



The Buddhist Temple of Chicago

BULLETIN

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Volume 68 Number 1 **October 2011** (2555 B.E.)

Scheduled Events

Call 773-334-4661 or visit
www.budtempchi.org

Regular Sunday Services

Dharma Sunday School

Sundays 11am, Oct. 9 and 23

Religious Services

Sundays at 11AM – Noon, in English

Monthly Memorial Service

Shotsuki Hoyo, Sunday, Oct. 2,
11AM in English, 1PM in Japanese

Special Observances/Events

Temple Anniversary – Special service Oct. 9 at 11AM followed by luncheon and Keiro-kai recognition

Dharma School Halloween Party – Oct. 23, after regular service

Buddhist Studies/Practices

Discussion Group – Open to All, 2nd Sundays, 12:30PM to 2PM

Introduction to Buddhism – Call temple to confirm dates and time

Meditation Sessions – 9AM Sundays

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

Study Class – Wednesdays, 7PM

Activities

Asoka Society – 3rd Saturdays, 1PM

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

Crafts Class – 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 10AM to noon, open to all (call temple for confirmation)

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

Japanese Language Class – Saturdays, 10AM to noon, children or adults, call 773-334-4661 to register

Japanese Swordsmanship – Iaido, Mondays 7PM to 9PM

Middle Way – 1st Sundays, noon

Taiko Drums – BTC Kokyo Taiko Drum Troupe, Fridays, 7PM to 9PM

TEMPLE 67TH ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS!

Greetings and joyous wishes as we join together in celebration of the 67th anniversary of The Buddhist Temple of Chicago on October 9, 2011.

The history of the The Buddhist Temple of Chicago is the history of innermost aspiration of Amida Buddha – ministers and laymen making efforts to listen to and appreciate the Dharma. We live a life of Nembutsu – oneness with Amida – the Buddha of infinite wisdom and compassion.

Welcoming this auspicious occasion of the Temple's 67th Anniversary, I remember a story my senior student told me at Otani University. In October 1913, Otani University moved back to Kyoto from



Rev. Yukei
Ashikaga

Tokyo and built the new school buildings in their present location. The modern European-style buildings with the red bricks appeared in the midst of the farm land of northern Kyoto. It was quite an attraction for young students who had big dreams for their futures. The president of the university was Dr. Bunyu Nanjo, who was an outstanding scholar of buddhology and educated in England. When the dedication ceremony of the new

buildings was held, among the many scholars and distinguished guests there was a British professor from Oxford University. He congratulated Dr. Nanjo and asked, "How much did it cost to build such fantastic buildings?" Without saying a word, Dr. Nanjo answered by showing his six fingers. The professor again asked, "Six million yen?" Dr. Nanjo answered, "It was Na-Mu-A-Mi-Da-Butsu." The six fingers represented six Kanji (Chinese characters) of the Nembutsu.

Many changes have come to pass since the founding of The Buddhist Temple on Chicago's South Side by Rev. Gyomay Kubose and a few enthusiastic Nisei members on October 1944. Through the dedicated efforts of members and friends, the Temple has continued to serve the spiritual needs of its community. To all those who made this development of our Sangha possible, we offer our gratitude. They would say, though, that the energy and commitment came not from within, but from power of the Nembutsu.

I sincerely hope that Amida's compassionate light will bring us together in a deep sense of introspection, contemplating our past together with prospects for the future.

Namu Amidabutsu.

Please welcome the newest member of our editorial team, Ann Yi. Ann first came to BTC two years ago to attend Rev. Patti's Introduction to Buddhism class. She soon started attending the study classes and Sunday services. Recently she expressed a desire to volunteer. Ann's experience with writing, editing, and layouts has already made her mark with this issue of the bulletin, as you can see, and her computer skills have spawned production techniques that will bring efficiency to the process. Please lend her your support and encouragement at btcbuledtr@hotmail.com! - GTN

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Feedback & Submissions

Comments,
corrections, questions,
and suggestions are
encouraged.
Submitted material will
be reviewed for
suitability and space
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Anonymous
submissions will not be
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TEMPLE NEWS, AUGUST 2011

