



# WHEEL OF DHARMA

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## New Year's Greeting from Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani

Happy New Year, everyone! At the beginning of this New Year, I would like to extend my best regards to you all.

Last year again, following the year before, Japan, as well as many other countries in the world, was struck with multiple natural disasters. I would like to convey my deepest condolences to those who lost their lives through those disasters and express my sympathy to everyone affected. In addition, we must never forget that armed conflicts and terror attacks as well as severe starvation is making it difficult to live, and lives are being lost every day.

Last September I had an opportunity to make an official visit to the temples of the Buddhist Churches of America as Monshu for the first time. This allowed me to complete the first round of visitations to all of the overseas districts which include Canada, Hawaii, South America, and the US mainland.

Although every temple and district has its own history and background, many of the overseas Jodo Shinshu temples were established and have been cherished by the Japanese immigrants and their descendants. Reflecting on how sincerely our prede-

cessors entrusted themselves to the Buddha Dharma and how importantly they thought of their temples while facing many difficulties such as World War II, I cannot help but feel grateful and even awe for their tremendous efforts as well as many other wondrous circumstances that have allowed the Jodo Shinshu teaching to be handed down to us today.

However, a considerable amount of time has passed since the Japanese emigrated overseas, and the lifestyle of their descendants, as well as the world situation have changed greatly. In accordance with these changes,

quite a few people who are not of ethnically Japanese origin have also come to appreciate the teaching clarified by Shinran Shonin, and attend our overseas temples.

What caused this is nothing but the universality of the Jodo Shinshu teaching that transcends time and space. In other words, Amida Buddha's compassion equally reaches and nondiscriminatively embraces everyone in the midst of all sorts of pain and agony.

In this year, let us continue to listen to the Dharma, considering it is directed to each one of us, and keep moving forward to share it with many other people as possible.



Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani

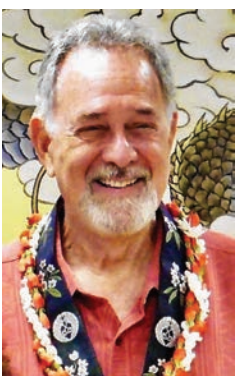
January 1, 2020

OHTANI Kojun  
Monshu  
Jodo Shinshu  
Hongwanji-ha

## Bloomquist Legal Battle — Extraordinary Success for BCA, IBS

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### A Dog, the Pope and the Buddha



By Richard A. Stambul  
BCA President

Leonard was a dog, a likeable Weimaraner, weighing in at about 70 pounds with a long tail, and he was primarily responsible for teaching me the law of wills and

estates.

The tail is important.

Our class on wills and estates began at 8 a.m. sharp and met several days each week. Our professor was a nationally recognized attorney, author and lecturer, Laurence P. Simpson. By 1970, Dr. Simpson was aging, hard of hearing, yet still brilliant and learned. His class roster included more than 100 students but barely 25 showed up for the first lecture. The class was simply too early in the morning, and for law students already full of

themselves, a relatively boring subject.

Leonard's owner started sneaking him into class. I should mention that back in my law school days, dogs were never allowed in public buildings. Never. Leonard would hide underneath the desk which made him invisible from the front of the lecture hall.

At least once each class, sometimes more often, Leonard's tail would knock repeatedly against the desk ... "BANG, BANG, BANG." Dr. Simpson

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### Hear the Teaching of the Buddha

By Rev. Dr. David Ryoe Matsumoto  
IBS President

We often take so much for granted in our lives. Our families and friends. The world. Our past, present and future. Our Buddhist temple, BCA and IBS. Even the Three Treasures that we recite weekly in our temple services. We are rarely amazed that we are actually able to hear the teachings of the Buddha.

Shinran Shōnin thought about those things a lot. From the Larger Sutra, he learned that:

*It is difficult to encounter a time when a Tathagata appears in the world,  
And difficult to hear the teaching of the Buddhas;*

*More difficult even than trust in the teachings of Sakyamuni's lifetime  
Is the true entrusting of the universal Vow ...*

*Nothing surpasses this difficulty.*  
— "Hymns of the Pure Land"



IBS President Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto holds the Memorandum of Understanding and BCA President Rick Stambul presents IBS with a check of \$418,488.09, a preliminary distribution from the Richard Bloomquist estate. Additional funds from the estate will bring the total distribution to IBS of more than \$1 million. (Buddhist Churches of America)

Shinran was amazed that we are actually able to receive the truth of the Buddha's teachings, and I believe that he

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## Buddhist Church of Florin Celebrates 100 Years With Full Slate of Events

By Judie Miyao  
Buddhist Church of Florin

Turning a momentous page in its history, the Buddhist Church of Florin celebrated its 100-year anniversary on Sept. 21 with the theme of "Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Future."

The day's events, led by resident minister Rev. Candice Shibata and honored guest, BCA Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezu, also included Rev. Yoshiaki Takemura, Rev. Hoyu Ishida and Rev. Yuki Sugahara, who previously served in Florin. The Northern California District ministers, including Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi, Rev. Matthew Hamasaki, Rev. Masanari Yamagishi and Rev. Tim Castle also participated in the service, which began with the ochigo procession of 12 children

wearing traditional ochigo costumes.

"One hundred two years ago, Florin members met to establish a group to hear and receive the Dharma. Florin was established as the spiritual and physical home for Buddhist immigrants, who longed for a place where they could feel safe and accepted," Bishop Umezu said. "Today, 100 years later, people continue to welcome and support people in our community to listen to the words of the Buddha and work towards creating a better place for all people."

In 1917, the original community that established the Buddhist Church of Florin initially gathered in homes to listen to the words of Buddha. In 1919, the founding members completed the construction of the temple and it became the

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Buddhist Church of Florin Resident Minister Rev. Candice Shibata, center, and BCA Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezu pose with the seven participants of the Kieshiki Affirmation Ceremony. The ceremony was part of the daylong events celebrating the Buddhist Church of Florin's centennial. (Courtesy of Douglas Blakkolb)





## BISHOP'S MESSAGE

## On New Year, Think of Buddha's Wish for Happiness



By Rev. Kodo Umezu  
BCA Bishop

Happy New Year!

As we welcome the New Year, we exchange our greetings with each other by saying, "We wish you a Happy New Year!"

It is natural for us to have such feelings for people around us. We wish for happiness for our family members, friends and the world. But we really don't know what happiness is. Even if we wish for the happiness of others, we don't know what to do.

This leads me to think of the wish of Amida Buddha known as the Primal

Vow. Amida Buddha, knowing how we are, sincerely wishes all sentient beings without exception to live their lives with true happiness and fulfillment. This wish did not stay just a wish. The Buddha gave rise to the Vow, and the way to bring true happiness was discovered and presented to us. This is known as the path of the Nembutsu.

Hearing this caring call, Namo Amida Butsu, coming from the Pure Realm, we live our lives with clarity and fulfillment. By doing so, we will not need to ask for the worldly pleasures and happiness. Happiness will be given to us naturally and constantly.

This Nembutsu path is open to people of all walks of life. We are not asked to be anyone else. We are able to be ourselves, and we find ourselves as family members of Amida Buddha. It is only in our human world that we discriminate with each other by race, color, wealth, education, etc. The Universal eyes of Buddha view all beings as wonderful individuals and we are welcome to return to the Ultimate Home of All Life.

The Buddha, with a true, compassionate heart, wishes for happiness for all of us, and we can acknowledge the tireless call from the Realm of Our True Home by responding with the Nembutsu.

