Message on ‘Our Pledge’

Thank you for attending the perpetual memorial and annual service at Hongwanji today. This annual service is in remembrance of all the Jodo Shinshu followers who passed away during the year. Let us take this opportunity to appreciate the Dharma with a feeling of respect to our deceased predecessors. Society today is facing concerns including the depopulation of rural areas, declining birth rate, rapidly aging population, and diversification of values, and such issues have greatly transformed the close ties created for a long time between Buddhist temples and their members in Japan. This social trend makes difficult the long established Japanese custom that religious tradition is handed down within the household from generation to generation to remain intact, and consequently, has led to the weakening connection between the people and temple.

Resulting from this social trend, however, with conventional ties between the temple and its members changing, quite a few people have begun seeking spiritual comfort in teachings like Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu. To be able to address the individual’s spiritual quest and for the sake of coming generations, it obliges us to follow in the footsteps of our forebears to pass the Nembutsu teaching on correctly and in a way that is easy to understand.

On the first day of the Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition, I delivered a message entitled “A Way of Living as a Nembutsu Follower,” expressing how we should live in the real world as one who encounters the great wisdom and compassion of Amida Tathagata. Although Sakayamuni Buddha espounds the truth of this world in the principle of impermanence or dependent origination and other teachings, we are unable to accept reality as it is and have a tendency to view things through our own egocentric point of view. As a result, we ourselves become disheartened and become embroiled in quarrels with others. Saddened by our ignorance, Amida Tathagata of this world in the principle of impermanence or dependent origination and other teachings has vowed to continue working to save us just as we are.

In Jodo Shinshu, there is the light and the darkness, wisdom and foolishness. Renryo, in writing of these contradictory tendencies, calls it “ki-ho ittai,” a term used to signify the oneness (ittai) of the Buddha Dharma (ho) and all (foolish) beings (ki).

In truly appreciating the Buddha’s compassionate aspiration directed to each of us, we naturally become enabled to aspire to act and speak in accordance with the Buddha’s wish and feel the joy and sadness of others as our own. It is totally apart from the self-destructive attitude that takes advantage of our selfish human nature as an excuse for giving up any good deeds and doing nothing, or thinking “we can do whatever we want because we are foolish beings.” Thus, our efforts of trying to be in accord with the Buddha’s wish is the first step toward realization of a society in which everyone can live life spiritually fulfilled.

On this occasion, with the hope of presenting it in a more familiar and understandable way, I have summarized the essence of the message into the following four verses of “Our Pledge.”

Our Pledge
Breaking out of my shell
I shall share a warm smile and speak gentle words
Just like the kind Buddha.

Not becoming lost in my greed, anger, and ignorance
I shall think and act with an open-mind
Just like the calm and peaceful Buddha.

Not putting myself first
I will share in the joy and sadness of others
Just like the compassionate Buddha.

Realizing the gift of life I have received
I shall strive to live each day to its fullest
Like the Buddha who tirelessly works to liberate all.

In today’s day and age, where it is said that the younger generations are distancing themselves from religion, it is my hope that these verses will be used during various engagements and gatherings. Let us continue on the path of the Nembutsu, as we have engrained in our hearts, that we must pass on to the coming generations far and wide, the Jodo Shinshu teaching that was carefully transmitted to us by our forebears.

November 23, 2018

GOMONSHU KOJUN OHTANI

Monshu

Jodo Shinshu Hongwan-ji

Hear the Nembutsu Through BWA’s Selfless Work for Convention

By Elaine Donlin | Buddhist Church of San Francisco

In Jodo Shinshu, the light and the darkness, wisdom and foolishness. Renryo, in writing of these contradictory tendencies, calls it “ki-ho ittai,” a term used to signify the oneness (ittai) of the Buddha Dharma (ho) and all (foolish) beings (ki).

In living this precisely impermanent – yet profoundly interconnected – life of Nembutsu, I feel an abundance of gratitude. Despite my foolishness, I am constantly illumined by the light of compassion. From my family, whose love has always encouraged me to embrace a journey of the heart; to my Dharma teachers, for their gentle guidance and wise counsel; and from my friends – both inside and outside of the temple – for their compassionately sustaining me despite my foolishness.

The efforts of so many Buddhist Women’s Association sisters involved in the planning and implementation of the upcoming 16th World Buddhist Women’s Convention has continued to teach me about living the Nembutsu. Their selfless work, involving years of long meetings, innumerable emails and miles of travel, all point to a compassionate light supporting and sustaining me. (And everyone else who is fortunate enough to attend the convention on Aug. 30 through Sept. 1.)

