

# WHEEL OF DHARMA

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## Seminar Shares Dharma with School Teachers



Participants included (first row, left to right): Alex Ettling, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara (CBE Co-director), Edythe Vassall (CBE staff), Rev. Kodo Umezu (BCA Bishop), Venerable "Bhante" Madawala Seelawimala (IBS), Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto (IBS), Stacy Uyeda, Karen Magnin, and Rev. Marvin Harada (CBE Co-director). Second row: Loren Otake, Nikki Taura, Josh Hernandez Morse, June Trachsel, Jennifer Ransdell, Amanda Lepore, and Alan Takemura.

In the first of a proposed series of seminars on Buddhism for the benefit of the general community, the Institute of Buddhist Studies and the Buddhist Churches of America Center for Buddhist Education sponsored a Dharma Training for School Teachers seminar to introduce Buddhism to elementary school teachers and explore how the Dharma can relate to the teaching profession.

The seminar took place from July 20-23 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley. Teachers came from as far away as Hawaii, Washington State, and Arizona, though most were from California. The majority teach grades from middle school through high school. The students they serve range from youth in South Central Los Angeles living be-

low the poverty line to youth in private schools.

Presenting lecturers were the Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto and the Venerable "Bhante" Madawala Seelawimala, both faculty members at the Institute of Buddhist Studies.

"Personally, Bhante's talks had my mind going (and continues to) as many concepts he spoke of were very new to me," one teacher commented. "I appreciated Rev. Matsumoto's talk about wisdom and foolishness, and how the goal is not to be righteous. As a teacher, I think it was meaningful to hear the dharma so I can be a better person and therefore a better teacher ... As for classroom applications, I think there are many ways I already include secular versions of Buddhist

virtues/values in the classroom that I will continue to do."

Personal enrichment sessions, including morning yoga and an interactive lesson on the basics Japanese tea ceremony, were led by Yufuko Kurioka Galbraith and David Galbraith of *nogatetea.com*.

Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, created the program, which was funded by an anonymous donor. "Bishop Umezu's will to recognize and support teachers came through clearly in this seminar," one teacher wrote on her feedback form.

"I truly appreciate all of the *senseis* and staff for their support of education," wrote another. "Your vision to build stronger communities by assisting teachers and students is very heartening!"

## Statement on the Killing in Charlottesville, Virginia

On August 12, 2017 at a white supremacist rally, a neo-Nazi drove a car into the people protesting his ideology. He killed a woman and injured 19 other people. It was very deplorable and sad to see this incident in Charlottesville, Virginia. I would like to express my deepest sympathies and condolences to the victims' families and friends.

The action that we witnessed was caused by anger and hatred deriving from a sad American historical background. We, as American citizens and residents, are experiencing the heavy karmic effects of our past history. We should be reminded of the American doctrine that all people are equal, as we often hear. We should turn to the core values of each individual's religion or faith to find the way to live harmoniously.

No matter what path we walk, we know that we should not get angry or hate others. We know that we want to love everyone. And at a time like this, we all ask why this happened and how we can stop this type of human behavior.

We, as Buddhists, come to hear the urging voices coming from our teachers in the midst of this world of suffering — this world of *samsara*. The Buddha is standing with us with tears in its eyes, urging all of us to turn to the Infinite Compassion and Wisdom in order to transcend love and hate. Transcending love and hate does not mean that we eliminate our feelings of love and hate. It means that we recognize and understand that these powerful emotions

exist within each of us; they are part of our human condition. We seek to encounter people who feel deep sorrow for our human condition and aspire to attain something worthier.

When we are touched and moved by the Vow of the Buddha to save all beings from suffering with Infinite Wisdom and Compassion directed at us to find the True and Real World beyond our foolish thoughts, we begin to live our lives with humility, understanding, and concern for one another.

Ultimately, we are all within the World of Oneness. Let us start with each individual to help create a better community by hearing the Compassionate Call from the World of True Equality.

Namo Amida Butsu,  
**Rev. Kodo Umezu**  
Bishop, Buddhist  
Churches of America

*Ignorance and blind passions abound,*

*Pervading everywhere like innumerable particles of dust.*

*Love and hatred arising out of accord and conflict*

*Are like high peaks and mountain ridges.*

(Collected Works of Shinran, p. 400)

*When we reflect on the establishment of the Vow,*

*We find that the Tathagata, without abandoning sentient beings in pain and affliction,*

*Has taken the directing of virtue to them as foremost,*

*Thus fulfilling the mind of great compassion.* (CWS, p.408)



Rev. Nariaki Hayashi and minister's assistant Dr. Erick Ishii of Ekoji Buddhist Temple conducting the 2017 memorial service. Flower bouquets were offered by Ekoji and the Buddhist Churches of America. The Memorial Wall includes the names of many BCA members who fought and died in WWII.

## Obon Memorial in Washington, DC

Since the dedication of the Japanese American National Memorial to Patriotism During World War II in Washington, D.C. on November 9, 2000, the Ekoji Buddhist Temple has conducted a memorial service every Obon\* in memory of the more than 800 Japanese American soldiers who died in World War II. Their names are engraved on the memorial wall.

The Memorial honors Japanese American veterans who served in the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Military Intelligence Service, and other units.

"The 100th Infantry Battalion/442 RCT, made up of mostly Japanese Americans from Hawaii and the concentration camps on the mainland, became legendary because of their exploits in Europe during World War II. In just 225 days of combat between 1944-45, the 442nd compiled a remarkable record and became the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in American military history."<sup>1</sup>

Some of these Nisei soldiers were buried in European cemeteries, and their families and descendants are not able to visit the graves of their

loved ones during Obon. Therefore, Ekoji Buddhist Temple, located in Fairfax Station, Virginia, has made it a part of their annual Obon observances to conduct a memorial service here on behalf of all Buddhist Churches of America and Hawaii Kyodan families, and the Japanese American community.

\*Obon: an annual Japanese Buddhist event for commemorating one's ancestors.

<sup>1</sup>[www.jamsj.org/100th-infantry-battalion-and-442nd-regimental-combat-team-rct](http://www.jamsj.org/100th-infantry-battalion-and-442nd-regimental-combat-team-rct)

## Mutual Recognition

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

Some time ago, I heard a senior member of the Buddhist Churches of America express with surprise that a long-time resident didn't even know that a Buddhist church existed in their town.

I could see how that happened. Our Buddhist churches and temples have been here for over one hundred years. However, their main purpose had been to care for the wellness of the Japanese immigrants, their families and descendants facing historical and cultural obstacles such as racism, religious intolerance, and language differences. Our ministers and leaders provided whatever was needed in order for their people to survive in this country. Churches and temples were and are needed for those reasons. But the conditions surrounding our organization are rapidly changing.

