

WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

VOLUME 40

JULY 2014

ISSUE 7

Changing of the Guard

By Rev. Kodo Umezu
BCA Bishop

I was invited by the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha to attend the Ceremony of Transmitting the Jodo Shinshu Tradition on June 5 and 6, 2014, marking the retirement of Monshu Koshin Ohtani and the Accession of Shinmon Kojun Ohtani to the position of Monshu. Together with my wife, Janet, we joined thousands of followers from throughout Japan for this historic event in the Goeido Founder's Hall.

On June 5, the ceremony to mark the retirement of His Eminence Monshu Koshin Ohtani was held, at which time he became Zenmonshu or Monshu Emeritus of the Hongwanji. The next day, June 6, a service and ceremony were conducted to mark the Accession of Shinmon Kojun Ohtani to the position of Monshu, Head Priest of the Hongwanji and Spiritual Leader of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha denomination.

In his retirement announcement, Zenmonshu expressed his gratitude to the many followers throughout the world for their support and cooperation, which allowed him to fulfill his duties as Monshu over the past 37 years. He



Above left photo: Rev. Kodo Umezu, bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America and Tatsuya Aoki, bishop of the Jodo Shinshu Temples of Canada are among other guests observing the 800-year old tradition of leadership transition for the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, of which BCA is a part. Right photo: The new Gomonshu is shown on the Hongwanji's TV screens. Photos - Courtesy of Janet Umezu.

noted that among the many activities and events during his time as Monshu, he was able to oversee the renovation of the Amida-do and Goei-do, as well as to conduct the 400th Memorial Service for Kenryo Shonin, the 500th Memorial Service for Rennyō Shonin, and the 750th Memorial for Shinran Shonin. As he nears the age of 70, Zenmonshu concluded his message by saying that he would continue to do his best to fulfill his duties as a Jodo Shinshu priest, respecting the teaching of Shinran Shonin.

On June 6, Shinmon Kojun

Ohtani became the 25th Monshu of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, taking on the title Monshu Kojun Ohtani, Shaku Sennyō. In his proclamation message, the new Gomonshu expressed his sincere appreciation to his father, Zenmonshu, for his guidance and tutelage, and vowed to do his best to follow in his footsteps.

He went on to state that the Jodo Shinshu teaching has served as a source of support for many people. This is a result of the central role that all previous Monshu have played in sharing the teaching



of Amida's vow to save all sentient beings as taught to us by the Shakyamuni Buddha, and as expounded to us by Shinran Shonin through his understanding of the teachings of the Seven Masters. Following in this tradition, he expressed his desire to continue to transmit the Jodo Shinshu Teaching to the best of his ability.

Reflecting on the current state of the Hongwanji-ha organization, Monshu stated that, while it is important to continue to propagate the teachings to current members, it is equally important to think

about how we share the teachings with those who have no ties to our temples. He also noted that, while the times and society will continue to change, the essence of the teaching of the Nembutsu Primal Vow will never change. Therefore, how we transmit the teachings must correspond to the changing times.

Monshu closed his remarks by stating that he looks forward to walking with all of us on the path towards creating a society of oneness and togetherness as we, together, carry on our shoulders the sufferings of today's world.

LGBTQ: A Seminar for the Whole Sangha



CBE's second seminar on the LGBTQ Community & Shin Buddhism: "Being Gay, Being Buddhist" at the Jodo Shinshu Center. Keynote speaker George Takei is seated in the front row, center. At his right are speakers: Hoshina Seki, Lois Toyama, Piper Toyama, Sensei Fred Pelger and husband, Les Hitsman. To George's immediate left is his husband, Brad Takei, Sensei Elaine Donlin, CBE Co-Director, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, BCA Bishop, Kodo Umezu, Mrs. Janet Umezu, Rev. Ron Kobata and Rev. Carol Himaka. Participants were from throughout the BCA sangha, multi-generational, LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ, listening, learning and sharing stories of inclusive sanghas. Photos by Keith Uyemura

By Edythe Vassall
Berkeley Buddhist Temple

More than 80 people came to the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley to hear six speakers at the "Being Gay, Being Buddhist: The LGBTQ & Shin Buddhism Seminar" on June 28, 2014, presented by the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Center for Buddhist Education (CBE). Of course, George Takei was the main attraction. His keynote speech covered many of his life experiences, from being incarcerated as a child in an American internment camp, to attending the Senshin Buddhist Temple Dharma school, to realizing while growing up that he was gay. He spoke of the present-day triumph of being able to be openly gay and marry his partner of 27 years, Brad Takei. George talked about his movie, *To Be Takei*, which premiered in San Francisco's

Castro Theatre on June 24, and of his musical *Allegiance*, which tells the still little-known story about the incarceration of Japanese-Americans during World War II. Through these, George Takei continues to address discrimination and strives to work toward equality for all people.

Pieper and Lois Toyama spoke about what it means to be the parents of a daughter who is a lesbian. Pieper is the former Head of School at the Pacific Buddhist Academy and current President of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. Lois is currently the Vice-President of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Buddhist Women's Federation. They discussed their personal feelings as well as the legal struggles that their daughter, her partner, and their infant daughter have had to face just to be a family. They talked about the difficulties, but also about how speaking out as parents of an LGBTQ

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New on the BCA Website
www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org



2014 OBON & BAZAAR SCHEDULE



The True Danger in the World

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

Since I became the Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America, I fly quite often. Consequently, I spend a lot of time at airports. When we fly, we are required to go through a security check. I think it is necessary for airline companies to make sure that no one brings anything dangerous on board. They use the latest technology to see what we have in our carry-on bags and also what we have in our shoes and clothing. They thoroughly check each and every passenger inside and out.

At security checkpoints they can screen us to see if we have any explosive, dangerous, or harmful items, but they cannot see what we really have deep inside our minds. Sometimes, even *we* don't know what we are carrying. However, through the security eyes of Wisdom, we are taught that we have very explosive, dangerous, and harmful minds. They can explode any time. They can harm others. They can be dangerous. They

are minds of greed, anger, and ignorance. These are called three poisonous minds.

As a possessor of three poisonous minds, I have to watch myself. When I don't get what I want, I get very frustrated. I am very short tempered and explode easily. When that happens, I know I am making others feel very unpleasant. But when it happens, I really understand what Shinran Shonin explained as the true nature of ordinary people who are not enlightened.

Foolish beings (*referring to ordinary people like myself*): as expressed in the parable of the two rivers of water and fire, we are full of ignorance and blind passion. Our desires are countless, and anger, wrath, jealousy, and envy are overwhelming, arising without pause; to the very last moment of life they do not cease or disappear, or exhaust themselves. (CWS p.488)

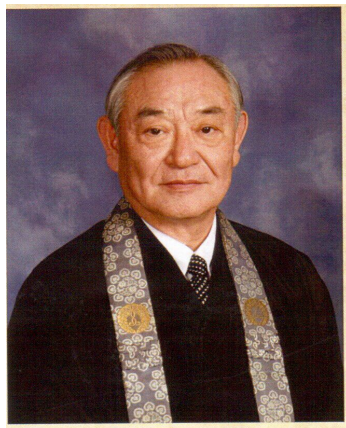
My true nature has been identified by Shinran Shonin and his predecessors. How deplorable! Our teachers and masters have gone through the security checkpoint called Immeasurable Wisdom Light (also known



as Amida), and have been warning us to be careful about how we handle our explosive, dangerous, and harmful nature. When and if we realize our true nature, we will naturally be mindful of how we behave and begin to handle ourselves with more care.

The true danger in the world is not nuclear weapons. Rather, it is within us. Let us make sure that the three poisonous minds within us do not destroy our lives and others as well. Let us understand the true nature of self and treat each other with care and sensitivity.

Wisdom and Compassion in the Obon Story



By Rev. Doei Fujii
Tri-State/Denver
Buddhist Temple

A college student came to my temple office with a ghost-like face. I asked her to describe what was going on. She said that she had come from the east coast to Denver, Colorado for her college education. When her final examination was about to begin, her mother passed away

suddenly back east. She was wondering what to do: stay and finish the exam or skip the final and go back for her mother's funeral service. At last she decided to stay in Denver. However, she felt sad, lonely, and a strong sense of guilt after the final. She didn't know how to deal with this mess in her mind. She couldn't get anything done, day after day.

