

The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

BULLETIN



Volume 67 Number 12 September 2011 (2555 B.E.)

Scheduled Events

(call 773-334-4661 or see www.budtempchi.org)

Dharma Sunday School – Sundays 11am starting September 11th and 25th

Religious Services

Sunday at 11:00AM – 12:00PM in English
Please note: No service on September 4, Sunday, Labor Day weekend.

Monthly Memorial Service - Shotsuki Hoyo, Sunday September 11th, 11:00AM in English and Japanese.

Buddhist Studies/Practices

Discussion Group – Open to All, Sangha Q & A, 2nd Sundays, 12:30PM – 2:00PM

Introduction to Buddhism – call temple to confirm dates and time

Meditation Sessions – 9:00AM Sundays, starting September 11th.

Sutra Study Class – 3rd Sundays, Open to All, 12:30PM – 2:00PM

Weekly Study Class – Wednesdays, 7:00PM starting September 14th.

Special Observances/Events

Ohigan Service and Luncheon – September 18th, 11:00AM, A time to reflect on crossing over to the Other Shore. All are welcome!

Activities

Asoka Society – 3rd Saturdays, 1:00PM

Calligraphy – Japanese brush writing class 1st & 3rd Tuesdays 7:00PM

Crafts Class – 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 10:00AM – 12:00PM, Open to All (call temple for confirmation)

Fencing – Introduction to Kendo, Dojo sessions, Tuesdays, 8:00PM – 10:00PM at Bethany United Church (Bob Kumaki, 847-853-1187)

Japanese Language Instruction – Saturdays, 10:00AM – 12:00PM, children and adult classes, call 773-334-4661 to register

Japanese Swordsmanship – Iaido, Mondays 7:00PM – 9:00PM

Middle Way meetings – 1st Sunday of each month, 12:30PM

Taiko Drumming – BTC Kokyo Taiko Drum Troupe, Fridays, 7:00PM – 9:00PM

True Disciples of the Buddha

by Rev. Patti Nakai

In the teachings of Shinran Shonin, spiritual development is the deepening awareness that the buddhas (teachers) have become bodhisattvas (helpers) mingling incognito with us ordinary persons. Looking back on the trip I took to Japan in the first week of August, I was a very fortunate “foolish ordinary person” (*bonbu*) mingling with and learning from lots of buddhas and bodhisattvas, directly and indirectly.

I arrived in Osaka on Tuesday the 2nd and early the next day I took a highway bus to the mountains of Hiroshima prefecture to see Prof. Shunsho Terakawa who had been my advisor during my three years at Otani University. It was sad to see how physically weak he had become and even speaking had become difficult for him so his wife did most of the talking. When I was studying at Otani, it was mostly through Terakawa-sensei that I heard the words of the great teachers – Shinran, Kiyozawa, T'an-luan and others. During my visit I was reminded of his broadmindedness when he apologized for not learning much English because as a student he concentrated on German so he could read Martin Luther's works for his thesis in religious studies. Almost all the other Otani professors had entirely sectarian educations, so I was lucky to learn Buddhism from someone who had a world religions background.

On Thursday the 4th I left Osaka on the local train to Kyoto (it was too early for the express trains) so I could attend the 7am service at Higashi Honganji. A large group of teenage girls came into the hall, filling the whole middle section. I was glad to see mostly women ministers escorting and instructing the girls. I sat in the side section and in my American way, I wanted a wide diameter of space but an old gentleman came and sat near me. My reaction was to move away, thinking, “I don't want it to look like I'm with him.” But then I realized, “I am with him, all those teenage girls and the other people in this hall – we are all here together to receive the teachings.” The Dharma talk that morning seemed amazingly related to the Maida Center retreat I had just attended in Berkeley (will write about that in a later article).

