

# WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

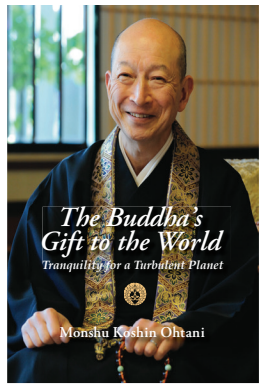
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## BCA Bookstore News By Gayle Noguchi



Now available: *The Buddha's Gift to the World: Tranquility for a Turbulent Planet* by Monshu Koshin Ohtani, paperback, \$10.00.

The third book in a trilogy of publications by Monshu Koshin Ohtani, *The Buddha's Gift to the World* begins with an outline by the Gomonsu on Buddhism and society and a talk he presented to college students at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan.

He acknowledges that, though times have changed, the fundamental issues of life that we as human beings must all inevitably face and come to terms with such as sickness and old age, have not.

Buddhism can be the guiding light that helps us to receive whatever life has in store. The book concludes with the Gomonsu's reflections on how Buddhist teachings can help bring about world peace by promoting mutual understanding among world religions.

*The Buddha's Gift to the World* reaffirms that the Buddha-Dharma teachings are as relevant today as ever for addressing the very real and complex problems of our modern society and global community.

To order, go to [www.bcabookstore.com](http://www.bcabookstore.com) or [sales@bcabookstore.com/510-809-1435](mailto:sales@bcabookstore.com). The BCA Bookstore is open Wednesday-Saturday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.

## Entering the Ocean of Compassion: Reflections on the Pacific Seminar

By Janis Hirohama  
Orange County Buddhist Church

My husband Jim and I have attended all of the Pacific Seminar 21st Century programs since their inception in 2008. Each has been unique, exposing us to different perspectives and giving us opportunities to learn, reflect, and deepen our understanding of the Buddha-Dharma. This seminar, with its theme, "Sea of Suffering, Ocean of Compassion," was an especially memorable experience.

This year's program centered on the Unno family. Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno and his wife Alice were the honored guests, and their son, Rev. Dr. Mark Unno, was a keynote speaker together with his uncle, Rev. Tetsuo Unno. Taitetsu Unno, now 85 years old, is a prominent and revered figure in American Shin Buddhism, and many attendees said they were drawn by this rare opportunity to see "Ty" and Alice. Some have known members of the Unno family for forty-plus years, such as our friend Sachi Ochiai, age 95, who decades ago hosted Taitetsu Unno's lectures at her home in Orange County. It was moving to see so many people, with smiles and sometimes tears, approach the Unnos to share memories and to express gratitude for all they received from them. In Jodo Shinshu we say, "Every time is the first time and the last time." Witnessing these poignant encounters, I truly felt the reality and depth of that teaching.

Like many others, my understanding of Buddhism was deeply influenced by the Unnos. My path to Buddhism began eight



Pac Sem 2014 - JSC audience. Photo by Tom Nishikawa

years ago and came through many causes and conditions, particularly my youngest brother's death. One of my first Buddhist books was Taitetsu Unno's *River of Fire, River of Water*. Rev. Marvin Harada brought it to the hospital for Kent, although sadly my brother never got a chance to read it. I was impressed by the book's clarity, its melding of history and religious philosophy with personal experience, and its deep compassion and insight into the human condition. It also played a key role in debunking for me the idea that Jodo Shinshu is a purely devotional tradition lacking in intellectual content. Jim and I also attend Rev. Tetsuo Unno's yearly lecture series at Orange County Buddhist Church and his annual Senshin Buddhist

Temple retreats. His powerful, dynamic, and provocative teaching style brings the Dharma to life and is steeped in extensive knowledge of Japanese and Western history, literature, and philosophy.

The Pacific Seminar is always an opportunity to reunite with old Dharma friends and make new ones. I met people who came from as far as Hawaii, New York, Virginia, Chicago, Texas, and Vancouver, Canada, and saw several of my Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course classmates in person for the first time. Conversations during the weekend were not confined to small talk; the deep nature of the seminar presentations carried over into personal discus-

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## OCBC's New Social Hall Dedication



Photo by Greg Goodman

Orange County Buddhist Church celebrated the completion of its new two-story social hall, July 13, replacing a 50-year-old building. The second floor now houses the primary offices and a multimedia room. Jim Shimozono, a temple member and the original architect of the prior social hall, hondo and classrooms buildings, oversaw the design of the new building after discussion with resident minister, Rev. Marvin Harada and the Facility Planning Team, beginning in 2008. The hall is larger than the previous building and took many years of fundraising by the OCBC Sangha. Over 300 persons took part in the ribbon cutting, dedication and open house, just in time for OCBC Obon Festival a week later.

