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The Light of Joy Shines in the UK

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

My wife, Janet, and I had an opportunity to meet with many Jodo Shinshu Buddhists from around the world during the four-day European Shin Buddhist Conference* (ESBC) held at Solent University in Southampton, United Kingdom, September 1-4. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience; I don't know how to describe my feelings. There were over 60 people from many countries in Europe, Nepal, Australia, the US, and Japan, including our former Monshu, Koshin Ohtani.

A simple Japanese-style opening service was officiated by Rev. Daichi Gary Robinson, minister-in-charge of the Southampton Sangha, and his four assistants. Sitting on the hard carpeted floor, they read the Three Treasures, the Jodo Shinshu Creed, and Juseige. After the service, they removed the sacred objects from the onajin setup so that they could proceed with the program. I was surprised to see the young assistants handle the Buddha's Name scroll with white gloves on. I sometimes forget the proper manner for handling sacred objects, but they showed the highest respect to the scroll. I believe it was a reflection of their deep appreciation of the teaching.

During the four-day conference, many



At the 17th Annual European Shin Buddhist Conference, Rev. Daichi Gary Robinson of the Chomon House of Southampton, U.K., leads the opening service at the Southampton Solent University Conference Center with four minister's assistants. The conference was co-sponsored by Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha.

individuals presented papers and had question-and-answer sessions. I enjoyed hearing their views and sincere appreciation of the nembutsu teaching. Some of the

speakers have also written books. Rev. Diane Jishin Johnson, though born in Philadelphia, PA, received Tokudo under the European umbrella group. She is re-

sponsible for a small temple in Deer Island, Oregon called Myoko-in, which is a branch of the Jikoji Temple in Antwerp, Belgium. I was honored that Rev. Johnson asked me read a poem from *A Day in the Life of a Shin Buddhist*, one of several books she has written. I chose the poem "Goodness Escapes Me":

*Goodness escapes me.
Compassion escapes me.
Wisdom is a distant memory.
My kindness is born from ego.
Is it possible for me to be genuine?
I feel fake and false.
I don't know anything.
Empty.*

*Amida Buddha sees me.
Amida Buddha Vowed to save the likes of me.
Amida Buddha threw his Compassionate net so wide that
even someone as evil as me
gets caught in its grasp.*

*Good for nothing
that is me,
and that makes me
perfect for Amida Buddha.*

Namu Amida Butsu

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The Hongwanji Meets the BCA

The Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto initiated a new program that brings staff members from the Hongwanji to the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) for a period of three months to be inspired by what they learn from the BCA temples and members. The study tour is coordinated through the Hongwanji Office located at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California.

Arriving on September 8, the Hongwanji staff joined the ministers participating in the International Ministerial Orientation Program (IMOP). They are Rev. Kenko Takamine, 29, from the Administrative Affairs

Department at the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto and Rev. Anan Hatanaka, 28, from the General Affairs Department at the Tsukiji Hongwanji in Tokyo.

Rev. Takamine is originally from Saga prefecture and his home temple is Joshin-ji. He has been working for the Hongwanji for four years, after graduating from Fukuoka University and Chuo Bukkyo Gakuin in Kyoto.

Rev. Hatanaka is originally from Fukui prefecture and his home temple is Myosho-ji. He has been a Hongwanji employee for 3.5 years. He graduated from Fukui National College of Technology and also from Chuo

Bukkyo Gakuin. He continued his training at the Hongwanji Rituals and Liturgy Training Center. (In April 2012, the Tsukiji Hongwanji became a direct part of the Hongwanji and the Monshu (head of the Hongwanji) is also the head priest of Tsukiji Hongwanji.)

Rev. Takamine's interest during this study tour is to learn the history and current state affairs of the BCA, as well as propagation efforts. He stated, "I am enjoying each day of my training with a fresh feeling. I look forward to returning to Japan and sharing the many wonderful aspects of Jodo Shinshu in America that

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Rev. Anan Hatanaka, Tsukiji Hongwanji; Rev. Ron Kobata, minister at Buddhist Church of San Francisco and Rev. Kenko Takamine of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha.



Candace Shibata, IBS Student.

IBS-Ryukoku University Student Exchange

Graduate students studying at the Buddhist Churches of America's (BCA) Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) are able to participate in a student exchange program at Ryukoku University in Kyoto. Ryukoku University was started in 1639 by the 13th Monshu of the Hongwanji, Ryonyo, as a seminary for Jodo Shinshu priests. It is one of Japan's oldest institutions of higher education.

To qualify for the exchange, IBS students must have their coursework completed and a draft of their final thesis approved.

IBS students Candace Shibata of the Buddhist Church of Stockton and Matthew

Hamasaki of Berkeley Buddhist Temple left in March of this year to begin their rewarding experience in Kyoto. Around the same time, Nobuya Dake of Ryukoku University came to Berkeley to begin his year as an exchange student at IBS.

Living as a foreign exchange student in Japan or the U.S. has its moments. *The Wheel of Dharma* will begin featuring stories about these current exchange students on an occasional basis.

Ms. Shibata recently wrote that she is fortunate to have this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and is reminded that she is in Japan because of the support and efforts of others.

"I cannot thank my family and friends enough for their unconditional love and encouragement," Ms. Shibata wrote. "I must also thank my IBS/Jodo Shinshu Center family for providing the firm push I needed to get things done while also giving me gentle hugs when I felt defeated. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the kind individuals, BCA temples, and BCA-affiliated organizations for the generous scholarships that I have received to support my studies in Japan."

The series will begin with an article by Candice Shibata in an upcoming issue of *The Wheel of Dharma*. Please see page six for support of IBS students.



What Really Matters

By Rev. Patricia Usuki
San Fernando Valley
Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

All over the world today, as in the past, there are people who are persecuted and killed for adhering to their religious paths. In Japan, there have been times when Nembutsu followers suffered the same treatment. Would you do anything to ensure accessibility to the Buddha-dharma and the Nembutsu teaching? In the grand scheme of temple priorities, where does it rank on your list? In your life priorities, how much do spiritual matters count?

It has been 115 years since the first ministers from the Hongwanji in Kyoto came to America to share the dharma and our Jodo Shinshu teaching. According to an 1899 *San Francisco Chronicle* article that was reprinted in last month's issue of the *Wheel of Dharma*, their purpose was not only to serve Japanese immigrants, but also "to communicate with those among Americans who wish to investigate Buddhism."

Decades ahead of their time, the two priests had only pamphlets, a poor command of

English, and a hostile social milieu in which to pursue the latter objective. Over a century later, we still have pamphlets, but we also have social media and the Internet with which to communicate information about the dharma and about our organization's existence. Many of our ministers are native English speakers, and, thanks to an initial interest in Buddhism sparked by figures like Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama, and popular practices such as meditation and mindfulness, the mainstream population is finding us through our websites and by word of mouth.

We are fortunate to have a well-established infrastructure that has been passed along to us through all these years. Granted, many temples are struggling, but as long as the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha still exist, there is great potential. The number of ethnic Japanese will without any doubt decline, but the number of dharma seekers in this country has been rising steadily, as the growing and diverse sangha at temples like the San Fernando Valley Hongwanji demonstrate.