*How difficult it is to encounter the strong influence of the Universal Vow, even in many cycles of birth and death! How difficult it is to attain the pure faith, even in millions of kalpas! If you are fortunate enough to attain practice and faith, you should rejoice at your close relationship with Amida from the distant past. If your mind is still covered with a net of doubt, you will continue to wander about in samsara for myriads of kalpas.*

*How trustworthy are the words of truth that say that we are embraced in Amida's Light and never forsaken! How extraordinary and wonderful is the Right Dharma! Hear and reflect; be careful not to hesitate too long.*

*What a joy it is that I, Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Shakyamuni, have had a rare chance to meet with the Pure Land scriptures from India and the commentaries by Chinese and Japanese masters, which are difficult to encounter, and have been able to hear their teachings that we can only rarely hear!*

*Having respectfully accepted in faith the teaching, practice, and enlightenment of the True Pure Land Way, I deeply acknowledge the Tathagata Amida's benevolence. Here I rejoice over what I have heard and marvel at what I have received.*

— "Kyogyoshinsho Preface" by Shinran Shonin

## A Mother's Final Message to Her Child — a Lesson in Gassho



By Rev. Takashi Miyaji  
Tacoma Buddhist Temple

We often get told that Jodo Shinshu is a path of hearing. But what are we hearing? One answer is that we hear with our hearts the

calling voice of true reality. It is admittedly a very abstract answer. But I would like to share with the reader a story I once heard that might put this into perspective.

Once, there lived a pregnant mother in Japan before the war. When she had the child, there were complications from her pregnancy. The healthy baby grew up to be about 2 years old, but the mother's condition worsened, and she suffered from an illness that was not known at the time. In fear of the child contracting the illness as well, the father did not let this child around the mother.

The mother was essentially confined in her room.

One day, the doctor said that she did not have long to live. She begged her husband to let her see her child one last time. Finally, the father agreed, but just for a few minutes. When the child entered the room, the mother hugged her child very tightly for a long time.

What does a mother say to her child if it is the last time they will meet?

"When I was a little girl, my parents showed me the most important posture you can take in this life," she said. "Put your hands together like

this," and she put her child's hands together in gassho.

"This is the most important form you can take in this life," she continued. "Don't ever forget this posture, my child. Every time you feel alone, put your hands together like this to remember that the Buddha is always with you. Every time you feel lonely, put your hands together in gassho to remember that I will always be with you. Don't ever forget this."

After that exchange, the mother entered the Pure Land.

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## 'You Must Unlearn What You Have Learned'



By Rev. Kory Quon  
Venice Hongwanji  
Buddhist Temple

Happy New Year! Happy 2020! Best wishes for this New Year. As this is another turning point in our lives, let us reflect and appreciate this Nembutsu path and keep with

the foundations that make it right for each and every one of us.

Have you ever shared something special with someone? How did they receive your gift? Recently, I was able to share a moment with my 7-year-old son.

I thought it was time to show him a large part of my childhood. We sat together to watch "Star Wars" for the first time. Do you remember the hold it had over us over 40 years ago? Do you remember the visions of galaxies far away and the battle of light and dark that raged not only around but also within us?

If you were not a fan, fanatic or zealot, I am sure you know someone that is or has been. As

we watched the original "Star Wars: A New Hope," a review from my son opened my mind.

"This is weird. Why would they do that?" he kept on saying. By the time we reached the halfway point of the movie, he was done and the electronics came out. I was very surprised.

We continued on to the next film and he kept his stance. This is where the title of this piece comes from. It is quoted from a character who is considered a great teacher that has given guidance and has been a great influence for many people of my generation.

Do you know where the words, "You Must Unlearn What You Have Learned" comes from? The words belong to the Jedi Master Yoda.

As I heard Yoda's words, I thought of these words by Shinran.

*For evil sentient beings of wrong views and arrogance, The Nembutsu that embodies Amida's Primal Vow Is hard to accept in shinjin; This most difficult of difficulties, nothing surpasses.*

Let me explain why. "You Must Unlearn What You Have Learned," Yoda says this to the main character, Luke Skywalker, while training him. Luke is already too old and set in his ways to be trained. On a subconscious level, he constantly fights the principles of the Force and Yoda's teachings with doubt.

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## Correction

In the December issue, the article on Senshin Buddhist Temple's Kinnara Gagaku incorrectly listed Rev. Haruyoshi Kusada as the founding director of IBS.

The founding director from 1966-67 was Rev. Kanmo Imamura, the former Resident Minister of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, until Imamura became Bishop of the Hawaii Kyodan. Rev. Kusada was the second director.





# Gardena's Annual Ichi-Mi Is Successful LGBTQ+ Awareness Seminar

By Amy Umezu  
Gardena Buddhist Church

Approximately 50 people participated in Gardena Buddhist Church's third annual Ichi-Mi seminar on Nov. 16 to bring awareness to LGBTQ+ issues within the BCA's Sanghas.

Ichi-Mi began in 2017 as a half-day workshop. In 2018, it evolved into a one-day seminar, and this year, Ichi-Mi is now an official affiliated organization of GBC.

The following is the Ichi-Mi group's mission statement: "We pledge our best efforts as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists to provide a safe space for LGBTQ+ identifying people, their family members and allies."

"Ichi-Mi 一味" is a phrase that can be found in the following passage of Shinran Shonin's "Shoshin-Nembutsu-Ge," which is found in the chapter on "Practice" in the "Kyo Gyo Shin Sho":

*bonshō gyaku hō sai e nyu 凡聖逆誘齊回入  
nyo shu shi nyu kai ichi mi 如衆水入海一味*

A translation of this passage is:

*When ignorant and wise, even grave offenders and slanders of the Dharma, all alike turn about and enter, They are like waters that, on entering the ocean, become one in taste with it.*

The meaning of this passage is that all beings, both the foolish and virtuous, once encountering and hearing Amida Buddha's name, Namo Amida Butsu, are all of one flavor or taste.

In other words, within the grasp of Amida Buddha, we are all of the same essence. This is what Jodo Shinshu informs us of. It is from this Nembutsu spirit that the Ichi-Mi group was established.

The topic for this year's Ichi-Mi event was exploring how the Sangha, families and LGBTQ+ individuals can be mutually supportive.

The seminar began with an opening service led by Gardena Buddhist Church's Resident Minister, Rev. John Iwohara, chanting "Shoshinge" with wasan, followed by a Dharma message on the meaning and importance of "Ichi-Mi."

Alan Kita, chairperson of the church's Jodo Shinshu Education and Culture Committee, welcomed everyone to the event and shared a Safe Space Agreement to ensure the event would be a comfortable learning environment for all the participants.

The service was followed by a panel of four parents of LGBTQ+ individuals who grew up attending various BCA temples: Michael Jones of San Jose Betsuin, parent



Participants at Gardena Buddhist Church's third annual Ichi-Mi seminar gather for a group photo Nov. 16. The event was held to bring awareness to LGBTQ+ issues within the BCA's Sanghas. Below right, four parents of LGBTQ+ individuals speak to the attendees. Shown, from left, are Jo Ann and Kevin Tanioka of Orange County Buddhist Church, parents of a gay son; Michael Jones of San Jose Betsuin, parent of a transgender daughter; and Janet Umezu of BCA, parent of a transgender son and lesbian daughter. (Photos courtesy of Gardena Buddhist Church)



### FYI

The Gardena Buddhist Church's Ichi-Mi group has come up with an educational resource titled "Embraced by the Buddha's Compassion: A Jodo Shinshu LGBTQ+ Resource Guide."

The resource guide is available free for any individual, church or temple by contacting the Ichi-Mi group at [ichimi.gbc@gmail.com](mailto:ichimi.gbc@gmail.com).

of a transgender daughter; Jo Ann and Kevin Tanioka of Orange County Buddhist Church, parents of a gay son; and Janet Umezu of BCA, parent of a transgender son and lesbian daughter.