Today, we are seeing some positive changes. One is that more and more people are looking to Buddhism as their spiritual and religious quest. According to Rev. Nariaki Hayashi of Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Virginia, around 1,800 people came to their Obon Festival, and many people attended the Obon Service to listen to the Dharma. He also said that

over 500 scouts came to the Buddhist Sunday Service at the 2017 Boy Scouts of America National Jamboree on July 23. The space allocated to the Buddhist group had a capacity for only 150 people, so he had to divide the group into three and it was still standing room only. As reported in the August issue of the *Wheel of Dharma*, Rev. Hayashi was assisted by a Youth Minister's Assistant, Brandon Fujii of Oxnard Buddhist Temple. Many scouts were impressed to see a young Buddhist actively participating in the Sunday morning service. Rev. Hayashi is trying to let the public know that Ekoji Buddhist Temple is there in the community.

I would like us to encourage each other to let people know that we are here. It is our responsibility to let people know that we exist and would like to welcome them. When the community recognizes our temple, our temple truly becomes a temple. This reminds me of the third stanza of *Juseige*\*:

*When I have fulfilled the Buddha-way,  
My Name shall pervade the ten quarters;  
If there be any place it is not heard,  
I vow not to attain the supreme enlightenment.*

Although the Buddha is always the Buddha, if we do not recognize the Buddha or his Wisdom and Compassion, he does not become the Buddha. It is like the mutual recognition between a mother

and her child when the child calls out, "Mother."

Amida Buddha appears in this world of *samsara*\*\* as the Name, *Namo Amida Butsu*\*\*\* because Amida wants us to recognize his presence and call his Name. Our True Friend has been calling to each and every one of us through the Name. However, it is not merely a name. It is the powerful and effective working of Enlightenment. It destroys our foolishness. It breaks our massive ego. It takes us to our True and Real Home. Therefore, the Name itself is Amida Buddha; the activity of the infinite compassion and wisdom. To call the Name of Amida is to hear, recognize and praise his profound compassion within the Name. It is indeed a call and response.

The First of September is the founding day of the Buddhist Churches of America. It was called the Buddhist Mission of North America at the time. Let us express our deepest appreciation to the founding members and leaders of our organization. And let's be a little more proactive in letting people know that we are here and would like to share the Dharma with everyone.

Namo Amida Butsu.

\* *Juseige: Three Sacred Vows*

\*\* *samsara: eternal cycles of birth, suffering, death, and rebirth*

\*\*\* *Namo Amida Butsu: a command to take refuge in Amida Buddha; an expression recited in gratitude*

## King of the Fish

By Rev. Henry Toryo Adams, San Mateo Buddhist Temple



During a recent drive through inland California, I noticed many dry riverbeds as I passed by ravines and over bridges. Seeing dry land where water once flowed, called to mind a Buddhist

Jataka that tells of the king of a school of fish that lived in a beautiful lake that was adorned with lotus blossoms and surrounded by flowering trees.

One summer there was a dry spell, during which no rain fell for weeks on end. The hot sun beat down, a dry wind blew and the parched earth soaked up the waters of the lake. As the lake dried up, crows began to circle overhead looking to snatch a meal from the increasingly shallow water. The fish in the lake grew anxious and began to dart back and forth in search of shelter.

Feeling the suffering of his companions as his own, the king of the fish looked up to the sky and said, "As surely as I do not recall ever having intentionally killed a living creature, even in the most desperate situation, so, by the

power of this truth, may the lord of gods send rain and fill the lakes with water."<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the fish king's store of virtue, the skies were moved by his request the rains began to fall. As the rain fell, the fish were filled with joy and relief.

The king of the fish was pleased to see his companions' relief. At the same time, he was concerned that the lake may dry up again in the future. In the hope of providing lasting peace of mind for his companions, he appealed to Sakra, lord of the gods, to help him ensure that the lake would never again face a similar crisis. Inspired by how the king of the fish had made efforts to help his companions, Sakra caused the rains to pour down such that the lake would never go dry again.

This story reminds us of the truth that when you work for the benefit of others, you can achieve the marvelous and unexpected because others are inspired to help. Few people are inspired to help someone who is working only for their own personal benefit. However, when one is working for the benefit of all beings, people will go to unexpected lengths to help achieve a worthy goal.

In this story, I see a reflection of how the Buddha's boundless compassion is at work in our lives through the *Nembutsu*.\* In his *Hymns of the Pure Land*, Shinran

Shonin writes:

*When we say "Namu-amida-butsu,"  
Brahma and Indra\*\* venerate us;  
All the benevolent gods of the heavens  
Protect us constantly, day and night.  
(Collected Works of Shinran, p. 353)*

Like the fish king who would go on to become Shakyamuni Buddha in a future birth, Amida Buddha possesses a tremendous store of virtue that he directs for the benefit of all beings. In the words "Namu-Amida-Butsu" we receive this directing of virtue for our Birth in the Pure Land and realization of awakening. Just as Sakra is inspired to aid the fish king in the Jataka above, Shinran writes that one whose heart dwells in the Nembutsu finds marvelous support and protection from the unseen flow of benevolent powers in the universe.

Namo Amida Butsu

<sup>1</sup> *Once the Buddha Was a Monkey: Arya Sura's Jatakamala*, trans. Peter Khoroch, p. 104

\* *Nembutsu: to recite the Name of Amida Buddha: Namu Amida Butsu*

\*\* *Indra: another name for the god Sakra*

## Watsonville Buddhist Temple



Watsonville Buddhist Temple  
423 Bridge Street  
Watsonville, CA 95076  
Tel: (831) 724-7860  
Fax: (831) 724-8167  
E-mail: info@wbtemple.org  
www.wbtemple.org

On July 6, 1907, the Watsonville Hongwanji Buddhist Church was officially organized by community leaders. The first minister was Rev. Jinow Inouye, and within a year there were 208 paid members. On September 8, 1907 a lot was purchased, and construction of the first temple was completed in November 1908.

Between 1919 and 1930, four neighboring houses were bought as rental properties. Official church records from 1906 to 1936 were lost when the buildings were closed during World War II. The Japanese families were sent to the Assembly Center in Salinas, then imprisoned in the Poston Relocation Center in Arizona. In late 1945 the buildings were reopened as a hostel for those returning to Watsonville. Rev. Yoshio Iwanaga conducted religious services voluntarily. After five years, the Temple was officially reactivated. Rev. Iwanaga passed away in 1950, and there was no resident minister until 1956.

From the 1950s and on, several additions resulted in a new temple complex, including apartment buildings behind the temple to provide low-cost housing for seniors. A bell tower building was completed in 1981.

The Watsonville Buddhist Temple will observe its 110-Year Celebration on November 4, 2017.



