



Buddhism Learning by eye, Buddhism Learning by voice

by Rimban Katsuya Kusunoki

Recently, I noticed that the volume of my chanting voice has become smaller. My chanting voice doesn't carry as well as before. When I visited my family in *Nagasaki*, Japan, my older brother, who is also a Buddhist minister, and I sat in the *najin* and chanted a Sutra together. After the service, my niece told me,

"*Kacchin* (my nickname), your chanting voice is so small. I only hear my father's chanting voice."

I was shocked. I had never thought that my voice was small. However, my voice was drowned out by my brother's voice. My brother visits members' houses everyday. He officiates services and chants sutras many times a day. Because of the accumulation of his daily chanting, he got his deep powerful voice. On the other hand, in US, I chant sutras only once or twice a day. Moreover, the Seattle Betsuin has an audio system of high performance. I just adjust my voice to the microphone. As a result, my voice doesn't carry well unless I use the microphone.

My first son was born in last September. I named his first name "*Yuiya*". At first, I wasn't sure what I should call him. We live together everyday and I call his name over and over again. And then, his name "*Yuiya*" or "*Yui-chan*" comes out of my mouth naturally. It is natural that a name is not an object to see or smell. A name is, of course, an object to call and to be called.

It is very important to say words aloud. We, *Jodo Shinshu* followers, recite *Namoamidabutsu* aloud. Our 8th religious leader, *Rennyo Shonin* wrote in his letter 'Those Lacking Wisdom in the Latter Age 5-1'

"Laymen and laywomen in the latter age who lack wisdom should deeply rely on *Amida* Buddha with singleness of heart, entrusting themselves to the Buddha single-mindedly and unwaveringly for their emancipation, without turning their thoughts to other matter. However deep and heavy their evil karma may be, *Amida Tathagata* unfailingly saves them.

This is the essence of the Eighteenth Vow that assures our birth in the Pure Land through the *nembutsu* (recitation of *Namoamidabutsu*).

Once our heart is thus settled, we should say the *nembutsu*, whether awake or asleep, for as long as we live. Humbly and respectfully"

We always have the *Amida* Buddha's guidance in the center of our life. We are always mindful of *Namoamidabutsu* and recite it aloud. For the *Jodo Shinshu* follower, it is the way of birth in the Pure Land and awakening.

When we read words and sentences through using our eyes, we naturally use our head and try to understand what they mean. When we read a word and sentence aloud, the voice naturally comes in from our ears and reaches into our heart. When we learn Buddhism, it is important to read sutras and textbooks through using our eyes and head to understand the meanings of each word and sentence. We try to understand them deeper and deeper. At the same time, Buddhist followers have also been chanting a sutra and reciting *Namoamidabutsu* aloud since the distant past. That would be because people wanted and needed to feel the Buddha's guidance and the *Amida* Buddha's compassion in their heart. When the Buddhism learned by the eyes and head and the Buddhism learned by the voice merge and become one, we can truly say that Buddhism becomes the path we live.

Continued on p. 2...

The Seattle Betsuin Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Donations October—November 2017

Funeral / Memorial / Nokotsudo:

Given by:

Yoshie Hiroo – Memorial Service	\$ 1,000.00	Mickey Hiroo
Marion Dumont – Memorial Service	\$ 500.00	Kemi Nakabayashi
George & Shizuko Nose – Inurnment (Burial) Service	\$ 300.00	Janet Terada
Noriko Holcombe – Memorial Service	\$ 210.00	Roger Holcombe
Hiroto Nagasugi – Graveside Service	\$ 100.00	John & Arlene Dunaway
Rev. Tatsuya Ichikawa – In Memory of	\$ 100.00	Milnes & Noriko Kurashige
Toku Norikane – 50 th Year Memorial	\$ 50.00	Hiroko Janet Kosai
Gene & Mary Akutsu – In Memory of	\$ 50.00	Marilyn Akutsu

In Memory of:

Given by:

Janet Setsuko Anthony	Sheri Moore
Marion Dumont	Donald & Karen Akira; Lisa Butler; Donald Castro & Shuri Saigusa; Mary Y. Furuta; Setsuko Harada; Terry Hirahara; Isao & Toshiko Hirotsuka; Alan S. & Lori Hoshino; Diane Inaba; Tetsuden & Cecilia Kanako Kashima; George & Irene Larson; George & Irene Mano; Wayne & Denise Montgomery; Craig & Joan Nakano; Junko Nakano; Tsukasa & Keiko Namekata; Terry & Geraldine Noshio; Sunako (Sunkie) Oye; Alvin & Donna Sasaki; Ben & Etsu Shimbo; Phyllis Simonson; Sato & Darlene Shimizu; Leslie Sumida; Midori Sumida; Yoshiaki & Naomi Takemura; Theodore & Akico Taniguchi; Michiko Toyoshima; Yoko Joan Yanari
Yoshie Hiroo	Donald & Karen Akira; Lauren Asaba; Marian Asaba; Janet Baba; Aya (Jean) Deguchi; Mae Deguchi; Yvonne Edamura; Aiko Fujii; Sue Fujino; Etsuko Fujishima; Florence Fujita; Toshiko Fukeda; Mary Y. Furuta; Ellen Hale; Miyuki Hanada; Peggy Hanada; Reiko Hara; Eddie Hiroo; Norigiku Horikawa; Toshiko Isomura; Mary K. Katayama; Kazuko Kawasaki; Taka Kogita; Daisy Toyoko Kuramoto (Estate of); Toshie Kawahara; Tsugio Jack Matsui; Paul Miyake; Paul & Teresa Mori; Edward Muneta; Ernest & Sanaye (Sunnie) Nagai; Teruko Nakamichi; Yoshio & Judith Nakamura; Craig & Joan Nakano; Curtis & Charlene Nakayama; Barry & Marlene Okada; Sunako (Sunkie) Oye; Pauline Sakuma; Deborah & Gary Shibata; Kenneth Shigaya; Sato & Darlene Shimizu; Frances Shintaku; Jim & Sally Shoji (2 remembrances); Masaru & Anna Tahara; Haruso & Sonoe Taketa; Masao & Frances Tamekuni; Frank & Fay Tanagi; Martha Taniguchi; Theodore & Akico Taniguchi; Ronald & Suzuko Terada; Margaret Teramoto; Pacific NW Exposure Inc.; Shirlee Tsuchida; Angela Shimizu-Tse; Sam & Masako Uchida; Machiko Wada; Betty Hiroo-Williamson; Arlene Yamada; Fujie Yamasaki; Sadie Yamasaki; Carolyn Yasui; James & Tomiko Zumoto

