

WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

LIVING THROUGH A PANDEMIC

Reflections on 75th Anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki



By Rev. Marvin Harada
Bishop of the BCA

The month of August was the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, on Aug. 6 and Aug. 9, 1945.

At the Orange County Buddhist Church, we have several survivors of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. I have had very moving conversations with them about their experience that fateful day 75 years

ago.

One of our members, Junji Sarashina, described to me that the blast knocked him completely flat on the ground on his face. Because his back was turned to the blast he wasn't burned as badly as he could have been. He said that people didn't even know what had hit them. No one knew what an atomic bomb was or how powerful it could be. People didn't know the effects of radiation or anything. Parents who had missing children lost in the blast, went daily to the city trying to find their lost child. Every day

that they went into the city, they became exposed to the radiation, and in a few days became sick and died.

Junji recalls coming to a river, where many people had gone into, because they were burned, but could not climb out of the river. A man reached out with his arms to ask for help, and when Junji tried to pull the man out of the river, the man's skin came off of his arms instead. It was just unbelievable, all the devastation and

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BCA Temples Ring Bells for Peace



Several BCA temples held bell-ringing ceremonies for the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August. In the main photo, San Jose Betsuin Buddhist Temple Rev. Etsuko Mikame rings the bell on Aug. 5 to coincide with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. In the top left photo, San Jose Betsuin Rinban Rev. Gerald Sakamoto rings the bell on Aug. 5. In the bottom left photo, Lowell Hurst prepares to ring the huge Bonsho at the Watsonville Buddhist Temple. (Above and upper left photo courtesy of Dai Sugano/San Jose Mercury News. Lower left photo courtesy of Mas Hashimoto)

Thoughts of Compassion — and Nagasaki

By Rinban Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki
Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple



Seventy-five years ago, my hometown Nagasaki was devastated.

On 11:02 a.m., August 9, 1945, the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki city by the United States. The A-bomb was produced at the Hanford site in Washington state. Nagasaki city was instantly burned flat by the

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A Wish to Be Mindful of Cause, Effect — and the Cost in Human Suffering



By Rev. Henry Toryo Adams
San Mateo Buddhist Temple

As we mark 75 years since the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I find myself recalling a story I heard from a professor and Buddhist

priest who showed me great kindness when I was a student in Kyoto, Japan.

During a lecture for Buddhist priests working here in the United States, the professor shared how the Buddha's teachings helped him when he was a young man struggling to come to terms

with his experiences as an atomic bomb survivor.

He was a young boy during the war living at a Buddhist temple in Hiroshima where his father was the priest. On the morning of Aug. 6, 1945, he was at home playing in the kitchen. He had propped himself up with

one hand on the breakfast table and one hand on the back of a chair, so that he could lift his legs up off the ground and swing them back and forth in a rocking motion. When the atomic bomb detonated above Hiroshima, the

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Cleveland Buddhist Temple Closes Doors

Decision Tied to Ohio's Quarantine, COVID-19

The Cleveland Buddhist Temple, which overcame a series of challenges over the years to celebrate its 75th anniversary in January, made the difficult decision to shut down amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"With both gratitude and sadness, the Sangha of the Cleveland Buddhist Temple has voted to close its doors," the temple said in a July 1 statement. "It is with gratitude that we were able to share the Buddha-Dharma,

and we acknowledge the sacrifices of the founders and those who came before us. And, it is with great sadness that we must experience the reality of impermanence by closing the temple."

The statement said there "was not one reason, but many small ones, ones familiar to most BCA temples. But the final reason was when Ohio ordered a close down to safeguard its citizens from

COVID-19."

It noted that there were "many attempts to reinvent ourselves over the past 75 years, but even with these changes we were not able to maintain a sustainable Sangha. This realization is very difficult to accept and even more painful to implement. Our hearts are heavy with this realization."

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The Cleveland Buddhist Temple hosted the 12th EYBL (Eastern Young Buddhist League) conference in 1957. This photo was taken in front of the old temple that was firebombed in the city's Hough Riots in 1966. (Courtesy of Cleveland Buddhist Temple)

There Are Signs of Brightness — Beneath the Clouds



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

We are at a critical point in American history. A worldwide pandemic has disrupted and challenged what we assumed was a basic way of life. The Black Lives Matter movement has exposed the institutional racism that permeates all levels of society. As most of our members are non-Christian Asians, we know the experience of being judged as not quite fully American. The BLM move-

ment includes all of us. This may be a time when a new “normal” is being created. As America seeks solutions that can guide us to a more equitable society, Shin Buddhism offers a religious tradition with practical and spiritual benefits. Millions of Americans have discovered the benefits of meditation and mindfulness in daily life. The pandemic is demonstrating that the Buddha’s fundamental teaching of interdependence is true, as the rise and fall of infections are determined by how we interact with each other. The teachings and practices of Buddhism are being accepted as logical in thought and effective in practice. The image of Buddhism is shifting from being an exotic curiosity to being an effective guide to life. Because the pandemic has expanded the use of the internet to deliver our Shin

message beyond the doors of the Hondo, Americans throughout the country are able to hear the Shin Dharma. Let us take this unique opportunity to expand our

Shin concepts may not seem relevant to 21st century Americans. As an introduction, let us present Shin in a manner that Americans (including our children) are seeking.

This may be a time when a new “normal” is being created. As America seeks solutions that can guide us to a more equitable society, Shin Buddhism offers a religious tradition with practical and spiritual benefits.

Sangha from its ethnic origins to the greater society. Our own children represent this new non-cultural Sangha. Let us ask them what they don’t find attractive and what might influence them to become temple Shin followers. Our decreasing membership may indicate that our present style of presenting Shin has not been effective. Simply translating traditional

Before the 20th century, death was a constant reality at any age. Illness, injury, and death were familiar to many because they were without the present health and safety knowledge that we enjoy today. Since the actual causes of these misfortunes were unknown, religion and deities

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Political Discussions and Gossip



By Rev. Jundo Gregory Gibbs
Pasadena Buddhist Temple
Arizona Buddhist Temple

Some things which we should not do ... we do them anyway. Some things we really shouldn’t say — we say them anyway. Some things we think we are not supposed to do or say, really aren’t so bad, after all. Some actions really do need to be avoided. Some

things we say, perhaps, should never be said. We need to know which is which. Buddhist advice on living is full of discouragements to hurtful speech: “Do not praise oneself, and blame others.” “Do not discuss the faults of others.” “Do not gossip.” You will not find any long-standing Buddhist texts that say, “Don’t discuss politics.” Yet modern North Americans seem to consider gossiping and talking politics to be equally low ways of spending one’s time with others. From a Buddhist perspective the former, publicizing the alleged failings of others, is despicable. The latter, talking about social issues and governmental structures, a rather unremarkable behavior.

