

# WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

VOLUME 40 • ISSUE 9

SEPTEMBER 2018

## Pacific Seminar Offers Triple Opportunity

By Ellen Crane,  
Orange County Buddhist Church  
Assistant Minister

Three groups of Dharma seekers converged July 18-21 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley to take part in this year's annual Pacific Seminar sponsored by BCA Center for Buddhist Education and the Institute of Buddhist Studies to explore the topic, "What Is Enlightenment?"

The seminar brought together Minister's Assistants, Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course students and interested Dharma seekers to listen and learn from special guest speakers from far and wide.

Headlining the list of eminent presenters was Rev. Dr. Jerome Ducor from Geneva, Switzerland, who received degrees from the University of Geneva and Ryukoku University, taught at McGill University in Canada, received ordination from the Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto and currently holds numerous positions as a Buddhist scholar and minister in Europe.

In a slight variation on the main theme of the Pacific Seminar ("What is Enlightenment?"), Dr. Ducor addressed the topic of "Shinran's View of Enlightenment?" He first explained that Shakyamuni Buddha's main focus was deliverance or transcendence from life's *dukkha* (difficulties, frustrations, angst, disappointments, and yes, suffering). To that end, he formulated the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path of the Noble as a way to eliminate the causes of *dukkha*.



The annual Pacific Seminar held July 18-21 at the BCA's Jodo Shinshu Center attracted Minister's Assistants, Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course students and interested Dharma Seekers.

For Shinran, "enlightenment" has the deeper and more nuanced connotation of "awakening," whereby the foolish being, trapped in *samsara*, transcends suffering and "awakens from the long night of ignorance" to see Amida as the manifestation of reality, embodying the truths of impermanence and dependent co-arising, or what Dr. Ducor calls, "interpenetration" — everything is connected. As we recognize reality ever more clearly, we awaken to the working of compassion and wisdom and recognize it as Amida and Namu Amida Butsu.

The afternoon session consisted of presentations on the main theme by three eminent speakers from the Zen, Theravada and Vajrayana (Tibetan) traditions. Dr. Paula Arai, professor from Louisiana State University, presented a

Soto Zen perspective, which focused on *gyobutsu* or "acting like a Buddha." According to Dr. Arai, "everything can be Buddhist activity," and illustrated the point with an engaging story about wiping a table top with a rag. Soto Zen strives for *zenki*, total dynamic movement in non-bifurcated engagement, which seemed to mean acting with complete awareness, i.e., mindfulness. For Zen, "practice is enlightenment." Cleaning a table with engagement and respect, you *are* enlightenment, and the rag is your teacher.

Venerable Bhikkhuni Thathalo Theri is an American-born member of the Theravada Buddhist Sangha who entered monastic life 30 years ago. With a gentle warmth that bespoke a deep commitment to her path, she explained the five quali-

ties of awakening that included aspects of vision, insight, discernment, knowledge and illumination. She said that "it is possible, both gradually and suddenly, to realize stages of the path of awakening, to have a vision of nibbana, and to realize it for oneself both in this life and at the time of death ..."

Ms. Mayumi Kodani is a Ph.D. candidate in (Tibetan) Religious Studies at UC Santa Barbara and has also studied at Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Tibet University in Lhasa and in Darjeeling, India. Her presentation on Vajrayana (Tibetan) Buddhism had the intriguing title, "Enlightenment as Monsters — A Grotesque View of Vajrayana Buddhism." Ms. Kodani explained that because enlightenment is ineffable, incomprehensible and transcends conventional thought, we must relinquish ordinary ways of understanding ultimate reality. Through the grotesque figures and forms found in Vajrayana Buddhism, Ms. Kodani illustrated how they help us open our minds to heretofore inconceivable possibilities beyond our realms of experience, and to glimpse the possibility of enlightenment.

For all three groups in attendance at the summer Pacific Seminar, the presentations were thought provoking and informative. Minister's Assistants and Correspondence Course attendees were treated to a special session with Dr. Ducor on the topic of Shin Buddhism in Europe, which was fascinating. For everyone, there were ample opportunities to speak with old dharma friends and meet new ones from many places, including Canada.

## Ministers' Summer Seminar Held in Oregon



Summer Seminar participants in front of host Oregon Buddhist Temple.

The annual BCA Ministers' Summer Seminar (Fuken) was hosted by the Northwest Ministers Association and held Aug. 6-8 at the Oregon Buddhist Temple. This year's keynote lecturer was respected Professor Emeritus Rev. Ryusei Takeda of Ryukoku University.

Participating in this year's seminar were 36 BCA resident ministers, one Kyoshi and five Tokudo ministers, as well as Revs. Shindo Nishiyama and Joshin Kamuro from the Hawaii Kyodan and Rev. Yoshimichi Ouchi from the Canada Kyodan.

A meeting of the BCA Ministers Association was also held during the seminar.

This year's seminar fell on the anniversary dates

of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. During his lectures, Rev. Takeda shared his own experiences and horrors of experiencing the terrible bombing in Hiroshima as a small child.

Rinban Katsuya Kusunoki of the Seattle Bet-suin, whose own father was a "hibakusha" (atomic bomb victim) and activist led the ministers in a moment of silence and reflection in memory of all the victims of the atomic bombings.

Next year's seminar will be held with the World Buddhist Women's Convention in San Francisco over the Labor Day weekend. It will be coordinated by the Mountain States District Ministers.

## Join Bishop Umezu in January for Hoonko in Kyoto

Once again, Bishop Kodo Umezu is planning to attend *Hoonko* observances at the Nishi Hongwanji *Honzan* (Mother Temple) in Kyoto next January. BCA President Rick Stambul will also be joining Rev. Umezu for two days of observances and opportunities to hear the Dharma during the most important Shin Buddhist holiday of the year.



Interested persons can make their own schedules and travel arrangements but should plan to be in Kyoto on January 15-16, 2019. Hotel arrangements should be made as soon as possible as Kyoto will be crowded with thousands of followers coming to Hongwanji for Hoonko. For further information, please contact Bishop Umezu directly at kumezu@bcahq.org.

## SOCHO'S MESSAGE



By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

I hope that the summer hot weather is gone by the time you read this issue of the *Wheel of Dharma*. During the summer, many temples and churches offer wonderful programs for youth. I am pleased to hear many success stories and comments from ministers, teachers, parents, and participants.

It is our responsibility as adults to make sure that our

young people receive skillful guidance. I recently learned that Gardena Buddhist Church, for the first time, offered junior high school students a one-month long summer school program. Nineteen enrolled students were offered a series of life-enrichment activities which included classes on simple cooking, sewing, calligraphy, games, chanting, sharing stories, as well as Japanese cultural activities of tea ceremony, taiko drumming, and Japanese *odori* dancing. Everyday, the students attended a short morning service and listened to a dharma message about either *atarimae* (taking things for granted), *arigatai* (gratefulness), *mottainai* (being wasteful).

## Summer Is Over

The classes were taught by temple members who volunteered their time and skills, and the school program was overseen by a temple member who was previously a middle school principal. At the end of the four-week program, a closing reception was held for the students and their families, at which the students were able to share what they learned with their parents. The students performed taiko and odori, as well as conducted a short service where they led everyone in chanting.

I was very impressed with their curriculum and the positive outcome of the program. We often talk about the declining membership of our Sangha, but many ef-

forts are being made at the local temples and churches to connect people. By doing so, the temples become part of people's lives and help them to cope with challenges and difficulties they are experiencing. We are here to share our lives with the warm compassion of the Buddha and help create a better society and community.

Let us continue with our efforts to provide positive support for all people based on the teachings of the Buddha and Shinran Shonin. I would like to thank everyone who is supporting these endeavors, spiritually, financially and physically. Let us work together to enlarge the circle of peace and harmony guided by the Dharma.

## The Song of Life

By Rev. Mutsumi Wondra,  
Orange County Buddhist Church

Living in Southern California, we know about traffic jams. When my 40-minute driving commute is smooth, I am super lucky! During my commute, I enjoy listening to CD music, thinking about ideas for my next Dharma message, and planning the day, or reflecting on my day on the way home.

