The Spirit of Temple Members Spark the Construction of 20 Taiko

Don! Don! Don! Don!

Thunderous sounds resounded from the basement of the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple. These are the sounds emanating from the 20 taiko that were recently built by the resident minister, Rev. Fumiaki Usuki, with the help of a long-time temple member, Ichiro Ouchi.

The taiko were built for the taiko class that was started in January, 2005. The class is being taught by Shin3, a part-time temple member, Ichiro Ouchi, with the help of a long-time temple member, Rev. Fumiaki Usuki.

The building of the taiko was made possible by the generous sponsorships by various members and organizations of the WLA temple.

In asking Rev. Usuki why he wanted to make so many taiko, he replied: “As a newly-assigned minister to the WLA temple, I was so impressed by the spirit of the temple members, I wanted to create a program for everyone, both young and old. I asked if they were interested in doing taiko and many indicated that they were.

So, though I knew nothing about taiko and taiko-making, they gave me the energy to commit to making taiko for them.”

Shin3 commented, “The making of 20 taiko in a relatively short period of time is a remarkable feat. Each taiko requires 50-100 hours of painstaking work...and this is on top of Rev. Usuki’s busy, full-time ministerial duties.”

The West L.A. taiko class performed on the 20 taiko at the temple’s Obon festivities.
**Challenge Your Beliefs**

By Rev. Patricia Jihou Usuki
San Fernando Valley Hongwanji

I recently came across an article about a man named Darren who was serving time in prison, locked in solitary confinement. To ease loneliness and boredom, Darren and the inmate in the next cell found a way to converse with each other via the underground pipes by draining the water from their toilets and speaking into them. Over the months, the two struck up a close friendship without ever seeing each other. Imagine Darren’s shock when he finally met that man in prison. Darren had been raised as a white supremacist and even had a huge swastika tattooed on his stomach as an adolescent. His neighbor, it turned out, was black.

Despite the hours and hours of camaraderie the two had shared together, Darren related that as soon as he discovered that the man was black, he felt an instant dislike for him, and he didn’t know why. After sitting alone trying to justify his life-long belief about other races, he was overcome by confusion and disillusionment. Reality was staring him in the face—not only the physical reality of his friend, but also the truth of his own life of delusion. Still in solitary, and with no recourse for escape, either physically or mentally, Darren returned to the pipeline and his buddy, eventually renouncing racism.

In a way Darren was fortunate, having been forced to examine his beliefs he had taken for granted, and then finding them wanting. Yet even if the beliefs that had been instilled in him as a child had been benign, could he have really claimed them for his own truth? In either case, it is through personal experience that we can truly know something without any doubt. It is one thing to be told about a belief, a teaching, or a creed, and quite another to test it against the daily reality of one’s life to check its authenticity.

How many of us are in some ways like Darren, whether we are talking about our beliefs about others, or our beliefs about who and what we ourselves really are? Don’t we spend our lives building up a personal illusion, festooning ourselves if not with tattoos, then with attributes, accomplishments, titles, favorite sports, beliefs and conventional myths to justify our shortcomings or enhance appearances? Like Darren, we are born into a particular set of circumstances that play a role in shaping our lives right from our first breath. Outside of our families, society exerts its share of influence as well. And so we build our identities, too infrequently questioning the veracity of what we believe we really are.

I have met so many BCA members who tell me that they’re not sure why they are Buddhist outside of the fact that they were born and raised in a Buddhist family. There are lots of erstwhile Buddhists in that category who are no longer “practicing” because, they say, “that’s something my parents or grandparents do.” Research shows that a majority of the Sansei who went to Dharma School have left the temple and have not returned. Of those who remain, many express their uncertainty about the spiritual and religious aspects of their temple participation. They’re comfortable with the traditional social and cultural aspects that they have grown up to associate with the temple, but too many are lost in a morass of confusion about the teaching that should be their real reason for being a part of the sangha. We know that due to historic circumstances, most of our temples have evolved the way they have, with more emphasis on ethnic factors than on Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu. Judging by the considerable decline in membership over the past few decades, however, it’s time we reassessed the way we interact with our religion.

