750th Memorial Anniversary of Shinran Shonin

January 16, 2012 will mark the 750th memorial anniversary of the passing of our founder Shinran Shonin. The Hongwanji in Kyoto will be commemorating this significant event from April 2011 through January 2012. The National Council of the Buddhist Churches of America has begun preparations to honor Shinran Shonin. Leading up to this significant event from April 2011 through January 2012, the BCA National Council at its annual meeting in Portland, Oregon this year approved a $400,000 gift to Hongwanji. This gift will be presented to the Hongwanji in 2011. Although this $400,000 gift can be achieved by contributions of $25 per BCA member, we ask you to give generously for this once in a life time event by considering gifts of $100 or more to surpass this goal.

In addition, the BCA Executive Committee recently designated the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) as BCA’s commemorative project for this event. The JSC is symbolic of the Buddhist Churches of America’s commitment to the propagation of the Buddha Dharma in America. This gift will be presented to the Hongwanji in 2011. Although this $400,000 gift can be achieved by contributions of $25 per BCA member, we ask you to give generously for this once in a life time event by considering gifts of $100 or more to surpass this goal.

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As leaders of the Buddhist Churches of America we support the efforts of the Dalai Lama to bring the recent conflicts between the people of Tibet and the Chinese authorities to a non-violent resolution. His stature as an internationally respected religious leader is widely acknowledged. We admire the patience and dedication that he has brought to his role as the societal and spiritual leader of the Tibetan people in maintaining a stance of peaceful diplomacy.

The use of violence in this conflict is unacceptable and we urge the Chinese authorities to quickly find a peaceful resolution. Justice and human rights are not realized through oppression and brutality.

With world attention directed to your country as you host the Olympic Games, we appeal to the Chinese government to demonstrate the character of a world leader that respects the basic rights of all people to live a free and safe existence. The teachings of the Buddha makes us realize that a true society exists where all people are mindful of the universal truth of their interdependence, appreciating things in common while aspiring to a harmony of differences.

Respectfully,
Koshin Ogui, Socho
Bishop BCA

Billy Salki, President
BCA National Board of Directors

A Peaceful Resolution to the Tibet Conflict

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Billy Salki, President
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Scout Quilt presented to Jodo Shinshu Center

Rinban Nobuo Miyaji
Fresno Betsuin

Many years ago at the age of 28, I left my parents and hometown in Kyoto. As I left them, I felt as though it would be the last time that I would see my parents in this world. We said our “good-byes” at Haneda Airport. In those days, the area for seeing people off was covered by thick glass. Though I could hear them, they could not hear me. This is how I imagined our final farewell would be.

To evade parents is a very uneasy situation, as it was for me because I was the youngest son. It was at this very moment that I realized how important my parents were to me. I also became aware of how easy life with them was. Yet, while living with them for all those three years, I was not aware of this. While always protected by our parents, it is absolutely tremendous that our parents love us so. With the warmth of their love, we can easily become a mature adult.

A couple weeks ago, I saw the Japanese TV program called “Professional”. Some of you might be familiar with this program. What a wonderful story it was. The featured “professional” was the captain of the Hyper Rescue Team of the Tokyo Fire Department. The Hyper Rescue Team is an elite search and rescue unit whose members are trained for high-risk rescue missions. The Captain is the most important person on this team therefore it is self-evident how difficult his job is. During his career, he has saved many lives and together with his team, has received much appreciation and praise by those people who were saved.

He spoke of one incident that happened when he was still young. Soon after he joined the Tokyo Fire Department, a large fire raged upon a small house in Tokyo. Even though he was a freshman, he was called to duty and rushed to the home along with other firefighters. Though he was well educated as a fireman, the blaze was so intense it had already engulfed the entire house. There was nothing that any of them could do, other than to stand and watch the fire, in disappointment. Then, from inside the burning home, they heard the voice of a weak woman, calling out, “help, help”. The firefighters, knowing that someone needed their help, tried everything possible to save her, but were unable to. This young man was disappoint in himself because he could not do anything to help her. This one incident was what motivated him to join the Hyper Rescue Team.

