



GASSHO

July
2011

Issue No: 07-11

"Hands together in reverence & gratitude"



SHINSHU KYOKAI EARLY BEGINNINGS

by rev. roland k. tatsuguchi

I would like to dedicate this O'bon issue of *GASSHO* in memory of the seventy-two certified members who, in spite of their fears of being arrested as aliens, met to hold that most crucial meeting on Sunday, September 24, 1944 that saved Shinshu Kyokai Kyodan from final dissolution and confiscation by the Federal Government. If, in those waning years of WWII, had they not met under the guidance of two retired Quaker missionaries, Dr. Gilbert and Mrs. Minnie Bowles, to fulfill the stipulations required by Executive Order #8389, the temple with its assets then and there would have been lost to the Federal authorities.

Because of these "seventy-five" who met, the temple and dormitory as they now stand on 1631 So. Beretania would not have been possible. "Many organizations lost their assets and had their lands confiscated by the government during this time because they had no legal representatives." (See Ch. 4 "*The World War II Years: 1941-1945*," and Ch. 5 "*The Building of a New Temple: 1946-1951*," in *Shinshu Kyokai Mission of Hawaii: 1914-1984* by Yoshiko Tatsuguchi and Lois Suzuki.)

To recall and acknowledge each key person by name, such as Mrs. Harumi Okimura Char, (now 101 years of age), this cannot be done in a single issue of *GASSHO*. However, this does not mean that the pioneering few who first met under the shade of a lychee tree as they sat on rough straw mats to hear Rev. Untai Toshima and Rev. Jyakujo Takeda deliver sermons are being overlooked. Both Reverends arrived as visiting ministers in January of 1914 when the Waikiki to Ala Moana areas were yet full of marshes, taro patches, and rice fields. The whole Pawa-McCully and Moilili to Kapahulu areas were full of duck ponds and fishponds fed by the waters of valley streams, natural springs, and artesian wells such as the one at Pagoda Floating Restaurant and Hotel. In fact, Wai'kiki means a place of waters bubbling and gushing. Neither are the first twenty-six people who soon thereafter met at the home of a Seisuke Yamashita in Liliha on April 23, 1914, to establish a charter, by-laws and the

MONTH'S THOUGHT



Basically, filial piety means to be good to one's parents; to take care of one's parents; to engage in good conduct not just towards parents but also outside the home so as to bring a good name to one's parents and ancestors; to perform the duties of one's job well so as to obtain the material means to support parents as well as carry out sacrifices to the ancestors; not be rebellious, show love, respect and support; display courtesy; ensure male heirs, uphold fraternity among brothers; wisely advise one's parents, including dissuading them from moral unrighteousness; and display sorrow for their sickness and death. – Terry Bryan, American Black Belt Academy



name *Shinshu Kyokai* as a non-profit organization being overlooked.

The subsequent efforts of those who, in November of 1916, volunteered their time, labor and skills to begin building a temple with a hanging bell tower (*kansho*) as an annex to the rear of a *judo-ba* at the end of Aloha Lane on the mauka perimeter of the

SHINSHU KYOKAI MISSION
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REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SERVICES FOR JULY 2011

1st SUN JUL 3rd:

ANNUAL O'BON SERVICE

9 A.M. English Service

Guest Speaker:

Rev. Alan Urasaki

2nd SUN JUL 10th:

"Bon Dance Set-up"
Choba, Concession
Please come "KOKUA"
8 A.M. to 12 P.M.

9 A.M. English Service
Rev. Tatsuguchi

Bon Dance Practice
TUES. Jul 12th only
7:00 to 9:00 P.M

"BON DANCE NIGHTS"
FRI & SAT JULY 15 & 16
7:00 to 10:30 P.M.

Note: Short Bon Services

- Temple sanctuary
at 6:30 P.M.
For all deceased

- Stone Memorial
at 6:50 P.M.

In memory for all war dead

With Deepest Sympathy

Mrs. Mildred Hashimoto 96 yrs May 24, 2011

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

KARAOKE CLASS Mon 7 - 9 P.M.

Mr. Nelson Yoshioka

KARATE Tues/Fri 6 - 9 P.M.

Shihan - Walter Nishioka

FUJINKAI SEWING CLUB Wed 9 - 11 A.M.

