New Year’s Greeting “Immeasurable Light and Life.”

By Dr. Gordon Bermant

A t the beginning of the year, I would like to send you my greetings.
May we all continue to live every moment and every day of this year in appreciation of the Nembutsu. I wonder how you all spent this past year. There are a number of armed conflicts all over the world and climate change seems to have occurred. Those whose work or daily lives have been directly affected by these things must feel particularly threatened, but even those of us who are not directly influenced feel somewhat anxious. All lives are interrelated, and therefore, armed conflicts or climate change cannot be regarded as the problems of other people. We must address them as issues that concern us all.

Some of you may wonder how peace issues and environment concerns are related with the teaching of the Buddha, or how on earth they are connected with being born in the Pure Land to attain Buddhahood. I recognize that the basis of Buddhism is my attainment of enlightenment or my birth in the Pure Land, and so the teaching is not a wonder drug which can immediately solve those problems. Taking into account, however, the fact that the human race has caused serious problems on a global scale by pursuing their self-centered desires without careful consideration, you cannot say that Buddhism is irrelevant to these issues. Buddhists seek enlightenment because actual humans, due to their ignorance and blind passions, constantly cause damage to their own lives and the lives of others, thereby deepening everybody’s suffering. It is said that Bodhisattvas, who are regarded as an ideal beings in Buddhism, can not feel happy unless all other people also become happy. As we have been given only limited amounts of air and water on this planet, let us make every effort to lead a moderate way of life and realize a society where everyone helps each other, so that all people are able to live life fully and with joy.

January 1, 2008
OHTANI Koshin
Momshu
Jodo Shinshu Hongwan-ji

New Year’s Greeting
Santa Claus Isn’t Coming to Town—or Are We?

Y ou are reading this in January, but I am writing it in December—December 18, actually, two days before my deadline and just a week before Christmas Day. So my mind today, like yours several weeks ago, is saturated with the accessories of Christmas: decorations, great crowds at the stores, office parties, and music.

Indeed, music, music, music. Some of the world’s most inspirational music has been composed to honor baby Jesus, the hero of Christmas: the Messiah Oratorio of Handel, Bach’s Christmas Oratorio, and the great carols such as Adeste Fidelis, O Holy Night, the Wassail Song, Hark the Herald Angels Sing, and so on. Each of us raised in Christian countries, whether Christian or not, probably has favorite Christmas music. There is also the kitschy Christmas music that we cannot escape: “All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth” and “Jingle Bell Rock” are two songs that can stand for all the rest of the tunes written more to ring cash registers than bells of religious joy.

Somewhere in the middle, for me, is “Santa Claus Is Coming to Town.” I’m willing to bet that just about every Wheel of Dharma reader knows this melody. The conclusion of this article shows you that I’m serious about the bet.) The song has an interesting history. It became famous in 1934 as a hit song on radio: again and again and again between Thanks-giving Day and Christmas Day.

This year, hearing about Santa Claus too many
By Dr. Kent Matsuda

Emmarji, BCA Campaign Chair

The BCA National Board met on December 1, at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley, California. The meeting began with a service officiated by Socho Ogata. It was a privilege to introduce the work done by Gordon Bernett as president of the BCA. President Bernett’s term ends with the upcoming 2008 National Council Meeting in Portland, Oregon.

Gordon Bernett announced that the functions of the Ministers Candidates Affairs Committee was moved into the Socho’s office, at his request. Socho Ogata reported that Rev. Ronald Miyamura was assigned as supervising minister of the Twin Cities Buddhist Association Sangha, Rev. Ryo Imamura was assigned to the Buddhist Church of the Peninsula, and that Rev. Dennis Shinko was assigned as a part-time, non-resident minister of the Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Temple, Mr. Henry Adams was accepted as a BCA ministerial candidate. He received a Masters degree in Buddhist Studies from the University of Michigan with a degree in Buddhist Studies.

Rev. Kohata reported that he and Judy Kono have been appointed as the co-chairs of the BCA’s planning committee for commemorating Shonin’s 750th Memorial Anniversary in 2010. Rev. Kiyonobu Betsuin at the Hongwanji ten-day certification seminar in Portland, Oregon in February, 2008, the National Council will be asked to ratify the vote by the National Board.

After the National Board Meeting, Rev. Abiko confirmed that the location of the 2008 Fukan will be in New York City in 2008. Henry Shibata told the National Board that the BCA has been recognized as a 509(a)(1) organization by the IRS. The 509(a)(1) status was established by the IRS in 2007. This recognizes the BCA as an approved non-profit organization for tax deductions. This is in addition to BCA’s 501(c)(3) status. A copy of the letter from the IRS recognizing the BCA as a 509(a)(1) and 501(c)(3) organization will be sent to all BCA temples and organizations.