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BCA National Headquarters  
1710 Octavia Street  
San Francisco, CA 94109  
Tel: (415) 776-5600  
Fax: (415) 771-6293  
Info@bcahq.org

www.BuddhistChurchesOfAmerica.org  
Email: WODeditor@bcahq.org

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Editor, Japanese Section:

Rev. Ryuta Furumoto

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Section Editors: Yumi Hatta,

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## Can the Nembutsu Help with Our World Issues?



By Ken Tanimoto  
BCA President  
Watsonville Buddhist Temple

In this issue of the *Wheel of Dharma* you will find an article about the beginnings of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA). The BCA was born in an American concentration camp at a time when racist hatred was sharply focused on people of Japanese descent. Today we see the same fires of

hatred, greed, and ignorance being fanned at home and abroad, and the threat of nuclear war is again rearing its ugly head.

Like many of you, I have been reading about the many serious social and world issues that have been happening recently. Like you, I am disturbed by the recent actions of leaders in Venezuela, North Korea, and even in our own country.

What I am most distressed about is what happened on August 12 at a white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. One innocent protester was killed and many people were seriously injured by a white supremacist who expressed the three poisons that create human suffering: greed, anger, and ignorance. Two others died in an accident related to the event.

When I first heard about this, I, too, be-

came just as angry as the person who drove into the crowd and killed the protestor. Anger at the murderer was my first emotion, then ignorance of not really knowing what led to this event, blaming our political leaders, and quickly reacting to raw emotion. For a few moments after seeing and hearing about the incident, I felt the desire to do harm to another person.

Looking back at this terrible day as well as other events of past and present history, i.e., Japanese-American relocation camps, Muslim temple bombings and beatings, African-Americans and Latinos being racially profiled, I felt a gut wrenching feeling that hatred and bigotry exist today more than ever.

It is my personal belief that what happened in Charlottesville could have been different if, before anything erupted, a respectful, active dialogue could have taken place so that differences could have been listened to and hopefully negotiated. Maybe I am a dreamer, but there has to be some way of interconnecting with one another before innocent people get hurt. Our world we live in is not about you or me...it's all about you *and* me.

To make any sense of world, national, and local issues, my guide to peace and tranquility is going back to our *Nembutsu* teachings of showing and expressing kindness and compassion. It is the only way to bring joy back into our lives. In the words of Shinran Shonin:

*Even when we are evil, if we revere the power of the Vow all the more deeply, gentleheartedness and forbearance will surely arise in us through its spontaneous working.*

(Collected Works of Shinran, p.676)

*Namo Amida Butsu.*

## No Boundaries

By Rev. Ronald Kobata, Buddhist Church of San Francisco



Rev. Ronald Kobata spoke at the SF Unite Against Hate Rally at City Hall on August 25. Photo by Keith Kojimoto.

*The radiance of enlightenment, in its brilliance, transcends all limits; Thus Amida is called "Buddha of Light of Purity."*

*Once illuminated by this light,*

*We are freed of karmic defilements and attain emancipation.*

— Hymns of the Pure Land #9 (Collected Works of Shinran, p. 326)

Twice a year we dedicate a service to reflect upon the seasonal changes in the natural and physical world by observing Spring or Fall *O-Higan*\* 「御彼岸」 (other shore), which coincide with the equinox. Transitioning from the heat of summer to the cool of autumn provided people with a sense of reinvigoration and anticipation for the fall harvest. They were inspired to rededicate their lives to a spiritual sense of being idealized as the "Other Shore" or 「彼岸」 *Higan*, a state of spiritual liberation, or the Pure Land of Enlightenment.

An alternate description for the experience of awakening to the truth (the Dharma) describes breaking out of the cycle of *samsara*\*\* (delusion). Regardless of how it may be described, the goal of awakening from the delusion of seeing ourselves as individual, separate beings independent unto ourselves is how I appreciate our Buddhist sense of being in and of the world we live in, together in Oneness with all beings. This awareness is awakened within us by the reality of impermanence: nothing exists forever. In this light, we come to appreciate the truth that we do not live alone.

There is a metaphor that describes an unaware life as being encased in a cocoon of self-

identifying threads of thoughts. We have our own beliefs about what we think "I" am, what "others" are, and what "the world" is. Until the causes and conditions of our life situations redirect our minds to question who or what we are, we will continue to wrap ourselves in these thought threads. Shin Buddhist writings refer to them as "blind desires." They are considered blind in that they lack light; they lack awareness. We continue to wrap ourselves in thoughts of becoming "somebody" (wanting recognition and praise), and fearing being "nobody."

The unraveling process begins with the awareness of the limits and foolishness of identifying ourselves as someone or something that exists independently and unchanging; as my "self." I appreciate the meaning of "Hearing the Dharma" as the light of day that penetrates into the cocoon, causing it to open up to the boundless world surrounding and sustaining it.

You may recall the late Lt. Col. Ellison Onizuka, one of the seven astronauts who died in the tragic explosion of the Challenger space shuttle in 1986. A recent news item brought to mind a comment I read quoting Ellison's observation from a prior successful space shuttle mission. Having

been raised as a Shin Buddhist through his family's involvement with the Kona Hongwanji on the island of Hawaii, and having served as the president of the state Junior Young Buddhist Association, looking into the vast universe from the space shuttle, he shared with his mother, "I felt that I saw the Pure Land; no boundaries!"

Like being liberated out of the bondage of the cocoon of thoughts of a single, solid, static "self," we cross over to the Other Shore, the Boundless Pure Land of Immeasurable Life and Light.

*That which gives meaning to human existence is the Pure Land*

*That which binds the Pure Land to human existence is the Primal Vow (Hongwan)*

*That which manifests the Primal Vow in human existence is the Nembutsu.*

*That which is inwardly sensed in human existence by virtue of the Nembutsu is Light*

Rev. Daiei Kaneko

*Namo Amida Butsu*

*\*Higan (or o-higan): literally means "other shore" in Japanese. It refers to nirvana, enlightenment, or the Pure Land.*

*\*\*samsara: eternal cycles of birth, suffering, death, and rebirth*

## In Memoriam

### Rev. Yasuto John Jaan Doami



The Buddhist Churches of America announces with deepest sympathy the passing of Rev. Yasuto John Jaan Doami on August 16, 2017 in Cerritos, California. Rev. Doami was born in Sacramento and received *Tokudo* ordination in 1960 and *Kyoshi* certification in 1961 and was appointed a *Kaikyoshi* in 1965. He served at the Los Angeles Betsuin and Gardena Buddhist Church before embarking on a career at the Los Angeles County Library overseeing the Asian collections. Rev. Doami began volunteering as a part-time minister at the Orange County Buddhist Church in 1974 and formally served the Orange County Sangha for 36 years, from 1977 until 2013.

