



# WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

## LIVING THROUGH A PANDEMIC

### Ministers Find New, Innovative Ways to Adapt

They Turn to Internet to Offer Talks, Meditation, Study Groups; Launch Outreach to Elderly

By Jon Kawamoto  
Editor  
Wheel of Dharma

Although the coronavirus pandemic may have put in-person services on hold, BCA temples, churches and Sanghas are finding innovative and ingenious ways to continue spreading the Dharma — while working to maintain the sense of community.

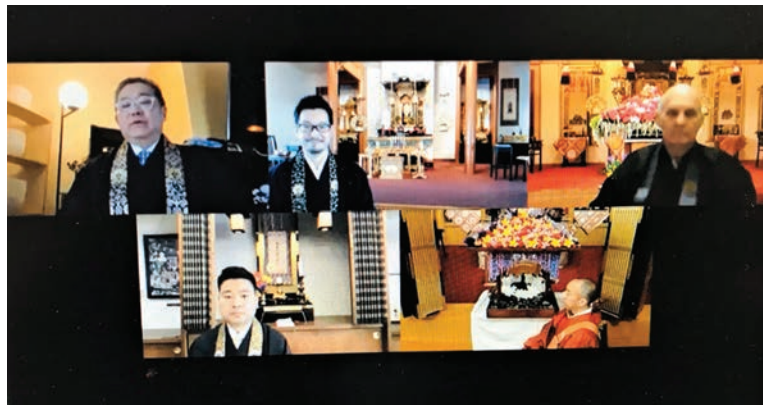
In addition to the more than 20 temples and churches now offering live-streaming and videos of Dharma services and messages, a proliferation of programs have quickly and steadily sprouted as

#### FYI

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

ministers and the Sanghas adapt to the abrupt, confining — and temporary — reality of shelter-in-place orders.

For Hanamatsuri, several temples held live-streamed or taped video services either on the Sundays before or after the actual



The Northwest District Ministers Association held a joint Hanamatsuri Service — in both English and Japanese — on Zoom on April 8. (Courtesy of Jon Kawamoto)

date — April 8 — while some held live-streamed services on the actual date.

Notably, the Northwest District Ministers Association — with Rinban Rev. Katsuya

Kusunoki, Rev. Yuki Sugahara, Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji, Rev. Jim Warrick and Rev. Jerry Hirano — held a joint Hanamatsuri Service using Zoom.

“We did Dharmathon in English and Japanese, too,” said Rev. Sugahara, Resident Minister of the Oregon Buddhist Temple, who called the event “one of the unique things we tried.” To see the video, go to: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcSgC8R6v10](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcSgC8R6v10)

Ministers have held a variety of innovative programs, including weekly discussion groups on Facebook Live, Zoom chat times

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### ‘Everyday Buddhist’ Offers Collection of Teachings Available Online

#### Goal Is to Share Contemporary Shin Buddhism

By Rev. Jon Turner  
Orange County Buddhist Church

With people forced to shelter in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic, now may be the perfect time to check out and sign up for the EverydayBuddhist.org online school -- which had its modest beginnings at the Orange County Buddhist Church.

The EverydayBuddhist.org online school was created on Friday, Sept. 22, 2017. It began with one student, myself



The EverydayBuddhist.org online school had its modest beginnings at the Orange County Buddhist Temple in 2017, spearheaded by OCBC Resident Minister Rev. Jon Turner. It now has more than 700 students from around the world and offers 46 courses. The OCBC ministers have all created courses for EverydayBuddhist.org. Shown, from left, are: Resident Minister Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wondra, BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada and Rev. Jon Turner. (Courtesy of Rev. Jon Turner)

and no classes.

Today, we have more than 700 students with 46 courses, and a cadre of Southern California Shin Buddhists as our development team. We are housed at Orange County Buddhist Church, but operate as a separate entity from the temple itself. That first year, we were busy just getting started. We had to buy the hardware and then teach ourselves how to use it. It really was an early startup.

The second year, we began to focus more on who our target audience is. We decided we wanted to propagate the Dharma to as many as possible. We made adjustments based on the feedback we got from our initial students. At

#### FYI

The EverydayBuddhist online school is at [www.everydaybuddhist.org](http://www.everydaybuddhist.org)

first, it all seemed a bit random, but this was because we were listening to many different constituencies.

With further analysis, we realized that there were three main target groups: Sangha members and friends of our BCA temples, new visitors to our temples, and other seekers of the Dharma.

Our intention is to share contemporary Shin Buddhist teachings and practices for

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### ‘Young Buddhist Editorial’ – New Home for Dharma

Digital Platform Formed to Give Young Adults a Voice, Solidarity

By John Mullins  
Berkeley Buddhist Temple

In 2016, Devon Matsumoto and Trevor Yokoyama were having a conversation in their dorm room at the University of Utah about finding ways to revive our shrinking young adult groups.

While growing up at the temples, so many young people make connections with each other through youth organizations, district events



A brainstorming session for the launch of the “Young Buddhist Editorial” website took place at the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple in January 2020. (Courtesy of Devon Matsumoto)

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### Dharma School Is Back in Session at Some Temples – Online

By Jon Kawamoto  
Editor  
Wheel of Dharma

Watching the first Berkeley Buddhist Temple live-streaming service on March 15 proved to be motivation enough for Dharma School Superintendent Stacy Uyeda to bring back the school — online.

“The hard work that (Berkeley Buddhist Temple Supervising Minister) Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara and others did made me realize that host-

ing a Dharma School class every week would be something that I could contribute,” said Uyeda, who is also President of the Bay District Dharma School Teachers League.

She began working on providing the Dharma School via Zoom. The first online class was held March 29.

Uyeda was of a like mind with other Bay District Dharma School teachers, who were already working on online options.

Indeed, online Dharma

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## BISHOP'S MESSAGE



By Rev. Marvin Harada  
BCA Bishop

## Wisdom From My Mother

she bought a new car.

I would like to share something that I learned from a conversation with her a few years ago. I can't recall when and where we had the conversation, but with the recent ordeal of the coronavirus pandemic that we are all experiencing, somehow this conversation came back to me.

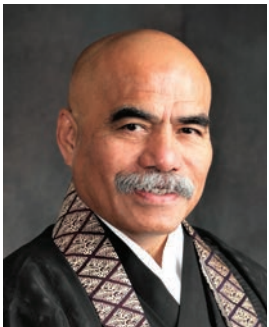
In Buddhism, anything and anyone can be our teacher. A parent or grandparent can be a teacher. A pet cat or dog could be a teacher. A difficult life experience like getting cancer can be a teach-

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Rev. Marvin Harada, Bishop, enjoys a lighthearted moment with his mother, Ruth Harada and sister Donna Sasaki at the BCA National Council meeting and Northwest District Convention in Renton, Washington, in February. (Courtesy of Rev. Marvin Harada, Bishop)

My mother, Ruth Harada, is 91 now. She lives in Oregon on her own and still drives. A couple of years ago, at the age of 89, she said, "I think I want to buy a new car," and



By Rev. William Briones, Rinban  
Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji  
Buddhist Temple

## The Choices We Make and COVID-19

You're Exhausted Is 'Moral Fatigue', written by Elizabeth Yuko. It's a very interesting article about simple decisions we made, pre-coronavirus, that are now consequential even life threatening. Something as simple as going to the market or for a walk has become a moral dilemma.