Dean Richard Payne of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) reported that three applicates have been accepted for the spring term, one of whom is seeking the BCA ministry and the other two focusing on chaplaincy. The Chaplaincy Training Program curriculum has been completed. The Chaplaincy Program and the IBS online courses have proved to be popular. At an upcoming BCA National Council Meeting in Portland, the IBS is planning a symposium on “Shin Buddhism and Contemporary Philosophy.”

Dean Payne announced that a rumor about plagiarism surfaced involving a member of the IBS faculty. This was thoroughly investigated and the BCA concluded that no plagiarism occurred and that there was no such intent.

Sumi Tanabe of the CBE Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) Governing Board told the National Board that the CBE has been recognized by the BCA as an official JSC. The CBE acknowledged and gratefully appreciated the work done by Gordon Bernett for calling for 50% of unrestricted funds from each temple BWA and district BWA to the CBE.

The National Board voted on next term’s BCA National Executive Committee. The Board voted to have Everett Watada (Tri State/Denver) as BCA President-Elect, Mick Kubota (Vista) as Vice-President, Charlene Grinolids (White River) as First Secretary, and Erick Ishii (Ekoji) as Director. Billy Saeki moves up from the FBWA that called for donating 5% to 10% of unrestricted funds to each temple BWA and district BWA to the CBE.

A monthly periodical with additional issues; postage funded by renewal subscriptions. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to “Wheel of Dharma,” Buddhist Churches of America, 1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109.

Dr. Kent Matsuda and Socho Ogata at last year’s National Conference Meeting in Oakland.

Glenn Kameda, chair of the Ministries Affairs Committee, informed the Board that the recent ministers’ surveys showed that only 27% of the ministers were receiving the basic salary outlined by the BCA Guidelines. The percentage decreased for ministers with more than 12 years of service. The committee will be looking at providing a subsidy for ministers to help pay for supplemental health insurance.

Susan Battiri of the Insurance Committee recommended that all BCA temples and temple organizations be consolidated into a single group program. Every temple could save money this way. Ms. Battiri also recommended that all temple board members be covered by directors and officers liability insurance policy.

The 4th Annual Youth Advocacy Committee Summit will be held at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple in January, 2008. A combined YBA Advisors and College Summit is being planned for March, 2008 at the Jodo Shinshu Center.

Calvin Doi, chair of the BCA Social Welfare Fund, announced that $10,000 was given to the Niigata Earthquake Fund in August, 2007. The National Board approved the Social Welfare Committee’s recommendation to give $15,000 to the Rebuilding Lives Project in Sri Lanka and $10,000 to UNICEF to help children in the Darfur area of Sudan. Billy Saeki from the Ad Hoc Committee on JSC Financing reported on the BCA debt for the Jodo Shinshu Center and on the money raised from the BCA Campaign. The National Board gave its approval of the report and indicated that the report complied with the White River Resolution passed at the March, 2007 BCA National Council Meeting. The National Board approved the following motions to give the BCA Executive Committee the authority to refinance loans for the JSC, to give the Executive Committee the authority to sell the Bishop’s residence in Belmont, California, if necessary; to give the Executive Committee the authority to sell the BCA Headquarters building in San Francisco, if necessary; to sell interests in the JSC to appropriate partners; to continue efforts to secure favorable loans or gifts from organizations affiliated with the BCA; and to start a special BCA dues assessment of $25 a member yearly for five years beginning fiscal year 2009. These motions will need to be ratified by the National Council.

After much debate, the National Board approved the budget for 2008-2009. Treasurer Everett Watada explained to the National Board that every effort was made to keep dues to a minimum. Many BCA committees and organizations had part of their allocations reduced. The dues will be approximately $84 per person, not including the $25 special assessment discussed in the previous paragraph.

CBE SEMINAR: “Crossing Over to Shin Buddhism”

The BCA Center for Buddhist Education and Direction will present for the first time a weekend seminar geared toward temple newcomers who come from a non-Shin Buddhist tradition background.

CBE Director Rev. Kodo Umezu recruited 13 converts to join him in this special seminar to be held at the Jodo Shinshu Center in San Francisco, CA 94109. In speaking about the concept for this seminar, Rev. Umez reported that newcomers coming to our BCA temples must at times feel like fish out of water. So much of our temple’s history, practices, and activities are based on the history and experience of the Japanese American community and what many BCA members of Japanese ancestry might take for granted could be something totally alien to a newcomer.

