



# Metta

Winter 2019

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## 2019 New Years Messages

by Monshu Kojun Otani, Bishop Eric Matsumoto & President Pieper Toyama



New Year's Greeting

At the beginning of this New Year, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to you all.

Last year, Japan was hit by frequent natural disasters like torrential rains, typhoons, and earthquakes. Other countries including Indonesia and the US were also visited by devastating earthquakes, tsunamis, and major hurricanes. I would like to convey my deepest condolences to those who lost their lives through the natural disasters and express my sympathy to everyone affected. We must also never forget that armed conflicts and terror attacks as well as severe starvation is making it difficult to live and lives are being lost every day.

In my message entitled, A Way of Living as a Nembutsu Follower which I presented on October 1, 2016, the first day of the Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition, I have stated, "by trying to live according to the Buddha Dharma, ...we can live to the best of our ability, aspiring to live up to the Buddha's Wish." In agreement with this proposal, beginning last April, our organization has launched a campaign against poverty under the slogan, "Dana for World Peace— overcoming poverty to nurture our children."

Unable to part from our self-centered mentality, we are simply foolish beings, incapable of attaining supreme enlightenment through our own strength. It is all through the salvific working of Amida Tathagata that we are enabled to realize our selfishness. Furthermore, because of this self-awareness, with the hope of responding to the Buddha's boundless compassion even just a little, we are enabled to aspire for everyone's happiness and make a sincere effort in dealing with the many difficult problems of bitter reality in this world.

In this New Year, as we receive the Dharma and recite the Nembutsu, let us make every effort to acknowledge and cope with the reality we face.

January 1, 2019

OHTANI Kojun  
 Monshu  
 Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

## 2019 New Years Messages

by Bishop Eric Matsumoto & President Pieper Toyama

### Aloha Kakou and Happy New Year! "NAMO AMIDA BUTSU"



Our Theme & Slogan for 2019 is Embrace Change: Transformation (Walk in Peace). It is our last year with the theme of "Embrace Change." Have you noticed a change in yourself? Have you noticed a change in our organization (Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii/Hawaii Kyodan)? Have you noticed a change in the world? Indeed, these are complex and challenging questions to answer.

Perhaps an answer we can all agree upon is "Not enough." Yes, how difficult it is to change for the better because my ego continues to get in the way. An important aspect of "Walking in Peace" is to become aware of my limited self, but rest assured that there is hope. A great hope, the encouragement of Namo Amida Butsu, The-Buddha's-Name-That-Calls (Myogo) and The-Buddha's-Name-Which-I-Call (Nembutsu). Amida Buddha fully understands the plight of this spiritually foolish "I" full of imperfections and thus reaches out, unconditionally, vowing never to forsake with the promise of attaining the Perfect Peace of Nirvana with birth in the Pure Land of Enlightenment (at the end of this finite life). However, the journey of "Walking in Peace" begins from the moment when True Entrusting occurs.

*(Continued on page 4)*



The current logo from all the documents I have found was designed in 1992 under the direction of Rev. Yoshiaki Fujitani, when he was director of the Buddhist Study Center. The background of the black circle with the white stripes images a scene of the calm ocean and symbolize serene and tranquil state of

mind created by the Buddhist teachings which is represented by the white lotus flower in the center of the logo.

This also symbolizes the BSC, located in Hawaii on the crossroads of the Western cultures and the Oriental cultures, which shares the better understanding of different cultures and contributes towards the peace of human beings and the world.

The white lotus flower symbolizes a stage that is associated with the state of bodhi; that of becoming awakened to the wonders of it all. When one reaches this state it is said that one has mental purity and has reached a state of spiritual perfection.

### Embrace Change: Transformation (Walk in Peace)



It is my hope that the 2019 theme speaks to all of us personally. At the heart of the theme is the call for usca to transform ourselves and from this profound change to walk in peace. The transformation we seek is borne out of awareness. As our awareness allows us to see, hear and feel with clarity, we come to know all that is given to us in our lives. Our appreciation of life itself becomes a real and true experience.

