

# WHEEL OF DHARMA

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## Coronavirus Leads to BCA Closures, Cancelled Events

### Sangha Members ‘Attend’ Via Virtual Dharma Talks; New Temple Changes Outlined

By Jon Kawamoto  
Managing Editor, Wheel of Dharma

The novel coronavirus pandemic continues its lethal path around the world, claiming an ever increasing number of lives and forcing entire countries — and nearly 30 states to date, including the

entire West Coast, New York and Hawaii to shut down — upending the lives, jobs and routines of billions of people.

It’s also severely impacting the Buddhist Churches of America from BCA Headquarters in San Francisco to the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley to BCA temples and churches across the United States.

Because of concerns about containing the spread of COVID-19 — especially among the elderly and those with chronic or pre-existing medical conditions — the BCA Headquarters, JSC, and temples and churches have been forced to close, leaving staff and ministers to work from home.

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### FYI

For a list of BCA temples and churches providing live-streaming Dharma messages and videos, go to the BCA website at: [www.buddhist-churchesofamerica.org/live-streaming-and-recorded-temple-services](http://www.buddhist-churchesofamerica.org/live-streaming-and-recorded-temple-services)

## BCA Bishop, Executive Council Ratified at National Council

By Dr. Kent Matsuda  
BCA President

The BCA National Council ratified the selection of new Bishop, Rev. Marvin Harada of the Orange County Buddhist Church, and the executive slate of BCA officers for 2020-2021 -- including the first woman President-Elect in BCA history -- Terri Omori of the Vista Buddhist Temple.

Other officers approved included Steve Terusaki, Vice President; Glenn Inanaga, Vice President; Darlene Bagshaw, Secretary; and Jeff Matsuoka, Treasurer.

The Bishop’s term is for four years and the BCA Executive Board terms are for two years.

The ratification of the National Board’s votes was among several actions taken at the BCA 2020 Ministers Association and National Council meetings on Feb. 19-22 in Renton, Washington, at the Hyatt Regency Lake Washington Hotel.

In all, an estimated crowd of more than 500 people attended the Saturday night banquet on Feb. 22 — including attendees of the BCA National Council and Ministers Associations meetings as well as the annual Northwest District Buddhist Convention.

Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezu announced the schedule for services for the 850th Anniversary of Shin-



The National Board meeting tackled a variety of issues and subjects, including ratifying a new Bishop and Executive Council, on Feb. 21-22 at the Hyatt Regency Lake Washington in Renton, Washington. (Courtesy of Michael Endo)

ran Shonin’s Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching in 2023.

Bishop Umezu introduced our newest ministers: Rev. Etsuko Mikame (San Jose Betsuin), Rev. Noritaka Imada (Tri-State Denver), and Rev. Hibiki Murakami (Los Angeles Betsuin). Rev. Fumiaki Usuki (West Los Angeles) retired on Feb. 28 and Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi (Stockton) will retire on May 31.

Rev. Patricia Usuki, Gicho of the Ministers Association, informed the National Council that the Ministers Association was working on revising the guidelines for selection of the Bishop.

She also announced that certified Minister’s Assistants had priority in attending ministerial assistant program sessions, but that they were no longer required to attend. Rev. Harry Bridge (Oakland) was elected as the incoming Gicho.

Gayle Noguchi, BCA Director of Operations, introduced Robert Matsueda as the new BCA Facilities Manager. She and Pam Matsuoka from BCA headquarters recently attended a seminar on human resource issues in religious organizations.

Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, President of the Institute of Bud-

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## NW District Convention Held With BCA Meetings

### Banquet Attended by Over 500

By Leanne Nishi-Wong  
Convention Co-Chair  
Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple

The 73rd Annual Northwest District Buddhist Convention was held in February in conjunction with the annual BCA Ministers Association and National Council meetings in Renton, Washington, at the Hyatt Regency Lake Washington in Southport.

The unusual timing of these events allowed the Northwest District and the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple to host all of these gatherings in one convention.

In all, an estimated crowd of more than 500 people attended the Saturday night banquet Feb. 22 -- including attendees of the BCA National Council and Ministers Association meetings as well as the Northwest District Buddhist Convention.

BCA ministers met beginning Feb. 18, with Bishop Kodo Umezu, Bishop Tatsuya Aoki (Canada) and 37 ministers in attendance. The National Council attendees met beginning Feb. 20, and all joined the Northwest District Convention attendees until Feb. 23.

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### BISHOP’S MESSAGE

## New Bishop, Rev. Marvin Harada, Offers Thanks, Optimism Amid Challenges



Rev. Marvin Harada, the new BCA Bishop, is shown in a May 2011 photo with his Larger Sutra class. Shown, from left to right, are: Tad Nakawaki, Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC); Joe Natsuhara, OCBC; Sachi Ochiai, OCBC; the late Clara Sanematsu, OCBC; Rev. Harada; the late Betty Furumoto, OCBC; Kory Quon, Gardena Buddhist Church; Sachi Murata, Los Angeles Higashi Honganji; Byrda Hamada, OCBC; Sei Shohara, West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple; the late Yasuko Shohara, West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple; Roy Nakahara, Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple; and Sets Nakahara, Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. Quon is now the resident minister at the Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. (Courtesy of Tad Nakawaki)

By Rev. Marvin Harada  
BCA Bishop

May I take this opportunity to thank the members of the National Council, the members of the National Board, and the members of the Bishop’s selection committee, for giving me the privilege and responsibility to serve as the Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America.

Truly, I stand amongst a tradition of exemplary previous Bishops who have admirably led our BCA. I will do my best to uphold their high standard of

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# Second Texas Outreach Gathering Held; 30 Attend Service

By Rev. Marvin Harada  
BCA Bishop

The second gathering of the Texas Outreach was held March 11 in McKinney, Texas, and attracted 30 people — mostly former residents of the West Coast — for a service and discussion led by Rev. Marvin Harada of the Orange County Buddhist Church. The attendees were formerly from other BCA temples, including Orange County, Gardena, San Mateo, Los Angeles Betsuin, Senshin and Salt Lake City. Hosted by Kevin and Carole Hayata at the clubhouse of their homeowners association, the group shared in the Dharma and fellowship after the service. Some knew each other from working for Toyota, formerly in Gardena but since relocated in Plano, Texas, while others were meeting for the first time. A few individuals were attending their first Buddhist service and gathering. The Texas Outreach is being funded by a generous donation made to the BCA by Glenn and Michiko Inanaga. Plans are to gather several times a year. Brad Ito, formerly of the Gardena Buddhist Church, created



BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, in the cowboy hat, poses with the Texas Outreach attendees March 11 in McKinney, Texas. The attendees were formerly from other BCA temples, including Orange County, Gardena, San Mateo, Los Angeles Betsuin, Senshin and Salt Lake City. (Courtesy of Carole Hayata)

a Facebook group called DFW Shin Buddhist Sangha to inform the Texas residents of future gatherings. For more information about the DFW (Dallas Fort Worth) Shin Buddhist Sangha, go to the Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/groups/dfw.shin/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/dfw.shin/).



