President’s Message

It’s truly an honor to be the newly installed President of the Buddhist Churches of America. Following in the footsteps of past BCA presidents such as Gordon Bermant, Douglas Iwamoto, Milnes Kurashige, and Jim Uusi is a humbling prospect that was never in my thoughts when I attended my first National Council meeting chaired by then BCA president Ralph Sugimoto. But I look forward to working with the challenges that face BCA during the next two years in office. Last December the National Board elected very capable and dedicated national officers: Everett Watada (President-Elect), Charlene Grinolds and Mick Kubota (Vice Presidents), Pauline Sakuma (Secretary), Richard Endo (Treasurer) and Erick Ishii (Auditor). Each has worked many years at the local and national levels and brings valuable, knowledge, experience and dedication to the leadership of BCA and I look forward working with them.

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For more information, please contact Rev. Umezu

Phone: 510.809.1460
Email: Director@cb-ibc.org
Website: www.cbe-ibc.org

June 27-29
$100 Registration Fee, Deadline May 30.

Featured Speakers
Rev. Kodo Tanaka, Acting Bishop of the Jodo-So Shingon Buddhist Temple
Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Director, Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies
Dr. Lisa Grumbach, Professor of Buddhist Studies and Japanese Religious, Institute of Buddhist Studies
Rev. Kodo Umezu, Director, BCA Center for Buddhist Education
Rev. Harry Bridge, Resident Minister, Buddhist Church of Lodi

The Institute of Buddhist Studies and the Center for Buddhist Education present “Pacific Seminar 21st Century Honen & Shinran Pureland Masters Within Our Contemporary World”

Through countless kalpas and immeasurable lives, We did not know the strong cause of liberation; Were we not for our teacher Genku, (Honen) This present life also would have been vain. (Shinran)

CBE/Pacific Seminar

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By Dr. Gordon Bermant

The IBS Symposium at the 2008 National Council Meeting

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Six Voices, One Emergent Theme: The IBS Symposium at the 2008 National Council Meeting

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BCA at the national level must operate with the efficiency and management con-
I am looking forward to joining my fellow Nembutsu friend, the late Rev. Shiro Nishii, along with many other Buddhist friends there some day. Sensei entered the Pure Land soon after the age of 77. BCA-sponsored funeral service was held at Fresno Buddhist Betsuin on March 7.

I met Rev. Nishii when I received my Kyusho mystical ordination in Kyoto in 1957. He was one of the Hongwanji staff assistants during this time of my ordination. Although he is a year younger than me, I consider him my "Sen- no" (senior/teacher) in an important fundamental way.

It was a sad ending of his physically active life, but after being confined for four difficult months in a Fresno hospital during my visit, he showed me both his legs and said, "It is very frustrating to be this helpless." He was totally dependent on the hospital staff and his faithful wife Janer. As physically frustrated as he was, I firmly believe he was spiritually at peace with gratitude and assurance that he will be joining his late parents, brother and countless others in "Kujofo." This deep expression of gratitude came from his family legacy and life as a devout and dedicated Buddhist.

His ministerial career of forty years, like most other ministers, had countless times of joy and travail which far outweighed occasional frustrations, disappointments and sometimes anger. One of his two sons told me that, "Dad was a real Danji (Kyusho island man of strong will), and a true Judo man." This perception and determination was reflected in his ministry. Aside from serving in seven of BCA's administrative districts, I still re-call admiring his spirit to propagate the teachings when he decided to leave the BCA to establish an independent Jodo Shinshu temple in Los Angeles. He felt he was limited and restricted by serving only his church community and not the larger community of all ethnic backgrounds and ages.

Rev. Taniguchi of the Buddhist Temple of Alameda, who worked as a friend at the funeral service, shared a recollection of Rev. Nishii, where during a BCA ministers' meetings forty years ago he questioned the practice of conducting the meetings in Japan at the exclusion of some English-speaking ministers. He strongly believed that the voices of the American-born ministers needed to be heard and be actively involved if the BCA was to have a sound bright future. On a lighter note, Sensei was a person with a sense of humor and playfulness with, and other things, a love for fishing, the outdoors, his pet prized dogs, and gardening/homos. His son told me that his father taught him how to fish as he, himself, did when he was a child. However, since becoming a minister, although he would continue to take his boys fishing, he would not cast a fishing line out of respect for life.