And when we become aware of the preciousness of our lives, the ordinary is transformed into a miracle of perfection. This is the transformation we seek: to see our lives as miracles because of the forces and people known and unknown have created the causes and conditions for us to be alive in this very moment. In these moments of transformation, we can only say, Namo Amida Butsu. And it is in this instant we walk in peace.

The reality is that these moments of transformation are short-lived because our self-centered egos wrench us back to attend to our attachments and our unreasonable desires. But this should not deter us from being open to the next moment of transformation and the next and the next, even though they may be so short-lived, for each is a step in peace.

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1436 University Avenue  
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Phone: (808) 973-6555  
Fax: (808) 973-6551  
E-mail: [bscassist@honpahi.org](mailto:bscassist@honpahi.org)  
Director: [bscdire@honpahi.org](mailto:bscdire@honpahi.org)  
<http://www.bsawahaii.org>

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**Excerpt from Hongwanji Shimpo July 1, 2017**

**Rev. Michio (Ichido) Tokunaga**  
**Dean, House of Hongwanji Academicians**

**The Heart of the Buddha is that of Great Compassion**

Seeing the sentient beings of the nembutsu  
 Throughout the worlds, countless as particles, in the ten  
 quarters,  
 The Buddhas grasps and never abandons them,  
 And therefore is named "Amida."

(Collected Works of Shinran, Vol. I, p. 347)

Firstly, the heart that considers others

Several years ago in the readers' column of a national newspaper, there was a letter that someone had submitted to the editor.

It was from a woman in her fifties. She and her younger brother were taking turns caring for their mother who had a grave illness and was on her deathbed. Even at night, she was at her mother's side. Although she had intended on only taking a short nap on a cot that was next to her mother's bed, because she had to go to work during the day, she fell into a deep asleep due to exhaustion.

She awoke all of a sudden when she sensed that someone was covering her with a blanket. Who was that person? It was her ailing mother. Her mother had climbed down from the bed to retrieve the blanket that had slipped off and was covering her with it.

Realizing this, the woman said she pretended to be asleep beneath the blanket and wept silently. Even on their own deathbed, parents cannot help but always be thinking about their own child. It is for certain that this woman, for the rest of her life, will always remember the love, kindness, and caring of her mother.

In Buddhism, this concept of consideration for others over oneself is known as compassion. It is said that a mother's love and compassion is unparalleled as the greatest emotional (心) concern that human be-

ings possess. However, it is directed to one's own child only.

In contrast to this, Amida Tathagata's compassion is vast and without limit, its working extends to all people and all living beings. This is the foundation of the salvific working of the Pure Land.

The Contemplation Sutra explains this as follows.

The Buddhas' mind is great compassion. It is with this unconditional compassion that they embrace all beings.

In regard to the common notion that "it is impossible to save persons who lack conditions," actually this concept ought to be considered from a different perspective.

Although I turn my back on the Buddha, Amida pursues me

The above wasan is found in the Hymns of the Pure Land in the section 'On the Amida Sutra.' In this copy that belonged to Shinran which is a National Treasure, he inscribed notes explaining the meaning of the word "grasps" (撰取 sesshu).

撰Setsu means to take in: 取 shu means to receive and embrace.

Shinran has also added:

Once grasped, one is never abandoned. Setsu means to pursue and grasp the one who seeks to run away.

This clearly explains Amida's Great Compassion and the extent to which the salvific working embraces all sentient beings.

As for the notion stated earlier from the Contemplation Sutra on "unconditional" and the common belief of "lacking conditions," both are interpretations of the original Chinese 無緣. However, it can and has been understood and misunderstood in various ways. Nonetheless, this notion should be understood as Amida's compassion is unconditional and embraces all beings equally. Therefore anyone who may have lacked opportunities to encounter this great compassion until now, once you have encountered it, then its working will never abandon you.

