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Left to right: Rev. Patricia Usuki; Passing of the Flag Ceremony; Line Dancing by BCA members. Lower: White Hat Ceremony. Photos by Robert Gubenco. See additional photos on page 8.

Embraced by the Oneness of Life Two Thousand Attend 2015 WBWC in Calgary

By Jeanette Arakawa
BCA FBWA Secretary General

The quadrennial World Buddhist Women's Convention (WBWC) is the largest international gathering of Jodo Shinshu Buddhists in the world. Hosting responsibilities rotate among the five *kyodans* or districts: Japan, Canada, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), South America, and Hawaii. From May 30 - 31, 2015, 2,000 *Nembutsu* followers assembled for the 15th WBWC at the Calgary TELUS Convention Center in Calgary, Canada, hosted by the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada Women's Federation (JSBTCWF). Over 260 women and men were in attendance from BCA.

Prior to the scheduled events, the WBWC Representatives' meeting was held on Friday, May 29. Two representatives

(Secretaries General) from each of the five Districts conducted the business of the organization. Bishops of each of the Districts, including Rev. Kodo Umezu (BCA Bishop), accompanied by Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations (FBWA) honorary advisor, Janet Umezu, attended as advisors. Jeanette Arakawa and Janice Doi participated as the BCA FBWA Secretaries General. An outcome of the meeting was the appointment of a committee comprised of members from each of the Districts to revise the current WBWC Bylaws. Hawaii, which initiated the process of updating the document in 2013 was appointed to head the committee. This action was a result of the recommendation contained in a report from the "BCA FBWA Ad Hoc Committee to Review Hawaii World Bylaw Revision Proposal." Susan Bottari, Karen Suyama, and Terrie Masuda, 2019 WBWC Cabinet Chair and Vice Chairs, were present at the meeting as observers.

The first keynote speaker, Reverend Nana Yanase, minister of the Kyo On Ji Temple in Nara Prefecture, Japan, delivered a moving message through an eloquent

telling of her life story, augmented by her amazing singing. She also shared her "Makenai Towel" (double meaning: a towel too short to wrap around one's head or "I will not give up"), which she created as a fundraiser for victims of the East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of 2011.

The theme for workshops which followed in the afternoon was the Eightfold Noble Path. There was a variety of topics in two workshop sessions.

After dinner, Rev. Yanase performed an elegant recital. This was followed by dances performed by each of the WBWC districts. Twenty FBWA members from the Bay, Northern California, Coast and Eastern Districts did a line dance to "Living in the Moment."

The second keynote presenter, Rev. Patti Usuki, is a native of Toronto, Canada. She also shared her life story and spoke to our individual responsibilities to society as Buddhists. It was a call to be aware of our external world and recognize the importance of our respective roles in it.

The panel discussion which followed featured representatives from each of the

districts speaking to the theme, "Embraced by the Oneness of Life." Joyce Iwasaki, San Jose Betsuin, represented the BCA FBWA.

The event closed with the "Passing of the WBWC Flag Ceremony." It heralded the transfer of the WBWC hosting responsibility from Canada to the BCA FBWA. Karen Suyama, vice chair of the 2019 WBWC Cabinet, delivered the acceptance speech, along with Yasuko Fukuda, who translated it into Japanese. They were joined onstage by other members of the 2019 WBWC cabinet and over two dozen BCA FBWA members and supporters. A lively invitational video announced the 16th WBWC in San Francisco from August 30 - September 1, 2019 and featured Shinran Shonin enjoying iconic San Francisco destinations. All the diners received an eye-catching bookmark urging all to "Bring your Heart to San Francisco in 2019!" Visit www.wbwconvention.com to view 2015 highlights and 2019 announcements.

A huge "thank you" also goes out to all the unnamed others who contributed in so many ways to the success of this event. What a great convention! *Namo Amida Butsu.*

Rainbow Pride Okesa Headed for the Smithsonian



Noriko Sanefuji, cultural assistant with the Smithsonian Institution, visited the Buddhist Church of San Francisco to gather historical information regarding the rainbow okesa designed by BCSF member Yasuko Fukuda. The rainbow okesa was first introduced during the 2013 San Francisco Pride Parade. The Smithsonian Museum exhibit is still being developed but is expected to include the rainbow okesa. It will be part of an exhibit highlighting how religions in America are making efforts to include the spiritual well-being of the LGBTQ community. BCSF has been a parade contingent since 2013.

Japanese American Obon Music

By Wynn Kiyama
Assistant Professor of
Musicology/Ethnomusicology,
Portland State University

Most of us are familiar with bon-odori songs such as *Tanko Bushi*, *Bon Odori Uta*, or *Shiawase Samba*. These are perennial favorites used at temples throughout the United States. But there is a small body of repertoire, perhaps less well known, that is rooted in the American experience—obon songs written by or for Japanese Americans.

This tradition goes back to the 1930s, when Reverend Yoshio Iwanaga introduced bon-odori to numerous Japanese American communities along the West Coast. He used folk and popular music from various Japanese prefectures and arranged regional bon-odori songs such as *Sacramento Ondo*, *San Francisco Ondo*, and *Stockton*



Ondo. Around the same time, the Japanese songwriting team of Shimpei Nakayama and Yaso Saijo composed *Rafu Ondo* ("Los Angeles Ondo") and *Amerika Ondo* on commission for the Little Tokyo community.

After WWII, Mary "Chico" Taira composed *Fresno Ondo* with choreography by Reverend Iwanaga, producing the first documented and recorded example of a Japanese American

bon-odori song written in the continental United States. In 1949, the Japanese songwriter Ryoichi Hattori, who had a huge wartime hit with *Tokyo Boogie Woogie*, wrote *Nisei Ondo* for the Nisei Week Festival in Los Angeles.

In the 1960s, Reverend Gyosei Nagafuji wrote the lyrics to *Song of Nisei Week*, and Bay Area temples danced to Yu-

Continued on Page 6



By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

We had a very good discussion during the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) District Ministers'

Association Chairpersons' Meeting preceding the BCA National Board Meeting held in Berkeley in June. We talked about the state of our organization and how members feel about being Jodo Shinshu Buddhists compared with other Buddhists. We are interested in hearing from our members: "Why Jodo Shinshu?"

Rev. Jerry Hirano, the Chairperson of the BCA District Ministers' Association, suggested that all BCA ministers be asked to write about

their own appreciation on the theme "Why Jodo Shinshu?" The ministers agreed with the idea. So the BCA ministers are going to write short essays of from 50 to 100 words and share their stories with us.

Here, I would like to talk about my case. My main reason for being a Jodo Shinshu minister is Shinran Shonin. I love him. As I reflect on my path to the ministry, I could see his presence through people around me; my grandparents, par-

ents, hometown temple members, teachers in Kyoto, college friends, and other ministers. Shinran Shonin touched all these people and indirectly influenced my life.

We call him a great Master and the founder of the Jodo Shinshu school of Buddhism, but he made no such claims. He is such a humble and down-to-earth person. He understands the weakness of each and every one of us. He doesn't criticize anyone. Rather, he under-

stands what we must go through as human beings and encourages us to live our lives no matter how heavy our karmic burdens are. He is the best companion for everyone in the world.

I am so grateful that I encountered Shinran Shonin in my life. Without him, I don't know what my life would have been like. This is my "Why Jodo Shinshu."

I know each of you had a different reason for becoming a member of your temple or church. Whatever the reason may be, you are touched by the heart of Buddha.

