Greetings and Happy New Years

By Billy H. Saeki
2010 was yet another year in which I continued my efforts towards making Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and our Nembutsu teaching a major religious tradition here in America. With my motto, "...to challenge oneself to search amidst the uncertainties of the work and life, and not be afraid to try new things out or make mistakes along the way," as my guide, I have come to realize that there are no definite answers to the questions on how to achieve this goal. Rather, it is a process of trial and error as we pursue our goal. This year marks the 6th New Year that I have the privilege of ushering in with Socho, Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America. As we begin the 2010 year, I feel that, little by little, we are making progress towards achieving our goals. I am determined to continue to move forward guided by the same motto and dream. "There is no progress without change.” On February 28, 2010, we will be observing the 750th Memorial for Shinran Shonin in San Jose, California. We must not forget that it was Shinran Shonin who, as a reformer, strived to change the image of Buddhism in Japan. I am deeply grateful to the many members and friends of the BCA who have supported our capital campaign, Campaign BCA – The 21st Century. As a result of your support and generosity, we have been able to develop and organize a variety of programs and plan for the future of the BCA. I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Kazukiyo ministers, BCA President, Dr. Billy Saeki, and the members of the BCA National Board for their support in our fundraising efforts and their efforts to help guide the BCA forward.

Greeting and Best Wishes for the New Year

By Ralph Honda
750th Publicity Committee

Music is an expression that is captivating. For BCA temples, whether it is in the form of singing gathas, chanting the sutras or listening to CDs and tapes, melodic expressions of the Jodo Shinshu tradition resonates throughout the hondo. On Sunday, Feb. 28, a medley of music will blend together during a very unique musical presentationcommemorating the life of the founder of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, Shinran Shonin. The event will be staged at the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose, Calif. and will conclude festivities for the BCA’s commemoration of Shinran Shonin’s 750th Anniversary Memorial. All BCA members, families and friends are invited to attend this service which will be free and open to the public.

Beginning at 9:30 a.m. the Shinran Shonin 750th Memorial Service will commence. Led by Socho Koshin Ogui and accompanied by the ministers, the service will include a message from Mondsu Koshin Ohtani. Following the service, a musical program entitled “Take Refuge in the Pure Music will be joined by Socho Koshin Ogui and a medley of music will blend together during a very unique musical presentation commemorating the life of the founder of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, Shinran Shonin. The event will be staged at the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose, Calif. and will conclude festivities for the BCA’s commemoration of Shinran Shonin’s 750th Anniversary Memorial. All BCA members, families and friends are invited to attend this service which will be free and open to the public.

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A THOUSAND HELPING HANDS

By Rev. Don Castro
Seattle Betsuin

The name Kannon is generally interpreted as “The One Who Heals the Cries of suffering beings.” When I first became a Buddhist in 1968, I was rather repulsed by the many-armed images of Kannon Buddhist in 1968, I was rather repulsed by the many-armed images of Kannon. Inokoji-Kim. However, I consider the Thousand-Armed Kannon to be a highly trained and dedicated medical team administering life-saving treatment. Paramedics, ambulance drivers, doctors, nurses, aides, medical technicians, auto mechanics, dietitians, etc., were all working in a coordinated effort.

This dedicated sense of teamwork is the cornerstone of any successful and compassionate hospital. Compassion, teamwork is also the key to appreciating the sublime meaning of the Thousand-Armed Kannon which so beautifully expresses the basic Buddhist teaching of interdependence. It is also the harmonious spirit of the Buddhist Sangha that, ideally, works as a team to extend wisdom and compassion to all living beings. As an individual with two arms, we can only do so much but a thousand arms means five hundred people and a thousand hands means five hundred people reaching out to one another in a coordinated effort to alleviate pain.

Dogen Zenji, the founder of Soto Zen, stated that, in actuality, Kannon has an in calculable number of arms. Of great interest for Jodo Shinshu followers is the fact that Kannon is an emanation of Amida Buddha’s compassionate activity. When we realize the parable of the potato, we are filled with a profound sense of gratitude and indebtedness. We are given a hand in countless thousands of different ways but are only able to give back with two hands and a sincere heart.