In his June 6 inaugural message, Monshu Kojun Ohtani, the

Hongwanji's Head Priest and spiritual leader, noted, "In reflecting on the present circumstances of our organization, it is significantly important to consider how we can approach and reach out to persons who have never had any contact with a Buddhist temple, as well as those who are already involved with one. The *nembutsu* teaching that is based on Amida's Primal Vow remains unchanged, regardless of the changing times and society. However, the methods for transmitting and sharing it need to evolve and adapt according to social changes..."

Let's state the obvious: it isn't the temples *per se* that are so precious and important. In the Preface to his monumental work, the *Kyogyoshinsho (The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way)*, we read, "How joyous I am, Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Śākyamuni! Rare is it to come upon the sacred scriptures from the westward land of India and the commentaries of the masters of China and Japan, but now I have been able to encounter them ... I am especially aware of the profundity of the Tathagata's benevolence. Here I rejoice in

what I have heard and extol what I have attained." Remember, Shinran Shonin did not even have a temple. Like Śākyamuni Buddha, he shared the teachings with those who wanted to hear them, people who sometimes braved long and dangerous journeys for this purpose.

We who call ourselves members of a Hongwanji sangha are so fortunate to be enabled to receive the dharma. Yet it often seems that we have things backwards, being preoccupied with the physical temple or the number of members, while paying no heed to the main objective of hearing the teachings. Every organization should ask what its primary purpose is. There isn't much point in having a temple or activities or clubs if people do not avail themselves of the real treasure. What percentage of our temple members of any age regularly attend services, seminars, and study classes? Back in the day, before the temples were built, people gathered together in homes or halls just to hear the teaching.

We have to ask ourselves some hard questions. Do we find the teaching so powerful and essential to our lives that we would



give it the priority and support it deserves? If not, why not? Do our ministers have the depth, understanding, and ability to connect meaningfully? Are our activities relevant and reflective of the teaching?

Just as our Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley has met with great success thanks to its many and varied Buddhist educational programs, so our continuation lies in focusing on the Buddha-dharma at our temples. But regardless of what we do or how we see it, Buddhism will follow a course of ebb and flow as it has throughout its 2,500 year history, and just as has happened countless times in the past, temples and organizations will rise and fall. Ultimately, it is beyond our limited vision and self-serving calculation. Only the Nembutsu, like the dharma, is true and reliable.

"The Pure Land Teaching: Supporting Us to Live as Fully as We Can"



By Rev. Yuki Sugahara
Buddhist Church of Florin

The other day, my wife Namiko and I were watching Japan's National Cheerleading Championship on TV. Actually, I wasn't interested in watching it, but when I started to, I was amazed by their skills and stamina—how high they could jump with the help of others, their quickness, and what a beautiful human pyramid they made. It was very impressive.

When the cheerleaders

make a human pyramid, there is always a person at the top. This person is at least 10 feet off the ground (and sometimes more than 15 feet), smiling the entire time. She even stands on one foot while at the top. After the pyramid is completed, the cheerleader jumps off without hesitation. I cannot believe it! I do not like high places so I know it would take me some time to get the courage to jump from such a high place. I would never even try to stand on one foot but the cheerleaders can do this easily. Of course, I am sure that they practiced this over and over again, because it is not easy to overcome the fear of heights or getting hurt. But this made me wonder: how can cheerleaders do this so easily?

I looked at the bottom of the pyramid and saw that there were people on

the ground waiting to catch them. The people put their hands out in front of them to relay the message that there was nothing to worry about, "We will catch you, no matter what happens." The fear of the cheerleader at the top comes from within, not trusting the people on the ground. But when she removes that feeling from within and focuses on the message from the people on the ground, "We will catch you, no matter what happens," the fear disappears and she is able to jump off the top of the pyramid. The person at the top just needs to entrust herself to the message conveyed by the people on the ground, complete the performance, and jump.

When I talk about the Pure Land, many people think of the Pure Land as where we go after we die, and that the Pure Land

teaching has nothing to do with this life. But, according to *the Larger Sutra*, we are not going to die; we will be born into the Pure Land. We are not living life to die; we are living life to be born into the Pure Land. The calling of Amida Tathagata is just like the people on the ground below the human pyramid, waiting and saying "we will catch you, no matter what happens. Don't worry about it." Just as the cheerleader on top of pyramid can smile and focus on her performance because of the support on the ground, the Pure Land teaching becomes the energy we need to live this life fully without worrying about what is going to happen when we die. All we need to do is just entrust ourselves to the teaching, focus on this life, and live as fully as we can with gratitude in our hearts.

Namo Amida Butsu



Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Temple
1155 Noche Buena Street
Seaside, CA 93955
P.O. Box 1328, Monterey, CA 93942
Tel: (831) 394-0119
www.montereybuddhist.org
e-mail: mail@montereybuddhist.org

Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Temple

The Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Temple began as an independent temple on December 15, 1946. The present location of the temple was purchased in 1958 and on June 13, 1965 the temple building was completed and dedicated. Tragedy struck in January 1976 when a fire destroyed the entire temple.

With hard work, dedication and dana from many members and friends, a new temple was built and dedicated on June 5, 1977. Including a beautiful garden and multipurpose room, meeting rooms and the beautiful naijiin pictured this month in the BCA calendar, the present temple grounds include a new Dharma School room dedicated in 2013.

The temple stands today as a testament to the past and present members whose faith and dedication have left a lasting legacy for future generations to hear the Nembutsu teaching.

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President's Message

The European Experience



By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

On Sunday, August 31, 2014, the 32nd World Joint Coordinating Council Meeting for Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha took place in Southampton, England. This was the first time it was held in Europe. Representatives from the Hongwanji in Kyoto met with representatives from the four Overseas Districts (*Kyodans*): North America, Hawai'i, Canada, and South America. (The representatives from the *Comunidade Budista Sul-Americana Jodo-Shinshu Honpa Hongwanji* were unable to attend.) At this meeting, Hongwanji representatives and the overseas districts can report what is happening at their respective locations.

Representing the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) was Rev. Kodo Umezu, bishop, Alan Kita, chief administrative officer and I (as president). Rev. Kiyo Kuwahara was also present representing the Hongwanji Office in the USA.

The BCA's written report to the Council consisted of many of the facts one would normally see in the Bishop's Report to the BCA National Council. (A copy is available from the BCA temples.) In addition, our Bishop shared his middle- and long-term visions for international propagation, including ideas such as establishing a Hongwanji International Office in San Francisco to send messages out to the world, and making the Institute of Buddhist Studies a center for world Jodo Shinshu studies.

The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i was represented by Rev. Eric Matsumoto, bishop, Pieper Toyama, president, and Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani, executive assistant. They are moving ahead with plans to build classroom facilities for the Pacific Buddhist Academy. They received a \$1.5 million grant from the Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation. Another \$2 million is needed to construct the first building. The building must be finished by the end of 2016, or they will lose the grant. They have already raised about \$5.8 million.

Bishop Matsumoto is looking at ways to try to share the Dharma with non-Buddhists. He wants members of the Hawai'i Kyodan to reach out to the general community and provide a Buddhist perspective. He notes that some of the Hawaiian temples chant their sutra in English. He also reported declining membership and a shortage of qualified certified ministers. The Kyodan is

also trying to standardize ministers' compensation.

Rev. Tatsuya Aoki, bishop, presented for the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada (JSBTC). His report was similar to what appeared in my column in the August *Wheel of Dharma*. In addition, he reminded BCA members going to the 15th World Buddhist Women's Convention in Calgary in May 2015 to bring their *nenju*, *monto-shikisho*, passport, and six *omiyage* gifts (suggested value of \$5 or under) to exchange at your banquet table. The BCA Bookstore can give you ideas.

