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Gomonshu's Message: *On the Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition*

On June 6, 2014, I came to inherit the legacy of the Jodo Shinshu tradition through receiving the transmission from the Monshu Emeritus Ohtani Koshin, succeeding to the posts of the resident priest of Hongwanji and the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Monshu. Today, I would like to announce that the Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition (*Dento Hokoku Hoyo*) shall be scheduled for the years 2016 and 2017. My succession of the Jodo Shinshu tradition will be officially proclaimed to the Buddha and Masters, and through its observance, it is anticipated that the teaching of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow shall gain prosperity and Hongwanji in its entirety shall achieve further growth.

Amida Buddha's Primal Vow is directed without discrimination to every life and saves them just as they are. Despite our being filled with delusions and suffering, we are enabled to entrust ourselves wholeheartedly to Amida Tathagata's great compassion and be born in the Pure Land, the manifestation of the Buddha's true enlightenment. Although everything in this world, including ourselves, is unreliable, which Shinran Shonin expressed as "empty and false," we are always able to realize the assuredness in the working of the Primal Vow.

Modern scientific and technological sophistication urges us to pursue convenient and luxurious lifestyles, thereby making our desires swell boundlessly. However, I feel that people have begun to realize the futility of these efforts. In addition, such factors as the nuclear family unit and demographic shift from rural to urban areas have forced the conventional social structure to change greatly. As a result, the bonds between people have become weak, causing new anxieties and feelings of uneasiness to arise. On the global scale as well, we can see that there are a number of issues that threaten humanity's existence, such as armed conflict, economic imbalance, climate change, and the proliferation of nuclear materials, and it is anticipated that the situation will likely intensify.

Therefore, I believe it is important for us to listen to the Dharma. Listening to the Dharma clarifies for us the compassionate working of Amida Tathagata that always embraces us as just as we are and never abandons us. Hence, we should share our appreciation and gratitude for it with as many people as possible. As Nembutsu followers who are guided by the Buddha's wisdom, it is important for us to take the initiative and actively carry out programs to cope with the numerous problems and issues in contemporary society. I feel that such efforts will contribute to the actualization of a society in which everyone is able to live a life of spiritual fulfillment.

It is my hope that this upcoming Commemoration of Accession shall become a significant event as the first major step of our organization. May this occasion serve as the impetus for the Hongwanji to effectively cope with the changing times while upholding the traditional religious values based on Amida Tathagata's unconditional compassion. The Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha administration is currently formulating new long-term plans in anticipation of the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching. We kindly request your active cooperation and participation.

January 16, 2015

Shaku Sennyō
OHTANI Kojun
Monshu
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

Response to the Shooting in Orlando, Florida

We are deeply shocked and saddened by the mass shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. We wish to express our profound sympathy to the families and friends of the victims.

When we encounter tragic events such as this, we turn to the Buddha for guidance on how to live our lives without hating and harming each other. We recognize that the root of hatred is very difficult to identify. It comes from deep inside of our karmic consciousness. We live our lives based on emotions and feelings of love and hatred. This is the source of our daily actions.

But there is a true and real realm beyond love and hatred. This is the Buddha's realm; the realm of Enlightenment. Deeply grieving our condition, the Buddha urges us to listen to the Dharma and to hear the words from the world of true equality. Through this realization, we are able to see one another as fellow travelers on a journey to the world of true equality. Regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation, we should live our lives with respect and kindness.

Namo Amida Butsu

In Gassho (With Palms Together),
Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop, Buddhist Churches of America



On the evening of June 12, 2016, Buddhist Church of San Francisco's resident minister, Rev. Ron Kobata, with Keisuke Miyaki Sensei and Elaine Donlin Sensei, joined thousands of people who gathered in San Francisco's Castro district for a vigil and march to City Hall in remembrance of our LGBTQ brothers and sisters killed in Orlando, and to recommit to peace, unity, and gun control. SF City Hall was lit in rainbow colors and flags were lowered to half-staff as a memorial for the dead. See page 5 for article.



Mrs. Joyce Terao was honored by the Spokane Buddhist Temple as one of its founders. Terao Hall was named after her and her late husband, Rev. Eiyu Terao, and the late Rev. William and Mrs. Mary Terao. Also participating in the ceremony were Rinban Don Castro (far left) and Sensei Paul Vielle.

On April 23, 2016, the Spokane Buddhist Temple honored Mrs. Joyce Terao, her late husband Rev. Eiyu Terao, and his late brother and wife, Rev. William and Mrs. Mary Terao, in the dedication of the building adjacent to the temple. A special ceremony was held to name the building Terao Hall. Mrs. Joyce Terao of Alameda, CA,

Terao Hall Dedicated in Spokane

By Karen Akahoshi,
Buddhist Temple of San Diego

attended the event with her daughters, Reiko Murakami of Mountain View, CA, Karen Akahoshi of San Diego, CA, and Lenni Terao-Doerr and her husband, Douglas Doerr of Alameda, CA. Also joining them was Judy Uyema of Huntington Beach, CA, the daughter of the late Rev. and Mrs. William Terao.

"I really appreciate this great honor," said Mrs. Terao. "My late husband and brother-in-law would be gratified to see the continued growth and prosperity of the Spokane temple."

The dedication ceremony was conducted by Rinban Don Castro of the Seattle Betsuin who was assisted by Sensei Paul Vielle. Following the ceremony, a dinner was held in the Terao Hall.

The event was chaired by Eileen Tanaka.

Rev. and Mrs. Eiyu Terao established the Spokane temple in 1945, following their release from the Minidoka Internment Camp in Idaho. The temple was originally housed in

the Terao residence until 1966, when a converted Christian church was purchased. The statue was of particular significance as Rev. William Terao, who was a part of the 442nd Combat Team, reenlisted so that he could travel to Japan to purchase a statue of the Amida Buddha. This was to be a memorial to Rev. William and Rev. Eiyu's parents, who perished in the bombing of Hiroshima. The Gomonshu of the Nishi Hongwanji donated the statue.

The temple building was partially destroyed by fire in 1992, but the altar and statue were saved by firefighters. A new temple was built and rededicated in 1994. The statue still stands today in the altar of the Spokane Buddhist Temple.

Both Karen Akahoshi and Judy Uyema spoke at the dinner on behalf of their parents to acknowledge the honor. Mrs. Akahoshi commended the temple for continuing to grow and thrive by embracing those outside of the Japanese American community.



Visit www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org for temple schedules.



The Ignorant and the Wise

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

The above quote is from the *Nirvana Sutra* and can be found in Shinran Shonin's *Kyogyoshinsho*. This is part of a dialogue between Shakyamuni Buddha and King Ajatasatru. I hope you know the famous story of Ajatasatru. After imprisoning and starving his own father to death, King Ajatasatru suffers a great deal of remorse and physical and mental pain. Various treatments are tried, but nothing helps him. The king finally listens to the advice of Jivaka, one of his vassals, and reluctantly decides to go to the Buddha for help.

