

WHEEL OF DHARMA

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BCA Ministers “Working As One”

“The BCA Ministers’ Association is the most important organization in the United States,” said Rev. Kodo Umezu, quoting the words of Rev. David Matsumoto from last year’s meeting held in Berkeley, CA.

The Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Ministers’ Summer Retreat and the Ministers’ Association Meeting were held from August 10 to 12 in San Jose, CA, hosted by the Coast District Ministers’ Association. This year’s high attendance level showed the enthusiasm and willingness of all BCA ministers to learn from the Hongwanji-dispatched guest lecturer, Rev. Haruki Shirakawa, principal of the Chuo Bukkyo Gakuin (Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Buddhist Seminary) in Kyoto. Also in attendance were guest ministers from Hawaii and Canada, as well as Rev. Shirakawa’s wife, Yukie. Rev. Shirakawa lectured passionately on topics including *Shinjin* and the “Evil Person” in Japanese with English translations.

After a busy first day, everyone gathered at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin on the evening of August 10 for a special Dharma gathering. In addition to Rev. Shirakawa,

Rev. Earl Ikeda (New York) and Rev. Diana Thompson (Tri-State/Denver) brought the Dharma to life with their messages to the ministers, members, and friends living in the area.

The Ministers’ Association Meeting began on the morning of August 11. The Bishop introduced three newly-assigned ministers to the members of the Association. He reminded everyone to demonstrate great leadership based on Shinran Shonin’s teaching. Bishop Umezu also shared his vision for the future. The Center for Buddhist Education, each district, and various committees reported on their activities in the first half of 2015.

At this meeting, Rev. Jerry Hirano was reelected as *Gicho* (Chair of the Ministers’ Association) and all the BCA ministers decided to continue on the path together with Rev. Kodo Umezu as Bishop for a second term. This recommendation from the Ministers’ Association will proceed through the bishop selection process.

On the last day of the retreat, the ministers had an opportunity to reeducate



themselves on traditional Hongwanji liturgy, led by Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, co-chair of the Liturgy Department. During this session, the ministers had an interesting discussion on rituals related to funeral and memorial services.

The 2016 Summer Retreat will be held in the Bay Area, hosted by the Bay District Ministers’ Association. The hard work of the Coast District Minister’s Association and the local members was very much appreciated by all the attendees.

International Pure Land Scholars Convene at the Jodo Shinshu Center



IASBS participants, from left to right: Dr. Lewis Lancaster, Emeritus Professor, University of California, Berkeley (fourth from right) was presented with the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) President’s Award for 2015. In attendance were (from left to right) Dr. Richard Payne, Dean of IBS; Dr. Kenneth Tanaka, Musashino University, Tokyo; Prof. Carl Bielefeldt, Emeritus Professor, Stanford University; Rev. Kodo Umezu, IBS President; Dr. Lancaster; Mrs. Lois Lancaster; Dr. Mark Blum, UC Berkeley; and Mr. Richard Endo, IBS Board Chairman.

By Dr. Scott Mitchell, Rev. Yoshitaka Tamai Professor Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies, Institute of Buddhist Studies

The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) was honored to host the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies’ (IASBS) 17th Biennial Meeting, held over the weekend of August 7-9, at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley. Panelists came primarily from North American and Japanese universities as well as Brazil, Taiwan, and Europe. Approximately 100 registrants and guests attended the three-day conference.

The IASBS is the world’s only scholarly and professional organiza-

tion dedicated solely to the study of Shin and Pure Land Buddhism. Founded in 1982 by a group of Jodo Shinshu scholars in Japan, the organization today has nearly four hundred members in six districts across the globe. The Biennial Meetings serve as the primary means by which members gather, share their ongoing research, and foster community among Shin and Pure Land scholars, thinkers, and teachers.

The theme of the 17th Biennial Meeting was “Subjectivity in Pure Land Buddhism.” Forty papers and a keynote lecture were delivered on such topics as: ongoing clinical and pastoral work among Shin Buddhist

Continued on Page 6

Giving, Gifting, or Offering?

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

Four years ago, the Buddhist Churches of America was about launch a new fundraising drive called “Annual Giving.” Some of us were in the Jodo Shinshu Center kitchen talking about it. Bhante Seelawimala, listening to our conversation, interrupted us and said that we should not use the word *giving* for this drive. He explained that the word *giving* implies that someone higher is handing something to someone lower. He said that when we present something to someone in an equal position, we call it *gifting*. When we present something to someone above us, he said we should call it *offering*.

His words of wisdom reminded me of my personal experience growing up in Japan. My parents used to tell us that everything we receive comes from the Buddha. I didn’t understand what they meant at first, but I learned that my temple members were donating things to the Buddha. My parents used to offer everything they received from our members to the Buddha first. Later, they brought the things down from the altar to use for our livelihood.

My temple members were not giving things to us. They were donating money, food, and materials to the temple or to the Buddha so that they could continue to gather at the temple

and keep receiving the teachings. Therefore, whatever is offered to a temple is called *O-fuse* or *O-sonae*, meaning *Dana*.

We, the Buddhist Churches of America and the BCA Endowment Foundation, are now about to start a new fundraising program called the Annual Dana Program to keep our organization going strong into the future. We are inviting each and every member to join us in this program. You will be receiving a letter and a form that explains how and what you can do to be part of the movement.

We now have our own development office that is designed to manage the additional financial needs of the BCA. The member temples and churches will continue to support the annual budget through the yearly assessment, and it will be supplemented by this new Annual Dana Program funding from individual members and friends.

I would sincerely like to thank you, members and friends, for your continued support. Because of your kindness, more people are able to hear the *Nembutsu* teaching. The BCA has our own seminary, our own endowment foundation, and our own educational facility and programs. We have been working harmoniously to create conditions for people of today and tomorrow to appreciate life guided by the compassionate light of Amida Buddha.

Announcing the Annual Dana Program

The Buddhist Churches of America with the BCA Endowment Foundation will launch a new donation program this fall which invites members and supporters to offer their *dana*, or gifts of appreciation to sustain, develop and promote Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in America. The Annual Dana Program will provide new options for making gifts on a recurring basis. Donors will also be able to designate a local BCA temple to receive a portion of the gift. Please read “Offering with Appreciation: the Annual Dana Program” on page 6.

A Dharma Village for All

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

Dr. Kent Matsuda, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) President, wrote about the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) in his column last month. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the wonderful Dharma team of ministers and volunteers who have been working really hard to nurture our youth through the YAC programs for over ten years.

My wife and I were invited to the tenth-year YAC reunion last July. I was overwhelmed by the hardworking volunteers of the Sacramento Betsuin. Many people came out every day to cook meals for these growing 15 to 18 year olds. Many members, behind the scenes, make their robes every year. The chief planner is Rev. Patti Oshita. I saw tears in her eyes when former participants expressed their feelings of appreciation.

Young people are now becoming more active after college and helping at their temples and churches. They are expressing their desire to hear more Dharma. There are youth programs at various temples. Let us support them whenever and however we can.

The Young Buddhist International



2015 Young Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange group photo with His Eminence Monshu Kojun Ohtani at the Hongwanji in Kyoto.

Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE) is a Hongwanji-sponsored program. This year for the first time, together with Rev. Kazuaki Nakata, I was privileged to chaperone a group of 15 youths in Kyoto in July. This was my first experience being with our youth for eight days. It was fun—though

the hot weather was unbearable. It was also rewarding to be with young people. They became close friends, and as we spent time together, they became like my own children. When they went off to the homestay families, I felt sad and lonely.

