

WHEEL OF DHARMA

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2018 IBS Commencement: Moving Forward

Ten students received graduate degrees and certificates at the 2018 Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) Commencement, held on May 18, 2018. In addition, the annual IBS President's Award was presented to Dr. Jack Masakazu Fujimoto, the fourth IBS Trustee Chair from 1982 to 1993.

The program began with introductions by Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, IBS President, followed by a service led by Buddhist Churches of America Bishop and IBS Chancellor, Rev. Kodo Umezu, and opening remarks from Dr. Scott Mitchell, IBS Dean.

Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka, IBS Vice President of Development, presented the IBS President's Award to Dr. Jack Fujimoto for his services in providing academic and organizational leadership to IBS.

Dr. Fujimoto coordinated the process for IBS to affiliate with the Graduate Theological Union, upgraded the faculty and curriculum, and established professorial chairs for the faculty. Dr. Fujimoto guided IBS in raising its standards with the ultimate goal of attaining the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation. It is due to his leadership that IBS is closer to achieving that goal.

Dr. Fujimoto expressed his grati-



IBS graduates and faculty (front, left to right): Rev. Kodo Umezu, Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka, Dr. Jack Fujimoto, and Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto. (Second row): Wen-yi Lu, Satoshi Shaku, Stacey Koyama, Kenneth Koyama, Carmela Javellana Hirano, Uma Lama Ghising, David Pating, Blayne Higa, Dr. Gordon Bermant, and Hoshina Seki. (Third row): Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Jerry Hirano, Dr. Scott Mitchell, Rev. Dr. Daijaku Kinst, and Rev. Patricia Usuki. (Fourth row): Rev. Gerald Sakamoto, Rev. Gregory Gibbs, Dr. Richard Payne, Richard Endo, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, and Rev. Harry Bridge.

tude for being given the opportunity to serve IBS, and wished the current faculty, staff, and trustees success in their endeavors to make IBS a recognized educational institution.

Rev. Harry Bridge, Resident Minis-

ter of the Buddhist Church of Oakland and an IBS graduate, gave the commencement address titled, "A Journey with Vasubandhu." Rev. Bridge discussed some key ideas from the *Jodoron* (Vasubandhu's Treaties on the Pure

Land), and concluded by expressing his gratitude to his teachers, students, and colleagues, recognizing that life is a continual process of learning about the Dharma and himself.

Dean Mitchell and Richard Endo, Chair of the IBS Board of Trustees, presided over the Conferral of Graduate Degree and Certificates.

Tadao Hiramoto Koyama was awarded the Master of Buddhist Studies. His thesis title was, "Chanting in Buddhism: With a focus on Chanting in the Jodo Shinshu Tradition." Koyama is currently in Japan to further his studies. His parents, Mr. Kenneth and Mrs. Stacey Koyama, received the degree on his behalf.

Six Kyoshi Certificates were awarded to Ellen Hamada Crane, Robert Anraku Gubenco, Blayne Higa, Carmela Javellana Hirano, David Pating, and Todd Tsuchiya.

Ryukoku University and IBS Exchange Program certificates were awarded to Uma Lama Ghising and Satoshi Shaku.

The Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts and IBS Exchange Program certificate was awarded to Wen-yi Lu.

After closing remarks by Dr. Matsumoto, the graduates, friends, family, staff, and colleagues enjoyed a reception in the JSC lobby.

Exploring "Intersections" at the FDSTL Conference

By Mas Nishimura, San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin, FDSTL Recording Secretary

On the weekend of April 28-29, 2018, the annual Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Federation of Dharma School Teachers' Leagues (FDSTL) Conference was held at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Foster City, California with over 170 attendees from throughout the United States, Canada, and Japan. Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, welcomed the attendees. Rev. Henry Adams gave the keynote talk explaining the conference theme, "Intersections." Intersectionality is a relatively new word which describes how the interconnected nature of social categories such as race, class, and gender can overlap and lead to various levels of discrimination or disadvantage. The conference goal was to bring awareness to those moments when we are at a crossroads or intersection, deciding which path to choose, and trying to do so

with mindfulness, awareness, and guidance from the Buddhist Dharma.

The keynote was followed by a workshop where attendees were introduced to the "Power Flower." This graphic helps clarify the important facets of a group, identifying dominant and non-dominant subgroups by using large and small flower petals, respectively. Participants filled out their own "power flowers" to see where they fit as individuals, and to see dominant groups within our society and within our temples.

During lunch, an excellent presentation on "Implicit Bias" was given by Camille Pating (San Francisco) and Joyce Oishi (Berkeley). They helped us uncover our ignorance, one of the Three Poisons, in how we perceive and frequently misjudge other people. We explored how inherent and often undetected forms of bias influence our thinking, and how those messages are passed on to children.

In the afternoon workshop, the attendees learned about

the "Sangha Cafe" discussion format and then applied it to four questions: How can we make our BCA temples more welcoming? How can we maintain a sense of heritage and identity? How can we use the Dharma to help and heal our issues with power, privilege, and implicit bias? What other questions do we have about Shinran or the Parable of the Two Rivers and the White Path to be able to teach the stories to our students? These questions were then presented to the "aquarium" panel (based on the "fishbowl" conversation concept, which allows everyone in a large group to participate). The panel was initially composed of ministers. After each response, attendees in the audience were asked to come up to replace panelists so they could contribute to the conversation or ask their own questions.

The panel discussion was followed by an FDSTL General Meeting where the annual budget and changes to the by-laws giving more flexibility to the conference schedule were



Mrs. Emma Ito of San Mateo Buddhist Temple (center) was present to receive recognition for 50 years of teaching Dharma School. The FDSTL Award was presented by BCA Bishop, Rev. Kodo Umezu (right) and FDSTL President, Carl Yanari. Photo by Cathy Fujimoto. See pages 5 and 8 for more photos.

approved. Near the end of the meeting, the new executive board was announced: Koichi Sayano (President), Carl Yanari (Vice President), June Kondo (Treasurer), Mas Nishimura (Recording Secretary), Bessie Tanaka (Corresponding Secretary), Mike Shibata (Historian), and Tad Shibata (Ex-Officio). Finally, Mas Nishimura representing the Coast District moved that a resolution of appreciation be passed to express gratitude to the Bay District for organizing the 2018 Conference.

After a delicious banquet, the Dharma School Teachers received awards for 10-, 25- and 50-years of service. The Coast District invited attendees to the 2019 Conference in San Jose on April 27-29 with the theme "I am a link... Heal Ourselves, Heal the World." This was followed by evening workshops.