The Buddha, who truly understands why we do the things that we do, explains to the king that foolish people react to things that do not really exist and, as a result, say and do terrible things like harming or killing others. He also says that the wise know that what they think they see is not real.

I don't believe I belong to the group of foolish people. I think I am wise and I think I know what is

"Great King, it is like a magician at the crossroads conjuring all varieties of men and women, elephants and horses, adornments and robes. The ignorant think them real, but the wise know that they are not."

(Collected Works of Shinran, p. 136)



Minister's Assistant Certification: On June 18, 2016, Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, certified Laverne Imori (far left) and Maribeth Smith (far right) as minister's assistants at the Buddhist Temple of San Diego. Rev. Kenji Akahoshi, resident minister, assisted. Photo by Richard Matsumoto.

right and wrong. I believe that what I see is true and real. However, the Buddha's message challenges my way of thinking. In reality, I am no different from Ajatasatru.

What Shakyamuni Buddha said over 2,500 years ago is a timeless truth. In the present world, we live with deep faith in our own judgment and create chaotic conditions

around us. How deplorable!

Our delusions have become more sophisticated than magicians at crossroads. I recently saw a new recreational device on TV; a pair of electric goggles that show virtual reality in front of the user's eyes. The picture is so real that the user thinks it is real. This is good for some purposes. For example, it can seem like your family or friends who live far away from you are in your own living room. It can seemingly take you to Paris or London in an instant. This advanced technology lets us see any location in the world or in the universe.

But the Buddha's words warn us that our minds work like these electric goggles—showing us things that don't exist. Our minds change constantly and so do our views. So before we say or do things that might hurt others, let us pause for a moment and hear the words coming from the realm of enlightenment.

Namo Amida Butsu.

"Attaining the Stage of the Truly Settled Here & Now": What Does that Mean to Us?

By Rev. Mutusmi Wondra,
Orange County Buddhist Church

Time flies. Ten months have already passed since I started working as a full-time Kyoshi minister at the Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC). I am grateful to share the Buddha Dharma and Shin Buddhist teachings with the Buddhist Churches of America Sangha.



In this Dharma message, I would like to share thoughts from my two Master Theses at the Institute of Buddhist Studies and Ryukoku University Graduate School, focusing on Shinran's unique teaching of attaining the stage of the truly settled in this life (now) and in the present world (here), called *genshō shōjōju* (*genshō*: here and now, *shōjōju*: the group of people whose minds have been settled). This thought is that once you hear and receive the Amida Buddha's Vow, you will not fall back again spiritually for the rest of your life. People might ask, "Is that right?" The answer is: "Yes, it is right and true." This concept is unique among Buddhist teachings, and is also regarded as Shinran's contribution to the development of Pure Land Buddhism.

Traditional Pure Land Buddhism, taught up until Hōnen before Shinran, explained that the status of non-retrogression (not falling back) would be attained only after our physical death, and then practice to achieve enlightenment would occur in the Buddha's land. People thought the Buddha's land was the perfect place for practice, instead of this deluded world where they were living everyday lives. However, Shinran focused on the importance of here and now. He developed the idea that at the one-thought moment of realizing the Buddha's true and real mind while living in this life, one would immediately join the group of people whose minds had been truly settled, and then could dwell in deep joy, even without severing delusions, for the remainder of this life.

Shinran did not develop this thought originally by himself. It is based on the *Three Pure Land Sutras* and the Seven Masters' writings, particularly those by Nāgārjuna and T'an-Luan.

Shinran pursued his spiritual path during hard times. In the late 12th to 13th centuries, a number of natural disasters hit Kyoto. After a twenty-year practice on Mt. Hiei, Shinran finally descended from the mountain and visited Hōnen, who shared the *Nembutsu* teaching. Hōnen's teaching opened a new world to Shinran, and he came to join a group of people whose minds had been settled in the *Nembutsu*. The calling voice of *Namo Amida Butsu* is the source of immeasurable wisdom,

which spiritually liberates us beyond life and death.

Shinran explained that people who wholeheartedly entrust in Amida Buddha's Primal Vow can attain the stage of the truly settled during this life, and will later be born in the Buddha's land and attain Buddhahood after physical death. He also regarded and praised those people as true disciples of Śākyamuni and other Buddhas, the "same" as Bodhisattva Maitreya, and even "equal" to the Amida Tathagata, in that their hearts and minds were already equal to the Tathagata, even though they were impure and accidentally creating karmic evil in this life. By subtly distinguishing the two words "same" and "equal," Shinran clearly implied that we do not attain Buddhahood in this world as long as we live with the three poisons: greed, anger, and delusion.

There are ten benefits for those people to receive in the present world. Those benefits are not worldly. Rather they are spiritual benefits so we can live our true lives fully with humility and gratitude for the great compassion, even as we struggle with our own minds of discrimination. You can imagine the white lotus coming out from muddy water and blooming as a beautiful white flower. The benefit of entering the stage of the truly settled *genshō shōjōju*—here and now—eventually leads us to the world of nirvana. Shinran's teaching is universal and appreciated.

Namo Amida Butsu

San Mateo Buddhist Temple



San Mateo Buddhist Temple
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www.sanmateobuddhisttemple.org

With the growth of the Japanese community around San Mateo, California, the San Mateo Buddhist Temple was established on February 10, 1910 as a branch of the Buddhist Church of San Francisco.

Initially, the Sangha conducted services at various local residences and rented halls. The land on which the temple currently resides was purchased in 1940. However, with the outbreak of World War II in 1941, all plans for temple construction were suspended. Upon the return of families from the relocation camps in the fall of 1945, services continued and construction plans commenced again. The San Mateo Buddhist Temple officially became an independent temple on November 7, 1951.

Due to increased membership, Dharma school classrooms and a new kitchen were constructed in July 1958. In 1980, major remodeling of the altar, construction of the Buddhist Education Wing, and the establishment of an additional parking lot were completed. Services and community activities continue to this day at 2 South Claremont Street in San Mateo, providing a resource for sharing the *Nembutsu* and the continued propagation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.



BCA 2016 Calendar Correction:
Please note that the *onajin* and *gohonzon* photos featured for the month of July, are not correct. The correct photo is featured here, in this issue of the *Wheel of Dharma*. We apologize for this error.



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

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JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: Director of Operations

The Buddhist Churches of America, a California non-profit corporation (BCA) is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Director of Operations in the BCA National Headquarters Office in San Francisco. This position is responsible for the administration and implementation of the strategic vision of the BCA. See the complete job posting at: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org, under the "Contact Us" tab, or go to this link: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/job-announcement



Are We Worthy Enough?