Representatives from Honzan (Hongwanji headquarters) informed us that they are still making plans for public services to commemorate the Go-Monshu's Succession in 2016. The Hongwanji Office on Building Opportunities for Children and Youth is continuing with the Kids' Sangha movement and expanding youth participation. Overseas districts will be sending 15 people for Tokudo ordination in November. Thirteen are from BCA, one is from JSBTC, and another from Europe. Honzan announced that Mr. Fons Martens from Jikoji in Antwerp, Belgium, was certified as a Minister's Assistant and appointed Acting Liaison for the European Sub-District.

Honzan told the Council attendees there will be a job announcement for an English-speaking ministerial candidate to work in Japan to teach English to Hongwanji employees, receive guests from abroad, assist in trans-

lations, and perform other duties for three to five years. Honzan is also trying to update their Overseas Ministers and Tokudo Holders' Lists by removing those who have passed away or are no longer active. Honzan presented information on the shrinking population of Japan.

They also told the Council that they will partially subsidize the costs of ministers participating in the International Ministerial Orientation Program (IMOP) at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC). IMOP enables Japanese ministers to learn how to be a *kaikyoshi* minister. The IMOP ministers take English courses, go to lectures on western culture, and visit many different temples. Rev. Kuwahara estimated that it cost about \$25,000 to train the four ministers who came last year, not including travel to and from Japan, insurance, meals, or Rev. Kuwahara's time. There are five ministers participating this year.

A resolution of appreciation was signed by all the overseas bishops and was presented to His Eminence Koshin Ohtani, *Zenmon-sama*, at the meeting's dinner.

One day following the Joint Coordinating Council Meeting, the 17th European Shin Buddhist Conference (ESBC) began with a joint session of the 14th International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies Conference. The theme for the conference was "Jodo Shinshu in Daily Life." We heard papers titled "Namandabu Anytime, Anywhere," "Defeating the Mara," "On Other Power Faith," "Myo-

konin Okaru and Her Poems of Despair and Joy," "Walking the Shin Buddhist Path as a Buddhist," "The Name and the Light as our Compassionate Father and Mother," "Mindfulness of Amida: the Application of the Nembutsu in Everyday Life," "Jodo Shinshu: The Supreme Teaching for the Present Age," and "The Ordinary Circumstances of Human Life: Reading Rennyo In and Out of Context." The speakers were from England, Japan, Romania, Australia, Germany, and Belgium.

An address was given by Zenmon-sama at the opening ceremony of the 17th ESBC, the second half of which was held jointly with the International Association of Buddhist Culture. We heard papers on "The Power of Gratitude," "Nembutsu Poetry and Daily Life," "Responding to Climate Change in Daily Life," "Amida's Pure Land: My Heaven on Earth," and "24/7—Isn't That Too Much?"

Both conference groups were taken for a day trip to Stonehenge and Winchester Castle and Cathedral. We had tea and scones with the mayor of Winchester. She and Zenmon-sama exchanged gifts.

After the conference I asked BCA headquarters to send fifty copies of the "Complete Works of Shinran Shonin" to the Southampton Shin Buddhist Fellowship.

The next ESBC will be in August 2016 and the theme will be "The Meaning of Nembutsu." I hope that a BCA minister and a lay representative will attend.

Looking Ahead to 2015 BCA Annual Meetings

By Ralph Honda,
Planning Committee
Co-chair

A new vision is on the horizon for the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Ministers Association and National Council Meetings. During February 25-28 and March 1, 2015, the BCA will conduct its annual meetings at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in San Diego, California.

Bishop Kodo Umezu encourages a fresh look to the decades-long event, with less meeting time and more Dharma dialogue, in an effort to attract more future leaders, temple Sanghas and the general public to participate. "I would like to see the future of the BCA Ministers and National Council Meetings to be more of a

conference atmosphere," he said recently.

The Southern District Council of the BCA is the host district, and Buddhist Temple of San Diego (BTSD) and Vista Buddhist Temple (VBT) will serve as co-host temples. The Planning Committee has been working closely with the BCA National Headquarters since January 2013.

"Buddhism and Counseling" is the theme of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) symposium. It will be presented on Thursday, Feb. 26 at the hotel. Dr. Carmela Hirano of the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple will be the keynote speaker. Dr. Hirano is a psychiatrist who is incorporating Buddhism into her medical practice. The symposium is from 1

to 5 p.m. and is open to the public.

On Friday and Saturday, workshops will be conducted from 2 to 4:30 p.m. under the guidance of the BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE). Many college-aged Buddhists affiliated with the Young Leaders of Today (YLT), will attend its activities on Friday evening and all day Saturday. The Endowment Foundation and BCA Archives will also conduct informational workshops.

The BCA Bookstore and Southern District Hongwanji Place will offer their collections of Buddhist items Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and a new addition will be a vendor Expo Fair. Merchants and businesses that have a



relationship with the BCA will be on hand to provide information on what their particular business offers. Saturday's activities will conclude with the banquet and BCA awards and recognitions.

On Sunday, March 1, the scene will shift to the

Buddhist Temple of San Diego, where the National Eitaikyo service will take place from 10 to 11 a.m. "It will be nice for everyone attending to visit the local temple that is hosting the meetings," Bishop Umezu said encouragingly. Prior to the service, the San Diego

and Vista Jr. Young Buddhist Associations (YBA) will conduct a breakfast fundraiser for everyone to enjoy.

Registration and hotel information will be mailed and emailed to temple presidents and ministers towards the end of October.

February 27 - March 1, 2015

San Diego BCA National Council Meeting and Forum Public Welcomed. Registration materials in next month's issue.





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

CBE Co-Director's Message:

A Broader Perspective

by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, CBE Co-director

The Jodo Shinshu Center has been very busy lately. The dorm rooms are full of visitors from Japan. In addition to the ministers from the International Ministerial Orientation Program (IMOP) who you read about in the September *Wheel of Dharma*, we have two other Hongwanji administrative staff members staying until early December. Rev. Kenko Takamine works at the Hongwanji in Kyoto, and Rev. Anan Hatanaka works at the Tsukiji Hongwanji in Tokyo.

Just as our bishop, Rev. Kodo Umezu, and other Buddhist Churches of America leaders were able to visit the recent European conferences and get an idea of what Jodo Shinshu is like in Europe, the Hongwanji ministers are here to see what Jodo Shinshu is like in the United States. They are getting a first-hand look at temple activities and management, the relationship between Jodo Shinshu and other religious traditions, and general cultural differences. Through this hands-on experience, the reverends can develop a broader perspective to take back with them to Japan. This may blossom into something new for the future of Jodo Shinshu.

Reverends Takamine and Hatanaka may be visiting your church or temple as part of their staff development training. When they do, *yoroshiku onegaishimasu*, please be nice to them.

Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course - Monthly Essay

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



What can we learn from Rennyō Shōnin to support our contemporary propagation of Jodo Shinshu?

By Mike Sugimoto
Steveston Buddhist Temple
British Columbia, Canada

Rennyō's revitalization efforts of the Hongwanji took the form of what we might today refer to as evangelism. In his efforts to reverse the decline of the Hongwanji and restore it to its former glory, Rennyō sought to clarify, expand, interpret, and refocus attention on the original teachings from Shinran that had been lost in the intervening years. His actions, and the choices he made, continue to influence the development of Buddhist thought even to today, and the understanding he brought to the community of followers helped to ensure its longevity.