I hear the Nembutsu in each and every contribution made to this upcoming and historic convention. I bear the Nembutsu in the joy of the programs committee members as they’ve finalized the wonderful keynote speakers and diverse and interesting workshops. I hear the Nembutsu in the excitement of the banquet committee as the members shape the convention’s Saturday evening program of dinner, Dharma and entertainment. I hear the Nembutsu in the satisfaction of each person who thoughtfully offered a band, a meal, a suggestion, or an idea toward making this extraordinary event a deeply meaningful one.

And I hear the Nembutsu in all the quiet ways that the BWA has historically worked without recognition, fanfare or status that is usually afforded such a critically important and dynamic group. I see, hear and live the Nembutsu through the grace of all of these women, past and present.

Namo Amida Butsu

Working With Community

The Watsonville Buddhist Temple organized its second annual Neighborhood and Levee Ohigan Cleanup and more than 60 people took part in the March 16 event. The participants included Watsonville Mayor Paco Rodriguez, Pajaro Valley School District Trustee Daniel Dodge Jr, Watsonville Sangha members, friends, neighbors, Boy Scout Troop 506, Watsonville High School SAVE Club and the city of Watsonville. The volunteers secured the neighborhood around the Buddhist temple, cleaning up the train.

(Courtesy Watsonville Buddhist Temple)
Remember Compassionate Wisdom in Light of Shinran's Birthday

By Rev. Kodo Umezu
BCA Bishop

Albert Einstein introduced the theory of general relativity about 100 years ago. According to the theory, space and time are interrelated. Jido Shinshū followers know this fact as well. Our teaching always talks about time and space as a pair. The notion of the compassion skrit is expressed as “Amītāyus” and “Amītākha.” Amītāyus is immeasurable life (time) and Amītākha is immeasurable light (space). Time and space are two aspects of compassionate wisdom. And this compassionate wisdom transcends time and space. It means that the compassionate wisdom is always here and now.

What an important reminder as we reflect on the seemingly endless stream of violence we see and hear across the world. The truth of our suffering is unchanging for all people, regardless of gender, age, race, or any other division we create, from the timeless past until now. The terrible March attacks at mosques in New Zealand remind me of how our blind passions cause us to take refuge in the Buddha. All of us, without exception, need this compassion, this compassion that transcends the realm of non-discrimination.

In May, we celebrate the birth of Shinran Shōnin. In his life, Shinran Shōnin was made aware that we have long been cared for by the universal wisdom, the true and real heart of the Thātā (Oneness or Suchness). He shares our true condition in “Kyo-gyō-shin-shō” as the following:

"...all beings, an ocean of multitudes, have since the beginningless past down to this day, this very moment, been cared for by the universal wisdom, which is light to many people, which is why we sing verses of this song "Shuso Goyane" in honor of his birth. (Translation)

"For we who wander aimless in darkness, let us open the way of life and endeavor to raise the distant light of enlightenment."

Shishaku Yamashita, shown in front row center, celebrates turning 101 on May 21, 2018, at the Southern Allegheny Buddhist Church’s Golden-Years service on May 21, 2018. Shown, in front row from left, are BCA Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezu; Yamashita; and her grandson, Kiyahiko Koke. In the back row from left, are Yamashita’s daughter, Nancy Tannos Dold, and the grandson’s husband, Adam Cole. The Coles came from Pennsylvania to attend the special service. (Courtesy of Nancy Tannos Dold)

Praise this day! Celebrate this day! He strove to see that the parched earth will be moisturized by the gentle eternal rain that would pour compassion on all.

Praise this day! Celebrate this day!

When we, the wanderers in the dark, encourage “a beautiful place” to pass through, the compassionate light is appreciated throughout the world. It is part of the U.S. National Park Service. The universal light to many people, which is why we sing verses of this song. He strove to see that the parched earth will be moisturized by the gentle eternal rain that would pour compassion on all.

People Don’t Listen to the Dharma Seriously

By Rev. Doei Fujii
Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple

When I was a sophomore in high school, my math teacher called me to come to his office after a midterm examination. I told him, “Sirs, you probably don’t know how to get more points in a math test,” he said.

“I don’t get it, sir,” I replied.

“Look at your paper. You started from the first question, the second question and so on,” the teacher continued. “These are the difficult ones, but you solved them easily. You missed easy ones because your mind was not focused. You ran out knowing truth. Their thought.

I recognized the difference between math tests and life. In Dharma, it emphasizes that the most difficult question in life should be solved first.

One example of this is as follows: Ejo (1198-1280) was the disciple who succeeded Sōtō Zen after his Master Dogen (1200-1253). One day, Ejo asked his master, “People don’t listen to Dharma seriously. Do you have any proposal to recommend when I share it to my students?” His master recommended two things: One is the beautiful life and the other is the blind karma. This means that people die in vain without knowing truth. Their short conversation has been in my mind for years.