Just recently, I listened to the song titled "The Song of Life," composed and sung by Mariya Takeuchi. She became very popular after I left Japan in 1981. Even now, she is one of the best J-pop singers, and she is married to the singer songwriter Tatsuro Yamashita. Let me share her song, which I translated into English.

### The Song of Life (*Inochi no Uta*)

By Takeuchi Mariya

Well, here we are, living the same old ho-hum life, day after day.

But when I stop to ask myself, "Hey, what's it all about?"

I find myself experiencing this warm feeling rising up from deep within

As I think of all the really wonderful people I've met up to now.

But living here in this distant corner of our rocky star, the real miracle is my having met you.

Meeting you is a miracle I treasure more than any diamond or pearl I could ever have.

In this life of mine there were times I cried my eyes out, when

I just gave up completely.

At those times I'd think of you by my side. You were always there for me when I needed you.

I'd remember the good old days when we would cuddle up together

And watch the sun set in our old hometown as we sang the song of life.

Ever notice how the really important things in life are always hidden from us?

Even on the most uneventful day there's an irreplaceable sense of joy to be found.

There comes a time when everyone has to say *sayonara* and bye-bye

To this rocky star we're living on.

Let it be a reminder to us that this life of ours is constantly flowing on.

Born into this world where we grew up,

There were all the good times we've had with everyone we've met. And after our life here, we now have to say thanks and bid a fond farewell.

Thank you, dear Life, for everything and a fond farewell to you, we say, as we sing the song of life.

You can hear this song in Japanese on YouTube. It expresses the preciousness of life and her deep gratitude to have known family and friends in this life. Don't we stop and ask ourselves at least one time in our lives, "What is my life? What does it mean to live?"

Our great teacher, Shinran, also thought about this during the 12th century in Japan. He realized the inconceivable working of the Tathagata Amida to guide him to the superior Nirvana (*Parinirvana*). The way to get there is to have mutual trust with Amida Buddha by hearing and receiving the Buddha's sincere and pure vows of spiritual liberation. Jodo Shinshu or Shin Buddhism teaches us how we can live fully in this one lifetime. Even in adverse situations, you can deeply accept and turn your life around. That is the wisdom that we human beings can learn from the Buddha-Dharma. *Namo Amida Butsu*

## BCA Headquarters Announcements

The Office of the Bishop announces the following:

### MINISTERIAL ASSIGNMENTS

**Rev. Midori Nakagawa**, was appointed Kaikyoshi-ho for the Central California District, effective July 1, 2018. Rev. Midori Nakagawa is the wife of Rev. Kakei Nakagawa.

**Rev. Ken Kenshin Fujimoto**, Rinban of the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin, has announced that he will retire from BCA ministry on Dec. 31, 2018. Rev. Fujimoto concluded his assignment as Rinban of the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin on July 31, 2018, and was assigned as resident minister of the San Jose Betsuin, effective Aug. 1, 2018.

**Rev. Gerald Sakamoto**, resident minister of the San Jose Buddhist Church

Betsuin, was appointed Rinban of San Jose Betsuin, effective Aug. 1, 2018.

**Rev. Masanari Yamagishi** arrived from Japan as a new Kaikyoshi minister for the BCA on July 26, 2018. Rev. Yamagishi has been assigned to the Buddhist Church of Lodi, effective Aug. 1, 2018. Rev. Yamagishi will also serve as Supervising Minister of the Walnut Grove Buddhist Church.

**Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi** of the Buddhist Church of Stockton will serve as mentor to Rev. Yamagishi for a period of one year.

**Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi** of the Buddhist Church of Stockton concluded her assignment as the Supervising Minister of the Buddhist Church of Lodi and Walnut Grove Buddhist Church on July 31, 2018.

**Rev. Nobuo Miyaji**, BCA Minister Emeritus, concluded his services to the

Buddhist Church of Lodi and Walnut Grove Buddhist Church on July 31, 2018.

### MINISTERIAL AFFAIRS

**Rev. and Mrs. Rajan Nariaki Hayashi** of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple welcomed the birth of their son Daichi Rajan Hayashi on May 23, 2018. Daichi Rajan weighed in at 6 pounds, 14 ounces.

### CONDOLENCES

**Mrs. Shigeko Yamaoka**, wife of Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka, BCA Minister Emeritus, passed away on Aug. 4, 2018 in Castro Valley, California, at the age of 76. Funeral services were held on Aug. 25, 2018 at the Buddhist Church of Oakland. Besides Rev. Yamaoka, Mrs. Yamaoka is survived by two daughters, Jennifer (Ryan) Davis and Stacy (Chris) Yamaoka Anderson; a sister, June (Harry Bergland) Masuyama; and two brothers, Ken (Michiko) Masuyama and Dean (Myra) Masuyama.



Wheel  
of Dharma

(USPS 017-700)

Official Publication of the  
Buddhist Churches of America

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

Wheel of Dharma (USPS 017-700) is published monthly by Buddhist Churches of America, 1710 Octavia St., San Francisco, CA 94109-4341. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to WHEEL OF DHARMA, 1710 Octavia St., San Francisco, CA 94109-4341. Subscription free to BCA temple members; \$12.00 annual subscription for nonmembers.

#### Submission Guidelines:

Articles should be around 500 words, typed, double-spaced in Microsoft Word. The editors may ask for longer articles, or split in multiple parts at the editors' discretion. Documents should be sent as an email attachment to WODeditor@bcahq.org. Please include the article's author or contact, temple, and suggested title. Images, preferably in color, must be submitted as 300 dpi JPEG or TIFF in separate attachments and never embedded in a Word document. PDF is not preferred. The editors reserve the right to crop images and to edit articles. Articles and news releases are reviewed for publication on the 10th of every month.

#### Change of address and subscription cancellations:

Individuals may mail, email, fax or phone in change of address requests and subscription cancellations to the BCA National Headquarters at the address above. Please include the following: Subscriber's name (as written on current subscription); address currently being used; New address and/or name changes; requested action (e.g. change of address, name, subscription cancellation, etc.); phone and/or email of person requesting the change; date of request. Please allow up to 8 weeks for changes to take effect. BCA local temples should send update requests as usual.

#### WHEEL OF DHARMA POLICY

##### HARDCOPY PUBLICATION LICENSE:

Authors who submit articles for publication in the Wheel of Dharma ("WOD") thereby grant WOD a royalty-free non-exclusive paid up license, worldwide, in perpetuity and in all media (the "License") to use, edit, and republish the article(s) and to grant sublicenses to any third party to do so on the same terms. WOD grants third parties an identical License to republish its articles so long as the article(s) is republished in its entirety, without edit, providing credit to the WOD and the Buddhist Churches of America.

##### ONLINE PUBLICATION LICENSE:

Authors who submit articles for publication in the Wheel of Dharma online ("WOD") thereby grant WOD a royalty-free non-exclusive paid up license, worldwide, in perpetuity and in all media (the "License") to use, edit, and republish the article(s) and to grant sublicenses to any third party to do so on the same terms. WOD grants third parties an identical License to republish only the first three paragraphs of any article, without edit, providing credit to the WOD and the Buddhist Churches of America, including a hyperlink to the article in WOD.

Editor: Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop  
Editor, Japanese Section:  
Rev. Ryuta Furumoto  
Managing Editor:  
Brian Kensho Nagata  
Section Editors: Edythe Vassal,  
Michael Endo  
Copy Editor: Jon Kawamoto  
Print Production: Jeffrey Kimoto



Like the Buddhist  
Churches of America



Find us on:  
facebook

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Richard A. Stambul  
BCA President

## Help Us Preserve Our Shin Buddhist Teachings

dhist, as human beings, to embrace a positive narrative in your life. That includes the mission and the vision of BCA.”

BCA and its predecessors began in America 119 years ago. It has received support and guidance from a great many persons. Reflecting for a moment on the first *Kaikyoshi* ministers who landed on our shores in 1899, and on our founders, ministers, teachers, leaders, and friends, we all share a common wish ... that BCA provide a foundation for the propagation of Shin Buddhism in America.