By Ken Tanimoto
BCA President
Watsonville Buddhist Temple

Growing up with my family in Central California, I was very close to the Temple community. The Temple was both a religious and social community. I looked forward to attending "Sunday School" (after WWII, "Sunday School" was used instead of "Dharma School" as the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) needed to "Americanize" their image.) I felt comfortable being with my Japanese American friends and attending many activities at the Temple. Although I was socializing with my friends most of the time, I knew there was something worthy about what I was taught. Believe it or not, I even learned a few things about the teachings of the Buddha.

Later on, after moving to various parts of California for my professional career, starting a family, and settling down in a community, I realized something was missing from my life. I was missing what had earlier given me great joy: the teachings of Shinran and the unity of a Sangha. I found the Watsonville Buddhist Temple and rediscovered the joy of the Dharma and temple harmony.

BCA temples are here for us to address the question of "why" things happen. The Sangha continues to provide inspirational role models for "giving back." I realized the importance of giving back to the temple. Our practice is not just about listening and learning about the Dharma, but spreading the BuddhaDharma as well.

Rev. Masami Hayashi of the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple is an

inspiration to me. A retired geologist from the state of Utah, he received his Masters' degree from the Institute of Buddhist Studies, then studied for Tokudo ordination and Kyoshi certification. Rev. Hayashi has been Rev. Jerry Hirano's minister's assistant since the BCA Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) started almost twelve years ago. I was astonished by his physical energy and enthusiasm for Buddhism at the age of 93!

Initiated in February 2004 by then Bishop Kosho Ogui, MAP has certified over 150 BCA lay members to engage in assisting their resident or supervising minister in various roles such as preparing the *hondo* and/or *onajin* for services, giving Dharma talks, conducting Sunday services in the absence of the minister, helping with Dharma study classes, and performing

temple office and clerical work.

Minister's assistants vary in age and backgrounds. Some grew up in BCA temples; some came from other religious traditions. Some have been so inspired by the Dharma that they have become BCA ministers. I thank Rev. Hayashi as well as the other minister's assistants who have dedicated a large part of their lives to helping at their temples. They are truly worthy members of the Sangha.

The BCA has many paths that encourage and teach us how to give back. I have chosen to be involved with my temple, district, and now with the BCA Executive Board. But even today, I am still questioning, "Am I worthy enough to hear and share the Dharma?" Perhaps you are asking yourself the same question.

Shinran gives us the answer



Rev. Masami Hayashi (left) with Ken Tanimoto at the Arches National Park in November, 2015. They were attending the BCA Mountain States District Conference in Moab, UT.

in his *Notes on "Essentials of Faith Alone"*: "When we entrust ourselves to the Tathagata's Primal Vow, we, who are like bits of tile and pebbles, are turned into gold." (*Collected Works of Shinran*, p. 459)

The Three Great Benefits of Old Age

By Rev. Yushi Mukojima, Mountain View Buddhist Temple

Recently, I feel keenly how old I am getting. I am ashamed to say that I often get backaches and shoulder pains after playing with my kids.



Also I am getting farsighted so it is hard to read books... I don't think this would have happened several years ago, but when I realize that aging has made steady progress on me, I feel sad. I know that there are some members who say, "Sensei, you are still young!" Although I think that I am still young, I just keep getting older and only feel fear. The suffering of old age, which Shakyamuni Buddha preached about, is enduring.

In Japan there is a saying, "When we attain old age, we lose three things." First, we lose our health. When we are young our bodies are strong and full of energy. But as we age, our bodies begin to ache and functions begin to slow. Also as our brain loses its health with age, our memory deteriorates and we are forgetful.

Second, we lose our livelihood. Even if one believes that he or she can still keep up with young people and has a strong will to work hard, when a person reaches retirement age, it is time to consider leaving the workplace.

Third, we lose our companions. Inevitably, we lose the partner with whom we shared life together for a long time. Even the couple who loved and supported each other throughout their relationship will eventually be separated by death. Also, our dear old friends will depart from us.

We call this the "Three Great Losses of Old Age." We take it as a gloomy

view. However, when I was at the university, my teacher told us an interesting story that challenges this old saying. He said that a person who listens to the *Nembutsu* teaching will be able to gain, rather than lose, three important things.

What is it that can only be gained by growing old? First, as one grows older, it makes one's stubborn mind soften and one becomes more agreeable. Even a person who always got angry at every little thing and complained about anything in his youth will mellow out and develop a peaceful mind as he grows older.

Second, with the *Nembutsu* teaching, one is able to have rich experience in tasting both the sweetness and bitterness of life. By understanding impermanence, something that is hard to grasp in one's youth, we will be able to live life treasuring each day. We can go through life doing our best to carry out tasks that can be finished today and never put them off until tomorrow.

Third, we are able to enjoy a deep and meaningful life by living each day based on the first two "benefits." This way of life led by the *Nembutsu* teaching values each day with a deep feeling of gratitude for everything that allows us to live at this moment.

Rather than focus on "Three Great Losses of Old Age," my teacher told us to consider the "Three Great Benefits of Old Age," which are given by the *Nembutsu* teaching. These are the precious gifts that we only receive with old age.

As we attain old age, we will lose many advantages. Although this is true, we also gain a precious way of life that has immeasurable depth.

Let's rejoice in the precious gifts, "Three Great Benefits of Old Age" assured by the *Nembutsu* teaching that make old lives shine more and more brilliantly.



BCA National Board Meeting Report

By Dr. Kent Matsuda, Enmanji Buddhist Temple

On June 4, 2016, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) National Board met at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC), marking the first such meeting in Rev. Kodo Umezu's second term as BCA Bishop and Ken Tanimoto's first as BCA President.

President Tanimoto reported that he held a retreat at the JSC in April with BCA past and present leaders focusing on issues facing the BCA, with details on who would be working on solutions and reporting timelines.

Rev. Jerry Hirano, Chairman of the BCA Ministers Association, reported that they are looking into strategies for the future propagation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in America. Also, they are reviewing the Minister's Assistant Program to make improvements.

Rev. Marvin Harada and Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Center for Buddhist Education co-directors, shared that six BCA minister's assistants and three members of the Hawaiian kyodan will go to Japan in July for Tokudo ordination.

Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Provost of the Institute of Buddhist Studies, reported that 40 students were enrolled in classes during spring semester. Five of them were ministerial candidates, and four expressed interest in becoming BCA ministers. Seven students were working on Kyoshi certificates.

Hideaki Mizuno, Executive Director of the BCA Endow-

ment Foundation, reported that the Growth Portfolio made 0.3% in the first quarter of 2016, while the Growth and Income Portfolio increased by 1.3%. The Income Portfolio increased by 2.2% and the BCA Portfolio increased by 0.1%.

