A Trip to the Rome and Assisi with Shinmon-sama

By Dr. Kenneth K. Tanaka
Musashino University, Tokyo

In Gassho

I lead the privilege of accompanying His Eminence Otani Kohjin, Shinmon (Dentshoryu, Shinmon-sama, which is love I address him) to participate in the gathering of world religious leaders convened by Pope Benedict XVI on October 27 and 28, 2011. Named the “Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for Justice and Peace in the World,” this gathering marked the 25th anniversary of the “World Day of Prayer for Peace.”

On Oct. 27th, we joined the Pope and approximately 300 delegates of various religions and boarded a special train from the Vatican (located in Rome) for the hour and a half ride to Assisi. Assisi is the home of St. Francis (1181-1226), known for centuries as the man of peace and, thus, serving as an appropriate location for the event calling for world peace. I also felt a special bond to St. Francis, for he is the source for the city of “San Francisco,” where the first Jodo Shinshu priests arrived in 1859 to initiate the Buddhist Churches of America.

During the train ride thousands of people lined up at the stations along the way to greet the train. They came out to get a glimpse of the Pope in the last car and to welcome us delegates from around the globe dressed in religious apparel. I could not help but to be impressed by the expressions of joy and endurance on their faces as they cheered and waved at the train.

At Assisi, we gathered at a large cathedral (Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels) and a monumental plaza where we were welcomed by thousands of people from around the globe who were determined to live in this globalized “village.”

On Oct. 28th, we joined the Pope for a mass held at the Basilica of Our Lady of Assisi. I was impressed by the many thousands of people who gathered from around the world to listen to our beloved Pope teach. The event itself was monumental. We were out-numbered by our brothers and sisters from all over the world. I was moved to tears as I addressed the large crowd and the Pope talked about his mission in Assisi.

I felt a deep spiritual connection to this event, as I was able to witness the Pope’s love and devotion to peace. It was a powerful experience that I will never forget.

Shinmon-sama and Pope Benedict the 16th at the Vatican.

Continued on Page 4

Shinmon-sama and Pope Benedict the 16th at the Vatican.

Continued on Page 4

Buddhism, A Paradigm for Society

I n a recent op-ed essay the noted commentator David Brooks, after viewing various forms of evidence, concluded that “collective efforts to build a culture that emphasizes self-expansion are a change in self-understanding may be related to many of the problems, social and political, that we are having presently in our nation. Particularly he sees this in the loss of awareness “of the virtues associated with citizenship.” As he describes citizenship, he is really talking about our interdependence, a central principle for self-understanding in Buddhist teaching. As he explains, citizenship means we are involved in a “common enterprise” which gives meaning to our lives because of the “service we supply to the nation.”

Noting that there has been a shift in the culture with its attendant problems, Brooks suggests that there needs to be “a more comprehensive shift in values” in order to rebalance the “expansion of self” (read egotism) that has undermined our social net. (Star-Advertiser, 3-14-11), pp. A-8-9.)

The character of American politics and the malaise of American society indicates the necessity for a new paradigm or way of thinking by which to evaluate contemporary life. We have all advocated and promoted the so-called American Dream, which, as a dream or personal goal, has motivated the upward striving of American youth and immigrants for decades, while stirring the admiration of people around the world, encouraging them to dream to America.

However, in this process we have ignored the oppression of many segments of our society which enabled that dream. Our history of unjust treatment of native peoples, slavery, later racism and the terrorism of Jim Crow, the exploitation and discrimination of the Chinese and Japanese, the incarceration of the whole mainland Japanese community in wartime, as well as the opposition to other European immigrant groups who came to share the dream. The dream was also a nightmare for many. We often forget that the American dream is more than an economic success; it is a dream where each person has the right to fulfill their deepest potential, through realizing all of their human rights.

The effort to limit the
Dramatic Growth of American Buddhism: An Overview (Part 4)

By Dr. Kenneth K. Tanaka
Musashino University, Tokyo

As early as the 1920s, there were Buddhist communities in the United States, primarily centered around the Japanese community. However, it was not until the 1950s and 1960s that Buddhism began to gain significant traction in the American cultural landscape. By the mid-1960s, the number of Buddhists in America had reached about thirty million people.

Characteristics of American Buddhism

American Buddhists have largely rejected the monastic lifestyle. Most priests are not prominently seen in disease. A memorial service was held Jan. 7 at the Berkeley Bud- dhist Temple.