- continued on page 3 -

Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends
of:

Mr. Jimmie Masao Ito

Mr. David Masaru Uchima

(Please see Temple News for details)

TEMPLE NEWS

July 2011

07/01 The Funeral/Memorial Service for the late Jimmie Masao Ito was conducted at the Temple. The late Mr. Ito, 89, passed away on June 25, 2011. He is survived by sons Mike (Gail) Ito and Ken (Janet) Ito, and daughter Cathy (Steve) Enck. He is also survived by brothers Tom (Haru) Ito, Henry (Sheila) Ito and sister Mary Ota.

07/03 Regular Sunday Service was observed, Rev. Patti Nakai delivered the Dharma message.

07/10 Shotsuki Hoyo (Monthly Memorial Service) was observed. Rev. Ashikaga delivered the Dharma message.

07/14 The Funeral/Memorial Service for the late David Masaru Uchima was conducted at Drake and Son's Funeral Home, officiated by Rev. Ashikaga. The late Mr. Uchima, 70, passed away on July 9, 2011. He is survived by daughters Jackie (Eddie) Randle, Stephanie and Kimi Uchima, and sons Roger (Loriann) Safian, and Tony (Susan) Safian. He is also survived by brothers Thomas (Irene) and Joseph Uchima, and sister Keiko Uchima (Jim Conrad).

07/16 "Movie Night" was sponsored by BTC Middle Way.

07/17 Regular Sunday Service was observed. Lay speaker was Elaine Siegel.

07/22 The August issue of the Temple Bulletin was mailed.

- continued on next column -

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The Buddhist Temple of Chicago Bulletin

The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

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Editor's Note: Comments, corrections, questions, suggestions are encouraged. Submitted material will be reviewed for suitability and availability of space. Anonymous submissions will not be published, but authors' names may be withheld from publication upon request. Deadline: first Friday of the month. btcbuledtr@hotmail.com

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

Understanding the Nembutsu through recognizing the Paramitas in others – send in your recognitions!

Sunday Service Participants: Ruth Abbinanti, Karen Baier, Sue Balsam, Bill Bohlman, Glenn Fujiura, Amy Kawamoto, Alice Murata, Leroy Wiley, Justin Woodward, and Mrs. Ashikaga, our pianist. Lay speaker Elaine Siegel.

Sunday Refreshments: Jackie Denofrio, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Michio Iwao, Ruby Izui, Amy Kawamoto, Emily Stewart, Jenny Watanabe and Ruby Tsuji. And to everyone that brought delicious food for the Temple picnic.

Temple Bulletin Mailing: Rev. Ashikaga, Noreen Enkoji, Haru Ito, Chuck Izui, Rev. Patti Nakai, Tak and Tommi Tomiyama and Ruby Tsuji.

For taking care of the Temple inside and out – Tomio Tademoto.

For cleaning the entire Temple every week – Harky Tademoto.

For manning the Temple office every Thursday – Tak Tomiyama

For emptying the trash bins, filling them with new bags and putting them out for disposal – Adam Kellman, April Kellman, Shawn Lyte and Rev. Patti Nakai.

- "Temple News" continued from previous column -

07/23 The Chicago Kendo Dojo sponsored the special Birthday Celebration for Sensei Frank Matsumoto (Seattle, WA) at the Temple. Both Frank and wife, Nobi flew in from Seattle. * * * Mr. Edward Horiuchi visited Temple. * * * The wedding of Justin Woodward and Alison Nguyen took place outdoors in Rockton, IL, officiated by Rev. Patti Nakai. Congratulations to the happy couple!

07/24 Regular Sunday Service was observed. Rev. Patti Nakai delivered Dharma message. * * * Frank and Nobi Matsumoto and son, Dr. Alan Matsumoto (Bethesda, MD) visited with BTC Sangha and attended service. * * * Temple Board of Directors met.

07/31 Special Sunday Service for picnic was observed. After the short service with Rev. Ashikaga's message, everyone enjoyed pot-luck lunch, games and door prizes. See picnic chairman Dennis Chan's report/article, within.

Ti-Sarana Essay
By Rodel De Ocampo

[The following is the essay submitted by the author in preparation for his Ti-Sarana confirmation ceremony, printed with author's permission.]