On April 12, I went to the Manzanar National Historic Site, part of the U.S. National Park Service, to conduct a memorial service.

About 50 Japanese Brazilians -- Issei and Nisei from Brazil -- attended the service. They were surprised that about 10,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated in such an isolated, windy desert.

On the backside of the Ieito, the word Manzanar is engraved in kanji. I do not know who chose the kanji Manzanar, but the selection of the kanji was very interesting.

In kanji, Manzanar is written “輪華苑” and “輪華苑” means “a beautiful place.”

Manzanar means an “apple orchard” in Spanish, but in kanji, there is no meaning of apple. In this (man) means “filled with,” (に) means “sand,” (苑) means “beautiful” and the word is embedded in a desert, so it is filled with sand. The people in the camp chose the kanji (苑) which means “a beautiful place.”

However, (苑) also means “a lot” and “How come?” Hence, Manzanar in kanji can also mean,
**BCA Guests Attend Hawaii Kyodan’s 107th Giseikai**

By Gary Mukai

Buddhist Church of Fowler and Celeste Sterrett

Spokane Buddhist Church

Continuing a longstanding tradition, two guests representing the BCA attended the 107th Giseikai of the Hawaii Kyodan on Feb. 8-9 at the Honolulu Honpa Hongwanji headquarters in Honolulu.

The Hawaii Kyodan was celebrating the 130th anniversary of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

Visiting the Giseikai legislative session were guests Gary Mukai of the Buddhist Church of Fowler and Celeste Sterrett of the Spokane Buddhist Church. Mukai and Sterrett were both representing the Buddhist Churches of America.

The Giseikai theme for the past five years has been “Embrace Change,” while adding a different secondary theme each year. The 2019 theme was “Embrace Change -- Transformation (Walk in Peace).” Ninety-three representatives from throughout the Hawaiian islands attended the meeting.

Temple representation at the meeting was proportional to each temple’s membership, so the size of the delegations ranged from 17 delegates from the Hawaii Betsuin in Oahu to one delegate for each of several smaller temples.

On Feb. 7, the day before the Giseikai, the Kyodan board meeting was held to discuss the proposed annual budget and resolutions. There were five districts represented at the board meeting.

The State Ministers Association meeting was also held Feb. 7.

A workshop on “Creating a Welcoming Experience for Engaging With the Dharma” was held Feb. 8. In a workshop, the methods of welcoming guests were discussed, and ways to make visitors feel at home were shared.

Omar Atia is an assistant Imam at the Islamic Center in Evanston, located in Newburgh, Indiana. In a drawing a link between his religious center and the brutal murder of more than 50 Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand, in March, he commented: “We’re a suburban minority community with kids of immigrants in a Western English-speaking nation. In the Muslims of New Zealand, we see ourselves. Everybody has a fear. Of course, our hearts go out to all our brothers and sisters regardless of faith, but what shocks me is how we react with horror to violence and killings during a news cycle or two, then, almost too routinely, we go on with our lives, with pity for those families affected, but grateful that this time we weren’t the ones who wereattacked. But it could have been us.

BCA has 60 temples and churches located in both suburban communities as well as in major urban centers throughout the United States. Most of our members are immigrants and descendants of immigrants. Virtually all Americans fall into that category. All of them sought a better life, a safer life, spiritually and economically, for themselves and their children. As we’re forced to watch a seemingly never-ending series of violent attacks all too often aimed at faith-based institutions throughout the United States and worldwide, it’s not hard to imagine that we too could become a target.

The Washington Post reports that more than 225,000 American students at 229 schools have experienced gun violence since Columbine, Colorado, in 1999. Deadly incidents at religious institutions and houses of worship are on the rise and are almost universally attributed to gun violence and anti-religious sentiments.

Carl Chinn, a church security expert, reports that there have been 14 incidents of mass killings at faith-based properties in America. These statistics are not just numbers -- we all know that. These are real people we’re talking about. They’re our neighbors, our friends, decent people who deserve to be free of such violence. We must work diligently to prepare our temples and churches against such catastrophes.

The common threads that run through many articles on security at faith-based properties recommend education, assessment of choices and a clear plan. Most church experts urge that the most effective response is a local one. The physical layout of each of our temples is different; the choices of what to do, how best to educate our members, how to properly assess our choices, and the development of an unambiguous plan of action, understandable to every member of age. Most of the experts on church security confirm that the risk of any one site being attacked is statistically minimal. The odds are that none of our temples or churches will ever be attacked. But statistics can be misleading. If your church is attacked, the odds won’t matter.

BCA is planning a workshop to address these issues for the 2020 Ministers’ Association and National Council Meetings in Seattle. Can we ask each of our temples and churches to do the same? All of us -- temple presidents, temple leaders, board members -- need to begin looking at security with as much vigor as we devote to our summer festivals.

