

# Calendar of Events March 2006

## Announcements

**March Sangha Services** - Our Sangha Service (Sangha is the Sanscrit word for Buddhist community) is a traditional Jodo Shinshu service with chanting led by a Doshi. Immediately following Sunday services we offer a book study and discussion. We now offer two book study programs. **Buddhism 101** featuring the book "Eight Mindful Steps to Happiness" by Bhante Henepola Gunaratana. The second option, **Jodo Shinshu Book Study**, featuring the book "A Life of Awakening-The Heart of the Shin Buddhist Path", by Takamaro Shigaraki. Refreshments will be available following the book study and everything will be wrapped up by noon. All are welcome to come join the discussions.

**Hinamatsuri-(Girl's Day) - Saturday, March 4th, 1:00-3:00 pm** - Hinamatsuri is a festival which can be traced back to the Edo Era (1603-1876). On this day, families with young daughters celebrate this event at home by decorating "hina-Ningyo", to insure their daughter's future happiness. These ceremonial dolls have been handed down generations, and displayed for a few days in the best room of the house at festival time, after which they are carefully put away until the next year.



Come celebrate this festival on Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup> beginning at 1:00 pm. The JACL is hosting this event which will be located downstairs at the Spokane Buddhist Temple. This event is free to JACL members and \$3 for non-members.

Activities planned are:

An introduction to the Hinamatsuri tradition - given by Christy Kondo

Display of a vintage Hina-doll set

Crafts – Card making and origami

Light refreshments

For more information, to help, or to RSVP call Christy Kondo at 624-5892

We hope to see you there!

**Ohigan - Sunday, March 19th, 10:30 am**

The Spring Ohigan is observed in Japan for one whole week beginning on March 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup>. During this season the length of day and night is said to be equal and the weather is neither too cold nor too hot, thus, making it ideal for contemplation and spiritual awakening to the infinite Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha. Excerpt from *"The Buddhist Holidays, by Rev. George Shibata"*



**In Honor of our Convention Volunteers**

Come celebrate with us as we honor the many Sangha members whose hard work and dedication helped to make the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Northwest Buddhist Convention a great success. We will have a pot luck dinner on Saturday evening, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm. There will be a sign-up sheet at the temple where you can sign-up to bring your favorite dish!

# Temple News

By Christine Marr

Temple President

Sitting at my computer writing for the March newsletter (pushing my cat's tail off the screen as usual), and thinking over what to write. Suddenly it occurs to me that I *don't* need to give reminders like, make your hotel reservations...send in your meal choices...tentative schedules...and the worry of what are we forgetting! It is with a sense of accomplishment and relief that the convention is behind us and our little sangha did an incredible job. I am so proud of everyone. You all worked so hard and together we did it. There were so many highlights it is impossible for me to capture it in a short message. Rev. Castro warned me that it would go by very quickly and he was so right. I am grateful for that observation, I tried harder to comprehend as it sped by. I think the very best part was having the Terao family share this special event with us. Mrs. Terao spoke with grace and warmth at the banquet giving us her support and friendship. I heard from many that to actually meet and talk with her was priceless. Then there was all the talent we had under one roof; Rev. Mark Unno, Bhante Seelawimala, Dr. Kenji Akahoshi and our wonderful Socho Ogui who won all our hearts. We had 87 new people attend our *Experience the Dharma* program, proving there is an interest in Buddhism in our community. I heard over and over how much the northwest temples appreciate us being back in the rotation. I could go on and on, I hope we all get a chance to share this experience in our pot luck celebration March 25. See the announcements section for details.

There is also the other side of the coin for this convention. We made mistakes in our estimation of the number of convention attendees. The high number of expected attendees we used in our hotel negotiations was partly our optimism. Did you hear the joke about the optimist who fell off the roof? Every floor he passed he was heard to say, "So far so good!" That was us. Beyond naive optimism was an error in our dates resulting in it not being held over Presidents Day weekend. The two combined is not disaster but we know there will be financial realities to deal with. The board plans to send temple members an update once the final numbers are in.