“Don’t talk politics” is a self-contradictory statement. Is there any more political act than to say to someone else, “We/you should not discuss politics”? Such imperatives were never issued by Sakya-muni, nor have they been spoken by any prominent Buddhist teacher these past 25 centuries. Discussing topics that have a strong political dimension is inevitable, wherever you are. It is like taking out the garbage, it just has to be done. Under normal circumstances, for most of us, political discussions are about as much fun as taking out the garbage. Gossip, in the sense of circulating negative information about others, whether it is in part true or not, is an

ugly way to spend one’s time. If you aren’t sure whether a certain tidbit is gossip or not, just ask if others knowing it might hurt someone. If the answer is “yes” — don’t say it. Like my grandmother told me, “If you don’t have anything nice to say about someone, say nothing at all.” Of course, we need whistleblowers to uncover destructive acts by government officials and such. Sometimes unpleasantness is better addressed than swept under the rug. In this day and age, in our daily lives, for you and I, best “not to discuss the faults of others.” Talking politics ... well it all depends. So far as the current President goes, I have nothing to say about him at all.

Ministerial Assignments Announced

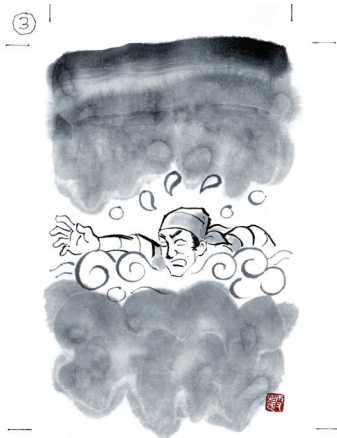
The BCA Office of the Bishop announced the following ministerial assignments:
Rev. Candice Shibata of the Buddhist Church of Florin was assigned to the Buddhist Church of Stockton, effective July 1.
Rev. Matthew Hamasaki, Interim Rinban of the Buddhist Church of Sacramento, was assigned as the supervising minister of the Buddhist Church of Florin, effective July 1.
Rev. Ryuta Furumoto of the Senshin Buddhist Temple was assigned as the supervising minister of the Oxnard Buddhist Temple, effective July 1.
Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji of the Tacoma Buddhist Temple was assigned to the Southern Alameda County


Buddhist Church, effective Aug. 1. Rev. Dr. Miyaji will also be teaching at the Institute of Buddhist Studies.
Rev. Tadao Koyama has been assigned to the Tacoma Buddhist Temple, effective Aug. 1. Rev. Koyama will be serving the Tacoma Buddhist Temple as a full-time Kyoshi minister under the supervision and mentorship of Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, Rinban of the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple, for a period of one year. At the conclusion of one year, Rev. Koyama will be eligible to apply for Kaikyoshi status from the Hongwanji-ha.
Rev. Koho Takata of the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple has been assigned to the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple,

effective Aug. 1.
Rev. Koe Amy Umezu has been assigned as a part-time Kaikyoshi Assistant to Rev. Koho Takata at the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple to help begin and develop a Buddhist campus ministry at UCLA, effective Aug. 1.
Rev. Harry Bridge of the Buddhist Church of Oakland has been assigned as the Buddhist Ministry Program Coordinator for the Institute of Buddhist Studies, effective Aug. 1. This position is on a part-time basis.
Rev. Sala Sekiya of the Gardena Buddhist Church has been assigned to the San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, effective Aug. 1. Rev. Sekiya replaces Rev. Patricia Usuki, who retired on July 31.

Correction

In the August Wheel of Dharma, the wrong illustration was used for the article “Phase 3: Swimming by Striving: in Rev. Dr. Kenneth Tanaka’s “Seven Phases of a Drowning Sailor: A Shin Buddhist Path.” This is the correct illustration by Hiroshi Tarui.





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BCA National Headquarters
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Tel: (415) 776-5600
Fax: (415) 771-6293
www.BuddhistChurchesOfAmerica.org
Email: WODeditor@bcahq.org

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Submission Guidelines: Articles should be around 500 words, typed, double-spaced in Microsoft Word. The editors may ask for longer articles, or split in multiple parts at the editors' discretion. 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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Editor:
Jon Kawamoto
Editor, Japanese Section:
Rev. Ryuta Furumoto
Print Production:
Jeffrey Kimoto



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President

I hope that all of you are aware that the BCA and the Endowment Foundation have initiated a new Capital Campaign called the Dharma Forward Campaign. Approved by the BCA National Board and the 2020 National Council, this Campaign includes the \$1 million mini-campaign that was approved by the 2019 National Council and funding for IBS,

Technology Focus on New Dharma Forward Campaign

the Center for Buddhist Education, the Student Financial Assistance Program, and other BCA programs that are in need of funds. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BCA and the Endowment Foundation have not been making a big production out of this new \$15 million campaign. I am pleased to report that we already have some donors who have given generously. We are, nonetheless, mindful that some of our members are having financial difficulties now. The current pandemic has caused many of our BCA temples to close. But, the BCA presence on the internet has been impressive. Many temples held virtual Obon celebrations on the internet. At least two of our temples were able to raise a lot of money this way. This leads me to focus this

column on the technology advances that we hope to achieve through the Dharma Forward Campaign. Judy Kono, chair of the BCA Communications Committee, has been busy having all of her committee members work on ways that BCA temples can improve their technology skills so that all of our BCA temples will be represented on the internet. Using the funds from the Dharma Forward Campaign, the Communications Committee hopes to form a “BCA Tech Squad” that can help

temples with their websites. We want to see our ministers giving talks on the internet. We would like to see our temples advertise their events and the events of nearby temples. We want temples to be able to handle donations that come through the internet. Those temples that are already showing services on the internet have noticed that viewers are watching from all over the country, if not the world. Hopefully, this will increase membership at our temples. Also, temples can

advertise the BCA individual membership that I wrote about last month. As we increase our internet presence, we hope to propagate

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FDSTL Holds Dharma School Workshop

By Koichi Sayano
FDSTL President

The Federation of Dharma School Teachers League held a July 25 online webinar on virtual Dharma School lessons and teaching methods in preparation for the resumption of Dharma School this fall in a fully distance learning environment. With the continuing spread of COVID-19 and the need for social distancing, the Dharma schools need to be prepared for an online or remote teaching environment in the long term. The workshop was organized by FDSTL’s Education Committee and began with a basic tutorial on the use of Zoom and other online communication tools, presentations of lesson examples by teachers from various chapters after the closure of in-person services in the spring, as well as a discussion on lessons learned from the shelter-in-place period.