Rev. Doami is survived by his wife Koko, sons David (Kim) and Daryl (Lily), brother Junji (Pat) and four grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at the Orange County Buddhist Church on September 3, 2017.

### Rev. Dr. Alfred Bloom



It is with deepest sadness that the Buddhist Churches of America and the Institute of Buddhist Studies announce the passing of Rev. Dr. Alfred Bloom on August 25, 2017 in Hawaii.

For many years, Dr. Bloom served a distinguished career at the University of Hawaii as Professor of Religion. Upon retirement, he came to Berkeley and was appointed Dean of the Institute of Buddhist Studies from 1986 to 1988.

In 1990, Dr. Bloom received *Tokudo* ordination from the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji sect, followed by *Kyoshi* certification in 1992 and was designated as a *Kaikyoshi* in 1994.

Dr. Bloom was awarded the Institute of Buddhist Studies' President's Award in 2016 for his extraordinary support of the IBS.

Funeral services for Dr. Bloom were held at the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin on September 2, 2017.



**Kieshiki Affirmation Ceremony for YAC at Buddhist Church of San Francisco:** On Thursday, July 6, 2017, Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America, conferred Buddhist names on 13 members of the BCA Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) Summer Retreat during their visit to the Buddhist Church of San Francisco.

### Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani to visit Hawaii Kyodan

On June 4, 2014, His Eminence Monshu Kojun Ohtani assumed the position as the 25th *Monshu* (head priest) of our Hongwanji sect. At that time, he began traveling throughout Japan, making official visits to each district and meeting with temple members.

From October 2016 through May of this year, *Dento Hokoku Hoyo* (Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition) services were held at the Hongwanji headquarters. They were attended by thousands of *Nembutsu* followers from all over the world, including members from the overseas

districts from Hawaii, Canada, South America, and the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA).

This month, Gomonshu Ohtani will make an official visit to the Hawaii District, visiting temples throughout the islands. On September 8, Gomonshu will participate in the Classroom Building Dedication Ceremony at the Pacific Buddhist Academy, the first Shin Buddhist high school in the USA. The BCA extends a warm welcome and best wishes for a memorable visit to our 50th state!

### BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

## Memories of the 2017 Young Buddhist International Exchange

By Trevor Yokoyama, Seattle Betsuin

Before participating in the Young Buddhists' International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE) program, I had yet to realize the profound effect that Jodo Shinshu Buddhism has had upon my life. For me, growing up Buddhist was always fairly simple: going to church on Sundays, chanting *Juseige*, going to Dharma School and YBA [Young Buddhists' Association] and occasionally saying *Namo Amida Butsu* whenever I killed a bug. However, going to Japan and meeting fellow Buddhists from around the world as well as learning about the history of our religion has allowed me to gain a deeper appreciation for being a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist.

For those of you who don't know, YBICSE is a program in which young Jodo Shinshu Buddhists travel to the Nishi Hongwanji for a 10-day retreat in which they learn about and experience Buddhism in Japan. Our group had a total of 35 participants from Hawaii, Canada, Brazil, and mainland America. For the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) participants,



YBICSE group at the Hongwanji Headquarters

six days were spent in Kyoto, three days at a home-stay in Osaka, and a day trip to Hiroshima. Furthermore, after the program ended, our group spent an additional two days in Tokyo.

For many of the participants in YBICSE, this was a trip of "firsts." A large number of participants had never traveled to Japan nor had they had the chance to visit the Nishi Hongwanji.

However, any anxiety that our group possessed was resolved after the first day of the program. Meeting the other participants was an experience that I will always cherish. I thought that it was wonderful how, although from different countries, Buddhism had allowed us to meet and befriend one another. I would often reflect upon this notion throughout the trip as I traveled to other temples and my homestay.

Staying at the Hongwanji was both educational and enjoyable. It is a very surreal feeling to go to morning service at the Hongwanji. As Rev. Endo pointed out to us, our BCA churches have gone through a bit of "Americanization" as our *Hondos* (main hall of the temple) are more narrow than wide, and have pews. Although different, I felt at ease during service and we all found service to be a wonderful, albeit early, start to our mornings.

I think that the highlight of the week for everyone was the homestays in Osaka. We were assigned to different Temples throughout the area and our homestay families quickly became extensions of our own families. All of us were stuffed full of food, *omiyage* (souvenirs) and memories over those three days, and we all treasure our time there.

Our whole group encourages anyone who is eligible to take part in the YBICSE program. We have all gained wonderful friends, memories and stories that we will hold dear for the rest of our lives. I would also like to thank everyone involved with YBICSE program including Rev. Patti Usuki, Rev. Michael Endo, and members of Nishi Hongwanji's international department. These individuals, along with many more, helped to enable myself and the other participants to realize a grander meaning to being a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist. *Namo Amida Butsu.*

## 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Tribute to George Aratani

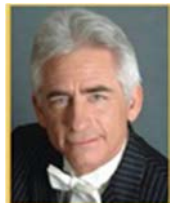
Sunday, October 1, 2017 from 1-4 p.m.

Aratani Theatre, 244 S. San Pedro St., Los Angeles, CA

George Aratani was a great Japanese American *Nisei*. He was a man of humility, compassion, fortitude, and courage who practiced his Buddhist principles by caring for all human beings; an innovator who founded two international companies: Mikasa & Co. and Kenwood Electronics. He was a great philanthropist and helped raise awareness of Japanese culture.



Speakers:  
George Takei  
Rev. William Briones  
Joy Melcher



Performances by:  
David Benoit  
June Kuramoto  
Scott Takeda  
Josephine Seki

Tickets available at JACCC Aratani Theatre or online at [Aratani100.eventbrite.com](http://Aratani100.eventbrite.com)

Early Bird ticket: \$25 per person Early Bird group of 10 or more: \$22 per person  
After September 20, ticket prices go up to \$35 and \$30 for 10 or more

To become a sponsor or place an ad in George Aratani souvenir program booklet, please contact Hoshina Seki at [info@ambuddhist.org](mailto:info@ambuddhist.org) or call 914-393-0510

Sponsored by



American Buddhist Study Center

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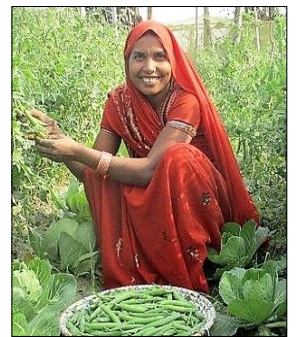
[www.ambuddhist.org](http://www.ambuddhist.org)



These walks raise awareness and funds for Buddhist Global Relief which was inspired by Bhikkhu Bodhi to combat hunger and malnutrition. BGR supports long-term methods of sustainable food production and promotes the education and right livelihood of girls and women so essential in the struggle against poverty and malnutrition. The walks help people lift themselves out of poverty here locally and all over the world.