All the families who hosted them were

very impressed by “my” children. Naturally, I felt really proud of them. It is true that all of them are really nice and well behaved. I can truly attest to it. They *gassho* properly and chant aloud. They know how to greet people. They always keep smiles on their faces. They are BCA family children. All of them grew up attending our Dharma School system and some of them went through the YAC program that I mentioned above. Their families also are active members of their temples and churches.

It is true that it takes a village to raise a child. It takes everyone’s effort to raise our children. We offer many programs for all ages. I can say with confidence that enrolling your children and grandchildren in Dharma School will definitely help them grow up to be respectable individuals. I would also like to encourage all parents and adults to get involved in your temple’s activities. The new Dharma School year begins in September. Please enroll your children.

I cannot say enough to thank all of those who are involved with Buddhist youth programs, including the Hongwanji staff. Let us continue to help create a Dharma village for all.



A Matter of Life or Death

Rev. David Matsumoto, Berkeley Buddhist Temple

*Though the great universe be filled with flames,
One who dares to pass through it
To hear the Name of the Buddha
Will gain non-retrogression forever.*

In the *Larger Sutra*, Sakyamuni Buddha urges us to seek to hear the Name of Amida Buddha—*Namu Amida Butsu*—as if it were a matter of life or death. These are words of promise and challenge, of courage and action. Indeed Shinran Shōnin recognized the importance of the Buddha’s words and based his own life upon them.

This passage brings to mind the story of a young mother who lived with her only child in the Australian outback. One evening, after putting her daughter to bed, she left the home to do some shopping. When she returned after only a few minutes she found her house engulfed in flames. Firefighters warned the woman to stay away, but she fought through them and plunged into the flames in search of her child. The fire raged throughout the night

and the house was destroyed completely. Everyone expected the worst. Indeed when the firemen looked through the ruins the next day they found the charred body of the young woman. But, to their amazement, as they moved her body, they found beneath her, still bundled in her arms, her little girl. The child was barely alive, but she was alive nonetheless, saved by the brave and fearless love of her mother.

As we read this powerful and moving story, many of us, perhaps, feel that we might also run into a burning house in order to save our child. But, would many of us do so in order to save someone else’s child? Perhaps not. And, there are likely fewer still who would dare to enter the flames in order to hear the *Nembutsu*.

In fact, many of us are unable to sacrifice our time once a week or even once a month

to hear the Buddha’s teaching. We have many important concerns. Our families, jobs, or school take all of our time and effort. We work hard to make a living, educate our children and plan for retirement. And we often need to unwind in order to keep up this pace. That is all well and good.

However, the Buddha teaches us that our worldly concerns tend to blind us to other realities of life. He teaches us that worldly happiness is limited because (1) it is centered on our own wants and desires, and (2) our wants and sense of happiness are always changing. Hence, all worldly concerns inevitably lead to unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Moreover, our everyday concerns for money, success, fame and satisfaction also have a way of taking our minds off the realities of old age, sickness and death.

For this reason, the Buddha urges us to deal with the central questions of life and death, as if they were a matter of life or death. The Buddha says this in another way: The problem of the self—its impermanence, fragility, suffering and dissatisfaction—can only be addressed when we dare to plunge into the flames of that self. It is only when we dare to face directly our self-centered and passion-filled selves, which are burning like a universe on fire, that we will be able to find freedom from those flames.

Sakyamuni Buddha and Shinran Shōnin have given us the teaching of *Namu Amida Butsu*, which can lead us into the reality of ourselves and to the realization of true freedom from ourselves. And they urge us to listen to this teaching as a matter of ultimate concern, as if it were a matter of life and death.



Placer Buddhist Church

In 1902, Placer County’s first Buddhist church was erected and called Penryn Bukkyokai. In October, 1915, Rev. Doshun Mizutani became Penryn Bukkyokai’s first resident minister, moving into the parsonage built earlier that year.

Growing interest and a steady increase in membership required a larger church, which was completed in 1920. The new church was dedicated and the name changed to Placer Buddhist Church so as to assume jurisdiction over all of Placer County, except for a small area served by the Auburn Buddhist Church. After WWII, Auburn Buddhist Church members joined the Placer Buddhist Church and in 1949, the Auburn shrine was installed into Placer Buddhist Church. In the early 1960s, the old shrine built in 1920 was donated to the Buddhist Church of Sacramento, and then to the Walnut Grove Buddhist Church.

In 1961, a movement to build a larger church was started. After securing property near the Penryn exit off I-80 and going through the building process, the new church was completed and dedicated on June 6, 1965. Classrooms were added in 1966 and a new parsonage was completed in 1974.

The 113-year history of Placer Buddhist Church reflects the vision and efforts of all members, past and present, so that everyone can walk the Nembutsu path and realize Amida’s Wisdom and Compassion.

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Submission Guidelines:

First-person articles should be around of 500 words, typed, double-spaced in Microsoft Word. The editors may ask for longer articles, or split in multiple parts at the editors’ discretion. All other articles should be in news release form at maximum of 500 words. 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 Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

President's Message

Canadian Conversations, Global Visions

The JSBTC meeting was held at the Steveston Buddhist Temple. The *bondo* of the temple has supporting beams that look like they could be part of an upside-down ship. The design acknowledges the fact that the early pioneers of the temple were fishermen.

Similar to BCA, issues of membership dues, numbers and the national staffing budget were key areas of discussion. Notably, JSBTC delegates voted to have a full-time bishop, following many years of this being a part-time position. Currently, Rev. Tatsuya Aoki spends half his time as the resident minister of Vancouver Buddhist Temple and the other half as Bishop.

In May, 2015, I had the oppor-

tunity to visit Canada again for the 15th World Buddhist Women's Convention which was held in Calgary. Attended by almost 2,000 BWA members, supporters and others from throughout the world, this was a very successful and memorable event. During this time, Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop of the BCA, and I took advantage of the opportunity to meet with Greg Chor, president of JSBTC; Pieper Toyama, president, Hompa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii; and Rev. Gikyo Kajiwara, Bishop of Comunidade Budista Sul-Americana Jodo Shinshu Honpa Hongwanji (Brazil kyodan). Bishop Umezu shared his idea of opening a branch office of the International Department of the

Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha in San Francisco.

This office would facilitate communication between all the overseas kyodans, including groups in Europe, and the International Department. More materials could be translated into English and into other languages. We could help realize the Monshu's vision of spreading the Dharma around the world. We could improve the continuing education programs for *kaikyoshi* ministers for all the districts. Everyone was excited about these possibilities.

I would like to thank Bishop Aoki, Greg and Gina Chor, and the board of directors and ministers of the JSBTC for the wonderful hospitality extended to me during

these recent visits to Canada.

Focusing back home on the BCA, I would like to express my appreciation to members of the Joint Development Committee of the BCA Endowment Foundation (BCAEF), led by co-chairs Steve Terusaki, Char Grinolds and Rev. Jerry Hirano and honorary advisor, Bishop Umezu. As you will see from articles in this issue of the Wheel of Dharma, the new Annual Dana Program will begin this fall.

Please look for details in the coming month and join me in making the Annual Dana Program a vital opportunity for sustaining, developing and sharing the Nembutsu teachings – today, tomorrow and into the future.

In April, 2015, I attended the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada (JSBTC) Annual General Meeting in Richmond, British Columbia. Just as the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) invites representatives from the JSBTC and Hawaii *Kyodan* (Hongwanji Overseas District) to the BCA National Council every year, I was invited to this annual meeting.