When I look at the Thousand-Armed image of Kannon, I sense the painful multitudes who are reaching out for help. On the other hand, so to not get stuck with a one-sided view, I look at the thousand hands reaching back and sense the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were more numerous than the grains of sand in the Ganges River” dispensing their edifices and compassionate effort.

Dr. Kent Matsuda
Emmanji Buddhist Temple

Welcome to the BCA!
New Ministers Await Assignment to BCA Temples

Rev. Katsuyu Kurusu and Rev. Sakamoto enjoyed a three-night stay at the Socho’s residence in Belmont prior to travelling to Sacramento on Nov. 28, for a three-week orientation at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento. Under the guidance of Rinzan Rev. Bob Osbista, and Rev. Peter Inokoji-Kim, fulltime Kyoshi Minister, and the help from the other Minister’s Assistants of the Sacramento Betsuin, Rev. Kurusu and Rev. Sakamoto are receiving and undergoing a wellrounded and meaningful orientation as they begin their ministerial careers with the BCA.

During their orientation period in Sacramento, the Buddhist Church of Florin graciously provided housing accommodations for Rev. Kurusu and Rev. Sakamoto in their church parsonage.

Rev. Kurusu and Rev. Sakamoto were participants in the first International Minister’s Orientation Program conducted at the Jodo Shinshu Center in 2008 under the sponsorship of the Hongwanji (Rev. Kyonobu Kuhara, Program Coordinator). The newest Kaikyoshi ministers.

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

Berkley BWA ........................................... $200
Emmanji BWA ........................................... $150
Senshin BWA ........................................... $100
Salinas BWA ........................................... $100
Walnut Grove BWA ........................................... $100
Lodi BWA ........................................... $150
Enmanji BWA ........................................... $100

From left to right: Rev. Katsuyu Kurusu, Socho Koshin Oguri, and Rev. Shuho Sakamoto.

Page 2
New Directions in Buddhist Psychology: 1st International Conference on Other-Centered Approaches (ICOCA)

“Arguably, mankind’s major difficulties at the moment – breakdowns at the psychological, community, economic, ecological, and international levels – are due to a deficit of other-centeredness.” – ICOCA statement

On February 19 – 21, 2010, the BCA Center for Buddhist Education will be hosting New Directions in Buddhist Psychology: The 1st International Conference on Other-Centered Approaches, presented by Amida USA, Todo Institute, and Institute of Buddhist Studies.

This historic gathering will begin on Friday, Feb. 19 at 6 p.m. and conclude on Sunday, Feb. 21 at 5 p.m. Registration is $190 which covers all sessions, materials, and snacks. The registration deadline is Wednesday, Jan. 20.

Please register by emailing: conference@amidartrust.com. The formal conference announcement is viewable on YouTube at: www.amidartrust.com/cica.html.

Limited lodging is available at JSC for a separate fee and can be reserved by email: mgro@jsc-bca.org or phone: (510) 809-1401.

Details at www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org and clicking to Center for Buddhist Education.

We are honored to host and partner with Amida Trust/USA, Todo Institute and IBS in launching this ground-breaking event here at the JSC.”

*The registration deadline is Wednesday, Jan. 20.*

BCA Campaign Manager Robert Noguchi at the Jodo Shinshu Center at (510) 809-1453, located in the lobby of the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley.

*A gift or pledge of $5,000 or more will permanently place your name on the donor wall, for a gift or pledge of $500,000, with a stipulation that the year of its inception was 1929. Yes, the Foundation was formed during the worst time in the history of the United States, due to the stock market crash of 1929 that hurled our nation into what is known as “The Great Depression.” The foresight of our BCA leaders of that time is to be commended, as the financial foundation they established continues to grow and provide funding for our current and ongoing projects. One might consider the tremendous conviction of our BCA leaders in 1929 regarding the need for an endowment fund despite economic hardships of the time.

