



WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

LIVING THROUGH A PANDEMIC

BCA Facing 'Severe' Shortage of Ministers

Retirements, Pandemic
Among Several Factors;
MAs Providing Key Role

By Jon Kawamoto
Editor, Wheel of Dharma

As the BCA's temples, churches and Sanghas begin to emerge from the pandemic's prolonged shut-

downs and isolating restrictions, another issue is surfacing — the acute shortage of ministers.

The shortage is linked to a number of divergent factors, which are combining to create a perfect storm of a dilemma: a wave of ministerial retirements over the past year and this year, leaves of absence, and the unexpected, unforeseen impacts of the pandemic.

Currently, there are 35 Kaikyo-

shi ministers actively covering the BCA's 58 temples and churches. The BCA's active 130 Ministers Assistants (MAs) are playing a vital role in making up for the shortfall, and by providing Dharma messages for a number of churches and temples. In addition, retired ministers are serving as interim ministers.

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BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada described the minister shortage as "getting more severe" and called it "a very, very challenging time" for the BCA at the June 5 National Board meeting. There are currently 35 full-time ministers for the BCA's 58 temples and churches. (Courtesy of Jon Kawamoto)

BCA Part of White House's Vesak Celebration

Bishop Rev. Harada
Attends Historic Event;
Biden Issues Statement

By Jon Kawamoto
Editor, Wheel of Dharma

The Buddhist Churches of America participated in the first official White House celebration of Vesak — the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and passing — in another milestone event for Buddhism in the United States.

BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada took part in the May 25 special event, which included an official statement from President Joe Biden that was issued on May 26, as well as a tweet from Vice President Kamala Harris on Vesak. Representing President Biden at the ceremony was the Second Gentleman, Doug Emhoff, husband of Vice President Harris.

"It was indeed an honor to represent not only BCA, but to represent all of Mahayana Buddhism, at the historic Vesak ceremony at the White House," Rev. Harada said in his opening remarks at the June 5 BCA National Board meeting.



BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada lights a candle at the White House Vesak ceremony on May 25 as Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff looks on. At right, Emhoff joins the Buddhist representatives for a group photo at the White House. (Official White House photos by Cameron Smith)

"We both had a most memorable experience and it opened up our eyes to what other Buddhists are doing to promote Buddhism in the West," Rev. Harada said, referring to himself and Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, program director for the Jodo Shinshu International Office (JSIO) and Supervising Minister for the Berkeley Buddhist Temple and



Buddhist Temple of Marin. Rev. Kuwahara accompanied Rev. Harada to Washington, D.C.

During the White House ceremony, Emhoff lit a candle and spent about 30 to 40 minutes with the Buddhists, who represented

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By Rev Jon Turner
Orange County Buddhist Church
and Ricky Schlesinger
Vista Buddhist Temple President

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Venice Hongwanji Girl Scouts Create Hearts for Love to Promote Inclusion

2,500 Origami Hearts Project Is Response to Anti-Asian Hate

By Victoria Yamashita
Girl Scout Troop 5325
Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Girl Scout Troop 5325 at Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple folded and collected more than 2,500 origami hearts to bring attention to promote a message of love, inclusion and unity.

The project was inspired by Paper Tree, an origami store in San Francisco, which began the "Hearts for Love" movement to combat the

increase in AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander) hate crimes since the start of the pandemic.

In addition to folding origami hearts and creating the displays, the Girl Scouts collected hearts from temple members and friends with an overwhelming response.

A special shout out to our Jr. YBA, who contributed 600 hearts. What made the hearts so special was that so many wrote thoughtful, impactful messages like, "Compassion," "Love

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Girl Scout Troop 5325 Senior 1 (ninth-grade) members pose in front of their Hearts for Love project, which promotes a message of love and inclusion. (Courtesy of Victoria Yamashita)



Shown above are some of the 2,500 origami hearts that were collected and folded by the Girl Scouts. (Courtesy of Victoria Yamashita)

BISHOP’S MESSAGE

Anger, the Second of the Three Poisons



Editor’s Note: This is the second of three columns by Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada on the Three Poisons in Buddhism — greed, anger and ignorance, or stupidity (GAS).

By Rev. Marvin Harada
Bishop of the BCA

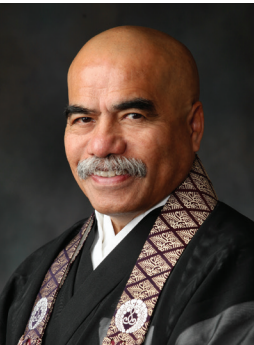
Last month, I discussed the first of the three poisons, greed. This month, I would like to discuss the second of the three poisons, anger. Some people think that an enlightened being like the Buddha never gets mad, never gets angry. This is not true. Even the Buddha feels the strong emotion of anger. The difference between the

Buddha, or an enlightened one, and ourselves, is that for a Buddha, their anger doesn’t last long. That doesn’t sound like much of a difference, but in actuality, it is a huge difference. An awakened person feels their anger rising up within themselves, but is able to let go of anger right away, just like letting go of a balloon to float up into the sky. We unenlightened beings not only feel our anger arise, we hold on to our anger, for days, weeks, months, even years. If you really reflect upon yourself, isn’t there something in your past, something that someone said to you, or did to you, that you are still angry about to this day? Calculate how long ago it was. Ten years? Twenty years? Maybe even 30 or more years ago. If you stop to bring that memory up in your mind, you feel the anger as if it was yesterday. That’s the difference between ourselves and an awakened person. I always tell the story about my own episode of holding on to my anger. Once, many

years ago, I had an argument with a member. I rarely have had such arguments, but it did occur. He said this, I said that, and it was a heated discussion. Years later, I was taking a shower. At our home, my wife made a rule that after you take a shower, you have to use this plastic squeegee to wipe the shower stall to prevent the hard water buildup. For some reason, that argument with that member had somehow come back to me and I was reliving the entire conversation. I should have said this or that, but I didn’t. As I was reliving this argument, I was squeegeeing the shower stall. I pressed the plastic squeegee so hard, it snapped in two in my hand! I thought to myself, “What is the matter with me? That was years ago. I am still holding on to my anger.” Thich Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Buddhist master, says that when we get angry, we are like a person who chases after the person who set our house on fire. Instead of chasing after the arsonist, shouldn’t we be trying to put

out the fire on our house? That is how we un-awakened deal with our anger. We chase after the person who caused our anger, rather than trying to put out the fire of our own anger. How does a Shin Buddhist deal with their anger? Is there nothing we can do about it? I recall one story that Professor Shigaraki of Ryukoku University told about a member he had known. This elderly gentleman was a victim of a mischievous prank by some young boys. As the elderly gentleman was walking along the edge of a rice paddy, some young boys jumped out of the bushes and pushed the man into the muddy rice paddy and ran away. Some years later, one of the boys who had grown older, confessed to the man that he had been one of the boys who pushed him and he apologized. The young man asked the elderly man the question, “I always wondered why you didn’t get mad that day and that you never told

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

June 2021 marks my 20th year of serving at the Los Angeles Betsuin. Twenty years! It’s hard to believe, yet it seems like only yesterday that I came into the front office for the first time and frightened the office staff. As I reflect on that time, I remember thinking Los Angeles

There once lived a poor farmer, who lived in a poor village, but this farmer was considered very rich and fortunate because he owned a horse. One day, his horse ran away. His neighbors came to his farm to say they were sorry for his misfortune. But the farmer said, “I don’t know, it could be bad, it could be good.” Several days later, the horse returned, with six strong horses. Once again, the neighbors came by this time to congratulate him, but the farmer said, “I don’t know, it could be good, it could be bad.” Some time later, the farmer’s son went riding on one of the wild horses. But he fell off and broke his leg and arm. The neighbors came by to console the farmer. But the farmer said, “I don’t know, it could be bad, it could be good.” A year later, a fierce war broke out between the farmer’s country and the neighboring country. Many young men were drafted into the army. When the army came to draft the farmer’s son, they found that he was disabled, thus exempting him from military service.