... Rinban's Message continued from p. 1

To be honest, I am not good at learning Buddhism through using my eyes and head. My eyes close instantly. Therefore, I try my best to learn Buddhism through using my voice. When I go to the temple, I go to the Hondo (main hall) first and chant a Sutra. Recently, I try to carry my voice entire the Hondo. I also try to beat my older brother's chanting voice. After that, I dust the altar. It is my motto to chant Sutras clearly and lively. I feel refreshed when I chant a Sutra aloud in the morning. Please try chanting a Sutra in the morning. To conclude my Dharma Talk, let's recite "Namoamidabutsu" aloud!! Gassho,

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ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE...

We would like to “thank” the following regular members, for contributing their minimum annual Sustaining Membership dues (the basic dues toward the Temple maintenance/operations). These are the most recent paid members for the fiscal year of 2017.

*Gary Kato, Greg Koba, Stan Kondo & Bonnie Duran, Cyrus Honmyo & May Chin,
Matthew & Rosalie May, Gail Suzaka, Bob Umeda*

(compiled by HL, PS, JN, & SO)

New: Wednesday Morning Service 10:00AM-10:30AM

Service includes sutra chanting and readings from the Gobunsho on **most Wednesdays** in the hondo. Please check the Betsuin newsletter or website at SeattleBesuin.com or call the office at (206) 329-0800 to confirm the morning service dates. - JN

New Time/Place for Meditation at Seattle Betsuin:
Before Sunday Morning Service - 9:00am - 9:40am In Memorial Hall Chapel



BCA Ministers' Association and National Council Meeting

Together in Gassho

DoubleTree Inn by Hilton - Sacramento, CA
February 21-25, 2018

Registration Materials were sent to temples in October

Scout Troop 252 News On November 12 Troop 252 held the monthly PLC (Patrol Leaders' Council) meeting and talked about our plans for the next few months. Our Court of Honor will be held on December 14, followed by elections to replace officials with other members of the troop. We will resume our weekly meeting on January 14. We also planned the crossover camp in April. Thank you for supporting Brent's Eagle Scout Project. He collected over 250 jackets to support Tree House which supports foster children. Gassho Daniel

Book Study Group The Book Study Group will meet on Saturday, December 9 from 9:30am - 11:30am. We will continue in our reading of the Larger Sutra from the start of Part 2 up until page 290 in the "Larger" Larger Sutra book. If you are using a different version, read up to section 34.



If you are feeling festive, please go ahead and bring something special to eat for Bodhi Day. If not, no worries - just bring yourself! There is no cost to attend. Questions: contact Leonora Clarke

Thanks, Leonora

Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Women's Association

submitted by Machiko Wada

Winter weather is here and we hope you are staying warm and comfortable.

General meeting (Sokai), Appreciation Tea (Irokai)

on November 19: We have revisited and revised our by-laws and approved the changes. Thank you to Shizue for typing and presenting them at the meeting. Please see the copy of the by-laws we have mailed you. Thank you to Janie and Kanako, our VPs for organizing Tea gathering after the meeting. Almost 40 members attended and we had a nice visit with each other.



BWA memorial service: was conducted on October 29, attended by over 130 members, family and friends. Rinban Kusunoki's message was wonderful and reading of "On the white ashes" was very touching. Thank you for attending and donating for the service.

Year-end donation: BWA board of directors has approved to donate to 5 organizations, Wheel of Dharma, ACRS, Keiro Northwest, Denise Louie, NW Shin Buddhist Grant.

Hoonko Service: BWA, led by Ritsuko Kawahara made Zenzai and Nigome for this very important service, was enjoyed by everyone. Thank you to the members who volunteered to cook, serve and clean up.



Mrs. Mariko Mano's 100th Birthday Party: On November 14, twenty-two (22) of us gathered at a restaurant to celebrate her 100th birthday. She is such a gentle, kind person, still *genki* to attend the party by herself.



suko Desaki, Aiko Fujii, Suzanne Fujinari, Sue Fujino, Florence Fujita, Miyuki Hanada, Peggy Hanada, Setsuko Harada, Kathy Hasegawa, Cynthia Hinds, Jamie Huh, Toshiko Isomura, Shizue Kaku, Miyoko Kaneta, Kanako Kashima, Mary Katayama, Masako Kawamoto, Taka Kogita, Yoshie Kosai, Masako Kubo, Lisa Kumasa-ka-Mitchell, Carolyn Kunihiro, Daisy Kuramoto, Kinue Kuwahara, Haruko Mamiya, Irene Mano, Mariko Mano, Julie Mayeda, Sheri Mizumori, Karen Morikubo, Kemi Nakabayashi, Judith Nakamura, Joan Nakano, Junko Nakano, Leanne Nishi-Wong, Mabel Nishizaki, Marlene Okada, Janie Okawa, Sunkie Oye, Shirley Shimada, Etsu Shimbo, Darlene Shimizu, Kazumi Shimizu, Fran Shintaku, Anna Tahara, Kuniko Takamura, Naomi Takemura, Frances Tamekuni, Rikuko Tanaka, Martha Taniguchi, Fumie Taniguchi, Terrie Tanino, Miyoko Tazuma, Kayoko Terada, Suzuko Terada, Mayumi Terada, Nina Tomita-Kato, Michiko Toyoshima, Machiko Wada, Susie Yamane, Fujie Yamasaki, Sumie Yokota, Charlene Yoritsune, Fuyo Yoshida, Tomiko Zumoto, Tina Zumoto-Ko