The parents shared their touching stories of their personal experiences of being parents to LGBTQ+ individuals and how Jodo Shinshu has helped them

through their process of accepting their respective child's coming out. Participants also had the opportunity to submit questions to ask the panelists.

Following the panel, participants broke out into small groups for the first workshop of the day.

The first workshop consisted of participants reading personal stories submitted by four anonymous LGBTQ+ identifying individuals who grew up attending BCA temples.

In these stories, the anonymous individuals shared

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# National Board Holds Meeting at JSC, Addresses Variety of Issues

Members of the BCA National Board met Dec. 7 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley and it was Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezu's final National Board meeting as BCA Bishop.

Bishop Umezu announced that Rev. Kazuaki Nakata was assigned to the Central California District. Rev. Etsuko Mikame and Rev. Noritaka Imada both arrived from Japan in August as new Kaikyoshi. Rev. Mikame was assigned to the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin and Rev. Imada was assigned to the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple.

Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, President of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS), announced that Richard Endo resigned as Chair of the IBS Board of Trustees. Rev. Dr. Matsumoto told the board that enrollment at IBS continues to increase. There are 10 ministerial aspirants enrolled. Rev. Patricia Usuki, Gicho of the BCA Ministers Association, said many ministers are currently not enrolled in BCA's long-



BCA National Board members and supporters gather Dec. 7 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley. (Courtesy of Rev. Michael Endo)

term disability plan. The BCA headquarters staff is working to correct this.

Hideaki Mizuno, Executive Director of the Endowment Foundation, reported that October 2019, the foundation's assets grew by \$4 million. This growth was mainly because of investment returns and custodial account deposits.

The Growth Portfolio A increased by 13.8 percent and Portfolio B grew by 14.8 percent for the first 10 months of 2019. The Growth and Income Portfolio showed a gain of 11.9 percent and the Income Portfolio grew by 8.2 percent during the same period.

Jeff Matsuoka, BCA Treasurer, announced that the Dana Pro-

gram has raised about \$89,000 as of Oct. 31, nearly \$40,000 less than last year at this time. The preliminary dues assessment for 2020-2021 is estimated to be over \$151 per BCA member depending on the membership numbers coming in January.

Revs. Jerry Hirano and Marvin Harada, co-directors of the Center for Buddhist Education, announced that a Temple Leadership Workshop will take place at the JSC from Jan. 31 to Feb. 2, 2020.

Gayle Noguchi, BCA Director of Operations, said CB Executive Protection was hired to provide security services at the JSC on weekdays and on weekends when needed.

Calvin Doi, President of the Central California District, announced that the Dinuba Buddhist Church held its final service on Nov. 2.

The National Board voted to approve a change to the BCA Bylaws. Every temple that does not have a resident minister and

is supervised will have only one ministerial vote at the BCA National Council.

Steve Terusaki, BCA Vice President, and John Mullins, IBS student, both on the Endowment Foundation's Joint Committee on Development, unveiled the new long-term capital campaign.

This campaign will help pay off the debt on the JSC, fund six IBS professorial chairs, expand the BCA's digital resources, and provide funds for maintenance on the BCA properties. The campaign goal will probably be \$25 million.

The National Board approved starting this new campaign, which is currently called "The Dharma is Our Home."

Representatives from the BCA and the Endowment Foundation met to restructure the current BCA loan on the JSC. An agreement was made to amend the current loan so that the current outstanding debt of \$3.4 million will be converted into a 30-year loan.





## When I Think About the Future of Buddhism

*Editor's Note: This article appeared in the Lion's Roar magazine and is reprinted with the permission of the author.*

By Tara Umemoto  
Berkeley Buddhist Temple

From minister to lawyer, social worker to construction worker, artist to accountant, age zero to 104 — we are each here because of infinite causes and conditions. We are who we are because of our interactions with other people, our upbringing, our culture, and our experiences.

Anyone can be Buddhist, no matter their race or ethnicity or gender or sexuality or socioeconomic class or ability or language. But because of these differences, we also have different perspectives that impact the way we interact with everything around us, including Buddhism.

When I think about the future of Buddhism, I see inclusivity.

With this diversity, we need to be aware that we don't really know other people's experiences, values, and perspectives. You are talking with a new person after service and their eyes keep flickering to their phone sitting on the table.

Are they fearful of being in a new place? Anxious? Shy? What brought them to the temple? Did something happen to them before coming to the temple? Are they waiting to hear back from a loved one who is in another country?

When someone does something we disagree with, we need to remember that they have experiences we may not know about that affect their perspective and actions. We also need to remember that we are all human beings and Amida Buddha accepts us as we are. By having this understanding, we can be more inclusive.

When I think about the future of Buddhism, I see change.

Everything is constantly changing. This is a core Buddhist teaching. Buddhism itself has a history of change. It has adapted over time as it moves from one country to the next, one city to the next, one home to the next, one teacher to the next. With each change, each adaptation, it is not quite the same as it was.

Today, our environment is changing. Our political climate is changing. There is increasing diversity, and at the same time fear and ignorance of diversity. There is more and more technology, and with that comes both opportunities for us to connect and also new challenges: distraction, isolation, cyberbullying.

Today, youth face different types of stressors, pains, and suffering than those of past generations. Not better or worse, just different.

And, like everything else, the Buddhist community is constantly changing. Buddhism needs to adapt to meet the new needs of its ever changing members. By listening to the sangha and coming generations, we can change to meet their needs.

When I think about the future of Buddhism, I see kindness.

I was yelled at by multiple people at work. Despite knowing it was not my fault and that I had done all I could do, I kept thinking, "I have failed, I have messed up, I have made a mistake."

After work that evening, I walked onto the temple grounds, where a fellow member caught my eye. A huge smile stretched across her face and she lifted her hand to wave hello, saying, "Hi, Tara! Good to see you!"



Berkeley Buddhist Temple Minister's Assistant Tara Umemoto is shown next to a donation bin for the Alameda County Community Food Bank in 2018. Umemoto organized the food bank donation drive. (Courtesy of Jon Kawamoto)

In an instant, I could feel the anger and frustration and stress disappear, and instead I was filled with warmth and kindness and courage.

When I think about the future of Buddhism, I see community.

Whether it is deepening my understanding of the Dharma, giving me a job at the bazaar fundraiser, inviting me on the camping trip, offering me a ride home, or simply listening, the temple has made me feel part of a community.

When the roof leaked, many members came out to catch the water, move the carpets, and work together to ensure the service could still happen. When a temple member fell ill, members came together to donate money, write cards, and reach out to make sure they felt supported. The community has been a constant support through the changes and struggles members have faced. It will continue to be there for others facing life's challenges.

I have had a positive experience of Sangha, and not everyone has this. I met a young professional who wanted to join the community. She joined a committee but could not make the meetings because they were scheduled during work hours. This youth didn't feel included.

At a youth panel at a Buddhist conference, the majority of the time was taken up by a non-youth telling their story. These youth didn't feel heard.

This shows we have room to grow. In Buddhism, we learn that everyone has the potential to change and be better. We must be intentional about including each person who comes through our doors. We must be prepared to adapt and meet the needs of the new generation. I hope that we all can make that effort every day to continue to learn and change and do better.

When I think about the future of Buddhism, I see inclusivity. I see change. I see kindness. I see community. I see Namu Amida Butsu.

## Ichi-Mi

Continued from Page 3

their difficulties as LGBTQ+ individuals growing up in temple, attending Dharma School and Jr. YBA. While the individuals recognized that various BCA temples are working to make our Sanghas more welcoming, some also expressed their hesitancy to return to their home temple or any temple in BCA because of the challenges they experienced while growing up. After reading these stories, participants engaged in small group discussions, talking about their reactions and feelings about the stories.