This is not a question of belief in a creed. Unlike other religious traditions, Buddhism is not about something in which we believe. Rather, it is a teaching in which to engage. It would be a shame if people abandoned the sangha because they did not perceive the Buddhist way of life to be a meaningful path for them; if they merely saw it as incomprehensible tradition and ritual for an older generation. Even though we recite the Three Treasures, intoning the difficulty of being born into human life and of having the opportunity to hear the Dharma, do we say this with a sincere and deep aspiration to seek answers to the larger questions of life such as, “Who am I?” and, “What is it all about?” Do we carry our teaching with us, from time to time noticing its truth and reliability in our daily lives, so that we can know personally and unequivocally that we are “grasped, never to be abandoned.”

Designations, religious or otherwise, are only labels. Sometimes we adopt them ourselves, and sometimes they are bestowed upon us. One isn’t Buddhist just because one has been born into a Buddhist family. Like Darren, each of us needs to engage in an honest enquiry of what we believe we are, without even daring to address what others may or may not be. We need to question ourselves and challenge our so-called identity. Discovering Truth is a unique and personal endeavor that begins by a discerning look inward. It is then that we can begin to understand that the only true, real, and sincere mind is the one that arises in us from Amida Buddha, which is ever-pervasive Ultimate Wisdom and Compassion.

Nobody ever told us to be passive about the process of Buddhism. Shakuyamuni Buddha constantly brought people to test the dharma for themselves in the context of their own lives. Shinnran Shonin experienced the embrace of Amida Buddha only after realizing and accepting his own reality as an utterly deluded being full of blind passions, incapable of any meritorious practice. If we simply live our lives without probing the deeper meaning of our encounters and interrelationships, we may miss the opportunity to know our own authenticity. Under the superficial guise of convenient descriptors, whether a person is Japanese or not, whether a newcomer to Buddhism or not, whether a minister or not, we could make a lot of erroneous assumptions that prevent us from seeing our true selves. We need to open ourselves up to being able to see things as they really are, to see what is always there. Spontaneous, genuine gratitude and joy will follow. In the realization that we are all deluded beings, lost in the darkness of our own ignorance, we come to discover ourselves immeasurably. We come to see the sincere mind of Immeasurable Light and Life, the only mind capable of unconditional compassion.

The time to challenge our beliefs about ourselves and who and what we are is right now. It is infinitesimally better to feel at peace for the rest of our lives than to discover, sometimes too late, that we had it all wrong. *Namo Amida Butsu.*

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**Rev. Shobo Ohata Passes Away at 71**

With deep shock and sadness, we announce that after a brief illness, Minister Emeritus Rev. Shobo Ohata passed away at his home in Stockton, California on Aug. 5, at the age of 71.

Rev. Masanori Shobo Ohata was born March 31, 1915 in Wakayama, Japan. He received his Tokudo ordination on July 15, 1955 and Kyoshiki certification on Aug. 31, 1956. Ohata sensei graduated from Ruyoku University in 1957. After arriving in San Francisco on June 25, 1959, he began his forty-six year ministry with the BCA on July 1, 1959 at the Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple.

Subsequently he went on to serve the following Sanghas: Onxard (July 1, 1960); Ogden (June 8, 1965); Honeyville (overseer) (January 15, 1979); Stockton (July 1, 1981); San Jose (July 1, 1996); Mt. View (overseer) April 19, 1998.

Due to family temple responsibilities in Japan, Rev. Ohata decided to conclude his long and distinguished career and retire from the Buddhist Churches of America on Dec. 31, 2005. Ohata served as a member of the Bishop’s (Sanyo) Advisory Council for Bishops Tsuji, Yamanka, Watanabe and Ogui. He also served many terms as a minister representative on the Institute of Buddhist Studies Board of Trustees.