Steve Terusaki, Interim Director of BCA Operations, introduced Amy Doi, the new administrative assistant at BCA Headquarters. A permanent Director of BCA Operations is being recruited.

Glenn Kameda, Interim BCA Facilities Manager, commented on the popularity of the JSC and that many groups use the facility. He requested that JSC meeting rooms be reserved six months in advance.

Larry Hirahara, Chair of the Evaluation and Planning Committee, reported that his committee is evaluating changes in voting procedures at National Council meetings.

Jeff Matsuoka, BCA Treasurer, announced that the BCA will use the same budgeting system for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. Budget requests are due August 1. The Dana Program received approximately \$98,700 during the last fiscal year. Continued awareness of the program at local temples was discussed. The BCA successfully completed its first audit in 2015 with no major issues and is preparing for a 2016-2017 fiscal year audit by DZH Phillips of San Francisco.

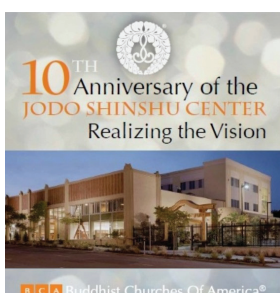
Mick Kubota, Chair of the BCA Minister's Pension Fund

Committee, stated that options are being reviewed for the current BCA-defined benefit pension plan. One option is to transition participants into a new 403(b) plan while continuing the defined benefit for current and near-future recipients. The BCA Executive Committee agreed with this approach; the proposal will be presented to the BCA Ministers Association.

Glenn Kameda, Chair of the Ministerial Affairs Committee, again proposed a centralized retirement gift fund to ensure that all retiring ministers receive a monetary gift reflective of their career and to lessen the burden on the temple from which the minister is retiring. Funding sources and procedures will be studied further.

The National Board approved requests from BCA Vice Presidents Charlene Grinolds and Gary Mukai to give \$25,000 from the BCA Social Welfare Fund to the Hongwanji Earthquake Relief Fund for Kumamoto and to grant \$25,000 to the Central California Nikkei Foundation in Fresno.

Services formally announcing the accession of His Eminence Kojun Ohtani as Monshu of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha will take place from October 2016 to May 2017. Many BCA temple groups are planning to attend services specifically arranged for overseas district members in October 2016 and March 2017.



10th Anniversary of the Jodo Shinshu Center:

Realizing the Vision

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BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

Together in Harmony and Gassho: The 2016 Choir Festival

By Jim Gray
Choir Director, Mountain View Buddhist Temple

On June 11, 2016, the Mountain View Buddhist Temple (MVBT) Choir was honored to host a Choir Festival attended by over 150 singers, representing eight Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) choirs. This choral tradition was started by the San Jose Betsuin Choir in 2005, and since that time it has been held approximately every other year. This year, participating choirs included San Jose, Palo Alto, San Francisco, Fresno, Mountain View, Salinas, Berkeley, and Southern Alameda County.



In the morning, we held a short service with an inspiring message from MVBT's resident minister, Rev. Yushi Mukojima. He spoke about the deep connection between choir music and Buddhism, and their relationship to the festival theme: "Together in Harmony and Gassho." Rev. Mukojima's message, along with 150 singers chanting *Juseige* and singing

Ondokusan II, made the service a wonderful experience. Many people commented that they'd never heard *Ondokusan II* sung so beautifully.

The afternoon included a performance in MVBT's Sangha Hall, where each choir was invited to perform individually. We were treated to a tremendous variety of musical styles. Afterward, Nancy Hikoyeda of San Jose Betsuin was inspired to comment, "The individual performances were stellar and revealed a deep respect for traditional choral arrangements as well as an innovative evolution in Buddhist music. It was very exciting to see and hear."

At the end of the day, the festival theme came to life with a "mass sing," where all eight choirs performed together two *gathas* and the song, "We Are the World" by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie.

For many people, the mass sing was the highlight of the day. At its conclusion, the audience showed appreciation with a standing ovation.



For the members of the MVBT Choir, this year's festival far exceeded our expectations. We are extremely grateful for the support from our local Sangha, as well as the participation of all the singers and attendees. It was truly a day spent together in harmony and gassho.



(Top two photos:) Snapshots of all the groups rehearsing together for the first time. (Above:) Choir Director Jim Gray (far left) leads the entire group during the mass sing. (Left:) Accompanists included Emily Kawaguchi, flute; Jim Lund, electric guitar; and Cheryl Shay, keyboards. Not pictured: Dan Dover, drums and Mark O'Connell, electric bass. Photos by the Arakaki Family.

BCA Bookstore News: Reaching Out, Near and Far

By Gayle Noguchi

The BCA Bookstore took part in the second annual Bay Area Book Festival held in downtown Berkeley, CA on Saturday and Sunday, June 4 and 5, 2016. Over 50,000 book lovers of all ages attended this signature event. My thanks to Senseis Tadao Koyama and Elaine Donlin; Lucy Hamai, Lia Noguchi, Yumi Hatta, and Robert Noguchi for staffing our booth. They did a fantastic job of sharing with attendees all that the BCA Bookstore and the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) have to offer.

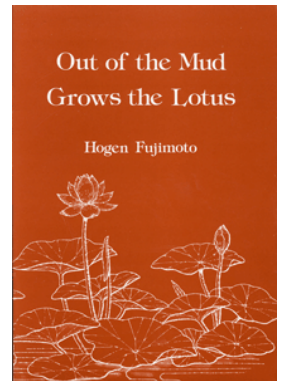
Ekoji Buddhist Temple participated in the Celebrate Fairfax Festival, a local, county-sponsored event held from June 10-12, 2016. Ed Sams, Ekoji Buddhist Temple Outreach Coordinator, contacted the BCA Bookstore and we were happy to provide them with 500 *udewa onenju* (wrist beads) at a special bulk rate discount. They sold the *onenju* at their booth.

The BCA Bookstore is supporting the BCA's efforts to share the BuddhaDharma with persons serving terms in penal institutions throughout the United States. We have taken part in establishing a new procedure that will allow us to more fully respond to the inmates' interest in Buddhism and their requests for Buddhist books and materials.

Available now, a classic publication: ***Out of the Mud Grows the Lotus*** by Reverend Hogen Yoshihiko Fujimoto. Paperback, \$10.00.

We extend our gratitude to the late Rev. Fujimoto for sharing his reflections on his work with inmates under incarceration as well as their correspondences with him. The inmates' letters reveal poignant and profound realizations as they deeply connected with the true heart of Shin Buddhism. As fellow seekers of the truth, these inmates can be bodhisattvas to us all who are bound and imprisoned by our own ignorant, ego-centered selves.