The GBC-BWA kindly prepared and served everyone a delicious donburi lunch. Desserts, drinks and refreshments were generously provided by the GBC Dana Group.

The seminar continued after lunch with a creative arts workshop. Participants were able to choose among three different stations: a Japanese calligraphy workshop led by Rev. Nobuo Miyaji, teaching how to write “一味” (ichi-mi) and “摄取不捨” (sesshu fusha); a wrist nenju-making workshop led by Ichi-Mi members Cheryl Kono and Mitch Kobayashi; and a poetry writing workshop led by Rev. Iwohara in which participants could take time to reflect on and express their experience at Ichi-Mi, inspired by Jodo Shinshu poetry.

In the third and final workshop of the day, participants gathered to discuss future action plans. Participants came up with different actions that individuals and Sanghas can take in the near future to help make BCA churches and temples a more safe and supportive environment for our LGBTQ+ identifying members.

Examples of suggestions that were discussed included holding educational workshops for Dharma School teachers at conferences, or for churches or temples to hold more educational events such as Ichi-Mi.

The day wrapped up with a closing service in which Rev. Iwohara, Rev. Miyaji, and Minister's Assistant Amy Umezu led participants in the chanting of “Juseige.”

The seminar received positive feedback from the participants, many of whom expressed their appreciation for the personal stories that were shared by the panelists and the anonymous contributors.

At the seminar, the Ichi-Mi group also shared for the first time “Embraced by the Buddha's Compassion: A Jodo Shinshu LGBTQ+ Resource Guide.”

The GBC Ichi-Mi group hopes that the guide can serve as an educational and helpful resource for Jodo Shinshu members navigating their journey as an LGBTQ+ identifying individual, a family member, or a supporter who wishes to one day become an ally.

For any individual or temple who wishes to receive a copy of this resource guide, please feel free to contact [ichimi.gbc@gmail.com](mailto:ichimi.gbc@gmail.com).

Ichi-Mi 2019 was made possible in part by a grant from the Aratani Foundation, and the fiscal sponsorship of Marsha Aizumi and the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA).

Ichi-Mi thanks all the participants who came out to attend and support our 2019 seminar.

## Tax Break Available for IRA Holders

Traditional IRA holders ages 70½ and up must withdraw a required minimum distribution each year from your account, and normally, this amount is counted as income.

But if you direct all or part of your distribution to support BCA, it can be designated as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). This type of donation will not be counted as taxable income, up to \$100,000.

Some simple rules to take advantage of this opportunity to support Buddhist education without paying taxes on your IRA withdrawal:

The distribution must be made directly from your plan to the BCA;

The maximum required minimum distribution (RMD) donation is \$100,000;

The amount of your annual RMD is based on a table published by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS); and

You do not have to pay income tax as long as you make a distribution to a charitable nonprofit like BCA.

Reduce your tax liability for 2020 by planning your charitable withdrawals today. For help planning your qualified charitable distribution donation, contact Steve Okamoto at [steveokamoto1@gmail.com](mailto:steveokamoto1@gmail.com) or at 650-468-8184.

**WINTER PACIFIC SEMINAR - 21ST CENTURY**

**“Fushidan Sekkyo”**  
DHARMA TALKS & STORY-TELLING IN JODO SHINSHU

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**  
**Dr. Mark Blum**



Dr. Mark L. Blum is a Buddhist Studies Professor and Shirjo Ito Distinguished Chair in Japanese Studies in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of *The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism* (2002), co-editor of *Ren-ryō and the Roots of Modern Japanese Buddhism* (2006) and *Cultivating Spirituality: a modern Shin Buddhist anthology* (2011) and author of other works. He is currently working on completing *Think Buddha, Say Buddha: a history of nembutsu thought, practice and culture*.

In Japan, Jodo Shinshu priests often delivered Dharma messages in the form of fushidan sekkyō, which featured musical, often comical, forms of story-telling. Dr. Mark Blum will discuss this style of preaching and explain how, like rakugo (“fallen words”), a similar form of Japanese performance art, it is gaining in popularity today.

**DHARMATHON:**  
**Southern District Ministers**

—Presented in English and Japanese—

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(includes lunch)

SO. DISTRICT: PLEASE REGISTER WITH TEMPLES

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Contact: Rev. Koho Takata at [NishiDharmaCenter@gmail.com](mailto:NishiDharmaCenter@gmail.com) or call (213) 680-9130

**SATURDAY,**  
**JANUARY 25, 2020**  
**9:30 am - 3:30 pm**  
Doors open at 9 am

**LOS ANGELES HONPA HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE**  
**815 E. First Street**  
**Los Angeles, CA 90012**

Download registration forms and schedule at [www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org](http://www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org)

Presented by the Institute of Buddhist Studies & BCA Center for Buddhist Education  
Hosted by the BCA Southern District Ministers Association & Buddhist Education Committee





## President's Message

Continued from Page 1

couldn't tell exactly where the loud noise came from, but every time Leonard wagged his tail, "old man Simpson" would yell, "Who's making that noise?" "Who is that?" No one said a word. Not even Leonard. We thought this was great fun and soon enough the early morning classroom was filled to standing room only. That's why I learned the law of wills and estates and came to appreciate the implications of Richard Allen Bloomquist's will.

Bloomquist died in San Diego County on May 19, 2014. He left no immediate relatives, no wife, no children, no relatives at all except for a distant cousin in who — we later learned — had barely made any contact with Bloomquist. After Bloomquist's passing, it appeared the approximately \$1.4 million in his estate would pass to his distant cousin.

However, in the summer of 2016, two years after Bloomquist died, the San Diego County Deputy Public Administrator informed the Buddhist Churches of America that it had found a holographic or handwritten will in Bloomquist's desk that he had written in 1987, 27 years before his death. Executing a holographic will is not an easy task. Because there are so many technical requirements for such a will to be valid, it is rarely attempted, at least not successfully. But Bloomquist, without any legal training that we can establish, had handwritten the perfect example of a legally enforceable, holographic will.

In his will, Bloomquist bequeathed everything in his substantial estate to the "Buddhist Church." We don't know if Bloomquist was a Buddhist. It's likely he was raised Catholic, but we don't know if he had

ever been a practicing Catholic or had any affinity for the Pope.

His will, however, was precise. He left everything to the "Buddhist Church."

After finding the will, the San Diego County Deputy Public Administrator did a Google search for "Buddhist Church" and one of the hits, among others, was the Buddhist Churches of America, so he contacted BCA.

At the time, I was serving as BCA President-Elect and visiting the New York Buddhist Church. I read the legal papers and the Bloomquist will, and felt we

case I had presented; the BCA Executive Committee offered unflagging support; the BCA National Boards of 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 unanimously and courageously supported our cause.

Others in BCA contributed to this effort. Ken Tanimoto, BCA President at the time, urged me to take over this project and pursue the case. Rich Endo, Chair of the IBS Board of Trustees, was an unconditional supporter. I formed a tiny committee consisting of myself and Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto who, in a previous life, long ago, briefly practiced law. Together, we mounted a persuasive argument about the history of

*"If not for Leonard, my likeable Weimaraner friend whose long tail banged loudly during each meeting of our law school class on wills and estates, I would never have ... become reasonably adept at this arcane subject. My deepest thanks to sweet Leonard."*

had a case we could prove in court: that BCA is the "Buddhist Church" mentioned in the will.

If not for Leonard, my likeable Weimaraner friend whose long tail banged loudly during each meeting of our law school class on wills and estates, I would never have attended, let alone remembered, Dr. Simpson's lectures nor become reasonably adept at this arcane subject. My deepest thanks to sweet Leonard.