We are the keepers and the trustees of that wish. We must work to put aside our differences because it is the teachings of Shinran Shonin that hang in the balance. We must focus on this all-important and positive narrative.

As lay members of BCA's National Board of Directors, we are responsible for ensuring the well-being and welfare of our ministers who have chosen the Shin path. They are not employees or workers to scold or straighten out. They are our treasure.

Our *Nikkei* heritage (and I include myself and all of us who may not be of Japanese descent) is our joy to be honored. Yet, it is our religious teachings for which we should sacrifice, for ourselves and all beings.

How do we sustain our Shin Buddhist teachings? We nourish our teachings by protecting and supporting the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) and the BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE). IBS would not exist without BCA, and BCA would not long survive without IBS. It is a true symbiotic

relationship. To survive, we should encourage work toward that common goal.

IBS is guided and led by Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto and Dr. Scott Mitchell. It is not an exaggeration to say they represent the best of us, and they walk that road guided by the highest principles and goals. I know this because, as a member of the IBS Board of Trustees for the past five years, I have worked by their sides and under their leadership.

We anticipate that IBS will soon be fully accredited. This will give rise to new students eagerly seeking to attend a fully accredited graduate school, to federal financial grants, and perhaps, someday soon, to the offering of a Ph.D. curriculum.

How can we preserve and protect IBS? How can we support CBE, which is BCA's internal educational arm? Bishop

Kodo Umezu has guided CBE almost since its inception and has grounded it in the solid earth of our Shin Buddhist teachings. We need to support the work of IBS by our work as leaders, and by our wallets! Many of you have financially supported both BCA and IBS in the past, and I ask each of you to do so now. Encourage others to join you! Urge them to do so.

I ask each of you to return home to your districts and temples with this positive story. We are the vanguard of all those who came before us to preserve and propagate our Jodo Shinshu teachings, which are the true essence of BCA.

Together we can accomplish great things. As an old proverb says: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

Join me in this noble quest.

On June 2, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) National Board Meeting began as usual at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California. Bishop Kodo Umezu's Dharma talk urged a path forward grounded in the teachings of Shinran Shonin. I tried to adopt a similar tone and approach, and I commented as follows:

"I appeal to each of you. I urge you as members of this National Board, as Shin Bud-

## Shopping and Chanting - Diary of a Costco Monk



By Rev. Dennis Fujimoto  
Buddhist Temple of Alameda

through the aisles with our giant shopping carts. Only the best samples are tasted twice as hors d'oeuvres before lunch date at the hot dog counter. Racing through the aisles, I am made aware of the incessant voice of me planning every move from the moment I turn in to the parking lot.

I am reminded of Sunday Service. Chanting together is what I appreciate most. There is a connected air and the blend of voices that provides a calming, soothing groundedness that makes my day. We need and seek that grounding connection, causing us to return. When we chant, there are two voices. One voice is engaged in chanting the sutras. The other voice emerges around line three, and looks around the Hondo and plans what we should do for lunch

and the rest of the day.

Which voice is the real you? The second voice is the one we recognize. It is the voice we hear first thing in the morning and the last thing we hear at night. Clearly, that is the voice of the me I know. It is the voice of our ego ... controlling, planning, conniving and calculating our every move. We trust that voice because we know that voice.

What if the first voice and not the second was the real you and the real me? Just by chanting, we are giving the first voice priority and status over the second voice. The ego voice is second fiddle! When does that ever happen? A huge role reversal as the ego voice does everything it can to be in power and in control of every situation. In defiant revolt, the ego voice does all it can to re-

gain control. Let's not chant anymore! I don't understand the sounds! It's a waste of time! Let's chant in English so I can control how it goes and what it means! Let's not go to church at all!

The first voice, in its duty of chanting, is connected to the other voices in the room. The first voice is connected to the Dharma. The first voice is connected to the infinite past, the infinite future, and the infinite now.

The first voice is connected to Amida. It is the voice that entones the Nembutsu when it finally gets to mean something true and real ... connecting self to other ... connecting I to all ... dissolving divisions and separation. With the last bite of my hot dog, consider again, which voice is the real you and the real me?

## With Sale, Fresno Betsuin Embarks on New Chapter

Capping nearly a century of Buddhist celebrations -- including weddings, funerals, as well as memorial and weekly services -- the final, emotional and heartfelt "Farewell Service" was held Aug. 4 in the 1340 Kern Street Hondo, and was conducted by Rinban Kakei Nakagawa.

For eight years, the historic temple was up for sale and received a number of offers. But the final, accepted offer came from the Mauyk Oo Dhamma Center, a Sangha of Burmese families living in the Fresno area. The new owners envision creating a monastery and temple within the confines of this religious landmark. Therefore, the Dharma will continue to be heard from within the walls of this hallowed temple.

The long legacy of the Fresno Betsuin Temple is intertwined with the history of BCA members in the Fresno area, the nation's greatest agriculture region. Fresno was first settled by European settlers around 1850 and some 30 years later, the first Issei began their venture into agriculture.

The majority of the early day Fresno immigrants were from predominantly Shin Buddhist regions in Japan. In November 1889, Rev. Kakuryo Nishijima came from San

Francisco to conduct the very first Howakai (Dharma gathering) in Fresno.

In 1900, the Rev. Fukyu Asaeda became the first resident minister in what would become the Fresno Buddhist Temple. In 1901, property was purchased at 1340 Kern Street and construction immediately began on a temple building in the middle of what would eventually become one of the largest Japantowns in California.

A year later, a magnificent three-story wooden temple building was built as a testament to the devoutness of these Nembutsu followers. However, in 1919, a fire completely destroyed the wooden temple.

A year after the fire, a three-story, Japanese- and western-influenced designed concrete temple would rise. The Fresno temple was elevated to Betsuin status in 1936 by the Nishi Hongwanji headquarters and in its heyday, the Betsuin had 21 branch temples and Howakai groups.

For 98 years, this beloved and regal temple served as the site of thousands of *hatsumairi* (first temple visit), weddings, funerals, memorial and countless weekly services. Every BCA affiliated organization had conferences and meetings at the only three-story BCA

temple in the United States.

Fresno's Japantown was a complete community within a community and the Fresno Betsuin was the tallest building in Japantown. However by the 1980s, Fresno's downtown started to deteriorate as the community moved northward, leaving downtown Fresno abandoned.

Most Japanese American families had also moved out of the area by this time and the Japantown area began to decline as Japanese American business after business retired. Safety and convenience became a major concern and in 2010, the Betsuin dedicated a new Family Dharma Center multi-use facility in North Fresno.

Most programs and services, as well as the Obon Odori festival, are now held at the new Family Dharma Center. Few services were held at the old Betsuin facility and only the Betsuin office remained in constant operation until the sale of the complex.

As beloved and important as the Betsuin facility was to Fresno's Japanese American and Buddhist communities, it was decided that the Betsuin site and buildings had to be sold to raise funds to build the new Hondo building to be erected in front of the Family Dharma Center.



Top photo: The noble 1340 Kern Street Fresno Betsuin Temple which has served the Sangha for almost 100 years. Middle photo: Members' Farewell. Picture in front of their Betsuin Temple. Bottom photo: Original Fresno temple building 1902 - 1919.

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

Sensei Elaine Donlin has been a minister's assistant at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco since 2008. She received Tokudo ordination in 2012 and is a founding member of the Buddhist Churches of America's first LGBTQ+ Group at BCSF. Elaine Sensei also does chaplaincy work in the San Francisco County Jails. This article originally appeared in the July 2018 issue of the BCSF's Geppo newsletter. This is a slightly edited version.