As it became apparent that the COVID-19 related restrictions on gatherings and physical assemblies would last much longer than originally anticipated, this workshop was presented to help Dharma schools pivot toward implementing a fully remote and virtual program in the fall. The presentations included examples of lessons using live, two-way interactions with web conferencing tools, and also class lessons that can be sent via e-mail or even regular mail without relying on live conferencing



These cards, which were created by students, were one of the examples presented at the workshop by the Buddhist Church of Stockton’s Dharma School. (Courtesy of Darlene Bagshaw)

tools. FDSTL has also transitioned to extensive use of online tools for its administrative and committee meetings, and now also includes conferences and workshops. The 2020 annual conference has become a fully web-based event, and future conferences are being planned to be online in light of COVID-19. The new environment is a challenge, but one that will be overcome as our predecessors have done countless times in the past. Although we are now forced into this distance learning situation, it is also an opportunity to reach out beyond the confines of our temples’ physical space.

workshops. The 2020 annual conference has become a fully web-based event, and future conferences are being planned to be online in light of COVID-19. The new environment is a challenge, but one that will be overcome as our predecessors have done countless times in the past. Although

we are now forced into this distance learning situation, it is also an opportunity to reach out beyond the confines of our temples’ physical space. Thanks also to Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada for his support and encouragement, and to the staff of the BCA Center for Buddhist Education for helping with workshop logistics. There was another tutorial workshop on the operation of Zoom and other online tools for the Dharma School classroom on Aug. 15.

Rev. Oshita Shares Dharma Messages With Girl Scouts

By Tara Mochizuki
Buddhist Church of San Francisco

Recognizing the profound impact COVID-19, physical distancing policies and issues of racial injustice would have on its members, the Girl Scouts of the USA sponsored a June 4 webinar entitled “Awesome Girls: Living Our Faith in Uncertain Times.” Faith leaders discussed how different religions are responding to the new normal and how a girl’s faith can support her and help her serve others. Rev. Patti Oshita, California State Assembly chaplain and member of the BCA National Buddhist Committee on Scouting and the Buddhist Church of Sacramento, represented Buddhism. She joined a panel of nine other clergy and lay members of the Islamic, Christian and Jewish faiths. Each faith leader had an opportunity to address the hundreds of girls and adults who joined the webinar. When it was Rev. Oshita’s turn, she shared how Buddhism can help girls through these unsettling times. She shared many insights during her three-minute presentation. Among her messages was that personal reflection and reflective meditation can help girls remain engaged with who they are and keep them positive, centered and hopeful. She also explained the importance of recognizing that we are all interdependent, interconnected and part of one humanity. The full webinar can be viewed at: <https://bit.ly/2WeUWfj>. Before the California state Legislature called a recess because



Rev. Patti Oshita

of the shelter-in-place order, Rev. Oshita shared a reflection to open the Assembly floor session on March 12. The moderator of the Girl Scout webinar felt it was most appropriate to close the event with Rev. Oshita’s reflection: “Please join me in a moment of Quiet Reflection: “Often, it is a shared adversity that will bring people together. When that adversity is a pandemic, then borders dissolve; and we are made to see again that beyond all the boundaries that may separate us, we are all a part of One Humanity. With our Wisdom Eyes open, we see again that no life can exist in a vacuum. All Humanity is interconnected. We are all One, in the Fabric of Life. As we move forward together through this crisis, let us nurture our awareness of truly being One Humanity: for Kindness flows from our awareness of being One. “Namo Amida Butsu — With Kindness & Gratitude beyond words

SEVEN PHASES OF A DROWNING SAILOR:
A SHIN BUDDHIST PATH

Phase 4:
Letting Go and Floating

Introduction: This is the continuation of the article from the August issue, the fourth in a series of seven segments.

By Rev. Dr. Kenneth Kenshin Tanaka
Professor Emeritus, Musashino University, Tokyo
Former BCA minister and IBS Associate Professor

The sailor hears a call from the depths of the ocean: “Let go. Let go of your striving! You’re fine just as you are!” Hearing the call, the sailor ceases his striving, relaxes, and turns over on his back with limbs outstretched as if lying in a backyard hammock on a lazy summer afternoon. Then, to his great surprise, the ocean holds him up and he finds himself floating!

This phase symbolizes the Shin transformative experience called shinjin. Shinjin is at the heart of Shin Buddhist soteriology; it takes place in this life and guarantees Buddhahood upon death.

Shinjin is a multivalent term that can mean “realization,” “entrusting,” “faith,” “joy,” and “confidence.” Most Shin writers render it “entrusting heart,” but I prefer “awakening.” Shinran speaks of the “wisdom of shinjin” and tells us that “Great shinjin is none other than buddhanature.” Both wisdom and buddhanature are revealed through the personal experience of awakening.

The content of shinjin involves awakening to two Buddhist principles, namely, emptiness and interconnectedness. Shinran, however, expressed them in distinctively Pure Land terms: emptiness as “the depth of his bombu nature” and interconnectedness as “being embraced in Amida’s compassion.” He expresses in deeply personal and mythic language these two foundational teachings of Mahayana Buddhism.

For Shinran, shinjin was not a simple belief in Amida as a divine being. It entailed wisdom and insight. It is, therefore, not surprising that Shinran equated shinjin with the first stage of liberation, stream-enterer, found in early Buddhist texts and with the first of Mahayana Buddhism’s ten stages, or bhumis, on the bodhisattva’s path, the stage of joy. Although those who reach these stages have yet to overcome the deeper layers of mental afflictions, they have achieved an essential initial level of awakening.

Going back to our parable, in Shin Buddhism the ocean is none other than Amida Buddha. Amida is often thought of as the foundation that supports us from underneath, the sides and behind. Shinran, for example, speaks of Amida as “the immense ocean into which all the rivers of sentient beings flow.” Amida constitutes the foundational reality that has been there all along, underneath and around us. We simply fail to notice it because of how we strive. We get too caught up in our effort to reach the island solely on our own power.

With greater room in his heart, the sailor desires to help his buddies by sharing with them his experience of letting go.

Amida is ultimately not a divine being dwelling in an unfathomably distant paradise. Amida’s essence is ineffable and beyond form. Amida is, therefore, the provisional manifestation of ultimate reality, which is expressed in such mainstream Mahayana Buddhist terms as “suchness” (tathata) and “dharma-body” (dharmakaya). Shinran also used a term considered unique to him, “jinen honi,” which I render “suchness of naturalness.”

It was this suchness of naturalness that Shinran had awakened to. Just as the sailor let go of striving and realized that the ocean embraced and uplifted him, with shinjin, one lets go of egoic self-power and awakens to Amida’s workings, or other-power.

Next: Phase 5: Joy
Editor’s note: This article originally appeared in the quarterly magazine *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* in its Spring 2019 issue. The illustrations were drawn specifically for the *Wheel of Dharma*.



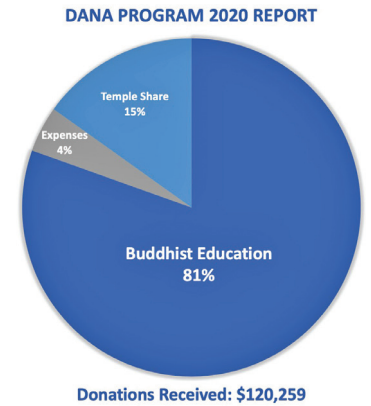
Courtesy of Hiroshi Tarui

Support BCA’s Dana Program
Proceeds Allocated Directly to CBE, IBS; Sharing Shinran’s Teachings

The Dana Program was introduced five years ago as an important vehicle to bring the Buddha-dharma to everyone. Last year, your generous donations contributed to a growing base of support that has raised over \$750,000 since 2015.