Buddhism to me is like a mirror where I can see who I really am. It forces me to look deeper into myself to see who I am and not what I think I am. In doing so, I can see the good and bad things about me and Buddhism taught me what can be done to correct myself. It has shown me that the sources of my unhappiness are my attachments, anger and ignorance which I have a lot of. I also learned that no one can save me except myself and that I have this lifetime to do as much good deeds as I can to try to enlighten myself. I must admit that it is hard to go against my "ego." It is a formidable opponent but nobody ever said that life is a bed of roses. I like the idea that Buddhism is like a "do it yourself" project. It teaches self-reliance and the benefits of spiritual hard work.

Buddhism also means living my life in balance. I really like the "middle way" concept. Everything in moderation is the way to go especially for me who has the tendency to "binge" on almost everything. It also teaches me that regrets, guilt and shame are all useless emotions. Buddhism has taught me that anytime I make a mistake, I should recognize it, be sorry, correct myself and try not to do it again and then move on with my life. Feeling guilty and shameful over an extended period of time will not make a good Buddhist out of me. Those emotions are just barriers to my enlightenment.

I took refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and the Sangha and I try to follow the five precepts as a guide in my life. Buddhism has made me realize that if only everyone will follow their five precepts, we will all be happy and will live in peace and harmony because no one will harm and kill, no one will lie and steal, no one will engage in any unwholesome sexual activities and nobody will be drunk or be high on drugs. It will be like nirvana on earth. On the downside, policemen and lawyers will be unemployed as there will be no one to police, defend or prosecute.

I am very new in Buddhism. I first encountered it about five years ago and there are many, many things to learn and study. I am not a Buddhism scholar but I am a student who is trying to learn day by day. Buddhism has taught me that the way I practice and use the Dharma in my day-to-day life is as important as learning and memorizing all the sutras ever written in Pali.

- continued on page 4 -

TEMPLE PICNIC JULY 31

by Dennis Chan

We had great weather and a wonderful turn-out of more than sixty people to our annual picnic held on Sunday, July 31. We enjoyed a wide variety of food that was contributed by members and a sandwich platter donated by Jimmy John's. We enjoyed delicious home-made salads, main entrees and sides, and desserts. We had cooling beverages to help digest the tasty treats. We thank Ruby Tsuji and her daughter, Janice for coordinating the kitchen preparation, serving and clean-up. We also thank John Sagami and the Isshin Taiko members who set-up the tables and chairs for the event, and afterwards mopped the floors. After lunch, we had a raffle for gifts donated by Alice Murata and the crafts group, and Lynda Yanez. We then enjoyed Bingo with prizes donated by various sponsors: Starbucks on Wilson, Sunshine Cafe, Renga-Tei, Royal Thai and Katsu. And lastly, Reverend Ashikaga and the BTC Board wants to thank our Sangha who came, donated (food, time and/or money) and enjoyed the day. Your contribution made it the success it was. Gassho.

- "True Disciples" from page 1 -

Before the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies (IASBS) conference started at Otani University, I visited the administrative office of Higashi Honganji to discuss our temple's minister search. I met with Rev. Muryo Nakanishi of the Organizational Department and Rev. Makoto Honda of the International Office. Rev. Nakanishi was sympathetic to our temple's concerns and understood why the previous two ministers from Japan did not work out. They agreed that Higashi Honganji should try to find prospective ministers that will be appropriate to our temple's needs instead of imposing someone on us. I also put the word out to people at Otani to let us know about any prospects, especially any ministers already familiar with our teaching lineage of Kiyozawa and Akegarasu.

When I got to the conference I wasn't heartbroken about missing the first special lecture with the title "Defense of the Literal." I was in time for the second special lecture, a PowerPoint presentation by eminent Buddhism scholar Paul Harrison and art historian Christian Lucznits about a stele (carved stone slab) from the area once known as Gandhara (parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan). In their opinion, the stele shows a Pure Land scene and it was interesting when they pointed out two female figures standing with males. The two scholars felt the images of the couples represented the wealthy patrons who donated to the cost of the artwork. It was evidence that the Pure Land tradition goes back to the early C.E. centuries and enjoyed substantial support from laymen and women.