Reminder and Calling

By Rev. Orai Fujikawa
Buddhist Temple of Salinas

Some time ago I was talking to an elderly lady who said, "Sensei, isn't it a shame and terrible when you can't remember what you want?"

According to her, she was cooking in the kitchen and found that the soy sauce had run out, so she went to storage room downstairs in order to get a new bottle. But then after going downstairs, she asked herself, "Why am I here?" She couldn't remember what she

wanted. Yes, it is terrible, isn't it?

As a matter of fact, I had a similar experience myself. One morning I finished writing a letter and looked for an envelope. I couldn't find any in my residence so I had to go to my office in the temple. My office is about 50-60 yards away from my home. I had to pick up my keys and put on my jacket. I had to walk through the yard, open the gate, pick up a newspaper, and pass by the statue of Shinran Shonin to pay tribute. And then I picked up some litter before opening the temple door

and turning off the alarm. But then, alas, "Why am I here anyway?" I really got frustrated and mad at myself. I went home empty handed, only to find my letter sitting on the desk. "Oh, yes, I went to get an envelope!"

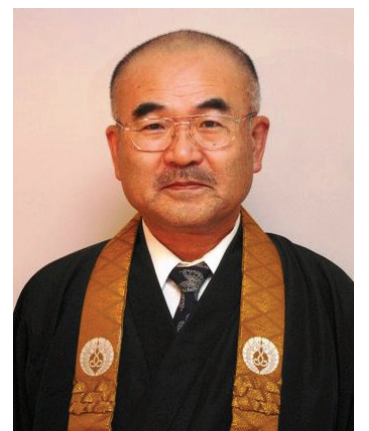
It may take extra time and I might get mad at myself, but it is all right as long as I eventually remember what I wanted. However, if you can't remember what you wanted at all, it will be a big problem. You could be sent to a nursing home.

Here is a question for everyone. WHY ARE YOU HERE in the world of human beings? Do you remember?

As far as I am concerned, thanks to Shinran Shonin and the succeeding teachers as well as my ancestors, I am here to meet *Namoamidabutsu*, which is a reminder and calling from Amida Buddha to me. *Namoamidabutsu* reminds me to remember the most important thing, that is, I am going home to the Pure Land of Amida Buddha, because I often forget. I often don't remember.

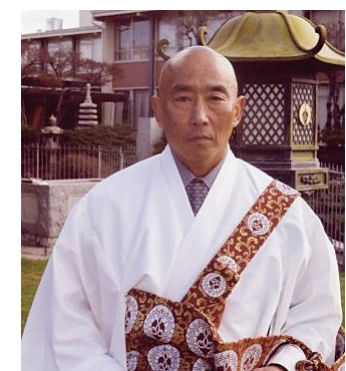
If you know you are going home you feel peace of mind and you can do your best at whatever you do, each and every day, as long as you live.

May you recite and hear *Naman-da-bu, Na-man-da-bu, Na-man-*



da-bu, which has been practiced by billions of people including your ancestors, wishing you the best, peace, happiness, and harmony.

In *Gassho, Namandabu...*



By Rev. Joshin Dennis Fujimoto
Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple

In the wilderness of the Great Northwest lived a powerful polar bear named Nanuq. He was respected not only for his strength but also for his wisdom and kindness. He was quick and nimble, and few would even dare to challenge him. Respect came to him from not just the other bears but from the wolves, eagles, moose and all the animals of the land.

Nanuq had come to learn that his great strength was a gift from those who had come before him. It was not his to flaunt and abuse, but a gift that he should respect and appreciate.

When Nanuq would make his rounds through his domain, the other animals would make way for him or even share their food. Most were too much in awe to even speak to him. The only one who would speak to Nanuq was Big Moose.

Big Moose was the most powerful moose in the land; a respected

leader in his own right. When they were young, they happened to stumble upon one another. Their mothers had wandered away for a bit, and the two young ones were eye to eye with curiosity and adventure swirling through their hearts. They sniffed and snorted, and ran together. They tumbled and played until they were exhausted. Finally, their mothers called to them and they ran home. Each looked over his shoulder as they ran, with a plan and a promise to meet again and play some more.

Every day they would sneak away from their mothers to play tag and tumble games. They were getting bigger and stronger, but they could match each other. Soon their encounters would become less frequent, but their friendship was deep and lasting.

During one of their meetings, Big Moose said, "I have met many who come into strength and power and then become arrogant. They think to get their way and use others for their own convenience. Nanuq, you have never been that way. What has made you so respectful and humble even though you are twice as strong as the others?"

Nanuq responded, "I try to remember the qualities of those I respect ... my parents and their parents before them. I still have selfish thoughts of advantage and greed; they are always a part of me.

But when the self is large, the small needs have no bearing. Greed, anger, and ignorance are the small needs that come back again and again, but there is a larger self and a greater mind that calls me to connect."

Big Moose replied, "Your mother taught you well. Even as a youth, you were respectful and humble. My mother told me to honor these values and be with others who do the same. She had a book that was torn and tattered. She called it *The Colle*, and brought it out to share the words. I can still remember one verse,

If one rids oneself of arrogance and self-indulgence,

One benefits all sentient beings as well as oneself.

If one benefits all sentient beings as well as oneself,

One dwells in the realm of birth-and-death without fatigue or revulsion.¹

"I remember it because it reminded me of you and showed me what to aspire to."

Nanuq said, "We had such a book, too, in our den lined with tree bark, moss, and shreds of paper. I called our book *The Works of Ran*. It was burned and parts were gone, but the words we had were strong and deep. There were words of the Buddha ... a calling voice that said the *Nembutsu* ... a mind of trust that opened to strength and truth beyond any other. I remem-

ber reading verses like yours before falling asleep next to my mother."

"Nanuq, bring your treasured words and I will bring mine. Let's share these words that have moved us both."

The next day, Big Moose opened his *furoshiki* that protected the remnants of his mother's special book. Nanuq also opened his *furoshiki* to uncover his *Works of Ran*. They were shocked to find that the writings matched and the pieces fit. Big Moose's *The Colle* and Nanuq's *The Works of Ran* fell together ... *The Collected Works of Shinran!*

Their eyes met. "We can learn even more from these words. We should share these words with all who want to know."

What is the likelihood of all the infinite causes and conditions to come together in such a manner that the Nembutsu Teachings of Shinran Shonin would make their way to Anchorage, Alaska?

In September of this year, the Buddhist Churches of America Center for Buddhist Education will present a seminar on Shin Buddhism and the Nembutsu teachings at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. Polar bear and moose will be in attendance. We are hopeful that a few people will make their way there as well. Stay tuned!

¹ *Collected Works of Shinran*, p. 103

Shinran, Polar Bear, and Moose



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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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Buddhist Church of Parlier

The history of the founding of the Buddhist Church of Parlier goes back over 85 years. Hard working Issei immigrants looking to fulfill their spiritual and social needs and wanting to maintain their rich cultural and religious heritage banded together to form a community organization. This organization grew into the Buddhist Church of Parlier. When the *Onajin* items were purchased, the temple was affiliated with the Higashi Hongwanji.

The temple exists today primarily because of the hard work, personal sacrifice and monetary contributions of the *Issei* and *Nisei* (second generation) members and the dedication of the ministers who served the Buddhist Church of Parlier. While we continue to adapt to the reality of impermanence, our temple is still a place where the wonderful Dharma can be heard and shared with everyone.



By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

President's Message

June National Board Meeting Report

On June 6, 2015, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) representatives gathered at the Jodo Shinshu Center for our National Board Meeting. Bishop Kodo Umezu informed the Board that he is working with the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto to try to have a Hongwanji International Department branch office opened in San Francisco. He is also working with the Central California

District ministers and temples to try to develop a new system of assigning ministerial duties that will meet the needs of the members in that district.

