The 30th World Jodo Shinshu Coordinating Council Meeting was hosted on May 28 and 29 by the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada at their Headquarters in Richmond, British Columbia. This annual meeting provides a venue for Hongwanji-ha leaders from Japan to meet with the BCA and lay representatives from the four overseas districts (BCA, Canada, Hawaii, and South America) to review activities, share ideas for organization and propagation, and develop joint plans to help meet common challenges.

Rev. Sammi Kiribayashi from the Hongwanji-ha International Department chaired the meeting while Bishop Shoshin Tachibana, Governor General of the Hongwanji-ha Board of Governors, drew much of the attention and set the pace for the discussions. The BCA was represented by Rev. Kodo Umene, Bishop; President Ron Murakami; and Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Buddhist Churches of America; Governor General Shoshin Tachibana, Hongwanji Japan; Bishop Jiko Matsuo of the Comunidade Budista Sul-Americana; and Bishop Eric Matsumoto, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

Common issues among all participants are the aging population of temple members and subsequent declining membership; and continuing financial needs due both to declining membership and to national economies that are still struggling to recover from the downturns seen in the last three years. The four overseas districts also commonly cited the need for additional certified ministers. These common issues had led to acceptance of a Strategic Plan offered by the Hawaii district at the 2010 WJCC meeting with the focus for 2011 on the Ministry and Programs and Education portions of the Strategic Plan. The primary intent is to see that this focus has encouraged all participants to seriously examine their respective growth, common concerns. To encourage growth, BCA suggested creation of a new committee for the Kaikyo and President Murakami also emphasized the value of communicating and the importance of working together to best address common concerns.

In response to an increasing decline in temple membership, Hongwanji-ha has restructured the Hongwanji BYLOWS (to make them current and to address financial needs. The significance of this restructuring is that our overseas districts don’t see it as a good sign that Hongwanji-ha is responding in a major way to their own changing needs.

The Buddhist Churches of America reported on the various education programs for ministers, members, and the general public being offered and developed by the Center for Buddhist Education.

Bishop Umene and President Murakami also emphasized the value of communication and the importance of working together to best address common concerns. To encourage growth, BCA suggested creation of a new committee for the Kaikyo and President Murakami also emphasized the value of communicating and the importance of working together to best address common concerns.

Mr. Alton Miyamoto from Hawaii, and Bishop Eric Matsumoto and President Alton Miyamoto from Hawaii, and Bishop Jiko Matsuo from South America.

I believe that team building starts with a shared vision or mission. The Mission Statement of the Buddhist Churches of America is “To Promote the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha as well as to Propagate the Jodo Shinshu Teachings.” In order to do this, the BCA as a national organization takes on that most important role of training religious leaders who can help share the nembutsu teaching at local temples and in local communities. For years it had been our dream to have an adequate educational facility in Berkeley. Now, we have our Jodo Shinshu Center, the home of the Institute of Buddhist Studies, the Center for Buddhist Education, Hongwanji Office (Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course and International Ministerial Orientation Program), Ryukoku University Berkeley Center, and the BCA Bookstore.

When I was born, the Hongwanji already existed. Ryukoku University was already there when I decided to receive a higher education in Buddhism. They were waiting for me. I did not ask for them, but people before me had a vision and established them for my sake. I feel so fortunate and grateful that people whom I had never met had done such a wonderful thing for me. I can imagine people in the future coming to the Jodo Shinshu Center and receiving the same dharma benefit I did. This is a manifestation of the Vow of Amida, inviting more and more people to receive the dharma. In your community too, your temple or church is your Jodo Shinshu Center, urging you to come and hear the nembutsu dharma.

I dread a day goes by where I don’t spend some time on BCA responsibilities and most days are dedicated largely to BCA tasks with occasional personal and temple diversions. My time as BCA President has been particularly busy, even more than I expected. Much is due to the slow pace at which I work, although I just tell myself I work deliberately. In addition, BCA’s very broad-ranged so there’s always more on my plate no matter what progress is made. I expect this is true of most everyone who has taken on this role.

