**45th BWA Conference Draws 250 in Visalia**

The 45th BCA Federation of Buddhist Women’s Associations (BWA) Conference drew approximately 250 chapter delegates and members in Visalia, California, on Sept. 14-16.

The conference, hosted by the Central California District BWA chapters, was held with the theme of “Create an Endless Ripple” at the Marriott Hotel and Convention Center. Denise Kusunoki and Julie Doi were co-chairpersons.

“The conference was meaningful and so worthwhile,” said one attendee. “The Central California BWAs went all out to make sure we had a wonderful conference. They set the bar very, very high. I am so grateful for all the people who made it possible.”

Being that this year’s conference was being held in the nation’s breadbasket, it was only fitting that BWAs went all out to make sure we had a wonderful conference. They set the bar very, very high. I am so grateful for all the people who made it possible.

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We see a continuing change in the generational makeup of the BWA membership, but it is gratifying and personal Dharma message.

“Continuing to find personal meaning in the BWA,” to see third- and fourth-generation BWA members continuing to find personal meaning in the BWA, “Endless Ripple” to re-invigorate the BWA. Moderated by Rev. Karen Mukai, Rev. Candice Shibata of the Flavin Church, Camille Pating from San Francisco, Sydney Shiryo, who grew up in the Palo Alto temple and Jenna Tokeshi a lifelong member of the San Fernando Valley Temple, all shared their perspectives on the topic.

The afternoon Japanese language session featured a discussion led by the Rev. Ryuta Furumoto, Rev. Candice Shibata of the Flavin Church, Camille Pating from San Francisco, Sydney Shiryo, who grew up in the Palo Alto temple and Jenna Tokeshi a lifelong member of the San Fernando Valley Temple, all shared their perspectives on the topic.

The afternoon’s service featured a discussion led by the Rev. Ryuta Furumoto, Rev. Candice Shibata of the Flavin Church, Camille Pating from San Francisco, Sydney Shiryo, who grew up in the Palo Alto temple and Jenna Tokeshi a lifelong member of the San Fernando Valley Temple, all shared their perspectives on the topic.

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A Friend's Gift of Kindness

By Rev. Kodo Umezu
BCA Bishop

When I attended Ango, the summer study session for ministers at Rikyuu University in Kyoto, Ango has been held for more than 570 years and every year, doctrinal topics have been discussed. This year’s main discussion was the purpose of the Ango forgoing the Pure Land and for our return to this world.

Actually, the structure of Pure Land Buddhism is stated in the Larger Sutra Volume II, “The Larger Sutra” (p. 110) as we see here, attainment of birth in the Pure Land is a matter of when our lives come to an end. Our founder Shinran Shonin understood as we enter the stage of transcendence (assumed to become a Buddha) in this life and we become a Buddha when our lives come to an end.

Some people say, “It is meaningless to become a Buddha when we die.” But, I wonder if it is really meaningful to become a Buddha when we die?

I’m one of the last ministers who was invited to Watsonville Buddhist Temple to become the new priest when Rev. Shousei Hanayama was alive. He barbecued for us, played with my daughter, made a lot of jokes as usual, but he did not have much time left.

It was few months later that he found out that the pancreatic cancer had already spread to stage four and his diagnosis was that he had only a few months to live. He died in July 2017.

In Yasuandu’s last Facebook post in Japanese, he said: “I am happy that there is the Pure Land and I will save all of you as a Buddha.” I feel that this is the best and only path for us.

We certainly will become a Buddha and lead everyone to the truth of life.

Welcome the Newest BCA Minister: Rev. Yamagishi to Lodi

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop

Buddhist Churches of America, including the Oregon Buddhist Temple, have called by the Universal Buddha, Namo Amida Butsu, to a priest was reading Rev. Shousei Hanayama’s last Facebook post in Japanese: “I am happy that there is the Pure Land and I will save all of you as a Buddha.” I feel that this is the best and only path for us.

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We certainly will become a Buddha and lead everyone to the truth of life.
Let me share a great success story with you. Thanks to the commitment, perseverance, and hard work of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Archives and Historical Preservation Committee, we’ve made a great leap forward.