Rev. Jerry Hirano told the Board that the Ministers' *Fuken* will take place from August 10-12, 2015 in San Jose. During the *Fuken*, the ministers will begin the bishop selection process.

Jeff Matsuoka, BCA Treasurer, informed the Board that the BCA will begin a zero base budget process for the 2016 – 2017 fiscal year. In this system, all committee and organization budgets will be zero unless specifically requested otherwise by the committee or organization. Every member of the Budget and Finance Committee

will oversee a specific committee. Committee budgets will be due by June 30, 2015.

Rev. David Matsumoto gave the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) report. Due to changes in California State law, the IBS needs to and will apply for independent accreditation. In May, 2015, five students participated in graduation. Of the five, three are pursuing *kyoshi* ordination. The IBS currently has nine ministerial applicants enrolled.

Hideaki Mizuno, BCA Endowment Foundation Executive Director, announced that Christopher Sujarit was hired as the new Development Assistant in April, 2015. One of Mr. Sujarit's first assignments was to help raise

money for Nepal Earthquake Relief. As of June 1, approximately \$130,000 has been raised for the Kathmandu Hongwanji in Nepal and will be sent this month by the BCA.

Rev. Marvin Harada, Executive Assistant to the Bishop, reported that outreach projects have been initiated with the Buddhist Church of Marysville (CA), and in Anchorage, Alaska.

The Board voted to allocate funds to complete a study to find the best direction for the ministers' pension fund system.

Mary Ann Miyao, Chair, Social Welfare Committee, reported that \$10,000 was sent to the Asian Community Center in Sacramento, CA, for their senior trans-

portation program. The Social Welfare Committee sent \$14,000 on behalf of the BCA to the Kathmandu Hongwanji immediately after the first earthquake.

Ken Tanimoto, BCA President-Elect, reported that \$150,000 raised from the Sustaining Membership Program was forwarded to the Bishop's Expansion Fund to begin the Bishop's initiatives for new programs. Mr. Tanimoto also informed the Board that \$500,000 in the H.E. Kosho Ohtani Monshu Emeritus Special Temple Building Fund, which originally was in the defunct Ministers' Income Protection Program, will be transferred to a program to be decided by the Ministers' Association.



2015 National Board Meeting attendees: Front Row, seated: Mick Kubota, Jeffery Matsuoka, Susan Bottari, Rick Stambul, Rev. Jerry Hirano, Rev. Kodo Umezu, Dr. Kent Matsuda, Ken Tanimoto, Charlene Grinolds, Rev. Marvin Harada. Second Row: Michael Endo, Glenn Kameda, Arleen Miya, Terri Omori, Samantha Nitta, Lynn Ozawa, Carl Yanari, Rev. Harry Bridge, Jon Takagaki, David Ito, Karen Suyama, Lucy Hamai, Larry Oda, Mary Ann Miyao, Judy Kono, Rev. Patti Usuki, Rev. Kakei Nakagawa, Hide Mizuno. Third Row: Kevin Arakaki, Nadine Kakimoto, Chris Sujarit, Tom Nishikawa, David Chin, Alan Kita, Mark Achterman, Gary Omori. Fourth Row: Harry Berglund, Richard Endo, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Perry Yoshida, Jeff Hiroo, Candy Hayashi, Gary Mukai, Cathy Nishinaka, Dr. Jim Kubo, Tom Fujikawa, Rev. Joshin Fujimoto, Steve Terusaki, Erick Ishii, Rev. Ron Miyamura, Dianne Belli, Shizue Yahata, and Glenn Kitasoe.

Bon Dancing in NYC



By Isabelle Bernard
New York Buddhist Church

Sunshine and blue skies greet members and friends of the New York Buddhist Church (NYBC) in Bryant Park for the annual *Obon Odori* festival. Located next to the New York Public Library between 40th and 42nd Streets, beautifully groomed and green Bryant Park has its usual summer sunbathers, chess players, book readers, and others enjoying a relaxing day. So when a procession of *yukata*-clad dancers and BIG guys carrying taiko drums enters the public park, heads barely raise! As Soh Daiko begins its set up and "tune up," folks start to gravitate toward the group. New Yorkers know something special is about to happen and when in New York, one learns to expect—and enjoy—the unexpected!

Hoh Daiko from Seabrook Buddhist Temple performs first, and the sounds of taiko drums quickly rouse the rapt attention of the audience. Cheers and applause follow. Then the time comes ... as the sounds of Japanese folk songs are heard, the dance circle quickly forms, led by the NYBC Tachibana Dance Group and Soh Daiko of NYBC. A gaily clad, diverse group of members, family, and friends enjoys dancing on this special day; a tradition shared by Buddhist Churches of America temples across the country.

The Tachibana Dance group, led by Sahotae Tachibana (Nancy Okada), shows off the finer points of *Nihon Buyo* (Japanese Dance) in both group and solo performances, which is greeted with much applause and appreciation. The onlookers are then treated to Soh Daiko's energetic and well-choreographed taiko drumming and responds with more rousing cheers. *Soraya!*

Gradually the entourage is joined by members of Seabrook Buddhist Temple, the Princeton Japanese Association, and NYBC members ... and the Friendship Circle grows to a huge diameter as people join the dance, somewhat tentatively as first. The Obon dances are easy to learn and soon 3,000 people become part of the festivities. Nobody wants the day to end! But in New York.

Continued on Page 6

Buddhist Churches of America 2015 National Board Members

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President-elect Kenneth Tanimoto,
Vice President - Charlene Grinolds
Vice President - Richard Stambul
Secretary - Susan Bottari
Treasurer - Jeffery Matsuoka
Bishop - Rev. Kodo Umezu
Chair, Ministers Association - Rev. Jerry Kyosei Hirano

Kyokucho

Bay District - Rev. Harry Gyokyo Bridge,
Coast District - Rev. Ken Kenshin Fujimoto
Mountain States District - Rev. Jerry Kyosei Hirano
Eastern District - Rev. Ronald Gutei Miyamura
Central California District - Rev. Kakei Nakagawa
Northern California District - Rev. Bob Bombu Oshita
Northwest - Rev. Joshin Dennis Fujimoto
Southern District - Rev. Patricia Jisho Usuki

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2013-2016
Charlene Grinolds, Jeffery Matsuoka, Richard Stambul

2014-2017

Mick Kubota, Gary Omori, Hoshina Seki

2015-2018

Dianne Belli, Larry Oda, Karen Suyama

District Representatives

Bay District Council

Jon Takagaki, David Tanaka, Ron Hiraga or Susan Bottari

Central District Council

Jim Kubo, Kathy Nishinaka, Ellen Tanimoto

Coast District Council

Janice Doi, Glenn Kitasoe, Perry Yoshida

Eastern District Council

Gordon Bermant, Linda Engstrom, Erick Ishii

Mountain States District Council

Tom Fujikawa, Larry Shires, Ivan Van Laningham or Jackie Tono

Northern California District Council

Candy Hayashi, David Ito, Mary Ann Miyao

Northwest District Council

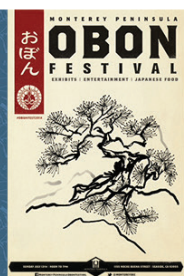
Mark Achterman, Jeff Hiroo, Lon Inaba

Southern District Council

Dianne Belli, Arleen Miya, Terri Omori

Affiliated Organizations Representatives

Young Adult Buddhist Association - David Chin
Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations - Shizue Yahata
Federation of Dharma School Teachers Leagues - Carl Yanari



2015 OBON & BAZAAR SCHEDULE

Available at buddhistchurchesofamerica.org



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

Buddhist Wedding Ceremony Practice for *Kyoshi*



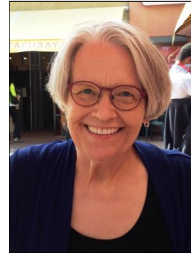
How many times have you attended a Buddhist wedding? At the Jodo Shinshu Center on June 13, *Kyoshi* candidates (left to right) Candice Shibata (Buddhist Church of Stockton), Kory Quon (Gardena Buddhist Church), and Matthew Hamasaki (Berkeley Buddhist Temple) practiced performing a Buddhist marriage ceremony as part of their second *Kyoshi* training session under the direction of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Center for Buddhist Education.