The first task for Rennyō was to address the multitude of misinterpretations of Shinran's teachings. Since the original teachings were promulgated, a series of false beliefs had sprung up around them, mostly centered on ascetic or mystical practices that were, in some cases, entirely antithetical to the original teachings themselves. Rennyō sought to enhance an understanding of the dharma, to reinforce the idea that simple entrusting alone — and nothing else — was necessary to achieve birth into the Pure Land. No amount of mystical practice would change that, and indeed such activity distracted from the truth of the original teachings.

To help reorient the Jodo Shinshu followers, Rennyō began writing letters, in which he sought to provide guidance, examples, and parables about the applications of the teachings to daily life. As the original teachings could be obtuse and complicated, Rennyō wrote clearly and simply, in some cases describing the way in which Shinran's work could be used to understand a particular problem. In "On Hunting and Fishing," for example, in trying to explain the meaning of a "settled mind," Rennyō wrote that followers should "carry on with your trade or position of service, hunt and fish," because "when sincere faith is awakened in us by the realization that Amida saves us, then, without fail, we partake of the Tathagata's saving work." It was not, in other words, necessary to find a way to abolish "the rising of delusion and attachment" — the *shinjin*, the awakening of entrusting faith, was sufficient, and indeed was the only thing required of a follower.

These letters provided followers with applicability meaningful to their lives. They reconfirmed the fact that faith in the other-power was all that was required. Rennyō's letters also helped to resolve tensions between secular and religious authorities of the time, creating a kind of "render unto Caesar" moment in an era where the concept of a secular civil society was still elusive.

It was, in other words, the sort of behavior we associate with religious leaders in contemporary eras: the idea of street-level preaching, sharing these wondrous messages directly with individuals or small groups rather than transmitting them as proclamations from on high. We recognize the pattern: make it personal, make it relevant, make it accessible, and explain why it is so unique and so special. This pattern of fevered evangelism has been seen before, and has been enormously successful, in the various Protestant denominations springing up around the world and particularly in the United States, and my sense is that the value of these actions are self-evident.

Applying these lessons to the growth of Jodo Shinshu in the 21st century is not a simple task. My sense, based on nothing more than potentially cynical intuition, is that reorienting Jodo Shinshu to the modern era is far more difficult than it was in Rennyō's time, and truthfully I have no idea what an evangelical form of Buddhism might look like today. George Tanabe, in 2010, wrote a lengthy essay in which he argued that Japanese Buddhism, and Jodo Shinshu in particular, were in need of disruptive leaders that could drag the faith kicking and screaming into the modern world, essentially ascribing the slow decline to an attachment to tradition. I don't agree with all of Tanabe's prescriptions — certainly, one of the most appealing things about Jodo Shinshu Buddhism for potential converts is the fact that it is so manifestly ritualistically different from western church — but he is correct when he says that the teachings are essentially silent on subjects like gender inequality, abortion, income inequality, access to health care, and many of the other moral problems of our age. A contemporary Rennyō could find ways to make the lessons laid down by Shinran apply to these topics. I do not know how useful we would find them, whether they would lead to a wider audience for Jodo Shinshu teachings, or indeed whether they would reflect doctrinal consensus or merely the views of a particular author.

I continue to think that the real solution to dwindling temple populations in the modern age is to provide those *secular or social* opportunities that are lacking in contemporary society — daycare, neighborhood association support, book clubs, anything that brings like-minded people together in a safe environment and builds intimate, personal relationships. Within that space, personal connections can lead to individualized discussions about the value of the dharma, and the sangha may grow through this kind of outreach.

A life-long Jodo Shinshu Buddhist, Mike Sugimoto is a member of the Steveston Buddhist Temple in British Columbia, Canada. He lives in Victoria, B.C.



NYBC Welcomes Minister's Assistant Program

The Fall 2014 MAP Seminar was held at the New York Buddhist Church last September 18-21, with 29 attendees. Following are some comments from participants:

"It was a privilege to host the first Eastern District MAP session at NYBC. I am indescribably grateful to everyone who contributed behind the scenes, as well as to the attendees, both Senseis and students. Wonderful dharma weekend!"

— Isabelle Bernard, NYBC

"The intensive MAP session was highlighted by Rev. Earl Ikeda's closing Dharma talk, which truly expressed the understanding and compassion of the Jodo Shinshu faith."

— Sandra M. Adams, Midwest Buddhist Temple

"For Shin Buddhists, the most important practice is Deep Hearing (*O-Chomon*). We all listened to wonderful Dharma talks and messages... Arigatou to all of you."

— Akemi Ishida, NYBC

"The session on ritual presented a good grounding in recitation and appreciation of sutra chanting and etiquette for services one does not necessarily understand just by attending services. Much food for thought!"

— Nancy Okada, NYBC

"Not only did I have the opportunity to deepen my connection to the Dharma, but to the greater Sangha and the people who inspire my practice."

— Devin Rench, Cleveland Buddhist Temple

(Above) Participants pose in front of the NYBC. This statue of Shinran Shonin survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. It was donated to the American Buddhist Study Center, which is also housed at this location. (Below, l. to r.) Gail Wong, Cheryl Ike-miya, Matthew Wise, and Gary Jaskula lead sutra chanting from the onajin.



CBE 2014 Calendar of Events

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

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

October 25: Japanese Seminar with International Ministerial Orientation Program (IMOP) and Tsukiji Hongwanji Ministers

November 11-13: Ministers' Continuing Education (MCE) with Dr. George Tanabe

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

March 7, 2015: Winter Pacific Seminar at the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple
Guest Speaker: Rev. Tomoyasu Chiko Naito, Professor Emeritus, Ryukoku University

March 13-16, 2015: TechnoBuddha Seminar

June 27, 2015: Shin Buddhism & the LGBTQ Community Seminar at the New York Buddhist Church

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



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

Baby Boomers' Seminar Celebrates Its Eighth Year

By Carl Yanari, Palo Alto Buddhist Temple

The Eighth Annual Baby Boomers' Seminar was held at the JSC on September 6, 2014. Rev. Patricia Usuki (seated, center) of the San Fernando Valley Buddhist Temple was the guest speaker.



This was my first time attending a Baby Boomers' Seminar, so I was not sure what to expect. Friday evening featured an informal discussion where we were able to ask Rev. Patricia Usuki questions on anything. Besides learning about her path to becoming a minister, we also learned about the IMOP (International Ministerial Orientation Program) ministers who attended the seminar. It made us aware that each of our paths are unique and are shaped by our relationships with each other.

On Saturday morning we held a service in the Kodo and listened to Rev. Usuki's keynote talk: "Who, Why, Where." The first discussion was on "Who We Are." We usually focus on "I" or "Me" when defining ourselves. We don't often think of all the causes and conditions that make us who we are. Through awareness and self-reflection we begin to discover our true selves and how we fit in the grand scheme of things.

The "Why" discussion focused on how we wonder why things happen. Sometimes unfortunate things happen to us or our loved ones but often things end up being okay. Sometimes wonderful things happen to us but they are usually short-lived. Such is the nature of how things happen—not because one wills it so, but more do to with the connectedness we have with one another.

