

# The Dharma Breeze

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**Maida Center of Buddhism**

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## The Perspective of Death

Nobuo Haneda

### Introduction

In this essay I want to talk about the importance of having the perspective of death. It is not until we assume the perspective of death that we can fully appreciate our own life.

When we look at the life of Shakyamuni, his spiritual quest started when he gained insight into the reality of his own death. It was this that most clearly showed him the truth of impermanence. Legend tells us that he first saw an old man and a sick person and learned that he himself must become old and sick some day. Then he went out of a palace gate and saw a dead man and realized that he himself must die. Having learned the inevitability of his own death, he knew that he had to lose everything, such as his possessions and the status to which he had been attached. He started to fear the prospect of death. He felt uneasy, confused, and deeply depressed.

Shakyamuni lost interest in all the things he had been enjoying. He started to think about the meaning of his life. Some time later, he again went out of a gate and saw a traveling monk whose face was shining because of his wisdom. He saw in the monk a person who had overcome the fear of dying. Being deeply impressed by him, Shakyamuni awakened within himself an aspiration to emulate him.

So how did Shakyamuni overcome the fear of his own death? Initially death (or impermanence) was a scary devil that was constantly frightening him from outside his being. But Shakyamuni courageously looked into the eyes of the devil. He examined it carefully and eventually realized that it was wrong to see death (or impermanence) as a devil scaring him from outside himself.

In his meditation before his enlightenment, Shakyamuni meditated deeply on death (or impermanence) and realized that death was an integral and inherent part of his being. When he became one with death, or more accurately, when he discovered that death (or impermanence) had always been an integral part of his being, he no longer saw it as a devil that was terrifying him. Having recognized what death really was, he was no longer afraid of it.

When Shakyamuni attained enlightenment, his perspective of life turned into his perspective of death. Before his enlightenment, he was viewing death from the perspective of the self that was attached to life, to the affluence of life. Then death was always a threat to the self. But when he learned that impermanence was the absolute truth that negated the self that was attached to life, he experienced the death of the self. Since the self that was attached to life ceased to exist, his perspective of life ceased to exist. He gained a new perspective, the perspective of death, of absolute nothingness. When he gained this new perspective, he began to view everything in this world in a new light. Everything started to shine. He started to see everything as a wonderful manifestation of the truth of impermanence that had now become a lively, fresh, and creative, powerful, and dynamic flow of life. The truth of impermanence that was a fierce devil before his enlightenment turned into a wonderful friend that enabled and realized his dynamic and creative life. He now came to appreciate life in its entirety.

Although Shakyamuni repeatedly teaches us the importance of recognizing the truth of impermanence that takes the form of difficulties such as aging and death, we are so slow to learn it. Many people ignore or deny the inevitable fact of their own deaths. But Shakyamuni instructs us to squarely face the reality of our own deaths. It is only from the perspective of our own deaths that we can clearly see the meaning of our own life. The deeper our insight into death becomes, the deeper our appreciation of life becomes.

## **Two Ways of Viewing Death**

Concerning the issue of death, I first want to discuss two ways of viewing death: the general way and the specific way. The general way is viewing death only as a general fact. Here we do not recognize it as something that is directly connected with our own life. Without knowing that we are personally facing death moment by moment, we turn it into a general fact. In saying, “Man is mortal,” we see “mortality” only as a general fact, as when referring to a generalized someone. This kind of “mortality” does not scare us personally and does not lead us to a serious examination of our lives.

The specific way of viewing death means viewing it as our own personal fact. It means: “I, no one else, am going to die.” When we have this specific way of viewing death, we are frightened by the prospect. The basis of our life is deeply shaken; we become uneasy and confused. But, at the same time we can start to search for the deeper meaning of our life. We can start to pay attention to the words of our teachers who both accepted the reality of their own deaths and lost the fear of death.

Buddhism teaches us that each one of us is living in “a burning house.” “Burning” is a symbol of “impermanence.” But many people do not think their own houses are on fire; they see fire only in other people’s houses. Although Shakyamuni is constantly warning us to pay attention to our own fire, we are so reluctant to do so. If we recognize that our own house is on fire, we would immediately try to get out of it. But unfortunately, it is often the case that when we do recognize the fire, it is too late.