## Music, the Universal Language

By Myra Okasaki,  
Sacramento Betsuin  
Buddhist Temple

Rinban Bob Oshita of the Sacramento Betsuin stated that "Music is truly the universal language. From the dawn of human history, music and song have been a part of every culture. It can even be said that there have been moments when music has transcended time and has reached beyond cultures...and touched the heart of our shared humanity."

On Saturday, June 21, six enthusiastic and well-rehearsed temple choirs met in the Capital City to participate in the 2014 Choir Festival. The Sacramento Betsuin Choir hosted the fifth Jodo Shinshu Choir Festival with the support of the Betsuin's ministers, minister's assistants, Betsuin Executive Committee, Buddhist Women's Association, Legacy Endowment Fund Board, and their own Choir Fan Club.

The morning service was conducted by Rinban Bob Oshita



with Rev. Hiroshi Abiko, Rev. Roy Mayhugh, Rev. Patti Oshita, and Sensei Grace Hatano taking their place on the onajin. Rev. Patti eloquently chaired the opening service dedicating the festival to the memory of the late Mary Kawano Fong and the late Frances Kondo. Welcome messages were presented by Betsuin President Robbie Midzuno and Rinban Bob who also sang his *a capella* composition of "Do You Know Your Way to San Jose?" Minister's assistant Sensei Koichi Mizushima energized the Sangha in a warm-up for things to come by engaging them to provide the back-up harmony while injecting

his falsetto into the song, "The Lion Sleeps Tonight."

Throughout the day, beautiful music resonated in the temple and hearty laughter could be heard among friends. The participating choirs were: Fresno Betsuin Choir, directed by Toshiko Norimoto and accompanied by Gale Nakai; Mountain View Buddhist Temple Choir, directed by Jim Gray and accompanied by Cheryl Shay and Jim Lund; Palo Alto Buddhist Temple Choir, directed by Alice Fukushima and accompanied by Alyssa Yoshida, Tyler Montgomery, Casey O'Connell, and Mark O'Connell;

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# Spiritual Wealth



By Rev. Kodo Umezu,  
BCA Bishop

Many temples and churches slow down their religious activities during summer, so the Buddhist Churches of America ministers utilize this time to meet and study together for three days. This seminar is called *Fukyo Kenkyu Kai* (Research and Propagation Seminar), or *Fuken* for short.

This year we had a very young, eminent scholar minister from Kyoto, Japan, Dr. Seiji Kumagai, as our guest lecturer. He teaches and researches at the Kokoro

Research Center at Kyoto University. He specializes in the area of the human mind, heart, and spirit. He is a Hongwanji minister and has also studied Buddhist history and teachings in India, Tibet, and Bhutan. His lecture focused on how and when Buddhism was transmitted from India to Tibet and from Tibet to Bhutan.

Bhutan is a kingdom located in east India with a population of about 700,000. Their state religion is Buddhism, though their constitution guarantees freedom of religion. Some of you might know that in the 1970s, the fourth king of Bhutan introduced the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) to the world. This was in response to the commonly accepted measure of a nation's economic well-being: the Gross

National Product (GNP) and the assumption that the greater a nation's GNP, the more financially successful it was. It was a time when many nations were trying to advance economically and financially so that they could be wealthier and happier. People in those days (and even today) thought that happiness was linked to money. However, people in Bhutan did not agree with that. They suggested using other factors beside financial conditions to measure national wealth. The people of Bhutan are not as wealthy as people in some other nations, but they are very contented and happy with their lifestyle. They are actually *spiritually* wealthy due to the influence of their religion.

In 2004 a new king, Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, was

enthroned. Dr. Kumagai shared part of the King Wangchuck's message delivered during the coronation ceremony: "Throughout my reign, I will never rule you as a king. I will protect you as a parent, care for you as a brother, and serve you as a son."

Wow! When I heard his message, I was really moved. How fortunate the people of Bhutan are! The heart of Buddha is living in their king today. Japan invited the king and queen as their state guests in 2011. They visited Soma City in Fukushima Prefecture and delivered a very inspiring and encouraging message\* to children there, who are survivors of the March 11 tsunami.

The Buddhist Churches of America is no different from Bhutan: it is comprised of people

who are inspired by the heart of Buddha. Ministers and leaders of our organization together revere the Buddha-dharma and help create harmonious communities. We ministers and leaders are working together to help our temples and churches expand their circle of joy to more people in their communities.

One of many changes taking place in our organization is to make our annual National Council Meeting a more Dharma-inspired event, with interactive dharma sessions and more time for all the temple and church leaders to share stories and program ideas.