I listened to her great loss and misery. She told me through tears that she was tied to her mother by profound and strong bonds. She also talked about her strong feelings of guilt because she hadn't attended the funeral service. "Whatever I may wish now, my mom is gone. I can't talk with her anymore. I don't know what to do," she said, looking downward. The woman in front of me was in trouble and asked me for help. I had

to be soothing; I had to relieve her suffering. I had to open up a peaceful state of mind for her. But what should I say to her? How could I solve her problem?

Her situation reminded me of the O-bon story of Mogallana, one of the ten great disciples of Buddha. Mogallana's late mother was suffering from starvation in the world of greed (the hell of hungry ghosts). In order for to end his mother's suffering he tried to give her food, but every attempt failed. So at last, he went to the Buddha for help. The Buddha first explained how her suffering was created, and then the Buddha explained the specific way to liberate her from starvation. In short, the Buddha talked about the cause of suffering and its solution.

So I talked to my sad visitor about how and where her present situation came from. "Now

you feel sad and lonely, and you think that you are in trouble. Your present situation was brought on by the past relationship with your mother. Do you agree with me?" I asked her and she agreed. "For example, you loved your mother, trusted her, and shared many good times with her for years, didn't you? But you lost her. So your love in the past, trust in the past, and sharing in the past are now appearing to you in the present in the form of sadness, loneliness, and emptiness. Don't you think so?"

Then I added, "You probably think that sadness and so forth are all negative things and you want to be freed from them. However, are they really negative things or something else? What do you think?" She looked puzzled at my words.

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¹ Also serves as a District Representative

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³ Also serves as a District Ministers Association Representative

SHARING OUR STORIES AS BUDDHISTS

A Conference for All Seeking the Light of Buddha

The Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations (FBWA), joining with Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Southern District temples, will present an exciting conference, *Sharing our Life Stories as Buddhists*, at the beautiful Hotel Irvine Jamboree Center from Friday, Oct. 10 to Sunday, Oct. 12. Everyone is invited to attend.

Registration is open until Friday, Aug. 15; late registration until Monday, Sept. 15. BCA temple members should register with their local BWA presidents. Unaffiliated individuals may register online. See full program bios, schedules, and registration details at: www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org. Contact: Haru Matsumune at (310) 477-7274 or email: fbwa_haru@ymail.com

"The theme, *Sharing Our Stories as Buddhists*, binds all of us and touches us regardless of gender, age, orientation, or history," explains FBWA President, Dianne Kujubu Belli. "Just as traveling to a different culture teaches us about the uniqueness of our own

culture, learning about the different Buddhist traditions helps us to better understand our own tradition. We come to appreciate that our view of the world is only one of many. Through sharing our life stories as Buddhists, we gain a deeper understanding of our own tradition, our lives and the world."

The nine guest speakers are from diverse Buddhist traditions:

Rev. Patricia Usuki was born and raised in Canada, and educated in Toronto, Ottawa, Kyoto, and Berkeley. She has served at the International Department, Hompa Hongwanji, Kyoto as a European language specialist and English editor (including the 2002 publication of *Jodo Shinshu - A Guide*). Her other publications include *Currents of Change: American Buddhist Women Speak Out on Jodo Shinshu*. In August 2004, she was assigned to San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, where she continues as resident minister.

Rev. Shumyo Kojima is a Soto Zen priest who has been

serving the Zenshuji Temple in Los Angeles for over nineteen years. Born in 1968 in Saga Prefecture, Japan, Rev. Kojima grew up as a disciple of his father, a Zen priest. He is a graduate of Komazawa University; and also attended the Soto Institute for Buddhist Studies. He entered the Eiheiji Monastery at the age of 25.

Rev. Shoko (Angela) Oh is a second generation Korean. Over a period of more than ten years, her legal career transitioned away from trial advocacy and moved toward conflict resolution and alternative dispute resolution methods as a means for resolving or preventing threats of litigation. During this transition, she studied with Tenshin Tanouye, founder and Archbishop of Chozen-ji/International Zen Dojo in Honolulu, Hawaii. In 2001, she was ordained in the Zen Buddhist tradition, Rinza Sect. Rev. Oh now works as an attorney mediator for the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing.

Venerable Dr. Jue Ji became

a Buddhist nun at Foguangshan, Taiwan in 1990, following the ideals of Humanistic Buddhism advocated by the founder of Foguangshan, the Venerable Master Hsing Yun. She received her PhD at the Centre of Buddhist Studies, University of Hong Kong. She is currently the Director of the Institute of Chinese Buddhist Studies, University of the West.

Rev. Dr. Duncan Williams earned his Ph.D. in Religion at Harvard University. He is an ordained Soto Zen priest and is currently chairman of the University of Southern California (USC), School of Religion and director of the USC Center for Japanese Religions and Culture. He has also served on the faculty of UC Berkeley and was the Buddhist chaplain at Harvard University. He has written and translated numerous books and articles.

Rev. Yoshiko Miyaji was born in Kitakyushu, Fukuoka, Japan as the fifth daughter of the Keikoji Buddhist Temple. She studied at Chuo Bukkyo Gakuin and earned the Hongwanji Award, given to the top graduating student. In 1971, she received Tokudo. In 1975, she married Rev. Nobuo Miyaji. In addition to be-

ing the mother of three children, she was an active *Bomori* (temple mother) at many BCA temples: Santa Barbara, Ogden, Los Angeles Betsuin, Venice Hongwanji, Fresno Betsuin and Gardena.

Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi was born in Toyama, Japan, into a ministerial family. In 1997, she received her M.A. from Shizuoka University. She continued her studies at Otani University and received her Tokudo and Kyoshi ordination in 2000. In 2001, Reverend Miyoshi came to the US to study at the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) in Berkeley and received her M.A. degree. She has served as a Kaikyoshi at the Higashi Honganji Betsuin since 2004. In February 2014, she was assigned as the resident minister of West Covina Buddhist Temple.

Karma Lekshe Tsomo is a professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of San Diego. She received full ordination as a nun in Korea in 1982. She studied Buddhism in Dharamsala for 15 years and received a doctorate in Comparative Philosophy from the University of Hawai'i in 2000. In addition to her academic work, she is actively involved in interfaith

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President's Message



By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

On May 31, 2014, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) representatives from across the country came to the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley, California to attend our National Board Meeting.

Bishop Umezu told attendees that the Delano Buddhist Church disbanded on March 31, 2014. The few that remained were also members of Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple. The Bishop and his wife were scheduled to attend the retirement of Monshu Koshin Ohtani and the Succession of Shinmon Kojun Ohtani to the position of Monshu on June 5-6 in Kyoto. From November 4-14, 13 BCA members will be going to the Hongwanji in Kyoto to receive Tokudo ordination.

Jeff Matsuoka, BCA Treasurer, informed the Board that the BCA received about \$460,000 in unanticipated estate gifts during the last fiscal year. The Budget and Finance Committee will be sending out budget request forms to all BCA committee chairs. The forms are due back by July 15, 2014.

Dean Richard Payne of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) reported that the IBS

May National Board Meeting

graduated four students this year. All will be entering a chaplaincy program. Currently, there are 12 ministerial aspirants enrolled: six in the Masters of Divinity three-year program, and six in the Kiyoshi Certificate Program. Thus far, \$57,000 has been raised for the Friends of the IBS Ministerial Scholarship Fund. This fund helps to pay some of the tuition costs that IBS students face while studying to become ministers.

Hideaki Mizuno, Executive Director of the BCA Endowment Foundation told the Board that the Endowment Foundation brought in over \$400,000 in investment income during the first quarter of 2014. More and more temples are creating custodial accounts with the Endowment Foundation so that they can take advantage of the investment companies that the Foundation uses.