The "Where We Are Going" discussion looked at how we can use the realization of who we are and knowing why things happen to empower us to live a full and rich life. Once we realize the who and why, we can't help but be filled with gratitude and live a life of Nembutsu.

Thanks to Rev. Patti Usuki for her wonderful insights. Her thoughtful message was easy to listen to and understand. Thank you all for such a wonderful time.

Special for the BCA Wheel of Dharma

Coming of Age in Hawaii: Pacific Buddhist Academy

*The first Jodo Shinshu Buddhist high school in the U.S. is growing
Lead grant received from The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation*

By Bishop Eric Matsumoto, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii

Over the past 11 years, we've met many parents who agree that the traditional model of education is no longer enough to prepare students for the problems we face today or the challenges they'll likely face tomorrow. Pacific Buddhist Academy has been providing high school students with a new and transformative college preparatory experience that has our graduates confidently striding into the world with the spirit of peace, talk of more compassion, and the teaching of interdependence in their minds.

Our unique peace education curriculum combines traditional core subjects with culturally enriching experiences such as *taiko* and *chado*, and student favorites such as art and rock band. Most importantly, each lesson plan incorporates the Buddhist values of gratitude, compassion and interconnection. This new educational model resonates with many families, including the Atcheson family, originally from Seattle, WA.

"Since we moved to Hawaii from the mainland, we've been asked repeatedly what brought us here," shared Penny Atcheson, the mother of student-athlete Koki Atcheson who will be a senior this fall. While not the only reason, Pacific Buddhist Academy has always been a part of our explanation.

"We, felt that what was available in the mainland didn't align closely with what we wanted to experience as individuals and cultivate as a family...We saw a need for something very different than the standard traditional programs that seem to be blindly valued and followed. While they've worked for previous masses, ourselves included, something is not working for the majority of this generation. Unfortunately, it's creating a huge divide in so many areas of life."

In contrast, PBA cultivates interconnection. The school respects students as equals, and their opinions are welcome to ensure a successful high school experience. Families are invited to take part in PBA's activities, including an annual Taiko Festival, athletic competitions, and special events. Even seniors attending the adult day care at the adjacent Hongwanji are included on special occasions when students prepare a lunch for them harvested from the school's garden.

These experiences enable PBA students to see life from a global perspective. Their coming of age culminates in the school's PeaceBridge Project™, a senior-year experience that has students enrolled in classes at the University of Hawaii as they research and address real-life challenges such as homelessness and sustainability.

Since the school's humble beginnings in 2003 with just 14 students, you might say PBA has also been coming of age. In the 2013-2014 school year, the school welcomed 72 students – our highest enrollment to date. Due to PBA's growing appeal, the trustees embarked on a capital fundraising campaign for a new building in 2009.

We recently received most welcome news when PBA was awarded a \$1.5 million grant from The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, one of the largest private foundations in the nation. The Weinberg Foundation's generosity brings PBA and our school community a giant step closer to our new school building. With more classrooms, a science lab, and tea ceremony room, the new facility will enable PBA to promote and enhance the role Buddhist values play in not only education but also in forging a better world. Individuals interested in supporting PBA may contact Rüdiger Rückmann, Director of Advancement, at rüdiger.ruckmann@pbahi.org or (808) 532-2649, ext. 209.



The Dharmakara Series: Our Lifelong Learning Challenge

INTRODUCTION TO THE SANBUTSU-GE: Gatha (verses) in Praise of the Buddha (Part 9)

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)

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

Section 1: In praise of the Buddha (...continued)

Following Dharmakara Bodhisattva's praise of the Buddha Lokeshvararaja's actions of the body and mouth, the next ten lines conclude the praise of the three karmic acts and focuses on the karmic acts of the heart or mind. This praise of the karmic acts of the mind are again divided into two large sections. The first four lines focus on the five virtuous acts and praises the magnificence of the Buddha's virtues. The remaining six lines focus on two virtues and is in praise of the ultimacy of the Buddha's virtues. Beginning with this article I would like to focus on the first of four lines or the introduction of the five virtuous acts.

戒聞精進 三昧智慧 kai mon shou jin san mai chi e

"Precepts, Hearing, Endeavor, Concentration, and Wisdom"

Dharmakara Bodhisattva's praise of the Buddha's karmic acts of the mind are first represented through the five virtuous acts of maintaining precepts, hearing frequently, endeavoring, concentrating, and having wisdom. The first of these five virtuous acts, or maintaining precepts, might be construed as "doing" something and because of this can arguably be categorized as either an act of the body or mind. However, when we take a look at how precepts are generally written we discover that it is telling us "not to do" something. Because of this it is categorized as an act of mind.

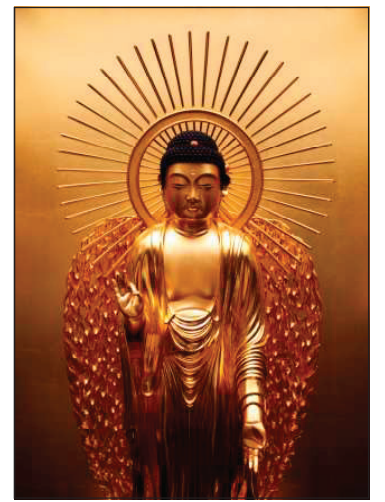
Ostensibly, maintaining precepts or *kai* (戒)—because all we have to do is NOT do something—seems relatively easy to accomplish. We think that it is much more difficult "to do" something than it is "not to do" something. We often equate laziness with not doing something. Why, then, does the Bodhisattva praise the Buddha for being able to do nothing and elevate it to the degree of becoming a virtue? On the other hand, if we assume that maintaining precepts is hard, then the list of precepts becomes a list of those things that are very easy for us to do. These easily performed acts of ours become precepts when these acts are all discovered to be harmful to self or others. Although not a precept, one example of an act that is easy for us to do but should be avoided is picking at the scab of a recently healed wound.

Sakyamuni Buddha, in thinking about what easily performed acts should be avoided by people who want to live a wholesome life, taught the five lay precepts. These five things "not to do" are acts that should be avoided, as a minimum, by anyone who says that they wish to live their lives guided by Buddhist principles. These five acts that should be avoided include: (1) killing, (2) stealing, (3) adultery, (4) lying, and (5) becoming intoxicated. The last precept of avoiding intoxication probably also includes the act of not becoming addicted. Of these five the first precept of "not to kill" seems reasonably easy to uphold. Very few of us, if any, consider ourselves to be ruthless, killing machines. Having said that, however, there are also times when we might be somewhat cavalier in our attitudes towards taking a life.

For example, I recently had our home tented for termites. With regards to taking life it was genocidal in its scope. I signed the paperwork with very little, if any, remorse, and instead hoped that the treatment would be complete in its annihilation. On a more regular basis I find myself not infrequently looking for cans of insecticide or putting out ant traps in the hopes that I can kill the entire colony. I also find myself swatting at flies without even a pause. The only time I find myself hesitating from doing these things is when I am at the temple or a place where I am reminded that I am a Buddhist. Otherwise, it seems that I rarely reflect on these acts of killing.

