dharmakaya

Circle without a circumference: without beginning and without end; formless, colorless, nameless.

The historical aspect: Nirmanakaya

Oneness as the heart of man: with beginning (birth) and with end (death) of Sakyamuni Buddha (represented by square) whose enlightenment is realization of Suchness (represented by a circle).

The spiritual aspect: Sambhogakaya

Suchness as timeless spiritual principle: with beginning (Bodhisattva Dharmakara, Hozo Bosatsu) and without end (Amida Buddha): Suchness expressed in finite terms but without historicity.

Faith: Shinshu idea of enlightenment

Man (square) embraced in Amida Buddha who is living aspect of Suchness (circle). The complete realization of this state is Namu Amida Butsu.

Buddhahood: All men become Buddhas

When the physical aspect of man (represented by square) returns to dust, the enlightened and the faithful become Buddhas which means living Suchness.

Oneness: The ground of existence

All historical and spiritual events occur on the common ground of Suchness (tathata) which has two integral parts: Emptiness and Conditional Origination. The latter is the basic of history; the former of spiritual values.
A. What is meant by the three bodies of the Buddha, or Trikaya?

The three bodies of the Buddha, or Trikaya, are different aspects of Reality viewed in terms of enlightenment, that is, Buddhahood. They are not three separate “bodies” but aspects of one Buddha, the realization of Suchness.

**Dharmakaya:** Suchness in its absolute aspect is formless, colorless and nameless; it is beyond dualistic reasoning and verbal description. It is the circle without a circumference, inconceivable by conventional knowledge; without beginning and without end.

**Nirmanakaya:** Prince Gautama became the enlightened one, the Buddha, when he perceived reality. Reality and suchness existed prior to the Buddha, but it was never realized in its perfect state in any one; this realization had to await the Buddha. Through the person of the Buddha, the inconceivable became the conceivable.

The insight into reality is prajna. The eye of wisdom sees into the real cause of unhappiness, the loneliness, and frustration rampant in society, and as the result of this penetration into the nature of existence, the heart of wisdom is stirred to action. This stirring of the heart is (karuna). The expression of supreme compassion is the unfolding of the Buddha’s personality; it begins with the First Sermon at Benares, continues throughout Buddhist history in the development of the various schools, and it goes on in the timeless now. Reality, caught in the realization of this historical Buddha, sheds its finite container at the moment of his death. This aspect of Buddhahood conceivable by us, thus, has a beginning and an end.

**Sambhogakaya:** When the historical Buddha passed away, the Reality that became conceivable through his personality and his teachings was no longer visible to man. But the reality which the Buddha formulated in finite concepts remained; that is to say, the spiritual content of his personality became more meaningful, since the death of the Buddha released its ties to the finite physical container.

This reality which remains — not in the historical Buddha, for he is no more, and not in its absolute aspect, for beyond comprehension — is Amida Buddha.

It is impossible to realize Dharmakaya, for it is inconceivable; it is meaningless to seek refuge in the Nirmanakaya, for he is no more — but the heart of Nirmanakaya which is Dharmakaya lives in the timeless now as Sambhogakaya, Amida Buddha. The three aspects of reality has a beginning but to review the highest formulation in the personality of Amida Buddha has no end. But the three aspects denote a single reality, so we may say Amida contains the Trikaya.

B. Please explain Dharmakara Bodhisattva (Hozo Bosatsu); when and where was he born, some of his history?

When we speak of the Three Aspects of Buddhahood (Trikaya) in terms of a beginning and an end, the relationship is thus:

1. Absolute Dharmakaya: without beginning and without end
2. Spiritual Sambhogakaya: with beginning but without end
3. Historical Nirmanakaya; with beginning and with end

The absolute is inconceivable; therefore, it is described as having neither beginning nor end. The historical world is part of our everyday experience, and we understand life in this world as having a beginning (birth) and an end (death). The two correspond to Dharmakaya and Nirmanakaya, Sakyamuni Buddha. Amida Buddha, the spiritual Sambhogakaya, is described as having a “beginning” is Dharmakaya Bodhisattva, and the fact that it is “without end” refers to Amida as immeasurable light and immeasurable life.
We are limited beings. We can see only so far under certain conditions, live only until a certain age, and cannot fly or live underwater. In thought we also have only a limited range of understanding, also. We think in terms of certain established concepts or categories; “birth” (beginning) and “death” (end) are such concepts. Although there is no birth and no death from standpoint of higher truth, it is impossible for man to think without those terms; therefore, we apply them to certain changes in life. Time (when?) and space (where?) are other concepts which aid man to understand the world about us, although in actuality there is no time and no space in the static way in which we conceive them.

To understand Suchness it is necessary to first understand it through the such concepts of beginning, end, time and space. Thus, the truth of Suchness is taught by historical Sakyamuni Buddha, who was born in Lumbini Garden and who died in Kusinagara. But timeless truth did not “die” as did the historical Sakyamuni; that is to say, Suchness which he realized did not “die”, only the physical body died. The essential spirit of Sakyamuni, Suchness, lives on; it is endless, although it had a “beginning” in the sense that it was made conceivable for man by Sakyamuni Buddha.

The essential spirit, Suchness, which lives on is Amida Buddha. To make this truth understandable for us, Amida Buddha is described in terms of concepts that we understand: “beginning”, “time”, “space”, etc. And so we say that Amida Buddha was previously Dharmakara Bodhisattva and he meditated for five long kalpas, practiced for innumerable aeons of time, and finally became Amida Buddha. The absolute is explained in terms of human experience so that we can appreciate this truth. The life story of Amida Buddha, beginning with the time when he was Bodhisattva Dharmakara, is the concretion of absolute reality. It “happened” in a realm totally different from ours, but is explained as if it took place in the realm of birth and death that we know.

The “history” of Bodhisattva Dharmakara, therefore, is not to be understood in terms of facts and events. History as facts and events are localized experience which lack universal meaning. The “history” of Bodhisattva Dharmakara, when and where he was born, cannot be explained in terms of facts and events localized in time and space, for then it would have no universal, spiritual significance. It is to be understood as being symbolic of a higher universal truth; it is a “history” which occurs in all time and space. Only the faith that gives wisdom, can impart this understanding.

What is the Buddhist definition of God?

The term “God” is not ordinarily used in Buddhism. It can be used, however, if “God” means the reality of Suchness. We are part of Suchness, and when we realize this truth, we become Suchness. That is to say, we become a Buddha; we become a “God”. “God” may be used in this sense and this sense only.

If “God” is used to refer to a creator of the universe, or a being which stands outside of man and the world, or a power which judges the acts of person, such a “God” is denied in Buddhism.

Is Sakyamuni ever regarded as divine or mystic?

No. Sakyamuni is neither divine nor mystic in the sense that he possessed some supernatural powers. He attained understanding of the working of the universal through Right Effort, and he taught us the truth of his realization which is to live in harmony with the natural order inherent in life. Some people in later ages may have rever him as “divine”, but he himself never made any such claim. Sakyamuni was bit a “mystic” in its ordinary, vulgar usage; if “mystic” is used in its higher sense, meaning “one who has attained direct perception of truth” then Sakyamuni may be called a “mystic”. However, since this usage is not commonly understood, the appellation, mystic, is denied to avoid any misunderstanding.
V. FAITH (Shinjin)

PERSON

SECOND NOBLE TRUTH:
The cause of Dukkha, Blind Desire.
1. Jealousy and envy
2. Selfish giving
3. Blind love

Discontent ← Blind Action

Blind Desire

BUDDHA

THIRD NOBLE TRUTH:
Nirvana is perfect peace.
1. Joy for others
2. Selfless giving
3. Pure Compassion

Contentment ← Pure Action

Pure Desire

Samsara:
the Ocean of Birth and Death

Primal Vow: the pure desire of the Buddha that all beings shall attain happiness

FAITH: Meeting of self and Amida Buddha expressed in Namu Amida Butsu.
What does Namu Amida Butsu really mean?

"Namu Amida Butsu" means "My heart is one with the heart of the Buddha", and the levels of understanding this utterance may be described as:

1. As an expression of sincere which to understand the teaching, realize Suchness, and thereby awaken to the purpose of life. The effort is made to cultivate appreciation for the opening lines of the Three Treasures:

   "Hard is it to be born into human life. Now we are living it. Difficult is it to hear the Teachings of the Blessed One. Now we hear it . . ."

2. The guiding light, which is Amida Buddha, illuminating the darkness of our hearts and of our world. There is no Amida Buddha existing anywhere aside from the name, "Namu Amida Butsu". In sorrow and in joy we recite the Name for that is where Suchness comes alive.

3. As an expression of deep gratitude for the enlightenment which is assured us through the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha. Within our hearts there is only ignorance and darkness, but wisdom and compassion embrace us though we cannot see with our own eyes, we are able to understand through insight given us by virtue of Namu Amida Butsu. This realization of salvation awakens a profound gratefulness in our hearts, and because words are inadequate to express our deepest gratitude, we say "Namu Amida Butsu", the supreme word, to express our feeling.

Shan-tao, the Fifth Patriarch of Shin Buddhism, explained the name, as follows:

"Namu" is the reliance on the part of the faithful follower. "Namu" is also the calling of Amida to man; it is saying come as you are. "Amida Buddha" gives us all his merits, so that his accumulated practice is transferred to us to effect our ultimate enlightenment. This is "Namu Amida Butsu".

Namu Amida Butsu is the symbol of the formless, colorless, and nameless Dharmakaya. We cannot understand Dharmakaya, but we can see the words, Namu Amida Butsu, and recite the name, Namu Amida Butsu. The inconceivable Dharmakaya is made conceivable through "Namu Amida Butsu" which can be repeated by even the child and the unlettered.

Dharmakara Bodhisattva, through kalpas of meditation and eons of practice, worked to make the inconceivable Dharmakaya conceivable for us. When he finished his work to make the unknowable knowable, he became Amida Buddha, and produced "Namu Amida Butsu" for man. Through understanding Namu Amida Butsu, we understand the truth of Suchness.

Therefore, in essence "Namu Amida Butsu" is the inconceivable truth of Suchness (Dharmakaya), its spiritual personification, Amida Buddha (Sambhogakaya), and the whole teachings of Amida Buddha (Nirmanakaya) all in one expression.

B. What does faith in Buddhism mean?

Faith in Buddhism means the union of the heart of one and the heart of Buddha; it is the union of two opposing natures: blindness and enlightenment. Shan-tao explained the contents of faith in terms of two profound realizations or beliefs:

1. To awaken to the evilness of this blind self, wandering from life to life, not knowing peace and the way of deliverance.

2. To awaken to the saving vows of Amida Buddhas whose pure compassion knows no bounds and is directed to the blind and evil.
These two realizations deepen simultaneously to form the content of faith, and the two continue to progressively deepen until Buddhahood is attained when we shed our physical form. Explained in the total content of general Buddhism and life experience, the two realization are, as follows:

1. The first realization: the evilness of this blind self. “Evilness” here refers to the blind self centeredness, the second of the Four Noble Truth: the cause of duhkha. The problem of life is brought to focus in the understanding of the cause of duhkha which is Blindness. The discontent in life is created not because of external circumstances but because of the blindness in oneself, “this blind self.” The result of Blind Desire, selfishness, is Blind Action, which is characterized by:

   *Jealousy and envy of other people’s success and happiness which is agitated from within oneself to create unhappiness and turmoil in the world.*

   *Selfish giving which is the act performed by self-righteous people, not to help others, but to affirm one’s own position in the eyes of others.*

   *Blind love which fails to appreciate the total human being and which, because of its restlessness, does not nurture real love but rather creates pain and unhappiness.*

Blind Desire leads to Blind Action and this produces Discontent. The Discontent produces greater blindness of desire which in turn results in a more violent blindness of Action. Thus Discontent grows and the cycle of Blind Desire, Blind Action and Discontent whirls to form samsara: one lost in the ocean of birth and death, caught in the trap of his own ignorance and not knowing the path to peace and fulfillment. This is the true picture of human beings, and unless there is acknowledgement of human predicament, we fail to appreciate the compassion of Amida Buddha.

The second realization: the saving vows of Amida Buddha. Along with the first realization there is a simultaneous realization of the opposite state, enlightenment, which is expressed in the third of the Four Noble Truth: Nirvana is peace. Amida Buddha is the living compassion, calling man from the peace of nirvana. Freed from the bondage to Blind Desire, the Buddha is moved to action until all beings achieve the same state of nirvana. Amida Buddha possesses only pure desire: the wish to enlighten all beings. Amida Buddha lives in suchness, therefore, his pure desire and pure action are effective in realizing the salvation of all beings.

   a. Joy for others: in Suchness there is no distinction of self and others in the conventional sense. The others are self and the self is others. Therefore, when there is occasion for joy in others, one participates in that joy as if it were one’s own. In every person’s awakening to truth, there is joy: and at the same time, there is pain and sorrow when a person fails to open his eyes to reality.

   b. Selfless giving: in Suchness the giver experiences greater joy than the receiver. In selfless giving there is a reversal of ordinary situation: the giver becomes the given. There is deep joy in the ability to give without the need of asking for a return. Amida Buddha gives his whole being to us so that we shall achieve the same peace as himself. This giving is called the transference of merit.

   Pure Compassion: in Suchness the wisdom of understanding the total life-situation becomes the basis for pure compassion. Compassion is deeply grounded in wisdom and devises means to achieve its pure desire through wisdom. Compassion arouses the Primal Vow and wisdom creates “Namu Amida Butsu”, so that the Vow can be fulfilled.

   Faith is the awakening to the nature of this blind self and simultaneous awakening to the compassionate vow of Amida Buddha. The faith is deepened as we grow in the realization that the vow of Amida Buddha is for none else but this blind self. Ultimately, our hearts are in harmonious union with the heart of Amida.
It is true that we fail to appreciate the real meaning of Shin Buddhism if we do not desire to be born in the Pure Land?

Yes, it is true. When one realizes the nature of this blind self, he realizes the great distance that separates him from enlightenment. This is the contrast between self and Buddha, one who lives against Suchness and one who is the living Suchness.

Pure Land is also suchness itself, and one seeks to become suchness completely. In order to do so, we must seek birth in the Pure Land, but as the Lure Land Masters have taught, birth here in the “birth whose essence is no-birth.”

VI. KARMA

Ordinary Person: centripetal ego, living in selfishness; inward into blindness.

SOUL, LIFE AFTER DEATH, etc.: the continuity of blindness, and meaningless cycle of birth death, samsara.

BUDDHA: centrifugal being, acting in selflessness; outward for salvation of those in blindness.

THE PRIMAL VOW: action in enlightenment, the desire to save all people from samsara.
A. Please explain Karma.

Karma means “action”. When it is understood properly, it is the source of happiness, but when it is misunderstood, it can become the source of unhappiness. To fully appreciate the meaning of karma and dispel any misunderstanding, three points must be made clear:

1. Karma meaning “cause and effect“ is not the Buddhist idea of karma. Karma in this sense, that to every action there is corresponding reaction, was a popular belief among pre-Buddhist people, and people of later years who failed to appreciate the Buddhist meaning of karma interpreted it in this popular way.

2. Karma as an objective universal truth was taught by the Buddha as being essentially an attitude developed on Conditional origination towards circumstances in life. In the popular belief happiness and unhappiness were determined externally by good or bad acts in the past. In Buddhism happiness and unhappiness become attitudes determined by self, freed of any external force. Therefore, it is said that the basis of karma is thought (cetana), meaning that by our thought or will we create happiness for ourselves. The past does not determine life; we create future happiness in the present. Therefore, throughout Buddhism the stress is made on the effort or will to create meaning in life.

3. Karma is developed and explained subjectively in Mahayana Buddhism. All action (karma) creates bondage and greater blindness for people who do not live Oneness, but for those who have attained insight of prajna—the enlightened, the faithful, and the person of satori—no human action is binding to become the cause of unhappiness. Human life is karma (series of action) which brings unhappiness for those who live in blindness and selfishness (centripetal ego), but that same karma is the very source of the meaning in life for those who have become freed of blindness and selfishness centrifugal ego).

B. Is the life we live laid down for us before birth, or is it due to what we do day after day?

When Buddha taught Conditional Origination, he denied three traditional ways of thinking:

1. That life is pre-determined by our past actions (fatalism).
2. That life is governed by an absolute being (determinism).
3. That life is without rhyme or reason (nihilism).

Conditional Origination was a new insight into life which taught that the circumstances in our life are due to a multiplicity of shifting conditions (life is not predetermined), but that the meaning we give to the changing circumstances is wholly dependent upon the effort we apply in working towards a better and richer life. (Life is based upon our actions from day to day.)

C. What is the idea of soul in Buddhism?

Buddhism teaches that one has no soul as a permanent substance or essence which is in one and remains after death. Such an idea of soul is the product of attachment born from Blind Ego. It goes against the reality of life. Blind attachment sets up distinction between self and others; it is a mere illusion created by one who does not live in reality. The Blind Ego has a soul (attachment), but the enlightened have no soul (non-attachment). This is not a negation of the differences between self and others; rather, it is the negation of the differences as absolute.

D. What is the Buddhist idea about life after death?

The person who lives in Blind Ego continues to wander in darkness after death, as he does in life, until he reaches enlightenment. The centripetal ego whirls into endless samsara. The person of enlightenment, pure faith, and satori, purified of blindness, becomes a Buddha after death. As a Buddha he works for the enlightenment of all beings with who he is endlessly interelated.
E. Please explain the relationship between theory of soul, reincarnation, and rebirth.

“Soul” as a permanent entity is denied in Buddhism, because it is the product of man’s ignorance, the Blind Ego, which against Oneness. The belief in “soul” produces in turn the ideal of life after death, and in the popular religions of India this “soul” is believed to undergo a series of “rebirth” into other forms which is called “reincarnation.”

Buddhism denies the idea of a “soul”, but the unenlightened who lives in Blind Ego holds an attachment to self and his attachment of the Blind Ego continues to wander (samsara) after physical death until enlightenment is attained. This wandering does not occur in the sense of rebirth or reincarnation. It is a spiritual transmigration, a meaningless wandering, applied not only to an empty life not but in timeless past and timeless future.

F. What is the Buddhist definition of sin?

Sin is the state of one who live in Blind Ego against the truth of interdependence. No matter what the act is, where good or bad morally speaking, it is a sin if it is the act of the unenlightened.
VII. A COMPARATIVE OUTLINE OF
GENERAL BUDDHISM AND SHIN BUDDHISM

GENERAL BUDDHISM

SHIN BUDDHISM

FAITH - SHIN

A. Definitions of “faith” in
   1. Early Buddhism
   2. General Buddhism

B. Comparison of meaning of “faith” in
   1. Christianity
   2. Shin Buddhism

TEACHING - KYO

BASED ON GREAT WISDOM

A. Gate of the Saints (Shodo-mon)
   1. Four Noble Truths
      (Three Characteristics)
   2. Non-ego, Selflessness
   3. Voidness - Dependent Origination
      Suchness, Thusness

B. The diverse teachings of the
different schools of Buddhism were
based upon the various types of
sutras which emphasized different
aspects of Buddha’s teachings.
E.g., Nirvana in the Nirvana-
sutra, Prajna (Wisdom) in the
Prajna-sutra, Buddha in the
Buddhavatamsaka-sutra, Dharma
in Saddharma-pundarika-Sutra,
etc.

TEACHING - GYO

BASED ON GREAT COMPASSION

A. Gate of the Pure Land Believers
   (Jodo-mon)

   COMPASSION — St. Shinran taught
   that regardless of the teaching,
   however noble and austere, all
   must be grounded in GREAT COM-
   PASSION (Mahakaruna). This, he
   realized, is the centralizing
   ideal of Buddhism wherein all
   men, regardless of capacity,
   could eventually attain Perfect
   Enlightenment.

B. The Great Compassion of Amida
   Buddha is best expressed in the
   sutras selected by Shinran as
   the basic of Shin Buddhism.

   1. Larger Sukhavati Sutra
   2. Amitayur Dhyana Sutra
   3. Smaller Sukhavati Sutra

22 Dharma Pre-School Text
A. Way of Difficult Practice (Nangyo-do)
1. Eightfold Noble Path
2. Six Perfections (Paramitas)
3. Systems of Meditation
4. Prajna-intuition

B. The Vow in General Buddhism

"Shiguzei-gan" (Four Great Vows):
"Sentient beings are innumerable:"
"I vow to save them all."
"Evil human desires are inexhaustible:"
"I vow to quench them all."
"Buddha's teachings are immeasurable:"
"I vow to study them all."
"The Way of the Buddha is unexcelled:"
"I vow to attain the Path Sublime."
A. Self-Power (Jiriki)

In general Buddhism man attains Enlightenment through Practice of Teaching. Man strives toward Buddhahood, earnest in his purpose and piling up merits so that he will be assured of Enlightenment.

B. Psychological process involved in attainment of “satori” in Zon Buddhism

A. Other-Power (Tariki)

In Shin Buddhism man attains Enlightenment through the NEMBUTSU — Amida’s Great Compassion makes us strive towards Buddhahood, He gives us the strength to seek and to attain in His Sacred Name He has accumulated all His merits and gives it to us.

We will all attain Buddhahood, because True Faith, the seed of Enlightenment, has been given to all of us through his Sacred Name, Namu Amida Butsu.

B. The three steps in the process of attaining True Faith in Shin Buddhism (Shinran’s “Sangantennyu”)

A. Realization of “Enlightenment” on This-Shore.

B. “Satori” as the state of complete detachment to world things.

A. Realization of “Enlightenment” on Other-Shore.

B. Peace in the “Assurance of Enlightenment” (Shojoju); eternal happiness in the fulfilled Promise of birth in the Pure Land-while living life which is essentially one of bondage, suffering and imperfection.

24 Dharma Pre-School Text
Worship For Young Children

To guide a young child to live intimately with Amida Buddha in His Compassion and wisdom, is the most sacred and challenging task for both parents and teachers. How beautiful and inspiring it is to see a child come to the Buddha with his small hands put together in gassho, with pure adoration and trust in Amida. Such trust and faith generate courage and hope in their lives. Therefore, it is very important to guide them properly by understanding the significance of religious etiquette such as worship, gassho, meditation, adoration, thanks-giving, and Shogon or adornment.

Religion begins and ends with worship. It is the essence of religion and is the expression of reliance and faith. It is also an expression of gratitude and service. Therefore, worship should be starting point and foundation of the religious education. The children and teachers should be united together in the Oneness of worship. From such inspiring religious experience, unspoken teaching can be communicated to the children.

*Let us try to guide the children by observing the following points:*

During worship, a child should feel the presence of Buddha more vividly with growing consciousness. The feeling of oneness and Nembutsu should be cultivated in worship. Such feeling can be instilled in children by the sincere attitude of leaders. Children should be trained to bow as they come in or leave the Hondo and to sit quietly during the service.

**Gassho**

Right attitude or worship should be based on spiritual concentration. Gassho is a concrete expression of faith, reliance, thankfulness and Oneness with Amida Buddha. The teacher should always remind young children to bring an Ojuzu with them because an Ojuzu is an effective means to give religious feeling to children. It is also important to instruct children in the right way of holding an Ojuzu. It is quite appropriate to present an Ojuzu on their addmittance to the Dharma School as a symbol of becoming Buddha’s children.

**Meditation**

Meditation leads children actively into a religious feeling of spiritual tranquility. Children may be instructed to concentrate their active and wandering minds on Buddha and His Love in order that meditation becomes more meaningful and constructive.

**Gathas-Chanting**

Singing of Gathas, chanting of sutras and “Raisan mai” (Buddhist dance) are expressions of adoration for Buddha. The meaning of gatha should be explained to children before hand so that they can more fully appreciate their Dharma School service.
Nembutsu

Nembutsu should be explained to young children as an expression of gratitude to Amida Buddha for His constant protection and guidance. It should be taught in such a way that Nembutsu becomes meaningful to children. In order to do that, the teacher should watch for every opportunity to have the children show their appreciation of the Buddha’s Compassion and guidance in practical ways and explain that such appreciation can also be expressed by reciting the Nembutsu. The example, at the end of a pleasant Dharma School session the teacher may say, “We had a wonderful time together, learning more about Amida Buddha. Since you have been so nice and quiet, you have learned your lessons well. Amida Buddha must be very happy. Now let us say thank you to Buddha with the Nembutsu.”

Obutsudan

Scent of burning incense, beautiful flowers, bright candlelight, all these things lead us into a deep religious atmosphere of serenity. Young children should be led to feel the same way. They also should be encouraged to participate in cleaning the Obutsudan and bringing flowers in the spirit of joyous offering to Buddha. Ideally each class should have a small Obutsudan as a worship center which children feel is their own class Obutsudan. The right manner of incense offering, etc. should be taught and the children given an opportunity to practice it regularly.

WHAT IS TEACHING

In preparing to become a teacher in the Buddhist Dharma Schools the very first question we must ask ourselves is: “What is Buddhist education, its goal and nature?” Unless we know it clearly and definitely most of our effort and energy will be exerted in vain. The more we realize the importance of educating Buddhist children, the more we want to know what we are trying to achieve.

To begin with, what is teaching itself? If you are already teaching in the Dharma School, you must be going through certain procedures which you consider to be teaching from observing other teachers without inquiring into its real effectiveness. And we think of this as teaching but this is guesswork and results in some confusion.

Teaching is sharing experience with children in such a way that the children’s needs, interest and problems are clearly understood. It is simply the art of facilitating desirable learning. So, teaching consists of those activities whereby a teacher helps in the growth and enrichment of children’s personality and religious understanding.

Children are constantly going through a process of growing, both physically and mentally. Buddhist education aims to help children grow steadily and wholesomely as Buddha’s children. First of all, we must clearly recognize the important fact that every individual child is Amida’s child and endowed with “Buddha-nature.” It is our task to help develop this “Buddha-nature” in every child into the fullest which is called Buddahood through Amida Buddha’s Wisdom, and Compassion. Such is our ultimate goal in Buddhist education.

We lead children to gain increasing trust and confidence in Amida Buddha and a warm attitude towards not only other people but all other living things. They will grow with an appreciative understanding of Amida Buddha’s great Compassion.

The philosophy of Buddhist education has been discussed to give an understanding of what is expected of the teachers.

The next question is how we can learn to teach effectively. We must know that to be an effective teacher is a result of hard work. Every teacher can learn to teach effectively. The following four ways may be studied and practiced in order that we may become an effective teacher.
Observation: Visit a classroom where a capable teacher is in action. Observe carefully what goes on there. Study and note what the teacher is trying to do, the method he/she uses for that purpose, how the children react, the attitude of the teacher and other matters of interest which come to your attention. Later prepare a careful report with comments and discuss it with some experienced teacher. By observing others, teacher can learn a great deal.

Reading and thinking: Read good books on Buddhist education. Formulate knowledge from such reading for your own teaching purposes. Study methods in teaching and work out a plan to fit your needs. Try out your plan to see if it works. Analyze why such a solution was successful or why it failed. Talk freely and often with other teachers. Dharma School Teachers' Conference is always helpful in guiding and stimulating your thinking and skill in teaching.

Actual teaching: The best way to learn to teach is to actually take a class. Unless you teach in the classroom you will never become a good teacher. Don’t let your first mistakes or failures discourage you, but take them as a challenge. Utilize all available material and observation in your actual teaching.

Meditation: A few moments of meditation before and after the class session can be inspirational and place you in the right frame of mind. Particularly when you are in the midst of teaching, concentrate your mind on the Wisdom and Compassion of the Buddha. Often new courage or new ideas to solve that problem will come forth which had never occured to you. Therefore, we are inspired, sustained and encouraged.

The work you are undertaking is an act of dedication. It is a tremendous challenge to anyone who sincerely and truly desires to serve as a Dharma School Teacher.

It is a rewarding kind of work—the feeling of participating, and helping others to lead a better and richer life. We bestow the greatest gift or service that one Buddhist can give to another when we make children aware of the Amida Buddha.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD TEACHER

It is often said that the teacher is the most important factor in education. This is so in the field of religious education. If we try to recall the most important influence that has come into our life, it is usually a person or persons and not abstract truths that comes to mind. Some teacher or a person had done more toward shaping our characters than had any other factor.

This does not mean that other factors such as teaching materials, teaching methods, etc. are not important. But these lessons or materials become “alive” with meaning when they are taught by a person who found and lived by the true meaning. The way of the Nembutsu is lived in each generation because it is taught by those who live the life of complete faith. The effective teacher presents his lessons as reflection from his life.

When a teacher is the kind of person who can show the children the real meaning of Buddhist living through his own personal, religious way of life, we don’t have to be afraid of the result. Then what are some of the most essential qualification for a good teacher? Let us study the following qualifications and strive to improve such qualities in ourselves.

(1) Rennyo Shonin said, “any person who teaches others should first of all firmly fix himself in faith. Then the scriptures may be read and talks given.” This should be the very basic qualification for the Shin-shu teacher. If we apply this standard to ourselves, many of us may not be equal to it, however, that should not discourage us from striving for it. For the spiritual welfare of children the teacher who humbly and sincerely seeks the Way is the very one who can understand and guide children's spiritual growth effectively. Such spiritual attitude is the most important qualification of an effective teacher.
(2) Attractiveness in personality — He/she must combine in himself/herself the qualities on life and character that he/she seeks to develop in his/her pupils. A personality which is warm-hearted, outgoing, and with a gift for getting along with people, should be consciously strived for by every teacher.

(3) Mastery of subject — To be ideal, the lesson should be manifested in the teacher, the mastery of his subject is one way in which he helps to make this possible. Each lesson should be carefully prepared so that teacher feels his adequacy in teaching.

(4) Love and Respect for children — one should recognize and respect in each child, Buddha Nature and love each child as child of the Buddha. Sakyamuni Buddha said that the teacher should regard the pupil as one's own. Such genuine love makes children grow religiously in a warm receptive atmosphere. Children are drawn to the teacher who has warm love and respect for them. He/she is congenial and sensitive to another's sorrow, joys, needs and problems.

(5) Initiative and Open-mindedness — A good teacher is receptive to the ideas and suggestions of other. He/she uses imagination and experiments to improve his/her ability.

(6) Practical knowledge of psychology — Such knowledge helps him/her to better understand the children. Each child is unique in his/her personality make-up, rate of growth and ability, and an effective teacher should recognize these variations in each personality and accordingly proper guidance should be given.

(7) Practical knowledge of educational methods — Method is a means to an end an “know-how” of such method is extremely important.

(8) Physical fitness — An effective teacher is calm and free from nervous tension. The high-strung teacher passes on to the children the same nervous tension that he/she feels.

We are reminded that in the process of teaching, the teacher, as a person is very important. We must truly understand the reading of the following sentence. “The Dharma is not propagated by itself but by people who believe it.”

We should take notice that an effective teacher is the person who helps his/her students in self-discovery. The way of living is not transferred from one to another in words. It comes by living life together, and together seeking the higher way.

TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In the field of religious education, there are two lines of approach or thought which are outstanding. It is worthwhile for every teacher to study them in order to integrate his own thought and approach to the light of these two lines of thought. The following listing is for you to compare, point by point with ease.

The term “old” and “new” are used to differentiate the recent movement from the prevailed one in the past. The left-hand column is often called the “content-centered approach to teaching”, while the right column is called the “pupil-centered” or “life-centered” method.

The best teachers of all time have used the “pupil-centered” method. Sakyamuni Buddha is well-known for his method in the “pupil-centered” approach. To guide them effectively, He taught according to the listener's metal abilities, cultural background, education, and personality make-up. It is one of the most basic educational principle of Buddhist nurture to study the learner and teach accordingly, namely “pupil-centered”.

28 Dharma Pre-School Text
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>THE OLD</strong></th>
<th><strong>THE NEW</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To change character, the teacher fills the pupil's mind with knowledge.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Character is changed by establishing purposes, setting ideals, making choices, and going through experiences which allow the pupils to practice what the teacher wants him/her to become.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture knowledge will make people good.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The scriptures are the greatest record of man's religious experience. It is a guide to action and an aid to right living, but knowing them does not alone assure good conduct.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The teacher is the source of wisdom. Because he/she is the teacher, his/her authority. And, he/she is always right.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The teacher is the guide. He/she helps the pupils from knowledge and experiences which aid their growth. Authority comes from tested experience.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>It is the pupil's duty to listen and try to remember the lesson. The teacher decides what should be taught and often teaches what he/she likes to teach.</strong></td>
<td><strong>The teacher recognizes the pupil's initiative and dignity. The teacher seeks to discover the needs of the pupil and to guide him/her meet his/her needs.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest of the pupil is maintained by threatened punishment and promised prizes and rewards.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interest of the pupil is maintained by leading him/her to want the information or experience offered. The teacher seeks to make learning more meaningful and interesting to the pupil.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is taught is organized logically and handed out regardless of its relationship to the pupil's experience.</strong></td>
<td><strong>It is best to consider the psychological point of the pupil's growth and to offer a study when it comes nearest to fitting into his/her experience.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Memory work is given for the “training of the mind” and to “store up” desirable knowledge for future use. It is not essential that it fit the present understanding or situation.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Memory work is given because there is a use for it now or in the near future. It is selected to fit the pupil's understanding.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A given study is discontinued when the time is up, whether or not solutions are reached.</strong></td>
<td><strong>A study is continued over such periods as needed to complete the experience of searching, acquiring new ideas, making commitments, planning action and carrying it out.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods used are telling, reading, writing, memorizing, reciting, questioning and answering.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Methods used include telling, reading, writing, memorizing, reporting, constructing, evaluating, discussing, sharing, creating, interviewing, and any other method which helps the pupil to learn.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## THE OLD
The teacher does all the planning and makes all arrangements for a given lesson.

The pupil has done good work when he/she can reproduce what the teacher has given to him/her, orally or in writing.

Lesson materials for Temple school purposes are organized for each single session and are not necessarily related to the preceding or succeeding session.

The right of the teacher over the pupil is often emphasized.

Physical seating arrangement is likely to be with the teacher at the front and pupils in rows facing the teacher.

## THE NEW
The pupils and teacher co-operatively plan in committees and make arrangements for a given experience in teaching and learning.

The pupil has done good work when he/she can make use of his/her new discoveries to meet some need in his life or to fulfill at least partially the purpose toward which he/she set out in the particular study or experience.

Lesson materials are organized in groups of sessions or in units of sufficient length to complete the experience. Each session in the unit has a relationship to all the others in the series.

The personalities of the pupils and the teacher are held sacred. The right of each pupil and teacher is held in trust by all.

Seating is more likely to be in a circle or hollow square where each has the seat of honor and all face each other. This arrangement promotes the spirit of sharing.

## TEACHING METHODS IN DHARMA SCHOOL

### Making Learning Interesting

Both learning and teaching can be “fun” if the teacher knows how to make learning easy and interesting. Remember, the more ways an idea is presented, the easier it is to remember the idea. The teacher should not confine himself/herself to one method of teaching, but combine many ideas.

### Using Concrete Methods

Remember the more concrete the method used to present a lesson the more likely the pupils will learn the lesson, while the more abstract the method used the less likely they are to remember. Providing of actual experience is the most concrete way to teach and the use of words the most abstract.

We learn easiest things which we experience in the natural course of living. This is not always possible, so teachers sometimes plan experience which are helpful for the pupil. If that is not feasible, they may have the children “act out” the deed or watch a dramatization. A picture of someone else participating is more effective than the story alone, and a story is better than just a description.
A specific case will help to clarify this principle. Suppose the teacher aims to teach the pupils to be less selfish. The best possible way to teach this lesson would be for the pupil to receive satisfaction in the everyday experience of life through acting unselfishly. But since this experience is not always possible, the teacher may plan for the group to share their food with those who are hungry. If this cannot be worked out, she might help the class give a dramatization of sharing with the hungry. Next best would be that they observe others as they share their food, or see a picture of other children sharing. Or they might hear a story about children who shared. The least effective of all would be for the teacher merely to tell them that they ought to share, or that the Buddha says for us to share.

However, the good teacher will rarely use one of these methods alone. He/she will make it easy to learn by combining many methods of teaching.

**Teaching By The Project Method**

This is a method of teaching through an actual life situation or through a situation set so that the pupils have an actual experience. It is based on the idea that we learn to do by participating.

It is seldom the project method is used alone. Usually the lesson begins with the study of a problem or situation with the resultant feeling that the group must do something to improve the situation. The usual steps by which this method proceeds are:

1. Locating and defining the situation to be studied.
2. The preliminary survey and bringing together of information, with discussion and decision as to next steps.
3. The assignments of definite responsibilities to groups and individuals.
4. The carrying out of the project.
5. Evaluating the results and planning for future activity.

Project teaching is suited to all ages. Learning in the Dharma school would be much easier if the project method were used often.

**Teaching Through Dramatics**

The dramatic method is much like the project method. The difference is instead of having the experience, the pupils “play act” the experience. This is a natural method of learning. Young children “play house” and “play school”. Without guidance this is a valuable form of learning; with guidance it is next to having the experience itself. It is suited to any age group.

Usually the class shares the story or a problem situation. They get the general idea of the story or the plot development clearly in mind, then they act it out, forming their own dialogue as the plot progresses. However, there are some tests for determining whether a story or situation is suitable for dramatization.

1. It must be full of action.
2. It must be put into direct discourse.
3. The plot must be simple.
4. The characters must be desirable.
5. It must be suited to the age.
6. It must carry a Buddhist Teaching.

**Teaching With Visual Aids**

Visual education is an effort to make learning easy through *seeing*. Any method of teaching which uses the eye as the media for learning is called visual education.
The Field Trip

Very often we have thought only of pictures, still or projected, when we heard the mention of visual aids, but there are many other kinds of visual materials. Of these, perhaps the “field trip” is most valuable.

Visual Aids Merely Aids

Visual aids include pictures, both slides and motion, also models, objects, blackboard drawing, flannelboard, the bulletin board, maps, charts, and field trips. There is no question as to their value in teaching. The question is how to use them so that they help to achieve the real objective of teaching.

In recent years, a flood of so-called visual aids have become available. Because they are new, they have been used by teachers as lifesavers, and have become, in many cases, a substitute for real teaching. Let us remember that learning comes by doing, by participating, rather than by watching. At best these aids are merely a tool which must be employed intelligently. There is no substitute for first-hand creative experience.

Constructive Use of Visual Aids

The aid is selected to serve a specific purpose in teaching. This means that any visual aid—chart, slides, or otherwise—will not be used merely because it is “good” and is available. Nor will all the children of the Dharma school be grouped together to see the picture, because it is to be used with one group. Schools which disrupt the whole teaching sequence for every group of children so they may all see a picture, surely do not understand the proper use of visual aids or the purpose of the Dharma school. Rather the aid is selected to serve a specific purpose for a definite group of people. The leader should know exactly for what purpose he has selected the aid.

The aid is selected according to the interest and abilities of the group. Projected visual aids are not recommended for preschool children. Children of this age learn much through their sense of touch. They want to touch the picture, pat the face of the baby, and handle the objects. Artistic pictures, hanging low enough for them to see and feel, and real objects are the best visual aids for teaching small children.

The visual aids must be prepared for and followed up by discussion. If the teacher has chosen the aid with a specific purpose in mind, he will know how to prepare the pupils for that purpose. Often there will be discussion concerning what to observe in a picture. Many times the pupils themselves will make a list of the things they wish to learn. After they have observed the picture, they will discuss the problems presented or the basic truths and often decide on a plan of action. Usually slides have been found more successful as teaching aids than movies.

The aid should be technically efficient. This is particularly applicable to projected visual aids. Very often the effectiveness of a visual aid depends on the skill and preparation of the operator. The seating should be such that all can see well. The machine should be in focus and threaded properly, and all other preparations made before the room is darkened. Waiting in a darkened room often caused discipline problems among children and destroys readiness in adults. If we cannot be sure of some measure of technical efficiency, I suggest that we use another method of teaching.

The purpose and use of visual aids should now be clear. They are to be interesting, but their chief purpose is not to entertain. They are not for the purpose of capturing the lost interest of the class. They are not labor-saving devices for the teacher. More, rather than less, preparation is necessary with their use.
The purpose of the lesson must be first; the visual aid chosen must be contributory to that purpose. If the effect of the visual aid detracts from the real purpose of the lesson, then it is a hindrance rather than an aid to teaching.

Teachers will find many kinds of visual materials real aids to teaching if they learn to use them properly and wisely.

**TEACHING BY STORYTELLING**

Usually we have thought of the storytelling method as suitable for use with children only. The story is an excellent technique with children, and it is interesting and useful for any age if the story is carefully selected and well told.

The most effective way to learn is through having an experience or by observing someone else have the experience. But this is not possible under many circumstances, so the story provides the opportunity for the learner to have the experience in his imagination. He/she hears a story of someone else having the experience; he/she identifies himself/herself with that person and responds with the same emotional reaction as if he/she were having the experience himself/herself.

All who have told stories to children have heard children laugh with glee or show sympathy or disappointment. They are learning through emotional experience. Stories cannot be effective if they are read or merely recounted as a tale. They must register through the emotions both of the teller and the listeners.

**A Story Has Structure**

A story has a certain structure comparable to the design of a painting or the composition of music. It is not merely the description of an incident.

The beginning. The take-off of the story is sudden and short. It has four functions: (1) to gain the interest, (2) to give the setting, (3) to introduce the characters, and (4) to get the action started. There is no long description of place or characters; you will learn that from the story itself. What your listeners wants is action.

The rising action. Notice that the action of the story proceeds by a series of problems and solutions.

Every good story progresses by questions and answers of “then what?” in the minds of the listeners. The story moves faster as it reaches the climax.

The Climax. The climax should be charged with surprise! The teller must feel it, then the listeners will feel it too.

The ending. The story must have an ending, and it must be short. It should not “fade out”; just enough to let everybody know that things went all right after that. Thus ends this story. The story goes straight to the climax and then ends. There is no “I forget to tell you,” no endless descriptions, but only forward moving action.

