

## **Shoyo Sensei's Dharma Message**

### **Compassion or Fear**

According to the studies of neuroscientists and psychologists, when we feel compassion for others, our heart rate goes down from baseline levels. It is because our body prepares to approach and soothe someone in need of our help and support. Not only that, when we act with caring, kindness and warm-heartedness, our body produces more positive hormones. This suggests that compassion is self-perpetuating: Being compassionate causes a chemical reaction in the body that motivates us to be even more compassionate. This is the same line that the Buddha taught 2500 years ago:

When there is less selfishness, there is less more happiness.

When there is more selfishness, there is more stress.

On the other hand, when we feel threatened, our heart and breathing rates usually increase, that is our body prepares either to confront or flee from the threat – thus, it is called “fight or flight” response towards fear.

For us, Jodo Shin followers, it is great to recognize that Amida is the Power that completely stops all kinds of fears.

Let's apply the above principle to day-to-day experiences in our daily life.

Namu Amida Butsu  
Shaku Shoyo