- continued on page 4 -

- "True Disciples" from page 3 -

Friday the 5th and Saturday the 6th had full all-day schedules of presentations in two different rooms so one had to make a choice for each session. For the most part I chose the sessions with papers in Japanese. I found something in each presentation that was a Dharma message to me. What follows is just a few of the many highlights:

--The very first presentation was a comparison of the stories of Ajatasatru (usurping prince in the Contemplation and Nirvana sutras) and Job (of the Hebrew Bible) by Mr. Hideaki Komori of the Japan Association for Care Providers. A person working as a care provider would know as much as any minister about people struggling to overcome their suffering. Mr. Komori said that we want so much to control life that we think ethical and religious practices will bring the results we desire. But suffering teaches us that life is much more than a mechanical system of reward for "right" actions and punishment for "wrong" actions.

--Rev. Masumi Kikuchi who had served as a minister in Canada gave a report on Ernest and Dorothy Hunt who created the first Buddhist service book in English. I wished I had heard her paper before we revised our temple's service book -- I would have taken out more of the Hunts' influence. For example, they wrote "The Golden Chain" as a description of reincarnation ("chain" of one's repeated lives). We have to appreciate their work done during a time when not much Buddhism was available in English, but we need to understand now how their views clashed with Jodo Shinshu.

--Rev. Clifton Ong presented a history of Jodo Shinshu in Taiwan. In the early 20th century the temples catered not just to the Japanese nationals but were involved in social welfare activities for Taiwanese communities and ordained native Taiwanese ministers. So even in the latter half of the 20th century with the backlash against the Japanese occupation, Taiwanese followers of Jodo Shinshu persevered and even helped spread the teachings to other Asian countries. To me it shows the big mistake that temples in North America made and are still making by focussing on the ethnic Japanese and not getting involved in their surrounding neighborhoods.

--I participated in a "Women Priests' Panel" along with Rev. Mari Sengoku, the first female Japanese minister sent to Hawaii and Rev. Angela Andrade, a native Brazilian. Rev. Angela's paper brought up many good points about Jodo Shinshu's appeal that women have the advantage in conveying (e.g. emphasis on

- continued on next column -

2011 BON ODORI

by Rev. Patti Nakai

The 2011 Bon Odori went smoothly and everyone had a great time at the annual Japanese folk dancing celebration. Due to the weather forecast of rain, Rev. Ashikaga decided to have the Bon Odori indoors. The off-and-on rain Saturday may have kept a few people away, but we had a good mix of temple members and their friends and relatives dancing and cheering from the sidelines. All of those who came to the six practices were there and helped advise other dancers. Thank you to all who helped with set up and clean up and a special thanks goes to Jerry and Jane Morishige for providing the after dancing refreshments.

- "Ti-Sarana" from page 3 -

So, Buddhism the way I understand it is learning to recognize who I really am. What I really am is that I am a part of this wonderful energy and enlightenment. That Buddhahood is my birthright and all I have to do is to access it. The Lord Buddha has given very clear directions on how to do it. Buddhism means enlightenment is already built in us. We are all Buddhas in the making. For some, it may take a while but eventually depending on causes and conditions that we all create, one day we will all be. That's the beauty of it. There is hope for all of us.

Namo Amida Butsu. May all beings past, present and to come attain enlightenment as soon as possible and be peaceful. May my every word, action and thought contribute to that peace even in a small way.