The Rev. Donald Castro from the Seattle Betsuin will be the guest speaker at the opening service. Panel discussions and workshops have been planned to provide members with a stronger foundation in Buddhism and our Shin Buddhist way of life. “It’s obvious that the education and social needs of newcomers will be different and we want to give them an opportunity to share their ideas and concerns and to give them the opportunity to learn more about Shin Buddhism and themselves at the same time,” said Mr. Umezu.

Registration for this seminar is $60 per person and lodging at the Jodo Shinshu Center in San Francisco will be in the first floor, first serve basis.

For further information about this seminar, contact Rev. Kodo Umezu at: admin@cbe-bca.org or call (510) 809-1460.

The 2008-2012 BCA theme will follow the slogan for Shinran Shonin’s 750th Memorial commemoration:

May Peace and Tranquility Prevail Throughout the World (Yono naka annon nare).

We gratefully acknowledge contribution to the Wheel of Dharma by the following donors:

Greeley Buddhist Church Women’s Club .......................$25 Sinaloa BWA ..............................................$100

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But we were all still essentially to have been recommended for the Institute of Buddhist Systematized Program of Education.

The Institute to coordinate our study efforts and even news letters, our focus was without telephones, television or any other distractions. We would be invited to participate in the Kyoshi Training in December. We could pass this four hour examination, scheduled a Kyoshi Examination Ogui’s earnest request and students joined the Kyoshi Session.

Japan to consider having a foreign systematized Program with Continuing Education Programs, and 2003, he came with a vision.

While Socho Ogui worked with the Institute of Buddhist Seminars. Under the direction of Rev. Kodo Umezu of the Jodo Shinshu Ministry.

With this in mind, he developed the Minister’s Assistants Program with Continuing Education Seminars. Under the direction of Rev. Kodo Umezu of the Jodo Shinshu Center, MAP (Minister’s Assistants Program) Quest and Kyoshos were developed to organize our training. With a systematized program of education, BCA and Socho Ogui were able to petition Hongwanji in Japan to consider having a foreign students’ Kyoshi Training session.

In February of this year, Hongwanji responded to Socho Ogui’s earnest request and scheduled a Kyoshō Examination to be proctored in mid-June. If we passed the first hour examination, we would be invited to participate in Kyoshō Training in December.

On Dec. 3, eleven candidates for the Minister’s Assistants Program for Kyoshō Training Orientation at the Nishi Hongwanji International Center in Kyoto, Japan. The next day, we entered the famous Nishiyama Betsuin for 10 days of rigorous training orientation at the Bishiyama Betsuin, is a large temple facility with modern monastery, a kitchen and dining area, Japanese style bath areas, dorms, a Kodo, which is a large room with a full Onjaï for us to practice ritual and services, and of course a beautiful Honda.

Our class had 78 participants and 16 of us were “foreigners” from the US, Canada, Australia, and England.

We were a unique class of international Dharma Seekers. Socho Ogui worked with the Hongwanji International Center to get special permission to perform services in a seated position.

Our training was also unique because we trained with our Japanese classmates at the same time; sometimes with a translator in the same classroom, and other times in separate classrooms.

During our training, we had no responsibilities other than to pay attention and learn. We were asked to be mindful and to live in the moment. When it was time to eat, we ate. When it was time to study, we studied; and when it was time for us to lead services, we had to put aside distractions, and pay attention to what we were doing. Although “living in the moment” sounds easy, it is not so easy to do.

Before going to Japan, many of us thought that when it comes to chanting, ritual, and services, we would be lacking, since most of the Japanese trainees came from Temple families. But, to our relief, we found that most of what we were learning was also new to them, and they were as nervous as we were.

As with many things in life, how much we gained from the experience could only be a reflection of the genuine effort we gave to fully participate.

Receiving Kyoshō is not a finish line, but rather a starting point. Kyoshō Certification simply means that we were able to meet the minimum Hongwanji requirement.

We would like to thank Socho Ogui, Rev. Kodo Umezu, Rev. Ron Kobata (Assistant to the Bishop), the BCA, our Mentoring Ministers in Japan and England, and also the entire staff at the Nishiyama Betsuin and the International Center, for their guidance and support. Special thanks to Rev. Harry Bridge and to Rev. Gene Sekiya and Rev. Masako Sugimoto (from the International Center) for all of their support and encouragement throughout the training session.