By Rev. Etsuko Mikame  
San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin

The San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin is located in one of the biggest Japantowns in the United States. Therefore, the good thing is that I have had many opportunities to learn about the history of the internment camps through directly hearing the stories from some survivors. During World War II, a compassionate attorney, J.D Peckham, took care of our church as most of Japanese and Japanese American Sang-

## Having True ‘Home’ in Our Lives

ha members were interned. Following the release of the Issei (first generation) and Nisei (second generation) from the various camps, our Betsuin served as a temporary housing facility. I was very impressed with the words from one of the dedicated Sangha members. One Sunday morning, he came up to me and happily told me that he always felt at home when he visited the main hall of our church. He said he was the one of the internees who had lived in the main hall of our temple when it was a hostel. According to his story, the pews were taken out from the main hall, so that adults — and children, too — would have room to sleep in the main hall. They all slept in front of the statue of Amida Buddha. Since he is one of the ded-

icated church members, I felt very happy to hear his story. I tried to imagine how people had felt with the difficult situation during — and after — the internment. Many of them must have experienced sadness and the feeling of despair caused by prejudice and discrimination, and also the pain of being kicked out of their homes. Having endured so many difficulties, this church member — and other internees — must have felt a sense of security at our church at the time. It was the place where everyone was treated and accepted equally. I guess there is another reason why he feels that way about our church. His words made me realize what our church should be like. The Sanskrit word “Vi-hāra” generally means a type

of Buddhist temple which usually has living quarters for monks or nuns, a meditation space and a place to feel peaceful and heal their sufferings. Many Buddhist temples in Japan in those days used to be considered as a public place where many people came to learn something as a school, to heal their sufferings and wounds as a hospital and as a counseling place to hear the teaching of Buddhism for their true way of living. As Shakyamuni Buddha told us about 2,600 years ago, we are living with many sufferings and anxieties in this world. We always try to hide our own weaknesses and anxieties from others and show ourselves as bigger than our own true selves by our words and behaviors.

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By Rev. Noritaka Imada  
Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple

Shinran Shonin was perhaps one of Honen Shonin’s most documented disciples. I would like to share a story of one of Honen Shonin’s other disciples. There was a famous soldier, Naozane Kumagai, who served the Genji Clan during the Heian period of Japanese history. During the Genpei War, one of the enemy soldiers he fought and killed was of the same age as his son. He was shocked and felt impermanence and decided to become a Buddhist. “I killed a lot of people,

but I would like to be born in Pure Land if possible,” Naozane told Honen Shonin. “If I could be born into Pure Land by killing myself with a sword, I am determined to do that.” Honen Shonin replied with surprising words, “You don’t have to kill yourself. Just recite the Nembutsu and you can be born in Pure Land.” It was at that moment Naozane encountered Nembutsu teaching. “Just Recite the Nembutsu” being the answer from Honen Shonin. Shinran Shonin said: *“Although I am without shame and self-reproach And lack a mind of truth and sincerity, Because the Name is directed by Amida, Its virtues fill the 10 quarters.”* There is nothing we can

do to be born into Pure Land, but Amida Buddha is trying to catch us. There is no quota for how many times you have to recite the Nembutsu. We can recite as much as we want every time we feel grateful. After meeting Honen Shonin, many people changed their lives. Shinran Shonin is also one of them. When Shinran Shonin was alive, he encountered many people. In particular, his encounter with Honen Shonin seemed important to him. Shinran Shonin wrote about Honen Shonin in “Kyogyoshinsho.” This document indicates that his encounter and separation from Honen Shonin were the greatest joy and greatest sadness of his life. Shinran Shonin writes at the last part of “Kyogyoshinsho”: “I have collected true words so that they may help others practice the way for birth. For my wish is that

those who have attained birth may lead those who come after them and those who aspire for birth may follow their predecessors, thus following one after another endlessly and uninterruptedly until the boundless sea of birth and death is exhausted. “ When Shinran Shonin met Honen Shonin, he encountered the path of Nembutsu. Shinran Shonin wanted to share the teachings of Nembutsu with people born in the future. With the words “the boundless sea of birth and death,” Shinran Shonin often compares blind passion with the sea and Amida’s Vow with the ship. I have a lot of blind passion, but I don’t have a Vow. Fortunately the target of Amida Buddha’s Vow is me. Amida’s Vow is for “all sentient beings.” It includes

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



By Dr. Kent Matsuda  
BCA President

Hello, again. I am Kent Matsuda. You may remember me as the BCA President during 2014-2015. If you don’t, you didn’t miss much.

I would like to thank the BCA National Board that met in December, 2017. They elected me as President-Elect. I would like to thank Rick Stambul for leading the administrative side of the BCA for the past two

## New BCA President: ‘We Will Get Through This Together’

years. I would like to thank Bishop Umezu for his guidance during the past eight years. Mostly, I would like to thank the BCA members for putting up with me for the next two years.

We are living in an unusual time. We

of human existence. We can also be grateful for what we have. Currently, we are learning to be grateful for having ... toilet paper.

And yet, there are positive movements coming from our BCA temples. Although many

that I would like to see happen this year is for our temples to be electronically connected so that (when regular services resume) the Sangha from one temple may be able to see a service or Dharma talk from another temple.



Rick Stambul, the outgoing BCA President, poses with new BCA President Dr. Kent Matsuda at the National Council meeting held in February in Renton, Washington. (Courtesy of Michael Endo)

*“At some point, the COVID-19 pandemic will subside. When that happens, we will find that our Sangha are more flexible, our temples more resilient, and our ministers more creative. We will get through this together. Always remember that Amida’s Compassion surrounds us at all times. Even now.”*

are currently seeing a worldwide phenomenon that has stretched government and medical services to unbelievable limits. And yet, as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, we know that impermanence is the hallmark

are not holding regular services now, I have seen evidence of many temples holding services on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. We continue to share the Dharma through the internet.

One of the projects

Two temples can share the same service. We will be trying this system out in the Central California District, but at some point, I would like to see all BCA temples connected.

I would also like to

see our BCA membership grow by having people in areas of the country that do not have a BCA temple nearby experience sutra chanting and hear a Dharma message through the internet. The services that are

taking place now, in our BCA temples during this unusual time, can be used to spread the Dharma across the country. As more temples begin to hold services that are

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## College YBA Conference Draws 40 Students – a Record High

By Devon Matsumoto  
Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple

The largest conference in College YBA history was held this past December — attracting 40 individuals from throughout the United States — at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple.