- ❖ 08/05 Bon Odori practice held.
- ❖ 08/06 Rev. and Mrs. Ashikaga attended the Beiju Birthday party for Ralph Fujimoto at the Union League Club.
- ❖ 08/08 Shotsuki Hoyo (Monthly Memorial Service) observed. Rev. Ashikaga delivered Dharma message both English and Japanese. * * * The 49th Day Memorial Service of the late Jimmie Ito conducted at the Temple.
- ❖ 08/09 Rev. Ashikaga visited Kiyoshi Hosokawa at his home in Niles.
- ❖ 08/10 Bon Odori practice held.
- ❖ 08/13 Bon Odori enjoyed by all who attended. Due to the doubtful weather, dance was held inside the Temple. All enjoyed refreshments.
- ❖ 08/14 Obon Special Service observed. Rev. Patti Nakai delivered Obon message in English and Rev. Ashikaga in Japanese. Refreshments served by Asoka members.
- ❖ 08/19 September issue of Temple Bulletin mailed. * * * Rev. and Mrs. Ashikaga attended farewell party for the Consul General of Japan, Hon. Mr. Joji Sakaeda at the Union League Club
- ❖ 08/20 The First Year Memorial Service of the Late Tamako Akune conducted at the Temple.
- ❖ 08/21 Ko-so-ki (Rev. Haya Akegarasu's Memorial Service) observed. Rev. Patti Nakai, speaker. * * * Temple Board of Directors met.
- ❖ 08/26 The 49th Day Memorial Service of the late David Uchima conducted at the Temple.
- ❖ 08/27 Special book sale sponsored by the Middle Way Group with big success.
- ❖ 08/28 Regular Sunday Service observed. Rev. Ashikaga delivered the Dharma message. * * * Second day of book sale was also successful.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

**Understanding the Nembutsu
through recognizing the
Paramitas in others.**

Send in your recognitions!

- ❖ Sunday Service Participants: Ruth Abbinanti, Bill Bohlman, Rodel de Ocampo, Glenn Fujiura, Anna Idol, Michael Kudo, Jr., Miriam Solon, Ruby Tsuji, Leroy Wiley, Justin Woodward, Mrs. Hisayo Ashikaga, our pianist.
- ❖ Sunday Refreshments: Noreen Enkoji, Jane Ike, Haru Ito, Dennie Okuhara, the BTC Toban Group C for Obon Service
- ❖ Temple Bulletin Mailing: Rev. Ashikaga, Dennis Chan, Antoinette d'Vencets, Noreen Enkoji, Evelyn Inamine, Haru Ito, Rev. Patti Nakai, Mary and Yone Shimomura, Tommi and Tak Tomiyama, Ruby Tsuji, Peggy Waters
- ❖ Taking care of the Temple inside and out: Tomio Tademoto
- ❖ Cleaning the entire Temple every week: Harky Tademoto
- ❖ Manning the Temple office every Thursday: Tak Tomiyama
- ❖ Emptying the trash bins, filling them with new bags and putting them out for disposal: Adam Kellman, April Kellman, Shawn Lyte, Rev. Patti Nakai

Excerpts from 2011 BTC Scholarship Recipient Thank You Cards

You have helped me so much getting through college. I appreciate all that you have done. Thank you again!! – Kara Miyashiro

I was very happy and appreciative to learn that I was selected as the recipient of your scholarship. Thank you again! – Jill Sakai

Thank you very much for the scholarship. I am looking forward to starting school this fall and beginning a new chapter of my life. – Mika Sugano

**We wish Kara, Jill, and Mika the very best in their
college careers and in their bright futures!**

The Necessity of Words – Report on the 2011 Maida Center Retreat (July 29-31)

The theme for this year's retreat was "The Importance of Listening in Shin Buddhism." As Dr. Nobuo Haneda pointed out at the start of the retreat, Jodo Shinshu ("Shin") says that listening is the only thing we need to do on the path of Buddha-Dharma, while other traditions consider listening as one among other practices (meditation, chanting, good deeds, etc.). Although Buddhism points us toward the awakening to Oneness which is beyond



Rev. Patti
Nakai

description by words, there was no way for the historical Buddha to communicate to us about the path without using words. However, there is the danger of being misled by words. Language is based on dualistic (subject vs. object) thinking – we label other entities as being separate from us and each other. So when we use language we are likely to become more entrenched in the delusion of separateness.