In this life, we have to make many choices. Every waking moment, we are making choices. Today, you will choose what to eat. You will choose whether or not you get some exercise. You will choose what you will put in your mind. You will choose whether you will stay safe at home or buy groceries. You will choose whether to be happy or grumpy.

This morning, you already made some choices ... did you check your email, your text before saying "good morning" to your spouse? Did you have a hard time deciding to change from your pajamas? You will make hundreds of other decisions today. During your lifetime, you will make many choices.

Some will be very important. Some will not. The choices we make, however, determine to a large extent of our happiness or unhappiness because we have to live with the consequences of our choices. Just as the Golden Chain says,

"I will try to think pure and beautiful thoughts, to say pure and beautiful words,

and to do pure and beautiful deeds, knowing that on what I do now depends on my happiness and misery."

Some of the choices we make will have immediate impact. Other choices will have an impact days, or even weeks later. Some may take years or decades or even generations. But, make no mistake about it ... the multitude of choices you make today will have an enormous impact on the quality of your life.

In Buddhism, our understanding of decision making is based on cause and effect of our thoughts, words and deeds.

Why do some people

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As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to dominate the world news and how we live our life now, it has given us an opportunity to reflect on the many things that we have taken for granted in our everyday life.

Recently I came across an article in Rolling Stone magazine entitled, "The Reason

## 'Amida Buddha Is Always Beside You'



By Rev. Hibiki Murakami  
Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji  
Buddhist Temple

schools were closed. The restaurants were closed, either, doing only takeout and drive-through service. A lot of offices asked their employees to do remote work from their homes. Small businesses and physical labor jobs had to reduce their work or stop operations.

The many BCA Buddhist churches and temples were impacted. The Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, where I belong, was unable to hold any events and activities in the building. We have a child care center in the basement of this temple. I usually hear the cheerful voices of the children when I work. After the center closed, I heard — silence.

After California declared a statewide shelter-in-place order, the freeways in Los Angeles truly became a "free" way. Usually, when I drive to the temple on weekdays, it takes 30 minutes because of heavy traffic. But, after the COVID-19 outbreak,

it took only 10 minutes to arrive at the temple during the weekdays. Surprisingly, it brought us the clean sky above Los Angeles. We were able to observe not only the transparent sky, but also how what we do had changed.

The theme of our temple's Spring Ohigan service was the Amida Buddha's 17th vow: the vow of all the Buddhas saying the name. Unfortunately, it was cancelled and we missed the chance to listen to the Dharma messages by our guests. However, I was privately thinking about this topic.

Losing the opportunity to sit in front of Amida Buddha, I recognized that I was just frightened by anything caused by the confusion brought on by COVID-19.

For example, I became frightened because of the shortage of drinkable water and food, and spending money for the extra home

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I hope those of you who are reading this article are in good health and peace. As you know, COVID-19 changed the United States drastically.

Its impact overwhelmed the entire nation — including Los Angeles, where I live.

What was happening in Los Angeles became clear from watching the TV news every day.

Many community spaces were required to limit their activities. For example,



## Corrections

A photo on Page 4 of the April issue of the Wheel of Dharma incorrectly identified Pamela Matsuoka. She is a BCA administrative assistant, not the BCA Secretary. She was standing in for Nancy Okada, who was unable to attend the National Council meeting in Renton, Washington. The new BCA Secretary is Darlene Bagshaw.

An article on Page 6 in the April issue about ministerial news incorrectly listed Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi as the Resident Minister of the Buddhist Church of Sacramento. She is the Resident Minister of the Stockton Buddhist Church.



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Documents should be sent as an email attachment to WODeditor@bcahq.org. Please include the article's author or contact, temple, and suggested title. Images, preferably in color, must be submitted as 300 dpi JPEG or TIFF in separate attachments and never embedded in a Word document. PDF is not preferred. The editors reserve the right to crop images and to edit articles. Articles and news releases are reviewed for publication on the 10th of every month.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Dr. Kent Matsuda  
BCA President

Despite our inability to meet for services, there are more than 25 temples in the BCA that are holding virtual services on the internet. Some temples live-stream, some use Instagram, some use Facebook, and some use YouTube.

If you go to the BCA website ([buddhistchurchesofamerica.org](http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org)), you will see a list of the temples that are videotaping their services. Many temples will allow you to see past services by accessing their website.

In the beginning of April, Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada began recording Dharma messages that can be accessed by phone. Soon, we will have Dharma messages in Japanese available. Call 415-528-7220. The Dharma messages accessible by phone are meant to be for those who do not have easy access to a computer or smartphone.

When a temple puts up a

video of a service, members and non-members can view the service. I am aware of a person who had never been to Ekoji Buddhist Temple who viewed one of their services on the internet. They indicated that they would have liked to have attended a service in person, but were unable to do so in the past. Now that they saw the inside of the temple and how a service was conducted, they felt much less apprehensive about attending a service in the future when the shelter-in-place order is lifted.

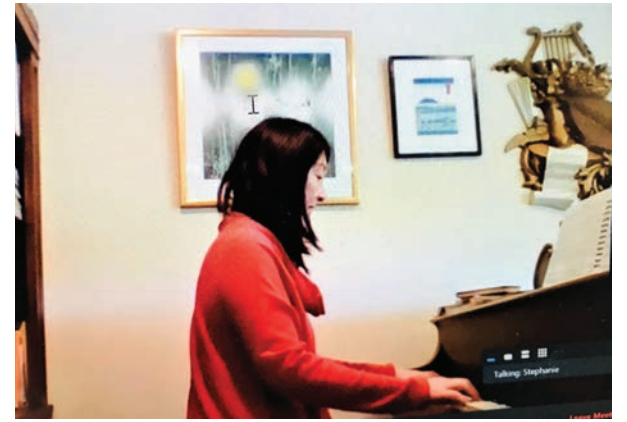
Although we can hold services through the internet, I know that many temples have had to cancel fundraisers because of the shelter-in-place order. Being unable to hold in-person services and fundraisers is causing many temples to suffer a tremendous loss of income. This may impact a temple's ability to pay its minister or office staff.

As many of you know, the federal government's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) was available to help temples continue to pay their ministers and office staff during this crisis. The PPP was supposed to be available until June 30 or until the money ran out. In a little over a week in early April, all \$349 billion was allocated.

At the national level, BCA headquarters is also experiencing a loss of income. We



Rev. Henry Adams, Resident Minister of the San Mateo Buddhist Temple, conducts the Hanamatsuri Service via Zoom on April 19. Sangha members and Rev. Adams are able to see each other during the virtual services. During the Hanamatsuri service, the temple's children provided musical performances — two pianists and a violinist. Stephanie Yoshimoto Patterson is the temple's pianist and is shown performing "In Lumbini's Garden." After the service, Rev. Adams hosted the weekly adult discussion group attended by more than 20 members. (Courtesy of the San Mateo Buddhist Temple)



know that temples will have difficulty paying their BCA assessments. We are looking at ways to decrease our expenditures. For example, the June National Board meeting will be done using Zoom. We may need to restrict the number of lay district representatives attending to allow for a more manageable meeting. But, holding the meeting on the internet will save us money.

Bishop Harada has indicated that he will not be living in the Bishop's parsonage in Belmont. He will use one of the rooms at the Jodo Shinshu Center as his Northern California home. This will allow BCA to rent out the parsonage and generate some income.

