



Metta

Summer 2019

Inside this issue:

-Page 1
Jodo Shinshu in Every-
day Life
 Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara

-Page 2
The Story of Saichi's
Chirping Sound.
Or, How to Fall Asleep
 W. S. Yokoyama

-Page 3
Essays of
Rev. Michio Tokunaga

-Page 6
Summer Session 2019

-Page 7
Mahalos and
In Memoriam

-Page 8
Upcoming Events

Jodo Shinshu in Everyday Life

Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara



I am writing this article at the Tokudo Training Center in Kyoto. This is because I am accompanying 20 aspirants from the mainland US, Canada, UK and China who are receiving the training at the Center from July 6th to 16th to take the ordination at the Hongwanji, mother temple of the Jodo Shinshu Honwanji-ha in Kyoto. This is one of the largest groups in our history.

The temples of the overseas districts of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha are facing the decline of membership. However, I think it is a good sign that 20 people want to become a Jodo Shinshu minister with an aspiration to devote themselves to propagating the teaching of Shinran Shonin in the world. Let me mention another positive sign. As a program coordinator, I have run the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course since 2008. Over 200 students have successfully completed the two-year online program. The majority is the members of Jodo Shinshu temples. However, about one fifth of the students are not temple members and are from various places of the world, such as South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Italy and so forth. Of course, there is no Jodo Shinshu temple or sangha group. I always wonder how they encountered the teaching of Jodo Shinshu and also deeply appreciate their commitment to take the two-year course for their better understanding of the teaching.

As a program coordinator of the online program and also a minister of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, I see the diversity of people who come to listen to the teaching of Jodo Shinshu. In other words, the teaching attracts people regardless of age, gender, race, cultural background and so forth. When we truly listen to it, I am sure that the teaching of Jodo Shinshu surely makes sense to anybody, because it is based on Amida Buddha's compassionate aspiration to inclusively embrace all sentient beings. Whoever we are, we are already in the embracement of Amida Buddha.

Jodo Shinshu Buddhists are those who truly realize the embracement by deeply and carefully listening to the teaching. Such realization is totally based on our humble or even critical realization of who we are or how we live our everyday life. For our true

(Continued on page 7)

The Story of Saichi's Chirping Sound. Or, How to Fall Asleep

W. S. Yokoyama

One night, as I was having trouble falling asleep, I heard this chirping sound. At first I thought it came from somewhere in my chest or shoulder. Sounded like a creaky shoulder joint needed oil. Then after a while another chirping sound. "Why, the sound was riding on my breath!" I realized—how I don't know. But it was a kind of epiphany in miniature. I now knew why I was having trouble falling asleep: I was breathing all wrong. It was a reminder: "When you cannot fall asleep, all you have to do is breathe "in" from nose, "out" from mouth." Remember that when you cannot sleep.

One might Saichi must have had the same trouble falling asleep. He wrote a poem that goes,

Koko ni fushigi na koe ga suru Namuamidabutsu no koe ga suru
Washi no kokoro no moriki no naka de saezuru koe no umushirosa kore wo
shito ni mo kikasetai

"Right here, there is a funny voice I hear:
'Tis the voice of NamuAmidabutsu
Emerging from out of the dense thicket of this heart of mine.
There is this interesting chirping sound—
This I want people to hear!"



To fall asleep you have to turn your mind off. Hit the switch. In ancient India someone discovered it possible to switch off mental functioning by consciously choosing how to breathe. "Breathe in from nose, out from mouth." When we cannot sleep we are only breathing in and out from nose. This lets the mental functioning run flat out like a hopped-up racing car burning pure nitrous oxide. You can flip the switch by breathing in from nose, out from mouth. Guide your own breath in this way and your mental functions start to flatline and you drop off into sleep before you know it.

(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.

Metta
The Newsletter
of the Buddhist Study Center
Volume 50, Number 1— Spring 2019

METTA is published by the:

Buddhist Study Center
1436 University Avenue
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Phone: (808) 973-6555
Fax: (808) 973-6551
E-mail: bscassist@honpahi.org
Director: bscdire@honpahi.org
<http://www.bsawahaii.org>

The views and opinions expressed in METTA reflect only the views and opinions of its writers and contributors, who are solely responsible for its content. No material that appears in METTA may be reprinted or republished in any one's without permission.