Speaking of the two ways of viewing death, the general way and the specific way, I want to talk about Dr. Hideo Kishimoto (1903–1964), a famous scholar of religion at Tokyo University. In the 1950’s, when he was around fifty, he was a visiting professor at Harvard University. While he was teaching at Harvard, he had an annual medical check-up. To his surprise, his doctor told him that he had a serious case of melanoma, a skin cancer, and that he had only six months to live. Having been informed of his critical condition, he was totally devastated.

Then, Dr. Kishimoto became ashamed of the fact that his knowledge about religion, which often deals with the topic of death, had been quite shallow. He had been a scholar of religion and discussed the issue of death on numerous occasions. But now he realized that his knowledge about death had been merely academic and general, and that he did not have any actual personal knowledge of it. He had not known death as something that directly concerned his own life. Now he was totally overwhelmed by fear of his own imminent death. He desperately sought a way to be liberated from this fear. He moved from a general way of viewing death to a specific and personal way of viewing it.

I believe that recognition of the reality of our own death marks the beginning of Buddhism. People may study Buddhism out of various motivations, such as intellectual curiosity, cultural interest, and a need for ethnic identity, but such Buddhism is not authentic. Only when we clearly understand that our life is quite short and could end at any moment do we start thinking seriously about the meaning of our life. We start to think about priorities in our life. Without having clear insight into our own death, I do not think we can seek the Dharma seriously.

## **The Perspective of Death**

When Shakyamuni attained enlightenment, he identified himself with death, impermanence, or absolute nothingness. He gained the perspective of death. He started to see all things from that perspective. Then they started to shine.

We could have either one of the two perspectives: the perspective of (affluent) life or the perspective of death. If we have the perspective of (affluent) life, we cannot see life in its entirety. We cannot fully appreciate it. It is only from the perspective of death that we can fully appreciate life.

It is often the case that to see something in its entirety we must go out of it and see it from outside. For example, we can talk about this shore and the other shore. In order to see this shore in its entirety, we must go to the other shore. If we are standing on this shore, we can see part of it, but we cannot see it in its entirety. To see this shore in its entirety, we must go to the other shore. Similarly, if we want to see life in its entirety, we must go out of life and go to the opposite side—the side of death, and see life from there. It is only when we see it from the side of death, from the perspective of death, that we can see it in its entirety. In order to appreciate life in its entirety, we must have the perspective of death.

## **Flood Victims**

To explain the importance of having the perspective of death, let me now talk about two episodes. First, I want to talk about an experience that one news reporter had when he visited a town where a huge flood had washed away dozens of homes.

When the reporter entered the town, he saw an old man who looked quite unhappy. The

reporter asked him, “Sir, you look very unhappy. What happened to you? What kind of damage did you suffer?” The man answered, “Oh, I am so upset. That flood took away a bicycle that I had recently bought.” He also complained about the damage to the fence of his yard. He looked quite depressed. He was almost crying.

Then the news reporter went to another location where he saw many houses that had been totally destroyed. There he found a middle-aged woman who was smiling. The reporter asked her, “Madam, you are smiling. You look happy. Does that mean that you have not suffered any damage in the flood?” The woman answered, “No. I’ve lost everything! My house was totally destroyed. Everything including all my furniture, my car, my books, and photos were washed away. I have lost everything!” Being puzzled by her answer, the reporter further asked her, “If you have lost everything, why are you smiling?”

She answered, “Oh, when that terrible flood hit and destroyed my house, I was carried away by a huge flow of muddy water. I thought I was going to die. But, while I was being swept along by the violent flow of the water, I passed by a tree and was able to grab a branch. Then, I climbed up the tree. Oh, thank God, that tree saved me. How fortunate I am! I am alive. How happy I am!”

This way, the reporter met two individuals who were reacting to the flood in two totally different ways. One was totally sad and the other totally happy. It is very interesting. The old man lost two things, a bicycle and a fence. He did not lose anything else. But he looked so upset, so unhappy. He was almost crying. The woman lost everything, her house, her car, and all her possessions. But she looked so happy. She was smiling.

Then, why was the man unhappy? Why was the woman happy? I believe the man was viewing his situation from the perspective of *life*, the perspective of his *affluent life*. But she was viewing her situation from the perspective of *death*, the perspective of *nothingness*. There were considerable differences between them.