The Archives Committee is comprised of Lynne Ozawa (chair), and members, Rev. Fumiaki Usuki, Rev. Kazuki Nakano, Dona Mitoma, Eiko Masuyama, Tanaka and Jamie Henricks of the Japanese American National Museum (JANM). Aside from dedicated contributions of all committee members, Lynne Ozawa, Eiko Masuyama, and Sandy Saikey deserve special recognition for their extraordinary efforts.

The committee’s purpose is to encourage the collection of records related to the BCA for the permanent preservation of their enduring cultural, historical, and evidentiary value to the entire Japanese American community and the general public. The committee is dedicated to ensuring the collection is substantial by archiving standards. In 1999, BCA deposited the collection with the JANM. More than two years ago, JANM informed BCA that the annual cost to continue Collection maintenance would increase by more than 60 percent from $30,000 to $49,500 because of rising costs and other factors. This additional expense was unmanageable for BCA.

The Archives Committee met more than 14 times in just over a year to explore alternative institutions to which the collection could be safely transferred and properly maintained before the BCA’s contract expired with JANM. The Archives Committee determined the three best sites for potential relocation were the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA); University of Southern California and Stanford University’s Hoover Institution Library and Archives.

The committee made visits to each site, several times some. Discussions were held with knowledgeable former leaders. One sunny afternoon, I met with Dr. Ryo Muneoka, past president (1996-1998) and a great BCA treasure himself, regarding the wisdom of moving the collection. Dr. Muneoka was fully supportive of the move. Regrettably, shortly after my meeting with him, he passed on to the Pure Land without witnessing the conclusion of this exciting saga.

Expert archivists at all of the institutions considered as new homes for the BCA Collection made us aware that our collection has enormous historical value as an enduring record of the Japanese experience in the United States during the 20th century, and a means for us to charge BCA anything to transport, insure or maintain the collection. Consequently, with the help of the BCA Collection Committee, members Dona Mitoma, a recently retired UCLA professor, 56 years of Naval and Japanese-American studies.

Additionally, the archival storage facilities at UCLA are considered cutting edge, including a fire-suppression system which only need have a small sprinkler system. Thus, avoiding permanent water damage to the materials. Most significantly, UCLA’s policy and mission are to permanently and expertly house and preserve all collections it receives, and to make them freely available to scholars and the public, in perpetuity.

UCLA was unanimously recommended by the BCA Collection Committee, member Dona Mitoma, a recently retired UCLA professor, 56 years of Naval and Japanese-American studies.

Similarly, in Buddhism, we find two terms that I think of often: “cataphatic” and the “negative” approach. In religious studies, there are “negative” terminology, using symbols and forms are meant to awaken an “inner light.”

In Christianity, Catholicism is more cataphatic while Protestantism emphasizes the apophatic style. Similarly, in Buddhism, we find the Pure Land schools to be more cataphatic while the Zen schools tend to use an apophatic approach.

In religious studies, there are two terms that I think of often though I don’t always remember how to spell them. One is “cataphatic” and the second is “apophatic.” Cataphatic describes a type of spirituality that relies on “positive” terminology, using symbols and forms. You might call this the “way of affirmation.” Apophatic uses a more “negative” approach that might be called the “way of negation.” In Christianity, Catholicism is more cataphatic while Protestantism emphasizes the apophatic style.

In gashio, Richard A. Stambul, President Buddhist Churches of America

Like the Buddhist Churches of America

The Way of Affirmation

By Rev. Jon Turner
Orange County Buddhist Church

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The deadline to apply is October 31st. Resumes received after October 31st will not be considered.
Las Vegas MA’s, BCA Bookstore Create Shikisho for Veterans

Nov. 11 will mark a milestone in American history -- the 100-year-old anniversary of Veterans Day, which began as Armistice Day in the World War I.

In gratitude and appreciation for all active U.S. military members and veterans, the Las Vegas Sangha Minister’s Assistants -- Michael Tanaka, Dave Hopper and Al Kayatani -- collaborated with the BCA Bookstore to create a red, white and blue monto shikisho for the 100th anniversary of the WWI Armistice. Kayatani served in the U.S. Army and his uncle and friends served in the all-Nisei 100th Infantry Battalion.

