

WHEEL OF DHARMA

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New Year's Greeting Immeasurable Light and Life



At the beginning of the year, I would like to send you my greetings from Hongwanji in Kyoto.

Upon succeeding the position as Monshu, thirty-six years and nine months have passed. I have come to empathize with Chinese master, Shan-tao, as he writes in *Hymns of Birth in the Pure Land*, "Caught up in everyday life, the days and nights go left unnoticed, unable to become emancipated and escape the sea of suffering." I shall vow to work diligently until my term comes to an end this June.

For many of us, although the passing of time seems to speed up with age, in recent years, changes within society have sped up, making things all the more unsettling. Because these rapid transitions are largely the result of developments in scientific technology and economic growth, they sometimes produce discrepancies in individual lifestyles and societal framework. The gap among socio-economic concerns including business corporations and people's lifestyles are widening that both domestic and international efforts have not been successful in dealing with such issues. As a result, there is a sense that neither reflect-

ing on the past nor thinking ahead into the future matters, so long as we are content with the present. However, this mentality will result in repeating past mistakes or passing burdens on to future generations.

Is it not that the role of Buddhism is to provide us who live in this constantly changing world, with an unfaltering spiritual foundation to live the life which we have received to the fullest? In Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, that foundation is the Primal Vow of Amida Tathagata, namely *Namo Amida Butsu*. Being unconditionally embraced by Amida Tathagata, we are enabled to accept our own inconvenient past and at this very moment, be joyous of this life we have received.

May we all continue to live every day of this year in appreciation of the Nembutsu.

January 1, 2014

OHTANI Koshin

Monshu

Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

My Appreciation for Shinran Shonin

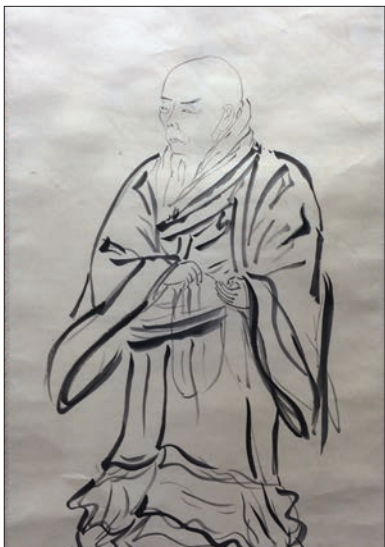
By Rev. Kodo Umezu
BCA Bishop

Hoon-ko

During the month of January, many temples and churches observe a very special service called *Hoon-ko*. It is a service to honor the founder of the Jodo Shinshu School of Buddhism, Shinran Shonin (1173-1263). *Hoon-ko* is the main service in our tradition and is the origin of our religious organization. The term *Hoon-ko* means "a service or a gathering to express appreciation" and is used by many other Buddhist orders in Japan. Therefore, the *Hoon-ko* that we observe is formally called "*Shinran Shonin Go-shoki Hoon-ko*" to specify that the service is a gathering to express our appreciation for Shinran Shonin on his memorial day.

My Childhood Memories

While growing up in Japan, during my grammar school years, my temple in Fukuoka observed *Hoon-ko* for an entire week, from January 2 to January 9. Though the observance lasted seven days, it required more than two weeks of preparation. About a week before the service we had to clean the *hondo*, polish the brass items and ornaments in the *naijin*, and decorate the altar. We relied on a group of five or six members called *Hana-ko* (Flower Arrangement Association), who were in charge of arranging special flowers for the altar. About one week before the service they went to the nearby mountain and brought back piles of pine and bamboo branches. They secluded themselves in a special room behind the *hondo* where they spent many days creating two pairs of huge, magnificent arrangements. Around the same time, a group of musicians called *Gakumin* (musicians) started rehearsing the *gagaku* music to be played during the services. The people of *Hana-ko* and *Gakumin* were



dedicated members who were local farmers but had special talents and skills. A few days before *Hoon-ko*, we pounded *mochi* rice and made hundreds of tiny *mochi* rice cakes. These small *mochi* cakes were stuck on bamboo skewers, tied around wooden cylinders, painted, and placed around the shrines as offerings to Amida Buddha and Shinran Shonin.

Our *Hoon-ko* was one of the biggest events in my village. It required every villager to come out and help put on the services. In the morning of the first day, heating devices with burning charcoals inside (*hibachi*) were placed in the *Hondo* as we waited for people to come. The series of *Hoon-ko* services began with an early morning service at 5 a.m., then another one at 10 a.m. The afternoon service began at 1:30 p.m. and the last one was at 7:30 p.m. Some members stayed at my temple for seven days to attend each and every service. *Otoki* lunch was served every day. The menu was all vegetarian dishes. I remember sometimes sake was served. Many Buddhist Women's Association members who were in charge of cooking came early in the morning and started the fire in the kitchen. Their

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The Significance of a Name

By Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto
Berkeley Buddhist Temple

Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

INMATE #466/64. Imprisoned for 27 years by a South African government intent on burying the significance of his life, he was dispossessed of his name and called by a number. But his name remained alive outside of the prison walls—among those struggling for freedom in South Africa and those opposing apartheid throughout the world.

Nelson Mandela had many names. His given name was "Rolihlahla," meaning "troublemaker." "Nelson" was the name given to him by a teacher on his first day of school. At 16 he completed the initiation rites of the Mandela family's Xhosa tribe and was given the name "Dalibhunga," which means "convenor of dialogue."¹

In his 20s he joined the African National Congress and became actively involved in campaigns of civil disobedience against the South African policy of apartheid. Through protests, strikes and later plans for armed struggle, Nelson Mandela became a leader in the movement to rid the country of its policies of segregation and inequality. A series of arrests and convictions followed, culminating in a 1964 trial in which he and others were convicted of sabotage and sentenced to life imprisonment. For the next 27 years he lived in seclusion as inmate #466/64.

But the movement for freedom in So. Africa was not forgotten, and people there and throughout the world remembered and spoke of his name. Finally, decades of struggle, boycotts, strikes, and divestment led to his release from prison in 1990. Mandela quickly set about working



to unite the nation, not through retribution, but through forgiveness.

Mandela began to negotiate with F.W. de Klerk to hold the first multi-racial elections in South Africa. For their efforts, the two were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Then, in 1994, Nelson Mandela was elected as South Africa's first black president. He immediately embarked on a mission of racial reconciliation, government rebuilding and economic rehabilitation. In a unifying moment, he donned the green jersey of the Springboks rugby team – beloved by whites, despised by blacks – to present the World Cup trophy to the team while the crowd erupted in cheers of "Nelson! Nelson!"

In his later years, Mandela was known to his countrymen simply as "Madiba," a tribal name of great honor, "Tata" (father) and "Khulu" (Great One). His rejection of vengeance led him to assume roles—and names—from freedom fighter and prisoner, to world symbol, leader of the struggle against racial oppression, and president of a new nation. Nelson Mandela was able to regain his name and his humanity, and became a great beacon for equality and reconciliation.

What's in a Name?

In Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*, is this famous line: "What's in

a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." In urging Romeo to renounce their family names, Juliet makes a familiar argument: A name is just a name. It is a word or label. It is not the essence of a person. Again, this is familiar logic. But, it is always true?

What's in a name? Certainly, our family name is inherited, and we keep it throughout life unless we change it or renounce it (as Juliet would have had the two star-crossed lovers do). Usually, our first names were chosen by our parents. Maybe they liked the name. Maybe it was the name of a family member or a family custom. Perhaps it was popular or unusual. Or perhaps our chosen name represented our parents' hopes and dreams for us. There are many reasons for a name and so there is a lot in a name.