**Using Stories Effectively**

Choose the story carefully. The characters in the story should be few and true to life. They should be full of action. The characters should be desirable so that the listeners may well take them for a pattern. The story should contain high moral and religious truths. It should meet the needs of the pupils and fit the aim of the lesson for the day. Young children like imaginative stories and do not care whether they are true. Juniors want true stories filled with bravery.
Know the story well. Be certain that you know every incident as it leads up the climax. Do not have to be dependent on a book or outline. Practice telling the story so you will not have to hunt for words; then you can “feel” the story.

Prepare the setting for the story. Remember that you want your listeners to forget themselves and identify themselves with the characters. Therefore, you will be sure the class is free from distractions. You will teach children not to interrupt with questions during the story. You will explain any new words or strange customs before you begin the story. Your picture may be used for this purpose or it may be used for discussion after the story. Referring to a picture of object during the story usually breaks the experience. Now that you have prepared them for the story, you have them draw their chairs a little closer and you begin. You forget yourself and remember you are merely a mouthpiece through which the experience of others may become the experience of your listeners.

TEACHING THROUGH DISCUSSION

The pre-school and kindergarten children are just learning to follow and share in conversation, it is valuable to get a child’s opinion. Juniors have gone far beyond this beginning stage, and the use of the discussion method helps them to develop clear thinking. The discussion method is most effectively used with youth and adults.

Group discussion may more correctly be called group thinking, for it is the effort of the group as a whole to find truths or to arrive at a solution to a problem. The discussion is not an argument or debate in which one member tries to prove he/she is right in the face of opposition. It is not a recitation where the teacher asks a question of one pupil and after he/she answers it, asks a question of another.

The discussion method provides opportunity for spontaneous exchange of ideas on a subject with the definite thinking procedure and must go from step to step in that procedure if a conclusion is to be reached.

The atmosphere has much to do with the ease of developing a worth-while discussion. There should be a spirit of friendly informality. The seating in informal also, usually in a circle. The leader sits with the group rather than standing behind a pulpit or desk.

The discussion is not another type of question and answer. It is not a case of the teacher asking a question and the pupil answering, rather the thoughts and questions go from one to another in the group.

Each assumes the integrity of the other and must show real respect for every opinion, yet each must be willing for his opinion to be evaluated and weighed.

The problem must be real and worthy of their best thinking. If the members do no thave some background experience and study on the subject the result of the discussion will be fruitless.

Preparing to Lead a Discussion

How does a leader prepare for a discussion and what are his/her responsibilities?

The leader presents the subject. Remembering the law of readiness, he/she may introduce the subject by an illustration or experience. He/she may use a question.

The leader asks questions to lead from one step to another, and keeps the discussion focused on the central issue. If the group tries to talk about everything, it will really gain nothing. While the leader is not to dominate the discussion or determine the final decision, he/she is responsible to see that the group is progressing toward a final conclusion definite action.
The leader summarizes. About every ten minutes the leader will try to pull loose ends together. He/she may say, “Do we agree—?” or “Have we come to this conclusion?” or “Would you say that so and so is true?”

The leader sets the morals of the group. It is his/her business to see that everyone is drawn into the thinking and is an active part of the group. He/she must not allow sarcasm or lack of respect for honest opinion. He/she must see that no one dominates the time or the decision.

The leader leads the group to a conclusion. Discussions may be for different purposes and the purpose determines the conclusion. Sometimes the aim is for enrichment, in which case each would share his/her ideas and experiences, and the conclusion.

### Discussion for Action Outline

Very often the purpose of the discussion is to decide on a definite way of action. A good example of this type of discussion topic would be: “What can we as a Buddhist group do to lower the rate of delinquency in our community?” A discussion for action must progress along a definite outline, and the leader is responsible to see that each step is carefully taken.

1. A careful understanding of the problem.
2. Possible ways of meeting the problem. There should be a careful evaluation of the factors involved in each possible answer.
3. A decision on definite action.
4. Setting up the instruments for carrying out the decisions, appointing committees, deciding on dates, etc.
5. Carrying through the decision.
6. An evaluation of the results.

The discussion method is one of the most successful with youth and adults, but the success depends on the preparation and skill of the leader.

Teaching can be “fun” and learning can be easy, if every teacher will determine to develop real skill in at least two teaching methods and dare to experiment with other methods as the lessons provide opportunity.

### HOW TO PLAN FOR DHARMA SCHOOL SESSION

Our primary concern in teaching Dharma School is the religious growth of the pupil in living with Amida Buddha. Our responsibility is to help the pupil live the Buddhistic way of life. Such teaching requires not only inspiration but careful study and consistent planning. A blueprint of the experience the teacher hopes to provide for his pupil is just as important as the plan of an engineer for a bridge. Without planned instruction, goals remain vague, procedures are undetermined, materials chosen may not be put into an effective usage in the spiritual growth of the students.

Lesson plan sets the course, keeps the teacher on the track, and secures adequate time for desirable points of emphasis in the learning activity. It contains a statement of objectives and the method to be used in achieving these aims. A good planning sets the attention of the teacher upon desirable changes in the life of the pupil and provides for definite pupil participation in the class experience, which put the pupil in the center of the actual teaching process.

An outline of such planning should be put on paper. Some teachers may get to the point where they can carry in mind just what they plan to do in the class session, but it is far safer and effective for us to commit the plans to paper.

How can we prepare such successful planning of a lesson? The following is a recommended and suggested plan or pattern.
Familiarize Yourself with your whole course

We presume that you are using lesson units. Find out what the course intends to accomplish through this series, and get some idea of the method it would suggest that you follow. An introduction of the teacher’s guide, Jishin Kyo Nishin, will be helpful.

Study the Lesson to be used the following week

The purpose of this first scanning is to get a general idea of what is coming, and how this week’s lesson is developed and see its connection. Thus you maintain a well integrated continuity of lesson.

Study your pupil’s need

Find out what possible interest they may have in the lesson which you are to teach. It may be necessary to use some means to find out more about your pupils, through tests, conversation, and questionnaires.

Determine your objective

You are now ready to decide what you would like to accomplish in this lesson. Do not depend on having this vaguely in mind. Study the teacher’s guide and look at it from all angles. Be sure that it is stated in terms of some result in the lives of the pupils you are teaching. Be specific so that you may check whether you have achieved your purpose.

Decide on the method or methods to be followed in class.

This is a specific plan. This part of the plan will include both what you will do and what the pupils will do.

Keep in mind your objective. Select the method that seems to be most feasible in your situation.

Supplementary teaching materials

There may be a need for pictures. Often usable pictures may be found in magazines and in books. The teacher needs to be alert to such materials. Illustrative objects may be needed and will have to be located wherever they may be found. Newspaper clippings may be useful for starting a discussion, supplying data, or illustrating a point. Make careful notes on what is to be used and where it may be found. File these notes for future use.

Formulate your teaching plan

Now put your plan on paper specifically.
(a) General data, such as class, topic, date, et cetera
(b) Your objective for this session and for the series of sessions;
(c) A list of the teaching materials you propose to use;
(d) A schedule of proposed procedure.
(1) How you will get started
(2) What the pupils are to do
(3) What the teacher will do and say, with some of the key questions written out.
(4) Notes on content to be used, quotations to be used, etc.
(5) A plan for closing the session, with summary
(6) Assignment of future work.

Each step should be planned in terms of time. For example, three minutes for an introduction, etc. These details will vary greatly with different teachers, and with different lessons. The important thing is to make some plan for the session.

Review your plan and materials

Go over your plan a number of times during the week. Most teachers will want a last rehearsal on Sunday morning, preceding the session.

Evaluation

This comes after the class session. Each session should be reviewed critically to find out good points and weakness in the presentation and in view of such evaluation improvement should be made in your next planning. The best time to such evaluation is right after the class session while your memory is fresh.

Early preparation

Such planning should be done in the early part of the week, not on Saturday night, because you will need more time for looking up materials, making assignments to pupils and other necessary activities.

Flexibility

The situation may arise to necessitate your plan to be altered. Of course, it should be tried to eliminate such happening as much as possible, but the wise teacher will keep his plan flexible, so that it may be changed if the occasion requires it. However, this does not mean an excuse from thorough preparation.

EXAMPLE

The following plan is illustrative of the point mentioned above. Each teacher should work out for himself/herself the pattern which served his/her purpose best.

Lesson Plan for Junior Class

*Date:* May 8, 19-
*Class:* Junior Class
*Subject:* Childhood of Shinran Shonin
*Time:* Thirty-five minutes
*Purpose:* To help the children to a better understanding of Shinran Shonin’s childhood with particular reference to the following:
1. The family, family training, and his religious inclination at the early age.
2. Death of his parents and how we should face such tragedy.
*Materials:* pencils, paste, crayons, and a copy of Shinran-Shonin.

Teaching Procedure:
1. Two minutes of meditation
2. Introduction (5 mins.)
   a. Review briefly by asking children few questions on the previous week’s lesson. When he was born, and how well he was cared for.
b. Remind the children of the death of Queen Maya.

3. Story (8 mins.) Tell the story of Shinran Shonin’s childhood.

4. Discussion (10 mins.) Lead a discussion on what happens when they die. Let children participate in the discussion to find out what kind of idea they have regarding death. Summarize it with assurance of Amida Buddha’s love. Discuss the teaching of Amida Buddha so that they can also become Buddha. If time is not enough for this discussion, leave it till the next Sunday, but make sure to review the lesson.

5. Review (3 mins.)
   a. How old was Shinran Shonin when his father died?
   b. Did Shinran Shonin receive a good education?
   c. How old was he when he lost his mother?
   d. How do you think Shinran Shonin felt when he lost his mother?
      (let them write out a composition if there is enough time.)

THE DHARMA SESSION

I

The teacher should be at the Temple before the children and greet them as they come. The actual teaching begins not only in the classroom but outside of the classroom as well. The teacher’s genuine interest and friendliness to the children when greeting them at Dharma School has often immeasurable influence upon the child’s attitude. But in order to greet and welcome children cheerfully, the teacher should attend to all necessary preparation beforehand.

Once a happy friendly experience is established, children look forward to meeting the teacher before the class session.

It is also mentioned that through such informal and friendly contact, the teacher can develop a mutual understanding. It is a good opportunity to observe and study the children; how they manage themselves outside of the classroom.

II

The arrangement of the room is an important factor in assuring a successful session. Are they seated so that they can best participate in the class? Are they seated so that they all can see the face of the teacher? Is the room which you are using the best that the Temple can provide? Imagination and common sense will often solve your most serious difficulties.

Look over the seating arrangements, lights, and ventilation. Often a little change will greatly increase the effectiveness of your work. A picture here and there, a little paint and flower pot, etc. will greatly improve the environment.

Notice that an ingenious arrangement of the pupil’s seating often minimize the discipline problem.

III

If the classes are divided after service in the temple, the movement to respective classroom should be handled efficiently. This transition is a part of the Dharma school session, and should be carried out with proper dignity and order.

One way to avoid such confusion is to have the teacher lead the group and never let the pupils precede him to the room; ask for a student monitor to help in keeping the line of march in order.

When they enter the room, it is best for the teacher to start out immediately with the work of the hour for the group.
IV

For the proper class session, the teacher should follow the plan which was prepared during the week. The previous sentence does not mean that you should stick to the plan regardless of the students’ reaction.

Depending upon the situation, a well-prepared plan should be discarded to meet the new situation to which the teacher did not foresee. For example, a teacher may make a well-prepared plan for the birth of Shinran Shonin. Yet, when she prepares to proceed with her planned lesson, she finds that the students lack in geographical as well as historical background. In such situations, what would you do? It is better to leave that prepared plan for the following Sunday and the present Sunday’s time should be spent in providing enough information on such needed orientation. Therefore, the instructor should be resourceful and flexible in planning, as well as conducting a class.

The teacher should always be alert to the reaction of her students and provide an opportunity for students to participate in the class. Children should be invited to ask questions and their questions should be respected even when they seem rather silly to the teacher. This from the student indicates an awakening on the part of him and should be encouraged.

V

After the class, the teacher should think through the session carefully, and critically. Make appropriate notes on your lesson plan so you may use them for better results in the future.

The following questions are for your help in evaluating you class:
1. Were your students interested? At what point were they were most interested and at what point were they least interested? Why?
2. Did I do my best to enlist participation, particularly to the more timid ones? How could I have done better?
3. Did your students seem to think it was worthwhile and show a desire to continue with what they are doing?
4. Were my objectives achieved?
5. Was my lesson plan changed from the original one? Why was such a change necessary? Did such changes improve the lesson? How would I change it if I could do it over again?
6. Did I make an assignment? Was my assignment clear to the pupils?

HOW CAN WE HELP CHILDREN LEARN

How can we help children to learn well? Are there any laws of learning? These questions are very important to any teacher who desires to be effective in his teaching. For example, in the case of an orchid grower he wants to know how an orchid plant grows and under what condition it grows best, so that he can utilize such knowledge to bring about the best result. In the same fashion we want to know some of the laws of learning so that we can use them effectively and intelligently in guiding children to learn.

In the psychology of learning there are a number of laws which have been revealed through careful experiments and research. Let us consider some of the most basic and common laws of learning by which we may be guided and profit most.

The first law is the Law of Exercise, which is sometimes called the Law of Use and Disuse. This law demonstrates that learning will become well fixed or “stamped in” through constant practice. And by the same token through failure to exercise it, learning will be lost. In applying this principle to religious education, a right response or learning may be digested and fixed in the students through their frequent experience and usage in their daily living. Therefore, we can understand why mere “explaining away” or “teaching away” a
new lesson every Sunday without providing that such lesson be repeated and experienced frequently is ineffective. Frequent repetition of experience with increasing meaning and understanding is extremely important and essential in Dharma School teaching. This is more so in the case of younger children. It is often the teacher’s intention to teach as many topics or facts as possible on Buddhism but such intention should not overlook this law of learning and neglect the importance of practice. The common phrase, “practice makes perfect” holds true in religious education. Particularly in the work of Dharma School more emphasis should be placed on a thorough and intelligent understanding and practice of a few basic teaching rather than on many subjects without meaning and understanding. St. Rennyo’s words should be clearly understood and appreciated by every teacher. St. Rennyo stated, “He should be regarded as a wise person who understands the significance of life, though he cannot read a word. He should be regarded as an ignorant person who does not understand the significance of life, though he may read enormous volumes of books.”

The next law of learning is the Law of Effect. This involve the satisfaction or dissatisfaction accompanying a certain learning process. Psychologically, this may be the most important one since it is related to several basic problems of motivation. This law explains that an experience or response associated with feelings of satisfaction and pleasure is more easily learned, thus strengthening the response. This reminds us to reflect carefully upon children’s experience and reaction to the Dharma School. If the child’s experience at the Dharma School is pleasant and satisfying, then he keeps coming to the Dharma School. Again if his experience of offering incense was pleasant and satisfying, he loves to repeat it correctly and learns it well. Punishment and praise are some of the devices to enforce this particular law. A large number of psychological experiments and researches have consistently proved that a better learning result is obtained through praise rather than punishment. A little praise at the right moment may be very effective in learning as well as in amicable teacher-student relationship. Children should be encouraged through positive means of praise rather than negative means of punishment.

Closely related to this Law are the Law of Intensity and Law of Vividness which stress the effectiveness of intensity in stimulus. In general the more vividly and clearly the lesson is presented, the more readily it is learned. Again this means that the lesson presented enthusiastically by the teacher will be better than the lesson presented without enthusiasm. Audio-visual aids in education is another application of this law.

Permanent religious attitudes, Buddhistic way of living, faith in Amida Buddha are the goals sought by our teaching. These goals will become an integral part in the lives of Buddhist children as their learning experiences yield such satisfaction and pleasure that they will willingly put it into practice. On the other hand, if such experiences are associated with disinterest, misbehavior and failure to cooperate, the repetition of such negative experience forms an outcome which are the opposite to the goals sought in Buddhist education.

“Success in any undertaking or any single act depends to a large extent on how badly you want to succeed, and how much energy you put forth—in short, on how strongly you are motivated.” Motivation is a vital condition of all learning. If a child is properly motivated such as wanting to become a good baseball player, he will go through many hours of hard practices willingly; as a result he will learn faster and better than the child who is mildly interested in baseball. Learning takes place when there is: (1) a need or motive and (2) an appropriate goal, the attainment of which will satisfy the motive.

What are some of the needs or drives of motivation? Some of them are the bio-physical type, such as hunger, thirst, sleep, etc. Others are acquired such as fame, power, etc. These drives are dynamic in that they arouse a person to act to satisfy them. In religious education we are primarily concerned with acquired drives but some authorities consider that religious need or drive is almost innate like hunger and thirst.
When a child comes to the Dharma School, he may be motivated by his acquired drive for belonging to a group. This drive will become more vivid and strong when he becomes a part to a yet larger and harmonious group called the Sangha. To satisfy such drive the Dharma School lessons and activities are presented as means. The following are practical suggestions or procedures which are useful in the work of the Dharma School.

1. Appeal to as many motives as possible. Enlist the whole personality.
2. Be enthusiastic. It is contagious. It helps to create that proper atmosphere which is one of the most important elements in the environment as far as effective learning is concerned.
3. Encourage participation—provide more opportunities such as class project, service project, etc.
5. Punishment should be in the interest of the one punished. You should at least have an idea of how punishment is going to benefit the offender.
6. Set the proper example. What you are, will speak more eloquently than anything you may say.
7. Provide more opportunity for self-expression.
8. Do not make the task too difficult to cause apathy and frustration.
9. Make it child-centered. It is his life and he must live it. All that we can do in education is to manipulate the environment toward a more effective motivation.
10. Patience is a primary virtue for teachers.
11. Be liberal with praise and sparing with criticism.
12. Be truly appreciative of the child’s efforts. Expect the right action and you are more likely to get it. Children are more accommodating in this respect, both consciously and unconsciously.
13. If it is necessary to offer criticism, do it with a smile. The child must not get the impression that you are angry at him but disappointed at a given act or conduct.
14. Avoid negative reactions, such as anxiety, shame, resentment, suspicion, defect, and frustration. The feeling of frustration is about the worst experience for children.

TEACHING SHIN BUDDHISM TO CHILDREN

What has been mentioned is a brief outline of Shinshu. However, a teacher with all the points clear in mind is qualified to teach Shinshu because he/she is also qualified as a Shin Buddhist. Shin Buddhism is primarily an experience, and that is how it should be taught to children. Probably it is the best way children will understand Buddhism because abstract ideas make little or no impression upon the life of a child. But we can bring them closer to Amida Buddha, which will make life more and more meaningful as they grow older. For example, children of kindergarten age are a great problem to Dharma School teachers because they cannot understand any of the more technical Buddhist teachings. Still they can be taught to depend upon Amida. They can share their happiness or unhappiness with Amida, knowing that Amida is always with them, loving them like a mother and father. All children need someone to rely upon, to talk to, and to give them a feeling of security and love. Amida will never fail them and when they know this, Amida will become important to them. It is a good idea for each child to have his own symbol of Amida, even if he/she does not have an Obutsudan. He/she should have a special place of his/her own to keep the symbol. As to the type of symbol, a colorful painting of Amida is probably the best.

It is good to tell the child that Amida is happy when the child is happy, and sad when the child is sad. But we should never tell him that Amida is angry when the child is bad, or that Amida will punish the child. Amida should never be confused with a God who rewards and punishes people. That is a Christian idea which is logically false and not accepted by Buddhist. Amida never does things even a little bit negative or harmful. Amida is perfect Love and Wisdom. Amida sends love to all living beings regardless of their good or bad conduct. This is true Love and Compassion.
Now let us discuss some of the ideas already mentioned as they can be taught to children. We said at the beginning that every teacher should know what it means to be a Shinshu follower. For one thing it means we are working with Honpa Hongwanji, because the real purpose of Honpa Hongwanji is to bring people closer to Amida. Philosophically speaking, the power of the temple to help people comes ultimately from Amida, and the power we have to help children comes from Amida also. We can say that since the purpose of the temple is to bring people closer to Amida, everything we do to help the temple is for the same purpose. We, as teachers, are the temple itself. Because the temple is much more than a building; it is whatever we make it, with Amida’s help. The temple serves the children, and after the children grow up it is their duty to serve others by helping the temple. As much as possible members of a temple should be taught that they need the temple and the temple needs them. If there is something wrong with a temple the error must be corrected, but the temple cannot be deserted. If we desert the temple we are deserting Amida also. For this reason, everything we do to bring the child closer to the temple should also bring him closer to the temple to Amida and if he realizes this, he should be willing to support the temple in return.

Probably most of the children have been taught about Sakyamuni Buddha, but little or nothing about Amida Buddha. The older children will understand that Sakyamuni received his wisdom and love from Amida. Most teachers have spent much time talking about Sakyamuni without mentioning Amida, so the children think Amida is not so important. Now we must show them that Sakyamuni could never have become a Buddha without Amida. Because Amida is the Love and Wisdom of Sakyamuni. It is best to talk more about Amida so the children will become better accustomed to the name. When we do mention Sakyamuni we can add something about Amida at the same time. For example:

“Sakyamuni loved and respected all people and He was very wise also. Do you know where He got His love and wisdom?” (The answer is Amida.) “How can we become kind and good like Sakyamuni?” (The answer is by thinking of Amida and saying the Nembutsu.) Not that we should wait until Sakyamuni is mentioned before speaking of Amida. On the contrary, whenever possible, Amida should be discussed. Whenever the children say “Namu-Amida-Butsu” they can add “Thank you Amida Buddha.” In this manner the Nembutsu will become more than meaningless sounds. Children will easily learn to thank Amida for many things if their parents do also. As teachers it is useless for us to teach the child to say the Nembutsu at meals etc. If his parents do not encourage him by their example. If we ourselves show love and gratitude towards Amida, the children will naturally follow. But if we do not set an example and teach by word of mouth only, progress will be very slow.

Small children may be told that Shinran Shonin told us many things about Amida and so we are grateful to him. The older children may be told about his wonderful character, and his life of faith in Amida Buddha, that he tried to become a Buddha by his own efforts, but after twenty years of struggle he realized that the “Path of Faith” (Shinshu) was the best. He fully admitted his weakness and asked Amida to save him from the world of suffering. As soon as he lost all self-conceit, Amida Buddha was able to give him the True Joyful Faith, which comes only from Amida through the Karmic power of His Vow or Promise to save all beings. Unlike so many conceited people who think they are good enough to become Buddhas through right practice, Shinran Shonin was completely honest with himself. He knew he was not nearly good enough to become a Buddha. When he discovered the teaching of Amida, he wanted other people, who were not capable of becoming Buddhas by their own power, to know about Amida also. Because only Amida saves all people, strong or weak, good or bad, intelligent or ignorant. Then he wrote all about Amida’s salvation so everyone could understand. Actually Shinran Shonin’s True Joyful Faith came from Amida, and that means Amida is working through Shinran Shonin to save us. Sakyamuni is an example of a person strong in body and mind to become a Buddha. Shinran Shonin is an example of a person just like all the rest of us—the type of person Amida made a special promise to save.
What can we teach children about death? That depends on how we ourselves feel about it. If you are afraid or doubtful don’t say anything about it, or the children will become afraid and doubtful too. If you have confidence in Amida, you know that death is nothing to fear, and you can speak about it without frightening the children. Sooner or later a child will mention the subject and then in a natural manner you may discuss it with the whole class if you wish. To very young children the Pure Land may be described in materialistic terms. All the very best things belong there. When older children ask about the Pure Land remember they should be able to understand that it is far beyond our limited imaginations. Only a Buddha can understand the meaning of Pure Land.

What is the Nembutsu and Amida’s Vow? The Nembutsu may be taught to little children as simply an expression of thanks for all the wonderful things Amida does for us. That is why it is good to learn to say “Nam-Amida-Butsu, thank you Amida Buddha.” Older children may understand that the Nembutsu is actually part of Amida’s Karma of Love and Compassion. By saying the Nembutsu with a heart of gratitude and sincere desire to know Amida’s Pure Land, we allow the True Joyful Faith to come to us. Explained very simply, the Vow is Amida’s promise that we can all go to His Pure Land. More technically, it is the result of unending good works or karma performed by Amida. Because the tremendous power of all of these good karmas is directed towards the salvation of all sentient beings it is called Amida’s promise, our “Vow of Salvation.” Philosophically, there is no difference between Amida and Love, Wisdom and Good. Therefore when we rely upon Amida, we are relying upon Love, Wisdom and Good. How could we find anything better to rely upon? Everything is made up of Karma (energy) as science says also, and what we call Love is Love energy, Wisdom is Wisdom energy, etc. So it is this particular type of energy that underlies the Vow. It is “Amida energy” to save all beings. There are more accurate technical explanations of the Nembutsu and Vow but they require a deep understanding of Buddhist philosophy.

What happens after we become Buddhas in the Pure Land? All Buddhists believe in ethical action. That is also very true of Shin Buddhists. Shinran Shonin made it clear that in this day and age no one is good enough to become a Buddha by himself. But, that does not mean we are not suppose to help others. A very important Shinshu teaching is that all of us after going to the Pure Land should return to the world of suffering to help others go to the Pure Land. We will gain the power to help others, and the desire to do so, once we become close to Amida’s Love and Wisdom. Everyone should realize that his going to the Pure Land is not for himself alone, but ultimately is supposed to benefit all sentient beings. We gain universal significance by becoming Buddhas, and thus we carry on the great Buddhist tradition:

“To do what is right;
To avoid what is wrong;
That is the Promise of Buddhas.”

CO-OPERATION AT HOME

It is important to work closely with the home. The guidance of children is a twenty-four hour task in which teachers and parents have to co-operate if they want their child’s training to be effective and continuous.

Religious education, if it is to be really an effective teaching, must be in the active part of the children’s daily living. Therefore one hour class period at Dharma School, no matter how well it may be carried out, loses its effectiveness in guiding children unless that teaching is practiced at home during the week.
Who should take the initiative in promoting such desirable relationship? It should be
taken by the Dharma School teacher. The lack of interest on the part of the parents is often
due to the fact that the parents are unaware of what they can do to help the work of the
Dharma School. When a proper opportunity is given, the parents usually come up with
willing co-operation which is so gratifying, encouraging, and inspiring.

Home and school can work together with harmony:

1. The home and the Dharma School should be in complete understanding of the goal for
religious growth of the child.
2. The home and the Dharma School should regard each other as mutually helpful party in
the achievement of these objectives. Each must have confidence in the other to do his/her
share. Each should seek to build the work of the other.
3. The Dharma School has the right to expect the home to have its members to the school
regularly and on time. The home has a right to expect proper notification on the hours of
regular meeting and other special meetings.
4. On account of the brief time available for work at the Temple, the Dharma School must
depend on the home to help understand the child in his normal life situation. Parents
know about their own children—specifically their individual traits and problems, interests, questions, and evidence of religious growth. The teacher in turn can furnish
useful information on pupils’ behavior and experiences at the Dharma School as well as
the general characteristics of this age group.

To establish this parent-teacher co-operation in which parents and teachers plan for the
spiritual growth of their child, the teacher must make every effort to gain the confidence of
the parents, so that she can carry out successfully her role of an understanding sympathetic
assistant in the child’s guidance. If mutual trust is present, the parents and teachers is of
valuable assistance to each other.

How can this co-operation between the home and the school be effected? There are many
ways to achieve them:

1. The first suggestion is that each teacher makes it his/her business to become a friend of the
pupils in his class. Parents will readily respond to genuine friendships with their children.
2. Each teacher should visit the home of his pupils—at the beginning of the term and when
the student is absent, a call can be quite effective.
3. A newsletter or monthly report from the school is another way to promote such mutual
understanding. Newsletter can inform parents what the school or class is doing and
planning for the future.
4. Parents may be invited to visit the class at Dharma School, and see the work in actual
operation. Observing the teacher in action, the parents come to appreciate the sincere
work of the teacher and significance of the Dharma School. Through such a visit, the
parents’ interest int he Dharma School is stimulated and their service in monetary or
spiritual form is offered. Many parents realize for the first time why the Dharma School
needs financial help as the watch the children undertake many craft projects and other
activities.
5. There may be meetings of parents with the teachers. It may be a combined service with
the children. At such a service, a priest can talk on the importance of the religious
education or the role of the home in religious guidance, etc. After the service the children
talk with the teachers and their priest on the improvement of the Dharma School. In such
a meeting, parents and teachers may participate in a discussion on religious problems
raised by the children.
6. Parents may be asked to help with the work of the Dharma School. Parents may be asked to help with some mechanical work or carpentry or coach for a softball team, or to serve as a teacher. Parents may be able to help with music or some of the administrative work. The problem of providing transportation for field trips can be talked out with parents and they may be willing to help the Dharma School. However, the teacher must know the parents and be alert to the ways of soliciting such help.

Through such means, we can work together toward the safeguarding of the children's spiritual growth.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AGE-GROUPS**

Teachers should make a careful study of the age-groups they are teaching. These characteristics help teachers to understand the class in their charge better. Teachers will know what to expect from that particular age-group. Such knowledge of general characteristics will be a great aid to the teacher in planning lessons and projects.

**Nursery and Kindergarten**

There are two groups cover the three year span of three, four, and five years. There are some remarkable changes during this time, but the main environment is a pre-school, home-centered one (even with a few hours of nursery school or kindergarten each day). The fundamental needs of this group remain fairly static: (1) sense of security, (2) friendly companionship with parents, (3) contact with people who can be respected, (4) freedom to grow.

They have a great number of simple experiences. They can make the distinction between animate and inanimate things; they discover that living things are born (especially pets or brothers and sisters); they make the distinction between fact and fancy; they play with their shadows; they need social cooperation and social living; they desire personal creative achievement; they can choose between present and future goods; but they have no historical sense; they rejoice in overcoming difficulties with its accompanying consciousness of inner strength; and they are talkative.

Children of this age will not seem to learn very much. This is because their learning is almost entirely physical. They learn by imitation, through the development of the senses, and through simple experience. Even at five, they are learning motor and emotional control, and they draw their experiences from nature, family, pets, neighbors, and obedience to law. Their span of attention is very short, and they need constant variety in their activities.

The objectives for nursery and kindergarten children are necessarily simple what comes after this. The kindergarten child has a wider horizon than the nursery child, and becomes more aware of his neighbors, has more mental activity, is more adventurous and free although still needing a sense of security.

**Primary Children**

The ages six, seven, and eight bring in a completely new set of experiences. The child's center changes from home to school. The most critical experience of the six year old is his first day at real school (which is so different from kindergarten). A new world has opened to him and he meets new friends and teachers. He also learns to read, he spends less time with his parents and brothers and sisters, his Dharma School takes on new meaning, capacities at first, but his physical coordination is much improved. He enjoys both individual and corporate activity.
He wants to learn. He can distinguish real life from imagination. He likes simple dramatics—unrehearsed and natural. He must have a place to play. He can use a minimum of memory. He still learns primarily through the senses. He can discern “Buddha-likeness”. He may enjoy stories of the early life of Sakyamuni, he will learn simple memorization and gathas, he likes people, he wants to know more about people and especially the minister and teacher, and he already knows enough science to appreciate simple scientific facts.

Junior Boys and Girls

The ages nine, ten, and eleven are marked by rapid transition. They are very active physically. It is the beginning of adolescence, with all its accompanying worries, headaches, and tremendous surprises. The boy and girl begin to establish their personalities independently of their parents. They begin to be aware of sex difference.

The junior classes are products of the “gang spirit.” They like to elect their own officers and enforce their own rules. At the same time, they are rugged individualists. They are impatient with external authority, but respect leaders who can control them. This means that the teacher must “know his stuff” as they put it. He cannot bluff them or pull the wool over their eyes. They have a great respect for achievement. They want to know what Sakyamuni did and they are interested in all the action stories. They want success and not moral victories. They read easily, and because of their hunger for knowledge they can memorize whatever they desire.

Junior High or Intermediate

A great mental change comes with the years twelve, thirteen, and fourteen. There is the capacity for wide reading (and the scope of it in some youngsters is amazing), critical analysis, and sustained interest. The physical changes are more eruptive and adolescence plays its strangest tricks, such as uneven growth, awkwardness, changing voices, and all the rest.

They are dreaming of their future work, riding one hobby after another, changing moods as rapidly as a cyclone comes and goes, refusing to be communicative even with their parents, being shy one minute and aggressive the next, demanding freedom and independence (and trying to get the family car), becoming interested in the opposite sex and therefore very self-conscious. The classes should be well organized. There is room for discussion groups. Religion must be tied in with life.

There are many Dharma Schools which end with the eighth or ninth grade. Just at the time when there could be some teaching of the content of religious doctrine, Temple history, and the real problem of religious living, the pupils drift away. They decide that Dharma School is too childish for them, or parents cease using pressure to get them there. Unless there are real means of assimilating them into fuller Temple life, they are lost to the Temple for a long period.

Some losses are inevitable. Those who come only because of parental pressure will fall by the wayside. Those temples which have no program for building them into the life of the Temple will fail to keep them. Those Dharma Schools which are thoroughly dull deserve to lose them. The temple cannot do much about parental pressure, but it can provide adequate programs and sufficiently interesting to make them want to stay. All the successful experiments cannot be listed here, but a few are mentioned in the section on Senior High.

The Senior High Group

The ages fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen are the most challenging of all. There is no censure on them if they cease coming, no social pressure to keep them coming, and they have
many alternative activities which frequently prove more interesting. The period is that of middle adolescence, where the changes are more mental than physical. There is an expansion of selfhood, and a recognition of the rights of their own choices. They have independence of thought and action, combined with emotional instability. Sex is important and mixed classes are usually essential.

If their interest is maintained, remarkable things may be done. They can study hard and apply themselves with vigor to good courses in the beliefs of the Temple, and the problems of religious living. Lectures and discussion method are successful. The students demand opportunity for expression, and they will cooperate with the leader in working out their own courses.

Several successful experiments have been made in keeping these ages almost intact. One way is through the three year course in a leadership training class, beginning with the eleventh grade and going one year beyond high school. This group meets separately, under the direction of a well-trained leader, studying history of Buddhism, and methods of teaching religion. At the end of this time, a certificate is given which qualifies the graduate for Dharma School teaching. Sometimes the shift has been made to evening meetings, and while this usually eliminates the long study period it need not do so. A good young people's fellowship sometimes is larger than any morning class could be.

Within the fabric of the usual Dharma School, most students of this age can be kept if the Dharma school makes a real place for them, if all ages come because they want to come, and if individuals are given responsibilities.

Young People

For the people above high school age there is still the continuance of adolescence. There is the same enthusiasm which dies out before a task is completed. There is the same willingness to work hard for a period, followed by a lapse. Young people's groups are noted for their "ups and downs."

Many new interest appear, paramount of which are choosing a vocation, going to college, and falling in love. They will come to the temple regularly if the temple will provide entertainment, social contacts, and discussion of their own problems. They enjoy critical arguments about religious beliefs. They like courses on marriage and the home. They will discuss problems of cheating, the meaning of success, and details of temple ceremonials.

Young people should go to the temple, teach in Dharma School, have their own meetings, and take part in other temple activities. If they do not appear in temple, something is wrong with the services and sermons. The total impact of the temple on the lives of young people make the temple indispensable. At the same time, it must be kept in mind that some people would not go the temple if the best preacher, choir, and architecture were combined and a taxi provided.

No one knows just how to deal with young people. No book can give advice that will apply to all conditions.

This brief outline gives only an introduction to some of the problems. This is the general knowledge which every teacher should have. Beyond this he must read about his own students, taking a single volume about a particular age-group.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SANSKRIT

Aside from the invaluable tool in comparative philology, knowledge of Sanskrit has brightly illuminated the beauty and stature of Indian thought and culture. By it's application, western scholars have become acquainted with a tradition which pondered many philosophical problems, or explored the vistas of literature which western writers has just recently begun to investigate. Buddhist Dialectical Systems, the Epic Poems of the Mahabharata are among the many important translations.
It is evident that Classic Sanskrit as a formal grammar, had evolved from the necessity of accurately defining and recording the various religious doctrines of the early periods of Indian History. Written records of Sanskrit grammar of Panini is extant with mention of earlier grammarians (Yaska) which indicates a scientific formalization of Sanskrit before Panini’s time (circa 300 B.C.). MacDonell, a noted Sanskrit scholar remarks, “The ancient Indian Grammarians had by the fifth century B.C. arrived at scientific results (formalization of Sanskrit) unequalled by any other nation of antiquity.”

Paradoxically, it is not until very recently by western history, that our scholars began to make a serious study of Sanskrit and its literature. (With the possible exception of Boston in the 13th century). Even the recent studies have mostly been of Pali texts and therefore most available to us. Much of the English writings of Buddhism is of this source and represents the Hinayana tradition. It is easy to see how confusion may arise to the Mahayanist who is unaware of the source of translation.

Much of the original Mahayana texts written in Sanskrit have not as yet been committed into English and remains the task of future scholars. And those available in English, particularly Kegon, Tendai, Zen, Pure Land schools and other writings are translations from Japanese or Chinese sources. Many of these which are earlier translations of original Sanskrit.

As an interesting note, the Okyos chanted in our services are written in Chinese characters but read with “Japanese” sounds. The Sho Shin Ge of Shinran Shonin is also rendered in classical Chinese as was the practice in those days by Japanese scholars. The present “Japanese” sounds are still very close to the original pronunciation which was introduced from China. However, the Chinese pronunciation have since changed so radically, that modern Mandarin only in places resembles the “Kanji” pronunciations.

The Triple Sutra of the Shin tradition is also earlier Chinese translations of original works in Sanskrit. Despite these retranslations, literacy is retained with amazing accuracy. The literal renderings of names of persons and places are an important gage to check the accuracy of similar transcriptions when compared with Tibetan translations of Sanskrit. The Tibetan Sanskrit scholars were meticulously consistent in their literal translations of names and places, whereas the Chinese scholars used both literal translations as well as phonetic transliterations.

However, our acquaintance with Sanskrit is not important merely from a Historical or Etymological standpoint. Most important, with out such acquaintance, it would be impossible to venture into the ideas of Buddhist of Hindu thought.

There are many precise Buddhist terminologies or ideas which have no equivalent English rendering. In an attempt to do so, would result in loss of much of the original coloration and precision. Not to mention the inaccuracies which would result due to misinterpretation.

Thus, doctrinally, Sanskrit plays the most important role of representing ideas or concepts not common in the Western tradition. Sunyata, Dukkha, Nirvana, Anatman, Buddha and many others are examples. Each of these ideas has nurtured in a culture quite different from ours in their psychology, sense of values, etc.

For example, Anatman, which is usually translated as “Non Ego” or “Selflessness”.

This concept, unique to Buddhism, emerged as an antithesis of the Atman of Brahmanical schools, then later developing into a concept consistent with related doctrines of Buddhism. The usage of “Non Ego” or “Selflessness” would give no clue to the investigation of the Atman vada for a contrasting view, nor contrasting it to the western idea of “Ego” or “Self” lead us to the correct understanding of Anatman.
Another example which can briefly be discussed here is “Buddha”. The usual translation is “The perfect, Enlightened One”.

However, if we should choose this to mean “All Knowing” of “Omniscient” or possessing universal knowledge which is a common attribute to a “higher Being” in Western culture, this would be suspect when we find throughout Buddhist writings that Buddhahood is enlightenment to the essence of Dharmakaya (sometimes Dharma or Tathata is used). And that all empirical knowledge and relative knowledge is “empty” in essence.

Esthetically, classic Sanskrit has transported much of the beautiful literature of the Vedas, Jainas and Buddhism which otherwise could have lost through the natural corruption and change of popular dialects. Its latitude of expression, phonetic appeal, its lucid transparency is beautifully demonstrated by the Dramas of Kalidasa, or the poetic renderings of the Bhagavat Gita. Yet with ample articulation to manipulate the intricate doctrines of Indian Philosophies.

Though it may be difficult to become a student of Sanskrit, we can Learn to appreciate the significance of Sanskrit terms which are so abundant in our religious literature.

### THE SUPERINTENDENT AS THE ADMINISTRATOR

The “Aims and Objectives of Buddhist Education in the Dharma School” states, “The purposes . . . is to educate the children to be good Buddhists who believe in Amida Buddha, learn the teachings of Buddha, and live according to those teachings.”

In most Temples, the Dharma school is the main source of Buddhist education. It is usually the only organized program of religious which enlists and trains people to become Buddhists living each day according to the teachings of Buddha.

The superintendent must be aware of the purposes of the Dharma school and its importance. He serves as the administrator upon which the success or failure of the program, the future of Buddhism, and the membership of the church are dependent. Thus, the role of the superintendent is a vital part of the Buddhist education program.

As an administrator, the superintendent coordinates the activities of and promotes effective communication among and between the minister, officers, teachers, and students.

### THE SUPERINTENDENT AND THE MINISTER

Ideally, the superintendent works with the Temple as a whole, but his primary responsibility lies with the Dharma school.

The minister also works with the Temple as a whole but has many more responsibilities in addition to the Dharma school. The Dharma school is even more important to the local minister for he knows that the success of his ministry depends more upon the success of the Dharma school than on any other single area in his Temple. Therefore, he is greatly interested in your work as superintendent and he is appreciative of your efforts and choice of service to the Temple. The minister is more than willing to do all he can to assist you in your superintending work.
It is important to work together toward the common goal of a successful Dharma school. This can be accomplished by:
1. discussing problems and progress of the Dharma school with him personally as well as seeking his advice.
2. making certain that he attends the teachers' meetings and encouraging him to take part in teachers' conferences and workshops.
3. discussing general goals of the annual program and evaluating past and present needs.

You can ask the minister to help you in many ways such as:
1. suggesting and selecting possible teachers.
2. training teachers; offering suitable lecture(s) for the teacher training program.
3. suggesting materials and possible activities which may be used by the teacher.
4. publicizing Dharma school activities.

THE SUPERINTENDENT AND HIS OFFICERS

The superintendent’s involvement can be overwhelming for he/she usually has many areas of responsibility and a number of people to work with. Teachers and students look to him/her for leadership as an administrator. Ministers seek closer communication with teachers through him/her. Officers and chairmen look upon him/her as a coordinator as well as a major decision-maker.

As a result, the chief causes of discouragement and reasons for his resignation after a year of service are:
1. the failure to let others share in the responsibilities of Dharma school education.
2. the failure to give adequate guidance to those who have been given responsibility.