The three aspiring BCA ministerial candidates were preparing to go to the Nishiyama Training Center in Kyoto, Japan for *Kyoshi* training and certification from June 16-26, 2015. All three received masters' degrees from the Institute of Buddhist Studies on May 15, 2015.

Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course - Monthly Essay

This article was written in response to an assignment for the JSCC and reflects the author's individual understanding of this topic.

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



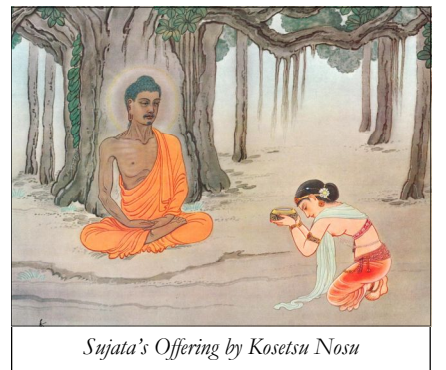
How Sakyamuni's encounter with an important character in his life story led him to a deeper understanding of the truth

By Victoria Brundage
Buddhist Temple of Chicago

The Buddha encountered Sujata¹ at a crucial time in his spiritual journey. It might have seemed that he had come to a dead end—perhaps literally, because of his weakened state. The ascetic fasting practiced by others had become counterproductive for him. To take nourishment would seem like failure to others, but he needed nourishment to continue his quest. It was then that Sujata 'happened' to pass by, carrying a mix of rice and milk. (In the *Buddhacarita* we read that she happened to pass there "at the instigation of the deities.") She offered her milk-rice to the Buddha. He accepted and consumed it. Now he was fit for the next stage of his journey. He went, "accompanied only by his resolution," to the Bodhi tree and took his seat. [Text, p.12; Gethin, p. 22; *Buddhacarita* (Conze), p. 47]

Sujata was the right person at the right place at the right time. She gave him what he needed to continue his spiritual journey. Before his encounter with Sujata, the Buddha was starving; after his encounter with Sujata, he attained enlightenment.

This powerful story reminds me of Shinran's visionary encounter with Avalokitesvara in the Rokkakudo.² Like the Buddha, Shinran seemed to have come to a dead end in his spiritual journey. Like the Buddha he subjected himself to an extreme practice: he entered confinement in the Rokkakudo for 100 days. But on the ninety-fifth day, Shinran had a dream vision. Avalokitesvara appeared in human form and "revealed the path to enlightenment." [Ohtani in Bloom, p. 9] The path led straight to Honen. For Shinran to leave before the end of 100 days would be failure. To give up traditional monastic practice and join Honen as his student meant risking everything. It would bring condemnation in this world. It might send him to hell.



Sujata's Offering by Kosetsu Nosu

But the Bodhisattva appeared as the right person at the right time and the right place (of course). The Bodhisattva gave Shinran the guidance he needed to continue his spiritual journey. At dawn of the next day, Shinran ended his confinement. He left the Rokkakudo and went to Honen. Under Honen's tutelage, Shinran's 'faith became fully established'. [Godensho in Bloom, p. 35]

In its outline, this is a story with which many people can identify, myself included. How many of us have been in great distress, only to have someone appear out of nowhere and give us what we needed? At the time it can seem to be pure chance, but upon reflection it may appear to be pure grace.

One time, years ago, I was alone and experiencing a post-traumatic flashback. In my relived helplessness and terror I cried out, "Kannonsama, Kannonsama!" In that moment the waking nightmare stopped. In my heart I was in a different place, feeling deep and healing peace.

As a former member of the clergy and former psychotherapist I have learned that such experiences are not uncommon. They can occur in a context of faith or of no faith at all. But when we cry out, we may realize that someone—the One Who Regards the Cries of the World?—hears us. That someone intervenes. Our suffering becomes our Pure Land, as it always was. We are a moment closer to realization of the Way. [*Lotus Sutra*, Chapter 25]

As a Buddhist I am happy to attribute Shinran's experience and my own to Amida Buddha's grace conveyed through Avalokitesvara, but what about the Buddha Sakyamuni and Sujata? In the *Buddhacarita* we read that Sujata appeared at the instigation of the gods. For myself I wonder if she was a Bodhisattva in human form, a manifestation of Amida's boundless omnipresent grace.

¹ Sujata is referred to as Nandabala in the *Buddhacarita*. [Conze, p. 47]

² In a letter Shinran's wife Eshin-ni said that Shinran saw Shotoku, but Shinran identified Shotoku as an earthly manifestation of Avalokitesvara. [Ohtani in Bloom, p. 9; *Godensho* in Bloom, p. 36]

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Victoria (Tori) Brundage lives near Kansas City. She is affiliated with the Buddhist Temple of Chicago and the Milwaukee Zen Center. She has been an academic, served in ordained ministry (Christian and Soto Zen), and practiced and taught psychotherapy. Now she is a lay person and retired.

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Professor, Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley

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by Gayle Noguchi

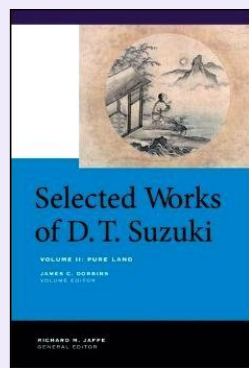
Now available: **Selected Works of D.T. Suzuki**
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In *Selected Works of D.T. Suzuki - Volume II: Pure Land*, Dobbins begins with a brief overview of Suzuki's life and a discussion of some of the intellectual influences that shaped Suzuki's thinking. Dobbins asserts that Suzuki's writings articulated a re-interpretation of Pure Land Buddhism, one that emphasized religious experience. Through his writings Suzuki offered a persuasive and compelling viewpoint that re-established the relevance and credibility of Pure Land Buddhism for the modern world. Following this introduction, Dobbins presents ten essays by Suzuki, including "Zen and Jodo, Two Types of Buddhist Experience," "The Myokoinin," and "From Saichi's Journals." The tenth essay is "The Spirit of Shinran," the address that Suzuki gave during the installation ceremony of the Shinran statue at the American Buddhist Academy in New York on September 11, 1955.

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CBE 2015 Tentative Calendar of Events

(at the Jodo Shinshu Center unless noted otherwise. Dates and programming subject to change.)

July 3-5: Summer Pacific Seminar & Minister's Assistant Program (MAP): *The Call of the Nembutsu* with Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Prof. Mitsuya Dake (*Ryukoku Univ.*), Rev. Uma Lama Ghising (*Kathmandu Hongwanji*), and others. Co-sponsored by the Institute of Buddhist Studies

August 1-2: Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) August Workshop

September 24-26: Fall Minister's Assistant Program (MAP)

October 3: Baby Boomers' Seminar with Rev. Earl Ikeda * **October 10:** Japanese Seminar

October 15-17: Ministers' Continuing Education Seminar (MCE) at the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple in conjunction with the 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions, in Salt Lake City, UT

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BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

Special Feature: This is the first of a two-part series to observe the 70th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It recounts the memories of Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki, who survived the bombing of Nagasaki. View the original article written in Japanese online at www.asahi.com/articles/OSK201311110028.html.

THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE A-BOMB (Part I of 2)

by Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki

President, Nagasaki Buddhist Association

Translated by Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, Buddhist Church of Lodi

Translator's Note: The first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima City at 8:15 a.m. on August 6, 1945, and the second one was dropped on Nagasaki City at 11:02 a.m. on August 9, 1945. About one-third of each city's population was killed instantly; around 140,000 people in Hiroshima and about 70,000 people in Nagasaki. My father, Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki, a survivor of the Nagasaki A-bomb, was six years old at that time. Seventy years have passed since then. Before retirement he had been the resident minister of Kougenji Temple, his family temple in Nagasaki, for over fifty years. Even after retiring, his unceasing desire is to share his experiences and his wish for peace with others. I would like to present my father's reminiscences of the A-bomb, written in 2013 and published in the local Japanese newspaper, *Asahi* on November 11, 2013.



Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki shares his wish for peace with children and adults at the birthplace of the Kougenji Temple Dharma school, Hikari Kodomokai, in Nagasaki.

“Overcoming religious barriers and wishing for peace”

Every year, the night before August 9 in Nagasaki, religious leaders of various faiths including Buddhism, Christianity, Shinto (the traditional polytheistic religion of Japan), Islam, and others, gather at the Nagasaki Peace Park to have a peaceful assembly and memorial service for victims of the atomic bomb, hosted by the Nagasaki Interfaith Organization. Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki, 75, president of the Nagasaki Buddhist Association, has been in charge of the interfaith peace gathering since 2012. His family temple, Kougenji, is located 3.5 km (2.2 miles) southeast of ground zero. The temple suffered extensive damage from the bomb blast. Many people took refuge there.

Rev. Kusunoki explained the relationship between religion and war. “In human history, religion has been a cause of war. During World War 2, our country, Japan, used Shinto to support the war and the other religions also supported the war.”

Nagasaki is a small town where many different faiths exist. Buddhist ministers attend Christian churches at Christmas. Shinto priests and Christian pastors visit Buddhist temples at Hanamatsuri to celebrate Shakyamuni Buddha's Birthday. All religious groups have emphasized love for humankind, yet at the same time they have fought and killed each other. The Nagasaki Interfaith Organization was formed to transcend such a history of religion. The organization has kept working for peace. “Overcoming religious barriers and wishing for peace. This is the proper role of religion.”

Enjoying playing the game of kamikaze

There is a street with many Buddhist temples in Nagasaki. The Kougenji temple, Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki's family temple, is located on this street. Kougenji is famous for an old story about the ghost of a mother who came out of her grave to buy candy for her baby. Tatsuya Kusunoki was the third son of Rev. Monshin Ecchu, the resident minister of his Kougenji. From the time he was a little boy, Tatsuya would wake up early every morning and chant sutras. He was already able to chant from memory when he was five years old. His oldest brother is Rev. Tetsuya Ecchu, 91, a famous Nagasaki historian. Tatsuya has always called his brother “Ecchu Sensei” (Teacher Ecchu) because his brother was his teacher—even more so than his schoolteacher. Kougenji was a very lively, crowded temple. Besides his family, there were also ministers, housemaids, boarding students, and beggars all living together.

During those days, Tatsuya liked to play a war game every day. It was called the *Kamikaze* air force. He would spread his arms out and butt into the other players. Another game was to break the roof tiles and throw them at each other. He admired war and soldiers. However, his feelings changed in 1944 because the war situation was getting worse. Provisions were running short. People who had lived together were leaving for other places. Bells, altar vases, and altar fittings made of metal were confiscated to make into weapons. During air raids, his father wrapped the Amida Buddha statue in a white cloth and took it to a safe place. It was like a mummy. It was very strange and scary for young Tatsuya to see the mummy-like Amida Buddha statue.

Sugar candy balls: a taste of parental love

In the summer of 1944, the shortage of provisions became more serious. Troops came to stay at the Kougenji temple. In those days, Japanese troops used Buddhist temples for lodging. The troops stayed for a week and then left from the port of Nagasaki for the battlefield. Rev. Kusunoki clearly remembered that a superior officer made soldiers stand outside and hit them with a leather shoe. Also, a soldier was tied and lowered into a well to retrieve a mess kit that someone had dropped into it.

One day, a soldier called to Tatsuya and said, “Hey, boy, stretch out your hand.” The soldier gave him some red and white sugar candy balls. He was so happy, it was as if he was treading on air. He carefully ate them, savoring them, one by one. The candy was more valuable to him than diamonds. A few days later, the troops left the temple for the battlefield. Nobody knows if they survived or not, but most of them must

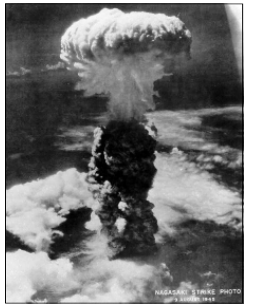
have been killed in the war. Even now, Rev. Kusunoki reflects upon their lives, thinks about their thoughts and feelings, and puts his hands together in *gassho*.

Decades later, he got married and became a father. One day, he recalled the soldier who gave him the sugar candy balls and realized the soldier's intent. “If he had had the chance, the soldier would have wanted to give the sugar candy balls to his children, if only he could. Instead, I was the one who received his last gift to his children.” Rev. Kusunoki rushed out to buy some sugar candy balls. When he put the first one into his mouth, tears welled up in his eyes.

“Bakatare!” (Stupid!): the voice that saved his life

“What would have happened to me if that man had not called me, *Bakatare!* (stupid)”? Rev. Kusunoki reflected upon the person who yelled, “*Bakatare!*” and put his hands together.

The day the atomic bomb was dropped was during summer vacation. Tatsuya was in the first grade at that time. After the air raid warning ended that morning, he left the bomb shelter to catch a cicada in the temple courtyard. He climbed the tree and poked the cicada with a bamboo stick. He faintly heard the sound of a bomber, but didn't pay attention because he was frantically trying to catch the cicada. At that moment, someone shouted, “*Bakatare! Run away!*” The voice was like a rumble of thunder. He was thunderstruck; jumped out of the tree and ran into the temple. It was 11:02 a.m. The A-bomb was dropped. The explosion and the bomb blast hit the temple. The wall and roof crumbled. Tatsuya ran into the bomb shelter in a panic. He didn't have any injuries, but was very frightened; so much so that he wet himself and cried aloud. Water was dripping from the ceiling. Centipedes were crawling on the wall and flies flew in. The bomb shelter was filled with a disgusting stench.



Kougenji becomes a casualty clearing hospital

Tatsuya Kusunoki was alone in a bomb shelter and crying loudly. After a while, his mother, Yae came into the shelter. She was holding his brother, Isamu who was still a baby. His mother's face was bloodstained and his brother's hair was scorched and frizzy. His father was supposed to have visited a temple member's house and his two sisters were supposed to have gone to work at an arms factory near ground zero. However, they had changed their schedules due of health problems and other reasons. Therefore, all the family members were alive.

The sky was covered with dark clouds. It was dim outside as if it were night. Tatsuya could see fire in downtown Nagasaki near the city hall. At about midnight, *onigiri* (rice balls) were delivered from the neighboring city of Isahaya. All the family members stayed overnight in the shelter.