In 1929, the ministers and lay leaders of BCA began discussion of establishing a permanent, ongoing fundraising program to support the growing needs of their organization for the future generations. It was to be called the Hokai-Bei Kaiyo Zaidan (Buddhist Mission of North America Foundation), more commonly known as the “Zaidan Fund.”

After extensive study and discussion, the necessary document was filed with the Secretary of State in 1929. The goal was $500,000, with the key to a change of paradigm in therapeutic and spiritual practices. Participants will be introduced to the theory and practice of other-centered approaches.

A distinguished global roster of authors, editors, and lay leaders of BCA will be introduced to the theory and practice of other-centered approaches.

Chaired by Gregory White (CA), keynote speakers will include: David Brazer (UK), Clark Strand (NY), Caroline Beasier (UK), Greg White (CA), and Daiyaku Judith Kinst (CA). Other speakers/panelists will include: Francisco Acosta (HA), Kazuo Yamashita (Japan), Maya de Andrade (BC) and Carol O’Dowd (CO).

Reflections: BCA Endowment Foundation Celebrates 80 years

By Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamakawa

The BCA Endowment Foundation quietly celebrated its 80th birthday this year! This was an amazing feat, considering that the year of its inception was 1929. Yes, the Foundation was formed during the worst time in the history of the United States, due to the stock market crash of 1929 that hurled our nation into what is known as “The Great Depression.” The foresight of our BCA leaders of that time is to be commended, as the financial foundation they established continues to grow and provide funding for our current and ongoing projects. One might consider the tremendous conviction of our BCA leaders in 1929 regarding the need for an endowment fund despite economic hardships of the time.

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Continued on Page 6
M y two children love the DVD video of the movie “Ice Age.” I have watched it with them more than ten times. Therefore, I am very familiar with all the characters in the story. Manny is a wooly mammoth. Diego is a rhamphodon, Sid is a sloth. These three characters each have their own unique experiences in the movie. My favorite character is Sid.

I also enjoyed watching Scrat, a saber-toothed squirrel. He is never involved in the main part of the story, but his character gives us entertaining moments while we watch the movie. He has a strong attachment to an acorn. When Scrat struggles to keep his acorn, it is very comical. However, it is the very meaningful element of the story.

I imagine that during the ice age, humans had to struggle with each other in order to survive. They couldn’t offer to help each other. There was no compassion or wisdom in this struggle during the prehistoric ages of our planet. Stronger species were able to dominate, and weaker species survived by producing lots of babies or eggs. According to the Lager Satra, Drakkamara became Amidu Buddha very long time ago and then he became a human being named Shakyamuni Buddha. Shakyamuni Buddha has appeared in this world about five billion and six hundred seventy million years later. Therefore, there was only one Buddha, Shakyamuni, in this world as a human being from the ice age to present time.

During the Ice Age, there was no Buddha because Shakyamuni Buddha appeared in this world about 2,500 years ago. However, in the Pure Land, Amidu Buddha was watching everything in this world during the Ice Age. There were no Buddhists during the Ice Age, but we had many ancestors even if they were not human beings, yet.

Even though we can’t know our early ancestors, we should think of them. Without them, we could not have been born in this world and we could never know the Buddha Dharma.

According to Shinran Shonin, “Namu Amida Butsu” includes all our ancestors’ names. That’s why we don’t have to know all their names or remember all members of our family tree.

Shinran Shonin lived during the Kamakura era (1192-1333) in Japanese history. He referred to this time as the age of “Mappo” which means “The End.” According to Shinran, it is very important to keep the five precepts. Most people are watching the BCA from a distant place.

According to Buddha Dharma, everything is impermanent in this world. But the real Buddha who can live the teaching of Buddha is the universal truth in this suffering world. It means “Nembutsu” is the only reliable truth for us. I would like to believe all people who are connected by “Nembutsu” can become one from diversity, during this critical time of Shin Buddhism in the United States of America.

Let’s remember our master! No one is alone. If we shake our heads and ignore our neighbor’s fire, the flame will spread through other properties. “Do not spit into the wind!” Or it will blow back into your face.