He continued to talk about this one experience. After the fire was brought under control, the firefighters rushed into the room from where they heard the woman calling. There they witnessed a miserable and sad scene, the burnt body of a mother holding her two small daughters to her chest. All the firefighters including him began to cry. It was then that he saw something quite incredible. The faces of the two children looked as though there was no suffering, just as though they had been sleeping. That was the only comforting thing he could find in that miserable and cruel mishap.

When I heard this story, I began thinking about all parents. Parents always think about their children first. That is their life.

The mother in that burning house was taking care of her younger son. She prayed for their safety before her own. Those two small children were embraced in their mother’s arms and I believe, were not aware of their death because their mother comforted them until the very end. There was nothing else for them to worry about.

Amida Buddha is our spiritual mother. We are strongly embraced in Amida Buddha’s arms. As long as we are one with Amida Buddha, we can live in this world without any worries until our very last moment. This is the life of Shinjin in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. We must become aware of Amida Buddha’s Great Compassion as soon as possible. I believe this is the sole purpose of our life as human beings.

Nama Amida Butsu

Socho Ogui announced that Rev. Kurt Rye was assigned to the Fresno Betsuin as of April, 2008. Rev. Kurt Rye was assigned to the Fresno Betsuin as of April, 2008.

Lodi BWA (Correction from March issue) .............. $150
Sacramento Betsuin BWA ............................... $00

To separate from parents is a great experience as human beings. We must become aware of this as soon as possible. I believe this is the sole purpose of our life as human beings.

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We support the BCA Campaign-e 21st Century for many reasons. First and foremost, we agree with Socho Ogu that now is the time that BCA has the opportunity to steer the BCA and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in a new direction that will ensure that the teaching will be available and relevant in the 21st Century.

Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is important to us particularly in these terrible times when wars are raging throughout the world and innocent people are dying and suffering every day. We want our grandchildren to be able to live in a world at peace. We think that more and more people will turn to Buddhism if they were aware of the Buddha's teachings.

We and the San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple where we are members have been extremely fortunate to have such a wonderful minister in Reverend Patricia Usuki who studied at the IBS. It has made us realize what the Institute of Buddhist Studies is accomplishing and that given adequate resources it can provide the "thriving Jodo Shinshu ministry" as stated in the five elements of the Campaign. San Fernando has also sent several students to the programs provided by the Center for Buddhist Education and has seen the enthusiasm for Buddhist practices that they have brought back to the Temple. We believe that the Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) programs are important to provide educational opportunities for the Sangha to be truly educated about Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

We are grateful for the opportunities that we have had to listen to the Buddhist teachings that allow us to live a life of gratitude.

Gakushu, Ray and Marie Itaya
Takuhatsu
By Dimiti Bakhroushin
New York Buddhist Church

"You don't know what to ex-
pect until you do it," Reverend
Kenjitsu Nakagaki said of taku-
hatsu, the traditional Buddhist
practice of begging for alms. We
can certainly attest to the truth of
this statement. This October, I
had committed myself to all five
days of takuhatsu for the New York
Buddhist Church. The night be-
fore we began, I slept very little.
Tossing and turning in bed, I
became obsessed with the question
of how people would react to us,
each of us dressed, as we would
be, in black robes, special white
linen leggings and sleeves, and,
most of all, a huge bamboo hat
la Shirnan Shonin. We would be
striding through the most public
places in New York City, chant-
ning "ho, ho, ho!" and all the time
asking for donation. I really
thought that we would not be able
to collect a penny.

