Dear BCA Members:

The generosity expressed by so many BCA members this past month speaks highly of our dedication and commitment, as well as the important role that BCA plays in our lives. We received hundreds of new pledges, payments on existing pledges and increased contributions. We received several cash advances from many temples. Your support will allow us to complete the Jodo Shinshu Center and avoid debt shortfall. A complete list of temples who have pledged gifts or collateral since the urgent appeal will appear in the August Wheel of Dharma.

With financial support from every temple minister and almost all of BCA’s lay leadership, we have been able to raise more than $8,089,621 from 1,685 gifts and pledges coming from all 60 BCA temples. Raising this amount is a tremendous achievement! However, receiving pledges from 10% of the members means that there are still 15,068 members out there who have not yet made a pledge to Campaign BCA—the 21st Century. Now is the time, we need you! This campaign is about the future of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in America. It’s about Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. It’s about strengthening temples and ensuring that our children and grandchildren have opportunities to experience the rich culture and traditions we have been blessed with.

After seeing last month’s appeal, many responded generously—thank you. Others asked: “what can I do to help?”

Make a pledge, if you have not already (remember you can pay over time, if you need to). There is a form inside this issue of the Wheel that you can use.

If you have made a pledge, send payment early. This leverages your gift further.

If you have made a gift and can afford to give more, please consider making an additional gift or pledge.

If you have made your pledge, ask your family members, friends and others in your sangha to join you.

Talk to your temple leaders about strategies to encourage members to give and to increase your temple’s overall contribution to the Every Member Campaign.

We have come a long way from 1899, when the first BCA temple was built in San Francisco. We are now spread across the country, many of us miles from our loved ones. So, the importance of belonging to a sangha and having a central locale for Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in America has never been greater. BCA—all of us together—can ensure the legacy of our proud traditions. And we, who are BCA, now have the opportunity to forge a future with growing sanghas bonded through the buddhachara. Please participate in Campaign BCA—the 21st Century and be part of our collective future.

In Gassho,

By BCA President Gordon Bermant

BCA National Board Meeting Report

T he BCA National Board met on June 3 at the BCA Headquarters in San Francisco. Prior to the meeting, Socho Ogui read a proclamation from Hongwanji recognizing Dr. Gordon Bermant as the president of BCA for 2006-2007. Socho Ogui also presented Rev. Patricia Jisho Usuki (San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple) with a letter from Hongwanji and an official BCA oseki in recognition of her attaining kaikyo shiki status. Rev. Dr. Shoyo Taniguchi (Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church) was not present at the meeting, but has also been awarded kaikyo status. President Dr. Gordon Bermant announced that the Northampton Shin Buddhist Sangha of Massachusetts has requested affiliation as a Sangha with the BCA. Their request was approved by the BCA Executive Committee and the BCA National Board. Their request will be brought before the BCA National Council next March for ratification.

Socho Ogui announced that Rev. Ryusen Furumoto returned from Japan and resumed his duties as resident minister of the Arizona Buddhist Temple in Jan. 2006.

On May 1, Rev. Doei Fujii was assigned to the San Luis Obispo Buddhist Church and will supervise the Guadal- upe Buddhist Church.

Rev. Hoshio Shindo was assigned to the Buddhist Temple of Salinas and the
SACBC’s Stained Glass Doors Dedication

Choosing an auspicious day in March 2006, the Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church (SACBC) conducted a unique dedication service in conjunction with their Spring O-Higan Service: Stained Glass Doors Dedication Service.

Two stained glasses with images of lotus flowers were donated by the Rev. Dr. Shoyo Taniguchi, the resident minister, in memory of her beloved mother, Mrs. Yoshiko Tsunekawa, who passed away last June. Mrs. Tsunekawa, before making a transition to the Buddha’s Land, had beautiful visions: images of the Amida Buddha above the Himalayas, brilliant ray directed towards her, and the Buddha’s moving into her heart. At that time, Taniguchi wanted to make a donation to the temple in memory of her mother. She talked to her friend, Ms. JoAnn DeStefano, a professional stained glass artist. DeStefano, after several trials and errors, succeeded in creating two beautiful Buddhist stained glasses, in images of the late Tsunekawa’s vision with hellish rays, and an elegant design from the Kimono which her mother loved and wore for all her life.