This year, 81% of Dana Program proceeds were allocated directly to the Center for Buddhist Education and Institute for Buddhist Studies, advancing our common wish to share Shinran Shonin’s teachings with the world. 15% of funds were shared with local temples by donor request.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that now, more than ever, we must focus on technology and



digital media to guide new seekers to Shin Buddhist communities, connect members to innovative virtual programming, and highlight the inspirational messages of our ministers.

We ask that you join us in building upon our vision for the public, our

temples and our ministers to walk the Nembutsu path together. It’s simple: the more we grow, the more we can support our programs each year. Together we can accomplish great things, one step at a time.

Our annual brochure was recently mailed to your home. While we are grateful to receive donations by mail, our office access remains limited during the pandemic. We kindly encourage you to set-up a one-time or recurring donation today at: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/donate

For more information, contact the BCA Endowment Foundation at donate@bcahq.org or call 415-776-5600 x311.

Recalling the Taste of Kindness at Obon

By John Mullins
Berkeley Buddhist Temple

As we have adjusted to life in the COVID-19 pandemic, I have marveled at the speed with which temples have come together to support each other through digital technology.

Whether through live-stream services, Dharma discussions via Zoom, or even the chance to hop on the virtual Obon festival circuit this summer, we are able to stay socially connected while physically distanced.

But is it OK to admit that I miss the physical connec-



The menu featuring a variety of popular foods is displayed at the 2014 Obon at the Orange County Buddhist Church. (Courtesy of Jon Kawamoto)

tion? Can I go even further and say I miss the opportunity to spend those long hours

preparing for, working at, and breaking down the festival with my temple friends?

In the special BCA Donor Appreciation section in last month’s issue of the *Wheel of Dharma*, we were able to acknowledge the contributions of our wonderful donors, and I am grateful that because of their financial support, I’m able to deepen my study of Shin Buddhism as I prepare for the ministry. But there is another kind of contribution that our donors and so many who are not listed offer their temples. This support swells up from our

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Bishop’s Message

Continued from Page 1

suffering. In Junji’s own words, “I saw hell with my own eyes.”

Junji shared with me, “You know Sensei, I don’t believe in a hell in the afterlife, because I saw hell with my own eyes, that day in Hiroshima. There can be no greater hell than what I saw that day of the atomic bomb.”

Isn’t that true? Isn’t the hell of various religions, the construct of man, saying that these people or those people fall into hell? It is a reflection of the unenlightened man that discriminates and judges others.

For someone like Junji, such talk is absurd. Only someone who has seen hell with their own eyes, can say something like that.

In contrast to that, Junji also shared something very profound with me. He said, “You know Sensei, I also feel the same about the Pure Land. I don’t think of the Pure Land as a place I will go after I die. Sometimes I am having an enjoyable dinner with my family, with my grandkids, and I feel like, isn’t the Pure Land right here and now? If I can see hell with my own eyes, why can’t I also see the Pure Land?”

I thought that was a very profound statement by Junji. The issue of whether the Pure Land is something we can know in this life or not is a highly debated issue in Jodo Shinshu, but I tend to side with the viewpoint of Junji. Actually, there are numerous great Shin Buddhists who have that same sentiment. The Myokonin, Saichi, in his poems, writes,

I cannot fall into hell.

*Hell is right here.
This place is hell,
And hell is where we dwell.
Where is Saichi’s Pure Land?
Saichi’s Pure Land is right here.
Where is the borderline of the Pure Land in this world?
The eyes are the borderline of the Pure Land in this world
Where is Saichi’s Pure Land?
Saichi’s Pure Land is in my heart.
It is, it is,
Namu Amida Butsu.
This floating world is wretched,
But this floating world becomes the Pure Land.
I’m joyful
Namu Amida Butsu.
In this world I enjoy the Pure Land.
This world transforms into the Pure Land.
I’m joyful
Namu Amida Butsu.*

As we pause to reflect on the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 75 years ago, may the experiences and memories of those who survived that day, be the words of wisdom to the whole world, as they implore all of humanity to live in peace and harmony.

Shinran Shonin said, “May the Buddha Dharma spread, and may the world be at peace.” Approximately 750 years ago, Shinran Shonin aspired for a world of peace and harmony. Seventy-five years ago, after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, those survivors aspired for a world of peace and harmony. And still today, in 2020, we too aspire for a world of peace and harmony.

Namuamidabutsu,



SACBC Remembers

Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji, the new minister at the Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church, rings the bell during the 75th anniversary ceremony of the Nagasaki atomic bombing on Aug. 8. (Courtesy of Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji)



Women in Buddhism

A Webinar Gathering: October 3 & 4, 2020

Registration: Free

Tools for Spiritual Wellness

SPEAKERS:

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Radical Humility: Jodo Shinshu Path to Joy

Bonnie Duran, Ph.D.
Dharma for Undoing Internalized Stereotypes

Sharon A. Suh, Ph.D.
Meditation & Yoga for Healing Trauma

Sheri Mizumori, Ph.D.
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Art as Healing

seattlebetsuin.com/2020wib

Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple & Women's Association
and BCA Center for Buddhist Education

BCA CENTER FOR BUDDHIST EDUCATION
& TECHNObuddha

PRESENTS...

Saturday, October 10
10am - 12pm (PDT)
Free & open to everyone

Good Trouble!

"I don't think slavery ended in 1865... I think it just evolved."
-Bryan Stevenson

Tens of thousands marched throughout America, and around the world, following the horrific death of George Floyd. What led to this seemingly sudden outpouring of solidarity? How do we deal with the burden of injustice, and of racial inequality? How can we awaken to our history of depraved indifference and brutality?

Richard Stambul

Attorney, past BCA President, Foot soldier in the Civil Rights movement, Trustee of the Institute of Buddhist Studies.

Rick Stambul practiced law for 41 years in Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, D.C., with a focus on issues of Social Justice. He was a past BCA President. He received his B.A. in History from UCLA, and a J.D. from Loyola Law School where he taught as a Teaching Fellow. He has lectured about his involvement as a foot soldier in the Civil Rights movement and the incarceration of Japanese-Americans during WWII throughout the United States. He is co-author of Lawless Law Enforcement (4 Loyola Law School of L.A. Law Rev. 161, 1971) discussing police brutality targeting the African-American community.

Rinban Rev. Kusunoki

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atomic bomb and 73,884 lives were taken. My father was 6 at the time. He was about three kilometers (or two miles) away from the hypocenter. I would like to think about “peace” with you through the Nagasaki atomic bomb.

Seattle Betsuin’s Obon is usually held in July, and Obon season in Nagasaki is from Aug. 13-15. My family’s temple, Kogenji, becomes busy for Obon from the beginning of August. Although it is hot in Nagasaki during the Obon season, many people visit their family gravesites and go to temple to attend Obon service. Buddhist ministers visit their members’ houses and conduct Obon services at their homes, in addition to yearly or monthly memorial services.