Although it may seem somewhat trivial to be talking about insects, the attitude that I have shown towards the life of an insect and the attitude shown by Sakyamuni Buddha and his disciples is markedly different. For example, in the *onajim* or inner altar area of our Jodo Shinshu temples is often found a lantern called the *kana tourou* (or *tsuri toro*) hanging from either side of the *gokuuden* or the "palace" where the Buddha image is placed. The *kana tourou* or "Covered Metal Lantern" was originally developed in order to help prevent fires as well as to keep flying insects from accidentally killing themselves in the flames of the lantern. Eventually, as is found in Jodo Shinshu temples, the lanterns became more decorative than practical, but part of the meaning behind the lamp is the protection of life including but not limited to the insects that I would so recklessly destroy with abandon. Not doing something, then, is not necessarily something that is easy for us to do (or not do as the case may be). In the case of the *kana tourou* we are shown, at the very least, how mindful the Buddha and the Sangha used to be in their practice of how not to take life. The mindfulness that is required to *not take life* was born from an appreciation of how delicate, beautiful, and rare life is even in the form of an insect. It is because of this lack of appreciation for life, the lack of mindfulness that we tend to show towards life, that the other lay precepts become relatively easy for us to ignore as well. In other words, if we can teach ourselves how not to appreciate life because we can call it an "insect," then it would not be that difficult for us to figure out how to justify not following the other four lay precepts. It is because of how easy it is for us to do these harmful things that the Buddha had to caution us not to do these things.

Prior to Sakyamuni Buddha teaching the contents of what would become the *Larger Sutra*, he himself was prophesied to become either a great spiritual leader or the Cakravartin King. A Cakravartin King is the King of the World. In order to become that king, however, Sakyamuni Buddha would have had to conquer many different kingdoms. Conquests are generally achieved only after spilling much blood. Prior to becoming Dharmakara Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva was a king himself. As a king he lived a lifestyle where bloodshed was a constant consideration. In praising Lokeshvararaja Buddha for maintaining precepts, part of the praise must have included an appreciation for being shown a different way to live life, one freed of having to spill blood, and one that emphasizes an appreciation for the beauty of life.





Hongwanji

Continued from Front Page

I learned.” He was disappointed that many homes do not have an Obutsudan; however, he feels that the weekly Sunday service which many members attend is a good thing.

Rev. Takamine’s favorite saying by Shinran Shonin is: “It is certain that I will go to birth in the Pure Land before you, so without fail I will await you there.” (Collected Works of Shinran, p. 539, Lamp of the Latter Ages)

As for Rev. Hatanaka, he sees his experience an opportunity “to learn and understand...the differences in the activities between temples in Japan and the temples of the BCA.” He also said, “By doing so, I hope to find ways to better share the joy of the Nembutsu teaching.” His message to BCA members is, “Separated by such a great distance from Japan, I am grateful to know that there are so many fellow Nembutsu followers here in America.”

Rev. Hatanaka noted it is wonderful that many BCA temples have gymnasiums where members can gather for activities and also thinks it is great that weekly Sun-

day services are conducted.

Rev. Hatanaka’s favorite Shinran Shonin saying is: “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!” (CWS p.679, *A Record in Lament of Divergences*)

Both ministers are near the midpoint of their tour. They will be visiting BCA temples in Southern California and Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada in October and November. They also plan to call on BCA temples in the Eastern District.

UK

Continued from Front Page

After the conference was over, Rev. Robinson kindly invited us to his residence called Chomon House, where sangha members regularly meet and listen to the nembutsu teaching. There was a simple Jodo Shinshu hondo set up in the upstairs room that could hold about 20 people maximum. Rev. Robinson proudly showed us the hondo and explained from where they had received the Buddha’s Name scroll and other sacred objects. Though the hondo was simple, it meant a lot to them.

I understand that, besides the United Kingdom, there are places like this in Poland, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Hungary, and Romania. Some members are taking the Hongwanji Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) offered from Berkeley and plan to receive ordination from the Hongwanji. As a matter of fact, I met two JSCC students during the conference.

We could see that the international sangha members were so grateful to have encountered the nembutsu teaching that their joy was overflowing in their words, actions, and faces. We felt like we had been transported back to the time of Shinran Shonin, or even the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, because the people we encountered were so genuinely happy.

During the closing session of the conference, Rev. Robinson read a section from The Teaching of Buddha. After listening to him, I couldn’t help but think about the world in which we live now. The quote describes people living in absolute darkness, frightened and unable to recognize one another. They do not know how to associate with each other in peaceful harmony. With no light of wisdom in their minds, they wander about in loneliness and fear. Then the Buddha suddenly appears, and by his wisdom and compassion he illumines the world. In this light people find themselves as well as others and are glad to establish human fellowship and harmonious relations.

Today, we are witnessing many conflicts and wars all over the world. We can hear people screaming and crying and at the same time, we can hear the words of the Buddha:

“Thousands of people may live in a community but it is not one of real fellowship until they know each other mutually and have sympathy for one another. A true community has faith and wisdom that illuminate it. It is a place where the people know and trust one another and where there is social harmony. In fact, harmony is the life and real purport of a true community or an organization.”

Our visit was a very gratifying experience. I feel we need to have more interaction with our international sangha. Dr. Kent Matsuda and I agreed that other people—BCA ministers and members—should have the same opportunity to participate in the next ESBC scheduled to be held in Belgium in 2016.

*Please read Dr. Kent Matsuda’s article for additional information about the European conferences.

FRIENDS OF IBS MINISTERIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Institute of Buddhist Studies would like to gratefully acknowledge all who have extended their generosity and support of the Friends of IBS Ministerial Scholarship Fund.

The total received since January 1, 2014 is \$72,550. Thanks to the generous and timely response of BCA members, organizations and Friends, we have already begun distribution of financial assistance to ministerial students.

Following are the individuals, families and organizations who have made contributions from July through September, 2014:

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BCA Bookstore News

By Gayle Noguchi

Now available: *Refuge Recovery – A Buddhist Path to Recovery from Addiction* by Noah Levine, paperback, \$16.99.

Refuge Recovery is an approach to recovery from addictions of all kinds that bestselling author and renowned

Buddhist teacher Noah Levine developed based on the Four Noble Truths and the Eight Fold Path. The first half of the book presents the principles and process of this proven and systematic approach and takes the reader through the program step by step. The second half presents stories from former addicts recounting their lives of addiction and their recovery achieved through Buddhist practice and the Refuge Recovery Program.

Levine articulates his message with clarity and compassion. His program not only provides a paradigm for understanding addiction and the suffering it causes, but also a non-theistic means of transformation and liberation from it.

To order, go to www.bcabookstore.com or sales@bcabookstore.com/510-809-1435. The BCA Bookstore is open Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.