To register for a walk, visit [BuddhistGlobalRelief.org](http://BuddhistGlobalRelief.org). Contact BGR at [info@buddhistglobalrelief.org](mailto:info@buddhistglobalrelief.org) or call 1-888-852-7579.

San Jose, CA	September 16
Willington, CT	September 24
San Francisco, CA	September 30
Portland, ME	September 30
Milford, MI	September 30
Seattle, WA	September 30
Philadelphia, PA	October 15
Portland, OR	October 21
St. Louis, MO	October 22
New York, NY	October 28
Houston, TX	November 4



## 2017 BCA Educational Events

Programs subject to change. Events at the Jodo Shinshu Center unless otherwise noted.

September 23 ~ Fifth Annual Women in Buddhism Conference, *Buddhist Paths: Women's Choices*. 9:30 am - 3:30 pm, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple, 1427 S. Main St., Seattle, WA. Speakers: Rev. Carol Himaka, Rev. Candice Shibata, and Prof. Kyoko Tokuno. **Registration:** \$30 for students with ID, all others \$45. For details, visit [seattlebetsuin.org](http://seattlebetsuin.org).

September 23 ~ "Just As You Are: Being LGBTQ and Buddhism" will be held at the Pasadena Buddhist Temple, 2-5 pm. Free admission; all are welcome. RSVP at [PasadenaBuddhistTemple.org](http://PasadenaBuddhistTemple.org)



Sept. 26-29 ~ West & East Hong(w)anji Overseas Propagation Exchange (WEHOPE) and Ministers' Continuing Education (MCE) Seminar.

Nishi and Higashi ministers meet, study, and dialogue together.

## 2017 WEHOPE DHARMATHON

A series of Dharma messages

September 27, 7-8:15 pm & September 28, 4-5:15 pm  
Free & Open to the Public at the JSC, 2140 Durant Ave., Berkeley

September 30 ~ Fall Japanese Seminar. Dharma talks in Japanese by ministers participating in the WEHOPE gathering.

October 1 & October 6-8 ~ Ohana Arts presents "Peace On Your Wings," a new musical inspired by the life of Sadako Sasaki. Performance at the Cowell Theatre at Fort Mason, San Francisco on October 1 at 2 pm and 7:30 pm, and at the Hammer Theatre in San Jose from October 6 - 8 at 7:30 pm, with 2 pm matinees on Saturday and Sunday. For ticket information, visit [peaceonyourwings.com](http://peaceonyourwings.com). See article on page 6.

October 12-14 ~ Fall Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) Seminar. Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto (IBS) will lecture on chapters 15 & 16 of *Tannisbo*, Dr. Natalie Quli (IBS) will lecture on Diversity and Intersectionality in the Buddhist Bay Area, and Rev. Sala Sekiya (Gardena) will teach chanting and liturgy.

November 18 ~ "Rainbow of Infinite Life: LGBTQ in Shin Buddhism Seminar" will be held at the Seattle Buddhist Temple Betsuin from 10 am - 3 pm. Tickets are \$40 General and \$20 Students. Visit [seattlebetsuin.org](http://seattlebetsuin.org) or see LGBTQ article on page 5 for more information.

December 7-9 ~ Winter Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) Seminar. Dr. Mark Blum (UC Berkeley) will lecture on *Tannisbo* chapters 17, 18, and epilogue. Rev. Harry Bridge (Oakland) will teach chanting and liturgy.

[BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org](http://BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org) [cbe@bcahq.org](mailto:cbe@bcahq.org) (510) 809-1460

BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

**2017 LGBTQ Pride Events**

This year, in addition to ongoing participation in Pride Parades by the New York Buddhist Church, the Buddhist Church of San Francisco, and other Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Sanghas, we received additional reports which we have excerpted below:

**Southern District**

“*Ichi-mi*: Being One in Flavor” was the name of the seminar hosted by the Gardena Buddhist Church on June 17 to discuss and understand the difficulties in making a temple a safe place that does not exclude anyone, and in particular, people of the LGBTQ community.

Initially, several persons were asked to serve on a panel but all declined due to personal circumstances of not feeling safe enough to openly participate. This situation resulted in the 50 attendees having an open discussion, followed by a role-playing activity emphasizing the realities of revealing one’s sexual orientation to family, community, and sangha.

At the conclusion of the afternoon, all were encouraged to go back to their temples to work towards making them safe and welcoming places for LGBTQ persons to come to and hear the Dharma. The next *Ichi-mi* Seminar will be scheduled in 2018.

“*Just As You Are: Being LGBTQ and Buddhism*” *A Community Conversation* will be held at the Pasadena Buddhist Temple on Saturday, September 23 from 2-5 pm. Admission is free and all are welcome. Visit [PasadenaBuddhistTemple.org](http://PasadenaBuddhistTemple.org) for more information and to RSVP.



**Northwest District**

Inspired by conversations with the Seattle Dharma School parents during a Dharma exchange, 100 members from the Northwest District participated in the Seattle Pride Parade, held this year on June 25.

Several weeks prior to the Parade, several dharma talks were given by Northwest ministers sharing the Shin message in regard to the practice of inclusiveness in our Sanghas. At the Pride Parade, where a festive atmosphere was the theme, the Northwest members danced to “Shiawase Samba” and “Tanko Bushi” as they were accompanied by Seattle Matsuri Taiko.

“*Rainbow of Infinite Life: LGBTQ in Shin Buddhism Seminar*” will be held at the Seattle Buddhist Temple Betsuin on Saturday, November 18 from 10 am - 3 pm. Tickets are \$40 General and \$20 Students. Visit [seattlebetsuin.org](http://seattlebetsuin.org) for more information. Sponsored by the BCA Center for Buddhist Education and Seattle Buddhist Temple Betsuin.

**OUR JODO SHINSHU TRADITIONS**

**Nenju or Juzu?**



What is the difference with these strands of beads? Some people call them “*nenju*” and others call them “*juzu*.” Are they the same?

In some Buddhist traditions and other religious traditions, the “*nenju*” or “*juzu*” is used for counting how many times a person recites something. In the Chinese characters for *juzu*, “*ju*” means “counter” and “*zu*” means “beads.”

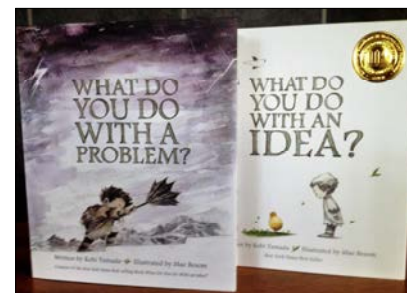
However, in our Shin tradition, since we do not use the beads as an aid for meditation or chanting, we should refer to it as a “*nen-ju*”: *nen* (mindful or thinking) + *ju* (beads) = beads to keep us mindful of the Buddha.