The next day, a lot of injured people were carried into the *bondo* (main hall). There was no room to stand. The injured people moaned in pain. Tatsuya couldn't go into the *bondo* because he was afraid to look at them. His parents put antiseptic on the wounds in people's months. However, after a few days, the wounds were full of maggots. Many people suffered from their injuries and died. The bodies were taken to an elementary school near the temple and cremated. By late afternoon, the smoke and odor flowed out and reached the temple.



An exciting impression: fruit juice and snacks

August 15, 1945 was an unforgettable day. The Nagasaki newspaper publishing company was using the Kougenji as their temporary office. A staff of 40 sat in the *bondo* listening to the radio broadcast by the Emperor of Japan. Being a child, Tatsuya couldn't understand what was going on. One man started crying aloud. Somebody told him that Japan had lost the war.

Japanese people, including Tatsuya, used to call the Americans and British brutes and savages, but after the war ended, his impression of the Americans and British changed completely. He enjoyed visiting the U.S. military base in Japan after dinner. His purpose for visiting was to get chocolate and chewing gum. If he said, “Hallo,” the U.S. soldiers scattered sweets. His two brothers worked for the U.S. forces in Japan as interpreters. A lot of U.S. soldiers visited Kougenji. They wound up a phonograph, played western music, and danced a folk dance on a tatami mat. They gave white bread to some people. It was a great delicacy for young Tatsuya Kusunoki.

When he was in the third grade, the school children were served a cup of juice. It was very sweet and had a fruity taste. He had never tasted such a delicious juice before. He covered the cup with his hand and took it home for his family to taste.

A surprising onigiri offering at an obutsudan

Rev. Monshin Ecchu passed away when Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki was 20 years old. He took his father's place and became the 16th resident minister of Kougenji. He changed his last name from Ecchu to his mother's maiden name, Kusunoki. In those days, he just chanted the sutras with all his strength but without thinking about the meaning and was not so interested in antiwar, antinuclear, or peace activities. When he was over forty years of age, he met an old woman who was a Kougenji temple member. This encounter changed his life.

Rev. Kusunoki visited her house to conduct a memorial service. She had put some *onigiri* (rice balls) on a regular plate and placed it on the *obutsudan*, the household Buddhist altar. This wasn't the proper way to offer rice to the Buddha. The rice must be shaped like a lotus bud. There is also a specific tray used to offer rice to the Buddha. Rev. Kusunoki thought that she didn't know these things. To correct her impropriety, he asked her why she offered *onigiri* on a regular plate. Tears formed in her eyes and she said that she had lost her four children because of the A-bomb when they were still under ten years old. On the day the atomic bomb was dropped, she had told her kids, “I made some *onigiri* for your lunch. Be nice and share them.” She left and went to Isahaya to buy food. She came home after the A-bomb had been dropped. Her house was crushed and she found her children's bodies surrounding the dining table where she had placed the *onigiri*. She told Rev. Kusunoki, “I am the only person who can make *onigiri* for them.”

When he heard her solemn story, he felt ashamed of his ignorance and conceit. It was his first experience to deeply understand and feel the pain of the surviving families who had lost their loved ones because of the war and the A-bomb.

To be concluded next month.



Why BCA?



By Charlene Grinolds
Co-Chair, Joint Development
Committee of the BCAF

Have you ever asked yourself “Why Jodo Shinshu?” For me, Jodo Shinshu is about accepting everyone for who they are. It’s not always an easy task, as our own egos and self-delusions get in the way. We all have our own issues, views, and thoughts which make us different and imperfect beings. It is very difficult to see things from the viewpoint of others and even more difficult to see our own “real” self. Jodo Shinshu Buddhism helps us

realize and deal with these challenges.

So Why BCA? When we talk about Buddhist Churches of America, we should speak in the first person and not the third person. We are all BCA and we are trying to provide Shinran’s teachings to everyone, whether they are Buddhist or not. In fact, that’s how we can get others interested in Jodo Shinshu. BCA can help us do this by providing materials, classes, lesson plans, and speakers for all temples to use, but it is the people at each temple who have to share the Dharma daily with visitors and people who are interested in learning more about Buddhism. We cannot grow our temples alone: it takes a village to attract even one new member. We say we want to grow our temples but first we must be willing

to listen and try new things. Buddhism teaches us that change and impermanence are fundamental facts of existence, so we as temple members need to learn to change as well. Certainly, clinging to the “old ways” can provide a sense of security, but to stretch and learn and change will provide a fuller life experience for all of us.

I can’t tell you your particular “why” for BCA, but I ask you to come up with your own individual “why.” I am sure you have one, since we all have one somewhere within us! My “why” is for those who came before us and shared the Dharma with us, as well as for the generations yet to come, who follow in our footsteps. The youth are our future and the legacy we will leave behind. There is much we can learn from them; they are connected by Jodo Shinshu and are part of the larger world of

Jodo Shinshu. They want to hear the Dharma and many are willing to help out at a temple as needed. But how and where they connect is not just a temple, district or BCA; young people are connected by the Internet and social media.

The youth are the future leaders of BCA and we need to include them in our discussions when we are talking about growing our temples, fundraising, communications, and programs. I for one do not know what the spiritual and/or religious needs are for the millennial generation, so for this reason I support BCA and want to see us flourish long into the future. Let’s listen, nurture, and incorporate their ideas into BCA. In order to do this we must continue to support BCA on an annual basis and not just for one year. Let’s leave a legacy for future generations, as Shinran did for us. *Gassho*

Nepal Relief Update



Rev. Sonam Wangdi Bhutia (far left) distributes books to children at the site where the Shree Kalika Saran Secondary School is being rebuilt with your generous donations.

BCA members and friends have come together in a big way to support Reverend Sonam Wangdi Bhutia and the Kathmandu Hongwanji in their relief efforts for victims of the earthquakes in Nepal in April and May, 2015.

Almost 900 donors gave with generosity and compassion to the Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund stewarded by the Buddhist Churches of America Endowment Foundation. Together, we have raised over \$130,000 for Nepal, and we will be sending our first disbursement of these funds to Rev. Sonam in July.

For updates on Rev. Sonam’s current relief efforts, visit his Facebook page at www.facebook.com/sonam.wangdi.146. Be sure to visit BCA’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/buddhistchurchesofamerica and Like our page.

Obon Music

Continued from Front Page

miko Hojo’s gatha, *Obon, Obon, It’s Festival Day*. Reverend Hozen Seki composed the lyrics to *Riverside Ondo* for the American Buddhist Academy in New York, the song *America Ondo* was commissioned by the Japanese Community Pioneer Center in Los Angeles, and *Sakura Matsuri Ondo* was recorded by the Shinsei Band in San Francisco.

The Little Tokyo community celebrated its centennial in 1984 with *Sho Tokyo Ondo*, recorded by Matsutoyo Sato. In the same year, the singer and activist Nobuko Miyamoto worked with Reverend Masao

Kodani and the Senshin Buddhist Temple to produce *Yuiyo* with lyrics in English and Japanese. Miyamoto subsequently wrote *Tampopo Ondo*, *Gardener’s Song*, *Ichigo Ichie*, *Mottainai*, and *Bam Butsu no Tsunagari* with the Chicano rock band Quetzal.