To order, go to www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org and click on the BCA Bookstore link or contact gnoguchi@bcahq.org / 510-809-1435. Open Wednesday through Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.



Camp Fire Awards Presented at Seattle Betsuin

By Dana Nakashima, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple

On Sunday, May 22, 2016, three Seattle Betsuin Temple Camp Fire group members received the Wohelo Award. "Wohelo" stands for work, health, and love. Rick Taylor, Executive Director of the Camp Fire Central Puget Sound Council, presented the awards to Amanda Hamakami, Meghan Horn, and Emi Nakashima. Samantha Honmyo and Marie Kosai-Luke, previous Wohelo Award recipients, assisted in the awards presentation. Melissa Poole, who served as Wohelo Award Youth Advisor, also attended the presentation.

The Wohelo Award is the highest achievement award presented by the Camp Fire organization. It involves completing intensive coursework aimed at developing skills in leadership, teaching, service, and speaking. Additionally, recipients must complete three individually-selected advocacy projects that enable them to demonstrate their dedication to a strong work ethic, perseverance, commitment to community service, and abilities to work with others to achieve common goals.

Amanda, Meghan and Emi worked for four years to complete their Wohelo Award requirements. The first two years were dedicated to completing the Karuna Award, a Camp Fire religious award that aims to deepen their knowledge of Buddhism and their Japanese ethnic/cultural heritage. During their final two years, the girls completed their Wohelo coursework and their three advocacy projects.



(Left to right): Melissa Poole (Camp Fire Wohelo Award Youth Advisor), Emi Nakashima, Meghan Horn, Amanda Hamakami, Rinban Donald Castro, and Rick Taylor (Executive Director, Camp Fire Central Puget Sound Council). Photo by Corey Murata.

Amanda's advocacy projects included organizing a holiday decorating and entertainment event for the elderly, designing and hosting a gymnastics camp for local youth and leading the Temple's Camp Fire Sunday Service.

Meghan's advocacy projects involved educating the public about Camp Fire by hosting a craft booth during our Bon Odori festival, organizing a nail painting booth at a local farmer's market to raise awareness of Stevens Johnson Syndrome and fund a dance scholarship, and coordinating a dance performance for a local nursing home.

Emi's advocacy projects included introducing a modern Japanese cultural experience by leading a cos-play contest prior to the Temple's Bon Odori festival, overseeing an end-of-year Camp Fire Ceremonial Council Fire, and creating a compilation of movies that depict various aspects of Camp Fire's history.

We congratulate the recipients on their awards and thank them for their significant contributions to the community and to the Seattle Betsuin Sangha.

2016 BCA Educational Events

Programs subject to change. Events at the Jodo Shinshu Center unless otherwise noted.
This is a partial listing.

July 5 & 19, August 2 & 16 ~ Mirrors of the Mind: Buddhist Cosmology & Western Psychology. Lectures and discussions at the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple. \$50 includes workshop materials Pre-registration and details: drcarmela.sbin@yahoo.com

Courtesy Announcement: July 29-31 ~ Maida Center 2016 Summer Retreat: Wisdom and Compassion: Introduction to the Kyogyoshinsho. Speakers: Dr. Nobuo Haneda and Rev. Patti Nakai. Please register by July 10. For details and registration information, visit: maida-center.org/2016-summer-retreat or call (510) 843-8515.

August 19 ~ Institute of Buddhist Studies Symposium: Shin Buddhism & Globalization. Free, 9 am-5 pm. Speakers: Dr. Ugo Dessi, Dr. Elisabetta Porcu, Dr. Jessica Main, and Dr. Scott Mitchell.

August 19-21 ~ Summer Pacific Seminar: Jodo Shinshu Buddhism Beyond Borders. Begins Friday at 7 pm. Keynote speakers: Dr. Ugo Dessi & Dr. Elisabetta Porcu. Co-sponsored by IBS & CBE. Register online at BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org

August 20-21 ~ Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course August Workshop will be held at Ekoji/Eko-Haus in Dusseldorf, Germany.

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



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

The Enlightenment of Nondiscrimination

By Elaine Shomyo Donlin Sensei, Buddhist Church of San Francisco LGBTQQ Group

On June 19, 2016, the Buddhist Church of San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQQ) Group facilitated its first Sunday service. What was originally meant to be a celebration of the anniversary of the group's founding one year prior in 2015, took on a more somber tone as more details unfolded about the June 12 massacre at the gay club, Pulse, in Orlando, Florida.



During the service, we read the words of Shin's third patriarch, T'an Luan, "Compassion does away with the distinction between self and other. When one sees the illusory nature of self, true compassion arises." I expressed my gratitude to be "home" in a tradition which not only celebrates the Buddha's teachings of Universal Oneness, but practices it as well.

The Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) has a long history of acknowledging and honoring the LGBTQQ community. From the mid-70s to the present, same-sex marriages have been performed in Shin temples. In 1988, the BCA gave the Hartford Street Zen Center a financial grant to help establish one of the first hospices for AIDS patients on the West Coast. In 1989, the BCA Educational Department published "What Can Shin Buddhists Do?", a pamphlet for nationwide temple distribution that offered informative and exceptionally compassionate advice regarding AIDS.

In 2004, the BCA Ministers Association sent a formal resolution expressing their opposition to the U.S. government's prohibition of same-sex marriages. In 2013, the BCA Ministers Association sent a formal resolution to the Boy Scouts of America encouraging their removal of all limitations to participation due to sexual orientation. In October 2013, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, co-director of the BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE), published an article in *Buddhadharma* magazine titled, "Is My Sangha Inclusive?", which explored the issues of safety and inclusivity for our LGBTQQ members within our temples. For three consecutive years (2013, 2014, 2015), the BCA CBE held a series of seminars recognizing and exploring the experiences of the LGBTQQ community within Shin Buddhism. Surprisingly, the list doesn't end there...

We closed our LGBTQQ Anniversary service with a meditative reading including healing words from our founder, Shinran Shonin (from *The Hymns of the Pure Land*):

*The liberating wheel of light is without bound;
Each person it touches, it is taught,
Is freed from attachments to being and nonbeing,
So take refuge in Amida, the enlightenment of nondiscrimination.*

May love, compassion and peace prevail. *Namo Amida Butsu.*

BCA YOUTH VOICES: Young people share their experiences in Buddhist Churches of America's (BCA) youth leadership and Buddhist education activities.

Project Koromo: Our BCA Future

By Megan Doi and Brooke Shimasaki,
Buddhist Church of Stockton Jr. YBA Co-Presidents

Calling all temple youth groups! Join the Stockton Junior Young Buddhist Association (Jr. YBA) "Project Koromo: Our BCA Future" challenge to help the Koromo Fund of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Endowment Fund survive.