**Kinnara Celebrates 50th Anniversary as Senshin Temple’s Taiko Group**

By Todd Tsuchiya

Twin Cities Buddhist Association Sangha

How do you celebrate 50 years of Buddhist music innovation? With good food, friendship -- and taiko.

Kinnara celebrated its 50th anniversary Feb. 16 as an organization begun by Rev. Masao Kodani and members of Senshin Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles. It developed out of the desire to start a Buddhist study group to learn about Musicians of Voice in Buddhist mythology.

They explored innovations in activities that were not traditionally done in temple settings but could be valuable teachings. Out of that experimentation developed the revival of “Horaku,” or Dharma entertainment, with more musical offerings of gagaku, bugaku and taiko.

Continued on Page 6
OCBC ‘Joy of Living’ Workshop Features Chef’s Cuisine
By Karen Kino
Orange County Buddhist Church

The Orange County Buddhist Church’s Adult Bud- dhist Association sponsored its first “Joy of Living” seminar March 24, focusing on lifestyle habits that bring people joy and keep them healthy and balanced on the Buddhist path.

This seminar was inspired by ABA adviser Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wonda. The event was organized by ABA co- chairs George Miyake, Karen Kino and Joan Tani, with help from Jane Sasaki, Janet Uyeno, Gordon Tani, Julie and Clark Sato, Chicco Miyake, BettyAnn Nagami and Art Mio.

ABA President Margie Mio acted as the master of ceremonies. The workshop included a light lunch prepared by ABA members and a cooking demonstration by Bonnie Goodman, an OCBC member and successful personal chef serving Orange County since 2010.

Chef Goodman has been creating allergy friendly and healthy home-style meals for busy families, seniors, celebrities and professional athletes.

Goodman was, at one time, a golf professional, but her interest in cooking became her passion. She went on to attend the acclaimed culinary school at the Campbell Foundation’s Plant Based Nutrition Program through eCornell, ROUXBE Plant Based Professional Program and Laguna Culinary Arts in Laguna Beach. She is certified by the National Registry of Food Safety Professionals.

A group of 64 workshop attendees were treated to various samples of Goodman’s creations: avocado chili-michurri bruschetta, medjool date rolos, vegan Caesar salad, maple roasted trail nut mix, and chia pudding with blueberry compote.

Chef Goodman relies on fresh organic ingredients, smart substitutions and proper cooking techniques to create healthier versions of traditional dishes and favorite comfort foods.

The afternoon ended with handouts of Goodman’s sample recipes and with Goodman sharing her expertise on preparing healthy alternatives and delicious food.

For more information about Bonnie Goodman, go to her website at: www.chefbonnie.com.

Renewing Friendship in Phoenix

From left to right, Kate Higashi, Lauren Ikemoto and Chelsea McKeever, all of the San Fernando Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, Katie Shue of the Pasadena Buddhist Temple and Emiko Matsumoto of the Arizona Buddhist Temple enjoy their ice cream treats and rekindle friendships at the Southern District Jr. YBL Southern District Semi- nar 1. The seminar was hosted by the Arizona Jr. YBA during Jan. 19-20 in Phoenix.

Walking With Tears

Editor’s Note: Mr. Richard L. Wooster II is a longtime member of the Buddhist Church of San Francisco and has submitted this article to the effect of his deep appreciation of the Nembutsu teaching. Since this is his sincere feeling out of deep grati- tude, the editor decided to share his message with you without any editing.

By Richard L. Wooster II
Buddhist Church of San Francisco

Why is it called “Walking With Tears”? It is the joy that one experiences and expresses when a person has reached a state of the settled mind in Jodo Shin- shu via the Vow power of Amida Tathagata, which is the cause for liberation from the ocean of life and death.

The tears are a sign of immeasurable joy expressed upon recitation of the name when one has self-realization as to one’s own suffer- ing and has come to relate with it as part of living life in the Nembutsu.

The struggle to rid oneself of the three evil passions -- and kindred and understanding that the accomplishment of just one of the three evil passions -- is salvation and libera- tion from suffering.

Most people associate tears with mental and physical pain, the pain of suffering or the loss of someone close in their lives. Yet there is another type of tears -- the “joyful tears” when one feels elated and filled with great emotion. Some have called it tears of grati- tude, salvation and recompense. I have never come to see another who expresses their deepest gratitude via tears of immeasurable joy.

No one has talked to me about this, and as I believe, no one has come to this realization yet in their own lives. I know and understand that I am still in the state of inclination and in the ocean of life and death with understand- ing that there is a true liberation from this cause and effect of my past karmic condition.