Eleven years ago, on Aug. 9, I was helping at my family’s temple. It was just before I moved to the United States. I visited temple members’ houses to conduct memorial services.

On that day, I visited a small apartment house and an old lady welcomed me. There was no air-conditioning. The windows were wide open. I sat in front of the family altar (obutsudan) and faced it. I found bananas there which she offered to Buddha. The room was so warm and the banana skin had almost turned black.

After the service, she served me a cup of tea. I drank it and was leaving the room. Then, she said, “Reverend, please take these bananas.” They looked almost rotten. I could not say “no”; instead, I said, “thank you” and took the bananas home. That night, I told my father, “I went to visit a member’s house, then she gave me bananas which were almost rotten. I was not sure what I should say to her.”

My father said, “Well, bananas spoil easily this time of year. It is August 9 today. Some of today’s memorial services are for victims who died from the atomic bomb. She also lost her child by the A-bomb. She schedules her child’s memorial service on August 9 every year. During World War II, bananas were valuable food. She offers bananas because she wanted her child to eat bananas.”

I felt ashamed because I brought the bananas home without knowing her thoughts. When I read my father’s articles on his experience of the atomic bomb, I realized that he also had a similar experience. When he was around 40 years old, he visited an elderly woman’s

house to conduct a memorial service. The article follows below:

“I visited her house to conduct a memorial service. She had put some onigiri (rice balls) on a regular plate and placed it on the obutsudan, the household Buddhist altar.

“This wasn’t the proper way to offer rice to the Buddha. The rice must be shaped like a lotus bud. There is also a specific implement used to offer rice to the Buddha. I thought that she was not aware of how to properly make offerings.

“To correct her impropriety, I asked her why she offered to the Buddha a plain onigiri on a regular plate. Tears formed in her eyes and said that she had lost four children, all under 10 years of age, due to the A-bomb. She then shared with me that on the day the atomic bomb was dropped, she had told her kids, ‘I made some onigiri for your lunch. Be nice and share them.’ Then, she left the house to go to Isahaya city to buy groceries. The A-bomb was dropped. She ran home as fast as she could because she was so worried about her children. When she got there, the house was crushed, and she found her children’s dead

Nagasaki. Four children who were sitting around the dining table are also included in the number of 73,884. The child whose mother offered bananas every year is also included. The atomic bomb took many people’s lives. Many people lost their father, mother, children, brothers, sisters and friends.

Even after many years have passed, these mothers offered bananas and onigiri (rice balls) to the obutsudan for their children. They have never lost their love and they still wish for their children to eat bananas and onigiri.

Each one of 73,884 people had their family and lived their precious life. The Hiroshima and Nagasaki’s atomic bomb victims memorial service gives us the opportunity to listen to their voices and cherish their lives.

“The basis for peace is for people to understand the pain of others.” This is also the word from the late Mr. Katsuji Yoshida.

In Buddhism, it is called Compassion to understand the pain of others. Amida Buddha has never rounded off any lives and discarded anybody. Amida Buddha sends compassion to each one of us. Shinran Shonin wrote in his

It is the Buddha’s Compassion to accept all beings’ pain as his suffering. We listen to the guidance of the Buddha’s Compassion and cultivate our heart and mind to understand the pain of others. It is the Nembutsu path to make this world peaceful.

bodies around the dining table where she had placed the onigiri.

“She told me, ‘I am the only person who can make onigiri for them.’ ”

He said that it was his first experience to deeply understand and feel the pain of the surviving families who had lost their loved ones because of the war and the atomic bomb. The late Mr. Katsuji Yoshida was also a survivor of the atomic bomb and a member of Kogenji temple.

“Each and every life is equally precious,” he said. “The number of people who died from Nagasaki’s A-bomb is 73,884. This number is important. The media and people who speak at the peace assembly often round off the number and discard the fraction and introduce just a rough number of victims. But we should not drop any number. Each one of them is precious. The number of 73,884 is important to remember.”

Until now, I usually said that about 70,000 people died from the atomic bomb in

hymn:

“When a person realizes the mind of nondiscrimination
The attainment is the ‘state of regarding each being as one’s only child’
This is none other than Buddha-nature;
We will awaken to it on reaching the land of peace”

The expression, “state of regarding each being as one’s only child” tells us what the Amida Buddha’s Compassion is. Amida Buddha regards and accepts each of us as his only child.

It is the Buddha’s Compassion to accept all beings’ pain as his suffering. We listen to the guidance of the Buddha’s Compassion and cultivate our heart and mind to understand the pain of others. It is the Nembutsu path to make this world peaceful.

While conducting the 75th anniversary of Hiroshima/Nagasaki atomic bomb’s victims’ memorial service, I wish that Nagasaki becomes the last city where the atomic bomb is dropped and that all beings live in peace.



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Rev. Adams

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shock wave propelled his body through the air and down a hallway, lodging his body in an alcove.

There was a kindergarten at the temple, and he was particularly fond of one of the young teachers. At the moment the bomb exploded, she had been standing outside the temple to greet the children who were arriving for the day. When the boy ventured out into the temple courtyard after the blast, he saw that his teacher was badly burned, recognizable only by the tattered remains of the dress she had on that morning.

He described how she held her arms out in front of her in the haunting posture that I have seen in drawings at the Atomic Bomb Memorials in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The professor had maintained remarkable composure up to that point in recounting his childhood memory of the bombing but recalling the sight of his beloved kindergarten teacher so badly burned, he began to sob.

The professor described how he carried a deep anger with him during the years that he was growing up in occupied Japan after the war. He said that it was the Buddha’s teachings on the law of cause and effect that ultimately enabled him to find some peace of mind and come to terms with his experience.

The Buddha taught that everything we experience in the present is the result of what has been done and what has not been done in the past. The conditions of every moment of our lives are the result of actions in the past.

Each result that comes to fruition from the past, in turn, becomes the cause for a new experience or circumstance to arise. The suffering brought on his family and community by the atomic bomb was not a divine punishment. It was the result of human calculation and wartime logic. Atomic bombs were developed in a time of war, and so they were used in that war.

Seventy-five years later, the effects of those atomic bombs continue to reverberate in our lives. In my education growing up in the United States, I was taught that the atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were decisive in ending a long and bloody war. I was taught that the bombs saved countless American and Japanese lives that would have been lost if the United States had launched an invasion on the main islands of Japan. My grandfather was a combat pilot in the U.S. Army Air Force during that war. It may be the case that I am alive today as the result of those bombs.

And yet, when I reflect upon that history now, my heart is filled with great sadness at the tremendous human suffering caused by the atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

My life has been made possible by great sacrifices of others. With that awareness, I share my teacher’s sincere wish for a world free from nuclear weapons. I share his wish for a world in which we are ever mindful of the law of cause and effect and the cost in human suffering of the decisions that we make.