Let us continue to be inspired by the Buddha-dharma and enjoy the rest of the summer.

\*Please ask your minister what the king's message was.



By Rev. Kojo Kakihara,  
Tacoma Buddhist Temple

My daughter Satone is now two years old, and by the time you read this, my second child will have been born. It is enjoyable to see Satone growing up. At the same time, I realize it is not

## Osodate: An Attitude of "Being Brought Up"

easy to raise a child because, as she grows, she has been asserting herself more. I have to thank my wife, Masayo for spending most of her time looking after Satone.

In Japan there is an expression: "A parent is brought up as a parent by a child." In other words, we learn to be parents through our children. We usually think that we as parents have to raise children carefully and discipline them well. However, sometimes we tend to force what we think is right on a child and forget to think about our own faults. Parents raise their children, but at the same time we have to remember that our children make us into parents. We are "brought up" or taught to be parents by our children. When

we think this way, I think we can be a little gentler and kinder to children and to ourselves.

In listening to the teachings of Jodo Shinshu, it is very important to have this attitude of "being brought up," called *osodate* in Japanese.

There is a phrase, "When we walk the Nembutsu path, we meet good teachers everywhere." When we appreciate the Nembutsu teaching and live a life of "being brought up," people who we meet in our lives become our teachers. They teach us about our true selves and lead us to the truth. Thus we might be able to think about ourselves more honestly.

We sometimes hear expressions in Jodo Shinshu such as

"accept life as it is." As you may know, in Jodo Shinshu there is nothing that you are required to do or practice to attain enlightenment. We don't have to do meditation as our everyday duty. Because of that, some people may think that Jodo Shinshu is weak or passive. However, is it really so? I think "to accept life as it is" is a beautiful and strong way of living.

We humans may want to believe that we are reliable and right. We want to think that what we believe is correct. However, in the Jodo Shinshu teachings, it is a different case. The existence of "I" is far from reliable and true. Something is not true simply because "I" believe it. But because the Buddha Dharma is true, we

can accept it with a peaceful and humble mind. We can realize and accept our true selves, including our foolishness. The Buddha Dharma also allows us to accept other people just as they are, including their weaknesses and imperfections.

True strength is not in blindly believing something and being satisfied with our egotistical selves. True strength is in realizing the truth, and true wisdom is in realizing our true selves, including our imperfections and ignorance.

We are always being brought up by Buddha, the working of truth.

Gassho

## How can we confine the limitless to the limited?



By Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara  
(Center for Buddhist Education)

I conduct a morning service at the Jodo Shinshu Center almost every weekday. I chant the Shoshinge (Hymn of True Shinjin and the Nembutsu), followed by six *wasan* hymns, composed by Shinran Shonin. Chanting a different set of six *wasan* hymns daily is called *kuriyomi*. I really like this *kuriyomi* style because I can see Shinran Shonin's various ways of appreciating the teaching every morning. If you are interested in conducting a morning service in the *kuriyomi* style, I encourage you to get the chanting book, *A True Pure Land Teaching Jodo Shinshu Song of True Shinjin...* by Gutoku Shin-

ran, from the BCA Bookstore. It contains the Shoshinge and all the *wasan* hymns with translation and musical notation.

The Shoshinge is a summary of the Jodo Shinshu teaching composed by Shinran Shonin. This gatha begins with "帰命無量寿如来 (I take refuge in the Tathagata of Immeasurable Life!) 南無不可思議光 (I entrust myself to the Buddha of Inconceivable Light!)." These two phrases have been traditionally understood as Shinran Shonin's declaration of entrustment to Amida Buddha. It is similar to the verse of Vasubandhu's *Treatise on the Pure Land* which begins with his words of taking refuge: "O World-honored One, with the mind that is single, I take refuge in the Tathagata of Unhindered Light Filling the ten quarters." The two phrases of the Shoshinge introduce one aspect of how Shinran Shonin appreciated Amida Buddha. That is, Amida Buddha is the Buddha of Immeasurable Life, which corresponds with the 13th vow of the *Sutra of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life (Larger Sutra)*. Amida Buddha is also the Buddha of Inconceivable Light, which corresponds with the 12th vow of the *Larger Sutra*.

Amida Buddha ceaselessly tries to give us guidance, no matter what

era we may live in. This is because the life of Amida Buddha has no limit. People living in the 13th century, 21st century and even 30th century can equally receive Amida's guidance. Amida Buddha also tries to illumine us with the Light of Dharma, no matter where we may live. This is because Amida Buddha's Light is not hindered by anything. People living in the US, Asia, and Africa are universally illumined by the Light. Because of these features, I sometimes introduce Amida Buddha as a Buddha of anytime and anywhere, or a Buddha that is always with us.