In the Bay Area, P.J. Hirabayashi composed *Ei Ja Nai Ka* (1994), with additional lyrics by Yoko Fujimoto. The singer Reiko So wrote *Chidori Band Ondo* (1999), San Jose Taiko rearranged Hojo’s gatha, and Reiko Iwanaga, daughter-in-law of the late Reverend Iwanaga, choreographed Matt Ogawa’s *San Jose Bayashi*. More recently, bon-odori songs have been produced in Minnesota, Seattle, Salinas, and Tacoma.

I started tracking down this rep-

ertoire several years ago. Both Reiko Iwanaga and the scholar Linda Akiyama, who wrote her master’s thesis on Reverend Iwanaga, have been extremely generous and supportive of this research. In 2014, I teamed with Reverend Masao Kodani and the Senshin Buddhist Temple and our intention is to produce a CD and booklet that will be distributed to BCA temples. Ultimately we hope this will inspire new bon-odori songs from all corners of the United States.

We are still looking for records and any information concerning *Nisei Ondo*, *Sacramento Ondo*, *San Francisco Ondo*, or *Stockton Ondo*. If you can help, please contact me at wyn@pdx.edu. Thank you and we hope you have a wonderful obon season!

N.Y. Obon

Continued from Page 3

as evening approaches, it is time to signal the finish. The Obon Dances end as they had begun, in *gassho* with gratitude for this special day and all those people, causes, and conditions that made the day possible. *Namu Amida Butsu*.

NYBC members eagerly look forward every year to the Obon Odori. If you are ever in New York in July, please contact the temple for date and time and consider joining us!

Thank You to Our Donors

The Friends of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (FIBS) is an essential group of donors supporting the Ministerial Scholarship Fund and the future of BCA Ministers. The Institute of Buddhist Studies gratefully acknowledges these individuals, families, and organizations who gave so generously from March of this year until present:

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Congratulations to Matthew Hamasaki (Berkeley Buddhist Temple), Kory Quon (Gardena Buddhist Church), and Candice Shibata (Buddhist Church of Stockton)!

By the time you read this message, these recent Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) graduates will have returned from *Kyoshi* certification in Kyoto, Japan. They are on their way to becoming ministers for the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), possibly serving in your temple or church! A huge Thank You to each of you who helped these three students become ministers.

The Friends of the Institute of Buddhist Studies has successfully met its goal, which is to provide financial assistance

to our new generation of BCA ministerial students. Thank you, BCA members, for your foresight and *metta* spirit in responding to the need to support future ministers!

We continue to need your generous support, through the Friends of IBS Annual Giving Program for IBS ministerial scholarship students. If you can, please use the coupon provided below and send in your annual Friends of IBS contribution. Thank you.

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御法話

「ばかたれクラブ」

ロサンゼルス別院
開教使 高田 興芳

羅府別院の支部であるハリウッド仏教会が11月に一〇〇周年を迎えます。一〇〇周年を迎えるに当り、一〇〇年の歴史を振り返ったり、将来の展望について討議する機会が増えてきました。ある大学の研究チームが日本からの移民の歴史を調べるに当り、どのように仏教寺院が開基され、維持されてきたかを当時のメンバーにインタビューした資料が残っています。その中

ある二世の娘さんがお父さんに言われたことを記しておられます。「あなたの食事がなくても、私はお寺を維持するためにお布施をしないといけない。」普通ですと家族優先でお寺が二の次になってしまうのですが、一世の方は家族を犠牲にしてまでもお寺を支える為にお布施をしてこられた。生命をかけてまでお寺を護持し、後世に伝えたかったものは何だったのだろうか？

一世の方が心の底から抱き所とされたものは何だったのかわからない。それは、移民者であろうがアメリカ人であろうが差別せず、いつでもどこでも限りのない慈しみの心で必ず救いますよと呼び続けてくださる親さまのみ教えです。大きな親さまの御手に抱かれて生活は苦しくとも大きな大きな喜びのなかでお念仏の日暮を送られたことと思えます。

一〇〇周年の準備や将来の展望を話すに当り、主要メンバーとお会いする機会が増えてきました。ある方の提案でH H H (Holi-wood Happy Hour) Clubが結成されました。簡単に言うと、



ばかたれクラブの面々 Members of Bakatate Club



高田師とクラブのメンバー

ハリウッド仏教会で育った方々、ビアワーに飲みに行くと、うクラブです。つい先日、

一番初めの集いがあり、私とそのクラブのばかたれ委員長に就任いたしました。お互いにハリウッドで育ったときの昔話や仏教会の将来について語ったり、個人の現況を話したり、怒ったり、笑ったりと忙しい時間を過ごしました。その翌日、一緒に飲んだあるメンバーの方から皆で取った写真が送られてきました。それをみて、ある物語を思い出しました。

酔っ払った人が道に倒れて泥だらけになりながら騒いでいる。周りの人に文句を言ったり、けんかを吹っかけたりと歩いてる人たちは皆その酔っ払いを避けて通っている。誰一人としてその酔っ払いに近づこうとするものはいません。そこへ綺麗な格好をした人が近づいてきて、泥だらけになった酔っ払いを背負って運ぼうとする。ですが、その酔っ払いは逃げ回って未だに皆に迷惑をかけていてとても始末に終えない。それでも、その綺麗な格好をした人はその酔っ払いを連れて帰ろうとする。周りにいる人たちは、不思議そうにその綺麗な格好をした人を見つめている。あの人はなんと変わった者か？あんな泥だらけの酔っ払いを何でそこまでして連れて帰ろうとするのか？他人からみれば、綺麗な格好をした人は変わり者、でも、よくよく聞いてみるとその綺麗な格好をした人は酔っ払い

の親でした。自分の綺麗な格好が泥だらけの息子を背負うことで汚れることにも構わず、周りの人たちから冷ややかな眼で見られることにも構わず、酔っ払いの息子を抱えて連れて帰ろうとする。不甲斐ない息子の全てを大きな心で受け止めて、つかまえたなら決して離さない。それが親様の姿です。

私はばかたれクラブの集いでお酒を一杯、二杯、三杯と飲み、気持ちよくなる。自分はまだまだ大丈夫だと、まだ酔っ払っていないとお酒を飲み続ける。同じように毎日の日暮の中で、自分にとつて都合のいいことは貪り求め、都合の悪いことには怒り、そのような貪欲な自分に気付かない無知な自身にも気付かず、無明煩惱の酒に酔っ払っている。でも、私のように自分の事しか考えずに逃げ惑う酔っ払いを必ず護る、決して見捨てないぞと虎が大きな声で吼えるように、「南無阿弥陀仏」と喚び続けてくださる親さま。まことの親さまがいつもばかたれで酔っ払いの私を見ていてくださる。

ハリウッド仏教会一〇〇周年を迎えるに当り、私は今、一世の方々が心の底から抱き所とされた「南無阿弥陀仏」、弥陀大悲の招き喚ばれるみ声を聞かせて頂き、ばかたれクラブの皆と共に大きな親さまの御手の中で生かされ、親鸞聖人をはじめ次第相承の善知識方が伝えられたみ教えの中で私は生かされている。少しでも自身の無明煩惱の酔いからさめるように、「南無阿弥陀仏」のみ教えを毎日の日暮らしの中で聞法させていただき、思います。

南無阿弥陀仏

会長のインタビュー

今回はオックスナード仏教会でダルマスクールのスーパーインテンダントをされている高辺ヘレンさんに話をうかがった。

このインタビューは、BCAの次代をなう子供たちに仏教を伝えるダルマスクールの先生を紹介するものです。特に日英のバイリンガルで日米両方の文化を知っておられる方ということで、高辺さんにインタビューをお願いします。