Mr. Shiz Harada carefully put these stained glasses into the Hondo doors. Harada innovatively and tirelessly completed this difficult job also after trials and errors. SACBC invites you to visit their Hondo and enjoy these Hondo doors.

Taniguchi wrote about her baby’s transition in detail and published in the SACBC temple newsletter.

Letters to the Socho

Dear Ogai Sensei,

I hope this letter finds you and your family happy and healthy. I am sorry I have not written sooner and that I missed you last September in Denver. I hope you are enjoying your Socho position and San Francisco too!

We are doing well here in Fort Collins, my little Alida is now three and a half years old and we have another little girl due in September.

Alida is now participating with me in lighting incense, gassho-ing, and reciting the nembutsu in front of our altar (where I have put the Nembutsu you so kindly made). She is a very thoughtful person and will be a great big sister. For a while, she was telling everyone that her baby’s middle name was Nama Ki! AKA Buddha!

The nembutsu has been keeping me well and I don’t think too much, I start to see how Other Power works! It is funny how at some times, nembutsu, zazen, work, play, all seem not different from each other!

I used to wonder and worry if I was on the “right” path or had the “right” practice, not I “just discard” right and wrong and try to meet things and people where they are, not think where they should be.

Maybe someday we will finally meet, maybe not, but Dharmas talk is good talk!

Yours with respect,
Matthew Kress
Fort Collins, Colorado

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WJSCC Report

cluted reports by the four missions about efforts to increase the number of available ministers. Socho Ogai made a thorough presenta-

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Chigo Processional

BCA Jodo Shinshu Center
Dedication and Celebration

By Sumi Tanabe. Photo by Tom Nishikawa

The BCA Jodo Shinshu Center Dedication and Celebration Planning Committee request all district councils participate in the Oct. 21 Chigo Processional by selecting one boy and one girl, ages 7 to 9 years. Districts will be responsible for the children's costumes and transportation. If districts/temples are unable to find costumes, please email Mrs. Sumi Tanabe at atanabe@hotmail.com. She will refer to parents of all participants will be sent giving details on what to wear and what to bring.

Chigo are children who participate in Buddhist processions. From the Kamakura Period on, families sent their children to temples for their education. In major celebrations, the children being educated at the temple participated in ceremonial processions and major celebrations. They were dressed to represent heavenly beings. The children wore the “Kariginu,” a robe with long, wide sleeves which is worn over Hakama, a culotte-like skirt. This is the hunting costume of the Heian nobility which later became the official garb of the government. Boys wear a crown of a Phoenix Bird and bright metal pendants called “Tenkan.” Both boys and girls wear the ancient makeup of the nobility called “Kugemayu” which consists of two black dots just about the space between the eyebrows. (The description above is from the book, “Traditions of Jodo Shinshu-Hongwanji-ha” by Rev. Masao Kodani and Rev. Russell Hamada.)

All children are requested to be at the Berkeley Buddhist Temple by 9 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 21. There will be volunteers to help dress the children. The procession will begin at 10:30 a.m.

It is the hope of the Jodo Shinshu Center Dedication and Celebration Planning Committee that all districts will have one boy and one girl participating in the Chigo Processional on this auspicious event. If you have any questions, please email Mrs. Sumi Tanabe at the above email address.

My Gift to Campaign BCA—The 21st Century

Please Cut Out and Return to BCA Headquarters:

c/o Campaign BCA-The 21st Century, 1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

Date: __________________

Socho Ogui:

☐ Enclosed is my special gift of $______ to Campaign BCA—The 21st Century.

☐ I would like to pledge a total of $______ over (1 to 5 years) to Campaign BCA—The 21st Century.

Amt. to be paid Date(s) payment(s) will be made to BCA

$ ______ $ ______

$ ______ $ ______

$ ______ $ ______

Thank you.