By Rev. Hosei Jay Shinseki
Monterey Peninsula
Buddhist Temple

The World of Non-Duality

"If in the land of the Buddha there remains the distinction between the beautiful and the ugly, I do not desire to be a Buddha of such a land."
– Kanmuryojukyo (Meditation Sutra)

A Buddha by name is a person who has awakened or achieved Enlightenment. According to the Buddha's teaching, each of us may become a Buddha. Shakyamuni Buddha is the example to live by and all Buddhists aspire to follow his footsteps. The Buddha is an example. We do not have a god; we have the Dharma, the truth of our lives. The manifestation of this truth is Amida Buddha.

Enlightenment has been

defined in many ways. It has been described as the state of being free from all duality. The word "oneness" is often used as a synonym for Enlightenment. In this world of dualities it is difficult for us to comprehend the world of non-duality that is Enlightenment. It may be easy for some of us to understand non-duality when it comes to objects or experiences not personal or close to us. Most difficult for us to comprehend is the non-duality of life and death and of the self and non-self.

Once a man visited a Buddhist temple seeking enlightenment and the local priest asked him, "What did

you come for?" The visitor replied, "I am confused by the problem of life and death, so I have come to learn from you." The priest replied, "You should go home. There is neither life nor death here." As long as we see life and death as opposing moments of existence, we cannot grasp the truth of the Dharma.

We are constantly being bombarded with images and references to a dualistic world. There is good and bad, rich and poor, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly. Our failure to see otherwise is our self-made dualistic distinction, or in other words, our deeply-rooted

ignorance.

On the other hand, in the world of the Buddha there is no good or bad, rich or poor, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly. They do not exist. Buddhism is not concerned with these dualities. Every person, every thing without exception has its integrity, its uniqueness. It follows then that we who by nature are saved, who by nature are one with all things, who by nature are non-dualistic, even while not possessing great talent, beauty, riches, or intellect, are embraced by a compassionate and wise Amida Buddha.

Namoamidabutsu



Reclaiming the Heart of Our Humanity

See speakers and registration info at www.ParliamentofReligions.org. To volunteer at the BCA booth, contact CBE: (510) 809-1460 or cbe@bcahq.org

Sunshine Tour: Salt Lake City to San Francisco



Members of the Salt Buddhist Temple YBA, led by Troy Watanabe and Faye End, paid a visit to the BCA Headquarters and the Buddhist Church of San Francisco on July 17, 2015.

SAVE THE DATE:
MARCH 2 - 6, 2016
BCA National Council &
Ministers' Association Meetings
Visalia Marriot - Visalia, CA

Seattle Buddhist Church and Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Women's Association Present

Their Fourth Annual Women in Buddhism Conference

"Everyday Bodhisattvas"

Saturday, October 3, 2015 9:30 am - 3:30 pm
at Seattle Buddhist Church, 1427 S Main St, Seattle, WA



Linda Anderson Krech, LICSW
Program Director, Tōdō Institute
Softening the Family Heart with the help of the Japanese practice, Naikan, and awareness.



Reverend Patti Nakai
Resident Minister, Buddhist Temple of Chicago
Care-Receiving: Allow ourselves to receive help from others.



Reverend Sala Miho Sekiya
Associate Minister, Seattle Buddhist Church
Rhythm and Echoes of Buddhism: We will practice Buddhist melodies that can soothe our hearts.

To register go to www.SeattleBetsuin.org/ - \$40 includes lunch; \$20 for students



LINKED IN THE NEMBUTSU: SUNAGATE

Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations

October 10, 2015 FBWA Representatives' Meeting
DoubleTree Suites Southcenter, Seattle, Washington

October 7, 8, 9, 2016 FBWA 44th National Conference
Westin Bellevue, Bellevue, Washington

<http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/fbwa>

BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

2015 JSCC August Workshop Highlights

By Detlev (Ted) Gempf, Berkeley Buddhist Temple

This year's Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) Workshop was held on August 1-2. Twenty-four persons attended. Participants and lecturers came from many parts of the US including Alaska, and from Japan and Canada.

Saturday's first event was a workshop during which students were able to ask questions and discuss with faculty members and administrators on the contents and goals of the two-year course. Since it is given via the Internet, the JSCC allows participants from all over the world to learn about Shakyamuni Buddha's teachings, general Buddhist history, and Mahayana and Jodo Shinshu history and beliefs.

Saturday afternoon was given over to guest lecturers Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, professor, Institute of Buddhist Studies and resident minister, Berkeley Buddhist Temple, and Dr. William M. Bodiford, Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Bodiford is an authority on Zen history and its respective practices in Japan. Dr. Matsumoto spoke about the differences between Jodo Shinshu beliefs and their Zen counterparts.

Many interesting details and differences were presented by these two authorities. Zen was created when Buddhism merged with Taoism in China. Zen incorporates monastic training and subscribes to the belief that the essential teacher-student relationship confers "actual and mythological authority" to its practitioners. This lineage was carried over to Dogen in Japan. Dr. Bodiford lectured that one of his goals is to establish that Zen, although dominated by practice, is in essence a religion of faith.



(Above seated, l. to r.) Participants included Rev. Michael Hayashi, Rev. Carol Himaka, Rev. Henry Adams, Bishop Kodo Umezū, Prof. William Bodiford, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuvahara. Second row: Chiemi Onikura-Bly, Victoria Brundage, Colleen Morimoto, Carolene Pandoren, Ron Ito, Gail Wong, Akiko Rogers, Ai Kayatani, Detlev Gempf, Neil McGuffin. Third row: Maya Togashi, Irene Hashimoto, Lisa Mayeda, Bong Nae Bodiford. Not pictured: Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto. (Left:) Enjoying Obon Odori at the Buddhist Church of Oakland.



Dr. Matsumoto lectured that Jodo Shinshu differs from Zen in that it is non-monastic and does not confer any special precepts on the student-teacher relationship, nor that self-power can lead to our goal of gaining *shinjin* or entering the Pure Land. Shinran Shonin taught that the "exclusive practice of the *nembutsu*" is the means for achieving that goal. Interestingly, Shinran Shonin and Dogen were contemporaries and lived near one another.

On Sunday, after an early morning service, Rev. Michael Hayashi of the Manitoba Buddhist Temple, Canada gave an excellent overview of Shakyamuni's life and teachings in the context of his times and how they support Mahayana thought. He utilized a graphic display illustrating how our egos or consciousness can help us better understand the relationship between our "real world" experiences with our "timeless/eternal" spiritual world. Finally, he showed how our objective and subjective realities are intersected by Amida Buddha's primal vow and the *Nembutsu*.

At the conclusion, Buddhist Churches of America Bishop, Rev. Kodo Umezū, presented three recent JSCC graduates with Certificates of Completion. Next year's JSCC August workshop will take place in Dusseldorf, Germany, allowing many European Pure Land believers to more easily take part in inspiring lectures and discussions.

CBE 2015 Tentative Calendar of Events

(at the Jodo Shinshu Center unless noted otherwise. Dates and programming subject to change.)

September 24-26: Fall Minister's Assistant Program (MAP)

October 3: Baby Boomers' Seminar: "Suffering... What's the Problem?" with Rev. Earl Ikeda

October 10: Japanese Seminar with Rev. Chikako Tsuyama, Rev. Yugo Fujita, and Rev. Anan Hatanaka (program is in Japanese)

October 15-17: Ministers' Continuing Education Seminar (MCE) at the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple in conjunction with 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions, in Salt Lake City, UT. Program includes discussion group on the future of Shinshu in America; public classes taught by BCA ministers (Intro to Buddhism, Intro to Shinshu, and Intro to Buddhist Chanting); a sacred spaces area at the convention center where BCA ministers can share our Jodo Shinshu teachings with other faith leaders and the general public, and more.