Under the direction of Harry Bergland and Mick Kubota (Chairs of the Ad Hoc Committee on JSC Financing), the BCA will be replenishing the current \$4 million deficit in the BCA portfolio in the Endowment Foundation with new terms that will have a 1.75% interest rate for 10 years based on amortization of 40 years. The money was used to pay off the loans held at California Bank and Trust for the costs of renovating the JSC after the building was purchased. The National Board voted to approve the terms.

Bishop Umezu and the BCA Executive Committee expressed a desire to replen-

ish the BCA Fund. The Bishop agreed to start a new fundraising program where 1,000 individuals would be asked to donate \$1,000 yearly for four years. If 1,000 individuals agreed to do this, the entire new loan between the BCA and the Endowment Foundation would be paid off in four years. All the members of the BCA Executive Committee and three other National Board members (a total of 10 individuals) pledged to donate \$1,000 each yearly for four years. We now need 990 more individuals to agree to donate to help pay off our final debt on the construction of the JSC.

Glenn Kameda and Miles Hamada, BCA Facilities staff, informed the Board that there were projects that could be undertaken at the JSC to replace some items that have come to the end of their useful lives. This includes replacing the sofa sets in the lobby and all the blankets in the dorm and hotel rooms, upgrade the PA system in the Kodo and installing a ceiling projector in the Conference room. In addition, savings could be realized in an investment of solar recharging panes and conversion of the lights to LED lights.

Gayle Noguchi, Manager of the BCA Bookstore, reported positive results from the new store hours.

Rick Stambul, Chair of the BCA Bylaws/Legal Committee, presented seven different voting items for the Board to consider and recommend to the National Council

for approval. These include making non-substantive changes in the Bylaws for clarity and accuracy. After much discussion, the National Board approved all six Bylaws changes. Temple representatives are encouraged to talk to their district representatives so that they are aware of the proposed changes to the BCA Bylaws, and to ask questions about these Bylaw changes prior to the 2015 BCA National Council Meeting, if possible. This will help keep us on time at that meeting.

A seventh voting item dealing with allowing electronic communication as a way to provide notice of upcoming BCA meetings was also approved by the National Board. This item will not need to be presented to the BCA National Council.

Lucy Hamai, Chair of the Student Financial Assistance Program, announced that Matthew Hamasaki and Candice Shibata were awarded grants for their studies at Ryukoku University in Kyoto. Rev. Yuki Sugahara from the Buddhist Church of Florin was awarded a grant for a correspondence course he will take with Musashino University in Japan.

Mary Ann Miyao, Chair of the Social Welfare Fund Committee, reported that they were looking at giving grants of \$25,000 each to the Poverello House in Fresno and the Fresno Community Food Bank, pending confirmation of continued need by those

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Wheel of Dharma

(USPS 017-700)

Official Publication of the
Buddhist Churches of America

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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:

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

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The Imaginary and the Real in Obon

**Rev. Jundo Gregory Gibbs
Oregon Buddhist Temple**

While I love the tradition of *toro nagashi*, floating little boats to guide visitors back, it is not the case that our deceased loved ones revisit us every Obon season. Or ... it is not literally true. Or it is not exactly what happens. It is an imagined reverie that may, nonetheless, illumine aspects of the truth about life, death, and human connection.

I suspect that I have lost fewer family members and close friends than most 65 year olds. Yet, I have my losses. Some of those I share with some of you. We lost Alan Kasubuchi at the Oregon Buddhist Temple, three days before my birthday this April. Am I waiting for him to visit at Obon time? Not really ... not exactly. Where is he supposed to be coming from? Isn't he busy with a new life unfolding for him? More pointedly, why would I wait until Obon season to feel an enduring connection with him?

We often wish for signs of what we know is true. We heard the weather report, we can see the trees leaning to the west but we still stick a moistened finger in the air to verify that the wind is blowing in from the east. We know we have a living connection with a deceased loved one but we want some sign, some concrete proof. John Lennon told his sons that if he tried to contact them from the other side of life one day he would do it by producing a white feather. That feather never materialized, yet both Sean and Julian know they are deeply linked to John.

Sometimes it helps to imagine things in order to appreciate deep truths about life. Shinran tells us that birth into the Pure Land and Awakening to Buddhahood will be done in bodies of boundlessness. This is not a perspective that lends itself to a highly literalistic interpretation. So ... Shinran also gave more realistic accounts of what it means to Awaken under the auspices of Amida's Pure and

Transformative Realm. He is remembered in article #5 of the *Tannisho* as teaching that we should aspire to attain enlightenment in the Pure Realm of Amida Buddha's influence and return as Buddhas to liberate all beings, beginning with those with whom we have close connections. This is quite realistic. We come back as individual Buddhas to help those we love. This sounds pretty concrete. We do so, remember, after we attain bodies of boundlessness. This is not an uncritically realistic perspective. Shinran used both realistic philosophy and idealistic imagination to unfold the truths about our current life, and about resuming lives after death rooted in the Buddha's Vow.

I believe that a model of life after death as an individual Buddha who works to liberate those he loves, those he is connected to, and then, eventually, all living beings is valid. What does valid mean? It means that there are some aspects of this model



that highlight truths about the future. Which aspects? How close will the future reality match my current imagining of it? I really don't know.

Is the boat really leading your mother back to the Pure Land at the end of Obon season? No. Not anymore than it is the case that someone who acts severely against your interests is still, somehow, your friend. Will I, in some sense, somehow, see my deceased mother again in the future? I think so. Imagining it now holds up a positive truth about the future. Some of what we imagine is true and real.

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www.buddhisttempleofmarin.org

Buddhist Temple of Marin

The Buddhist Temple of Marin (BTM) began as a fellowship, meeting at various members' private homes beginning with the home of Akira Otsuka in 1960. In 1972 it purchased and moved into a building known as Brown's Hall in Mill Valley where it is located to the present day. The BTM had many of the traditional customary affiliated groups such as a Japanese language school, Buddhist Women's Association (BWA), Young Buddhists' Association, Dharma school, and activities such as the annual Obon bazaar.

For the past nearly 20 years BTM has continued with various supervising ministers. One of those past ministers, Rev. Naoki Kono, is credited with the temple's current onajin. When the Buddhist Church of Oakland obtained a new shrine, this one became available and was refurbished by Rev. Kono and carefully relocated to BTM.

The current supervising minister at BTM is Rev. Ronald Kobata, resident minister of the Buddhist Church of San Francisco. Regular Sunday services and Buddhist education activities continue. With the exception of the BWA, the affiliated groups have disbanded and the bazaar has been discontinued. However, other activities such as meditation and yoga classes have emerged, opening the doors in response to the new needs of the surrounding community.

Located just a few miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge, at the foot of Mt. Tamalpais in Marin County, BTM has continued as a small and friendly but mighty sangha. In 2015 it will celebrate 55 years of sharing the Dharma as a BCA temple.

Note: This series introducing BCA temples correlates to the 2014 BCA Calendar.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Take Refuge in the Light of Joy!

Center for Buddhist Education Public Lecture
Held in conjunction with the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course - August Workshop 2014

Presents

Neither Nun nor Laywoman: Buddhist Renunciation and the Female Lifecycle in Premodern Japan

Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course - Monthly Essay

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



Why Mahayana Buddhism is Relevant to My Life

By Perry Ritenour, Enmanji Buddhist Temple

The spirit of Mahayana Buddhism is realized in the role of the bodhisattva. To the bodhisattva, his/her own pursuit of Enlightenment/Nirvana is seen through compassion toward all other beings not yet Enlightened; therefore the bodhisattva postpones his/her own entry into Nirvana, and returns to earthly life to help lead others to attain Enlightenment and salvation in Nirvana. Until all have attained such Enlightenment, bodhisattvas personally refuse to enter Nirvana for themselves.

The Mahayana tradition also developed deep philosophical and doctrinal innovations, particularly under the reigns of kings Asoka and Kanishka in India. Mythical and legendary elements focusing on the Buddha's personality revealed complex dimensions of Buddhahood, as in the contrast between the theory of "humans inspired by God and humans who are God" as well as the concept of the "Three Bodies of the Buddha" (*Trikaya*). The Mahayana tradition leads to an understanding of a religion in which all beings are interdependent and need the help of Buddhas, bodhisattvas, friends, and teachers in order to gain salvation. The bodhisattva helps bring all beings to Enlightenment and salvation through the sharing of the bodhisattva's merit and compassion for their suffering. And for followers of the Mahayana tradition, compassion motivates wisdom. The teaching of the dharma is always at the level of the listener's individual understanding as the listener delves deeper and deeper toward Enlightenment.