Rev. Ohata is survived by his wife, Tomoko Ohata, children, Dr. Mitsuki (Kiriko) Ohata, Mins. Miki (Tae) Shin; three grandchildren; sister, Minori Ryu-jin of Wakayama, Japan. A BCA/San Jose Betsuin sponsored service was held on Aug. 12 at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin, officiated by Socho Koshin Ogui, co-officiant Rinban Keshin Fujimoto and assisted by Rev. Kango Sakamoto and Rev. Myoei Koyama, with twenty other BCA ministers participating in the ceremony.

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**Live A Life of Awakening**

2006 BCA Theme

*Wheel of Dharma* (USPS 017-700)

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**WHEEL OF DHARMA**

SEPTEMBER 2006
Coast District Nembutsu Family Convention

By Larry Hirahara

Working the Coast District Conference, from left: Glenn Kumamoto, Sue Sakai-McClure, Marlene Aso, Phyllis Sugimoto, and Dina Onishi.

The third workshop was an opportunity for specialized activities. Coast District Ministers and keynote speaker Reverend Don Castro held a panel discussion that allowed participants actively to participate in the teaching. The Monto Shikisho circle. Obon dancing, which always is an attractive public activity, also represents the oneness and harmony of the groups.

The first workshop was a creative and attractive public activity, also representing the oneness and harmony of the groups.

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The Convention ended with a bento dinner, with most staying and enjoying another great meal, but mostly enjoying each others company. The Convention was fast paced, action filled and enjoyable another great meal, but mostly enjoying each others company. The Convention was fast paced, action filled and enjoyable another great meal, but mostly enjoying each others company. The Convention was fast paced, action filled and enjoyable another great meal, but mostly enjoying each others company. The Convention was fast paced, action filled and enjoyable another great meal, but mostly enjoying each others company. The Convention was fast paced, action filled and enjoyable another great meal, but mostly enjoying each others company. The Convention was fast paced, action filled and enjoyable another great meal, but mostly enjoying each others company. The Convention was fast paced, action filled and enjoyable another great meal, but mostly enjoying each others company. 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Bay District’s Family Day Service and Activities

The opening of the Jodo Shinshu Center will be a historic moment in the history of the BCA. In conjunction with the other events planned for the Jodo Shinshu Center Dedication and Celebration weekend, the Bay District and Coast District Dharma School Teachers’ League will sponsor the Family Day Service and Activities from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 22. This event will take place at the Jodo Shinshu Center and will give BCA Dharma School students, families and other members an opportunity to visit the newly opened center. The Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) organizers invite family members of all generations to take part in this event.

The guest speaker is Rev. David Matsutomo, who is currently resident minister at Berkeley Buddhist Temple and director of the Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies at the Institute of Buddhist Studies. Formerly a lawyer, Rev. Matsutomo studied at IBS and Ryukoku University to receive his hakusho. After his return from Japan, he was appointed to Stockton Buddhist Temple where he was resident minister for six years. Rev. Matsutomo has authored a number of articles, academic papers, and has translated from Japanese to English numerous articles and books, the most recent being “A Life of Awakening: the Heart of the Shin Buddhist Path” by Shigatsu Takamato.

The day will include a service, tour of the JSC, lunch and activity station. A variety of hands on activities for young and old alike are being planned. The planning committee hopes all will participate and have a good time.

Buddhist Churches of America JODO SHINSHU CENTER

The 21st Century

GRAND RAFFLE

First Prize $12,000
Second Prize $7,000
Third Prize $5,000
Fourth Prize $1,000
Fifth Prize $500

Drawing Sunday, October 22, 2006
at the Jodo Shinshu Center
during the Family Day Service
2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704

Your Raffle ticket donation will support the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) as it reaffirmed its mission to promote the teaching of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and to assist in giving this practice to the American people.

HURRY:
A limited number of raffle tickets are now available for the BCA!

