

# NA-MAN-DA-BU



Shin Buddhist Fellowship UK

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After the chanting of the central element in a Buddha Service, the four syllables *Na Man Da Bu* are repeated six times, and this is followed by an Eko.

In Shin Buddhism, the repetition of *Na Man Da Bu* should be regarded as an expression of gratitude towards Amida, and his Great Vow (the 18th) to save all beings-without exception; and this it is in-line with the Shinshu concept of *genso bodhisattva*, returning to this world to work for the enlightenment and welfare of all sentient beings of the past, present and future.

Fueko and other Eko Verses

The purpose of *Fueko* and other *Eko* Verses is to ‘turn around’ (eko) any merits accrued from chanting or any other ritual practices; and thus, pass on or return any merit accrued to all sentient beings. Accordingly, it is always the last chant performed in a Buddha Service. The *Fueko* is universal, however, there are many other styles specific to other schools of Buddhism.

Eko is rooted in the Mahayana (but not the Shin) practice of transferring any merit accruing from chanting -or any other form practice or ritual. However, Shinran abandoned this concept of the necessity of acquiring merits a means to the end of attaining Buddhahood,

So, strictly speaking, the Mahayana Eko is not compatible with Shin Buddhism. However, the practice of chanting Eko has persisted for centuries in Shin temples.

For Rennyō Shōnin, under whose guidance Shinshu flourished in Japan, the chanting of the Eko confirmed a person’s yearning to be reborn in Amida's Pure Land.