Because of the flood, the woman faced her own death. She thought she was going to die. She got very close to her own death. The moment she faced the prospect of her imminent death, she gained the perspective of death. Then she started to see her life from this new perspective. Seen from the new perspective, her entire life started to shine. It became a priceless treasure. When she recognized that she was alive—that she had life, she could not help feeling tremendous happiness. Compared with the joy of being alive, of having life, the loss of all of her property, although painful, seemed minor and insignificant.

But the old man was different. Since he did not face the danger of his own imminent death, he did not gain the perspective of death. The flood did not challenge his perspective of life, of affluent life. Thus he could not appreciate the fact that he was alive—that he had life, such a wonderful treasure. Nor could he experience the joy of being alive. He just complained about the things he had lost. He could not appreciate all things that he had, particularly his own life—the most priceless treasure.

It is very unfortunate for us that we cannot appreciate our own life. Why can we not appreciate it? It is because we cannot see life, the nitty-gritty basis of our being. Instead, we just worry about things that cover and decorate life; we worry about things that cover the plain wood that is the brilliant basis of our being. Since so many layers of coverings and decorations cover up the plain wood, we cannot see it. Simply because we are busy worrying about coverings and decorations, such as material possessions, identities, and labels, we cannot see the wonderful basis of our being.

Our life is too close for us to see it. Simply because life has been with us all the time, we cannot appreciate it. A proverb says, “Familiarity breeds contempt.” We cannot appreciate life because it is with us all the time; we have learned to take it for granted. Some of us have even learned to despise and hate it. When we receive a gift from a friend, we say “Thank you, thank you...” a million times. But after a while we forget all about it. We forget it was a gift. We forget who gave it to us. To that extent, we are ungrateful. But we are most ungrateful as far as our attitude toward our own life is concerned. Without feeling grateful for it, we take it for granted. We seldom appreciate it, constantly worrying about its coverings and decorations.

### **A Grandmother and Two Boys**

Let me talk about another episode that teaches us the importance of having the perspective of death. This is a story about an old woman and her two grandsons.

An old woman lived with her two grandsons. One day she gave a piece of cake to each of her grandsons. When the older boy received his cake, he immediately ate it. Then seeing that his younger brother had not yet eaten his cake, he snatched it and ate it, too. Since his older brother ate the cake, the younger one got very upset and angrily started to attack his brother. They started fighting. Since the older boy was much stronger than the younger one, he easily beat him up.

Then the little boy, crying, rushed to his grandmother. He complained, saying, “My brother ate his cake and he ate mine, too. He is terrible. He hit me, too.” He kept on crying. His grandmother said to him in a gentle voice, “My boy, don’t cry! Calm down!” The boy kept on shouting, “It’s not fair. It’s not fair.” It went on for a long time. Finally, the old lady said,

Don’t cry! Just calm down! Let me tell you something. You know the other day a boy in our neighborhood died. His name was Jimmy. You knew him very well. He was your good friend. My boy, suppose Jimmy were standing here right now. Suppose his ghost were standing here. Do you know what Jimmy is thinking about? Do you know he is envious of you? How envious he is of the fact that you are alive! How envious he is of the fact that you can fight with your brother! How envious he is of the fact that you are alive and can do all kinds of things! How envious he is of the fact that you can get upset, shed tears, and fight with your brother!

When the old lady told the boy this, he stopped crying. That is the end of the story.

Should we not be content with what we have, with what we are? Should we not be content with our own life, the most wonderful treasure we have? Should we not be grateful for the fact that we are alive and can do all kinds of things? Should we not be grateful for all that we have—not only the good but also the evil? Should we not be grateful not only for joy and happiness but also for sadness and unhappiness?

The old lady had the perspective of death. If we have the perspective of affluent life, we have many grudges and complaints. We have many reasons to be unhappy. But if we have the perspective of death and can see our life from that perspective, we can appreciate it in its entirety. We can see it as a shining treasure.

We often have complaints. None of us enjoy complaining. When we complain, we feel miserable. But, seen from the perspective of death, of nothingness, our *being able* to complain is a wonderful thing. Our *being able* to do all kinds of things, good and evil things, is a good thing. We cannot complain about the fact that we *can* complain. We must be grateful for the fact that we are alive and *can* complain—*can* do all kinds of things.

Although there are so many sad and miserable things in this world that could make us unhappy, there is always a reason, a deep reason, for us to be happy. We are alive here and now. We have life—such a wonderful treasure, a wonderful gift. As long as we are alive, as long as we have life, we have a good enough reason to be happy. So, to a person who is crying and agonizing, we should say, “Why do you cry when you could smile?” To a person who is grieving about his life, we should say, “Why are you so unhappy when you could be happy?”