#### Crossing Boundaries

By Sensei Elaine Donlin,  
Buddhist Church of San Francisco

*The light of wisdom exceeds all measure,  
And every finite living being  
Receives this illumination that is like the dawn,  
So take refuge in Amida, the true and real light.*  
— Shinran Shonin

The liberating light of Wisdom is infinite, reaching all. And I am struck by the egalitarianism of those words... I recently gave a talk at Enmanji celebrating Shinran's wife and patron, Eshinni, and their youngest daughter, Kakushinni. It was through Kakushinni's devotion to the *Nembutsu* that she founded the Ohtani mausoleum to house Shinran's ashes – which later grew into our mother temple in Kyoto, the Hongwanji [Temple of the Primal Vow]. Both Eshinni and Kakushinni were intelligent, resourceful and devout *Nembutsu* followers who were at the same time women who performed their societal roles.

This was not unlike so many of our female temple members here in America. From the *Issei* immigrants to the present generation, great contributions were made by women to strengthen the temple and to promote the Jodo Shinshu teachings through how they lived.

Remembering Eshinni and Kakushinni is an opportunity to celebrate the true equality of women in Buddhism which, due to human ignorance, has not always been recognized.

It is now clear to most Buddhist scholars that the negative beliefs about women which Buddhists accepted throughout the ages *were*, and unfortunately in some places still *are*, the consequence of the overwhelming influence of cultural attitudes about men and women and have nothing to do with authentic Buddhist teachings.

Everywhere I go, in all the different temples I'm privileged to be invited to, I look out and I see women, lots of women. And then I look at our institutional organizations – the ministry and the National Board leadership – and I see that it has been – *and continues to be* – overwhelmingly male.

The incongruity between our temple attendance and our BCA leadership is glaring. The incongruity between our *doctrinal teaching of non-discrimination* and the current reality of our patriarchal authority is heartbreaking.

Several weeks ago I received the June issue of the *Wheel of Dharma* and on page 2 was an article titled, "World Jodo Shinshu Leaders Meet." It was not at all difficult to see that the Shin "leaders" sitting around the table (Representatives and Bishops from Kyoto, Hawaii, Canada, So. America and the US) were all men.

We can talk all we want about our declining membership, outreach, etc., but if we don't walk the talk of our Shin teaching which is rooted in equality, then it's all for naught.

My wish and aspiration for the future of BCA is the following:

May we live to see the day when women participate equally and fully in all aspects of our organization's leadership – nationally and locally, religiously and in governance. For when that happens, rather than perpetuating the current contradiction between our teaching and our institutions that privilege men over women, we will finally be *actualizing / bringing to reality* our profound and beautiful teaching... and its vision. *Namo Amida Butsu.*



#### 2018 "YouAreCool" Seminar Held at Mountain View

The "YouAreCool" Leadership and Life-Skills Seminar for high school Young Buddhist Association (YBA) members was sponsored by College YBA and held on June 29-July 2, 2018 at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple. Thirteen delegates from across California and Utah were selected by their respective YBA cabinets and advisors to participate in this inaugural seminar.

Rev. Yushi Mukojima, resident minister at Mountain View, gave the opening message, and Rhea Munoz, YMCA social worker, was the guest speaker. Next year's seminar will be billed as the DANA Retreat and will be held in the summer.

The College YBA group is open to any young Buddhist from ages 18-24. For further information about College YBA or the DANA Retreat, please contact Devon Matsumoto at [matsumotodevon@gmail.com](mailto:matsumotodevon@gmail.com).

BCA Center for Buddhist Education Every Day Buddhism Committee presents:



#### Adult Buddhist Association (ABA) Leaders Workshop

October 26-27, 2018

At the Jodo Shinshu Center, 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704

For ABA Leaders & Aspiring Leaders

ABA Past, Present & Future \* Why have an ABA? \* Growing Your ABA or starting one  
Sharing Successes and Challenges \* Ideas for Buddhist education

Registration: \$50 before Oct 1 • \$60 after Oct 1

Optional Bus Excursion to Enmanji Buddhist Temple, a local winery, and Graton Casino on Sunday, Oct.28 (additional cost).

Visit [BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org](http://BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org) to register online or download registration forms. For JSC lodging, contact Glenn Kameda at [gkameda@bcahq.org](mailto:gkameda@bcahq.org)

#### 2019 World Buddhist Women's Convention Sponsorship Opportunities

The 16th World Buddhist Women's Convention (WBWC) will be held August 30 through September 1, 2019 at the San Francisco Marriott Marquis in San Francisco, California. Approximately 2,000 women and men of many generations are anticipated to gather from Japan, Canada, Brazil, Hawaii, and throughout the US mainland to explore and experience the Convention theme: "Live the Nembutsu."

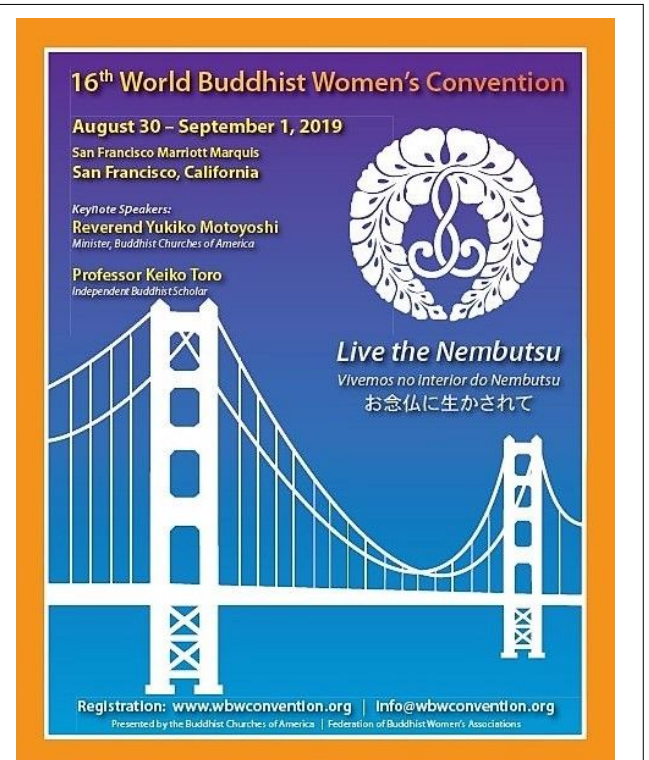
The WBWC is an opportunity for Jodo Shinshu followers to gather together on an international level; meet new people, learn together, and spread the circle of Dharma followers today and for generations to come. Originally, the Convention was for women only; but over the years it has welcomed all, men and women, in the Jodo Shinshu Sangha or spiritual community.

WBWC sponsors are being sought to help make this important event possible. Various levels of financial support can be given, from a convention program ad at \$250, to a \$2,000 workshop sponsor, to a \$15,000 "Magnolia" sponsorship. All sponsors receive recognition in event marketing and/or the program booklet, as well as higher levels of additional benefits, depending on the level of support.

If you would like to participate, have questions, or would like more information, please contact Karen Suyama by email at [karensuyama@wbwconvention.org](mailto:karensuyama@wbwconvention.org).

Thank you for your support! We hope to see you at the World Buddhist Women's Convention!