Also, since we are unable to meet in person, many of the

Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) programs have been cancelled. This will help BCA save money. Some of the CBE programs will still be taking place over the internet. Please look at the BCA website for up to date information.

If the shelter-in-place order continues a lot longer, BCA will be looking at possibly closing down the headquarters building in San Francisco and shutting off the utilities. We, however, were recently approached by an organization that wanted to rent out space in the headquarters building, so we need to look this proposal over carefully.

Despite the fact that the BCA and temples are providing services with ministers and staff working from home, I know

that some BCA members have passed away from COVID-19. Now is a particularly difficult time to try to provide funeral services for families. I know that family members are not allowed into hospitals or nursing homes to see their loved ones during the last days of their life. Makuragyos and funeral services usually cannot be performed in person. This makes one's death a very lonely experience.

Nonetheless, Bishop Harada's first message on the Dial the Dharma phone line addresses this exact situation. Please listen to his message. It reinforces the idea that we may die with no family members in attendance, but Amida Buddha and Shinran Shonin will always be by our side.

## Rev. Dr. Miyaji Is Third IBS Graduate to Receive Doctorate From Ryukoku

Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji of the Tacoma Buddhist Temple became the third Institute of Buddhist Studies graduate to receive a doctoral degree in Shin Buddhist Studies (Shinshūgaku) by Ryukoku University of Kyoto, Japan.



Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji

Miyaji received his degree on Sept. 19, 2019.

The title for his dissertation was "A Research on Shin Buddhist Ethics" ("Shinshū Rinri no Kenkyū"). In this work, Miyaji explored the historical, cultural, and doctrinal reasons as to why Shin Buddhism, or more specifically, Nishi Hongwanji has been portrayed to struggle with the issue of social engagement.

He went on to introduce a new ethical policy that is not derived from Japanese cultural values, but rather, directly from Shinran Shonin's thought. He calls this the "Pragmatic Approach" and argues that this new ethical policy promotes the doctrinal justification for social engagement by Shin Buddhists.

Rev. Dr. Miyaji is grandson of Professor Kakue Miyaji, a kangaku of Nishi Hongwanji. He is the son of Rev. Nobuo Miyaji, an emeritus minister of the BCA who retired in 2017, and Rev. Yoshiko Miyaji. He received his Tokudo in 2012 and Kyoshi in 2014, followed by Hokyo academic ranking, which he received in 2016.

Miyaji was born in Ogden, Utah, and grew up in Los Angeles, attending the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.

He attended the University of California at Berkeley, where he majored in Philosophy, Japanese Language and Literature, and minored in Buddhism. After college, he went to study at the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS), then to Ryukoku University, where he received another master's degree and completed his doctoral coursework and program there as well.

He explained that the research he conducted at IBS ultimately prompted him to try and find a path to connect the issue of shinjin to ethics.

"We are in a time of trying to re-establish our religious identity in a society of religious pluralism," he said. "The temple is no longer just a haven for JAs (Japanese Americans) to find solidarity after their mistreatment from white America during World War II. This is our avenue forward. Engaging in Shin Buddhist ethics will help to establish our religious identity not just to others, but more importantly, to ourselves."

He is in his third year as Kaikyoshi and lives with his wife Kaori and son, Keisai, who is 3. He is the Resident Minister at the Tacoma Buddhist Temple.

"I'm excited to be here and to start my career," he said. "There are a lot of challenges facing the BCA right now ... a lot. But as long as we remember Amida's Buddha's infinite Wisdom and Compassion that is the ground that we walk on, we will be OK."

## Rev. Umezu Retires After 47-Year Career



Rev. Kodo Umezu concluded his two terms as Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America and Superintendent of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha North America District and retired from the BCA ministry on March 31, 2020 after a 47-year career of sharing the Nembutsu with the members of the BCA. Rev. Umezu and wife, Janet, paid a visit to the BCA monument at the Colma Japanese Cemetery on his last day in office on March 31 where he offered his words of gratitude to all those who came before him for their support and kindness which allowed him to carry out the mission of the Office of the Bishop. (Courtesy of Rev. Michael Endo)



## 'I'm not ok and that's ok'

*Editor's note: This poem is reprinted with the permission by the author, Rev. Blayne Higa, who received his Master of Divinity degree from the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley with a focus on Shin Buddhist ministry and chaplaincy. Rev. Higa is currently the Resident Minister of the Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. For more articles like this one, go to [blaynehiga.com](http://blaynehiga.com).*



**By Rev. Blayne Higa**  
**Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple**  
**(Kealahouka, Hawaii) and IBS Graduate**

I'm not ok.  
 I'm not ok I had to close the doors of the temple to protect my Sangha.  
 I'm not ok I can't give a hug to someone grieving the loss of their loved one.  
 I'm not ok because I feel like I'm not doing enough.  
 I'm not ok the most vulnerable in our society have become worse off.  
 I'm not ok corporate greed is prioritized over people's lives.  
 I'm not ok Asian Americans are being attacked for the color of their skin.  
 I'm not ok those institutions charged with protecting us are spreading confusion and fear.  
 I'm not ok we are trusting the words of a willfully ignorant and self-serving President over doctors and scientists.  
 I'm not ok some pastors and churches are still holding large communal worship falsely claiming, "religious liberty."  
 I'm not ok some selfish people are endangering the welfare of others by not staying at home.  
 I'm not ok that people are dying alone.

I am made ok by realizing that temple is not just a building but a community of people who care for one another.  
 I am made ok by witnessing simple acts of human kindness.  
 I am made ok by being part of the evolution of what it means to be Sangha.  
 I am made ok when a temple member asks me how I'm doing.  
 I am made ok by slowing down to realize what is most essential in life.  
 I am made ok awakening to the beauty that is always present.  
 I am made ok by the sun rising and setting each day.  
 I am made ok when I chant the Hymn of True Entrusting each morning.  
 I am made ok by hearing Amida's voice of compassion in my solitude.  
 I am made ok realizing I don't have to be perfect to care for others.  
 I am made ok knowing we can change our world if we try.  
 I am made ok knowing that within the embrace of the sacred no one dies alone.

Not being ok makes me appreciate my full humanness illuminated by the Buddha's light.  
 Not being ok makes me strive to make things ok.  
 I'm not ok and that's ok.  
 Namo Amida Butsu



**"Dial the Dharma"**  
 for Bishop Harada's Enlightening Message  
**(415) 528-7220**

## BCA Initiates 'Dial the Dharma' Message

While many ministers and temples are creating innovative ways to conduct services and to share the Dharma via the internet by live-streaming, YouTube videos and the like, BCA President Kent Matsuda was concerned about the member who might not have a computer or smart phone and is confined to their homes, unable to access the Dharma.

In response to BCA President Matsuda's concern, a "Dial the Dharma" program has been initiated. By using a designated phone line at the BCA, Rev. Marvin Harada, our new Bishop, is producing audio messages from home and placing them on the phone message system.

Anyone can simply call this number — 415-528-7220 — to hear a short, four- to five-minute recorded Dharma message by Rev. Harada.

The message will be changed periodically.

Please share the number with any member, relative, or friend that you think might enjoy this way to access the Dharma.