The traditional strand of the *nenju* have 108 beads, but today, most lay members have an abbreviated version with fewer beads for easier carrying. The number of beads is insignificant. However, traditionally, the number of beads on shorter strands have been in numbers evenly divisible into 108 (usually 54 or 27). Different denominations and traditions have different styles and tassels.

When carrying the *nenju*, you should hold it in your left hand. If you’re wearing a wrist-style *nenju*, you should wear it on your left wrist.

**BCA Bookstore News** By Gayle Noguchi

Now available: *What Do You Do with a Problem?* and the award-winning *What Do You Do with an Idea?* written by Kobi Yamada, illustrated by Mae Besom. Both available in hardback, \$16.95 each.



Have you ever felt overwhelmed by a problem? Have you wished it would just go away or that you could hide from it? *What Do You Do with a Problem?* is a charming story about a young boy who is plagued by a persistent problem. At first, he doesn’t know what to make of it and he tries desperately to avoid it. However, he eventually finds the courage within himself to face it and, in doing so, he unexpectedly discovers something beautiful. Of course, as Buddhists we recognize that life is full of suffering. Whether at home, at school, work, or temple, “life is a bumpy road” as Reverend Dr. Kenneth Tanaka would say. This story reminds us that what may appear to us as a problem, actually brings with it an opportunity to encounter the *Nembutsu* teachings, helping us to awaken to our true selves if we have the courage to look deeply.

Have you ever had an idea that just seemed too different? Too “out there”? Even a little crazy? What do you do with it? *What Do You Do with an Idea?* is a delightful story for people of all ages. One day an “out of the box” idea occurs to a young boy. Although initially wary of it, the boy eventually learns to embrace it. This story encourages us to open our minds and hearts and to welcome seeing things from another perspective. Letting go of our attachment to set viewpoints, we find we can change and grow and, ultimately, we can even change the world. *What Do You Do with an Idea?* is a recipient of the Independent Publisher Book Awards, recognizing excellence in independent publishing.

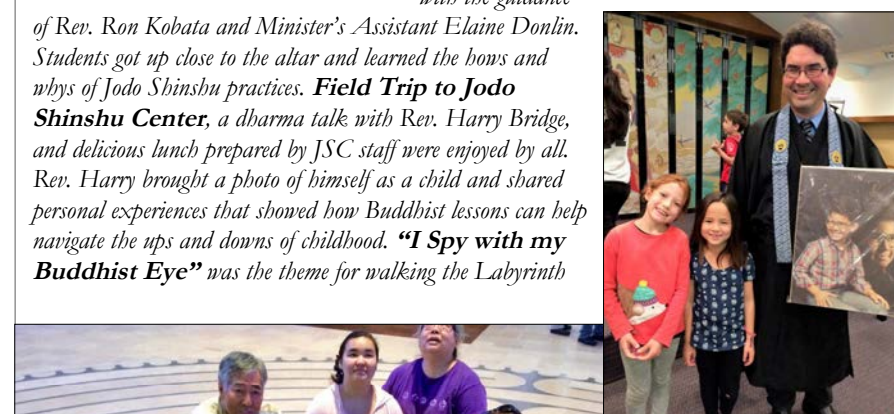
To purchase, go to [buddhistchurchesofamerica.org](http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org) and click on the BCA Bookstore link, or contact [gnoguchi@bcabq.org](mailto:gnoguchi@bcabq.org) or 510-809-1435. The BCA Bookstore is located in the Jodo Shinshu Center at 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704. Open Wednesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us Facebook.

**“A Special Place” Summer Dharma School at BCSF**

For two weeks in June, 17 students practiced Buddhism, crafted, cooked, and made new friends at “A Special Place” Summer Dharma School sponsored by the Buddhist Church of San Francisco. While more than half the students came from non-Buddhist backgrounds, “Golden Chain,” “*Nembutsu*,” and other Jodo Shinshu teachings were familiar to all by the end of the session. The program was supervised by Rev. Ron Kobata, with assistance from Minister’s Assistant Elaine Donlin and program directors Nanayo Silver, Arlene Kimata, and BJ Soriano.



Photos from top to bottom: *Nenju* (Buddhist beads) were created with beads earned by each student to represent activities and lessons. Everyone, including the 5-year-olds, earned the Mealtime Thanksgiving bead. Other beads represented memorized verses, daily attendance, and art/craft projects. **Preparing the *naijin*** for service, offering incense, and “*Gassho With Amida*” were twice-daily rituals performed



with the guidance of Rev. Ron Kobata and Minister’s Assistant Elaine Donlin. Students got up close to the altar and learned the bows and whys of Jodo Shinshu practices. **Field Trip to Jodo Shinshu Center**, a dharma talk with Rev. Harry Bridge, and delicious lunch prepared by JSC staff were enjoyed by all. Rev. Harry brought a photo of himself as a child and shared personal experiences that showed how Buddhist lessons can help navigate the ups and downs of childhood. **“I Spy with my Buddhist Eye”** was the theme for walking the Labyrinth



at Grace Cathedral. Who knew that walking meditation is a practice shared by another religion?! Students began to see how Buddhist ideas are universal and can be found in other unlikely places. Photos by Arlene Kimata.

## “Be the Refuge”: Reflections on Karma & Gratitude, Suffering & Spiritual Friendship

(Part 3 of 3)

Commencement Address to the  
Graduating Class of 2017

Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley, CA  
May 19, 2017

By Chenxing Han, MA (Class of 2014)

*Editor's Note: This is the third of three parts. Parts one and two appeared in the July and August issues, respectively.*

During my three years as a student here at IBS, I periodically read Carl Bielefeldt's commencement address to the graduating class of 1994.<sup>1</sup> One of my favorite insights from his speech is the reminder that students here have a “rare and precious chance to explore a rare and precious world.” We are blessed with a kaleidoscopic view of Buddhism here at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, where we learn about the Buddha in multiple forms, explore the dharma in all its capaciousness, and build warm and welcoming sangha together. Recognizing that meaning is always multivalent, we can interpret bhikkhuni Rohini's poem to refer to venerable monastics who have long ago passed on, or we can admire the many contemplatives here today. Whether contemplation means saying the *nembutsu* or reciting the *daimoku*, investigating *dharma*s or “just sitting,” recommitting to bodhisattva vows or undertaking *ngöndro* [Tibetan Buddhist] practices, reflecting on impermanence or pondering the four immeasurables—there is room for all of us here.