I have traveled the path of the 84,000 paths to the liberated salvation via the 18th Vow that saves all sentient beings through the recitation of the name Amida Buddha.

I have stopped mourning the loss and cry- ing for them, as my path is too narrow and my goal now is liberation from rebirth in the saha world.

Death has been my constant co-pilot throughout my life, which gives me the strength to meet my challenges head on and live. I do not lament the fact that dying on death’s bed and having nothing to hold to one such as, fear was my loss.

Many times, I have been pulled from the abyss through self-realization, but still with no grasping to a real faith that saves.

I understood that I have experienced three times in my life but with a twist, the first time I questioned, “Why me?” and the second time I concluded that there is salvation and the third time I relied on reciting the name and -- felt great joy -- of being overwhelmingly embraced by Amida Tathagata.

This path is my immeasurable joy which I am sure and will be reborn in the ut- most land of bliss. That is why I am “Walking With Tears.” Why we all may be emancipated from the ocean of life and death through the recitation of the Namu Amida Butsu and walking with tears of immeasurable joy of our impending rebirth in the utmost land of pure joy.

Walking With Tears

The Orange County Buddhist Church’s Adult Buddhist Association holds a “Joy of Living” seminar March 24, focusing on positive, healthy lifestyle habits. Shown, from left, are Joan Tani, Karen George Miyake, Chef Bonnie Goodman, Margie Mio and Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wonda.

The seminar was hosted by the Arizona Jr. YBA during Jan. 19-20 in Phoenix.

The Bodhi leaves will be put on display throughout the day to honor, will be written on colored “Bodhi Leaves” correlated to the honor, will be written on colored “Bodhi Leaves” correlated to the Donors are listed first, followed by the honoree’s name(s) in bold print. Thank you to all of the donors, and Arigatou Obachan and all honorees!

The Buddhist Church of America Federation of Bud- dhist Associations (FBAWA) has been co-sponsoring special donations in support of the 16th World Buddhist Women’s Convention, to be held from August 30 to Sept. 1, 2019, in San Francisco.

FBAWA Board represents women being recognized and honored for their sacrifice, hard work, dedication, generosity, pursuit of the Buddhist-Dharma, and help in the propagation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. In recogniz- ing your Obachan, mother, aunt, sister, or group of women, you are also honoring them for the very special role they have played in your life.

Your name, together with the names of those you wish to honor, will be written on colored “Bodhi Leaves” corre- sponding to your donation level (please see donation form). The Bodhi leaves will be put on display throughout the weekend at the World Buddhist Women’s Conven- tion this summer.

To donate and honor the special women in your life, please go to the wbwc.org website and click on the “Do- nation” button to download the form. For information or question, please contact Terrie Masuda at terriemasuda@wbwc.org.

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The Orange County Buddhist Church’s Adult Buddhist Association holds a “Joy of Living” seminar March 24, focusing on positive, healthy lifestyle habits. Shown, from left, are Joan Tani, Karen George Miyake, Chef Bonnie Goodman, Margie Mio, and Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wonda.

The afternoon ended with handouts of Goodman’s recipe samples and workshops featuring alternatives and delicious food.

For more information about Bonnie Goodman, go to her website at: www.chefbonnie.com.
Becoming a Minister’s Wife, Part III

By Sumiyo Maeda

After my engagement to my future husband (who is the resident minister of a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist temple) was settled, I began attending a “būza school” (school to train Jodo Shinshū ministers) as a boarding school student. I married my husband, who was then over 30 years of age.

I found student life to be extremely interesting. For me, that school was like the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry in the Harry Potter series. It was a truly outstanding school in its late teens or early 20s, but among those who sat behind the school desks were only a few in their 30s as I was, and even those in their 60s and 70s.

And not all students were Japanese. There was a student from Nepal and one from Romania.

Some students had just graduated from high school or college, while others had quit their jobs to attend. Those were temple members who had retired and wanted to learn more about this wonderful teaching. And still others, like myself, wished to work at a job to support my family. It was difficult for me, even as a Japanese, to understand that the eldest son of a resident minister of a temple had to succeed his father. I therefore imagine it would be even more difficult for a non-Japanese to understand.

In my opinion, the greatest motivating factor for attending was that sons who would succeed their fathers as resident minister of their family temple were also seeking suitable bōmori wives, as well as women who wished to become their wives.

There were also some who declared, “I don’t want to succeed father as the resident minister of my family temple.” For the parents of such sons, this school might have been the last chance to change their sons’ minds.

I was born and raised in a family of an ordinary white-collar worker and I felt everyone should be allowed to work at a job as he or she wanted to. It was difficult for me, even as a Japanese, to understand the mentality that holds that the eldest son of a resident minister of a temple has to succeed his father. I therefore imagine it would be even more difficult for a non-Japanese to understand.