So, now you are asking, "What is the Koromo Fund and why should I care?" The Koromo Fund is a BCA Endowment Fund dedicated for monetary grants to newly ordained *Kaikyoshi* ministers. Thanks to our former YBA member, Rev. Candice Shibata, we better understand the dedication, countless hours of studies, and expense of becoming a minister. Ministers are not born overnight. They study a complex curriculum and endure a multitude of tests at each level along the way to becoming a minister.



Raising funds for new ministers: Stockton Jr. YBA members who raised \$4,000 included (left to right) Darlene Bagshaw (advisor), Brian Ito-Kiley, Michelle Oshita, Damien Levitt, Annika Estrada, Megan Doi, Corey Louie, Tyler Nakane, Miya Sakai-Cheng, Brooke Shimasaki, Chad Shimozaki, and Alex Padua. Not pictured: advisors Tiffany Shibata and Karen Shimozaki. Photo by Catherine Fujimori.

The Koromo Fund assists with the purchase of their required and very costly robes, called *koromo*. At the 2015 National Council Meeting, our YBA Advisor, Darlene Bagshaw, learned of the precarious predicament of the Koromo Fund. Fund facilitator, Tom Nishikawa spoke of how the Koromo Fund was created by the now defunct Western Adult Buddhist League. Since they disbanded, support for this very important fund has dwindled immensely and the Koromo Fund is nearly depleted. Our up-and-coming ministers need the support of our BCA youth, both financially and emotionally. These new ministers are **our** BCA future!

Now, perhaps you are wondering, "What is *my* role in this picture?" The Stockton Jr. YBA, 25 members strong, raised a total of \$4,000 for the Koromo Fund. We are truly grateful for the continued support and generous donations from our own Sangha as we are passionately supportive of this fund. Bishop Kodo Umezu recognized our chapter at the 2016 National Council banquet. He sincerely appreciates all that the youth can do and are doing for the livelihood of the BCA.

If our small group can raise \$4,000, what can a larger YBA achieve? We challenge *you* and *your* YBA or youth group to join in our efforts to replenish and revive the Koromo Fund. Every bit counts and will make a huge difference in the lives of our new ministers and *our* BCA future.

Watch for our challenge letter with more information or contact our advisor, Darlene Bagshaw at projectkoromo@yahoo.com.

Again, we implore each and every BCA member to support your local YBA, our future temple ministers, and the Koromo Fund. We strongly feel this is a very worthwhile project. Please help us strengthen the future of our BCA!

Post Script: Darlene Sakata Bagshaw, the Jr. YBA Advisor and Dharma School Superintendent of the Buddhist Church of Stockton, commented: "Most of their fundraising was done by direct solicitation and education. Nearly 100% of those informed had no idea this fund existed.... When a project is worthwhile and we can say 100% of the donations go directly to this fund, members will support the youth. Not only are these new ministers our BCA future, but these young YBA members are as well."

The Dharmakara Series: Our Lifelong Learning Challenge

This is the fifth and final part of this guest series on the Juseige. We hope you enjoy it.

Reflections on the Juseige: The Lion's Roar

By Rev. Henry Adams

In these summer months, the neighborhood park by our house is in constant use by soccer teams of all ages. Watching the players chase the ball across the grass brings back memories of my junior year of high school, when I decided that rather than continue to play on the football team, I would play soccer instead. I had played football every fall since the seventh grade, and had hardly touched a soccer ball since primary school, so I didn't have any expectations that I would excel during the season. Mainly I was hoping to have fun and stay in shape for alpine skiing and tennis, the sports I was most enthusiastic about.

Soccer is a sport played on a wide field with constant action and limited breaks. I encountered many soccer coaches who communicated with their players by constantly shouting instructions from the sidelines in a loud voice in the hope of being heard all over the field. This style of coaching is quite different from what I experienced with my skiing and tennis coaches, who encouraged us to concentrate while in motion, and took the opportunity for calm, focused instruction during breaks between runs or side changes.

It seems to me that these two styles of communication— anxiously shouting urgent messages and calmly conveying well thought out ideas— can be found in many aspects of our lives. Many times, it is the ones with the loudest voices who attract the most attention and drown out the voices of those who speak with the clarity of quiet reflection.

Nevertheless, there have been great teachers whose words carry the power of the truth and endure for generations unobstructed by the clamor of society. For me, the words of Shakyamuni Buddha resonate in my heart and mind with a power undiminished by the 2,500 years and thousands of miles that separate our lives in this world.

Because of the great truth they convey, I feel that the words of the Buddha were spoken just for me. *The Sutra on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life Delivered by Shakyamuni Buddha (The Larger Sutra)* contains a message of boundless wisdom and compassion that I find to be a particularly wonderful source of inspiration. *The Larger Sutra* tells the story of Dharmakara Bodhisattva who established forty-eight vows expressing his aspiration to deliver all beings from suffering. In the sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha tells us that Dharmakara Bodhisattva fulfilled his vows when he attained enlightenment, and henceforth was called Amida Buddha, the Awakened One of Immeasurable Light and Life. In the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist tradition, we revere Amida Buddha as a tangible expression of the marvelous truth of enlightenment, a truth that cannot be expressed using ordinary speech and concepts.

Because a Buddha's words are an expression of the true reality that is realized at the moment of enlightenment, they have special power to inspire us. *The Larger Sutra* contains a section of verse called the *Juseige* or "Three Sacred Vows," which we regularly chant together during our services. The following stanza expresses the Bodhisattva's aspiration to speak the truth with the power of Buddhahood for the benefit of all beings:

*I SHU KAI HO ZO
KO SE KU DOKU HO
JO O DAI SHU CHU
SEP-PO SHI SHI KU*

For the sake of all beings I will open forth the Dharma-store
And universally bestow its treasure of virtue upon them.
Among the multitudes of beings
I will always preach the Dharma with a lion's roar.

(*The Three Pure Land Sutras, Volume II: The Larger Sutra, p. 31*)

The Buddha does not shout at us from the sidelines of life. To say that he speaks with a lion's roar does not mean that he has a bellowing voice. The Buddha speaks to us with the intimacy of a close companion who has gone forth all the way down the path to awakening and returns to show us the way.

Our spiritual ancestor Shinran describes the words *Namo Amida Butsu* that we recite in the *Nembutsu* as the voice of the Amida Buddha calling us to the realm of immeasurable wisdom and compassion. *Namo Amida Butsu* is the voice of enlightenment speaking in our lives, sometimes softly in quiet gratitude, sometimes with rich tone and full volume when we gather as a Sangha, but always with the majesty of a lion's roar. *Namo Amida Butsu*



IBS Graduate Paths: Master's Degree in Buddhist Studies



Thomas Calobrisi with his mother after receiving his MA degree at the IBS commencement ceremony on May 20, 2016.