“For me, I felt that what we did, having all veterans stand up to be recognized was just not enough for us and a plain service, commitment, and sacrifice they made for the rest of us,” said Michael Tanaka, the project leader. Starting at last year’s Las Vegas Sangha’s Veterans Day service, “I wanted something more that would stand out at any service. Wearing the red, white and blue shikisho I thought would have them be recognized not just on Veterans Day, but at any service and they (would) attend throughout the year.”

At last year’s Las Vegas Sangha’s Veterans Day service, the Minister’s Assistants began the process of coming up with the special shikisho -- with the support of the board, Tanaka said. “I connected with Gayle (Noguchi) at the BCA Bookstore to discuss my idea,” Tanaka said. “She enthusiastically accepted the challenge. A moving story that teaches the Buddhist idea of accepting others and oneself. Kenneth Tanaka (author of Ocean) calls it, “A moving story that teaches the Buddhist idea of accepting others and oneself.”

Tanaka said being selected as Grand Marshal was “a great honor,” and will move the next day to the Amache concentration camp to attend a reunion of internees. “As I sat on the automobile smiling and waving, it was a thought-provoking experience, a terrific mix of emotions,” Takano said. “I am very proud to have been selected as Grand Marshal for the 100th year’s Las Vegas Sangha’s Veterans Day service, but at any service and they (would) attend throughout the year.”

The shikisho are available through the bookstore for $25 each at http://bcabookstore.mybigcommerce.com/. If you have any questions about products or ordering place orders at any time at www.bcabookstore.mybigcommerce.com. If you have any questions about products or ordering, please contact the manager, Madeline Kubo, at mkubo@bcabookstore.org. Thank you for your continued support: Gomu.
Century Old Sangha Rivalry: Seattle vs. Tacoma

In a competition that began nearly a century ago, the Tacoma-Seattle baseball rivalry was brought back to life in 2017 when the Tacoma-Seattle baseball elementary school and ended in a 2-2 tie after nine innings. The 2017 game was won by Tacoma and allowed Rev. Kakihara to get revenge on Rev. Kusunoki for a game the ministers played against each other while they were attending Ministers’ Seminary School in Kyoto and Rev. Kusunoki’s team won that match. This year’s “Annual Battle of the Buddhas” Softball game was held at Browns Point Elementary School and ended in a 2-2 tie after nine innings.

Ekoji’s Nen Daiko Performs at Japanese Embassy

Founded in 1994, Ekoji Temple’s “Nen Daiko” group has been performing for nearly 25 years in the greater Washington, D.C., area including performances for the White House and the Japanese ambassador. Nen Daiko -- along with Soh Daiko from the New York Buddhist Church and Hoh Daiko from the Seabrook Buddhist Temple -- perform at each other’s Obon festivals. In addition, Nen Daiko has also performed at the dedication of the Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II, the Japanese ambassador’s appreciation barbecue honoring the U.S. troops that fought in the Middle East; and at the National Theater and the Smithsonian Institution’s Folklife Festival. In 2015, Nen Daiko performed at the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

By Katia Shue, Pasadena Jr. YBA

Reflections on Obon

I love Obon. The reason I love Obon so much is that it reminds me of home and the people who were responsible for caring for me during my childhood.

Home for me is the small southern town near Knoxville, Tennessee, where I was born and lived for 13 years. This is the only place where African Americans could be buried. Even cemeteries were segregated. For a long time, I considered this act of discrimination based on race an unforgivable injustice. Things have changed now and cemeteries are integrated. However, the small African American cemetery still remains as a historical site. Because of the relatively small space that the cemetery occupies, I was able to slowly walk the entire area. I read each grave stone. Not all the people were known to me, but I say their name aloud anyway. Everyone deserves to be remembered.

For all the people who loved and nurtured me, I stop and bow at the graves and say, “Thank you. I will always remember you.” Buried here are my maternal grandparents, the doctors who delivered me. I visit the house that still stands, several of my elementary school teachers, neighbors and family friends. As long as I remember them, they will continue to live through me. I am humbled by the legacy that they have left. I am the elder now, and it is up to me to see that the next generation remembers these worthy and most noble ancestors. We stand on mighty shoulders.

As long as we remember those who have died in our hearts and mind, death has no hold on them. My memories will always keep them alive. While I am visiting my hometown, stories are shared among friends who remember what it was like to grow up there. There is laughter and sometimes tears for those whom we miss dearly.