Even if the Shin Buddha Sangha doesn’t remain in its present form in America, the teachings of Shin Buddhism survive worldwide because it is truth in itself. Actually, Shinran believed he was one of Honen’s disciples.

That means that through his lineage with the Seven Patriarchs, Shinran was one of Shakyamuni Buddha’s disciples. Just like Shinran, we are disciples of Shakyamuni Buddha. All we can do is extend our deepest appreciation by reciting “Nembutsu” anytime, any place, and any occasion.

If we are in the Ice Age, we can survive with our families if we eat and sleep together. I love Sid the best of the three main characters, because he is the harmony maker in “Ice Age.” In this way, I would like to be a minister in a temple and the BCA just like Sid. Although Sid is just a sloth, which means, “Namakemono (lazy) being” in Japanese, I can understand the importance of the group and I am a lazy minister, too, but would like to bring Peace and Tranquility to the world.

Over 300 Attend “Caring for the Caregiver” Conference

The Institute for Healthy Aging at Keiro and Los Angeles Hoompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (L.A. Nishi Hongwanji) Adult Buddhist Association presented the 10th “Caring for the Caregiver” Conference and resource fair on Nov. 21, at Los Angeles Hoompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. Sponsored by Keiro Senior HealthCare (Keiro) and Los Angeles Hoompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple Betsumi with partial funding from the Takayama Foundation and California Community Foundation.

The conference included a resource fair, presentations on important caregiving topics, as well as a resource and pharmacy consultations by appointment, nutrition consultation, and lung and heart health programs. The Japanese translation was sponsored in part by Lighthouse Takayama, cooperation, with translation headliners.

Conference Committee Chair Ernest Hida welcomed over 300 people to the conference, noting the signifi-

PAGE 4
WHEEL OF DHARMA
JANUARY 2010

“Ice Age” for Teaching of Buddha

By Rev. Shoukei K. Hanayama
Watsonville Buddhist Temple, Resident Minister and Supervising Minister of Salinas

By Kelsey Hayashi
Buddhist Church of Stockton

I nternational Buddhist Conference Vision 2009

On Saturday, people wake up early enough to wake to their hoods for the movie. He has a strong attachment to an acorn. The movie “Ice Age” is very familiar with all the characters, but I have viewed it with them more than ten times. Therefore, I am very familiar with all the characters in the story. Manny is a wooly mammoth. Diego is a rhamphodon, Sid is a sloth. These three characters each have their own unique experiences in the movie. My favorite character is Sid.

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YBICSE Trip 2009

By Kelsey Hayashi
Buddhist Church of Stockton
This Life Too Would Have Passed In Vain

By Rev. Lee Rosenthal
Pasadena Buddhist Church

Shinran-sama always identiﬁed himself as a student of Honen Shinon. His expres- sion of “I have no disciples of my own” illustrates that Shinran had no desire to start a new school of Buddhism-Dharma or to construct a new temple. The most important thing in Shinran’s life was meeting Honen Shinon. For Shinran, True and Real Entering Mind (Shin- jin) was a speciﬁc human relationship between a teacher and a stu- dent. Although Shinran studied Pure Land teachings before he met Honen Shinon, it was only after meeting speciﬁcally with Honen that he truly understood Amida Buddha’s Original Vow (the 18th Vow of the Larger Sutra). For Shin- ran, looking at Honen Shinon was simultaneously seeing Amida Bud- da.

In referring to Honen Shinon, Shinran’s comment that “I don’t know if he is leading me to Hell,” is much deeper than a statement of whether Shinran agreed or dis- agreed with Honen’s teaching. Shinran-sama experienced “self-for- getting” when thinking of his teach- er Honen.

Shinran realized that he was the most unanswerable person, and yet, that he was liberated by Ami- da’s Primal Vow. He was therefore ﬁlled with deep gratitude. Accord- ing to Shinran-sama, karmic ele- ments are deeply stored in each of us, and arise according to condi- tions. Spiritually, we are therefore “inherently bad” beings capable of no- possibility of emancipation. We have no potential for our own liberation. The true and real examination of ourselves, we realize we are the last (only) one to be released. This loss of self-at- tac- hment and pride, the manifesta- tion of the pure heart, is the single- hearted entrusting, became the source of liberation.