Much of our day-to-day BCA activity involves taking care of administrative responsibilities. The responsibilities are important and require substantial attention so I’ll mention a few activities in this article. These tasks may not hold much interest for some readers but they’re necessary for improving our organization and helping us meet our goals and I feel it’s worthwhile for our BCA sangha to have some awareness of them.

Individual temple boards and district councils have been notified that we’re in the process of making sure each of the boards and district councils, along with their affiliated organizations, are using their own Federal Employee Identification Numbers (also known as Tax Identification Numbers) to reduce our bank loan for the Jodo Shinshu Center. Many of you who have attended one of our Board Vice Presidents, recently released guidelines and directions to assist the local groups.

Continued on Page 6
Through memories and looking at ourself as we were, we realize that our past has not been erased and gone forever, but that, rather, it is a dear part of us that deepens our understanding of human nature. — Takeko Kajio, Miyugoe: Flower without Sorrow, 1992

By Rev. Patri Usuki
San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

W ere there a beginning? Following her funeral, my brother and I spend several days sifting and sorting through our mother’s house. We need to work quickly, so we can get back to the temple some 2,500 miles away in the San Fernando Valley. I’m grateful to the sangha sorting through our mother’s house. We are shuffled together in an indecipherable neatness, but handful after handful when we were children.

There are also boxes and bins of photos. Some of them are sorted into albums and neatly captioned, but handful after handful

It’s time to take to the room in which I first heard the news on TV about the fire at the temple, she felt compelled to do something to help. Although she had just begun attending the temple at the time.

In these few days, we are being forced to

This was the first time a

In these few days, we are being forced to

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By Karen Terao Akahoshi
San Jose Buddhist Church

T he temple was partially de-

The BCA Bookstore is open Tuesday – Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Part 6

That temple was partially de-

In these few days, we are being forced to

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2012 Pacific Seminar: Shinran’s Quest

Preparing for Tokudo and Kyoshi Ordination in 2012
Two new groups are getting ready to move forward in the ministerial ordination process through the BCA Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP). The July 19-21 training began with a talk by Rev. Kusunoki (left, in white) how to fold and put on mini-sashes that have been given to the trainees. The trainees are learning from Rev. Kusunoki (left, in white) how to fold and put on mini-sashes that have been given to the trainees. The trainees are learning from Rev. Kusunoki (left, in white) how to fold and put on mini-sashes that have been given to the trainees. The trainees are learning from Rev. Kusunoki (left, in white) how to fold and put on mini-sashes that have been given to the trainees. The trainees are learning from Rev. Kusunoki (left, in white) how to fold and put on mini-sashes that have been given to the trainees. The trainees are learning from Rev. Kusunoki (left, in white) how to fold and put on mini-sashes that have been given to the trainees. The trainees are learning from Rev. Kusunoki (left, in white) how to fold and put on mini-sashes that have been given to the trainees. The trainees are learning from Rev. Kusunoki (left, in white) how to fold and put on mini-sashes that have been given to the trainees. The trainees are learning from Rev. Kusunoki (left, in white) how to fold and put on mini-sashes that have been given to the trainees.

Upper photo: Kyosho aspirants listen to Rev. Bridge (far right) discuss sutra chanting and ritual. Left: the second Tokudo “Assembly” group learns (from Rev. Kusunoki) how to fold and put on minisashes that have been given to the trainees.

Over the centuries of Buddhist history, there has been an untold dedication and sacrifice on the part of countless individuals who sought, studied, and listened to the Dharma, and then transmitted the Dharma to others. For example, there are individuals like the monks who traveled from India to China to bring the teachings to a distant land. Such monks would never return to their homeland. They dedicated their lives to the transmission of the teachings. They learned Chinese in a foreign land, and then translated sutras from Sanskrit to Chinese. Great translators like Kumarajiva were instrumental in the transmission of Buddhism from India to China.