Please mark your calendars to attend this day’s event and help support the BCA.

Need not be present to win. – A donation of $20.00 per ticket is requested.

Church is under construction – a new building for the new Jodo Shinshu Center that will be occupied by the general public and endorsed by a multi-ethnic Sangha.

For further information, please contact:
Roy Yamashita
(415) 883-4572
s.yamashita@worldnet.att.net
Ken Tanimoto
(510) 524-2093
lucyhamai@micmi.net
Why you need the Jodo Shinshu Center

By Dr. Kent Matsuda

As many of you are aware, the newly-constructed Jodo Shinshu Center will soon be ready for complete occupancy. We have spent over $7 million on the building; another $12.7 million will be needed to pay off the loans used to build the renovations and pay off the mortgage. Our Institute for Buddhist Studies (IBS) will be housed there. The BCA Bookstore will be there, along with offices for the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ja (Hongwanji), Ryukoku University, and the Center for Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies.

Many BCA members wonder why the BCA embarked on such an expensive project. I will give you one answer for this important question. The Jodo Shinshu Center is needed so that the BCA can develop more ministers. We all need ministers. These ministers help you when you are born, when you get married, when you have anxiety, when you have a minister. Our Go-Monshu at Hongwanji in Kyoto (our mother temple) has agreed to allow the BCA to ordain and train ministers in the United States. Socho Dogyu wanted to achieve this agreement by presenting a package of education and training provided by the BCA that won the approval of the Go-Monshu and his staff. Part of that package included the education provided by the IBS that is now housed in the Jodo Shinshu Center.

Our Go-Monshu would like to see Shinran Shonin’s teachings reach a wider global audience. The leaders at the Hongwanji have decided that the propagation of our Jodo Shinshu teachings can be best accomplished if the Dharma is presented in English. The Jodo Shinshu Center will be integral in achieving that goal. That is why the Hongwanji was so impressed with the Jodo Shinshu Center and will have an office in the building. They look to the BCA as being the leader in providing Jodo Shinshu materials in English to the world.

Their faith in the BCA’s ability to propagate the Jodo Shinshu teachings is what caused them to donate so much money for the Jodo Shinshu Center and allow ministerial candidates to be ordained in the United States.

Ministerial candidates are not the only ones who will be able to enjoy the Jodo Shinshu Center. Lay members can learn more about Jodo Shinshu Buddhism through the Center for Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies that will be housed in the building. Currently under the direction of Rev. Umezu, the Center for Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies will be and has already been putting on numerous programs for lay members. Lay members can expand their knowledge about Jodo Shinshu Buddhism if even they have no intention of becoming a minister.

We still need more people to become ministers. To that end, the IBS has started online courses on Buddhism that can be used towards obtaining a master’s degree in Jodo Shinshu Studies. The Center for Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies is working with the Hongwanji to produce correspondence courses on Buddhism. Hopefully, anyone will be able to learn more about Buddhism before they decide to enroll in the IBS.

Nonetheless, we can all see that the cost for building the Jodo Shinshu Center will be high. Taking on such an expensive project is not without precedent in the BCA.

In the 1935, the Emperor of Siam presented the BCA with the Holy Relics. These Relics include a minute portion of the cremated remains of Sakyamuni Buddha, Sariputra, and Maudgalyayana. At the time, the BCA did not have an appropriate place to house the Relics. It was decided that the then-existing Buddhist Church of San Francisco building would be torn down and a new structure would be built. Although this took place during the Great Depression, that is exactly what happened. At that time, a great campaign took place where BCA members from across the country were asked to donate so that a new Buddhist Church of San Francisco building could be erected. The current building for the Church is the result of the efforts of many who wanted to see an appropriate place for the Relics. On top of the Church is the Stupa that houses the Holy Relics. These Relics will be temporarily brought to the Jodo Shinshu Center.