BCA FBWA is a duly recognized organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Tax ID #94-1498382



16<sup>th</sup> World Buddhist Women's Convention  
August 30 - September 1, 2019  
San Francisco Marriott Marquis  
San Francisco, California

Keynote Speakers:  
Reverend Yukiko Motoyoshi  
Minister, Buddhist Churches of America  
Professor Keiko Toro  
Independent Buddhist Scholar

Live the Nembutsu  
Vivemos no interior do Nembutsu  
お念仏に生かされて

Registration: [www.wbwconvention.org](http://www.wbwconvention.org) | [info@wbwconvention.org](mailto:info@wbwconvention.org)  
Presented by the Buddhist Churches of America | Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations

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

*Arigatou Obaachan (Thank You Grandmother) Campaign Donors*

The Buddhist Churches of America Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations (FBWA) has been receiving special donations in support of the 2019 World Buddhist Women's Convention, to be held in San Francisco, California from August 30 through September 1, 2019. The names below represent Buddhist women being honored for their sacrifice, hard work, dedication, generosity, pursuit of the Buddha-Dharma, and help in the propagation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Donors are listed first, followed by the honored *obaachan's* name(s) in **bold print**. Donations are listed in the order received, through July 31, 2018. Thank you, donors and *arigatou, obaachan!*

Fusae Miyamoto ~ **Kiyoko Miyamoto**; Darlene Bagshaw ~ **Yuki Torigoe**; Marcia Kawabata ~ **Susan Bottari**; Erick Ishii ~ **Sakaye Tsuji**; Susan Bottari ~ **Kay Nagata, Dorothy Bottari, Kiwa Hirano, Shikao Nagata, Ayako Bankowski**; Lucy Hamai ~ **Shizue Ikeda**; Charlene Grinolds ~ **Tomi Tsuji, Shizuno Oki, Barbara Tsuji**; Terrie Masuda ~ **Shizue Nii, Haruko Masuda**; Jane Naito ~ **Teruko Naito**; Susan Yoshimura ~ **Kumaye Okuda, Koma Fukunaga**; Richard Uyematsu ~ **Teiko Uyematsu**; Victor Iwamura ~ **Fumiye Iwamura, Obaachan Kitagawa, Obaachan Hayashi, Dina Iwamura Sakai, Alyson Iwamura Matsuo, Blanche Unciano**; Rev. Candice Shibata ~ **Jackie Shibata, Haruko Shibata, Sadako Soeda**; Jean Toshima ~ **Yoshiko Takahashi, Yuriko Fukawa**; Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi ~ **Yoshio Motoyoshi**; Ken Tanimoto ~ **Masano Tanimoto**; Michael Endo ~ **Chieko Endo, Nao Endo, Toshiko Ninomiya**; Karen Suyama ~ **Ayako Fujii, Hisako Yokota, Matsuko Suyama**; Wayne Berue & Debra Omoto Berue ~ **Kiyoko Omoto**; June Okubo ~ **Mabel M. Okubo**; Mr. & Mrs. Robert Tanaka ~ **Mumayo Mitsuda, May Kimiko Tanaka, Shizu Fujino**; Tsuyaye Sue Nakao ~ **Miyoshi Nakao, Seki Higashiyama**; Emi Tsutsumi ~ **Evelyn Hatsuko Tanaka**; Eiichi & Iyoko Katsuyoshi ~ **Miyoshi Nakao, Seki Higashiyama**; Holly Low ~ **Mitsuko "Mitzie" Yamada**;

**"Mitzie" Yamada**; Sandy Hongo ~ **Hilda Shizue Murakami, Thelma Kiyoko Higuchi**; Linda Kadani ~ **Kioyomi Kadani**; Linda Iwasaki ~ **Midori Takao, Nancy Matsuura**; Dale Shimane & Karen Akimoto ~ **Mabel Mutsuko Shimane, Yoshie Iwane Santo, Shizue Miura Shimane**; Trisha & Lynne Yamaichi ~ **Umeko Kodama, Helen Santo**; Hideko Heidi Sakazaki ~ **Yukimi Sakazaki**; Lois Tanaka ~ **Kihei Ito**; Miwako Yamashiro ~ **Hiroko Tsuda**; Sharon Yokoi ~ **Yuriko Yokoi**; Whitney Okabayashi & Sharon Chu ~ **Tomie Okabayashim Tayeko Takeuchi**; Rose Takamoto ~ **Seikiyo Nishikawa, Mary Chikuma**; Jan Oshita-Tokiwa ~ **Komatsu Miyanaga, Miya Oshita**; Helen Sasaki ~ **Kinuko Sasaki, Yuki Yokoi**; Shizuka Hanada ~ **Miyo Maruyama, Asa Maruyama**; Cherry Tsutsumida ~ **Keina Tsutsumida**; Emi Tsutsumi ~ **Nami Suezaki**; Tomi Imokawa ~ **Toshi Ouchida**; Karen Hironaga ~ **Hisayo Tsukamoto, Ume Tsukamoto, Haru Onomura**; Cynthia Tsukamoto ~ **Suzuko Tsukamoto**; Claudia Nakata ~ **Asako Kimura**; Ed Tsumura ~ **All past & present BWA members**; Marcy Mamiya ~ **Diane Umemoto, Toshiko Uyehara**; Don S. Gee ~ **Shet Won Hom Gee**; Tomoko Matsuda ~ **Ritei Matsuda**; Roy & Sydney Yamashita ~ **Yukuno Takeuchi Shimizu, Sawame Furuta Shimizu**; Pauline Ogasawara ~ **Kisayo Tamiyasu**.

Updated donor lists will be published periodically. For corrections, questions, or if you would like to donate, please contact Karen Suyama at [karensuyama@wbwconvention.org](mailto:karensuyama@wbwconvention.org).

**Oregon & Florin "Time Capsule" Japan Tour**

By Randall Ishida, Buddhist Church of Florin

In June 2018, Oregon Buddhist Temple's Rev. Yuki Sugahara led a tour to Japan with members from his temple and the Buddhist Church of Florin. We visited Hokkaido, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Tokyo, and Rev. Sugahara's family temple, Korinji, in Oda City, Shimane prefecture.

We had a wonderful tour. One of the highlights included attending the 6:00 a.m. hour-long service at the Nishi Hongwanji Temple in Kyoto. We paid our respects to Shinran Shonin at the Otani Hombyo where his remains are interred. We also visited the historic and venerable Mt. Hiei, where Shinran studied in his early years before hearing the Nembutsu teachings from Honen Shonin.

Another tour highlight was the opening of the Korinji Temple's 30-year-old time capsule.

The Korinji Temple is currently served by Rev. Toshiki Sugahara, Rev. Yuki Sugahara's father. In 1988, members of the Temple buried a time capsule on the grounds to commemorate its 350th Year Anniversary and a visit by Gomonshu Koshin Ohtani. Thirty years later on June 23, 2018, after a brief ceremony and family memorial service, the members of our tour and Korinji Temple members shared the honor of opening the time capsule.

Inside the time capsule was a letter written by eight-year old Yuki Sugahara, who in time would become our sensei. The letter expressed his memories of being hungry and eating a big meal, and a reminder from his mother that he was growing older. Letters from other Korinji Temple members were also revealed and read aloud to the surprise and enjoyment of all in attendance.

This Japan trip was a wonderful and rewarding opportunity to make many new friends and renew old acquaintances. We learned more about Japanese heritage, culture, values, the teachings of the Buddha, and about each other as well. The sights, sounds, and heart of Japan will always be within our hearts.



Members of our tour and Korinji Temple members shared the honor of opening the time capsule.

**2018 BCA Educational Events**

*Programs subject to change. Events at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) unless otherwise noted.*

**September 9-16 ~ Tomoshie Tour.** Young Jodo Shinshu priests from Japan will perform shadow graph storytelling, followed by Dharma talks on the stories' themes. Three stories will be performed at LA Betsuin (Sept. 9 & 10), San Mateo Buddhist Temple (Sept. 12), and Seattle Betsuin (Sept. 16). Free for all ages; donations gratefully accepted. For more details, visit [BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org](http://BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org). Sponsored by BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE).

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

**September 29 ~ Creating Inclusive Youth Programs Seminar: Supporting LGBTQ Youth & Families: Nurturing Compassionate Communities.** Keynote speaker: Aiden Aizumi. Seminar for leaders of youth programs with focus on supporting LGBTQ youth and families at our temples and affiliated youth programs. Speakers from Jodo Shinshu Buddhist and Christian perspectives. 10 am - 2 pm. Register by September 21; \$20 donation includes lunch. To download registration form or register online, visit [BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org](http://BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org).

**October 4-6 ~ Fall Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) Seminar.** Hosted at the Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Fairfax Station, VA for certified BCA minister's assistants. Register by Sept. 17. Lodging available at the Hilton Springfield, \$109 per room/night. Reserve room with the Hilton Springfield by Sept. 4. Contact your resident or supervising minister or [cbe@bcabq.org](mailto:cbe@bcabq.org) for registration information.

**October 26-27 ~ Adult Buddhist Association (ABA) Leaders Workshop** for ABA Leaders and Aspiring Leaders. See ad on page 4.

[BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org](http://BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org) E-mail: [cbe@bcabq.org](mailto:cbe@bcabq.org) Phone: (510) 809-1460

You are cordially invited to the  
**6th Annual Women in Buddhism Conference**

**Tools for Spiritual Wellness**

Saturday, September 22, 2018 9:30AM - 3:30PM  
Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple

**Carmela Javellana - Hirano M.D.**



**The Wounded Heart**  
Integrative Psychiatrist  
Founder  
Sanctuary for Healing and Integration  
Assistant Minister, Salt Lake Buddhist Temple

**Elizabeth Myoen Sikes Ph.D.**



**Tara's Response: Deep Listening and Right Speech in Our Relationships**  
Counselor, LMHCA  
Japanese Soto Zen Practitioner  
Co-director, EcoSangha at Seattle University

Sponsors: Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple and Women's Association  
1427 S Main St, Seattle, WA 98144 Ph: 206.329.0800  
[Office@SeattleBetsuin.com](mailto:Office@SeattleBetsuin.com) and [www.SeattleBetsuin.com](http://www.SeattleBetsuin.com)  
Register at [seattlebetsuin.wufoo.com/forms/r1hf0w10ezyu7/](http://seattlebetsuin.wufoo.com/forms/r1hf0w10ezyu7/)

## With Roots in Berkeley Buddhist Temple, Daruma no Gakko Celebrates its 40th Anniversary

By Jon Kawamoto  
Berkeley Buddhist Temple

“Daruma no Gakko,” a special summer program founded by Japanese American women who were mostly members of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, recently celebrated its 40th year.

The idea for Daruma no Gakko began in 1978 with 10 Japanese American women who were concerned about their children not knowing about their Japanese cultural heritage and wanted to develop their self-esteem as Japanese Americans. They established a curriculum taught by credentialed teachers to help build strong, positive self-images and identities while learning about Japanese American history. The program also taught the students about Japanese culture -- through songs, language, festivals, art, food and cooking.

Daruma no Gakko was at the Berkeley Buddhist Temple for its first two years and is now held at the Berkeley United Methodist Church.

“As one of the 10 founders of this program, it is just amazing to see this program still thriving and relevant, and hearing our students singing in Japanese is the most rewarding and moving experience for me,” said Emiko Katsumoto, of the Berkeley temple, who is one of two founders still actively involved with the program. Katsumoto has been in charge of Daruma no Gakko’s music program for the past 15 years.

Typically, about 85 students, from those entering kindergarten through sixth-graders, are enrolled in the summer program. In 40 years, more than 500 students have graduated – and several students now have parents



Left photo: The founders of Daruma no Gakko, pose in this 1980 photograph. Front row, from left, are Jan Inouye and Gail Harada. Second row, from left, are Judy Kono, Amy Shinsako, Jane Tanamachi and Sally Takeda. Third row, from left, are Etsuko Steimetz, Emiko Katsumoto and Janie Nehira. Vicki Mizuhara, another founder, had passed away before this photo was taken. All the founders except for Tanamachi and Inouye are members of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple. Photo courtesy of Nancy Kato. Above photo: Daruma no Gakko students enjoy a game of tug of war at a Undokai (sports day) event. Photo courtesy of Kehli Agaki.

who have attended Daruma no Gakko.

The program draws students from mainly Berkeley, Oakland, El Cerrito and Alameda. But other students come as far as San Jose, Larkspur, New York and Washington state.

“Daruma no Gakko was an amazing experience from the lifelong friends I made to the Japanese American culture I embraced,” said Riley Togashi, 17, who will be attending UC Berkeley as a freshman. “As a student, I gained a great sense of pride for my heritage and as a program aide, I gained valuable leadership experience. The program has had a lasting impact on my life and I am fortunate to be part of such a fantastic program.”

Berkeley temple temple Lorin Kagehiro, attended the program during the early 1990s and reflected on the program’s impact on her.

“Daruma no Gakko is a special place, and I am so lucky to have had the privilege

to be a part of it,” Kagehiro said. “In those summer weeks, my classmates and I learned about our cultural history, culminating in a spotlight on the false imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II. I still remember interviewing my grandparents about their experiences, never realizing how precious those conversations would be to me today.”

“Many years later, my memory of participating in the sixth-grade evacuation simulation is so clear,” Kagehiro continued. “How could I possibly pack my life into one small suitcase? The lessons about what was lost, how our grandparents made joy out of desert dust, and how the community rallied together, are treasures I carry with me.”

Daruma no Gakko, which ran this year from June 25 to July 13, commemorated its 40th anniversary with a Undokai (sports day) June 23 at Canyon Trail Park in El Cerrito.

In addition, a crowd of

about 300 people attended the Gakugeikai (end of year program) July 13 at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in Berkeley. The event featured a performance by all of this year’s students singing Japanese songs.

“Daruma no Gakko had a wonderful 40th anniversary session,” said Stacy Uyeda, who taught this year’s sixth-graders. “The co-directors and the board worked hard to incorporate the specialness of the anniversary with all the tried-and-true traditions of our Nikkei heritage program.”

Judy Kono, another founding member from the Berkeley temple, was appreciative of the contributions from students, parents and alumni.

“We are so proud and grateful to the generations of families who have kept Daruma-no Gakko going for 40 years,” Kono said.

For more information about Daruma no Gakko, go to [daruma-no-gakko.org](http://daruma-no-gakko.org).

## BUTSU BUTSU

By Brian Kensho Nagata  
Managing Editor

In June, I visited the Tohoku region of Japan with friends and we stopped in Sendai, which was one of the cities hit by the devastating and tragic Great Eastern Earthquake and Tsunami that struck on March 11, 2011 and killed 16,000 people. An additional 2,500 people are still missing.

Seven years after this disaster, there are still more than 100,000 displaced people living in temporary housing or having to live with relatives and friends. Sadly, I suppose governments are the same all over. The needs of these displaced survivors and cleaning up the nuclear power plant mess are no longer a priority of the nation. Here in the United States, the people of New Orleans are still dealing with the aftermath of the Katrina hurricane from 2005. How sad, how sad.

Living in the Bay Area, I am perched on the Pacific’s Great Rim of Fire and the Big One is definitely coming again ... it’s only a matter of time. I purchased my house on the east side of the East Bay, east of the San Andreas Fault, thinking I would be safe from earthquakes. But wouldn’t you know it that I later learned that an earthquake spur runs only one block away from my house. It’s only a matter of time.

We in the San Francisco Bay Area all know the Big One is coming, but we live as if it will never come. How many of you have a sturdy pair of shoes sitting besides your bed? In the event of a major earthquake or house fire, you will need to run outside as quickly as possible. How are you going to look for your shoes in the dark? Or did you ever think that there will be broken glass and other dangers when you run through the house and outside in your bare feet in such an emergency?

Unfortunately, I live my life in the same way, somewhat cognizant of what will inevitably come for me BUT in the same breath, my insatiable *Bonno* gives me a truly false sense of eternal safety, security and well being in this life.... BUT I am NOT going to live forever! Who would have ever imagined a tsunami wave could reach 128 feet in height and travel inland as far as six miles ... but it did! Just as certain is my departure from this *saha* world....

### POSTSCRIPT:

On Oct. 6, world-renowned drummer Akira Tana, son of the late Rev. and Mrs. Daisho Tana, will bring together his band called “*Otonowa*” (“Sound Circle”) at the Mitchell Park Community Center in Palo Alto for the “Tohoku Tsunami Relief Benefit Concert” to raise funds for those Tohoku victims still suffering from the terrible disaster. Each year, Tana and his “*Otonowa*” group return to the Tohoku area to perform free community concerts and clinics to cheer up residents. This year, Mr. Takehiro Dai, who was a high school student at the time of the tsunami, will talk about his own experiences and life since that fateful day. For further information, please contact [Tohokuhearts@gmail.com](mailto:Tohokuhearts@gmail.com).