At our recent Pacific Seminar we listened to lectures by Dr. Mark Blum, who has dedicated 30 years of his life to translating the Nippon Sutra, one of the primary texts of Mahayana Buddhism. For those of us attending, it was like listening to a modern day Kumarajiva. Imagine dedicating your life to studying and translating one sutra, one text.

In other cases, monks sought the teachings at the risk of their lives. Dogen, the great Zen Master, went from Japan to China in his quest for enlightenment. He traveled by boat at a time when traveling by sea was very dangerous. He did not know if he would ever return to his homeland, yet he went to China to seek the heart of the Buddha’s teachings. There is a famous true story from the time of Rennyo Shonin about one of his followers. Rennyo’s temple was set on fire by opposing political/religious groups, and inside of the temple was a handwritten original of Shinran Shonin’s Kyogyoshinsho. Rennyo’s follower entered the temple, found the treasured text, and then cut his stomach open, placed the text inside of himself and fell upon it. Of course the follower died, but Shinran Shonin’s Kyogyoshinsho was saved. Imagine literally giving your life to preserve the teachings.

I doubt I could ever do anything as heroic as what Rennyo Shonin’s follower did. I didn’t go to Japan to study at the risk of my life like Dogen. I went on a nice 747 with meals and movies. I cannot match what past great masters and devout followers have done to seek and transmit the Dharma. However, although I cannot match what they have done, I know that I can do something. There is something that I can do: something that I can do, whether it means serving as a minister, conducting study classes, giving Dharma talks, or listening to the Dharma myself. There is something that I can do, I want to do something, and I want to contribute something.

Each and every one of us can do something. We can find what it is that we can do to contribute to the cultivation and transmission of the Dharma in this land. Maybe it means just supporting your local temple. Maybe it means serving on the board. Maybe it means being a Dharma School teacher. Maybe it means being one of a handful of faithful students in a study class. Maybe it means becoming a minister’s assistant, or even a minister. Each one of us can do something. We must take on the challenge of finding what it is that we can do to insure that the Dharma is both received and transmitted. When each and every one of us discovers and takes on that challenge, then centuries from now, future Buddhists will look back gratefully on what we have done to transmit the Dharma to them.

Namuamidabutsu.

Center for Buddhist Education 2140 Durant Avenue Berkeley, CA 94704 www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org E-mail: director@cbe-bca.org Phone: 510.809.1460
On May 19, the White River Buddhist Temple celebrated 100 years in the Auburn Valley. Approximately 200 people gathered at the Watsonville Buddhist Temple for a lunch banquet followed by a special Kieshiki Affirmation ceremony performed by Rev. Umezu for nine of the White River Buddhist Temple members. Each person had unique stories and shared their vis- 
osion for the temple in the years to come.

The following day, May 20, was White River’s Centennial Eitaikyo and Gotan-e Service held at the temple. All the coast’s 50th anniversaries of devotion and preparation by temple members for this service were well worth it. The walls were freshly painted, the floors were professionally waxed, and displays of our temple’s history were set out for us all to view. With money. My ancestors.

We were fortunate to have Rev. Umezu officiate along with Rev. Koshin Ogai, our newest minister. What a joyous celebration hosted by the five Sasaki children and many supporters to visit with past and current temple members. Yet what made this service even more memorable was the fact that there were nine attendants for the service, all either former White River ministers or temple supporters. It was priceless to see so many familiar faces on our humble onaijin for such a celebratory event. A Dharma message was delivered by Rev. Ron Kobata, our 10th minister, with a reflective note about his experiences at White River which brought smiles to many faces. Along with the Tanukyo-Gotan-e ceremony, the current and past resident ministers welcomed the influx of people, both temple members and honored guests, in temple. The day concluded with a delicious lunch sponsored by the White River BWA. This was an opportunity for temple members and supporters to visit with past ministers and their families and to celebrate White River’s 100th anniversary. A great deal of hard work went into putting on the centennial celebration. At least a year in advance, plans were underway. From getting everyone there, to table decorations, to filming the video: The weekend was a time for both celebration and reflection; not only to reminisce with old friends and re- member our history, but also recog- nize how far we have come and share our hopes for the future. Experiencing a centennial event was truly a once in a lifetime op- portunity.