Excerpt from Hongwanji Shimpō October 1, 2017

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

Not from me, but rather from the Tathagata

Amida has fulfilled the directing of virtue,
 Which has two aspects: that for our going forth and that for our return.
 Through these aspects of the Buddha's directing of virtue,
 We are brought to realize both mind and practice.
 (Collected Works of Shinran, Vol. I, p. 370)

Buddha Dharma is the teaching of directing virtue (ekō)

At a funeral I attended, when the sutra chanting concluded, the emcee, who was an employee of the funeral home stated, "The priest just delivered a most respectful prayer for the soul of the deceased...."

Lately it seems that many people have come to regard the chanting of sutras and recitation of Namo Amida Butsu as merely a Buddhist religious service for the repose of the deceased's soul, that is, the directing of merit/virtue for the benefit of the deceased for his/her attainment of enlightenment. They are unaware of the actual purpose of reading sutras and scriptures, much less the meaning and significance of their content.

An excerpt in Section 5 of the well-known Tannishō (A Record in Lament of Divergences) states:

As for me, Shinran, I have never said the Nembutsu even once for the repose of my departed father and mother.

This clearly reveals that Shinran believed the intoning of the Nembutsu is not a prayer during religious services for the repose the deceased's soul.

According to general Buddhism, the actual meaning of directing of merit/virtue does not have any connotation with this misconception. Rather, Buddhist practices are undertaken for the benefit not only of oneself, but others also. It is the working of great compassion, which transcends the principle of bondage to one's own karma and the cycle of birth-and-death, thereby for birth in the Pure Land to continue carrying out Buddhist practices for finally attaining enlightenment.

The Way of the Buddha's Directing of Virtue

On the other hand, Shinran had a view that was different from the way general Buddhism regarded

(Continued on page 5)

The Story of Saichi's Chirping Sound. Or, How to Fall Asleep

(Continued from page 2)

No one quite explains it in this way. The first time I did zazen was at a Zen sesshin under the then famous now infamous warumono Rinzaï roshi Sasaki Joshu. It was a weeklong summer retreat at San Luis Obispo sponsored by the Nishi. There was not much in that area in those days other than coyotes, rattlesnakes, buzzards roosting in dry trees on the surrounding hills. And us Buddhists sitting on round cushions. I was a college student then and I was terrible at sitting.

One day after taking a hot bath at the local hot springs I had a meltdown in sitting position. I was like a boneless puddle of protoplasm. A jellyfish floating in the universal sea. Very pleasant. Years later I realized it was an allergic reaction to sulphur fumes from the hot springs. And very dangerous, a step away from anaphylactic shock. Born in Wahiawa, where sulphur fumes are not unknown, to this day I do not know how I managed to survive. Pele smiled on me, is really all I can think.

A lot of things I learned and experienced in college was just a lot of hogwash, though I did not think so at the time. But zazen was different, though I did not think so at the time. It has stuck with me even fifty years later. Most of the time you just get told to do "this" in this way. No one tells you why. I suppose you have to figure it out yourself. Like Saichi and the chirping sound. In the middle of a sleepless night you get a clue from out of nowhere. A reminder from Amida telling you, "Breathe out from mouth." Saying NamuAmidabutsu serves that purpose. You have to breathe out to say it. But I have never heard anyone say how important it was to do this.

Nenbutsu can just mean "thinking" on Buddha. The Contemplation Sutra is a nenbutsu sutra. In the orthodox understanding it is all about contemplating the aspects of the Pure Land. In China today people still understand it this way. Only the grand masters are really accomplished in contemplation practice. I am not one of them. I am only good for floating on the universal sea.

Then Shandao came along. He read the confession of Vaidehi. She was a queen and yet she critically assessed herself saying, "I am just an ordinary person (as far as religious practice goes) and have no potential to free myself from transmigration. O Buddha, please help me!" From this Shandao realized we are all of a body Ordinary Man with no potential to save ourselves. It was a revolutionary interpretation, nothing like my tiny epiphany on a midwinter night.

Oddly enough Shandao's teaching disappeared from China and had to be reintroduced from Japan. The person who did this was a famous Higashi scholar named Nanjo Bunyu. He liked to sign his name "Nanjio Bun-yiu" because a famous Japanese linguist told him to write it this way. Nanjo studied Sanskrit at Oxford under F. Max Muller and excelled in studies. His name actually ought to be more famous. But his fame was eclipsed by Kiyozawa Manshi. That is, the Kiyozawa followers actively promoted Kiyozawa's memory after he died. But no one did the same for Nanjo. Today Nanjo's name is little known at Otani University where he was the second president, even though his name is well known in the West. But at one point in his life he importantly arranged to have Shandao's writings reintroduced to China. This produced a new line of thought among Buddhist thinkers including Yinguang, important leader of the first modern mass movement in China.