Urgency invites a teacher; des- ination creates one. For Shinran, ﬁnding himself in Hell was the gate to the Pure Land. On Mt. Hiei, Shinran-sama was taught an objective conceptualization of Hell and the Pure Land, but Shinran’s personal realization became subjec- tive. Shinran Shinon, Hell and the Pure Land are one and the same. Birth in the Pure Land is a hellish experience. We are being tormented and being reborn in each moment, simultaneously. Suffer- ing, continual change, and selfless- ness – these are elements in our perspective differentiates them. This birth-and-death existence is it- self enlightenment.

Shinran’s remark, “I know nothing of good or evil” is an expression of extreme humility, for if we lose our self-pride we no long- er can judge. We are neither good and bad, not because of any lack of intelligence, but rather, because of loss of self. Shinran-sama knew that his view was relative and limited, that there was nothing ab- solute about it. Yet in this insight that our individuality makes itself, Buddhist insight is knowing our limitations, not gaining insight into the limitless universe.

Each second is full of deluded ideas. To understand this deluded- ness is to awaken to the Dharma. This is the path of self-libera- tion. Awakened to the birth-and- death nature of mind, Shinran-sama awakened to the continuous process of change. The more ﬁlled with Dharma, the more lacking (grateful) Shinran-sama felt. Re- pleat with seeds of potential, when Dharma is cultivated, the current school of Buddhism’s Compassionate Light, Shinran-sama’s Entrusting Mind blossomed in the Pure Land. In this way, his “ordinariness” became most extra-ordinary.

THE VIEW FROM OUTSIDE IN:

The 4th Overseas District Representatives Seminar at the Hongwanji

By Carmela Javellana Hirano, M.D.
Salt Lake Buddhist Temple Lay Representative

It was a great privilege for me to participate in this 4th Overseas District Representatives Seminar at the Hongwanji. It was an amazing opportunity for me to meet people from all over the world and to see how they interpret and experience the generosity and benevolence of the Hongwanji’s teachings.

Many of the participants were very knowledgeable in the Hongwanji’s teachings and were able to share their insights on various topics such as meditation, mindfulness, and the role of the Hongwanji in the community.

The seminar was held in a beautiful location, the Hongwanji Priest House, which was surrounded by lush vegetation and natural scenery. The atmosphere was very peaceful and conducive for learning and discussion.

The seminar was divided into three main sections: the Overview of Buddhism in America, the Presentation of the Hongwanji’s Teachings, and a discussion among the participants. Each section was led by a knowledgeable speaker who provided insightful and informative presentations.

The Overview of Buddhism in America section was particularly interesting as it provided a comprehensive overview of the history and development of Buddhism in America, as well as its current state and future prospects.

The Presentation of the Hongwanji’s Teachings section was a detailed and thorough presentation of the Hongwanji’s teachings and practices, which were explained in a way that was easy to understand and applicable to daily life.

The discussion among the participants was a highlight of the seminar, as it allowed everyone to share their experiences and insights on the Hongwanji’s teachings and practices. The discussions were lively and engaging, with participants from different backgrounds and perspectives contributing to the conversation.

Overall, the seminar was a wonderful opportunity for me to learn from and connect with people from all over the world who share a common interest in the Hongwanji’s teachings. It was a great experience that I will cherish for a lifetime.

Buddhist Poem Readings by Hiroshi Kashiwagi

Hiroshi Kashiwagi will be reading some Bud- dhist poems from his latest book “Ocean Beach” at the 6th annual poetry event spon- sored by the Asian American Curriculum Proj- ect on Saturday, Jan. 16, 2 p.m. at the AACP store, 112 East Third Ave., in San Mateo, California.
the end of the Campaign and putting all donations to the BCA in a single database.

The BCA National Board participated in a panel discussion with Naomi Nakano-Matsumoto of Mountain View Buddhist Temple, Leroy Morishita from San Francisco State University, and Bob Zimmerman, a former president of the BCA. The panel members stressed that survival of any non-profit organization included fund-raising and that they had reported to the Board that the most successful method to raise money was to approach people personally.