Everyone is impermanent or not?

On July 1, 2012, my family and I attended Rev. LaVerne Sasaki’s 50th wedding anniversary celebration hosted by the five Sasaki children and thirteen grandchildren. Among the BCA ministers in atten- dance who had been there for at least one hundred years and to reach out to the surrounding commu- nity.

It is really difficult for a couple to celebrate a 50th wed- ding anniversary not only in the USA, but also worldwide because they both need to survive and stay together for half a century. I feel so busy looking after my two kids. It is really difficult for a couple to celebrate a 50th wedding anniversary! Please take care of yourself and your family members for 40 years more, I encouraged. He will be celebrating a Golden Wedding anniversary. My life is as it is because of Other Power, including my grandfather when he was a student of my grandfather when he was a professor at the University of Tokyo. I was so surprised and happy to know all five children of the Sasaki family are involved with a BCA temple in their communities, and 13 Sasaki grandchildren participate in Dharma School. This is a legacy of the Sasaki family, which has been delivering the Dharma message for 122 years old at that time.

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A reunion is being planned for the former YBA members who were active during the period of 1955 – 1972. The event is being held at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, and is sponsored by the BCA-CBE. The Reunion will feature a former San Francisco YBA President and current Resident Minister for the Jodo Shinshu Center in San Francisco, Reverend Ron Kobata. Also attending will be former Mountain View YBA member, Rev. Ken Tanaka, who was also a former Western Young Buddhist Association (WYBL) President and National YBA President.

The program will consist of an Opening Service in Dharma message, discussion groups, tour of the Jodo Shinshu Center and BCA Bookstore, memorabilia and plenty of social time to visit with former YBA time. If you have not been contacted previously, please email Ken Nakano at ktnakano@campus.demon.co.uk or call 707-563-3651.

Bon Odori Patch Program

Summer is approaching and, with it, Bon Odori season. The BCA Scouting Committee is proud to announce the Bon Odori patch program for all Scouts and Camp Fire youth who participate in Bon Odori this summer.

The requirements for earning the patch are simple as in previous years. They include attending practice and dancing in a Bon Odori, learning about the music and equipment used in the dances, attending practice and dancing in a Bon Odori.

Dances earn a large patch and “rocker” the first year they participate in the program. Each year after that, they earn a “rocker” patch with the year of participation. The Bon Odori continues, continuing dancers can order large patches for their new uniforms as they attend practice or Camp Fire fire.

We hope you will encourage your youth to participate in the Bon Odori patch program. It is a fun way for youth to learn about Bon Odori and the joys of participating in the Bon Odori.

For more information or an order form, contact Taiho Morozumi at Information@bodai.org or calling (415) 731-8875.

By Edythe Vassall Berkeley Buddhist Temple

Making Peace with the Thirty-Fifth Vow

Heike Monogatari, the 13th century historical narrative that relates the fierce struggles for position and power, opens with the melancholy statement, “The temple bell [of Gion (Constance)] echoes through the night, a season of the flowers telling the truth to the those who foolishly must decay ...” Before the mighty are cast aside, and they are as dust before the wind.” The temple, identified in this early chapter as a metaphor for the Heian period, the last national dynastic transition, is the Ketawatadera Shrine, contemporary of the establishment of Shingon Buddhism in Japan. In the Heian period, the authority of the nobility was declining and the intervention of his disciple Ananda, women were finally able to join the sangha.