It is not clear to me when Nenbutsu came to be "saying" NamuAmidabutsu (instead of just "contemplating" the image of Pure Land). But when your mind is feeling confused and your mind is in a state of delusion, you

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 3)

the directing of merit/virtue. Just as the excerpt from Tannisho infers, this reason for saying the Nembutsu and directing of virtue is not found in Shinran's understanding and teaching of Amida's working. Despite this, 'directing of virtue' is without a doubt an indispensable technical term in the Jodo Shinshu teaching and Shinran used it frequently in his writings.

The above wasan is the first one found in the Hymns of the Pure Land Masters in the section 'Hymns on Master Tanluan.' It is said that it contains the essence of the teaching on the Pure Land that Shinran learned from Master Tanluan in studying his writings. According to the notes he inscribed in his own copy of the wasan, which is a National Treasure, Shinran succinctly reveals the meaning of directing of virtue in the Jodo Shinshu teaching.

our going forth and our return: The aspect of our going forth is the directing of virtue that seeks to bring us to birth in the Pure Land. The aspect for our return refers to Amida's directing of virtue so that after going to the Pure Land we are enabled to perform the activity of Samantabhadra and benefit other beings.

Going forth to attain birth in the Pure Land, which is the ultimate destination and goal of our life, is also the starting point to endeavor for the benefit of others by returning to this world to guide and enable them to also attain birth. This aspect of returning to this world and working for the benefit of others is called the activity of Samantabhadra, and all of this is made possible by none other than the directing of virtue to us by Amida Tathagata.

Translation by Gene Sekiya

(Continued from page 4)

need to turn off your mental functioning. It does not help to use the mind of delusion to think on Buddha. In Shin Buddhism as Shinran conceived of it, (although I am no expert in the field,) I think the emphasis is from the other direction: Nenbutsu is the Buddha thinking on us. Us poor, unfortunate ordinary beings caught in the state of delusion! When we turn off our mental functioning we are integrated into the Buddha mind. We can see the world through the eyes of the Buddha, as Reverend Earl Ikeda once said in a sermon at New York Buddhist Church. To a certain extent this becomes possible when we turn off our mental functioning, our hakarai, and breathe the same breath as Buddha in NamuAmidabutsu.

I think Saichi is saying "NamuAmidabutsu emerges at the vanishing point of the mind." This is the logic of Nenbutsu. To our mind, when one emerges the other vanishes. But it is possible for the mind of Amida to entertain both of these contradictory standpoints at one time. Toward the end of the Tannisho it says, "Zenaku no futatsu, sōjite motte zōjisezaru nari." Usually this is translated as, "I know nothing at all about good and evil." Fair enough. But I think it can also be read, "I cannot claim to know anything of holding good and evil, right or wrong, in mind at the same time" the way Amida does. From the point of view of Amida there is no discriminating right from wrong, good from evil. This is the other power logic of Nenbutsu. It is where our logic of Nenbutsu vanishes that its other power logic emerges that does not discriminate between man or woman, old or young.

So if you cannot sleep at night, remember the story of Saichi and the chirping sound. Or just take out this rambling essay and read it. You will fall asleep immediately.

BSC Summer Session 2019

Jodo Shinshu in Everyday Life

Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara



Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara was born in Kure City in Hiroshima Prefecture, and is the oldest son of a temple family. He received his B.A. in English Education in 1997 from Hiroshima University, before obtaining his Tokudo Ordination in 1998 and his Kyoshi Certification in 1999. In March 2000 he completed his M.A. in Jodo Shinshu Studies at Ryukoku University, and went on to complete the Ph. D. Program coursework in Jodo Shinshu Studies in 2003. In 2006, Rev. Kuwahara received his M.A. in Jodo Shinshu Studies at the Institute of Buddhist Studies.

In 2006, after receiving his second M.A. in Jodo Shinshu Studies at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, Rev. Kuwahara went on to become one of the office staff at the Hongwanji International Department. In 2007, he became the current Program Coordinator for the Hongwanji Office, and in 2009 he also became one of the current Adjunct Faculty for the Institute of Buddhist Studies. He was the former Co-Director of the BCA Center for Buddhist Education from August 2012 until December 2017.

Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara is currently the supervising minister at Berkeley Buddhist Temple in Berkeley, California. He has a wife, Hitomi, and three sons: Takato, Eight and Hiroto. He likes to eat, and his favorite kind of food is American food (potato chips, pizza, burgers, etc.).

August 12 – 16, 2019
6p.m.-9p.m.
Buddhist Study Center

The session will be conducted at the BSC (1436 University Ave.) There will be additional parking at Lutheran High School. Registration is free, and donations are always welcomed. There is also a livestream for those who would cannot attend in person but would still like to watch the session. Feel free to watch at:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/653134301>

If you have any questions please contact :
Buddhist Study Center, 1436 University Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96822 Phone: (808) 973-6555, fax: (808) 973-6551, e-mail: kwong@honpahi.org

MAHALO FOR YOUR DONATIONS TO THE BUDDHIST STUDY CENTER

For Buddhist Study Center

Irene Ida	Honolulu, HI
Aurleen Kumasaka	Honolulu, HI
A. P. Maneki	Columbia, MD
Jane Nagata	Hilo, HI
Ethel Aiko Oda	Honolulu, HI
Mildred Sasahara	Honolulu, HI
Junko Toll	Eugene, OR

For Metta

May Imamura-Uruu	Aiea, HI
Ruth Tokumi	Honolulu, HI

In Memory of Minoru Ota

Frances Ota	Saratoga, CA
-------------	--------------

In Memory of Eleanor I Sakamoto

Edric Sakamoto	Honolulu, HI
----------------	--------------

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 1)

and real realization of Amida Buddha's compassionate work arises only when we deeply and humbly realize the reason why Amida Buddha established the great aspiration to embrace and guide us. Furthermore, such realizations are not something statically residing within ourselves, but they actively and dynamically change the way we live our everyday life. Therefore, to practice Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is inseparable from our everyday life. I believe this is to live with Amida Buddha or the Dharma.

In my talks during the Summer Session, I will explain more about how our everyday life is changed, enriched and benefitted with the teaching of Jodo Shinshu, referring to more examples and doctrinal backgrounds. Also I would like to have Q&A sessions so that we can deepen and develop our understandings by exchanging our thoughts and opinions.

Lastly, I would like to give my deep gratitude to Bishop Matsumoto, Rev. Kuniyuki, Rev. Furusawa and all those who work hard for the Summer Session. I look forward to seeing you in August!

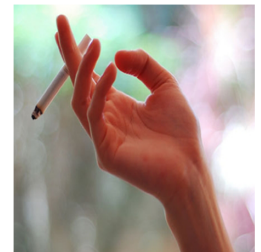
In gratitude
(palms together)

Cigarette Smokers Wanted

New Study at the UH Cancer Center

We are recruiting participants for a study on cigarette smoking being conducted at the UH Cancer Center.

Participation in this study will help scientists better understand why there are differences in risks for developing smoking-related disease.



Call Us if you:

- 1) Smoke at least 5 cigarettes per day for at least 3 months.**
- 2) Are of Hawaiian, Japanese or Caucasian ancestry.**
- 3) Are 21 years of age or older (≥ 21).**

A single visit will take place at the UH Cancer Center in Kakaako.
Study volunteers will be compensated \$75 for their time and effort.

If you are interested or want more information please contact us:

(808) 237 - 3901
smokersstudy@cc.hawaii.edu



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

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HONOLULU, HI
PERMIT NO. 9044

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



is a publication of the
Buddhist Study Center

Upcoming Events

Zen Meditation	Jul 30
BSC Shakuhachi Club	Jul 30
Shakuhachi with Rev. Okano	Jul 31
Yoga with Lisa Yanagi	Jul 31
Shakuhachi with Rev. Okano	Aug 1
Meditation with Pat Jichaku	Aug 6
Zen Meditation	Aug 6
BSC Shakuhachi Club	Aug 6
Shakuhachi with Rev. Okano	Aug 7
Yoga with Lisa Yanagi	Aug 7
Shakuhachi with Rev. Okano	Aug 8
Summer Session with Rev. Kuwahara	Aug 12 -16
Meditation with Pat Jichaku	Aug 13
Meditation with Pat Jichaku	Aug 20
Zen Meditation	Aug 20
BSC Shakuhachi Club	Aug 20

Director	Rev. Kevin Kuniyuki
Editor	Rev. Kevin Kuniyuki
Contributors	Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara Rev. Michio (Ichido) Tokunaga W. S. Yokoyama
Translators:	Rev. Gene Sekiya W. S. Yokoyama