— ancient Taoist story

was the last place I wanted to be. I had heard Los Angeles Betsuin was the harshest, most difficult place to be. I told Bishop Hakubun Watanabe that I’d go to Los Angeles for my orientation, but that I wanted to transfer as soon as my six

months were up! Twenty years have past and I can’t think of anywhere else I’d rather be. I’ve met so many wonderful Dharma friends, so many wonderful people in the Little Tokyo community. And, of course, it’s great that Rev.

Miyoshi (AKA Nobuko Briones) is serving at West Covina Buddhist Temple. The story I began with is an ancient Taoist story that I enjoy telling our Saishin Dojo

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Life of Gratitude — Nembutsu



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


“Life of Gratitude” is the motto on our new BCA logo. How might we experience it? Watching my young grandson revealed a fundamental process of life. Every action and thought has been the result of practice: a repetition of

thoughts, speech, and conduct until it becomes a natural part of our lives. Taking that first step leads to walking, then running, then jumping, skipping, and dancing. Each letter leads to words, sentences, stories, discussions. The initial clumsy steps lead to enjoying the benefits of a deeper experience. We use this process in learning music, sports, cooking, and all tasks in life. Yet, what is our process in knowing, accepting, and incorporating the primary practice of Shin? Just say the Nembutsu, “Namo Amida Butsu.” What happens? If nothing occurs,

we assume it is ineffective and drop the practice. Could this be one of the factors that former students and members leave our sangha in preference for other activities? Many Americans are concerned with a comfortable quality of life without the anxiety it fosters to achieve and maintain it. A Shin Buddhist solution would be to follow a middle path. In “Shoshinge,” Shinran notes that under the darkness of the clouds of greed, hatred, and ignorance, there is brightness, not dark. He says that we close off the five evil courses by a crosswise leap. Moving sideways shifts our po-

sition and gives us a different perspective, which allows us to see the ever present light. How might the voicing of the Nembutsu move us toward this balance? We often say “please” when we desire things we don’t have. To balance this desire, let us note the brightness of our lives by recognizing the many benefits we enjoy now. The Nembutsu is our expression of gratitude voiced as we awaken to the benefits of life, gifted to us by others. So, to incorporate a practice that follows the learning process described above, our beginning

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

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Editor:
Jon Kawamoto
Editor, Japanese Section:
Rev. Ryuta Furumoto
Print Production:
Jeffrey Kimoto

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President

The June 2021 BCA National Board Meeting took place via Zoom on June 5. Rev. Marvin Harada, Bishop of the BCA, commented on the shortage of ministers in the BCA.

He acknowledged that some ministers were supervising up to four temples. There are 10 BCA members who are waiting to go to Hongwanji headquarters in Kyoto in get their Kyoshi certification from. At least six of the aspirants have indicated that they would like to become BCA

Highlights From June National Board Meeting

Kaikyoshi.

Rev. Harada has met with each full-time minister to discuss how they have been able to get through the pandemic. He is now in the process of meeting with each temple president and discussing their concerns as we start to reopen our temples.

Rev. Jerry Hirano, director of the Center for Buddhist Education, has noted that every seminar the center produces has more than 100 participants and that many come from all over the world. The second annual BCA virtual Obon Dance will take place on Aug. 15.

Dr. Scott Mitchell, Dean of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS), reported that the IBS held its virtual graduation on May 21. Eleven people completed their degree or certificate program. Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka was honored for his lifetime of service to the IBS and was given the title Professor Emeritus. The IBS had 44 students enrolled

in the Spring 2021 semester. On July 1, the IBS is expected to become a full-time member of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley.

Hideaki Mizuno, executive director of the Endowment Foundation (EF), reported that the Growth Portfolio realized a gain of 2.6 percent in the first quarter of 2021. The Growth and Income Portfolio had a gain of 1.4 percent and the Income Portfolio lost 0.9 percent during that time. The custodial management fee charged by the EF will decrease to 0.6 percent on the Growth Portfolio, 0.51 percent on the Growth and Income Portfolio, and 0.39 percent on the Income Portfolio.

Rev. Kuwahara, director of the Jodo Shinshu International Office, announced that the JSIO became independent from the BCA on Feb. 1. There are currently 40 people enrolled in the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course.

Jeff Matsuoka, BCA Treasurer, noted that as temples

begin to reopen, he hoped that BCA committees would continue to meet virtually for at least half of their meetings. The BCA was approved for a second draw from the Paycheck Protection Program and received more than \$217,000. The BCA will be making a loan payment of more than \$148,000 to the EF, decreasing the total loan outstanding to \$3.3 million.

Robert Matsueda, BCA Facilities Manager, informed the Board that the lower level parking lot at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) has been cleaned out. All lights and sensors in the garage have been repaired. The interior leaks from the upper floor decks and the lower level parking garage have been repaired. Robert noted that our security guard has done an outstanding job in preventing unauthorized people from entering the JSC, chasing off vandals, and removing graffiti on his own initiative.

Gary Mukai, Chair of the Propagation and Membership

Committee, reminded all temples to report those temple members under the age of 30 to the BCA with the annual census. Tom Nishikawa, Chair of the Student Financial Assistance Program indicated that the Program will need to undergo major revisions in how the restrictions to the individual funds are managed. Also, some funds will need to be contacted so that there would be more uniformity in how money would be available for candidates needing financial assistance. Nishikawa said he hopes the end result of the revisions will be more money available for eligible candidates.

The National Board approved the revised charter for the Social Welfare Committee. The committee will now have non-delegate at large members and will review applications for grants needed for natural disasters and developing humanitarian crises. The

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FDSTL Holds 70th Annual Conference



The Bishop’s 10-Year Service Awards and FDSTL 25-Year Service Awards were presented at the FDSTL’s 70th Annual Conference on April 24. Recipients are, from left, for 10 years, Teri Futaba of OCBC and Nancy Aochi of San Jose Betsuin; and, for 25 years, Lynda Ichinaga of San Jose Betsuin, and Loren Miyasaki and Linda Miyasaki of Enmanji. (Courtesy of Koichi Sayano)

By Koichi Sayano
FDSTL President

The Federation of Dharma School Teachers’ League held its 70th Annual Conference online on April 24.

With the continuing COVID pandemic, it was held for the second year as a totally online event, hosted by the Southern District Dharma School Teachers’ League.

The conference program, with the theme of “Meeting the Challenges of Today’s Dharma School,” was originally planned for an in-person conference until the COVID pandemic forced a drastic change in plans and the program was shifted to an online format.

Pieper Toyama, the founding headmaster of the Pacific Buddhist Academy in Honolulu, Hawaii, was the keynote speaker.

He spoke about “Nembutsu moments” as an underlying goal of the Dharma School program from his experiences at PBA. This was followed by a question-and-answer session moderated by Rev. Jon Turner, Resident Minister at the Orange County Buddhist



Pieper Toyama, inset, the founding headmaster of the Pacific Buddhist Academy in Honolulu, was the keynote speaker at the conference. A question-and-answer session followed and was moderated by Rev. Jon Turner of OCBC and BCA President-Elect Terri Omori of Vista. (Courtesy of Koichi Sayano)

Church, and BCA President-Elect Terri Omori and breakout workshops discussing applications of the topics presented in the keynote address and lesson sharing among the attendees.

The Bishop’s 10-Year Service Awards and FDSTL 25-Year Service Awards were presented during the conference.

Recipients for this year are:

10 Years — Teri Futaba of OCBC and Nancy Aochi of San Jose Betsuin

25 Years — Lynda Ichinaga of San Jose Betsuin, and Loren Miyasaki of Enmanji and Lin-

da Miyasaki of Enmanji

The evening workshops were presented as pre-recorded, 20-minute videos that the attendees can view at their convenience. Topics included use of technology, social media, and other technology tools for use in the Dharma School classroom.

The 2022 FDSTL Conference will be hosted by Northern California Dharma School Teachers League and will be held as a virtual conference, with possible hybrid participation at the district or local temple level as pandemic conditions permit.