Editor’s note: This column by Rev. Henry Toryo Adams appeared in the San Mateo Daily Journal and is reprinted with the grateful permission of the newspaper. Rev. Adams credits the Peninsula Solidarity Cohort with providing the causes and conditions that encouraged him to write the article. Rev. Adams was ordained as a Buddhist priest in Kyoto, Japan at the Nishi Hongwanji temple in September 2008. He began working as a minister in the Buddhist Churches of America in 2010, serving temples in Oxnard, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Guadalupe, before coming to San Mateo in 2013. He is a native of Minnesota.

President’s Message

Continued from Page 3

problems. They are also looking to hire a digital content coordinator who will post temple and Center for Buddhist Education programs. The 2020 National Council approved an allocation for the Communications Committee to hire a part-time marketing and outreach manager.

We actually have some donors who have made commitments to helping the Communications Committee with these goals. Will you help us in this endeavor?

On another subject, I would like to thank Tom Nishikawa for recently taking on the committee chair

position for the Student Financial Assistance Program. This program helps IBS students who are working towards becoming a minister.

This year, Tom Nishikawa, Richard Uyematsu, Gary Tanimura, Gary Omori, and Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada helped to secure funding for our students. Unfortunately, becoming a Jodo Shinshu minister is a very expensive process.

As some of our current ministers can tell you, it is not unusual to graduate from the IBS with a lot of student debt. Given how much some ministers make after they become a resident temple minister, it’s a wonder anyone wants to become a minister at all. We are grateful for those who responded

to the calling to help spread Shinran Shonin’s teachings. We hope that our internet presence helps to increase our temple membership. And, we hope that our ministers receive appropriate compensation for the work that they do.

The Dharma Forward Campaign will help the Student Financial Assistance Program increase their endowment so that we can continue to support those who want to join the ministry. As many of you know, we can always use more fully ordained ministers. At this time of a minister shortage, we rely and appreciate our minister’s assistants and lay leaders who help to keep our temples and sanghas going during this pandemic.

Rev. Akahoshi

Continued from Page 2

were deemed to be significant. Amazing scientific progress has been made in the past 70 years in the fields of health, medicine, food, and safety in homes, jobs and transportation. Illness and death have become inconveniences to be ignored. This point is demonstrated by the behavior of many during the COVID-19 pandemic. Religion and spirituality no longer hold the significance that they once held.

The concerns of 13th century peasants were strongly about being saved from the challenges of life and the proximity of death. The concerns of 21st century Americans deal more with the stress of modern life with little regard to death. So, would it not be wise to emphasize that the teachings provide solutions

to our current concerns.

Shin aligns with science and not belief to address the COVID-19 pandemic. We accept all people as equals to address the BLM movement.

Women in clergy, women’s inequality, LGBTQ concerns, and same-sex marriage are not doctrinal issues as everyone is accepted, just as we are. Our EcoSangha activities address global warming. In recent decades, many Americans are discovering the pragmatic benefits of Buddhist principles. Let us present the benefits of Shin’s emphasis on gratitude.

Shinran presents our optimistic view as he describes that the clouds of greed, desire, and hatred cover the sun, which represents truth. But he observes that beneath the clouds there is brightness, not dark. By making a crosswise leap, we can change our perspective.

Even when we consider ourselves lost in our incompetence, we are accepted, just as we are. Shinran’s basic message is that we receive Amida Buddha’s compassion, which is often stated as Other Power or the efforts of others. As we realize the gift of our human birth, we respond in gratitude, uttering Amida Buddha’s Name.

I have an article on gratitude in the current fall issue of the Buddhist magazine Tricycle. Presenting gratitude as an attractive introduction to Shin has been successful in attracting new members and inspiring traditional ones.

Once people are welcomed into a friendly Sangha, the more traditional explanations of Shin can be provided. Beneath the clouds of this pandemic, the brightness of the internet allows us to share the Shin Dharma widely in a more contemporary manner.

Cleveland

Continued from Page 1

The Cleveland Buddhist Temple formed as a result of the influx of Japanese American families from the World War II detention camps, looking for jobs and to begin new lives.

With the support and encouragement of Chicago’s Midwest Buddhist Temple, they formed the Cleveland Buddhist Church — the precursor of the Cleveland Buddhist Temple.

The dedication service was held Jan. 7, 1945, at the First Unitarian Church. Rev. Seijo Onoyama was the first resident minister.

The first church building was

purchased in 1955 on East 81st Street. Zen scholar Dr. Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki — the internationally known Buddhist scholar D.T. Suzuki — was the invited guest speaker at the Hanamatsuri service in 1957.

In July 1966, the temple building was firebombed and services were suspended during the city’s Hough neighborhood riots. Two years later, an appeal to BCA temples and members was made for funds to help purchase a new building. As a result of the generous donations, a building was dedicated in Euclid in May 1970.

But because of declining membership as well as maintenance problems — including a major roof leak and burst pipe — the Euclid

building was sold in December 2018.

Most recently, the temple had been holding monthly services at its new, rented home at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Shaker Heights.

Supervising Minister Rev. Ron Miyamura of the Midwest Buddhist Temple will continue to support Jōdo Shinshū efforts in the greater Cleveland area with the assistance of Minister’s Assistant Rev. Anita Kazarian.

“The important point is that we are reorganizing and reforming -- we are not going away,” Rev. Kazarian said, adding that the Sangha plans to continue to use the Unitarian Universalist Church as it explores its options other than a temple.

Kindness

Continued from Page 4

Sanghas and graces every temple kitchen, parking lot, social hall, and all the spaces where food, games, and dancing take place during the festivals each summer.

We might call it volunteering, reporting for duty, or “in-kind support,” but when I bite into a tender chicken teriyaki, spam musubi, or Okinawan dango, I can only call it the taste of kindness. It is the taste of everyone’s effort and care toward their communi-

ty, realized in a delicious dish, a friendly wave, or a knowing laugh when we catch each other on the dance line. It is the taste of being connected, of being human together.

Of course, the taste of kindness is even sweeter when we hop over to another temple’s bazaar and enjoy the fruits of their labor! If we added up all the meals, shave ice, bingo games, everything we spend throughout the summer, how much would it be? Can we even put a price on it?

In the wake of our canceled festivals this year, many temples

have put out a call to their members to help fill the fundraising gap, but it’s harder to replace the support our festivals receive from the larger community.

When you have a moment, think of where you would have gone this summer, and think of all the kindness that would be waiting for you when you got there.

As we remember our own temples, if we can, let’s share our appreciation for each other’s temples by giving to them as well. For me, I’ll think of it as a celebration of friendship, and my early gratitude for next year’s taste.