College YBA Co-Presidents Gillian Yamagiwa and me, Devon Matsumoto, along with the 2018-2019 College YBA Cabinet, hosted the three-day conference. It was titled, “When Will My Reflection Show Who I Am Inside.”

Students came from colleges and universities in Washington, Virginia, Indiana, Hawaii and California to attend the event, which was held Dec. 27-29, 2019. A few of the attendees even identified as Christian.

The event’s theme centered around identity and self-reflection. Workshop leaders prompted participants to reflect on the various identities they hold (ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexuality, class, etc.).

These workshops were meant to help participants begin to contemplate how their own identities intersect and interact with each other. Presentations on the Kakehashi Project, Young Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE), and Buddhist persecution in the United States were also given to help illustrate the interconnectedness of being Asian American and Buddhist.

The event also included activities like ice breakers and the smoothie challenge, which tested the participants knowledge of pop culture and Buddhism — with a catch.



Students from all over the United States attended the College YBA conference, which was held in December 2019 at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple. The students took a group photo at the temple. In the front row, from left, are: Allison Tanaka, Skye Nikaidoh, Marissa Wong, Haley Arakaki, Grace Matayoshi, Charlene Din, Maddie Matsumoto, Matthew Shikada, Vicky Shinkawa, Kiana Tsudama and Alex Eng. In the top row, from left, are: Toshi Steimetz, Evan Tsukahara, Devon Matsumoto, KC Mukai, Mitchell Kita, Alex Shinkawa and Trey Sano. (Courtesy of Dustin Uemura)

If you gave the wrong answer, you ended up making a nasty smoothie. If you gave the right answer, you made a delicious smoothie. The group also walked to downtown Mountain View for dinner and explored the area.

In addition to these thought-provoking workshops and fun activities, Gillian and I had a second goal of the conference. We wanted to bridge the gap between graduates of the



In a workshop at the College YBA conference are, from left, College YBA Co-President Gillian Yamagiwa, Mitchell Kitazumi and Mitchell Tsudama. (Courtesy of Dustin Uemura)

Youth Advocacy Community (YAC) summer program, the Buddhist Youth Retreat (BYR) summer program, and the Dharma And Nembutsu Always (DANA) summer program.

At the conference, we had graduates from all three summer programs. Knowing and

understanding the political weight of the three programs and the toll it has taken on many of BCA’s active youth members, Gillian and I wanted to make sure that the attendees from all three programs felt like they belonged.

We asked participants from

all three programs to help in both our formal services on the Onajin and our informal services that were held in the gym. Youth ministers assistants (YMA’s) also helped guide those from DANA and BYR who were not as familiar with Onajin etiquette. From my perspective, I thought that this was a success.

At the end of the day, the purpose of the College YBA Conference is to bring people together through the Jodo Shinshu teachings and allow people to form new friendships and reconnect with old friends.

I have been fortunate enough to have been a part of College YBA — not only as a participant but as a cabinet member for the past few years — and I hope that these fun and meaningful activities can continue to happen.

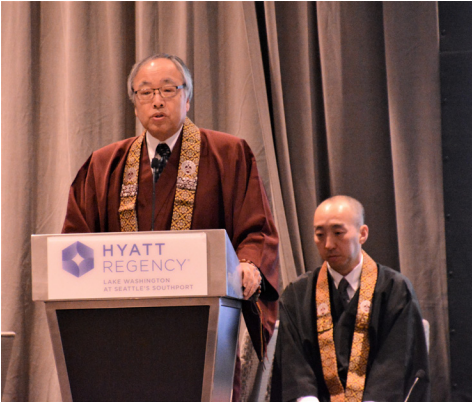
As new leadership in the BCA and CYBA comes in, I hope both parties can keep the well-being and fostering of young active Buddhists at the forefront of their mission.

I would like to thank the Mountain View Buddhist Temple, the MVBT YBA, and Rev. Mukojima for their continuous support of CYBA activities. I would also like to extend another thank you to Doug Sawamura, Bob Matsumoto, Ken Nakano and Sterling Makishima of the Mountain View Buddhist Temple, who continue to be vocal in their support of myself, College YBA, and youth activities throughout the BCA.

Devon Matsumoto is the out-going CYBA co-president and a Minister’s Assistant in training at the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple.



# Scenes from BCA Meetings, NW District Convention



Members of the BCA Executive Committee, Ministers Association cabinet and Northwest District affiliated organizations pose for a group photo following the Eitaikyo Service on Feb. 23 in Renton, Washington.

Photos courtesy of Michael Endo, Joseph Gotchy and Corey Murata

Top photo, BCA Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezu gives a talk to the National Council audience with Seattle Betsuin Rinban Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki seated. Middle photo, Northwest District ministers pose for a photo. Shown, from left, are Rev. Jim Warrick of White River Buddhist Temple, Rev. Takashi Miyaji of Tacoma Buddhist Temple and Rev. Yuki Sugahara of the Oregon Buddhist Temple. Above, Seattle Betsuin Bodhi Ensemble members sing. At right, Rev. Sala Sekiya, of the Gardena Buddhist Temple, presents her workshop, “Melodic Chanting of Juseige.” Far right, Seattle Betsuin Ministers Assistants participated in a Dharmathon on the theme of “Dana for World Peace.” Shown, from left, are: Meya Stout, Devon Matsumoto, Rev. Irene Goto and Leonora Clarke.



## National Council

Continued from Page 1

dhist Studies (IBS) and Scott Mitchell, Dean, announced that IBS has 75 students enrolled. Twenty-one of them are in the ministerial track. The IBS allocation from the BCA budget will be \$428,000. This is a 5 percent decrease from the year before.

Charles Ozaki and Hideaki Mizuno of the Endowment Foundation (EF) told the council that the EF was overseeing \$35.7 million in assets. The Growth A portfolio increased by 19.8 percent in 2019. The increases in the Growth B, Growth and Income, and Income portfolios were 20.7 percent, 16.3 percent, and 9.4 percent, respectively.

Jeff Matsuoka, BCA Treasurer, reported that the Dana Fund Program raised \$96,000 for Buddhist Education in 2019. The EF allocation to the BCA was \$193,000. The 2020 dues assessment will be \$157 per BCA member.

Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, from the Hongwanji Office, told the council that the Jodo Shinshu International Office (JSIO) was established in April 2019.

The JSIO will oversee the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence



BCA officials pose for a photo at the main table at the National Council meeting in Renton, Washington, in February. Shown, from left, are BCA Secretary Pamela Matsuoka, incoming President Dr. Kent Matsuda, President Rick Stambul, Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezu and Rev. Patricia Usuki, the BCA’s first woman Gicho or Chair of the Ministers Association. (Courtesy of Michael Endo)

Course, International Ministerial Orientation Program, and the staff of Hongwanji Advanced Research and Education Programs. The JSIO is still waiting for its 501(c)(3) tax exemption number.