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Donations: gratefully appreciated. Ed and Joyce Kato in memory of Gayle Sordetto

Eshinniko/Kakushinniko
2017 Service: Yuki Arinobu, Marian Asaba, Lauren Asaba, Janet Baba, Patricia Bobrow, Mae Deguchi, Ya-

.....Donations continued from p. 2

Ross Hori	Brian & Helen Gota
Daisy Toyoko Kuramoto	Geraldine Furuta; Sue Sumiko Furuta
Joseph Matsuzaki	Michiko Hirata
Helen Mizuki	Dennis & T. Judy Nomura
Gayle Sordetto	Donald & Karen Akira

General Donations:

Rev. Katsuya & Ayano Kusunoki
Use of Facilities
General Donation
Appreciation to Temple for
Welcoming Granddaughter of
Rev. John Doami of OCBC Temple
General Donation
Appreciation for Onenju repair
General Donation
General Donation
3rd Quarter Dana Sharing

Appreciation for Use of Facilities

Given By:

In celebration of their son, Yuiya's 1st Birthday
David & Janet Hata (Ohmi Club)
Shinya & Jayne Ichikawa
Koko Doami

Nobuko Otsuji
Ernst & Sanaye Nagai
Hideo & Joyce Kawahara – Visitors from Hawaii
Yaeko Ito
Buddhist Churches of America Endowment Foundation
(Donation to BCA EF given by Gail Kaminishi)
Garfield High School Key Club

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2018 New Year Party, January 7, tickets on sale Sundays in the foyer through December 17

The Betsuin New Year's Party will be held on **January 7, 2018 from 12:00- 3:00 P.M.** Tickets for adult and children's *bento* will be sold in the foyer on Sundays until December 17, or you may purchase your tickets by contacting the temple office. **Adult *bento* will be \$15.00** and **complimentary *bento* are available** for regular Ijikai members who are 80 and over (these guests will have seating at a reserved table). A sign- up list will be available in front of the office or at the ticket sales table for those who would like one. Any *bento* ordered **after DECEMBER 24 will be \$20.00.** Children's *bento* (American style) will be available for \$7.00 and complimentary **children's *bento*** will be available for Dharma School **children 5 and under** (tickets are still required.) We will only be taking cash or check.

Submitted by Kiana Luke

Dharma School's Celestial Beings

On November 12, Dharma School students dressed as celestial beings for the Ho-onko service Ochigo procession. Thank you to the well-behaved participants, their parents for bringing the eager children on time, and the activity coordinators. They did a great job!

Dharma School Invites the Sangha to attend Bodhi Day Potluck on December 3 at 11:45AM.

Please bring your favorite dish to share.

Photo by Corey Murata

Classroom Reports

Pre-K/K After listening to "The Pumpkin Patch," a traditional Buddhist tale about finding peace in our special place in the world, the Pre-K/K students decorated pumpkins to take home. We express our gratitude to the middle school class and teachers for hosting a fun filled Halloween party the following week. Our students participated in temple clean-up by tidying up and cleaning our classroom. In observation of Hoonko; the students also learned about the life of Shinran Shonin, the founder of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. They then made a card with Shinran Shonin on the front using circles and glued a summary of his life inside so that they could remember him for many years to come. To celebrate Thanksgiving and to acknowledge our gratitude, the children read the book "Thanksgiving at Obaachan's". They made a turkey and on each of the feathers indicated things they were thankful for such as friends, family, food, shelter, health and Buddha.

First/Second Grade We have been discussing the Golden Chain. We made a chain out of yellow paper links with our names and the names of others who we feel a connection with written on them. It is up in our classroom around our globe. Then we read the story of Stella Luna the lost baby bat cared for by a mama bird, who is being kind and gentle and protecting her because she is weaker. We made paper bats where our handprints were the wings. The kids cleaned the classroom with the help of their parents for temple clean up. We read the book "Thank you, Thanksgiving" which illustrated thankfulness. Then the students made a Thanksgiving tree where they wrote what they were thankful for like, the Earth, fish, home, and family on the leaves to take home and share with their family.

Editor's Correction: In last month's DS News, a few lines were inadvertently omitted from the last paragraphs about the Halloween Party revived by Debbie Akiyama and an open invitation to visit classrooms. They should have read,

This Sunday Debbie Akiyama is going to visit our workshop to work on reviving the Halloween party for the younger kids. The kids were so sad last year when we decided to give it a miss. They really want to revive it!

We love your kids, and we love hearing what they have to say. If you have a chance, check in with them about whether they are enjoying class, and whether they have any suggestions! We want them to love Dharma school!

Finally, I want to thank Erin Taylor for coming to our open house last week and participating!!!! We hope to have more open houses in the future and that all of you will be able to come!

Submitted by Joyce Tsuji

Photo

intentionally

removed

Photo by Corey Murata

Musical Notes

We had quite the musical month of November with the *gagaku* workshop to prepare for Ho-Onko service and the 8th annual autumn music service. Rev. Ryuta Furumoto from Los Angeles Senshin temple taught the *ryuteki* while Rev. Kakihara came up from Tacoma to review *hichiriki* on Saturday, November 11. In addition to the adult participants, Soma and Mika did a great job playing *hichiriki* for Ho-Onko service the following day.

Guest minister Rev. Dr. Jeff Wilson from Toronto explained at the autumn music service how Shinran used music in the form of *wasan* to share the Dharma. Rev. Dr. Wilson also appreciated the Seattle Betsuin Ukulele Band selection of Paul McCartney's song *Let it Be* and the Bodhi Ensemble performance of *Over the Rainbow*. Thank you to Mas Tamekuni for continuing to teach the ukulele band new songs and to Mark Taylor for coaching and conducting the youth ensemble. We also appreciate Paul Mori playing trumpet in addition to singing



with the Sangha Singers and Donna Zumoto playing taiko in addition to chairing the service.

How nice it was to have new youth musicians included in our recent services! There are various other opportunities to participate in service music with very limited rehearsal time. Children's services on December 10 and in 2018 are a great chance to be involved with your instrument. New Year's Eve service, the spring music

service and the annual Dharma School visit to Keiro nursing facility are other times when youth musicians are most welcome to join in.