I often bring to mind the plaque that is hung in front of the school auditorium. It is brushed with the words “Buddhism is for everyone.” Those words mean, “Learn the Buddha’s Mind of Great Compassion.” A mind of great compassion is open to the great and compassionate mind and heart that embraces the rebelliousness, anger, desperation, despair, and sorrow that we all harbor, and vows to cause ultimate joy all those who suffer. I believe that’s what causes us to determine to walk the Buddhist path.
Donations Sought for Shin Buddhist Grant

The Shin Buddhist Grant, administered for many years by the Northwest District Council, is seeking donations from the BCA to continue supporting aspiring ministers and Ministers Assistants.

The deadline for donations is because the grant has been nearly depleted — a direct result in the recent increase of applications.

In 2019, there were seven applicants, and in 2018, there were five. The committee sees a significant increase. In the past, there were only one or two applicants — and sometimes no applicants.

The grant’s intent is to help aspiring ministers seeking Kai-kyo to serve BCA. A second purpose is to support Minister Assistants in the Northwest District to seek further their education and continue their service to their temple. This includes those seeking Tokudo and Kaikyo.

The grant has historically been funded by the Northwest District Council and the Northwest BWA. Additional donations have come from northwest district temples.

Northwest District temples.

Bishop Rev. Kodo Kodani, the retired head minister of Senshin, of those early days of Kinnara. We did something else,” said Rev. Curt Rye; Rev. Dr. Mut- sumi Watanuki; Rev. Jim Warrick; Rev. Can- dice Shibata; Cynthia Yasuki; Rev. Henry Adams; Rev. Matthew Hamasaki; David Black; Rev. Kathy Chatterton; Rev. Takashi Miyaya; John Mullins; and Mitchell Ohara.

For questions about the Shin Buddhist Grant, please contact Minister Assistant Rev. Anne Spencer; Jennifer Akiko Rogers; Rev. Bryan Stiebuhr; Rev. Paul Vieille; Tadao Koya- ma. For the BCA certified ministers, you may contact Christine Matt; CJ Dunford; Rev. Curt Rye; Rev. Dr. Mut- sumi Watanuki; Rev. Jeff Eigenheart; Rev. Jim Warrick; Rev. Candice Shibata; Cynthia Yasuki; Rev. Henry Adams; Rev. Matthew Hamasaki; David Black; Rev. Kathy Chatterton; Rev. Takashi Miyaya; John Mullins; and Mitchell Ohara.

Rev. Fuji

Continued from Page 2

“things first.” This means that the most important thing is to attain Satori or Enlightenment in life.

How about Jodo Shinshu? People don’t listen to Daviso seriously. Do you have any suggestion when I share Daviso, Master Shinran? Shinran Shonin recommended emphasizing, two things: One is the vidas Amida Buddha, and the other is our “Residual Karma (Shuku-Go).” In the history of Buddhism, Residual Karma was not clearly stressed enough until the vows brought it to our attention.

In traditional Buddhism, it’s been explained that the nature of human be-ings is pure from the beginning and that our natures are by nature unrepeatable. Amida teaches us that our nature is not pure from the beginning. Rather, our nature has been made of our past lives and events. In other words, I am the accumulation of past experiences that are by my feeling and power to change. Thus, any priest, 1 do not, can not liberate me at all. The only way to be freed from my Shuku-Go relies on the understanding of Amida.

Traditionally, many great priests in Jodo Shinshu have pointed out that someone who woke up their Shuku-Go and saw the Buddha who guide them to open up Amida’s world because ultimate Dharma (Amida) is made to be so.

Rev. Furumoto

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“How come we were sent to such a strange area with a lot of sand?”

The internees must have been so wor-ried and confused with thoughts like, “How come we were sent to such a place?” and “What would life be like for my family and me in camp?” and “Why am I, an American, treated like an enemy?”

But they could not change the en-vironment of Manzanar nor could they ask, “Is America a beautiful place, they made an effort to make the best of the life in camp.

When I saw the kanji Manzanar, I recalled the lyrics of “Seiya,” which was written by Lady Takeko Kujo (1887- 1928), co-founder of Fujinkai or Bud- dhist Women’s Association.

Lady Kujo wrote: “More than the grains of sands on the banks of the river, I do not believe the day and night of the heart. This is how Amida teaches us that our nature is pure from the beginning. Rather, our nature has been made of our past lives and events. In other words, I am the accumulation of past experiences that are by my feeling and power to change. Thus, any priest, 1 do not, can not liberate me at all. The only way to be freed from my Shuku-Go relies on the understanding of Amida.

Traditionally, many great priests in Jodo Shinshu have pointed out that someone who woke up their Shuku-Go and saw the Buddha who guide them to open up Amida’s world because ultimate Dharma (Amida) is made to be so.