今月の法話

「ステイブ・ジョブズの人生観」

米国仏教団名誉開教使

宮地 信雄



Rev. Nobuo Miyaji

コロナ渦の中で皆さんも色々な新しい試みをされていることでしょう。私もこの大変な時期に思いもよらない新しい

発見や見聞ができたことに驚いています。

その一つに、この前たまたま見ていたYouTubeの一つに、あのマッキントッシュコンピュータの創始者であるステイブ・ジョブズ氏のスタンフォード大学の2005年度の卒業式で演説した一部が出ていました。この記事そのものはそれほど最近のものではないので、多分多くの人が昔に見たことがあることでしょう。しかし、興味本位で見ていた私にとってジョブズの言ったある部分がとても印象的でしたので、ここに紹介しながら仏教との関係を述べてみたいと思います。

彼はその講演の中で、卒業していく学生達に何からこの人生にとって大事かということを行っています。そこで次の三つの点が大事なのだというのです。最初に彼は自分が一度も大学の卒業式に出たことがないと言ってみんなを笑わしていました。そして第一に大事な事は点と点を結ぶ事だと言います。彼は生まれてすぐに養子に出されたのですが、その条件として大学を出すことを産みの親が養子先の親に約束させたことでした。それで彼は、リード大学に行かせてもらうことができました。しかし、育ての親の経済状態が悪いため、途中で退学を余儀なくされます。しかしそれが彼にとって最善の選択になりました。つまり、好きな科目だけを外部生として聴講するきっかけ

になったのです。リード大学はカリグラフィ（書体）の先端をいく講義をしていました。そこで彼は後にWindowsにはなかった様々な活字フォントを考案することになる基礎を学んだのでした。点と点を結ぶという行為は、その時にはできませんが後になって振り返るとそれを結びつけることができるようになるのです。その点と点との結びつきを信じるのが大事なのです。第二の大事なことは愛と喪失ということです。20歳で創業したアップル社でしたが、30歳の時彼はその会社から首にされたのです。意見の違いからでした。その当時彼はもうこのコンピュータ関係から足を洗うことを決めようとしていました。しかしその時思ったのは愛でした。私はこの仕事を愛しているということに気がつかされたのでした。そして再び立ち上がった彼は新しい会社を作り出しました。Pixar社で作った世界で最初のコンピュータアニメ映画Toy Storyにより、世界で最も成功したアニメーションスタジオを作ることになりました。こうした体験からこの人生で最も大事なことは愛することである、自分の仕事を愛し、自分の妻を愛することであるということ学びました。

卒業していく皆さんも自分の愛するものを見つけて、それを全うしてください。それが一番の成功につながるものです。ですからそれがまだ見つからない人はあきらめなくて探し続けてください。あきらめが一番ダメなことです、とハッパをかけます。そして第三番目に大事なことを話します。それは「死」についてです。彼はこの問題について注意深くこう語っています。「もしも、あなたが毎日人生最期の日として生きていくとしたら、その人生は随分違ったものとなるはずですよ。」「もしも、今日が私の人生最期の日だとしたら、今からやろうとすることが本当にしなければならぬものなにかどうか考えるはずですよ。」「死は、自分の人生で重大な選択するために助けとなる私が出会った最も重要なツールだったので。というのは、ほとんどすべての事柄、例えば周囲から自分に向けられた大きな期待や、そのことへの誇り、また逆に屈辱を受けたり、挫折することへの恐れなど、様々なことが起こりますが、これらの事柄は、死を前にした時には跡形もなく消えうせ、真に大切なもののみが残るからです。

私たちはすでにこの身体には何も着ていないのです。」「と語り、自分が一年前脾臓ガンと診察されたことを打ち明けます。脾臓ガンはほとんど死の病で治らないとされています。しかし、彼は奇跡的に治りました。そしてその経験から次の言葉を出しています。「誰一人として、かつて死から逃れた人はいないのです。、、死とはおそらくは生物のただ一つの、かつ最高の発明なのです。それは生き物の変革の仲介をするものなのです。」「死とは、古きを取り除き、新しき道を切り開くものなのです。私はもう古くなりました。これからはあなた方が新しき道を切り開くのです。」「こう言って彼の講演を締めくくりました。会場からは終わった後しばらく沈黙が続き、そして大きな拍手となってしばらく鳴り響いたのです。

素晴らしい講演だと思いますね。仏教者の私からみて、これは彼の人生の本音をかいつまんでわかりやすく我々に語ってくれたものとしていつまでも印象に残るものとなりました。中でも、第三番目の「死」について語ったところは、やはり歴史的な人物の言うことは違ふなと思われました。浄土真宗では、このところを「後生の一大事」と言う言葉で表現します。「後生」とは死ということ。死の問題が一番大事なことですよというのがその意味です。

ステイブ・ジョブズは毎日、死を前にして考え、行動せよと言ったのです。これは宗教者の言葉です。どんな素晴らしい人生も、輝かしい勲章も死の解決なしには無意味なものです。彼はこの講演の締めくくりを「新しき道を切り開く諸君達」と言う言葉で終わりましたが、本当のところは、「でも、忘れないでください。そんなあなた方もいつかは古きものになり、新しいものにとってかわられるのです。」「と言いたかったのでしょう。

点と点を結ぶ人生に自信をもって挑み、自分の最も愛するものを見つけてそして最後に「死」の解決をつけていく人生こそ本当に大事なもののなのだという、人生の達人の話を私たちはうかうかと聞き流してはならないと思います。

南無阿弥陀仏

BCAバーチャルお盆サービスとお盆踊り

8月15日、16日にインターネットを利用したBCAお盆踊りと、孟蘭盆会が行われた。15日のお盆踊り、16日の法要にそれぞれ約600名以上の参加者と参詣者があり、踊りの輪と念仏の輪が全米に広まった。お盆踊りはインターネット会議プログラムのスームで開催。昨年の各仏教会での盆踊りの様子と、踊りのインスタラクシオンビデオを放送し、参加者はそれぞれの家庭

REV. TADAO KOYAMA
ENGLISH DHARMA TALK FROM TACOMA

BCA Virtual Obon Service

sha-ri-hotsu, nyo-ga-kon-ja, sho-san-sho-butsu, fu-ka-shi-gi-ku-doku
("As I present magnify here the inconceivable excellences of those Buddhas, thus Sariputra")

のリビングルームで踊った。16日の、西北部教区とBCA共催の孟蘭盆法要はYouTubeで行われ、原田総長、西北部教区の開教使とBCAの8教区の教区長らがお勤めをした。阿弥陀経を誦誦し、タコマ仏教会に新任の小山忠男開教使が日英両語で法話をした。

孟蘭盆会は現在もYouTubeで視聴することができる。
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jduTko7fs-o>

開教使会会議と布研もズームで

8月18日と19日にBCA開教使会会議および布教研究会が行われた。南部教区主催で、ロサンゼルスで開催される予定になっていたが、コロナウイルス感染拡大の影響のため、ズームを利用して会議と講義が行われることになった。18日の会議では、ダルマフォワードキャンペーンのことなどが話し合われた。19日の布研ではカリフォルニア大学バークレー校教授、ブラム・マーク博士が「涅槃経と浄土教」の講義をし、阿闍世の物語など親鸞聖人が涅槃経とその思想から受けた影響について学んだ。講義にはハワイとカナダの開教使も参加した。

ダイヤルザダルマで 日本語法話

コロナウイルスの世界的な感染拡大を受けて数ヶ月に渡って外出が制限されている中、BCAでは電話をすれば5分間の法話を聞くことができる「ダイヤルザダルマ」プログラムがはじめられている。コンピュータをあまり使わない門信徒の方から好評を得ているこのプログラムに、5月から日本語の法話が加えられた。