December 10-12: Winter Minister's Assistant Program (MAP)

**Website: www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org
Email: cbe@bcahq.org Phone: (510) 809-1460**

Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course - Monthly Essay

This article was written in response to an assignment for the JSCC and reflects the author's individual understanding of this topic.

Visit: www.JSCC.cbe-bca.org for course details



On What it Means to Be "Born" into the Pure Land

By Maya Togashi, San Mateo Buddhist Temple

What does being born into the Pure Land mean, literally?

One definition of "to be born," according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is "to be brought into existence," while the "Pure Land" can be described as "the true and real world," *Nirvana*, realm of Buddhahood, as well as the "Land of Immeasurable Light" and the "Land of All-Knowing Wisdom." Therefore to be born into the Pure Land means to reach the level of supreme attainment of enlightenment and join the realm of perfection, non-attachment and ultimate peace. It appears that this transition or transformation can happen at any moment and spontaneously. However, as long as we are connected to a human form which requires and is attached to physical needs, this new birth can only happen after our body dies. Shinran's interpretation of the Primal Vow promises Buddhahood at the moment of death for everyone with *shinjin* awareness, which he called the "stage of the truly settled." It is with the *Nembutsu* and Other Power of Amida Buddha that we can truly make our way toward the Pure Land in our day-to-day life, making the final transformation after taking our last breath. Once there, we are joined with other Buddhas (Oneness) and the journey continues as we move on to help other sentient beings become enlightened.

What does being born into the Pure Land mean, personally?

I do not recall ever being concerned about what happens (to me) at the end of life, but rather have more fear and insecurity of not being able to handle the death and loss of loved ones. I approach the meaning of birth in the Pure Land with this in mind. In his book *Ocean*, Ken Tanaka answers a question about how one handles a death in the family and finds meaning in any great loss. He suggests we realize that this person has entered the Pure Land and joined a Oneness (interconnectedness) that makes the beauty, magnificence and miracles of one's daily life continue. I interpret it this way: despite losing the physical presence of this person, the deceased will live on in other ways, such as in the visual grace of nature's multi-hues of fall foliage, or the joy experienced in the fine rhythms and tunes of a favorite jazz artist, or the happiness felt rubbing one's face into the soft-furred purring face of a cat... As such, the impact and presence of my parents and those I love are constantly surrounding me if I see them in such treasured moments. Consequently I realize that life will be more meaningful if I can make a difference and affect others so that *their* lives are made more positive and meaningful; to influence and do what, when and where I can, while *they* are still alive, as once they are gone it's too late to be able to do anything for *them*. And this goes beyond just my close friends and loved ones, but is rather a larger sentiment toward *all* sentient beings if I allow myself to expand to that level. As Jodo Shinshu Buddhists our birth into the Pure Land may be a certainty; however, one's length of time on earth is more often than not far from certain.

In conclusion, the belief in being born into the desired realm of the Pure Land (i.e., to become a Buddha) after one's death is the goal and ultimate destination for Jodo Shinshu Buddhists. Although this doesn't happen within one's lifetime, there is tranquility knowing that we will be joining all others who have left before us and become part of the Oneness encompassed within the whole of time and space.

Our form may change, but we continue to affect the present world with what were our thoughts, words and actions while we were alive. This explains the importance of how we live our lives right now, as there is no running away, denying, or erasing what we do today and its subsequent impact.

Maya is from Honolulu, Hawaii and grew up in a Jodo Shinshu household; however, only later in adulthood began an earnest effort at studying Buddhism and listening to Shinran Shonin's teachings. She currently lives in California, is a member of the San Mateo Buddhist Temple, and enjoys the arts, hiking, and travel. Editor's Note: Maya's cat, Po, was her partner in a Pet Therapy Team. They volunteered with Sutter Hospice and at other facilities to bring comfort to those in need.

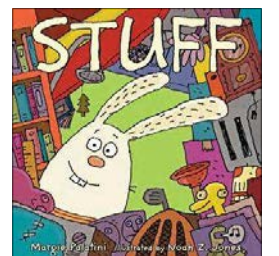
BCA Bookstore News

by Gayle Noguchi

Now available: **Stuff** by Margie Palatini, hardcover, \$16.99.

Stuff is the story of a kid named Edward who absolutely loves his stuff. In fact, Edward believes there is no such thing as too much stuff. Edward loves playing with his stuff so much that he doesn't even want to hang out with his friends. Then one day Edward realizes that having all that stuff isn't so great after all—it doesn't bring him real joy and happiness. Children and adults alike will relate to Edward's attachment to his treasured things. Author, illustrator, and animator Noah Z. Jones brings this entertaining story to life with fun and humorous illustrations.

To order this and other children's books that convey a dharma teaching, go to www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org and click on the BCA Bookstore link or contact gnoguchi@bcahq.org / 510-809-1435. Open Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.



Thank you to all of our generous donors!

The BCA has instituted a change in policy for receiving donations. Please make all donation checks payable to the **BCA Endowment Foundation** and specify in the memo line where you would like the donation to go (ex.: CBE, JSC, CBE 500 Club, etc.). If you have any questions, please call (510) 809-1460 or email cbe@bcahq.org. Thank you!

BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

BCA YOUTH VOICES: Young people share their experiences in Buddhist Churches of America's (BCA) youth leadership and Buddhist education activities. Learn more about the BCA Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) at: bcayouth.org



YAC Summer Retreat attendees (back row, left to right): Rev. Tim Castle, Nick Karen, Avery Higgins, Kirt Achterman, Morgan Gee, Rev. Carol Castle, Sensei Keith Kato. (Middle row): Rev. Patti Oshita, Breven Honda, Andy Yamashita, Joy Yuzuriha, Trey Sano, Alex Shinkawa, Kellie Lee, Sensei Kelvin Mark. (Front row): Sensei Koichi Mizushima, Hayley Arima, Kristine Yabumoto, Amanda Borges, Bishop Kodo Umezū, Juliet Bost, Emi Nakashima, Rev. Bob Oshita. Photo by Jim Shimomaye

“A Life-Changing Experience”

By Juliet Bost, Palo Alto Buddhist Temple

I first heard about the Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) Retreat during a Dharma school class at my home temple in Palo Alto. Sensei Glenn Kameda, a minister's assistant there, introduced the retreat to the class, and told us that we would learn how to be Youth Minister's Assistants (YMA) and deepen our knowledge about Buddhism. The Junior Young Buddhists' Association (Jr. YBA) advisor, Landon Yamaoka, chimed in, saying he had gone to a YAC retreat. He had lots of fun and made new, lifelong friends.

By then I was intrigued, so I followed up with Sensei Glenn and submitted an application a few months later. And then I waited. And waited. And waited. For about a month, I was too preoccupied to even think about the retreat. It wasn't until I got the letter in the mail with the roster and schedule that I began to get excited again. I had so many questions about Buddhism, and I was eager to find the answers and learn more.

Day One of the retreat started when I hastily tossed my bags, blankets, pillows, and suitcase down, and ran down to the *Hondo* for opening service, the first of many to come. I remember being very awkward and not knowing what was going on, fumbling around with my *o-nenju* in order to keep up with the ministers, chanting soft and timid, and sitting with terrible posture.