I have talked about the importance of seeing life from the perspective of death. It is only when we see life from that perspective that we can see it in its entirety and fully appreciate it. We can see life as a wonderful shining treasure. A diamond shines because it has shiny parts and shady parts. If it had only shiny parts, or only shady parts, it would not shine. Similarly, our life shines because it has both shiny parts and shady parts, both joy and sorrow. Only the perspective of death, of nothingness, can make us appreciate life in its entirety, including not only the positive but also the negative.

(4/28/2016)

## **The Fact of Death**

**Shuichi Maida**

What is the most certain thing that we can firmly grasp? It cannot be a thought or an idea, because thoughts and ideas are constantly changing. No, the most certain thing must be a fact. Is it, then, the fact of life—that we are alive? No, that cannot be it, because life has so many complicated and manifold aspects that we cannot know which is the most important point. But there is one thing in my life that I can point as the only absolute fact. It is the fact of my death.

Thus, the most certain thing is the fact of our personal death. Religion is based on this. From ancient times, philosophers have searched for the most certain thing, the one fulcrum, on which they could base their philosophies. Archimedes, in explaining the principles of the lever and the fulcrum, said, “Give me a lever and a fulcrum that are large enough, and I will be able to lift the earth.” In a similar way, all philosophers have been trying to find a fulcrum, a starting point, from which our entire life can be lifted—from which all things in

the world can develop limitlessly and bear wonderful fruit. But they have not been successful, because they have sought it in ideas or in the fact of life. All their efforts have been in vain.

There are two proofs that show their failure. First, philosophies have not shown us anything absolutely certain. That is why any philosophy always has to be identified by a proper noun such as Kant or Fichte. Second, I have not heard of any philosophy, either in the East or the West, which started from the fact of one's own death. People like Confucius did not pay attention to the fact of his own death, the most certain fulcrum, saying, "Since we do not understand life, how much less do we know about death!"

Thus philosophers do not see and understand that one's own death is the most certain thing in human life. Thus, we must call them extremely foolish because they are missing the most essential thing.

Rennyō (1415–1499, a Shin Buddhist teacher) said, "Even if a person has learned eighty thousand Buddhist scriptures, if he does not know the world after death, he is a fool." These words must be directed at philosophers. Thus Rennyō considered even renowned philosophers inferior to illiterate men and women. Death divides the world after this [deluded] life from the world of this [deluded] life.

Rennyō also said, "Even if a Buddhist lay woman is totally illiterate, if she knows the world after death, she is a wise person." This statement clarifies what the world of religion is. In the world of religion, there is no doubting, no "either/or." Everything is clear and based on an obvious fact. It is the world of "yes, yes, or no, no" (as Jesus said). Nothing is ambiguous. Everything is certain, immovable, and universal.

In the world of religion, unlike the world of philosophy, we do not have to modify the words of ancient teachers. For example, there is no need whatsoever for us to improve on the words of Shakyamuni. We have only to kneel before his teaching. He has already said everything. His words are absolute and immovable. Why are we able to say this? Because he started from the fact of his own death, which is timeless and immutable—from the universal fact that is true for all humanity. Similarly, there is no need for us to modify and improve on the teaching of Shinran. He also stands on absolute and immutable ground, for he also started from the fact of his own death. We have only to kneel before him.

Thus the world of religion is the world of oneness. Although there are many theories in philosophy, different theories cannot exist in religion. All religions are equally based on the fact of death; they start and develop from it. They are, as it were, "the wisdom of death."

All religions of the East and West are one and the same in that they are "the wisdom of death"—the light from the sphere beyond the flesh or the wisdom coming from the sphere of death. There cannot be discrimination, distinctions, and differences in the world of religion. As long as one examines, judges, discusses, and asserts differences between religions, one cannot truly appreciate religion. If some Christian ministers say that only Christianity, not Buddhism, can save people, they do not know the oneness of religion. Rev. Manshi Kiyozawa (1863–1903, a Shin Buddhist teacher) enjoyed reading not only Buddhist texts, but also Epictetus and the New Testament. I cannot help revering the absolute oneness that I see in him.