## Membership During COVID-19



**Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi**  
**Buddhist Temple**  
**of San Diego**

One positive method of propagation is to have the present membership feel that the temple is serving their needs.

Some members feel

that the Teachings can be a difficult matter to convey to newcomers. However, members can relate how they feel about the benefits of belonging to the temple.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has created a challenge for all temples and the whole society. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the validity of the Dharma and the benefit of temple association.

Interdependence is an important teaching of the Dharma. The current pandemic is an actual demonstration of

our interconnectedness as it has enabled the virus to infect people throughout the world. Many states have ordered a stay at home directive for weeks or months. Although this is effective, it presents other problems. Having no social contact can be very upsetting for many, especially those who live alone.

The Buddha described Indra's net with each knot moving and affecting all other parts of the net. Our temple is making Indra's net a reality by connecting all of our members by email

and telephone. Each temple organization confirms their connection to their members.

For others, especially those who live alone and don't use the internet, we have made a real connection with other Sangha members. This two-way communication allows them to receive printed email safety information and also have a name and phone number for any needed assistance.

This real experience of Indra's net brings security and joy to all, knowing that we are connected.

## Rev. Briones

Continued from Page 2

disregard or don't take seriously social distancing or "safer at home"? Why is there hoarding of toilet paper and hand sanitizers? Why are health-care workers, public safety personal, grocery stock and clerks compromising their health to help those who might have the virus? Who knows?

For Shinran, all our choices, whether good or bad, are the outcome of past karma. Shinran understood that we all have needs and desires or

drives that control our behavior. Shinran recognized the innumerable causes and conditions that could drive people to do things almost against their will, even into situations they had no control over.

In Chapter 13 of the "Tannisho," Yuien writes, "Good thoughts arise in our minds due to the effect of past good and we are made to think and do evil due to the working of karmic evil" and in the words of Shinran, "Under the influence of our karmic past we human beings will do anything."

Jodo Shinshu does

not place a good or bad label upon our choice. Depending upon the circumstances, we must all make the best decision at that moment. It is easy to judge. However, in retrospect, regardless of right wrong, good or bad, how do we feel about what has happened.

The awakening of the individual goes beyond the dualistic nature of extremes. Our life, our karma is unique, therefore our own shall also be unique. And, it is also independent of what we are told is good, bad, right or wrong.

The bottom line for

Shinran's faith goes beyond good and evil, therefore we have no good deeds that will assure us salvation ... but too, there are no evil deeds that can obstruct Amida's Vow. Because Shinran realized our shortcomings he assures us that salvation is completely the result of the Vow.

I think this moral fatigue is real. The author concludes, "As exhausting as moral fatigue can be, we're experiencing it because we're taking the time to reflect more on how our decisions and actions may affect other people" ... What's new?

## Rev. Murakami

Continued from Page 2

utilities and health care to keep my body healthy under the variable circumstances. I was very controlled by the conditions surrounding me, while what I did was just waiting for this difficult time to pass.

My heart, my emotions were not stable. The reason was that I felt that I had lost my "normal" days. They were the normal things before the coronavirus pandemic that included the cheerful voices of children, our daily

schedules, the traffic, (actually, I hope it remains light) and so on. When those things disappeared, it left me lonely.

Master Shinran named the Amida Buddha's 17th vow the Vow of great compassion. This vow is proclaimed as "if, when I attain Buddhahood, the countless Buddhas throughout the worlds in the ten quarters should not all glorify and praise my name, may I not attain the perfect enlightenment."

To see that Shakyamuni Buddha delivered the Larger Sutra, which

is one of the important sutras in Shin Buddhism, we can review how this vow was accomplished and how it is working.

In the sutra, the Buddha praised Amida Buddha's great practice and work, and advised audiences to keep this sutra for future generations. It means that if Amida Buddha didn't manifest this vow, we could not reach the guidance.

As Master Shinran said, Nirvana has neither color nor form; our minds can't grasp it nor describe it. This is why Amida Buddha

manifested the body as compassionate means, which is known as the shape of the Buddha statue in Onaijin, on the sutras.

Taking this form, Amida Buddha is saving the sentient beings by reciting the Nembutsu, which arises from the 17th vow, too. With many ways such as shape, sound and word, the Amida Buddha's great compassion that is the heart never lets us be alone and always appears in this world from Nirvana.

We are not alone. Amida Buddha is always beside us.



## Ministers

Continued from Page 1

with Sangha members, online meditation sessions, Zoom study groups, as well as a blog with entries from ministers and minister's assistants.

In addition, Sangha groups, including the ukelele clubs at the Orange County Buddhist Church and the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple, are continuing to meet — for online sessions.

Several temples and churches also have been reaching out to their Sangha members, particularly the elderly members who may face more of a sense of isolation and loneliness because they are at home, unable to drop in at the temple, see their friends or attend services. Volunteers have been helping seniors with errands, meals, groceries, prescription medication and refills, shopping, or by simply offering a familiar voice.

And Dharma School students have reached out to the seniors, too. At the Midwest Buddhist Temple and Berkeley Buddhist Temple, the students have mailed out fun cards.

"None of us have ever faced what we are facing today with this coronavirus," BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada said. "But ministers and members alike are responding with swift action, sharing the Dharma via the internet, calling on our elderly members who are homebound, conducting services by Zoom, just to mention a few of the innovative things being done. We will continue to share the teachings in creative ways for a time when we most need the teachings."

BCA President Dr. Kent Matsuda saw a silver lining in the current crisis.

"Despite the complete upheaval in everyone's lives and the sadness associated with the tremendous loss of life, we are finding our BCA members have greater access to the Dharma via the internet and an ordinary telephone," Matsuda said. "This has resulted in greater awareness of what is happening in our temples to both our BCA members and the community at large."

Rev. Henry Adams, Resident Minister at the San Mateo Bud-



Several BCA ministers are live-streaming services, including Rev. Diana Thompson, Resident Minister at the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple, and Rev. Ron Miyamura, Resident Minister at the Midwest Buddhist Temple in Chicago. Both Rev. Thompson and Rev. Miyamura use Facebook Live. (Courtesy of Jon Kawamoto)

dhist Temple, said "we're pretty well managing to maintain our established program of Sunday services, adult discussion and Dharma School gatherings using Zoom meetings."

Indeed, with Zoom, members play music from the gathas from homes and make announcements at the end of the service, he said. Other members call in and Rev. Adams can see faces of people who are listening to his Dharma talk.

"During the week, I have been trying to keep up with Zoom meetings, email, and phone communications from home while taking turns with my wife attending to the 'distance learning' programs of our two older sons (in the third-grade and kindergarten), which is proving to be a full-time job in itself!" Rev. Adams said.

Salt Lake City Buddhist Temple Resident Minister Rev. Jerry Hirano and his wife, Dr. Carmela Javellana Hirano, hold a weekly discussion group Wednesday evenings on Facebook Live on topics such as "Fear" and "Trust."

The Midwest Buddhist Temple has a podcast and has begun Zoom meetings and connections with Dharma School students, according to Resident Minister Rev. Ron Miyamura. He also said that the Cleveland Buddhist Temple, where he is the supervising minister, has begun holding Dharma discussions via Zoom.

Monterey and Watsonville Sangha members can each check in via Zoom with Rev. Dennis Shinseki to chat every weeknight

on Tuesdays and Wednesdays — and Rev. Shinseki also conducts a weekly, 60-minute study session on Tuesday afternoon with minister's assistants.