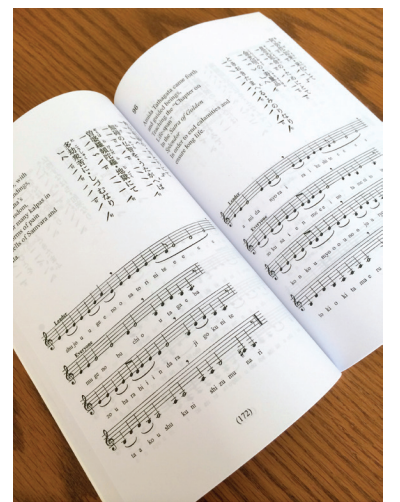
These are objective descriptions of Amida Buddha's compassionate and salvific features. There is room for further interpretation in the adjectives "Immeasurable" and "Inconceivable." They not only introduce the features of Amida Buddha, but also they can be interpreted as words which comparatively and implicitly lead us to a realization of the reality of our existence.

The word "immeasurable" teaches us that Amida Buddha is beyond human concept of measurement; the word "inconceivable" teaches us that Amida Buddha is beyond human comprehension. From those ideas, we learn the transcending features of

Amida Buddha. At the same time, we should realize the reality that we are limited beings. It could be said that it is not until we truly encounter something that surpasses us that we can realize the limitations of our human existence. Such a realization leads us to a better and deeper appreciation of the Jodo Shinshu teaching. On the contrary, we do have difficulties when we try to confine the limitless into the limited. Our ignorance of the reality of our existence might be one of the biggest obstacles preventing us from truly appreciating the Jodo Shinshu teaching.

By emphasizing Amida Buddha's immeasurability, inconceivability or transcendence, I am not encouraging "blind faith." Of course we should challenge who or what Amida Buddha is so that the Jodo Shinshu teaching really makes sense to us. Actually, this is how the doctrine and philosophy have developed in the Jodo Shinshu tradition. However, we should keep in mind that we cannot completely grasp Amida Buddha with our limited human capabilities and rationality. If we fail to realize that, we will be troubled.

One of the features of Pure Land Buddhism is dichotomy or duality, such as the Pure Land and this world of impurity, or Amida



Buddha and ignorant beings (Jpn. *bonbu*). Because of the purity of Buddha's land, we can have a deeper realization of the impurity of the world we are living in now. Because of the transcending features of Buddha, we can realize how deluded we are due to blind passions. In other words, we can realize the truth of this world and our existence all the more clearly thanks to the dichotomies that exist in Pure Land Buddhism, or by the transcending features of Amida Buddha and the Pure Land in contrast to us and this world of suffering. When we truly attain realization of the truth, we should seriously work on how we should change our lives.

"Immeasurable" and "inconceivable" are features of Amida Buddha, and at the same time they

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# Our Canadian Friends

## President's Message



By Dr. Kent Matsuda  
BCA President  
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

In late April of this year, I had the opportunity to attend the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada's Annual General Meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia. This meeting is the Canadian counterpart to the BCA's National Council Meeting. I was attending the meeting as a guest of the Canadian kyodan's president, Greg Chor.

The Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada (JSBTC) consists of twelve temples and eight ministers. One of their ministers, Rev. Tomofumi Fujii, was getting ready to return to his family's temple in Japan. His father passed away in January, 2014.

The Canadian kyodan had over 1,660 members at the end of 2013. Projections for

2014 indicated that their membership would decrease by about 100 members. At the meeting that I attended, it was decided that the dues per member would go up to \$70.

Four of the Canadian ministers serve more than one temple. The Bishop of the JSBTC is Rev. Tatsuya Aoki. He is also the resident minister for Fraser Valley Buddhist Temple in Adlergrove, British Columbia, and the Vancouver Buddhist Temple. The Canadian Bishop can only work part-time as the Bishop and must also serve as a resident minister due to the shortage of ministers. Even though the Bishop is elected by attendees of the annual meeting, the temple that the bishop candidate serves must also give its consent to having their minister become the Bishop.

During the evening before their annual meeting, Greg Chor chaired a meeting where attendees went over the agenda and discussed topics that needed further discussion. In this informal meeting, temple representatives have the opportunity to ask questions and go over complex issues so that the annual meeting does not take so long.

One of the issues that the Canadian kyodan faced was a change in their bylaws to comply with a recently passed Canadian law known as the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act. The Act requires that

all members of a membership class have to have a chance to vote on any issue that affects any interest in that membership class. For that reason, the attendees of the annual meeting voted to eliminate the "individual members" membership class and changed their bylaws so that JSBTC members were just the temples.