Sacramento’s Bazaar Returns as Online Telethon

By Brian Hatano
Past President
Buddhist Church of Sacramento

Last year, for the first time since the inaugural event in 1947, the Buddhist Church of Sacramento’s annual Japanese Food and Cultural Bazaar was canceled because of the pandemic.

Despite not being able to stage its two-day bazaar to the community as it had for 73 years, the temple organized a program online featuring a wide array of talent. This year, the 2021 online event is similar, with a variety of participants enlisted to commemorate the 75th bazaar.

On Saturday, Aug. 14, the Buddhist Church of Sacramento is hosting a live-streamed telethon event, “Bazaar — At Home Edition,” from noon to 5 p.m. Watch the live event on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/buddhistchurchofsacramento

Viewers can tune in to the program any time during the five-hour period. The schedule and updates will be posted on the church’s website (www.buddhistchurch.org) and on its Facebook page.

Some of what you’ll see:

- The East Wind Band, a regular favorite of past bazaars;
- Temple members (all professional artists) showcasing their musical talents, including Merv Maruyama, Alexi Ishida and Kendyl Ito;
- The Sacramento Taiko Dan Youth Group;
- Stories about local busi-



FYI

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nesses affiliated with the temple, including Kiyo’s Florist, North American Food Distributing, Osaka-Ya, and the Asian Community Center;

- Cultural and cooking demonstrations;
- Get to know Resident Minister Rev. Matthew Hamasaki;
- Interviews with temple members; and
- “Where Are They Now” stories of former students who have gone on to successful careers.

Once again, the co-hosts of the event are temple members Koichi Mizushima and former local TV news anchor Sharon

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My Grandfather’s Wooden Swing

By Richard A. Stambul
Past BCA President

There’s a story I once heard, and it starts like this:

A Rabbi asks his students, “How can we know when night ends and day begins? How can we tell night from day?”

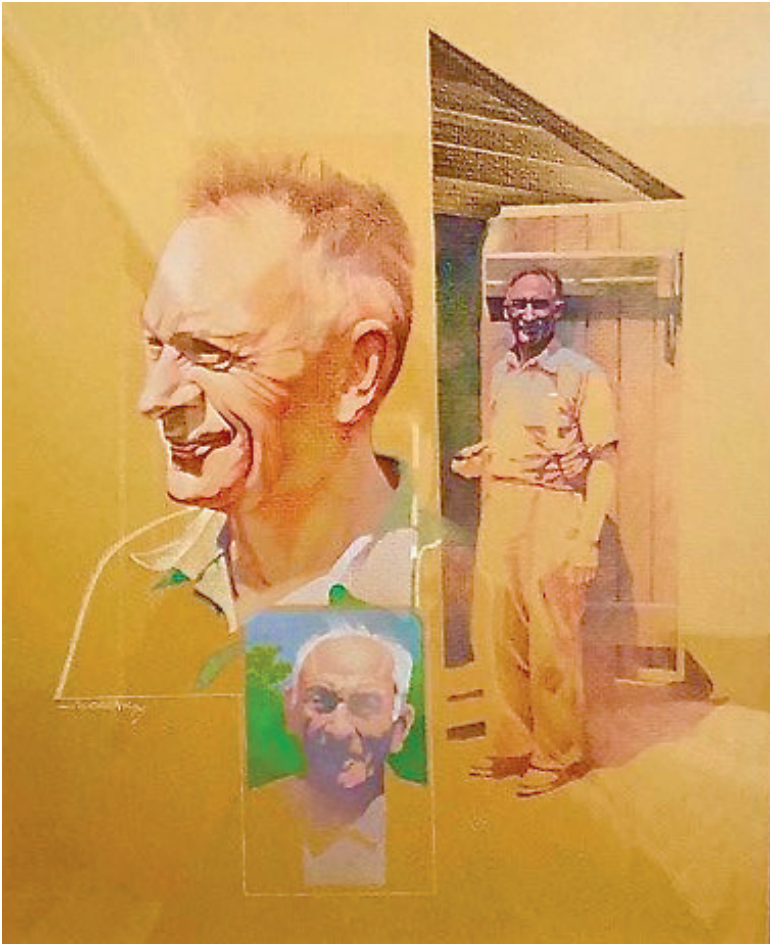
That’s an intriguing question and it has an even more intriguing answer, but first let me tell you a little about the man who told me that story: my grandpa, Abe Marcus.

My grandpa was born in October 1885 in a tiny farming village in Romania. At the age of 15, he emigrated first to London, and four years later to New York City. He was a carpenter and barrel-maker, and later, he became a farmer in upstate New York.

When I was almost 6, living in the San Fernando Valley, a suburb just outside Los Angeles, I announced to my parents that I was going to spend my summers with my grandpa on his 75-acre chicken farm in New York state’s Catskill mountains. My parents agreed, and off I went to the Catskills to spend summers with my grandpa.

Grandpa had built a three-story farmhouse back in 1910 when he’d first bought the farm, and I think it was before I was born, in the early 1940s, that he built a large, wooden swing that four people could sit on facing each other. A skilled carpenter, grandpa made the swing out of white, picket fence posts. He and I would sit there after dinner each evening, swinging back and forth, sometimes sitting in silence as grandpa smoked his pipe.

When there was too much silence for my comfort, I’d say, “Grandpa?” He’d reply, “What?” Waiting a moment or two, I’d say, “Oh, nothing.” Later, I came to realize that was my way of telling grandpa I loved him.



Abe Marcus, the grandfather of Past BCA President Richard Stambul, is depicted in this painting by well-known French artist Alain A. Moreau, who made it as a gift to Stambul after his grandfather passed away in 1975. (Courtesy of Richard Stambul)

Chicken farming was hard work, and grandpa never made much money at it, so he built seven bungalows on our farm, about 100 yards south of the main house.

The bungalows my grandfather built with his own hands were tiny, two-room affairs with a small master bedroom and one tiny room for the kids. There was also a small kitchen, not large enough for two people to stand in at the same time. Just outside the kitchen there was a room with a water heater and some electrical wiring.

Families from New York City would rent one or more bungalows during summer months.

Most often, the mothers would come up with their children, and their husbands would join them on the weekends.

There was a sense of community among the families who stayed in our bungalows.

This was remarkable, when you think about it, since the families who stayed at the bungalows were either religious Jews or Irish-American Catholics. This sense of community was shared by our family — my grandpa, my grandmother, Dora, and myself.

I remember that sometimes, on warm summer nights, the families would gather together around the swing grandpa had built, and they’d sit around and tell stories. I must have been 8 or 9 at that time, and we’d join the guests. These stories often had a moral, something to ignite discussion by everyone ... by the mothers, the children, the entire group.

On one of those August evenings, still warm from the heat of the day, we gathered for a story, this time from my grandpa. I filled his pipe with the required three layers of tobacco — Prince Albert — leaving the very top layer a bit looser than the rest. Using one hand, he struck a kitchen match on his thumbnail and lit his pipe spreading a

‘I’ll tell you. Night becomes day when you can look into the face of any human being — any human being — and there is enough light to recognize him as your brother. Until then, it is night, and darkness is still with us.’

I was very young, but I’ve never forgotten that story. My grandpa explained this was a

It (my grandfather’s story) was about looking at all human beings, men, women, children, anyone, as though they were family. If you think of the stranger as family, then you don’t think of that individual as a threat. Rather, they are valuable members of the human family, of our family We are all one.

wonderful odor around all those seated, and he told the following story:

“A Rabbi tells his students, ‘Listen, class, there’s night and there’s day, right? Night ... and day. But how can we know when night ends and day begins? How can we tell night from day?’

“So the students think about it and think about it, and finally one of the students raises a hand, and the Rabbi calls on him, and the student says, ‘Is it when you can see two animals in the distance and you can tell which is a dog and which is a sheep?’

“The Rabbi says, ‘Hmm, good ... but that’s not the answer I was looking for. Any other ideas?’

“So a second student raises a hand and says, ‘Is it when you can see two trees in the distance, and you realize one is an olive tree and the other a grapevine?’