The Palo Alto Buddhist Temple is restarting its study class via Zoom, led by Resident Minister Rev. Dean Koyama. The class is reading "Heart of the Shin Buddhist Path" by Takamaro Shigaraki.

In Berkeley, Supervising Minister Rev. Kiyonubu Kuwahara has moved the meditation sessions from the Hondo to online via Zoom. The Vista Buddhist Temple is also holding meditation sessions online.

Buddhist Church of Florin Resident Minister Rev. Candice Shibata has begun live-streaming Sunday services. Rev. Shibata said the Placer Buddhist Church, where she serves as Supervising Minister, has begun a Facebook page with church updates and activities. She plans to resume study classes online at both Florin and Placer.

And, at the San Jose Betsuin, Rinban Rev. Gerald Sakamoto began a blog, called Byakudo (<https://byakudoandme.wordpress.com/>), with writings from the ministers — Rinban Rev. Sakamoto and Rev. Etsuko Mikame — and minister's assistants.

There have been many first-time experiences for the ministers, especially in holding funerals and memorial services.

Rev. Adams conducted a funeral at the San Mateo Buddhist Temple with only six people in attendance, sitting in separate

pews maintaining the minimum 6 feet apart from each other for social distancing. He also officiated a funeral at a mortuary with only two family members and an iPad facing the casket was set up. Other family members joined via FaceTime.

Rev. Ronald Kobata, Resident Minister at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco, held a virtual makuragyo service via Zoom while in the najin.

"I officiated a makuragyo over speaker phone," said Rev. Diana Thompson, Resident Minister at Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple, referring to the service held immediately at the bedside of the deceased. "The makuragyo was an odd experience, to say the least, as it was very hard for me personally not to be with (or even see) my Sangha members at this very crucial moment in their lives."

She also said she was officiating a hoji memorial service through Zoom. "The family that I am doing the hoji service for is very appreciative of our willingness to adapt to the current circumstances," Rev. Thompson said.

At the San Jose Betsuin, every Sangha member recently

received a brief letter from the temple, with phone numbers and other contact information — and telling them to contact the temple for any needs.

"I wanted it short, to be posted on the refrigerator," Rinban Sakamoto said. "It's not trying to do something extraordinary, but we are doing something ordinary in extraordinary times."

He said he conducts Sunday live-streaming services with only Rev. Mikame in attendance. A stationary camera is installed in the Hondo and Rinban Sakamoto operates it.

"I don't want to jeopardize anyone's health," he said, explaining why he won't allow anyone else to attend the services.

And some ministers, like Rev. Mikame, have decided to go beyond the temple duties to help during the pandemic. She had been volunteering for two weeks at San Jose's Yu-Ai Kai Japanese American Community Senior Service, taking the temperatures of incoming seniors.

"I was remembering my grandmother, who passed away last year, so I contacted the manager of Yu-Ai Kai to see what I could do," Rev. Mikame said. "I also wanted to help the elderly."

## EverydayBuddhism

Continued from Page 1

everyday life. Everyday Buddhist content offers the Dharma 24/7 and we see our courses and content as a supplement for BCA temple Sangha members across the country.

We will be developing a Temple Affiliate Program for BCA temples which will structure how Everyday Buddhist and our BCA temples can work cooperatively to propagate Shin Buddhism and help grow local Sanghas at our temples.

Interestingly, our students are from all over the United States, with clusters around Denver, New York,

Sacramento, San Jose, Orange County Buddhist Church and Vista. Curious but not a coincidence.

We are also reaching seekers from Spain, Scotland and South Africa. Online, we can teach the Dharma globally and share the Shin Buddhist traditions worldwide.

Rather than our original pay-as-you-go model, this year Everyday Buddhist will evolve to a subscription-based model.

Our long-term goal is to become the Spotify of Buddhism. We will continue to offer free introductory content to give interested viewers a taste and feel for our classes. We are developing four specific pathways: "Buddha," "Dharma," "Sangha," and

"Practice" — each with a mix of existing and new courses being introduced this year. There will always be a steady diet of new content to keep Everyday Buddhist fresh and relevant.

It is our vision that EverydayBuddhist.org becomes an educational platform that provides value for the BCA, one of the public faces of Jodo Shinshu teachings.

We hope to help satisfy the spiritual needs of our entire Sangha, whether members, visitors or seekers. Our vision is to create and strengthen our relationship with all BCA temples. Working together we can increase our presence within the growing American Buddhist community.





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## Bishop's Message

Continued from Page 2

er. Even your greatest enemy, or the person that is a thorn in your side, can be a teacher.

My mother does not have any formal Buddhist training or education, but I think that her life experience itself has given her a certain depth of wisdom and spiritual fortitude that I would like to share in this essay.

In that conversation, my mother was talking about her early years growing up. Her generation, the Nisei, or second-generation Japanese Americans, had to live through great trials and tribulations that we can't hardly imagine.

First of all, she had to live through the Great Depression during the 1930s and extreme poverty, as did many in that era. When my mother was a young girl, she only had one dress to wear to school. Every day after returning from school, she would change into her really raggedy clothing, and hand wash the dress for

the next day of school.

One day a classmate said, "You wear that same dress every day. Don't you have anything else to wear?" She was too embarrassed to say anything in return.

Her family was so poor that sometimes they had to pick wild watercress that grew along the streams and rivers for their food. Rarely did they have meat. Her school lunch was two pieces of bread with a sandwich spread resembling tartar sauce in between. No bologna, tuna, or anything like that.

My mother's generation also experienced severe racial discrimination. Even her school teacher was abusive to her and the other Japanese boy in the class.

Then World War II broke out, and businesses and stores put signs in their windows that read, "No Japs allowed."

Japanese Americans were rounded up and sent to internment camps. My mom remembers being put into trains with the windows completely covered. They didn't know where they were being taken

or what their fate awaited them. Some naturally feared the very worst.

When my mother was talking about those difficult early years of her life, she then said something quite striking and unforgettable.

"If we had another Depression or something terrible were to happen, I could take it," she said.

She said it with a sense of confidence that can only come from one's life experience. I realized that because of her life experience, she has an "inner strength," a "spiritual fortitude," that I or maybe our generation lack because we have not had to endure those kinds of life experiences.

Add to that the fact that my grandparents were devout Shin Buddhists and I think that adds up to the inner, spiritual fortitude, and wisdom that my mother has.

Now we are faced with something none of us have ever experienced before in our life, a pandemic. We live with fear, anxiety, at the very least, uneasiness. Will I get it? Will my loved ones get it?

What is going to happen to the world?

Just think about our life a mere few months ago before all of this. We complained about the traffic. We complained about stress and too much work. We complained about the frequent business trips and all the flights we had to take. We would go to a restaurant and complain about the service or the quality of the food. We would complain that our favorite sports team wasn't winning.

Think about it. Wouldn't any one of us take that life back in an instant if we could right now? Now we have to work from home — if we are able to work at all. We cannot fly or travel. We cannot go out to dinner at a restaurant. We can't watch our favorite sports teams on TV or go to a game. We had all of that, but we didn't really appreciate or cherish it.

There is always something positive in what we see only as negative. This terrible ordeal with the coronavirus could be the life experience that "gives to us" the spiritual fortitude,

the inner strength and spirit to live through whatever life presents to us.