JSC Opening and Altar Dedication by Hongwanji and Ryukoku University

BCA members are welcomed to attend a special opening ceremony and altar dedication of the Jodo Shinshu Center conducted by officials from the Hongwanji and Ryukoku University, at 2:00 PM on Thursday August 10. The JSC is located at 2140 Durant Avenue in Berkeley.

For more information, call Rev. Ron Kobata at the BCA Headquarters at (415) 776-5600 ext. 24.

Shinran Shonin’s 750th Memorial Slogan and Logo

For the Shinran Shonin’s 750th Memorial, the Hongwanji has recently selected its slogan and logo to commemorate the observance which will take place in 2011. It is our hope that they will be used for publications and temple newsletters and flyers so that people in your district will become familiar with the forthcoming important observance.

Slogan: 建のなか安穏なれ (Yono naka annon nare)

On April 27, 2006, Governor General Kosho Fujiwara, at a press conference, revealed the slogan as shown above which literally means “May peace and tranquility prevail throughout the world.” The following is his statement:

“This phrase was written by Shinran Shonin, who lived through social turmoil of medieval Japan, to inculcate the path which Nembutsu practicers should follow. It is the hope of the Jodo Shinshu Center that the slogan will serve as an inspiration to all persons that seek peace and tranquility in the 21st Century.”

It is our hope that they will be used for publications and temple newsletters and flyers so that people in your district will become familiar with the forthcoming important observance.
Transformations

By Rev. Jeanette Shin, Buddhist Church of Florin

In many religious traditions, including Buddhism and Christianity, there is a spiritual transformation that occurs when one commits and understands. A person who commits to the Christian belief is expected to, and transforms from, a person who does not “kn0w!” Christ to a person who does, meaning that person becomes aware of his or her sins and is also aware of the forgiving nature of Christ. That person undergoes a profound transformation. The emphasis on the “Come As You Are....And Be Transformed!” message accounts for the success of many of the new “megachurches” phenomenon or the growing “home church” movement; in contrast, Christian churches that do not talk about transformation, the kind people mostly attend only for Christmas or Easter, are in decline. I have learned of this from Christian chaplains.

The Buddha invited people to come as they are, and they too came in order to be transformed, in effect, to awaken to enlightenment. In Jodo Shinshu, this spiritual transformation experience was identified by Shinran Shinonin as the awakening of shinjin. To have realized shinjin meant that one was the “equal of the Tathagatas.” Shinran called persons of shinjin “excellent persons” and “wondrous persons.” But simply attending (a kante and “Touch the Sky” later, Shinshu temples, did not guarantee one’s attainment of shinjin. Shinran Shinonin was aware of this; we know from his letters that he was constantly writing about shinjin, discussing shinjin, and that he was concerned that people should know the experience of shinjin, and also know what was not an authentic awakening of shinjin (his disciples also felt the same, thus we have the “Tametsih”). Later, Renzo Shinonin also would state that the
temples should be where persons could understand Dharma intimately, not just as places to socialize.

Perhaps in contemporary Jodo Shinshu (non)practice, we have neglected this idea that one’s ultimate spiritual achievement ought to be this awakening of shinjin. This moment of awakening to shinjin should be earth-shattering, life-transforming, something that alters us to completely and yet subtly enough that we would find it impossible to say of ourselves, “Yes, I am a person of shinjin.” It would be profoundly auspicious, much like hearing someone boasting of what a great Marine he or she is, yet only his or her buddies would really know if that person was a “good-to-go” Marine! There is no need to boast. We may be able to recognize people of shinjin, even if they do not see it in themselves. But how can we know the experience of shinjin? Are we able to describe it, or inspire others to achieve it?

Because we consider shinjin to come directly from Amida. We cannot even speak of “working for” the awakening of shinjin it is not something you can necessarily get through lots of ritual work like yoga, or through academic study, or even regular temple attendance! But human beings need This is a nostalgic song

Continued on Page 5
Oxnard Dharma School student Kendra Yoshinaga, 12, made a successful third consecutive trip in May to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.