The Mahayana school also developed absolute and idealistic metaphysical theories. Buddhist sages such as Nagarjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu, and Ashvaghosha enriched the Mahayana tradition with complex and differing views of the cosmos, combining them with much symbolism and mythology. Mahayana as a "visionary tradition" produces wondrous insights into the worlds of spiritual reality and personal liberation/salvation. Such vivid imagery motivates and energizes all sentient beings.

The Mahayana tradition is personally relevant to me. My initial introduction to Shin Buddhism came in 2012 after I began to experience a serious medical challenge. I sought compassion for and liberation from my illness, and salvation upon my eventual death. Through the teachings of the dharma at my home temple, I came to understand the broader message of Mahayana Buddhism with its focus on compassion for self and for others, and for wisdom gained through such compassion. As a follower of Amida Buddha, I have now come to realize the meaning of that compassion which has helped take away my fears of illness as I came to believe in Amida's Vow of salvation. Even my personal regrets for past wrongs and failures will not hinder my path toward my ultimate salvation.

The Mahayana tradition also attracts me as a scholar of Asian history and cultures. The complex philosophy and metaphysics in the Mahayana tradition engages my intellect as I seek Enlightenment in my current life with the help of Amida Buddha. Mahayana's symbolism, mythology, and differing views of the cosmos are very stimulating to my intellect and help make my daily life more energized, while taking away any obsession with my illness. (The combination of religious elements with philosophical reflection is also very compatible with my early Jesuit education.) I am particularly drawn to Nagarjuna's perspective on reality and truth and the differences between relative truth and the highest truth: that all things are relative to one another.

However, the tenets of the Mahayana school may be contrary to the general tradition of "individualism" in American society. America's history is defined by the rugged individual who achieves success without help from anyone. However, not all Americans are in agreement with this tradition of individualism; hence the philosophical conflict seen today in America's politics and society. An interesting study of today's American culture can be seen through the lexicon in Google. A word study of Google by Twenge, Campbell, and Gentile found that between 1960-2008, individual words and phrases overshadowed communal words and phrases such as *community*, *collective*, *united*, *banding together*, and *common good*. Another study by Pelin Kesebir and Selin Kesebir found general moral terms including *virtue*, *decency*, and *conscience* are less frequently used over the last 100 years in America. Other terms also less frequently used in the American dialogue include *honesty*, *patience*, and *compassion*. Gratitude words like *thankfulness* declined by 49%; humility words like *modesty* and *humbleness* dropped by 52%, and compassion words like *kindness* and *helpfulness* dropped 56%—all during the 20th century in America. Studies by Daniel Klein found a long-term decline in words like *faith*, *wisdom*, and *prudence* and the rise of social science terms such as *subjectivity*, *normative*, and *psychology*.¹ How does one reconcile this American historical tradition of individualism with the Mahayana spirit of compassion and salvation for all?

Mahayana Buddhism offers hope for America's future in today's global world. Compassion for others and sacrificing one's own salvation until salvation comes to others (as reflected in Amida Buddha) both have resonance with other American religious traditions and represent a noble act for all humanity. Men such as the Dalai Lama and Nelson Mandela exemplify that bodhisattva spirit in their selfless dedication to the lives of others.

May all men and women practice love, peace, and compassion in their daily lives as they struggle for salvation for themselves and for others. Mahayana Buddhism represents a meaningful path toward the goal of Enlightenment and Nirvana for all beings despite their suffering from sickness, old age, and death. I am at peace in Mahayana Buddhism because I am no longer alone. Amida stands beside me, always!

¹"The decline of community, in our own words" by David Brooks, *The Press Democrat*, 5/21/13

Perry Ritenour, Ph.D. is a retired professor of Chinese history who still lectures on current affairs in Asia. His pursuit of Shin Buddhism comes later in his life as he searches for true peace and happiness through Buddhism despite illness and old age. Perry is a member of Enmanji Buddhist Temple in Sebastopol, CA. He is in his second year of the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course and wishes to thank Rev. Bridge for his helpful suggestions and edits to his essay.



Guest Speaker: Dr. Lori Meeks

Associate Professor, Departments of Religion and East Asian Languages and Cultures
University of Southern California

Saturday, August 9, 2014

1:00 – 3:30 pm - Lecture ~

3:30 – 4:00 pm - Q&A Session

Free and open to the public

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

For more information email us at hongwanjioffice@bcahq.org
or call (510) 809-1441

In premodern Japan it was common for women to take monastic vows at certain stages in the life cycle. Younger women sometimes took vows to break off a romantic relationship, or as a precaution during a difficult childbirth. It also became very common for women to take monastic vows when they were ready to retire from household life; at this stage, they would turn away from conjugal duties and towards spiritual preparation for death.

Women who took such vows are often difficult for historians to classify: since most women who took Buddhist vows did not live in monastic communities or undergo formal training as nuns, they seem to have occupied a liminal space between nunhood and lay life.

This talk will explore the place of vow-taking in the lives of ordinary women in premodern Japan and will address the role that such practices had in shaping women's engagement with Buddhism.

CBE 2014 Calendar of Events

Programs subject to change. Events are at the Jodo Shinshu Center unless otherwise noted.

July 18-20: Young Buddhists International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE) Reunion

August 8-10: Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) August Workshop

August 8-10: Tokudo Preparatory Session #2

August 9: JSCC Public Lecture: *Neither Nun nor Laywoman* by Dr. Lori Meeks

Sept. 6: Baby Boomers Seminar *WWW.Com: Who, Where, Why?* with Rev. Patricia Usuki

September 18-20: Fall MAP seminar at New York Buddhist Church (All levels)

September 26-28: Tokudo Preparatory Session #3

October 20-31: CBE Shinran Shonin Study Tour (in Japan)

October 25: Japanese Seminar

November 11-13: Ministers' Continuing Education (MCE)

December 11-13: Winter Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) seminar

www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org Email: cbe@bcahq.org Ph: (510) 809-1460

Interdependence... Discover the breadth and depth of WHO you really are, WHY the unfortunate is fortunate, and WHERE your potential lies.



The 8th Annual
Baby Boomers' Seminar

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**Who,
Why,
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Interdependence... Discover the breadth and depth of WHO you really are, WHY the unfortunate is fortunate, and WHERE your potential lies.

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

Keynote Speaker:

Rev. Patricia Usuki

San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Saturday, September 6

8:30 am - 8:00 pm

at the

Jodo Shinshu Center

2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704

General Registration: \$75

Deadline: August 31

BCA Member Rate: \$60

before August 6



BCA Education News & Highlights - Take Refuge in the Light of Joy!

CBE Co-Director's Message:

The Wish to Become a Buddha

by Rev. Marvin Harada, CBE Co-director

Whether people realize it or not, I think that all people at some time in their life have touched on the wish to become a Buddha. You might think, "I don't think I have ever thought about wanting to become a Buddha."

Let me rephrase the statement. Have you ever had any of the following thoughts: "What is the meaning of my life? Why am I living? Why was I born into this world? Is there a purpose in my life? Who am I, really? I mean, I know my own identity of course, but on a deeper level, who really, am I?"

Or, have you ever had these kinds of questions: "Isn't there more to life than this? Is life just work, eat, sleep, work, eat, sleep, and then someday die? Isn't there more to life than this?"

Or, have you ever had thoughts like these: "I am so miserable. My life is a total mess. Nothing in life is going right. I must be destined to suffer. Why can't I find happiness?"

If you have ever had any of the above thoughts or questions arise in your heart and mind, then you have had the thought of wanting to become a Buddha. To wish or aspire to become a Buddha is to wish to find meaning in your life. It is the wish to find your true self; to transcend the sufferings of life that we all incur; to find the true meaning of happiness. In that sense, every human being who has ever lived has had that wish or aspiration.