Shinran Shonin wrote a Wasan (Japa- nese hymn).

When we say “Namu-amida-butsu,” “The countless Buddhas throughout the ten quarters of Heaven” and “Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light” and “The countless Buddhas” are a thousandfold, rejoice in and protect us.” “Collected Works of Shinran,” 3rd ed., 1993, p. 639.

The Nembutsu followers in Manzanar recited the Nembutsu and remembered this Wasan, imagining the grains of sands are the Buddha who guides them. I do not know who put kanji to Manzanar, but I think the kanji are very meaningful from a Bud- dhist view.

Namoamidabutsu

Hawaii

Continued from Page 3

was held the evening of Feb. 7 for the Giseikai delegates. The workshop, led by Kyodan President Pieper Toyama, focused on how to create a comfortable, welcoming experience for visitors and encouraging them to return to temple.

Toyama, who is serving his sixth and last year of his third term as president, called the Giseikai legislative session to order on Feb. 8.

At the meeting, Bishop Eric Matsu- moto was approved for a third four-year term as bishop.

Bishop Matsumoto announced the assignment of Rev. Blaine Higa, a recent IBS graduate and Hawaiian natu- rative, to the Kona Hongwanji Temple. A by-laws amendment was approved to allow the addition of the President of Ministers Association, the President of the FBWA, and the President of the State Junior YBA to the Kyodan Board of Directors.

The highlight of the Giseikai week- end was the 45th Annual “Living Trea- suries of Hawaii” Retreat Luncheon to end the session. The sold-out event, attended by more than 400 people, was held at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Coral Ballroom to honor Hawaiians for extraordinary accomplishments in the preservation of Hawaiian culture, the arts, the sciences and sports.

The four “living treasures” honored this year were: Jimmy Yagi, legendary basketball coach at Hilo; John Haro, premier architect; Gertrude Tsutsui, master teacher of Japanese dance; and Earl Kawa’ana, pre- server of Hawaiian culture.

The luncheon was attended by the Hawaii Gov. David Ige, Honolulu May- or Kirk Caldwell, the Counsel General of Japan, and other dignitaries.

On Feb. 7, the Hawaii Legislature recognized the Hawaii Kyodan for its efforts to honor the “living treasures.”

Two members of the Tacoma Buddhist Temple were certified as Ministers Assistants. Feb. 17 in Seattle. Shown, from left, are: Lynneia Hubbell (Shukannon Koshio), BCA Bishop Kodo Umezu and Erik Hammerstrom (Shaku Kosho). (Courtesy of Julie Shimizu)
あなたは誰ですか？

開教使

馬見由史

馬見由史

お陰さまで、先の三月に、結婚十五周年目を迎えました。その日は、ご門徒に子供達を預かっていただき、夫婦二人だけでささやかなお祝いをしました。妻とこの十五年間を振り返りながら思い出話に花を咲かせていたのですが、あまりにもいろんなことがありすぎて、覚えてないことも多々ありました。少し気まずい雰囲気になりそうなので、「プロポーズをした日のことははっきりと覚えている ... な思い出として残っているようです。誰も興味のない話でしょうが、今さらながら最高のロケーションだったなとつい一人悦に入っています。この先、二十年、三十年と末永く子供達の成長を見守りながら共に年を取っていければと改めて思った楽しい夜のひと時でした。

結婚以来、多くのご門徒が、「先生はいい奥さんと結婚されましたね」、「先生はいい奥さんを持ててラッキーですね」等と、ことあるごとにおっしゃって下さいます。勿論、妻へのお褒めの言葉は大変有難いのですが、妻には「奥さん、素敵なご主人をもって羨ましいわ」なんて言われた方は一人としておられないようで、誠に面目ない限りです。

確かに、私たちの結婚生活を振り返ってみますと、この十五年間、価値観の違いや考え方のずれ等が原因で多くの口喧嘩をしてきましたが、どんな原因があったにしろ、最後には必ず、妻が私の意見を尊重してくれました。その一方、私はと言いますと、妻の意見を聞くどころか、常に自分が正しいという思い上がりだけで日々生活してきたような気がします。今の世の中、私のような夫であれば、すぐに「別居よ!」、「離婚よ!」と見放されてもおかしくはないのですが、妻はよくこんな傲慢でどこまでも自分勝手な私を見捨てることなく、忍耐強くついてきてくれました。その事を考えると、自らを恥じると共に、妻の寛容さにただ頭が下がる思いでいっぱいです。