Translation by Gene Sekiya

*(Continued from page 2)*

A Foremost Scholar of Jodo Shinshu the late Rev. Jitsuen Kakehashi explains “The “turning of the heart” means forsaking the human-centered way of thinking and placing the teaching of the Tathagata at the center of our thought. Being saved means that with the Dharma-centered values, a new view of life is established in ourselves.” “In our daily life, we are liable to be dictated by self-centered thoughts, but in the mind of Nembutsu practitioners who are saddened and pained by this reality, there is a recurring transformation in which with the heart and mind of the Tathagata’s great wisdom and great compassion, we come to look back at our own thoughts and behaviors.” “...we come to reflect on our self-centered thoughts, reject our blind passions and make efforts to see things and live our lives in a way that can be approved by the Tathagata.”

As I have often emphasized, the life of a Shin Buddhist is one of responding in gratitude to the unprecedented and unparalleled Wisdom and Compassion of Namu Amida Butsu by reciting the Nembutsu in awareness, joy and gratitude that I am embraced just as I am with all my limitations and we try to live our life guided by the Dharma in grateful response to Unconditional Compassion until our life culminates (at death) with our entering the Pure Land of Perfect Peace and Happiness at which time the ultimate transformation to Perfect Buddhahood occurs. Or, more simply, out of gratitude, as The Golden Chain of Love shares “I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts, to say pure and beautiful words and to do pure and beautiful deeds knowing that on what I do now depends not only my happiness or unhappiness, but also that of others. May every link in Amida Buddha’s Golden of Love be bright and strong and may we all attain Perfect Peace.”

In 2019, embraced, nurtured and inspired by the Buddha’s 12 Lights, may we be encouraged to contribute towards a more peaceful, compassionate and harmonious world until we enter the “Land of Immeasurable Light” and the “Land of All-Knowing Wisdom” only to find “my” enlightened Great Self returning (from Pure Land of Peace) to aid others in their quest for the Perfect Peace of Nirvana. Namu Amida Butsu (Entrusting in All-Inclusive Wisdom and All-Embracing Compassion).

*(Continued from page 2)*

As 2019 unfolds one day from another, it is my hope that we will all find perfection in ordinary moments and in that perfection a profound appreciation for our lives. In that morning cup of coffee, in the smile of the cashier at the supermarket, in the “shaka” sign of a grateful motorist you allowed to merge into traffic, in the quiet loneliness of an empty house, in the Sunday morning greeting of a fellow temple member, in the laughter of your child, in the glow of the setting sun, I hope you feel the perfection of life, the perfection of your life. I hope in that instant your life is no longer ordinary but is transformed into a miracle. And I hope you walk in peace with the only sound on your lips, “Namu Amida Butsu.” Such is my hope for you in 2019.

## **The Inscription on the Myogo Scroll Reflections on my new theory of the Tannisho**

**W. S. Yokoyama**

..... CONTINUED FOM LAST ISSUE .....

For years Shinran must have pored over Buddhist texts looking for an answer, an affirmation. Then one day someone showed him the Sutra of the Tathagata of Immeasurable Life. And there it was: “the single moment of joyous love.” Love affirmed. Shinran was overjoyed. Surely Honen knew of it but just never had a chance to show it to him!

At the same time this is not something to tell everyone. It is a secret you keep hidden away in your heart. It is the principle you live by but never let be known. That must be what Honen was talking about when he said, “Nenbutsu is the principle of having no principle.” In the life of nenbutsu hold to the principle of holding to no principle. Just do whatever you have to do to live the life of nenbutsu.

Shinran must have told the story of his encounter to Yuien. As a result he too held the phrase, “the single moment of joyous love,” in reverence. After all Yuien had also crossed the line when he fell in love with Kakushinni who was already married. The year before Shinran started to produce the myogo scrolls Kakushinni gave birth to her second son, Yuizen. “Yuizen.” The “Yui-” part of the name raises eyebrows since it looks like Yuien might have been the father of the child.

At the same time, Shinran, like Honen, is giving the nod of approval to love. Just do whatever you have to do to live the life of nenbutsu. Love is the experience that imparts meaning to our life. We can now see why it was with tears in his eyes that Yuien set down the final touches to the Tannisho.