Submitted by Kemi Nakabayashi
Photos Tomi Zumoto and Kemi



Message from Chairperson

Alan Hoshino

As 2017 comes to a close, the temple is bustling with activity. Last month we co-sponsored with the Center for Buddhist Education a remarkable seminar titled Rainbow of Infinite Light which had over 90 registered participants, many of whom were not temple members, and addressed Buddhism's openness and acceptance of those who identify as LGBTQ. There's more about this event in an article that appears elsewhere in this issue of our newsletter. Holding the Rainbow seminar is part of an overarching program of Engaged Buddhism which the temple is undertaking to increase awareness of our temple throughout the region and expand our offerings to connect with both current and potential new members.



Alan Hoshino on left speaking with Rev. Dr. Jeff Wilson after the Rainbow of Infinite Light Seminar on November 18, 2017

On the facilities front we are in the midst of a major remodeling of the large parsonage which will become home for Rinban Kusunoki, Ayano and Yuiya early next year. At the time of this writing the entire interior of the house has been gutted back to bare studs and joists in preparation for new wiring, plumbing and other infrastructure renovations before new walls and interior finishings are installed. Budgeted to come in between \$130K and \$150K, this is an expensive undertaking but a wise move for the temple returning the run-down house which was only good for storage space back into a modern single-family residence with an anticipated value of around \$1MM. The payback is even better. With housing costs skyrocketing in the Seattle area, renting an apartment or house for the Kusunoki's would cost around \$3K/month or \$36K/year which means we break even in 4 years!

Speaking of financial issues, our accounting and finance teams are also busy this fall with a few changes that include switching our fund management investment strategy from actively managed to passively managed investments, a move that will save us a considerable amount of investment management fees, something on the order of what we net from our spring salmon dinner fund raiser! Also changing this year is the date of the temple's fiscal year end from November 30 to December 31. This is being done to reduce confusion and simplify reporting as most financial institutions prepare year end reports based upon the calendar year. To implement this our Betsuin treasurer and all affiliated organization treasurers will make 2017 a 13-month year (Dec 1, 2016 through Dec. 31, 2017) and we will footnote our financial statements. The other big change on tap from the accounting world is the publication of consolidated financial statements for the Betsuin and all affiliated organizations operating under the Betsuin's federal tax payer identification number. A big shout out to Craig Nakano and summer intern Matthew Lee who undertook this effort.

As part of the change in fiscal year end we will also be changing the temple's Annual General Membership Meeting date. In past years the fiscal year ended on November 30 and all of our treasurers would be forced to scramble and prepare annual reports in a single week to allow the reports to be collated and printed in time for an annual meeting in mid-December. Making this almost impossible was the fact that the November bank statements didn't show up until the 2nd week of December. At this year's annual meeting on December 10th you will be asked to approve an amendment to the temple's constitution which includes moving future annual meetings from "December" to "four to six weeks after the end of the fiscal year". If the constitutional amendment is approved, we will end up having our next Annual Meeting next month on January 28 when the annual reports for 2017 will be reviewed. If you haven't already received the annual meeting notice which includes this year's Board of Directors ballot and the complete text of the proposed constitutional amendment you will receive it shortly. Please look over these materials and if you have any questions, please feel free to drop me a note at chairperson@seattlebetsuin.com. All of this will be explained in detail at the annual meeting on Sunday, December 10, at 11 AM in the Hondo (main hall).

It's been an honor and a privilege to serve as your temple chairperson these past two years. I'm continually in awe of the volunteers and supporters of the temple through whose efforts to support our ministers and staff we are able to continue to propagate the Buddha Dharma in the Greater Seattle region. I ask for your continued support of our temple and wish you all a holiday season of peace and enjoyment starting with a very Happy Bodhi Day!

Dharma Exchange Notes

October 22 - Doug McLean MA presented his summary of Buddhism 101 and outlined three parts as follows:

Buddhism 101 Contains basic Buddhist concepts that are prevalent in most sects Buddhism 102 Mainly about Mahayana Buddhism found in SE Asia Buddhism 103 Jodo Shinshu is explained

Doug talked about the Three Dharma Seals:

1. All phenomenon is impermanent.
2. Everything arises from other "stuff" (as Doug put it).
3. Peace comes through Nirvana.

We all arise from different causes and conditions.

The Buddha contemplated many past lives including thousands and millions.

Samsara = endless lives with no sense of direction.

The Universe is growing rapidly. A Kalpa amounts to a huge, unfathomable amount of time.

The Buddha said it is difficult to be born a human and for us to make the most of it.

The Buddha himself set the wheel in motion.

There are three lasting refuges -- the Buddha himself, the Dharma and the Sangha.

Nirvana is the third Dharma Seal and involves the blowing out, as in blowing out a candle. It is the only true peace, and is the culmination of many lives. Nirvana is the point of Buddhism and is not annihilation. It is the culmination of many lives. There are many Buddhas all over the world and will continue to be. How to get to Nirvana? Doug explained that the Dharma is a manual, a road map. The monks memorized sutras and passed them on verbally. He said not to rush things, but to read the Sutras carefully. Finally, he also suggested we not compare ourselves to other Buddhists.

October 29 - Our guest speaker at Dharma Exchange was Michele (born Michael) from the Los Angeles Senshin Temple. She is now a member of the Betsuin. She said she was confused about gender as a child but did not discuss with parents. She cross-dressed in secret in childhood as her father would not understand. Being physically strong her whole life, she became a fire fighter and was the Station Commander/Captain when she retired. She felt welcomed and embraced at Senshin. A huge burden went away when she came out, and felt her earlier life was corrosive to her integrity. Michele said one can't simply come out to family and friends; one must come out to the whole world or it is not valid. In 1999 she was legally married in London and later divorced.

