

# Brief Commentaries On The Sanjo Wasan

by Rev. Lee Rosenthal

## JODO WASAN (70)

*More difficult than to believe in any of the Buddha's life-time teachings  
Is to have Serene Entrusting of the Universal Vow.  
"Most difficult of all difficulties, says a sutra;  
"Nothing is more difficult than this," it states.*

Early Buddhism as taught by Sakyamuni was not truly a religion as we have come to define the term. It was not "the feeling of absolute dependence," but rather, the awakening to interdependence. The Buddha placed great emphasis on gaining insight into Wisdom by self effort, as a means of alleviating personal difficulties, rather than formulating a belief system of worship.

Religion in its general sense is often a creation of fear. If one destroys their fear through understanding, they may also destroy their need for religion. This is extremely frightening to some. Others, through meditation and adherence to precepts, are able to aspire to the attainment of Wisdom; but this path has always been difficult to attain because it was "life-threatening". It is not easy to deny "self" in an attempt to gain an understanding of "self."

Interestingly enough, early Buddhism also included the element of faith in its scheme. Sakyamuni, however, was not referring to blind faith, which is a temporary creation of our own mind, produced in order to support our needs. Rather, he was referring to confidence which is derived from gradual insight into Wisdom and which leads us further along the path to the cessation of our difficulties. Faith, then, is the confidence that a path leading away from suffering exists.

For Shinran Shonin, faith was the realization that one must not necessarily eliminate "self" in order to gain Wisdom, only their self-power. By entrusting wholeheartedly in the Primal Vow, one is enmeshed automatically in Amida's compassionate embrace. In essence, because we are already accepted as we are, there is nothing to do, no place to go, outside of one's True Entrusting Mind. This is very difficult for rational human beings to accept, since we are constantly thinking that something must be done in order to make life meaningful. How can we expect to accept entrusting that is neither blind nor derived from self-efforts?

Are we even capable of receiving Amida's Mind? True Entrusting, then, is indeed the greatest "gift" that may be bestowed upon us, and truly realizing this, we cannot help but feel deep, humble gratitude and joy. Achievement of Serene Entrusting in the Universal Vow, actually coming to know and accept that we can do nothing *but* receive, and yet that we are assured *of* receiving Amida's unconditional Mind of Wisdom/Compassion, is indeed the "most difficult of difficulties." The Easy Path is never easy, but it *is* the most assured.

## President's Message

The Buddhist Churches of America is about to face a major financial crisis if campaign contributions are not increased in the very near future. The construction renovation of the Jodo Shinshu Center commenced nearly a year ago and is now a couple of months away from occupancy. The construction expenses were financed by a conventional construction loan, with the anticipation that by project completion, the loan would be satisfied with payment from Campaign Fund donations. The Campaign contributions have not been coming in at the rate anticipated. As a result, we are presently seeing a shortfall of huge magnitude.

It is a fact that we at VBT have, to date, distanced ourselves from participating in BCA and its Campaign. A recently published report listed contributions from only 2 VBT families. I am hopeful that there will be many more names on the list when all is said and done.

I urge you to help the Temple help BCA by making a pledge to the BCA Campaign today. Remember, in the light of Amida Sama we are all One.

## VBT Upcoming Events

July 8        Obon Service ~ 7:30 p.m.  
                 Dr. Subhash Gedam

July 29-30    Obon Festival

Sep 23        Higan Service

Nov 18        Southern District  
                 Mini-Workshop

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October 7

VBT 25th Anniversary Celebration

## VBT Poetry ~ Memoirs Writing Prompt for June

Write a poem about someone close to you in the temple (past or present). Highlight some aspect of their personality which mirrors the Buddha and give an example of when that person really embodied one aspect of the teaching.

Thank you!

# **PET MEMORIAL SERVICE**

**Sunday June 4 9:30 AM**

The Vista Buddhist Temple will be conducting a special memorial service on Sunday, June 4 at 9:30 AM in memory of those deceased pets that became a part of our family and helped to teach us about the Buddhist lesson of respect for all living beings with which we are connected. Anyone wishing to have their deceased pet remembered during this special Sunday service should submit the following information to the temple no later than Thursday, June 1:

**Your name**

**Name of your pet**

**Kind of pet (cat, dog, goldfish, etc.)**

**Year of pet's death (and age if known)**

A special memorial card will be made for each pet whose name is submitted. Please feel free to bring any photographs of your beloved pet to the temple where they will be displayed during the  
Pet Memorial Service.

## **Annual Temple Picnic**

**Sunday, June 25, 2006**

**Calavera Community Park  
2997 Glasgow Drive in Carlsbad**

(Between College & El Camino Real at Carlsbad Village Dr.)