私たちはどんな人であろうとも、多かれ少なかれ、うぬぼれや思い上がりの心を持っていますし、また、そうした心を消し去ることもできることではありません。しかし、こうしたおごり高ぶる心が自分の中に巣食っていることに気づき、深く反省している人は、努めて他人の声に耳を傾ける努力をしますし、相手の意見を素直に受け入れようとします。毕竟、煩悩具足の凡夫である私たちの心の中には、どこまでいっても「自分は正しい」、「自分は道理をわきまえた人間だ」という自己中心の強いうぬぼれがあり、仏教では、こうした物の見方を「邪見」といいます。 「邪見」ということは、「悪い心」があるということではなく、「悪い心」があってもその心に全く気づかない人の見方を言っているのです。ですから、「邪見の心が自分の中にあります」と素直に認め、「お恥ずかしい」と言える人は、もはや邪見驕慢の凡夫ではありません。そういう人は、邪見で驕慢である衆生を救わんとする阿弥陀仏のご本願が、「この私目当てであった」と、素直に受け入れることができます。そして、阿弥陀仏の大悲に対する報恩謝徳のお念仏「南無阿弥陀仏」が自然と口からこぼれてくるのです。しかし、自分を邪見とも驕慢とも思わない悪衆生には、残念ながら、阿弥陀仏の大いなる願いを聞き喜ぶ心は一切起きません。

『歎異抄』の中に、「善人なをもて往生をとぐ、いはんや悪人をや」（現代語訳―善人でさえ浄土に往生することができるのです。まして悪人はいうまでもありません）という親鸞聖人の有名なお言葉があります。これは、阿弥陀仏の大悲の前では、凡夫と聖者の区別はなく、むしろ、貪欲、瞋恚、愛憎の心に苦しむ悪凡夫を救わんとするところに「阿弥陀仏の心」が生まれたのだと述べられています。そして言うまでもなく、その悪凡夫とはこの私自身に向けられた言葉であって、決して他の誰かを指して言っているわけではありません。しかし、自分を悪人、凡夫と気づけない者（善人）は阿弥陀仏のご本願に心を開くことができないために、せっかくの大悲心もその人のものとなりません。

親鸞聖人は『正信偈』の中で、「阿弥陀仏の本願によって示されたお念仏のみ教えは、よこしまな考え方を持ち、おごり高ぶる自力の人が、素直に受け止め、喜ぶことは実に難しい。難しい中でもこれほど難しいものはない」とおっしゃっておられます。確かに、私たち自身を深く省みますと、一番身近な存在である妻の意見ですら素直に聞くことができず、常に自己中心で「我正し」の私が、阿弥陀仏のご本願を素直に受け入れることができるはずもありません。たとえ妻と喧嘩して、彼女の心を傷つけたとしても、「こんなことぐらいで妻は私を見捨てない。妻は決して私を裏切らない」と知らず知らずのうちに根拠のない自信を持って居直ってしまっている私がいます。妻に対するこうした醜い甘えが、今の自分をそのままで良しとする私をさらに傲慢にして、阿弥陀仏の大悲にまで間違った甘え方を覚えてしまっているようです。

本来、そんな私を見透かしてこそ誓われたご本願ですから、阿弥陀仏にとって私の甘えに正しいも間違いもないのですが、お念仏のみ教えを聞けば聞くほど、私の思いとして、いつも大悲の上に胡坐をかいてすまし顔をしている我が身の姿にあきれるばかりで、そんな利己的で思い上がりの心を持つ生き方に慚愧の念を禁じえません。
「私たちのちかい」についての親教
私は伝灯奉告法要の初日に「念仏者の生き方」と題して、大智大悲からなる阿弥陀如来のお心をいただいた私たちが、この現実社会でどのように生きていくのかということについて、詳しく述べさせていただきました。このたび「念仏者の生き方」を皆様により親しみ、理解していただきたいという思いから、その肝要を「私たちのちかい」として次の四ヵ条にまとめました。

1. 自分の殻からに閉じこもることなく、穏やかな顔と優しい言葉を大切にします。微笑み語りかける仏さまのように。
2. むさぼり、いかり、おろかさに流されず、しなやかな心と振る舞いを心がけます。心安らかな仏さまのように。
3. 自分だけを大事にすることなく、人と喜びや悲しみを分かち合います。慈悲に満ちみちた仏さまのように。
4. 生かされていることに気づき、日々に精一杯つとめます。人びとの救いに尽くす仏さまのように。

この「私たちのちかい」は、特に若い人の宗教離れが盛んに言われております。今日、中学生や高校生、大学生をはじめとして、これまで仏教や浄土真宗のみ教えにあまり親しみのなかった方々にも、さまざまな機会で唱和していただきたいと思っております。そして、先人の方々が大切に受け継いでこられた浄土真宗のみ教えを、これからも広く伝えていくことが後に続く私たちの使命であることを心に刻み、お念仏申す道を歩んでまいりましょう。