Replenishing Our Dharma Reservoir

We ministers of the Buddhist Churches of America just finished our summer retreat called the 2013 Fuken (Report), at the Kyoto Ekke in Japan. The Fuken is a traditional report that originated in India at the time of Shakyamuni Buddha. During the rainy season, all the monks gather in one place and studied together. To assist the monks, lay supporters brought them food, there is an annual summer retreat. This year, the BCA’s Fuken was held in Chicago for the first time in our history. It was hosted by the Eastern District and the Midwest Buddhist Temple. For a detailed description of the Fuken, please read the article written by Rev. Ronald Miyamura that appears elsewhere in this issue of the Wheel of Dharma.

On the way to the hotel, I asked Rev. Miyamura about the source of the abundant water in the Great Lakes. He told me that, besides rainwater, it is underground water that has accumulated in the Great Lakes. According to a recent report from the Institute of Buddhist Studies, there are now about 90 students who are enrolled and/or taking a class in Buddhism. Some are aspiring to become BCA ministers. I really would like to see us support them financially.

I would like to thank all the temples for sending their ministers to this year’s Fuken in Chicago and give them a chance to further their studies.

In Gasha,
Rev. Kodo Umezu

By Rev. Ron Miyamura
Midwest Buddhist Temple

The 2013 BCA Fuken (Research and Education Seminar) was hosted on Aug. 13-15 by the Eastern District Ministerial Association and was held in Chicago at the Midwest Buddhist Temple. On a mild (for Chicago in August) summer morning of Aug. 13, thirty-five Hongwanji Kaikyoshi Ministers, with observers from Hawaii and Canada, gathered for the Opening Service of the 2013 BCA Minister’s Fuken. Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop, led the chanting, and we were honored to hear the words of wisdom of 43 years of experience from Rev. Hiroshi Abiko who will be soon retiring. Next was a helpful chanting workshop led by Rev. Katsumi Kusunoki. After the closing renunciation of Japanese pronunciation for Japanese ministers chanting the Sanbujo and Hata, we concluded with the re-election of BCA President.

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When Help is Not

D uring a visit to a medical care facility I had time to relax in a dining area, thinking I would help any of the rehab patients using walkers or wheelchairs as they passed by. I saw one woman in a wheelchair crossing in front of me three times but I hesitated offering her help when I saw how determined she was to move about on her own. Her determination told me she would probably have refused any offer of help and might have even resented me thinking she needed assistance. She moved haltingly but in a way that clearly showed her will and pride at being independent. She wanted to be treated with respect rather than dealing with my misguided desire to be helpful or feelings of sympathy from anyone who saw her. I was vain to think this person would need and want my help. In future situations I hope I can remember that there is an urgent need to ask, “May I help you?” I’m very grateful for this experience and the person who unknowingly helped me.

In last month’s President’s Message I summarized tasks I hope we can accomplish by March of next year. Most of the items depend on joint efforts and in many cases I’ll need to depend on others to do most of the work. In particular, Alan Kita, BCA Chief Administrative Officer, and Kevin Askalani, BCA Controller, will carry much of the responsibility for the tasks I mentioned. I feel it’s worthwhile to describe some of the work done by our BCA staff members to help our general membership understand the many responsibilities involved in meeting

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BCA President
White River Buddhist Temple

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Rediscovering Obon in Santa Barbara
By Rev. Henry Tōryō Adams, Supervising Minister Buddhist Church of Santa Barbara

A few decades ago, Obon had several celebrations in Santa Barbara. In 1996, the Obon Society (B.C.A. Kaikyo) of the Buddhist Church of Santa Barbara together with the Buddhist Church of Los Angeles, sponsored the first Obon Celebration in Santa Barbara. This annual celebration continues to thrive and grow.

It started with a small event in the church parking lot, with the motto “boom box on the parking lot.” Since then, the Obon Celebration has grown into a meaningful way to carry on our legacy as a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist temple in America.