Standing, from left to right: Masami Hayashi (Salt Lake), James Martin (Canada), Victoria Yoshimura (Japan), George Gately (Australia), Art Kaufman (Hawaii), Richard Tennes (Hawaii), Jim Winick (Seattle), Carol O’Dowd (Tri-State/Denver), Tim Rye (Bris/Oakland), Carol Castile (Sacramento). Seated: Joanne Med(Marin), Michael Endo (Oakland), Rev. Dr. Hisao Inagaki, Patti Oshita (Sacramento), Peter Inokoji-Kim (Tri-State/Denver), Mutsumi Wondra (Orange County).

My Gift to Campaign BCA—The 21st Century

\[ \text{Yes! I’m enclosing my } \text{special gift of } \]
\[ \text{1} $5.00, \frac{5,000}{\text{(5,000,}} \text{1} $0.00, \] \[ \text{5 or other amount to Campaign BCA - The 21st Century.} \]

\[ \text{Yes! I would like to pledge a total of } \text{1} $5.00, \frac{5,000}{\text{(5,000,}} \text{1} $0.00, \] \[ \text{5 or other amount over a period of } \text{1 to 5 years} \text{ to Campaign BCA - The 21st Century.} \]

\[ \text{Check enclosed, made payable to Campaign BCA - The 21st Century.} \]

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For more information, please contact your temple representative, your local minister, or BCA Campaign Manager Robert Nagashita at the Jodo Shinshu Center at (510) 809-1153, or email info@bcacampaign.org.

Our Kyoshi Experience

By Peter Inokoji-Kim and Patti Oshita

The Hongwanji Overseas District Seminar

A recent photo of the Kamo River in Kyoto, Japan.

L ast November, I was able to participate in the Hongwanji Overseas District Seminar in Kyoto. It was a wonderful opportunity for me to re-visit Japan. It is not easy to get to Japan, considering time or money. I don’t take these travel opportunities lightly. I was very appreciative to have this chance to go.

The first morning in Japan, I needed to extend my personal AITSATSU to the Kyoto area. I left the Hongwanji International Center in the early morning hours, for a run along the Kamo Riv. I got to the river, and as I looked down from the overpass, I mumbled to myself, “Hai, mata kisshita.” (I’ve come back).

The Kamo River is a famous river that runs through the city of Kyoto. Although Kyoto is now a major metropolis and a world-class city, the Kamo River continues its flow as it always has. We are coming up on the 750th Anniversary observance for Shinran Shonin in just a couple of years, but the Kamo River has been there for maybe a Kalpa or two longer. About twenty feet below street level, the river is protected with well-manicured retaining walls. Public pathways run along each side of the river. There are access ramps to the pathways every other block. As I start along side the river, I can hear Roberta Flack singing, “There’s a river somewhere...flows through the lives of everyone. And it flows through the mountains and the valleys and the meadows of time...”

Yes it does. The river flows gently and ducks swim through the reeds. Every half mile or so, there is a drop in the river, causing a waterfall of a couple of feet. Usually at these locations, stink or crank stand silent ...watching for fingering to make a mistake ...Iadakimasu!

Through study and time, quotes from the past come to be familiar. Often heard is the quote from Shinran who said, “When I die, put my body in the Kamo River as food for the fish.” It reminds us not to attach to the human form. It is a vehicle and a...
The Vision and Preservation Committee Report

By Calvin Doi and Vickie Nishida

Vision and Preservation Committee Report

The Vision and Preservation (V & P) Committee from Central California has completed another successful year of services and activities. Determined to find ways to encourage attendance, a combined service held last December at the Visalia Buddhist Church welcomed Rinbin Nari Ito, from the Los Angeles Higashi Temple as the guest speaker. It also featured a performance by Gordon Ah-Tye, a local artist who performed a gatha he wrote entitled, “I’m A Link in the Golden Chain.”

In an effort to diversify, the congregation was invited to sing the gatha, “Namami Amida Butsu” in Spanish. As the Committee searched for opportunities to reach out to the community, the New Year’s Festival at the Rush and Sherman Lee Institute of Japanese Art in Hanford presented the perfect arena. The V & P Committee introduced the community to the Kansho, an Obutsudan, books, brochures, and other religious items. Assisting with setup, cleanup, and parking were the young adults from the Ondogyo group, a relatively new group of “smart high school” individuals, looking for ways to participate in Buddhist activities.

In February, a combined service hosted by the Redley Buddhist Church highlighted local lay speakers: Mr. George Teraoka and Dr. Michael Matsuyama speaking to the older Dharma School students and adults, while Dr. Gordon Musaki provided a delightful Dharma talk and activity for the younger Dharma School students. The Dharma messages conveyed were appreciated by all. A special treat for the day was the performance by the Sangha Band, a group of high school musicians from Central Cal. This band originated at the Redley Buddhist Church from a Hamatsuri performance by the Senior Class several years ago.