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今月の法話

凡夫・知らないことも知らない私

カーテナ仏教会 宮地 信雄

「釈迦如来さまがこの世に出世してこられた理由は、ただ弥陀の本願海を説く為でありました。五濁悪時の群生海に生きるものはすべて如来の如実の教えを信ずべきでありましょう。」

正信偈拙訳



世界的情勢を見ていますと、大変なことになってきています。この記事を書いている時、私の目に飛び込んできた「ユー

スは本当に信じがたいものでした。それはあのイスラム国の残虐行為です。皆さんも見られたことでしょうか、それこそ教えきれない人が見ている目の前で、罪も無い人を殺すという野蛮で凶暴きわまりないことが行われたのです。これを見たとき私は恐ろしさにふるえてしまいました。人間の狂気もここまでくるのかと戦慄したのです。皆さんはどう思われましたか。あれが私と同じ人間のすることでしょうか。あの後で殺された人のご両親が出てコメントをされておられましたか、どんなお気持ちであろうかと考えますと、本当にいたたまれない気持ちです。

親鸞聖人の師である法然上人のご両親という方は当時押領使といってその国の治安維持などに関わっておられた方と聞いています。そのお父様が、多分土地の分配の件か何かで人から恨みを買って、夜討ちにあつて無惨にも自分の目の前で惨殺されたと伝えられています。その時、お父様の遺した言葉が、後の法然上人を育てたとされています。つまり、憎しみを憎しみで返せば、その憎しみがまた次の憎しみを生み出す。「お前は私の憎しみを仇で返すのではなく憎むものになつて私の菩提を弔ってくれ」というものでした。まだ幼い子供に対してそういう残して亡

くなつたお父様も立派な方ではありますが、後に一人残された幼き法然上人の気持ちはどんなであったでしょうか。

仏教哲学者梅原猛氏によると、お釈迦様も自分の部族をすべて殺されたといわれています。その時のお釈迦様のお気持ちはどうであったか、同氏は非常に興味深いものがあると仰っています。

これらのことを考えさせて頂きますと、この地球上で繰り返されている残虐行為というのは昔も今も全く変わりがないと思われまます。こういった一人の人間としてどうしようもない状況におかれたとき、私達は一体どうすればいいのでしょうか。仏教では末法の時代ということを知ってききました。先ほどのイスラム国のことなどまさにこの末法時代を表しているのではないのでしょうか。

それに加えて地球の温暖化により急激な気候変化による多大なる自然災害被害が続出しています。これからもこれらの災害被害による死者や被害者は想像がつかないと聞きます。

人間の力が何処まで及ぶのか本当に心配な限りです。46億年の地球、その中のほんの一点にすぎない人類の歴史、進化論を信じる私達人間がいつまで生きていけることができるのか、誰も想像さえつかないのではないのでしょうか。地球の命は一説によると一〇〇億年だそうなんです。あと54億年残っていることになりまます。果たして私達人間はいつまで生き延びることができるのでしょうか。

長々とつらぬくことを書き連ねましたが、親鸞聖人が仰る「五濁悪世」の自覚が本当に私達にあるのでしょうか。私達はまきれも無くこの悪世に生きています。そんな思いのひとかけらもないように思われてなりません。五濁悪世のど真ん中に生きておりながらそうは思わない。いや、五濁悪世そのものに気がついていないのが私達ではないのでしょうか。つまり私達は五濁悪世という現実にとっぷり浸かっているから五濁悪世ということする知らないでいるのでは無いでしょうか。真つ暗闇の中に育つ魚が居るそうです。その魚には目がありません。

の魚には光を見る必要がないから目がいらないので。私たちがこの魚のように光の無い闇の世界に住んでいるので、本当の世界を見る必要がないのです。五濁悪世に住んでいながらそれを五濁悪世と知らないでいるのです。ここに私たちがこの不幸があります。これを親鸞聖人は「凡夫」と呼ばれたのです。

あの偉大な哲学者ソクラテスは、「無知の知」という有名な言葉を遺しています。私達は知らないことを知っている、だから賢人、つまり哲学者なのだということです。これが人類のサイエンスと呼ばれるものの始まりであります。この無知の知を知ることこそ人類の最も偉大なことであるというのが理性人たる私達の実態です。しかし、今親鸞聖人は「無知の無知」ということを言われたような気が私にはします。知らないことがあることを知ってそれを知らうとする、それが人間なんだという人類の智にはまだおごりがあるのではないのでしょうか。もう

一步突っ込んで人間は知らないことを知らないでいつつけてしまう存在ではないかというのが親鸞聖人の反省ではなかったかと思われまます。人類は今大変なときに来ている。そしてそれを示唆するような様々な恐ろしいことが私達の回りで起こっています。そんな中に生きている私達、つまり仏さまから見れば「凡夫」を救おうとされているのが阿弥陀さまなのです。今の五濁悪世の中に何も気が付かずに生きている私達にはこの阿弥陀さまのお慈悲に任す以外に他に出ることはないのでないのでしょうか。

南無阿弥陀仏

本願寺派から二名が訪米

九月八日(月)から浄土真宗本願寺派の職員二名が研修に訪れている。宗務員海外研修と呼ばれるこのプログラムには、本願寺派の職員の高峰顕晃師(所務部)と畑中阿難師(築地本願寺)が参加。二人は九月から十二月までの約三ヶ月間、浄土真宗センターを拠点として研修を受ける。九月のひとは英語を学び、その後各寺院を参拝し開教使や門徒と交流する予定。高峰師、畑中師ともに、「できるだけ英語で

コミュニケーションしたいと思ひますので、私たちが訪れたさいは英語で話しかけてください。よろしくお願ひします。」とBCAメンバーとの出会いを楽しみにしている。以下各師の紹介。



高峰 顕晃
Kenkou Takamine
1985年10月5日生

佐賀県出身。浄土寺(佐賀教区松浦組)本願寺派所務部、文書担当

研修で特に学びたいこと・北米開教区の歴史並びに現状及び伝道活動について
日本のお寺とアメリカのお寺がちがっていることとで、
良いところ・サンデーサーブスに多くのメンバーの方たちが参加されること。
あまり良くないところ・家にお仏壇がありません。

アメリカのご門徒さんたちに一言：毎日新鮮な気持ちで研修させていただいています。アメリカの浄土真宗の現状を学んで、良い所を日本に持ち帰ることができればと思っております。よろしくお願ひいたします。

好きな食べ物：カレーライス
好きな音楽：気分があがる曲が好きです。笑
趣味：サッカー

好きなお勤め：正信偈
本願寺の好きな場所：御影堂と阿弥陀堂
親鸞聖人の好きな言葉：浄土にてかならずかならずましまし候ふべし(ご消息)



畑中 阿難
Anan Hatanaka
1986年10月2日生

秋の聞法セミナー

日時…2014年10月25日
午前10時から午後3時まで
場所…浄土真宗センター
講師…宍 定心師、一羽 諒師、
林 育昭師、大内 深生師
費用無料、昼食付き
詳細は乗原まで
(510) 230-8439
kkuwahara@bcahq.org



福井県鯖江市出身。明正寺(福井教区河和田組)築地本願寺 総務部

研修で特に学びたいこと：日本の寺院とBCAの寺院の活動の相違点をよく学び、互いの良いところ・悪いところを理解したいです。そのうえで、さらにお念仏の喜びが広まる方法を模索できればと考えています。

日本のお寺とアメリカのお寺がちがっていることとで、
良いところ：こちらのお寺には皆が集まる体育館があり、皆が集まる日曜礼拝がある。すばらしいです。

あまり良くないところ：こちらのお寺では、あまり毎朝のお参り(お晨朝)をされていないそうです。生活スタイルと合わないの仕方ではないことですが、少しびっくりいたしました。アメリカのご門徒さんたちに一言：日本より遠く離れた、ここアメリカの地で、お念仏の仲間がこんなにもたくさんいらっしゃって、感激しております。

好きな食べ物：納豆
好きな音楽：声明
趣味：映画鑑賞
好きなお勤め(お経、偈文など)：空心礼
本願寺の好きな場所：御影堂のご真影様の前
親鸞聖人の好きな言葉：「弥陀の五劫思惟の願をよくよく案ずれば、ひとへに親鸞一人がためなりけり」(歎異抄 後序)

法輪

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Buddhist Churches of America
1710 Octavia Street
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電話 (415) 776-5600
FAX (415) 771-6293
Email: info@bcahq.org
forWOD: WODeditor@bcahq.org