Enlisting others to do the job whenever possible in one way of avoiding overloads. The superintendent should not “spread himself too thin” but should enlist as many helpers as possible. The phrase “use me or lose me” is as true in Dharma school as it is anywhere else. Involvement is one way to helping the teacher feel needed.

A major problem among Temples, especially those with limited membership, is the involvement of only a few members who try to do everything year after year.

Every Temple school, regardless of size, has similar work for all Dharma school teachers who strive for effective Buddhist education for the young. In small temple schools where there are few workers, Dharma school teachers may have to share several responsibilities, whereas in larger temples there are more staff members having fewer responsibilities.

LIST OF POSSIBLE OFFICERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>assistant superintendent</th>
<th>material and supply chairman</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>recording secretary</td>
<td>activities chairman</td>
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<td>corresponding secretary</td>
<td>publicity chairman</td>
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<tr>
<td>treasurer</td>
<td>hospitality chairman</td>
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<tr>
<td>advisors (lay member or</td>
<td>religious chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minister)</td>
<td>attendance chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>historian-reporter</td>
<td>auditors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research chairman</td>
<td>librarian</td>
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<tr>
<td>music chairman</td>
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</table>

Most of the positions are usually created as the need arises.
THE SUPERINTENDENT AND THE TEMPLE

A superintendent should be well-acquainted with the total program of the Temple. He/she is an important liaison person who co-ordinates the Dharma school activities and projects with the total Temple program.

Therefore, he/she should:

1. attend Temple meetings regularly. He/she is aware of the activities of the Temple and keeps his/her staff well-informed.
2. appoint someone else to attend a meeting when unable to do so.
3. keep the Temple members posted on the various aspects of Dharma school activities.

ENLISTING TEACHERS

Finding potential teachers is a matter of looking for individuals capable of fulfilling the role of the teacher. Most temples fail in this area because they do not make use of the full potential manpower of their membership. With encouragement and teamwork, workers do show enthusiasm and interest in their positions.

1. Have your minister or the board conduct an annual service enlistment campaign whereby members of the temple are enlisted to do a job in which he/she is most interested or suited. Prepare a list of Temple activities with main headings such as “General Temple Administration”, “Buddhist Education”, “General Services”, etc. Have members sign up for specific positions.
2. Get together with the minister and officers to make an overview of the entire Temple role and compile a list of potential workers.
3. Organize a training program for present and potential workers.
4. Encourage students to take an active part in organizing lessons and activities so that they will have the desire and ability to serve.
5. Enlist assistant helpers; set up a substitute teacher program.
6. Give associate teachers and officers the chance to serve as regular teachers every few weeks.
7. Inspire youth to attend summer camps and seminars and give them something special to do in the Dharma school as a follow-up. It would be wise to start them with responsibilities that are not overbearing and assure a degree of success. Perhaps they will be motivated into becoming future teachers if they have a taste of success and satisfactions.
8. Make appointments for a one-year period.

TRAINING DHARMA SCHOOL TEACHERS

Teacher’s training is an essential part of Buddhist education. It is a means of helping the workers become confident in planning lessons and in understanding the students and the goals of the curriculum.

Some areas which may be covered in the training sessions are:
1. program and curriculum planning
2. teaching techniques and ideas
3. an understanding of children’s characteristics
4. knowledge of Buddhism
5. development of attitudes among your co-workers which promote good workmanship, faithfulness, and cooperation.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

Interest often begins with involvement. Exposure to Temple activities is a method of giving workers some training.
1. Involve the youth in Temple programs such as Dharma school department and youth groups. Let them assume leadership roles or become involved in service projects, be chairperson for the service.

2. Send the youth membership to conferences and seminars where they can learn more about Buddhist faith and develop leadership qualities. Give them an opportunity to utilize what they have learned at their own Temple. Youths are often disillusioned when the Temple does not make use of, or even consider, what they have to offer.

3. Assist another Dharma school teacher.

4. Start leadership training courses for seniors and older youth as part of the regular Temple curriculum. This will prepare and encourage them for future leadership.

5. Hold training classes on Sunday mornings or weekdays for prospective teachers.

6. Encourage youths attending college to enroll in religion or Buddhist philosophy courses.

**IN-SERVICE TRAINING**

Training is a continual process. It is a means of helping teachers to learn new ideas, techniques, and trends in Dharma school education. Training provides guidance to teachers on dealing with special problems and on arriving at possible solutions. It is also a way of inspiring and motivating workers.

1. Careful instruction—Give clear instructions so that they will be able to anticipate and confront problems on their own. It is very important that new teachers have clear guidelines which they may rely upon when necessary.

2. Personal guidance—create an atmosphere where the teachers will feel free to ask for help from the minister, superintendent, and co-workers. Scheduled conferences or classrooms visits are often beneficial for both the superintendent and the teacher to evaluate areas needing attention.

3. Guided reading—Encourage teachers to read for they can learn through books. There is an abundance of books and resources. Encourage teachers to take the initiative to learn from books.

   Encourage teachers to read books on religious education and Buddhism. Set aside a fund to organize a Temple library.

4. Observation-demonstration—Visit other classes. Visit neighboring temples and observe their teachers in action.

5. Workshops and conferences—provide opportunities to discuss and plan Buddhist education.

6. Provide the teacher with Buddhist education materials.

The Buddhist temple offers spiritual nourishment to the entire family. Young and old alike seek Amida Buddha and the teachings of Buddha. As a result, the temple must be able to accommodate students of a wide age range.

The Dharma school assumes the responsibility for the education of the students. To be effective, the Dharma school must initiate programs that are interesting and comprehensive for the students.

Many temples find it necessary to have a graded Dharma school.

1. there are distinctions with age.

2. it is more conducive to learning. Children of different ages learn at different rates.

   Learning ability is dependent upon physical as well as mental maturity.

3. Dharma school materials should be appropriate for the various age levels.

Dharma school teachers should learn the general characteristics and needs of the children she teaches in order to teach effectively.
LENGTH OF SESSION

The time length of the Dharma school session determines the amount of Buddhist education students receive. The traditional thirty minute sessions are often too short. Many Temples extend the time to better the quality of the religious education.

There are several reasons for allowing ample time in the class:

1. Much time is lost when students move from the temple to the classroom and in settling down.
2. Younger students take longer to reach a point where they are able to concentrate on the lesson.
3. The Dharma school teacher can make wise use of the beginning portion of the classtime. Spending the first few minutes in informal conversation often leads to a more relaxed and casual atmosphere. It gives the Dharma school teacher a chance to establish a closer rapport with the students for he can show an interest in their weekly activities. Sensitivity will also promote openness between teacher and students.
4. Routines such as roll call and announcements take up some of the class time. Dharma school teachers also use some of the time to prepare, pass out materials, and, after each session, clean up.

If we were to compute the number of hours spent in the classroom, we would be dismayed to see that the actual learning time is minimal. For example, suppose a Dharma school averaged thirty half-hour class meeting per year after omitting special holidays, program preparation time, and vacations. This would mean only 10 1/2 hours net time spend in teaching Buddhism per year. Of this total, much of the time is lost settling down in class. It is no wonder that many of our youth feel inadequate in the understanding of our religion!

In order to use classtime fully, it is wise to sit down and plan the year thoroughly with persons in charge of the temple program. Perhaps a computation of the number of hours spent in the classes would help the Dharma school teacher to realize the importance of careful planning and the necessity of budgeting the time. Organize the Dharma school program in such a way that better use of the available time is made.

Just as important as budgeting is promptness. This is often overlooked as a factor contributing to successful Dharma morning programs. Let everyone know that the school begins exactly when it is supposed to begin and closes exactly when it is supposed to close. Beginning on time will discourage tardiness; closing promptly will contribute to the success of the temple’s other Dharma activities.

INCREASING ATTENDANCE

A matter of major concern is improving attendance of classes. Good attendance is the result of organized and continuous effort. Contests and awards may attract the students temporarily but lose effectiveness once the novelty wears off. Important factors contributing to higher attendance are:

1. A good and interesting program.
   - *Definite goals.* Each class has a set of objectives to strive toward during the course of the year. This would give the class direction and purpose, thus eliminating any possibilities of floundering.
   - *Right curriculum.* The lessons are meaningful and can be applied to daily life. The maturity and interests of students are taken into consideration.

2. Close student-teacher rapport. A staff of teachers who are personally interested in the progress of the students and have the zeal to impart the teachings. Dharma school teachers may express personal concern for absences and, if necessary, encourage regular attendance through closer communication with parents by telephone, post cards, letters and visitations.
3. Adequate facilities. Though this is not as important as the first two, an attractive, well-equipped classroom environment is conducive to better learning.

4. Summer school program.

INCREASING ENROLLMENT

Reaching new students is a constant concern of all temples. Parents who are interested in Buddhism will encourage their own children to attend Dharma school. So, young parents are often the key to recruiting more students in your school. If they are aware of the significance of Buddhism, they will take an active interest in the temple and will support the Dharma school program.

There are other ways of reaching the people in the community:

1. Encourage pupils to invite their friends.
2. Make a list of prospective students in the community and invite the family to temple functions.
3. In cases where transportation is a problem, establish a bus system or car pools.
4. Vacation Temple summer schools (special weekday programs during the summer).
5. Close contact with the community through news media, organizations, posters, etc.
6. Buddhist Elementary School

REGISTRATION OF DHARMA SCHOOL TEACHERS

The superintendent is required to register each teacher with the BCA Dharma School Department. The Headquarters keeps permanent records of all teachers, namely:

Active: those who are presently involved in teaching
Inactive: those who are no longer teaching

PROCEDURE FOR REGISTERING TEACHERS

1. Register teachers at the beginning of your Dharma school term, usually in the fall.
2. Report the following information:
   - teachers leaving the staff
   - moving to another city (transfers)
   - taking a leave of absence
   - any change in status
   - marriage (report maiden as well as married name)
   - death of teacher or spouse
   - change of address
BUDDHIST EDUCATION AGE CHART

### CHILDREN'S DIVISION

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<td>* Crib Toddlers</td>
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### YOUTH DIVISION

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<td>Grade 11, 12</td>
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### ADULT DIVISION

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* Usual Classification
** Optional
*** New Trend

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Chapter III

GOALS OF THE PRESCHOOL

The most important goals of the preschool teacher are to provide a religious environment and varied experiences in Temple activities that will allow the child to:

- learn to be with other children in the Temple
- become familiar with Jodo Shinshu materials
- develop an interest and joy in learning about himself/herself
- develop self-expression and thanks to Amida
- develop self-control
- develop responsibility in taking care of the Gatha Book and Ojuzu.

A balance between freedom and guidance, group and individual activities, active and inactive experiences should be considered by the teacher as she sets up a Dharma School schedule. Flexibility on the teacher's part and a relaxed attitude toward the schedule are necessary but also the child needs security and need to develop a sense of order when there is a schedule and plans for each Dharma School class.

Examples of activities:
- Show and tell time
- Looking at pictures and drawing them
- Discussions
- Playacting
- Relating experience or telling about an interest
- Telling a story
- Sending notes or letters home
- Discussion and observance of safety rules in Dharma School
- Visits with community helpers/Senior Citizen's home, etc.
- Taking care of toys and materials
- Taking care of Gatha Books and Ojuzus
- Taking care of your clothing
- Clean-up time
- Develop cutting, pasting, crayon use, listening, following directions, and remembering skills.
- Drawing pictures
- Enjoying new books

BUDDHIST ETIQUETTE AND SYMBOLS

Buddhist Flag

The first five stripes of the flag are self colors of blue, yellow, red, white and light red. The sixth color is a combination of the five. The flag symbolizes the unity and harmony of Buddhists.
Dharmacakra

Also known as the Wheel of Dharma. It is the symbol of Buddhism. The eight spokes represent the Noble Eightfold Path. The wheel symbolizes the wholeness as well as the flow of Buddha’s teaching.

Gassho

Gassho means to put the hands together. It signifies the oneness of Buddha and all beings. It also expresses reverence and gratitude.

Hondo or Main Hall

The Hondo should be entered quietly and with due reverence; i.e., enter and leave with gassho facing the shrine.

Ojuzu

A collection of beads and three main beads strung together is used when in gassho at the time of worship. Three main beads represent the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and other beads representing Buddha’s teachings to overcome each suffering of beings.

Saisen or Offering

Saisen is a practice of dana, an act of selfless giving and receiving.

Service Book

The service book contains the teaching and words of Buddha; therefore, it should be handled with respect.

Shoko

The burning of incense should be done with reverence because it prepares us to receive the Dharma. It means to pay homage to Buddha and remind ourselves of the law of impermanency of all things including ourselves.

Wisteria Crest

The double wisteria crest is the temple crest of the Honganji. The wisteria blooms with its blossoms hanging low. Thus, the wisteria crest symbolizes humility and sincere reverence to Amida Buddha.

BUDDHIST TEMPLES OF AMERICA DHARMA SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

GRADE LEVEL | FOCUS | AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
Preschool | Buddhist Etiquette | Learn how to act in Temple
 | Buddhist Holidays | Learn to gassho - to recite
 | Activities | the Nembutsu - why?
 |  | Learn to get along with each
 |  | other
 |  | Learn about Buddhism and
 |  | Jodo Shinshu through -
 |  | listening to stories, sermons
 |  | and to each other.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Buddhist Observance</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Titles</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
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</table>
| Sept.            | B.C.A. Founding Day | Sept 1 | Higan E | B.C.A. Founding Day  
|                  |                     | Sept 23 |        | Autumnal Equinox |
|                  |                     |         |        |               |
| Oct.             |                     |        |        |               |
| Nov.             |                     |        |        |               |
|                  |                     | Dec. 8  |        | Enlightenment  |
|                  | New Year's Shinran Shonin Memorial | Jan. 1 | New Year Shuso-E Hoonko | New Years |
|                  |                     | Jan. 16 |        |               |
| Feb.             | Nirvana Day         | Feb. 15 | Nehan-E | Passing of Sakyamuni into Nirvana |
| Mar.             | Higan               | March 21 | Higan-E | Spring Equinox |
| Apr.             | Buddha Day          | April 8 | Hanamaturi | Birth of Gautama Buddha |
| May              | Shinran Shonin Day  | May 21  | Shuso-Gotan E | Placed his faith in Amida’s power  
|                  |                     |         |        | Mother’s Day |
| June July        | Obon                | June July August | Obon | Graduation  
|                  |                     |         |        | Obon Festivals  
|                  |                     |         |        | Father’s Day |

**BUDDHIST OBSERVANCES**

Every day we are surrounded by Amida’s light of Wisdom and Compassion. When we become aware of this light, there is no need to designate special days. However, we tend to forget the meaning of Buddhist history and, therefore, the observance of a special religious day sharply focuses our attention on some historic event or an important Buddhist practice and deepens our appreciation of our rich heritage.

**January 1 — New Year’s Day (Shusho-e)**

This is a day of dedication. With renewed resolution we dedicate ourselves to the way of the Nembutsu.

**January 16 — Shinran Shonin Memorial Day (Ho-on-ko)**

Ho-on-ko is a service in memory of Shinran Shonin (May 21, 1173 - January 16, 1262) the founder of Jodo Shinshu (True Pure Land Sect). Shinran Shonin was the first to teach absolute faith in Amida Buddha.

**February 15 — Nirvana Day (Nehan-e)**

On this day we solemnly observe the passing of Sakyamuni Buddha into Pari-nirvana.

**March 21 — Higan (Higan-e)**

Higan, meaning Other Shore, is a service conducted in spring on or about equinox day. At this time harmony rules throughout the universe. Therefore, we gather before the shrine of Amida Buddha to devote ourselves to the realization of this harmony in our inner lives.
April 8 — Buddha Day (Hanamatsuri)

This service is held to commemorate the birth of Gautama in Lumbini Garden. During the service a flower shrine known as Hanamido is set up in front of the main shrine as a symbol of Lumbini Garden. The sangha offers flowers and pours sweet tea over the image of the infant Buddha.

May 21 — Shinran Shonin Day (Gotan-e)

Shinran Shonin was born near Kyoto on May 21, 1173. On this day we observe his birth as the founder of Jodo Shinshu.

July — August — Bon

Bon is a Buddhist Memorial Day. It is an occasion for rejoicing in the enlightenment offered by the Buddha. It is often referred to as a “Gathering of Joy.”

September 1 — BCA Founding Day

This day marks the official introduction of Jodo Shinshu into the mainland United States. The Reverend Shuye Sonoda and the Reverend Kakuryo Nishijima arrived in San Francisco on September 1, 1899.

September 23 — Higan (Higan-e)

The sangha gathers twice a year during the spring and autumn to recall the practices of Six Paramita.

December 8 — Bodhi Day (Jodo-e)

Gautama meditated under the Bodhi Tree (Tree of Enlightenment) and became a Buddha, perfect in Wisdom and Compassion.

December 31 — New Year’s Eve (Joya-e)

On New Year’s Eve we meditate on the countless blessings we have received throughout the year and express our gratitude to our parents, our nation, all beings and Amida Buddha.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE and HOW TO ACT IN THE TEMPLE

Recite the (Kokun) Nembutsu, Gassho

Welcome children to Dharma school. Introduce yourself by saying your name as clearly as possible. Have the children repeat your name.

Roll call: Use roll call chart - use Buddhist stickers for record keeping

Lesson Period: Today’s lesson will be on how to:

— Offer incense

Children who are new to the Dharma school and do not have the Ojuzu may receive their Ojuzu from the minister.

Lead each child to the butsudan and show how to offer incense.

Note: “The burning of incense is an act to purify our mind and body and free us from the passions which bind us to the cycle of birth and death. In the world of Buddhism, said Rennyo Shonin, ‘the ego should not be thought of.’ Incense offering represents the burning away of our selfish aims.”

After each child has offered incense and received his Ojuzu, tape or tag name tags onto the Ojuzu (make name tags) Shrink art
After the children are settled and quiet, ask the children if they remembered how to Gassho and review the process of offering incense.

Show them again how to hold the Ojuzu and repeat the Nembutus, “Namu Amida Butsu,” with the children. Ask the children if they have ever heard anyone saying these words. Tell the children that we will be repeating these words very often in Dharma school and at activities involving the church.

Let each child know that this is his very own Ojuzu to take home. Tell the child to take good care of the Ojuzu and to bring it with him every Sunday. The Ojuzu should be on the left hand or in the pocket when not in use and should not be used as a plaything.

Explain to the children about the following:
1. what they are to do if they arrive early to Dharma school
2. how to enter the temple (gassho)
3. where to give their offerings
4. how to sit down quietly until the service begins

Note: Make sure children gassho before entering the temple and show them where to place their offering. Tell them they are to sit quietly and wait until the service begins.

Me Project

Closing meditation: compose in your own words appropriate remarks for this quiet period during meditation.

“We are very glad on Sundays because we come to Dharma school. Amida Buddha is happy too because, (name children) all gathered at our temple today.

Nembutsu, Gassho

Recite the Promise

PROMISE

We thank Amida Buddha for showing us the Way of freedom. We will endeavor to walk in His Noble Path every day of our lives.

KOKUN

WATAKUSHI TACHIWA MIHOTOKE-SAMA NO KODOMO DE ARIMASU.
We are all Buddha’s children.

WATAKUSHI TACHIWA MIHOTOKE-SAMA NO OSHIE WO MAMORIMASU.
We will all follow the Buddha’s Teachings.

WATAKUSHI TACHIWA MINNA NAKAYOKU ITASHIMASU.
We will all be friendly to everyone.
Golden Chain

I am a link in Amida Buddha's golden chain of love that stretches around the world. I must keep my link bright and strong.

I will be kind and gentle to every living thing and protect all who are weaker than myself.

I will think pure and beautiful thoughts, to say pure and beautiful words, and to do pure and beautiful deeds.

May every link in Amida Buddha's golden chain of love become bright and strong, and may we all attain perfect peace.

Namu Amida Butsu

Pledge

Leader:  To the Buddha...

Everyone:  . . .who promised to be present in his teaching, we pledge our loyalty and devotion. We dedicate our lives to the way of life he laid down for us to walk. We resolve to follow his teachings and work earnestly for the welfare of all mankind.

Summary:

Preschool-Kindergarten children are active, curious, self-centered and have short attention spans. In teaching young children, I have found that they feel more comfortable with a fairly set classroom routine. Which may be:

1. Setting up the classroom Obutsudan, lighting the candle and the incense. Then each child taking a turn and doing oshoko.
2. Repeating the kokun together.
3. Reviewing the Reverend's sermon together. (Explaining if necessary in simpler words).
4. Do the class lesson or project for the day.
5. Closing the class with the Promise.
Chapter IV

BUDDHIST OBSERVANCE AND ACTIVITIES

ACHIEVEMENT RECORD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHOTOGRAPH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAME ______</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| PRIZE #1 |
| PRIZE #2 |
| PRIZE #3 |
| YOU DID IT! |
SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES

September 1  B.C.A. Founding Day

The Reverend Shuei Sonoda and the Reverend Kakuryo Nishijima, dispatched by the Nishi Honganji to minister to the Buddhists in America, arrived in San Francisco on September 1, 1899. This day marks the official introduction of Jodo Shinshu into the mainland United States.

September 23  Higan

The Higan service around the twentieth of September coincides with the autumnal equinox. Like the spring Higan, this observance has a distinct origin in Japan where seasonal changes called for religious affirmations and celebrations. The word Higan comes from the Sanskrit word Paramita—"Other shore," and suggests the Six Paramitas of charity, morality, patience, effort, meditation, and wisdom.

HIGAN

In Buddhism, the four seasons of the year are subdivided into eight periods of which spring and autumn equinox periods are set aside for their respective OHIGAN observances. The two days—one in the spring and the other in the fall—when the hours of daylight and darkness are of equal duration, are known as Chu-nichi—the middle day—of the seven day week with three days of observances before and after the middle day.

Seasonally, both the spring and autumn Higan are quite similar and are commonly referred to as “the periods marking the end of the cold winter and hot summer seasons.” So delightfully ideal and enjoyable are the Higan periods that the centuries-old Buddhist practice of placing emphasis on them for the spiritual and moral benefit of all faithful followers bears profound significance.

The word Higan is a Buddhist term and was originally taken from the Sanskrit "Paramita" which is translated as "gone or leading to the other shore." The words “other shore” refer to the "world of Nirvana.” In contrast to this, is the transient world of illusory birth and death.

The most important question is, of course, “How, then, can one reach the other shore of Nirvana?” The answer lies in the Bodhisattva practice of the Six Paramitas—Dana, giving; Sila, precepts; Ksanti, patience; Virya, endeavor or effort; Dhyana, meditation; Prajna, wisdom. These are also known as Rokudo or Six Paths. “Do” is translated as “to cross over” or “to carry across.” It is the means by which one crosses over the illusory ocean of birth and death to the other shore of Nirvana.
Month of September

PROJECT (A)
Take pictures of children. Mount the pictures on a piece of tagboard.
Talk about the pictures and the activities involved.
LOOK AT US!
Photos
Can you find yourself?
Can you find your friends?
Write a story about what you are doing.

PROJECT (B)
Make a THIS IS ME book. Staple pages together. Let child cut out arms, legs, etc. from different magazine pictures. Put parts of body together—use collages for texture.
Also—THIS IS OUR TEMPLE book can be made with the same procedure.

My name is
I have brothers.
My friends are
I like to

PROJECT (C)
Help your teacher get to know you. Make a little book for your teacher in the shape of an apple. Tell her about your family, friends, hobbies, and what you want to learn in the temple.
**PROJECT (D)**

Make a little picture of your house on cardboard; write your name, address and telephone number on it. Attach it to a string and wear it around.

![Diagram of a house](image)

**PROJECT (E)**

Label the things in your room in large print.

Help your mother get to know your teacher.

Make a book about your new teacher.

What does she look like, etc.

![Diagram of a book](image)
MAKE A BIRTHDAY GRAPH

Write each child’s birthdate on two pieces of manila drawing paper or light-colored construction paper. Each piece should be about 1½ to 2 inches. Have each child draw a cake around his birthday on each piece of paper and ask children to decorate the cakes. Pin or tape the cakes next to the correct month. When the child’s birthday arrives, let the child take one of the cakes from the cake chart and wear the cake that day.

After the graph is complete, discuss it. You might ask-
• which month has the most birthdays
• the least?
• is there a month with no birthdays?
• who has a summer birthday?

Use the same procedure for Buddhist Holidays or Special Buddhist events.

Birthday Child
There’s someone special here today
He’s one year older — — it’s his birthday!
________________, stand up; to you we bring
Happy wishes. Everyone, sing!

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<td>December</td>
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Birthday Celebration

Purpose
To be the center of attention, to develop feelings of self worth, to experience joy in own and other’s pleasure.

Materials needed
- cup cakes, candles, special hats, placemats, decorated tables.

Directions
1. Teacher announces that the child is having a birthday party.
2. Everyone sings “Happy Birthday”, and claps.
3. All eat together.
4. Each child cleans up crumbs at his place at the table.

Birthdays
A child’s birthday is his/her most important day. He/she loves to talk about it months before it is due. Celebrating a child’s birthday at Dharma School is exciting for the child and the group.

The teacher should prepare ahead of time a birthday hat. Have the children sing “Happy Birthday.” Serve the treats. The birthday child’s mother should be notified several Sundays before the celebration date.

Draw a special picture of the event. If budget allows, take a photograph of the child.

The teacher says: Today is _____’s birthday. What has he learned in Dharma School today? What has the class learned today in Dharma School today?

Our life is filled with warmth in sharing life with others. It is a simple truth to learn, but a difficult practice to fully realize. In personal life, it means to act by placing ourselves in the position of another, and in community life, it means to give service with joy and gratitude for the betterment of all. The practice of making others happy is based upon the clear understanding of life which is Interdependence. In deep gratitude, let us realize this Interdependence of all life, the heart of which is Compassion.
My Helpers
My eyes are two so I can see
Amida watching over me
My ears are open so I can hear
About Amida Buddha dear
My nose can sniff the very nice smell
Of incense burning where Buddha dwells
My mouth can say, “Thank you,” too
Namu Amida Butsu
My hands can meet, my head can bend
To Amida Buddha, my special friend
My feet can walk; to the temple take me
Oh, my helpers work so happily.
My eyes, my ears, my nose,
My mouth, my hands, and even my toes!

My Window
This is my window from which to see
Everyone who is a friend to me
The milkman brings the milk we need,
The mailman carries the letters we read
From this window I can see
The boys and girls who play with me
Here comes Sensei to the door.
So many friends — can you think of more?
YOU

YOU are wonderful. You have two eyes to see the lovely blue sky. They see the sun that keeps us warm and makes things grow, the flowers and the twinkling stars. Best of all, you can see the shrine of Amida Buddha and the faces of your dear family.

YOU are wonderful. You have two ears to hear the tug boats, fire engines, whistles, birds singing, phones ringing and mother telling a story. Best of all, you can listen to Sensei as he tells of Amida Buddha.

YOU are wonderful. You have one nose. It can smell flowers and cookies baking in the oven. It can also smell corn popping and pickles being made. Best of all your one nose can smell the incense as it burns before the shrine of Amida Buddha.

YOU are wonderful. You have one mouth. You can say many things like hello, happy birthday, please, thank you, and you can even sing a song to Amida Buddha.

YOU are wonderful. You have two hands. You can eat without anyone helping you. You can bounce a ball and hang up your clothes. At night you two hands can bring Daddy’s slippers. Your two hands can tie laces and bows. Best of all, your two hands can gassho before the shrine of Amida Buddha.

YOU are wonderful. You have two feet. Oh they can do many things. They can wiggle, twist, turn, jump, walk a straight line, and run to the store for Mother. Best of all, they can walk to Dharma School and stand before the Shrine of Amida Buddha.
As a Child of Buddha

1. I am thankful for many things.
2. I try to come to Dharma school regularly.
3. I give my offering to the temple.
4. I am friendly to everyone.
5. I try not to be selfish.
6. I try to help wherever I can.
7. I try to make other people happy.
8. I try to be neat.

These points are to serve as reminders for the teacher to think about as she teaches the children.

The teacher should ask herself/himself often, "Through the Dharma school, am I teaching the children to be more friendly? Are the children acquiring neat habits? Are they beginning to feel the joy thankfulness; etc. etc."

We turn towards the Obutsudan
To Buddha
To say thank you for the happy day.

SIX PARAMITA

GIVING—dana: I shall be helpful to others.
DISCIPLINE-sila: I shall follow the precepts of the Buddha.
PATIENCE—ksanti: I shall be patient and understanding.
ENDEAVOR—virya: I shall do my best in all things.
MEDITATION—dhyana I shall reflect on the teachings of the Buddha.
WISDOM—prajna: I shall seek the light of wisdom.
MANNERS

1. Behavior in general requires children (grown up too) to refrain from talking out of turn, from whispering and talking when in a large group. Stress that when they come to the temple that they must learn not to run when in the temple, walk quietly, etc.

2. Use story to bring out point.

Example:

We all have two ears, two feet, two hands, two eyes and a mouth. Now let us see how we must learn to use them when we come to Dharma School.

What are our two ears for? Yes, to listen with. We must learn to listen so we can learn of Lord Buddha’s teaching. Let’s look at our hands. How many do we have? Yes, two hands. Where do you suppose they belong? During the service let us try to keep our hands folded in our laps. We must learn to keep our hands to ourselves and not poke or hit others. Let’s look down, how many feet do you see? Yes, two feet. When we come in the front door let’s remember to walk quietly. When we are seated, we do not kick our own chair or the one in front. Everybody has two eyes, what are they for? Yes, to see. Let us keep our eyes open so that we can see that our hands and feet behave.

Do we all have a mouth? Yes we do. We have a mouth so that we can talk. When we come to Dharma School we must learn not to talk out loud during the service. Also, we must learn to speak kind words and try smiling.

3. Have outline of face drawn for class. Cut out face features, hands and feet and paste in proper places as illustrated.


5. Make a book with the child’s photograph on the front cover and blank pages to cover 10 months period. Each month, have the children draw what they like best and discuss the drawings. Make sure each child has a turn.
What Do Our Fingers Do?

They can wiggle, wiggle, wiggle and shake, shake, shake.
Clap, clap, clap and a wave they can make.
To our mommies they can throw a kiss.

Dial a phone to someone we miss
Count with our fingers from one to ten
Close into balls to start again

Put them in the water to scrub them clean
And give a big splash when we’re not seen

And best of all, our fingers can meet
When Amida Buddha we wish to greet

Such busy workers should take their naps
So place them quietly in our laps.

GRATITUDE

1. Explain to the class how important it is to use the words:
   May I
   Please
   Thank you
   Excuse me
   You’re welcome
   Namu Amida Butsu

2. Stress the use of the words as the secret to harmony and happiness.

3. Words to remember:
   Repeat:
   May I
   Please
   Thank you
   Excuse me
   You’re welcome
   Namu Amida Butsu

Manners

Did you put on your manners when you got dressed today?
Did you remember to put in your heads the magic words we say?
When a friend gives you a present or does something nice for you,
*Thank you very much* are the words that nicely do.
When there is something that we want, *please* is the magic word
And don’t forget *excuse me* when we wish to be heard.
And at dinner, we should say, *Itadakimasu.*
And *Gochisosama* when we have had enough.
We shake the hands of grown up friends and quietly we sit
And try to learn our manners little bit by little bit.
LEARNING TO SAY GRATITUDE BEFORE EATING

Show the children the picture of a little girl saying (or expressing) her gratitude before eating.

Ask the children,
“What do you think she is saying?”

“Why does she do that?” (She is saying “Thank you” to Amida Buddha for the food she is about to eat.)

Tell them that we have special words to say before we eat. The words go like this:

Thank you Buddha for this food,
And all the things that make it good.
For my health and wisdom, too,
Namu Amida Butsu.

Repeat with a picture of a boy.

Go over the words several times with the children.

Give children a treat by serving light refreshment. (e.g. fruit juice and cookies etc.)

This will give the children an opportunity for reciting their Gratitude before eating.

Practice at: Each meal

Itadaki-masu
Gochiso-sama

DAILY GRATITUDE

1. Have actual practice by serving cookies.

2. Peter was a good bunny rabbit. He was everybody’s friend. One day he invited his friend Buster, the dog, for lunch. Yes, Buster and Peter were best of friends.

When they sat down to eat, Buster picked up his fork and started to eat. Peter said, “Buster, haven’t you forgotten something?”

Buster looked around. What did he forget? Yes, he forgot to say Itadakimasu. Itadakimasu is a way of thanking Amida Buddha for our food and everybody who had a part in raising and making it ready for us to eat. Many a time there may be food that we do not like, but we must remember that there are many boys and girls who do not have nice things to eat like we do.

Buster finished his lunch and he remembered to put his hands in gassho and say Gochiso-sama.

I think Buster will remember from now on to say Itadakimasu and Gochisosama. We must all remember to say - Itadakimasu and Gochisosama.

3. Words to remember. Itadakimasu - Gochisosama

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BCA FDSTL 2017
FIVE PRECEPTS

To teach the children to say Itadakimasu and Gochisosama

Materials:

Story on Gratitude, flannel board and the cutout pieces of a cat, rabbit, milk dish and carrots.

Procedures:

I Tell the story about a kitten and a rabbit.

II Peter was a good bunny rabbit. He was everybody’s friend. One day he invited his friend Kitty, the cat for lunch. Yes, Kitty and Peter were best of friends. When they sat down to eat, Kitty picked up his spoon and started to eat. Peter said, “Kitty, haven’t you forgotten something? Kitty looked around. What did he forget? Yes, he forgot to say Itadakimasu. Itadakimasu is a way of thanking Amida Buddha for our food and everybody who had a part in raising and making it ready for us to eat. Many times there may be food that we do not like, but we must remember that there are many boys and girls who do not have nice things to eat like we do.

Kitty finished his lunch and he remembered to put his hands in gassho and say Gochisosama. I think Kitty will remember from now on to say Itadakimasu and Gochisosama. And so we must remember to say it too.

III Have the children color a picture of a girl and boy sitting at the table and write the words Itadaki Masu and Gochiso Sama.

FIVE PRECEPTS

1. I shall not harm any living thing.
2. I shall not take what does not belong to me.
3. I shall not do anything impure.
4. I shall not tell falsehoods.
5. I shall not take harmful foods and drinks.
ANIMALS AND THE SOUND THEY MAKE

Purpose

To associate an animal with the sound he makes by listening to a book the teacher reads and then by imitating the sounds themselves.

Materials

1. Any book that has animals and the sounds they make in it (ex. "Ask Mr. Bear")
2. Or animal pictures

Directions

The teacher goes through the book with children as they imitate the different sounds that animals make. Discuss what the animals offer to give the boy—for example, cow—milk, chicken—egg, etc. Using pictures, teacher holds up an animal picture and asks who knows what it is and what it says. Another idea: Sing "Old McDonald Had a Farm" using flannel board animal pictures.
TEACHING OF GASSHO

1. Gassho is the natural expression of reverence of gratitude. It is our way of saying “Thank you” to the Lord Buddha.

2. Gassho means to put hands together. Palm of both hands are placed together with the fingers and thumbs extended and with the ojuzu encircling both hands and held lightly between the thumbs and the fingers.

   To bow during gassho, the hand should be held steady, while the body is bent forward from the hips and then back to upright position.

3. Use story to bring out point.

   Example:

   Who can tell me why the dog wags its tail when you give it something it likes? Yes, he wags his tail because that is the way he says “Thank you.” We all have a cat at home don’t we? She will purr and rub her soft fur up against your legs. Well, this is the way the cat says “Thank you.” How many of you have a bird at home? What will she do if you feed her seeds? Yes, she will chirp and sing for you. This is the way the little bird says “Thank you.”

   When we receive things, we use our mouth to say “Thank you” and when we hear a nice story we clap our hands to let the teacher know we enjoyed it and say “Thank you.” We have a special way of saying “Thank you” to the Lord Buddha. That is by putting our hands together in Gassho and calling his name—Namu Amida Butsu.

   Show photographs or pictures of dogs, discuss each dog. If the children have dogs, discuss their dogs.

   Demonstrate “gassho” and meaning of gassho.

   Practice the “gassho” together.

KOKUN

Watakushi tachiwa mihotoke sama no kodomo de arimasu
We are all Buddha’s little children.

Watakushi tachiwa mihotoke sama no oshie wo mamorimasu
We will all follow the Buddha’s Teachings.

Watakushi tachiwa minna nakayoku itashimasu
We will all be friendly to everyone.
FOUR EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE

Morning
Good morning, Amida Buddha -  
I will try to follow your teachings,  
At home, in school, and at play.  
Namu Amida Butsu

At Night
Thank you Buddha for this day  
In guiding me in work or play.  
Thank you for your shining Light  
To make our world so good and bright.  
Namu Amida Butsu

**

Thank you Buddha for this day  
In guiding me in work or play.  
Thank you for your loving care  
To keep us all happy and safe.  
Namu Amida Butsu

Mealtime
Thank you Buddha for this food,  
And all the things that make it good -  
For my health and wisdom too.  
Namu Amida Butsu

THANK YOU,
BUDDHA

Thank you, Buddha,  
For my little toys,  
’Cause they’re such fun  
For little boys and girls.

Thank you Buddha,  
For my mother true,  
She cheers me so,  
When I am sad and blue.

Thank you, Buddha,  
For my Father dear,  
He’s oh! So strong!  
He never sheds a tear.

Thank you, Buddha,  
I come to your shrine  
Each day, each night.  
I’ll gassho rain or shine.
Watakushi tachiwa mihotoke sama no kodomo de arimasu
We are all Buddha's little children.
Watakushi tachiwa mihotoke sama no oshie wo mamorimasu
We will all follow the Buddha's Teachings.
Watakushi tachiwa minna nakayoku itashimasu
we will all be friendly to everyone.

Instructions
Help child cutout the hands and Ojuzu.
Fold the hand and glue together at the tip of fingers and thumbs only.
Fold the sheet with KOKUN in half.
Apply the glue within the blocks and place the hand between it and close the sheet and hold it for few seconds.
Place the Ojuzu as shown at left.

Namu Amida Butsu
Namu Amida Butsu
Namu Amida Butsu
KOKUN
WATAKUSHI TACHIWA MIHOTOKE-SAMA NO KODOMO DE ARIMASU.
We are all Buddha's children.
WATAKUSHI TACHIWA MIHOTOKE-SAMA NO OSHIE WO MAMORIMASU.
We will all follow the Buddha's Teachings.
WATAKUSHI TACHIWA MINNA NAKAYOKU ITASHIMASU.
We will all be friendly to everyone.
Ojuzu

I have a special friend
Who doesn’t leave when day does end
It’s small enough to go with me
Wherever I go, it comforts me
It doesn’t scold or cry
and here’s the reason why — —
IT’S MY OJUZU!
THE OJUZU: OUR DEAR LITTLE FRIEND

The most practical and effective educational philosophy is "LEARN BY DOING." Parents and teachers recognize the fact that children learn best through involvement. They know that such learning experiences can be rewarding as well as interesting to young children.

Teachers can try to employ new teaching techniques to enhance our students interest in Buddhism.

I. Aims and Purposes

A. To become aware of . . .
   1. the parts of the Ojuzu
   2. the meaning of the Ojuzu

B. To feel . . .
   1. gratitude to Amida and parents
   2. respect for symbolic aspect of Ojuzu

C. To do . . .
   1. send an invitation to parents
   2. make a picture of the Ojuzu
   3. participate in a sermon

II. Materials Needed

A. Picture of Ojuzu

   1. "Self-sticking" contact paper. Use the most cheerful colors you can find (plain, no design). Cut several ½" beads. Also ¾" Buddha beads and 7/16" Parent beads. Or, draw the Ojuzu with crayons.
   2. Sharp instruments to make a hole
   3. Construction paper
   4. Yarn
   5. Scissors

B. Invitation
   1. form letter
   2. pencil
   3. postage stamps

III. Presenting The Lesson

A. Introduction

   What do we bring to church every Sunday? What do we have around our hands when we say "Namu Amida Butsu"? Yes, it is the Ojuzu.

   Do you children have any friends? You like your friends, don't you? Well, the Ojuzu is our dear little friend. As we put our hands together and say, "Namu Amida Butsu," we can think, "Amida Buddha is always with me. I am thankful. I am happy."
B. Class Lesson

Show the children a sample of the art work they will do.

Tell the children the two beads at the sides represent "parent bead" (teacher) and the large one in the middle represents Amida Buddha (Oyadama). The beads are strung together with a single strand of string. It reminds us of our "togetherness" or Oneness with Amida, our parents, and our friends.

When we hold our hands together in the temple, the Ojuzu reminds us of our parents' and Amida's love. Discuss reasons for gratitude to Amida and parental love.

Go Over the Steps for Making the Ojuzu:

a. Cut circles representing the Ojuzu beads for the children. Do this before Sunday. Use colored "stick-on" paper to make circles.

b. Have the children place the circles on the picture. Draw a very faint guideline to help the children along.

c. Use several strands of yarn for the "fusa." Make a small hole in the paper where the yarn is to be attached. Pull the yarn through this hole. Tie a knot on the other side so the yarn won't pull through.
Discuss the significance of the Ojuzu with individuals as they do their work. Ask simple questions such as:

Togetherness is . . .
My wonderful parents are . . .
I’d like to thank Daddy for . . .
Thank you, Mommy for . . .
The first bead on the Ojuzu represents _____ because . . . The second bead is because _____ etc.
Etc., etc., etc. (Think of creative questions!)

C. Parent Involvement

After the children have completed their work, evaluate their project together. Review what they have learned. Why is the Ojuzu tied together with a single strand? Who does the large bead represent? Who does the small bead represent? Share some of the children’s commentaries.

Ask: Why not share what we have learned with those who care for us? Introduce a plan to invite parents to temple and to present a “mini-sermon.”

Have the children send the following invitations to their parents.

Dear Parents:

Next Sunday, our Pre-School Class is going to help (Reverend ____________) present the sermon during our Dharma school service.

Our teachers and I are very proud of this. We would like to have both Mommy and Daddy or grandparents or relatives attend the service with us and help us in this presentation.

Thank you.

In Gassho,

Mail the letters to further the children’s interest in the project. In this way, they will hopefully share the anticipation of receiving the official invitation with their parents.

