

**Translation by Rev. Lee Rosenthal of the chapter on "Bodhi-Mind" from
An Introduction To Pure Land Teaching by Prof. Jokai Asai of Kyoto, Japan**

When Honen Shonin proclaimed that "only Nembutsu" was sufficient for one to attain Buddhist awakening, he caused a stir in the Buddhist world of his time. One of the criticisms against Honen's position concerned his assertion that it was not necessary to raise one's Bodhi-Mind, or the aspiration for enlightenment. This aspiration, which was included among all the Buddhist disciplines and considered essential to the Buddha-Dharma, caused doubts as to how one may transcend birth-and-death existence without first raising the mind of highest Buddhist Wisdom.

Furthermore, even the Pure Land sutras spoke of raising the Bodhi-Mind, and among the many Pure Land Buddhist teachers extending from China to Japan, great importance was attached to raising one's Bodhi-Mind as the proper cause for enlightenment. Criticism thus surfaced against Honen Shonin, whose position of adhering to "only Nembutsu" was questioned as being inconsistent and incompatible with the prevalent thought of the time, namely, without raising one's aspiration for Buddhahood one could not attain the highest enlightenment. In this manner it became the task of Buddhist monks to determine what significance to attach to the doctrine of Bodhi-Mind. Accordingly, various original perspectives on Bodhi-Mind were expressed and advocated.

Bodhi-Mind (*Bodhi-citta*) is the mind that seeks the fruition of Buddhhood, a Buddha's enlightenment attained as the result of the practices of a Bodhisattva. It is the Highest, Perfect Enlightenment (*anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*). According to Mahayana Buddhism, even the fruition of Buddhhood accomplished individually, is not referred to as true enlightenment. Only when all sentient beings achieve the way to enlightenment, is true awakening possible. The accomplishment of "self-benefit" and "benefitting-others" is that of a Buddha. The heart and mind that seeks for enlightenment is a mind that arises seeking the way of accomplishing self-benefit and benefit to others, and this mind is of itself complete and fulfilled.

One of the characteristics of Mahayana Buddhism is the development of the Bodhisattva ideal which expresses the liberation of all human beings. The notion of Bodhi-Mind has a deep connection with this Bodhisattva ideal. That is to say, the term "Bodhi-Mind" was present among the early Mahayana sutras, which stated that even the ordinary person who was unable to undertake training and practice, through arousing the aspiration for the highest wisdom, could possess and benefit from the consciousness of a Bodhisattva. The difference between the Bodhisattva in general and the Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism is indicated by whether the mind of Bodhi is existent or not.

In this way, the Mahayana Bodhisattva endeavors to raise the Great Mind of Buddha within the ordinary person who does not study the Buddhist Path, and endeavors to save all sentient beings. Knowing the truth of all existence, he endeavors to fully accomplish the benefit to self and thus benefit all human beings. The mind of Buddha which is conferred on the ordinary person, is the Bodhi-Mind of *Emptiness*, and its dynamic movement is the mind of Great Compassion which works toward liberating all people. It is the unfolding of the highest enlightenment. The aspiration for the Highest Wisdom, therefore, has a deep connection with the essence of Mahayana Buddhism.

In his discourse intended to destroy wrong views (*Zaija Ron*), a Kegon priest named Myo-E Shonin severely criticized Honen Shonin for not understanding the essence of Buddhism. Honen's *Senjakushu* advocated abandoning the notion of raising one's Bodhi-Mind, and realizing birth in the Pure Land through the solitary practice of Nembutsu. Adapting to the development of the Buddha-Dharma, the position of a Bodhisattva's practice was explained in a complex manner, and accordingly, each school of Buddhism developed a complicated and precise theory about Bodhi-Mind. Honen Shonin, on the other hand, did not expound upon a difficult to understand practice regarding aspiration for Buddhist wisdom for the ordinary person. He relied solely on the mind of Buddha which was bestowed to all human beings.

However, the Mahayana sutras which developed also consisted of Pure Land sutras, and the three main sutras of the Pure Land tradition respectively mention the arising of the aspiration for enlightenment. The 19th and 35th Vows of the *Larger Sutra* recommend raising the Bodhi-Mind and thinking of the Buddha of

Immeasurable Life. The *Meditation Sutra* states that those of the lowest birth of the highest rank will cherish the thought of obtaining the highest Bodhi, raise the Highest Mind, and desire birth in the Pure Land. Likewise, those of the highest and middle form of the lowest grade of birth, after being born in the Pure Land shall listen to the Dharma of *Avalokitesvara* and *Mahasthama*, and cherish the thought of attaining the highest Bodhi, or the mind aspiring for Buddhahood. The *Amida Kyo* also mentions the Highest Bodhi-Mind of those in the world of Five Defilements who desire birth.