Religion is the wisdom of death. Thus all religious doctrines, in the final analysis, are designed to explain the wisdom of death. This is the clue to solving all secrets contained in religious teachings. For example, such concepts as "the absolute power beyond the ego-self" or "the loss of the power of the ego-self" are the wisdom of death. These concepts can be clearly understood when we see them as truths that are realized through our own death. Furthermore, things such as God and the Tathagata also come from beyond death. It is not until we gain the wisdom of death that we can clearly understand what limitless life is. Limitless life is flowing peacefully and powerfully in the sphere that is beyond death. This is the spiritual reality in the absolute world of religion, which the wisdom of this world cannot even dream of. It becomes clearly understood when we immediately face the fact of our own death, the one crucial point.

Suppose a person claims that there is nothing absolute in this world. The heavy iron hammer of his personal death, that absolute fact, is about to fall down upon his head. Knowing this fact, does he still say that there is nothing absolute in this world? I believe that by understanding the fact of our own death, we can taste the oneness of all religions in this world.

(Written 1/5, 1952. *The Complete Works of Shuichi Maida*, Vol. X, pp. 857-859. Tr. N.H.)

# The Problem of Death

Shuichi Maida

The problem of death is *the only* problem for human beings. This becomes most apparent when we honestly face the fact that we ourselves are going to die. The proposition, “Man is mortal,” should hit everyone on top of the head like a sledgehammer. Anyone who disregards the absolute certainty of this proposition should be regarded as simply insane. Human beings have no choice but to come to terms with its inevitability. Nonetheless, mankind has desperately created all kinds of devices that are designed to blur the significance of this proposition and dodge its compelling power. Pascal called the devices “comforters.” Innumerable distractions, ranging from amusements and entertainments to our daily gossip belong in this category. By enjoying them, human beings seek to turn their eyes from the problem of their own deaths. However, despite one’s efforts to ignore it, the inescapable reality of personal death mercilessly comes closer and closer minute by minute.

The problem of death is not confined to our own existence; it also concerns our surroundings and our loved ones. This engenders questions such as “If these people die, what should I do?” and “If I die, what should my loved ones do?”

The problem of death is related to many other issues. Issues such as poverty, sickness, disgrace, confusion of the social order, discord, violence, and war raise our anxiety because they are connected with the problem of death. If they were not connected with death, who would consider them real problems? All these issues are manifestations of the problem of death; every one of them is precisely the problem of death. That is why I said at the outset that the problem of death is *the only* problem for human beings.

Conversely, the solution to the problem of death is the solution to all other manifold problems. How, then, can we solve the problem of death? The process of solving it must first begin with recognizing the problem as the problem of our own death; otherwise we cannot have any clear focus.

Our own death’s becoming a problem is synonymous with asking the question, “Do I have something that I have to do in this world?” If we still have something that we have to do, we cannot say, “It is all right for me to die at any time.” But when we feel that we no longer have anything that we have to do in this world, we can, for the first time, say, “It is all right for me to die at any time.” The solution to the problem of death means having the clear awareness that “It is all right for me to die at any time.”

Hence what we have to examine is the problem—whether we have something that we have to do in this world or not. In dealing with this problem, deception is not allowed. With deception we cannot solve this problem. The solution to it is directly connected with *recognition of the truth*. The solution must be based on the truth. We must ask, “How does the truth exist? Does it exist in such a manner that I have to do something in this world?” Here the truth itself becomes the problem. That is why I have said that the solution to the problem is directly connected with *recognition of the truth*.”

Now, we must seek *the truth itself*, nothing else. Concerning the truth, a question arises. Is the truth something that we seek on our own and grasp by our own power? Or, is it something that is based on revelation by teachings? This question concerns our own abilities. There are two possible answers to this question. The first answer is that we have the ability to seek and grasp the truth on our own. The second answer is that we do not have it. How, then, can we know which answer is right? There is no way of getting the right answer apart from actually attempting to seek and grasp the truth on our own. When we actually attempt to seek the truth on our own and consequently realize that we have no ability to attain it, we will know that recognition of the truth is possible only through the revelation by teachings.

