



Spokane Buddhist Temple

OCTOBER 2007

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PAGE 2

Announcements

October Sangha Services—Our Sangha Service (Sangha is the Sanskrit word for Buddhist community) is a traditional Jodo



Shinshu service with chanting led by a Doshi. We meet

after service for refreshments and discussion.

Senbei Making, Saturday October 20th—Join in on one of our most enjoyable tasks. We will be selling senbei at our food bazaar and need everyone to help out with rolling, cutting and cooking. There is a sign up sheet going around at the

temple or you can contact Jefferson Workman at 768-5449 to sign up.

Fall Food Bazaar, Sunday, Nov. 4th—We will be serving Yakisoba Noodles with your choice of chicken or vegetarian style. We will also be selling our world famous senbei and having a bake sale. We are looking for people to help out with preparation, cashiering, cooking, and cleaning. There is a sign up sheet being passed around the temple so please volunteer, we need your time and energy! For pre-orders, contact: Fumi Uyeji 747-0480

Bake Sale Items In Great Demand!! We have some

fantastic bakers within our midst's and we are in need of your delectable delights. Please bring in your baked goods on Sunday, Nov 4th, they will be going to a great cause!



Daylight Savings Time Change—In years past, it was common to change the clocks back in October, but this year there is a new date for setting our clocks back one hour. The date is Sunday, November 4th.



Dues and Donations

Due to time constraints, we will provide the information for October dues and donations in the November newsletter. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Spokane Buddhist Temple Team

Supervising Minister:
Rev. Don Castro
Seattle Betsuin
Minister's Assistant:
Paul Vielle

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Christine Marr, President
Leslie Green, Vice President
Ann Heineman, Secretary
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Newsletter Editor
Leslie Green

Shotsuki-Hoyo October 21, 2007

Shotsuki-Hoyo (the remembrance service for deceased loved ones) will be held Sunday, October 21, 2007. According to temple records and other sources, a total of 17 people passed away during the month of April. They are:

*Arthur "Len" Braden
(Mrs) Masako Umada
Hichiro Ishikawa
Johei Kato
(Mrs) Hisako Kato
Yoshinobu Kimura
Jokio Konishi
Teresa Lira
Kotaro "Van"*

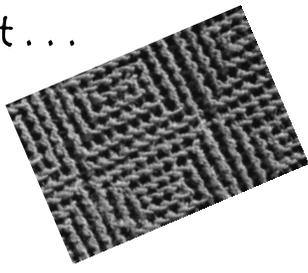
*Omine Seichi Nakamura
John Norisada
Rei Shigenobu
Jim Shimizu
Kame Uyeji
Jakeo Uyeji*



Andrew Vielle

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The Sangha as Pureland

Our tradition is called *Jodo Shinshu* which means True Pure Land tradition. Newcomers often ask, what is this Pure Land and what does it mean to be “born” into it? *Pure Land* is not an easy concept to explained or understand, yet it lies at the heart of what it means to be a follower of Jodo Shinshu. One can learn about Pure Land by reading the *Sutras* and Commentaries and by listening to scholarly lectures on the topic. You’ll find a variety of explanations. In ancient India for example, the Pure Land was conceived of as a spiritual abode, a Land of Bliss in the West to which the soul migrated after death. Other interpretations were more nuanced: Pure Land is a state of consciousness in which there are no obstacles to becoming a Buddha, or, Pure Land is a state of mindful appreciation of ‘life-as-it-is, without any qualifying ideas from the self or Pure Land is a symbol of Ultimate Truth.

Speaking as a lay person, I don’t find such definitions very satisfying. I’m always looking for simple explanations. Of course, I understand there are many Buddhist concepts that are simply beyond human comprehension—where language fails to explain. Such things belong to the realm of intuition or “sensed” phenomena, I think. A well-crafted haiku poem for example, can sometimes convey a sublime ineffability unreachable through logical reasoning. I wonder if “Pure Land” is one of those concepts beyond language. Maybe it’s best understood as a phenomenon; --as direct experience. Even so, I’d still like to have some way to apprehend Pure Land in everyday language.

Dr. Nobuo Haneda* in his new book *Dharma Breeze* offers a compelling, down-to-earth explanation of Pure Land. In his view, Pure Land is a symbol for the Sangha—the community of Buddhist followers. His rationale derives from a thoughtful interpretation of the Larger Sutra (the Sukhavativyuha Sutra), --one of the three principal sutras (or sacred texts) of the Pure Land tradition. Briefly, the sutra tells the mythical story of how, eons ago, the Bodhisattva Dharmakara aspired to become a Buddha. He was instructed that in order to do so, he must become a “perfect seeker of Truth”. That is, he must embody the spirit of

the perfect student (one who is constantly seeking and learning.) Dr. Haneda explains “...the only truth that Buddhism teaches us is the truth of impermanence. The truth of impermanence is the freshness of life, or creativeness of life. When this truth starts to permeate us and we start to embody this truth, we become seekers; ... [no longer able to be] complacent with fixed values.” (p.45) After an infinitely long period of practice (in which he “traveled in the ten directions, studying and learning from innumerable Buddhas) the Bodhisattva Dharmakara eventually fulfilled his vows and became a Buddha by the name of *Namo Amida Butsu*. A key point in the story is his 18th vow which states, he will not become a Buddha until birth in the Pure Land is assured for everyone who recites his name. Bringing these ideas together: Amida Buddha is the perfect seeker; an embodiment of the truth of impermanence. By invoking his name *Namo Amida Butsu*, we are seeking to fulfill our deepest aspiration, namely, to live a rich, full and creative life.