The teachers of the Pure Land school also speak of the perspective of Bodhi-Mind, which is a characteristic developed further in the sutras. The Chinese Pure Land master, Donran Daishi, in his *Commentary on the Discourse on Birth (Ojo Ron Chu)*, explains that all people who desire birth in the Pure Land, whether of the lower, middle or higher level of birth, should raise the Highest Bodhi-Mind. This mind is not for the purpose of seeking ease in the Pure Land for one's own sake. Rather, it is the mind arising from the Vow of Buddha which desires for all human beings to become enlightened as they are. Further, the unfolding of this Highest Bodhi-Mind accompanies the Highest Wisdom, severs all hindrances, and confers a pure mind not tainted with evil passions.

In his *Collection of Passages Concerning Birth in the Pure Land (Anraku Shu)*, Doshaku Zenji discusses Bodhi-Mind in detail. He indicates that those people who desire to be born in Amida's Pure Land most assuredly should raise the Bodhi-Mind, and that the movement of Bodhi-Mind is everywhere in the Boundless Dharma Realm, which is like a great empty space. While comparing the Bodhi-Mind of the Path of Sages and that of the Pure Land Way, Doshaku quotes the *Commentary on the Discourse on Birth (Ojo Ron Chu)*, and states that mainly the One Mind of those desiring birth in the Pure Land is the highest mind of Bodhi.

In his *Essential Collection Concerning Birth in Amida's Pure Land (Ojoyoshu)*, Genshin Kasho compiled the point of view of many Pure Land masters regarding Bodhi-Mind. In the manner of Pure Land teachers before him, Genshin asserted that the mind that desires birth in Amida's Land, is the highest mind of Bodhi, and not merely a mind which desires birth for ease and pleasure. He clearly states that the Bodhi-Mind of the Pure Land is within the stream of Mahayana Buddhism.

The *Ojoyoshu* clarifies the mind which arises as the thought of Highest Wisdom. Within the "Five Practice-Gates of Mindfulness," there is the position of aspiration for birth in the Pure Land. Should the aspiration for Bodhi arise, conclusively, the result of this wish will be birth in the Pure Land. Even though one should not undertake meritorious practices other than Nembutsu, Genshin stated that birth in the Pure Land would still result through the desire for Birth. He thus explained that the proper cause for Birth was the mind which aspires for enlightenment. This interpretation was inherited from earlier Buddhist masters who presented the Four Great Universal Vows of a Bodhisattva in their writings, and wrote of the mind that aspires for Bodhi, not as one which desires Birth for one's own enjoyment, but the awakened mind which desires to benefit all sentient beings.

The Bodhi-Mind was further divided into two phases. One aspect reveals to all people who have raised the aspiration for Highest Buddhist Wisdom, the real state of existence, in that birth-and-death itself is Nirvana, and that our evil passions and afflictions are in themselves enlightenment. The other phase of Bodhi-Mind is the mind of all sentient beings which is in accord with the first three vows of a Bodhisattva, seeking Truth and the fruition of Buddhahood. This aspect relates to the perspective of Bodhi-Mind as interpreted in the *Discourse on Mahayana Meditation and Contemplation* by Chih'i. This work explains the accomplishment of meditation on the noumenal (as opposed to the phenomenal) and pursues four methods of mental concentration. For the purpose of accomplishing tranquility and contemplation, the mind of Bodhi is indicated as the core.

While asserting the predominance of Bodhi-Mind through the background of Chi'i's work, Genshin Kasho, in the *Ojoyoshu*, prepares a series of questions and answers. How should ordinary people pursue the practice of raising the mind of Bodhi? The Buddhist practices as found in the *Ojoyoshu* are exceptionally complicated, and so, for the sake of those who cannot endure the more stringent forms of meditation, Genshin advocated the calling of the Name of Buddha. The karmic action of this Nembutsu which results in birth in the Pure Land, comes from the Great Bodhi-Mind of Buddha. The *Ojoyoshu* explains the Bodhi-Mind and its complicated practices, but also emphasizes the fact that in line with Pure Land teaching, there is also a fundamental Bodhi-Mind which causes even the ordinary person to be born in the Pure Land.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The year 2005 is about to come to a close. As I reflected on the year I was astonished at the scope of the activities and the volume of participation that was undertaken. Thanks to all our committee heads and Reverend Rosenthal; the ordinary memorial services and weekly gatherings went smoothly as usual. The major fund raiser events, Hanamatsuri and Obon Festivals, despite being seriously hampered by inclement weather, turned out at the end, a success. The Temple Fund Raising Campaign this year was quite successful in that it raised over \$50,000 in donations and kept fiscal matters in the black. This also enabled the building to receive termite fumigation services. With help from our neighbors, we were able to contribute towards the parking lot asphalt sealer application. On the religious side, Rev. Rosenthal facilitated a couple of seminars and held Buddhist classes. And for pleasure, members participated in a nature walk, camp outing and the usual fun day at the Temple picnic organized by the Dharma School.