A name tells us a lot about a person. It signifies meaning for and about us. What if we were suddenly to have no name? What would we lose? I think that we would lose a great deal. For instance, without a name we would lose our sense of identity. We would also lose our sense of connection with others (family, ancestors), our place in the world (community, ethnicity, or culture) and our sense of history. When we lose our name we also lose our face. We become a faceless "them," a number, or a byte of data. When we lose our name we also lose our voice. No one can recognize us or hear us.

That is why, as was the case for Nelson Mandela, our names are sometimes taken away from us by others, the authorities, or our oppressors. They may try to take away our names in order to take away our sense of self, our minds, or our humanity. But all too often we are the ones who let our "names" slip away.

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Happy New Year!

By Rev. Kodo Umezu
BCA Bishop

As we start the New Year, I would like to express my deep appreciation to you for your support and guidance throughout the year 2013 and ask for your continued support again for 2014.

When I took office in 2012, I emphasized that we need to focus on Buddhist education. Many people have shown me their support since then. The Center for the Buddhist Education (CBE) is now in second

gear under new co-directorship and is focusing on fine tuning and enhancing the quality of its programs. The George T. and Sakaye Aratani Foundation has completed its pledge to the CBE Education Endowment Fund. Hongwanji has provided financial support to ministers in order to help them attend the Continuing Education Program held in Berkeley last November. The Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Board of Directors was able to pay the remaining balance of the California Bank and Trust loan last year, so now

we can focus on other areas. However, we still have a \$4 million loan from the BCA Endowment Foundation that we need to find a way to repay.

Another change that is taking a place this year is a change of the editorship of the *Wheel of Dharma*. Rev. Ronald Kobata has been the English editor of this newspaper for the last nine years. I would really like to thank him for his dedication and commitment to our mission of sharing the dharma with all. The *Wheel of Dharma* is a great vehicle by which we transmit our appreciation of the Dharma with over 11,000 subscribers. We are committed to keeping the quality high and informing you with news and dharma related articles under the

new editorial team of the BCA staff.

Our organization was founded 115 years ago with the wish of hearing and sharing Shinran Shonin's teaching. Our pioneer members begged our mother temple in Kyoto to dispatch ministers to this country. After World War II, the members' first priority was to nurture future ministers here in the United States, so they founded the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS). Today, we carry on that commitment and support the endeavor. IBS has just launched a new and additional fundraising program to support its ministerial students.

As time passes, we tend to forget the founding spirit. It is good to remind ourselves why we are here and

revisit what our predecessors wanted to hear, so let me touch upon our basic religious practice. Our practice is to hear the message of *Namo Amida Butsu*. By hearing it over and over, we come to appreciate Amida's Vow and *Namo Amida Butsu*.

People of today including me are extremely impatient. If we don't understand something after listening a few times, we give up. Our teachers used to say we must use our legs to listen. That means we should make every effort to go to a place where we can listen to the teaching of Shinran Shonin. Shinran Shonin, too, commuted to his teacher's place when he was searching for spiritual guidance. He walked there and back for one

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By Rev. Ronald Kobata
Buddhist Church of San Francisco

As our terrestrial home begins another revolution around and through the circuit of our solar system I offer the traditional Japanese New Year's greeting, *Shinnen Akemashite Omedetou gozaimasu*. At the same time take this means to announce the ending of my English editorship of the *Wheel of Dharma*. Nine years ago I was just beginning my "return" to the

As the Wheel (continues) to Turn

Buddhist Churches of America after enjoying 24 years of Shin Buddhist ministry with the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. As part of my becoming the Executive Assistant to the then Bishop Koshin Ogui, I was assigned to take on the responsibility of editing the *Wheel of Dharma*. Both responsibilities were very new challenges that my previous thirty years as a *kaikyoshi* didn't necessarily prepare me for.

As is the general rule in life we just do the best we can with whatever resources and means that are available to us.

For the Executive Assistant's duties I was fortunate to have the guidance of my predecessor in that role, Rev. Kodo Umezu willing and available to get me on track. The editor's role was quite a different situation though I did have the benefit of Brian Nagata who had edited the *Wheel of Dharma* in the past. He helped me locate a person to work on the lay-

out of articles, advised me about gathering materials for publication, and the distribution of the monthly issues.

A few months into the role as editor I had a very fortuitous encounter with a young man for whom I had conducted his wedding ceremony on Maui years before. Just as the production person informed me that she would not be able to continue I was introduced to Jeffrey Kimoto. He was involved in publishing his own community newspaper, *NikkeiWest*, and handled a number of other newsletters and publications. Jeffrey contracted with BCA to become the production manager for the *Wheel of Dharma / Horin* (Dharma Wheel) [Japanese] monthly newspaper. Through his expertise as a publisher himself and generosity in sharing his resources for producing the *Wheel* we see the results in the full colorization and the layout formats he employs.

One of the major concerns presented at the beginning of my term was how to find enough materials to fill the six pages of the English section. Gratefully this concern did not materialize. In fact, there were some months that I had to decide which submissions to hold over for future editions, or to serialize over a number of issues. Though on occasion I would have to send reminders about due dates, and anxiously wait to see if an article was forthcoming, I've been fortunate to have many people lay and minister alike willingly share their appreciation of the Dharma in writing, report on special events, and give expression to the many ways that our "fellow travelers" (*Ondo-bo*) realize, experience moving on and live the Path of Nembutsu in America. I'm truly indebted to correspondents and readers alike for keeping the *Wheel* turning with their thoughtful essays,

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President's Message



By Ron Murakami
BCA President
White River
Buddhist Temple

On behalf of the Buddhist Churches of America I extend a warm Happy New Year's greeting to each of you. The beginning of the year brings forth hopes and aspirations, helping us to start the

year with the beginning of a new life and encouraging us to successfully cope with any difficulties we may face.

Thanks to the hard work and contributions of many people, we can feel good about the foundation being built for BCA. From my perspective, we're a much different organization than even just a few years ago. Of course there's still much to do and I hope we'll always feel that way since it means we understand there will always be ways to im-

prove our organization. Having the Nembutsu Teaching be a significant influence on the lives of everyone we're able to reach will be an ongoing endeavor that requires continued diligence.

This year is one of great potential as we've gotten past the burden of our bank mortgages and can now work on the remaining building loans from the BCA Endowment Foundation (BCAEF). Paying back our loans to the BCAEF may take several years, but we should be encour-

aged and very proud of paying off all of our bank loans.

I hope we can continue to build a solid base for propagating our Jodo Shinshu tradition. With the Center for Buddhist Education developing nourishing programs and with Rev. Umezu leading us, we're making good progress on fulfilling our mission of Buddhist education. We're moving forward on addressing the need for funding to reduce the burden for prospective ministers

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Welcome to 2014!

Let's shout our love (Nembutsu) in the center of the Hondo!!

By Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki
Buddhist Church of Lodi

Happy New Year! I always make resolutions at the beginning of the year. One of my 2013's resolutions was to make my baseball's batting average over .300. Unfortunately, I am not a good batter like *Ichiro Suzuki*. My batting average was way below .300. I could not achieve my 2013 resolution. But I will try to make my batting average better in 2014.