D. Conclusion:

The concluding activity of the project is the presentation itself. It is important to work with the minister. Ask him to explain the significance of the Ojuzu. Don’t forget to give him the children’s comments. Sharing these commentaries in temple will make the sermon highly personalized, therefore, meaningful.

Have each child step in front with his or her picture. As students show the picture, introduce the parents. The parents should be asked to stand behind the child.
Four Noble Truths

Procedures:

I Discuss the importance of the ojuzu.

II Explain that we all sit very quietly without Ojuzu in our left hand or put our hands together with our Ojuzu in our hands and rest in our lap. We don't play with it, throw it in the air or twist it or put it in our mouths.

III Tell a story about a happy and a sad Ojuzu using the flannel board.

Billy was a very good little boy. There was one thing Billy could never find on Sunday morning. What do you think it was? It was his Ojuzu. Finally when Billy did find it the Ojuzu looked very sad. Billy took the Ojuzu to Dharma School and he would put it on his finger and swing it around, then he would put it in his mouth and pull—what do you suppose happened? Yes, it broke and looked like this sad Ojuzu.

Mary was also a good little girl. She learned to take care of her Ojuzu like she was supposed to. When she was all through with her Ojuzu at Sunday School, she would put her Ojuzu away in a special place so that Sunday morning she would know where it was. Mary's Ojuzu was always happy because Mary took very good care of it.*

IV. Color pictures of a happy and sad Ojuzu, or make an Ojuzu out of construction paper.

V. Words to remember: NAMU AMIDA BUTSU.
THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

I. Truth of SUFFERING

1. Birth
2. Decrepitude
3. Sickness
4. Death
5. Union with Loathsome things, persons
6. Separation from beloved one, the pleasant things
7. Failure in attaining that which is desired
8. Life that is not free from desire and passion

EXISTENCE of individuality
(Nourishment of five elements of the body)

II. Truth of the CAUSE OF SUFFERING

Root of Evils
Karmaic Cycle

Ignorance
Karma
Suffering

1. BODY
   1-Killing
   2-Theft
   3-Adultery

2. ORAL
   1-Lying
   2-Slander
   3-Abuse
   4-Gossip

3. MIND
   1-Desire
   2-Hatred
   3-Ignorance

III. Truth of the CESSATION of SUFFERING

1. Enlightenment

The extinguishing of all human ignorance and Karma results in a state known as Nirvana.

IV. Truth of the PATH to the CESSATION OF SUFFERING

Dharma Pre-School Text
OJUZU

1. How many of you remembered to bring your Ojuzu to Dharma School this morning?

2. Those who forgot let us remember to bring it to temple next Sunday with your gatha books and “osaisen.”

3. In temple when listening to sensei’s sermon, singing gathas together or listening to one of the teachers telling us a story, we should all sit nice and quietly and put our Ojuzu on our left hand or put our hands together with our Ojuzu in our hand and rest in our lap. Do not play with our Ojuzu in our hand by throwing, hitting someone with it or twisting it or biting it.

4. Show picture of happy and sad Ojuzu.
   a. Happy Ojuzu — why? because the person is taking good care of it and keeping clean.
   b. Sad Ojuzu — why? because someone is not taking care of it and probably twisted it or threw it and broke it and didn’t keep it clean and maybe threw it on the floor or gound
THOUGHT

1. We’re going to play a game called “Do you remember?” Now, if you do remember, tell me when I ask you.

This is the first situation: What do we call this—when we put our hands together and say Namu Amida Butsu? Yes, Gassho.

This is the second situation: The hand is doing Gassho but, there is something missing. Do you remember what it is?

Yes - the Ojuzu. We must learn to do everything the right way. It is easy to do things - just anything - but to do everything the right and proper way, that’s the hardest thing of all. So let’s try to remember to bring our Ojuzu with us every Sunday.

Now, what do you think this is? What does it look like to you?

Does it look like a carrot? You think it might be a hat - upside down? You know what it is don’t you? Yes, it’s an ice cream cone, but something is missing isn’t it? What is missing? Why, the best part - the ice cream - of course. Let’s put the ice cream on the cone - Ummm good. Now that looks much better doesn’t it? Let’s go back to this picture of the hand. Let’s put this ojuzu there - now, that looks better too, doesn’t it?

Remember to bring your Ojuzu and gassho.

2. Words to remember: Gassho.

OJUZU BULLETIN BOARD

I. Ojuzu Bulletin Board
   A. Explanation: An ojuzu bulletin board made of “beads” represented by self-drawn faces of each child in the Dharma School class.
   B. Introduction to the children
      1. The ojuzu symbolizes oneness with Amida Buddha.
      2. Symbolism of the ojuzu:
         a. Smaller beads symbolize each one of us, including all the animals, trees, and all the other living things.
         b. Two colored beads at each side represent our Oyadama (Amida Buddha) Parent (Teacher).
         c. The largest bead represents the Amida Buddha.
         d. The tassel represents that we are all tied together by the Amida Buddha’s teachings.
      3. Ojuzu etiquette:
         a. Kept on left wrist when not in use.
         b. How to gassho
         c. How to offer incense
   C. Materials
      1. Several hand mirrors
         a. To be used for the children to look closely at their facial features, noting eye shape, double eyelids, single eyelids, etc.
b. Stress that although we are all physically different, we are all Buddha's children whom he loves equally.

2. White paper, approx. 3"x3" for each child's face.

3. Pencils

4. Crayons

5. Scissors

D. Assembly
1. Form a large circle using each of the children's faces.
2. Cut out two colored circles for each side and one slightly larger one in the image of Buddha's face.
3. Using yarn, fashion on a tassel to be put under the bead representing the Amida Buddha.

**BAKER'S DOUGH OJUZU**

Have each child contribute one bead to a class Ojuzu. The Ojuzu can be used at the classroom Obutsudan.

**Baker's Dough Recipe**

Mix 1 cup flour to 1 cup salt. Add just a little water until the dough feels like modeling clay. You can color small amounts of dough with food color - or after baking paint it with poster paint.

Have each child roll a small piece of clay into a round ball - poke a large hole through the center. If necessary insert a toothpick or small wooden dowel (tinker toy) to keep the hole open during baking.

The teacher needs to make two smaller beads and one larger bead which has three holes.

Bake at 200° oven until hard.

The remaining dough can be used to make small flower pots.

String the beads together with yarn.

**OJUZU BAG**

**Materials needed:**

- Purple felt fabric
- Assorted colored felt scraps for decoration
- Large yarn needles
- Large hole puncher to punch holes in the felt
- Colored yarn
- Buttons
- Note paper and pencils to write an enclosure note.

**Students Activity:**

Make the Ojuzu bag by:
1. Stitching yarn through the holes.
2. Glue on the felt decorations.
3. Cut a slit in the top flap
4. Sew on buttons.

Write a note of appreciation to Mother to enclose with her gift.
BUDDHA’S SHRINE — OBUTSUDAN

Flowers - remind us of all the beautiful things around us and that it never stays the same; that life is always changing.

Incense - is burned to reaffirm our vow to purify our minds for the Enlightenment to come.

Candle - The light which shines in the world of darkness helps us to see and learn about Buddha’s teachings.

Osaisen - is offered to experience the feeling of giving and to learn to share our wealth so that Buddha’s teachings can reach everyone.

In the Obutsudan is usually a statue, picture, or the scripture of the name Namu Amida Butsu - the symbol of Infinite Light and Love.

Procedure II

Artwork - Make a paper shrine with cutouts of the things that are placed on the altar.

Candle holder - use an empty thread spool and a birthday candle.

Flower vase and incense burner - Baker’s dough flower vase.

How does Amida Buddha appear in your temple? Does he appear in the words “Namu Amida Butsu,” in a picture, or in a statue?
The perfect beauty of flowers has been caught on the altar. Day after day, they bloom to help us remember the beauty and the pleasantness of Amida's world.
南无阿弥陀佛

NAMU AMIDA BUTSU
SHRINE

ONENESS IN THE NEMBUTSU

"Our family worships daily before the family shrine"

Amida Buddha cares for me. My pets and toys, what joy they bed
I thank them all, Namu Amida Butsu!
Amida Buddha’s love is not only for you and me, but for every one and everything in this world.

Ask children the following questions — waiting for their reply after each question:

1. Can you name an animal that flies in the air, has wings etc., etc.  (birds)
2. Can you name an animal that lives in the water and swims so very well?  (fish)
3. Can you name an animal that lives sometimes in the water and sometimes on land? This one is very hard, so think carefully. This animal goes about very slowly and can hide all its legs, head and tail in its shell.  (turtle)

Buddha’s great love is with us at all times, even to the animals in the air as well as the animals that live in the water. Buddha’s love and kindness is with us at all times. That is why we say, “Namu Amida Butsu” which means, “Thank you Amida Buddha”. Will you please remember this always?

EIGHTFOLD NOBLE PATH

To teach the children to always act like good children of Amida Buddha.

Materials: Flannel board and cutouts of a lion, elephant, horse and monkey.

Procedures:

I Tell the story about a circus.

II One day there was a big commotion on the circus ground. What do you suppose was happening?

Jojo, the monkey was there, Nosey the elephant was there, and Prince the horse. They were arguing about who was stronger and better. Jojo, said, “I can climb high and see all around.” Nosey said, “I’m stronger and can lift anything.” Prince said, “I can run faster than anyone.” They all thought whatever they could do was best of all. King, the wise old lion, came along and said, “Now listen, what are you fighting for? Let’s all sit down and think this over.” Remember the time when a big tree fell and the road was blocked, well, if it was not for Nosey we would never have gotten through. When the rope cut and came down, Jojo climbed high and took the rope up, and when we needed help, Prince carried the master on his back and ran as fast as he could to get help. So, you see, we all have our good points, and we must work together to make a good circus.” So, boys and girls, when we fight, let us stop and think. We could get hurt and that would not be fun, so, let us be wise and think before we hit someone or say something to hurt others.

III Art project - make a lion out of a paper bag.
NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Leader: The Buddha teaches us that we may become pure by following the teachings he laid down for us. Let us repeat them and remember them at all times:

First: Right View.
Everyone: I shall seek the truth.

Leader: Second: Right Thought.
Everyone: I shall have pure thoughts.

Leader: Third: Right Speech.
Everyone: I shall speak truthfully.

Leader: Fourth: Right Conduct.
Everyone: I shall act truthfully.

Leader: Fifth: Right Livelihood.
Everyone: I shall live honestly.

Leader: Sixth: Right Effort.
Everyone: I shall follow the teachings of the Buddha.

Leader: Seventh: Right Mindfulness.
Everyone: I shall think of the Buddha.

Leader: Eighth: Right Meditation.
Everyone: I shall recite the Nembutsu.
NOBLE EIGHT FOLD PATH

1. Right Views
   To keep ourselves from prejudice, superstition, and delusion, and to see aright the true nature of life.

2. Right Thoughts
   To turn away from the evils of this world, to direct our minds toward righteousness.

3. Right Speech
   To refrain from pointless and harmful talk, and to speak kindly and courteously to all.

4. Right Conduct
   To see that our deeds are peaceful, benevolent, compassionate, and pure; to live the Teaching of Buddha daily.

5. Right Livelihood
   To earn our living in such a way as to entail no evil consequences.

6. Right Effort
   To direct our efforts incessantly to the overcoming of ignorance and selfish desires.

7. Right Mindfulness
   To cherish good and pure thoughts, for all that we say and do arise from our thoughts.

8. Right Meditation
   To concentrate our will on Buddha, His Life and His Teaching.
WISDOM

1. Use the lion as the animal. King of all beast because he is the wisest.

2. Story, example:

   One day there was a big commotion on the circus ground. What do you suppose was happening?

   Jojo, the monkey was there. Nosey the elephant was there, and Prince the horse. They were arguing about who was stronger and better. Jojo said, “I can climb up high and swing around.” Nosey said, “I’m stronger and can lift anything.” Prince said, “I can run faster than anyone.” They all thought whatever they could do was best of all.

   King, the wise old lion, came along and said, “Now listen, what are you fighting for? Let’s all set down and think this over.” “Remember the time when a big tree fell and the road was blocked, well, if it was not for Nosey we would never have gotten through. When the rope cut and came down, Jojo climbed high and took the rope up, and when we needed help, Prince carried the master on his back and ran as fast as he could to get help. So, you see, we all have our good points and we must work together to make a good circus.”

   So, boys and girls, when we fight, let us stop and think. We could get hurt and that would not be fun, so, let us be wise and think before we hit someone or say something to hurt others.


4. Words to remember: Be wise.

DANA

(Paramitas Expressed in Circus Theme)

1. Tell story using the elephant as the animal.

   Example:

   Nosey was a big happy elephant and he loved people. But, most of all he loved to eat peanuts and popcorn.

   As Nosey grew older he was asked to help with the circus. He thought, oh my, they're going to put me to work and I hate to work. So, when time came for all the elephants to go to work - what do you suppose Nosey did? He had a headache - a tummy ache - Yes, that's what it was. So they let him rest.

   After the work was all done all the other elephants got a big bale of hay and all the peanuts they could eat, but poor Nosey couldn’t have any. Why? Yes, because he was supposed to have a tummy ache.

   I think Nosey learned his lesson. You have to give a little and work together to get along in a circus. So, Nosey was a good worker now and helped wherever help was needed.

   Nosey ate all the peanuts and popcorn he could eat and was a happy elephant. So, boys and girls, let’s try to give - I don’t mean money or things. You can give Mommy and Daddy help by hanging up your clothes and putting things back where they belong. I’m quite sure you all ready do.

   When you come to Dharma School you can give teacher your attention and by doing so we will be able to get along much better and learn about Lord Buddha’s teaching.

2. Elephant puppets can be made of paper bag. Or elephants can be made of clay or styrofoam.

King
Nosey
Prince
Jojo
ACTION

1. Remind the class to start the day out right by remembering to bring their service books and ojuzu.

2. Build a story around the smiling clown. Show an illustration or photographs.

Example:

Do you know why the clown wears a smile?

He wears a smile because he wants to make everyone happy. A smile looks so much better than a sad face. Let's see if we can smile real big. Oh, we can do better than that. Smile so it will reach from ear to ear like our smiling clown. That's much better. Now can we remember to wear a smile every Sunday? If we can remember to smile, it will make other people happy too.

3. Words to remember: Remember to wear a smile.
PUPPET - PAPER BAG

Material

1. Paper lunch bags.
2. Decorative felt, leather, fur, buttons, sequins.
3. Construction paper.
ME UNIT

The Me unit deals with the child, his family and his temple. The pages in this unit appear to be merely worksheets, however, they should be used as building blocks to develop mini-units of study. The unit is designed to enable children to gain a greater understanding of who they are and help them begin to develop an understanding of what temple means to them. It is most important that children come to feel temple as a warm and friendly place, a place to learn about Buddha’s teachings and a place to make new friends and friendships.

Before the children draw in their “Me” picture, the teacher should lead them in a discussion. Asking

1. Who they are (boy, girl)
2. What they look like (color of their hair, eyes, clothing)
3. How they look like others (all have ears, eyes, mouth)
4. How they are different from others (clothing, height, weight, age)

Activity:

1. Have the children bring in photos of themselves at age 6 months or one year. Talk about how they have changed and grown. Or maybe how they are still the same in some ways. Hold up some of the pictures and see if the other children can guess who they are.

AGE-HEIGHT-WEIGHT Review the discussion of how they are alike others and how they are different.

Activity:

1. Make a growth and weight chart. Measure and weigh each child at the beginning, middle and end of the year. The change in their growth each time, could be compared to the change and growth of their knowledge of themselves and the teachings of the Buddha.

MY FACE Bring in a mirror or two to the class. Have the children study their faces. Ask what do they see. Talk about the various facial features. Have them draw a face at the top of the page.

Activity:

1. Make a Who Am I Book. Have the children draw their faces on a paper; print some facts about them on the otherside. Put all the pictures in a book. See if they can guess who the child is from the facts, then look at the picture.

EYES Ask the children what are their eyes for? What can you see outside? What can you see in the classroom? What can you see in the temple? (people, the ministers, the shrine) Have them choose something they can see in the temple and draw a picture of it. Then write in their response.

EARS What do your ears do? What do they hear? What are some sounds they can hear outside, in the classroom and in the temple. (chanting, music, Reverend talking, the gong ringing) Have them choose something they can hear in the temple and draw a picture of it and write in their response.

NOSE What do you use your nose for? What are some things your nose can smell - bad smells and good smells. What can your nose smell outside, in the classroom, in the temple? (flowers, incense) Draw a picture and write in their response.
MOUTH What can your mouth do? eat, drink, talk. What can your mouth say in temple? (the Golden Chain, Namu Amid Butsu, sing a song) What does your mouth like to say in temple? Draw a picture and write in the response.

Activity:

1. Have the children choose a song or choose one for them. Practice it so they can sing it well. One Sunday have the chairman announce that today's gatha was chosen by the Preschool-Kindergarten children.

BUDDHA Discuss where they see the statue of the Buddha.

1. Paste in the picture of the Buddha.

2. Read the Kokun and the Promise - help them learn it, so they can recite it from memory.

TEMPLE Before drawing a picture of the temple, take the class outside and look at the temple. How many windows, doors steps, trees, statues. What color is the temple? What is the shape of the roof?

MINISTER Have the Reverend visit the class. Have him explain why he wears a robe and the okesa for service and not all the time. Ask him what he does at temple? Later have the children describe what the Reverend looked like and then have them draw a picture of him.

TEACHER - FRIENDS Have the children draw a picture of their teacher or teachers. Discuss what the teacher does. What they like about the class. How they could help the teacher in class.

Friends - Talk about friends. Who is a friend? What is a friend for? How to be a friend. How to make friends. Read them a book about friends and friendships. Then have them draw picture of a few of their friends at Dharma School. Or if the class is small enough take a class picture and mount on the page instead.

Activity:

1. Make a mural of the children in class. Have each child draw their own picture; cut around the picture and glue them onto a larger sheet of paper.

2. Invite a friend to come to temple on Sunday. Have a special friendship service.

FAMILY Talk about who are the people in your family. Talk about each person. Who they are and what they do. What they like best about each persons. Then have them draw in their picture of their family.

Activity:

1. Invite parents to come to a service and then to class one Sunday. The children could make special invitations.

2. On another Sunday, they could invite just their grandparents.

3. Make simple gifts for Mother's day and Father's day.
OBSERVING FACES IN MIRRORS

Purpose
To learn facial characteristics of self and others, to appreciate differences, and to observe likenesses.

Materials needed
Long mirror to be propped up, laid flat or individual mirrors for each child. Small felt boards with loose felt shapes for eyes, lips, noses, and etc.

Directions
1. Teacher talks with children about their heads (touch eyes, nose, hair, ears, etc.)
2. Teacher and children discuss facial characteristics of self and each other.

DISCUSSING “SITUATION” PICTURES

Purpose
To share feelings and to express possible actions to be taken based on pictures; to hear that others could feel the same or different.

Directions
1. Teachers hold up picture, “What’s happening here?”
2. Teacher waits for response.
3. Children may have a lot to say and will need to take turns so that the quiet child can have equal time.
4. All responses are accepted, no critical judgment is given by the teacher.

SHARING IN GROUPS

Purpose
To share something important about yourself with the group. To show a favorite toy or important experience.

Materials needed
Whatever child brings to share.

Directions
1. Teacher gathers children.
2. Teacher calls on each child.
3. Teacher encourages appropriate comments and helps with listing skills.
Me
Rabbits have two long ears
   And mine are tiny ones.
Kittens have nice whiskers
   And on my face there are none.
Birds have pretty feathers;
   But I can't fly, can you?
My stomach doesn't have a pouch
   As does the kangaroo.

A penguin on ice can waddle
   But all I do is walk.
A lion can let out a Roarrr!
   But all I do is talk.
Puppies use their noses to sniff
   And mine sits on my face.
Monkeys use their tails to move
   And I stay in one place.

Elephants use trunks to get food,
   Not like my fork and knife.
I only swim in summertime;
   A fish swims all his life.
Still I'd rather just be me
   With Mommy and Daddy near
Than all the animals with their tricks.
I'm happy that I'm here.
Grouchy Me

Sometimes we feel grouchy and we grump, grump, grump around
We want to kick a toy or two and walk with a big frown.
But when we think of what our friend, Amida Buddha said
Think kind and pure and beautiful thoughts,
which means be nice instead.
Then the frowns to smiles turn so all around may see
That we remember the best we can be is to
think of others and not of me.

ANGER

Some people are like letters carved in a rock; they easily give way to anger and retain their angry thoughts for a long time. Some people are like letters written in sand; they give way to anger also, but the angry thoughts quickly pass away. Some people are like letters written in running water; they do not retain their passing thoughts, they let abuse and uncomfortable gossip pass by unnoticed, their minds are always pure and undisturbed.

GREED, ANGER, FOOLISHNESS

These three — greed, anger and foolishness — are called the fires of the world. The fire of greed consumes those who have lost their true minds through greed; the fire of anger consumes those who have lost their true minds through anger; the fire of foolishness consumes those who have lost their true minds through their failure to hear and to heed the teachings of Buddha. Indeed, this world is burning up by its many and various fires. There are fires of greed, fires of anger, fires of foolishness, fires of misunderstanding, fires of infatuation and egoism, fires of decrepitude, sickness and death, fires of sorrow, lamentation, suffering and agony. Everywhere these fires are raging. These fires of worldly passion not only burn the self, they cause others to suffer and they lead others into wrong acts of body, lips and mind. From the wounds that are caused by these fires there issues a pus that infects and poisons everyone it touches and leads them into evil paths.
HAPPINESS

The Sangha member will enjoy his/her happiness by habits of recollection and reflection and thanksgiving. He/she will come to realize that his/her faith is Buddha’s compassion itself and that it has been given to him/her by Buddha.

“My disciples. The teachings that I have given you are never to be forgotten nor abandoned. They are to be treasured, they are to be thought about, they are to be practiced. If you follow these teachings you will always be happy.”
Helpful ME

I help my mother every day
And in between I like to play
In the morning, flowers I bring
Good morning, Buddha, I like to sing.
I wash the dishes; I sweep my room
It takes me awhile with my tiny broom.
For lunch, the table I help set
There is milk to pour and napkins to get
After nap, I pick up my toys
That I have shared with girls and boys.
To Amida Buddha, I offer rice
To thank Him for the day so nice.
I next bring the paper to my Dad
And tell him of the day I had
Helping my mother and playing all day
And thinking of Buddha along the way.

COMPASSION

The spirit of Buddha is a great compassion and love to save all people by any and all means. It is the spirit of a mother toward her child nourishing and protecting it; it is the spirit that prompts it to be ill with the sickness of people, to suffer with their suffering. “Your suffering is my suffering and your happiness is my happiness,” said Buddha, and he does not forget that spirit for a single moment, for it is the self-nature of Buddhahood to be compassionate. A mother realizes her motherhood by loving her child, then the child reacting to his/her mother’s love feels save and at ease. The Buddha’s spirit of compassion is stimulated according to the needs of people; faith is the reaction to this spirit, and it leads him/her to enlightenment.
ME!

MY NAME IS

112 Dharma Pre-School Text
I am _____ years old.

Today's date is:

__________________

I am _____ feet _____ inches tall.

I weigh ______ pounds.
This is my face

In temple

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My eyes can see ______</th>
<th>My ears can hear ______</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My nose can smell ______</th>
<th>My mouth can say ______</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My Hair is:

Check the right boxes

- short
- medium
- long
- thick
- thin
- no hair
- straight
- wavy
- curly

Here is a piece of my hair.

Please get parental permission.

The color of my hair is ______.
My Eyes

This is what they look like
Put your foot on the line. Trace around it.

My foot is inches long
Put your hand on the line. Trace around it.

My hand is inches long
Name Body Parts in English and Japanese.

Name

[Diagram of a boy with body parts labeled]
Name Body Parts in English and Japanese.

Name
Identifying a child

Purpose
To identify a child after teacher gives a one-sentence description of child.

Directions
1. Teacher will describe a child with a one sentence clue such as: “This person wears glasses.” “This person has black hair.” “This person has a red dress on.” “This person has pigtails.”
2. Children will try to figure out who is being described.

Simple Simon Game

Purpose
To facilitate recognition of body parts by following rules of game (visual and verbal instruction).

Materials needed

Directions
1. Teacher says, “Listen to me. I’m Simple Simon. Point to the part of your body Simple Simon tells you to point to.”
2. Use the following body parts:
   a. head, forehead, nose, chin, mouth, lips, tongue, teeth, neck, chest, back, fingers, fingernails, waist, toes, stomach.
   b. Pairs of body parts - find both: eyes, ears, eyebrows, cheeks, shoulders, arms, wrists, thumbs, hips, legs, knees, ankles, feet, elbows, heels.

Name of activity
Following directions

Number of children
1 - 5

Purpose
To follow the directions of movement in space as given by the teacher.

Materials needed

Directions
Teacher will say, “I want you to go to a place in this room, but I’m not going to tell you the place; I’m going to tell you how to get there.”

Example: “Stand up, now walk toward the window, stop! Now take three steps. Stop! Turn and take two steps toward the bookshelf and stop. Where are you?”
Show and Tell

Purpose
To show something to a small group of children and to tell about it.

Materials needed
1. Something the child brings from home or outside.

Directions
1. Teacher will tell children to bring something from home or to find something outside that they’d like to tell about;
2. Give each child a few minutes to talk and ask questions to keep enthusiasm up.

Large self portrait

Purpose
To draw body parts on child’s self portrait with felt tip pens in order to facilitate the awareness of self.

Materials needed
1. Large pieces of butcher paper
2. Felt tip pens
3. Scissors

Directions
1. Teacher says, “Lie down on the paper and I will draw around you.”
2. “Draw in your face and your clothes and then I’ll cut out the picture of your body.”
3. “Then we’ll put it up and look at it.”
(When teacher is drawing around the child’s body she should verbalize as she draws and name appropriate parts. “I’m going around your round head and down your long arms.”)
AMIDA BUDDHA
Each Sunday in class we say:

The Kokun
Watakushi tachiwa mihotoke sama no kodomo de arimasu
We are all Buddha’s little children.

Watakushi tachiwa mihotoke sama no oshie wo mamorimasu
We will all follow the Buddha’s Teachings.

Watakushi tachiwa minna nakayoku itashimasu
We will all be friendly to everyone.

Promise
We thank the Buddha for showing us the Way of freedom.

We will endeavor to walk in His Noble Path every day of our lives.
My Temple

I attend the
AMIDA BUDDHA

The mind of faith is the mind of sincerity; it is a deep mind, an unquestioning mind, a mind that is sincerely glad to be led to Buddha’s Pure Land by Buddha’s power and in his own way. Therefore, Buddha gives a power to faith that leads people to the Pure Land, a power that purifies them, a power that protects them from self-delusion. Even if they have faith only for a moment, when they hear the Buddha’s name, that is praised all over the world, it will bring them to his Pure Land.

Buddha is both father and mother to the people of the world. For many months after a child is born the father and mother have to speak to him in childish words, then they gradually teach him better words. Like earthly parents, Buddha first cares for people and then leaves them to care for themselves; he first brings things to pass according to their desires and then he brings them to a peaceful and safe shelter.

Buddha is a friend of everyone in the world. If Buddha finds a man suffering under a heavy burden of worldly passions, he has sympathy for the man and shares the burden with him. If he meets a man suffering from delusions, he will clear away the man’s illusions by the pure light of his wisdom.

Do not seek to know how Buddha by his form and attributes; for neither the form nor attributes are the real Buddha. The true Buddha is Enlightenment itself. Buddha’s body is Enlightenment itself. Being formless and substanceless it always will be. It is not a physical body that has had a beginning and must be nourished by food. It is an ethereal body whose substance is Wisdom. Buddha has no fear, no disease; he is eternally changeless.

“My disciples. The last moment has come, but do not forget that death is but a vanishing of a body. The body was born, so sickness and death is unavoidable. But the true Buddha is not a human body: it is Enlightenment.”

DARMA

A little brook is muddied by the tramping of horses and cows and is disturbed by the movement of fish and turtles, but a great river flows on pure and undisturbed by such trifles. Buddha is like a great river. The fish and turtles of the teachings swim about in its depth and push against its current but in vain; Buddha’s Dharma flows on pure and undisturbed.

As Buddha is the great king of Dharma, he can preach to all people as he wishes; so Buddha appears in the world to bless the people, and to save them from suffering he preaches the Dharma, but the ears of people are dulled by greed and they are heedless. But those who listen to his teachings are free from the delusions and the miseries of life. “People cannot be saved by relying on their own wisdom,” he said, “they must enter into my Dharma through faith.” Therefore, one should listen to Buddha’s Dharma and put it into practice.

As one little candle lights another, so the light of Buddha’s compassion will pass from one mind to another mind endlessly.
FAITH

On the long journey of human life, faith is the best of companions, faith is the best refreshment by the way, and the greatest reward at the end. Faith is the hand that receives the Dharma, faith is the hand that receives the profit.

On the journey of life faith is nourishment, virtuous deeds are a shelter, wisdom is its light by day and right mindfulness is its protection by night. If a man lives a pure life nothing can destroy him; if he has conquered greed nothing can limit his freedom.

The beginnings of faith were planted by the compassion of Buddha, long, long ago. When one has faith he should realize this fact and be very grateful to Buddha for his goodness. They should never forget that it is not because of their own merit that they have awakened faith, but because it was Buddha’s merit which long ago threw its pure light of faith into human minds and dispelled the darkness of their ignorance, and you who have faith have entered into their heritage.

A tree leaning toward the east will fall eastward and those who listen to the Buddha’s Dharma and maintain faith in it will be reborn in the Buddha’s Pure Land.

Faith has three significant aspects: a humble and patient self-depreciation, a rejoicing and sincere respect for the virtues of others, and a graceful acceptance of Buddha’s appearance.

Faith brings us into the presence of Buddha, faith brings us to where Buddha’s arm supports us. Faith softens the hard and selfish minds of people and gives them a friendly spirit and a mind of understanding sympathy.

PRACTICE

For those who are seeking enlightenment, there are three methods of practice that must be understood and followed. 1. rules for practical behavior; 2. right concentration of mind; and 3. wisdom.

Suppose a donkey was following a herd of cows and loudly proclaiming, “Look, I am a cow.” Would anyone believe him? It is just as foolish for a man who does not follow the three methods of practice, to boast that he is a disciple of Buddha.

The training for enlightenment is just like tuning a harp. One cannot attain enlightenment if he stretches the strings of his mind too tightly. One must be considerate and act wisely.

ENLIGHTENMENT

Enlightenment has no definite form or nature by which it can manifest itself, so in Enlightenment itself, there is nothing to be enlightened. Enlightenment exists solely because of delusion and ignorance; if they disappear so will Enlightenment. And the opposite is true also; delusion and ignorance exist because of Enlightenment; when Enlightenment ceases, ignorance and delusion will cease also. Therefore, be on guard against thinking of Enlightenment as a “thing” to be grasped after, lest it, too, becomes an obstruction. When the mind that was in darkness becomes enlightened, it passes away, and with its passing, the thing which we call Enlightenment passes also.

126  Dharma Pre-School Text
Lesson Plan 1: Give the students enough time to fill in the blanks. Then have them read their papers to each other.

Lesson Plan 2: Have the students draw in the face of My Minister. They may want to color in the rest of the picture. Display their pictures on the board.

Lesson Plan 3: Give the students time to write their story. Discuss with the class what the sensei spoke about that morning.

Using the same idea have the students write a short story and have them share with each other.

Lesson Plan 4: Discuss with the students the Eightfold Path. Have the students write a short sermon about any one of the Eightfold Path. Have each child give his/her sermon.

Lesson Plan 5: Self explanatory.

My Sensei

This morning ___________________________________________ Sensei gave me a message about ___________________________________________.

Sensei has ____________________ hair and enjoys playing ____________________

____________________________________________________________________ His favorite food is

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________ Sensei is always smiling

and always ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________ Sensei is a nice person and I think’ he/she is ____________________________________________ because

____________________________________________________________________.

Dharma Pre-School Text 127
My Sensei
My Sensei

This morning _____________________________ Sensei gave a message about _____________________________.

Write another short story using Sensei's idea.
My Sensei
Write a short sermon for your sensei on one of the Eightfold Paths.
My Sensei

Write a short story about what you would do if you were a sensei. (include daily life, giving sermons, writing sermons, weddings, deaths, etc.)
MY TEACHER
Friend

A true friend, the one with whom a man may safely associate, will always advise sticking closely to the right way, will worry secretly about his friend’s welfare, will console him in misfortune, will offer him a helping hand when he needs it, and will always give him good advice. It is very hard to find a friend like this, but one should try very hard to be a friend like this. As the sun warms the fruitful earth, so a good friend stimulates a man.
Things I can do myself.
Feelings and Thoughts

Something that makes me happy

Something that makes me sad

Something that makes me feel good

Something nice I would like someone to do for me

I like when my mother

I like when my father

I like when my brother/sister
MY FAMILY
FAMILY

A family is a place where a mind lives with other minds. If these minds love each other the home will be as beautiful as a flower garden.

A disciple should see to it that his family observe the teachings of Buddha. Especially should they cherish respect and consideration for their Buddhist teacher. They should treat him with courtesy, attend to and observe his instructions, and always have an offering for him. Then the teacher of Buddha’s Dharma should rightly understand the teaching, rejecting wrong interpretations, emphasizing the right, and should seek to lead believers along a smooth path. If a family follows this course, keeping the true teaching for its center, it will thrive happily.

OUR BUDDHIST FAMILY

1. Our family centers its life around Amida Buddha.
2. Our family worships daily before the family shrine.
3. Our family attends temple regularly and gives full support.
4. Our family builds a home that is physically and spiritually clean.
5. Our family loves the young and respects the elders.
6. Our family cherishes peace and harmony.
7. Our family upholds the dignity of work.
8. Our family practices thrift.
10. Our family extends a helping hand of compassion to all men.

FILIAL PIETY

It is impossible for a son to repay his parents for their gracious kindness, even if he carried his father on his right shoulder and his mother on his left shoulder. And even if he should bathe the bodies of his parents in sweet-smelling ointments for many years, and serve his parents as an ideal one should, and gain a throne for them, and give them all the luxuries of the world, still he could not repay them for what they have done for him.

But if he leads his parents to Buddha and explains Buddha’s teachings to them, and persuades them to give up a wrong course and follow a right one, and leads them to give up all greediness and to enjoy and be grateful for Buddha’s mercy, that is the only possible way for him to repay his parents. Or perhaps it is more than repaying them.
Learning names of family members

Purpose
To discover that a child is part of a family and families range in size.

Materials needed
1. flannel board
2. cut-out pictures of all kinds of people family figures

Directions
"Today we’re going to talk about families. Here’s a sister, and here’s her brother.” (Puts appropriate pieces on the board)

“Some children live with their mothers; some live with their fathers; and some live with their mother and their father.” (Place appropriate cut-outs on flannel board) “Some live with their grandmothers and grandfathers.” “Here’s an auntie. Does anyone have an auntie?” (Teacher proceeds with cousin and uncle)

Family members

Purpose
To be able to identify by naming family members.

Materials needed
1. Sears catalog or other magazine. Buddhist calendars or photographs.
2. Cardboard
3. Scissors
4. Paste

Directions
1. Cut out magazine pictures representing father, mother, sister, brother and baby.
2. Paste on cardboard or large file cards.
3. Paste several pictures of each family member on cards.
4. Have one picture of entire family to label as the “family”.
5. Introduce one family member at a time.
My Favorite Foods

EXAMPLE:

Apple    Candy    Sushi

Why is it my favorite food?
I use these utensils to eat with:

FORK  SPOON  KNIFE  CHOPSTICKS

Why do I use these utensils?
My Favorite Toys

Draw your favorite toy.

Describe it:
My Favorite Games

Draw a picture of your favorite game.

It is called
MY ADDRESS

My house has an address.

If you send me a letter, please write my name and address like this:

My mailbox looks like this:

My mailbox looks like this:
MUSIC

If I could play any musical instrument, I would play the

                                                  

This is a picture of it.

I like to sing  ________
I don’t like to sing  ________
MY HOUSE

My house is most like:

It looks like this:
Places to live

Purpose
To discover that people live in many kinds of homes.

Materials needed
1. Five small felt boards
2. Cut out pictures with cardboard and felt, backing of houses, apartments, teepees, igloos, etc.

Directions
Teacher says, “Let’s look at the different kinds of homes, dwellings people live in.”

Learning names of furniture and rooms in the house

Purpose
To help children to become familiar with the names of the different rooms in their house by playing a game requiring them to put the correct item (ex. stove) in the correct room (ex. kitchen).

Materials needed
1. Doll house (or boxes to represent different rooms)
2. Furniture in box

Directions
Teacher models game by saying “You are going to play a game by choosing a toy from the box.” And saying “This is a stove. It goes in the kitchen.” Then you can put it in the right room. Each child has a turn.
IN MY HOUSE

A family is a place where a mind lives with other minds. If these minds love each other the home will be as beautiful as a flower garden.

I can count many things in my house.

There are ______________ windows.
There are ______________ doors.
There are ______________ tables.
There are ______________ chairs.
There are ______________ people.

Draw my favorite things in my house.
MUSIC IN DHARMA PRESCHOOL

The Preschool music program should give appreciation of music and emphasize the joy that participation brings. Perfection of performance is not the goal. The material presented should become a vital and pleasurable part of the child’s Dharma School experience. Children naturally enjoy music in its various forms, and the introduction of musical activities into the program helps greatly to make Dharma school a happy and creative place.

A good program is developed through the needs, experience, and interests that the child brings to Dharma school with him or her.

Listening

Preschoolers may have very satisfying music experience simply by listening to records, both instrumental and vocal. Sometimes the music should be presented to the group without discussion, so that each child can enjoy it in his/her own way.

Singing

Preschoolers are exposed to singing, not told that “Now we will learn a new song”. They enjoy singing about other children and their activities.

Children sing when they are happy. Keeping in mind the child’s stage of development in music, the teacher helps him/her raise his/her own standard, but never in such a way that she/he destroys his/her love of singing or turns it into a chore.

The selection of songs that appeal to the teacher is of great importance. Her/his enthusiasm is conveyed if she/he presents the song with vigor. When teaching a new song, the teacher should sing with the children. If the teacher feels uncomfortable when singing, then use the piano or have someone assist her/him.

Rhythm instruments

The rhythm band will create appreciation through participation. It is a valuable experience in cooperative effort.

Children are fascinated by the peculiar shapes of the instruments, the ways in which they are played and their sounds. They can soon be made to feel that each instrument has something to say musically.

To begin, the children should be seated comfortably: a semicircle where all the group can see the teacher is best. The piano or phonograph is used to create a musical background. It is wise to introduce the instruments a few at a time, gradually bringing in new ones—the sticks alone at first, and the cymbals last. The children should become familiar with the manner of holding the different instruments, and they should learn the names and recognize the special quality of each. They will enjoy experimenting with different combinations of sounds.

Teach Gatha - “Amida Buddha is With Me”

Craft - Blank faces of Children titled, “We are Buddha’s Children”

Have the children color and fill in the faces with happy, smiling faces after teaching gatha.

Body Motor Development.

Teach easy dance steps to Gatha.
IDEAL FOR
RHYTHM BAND INSTRUMENTS

Drum - An empty oatmeal box or an empty coffee can with a plastic lid may be used.
Decorate by painting or pasting large colored shapes on the sides.
For drumsticks, place empty spools on the end of pencils.

Wooden Blocks - Use two small pieces of wood about the same size. They may be colored or painted.
The blocks are used by slapping together in a back and forth motion.

Bells - A grownup may have to help you by sewing bells (may be purchased in most notion departments) on an elastic strip to be held in your hand or worn on your wrist.

Cymbals - tie ribbon or yarn around handles of pot covers. Strike together.

Noise Makers - Use an empty, clean plastic bottle with label removed. Partially fill with rice, dried beans or unpopped corn. Fasten top securely. Decorate sides. Shake bottle to make a fun sound.
RHYTHM BAND INSTRUMENTS

A DRUM

WOODEN BLOCKS
BELLS

CYMBALS

NOISE MAKER
Amida Buddha Is With Me

A. Happy, Happy, happy!
Hold each others hands,
skip 3 steps forward
starting with the right
foot.
Stand feet together.

B. When at play I'm happy.
Skip 3 steps backward,
starting with right foot.
Stand feet together.

C. Happy, happy, happy!
In 2 counts, put both hands
on chest.
In 2 counts, tap right heel to
right front and raise hands
up, palms up, to the right.

D. For Amida Buddha is with me.
In 2 counts, put both hands
on chest.
In 2 counts, tap left heel to
left front and raise both
hands up to the left, palms
up.

Yumi Hojo

Dharma Pre-School Text  153

BCA FDSTL 2017
PARADE HATS

1. Take a 12" x 18" Piece of Newspaper and Fold in Half.

2. With Folded Edge Away From You, Take Upper Corners and Fold to Center as Shown.

3. Fold Bottom Edges Up, One on Each Side.

4. Tuck in Points and Tape Them.
Temple Bell

Instruction

1. Carefully cut-out each piece
2. Glue sides of bell together
3. Bend pointed tabs: glue top of bell
4. Glue reinforcement for top inside
5. Fold hanger along two dotted lines and glue; punch hold (see insert)
6. Attach hanger on top of ball
Buddha Loves You

Kimi Hisatsune

Jane Imamura

Intro.

1. Fly, fly
2. Run, run
3. Don't cry
4. Swim, swim

lit-tle bird,
lit-tle pup,
pu-ssy cat,
lit-tle fish,

Bud-dha loves you
Bud-dha loves you
Bud-dha loves you
Bud-dha loves you

lit-tle bird
lit-tle pup
pu-ssy cat
lit-tle fish

Tweet, tweet, tweet tweet tweet tweet Tweet.
Bow, wow, bow wow wow wow Wow.
Mew, mew, mew mew mew mew Mew.