The Wheel of Dharma interviewed a couple of the 2016 IBS graduates to give readers a sense of the broader leadership role that IBS plays in the field of Buddhist education in the US and English-speaking world.

The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) attracts students from all over the United States as well as internationally. Thomas Calobrisi, a native of Austin, Texas, received his Master of Arts degree from IBS on May 20, 2016. The title of his theses was *On Mindful Civil Religion: A Study of the Rhetoric of the Mindfulness Movement in the United States*.

Calobrisi expressed his appreciation for IBS in this way: "There are many things which make the Institute of Buddhist Studies special, not the least of which is that it was the first institution of its kind in the United States, and in that spirit continues to innovate in the arenas of Buddhist studies, Buddhist ministry and Buddhist chaplaincy, pushing the boundaries of what it means to provide education and service in light of Buddhist teachings."

Wheel of Dharma (The Wheel): What first piqued your interest in Buddhism?

Thomas Calobrisi: I first became interested in Buddhism as a teenager. Disillusioned with the faith I was born into, I began to search for alternative forms of religion. I was particularly fascinated by intellectual rigor and humanistic tendencies of Buddhism.

The Wheel: How did you first hear about the Institute of Buddhist Studies?

Thomas Calobrisi: If I remember correctly, I first encountered the Institute of Buddhist Studies through the Dharma Realm podcast hosted by Rev. [Harry] Bridge and Dr. [Scott] Mitchell. I had been curious about Jodo Shinshu Buddhism around the year 2010 and their program tackled certain issues I had in engaging with the teachings of Shinran and his Pure Land path.

Wheel of Dharma (The Wheel): What was the topic of your thesis?

Calobrisi: My thesis studies the

rhetoric of "the problem of disconnection" used in the promotion of mindfulness meditation in the United States. I argue that this rhetoric presents a false dilemma, a pseudo-problem, insofar as it claims that modern people are somehow disconnected from themselves, others and their environs. I utilize the work of Bruno Latour and Michel Foucault, among others, to demonstrate how this is so and how mindfulness meditation functions as a confessional technology of the self, coaxing modern people into confessing the falsehood that they are "disconnected."

The Wheel: What are your future plans?

Calobrisi: I've recently decided to continue my studies at the doctoral level through the Graduate Theological Union. In my doctoral studies I plan to build on the research I've conducted in my graduate work thus far. Beyond this I am looking to teach at the collegiate level. Optimally, I'd like to teach courses on the issues of religion in postmodernity, religion and science, and cross-cultural philosophy (Buddhist and Western philosophy in particular).

The Wheel: Finally, what is your favorite Buddhist quote?

Calobrisi: "When I consider deeply the Vow of Amida, which arose from five kalpas of profound thought, I realize that it was entirely for the sake of myself alone!" Shinran Shōnin, as recorded by his disciple Yuien in the postscript to the *Tannishō*.

August 19: IBS Numata Symposium

Crossing Realities: Shin Buddhism and the Processes of Globalization

"In honor of the 50th Anniversary of Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) incorporating as a seminary and graduate school and in celebration of the Jodo Shinshu Center's 10th Anniversary, the 2016 IBS Numata Symposium, *Crossing Realities: Shin Buddhism and the Processes of Globalization*, will be held on Friday, August 19, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Jodo Shinshu Center, 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, California," announced Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, IBS provost and director of the IBS Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies.

Crossing Realities: Shin Buddhism and the Processes of Globalization, will feature internationally renowned scholars who will address this emerging field of scholarship on the impact and influence of Shin Buddhism in all aspects of global dynamics. Co-sponsored by the Numata Foundation, the IBS Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies, and the Graduate Theological Union Asia Project, the event is free and open to the public. Please visit shin-ibs.edu for program updates.

Presentation titles and presenters are as follows: *Shin Buddhism and the Globaliza-*

tion of Moral Discourse from the mid-19th to mid-20th Centuries, by Professor Jessica L. Main (University of British Columbia, Canada); *Locating Shin Buddhism within Globalization: Theory and Practice*, by Professor Ugo Dessi (University of Leipzig, Germany and University of Cape Town, South Africa); *The Translocal Movement of North American Shin Buddhist Song Culture*, by Professor Scott A. Mitchell (Institute of Buddhist Studies); and *Shin Buddhism, Globalization and Branding*, by Professor Elisabetta Porcu (University of Cape Town, South Africa).

IBS & BCA CBE present

SUMMER PACIFIC SEMINAR
21ST CENTURY

Jodo Shinshu Buddhism
Beyond Borders
August 19-21, 2016
Jodo Shinshu Center



Dr. Ugo Dessi
Univ. of Leipzig, Germany
Dr. Elizabeth Porcu
Univ. of Cape Town, South Africa

What would it mean for Jodo Shinshu Buddhism to be a worldwide religion?

International Buddhist scholars and lay practitioners of all levels to engage in ground-breaking discussions.

The 2016 Summer Pacific Seminar – 21st Century will take place starting the evening of August 19 and continue to noon, August 21, at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley. Online registration is now open. Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) member rates are \$125 until July 23; general registration is \$140 and the deadline is August 6. Visit BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org where flyers, tentative schedule, and registration forms may be downloaded. Contact cbe@bcachq.org or (510) 809-1460.

The Saturday sessions will focus on the two keynote presentations, and interactive sessions with Dr. Ugo Dessi will present, "Making Sense of Shin Buddhism as a Religion Beyond Borders;" and Dr. Elisabetta Porcu will present, "Jodo Shinshu in a Global Context: Between Tradition and Innovation." Additional presenters include *Dharmarealm.com* podcast hosts Rev. Harry Bridge and Dr. Scott Mitchell, in a discussion of "Podcast: Past, Present and Future."

The Sunday session will explore a variety of genres related to "Chanting and Music Beyond Borders." The half-day session will include traditional chanting (*Ojoraisan*) by Reverends Kojo Kakihara and Yuki Sugahara; Richard St. Clair's "Dharma Chant: A Buddhist Oratorio in Three Parts," (audio clip); *New Gathas: Call and Response* led by Dii Lewis, and examples of the Nembutsu expressed in various forms and styles such as rap and heavy metal. Also see the *Wheel of Dharma*, April 2016 issue, page 4 for program details.

About Pacific Seminar: Continuing in the spirit of the Pacific Seminars which enlivened the Jodo Shinshu movement in the US after WWII, the IBS and the BCA Center for Buddhist Education re-initiated the Pacific Seminar – 21st Century in 2008 shortly after the Jodo Shinshu Center first opened, ushering in a new era for Jodo Shinshu Buddhist education. In addition to the two-day annual summer session, one-day Winter and Spring Pacific Seminar sessions have been hosted in Southern California and in the Northwest.