The Conference concluded on Sunday with the installation of the FDSTL 2018 Cabinet and a closing service with a Dharma Message by Rev. Adams.



Everlasting Wish

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

My office in San Francisco is like a room in a museum. It shows no changes since the headquarters building was constructed in 1971. The furniture from when I came to visit Bishop Tsuji right after I arrived in the US in 1973 is still there. The only new items are the carpet and the telephone on my desk.

I believe that the BCA National Headquarters Building is the embodiment of our *Issei's* and *Nisei's* dream of sharing the joy of the Dharma with everyone. During the '60s and '70s, the makeup of the Buddhist Churches of America was mainly Nisei members. After World War II, they had to start from scratch. Some moved to new places to build their communities. Many returned to where they had come from and rebuilt their Japanese American communities and Buddhist Sanghas. After they finished their community-building tasks, they constructed this building in San Francisco. This building speaks to me deeply. To me, this building is not just bricks and mortar; it is the life of the Nisei-generation Japanese Americans asking us to carry on their dreams and hopes. Moreover, this building is the embodiment of the Buddha's wish.

From the '70s to the present

time, our organization has been showing a great change—especially in the makeup of our membership. Younger people are expressing their sincere desire to learn more about the *Nembutsu* teaching. New people are constantly visiting our temples and churches. The teaching that we have received has much to offer in this world of uncertainty.

Shinran Shonin appreciated this teaching and encouraged us to share it with people in the world. He was able to cure his spiritual illness with this wonderful medicine. He urges us to find this wonderful remedy that brings peace and happiness to people's minds. Unless we do this, there is no need to have our organization, nor buildings in San Francisco or elsewhere. Our human wisdom does not bring true peace in the world. It is only through the Immeasurable Wisdom known as Amida that we come to realize the oneness of all beings and the limitations of our foolish views.

Shinran Shonin wrote:

The Vow of compassion... is like a wonderful lotus blossom, for it is not stained by anything in the world.

It is like a sharp ax, for it lops off all the branches of suffering.

It is like a guiding master, for it informs foolish beings of the essential



The Bishop's Office at BCA Headquarters with Bishop Kenryu Tsuji in the early 1970s and Bishop Kodo Umezu in 2018.

way of liberation.

It is like the right path, for it leads the multitudes of beings into the capital of wisdom.

(Collected Works of Shinran, excerpts from pages 66 and 67)

Besides the furniture, two other things in my office have not changed: the everlasting wish of our founders, and the Buddha's Compassionate Vow. If and when we renovate this building, I would like to strongly suggest that we have a ceremony to rededicate it to the Nisei members who did so much for us. *Namo Amida Butsu.*

Wisdom and Compassion are Inseparable



By Rev. Matt Hamasaki,
Buddhist Church of Sacramento

I recently attended a banquet on behalf of a graduating high school senior. The banquet was put on to recognize students who maintained a high Grade Point Average (GPA). I thought I did pretty good in high school, but I was sitting in a room with over 100 students who were receiving awards for their academic excellence. Many of them had GPAs over 4.0. I was overwhelmed at their intelligence and thought I didn't belong among them.

I was there because I was invited as the "sponsor" for a member of the Junior Young Buddhist Association (Jr. YBA). This meant that this particular graduating senior felt that I made an impact in his life. I was incredibly honored and humbled to be thought of this way and it was my privilege to be able to go and celebrate his accomplishments. During the program, there was a student speaker who was well-spoken and had a good message. She said that, while that evening was all about numbers, the students themselves were more than numbers, and to remember that while finding their passions in life. I couldn't agree more. As Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, we take refuge in the Buddha of Infinite Wisdom and Compassion. Wisdom and compassion are inseparable. And while I am

very proud of how smart this Jr. YBAer is, I also know that his caring personality is what will allow him to make a true impact on the world.

He never seemed to have his homework at the study sessions I held at the temple, but I guess that didn't matter since he still got good grades. He was more there for the camaraderie. And I will never forget when I put together a program for the Dharma School kids of all ages to participate in fun activities that would help them get in touch with the Dharma. A family with young children came to the temple for the first time. Without any direction, this senior took it upon himself to entertain these kids and make sure they had a fun time in a new place. His compassion led this family to a relationship with the temple. His actions were an inspiration to me for

how to live a compassionate life.

The principal gave the closing words. He told the students to thank their parents for all the efforts they put in during their high school career. From taxiing them everywhere to helping them study, graduating would have been impossible without their help. This was true for the Jr. YBAer's parents as well. They are two of kindest, funniest, most supportive people I know. And, as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, when we look at Amida Buddha as our parent, we begin to realize all of the people who made our lives possible. I am so grateful I was given the opportunity to attend that banquet. Not only was I given dinner, I was also given a great honor, saw some great friends, and opened my eyes and heart to the Great Compassion of the Buddha.

World Jodo Shinshu Leaders Meet

The Buddhist Churches of America recently hosted the 36th World Jodo Shinshu Coordinating Council (WJSCC) Meeting from May 8-9, 2018 at the Jodo Shinshu Center and BCA Headquarters in San Francisco. This is an annual gathering of representatives from the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto and its overseas districts in Hawaii, Canada, North America, and South America.

Since 1982 this international meeting, whose location rotates between Hongwanji headquarters and the various districts, has offered the opportunity for overseas districts' leaders to discuss with Hongwanji-ha representatives activities in their respective regions, and concerns being faced by their members and organizations.

The next WJSCC Meeting will be hosted by the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto from June 26-27, 2019.



Shinran Shonin watched over the bishops and representatives at the World Jodo Shinshu Coordinating Council Meeting at BCA Headquarters.



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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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By Richard A. Stambul,
BCA President

Some time back I attended a symposium at Gardena Buddhist Church. What was going on during Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto's Dharma talk was interesting and absorbing, but as happens with all of us from time to time, my mind started to drift. I couldn't stay focused. I noticed the picture of Shinran Shonin on the back wall of the *Naijin*. I saw my friends, Tosh and Masako Ishioka, and remembered the time when they asked me

out to dinner. I recalled that meal with clarity. During the evening we talked about the old days when Tosh's family ran a boarding house in West Los Angeles for those returning from the camps during WWII; about their upcoming trip to Japan and my suggestion they be sure to visit Koyasan high up in the mountains. And what did we eat that night? Let's see, we started with...

Suddenly, my attention shifted to something that Rev. David said. He was talking about authenticity, love, friendship, and shame, and I realized he was offering something that really resonated with me. But where was my mind before then? It had been wandering all over the place.