After service, we each received an *etai-bako* (wooden box) with a robe and *seiten* (service book) in it. We learned how to meticulously fold our robes and organize our boxes so they all looked crisp and uniform. Next came a delicious dinner, followed by a lecture on how to give an effective Dharma Talk (*howa*). We were divided into two groups (*tobans*): the Sangha Squad and the Buddha Buddies. The groups each led two services a day for the next week, rotating jobs within the *onajjin* (altar area). We took turns being *doshi* (or *chosho*), *kansho* (the temple bell) ringer, *kansho* caller, *egakari*, chairperson, and giving a Dharma talk.

The *doshi* (or *chosho*) is the one who leads the service and chanting. To other ministers on the *onajjin*, the *doshi* is their boss. They assist the *doshi* and follow the *doshi's* lead to help the service run smoothly. The *kansho* ringer and caller worked together to begin the service. The *kansho* caller bellows “Kansho!” to signal the *kansho* ringer into action. He or she yells back “Hai!” and runs to ring the *kansho*, calling people into service. The *egakari's* job is to prepare the *onajjin* for service. They move purposefully and mindfully, lighting the candles and incense burners, burning incense, and preparing the *huppan* (rice offering).

All of these jobs were given separate workshops, and were overseen by ministers to make sure everyone understood their job. Other workshop topics included basics of Buddhism, the life of Shinran Shonin, a lecture on the *Nembutsu*, and chanting workshops. I loved all the lectures, but my favorite workshop was Rev. Yuki Sugahara's workshop on the life of Shinran Shonin. It was very educational, and included an interactive game that helped describe the reason behind the teachings of the Dharma. Reverend Bob's workshop on the *Nembutsu* was amazing; it really helped me understand the meaning of *Namu Amida Butsu* and why we recite it. Reverends Tim and Carol's workshop on basic Buddhism was informative and established a common understanding for everyone to build off of.

On the fourth day, we took a trip to the Jodo Shinshu Center, located in Berkeley. Rev. Kiyo Kuwahara, the Center for Buddhist Education Co-director, led us on a tour of the facility, and we met ministers who were working and studying there. After visiting the BCA Bookstore, we headed off to Japantown in San Francisco for lunch, then to the Buddhist Church of San Francisco. We visited the *stupa* on the rooftop and chanted in the small room. Our fifteen strong voices filled the room with a warm, full sound. It was a magical moment; one that only lasted about ten minutes but felt like it would last forever.

This experience has definitely been life changing for me. It has really opened my “Dharma eyes” to live a life of gratitude. By learning about impermanence and interdependence, constant change and oneness, I can appreciate everything in life on a deeper level. The week taught me to really take a deep breath and live in the moment, instead of regretting the past or worrying about the future. As Reverend Bob said, life is all about knowing when to hold on, and knowing when to let go.

To all my new Dharma Buddies For Life (DBFL), the ministers at the Sacramento Betsuin, the food crew, and everyone who helped with the BCA YAC Retreat: Thank you for making this an amazing and enlightening experience!

New! September 26th Public Lecture in Anchorage, Alaska: “Awakened Awareness”

Due to rapidly growing interest in Buddhism in America, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), one of the oldest Buddhist organizations in the U.S., will hold a public presentation on Shin Buddhism, also known as Jodo Shinshu, in Anchorage this fall and welcomes those interested in learning more about it.

Jodo Shinshu is the largest school of Buddhism in Japan. In addition to temples throughout Japan, the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha has districts in the mainland United States, Canada, Hawaii, and South America. Additional international districts are located in Australia, Europe, Nepal, Mexico, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Founded by Shinran Shonin approximately seven hundred and fifty years ago, Shin Buddhism is based on the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha and Buddhist Masters from India, China and Japan.

Rev. Joshin Dennis Fujimoto will be in Anchorage on September 26, 2015 to present “Awakened Awareness: The Path and Process of Shin Buddhism.”

Rev. Fujimoto is the resident minister at Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple in Ontario, OR. He holds a BA from the University of California, Berkeley and an MA from the Institute of Buddhist Studies, also in Berkeley. He received Kyoshi (teacher) certification at the Hongwanji in Japan in 2004.

All are welcome to the presentation to be held at UAA, Gorsuch Commons, Conference Room 107, on Saturday, September 26 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. There is no admission charge. Additional information about the history and teachings of Shin Buddhism are available at www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org and any inquiries may be sent to the BCA Center for Buddhist Education at: cbe@bcahq.org



BCA Center for Buddhist Education presents

The 9th Annual Baby Boomers' Seminar
SUFFERING...
What's the Problem?



Keynote Speaker: Rev. Earl Ikeda
New York Buddhist Church

Saturday, October 3, 2015
9 am - 3 pm

Jodo Shinshu Center 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA

General Registration: \$75 Deadline: September 20

This is our Ninth Annual Baby Boomers' Seminar! Three years ago, the committee decided to discuss the three Pillars of Buddhism. To discuss each “pillar” more in detail, we decided to use each one as the theme for each seminar. Two years ago, we addressed *impermanence* with Rev. Masao Kodani. Last year, we addressed *interdependence* with Rev. Patricia Usuki. This year, Rev. Earl Ikeda will address the Third Pillar in Buddhism: *suffering*. Is it such a problem? We'll find out... And as an added bonus, Rev. Ikeda will teach us how the Okinawans dance Obon and how his Hawaiian family made *manju*. Yes, we get to sample, too.

Hope you will join us...
The Baby Boomers' Committee

To register online visit BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org and click on CBE
For more information call: (510) 809-1460 or email: cbe@bcahq.org

Buddhists Participate in Denver PrideFest 2015

by Rev. Diana Thompson, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple

June 21, 2015 marked the second year of the Tri-State Denver and Longmont Buddhist Temples' participation in Denver's PrideFest Parade. Members, their families and friends came out wearing t-shirts printed with “*sono mama*” (just as you are) to walk, pedal, dance, laugh, sing, and show our support for the LGBTQ community while being greeted with friendly shouts of “Yay, the Buddhists!”



Photo by Christian Onassis

Thanks to donations from the Mile High Japanese American Citizens' League (JACL), Sakura Square Management, and others, the Denver Temple was able to host Marsha Aizumi, a national board member of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) and author of *Two Spirits, One Heart*, as a guest speaker on the Friday night before the parade. She gave a very moving speech about her journey with her transgender son, Aidan, and was refreshingly candid about her wide range of emotions, including her struggle with being from a Japanese American family and having a child who didn't fit the “norm.” She was very well received and her talk was a perfect start to our PrideFest weekend. *Namu Amida Butsu*



By Steve Terusaki, Co-Chair,
Joint Development
Committee of the BCAA

In my article last month I asked the question, “What small part can I play...” to ensure that the legacy of Jodo Shinshu continues here in the United States and in the English-speaking world? It is with this in mind, that I offer you a way to take part through the launch of the Annual Dana Program.

At the February 2011 National Council meeting, delegates approved a fundraising program to benefit the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) and its operations. The funds raised through this effort are to provide resources to support ongoing BCA activities: the Office of the Bishop; the Center for Buddhist Education (CBE); Youth Programs; Ministerial Training; Ministerial Support and Retirement; Ministers’ Assistant Development; Outreach and Propagation; the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS); as well as to enhance the growth of the BCA Endowments. Each of these programs has an ongoing need. The goal of the Annual Dana Program is to provide a vehicle for regular, recurring offerings to support that ongoing need.