There were some in the BCA who doubted we could legally establish that the reference to the "Buddhist Church" was to the BCA, but we persisted.

There were many people who were involved: the Endowment Foundation board risked more than \$100,000 in legal fees based on their confidence in the

BCA, and why and how the word "church" became part of BCA's story going all the way back to 1904.

It took us more than three years to force a settlement and have it approved by the San Diego County Superior Court. In the end, we won the case.

Proceeds from the Bloomquist Estate resulted in the distribution of more than \$1 million to establish The IBS Bloomquist Educational Funds and an endowment of \$125,000 for urgent Buddhist education needs of our temples. These funds will focus on spreading the teachings of the historical Buddha as requested in Richard Bloomquist's will.

File this legal case under Namō Amida Butsu... or Thank You, Leonard.

### 2020 Temple Leadership Workshop

Cultivating Dharma-Centered Leadership

January 31 - February 2, 2020

Jodo Shinshu Center

2140 Durant Ave. Berkeley, CA

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*How does a strong Buddhist education program ensure the temple's well-being?*

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 Register online from 12/8

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Presented by BCA Center for Buddhist Education  
 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704  
 Contact: cbe@bcahq.org or phone: (510) 809-1460

## Bloomquist

Continued from Front Page

offered two valuable insights:

It is "difficult to hear the teachings" of the Buddha; now we "hear" it.

1) We are able to encounter the working of Amida Buddha, "as if by chance."

### Difficult to hear

In the Preface to his magnum opus, Shinran states, "*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. Rare is it to hear them, but already I have been able to hear.*"

Many people, events and things had to exist in the long history of Buddhism for us to be able to hear the Buddha's teachings.

Amida Buddha appeared as Śākyamuni to reveal the working of the Primal Vow. Many Buddhist masters transmitted the Buddha's teachings across centuries, countries and cultures. Countless people, known and unknown, have heard the Dharma, experienced its truth, practiced the way, and decided to live or spread the Dharma at the risk of their lives. Without any of them, we would not have been able to hear the teachings of the Buddha today.

In that sense, it is so rare that we are able to hear the Dharma. Yet, "now, we hear it." Incredibly — against all odds — we can hear the Dharma, say and hear the Nembutsu today in our temples and in our hearts. How amazing! "**As if by chance**"

In the same Preface, Shinran also exclaims, "*Ah, hard to encounter, even in many lifetimes, is the decisive cause of birth, Amida's universal Vow!*"

*Hard to realize, even in myriads of kalpas, is pure shinjin that is true and real! If you should come to realize this practice and shinjin, rejoice at the conditions from the distant past that have brought it about.*"

Shinran came to encounter the working of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow and realize true nembutsu and shinjin. He described that encounter in Japanese as "mouau" and "tama-tama." These expressions describe an encounter that was not planned and not his doing. It took place almost accidentally, "as if by chance."

In other words, in Shinran's experience, true Dharma encountered him — as if it were coming to him from the outside, from the teachings of the Buddha and the masters, through meeting his true teachers and true Dharma friends.

Our awareness of the working of the Vow is experienced as coming from outside ourselves, even as we look deeply within. Even as we struggle to reach the Buddha, we are somehow encountered by Infinite Light and Life "in spite of ourselves." In gratitude for the Buddha's benevolence, we are moved in response to share this encounter with all.

## Richard Bloomquist

BCA and IBS have received a very rare and chance encounter with the wish of Mr. Richard A. Bloomquist. In his article, President Rick Stambul writes about Mr. Bloomquist, and I urge you to read his very compelling story.

Mr. Bloomquist left all of his property to the "Buddhist Church" in order that the teachings of the Buddha might be heard freely by individuals today. His wish was not unlike those of the Buddha, Shinran, all the masters and the countless devout Buddhist followers throughout the centuries. Yet, BCA encountered Mr. Bloomquist's wish tama-tama, as if by chance.

Now, BCA has transmitted to IBS both his gift and wish to have the Buddha's teachings made widely available. The new Bloomquist Educational Endowment will enable IBS to carry out his wishes through educational programs and activities that will make the teachings of the Buddha and the study of those teachings available to scholars and the public throughout the world.

Rare is it to hear the teachings of the Buddha, but now we are able to hear!

*Namōamidabutsu.*

## SYMPOSIUM

# "Prayers for the World"

*"May there be peace in the world and may the Buddha's teachings spread." - Shinran Shōnin*

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**PRESENTERS:**

**Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto**  
President, Institute of Buddhist Studies  
*"Living with Prayers for the World: As We Take Amida Buddha's Vows As Our Own"*

**Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Fujiwara Wondra**  
Resident Minister, Orange County Buddhist Church  
*"Shin Buddhist Thoughts on World Peace in the Age of Buddhist Modernism"*

**Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji**  
Resident Minister, Tacoma Buddhist Temple  
*"How Shinjin Can Help Us Live in the 21st Century"*

*How might the teachings and life-values of Jōdo Shinshū guide us in the pursuit of world peace?*

Three BCA ministers will share important features of the Jōdo Shinshū tradition that can help the sincere aspirations of Shinran Shōnin to come true today.

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**Thursday, February 20, 2020 - 1 - 5 pm**  
**Hyatt Regency Lake Washington Hotel at Seattle's Southport**  
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Presented by the Institute of Buddhist Studies & BCA Center for Buddhist Education  
 In conjunction with the Buddhist Churches of America Ministers Association & National Council Meetings, and the Northwest District Buddhist Convention

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## BYR & Friends Reunion Held

*Thirteen YBA high school students, from Denver to Oxnard, gathered for a BYR (BCA Youth Retreat) & Friends Reunion event from Nov. 30 to Dec. 1 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley. BYR youth events are open to all current high school YBA participants. (Courtesy of Koichi Mizushima)*





## Florin Centennial

Continued from Front Page

center of social life for families.

In 1942, when Japanese Americans were incarcerated in concentration camps, their belongings were held in the temple's Young Buddhist Association (YBA) Hall until their return. Around 1945, many families returned to the Florin area and the temple once again became a vibrant gathering place, providing religious services and sponsoring basketball and Florin athletic baseball teams.

In 1975, Rev. Hoyu Ishida held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new, larger temple and the original temple on Florin Road was closed.

On May 23, 1976, the current Buddhist Church of Florin was completed and a dedication ceremony was held with Rev. Ishida officiating. The Florin Area Reunion Committee also organized the placement of a commemorative boulder and plaque on the newly landscaped garden surrounding the temple.

The temple has undergone several modifications since 1975. The YBA Hall was renovated in 1983 and a multi-purpose room was built



The attendees at the Buddhist Church of Florin's centennial on Sept. 21 gather for a group photo in front of the church. (Courtesy of Douglas Blakkolb)

in 1986. A pergola was built in 1988 and a quiet room located in the rear of the hondo was added in 1991.

Other projects included the placement of a statue of Shinran Shonin on the east side of the temple, which was donated by Florin Buddhist Women's Association, an Isle of Trees completed by the LOTUS Club located on the west side of the temple, and new onaijin cabinets sponsored by the Young Adult Buddhist Association.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary, personalized brick pavers and bench plaques were added to the temple entry walkway and the courtyard and the Heisei

Garden was spruced up by the LOTUS Club.

Mr. Shig Okimura, a long-time temple member, was instrumental in burying a copper time capsule at the base of the boulder on Oct. 10, 1982. Mr. Okimura's son, Mr. Lloyd Okimura, was given the honor of opening the time capsule at a ceremony held on July 20, 2019. The contents of the time capsule displayed at the anniversary celebration included letters, newspaper clippings, photographs, and other memorabilia. In keeping with this tradition, attendees of the 100th anniversary celebration were encouraged to write messages to be included in the next time capsule opening in

25 years.