We all come to Buddhism (or any religion) with the agenda of getting "goodies" for our self. I couldn't help chuckling when Dr. Haneda said many people come to Buddhism very excited about it, saying, "I found something that agrees with my ideas!" As we've already seen over and over with newcomers to our temple, that excitement soon wears off. "True Buddhism challenges us," Dr. Haneda said, and he quoted Rijin Yasuda: "When we encounter true Dharma, we feel uncomfortable and even hurt."

Despite having to use the language of dualistic thinking, Shakyamuni effectively got the teachings across to people throughout history. We can see in their writings and the writings about them that by listening to the teachings they broke through their self-attachment and lived their daily lives in the awareness of true reality. How can we get to that "Other Shore" when the words become more difficult to understand because they defy our "objective" way of thinking? Dr. Haneda said in order to keep listening we should feel a sense of "spiritual resonance" and a respect for the depth of the teachings. The annual retreat fosters those feelings, and we hope we can cultivate those conditions at our temple gatherings as well.

Buddhism seems difficult to understand because the Buddha is speaking to our "inner consciousness," not the ego-centered consciousness where we do most of our thinking. In this inner consciousness is the "ultimate

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BTC Anniversary Greetings

by Rev. Patti Nakai

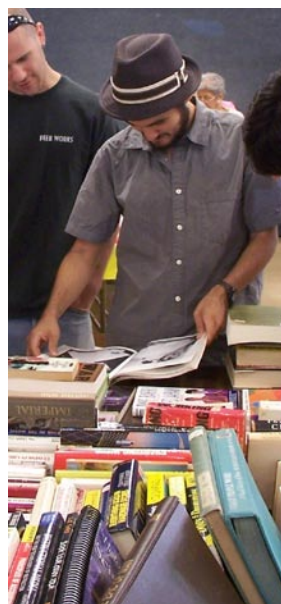
This year 2011 is the 67th anniversary for our temple. The celebration of the temple's anniversary is a time to express gratitude for all the founding members and Rev. and Mrs. Gyomay Kubose who worked very hard and sacrificed much in order to establish this important Dharma learning center in wartime Chicago. Looking back, our temple could not have survived to the present without the ministers and many hundreds of members and friends who contributed to the temple's growth and development as a spiritual gathering place.

As we prepare to observe the 750th memorial for Shinran Shonin in November, I am glad we have been able to bring the Nembutsu teachings to an audience much more diverse than most middle-class ethnic Asian/Euro-American Buddhist sanghas. It is my hope that we continue to welcome and involve people from many different backgrounds in carrying on our temple into the future.

Schlepping, Sorting, and Selling

by Janet Lipner

The Book Sale was held the weekend of August 27 and 28 during inviting weather. My sincere thanks to all who stayed indoors to help arrange and sell. We had a wide variety of offerings in fiction and non-fiction and a steady stream of customers throughout most of both days. This is the first book sale BTC has had in many years, and it was very successful. For little more than the price of two ads in the Reader we made a tidy profit of \$506.50. The efforts of the Craft Club added another \$108.50.



Many thanks to Lauren, Rodel, Helene, Sue, Ruth, Antoinette, Tager, Glenn, Stan, Justin, Karen, Shawn, Adam, Dennis, Dennie, Arlene, Alice, Jennie, and my co-chair Bill. Thanks also to all those who donated books. Happy reading!