What is your 2014 resolution? Some younger generations may make their resolution to get a girlfriend or a boyfriend. These days may be the most exciting and fun time. Let's think about a general love story where a man tells his feelings to a lady.

A man has to ask a lady who he loves out on a date. He needs to invite to her to lunch, dinner, or for a drive. They meet someplace. They go somewhere together. He talks a lot. He asks some questions to get more informa-

tion about her. However, it is very difficult for him to express his feelings. He hesitates to tell her his feelings. In his mind, he encourages himself, and at last he finds the courage to speak.

"I have something to tell you. The reason why I asked you out today is to tell you my feelings. I have a great affection for you. In fact, I love you."

Then, he starts talking about the reason why he loves her.

"You are so beautiful. You are my type. I like your ...whatever."

He sings his praises of her. And then, he tells his feelings again and he waits for her reply. She replies to him, "I love you, too."

When he hears her reply, "I love you," he rejoices over her reply. He starts calling his friends to tell them of this success story. He tries to share his happiness with his friends. And then, his love story concludes happily.

I want to arrange and repeat the order of this love.



1. A man invites a lady who he loves out.
2. A man expresses the feelings he has for her to her.
3. A man sings his praises of her.
4. A man tells of his love again and he gets a reply from her.
5. A man shares his happiness with his friends.

I think this order is very similar to our Buddhist service. Please look at the Lodi's *Shotsuki* service order:

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Submission Guidelines:

We recommend a length of approximately 800-1,000 words, typed, single-spaced. Longer submissions will be rejected or, if accepted, split into multiple parts.

We prefer Microsoft Word documents in an 11-point Times New Roman font, as it translates best for our graphic design department. If you do not have Word, a simple text file will work, even pasted into the body of an e-mail message. In ALL cases, do not embed images in Word document. Send as separate attachment. Please do not send text as PDF files.

Color prints or digital prints are acceptable. Color photocopies, inkjets, or third-party photo sharing websites are not recommended. Photo attachments should be sent at 300 dpi JPEG, TIFF or PDF format for best resolution. Cell phone images are not recommended. Web-based images (72 dpi) do not produce quality images for newsprint usage.

We reserve the right to crop photos and illustrations to conform with space and design requirements.

Submission deadline: 20th of each month.

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Zaidan, Beyond a Rainy Day

By Ron Murakami

During my years of involvement with the Buddhist Churches of America, nothing has been more mystifying than the Zaidan Fund. However, if you're familiar with the BCA Endowment Foundation then understanding zaidan is easy. In 1926, the Buddhist Mission of North America (now our Buddhist Churches of America) leaders, inspired by the visit of His Reverence Sonyu Ohtani, the 22nd Head Priest of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Buddhist Mission, began discussions on establishing the Hokubei Kaikyo Zaidan (North American Overseas District Endowment Foundation) to expand the missionary work to all people in the United States and to ensure the future of Buddhism in America.

The Hokubei Kaikyo Zaidan was formalized in 1929 by ministers and lay representatives at their General Meeting in San Francisco, California. As part of the documents of incorporation, the Zaidan was established with a goal of \$500,000 as its foundation. Emphasis was placed on the Zaidan to be a permanent fund with the corpus (principal amount) to be kept untouched. This goal was a staggering amount considering the time in history. The proposal came just after the start of the Great Depression in 1929 that was to become the longest, most widespread, and most severe financial depression of the 20th century.

Funding of the Zaidan was dis-

rupted by WWII but was enhanced in 1945 when all churches were requested to have a special "Bishop's Memorial Service" to honor all past Bishops with the offertory earmarked for the Zaidan. Today, temples are still encouraged to conduct this annual service in September.

In 1959, the BCA Board of Directors adopted a proposal for a \$1 contribution for each registration at all official conferences and meetings. This practice continues today at both national and district conferences and major meetings.

In 1964, the bylaws were redrawn and the Hokubei Kaikyo Zaidan name was changed to the Buddhist Churches of America Endowment Foundation (BCAEF), with the fund goal raised to \$1 million, which was achieved in 1999.

The BCA National Council approved the Campaign for Buddhism in America in 1982 and the BCA Campaign - 21st Century in 2003. Both of these were capital campaigns that substantially added to the BCA endowed funds. The Zaidan was kept as a separate fund and in more recent years investment earnings from the Zaidan Fund have been used for special items such as assisting the BCA website start-up, for special programs and ministers' workshops, for start-up and ongoing funding of the Center for Buddhist Education, and more recently to help pay off the bank loan for the Jodo Shinshu Center. The decision to use a significant portion of the Zaidan Fund for the bank mortgage was the most difficult of the decisions to make,

but thanks to the guidance of Bishop Umezu on explaining the original purpose of Zaidan, we reached a major goal of getting past the bank debt for the JSC by using all but about \$500,000 of the fund. Thus this major achievement of paying off our bank mortgage loans was helped by the contributions of thousands upon thousands of individuals stretching over 80 years.

Our next goal for the Zaidan Fund is clear. We're replenishing the fund in the same way it was built up, with regular contributions at conventions, conferences, workshops, and major observances. One major difference is recognizing the need to increase our individual contributions to keep pace with the changing times. At BCA National Board and National Council meetings, we now encourage a minimum contribution of \$10-\$20 per person. Fortunately, we have individuals who now speak up and encourage larger donations, even offering challenges to match their generous contributions. At conventions, it's common to suggest minimum contributions of \$5-\$10 per person. This level is consistent with changes in the value of a dollar. \$1 in 1959 would be equivalent to about \$8 today based on changes in the consumer price index.

Thank you to the Officers and Directors of the BCA Endowment Foundation Board for introducing me to the historical information on the Zaidan that went into this article. Most of the detailed information for this article was taken from the BCA 75th anniversary and centennial year history books.

National Jr. YBA Conference

Young Buddhists are invited to broaden their horizons and form new bonds at a National Jr. YBA Conference scheduled to take place on August 30-September 1, 2014 at the Hilton Orange County in Costa Mesa, California, by the Orange County Buddhist Church Jr. YBA. OCBC's Rev. Marvin Harada proposed the idea to extend the traditional local event, the BCA Southern District Jr. YBA Conference to invite chapters nationwide. Driven by this concept, the hosts, OCBC Jr. YBA, has been busy brainstorming plans for the upcoming event.

The theme for the conference is "Plug Into Buddhism" and will explore the interaction between today's ever-changing world and classical Buddhist traditions, as well as the bonds that link us all together - no matter where one may live. The conference will conclude with a formal dinner and dance, and the Jr. YBA hosts hope that you can join them! For all questions and concerns, feel free to email the OCBC chapter at plugintobuddhism@gmail.com or go to the website - www.plugintobuddhism.webs.com.

Rev. Kusunoki

Continued from Page 2

1. *Sambujo*
2. *Hyobyakumon*
3. Sutra Chanting "Juseige"
4. *Nembutsu*
5. *Eko*

I want to compare the love story's order with the *Sbotsuki* service's order.

1. A man invites a lady who he loves/ Sambujo

"We respectfully call upon *Amida* Buddha, *Shakyamuni* Buddha, and Buddhas of the ten directions to enter this place of practice. As we joyfully scatter flowers of welcome."

Chanting "*Sambujo*" means we are inviting *Amida* Buddha, *Shakyamuni* Buddha and Buddhas of the ten directions here to this Hondo, the church's main hall. We rejoice and reverently welcome them with beautiful flowers.