J. Kobuke/A. Murata

HAWAII EISA CHIMUGUKURU DAIKO

Mr. Van Shimabukuro

Wed/Thur 6.30-8.30

3rd SUN JUL 17th:

9 A.M. English Service
Dharma Talk
for Children & Adults
Rev. Tatsuguchi

4th SUN Jul 24th:

Temple Service Cancelled

Waianae Members!

If you wish to hold
O'Bon services for your
deceased family members,
call Rev. Tatsuguchi
(949-2801)

5th SUN Jul 31st:

9 A.M. English Service
Dharma Talk
for Children & Adults
Rev. Tatsuguchi

NOTICE: Rev. Roland Tatsuguchi will be off island from August 26 to September 6, 2011

Pawaa Pah'ke Patch (later Kaheka Lane, now Kaheka Street) are being overlooked. For it is extraordinary that in just the short span of two years all this took place. (Note: WWI began in the summer of 1914 and ended in November of 1918 to usher in the Great Depression years from the 1920s up into the 1940s.)

Aloha Lane in 1914 was an unpaved dead-end with an offshoot side lane called Ahana Lane (Ahana, like Akaka, Apana and Ahina, are Chinese-Hawaiian names). The contract Chinese laborers were bachelors and had married Hawaiian women because there were no Chinese women then). The *Judo-ba* then was located about where the Pagoda Hotel and Floating Restaurant is today. This *judo-ba* is now located on the former grounds of *Makiki Nihongo Gakko* on Young Street which I attended up to the fifth grade just when WWII suddenly broke out. The school property originally extended all the way to Beretania Street as does our present temple property. My fifth-grade teacher was Mrs. Fusako Sugiyama, wife of Mr. Takeo Sugiyama, long-time treasurer of our temple. His uncle Ryoichi Kawasaki used to live on the mauka side of the *judo-ba*.

The grounds of what are now the Kalakaua Housing once belonged to the Ii Estate where banana and taro patches and other neat rows of vegetables were being raised and cultivated. It was then dubbed the "Dry Land Pah'ke Patch," watered by another bubbling artesian well. So too were the wetland Pawaa and the Sheridan Pah'ke Patches fed by other underground natural spring waters bubbling up to the surface. In fact, the whole area between the Makiki-Pawaa-Sheridan, McCully-Moilili and Kapahulu-Waikiki residential neighborhood were once wetlands fed by the streams of the Makiki, Manoa and Palolo valleys. The shoreline from Waikiki to Kewalo basin was once full of estuaries and inlets and tidal mudflats long before Captain Cooke discovered the Sandwich Islands. The reefs along the shorelines from Barbers Point to the base of Diamond Head were once a single barrier reef. Today the shoreline from Barbers Point to Diamond Head are full of man-made channels and landfilled land. The most noticeable landfills are the Reef Runway, Sand Island, Magic Island, and the Ala Wai Canal. In fact, the whole of Honolulu International and Hickam airfield areas were once reef areas.

So also were the reefs without man made channels like the ones at Kewalo Basin, Honolulu Harbor,

WORDS OF SHINRAN

People who look down on teachers and who speak ill of the masters commit slander of the dharma. Those who speak ill of their parents are guilty of the five grave offenses. We should keep our distance from them.... SBT-Series. *Letters of Shinran*, No. 19. pp. 58, 59.

and Keehi Lagoon. These areas were once flat tidal reef areas from the shoreline to the breaking surf. In fact, Mokauea Island with its other islets nearby as they presently exist in Keehi Lagoon were once a self-sufficient fishing community of native Hawaiians just off what is now the Sand Island Yacht Boat Harbor and the Honolulu Harbor area. This area was dredged in the early 1900s to create seaplane runways for commercial and military use.

So too was the Pearl River dredged and widened to deepen the entrance into Pearl Harbor. A satellite topographical photo of the Honolulu Harbor area clearly reveals these parallel and angular channels that were so dredged. The reef on which Mokauea stands was once unmistakably connected to the very shores of the old John Rodgers Airport all along the length of Lagoon Drive, while the lagoon area was fed by the waters of Moanalua and Kalihi streams. It was full of native fishes, lobsters, and other ocean life and edible sea plants. In fact this airport area is now a landfill that is Hickam airfield, Honolulu International Airport and Pearl Harbor. Hickam was already a naval air base before 1930 servicing both Army and Naval aircraft. It was a time when the invention of commercial and military aircraft had and continued to drastically change things all over the world.

