

## TRY THIS FOR A DAY

From the time you get up in the morning until you go to bed at night, avoid any kind of exposure to music of any kind. If you listen to the radio while driving, do not listen to any music. Do not watch any tv, do not look at anything other than the written word on your computer or e-mail. Do not sing, do not hum, do not beat out rhythms with your fingers, do not pause to listen to birds singing, do not sit near fountains, waterfalls, or wind chimes. Do not dwell on flowers, decorative plants, clothing displays, ads, commercials, beautiful people, cute children, pets, etc. Avoid the mindless and self-serving rituals of religious services, weddings, banquets, engagements, showers, award shows, graduations, anniversaries, funerals, memorial services, inaugurations, dances, parties, coffee breaks, etc, etc, ad nauseum. Avoid all of the above for one day and what is the quality of life in that one day? All the above are not necessary for a healthy and happy life I am told. But without at least some of the above, what do you have left? For Buddhists, the absence of the above is hell, the presence of the above is heaven, the oneness of both and everything in between is the Pure Land. The Pure Land is described in terms of flat green land with clear streams gleaming silver and gold in the sun light. They are lined with trees, jewel-like, of seven colors. There are broad lakes with birds singing and lotus flowers of many colors, each one magnificent to behold in their own color. A soft breeze blows, causing silver bells hanging from golden nets to ring. It is a land of differences but no conflict. It is beautiful in its *isness*. It is not *for* anything, it simply *is*. Every religion has two kinds of value. A religion is deemed valuable because it is true and/or because it is usable. Jodoshinshu is valuable because of its truth value, and very little because of its utility value. Jodoshinshu teachings are low on bringing wealth, health, and happiness. It is utterly useless for predicting the future, avoiding the bad and inviting the good, protecting you from car accidents and illness, helping you win in Vegas and avoid losing in love. It has overwhelming truth value and the accompanying beauty of that truth. Truth, beauty and light is the business of Jodoshinshu; and the Nembutsu, *Namoamidabutsu*, is the verbal expression of that reality. the Pure Land is the visual and audio expression of it, and Amida Buddha its human personification. Praise be to beautiful music, dance, painting, singing, plants, buildings, and things, and even if they are useful. Namanda, Namanda, Namanda

Rev. Mae