Gayle Noguchi and Robert Matsueda reported on the BCA properties. Some work has begun on the JSC balcony leak. The JSC parking lot leak work is on hold. The elevator at headquarters is still requiring a new clutch. A part-time guard was hired for JSC security and will be at the JSC

daily from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The council voted to modify the current loan agreement between BCA and the EF so that the balloon payment was removed and the existing debt to the EF was converted into a 30-year loan. The council voted to modify the BCA Bylaws so that BCA members could work at headquarters. The new Directors-at-Large for 2020-2022 were Koichi Sayano, Nadine Kakimoto, and Celeste Sterrett.

Gary Mukai, Chair of the Propagation and Membership

Committee, recommended having an “Individual” membership category for people who did not live near a temple but wanted to participate in sutra chanting and hear a Dharma message. Attendees expressed concern over how this might affect temple memberships.

Dr. Kent Matsuda indicated that current temple members might be allowed to enjoy the benefits of the individual membership where they could view Dharma messages on the internet and continue to be

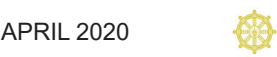
temple members. This may benefit those who were unable to physically come to the temple because of a medical condition. For those who do not live near a temple, they would be able to view internet Dharma messages, receive the Wheel of Dharma, and be eligible for reduced fees to BCA events, mostly through the Center for Buddhist Education. The council approved this membership category.

Steve Terusaki and John Mullins, both from the Joint Committee on Development, introduced the “Dharma Forward” Long-Term Capital Campaign.

The first \$1 million will be focused on the recommendations of the BCA Strategic and Financial Planning Committee presented at the 2019 National Council Meeting in Phoenix. An additional \$6.5 million would be used to pay the loan to the EF, make additional improvements to the BCA properties, support scholarship programs (like the Student Financial Assistance Program) and assist educational programs through the CBE. An additional \$7.5 million would be used to fund IBS endowed chairs. The council agreed to begin the Dharma Forward Campaign.

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# ‘Dana for World Peace’ — A Shin Buddhist Response

*Editor’s note: The following is a piece written for the “ ‘Dana for World Peace’: An Interactive Culminating Workshop,” which took place at the Northwest District Buddhist Convention on Feb. 22. This statement was written to provide one perspective on how Shin Buddhists can approach social engagement.*

By Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji  
Tacoma Buddhist Temple

What does “Dana for World Peace” look like for Shin Buddhists? How can Shin Buddhists take part in social engagement? To address these questions, we must look at the doctrine and the teachings of our founder Shinran Shonin, to see what suggestions, if any, does he provide regarding these issues.

Shin Buddhism explains that the egocentric self is the precise problem that inhibits one’s ability to act in altruistic compassion toward others. What makes it even worse is that sentient beings do not believe themselves to be ignorant. It is very easy to think that our problems in life are the result of actions done by other people. Little do we know that only little do we know.

Buddhism defines ignorance as the egocentric self who cannot help but to place judgment values on people and things based on the benefit they can provide relative to the self. This is what the Buddha Dharma teaches us. If we can swallow this tough pill, or in other words, when we dare to look at the clear mirror of the Buddha’s teachings that show us our true selves, we awaken to a world of Amida Buddha’s infinite wisdom and compassion. That world of Great Compassion is the sustaining life force that embraces



us just as we are.

The question of how we approach the issue of social ethics, social engagement, or “Dana for World Peace,” is not about what exactly do we do as Shin Buddhists. Instead, the problem is more about how do we go about taking part in social issues.

We should approach the concrete world in a minimalist and humble way, with optimistic mindfulness. By minimalist, I mean valuing simplicity, calmness, self-reflection, and not living beyond our means. It is understanding that this self is privileged to be able to live on this Earth, to have the things that we do and the friends and family that we have. Therefore, we should live gratefully for what we have and strive not to possess and want more than what we need.

By humble, I mean that we recognize that this self is limited in its capacity to be absolutely altruistic in compassion. It is seeing that my efforts of compassion pale in comparison to the world of Great Compassion that embraces not just me, but all sentient beings as well. I am receiving in this life much more than what I can give. Therefore, we must live in a way that reflects that understanding. We should keep in mind that contrary to what popular

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## President’s Message

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videotaped or live-streamed, we can spread Shinran Shonin’s teachings to anyone in the country. We may be able to increase our membership this way. At the recent BCA Ministers’ Association and National Council Meetings held in Renton, Washington, we discussed increasing our membership this way.

As we go through this unusual time, ministers are remaining available by telephone or via the internet, if they are needed. Even ministers and temple staff need to be careful and may not be in a position to accept visitors or members at the temple. We need to practice social distancing and we need to protect our ministers and temple staff from exposure to COVID-19.

Likewise, temple meetings may need to be done via the internet. We may need to hold our next National Board meeting via the internet. We continue to monitor the situation and need to be mindful of how best to conduct our temple and BCA business.

With the cancellation of temple services, many temples have had

to cancel temple fundraisers. Our affiliated organizations have had to postpone special events. We should not fear doing things in a way that has never been done before. That is part of impermanence. And, someday, we will resume regular services at our temples and resume holding conferences and events.

Something that cannot be seen is having a profound effect on our lives. This applies to COVID-19 and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. I applaud our BCA temples that are holding services for their internet Sangha. I applaud our ministers who are now conducting funerals and makuragyo in untraditional fashion. I applaud the resiliency of our members.

At some point, the COVID-19 pandemic will subside. When that happens, we will find that our Sangha are more flexible, our temples more resilient, and our ministers more creative. We will get through this together. Always remember that Amida’s Compassion surrounds us at all times. Even now.

Since the recent National Council Meeting in Washington, I have been sending out Twitter messages at least weekly @BCA\_President. Follow my messages there and watch this space next month. Be safe!

## NW Convention

Continued from Page 1

This was a rare opportunity for Northwest District attendees to meet other temples’ ministers and leaders from across the contiguous states, as well as Hawaii and Canada. Many attendees remarked that the participation by Bishop Umezū and the ministers at the services was awe inspiring and a once in a lifetime opportunity.