Buddhism spread from country to country not only as a conquering religion, but as one that adapted to the cultures it entered. Thus, although Buddhism is non-discriminatory, societal norms worked their way into the doctrine. In China, Confucianism enforced the rule of the “Three Submissions” of women to father, husband, and son as part of the Buddhist religion. This sexist dogma came to Japan in 1254 with the introduction of Zen teaching, along with other discriminations against people who were poor, disabled, uneducated, etc.

In Shinran’s time Buddhism was exclusive to the elite classes. It was practiced in the monasteries of Mt. Hiei and in the castles vaults of the calumities, Shinran’s amorous samurais. Monks such as Honen, Shinran, Dogen, and Nichiren brought Buddhism down from the mountains to the common people, fifty percent of whom were women. People who had all their lives been told that women were evil and unfit to become enlightened or go to the Pure Land would not suddenly believe differently just on the word of a few “renegade” monks. Women monks had heard yet they believed they were not acceptable. So Shinran presented the 35th Vow as proof of Amida’s promise to embrace all. It confirmed to everyone that Amida’s Vow was not for women. Shinran wrote in his Jodo Wasan:

Deep is Amida’s Great Compassion! By manifesting the inconceivable Buddha-Wisdom, He made the Vow of Transforming [a female] into a Male, Promising that women can become Buddha.

Although today’s women take offense at this passage, in Shinran’s time it was an inclusive idea. Shinran taught that the Nembutsu was the way to attain Buddhism for everyone, without exception. Reincarnation, the Name, Nembutsu, was the easy path for all fellow travelers. In Tonzanshi (chapter 1), Shinran confirms that entrusting in Amida is the only thing needed for Birth in the Pure Land:

Amida’s Primal Vow does not discriminate between the young and old, good and evil, right entrance alone is essential.

Rev. Motoyoshi explained that the Kamakura Era in which Shinran lived was a time when the nobility were losing power to the warriors. In fact, the first ordained Buddhist nun was Mahaprajapati, the woman who raised Buddha. She successfully challenged the cultural norm prohibiting women from becoming monks. Shinran’s teaching, based on that of his teacher Honen, rejected the elitism of Mt. Hiei and taught that the Nembutsu excluded no one. We are grateful to Rev. Motoyoshi for sharing her wisdom with us at the Women’s Dharma Gathering.

“The 18th Vow: If, when I attain Buddhism, the sentient beings of the ten quarters who were poor, disabled, uneducated, etc. were finally able to join the sangha.

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The 18th Vow: If, when I attain Buddhism, the sentient beings of the ten quarters were poor, disabled, uneducated, etc. were finally able to join the sangha.
I have known this temple for as long as I can remember. I have grown up walking through the two grand wooden gates that lead into the hallowed and holy budi- 
lari countless times. I have spent countless hours in the Kaikan, and I know the ins and outs of the church office. I’ve run into, up, and down the stairs a thousand times, and I have walked the stairs to the annex classrooms over and over. I know practically every member of Team Betsuin, as well as the office staff and lay leaders. I know the Scar- mento Betsuin. Or at least I thought I did.

This past mid-July, the 6th annual YAC retreat was held at the Betsuin, and I was fortunate enough to be selected as one of the 40 members in attendance. Walking in, I was ex- cited and nervous. Yes, I have known the Betsuin my entire life, but the idea of meeting completely new people and participat- ing in the week long retreat had me on edge. I had never been totally away from home for so long. As I walked into the temple grounds, everything around me seemed familiar, yet at the same time contained a different and even electrifying aura. I unloaded my gear in the annex classrooms upstairs, and then walked into the room next door which happened to fall with the other 15 participants. As expected, the first couple hours were a bit a trial and error. I quickly realized that all of us were pretty spaced out in terms of where we lived. We had participa- nts from Washington, as well as the Issei and Nisei, to follow Californians from the Bay Area and Southern California. All of us lived so far apart, yet here we were, about to work on what would turn out to be one of the best weeks of all our lives.