The core group that partici-
pated for all five days consisted of
Reverend Nakagaki, Reverend
Utada, Rev. Masahiro Maeda --
who I found out lives on a moun-
tain in Japan and devotes his
life to carving images of the Bud-
dha -- and I. Other persons who
were gracious enough to join us
for one or more days were: Pin
Hutcheson, a teacher of Tai Chi,
Rico Speight, Mari Matsumoto,
Hiroshi Murakami, the teacher of
Caligraphy, Akemi Ishida and Carleeta Joy Walker. Many thanks to them.
We were also joined by photographers, and
by Masayuki Tanaka, a business-
man who helped to direct us to
many Japanese and one Ukrainian
restaurant.
The first day, Monday, May
was the hardest. I did not yet
know how to tie my leggings the
right way, so they kept dropping.
We went by subway to "Strawberry Fields" of John Len-
non and Yoko Ono fame in Cen-
tral Park, where we began to re-
tray our "sangha spirit." I was
amazed by the temple's atmosphere of warmth and structural
strength.
Walter explained that our Hondo was
patterned after the Stockton Buddhist
Temple. He chose this photo because it candidly re-
lates how my father smiled at age 83 when
getting older. After five days in
the temple I needed two days of
rest in my apartment to recover.
But when it was over Nakagaki
Sensei was just like the "energized
Buddha," he just kept going on and
on.

Gasho
Dimiti Bakhroushin

Warm Sangha Spirit

A

At the end of January, John Arai, our
hard-working temple president, in-
formed me that Mr. Seichi Kami
passed away in Wyoming. I hadn't
heard the name before so John explained that Jim
Segikahama told him that Mr. Kami was
the architect who designed SACBC's Hon-
do, Stockton and Mr. View Buddhist Tem-
ple's gymnasiums.
John asked if we should send O-Koden.
But, I felt that just sending O-Koden was
not enough. I had an urge to have a memo-
rial service for Mr. Kami. I brought up the
idea of including a remembrance of Mr.
Kami during the previously scheduled Feb-
ruary Shotsuki-hoyo and memorial for La-
Diana Takego Kuo and Yoshiho Ohtani
to the temple board. Yas Yamada, one of the
board members, not only concurred with the
proposal to observe a memorial for Mr.
Kami, but recommended that it should be
held separately and the entire sangha be in-
vited. All board members agreed. What a
warm sangha spirit! I was touched by the
wonderful expression of acknowledge-
ment from our predecessors that the current
board members reflected, even though
none of them knew who Mr. Kami was,
other than being told that he was the
temple's first architect. He contacted his sister, Mrs. Vasko Kami Yedoloski, an active member of
Berkeley Buddhist Temple. I was pleased to
hear that she wanted to attend the ser-
vice. I also contacted Mr. Kami's son,
Mark, in Wyoming. In a phone message re-
ply he noted, "I am sending you a framed
photograph of my father for use at the ser-
vice. Although the setting is informal, I
choose this photo because it candidly re-
flects how my father looked at age 83 when
he lived in "cowboy country" in Arizona and
Wyoming." I was looking forward to seeing
an image of Mr. Kami since many of our
current members and myself had never
met him. I thought that Mark was reading
my mind.
When the picture arrived, I felt I was fi-
nally able to meet Mr. Kami, wearing a
cowboy hat as he stood outdoors with a
gentle and genuine smile! In a letter that
Mark had enclosed with the photo he relat-
ed, "I wanted to inform my friends at the
church that all of the architectural works
my father created in his lifetime, custom
homes, offices, schools, etc., his most re-
warding were the small number of Bud-
dhist churches that he designed including
the Southern Alameda County Buddhist
Church." He even thoughtfully included a
 prepaid UPS label to cover the cost of re-
turning the photo to him.

Though the day of the memorial was on
a busy weekend a cross section of the sangha
was in attendance. Beautiful memorials
written by Mrs. Yedoloski and Dr. Hashi-
 moto were read by Jim Segikahama and
John Arai. The O-Koden from many mem-
bers of the Southern Alameda County
Buddhist Church. The night be-
"Start again. "Ho" means "the
maximum, but personally made financial gifts
of Mr. Kami's broad vision, expertise, pa-
ticipation with Darlene Fujiwara, whose fa-
ther, Satori Sekigahama was a founding pi-
=}
These words were spoken by the Gomouhou in English at the Howgnwani in Kyoto in October of 2004. He was addressing the first foreign group to go through the tokudo session and receive ordination in attending bazaars at the Tacoma Temple where some of my mother’s high school friends attended. However, I did not become interested in Buddhism until I moved to Japan in 1987 to teach English. While walking unknowingly, by occasionally