The convention highlights included:

- “Prayers for the World” Symposium featuring Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Fujiwara Wondra and Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji. This presentation was held from 1 to 5 p.m. Feb. 20 and was attended by more than 150 people.
- Convention speakers and workshops, which included the following: Professor Jessica Starling on “Shin Buddhist Liberation Theology and Hansen’s Disease (Leprosy) Activism in Japan”; Dr. Kemi Nakabayashi on “Sing Namo Amida Butsu”; Rev. Don Castro on “What is EcoSangha?”; Seattle Betsuin’s Youth Adult Minister’s Assistants on “Youth Discussion on Dana and Buddhism”;
- Also: Rev. Jim Warrick on “World Peace Begins with Me”; Minister’s Assistants Irene Goto, Leonora Clarke, Meya Stout, and Devon Matsumoto on “Seattle Betsuin Ministers’ Assistants Dharmathon”; Ayano Kusunoki and Kaori Miyaji on “Otera de Asobo (“Let’s Play at the

Temple!”); Japanese session featuring Rev. Anan Hatanaka on “Awakening to Buddhism Through the Study of Sutra Chanting”; Youth Session featuring Rev. Fred Pelger on “Bits of Rubble Turned to Gold”;

- In addition: Rev. Diana Thompson, Rev. Yuki Sugahara, Crystal Inge and Diane Deaver on “Panel on Buddhist Parenting”; Tom Ikeda of Densho on “Preserving and Sharing Japanese American History”; Rev. Sala Sekiya on “Melodic Chanting of Juseige”; Rev. Nariaki Hayashi and Rev. Yushi Mukojima on “Japanese Dharmathon With ‘Dana for World Peace’ Theme”; and Youth Session featuring Rev. Ryuta Furumoto, Rev. Kazuaki Nakata and Rev. Melissa Opel on “Road to Tokudo Panel”
- The workshops culminated with: Professor Eric Hammerstrom and Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji on “Dana for World Peace.”

The Saturday night banquet on Feb. 22 was attended by 524 people. It was an opportunity for attendees to meet new friends, catch up with old friends and have a good time.

A raffle drawing, with tickets given to people who read a certain portion of the program booklet, was won by Janet Umezū. The \$100 prize was generously given to the Zaidan Fund.

Convention Co-Chairs Alan Hoshino, Charlene Grinolds and myself thank all of the volunteers and attendees for making this event a big success.

## Bishop’s Message

Continued from Page 1

leadership and excellence.

I have had the privilege of serving as a minister in our BCA for the past 33 years, all at the Orange County Buddhist Church. I have also served as supervising minister for the Vista Buddhist Temple and the Buddhist Church of Sacramento. I would be remiss if I did not express my deepest gratitude to the past and present members of OCBC, and the members of the Vista and Sacramento temples for all that I have received and learned from them.

Professor Daiei Kaneko, an esteemed Buddhist minister and scholar of the Higashi Honganji tradition, wrote that a minister is created and nurtured by a Sangha. How true that statement is. I have been nurtured and raised as a minister by the Sangha.

Whatever it is in my ministry that others have deemed worthy to become the next Bishop, it is all due to what I have learned and experienced in my ministry, and what I have learned from the many teachers in my life.

We face great challenges in these next few years. We are facing perhaps the greatest shortage of ministers that we have ever experienced in BCA history. Many of our temples are facing a decreasing membership and struggle to maintain their temples financially. On top of that, we are now facing the terrible coronavirus (COVID-19) issue, affecting our entire interdependent world.

As you read this, you have seen how services have been cancelled, fundraisers have been cancelled, luncheons and gatherings have been cancelled. Our churches and temples have been the bastions of comfort and a place for people to gather, make friends, and listen to the Dharma. Now that is being challenged by the virus.

For the time being, we will have to limit our public and social gatherings to do our part to try and curtail the spread of this virus. We may have to donate to

our temples to compensate for fundraisers being cancelled. There will be many challenges to face.

But I am not daunted. I am not pessimistic. On the contrary, I know that we can face this new challenge. Think of what our pioneering members dealt with when they started our churches and temples. They faced discrimination issues, they were in a terrible depression, there was a World War going on, but despite that, they managed to build 60 Buddhist churches and temples with vibrant Sanghas. We must return to the spirit of our pioneering members, and find the best ways to make it through the challenges that this virus presents to us, in our lives and at our temples.

This virus spreads by person-to-person contact. Buddhism grows in the same way, from one person to the next.

*“We must return to the spirit of our pioneering members, and find the best ways to make it through the challenges that this virus presents to us, in our lives and at our temples.”*

We need to be the kind of Buddhist, the kind of Nembutsu follower that someone who sees how we live, is inspired to seek Buddhism for themselves. It is then that the Dharma and our membership will grow.

We have so much to offer to the world. Ours is a path of Buddhism that anyone can follow, young or old, men or women, people of all backgrounds, sexual orientation, and lifestyles. We have no physical requirements to follow Shin Buddhism. You just have to sincerely seek and listen to the Dharma.

As we face a growing climate of uncertainty, may we find that the foundation of our life is in the Buddha-Dharma, a truth that transcends time, culture, and the rise and fall of human issues that all societies have to face.

Namuamidabutsu.



Coronavirus

Continued from Page 1

After the first cluster of COVID-19 cases spread in February at a Seattle area nursing home, the Northwest District temples — including the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple, Tacoma Buddhist Temple and White River Buddhist Temple — were among the first in the BCA to announce the cancellation of in-person services, activities and events.

As the coronavirus toll continued, BCA Bay Area temples and churches were the next wave to cancel, followed by the Southern District temples, then across California and the nation.

In-person services are currently not being held at temples and churches. Some temples and churches have simply shuttered for now.

However, a growing number of BCA temples and churches are continuing to hold Dharma services via video and live-streaming messages.

In addition, a March 17 memo by BCA Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezu and incoming BCA President Dr. Kent Matsuda outlined new precautions, considerations and changes at churches and temples.

Some of the changes in the BCA memo don't apply to states such as California, New York and Illinois that — beginning on March 19 — directed all state residents to stay at home and have suspended all non-essential activities for now. Other states may follow these directives.

Regarding funerals, the BCA memo stated: "Obviously, we cannot cancel funeral services all together, but for the time being, if a funeral is not going to be postponed, then it must be



Berkeley Buddhist Temple Supervising Minister Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara prepares to give his Dharma message in front of an empty Hondo on March 15 because of coronavirus concerns. Rev. Kuwahara's Dharma talk was instead live-streamed. (Courtesy of Jon Kawamoto)

limited to small, private funerals of immediate family only."

If funerals are held, the following is recommended: no handshaking or hugging the family; no oshoko, but instead have people come to the front, gassho, and bow to the casket or urn; encourage family members to practice social distancing instead

acceptable at this time. Once Dharma services resume at temples and churches, social distancing should be practiced and handshakes, hugging and standing close to someone should be avoided. Anyone who has a cold or is feeling under the weather should stay home. "Since ministers will not be working in the

*Once Dharma services resume at temples and churches, social distancing should be practiced and handshakes, hugging and standing close to someone should be avoided. Anyone who has a cold or is feeling under the weather should stay home.*

of sitting next to each other; no otoki after the service; and wiping the pews with disinfectant wipes before and after the service as well as other areas, including the lobby door handles.