Despite the frustrations and difficulties of Rev. Nishii's ministry, his wife and sons told me that their husband/father was truly happy and had to have the opportunity to be engaged in a profession of sharing the teachings of the Buddha and Shinran Shonin. I hope that we of the BCA, both lay and ministers, can reflect upon and learn from Rev. Shiro Nishii's example, and continue to practice and spread our way of life for the sake of all beings.
Like many organizations with which we’re involved, in the BCA, the Western Adult Buddhist League (WABL) has encountered falling membership and difficult times but we still wanted to make an impact on our youth and our sangha nationwide. What better way than to help our BCA’s capital campaign: Campaign BCA – The 21st Century! After we donated $1,000,000 to the Campaign BCA (already had previously donated) and made a challenge to each and every temple Adult Buddhist As-
sociations (ABAs) to donate an equal amount to the Campaign. There are 16 ABAs among our 60 BCA temples, and the Coast District Adult Buddhist Association (CD ABA) stepped up first and met the challenge with a $1,000,000 donation. This gave us the potential to raise a total of at least $18,000 for the Campaign!

This challenge by the National Council in Portland was phenomenal! This has really been EXCITING! With the “WABL Challenge” we now have 75% of all ABAs giving to the Campaign! Four ABAs previously followed up... Two ABAs added an additional donation. The total number of ABAs has increased to 14 ABAs – some ABAs have been ever more generous. The WABL’s $1,000,000 challenge has raised a total of $1,025,000.

My Gift to Campaign BCA – The 21st Century

to Campaign BCA: The 21st Century

Name Address City State Zip

Phone Email

Donate by Credit Card (See website)

Aid for the Bhutanese

Nonprofit 501(c)3

Donations are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Donations

www.campaign-bca.org

Santa, Every One!

In the January Wheel of Dharma, I invited readers about a dollar to add a few dollars to the BCA Campaign, in honor of the deadline for responding was March 1. Here is a

challenge. WABL has received a total of four re-ma in ing ABAs to en-courage them to raise this to a 100% participation rate for all the ABAs (we just need the ABAs at Alameda, Senshin, Idaho-Oregon and LA Buddhist). Let’s stand together united in our support of this incredibly im-portant Campaign. The very future of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in America is in our hands. This Campaign is about legacy to future generations, our children, our grandchildren, and our great grandchildren, all of our descendants, all future fol-lowers in the Dharma. The Istiti- and the Nirev have left us a wonderful legacy and we have met few challenges that they will benefit from what we have done within the hands of our children.

in gasgas, Tom Nishikawa

President, WACL & CD ABA
The following excerpt is from the opening service talk at FBWA Conference held in San Francisco last October.

Good morning. It is an honor to be invited to speak to you at this 40th national conference of the Federation of Buddhist Women’s Associations. The theme for this conference is “Hakko Kokoro - Open Heart/Mind.” This morning, I hope that your heart/mind will be open to something I believe is important for each of us to do for ourselves, for our temples and ultimately for the continuance of the Jodo Shinshu teachings in North America.