2. A man tells his feelings/ Hyobyakumon

A minister usually reads the *Hyobyakumon* as a representative of all attendees.

"Today, on this occasion of this service, we have reverently come before *Amida* Buddha.

With the deepest reverence and gratitude for the all embracing wisdom and compassion of *Amida*."

I confess my faith as I read "*Hyobyakumon*".

3. A man sings the praises of her/Sutra chanting

The Sutra, *Juseige*, is Buddha's words, Buddha's teachings. It is a condensation of Buddha's virtue, Buddha's effort, and Buddha's thought in this teaching. I am given this teaching, which tells me the truth. Chanting or reading a sutra aloud means praising Buddha's teaching.

4. A man expresses his love again and he gets a reply from her/ Nembutsu

Reciting *Nembutsu* is most important in a Buddhist service. Reciting *Nembutsu* is the simultaneous call and

response between *Amida* Buddha and me.

"I love you, *Amida* Buddha." "I love you, *Katsu*."

I recite *Namoamidabutsu* expressing my feelings, however, at the same time; I am receiving *Amida* Buddha's response with his compassion.

I express my feelings, "I entrust *Amida* Buddha. I take refuge in *Amida* Buddha. *Namoamidabutsu*."

Amida Buddha sends me his compassion,

"*Katsu*, I accept you as you are. *Namoamidabutsu*."

At the end, as a conclusion,

5. A man shares his happiness with his friends/ EKO

"May this merit-virtue

Be shared equally with all beings.

May we together awaken the Bodhi Mind,

And be born in the Realm of Serenity and Joy."

At the end of service, we chant these words as a conclusion. We share Buddha's teaching or Buddha virtue. We rejoice together and are born into the same Buddha's Land.

1. *Sambujo*
2. *Hyobyakumon*
3. Sutra Chanting "JUSEIGE"
4. *Nembutsu*
5. *EKO*

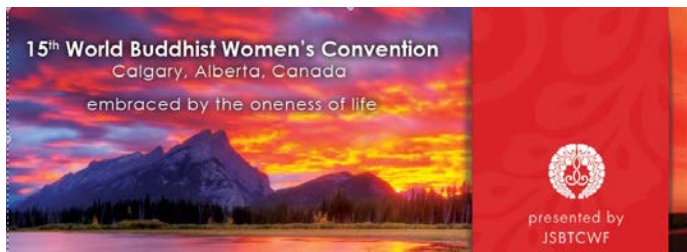
This is the order to express my faith in *Amida* Buddha. At the service, each of us is forming a deeply connected love story with *Amida* Buddha and our founder, *Shinran Shonin*. The Buddhist service is the opportunity to declare my respect and gratitude to *Amida* Buddha, and *Shinran Shonin*.

Don't you think that it is good idea to add "Attending Sunday service every Sunday" to your 2014's New Year resolution! Please go to your church/temple! Please go to Sunday Service. And let's recite or shout *Namoamidabutsu* in the Hondo, the church's main hall, together.

Namoamidabutsu

Saturday, May 30 and Sunday, May 31, 2015

Rev. Patti Usuki, English Keynote Speaker



- Opportunity for Jodo Shinshu followers of all ages to gather together on international scale
- Meet new people, learn together, share experiences and spread the circle of Dharma today and for generations to come
- Originally, aimed at women only based on their efforts to support the temples, however, this has changed over the years and convention now includes both men and women joined together in the Jodo Shinshu Sangha spiritual community*
- Workshop sessions will incorporate the Eightfold Path, and more details will be announced as plans are finalized.

See BWA Chapter presidents for registration information or email wbwa2019@yahoo.com. Go to www.wbwconvention.com for general information.

* Taken from 2015 Canada WBWC website www.wbwconvention.com

HANFORD BUDDHIST CHURCH

As history repeats itself, in the late 1800s and early 1900s the Hanford area was supervised by the then Fresno Buddhist Church. Rev. Fukyu Asaeda traveled by train to Hanford holding services in private homes. In 1905 property was purchased with a house at 314 East 7th Street in Hanford, and Rev. Shuyu Sashihara was assigned to our area. This was the start of our church.



In 1916 a church was built on the 7th Street site and on April 30, 1916 dedication ceremonies were held and the Kings County Buddhist Church opened. As the congregation grew in 1927 a larger property was bought, the old church was moved to the new site, and the church was opened on December 1, 1929. The church was renamed Hanford Buddhist Church. In 1936, with the help of the Fujinkai and several families honoring the deceased Issei pioneers, the Onaijin we have today was purchased. On November 10, 1968 a new building was finished and the dedication ceremony was held. This is the building we meet in today.

As we near our 110th anniversary in a few years, the congregation is dwindling to the point where we no longer have our own minister. However, the Nembutsu teaching continues to live on in Hanford. And as stated earlier, history repeats itself. Today, we are once again being supervised by Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple ministers.

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Hanford, CA 93232
Tel: (559) 584-8077

Note: This series introducing BCA temples correlates to the 2014 BCA Calendar.

67th ANNUAL NW DISTRICT BUDDHIST CONVENTION

"Honor the Past, Live the Present, Build the Future"



The 67th Annual NW District Buddhist Convention will be held February 7 - 9, 2014 at the [Sheraton Portland Airport](http://www.sheratonportland.com).

Rev. Dr. Jeffery Wilson, professor and author of [Buddhism of the Heart](#) and [Dixie Dharma](#) will be our keynote speaker.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Take Refuge in the Light of Joy!

Winter MAP Reflections



Attendees at the Winter MAP 2013 Session (front row, left to right): Candice Shibata, Jack Daikiri, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Bishop Kodo Umezu, Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, Karen Mukai, Dennis Madokoro, Akemi Ishida, George Thow, Leonora Clarke, Laverne Imori. (Back row): Kory Quon, Michael Tang, Linda Engstrom, Vonn Magnin, Blake Honda, Calvin Mark, Robert Gubenco, Matthew Wise, Greg Mukai, James Pollard, Shigeki Sugiyama, Craig Honda & Paul Vielle. Not pictured: Elaine Donlin and David Pating.

"We learn from our mistakes & we learn by the help of other MAP attendees."

On December 12-14th, the BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) conducted the Minister's Assistants Program (MAP) Winter Session at the Jodo Shinshu Center. Thirty-five participants gathered to hear lectures by Rev. Dr. Daijaku Kinst and Dr. Scott Mitchell, both on the IBS faculty, as well as Dr. Scott Wilson, based in Canada, (via Skype). Liturgy practice was provided by Rev. Katsu Kusunoki. Participants from several generations attended from 13 BCA temples: Alameda, Arizona, Ekoji, Enmanji, Fowler, Gardena, New York, Orange County, Sacramento, San Francisco, Seattle, Spokane and Stockton, as well as 2 from Canada: Calgary and Toronto.

"From Rev. Kinst's chaplaincy lecture, I learned the importance of being grounded in one's tradition in order to receive another person."

"I learned the importance of having courage to be present in the face of fear."

"After a long and intense weekend of lectures and training, I appreciated Dr. Wilson's energy and was reminded that Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is 'engaged.'"