This year, Kendra tied for 14th in the country and made it to round seven, a personal best. Last year, 2005, she placed 72nd in the country. In 2004, she placed 27th. Kendra practices year round for the event but January through May she diligently practices her spelling skills.

Kendra is the daughter of Dharma School teacher Steve and Brenda Yoshinaga. She has an older brother Cory, 14, and a younger brother Kai, 9. Kendra is homeschooled by her parents. In June, she received her Dharma School nine-year Perfect Attentdance Award.

On May 30, a new chapter of the Hongwanji Clean-up in Coral Gables opened. The clean-up began at 9 a.m. We awakened before 6 a.m. and attended the early morning service in the Hongwanji. We were so excited to hear the resounding sound of the Kansho at 6:00 sharp and saw many ministers walk in front of us. At last, the Gomonshu (Abbott) appeared and sat down. He led us in chanting the sutra solemnly. There were over 300 people in the Hongwanji that morning, many ministers taking Kyoshiki course in order to become a Jyushoku, temple minister. Everybody, including those from neighboring areas around the Hongwanji who come to morning service each day and us, chanted the sutra with the Gomonshu in loud voices. That was a wonderful and impressive moment. I was sure that the sound of chanting was the source of powerful Hongwanji activities. A group photo with the Gomonshu finalized our volunteer work of Nenbutsu Hoshidan. He thanked everyone that participated in the clean up that day, bowing his head politely. I was struck by his humble manner, addressing all the members of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

We then walked back to the Hongwanji Kaikan (the assembly building) and had a chance to listen to the teaching of the Gomonshu on loudspeakers. His teaching was about Jodo Shinshu Buddhism using interesting parallels. Those who were able understand Japanese enjoyed his Dharma message, but for others, like some in our group, were unfortunately, not able. Surprisingly Rev. Gene Sekiya, a Sansei minister from Fresno taking care of us the whole day, prepared an English translation of the Dharma message for us. In appreciation for his kindness, we bowed our heads to him.

We then had a recognition ceremony in the same room. We were recognized because we were abroad from another country. Among the recipients was a group who has come to the Hongwanji for 42 consecutives years. Everyone applauded and praised them for their efforts. One of the high-ranking official ministers from the Hongwanji greeted and thanked all participants. In his message, he spoke of the Gomonshu’s early morning message, quoting that all volunteers like that of the Nenbutsu Hoshidan, helps to spread the teaching of Onenbutsu in this world. Without these various activities, the Hongwanji would never be able to survive for all these centuries. Many were impressed by the words of the Gomonshu and therefore decided in their own minds, to help more and more.

I also believe that these kinds of everyday activities, which don’t look so difficult but are very special, are the most important things for Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and would be the source of spreading the teaching of Nenbutsu in the whole world.

All of us from the Fresno Betsuin, have learned and are now feeling something different from their experiences in Kyoto this spring. And I believe that they will be good followers of Shihan Shonin and strong leaders of our Betsuin.

Namu Amita Batu.
Continued from Front Page

National Board Meeting
Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Temple as of June 1. He previ-
ously was with the Kona Hong-
wa Buddhist Temple.

Soo Ogii told the Na-
tional Board that there are 23 Ministries’ Assistants active in
the day-to-day operations of the

At the recent World Jodo Shinshu Coordinating Council Meet-
ing in Sendai, Japan, the
Hongwingers officially approved the BCA Ministerial Train-
ing Program by the Center of Buddhist Minis-
terial Studies. This will allow ministerial aspirants the chance to
obtain their Tokudo Ordina-
tion and Kyoshi Certification in the United States.

Rev. Ron Kengu Kobata, executive assistant to the So-
cho, announced that Harry Bridge returned from Japan and
has begun his orientation at the Sacto Shingon Buddhist Temple under the direction of Rev. Bob Bomuho
Oshita.

Koichi Aikura, who announced that the Hongwingers International Department will be conducting an annual three-day workshop in Kyoto where lay and minist-
ical representatives from all the overseas districts will gather to discuss issues with Hongwingers represented in the BCA.