And it is precisely this awareness of my monkey mind

swinging from one branch to another with awe-inspiring skill that contains the answer to the question at hand: Why am I a Shin Buddhist? There is no correct answer to that question. What the Dharma means to me may not be what it means to others. For some it may mean just hanging out with friends at the temple; for others it may mean searching deep inside themselves.

For me, being a Shin Buddhist means being aware that I was sitting at a Shin service while my head was somewhere else. My body may have been there, but my thoughts were in a different place. A classic case of dualism. Of not being present. Of not being fully awake.

It is the possibility of wakefulness that attracted me to Shin Buddhism.

To be present means to be awake. To be awake means to appreciate the interconnectedness of all beings and to realize a transformation of consciousness that allows one to dare to aspire to peace, freedom, and equality in oneself and in the world. To be awake means to try to build a society and a culture in this life befitting the Pure Land; a refuge of true peace and harmony without discrimination, hatred, or suffering. Being awake, being fully present, can create an awareness that allows us to engage in compassionate work.

Jodo Shinshu guides me to a deeper awareness of my own spiritual imperfections, my own inadequacies in a never-ending search for who I really am. Authenticity and shame are critical components of this

exploration. The more I dig out the ore of my own spiritual faults and shortcomings, the more real and embracing becomes my awareness of Amida Buddha's compassion. By obtaining a deeper understanding of ourselves, we come closer to appreciating the truth of interconnectedness.

Rev. Mas Kodani (retired BCA minister of Senshin Buddhist Temple) teaches that the ego and its never-ending needs, is the real obstacle to awareness. In the rare moments, sometimes nanoseconds of time, when I briefly transcend the demands of my own ego, I can sense a new life, a spiritual rebirth. The deeper problem, however, is how to transform those glimmers of ecstasy into an enduring state of mind. *Namo Amida Butsu.*

President's Message: Why Am I a Shin Buddhist?

Mottainai and Eco-Sangha: A BDBWL Workshop

By Joanne Gozawa, Palo Alto Buddhist Temple BWA

Mottainai, the Japanese expression of regret for a missed opportunity, is often used to convey dismay when resources are wasted. In this context, roughly translated as "it is a shame to waste," *mottainai* brought together ideas of ecological awareness and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism at the Bay District Buddhist Women's League (BDBWL) workshop on March 24, 2018 at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple.

Put simply, *mottainai* reflects the Buddhist perspective of interdependence; each and every thing is part of the web of life that sustains all of us. Thus, "it is a shame to waste" is about the feeling that everything is of the Dharma and therefore precious. Even a scrap of paper

states in part: "Therefore, be it resolved that each BCA temple be encouraged... to promote ecologically friendly behavior in the spirit of *mottainai*." During the BDBWL workshop, the participating temples organized into three sub-regions of three temples each to help support each other's efforts and to propose joint ecology-themed events, with the aim of sustaining the momentum for fostering Eco-Sangha in the spirit of *mottainai*.

This year's BDBWL workshop was hosted, designed, and facilitated by the Palo Alto BWA. Ecological awareness permeated the planning of the workshop itself. Since livestock production is a major stressor on ecosystems, lunch was vegetarian and so delicious that no one

Participants shared their personal stories about mottainai conservation awareness during small group discussions. This group included (left to right) Jacqui Yamaoka-Panzella, Sharmon Fujimoto, Lenni Terao-Doerr, Steven Terusaki, and Linda Minamoto. Photo by Carl Yanari.



or a bit of food left on a plate needs to be given respectful consideration.

With over 50 people in attendance, the BDBWL workshop began with five Bay District ministers—Rev. Henry Adams, Rev. Harry Bridge, Rev. Dennis Fujimoto, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, and Rev. Dean Koyama—each giving a Dharma talk about the connection between ecology and Buddhism, and about their personal experiences learning to be mindful in the spirit of *mottainai*. Then, in small groups, the participants shared their own *mottainai*-awareness stories.

By the end of the workshop, participants vowed to approach their temple boards to support temple-wide *mottainai* consciousness-raising events and sustainable ecological practices. This is in alignment with the Eco-Sangha Resolution passed in 2014 by the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), which

thought to complain. Because *waribashi*, or disposable wooden chopsticks, contribute to deforestation, reusable bamboo chopsticks were provided as utensils, and each participant took home a gift of foldable/portable reusable chopsticks to take to restaurants. Even the plates at the workshop were of the reusable variety, while the tablecloths were 100% compostable, and the centerpieces were simple greenery from local BWA members' gardens. Furthermore, to minimize waste, participants were instructed to bring along their own cups or thermoses for beverages, and all gladly complied.

Bay District and other interested temples will have an opportunity to share their Eco-Sangha experiences and initiatives at the World Buddhist Women's Convention to be held in San Francisco, California, August 30 to September 1, 2019.



By Rev. Sala Sekiya,
Gardena Buddhist Church

"What's Your Treasure?" A Question from the Land of Hidden Nembutsu

At the recent Federation of Dharma School Teachers' Leagues Conference, I appreciated Rev. Henry Adam's Dharma talk in which he described vividly how Shakyamuni Buddha shared his "treasure" with his son, Rāhula. Rāhula was excited to receive his father's treasure, although he didn't know what the treasure was. Was it a bag of precious jewels? The Buddha told him it was the most precious thing that he had. The treasure was the Buddha, Dharma and the Sangha. Rāhula joined Buddha's disciples who paid homage and bowed down to the treasure.

When I reflected upon the treasure, it reminded me of the Jodo Shinshu treasure we were made keenly aware of, by the trip last year to southern Kyushu with a group from Seattle Betsuin. There we learned the history of "*Kakure Nembutsu*," the hidden Nembutsu. In southern Kyushu, the Jodo Shinshu teaching was banned for over 300 years.

It is not easy to single out the reasons for the religious persecution, but our teaching that "all beings are equally precious in the eyes of Amida Buddha" was opposed by the ruling forces. The unification among the Nembutsu followers was also seen as dangerous; Nembutsu followers fought against the powerful feudal lord Oda Nobunaga for 10 years in Osaka.

The Jodo Shinshu teaching was outlawed in Kumamoto and then in Kagoshima by the feudal governor, named Shimazu, in 1597. Persecution was severe; more than 140,000 followers were arrested and 2,000 Buddhist images were confiscated. The torturous punishment of Nembutsu followers led to their deaths and suicides.

Despite the hardships, Nembutsu followers maintained fellowships called

ko and held Dharma gatherings in hidden locations like mountain caves and aboard ships. There are many locations and relics still in existence today and we visited a few. People skillfully hid scrolls with the Name, Buddha statues, and images of Shinran Shonin they received from Hongwanji and paid homage with them. These were the treasures the followers protected despite threats to their lives.