April brought another opportunity to be visible in the community, as Fresno City College hosted their Asian Festival. Collaboratively, V & P worked with a Japanese Christian Church (UJCC), on a Japanese Culture and History presentation and again provided an information booth displaying the Kansho, Obutsudan, Buddhist books and other religious items. As part of this celebration, FCC prompted Asian Religions Day and invited panelist, Mr. George Teraoka to represent Shin Buddhism.

Another combined service in May, hosted by the Fowler Buddhist Church, brought Rev. Hozan Hardiman back to the Central Valley as a guest speaker. He also shared an inspiring Dharma message for all in attendance. Gordon Ah-Tye’s gatha was selected for this service and a guest performance by the Fresno Betsuin Choir once again emphasized local talent.

Working to promote the Dharma, Dr. Gary Mukai hosted Dharma Classes during February and March at the Fowler Buddhist Church, while Mr. Curtis Koga and Rev. George Shihata presented a Beginning Buddhism Class at the Redley Buddhist Church during July and August. These classes continue to encourage participation from members from different churches to come together.

After sponsoring a successful bus trip to San Francisco last August, V & P decided to again sponsor an August bus trip, this time to the Las Vegas Obon. The Las Vegas Sangha was very welcoming to the Central Cal group and featured a delicious box lunch prior to the Obon dance. An additional combined service and Dr. Gary Mukai’s presentation of a Buddhist service at the Sahara Hotel’s “Matsuri” show.

Always mindful of causes and conditions, and focusing on the wonderful camaraderie, this group never complained, even after adding six hours to their already seven hour trip, as the bus broke down in Baker. As the summer concluded, V & P continued to support local functions such as the Nembutsu Seminar sponsored by CICDC’s BIDC at the Visalia Buddhist Church and Fresno Buddhist Church’s Ohigan Seminar at Fresno State, featuring Rev. Tetsuo Unno.

As winter approaches, V & P looks towards its last sponsored service for the year in December at Fresno Betsuin. We look forward to hearing Minister’s Assistant, Koshi Misunaga leading the service and are grateful that Buddhism has been preserved and promoted harmoniously through joint activities in Central California.

Southern District Buddhist and Family Conference Held in San Diego

By Ralph Honda, Buddhist Temple of San Diego

Mindful Mind was the theme for the annual Southern District Buddhist and Family conference co-hosted by the Buddhist Temple of San Diego and Vista Buddhist Temple on Sept. 29, at the Sheraton Hotel and Marina on San Diego’s Harbor Island.

Jodo Shinshu Buddhists of all ages, from throughout the Southern District, gathered on a beautiful Saturday for a day on San Diego’s Harbor Island. Socho Koshin Ogui delivered Dharma message to the Dharma School children and their families, Sangha Teens, members from the Jr. YBA, ABA and BWA, Dharma School teachers and friends were part of the 570 delegates to participate in the daylong activities.

Temples represented at the conference included Arizona, Gardena, Los Angeles Betsuin, Orange County, Oxnard, Pasadena, San Fernando, Senshin, Venice, West Los Angeles, Vista and San Diego.

Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple and IBS was the keynote speaker. He reflected on the theme and how it relates to an individual’s everyday living. Rev. Matsumoto also gave personal self reflections on how a Mindful Mind has affected his life.

Sosho Koshin Ogi created Dharma message to the Japanese-speaking delegates.

Rev. Yushi Mukojima (San Diego) and Rev. Lee Rosenthal (Vista) hosted 24 ministers, both active and retired, in participating in the opening and closing services, and workshops.

The Southern District Women’s Buddhist League and Southern District Dharma School Teachers League held their annual meetings in conjunction with the conference. The Southern District Jr. YBL held is first delegates meeting of the 2007-08 term.

Conference workshops for adults included Walking Meditation, Laughing Yoga and Multi-Intelligence and Journaling. Delegates were able to participate in ease with mind with walking meditation, then show outward expressions of this concept.

The San Diego and Vista Dharma School teachers hosted activities for students for 5-year-olds and younger, grades 1-5, and Sangha Teens. Rev. Naomi Nakano of the Gardena Buddhist Church and Rev. Marvin Harada of the Orange County Buddhist Church, along with their buddy, Freddy the Frog, shared the Dharma with the youth. Prince Graham, a San Diego Hip Hop instructor, got the kids energized with Hip Hop aerobics.

During the closing service, the Southern District Dharma School Teachers’ League held their installation service of new officers.