Photo by Shawn Lyte

2011 EBL Conference

by Rev. Patti Nakai

The 2011 Eastern Buddhist League conference was hosted by the New York Buddhist Church in the “retreat” format (workshops and services) instead of a convention (banquet and recreation activities). There were about fifty attendees, but they were mostly the New York members. The featured speakers were Rev. Ron Miyamura from the Midwest Buddhist Temple, Rev. Kaz Nakata from the Ekoji Buddhist Temple (Washington D.C.), and Rev. Tomo Fujii from the Toronto Buddhist Church, who presented workshops on Buddhist teachings and rituals. On the panel discussing how Buddhism is presented to English-speaking audiences were Bishop Koshin Ogui of the Buddhist Churches of America, Rev. Hoshu Matsubayashi of the New York Buddhist Church, and Rev. Wayne Yokoyoma, noted translator of *Coffinman* and other works. It was great for me to see my friend Wayne who was in New York to research documents pertaining to D.T. Suzuki. During the conference, Wayne and I met up with Tom Kirchner who has worked on translations of both Shin and Zen Buddhist texts.

Next year’s EBL gathering will be a convention hosted by the Twin Cities Buddhist Association. I hope many of you will join us Labor Day weekend in 2012. Compared to the New York conference, the travel costs should be very affordable as we will try to get a bus with the Midwest Buddhist Temple.

Note: The photograph depicts a side view of the famous Shinran Shonin statue in front of the New York Buddhist Church. The statue had been in a park in Hiroshima during World War II and survived the atomic blast.



Midwesterners in NYC for the 2011 Eastern Buddhist League Conference. From left to right: Todd Tsuchiya of the Twin Cities Buddhist Association in Minnesota, Rev. Patti Nakai of The Buddhist Temple of Chicago, and Rev. Ron Miyamura of the Midwest Buddhist Temple in Chicago. Photo by Wayne Yokoyama of Kyoto, Japan.

Dharma School Bright Dawn Home Spread Field Trip

by Wen Qing

On Aug. 26-28 we went to Wisconsin. This report will be telling you all of the fun adventures we went on. On the first day we saw Bea bursting out of the door. We went inside the house. It was a very big house. Anna was probably on her way now because it was getting dark outside. Bea's grandma came in with Will (Bea's little brother). For dinner we had Pasta and hot sauce. I loved it! Then we did some seating meditation. Mr. Brandon lit a lot of small candles and we each got our own. Then we went to sleep!

Sweet Dreams

On the second day we heard Anna's dad. They're here?! So we quietly knocked on their door. And it turns out they were here. Yulian and Bea and Anna and Wen Qing went on a hike together. It was fun! We even collected Parsley! At night we had a campfire and made s'mores. Oh my gosh! It was so good! The best part was when Bea played her violin. She is so good! I play violin but I started after her.

Yum! Yum!

On the third day breakfast was awesome! First Granola Bars and Donuts that were brought by Mr. Scheele. For lunch we had crockpot. Then rock meditation. Then we had to leave.

Bye!



Photo by Diana Schoendorff



**Dharma
School Bright
Dawn Home
Spread Field
Trip**

When the dharma school went to Wisconsin, I liked when we visited the farm. When we got there we saw fields of vegetables, and greenhouses full of tomatoes. It was a sunny day. (It smelled a little trashy) We went and helped to pick carrots. They let us take some home. We also picked a melon and an onion. After that, we went inside a greenhouse and picked lots of tomatoes. There were so many, and they were so big! Then, we drove down the road and came to a spring! It was a pipe ...with fresh, cold water running down rocks, into a stream. We washed our faces and drank the water. It was great! After that, we went to our house, and helped make dinner with the food we picked.

The End



Essay by Bea
Photos by Dave Leshuk, Diana Schoendorff, and Bob Scheele

The Haiku Corner

The *Hototogisu* At Ohigan

by Elaine Siegel

At the autumn equinox, we celebrated O-higan, the time of “crossing over.” Passing from summer to autumn, we turn to spiritual transition as well. “Higan” means the “other shore.” We cross the ocean of birth and death, of craving and suffering, of samsara. We pass from dualism to Oneness, to the “other shore” of enlightenment, harmony, and peace.

Crossing over to the other shore figures literally in a haiku by Bashō, written at the beach at Suma, near the offshore island of Awaji. A bird, the *hototogisu*, flies off across the water –

*The cry of the hototogisu,
Vanishing toward
The solitary island.*

– Bashō (1688)¹

The *hototogisu* is an Asian cuckoo, a migratory bird native to Japan, with a distinctive, clear song. In Bashō’s haiku, the bird flies away across the waves, disappearing into the distance as its call lingers.