For a small group such as ours I think the accomplishments for the year has been anything but little. Lets continue to share each others company and participate in the experiences and support the Temple.

Additionally, the end of the year is Oseibo time. It is a time in which we express gratitude to the many people who enabled us to enjoy the year. As for me, there are just too many individuals to name and express thanks, so for the last time this year I'd like to extend my thanks, once again, to EVERYONE.

It is with all due respect, that I ask you to join me and the Board of Directors in extending appreciation to Reverend Rosenthal. At this time of Oseibo, it is traditional for BCA temples, and individual members, to present their ministers with orei (monetary gifts of appreciation). As is customary, the Vista Buddhist Temple will present Rev. Rosenthal with an orei at Oseibo Taikai . You may also thank Sensei with your own personal orei. This expression of gratitude in the form of monetary gift can be offered directly to the Sensei. What better time than now, a time of giving and time of joy. Please show your support for the Temple, the Board and for Sensei.

HELP IS NEEDED FOR MOCHITSUKI December 18, 7:30 AM

Why do we prepare mochi during this time of the year? Because mochi is a Japanese New Year tradition. Mochi is specially grown sticky, sweet rice that is pounded and mashed to produce a taffy-gummy paddy. The paddies can have sweetened cooked Azuki beans in the middle as a filling. Large paddies are made for display on home shrines, which are later eaten. Some people like mochi eaten in a variety of ways, and some just tolerate it.

In times past, when people traveled, they needed food that was easy to carry. Mochi fit the mold, and since many people traveled during the New Year's season to see loved ones and relatives, mochi became a pre-New Year chore that became a tradition.

At VBT, we pound the mochi with machines, but most of the preparation is done manually. The mochi is sold to members and the community as a traditional service. Come and visit with us and see how it is done. Better yet, come and join in the fun and tradition. Actually, your help will be greatly appreciated.

On Saturday, December 10, 8:00 AM, members will be preparing the 'an', or cooked azuki beans which is placed into the center of the 'an mochi'. Mochitsuki will take place on Sunday December 18.

Mochi order form is enclosed in this issue of the View. Please use this form to order your mochi and send it in with your payment by December 7.

BWA NEWS

Appreciation Dinner

On Oct 23rd at the Kurando Restaurant, the Buddhist Women's Association celebrated a hearty and delicious meal at the annual appreciation dinner. It was also a dinner for the members to show our appreciation to the men of the Wednesday Group, who without fail, help and support the BWA and Temple activities. Sensei opened the event recognizing and appreciating how the Nembustu is a part of our lives.

In addition to the exquisite meal, lucky members won door prizes ranging from wines to boutique baskets donated by various members (see the happy winners). Every guest went home with roses from the evening's event. What a wonderful way to celebrate the year's accomplishments.

Tupperware Party and Bake Sale Are Successes!

Thanks to all of you who

supported both fundraisers.

Funds from each event

will be used towards a BWA

Temple donation and other

BWA expenses.



AN Making for Mochitsuki

Please come out to help on Saturday, December 10 at 8:00 a.m. to make the "an" (bean filling) for mochitsuki.

Shokenji Taiko News

After playing at our Obon Festival in July, the Shokenji Taiko Group then performed at San Diego Temple's Obon during their intermission. This has become a traditional performance that we look forward to. We also performed at a martial arts summer camp in Del Mar. This was an educational performance where we were able to teach children and adults about Buddhist taiko.

In August, we played for the August Moon Festival fundraiser at the Japanese Friendship Garden in Balboa Park. We are always happy to see familiar faces of our friends in San Diego at this successful gathering.

The beautiful sunshine of Southern California smiled on us when we performed for Carlsbad Art Splash in September. This is hosted by the city of Carlsbad where chalk artists create unique drawings on the pavement. There were food and art/craft booths along with entertainment performances to help the festive atmosphere.

In October, we played at Hope Elementary School in Carlsbad for their school carnival.

We were honored to perform at the San Diego Chapter of the Japanese American Citizen's League's tribute to the Japanese American Veterans of San Diego. The event, emceed by TV newscaster, Marianne Kushi, honored all Japanese Americans who served in the armed forces, including our own Mike Sonoda. Mike, a former Temple and Shokenji Taiko member, recently lost his life while serving in Iraq with the Army National Guard, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment.

Most recently, we gave a show-stopping performance at the La Costa Resort in Carlsbad. We played three short performances outdoor, by the poolside, and through the mist of the fog. Shokenji Taiko really brought the house down!

This year's beginner workshop was held for six weeks in October and November and was attended by five people. Two people attended previously and had such a good time that they came back for more!

DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

The Dharma School held their annual Costume party on October 30. It's always so much fun to see the students come to Temple in costumes. The kids had a great time decorating their lanterns and goody bags and making masks. The party culminated with the traditional trick-or-treating around the social hall. Thanks to all those who provided all of the treats!

Thank you to all the families who provided the *Osonae* and *Obuppan* offerings last month. It was extra special to have the students assist Sensei in placing their offerings up at the altar. Thank you Sensei for teaching the students the proper etiquette. Sensei's Jr. Ministers are preparing for the Bodhi Day Service. They will assist Rev. Rosenthal with the service on December 11.

I encourage all of our Dharma School families to attend the *Oseibo Taikai* – End of the Year Party on December 3. It has been requested that the students give an encore performance of "Samurai Cats". Also, come out to help the Temple's *Mochitsuki* on December 18. Let's continue the VBT DS traditional of pounding the last batch and then making our own mini kasane mochi. If you are in town come ring our Temple Bell on December 31 at the *Joya* – Last Service of the Year. It's a wonderful way to end the year as we reflect back on 2005 and look forward to 2006.

If you have any questions or would like to assist with any of the upcoming activities please contact Terri Omori.

Upcoming activities:

12/3	Sat	4:00 p.m.	Oseibo- Temple Year-end Party
12/11	Sun	9:30 a.m.	Bodhi Day Service
12/18	Sun	8 a.m-1 p.m.	Temple Mochitsuki
12/31	Fri	7:00 p.m.	Joya - Last Service of the Year
1/1	Sun	10:00a.m.	New Year's Service
1/8	Sun	9:30 a.m.	Dharma Gathering
1/15	Sun	10:00 a.m.	Ho-Onko: Shinran Shonin Memorial
1/22	Sun	9:30 a.m.	Dharma Gathering & SMJC

COMING IN 2006...

**25TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION OF
VISTA BUDDHIST TEMPLE**



A Gathering To Repay A Kindness Shinran Shonin Memorial

Sunday, January 15 10:00 AM

Ho-ONKO is a memorial service in memory of Shinran Shonin. It is a religious gathering to express our indebtedness and thankfulness for having received the opportunity to awaken to life's supreme meaning through the movement of Amida Buddha's Wisdom/Compassion.

Ho-Onko is the **most important Jodo Shinshu observance**. At Honzan, our parent temple in Kyoto, Japan, Ho-Onko is a weeklong ceremony from the 9th through the 16th of January. Through listening to Dharma messages, holding formal ceremonies, and participating in Sangha fellowship during this time, we participate in reflecting upon Amida Buddha's Compassionate embrace.

The Vista Buddhist Temple will conduct this solemn memorial service for Shinran-sama on **Sunday morning, January 15**, beginning at **10:00 AM**. **Rev. Akira Hata**, emeritus, will be our guest speaker. In accordance with the special observance, Rev. Rosenthal will ceremonially read two chapters of the *Godensho* in classical Japanese. The *Godensho* is a work written in 1295 by Kakunyo Shonin, depicting the life of Shinran Shonin. This ceremonial presentation is rarely heard in the United States, and is only read in Japan once a year during Ho-Onko.

By truly coming in contact with our own life through the teaching of Nembutsu, we may come to know and understand the life of Shinran Shonin a little better. The life of Shinran-sama then, becomes a part of our own life, as we are brought to realize that the life which we have been allowed to receive is indeed a life which includes all living things, as it is a life embraced always by the Wisdom/Compassion of Amida Buddha's Original Vow. The life of Shinran Shonin is a life of *Namo Amida Butsu*. When we come to realize that our life too, is the life of *Namo Amida Butsu*, we will know intimately the life of Shinran Shonin.

A Memorial Tea will be served following the service. Please plan on joining us January 15 in observance of this most important Jodo Shinshu ceremony.

VBT UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan 1	New Year's Day Service	10:00 a.m.
Jan 15	Ho-Onko Service ~ 10:00 a.m. Rev. Akira Hata	
Feb 5	Nirvana Day Service ~ 9:30 a.m.	
Mar 12	Higan Service ~ 10:00 a.m.	
Apr 9	Hanamatsuri Service~10:00 a.m. Rev. Jim Yanagihara	

Temple Rummage Sale Acknowledgement

A big “Thank You” to everyone who supported our Temple Rummage Sale. It takes a lot of time and effort to sort through all of the items, make sure they are saleable, give it a price and set up the sale early in the morning. It takes a great group of members to make this event a success.

****We appreciate those who generously donated items to this event.**

****Thanks to the Wednesday Group for sorting, checking and pricing items.**

****Thanks to the Taiko Group for sorting and pricing**

****Thank you to our Temple Members for helping at
Friday Prep & the day of the sale.**