We have all heard the bad news—the vast majority of temples are experiencing shrinking membership numbers. For many decades these Buddhist temples have served as social and cultural centers for the Japanese American community. At my temple, whenever I see a crowd of Niseis in their 70s, 80s and into their 90s, I can’t help thinking that 10, 20 years from now there won’t be a temple because all these people will be gone. I wonder: what will keep the temple going for the newer and younger members who don’t identify themselves as ethnically Japanese? About a month ago, a member of my temple sent me an article from the Rafu Shimpo (the Japanese community newspaper in Los Angeles) and I was reminded of the good news that, “my grandmother, my mother, my sister and I have all attended the classes on basic Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu given by Rev. Pati Usuki.” It struck me that she didn’t say that her father, husband and/or brother were also attending these classes, and I realized that what is really keeping the Buddhist teachings alive in the temples has been and will continue to be the women members. At my temple as well, the majority of the people who come to my weekly and monthly study classes are women and sometimes it’s only the women who show up. When people think of the fujikai, the women’s group, at their temples, they think it means the people who do all the cooking and cleaning, but in reality, even going back to Shakyamuni Buddha’s time, it is the women who have kept the transmission of the Dharma going. It is the women who continue to show up at temples to hear the teachings—not to accumulate scholarly knowledge—but because they want to be in continual contact with the guidance and inspiration that gives meaning to their day-to-day life even in the midst of frustrations and sorrows. I know a good number of you here today have been actively participating in Dharma learning activities at your temples. If your temple doesn’t have any study class and your minister doesn’t have the time or inclination to lead one, find a ministerial assistant or lay leader to conduct the class. Take advantage of the resources available to you in BCA on the district and national level. It would be wonderful if Rev. Umezu was always busy scheduling lecture series and seminars because week after week busesloads of women are showing up at the Jodo Shinshu Center eager to hear the Dharma.

So let us all join the grandmother, mothers, sisters and daughters—and the men and boys, too—in the earnest seeking and receiving of the Dharma. By doing so we are keeping alive and fresh the essence of our temples. It is all of us as sangha members, not just the ministers and leaders, who must be an active part of the transmission of the Buddhist teachings. By opening our hearts/minds to the treasures of the Dharma, our lives can be more meaningful and through us, Jodo Shinshu can take root and spread its benefits throughout North America.

I am taking my evening walk with my wife. This is a nice thing to do, but actually I am struggling to keep in step with my wife. My doctor has recommended these walks because my cholesterol is a little high. So under these circumstances, I have to walk.

Our walks take us around the church grounds and on to the adjoining road. This road is partially asphalt and part dirt. On the dirt road I saw a wild flower blooming. I thought how unusual to find a flower growing where people walk. This flower is not meant for show, not is it even to be noticed. It seemed as though it just needed to grow there, lose it petals, and die. Seeing this flower growing under these conditions made me stop and think, “What a strange place for a flower to grow.”

Recently I purchased a CD from Hongwanji entitled Thousand Winds Embraced by Infinite Life. The poet Nishiwaki Kanshin wrote: Do not cry, do not weep Do not stand at my grave and weep. I am not there; I did not die. I am a thousand winds that blows around the world, I am the diamond flakes on the snow, I am the lustre on the ripened grain, I am the gentle autumn rain. So I am a thousand winds that blows around the world. When you awaken in the morning’s hush I am the swift unlifting rush Of quiet birds in circled flight I am the soft stars that shine at night. You are embraced by endless strength. So do not cry, do not weep, Do not stand at my grave and weep. I am not there, I did not die. I am a thousand winds to be with you, Always close by your side.

A famous poet Kikan lost his beloved son. Due to economics, he himself buried his son. In time, on top of the grave, on the mound of soil, grew a wild flower. Upon seeing this, he was astonished, but thought, “My beloved son has returned to me in the form of this wild flower.” So touched by this, Kikan expressed his happy feelings in this poem: Hatsuko-sama’s heart and spirit is said to be compassionate. Amida-sama changes forms and approaches me As a flower, birds, and as a starlight, To give me compassion.

Today I am again taking my daily walk and I am talking to the wild flower. I now realize that this wild flower was meant for me. Amida’s form changed to this flower, whispering encouragements to me, “Gambare! Gambare! (Be strong! Hold on!” How grateful I am....

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**FDSTL Conference**

**May 2, 3 and 4, 2008**

**The Heart of Jodo Shinshu: Living the Triple “A” Life**

**Ave Maria, Alameda**

**Awake Awareness**

**Authenticity Appreciation**

**Appreciation**

**Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. Harold Byrne Maussmann, Director of Bay Area Buddhist Temple Institute**

**Digital Dharma School**

**San Mateo Marriott Hotel, San Mateo, California**

**Bay District Dharma School Teacher’s League**

**For Further Information**

**Please call Reverend Kodo Umezu at 510.809.1460 BY APRIL 30**

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**TALKING TO THE WILD FLOWERS**

Aoyama family, from left: Jeft, Rev. Tesshi, Kimiko, Joy (with baby Tesshi), Tessho.