To help defray some conference expenses, the committee held a raffle drawing. The first prize winner was Yasuko Shohara of the West LA Buddhist Church. Congratulations!!!

During the conference, donations were being accepted for the BCA’s Zaidan and Bishop’s Memorial Fund. Also, the committee opened a “Mindful Mind Shop,” selling donated items and other Japanese wares.

The 2008 Southern District Buddhist and Dharma School Teachers’ League Conference will be held on Saturday, June 21st at the San Fernando Buddhist Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.

As the Wheel Turns

Happy Shin (New) Year!!!

It’s been a while since I had/made space to include a ATWT column. To my feelings of gratitude and relief, the last few years since I’ve been in charge of putting together materials to be printed in this monthly BCA newspaper, writers and photographers from throughout the kyo- in and friends have generously taken the time and effort to submit articles and pictures. I hope readers have enjoyed seeing and/or, at least, been informed by the variety of expressions of Jodo Shinshu in America.

My main purpose in placing this column in the first issue for 2008 is to announce that for the next four years leading up to the special commemoration of Shinran Shonin’s 750th Memorial Anniversary in 2011-2012, we will use the commemorative slogan: “May Peace and Tranquility Prevail Throughout the World” (Yona naka annon naneco), as the annual BCA theme.

A special committee has been appoint- ed to begin making preparations for local, district and BCA-wide activities to honor Shinran Shonin on the occasion of his 750th memorial anniversary. In the coming months and years there will be announcements about programs that will bring us together to celebrate the heart of the Buddha Dharma that Shinran Shonin conveyed in his teachings of the working of the Primal Vow, shinran, becoming ignorance into enlightenment, suffering to joy, complaints into gratitude, conflict to peace. It is for this purpose that the Wheel Turns!!!

Namu Amida Butsu, Shaka Turye (Ron Kobata)
Wheel of Dharma, English editor

Wheel of Dharma, English editor

May Peace and Tranquility Prevail Throughout the World (Yona naka annon naneco).

Buddhist Churches of America

Youth
“Let us experience the Vast World!”

Visiting new places is fun and exciting, which makes me aware of the important lesson of having experiences with our own mind and body. Studying in a room may be comfortable, but it will be healthier to go outside!

The Nembutsu-Dharma always invites us to go out and know the world beyond!

(From a speech of Rev. Kenjirō)

President’s Message
Continued from Page 1

The great innovative changes made by Shinran Honen, I believe, Shinran must have been the vastness of Amida’s Vow. I feel exactly like returning to and knowing the world beyond! To paraphrase Robert Frost, we’ve miles to go before we sleep.

There is no use dreaming about Santa Claus as we trudge ahead toward our own destination of a debt-free life, but rather requires that one be able to observe it intelligently and even scientifically. I sometimes see this approach at the temple: people talk about things intelligently, but they are just commenting, without participating or even helping.

The important part of learning with your body is that our views become broader, deeper and more open. Knowing the larger world also means knowing our narrowness, limits and smallness. In New York, I have met many accomplished individuals in various professions, whom I really admire. Knowing such people, I feel that I am not mature enough. In a way, being in New York City means meeting various Bodhisattvas incarnated from the Buddhist World. I feel as if I am learning many teachings from living Bodhisattvas who depart from the sutra-books.

When Shinran Shōnin met his master Honen, I believe, Shinran Shōnin must have been impressed by not only his teachings, but also the openness and vastness of Honen himself. Knowing the broad and profound world of Honen made Shōnin say “Even though I go to the hell, being deceived by Honen, I have no regrets.”

Shinran Shōnin experienced the vast and profound Nembutsu world through his master Honen. Shinran Shōnin himself has always been looking at the great vast world of the Dharma, formed by the universal vows of Ameda Buddha. He must have been living in the ocean-like Nembutsu-Dharma with an open and joyful mind.

My favorite expression of Shōnin is “My mind is rooted in the Wisdom Ground of Dharma and my thoughts are floating in the inconceivable Dharma-Ocean.”

Let each person experience the vast and profound Nembutsu-Dharma, and together live their lives with the boundless compassion and wisdom of Ameda Buddha.

Centennial Commemorative Book Order Form

I wish to order... book(s) at $100 each. (Tax and shipping included.)

Total enclosed $__

Please make check payable to: WBT Centennial Fund

Mail order form and payment to: WBT Centennial Committee

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A hard bound book filled with 208 color pages of history and special memories of the Watousawa Buddhist Temple. A tax deductible receipt will be sent to you with your book(s). Limited Edition (order while they last!)