Currently, it is not safe for a minister to go to a hospital to conduct a makuragyo service, the memo stated.

Regarding memorial services, the memo recommended that it is preferable to postpone them. If they are held, the services must be limited to a small number of people. Wiping the pews before and after the service and eliminating oshoko are recommended.

Only very small, private weddings would be

office and available for in-person meetings, they can make themselves available to 'chat or talk' with members on the phone by FaceTime or audio," the memo stated. "Designated times can be created like 'office hours' where members can feel free to talk to their minister if they wish to be counseled or just to have some human connection through this difficult time."

Ministers can write more essays or Dharma talks and share them by email or by the use of blogs, according to the memo.

In addition, "chat rooms" or Dharma discussions can be created through the internet.

BCA Office of the Bishop  
Announces Ministerial Assignments

The BCA Office of the Bishop has made the following recent ministerial assignments:

- **Rev. Chiemi Onikura-Bly**, a member of the Twin Cities Buddhist Sangha, was officially recognized as a BCA Kaikyoshi-ho (Assistant Minister) by the Hongwanji for the Midwest Buddhist Temple under the supervision of Rev. Ronald Miyamura.
- **Rev. Patricia Usuki**, resident minister of the San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, was appointed supervising minister of the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple, effective Feb. 29.

- **Rev. Masanori Watanabe**, resident minister of the Buddhist Oxnard Buddhist Temple, has announced that he will take a leave of absence from BCA ministry, effective May 1.
- **Rev. Ryuta Furumoto**, resident minister of the Senshin Buddhist Temple, has been appointed the supervising minister of the Oxnard Buddhist Temple and Buddhist Temple of Santa Barbara.
- **Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi**, resident minister of the Buddhist Church of Sacramento and supervising minister of the Buddhist Church of Lodi and Walnut Grove Buddhist Church, has announced that she will retire June 30.

Rev. Dr. Miyaji

Continued from Page 5

American culture will have us believe, humility is not a weakness; it is a strength.

Finally, we approach society with optimistic mindfulness. As it is explained in the Primal Vow fulfilled by Amida Buddha, all sentient beings will eventually attain spiritual liberation. As such, we should be hopeful that the sentient beings of this world will one day awaken to the working of Amida Buddha's Great Compassion. But that optimism should not be mistaken for naiveness. It is important to be mindful not only toward the ignorance that pervades this world but, more so, of our own.

All sentient beings are bound within their egocentric bubbles. Therefore, no matter how well-intended we may be, no matter how much we believe we are on the side of justice, righteousness, or moral piety, everything we do has some degree of our ego acting in self-interest.

We need to recognize the pitfall of being carried away by our prideful egos. However, at the same time, this should not dishearten us. The mindfulness and caution toward this smug and hubris ego is, ironically, our unique contribution to the world of social engagement, a world that is rife with people who are shackled in their delusion of self-righteousness.

Let us look at an example of a Nembutsu follower who lived in the spirit of "Dana for World Peace." Takeko Kujo sama, who lived in the early 20th century Japan, was a philanthropist, poet, artist, and writer. She was also a devout Nembutsu

follower. Awakening to her true self as a bonbu, she greatly contributed toward the welfare of her society by helping to establish Kyoto's Women's University, Asoka Hospital in Tokyo and the Buddhist Women's Association. She serves as an example of how we can be inspired by the Nembutsu teaching to contribute toward "Dana for World Peace." Amida Buddha's teaching of Great Compassion will enable us to see the human condition for what it is, and try to mitigate, or lessen, the cause of suffering as much as possible. As

*"Shin Buddhism explains that the egocentric self is the precise problem that inhibits one's ability to act in altruistic compassion toward others. What makes it even worse is that sentient beings do not believe themselves to be ignorant. It is very easy to think that our problems in life are the result of actions done by other people. Little do we know that only little do we know."*

Shin Buddhists, when we receive Amida Buddha's Great Compassion, we see the limitation of the ego-self. But when we understand this, we then use that to empower ourselves as participants in the spread of Great Compassion. Namo Amida Butsu

Rev. Mikame

Continued from Page 2

Even with changing times and technology, the core problems of our lives are basically the same as that about 2,600 years ago. We are living our lives with our own sufferings. So, maybe that is why we always try to look for someone who we can share our feelings and sufferings together in this world.

Our Jodo Shinshu founder, Shinran Shonin, tells us that the Pure Land is called a "place of peace" in one of his main writings, "Kyogyo Shinsho." Shinran Shonin suggests that we live our lives hearing the Pure Land teaching as our true home.

What is "home" like for you? For me, I feel it is somewhere we feel safe, a place where we can show our weaknesses without any fear and where we can be accepted just as we are. But it doesn't always refer to certain places. It can also be a person who has the "home" feeling.

We are fortunate that Amida Buddha wishes for us to be able to accept Pure Land and his wisdom and compassion as a firm place of peace in our lives whenever we are in any situation in our lives.

It's not only in front of the statue of Amida Buddha at church, where we recite Nembutsu, where we find ourselves embraced by his compassion. Amida Buddha always says to us, "Welcome home."

National Council

Continued from Page 4

BCA President Rick Stambul gave an update on the Bloomquist estate. The legal case has come to a close. More than \$1 million will be going to the IBS and a \$125,000 separate fund will be used for Buddhist Education and will be supervised by the BCA Executive Committee.

The 2021 BCA Ministers Association and National Council Meetings will be held Feb. 23-28, 2021, at the Crowne Plaza in Foster City, California. The theme will be "Living the Nembutsu."

Rev. Imada

Continued from Page 2

me, includes all who recite Nembutsu. If I recite NamoAmidaButsu, it means I entrust myself to Amida's vow. It means I want to get on Amida's big ship which will take everyone to the Pure Land.