Jane Imamura made everyone, regardless of background or age, feel welcome and wanted, said Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Gary Snyder, who along with other Beat Generation icons such as Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, studied Buddhism at the temple during the 1950s. She was also a wonderful personal friend and advisor, with a deep knowledge of Buddhist thought and values, and a great spirit of compassion and service.

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Jane Imamura was a kind of a beacon in my light, a light to steer by all those years, and I know I was true for many others – not just me. My great thanks to her big spirit and extraordinary life.”

At the service, Rev. Dr. David Ryue Matsutomo of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple said: “Jane Imamura’s importance to us is expressed in her Dharma Name, Shako Chlo Sho (transcendent beauty, light, mother of all beings).”

During the service, it was announced that a memorial house would be established to honor Master Issei Honda, who passed away in 2011, at her Berkeley home of Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, she was sent to the Gila River internment camp nearby Phoenix, Ariz. They were released in March 1945 and went to the Sendan Gakuen – later the Senden Buddhist Temple – in Los Angeles, where they stayed at the hotel. They returned to Berkeley in March 1946. Jane Imamura created the Berkeley temple choir in 1947 and began to influence music for Dharma School Services. The Imamuras, with other homini and masters, helped to run the BCA music department.

The memorial house, known as the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, will be dedicated on Jan. 7 at 11 a.m. at the temple. The service will begin at 11 a.m. at the temple.

If we add up all three groups (Buddhists, ninnaid Buddhist, and those strongly influenced by Buddhism), they amount to about thirty million people in America.
Feburary 2012 • News and Highlights

750th Memorial for Shinran Shonin

Encourage all of us to reflect with deep gratitude on the workings of Shinran Shonin and all of those precious individuals who have gone before us who make us who we are. I encourage you to look not at your loss, but at what you have gained from them and everything that they leave behind with you as their memory continues to live on in you.

Candice Shibata, B.S. Student

As we celebrate Hoonko and think on the teachings of Shinran, perhaps we can reflect on the other teachers and influences that have made a great difference in our lives.

Senso Diana Thompson
Minister’s Assistant

Attending his services was an incredible experience, and we will never forget this special trip to step back in time to revere our founder and appreciate his life.

Emiko Katsumoto
CBE Educational Japan Tour Participant

Yes, it was a very memorable trip... making new dharma friends, reconnecting with old ones, visiting new sites and revisiting old ones... and most of all, being able to attend the final Shinran Shonin 750th Memorial Service.

Judy Kono
CBE Educational Japan Tour Coordinator

SPACE IS STILL AVAILABLE!

CBE Educational Japan Tour: March 29-April 9, 2012*

Step back into history as we visit Kaga-shima. We will visit sites of the "Kakure Nembutsu" underground movement from the samurai era when the Nembutsu teaching was banned, and peace memorials and other sites at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We will spend three days in Kyoto.

If you are interested in this tour, please contact Judy Kono at 510.809.1460, by email: admin@cbecbca.org or Mieko Ogata of JTB at 415.986.4764, or by email at mogata@jtbusa.com.

*This tour was originally planned for April, 2011 but had to be rescheduled due to the East Japan Earthquakes of March 11, 2011.

Being Moved Forward

Rev. Kodo Umezu, CBE Director

Amazing was my first impression when we sat down in the Founder’s Hall in Kyoto on the last day of the Shinran Shonin 750th Memorial Observance and watched over 400 ministers and 100 gagaku musicians pass in front of our eyes with their traditional costumes and music. The big room was filled with the joy of our fellow Nembutsu followers.

When I returned to my office after the ten-day visit to Japan, another “Amazing” was waiting for me. The number of registrants for the first Winter Pacific Seminar 21st Century in the Southern District had risen from about 40 before I left to almost 160. That was a real surprise.

These two amazing events gave me a sense of joy and encouragement to carry out our educational mission here. I feel very grateful for our wonderful tradition and history and, at the same time, I feel that the flow from the past is continuously carrying the people of today to the Nembutsu world.

We are part of a big flow, and yet, each of us is living a precious life of our own. Each of us has to find a wholesome path in his or her own life through encountering the dharma. We do so in many ways. One way is through temple activities; by listening to the dharma and interacting with each other. The Center for Buddhist Education has been given the task to train future leaders. That means to help promote activities at local temples so that more people have opportunities to hear the dharma and can live their lives with joy and gratitude.

The Hongwanji recently informed us that Tokado ordination and Kyoji certification for members of foreign countries will be held this September and December, respectively. The screening process for candidates is taking place now. All the CBE staff members are busy getting ready for more Tokado and Kyoji preparation seminars. This is the legacy of Socho Ogui; a result of his vision and actions which will be felt for years to come.