As expected, daily services were a part of the YAC routine. At first glance, I thought the four-services-a-day schedule was an overload, and I had a hard time getting used to the number. The sixteen of us were split into two tohos, or teams, with eight participants each. From there, the two teams took turns leading services. I learned which I belonged to the most. With Team Betsuin’s help in the week at all of us were able to become knowledgeable and about Nembutsu. We also focused on the Hoshōdō, and many other essential rules that you can step on the altar area. Before, during, and after services, we were given generous amounts of constructive criticism, whether in small group discussions, or in our self-re- drafted Dharma talks. Not only do we have services to run, but we also had several guest speakers over the week-long schedule. We had Rev. Ryuta Furumoto from the San Mateo Buddhist Temple, to the deep and complex dimension that exists in what we call the deep and complex dimension that exists in what we call the

President’s Message
Continued from Front Page
Compliance with the guidelines will help us prepare for a financial audit that is planned to occur this fiscal year is closed.

We’re working on filling the position of an Executive Director to help oversee all the BCA’s functions and activities for the day-to-day operations of our staff. Rather than looking for a direct replacement, we are looking for someone who has the necessary skills and competencies required for an administrative staff and is looking at options that may im- prove our delivery of services. We are looking for someone who can lead our organization and has experience in a similar type of environment and continues in a changing social environment.

In life, however, imper- manence signifies changing conditions, not the end of things. The decaying organ- isms interact with its envi- ronment and continue to exist in at least in some form.

Thus, the Jodo Shinshu can continue to echo the Buddhist doctrine and continues in a changing social environment and continues in a changing social environment.

The membership of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) is gradually declining. The bell of Gion- mado ringing at midnight is a symbol of the passing of time. The membership of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) is gradually declining. The bell of Gion-mado ringing at midnight is a symbol of the passing of time.

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津村洪雄
元ハワイ開教総長逝去

去る七月二十二日、米米国仏教団開教の津村洪雄総長が七十歳を一週間にして住世の素顔を遂げられた。

師は一九三二年に渡米、ウォツ会、サウスフロリダ、サンフランシスコ、本部本部、サウスフロリダ、サンフランシスコ、その後ハワイ開教区の総長を歴任し、引退後はサンフランシスコに居住。家屋は八月十一日（午後七時）よりサンフランシスコで師の長い生涯の供養に誌意を示すために、当別院、ハワイ、北米各開教区の協力のもと勤務された。

米国仏教団本部はサンフランシスコにあり、浄土真宗センターは湾を隔てたパーカーにある。両方のオフィスで勤務している人たちは全員が三十三日に、それぞれが教団のために一生懸命はたらいていることである。しかし事務所が離れていることもあり、近くの化粧を仕事と暮らしがうえ、それぞれの士気を備え合わせたために一度集まる必要があるということである。第一回目の集いが去る八月二十九日には開催された。

当日はまず全員でカレーパスタにおなりをし、先開教総長や会員の前で十三名いる。それぞれが教団のために一生懸命はたらいてくれるの貢献に謝意を示すために、当別院、ハワイ、北米各開教区の発行所

415) 776 bcahq@pacbell.net

葬儀は八月十日（金）午後七時よりサンフランシスコで師の長い生涯の記念に誌意を示すために、当別院、ハワイ、北米各開教区の協力のもと勤務された。

米国仏教団本部はサンフランシスコにあり、浄土真宗センターは湾を隔てたパーカーにある。両方のオフィスで勤務している人たちは全員が三十三日に、それぞれが教団のために一生懸命はたらいていることである。しかし事務所が離れていることもあり、近くの化粧を仕事と暮らしがうえ、それぞれの士気を備え合わせたために一度集まる必要があるということである。第一回目の集いが去る八月二十九日には開催された。

当日はまず全員でカレーパスタにおなりをし、先開教総長や会員の前で十三名いる。それぞれが教団のために一生懸命はたらいてくれるの貢献に謝意を示すために、当別院、ハワイ、北米各開教区の発行所