Next weekend, Leslie Green and I will attend the National Council meeting in Sacramento. I am honored to represent our temple and along with the experience of seeing the National BCA. I will get to see how this huge organization operates. I hear it will be a jam packed weekend with some very talented BCA Reverends and Lay Leaders. My plan is to take lots of notes, watch how it works and to pick many brains along the way. My main objective is to gain knowledge in how other temples are organized and find out how their committees operate. I hope to bring back lots of information that will improve our temple structure as we grow. We have done well in reading the by-laws and tapping into the experience of Fumi Uyeji and Janet Tamura our long time board members. However at times I know we stumble along our way and I am excited to hook into some lay-leader guidance. I will let you know what I learn.

And last but not least, we have been asked to be a part of a panel discussion during the National Council meeting. It will consist of Rev. Castro, our fearless leader these past 15 years, Paul Vielle the minister's assistant under Rev. Castro here in Spokane, myself and Leslie Green. They want to hear how we have managed without a resident minister. Keeping in mind we are not close to being in the black and have a long road ahead, we will do our best to represent the incredible Spokane Sangha and share our experiences thus far.

With Gassho,

Christine Marr

## From the T atami Mat. . . .

### "How Sweet It Is!"

Back in the late 50's the famous comedian Jackie Gleason starred in what was arguably the best sitcom of early television "The Honeymooners". At the close of each show, he'd step out from behind the curtain to thank the audience for their support and the cast for their fine work. Often, at the very end, just before stepping back behind the curtain, he would stretch out his arms in a sweeping gesture, as if to embrace the world and shout loudly "How *s-w-e-e-t* it is!" The applause would swell and everyone understood, I think, the phrase to mean the contentment and gratitude one feels whenever things come together in just the right way.

I caught a sense of "How sweet it is!" this last weekend working at the N/W District Buddhist Convention. The main thing I came away with is this; *there is no greater joy than that felt when people work together in harmony*. It seems so simple, so obvious, but so difficult to achieve in daily practice. Most of the time, the chatter in our heads is all about us; our plans, our complaints and our perceived entitlements. It's nearly impossible to reflect on the larger Buddhist themes of interdependence, impermanence, compassion and gratitude. But when you work in a group where every member is focused on a common goal, something wonderful happens. You forget yourself. For a while at least, the constant preoccupation with "self" simply vanishes. You enter a kind of energy-zone where you and your coworkers are thinking clearly and acting in concert.

Our team handled the registration table. An hour or so before the process began, I had real doubts about how smoothly the process of matching the different colored meal tickets with people's food choices would go. We had made several changes in the procedure the night before and I was afraid there would be much confusion at the table. I explained the revised process as best I could to Jim Bennett and Janet Tamura, who were the first of the team to sit down ready for work. Seemed like we had little more than half an hour to talk about the new process, before delegates started arriving.

I watched as more and more people assembled at the table and the team swung into action. Within a few minutes it appeared everyone working the table knew what to do. Sure there were a few sticky points here and there and not everyone got what they wanted. But by and large everyone registered with no major snafus. Things worked-out so well I think, because people on the team functioned with one goal in mind; to give every delegate what they need to get started. You could see it on their faces as they went about instructing one another, sharing shortcuts, resuppling positions and giving each other breaks. They just forgot themselves, utterly. When it was all over everyone smiled contentedly knowing they had completed their work successfully. Truly, Jackie's maxim, "How *s-w-e-e-t* it is!" was alive and well at the registration desk that afternoon.

Thank you dear dharma friends for all your help at the registration table. They are in no particular order: Anne Heineman, Martina Peterson, Shari Soejima, Hyacinth Dezenobia, Jim & Shirley Bennett, Karen Vielle, Janet Tamura, and Ets Yamada.