With the above as background, Dr. Haneda asserts, “I believe that the Pure Land is a symbol of the Sangha...a place where a teacher and students are wholeheartedly seeking the Dharma.” Citing from the lectures of Rev. Rijin Yasuda, Dr. Haneda adds: “This place [the temple] where we are listening to the Dharma together is the Pure Land. Our being allowed to be part of this place, this Sangha, is [one way of understanding] ‘birth in the Pure Land’.” (p.46)

Space does not permit further elaboration on this theme of ‘Sangha as Pure Land’. I urge the reader to get a copy of Dr. Haneda’s book and discover his wisdom for yourself. But just last month, several of us had a chance to experience this idea first hand.

Early in September (when our temple was closed for a two-week break), ten members of the Spokane Buddhist Sangha traveled 100 miles west to Moses Lake WA, in order to attend service with the Columbia Basin Sangha. In all, 22 people attended this “first-ever” joint-service. (continued on page 4)

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Workshop Well Received

Static Buddha,
Dynamic Buddha”

On Saturday, September 22 Rev. Don Castro from the Seattle Betsuin and Chaplain Shuri Saigusa from Swedish Hospital (also in Seattle) presented a workshop entitled “Static Buddha, Dynamic Buddha”. In the morning session, Rev. Castro led the group through a series of meditations and discussions designed to show how daily meditation can enrich one’s spiritual life. After lunch, Shuri Sensei discussed her

work with families of dying thought-provoking workshop. She led the group through a powerful exercise requiring us to make hard choices in connection to our own imagined death. Afterward, everyone agreed the difficult process of “letting go” of loved ones and cherished things is much easier when one has a solid spiritual grounding. All in all it was an interesting and



Rev. Don Castro and Chaplain Shuri Saigusa

From the Tatami Mat (continued from pg 3)

We had a wonderful service, followed by a dharma exchange and a buffet lunch. As we were leaving, they loaded us up with all manner of fruit and vegetables—fresh produce from the local farmer’s market. I think we all came away feeling truly contented and very connected with our new dharma friends.

Driving back, I thought about Dr. Haneda’s thesis. I can’t speak for the others, but for me the coming together of our two sangha groups was an excursion into the Pure Land. For the brief time we were together –we earnestly sought the Dharma, without pretensions. For that brief time we were all just *do*bo (spiritual companions) on the Nem-buttsu path. If this is the Pure Land, I want more of it!

Namo Amida Butsu

Paul Vielle
Minister’s Assistant

*Dr. Haneda will be our guest speaker on the weekend of November 17-18.



MEMBERS OF SPOKANE & MOSES LAKE SANGHA'S

FALL FOOD
BAZAAR
SUNDAY,
NOV 4TH
11 AM TO 3 PM
YAKISOBA
NOODLES \$8
SENBEI \$3.50
BAKE SALE
ITEMS





November

Sunday, November 4th, 11 am to 3 pm—Fall Food Bazaar

Saturday, November 17th at 7 pm— Dr. Haneda will conduct a public lecture at the Spokane Buddhist Temple. He will also deliver the Dharma talk on Sunday, November 18th during our regular service.

February 2008

Weekend seminar at Center for Buddhist Education (Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley California) Feb. 2-3: "New-B's Seminar" - "Crossing Over" for those members who were not born into Buddhist families but came to find the Nembutsu teachings. Guest Dharma message will be given by Rev. Don Castro with participation from other ministers whom are "New-B's" themselves.

Socho Koshin Ogui Re-elected

On Friday September 21, 2007 BCA Ministers and Council Delegates re-elected Rev. Koshin Ogui as Socho (Bishop) for a second 4 year term. This means Ogui Socho's many initiatives to revitalize the BCA--such as the completion of the Jodo Shin-



shu Center in Berkeley, California and the creation of the Minister's Assistant Program, (along with many other creative projects) will continue in the coming years. This is welcome news indeed. The Spokane Buddhist Temple extends hearty congratulations to Ogui Socho and his family at this wonderful development.

Buddhist "Buddhism's" : (terms relative to Buddhist practice)

In any new endeavor there are sometimes terms and words associated specific to it. As a newcomer these new words can leave you "in the dark" if you don't know what they mean, and too, you may feel awkward asking someone what a particular word means. When space is available, we will print some of these new terms or words along with a brief explanation of what they mean. Here is a start:

What is the "Hondo" (*hone-doe*)? The word "Hondo" basically means "main hall." In the western world, the "hondo" is sometimes referred to as the "Buddha Hall" or possibly the "chapel." At the JSC, the "Buddha Hall" is called a "Kodo" which means "practice hall or lecture hall" because the JSC is not a temple per se.

What is the "naijin" (*nye-jean*)? The "naijin" is basically the altar portion of the Hondo.

What is the "gejin" (*gay-jean*)? The "gejin" is the seating area where the members sit.



Naijin at Hongwanji,
Kyoto, Japan