- - - - - (just open mouth like the fish)
WHICH ANIMALS DO YOU FIND AT HOME AND AT THE ZOO
Buddha Loves You Little Bird
Buddha Loves You Little Bird

Instructions:
1. Cutout the bird
2. Score on the center line and fold in half
3. Cut and separate the tail from the body and leg from the wing
   See Fig. 3
4. Glue together the head, Fig. 1
5. Glue together the head & body, see Fig. 2.
A Basic Bird Pattern

Dotted lines indicate the Swallow tail added to a basic bird pattern.

Wings

Swallow
Buddha Loves You Little Pup

Overlap this section and glue or staple together.

--- a peak (convex) fold
.... a valley (concave) fold

Overlap
Buddha Loves You Pussy Cat
Buddha Loves You Pussy Cat

Overlap this section and glue or staple together.

-- a peak (convex) fold
.... a valley (concave) fold
Buddha Loves You Little Fish
Buddha Loves You Little Fish

Glue these two points of the tail together.

Tabs glued together but it separates the tail at this end

Fold in and glue together
Ding Dong, Ding Dong, The church bells ring.
Ding Dong, Ding Dong, They ring with glee.
Ding Dong, Ding Dong, It's Buddha's call!

Ding Dong, Ding Dong, Of joy they sing!
Ding Dong, Ding Dong, For you and me!
Ding Dong, Ding Dong, Come one and all!
PROMISE

We thank the
Buddha for
showing us the
way of freedom.
We will endeavor
to walk in His
Noble Path every
day of our lives.
Namu-Amida-Butsu
Namu-Amida-Butsu
Namu-Amida-Butsu
Namu-Amida-Butsu

THANK YOU BUDDHA

1. Thank you, Bud-dha, For my lit-tle toys, 'Cause they're such fun, For lit-tle boys and girls.
2. Thank you, Bud-dha, For my mother true, She cheers me so, When I am sad and blue.
3. Thank you, Bud-dha, For my father dear. He's oh! So strong! He nev-er sheds a tear.
4. Thank you, Bud-dha, I come to your shrine. Each day, Each night, I'll gas-sho rain or shine.

Yumi Hojo

168 Dharma Pre-School Text
OBON, OBON, IT'S FESTIVAL DAY

Yumi Hojo

1. Obon, Obon, It's Festival Day!

We will gather friends all along the way
And bring fruits and vegetables for the shrine,
Very to our dearly loved ones who lived in the past,

Like Mogalana many, many years ago.

2. Obon, Obon, It's Festival Day!

All our humble thanks we will here confess
To our dearly loved ones who lived in the past,

With Nebutsu, Nebutsu 'pon our lips.

3. Obon, Obon, It's Festival Day!

O, the streets are lined with our lanterns gay,
And the wind bells twinkling atop the trees
Sway to-and-fro, to-and-fro in the breeze.

Dharma Pre-School Text 169
OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

Make a book in the shape of a Halloween figure. Inside:
1. Write a scary story, or
2. Paste magazine pictures.

Make a book in a bell shape and write a story about the Temple Bell. Paste pictures of different bells or photographs.

FRIED PUMPKIN SEEDS

1. Clean and wash seeds.
2. In a skillet, cover seeds with oil.
3. Fry until brown.
4. Remove and salt.

CRAZY DOUGH RECIPE

2 cups flour
1 cup salt
1/4 cup oil
3/4 cup water

Add coloring to liquid before mixing.
Mix all ingredients together and add more water if necessary. Shape or mold into object desired. Bake in 350 degree oven for 1 to 1-1/2 hours.
1. On white paper, draw an Ohigan Scene, with black crayon.

2. Paint horizontal stripes of watercolors such as red, orange, and yellow.

Make a tissue ghost. Stuff a tissue inside of another tissue. Tie with a long string. Cut three small circles from black paper. Glue on to head of ghost.

MAKE OHIGAN SILHOUETTE

Method:

1. Show children silhouette pictures from magazines which show the sun setting. Discuss how the sky is streaked with shades of red, yellow, and orange, and the figures are solid black.

2. Let the children draw an Ohigan scene. Have them color it very dark with a black crayon. Then let them do a crayon resist over the picture using red, yellow, and orange watercolors.
To learn about Autumn Ohigan

Materials
Pictures of things that show the autumn season. Cut out a tree trunk and red, yellow, and orange leaves and paste.

Procedures:
1. Talk about the season of autumn and show pictures of the season.
2. Discuss and explain that there is a Buddhist holiday that is celebrated and it is called Autumn Higan.
3. Art project - paste a brown tree trunk on a piece of construction paper and have the children paste the red, yellow and orange leaves on the picture to make an autumn scene.
4. Short finger play story - Little leaves
   Little leaves fell gently down,
   Red and yellow, orange and brown.
   (Raise hands and lower them,)  
   Fluttering fingers like falling leaves
   Whirling, whirling, round and round,
   (repeat above motions)
   Quietly without a sound,
   Falling softly to the ground
   (Lower bodies gradually to floor)
   Down-and down-and down-and down.
HALLOWEEN

Sakyamuni Buddha often spoke of being thankful for the things we receive. He once said that if we know how to be thankful, we would be able to lead a very happy life.

During the month of October, on a certain day, many of you will receive a bag of treats. Do you know what day that will be? HALLOWEEN! Yes, on Halloween, you will dress in bright clothes and wear funny masks. You will give a small knock on well-lit doorways (point to the porch light by the doorway) and call out, “Trick or Treat!”

All over America, mothers and fathers are waiting and listening for your small knocks. They have prepared candy or gum, cookies and even apples for you and other small “Goblins”. It is a nice game for you. Mothers and fathers enjoy it, too.

When you receive these treats, do you remember to say, “Thank you?” Do you say, “Thank you” at each place whether the treat you receive is big or small, something you like or don’t like?

As Buddhist children, we must remember to be thankful for whatever we receive. Then, indeed, we will be following the Buddha’s Teachings.

For the Activity Period — Have the children cut out Jack O’Lantern and paste eyes, nose, and mouth.

For the following Sunday — Talk about Halloween and the fun the children had. Ask the children, “How many of you went trick or treating? Did you remember to say, “Thank you’ to the people from whom you received the treats? Let us remember to say, thank you, whenever we receive something — not only on Halloween, but all the time.”
NOVEMBER
THANKSGIVING DAY

Brief Comment

We live today in a moment of history in which electronic feats, technological achievements and medical marvels have beguiled mankind into believing that what the “eye-ball” sees, what the “ear” hears, what the “tongue” tastes, what the “nose” smells and what the “body” in its various tactile capacities senses are paramount realities. The extension of man’s sense perceptions have intrigued and made captive his cognitions to a point where, that which cannot be seen with the “eye,” that which cannot be heard with the “ear,” that which cannot be tasted with the “tongue,” that which cannot be smelled through the “nose” and that which cannot be apprehended through the “body” senses are not real and purposeful in this age of “scientific enlightenment.” As Buddhists, we have reason to pause and reflect on this phenomena which threatens us with divisiveness and alienation. A divisiveness not only between men and men but within man himself; an alienation not between men and men but with man himself.

The Venerable One long ago made explicit that man acts and speaks according to his thoughts (cognitive impressions of sense data). He indicated clearly that the mind, as the center of man’s thoughts, was the key. For a person’s way of speaking of and about things and his mannerisms and particular way of doing things are carbon copies of what is in and goes on in his mind. And it is self evident that it is not so much what one says but what one does that is more important. Is this not why the psychoanalyst lets the patient speak to his heart’s content and find the real reasons for his private internalized behaviors as masked by his socially approved externalized conducts? Therefore, an inquiry into the practice of “thanksgiving” from a Buddhist point of view can have merit only in examining one’s own deeper consciousness. It seems that the true spirit of “thanksgiving” materializes in a man when his cognitions (thoughts) are liberated and freed from the bondage of his various sensations (physical karma) for what they really are.

This is not to deny the reality of that which is material and sensate for they give substance, meaning, and worth to a man but it means that man should not become enslaved by them in mistakingly ascribing them to a status of ultimate and permanent worth. Is this not why men who probe the human psyche and attempt to mold the moral and intellectual fibre of man’s mind are paid horrendously less than those whose jobs are to provide for the relative security of his creature comforts and pleasures? It seems obvious that to have a truly grateful and genuinely appreciative life’s posture is one in which the creature comforts and material pleasures in terms of life’s securities are provided for as needed but do not in and of themselves become the motivations for living. The credo of our times is frightfully clear. What am I getting out of life? What is there in it for me? How much can I get out of it? How can I get more with the least effort? Such thoughts, are they the basis for “thanksgiving”?

Therefore, it is important to consider the arbitrary commitment of man to the practice of “thanksgiving” in times of extreme poverty, in times of restrained prosperity and in times of unbridled affluence. It is this realization of the arbitrariness of man’s thoughts (cognitions) as influenced by the experiences of the fleeting moment (sensation instigated perceptions) that led Shinran Shonin to an inner immovable “awareness of gratitude” through Amida’s Light that man’s thoughts as conditioned by the various sensations are unreliable and in the end, of themselves, are devastating, for they lead to the cycle of insatiable self-aggrandizement, no matter how noble and rational the motives may be. It should be apparent by now that the Shin Buddhistic interpretation on “thanksgiving” goes much deeper than commonly understood. Thanksgiving is really a matter of pure joy in the awareness of
authentic, meaningful worthwhile life's experiences according to Shin teachings, no matter how humble and insignificant one's social position or economic status may be. If there is an absence of this basic spiritual quality in one's life, the thoughts (cognitions), the words and actions (reactions to one's perceptions of his reality) can be but only counterfeit and phony, if not in the extreme sense, self-emasculating and demeaning. Herein the meaning of Amida's Name is contained, not in the congregational practice of pronouncing "Namu Amida Butsu" in public, but as a natural spontaneous utterance in sequence to an awareness-in-appreciation of those insights and experiences which bring out deeper understandings and hidden meanings which rise up beyond the common mundane falsities and shortcomings found so abundantly in life's confrontations.

Origin and Interpretations

Not being a historian, it is difficult to present empirical data on this subject. However, it is only common sense to see that the feeling and emotion involved in the human activity of giving thanks is not peculiar to any one era or period of history. Neither is it unique to any culture or religion. In the final analysis, it is a universal quality of humankind not found among other creatures which we know to inhabit this planet. And this is the reason for the Buddhist position that man's true significance in life begins with the realization that "it is indeed very hard to be born as a human being." There's much hidden meaning and food for thought in this statement. And being born a human being makes it possible for him to participate in a dimension of appreciation, that facet of consciousness that makes him realize that "nothing can be taken for granted." As a human being he is now a candidate for thought processes lying beyond the limited range of his organic senses. Whether this power of reason becomes harnessed for purposes of genuine "self-realization" or for "me-oriented" purposes of "self-aggrandizement" is the crux of the whole matter of whether he becomes truly thankful. This power of "knowing awareness" is the key in giving thanks as a human being. Therefore, this phenomenon of "man-in-thankfulness" is probably as old as man himself when he first became "aware" of himself as a thinking rational being. We know now that there are older civilizations buried somewhere in the obscure historical past and their discovery will eventually point to this fact.

Thanksgiving should perhaps be understood in the following categorical contexts. First, that which is purely traditional and cultural in context. Second, that which is mainly ritualistic and ceremonial. And third, that which is individual and personal in quality.

Thanksgiving Day as we observe it in America began with the pilgrims in the fall of 1621, when Governor William Bradford of Plymouth Colony appointed a day for feasting and thanksgiving. Considering the circumstances that it was designated as a day for giving thanks for the harvest and other blessings of the year, it would have to be categorized as being purely traditional and cultural in context. This form for expressing deep gratitude is akin to our custom of saying "itadakimasu" before meals and "gochisosama" after meals. Of course there is a religious quality here, but it is mainly an expression of thanks for the material goods that make life possible. It is a way of showing appreciation for the people, things and conditions (innen: interrelated factors) which have culminated in the various foods and goodies on the table. For instance, the simple grain of rice just didn't happen out of thin air. We are admonished by this practice of thanksgiving at the table to appreciatively reflect on the various factors and conditions which make possible even for a grain of rice to take concrete form. What's the value here? Why thank the rice? The basic message here is that the human habit of "taking things for granted" dehumanizes us. The basic purpose for this form of "thanksgiving" is to make ourselves more human.
Religious rituals and ceremonies connected with “thanksgiving” are many and as varied as the peoples and circumstances giving rise to them. Each religion has its forms and reasons for their particular thanksgiving services. In the second category of thanksgiving in this religious form, we must caution the Shin Buddhist that rituals and ceremonies are not observed for the same reasons as other Buddhist denominations do. Shinran Shonin, has pointed out crucial differences between “thanksgiving” to gain some virtuous vantage or profit (which, according to Shin teachings, are patently false) as against that form which is a pure spontaneous manifestation of deep gratitude without any strings attached.

Thanksgiving in religious worship services of the Shin denomination are natural spontaneous manifestations of “awareness-in-joyous-gratitude” within the totality of Amida’s universal Wisdom and Compassion as having explicit reality in that particular follower’s life posture and configuration. This really means that the Shin follower realizes that the true spirit of “gratefulness” (thanksgiving in a religious sense) becomes possible only in his acceptance of the reality of Wisdom-Compassion’s Power as symbolically manifest in Amida Buddha’s Name, whose reality brings out the meaning and worth of his existence for what it really is (“sono mana”: as I truly am). Life in other words, can be only meaningful and worthwhile if the individual faces up to his real self which lies obscured beneath layers of “selves” erroneously thought to be one’s self. Therefore, worship services in Shin Buddhism are means by which the individual worshipper is brought face to face with Amida Buddha. As such, they are not primarily for the deceased. They are for the living. The deceased, whether it be Sakyamuni the Buddha or Shinran Shonin the simpleton or someone whom we loved dearly, only serve to facilitate this inner confrontation. And it is for this very reason that we express our deepest gratitude to them. Our lives become worthwhile and meaningful only as we draw upon their life-experiences and examples in retrospect in following the Buddha’s dictum: “stop doing evil and perpetuate that which is good and brings happiness to all.”

In remembering the deceased now no longer with us, we are admonished to learn through their successes and failures in ordering our present lives. And in ordering our present lives, we are further admonished to prepare for those who will be coming after us with a viable legacy of integrity in all facets of human endeavor. The Shin position is that man is incapable to do this by himself for his is not only limited but self-centered in his life's orientations. This is where Amida the eternal Buddha comes in. Before Amida’s Light, there can be no compromise, for “me-centered” orientation are in the final analysis temporary and not real and therefore meaningful. Therefore, in Shin Buddhist liturgy there is no dogma or formula to manipulate the deities deemed to control our “me-centered destinies.” There is only deep gratitude for the revelations of insights afforded in the worship experience.

In the third category in which “thanksgiving” is a personal individual matter, it stands to reason that the significations and modes are as many as there are individuals. They are found on a continuum from the simplest giving and returning of favors amongst friends to the more ineffable heights of spiritual awareness in which there is a deep realization that in the final analysis, man is incapable of repaying that which has been given even to the minutest degree. In this category of individual and personal forms of thanksgiving we can further break them down into two basic types. These two are simply put, obligatory and non-obligatory. In the first type, there is always an element, apparent or not, of an obligation, a debt to repay, a contractual feature. It is a double edged sword for it tends to work both ways for the parties concerned and in receiving one may think he didn’t repay me enough, he should have given me more! I give because I received and I give again in order to influence and indebt you to me. It is simple as that. I give my friend something because he gave me something and I am obligated to return the favor, or because I hope to get something that I want or need from him. We see this motive functioning in many subtle forms even in the religious aspirations of individuals. This is not the Shin Buddhist interpretation of “thanksgiving.”
The Shin View

The Shin interpretation of thanksgiving would probably be stated as a “joyful awareness in the state of things as they really are” as made possible through the Light of Wisdom and Compassion. There is a difference between a perception of things in this imperfect world of ours through individual “eyes” and through an “individual’s eye” permeated with Amida’s Wisdom and Compassion. In the former instance without Amida, because the human organism is me-centered, there can be only a distorted picture of what the world is all about. Through “me-centered” judgments, a rejection of that which does not fit our world picture takes place; and when a certain reality or fact which does not fit persists and intrudes our consciousness we are easily irritated and become unreasonable. And that which tends to block and frustrate our desires and motives is condemned. And we suffer because life does not go the way we want it to for us. And we thereby fail to “see” life as it really is.

In the latter instance, the shortcomings and limitations of one’s own self are obliterated. One’s own basic and real original human nature is revealed. The key word here is “revealed,” not exposed for ridicule and humiliation. This revelation of one’s true self is the basis of the Shin Buddhists “thanksgiving.” He is truly “grateful” for this discovery of counterfeit me has put him in the sphere of Amida’s Compassion which makes him a true human being. This state of the “Phony me” as revealed under the Light of Amida’s Wisdom is called “ki.” There is not condemnation or rejection of this all too “human me” as now revealed. Through Amida nothing is rejected, everything becomes meaningful and purposeful and thereby acceptable. There is an understanding and acceptance of what one discovers as comprising his relative individual. And understanding that affords the way to change and an acceptance that has the patience to work out the changes needed. This is why Amida’s Wisdom and Compassion are so great. This is why the Shin Buddhist is thankful. He is thankful for these insights into himself as he really is which make him a better person, a person who has become really human. He knows that the answer is not to hide or escape by rejecting or condemning that which are painful insights into this weaknesses and shortcomings. He faces them directly for now he is no longer threatened by them. Rather, he goes forth with a vigorous humility to understand them and thereby change. He is at peace with himself as he goes about the business of self-realization which is now his daily business. All this is possible because of Amida’s Wisdoms Power and Compassion’s Reality. This is the crux of the Shin Buddhist’s steadfast faith which is the state of non-retrogression. This is the meaning of Shin faith when expressed in terms of a “deep gratitude” which leads him on to higher broader horizons of meaningful, purposeful usefulness within the framework of his limitations and shortcomings.

Closing Remarks

In closing, let us remember that the phenomena of “thanksgiving” is universally a human one. There are many ways and many reasons for giving “thanks.” The basic meaning of Shin gratitude lies in the awareness that man, because he is a perceiving being, centralizes all his perceptions in terms of his own “thoughts of me.” In so doing, he is mentally manipulating the sense-perceptions coming from his life’s environment in a rather distorted way. More often than not, his cognitions are distorted and biased, if not dangerous. Shin Buddhism teaches and shows us that we need a higher and more complete wisdom than ours. We need a nobler and more totally encompassing compassion than ours. A man who is apparently sufficient unto himself in reality is ignorant and exists in an environment that has enslaved his perceptions. He is not truly free and happy (thankful).
Finally, thanksgiving in the Shin sense is never an obligation. It is a basic attitude towards life in which nothing, and nothing at all is taken for granted. In everything we say, do not think, everything that we eat, breathe, touch, hear and see, nothing can be taken for granted. All is one (interdependent) and one is all (each is different and distinct). We cannot buy and we do not own things—to do so is only an illusion which brings misery. One without the other and the other without the one cannot exist. This spiritual realization beyond words is the basic ingredient in the Shin Buddhist's awareness and appreciations. He is thankful, from day to day, from moment to moment for the fact that all forms of animate and inanimate life make his life's quest for meaning and worth possible. Every day is thanksgiving day for him. Every moment, he is appreciative in a sensitive way to all that life has to teach him and make him whole.

EITAIKYO SERVICE
(SANGHA MEMORIAL SERVICE)

Introduction

The Eitaikyo service is observed by most of the Hongwanjis in the state. It is usually held in November. Eitaikyo is an abbreviation of “Eitai dokyo” which literally means the perpetual recitation of the sutras. It is a kind of memorial service to pay tribute to those who preceded us. Memorial services for the immediate family are held from time to time; however, after the 50th memorial anniversary or if the bereaved family is not of the Buddhist faith, memorial services are often not observed at all. The Eitaikyo service is dedicated to all those who lived and died as Buddhists in due respect to the contribution to the growth of the local Sangha.

Its Origin

The origin of this observance lies with the other Buddhist denominations. The original idea was to dedicate the sutra recitation to the deceased. It is believed that the living wished to turn the virtue of the sutra recitation towards the deceased. The practice of transference of good deeds to the deceased has been strongly recommended to the members of the temple. Consequently, this practice became a means to bring some income to the temple. As a matter of fact, the contribution of large monetary sums in memory of the deceased has been strongly recommended by the temple. This fund-raising idea is also found in Hawaii.

Shinshu Interpretation

With our denomination, this observance seems to have originated sometime in the Tokugawa period. We can find a few records on this practice. the Nendaikibattsho, recorded in November of 1727, says that, “Eitaikyo was observed every month by the request of the members.” This also appeared in the Hongwanji-tsuuki, which was recorded in January of 1678. This means we have been observing the Eitaikyo service for 300 years. It is interesting to note that Koshinryoku says, “It is impossible for us to expect the perpetual recitation of the sutras, because the ups and downs of the temple are common nowadays.”

I think this is well reflected by the thinking of the people who lived during the unrestful days in early 18th century Japan. It is certainly true that without a sound existence of a temple, we are not able to propagate the Dharma to the people. We ought to realize that this Eitaikyo service is an opportunity in which the members of the Sangha, in general, express their gratitude, love, honor, respect, and reverence to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. These three are known as the Three Treasures in Buddhism and without the harmonious existence of these three, there will be no prosperity of Buddhism at all. We must reaffirm our responsibilities to uphold the Three Treasures.
At first, we expressed the idea that Buddhists observe the Eitaikyo service for the sake of the deceased. Our attitude, however, as Shinshu Buddhists is rather different. There are many traditional rituals we practice in Buddhism. However, their true significance is what we are seeking. It is true that many young American Buddhists have pointed out that many Buddhist practices mean nothing to them.

I would like to discuss the five right attitudes for Nembutsu followers which were prescribed by the Chinese sage, Shan-tao, the fifth Patriarch in our denomination. They are: 1) read three basic sutras, 2) perceive Amida in our mind, 3) worship Amida, 4) recite the name of Amida and 5) praise Amida and his mighty saving power. We must remind ourselves, however, that these five attitudes are not conditions which guarantee our salvation. We believe that these attitudes are the consequent results of one's deep faith in Amida. It is very natural that a sincere follower will worship Amida, read the scriptures as a source of inspiration, perceive the eternal light of Amida as a guiding torch, and praise him through the calling of His name.

One may wonder if those who have deep faith in Amida can have such attitudes. All who wish to follow Shinran's footsteps must follow these steps faithfully and diligently. For example, someone who wishes to receive a driver's license must learn how to drive a car through actual practice. If he only practices by riding a bicycle, he cannot learn how to drive a car. Likewise, in order to have these five attitudes, one must apply himself, otherwise one will not receive the spiritual insight.

Shinran tells us that to be awakened to our faith we have to call Amida’s name; that is to recite the Nembutsu, Namu Amida Butsu. This is the right action which leads us to enlightenment. We should recite the Nembutsu at work and at home even when we are at our leisure. At the beginning, this practice of reciting Amida's name may be only mechanical. We might recite it with our lips only. But eventually, we find ourselves reciting the Nembutsu with faith and devotion and we are on our way to enlightenment, guided and helped by the inconceivable power of Amida. Having all our thoughts on Amida, we are purifying ourselves of greed, lust and hatred. The thoughts of Amida gradually replace all our other thoughts. We pull out the evil thoughts from our minds and bring in the eternal light of Amida.

This awakening of faith may come to us suddenly or gradually in one's life. A young fellow, a member of the Hilo Hongwanji YBA about forty years ago, was employed by the Hilo Sugar Company, and worked in the mill. One day, an agonized scream startled the workers in the mill. He had been caught between the cane crusher. They stopped the machine immediately and he was quickly taken to the hospital. His injury was severe and there was no hope for him to live. He suffered great pain, but he did not show it to his mother whenever she visited him at the hospital. One day he told his sister, “I don’t think I can live much longer. I hate to see mother’s worrying face everyday, because the more I see her, the more I feel sorry for her. It is my mistake that will end my life. But there is one thing I am sure of, I am going to Amida’s Pure Realm, I will be waiting for you people there. However, I feel at the same time that I am too young to die yet.” And a calm smile crossed his face. Living only a week or so after the accident, he peacefully entered into eternity.

I want to point out his real humanistic feelings as indicated by his words. I don’t think he was a so-called devout, religious person. He was an ordinary YBA member. He might not have been aware of it, but he was already embraced in Amida’s compassion. “I am too young to die,” expressed well what he had thought at that time. As a man living on this earth, he could not deny this feeling.
We can find the same kind of thinking expressed by Shinran in Chapter Nine of the *Tannisho*. In answering the question, "Why, if I feel neither cheer for joy do I wish to hasten to the Pure Realm?" Shinran replied, "I, too, doubted as you do now." According to Shinran, upon deep reflection, we should be more certain of our entering into the Pure Realm because Amida's compassion extends especially to those who cannot so rejoice when they should be so full of joy. It is the working of our passions which suppress the joyous feelings in our hearts. Amida foresaw this fact that we are filled with mixed feelings. When we realize that the compassion of Amida is for us, we feel all the more encouraged. We, who lack the desire to be reborn immediately into the Pure Realm, feel disheartened because we fear we shall die with the slightest illness. This feeling too, is due to the working of our passion. It is difficult to give up our home of suffering where we have been transmigrating forever. We don't long for the Pure Realm of eternal peace where we have never been born. It is because of this promise of the great Compassionate Vow we feel an ever increasing hope, and know that our attainment is assured.

**Conclusion (Modern Interpretation)**

The significance of Eitaikyo has been discussed. It is an opportunity to express our thanksgiving to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. In fact the Buddha's messages have been preached through the various functions of a Sangha. The very existence of a Sangha and its contribution should not be forgotten. Since 1961, we have been calling the Eitaikyo service the Sangha Memorial Service. The basic idea is that a Sangha sponsor this mass memorial service in which all the members should rededicate themselves for those deceased members who contributed to the growth of their Sangha. Memorial services for the deceased are usually held by the family; however this Sangha Memorial Service is to be sponsored by the local Sangha and honor the deceased members in this manner.

Small jelly cup. Insert head and tail in the cup.

**NOVEMBER**

**Thanksgiving Day**

On the Sunday before Thanksgiving Day - Talk about Thanksgiving. Tell the children that we are going to make *turkey cups* so that they may be ready to be filled with goodies for next Sunday.

Explain to the children that Thanksgiving Day will soon be here. We have this special day because we are thankful for many things, but as Buddhists we are thankful particularly for:

1. mommy and daddy for the many things they do for us.
2. our friends, as well as animals, flowers, trees, etc.
3. our country in which we live.
4. the Buddha and His Teachings.

Have the children repeat the Four Gratitudes.

Refreshment period - treats in the turkey cups.
Happy Thanksgiving

Many, many years ago, when our country was young, beautiful trees grew almost everywhere. Tall trees grew where your house now stands. Tall green trees stood where stores and parks now stand. Fathers and mothers, even children worked hard to cut down trees to build their homes, and to plant their gardens. It was a happy life. Once a year, in the month of November, they had a special day called Thanksgiving Day to show how happy and thankful they were for their wonderful land and many things.

Ever since that time, once a year, we too have a big dinner on Thanksgiving Day to show that we are thankful too, for many things.

Mothers and fathers are thankful because they have nice children, because they are able to live in this big country and because they are able to work and buy food for their children.

Boys and girls are thankful too, because they have good mothers and fathers, because they have homes and food and fine schools, and because of many other things.

Mothers, fathers, boys and girls are all very, very happy and thankful because they have the love and care of Amida Buddha.
NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

HOMEMADE BUTTER RECIPE
1. Place one pint of plain whipping cream in a jar.
2. Shake until cream thickens.
3. Add a little salt, if desired.

THANKSGIVING RECIPE BOOK

Write a Thanksgiving story and illustrate it. Write about how your family is going to celebrate. Who is coming, etc.

Dip 1st string in wax.

Dip 2nd in water.

Make a candle. Melt paraffin (wax). Remove from heat. Dip a string in. Dip string in water to cool. Repeat twenty or more times. Have children count. You can place wax and water on a round table and have children walk around it dipping their strings in the wax, then the water.

FINISHED CANDLE

181A Dharma Pre-School Text
Make a Thanksgiving book or dictionary in the shape of a turkey, pilgrim or other Thanksgiving symbol. On each page the children draw pictures such as thanksgiving, pilgrims, Indians, log cabins, etc. and label them. Make sentences for each. Tell a story. This project should be extended over a period of two or more weeks.
DECEMBER

December 8
JODO E
Bodhi day

Bodhi Day or Jodo E marks the day when Prince Siddhartha “awakened” from a life blinded by ignorance and was “reborn” into an enlightened life as Sakyamuni Buddha.

Gautama meditated under the Bodhi Tree (Tree of Enlightenment) and became a Buddha, perfect in Wisdom and Compassion. This historic event took place on December 8 as the first faint light of day began to glow in the eastern sky. By his example he showed us that it was possible for man to become a Buddha—a fully Enlightened Person. We are, therefore, in possession of this potentiality—Buddha-Nature—which, when awakened and cultivated, will enable us to achieve supreme Wisdom and Compassion.

December 31
JOYA E
Final Service of the Year

The final service of the year is called Joya E. It is a time of reflection and a time of anticipation. It is a time of joy and a time of sadness. It marks an end as well as a new beginning. But most of all it is a time to gather as a Sangha. At the end of the service, the temple bell is tolled 108 times to call in the new year and to rid ourselves symbolically of the “108” imperfections.

We meditate on the countless blessings we have received throughout the year and express our gratitude to our parents, our nation, all beings and Amida Buddha.

BODHI DAY

Bodhi Day, December 8, is relatively unknown as the day on which Sakyamuni was born as a Buddha; but Hanamatsuri, April 8, is widely known as the day on which Sakyamuni was born as a Prince. In the following paragraphs, I would like to relate some things about Sakyamuni’s attainment of Enlightenment, that is, his becoming a Buddha.

It was at the age of 29 that Prince Siddhartha had set himself out on a long journey in search of a path that would lead to the end of suffering. He was compelled by an inner urge to seek the answer. He was long aware of the fleeting nature of life and was struggling with some of life’s basic questions as: For what purpose has man come into existence? What does he live for? For six long years, he sought worthy teachers whom might give him the answers. He followed the difficult disciplines. But all was vain. He failed to find the means by which to liberate man from the suffering of birth, old age, illness and death.

He realized then that he must resolve these perplexing problems by himself. He crossed the River Nairanjana and entered a retreat in a quiet forest near the village of Uruvilva where he began to take up ascetic practices. The religious austerities were such that the Prince literally became skin and bone. Yet he found no light that would illumine his darkened mind.
It was a common belief in those days that man would attain enlightenment and gain peace and liberation by suppressing the desires of the flesh. The Prince came to have a totally different view. Desires could not be suppressed as long as man has his physical body. To completely subdue them meant death. Austerities are not the way to free oneself from sufferings. When he arrived at this conclusion, he adopted a new approach. As the common saying would have it, “sound mind in sound body,” the Prince thought that true wisdom is not born of an emaciated body. He partook of the milk offered by Sujata, the daughter of a landowner in Uruvilva. He regained his strength and went on to a place which later became known as Buddha-gaya. Settling under a pippala tree (which was named Bo or Bodhi Tree as the Prince attained the Bodhi under this tree), he made a firm resolution that he will not rise from this seat until he attains enlightenment. He entered quiet meditation to discern the true nature of himself. In the meantime, Mara, the evil one, appeared and attempted to impede his path to the goal; but the Prince was not perturbed. He went right on with his Dhyana, dispersed the evil one and finally attained Buddhahood. (Needless to say, Mara was no other than his own illusion or klesa. Illusory views prevent one from seeing the true nature of things.) The Prince was then 35 years of age. He must have been a solemn sight on the morning of December 8 with the morning star shining above with brilliancy when this epoch-making event took place. BODHI DAY is to commemorate this event.

Awakening to the law of “Dependent Origination” is said to be the content of the religious experience of the Buddha under the Bo Tree. The teaching expounded during the 45-year period, from his 35th year until the time of his demise, was the elaboration of this Dharma in all phases of life. Four Noble Truth and Eightfold Path were the substance of his first sermon which is also called “Setting the Wheel of Dharma in Motion.”

The term “Bukkyo” (literally, Buddha Teachings) has two meanings. One is “the teaching of the Buddha,” and the other, “the teaching by which one becomes a Buddha.” The teaching of the Buddha refers to the teaching of the Dharma (truth). The Buddha has awakened to the Dharma which is the Universal Truth; it was not that the Buddha had created the Dharma. The Buddha himself declared, “I merely discovered the old path. Whether I be born in this world or not, the Law of the Truth prevails forevermore.” Dharma rules at any time and any place.

Question is frequently asked: “Then, is not Buddhism very much like science?” Certainly, there are similarities. Only, while science observes the Dharma outside of oneself, Buddhism sees the law within the self. Therefore, a profound self-reflection is necessary in the case of the latter. To look objectively at that which concerns others is science; to see subjectively at that which concerns the self is Buddhism.

Long ago, in China, there was a renowned poet by the name of Hakurakuten who once asked a great priest Dorin, “What is the essence of Buddha’s teaching?” Dorin replied tersely:

“Commit no wrong but good deeds do
And let thy heart be pure.
All Buddhas teach this doctrine true
Which will for aye endure.”

Hakurakuten, who was not entirely free from the thought of self-importance and was overly confident of his own knowledge and sagacity, discontentedly retorted, “I need not hear those words from you. It is of such common knowledge that even a child of three would know.” Dorin’s sharp reply was, “There are things that a three year old knows, yet a silver-haired old man is not able to practice. Without practice, it is not even Buddhism.”

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Practice is truly difficult. "Do right and purify one's own heart" is the hardest of all. The study of the outside world as in science is much easier in comparison to tackling the problems of one's own self. I regretfully confess that I am a habitual smoker, and I am aware that many people dislike smokers. Even my own family constantly warns me saying, "Daddy, stop smoking before you are affected with cancer." I know full well that smoking is harmful to my physical well-being, but I have not the will strong enough to stop the habit. Smoking is my personal problem. Yet I have to admit that I am not really awakened in that regard. Should I be able to completely break the habit of smoking, I might say that I am awakened as far as the smoking is concerned.

Now, to realize or to be awakened to the Dharma means to become a Buddha. And this is what makes Buddhism unique among the world religions. This is its characteristic as well as its essence. "Buddha" is an Indian word which is translated "Awakened One" or Enlightened One." Bodhi means Wisdom. And, Bodhi is by nature altruistic. It is to be distinguished from men’s rationality which is self-centered. Inseparable from Wisdom is Compassion. Wisdom is the eye to see the Truth (Dharma); it is having the power to see all things as they really are (Nyo-jitsu-chi-ken). For instance, we all experience that to lie is difficult but to tell the truth is easy. This is because we tell the truth when we discover our selves.

Thus, to have the eye to see things as they are (Nyo-jitsu-chi-ken) means enlightenment—the attainment of Buddhahood. However, attainment is not the end. The expression, “Buddha is the heart of a parent that cannot remain still” is a good description of Buddhahood. Buddha does not remain in his lofty state for long, but comes to the midst of common ordinary men (Bombu). Buddha’s constant effort is his Primal Vow (Hongan). Bombu is “saved” when Buddha’s Wisdom and Compassion reaches him. This union of Buddha and Bombu is Namu Amida Butsu. The infinite Wisdom is Amida Butsu, and man’s surrender to it is Namu.

True, man has wisdom of a sort; but it is finite. It originates in self-centered ego which interprets things colored with egocentricity. It is only when the Bombu is illumined by Buddha’s Light of Wisdom that the ego will be evolved and become one with the Wisdom of the Buddha. This is being saved. Namu Amida Butsu is the “bowing before the grave concern expressed in the parental heart.”

Shinran Shonin often spoke of the “Nembutsu of Wisdom” and “Faith of Wisdom.” He said, “Shinjin (Faith), rendered into Japanese words, reads Makoto no Kokoro (True Mind). It does not mean the deluded mind of the Bombu. It is all Buddha Mind. This is Buddha Mind, when given to Bombu, is called Shinjin (Faith).” Buddha’s Heart is the Light of Wisdom. When this Light reaches my heart, then I am endowed with Faith and I am awakened to the True Dharma.

In observing the BODHI DAY, let us find joy in our good fortune that we are being delivered, in spite of our unworthiness, by the Nembutsu of Wisdom which was uncovered by Sakyamuni Buddha and expounded by Shinran Shonin. Let us learn to practice dana as an expression of gratitude.
Bodhi Leaf

2. Cut it out.
3. Mount and frame it.

Bodhi Day, December 8th
Flower Vases

1. Make flower vase from an empty soda or beer bottle. Using a mixture of equal parts of white glue and water, cover bottle with torn tissue paper. Be sure that the tissue paper is well covered with the glue mixture.

2. For a variation of the flower vase mentioned above, apply heavy glue on outside of can and roll in crushed dry egg shells. Spray with gold paint and set to dry.

3. Cover the bottle with strips of masking tape. (Teacher—apply brown shoe polish over the tape then spray with clear varnish).
DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

GIFT MAKING IDEAS

1. POTHOLDERS

**Materials:**
2 pieces of heavy cloth 6 x 6 inches square
Stuffing such as old rags or nylons
Small brass ring or rickrack for a loop
Needle and thread

**Directions:**
Sew material together along three sides.
Leave one side open for stuffing. Stuff
and sew up fourth side. Attach ring or
rickrack at the corner of the potholder for
hanger. Use iron-on letters to print the
name or design.

2. PLACE MATS

**Materials:**
Cloth 14 x 18 inches, or buy inexpensive
plain place mats.
Needles

**Directions:**
Fringe the edges of the cloth by using a
needle and putting off one strand of
thread at a time. Decorate with felt or
iron-on appliques. Make a set of four or
six.

3. FLOWERPOTS

**Materials:**
Clay Pots
Bright-colored material and ribbons

**Directions:**
Wrap material around the base of the
pot. Glue. Wrap ribbon around the top
edge of the pot and glue. Add a small
plant if you wish and your gift is ready.
4. SHOPPING PAD

Materials:
30 to 40 pages of assorted or plain paper
4 x 6 inches.
Cardboard from a shoe box or tagboard
Ribbon

Directions:
Staple the stack of paper together. Cut
cardboard or tagboard to size of all
paper. Staple it to the pad as a cover.
Decorate the cover with a ribbon and
print the name of the person the present
is for.

5. TOTE BAG

Materials:
Newspaper
Burlap, canvas or any heavy cotton cloth
Heavy rope
Sissors
Needle and thread

Directions:
Cut any size desired pattern from
newspaper. Pin pattern to the material,
and cut out the bag. Decorate the bag
with stitchery or iron-on appliques. Sew
the two pieces of material together,
leaving one end open. (Use a small
running stitch.) Staple or sew on a rope
handle.
Trivet

What to use:
- 10 ice cream sticks
- 10 large wooden beads
- Felt pens, glue, shellac, brush, tape
- measure, newspapers

What to Do:
1. Spread newspapers on your working surface. Color one side of each of the ice cream sticks in one color, or two colors, or any number your like. Use your imagination. Let the paint dry.

2. Now shellac each of the sticks and let the shellac dry thoroughly, for at least one hour. Repeat shellacking and dry.

3. Glue five sticks, painted sides up, at right angles to the other five sticks. This will form a latticed square.

4. Glue large wooden beads under the bottom five sticks, at both ends, approximately ½ inch from the edges. The beads will make an air space between the hot spot sitting on the trivet and the table surface.
"ROCK FRIEND"
(paperweight)

Materials:
Smooth rocks (available at most builder’s materials stores)
Tempera paint
Paint brushes
Varnish spray or paint
White glue
Yarn, felt and gadgets for adding features

Directions:
1. Glue rocks to form animals or people. Paint with tempera.
2. Glue a picture on the rock (child’ pictures, family picture, etc.)
3. Varnish.
NEW YEAR'S EVE SERVICE

The New Year's Eve Service is called Joya E and is observed at all temples on New Year's Eve. Adherents assemble before the shrine of Amida Buddha to quietly recollect the Happenings of the year and to rejoice in the blessing of Amida.

In the United States, New Year's Eve is commonly associated with merry-making, gaiety, and noise-making. Parties are held late into the night and with the approach of midnight, that is, the ending of the old year and beginning of the new year, there is a sudden eruption of noises—yelling, singing, tooting of horns, blowing of bugles, popping of firecrackers, etc.

Quite in contrast, New Year's Eve in Buddhist Japan is quiet and peaceful. Family and friends gather together to play karuta or, in modern Japan, to watch late television programs until the approach of midnight. The lady of the house will serve toshikoshi soba for the late hour snack. As the party enjoys the soba together the sound of temple bells is heard in the distance. The low belling resonance renders an atmosphere of nostalgic feeling for the year past and of cheerfulness at the anticipation of a better year to come.

G-o-n-n-g! G-o-n-n-n-g-g-g-g! Its deep resonance carries over hill and dale into every village home. G-o-n-n-n-g-g-g-g! It continues seemingly into eternity. G-o-n-n-n-g-g-g-g! It finally comes to an end after 108 rings.

In our home, the family shrine is given a thorough clean-up for the last time of the year and the family gathers around the shrine for the final service of the year. The candle is lit and the incense gives rise to a line of smoke which serves as a reminder to us of the impermanence of all things throughout the universe. True to this symbolic teaching, even the year was but a passing thing.

The New Year's Eve bell is stroked 108 times as a symbol of overcoming of the 108 passions human beings are said to possess. "Six feelings are recognized in Buddhism, viz., feelings arising from sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, and consciousness. Now, each of these six sensations is associated with pleasant, unpleasant, or indifferent feelings, making a total of 18 feelings. Furthermore, each of the pleasant, unpleasant and indifferent feelings has two classifications: those feelings that are attached to pleasure or detached from pleasure. When we multiply the 18 different feelings with the two classifications, we arrive at the figure 36. These 36 are the basic passions of man that are manifested in time—past, present, and future. Thus, 36 multiplied by past, present, and future will give us the total of 108 passions."