During the meeting, we had a presentation by members of the Calgary Buddhist Temple. Their current temple building was built in 1912 as a Ukrainian Catholic Church. It was damaged by a fire in 1942 and repaired. It became the Calgary Buddhist Temple in 1981. The building does not have much insulation, which is a serious problem in that part of the country. It will cost about \$2 Million Canadian to renovate the building. Temple members have been raising funds since 2002 and now have over \$1.4 Million Canadian raised. Anyone wishing to donate can contact me or visit [www.calgary-buddhist.ab.ca](http://www.calgary-buddhist.ab.ca). The Calgary members are currently using another site while their temple is being renovated. The members hope to have construction completed by the time of the 2015 World Buddhist Women's Convention in Calgary next May.

I do not mean any disrespect for any BCA temple that is currently undergoing renovation or construction, such as the

Fresno Betsuin. I can understand that they need funds to complete their building projects and would like BCA members to join them.

I bring up the Calgary Buddhist Temple's situation because events in Calgary were discussed at the Canadian annual meeting. As mentioned above, Calgary is getting ready to host the 2015 World Buddhist Women's Convention next May and the World Convention organizing committee is also raising money. I saw evidence of their fundraising efforts while I was in Vancouver. If anyone would like to help the Canadian women, you can go to [www.wbwconvention.com](http://www.wbwconvention.com) or contact me. I am hoping that our Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations will be able to donate.

One day before I arrived in Vancouver, the former minister for the Calgary Buddhist Temple, Rev. Kyojo Ikuta, passed away. He is Rev. Grant Ikuta's father. Rev. Grant Ikuta is the resident minister for Steveston Buddhist Temple. There were many items of remembrance visible during the time I was at the meeting.

After the Canadian annual meeting was completed, I joined the members of the Vancouver Buddhist Temple in celebrating their 110th Anniversary. They were also

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

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## Fresno Betsuin 2014 Scholarship Recipients

The Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple Scholarship Committee is proud to announce the scholarship recipients for 2014. These students have been actively involved at their temple, school, and community. Congratulations to all these outstanding individuals.

Kellen Araki is the son of Mike and Valerie Araki. He graduated from Clovis High School, and is awarded the Matsuo & Ida Okumoto, and Shigeto & Shizuko Ito Scholarships. Kellen will attend Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo as a Civil Engineering major.

Taryn Araki is the daughter of Dell and Nancy Araki. She graduated from Selma High School, and is awarded the Nobuyuki Doizaki and Alan Akiyoshi Masumoto Scholarships. Taryn will enroll at Reedley College in the fall.

Gaven Ideta is the son of Rick and Stacy Ideta. He graduated from Clovis West High School, and is awarded the George Taketomo and Alice Morishita Memorial Scholarships. Gaven will attend Willow International College as a Chemistry major.

Crystal Ikemiya is the



daughter of Robert and Susan Ikemiya. She graduated from Reedley High School, and is the recipient of the Tad Yamada, and Seisou & Yoshiye Watanabe Scholarships. Crystal will enroll at Fresno State in the fall as a Business major.

Kelsey Ikemiya is the daughter of Donald and Rhea Ikemiya. She graduated from Reedley High School, and is the recipient of the Sukeichi and Michie Ikuma Scholarship. Kelsey will attend California State University, Fullerton as a Theater Arts major.

Kyle Matsumura is the son of Pat and Dayna Matsumura. He graduated from Clovis West High School, and is awarded the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist

Women's Association Scholarship. Kyle will enroll at San Jose State University as a Biology major.

Morgan Miyake is the daughter of Stan and Sherri Miyake. She graduated from Clovis High School, and is the recipient of the Gunzo Miyamoto and Byakudokai Scholarships. Morgan will attend the University of Pacific as a Pharmacy major.

Madison Mukai is the daughter of Steve and Sheryl Mukai. She graduated from Clovis North High School, and is awarded the Harry and Shizuko Takeuchi Scholarship. Madison will enroll at Fresno City College as a Biology major.

Connor Osato is the son of Russell and Judy Osato.

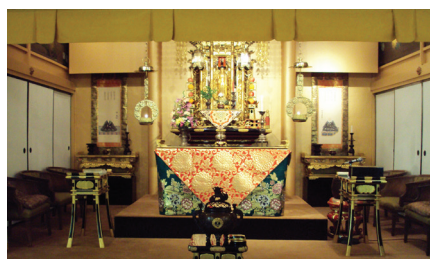
He graduated from Kingburg High School, and is awarded the Kanichi Komoto and Lynn Araki Scholarships. Connor will attend the University of California, Davis as a Neuro-Biology major.