A new approach

It has taken over four years of discussion, planning and organization to reach this point of announcing the Annual Dana Program. There is still much to complete for the Program to be operational, but the Joint Development Committee and staff of the Endowment Foundation and BCA are moving rapidly to finalize all the outstanding issues as we look toward the launch on October 1, 2015. The goals of the Program remain intact from the 2011 National Council mandate:

- Continuous Giving
- Coordinated Fundraising
- Complementary Fundraising
- Expanding the Donor Base

The Annual Dana Program is to be coordinated with and complementary to other requests from BCA that support a specific need. For example, the **Thanksgiving Offering** will continue to be a mailing solicitation whose proceeds provide for the Social Welfare

Fund. This is the only source of funds offered as grants for disaster relief and to social service agencies and organizations in financial need. The **1000 x \$1000 x 4** program will continue to provide funds to reduce the BCA loan that replaced the external financing for the Jodo Shinshu Center. Also, annual requests from the **Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS)** will be complementary to the Annual Dana Program. IBS has special fundraising criteria and tracking as it pursues accreditation with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and



Artwork by Tessa Asato

will be kept separate from the Annual Dana Program. Finally, the Annual Dana Program will work together with a program for **Planned Giving** that assists families and estates who wish to provide for bequests and offerings to BCA that can reduce estate taxes and other administrative expenses. Beyond these specific requests, offerings to the Annual Dana Program are requested to be without designations so that the monies can be allocated to the greatest needs within BCA.

Support for local temples

The Annual Dana Program will also be a vehicle to provide “complementary” fundraising that will support the local temples and churches. Each offering will allow the donor to decide whether to provide a 50/50 split with the BCA and a temple or church of their choice. The Annual Dana Program recognizes that BCA is only a strong as the local temples. This element of the Program is a vehicle to ensure that local temples and churches are strong and benefit from the generosity of all

of BCA’s Sangha members.

Expanding BCA

A further objective of the Annual Dana Program is to go beyond our traditional Sangha for fundraising. There is a dedicated effort to move the focus of donation requests from a paper “snail mail” approach to web-based approaches, including updates to the BCA website, mobile apps, and links to social media platforms. This web-based approach will also provide access and greater visibility to individuals beyond our temple/church memberships. Many of these individuals have an interest and desire to learn about Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and represent a segment of an extended Sangha that can find meaning and appreciation through the practice of *dana*.

The Annual Dana Program is about *continuous* recurring offerings, be they monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually, year-after-year, or until the donor wishes to end their offerings. In the changing face of fundraising, the goal is to have the transaction be as simple for the donor as possible without the burdensome administrative aspects of reminders, tracking and acknowledgements. There is also a need to respect an individual donor’s right to approve the transaction and the need to acknowledge donations on a timely basis. These are some of the challenges we are working to finalize before the launch of the program.

We’d like to hear from you

This fall, members of the Joint Development Committee and BCA will be presenting the Annual Dana Program at District conferences and meetings. Through these in-person presentations we hope to engage each of you and provide the opportunity for questions and comments. The Annual Dana Program is not static and will evolve with your input. And finally, look for the letter and offering request that will be in your mailboxes in early October. Your commitment to step forward and kick off the program with fanfare will be a testament to the future strength of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in the US and the legacy of 800 years of Shinran Shonin’s teachings for the world.

A Humbling Experience

By Tadao Koyama
Buddhist Church of Florin



My first semester at the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) was a very humbling experience. I was grateful to receive many lessons on the Dharma from a variety of different perspectives. This first semester made me realize that being a minister in the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) is not just about standing

at a podium and speaking for about half an hour. It comes from hard work in religious study and ritual practice. I especially enjoy having access to the Jodo Shinshu Center on a daily basis. Thankfully, all of my teachers in this first semester were challenging me to continue my education. They all reminded me that my education is a never-ending process and that I should feel free to express myself rather than just relying on religious scripture. It brings to mind that I still have so much to learn before I can even think of myself as a minister. I had many great opportunities to participate in conferences and listen to ministers who have been serving the BCA for decades.

This semester also served as a great time to become more familiar with Berkeley. I will admit that since my mother is a very proud Cal graduate, I found Berkeley to be a little over-hyped at first. However, as I continued to live in this small but intellectual city, I began to enjoy meeting new friends and becoming used to all aspects of the city.

I also was able to make new friends in the dorm. When I first moved in I was nervous because I was coming to IBS in the spring. Everyone had moved in the previous fall and had gotten to know each other. However, my peers were very open and friendly! I was also glad that many were from different Buddhist backgrounds than Jodo Shinshu. This added to my perspective on the Dharma and forced me to think outside of the box of Jodo Shinshu at times.

I am extremely grateful to the staff at IBS for always making sure that I am on top of my classes and for genuinely caring about my wellbeing while I am here. They are welcoming and encouraging. I would also like to thank all members and friends of the BCA for giving me the opportunity to continue my education and for providing scholarships to assist IBS students in their goal to one day serve the BCA as ministers. I look forward to my next semester and am eagerly anticipating stepping into the next IBS class.

In gratitude.

Pure Land Scholars

Continued from Front Page

priests in Japan; Vietnamese-American Pure Land Buddhists in Nebraska; gender, identity, the body and ritual in Shin Buddhist thought and practice; the cultural transformations and adaptations of Pure Land Buddhism in new historical contexts; modern Japanese Shin Buddhist subjectivities from multiple perspectives, both Hongwanji’s, and historically. In his keynote lecture, “So distant and yet so close: contemporary reflections on the hope of a limitless light,” Prof. Luis Gómez, University of Michigan, emeritus, discussed the importance of hope within the narratives of Pure Land Buddhism.

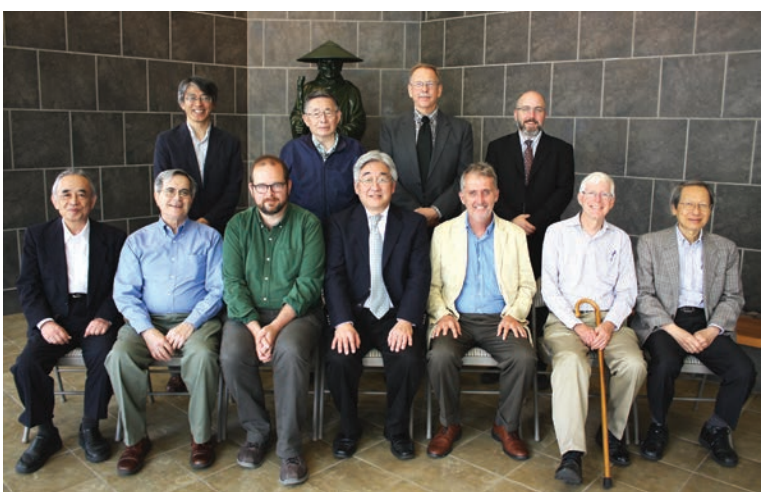
On the evening of August 7, Prof. Lewis Lancaster, University of California, Berkeley, emeritus, was awarded the Second Annual IBS President’s Award in recognition of his decades of support for the IBS. When he began the Buddhist Studies group at the University of California, Prof. Lancaster

was aided and supported by the Berkeley Buddhist Temple and the already existing IBS, and he has been a longtime supporter of the Institute’s programs.

On Sunday August 9, the conference concluded with a special screening of *Buddhism After the Tsunami: The Souls of Zen, 3/11 Japan Edition*, an important documentary about the Japanese Buddhist response to the triple-disasters of March 2011. Director Tim Graf joined a post-film discussion from Germany via Skype.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to the staff and volunteers from the Institute of Buddhist Studies, the Jodo Shinshu Center, the BCA Center for Buddhist Education and the Berkeley Buddhist Temple who worked tirelessly throughout the week to ensure that all conference participants were well cared for and welcomed into our community. It is this sense of collaboration and mutual support that gives me a deep sense of hope in the long-term growth of Shinran’s teachings in the West.