I return to Southern California, bringing my fond memories of so many special people. I help my Sangha prepare for our Obon festival. When the weekend arrives, I joyfully dance Bon Odori with gratitude and appreciation for the special people I left at the small cemetery in Alcoa, Tennessee. I am also grateful for all the ancestors I did not know who have made it possible for me to hear the Dharma at Vista Buddhist Temple. With gratitude and love, may we always remember the people who paved the way for us to be in this place, at this time and on this most sacred path of Shin Buddhism.

Namo Amida Butsu

By Rosalyn Dong, Minister’s Assistant, Vista Buddhist Temple

Enjoying this year’s Vista Temple’s Obon Dance Festival.

Young Buddhist Gather for 68th Annual Southern District Jr. YBL Conference

The 68th annual Southern District Jr. YBL conference was held September 1-2 at the Los Angeles Marriott Burbank Airport Hotel, and was hosted by the Oxnard, Pasadena and San Fernando Jr. YBL groups. The conference theme was “O’Brien’s Baseball and Your Operating System” and was targeted towards the teen’s use of technology and social media. Approximately 120 delegates representing 12 Southern District chapters participated in a weekend full of activities.

Eleven ministers from the district participated. Rev. Kory Quon from Venice Hongwanji Temple served as keynote speaker.

Following the opening service and group picture, there were icebreakers activities. This was followed by three workshops which explored the Buddhist ideas of learning about one’s true self and being able to understand situations from different perspectives.

During the banquet, awards were presented to teams that finished in first place at the basketball and volleyball tournaments. Other presentations included the chapter sign contest, religious award and scholarships to the recipients of the Chuck Matsutomo Kokoro Award. Mrs. Linda Okino was given a special presentation. President will be Kotaro Chavez from Nishi. A slideshow capturing the weekend’s activities concluding the service.

Next year’s conference will be August 24-25 and will be hosted by the Venice Jr. YBA.
The Buddhist Churches of America Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations (FBWA) has been receiving special donations in support of the 2019 World Buddhist Women's Convention, to be held in San Francisco, California from August 30-September 1, 2019.

The names represent Buddhist women being honored for their sacrifice, hard work, dedication, generosity, pursuit of the Buddha-Dharma, and help in the propagation of Shin Buddhism.

Donors are listed first, followed by the honored obaachan’s name(s) in bold.

Donations are listed in order received through September 16, 2018.

Thank you, donors and arigatou, obaachan!


Correction: We apologize for the errors (correction underlined) appearing on the previous acknowledge ment – Whitney Okabayashi & Sharon Chu – Tomie Ohkabayashi, Rose Taka moto – Sekiro Nishikawa

For corrections, questions or if you would like to donate, please contact Karen Soyama at karensoyama@wbw-convention.org.

Arigato Obachan (Thank You Grandmother)

Campaign Donors

By Brian Kenaih Nagata
Managing Editor

Well, another summer has ended and time keeps moving forward…

First of all, I want to personally thank each and every one of you who worked so hard at this year’s Obon festivals throughout the BCA. I know countless hours of planning, negotiating, headaches and unplanned obstacles go into every festival BUT when we feel the vibes of the joy of dancing, the happiness and friendships shared, I realize that Obon, the memories of the past and the present make the present it all worth it.

A few months ago, the 98-year old Fresno Betsuin Temple building was sold. The 3rd generation of Issei in central California, so the Fresno temple was always “The Betsuin,” but for many Issei, they found a way for more than that, it stood proudly, the only three-story building in the center of what was once a great bustling Japantown. It was such a proud testament to our Issei generation. I can’t imagine how hard lives have been to just exist and provide for oneself and the family and yet our Issei generation somehow had such guts!

In sharing memories of “The Betsuin” with friends who are celebrating reunions, many feel, “It’s the best of both worlds.”