Michael Jones, member of the Endowment Foundation, reported that 1% of the total market value of custodial funds and 1.25% of the total market value of non-custodial funds were required to be assessed for administrative and operational expenses. A special 0.5% assessment was made last year. The Board voted in November to cover the anticipated budget deficit for administrative and operational expenses.

Dean Richard Payne of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) informed the National Board members that three students interested in the chaplaincy program were accepted for the spring semester. The Contemporary Issues in Buddhist Studies series was accepted for market-

Natl. Board Report

Continued from Page 2

Delegates and board members at the National Board meeting in the Kodo of the Jodo Shinshu Center.

President’s Message

Continued from Front Page

this message concerns us all. As we move forward in our daily lives, may we be reminded of the peace and tranquility of the Wheel of Dharma.

This year marks the 111th year anniversary of the founding of the Buddhist Churches of America. Throughout the year we observe this milestone with gratitude to the ministers and lay leaders who have had the spirit, perseverance and vision to establish the Nembutsu in America. This year also marks the fourth since the doors of the BCA Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) opened. Inside the Center, the Institute of Buddhist Studies, the BCA for Buddhist Education, Ryukoku University Berkeley Center and Hongwanji have successfully offered education, Ryukoku University Berkeley Center for Buddhist Education, the BCA Center for Buddhist Education, and Hongwanji have successfully offered education, the BCA Berkeley Center for Buddhist Education, and the BCA Berkeley Center for Buddhist Education.

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President Billy Saiki informed the Board that he was successfully re-appointed as an audit committee chair. Consequently, work on finding and hiring an external audit firm has yet to begin. Previously, there was an effort to remove the BCA Auditor’s position from the BCA Executive Committee. Due to ongoing work by the Bylaws Committee, the BCA Auditor remains on the Executive Committee for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Dr. Sasaki has asked Erik Ishii, BCA Auditor, to chair the audit committee.

Richard Endo, BCA treasurer, informed the National Board about how the budget and Finance Committee came up with the budget for 2010-2011. There were several salary increases for BCA employees. There were increases in taxes and health insurance premiums. More of the BCA budget was included in the BCA budget. As a result, the BCA member increased from $85.64 in 2009-2010 to $87.70 in 2010-2011. The final amount will be decided after National Council ratification.

Rick Stamml, chair of the BCA Bylaws/legislative Committee, proposed changes to the BCA Bylaws. These include the Western Adult Buddhist League in the bylaws (since they dissolved) and removing the word “alternates” in Article VIII, Section B2. The National Board voted to approve these changes.

The Board voted to ratify the recommendations of the BCA Social Welfare Committee, chaired by Calvin Dovi. The Committee decided to grant $17,500 to the Asian Counseling and Referral Service in King County, Washington. They provide food and nutrition information to immigrants with limited English skills.

Seiko Tamura from the BCA Archives Committee informed the National Board that the Japanese American National Museum has had to cut their staff from 120 to 40 due to the economy. As a result, temples are asked to keep their materials and not send them to the museum.

Dr. Alfred Bloom’s “Kannon in the 21st Century” has been received with great enthusiasm, and the second the $1.00 prize for the Bishop’s Memorial Fund was received.

Due to the nature of the dire economic situation at this time and the financial circumstances of the membership, no active solicitation program was established. Funds were derived from gifts given on occasion.

After World War II, two programs were initiated to raise funds. The first was the “Bishop’s Memorial Fund” which were temple donations were sent to be sent to the fund and the second the $1.00 donation by members attending BCA conferences and meetings held, which, to date, is still known as the donation to the Zaidan Fund.

In 1964, the Zaidan Board Committee, felt the need to revitalize the investment program and changed the name to the Endowment Foundation with new by-laws. The goal of the Zaidan was $1,000,000. With the rise in interest rates and a decline in the stock market, the Zaidan held by the BCA were around $250,000 in 1981.