If I talk about the concrete process of discovering the right answer, it takes place in circumstances in which we, on one hand, keep on making an effort in seeking the truth with our own abilities, and in which revelation by teachings, on the other hand, is simultaneously coming to us without any interruption. Our efforts to seek the truth and revelation by teachings do not take place in a chronological sequence in which the former comes first and the latter follows. They are simultaneous and integral. That is, it is in the process of revelation by teachings that we come to realize that we do not have the ability to seek and grasp the truth on our own. Only when our own efforts have been tested and failed can we, for the first time, surrender ourselves to the power of teachings that reveal the truth. And we come to know that the first position, which presupposes our ability to seek and grasp the truth by our own power, is nothing but a form of ignorance and arrogance.

We are now facing the undeniable fact that the truth is being revealed to us through teachings moment by moment. Teachings do exist. They immovably exist there for us. They are constantly revealing the truth to us. This truth is nothing that I sought or

discovered. It was already discovered by our teachers and is being revealed to me through their teachings.

I am nothing but one to whom revelation is being made, one who is receiving and learning teachings. I do not have to add or subtract even one thing to this truth. Nor do I have the ability to do so. The truth is being manifestly revealed there. This is an undeniable fact that continually takes place before my eyes.

If *recognition of truth*—the only requirement for solving the problem of death—is already given to me without any use of my abilities, then the solution to the problem of death must also be something that is given to me. That is, to the question “Is there something that I have to do or is there something remaining to be done by me in this world?” I must answer that there is not even one thing remaining that I have to do in this world, because *recognition of the truth*—the only requirement for solving the problem of death—is already given to me. I myself and all other human beings are living in the situation where the only requirement for solving the problem of death is already given.

It is clear and evident that the truth is being revealed before me by teachings. There is no room for my complaining. There is only revelation of the truth. The truth is simply working. There is no room for my working. No, there is only the fact that I am working through the power of the truth. It is all right for me to be serene and calm because the truth is simply working in me. That the truth is simply working in me means that my self ceases to be an important issue. It means that either life or death is all right for me, because the most important thing has already been done. When we recognize that the most important thing has already been done, it becomes all right for us to die at any time because we no longer have anything we have to do.

To sum up, the solution to the problem of death solely depends on recognition of the truth. The truth does not allow the problem of death to be a problem at all. That is, death is a fact of the truth. We cannot help leaving death to the truth. This means that the truth alone is working in this world. The basis of the solution to the problem of death is found only in the truth.

It is from there that human life that is lived in accordance with the truth comes to be realized. Human life in which both life and death cease to be problems—in which either living or dying is acceptable—comes to be realized. This is a peaceful human life. It is the so-called life of ordinariness (*heijo-tei*). (Human life that is based on the truth is a life of ordinariness.) Here we can say that the ultimate answer to the problem of death is ordinariness.

If the problem of our own death ceases to be a problem, all other problems in human life cease to be problems. Conversely, the ultimate answer to all problems in human life is found in recognition of the truth. Thus, the only necessary thing for human life, for human beings, is recognition of the truth. There are no other necessary things. That is so, because the only problem in human life is the problem of death. If we focus on the core issue in our life, that is an inevitable conclusion. “A man chasing after two rabbits cannot catch either”—this is a timeless maxim concerning the solution to human problems. Those who attempt to solve more than one problem at a time will not be able to solve even one. We must focus our attention on one point. How much more should we do so if the problem is the most difficult and enormous one in human life and therefore requires the concentration of our total being! And it is also an undeniable fact that when the one crucial problem is truly solved, all other problems are simultaneously solved.

(Written 1/17, 1955. *The Complete Works of Shuichi Maida*, Vol. VII, pp. 842-844. Tr. N.H.)

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#### Notes:

We held the Maida Center summer retreat July 24–26, 2015, at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley. Forty people attended it. We held the Maida Center (Japanese) fall retreat November 13–15, 2015, at the Maida Center. Nineteen people attended it.

For the information and registration form of the 2016 Maida Center summer retreat, please see p. 8 of this newsletter.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to the following individuals:

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Nakahara and Dr. and Mrs. Kiyoto Arakawa for creating DVDs of Dr. Haneda’s lectures.

Mr. John Veen for doing all the works for reprinting *The Evil Person: A Collection of Shin Essays* by Shuichi Maida, tr. by Nobuo Haneda.

Mr. Donald Bender, Mr. Steve Kaufman, and Mr. Paul Vielle for valuable suggestions concerning the three articles in this newsletter.

Every Saturday (2–5pm) we hold a study class at the Maida Center. We are now studying Shinran’s view of birth in the Pure Land. Everyone is welcome to attend. (T.H.)