The Tadaki and Maki Torii Collegiate Scholarship is awarded to second year college students. This year's recipient is Kristen Shimoda. Her parents are Martin and Jean Shimoda. Kristen is attending the University of California, Berkeley as a Chemical Biology major.

The Chien and Yehan Numata Scholarship for Post Graduate Students is awarded to Trevor Ideta and Lauren Okajima. Trevor Ideta is the son of Rick and Stacy Ideta. He will attend the University of Hawaii (Manoa) in the John A. Burns School of Medicine.

Lauren Okajima is the daughter of Ken and Linda Okajima. She will enroll at San Jose State University in the Occupational Therapy program.

The Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple Scholarship Committee would like to thank all the donors for their continued support of the scholarship program.



## Buddhist Church of Marysville

Founded in 1908, the Marysville Buddhist Church has brought the teachings and practice of our Jodo Shinshu tradition to the Marysville/Yuba City area for over one hundred years. With the influx of immigrants in the late 1800s, the Japanese community quickly realized the need to establish a cultural and religious center to meet the needs of its growing population. Since that time, the Issei and Nissei pioneers who built the church have lovingly passed along a legacy of kindness, compassion, and sacrifice without which the church would simply not exist.

Today, we are a long way from the prosperity and growth that existed a hundred years ago. As with many small churches within the BCA, Marysville has experienced a significant decline in membership as subsequent generations have moved away from our rural community. No longer able to support a full-time minister, we have had to become creative and enlist the assistance of the Sacramento Betsuin. With the part-time assignment of Sacramento Betsuin Minister's Assistants, Reverends Tim and Carol Castle, our small but dedicated Sangha is striving to keep the vision of our temple founders alive, and to provide a place where the Dharma can be shared and all are welcome to attend.

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

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

Center for Buddhist Education Public Lecture

Held in conjunction with the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course August Workshop 2014



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

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Lori Meeks**

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

**Saturday, August 9, 2014**

1:00 – 3:30 pm - Lecture ~ 3:30 – 4:00 pm - Q&A Session

**Free and open to the public**

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

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

For more information email us at [hongwanjioffice@bcahq.org](mailto:hongwanjioffice@bcahq.org)  
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**Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course - Monthly Essay**

Visit: [www.JSCC.cbe-bca.org](http://www.JSCC.cbe-bca.org) for course details



**Does the Realization or Attainment of Shinjin  
Make a Difference in One's Present Life?**

By Janis Hirohama  
Orange County Buddhist Church

The phrase "realization of shinjin" can be defined in many ways. I consider it to be the moment when one fully experiences the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha and entrusts oneself completely to it. That realization makes a profound difference in one's present life.

First, the realization of shinjin affects one's present life by giving meaning and context to the events and choices we encounter every day. It transforms them into opportunities to see both the depth of our ignorant, *bonno* nature and the salvific working of the limitless wisdom and compassion that we call Amida Buddha. Buddhism is said to be nothing but self-examination; shinjin awareness gives us the insight to apply that to our daily lives. We recognize that we are deluded beings, and through those eyes of shinjin we have countless opportunities to observe our own behavior with both honesty and non-judgment. We can clearly see our foolish and evil nature, but it is not a cause for despair. Rather, it is an opportunity for self-reflection and dynamic change. The clarity in seeing ourselves and the gratitude we feel for the Vow that saves us enables us to choose to behave in a way that may reduce suffering for ourselves and others. By acknowledging the totality of our nature and experience as human beings, particularly the paradox of being both hopelessly deluded and completely saved, shinjin allows us to live fully and authentically – so that we neither deny our *bonno* nature nor succumb to it.

Secondly, the realization of shinjin also gives substantiality to the concept of the Pure Land, making it real in our lives. The Pure Land exists in a realm of truth that is both here-and-now and eternal. As the text states, it "goes beyond and transcends the temporal dimensions of the past, present, and future and at the same time, performs its work within those dimensions." Significantly, it lies beyond the confines of space and time, yet works within the temporal dimensions of our physical existence, making the Pure Land not purely symbolic and not merely an abstraction. Rather, it is something true and real that is embodied in our everyday existence. To make a scientific analogy, astronomers know that dark matter exists in the universe, although it cannot be seen with telescopes, because its existence and properties can be inferred through its effects on visible matter, such as stars. Similarly, we cannot literally "see" the Pure Land. However, viewing our daily lives through the eyes of shinjin, we perceive the wisdom and compassion of Amida manifested in many ways, large and small – in the kindness of a stranger, in the beauty of nature, in a serious illness that awakens us to the preciousness of life. Because we can see in real life evidence of the immeasurable compassion that surrounds and sustains us, we know that the Pure Land exists and that we are living in that realm every day.