In closing, I will share the passage of Shinran Shonin. "The ocean of birth-and-death, of painful existence, has no bound; Only by the ship of Amida's universal Vow Can we, who have long been drowning, Unfailingly be brought across it." Namo Amida Butsu



# 今月の法話

## 「お釈迦様が 伝えたかった事」

バークレー仏教会  
開教使 桑原浄信



Rev. Joshin Kuwahara

私は広島県呉市にある浄土真宗のお寺に生まれまして。満州で開

教使をしていた祖父が戦後日本に引き揚げて新たに開いたお寺で、寺号を「浄円寺」といいま

す。島根の在家出身の祖父が京都で真宗の勉強をするにあたって足利浄円という先生に大変お世話になり、戦後新しくお寺を開くにあたって恩師の足利先生のお名前をいただき浄円寺となったと祖父の跡を継いだ父から聞いております。自分は現在バークレー仏教会のお手伝いをさせていただいておりますがバークレー仏教会のご本尊は足利浄円先生から譲り受けたものであります。海を渡ったアメリカの地でも足利先生とのご縁があることをありがたく感じております。

私が生まれ育った浄円寺では近所の小学生が10人ぐらい集まって日曜学校（子供会）も行われていました。毎年4月には花御堂を出し、お釈迦様のご誕生をお祝いする花祭りをしていました。花祭りではお釈迦様がお生まれになられた時に甘露の雨が降ったという故事に基づき、花御堂の中央に安置された子供のお釈迦様の像に甘茶をかけます。日曜学校では花祭りの際には甘茶がふるまわれました。大人になった今でも不思議なのですが甘茶とというのは砂糖等の甘味料を全く加えていないのに本当に甘いお茶ですね。幼少期の自分はそのような説明を日曜学校の際に父から聞いても「そんなはずはない。砂糖を

入れずにこんなに甘くなるはずはない。きっと母がやかって甘茶を作っている時に砂糖を加えているんだ！」と思っていました。学年が上がり、色々なことを学ぶうちに世の中にはそういったお茶も存在することを知り、父の言っていたことが本当だったんだと納得する同時に母に対する勝手な疑惑もはれていきました。

さて4月号の記事ということでお釈迦様から浄土真宗についてお話をさせていただきます。約2500年前にインドにお生まれになられたお釈迦様があきらかにして下さいました教えは今日では仏教として世界各地に伝わっています。その教えは私たちの生活を心豊かなものにして下さったり、生きる強さを与えて下さり、多くの人がその教えをよろこんでいらっしやいます。

お釈迦者は教えをご自身で書物にはされませんでした。お釈迦様の没後にお弟子の方々が中心となってその教えがまとめられ仏教経典、いわゆる「お経」となっていきました。今日、大変数多くの仏教経典が存在しています。皆さんも『阿弥陀経』『無量寿経』『観無量寿経』『法華経』『般若心経』などといったお経のタイトルを耳にされたことがあるかと思います。膨大な数の仏教経典を通してお釈迦様の教えを学んでいく中で仏教徒の間では「お釈迦様が説かれた教え（経典）」の中で一番大切なものは一体何だ？という問いが起こつてまいります。「お釈迦様がさとりを開かれて一番最初に説かれた教えこそ最も大切だ！」「お釈迦様が亡くなる直前に説かれた教えこそが集大成として最も大切だ！」と色々な意見が出てきて、どれも一理あると思われま

私たちの浄土真宗の開祖であります親鸞聖人は「お釈迦様がこの世界にお生まれになられたのは阿弥陀仏の私たちを救いたいという大きく深い思い（ご本願）を伝えるためでありました」と仰り、阿弥陀仏の救いこそがお釈迦様の教えの中で最も大切なことであると指示下さっています。これは親鸞聖人が浄土真宗の教えをまとめられた『正信偈』の中の一句であります。親鸞聖人は鎌倉時代の方で、その当時の日本仏教の最高峰ともいうべき比叡山で20年にわたって様々な経典を学ばれました。その上で数ある仏教の教説の中でも阿弥陀仏の救いこそがお釈迦様が最も伝えたかったことだと結論付けられました。ではなぜそのように考えられたのでしょうか？

お釈迦様の教えの中で何が一番大切なかを考えるにあたっては何を基準にするのかということが大変重要になってきます。さとりを開かれたお釈迦様は80歳でお亡くなりになるまでその生涯を仏法を説くことに捧げられました。それは自分だけでなく他の人々もまたさとりを開き、仏となり、苦しみ悩みから解放されることを願われたからです。お釈迦様の教説は色々ありますが、このことこそがその根底にあると言えます。そうすると一人でも多くの人が困難なく行うことのできる方法で成仏できる教えこそお釈迦様のお心に最も沿うものだと言えます。

仏教は成仏道とも言われるように仏と成るための教えです。その教えを完遂すれば仏になれるのでお釈迦様以外にも仏様はいらっしやいます。そしてそういった仏様たちもまたお釈迦様のように苦しみ悩みをかかえている私たちが仏となり、苦しみ悩みから解放されるよう様々な形で働きかけて下さっています。お釈迦様は数ある仏様の中で阿弥陀という仏様について特に説かれます。

この阿弥陀という仏様は全ての生きとし生けるものを何とかして苦しみ悩みから解放し仏にしたいという大変大きく、深い願いをお持ちです。聖者や善人だけでなく、生きとし生けるもの全てを仏にするのですから並大抵のことではありません。ですからこの仏様は大変長い時間を費やしてどうしたらいいか考えられます。通常の仏教の教えですと、私たちが何か修行をして功德を積み、その積んだ功德を積み重ね、努力していくことでさとりへと徐々に近づいていくことができると説かれます。能力があり、修行を完遂してさとりに向かって着実に進むことのできる方々はいいいですが、全員が全員そういうわけにはいきません。色々な事情でそのような修行ができない方や十分な能力を持ってない方もいらっしやいます。そこで阿弥陀仏は通常の仏道とは全く異なるアプローチを考えつかれます。仏の側で全ての生きとし生けるものが仏となるための功德を用意するというものでした。それも南無阿弥陀仏というわずか六文字の中に。全ての生きとし生けるものを何とかして救いたいという阿弥陀仏の願いが結晶化したともいうべき南無阿弥陀仏を受け取り、称えることで、私たちはこの命を全うした後に迷いの世界を離れさとりの世界へと生まれ仏となり、そして有縁の方々に働きかける新たな命が始まるのです。

「たった六字の南無阿弥陀仏という言葉を称えるだけ

仏に成れるなんて…」と思われる方もいらっしやるでしょう。仏教の歴史の中でも実際に他の仏教徒からそういう批判もありました。名号と呼ばれるこの六字の南無阿弥陀仏をお薬を例に考えてみましょう。我々が日常生活で主に服用する薬は小さな錠剤かと思われま

す。一粒の小さな錠剤ではありますがそれを開発するために何年、時には何十年という時間が費やされます。また研究者、医師、薬剤師がその病気で苦しんでいる人たちを何とかしたいという思いと彼らの努力がそこに込められています。私たちが手にする錠剤は小さなものかもしれませんが、それは研究者たちの深い思いと多大なる時間と努力が形となったものであり、人間の身体

の大きさとは比べれば大変小さなものですが私たちの身体全身に働き、病気を治癒する力を備えています。同様に南無阿弥陀仏の名号もわずか六字の言葉ではありますが、そこに阿弥陀仏の私たち一人一人を想う深い願いと長い時間にわたるご努力が形となったものであり、それを信受し称えるところでどんな者でも成仏させる力を備えているのです。仏様のこの私を想う深い願いに耳を傾け、南無阿弥陀仏と称えるだけでいいという大変容易な方法でどんな者でも成仏することのできる素晴らしい仏道を完成された阿弥陀仏をお釈迦様をはじめ他の多くの仏様方も誉め讃えていらっしやいます。一人でも多くの人がさとりを開き、仏となれるようその生涯を仏道を広めることに捧げられたお釈迦様にとって、阿弥陀仏の深い願い、そしてその願いに基づいたお念仏こそ数ある教説の中で最も説かれたかったことであると親鸞聖人は受け止められたわけでありま