“‘Good answer,’ says the Rabbi, ‘but sorry, that’s not right either.’

“So the students are all stumped and they plead with the Rabbi, ‘Please tell us the answer! How can you tell the difference between night and day?’

“‘I’ll tell you,’ says the Rabbi.

story with many lessons.

It was about looking at all human beings, men, women, children, anyone, as though they were family. If you think of the stranger as family, then you don’t think of that individual as a threat. Rather, they are valuable members of the human family, of our family. It doesn’t matter if they are different from us. Maybe they came from a different background, with ancestors from different places, perhaps different complexions, or colors. We are all one.

I never found anything my grandfather taught me to be wrong or worthless. His stories and lessons have always given me strength when I felt doubt or fear. Men like my grandpa cannot die. He is still with me long after his death more than 40 years ago.

The great Shin Buddhist scholar, Rev. Akegarasu Haya, taught that the power which may come from such stories is called “Tariki.” Tariki, he explained, is to “touch the light of a teacher, to be illuminated by that teacher, and to have the same wish, the same resolve of the teacher rise up in you.”

Rev. Briones

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students. It’s a story that shows us that the meaning of our good and bad could change immediately or years or even the next generation, depending on the circumstance. Although we constantly talk about good and bad, it is not easy for us to determine what is truly good or bad.

Usually we are pretty good about figuring out what is good and what is bad. But Buddhism teaches us that we really don’t have any firm basis or criteria for judging what is good or what is bad. Buddhism teaches us that our basis for good and bad are superficial and could change quite easily according to conditions. Buddhism teaches us that we should know the uncertainty of our judgments of good and bad. We should realize the limitations of our judgments are our own opinions of good and bad

based on what suits us now and on our self-centeredness.

That said, this doesn’t mean that we should not talk about good and bad, or judge between good and bad. In our everyday life, we are constantly judging what is good and what is bad. What Buddhism teaches us is that we must do so knowing the limits of criteria. If we believe that we have the absolute criteria of good and bad, then we really have a shallow understanding of this world and self.

In the Epilogue of the Tanisho, Yuien writes:

“In reality, all of us, including myself, talk only about what is good and evil without realizing the Tathagata’s benevolence.”

Yuien says that he is attached to his own principles of what is good and evil and does not have any insight into limitless reality.

Yuien continues:

“According to the master, he said, ‘I don’t know what the two, good and evil, really mean. I could

say that I know what good is, if I knew good as thoroughly and completely as the Tathagata; and I could say I know what evil is, if I knew evil as thoroughly and completely as the Tathagata. But in this foolish being filled with blind passion, living in this impermanent world of burning house, all things are empty and vain, therefore, untrue. Only the Nembutsu is true, real and sincere.”

Shinran knows that whatever he thinks regarding good and evil are empty and false, as they are constantly changing because of conditions and his self-centeredness. For Shinran, Nembutsu is true and real.

As I reflect on my journey to the Los Angeles Betsuin, there are so many “bad” to “good” times that influenced my life. There were times when I thought nothing good could ever come from losing my father or divorcing after some 27 years of marriage.

The simple story of the farmer and his horse speaks the truth that we never know what benefits will follow “bad” things. It is up to us to take both “bad” and “good” as simply what happens in life ... and to choose which part of our character either of those will reveal.

I am truly grateful to have been given this opportunity to share the Nembutsu at the Betsuin. I look forward to many more years ... mmm, I don’t know, it could be good, it could be bad.

Namu Amida Butsu

Bishop’s Message

Continued from Page 2

our parents?”

The elderly man said, “Oh, I got mad, but then I heard the voice of the Buddha saying to me, ‘They are just boys. Let it go. Let it go.’”

I think that this story illustrates how a Shin Buddhist who has come to receive the heart of the Buddha within their own heart and mind is able to feel anger, but then let it go. Coming to receive the heart of the

Buddha, which we call shinjin, in our Shin Buddhist tradition, is the result of deep listening and hearing of the teachings, as well as a life of self-introspection.

It is not easy to let go of our anger, but we cannot hold on to it for decades. Who is the one to suffer from holding on to such anger? We are the ones to suffer. It eats away at us from inside, just like a poison.

Through the Nembutsu, we can receive the power to let go of the anger that we have been holding on to for maybe even many years.



Minister Shortage

Continued from Page 1

Both BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada and Ministers Association Chair Rev. Harry Bridge, Resident Minister of the Buddhist Church of Oakland, raised concerns and issues over the ministerial shortage at the June 5 BCA National Board meeting.

Bishop Meets Ministers

Rev. Harada described the situation as “getting more severe” and said it was “a very, very challenging time” for the BCA. He held one-on-one meetings with all full-time BCA ministers over the past several months to gauge how the ministers were doing during the pandemic and if they had any issues and concerns.

“I learned many things during those meetings, like finding out that many ministers feel they are working even harder during this pandemic,” Rev. Harada stated in his Bishop’s report at the National Board meeting. “Some ministers felt overwhelmed, but all are doing the best they can.”

In addition, he noted that “a good majority of our ministers” are now supervising one or more temples.

“In the Central California District, we have two ministers for seven temples, and in the Northern California District, we have two ministers taking care of seven temples as well, with a very large number of members in the Northern California District,” Rev. Harada said.

The pandemic itself has created a double-edged sword, reflecting both benefits and not-so-obvious costs and liabilities. Ministers have been tasked with creating Dharma talks and Sunday services on YouTube, Facebook Live and Instagram, and as a result, are reaching a national and global audience interested in Jodo

Shinshu Buddhism. The ministers report their Zoom services are often attended by more than the in-person services, and the virtual services and social media outreach have helped increase BCA membership.

But coming up with all this online content has taken its toll on ministers, too.

“You might think that ministers aren’t having to do as much in terms of traveling during this pandemic, but many ministers tell me that they spend actually more time working during this pandemic than pre-pandemic,” Rev. Harada said. “It takes a great deal of time to create videos, and then there are numerous Zoom meetings. Some ministers have also had to become the computer and (audio visual) AV technician at their temple to put on their internet services and Dharma talks.”

Rev. Bridge said he was preparing for a Shotsuki memorial service in Oakland and noted it would normally take an hour to prepare for an in-person service.

“Instead, I’ve probably put in at least eight hours to make the video between thinking what I’m going to say, printing everything out and then filming all the various sections and then putting it all together and sharing it on YouTube,” he said. “It’s hours and hours of more work.

“Please, have sympathy with the minister and work with them and try to understand how difficult it is,” he said.

Shortage to Last to 2022

Rev. Harada said the shortage will continue through the summer of 2022, when 10 individuals will be receiving their Kyoshi certification. Not all of them want to become full-time Kaikyoshi ministers, he said, but some of them do.

Rev. Bridge said the Ministerial Association also raised the issue of ministerial mental health, and providing outside

counseling services for privacy and confidentiality reasons.

“Personally, I find the ministry to be very lonely,” said Rev. Bridge, who added that the pandemic’s isolation has only compounded the situation. “No one knows what it’s like to be a minister except another minister, and it can be actually even difficult to consult with other ministers and not show any weakness and vulnerability.

“You have people coming to you with their issues,” Rev. Bridge said. “That’s one of my favorite parts of ministry because I get to help people. But who do I get to go to?”

For now, with most BCA temples and churches remaining closed for in-person services, the impacts of the shortage have been minimized. But that is expected to change soon once the in-person services resume. Some temples, such as Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Fairfax Station, Virginia, have already reopened, and others are pointing to a fall reopening date.

Despite the ministerial shortage and several other challenges faced by the BCA, Rev. Harada remained optimistic.

“We are on the verge of reopening our churches and temples,” he said. “We have this ministerial shortage. We have decreasing membership. And we just launched a \$15 million major campaign (Dharma Forward). But I don’t have any doubt about what we can do to face those challenges. We can take on those challenges together as ministers and members.”

Ministerial Pioneers Cited

Rev. Harada noted what BCA ministerial pioneers accomplished in their careers.