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Continuing the Legacy of the Nembutsu Teachings

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You can easily make your offering using your credit card by visiting the BCA website at: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org and selecting the Dana Program icon or going directly to: bca.kindful.com

By giving online you will be able to electronically track and modify your giving schedule.

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We are here to answer your questions about the Dana Program at donate@bcachq.org or 415-776-5600 x311.



Like the Buddhist Churches of America



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2016年7月号

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二〇一六年度教化標語
「まことの人生を
歩もう」

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>

伝灯奉告法要についての消息

去る平成26年6月6日、前門主の跡を承けて法統を継承し、本願寺住職ならびに浄土真宗本願寺派門主として務めてまいりました。ここに法統継承を仏祖の御前に奉告いたしますとともに、あわせて本願念仏のご法義の隆盛と宗門の充実発展とを期して、平成28年および29年に、伝灯奉告法要をお勤めすることになりました。

阿弥陀如来のご本願は、あらゆる存在を分け隔てなくそのまま救おうとはたらきかけていてくださいます。迷いと苦悩をかかえる私たちは、阿弥陀如来のお慈悲ひとすじにこの身を任せ、真実のさとりの世界であるお浄土に生まれたいべき身にならせていただきます。宗祖親鸞聖人が「そらごとたわごと」とお示しくくださった私たち自身を含む迷いの世界は、何一つとしてたよりになるものはありませんが、ご本願のはたらきの中に生きる私たちは、確かな依りどころを持つことができます。

科学技術の発達による便利で豊かな生活の追及や欲望の肥大化はとどまることを知りませんが、人々は、そのような豊かさのみを追求することの虚しさに気づきはじめてのではないのでしょうか。しかも、核家族化・人口の流動化などによって社会構造は大きく変化し、人間関係は希薄となり新たな悩みや不安を生み出しています。さらに世界に眼を移せば、武力紛争、経済格差、気候変動、核物質の拡散など、人類の生存に関わる課題が露呈しています。これらの傾向は今後一層強くなっていくことと思います。

私たちは、凡愚のまま撰め取って捨てないと働き続けてくださる阿弥陀如来のお慈悲を聞信させていただき、その有り難さ尊さを一人でも多くの方に伝えることが大切です。それとともに仏智に教え導かれて生きる念仏者として、山積する現代社会の多くの課題に積極的に取り組んでいく必要があります。まさにこのような営みの先にこそ、「自他共に心豊かに生きることのできる社会の実現に貢献する」道が拓かれていくのでありましよう。

このたびのご法要が、親鸞聖人によって明らかにされた阿弥陀如来の救いのはたらきに依りながら、時代の変化に対応する宗門の新たな第一歩として意義を持つものでありたいと思います。宗門では、親鸞聖人御誕生850年・立教開宗800年に向けて新たな長期計画が策定されます。皆様の積極的なご協力とご参画を心から願いたします。

平成27年

2015年1月16日

龍谷門主 釈専如

ご門主の御真影が 各寺院に届けられる

6月初旬より、第25代浄土真宗本願寺派門主、専如上人(大谷光淳門主)の御真影(写真)と御消息が各寺院に届けられています。御消息は2015年1月16日に発布された「伝統奉告法要」(上に掲載)。御真影は各寺院の本堂やオフィス、ロビーなど、ご門主のお姿を仰ぐのに適当な場所にかかげられることになっています。

総長メッセージ

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

フロリダ州オーランド市で痛ましい銃撃事件があり、多くの死傷者がありました。本当に悲しいことでもあります。ご遺族や関係者の方々に心よりお悔やみ申し上げます。

私の先生は新聞の記事、特に殺人事件などを読んで、ご自分がそこに加害者としていると感じるとおっしゃっておられました。人ごとではない、自分自身の中にある業を感じておられたのだと思います。いつ自分が人を殺めるかわからない存在であるということを知っておられたのです。

私たちが生きるということは、愛と憎しみの感情をもとに生きるということです。愛と憎しみはちよっと強すぎる言い方もしれません。それは好き嫌いと言ひ換えてもいいかと思えます。好きなものは近くに置いておきたいし、嫌いなものは無くなって欲しいと思うのが普通の人ででしょう。いや、そうすることで生きていっているのです。

また、矛盾しているようですが、平和を願い、戦争や争いを嫌うことがまた争いを生むものとなつていっているのです。このような私たちの有り様を深く悲しまれて、愛憎を超えた世界を私たちに示してくださいませ。

その世界を私たちに示してくださいませ。皆そこへ還るべき者同士であるということをお教えてくださいます。私たちは、人種や宗教、性別で分け隔てをしていますが、仏さまからご覧になれる世界では、すべての生きとし生けるものは尊い命をいただいで生きていけるのであります。

仏さまの教えに触れることで、私たちの愚かさ気づかせていただきます。そして、そのお心にふれて、初めて自分の奥深くに巣食っているどうしようもない人間の闇を知らされ、生き方が少しずつ変わっていくのであります。それでも、縁あれば何をやるかわからない私であります。仏さまの深い願いを聞かせていただき、お互いに御同朋御

Japanese-speaking group at Southern District Conference in San Diego



同行として、一緒にお念仏の日暮らしをさせていただきましよう。

南無阿弥陀仏

6月18日(土)にサンディエゴのクラウンプラザホテルにおいて、南部教区仏教徒大会および仏教婦人会大会が開催された。大会のテーマは「American Shin Buddhism: New Voices, Listening, Hearing and Being...」で、サンディエゴ仏教会とピスタ仏教会が共催した。大会には255名が参加、南部教区12ヶ寺の僧侶、門徒に加え、ラスベガスサンカからの参加もあった。開会の法要は、総長追悼法要をかねて勤められ、先亡の歴代総長へ感謝の意を表した。法要後、午前中は日本語と英語のグループにわかれたのダルマソンが行われ、それぞれ4名のスピーカーが法話や感話をした。午後からはパネルディスカッションがあり、梅津総長と南部教区の開教使がパネリストとして、米国で浄土真宗が伝わっていくうえでの課題や展望を話した。日本語パネリストの開教使は「255名中、約50名の方が日本語の集いに来てくださいました。日本語を話される方が多くいらっしゃることに驚きました。そして、その方々はけっこう若くて、元気です。あまり浄土真宗にご縁のない方や、英語だけを話される方への布教をするのも大切ですが、日本語を話される方や日本に関わりのある方々に真宗の深い教えを伝え、ともに味わっていくこともフォーカスするべきですね。」と英語圏での日本語伝道の可能性を探った。

南加仏教徒大会開催される