Paul Vielle  
Minister's Assistant

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## Recent Temple Tour

- On January 25 two groups of exchange students from Japan visited our temple. Each group contained thirty students so it was quite a crowd. Accompanied by their instructor Kris Moore, these students are part of the International Relations Program at Eastern Washington University. This is a five-month course designed to expose foreign students to American culture, customs and traditions. The temple tour was part of a unit of study on world religions. Paul Vielle our Minister's Assistant answered their questions and gave a brief talk on the temple's history. By all accounts the tour was well received. We expect a return visit with a fresh group of students in the spring.

The Spokane Buddhist Temple gratefully acknowledges the following dues and donations. Please notify Fumi Uyeji or Liat Parker of any omissions or errors. Dues are acknowledged when received and are often times for a few months or paid yearly.

### **Dues**

**January 16- February 19**

Fumiko Heyamoto  
Mary Naber  
James Lea  
Samuel & Alexis Baker  
Marcelline Burdett  
Rachel Scudder  
Paul & Karen Vielle  
Pati Lira  
Bonell McLeish  
Leslie Green

### **Donations**

#### **Dana**

Paul & Karen Vielle  
Thomas Lande  
Jim & Shirley Bennett

#### **Ho'onko**

Kengo Kato

#### **Memorial Dana**

Paul Vielle  
in memory of Evelyn M. Vielle

Hatsue Tanaka Leong & Edwin Leong  
in memory of Ito Tanaka

Janet Tamura  
in memory of Nisaburo Tamura

Fumiko Heyamoto  
in memory of Asayo Heyamoto

### **Shotsuki-Hoyo**

**March 19, 2006**

Shotsuki-Hoyo (the remembrance service for deceased loved ones) will be held Sunday, March 19th. According to temple records and other sources, a total of 10 people passed away during the month of February. They are:

Iku Horiuchi  
Shoichi Kayahara  
Mrs. Asano Kirihara  
Charlie Nakanishi  
Yoshito Norisada

Joe Takeshita  
Kuhei Tsuchi  
Toshilo Uyeno  
Kana Yamamoto  
Marguerite Peterson

## Impressions/E xpressions

**Editors Note:** Toward the end of the convention people would approach me with comments about their individual experiences during the event. I asked anyone who was willing to write me so that I could capture some of this energy and share it with others who may not have been able to attend. Here are some responses:

**Bonell McLeish:** (from her Dharma Talk Sunday following the convention)

"You know, I'm so tempted here to just not say anything....and give us all a moment's silence....like Rev. (Mark) Unno did, but I know it would not be the same. Just like it would never be the same if someone tried to duplicate his laugh. I hope all of you who attended the conference got to see and hear that at least once. It was infectious. He'd throw his head back and laugh at something he had just said, most often about himself. I had heard that he could be very funny and he was, but also very sincere and with great wisdom to share. It's hard to even remember him without smiling. What a gift he gives."

**Mary Naber:**

"It brought tears to my eyes hearing some of these marvelous women reminiscing about the proms from days gone by in the gorgeous rooms here at the Davenport."

"My favorite workshop, "Thank God I'm a Buddhist" (Dr. Kenji Akahoshi) gave me a real "Ah, Ha Moment" when we had to write out the answers to some simple but profound questions. The one that really struck me was answering the question: "What motivates me?" I had to discuss with some friends to find out what a good Buddhist answer would be. All I could come up with was challenges and competition. Whoa, now that's something I can work on!"

**Celeste Sterrett:**

"A newcomer to Buddhism – I did not know quite what to expect from the convention – as evidently neither did some of the hotel staff. The bartender was overheard saying "I had no idea Buddhists drank like this." What I found was a welcoming group and an event filled with many contrasts (young and old, newcomers and life long Buddhists, reverence and humor, making new friends and seeing old friends and entertainment ranging from jazz to belly dancing) yet all there for a similar end to learn and show respect and gratitude for the Dharma."