By the time my father came in 1927 to serve as the temple's sixth minister, Aloha Lane had already been renamed Kaheka Lane. The name "Aloha" had been transferred to an avenue between Seaside and Lewers in Waikiki. Tourists were coming in by Matson steamships and Pan American Airway clipper planes. They were bringing in rich and famous tourists. These were times when the Big Five had control over all aspects of Hawaii's economy, politics, and social life. The military also had reasons as well, as seen in the construction of Camp McKinley, Fort Ruger, Hickam Air Force Base, Fort Shafter, Red Hill Naval Base, Pearl Harbor, Fort Armstrong, Fort DeRussy, etc.

By 1929, in anticipation of my mother's arrival, a parsonage had been built on 1014 Kaheka Lane. Because of the Alien Exclusion Act, it took my dad, who had returned to get her, some six months before he could return with her to Honolulu. The parsonage was connected by a short covered walkway to the

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temple. The temple itself had a two room second-story facility right above the temple kitchen and bathroom.

As a five- to seven-year-old, I used to get up on the topmost roof to get a 360-degree unobstructed panoramic view of the whole area. In those days you had a clear unobstructed view of the Moana and Royal Hawaiian hotels. They were the only two prominent luxury hotels on the Waikiki shoreline. One was gleaming white and the other radiantly pink. Diamond Head then majestically dominated the whole landscape up to the downtown area where Aloha Tower was built as a beacon to serve like the Statue of Liberty welcoming immigrants and tourists to Honolulu. In the temple bathroom, there was a hooded water heating unit with a series of coils through which water could be heated by switching on a gas fire (Note: Gas for household cooking and heating was introduced for the first time in Honolulu in 1905).

There was a steep stairway up to the two rooms, and the first-floor kitchen and bathroom facilities below it was to the back mauka side of the temple. These facilities were sufficient for the first two ministers who had come without their families. They were followed by others. The fifth was my uncle Rev. Zenkai Tatsuguchi, my father's elder brother. He had called him over to assist him. The first four ministers by then had all returned to Japan. My uncle was a bachelor. He lived in the two-room unit on the temple roof.

So, before my mother arrived in 1929, it was necessary for the members of *Shinshiu Kiyokai Mission* to build a parsonage for their first husband and wife team to serve the then fledging issei congregation which had its beginnings in the lower Aloha and Ahana Lane neighborhood next to the *judo-ba*. Sunday School was started as well as other cultural classes like tea ceremony, flower arrangement, calligraphy, a temple choir and so on. I remember a small pump organ and a small upright piano at the old temple that my mom used to play. I also learned to play this piano by ear.

I was born on November 1, 1930. I remember well a bird cage with a yellow canary hanging from one of the rafters under the covered walkway connecting the parsonage to the temple. I also remember two alligator pear trees in the back yard that I used to climb to get on the temple roof and then to the topmost rooftop to get a panoramic view. There was a Chinese mango tree right behind the garage on the mauka side of the parsonage. I remember also the hothouse behind the parsonage where my father grew orchids and kept catfish in a rectangular cement pool. I also remember the Poinciana tree that graced the front yard between the temple and parsonage. The watermelon colored blossoms on the Crape tree

(*sarusuberi*) between the temple and dormitory lawn was once growing in the front veranda of the parsonage at Kaheka Lane. This tree is now growing between the temple and dormitory.

I also remember well the families residing in single wall frame houses in what has now become the Pawaa Neighborhood District Park. I remember the other homes that were also down along the lower Kaheka and Ahana lane neighborhoods. I also remember well the Sheridan neighborhood, especially around the Dairymen's Milk Depot and the Sheridan Theater whose walls were of corrugated metal sheets. At that time Keeamouku Street ended at King Street. The Pawaa and Sheridan neighborhoods then were once full of *issei* families. This is why the Pawaa and Sheridan Pah'ke patches were the playground for many of the guys who grew up in the Pawaa-Sheridan neighborhood area. I remember catching guppies, crayfish, catfish and other freshwater creatures to raise them in gallon-sized mayonnaise jars as make-shift aquariums. In those days we made our own playthings like slingshots, bows and arrows, kites, bean bags out of Durham tobacco bags, soap derby cars using discarded skate wheels or wheels from discarded baby carriages and so forth.