In 1983, the BCA embarked on its first capital campaign called “Campaign for Buddhism in America,” spearheaded by the BCA Executive Committee.

The goal was an ambitious $15,000,000 in endowments to support national programs and ministerial concerns, which were the two major issues facing the BCA at that time.

Upon reaching the goal of $10,000,000 the BCA requested that the Endowment Foundation disbursed the funds (interest only) to support key programs to help the BCA with its budget. To date, the Endowment Foundation with the help of professional investment consultants have maintained their investments and never have been originated by the founders of the fund. In other words, the original fund remains untouched, and only the interest earned is disbursed.

The founders were aware that the fundraising was for the future of the BCA and that ongoing, always necessary. We have been successful in our efforts due to the wisdom of our forbearers, the founders of the BCA in America, and the support of members, such as you. The Endowment Foundation, on its first December 31, has done so in a heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you, for your generous, continued support and the MBMA in America for the future generations.

Endowment History

Continued from Page 3

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Helping Hands

Continued from Page 2

The most precious of media: boundless, liberating, and endlessly creative expressions. This is the medicine in the bottle Kannon holds to her breast. Why else would Kannon be the most vener-

ated Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism?

Note: The Interview is filled with images and information from Mr. & Mrs. Terri Leigh’s book “Faces of Compassion: Classic Bodhisattva Artworks and Their Modern Expressions.” on his website: Shin Dharma

For an excellent treatment of Kannon and Bodhisattvas generally, I highly recommend Professor Terri Leigh’s upcoming book in

PAGE 6

WHEEL OF DHARMA

JANUARY 2010

Judy Kono, co-chair of the planning committee for the 75th National Memorial Observance, announced that almost $17,000 has been raised for the 280 submissions for the art contest and 180 haiku/tanka submissions.

A few of the poems came from Croatia, Romania, and Serbia. Every temple, starting with the newest temple, the first living Buddha, His Holiness Daidhō Shoko during the service.

Each district will bring their non-perishable offerings that represent their district for the Sunday Service.

A few of the National Board voted on the National Officers for 2010-2012. Everett Wataba (Denver) will be BCA president, Ron Murakami (White River) will be president-elect, Susan Borttai (San Mateo) and Mick Kubota (Vista) are the vice-presidents, Richard Endo (Mountain View) is the treasurer, and Elizabeth Shibata (Seattle) is the secretary, and Erik Ishii (Ekius) is the assistant secretary.

The National Board voted to lower the National Officers for 2010-2012. Everett Wataba (Denver) will be BCA president, Ron Murakami (White River) will be president-elect, Susan Borttai (San Mateo) and Mick Kubota (Vista) are the vice-presidents, Richard Endo (Mountain View) is the treasurer, and Elizabeth Shibata (Seattle) is the secretary, and Erik Ishii (Ekius) is the assistant secretary.

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今月の法話
お念仏の利益

開教使をしているいろいろな質問を受
けます。その一つが、信仰とは生際のと
です。言い換えれば、信仰ある人は安ら
かに生涯を終えることができるかどうかと
いうことです。もちろん、家族としては死
にゆくものができるだけですに亡くなり
って欲しいと思うのはあたりまえです。
それでも保証できません。

なぜこのようなことを聞くかと申しますと、いつもお念仏を
口にしながら長年仏教を追い続けたが、死に行く時に大変戸
し、それを見た家族の人が、そんな信仰だったら意味がないと
って、仏教会や浄土真宗をあざますに言うのです。これは極端な
例かも知れませんが、お念仏の生活とは何か、どのような利益が
あるのかという考えが寄せられたのです。

恵信足さまの書かれた手紙が見つかった、その中に親鸞さまの最後
を看取った未読の覚信足との想い出しの向き取りが残されていま
す。それによると、どうも親鸞さまの最後は法然さまと違って
普通の人が見と受け取るように死んでいたが、本当に浄土寺へ生ま
れたのだろうかという疑問があり、それを新仏に住む親鸞に問い合わせ
ているのです。その当時は、いやらしい高僧といわれるような人は亡
くなるときに紫の雲がなびびなどの奇異があらわれると信じられて
いましたから、多くの人に数えられていた自分の有する親鸞さまの
最後が、普通のものしかなかったので不思議のものでした。