Rev. Kenjitsu Nakagaki of the New York Buddhist Church is leading the effort to have an inter-Buddhist ceremony and symposium at the Jodo Shinshu Center with the Holy Relics during the weekend of the dedication ceremony.

Thus, all we want to see the Jodo Shinshu Center become a thriving place for propagation of the Dharma. We want to see more ministers so that all the BCA temples have ministers. We want to see Jodo Shinshu Buddhism grow and become a major religious tradition in this country. The Jodo Shinshu Center will help us achieve these goals.

We need everyone’s support to make that happen. Please join us.

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Continued from Front Page

Bishop Fujikawa has joined in the JSC project, people involved in the construction of the building as well as other concerned individuals. On behalf of the Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to all.

It was in 1859 in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism that was transmitted to the continent of the U.S. for the first time. Because of the tireless endeavors of ministers and members of the past and present, the teaching of Jodo Shinshu has been called ‘Japanese Buddhism.’

However, as time went by, the universality of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism does not regard time, place or other conditions as requirement for coming to believe has been acknowledged by people of other races, and now Jodo Shinshu is accepted not only here in the society of America, but also in other countries as well.

Due to anxiety and confusion in regard to such things as accelerating globalization, war, economic disparity, and environmental concerns, the contemporary society has shown growing interest in the role of religions. However, in taking a look at the fast and furious changes in time and social dimensions of today, we have to say that it is not an easy task for us to spread the teachings of Jodo Shinshu to various people.

In our efforts of transmitting Jodo Shinshu, we need to approach propagation by keeping the sign of the times firmly in mind, and based on that analysis, we must establish the framework of propagation. We need to open up new horizons constantly by expanding our views and understanding on the effectiveness of propagation for its further promotion.

The Jodo Shinshu Center is the facility that the BCA has constructed in viewing the challenges and difficulties of contemporary propagation with the hope that the center will become a driving power for the future of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Especially, the Jodo Shinshu Center is designed to function as a propagation promotion center with various entities, such as the Center for Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies featuring MAP program and other ministerial training program for the BCA. Oversee Education Program for Student of Ryukoku University, the Institute of Buddhist Studies, and the Ministerial Training Center for the Hongwanji. These programs are to work in close cooperation with each other, and the key idea sharing in common among them is cultivation of human resources which is one of the most important subjects for propagation.

I am pleased that the unique activities of the Jodo Shinshu Center will add a new dimension to the future of overseas propagation activities of Jodo Shinshu at large.

As publicly announced, the Hongwanji will be observing the 750th Memorial for Shinran Shonin in 2011. In his message on the observance, Monsnu Koshin Ohtani of the Hongwanji, stressing the importance of the teaching of Jodo Shinshu, indicates to us that our present lives are interconnected with all forms of life, and that the life guided by the Nembutsu is the only path for us to follow. Receiving guidance, the Jodo Shinshu Center has just initiated a long-range plan which will be carried on for 12 years, starting from 2005 through 2016. With its fundamental concept stated as “A fresh start of our institution,” this plan, the Hongwanji Long-range Development Program, aims to promote various programs so that Jodo Shinshu will become as a beacon that guides modern people in this age of confusion.

Among the programs included are; an English corresponding course, designed for anyone from a country with no temple existing to be able to learn the Jodo Shinshu teaching, and the establishment of a ministerial training center to nurture enthusiastic ministerial candidates. These programs will use the Jodo Shinshu Center facility for their operation and, therefore, I hope that the center will restore full capability as a hub of various activities for propagation so that the Nembutsu teaching will be transmitted not only within America, but also to other countries. I hope that you will continue to listen to the teaching, and with this dedication as “a new beginning,” strive to work on promotion of the Buddhist Dharma.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the ministers and members of the BCA for their endeavors and contributions extended toward the completion of the building. Bishop Koshu Fujikawa

Governor General

Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ja

SEPTEMBER 2006 WHEEL OF DHARMA PAGE 5

The Hongwanji Dispatched Lecturer was Rev. Dr. Ryusei Takeda, Director of the Center for Humanities, Science and Religion at Ryukoku University in Kyoto. The topic of Prof. Takeda’s provocative lectures was “Satori to Sukui – Enlightenment and Salvation.” Greg Krech, director of the ToDo Institute in Middlebury, Vermont gave an engaging introduction to the Jodo Shinsu inspired school of psychotherapy Naikan (Inward View). His resume lists an award-winning book, “Naikan: Gratitude, Grace and the Japanese Art of Self-Reflection.”

Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka, in reviewing his recently published “Transmission of Jodo Shinsu to the U.S.” presented the background for writing the book that evolved from his personal spiritual journey and four decades BCA ministry.

During two “Socho’s Hour” sessions, Bishop Ogui arranged for a variety of informative presentations beginning with Dr. Paul Viele who shared the remarkable growth of the Spokane Buddhist Church through the efforts of Ministers Assistants under the supervision of Rev. Ron Kobata, Bob Oshita and Kodo Umezu brought the Ministers Association members up to date on the status of newly implemented, and Hongwanji approved, ministerial training programs that will be administered through the Center for Jodo Shinsu Buddhist Studies.

Dr. Susan Gilkey of the Midwest Buddhist Temple shared her journey to the path of Nembutsu that was inspired by Ogui Socho. Glenn Kameda, JSC manager, and Rev. Kodo Umezu gave an overview of the layout and basic plans for the operation of the Jodo Shinsu Center.

A novel workshop was led by Rev. Shinjun Fukuma, a connoisseur of saké, who explained the brewing process and the standards for judging the quality.

Rev. Jokai Aibko, newly elected chairperson of the Ministers Association, presided over the General Meeting. To expedite the proceeding, Committee, District, and Affiliated Organization representatives prepared written reports.

Under New Business the Ministers Association approved a $1,000 donation to help defray expenses incurred in carrying out the activities for the Dedication of the Jodo Shinsu Center in October. There was discussion on new design proposals for the BCA Monument at the Japanese Cemetery in Colma, California.

All members were asked to submit suggestions for the 2008 BCA slogan and have their Kyokucho bring them to the December meeting in Los Angeles.

Continued from Front Page

Socho Ogui: Greetings

The following speech was presented at the Grand Opening and Dedication Banquet on Aug. 10, at the Miyako Hotel in San Francisco by Socho Koshin Ogui to Bishop Kosho Fujikawa, Governor General of the Jodo Shinsu Hongwanji-ha and members of his entourage, Dr. Egun Mikogami, president of Ryukoku University and members of his entourage, Dr. Gordon Berman, president of the Buddhist Churches of America, and ministers, representatives, and members of the BCA, and honored guests.

Welcome to this commemorative banquet marking the Jodo Shinsu Hongwanji-ha and Ryukoku University’s special grand opening of the Jodo Shinsu Center and the dedication of the center’s new Kodo.

With the Commemorative Service and dedication conducted for the new Center earlier this afternoon, we are now well on our way towards seeking out and nurturing the innovative and talented members of our sangha and communities who can assist us in bringing Jodo Shinsu Buddhism to the forefront here in America.

We will never forget the generous heart with which in many people gave financially to help us see this enormous project come true. Our gratitude truly cannot be expressed in words. However, I am confident that the significant and meaningful programs that emerge from our new Center will serve as a testament to the many, many people who contributed to its completion.

As I close, I wish once again to welcome you to this evening’s banquet. And from the bottom of my heart, I thank you for you all for joining us and for your support of the Buddhist Churches of America.

Continued from Front Page

Gordon Berman

us to be where we are today. We look forward to your continued partnership and support. We hope that you will consider the Jodo Shinsu Center to be your home away from home.