In the preface to the Tannisho Yuien explains the meaning of the title as “Admiring the past and critiquing the present.” However, most commentators have been influenced by the closing lines of the text where Yuien is shedding tears of remorse. They prefer the zange or confessional tone of the closing lines to the cool, analytical style of the preface. But we do not have to follow suit. We can make a new line of interpretation that follows Yuien’s preface. We might also deem to assign Tannisho a new English title different from that used in CWS.

When Yuien received the commission to write the Tannisho, Shinran as well as Kakushinni had already passed on. Yuien must have taken out of his copy of the Songo shinzo meimon to commune with the spirit of Shinran. At length he uses Shinran’s comments on the Shoshinge section as a template to think on the Tannisho.

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There is no one to one correspondence of the Shoshinge section of the Songo shinzo meimon with the first ten chapters of the Tannisho. But the purported fact that Yuien used the former as a template for the latter goes toward explaining the structure of the statements. The final statement on the so-called meaning of no meaning in chapter ten is also seen in Shinran's final comments to the Shoshinge section.

This lack of strong correspondence is actually the weak point of my theory. But I think my proposal is a step in the right direction. There are other elements difficult to explain by the Shoshinge section alone. It could be there was another text that influenced Yuien at the time of composition. I have found a possible candidate. But this is the subject of another monograph.

Of importance is the purported fact that in Yuien's mind the one principle guiding his compilation is "the single moment of joyous love." It is the hidden principle informing the Tannisho. Even though he does not cite it anywhere Yuien is well aware of it in the Shoshinge section of the Songo shinzo meimon from which he takes his inspiration. It is interactive with his composition of the Tannisho. But there is no need to repeat it in Tannisho. In fact it would be inappropriate to do so.

There is the general consensus among Shin scholars that Tannisho turns on Shandao's two kinds of deep faith. Or that the Tannisho's so-called meaningless meaning is the principle. Either way this would mean Shinran's worldview does not go beyond Honen and Shandao. To assert that the guiding principle is neither one is to say Shinran goes beyond both of them.

I would contend the principle is elsewhere. After all, as stated in the preface, the Tannisho is a book of kuden, secret transmission. This is also the case with Songo shinzo meimon. It is only to be shown to those in the inner circle who are deemed worthy. It is only by chance that we happen to have both of these works in print. It is not necessarily the case we are deemed worthy heirs to the tradition. At the same time it is possible to look at both these texts and see no real connection between them. That is the view of the typical Shin scholar. It takes a brave soul to take the leap of faith to assert the "single moment of joyous love" is the hidden principle to both.

This most remarkable phrase appears on the portrait of Shinran that was intended to carry his image beyond the present into the future. In it he secreted a message expressing the deepest point of his life experience that he wanted to hand down to future generations. At that point it goes beyond what Honen taught.

But is this also not what Honen wished to express: the liberation of women from patriarchal society and the equality of the sexes in the way he treated Eshinni as an equal? In Shui koto-kuden version of the Life of Honen there was originally a kanbun section in scroll four that relates how Honen was opposed to the banning of female seekers from the monastic centers

and how he championed the thirty-fifth vow on the salvation of women. I suspect that at one time this statement may well have prefaced his Senchaku hongan nenbutsu shu but it was regarded as too incendiary to publish and at length edited out by his disciples who were afraid of reprisal from the monastic orders.

The myogo scrolls that Shinran designed and the portraits he commissioned of himself are of interest. One myogo scroll has a top inscription from the Sutra of the Tathagata of Immeasurable Life. I first came across it in a grainy black and white photo in a 1922 book. It was this photograph that made me sit up and realize the Sutra was of considerable importance to him.

The portraits he commissioned have a cane, sandals, and charcoal box lined up before him. They symbolize the fact that Shinran is always ready to make the journey to where you are wherever it may be in this world. The Shinran depicted is not a humble soul retreating from the world. He is a bold individual moving forward into the light advening upon him from the future, ready for come what may.

Together these scrolls and portraits made me realize that this highly creative period of Shinran's life was not adequately represented in any of Shinran's collected works. We look at CWS and think that is all we need to understand Shinran. But that is not the case. We are only fooling ourselves if we think we know all about Shinran from CWS. And this has been the situation for ages.