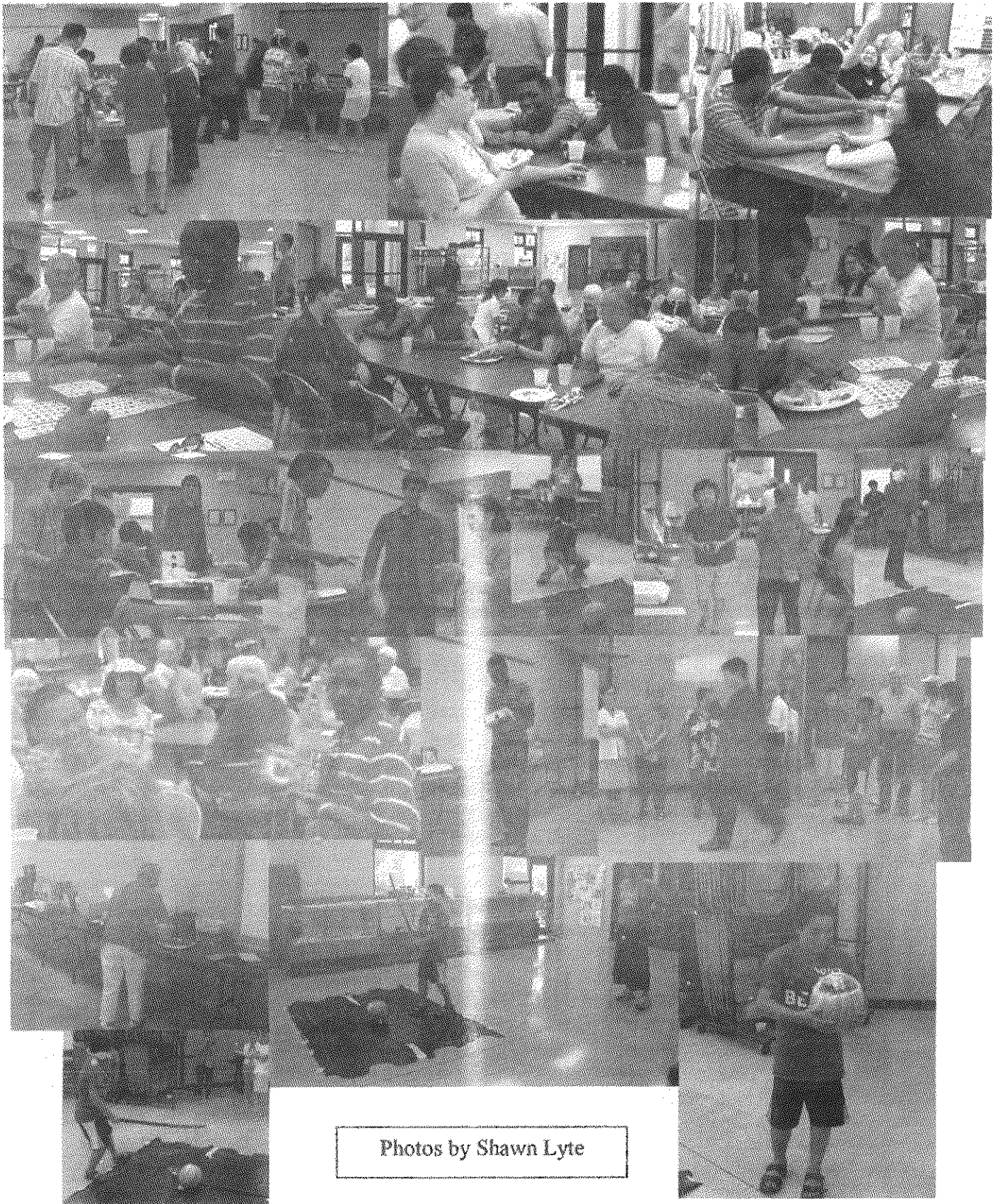
- "True Disciples" from previous column -

family and accepting one's sexuality). But for the conference attendees it was a breakthrough just to see three ordained women up on stage instead of panels that are all men or with only one woman.

The conference theme was "The True Disciple of the Buddha," a phrase Shinran used to express his awakening to the real essence of Buddhism and breaking out of the deluded ego-attached ideas of what he thought was Buddhism. Many of the papers including mine ("Path of the Useless Person") discussed how the theme applies to our individual journeys and the ways we are involved in society. Our temple's Michael Conway (now an instructor at Otani) presented a paper on how Shinran is telling us that the key necessities of being a true disciple of the Buddha are continual listening to the teachings and deep self-reflection. All other practices are optional -- some could be helpful but we should see in them the danger of self-infatuation.