At the time of this writing, the Winter Pacific Seminar is just a few days away. We hope this is just the beginning of a positive trend to stimulate learning, activity, and growth in our BCA churches and temples.

In gasho.

Techno Buddha Conference

Who Am I?

March 2-4, 2012

Guest Speaker: Reverend Mark Unno

Workshops (Tentative):

- Introduction to zazen
- Mindfulness meditation

- Self-perception & Self-reflection
- Action (Ten, Se7, Yogs., & Dharma)

Registration: $45 by February 15th, $60 February 16th
Late Registration: $75 by February 22nd, $150 February 23rd

For more information, please visit:

http://www.buddhistsources.com

CBE 2012 Tentative Calendar of Events

March 2-4: Techno Buddha Conference: “Who Am I?”
March 22-24: Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP II & II-T)
March 29-April 9: CBE 2012 Japan Tour (inv ad)

April 10-13: International Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange (HOPE)
April 11: Public Event: Series of Dharma Messages by HOPE Ministers
April 19-21: Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP I & III)
May 4-6: Crossing Over to Jodo Shinshu Buddhism: “Jodo Shinshu 101”
May 12: Japanese Seminar * June 22-23: Women’s Seminar
June 8-8: Pacific Seminar 21st Century
July 21-27: Young Buddhist’s Int’l Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE) Reunion
July 27-29: College YBA Retreat (Dr. Luis Olaho)
July 30-August 3: Waking Up to the Dharma
August 3-5: Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course Workshop
August 16-18: ABC’s of Dharma School
September 6-8: and September 27-29: Minister’s Assistant Program
October 4-6: Minister’s Assistant Program
October 16-18: Ministers’ Continuing Education Seminar
October 19-21: College YBA Seminar
October 22-24: Ministers’ Continuing Education Seminar
October 22-24: Chaplain’s Advanced Training Seminar (CATS)
November 3: Japanese Seminar  * November 9-11: Italy Boomer’s Seminar
Nisei Veterans and the Dharma

By Rev. Peter Insko-Jim
Sacramento Betsuin

American dream to a particular segment of society lead to the Great Depression and the ensuing war; our generation is still living with the aftermath; we are still experiencing in politics and society. The struggle for women's suffrage is another effort to limit the dream. Issues such as women's suffrage, i.e., the right to vote, women's equality, equal pay for equal work, the right to education and welfare make decisions concerning their own bodies, continue on as there are those who continually try to limit the dream. The forces resisting women's rights or gay rights are strong, undermining the universality of the American dream in our own society.

American society has become so individually identified with laissez faire capitalism, unbridled competition, and the notion of the free market that we have been willing to compromise our cherished values of personal freedom and equality that have made us the envy of the world in order to gain an economic advantage. We live in a violent world.

We fail to distinguish Nationalism from patriotism. Nationalism claims superiority, God-given, ordained above all other claims we are exceptional, Patriotism. Nationalism, which is the pervasiveness of the Wheel of Dharma. It is a teaching of Self Examination.

"You are to be congratulated for this great nation of ours. You fought for the sake of the children, it was my duty to step up and prove my loyalty to our nation. ’” to our Nisei veterans, I say, mission accomplished.

As President Harry Truman said on July 14, 1946 to men of the 422nd Regimental Combat Team: "You are to be congratulated for what you have done for this great nation of ours. You fought for the sake of the children, it was my duty to step up and prove my loyalty to our nation. ’” to our Nisei veterans, I say, mission accomplished.

Because of your actions, we are able to live with freedom and pride today. And you are a part of the Karma of our collective history.

Nana Amida Buta

PAGE 4  WHOLE OF DHAMMA  FEBRUARY 2012  

Buddhist Temple of Marin
390 Miller Avenue
Mill Valley, CA 94941
Phone: (415) 388-1173
www.buddhisttempleofmarin.org

Buddhist Temple of Marin
EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

TUESDAY: A Teaching of Self Examination

With Rev. Dr. Nobuo Hameda
Thursday, February 16th
7:30 – 9:30 pm

Admission Free

Tonight’s topic will explore the idea that the Buddha taught us to look deep inside for answers to our problems, which Jodo Shinshu Buddhism also emphasizes. Buddhism as a Teaching of Self Examination.

The family shared with us stories of our Nisei Veterans who answered the call of duty, but each time I karmically tied to their actions, they have humbly declined my words of gratitude. A few have said, “Kodomo no tame ni, for the sake of the children, it was my duty to step up and prove my loyalty to our nation.”