Included in the 100th anniversary celebration was the Kieshiki Affirmation Ceremony, which was conducted by Bishop Umezu. Seven participants of all ages received their Buddhist names as they endeavored to live a life of the Nembutsu teachings.

Rev. Shibata had the pleasure of communicating with each participant or their family members to inquire what this ceremony and receiving a Buddhist name means to them. While learning more about each participant and with the assistance of Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Shibata was able to select a Buddhist name for the participants, which was

granted by Bishop Umezu in the family-filled hondo.

The daylong activities featured a reception that included appetizers and drinks prepared by the BWA, historical displays, and digital video recordings of Florin members enjoying various functions over the years.

Rounding off celebration, a banquet with nearly 300 in attendance was held in the beautifully transformed YBA Hall. Mr. Tom Nakashima, a descendant of one of the founding families of Florin, was the master of ceremonies.

Among the dignitaries were BCA President Richard Stambul, Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli and U.S. Rep. Doris Matsui's representative, Gabriela Herrera. Rev. Hoyu Ishida, who dedicated the existing church in 1976, was the keynote speaker.

In keeping with the theme, "Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Future," the event was dedicated to the keiro, or honored elders, acknowledging their dedication and sacrifice that made it possible for current and future generations to live successful lives in the community.

*This article was edited by Rev. Candice Shibata.*

## Rev. Miyaji

Continued from Page 2

The mother in this story teaches her child the most important lesson in life — the life of gratitude in awakening to truth.

The child learns that the form of gassho is none other than the humble awakening to this greater reality, the world of Amida Buddha's Great Compassion. The reality of Great Compassion accepts us as we are, despite our imperfections. I feel great comfort when I hear this story because I know that the child will be OK. The child will never be alone. In gassho, one will always be embraced in warmth, which we call Great Compassion. This means that when I am in gassho, I too am never alone in this world.

In knowing that she could not physically embrace her child, the mother relies on Amida Buddha's Compassion to inform the child that she will be OK because the child is now connected to true reality. We call this in Japanese "omakasesuru," or entrusting in Amida Buddha. Likewise, each and every one of us has our respective Nembutsu role models who teach us this truth, as well. They tell us that true reality speaks to us and that we are embraced just as we are in Amida Buddha's Compassion.

When we are in gassho and hear with our hearts, that warm feeling we get is Amida Buddha speaking to us. That clench we get in our hearts when we feel connected to a greater reality that is beyond our egocentric selves, that is Amida Buddha making itself known to us. Finally, when we can cry in joy because we know that we will be OK, and bow in the posture of genuine gassho because we realize just how much we are being guided and cared for by the world around us, that is our connection to Amida's world of Great Compassion.

Absolute truth is speaking to us and it reveals itself to us. We do not grasp truth; truth grasps us. This is done through the Nembutsu, Namo Amida Butsu. When we truly listen and hear this teaching with our whole being, we awaken to a greater reality of Great Compassion. So let us put our hands together in gassho in humble gratitude and listen with our hearts to Amida Buddha's calling voice.

## Rev. Quon

Continued from Page 2

How often must we remind ourselves of this? It feels like each year we mentally want to start anew, but it sometimes also pushes us into worldly habits like wanting to do good to be happy rather than doing good because of the great and wonderful gifts you already have.

For some, it is even every day that we go back to wanting material items, control things that are out of our control, or have power over the things that give us none. For example, we want to share something like a

film and expect it to be loved or appreciated equally.

To be a follower of Amida, we constantly need to be mindful of our egocentric heart. With this realization, we can release the things in our lives that stop us from really enjoying it. "You Must Unlearn What You Have Learned."

Then you begin to understand the most difficult of difficulties is relying on Amida's path of Nembutsu. Then say again, "You Must Unlearn What You Have Learned" followed by "Namo Amida Butsu, I reflect, I return to, I contemplate, I think upon, I even take refuge in the Buddha of Infinite Light and Immeasurable

Life."

We are born into this world of material possessions and human perspectives, and in this life that we are all living we can only control our own minds. Yoda's words are not religious, but they help open the doorway to change — "You Must Unlearn What You Have Learned."

It then takes time, but through the sharing of life's experiences, the power of the Primal Vow, and the spontaneous utterance of Namo Amida Butsu you will never be the same.

I wish you a warm and Happy New Year! May this year 2020 continue to bring you peace through Amida's shining light.

## First Texas Outreach Service Attracts 30 Attendees

A CBE-sponsored Outreach Service was held Oct. 30 at the home of Kevin and Carol Hayata, formerly of the Orange County Buddhist Church, in McKinney, Texas.

Many individuals from churches and temples in Southern California have moved to that part of Texas because of their work, especially for those who work for Toyota, who moved its corporate headquarters to nearby Plano, Texas.

Rev. Marvin Harada conducted the service with about 30 attendees, formerly from temples including Gardena, West Los Angeles, Los Angeles Betsuin, Senshin, Venice, Zenshuji, and Orange County.

There were also several non-Buddhists who were there to learn as well. Thanks to a generous donation for the Texas Outreach by Glenn and Michiko Inanaga, of the Orange County Buddhist Church, future gatherings are being planned.

All of the attendees were so appreciative to be able to hold a service, listen to a Dharma message and to meet each other.



A CBE-sponsored Outreach Service was held Oct. 30 at the home of Kevin and Carol Hayata, formerly of the Orange County Buddhist Church, in McKinney, Texas. Sangha members from churches and temples in Southern California have moved to Texas because of work, especially employees of Toyota, which moved its corporate headquarters to nearby Plano, Texas. Rev. Marvin Harada conducted the service with about 30 attendees. More outreach services are planned in the future. (Courtesy of Rev. Marvin Harada)



# 今月の法話

## 「浄土とは何ですか?と聞かれて 浄土が何か説明できますか?」

フレソノ別院

開教使 中田和朗



Rev. Kazuaki Nakata

わたしたちの北米教団(北米開教区)のお寺は京都にある浄土真宗本願寺派の本願寺を本山としています。浄土真宗・真宗には主に十の宗派があり、真宗十派として知られています。浄土真宗とは文字通り、浄土の真(まこと)の宗(教え)と読むことができます。ここで疑問が浮かびます。真の教えがあるとするなら、偽の教えがあるのでしょうか?また、真の浄土ということは、ほかにも浄土があるのでしょうか?今回は、浄土についての基本的なお話について書いてみたいとおもいます。

浄土真宗はもと、インドにおいて二つの書物をもとに「インド浄土思想」として誕生しました。残念ながら、古代インドで阿彌陀仏を本尊とする宗派が存在したという記録はありません。どのように浄土思想を理解されたのかという記録もありません。二つの書物とは、大スカウアティー(無量寿経)と小スカウアティー(阿彌陀経)という題がつけられ、それらは経典と呼ばれています。この二つの浄土経典はインドの古代語であるサンスクリット語(デーヴァナガリ文字)で書かれています。経典の中身を読みますと、浄土思想が3つの重要な思想の一つとして説かれています。それらの思想とは、1. アミターバ(阿彌陀) 思想、2. スカバティー(浄土) 思想、3. プールバ、プラニダーナ(本願) 思想の三つのことを指します。それぞれの思想はインド周辺地域で別々に作り出されたように、今日では理解されています。これらの思想は紀元後5世紀の終わりのころまでに、二つのスカウアティー経典が成立した際に一つにまとめられ、私たちのよく知る「浄土思想」となりました。その後、6世紀に観無量寿経が中国語で編纂されました。