“The late Rev. Hozen Seki (who served from 1936-81) of the New York Buddhist Church was just one minister,” Rev. Harada said. “The late Rev. Yoshitaka Tamai (who served from 1930-70) of the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple was just one minister. The late Rev. Gyodo Kono (who served from 1944-75) of the Midwest Buddhist Temple was just one minister. But each one of them built temples and education centers from scratch, raising the money and establishing growing Sanghas and have left a legacy that remains

today.

“Every one of our ministers has the potential to leave a legacy like a Rev. Seki, like a Rev. Tamai, or like a Rev. Kono — if they have the deep desire to transmit the Dharma. So I know we can grow our temples and our membership despite a shortage of ministers — and really, what choice do we have? We have to turn our membership decline around. And I know that we can raise our goal of \$15 million for the Dharma Forward campaign — and we’re off to a great start already with 28% towards our final goal,” Rev. Harada said.

“Let’s continue to work to share our unique Shin Buddhist teachings, so that Shin Buddhism will be an integral part of the history of Buddhism in the West,” Rev. Harada said.

“We have much to offer, with our teachings of listening to the Dharma first, of deep self-retrospection, of understanding our interconnectedness, of living with gratitude and reverence for all beings. I think that we have a responsibility to share this wonderful teaching with others who are waiting to hear, encounter, and to receive it.”

Sacramento

Continued from Page 3

Ito.

Commemorative T-shirts, aprons, hoodies, reusable insulated grocery bags and sticker sets with this year’s bazaar logo will be available for orders from July 1 through Aug. 22; pickup and ship dates estimated between Sept. 18 to Oct. 2.

For those of you who miss our bazaar food, a bento meal is available for \$20 consisting of sesame chicken, teriyaki beef, korokke, gyoza, edamame, rice, and California roll. The bento is only available online, pre-sold

starting July 1 until sold out. Pickup at the church will be on Sunday, Aug. 22, from 1 to 5 p.m. on an hourly schedule.

The bento and merchandise can be ordered online at the betsuin’s website at www.buddhistchurch.org.

The temple welcomes your donations. Donating to the telethon is easily accomplished using one of these methods:

- Mail a check or money order to the Buddhist Church of Sacramento, 2401 Riverside Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95818;
- Call in during the live program at 916-446-0121 and contribute using your credit card; and

- Pay online using the “Donate” button on the church’s website at: www.buddhist-church.org

Since 1947, the bazaar has become one of the largest Japanese cultural events in the Sacramento region, featuring a variety of food, cultural exhibits and demonstrations, and games for children.

Last year’s global pandemic caused a situation that made the temple pivot and repurpose the bazaar, the major fundraiser of the year. Proceeds support the many programs and activities offered at the church and fund general operating expenses.

Vesak

Continued from Page 1

the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana traditions.

In honor of the occasion, President Biden issued the following official statement from the White House:

“Jill and I extend our warmest wishes to Buddhists in the United States and around the world as they celebrate Vesak, the day honoring the birth, enlightenment, and passing of the Buddha. The ceremonial lighting of a lamp, the symbol of this holiday that has been celebrated for over 2,500 years, reminds us of Buddhism’s teachings of compassion, humility, and selflessness that endure today. On this day, we also commemorate the many contributions of Buddhists in America who enrich our communities and our country as we all work together toward brighter days

ahead.”

And, in a tweet, Vice President Harris said: “Today Buddhists in the US and across the world honor Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and passing with the celebration of Vesak — a symbol of compassion, unity and care for each other. These lessons couldn’t be more important today. Doug and I wish a Happy Vesak to all who celebrate!”

The event was coordinated by Wangmo Dixey, President of the International Buddhist Association of America and the Executive Director of Dharma College in Berkeley through the offices of Shekar Narasimhan, President of the Dharma Into Action Foundation.

Lamps were lit and prayers offered by the Most Venerable Uparantan (representing Sri Lankan and Americans) on behalf of the Theravada tradition; BCA Bishop Rev. Harada (representing Japanese and

Americans) on behalf of the Mahayana tradition; and Venerable Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche (representing Tibetan and Americans) on behalf of the Vajrayana tradition.

“It is wonderful that prayers were offered from all three great traditions of Buddhist practice here, at the heart of American democracy,” Dixey said. “It is so auspicious that this should happen on this day of celebration of the life and teachings of the Buddha.”


Rev. Harada noted that Dixey is the eldest daughter of Venerable Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche, who was the first Tibetan Lama to come to the United States and who had been in seclusion at his retreat center for 30 years — but decided to emerge in public to attend the historic event.

Rev. Harada said it’s hoped that the Vesak ceremony becomes an annual event at the White House.

2ND ANNUAL

BCA VIRTUAL OBON DANCE

AUG 15, 2021 @ 1pm (PST)



PLEASE SEND A VIDEO:

This Virtual Obon program will be a collection of videos submitted by our BCA temples. So please send in a complete dance or tutorial video that you would like to share! We will edit the entire program together to share on AUG 15th.

Please submit all videos or questions to Koichi: bkmizushima@bcahq.org

EVERYDAY

Continued from Page 1

We currently have more than 14 courses, each with three to six lectures taught by certified Shin Buddhist ministers, which can be accessed at your own time, at your own pace, and in your own home.

We have recently converted EVERYDAY BUDDHIST to a subscription model at a low cost of \$95 a year or \$10 a month. You can start at the beginning and experience our curriculum as we have structured it, or access any course in any sequence you would like.

Our courses are no longer grouped by level of difficulty such as Introductory, Intermediate and Advanced. Instead, we conceive of our curriculum in terms of depth.

Each course along the path is of equal depth. If one has a beginner’s mind then even the story of the Buddha can be heard as if it is for the first time. In this way, introductory, intermediate and advanced students can all study and practice together.

We take this journey together in a round robin fashion taking a course on the Buddha, then the Dharma, the Sangha and Practice. These four categories of learning represent our organizing principle. After these first

four courses are completed then we begin again back at Buddha for another round of four courses. In this way, we can gradually and evenly present the Shin tradition. This also allows our instructors to focus on a specific topic knowing that there is more to come.

Each course lecture also has a comment section for students to interact with their teachers and a course bibliography is also provided. Lectures are also augmented with additional readings and videos.

In addition, each lecture has a quiz for students to review what they have just learned. This style of learning was developed from the feedback we have received from our students. They want to learn on demand in a relaxed environment. They are not looking for an academic experience but asked for guidance.

Buddhism is much like an escalator or a merry-go-round. It is very difficult to know where and when to jump on. Taking a course is much like this. It is hard to know where to start and where to go next.

EVERYDAY BUDDHIST is designed to make this transition for observer to participant much easier. We wanted to lower the bar to entry into our tradition.

Our EVERYDAY BUDDHIST Course Pathway is

intended to supplement the irreplaceable experience of temple membership and Sangha participation. It provides both the background of Shin Buddhism, the development of Buddhist thought, and how to apply Buddhist practices within your everyday life.

As a new entity, EVERYDAY BUDDHIST is ever expanding to serve our Buddhist community. New content is continuously being developed and there will be a steady flow of new courses on our EVERYDAY BUDDHIST Course Pathway. We are also working on a BCA temple affiliate program to support the local temples and provide content to their Buddhist Educational Committees.

We encourage Shin Buddhists to log onto everyday-buddhist.org. Check out our EVERYDAY BUDDHIST Course Pathway, sign up for free to our blogs, Live Chats and consider subscribing with a yearly membership.

Buddhist temple leaders; please make your Sangha aware of this opportunity and very practical way to increase their learning from home, deepen their practice, and add further understanding to help support their Sangha practice at your temple.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at contactus@everydaybuddhist.org.

Rev. Akahoshi

Continued from Page 2

step would be to voice “thank you.”

“Thank you” does not have to be explained. It is the experience of receiving something from another. Isn’t this similar to our awakening to the Compassion of Amida Buddha? This is not a practice of achieving. This practice reinforces Shinran’s message that “Solely saying the Tathagata’s Name constantly, One should respond with gratitude to the universal Vow of great compassion.” (CWS p. 71)

Like any first step, “thank you” is a rudimentary beginning to experiences far beyond any present thought. But it is a necessary step. For those who are new to Buddhism, many explanations of traditional terminology and concepts are difficult to accept

in the complexities of modern life. Yet, “thank you” is easily accessible.