REV. TESSHI Aoyama
The 2008 N.W. Buddhist Convention was held on Feb. 15-17 at the Doubletree Suites in south Seattle. The weekend long event was hosted by the Seattle Buddhist Temple under the theme, “Coming Home to the Nembutsu.” Convention co-chairs Joyce Kato and Joan Nakano explained, “...the theme signifies how the Nembutsu brings us the comfort and security that we feel at home with our families.”

The keynote speakers Rev. Miodor Kondo from the Lihue Hongwanji on the island of Kauai, and Rev. Dean Koyama of the Mountain View Buddhist Temple in California related their talks to the theme. In addition to discussion groups for all ages and Japanese theme, there were a variety of workshops involving calligraphy, taiko, and Bon dancing. Socho Koshin also led a meditation session for the college-aged group.

There were 480 delegates in attendance who were from all parts of the Northwest as well as Hawaii and Canada. A large percentage of the participants were youth, and among this group were a number of certified Youth Minister Assistants. The closing service on Sunday was led by the YMAs, with University of Washington student Kendall Koushi leading the chanting and Seattle University student Laurel Saito giving the Dharma message.

Next year’s convention will be hosted by the Oregon Buddhist Temple in Portland, Oregon. They have selected the theme, “Jodo Shinshu,” and will have the keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno. He is Professor Emeritus of World Religions at Smith College, where he now resides in Eugene, Oregon.

During the closing banquet of the 2008 BCA National Council meeting in Portland, Oregon, Rev. Charles Kenko Hasegawa and Rev. Carol Myokai Himaka were recognized for their contributions of ministry with the BCA.

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In October of 2006, I attended a meeting of an organization called Tsukimi-kai located in Berkeley. I learned that this group has organized tours to Cuba to meet with Cubans of Japanese ancestry, and was planning another visit in December.

On Christmas Eve 2006, twenty-three of us, without the permission of the U.S. government, left for Cuba through Mexico. Three members of the delegation were Nisei women who could converse in Japanese. The younger people, Billy Asians, were able to speak Spanish, as well as being photographers and historians. When we arrived in Cuba we split up into smaller teams to visit with individual families. Our trip to Cuba was to promote international understanding by sharing a common ethnic and cultural heritage.

In August of 2005, the Tsukimi-kai made its first visit to Cuba. On that visit we were invited to participate in a local commemoration on the second Saturday of August. All the Nikkei Cubans gathered at a local cemetery to honor their forebears. They lit candles and ozenko, and did some folk dances. When I asked if this was a Buddhist custom (of Obon), no one seemed to know the origin of the tradition. I had some Buddhism books written in Spanish and Japanese that I got from Rev. Shoyo Taniguchi, that the local people appreciated receiving.

On the second trip we discovered that another local Nikkei tradition was to celebrate the New Year (Oshogatsu) together. We were surprised to hear the older Nisei Cubans enjoying singing Japanese children's songs, making origami cranes, and other Japanese folk crafts. They relished the nostalgic taste of the tembei and mosschi mochi that our con- tingent brought with us on the tour.

Our conversations clearly revealed hopes we had in common, while acknowledging that despite being geographically close, we have preconceptions due to the differences between our political cultures. In Cuba, this kind of sharing among people with a common interest is called Solidarity.

We shared the hope that this process of unifying our ex- tended Nikkei community could contribute to building bridges across political divisions. It is a process that must take place if we are to be united in a peaceful community of hu- manity.

Everyone who participated in this cultural journey of goodwill has come away with many unforgettable experienc- es that I cannot adequately put in writing. In meeting my Cuban Nikkei counterparts I could see similar cultural and Buddhist influences that I received from my parents.

IBS Symposium
Continued from Front Page

the suffering that arises, we will experience frustration, anxiety, and despair.