November 12 - Rev. Warrick showed Part Two of the televised series, "Buddhism on Air" by Dr. Kenneth Tanaka. One of the reasons for the growth of Buddhism appears to be how well meditation has taken hold in America. Guest Jonathan Watts gave the viewers ways to meditate as an American Theravada Buddhist. - Shirley Shimada

November 19 - Rinban Kusunoki introduced Rev. Dr. Jeff Wilson of the Toronto Buddhist Church who headed the Dharma Exchange in the Hondo with the Dharma School parents in attendance. He made the joke that he takes attendance in his university classes. Further, he liked the choice of songs for the Music Service and felt that "Over the Rainbow" could be viewed as a Pure Land song. He discussed in depth the people all over the world who are facing troubles and stated we live in the age of refugees because 65.5 million people all over the world are refugees, and 21 million can't return to their home country. He drew the parallel that Shinran Shonin and Rennyo Shonin had similar experiences of enduring harsh, personal hardships. Shinran, a 13C monk, came from a low-ranking family and was orphaned at an early age. He went to a monastery, which at that time was a place for orphaned children. He spent 20 years on Mt. Hiei when he had a crisis in faith. He left Mt. Hiei, met Honen Shonin, and found his way with Pure Land Buddhism. They were branded as criminals by a strong aristocracy, and went on to share with others who were disenfranchised. Finally, they were invited back, but declined and went further away. Their disciples, whom they taught, were farmers and local people who mostly were unable to read. In the Jodo Wasan, Shinran stated every being is nurtured by Amida Buddha and to take refuge in Amida, the ultimate shelter. Shinran was a radical teacher and that was expressed in the Tannisho where he is said to have stated that an evil person is loved by Amida and is one who suffers most and needs Amida the most. Rennyo, who was the 8th Monshu of Jodo Shinshu, lived a difficult life as well. His temple was burned, and he was on the run as a result. Rev. Wilson concluded by saying that during WWII the Japanese Americans who were incarcerated in prison camps were also refugees. He stated that it was worse in Canada because the people were not allowed to return until 1949. Sensei felt that the temples have been sustained by refugees. A participant asked, "What is your take on 21st C people reaching out to the refugees of today?" Sensei gave examples of his family's involvement in refugee sponsorship. They sponsored a transgender Syrian refugee who was so depressed she was unable to learn to drive a car, but later achieved that, and is also learning to fly. Later, they sponsored a large three generational family.

In gassho, Pat Bobrow



More than 90 gathered for a daylong seminar on LGBTQ identity and Shin Buddhism

By Tara Tamaribuchi

Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple hosted “Rainbow of Infinite Light,” seminar on Saturday, November 18, 2017. It was organized by the Seattle temple and the Center for Buddhist Education of the Buddhist Churches of America to gain a deeper understanding of the LGBT community and its intersection with Buddhism and what Buddhists can do to create the conditions for inclusiveness and advocacy. About 25 percent of attendees were from outside of the temple Sangha.

The seminar featured a personal experience presentation by mother and transgender son, Marsha Aizumi and Aiden Aizumi, an academic talk on LGBTQ and Buddhism history by Rev. Dr. Jeff Wilson, and a panel of local LGBTQ Buddhists to share their experiences and views.

After organizing the temple’s first Seattle Pride Parade entry in June, the parade committee immediately launched into planning this seminar with the BCA Center for Buddhist Education. The committee included Dean O’Shields, Lynne Goodrich, Anna Tamura, Rosalie May, Matt May, Tara Tamaribuchi, Joe Gotchy, John Mancino, Kanako Kashima, Alan Hoshino, Tina Ko, Claire Murata, Calvin Terada and Rev. Kusunoki, with guidance from Bif Bee and Dale H. Watanabe of Blaine Methodist Church, and working with Yumi Hatta and Rev. Kuwahara of CBE, and Assistant Minister Rev. Elaine Donlin of Buddhist Church of San Francisco.

Rev. Dr. Jeff Wilson, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and East Asian Studies at Renison University College, spoke about the “queer history” of Buddhism and Shinran Shonin as a queer icon. Wilson, a Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha minister, explained the term “queer” has various connotations, from pejorative and harmful to political progressiveness and solidarity. Wilson ascribes to the latter in his study of queer theory, in which queer is “people who don’t fit into dominant positions, and therefore they call those dominant modes into question. This often results in marginalization or oppression.”



With this definition, Wilson asked if there was something queer about Buddhism itself as a religious system. From a western point of view, he argued that Buddhism is “queer” in its challenge of western spirituality.

Wilson explained that in classical Buddhist society, monastic and lay communities are mutually dependent, but are separated by one aspect — sexuality. While all forms of sexuality are forbidden in the monastery, all types of sexuality are treated as equal.

Wilson shared that LGBTQ were never actively persecuted in Buddhist societies through history. Today, he sees Buddhist treatment of LGBTQ as varied from making it illegal in some former British colonies, to trying to push gay monks out of monasteries in Thailand when the country suffered an AIDS crisis in the 90s.

He noted that Buddhist temples and organizations are sometimes led by LGBTQ persons. Wilson finds that modern-day Buddhist communities tend to be ignorant of the LGBTQ community.

“We find examples of discrimination, but not active persecution,” he observed. “Tolerance is increasing, but not in the pace that we would all prefer.”

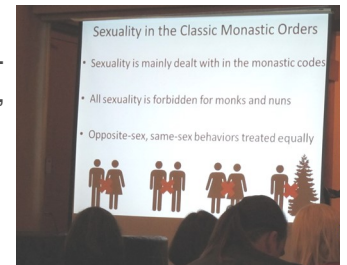
Although the pace has been slow, he called the present day, a golden age of queer Buddhism because of the many resources of information and support, citing the website www.transbuddhists.org, and at the “Queer Dharma: Voices of Gay Buddhists” book series by Winston Leyland.

Wilson calls Shinran Shonin a queer Buddhist icon, because he occupied an in-between status where he was neither a monk, or a layman, therefore living outside of the fundamental organizing principle of a Buddhist society.

“When he failed to fit into these categories he was absolutely what we would define as queer with all the possible discrimination and labeling by society,” Wilson explained.