Socho’s Message
Continued from Front Page

November 2008 issue. Yet, being told that this practice is wrong or that practice is wrong, it is as if we are only narrowing the vastness of Ameda’s Vow. I feel exactly the same way.

It is easy to simply return to and follow a traditionally Japanese religious philosophy. But while it is important to look at the beauty of tradition, at the same time, I firmly believe that it is equally important to keep in mind the great religious sphere inside of this vast Nembutsu Shōnin and Rennyo Shōnin, and bring that innovative religious spirit alive here today in America. With change always comes anxiety, suspicion, and skepticism. However, without challenging our thoughts and working through trial and error, the path towards making Jodo Shinshu and the Nembutsu teaching a major religious tradition here in America will never open up for us. It is great innovative change that I believe will provide the Buddhist Churches of America with a roadmap and vision for the future.

These are my honest thoughts as we welcome the New Year. I wish you all the best of health.

Socho, Socho Koshin Ogiu

27 affirmants participated in Visalla Buddhist Church’s Sarana Affirmation Ceremony (Kie-shiki) on November 3, 2007 in conjunction with the temple’s Centennial Celebration.
Richmond Marina and shore — perfect day for a walk along the... Methodist United, Contra... Dharma School also receives... senior programs. In return, the... raiser helps support a variety of... at the opening day, a memory came... There were babies and... Friends of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple Dharma School participated in the... Berkeley Buddha Temple Dharma School also receives... What a great way to enjoy some... Berkeley Buddha Temple Dharma School also receives... Many organizations participated including Berkeley Methodist United, Contra Costa JACL, Berkeley JACL... It is impossible to capture the content of all that... Berkeley Dharma School in Motion

By Jerry Bolick

Reflecting on the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies' conference this past August, whatingers most clear for me now are images of people huddled in deep conversation, in pairs, groups of three or four, scattered haphazard along a hillside or beside a river rushing through the Canadian Rockies, around Banff. These spaces were regular stops for tourists, stum- ming in their beauty. But what is striking and telling of this recollection is that these friends and colleagues from the conference seemed oblivious to the sensador and gran- deur of their surroundings, so completely rapt as they were in conversations with one another.

Such was the last day of three, a field trip guided by Professor Leslie Kawamura, who hosted the conference, held on the campus of the University of Calgary. The first two days had been filled with present- tations, panel discussions, spiritual exchanges and conversations, yet it seems we simply could not get enough of the latter. And this, for me, reflects the characteristic mark of those three days: the continuous and inspiring sense of fellowship, the deep and commonly held pas- sion for dharma scholarship and study.

The theme of this 13th Biennial Con- ference was the well-known phrase, “Nei- ther monk nor layperson.” This and a broad array of topics and issues, were ex- amined in approximately 40 separate papers being offered, most in English, some in Japanese, by delegates from the US mainland, Hawaii, Japan, Australia, Brazil and Taiwan. Canada was of course well repre- sented and we were honored to have Rev. Orai Fujikawa, Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of Canada, deliver the opening invocation.

The keynote Speaker was Professor Mark Blum of State University of New York, who gave a powerful talk on Rennyo. Professor Blum’s stated purpose was to urge us toward a “renewed look at Rennyo as a thinker whose words not only impact- ed his church in a profound way” during his own time, but who also deserves the careful attention of “anyone with serious concerns for Shin today and tomorrow.” Although fervently credited with engineer- ing phenomenal growth of the tradition during his lifetime, as well as with creating many of the institutional structures still ex- istent in today’s Japan, Dr. Blum feels Rennyo’s real contributions and strengths, those we might benefit from today, were as a teacher and a communicator.

Facing times as turbulent and threaten- ing as we face today as a religious commu- nity, Rennyo did not attempt to strengthen the church by addressing those outside of the fold; his focus was on existing mem- bers. For Rennyo, Shinshu’s status, its au- thority and place within Mahayana, Shin- ran’s contributions as a thinker and spiritual leader, were given, did not need to be defended. Furthermore, he saw his role as helping to break through the sense of isolation and division that characterized the life of Shinran’s teachings, as well as being responsi- ble for creating the environment where fol- lowers “encounter Shinran himself and through him, Amida Buddha…”

Face to face, person to person, in every day-language, Rennyo worked to convey the ways in which individual followers could move beyond faith as belief, to faith as the experience of Amida’s reality—shin- jin. Dr. Blum was inspired by and in turn inspired us by articulating Rennyo’s abili- ty to make the individual feel central to the entire cause of the Buddha’s vows…” This theme followed one of the, if not the, most successful propagation efforts in the history of Japanese Buddhism, we... might do well to heed Dr. Blum’s advice and return for a new look at Rennyo’s work.