Therefore, whenever I go shopping at Don Quixote [formerly Holiday Mart, then Daiei] or pass by what is now the Pawaa Neighborhood District Park, all kinds of memories of the Pawaa-Sheridan neighborhood come to the fore of my consciousness. To see the park now filled with homeless people really depresses and saddens my heart. To see what has happened to what was once the Pawaa-Sheridan neighborhood that was vibrant and full of friendly *mama-san* and *papa-san* shops now displaced by high-rise apartments, business and professional buildings, shopping malls and faceless mass of concrete, this reality alone sobers me to the truth: "all things are transient and impermanent" (*sarva dhamma anicca*). Seeing the plight of the homeless then reminds me further of the sobering words of Sakyamuni Buddha who said, "life is full of suffering because human beings are full of conceit and falsehoods as well as contradictions and paradoxes" (*avidya*).

Then the actuality of Shinran's words once again becomes reality, the actuality that:

In this life no matter how much pity and sympathy we may feel for others, it is impossible to help another as we truly wish; thus our compassion is inconsistent and limited. ...
T. Unno. *Tannisho* IV. p. 9.

These words cut deeply into my heart and resound loudly into my "conscience-ness" to make me realize the further undeniable fact that:

... in this foolish being filled with blind passion,
living in this impermanent world of burning house,
all things are empty and vain; therefore, untrue.
Only the nembutsu is true, real, and sincere.”
op. cite., Epilogue. p. 36

As of today, the former Pawaa-Sheridan neighborhood full of *issei* families are faded memories, mere shadows. In fact, the area has been displaced by giants like Wal-Mart and Sam's Club. So gone too are the Pah'ke Patches of yesteryear that once connected all the way to Ala Moana Beach. Kaheka Street that was once Aloha Lane now connects all the way down and across Kapiolani Boulevard to the Waikiki back end of Ala Moana Shopping Center. Keeaumoku Street that once ended at King Street now connects all the way down and across Kapiolani Boulevard right up a driveway into the second level of the Ala Moana Shopping Center. The land on which the shopping center stands was once marshes, bulrushes, water plants and scrub Kiawe. You once could find several kinds of medicinal plants like obako and popolo.

Therefore, in view of the hardship that the *issei*, especially on the plantation, endured during the Great Depression years in which Shinshu Kyokai was founded in 1914, I express my gratitude with a deep sense of indebtedness to those handful of Aki monto from Hiroshima, Japan, who I never met, the ones who first sat under the shade of a lychee tree on rough woven straw mats that began as a "roofless congregation" as they listened to the Reverends Toshima and Takeda. I express indebtedness also to those who soon thereafter in 1916 built a tiny temple as an annex in the rear of a *judo-ba* at the dead-end of Aloha Lane just above the mauka perimeter of the Pawaa Pah'ke Patch in 1916.

I remember well the two-story wooden home of a Mr. Hisaichi Tanaka that was right across the *judo-ba*. From the second-floor veranda of their home you could see the lotus paddies just below and beyond them the banana patches all along Kalakaua Avenue. There also was a section where water chestnuts in crystal clear waters were being grown. In fact, the home of the local-born artist Satoru Abe and his parents were living in a house in the midst of the lotus patch there.

Then, to those who relocated to the new temple site in the upper half of Aloha Lane between Young and King streets, I also express deep gratitude. Then to those who built the parsonage next to the temple for my father and mother in 1929 who then began serving Shinshu Kyokai as its first husband and wife team, I especially express my deepest gratitude, for my brother Samson and four sisters, Cordelia, Lois, Rosalie, and Emmeline, were born and raised there. I remember a Mr. Kawamura, a stone mason, building a wall constructed out of blue stone rock to replace the picket fence that had become termite ridden.

SHINRAN'S WASAN

Those endowed with "faith"
by the Other Power
Become filled with the Joys
of the Dharma's Truth!
Praised are they all teachers of Dharma
as "fellow Dharma seekers"
by the foremost of Teachers!

Shozomatsu Wasan No. 58
rkt trans.

Now, more importantly, I would especially like to express my indebtedness and heartfelt gratitude to the members and friends who came to the support of my mother during the war years when she was suddenly left with six children to care for in the absence of my father who had been arrested as an enemy alien the very evening of Decemer 7, 1941. The youngest, Emmeline, was then just a six-month-old baby. At that time, members were in "fear of being arrested and interned" because of having connections to a Japanese shrine or temple. Then, I would like especially to acknowledge my indebtedness to the core and key handful of members who worked so hard with my father after returning from his internment on the mainland to begin the arduous task of relocating and rebuilding Shinshu Kyokai to what it is today. These *issei* members now are no longer with us.