Human beings are extremely self-centered and thus man is oblivious of many things that do not concern himself. This nature of man has not changed since the ancient times. With his eyes, he sees things. With his ears, he hears things. With his nose, he smells things. With his tongue, he tastes things. With his epidermis, he feels things. And with every sight, smell, taste, and touch, his heart is either moved towards making it his own or repelling it. Pleasant things he wants to make his own and unpleasant things he wants to reject at all cost. This goes on in an endless cycle of suffering and frustration because his wants are never satisfied. Some of his unsatisfied wants may be light and no visible sign of suffering may be seen but some could be so fierce that it could drive him into disastrous consequences.

When Herbert Hoover was campaigning for the Presidency of the United States, he toured the country promising to improve the nation's economy. He campaigned with his famous speech, "A car in every garage and a chicken in every pot." This was in the early 1930's. How are conditions today? Now we have two cars in every garage and a power boat sitting outside ready to be towed out for a pleasure ride or a fishing trip!
In spite of all the economic improvements and material wealth we enjoy, one wonders whether the people of today are truly happier or not. All evidence points to the existence of more suffering and frustrations today than ever before. Materially they are wealthy, but spiritually, they are in greater confusion.

The 108 passions of the human beings are still at work in the very heart of each individual. As the New Year's gong is struck 108 times we must be reminded of the human weaknesses and live a life of deep reflection.

Time knows no bounds. Time is eternal. There is only the eternal now that we call the present. Yet, human beings make a division of eternity for his own personal convenience. The Buddhist scripture reads, "Since everything in this world is caused by the concurrence of causes and conditions, there can be no fundamental distinction between things. The apparent distinction exists because of people's deluding thoughts and desires. In the sky there is no distinction of east and west; people create the distinction out of their own minds and then believe it to be true. Mathematical numbers from one to infinity are each complete numbers, but each in itself carries no distinction of quantity; people make the distinction for their own convenience so as to be able to indicate varying amounts." This is also true of time. In the eternity of time there is no distinction of days, weeks, months, and years. Man makes this distinction for his own convenience.

As long as man has devised a means of dividing eternity of time into days, weeks, months, and years, it gives us an opportunity to look back and at the same time to look ahead. New Year's Eve being the end of the year, we can look back and reflect over the past year and quietly recollect on the happenings of the year and rejoice in the blessings of Amida Buddha.

The Temple Bell

Most large temples in Japan have a temple bell for tolling the time of day and night. The bell has its origin in Buddhism. Ananda, a disciple of the Buddha, it is said, struck a bell to call the Bhikkus and Upavassathas to the services, while, according to a certain Buddhist sutra, the striking of the bell exorcises evil.

In former days each temple bell boomed 108 times morning and evening in order to cast out evil. But now it only tolls the time, day and night and booms 108 times on New Year's Eve and on certain special occasions.

JANUARY

January 1
SHUSHO E
New Year's Day

New Year's Day Service is traditionally the first Buddhist observance of the year. In Japanese it is referred to as Shusho E which literally suggests "a gathering to recover the correct path." It is a time for renewal and recovery. It is a time to reaffirm our commitment to following the "middle path" of Buddhism.

January 16
HO-ON-KO

The Memorial Service for Shinran Shonin is a time to express our gratitude to the founder of the Shin Buddhist tradition. The Japanese term Ho-on-ko, a gathering to repay a kindness, describes precisely the essential purpose for our assembly. Remembering the life of Shinran, we are able to see him as a signpost along the Nembutsu Path... a Bodhisattva guiding us in our struggles to walk the Pure Land Path with sincere intensity, determined courage, and pure humility.
NEW YEAR’S DAY SERVICE

The first day of the year is observed in Japan with a special ritual known as SHUSHO E. This is known to have originated as a function in the Imperial Court during the reign of Emperor Kanmu (781 A.D.) when rituals known as “Misai’e” and “Mishi’ho” were held. The rituals conducted by the imperial family were very elaborate and the most significant part of the rituals was the offering of prayers to the “Kami” (deities of the national religion of Shinto) expressing the desires of happiness for the people as well as peace and prosperity within the country. Those rituals were gradually accepted by the various denominations of Buddhism and it became known as SHUSHO E or the New Year’s Day Service.

In the annals of Shin Buddhism, we find records indicating the observance of the New Year’s Day Service during the time of Rennyo Shonin (Eighth Abbot of Honpa Hongwanji). It is known that the first seven days of the year were devoted to special religious services.

At the present time, a special New Year’s Day Service is held at the Honpa Hongwanji Headquarter Temple in Kyoto. It is a service steeped with tradition and colorful customs dating back to ancient times. In fact, preceding the New Year’s Day Service, a special ritual known as “Goshukai” is conducted by the Abbot who places a ceremonial “sake” (rice wine) on the altar in which the image of our founder Shinran Shonin is enshrined. Subsequently, another ritual known as “Goryuhai” is conducted by the Abbot who then removes the ceremonial rice wine from the shrine. After that, the ceremonial rice wine is ritually partaken by the Abbot and the leading Bishops; as well as the representatives of the various Hongwanji organizations.

The people from Japan hold dear to their many traditional ways; however, much of its significance is bound to be lost along the passing of time. In celebrating the New Year’s Day, many customs and practices are especially remembered and perpetuated to this day. Therefore, it may be of special interest to understand some of the symbolism and their significance.

To begin with, the pine branch was one of the first items used from ancient times to decorate the entrance of a home on New Year’s Day. The pine branch symbolizes the long span of a man’s life. In later years, bamboo and plum branches were added to the pine branches. The bamboo was symbolic of sturdiness and steadfastness and the plum branch symbolizes the refined quality of kindness and service to other people.

Although, it is not the practice of the followers of Shin Buddhism, the “Shimenawa” (sacred rope with tufts of straw) is generally used by the people in decorating the entrance of their homes. The origin of the sacred rope is traced to Shintoism where it is used to mark the inner and outer premises of a Shinto shrine. Moreover, it is used as a symbol of purification and in preserving the sacredness of the inner premise of a Shinto shrine.

The “kagami-mochi” (ceremonial rice cake) is a traditional offering placed on the Buddhist altar during the New Year’s Day Service. It symbolizes the mirror which possesses qualities of reflecting the truth and therefore, we accept it as an important aspect of the Buddhist Teaching which emphasizes the need for self-reflection and the awareness of our true self.

Whenever the offering of a ceremonial rice cake is made, “daidai” (bitter orange) is placed on top of a ceremonial rice cake. The bitter orange is an unusual fruit which remains yellow during the winter months but will change back to its original green later on. Therefore, it is symbolic of happiness and prosperity from one generation to the other and on into posterity.

The eating of “zoni” (cooked rice cake) on New Year’s Day is a traditional practice which dates back to ancient times when the cooked rice cake was served as an important dish during the celebration of a happy and joyful occasion.
A specially prepared “sake” (rice wine) known as “toso” (spiced rice wine) is used to celebrate the New Year’s Day. The practice of using rice wine for ceremonial purposes may be traced back to the beginning of Japanese history. In fact, it is evident that rice wine was used during the various ceremonies related to the Imperial family. Moreover, it is a traditional practice for all the members of a Japanese family to toast the Happiness of a New Year by sipping the spiced rice wine.

During the first three days of the New Year, the practice of visiting relatives and friends are carried out with formal expressions of happiness and greetings of a New Year. Also, gifts known as “toshidama” (New Year’s gift) are mutually exchanged among relatives and friends.

In celebrating the New Year’s Day, the people from Japan are noted for their use of different kinds of food and the preparation of various dishes of food. Among them are the traditional food such as “kazunoko” (herring roe) which symbolizes the happiness of a family with many healthy children. The use of “nishin” (herring) indicates the happiness of having both parents living together within the family. “Konbu” or “kobu” (sea-weed) is oftentimes used in preparing some of the dishes and it is with the idea of accepting the Japanese term “yorokobu” which means joy and happiness. Another dish that is always served is “kuromame” (black beans) which implies good health saying that a person who is “mame-na” or healthy will not be a pale-faced person but instead, he will be a healthy-looking person with dark complexion. Salted “buri” (yellow-tail) is used for the purpose of wishing continued success because different names are given to the fish as it continues to grow from “wakashi,” to “inada,” then “warasa” and finally to “buri.”

Speaking of symbolism, the month of January is named after the ancient Roman deity Janus who is represented with two opposite faces emphasizing the need for reflection and aspiration. It is important to reflect and look back on the year that has gone by and re-evaluate our lives in the light of Amida Buddha’s Wisdom and Compassion and, at the same time, look forward with aspirations to the New Year with feeling of rededication. Especially, for the followers of Shin Buddhism, the New Year’s Day service is significant because it offers that wonderful opportunity to express our deep gratitude for the countless blessings we enjoy. Moreover, it enables us to realize the Compassionate Heart of Amida Buddha which embraces us at all times.

Where we have failed, we must strive to correct and rededicate ourselves to the Way of the Nembutsu.
New Year’s Day

1. Cut the omochi shape out of white construction paper.
HO-ONKO
(A BUDDHIST THANKSGIVING AND MEMORIAL SERVICE)

Definition:

Literally, the Japanese characters “Ho-On” means “return of gratitude” and “Ko” means “to clarify the meaning of.” “Ho-onko” is a day set aside to pay tribute to the founder of the Jodo Shinshu sect of Buddhism, Shinran Shonin. It is observed on about the date of his decease. Hence, Ho-onko is a service to express our gratitude and thanksgiving to Shinran Shonin.

Significance of Ho-onko:

Ho-onko is the most important for the Jodo Shinshu Buddhists because it is a day to pay our respects to the founder of the sect, Shinran Shonin. It was he who interpreted Buddhism on the level of understanding of the common people. In the pre-Shinran era, only the upper class people with ample leisure were able to pursue the profound teachings of the Buddha. To become a Buddhist in those days meant to forsake temporal life; to leave the home and family and enter a life of strict practice and study of Buddhism. However, Shinran, professing the doctrine of Faith in Amida Buddha’s power, enabled the common man to fully appreciate the teaching of the Buddha. For this, the followers of the Shin sect extend their deepest appreciation to Shinran Shonin in memorial of his passing on January 16, 1262.

Thanksgiving Aspect of Ho-onko:

The Buddhist form of Thanksgiving is broader in scope than the common concept of thanksgiving. Commonly, Thanksgiving is a day set aside for the people to express gratitude for the successful completion of harvest and for the turkey on the table, gratitude to our country, and gratitude for freedom of religion, etc. In Buddhism, we do express our thanksgiving to these things, too, but we go further and extend our thanks to every living and non-living thing that goes into making life possible.

HO-ONKO — JANUARY 16
(DAY OF THANKSGIVING)

Shinran Shonin devoted his ninety long years for the spiritual welfare of millions.

Even though he was born into the family of nobility, he tasted bitter human tragedy as he lost both of his parents at an early age. Thereafter, life was a continuous chain of constant struggle with suffering and sacrifice. If he craved fame and power, he could have easily become either a high ranking knight or an officer in the Imperial court, since he had many influential uncles in both fields. But he paid no heed to these more glamorous callings and, instead, he shaved his hair at the age of nine which only promised a long life of poverty, hardship and constant wandering.

In the long history of Buddhism we have many saints whose ardent desires were to save people from suffering and confusion, but Shinran Shonin really stands out among all of these saints in one particular—he was truly the friend of the ordinary man. In fact, he was really one of us as he was beset and confused in the maze of human love, hate and contradiction.

In Buddhism, priests were barred from leading a normal family life. Yet Shinran Shonin boldly entered into married life. This unprecedented act provoked not only bitter criticism, accusation and insults from the priest group, but from men in all walks of life as well. He faced such accusation and persecution courageously. Why did he dare to go against convention? He wanted to prove to the skeptical people that the Teaching promises the salvation of Amida Buddha for all, be they priest or laymen. The universal salvation of
Amida Buddha was propagated by outstanding saints like Honen Shonin, but they led a life of monks. The followers, therefore, felt doubt as to whether they might be saved through the Teachings because the master did not lead an ordinary life of a layman.

Shinran Shonin was fearless in his determination to prove that the Teachings were for the millions, even though he could foresee the wrath of the tradition bound priests and the public.

Shinran Shonin was extremely sensitive to human weaknesses. Tortured in the struggle with human passions and emotional conflicts, he confessed courageously of the human frailty and weaknesses in the writing, Kyo Gyo Shin Sho.

A word of caution is needed as we read these painful confessions of Shinran Shonin. These words of Shinran Shonin do not indicate that he was more sinful and of weaker character than we. On the contrary, these words indicate only his humble and deep inner reflection and his sincere effort to be bound by the highly rigid standard of religious practice.

His deep and unshakable faith in Amida Buddha was the result of overcoming these human weaknesses. Shinran Shonin walked over more than half of Japan, preaching to weedsman, fishermen, farmers and merchants who did not have access to the blessed Teachings of the Buddha at that time.

It is indeed fortunate that we have such a great saint as our founder. At this time of Ho-on-ko we should once again trace his footsteps with deep appreciation in our hearts and resolve to consecrate ourselves in the service of others.

**SHINRAN SHONIN MEMORIAL DAY**

Shinran Shonin Memorial Day (Ho-onko) commemorates the anniversary of the death of Shinran Shonin, the patron founder of the Jodo Shinshu sect. Each year, on the 16th of January, faithful followers of Shinran Shonin assemble together to pay homage to his memory and to Amida Buddha for having awakened man to the existence of life's supreme debt of gratitude.

Confronted by his own blind waywardness and, moreover, rendered helpless by his own inability to free himself of his ignorance and self-centered ways, mortal man has no alternative but to rely on the grace of the power of salvation of the Nembutsu which is none other than the manifestation of Amida Buddha's great wisdom and compassion graciously bestowed upon mankind in the form of His Primal Vow, assuring salvation and happiness for all sentient beings. The realization of this fundamental fact of life turns, in other words, into an awareness on the part of man to the supreme debt of gratitude he owes.

This gives rise to the question of whether or not we of the Jodo Shinshu faith are truly concerned and grateful to Amida Buddha and to Shinran Shonin for having shown us the way of the Nembutsu.

Shinran Shonin Memorial Day is currently being observed by the respective temples, but it appears to be carried out in a very superficial manner devoid of any sense of gratitude. Or can one be wrong and that, in reality, it is being observed out of a deep feeling of gratitude and pious propriety. Should one become aware that he has been merely going through the motions of observing Ho-onko, it is never too late to change. He must first strive to condition himself towards attaining a true sense of appreciation and gratitude.

Let us pause and reflect for a moment.

Why is it that despite the long hours we spend listening to the teachings on Nembutsu, we continue to remain unmoved and indifferent without any deep feeling of profound gratitude? Is it that we do not possess any sense of gratefulness? Why is this so? What is the underlying source of this problem?
Shinran Shonin interpreted the acknowledgement of gratitude to mean any reciprocal thought or act motivated by a profound feeling of gratitude for Amida Buddha's invocation of his power to enable us to attain faith. Reciprocal acknowledgement is not, therefore, merely giving donations or attending religious services. In other words, it is not just a duty or responsibility. It is, rather, an opportunity—a privilege and blessing which comes naturally as one becomes more deeply aware that all things, including one's faith, comes from Amida Buddha. Our faith and manner of living which are the very essence of life are bestowed upon us through the grace of Amida's compassion and merciful benevolence.

Man is by nature, from the time of his birth, self-centered and, therefore, does not feel any sense of gratitude unless his greed and selfish desires are satisfied. For example, the absence of any feeling of gratitude towards one's parents is because it is obstructed by selfish interests and a false sense of self-importance. There is the ever-present feeling that one's parents will not do as one wishes and that a person exists of his own accord—separate and individual.

The awareness of one's debt of gratitude means that one realizes the reason and purpose for this own existence. To be grateful towards one's parents is the awareness that one owes his existence to his parents. Gratitude towards the sun stems from the realization that one owes his existence to the sun's light and heat. We can also say for the same reason, that we owe our lives to our country and fellow beings.

Therefore, as long as one remains self-centered, any thought or sense of gratefulness will remain dormant and hidden within. Should we desire otherwise, we must change our attitude toward life from a self-centered one to that molded around Amida Buddha as its center. This change is called the attainment of faith.

As stated in the Hymns of Praise (Wasan), “To enter within the wisdom of faith is to become one who acts out of gratefulness to the Buddha.” Faith and acts motivated by gratitude are not two separate aspects of life but are one and the same. Therefore, one cannot possibly say that he has faith but does not feel any sense of gratitude.

In the light of this principle, then, can it be said that people are imbued with a sense of gratitude in their daily conduct? The answer is emphatically, “No!” It is quite apparent that in reality mankind is floundering in the ocean of the three cardinal evils and living in a state of ingratitude and disillusionment without the necessary understanding of the true meaning of life. For this reason, it is imperative that man takes immediate steps, not only to understand the true meaning, but moreover, assimilate the spirit of the reciprocal return of one's debt of gratitude by following the words of Amida Buddha, which teach us to persevere with forbearance and act with conviction of purpose.

By so doing, we shall come to the realization that the significance of Ho-on-ko lies in the assemblage of the faithful followers of Amida in the expression of their gratitude for having been graciously blessed with the means and opportunity of following the path of Nembutsu. From this awareness will rise a deep sense of the gratitude which each person must reply during the course of his life.

“Though I, my life having run its course, 
Return to the Pure Land of Eternal Rest,
Come back shall I to earth again and again
Even as the waves of Wakano-ura Bays.

“When alone you rejoice in the Sacred Teachings
Believe that there are two.
And when there are two to rejoice
Believe that there are three.
And that other shall be Shinran.”
JANUARY ACTIVITIES

Make a book in the shape of a snowman or snowflake.

Have the children write stories, poetry, or feelings.

1. What would you do if you were a snowman?

If you __________, ask other questions leading to discussions.
Make a tissue snowman.
Use blue paper for background, two or three pieces of tissue for body of snowman, and colored construction paper pieces for hat, boots, broom, snow, trees, etc. and yarn for scarf.

![Diagram of a tissue snowman with crumpled tissue and colored paper labels.]
FEBRUARY

February 15
NEHAN E
Nirvana Day

Nirvana Day or Nehan E is held in commemoration of Sakyamuni’s Parinirvana, the culmination of eighty years of life, forty-five of which were dedicated to the spreading of the Buddha Dharma. The Sanskrit term Nirvana literally means “a blowing out as of a flame,” and suggests the extinction of worldly passions and illusions.

NIRVANA DAY

Meaning of Nirvana Day

Nirvana Day, which comes on February 15, is one of the major Buddhist observances. The Sanskrit term “Nirvana” literally means “extinction, the extinction of the worldly illusions and passions.” Wherever the extinction of illusions and passions is being achieved, there will be a calm and peaceful Nirvana, but the term which applies to this particular day means the death of the Buddha Sakyamuni.

Since the Buddha had attained his Enlightenment on this earth, he was a living Buddha and his Buddhahood would never die; but as the Buddha appeared from Dharma (Truth) onto this earth in the form of man in order to save man, his manhood had been a subject of earthly restrictions. He passed away at the age of 80 and entered into Mahaparinirvana or the absolute free state of Enlightenment. Nirvana Day in short, therefore, is the Memorial Day of Sakyamuni Buddha, the great founder of Buddhism.

Life and Death

On the full-moon day of February, knowing that his end was near, the Buddha came to Kusinagara, located about 100 miles from Benares. He had his bedding spread with his head toward the north between the twin Sala trees and he lay upon it facing the west. After giving his last instructions to his disciples, he entered into the fourth meditation and passed away.

No teacher was so serious about the problems of life and death as the Buddha. After years of study and meditation he came to this conclusion: “People think life and death occur in two different times and are two separate things. This is the reason some of them enjoy living and lament death while others seek death, being disgusted with living. Life and death are fundamentally simultaneous; life and death occur at the same time. A man lives in his mind after mind and dies in his mind after mind. The process of life and process of death always go together. Therefore, if he clings to life and death, both become an essence of his self. If he transcends from life and death, both become non-essence of his self. You should find your eternity in Buddhahood lifting yourself above the realm of life and death.”

PRESIDENT'S DAY

During the month of February we honor the memory of our great Presidents, especially George Washington, the first President; and Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President.

George Washington

George Washington was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia on February 22, 1732. His English ancestors had migrated to America after the Puritan Revolution in England. Very little is known of his early childhood. It is said that his parents had died early and that he was brought up by his older brother, Lawrence, from whom he inherited his home, Mount Vernon, which is preserved today.
The fact that George Washington valued the rights and liberty of every individual is evidenced in some of his letters written prior to the Revolutionary War. Although he was bitterly opposed to the idea of independence, he was determined never to submit “to the loss of those valuable rights and privileges which are essential to the happiness of every free State and without which life, liberty and property are rendered totally insecure.”

In reviewing the life of George Washington, it can be pointed out that although he owned slaves, which was the custom in those days, he strongly disapproved of the institution and hoped for some way of abolishing it. It is said that he carefully clothed and fed them, and engaged a doctor for them, and refused to sell them. He said: “I am principled against this kind of traffic in the human species.” Because of his humane treatment of the slaves, they became so attached to him that few slaves are said to have run away.

George Washington served as commander-in-chief of the military forces of all the 13 colonies. His appointment is said to be due to the reputation in the General Edward Braddock Campaign in Virginia. After Braddock’s death, he assumed command of the Virginia troops. His poise, sense and resolution had impressed all the delegates to the second Continental Congress.

With the ratification of the Constitution of the United States, George Washington was elected first President by a unanimous vote. He served for a term of eight years, which were marked by caution, methodical precision and sober judgment which had always characterized him. When he died on December 14, 1799, these words were embodied in the resolutions introduced in the House of Representatives that he was “first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen.”

Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, was born on February 12, 1809 in a backwoods cabin in Kentucky. At the age of 9, Lincoln lost his mother. His father re-married Sarah Bush Johnston, a widow with two girls and a boy. However, she treated both sets of children evenly, but she became especially fond of Abraham and he of her. He afterwards referred to her as his “angel mother.”

Mrs. Lincoln doubtless encouraged Lincoln’s taste for reading. He received very little formal education. His entire schooling amounted to no more than a year’s attendance. He did not read a large number of books, but thoroughly absorbed the few that he did read. These included Life of Washington, Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrim’s Progress and Aesop’s Fables.

When Lincoln was 21 years old, his family moved to Illinois. He was described as being six feet four inches tall, raw-boned and lanky but muscular and powerful. He was good-natured, although somewhat moody and talented as a mimic and story-teller.

In Illinois he tried his hand as a “rail-splitter,” flatboatman, blacksmith and finally law. Then he moved to Springfield, the state capital, and engaged in law. He became known for his fairness and honesty.

In 1860, Lincoln was elected 16th President of the United States. War with the South began in 1861.

On January 1, 1864, Lincoln issued his famous “Emancipation Proclamation” in which slaves were to be freed by state action. This led to the 13th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States which prohibited and terminated slavery. This showed the respect for human worth and dignity regardless of color.
Lincoln’s famous Gettysburg Address, which is inscribed in granite on the wall of Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., was delivered on November 19, 1863, at a ceremony dedicating a portion of the Gettysburg Battlefield as a cemetery for those who died there in the battle fought on July 1, 2, 3, 1863.

Lincoln’s inner qualities—faithfulness, honesty, resolution, insight, humor and courage—these should be emphasized as traits we wish to emulate.

It should be pointed out that Lincoln had a remarkable life history as he rose from humble beginnings, meeting with a tragic death on April 14, 1865, as he watched a play at Ford’s Theater in Washington. His fame lies in his being known historically as the “saviour of the Union and emancipator of the slaves.”

We call George Washington the Father of our Country. He did many wonderful things to weld our Country together and make it strong in the right way. So, today, after these many years, the States that united together are still together. Each day, all over America, boys and girls are happy to say . . . “I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America . . .”

A country will keep strong in the right ways, if each family is strong in the right ways. It is easy to be strong in the wrong way, but hard to keep strong in the right ways. There are ways to make strong Buddhist families.

When boys and girls obey their parents, then all of the family are going in the same direction. When children, or even one of the children do not obey, then the family is being pulled one way against another. It’s like a tug-of-war where nobody wins. Everyone gets hurt.

When every member of the family shares the work, then no one has to work too hard. When one member of the family works too hard, the family becomes like a little chain with one broken link. When everyone shares the work, there is more time to enjoy life together.
FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES

1. Whole plate
   Make valentine holders
   Use soft paper plates.

2. Cut plate in half

3. Yarn
   Put Valentine inside pocket
   Staple half plate to whole plate
   Put Valentine inside pocket
Higan, meaning Other Shore, is a service conducted during the spring equinox. At this time the weather is neither too warm nor too cold; the days and nights are of equal length. Harmony pervades throughout the universe. Therefore, we gather before the sacred shrine of Amida Buddha and meditate on the harmony of nature and devote ourselves to the realization of this harmony in our inner lives.

HIGAN SERVICES

The Higan services are observed twice a year, i.e., once in spring and once in autumn. The word "higan" means "that shore" or "other shore" denoting Nirvana, the goal of Buddhism, as in contrast with "shigan" or "this shore" by which is implied the mundane world or the world of transmigration.

The Higan is an abbreviation of "to-higan" or "to reach that shore" which is the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit term "paramita." Although the concept of Higan is of Buddhist origin, its observance was originated in Japan with first recorded observance going back as far as 806 A.D. when Emperor Kanmu issued an edict ordering priests throughout the Empire to read the Kongo Hannya Kyo in the vernal and autumnal equinox weeks.

During these Higan weeks, when the days and nights are of equal length and the weather is neither too warm nor cold, Buddhists gathered before the shrine of Amida Buddha and listened to the teachings. As these unique observances became so popular among the people, they have eventually been made important entries in the Japanese calendar.

In 1878, the Meiji Government designated the two equinox days as national holidays. Among the existing national holidays of present-day Japan, only these two holidays have religious significance (as of January 1, 1969).

Why the equinox observance was expanded to seven days is explained by some as in accordance with the word of Buddha in the Amida Kyo or the Smaller Sutra that, "Those who call on the Buddha's Name for seven days will attain birth in the Pure Land."

However, as the name Higan denotes, this is the time to remind within each and every one of us the Bodhisattva practice of Six Paramitas or the Six Perfections, i.e., dana-paramita (offering, or charity), sila-paramita (observance of Buddhist precepts), ksanti-paramita (forbearance, perseverance), virya-paramita (effort, assiduity), dhyana-paramita (meditation), and prajna-paramita (wisdom). It is the Bodhisattva's practice to accomplish these paramitas and thereby cross the ocean of birth and death in the Six realms, and reach nirvana. The Six Realms are as follows: naraka-gati (hells), preta-gati (the realm of hungry ghosts), tiryagyoni-gati (the realm of animals), asura-gati (the realm of Asuras, or spirits of demons), manusya-gati (the human realm) and deva-gati (the heavenly realm). The number seven, therefore, symbolizes crossing over of the Six Realms.

In Shin Buddhism, our crossing over the Six Realms of birth and death is assured in the moment of Faith. Through the Vow Power of Amida Buddha we will be "carried" across from this shore to the other shore. The Nembutsu or the recitation of Buddha's Name is the expression of gratitude for the Buddha's Infinite Wisdom and Boundless Compassion, and at the same time our determination to fully do our best in contributing whatever we can to mankind. The Nembutsu is the realization of our true self, and from this realization, can we truly endeavor to do the best of our ability to accomplish the Six Parmitas.
HIGAN

Higan services are conducted twice a year in the spring and fall. These devotions last one week with the middle day of this seven day period being the spring and autumn equinoxes. Although it differs slightly from year to year, this middle day, known as "chunichi," is considered to be significant because the length of the day and night is equal. Generally, the "middle day" falls on about March 21 and September 22.

It is said that the first Higan service was conducted about 1200 years ago in the year 806 A.D.

The spring Higan, especially, is that time of the year when the sun begins to warm the cold winter soil. Grasses and trees, human beings and animals, and even insects feel the pulse of growth and experience the joy of living. Thus, there is an ancient saying, "Heat and cold last only until Higan."

Higan is an abbreviation of "to-higan"—literally meaning "to arrive at the other shore." In the original Sanskrit, it is "paramita" which has the same meaning. In Buddhism the world of illusion is referred to as this shore and the world of enlightenment is called the other shore. Transcending the life of birth and death and crossing over the sea of worldly passions means to reach the other shore of enlightenment. Buddhism, indeed, is dedicated to turning illusion into enlightenment and all the Buddhist practices are directed essentially to this noble purpose.

The various sutras teach the Six Paramitas as the way of reaching the other shore from this shore. The Six Paramitas consist of the following: Giving - action of love and compassion; Morality - actions based on Buddhist morality; Perseverance - perseverance in truth; Effort - directing one's efforts towards Buddhist practices; Concentration - pacifying our minds in meditation; Wisdom - gaining insight into truth.

Any person who faithfully practices the Six Paramitas can reach the other shore and attain enlightenment. However, the searching question is, "Can we really practice this difficult path of self-power?"

This is the most important question in our religious life. A flower blooming on a precipice may be desirable but may also be out of our reach. So too is a lofty ideal that is unattainable in the practical world. We live a life that is beset on the one hand by the busy hours of daily work and on the other by the pursuit of recreation in order to seek respite from the daily stress. Even the regular weekly worship at temple is a difficult practice to follow. How much more difficult is the complete practice of the Six Paramitas.

That is why Shinran Shonin taught the teaching of Nembutsu. According to Shinran Shonin, Amida Buddha manifested himself as Bodhisattva Dharmakara and meditated and practiced for infinite number of kalpas in order to fulfill all the virtues embodied in Namu Amida Butsu. Namu Amida Butsu is the crystallization of the practice of the Six Paramitas and all the other good practices. This name is given to all sentient beings as a gift.

Therefore, when we understand Amida's great labor of love that is inherent in the Nembutsu and awaken faith in Amida Buddha, the Six Paramitas and the other practices are transferred to us and become our spiritual treasure. We are thus given the true cause for our enlightenment in the pure Land through the grace of Amida Buddha. This religious experience is known as the awakening of faith.

When we truly realize Amida's infinite compassion, there arises within our hearts a natural expression of gratitude for salvation that is assured. Because of this feeling of gratitude, those, who follow Shinran Shonin, gave the Higan service a special name—"Sanbutsu E," meaning, "a service to praise the virtues of Amida Buddha." The Higan services, then, achieve a new significance as a dedication to the practice of Six Paramitas in gratitude.
It would be most fitting to practice all the Six Paramitas in gratitude, but if that is impossible, at least we would like to practice the first—giving. The act of giving can be demonstrated in three ways—the gift of faith, the gift of material objects, and the gift of a peaceful mind. Furthermore, there are the seven gifts of the poor. These are gifts which anyone can give even without power and material possessions. The seven gifts are: gentle eyes, a smiling face, gentle words, a gentle attitude, a kind heart, sharing our possessions, cooperative living. In other words the giving of the seven gifts does not mean merely to show a smiling face but actually practice deeds based on warm-heartedness and compassion.

I believe that of all the countless words in the world, there is none so beautiful as “arigato—Thank you.” I once heard that a man travelled around the world with the words “Thank you,” written in various languages on a piece of paper pinned to his chest.

In this manner with a friendly smile on his face this man had a most enjoyable trip. Indeed, the expression “Thank you” warms the hearts of people and brightens the world.

“Thank you” is truly an expression that pours out from the lips of a person who awakens to Amida’s compassion and joyfully embraces faith in Amida Buddha.

As we observe the Higan services, let us gather around the shrine of Amida Buddha, morning and night, and express our deep feeling of “Thank you” in the recitation of the Nembutsu. With the Nembutsu as the moving power of our lives, let us start with the practice of the “seven gifts of the poor” and from there proceed to expand and deepen our spirit of thanksgiving to embrace all the practices of the Six Paramitas.
MARCH ACTIVITIES

MY PLANT CHART

On Tuesday,
Planted my seeds.
On Thursday,
The seeds sprouted.

Plant seeds in pots in the classroom. Keep a chart.

This is my home.
This is my dog.

Have your family take pictures of you and your friends, pets, family, etc. Paste in a book and write about each picture.
PINWHEEL

Make a pinwheel. Cut stiff paper as shown:
1. Fold dots to center
2. Insert pin and attach to the eraser end of a pencil or to a plastic straw.
(Pinwheel turns better if you put a lifesaver between pinwheel and straw.)
**APRIL**

April 8

**Hanamatsuri**

This service is held to commemorate the birth of Gautama in Lumbini Garden. Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Wisdom and Compassion, manifested Himself among men in the person Gautama.

During the service a flower shrine known as Hanamido is set up in front of the main shrine as a symbol of Lumbini Garden. In this shrine is placed a statuette of the infant Buddha and the congregation offers flowers and pours sweet tea over the image. According to the ancient legend, the universe was filled with joyful music, flowers bloomed in full glory and sweet rain fell from the heavens to make this a joyful event.

**HANAMATSURI**

This is the birthday of Sakyamuni Buddha. He was born about 2500 years ago in India on the eighth day of the fourth month. According to our tradition and calendar, this glorious event occurred on April 8th. His given name was Siddhartha and he was the crown prince of the Kingdom of Kapilavastu, on the Nepalese border, one hundred miles north of the present city of Benares. The legends tell us that at the time of his birth in the beautiful Lumbini Garden, sweet rain came down from the heaven to wash the baby Buddha and all the flowers in the yard turned into full bloom. This is why we call the Buddha’s birthday Hanamatsuri. We decorate the Hanamido (flower chapel) and perform the ceremony of bathing the Buddha. Other episodes or symbols in association with his birth are almost too familiar to re-introduce here.

Later literature sometimes tend to employ poetical or mythical methods of presentation. However, when we look at the intention of these authors or biographers, we are surprised to notice the abundant teachings of the Buddha in his birth narrative itself. The first is the unique emphasis on humanity. We know that the Buddha had not only his mother, Queen Maya but also his father, Suddhodana. Under the agricultural climate it is very natural that his father, the King, bore the name, Suddhodana (Pure Rice) and his family name was Best or Sacred Cow as analysed in Gau (cow) and -tama (superlative suffix). His mothers’ name Maya has been translated into “illusion” by the Chinese and Tibetan Buddhists and some of the new Sanskrit literatures interpret it in the same way. As for this feminine name which is a very common and popular name among our ministers’ daughters, I have entertained a hypothesis for a long time in suggesting that the term Maya might not be either Sanskrit or Pali. Of dialects which are supposed to be close to the Buddha’s vernacular, the ancient Jainistic Ardha Magadhi language possesses a noun “ma-u” which stands for “mother” and of which the nominative case is “Maya.”

What Gautama Buddha’s language was is still unconfirmed, but there is a possibility that it resembled a dialect or dialects infused in the life stories of the Buddha. The founder of Jainism, Mahavira, was a man contemporaneous with Gautama Buddha. Because of the common territory of activity and resembling doctrines of these two teachers, some savants are very quick to regard these two as being identical. Furthermore, in the popular Buddhist literatures such as Gandavyuhasutra, Mahavastu, Latitavistara, etc., the proper noun Maya is always used as “mother” of emperors or “mother” of all Bodhisattvas and Buddhas (Sarvajinajetri)—past and future. The Buddha’s father was Suddhodana but mother might be just mother without a name. A name is man-made and convenient for identifying the person, but it will convey sometimes a discrimination or separation. Even we common men very rarely call our own mothers by name. This warmest humanity is profusely demonstrated in the Buddha’s birth.
Secondly, the name Buddha is a title and not a proper noun. Through numerous presentations of the Buddha’s teaching, we are shown two fundamental attitudes in studying Buddhism; the privilege of being insured of limitless exertion of wisdom; and the responsibility of studying or believing in this teaching. In other words, there is an absolute autonomy in our intelligence, morality and faith. The highest wisdom is symbolized in the boundless light of Amitabha and its function is the infinite compassion attributed in eternal time or Amitayus. Both are the projections of our highest goal and the very qualifications of Amida Buddha. Buddhism is the only religion in which the object of worship and goal of attainment are one. Our aspiration towards a higher step is secured and commended.

Now, the occidental counterparts as following are quoted for the purpose of comparison. These are not strictly historical but at least the voices of civilization in the respective stages of development.

For example, we question why the original man and wife were expelled from the garden of Eden in the Old Testament. This story was later dramatized by John Milton in his Paradise Lost. A son of Titans, Prometheus, in the Greek myth stole the fire from Mt. Olympus and taught the use of it to his fellow men. In punishment for this conduct, the fable says, he was chained by the order of the chief god, Zeus, to a rock in the Caucasus, where his liver was munched daily by a vulture. Aeschylus, one of the greatest tragedy writers in Greece, exaggerated this story, replacing the liver with the heart which grows by night as fast as the vulture consumes it by day. Prometheus’ affliction, therefore, lasted as long as thirteen human generations until Hercules slew the bird. Aeschylus had Prometheus utter, “I sooth all gods I hate (pantas ekhthairo theos).” Another god-detester, Karl Marx, loved Prometheus and concluded his preface to this doctorate thesis, “The Difference Between the Natural Philosophy of Democritus and the Natural Philosophy of Epicurus; 1841,” with Aeschylus version of Prometheus’ words, “I shall never exchange my fetters for slavish servility. It is better to be chained to the rock than bound to the service of God, Zeus.” The founder of communism lauded Prometheus as the noblest of saints and martyrs in the calendar of philosophy. According to the beginning verses of Genesis II in the Old Testament, human folks tried to build a tower whose top may reach the heaven, the abode of god. Eventually, this being the cause of divine resentment, the tower of Babel was demolished and in punishment human beings have suffered from many languages and were scattered all over the earth.

The motive or philosophy implied in these fables makes a clear distinction from a Buddhistic one. In spite of our sympathy for these ill-fated heroes or heroines, we witness now human exertion towards the highest goal has been impeded as symbolized in the forbidden fruit, stolen fire or ambitious tower. While the betterment of virtues is highly recommended, the final attainment of oneness with the absolute one has been interpreted as the most offensive arrogance. One may attain 99.999... percent proximity to God, but the last minimum point will never be bridged. Even if it might be an infinitesimal width, the gap is an absolute abyss. In the Buddhist legends sincere seekers of truth such as Zenzaidoji (sudhana-sresthidaraka) under 53 teachers or Sessendojo who dared to trade the truth with his own physical life have been told and retold as being the ideal students of Buddha’s teaching. Shinran Shonin’s followers regard the truth as Amida Buddha and listen to his interpretation of Sakyamuni Buddha’s birth; “His arrival in this world was solely to show the way of Amida Buddha and save all beings, thereby blessing them with true benefit.”

Now, regarding the Buddha’s birth date and calendar, we may have an impression that Buddhists are a little slothful with “about 2500 years ago,” especially in comparison with western religions. However, for example, Christmas has no biblical foundation at all, while there are innumerable references to the founder’s chronology in the Buddhist literature. If Sakyamuni Buddha were a mythological hero, it would be as easy as the other to pick an
arbitrary date and year. Paradoxically, because of his firm historicity, it has been necessary for constant assessment via new data and discoveries. Of course there is a movement to set a uniform calendar among Buddhists. For example, most of the Southern Buddhists have proposed the Buddha's birth to be in the year 624 B.C. From an academic standpoint, Dr. Hajime Nakamura has given the year 463 B.C.

On this occasion of Buddha Day, we are reminded of an episode told by Asvaghosa in his Buddhacarita (Life of Buddha); a great seer Asita nearing the nurse-bed of the infant prince, prophesied, "... having attained the highest truth by strenuous efforts, he will shine forth as a sun of knowledge to destroy the darkness of illusions in the world." And Asita bitterly wept knowing that he was too old to see the prince grown up. This prophesy was fulfilled. Today hundreds of millions of people are the followers of Buddha and the world witnesses the prosperity of his eternal Dharma. With this title, Buddha Day, our sister Sangha, the Buddhists of Hawaii were successful in establishing a state holiday. We Buddhists, being over proud of our religious heritage, should celebrate this holiday in deep sincerity and express our thankfulness to Buddha for the founding of the wonderful teaching.
APRIL ACTIVITIES


APRIL FOOL'S DAY

Think of a joke to play on the class. Fool them with a story you’ve made up. When children are involved: “April Fool.”

Tell them class is dismissed, etc.

April Fool’s Day: This is one story that many people tell.

A long, long time ago in France, people gave each other gifts for the new year. They gave these gifts on April 1st because that was the first day of the year. Then the King, Charles IX, changed the new year to January 1st, the way it is now. Some people did not want the new year changed. So other people sent them silly gifts on April 1st to make fun of them. Then people in other countries began to play tricks on April Fool’s Day, too. Today, we like to play April Fool’s tricks here in America.
Make a tulip garden.

Use red and yellow construction paper for the bulbs, green for the leaves and grass, straws for the stems.
Flower Shrine, "Hanamido"

INSTRUCTION: Fold in half and cut along the space between the solid & the broken lines at top & bottom. Do not cut posts. Unfold and cut around outside of shrine. Score the inside posts and push back blank section as you pull toward you the center-fold of roof and base.

Back Support

(Fold and glue to back)

Fold

Glue this section to the back of Flower shrine base
MOTHER'S DAY SERVICE

Mother's Day has begun to take a prominent place in Buddhist Dharma School Services after World War II.

Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday of May by wearing a carnation—red, if one's mother is living; white, if she's dead.

Frank E. Hering of South Bend, Indiana, proposed before a convention of the Eagles Lodge, first at Indianapolis, on February 7, 1904, that a day should be set aside by lodges for honoring mothers.

Miss Ana Jarvis of Philadelphia proposed the manner and time of celebration in a public meeting in 1907. Philadelphia was the first city to observe the day, May 10, 1908. By presidential proclamation on May 8, 1914, flags were flown on government buildings in honor of the day.

Miss Jarvis had lost her mother in 1906, and in 1907 she had called some friends to honor the memory of her mother. At that time, she conceived the idea of setting aside one day during the year to pay respects to mothers. This idea was passed on from friend to friend, from group to group and on to newspaper agencies. From the observance in Philadelphia the idea spread to other cities and finally, the then President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, issued a proclamation setting aside the second Sunday of May as Mother's Day.

Before the days of the Buddha, we note that in India, the women were very low in status. They were considered as chattel and their lives were regarded as cheap. However, the Buddha raised the status of women and brought them to a realization of their importance to society. He did not humiliate women, but only regarded them as weak by nature. He was the innate good of both men and women and assigned them their due place in His Teaching.

