

events within the BCA, its eight districts, and 60 temples and churches. This newsletter can be read online as well, and is offered with both an English and Japanese language section.

Centuries old tradition

The Buddhist Churches of America is part of the Nishi Hongwanji tradition of Shin Buddhism, with its mother temple located in Kyoto, Japan. Nishi Hongwanji has a history and tradition of over 400 years, but Shin Buddhism itself traces its roots back to Shinran Shonin, nearly 800 years ago. To go back even further, Shin Buddhism is part of the Pure Land Buddhist tradition which goes back to ancient India, and the origins of Buddhism some 2500 years ago.

Relating the teachings to our everyday life

Shin Buddhist ministers and teachers located at our 60 temples strive to bring the message of Shin Buddhism to not only its members and followers, but to anyone who seeks to find the meaning of the Shin teachings in their everyday life. Shin Buddhism brings a message of wisdom and compassion, gratitude and reverence, to the lives of people today, amidst the many struggles of life that we face. It offers a path in which one's life can be truly fulfilled, deeply grateful, and meaningful, no matter what one faces in life.

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Southern District Temples

- Arizona Buddhist Temple
- Buddhist Church of Santa Barbara
- Buddhist Temple of San Diego
- Gardena Buddhist Church
- Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
- Orange County Buddhist Church
- Oxnard Buddhist Temple
- Pasadena Buddhist Temple
- San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
- Senshin Buddhist Temple
- Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
- Vista Buddhist Temple
- West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple



Buddhist Churches of America

<http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org>



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www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org



Rev. Marvin Harada
Center for Buddhist Education, BCA

The Buddhist Churches of America (BCA)

The Buddhist Churches of America represents the Shin Buddhist tradition of Buddhism, which came to the west in the late 1800's. Presently, the Buddhist Churches of America consists of roughly 60 churches or temples located throughout the United States, serviced by nearly 50 ministers, with a following of 16,000 members. It also consists of a national organization and headquarters located in San Francisco, California, and a graduate school/seminary located across the bay in Berkeley.

The Shin Buddhist Tradition of Buddhism

Although not as well known as other Buddhist traditions like Zen or Tibetan, Shin Buddhism is a path suited for people of this age. It does not require a monastic life, or undergoing difficult practices. It is a path of listening to the teachings in one's everyday life. The founder of the Shin Buddhist tradition, Shinran Shonin (1173-1263), was one of the first Buddhist monks to openly marry and raise a family. Although Shinran himself lived a life of a monk for 20 long years, he left the monastic tradition to follow a path focused on the recitation of the Buddha's name, called *Nenbutsu*. In that path, a person of any background could both recite the name and listen to the Dharma in one's everyday life. This tradition has continued for nearly 800 years in Japan, and has a history in the U.S. for over 100 years.

Why "church"?

The Buddhist "Churches" of America was founded by early Japanese immigrants who came to this country in the early 1900's and formed Japanese communities. During that time there was strong anti-Asian and anti-Japanese sentiments, so pioneering Shin Buddhists adopted English terms, many Christian based, as a means to be more "mainstream." Many churches have



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changed to the term "temple" but others have maintained the original use of the word "church."

The Jodo Shinshu Center – Berkeley, California

In 2006, the Buddhist Churches of America purchased and built the Jodo Shinshu Center, an educational facility located in Berkeley, close to the University of California, Berkeley, campus. This facility houses the Institute of Buddhist Studies, which is a graduate school in Buddhism and Shin Buddhist studies where individuals can study and train for the ministry, chaplaincy, or Buddhism in general. It also houses a bookstore, programs for Ryukoku University, a Shin Buddhist university in Kyoto, Japan, and Buddhist education programs conducted for the general public and BCA members.

Jodo Shinshu Churches or Temples in America

The 60 churches and temples in the BCA are located primarily on the west coast, but there are churches and temples in Utah, Colorado, Illinois, Ohio, New York, Virginia, and New Jersey. These temples have Sunday services, meditation services, Dharma schools (Buddhist education for children), and various affiliate organizations and activities ranging from cultural classes to martial arts and yoga. Weddings, funerals, and memorial services are conducted, in addition to study classes on Buddhism in general and Shin Buddhism more specifically. Our temples have a warm sense of community and belonging, and lifelong friendships are nurtured.

The Bookstore

Located in the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, the BCA Bookstore offers a variety of books and religious items. The widest selection of books on Shin Buddhism are available, as well as the majority of current popular books by contemporary Buddhist authors. Buddhist altars, Buddhist beads (ojuzu), incense, cd's and meditation cushions. The bookstore website can be reached at:

www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org,
and click on the BCA Bookstore link.

An online catalogue is also available.
The Bookstore is open Wed. through Sat.,
from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Tel. 510-809-1435.

The Wheel of Dharma Monthly Publication

The BCA publishes on a monthly basis, a newsletter called "The Wheel of Dharma" that has articles and essays on Shin Buddhism and current news and