二〇一四年度教化標語
「歓喜光に帰命せよ」

Jr. YBA 南部教区に集う

八月三十日(土)から九月一日(月)のレイベーデーウィークエンドに、オレンジカウティにおいて、ジュニアYBA全国大会が開催された。会場はオレンジカウティ仏教会とコスタメサ市のヒルトンホテルで、大会のテーマは「Plug into Buddhism」。大会は南部教区のジュニアYBAが主催し、南部教区のジュニアYBAの高校生を中心に全米の十四ヶ寺から一三五名の生徒と七〇名のアドバイザーが集った。

基調講演にはオーランド仏教会のプリック・ハリ師が招かれ、コンピューターを用いての写真のスライドや、ベース演奏などを通じて仏教を伝えた。参加した生徒は「他の教区の生徒たちと出会えて楽しかったです。」「テクノロジーを使った仏教の講義はわかりやすかったです。」など、好評の大会となった。



Jr. YBA全国大会の様子 オレンジカウティ仏教会にて
Jr. YBA conference @ Orange County Buddhist Temple

た。一年の活動が最も顕著だったグループに送られる南部教区ジュニアYBAアワードは洗心仏教会が受賞した。

ベビーブーマー セミナーが開かれる

九月六日(土)に浄土真宗センターでベビーブーマーの世代を対象としたセミナーがあり、サンフェルナンド仏教会の宇宿パトリシア師がキーノートスピーカーとして招かれた。

講題は「WW. Com: Who, Where, Why?」で、自分とは一体なにか、どこへ向かい、何の目的をもって生きているのかを見つめなおすことに主眼を置いたセミナー。参加者は約30名で、主に60年代、70年代にジュニアYBAで活動していた方々が集い、同窓会のような和気あいあいとしたなかで仏法の学びを深めた。

講師の宇宿師は「私もベビーブーマーですから、同世代の方たちと仏法をシェアできるとてもうれしいです。青春時代に聞いていた音楽の歌詞が意外と仏教的なので、それを聴いてもらいました。みんな知っている曲なので、みんなで歌ったりおどったりしたのが楽しかったです。」と楽しく仏法を味わった。

イギリスでお念仏

海外開教区の代表者が集う、第三十二回世界浄土真宗連絡協議会が八月三十一日(日)にイギリスのサウサンプトンで開催された。浄土真宗本願寺派北米開教区の代表として梅津総長、理事長の松田氏、本部職員の喜多氏も参加した。協議会では北米、ハワイ、カナダ開教区、更にヨーロッパの各開教区からの活動報告がなされ、代表者同士が活発に意見交換をした。翌九月一日から国際真宗学会およびヨーロッパ真宗会議が行われ、各国の

真宗者がサウサンプトンを訪れた。サウサンプトンにはロビンソン・ゲリー師が代表をつとめる英国浄土真宗教会(聴聞ハウス)がある。



世界浄土真宗連絡協議会
World representatives Meeting in England

総長コラム

米国仏教団 総長 梅津廣道

八月の末から九月の始めにかけてイギリスで開催された本願寺連絡協議会とヨーロッパ真宗学会に出席参加しました。以前紹介しましたが、ヨーロッパ各地に数は多くありますが、お念仏を喜ぶ人たちが集まって団体を作っています。二年ごとに持ち回りで集いを開催しています。今年ロンドンの西にあるサウスハンプトンという町のグループが担当して開催されました。

大会初日には、当地のロレンソン大智ゲリー師の調声のもと開会式が行われました。ロビンソン師の後ろには四名の若いアシスタントが門徒式章をかけて、ちゃんと正座してお勤めが行われました。そのあと、アシスタント四人がテキパキと荘厳を片付け始めたのです。お名号をおろす時には全員白い手袋をつけて、丁寧に、もとの木の箱に納めているのを目にしたとき、言葉では表すことのできない熱いものを感じました。本当にまじめに心から教えを大事にしているということ



ロビンソン師
イギリス聴聞ハウスにて
Rev. Robinson @ Chomon House

が感じとられたのです。

この大会には、初めて参加された前門さまを始めとして六、七十名の念仏者がヨーロッパ各地より集い、三日間にわたり意見発表や質疑応答がおこなわれました。もちろん中には日本やアメリカなど他の国の代表者もいました。この方たちのお念仏の味わいの深さは本心にすばらしいものがありました。

大会の最後には、ロビンソン師が挨拶の中で「仏教聖典」の中から一部を引用して、師がフェローシップをリードしていくときの心構えの元はここにあるといわれたことが印象に残っています。

「広い暗闇の野原、無数の生き物がうごめいている。光が無いため、お互いを知ることができず、皆ひとりぼっちで、さびしさにおののきながらうごめいている。いかにも哀れな有様である。そこへ急に光がさしてきた。ある人が突然現れて手に大きなたいまつをふりかざしている。真っ暗闇の世界が一度に明るくなった。」

すると、今まで闇の中を探ってうごめいていた生き物が立ち上がってあたりを見渡し、まわりに自分と同じものがたくさんいることに気がつき、驚いて喜びの声をあげながら、互いに走り寄って抱き合い、にぎやかに語りあい喜びあった。

今この野原というのは人生、暗闇というのは正しい智慧の光のないことである。心に智慧の光のないものは、互いに会っても知り合い和合することを知らないために、ひとりぼっちである。ただ意味もなく動き回り、さびしさにのおののくことは当然である。

『ある人がたいまつをかかかってあらわれた』とは、仏が智慧の光をかざして、人生に向かっ

たことである。この光に照らされて、人々は初めておのれを知ると同時に他人を見つけ、驚き喜んでここに初めて和合の国が生まれる。社会とは、まことの智慧に照らされて、互いに知り合い、信じ合って和合するグループのことである。」

この教えは仏教の根本とも言えるもので、現在の世界情勢を見ても、本当に智慧のかけたもの同士がいがみ合い殺し合っていることは本当に悲しむべきことではないでしょうか。アメリカ力であるが、ヨーロッパであろうが、すべての人たちが同じように智慧の光に出会って欲しいというのが本願ではないでしょうか。大会の最後にロビンソン師が、私たちに「聴聞ハウス」に招待してくださいました。普通の二階建ての一軒家の二階の間を仏間として聴聞をしているのです。簡素なお荘厳でしたが、本当に心温まる、喜びに満ちあふれた仏間でした。

この大会は二年ごとに開催されていて、次はベルギーで開催されます。松田理事長と二人で、次の大会には他の人たちにも是非ご縁に会ってほしいと話したものです。

今日の一枚

去る八月七日(木)にローダイ仏教会の楠活也開教使がストックトン市をホームとするポーツボール(オークランドアスレチックス傘下1A)の始球式をつとめた。ポーツボールは毎年、ジャパニーズヘリテイジデイを開催しており、日米の友好を育んでいる。今年の始球式にはローダイ市の日系人野球チームで活躍する楠開教使が選ばれた。楠師は「投げる前には失敗したらどうしようかと緊張しましたが、南無阿彌陀仏となえたら安心していい球が投げられました。」とお念仏のはたらきに感謝した。



楠開教使が選ばれた。楠師は「投げる前には失敗したらどうしようかと緊張しましたが、南無阿彌陀仏となえたら安心していい球が投げられました。」とお念仏のはたらきに感謝した。