Finding one thing to appreciate daily evolves to realizing that the many benefits we enjoy are the result of the efforts of others. Each day, we make a conscious effort to voice “thank you” for things that we have taken for granted. “Thank you” as we switch on the light, turn on the water, receive a note from a friend. Even a negative sign of a red light deserves a “thank you” as we realize this safe process of allowing others to have the green light. “Thank you” wakes us up to the realization that all life is interdependent and most of it is due to the efforts of others.

Some may envision Enlightenment, satori, or shinjin as experiences akin to a hole-in-one, winning an Oscar, or being MVP. However, for the Shin Buddhist, being able

to play in the game is reward enough. We realize that our happiness is determined by our perception of this world. Our parents and grandparents were supported in their difficult, immigrant lives by their attitude of a life of gratitude.

The practice of daily gratitude develops an appreciation for all of life. As we voice “thank you,” we include “Na Man Da Bu.” This shift in perspective from “please,” a plea for things that I lack, to “thank you,” acknowledging what I have received, can brighten any day. This process has proven successful in having newcomers appreciate this unique practice of Shin. The initial steps of “thank you” become the natural breath of “Na Man Da Bu.” “Solely saying the Tathagata’s Name constantly, One should respond with gratitude to the universal Vow of great compassion.” Namo Amida Butsu.

Hearts for Love

Continued from Page 1

One Another,” “Tolerance,” and “Stop Asian Hate” that our temple community felt the need to share.

The Senior 1 (ninth-grade) girls of Troop 5325 helped put together the display, which now adorns the temple’s lobby

doors and windows in a colorful display calling for an end to hate and filled with wishes for peace and compassion.

Hearts and photographs of the Temple display were shared with Paper Tree in support of their initiative. We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this community project, and encourage others to consider

similar expressions of support.

The Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple is committed to promoting a message of diversity and inclusiveness while increasing awareness of the issue of AAPI hate. We greatly appreciate the support from our Sangha and community for this effort. #minnanakayoshi #everyone-together.

President’s Message

Continued from Page 3

board approved the charter for the Music Committee. The board approved the Ad Hoc Real Estate Committee’s request to rent out the former Bishop’s parsonage in Belmont if a suitable renter became available.

Judy Kono, Chair of the Communications Committee, announced that the Temple

Website Building Workshop would be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. PDT July 31.

Rick Stambul, Co-Chair of the Bloomquist Estate Ad Hoc Committee, gave the final report from the Ad Hoc Committee, and BCA President Kent Matsuda dissolved the Ad Hoc Committee.

Devon Matsumoto, President of the Young Buddhist Editorial, presented the YBE’s constitution and fielded questions about the document.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know the lyrics of “Obon no Uta” were written by Lady Takeko Kujo?

Did you know Yumi Hojo, who composed “Obon, Obon It’s Festival Day,” celebrated her 100th birthday this year?


For the summer, the Chanting and Music webpage of the BCA website features recordings of these Obon gathas.

— *BCA Music Committee*

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC ~ REGISTER FOR ZOOM LINK

RENNOY’S CONTRIBUTION TO HONGWANJI THOUGHT

Wisdom of a Great Propagator & Revitalizer



Rennyo Shōnin
(1415 - 1499)

SATURDAY
AUGUST 21,
2021
***11 AM - 1 PM**

*CHECK YOUR LOCAL TIME

REGISTER ONLINE:
<https://forms.gle/n0Cz8XpZvPMKRC86>

CONTACT:
cbe@bcahq.org
(510) 809-1460

Guest Speaker:

REV. DR. MUTSUMI WONDRA
Resident Minister, Orange County Buddhist Church
Adjunct Professor, Institute of Buddhist Studies


Rennyo Shōnin is revered for his great achievement as the “Second Founder” in the eight hundred year history of the Hongwanji.

When he became a spiritual head of the Hongwanji, Japan was developing economically, and a new social structure was forming during the Warring period. It was a period of internal warfare and people were facing social turmoil.


Rennyo transmitted, in an easily understood manner, the path of being spiritually liberated according to Amida Buddha’s deep wish, and the nembutsu taught by the Founder Shinran Shōnin.

Because of Rennyo’s energetic propagation carried on through his life, the teaching of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism spread throughout the country and became the foundation for the Hongwanji today.

In this seminar, we will learn about the life of Rennyo and his propagation methods, which may provide some hints to the American Shinshū community today.



Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wondra serves as a BCA minister at the Orange County Buddhist Church and adjunct professor at the IBS. She received Tokudo (2006) and Kyoshi (2007) ordination from Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha. She earned an MA from the Institute of Buddhist Studies; and MA and PhD from Ryukoku University Graduate School of Shin Buddhist Studies; and Hongwanji-ha Hokyo.



CBE Seminars Online For All (SOFA) Series
Click for [CBE summer events & registration links](#). Donations are welcome!
Visit www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/buddhist-education

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC ~ REGISTER FOR ZOOM LINK

THE ESSENCE OF THE THREE PURE LAND SUTRAS & HOW WE HOW CAN CHANT THEM

*THE SUTRA OF THE BUDDHA OF IMMEASURABLE LIFE
*THE SUTRA OF CONTEMPLATION ON THE BUDDHA OF IMMEASURABLE LIFE
*THE SUTRA ON AMIDA BUDDHA

SATURDAY,
AUGUST 7th
2021
***11 AM - 1 PM**

*CHECK YOUR LOCAL TIME

REGISTER ONLINE:
<https://forms.gle/EsTKWhn5eZTRGgs17>

CONTACT:
cbe@bcahq.org
(510) 809-1460



GUEST SPEAKERS:
RINBAN KATSUYA KUSUNOKI
Rinban, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple
BCA Northwest District Kyokuchō
Liturgy Specialist, Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha



REV. KIYONOBU KUWAHARA
Resident Minister, Berkeley Buddhist Temple
Supervising Minister, Buddhist Temple of Marin
Program Manager, Jodo Shinshu International Office

“We express our joy to be able to encounter Namoamidabutsu and the guidance of Pure Land through chanting the Sutras.”

In Jodo Shinshu, THE THREE PURE LAND SUTRAS delivered by Shakyamuni Buddha are the scriptures which we rely on as our doctrinal basis. English translations of THE THREE PURE LAND SUTRAS have been available; and now the [romanized liturgical material](#) has been published, making it possible for non-Japanese speaking audiences to chant the Sutras in their entirety.

In the Pure Land Way, Master Shan-tao (613-681) explained the five right practices for attaining birth in the Pure Land. They are: (1) chanting the sutras, (2) meditating on Amida Buddha and his land, (3) worshipping Amida Buddha, (4) reciting the nembutsu, and (5) praising and making offerings to Amida. These practices are the religious actions recommended for nembutsu followers to carry out in their daily lives.



THE THREE PURE LAND SUTRAS
(Jodo Shinshu International Office 2021)
Available at [Hongwanji Place](#)
“This is the first ever printing of THE THREE PURE LAND SUTRAS in Romaji, for easy reading and chanting...”