These days we hardly ever get to see the myogo scrolls or portraits. With their inscriptions they represent his final words of instruction to us. Perhaps this article will lead to interest in producing our own modern versions of them based on Shinran's designs.



In October, 2017, a Canadian astronomer working at Haleakala observatory spotted an unusual space object. Later named 'Oumuamua it came floating by ominously from outside the solar system. Scientists don't really know what it looked like. It was gone before they could tell much about it. But it was

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around the same time I had this revelation of the inscription on the myogo scroll. Like Doc Brown's vision of the flux capacitor. Coming from outside the centuries-old systematics of Shinshu shugaku studies, like this article, it was an 'Oumuamua moment taking place inside my mind.

Shinran's myogo scroll

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The Sutra of the Tathagata of Immeasurable Life says,  
"When I become buddha, if the sentients in my land  
are unsure as to whether they will all attain perfect enlightenment  
and realize great nirvana, may I not attain bodhi, enlightenment."

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"Take refuge in the Tathagata of unhindered light  
filling the universe in every direction !"

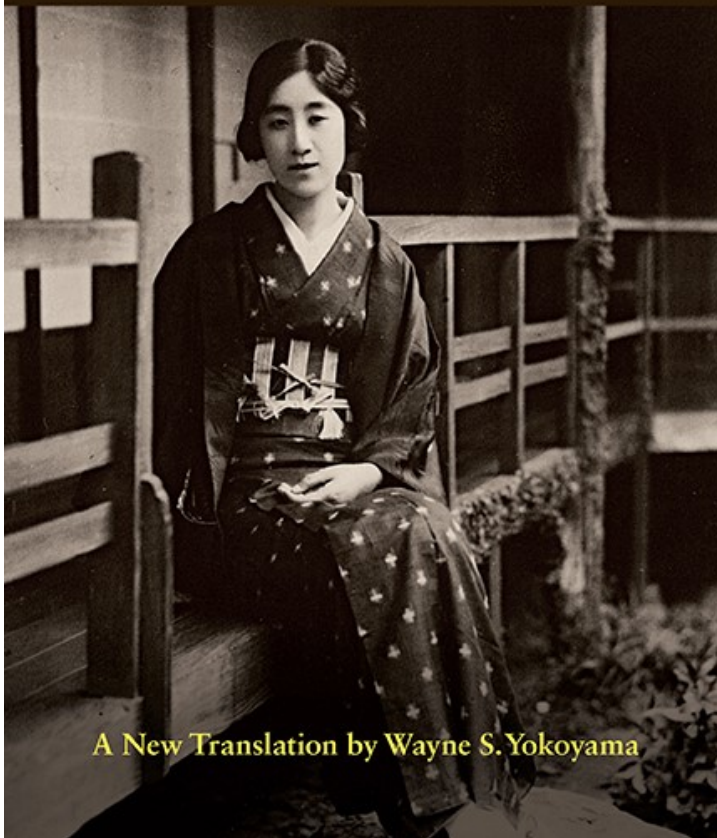
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\*The Sutra of Immeasurable Life Upadesa says:  
"O World Honored One, with singleness of mind  
I take refuge in the light filling the world everywhere:  
The Tathagata of irresistible light.  
Desiring to be born in the land of composure and joy  
I depend on the sutra the Buddha expounded."

## Leaves of My Heart

And selected works from *The Tinkling of the Golden Bell* collection

Lady Takeko Kujo



A New Translation by Wayne S. Yokoyama

### A New Book That Speaks to Our Times:

#### *Leaves of My Heart*

The American Buddhist Studies Center has recently published a book that in many profound ways speaks to our times. It consists of selected works from the book *Kinrei*, "The Tinkling of the Golden Bell" published in 1920 by Lady Takeko Kujo the sister of the great-great grandfather of the present Go-Monshu of the Nishi Hongwanji, Kohjun Ohtani. So I find it particularly remarkable that the essays and poems are so relevant to our challenges, big and small, that we face in the present age.

