

## Young Buddhist International Cultural Student Exchange



Front row, from left to right: Stacy Matsuura, Kristyne Wada, Lindsay Guerra, Lindsey Yoshimoto, Katherine Okamura, Melissa Komoto, Samantha Nitta, and Ahnna Kesterson. Back row: Rev. Tesshi Aoyama, Kerry Inokuchi, Blake Honda, Brett Nishimura, Sen Sugano, Kendall Kosai, Kathy Nishimura, Landon Yamaoka, and Michael Endo.

This Summer I had the once in a lifetime experience of going to Japan through the Young Buddhists' International Cultural Study Exchange, which was primarily held at the Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan. 45 students from the United States, Canada, Brazil, and Hawaii attended this year's 10-day trip. This exchange offered a tour around Kyoto to the various historical Jodo Shinshu Buddhist sites as well as a home stay to experience what life in Japan is like.

The home stay portion in Miyazaki gave me a better understanding of what life in Japan is really like. I had the privilege of being invited to be a guest speaker for the English classes at the local high school. The students were very proper and well behaved as I found most of the Japanese people I encountered to be. I also got the opportunity to tour a green tea factory and learned how to make soba noodles at a small restaurant. Although Japan's culture is different, many traditions are actually quite similar to those that have been passed down through the generations in my family here in the United States.

While I was in Japan, I toured several historic sites that are significant to Jodo-Shinshu Buddhism. During a rainy day, the 45 students boarded two charter buses and

drove around Kyoto, visiting those sites in the surrounding area. We stopped to see Shinran Shonin's birthplace, Mt. Hiei where Shinran studied intensely for many years, the temple where Shinran received Honen Shonin's guidance, and Shinran's cremation and grave sites. It was quite an experience to actually visit the sites where Shinran lived over 750 years ago, and walk on the grounds that I've only heard about in Dharma talks. This experience really gave me a better appreciation of the historic roots of Jodo Shinshu.

The friendships that were made were not only domestic, but international too. Everyone got along with each other and bonded very well to become good friends. Although each of us comes from very different locations around the world, we are all bonded by the same glue of our common religious tradition.

My journey to Japan through this special program gave me memories and insights into Japanese life along with a better understanding of the foundations of Shin Buddhism. Thank you for this amazing opportunity to experience not only Buddhist history, but my Japanese heritage as well.

*In Gassho,*  
Kendall Kosai

## Deep Hearing and Healing

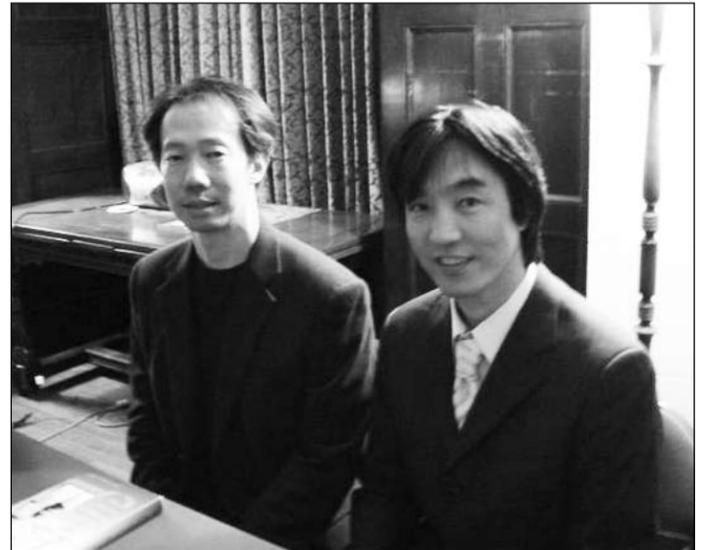
### An International Conference on Buddhism and Psychotherapy

For three days this summer a group of practitioners and scholars from the U.S. and Japan gathered on the campus of the University of Oregon to share their understandings of the connections between the Buddhist world view and the aims of psychotherapy. The conference emphasized the Shin Buddhist teaching of deep hearing, as shown by the formal conference title, "Deep Listening, Deep Hearing: Buddhism and Psychotherapy East & West."

The conference was a joint effort of the University of Oregon, the Open Research Center at Ryukoku University in Kyoto, and our own Institute of Buddhist Studies. Professor Mark Unno of the University of Oregon was the conference chairman. Dean Richard Payne of IBS will work with Professor Unno on the publication of the articles that will emerge from the work of approximately 30 conference participants.

Presentations and discussions during the conference brought out numerous valuable themes. In this brief space we can consider only one: how Shinran Shonin's appreciation of deep listening and hearing has profound significance for us as Shin Buddhists as well for all psychotherapists and their clients.. This theme was beautifully presented by Professor Naoki Nabeshima of Ryukoku University in his paper "The Emancipation of Evil Beings: The Story of the Salvation of King Ajatasatru."

Professor Nabeshima explained that Shinran interpreted the story of Ajatasatru as it is told in the Nirvana Sutra. Ajatasatru murdered his father King Bimbisara. He subsequently suffered great remorse and became painfully ill.



Profs. Mark Unno and Naoki Nabeshima

Sakyamuni Buddha came to him. In the presence of all who had been attending the king, Sakyamuni said that for the sake of Ajatasatru, he would not enter nirvana for millions of millions of years. He then entered a state of deep concentration (Samadhi), during which a wonderful light shined on Ajatasatru and cured his physical illness. Then the Buddha presented Ajatasatru with a teaching that removed Ajatasatru's anger and confusion, giving him the desire to lead others to enlightenment.