In Shin Buddhism, we don't try to "enlighten ourselves," but rather we find ourselves within enlightenment. We cannot conjure it up ourselves, but instead it comes to us. We encounter it.

When my mother said that if we were to have another Depression or had to face something terrible, and she said, "I could take it," it made me reflect on my own self.

Could I say now that "I could take it," no matter what life presents to me? Can I allow this experience of what we are all going through to be the "nurturing of my own inner fortitude?" If we can allow that to happen, then doesn't it take a load off of our shoulders? Doesn't it give meaning to all the inconvenience, the fear, the anxiety that we are facing?

Maybe this becomes the life experience that enables all of us to say someday, "I could take it too."

Namuamidabutsu

## Dharma School

Continued from Page 1

Schools have sprung up throughout the BCA, including Berkeley, the San Mateo Buddhist Temple, Buddhist Church of Oakland and the Buddhist Temple of Alameda.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 quarantine, Dharma School teachers want to give their students a sense of safety and familiarity by communicating regularly with the students and families. The teachers also send helpful links and messages to their students.

Junior YBA teens continue to have meetings using their phones and devices, even though they have had to cancel annual conferences, tournaments and mixers.

The coronavirus pandemic has also altered spring Hanamatsuri programs, which usually involve presentations, skits and projects. This year, many Bay Area temples made slideshows or other presentations that could be experienced remotely.

At the Berkeley temple, the virtual Dharma School class begins right after the regular Dharma Family Service concludes. Soon, the computer screen is filled with Zoom video images of students sitting in their homes.

"I really enjoy seeing all my friends from temple online, especially the seniors since I know they'll be off to college soon," Zora Uyeda-Hale, a 10th-grade student, said. "I've been really grateful to be able to interact with them still."

Zora's brother, seventh-grader Romare Uyeda-Hale, thinks that attend-



Stacy Uyeda, Dharma School Superintendent for the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, in top photo, conducts a Dharma School class via Zoom. (Courtesy of Stacy Uyeda)

ing Dharma School online is "cool."

Stacy Uyeda said the overall reaction from the Dharma School families and students is overwhelmingly positive.

"I have only heard words of appreciation from families," she said. "I think they welcome the regularity of Dharma School classes once a week and a chance to see and hear each other. One family, for instance, is waking up extra early and joining us from Hawaii every Sunday."

In addition, Uyeda and other Bay District teachers held the regular spring

## FYI

The Buddhist Temple of Alameda's Dharma School has the following suggestions for students and families sheltering in place:

- Watch YouTube videos of "The Jataka Tales." You can search "jataka tales, English" online and a storehouse of videos will appear. Here's the link for some to read: [www.pitt.edu/~dash/jataka.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/jataka.html)
- YouTube "simple origami for kids" is another activity that might fill a few moments.
- Online meditations or "cosmic kids yoga" videos for some exercise.

meeting of the Bay District Dharma School Teachers League via Zoom on April 2. Both Rev. Henry Adams, Resident Minister at the San Mateo Buddhist Temple, and Rev. Harry Bridge, Resident Minister at the Buddhist Church of Oakland, serve as advising ministers to the BDDSTL.

"Rev. Bridge spoke comforting words to the Dharma School teachers at our April BDDSTL meeting, reminding us that we are living through a 'crisis' and can only do as much as we can handle for our Dharma Schools," Uyeda said. "To me, I feel that he was reminding us to be compassionate and helpful to each other and to do our part without judgment."

Many Dharma schools are finding ways to practice loving kindness during the pandemic by making phone calls and cards to elderly temple members and remembering the gratitude we owe to essential workers and their families.

## YBE

Continued from Page 1

and conferences, but then move away for college, where those connections are harder to maintain.

Just over three years later, with the encouragement of Rinban Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki during a retreat at the Seattle Betsuin, a larger group of young adults considered how to address this "age gap" within the temples.

"How can we create a way for young voices to be heard, and how can we pass this on to create a legacy?" Matsumoto recalled asking.

The group decided to create a digital space for young Buddhists to express themselves and build solidarity with other young persons, advocates, and allies across the country.

With lightning speed, Matsumoto, Yokoyama, Josh McKinney, Mia Li, Marissa Wong, Emily Ko and Allison Tanaka formed a board, secured a website domain and began writing and soliciting their first articles for launch in February.

They named their site the "Young Buddhist Editorial," an online platform to share stories, Dharma messages, Buddhist art, interfaith dialogue, events and contact information of other young Buddhist groups.

Of course, just after launch, the COVID-19 pandemic overtook our lives, but as we have quickly learned, the digital space is now our primary outlet to share the Dharma.

"We want to be a voice and be a place people go to," Matsumoto said. "YBE is striving to put out stories that people can relate to and look at and

## FYI

Learn more about YBE by visiting their website: [www.youngbuddhisteditorial.com](http://www.youngbuddhisteditorial.com).

To support "Home Is Where the Buddha Is," submit a photo of your Obutsudan or other Buddhist objects in your home to [youngbuddhisteditorial@gmail.com](mailto:youngbuddhisteditorial@gmail.com). Please include a short history, description, or the personal meaning of the item or items in the photo.

YBE is also accepting articles for publication. If you wish to submit a story, contact [youngbuddhisteditorial@gmail.com](mailto:youngbuddhisteditorial@gmail.com).

feel connected to, especially during this time. And not just content for young people, but content that is relatable to everyone."

In the coming months, YBE plans to refine its website to make the group's content more accessible and user-friendly. YBE wants to grow the editorial board and network of young adult contributors throughout the country, and have already recruited Gillian Yamagiwa and Stephanie Fong to join the ranks.

The pandemic also inspired the creation of a photo campaign called "Home Is Where the Buddha Is," a collective community effort to gather pictures of Obutsudans, Buddhas, scrolls and other items that Buddhist followers have in their homes.

For Matsumoto, this project fits YBE's mission to build solidarity.

"We can't go to service, we can't go to temple, so this campaign helps us feel connected to everyone else," he said.

# 今月の法話

## 「互いに耳を傾け、仏様を聴く」

サンマリアオ仏教会  
開教使 アダムス ヘンリー



Rev. Henry Adams

今、新型コロナウイルス感染の影響で世の中が大変な状況になっている中、皆様は阿彌陀如来の智慧と慈悲をよりどころとして、心穏やかに暮らしていますでしょうか？

先月、私が仏教会の4月の会報用の法話を書いていた時ちょうど新型コロナウイルス対策のための不要不急の外出禁止要請が始まりました。その時点でこれからどうなるのだろうという不安はありましたが、新型コロナウイルスが世界中でこんなに数多くの人々が感染するとは想像もしていませんでした。今、5月の法輪用の法話を書いているところですが、今朝「新型コロナウイルスがアメリカにおける死亡原因の一位に上りそうだ」というタイトルの記事をワシントンポスト紙で見かけました。国内外で数多くの方々が感染し、命を落とすケースも少なくないという現状は本当に悲しいことです。しかしこのような不安と恐怖の中でも私たちは親鸞聖人の教えに耳を傾けることによって安心をいただくことができます。

この間、有難く読ませていただいた親鸞聖人のご消息は飢饉と疫病によってたくさんの方が亡くなっていった時代に書かれたもので、親鸞聖人のその言葉は今の大変な状況の中で読みますと心に響いてくるものがあります。