In 1901, a group of Japanese immigrants established the Buddhist Church of Santa Barbara. The church has been a cultural hub for the local Japanese community, providing a space for worship, education, and community gatherings.

In 2013, the B.C.A. Kaikyo Buddhist Church and the Buddhist Church of Los Angeles celebrated the 95th anniversary of the Obon Celebration. The event was held on June 25, 2013, and marked the beginning of the Obon season in Santa Barbara.

In summary, the Obon Celebration in Santa Barbara is a unique opportunity to honor our heritage and connect with our roots. It is a time to reflect on our past, remember our ancestors, and honor our traditions.

Correction
The CBC page in the August issue of the Wheel of Dharma was inadvertently printed with the incorrect file. There is no unseen problem that would be acceptable for this grave error. The print editor, Jeffrey Kimoto, sincerely apologizes for any inconvenience that might have resulted from this error.

Buddhist Church of Fowler
In 1901, a group of Japanese immigrants came together and established a Hōwa-kai in Fowler as a branch of the Freno Temple. Eventually the Freno Temple would have 22 Hōwa-kai throughout the Central Valley. With the growth of the Japanese community in Fowler, the Hōwa-kai (Japanese Association) in 1913 built a Community Center to be used for Hōwa School, Language School, Social Activities and as a Temple. In 1930 this building was destroyed by fire. In 1932 a new Church was built and it also was used for Hōwa School, Language School and Social Activities. This building is still in use today for Social Activities.

In 1942-1945 the Church was closed due to the relocation of Japanese from the west coast. In 1945 the Church reopened and served as a hostel for returning from Relocation Centers. As the Sangha continued to grow, using rent and novice members made a committee to construct a new Church, construction began in 1952 and was completed in 1953. On December 31, 1952 the Church was formally organized as a Temple. January 1, 1953 the Church became independent from the Freno Branch and began a direct association with the Buddhist Churches of America. Since our Independence, the Buddhist Church of Fowler has had three resident ministers in the past 40 years.

We hope the reader will continue to support the Wheel of Dharma.

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WHEEL OF DHARMA POLICY
Expanding Our Ministry thru MAP
by Rev. Marvin Harada, CBE Co-Director

Recently I had the opportunity to speak to the Boise Howakai (Dharma-talk group) of the Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple (IOBT), my temple that I grew up attending. Due partly to the fact that two of the IOBT’s minister’s assistants, Kathy Chaterton and Anne Spencer, live in Boise and nearby Caldwell, Idaho, the temple was able to create an outreach program by starting a howakai in Boise about two years ago. The Boise Howakai has been meeting every Tuesday evening under the guidance of resident minister, Rev. Dennis Fujimoto and his wife Sharmon (who is also a minister’s assistant at IOBT). It started out as a six-month pilot program, and after six months the group decided it wanted to keep meeting. Amazingly, two years have now passed. The other night when I went, there were over twenty people in attendance. They have a service with the chanting of the Jodo Shinshu sutras, and then led discussion. This is followed by refreshments and fellowship, often late into the evening. Individuals of various ages and backgrounds are present. A few families with children also attend.

I think that the IOBT is showing all of us in the BCA how we can reach out to the greater community by starting a howakai or branch in another city or town. I see no reason why any temple in the BCA cannot start a similar outreach program. Because of our trained and educated minister’s assistants, we can now expand our ministry by creating satellites and Dharma groups here and there, thus sharing the Dharma and bringing more people to our own local temples and Sanghas. Some of the individuals that attend the Boise Howakai have become IOBT members. Although the IOBT is located in a small town in Eastern Oregon it has a bright future, as shown by the howakai that has been created in Boise, Idaho.

Patricia Usuki (San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple) and Rev. Dennis Fujimoto.

Howakai is a time-honored practice that originated in Japan. In this practice, individuals come together and chant the Jodo Shinshu sutras for about an hour. This time is used for meditation, contemplation, and to share one’s Dharma experiences. It is a great way to connect with others and to develop a sense of community.