In the 1940s, Sears and Roebuck had purchased the Diamond Head side half of the block bordered by Kalakaua Avenue and Beretania, Young and Keeaumoku streets to open the doors of their first Sears & Roebuck Department Store the very next day after the 7th of December in 1941. By the time my father returned, Sears & Roebuck had bought out all the family sites that's now the Pawaa Neighborhood District Park that was needed for additional parking. When my father returned, all the shops and homes that comprised the upper Kaheka Lane and Rosemary Lane neighborhood (the present district park) were gone, except the land on which the temple and parsonage stood.

The temple and parsonage properties were the only two parcels of land left on the site, and Sears & Roebuck wanted them desperately to complete their additional parking. The struggle to relocate, to negotiate bank loans to finance the construction of the new temple and dormitory as they now stand today on 1631 S. Beretania Street, this feat would not have been possible without the handful of key dedicated members who worked with my father and mother to do so. These key people especially are to be recognized and commended.

The following paragraph from the *Shinshu Kyokai Mission of Hawaii: 1914-1984* basically names these people and families who supported Mrs. Tatsuguchi during the war years, as follows:

During the fearful early days of the war, however, the Hidesuke Oumae, Hideichi Kawasaki, Keiji Nakamura and Morito Shintaku families offered their invaluable moral and economic support. Mr. Oumae and Mr. Kawasaki, according to Mrs. Tatsuguchi, were the first members to brave the martial law prohibition and to give their support and counsel. Others who supported the temple and the Tatsuguchi family during the war years included the Tomokichi Miyamotos, the Hidekichi Nittas, the Mantoku Ogasawaras, the Hana Okas, the Hifumi Tamadas, Harumi Okimura Char, the Kanichi Takedas, Sadaka Kayahara, Kiku Kunihiro and the Tokuji Hiratas. Special mention should be also made of Dr. Gilbert and Mrs. Minnie Bowles, a Quaker missionary couple who spoke both English and Japanese and gave inestimable support to Mrs. Tatsuguchi and many other aliens in similar circumstances during those critical years.... *loc. cite.* pp. 57, 58.

Personally, I have fond memories of having lived with and been cared for by the Ogasawara, Oka, Tamada and Hirata families.

I especially have fond memories of Mr. Tokuji Hirata taking me to his wife Jean's cousin's piggery and chicken farm that used to be located between Koko Head and the Hawaii Kai Golf Course. The area and the highway bordering it was completely wiped out by a tsunami. I remember spending several idyllic days of summer with the boys of the Yamada family. I helped cook the swill to feed the pigs, feed the chickens, collect the eggs, and then go fishing with the boys off and on the black rocky reefs off Sandy Beach full of tidepools and reef holes to fish from.

I also have fond memories of Mr. Hifumi Tamada's family. He and his son Peter often took me fishing in Hanauma Bay. I have fond memories also of the Ogasawara family. Their number two son Neil "Norio" was the same age as I was. I remember helping him rolling, then delivering the Japanese language newspaper *Nippu Jiji*. He took me to look for golf balls in the Manoa-Palolo drainage canal alongside the Ala Wai Golf Course and crabbing along the Ala Wai canal. He was killed in the Korean War. I also remember Mrs. Kiku Kunihiro, who was a classmate and very close friend of my mom back in Yamaguchi, Japan, who was of great help to her in her time of need.

Now, footnote 4 on page 82 concerning a Mr. Yonetaro Shiraki and a Mrs. Kazue Kawasaki refers to them as being *myokonins*, or persons of unwavering faith in Amida Buddha in the face of difficulty. This term

also describes people without pretensions like Mr. Katsujiro Matsumoto and a Mrs. Naoyo Murakami whose "down to earth unpretentious piety" remains vivid in my memory to this day. According to Professor Ty Unno, a *myokonin* is a "wonderful good person." Such a person, according to Unno, is "devout" and "sincere" in his faith and displays a patience that is not overcome by uncertainty, hardship, turmoil or adversity. I would add that they are very humble, understanding and gracious people.

The footnote concerning Mr. Shiraki and Mrs. Kawasaki is as follows:

A word should be said here about Yonetaro Shiraki and Kazue Kawasaki. Mrs. Tatsuguchi refers to them as the *inochi no tsuna*, the "rope of life," i.e., the lifelines of hope, for her and the late Reverend Tatsuguchi, and true *myokonin* (individuals with true faith).