Directions: Take Highway 78 exit at College Blvd, head south; you will pass Kohls/Albertsons/Walmart shopping centers. Go up the hill, turn right on to Carlsbad Village Drive. Turn left on Glasgow (1<sup>st</sup> signal light) Calavera Park is on your right.

Sunday Morning Service will begin at 10:00 a.m. Dharma School will provide the hotdogs, drinks and paper goods. Please bring a side dish, salad or dessert to share

**Hope to see you there!**

There is a sign up sheet at the Temple. If you cannot sign up, please call the Temple and R.S.V.P. by June 22<sup>nd</sup>

## Dharma School News

**Last month the students assisted Rev. Rosenthal with the Mother's Day Service.** This month they will assist Sensei with the Father's Day Service. They always look forward to participating with Sensei and take pride in helping at Temple.

Prior to the Mother's Day Service some of the students assisted Rodney, Ford, Phil, Roy and crew in preparing the special Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast. Those who partook in the delicious breakfast appreciated your thoughtfulness and efforts. **Thank you!**

**For Father's Day the Dharma School will hold a luncheon following service.** All Temple men will be treated to a special lunch. Please join us!

**The parents and staff will be hosting the So. District Dharma School Teachers' League Mini-Workshop 2 on Saturday, June 24.** The theme is, "*I am a Dharma School Teacher, What's In It For Me?*" The workshop will consist of an opening service, activities, Dharma Message by Rev. Rosenthal, discussion and lunch. Following the workshop the SDDSTL will hold their quarterly delegates meeting. If you would like to assist us with luncheon preparations please see Terri or Satomi.

**We will conclude the 2005-2006 Dharma School term at the annual Temple Picnic on June 25.** Join us at Calavera Hills Park in Carlsbad from 10:00 a.m. Dharma School will provide the hotdogs, drinks and paper goods. We ask each family to share a salad, side dish or dessert. See article in newsletter for directions.

**Let's get ready for Obon.** Mark your calendars. It's on the weekend of July 29-30. More info next month.

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

### Upcoming Activities:

|      |     |            |                                     |
|------|-----|------------|-------------------------------------|
| 6/4  | Sun | 9:30 a.m.  | Dharma Gathering                    |
|      |     | 10:30 a.m. | SJMC                                |
| 6/11 | Sun | 9:30 a.m.  | Dharma Gathering                    |
| 6/18 | Sun | 9:30 a.m.  | Father's Day Service                |
|      |     |            | Followed by a Father's Day Luncheon |
| 6/24 | Sat | 10:00 a.m. | VBT DS Hosts SDDSTL Mini-Workshop 2 |
| 6/25 | Sun | 10:00 a.m. | Temple Picnic                       |
| 7/8  | Sat | 7:30 p.m.  | Obon Service                        |

## BWA News

### BCA Federation of the Buddhist Women's Association update:

**Last Call: *Is your life "A Life of Awakening?"*** The summer conference scheduled for June 11 at the Hyatt Westlake Hotel in Westlake, CA is awaiting your reservation. Speakers are Rev. Kodo Umezu (Japanese) and Rev. Shoki Mohri (English). Conference is hosted by the Oxnard Buddhist Temple and the Pasadena Buddhist Church.

Contacts: Yoshi Usuki at [yusuki@verizon.net](mailto:yusuki@verizon.net) or Irene Takemori at 626-355-0531. Bus transportation from Oceanside available at \$20. For local arrangements please contact Ford Omori.

**Meet Buddhist Women from around the world...attend the Thirteenth Annual World BWA Convention** in Hawaii Sept. 1,2,3, 2006. Although the pre-registration date has passed, registration is still open. A fee of \$250 is required with your registration. Contact: Terri Harada, President at [harada@psnw.com](mailto:harada@psnw.com)

### BWA Fundraiser

The ladies of the BWA are making a quilt for raffle. Please let us know how you'd like to help? Sew a square, help with the overall construction. Contact: Linda Kane

**Write a poem** - Support your Dharma practice and leave an artifact. See Poetry Project.

Living An Awakening Life  
A personal observation of the women of the Sangha.

Walking into the Vista Buddhist temple,  
On a journey to find meaning in life,  
Greeted by an experience of openness and gentleness,  
Overwhelmed by things that are foreign,  
A practice read about, but unfamiliar,  
I give it a chance.

One by one, the women who come to greet,  
In an ever so respectful way, introduce themselves,  
Inquire about my needs and background,  
Rituals are explained, again with hands extended,  
What is this openness and kindness?  
Is it the practice of compassion, selfless giving perhaps a way of living?