As a mother, a woman holds an honorable place in Buddhism. Just as the Arahants Sariputta and Mogallana were made the two chief disciples in the Order of Monks, even so the Arahants Khema and Uppalavanna were made the two chief female disciples in the order of Nuns. In this Order, queens, princesses, daughters of noble families, widows, bereaved mothers, helpless women, courtesans—all despite their caste and rank—met on a common platform, enjoyed perfect consolation and peace, and breathed that free atmosphere which is denied to those confined in cottages and palatial mansions.

Today, all Dharma Schools set aside this day to pay tribute to mothers—whether in a simple way by presenting corsages or in a more elaborate way by presenting a program dedicated to mothers. As the corsages are pinned on, we see the happy smiling faces of the mothers reflecting their gratitude and appreciation amidst tears of joy.

Mother's Day is indeed a day to say “thank you” to our mothers for all their love and care extended to their loved ones.

As Dharma School teachers must try to convey to the children the significance of the day. We wish not only to thank our mothers, but also we wish to become aware of and be grateful for the countless blessings that we have been able to receive from them.

We must pause to reflect on how we came into this world. We were helpless, having to be fed, nursed and our wants attended to. We must think of the many hours patience, kindness, love, tolerance, sympathy and security we received from our mothers.

Our physical parents are our fathers and mothers. Our spiritual parent is Buddha. When we recite the Nembutsu, we are calling our spiritual parent.

We are embraced in our mother's Compassion in our daily life, just as Amida Buddha embraced us with Compassion and Wisdom. No matter what we do, our mothers will always be with us as our strength and bulwark against all forces.
Although this day is set aside especially for mothers, we should show our love, respect and gratitude to our mothers in our daily life. We should realize that mothers undergo much sacrifices for their children without asking for special favors from their children. Her love is compared to the love of Amida Buddha whose love is extended to all with no conditions attached. It is given freely. However, it must be pointed out that human love in finite while Amida Buddha's love is infinite. That is, Amida’s love is extended to everyone, no matter who he is, or what he is.

MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day, May 30, was originally observed in the northern states of the United States in honor of the soldiers killed in the Civil War. Subsequently, however, this day has been set aside to honor all who fell in battle in defense of our nation.

No day had been set aside for this observance until 1868 when John A. Logan, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, issued a general order designating May 30 “for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion.” General Logan did this “with the hope that it will be kept up from year to year.”

In 1882, Grand Army urged that the “proper” designation of May 30 be “Memorial Day” and not “Decoration Day” as it was originally called.

In 1910, Memorial Day became a legal holiday. In most states, it is observed on May 30 while in others it is observed on other dates.

On Memorial Day, we Buddhists pay our sincere homage to those who have given their lives for our country. We also try to remember all those who have gone before us and honor them as Buddhas who have reached the states of Nirvana in the mercy of Amida Buddha.

MAY

“Thank you, Mother and Father”

A. Nembutsu
   a. Learn to gassho - reciting Nembutsu.
   b. Giving thanks at mealtime, ITADAKIMASU — GOCHISOSAMA.

Boy’s Day
   a. May 5th is Boy’s Day
   b. Carp fish is flown on the pole.

Mother’s Day
   a. Thank you, mother dear. To instill in the minds of children, the deep gratitude they owe their parents.
   b. Talk about what their parents do for them every day and what students can do for their parents.

Go-Tan-E
   a. Birthday of St. Shinran, who made the Nembutsu easier to understand.

Memorial Day
   a. Give gratitude for war veterans who have died.
   b. Give gratitude, also, to deceased relatives, grandparents, parents, friends, etc.
BOY'S DAY — “FISH” (May 5)
Tell the story of the “Koi”

1. Material needed:
   a. Flat paper bag (usually from drug stores).
   b. Wooden chopstick or dowel.
   c. String.
   d. Rubber band.

2. Instructions:
   a. Fold down corners of the bag toward the center forming triangles, for head and mouth of carp. Glue down.
   b. Draw eyes, mouth, scales, and fins on both sides of bag. Color.
   c. Punch a hole at the mouth and tie one end of a string through it. Tape or tack the other end of the string securely onto the chopstick. Gently push in “mouth area” inside the bag.
   d. Wrap small rubber band tightly around open end of bag, about 2-3 inches from the end. “Fan out” ends for the tail.
   e. Blow gently into the opening at the tail end to “puff up” the fish.

MOTHER’S DAY

1. Mother’s Day card.
2. Make little, simple gifts.
   a. A picture frame with snapshot of the child.

Go-Tan-E

1. The birthday of Shinran Shonin, who gave us Nembutsu.
SHINRAN SHONIN DAY

Shinran Shonin, I admire your firm faith,
Everpresent in your writing;
It is the expression of your kind, sincere heart.

Shinran Shonin, I accept your messages,
Telling me to examine the value of being born;
I trust your words.

Shinran Shonin, I will try to follow the way of life,
That you have shown me;
And I will always recite the Numbutsu,
With courage, gratitude, and reflection.

The month of May is noted for the observance of Mother's Day on the second Sunday; and Memorial Day, a national holiday, at the end of the month. There is another very important day for all Buddhists and we call this day SHINRAN SHONIN DAY. The observance of this day may be more familiar to some as Shinran Shonin Go-Tan-E or Fuji Matsuri.

SHINRAN SHONIN DAY is observed to commemorate the birth of Shinran Shonin (1173-1262), the founder of Jodo Shinshu. He lived in Japan more than seven hundred years ago and taught the true meaning of the Nembutsu, Namu Amida Butsu, until his passing at the age of 90. We observe this day to arouse awareness in the Nembutsu teaching, to pay tribute to our great founder, to take pride in the Buddhist herritage.

Shinran Shonin was born in the village of Hinro near the capital city of Kyoto on the first day of the fourth month of the lunar calendar 1173. This day falls on May 21 of our Gregorian calendar. In 1873 the Meiji Government abolished the lunar calendar system and was adopted the Gregorian calendar now in use. Until then the birthday of Shinran Shonin was known to the Japanese people as April 1. Higashi Hongwanji still maintains this earlier date, whereas the Honpa Hongwanji adopted the change according to the modern calendar.

When Shinran Shonin was born, the two major clans—Genji and Heike—were in a struggle for power to rule the country. It was a period of hard intensive battles and unrest. So intense was the civil strife that a famous author of the period of hard intensive battles and unrest.

The flow of the river is ceaseless and its water is never the same. The bubbles that float in the pools, now vanishing, now forming, are not of long duration; so in the world are man and his dwellings. They die in the morning, they are born in the evening, like foam of water . . . Whence does he come, where does he go, man that is born and dies.

From the fact that Matsuwaka-Maro, Shinran Shronin’s childhood name, entered priesthood at the early age of nine, we can easily surmise that he too was caught in the bitter turbulence of the social times. A sensitive child, he was prompted to seek a way of life that promised peace to mankind. We are well acquainted with the poem that Matsuwaka-Maro recited when the venerable Jichin Kasho, chief abbot of a monastery, urged him to postpone the ordination until morning:

“Like cherry blossoms are the minds
That think there is a tomorrow,
But who can tell, there may be
A tempest in the night.”

Dharma Pre-School Text 211
This determination of Matsuwaka-Maro so impressed the chief abbot that he performed the ordination at once. The name Hannen-Shonagon-No-Kimi was bestowed upon Matsuwaka-Maro. It was such a strong motivation that led Shinran Shonin into a religious life that he continuously sought the answer to life in the Buddha-Dharma.

It is mentioned in his master work, Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho (*Analects Concerning Teaching, Practice, Faith, and Attainment*), that under the guidance of Honen Shonin (1133-1212), his master, he discovered the unretrogressive path by having faith in the teaching of Nembutsu at the age of twenty-nine.

The growth and popularity of the Nembutsu teaching agitated a few. Jealousy led to malice and complaint was lodged against the proponents of the Nembutsu and they were brought to court. As a result, Honen Shonin and Shinran Shonin, together with other prominent followers, were sentenced to exile in 1207. Honen Shonin was exiled to Tosa (Shikoku) province and Shinran Shonin to Echigo (Niigata). Separated from the aging master, Honen Shonin, 75, the young Shinran Shonin, 35, looked upon his exile as a golden opportunity to introduce the teaching among the common people in the remote area. Shinran Shonin ascribed this good turn to the grace of the teaching of his master.

They were pardoned four years later in 1211 and the ban was removed. When Shinran Shonin heard of the passing of his master Honen Shonin in 1212, he decided not to return to Kyoto and instead turned his direction to the Kanto area. It was here in the village of Inada in Hitachi province (Ibaragi Ken) when Shinran Shonin was 52 years of age that he completed his masterpiece, *Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho*.

Leaving his wife, Eshin Ni, and his family in Kanto, Shinran Shonin returned to Kyoto in 1232 for the first time since his exile. Shinran Shonin spent his remaining years in Kyoto. He lived not in luxury but in thrift and moderation, he wrote many books and numerous letters to his family and friends, and he never wavered in his determination to expound the teaching of Nembutsu.

Reviewing Shinran Shonin's life, he did not live a fortunate life filled with happy environmental conditions. Both his parents were gone at an early age and he encountered many hardships throughout his life. But his spiritual experiences which evolved under many trying conditions and in many places, have given the many followers of the Buddha's Teaching an answer to the purpose of life in this world.

Shinran Shonin spent his simple and modest life of ninety years with no thought of making himself spectacularly prominent and impressive among the people. But millions of Nembutsu followers are rejoicing over his way of life through the guidance of Amida Dharma.

Shinran Shonin lived among the common people, he felt for them from this very heart, and communicated the message of true salvation with sincerity. He discovered peace and happiness with utmost confidence in the faith of Nembutsu.

During the years 1804 through 1809, Honnyo Shonin, the 19th Abbot of Jodo Shinshu, built the Hino-Tanjo-In Temple on the compounds of Hokkaiji Temple in the village of Hino. A statuette of Amida Buddha and a figure of Shinran Shonin at the age of five were enshrined.

The Hino Tanjo-In has then become a historical sanctuary marking the site of Shinran Shonin's birth.

In the early Meiji era Myonyo Shonin, the 21st Abbot and grandfather of the Abbot Kosho Ohtani, paid his respect at this temple. On this occasion, official records of the Hongwanji Temple reveal that the first Go-Tan-E, the Shinran Shonin Day Service, took place. It was on May 21, 1874.
It was not until 1882 that the commemoration of Shinran Shonin's birth flourished. Services are held on May 3 at the Hino Tanjo-In Temple and on May 21 at our mother temple, Honpa Hongwanji today. Various activities are scheduled, such as, oratorical contests, Gagaku and Noh, Hongwanji Open House, and many other events. A special music service was added to the traditional service in 1952 when over two thousand elected students from Ryukoku University, Kyoto Women's College, Soai Women's College, and Heian High School, and affiliates of the Hongwanji, took part in this special service.

In 1973, the 800th birthday of Shinran Shonin was observed. Today, we commemorate Shinran Shonin Day, let us see the true aspect of Shinran Shonin's faith. Through the teaching of the Nembutsu, let us live the life of Oneness with strength and convection.

MAY

May 21
SHUSO GO-TAN-E
Shinran Shonin Day

Shuso Go-Tan-E (Fujimatsuri—the wisteria festival) commemorates the birth of Shinran Shonin and is one of the most important observances for Shin Buddhists. For it was Shinran who realized the uselessness of ascetic religious practices unless they sprang from a spontaneous and natural outgrowth of a life based on “tariki-shinjin, or “the pure heart free from self-generated intensions,” and established the doctrinal basis for the Shin Buddhist tradition.

MOTHER’S DAY PROJECT

Make a nice Mother’s Day card with a nice drawing made by each child. Talk with the children about things they can do for Mother the whole year round. Have the children become aware that performing an act of kindness is just about the nicest gift of all.

After talking about simple everyday tasks that children can do to help Mother, ask them to think of one task that they feel they can promise to do for Mother. Write for the children the work that they would like to do for Mother in the card they have made.

Some suggestions of things children can do for Mother.

Dear Mommy—

As a gift to you on Mother’s Day, I would like to:
1. take out the waste paper basket and garbage pails,
2. hang up my clothes,
3. keep my room clean,
4. take care of baby when you are busy,
5. grow loving in thought and kindness everyday of the year.

Note: Use the same idea for Father’s Day.

Twin coffee cup card may be made. One for Mother and the other for Father. The Mother’s Day card may be given on Mother’s Day and the Father’s Day card on Father’s Day.

On the inside may be written what each child would like to promise to do for Mother or Father.

Make cup first on folded paper. Paste on saucer when finished.
MOTHER'S DAY

Talk with the children about Mother's Day —

"Since today is Mother's Day, would you children like to make something to show how much you love her?"

(Here are some samples of things children can do)

1. MAKE CUP-CAKE PAPER FLOWER

- cup cake paper
- cut end of straw
- Flex Straw
- Make leaves out of green paper
- use a small plastic flower pot or small paper cup

2. MAKE LARGE CARD for MOTHER

- use 8½ by 11 colored paper (pastel shades are pretty)
FLOWER BASKET

Materials

2 large thin paper plates
Colored paper
Ribbon or yarn
Paints
Glue
Stapler

Directions

Carefully cut an opening in each plate, in the same size and place. It is easier to cut straight across the middle of each plate and then up and around the rim.

Decorate by gluing wrapping paper or construction paper on bottom side of each plate.

Tape, or staple the plates together. Cover the upper handle of basket by wrapping colored yarn or ribbon around it. Punch 2 holes in the top or string around handle so you can hand basket. Fill with paper flowers, e.g. Iris.
MOTHER’S DAY CARD

The Guiding hand:

Materials: 1. Any thick or heavy weight paper may be used. Colored  
2. Scissors  
3. Pencil  
4. Crayons

Procedure: 1. A pattern of a hand or the children’s own hand may be traced on the light paper.

DEAR MOTHER,
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GUIDING HANDS
GASSHO,
MAY ACTIVITIES

Make and decorate a Crumb Scraper. Often family meals leave crumbs on the table. Help Mom out by making and using a crumb scraper.

Method: Take a stiff paper plate. Cut as shown. Paint or color to decorate. Use small part to scrape and large part to catch crumbs.

Learn about nutrition. Talk about the four food groups. Make a check list such as the one below. Check the columns to see if the family meals are balanced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR FOOD GROUPS</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk and Milk Products</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meat, Eggs, Fish, Beans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fruits and Vegetables</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breads and Cereals</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B = Breakfasts  D = Dinners
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE FOUR BASIC FOOD GROUPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GROUP ONE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk and Milk Products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**JAPANESE FOOD;**
FATHER'S DAY

History

The observance of Father's Day has increasingly become more popular for a number of years throughout the country. The credit for making the first suggestion probably belongs to Mrs. John Bruce Dodd of Spokane, Washington. The idea occurred to her in 1909 as a suitable tribute to her own father, who had successfully reared a family of children after the death of their mother. She first wrote, proposing that the third Sunday in June be set aside for honoring all fathers, to Rev. Conrad Bluhm, then president of Spokane Ministerial Association, and the proposal was approved. The first celebration of the day was observed in Spokane in June 1910, and in 1936, A national Father's Day Committee was formed with headquarters in New York City. Today all rejoice that the day is now observed in keeping with the honor and dignity deserved by fathers. The rose is the symbol of the day, sons and daughters wearing a red rose in honoring a living father, a white one if the father is no longer with them. Greeting cards, gifts, special services and sermons are common signs of the occasion, and sometimes, Father-and-son and Father-and-daughter banquets are held.

Father's Sacrifice

All fathers (and mothers, too) don’t mind sacrificing so that their children have what they need—schooling, clothing, food, recreation, trips, etc. From the cash they earn they provide for their children as best they can with compassion—no idea of compensation—but just thinking of their happiness, their growth—physical, mental and spiritual—their future as respected and useful citizens of the community and nation. Reared in a home like this, the children will long remember their parents and home life, irrespective of their age. Many of us have experienced staying in hotels, living temporarily in an expensive room, like the ones we see in the movies; but in spite of their elaborate furnishings, we can sleep more peacefully and comfortably in our own home, humble as it may be, where our compassionate parents are always watching, guiding and protecting us. In this safe and warm atmosphere, we are reminded of the image of Amid Buddha of the Pure Land.

Filial Piety

It is important for a son (and daughter) to repay his parents for their gracious kindness even if he carried his father on his right shoulder and his mother on his left shoulder. And even if he should bathe the bodies of his parents in sweet smelling ointments for many years, and serve his parents as an ideal son would and gain a thorne for them and all the luxuries of the world, still he could not repay them for what they have done for him. Buddha’s Providence abides in homes where the parents are held in respect. Indeed the parents are Buddhs’s Providence (The Teaching of the Buddha)

Amida Buddha and Father

Amida Buddha has three main qualities or characteristics, Great Wisdom, Great Compassion and Great Power. These are inseparable but the Great Wisdom quality of Amida is most often compared to a father’s guidance of his children. Just as a father’s wise guidance over his children is unselfish and directed solely toward the welfare of his offspring’s present growth and their future, so Amida Wisdom is pure, perfect and unlimited, that it will never fail us. Father’s wisdom, though great and unselfish, is limited; whereas Amida’s Wisdom is infinitely more powerful and good. His Great Wisdom showed Him the best possible way to save all men from ignorance and suffering, and He vowed He would not “attain the title of ‘Buddha’ until and unless I can save all beings and in the universe”. His Great Wisdom and Compassion give us faith which guarantees our future enlightenment unconditionally and therefore, makes possible a happy, fruitful present life.

Dharma Pre-School Text 217
Seishi-Maru’s Father

In Okayama Ken, about 100 miles west of Kyoto, Japan, there lived a warrior whose name was Tokukuni Urumano and his wife and son Seishi-Maru (born in 1133). In those days Japan was in a critical condition as a result of continuous battles among the different war lords and revenge was openly permitted among them. When Seishi-Maru was only eight years old, his father was seriously hit by an arrow one dark night, and Seishi-Maru immediately thought of revenge and told his dying father about it. But his father told him to forgive his slayers and explained, “You should not be revengeful because if you do, their sons will do the same and vengeance will be repeated and the cycle of evil will never cease.” Though Seishi-Maru was still young, when he heard the last words of his father, he realized his mistake and decided to become a Buddhist priest. When he was thirteen years old, Seishi-Maru went to Mt. Hiei (near Kyoto), then the mecca of Japanese Buddhism. Later he became the famous Honen Honin, the founder of the Jodo Sect of Buddhism.

FATHER’S DAY

The verse to be typewritten on another piece of paper and pasted on the left-hand side is

Sometimes you get discouraged

Because I am so small

And always leave my fingerprints

On furniture and wall.

But here’s a little hand print

You never will undo.

It’s for you to keep forever

‘Cause I made it just for you.

Have the child make his hand print by dipping his hand in white powdered paint (thickened with liquid starch) and pressing his hand on the paper.

Note: Making this card may work more successfully if it is done on two Sundays. Children may just color the outside of the card the first Sunday and make the inside the following Sunday.
Draw handprint on parchment paper above the poem. Glue gold strip of paper at the top and bottom. Attach string hanger at the top.

**SCROLL: 6x12**

**TO FATHER**

Here's my hand so tiny and small
To watch as the years go passing by
And see how we grow my hand and I.
You're the Gr-r-r-reatest Dad and I'm not a "li-on!"
LION'S MANE

LION'S HEAD

EYES (cut 2)
NOSE
MOUTH
PARENT'S DAY

We must help children to appreciate parents and to respect and love them for all they do for us.

Suggested Lessons:

Study the diagram below and develop your lesson.

![Diagram](image)

Talk about how children can help their parents.

Note: In suggesting what children can do to help parents stress everyday thoughtfulness rather than things that are beyond this age group.
JUNE

Four Gratitudes
   a. Gratitude to all beings.
   b. Gratitude to parents.
   c. Gratitude to country and community.
   d. Gratitude to Buddha.

Father’s Day
   a. Thank you, father dear. To instill in the minds of the children, gratitude for their parents.
   b. Talk about what their parents do for them every day and what the students can do for their parents.

Buddhist Family
   a. All Buddhist families should be conscious of good Buddhist practices.
   b. Attend the temple together regularly.
   c. Worship daily before the family shrine.
   d. Be thankful to Buddha by being warm-hearted with happy smiling faces, saying kind words and doing kind deeds.

Obon
   a. Obon is an occasion for rejoicing in the Nembutsu.
FAN

1. Cut off top & bottom
2. Score lines across thru blank and also vertical line
3. Fold back on vertical line and accordion-fold the rest
4. Tape and open into fan

After accordion-fold tape this end
DIRECTIONS:
1. Separate sections 'A' from 'B' by cutting along this side of the border
2. Fold section 'A' in half with border back or back and cut along fine lines up to the border
3. Unfold and cut off the shaded section; also cut off the shaded section on 'B'
4. Glue end-strips together to form tube with border around top and bottom
5. Form section 'B' into tube inside tube 'A' and glue or staple together
OBON

Meaning of the Term "Obon"

The Japanese term “Obon” is an abbreviation of “Ura bon” which in turn is the phonetic translation of the Sanskrit terms “Ullambana” and “Ullampana.” According to “Tetsugaku Daijiten” (Dictionary of Philosophical Terms - Iwanami Bunko) the root form of “Ullambana” is “Avalambana” which literally means to be “hung upside down.” It denotes extreme pain and suffering, both physically and spiritually. “Urabon” is also a translation of the term “Ullampana” meaning salvation or relief. In conclusion, “Obon” then means relief or salvation from extreme pain or suffering.

Origin of Obon

The origin of “Obon” stems from the “Ullambana Sutra.” In this very short sutra, the now well know story of Mokuren Sonja (Maudgalyayana) is related. According to the “Ullambana Sutra” Mokuren Sonja, one of the ten great disciples of the Buddha, saw with his superhuman sight the agony of his beloved mother as she suffered in the “Hell of Hunger” (Gaki-do). Mokuren Sonja was stunned to see his once beautiful mother so emaciated and reduced to a condition of being literally skin and bones. His now witchlike mother’s anguished cries for food and water felt like piercing arrows of icicles in Mokuren’s heart which sent a cold fear of guilt coursing through his entire being. With an indescribable feeling of guilt, pity and compassion, Mokuren Sonja placed some food in a “Bon” or bowl and offered it to his mother, who greedily grasped the bowl and immediately tried to devour its contents. Unfortunately the food burst into flames and she could not eat it. The astonished son hurried to Sakyamuni Buddha to request His aid in saving his mother. The Buddha then stated as follows:

Dear Mokuren, your mother’s sin (selfishness) was so great that you alone will not be able to save her. Only the combined powers of your fellow monks of the ten quarters will be able to accomplish this feat. on July 15th, your fellow monks will end their 90 days of training and studies. Make an offering of Dana (in this case food) to these monks for the sake of your mother and all other parents for the past seven generations.

Mokuren did as taught by the Buddha. The Buddha then commanded his disciples to commence the worship service. After the service as the monks accepted the food offered by Mokuren, they saw his mother and all other beings saved from the agonies of Hell. Great was the joy of all present. Mokuren thanked the Buddha and his fellow monks and posed his question of the Buddha.
Would it be possible for any Buddhist in the future generations to save his parents and others by observing “Ullambana”? The Buddha replied, “Yes, “Ullambana’ should be held on July 15th (lunar calendar) and offerings should be made to the Tree Treasures. The merits of this dana and services shall enable their parents, if still alive, to enjoy health, happiness and longevity in life; if deceased, for seven generations back they shall be saved from the agonies of hell and be reborn into the human world and heaven.

This last passage of the Ullambana Sutra is then the direct origin of the Obon Services.

Note: Some Buddhist scholars claim that Ullambana Sutra was written in China rather than in India. Hence, Obon probably originated in China.

History of Obon

In India, even before the advent of Buddhism, ancestor worship was generally practiced by the people. The early Indians believed that those who departed without any children would suffer the agonies of Hell and therefore, the Brahmins returned to their homes after training period was over, married, and produced offsprings and trained them to worship their ancestors. It is safe to assume that this belief did influence the early Buddhists. The Buddhist disciples, on the other hand, were not permitted to get married like their Hindu counterparts and without any children to do as Mokuren did, these Buddhist disciples were doomed to suffer the agonies of Hell. Perhaps as a means of salvation from this fate the early Buddhists originated the “Ullambana Service” which was held on the last day of their training period (July 15th) and taught the lay members to make offerings to the Three Treasures and hold a worship service.

Note: The above information is contained in the Gen no ongi.

In the Hoonjirin Vol. 77 it states that King Prasenajit and others made 500 bowls of gold and silver and placed foods of various tastes and offered it to the Buddha and His disciples.

In China in 538 A.D. Obon services were first observed on July 15th during the reign of Emperor Butei (This information is contained in the Busso so toki, Vol. 37) In China it seems almost certain that Obon service was observed not only by the ruling class but also by the common people (Ganshi Kakun). July 15 was sometimes referred to as “Chugen” and food offerings were made to the spirits of the dead.

In Japan, according to Nihonshoki during the reign of Emperor Suiko (600-620 A.D.), Obon Service was held in the palaces and temples of the nobility on April 8th and July 15th. During the reign of Emperor Saimyo, Obon Service was held at the Asuka Temple in Nara during the month of July. During the Heian period (900-1200), Obon was widely observed by the masses. Until this time it was only among the upper class that Obon services were held. In the Muromachi era (1400-1430), the Nembutsu Odori (dance) was first introduced during the service. Prior to this, as far as I could check there are no records, of dances being performed during the Obon Service. The popular legend that Mokuren Sonja and the other disciples clapped their hands and began dancing in joy and that this is the origin of the Bon Dance is now refuted by scholars. In the “Ullambana Sutra” it simply states that Mokuren sonja cried in joy.

Rituals and Customs

The rituals and customs among the various Buddhist denominations differ only slightly, with the exception of our denomination. Let me briefly explain the customs among the other sects.

Obon is unusually observed from July 13 to 15. July 13th is called “Mukae Bon” or “Welcoming Day.” The “souls” of the deceased members are welcomed back by the family. A “Shoryo Dana” (shelf for the souls”) is prepared for the returning souls. “Mukae Dango” (welcoming rice cake), noodles, vegetables and fruits are placed on this shelf and paper
lanterns complete the decorations. The members of the family then go to their family cemetery which is again gaily decorated with flowers, food and lanterns. Also horses and bullocks of cucumbers and egg plants with legs of dried grass stems are placed before the tombstones for the “spirits” to mount on. Ministers are invited to perform services both at the home and at the cemetery. July 15th is known as the “Okuri Bon” or farewell day. “Okuri dango” and other foods are offered on this last day. “Shoryo bune” or miniature boats are built and filled with various foods and lighted candle and set adrift on rivers and lakes. It is said that these boats will reach the other shore and until next Obon the “spirits” will not go hungry or be lonesome. During these three nights, memorial services are held for the deceased and young and old participate in the Bon dances held around the “yagura” or high platform.

In our Shinshu denomination we do not have elaborate preparations as mentioned above. Both the decoration and the offerings are done simply and a memorial service is held on August 15th. At “Honzan,” Obon is oftentimes called “Kangi E” or “Gathering of Joy.” At the various temples, services are held from July 15th to August 15th. It is held on August 15th at “Honzan” at our mother church in Kyoto because August 15th is the last day of the “Summer Seminar” or “Kaki ango” and it coincides with July 15th, the last day of studies and training for the Buddha’s disciples. During the time of Myonyo Shonin an edict was issued, officially proclaiming that “Obon” shall henceforth be known as “Kangi E” (Gathering of Joy). The reasons advanced for this change in terminology were as follows:

1. The Shinshu interpretation of “Obon” services is drastically different from those of other Buddhist sects and to avoid any misunderstanding among the lay membership on this matter, the title of this service was changed to “Kangi E.”

2. In the “Ullambana Sutra” the following words are found; such as “Buddha’s Day of Joy,” “To do in joy,” etc. Certainly it was a day of joy for Mokuren Sonja and the other disciples as they were instrumental in the salvation of Mokuren’s mother and other beings. Therefore, despite the fact that “Obon” is a memorial service, a festive mood rather than sorrow prevades the gathering. Hence, “Kangi E” would be an appropriate title for this service.

3. We feel that the “Kangi” (Joy) as it appears in the “Ullambana Sutra” should be nurtured and developed to a state where it will be synonymous with the “Shinjin Kangi” of the 18th Vow. (Blissfully trust in me with the most sincere mind). It is for this purpose that we observe and participate in the “Obon” service.

**Obon Dance (Bon Odori)**

As mentioned previously, Bon Dance seems to have originated during the Muromachi period (1400-1430) as numerous passages on this matter appear in a book known as “Kanmongoki.” It started with a simple form of dancing known as “Nembutsu hayashi mono.” To this simple form of dancing, masks denoting devils and saints were used by the early dancers. As the years went by, “Ise Odori” and other Shinto dances were incorporated (Mikawaki). Thus, it developed into what we have today. There are essentially two methods of dancing Bon Dance. These are dancing in a cycle around the “yagura” or platform as we do today and dancing while marching in a straight line. In certain districts in Japan, on July 13th, the dancers would gather at the village cemetery and after a graveside service they would dance back to the temple. The dancers would be preceded by a group holding lighted lanterns. This is called the “Mukae Odori” or welcoming dance. It was to welcome the “souls” of the deceased to this festive occasion. Upon reaching the temple, the dancers danced in a circle around the “yagura” to the accompaniment of drums and flutes. This dance was interpreted as a form of entertainment for the souls.” Again on July 15th, “Okuri Odori” or farewell dance commenced from the temple to the cementery. Usually the “Awa Odori” of Tokushima prefecture was used for the “Mukae and Okuri Odoris.”
Significance of Obon

Obon is a memorial service, and as such, is observed by all Buddhists. Elaborate preparations and services were held as mentioned previously in certain denominations other than Shinshu. Although it is a memorial service, a festive mood prevades the atmosphere which is heightened by the colorful kimonos and dances. The significance of Obon then could be enumerated as follows:

1. It teaches us the importance of “Kansha” or Gratitude to our ancestors and parents. We should have love and concern for our parents and practice “Bumo Kuyo” as stressed in the “Ullambana Sutra” in our daily lives. Mokuren’s mother suffered the agonies of “Hell” because of her love and concern for Mokuren. Like any other mother she could not practice equality in matters pertaining to her son and other people. Her love for Mokuren was greater than for her neighbor’s children and as such she could not give and sacrifice as much and to the same degree as she did for Mokuren. In this respect she was selfish and this was the cause of her sufferings. The same could be said of our parents and as children and realizing this, we should have love and gratitude to our parents, both living and deceased. If our parents are living, we should translate our love and gratitude in our daily lives; if deceased, we should be able to express our sincere appreciation in their memory during Obon services.

2. It teaches us the importance of Dana. This is also emphasized in the “Ullambana Sutra.” Through Mokuren the Buddha teaches us the importance of dana to the Three Treasures and to other people. We should practice dana, not just among the family members and close associates but to all other around us who make possible our very existence.

3. Although Obon is a memorial service, we as Shin Buddhists should understand that this service, like others, is held annually for the living. Through our participation in this service we are given the opportunity to further our knowledge of Buddhism and, more important, to nurture and develop our faith in the Compassion of Amida Buddha. As mentioned previously, the “Kangi” in the “Ullambana Sutra” should be developed on the stage of “Kangi” in the 18th Vow. It is for this purpose that we participate in Obon and all other services.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Every year, American citizens celebrate July 4th as Independence Day. However, should this day be taken merely just as another holiday to be enjoyed casually as a day of rest, then one must begin to realize that this particular holiday has lost something and will become a day of value and significance.

Looking over the situation of the American colonial government during the 18th century, one cannot help but feel the immensity of oppression the English government laid upon the lives of the colonists. The oppression was of such magnitude that it sparked and ignited the Revolutionary War. The Declaration of Independence states: “We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” The oppression was of such degree that it sparked and ignited the will of the colonists to acquire and secure that which they believed were their inalienable rights. History confirms this. History was made with the War of Independence.

The American colonists had long been oppressed and abused to the point of retaliation even to bear arms and fight for these rights—not the least was the freedom from oppression. Many sacrifices were made in the struggle to obtain the freedom should be known to all people.
It must not be forgotten that the independence fought for at the time was the independence of a will to obtain liberty or freedom rather than the independence of status of certain people. As events turned out, after the War, the freedom of religious belief was woven into the Constitution of the American government. As early as it was, it cannot be denied that there was carried within this war, an undercurrent wherein flowed the desire to win the freedom of religious conscience. America has for its basic freedoms: freedom of religious belief, speech and press. Of these, the freedom of religious belief affects us closely as followers of Buddhist faith, and as such we should appreciate this freedom which is given to us to enjoy.

If we as Buddhist laymen fail to appreciate this freedom that we enjoy, it would be like treating the meaning of Independence Day as valueless. Should we as Buddhist laymen never be awakened to hold and observe the spirit of appreciation and gratitude to those whose sacrifices made this freedom possible, can we as laymen truthfully say that we are qualified to celebrate in a proper sense this Independence Day? To say that we cannot be truly qualified would not be an overstatement. As Jodo Shin sect followers, we should strive to observe Independence Day with a spirit of thanksgiving and gratitude imbued with humility.

We look back toward the period of infancy of the American nation. We note that at that time not every nation of the world has had written into its national constitution the granting of religious liberty to its citizens as it was done by our forefathers when freedom of religious belief transcending sectarianism was incorporated into the Constitution of the United States. Then, couldn’t it be said that were it not for America, the insertion of this freedom of religious belief within a nation’s constitution would not have been possible?

We, as Buddhist followers, should foster especially, whenever Independence Day comes around, an understanding of the many struggles and sacrifices involved and a deep sense of appreciation for the blessings of liberty. It behooves us to hold within our hearts, the ever nurtured thought of expressing thankfulness and gratitude with the spirit of Gassho for that freedom of conscience we Buddhists enjoy throughout the United States of America.
JUNE ACTIVITIES

Make a "Good-Bye Gift" for teacher. Make a card or gift for your teacher that will help her remember you.

1. Make a card. Include a picture of yourself. Write a message.

Have your family help you look at a map. Find your house, the temple, etc. and details of your street.

CHILD DRAWN MAP:
LESSON: SELF REPORT CARDS

Area of Development: Self concept, intrapersonal

Materials: Prepared evaluation form, pencil

Directions: Use prepared evaluation form which follows, or make up one more appropriate to your own classroom situation. Children then fill in card either alone or with the help of the teacher.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LISTENING TO THE SERMONS:</td>
<td>😊 I usually do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LISTENING TO THE TEACHER:</td>
<td>😊 I usually do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTENDING CLASS REGULARLY:</td>
<td>😊 I usually do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GETTING ALONG WITH MY FRIENDS:</td>
<td>😊 I usually do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESSONS:</td>
<td>😊 I do my best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECTS:</td>
<td>😊 I do my best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HELPING OTHERS</td>
<td>😊 I usually remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLVING MY OWN PROBLEMS:</td>
<td>👍 I do my best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLEANING UP:</td>
<td>👍 I usually remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HELPING THE TEACHER:</td>
<td>👍 I do my best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGIOUS STUDIES:</td>
<td>👍 I'm working hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHARING:</td>
<td>👍 I usually remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIVING:</td>
<td>👍 I usually remember</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAYING:</td>
<td>😊 I have a good time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>😞 I'm having trouble</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MY BEST THING ABOUT TEMPLE OR DHARMA SCHOOL:

In the first grade I feel like

😊 I'M DOING WELL

😐 I'M DOING ALRIGHT

😭 I'M HAVING TROUBLE
WHAT I LIKED THE MOST THIS SUNDAY: ________________________________

WHAT I LIKED THE LEAST THIS SUNDAY: ________________________________

_____________________________________ WAS THE EASIEST FOR ME.

_____________________________________ WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT FOR ME.

NEXT WEEK IN CLASS I WOULD LIKE TIME FOR: ________________________________
“END-OF-MONTH” PARTY — “Placemats”

Materials needed:
   a. Construction paper.
   b. Simple design from children’s coloring book.
   c. Scissors.
   d. Crayons.
   e. Miscellaneous scraps, as needed.

Instructions:
   a. Draw simple design onto construction paper.
   b. Cut out design (optional).
   c. Add accent pieces.*
   d. Glue “Mealtime Gratitude” card in center of placemat.
   e. After the “goodies” are passed around, place your hands in gassho and recite the “Mealtime Gratitude” followed by “Itadakimasu”. Remind the children to say “Gochiososama” after they finish their snack.

*Bunny Placement: Cottonball tail.
Lantern: Black mending tape for lantern rims; curling ribbon for tassel and hanging loop.
Fan: “Contact paper” wood pattern for handle.
Finger Puppet: Self-sticking gift-wrap ribbon for obi and back bow; white ribbon for “eri” (optional).
SPECIAL PROJECTS

While much of the children's art activity will be carried out on an individual and independent basis, there are times when the group will enjoy working together on a project or will become interested in a single new idea the teacher has presented.

The teacher may supply construction paper for the children to cut or draw on, or she may put out a number of circles, large and small, and let the children assemble them.

Making a mural is an excellent group activity. A roll of paper should be placed on the floor measuring about 8 to 10 feet. Before beginning the children should take time to discuss their ideas with each other. When the mural is finished the children will enjoy looking at it. It should be hung up in the room.

Use assorted colored marking pencils.

Cutting and pasting are important parts of the pre-school program. The children will enjoy creating collages by mounting a variety of materials on pieces of construction paper. Various kinds of textile fabrics may be used and pieces of ribbon, or velvet can also be used.

Paste should be provided for the children.

Crayons used on plain manila sheets will show good results.

Completed pictures, bearing the child's name should be displayed around the room.

PRE-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Matching with clothes pins

Purpose
The children will practice opening and closing action by clipping different colored clothes pins on same color area on cardboard wheel.

Materials needed (for each child and teacher)

1. different colored clothes pins
2. cardboard color wheels
3. bowls for clothes pins

Directions

1. Teacher models clipping clothes pins of same color on the color wheel.
2. Teacher gives each child a color wheel and different colored clothes in bowls.
3. Children match colored pins to color wheel.
4. Teacher and children takes clothes pins off of color wheel, place them in bowl and put them away.
Paste appropriate color construction paper on clip to use with the wheel.

**More Challenging — 1**

Card → Joe Joe ← Clothespin

**Matching Beads**

**Purpose**

To help the child learn the concept same — using the fine motor skill of bead stringing.

**Materials needed**
1. colored beads
2. laces for stringing
3. 1 bowl per child

**Directions**
1. Teacher will discuss and demonstrate with the children which beads are the same.
2. Teacher will give each child a bowl of beads and strings.
3. Teacher will hold up a bead and tell the children to find a bead that is the same and string it.
4. Continue until all beads are used.
5. Teacher and children clean up.
Make the rabbit say, "Thank you, Buddha Namu Amida Butsu."

Instructions:
Hold the rabbit in your hand from the back and squeeze your hand with thumb and index finger to make the rabbit fold its hands in gassho.

Fold back this section and glue on to the head

Score from A to B and fold in.

Tail (Cotton ball)

PICTURE STORIES

The use of old calendar, magazine or pastel pictures can be an excellent teaching aide.

Material
Pictures from old Buddhist calendars
Posters from the "Buddhist Holidays"
Pictures from old magazines

Purpose
1. To encourage group discussion
2. To develop awareness of others around us
3. To develop an awareness and appreciation of nature
SUPPLEMENTARY LESSON PLANS

1. Learn how to act in Temple
2. Learn to Gassho — to recite the Nembutsu
3. Develop reverence for the Temple
4. Learn how to get along with others
5. Learn Dharma School songs
6. Learn about the everpresence of Amida Buddha*
7. Hear Dharma School stories and learn about faith in Amida Buddha

*Amida Buddha is emphasized throughout the lower grades. The purpose is to instill in the children's mind, while they are still young, a firm faith in Amida Buddha. Gautama Buddha is mentioned as the Prince who grew up to become a Buddha. Gautama Buddha is not emphasized too much until the fourth grade when children become more curious about such things as, “Who told us about Amida Buddha?” It Gautama Buddha is mentioned at all in lower grades, please refer to Him as Gautama Buddha rather then use the various names such as Sakyamuni Buddha, Oshakasama, Prince Siddhartha, so that little children will not be confused.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

Nembutsu, Gassho

Roll Call — Paste star for each Sunday the child attends class. At the end of the Pre-School year, cut the Attendance Roll Sheet into strips so that each child can take home a strip showing how often he has come to Dharma School. Although attendance is not the most important thing, the children will enjoy seeing all the pretty star.

Lesson Period — through story, slides, flannelboard, playing with toys and learning gathas.

Activity Period — (activity should tie in with the lesson)

Clean-up — allow children to help. Make children feel that they are really helping.

Refreshment — (optional)

(Announcement) — if any

Gatha — “Farewell” or “Sayonara”

Closing Meditation — Compose in your own words appropriate remarks for this quiet period during meditation.

e.g. We are very glad on Sundays because we can come to Dharma School. Lord Buddha is happy, too. He is waiting for us every Sunday. That is why we should try to come to Dharma School everytime.
HAPPY TIMES at Dharma School

Welcome children to Dharma School. Introduce yourself by saying your name as clearly as possible. Have the children practice saying your name.

Explain to the children about taking roll call. Tell them that roll call is taken to check attendance to see who is here and who is not here; therefore, they are to listen carefully and answer clearly “Here” when their names are called.

(take roll call)

Today’s lesson will be on how to offer incense. (Children who are new to the Dharma School and do not have the Ojuzu, may receive their Ojuzu at this time).

Lead each child to the obutsudan and show him how to offer incense.

“Incense is burned to symbolize the act of purification before worship.”

“The burning of incense is an act to purify your mind and body and free us from the passions which bind us to the cycle of birth and death. ‘In the world of Buddhism,’ said Rennyo Shonin, ‘the ego should not be thought of.’ Incense offering represents the burning away of our selfish aims.”

After each child has offered incense and received his Ojuzu, tape name tags onto the Ojuzu.