Shakyamuni Buddha, as a young prince, had these same questions that led to his eventual renunciation and long spiritual search for truth or enlightenment. As a prince, he had every material possession that he could want: a palace, servants, the finest clothing, the best horses and chariots, the finest of foods. But yet, he was not happy. Not only was he not happy, he was actually quite miserable. He came to the realization that material things could not bring him a true sense of happiness, but he did not know the source or meaning of true happiness. Young Prince Siddhartha also pondered, "What is the meaning of my life? Am I just born to live and then die some day? Is that all life really is?" Such were the questions that arose in the heart and mind of Prince Siddhartha, which led to his quest for enlightenment.

Does this mean that we have to leave our homes and family to find answers? No, it doesn't mean that we have to do exactly what Shakyamuni Buddha did. The Buddha already went on that quest and discovered the answers to all of those questions. However, in another sense, we have to embark on our own spiritual journey to find answers through the Buddha's teachings. That is the meaning of listening to the Dharma.

Shinran Shonin expresses this wish to become Buddha in one of his poems, called *Wasan*. That poem is as follows:

*The mind that aspires to attain Buddhahood
Is the mind to save all sentient beings;
The mind to save all sentient beings
Is true and real shinjin, which is Amida's benefiting of others.*
Collected Works of Shinran, p. 365

The wish to become Buddha is one side of the coin. The other side of the coin is the wish to save all sentient beings. You might think, "I have never had that thought." But the wish to save all sentient beings is also a wish we have all had deep within us. We don't want happiness just for ourselves. We wish that all people could be happy. That is the other side of the wish to become Buddha... it is the wish that all beings might find Buddhahood.

These two minds are the contents of *shinjin*, which is the true heart and mind of the Buddha that we receive from truth itself, from Amida Buddha.

I think we have all had, at some time or another, the wish to become Buddha, to find our true self, to find the real meaning of our life.

Namuamidabutsu

Vesak Celebration

by Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Institute of Buddhist Studies

A gathering to celebrate the birth of Gautama Buddha was held at the Jodo Shinshu Center on May 25, 2014. *Vesak* means "the month of May," a time when many Buddhists commemorate the Buddha's birth, his attainment of enlightenment and his entry into *parinibbana*. This year's celebration was co-hosted by the Northern California Buddhist Council (NCBC), Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS), and Center for Buddhist Education (CBE).

The celebration began with a choral offering by the children of the Compassion Meditation Center of Hayward. BCA ministers then led the chanting of the *Shishinrai*. Ven. Bhikkhuni Sobhana followed with a guided meditation, and Ven. Sister Pho Chao offered homages to the Buddha. After a meaningful Dhamma message by Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka of IBS, Jerry Bolick shared two new poems with the congregation. Everyone then joined together to recite the *Metta Sutta* and sing "In Lumbini's Garden."

The event was brought to a close with words of appreciation by Bhante Madawala Seelawimala, director of the NCBC, and blessings by Sri Lankan, Thai, Cambodian, and Western monks and nuns. Everyone assembled offered sweet tea to the image of the baby Buddha and then enjoyed refreshments and fellowship.

The NCBC wishes to extend thoughts of sincere gratitude to all participating monks, nuns, and ministers, Bishop Kodo Umezu, staff and students of IBS, the entire CBE staff, members of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, the Berkeley Thai Temple, and many other supporters.



Tedmon Tran led the children of the Compassion Meditation Center of Hayward in song. Photo: Timothy Nguyen

The Dharmakara Series: Our Lifelong Learning Challenge

INTRODUCTION TO THE SANBUTSU-GE: Gatha (verses) in Praise of the Buddha (Part 6)

by Rev. John Iwohara

This is the continuation of a series of articles on the *Sanbutsu-ge*.
The reader is also encouraged to visit the on-line site: Dharmanet.org



<http://www.dharmanet.org/coursesM/Shin/I.html>

In the previous articles we talked about the role and context of the *Sanbutsu-ge*. For example, I talked about where the *Sanbutsu-ge* can be found, the relationship between Ananda and Sakyamuni Buddha in the telling of the *Sanbutsu-ge*, the role that Ananda plays in representing us as *bonbu* or foolish beings, how the *Sanbutsu-ge* is chanted as part of the living tradition that is maintained by Hongwanji-ha temples, and the relationship and significance of Lokeshvararaja Buddha and Dharmakara Bodhisattva. Beginning with this month's article I would like to discuss the contents of the *Sanbutsu-ge*.

To begin, the *Sanbutsu-ge* is divided into three major sections. The first section praises the virtue of the Buddha Lokeshvararaja; the second discusses the kind of Buddha that Dharmakara Bodhisattva would like to be based on his experience with Lokeshvararaja Buddha; and the concluding section finds Dharmakara Bodhisattva asking the various Buddhas, beginning with Lokeshvararaja, to bear witness to his true intentions of becoming a Buddha.

The first section begins with the phrase *ko gen gi gi* and continues until *shin dou dai sen*. The second section begins with *gan ga sa butsu* and continues until *ke raku an non*. The third section begins with *kou butsu shin myou* and continues until the end of the verse, *nin juu fu ke*. The twenty stanzas in eighty lines of four (*kanji*) characters of the *Sanbutsu-ge* have, over the centuries, been explained using this outline structure.

Section 1: In praise of the Buddha

光顔巍巍 kou gen gi gi

"The radiance of (your) face is (spectacularly) colossal"

In the opening line of the *Sanbutsu-ge* we find a king addressing Lokeshvararaja Buddha in a fashion reminiscent of how Ananda first addressed Sakyamuni Buddha that led to the start of the discourse of the Larger Sutra. Unlike Ananda, however, the king quickly reached the state of being promised Enlightenment by a Buddha and became a Bodhisattva whose name means "Dharma Storehouse." Through this opening line we are helped to understand that the Dharma is a truth that is open to everyone regardless of status or ability: whether you are king or house-leaver*, whether Bodhisattva or *bonbu*, before the Dharma we are equals. This will continue to be an important theme of the *Nenbutsu* and a chief reason why Shinran Shonin would be able to declare that, within the Mahayana, Jodo Shinshu is its ultimate expression (see *CWS*, p. 524-525).

The King, in seeing the radiance of the Buddha's (Lokeshvararaja) face, begins by helping us to see the virtues of the Buddha. It is an embodiment that we ourselves are familiar with when we are able to see into the heart of someone. For example, at a wedding it is not unusual to hear people talk about how "radiant" the bride is. Everyone is apt to agree because everyone also understands the joy of the bride. This joy that the bride feels and that the guests understand is translated into being able to see the radiance of the bride. In Buddhism, light is often a metaphor for wisdom. For the King to see the radiance of the Buddha suggests that the King understood the wisdom of the Buddha. It is a wisdom that helps us to see the interconnectedness of all beings and that allows us to act accordingly: it is a wisdom that gives rise to compassion. Understanding the intent or the heart of the Buddha allowed the King to see the virtues of the Buddha. This is what is being praised in the King's description of the Buddha's radiant face; a radiance that is described as "colossal."

威神無極 如是焰明 無與等者 i jin mu goku nyo ze en myou mu yo tou sha

"Your divine powers are without an ultimate; this radiance (of yours), there are none that can compare."

The following line begins to tell us about the "heart" of the Buddha that the Bodhisattva was able to see. In this praise we are helped to discover the virtues of a Buddha. We are first told that these virtues are so expansive that it is without bounds, that it is infinite in its scope. It is no wonder that the Bodhisattva would call these virtues divine. However, following this second line the Bodhisattva once again focuses on the light of the Buddha. We are told that this light is without compare.

Hearing this, we would quickly assume this to mean that, compared to other lights, the Buddha's light was much brighter. However, if we make this assumption then we might also conclude that there are some Buddha brighter than other Buddha, and that Lokeshvararaja Buddha is the brightest among them. Unfortunately, if we make this assumption then that would mean that the Buddha's virtues are also relative. However, this example is somewhat forced because, as human beings, we cannot separate ourselves from our relativistic thinking. We frequently say things like, "I have the greatest parents in the world." How would we know? Have we experienced other people parenting us? Did we make comparisons between our parents and the parents of other children? How would we know, and yet when we make this kind of statement we are, typically, utterly convinced. The person that we made this declaration to could respond by saying, "I have the greatest parents in the world, too!" Although this can result in the never ending exchange of "nu huh," it can also end in total agreement, despite being contradictory in nature. When two friends declare to each other that they have the greatest parents in the world it is not a statement made in comparison. It is a statement that transcends comparison and because of this it is possible to have two (or more) sets of greatest parents simultaneously. Everyone, in fact, can have the greatest parents in the world.