みなさんがお寺の本堂に入られた際、奥に見える内陣(ないじん)と須弥壇(しゅみだん)が目に入ると思っています。その須弥壇

の上には宮殿(くうでん)があり、その宮殿の中には阿彌陀如来(アミターバ)の立像が安置されています。浄土真宗では阿彌陀如来の立像のことを本尊といいますが、大スカバティー経典(無量寿経)によりますと、昔インドの法蔵という修行者(菩薩)が長い年月をかけて誓願(本願)を立てそれをもとに極楽浄土を拓かれ、阿彌陀如来となられました。それはつまり、阿彌陀如来思想なしに、浄土思想は存在することは無かったということになります。しかし、いつ、どこで、阿彌陀思想が成立したのか未だに結論を出すに至っていません。

一般的に、サンスクリット語であるスカウアティーの日本語訳は浄土とされ、英語ではPure Landと呼ばれています。スカウアティーの詳細は、阿彌陀経として知られる小スカバティー経典の中で説かれています。経典によると、スカウアティーは西国十萬億土という遠い場所であり、その国土には黄金の宮殿があり、黄金の木々があり、黄金の池があると示されています。阿彌陀経の表すスカウアティーは想像すると黄金の楽園であるかのように思いますがその理解は間違いかも知れません。何故かというところ、スカバティーの正確な日本語訳は「極楽(へんろく)」であり、浄土でも黄金の楽園でもないからです。ここでその理由を書いてみたいと思います。サンスクリット語で「ブツ・クセトラ Buddha-ksetra」という言葉があります。この言葉は日本語では仏国土という訳語がありますが、もともとの意味からすると、「仏が法を説いてまわられる(行動)範囲」となります。インドの宗教であるジャイナ教ではクセトラは触れた土地という意味があります。一般的にクセトラは農地という意味もあり、一人の農家が耕せる広さの農地という意味としてもクセトラは理解されています。

「浄土」という言葉が中国語に翻訳された経典にたくさん出てきますが、実は、この「浄土」という漢字の言葉のサンスクリット語が見当たりません。原文にないのに漢文の翻訳には「浄土」と書かれているのです。これはいったいどうしたことでしょうか? サンスクリット語の経典が中国語に翻訳される際、言葉が付け加えられたり、変更されたり、削除されたりします。特に中国語の仏教経典では、こういう付加変更削除のことを格義(かくぎ)といい、格義を用いた翻訳仏教の事を格義仏教と呼んだりします。中国語に翻訳された無量寿経はまさしくこの格義仏教の書物ということになります。経典のなかに中国の道教思想が混ざり入れられ、サンスクリット語で書かれた原文からかなり変更が加えられています。浄土という言葉は、浄土真宗の宗派名にもなっていますように、とても大切な言葉です。しかし、サンスクリット語にはその元になる言葉がどこにも見当たりません。つまり、中国語の翻訳経典にしか存在しない言葉ということになります。そこで、浄土という言葉が、どうして中国語の訳経のなかで使われるようになったかの推論について書いてみたいと思います。

聖徳太子も注釈書を書かれた由緒正しい経典である「維摩経」

というサンスクリット語のお経があります。その中で仏国土・ブツクセトラの説明が書かれている箇所があります。その中で「(仏の)心が清らかである、ゆえに仏国土は清浄である」と説かれています。簡単に書きますと、仏の国土は清らかだから浄土と呼ぶ、と言えます。また、仏が普通の法を説いて回った場所が清められるからその場所が浄土と呼ばれる、とも言えます。その根拠を書いてみたいと思います。お釈迦様は500年前にインドで活躍されました。お釈迦様は北インドにある「霊鷲山」と呼ばれる小高い丘で長らく法を説かれました。無量寿経と法華経は、お釈迦様がこの霊鷲山で説かれた方便(悟りに至ることのできるお話)をもとにして書籍化されました。法華経の経典の中で霊鷲山は浄土として説かれ、その名称を「霊山浄土」と呼ばれています。それは、維摩経に説かれている浄土の説明に合致します。つまり、お釈迦様が歴史上自らの足で歩まれ法を説かれた場所が清められる、清らかになる、という説明に合致するからです。この説明をみると、どの仏教宗派、仏教経典にも浄土という思想がある可能性がともいえます。つまり、浄土は、浄土真宗だけにある思想ではないということも意味します。

アメリカ合衆国を見渡しますと、天台宗、真言宗(高野山)、東本願寺、浄土宗、曹洞宗(禅宗)、日蓮宗などの日系寺院があります。高野山真言宗の本尊は大日如来で、大日如来も仏国土・浄土を持つておられると説明されています。東本願寺は西本願寺と同じくアミターバの浄土を説かれ、曹洞宗では釈迦牟尼仏が本尊とされ、お釈迦様は自身の浄土を持っておられます。日蓮宗では法華経を聖典とされていますので、浄土思想があるというのは、先に説明させていただいた通りです。ここまで説明しますと、読者の皆さんの中では、浄土についての理解がこんがらがってしまった方もいるかもしれません。しかし、心配いりません。わたしも学生の頃、浄土について調べ始めたときに、同じ思いを持ちました。浄土という言葉は名詞ですが、浄土真宗・浄土宗だけで使われる固有名詞ではない、ということなんです。簡単に書くと、大乘仏教に属する宗派はすべて浄土思想がある可能性がともいえるわけです。

ここで、どうして私たちの宗派名は浄土真宗というのだろうか、と疑問に思われる方もいるかもしれません。親鸞聖人はこの言葉を通りに使われています。一つは「浄土真宗」、もう一つは「浄土の真宗」です。浄土の真宗という言葉は、今までに聞いたことはありませんか? 親鸞聖人は浄土の真宗という言葉を使っています。浄土文類聚鈔(じょうもんるいじゅう)の中で使われている。この書物は教行信証の特に重要な部分を抜き出して書かれたような書物で略文類とも呼ばれています。「浄土の真宗」とは、数ある浄土の教え(大乘経典)のなかで、七高僧が啓かれ伝えられた、忠実(真)に釈尊の教えを伝えられた教え(宗)であるというふうに解釈することができます。親鸞聖人は9歳でお得度をされたのち、20年間29歳になるまで天台教学の根本道場で

ある比叡山において勉強に励まれました。そこでは数多くの浄土思想(大乘思想)を学ばれたことでしょう。そのたくさん学ばれた浄土思想の中でアミターバを中心とする無量寿経に説かれた極楽思想を、浄土思想の中心・核になるものであることを身をもって体感されたことでしょう。そういう意味においても、親鸞聖人が浄土の真宗という言葉をもって、8万4千の法門のなかで真実を説く教え、それすなわち仏説無量寿経、と結論付けられたのだと思います。その結果として、今日私たちの宗派が浄土真宗と呼ばれていることを考えますと、ますます、親鸞聖人はしっかりと釈尊の教えを理解されていたのだなあ、と感服させられます。この浄土という言葉の成り立ちを知ることのできた縁を機に、みなさまが浄土についての理解を深めていただければ幸いです。 合掌

## 藤井道栄師往生される



Rev. Doei Fujii

南アラメタ郡仏教会の藤井道栄師(69)が日本で12月11日に亡くなり、往生の素懐を上げられた。師は新潟のご母堂様をたずねられていた。師は1978年に開教使を拝命し渡米、シアトル別院、スポケーン仏教会、ヤキマ仏教会、ロサンゼルス別院、サンフェルナンドバレー本願寺仏教会、サンルイスオビスポ仏教会、ガダルペ仏教会、山東三州仏教会に勤められ、オックスナード仏教会、サンタバーバラ仏教会、ロングモント仏教会などを兼務された。葬儀は南アラメタ郡仏教会で12月28日に勤められ、参列者は故人を偲びつつ深く本願を聞信した。

## 米国仏教団の報恩講

12月15日、16日に米国仏教団の報恩講が営まれた。この報恩講は米国仏教団本堂(サンフランシスコ仏教会本堂)において宗祖親鸞聖人へ報恩感謝の思いで聴聞し念仏するご縁をいただくことと梅津総長の発案で3年前よりはじめられた。15日は正信偈真譜のお勤めをし、オックスナード仏教会の渡辺正憲開教使が法話をした。16日は十二礼の節で正信偈を唱え、梅津総長(日本語)とIBSの松本ディビッド開教使(英語)の法話に、参加者が耳をすませた。16日の法要後、開教使と門信徒はコルマ日本人墓地へ参拝し、BCAを支えてくださった先亡の開教使、門信徒へ感謝の念を表した。参加者は「BCAの報恩講のことが知られてきて、昨年より参詣の方が増えてきているようです。多くの念仏者と一緒には正信偈をとなえられるのがありがたいです。」と喜んだ。法話の様子はYouTubeで見ることができ。



# 法輪

2020年1月号

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二〇二〇年度教化標語  
「尊び敬う心」

あの記事をもう一度!