## S.F. Buddhist Church’s Ardenettes celebrate 50 years

The Buddhist Church of San Francisco’s Ardenettes organization recently celebrated its golden anniversary of developing and encouraging young Buddhist women to play and enjoy camaraderie through basketball.

Over 150 former team members, family and friends gathered Aug. 25 at the Northern California Japanese American Community and Cultural Center to celebrate 50 years of friendship, competition and tradition -- which now includes three generations of players in some temple families.

Former Ardenette and San Francisco school board member Emily Murase presented a proclamation to team founders Teresa Ono and Laura “Bonz” (Kagehiro) Otsuki. The proclamation, signed by San Francisco Mayor London Breed, declared Aug. 25 as Ardenette Day in San Francisco.

In her anniversary message, Ono thanked the alumnae and their families for continuing the tradition of women’s basketball at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco. Ono encouraged everyone to



Celebrating three generations of Buddhist Church of San Francisco “Ardenettes” and their supporting families at the 50th Anniversary celebration.

continue being enthusiastic and looked forward to the Ardenettes centennial celebration in 50 years.

The Ardenettes began in the BCA’s heyday of the Sansei baby boom in the 1960s, when the Buddhist Church of San Francisco’s Hondo would be filled with children and young adults. At the time, there were boys basketball and baseball teams -- but nothing for the girls.

Before the days of Title IX in 1972, when schools were ordered by the federal government to offer sports for girls, two rebel rousers, Teresa Ono and Laura

“Bonz” (Kagehiro) Otsuki, decided to form a girls basketball team made up of their Dharma School classmates who all enjoyed basketball.

When it came time to come up with a team name, the girls took a cue from other teams such as the Royalties or Baronettes. One of the team members found the word “ardent” in the dictionary, which means “vivacious, energetic, fiery or hot.” And so the team became the “Ardenettes,” which was winning championships within a few years and became known for its fierce enthusiasm.

# 今月の法話

## 「無一物」

山東三州寺開教使  
藤井 道栄



Rev. Doei Fujii

日曜日のお参りの時だった。「先生、あの人がキッチンにまだいます。始めるのを少し待ってあげてください」という。その人が4、5分も遅れて本堂に入ってきた。「遅くなってしまいました。実はお数珠をさがしていたのですが、やっと見つめました」と安心顔でいう。その人は「お参りには必ずお数珠がいる」と思い込んでいるのだろう。法が先です。聴聞が先です。お参りにお数珠なんて、あっても無くともいいのにな。」

そこで私は次のように皆に言った。「私は今お数珠をこうして持っていますが、さてこのお数珠は何連目なのだろうか。どこかに置き忘れたり、落したり、ひもが切られてバラバラになったり、と今まで多くの数珠を失いました。どうしてそうも多くを失ったかと言えば、お数珠を持っていたからです。持っていないければ、失うこともないので、安心ですよ。皆さん、そう思いませんか」というと皆が笑った。笑いごとではないのですよ。冗談に聞こえますが、これミダの心のことなのですよ。

またある時、白髪のご婦人が来て言った。「先生、私は長らくお参りしておりますが、何もはっきりしたものを得ておりません。何もわかっておりません。心中はモヤモヤしたもので一杯です。これから私はどうしたら良いのですか」と真剣に問う。その人は心中にはっきりとしたものが無いという。「これでもう大丈夫だと思える確かなものを得たい」と言う。「確かなものをつかみたい」「はっきりとしたものを得たい」「心をすっきりとさせたい」等と願うのが凡夫の心です。ですが、この思いこそがミダの世界を聞き開く鍵となるのです。

「この魚は大海にいた。この魚が生きていた時には身は塩辛くなかった。だが、この魚が死んでから塩に漬けるとすぐに塩辛い味になる」と念仏者はいう。何のこた

ろうか？彼は阿弥陀仏の世界を短く語っているのです。ミダ法（真実）の中で「自分をどこまでも良しとし頼りにする心念」が生きている間には法が身に沁み込むことではない。だが、その心が死ぬと法が直ぐに身に沁み込んで法味となる。私たちはミダ法の中にすでにいるのだが、己を良しとする心がある間はミダ法がしみこまない。この心が死ねばミダ法はしみこむ。「これで大丈夫だ」と思えるようにはっきりとしたものを願う心は迷い心で、この心が威張っている間はミダ法はしみこまない。機（衆生）の心の上に確かなものを求めることはいらぬのです。なぜならミダ法はそのように出来上がっていて、そのように働くからなのです。

「貴方はどのようにしてミダの世界を聞き開きましたか」との質問に念仏者は次のように答えている。「自分に一つでも良き心があれば、それにとらわれて惑うのですが、一善も無いと気付いた時、ミダの世界が開けました」と。これ、己を良しとする心が死んだ瞬間のことです。法を先とせず、己を先とする心の死です。善とは己にとらわれ「我」を良しとすることです。「仏法は無我」と聞き及んでいながらも、自分を良しとする心その中にに入れてしまう。すると「仏法は有我」になってしまうのではないか。

さて、ミダ法とはどのような法（真実）なのだろうか？ミダの無量なる働きとはどのような働きなのか？ミダの世界とはどのような世界か？これらに答えているのが「本願・念仏」なのです。幸運なことに浄土真宗ではそれらが48願として具体的に我々に開示されているのです。

では「本願・念仏」は私たちに何を開示しているのだろうか？ミダ法の中にすでに・私のすべてが解かれている。それがミダ法なのです。その完成された無上法を聴聞し、聞き開くのが浄土真宗の教えなのです。ですから「聴聞（ちょうもん）」する他にないのです。ではどのように聴聞すればミダの世界が開けるのだろうか。心して聴くと、向こうから聞こえてくるものがある。それがミダの心・ミダの働きなのです。ところが、法を聴聞するとは、知識・理解を求めるのではなく、法の中に己を見出す作業のことなのです。

一例を上げます。昔ある寺に文字の読めない小僧さんがいた。ある時住職が何かの小用で本堂に行った。すると寺の縁側で小僧さんが経典を持ち出しページをめくって

いる。「はて、文字が読めないはずだが？」と思いつ事を済ませて縁側に戻り「お前は文字をよめるのかな？」と問うと、「いいえ、読めません」という。「では、なぜ経典をめくっているのだね」と住職。「毎朝お勤めする『正信偈』に私のことが書いてあるのですが、その部分を聞きおぼえた『正信偈』を称えながら一行・一行と探しているのです」と小僧さん。「なに！お前のことが書いてある？それはどの部分なのかね」と住職。「はい、極重悪人唯称仏（ごくじゅうのあにんはただほとけの名をしようすべし）、我亦在彼撰取中（われもまた彼の仏の救いの中にあり）、という部分です」と答えた。それを聞いた住職は「文字も読めぬのに仏陀の心を体解しているとは」と驚いたという。己を法の中に見出す作業が聴聞なのです。知識や理解のためではないのです。

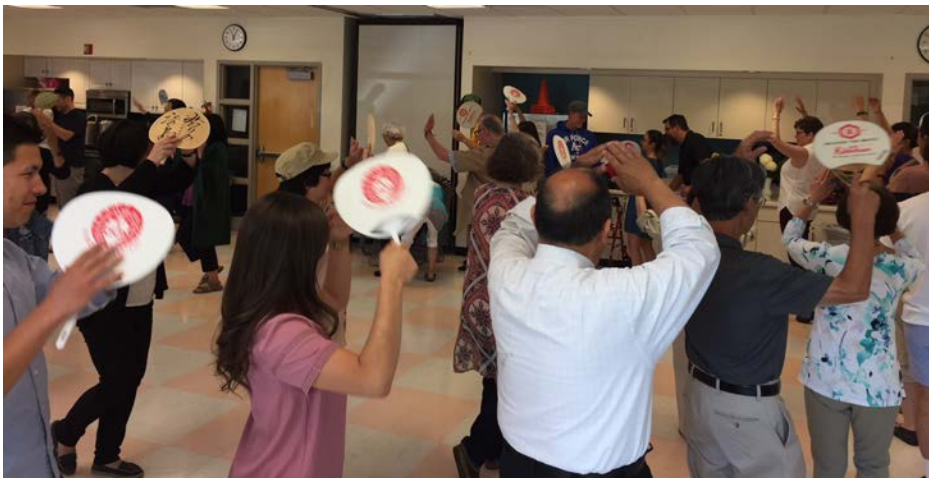
このミダ法は私に一切の条件を求めない。私は願いを起し、それに沿って求める者だと思っていた。だが、聴聞すると私が願い、求める前にすでに私を見定めたミダが私に願いをかけ、ミダが私を求めていると聞こえてくる。「汝は清く、正しく、美しくなつてから我が世界に生まれるのではない。汝に立派に成れとの条件は一切ない。また、抱えている無明、煩惱は、我が世界に生まれる際に一切邪魔には成らぬのだ」と示します。私の抱えているものがどのような物であれ、助けには成らず、邪魔にも成らずミダの世界には私を導きます。