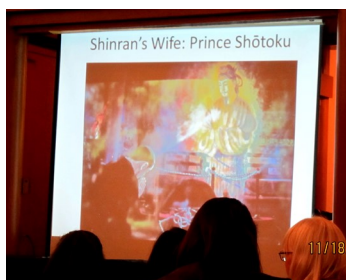
“He is absolutely in-between, he is a gender criminal,” he added. “He then founded a tradition of married monks and nuns. All of his followers become gender criminals. By the standards of the rest of Buddhism, we are gender queer.”

Wilson brought attention to when Shinran recited the nembutsu for 100 days at Ryokkaku-do temple in Kyoto, and saw the Bodhisattva Kannon manifested as Prince Shotoku on the 95th day. Prince Shotoku announced that as it was Shinran’s karma to have sexual contact with women, Prince Shotoku would become Shinran’s wife, help guide him through life and lead him to the Pure Land.



→

“So Shinran’s wife was a dude,” Wilson revealed. “If you just look at the facts of this, this is significant — Kannon is famous for gender-bending, so there is nothing odd about this in the Buddhist tradition. So, Shinran went on to carry the tradition and believed his wife to be a manifestation of Prince Shotoku.”



Wilson explained the gender fluidity in classical Buddhism, where living beings go through life after life for infinity, and can inhabit any possible kind of body or social position.

He touched on actions from the BCA in advocating for LGBTQ, from marching in Pride Parades, to the Bishop asking the Boy Scouts of America to not ban gay scouts. Since the early 1970s, BCA ministers have been officiating same-sex marriages. He cited Rev. Jerry Hirano, of the Salt Lake City Buddhist Temple, who urged BCA members to support people who are being discriminated against for their gender identity. His position was based on the racial persecution of Japanese Americans who founded the BCA.

The Aizumi Family

Marsha Aizumi, of the Los Angeles area, had been married for 16 years, when she and her husband adopted their first child, Aiden. She saw early signs that Aiden, assigned female, might be different, and that he had always been a male.



“He has always been my son, I know that now,” she said, showing a slide of Aiden in a dress with hair bows and Mary Jane shoes. “He always wanted to be in boy clothes, do boy things. We thought of him as our little tom boy.”

“Elementary school years were uneventful, other than marching to the beat of my own drum,” Aiden recalled. “My peers didn’t engage with me in a way that made me feel different. In middle school, I thought that would continue. A lot of my male peers, who I felt I had the most affinity with — they closed that circle. It was a boys’ only club.”

Aiden could sit with female friends, but shared zero interests. He found he had no peer connections. Aiden chose to attend a large high school, figuring he was bound to find a friend like himself among 4,000 students. Instead, he found the social pressure of fitting in to only increase. His only solace at school was playing on the golf team, where no one cared

how he dressed, and only cared about playing to win. “That was all they expected me to do,” he recounted of golf. “Outside of that, I still struggled to find someone I had a connection with.”

Aiden, at that time, was unaware of various gender identities. He decided to come out as a lesbian in his sophomore year. The school was unprepared to handle the daily bullying Aiden experienced after coming out.

“I was very easy to pick on,” he shared. “I was always by myself. I was having a lot of anxiety and panic attacks.”

By senior year, Aiden refused to go to school. Marsha arranged for him to finish high school through independent study at home. Aiden felt as though he lived in a limbo state, where he wasn’t experiencing normal high school life, while also suffering from agoraphobia, the fear of leaving the house.

Aiden began to recover his life when he learned about gender identity. When he explained to his mother that he was not a lesbian, but was transgender, Marsha was unfamiliar with the term, but recognized she needed to conquer her learning curve quickly.

“I didn’t know about it, but what I did know was that if I didn’t get it right, I would probably lose my son,” she explained. “I was going to figure this out so I was not going to lose my child.”

Aiden was turning 21, and going through the process of physically becoming a man. His parents grieved the loss of a daughter while celebrating their son.

“I saw the light come back into my child’s eyes. When we celebrated his 21st birthday, it wasn’t because he was turning 21. I was celebrating that my child was still alive... From this point on, I saw not only the light in his eyes, but hopes and thoughts of what he wanted to do in the future. It was hope that kept our family going forward and that we were going to make it.”

Marsha talked about the culture of shame for Asians, and the possibility of bringing shame to the family for being LGBTQ.

“I learned since that it is not a choice for our LGBTQ children,” she said. “It was up to me as a parent. Was I going to stand by him and walk this path, or was I not?... For me, I realized I was going to honor my family best by standing by my son. Today, I feel that shame has turned to pride. I am so proud of my son. I am so proud he gets up everyday and is himself. I’m proud of myself that I’ve been able to overcome some of the fears that I had and tell people how proud I am of Aiden.”

Marsha shared this story in her published book, “Two Spirits, One Heart: A Mother, Her Transgender Son, and Their Journey to Love and Acceptance.” →

She and Aiden serve in leadership roles in local and national PFLAG. Marsha has developed training for administrators in LA County schools for working with LGBTQ students.

Aiden now is working on his master's degree in education at the University of LaVerne, and hopes to work in a school that is inclusive.

"I'm filled with a lot of hope," Aiden said. "I see events like this happening, whether in religious or academic institutions, those conversations are happening. If they are happening, then my odds that I'll work in a school that has some awareness is greater and then I don't have to put out those barriers of walls, and be who I am."

You can find out more about the Aizumi family online.



The Panel

The panelists of LGBTQ identifying Buddhists, moderated by Rev. Elaine Donlin Assistant Minister of San Francisco Buddhist Church, shared stories of coming out, how Buddhism guided them in their identity, and the need for LGBTQ advocacy and understanding.

For one transgender woman, the Dharma has pushed her to live her life as her true self. "The Dharma is all around us and when are we going to receive it?" she recalled as a question that had lingered. "I take it as a step in what direction do you want to go? When am I going to take that step from presenting myself as a man to presenting myself as woman? That little phrase from the Dharma has helped me get there."

The gay son of Thai immigrants shared the story of "love in action" when he came out to his mother. His mother then told each of her family members that if they didn't accept him, then they couldn't be in his life.