This year the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) Summer Workshop was held on August 3 and 4 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley. Students came from Canada, Brazil, the U.K., and Japan, as well as the East Coast and local areas. The fifteen students enjoyed a variety of activities, including informative lectures, casual group discussions on topic, services in the beautiful Kodo Hall, and an outing to the Buddhist Church of Oakland’s Oden Festival on Saturday evening.

Special guest speaker and distinguished author, Pro. John Nelson, University of San Francisco, gave an insightful and inspiritional lecture entitled “Experimental Buddhism: Innovation and Activism among Shinshu Priests in Contemporary Japan.” He highlighted new and creative ideas being applied to current social problems in Japan. Rev. Jay Shingo Okamoto of the Hawaii Mission delivered an informative lecture on Jodo Shinshu terminology and the importance of understanding the sutras. Rev. James Martin of the Calgary Buddhist Church also participated in the program. Workshop meals were graciously organized by Judy Kono of the Center for Buddhist Education and prepared by Alan Hirahara with help from volunteers.

The JSCC Summer Workshop, as well as the August Workshop, is a wonderful time for students to gather together to share their experiences and meet with the instructors for a more meaningful understanding of their Jodo Shinshu studies. The JSCC offers new spring and fall enrollments every year and welcomes newcomers to sign up for the online course. Contact the JSCC Office at 510-809-1441 or email jscjfs@csn.edu. For more information, please visit www.jscc.cbe-bca.org.

Leggo My Ego at the College YBA Retreat
From June 21-23, about 36 people attended the College Young Buddhist Association Retreat held at the San Luis Obispo Buddhist Church. Hosted by Bay Area College YBA and Southern District Senior YBA, the theme was “Leggo My Ego.” Three college-led workshops focused on letting go of self-consciousness: a lip-sync workshop to promote not holding back because you feel embarrassed; an obon dance workshop to demonstrate that it doesn’t matter if you look foolish, as long you have fun; and a film viewing workshop to show that you can find embarrassing or other people may not. Rev. Henry Adams (Oxnard Buddhist Temple) spoke about the six senses of life. Some people feel that they have no sense of smell, some people have a sense of hearing, and some people are deaf. He encouraged students to connect and explore their six senses. From DHARMA CHATTER by Rev. Masao Kodani p. 60-61

BCE 2013 Tentative Calendar of Events
(at the Jodo Shinshu Center unless noted otherwise, Programs subject to change.)

September 6-7: Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP) for beginner/intermediate
October 8: Japanese Seminar • October 11-13: College YBA Conference “The Pursuit of Happiness” • October 18-20: Dharma School Teachers’ Continuing Education Seminar “Making the Dharma Connect with the Young Brisk Road to Inclusion” with Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto and Mrs. Kiyo Masuda
November 1: Baby Boomers’ Seminar “Wake Up & Be Alive!” with Rev. Masao Kodani
November 4: International Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange (IHOPE) Gathering
December 12-14: Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP) seminar for beginner/advanced
The Buddhist Churches of America on Scouting provided a booth at the 2013 Boy Scout National Jamboree to help promote scouting within the Buddhist community and to inform prospects about the opportunities for Scouts and Scouters. The booth provided an opportunity for Scouts and Scouter leaders to learn about a religion that they may not know much about. The booth was open daily at the Jamboree from July 25 through July 28. The booth was located on the BCA’s 23+ Group area of the United States, which was between the Four Noble Truths and the story of Siddhartha Gautama and teaching them lessons in Buddhis...
By Ron Murakami

O n June 3 and 4, the 31st World Jodo Shinshu Coordinating Council (WJSCC) Meeting was held in Calgary as part of the preparation for the 2013 World Buddhist Women’s Association Convention being hosted by Canada. The meeting provided a venue for Hongwanji 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 and share ideas for strengthening World Jodo Shinshu education.