CBE Seminars Online For All (SOFA) Series
Click for [CBE summer events & registration links](#). Donations are welcome!
Visit www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/buddhist-education

今月の法話

「火宅無常の世界」

西口サンゼルス仏教会 開教使 高田 興芳



Rev. Koho Takata

「群盲象を評す」という有名なお話があります。おそらく、皆さま、ご存知かと思いま

す。ある王様が象を知らないという盲人たちに象を教えたいということで盲人たちを集め、象を触らせます。そして、王様はこれで象が分かったかと盲人たちに尋ねます。すると、足を触った人は「王様、象とは立派な柱のようなものです」と答えます。別の盲人は尾を触ったので、「紐のようです」と答えます。そして、お腹を触った者は「太鼓のようです。」脇腹を触った者は「壁のようです。」背を触った者は「背の高い机のようです。」耳を触った者は「大きなうちわのようです。」頭を触った者は「大きな石のようです。」牙を触った者は「大根のようなものです。」鼻を触った者は「太い綱のようなものです」とそれぞれ答えます。

盲人達は象について、各々の見たことが正しい、相手の見方は間違っていると言ひ争ひ収拾がつかなくなりました。これを見ていた、王さまは笑って言いました。「お前達は、まだありがたい仏さまの教えに接していない者のように、理解の幅が狭いのだ」というお話です。

早いもので、新型コロナウイルスが大流行して、一年以上経過しました。この大恐慌を振り返ってみますと、さまざまな倫理的、社会的、経済的、政治的な社会問題が提起されました。これらのさまざまな問題を振りかえってみますと、先に、お話しさせていただきました象と盲人たちのお話を思い出しました。また、親鸞聖人のお言葉がとてもありがたく私の脳裏に浮かんできます。

わたしどもはあらゆる煩悩をそなえた凡夫であり、この世は燃えさかる家のようにたちまちに移り変わる世界

であって、全てはむなしくいつわりで、真実といえるものは何一つない。その中にあって、ただ念仏だけが真実なのである。（歎異抄 後序）

このパンデミックの間に提起された社会問題に対するさまざまな異なる見解により、私たちの日常生活の中で数え切れないほどの悲劇が起こりました。そして、その悲劇はまだ起こっています。私たちはわがままな欲望を燃やし続け、自分にとって都合のいい答えを求めるあまりに愚かな行動を繰り返しています。親鸞聖人が仰せの通り、私たちは仏さまのご恩がどれほど尊いかを問うこともなく、いつも自分の欲望、怒り、嫉み、妬む心ばかりを求めることに忙しく、自身がそのような生死の苦界、迷いの世界にとつぷりとつかっていることにも気づかない煩悩具足の凡夫です。

私たちは皆、コロナウイルスを恐れています。私たちが自身、むさぼり、いかり、おろかさの三毒の煩悩と呼ばれるコロナウイルスより危険なウイルスを常に具足していることを忘れてはいけません。この三毒の煩悩を常に具足する私たちは、条件さえ整えば、人を傷つけることも含め、何でもしてしまいます。私たちは悲劇が起こるといつも自分たちを被害者の様にとらえがちですが、私たちがそのような社会を作り上げている加害者かもしれません。

お釈迦さまは、憎しみは憎しみによって止むことはなく、愛によって止む。怒りは怒りを生みだすだけである。復讐は復讐を捨てることによってのみ、克服することができるのである。ご教示くださっております。お釈迦さまはまた、私たちは生まれた家によって貴くなるのではなく、私たちが行動する結果によって貴くなるのであると出生や信仰による身分の差別を否定されました。仏さまのみ教えの中では、全ての人は平等で、尊重されるべきです。さらに親鸞聖人は、阿弥陀さまのご本願は、老少善悪を問わず、生きとし生けるものの全てに対して平等である。ご教示くださっております。

阿弥陀さまのご本願のいいわれをお聞かせいただく事により、その仏さまの大きなお心に比べると、自分が自分の都合のいいようにしか社会問題を見ることができない如何にわがままで小さな心を具足している人間かと思ひ知らされます。

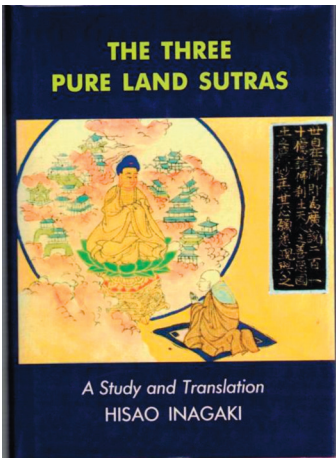
私たちは一部分だけ見て、これはいい、あれはダメだと判断します。私たちのわがままな物差しでの見方はとても浅く、狭いものです。それに比べて、仏さまは限りのない智慧の眼と限りのない大きな慈悲のお心で真実を見られます。ですが、私たちは、知らず知らずのうちに仏さまの完全なる智慧を追い抜いて、自分の限られた知恵の目で見ただけの確かなものであるかのようにとらえがちです。でも、私たちの都合のいいわがままな物差しで作り上げる見解は、私たちが本当に頼るところではありません。自分たちの物差しでは測ることができない完全なる智慧をお持ちの仏さまのみ教えをお聞かせいただく事が大切です。

私たちは、コロナウイルスから私たちの愚かさについて学ぶことができます。この世には多くのウイルスがあり、コロナウイルスはその中の一つにしか過ぎません。日々のニュースからも分かりますように、新しいウイルスが次々と発見され、私たちを苦しめているように、私たちの心の中に潜む煩悩もウイルスのように次から次へと私たちを悩ませます。科学者が次々とワクチンを生産し、苦しみを終わらせようとしても苦しみが尽きないように私たちの貪欲、怒り、愚かさも燃え盛る火のようにたちまちに燃え広がり、鎮火することはないでしょう。

このような時だからこそ、自分のわがままな小さな心を阿弥陀さまの大慈悲心に向け、自身の絶え間ないわがままで常にむさぼる心をどのようにコントロールすべきか、そして一つの社会問題をも完全に解決することができない自身の不完全さをどのように信知すべきかを阿弥陀さまのご本願にお聞かせいただきましょう。

言うまでもなく、私たちは皆、コロナウイルスを嫌っています。ですが、私たちにとってコロナウイルスは、善知識であり、心のウイルスである煩悩に苦しんでいる私どもを救わんがために建てられたご本願のいいわれをお聞かせいただく尊いご縁をくださっております。毎日の日暮らしの中で常にウイルス（煩悩）を具足してきれいな心を具足する事がかなわない私たちですが、そのよくな汚れた心を具足している我らを救おうとご本願をお建てになられた阿弥陀さまの本願真実のお念仏のみ教えを心の拠り所として共にお念仏の日暮らしをさせていただきましょう。

稲垣久雄師が往生される

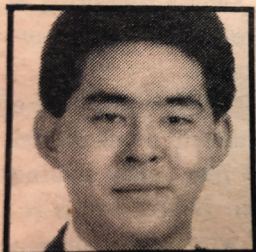


浄土三部経や往生論註などの英訳を手がけられた稲垣久雄師が6月6日に往生の素懷を遂げられた。葬儀は近親者のみで6月8日に営まれた。コロナ禍が終息したのちに故人を偲ぶ会を設ける予定にしている。

稲垣師のご家族への連絡をご希望される方は、BCA本部に連絡をしてください。

バックトウ1985年7月

1985年7月号の法輪の記事に、現在BCA本部で総長秘書を務める遠藤マイケル師が日米エクスチェンジプログラムの代表に選ばれたことが書かれている。当時、遠藤師は、オー克蘭ド仏青シニア会長で、「華道、茶道、習字等も修学中で、日本語の堪能な三世」と紹介されている。師は、世界仏教婦人会大会連盟の事業の一つとして実施された「日米交換仏青」で、BCAの仏教青年会代表に選ばれ、日本へ派遣された。記事に「派遣期間は今年七月十八日より同三十一日までの十四日間あり、七月二十・二十一両日、広島で開催される被爆四十周年追悼の全国仏青大会『真宗青年の集い』に代表参加することを皮切りに、福岡・四国・京都の各教区を訪問することになっている。ことに桑港教区仏婦連盟は福岡の二教区（北豊・福岡）と姉妹教区関係を結んでおり、遠藤君は初の親善大使ともなるので盛大な歓迎が予想される。」とある。



Michael T. Endo

Youth Exchange Winner

The Bay District Buddhist Women's League has selected Michael Tadashi Endo to represent the Young Buddhist Association (YBA) Youth Exchange Program to Japan sponsored by the Buddhist Churches of America Federation of Buddhist Women's Association. Mr. Endo is twenty years of age and a second year student at the San Francisco State University. He is the

Wheel of Dharma, July 1985 issue

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発行所
米国仏教団
Buddhist Churches of America
1710 Octavia Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
電話 (415) 776-5600
FAX (415) 771-6293
Email: info@bcahq.org
for WOD: WODeditor@bcahq.org