Please join us for this special occasion -

HOON-KO

Shinran Shonin's Memorial Service at the Jodo Shinshu Center

2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704

Thursday, January 16, 2014 12 noon & 5 pm

Free - Open to the Public



TECHNOBUDDHA

MARCH 14, 15, 16, 2014 | JODO SHINSHU CENTER
ICHIGO ICHIE "ALWAYS CHANGING, ALWAYS FLOWING"

Explore the meaning of Ichigo Ichie, "Always Changing, Always Flowing" and connect with other great people at the 2014 TechnoBuddha conference! TechnoBuddha is for adults ages 21-39 the weekend of March 14-16, 2014 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, CA, and is a fun and educational conference for young adults to have a great experience within the context of the Jodo Shinshu tradition, featuring interactive workshops, discussions and speakers, along with fun social activities.

2014 WORKSHOPS:

- Jodo Shinshu 101 - Intro to Jodo Shinshu
- Jodo Shinshu 201 - Advanced Discussion
- Social Science Workshop
- Buddhist Sites in Japan (primer for 2014 Japan Trip!)
- Dharma Talks/Extended Discussions
- Swedish Massage
- Morning Running
- Instagram Photo Scavenger Hunt



2014 TECHNOBUDDHA KEYNOTE SPEAKER: REV. PATTI OSHITA



ABOUT THE KEYNOTE: Rev. Patti Oshita was born and raised in the town of Fowler, outside Fresno. She attended Fresno City College and worked as a medical assistant. She later moved to Los Angeles and in 1984, she moved to Sacramento and worked for Congressman Robert Matsui for 6 ½ years. Rev. Oshita returned to school to complete her BA in Humanities and Religious Studies at California State University, Sacramento in 1995.

As of September 1, 2011, Rev. Oshita retired from State Service at Caltrans and in April 2012, joined the Sacramento Betsuin as the Assistant Minister, Program Development. Rev. Oshita continues volunteering as a Girl Scout leader under the Betsuin with 235 girls and 80 leaders. Since receiving her tokudo ordination in 2003 and kyoshi certification in 2007, she continues her volunteer work with the YAC programs.

Rev. Oshita is married to Rev. Bob Oshita and enjoys her spare time shopping, watching the Food Network and golfing when she has time.



Get registered today! Check out TechnoBuddha on Facebook for registration information and conference updates!
FACEBOOK.COM/TECHNOBUDDHACONFERENCE

Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course

Throughout the year, the Wheel of Dharma will feature an essay written by one of the over 150 students who have enrolled in this Hongwanji-sponsored online course since 2008. See details of the 2-year course at www.JSCC.cbe-bca.org

Why did Shinran Shonin choose the calligraphic written Name as the central object of worship?

by Christopher Caldwell

Shinran Shonin's decision to use the calligraphic written Name of Amida Buddha as the central object of worship serves a number of purposes: religious, political, and practical. Theologically, it draws worship and thought to the central focus of Jodo Shinshu: the Nembutsu. It is also a counterpoint to the tendency among nobles to embrace opulent forms of worship, with a great outward appearance of devotion, but little self-reflection. This gesture among the nobility was a result of the belief that the era was in *mappo*, or the decline of the Buddhist teachings. Shinran's reliance on the written Nembutsu provided a much-needed alternative to the nobility's mad rush to throw money in desperation for salvation, and brought the focus, theologically, to the truth of *Namo Amida Butsu*.

In a sense, Shinran's promotion of the simple focus of devotion, the calligraphic written Name, is as political as it is religious. As discussed in the monthly reading, the written Name serves as a powerful, populist antithesis to expensive statuary and forms of iconography that could really only be acquired by the wealthy. Shinran's approach not only corrects theological excesses, but also effectively moves worship from the exclusive to the inclusive, and puts the Pure Land within reach of everyone. Such inclusiveness can be viewed as a political gesture, as it runs counter to the prevailing notions of class providing greater access to salvation.



In terms of the practical, geographic complexities of propagation, the written name could travel great distances without appearing on the radar of the authorities. Shinran's choice was, in part, practical problem-solving. This is especially important in a period of such great political tumult. In many ways, it was a precursor to our more contemporary forms of grassroots movements, in that it is a piece of valuable information that can be shared easily and widely without the usual avenues of commerce and regulation. It is important to note that while a precious physical object, the calligraphic Nembutsu also has the potential for ephemerality, reminding us that the eternal content and beautiful simplicity live beyond the physical object.

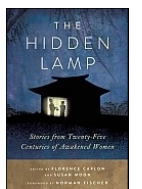
It is interesting to consider that, in current times, one may still purchase very expensive objects to assist in worship. Followers of Jodo Shinshu are no exception. The business of religion is as much intact now as it was centuries ago. Just as Shinran asked that his body be tossed into the Kamo River, only to have followers erect temples and mausoleums, worshipers will always go a bit beyond the original intention of a sect's founder. Although, in one light, this may be seen as excessive striving, I think that generally these extra gestures can be in good faith, as anything that helps with propagation of the teachings is positive for the sect, both financially and spiritually. That said, I think that it is still important to keep in mind the simple and powerful elegance of the core teachings, and to understand that when all else falls away that the eternal truths of *Namo Amida Butsu* remain.

Prof. Christopher Caldwell has studied Buddhism for many years on his own and lives in Tennessee. Calligraphy by Michael Endo

Visit www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org

BCA Bookstore News by Gayle Noguchi

Now available: **The Hidden Lamp: Stories from Twenty-Five Centuries of Awakened Women** edited by Florence Caplow & Susan Moon with a foreword by Norman Fischer, paperback \$18.95.



The Hidden Lamp is a collection of one hundred *koans* and stories of Buddhist women from the time of the Buddha to the present day – young, old, lay-people, nuns – all powerful teachers of the dharma. Each story is accompanied by a reflection by a contemporary Buddhist teacher, a personal response that facilitates understanding. Each story also concludes with a question for the reader posed by the editors to inspire further inquiry.

I recently had the opportunity to interview Rev. Dr. Daijaku Judith Kinst, one of the contributors to *The Hidden Lamp*. Kinst is a professor at the Institute of Buddhist Studies and Director of their Buddhist Chaplaincy Degree Program. She shared the following with me:



Rev. Dr. Daijaku Kinst

What inspired creating *The Hidden Lamp*? Florence Caplow, who edited the book with Susan Moon, has had a deep and longstanding interest in the koans and stories she encountered of women teachers. Many years ago she began to collect them and her commitment to making them available to others grew. Florence and Susan worked for four years bringing this book into being.

Tell us a little bit about the contributors. The contributors are contemporary women Buddhist teachers, both lay and ordained, from a wide range of Buddhist traditions.

Who do you hope reads *The Hidden Lamp*? This book was written for women and men who are interested in Buddhist teachings and practice. It aims at exposing readers to the insights, voice, and vision of the Dharma of both ancient and contemporary women Buddhist practitioners and teachers – demonstrating not only that they exist, but also that they can deepen our understanding of the Way.

What impact would you like *The Hidden Lamp* to have on readers? To show readers the breadth and depth of women's engagement in and embodiment of the Dharma and to expose readers to the voice of mature and dedicated women practitioners from diverse traditions. To order, go to www.bcabookstore.com, email: sales@bcabookstore.com or phone: (510) 809-1435. The BCA Bookstore is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Like us on Facebook.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Take Refuge in the Light of Joy!