A statement by Densuke, a devout follower who was captured, explains the feeling of the others. When sympathetic officers offered Densuke his life in exchange for abandoning Jodo Shinshu, he said, "Thank you, but I can't think of continuing my short life here without the Nembutsu. I do not recite the Nembutsu by my own calculation. The Nembutsu is given by Amida Buddha. Even if I tried to stop reciting the Nembutsu, the *shinjin* (entrusting heart) within me can never be erased." Densuke had a final *Shoshinge* service and said to his fellows, "My going to the Pure Land is without doubt. I hope you, too, share the gratitude for the Buddha's benevolence." This true story taught us that the Nembutsu is a rare and precious treasure for Jodo Shinshu followers and that, once given—for Densuke too—it could not be taken away by anybody. It keeps protecting us to live life to the utmost with strength and joy under any circumstance.

Religious freedom was finally given in 1876 and Hongwanji immediately sent ministers to the region to support the followers. Now the Kagoshima Betsuin temple shines brightly in the cityscape, visible and large, carrying on the wishes of those Nembutsu followers to transmit the treasure openly to future generations.

The question from the *Kakure Nembutsu* followers echoes in my ears, and hopefully in your ears too—*What is your treasure?* Are you keeping the rare and precious treasure and paying homage to it?



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

FBWA 45th National Conference in September

This year's Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations (FBWA) national conference will be held from September 14-16, 2018 at the Visalia Marriott at the Convention Center in Visalia, California. The conference will be hosted by the Central California District BWA.

45th FBWA National Conference
in the Central California District
September 14-16, 2018
Marriott Hotel, Visalia CA

CREATE AN
**Endless
Ripple**



The theme for 2018 is "Create an Endless Ripple" (in Japanese *Bup'po Hiromare, Hamon no Gotoku*). The keynote messages will be given by BCA Minister Emeritus Rev. Bob Oshita (English) and Rev. Ryuta Furumoto of the Senshin Buddhist Temple (Japanese).

Visalia, located at the southern end of the BCA Central California district, is about a 45-minute drive south of Fresno. Visalia was voted one of America's Best Small Towns for Food with a vivid and delicious "Farm to Fork" scene centered around one of the greatest agricultural regions of the world.

On Friday afternoon, September 14, before the actual conference starts, delegates and guests are invited to sign up for the optional "Farm to Fork" Tour, which will provide a unique "insiders" look and opportunity to taste some of the Central Valley's great agricultural achievements. The FBWA Representatives Meeting will be held on Friday evening from 7-9 p.m. For those not attending the meeting, a Zumba class for all ages and abilities will round out the evening.

Included in Saturday's schedule will be a video presentation and workshops on the conference theme, as well as an *Ichijukai* meeting for retired BCA ministers and widows. The day will conclude with the annual banquet.

Sunday morning's schedule includes the annual FBWA General Meeting, Closing Service, and an optional pre-ordered bento lunch.

Local temple BWA chapters now have registration packets. The registration is \$200, and the deadline is July 31, 2018. A special hotel rate of \$124 per night is available until August 24. For more information, please email: BuddhistWomens.Association.Reg@gmail.com

Cubs to Eagles: 100% Attainment

By Florence Oto-Wong and Gayle Okamoto-Firth,
Buddhist Church of Sacramento

In 2006 a group of first grade boys from the Pocket-Greenhaven and Elk Grove neighborhoods coincidentally joined Pack 50 Cub Scouts affiliated with the Buddhist Church of Sacramento (Sacramento Betsuin) and became known as the Den 1 Boys. These eight boys learned to tie knots, build campfires, stake a tent, and of course, make s'mores.



In 2011 they all "bridged" into the same Boy Scout Troop 50, also affiliated with the Sacramento Betsuin. In Troop 50 they all continued their commitment to scouting, with hours of community service, camping, hiking, cooking, cycling, and kayaking,

required in order to earn their merit badges. These scouts learned life skills, had fun, and learned to "be prepared."

Fast forward to 2018. All eight of these original first graders, together, have earned the highest rank of scouting, Eagle Scout. Only 4% of boy scouts achieve this rank. Each of the boys put in hundreds of hours of community service. Six of the eight scouts were able to give back to the Sacramento Betsuin by having their project benefit the Betsuin.

The Den 1 Boys are now young adult men, seniors in the Class of 2018 representing their respective high schools, and are well prepared for their lives to soar. Congratulations!



Upper photo: The Den 1 Boys of Pack 50 in 2006. Lower photo: Den 1 Boys of Troop 50 in 2018. Front Row: Samuel Wolff, Thomas Ito, Drew Tanaka, and Chad Wong. Back Row: Andrew Ikemoto, Brandon La, Corey Tanaka, and Brendan Firth.

Long Awaited Anthology...

Leaves of My Heart

By Lady Takeko Kujo

*Is it the flame of the gods?
Or the flames of demons – I know not.
All I know is: I must go, into that light,
Wherever it may lead me*



Lady Takeko Kujo (1887-1928), daughter of Gomonshu Koson Ohtani (the 21st Abbot of the Nishi Hongwanji), was one of Japan's leading women in the early 20th century. She was a devout Buddhist and co-founder of the Buddhist Women's Association (BWA). Lady Kujo was also a renown poet, writer, artist, activist, and humanitarian. She founded Asoka Hospital, one of the first modern medical centers in Japan, and was instrumental in the founding of Kyoto Women's University. Lady Kujo lived just 41 years before she died of blood poisoning contracted while providing medical aid to the poorest people of Tokyo.

The American Buddhist Study Center (ABSC) is in the process of publishing an English translation of Lady Kujo's series of essays which appeared in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper in 1926 under the title *Leaves of My Heart*. The book will also include a selection of poems from her *Golden Bell* collection, written to express the compassion and heartfelt concern she shared with people from all walks of life. In today's turbulent world, *Leaves of My Heart* brings forth a deeper meaning and understanding of our lives through Lady Kujo's words written over ninety years ago.

The ABSC invites all Buddhist Churches of America members and BWA chapters to assist with the publication of this important work. Please help the ABSC share the amazing life story and words of Lady Takeko Kujo with the world.

Several donation acknowledgment levels have been established, but any donation will be gratefully appreciated. Asoka Gift: \$2,000; Wisteria Gift: \$1,000; and Lotus Gift: \$500.

For those wishing to make an online donation, or for more information, please visit www.ambuddhist.org. To donate by check, please make it payable to the American Buddhist Study Center and mail to ABSC, 331 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10025. Please include in the memo line, "Donation for Leaves of My Heart."

2018 BCA Educational Events

Programs subject to change.