NAME TAG
Wayne

Let each child know that this is his very own Ojuzu to take home. Tell the child to take good care of the Ojuzu and to bring it with him every Sunday. The Ojuzu should be on the left hand or in the pocket when not in use and should not be used as a plaything.

Explain to the children about the following:
1. what they are to do if they arrive early to Dharma School
2. how to enter the Temple
3. where to give their offering
4. how to sit down quietly until the service begins

As the teacher, make sure that children gassho before entering the Temple and show them where to place their offering. Tell them that they are to sit quietly and wait until the service begins.

For additional practice, take the children outside and go over the procedure step by step.

* * * * *

Introduce the children to the Buddhist minister.

Draw a picture of a Buddhist minister.

The name of our minister is ________________________________.

Remark to the children that there is no name written on the line. Ask in the children if anyone remembers the name of our reverend. Help write in the name. (If anyone should ask about the “sensei” tell them that it means the same thing as reverend and that they may use either term.)

Our classroom teacher is ________________________________.

Help the children write in the name.
STORY — “GOING TO TEMPLE ON SUNDAY MORNING”

How to enter the Temple. Comment on how the children entered the room. Ask the children if they remembered to Gassho and to sit quietly during the service. If they did very well, tell them so. If they need improvements, help them along with kind suggestions.

Tell the story “Going to The Temple on Sunday Morning”.

Go over the story many times by yourself before reading it to the children. Then you will know the story so thoroughly that you will be talking to the children about the story rather than reading the story directly from the paper. Tell the story.

NOTE Use old Buddhist churches of America Calendars for pictures.

(1) It is Sunday morning. Oh, my, who is this sleeping so peacefully in his bed? It’s ________. He looks as if he is having a nice dream, doesn’t he?

(2) “______, ________,” calls sister ________. “You’d better get up or you’ll be late for the Temple.” Sister ________ is already getting dressed.

(Do you children try to dress by yourselves?)

(3) ________ slowly gets up from bed to go to the bathroom. He brushes his teeth. He is still so sleepy, he can hardly open his eyes. He quickly washes his face and combs his hair as well as he can. “I’m wide awake now,” he says.

(4) Everyone gets dressed, and the family is about to have breakfast. Daddy, Mommy, ________and ________ say, “Itadaki masu” before they begin to eat.

(5) With breakfast over, they all get ready to go to the Temple. “Don’t forget your Ojuzu and some money to offer to the Temple,” says Mother.

(6) Daddy drives the car to the Temple. Standing in front of the Temple is the minister. ________ is running to the minister to say, “Hello.” Other friends begin to the Temple.

“You know, Daddy,” says ________. “I like Sundays because we can come to the Temple and learn about all the good things.”

Have ready for the children’s use a simple drawing of their Temple or show a photograph or take the children outside to look at the Temple.

Draw some shrubs on green paper that the children can cut and paste on the picture of the Temple. You can also make pictures of children going to the Temple that the children can cut and paste. All the drawings should be done in a simple manner so that the children will have no trouble cutting along the outline.

Learning a New Gatha — “To Church We Go”

On the flannel board
1. show pictures to fit gatha. “To Church We Go”
2. go over the words — verses 1 and 2 (teacher only)
3. sing the song for the children
4. sing together

At this age children should not be expected to learn songs perfectly. Praise them for their effort and stop song practice before they get tired.
Directions for the flannel board pictures:

The flannel board pictures can be drawn or use Buddhist calendars or magazines. Paste strips of sandpaper, flannel, or masking tape behind the pictures so that the pictures will stick on the flannel board. The flannel board may be made by covering a large cardboard with flannel held in place with masking tape.

Show the pictures in the following order.
I have a dog, he says bow-wow.
He jumps at a frog and barks bow-wow.
But when to Temple
He follows me,
He's good, he's good
As sweet as can be.

He loves to wait,
He's never bored,
He listens to songs
About our Lord.
Yes, when to church
He follows me,
He's good, he's good,
As happy as can be.

ACTING OUT the "MULBERRY BUSH SONG"

Purpose for acting out song: so that children may act out the various daily activities such as washing, ironing, etc., and understand there is a difference between such activities and going to church.

1. Listen to the record or if the record is not available, the teacher can sing the song for the children.

2. Ask the children if they know this song.

3. Go over the motions for each day:

   Monday       wash our clothes
   Tuesday      iron our clothes
   Wednesday    scrub the floor
   Thursday     mend our clothes
   Friday       sweep the house
   Saturday     bake our bread
   Sunday       go to church

4. All children stand away from the table — placing their chairs out of the way under the table.

5. When the music begins, all children clap their hands in time to the music —

   "Here we go 'round the Mulberry Bush, 
   the Mulberry Bush, the Mulberry Bush, 
   Here we go 'round the Mulberry Bush, 
   So early in the morning."
6. Go through all the different motions of the song — standing in one place (When it comes to scrubbing the floor, they may pretend the table top is the floor.)

7. When the song comes to the part, “This is the way we go to church—” have the children go around the table quietly.

*Emphasize to the children that when they are acting the part of going to church, there should be no playing or giggling or unnecessary noise. The children should walk quietly and nicely.

Suggestions: After the children know this musical game, they may play it whenever there is a few minutes left over during class time.

A FLANNEL BOARD STORY — “WE GASSHO”

After the children are settled and quiet, ask the children if they remembered to bring their Ojuzu.

Show them again how to hold the Ojuzu and repeat the Nembutsu, “Namu Amida Butsu,” with the children. Ask the children if they have ever heard their parent or grandparents saying these words. Tell the children that we will be repeating these words very often in Dharma School.

Introduce the story for today by telling the children that today they will hear a story about two children — a boy, and a girl who come to Dharma School just like they do.

**WE GASSHO**

1. Obutsudan

   Barry tried ever so hard to sit still. His eyes looked extra big and dark as they peeked at the beautiful golden shrine. Two chubby hands were placed palm to palm and the small boy tried to make them exactly even. Big sister Patti nudged him to be quiet.

   **incense**

   Barry whispered loudly, “Are my fingers right, Patti? Are they, huh?”

   **table**

   “Shhh ... quiet ... or you won’t come again.”

   **girl boy**

   Those words kept the boy still for a while ... until he saw a girl slowly walking down the aisle and stand at the small table. Barry wondered if she were getting something good at the small table ... maybe CANDY. How Barry loved candy.

   “Patti, Patti, can I have some, huh? Can I Patti?”

   “My goodness. Have some what?” Big sister struggled to be patient.

   “Candy?” said Barry.

   “It isn’t candy ... it’s incense ... now be quiet.” Patty turned to Barry and whispered, “After service I’ll tell you all about the incense and I have a penny you can spend.”

2. Stand the little girl in front of the Obutsudan.

   Barry hardly moved after that, except to look happy.

3. Remove all cut-outs and place the picture of the hands on the flannel board

   Later Patti explained about how and why we GASSHO. She told little brother that we put our hands together to show love for our beloved BUDDHA. Putting our hands together helps us to think better, too.
Barry learned to say,
WE ARE ALL BUDDHA'S CHILDREN
WE WILL ALL FOLLOW THE BUDDHA'S TEACHING
WE WILL ALL BE FRIENDLY TO EVERYONE.

Patti told him too, that Buddhist boys and girls Gassho every morning and every night at home. But best of all, Barry likes to come to Dharma School and Gassho before the beautiful golden figure of the BUDDHA. He takes a pinch of incense and puts it in the bowl. Barry is very happy because he is a Buddhist.

LEARNING A NEW GATHA — “Church Bells”

For today’s lesson — introduce gatha, “Church Bells.”

For the following Sunday — review gatha, “Church Bells”

1. Go over gatha learned last week. “Let’s sing ‘Church Bells’ and see how well we remember the song from last week. How many of you practiced at home with your mommy or daddy? Will you raise your hands? (Encourage the children to learn gathas)

2. For additional purpose to help the children learn a new gatha, have the children listen to the music played on the piano. Have the children accompany the music on their Rhythm Band instruments (bells, triangles, tambourines, etc.)

Suggestions: Hand our rhythm band instruments to half the children allowing the rest of the children to be singers. Later, reverse the situation and let the singers play the instruments while the other group sings.

Caution children about listening to the music and not striking their instruments until the music begins. Also, they are not to play with their instruments after the music stops.


Ding Dong
Ding Dong
It's Buddha's Call
Ding Dong, Ding Dong
Come One And All

FRONT

Put front and back together. Fill with cotton and string with yarn.

Ding Dong
Ding Dong
It's Buddha's Call
Ding Dong, Ding Dong
Come One And All

BACK
AMIDA BUDDHA is ALWAYS WITH ME

LEARN ABOUT AMIDA BUDDHA’S EVERPRESENCE

With illustrations on the Flannel Board, show the children how Amida Buddha is always with us.

Amida Buddha Is Always With Me

1. Here you see a mother with her little baby. Mother watches over her baby at all times and takes very good care of the baby.

2. If the mother had other children in the family, she loves them all in the same manner.

3. Amida Buddha is like a mother. He watches over us at all times. He is always trying to make everyone happy.

4. Sometimes we have to be alone when big sister or big brother go to school or mommy or daddy have to go some place. But we need not feel lonely, for Amida Buddha is with us. Even though we cannot see Buddha, He is with us, around us, in us, everywhere.

5. When we know that Amida Buddha is always with us, we will become better boys and girls through Amida’s love.

AMIDA BUDDHA’S LOVE

Introduction of lesson: Last Sunday, we learned that just as a mother watches over her children, Amida Buddha is always with us. Amida Buddha’s love is not only for you and me, but for every one and everything in this world.

Ask children the following questions — waiting for their reply after each question:

1. Can you name an animal that flies in the air, has wings etc., etc.?
   (birds)

2. Can you name an animal that lives in the water and swims so very well?
   (fish)

3. Can you name an animal that lives sometimes in the water and sometimes on land? This one is very hard, so think carefully. This animal goes about very slowly and can hide all its legs, head and tail in its shell.
   (turtle)

Buddha’s great love is with us at all times, even to the animals in the air as well as the animals that live in the water. Buddha’s love and kindness is with us at all times. This is why we say, “Namu Amida Butsu” which means, “Thank you Amida Buddha”. Will you please remember this always?
Now for today's activity: Do you see this large, long picture on the wall?

What do you see in the picture? (clouds, birds, sky, water) The words on the top of the picture say, BUDDHA LOVES US ALL. What three kinds of animals did we talk about today?

(bird, fish and turtle)

Birds are already drawn on the picture, but there are no turtles, or fish. This picture is not finished is it? Would you like to help finish this picture by making turtles? We will make turtles this Sunday and make fishes next Sunday.
DIRECTION FOR MAKING TURTLE

Top of the turtle
Let children color it green. (Use cardboard or very stiff paper.)

Bottom of the turtle
Use wooden spoon (ice cream spoon) for head. Draw eyes, nose with ink.

Put top and bottom of turtle together. Put cotton inside to give roundness to the shell. Staple together and insert head.
DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING FISH

Draw several different kinds of fish on colored paper. Have children cut out the fishes. Glue sequins for eyes.
DIRECTIONS FOR MAKING CHILD FIGURES

Now that we have made turtles and fishes, we have by our picture on the wall animals that fly in the air, animals that live in the water, and animals that live on the land. Buddha’s love shines on all of these animals, doesn’t it? But who else does Buddha’s love shine on? Have we forgotten something? We’ve forgotten ourselves, haven’t we? Yes, Buddha’s love shines on all people. Would you like to make cut-outs of children to complete the picture? The girls can make a girl cut-out, and the boys can make a boy cut-out. Real cloth can be cut out for the girls’ jumper and boy’s trousers and pasted by the children. Paste long strip of paper on the back of the girl and boy cut-outs to make them stand.
The finished mural would look like this —

1. Paste, pin, or use masking tape to attach fish on the waves.
2. On the table, place turtles and girl and boy cut-outs the children have made.
THE OJUZU IS OUR DEAR LITTLE FRIEND

What do we bring to the Temple every Sunday? What do we have around our hands when we say “Nambu Amida Butsu”? Yes, it is the Ojuzu.

Do you children have any friends? You like your friends, don’t you? Well, in a way, the Ojuzu is our dear little friend. As we put our hands together and say, “Namu Amida Butsu”, we can think, “Amida Buddha is always with me. I am thankful. I am happy.

Tell the children the two beads at the side represent our parents and the large one in the middle represents Lord Buddha.

Go over step by step how the Ojuzu is to be made:

(1) Cut circles for the children to represent Ojuzu beads. Do this before Sunday. Use “stick-on” paper to make circles. (Except for the large one in the middle, and the two smaller ones at the side, the circles are the size of a dime.)

(2) The children are to place the circles on the picture.

(3) For the kesa, use several strands of yarn. Make a small hole in the paper where the yard is to be attached. Pull the yarn through this hole. Tie a knot on the other side so the yarn won’t pull through.
THANK YOU, AMIDA BUDDHA

LEARNING TO SAY GRATITUDE BEFORE EATING

Show the children the picture of a little girl saying (or expressing) her gratitude before eating.

Ask the children,
“What do you think she is saying?”

“Why does she do that?” (She is saying “Thank you” to Amida Buddha for the food she is about to eat.)

Tell them that we have special words to say before we eat. The words go like this:

Thank you Buddha for this food,
And all the things that make it good.
For my health and wisdom, too,
Nam Amida Butsu.

Go over the words several times with the children.

Give children a treat by serving light refreshment. (e.g. fruit juice and cookies etc.)

This will give the children an opportunity for reciting their Gratitude before eating.

Recall with the children the special words they learned last week.

Thank you Buddha for this food,
And all the things that make it good—
For my health and wisdom, too,
Nambu Amida Butsu

Ask the children if some of them say “Itadaki masu” and “Gochiso sama” before and after they eat. Tell them that these words are just as fine and that they mean just about the same thing as the above saying. It doesn’t matter which one they say; but the important thing is that the children remember to express their gratitudes.

Ask them what they do with their hands when they say these special words. Have all the children put their hands together.

Show the children the letter to parents that they are to take home. Explain to the children that this is a note for their mommy and daddy about more special words they may learn to say. These special words are not only for eating time but for morning time and night time.

“Thank You, Buddha”
GRATITUDES 
(FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Morning
Good morning, Amida Buddha -
I will try to follow your teaching,
At home, in school, and at play
Namu Amida Butsu.

At Night
Thank you Buddha for this day
In guiding me in work or play
Thank you for your shining Light
To make our world so good and bright.
Namu Amida Butsu

*   *   *   *

Thank you Buddha for this day
In guiding me in work or play.
Thank you for your loving care
To keep us all happy and safe.
Namu Amida Butsu

Mealtime

Thank you Buddha for this food,
And all the things that make it good -
For my health and wisdom too,
Namu Amida Butsu

Dear Parents,

These are special saying of gratitude that your child may learn at home. Where there is more than one saying, choose the one that you think is more suitable for your child.

With Gassho,
AS A CHILD OF BUDDHA

1. I am thankful for many things.
2. I try to come to Dharma School regularly.
3. I give my offering to the Temple.
4. I am friendly to everyone.
5. I try not to be selfish.
6. I try to help wherever I can.
7. I try to make other people happy.
8. I try to be neat.

These points need not be memorized by the Pre-school children. Rather, they are to serve as reminders for the teacher to think about as she teaches the children.

The teacher should ask herself often, "Through the Dharma School, am I teaching the children to be more friendly? Are the children acquiring neat habits? Are they beginning to feel the joy of thankfulness? etc. etc."

While the purpose behind the first three sections, "Happy Times at Dharma School", "Amida Buddha Is Always with Me," and "Thank You, Amida Buddha" was to help the children realize that they are Buddhist children, the last section "As a Child of Buddha" deals with how Buddhist children should act.

As a Child of Buddha, I am Friendly to Everyone

One day, Tommy was walking along with his Daddy. Whenever Tommy saw a friend of his, he smiled and smiled. But whenever he saw a boy he did not like, he put on a big frown that almost hid his eyes.

Daddy said, "Tommy, why is it you are smiling at some and frowning at others?"

"Because I like some of them and I don't like some of them," say Tommy.

"Oh, I see" said Daddy. After a time, Daddy began to laugh.

"Tommy, you are like your water faucet. We turn the faucet and we get water. We turn it off, and the water stops running."

"Well, how am I like an old water faucet?" said Tommy.

"Because you turn on and off your smiles. The next time you see someone you don't like ... smile ... and see what happens."

Tommy did, and guess what happened?

Try it yourself, and you will learn what happened to Tommy!

* * * *

"When you are about to fight with your friend, try and repeat the Nembutsu. Then you will be reminded of the Buddha and you will stop fighting."

250 Dharma Pre-School Text
As a Child of Buddha, I Remember My Offering to the Temple

Barri watched the sky as it became darker and darker. Big black clouds hung low. Here and there lights went on in the houses on Barri's street. In a few minutes drops of water fell on his nose and trickled down his chin. Suddenly the whole sky was pouring down rain. Barri ran as fast as he could. His shoes felt all wet and his hair sent dribbles everywhere.

Mother said, "Look Barri, the sky has brought a lovely present to the earth. Soon we will have many flowers."

"Oh yes, Barri, the sun gives warmth and vegetables give food. Trees give us wood and shelter. Birds give us songs. Animals protect us from harm. We must be thankful to live in such a beautiful world where one gives to another."

"Do people give things too, Mommy?"

"Oh yes, people can give many, many things."

"What can I give to Daddy?"

"The nicest thing children can give to either their mothers or fathers is love and obedience."

"Should I give something to Amida Buddha too? Would Amida Buddha like some of my pennies? Where would He spend them?"

"Amida Buddha would be very happy to know that you shared some of your pennies. Of course Amida Buddha does not need to touch or spend money. But The Buddhist Temples need your pennies to help spread the teachings, to other boys and girls. There are other ways to give to the Amida Buddha too. You may give the wonderful gift of quietness and equally nice gift of listening while before the Shrine."

"See Barri, the rain has gone and the sun is giving sunshine again."

* * * *

A small container may be made and decorated by the children to take home as their offering box. They may keep this box at home by the obutsudan to remind them about their offering of the Temple.

As a Child of Buddha, I Try Not to Be Selfish

It was a bright moonlit night. The greedy monkey had raided the farmer's garden. He quickly opened the pea pods and ate his fill of lovely green peas. Then, being of a selfish nature, he decided to take home some peas also. He took a handful home and sat on a high branch of the old tree as he drooled and looked at them proudly.

Just then a small bird came close by and said, "I'm sorry to bother you, Mr. Monkey, but I have been sick and could not fly to get food. I am very hungry. May I please have one of the lovely green peas you are holding in your hand?"

"Of course, you can't have my peas," said the monkey. "Go find your own food."

The little bird was very hungry and just sat there hoping the monkey would change his mind. The monkey became angry and threw out his fist as if to hit the small bird. In doing this, he dropped one of the peas from his hand.

"Now see what you've made me do," roared the greedy monkey. Going hand over hand he raced down the tree in search of the pea.
But the pea had fallen into a thicket of sharp thorns. “Ouch ... Ouch ... Ouch,” screamed the monkey as he tried to get the pea.

The little bird shook his head sadly. How awful to be so greedy.

The monkey scrambled about the thicket of thorns looking for the pea until at least he fell into it.

How he set up a loud cry . . .

“My peas, my peas, they are all gone. I’ve lost them, I’ve lost them.”

* * * *

“A baby only knows how to eat candy by himself and does not know enough to share with others. There are even some selfish, older children who will try to eat candy all by themselves, and do not like to lend their toys or others. This way, everyone will not be happy. As Buddhist children, will you please share and try to play nicely with all your friends?”

As a Child of Buddha, I Try to Be Neat

Nicky and Mother went to the market.

It looked like a rainbow
with big baskets of red tomatoes,
piles of yellow corn,
rows of fresh green lettuce
and long cucumbers,
piles and piles of oranges,
bunches of purple grapes,
and a whole table of many-colored pansies.

“Mother, Mother, look at the bananas!”

“Yes, Nicky, would you like to eat one now?”

Soon Nicky was eating a fat banana.

When he finished, Nicky threw the banana skin on the floor of the busy market.

Mother and Nicky went this way and that.

Soon they were back close to the banana stall.

DOWN WENT NICKY. Plop!

“Look Mother, some naughty boy left a banana skin and I slid on it,” said Nicky.
As a Child of Buddha, I Know the Meaning of the Lotus

Explain to the children about the significance of the lotus. Draw a picture of a lotus on the board. Show how the lotus grows in dirty, muddy water but how beautifully it rises above the water. (Colored chalk would be very effective in putting across the idea more clearly to the children.)

Tell the children that the Buddha taught that we, too, should be like the lotus and try to be as pure and beautiful in our hearts.

Make Origami Lotus large enough to wear as hats. Pink ones for girls and white ones for boys.

Directions for Making Origami Lotus

1. Use white or pink crepe paper.
2. Cut squares 20 x 20 inches.
3. Fold according to directions: Suggestion—Practice first with square paper napkin.

   Step 1. Fold paper in half
   Step 2. Fold in half again
   Step 3. Open the paper flat
   Step 4. Fold the 4 corners to the center. This is called a cushion fold.
   Step 5. Without turning the paper over, make cushion folds two more times.
Step 6. Now, turn the paper over and make your fourth cushion fold.

Step 7. Fold a small section of one corner. Bring over the loose corner from the other side to make your first flower petal. Repeat the same procedure on the other corners.

Step 8. Bring over the second set of loose corners from the other side to form the next layers of petals.

Step 9. Bring over third set of loose corners from the other side to form the third layer of petals.

Make a band for the lotus hat so the children can tie it under their chin. Use a narrow strip of crepe paper and attach with staple or cut a small slit through the bottom of the lotus where the band can go through.
Have children take home a letter to their parents.

Dear Parents,

The lotus, as you may already know, is full of symbolic meaning for the Buddhists. The lotus grows in muddy water but blooms as a pure white flower. Very often, the figure of the Buddha is seen standing on the lotus blossom symbolizing man withstanding the vices and evils of this world aspiring to live a life of righteousness and purity through the guidance of the Buddha.

Today in Dharma School, the children were told about the lotus. They were also given a lotus made of paper to wear on their heads.

This short letter is being sent home to give you a better understanding of what is being taught in the Dharma School.

With gassho,

Review Gatha, “Buddha Loves You”

Make enjoyable the reviewing of a gatha by dividing the class into birds, puppies, pussy cats, and fish.

As everyone sings, the children pretending to be birds or puppies etc. are to act out their parts.

1. Children pretending to be birds can swing their arms up and down as if flying.
2. Children pretending to be puppies can use the dog puppets they made last Sunday.
3. Children pretending to be pussy cats can act like sad little cats crying, Mew, Mew, mew—
4. Children pretending to be fish can put cupped hands together and move the hands from right to left in swimming motion. Move the two index fingers up and down to show the fist opening its mouth. Or the child himself can act like a fish swimming to and fro and opening mouth like the fish as the music suggestion.

The variety of ways these things can be done is numerous. Try to be creative in your teaching by using your own imagination. Teaching religious need not be dull.
GAMES FOR THE VERY YOUNG

Make Room for Toys

Toys are happy companions to tide children over critical periods, to relieve boredom or to suggest imaginative activity instead of mischief. They hold magic for the child who plays alone and they stimulate shared activities between two or more children to foster social skills. They invite participation and companionship of grown-ups which children enjoy.

Provide an open toy shelf for the children. The joy of the open shelves lies in making readily accessible the old, dearly loved toys, together with new toys in gay array.

Every toy has a place and each child is taught to return it to its "house" in readiness for play another time. This training in care of toys is part of the child's development, for few children are born with an innate sense of order as an adult thinks of it. They can, however, acquire if it convenient and logical space sapce and a fair measure of guidance is provided. And since toys are a natural part of living for a child, they need a place the same as clothing, or books or umbrellas.

In general, in purchasing or selecting toys, toys that are most readily accepted and used for the longest time are simple, require little effort, suggest play activity and can be used in various ways.

* * * *

Teach children to put away toys through a flannel-board story.

1. Make drawing of an open shelf.
2. Cut out picture of toys from an old toy catalog.
3. Place toys neatly on the shelf. Pretend that you are a child selecting a toy. Choose a toy to play with and show how you return the toy back to the shelf after you are through with it.
4. Place toys all over the shelf and show the children how terrible it looks.
5. Tell the children that one way they can help their mothers is by keeping their toys neatly in place. By putting away their toys, children help to keep their Dharma School room and their home clean.

(Although too much stress should not be put on playing games in the Dharma School, there are occasions for playing games every now and then. The following games are especially selected for FOUR and FIVE-YEAR-OLDS.

Play the game Pin-the Tail-on-the Donkey game. Buy a good one—it will have to last a long time and stand a lot of usage. A blindfolded child pins the tail where he thinks it ought to be — this charms the four-year-olds completely.

London Bridge — Two children facing each other clasp hands to form a bridge. The others line up to pass under, all singing. Each person in turn chooses one side or other of the bridge and a gentle tug of war end the game.

Finger game — Jack in the box, (Hands closed with thumb inside)
Sits so still,
Won't you come out?
Yes! I will (Thumb jumps out)
Playing Train — Choose a child to be the engine. Tie the center of a fifteen-foot light rope around his waist; line the other children up behind him as passengers inside the rope, and have the last child hold the rope ends. He is the caboose. Another is the conductor who marches beside the engine and calls the station stops. The train then moves around the room, with the engine saying “chug-chug”, to a sign that says “Station”. At each station the rope is dropped and the passengers get off. Everyone, of course, must have a turn as engine, conductor and caboose. It is even more fun for the conductor to wear a special paper hat and collect paper money fares. The stations may be named for the streets where the children live.

Animal Chase — Pig (a bean bag) is passed around a circle of children seated on the floor. The pig is closely pursued by a wolf in the form of a block. Both can be passed either way and the children try to keep the wolf from catching the pig.

Charlie Over the Water — Charlie over the water
       Charlie over the sea
       Charlie can’t catch a blackbird
       And he can’t catch me!

The players form a circle with one of their number as Charlie in the center of the ring. The circle moves to the left, chanting the song. As the last word is said, all players squat. Charlie must try to tag one before he is fully down. If successfully tagged, that child becomes Charlie in turn.

Heel and Toe Race — Make a starting line and goal line. Players start off with the right foot and must place the left heel in front of the right toe, touching it, then the right foot in front of the left in the same manner, and so on until one reaches the goal line.

Bean Bag Race — Again your starting line and goal marks are used. But this time bean bags are placed on the constants’ heads. If, while the child is moving at a fast walk, the bag falls off, he must return to the starting line and start again. No steadying hands allowed, of course.
THOUGHTS for the TEACHER

On Mother’s Day, we wear a red carnation if our mothers are living. We wear a white carnation if our mothers have passed away. But whether our mothers are living or dead, we may present our mothers with a gift. If our mothers are no longer with us, we may give our offering at the shrine.

It is nice for little children to make simple gifts to take home to their mothers, but they should be reminded that Mothers appreciate:

1. a nice answer when spoken to
2. a smiling face
3. to have children remember what they are told
4. to have children grow up into persons who believe in the Nembutsu. (The Nembutsu symbolizes the vow to live forever and ever and our loved ones in the Pure Land.

Gentle are Buddha’s children in school, at temple, or at play. Gentle are Buddha’s children in thoughts, in words, and in deeds.

The faults of others are easy to see but the faults of our own are difficult to recognize. If one sees that he has a fault he must realize that the fault must be very grave indeed for him to recognize it himself; thus, he must take steps to correct his fault. Because it is difficult for us to see many of our faults we should listen to the advice of others.

(Rennyo Shonin)

Open the eyes of the mind, and break through the darkness of ignorance. And close the roads of all evils. Then, unto the Land of Purity we will be led.

If one walks looking far ahead and pays no attention to the ground beneath his eyes he will stumble. If one gazes critically upon others and forgets to look into himself he will bring tragedy upon himself.

(Rennyo Shonin)
FATHER'S DAY
Help children appreciate Father and to respect and love him for all that he does for us.

Suggested Lesson:
Study the diagram below to develop your lesson.

```
clothing
  etc.

shelter

Nembutsu

love & kindness

care

PARENTS
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Talk about how children can help their parents.

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Mind Mommy & Daddy

Put away toys

Keep room tidy

CHILDREN
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Note: In suggesting what children can do to help parents, stress everyday thoughtfulness rather than things that are beyond this age group.
Appropriate pictures may be cut from magazines and used.

*   *   *   *

As is the case with Mother, Father would appreciate children's genuine affection and good attitude toward him and other more than any gift. But if time permits, without taking too much away from the precious Dharma School hour, projects may be fun to make something to give to Father.

At this age, you cannot expect anything fancy or elaborate. One suggestion that can be utilized very easily is to have someone in the Temple, who enjoys taking pictures, to take pictures of individual children in the pre-school class. These pictures can be mounted on a nicely decorated card (with original drawings by children, perhaps) and addressed to Daddy — With love,

A nice time to take the picture may be when the lotus hats are made for the children to wear.

Develop your own ideas for Father's Day.

LOTUS

Just as the pure and fragrant lotus grows out of the mud of a swamp rather than out of the clean earth of an upland field, so from the muck of worldly passions springs the pure enlightenment of Buddhahood.

DISCRIMINATION

Water is round in a round receptacle and square in a square one, but water has no particular shape. People often forget this fact. People see this and that, they like this and dislike that, they discriminate existence from non-existence; and then being caught in these entanglements and becoming attached to them, suffer in consequence. If people would only give up their attachments to these imaginary and false discriminations, and would restore the purity of their fundamental minds, then both their true minds and their bodies would be free from defilement and suffering and would know the peacefulness that goes with that freedom.
RECOMMENDED LIST OF BUDDHIST BOOKS

(Only those that are easily available are listed. The asterisk signifies books recommended for the beginner.)

General Introduction to Buddhism

***The Path Of The Buddha, edited by Kenneth W. Morgan (New York: Ronald Press Co.)

This is the best book available for those who seek a general introductory survey of the history, teachings, arts and culture, popular customs, etc. of Buddhism. There are eight chapters dealing with the history of Buddhism, the teaching as found in Sri Lanka, Burma and other Thervada countries, and as it is found in China, Korea, Tibet, Japan and other Mahayana countries. There are bibliography and glossary for the benefit of the readers. This book is unique, because the chapters were written by the Buddhists of respective countries.

*Mahayana Buddhist, By Beatrice Lane Suzuki (London: David Marlowe Ltd.)

An easier and a more compact work dealing with the principle teachings and doctrines of Mayayana Buddhism is this book written by the wife of Dr. D. T. Suzuki.

Buddhism, by Edward Conze (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer)

An interesting account of Buddhism is found in this book by Conze, who is a Buddhist scholar active in the London Buddhist Society. The author’s understanding of the basic thought of Mahayana Buddhism makes this a commendable work.

*The Meaning Of Life In Hinduism And Buddhism, by Floyd H. Ross (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd.)

An attempt at a modern, Western Interpretation of Buddhism is made in this work by a professor of world religions at University of Southern California.


One of the finest work to come from European Buddhist scholarship is THE HISTORY OF BUDDHIST THOUGHT. E.J. Thomas has a good understanding of the history and philosophy of Buddhism, and is a respected scholar of Oriental studies in England, and many present-day Japanese Buddhist scholars studied under him.

Systems Of Buddhistic Thought, by Yamakami Sogen (Calcutta: University Press)

Although this book is out-of-print, it can be obtained in some libraries. This work is an introductory study to various schools and sects of Buddhism mainly Mahayana, written in the form of traditional Japanese approach to Buddhism. As far as the accounts of some Chinese philosophical sects go, perhaps this is the best available. Yamakami Sogen is a Soto-Zen scholar and wrote this book when he was doing research in Sanskrit at Calcutta University.

*The Essentails Of Buddhist Philosophy, by Junjiro Takakusu (Hawaii: University of Hawaii)

The most concise and complete survey of the philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism is made by Takakusu, who was one of the great modern Japanese Buddhist scholars. He was a professor of Sanskrit at Tokyo Imperial University, and this work is a compilation of his lectures given at University of Hawaii plus descriptions of the various schools and sects patterned after traditional Japanese presentation of Buddhism.

**The Essence Of Buddhism, by Daisetz T. Suzuki (London: Buddhist Society)
This contains the lecture given by the author to the Emperor of Japan, and although very short, it contains the essence of Buddhism of which the various schools and sects are expressions. This pamphlet is an excellent introduction to the philosophy of Buddhism. It is not merely academic, but is alive with meaning. This lecture is the result of many years of thought, study and reflection by Suzuki.

*Gospel Of Buddha, by Paul Carus (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., reprint)

A popularized version of the life of Buddha with early teachings and parables. Although some renditions and terms used are objectionable, it is worth reading. Carus wrote many books on Buddhism, and it was Suzuki, who studied English with him, that supplied many of Carus's sources.

The Scriptures of Buddhism

There are countless English translations of original Buddhist scriptures contained in such sources as the Sacred Books of the East, Sacred Books of the Buddhists, and the Pali Text Society. However, they are purely academic works translated mainly through linguistic technique, without substantial appreciation for the meaning, and have significance only for scholars of Buddhism. They are difficult to read because it is not for literary purposes for which they were translated. The Pali Text Society translated a great majority of the Theravada Tripitaka, but there has been no systematic translation of Mahayana texts attempted.

**The Teachings Of The Compassionate Buddha, by E.A. Burtt (New York: Mentor Pocket Book)

The finest collection of scriptural passages is contained in this anthology edited by Burtt. It is easily available, and the general introduction and comments to passages will help the reader grasp the meaning of the texts. The anthology is well-balanced, since both Theravada and Mahayana text are selected.

Buddhist Texts Through The Ages, by Conze, Horner, Snellgrove, and Waley (New York: Philosophical Library)

A rather comprehensive collection of scriptural passages is found in this anthology which combines the efforts of four British scholars.

Buddhism In Translations, by Henry Clarke Warren (Cambridge: Harvard University Press)

A classic in scriptural translation is this work by Warren which forms volume three in the Harvard Oriental Series. The sources are confined to Theravada Buddhism, but for many years it was the only available work in English, and influenced many intellectuals, including such men as T.S. Eliot and Irving Babbit.

*The Dhammapada, by S. Radhakrishnan (London: Oxford University Press)

This contains the complete translation of the famous Dhammapada. Although Radhakrishnan's translation is not perfect from the academic standpoint, nevertheless it is readable and the introduction contains the best, lucid description of the life and teaching of Buddha. Radhakrishnan is a highly respected philosopher in both the East and West. He was for many years professor of philosophy at Oxford, until he became the Indian Ambassador to Russia. He is a prolific writer on Indian and comparative philosophy.


The best translation so far of any major Mahayana sutras is this one by Suzuki. THE LANKAVATARA SUTRA is a difficult but important text, and it should be read with the aid of the author's Studies IN THE LANKAVATARA SUTRA (London: Routledge, 1930), which is the best academic introduction to Mahayana Buddhist philosophy available in English.

This is the most comprehensive English rendition of Shinshu scriptures. The three sutras of Shin contained in the SEITEN is a very good translation. The translator went to great pains and personal sacrifice to make the English text accurate from both doctrinal and linguistic points.

***The Tannisho, by Ryugyo Fujimoto (Kyoto: Honpe Honganji)

The TANNISHO is the classic expression of Shin faith, and although there are a number of English translations of this work, the best and readable one is by Fujimoto. Fujimoto is professor of English at Ruyoku Buddhist University.

Life of Buddha

The historical account of Buddha's life can be found in many books, but the best works for various reasons are:


This is a classic work on the life of Buddha.


A short, fine book about the life-story of Buddha. Written in a style to be read by children.

Light of Asia, by Edwin Arnold

A verse form description of Buddha's life.

Japanese Buddhism

Japanese Buddhism, by Charles Eliot (London: Edward Arnold)

By far the best available work on Japanese Buddhism in English is this work by the former British ambassador to Japan. He also has a three volume work, HINDUISM AND BUDDHISM, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.).


An equally good book is this one by Anesaki. The treatment is broader and more general. Anasaki was professor of religions at Tokyo University, and this book contains the lectures he gave at Harvard University when he was a visiting professor.

Shin Buddhism

***Amitabha: The Life of Naturalness, by Kenryo Kanamatsu (Kyoto: Higashi Honganji)

A good, introduction to the meaning of Shin Buddhism is contained in this general work. It is easily available and should be read by all.

*Miscellany On The Shin Teaching Of Buddhism, by Daisetz T. Suzuki (Kyoto: Shinshu Otaniha Shumusho)

This contains a collection of essays on Shin by the great exponent of Zen. Chapter 1, "The Shin Sect of Buddhism" is the best available, systematic presentation of Shin. It received attention of philosophers in Japan when the Japanese version was printed.

Mysticism: Christian And Buddhist, by Daisetz T. Suzuki (New York, Harper and Brothers)

An illuminating series of articles on Zen, Shinshu of Saichi, and Meister Eckhart, a great German mystic, are found in this book by Suzuki. The book is included in a collection of writings by great thinkers, and is the first introduction of Shin to the West on a broad scale.
*Buddhism And Jodo Shinshu*, by Revs. K. Kumate, S. Tsunoda & S. Masunaga. (San Francisco, Buddhist Churches of America)

This is a handy book compiled by the three nisei ministers for YBA use. It contains readable and informative accounts of the life of Buddha, general Buddhism, and Shinshu. The translations of some Shin scriptures are also found.

*Shinran And His Religion Of Pure Faith*, by Gendo Nakai (Kyoto: Shinran Research Institute)

A simply written but very good book on the life and teachings of Shinran Shonin and anecdotes of his followers.

*Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho*, by Saizo Inagaki (Kyoto: Honpa Honganji)

This is a very good summary of a difficult Shinshu text by Shinran. Inagaki is a versatile writer on Buddhism.

*An Outline Of The Triple Sutra Of Shin Buddhism*, by Ryukyo Fujimoto (Kyoto: Honpa Honganji)

This is an illuminating introduction to the meaning of three basic sutras of Shin.

**Zen Buddhism**

*Zen Buddhism*, by D. T. Suzuki (New York, Philosophical Library, reprint)

Among the many classic works on Zen by Suzuki, this is the most compact of his writings. There is an introduction by Carl Jung, the great psycho-analyst. For those who are interested in further readings on Zen, Suzuki's Essays on Zen Buddhism, 3 vols. should be consulted.

*Living By Zen*, by D. T. Suzuki (Tokyo: Sanseido)

This book exposit the Zen of Suzuki as a way of life. It contains the full development of many of this thought on Zen.

*The Way Of Zen*, by Alan W. Watts (New York: Pantheon)

Watts is a disciple of Suzuki's Zen, and in this work, he summarizes the ideas presented in Suzuki's own previous works on Zen. Watts writes in a catching style and the book is well-organized. It is stimulating reading.

*Zen In The Art Of Archery*, by Eugene Herrigel (Routledge and Kegan Paul)

This book is unique, because it does not attempt to expound Zen, but to merely describe the authors training in the art of archery which is one with Zen, like to many arts of Japan. D. T. Suzuki has a short introduction.

*Zen In English Literature And Oriental Classics*, by R. H. Blyth (Tokyo)

An extremely interesting treatment of Zen as revealed in the literary classics of East and West.

**Jodo Buddhism**

*Honen, The Buddhist Saint*, by Coates and Ishizuka, (Tokyo)

This voluminous and comprehensive work on the life and teaching of Honen, the teacher of Shinran Shonin, is a translation of the authorized biography of Honen, with very useful footnotes for students.
Nichiren Buddhism


A brief biography of the founder of Nichiren Buddhism is written by Anesaki.

General Cultural Background

The following brief works on the thoughts of India, China and Japan are listed as suggested reading, since they form the background of Buddhism in these countries.

India

Buddhist India, by T. W. Rhys Davids (Calcutta)

A classic sociological study of India during Buddhism's peak of influence.

*Bhagavad-Gita, translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (New York: Mentor Pocket Books)

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA is the classic text of the Hindu religion, called Vedanta in America. This is a very short book and is read by many Westerners. The translation by Prabhavananda and Isherwood is very good. Isherwood along with Huxley are the two great Western Vedantists.

Hindu Scriptures, edited by Nicol Macnicol (London, Everyman's Library)

This contains selections from the Rig-veda and various Upanishads, which are the basic texts of Hinduism, along with the Bhagavad-Gita. The translation is excellent.

*Sadhana, The Realization Of Life, by Rabindranath Tagore (New York: Macmillian)

Although out of print, this book may be found in school and public libraries. Tagore, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature, expresses the philosophy of India in his own beautiful style.

Philosophies of India, by Heinrich Zimmer (New York: Pantheon Books)

This book is the result of the author's lectures on Indian philosophy at Columbia University. The treatments of the six systems of Indian Philosophy, Jainism and Buddhism prove beneficial reading.

Indian Philosophy, 2 vols. by S. Radhakrishnan (London: Allen & Unwin, reprint)

The classic work on Indian philosophy in English is this comprehensive survey by a distinguished philosopher.

China

The Spirit Of Chinese Philosophy, by Fung Yu-lan (London: Kegan Paul)

A very good description of the essential traits and tendencies of Chinese thought. The author has a detailed work on the same subject, A HISTORY OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY, 2 vols. (Princeton: University Press, 1952) which is the best available in English.


This is another pocket book which contains a very good introduction to Chinese ways of life, and a complete translation of the Tao-te-ching, a classic work ascribed to Lao-tsu. This work should be read by those interested in Zen.
Japan

Zen Buddhism And Its Influence On Japanese Culture, by D. T. Suzuki (Kyoto: Eastern Buddhist Society)

Although out of print, this work will be reprinted in the Bollingen Series. Suzuki described Zen and its influence on all phases of Japanese culture. Everyone should read this book.

*The Book Of Tea, by Okakura-Kakuzo (Tokyo: Kenkyusha,)

A very gook book explaining the meaning of tea ceremony and the sense behind all Japanese culture.

Religions In Japan, edited by W. K. Bunce (Tokyo)

A survey of present religious groups compiled by the U. S. Army Occupation Forces in Japan.


One of the best works on the arts of Japan by a sympathetic expert on Asiatic art.
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