Concerning Mr. Shiraki's person, footnote 4 on page 82 continues:

Mr. Shiraki was a true *sodan ai te* (advisor). He was a solid counselor. ... He would laugh off angry comments, yet could stand his ground when necessary in an inoffensive way.... He had a droll sense of humor, and when discussions became too depressing, he would interject some startling bit of humor to break the tension and lighten the mood. ... Mr. Shiraki was a quiet, unobtrusive person, but he had a way of impressing others. ... (a bank loan officer speaking of Mr. Shiraki said:) "Mr. Shiraki was truly a living treasure for the temple," and that "The temple was fortunate to have a member such as he."

It was also noted that "just his presence," though Mr. Shiraki spoke no English, "had a calming effect" on all those around him.

Then in footnote 5 the *myokonin*-like nature of Mrs. Kazue Kawasaki is described.

Mrs. Kazue Kawasaki (formerly Yamamura of Kauai) was bilingual and served as interpreter countless times during negotiations and discussions between the temple and other institutions. Though her help in this capacity was invaluable, it was her optimistic and cheerful spirit that was unforgettable. She had a way of encouraging and inspiring others, of bringing hope and sunshine into a gloomy situation. Mrs. Tatsuguchi remembers that it was Mrs. Kawasaki's unflagging spirit that carried the day many times when others were ready to give up. She always had faith that whatever it was could be done. She would be

the one to encourage one last try, to see the brighter side of things, to state that they had to see the project through, to say that they could do it. She worked tirelessly and cheerfully with *shinjin*, on behalf of the temple throughout her life. She was, as Mrs. Tatsuguchi puts it, her *kokoro no tahyori*, "the support of my spirit."

I remember well the home of the Kawasakis that once stood on the mauka side of King Street on what is now the makai-Ewa-end corner of the Pawaa Neighborhood District Park next to the State Department of Agriculture's garage.

Way back then in the 1930s, the Fukuchi Store, the Popeye Grocery Store and the Saito Drug Store were right across the Kawasaki home on the makai side of King Street. Mrs. Kawasaki taught sewing then in her home. The Sumida Building still stands right across the Pawaa Neighborhood District Park. It was the first two-story masonry building built in the Pawaa-Sheridan neighborhood area before WWII. The Ahana Lane neighborhood began right behind it all the way down to what is now Rycroft Street. All around throughout the Pawaa-Sheridan neighborhood area there were single-family wooden homes. There were three or four *mama-san* and *papa-san* family-run shops and stores down the lane like the Fujii Store and Takemoto Grocery. Yoshino Drug Store and Kayahara Butcher Shop were on the corners of Kaheka Lane right across each other on the makai side of King Street.

The *issei* and their *nisei* children of the Pawaa-Sheridan neighborhood are now all gone. Many of their *nisei* children too have passed on or are now either grand- or great-grand parents to their *sansei* and *yonseis* children often of mixed ethnicities. Honolulu has become a city of hyphenated and multi-hyphenated Americans with a combination of various ethnicities and religious affiliations. Therefore, it is not surprising to see a Caucasian-looking person with a Japanese surname or an Asian-looking person with a Hawaiian or even a Portuguese surname. Not only is Honolulu now a multi-racial society, it also has become a multi-cultural and multi-faith community of differing cultural and religious mixes.

Matters of faith and personal conscience in a society professing freedom and equality have now become digital, electronic and robotic. Matters of conscience have become secondary to matters concerning the contractual legalities that concern money matters and personal possessions. It is befuddling, therefore, to see the *sanseis* and *yonseis* joining the ranks of those who are now being swallowed by the faceless mega-corporations that have turned them into a mass of "consummate consumers" based on plastic identification and credit cards identified by numbers and bar codes.

Because things have gone global and conflict has become world wide, there are now Caucasians disenchanting with their Judeo-Christian heritage seeking for a "spiritual haven" from what is a blatant, unabashed culture of corporate greed. They want a life free from the excessiveness and wastefulness as spurred on and dictated by an industrialized society that has now become electronic, robotic and now nuclear. Many are turning to various "newly established syncretic religions" promising "this worldly" as well as "other worldly" benefits based on psycho-somatic healing and transcendental meditation techniques of a dubious nature. As of consequence, the teachings of *nembutsu* are becoming affected by words like "psyche," "ego," "paranormal" and others that have mystic psychological or psychiatric implications that are not of Buddhism whose teachers are based on causality and karma.