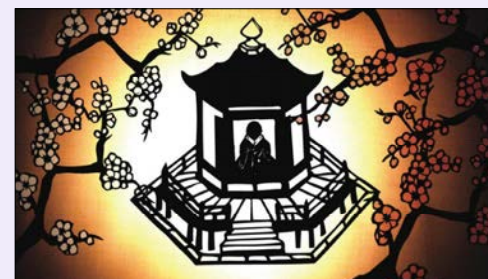
Events at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) unless otherwise noted.

July 1-7 ~ BCA Summer Youth Retreat at the JSC. A new Dharma and youth development opportunity for high school students. Sponsored by BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE).

July 20-21 ~ Summer Pacific Seminar, "What is Enlightenment?" Keynote speaker: **Rev. Dr. Jérôme Ducor**. See ad above. Register online at BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org or download form and register by mail. Co-sponsored by the Institute of Buddhist Studies and CBE.

September 9-16 ~ Tomoshie

Tour. This dynamic group of young Jodo Shinshu priests from Japan will perform shadow graph storytelling, followed by Dharma talks on the stories' themes. Three stories will be performed at LA Betsuin (Sept. 9 and 10), San Mateo Buddhist Temple (Sept. 20), and Seattle Betsuin (Sept. 16). Suitable for all ages. For more information, visit BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org. Sponsored by CBE.



September 25-27 ~ Ministers' Continuing Education (MCE) Seminar. Study and discussion for BCA ministers. Schedule TBD. Sponsored by CBE.

September 29 ~ Creating Inclusive Youth Programs Seminar: Supporting LGBTQ Youth & Families: Nurturing Compassionate Communities. Keynote speaker: Aiden Aizumi. A half-day seminar for leaders of youth programs with focus on supporting LGBTQ youth and families at our temples and affiliated youth programs. Speakers will be from Jodo Shinshu Buddhist and Christian perspectives.

BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org E-mail: cbe@bcahq.org Phone: (510) 809-1460



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

Girls' Day at Gardena Buddhist Church

On March 3, 2019, girls from kindergarten to fifth grade celebrated a Girls' Day (*Hinamatsuri*) program at the Gardena Buddhist Church, organized by Girl Scout Ambassador Kathleen Shiroma. The 71 participating girls enjoyed a great time with friends participating in a variety of activities.

The event began with a welcome by Rev. Sala Sekiya, a Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) minister currently serving at Gardena. Afterwards, the girls created paper dolls, taiko drums, Girls' Day drawings, flower ribbon headbands, racing boats made of corks, and priceless memories. "It was wonderful to see the young girls excited to learn different cultures through this Japanese traditional holiday turned into a modern, fun-filled event," said Rev. Sekiya.

Kathleen is working on earning her Girl Scout Gold Award. Rev. Sekiya is one of a just few female BCA ministers. Together they provided great role models for the girls.



Above: Girls race boats made of corks. Right: Girl Scout Ambassador Kathleen Shiroma shares Japanese Girls' Day cultural traditions with the attendees.

The Institute of Buddhist Studies & BCA Center for Buddhist Education present




SUMMER PACIFIC SEMINAR - 21ST CENTURY

*In conjunction with the Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) & Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) Summer Workshop

WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT?

All Buddhist paths are based on the aspiration for enlightenment.

Shinran's View of Enlightenment

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Rev. Dr. Jérôme Ducor

- Resident Minister, Shingyoji Temple, Geneva, Switzerland
- President, Institut d'Etudes Bouddhiques, Paris, France
- Author of many books and articles on Japanese Buddhism



July 20-21, 2018

Jodo Shinshu Center 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA

Registration: \$150 Deadline: June 20, 2018

Online registration available.

Views of Enlightenment from Many Buddhist Traditions



Theravada: Ven. Tathālokā Therī

Founder, Dhammadharini Vihara Monastery
Co-founder, Aranya Bodhi Hermitage

Zen: Dr. Paula Arai

Associate Professor, Louisiana State University



Tibetan: Mayumi Kodani

Ph.D. Candidate in Religious Studies,
University of California, Santa Barbara

*MAP and JSCC Summer Workshop will begin on Thursday, July 19 and include the Summer Pacific Seminar. Different registration fees apply. For MAP, email: cbe@bcahq.org. For JSCC, email: hongwanjioffice@bcahq.org.

buddhistchurchesofamerica.org cbe@bcahq.org (510) 809-1460

Save the Date: October 26-28, 2018

The Center for Buddhist Education Every Day Buddhism Committee presents:

Adult Buddhist Association (ABA) Leaders Workshop

For ABA Leaders and Aspiring Leaders

Where: **Jodo Shinshu Center, Berkeley, California**

Topics: What is ABA? Why have an ABA?

Growing your ABA or starting an ABA

Ideas for Buddhist education

Sharing your success stories

Sunday excursion to be announced!

Planned by the CBE Every Day Buddhism Committee

Scenes from the Federation of Dharma Schools Teachers' Leagues "Intersections" Conference

Clockwise from left: "Implicit Bias" presenters Joyce Oishi and Camille Pating; Buddhist traffic signs (created by Irene Aso-Wells) lead the way to the onajjin; Bishop Kodo Umezu (far right) with Dharma School teachers who received ten-year service awards; Maya Lawrence and FDSTL President Carl Yanari present Stacy Uyeda with flowers for her excellent leadership; the conference committee, with keynote speaker Rev. Henry Adams (back row center); and 25-year Dharma School teacher awardees with Carl Yanari and Bishop Kodo Umezu. Photo credits: 1, 4 & 5 by Yumi Hatta 2, 3 & 6 by Cathy Fujimori.



To learn more about the 2018 FDSTL Conference, see the article "Exploring 'Intersections' at the FDSTL Conference" on the front page.



Celebrating Buddha Day



Venerable Lieu Phap Veditadhamma of the International Theravada Bhikkhuni Sangha led a guided meditation. The diverse audience was welcomed by Ven. Madawala Seelawimala (standing, far right), President of the Buddhist Council of Northern California. Photos by Anan Hatanaka.

The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) and the Buddhist Council of Northern California (BCNC) co-sponsored the Buddha Day 2018 Vesak/Hanamatsuri 2561 Celebration at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley on May 6, 2018. Some 150 persons from various Bay Area Buddhist groups participated. Attendees enjoyed and participated in a variety of chanting and rituals from various schools of Buddhism.

The celebration of the birth of the Buddha began with a procession of monks, nuns, and ministers, followed by opening remarks by Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, President of IBS. Then offerings of flowers were made by the children of the Compassion Meditation Center,

Hayward.