IBS Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies Symposium Draws 60



Symposium participants (front, left to right): Dr. Ichigyo Oyama, Dr. Luis Gómez, Dr. Mark Csikszentmihalyi, Dr. David Matsumoto, Dr. Charles Hallisey, Dr. James Fredericks, Dr. Dennis Hirota. (Back row): Dr. Mitsuya Dake, Dr. Seigen Yamaoka, Dr. Richard Payne, and Dr. Scott Mitchell.

On Thursday August 6, preceding the 17th International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies (IASBS) Meeting on August 7-9, the Institute of Buddhist Studies Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies, in cooperation with the Ryukoku University Translation Center, hosted a one-day symposium, “Shinran and the Sutra of Immeasurable Life: Reflections on Reading in the Buddhist Tradition.”

The symposium featured scholars who are collaborating to produce a new work on the Larger Sutra with Shinran’s attendant notes. Buddhist scholars and theologians addressed “the question of how Shinran’s treatment of the Sutra of Immeasurable Life might help us to understand what it means to read a Buddhist text and what such reading might entail, require or imply.” Over 60 people were in attendance for this event. (See related article on page one for details on the IASBS Meeting.)

今月の法話

「感謝と共に生きる」

オックスナード仏教会

開教使 渡辺正憲



秋のお彼岸の季節がやって参りました。お彼岸と言えばお墓参りですね。皆さんはお墓参りをされますか？

これは、日本発祥の仏教的習慣だそうです。春と秋のお彼岸には、太陽が真東から真西に沈むので、沈みゆく太陽に阿弥陀仏の西方浄土を重ねあわせ、思いをはせたのが始まりといわれています。「彼岸」という言葉は、「此岸（しがらみ）」の対義語です。こちら側（現世）とあちら側（浄土）という風に考えることができると思います。サンスクリットのパラミター（波羅蜜）を漢字で表した「到彼岸（とつひがん）」

からこの言葉が来たようです。迷いの原因である煩惱を断ち切り、絶対の心の平安である涅槃にいたる。そのための方法として、皆さんがお寺で習う六波羅蜜が説かれました。しかし、現在ではご先祖さまを偲ぶ大事な行事となっておりますね。

お彼岸には、おはぎがお供えされることが多いようです。面白いと思っただけ、見た目も中身も同じようなものが、はたもちと呼ばれることもあるということです。これは春にお供えされるのがはたもち、秋にお供えされるのがおはぎになるようです。漢字で書くと牡丹餅とお萩。それぞれ春と秋の季節の花の名前です。かたちもそれぞれの花の形に似せて、丸いものと細長いものと微妙に違うようです。

私の子供の頃は、9月のお彼岸に母がおはぎを作り、家族そろってお墓参りを毎年のように

していました。お墓の周りの雑草を抜き取り、みんなで墓石を磨いて、花とおはぎとお線香を供えて、心静かに手を合わせます。その当時、私は墓地があまり好きではありませんでしたが、お墓参りの後に家族で食事をするのが楽しみでした。大学を卒業してからは、あまり熱心にお墓参りをするのがなくなりました。しかし、20代の後半にいろいろ悩みを抱えていた頃、本当に何気なくお墓参りをしてみました。そして、むかし家族としたようにお墓の周りの雑草を一つ一つ抜き取り、墓石を磨き、売店で買ったお花とお線香を供えて、心静かに亡くなったおじいちゃんとおばあちゃんに思いをはせました。すると、今まで感じていた心のイライラがすっと楽になっていくのを感じました。その時には理由は分かりませんでした。しかし、それ以来、月に一回は自分自身でお墓参りすることが習慣になりました。一人きりでお墓を掃除している時に、私はおじいちゃんとおばあちゃんを感じる事ができました。もちろん二人はもうすでにこの世にはいません。しかし、お墓参りをしているときは一緒にいるという感じが確かにするのです。と言っても、亡霊の話をしているわけではありません。心の中に二人を感じる事ができたということです。

その後、33歳の時に浄土真宗の僧侶となり、仏教の教えを聞かせていただく中で、なぜ私がお墓参りをしていた時に安らかな気持ちを感じることができたのかを考えてみました。そして、一つのこと気が付きました。それは、お墓参りをするようになる前には、あまり祖父母に対して感謝の気持ちを感じていませんでしたが、お参りをするようになってからは、二人に対してありがたさという気持ちを持ち始めたということでした。以前は、イライラや不安というものを強く感じていましたが、お墓参りを通して、祖父母や両親、そして、いろいろな人たちの優しさや愛情に包まれて、今こうして生かされているということが理屈でなく感覚的に少しずつ理解することができました。人は、一人で生きていくわけではないし、一人では生きられませんが、このことに気付いただけで私の心持ちは大きく変わりました。

浄土真宗では、亡くなられた方々は仏さまとなって私たちをいつも見守ってくれていると考へられています。そして、阿弥陀仏の大慈大悲はあたたかみ日光のように、常に私たちを暖かく照らしてくださっているということが説かれるわけですが、なかなか具体的にそういうことを想像することは難しいと思います。しかし、私がお墓参りを通して感じたように、確かに私たちは大いなる慈しみによって生かされていると思います。親鸞聖人はそのことと讃の中でこのように表現されました。

「煩惱にまなごさへられて 撰取の光明みざれども 大悲ものうきことなくて つねにわが身をてらすなり」

（親鸞聖人 高僧和讃 95）

お盆もそうですが、仏教的な年間行事は、ご先祖さまや私たちを生かす全てのものに対して感謝の気持ちを表現する大切なものです。感謝のない生活は、砂漠の中で一人きりで生きるような空疎なものでしょう。私たち仏教徒にとって、お釈迦さまや親鸞聖人をはじめとする多くの偉大な先生がたが伝えて下さったこの尊い仏教の教えをより所とし、感謝の気持ちと共に生き活きと日々を送らせていただくことが大切ではないかと考えております。

南無阿弥陀仏

総長特別メッセージ

募金のお願ひ

四年程前のことです。仏教団が新しい募金運動を始めようとしている時、委員会の人たちが浄土真宗センターのダイニングルームで話し合いをしていました。その時、たまたまそばにいた上座部仏教僧のシーラピマラ師がその募金運動の名称を耳にしたのでしよう、私たちにその言い方はよくないと注意してくださいました。その名称というのが「アニニアル ギビング（年ごと寄付という意味）」というものでした。彼は、ギビングというのは目上の人が目下の人に施す意味で、私たちが仏さまに差し上げるのは「オファリング」という言葉で表すべきですと諭してくださいました。ちなみに、友達同士の場合は「ギフト」というべきですと付け加えてくださいました。

そのことで思い出したのが子供の頃親からいつも聞かされていた言葉です。お寺で育った私は、すべてが仏さまからの頂き物ということを知られていたのです。なぜかというところ、ご門徒さんが持つてこられるのはすべて仏さまへのお供えであるということなんです。だから、頂いたものはいつも先ず仏さまにお供えをして、そのあと私たちが「お下がり」としていただいていたのです。ご門徒さんは私たちがお寺の家族に持つてこられるのではなく、仏さまにという思いで持つてこられていたのです。それが金銭の場合はお布施（ダーナ）といわれるのです。お米や物品などはお供え（ダーナ）と言われます。もちろん私たちが家族の生活の糧になりますが、それによってお寺が維持され、お念仏の教えを聞かせていただくことができます。