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総長メッセージ

三毒の煩惱、「瞋恚」

米国仏教団 総長 原田 マービン



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada

先月号では、三毒の煩惱の一つ「貪欲」についてお話ししました。今月は、「瞋恚」または「怒り」

についてお話ししよう。

お釈迦様のような悟りを開いた方は、決して怒ったりしないと思いますが、それは間違いです。お釈迦さまも、怒りという強い感情を持つておられたようです。けれども、お釈迦さまと私たちの怒りに違いがあります。お釈迦様は怒りを持ち続けられないのです。たいした違いではないように聞こえますが、実際には大きな違いがあります。悟りを開いた方は、自分の中に怒りが湧き上がってくるのを感じながらも、風船を空に飛ばすように、すぐに怒りを手放すことができるのです。

一方、悟っていない者は、怒りが湧き上がってくるのを感じるだけでなく、何日も、何週間も、何ヶ月も、何年も怒りを持ち続けます。みなさんも過去を振り返ってみると、誰かに言われたり、されたたりすることで、今でも怒りを感じていることがあるのではないのでしょうか？

その出来事は何年前のことだったかを数えてみてください。10年前でしうか？ 20年前でしうか？ もし

かしたら、30年以上前の出来事だったかもしれません。けれどもそのことを思い出すと、あたかも昨日あった出来事のように怒りが湧いてくるのです。それが、悟った方々と未だ悟っていない私たちとの怒りへの対処の違いなのです。

私も怒りを持ち続けてしまったことがあります。昔、あるメンバーと激しい口論になったことがありました。滅多にないことですが、そういうことがあったのです。

数年後、私がシャワーを浴びていたときのことです。なぜか、そのメンバーとの口論の一部始終を思い出したのです。我が家では妻が、ガラスなどに水滴の跡がつくのを防ぐために、シャワーを浴びた後、プラスチック製のスクイージーでシャワーブースについていた水滴を拭くというルールを作っていました。「あの時、こう言えばよかった、ああ言えばよかった」と、そんなことを考えながら、私は水滴を拭いていたのですが、スクイージーを強く押ししまい、それが2つに折れて壊れてしまったのです。私は「どうしたのだろう。もう何年も前の出来事ことなのに、いまだに怒りを持ち続けているのだ」と反省しました。

ベトナム人僧侶、ティク・ナット・ハン師は、私たちが怒っているときは、自分の家に放火した人を追いかけるようなもので、放火犯を追いかけるのではなく、まず自分の家の火を消そうとするべきだ、と言っています。悟っていない私たちの怒りの対処法がまさにそれです。自分の怒りの火を消すのではなく、怒りの原因となった人を追いかけてしまうのです。

それでは真の仏教徒は、自分の怒りにどう対処するのでしょうか？ 私たちにはどうすることもできないのでしょうか。龍谷大学元学長の信楽峻磨教授がある年配のご門徒さんの話をされていました。

そのご門徒さんは、少年たちのいたずらの被害にあいました。その方が田んぼ沿いを歩いていると、茂み

から飛び出してきた少年たちがその方を泥だらけの田んぼに突き落として逃げていったのです。数年後、成長した少年の一人が、老人に自分が突き飛ばした少年の一人であったことを告白し、謝罪しました。そして青年は老人に質問しました。「いつも不思議に思っていたのですが、どうしてあの日は私たちを怒らなかつたのでしょうか？なぜ私たちの親に言わなかつたのですか？」と。

ご門徒さんは、「ああ、腹が立つたけど、仏さまの声が聞こえたんだ。彼らはまだ子供じゃないか、放っておきなさい。とおっしゃったのが聞こえたんだよ。」

この話は、仏さまの心をいただいた真宗の念仏者は、怒りを感じても、それを放っておくことができるようになる、ということを示しているように思います。真宗では、仏様の心を受け取ることを「信心」と呼び、それは、念仏の教えを深く聞き、自分の心の動きを見て反省していくことでもあります。

怒りを手放すのは簡単ではありませんが、何十年も怒りを持ち続けるべきではできません。そのような怒りを持ち続けて苦しむのは誰でしょうか？ 苦しむのは私たちです。怒りは、毒のように内側から蝕んでいきますが、私たちは、お念仏の教えによって、何年も抱えてきた怒りを手放す力をいただくことができるのです。

2021年東部地区大会 オンラインで開催

メモリアルデーウィークエンドの5月29日から30日までの二日間、2021年の東部地区大会が開催された。今年はバージニア州の恵光寺がホストを務め、オンラインでの開催となった。例年は年に一度、東部地区の各ホストのお寺がある町に集まり再会を喜び合うが、コロナ感染症対策が続く中、今年はオンラインでの開催となった。

初日はダルマスクールの子供たちのための法座が行われた。テーマは「感謝を歩む道」。生徒の代表が調声をつとめ、恵光寺の林先生からご法話をいただき、自分たちが感謝しているものを各自コンピューターでボードに書き込んでシェアをした。パンデミックの間、学校に行けなかったり、友達と会えなかったり不自由だったからこそ、当たり前のことに感謝ができる気づ

きの場となった。(写真左)
午後からは、「真宗寺院、サンガの多様性」についてディスカッションが行われた。各寺で日系人中心のコミュニティから、日系人以外の方も新たにご縁にあってお寺に足を運ばれるようになり、変革の時期を迎えている。他の宗教や宗派から真宗にいられた方たちの経験談を聞いたりしながら、これから私たちにできることは何か話し合った。

夜の夕食会は、例年であればこの地区大会の1番の楽しみであるが、今回はオンライン開催ということもあり、オンラインでの「料理教室と歓談の会」となり、親交を深めた。

2日目の日曜礼拝は、参加者合同の礼拝となった。Zoom、Facebookでの同時配信を行い、東部地区以外にも多くの参加者があった。山東三州仏教会の開教使補、マッシャーメイス先生のご法話を拝聴し、勤行や仏教讃歌の唱和もオンライン用に工夫があり充実した日曜礼拝となった。

最後に、ツインシティ仏教会の土屋先生の司会で、マッシャーメイス先生の真宗との出会いや得度に至るまでの経験について

の対談が行われ、参加者からも多くの質問が寄せられた。

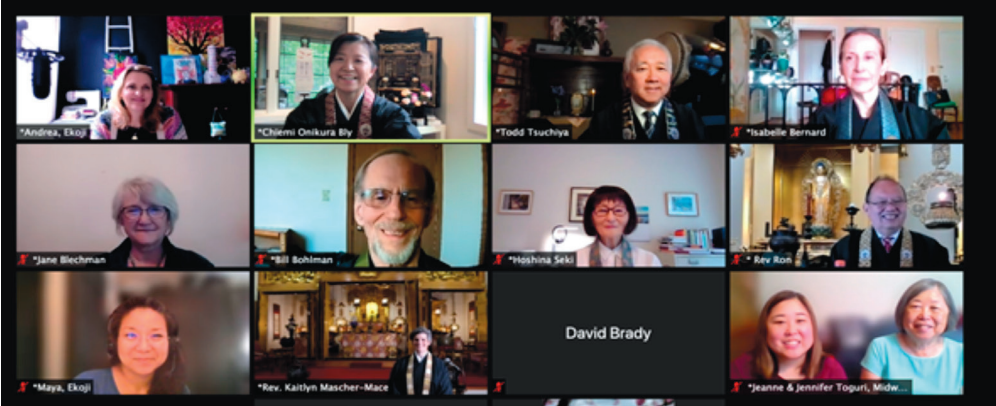
オンラインでの開催により、今まで参加が難しかった人たちも参加できるメリットがあることが明らかに

になり、来年以降の開催の形態について検討をしている。

パンデミックという世界的に厳しい状況の中でも、お念仏の輪は広がり続けることを実感し、困難な時期であるからこそ、

仏縁を求める人も多く、お聴聞の場を維持し続けることが大切さを確認しあう場となった。(記事

鬼倉知永美)



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