The attendees were guided through the observance of the Five Precepts by the Venerable K. Wimalaratana, and Rev. Anan Hatanaka led the Jodo Shinshu ministers and IBS students in the chanting of *Shishinrai-Nembutsu*. Ven. Lieu Phap Veditadhamma of the International Theravada Bhikkhuni Sangha led a guided meditation, and Rev. Alan Senauke, Berkeley Zen Center, read the *Heart Sutra*.

Ven. Thich Tu-Luc, Founder of the Compassion Meditation Center, gave the Dharma Talk. His compassionate nature came through as he expressed how happy he felt to be able to participate in the celebration of Buddha's birthday, and he

emphasized the importance of all Buddhists coming together to work for the welfare of all living beings. The Youth Choir of the Compassion Meditation Center followed the Ven. Tu-Luc's message with a devotional song.

The audience participated in the reading of the Metta Sutra. Afterwards, a Buddhist song from Nepal was beautifully sung by Rev. Uma Lama Ghising (Rev. Ashma) of Kathmandu Hongwanji.

Words of appreciation were expressed by the Ven. Madawala Seelawimala, President of BCNC, and the service concluded with Blessings and Merit Transference by the Thai, Cambodian, and Sri Lankan monks and nuns in attendance.

BUTSU BUTSU...

By Brian Kensho Nagata,
Managing Editor



I was recently talking with a BCA member who said right after he was released from the World War II concentration camp, he lived for a short time in the same town where I grew up. He told me that his father died when he was only 1-1/2 years old, before World War II started, so he never got to know his father and didn't know if he was buried here in America or Japan. However, he recently learned that his dad passed away in the neighboring town from where I was raised.

I told him that I would contact that town's temple and see if they might have his dad's death record. I called the minister's assistants at the temple. It just so happens that they conduct a monthly service at the temple's *nokotsudo* (urn vault) in the local community cemetery. There are about 20 urns of temple members inside this long-maintained *nokotsudo*. When my minister's assistant friends looked, they came across the urns of this BCA member's father and his grandparents as well.

He was overjoyed to hear the good news that we had located the urn of the father he never knew. At the time of this writing he was making plans to go to the cemetery, place flowers at the *nokotsudo*, and put his hands together in *gassho* to express his gratitude to the father he had lost at such a tender age.

For Shin Buddhists, *Obon* is known as the "Festival of Joy" (*Kangi-e*) because, amidst the sadness of losing our loved ones, we remember the wonderful lives we shared and celebrate the joy of knowing that our loved ones have returned to the Pure Land and are one with Amida Buddha.

As another summer approaches, temples and sanghas will be buzzing with laughter, smiles, good friends, great food, happy memories, and *Obon* dancing. Amidst running around back and forth during my work shifts, I hope that I will remember to go into the *hondo* and place my hands together in *gassho* to express my gratitude to my loved ones and friends who helped make my life possible. Thanks, *Jii-chan*, *Baa-chan*, grandpa, grandma, mom and dad, uncle and auntie and everyone else! Happy *Obon* to all! Let's all dance for joy, ever thankful for the life we are able to live today! *Nam Man Da Bu...*

2018 Manzanar Pilgrimage



This year marked the 49th Annual Pilgrimage to the Manzanar Concentration Camp where thousands of Japanese Americans including members of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) were unjustly imprisoned by the U.S. Government during World War II. On April 27-28, 2018, approximately 1,000 people made the trek to Manzanar to remember the prisoners and to hold a memorial service for the people who died there.

Now called the Manzanar National Historical Site, Manzanar is located in a remote desert area in California and is part of the U.S. National Park Service. It is one of 10 concentration camps built shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. About 120,000 men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry living on the U.S. west coast were incarcerated in these camps for several years due to anti-Japanese racism and wartime hysteria.

Since 1969, each year, from several hundred to over a thousand people make the trek to Manzanar, located on the eastern slopes of the

Sierra Nevada mountain range, about 200 miles from Los Angeles. Visitors are mainly Japanese Americans, including some internees and their descendants. This year's participants also included representatives from the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Native Americans, and various Nikkei student unions from California universities.

Various programs, discussions, lectures, and cultural events are held throughout the weekend. The final event is an Interfaith Service held at the Manzanar Memorial Monument located in the Manzanar Cemetery, where six internees are interred.

The calligraphic inscription "I-REI-TO" which means "Monument to the Deceased" was inscribed by the late BCA Minister Rev. Shinjo Nagatomi, who was interned and served at the Manzanar Buddhist Church. The now-famous monument was made of concrete purchased with contributions of 15 cents from every interned family. It was built in 1943 by residents of Block 9 and the Manzanar Young Buddhist Association.

This year Rev. Ryuta Furumoto of the Senshin Buddhist Temple participated in the Interfaith Service on behalf of the Buddhist community. "I visit the internment camp sites to show respect and gratitude to *Isseis* and *Niseis*," stated Rev. Furumoto. "The internees continued having services and listening to the teaching at camp. It is an important part of BCA history."

POST SCRIPT: The official Manzanar pilgrimages began in 1969. However, from 1946, the year after the war ended, Tokudo minister Rev. Sentoku Mayeda of the Gardena Buddhist Church and his good friend, Christian minister Rev. Shoichi Wakahiro would travel to Manzanar yearly to conduct a memorial service at the cemetery. Rev. Mayeda was active in BCA circles before the war. During internment he ran the Manzanar Dharma School until Rev. Shinjo Nagatomi arrived. After the war, Rev. Mayeda faithfully continued to assist at the Gardena Buddhist Church until he passed away in 1978.

Gearing Up for Obon Season



The Spokane Buddhist Temple Bon Odori Dancers, under the leadership of Jacqui Pierce (in purple kimono), performed at the Spokane Falls Community College Japan Day on May 2, 2018. They have also been asked to perform on June 3 as part of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. They will perform at the Spokane Buddhist Temple's *Obon* Festival from July 21-22.