- continued on page 7 -

BTC PICNIC 2011 – Fun, fellowship, food, games and prizes!



Photos by Shawn Lyte

Bon Odori – August 13, 2011 (Photos by Ron Yoshioka and Gary Nakai)



Heard By Me

Did you ever find yourself wishing you could be a “fly on the wall?” I know I have, many times, albeit after the fact. Oh what truths we could entitle ourselves to, and thus become great sages as a result! To my amazement, just the other day I found myself within earshot of two beings in a lively discussion, totally unaware that those around them could clearly listen in. I became for that moment, the proverbial “fly on the wall.”

It was obvious that these two were not from around here; I’d guess they were a long way from home. What they argued about sounded familiar, yet equally unfamiliar. It was evident that each felt deeply about his views and equally evident that they lamented over the common concern they shared. Their “give and take” was too irresistible for me to ignore and mind my own business. As I listened, the dialogue went like this:

You’ve forgotten our mission? We were chartered to be a place to help our kind find the truth.

Truth? What truth? Our kind don’t want to find the truth, we want quick answers to help us in the moment, to have it our way.

Oh yes, but we readily identify with the notion of finding the truth. It’s in the title that we call ourselves.

Maybe so, but we seem to regard socials and distantly related tribal activities as part of the benefits of membership even more so. Besides, what’s wrong with a happy group regularly assembling and appearing pleasant? Doesn’t that serve a purpose in and of itself?

It does serve a purpose. I’m not saying it doesn’t. But at the same time, if we don’t proactively foster the condition to have an active cadre of membership, enough in numbers to sustain the operation of the organization, we could not ensure that the critical numbers of leaders are present and always on hand.

What then is the motivation for members to always be at hand to ensure the place runs as it should?

That’s exactly what I believe the recent symposium on The General Future Vitality was trying to get across to us: After the interests in secondary and tertiary activities wane, what is the attraction of membership, let alone active participation? So if we base our membership drives and structure product offering solely on the basis of attractive social and tribal activities, nothing keeps them coming back after interest subsides, for what ever reason.

Then what’s left to motivate them?

Didn’t you attend the Council Chancellor’s lecture at

- continued from previous column -

the symposium?

No, I went on the area tour of the reclamation infrastructure. What was the gist of the honorable one’s message?

It was essentially that although the technique may be to employ social and tribal based activities to enhance membership, the strategy should be based on more time independent stuff, like everyday examples of living the spirit of our charter.

Come again?

In other words, we should first look inward to find ourselves as one with all and our joy in having accomplished that, will be outwardly visible in our new found attractive demeanor. And that in turn will have anyone approaching our midst to want to be like us. Not because of the current offering of social and tribal activities that come and go with time, but for wanting the serenity that can be had.

Wow! Now I see why all the buzz is about a most solid marketing approach in this day and age to sustain the interest and involvement of all who come to seek the truth. But how do you suppose such a strategy is best implemented? To undertake such a task is too daunting as it could offend.

Well here’s what I’ve been thinking.... Wait, are you leaving now?

Yes, soon if not immediately.

Good. Let’s take the same means and I’ll tell you all about it.

It would be just peachy if I could know how they made out, but they simply got up in the moment and departed. Obviously I will report more if and when I hear more. Thus, to be continued through some means.

Gary T. Nakai
President

- “True Disciples” from page 4 -

On my final day in Japan, Sunday the 7th I met up with Wayne Yokoyama (formerly of Los Angeles) and his family. Wayne is involved in many translation and research projects in Japan, so he is an important part of the Dharma pipeline for us in the English-speaking world.

There’s much that I’ve learned on this trip that I need to keep revisiting and probably from time to time you will hear me say more about the conference and the diverse range of teachers I encountered.

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