



Sakura Journal



Hoju
Group
宝樹会

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Buddhism came to Japan in the 6th century A.D. Jodo-Shinshu was founded by Shinran (1173-1263). It is often referred to as „Shin-Buddhism“. This „Shin“ comes from „Shin“ (真) in „Jodo-Shinshu (浄土真宗)“ and means truth (真実). Jodo-Shinshu teaches, that Buddhism exists for all human beings without discrimination or condition...

On the occasion of founding the Hoju Group (宝樹会) Hideo Okamoto

**Head priest at Tokusenji Temple,
Shimane prefecture, Japan**

I would like to express my happiness and gratitude about the founding of Hoju Group and its publication „Sakura Journal“. Three times I have visited Vienna and talked to people about Japanese culture and Buddhism. In order to express my best wishes I would like to share some thoughts. The Group is called „Hoju Group“, which in my opinion is a good and fitting name. „Hoju (宝樹)“ means „treasure tree“ and

this tree grows naturally on the big soil. This seedling, whose roots take hold in the big soil, grows powerfully, spreads its roots, grows an ever thicker trunk, grows foliage and blossoms, and grows fruits. If you wanted to plant this seedling on concrete, it could neither grow roots, nor could it grow bigger, and ultimately it would perish.

Seen in this light, one could assume the soil to have miraculous powers and also the tree to have such powers. The tree is able to grow powerfully and naturally. But in spite of having such power, the deciding factor is which kind of soil it is planted in.

As mentioned, the soil's power affects the tree slowly and continuously until its growth is complete. This is truly astounding.

The soil's power and the tree, growing powerfully only after receiving that power.



Sermon under the tree (1)

Let us speak about Buddha. He was born about 2500 years ago in India. His name was Gautama Siddharta. After having become Buddha, his name was henceforth Shakyamuni Buddha. In Sanskrit Buddha means „The awakened One“.

Buddhism uses the relationship between soil and tree to illustrate the relationship between Buddha and human beings. The big soil is „Jodo“. The tree is „human being“.

„Jodo“ symbolically illustrates the big soil, where the effect of Amida's power exists.

Amida Buddha's power is the effect of „Jihi“ and „Chie“.

„Jihi“ is the wish of wanting to save everything. „Chie“ is the power to discern whether things are true or false. This is summarised in one word „Daijihi“.

This is a big power shining its light on human beings' erroneous ways, making them awaken and wanting to save those beings.

Human beings receive the effect of „Daijihi“, consisting of Amida Buddha's „Jihi“ and „Chie“ and just like a seedling, having been small and weak and without understanding, slowly starting to realise the importance and meaning of greatness, power and significance, making secure strides itself while receiving the power, which affects human beings in distress and weakness.

We presume ourselves to be able to become big and strong without receiving the effect of „Daijihi“. But that greatness and power have a very different meaning.

I think that usually these words are used in the sense of being bigger and stronger than others and being able to win against them. However, if we live on Amida's „Jodo“ as foundation, this greatness will also be able to encompass other people and strength will mean a kind of power, which will make itself useful to other people.

The initial small way of living was only for oneself. The big soil's power, by the name of „Jodo“, creates a big way of living being provided for everyone.

Thus we have greatness and strength, but with a totally different mentality.

„Hoju (treasure tree)“ is called like that, because we have become great and strong for others, which is illustrated with the word „Ho (treasure)“. „Ho“ is of golden colour, which is used to illustrate Buddha in colour. This is Amida's colour.

Therefore „Hoju“ is symbolised as a tree receiving the effect of Amida's power. I think it would be a truly wonderful thing if Hoju Group activities made one or more trees grow in Vienna, in Europe.

I humbly ask for your gracious support.