Rev. Sammi Kirihara from the Hongwanji BCA Section Department chaired the meeting while Bishop Ryui Kuwaba, Governor, represented the World Buddhist executive Board of Governors. The BCA was represented by Bishop Kodo Umezu; President Ron Murakami; Rev. Kyonobu Kuwahara, Center for Buddhist Education Co-Director; and Alan Kita, Chief Administrative Officer. Among the other participants were Bishop Ryuji Kuwaba and President Greg Chor from Canada, Bishop Eric Matsumoto and President Alton Miyamoto from Hawaii, and Bishop Jiko Matsumine from South America.

The meeting was relaxed and engaging, possibly due to the easy and thoughtful nature of Bishop Kuwaba who quietly and attentively listened to the various reports and discussions. While we continue to face common issues of the aging population of temple members and subsequent declining membership, Bishop Umezu indicated that a positive atmosphere created by hearing about the heartfelt efforts being put forth to address our ongoing issues. In addition, the reports focused on inspirational accomplishments and worthwhile plans for sharing the Nembutsu teaching.

Bishop Umezu spoke about BCA’s own efforts toward hosting of the 2019 World BWA Convention. Among other topics, Bishop Umezu also spoke about the productive use of the Jodo Shinshu Center by the Center for Buddhist Education, the Institute of Buddhist Studies, Hongwanji, and Ryukoku University.

Umezu reported that a total of 93 students are attending classes at the JSC, including Graduate Theology students. Similarly to his words at the recent BCA National Board Meeting, Ron Murakami spoke about the responsibility of stewardship of the Jodo Shinshu tradition on a worldwide basis. We not only are responsible for maintaining Jodo Shinshu, but also have the greater responsibility of improving propagation. Ron and Bishop Umezu agreed that that exchanging ideas with our counterparts outside of the structured meeting times was extremely valuable since we could focus on particular issues of interest without the limitations of electronic communications.

Both Rev. Kuwahara and Bishop Umezu spoke on the various programs developed by the Center for Buddhist Education. The BCA focus is on education and we now have over 100 people certified as Ministers’ Assistants.

Bishop Aoki noted that even though temple membership has decreased, there is more and more interest from non-Japanese Canadians. He also indicated how assistant ministers are needed due to their shortage of ministers. Each of the overseas districts has different abilities so we should share ideas and resources. Canada has just implemented a student membership program to encourage younger people to be part of the national organization and to become full members. Bishop Aoki also wants to incorporate ideas from the BCA, such as minister’s assistants, website use, Skype lectures, and human and technology resources.

Gor’Chor appreciates the strong relationship the British Columbia temples have with the BCA and the BCA Pacific North-west board. Canada is looking at different ways to make Jodo Shinshu accessible to the general public as the Nembutsu teaching extends beyond their temples.

For Hawaii, Bishop Matsumoto said the Pacific Buddhist Academy (PBA) is the number one project with the start of the new $5.8 million phase. PBA provides outreach to youth and emphasizes a peace curriculum. Bishop Matsumoto is helping to promote the dharma by increasing visibility to the public, including at civic functions. Without knowing something about the teachings, people will not come to the temple.

Alton Miyamoto spoke about Hawaii’s involvement in the Sadakou crane project for the Pearl Harbor Museum. Yui Sasaki, a nephew of Sadakou Sasaki, visited Hawaii last September to give one of the five remaining original cranes that Sadakou made to the museum. The dedication for the project will take place on September 21, United Nations Peace Day. Bishop Murakami spoke about South America’s effort to have family programs. Their Fujinkai leads the efforts in promoting educational programs. Program directors from Portugal are being requested by lay members.

Rev. Kirihara reported that the Mondai succession ceremony will be held June 5, 2014. Hongwanji has published an English seien (service book) and copies have been sent to each overseas district. There

Continued on Page 6

The 2013 Hongwanji sponsored Young Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE – Youth Exchange) took place from July 16-25, 2013. 14 young adults from the West Coast were selected to participate in this year’s exchange. The Chaperones for this year’s group were Rev. Kyonobu Kuwahara, Co-Director of the Center for Buddhist Education (CBE), and Mrs. Yumi Hatta, CBE volunteer. The BCA group met up in Kyoto with other members from the Hawaii, Canada and South America Kyodan. They attended classes at the Hongwanji, visited historical sites related to Shiran Shoin and the Hongwanji, and had an audience with His Eminence Monshu Koshin Ohtani. The program also included a visit to the Memorial Peace Park and Museum in Hiroshima and a homestay program with host families in the Osaka area.