THE INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES & BCA CENTER FOR BUDDHIST EDUCATION
PRESENT
PACIFIC SEMINAR 21ST CENTURY

SPRING SESSION:

The Benefits of a Life of Shinjin

Guest Speaker:

Prof. Nobuhiro Fukagawa

Ryukoku University's Department of Shin Buddhist Studies in Kyoto, Japan. Resident Minister of Sainen-ji Temple in Yamaguchi Prefecture



Sat. March 22, 2014 9 am - 4 pm

Gardena Buddhist Temple - 1517 West 166th Street, Gardena, CA

- Why aspire to live "a life of shinjin"?
- What are "the ten kinds of benefit realized in the present life (by a person of shinjin)"?
- How do we experience the primary benefit of "entry into the ranks of the truly settled"?
- How is this pursuit different from the notion of seeking "worldly benefit"?
- How can this understanding transform our lives today?

Seminar sessions in Japanese and English:

*Prof. Fukagawa will present his keynote presentation in Japanese with an English translation by Rev. Mutsumi Wondra. The afternoon schedule will include:

*A second lecture by Prof. Fukagawa, moderated by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, CBE Co-Director. This session will be in Japanese.

*A lecture in English by Rev. David Matsumoto, Director, IBS Center for Contemporary Jodo Shinshu Studies and resident minister at the Berkeley Buddhist Temple.

Rev. Marvin Harada, CBE Co-Director and resident minister at the Orange County Buddhist Church will moderate. This session will be in English.

*A dialogue with Prof. Fukagawa conducted in Japanese and English.

The registration fee of \$30 includes lunch and is due by March 8.

Registration and other program details may be found online at www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org (click on CBE). BCA Southern District members are urged to register through their respective temple. Contact Rimban William Briones: email: malik615@msn.com or phone: (213) 680-9130. For general information, call CBE at (510) 809-1460 or email: cbe@bcabq.org.

Hosted by the Southern District Ministers Assoc. & Buddhist Education Committee

SUMMER SESSION

JULY 4 - 6, 2014 *Save the date!*

Sea of Suffering, Ocean of Compassion

* at the Jodo Shinshu Center, Berkeley, CA

Keynote Speakers:

Rev. Tetsuo Unno & Prof. Mark Unno

Honored Guests:

Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno & Mrs. Alice Unno

*Please note: This event WILL NOT be at Asilomar Conference Ctr.

Visit www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org for updates & details

IBS RYUKOKU LECTURE SERIES

Guest Speaker: Prof. Nobuhiro Fukagawa

Issues in Jodo Shinshu Propagational Studies

March 19 & 20, 2014 (Wed. & Thurs.) 6 - 9 pm

Free & Open to the Public

Jodo Shinshu Center - Berkeley, CA

For IBS course offerings & news, visit: www.shin-ibs.edu

RETROBUDDHA 2013

ON SATURDAY, SEP. 14, VENICE HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE'S YOUNG ADULT BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION HELD THEIR 3RD ANNUAL RETROBUDDHA SEMINAR. THIS YEAR'S THEME WAS "THE GOLDEN CHAIN".

AFTER ATTENDING VHBT'S REGULAR MORNING SERVICE, 32 ATTENDEES GATHERED TO LISTEN TO REV. KYO KUWAHARA'S KEYNOTE SPEECH ON JODO SHINSHU AND THE GOLDEN CHAIN.

THE KEYNOTE SPEECH WAS FOLLOWED SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS, FOCUSING AROUND QUESTIONS SUCH AS "WHAT WAS YOUR IMPRESSION OF THE GOLDEN CHAIN AS A CHILD? AN ADULT? THROUGHOUT THE YEARS?", AND "WHEN YOU ACTUALLY REFLECT UPON IT, ARE WE ACTUALLY PRACTICING THE GOLDEN CHAIN OR NOT?"

EVERYONE THEN HAD A CHOICE TO ATTEND 2 OF 4 DIFFERENT WORKSHOPS:

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HISTORICAL BUDDHA AND AMIDA BUDDHA?
GREAT QUESTION!
GROUP DISCUSSION WITH REV. KUWAHARA ON THE TOPIC "BEYOND THE GOLDEN CHAIN"...

"A CRASH COURSE ON JODO SHINSHU" WITH RESIDENT MINISTER REV. JOHN INOHARA...

O-HAGI MAKING, LEAD BY VHBT PRESIDENT-ELECT EMILY KARIYA...
(PRINCESS LEIA O-HAGI)

AND, LASTLY, A WRITING WORKSHOP ON "CREATING YOUR OWN GOLDEN CHAIN". WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS COLLABORATED TO COMPOSE THE FOLLOWING COMPOSITION:

LET'S GET TOGETHER, WE ARE ALL ONE.
I WILL RESPECT EVERYONE LIKE A BUDDHA.
I WILL BE AWARE OF MY KARMA AND LIVE A LIFE OF NEMBUTSU.
MAY ALL THINGS REACH ENLIGHTENMENT.

THE SEMINAR ENDED WITH A CLOSING SERVICE AND DHARMA MESSAGE BY REV. INOHARA, AND A SOCIAL HOUR WHERE ALL THE PARTICIPANTS COULD FURTHER VISIT WITH THEIR SANGHA.

RETROBUDDHA CHAIRPERSON: ALISON OSHINOWI VHBT YABA PRESIDENT: BENNETT ITO
SPECIAL GUESTS: FALL 2013 WOP PARTICIPANTS

CBE Co-Director's Message:

How to Listen with the Heart

by Rev. Marvin Harada

In the book, *The Buddha's Wish for the World*, by our Gomonshu, Koshin Ohtani, he cites a temple in Japan that has written on the wall the following creed, regarding how one should listen to the Dharma.

1. You should listen as if you are listening for the very first time.
2. You should listen as if the message is for you alone.
3. You should listen as if this is the last time that you will ever do so in your life.

It is easy to attend services and miss these three very important points. We attend, week after week, year after year, and we hear messages and stories that we become familiar with. As soon as we think, "Oh, I heard that story already," we turn off the speaker in our minds and our thoughts change channels to think of something else, like what we might have for lunch after attending service. But this creed reminds us to listen as if it is the first time. Think of how you felt on the first day of school, or the first day of college, or the first day on the job. It was nervous, exciting, and challenging, all at once. Even if we hear a story that we have heard dozens of times, each time we hear it, it is different, based on our mood, feeling, and life experiences. If we listen as if it is the first time, then we can always find something meaningful in the message, even if we have heard the story dozens of times.

Secondly, we should listen as if it is for you alone. This is a very subtle point that is very easy to miss. We could attend the temple and listen to the Dharma our whole lives and miss this crucial point.

Once I spoke at another temple and after the service, during the refreshments, a lady came up to me and complimented me on my sermon. She felt that my message on self-centeredness was very important. I thought, "Gee, this lady was really listening." But then, in the next sentence she said, "But you know what? The one person who really needed to listen to that message was *my* husband. He is the most self-centered guy! He should have been here to listen to your message."

This lady missed the whole point of the sermon. Shinran Shonin always takes a subjective perspective when he reflected on the teachings. The teachings were not talking about someone else's self-centeredness, it was talking about his.

The third most important point in listening is the fact that we should listen as if today might be the last time. If we think that we always have next week, or next month, or next year to listen, we will never listen with a sense of urgency. One never knows what might happen even tomorrow, so we must listen as if today might be the last time.

As we begin a new year, these three important points should be a model for us to follow as Shin Buddhists. To listen as if it is the first time, to listen as if the message is meant for you alone, and to listen as if it might be the last time you will be able to listen. If we listen with these three principles in mind, we will truly be listening with our heart.



Hoon-ko

Continued from Front Page

dedication was remarkable. They prepared and served hundreds of meals every day for seven days.