何よりも、去年から今年に欠けて、老若男女を問わず多くの人々が亡くなったことは、本当に悲しいことです。けれども、命あるものは必ず死ぬという無常の道理は、すでに釈尊が詳しくお説きになっているのですから、驚かれるようなことではありません。

（『親鸞聖人御消息16』現代語訳）

この手紙で親鸞聖人は先ず「本当に悲しいことです」と述べられています。この言葉で親鸞聖人がお別れにあった人々の悲しみをやさしく分かち合っておられるのが分かります。その次に

生まれてくるものは皆必ず死に至るといふ無常の道理はすでに、お釈迦様が詳しく説かれていたので、驚くようなことではありませんと述べられています。代々の念仏者はお釈迦様のこの智慧を拠りどころとして大変な時代を生き抜かれて来られました。しかし、新型コロナウイルスで亡くなられた数多くの人々のこと、またこの大変な状況の中でも一生懸命命を救おうと命懸けで働き続けてくれている医療従事者のことを考えると、私はどうしても驚いてしまいます。私はこのような不安を感じる時、小林一茶が『おらが春』に書かれた次の言葉が私の心に響いてきます。この言葉は一茶の幼い愛娘が1819年の天然痘で死別した際の一茶の人生の中で大変な時に述べられたものです。

楽しみが極まって憂い起きるのは、この世のならいであるけれど、まだ楽しみが半ばにもなっていない、千年も経るべき小松で、二葉ほどの笑い盛りである幼子が、寝耳に水が押し寄せるかのように、荒々しい痘瘡神に目をつけられて、今水痘ができて最中なので、ようやく咲いた初花が泥雨に打たれておられるのと同じで、そばで見えてさえ苦しうであつた。それも二三日たつと、痘瘡は乾いてきて、雪解けの谷の土がほろほろ落ちるように、かさぶたというものが取れるので、祝いはやして、棧儀法師（さんだらぼうし）というのを作って、笹湯（酒を入れた湯）を浴びせるまねをして、痘瘡神は送り出したが、ますます弱って、昨日よりも今日は望みが少なくなり、ついに6月21日の朝顔の花と共に、この世を去つた。母親が死に顔にすがりついて、よよよと泣くのももともなごだ。この期に及んでは、ゆく水は再び帰らず、散る花は梢に戻らないなど、あきらめ顔をして、あきらめがたいのは愛情のきずなであつた。

露の世は露の世ながらさりながら

（『おらが春』現代訳・NPO長野県図書館等協働機構／信州地域史料アーカイブ <https://trc-adeac.trc.co.jp/>）

この一茶の言葉は二百年前に書かれたのですが、今の時代に読めば正に述べられた通りだと思えます。生老病死は全ての人が必要出会う苦しみであるというお釈迦様の教えを聞き、それを信じて、また悟りの智慧が整っていない凡夫の私にはお別れの時は悲しみと驚きの気持ちに心が溢れてきてしまいます。

では、病氣と死別から逃げるのが出来ないこの世の中に生きていく私たちがどこから安心をいただくことが出来るのでしょうか？親鸞聖人は、阿彌陀如来が誓われた本願を信じる人は必ずお浄土に往生して苦しみから解放されるとした誓願を勧められており、私たちはこの阿彌陀如来による本願を信じて、

つまり信心によって安心をいただくことができるのです。わたし自身としては、どのような臨終を迎えようともその善し悪しは問題になりません。信心が定まった人は本願を疑う心がないので正定聚の位に定まっているのです。だからこそ愚かで智慧のないわたしたちであっても尊い臨終を迎えるのです。

（『親鸞聖人御消息16』現代語訳）

私のように智慧に欠け、世の中の苦しみに溺れている人々を救うため、阿彌陀如来は本願を立てられました。「南無阿彌陀仏」のお名号を聞きますと生きることにも死ぬことにも恐れはいらぬという安心をくださる仏様の呼び声を聞くことが出来ます。

お念仏に生かされるとは喜びの時にも悲しみの時にも仏様の呼び声を聞くということです。お念仏を共に喜ぶ仲間と一緒に仏法を聴聞することは私たちに大きな安心を与えてくれますが、今は不要不急の外出禁止要請によりなるべく人と会わないよう規制されているため、今まで通りの聴聞はできなくなっています。しかし、だからといって各仏教会のご門徒さんたちが同朋と共にお念仏を喜ぶことが途絶えてしまったというわけではありません。

この一ヶ月、不要不急の外出禁止要請の間、仏教会の仲間たちは電話やEメールを使ってお互いに声を掛けたり、外出が出来ない方を助け合ったりしています。この厳しい現状の中、スパーや薬局への外出ができない方のために買い物のサポートを提供してくれるサービスも必要ですが、そういった方々に電話で話を聞いてくれる相手がいることも大切だと思います。そしてそれは現状の社会的に距離を保たなければいけない時に特に大事と言えるでしょう。ずっと一人になることは精神的負担になります。それは特に高齢者に悪影響を与えてしまいます。日々いろいろな刺激を受けることは年齢を問わず精神的な健康にとっても大事なことで、ある方にとっては仏教会がその刺激を受ける一番の場所になっていくでしょう。今のようにお寺に直接来られない時でも電話で会話をすることによって刺激を受けることができます。この大変な時こそ、御同朋御同行（サンガ）；お仏法の仲間のご縁を互いに大切にしましょう。直接は会えなくても、代わりに家族や親戚、友人らに電話やテレビ電話をかけることによって会話を楽しむことができます。

また、テレビ電話や電話で話し合うことによって、それぞれが持つ不安や心配事に互いに耳を傾けることが出来ます。このような互いに心配事に耳を傾ける様子を見ると、仏様が全ての人々の不安に耳を傾け、皆一人ひとりに安心を与えるための本願を立てて下さったことが思い出されます。そして、「南

無阿彌陀仏」のお名号を耳にし金剛の信心をいただくことで、今のような大変な世の中においても本當の安心をいただくことが出来るのです。先日、オークランド仏教会のブリッジ・ハリイ楽橋先生からのメールに「お念仏を申すのを忘れなく」と書かれていましたが、まさにそのとおりだと思いました。たとえ私たちが阿彌陀さまを忘れてしまっても、阿彌陀さまは決して私たちを忘れることはありません。

南無阿彌陀仏

## 煩惱とウイルス

去年12月半ばより中国の武漢あたりで発生した新型コロナウイルスが、韓国へ、クルーズ船へ、日本へ、あれよあれよと言っている間にイラン、イタリア北部、そしてヨーロッパ全土、さらにアメリカ、カナダ、特に世界最大の都市ニューヨーク市に飛び火して、今3月末現在ではアメリカが世界で一番の感染者数を記録しています。カナダのバンクーバーでのんびり引退生活をしていた私には、この一ヶ月の毎日がなんと長い日々を感じられたことでしょうか。特に毎日孫の子守に明け暮れて、ある意味では余生を楽しんでいたのですが、日々のニュースで一喜一憂どころか、孫の顔も見えず、一憂一憂といった毎日です。

さて仏教では三毒の煩惱と言いますが、貪（むさぼり）、瞋（怒り）、愚痴（迷いの心）が自己の心身を悩ませる根源であるといいますが、宗祖親鸞様は「煩惱具足」と言われますから、これは生まれてから死ぬまで身についたものであるということでありましょう。この煩惱がないと生きて行けないのが人間であり、またそれが生きるエネルギーでもあるわけですから上手に煩惱と共存することを教えるのが、念仏の道でありましょう。