渡辺先生とヘレンさん



高辺さんのご出身はどちらですか？

高辺ー東京です。父が米軍人で福生の横田基地に任んでいました。母は日本人で東京育ちです。学校は父の勧めで都内のインターナショナルスクールに行きました。

ー東京にいるからお寺にお参りされていたのですか？

高辺ーはい、日蓮宗のお寺ですが、母に連れられて何度かお寺にお参りしたことはあります。でも父はカトリックだったので、キリスト教会にもお参りしていました。みんなには冗談で私は仏教とキリスト教のハイブリッドだと言っています。幼いときに宗教教育を受けたおかげで、今、浄土真宗の教えにあわせていただいたと思っています。

ーいつ米国にいられたのですか？

高辺ー21歳の時です。父が急に亡くなったことがきっかけです。父が亡くなり、自分の父が生まれ育ったところに行ってみたくなったのです。自分自身のアイデンティティーをさぐる目的もありました。それで米系航空会社のキャピテン

テンダントに採用されて、ロサンゼルスに住むことになりました。その時に働きながらUCLAへ通ってバイオケミストリーを学びました。卒業後、日系3世の主人と結婚し、薬品系の会社に転職したことでオックスナードの近郊に住むことになりました。

ーどのような縁でオックスナードのお寺にお参りされるようになったのですか？

高辺ー友人の紹介です。それと、お寺のおばあさんやおじいさんがとてもあたたかかったことです。娘が学校で仲良くなったクラスメイトが日本人で、彼女がオックスナード仏教会のダルマスクールに行っていると聞いたのです。私は娘に日本の文化や仏教の教えを学んでほしいと思っていたので、お寺に行ってみることにしました。すると、お寺のおじいさんやおばあさんがあたたかく受け入れてくださって、何回か行っていると「お寺を手伝ってね。」と行ってくださって。私は浄土真宗のことはあまりわからなかったのですが、「お寺はあたたかいていところだな」と思ってお参りするようになりました。

ーいつからダルマスクールのティーチャーをされているのですか？

高辺ー約4年前、お寺に行き始めたところから、ダルマスクールのお手伝いをしていました。2年前にダルマスクールのスーパーインテンダントを任されることになりました。私はお寺のおばあさんたちに「手伝ってね」といわれていたし、日本人的な性格であります。「No」と言えないので、引き受けることにしたのです。おかげで、今ではお釈迦様や親鸞さまの教えをより一生懸命に学ぶようになりました。アメリカ人の友人は「仏教はメティションでしょ？」とステレオタイプな見方をする人が多いのですが、「でも真宗は基本的にはメティションはしない仏教なのよ。」なんて言えるようになってきました。これからも聞法と勉強を続けて、み教えを子供達にわかりやすく伝えられるように努めたいです。

法輪

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「まことの人生を歩もう」

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世界仏婦大会開催される

5月29日(金)から31日(日)に第十五回世界仏教婦人会大会がカナダ、カルガリー市で開催され、日本、北米、南米より約2000名が集った。大会には大谷光淳ご門主がご臨席された。BCAからは梅津総長をはじめ18名の開教使と、各寺院の婦人会会員、約300名が参加し大会を盛り立てた。



宇宿パトリシア先生 Rev. Usuki @ 2015 WBWA

基調講演では「いだかれてもいつながるわたいのいのち」のテーマにそって梁瀬奈々師と宇宿パトリシア師が話した。僧籍をもつシンガーソングライターとして広く支持されている梁瀬(やなせ)師は、自身がカンを克服した経験を歌った曲を通じて念仏の教えを説き、サンフェルナンドバレー仏教会駐在で、カナダ出身の宇宿(うすき)師は二種深信の観点から環境問題を語った。

ワークショップでは、カナダ教団の歴史、カナディアンインディアンの教えと仏教、ライندگانなど開催地になんだユニークなクラスが開かれ、好評あった。晩餐会には各国の代表グループがフラダ



梁瀬奈々先生 Rev. Yanase @ 2015 WBWA

モンテベロで南部教区大会

6月13日(土)に南部教区仏教徒大会および婦人会大会がカリフォルニア州モンテベロ市で開催され、南部教区の門徒、約280名が集った。大会のテーマは「Perception」で仏のすべてをありのままに見る見方にくらべて、人間の見方は一方的で限定的であることを学んだ。オックスナード仏教会の渡辺正憲師、パサデナ仏教会のギブス・グレゴリー師、オークランド仏教会のプリッツ・ハリイ師らが基調講演をした。大会のオープニングサービスでは梅津総長がタイム教僧侶のワイヤク・ソウグ



オープニングサービスの様子 Southern district conference

一休さんとワイヤク・ソウグラン師(左)と、梅津総長、従軍僧侶 Rev. Unezu and Buddhist Chaplains



ラン師を紹介した。師は現在、アメリカ陸軍の従軍僧侶となるべくロサンゼルス近郊のタイム教寺院に勤める。かたわら仏教系大学院に通っている。BCAが米国で唯一仏教系のチャプレンを認定できる宗教団体であるため、梅津総長に面会に訪れていた。師は「幼いころは一休さんの愛称で親しまれていました」と、日本語で挨拶し会場を和ませた。

開教使候補が結婚?

写真は6月初旬に浄土真宗センターで行われた教師教修のためのセミナーでの、仏前結婚式を司式する練習をする候補生たち。それぞれが司婚者と新郎新婦の役割をし、近い将来、開教使として結婚式



に多くの人たちです。その人たちは皆親鸞さまからなんらかのお育てを受けた人たちです。

私たちは親鸞さまを浄土真宗を開かれた開山さまとお慕いしますが、ご自身は決してそういう者ではないとおっしゃっておられます。私の中の親鸞さまは、すべての人たちの「人間であること」の業、辛さや悲しさ」をわかっておられて、他人を非難しません。親鸞さまご自身、縁によっては人はどんなことをしてかすかわからないとまで言い切っておられます。そして、そういう私たちの存在を悲しみ慈しむ方がおられるというのを喜んでおられます。このような方こそが、世界のすべての人たちの本当の友達になれるのではないかと思います。

総長コラム

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

私自身、親鸞さまに出会わなかったらどうなっていたかわかりません。私にとって親鸞さまが浄土真宗です。

六月の初め、教団の理事会に先立ち、パークレーの浄土真宗センターで教区長会議が開かれました。その会議の場で、今アメリカにはいろいろな仏教のグループがあるが、禅とかチベット仏教の場合、そこに来ると自分なげなメンバーになったか、はつきりとした理由を持っていないが、果たして、米国仏教団の会員の場合はどうなのだろうか、というような話になり、「なぜ自分はメンバーなのか」メンバーの人たちの口から聞いてみたいということになりました。

それに対して、議長である平野ジェリー開教使は、メンバーに尋ねる前に、開教使全員に「自分はなぜ浄土真宗を選んだのか」ということについて簡単なエッセイを書いてもらったかどうかと提案し、それが了承されました。それは非常に良いことだと思いました。

そこで、今月は自分なげな浄土真宗を選んだのかということについてちょっと触れてみたいと思います。私にとっては親鸞さまがその理由です。親鸞さまが好きになったのがその理由です。もちろん親鸞さまの言葉に触れたのはずっとあとのことですが、振り返って見ると、いつも親鸞さまが自分の周りにいたように思います。それは、祖父母、両親、門徒さん達、素晴らしい先生たち、大学の友達など本當

この記事を読んでおられるあなたも、なぜ仏教会のメンバーになったのか、いろいろなわけがあると思います。それがどんな理由であろうとも、そこにはいろいろな人からのやさしい導きがあったと思います。その中に親鸞さまがおられるかも知れません。