The critic will point out that the *hototogisu* is a summer *kigo*, or season word. As the robin marks the return of spring, the call of the *hototogisu* announces the return of summer. Here, however, the bird is departing, not arriving. In the travel diary where he wrote this haiku, *Oi no kobumi*, Bashō notes the autumnal feel of the scene. “It was by a singular stroke of genius that an ancient writer pointed out that autumn was the best season to visit this beach, for it seemed to me that the scene excelled in loneliness

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... Necessity of Words – Report on Maida

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desire” to fully be a part of life in the now, unlike our self-attached desire to avoid “negatives” and accumulate “positives,” scheming for some big payoff in the future.

Continual listening to the Dharma, even when we think we don’t understand it, works to gradually change us from within. Dr. Haneda used several metaphors for that process, such as the smoked salmon and the duck swallowing mud-eating insects. I like the simple illustration of the seed – with constant exposure to the moisture and heat of the soil, the root breaks out of the shell and takes in the soil’s

(Continued in next column)

nutrients.

Specifically, as Shinran elaborated in his *Kyogyoshinsho*, it is the teachings of the Nembutsu, Namu Amida Butsu, that work to arouse our inner consciousness and break down the shell of the ego-self. Dr. Haneda frequently emphasizes (as he does in most of his seminars) *hearing* the Nembutsu rather than reciting it. To hear “Namu” is to hear life itself calling to us to come as we are. For “Amida Butsu,” Shinran preferred to translate the Sanskrit sounds into their meanings: “Amida” equals “unobstructed” or “beyond conceptual categories” and “Butsu” equals wisdom symbolized as Light (that which helps us see reality). To listen to the Nembutsu is to hear the voice calling to us, “Come to the real life beyond your dualistic thinking.”

Using Shan-tao’s familiar parable “The White Path and Two Rivers,” Dr. Haneda explained that the “path” in Buddhism is a symbol for the words coming from our teachers. It is by listening to those words and reflecting on their meaning in our own life that we are moved forward in the process of awakening.

Some people might argue that words are unnecessary because a spiritual teacher’s inner consciousness can connect directly with the student’s mind, or that the religious seeker can be totally in touch with the universe without help from anyone else. But my experience is in agreement with the teachings of Shinran and all the Pure Land teachers such as Haya Akegarasu and Shuichi Maida – the ego is continually deluding us into self-satisfied states of “oneness” that quickly disintegrate as soon as someone or something gets in our face. Those touched by the Nembutsu teachings demonstrate a vigilant self-reflection and the compassionate identification with all beings, no matter how lowly or despised they are in society. From what I’ve read of these people of *shinjin* (entrusting heart/mind), continual learning of the Dharma is the primary factor that led to their awakening. Without words coming from the mouths or the texts of their teachers there would be no path for them.

Dr. Haneda pointed out that in the White Path Parable, we find that the path becomes noticeable to us only in the midst of our experiences of fear and anger, hardships and irritations. If we could easily conquer on our own the raging waves of defilements and sufferings, there would be no need to listen to the words of the Buddha-Dharma, which are the path to transcendence. But if you know you have problems with seemingly no end in sight, keep listening.

Next month we will feature Ruth Abbinanti’s report on the Maida Center retreat. –Eds.

Looking Forward On This, Our 67th Year!

Congratulations to the Members and Friends of The Buddhist Temple of Chicago on the milestone of having traveled sixty-seven years on the Dharma path. Traditionally at BTC, we use the occasion of our anniversary to honor our most esteemed elders, those aged 80-years plus, which we refer to in Japanese as the Keiro-kai (literally, respect elders as a group or at a gathering). Along the same subject of advancing age, what has been a recurring observation through the years is witnessing the departure of charter members and other leaders – the pillars of the temple who during their time nurtured us and ensured that there would always be a temple here for us. Sometimes in lamenting their departure we are desensitized to the many positive evolutions that are taking place here at BTC nevertheless. I'd like to focus on one.