さて、風邪の一種であるウイルスという厄介者は、突然外部から入ってきて、私をあれこれ悩ませます。頭痛、咳、熱、体のだるさ、死への恐怖などです。しかし自分の体の中に抵抗力が備わっていればなんとかこれに対抗し、時間が経てばこれを追い出すこともできますね。一旦回復すれば、なにもなかったように元気になるのです。

そこに煩惱とウイルスの違いがあるようです。煩惱は生涯抱えてゆかねばなりません。それには日頃からよく聴聞をして上手に付き合っていく道、ナンマンダブで日々お浄土への道を歩むことが大切でありましょう。合掌。ナンマンダブ。

（特別寄稿 不二川往来名譽開教使）

# 法輪

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## 総長メッセージ

米国仏教団 総長 原田 マービン

母から学んだこと



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada

私の母親、原田ルースは今91歳です。オレゴンに一人で住んでいて、まだ車も運転しています。89歳の時に「そろそろ新しい車に変えよう」と新車を購入したのです。そんな母親との会話から学んだことがあります。数年前のこと、どこで交わした会話は覚えていないのですが、最近のコロナウイルス感染拡大の状況でふと思い出したのです。仏教では様々な人々や生き物、出来事が何かを教えてくれる先生だと見ることがあります。両親や祖父母をはじめ、猫や犬などのペットが仏教の教えを伝えてくれることがあります。癌をわずらうなど人生の困難な経験から学べることもあります。嫌いな人や悩みの種になるような人も何かを教えてくださる教師なのです。

私の母親は仏教の教義や教学を正式に学んだわけではありませんが、人生の経験を通して仏教の智慧や忍耐のことを深く理解しているように思えます。

1930年代母が幼い時、世界大恐慌が起こり貧しい生活を強いられました。学校に着ていく服が一枚しかなく、学校から帰ったらヨレヨレの着古した服に着替えて、学校に着ていく服を手洗いしていました。

ある日、クラスメートに「あなた毎日同じ服着てるわね。他に着るものないの?」と言われ、本当に恥ずかしい思いをして

何も言い返せなかったそうです。

家はとても貧乏で川岸に生えているクレソンを摘んで食料にしていました。肉を口にすることはほとんどなく、学校のランチにはパンにタルタルソースのようなものをほんだサンドウィッチを持って行きました。ミートソースやツナなどをほさむことはありませんでした。

また、母親の世代は厳しい人種差別も経験しています。学校の先生であっても日本人の生徒にはつらくあたったそうです。そして第二次世界大戦が起これば「日本人お断り」のサインが貼られ、ビジネスはできず、お店にも入れない、という状況になりました。

日系人はまとめて強制収容所に収監されました。母は列車に押し込められて移動中は外を見られないように、窓を完全に目隠しされていたことをよく覚えているそうです。収容所に送られるとき、一体どこに連れていかれるのだろうか、この先何が起るのかと不安になり、最悪の事態が起ることを恐れたことでした。

母親がそのような自分が若い時に起こった困難な経験を話してくれた時、とても記憶に残ることを言ったのです。「もしまだ経済恐慌や何か悪いことが起こったら、また乗り越えられるよ。」

その言葉には経験に裏打ちされた自信を持って言っていることが感じられました。母は、私や同世代の人々が経験したことがないような困難に耐え忍んできたので、我々に欠けているであろう「内面の強さ」、「我慢強さ」があるように思います。時代背景に加えて、私の祖父母は篤信な浄土真宗門徒で、それが母の内面を強くし、仏教の教えの理解を深めたのだとも思っています。

現在、私たちはコロナウイルスの感染爆発という今までに経験したことのない事態に直面し、恐れや不安の中で生活しています。「自分は感染しないだろうか?」「家族は感染しないだろうか?」「この先世界はどうなるのか?」と心配されていることでしょう。

つい数ヶ月前のことを思い出してみてください。私たちは渋滞、仕事が多いこと、ストレスを受けることに不平不満を言っ

てました。度重なる出張、搭乗する飛行機のこと、レストランでのサービスや味のこと、ひいきのスポーツチームがなかなか勝てないなど、文句ばかり言っていたのではないのでしょうか。考えてみてください。それでももしそんな生活に一瞬で戻れるとしたら、みなさんは戻りたいと思つてはいませんか? 今は自宅からリモートワークをしている方が多いです。飛行機に乗って出張はできませんし、レストランに食事に行くこともできません。好きなチームの試合も見られません。そういったことが当たり前でできていたので、そのことを心から感謝していませんか? なかったのではないのでしょうか。

ネガティブなことしかないように思える出来事でも必ず何かポジティブな面があります。私はこの恐ろしいコロナウイルスの苦境の経験は、今後どのような事が起きても乗り越えていけるような内面の強さが育まれている面があるようにとらえています。

浄土真宗は「自分で悟る」教えではなく自分が悟りの中にあることに気づく教えです。我々が悟り呼び起こすのではなく、悟りの方から呼び起こされるのです。それに出遇うのです。母がもしまた経済恐慌や何か悪いことが起こったら、「乗り越えられるよ。」と言ったことをこの状況で思い出し、たいへん考えさせられました。

今の私が母と同じように何が起っても「乗り越えられるよ」と言えるのでしょうか?このコロナウイルスの状況を「内面の強さを育むため」の経験と受け入れられるでしょうか?もしそのように思えるなら、気が楽になるのでしょうか?私たちが直面している不向き、恐れや不安には意味があるのでしょうか?

このように思い、考えるという事は、私たちは今困難な経験をしている中にあるということです。そしていつか「私も乗り越えられるよ」と言えるようになるでしょう。

南無阿弥陀仏

## 葬儀や法事に関するガイドライン

コロナウイルス感染拡大下での葬儀や法事のガイドラインが4月8日にアップデートされ、BCA本部から各開教使と各寺院に送られている。改訂されたガイドラインによると、僧侶、門信徒とその家族などがコロナウイルスへ感染するリスクをさげるため、現在では臨終勤行(枕経)、葬儀、法事などは行わ

ないようにし、延期する事が推奨されている。葬儀や法事を延期できない場合はズームやスカイプなどのインターネット会議プログラムや電話などを利用し、5、6名以下で法要を行うことが望ましいとしている。僧侶が自宅または寺院から読経や法話をし、故人の家族は自宅の仏壇前に集まり焼香、聴聞をする。(このアップデートは4月8日のものなので、最新の改訂については各仏教会の開教使まで連絡してください。)

## 電話で法話

現在、コロナウイルス感染拡大防止のため全米のほとんどの州で外出禁止令がだされている。その影響で多くの寺院がインターネットを利用して日曜礼拝をしているが、コンピューターをあまり利用しない門信徒にとって、インターネットでの法要に参加するのが困難だとの声があがっている。そういった方々に向けて、BCA本部は電話をすれば、原田総長の法話を聴聞できるようなじた。Dial the Dharmaというプログラムで、415-528-7220に電話すると、5分間の英語法話を聞くことができる。今後、日本語法話も行う予定にしている。



Shinran Shonin at wisteria at Los Angeles Nishi Betsuin