"Love is an action," he explained. "It is something you go out and do. You have to go out and create the conditions for it. My mother, she created the conditions so that when I came out, I didn't have to experience some of the things that others experience."

A member of the Seattle temple explained that Buddhism helped him reconcile with his parents, who had difficulty accepting him as gay.

"They acted out in fear, out of ignorance," he said. "I was able to forgive them, and I don't think my heart would be able to be ready for that without Jodo Shinshu."

A teenager who grew up at the Seattle temple, had gradually come out to her family and school friends, but waited to come out to her temple friends. "The ones I hadn't told was the church," she recalled. "It was one of my biggest fears. I didn't know any adults or kids who had come out. We always talked about accepting everyone, but I didn't know how they would react."

She decided to send a text message to her friends and turn off her phone. When she checked it later after school, her fears subsided.

"It was all really positive responses, and they promised they would support me," she said. "I'm really grateful that my friends support me, and the people here support me."

When asked how Buddhists can be supportive of LGBTQ people, the Thai Buddhist gave an inspiring statement that Buddhists need to be more than allies and create conditions for LGBTQ people to thrive.

"It's great to be an ally and support folks and accept folk into your community, but I'm not really looking for allies right now, especially living in Seattle, by and large, I can assume that folk in Seattle are going to be okay with it, or are not going to confront me on it because we don't like confrontation," he said. "I'm looking for accomplices. I'm looking for people who say I see you live in a uncomfortable world, and I'm going to come out with you and make this world comfortable for you. When we have to go out of our way, to do additional work, it's asking people who are already hurt by societal norms to have to defend ourselves. Step up and create the conditions so that we don't have to. We can't do this alone. It's my hope people will take away the words from sharing our experiences and think of ways you can be proactive."



Planning Committee from Seattle Betsuin and BCE

Tara Tamaribuchi grew up at Orange County Buddhist Church, while her family roots are at Placer Buddhist Church. She was a member at Oregon Buddhist Temple for more than a decade before moving to Seattle three years ago with her husband and daughter. She has taught Dharma School in the middle school class at Seattle Betsuin for the last two years, and helped plan the Betsuin's first Seattle Pride Parade entry and the Rainbow of Infinite Light seminar. Tara is an interdisciplinary artist. More information about her art practice can be found online. ###

The Betsuin gratefully acknowledges the donations received for the following special services. If your name is not listed, the donation may have been received after the deadline for this newsletter and will be listed in the next edition. Please accept our apologies for any inadvertent misspelling of names:

Ho' Onko: Akira, Donald & Karen; Bobrow, Patricia; Chinn, Connie Ozeki -; Chisholm, Steve & Lori; Deguchi, Mae; Desaki, Yasuko; Dodobara, Kenny & Yoshie; Driscoll, Irene Goto -; Dykes, Burke C.; Fujii, Aiko; Fujinari, Suzanne; Fujino, Suteko (Sue); Fujita, Florence; Fukeda, Toshiko; Gotchy, Joseph & Margaret; Habu, Gordon & Mae Yamasaki -; Hamakami, John & Lynda; Hamakawa, Ron; Hamatani, Jane; Hanada, Peggy; Hara, Reiko; Harada, Setsuko; Hasegawa, Kathy; Hinds, Cynthia; Hirata, Michiko; Hoshino, Alan A. & Lori; Isomura, Toshiko; Kaku, Dale & Shizue; Kaminishi, Gail; Kaneta, Miyoko; Kashima, Tetsuden & Cecilia Kanako; Kashiwa, Ann T.; Katayama, Mary K.; Kato, Kazue (Katie); Kato, Nina Tomita -; Kawahara, Ritsuko; Kawamoto, Masako; Kogita, Takako; Kojima, Esther; Kubo, Masako; Kunihiro, M. Carolyn; Kuramoto, Daisy Toyoko (estate of); Kuwahara, Kinue; Mamiya, Haruko; Mano, George & Irene; Mano, Mariko; Matsui, Tsugio Jack; Mayeda, Julie; Miyauchi, Takiko; Mizumori, Sheri; Mori, Paul Bruce & Teresa; Morikubo, Yukio & Karen; Naemura, Joseph & Janie Okawa; Nagai, Ernest & Sanaye (Sunnie); Nakabayashi, Kemi; Nakamura, Ruby; Nakamura, Yoshio & Judith; Nakanishi, Kiyoko; Nakano, Craig & Joan; Nakano, Junko; Namekata, Tsukasa & Keiko; Nishizaki, Mabel; Nomura, Ronald & June; Okada, Barry & Marlene; O'Shields, Dean; Oxrieder, Gregory & Catherine Ann; Parke, Troy & Mayumi Terada -; Sako, Masako; Sakuma, Pauline; Shibata, Dennis M.; Shibata, Gary & Deborah; Shigaya, Kenneth; Shigaya, Teruko (Terrie); Shimbo, Ben & Etsu; Shimizu, Roy & Kazumi; Shimizu, Sato & Darlene; Suzaka, Gail; Tahara, Masaru & Anna; Takamura, Kuniko; Takashima, Kiyoko; Taketa, Haruso & Sonoe; Taketa, Susan; Tamekuni, Masao & Frances; Tanaka, Rikuko; Tanemura, Kevin; Tanemura, Peggy; Taniguchi, Fumiye; Taniguchi, Theodore & Akiko; Tanino, Ryomi; Tazuma, Miyoko; Terada, Allan & Kayoko; Terada, Calvin J. & Yvette; Terada, Ronald & Suzuki; Teramoto, Margaret; Teramoto, Stuart; Tomita, Paul & Mabel; Topacio, Ashley; Toyoshima, Michiko; Uchida, Sam & Masako; Watanabe, Henry & Christy; Wong, Leanne Nishi -; Yahata, Shizue; Yamasaki, Fujie; Yamashita, Dennis & Elaine Aoki -; Yanagimoto, Michiko; Yokota, Sumie; Yokoyama, Kevin & Kari Ann; Yoshida, Fuyo; Yutani, Nobuo; Zumoto, James & Tomiko;

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Hatsubon / Obon: Ito, Yaeko; Miyauchi, Takiko **All Sangha Memorial Service:** Fujii, Aiko;

Guest speaker for Dharma Exchange

on December 3 will be Bree Grim, a student participating in Olympic College's 2017 Archaeology Field School program. She will outline the history of the Buddhist temple at Yama at Port Blakeley, Bainbridge Island, and its ties to the Seattle Buddhist Church and its place in the history of the Japanese-American community of Puget Sound. Dharma Exchange takes place in the dining room downstairs at 11:00AM following Sunday Service.