This first stanza of the *Sanbutsu-ge* tells us how the Bodhisattva saw Lokeshvararaja Buddha and the Buddha's virtues as being superior and without compare. However, the virtues of a Buddha are superior and without compare because it is something that transcends comparison.

Next month will continue introducing the next several lines of the *Sanbutsu-ge*.

**house-leaver: a person who leaves the "world" in search of spiritual truth; a monk or nun.*



Who owns it?

By Richard Stambul, BCA VP
BCA Director at Large;
Chair of BCA
Bylaws/Legal Committee

“What ‘da ‘ya mean I don’t own it?” “You crazy?”

After more than 40 years in the private practice of law specializing in intellectual property matters (trademark, copyright, and patent law), my clients have almost always been surprised, sometimes shocked, even angry when I tell them they don’t own what they’ve written.

If the work was created or written by someone who was an employee at the time, then, in most instances and with few exceptions (aren’t there always exceptions when you’re talking to a lawyer?), those works

remain the sole property of the employer. By the time our BCA ministers are close to the end of their careers, they have often amassed a substantial body of original work in published articles, sermons, and all their writings. All these works are owned exclusively by the temple they have served as an employee. I’m talking about ownership -- read that as: “Who does it belong to?” I’m talking about copyrights, including the right to give it away, to sell, publish and republish all their works, the whole shebang. Shocked? You should be!

17 United States Code Section 201 makes this the law. When I’ve discussed this at the request of a few BCA temples, some members have been incredulous. This is often

because most BCA members I’ve talked with want their ministers to own everything they’ve created during their service. Although we don’t pay our ministers the kind of compensation they deserve, most members want their ministers to have the unfettered legal right to use, sell, publish, even to give away everything they’ve ever written. If a minister can benefit from selling or republishing the writings, the works they originally created while a BCA minister, or to permit others to use or publish them then they should have the right to do so.

I urge every temple and church to begin a discussion of this issue to decide what it wants to do. Speaking only for myself, I recommend each of our temples authorize the

preparation of an agreement which essentially provides that the temple grants its minister the right to exclusively own everything they’ve ever written or will create in the future while serving us... without cost, free of charge and including a license back to the temple permitting it to continue its right to use and republish (but not sell) the minister’s works in its own publications. How can we do less for the women and men who have selflessly served us? I urge every BCA temple and church to return to its ministers what they should have owned to begin with... the copyright and ownership of everything they’ve ever written while working for that temple. We should do no less.

Namo Amida Butsu

LGBTQ

Continued from Front Page

child has enabled other parents to reach out and find support.

Two BCA minister’s assistants, Fred Pelger of Tacoma Buddhist Temple, and Elaine Donlin of the Buddhist Church of San Francisco, participated. Fred introduced his husband, Les, and presented a slideshow demonstrating the outpouring of love and support from their temple members at their wedding last January. Elaine had the fortunate experience of being totally accepted by her family while growing up. However, the outside world was not so kind. In her presentation she talked about how key events in the Gay Rights

Movement affected her life, including her development as a Buddhist. Hoshina Seki, President of the American Buddhist Study Center and member of the New York Buddhist Church, is a transgendered woman. She spoke of her years of silent suffering in denying her true identity and that it was only after her parents’ death that she transgendered. All of the speakers affirmed the acceptance they found in the Buddhist teachings and that, in particular, Amida Buddha accepts all of us just as we are.

Once again, we received very positive feedback from the attendees. The speakers were described as incredible, informative, inspiring, educational, and engaging. The Q&A

sessions allowed for deeper insight and understanding among the speakers and the audience. Many people expressed being moved by the personal stories that were shared and the community atmosphere. People in the audience felt safe and comfortable enough to share their own stories. Special thanks went out to Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, CBE Co-director, for starting this dialogue of inclusiveness.

We also received suggestions for improvement. The need was raised for a younger speaker to present a youthful perspective; maybe an LG-BTQ Seminar for teens. Also requested was more focus on other sexualities (including bi-sexuality, transgender, and

non-gender), and for dialogue with other Buddhist groups.

Shinran Shonin, founder of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, uses the analogy of the ocean in many of his teachings. George Takei told us about a lesson he learned at Dharma school that really makes sense to him:

Each of us is like an ocean wave. We rise for a brief moment, thinking ourselves to be a separate entity, but we quickly recede to become one again with the ocean.

If we keep this thought in mind, we will understand that we really are one.

Many thanks to everyone—speakers, audience, staff, and volunteers—for a learning experience based on wisdom and compassion. *Namo Amida Butsu.*

Rev. Fujii

Continued from Page 2

“Since your relationship was true, deep, and strong, your present sadness is strong and deep. In other words, what you feel is the evidence of your true relationship in the past. More importantly, your sadness is a gift from your relationship with your mother, and you are the only person on this planet earth who can receive a gift like that. So your sadness, loneliness, and

guilt are not negative things at all. They are wonderful gifts from your mother. It’s not wise to get rid of wonderful gifts. You can’t forget your mother in your lifetime. But from now on, you can live with sadness, loneliness, and a sense of guilt as wonderful gifts from your mother, can’t you?” Then, she nodded with surprise.

I continued, “You are young and healthy. You seldom think of your death. But your mother passed away suddenly.

She showed you what kind of life you have been living. She also showed you that life is impermanent and uncertain. Knowingly or unknowingly, you are living an identical life. So your mother gave you a big homework assignment; it is her last teaching. You must finish it before your death. Then, you will become the true and real daughter, and at the same time your mother will become the true and real mother for you.” She looked at me and smiled

with tears.

The student came in with a pale face. After she considered my questions, when she was ready to leave my office, I saw a smile of joy on her face. Indeed, the content of Wisdom is to clarify the cause of suffering; the content of Compassion is to clarify how to open up the world of serenity. This is what I have learned from the Obon story.

In Gassho.

Rev. Gibbs

Continued from Page 3

Only a Buddha knows for sure what is real and what is imaginary. During Obon season I, personally, do not imagine a temporary return of deceased friends and family. Others may, and perhaps should.

During Obon season I do imagine seeing the friends and loved ones who have predeceased me—somewhere, someday, somehow. This is a secondary narrative, or deliberate imagining about matters beyond my powers to know clearly and conclusively. One day I will see again everyone I’ve lost. One day I will come back

as a Buddha and help all my friends (who need it) in whatever realm they may be struggling. When I’ve accomplished that, I will try to help those who were false friends, fair-weather friends, and enemies. Then it will be on to help those I never knew before. This is the Buddhist way – help everyone if you can. But I like Shinran’s take on it—help your true friends and loved ones first. They have it coming. You really owe them. The false friends? We’ll get to them later. Is this all just some simple-minded imagining on my part? Sure! But that doesn’t necessarily mean it is not valid. We only know the real by imagining it, or by imagining something

like it. This is, perhaps, what Dogen meant by saying, “It is only a painting of a rice cake that can truly satisfy our hunger.” It is certainly part of what Shinran was trying to explain in his remarks recorded in *Tannisbo* article #5. Shinran tells us there that, after birth into Amida’s Pure Realm of Influence it is true of each of us that: “He will be able to save all beings with transcendent powers and compassionate means, whatever karmic suffering they may be sinking into ... beginning with those with whom his life is deeply bound.” [Dennis Hirota’s translation from *Tannisbo A Primer*, Ryukoku University 1991, page 25]

Sharing Life Stories

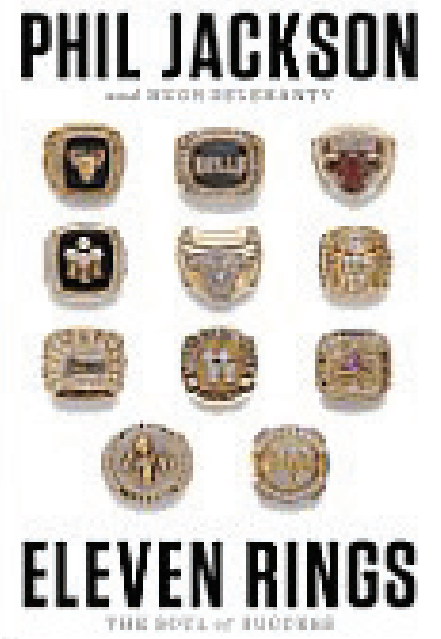
Continued from Page 2

dialogue and grassroots initiatives to empower women. She is a founder and past president of Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women and director of Jamyang Foundation.