す。そういった阿弥陀仏の願い、お働きを聞かせていただき感謝するのが浄土真宗のお寺であり、その中央には阿弥陀仏が安置されています。時々ある質問でなぜ浄土真宗の本堂にはお釈迦様が安置されていないのですかというものがあります。仏像や絵像としてはいらっしやいませんが文字のお姿でいらっしやいます。私たちは仏様というとすぐに人の姿・形で考えてしましますが、お釈迦様は文字の形、つまりお経としていらっしやいます。よくお勤めいたします『重誓偈』『讃仏偈』『阿弥陀経』はお釈迦様が阿弥陀仏を讃えていらっしやるお経であります。私たちが『重誓偈』『讃仏偈』『阿弥陀経』をお勤めしている時にお釈迦さまも私たちと一緒に阿弥陀仏を讃えていらっしやるのです。



# 法 輪

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二〇二〇年度教化標語  
「尊び敬う心」

あの記事をもう一度!

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ウェブサイトにて読めます。  
<http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/about-us/wheel-of-dharma>

## 前門様と前お裏方が訪米

昨年10月末に大谷光真前門主と大谷範子前裏方がベイエリアとロサンゼルスを非公式で訪問された。前門様と前お裏方は、引退開教使と引退開教使夫人を招いて昼食会を開催し感謝の意を伝えられた。10月28日には浄土真宗センターで昼食会が催され26名が参加した。ロサンゼルスでは10月30日にロサンゼルス別院近郊のレストラで昼食会を開かれ、16名が参加した。前門様は念仏の教えを弘めるため幾十年と開教に従事した引退開教使夫妻の苦勞をねぎらい感謝された。参加者は前門様ご夫妻とランチと会話を楽しみ、「前門様がお若い時にこちらに來られていたことが懐かしく思い起こされます。」「ご夫妻が私たちのことを忘れずに覚えていてくださったことはたいへんありがたいです。」と感激していた。



Zenmon-sama and Zen Ourakata-sama at JSC



Zenmon-sama and Zen Ourakata-sama at Los Angeles

## 全米のコロナウイルス感染拡大の影響で、

3月半ばより各仏教会では日曜礼拝や勉強会、ミーティングなどを一時中止している。葬儀、法事や結婚式などは条件付きで営む。梅津総長(3月当時)とBCA理事長松田ケント氏は各仏教会に寺院での法要や活動などのガイドラインを通知した。以下はその要旨。

「葬儀」延期をしない場合、できるだけ少ない人数で行う(10名以内が望ましい)。握手、ハグはしない。お焼香は感染の可能性があるため、お焼香をせず合掌礼拝のみをする。参列者は距離をあけて座る。葬儀の後のお斎はしない。椅子やドアノブなどを葬儀の前後に消毒する。

「臨終動行(枕経)」僧侶は病院や自宅には行かない。亡くなった次の日または数日後に葬儀社やお寺で行う。

「法事」延期が望ましいが、行う場合は葬儀の注意点と同じ。

「結婚式」葬儀の注意点と同じ。

「日曜礼拝」寺院に集まって行う礼拝は中止されているが、各寺院でインターネットを利用した礼拝の参加や、各家庭のお仏壇での礼拝を勧めている。

## 総長コラム

米国仏教団 総長 原田 マービン

4月より米国仏教団の総長に就任いたしました。この責任ある務めに励むご縁をいただき、米国仏教団理事会、各寺院の代表者、総長選挙委員会の皆様にご場をお借りして感謝いたします。BCAの約120年の歴史において、私たちの教団を見事に統率してくださった歴代の監督、総長方に並び立つことのできるよう、誠心誠意努めて参りますので、どうぞよろしくお願いいたします。

私は開教使としてオレンジカウンティ仏教会に33年間駐在し、ピスタ仏教会、サクラメント別院を兼務するご縁にも恵まれました。真宗大谷派の有名な学僧金子大栄師が、「僧侶は門徒の方によって育てられる」ということを書かれていたのを読んだことがあります。私の開教使生活を振り返って、本当にその通りだと感服しています。私が総長に就任できたのは、多くのご門徒さんからご指導を受け、お育ていただいたことの結果だとありがたく受け止めています。

私たちはこれから様々な問題に取り組んでいかなければなりません。開教使不足のこと、お寺のメンバー数が減少していること、お寺の維持をどのようにしていくかがあります。それに加えて昨今の新型コロナウイルスが世界的に感染拡大している状況ができました。

お寺は私たちにとって安心して仲間と集い、仏法を聴聞できる皆のような拠り所ですが、コロナウイルスの影響によって日曜礼拝をはじめ、昼食会やミーティングなどお寺での活動が中止されています。

またウイルスの感染拡大の防止のため集会の人数やイベントの開催などを制限されているので、フアンドレイズのためのバザーができません。ですからバザーができない今は、お寺の護持発展のため、皆さまにできるだけお布施をしてくださることをお願い

いするようになると思います。このように教団はいろいろな問題に直面しています。

けれども私はこの状況に悲観していません。反対にこれをやりがいのあるチャレンジだと思っています。1世や2世がお寺を建てた時代を思い起こしてください。私たちのパイオニアたちは差別を受け、経済恐慌や世界大戦の逆境の中で、活気のあるサンガを築き60ものお寺を建立しました。私たちはそういった先輩方の精神を受け継ぎ、このコロナウイルスの状況に取り組んでいくべきです。

このウイルスは人から人へと感染しています。あまりたとえが良くないかもしれませんが、仏教も同じように人から人へと伝播していくものです。仏道を歩んでいる人、念仏の教えを生活で実践している人と接することで、自分も仏教を学びたい、と思うようになる人が増えるのです。そうやって人々に仏法が伝わり、私たちのサンガも大きくなっていくのです。

浄土真宗の教えは、年齢、性別、文化背景、性的指向、ライフスタイル、体力、体格に関係なく、誰でもが歩める仏道です。ただ真剣に仏法を求め聴聞すればよいのです。この浄土真宗の教えを世界に向けて発信することは大切なことです。

気候や政治、経済、価値観などが目まぐるしく変化していく現代社会において、時代や文化の違いや人間の栄華盛衰にまどわされない、真実の仏法を拠り所にして様々な問題を克服していきましょ

う。



Rev. Harada at Texas Howakai