People often ask what I learned from interviewing nearly a hundred young adult Asian American Buddhists for my MA research here at IBS. I can pare it down to four words: diversity, humility, respect, and resistance. First, I learned that Asian American Buddhists—and, by extension, American Buddhists—are an astonishingly diverse group of people. Recognizing this diversity, they are humble in their own limited viewpoints, and respectful of other's viewpoints. With this respect comes the need for resistance—because the thriving of diverse peoples, practices, and beliefs is anything but guaranteed.

A story I heard on a recent podcast illustrates this point well.<sup>2</sup> Manzanar was one of the ten internment camps where more than 110,000 Japanese Americans were unconstitutionally incarcerated during WWII. In 1992, Sue Kunitomi Embrey, who had been interned at Manzanar, flew to Washington, D.C. to testify before the U.S. Senate subcommittee on Public Lands, National Parks, and Forests. She successfully appealed to have Manzanar designated as a National Historic Site. In her appeal, she argued: “democracy is a fragile concept only as good

and strong as the people who practice it.” We might say the same for the dharma: that it is only as good and strong as the people who practice it.

In the words of the Angry Asian Buddhist, a blogger who writes about issues of race and representation in American Buddhism, we must be the refuge we wish to see in the world. To quote Prof. Bielefeldt again, “it is not just that we students of the dharma take refuge in the dharma; the dharma also takes refuge in us.” We may feel like inadequate refuges, but, as one of my interviewees put it, “Buddhists must be brave because they must stare into the abyss of themselves and come out humble and compassionate. We need public figures to do this.” As chaplains, we are trained in deep listening. But chaplains, of course, are much more than listeners—they, like Guanyin regarding the suffering of all beings, also advocate and act. As Martin Luther King reminds us, “We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak.”<sup>3</sup> I have no doubt that our graduates will embrace the many lessons they have learned in their years of study here as they go forth as deep listeners and courageous speakers in a world that very much needs both.

Let me conclude with a message directed to our graduates: Reflecting back on why my digital inquiry for “how to give a commencement speech” proved to be woefully inadequate, it occurs to me that a 0.71-second, 2,850,000-result Google search couldn't possibly satisfy the burning questions and tenacious curiosities that led you to IBS. Those questions and curiosities have likely evolved during your time here. They have transformed through personal reflection, classroom debates, advisor meetings, formation groups, spiritual camaraderie, and the myriad opportunities this unique educational experience has afforded you. I hope these urgent questions and curiosities will continue to transform—in ways that startle and move you, unmask and renew you.

As you step forth into your post-graduation life, your learning continues, but now the curriculum design is entirely up to you. You must discern what needs to be done based on the causes and conditions of your life and the urgent needs of your broader communities. As you embark on the next steps of your journeys, my wish for you is this: May you be supported as you are today—surrounded by good friends and teachers in the Dharma, rejoicing together in your many laudable achievements, and dedicated to being a refuge for all who inhabit this precious and vulnerable world.

Thank you.

Complete text is available online at [shin-ibs.edu](http://shin-ibs.edu)

<sup>1</sup><http://www.shin-ibs.edu/documents/pwj3-6/02Bielefeldt.pdf>

<sup>2</sup><http://99percentinvisible.org/episode/manzanar/>

<sup>3</sup>[http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc\\_beyond\\_vietnam/](http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/doc_beyond_vietnam/)



## Butsu Butsu...

By Brian Kensho Nagata, Managing Editor

I am basically a *slob!* It *never* fails that I spill something on my clothes whenever I eat. The other day I was wearing one of my favorite shirts, a special gift from a dear friend. On par with my usual life pattern, I spilled something in two spots the size of a quarter on this favorite shirt. I didn't even notice until I was ready to put the shirt into the wash, and then I saw these two *gross*, caked-on spots right on the front of the shirt! I have no idea what they were from...

As my mother would have told me, I pre-soaked the spots with detergent and let it sit for a few hours, hoping the detergent would bring the stain out, but no such luck. I then went to the grocery store to look for something stronger and paid a fortune for this special cleaner: dab the spot with the cleaner, allow it to sit for two hours and then press a clean towel over the spot. I did just as I was

told and, while it did get some of the stain out, I could still see the shadow of the stain on the front of my shirt... the shirt is forever ruined.

I had never spent so much time trying to clean two small spots on a shirt! I thought to myself, how vain. Why am I wasting my time doing this? Why am I so attached to this shirt? Then I realized, these two spots are like karma. Once the stain is on the shirt, no matter how hard I may try to completely remove the stain, it just won't disappear.

Isn't this just like my karma? Once I have done something wrong or said something I should not have said, I may be able to “remove” most of the damage, but something will always remain. So, it took me ruining my favorite shirt to realize something that the Buddha has been teaching me since the day I was born... *Nam Man Da...*

## Thanking Our Sangha

On behalf of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) and Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, we thank all of the BCA members who contributed to the celebration of the succession of Monshu Sennyō Kojun Ohtani to becoming the 25th Head Priest of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha institution.

The numerous services marking the Commemorations of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition started in 2016, with the last event in May 2017. At that time Bishop Umezu and BCA President Ken Tanimoto offered your celebratory gift. As of August, the amount was well over

\$87,000 and is increasing monthly. Your offering to the Hongwanji-ha conveys the importance of Shinran Shonin's legacy of joy and gratitude to future generations.

We thank you again for your acts of kindness and continuing support in making Jodo Shinshu a worldwide religion of peace and tranquility.

Gassho,

**Ken Tanimoto**,  
President,  
Buddhist Churches  
of America

**Rev. Kodo Umezu**,  
Bishop,  
Buddhist Churches  
of America

## Northern California Premiere: October 1 in San Francisco Peace on Your Wings



A scene from “Peace on Your Wings.”

Ohana Arts of Hawaii presents the Northern California debut of *Peace on Your Wings* on October 1 at San Francisco's Cowell Theater in Fort Mason, and October 6-8 in San Jose at the Hammer Theater. *Peace on Your Wings* is an exhilarating musical inspired by the life of Sadako Sasaki, the 12-year-old young girl who folded one thousand *origami* cranes in the hope of having her wish fulfilled that she could overcome her leukemia caused by radiation from the Hiroshima atomic bombing.

Unfortunately, Sadako passed away, but to this day, she has inspired an international movement of folding cranes for peace. The musical juxtaposes Sadako's true story with a fictional story about a group of her friends who rally support from around Japan to have a monument built in Sadako's memory to honor the child victims of the world's first atomic bomb.

The original idea for this play started with a vision from the Bishop Eric Matsumoto of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, who

approached the directors to come up with a production in honor of the 125th anniversary of the Mission's founding. *Peace on Your Wings* was created by the talented Jenny Taira and Laurie Rubin and their production team. It has since played throughout Hawaii, in Los Angeles, and most recently in New York City.