Participants were: Michael Handa (San Jose), Kristin Hishinuma (San Jose), Mali McGuire (Berkeley), Matthew Nitta (Sacramento), Michael Samianio (San Fernando Valley), Garrett Sano (Fresno), Derek Shimozaki (Fresno), Lauren Takehisa (San Fernando Valley), Miyako Vasquez (San Jose), Truc Vu (Etok), Emily Yamanoe (Los), Scott Yebisu (Fresno), Michael Yebisu (Fresno), and Jason Yokoyama (San Diego).

The 2014 Young Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE) meeting will take place in June 2014. Young Buddhists from the United States and Japan will exchange ideas and experiences on the importance of Buddhist teachings. The program is open to all young Buddhists who are interested in learning more about Buddhist culture and connecting with others who share similar values.

The 2013 YBICSE was held in Japan, and the 2014 YBICSE will be held in the United States. The program will take place from July 16-25, 2014. The exchange will include cultural experiences, learning about Buddhist traditions, and networking with other young Buddhists from around the world.

To apply for the YBICSE, interested students should contact their local Buddhist temple or community center by the application deadline of February 1, 2014. The program is open to students who are at least 18 years old and have completed at least one year of high school or its equivalent. The YBICSE provides a unique opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of Buddhist teachings, connect with other young Buddhists, and explore new cultural experiences.
Recognizing 5% Debt Relief Donors

Retirement Ceremony

Continued from Page 2

sponsors from the BCA were in attendance for this memorable day.

This year’s event honored the ministers who retired in 2011 and 2012. In 2011, 260 ministers in Japan and five overseas ministers, had retired. The retired ministers from BCA were Rev. Koshibu Ogur, former Bishop of the BCA, Rev. Hoshina Masahuchia, and Rev. George Shibus. The other overseas ministers were Rev. Ryoo Tsuchiya in Tokyo, Hawaii, Rev. Hana K. Orai Fujikawa of Canada. In 2012, 294 ministers in Japan and 12 overseas ministers were honored and retired. The retired overseas ministers acknowledged BCA ministers Rev. Teshin Ando, Rev. and William Masuda.

The retirement ceremony began at 10 a.m. in the Amida- do, followed by the Dhama Message by the Rev. Chiko Naito, chairman of the Kangaku-kyo, a council of scholars that oversees the Shinsu- suhia disciplines and teachings. The Rev. Naito’s thoughtful summary of the Naito Sentai’s talk touched on how meaning of our faith has continued to grow and develop in our general Buddhist land teachings. This was fol- lowed by word of warm appreciations by Mons. Kudo for his many years of service in Japan. The entire group then took a photo on the main stage, allowing us to remember our general Buddhist land teachings.

As a first time observer, Alan Kita, Chief Ad- ministerative Officer, found the meeting to be in- sightful on the workings of the South America, Hawaii, and Canada kydai. The individual written reports for the WSJC report feature many more programs, activities, pieces of data, and ideas than can be captured in this edition. The BCA reminds all members and members who find some meaning in these reports to provide feedback regarding ideas and organization for programs shared. The meeting was very positive and worthwhile.

In a personal added note, it was both an honor and very humbling to experience how much Hongkong and the other overseas districts looked to the Buddhist Churches of America for information, services, and direction. We carry an im- portant responsibility in the world propagation of the Jodo Shinshu tradition.

WSJC Report

Continued from Page 5

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今月の一枚

おつかれさまでした

野球部でみさえ夫人と

8月1日にはホセク大会、12月にローガンをを迎えること

日本野球の輪番表に

「日本がお仕事大阪に

声明書に署名したが、その理由は

皆さんに感謝申し上げる。