私の無明煩惱は暗い影です。これは丁度、光と影に似ています。光は私の影をもって光のありかを知らせているのです。法を聴聞すると自分の暗い影がありありと映し出されるがゆえに、己の身の暗さになげく。だが、己の影がみえるということは同時に私は光の中にすでにいるからなのです。私の影をもって光は智慧・慈悲の在りかをしめすのです。私たちの日々はこの光を仰いで「ありがとう」と言い、暗い影を観て「申し訳ない」と念じる。この往復です。

ですが、「これで大丈夫だと思えるようなものを得ようとする心念」は迷い心です。ところが、迷いに迷ってついに無上法に導き入れられるのですから不思議なものです。「善も要にあらざる、悪も恐れるに足りず」と導き入れられるときは「善も悪も、ミダに摂られて何も無し」の「無一物」に成って無上法に直入するのですから、不可称・不可説・不可思議と言う他ないですよ。

合掌

# ミッドウインターでも盆



Obon at Twin Cities Sangha

ミネソタ州には1946年にツインシティー仏教会が発足約70年間、アメリカ中西部の代表的都市で念仏の教えがシェアされてきた。現在、シカゴ中西部仏教会の宮村ロン開教使が兼務しており、近年開教使アシスタントの養成によって、毎月一度の法要が行われるようになっていく。写真は7月下旬に行われたお盆法要後の盆踊りのようす。掲載予定。

# 今月の一枚

松林ジョージ開教使 ベニス仏教会盆踊りにて  
Rev. Matsubayashi at Venice BT Bon Odori



# 法輪

2018年9月号

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@bcabq.org  
forWOD: WODeditor@bcabq.org

二〇一八年度教化標語  
「平和と調和」

あの記事をもう一度!  
法輪のバックナンバーがBCA  
ウェブサイトにて読めます。  
<http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/about-us/wheel-of-dharma>

## 夏の布教研究会

8月7日から9日の3日間、開教使布教研究会および開教使会議が開催され、開教使46名が参加した。西北部教区の主催でオレゴン州ポートランド市、ユニバーシティプレースホテルが会場。テーマは浄土論註で龍谷大学名誉教授の武田龍精師を講師に招き、曇鸞大師の浄土教思想を学んだ。参加者は「論註の内容は難解でしたが、他力など親鸞聖人のみ教えの根幹をなす思想が書かれてあるので、また注意深く読んでみようと思います。」と意義深い講義となった。質疑応答では、師の幼少時の広島での被爆体験を話すこととなり、「長崎の原爆の日に貴重なお話しを聞くことができました。」と参加者が平和を念ずるありがたいご縁ともなった。講義前のサービスでは通常、重誓偈や讚仏偈などの偈文がおつとめされていたが、今回はそれらの偈文の出拠となる大無量寿経上巻を誦経。多くの開教使が喜んでおつとめをし、好評のサービスとなった。開教使会議では開教使アシスタントの役割や将来のBCA像に関しての話し合いが行われ、それぞれ意見交換をした。今回は山中部教区の主催となるが、世界仏教婦人会大会がサンフランシスコで開催されることにあわせ、同時期にベイエリアで布教研究会を行う予定にしている。



Summer Fuken at Portland

## ヨーロッパの念仏者と交流

8月中旬に英国サウサンプトン市で第19回ヨーロッパ真宗会議が開催され、約70名が集った。BCAからは10名が参加した。ヨーロッパ真宗会議は2年に1回開催されており、ヨーロッパ各国の浄土真宗僧侶、門信徒、学者らが、学術論文や伝道活動の発表を行っている。日本からもIABC(国際仏教文化協会)関係者で主に真宗系大学教授が参加する。今回は海外開教に積極的に関心をよせられる大谷光貞前門主、前裏方ご夫妻もご臨席された。会場地となったサウサンプトン市には聴聞ハウスという



European Shin Conference

## 総長コラム

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

九月になりました。夏が終わり子供たちも学校に戻って行きます。仏教会ではダルマスクールの新しい学年が始まります。夏の休みを利用して各地の仏教会では夏の長い休みを利用してキャンプやリトリートなど特別のプログラムが催されました。それらのプログラムに参加した子供達や親たちの喜びの声を聞くと本当に嬉しく思います。

大人の私たちは子供達に色々なことを教えていく責任があります。南カリフォルニアにあるガーデナ仏教会では今年初めての試みとして、中学生を対象とした一ヶ月のサマースクールを行ったというのを聞きました。十九名が参加し、習字、太鼓、裁縫、簡単な料理、ゲームに踊り、それ

真宗寺院があり、会場は寺院に近いソレント大学。会議のテーマは21世紀の浄土真宗で、イギリス、ドイツ、ルーマニア、日本、ブラジル、米国の参加者がプレゼンテーションを行った。BCAからは、桑原浄信開教使が「北米の浄土真宗における一如(ワンネス)の考察」、スタンプル・リック理事長が「BCAにおける社会問題への取り組み」を発表し注目された。BCAの参加者は「ヨーロッパの念仏者の方々から、念仏の教えを知りたいという真剣な熱意を感じました。私も聴聞や教学の研鑽にはげみたいと思います。」と世界に広がる親鸞聖人の教えを目の当たりにし、よい刺激をうけていた。

## お寺のサマースクール

夏休みに各寺院で小学生を対象としたサマースクールが行われた。寺院によって、さまざまなプログラムが用意されており、門信徒や近隣住民の子供たちが寺院に集っている。中でも、シアトル別院、サンマテオ仏教会、ガーデナ仏教会、ロサンゼルス別院と洗心仏教の合同スクール、は仏教を中心としたプログラ



LA Betsuin + Senshin



San Mateo



Seattle



Gardena

に茶道などの日本文化も紹介された、もちろん毎朝お参りがあり、そこでは「当たり前」、「ありがたい」、「勿体無い」などの言葉に含まれている深い意味を習ったということです。

これらのクラスはメンバーの奉仕で行われ、主任は中学校の校長をされていた方で、仏教会が全面的に支援して行われたのです。四週間のプログラムの修了式では集まった親たちの前で子供達はサマースクールで身につけたスキルを披露し、最後には子供達が調声してお参りが行われ、大きな声で本堂いっぱいにお経の音が響き渡ったとのことでした。

このカリキュラムの内容やこのプログラムの成果を見て本当に心を打たれました。最近では会員の減少などが議題にな

りますが、このように各地の仏教会で行われている素晴らしい行事などもお互いにシェアし合っていくことも大事ではないかと思えます。このようなプログラムを通じて、子供達にこれからの人生で起こるであろう、苦難や困難に立ち向かう準備をさせ、応援していくことも仏教会の役割の一つではないでしょうか。このように、仏教会は仏さまの願いを人々と分かち合うことで、安心して生きていける社会を作っていくことに貢献できると信じています。

これからも、このように親鸞さまの心を伝えるプログラムを行っている人達を支援して行きましょう。最後になりましたが、それぞれの仏教会で、仏さまの教えをもとに、安らかで共に助け合っている社会を作るために、精神的、金銭的、人的サポートをしていくくださる方々に心からお礼を申し上げます。