2. Religions have been the primary source of instruction for what is beyond ordinary understanding and of solace in the face of despair. Traditional Chris- tianity came under attack by Western philosophers beginning in the 18th cen- tury and has been a controversial sub- ject in philosophy ever since that time. In today's United States, with our ex- traordinary religious fluidity and diver- sity, there is no consensus on a single religious teaching as superior to all oth- ers as "the answer" to the question of what lies beyond our ordinary under- standings. Many sincere and intelligent individuals seek a religious framework that supports our search for this "power beyond the self" but does not require commitment to a history of the world that is simply incredible.

3. Buddhism, in general, responds to this search for many of us. And Shin Buddhism, in particular, gets to the heart of the matter with its radical rejec- tion of the power of our ordinary self to get beyond itself. But the Shin teach- ing is more in reception, because it also teaches us to surrender to the pow- er beyond self that is found in the every- day reality of causes and conditions supporting us at every turn and instant. We may use the poetry of Amida Bud- dha, tariki, and Namo Amida Butsu to focus our attention as it inevitably wan- der, but the reality is before us as it is, humble, ever-present, everyday.

Professor Mark Unno exemplified this theme by emotional evocations of his experiences in his own family and the recognition by some modern philos- ophers that "talk is cheap" and that au- thenticity is based on an attitude that precedes all talk. Professor Steven Shankman illuminated the theme with his dramatic rendering of the insights of the tragic hero brought low in Shake- speare's King Lear. Reverend Gregory Gibbs showed how the contemporary French philosopher Paul Ricoeur pointed to the need and possibility of finding our true or larger selves without succumb- ing to the illusion of an eternal soul as a personal possession. Reverend David Matsumoto turned to work of another modern French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, to deepen our under- standing of the morality arising from a personal commitment to relationships/essays submitted by April 1, 2008.

IBS should be thanked, and encour- aged to continue its practice of support- ing National Council meetings with symposia such as this one.

President’s Message
Continued from Front Page

trols of a business, but with the heart and compas- sion of a Church. Thus I plan to continue imple- menting improvements to the management and operations of the national organization. Better communications, improved financial controls, and clearer lines of responsibility and authority.

The BCA Jodo Shinshu Center opened in Au- gust 2006. Visitors from all over the world have paid visits to the center that opened. Visitors from Nepal, India, Japan, Austra- lia, Europe, Canada, South America, Vietnam, China and all BCA member states have come. The Jodo Shinshu Center has hosted a variety of activities including; special services, lectures and semi- nars, conferences, classes, meetings and book signs- ings. The three-story, 37,000 square foot build- ing came with a cost; the cost is that the Bud- dhist Churches of America has a $9,000,000 debt. I believe that there is currently a disconnect between our desires to keep the Jodo Shinshu Center and our willingness to sacrifice for it. There is no magic; we must work together to pay off the debt. I brought seven motions to the December 2007 National Board and the 2008 National Council rel- ating to debt reduction. My intent was to better understand the wishes of the BCA member tem- ples. The message I walked away with was positive; that we must not sell the Jodo Shinshu Center; that it is valuable and worth sacrifice. My task then is to spread the message that the Jodo Shinshu Center is valuable in our mission to propagate the Dharma and for our future generations – Kodomo no tame ni. Clearly my role is to work to remove the debt.

My wife Sandy and my sons Greg, Jeff and Ryan support me in many ways. And I will need their support during the next two years as the BCA president. Equally important, I need your sup- port.

In Gasta, Billy H. Sacki

Editor’s note: The title translation of this article is “For the Sake of the Children.”

In November of 2006, residents in and around the Eastbay community of Lafayette (10 miles east of Berkeley, California) started a community me- morial in memory of American soldiers killed in the Iraq war. The memorial is located on an open hillside across from the Lafayette BART station and consists of several thousand memorial mark- ers, one for each American who has died in the Iraq conflict. The majority of markers are in the form of Christian crosses and, as can be expected, there are also Star of David and Crescent Moon symbols. But the majority, 37,000 square feet of solid concrete and Islam faith who have given their lives for this conflict. But somewhat surprising is that there are also several Dharma Wheel Markers to remember those Americans of our Buddhist faith who have also died in this war.