Finally, the realization of shinjin has a transformative effect on our everyday lives because we are relieved of anxiety about the past, the present, and the future. We realize that although we are foolish beings, we are nevertheless embraced by the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha, just as we are. There is no hell in the next life to punish us for our misdeeds, and no heaven held out as a reward for good behavior. Because we trust in Amida's vow to save all sentient beings, we know we are assured of birth in the Pure Land. As Shinran said in the *Mattosbo*, "At the time shinjin becomes settled, birth, too, becomes settled." That assurance gives us peace of mind, easing the existential suffering that accompanies uncertainty. We also realize that although it is impossible for us to attain enlightenment through our own efforts, we will nevertheless be saved by Amida's Vow. That is not an excuse to live in passive complacency, but it does mean that we can cease struggling for enlightenment and focus instead on living our lives. By losing the need to flail and struggle, we gain equanimity and serenity.

Buddhism does not eliminate the problems and difficulties of life. But it helps us to see beyond the delusions that cloud our perception of the true nature of things and allows us to identify ways of being that will help us find happiness and avoid suffering. The process in which we simultaneously realize the depth of our ignorance and the great compassion that embraces us is the essence of the shinjin experience. Realizing shinjin means that our eyes are opened to the truth – to reality-as-it-is – and that liberates us to live fully, gratefully, and authentically in our present life.

*Janis Hirohama and her husband Jim Pollard are members of the Orange County Buddhist Church, where she administers the Facebook page for the Buddhist Education Center and volunteers on publications. She is currently enrolled in the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course.*

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

Center for Buddhist Education presents

**The 8th Annual Baby Boomers' Seminar**  
**www.com: Who, Why, Where?**

Keynote Speaker: **Rev. Patricia Usuki**  
San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

**Saturday, September 6 from 8:00 am - 7:00 pm**

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

General Registration: \$75 Deadline: August 31

BCA Member Rate: \$60 before August 6



Reverend Patricia Kanaya Usuki has been resident minister of the San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple since 2004. Born and raised in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, she received a B.A. in Modern Languages and Literature from the University of Toronto, a B.Ed. from the University of Ottawa, and an M.A. from the Graduate Theological Union (Institute of Buddhist Studies) in Berkeley, California. She graduated from Chuo Bukkyo Gakuin Seminary, Kyoto, received Tokudo ordination in 2001 and Kyoshi certification in 2002.

Reverend Usuki has lived and worked in France, New York, Ecuador, and Japan. She served at the International Department, Homba Hongwanji, Kyoto as a European language specialist (French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Italian) and English editor. Her main project was the 2002 publication of *Jodo Shinshu – A Guide*. Rev. Usuki is the author of *Currents of Change: American Buddhist Women Speak Out on Jodo Shinshu*.

Rev. Usuki will be one of the nine speakers at the BCA *Sharing Our Life Stories as Buddhists* Conference, October 10-12, 2014 in Irvine, CA, presented by the BCA Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations and the Southern District Temples, and the Southern District Dharma School Teachers League. She is married to Rev. Fumiaki Usuki, resident minister of the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple.

For online registration and forms: [BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org](http://BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org) Click on CBE  
Information: (510) 809-1460 Email: [cbe@bcahq.org](mailto:cbe@bcahq.org)

**GATHA SING**

with **BJ SORIANO**

Sunday, September 7 - 1:30 to 4 p.m.

at the **Berkeley Buddhist Temple**  
2121 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94704



BJ Soriano, a popular music leader from the Hilo Hongwanji Mission, will lead an informal singing session of her original gathas on Sunday, September 7 from 1:30 to 4 p.m. at the Berkeley Buddhist Temple. This event is co-sponsored by the Berkeley Buddhist Temple and the Buddhist Church of San Francisco with assistance from the Center for Buddhist Education.

BJ Soriano will present nine new gathas that she has written. Her songs and ukulele accompaniment make singing her gathas a joyous experience to be shared. Dii Lewis, Berkeley composer and arranger, will also present some of his new musical offerings.

To register, please email [iekatsumoto@sbcglobal.net](mailto:iekatsumoto@sbcglobal.net) by August 25 so that a space can be reserved for you. BJ's music will be sent to you before the event. Please also indicate if you would like to order an obento lunch, which will be served at 12 noon prior to the session. A \$10 donation would be greatly appreciated.

For more information, please contact Emiko Katsumoto at (510) 599-0327.