Beth Mulligan is a Board Certified Physician Assistant who received her Bachelors degree from Tufts University and her medical degree at Duke University. She has practiced medicine for 30 years and also has an extensive background in meditation, yoga and martial arts. She currently teaches Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) at The Susan Samuelli Center for Integrative Medicine at UC Irvine, Loma Linda University Medical Center, and Eisenhower Medical Center, and for corporations and non-profit organizations.

BCA Bookstore News

By Gayle Noguchi



Now available: *Eleven Rings: The Soul of Success* by Phil Jackson and Hugh Delehanty. The #1 New York Times Bestseller is now available in paperback (\$17.00) with a new Afterword by Jackson.

Phil Jackson is arguably the greatest coach of the National Basketball Association (NBA). With vivid descriptions down to play-by-play detail, Jackson recounts the ups, the downs, the strategies, the unexpected turns of events, the ego clashes, the humiliating defeats, and the incredible victories during his tenure coaching the Chicago Bulls and the LA Lakers. Jackson reveals how Buddhist teachings equipped him to skillfully navigate through it all and lead his teams eleven times to the ultimate goal: the NBA championship. In a culture that celebrates egotistical behavior and individual achievement over team bonding, Jackson discloses how he inspired and guided superstar players like Michael Jordan, Shaquille O’Neal, Kobe Bryant, and Dennis Rodman to connect with the selfless, spiritual nature of the game. By relying on Buddhist teachings, Jackson helped them to see that in the process of becoming a “we,” they could also be their best “me.” Of all the coaching principles he abides by, Jackson says that compassion above all else is key to success. Although *Eleven Rings* takes place in the world of the NBA, Jackson’s message is relevant for any organization of people striving to reach a common goal.

To order, go to www.bcabookstore.com or sales@bcabookstore.com/510-809-1435. Many of the books by Buddhist teachers Jackson quotes are also available from the BCA Bookstore. The BCA Bookstore is open Wednesday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.

President’s Message

Continued from Page 3

organizations.

Ken Tanimoto, BCA President-Elect, told the Board that temples would be receiving posters about the BCA Sustaining Membership Program in the future. He is also chair of the H.E. Kosho Ohtani Monshu Emeritus Special Temple Building Fund. Due to recent estate gifts and money from the Ministers’ Income Protection Plan (MIPP), \$500,000 was placed back into the Building Fund. The MIPP was no longer needed since temples now provide their ministers with disability insurance. With the additional money in the Building Fund, temples can borrow money interest-free for building projects. Mr. Tanimoto is working on forms that temples can use to request money from this Fund.

The next BCA National Board Meeting will take place on December 6, 2014 at the JSC.

法統継承式が営まれる



法統継承式に参拝したBCAメンバーたち
Attendees of the accession ceremony from BCA

日本時間6月6日(金)に京都の西本願寺で法統継承式が営まれ、大谷光淳新門(釋専如)が光真門主(釋即如)の跡を継ぎ、第二十五代門主に就任された。

継承式には全国各地より約8000人の僧侶、門信徒が集い、梅津総長夫妻をはじめ、ロサンゼルス別院、輪番のプリオネス・ビル開教使、元輪番、松林ジョージ名譽開教使夫妻、高田興芳開教使が同別院門徒18名を引率し、参拝した。

光淳門主は「各寺院にご縁のある方々への伝道へはもちろんのこと、寺院にご縁のない方へたいしていかにはたらきかけていくのかを考えることも重要です。どのようにしてご法義を伝えて行くのか宗門の英知を集める必要があります。」と伝道の重要性を式の中のべられた。ロサンゼルス別院からの参加者は「伝統のある本山で歴史的な式に参拝できて感激です。前門さまも、ご門主さまもぜひ米国に来ていただきたいです。」と喜びを語った。

総長コラム

米国仏教団 総長 梅津廣道

総長職に就いてから、それまで以上に飛行機に乗る機会が増えました。以前と違って、今はテロ対策として手荷物検査や身体検査などが厳しくなり、並ぶ時間や待ち時間、不便を感じます。でも、これもいたし方ないことかとあきらめています。そこで思ったのですが、いくら新しいテクノロジーで危険物を持っているか調べることができても、乗客の

国際的仏教徒の集い

浄土真宗センターでウエサック

5月25日(日)に浄土真宗センターで、お釈迦様の誕生、成道、入涅槃をお祝いするウエサックが勤められ、ベイエリアに所在する各国の仏教寺院から僧侶、門信徒が集った。

お勤めでは、各国の僧侶らが伝統的な説経によってお釈迦様への帰依を表明し、梅津総長をはじめ、桑原開教使、IBSの生徒など浄土真宗の僧侶は至心礼をお勤めした。ご法話を山岡誓源名譽開教使が務め、最後はBCAのお寺で親しまれている「ルンビニスガーデン」を歌い、国境を超えて仏教徒同士が交流を深めた。



ウエサックを祝う各仏教僧侶ら
Taiwanese monks chanting at Vesak observance @ JSC

心の中で調べることができないのが現状です。仏教では、私たちは危険物を所持していると警告しています。それは三毒の煩惱といわれています。一つは、思い通りにならないとき怒る思い、二つ目は、あれも欲しいこれも欲しいと思う欲の心、そして三つ目が、自分が正しいと思う愚かな心。これらの思いは自分も周りの人も傷つけてしまうので毒の心と言われているのです。人間の持っているこの三つの煩惱は、仏の光という強力な検査器をもって初めて見つけることができる、非常に厄介な危険物なのです。

親鸞聖人は、善導さまの二河の喩えを引いて、私たち人間は生きている間、怒り、妬み、欲の心はとどまる

南部教区布教研究会

死にゆく者への心のケア

6月16日(月)、17日(火)に南部教区の布教研究会が、ロングビーチ市で行われた。

南部教区では毎年夏に布教研究会を開催しており、教員の研鑽および、開教使同士の親睦を深めている。

今回のテーマは「死に面した者への心のケア」で、IBS教授で禅僧の大寂キンスト師と、ローダイ仏教会の桶開教使を講師として招いた。IBSで病院や軍隊などのチャプレンを養成するプログラムを教えている大寂師は、自身のチャプレンとしての経験や、親鸞聖人、道元禅師の教えを通じて、死にゆく者やその家族とどのように接していくか、について講義をした。桶開教使とのセッションでは、死後の葬儀や法事など、京都の本願寺が定めている規範と、BCAでのやり方などを比較、検討した。また、法要の意義や院号の下付などに関して議論が交わされた。梅津総長も招かれて研究会に参加し将来のBCAの方向性や、開教使の役割について話し合いをもった。

総長の「開教使とは阿弥陀さまの使い、だということをお忘れぬようにしたいですね。」とのメッセージに、参加者は初心に戻って学びを深めた。

南部教区布研の様子@ロングビーチ
Southern District summer study session



今月の法話

「遊ぶ」

洗心仏教会 開教使 古本竜太

お盆のシーズンがやってきました。多くの方は、6月初旬から毎週末に開催されるお寺のお盆踊りを楽しみにしておられることでしょう。8月の終わりまで、まだまだ暑いお盆シーズが続きます。