今月の法話

「共命鳥」

ガーテナ仏教会 開教使 関谷 沙羅



Rev. Sala Sekiya

最近スマートフォンなどによって様々な情報が即時に届くようになり、世界中の出来事がこれまで以上に身近に感じられるようになりました。ただ、ニュースを読んでいるとため息をつきたくなるような時、多々ありますよね。特に昨今の国際情勢や、テロ・銃乱射事件などは今や私達にとって遠いものではなく、身に迫る危機として不安な思いを持つ方も少なくありません。「どうしてこんなことを！」と悲しく感じながら、『共命鳥』について思いを巡らすことが増えました。

皆さんは共命鳥「ぐみょうちょう」をご存知でしょうか？私達の正依の経典の一つ『阿弥陀経』には、阿弥陀如来の極楽浄土に住む鳥として登場します。この鳥は一つの体に二つの頭を持つ二頭鳥ですが、その昔、雪山の麓に住んでいた頃、一頭がもう一頭に憎悪の思いを起したといわれます。同じ体を持ち、傍にいななければならないものの、相手が自分の思いと違うことを行うために常に腹が立ち、怒みの心を積んだのです。そしてある時、その思いが極まり、相手を殺そうと思いついて、相手が寝ている間に毒花を食べました。その毒は一つしかない体に回り、殺されようになっている者も、殺そうと凶つた者も、共に瀕死の状態になりました。その時に相手は言うのです。「まことに瞋恚(しんに)。怒りや愚痴というものに利益はない。このような愚かな心は他人を傷つけ、結果的に自らをも傷つけるからである。」

どうでしょう。今の世の中、色々と思いがたつてあるでしょうか。異なる利益、信仰や考え方から、対立し、命を削り合う事件が絶えません。瞋恚、愚痴、貪欲を仏教では三毒の煩惱と呼び、私達の根本的な問題と教えます。その教えに照らし合わせて世界を見つめ直すならば、ただ煩惱に支配されているままのような争いがいかに多いことでしょうか。二千五百年も前の釈尊の時代か

ら、人々は何も変わらないかのように、同じ思いにとらわれ続け、瞋恚と愚痴、貪欲でもって、争いを繰り返しているのです。

この共命鳥について特に印象的に教えてくださったのは、昨年の春、日本の広島別院にお参りした時のことです。被爆地であり、浄土真宗の御門徒の多い広島のア芸門徒の方々は、戦争をなくし真の平和を願うシンボルとしてこの鳥をかかっているとのことでした。今はお浄土で争うことなく共存している共命鳥は、「他を滅ぼす道は己を滅ぼす道、他を生かす道こそ己の生かされる道」と鳴き続けているといえます。人々を仏法に導いてくださる存在として、鳥の姿をとって仏様のみ教えを説いているのです。「私」が正しいと領けることを正しい事と定め、それを認めない「他者」を悪として排除しようとしたり、正義という名のもとに他者を成敗しようとしたりすることは、私達の本当のいのちを傷つけていくのです。私達は真の平和を願い、この鳥に教えられなければならないかもしれません。

共命鳥は鳴き続けています。私達はその声が社会の争いを起こしている他の人達に向っていると思っています。しかし鳴き声は止まることなく、ようやく世の中を見ていた私の目を声の方に向けて見ると、その声が、その目が、私に向いていることに気付かされます。争う人々の事件を悲しみながら、その問題は遠くにあると思っ「私」こそ、対立の心を持つ、煩惱にとらわれていた鳥であることを知らせているのです。日々の生活で誰かと言いつ争いになるような時、自身に目を向ける時、遠い存在であったはずの愚かな鳥がまさに自分であり、罪悪が深く有り続けているわが身を目の当たりにして、慚愧の心が生まれてきます。

「人々がこのようなありさまであるからこそ、私は救いの道を説かねばならぬ。」

釈尊はご自身の一族・釈迦族が攻め滅ぼされた時、このように仰ったといわれます。滅ぼされた者も、攻撃し滅ぼした者も、共に悲しい存在であり、共に救われねばならない存在であることに仏様は気付かれています。どちらをも救いに行かれるのです。そしてその救いは真っ直ぐに、ただ私に向かっているのです。

阿弥陀如来はいつでも独りばたらきをしてくださっていると、聴聞の中に聞かせていただいています。愚かな

争いを繰り返す私達、いや、私が、「このようなありさまであるからこそ、救いの道を説かねばならぬ」と、今も変わらず、偽りと真実の見分けがつかず、闇を迷い続ける私を哀れまれて、名号による救いを選び取って、われにまかせよと、はたらき続けていらっしゃるのです。南無阿弥陀仏

ハイランド 仏教徒太鼓会のセミナー

4月14日にマウンテンビュー仏教会で仏教徒としての太鼓グループのためのセミナーが開催され、約100名が集った。セミナーの講師には50年前に洗心仏教会で緊那羅(きんなら)太鼓会を創立した小谷政雄名誉開教使が招かれた。師はお寺の太鼓の特徴として、「楽しんで仲良くやること」「お盆踊りでの太鼓は脇役になること」などをあげ、約17ヶ寺から参加した仏教徒太鼓演奏者たちが熱心に聞き入った。「仏教会の太鼓では上手い人が下手な人にあわせることが大事です。下手な人を怒鳴ったのはよくないです。また、お盆踊りの時には、踊りのステップに注意して、踊り手のヘルプをするように演奏すべきであって、太鼓が目立たないように。」など、仏教会の太鼓は自分のエゴを少なくする練習だと強調した。セミナーでは講義の他、太鼓の合同練習、演奏も行われた。



Taiko Session at Mountain View

-特別寄稿-

念仏の詩

福間誠幹名誉開教使

胸に咲かせた 信の花
 心をこめ 胸に咲かせた 信の花
 きれいに見える 花なれど
 せっかく咲いても あだ花(徒花)で
 実らぬゆえに 無駄花という
 自力で咲かせた 胸の信
 私が造った 自力の信
 これが 胸に咲かせた 信の花
 わが往生の たのみにゃ(たのみ網)ならず
 やさしい仏の世界でも 通用しない 自力信
 仏の心を 聞いてみりゃ
 仏の智慧の眼から 苦悩の衆生を 覧になり
 迷いを迷いと知らずして 歩む姿が 可哀そう
 落ちるより 先に手を出し 助けにゃおれず
 親思う 心にまさる親心 どうしてほっておかりょうか
 他力の信を問うならば 仏の心を聞くがよい
 仏の願いは ただ一つ 衆生の救済これ一つ
 あらゆる衆生を救うため 智慧と慈悲のお心が

一つに大きく溶け合って 南無阿弥陀仏の「名号」となって われらを 呼びたもう
 その呼び声は 真実で
 仏の智慧の心から 出てくる大悲の言葉なり
 「まかせてくれよこの弥陀に 必ず救う」誓願に
 うそ いつわりは さらになし
 強いつよの本願の 力は救いの力なり
 み仏は「ナモアミダブ」と呼びどうし
 呼ばれた私もナモアミダ 呼びつ呼ばれつナモアミダ
 仏の方から私らに 仏の願いを告げられて
 その名号の おいわれを 聞かれた「信の一念」に
 往生すべき身となりて 正定聚の仲間入り
 念仏称えてナモアミダ 有り難うございました南無阿弥陀仏