Dr. Blum was also a part of the panel conducted by members of the Jodo Shu Research Institute, discussing their work in applying Pure Land Buddhism to issues of living and dying in modern life, i.e. bio-ethics, for profit medical institu- tions and end of life spiritual care. On an- other panel, psychologist Michael Christo- pher, of the Mindful Living Group, based in Hawaii, told of his research. Outlining current studies, he explained that modern science is in the process of showing that en- vironments, training and communications techniques based upon principles and ac- tivities that are consistent with Buddhist principles and practices are effective and beneficial in a variety of challenging areas, such as prisons and mental health institu- tions. Indeed, we are being shown what we already knew: the study and practice of dharma can educate, benefit and, yes, trans- form who we are, individually and as com- munity. Dr. Christopher’s work will be published in a book soon, under the title, The Science of Enlightenment. As a partici- pant in this same panel, I presented a pre- liminary report on my study of ground

breaking prison ministry in this country— in the form of interactive correspond- ence letters to prisoners in the 1970’s.

Numerous papers were presented that explored the conference theme, question- ing in detail what Shinran meant by “…the way of the Buddha is the way of the East Bay (JASEB)” 6th... Japanese American Services of... Buddhist Temple Dharma... Churches of Canada, deliver the o- pening invocation.

Orai Fujikawa, Bishop of the Buddhist... Taiwan. Canada was of course well re- presented, most in English, some in Japanese, by delegates from the US main- land, Hawaii, Japan, Australia, Brazil and Taiwan. Canada was of course well repre- sented and we were honored to have Rev. Orai Fujikawa, Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of Canada, deliver the opening invocation.

She had a TV in her car, which at that time was early and odd. They were interviewing a Zen priest who had just turned 100 years old. It was Naninnai Senrei from Dokka No Ji Temple. He was leaning on a cane, but he looked as strong as a bear, and his voice was deep and resonant. He was being asked about his secrets to longevity. Naninnai Senrei said in almost a growl, “Ko- koro wo masugau ni shite… karra- da wo masuggau ni naru.” (Make your heart/spirit straight, and your body will follow.) I remember thinking, “WOW, I want to say that!” I immediately had a plan to buy a cane just so I could practice for fifty years and say those same words with the same power when I became 100.

Laughing out loud, I was back to the present, and ready for my re- turn trip. The turtles carried me back to the bank of the river, and I started again, running downstream. It is not just for fitness or exercise … the running is as spiritual and as grounding as anything I do. The run is settling … as much as any service with ShoshUGE. Now I am ready for the seminar and whatever else Japan wants to throw at me. Oh, yeah … if you want to know about the seminar, Ralph Honda has an excellent article in last month’s WOCH.

Gatsuko

Isuzu Dennis

Fujimoto, IOTT

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WHEEL OF DHARMA

JANUARY 2008

2008 BCA Ministers’ Association and National Council Meeting

In Portland, Oregon at Doubletree Hotel Lloyd Center 1000 S.E. Multnomah Street (503) 281-6111

February 26-27 Ministers Association General Meeting

Feb. 26 - IBS Seminar “Jo-do Shinshu and Contemporary Philosophical Issues”

Feb. 29 - March 1 National Council Meeting

March 1 Eitaiko Service, Banquet

IASBS Holds 13th Biennial Conference in Canada

From left to right: Sensei Kitoku, Prof. Hoyo Ishto, Socho Fujiokawa, Sensei Rinnan Matsubayashi, Mrs. Matsubayashi, Yoshiko Kobata.

Berkeley Buddhist Temple Dharma School in Motion

Friends of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple Dharma School participated in the Japanese American Services of the East Bay (JASEB) 6th annual Nikkei Walk-a-Thon held on Sept. 23. JASEB offers a range of programs and services for seniors, their families and caregivers. The annual fund- raiser helps support a variety of senior programs. In return, the Berkeley Buddhist Temple Dharma School also receives 40% of its donations from JASEB. What a great way to enjoy some exercise and contribute to two wonderful organizations!

Standing there, a memory came...
初心忘れちからず

今月の法話

初１月

つながりを見つけて

お伽話集

北海道、札幌市

特別報恩講

 섬주 besonders

今月は、特別報恩講を開催します。1月7日㈰に開催されます。参加者の皆様には、特別な感謝の気持ちを込めて、特別な法話をお届けします。

お楽しみに！
世の中安穏なれ

2008年度教化標語

2008年 1月号

念頭の辞

新年の挨拶

念頭の辞

乾杯

2008年1月