The English translation of the selected works of the Lady Kujo was researched and done by an old friend of the Metta, W. S. Yokoyama, also known as Wayne S. Yokoyama in the book. The publication was managed by another good friend, Hoshina Seki, President of the American Buddhist Study Center, and made possible by many others who you will find credited in the book.

This book also gives the reader many insights into the life of Lady Kujo who, among many significant activities, helped found the Buddhist Women's Association at the Nishi Hongwanji, proposed the beginning of a

(Continued on page 7)

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Edith Ihori	Waipahu
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We gratefully welcome memorial donations and donations in all forms. We are now on Paypal! There is a link on our website. Please make all checks payable to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. Thank You.

*(Continued from page 6)*

schools for girls that later becomes the Kyoto Women's University, and was a significant part of the founding of the Asoka Hospital...

And with the remainder of the space of the Metta allow me to have Lady Kujo speaker for herself via excerpts from the book:

February 18, 1926  
Individuality

Given the fact that everyone has a different mission in life, it is to be expected that what each person does will vary. Every life is rooted in a different place. We should not compromise ourselves based on the opinions of others. If we do, we will inevitably lose our individuality.

We frequently bestow hard criticisms or gratuitous praise on the actions of others in an uncompromising manner. It is harmful to make assumptions completely from one's own point of view. To compare the differences in the lives of others and conclude that they have all the blessings is a serious insult to oneself.

People who have a firm grasp of their own precious lives should be oblivious to both praise and censure from the rest of the world. To give up on one's life mission based on other's opinions is yet another insult to oneself.

March 3, 1926  
On Religious Propagation

It is wonderful to find that, in every era, political leaders do not forget about religion. Looking back on human history, however, when religious propagation is used as a political policy in colonized lands, or as a foreign policy among cooperating parties, this does not mean the original intention was religious. Those who seek to use religion as a political tool usually have no religious convictions.

Religion can be applied to any situation or endeavor, but when a person with no religious conviction seeks to exploit the religion, they are not credible.

Politicians' schemes that use religion to soothe the anxieties of the human heart are not always without value. However, we recognize that religion does not exist in order to make people think a certain way. We must understand that the human heart will be more secure when the religious mind flourishes.

April 9, 1926

Astonishment on Our Faces

Some people try to attract attention by showing off, doing strange things, or wearing strange clothes. This marks a new high in just how low people will go.

Fools gleefully applaud themselves when they see astonishment on our faces. It gives them satisfaction to shock people, so they will use any means to do so.

Every aspect of recent times is saturated with sensationalism intended to surprise others. As a result, people are being subjected to far too much stimulation. However, the way of life that continues all over the world just follows the path of ordinary people. In other words, by living an ordinary life in this age of eccentricities, it would be rather astonishing for people to awaken to their ordinary human nature, would it not?

This new book, *Leaves of My Heart*, can be found at the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Bookstore and inquires can be made to the American Buddhist Study Center, 331 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10025

Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii  
Buddhist Study Center  
1436 University Avenue  
Honolulu, HI 96822-2415

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**Director**            Rev. Kevin Kuniyuki

**Editor**                Rev. Kevin Kuniyuki

**Contributors**        Monshu Kojun Otani

                              Bishop Eric Matsumoto

                              President Pieper Toyama

                              Rev. Michio (Ichido) Tokunaga

                              W. S. Yokoyama

**Translators:**        Rev. Gene Sekiya

## Upcoming Events

Buddhist Discussion Group	Feb 25
Zen Meditation	Feb 26
BSC Shakuhachi Club	Feb 26
Shakuhachi with Rev. Thomas Okano	Feb 27
Yoga Class with Lisa Yanagi	Feb 27
Shakuhachi with Rev. Thomas Okano	Feb 28
Zen Meditation	Mar 5
BSC Shakuhachi Club	Mar 5
Shakuhachi with Rev. Thomas Okano	Mar 6
Yoga Class with Lisa Yanagi	Mar 6
Shakuhachi with Rev. Thomas Okano	Mar 7
Zen Meditation	Mar 12
BSC Shakuhachi Club	Mar 12