BCA Youth Advocacy Committee Retreat
Returns to Sacramento
Betsuin July 7-13

This year the BCA Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) retreat will be hosted at the Sacramento Betsuin. It is designed for students 15-18 years of age and will take place July 7-13, 2008.

This retreat will be an interesting and innovative introduction to the teachings and traditions of the Buddha Dharma. This week-long retreat will give our students an opportunity to learn and experience the Dhar- ma teachings & rituals; understand its influence on Japanese culture; and understand the wishes of the BCA member tem- plates. It consists of several thousand memorial mark- ers in memory of American soliders killed in the Iraq war. The memorial is located on an open hillside across from the Lafayette BART station and consists of several thousand memorial mark- ers, one for each American who has died in the Iraq conflict. The majority of markers are in the form of Christian crosses and, as can be expected, there are also Star of David and Crescent Moon symbols. But the majority, 37,000 square feet of solid concrete and Islam faith who have given their lives for this conflict. But somewhat surprising is that there are also several Dharma Wheel Markers to remember those Americans of our Buddhist faith who have also died in this war.

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今月の法話
品格ということ

ガーデナ仏教総会 三浦教行

最近、女性の品格ということが取り上げられるようになりました。品格とは人間がどう感受し、どう行動するかを示すもので、人々が互いに尊敬し、信頼し、愛することを示すものです。品格は、尊重、信頼、尊厳、正直、敬意、礼儀、貞操、愛、平和、知恵、調和、親切、勇気、信頼、誠実、公正などと多岐にわたります。

こんな話があります。ある日、人間は品格を示すために、法律や規制を守ることを心掛けます。人が品格を示すことが、家族や社会全体の健全な発展に寄与することを理解します。また、人々が品格を守ることにより、社会全体の不安定さを未然に防ぐことが重要です。

この言葉に大変驚きと感動を覚えました。というのは、私が妻を仁王さんと呼んだのは、妻を守りたい気持ちがあったからで、この気持ちを守りたい気持ちがあったからです。自分がこの気持ちを守りたい気持ちがあったからです。品行の良い人が、品格を守ることを大切にし、社会全体のための大切な役割を果たすことが重要です。

品格とは、英語ではGRACEとかDIGNITYとかQUALITYとか

新幹部就任する

総会のレポート

「私苦しみ悶えし身一匹」と言葉にしたのは、私自身が、お詫びする気持ちを込めて、これを記すものでした。

今年の春、あなたが新幹部として就任される機会が与えられたことをお知らせします。あなたがこの部に加入されたことを喜ばせることはもちろんです。あなたがこの新幹部としての役割を果たすことができることを心から願っています。

今月は花祭りをお楽しみします。各仏教会のスケジュールをお確かめのうえ、お楽しみください。
2008年度敦化標語

世の中安穏なし

2008年 4月号

総長再任させる

去る二月の教団総会で、西村学長が、
総長選出委員会の推薦により、次世代長として選
られた。総長任には、総長候補を囲む団内問
で、3年後の春、新たな総長を出せようという
決意の声が、団内から上がった。

現の総長、西村学長は、団の責任を
とるモードが、団内の皆さんにあなたの活躍に
期待が集まっている。西村学長の再任に
向けて、団員全員の協力とご支援をお願
いします。

特別寄稿

西村先生を偲ぶ

青山 敬一

二〇〇八年七月一日

西村先生は、大師との間、教団の役を
担い、皆が感じたような、篤実で
温かみのある人でした。先生は、教団の
役を果たしながら、大師の思想を広め
ることを大切にし、団員全員の関与を
求める一つの指導者でした。先生の
逝去は、団員全員にとって大きな損失
となり、今後もその精神を引き継ぎ
ていく事を願っています。

さくら咲くセンター

春の訪れと共に、さくらの花びらが
舞い散る。さくら咲くセンターは、
団員全員の関与を求めて、団の活動
を広める場としての役割を果たしています。

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