The year 2012 is an election year. Will Shinshu Kyokai be able to observe and celebrate its hundredth-year anniversary in April of 2014? The *issei* who began our temple are now gone. The *nisei* membership now is dispersed and in their twilight years. Their *sanseis* and *yonseis* are now captives of a money culture based on credit cards and mortgage payments. The present Board will have to make this decision very soon.

Will Buddhism, especially the teachings of Shinran Shonin, be able to fill the void as the "cosmic religion" of the future as Albert Einstein envisioned Buddhism to be? We shall have to wait and see, for it is troublesome to see that personal divisiveness throughout our nation, especially in the hallowed halls of Congress, continues to be embroiled in politics as usual in terms of skin color and one's religious affiliation based more on one's sense of loyalty and allegiance to a nation rooted in a Calvinistic Puritan-Protestant and in Judeo-Christian heritage.

Despite the profession of faith in democracy, freedom of expression and equality of all human beings, subtle divisiveness based on racial, cultural and especially religious justifications continues to pit one American against the other in one way or another. When President Barak Hussein Obama continues to be demonized and caricaturized as a "baby chimpanzee" or a "darkie" or a "demon with bloody fangs and demonic horns," especially a "Muslim terrorist," such caricaturizations are sad indications that a certain segment of our nation, even among certain of our legislators, harbor sentiments of Anglo-Saxon supremacy. When political office is won by character assassination and through slandering the character of one's political opponents, or by casting unfounded aspersions and insinuations, it's time to examine ourselves. We, therefore, need to pause and take a deep look at ourselves as a nation, especially as individuals into our deepest conscienceness!

Indeed, we need more people like Mr. Shiraki, Mrs. Kawasaki and people of simple piety like a Mrs. Naono Murakami, who once graced the sanctuary of Shinshu Kyokai. They had "faith" in Amida's Wisdom and Compassion. They were people of true faith without sentiments of being "self righteous" or "overbearing" about it. Mrs. Murakami often used to come right up on the uppermost sanctuary after a sermon after everyone had left. She would put her hands in *gassho* and stand right before Amida's image. She would begin a conversation with Amida. Her responses were mainly, "Yes, yes, that is so ...," "Yes, I understand ...," and so was more of a "hearing" and "listening" to Amida's voiceless voice.

I often wonder what she "heard" and was "listening to." For she never went around saying "I heard Amida" or "saw Amida," as many televangelists of today do in their mega-church sermons, claiming all kinds of healing and miraculous powers through the power of supplication and prayer.

BUDDHIST STORY OR PASSAGES

... "In five ways, young householder, a child should minister to his parents as the **East**:

- (i) Having supported me I shall support them,
- (ii) I shall do their duties,
- (iii) I shall keep the family tradition,
- (iv) I shall make myself worthy of my inheritance,
- (v) Furthermore I shall offer alms in honor of my departed relatives.

"In five ways, young householder, the parents thus ministered to as the **East** by their children, show their compassion:

- (i) they restrain them from evil,
- (ii) they encourage them to do good,
- (iii) they train them for a profession,
- (iv) they arrange a suitable marriage,
- (v) at the proper time they hand over their inheritance to them.

"In these five ways do children minister to their parents as the **East** and the parents show their compassion to their children. Thus is the **East** covered by them and made safe and secure. *Sigolavada Sutta*. (Narada Thera trans.)

QUESTION & ANSWER KORNER

QUESTION: Why is it that in India where Buddhism was founded there are so few Buddhists today?

ANSWER: ... There are many reasons for the decline. ... because of its tolerance towards other religions, Buddhism in time began to lose its own characteristics and individuality: tolerance that eventually led to pollution and adulteration of its doctrine by the amalgamation with common beliefs and superstitions. Then, too, because the teaching of Buddha advocates equality of all and discrimination towards none, it met with violent opposition from a society which had for centuries upheld and lived with class distinctions [i.e., India's caste system]. The immediate cause for the decline was the persecutions and oppressive measure from invading Muslims in the 11th-12th century when Buddhist temples were destroyed and the monks and laymen killed indiscriminately. *JODOSHINSHU HANDBOOK FOR LAYMEN*. p. 136.

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