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Nana Amida Buta
IAC Reunion Retreat
By Matthew Miyake, Fresno Betsuin

H ello Dharma Friends! The BCA Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) held a reunion from January 13th through January 16th for the 7th graduating class of Youth Minister Assistants (YMA’s) at the Fresno Betsuin Family Dharma Center. Being a participant of this wonderful event, I would like to thank all of the ministers and advisors for organizing the event, and the Fresno Betsuin for allowing us to hold our retreat at their temple and for being extraordinary hosts.

Many Fresno Betsuin members helped so much in the retreat and prepared all of our delicious meals and snacks. I can easily say that they cooked for us ranged from huge breakfast burritos, delicious curry rice, a breakfast with fried salmon and Japanese style eggs, and even katsu dogs (hot dogs prepared katsu style served in a bun). Once again, on behalf of the YAC I would like to thank the Fresno Betsuin and the wonderful parents who prepared all of our meals for all of them that did in order to make the retreat such a success.

At the beginning of the reunion I was a bit nervous after seeing the schedule. I saw that we were scheduled to have three services per day, workshops on various topics ranging from learning to chant Shoshinge (grosa style) to discussing Jodo Shinshu terms in general. I was nervous because I feared that I wouldn’t have the attention span to sit through the long lectures and services that awaited me. But as the weekend progressed I found that I was actually looking forward to every activity. The workshops were run in a manner that left us both walking away with new insights into Jodo Shinshu, and also with many new questions that the rehearsals were more than willing to help explain to us. We also had an outing and enjoyed a guided tour of the Northern District State University Campus.

Not only were we able to do all of this, but we were also given the oppor-
tunity to attend Rinnai Miyaji’s farewell lunch. Again, there was so much food and entertainment. This was truly an event that I am glad I was able to attend.

At the beginning of the retreat, we were split into two groups, and we took turns leading services. The toban leading service was in charge of having its members do practically every task that would occur during a normal service. This means that we had Youth Minister Assistant’s prepare the Onajin, ring the kanto bell, lead the chanting (Dohji), and even give Dharma Talks. At the beginning of the retreat we were all a bit rusty, but by the end we were able to run service smoothly.

The end of the retreat came all too quickly, but it is safe to say that everyone had a great time. This retreat was a great chance for all of us to reunite and talk since we are all parts of the United States YAC group 7 had participants from California, Utah, Oregon, Seattle, and Virginia.

I would like to thank Socho Ogai for his support of all of the YAC activities over the years. Socho, these events have really been life changing. I’d also like to thank our organizers and teachers, Rev. Patti Oshita, Rev. Peter Inokoji-Kim and Rinnan Bob Ohitsu from the Sacramento Betsuin. Thank you to YAC Committee members, Keisho Sawada and Jim Shinmuy for who drove up from Los Angeles and helped program the memories of this retreat for us to share. And again, I’d like to especially thank the dedicated group of parents who prepared all of the delicious meals and snacks for us over this long retreat weekend. Our BCA friends, Mr. Everett Warda, even flew in from Denver because he wanted to see the value of these YAC events. I hope that will be continued funding for YAC for these events so that we can go on.

In closing, I would like to thank once again thank everyone that participated, organized, or worked behind the scenes on this event to make it such a success.

Numata Fellow at Ryukoku University
Prof. Taishin Kawase at the left is the Director of the Practical Shin Studies at Ryukoku University.

Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamakawa is the 2007 Numata Fellow at Ryukoku University. He established the Masters Division Course called, “Practical Shin Studies,” which was a land mark field of study in the practical application of Shin in society. At present, they have a total of 65 students in the three year program. The first graduates of this program will be in March of 2012. I was privileged to do research on the Practical Shin Studies Program at the university as a Ryukoku University Numata Research Fellow for a period of one month in October and November of 2011. The purpose of my research had to do with the scope of the Practical Studies as opposed to the long established Doctrinal Studies of Shin, and the relationship of both to our own area of study which is the person-centered Shin Religious Education Process.

By attending classes, participating in Seminars (Zemis), and conducting a class, I made a major contribution to the person-centered Religious Education Studies. I discovered areas that we must clarify.

I wrote in my dissertation, “The importance of person-centered religious education studies in the west, however, I discovered that in Japan, religious education studies had a totally different meaning. By law, religious education studies meant the objective study of all religions without any sectarian reference. In Shin Buddhist Studies, the emphasis is on the doctrinal or academic study of Shinran’s teaching, therefore religious education was not a part of the academic track, and the idea of a person-centered educational process was not a consideration.