Representatives from Honzan and Ryu-
ko University will participate in a special dedication ceremony at the Jodo Shinshu Center on Aug. 10. The Hongwingers group will also visit the San Matteo, Monterey, Mountain View, and Oakland temples.

Rev. Hiroshi Joki Abiko, Gicho of the BCA Ministries, has been asked to contribute funds to the
Jodo Shinshu Center dedication and celebration in Oct. 2006.

Steve Yamamoto reported that the Endowment Foundation’s investments increased 4.654 % during the first quarter of 2006. The Endowment Foundation is holding approximately $2 million in custodial accounts for BCA temples. The Zaidan will temporarily be used as col-
fusion of the Jodo Shinshu Center. The Jodo Shinshu Center Dedication and Celebration is scheduled for the keynote speaker. The 2007 Youth Retreat is scheduled for July 15-19, 2007 at the Jodo Shinshu Center. The National Board felt that
the BCA needs an additional $2 million to cover the costs of any unforeseen expenses that may turn up before the construction is completed.

The members of the National Board spent a lot of time discussing ways to raise the add-
tional $3 million. The most promising ideas before the end of June would be to increase the BCA’s line of credit to $3 million, or for another one-time surcharge, how-

selling BCA assets and prop-
erty was also discussed.

Members from all the dis-
tincts and affiliated organiza-
tions brainstormed many pos-
sible ways to raise funds and cover the current $3 million shortfall. The reader is encour-
ged to contribute funds that
will be held at Union Bank to extend BCA’s line of credit.

The reader is encour-
ged to contribute funds, whether for a one-time surcharge, holding a raffle and promoting gift
cards, or for bazaar/odori. Or find another way to make a difference.

Continued from Page 4

Rev. Shin

some people for strife – it is a human instinct to do something, whether it is fulfilling employment, competitive sports, being religious, etc. Like Chris-
tian monks, Buddhist monks or centers that encourage people to have something to strive for, whether it is an increased understanding of Buddha-

The Endowment Fund’s investment activities

The BCA needs to increase its line of credit to $3 million and the

The reader is encour-
ged to contribute funds that

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Order to June 10 to high school students at
the Jodo Shinshu Coordinating Cen-
ter Graduation Program Banquet held in Arvada, Colorado. Kathryn Ida was presented the TS/D BT Mr. & Mrs. Ikuko Nose Family Award. Joann Marshall was the recipient of the TS/D BT Mahuta Family Award. Joann Marshall was the recipient of the TS/D BT Tawara Tawara Memorial Scholarship Award. Craig Mansudal won the TS/D BT Yoshida Family Award.

Jacky Nakamura was presented the Tri-State/ Denver Buddhist Temple Award, Katherine Sakaguchi was presented the International Board Memorial Scholarship. Lawrence Sampson was the recipient of the TS/D BT Eugene & Kanako Sato Scholarship Award. Breat Shusho won the TS/D BT Tawara Tawara Memorial Scholarship Award.

Continued from Page 4

Rev. Shin

study spirituality on their own initiative, without relying on intercession from clergy, or having to be present in some stone building – American Buddhism is not exempt. Therefore, we find

as well as ethnic/cultural centers, which may be severely needed by newly-arrived immigrant community now (which is important), but the importance of temples and monks or priests will grow incrementally smaller and smaller as future, assimilated generations grow up and move on. This will be especially true if English is not spoken, and if Dharma texts are not translated into English.

Also, in America, there has always been an innate suspicion about clergy and church membership, people are encouraged and inspired to “encounter the divine,” or take away that comforting familiarity and loving. Once they do, we need to validate the spiritual reasons for attending a temple.

As human beings, especially those of us who are minorities in America, we do not have ethnic identities, so this at-
icle is not stating that our identities are

unimportant and must be tossed aside. The history of Jodo Shinshu in America provides an important lesson about the possibility that thinking that must be focused on in the

ory of the sangha, we need to emphasize the truthfulness and spirituality is more important that the concrete ways of living. We say that the title of “Marine” cannot be

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and encouraged, therefore, it is im-
or for bazaar/odori. Or find another
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