さて米国仏教団も、四年前からあたたかためていた計画を、この度新しい名前のもと、内容も少し変えて始めることになりました。名前は「アニニアル ダーナ」で、将来に備えて教団の基盤をより確かなものにしようというものです。会員の方々にもこの運動に賛同していただき協力いただくように、近いうちに趣意状と申し込み用紙が送られるようになっていきます。

本紹介「ブッディズムオンエア」
元BCA開教使で武蔵野大学教授、田中ケネス師の新刊本がオレンジカウウンティー仏教会の仏教教育センターから出版された。タイトルは「Buddhism on Air: Televised Kalaidose ope of a Growing Religion」で、田中師がホストをつとめた仏教テレビ番組の内容を編集したものを本にした。他宗派の僧侶との対談や基本的な仏教の教えに加え、ダルマスクールで歌われる歌などについて書かれている。テレビ番組は2006年にロサンゼルスでのケーブル局で放送された。本の値段は15ドル95セントで、各仏教会や浄土真宗センターのブックストアなどで販売されている。



ところで、教団には今まで募財を担当する部署がありませんでした。そして三ヶ月前に維持財団（エンドウメント ファウンデーション）内にその部署ができました。仏教団の毎年の予算は今まで通りに各仏教会からの維持費によって主にまかなわれますが、来年度より各会員からいただくダーナもそれに当てられることになっていきます。

もちろん今までも皆様のご協力があったこそ、教団もここまで発展することができたのです。おかげさまで、お念仏の教えが、今では仏教会の枠を越えて多くの人々に喜ばれています。本当にありがとうございます。心より感謝申し上げます。百十五年以上の歴史の中で、私たちは独自の大学院を持ち、そこから多くの開教使が育っています。また教団を財政的に援助するための維持財団も大きくなり、新しい浄土真宗センターも完成し、数々のプログラムが行われています。それぞれが力をあわせ、今の私たちがただでなく、これからの人たちが、お念仏のみ教えに遇い、すばらしい人生を送ることができるようをお願いしながら、教団の活動を続けてきています。

法輪

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「まことの人生を歩もう」

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布研ぎサンノゼ

8月10日(月)から12日(水)の3日間、BCA布教研究会(布研)および開教使会議が行われた。

今年、沿岸教区の主催で、サンノゼ市のホリデイ・インでの開催となり43名の開教使が集った。布研の講師には中央仏教学院院長の白川晴頭師が招かれ、「浄土真宗の教えと目覚め」「悪人の救いと信心」について講義した。白川師の講義のほか、サンノゼ別院での聞法の集いや、葬儀でのお勤めの練習およびディスカッションも行われた。サンノゼ別院で白川師の法話を聞いた聞法者は「聞いていて自然とお念仏がでてくるようなありがたさを感じました。」と日本語でのお聴聞を喜んだ。

開教使会議では総長オフィスをはじめCBE、各教区などから活動報告がなされ、IBSからは今春から松本デイビッド開教使(パークレー仏教会)がIBSの専任になると発表された。開教使会議長は平野ジェリー開教使(ソルトレイク仏教会)が選ばれた。今会議では次期総長を決める投票が行わ

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龍光大学から交友のある白河師と藤本師



れる予定であったが、梅津総長以外の候補者が総長選挙を辞退したため、満場一致で梅津総長が二期目へ継続することが決定された。

来年の布研は桑湾教区で8月に開催される予定。

三名の僧侶が開教使に

この度、新しく開教使に任用される予定の三名が布研と開教使会議に参加した。三名は、左からクワン・コーリー師(ヘニス仏教会)、柴田キャンディス師(パークレー仏教会)、浜崎マシュー師(リードレー仏教会)。三名は8月より教師ミニスターとして数ヶ月から1年のオリエンテーション期間を経た後、正式に開教使となる。今年はこの三名の他、9月に二名が開教使として迎えらる予定。



国際真宗学会開催される

8月7日(金)から9日(日)の3日間、浄土真宗センターで第十七回国際真宗学会(IASBS)が開催された。この学会には浄土真宗の学問的研究者が世界各国から集まり、それぞれが論文や研究発表を行う。日本からは龍谷大学をはじめ、武蔵野大学、大谷大学、東京大学の研究者が発表し、他、米国、欧州、中国、台湾の大学などから約80名の学者によるプレゼンテーションや参加があった。今会のテーマは「Subjectivity in Pure Land Buddhism」で学会をホストした国際真宗学会北米チャプター会員は、「subjectivity は日本語では主観とか、主体という意味になるでしょう。西洋の個人主義を、他との関わりがあってこそ存在できる自己、という仏教的観点から見直すことがひとつの目的です。」とテーマの意義を語った。最終日の基調講演は大無量寿経の英訳で知られるゴメス・ルイス氏が「So Distant And Yet So Close: Contemporary reflections on The Hope of a Limitless Light」の題で話した。今回の学会は2018年に東京で行われる。



く集まり、旧交を温めていました。また、いつもキッチンでお手伝いしてくださっている多くのメンバーや、子供たちが内陣でお勤めをするときに着用する勤行衣を作ってくださっている方々も招待され、全員からありがとうという感謝の言葉がかけられていました。

この素晴らしいプログラムを毎年続けていくくださるのには、委員会の人たちはもとより、別院のチームです。特にその中心となっているのは大下パティ師です。リユニオンで子供たちが立派に育っていく姿を見る目には涙が浮かんでいました。

今教団の中には大学を卒業した人たちが自主的に集まったりしています。この人たちが気楽に集まれるようにしてあげるのも私たちの責任であり、喜びでもあります。

さて、いろいろな青少年のプログラムがありますが、もう一つ長く続いているのが本願寺青少年国際研修という行事です。今年も北米から十五名が選抜され、八日間の研修旅行が七月に行われました。その引率が私とロサンゼルス別院の中田和朗師でした。初めての経験でしたが、若い人と一緒に行動し、親しくなり、年齢の差の関係で親子の気分を味わいました。特にホームステイの時には、我が子と別れるさびしさまで感じたことです。

ホームステイのホストファミリーは口を揃えて感動していました。私の口から言うのもおかしいのですが、全員素晴らしい子供たちばかりでした。マナーもしっかりとしており、お経も立派にあげることができ、誇らしく思いました。みんな「私たちの子供」です。ダルマスクールで育ち、青年会で活躍し、中にはサクラメントの行事に参加した子供たちもいました。もちろん親御さんたちも仏教会で活躍している人たちです。

昔からいわれているように、子供を育てるのは親の努力だけではなく、村全体が子供を育てる背景となっているのです。教団の中にはいろいろな年齢層を対象としたプログラムが多くあります。小さな子供を持っている人たちに、私は自信を持って各仏教会のダルマスクールを勧めます。九月から新学期が始まります。是非とも小さい子供さんたちと一緒にのお寺参りを続けてください。

京都本願寺の職員の方々や各仏教会で子供や青少年のプログラムのためにご尽力してくださっている多くの方がたに心よりお礼を申し上げます。一緒に念仏の香る村づくりに努めてまいります。

総長メッセージ

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

ちょっと前の出来事ですが、七月にサクラメント別院で米国仏教団の子供たちを対象とした夏の研修会の十周年記念リユニオン行事がありました。過去十年の間に研修を受けた子供たち、と言っても今は成人していますが、が数多