Professor Nabeshima emphasized that Shinran's interpretation of this story teaches us that no one is beyond the total embrace of the compassion that is Amida Buddha. Ajatasatru, who committed the most terrible crime of murdering a parent, is saved in body and mind through actions that are partly conducted in great silence, during the Buddha's Samadhi. In a sense, the Buddha didn't do anything. Rather, he *existed*

with Ajatasatru, side-by-side, incorporating Ajatasatru's pain and suffering as his very own. Feeling with and for another person: this is the nature of compassion.

This religious theme elegantly described by Professor Nabeshima resonated with the experiences of psychotherapists at the conference. There are times, they said, when therapists can do nothing else but silently hear and accept the many layers of anger and anguish that their clients express. If this receptivity to the other person is genuine, good things happen over time. As Shin Buddhists, receiving the compassion that surrounds us in Amida, we can express our gratitude by listening compassionately to others.

Whether as therapist or parent or friend or citizen, we can listen to voices of suffering, take them in, and respond to them with the gift that we have been given.

Gordon Bermant

## Utah

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dances or not. When Oakland's Obon ended, we were already anticipating the Palo Alto Obon, which was the following night!

We were awakened early the next morning to go to service at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco, followed by a bit of time to shop in Japantown. After shopping and eating crepes, we visited the San Mateo Buddhist Temple, where we met many more Jr. YBA friends. After lunch at SMBT, we left for the Palo Alto Obon which would be happening later that night. The Palo Alto Obon was even bigger than the Oakland one, and even had a bazaar! Once again, we had a great time dancing and afterwards helped clean up. We were graciously allowed to stay for two nights at the Palo Alto temple. We were exhausted from the busy schedule.

On our last day, we visited the Great America Theme Park with all of the friends we had made from Berkeley, San Mateo and Palo Alto. It was fun riding even more rides including many roller coasters and a two-level merry-go-round. After a day at Great America we returned to Palo Alto where we had dinner with the Bay District and hung out until everyone had to leave.

On Tuesday morning, we woke up early, and got all of our stuff together and prepared for the long ride home. After saying goodbye to those who came to bid us farewell, we left Palo Alto. Nearly half a day later, we arrived in Utah, and returned to our homes, full of many good memories!

Obviously this summary can't replace the entire experience, but that was basically our schedule for the five days in Northern California. Though it was busy, we were always doing something, so there wasn't a lot

of down time or times that we would just sit around. Looking back to the trip we took two years ago, it was still memorable, but during that time, there was a definite age gap between the Jr. YBA of Utah and Orange County (Jr. YBA is Middle and Junior High School age in Utah). But this trip, we were all older, and many more of our group's members had closer ages to that of the people we met.

Though the time was short, we got to spend several days with our friends from the Bay Area, which was great! Matt and Tiffany Hamasaki (from Berkeley's Jr. YBA) were even our "honorary members" because they were with us for all of our trips and activities around the Bay Area! Not only was this a trip for meeting new people, it was one for seeing old friends - our advisors/chaperones saw people they knew (who lived in the Bay Area) at the Obons, and Sean Sekino and I even saw someone we met in Japan last year at Oakland's Obon! We all became closer as a group as well - we got to know more about people we didn't talk to as much before, as well getting to know people we hadn't known from our own temples!

Though we were all different in some ways, the fact remained that we were all Buddhist. There are only three temples in Utah (Salt Lake, Ogden and Honeyville), so our Buddhist community and YBA groups are smaller in numbers when in comparison to the many in California. Because of this, it felt good to be meeting other people who were our age in the Bay District, who we could relate to in regards to religion.

Much gratitude and thanks to the Utah and Bay District temples and YBA's, the BCA, Socho Ogui, our advisors and parents and everyone else who supported us during this trip. Without them, this would have never been possible! We all have great memories of this trip!

### American Buddhist Study Center & The New York Buddhist Church

#### New York Buddhist Symposium

Saturday - October 28, 2006

#### Meditation and Shin Buddhist Practice



Please join us to learn the unique difference in Buddhist practices when it comes to meditation. We will explore Shin Buddhism (Jodo Shinshu) from its roots to present beliefs and practices, with special attention to the relationship between Shin and Zen.

Keynote Speakers:  
Socho Koshin Ogui - Bishop, Buddhist Churches of America  
Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno - Jill Kerr Conway Professor of Religion, Smith College  
Rev. T. Kenjitsu Nakagaki - Head Minister of the New York Buddhist Church  
Mr. Clark Strand - Buddhist Author  
Dr. Gordon Bermant - President, BCA, will moderate.

NY Buddhist Symposium includes: all lectures, discussions, meditations and luncheon:  
Members of New York Buddhist Church or ABSC \$30 per person  
Students with current student ID cards \$20 per person  
All others \$50 per person  
Advance registration is requested for this event. Please send in your registration form to the American Buddhist Study Center before October 15, 2006. Seating is limited so make your reservations early.

Date: Saturday, October 28, 2006  
Time: 10:30 to 4:15 pm

Place: New York Buddhist Church & American Buddhist Study Center

331-332 Riverside Drive (between 105 and 106 Street and Riverside Drive), New York, NY 10025  
For more information please contact Rev. T. Kenjitsu Nakagaki at 212-678-0305 or Hoshin Seki at 212-864-7424 or visit the American Buddhist Study Center website: www.americanbuddhist.org  
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