Many BCA temples observe “Keiro” (Respect for the Elderly) Day to honor senior temple members. At my temple, this tradition was started to recognize the Issei pioneer generation, then we started to honor the 5th and 6th generation members who turned 75 years of age and now, third generation members are starting to appear in our membership. Before I know it, I will be standing there amongst our temple’s senior members and wonder, “With the changing of the seasons, I wish everyone good health (get your flu shots) …. Gasho.”
私が開教使として、ローダイ仏教会とウォルナット・グローブ仏教会に赴任してから約二ヶ月が経ちました。まだまだ開教使としても私生活においても慣れないことだらけの毎日ですが、メンバーや先輩開教使のみなさんのご協力のおかげで楽しい毎日を過ごさせていただいております。先日は梅津総長が新任の私を案じて、様子を伺いに総長自らローダイまでお越しくださいました。ちょうどその日は仏教会において、Shinyukaiという月に一度のメンバーのみなさんと一緒にランチパーティーをする日でありましたので、梅津総長にもご参加いただき楽しいひとときを過ごすことができました。

そのあと梅津総長を私の自宅にお招きし、しばらく談話をしております。すると梅津総長から「この家の中に、お仏壇はどこにあるのですか。」と尋ねられ、私ははっと気づきました。私は開教使でありながらいまだに自宅にお仏壇を設置しておらず、その認識すらしておりませんでした。梅津総長からは、「自身で手書きの名号でもいいから、すぐに阿弥陀さまを自宅に招き入れなさい。」と助言をいただきました。

ローダイ仏教会へ行くと、本堂の内陣裏の奥に「一世ルーム」とよばれる控室や会議室に使える中部屋があります。その部屋には名のとおり、日系アメリカ人一世の歴史にまつわる絵や展示品が飾られています。展示品の主な物は生活用品や手芸品など様々ですが、その中でひときわ私の目を引いたものは、手作りのお仏壇でした。上手とは言えない粗さのあるお仏壇でしたが、中央にはしっかりと阿弥陀さまがいらっしゃり、手入れの跡もあることから当時の持ち主にとってはいかに大切なものであったか、見るだけでとるようにわかる素敵なお仏壇でした。

この今日でも大切に残されているお仏壇を眺めていると、私はふと自分の出身地である富山のことを思い出しました。私の実家も真宗のお寺であり、高岡教区に属しております。富山も含めて北陸地方一帯は、蓮如上人が伝道布教なされたおかげもあって浄土真宗が盛んであり、高岡教区では約三百のお寺があります。そして門徒のみなさんのおうちには、しっかりとお仏壇が設置されており大切に守られております。ところが、この頃では時代の流れを反映するかのように門徒のおうちの中にも跡取りが見つからず、空き家となる家が増えてきております。ご家族の若い世代のみなさんは都市部に住んでおり、ふるさとの実家についてはほとんど管理しきれていないことも原因となっているようです。

あるとき、私の知り合いの僧侶が東京に住む同級生のひとりから、こんな相談を受けたそうです。「俺の実家は親も亡くなってもう誰も住んでいない。取り壊してかたづけようと思っているんだが、大きな仏壇が邪魔でしかたない。お坊さんだからどこか知っている廃棄業者でも紹介してくれないか。」と、とても残念な内容だったそうです。もちろん知り合いの僧侶の彼は、その友人にきちんと自分で管理して残すように説得を試みましたが、その友人は東京の家はせまいからとかたくなに拒み続けました。するとその僧侶の彼は、「ご本尊の阿弥陀さまと聖典はお寺で預かろう。ただし条件がある。お前はこ...でやっと、その友人は思いとどまりお仏壇を廃棄することをあきらめてくれたそうです。そのお仏壇は今でも実家の中にしっかりと保存されており、その友人は「富山にはいつでも帰れるところがある。実家とお仏壇を残しておいてよかった。」と話してくれたそうです。