(800) 817-7918に電話すると、原田総長の声で英語の方は1を日本語の方は2を押すように促される。2を押すと約5分間の日本語の法話を聞くことができる。法話は2週間ごとに更新される予定。

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for WOD: WODeditor@bcahq.org

二〇二〇年度教化標語

「尊び敬う心」

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>

総長メッセージ

広島・長崎原爆投下75周年を振り返って

米国仏教団 総長 原田 マービン



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada

1945年8月6日と8月9日に広島と長崎に原爆が投下されてから75周年が経ちました。オレンジ郡仏教会には、広島で被爆された方が何人かおられ、75年前のあの恐ろしい日の体験について話を聞かせてもらったことがあります。

お寺のメンバーのサラシナ・ジュンジさんは、原爆の爆風を受けて顔から地面に倒されたと話してくれました。背中を爆風に向けていたので、大火傷にはならなかったそうです。その時は何が体にあたったのかさえ分からず、人々は原爆が何なのか、どれだけの威力があるのか、放射能の影響のことなど、何も知りませんでした。原爆で行方不明になった子供を持つ親たちは、毎日のように街に出て、子供を探しており、毎日、街に出るたびに被爆し、数日後には病気になるくらい死んでいったのです。

ジュンジさんは、火傷をしたので川に行きました。川の中には被爆した大勢の人が入っていました。ひどい火傷のために川から上がってこれなかったそうです。ある男性が腕を伸ばして助けを求めているので、ジュンジさんがその男性を川から引き上げようとしたところ、その男性の腕の皮が剥がれてしまったのです。信じられないほどの惨状と苦しみがあり、ジュンジさんは、「地獄をこの目で見た」と言います。

ジュンジさんは、「私はあの世に地獄があるとは思っていません。自分の目で地獄を見たのですから。あの原爆の日ほどの

地獄はないです」と話してくれたことがあります。

そうなのかもしれません。様々な宗教が地獄のことを説き、こういった人たちがあいつた人たちが地獄に落ちる、と言いますが、それは、他人を差別し、裁く無知な人間の考えが反映されているからではないでしょうか。自分の目で地獄を見てきたジュンジさんのような人にとっては、そういった話はばかげたことのように聞けるのかもしれない。

また、ジュンジさんはとても考えさせる話もしてくれました。「先生、浄土のことも同じように思っています。浄土は自分が死んだ後に行く場所だとは思っていません。時々、家族や孫と楽しく食事をしていると、今ここに浄土があるのではないかと思うことがあります。この目で地獄を見ることができれば、浄土も見ることができるようではないでしょうか。」

浄土をこの世で見ることができるとは何かとうかという問題は、浄土真宗の中でもかなり議論されていますが、実は、同じような考えを持った偉大な真宗の念仏者はたくさんいます。妙好人として知られる浅原才市さんは、いくつかの詩で次のように言われています。

わたしやじごくにおちるじゃないよ じごくは現にすみかすみか これがじごくのすみかぞかし

さいちがじごくわどこにある さいちがじごくわどこにある ころにをちるさいちが じごく

さいちがじごくどこにある さいちがじごくどこにある きほをいたい (機法一体) なむあみだぶつ これにさいちがまいる じごく

目が変わる 世が変わる ここが極楽にかわる うれしやなむあみだぶつ

才市や何処におる 浄土もろうつて娑婆におる これがよろこびなむあみだぶつ

75年前の広島・長崎への原爆投下のことを思い起こし、あの日を生きた抜いた人々の体験と記憶が、全世界への知恵の言葉となり、全人類が平和と調和の中で生きていくことができるようになることを念じましょう。

親鸞聖人は「世の中安穩なれ、仏法ひろまれ」とおっしゃいました。今から約750年前に、親鸞聖人は世界の平和と調和を願っておられました。今から75年前、広島と長崎の原爆投下後、被爆者の方々は平和と調和の世界を願っておられました。そして、2020年の今日、私たちもまた、平和と調和のとれた世界の実現を目指してまいりましょう。

南無阿弥陀仏

米国に響く ③ 念仏の声

③

日系2世の勝本清さん(83)は、バークレー仏教会カリフォルニア州)のメンバー。熊本県出身の両親は1924年に米国に渡った。熱心な門徒で、父は幼い頃に熊本の本願寺派の寺院で育てられたという。

戦争が始まり、6歳の勝本さんは、両親と兄弟の家族7人でユタ州トープズのキャンプ(強制収容所)に収容された。このキャンプには仏教会もあり、数人の開教使もいた。

キャンプの日本人の中には、仏教会に関わることで、米国政府に「要注意人物」としてマークされることを恐れ、距離を置く人々もいた。

だが、勝本さんの両親はアメリカに移住して以来、荒地を耕して農業を営む中で、浄土真宗の教えを心の支えに生きてきた。だからこそ積極的に仏教会に関わった。

戦後、南アラメダ郡仏教会(カリフォルニア州)を再建する時に、生活に

余裕がないにも関わらず、両親は多額の寄付をしたそうだ。「私にはよくわからなかったが、両親にとって仏教会は自分たちの人生の一部だったのだと思う」と勝本さんは考えている。

「今、私たちがこうして暮らしているのは、両親、そして戦時中の苦しい時期も浄土真宗のみ教えを護り続けた先人のおかげです」。

勝本さんの妻、笑子さん(75)も「先人の方々のように、み教えを日常生活の中でどう具体的に実践しているかを示すことが、若い世代に念仏が相続されていくためには大切なこと」と、言葉を添えた。



Mr. Masaki Takano

日系2世の高野正樹さん(87)は戦争中、コロラド州アマチのキャンプに強制収容されていたが、戦争が終わり、家族とともに再びカリフォルニア州のアラメダ島に戻った。「福岡出身の父は、キャンプに移る時に閉鎖されたアラメダ仏教会の復興に物心両面で尽くした」と述懐する。日本語がよくわからず、キャンプではほとんど仏教会には行かなかった高野さんは、仏教会のために献身的に尽くす父の姿に導かれ、アラメダ仏教会に通った。日曜学校の責任者を8年間にわたってつとめ、浄土真宗の教えを学ぶことで仏教徒、真宗門徒としての自覚を深めていく。日曜学校では生徒たちに「自分が責任を負えば済む」とはそれでよい。しかし、自分の言動で仏教徒全体の名誉を傷つけるようなことはしてはならない」と繰り返し、説き続けた。それは、生涯を真宗門徒として生きた父が、米国で仏教を存続させるために高野さんに伝えた「教え」だった。「親鸞聖人は私を導いてくださる存在。その聖人の教えに背くような生き方はしたくない、してはいけない、ということですよ」。その言葉に高野さんの「念仏者の生き方」を示されていた。

(年齢は昨年9月取材時)

Mr. and Mrs. Kiyoshi Katsumoto