もうすでに、阿弥陀仏におまかせ出来ているならば、私の心は本願の明るい仏地(弘誓の仏地)に打ち出して、もしも疑念があるならば、不可思議の大海に、遠く流してしましましょう。一人来て 二人で帰る うれしさよ 南無阿弥陀仏を 道づれにして 合掌

法輪

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二〇一八年度教化標語

「平和と調和」

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>

春の 開法セミナーの開催

5月12日(土)に浄土真宗センターで「春の開法セミナー」が行われ、センター近郊に在住の日本語開法者が集った。今回はI-MOP受講生の今田法翔師、三瓶悦子師、村上響師が講師をつとめた。午前中は今田師が「命のつながりの中の私」三瓶師が「温かなまなざしの中で」、午後からは村上師が「法からの呼び声」の講題でそれぞれ浄土真宗のみ教えの味わいを語った。参加者らは「今田先生が見せてくれたカワウソが合掌している写真が可愛かったです。額に入れて飾ります。」「三瓶先生が最近地震にあったこと、一番大事なものに気づかれた、というお話に引き込まれました。」



Spring Momo Seminar participants at the JSC

「村上先生がご紹介くださった『かぐや姫』の物語を通して、自分の姿を知られました。」と開法を楽しんだ。恒例となっている昼食の特製カレーも「大変美味しかったです。」と好評の集いとなった。法話はYoutubeで見られます。
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PanE17IE94>

ダルマスクール教師大会

4月27日から9日の3日間、サンフランシスコ近郊、フォスター市のクワイオンテラザホテルで全米ダルマスクール教師カンファレンスが開催され、約200名が参加した。



Dharma School Teachers' Conference

テーマは「インターセクション」で、基調講演はサンマテオ仏教会のアドムス・ヘンリー開教使がつとめた。「インターセクション」とは自分が置かれている様々な状況、境遇、場所などを意味する。寺院、会社、学校など自分の所属するいろいろなグループやコミュニティによって自身の立場が変化する事実を見つめ、できるだけ偏見を少なくしていくことを提案している。参加者は「米国では人種や性別、収入格差など多くの不平等を目の当たりにします。そういう社会において、ダルマスクールの子供達も偏見や差別意識に関して日常的に考えざるを得ません。でも、それは結局、私たちの煩惱の問題だと学びまし

た。お寺には日系人だけでなく、いろいろな人種の方が来られるようになってきました。そのことを踏まえて柔軟に対応していきたいと思えます。」と将来を見据えた。

開教使生涯教育セミナー 行われる

今回の開教使生涯教育セミナーも、バライティー溢れる講師を迎えて、浄土真宗センターにて4月25日から27日まで行われた。UCバークレー校のブルム先生は「善導と親鸞」という興味あるテーマで、善導大師が法然を通して親鸞に与えた影響を話された。参加者からも活発な意見が聞かれた。翌日は東本願寺前北米開教監督であった今井亮徳先生を迎え、先生が出版された山口益氏著作『大乗としての浄土』に英訳を中心に、大乗仏教の視座からの阿弥陀仏の浄土観を講義された。親鸞聖人が語られる浄土を理解するには、大乗仏教の立場を理解することが肝要であり、浄土とはパラダイスではなく、私たちの生き方やその後において意義ある思想であることが語られた。最後の講義は本願寺オフィスに勤務する畑中阿難先生から「浄土真宗の称名とその歴史」が講義された。以前は西本願寺も東本願寺も同じように「正信偈」をお称えしていたことなど、これまで知らなかった称名の歴史やお称えの仕方など目から鱗が落ちるような内容であった。(ワンドラ睦開教使)



Ministers' Countrning Education at the JSC

総長コラム

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

サンフランシスコの総長室は、この本部の建物ができた四十七年前とほとんど変わっていません。私が赴任して来た時、辻総長を表敬訪問しましたが、その時のソファや机がそのまま今でも使われていて、歴史を感じます。

この本部の建物は今では古くなっていますが、できた当時はモダンなもので、まだ新しい本部ビルの各部屋を案内してください。職員の方の笑顔は今でも忘れることができません。戦後、再出発しなければならなかった人たちは、まずそれぞれの仏教会をはじめとして、地域の復興につとめました。それが一段落して、今度はサンフランシスコ仏教会の隣に四階建のビルを作ることになったのです。同じ頃、総長住宅も新しくつくられ、希望に満ちた時代でした。この建物はただ単にオフィスビルではなく、一世や二世の血と涙の結晶でもあり、その当時のメンバーの希望でもあります。それをもう一歩踏み込んで考えますと、この建物は仏さまの深い願いの現れでもあると言えます。

七十年代から今日まで、私たちの教団は大きく変わってきています。今の心ある若い世代の人たちは、以前に増してお念仏の教えとは何かと問いかけてきています。また、日系だけではなく、多くの仏教会には日系以外の人たちがお参りをしてくださっています。私たちが受け継いできた教えは、先のわかからない時代を生きていた人たちの光となる、世界の宝であります。できるだけ門を開いて、より多くの人たちにご縁にあっていただきたいというのが教団の願いでもあります。

親鸞聖人ご自身はこの教えに遇えて本當に喜ばれました。また、聖人はこの教えこそ、私たちの心の病を直す妙薬であるとし、できるだけ多くの方々にも知っていただきたいと願われ、その願いが今の私たちまで届いているのです。この教えに会うことで、本當の安らぎを得ることが出来ます。自分の愚かさ、他人に對して優しい思いを持つことが出来ます。この教えを中心としないようになれば、建物も組織も邪魔にこそなれ、意味がなくなってしまう。人間の限られた知恵によって争いを続けるのではなく、大悲の願いを聞かせていただき、心豊かに生きていくことが願われているのです。

親鸞聖人は大悲の願いを色々なものに喩えておられます。「大悲の願いは蓮の花のようである、なぜなら、それは世間の何ものにも汚されることがないからです。また、その願いはよく切れる斧のようである、なぜなら、それは私たちの苦悩の枝をバツサリと切り落としてくださるからです。また、その願いは私たちを導いてくださる先生のようである、なぜなら、それは愚かな私たちに本當に自由になれる道を教えてくださるからです。また、それは正しい道のようなものである、なぜなら、それは全ての生きとし生くるものを智慧の世界へと誘ってくださるからです。」(教行信証、行巻)

総長室は調度品だけが変わってないのではなく、一世代、二世代の残して下さった願い、仏様の願いがここに変わらざることを知らされます。また、もしこの建物を修理することがあれば、私はこの建物を、一世と違った意味で苦勞の多かった二世のメンバーに捧げることを提案したいと思います。

称名