## Taiko News

Thank you to all the members, friends and family who helped out at the booths and work stations so that the taiko members could perform for Hanamatsuri. Linda Ring showed her skills in her debut as a member of Shokenji taiko. Thanks for the advance publicity for the event too Linda!! Phil York, busy chairman of the Garden Booth was not able to dazzle us this time, but we look forward to his first appearance with the group in future performances.

It was a real treat to have UCSD's Asayake Taiko 20 member group perform for Hanamatsuri. Their innovation and energy are great combinations for a creative, talented membership. Thank you Sandy for arranging their appearance as well as all the performers viewed by those attending our festival.

We look forward to playing at the San Diego Buddhist Temple food bazaar that takes place on Sunday, June 4.

The Junior taiko group has been working hard under Terri's leadership and practicing a piece that they helped write. Stance, listening to the base beat, form, counting, jamming, playing accessory instruments, quite an accomplishment for the time they have been playing. Good work everyone!!

## My First Hanamatsuri

I came to the Temple about six months ago because I wanted to learn taiko. I was so touched by the warm welcome I received from the taiko group, that I quickly became a member of the Temple. I have to admit, I knew nothing about Shin Buddhism but I knew that this was the Temple for me. It is quite different from the Tibetan Buddhism I have been practicing, but I am eager to learn.

This year was my first Hanamatsuri. Celebrating with the Sangha and the community was a very memorable experience for me. Saturday morning I was allowed to make "football" sushi. Watching all the other participants make preparations for the festival was amazing in itself. It was obvious that the women in the kitchen knew exactly what they were doing. Each dish was carefully prepared. Yes, even dicing the eggs to the proper tiny size was important.

Later in the afternoon, it was taikoyaki-making time for me. I am forbidden to cook at my home for lack of skill and the possibility of inflicting food poisoning. Needless to say, taikoyaki making gave me the opportunity to clean my "terrible cook" reputation. I hope it worked, but by the looks of my taikoyaki, I can see why I am known as a terrible cook.

Later in the afternoon it was off to sell strawberries. This is where I had the opportunity to practice my Japanese with the customers. Okay, so the big box of strawberries was to be sold at \$15 instead of \$1.50...my Japanese was somewhat close. The highlight of the day was my first Buddhist Taiko performance with the Taiko members. The butterflies were swarming inside me and I could never seem to get them all flying in the same direction. However, somehow I managed to finish my piece even though it was off beat. It was such a great honor to play with the other Taiko members. Boy oh boy, they are GOOD! My taiko partner was Wendie. It was her last festival and my first. I will always remember her and all the kindness she has given me. She will be sorely missed at the Temple. Sunday was sushi-making in the morning and scrip booth after that. I negotiated with a member to switch jobs. I was determined to get back to taikoyaki-making. Luckily for me, the person I asked to switch jobs with had sore feet and welcomed the chance to sit down at the scrip booth. With all my new found experiences in taikoyaki-making, you would think I would get it by now. Hmm, well, there is always Obon!

I have two very fond memories of my first Hanamatsuri. I am a dedicated vegetarian; it is one of my ways of practicing compassion. The festival organizers went far out of their way to assure my job duties would not include selling meat items. I was truly touched by their efforts to make me feel accepted. As a new member of the Temple, I have been pulling my hair out trying to understand why is it acceptable to eat meat if one is practicing compassion. Luckily for me, I was standing close to Sensei during the Saturday morning football sushi making party. That was my chance to ask the six- million-dollar question that has been driving me nuts. I never saw his answer coming; it hit me like an on-coming freight train. OH, I finally understand!!!! I won't try to repeat Sensei's answer for fear I cannot express his words as eloquently. However, I can assure you the next time I feel like eating a hamburger with my fellow Temple friends, it will be eaten GUILT FREE. From speaking with Sensei Saturday morning to sweeping the parking lot Sunday night, each and every moment of the festival was priceless.

## **Hanamatsuri 2006 Raffle Donors**

The Vista Buddhist Temple acknowledges the following businesses and individuals for their generous donations towards the raffle. Proceeds from the raffle support the Temple's Building Fund. We greatly appreciate their continuous support

Agri-Chemical & Supply  
Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach  
Bonsall Donut House  
Children's Discovery Museum, Carlsbad  
Eagle Creek  
Kurando Japanese Cuisine  
Mutual Trading Company  
Oriental Market of Vista  
Reuben H. Fleet Science Center  
San Diego Japanese Friendship Garden  
San Diego Repertory Theatre  
Teri Café  
The Zoological Society of San Diego  
3 D's Travel  
Ms. Kayo Beach  
Ms. Gail Furuya  
Ms. Mikiye Honda  
Ms. Yaeko Masuchi  
Ms. Terri Omori  
Ms. Bridgette Roberson  
Ms. Atsuko Taylor  
Ms. Wendie Yumori