We invited a guest speaker for Hoon-ko called the *Hongwanji Fukyo-shi* (certified speaker). He stayed with us for the entire seven day period and delivered about 30 messages. It was like a weeklong seminar and religious festival, but I was too young to sit through all of the dharma messages.

Sometimes it snowed. It was the coldest time of the year, yet people came with smiles on their faces. I remember laughter and friendly conversations inside and outside of the Hondo. Outside was cold, but there was a warm atmosphere around the temple compound. The nembutsu came out of people's mouths spontaneously. The sound of *Shoshin-ge* chanting, the beautiful, ancient melody of *Shoya Raisan-ge*, the flickering flames of big red candles, the gagaku music, the sound of the bell, the smell of incense, the delicious otoki meals, and the nembutsu utterance are all fond memories now.

My role (besides helping to make mochi) was to attend the services. My older brother and I had to wear specially made robes and sit next to our

father and chant. On the last day, sitting on the guest speaker's stage in front of everyone, I had to read a letter written by Rennyō Shonin. I remember not looking forward to it, but it made our elder members very happy, as I recall.

Who is Shinran Shonin?

When I was growing up I had no idea who Shinran Shonin was, but I was always part of Shinran Shonin's sangha. I knew his name through reading a comic book but had no idea what he had taught or done. It was much later in my life when he became a special person to me. Now I love him so much and I want to know more and more about him; or I should say, I respect him and appreciate all that he did. Reflecting on my childhood, I am especially grateful to my parents and temple members who gave me the chance to stay close to him.

Before and during Shinran Shonin's time, Buddhism existed just for the elite classes. The Dharma was for the Imperial family and some monks and priests. Shinran Shonin, after realizing the true essence of Shakyamuni Buddha's teaching through Honen Shonin, brought the teaching to all the people. He shared the message of the Great Vessel (Mahayana) that carries everyone to the realm of ultimate Oneness with only one condition; that

is, to hear and appreciate the reason that no conditions are required of us. Age, class, gender; whether ordained or not, single or married, and even the state of our minds are of no concern. This is what Shakyamuni Buddha said, and what Shinran Shonin taught. They had shown us not to rely on our foolish and unreliable minds.

The true Dharma made Shinran Shonin realize that we do not need to pray to a supernatural being for anything. The Dharma taught him that everything happens due to countless causes and conditions. He knew the law of causation. He taught people to live their lives according to the law of causation. His teaching freed people from superstitious beliefs so they could focus on their livelihoods as ordinary people.

The Pure Land teaching really awakened and humbled Shinran Shonin. He deeply appreciated the kindness of Shakyamuni Buddha, successive masters and teachers who had taught and passed the teaching down to him.

As I live my life, I appreciate his teaching more and more. I am just one being in this universe but I feel so fortunate to be able to hear his message.

Shinran Shonin in the United States

I grew up with Shinran Shonin. By

that I mean that I grew up with people who were inspired by Shinran Shonin. Shinran Shonin may have been a great individual, but those people who lived in my home town were as great as he. They might have not had schooling in the Jodo Shinshu teaching, but they lived it. They were simple, sincere, humble, and hardworking. They were down-to-earth people.

I believe that our *Issei* pioneers were like them. They came to this country to find a new life. They encountered indescribable hardships here, yet they were able to live through them. I know they treasured their temples and churches. This was their home. Home is where one can truly be oneself. Home is where we are accepted as we are.

The Jodo Shinshu teaching provides us with a Real Home where we can be ourselves. It is the place where we feel that we are loved and cared for in spite of our karmic differences. Shinran Shonin is inviting us to get on the Great Vessel and come and join him at his Home through the Hoon-ko service. Let us hear his invitation. Let us get to know him. He will be our lifetime friend.

I would like to conclude my article by sharing Shinran Shonin's last words.

Like the high waves that constantly flow back and forth in the Bay

of Waka, I, too, will go back and forth to this world to spread the compassion of Amida. When you are alone and find happiness, think that there are two, and when two of you find happiness, think that there are three; that other is, indeed, Shinran.

Optional Reading

Some time ago, I read an article in a Japanese weekly magazine. I forgot the name of the magazine, but according to the article, Waseda University in Tokyo did some very interesting research. Their research was to find out who among all the figures in Japanese history was most studied, researched, or written about. They listed all existing papers, theses, books, and articles written after the Meiji Era and tallied them. And to their surprise, they found that Shinran Shonin was by far the number one person whom people had studied and written about.

Shinran Shonin is not only well researched and studied in Japan, but is also one of the world's most influential persons, according to D. T. Suzuki. He wrote the following:

The Japanese may not have offered very many original ideas to world thought or world culture, but in Shin we find a major contribution that the Japanese can make to the world and to all other Buddhist Schools. (D. T. Suzuki, *Buddha of Infinite Light* (Boston & London: Shambhala, 1998), p. 21)

Rev. Matsumoto

Continued from Front Page

We just go through the motions, living out each day without thoughts, questions, hope, or faith. We allow others to determine how we should think or who we should be. And we thereby lose our sense of identity, connection with others, place in the world, sense of history, and our sense of value, worth and responsibility.

So it is important to have a "name." It might be said that when a person is able to take her or his "name," she or he is truly able to live. When a person is able to be "named," she can be identified and known as a human being; he can be seen and heard. A person with a "name" can be the recipient and giver of meaning and value.

Revealing a Name

In Buddhism as well there is an understanding that a name is not just a label. A name can become an expression of the significance of a person's life; a person can come to embody the significance of one's name.

Certainly, we know the historical Buddha by his names: "Siddhārtha" (his given name), "Gautama" (his family name), or "Śakyāmini" (sage of the Śakyā clan). However, the Buddha is more often referred to by his ten titles, which include *tathāgata* ("thus-gone" & "thus-come"), *arhat* (one worthy of alms-giving), *anuttara* (unsurpassed), *samyak-sambuddha* (fully enlightened), and *buddha-bhagavat* (the awakened one & world-honored one).

Shinran also had many names: "Matsuwakamaru" (his birth name), "Hannen," "Shakkū," and "Zenshin" (his priestly names), and "Fujii Yoshizane" (a name forced upon him by the authorities). However, Shinran finally realized his true self and revealed his true

name, "Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Sakyamuni." In so doing, he realized his humanity and revealed to us—through his life and teaching—that we can do so as well.

Shinran teaches us to say the nembutsu (*Namu Amida Butsu*) and entrust in Amida Buddha's Primal Vow throughout our lives—everyday, at any time, place or circumstance. For as we say the nembutsu, we come to hear the nembutsu. And as we hear the nembutsu we come to realize that the nembutsu is really the Buddha's voice—*Namu Amida Butsu* is really the Buddha's Name. As Shinran says, "Compassionate means' refers to manifesting form, revealing a name, and making itself known to sentient beings. It refers to Amida Buddha."²

As we hear Amida's voice, the infinite wisdom and compassion of the Buddha is revealed to us as Name—*Namu Amida Butsu*. We awaken to the reality of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow—the basic of wish of life, which is to become itself and give itself to others (us) that that we may live. As we hear the Buddha's Name, we find ourselves living within the Buddha's Vow. We find that we can make that Vow our own and become fully engaged in striving to realize freedom and equality throughout the world. Then, like Sakyamuni Buddha and Shinran Shōnin we can come to realize our own true "names" and become truly able to live. And like Nelson Mandela, as we realize our "names" together with all other beings, all of our faces will come to be seen and our voices will come to be heard. And the significance of our lives will be shared with all beings in harmony, reconciliation, and love.