**Jim Bennett:**

"All of your hard work put in over the past year sure paid off in an outstanding Convention. The facility couldn't have been better and as usual the speakers were outstanding. Having both Bhante & Kenji there was a real treat."

Shirley and I stayed over after the Convention to visit with family. Our daughter picked us up at the Hotel Monday morning and took us to the airport. While waiting for our flight it started snowing. By the time we boarded our plane it was snowing hard. Just a few hours later we arrived in Yuma to bright sunshine and 83'. Looks like we got out of town just in time. It was a great Convention and we look forward to being back with you all in the Spring."

**M. Burdett:**

"Thank you members of the board and Sangha members involved in planning the NW convention. It was a chance for handicapped seniors like me to attend. I enjoyed the service when the hundred of voices rang out our sutra chant, it was marvelous. The guest speakers were interesting and meeting Socho Ogui was the highlight for me. Visiting with Mrs. Terao and her family brought tears of happiness and gratitude I am not able to describe. I knew okusan since my Seattle days when Rev. H. E. Terao and Mrs. Terao first arrived as resident minister. The conference left me with many happy memories to cherish and I shall be grateful every moment of each day."

**Leslie Green:**

"What will last with me forever was the emotions I experienced on Sunday as everyone was hustling and bustling around to get their bento, catch their bus or check out of their room before the deadline (when magically the key will no longer work!). I spent the last six months of my life working daily with convention planning, and realized that it was over, and all too soon. Kind of like the thanksgiving dinner you spend all week preparing, only to have it disappear from the table in minutes. Anyway, bottom line, I **did not** want to leave the hotel, because I knew that when I did, the energy and excitement I got out of the weekend would be gone and leave me feeling empty. But then I come back to the teachings of the Buddha and remember that life is impermanent and that while I was sad to see everyone leave, I knew that I had made many new dharma friends."

## Looking Ahead . . . .

### Japan Week and Hanamatsuri

Our spring food bazaar is just around the corner and this year, as in years past, it will coincide with our community celebration of Japan Week. We kick off Japan Week with the bazaar on Saturday, April 22nd followed by a guest speaker lecture on Saturday night. This year's speaker is Rev. Gregory Gibbs from the Oregon Buddhist Temple. He will then lead our Hanamatsuri service on Sunday morning, April 23rd.

As a part of the bazaar we will be selling our famous senbei. As you all know by now this means we are looking for volunteers to help make senbei on April 7th and 8th. The schedule will be posted at the temple for sign-up. We need your help, and it is a good way to get to know your fellow Sangha members.

### Special Guest to Visit this Summer

Ven. Lama Panchen Otrul Rinpoche will be in Spokane sometime this summer and he will be giving a lecture about the work he is doing with Mongolia. There will be more information about him and his project in future newsletters.



The names below are the people who helped with the convention. We are so grateful to you for your time and energy. We tried to keep track of everyone, but if your name does not appear, we are truly sorry and will gladly make corrections next month.

Aiko Terao  
Ann Trevethan  
Anne Heineman  
Barb Braden  
Bonell McLeish  
Celeste Sterrett  
Don Ferris  
Doug Heyamoto  
Ed Parker  
Ets Yamada  
Fumi Uyeji  
Hyacinth Dezenobia  
James Lea  
Janet Tamura  
Jason (bookstore)  
Jefferson Workman

Jen Johnston  
Jim Bennett  
Jimmy Yamamoto  
Jordon Johnston  
Jun Yugawa  
Karen Vielle  
Katie Parker  
Kelsey Asato  
Liat Parker  
Martena Peterson  
Mary Naber  
Marylynn Bernard  
Pati Lira  
Paul Vielle  
Rachel Scudder  
Samuel Baker  
Shari Soejima  
Shirley Bennett  
Steve Kajima  
Tina Rodeen  
Yoshimi Yamamoto