親鸞は、念仏を喜ぶことがいただく十種の利益として次の十を
あげています。

１．見える力によって護られる
２．すばらしい夜をいただく
３．悪が喜びに転じられる
４．すべての仏によって護られる
５．すべての仏にほられる
６．仏の光が護られる
７．心にいつも喜びを感じる
８．仏の恵みをいつ心に持ち続ける
９．生活がいつまでもゆきもどせる
１０．迷いの世界から戻ることがない

こんな利益（ネプチネットなど）は、今の人たちにとってはどうでも
いいようなことです。それより、どうやったら心持ちになるか、
健康になれるのか、また名前をあげることができるのか、それを手数
げ遊ばれるような宗教を欲している。確かに、上にあげてい
る利益というのは、人生をすぐにおぼえるものではありません。
では一体お念仏の教えは私たちの生活に何をもたらすかなので
しょうか。それを考えるために、お釈迦さまの道心の目的をおさらい
してみましょう。

太子であったシッダルタ人は人間であることの是非の大学問を解決
するために出発されたのです。六年という長い間、その間行かけて
いったいろいろな修行をし、最後には死の直前にいったのです。
そこで、過去に別れをつけて深い瞑想に入られたのです。そして、
人間苦の根源に目覚められブッダ（仏）を覚えたのです。

その時のことが「勝利の歌」として次のように語り続けられてい
ます。

「私は苦しみの家を作った大苦しごとが、彼を見つけることは
できなかった。そして、迷いの車輪は回りつづき、苦しみから苦し
みへと私をいざなった。だがしかし、ついに私はその家を作った大 Morocco
を見つけた。彼は私の目の前にいる、おまえらもこの家
を作ることはできない。権は破れ、柱も倒されてました。私の
心は欲望から決け、安らかな場所に住んでいる。」

この大工とは一体誰なのでしょうか。なぜシッダルタ太子は最初に
彼を見つけることが出なかったのでしょうか。そして、ついに予前
をつけたと言ったとき、その「お前」というのは誰ですか。そ
れは、この歌の最後に答えを見つけることができます。

苦しみの家を作った大工は、欲望を取りつけられた自分自身のその
ものだったのです。初め、苦しみの原因を自分の外のところに見つ
けるとしていたので、見つけることができなかったのです。何か
自分のものではないが、自分の人生を支配していると思っていたのです。

これは、考えの浅い人が、自分自身を振り返り、目を外にむけ、
不安や不満を神な人や他者のせいにしているのと同じことであります。
目覚めた人のというのは、常に自己自身を深く見つめています。そ
こに、苦しみの始まりと終わりを見出します。

心と身体の六つの感情に刺激されて欲望ができます。この果て
しない欲望が苦痛をもつり続けているのです。それが、追いっ
追いの世界に私たちを繋がっているのです。これに終止符を打た
ためには、まずこの苦しみの家の大工を見つけなければならない
のです。それは、とりあえずおさき、自分自身の中で果物を果たし欲求を思い
なのです。そこから苦しみの本当の原因にたいして対処できるように
なるのです。

お念仏というのは、目覚めた人が求した人間苦から牡丹を
無関係ではないのです。それは、この世の成功を約束するのでもな
く、人生の山や渇をなくすものでもありません。それが私たちに示す
ものは、人生にどんなことが起こるとしても、智慧の光に照されて
慈悲の光に輝かされて、苦しみを見出して、大きな宇宙の流れの一部とし
て、前に進んでいく勇気を与えたくなるものです。

親鸞宗は「教行信証記」の最後に、中国の道家総帥の「安楽楽」
を引用、「前に生まれた人を後で尋ね、後に生まれる人を前に書か
てください。そして、それを次から次へ続けていって下さい。そのわ
か、遠のないこの深い道を無くすのです。」というように、
深い願を私たちにかけてください。

南無阿弥陀仏（訳文責 梅津）