The mainland productions have been made possible with the support of various community organizations as well as the Buddhist Churches of America, and the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple, San Jose Betsuin, and Buddhist Church of San Francisco.

This fall, the Bay Area performances will feature a new cast of youth ages 6-17, several of whom attend various Northern California BCA temples.

For ticket information, please visit [peaceonyourwings.com](http://peaceonyourwings.com). If you would like to support the production through crowdfunding, please visit [youcaring.com/ohanaarts-905743](http://youcaring.com/ohanaarts-905743). Your donation will be greatly appreciated.



# 法輪

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Buddhist Churches of America  
1710 Octavia Street  
San Francisco, CA 94109  
電話(415) 776-5600  
FAX (415) 771-6293  
Email: info@bcaha.org  
for WOD: WODeditor@bcaha.org

二〇一七年度教化標語  
「まことの人生を歩もう」

あの記事をもう一度!

法輪のバックナンバーがBCAウェブサイトにて読めます。  
<http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/about-us/wheel-of-dharma>

## 布教研究会がリノで開催

8月22日から24日の三日間、ネバダ州リノにおいて開教使布教研究会および開教使会議が開催された。北カリフォルニア教区の主催で会場はシルバレーガシーホテル。布教研究会のテーマは「Knowing Myself 唯識」で講師には立教大学名誉教授の横山紘一師を招いた。横山師は現在NHK「こころの時代」で唯識のシリーズに出演しているほか、「唯識、わが心の構造」などの著書がよく知られている。参加者は「従来は唯識の英訳がmind onlyやconsciousness onlyだったが、横山先生の representation onlyという訳のおかげで、唯識の意味がわかりやすくなりました。」と理解を深めた。講義は日本語で行われ、アダムス・ヘンリー開教使(サンマテオ)とワンド

ラ陸開教使(オレゴン州)が通訳をつとめた。23日には布教研究会の会場はリノ市所在の浄土真宗東本願寺派の寺院、リノブッディストセンターへ移動。リノ市近郊に住むプラサー仏教会会員が毎月の法話会を同寺院の本堂を借りて行っており、布教研究会のご縁に、法話会を開いた。リノ法話会会員に加え、リノブッディストセンターの会員が多く参



2017 BCA Ministers' Summer Seminar



Reno Howakai at Reno Buddhist Center

## 総長コラム

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

以前、ある年配の会員の方が、その人の住んでいる町の人から「長年この町に住んでいるが、この町に仏教の寺院があるなんて知らなかった」と言われてがっかりし、驚いたと語っておられました。これはわからないでもありません。ご存知のように、アメリカの各地に仏教会があり、百年以上活動を続けていますが、主に日系社会の中でのことでした。日系社会は排斥や差別の中、文化、言葉や宗教などの違いにより、自由に集まれる場所が必要とされていきましたし、今もまだその必要があります。仏教会はそういう中で、生き残るためにできることはなんでもしてきたのです。ところが今、周りの状況が大きく変わりつつあります。

その一つが日系以外の人たちの仏教に対する考えが変わってきているということです。バージニア州の恵光寺の林齊昭(はやしなりあき)先生によると、今年のお盆は千八百名の方が仏教会を訪れ、法要にも多くの新しい人が参詣し

## 夏のパシフィックセミナー

8月18日から20日の三日間、浄土真宗センターにおいて夏のパシフィックセミナーが開催された。

テーマは「Shin Buddhism: Current Challenges and Future Prospect (現代における浄土真宗と将来の展望)」で、世界に広まっていきつつある浄土真宗の動きを紹介するにあたり、四ヶ国からゲストスピーカーを招いた。基調講演はオーストラリア在住の本願寺派僧侶、パラスケヴォボラス・ジョン師がつとめた。パラスケヴォボラス師は「Call of the Infinite: The Way of Shin Buddhism」などの著書のほか、ウェブサイトの「Journal of Shin Buddhism (Muryoko)」を通じて真宗の教えを広く伝えている。ブラジルからはブラジリア本願寺門徒のカンボス・タイスさん、イギリスから英国シンブディストフェローシップ会員のクウアーク・ソーントン・デイビッドさん、ネパールからアシュマ・ウマ・ラマ・グシンさんが招かれ、それぞれの地域での布教、伝道の様子を語った。セミナーの参加人数は70名を超え、好評を博した。

参加者は「今までのCBEのイベントの中で最もエキサイティングなイベントでした。お念仏の教えが人種、国、文化を超えてダイナミックに伝わっている姿をまさに感じとりました。真宗の未来、ひいては世界の未来は明るいよ



Summer Pacific Seminar at the JSC

や文化での苦勞話を織り交ぜた大変味わい深い法話をされた。

ていたということでした。また、林先生は同州で催された全米ボーイスカウトジャンボリーに仏教界全体の代表で参加され、日曜日の仏教の礼拝を担当されました。先生によれば、仏教のグループには百五十名しか収容できない場所が指定されたけれども、蓋を開けてみれば、五百名のスカウトが集まり、三回に分けてサーブスを行ったということでした。そしてその時、スカウトの一人がオックスナード仏教会の会員のブランドン・フジイ君で、仏教会でいつも先生のお手伝いをしているということ、当日は林先生のアシスタントとして立派にその職務を果たし、先生を喜ばせていました。また、多くのスカウトが、若いフジイ君がお手伝いしている姿に感銘したということも聞かされ、うれしく思いました。林先生は、まだ赴任して二年目ですが、できるだけ仏教会の存在をコミュニティに知らせようと努めていると語っておられました。

各地の仏教会も同じように、それぞれの地域の中に仏さまの教えを聞ける場所があるということができるだけ知らせるようになっていくことが、私たちの努めであり、喜びではないでしょうか。それによって、仏教会が本当に仏教会になれるのではないのでしょうか。

同じように、もし仏さまが誰にも気づかれないうであれば、本当の仏とはなれないのです。仏さまは常に仏さまでありますが、すべての人を絶対もたらさず救うという誓いを起こし、受け取ってもらいたいのです。その慈悲の心が私たちに至り届いて初めて本当の意味で仏さまになれるのです。親子の名乗りと一緒にです。子が親を親と呼ぶとき親は親として喜ぶことができるのです。

そのために、真実の仏は、この迷いの世界に南無阿彌陀仏という呼び声となってあらわれているのです。声とならなければ、私たちと触れ合うことができないのです。真実の親が、すべての人を呼んでいてくださるのです。出会いを待っているのです。呼び声が仏さまの心であり、仏さまそのものなのです。

九月一日は米国仏教団の創立記念日です。私たちに仏教会や教えを残してくださった多くの先達にお礼を申し上げたいと思います。そして、できるだけ多くの人たちが仏さまの教えを聞くことができるよう、ここに仏教会ありと知らせていきたいと思います。

南無阿彌陀仏