



Shin Buddhist Project Conference: *Gathering 2007*

Q: What does it take for a teenager and her parent to have an honest, open relationship?

A: Suspend Judgement. Self Responsibility. Interdependence.

On Saturday, October 20th at the Honpa Hongwanji Hawai'i Betsuin, the Shin Buddhist Project and Pacific Buddhist Academy co-sponsored a day of educational sessions: *Gathering 2007-- Interpersonal Relationships: Closing the Generational Gap*. According to the planning committee, utilizing these three basic Buddhist values greatly enhances one's interpersonal relations.

Gathering participants learned to apply these three Buddhist values to the personal interactions in their lives through a combination of Dharma talks, storytelling, and facilitated small group activities and discussions. All PBA students participated in the conference as well as a number of PBA parents, who were segregated into separate groups to discuss the challenges of parent-child communication. In a parallel session, a group of non-PBA adult conference participants discussed interactions with aging parents, colleagues at work, and with temple members in the temple kitchens.



PBA parent Tammy Miyashiro, Rev. Kuniyuki, and PBA sophomore Bianca Nagata engage in an interdependence exercise.

In their written reflections on the conference, students revealed changes in thought and behavior that resulted from their participation. "Students were actively engaged in the discussions," said conference committee member Glenn Hamamura. "They had an opportunity to reflect on the values covered that day, and that perhaps in the future their actions might be guided by those values." Here are a few thoughts from students in the sophomore class:

- I take responsibility for my mistakes. I still blame people but I am a little more conscientious about it because I know I am affecting more people than I realized. *-Raymond Hayashi*
- I learned how to communicate better with my parents and how we both can get mad at each other but we have to not argue and just talk. *-Kelly Terakawa*
- I learned that you shouldn't judge people too soon because your assumptions aren't always right. I also

learned how to be more responsible and that everything affects something else. *-Nolan Higa*

- In class we are becoming book smart, but this taught us to be a better person. *-Shane Taira*
- I learned that everyone has a part to play in the miscommunication between parent and child. This conference really made me think about how I treat my parents. After looking at all they have done for me, I see no reason for my complaining to them. I have become more nice, talkative, and open to them. They have become just like my friends. I thank the conference for that. *-Bianca Nagata*

Although all PBA students benefited from the conference, for four Pacific Buddhist Academy students, *Gathering 2007* was a unique training experience. In preparation for planning an interfaith peace conference for high school students in fall 2008, junior Tara Miyashiro and sophomores Bianca Nagata, Marcie Moribe, and Lauren Ikeda actively participated in the organizing of this conference under the mentorship of veteran Shin Buddhist Project members Glenn Hamamura, Carolyn Uchiyama, and Rev. Kevin Kuniyuki and PBA advisor Liane Vilorio.

According to Mr. Hamamura, the four students played a significant role in identifying the topics for discussion. They also assisted with conference logistics, including preparing the classrooms for use and planning the potential menu. On the day of the conference, the students managed the registration table, set up and cleaned up lunch, and served as recorders in the small group sessions.

"Planning a conference is a lot of work," said Marcie. "You have to get everything done before the event and then the day of the event you're running around." Among other valuable lessons, the students learned that they shouldn't procrastinate, that it's a good idea to make to-do lists and most importantly, added Lauren, "choose people who actually DO work and contribute ideas."



PBA students (left to right) Bianca Nagata, Lauren Ikeda, Marcie Moribe, and Tara Miyashiro meet with advisor Liane Vilorio to plan.

At the close of this fifth Shin Buddhist Project *Gathering* in seven years, the planners are pleased with the conference results. "I thought that the mix of different age groups and interests led to a depth and breadth of discussion at the conference that significantly extends the dialogue of Buddhism in America," said Mr. Hamamura. "This richness of dialogue is very positive to the future health and communication of Buddhist concepts in Hawai'i, for the benefit of both individuals and the society."