なぜこうしてまで、梅津総長のお話や、一世ルームの手作りのお仏壇、富山の知り合いの僧侶のお話にあるように、お仏壇を大切にしなければならないのでしょうか。それは、当然、阿弥陀さまがそこにあるからです。阿弥陀さまがそこにいらっしゃる、私たちは常に阿弥陀さまと共にいることを知るためにお仏壇があるのです。
9月16日から3日間、第43回仏教婦人会大会が
中加教区のバイセリア市、マリオットホテルで開催された。「Create an Endless Ripple（仏法ひろまれ波紋のごとく）」の大会テーマのもとに、全米より約230名の婦人会会員および関係者が集った。基調法話には大下ボブ名誉開教使（英語）と洗心仏教会の古本竜太開教使（日本語）が招かれ、人から人へ伝わるお念仏の教えや仏の慈悲心について話した。法話は日本語、英語の順番で行われたが、英語母語の聴聞者は「日本語でのお話はほとんどわかりませんでしたが、南無阿弥陀仏と何回も言っておられたのはわかりました、それが印象に残りました。」と念仏には言葉の違いを超えて弘まる力があることを学んだ。パネルディスカッションには、柴田キャンディス開教使（フローリング教法）をはじめ、開教使アシスタントや寺院活動に積極的に関わる若者たちがテーマについて語りあった。大会中、引退開教使の集い「一樹会」のミーティングも行われ、引退開教使と夫人方で旧知の仲を深めた。また、同会の活動を支援する仏教婦人会に感謝のしるしとして寄付金を贈った。

9月中旬に影絵を用いた布教団「ともしえ」がロサンゼルス別院、サンマテオ仏教会、シアトル別院で影絵実演を行った。9名の若手僧侶で構成される同団は、手作りの切り絵を用いた劇と法話で、わかりやすく仏教の教えを伝えることで知られ、日本中の浄土真宗寺院に招かれている。今回は初めて海外の寺院での実演を行い、好評を博した。「光と陰のコントラストを使った切り絵が芸術的で、お話にひき込まれました。もっとみてみたかったです。」と参加者。切り絵の作り方のワークショップで、門信徒や子供たちと交流を持ち、皆が楽しんだ。

8月25日にタコマ市でソフトボールの試合が行われ、シアトル別院とタコマ仏教会が対戦、門信徒同士の親交を深めた。以下はシアトル別院輪番、楠克也開教使による記事。

昨年、柿原開教使と楠開教使の十年来の因縁から再開した、タコマとシアトルのソフトボール大会（ノースウェスト甲子園）が、今年も開催された。昨年は、強力な打撃陣を誇るタコマが打ち勝ち、優勝を飾った。今年は、タコマに強力な助っ人として、湯川名誉（引退）開教使も参戦。第一試合は、レクリエーション試合として、老若男女多数のプレーヤーが、白球を追っかけた。乱打戦の末、シアトルが勝利する。第二試合は、一転して、緊迫した試合展開となる。試合序盤にシアトルが2点を先制するも、中盤にタコマが1点を返す。楠開教使の粘りの投球で、最終回7回裏2アウトまでこぎつける。次の打者が、セカンドフライを打ち上げ、誰もがゲームセットと思ったその時、まさかの落球。精神的に動揺したのか、その後、連打をくらい、同点とされ、試合は延長戦へ。延長戦は、2イニング限定とされた。最後の最後に、タコマがノーアウト三塁のチャンスをつかむも、期待の宮地開教使があえなく凡退。試合は、引き分けのまま終了し、両チーム優勝。今年から復活したトロフィーは、今年もタコマがディフェンディングチャンピオンとして持ち帰ることとなった。両チームのプレーヤー、観戦者合わせると、60名くらいの参加者が訪れた。お互いの健闘をたたえ合った両チームは、一年後の再戦を約束して、帰途へ着いた。タコマ、シアトルのライバル故事は、今後も続きそうである。

ブライ鬼倉知永美さんインタビュー
1946年、ミネソタ州でツインシティー仏教会が発足。約70年間、アメリカ中西部の代表的都市で念仏の教えがシェアされてきた。現在、シカゴ中西部仏教会の宮村ロン開教使が兼務しており、近年開教使アシスタントの養成によって、毎月一度の法要が行われるようになった。今回、アシスタントの一人として活躍されているブライ鬼倉知永美さんにお話をうかがった。

―ご出身はどちらですか？福岡市早良区です。お寺は浄覚寺で、福岡教区早良組に所属してます。宗門校の福岡にある筑紫女学園高校と筑紫女学園大学を卒業しましたが、どちらも仏教が必須科目で、今になってとても役になっています。

―アメリカに来られた理由は何ですか？ミネソタ出身の主人が、福岡で仕事をした時に知り合い、結婚してこちらで生活をするようになりました。

（二ページ目へ続く）