法輪のバックナンバーがBCAのウェブサイトにて読めます。  
<http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/about-us/wheel-of-dharma>

## 謹賀新年

今年もよろしくお願ひ申し上げます。

合掌  
編集部一同

# 門主年頭の挨拶

## 年頭の辞

新しい年のはじめにあたり、ご挨拶申し上げます。

昨年日本をはじめ世界各地で多くの自然災害が起こりました。災害によってお亡くなりになられた方に謹んで哀悼の意を表しますとともに、被災された方に心よりお見舞い申し上げます。また、これら以外にも紛争やテロ・飢餓などによって、日々多くの方が犠牲となり、困難な生活を送っておられることも忘れてはいけません。

さて、昨年9月に、門主として初めて北米開教区を訪問させていただきましたが、これによって、カナダ・ハワイ・南米・北米の全開教区を門主としてお参りさせていただいたこととなります。各開教区、また各お寺によって、その歴史や現在の状況は異なりますが、多くのお寺が日本から移住された日本人の方とその子孫によって建立され、護持されてきました。第二次世界大戦をはじめとする様々な困難な状況にあっても、み教えを依りどころとして、お寺を大切に護ってこられた先人の方々に思いを致すとき、今日の私たちにまで浄土真宗のみ教えが受け継がれてきたことの尊く、また不思議なご縁をとて有り難く思います。

一方で日本人の方が最初に海外へ移住されてから相当の年数がたち、日系人の方々の生活も大きく変化し、また、時代状況も大きく変わりました。そのような中で、親鸞聖人が説かれた浄土真宗のみ教えは、日本人や日系人だけではなく、世界中の多くの方に伝わり、各開教区においても、様々な方がお寺へ来られるようになってきました。それは、浄土真宗のみ教えが、時代や場所を越えた普遍的な教えであるからです。



すなわち、様々な悩みや苦しみを抱えるすべての人々を包み込

み、根柢取ってくださる阿弥陀さまのおはたらきが普遍的であるという事です。本年も自分のこととしてみ教えを聞くとともに、多くの方にみ教えが伝わるよう努めて参りましょう。

2020年1月1日

浄土真宗本願寺派

門主 大谷光淳

## 総長年始のメッセージ

新年明けましておめでとうございます。



新しい年を迎えるたびに、お互い新年の挨拶を交わします。家族、友人そして社会の安寧を願ひ、お互いの幸せを願うのは人間としてごく自然であらうと思います。しかしながら、幸せとは何なのか、また、幸せを願ひながら、実際にはどうしたらよいのか分からないのではないのでしょうか。

願ひということをおもうとき、仏さまから私たちにかけられている願ひ、すなわち本願というものが思い起こされます。私たちの偽りのない姿を鑑みられ、すべてのものが本心に幸せに生き、悔いのないのちを送って欲しいという切なる願ひが起されたのです。その願ひはただ願ひに終わるのではなく、本当に幸せに生きることが出来る方法まで私たちに示して下さっているのです。それがお念仏の道であります。

私たちの迷いの世界を超えた真実の世界からの呼び声である南無阿弥陀仏を聞かせていただくことにより、迷信や間違った教えに惑わされることなく、生き抜いていける道が与えられるのであります。それにより、私たちが考えるような幸せや楽しみを追い求めなくても、大きな喜びが自然に与えられるのです。

このお念仏の道は誰にでも平等に開かれています。私たちは自分を自分としてしっかりと受け止めて生きる道が与えられます。そして、お互いが同じ兄弟姉妹であることに気が付かれます。仏さまの目からご覧になったら皆素晴らしい存在ですが、私たちは迷いの目でお互いを見、色々な差別をしているのです。すべての人々を、愛と憎しみを超

えた差別のない平等の世界、本来あるべきところにあらしめようとしていくのが阿弥陀仏であります。

すべての人が幸せになれるようにと願ひ、常に大悲の呼び声で呼び続けている仏さまの声にうなずくとき、仏さまありがとうとお念仏申し、合掌させていただくことができるのではないのでしょうか。

最後に親鸞さまのお言葉をご紹介させていただきます。

ああ、この大いなる仏の願ひは、いくたび生を受けても、そう簡単にあえるものではないかもしれません。仏のみに出会うことは、どれだけ長い年月を経ても不可能に近いのです。もし、たまたまこのたびのみ教えに出会うことができ、お念仏を申す身になられたなら、遠い過去からの縁を喜ぶべきでしょう。もし、今出会いながらも、疑いが晴れなければ、また次にこのような教えに会うには何億年という長い年月がかかるでしょう。仏さまのお言葉は間違いなく真実であります。

お念仏を喜ぶ人をおさめとて決して捨てられないというお言葉のまこと、迷いの世界を超えた稀に見る教えを、躊躇せずによく聞き開いてください。

私、愚禿親鸞、はうれしいことに、インドや中東、西域、中国や日本の祖師方の聖典や教えに会うことができ、そのお心を聞くことができました。仏教の本当の要と言える教え、その行、そしてその証果をありがたく受け取ることができ、如来のご恩徳の深いことを知らされました。

ここに、聞かせていただいたことを慶び、与えられたことを心から感謝し讃えさせていただきます。

(教行信証 総序一部)

### 冬季パシフィックセミナー

## “節談説教”

### 浄土真宗における節付説教と語りもの

講師  
マーク・ブラム博士



マーク・ブラム氏は、仏教研究教授であり、カリフォルニア大学バークレー校の東洋言語文化学科、日本語専攻教授で伊藤真実の権威者として著名である。『浄土教の起源と発展』(2002)、『聖如と現代日本仏教のルーツ』(2006)、『精神主義：現象思想の現代的理解』(2011)、その他、多くの著書がある。現在の研究テーマは、『仏を信念、仏を称名：念仏思想・行・文化の歴史』である。

南加教区開教使による法話リレー

参加費: \$40 (昼食込み)

申込締切日: 2020年1月11日

お申込・お支払いは、各所属寺院で。

お問い合わせは、高田 興芳 開教使

(ロサンゼルス別院、下記連絡先まで)

NishiDharmaCenter@gmail.com

電話: (213) 680-9130

日本では浄土真宗の僧侶がしばしば浪曲、講談、物語の語り手など話芸の母体となった節談説教という形で御法儀をお取次ぎされる。マーク・ブラム氏は、最近、日本芸能で人気を得ている落語のような節付説教について、その布教手段やスタイルを紹介されます。

2020年1月25日(土)

午前9時半 - 午後3時半  
(開場 午前9時)

ロサンゼルス別院  
(西本願寺)

815 E. First Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

主催: 米国仏教大学院、米国仏教団仏教教育部

協賛: 米国仏教団南加教区開教使、米国仏教団南加教区仏教教育部