- IHG



Takayoshi's Tea Garden with 13 men. The Buddhist Temple is in the background. Takayoshi is on the far right.

<http://bainbridgehistory.org>

Seattle Betsuin Celebrated *Ho'onko*, Shinran Shōnin's 755th Memorial, November 12, 2017



Betsuin Events for December 2017

MOST SUNDAYS – confirm at www.SeattleBetsuin.org. “coming events” listing, or call the temple office

9:00 am - 9:40 Meditation New Time/Location*- Memorial Hall Chapel

10:00 am - 10:35 SERVICE - in *hondo* (main hall) includes Sutra Chanting, singing, and Dharma Talk

10:35 am - 10:45 Sangha Gathering - offer incense, “meet and greet” after service in *hondo*, Main Hall

10:50 am - 11:30 Children’s Dharma School; school year starts Sept. 10 for all grades

DHARMA EXCHANGE – in dining room; a mix of discussions and educational programming; topics will be posted in newsletters in advance

PARENTS’ DHARMA EXCHANGE in Memorial Hall Chapel - discussion among parents of Dharma School children while children are in class; a minister or minister’s assistant attends

TEMPLE TOURS - to welcome newcomers, to ask questions!

SUNDAYS 9:00 am Meditation New Time*

December 3 9:00 am Meditation in Chapel

10:00 am **BODHI DAY SERVICE**

Youth/Adult: Rimban Kusunoki

Japanese: Rimban Kusunoki

DX: Guest, Bree Grim on Port Blakley’s “Yama”

DSDX: MA Rosalie May

Temple Tour: MA Irene Goto

11:45 am **Bodhi Day potluck**

1:00 pm Metta class #6

1:30 pm Sangha Award class #6

December 10 9:00 am Meditation in Chapel

10:00 am **FAMILY SERVICE and CHILDREN’S SERVICE**

Children: MA Matt May, Emily Ko, Marissa Wong

Youth/Adult: Rimban Kusunoki

11:00 am **Betsuin Annual General Meeting** in Hondo (no after service programs)

11:45 am SBBWA Board Meeting

1:30 pm Sangha Award class #7

December 17 Rinban Kusunoki at White River

Buddhist Temple; **9:00 am Meditation in Chapel**

10:00 am **FAMILY SERVICE**

Youth/Adult: Rev. Jim Warrick

Japanese: DVD

DX: MAs Irene Goto, Leonora Clarke, Matt May

DSDX: MA Rosalie May

Temple Tour: Rev. Jim Warrick

11:45 am SBBWA Cabinet Meeting

1:00 pm Metta class #7

December 24 9:00 am Meditation in Chapel

10:00 am **FAMILY SERVICE (No Dharma School)**

Youth/Adult: Rimban Kusunoki

Japanese: Rimban Kusunoki

DX: Doug on Buddhism 103

Temple Tour: Rev. Jim Warrick

December 31 9:00 am Meditation in Chapel

10:00 am **FAMILY SERVICE (No Dharma School)**

Adult: Rimban Kusunoki

Japanese: DVD

Dharma Exchange: Rimban Kusunoki

7:00 pm **NEW YEAR’S EVE SERVICE** (Joya-e)

MONDAYS Rinban’s Days Off

December 4, 11, 18, 25

TUESDAYS

December 12

10:30 am Keiro Bodhi Day Service with Nichiren and Koyasan Temples

December 21

10:30 am Keiro Service (Rimban Kusunoki)

WEDNESDAYS weekly 10:00 am Morning Service

December 20 2:00 – 6:00pm NW District Ministers’ meeting in Portland

THURSDAYS

December 7

1:30 pm Nikkei Manor Service (Rimban Kusunoki)

December 21

1:30 pm Nikkei Manor Service (MA Irene Goto)

December 28

11:00 am Merrill Gardens Service

FRIDAYS

December 1

12:00 pm **Gojikai Ho-onko Service & Luncheon** Meeting (Rimban Kusunoki)

SATURDAYS

December 9 9:00 am – 12 noon Ojo Raisan & Gagaku workshop with Rev. Kakiyama, Rev. Kusunoki and Seattle Gagaku group at Tacoma Buddhist Temple; **9:30 – 11:30 am** Book Study Group – Larger Sutra continued

December 16 10:00 am Shinran Shonin Monthly Memorial Service

January Newsletter Deadline
Monday, December 18, 2017 8:00PM

January 2018: Major Events

January 1 New Year’s Day service 10:00AM

January 7 Betsuin New Year’s Party & installation of officers

January 14 2018 Ho-onko Service 10:00AM

Seattle Buddhist Church
1427 S Main Street
Seattle, WA 98144

December 2017
Wheel of the Sangha
**A Monthly Newsletter of
Seattle Buddhist Church**

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December Major Events of Interest

Sunday, December 3 Bodhi Day service 10am; Dharma Exchange Guest Bree Grim at 11:00; Potluck at 11:45

Saturday, December 9
9:00 am – 12 noon Ojo Raisen & Gagaku workshop with Rev. Kakiyara, Rev. Kusunoki and Seattle Gagaku group at Tacoma Buddhist Temple

9:30 – 11:30 am Book Study Group – Larger Sutra continued

Saturday, December 16 10:00 am Shinran Shonin Monthly Memorial Service

Sunday, December 31 New Year's Eve service 7pm

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SeattleBetsuin.com

*Office Hours:
Mon-Fri 9am–4pm*

*Emergencies: Call
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for updated record-
ed message.*

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Deadline is the third Monday each month at 8PM