BTC is continuously growing. In membership strength? In active involvement of the Sangha? In what way? Let me offer this: continuously growing in diversity! Every Sunday it is not uncommon to greet first-time visitors, and from that group comes repeat attenders who in turn become full-fledged members after a time. And the common characteristic of each wave of new temple visitors is that there is no common characteristic among them. Their individual path to our door varies greatly and is personal to each visitor. Who knows what they are looking for or how they feel as they struggle for meaning in their lives? But take notice: they come from varying religious, cultural, educational, social-economic, and racial backgrounds – a wide spectrum of diversity as can be found anywhere in a great city like Chicago. Oh, I did forget to include age as one of these non-parameters; but the list is infinitely and fascinatingly long by any perspective.

It is one thing to understand the universal appeal of Buddhism due to the similar struggle we share in life to understand our egos but quite another to see its universal appeal taking root right at our front door! And by all accounts of those who regularly attend Sunday services, the draw of BTC is that it displays a sincere approach to see beyond ethnicity and to concentrate only on the Teachings, long after the welcoming gestures have passed. This is a credit to our present Sangha, nurturing the diversity and strength of our future Sangha.

So let us toast to our immediate and long-term future of growth in all areas, as we bestow congratulatory greetings on each other, on this our 67th year of our continued growth in diversity.

Gary T. Nakai,
President

... The Haiku Corner (Continued from Page 6)

and isolation at that season.”² The beach at Suma had been the site of a famous and tragic battle, which the poet relives in his diary. “This is probably why,” wrote Bashō, “even today after a thousand years, the waves break on this beach with such a melancholy sound.”³

In this haiku, however, Bashō goes beyond the grief and bloodshed of the ancient war ground. He writes in his diary that to view the scene he has climbed nearby Mount Tetsukai, which rises behind the beach. Climbing the steep rocky path with great difficulty, he “reach[es] the gateway of the clouds.”⁴

The haiku reflects a moment of great clarity and vision. Prof. Meisetsu notes it is at once concrete and historical; “it alludes to the Heike refugees who embarked on a long voyage from there.”⁵ On a great journey himself, Bashō does not shrink from the profound suffering of war. His message is not escapist. His meditation embraces and comes to terms with the horror of the ancient battle. The flight of the bird carries us from the slaughter and carnage, to merge in peace with the other shore.

The haiku aesthetically embodies profound contemplation. “This is a large-scale poem,” writes tanka poet Handa Ryōhei, with “an interesting union of the visual and aural senses.”⁶ R. H. Blyth writes, “There is a unity here of the sound of the bird’s cry, its movement through space, and the distant scene a unity so perfect that it can be said that we hear the far-off island, we see the voice of the *hototogisu*.”⁷ As the cry of the bird dissolves in the air, “there floated an island as if it symbolized the disappearance”, writes the critic Yamamoto Kenkichi.⁸ Poet and scholar Ōta Mizuho muses, “It makes one feel as if the *hototogisu* gradually faded out and became an island.”⁹

With his climactic meditation at Suma beach on the sorrows of war, and the passage of the bird to the other shore, Bashō concludes his travel diary.

The haiku brings to mind the beautiful mantra from the Heart Sutra, the Prajna Paramita Hridaya Sutra, which we recite at this time of year: *Gate gate pāragate pārasamgate Bodhi Svāhā!* Loosely translated: “Gone, gone, way gone, way far gone, all glory to Enlightenment!”

¹ *hototogisu kie yuku kata ya shima hitotsu*. Trans. R. H. Blyth, *Haiku*, v. III, Summer-Autumn (Hokuseido, 1952), p.165 (adapted).

² Bashō, *Oi no kobumi*, trans. Noboyuki Yuasa, *The Records of a Travel-worn Satchel*, in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1966), p.89.

³ *Id.*, p.90.

⁴ *Id.*, pp.88-89.

⁵ Makoto Ueda, *Bashō and his Interpreters: Selected Hokku with Commentary* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press 1992).

⁶ *Id.*, p.200.

⁷ Blyth, *op. cit.*, p.165.

⁸ Ueda, *op. cit.*, p.200.

⁹ *Id.*