With the changing times and the world emphasis on engaged religious education, it is probable that the Practical Shin Studies was developed to deal with the new movement. Thus, I learned that the students in the practical studies program are involved in many diverse areas of social engagement projects. The projects included areas as: “Internet and Shinbutsu,” “Working with Prisoners Facing the Death Penalty,” “Telephone Hotline Projects for Those Who Need Counseling,” “Grief Care,” “Volunteering to Help Those in Need,” “The Meaning of Volunteering to Work at Disaster Areas,” “How to Reach out to Temple Terminal Ill Patients,” etc. I was also asked to clarify the importance of the person-centered educational process in America, which at times seemed counter to the prevailing academic approach to Shin Studies. However, it was important to clarify the issues we had in America and the necessity for an educational process. I was happy to open discussing the issues that we faced, we may be able to work together to find a common ground which emphasizes the importance of Doctrinal Studies, but equally the importance of Practical Studies. Without the Doctrinal Studies it would be difficult to give dynamic meaning to the importance of Doctrinal Studies.
in town where ten representatives of the major religions, including a Korean Jogye Order monk representing Buddhism, gave short speeches. I found it interesting that among those included among the speakers was a representative of the household but what many of the converts had not considered religious and even anti-religious.

We then were served lunch, which was purposely simple in keeping with St. Francis' life of poverty. It was also a way for the delegates to symbolically participate in "the suffering of those persons and populations deprived of a life of peace." Ironically, I found the simple bread, salad and soup the most meaningful meals on the trip.

In the early morning, we broke off into separate tracks to spend an hour and a half in silence dedicated to reflection and/or personal prayer. While separated our rooms were in a huge dormitory building. The separation was intended to honour the uniqueness of each tradition while our sense of bonding was contained in the same building. Sh innova- samma, Rev. Ogushi (Honganji) said that he had no attachments, nor that he had no desires, nor had any wish to be in that time in quiet sitting and then in Nembutsu recitation as we each contemplated on how we can work more closely for peace.

Speaking for myself, I felt the difficulty of contributing in any significant way to world affairs. I still felt concerned about my own plans and obligations to my own work, family and community. Nevertheless, I also realized that to do my best in my daily activities would constitute my way of contributing in some small way to world peace. So, I felt encouraged to go on and do what I could, to share the Dharma in an effective and meaningful way through my teaching and writing.

At 3 PM, we got on the shuttle to move to the top of the hill to Pizzaro San Francisco in the morning. After Shinmon once lived. As delegates walked up the hill, we were greeted by thousands of well-wishers along the narrow street; they enthusiasti- cally greeted us in the rain to receive her. We also planned to make the trip to the Vatican, and to board the train to return to our resolution to work harder for world peace. So, I felt encouraged to go on and do what I could, to share the Dharma in an effective and meaningful way through my teaching and writing.

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お念仏の故郷を訪れて

ねんぶつ みちのくじょう たす

アラブラタ教会
谷口端夫

現在に伝わる中国三十三観音堂、石壁山中宮として、もとは天台宗の寺伽が建ち、後に禅宗に移ったという。

石壁山中宮は、山門が玄中寺のホームに位置する。玄中寺は京師の中心部に位置し、京都の観光地としても有名である。

玄中寺は、美しい自然環境の中に建ち、四季折々の景色を楽しむことができます。また、寺内の石壁山中宮は、観音大師像が安置され、多くの信徒が参拝している。

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寒かったけど感動した本山参り

昨年四月からお勤めされていた親鸞聖人七百五十回大遠忌も一月十六日にご満座を迎えた。このご勝縁に是非あいたいと、アメリカから二十六名が寒さや円高をものともせず一月に日本を訪れた。

一行は九日に出発し、関東の御影堂を巡り、京都には十四日の晩に到着。早速本山へ。午後二時には雅楽の演奏にあわせて縁起に引き続いての法要。十五日には朝の念仏の参拝、引き続き十二時の法要。会場の職員が席を確保して下さっており、全員満席。そのあと午後一時から会場の内の念仏が続きました。

このような五十年に一度のご縁に巡った一行はその喜びを胸に無事に予定を終え十九日に日本を発った。

この写真は辻の間でいただいたお斎（とき）

※辻（こう）の間とは、御門主との対面に使われる203畳敷きの大広間です。上下段の境の欄間（らんま）に雲中飛鴻の雕刻があるので辻の間と呼ばれています。この障壁画は狩野派の渡辺了慶筆。華麗で重厚な趣が深い間です。国宝に指定されており、特別な場合を除いて一般公開はされておりません。