南カリフォルニアのお寺で構成する南部教区では毎年、お盆踊りに新しい曲を取り入れています。今年「ファンダンゴお盆」というお盆とメキシコの民族音楽をミックスした歌をはじめ、日本の伝統的な民謡なども取り入れているようです。新しい曲の中に、沖縄の「遊び庭(あしびな)」という曲もあります。この曲は1988年に前川守賢さんが発表されたもので、沖縄ではとてもポピュラーな曲です。

「遊び庭」というのは、かつてよく行われていた若い男女が集まって踊る「毛遊び(もあしび)」をする場所のこと、歌は「毛遊びぬる夜や いそぎ肝どんどん (毛遊びの夜は心がワクワクするね)」という歌詞ではじまります。そして、太鼓や三味線をもって集まりなさいと皆に参加を呼びかけ、ヤドカリやカニ、村の娘たちがお尻をふって踊りを楽しむさまをあらわしています。「遊び庭」の歌は、そのアップテンポな曲調とあわせて、自然と体が動くような、楽しく踊れる曲です。

ところで、「遊ぶ」という語ですが、辞書には好きなことをして気ままに楽しむ、と説明されていて、漢字の成り立ちも、子供がぶらぶらと水に浮いているさまを表しているそうです。この「遊ぶ」という語が親鸞聖人の

書かれた正信偈にてきます。
遊煩悩林現神通 入生死園示応化(煩悩の林に遊んで神通を現じ、生死の園に入りて応化を示すといへり。)
と、お浄土に生まれた者はこの世に還って来て、多くの人を遊ぶように楽しんで救う、という意味のご文の箇所です。

「遊ぶように救う」と聞くと不真面目に適當に救う、というように聞こえますが、仏教での「遊ぶ」は、何事にも縛られず、自由自在にという意味です。また、このご文ではこの世のことを「煩悩の林」や「生死の園」と呼んで、自己に縛られ、煩惱が多い不自由な凡夫の世界のありさまを表現しています。その煩悩の林の中で「神通を現じる」「応化を示す」とは、仏さまや菩薩さま、お浄土に生まれた方々がこの世に還って来て、自由自在にいろいろな姿となり、さまざまな方法をもって人々を仏法に導く、という意味です。

このご文をいたたくと、私たちの生活の中で起るさまざまな出来事は、仏さまや菩薩さまが私たちに仏法を教えてくださっているのだと味わっていただけるようになります。

昔、ある女性が、夫が浮気をしことでたいへん腹をたて、そのことを相談しにお寺に行ったら、お寺の住職さんは、「それはよかった。」と言われたそうです。「それはかわいそう、なんとかしらう。」と言いかと思ったら、「それはよかった。」と言ったので、女性はいびくりにして「何がよかったか」と聞くと、「そういうことがなければ、あなたもお寺に来なかつたでしょう。」と言われたのです。その後、その女性はたいへん素晴らしい開法者になられたそうです。

もうちょっと違う方法で仏法に興味が向くご縁をくださればいいのに、と思いますが、この世は仏さまや菩薩さまの遊びに来られる場所なのでしょう。私たちがびっくりするような出来事で仏法を教えてくださるのかもしれない。そう考えると何事が起こっても、ちょっと愉快になれますね。

今月の一枚



6月7日、南部教区で一番始めに行われた盆踊りを楽しむアリゾナ仏教会のメンバーたち
Arizona Obon

光淳新門さまが第二十五代門主に

6月6日（金）に法統継承式が執り行われ、大谷光淳新門主が浄土真宗本願寺派の第二十五代門主に就任された。以下が、ご門主と大谷光真前門主のご消息。

法統継承に際しての消息

本日、私は先代門主の意に従い、法統を継承し、本願寺住職ならびに浄土真宗本願寺派門主に就任いたしました。

ここに先代門主の長きにわたるご教導に深く感謝しますとともに、法統を継承した責任の重さを思い、能う限りの努力をいたす決意であります。

釈尊の説き明かされた阿弥陀如来のご本願の救いは、七高僧の教えを承けた宗祖親鸞聖人によって、浄土真宗というご法義として明らかにされ、その後、歴代の宗主方を中心として、多くの方々に支えられ、現代まで伝えられてきました。その流れを受け継いでここに法統を継承し、未来に向けてご法義が伝えられていきますよう、力を尽くしたいと思います。

宗門の過去をふりかえりますと、あるいは時代の常識に疑問を抱かなかったことによる対応、あるいは宗門を存続させるための苦渋の選択としての対応など、ご法義に順っていないと思える対応もなされてきました。このような過去に学び、時代の常識を無批判に受け入れることがないよう、また苦渋の選択が必要になる社会が再び到来しないよう、注意深く見極めていく必要があります。

宗門の現況を考えます時、各寺院にご縁のある方々への伝道はもちろんのこと、寺院にご縁のない方々に対して、いかにはたらきかけていくのかを考えることも重要です。本願念仏のご法義は、時代や社会が変化しても変わることはありませんが、ご法義の伝え方は、その変化につれて変わっていかねばならないでしょう。現代という時代において、どのようにしてご法義を伝えていくのか、宗門の英知を結集する必要があります。

また、現代のさまざまな問題にどのように取り組むのか、とりわけ、東日本大震災をはじめとする多くの被災地の復興をどのように支援していくのかなど、問題は山積しています。

「自信教人信」のお言葉をいただき、現代の苦悩をともに背負い、御同朋の社会をめざして皆様と歩んでまいりたいと思います。

平成26年
2014年 6月6日

龍谷門主 釋 專 如

法 輪

2014年 7月号

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二〇一四年度教化標語
「歓喜光に帰命せよ」

退任に際しての消息

本日、平成26年6月5日をもって、私は本願寺住職ならびに浄土真宗本願寺派門主を退任し、後を本願寺副法・新門に託すことにいたしました。

昭和52年4月1日、法統を継承して以来、37年2か月になります。至らぬことが多々あった中、今日まで努めることができましたのは、仏祖のご加護は申すまでもなく、宗門内外の方々のご支援、ご理解とご協力のお蔭であります。皆様に、心より感謝申し上げます。

この間、本願寺では、阿弥陀堂の修復、顕如上人400回忌、蓮如上人500回忌、御影堂の修復、宗祖親鸞聖人750回大遠忌等のご縁を皆様とともにすることができました。さらに、北境内地を取得できたお蔭で、活動をより広く展開できるようになりました。また、宗門では基幹運動の推進とともに、さまざまの活動や事業がありました。世界各地にも、お念仏の輪が広がっています。それらを、巡教などによって身近に知り、御同朋の思いを確かめることができましたこと、まことに有り難く思います。

この37年間は勝如前門主の戦争を挟んだ激変の50年に比べれば、やや穏やかとも言える時代でしたが、国内では大小の天災・人災が相次ぎ、経済価値が優先された結果、心の問題も深刻化しました。世界では、武力紛争、経済格差、気候変動、核物質の拡散など、深刻なあるいは人類の生存に関わる課題が露わになりました。その中で、心残りは、浄土真宗に生きる私たちが十分に力を発揮できたとは言えないことです。

私たちの宗門は、門信徒一人ひとりに、み教えが受け継がれるという素晴らしい伝統をもっています。これからも、社会の変動の中にあって、浄土真宗のみ教えや伝統にある多様な可能性を見つけ出し、各人、各世代、それぞれの個性と条件を活かし、特に若い世代の感性と実行力を尊重して、一人でも多くの方を朋とし、御同朋の社会をめざして歩むことができるよう願っております。

後を継ぎます新門主は、築地本願寺で5年9か月の間、副住職を務めて経験を積み見聞を広めています。今後は、法統を護るとともに、宗門全体を思い、広く宗教界を視野に入れて、努めることとなります。皆様の一層のご支援をお願いいたします。

なお、私は、70歳まであと1年余りとなりました。先のことは予測できませんが、阿弥陀如来の揺るぎない本願力の中に、宗祖聖人のみ教えを仰ぎ、浄土真宗の僧侶としての努めを、できる限り果たしたいと思っております。

平成26年
2014年 6月5日

龍谷門主 釋 即 如



法統継承式の様子
(New Monshu, Kojun Ohtani at his accession ceremony)

御影堂の縁側にまであふれる参拝者
(The attendees of the ceremony sitting on the porch of the founder's hall)