To our distinguished ministers, lay leaders, and guests: I am sure you will agree with me, now that we have walked along the halls and through the rooms of this building, that it is a very special place. We find this in the quality of interior design, from the breathtaking atrium to the calming presence of Shinzen’s statue. We find it in the functionality and understated tastefulness of the lighting fixtures and the simple bentwood chairs in the dining room. We find it in the uncluttered and efficient furnishings of the dormitory rooms.

And we find it in this room, the kodo, where the line that strikes a wonderful balance between the traditional and modern. Perhaps it is the balance of the onajin that best symbolizes our intention to honor the past while we face the future. The balance is struck in the instant of the present, and we are fortunate to share this wonderful present moment together.

The Jodo Shinsu Center presents us with a gift and a challenge. It is a gift from everyone involved in planning, designing, and constructing this space, and from every person who has been generous and will be generous in financial support of it. It is up to us, as a community, to ensure that we, however we can, to meet the challenge and fulfill the promise that the Jodo Shinsu Center makes: to bring the Nembutsu teaching to all who would hear it. Let us commit ourselves again and again to this great calling.

Thank you very much.

Continued from Front Page

Mukogami ley Center, or RUBeC (pronounced as “ruh-beck”), within the Jodo Shinsu Center. The Ryukoku University Berkeley Center will offer various educational programs for Ryukoku students.

Currently, we are focusing on developing a very unique English language program in which our students will work as volunteers at senior centers and elementary schools. There, they will learn English through real life experience working with people in the community. We are very fortunate to have excellent teachers at the English Studies Institute (ESI) in Berkeley for helping us create this program. By participating in this program, we hope that our students will not only improve their English but also receive a lasting positive impact that will transform the rest of their college life and beyond.

Ryukoku University consists of seven departments spread on three campuses and offers educational and research programs in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Since the establishment of the University, we have also been known as a major center for the academic study of Buddhism and the teaching of Jodo Shinsu. Therefore, although we will begin modestly with the English Language program, and various other educational programs at RUBeC, we hope this center will also be an active place for the academic education and research of Jodo Shinsu teaching and practice. In order to accomplish this goal, we would like to enhance our partnership with the Jodo Shinsu Center and the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS).

Without the Nishi Hongwanji followers and tradition, Ryukoku University would not exist. Likewise, without the members of the Buddhist Churches of America who have established this Jodo Shinsu Center, we could not open the RUBeC. If we should ever experience some impasse or stagnation in the study of Jodo Shinsu teaching, either in Japan or the U.S., Ryukoku University must be there to make a breakthrough in response to the situation wherever we were. It is not uncommon to see such problems in many established religious traditions, because religious traditions tend to approach doctrinal studies without regard for the spiritual needs of the hearts and minds of contemporary people. In order to solve this problem, we need to develop new perspectives in doctrinal studies. I personally believe that it is much easier to develop new perspectives in doctrinal studies in the U.S. than in Japan.

Of course in Japan we must strive to respond to contemporary issues, and I believe in Japan we will be able to develop new doctrinal perspectives there based on existing traditional practices. However, in the U.S., I believe it is possible to develop new doctrinal perspectives in a very different manner than we do in Japan. Ryukoku University should also cooperate in the development of these new perspectives in the U.S. by facilitating the RUBeC. If we can successfully develop new perspectives that respond to contemporary issues, the birth of this Jodo Shinsu Center and RUBeC will be remembered as a historic moment in the development of human spirituality.

I would like to conclude my congratulatory address by confessing that I am thrilled with great expectation for the future of this center.

An invitation to help ensure the future of Jodo Shinsu Buddhism for Future Generations in America

SEPTEMBER 2006
WHEEL OF DHARMA}

PAGE 6
本当の思いやり

当時の自分は、どこかの場所で他人の役に立つことを夢見ていた。しかし、自分の中には、本当に誰が困っているのか、他人の切実な苦しみを理解する力がなかった。

物事に対して理解力が不足していた Fraser Lee

だからこそ、自分の中には、他人の苦しい思いを理解する力がなかった。自分の中には、他人の苦しい思いを理解する力がなかった。

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