¹ Information on Mandela's life and names from: The Nelson Mandela Foundation website; www.nelsonmandela.org

² Shinran, *Notes on Once-Calling and Many-Calling*, Collected Works of Shinran I, 486.

Rev. Umezu

Continued from Page 2

hundred days, rain or shine, until he made the final commitment to become a disciple of Honen Shonin. He literally used his legs to hear the teaching.

There is a church I know of that does encourage its members to come more regularly. I would like to share what

they are doing. My wife and I visited the Buddhist Church of Lodi (located between Sacramento and Stockton, California) for their Hoon-ko Service in November. We saw people getting attendance stickers from Mrs. Ayano Kusunoki after the service. According to Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, the stickers were originally given to their Dharma School students whenever they attended services, but now everyone wants

to get a sticker after service. We thought it was a great idea. Everyone is looking forward to being able to listen to the nembutsu teaching and receiving an attendance sticker on Sunday.

As we start the New Year, let us use our legs more to listen to the nembutsu teaching. By doing so, we can say *Namu Amida Butsu* in appreciation and have a very happy New Year.

President's Message

Continued from Page 2

to finance their educations for the long-term benefit of our BCA Sangha.

BCA and the Endowment Foundation are working together to develop ideas for paying back the BCAEF loans and this cooperative relationship will benefit both organizations. We're also jointly working on development and fundraising that will help BCA meet current and long term financial needs. Like most all non-profit organizations, we rely on continued donations for funding since endowments rarely provide full funding on their own.

We're also taking a strong look at how we can better help our temples and churches.

We can achieve great things when working together.

If you're one to make New Year's resolutions and don't already attend your temple or church on a regular basis, I encourage you to do so starting this year. Some people attend church primarily to learn about the Buddha Dharma while others may appreciate the social aspects of being with others. Both actions are important. Being among others offers opportunities to learn firsthand about fundamental Buddhist teachings, such as understanding the issues created by our own egos and the value of compassionate hearts. In this way, social interaction with fellow sangha members is an essential part of our Jodo Shinshu practice. In addition, from a very practical perspective, be-

ing at the temple can provide efficient communications and a good way to understand the workings of the sangha, two things that are essential to taking care of our temples.

Our last travels for BCA in 2013 ended with the National Board Meeting at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) on Dec. 7, and a wonderful experience visiting with friends and acquaintances who were working at the JSC during the same weekend. The time we shared with these individuals lasted but a few minutes each but the experience captured the feelings from our various trips during the year. We were very fortunate to be among such thoughtful, sincere, and positive people. Thank you to all for helping brighten the world.

In Gassho

Rev. Kobata

Continued from Page 2

descriptions of activities enjoyed, and concerns about the Jodo Shinshu sangha and world at-large. It was this energy that is the Wheel's momentum as Shinran Shonin encouraged, "May there be peace in the world, and the Buddha's teaching spread!" (CWS page 560)

Coincidentally nine years of Wheel of Dharmas calculates out to 108 issues. As many of you are familiar, in the Buddhist view, 108 represents the variety of afflictions that the human condition is subject to. It's symbolized in the ringing of temple bell at midnight of December 31, January 1. The ringing out/ending of the old year's accumulated delusions and passing of history, and beginning the

New Year with a clean slate or page in the continuing story of Jodo Shinshu in America. So with this turn of the Wheel of Dharma, the English editorship has been transferred to the Center of Buddhist Education and BCA Headquarters team to receive materials for consideration for publication in the Wheel of Dharma at: WODeditor@bcahq.org

Namo AmidaButsu



The Buddhadharma Practitioners' Quarterly, Winter 2013 issue features this photo of the BCSF's participation in the San Francisco Pride Parade, with an article by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara: "Let's Talk: Is My Sangha Inclusive?"

Photo by Philipp Weitz

今月の法話

「悲しみの中の幸せ」

名誉開教使、ホワイトリバー仏教会 小杭好臣



悲しい体験の中に幸せを知った人に出会った。

私がオハイオ州クリブランドに住んでいた、1979年頃の出来事だった。...

1979年代は、エイズは十分に研究されておらず、不治の病と恐れられ、治療方法も知られていなかった。...

「あなたは、可笑しい、変な牧師だ、他の牧師たちは素晴らしい祈りをしてくれているのに、あなたは何も祈っていない。...

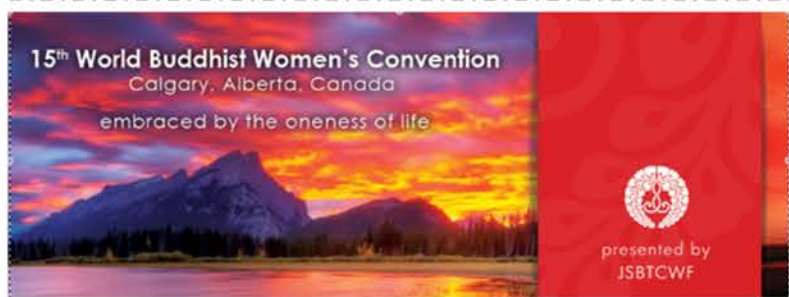
翌日、ホットしている私に、同じ病院の専属牧師から、再度のデンワがあった。「昨日会ったエイズの患者さんが、どうしても、あなたに会いたい、と、願っている。...

3回目の出会いのときであった。丁度、ランチの時、病院の食事は不味いと文句をいながら、ホークにさしたビーフの一切れを口にもって行く時であった。...

をみながら、おそる、おそる、「ビーフです」と答えた。「牛が命を犠牲にして、死んでゆくお前の命を支えているのか！」と私はいった。...

私の訪問にも、習い立ての合掌の姿で、迎えてくれるようになった。二人は、お互いに合掌して、挨拶する出会いとなった。...

それから、三週間ぐらいたった頃であつたらうか、病院の専属牧師から、彼の死が知らされた。...



大佛世界会婦界

2015年5月30日(土)31日(日)に第十五回、世界佛教婦人会大会がカナダ、カルガリーで開催されます。...

念仏の声を世界に！ 築地本願寺のグローバル化に向けて

小杭好臣師、1940年佐賀県唐津市に出生、衆徒となる。1962年龍谷大学卒業後開教使として渡米しロスアンゼルス別院、サンフランシスコ本部、オックスナード仏教会を歴任。...



スピーチ仏教会にて前列左より竹内師、小杭師、猪原師

10月下旬から12月中旬にかけて東京築地本願寺の職員、猪原慶成師と竹内浄土師がBCA各仏教会を訪れ、開教使や門徒から歓迎を受けた。...

2014年春季パシフィックセミナー 「信心生活の利益について」

講師：深川 宣暢 教授 龍谷大学大学院文学研究科真宗学 浄土真宗本願寺派司教 日時：2014年3月22日(土) 午前9:00 - 午後4:00 会場：ガーデナ仏教会 1517 W. 166th Street, Gardena, CA 90247 電話：(310) 327-9400



報恩講では 1月16日は親鸞聖人の祥月命日で各仏教会で報恩講が営まれます。報恩講は浄土真宗門徒にとってもっとも大切な法要です。...

オックスナードに 新しい先生が着任！ 12月中旬に日本からの開教使、渡辺正憲(わたなべまさのり)師がオックスナード仏教会に赴任した。...



Shinran Shonin is always with you.