Visiting the Shinju-ku ward of Tokyo I came across the “Buddhist English Academy” that held meetings every week to discuss the different schools of Buddhism in English. Through this group I made friends and was able to visit many different Buddhist groups in Japan. When I returned to Seattle in 1990 I went to the Seattle Betsuin to see a friend’s skelana exhibit and was introduced to Rev. Castro who invited me to the Sunday service. For the first time I understood what it meant to be a member of a Sangha and made many new friends. Over the years as part of the Sangha I witnessed members having children and attended members’ funerals. I saw how the Dharma was a living teaching, impacting so many peoples lives. I slowly began to understand what “leading a life of nembutsu” meant.

I became a minister’s assistant at the Seattle Betsuin and with Rev. Castro’s guidance and decided to attend the Institute of Buddhist Studies and to pursue a path to the Shin ministry, in order to share the universal teachings of Shinran Shonin. As you can see many causes and conditions lead me to that day in Kyoto. I’m grateful to Socho Koshin Ogui for the opportunity of serving the Fresno Betsuin as my first assignment. I’m thankful for all the generosity and support the Fresno Sangha has already shown me. I look forward to learning and growing with the Fresno Sangha and the BCA community in the coming years.

The opportunity to simply spend time together for the weekend made the experience. For me the most significant part of the weekend was really being in the wilderness, camping and cooking, religious discussion and swimming. The camp is held at the Camp Morningstar facility located in the Camp Angeles/Barton Flats area of the San Bernardino National Forest. At 6,000 feet elevation it is a beautifully forested area with running streams, lakes and wildlife. Being above the haze of L.A. the night sky is indescribably awe some the daytime sky is really blue! Each morning a minister presents a service in this natural setting. While the campsite has all utilities it is still a very rustic venue. By the end of the week the campers have a greater appreciation for nature and for the amenities they left in the city. Our all volunteer staff are gleaned from several So Cal BCA temples. There are even staff who come down from No Cal temples! They receive training that emphasizes safety in the wilderness, assisting campers with the various activities and the basis of religious themes as

The opportunity to simply spend time together for the weekend made the experience. Since most of us are from various areas and different districts, chances for us to get together in a religious and/or social sense are rare. Staying up late and bonding with one another is really what makes these events that much more personal and special.

Continued on Page 6
Meeting Pope Benedict XVI and Aspirations for Peace

By Rev. Bryan H. Ryan

YAC Summit Report

Continued from Page 5

passionate about Buddhism who wanted to keep their participation in the religion active and fierce. Fellow Buddhists to build relationships with. It is remarkable to see the growth of such groups and the enthusiasm of the young leaders.

As I looked around I realized that many of my closest friends were through church, retreats, Buddhist events, and especially in my own college group. Buddhism has had such an impact on our lives and the support that we have received, we are able to stay active even after leaving the temple. This weekend was a chance to find all of our thoughts and experiences thus far and to see the future we have ahead. Archdiocese for the next generations.

book review

The Second Revised Edition of “Memories, The Buddhist Church Experience in the Camps, 1942 – 1945” is an excellent book about our lives in incarceration during World War II and outside of the camps. With the addition of more photos and personal comments, it has added a new dimension to understanding what it was like to be in the camps as well as outside of the camps.

I am amazed at how the author was able to find all of the photos and documents. I am also amazed at how she was able to identify so many people. Reading the names and identifying my family has been wonderful.

I have gotten to know many of the people in the photos in my activities with the temples and the Buddhist Churches of America after the war. It brings back many pleasant as well as sad memories. Reading the book has been a pleasant and warm experience. It is a treasure.

Thank you, Eiko Maeyama for putting together a very important piece of my life. Living Memories...
宗祖達化の年号について

宗祖達化の年号について、佐賀県立九州大学名誉教授、藤谷政明

今年は「本性年」は春分の日が2月19日なので、摂津国寺の正月公演に

浄土真宗の教義を説く講義が行われました。今年の年号は「本性年」で、

浄土真宗の教えを守り、世の中の善を願うための年号とされています。

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死にこそない

今の法話

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