*CBE would like to extend a grateful  
**Thank You to All of Our Generous Donors**  
for CBE 500 Club, CBE Vehicle Donation Program,  
and all other donations.*

**CBE 2014 Calendar of Events**

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

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

**August 8-10:** Tokudo Preparatory Session #2

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

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

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

**September 26-28:** Tokudo Preparatory Session #3

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

**October 25:** Japanese Seminar

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

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

[www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org](http://www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org) Email: [cbe@bcahq.org](mailto:cbe@bcahq.org) Ph: (510) 809-1460



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

### CBE Co-Director's Message:

#### So Many Serious Seekers!

by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, CBE Co-director

*Each of you has come to see me, crossing the borders of more than ten provinces at the risk of your life, solely with the intent of asking about the path to birth in the land of bliss. (Collected Works of Shinran, p. 662)*

This is a passage from *A Record in Lament on Divergences* (Jpn. *Tannishō*). Shinran Shonin's followers travelled all the way from the Kanto area to Kyoto in order to see him and hear more about the teaching. They traveled about 300 miles on foot, which took a week or more. Today, it takes only three and one-half hours by *Shinkansen* Express train. However, there was no such transportation in those days. There was the danger of getting sick or injured, or being attacked by bandits. These travelers were literally risking their lives.

Why did they travel all the way to Kyoto at the risk of their lives? Because they had a strong desire to listen to the teaching from their master, Shinran Shonin. For them, the Nembutsu teaching was worth risking their lives. Looking at the history of Buddhism, we can see many cases in which monks and practitioners traveled long distances and risked their lives in order to hear or share the Dharma.

In the past month, four events coordinated by CBE were held in Berkeley: the LGBTQ Seminar (6/28), BCA Ministers' Seminar (6/30-7/2), Pacific Seminar (7/4-7/6), and the Young Buddhists' International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE) Reunion (7/18-7/21). In total, we had about 250 participants. Thanks to the great speakers and helpful volunteers, all of the events were successful. We had fruitful and wonderful experiences. As a coordinator of those events, I really appreciate that so many people attended.

At the same time, as a Jodo Shinshu minister, I had another reason for appreciation. While the majority of the participants were local, some people came all the way from Hawaii and Canada. One couple from the San Fernando Valley made the trip just to attend the one-day LGBTQ Seminar. I really appreciate the time and effort of the people who came all the way to Berkeley to listen to the Dharma and to meet Dharma friends. It could be said that their enthusiasm for the Dharma brought them to Berkeley. Such enthusiasm, which drives us to seriously and continuously pursue the Dharma, is a feature of *shinjin*. It is very fortunate that we were able to have these events with so many serious seekers.

CBE will keep making every effort to develop educational programs which respond to followers' enthusiasm for the Jodo Shinshu teachings. I hope to see more people at future events at the Jodo Shinshu Center.

### YBICSE REUNION: Lasting Friendships

by Jason Yokoyama, Minister's Assistant, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple



On the weekend of July 18-20, I, along with 17 other past participants of the Young Buddhist International Cultural Student Exchange (YBICSE) gathered at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley for the Second YBICSE Reunion Retreat. The YBICSE trip is a biennial student exchange sponsored by the Hongwanji for youth ages 16-25 from all *kyōdans* (Hongwanji-affiliated religious organizations) to travel to Japan and visit various temples. Last year I traveled to Japan with the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) group. The 11-day trip encompasses everything from a visit with *Gomonshu sama*, temple sightseeing, and a home stay. The purpose of the trip is not only to learn more about Jodo Shinshu, but also to foster relationships between the youth of the various *kyōdans* and with the Young Buddhist Associations (YBA) of Japan. I was fortunate enough to create many lasting friendships with not only people in the BCA, but also from Canada, Hawaii, and Brazil.

The reunion retreat program consisted of workshops held by myself and Matt Nitta (Sacramento Betsuin), Sensei Joanne Yuasa (Vancouver Buddhist Temple, Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada (JSBTC)), Reverend Michael Endo (BCA), Reverend Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Center for Buddhist Education (CBE), and Bishop Tatsuya Aoki (Vancouver Buddhist Temple, JSBTC). On Sunday we also attended Mountain View Buddhist Temple's *obon* and bazaar.

One of the best parts was hearing stories from various retreats. We all had different experiences and sharing them made us feel nostalgic. During Michael Endo's workshop he asked each of us why and how we got here. He made us realize that there were many circumstances that allowed us to be here, and how grateful we all are for the opportunity given to us by the Hongwanji and our *kyōdans*. As the weekend ended, we were all sad to see each other go, but looked forward to the next time we can meet. I would personally like to thank the reunion planning committee and all chaperones, ministers, and JSC staff for making this retreat possible. *Okagesama de.*



(Top) Group photo. (Lower left) Bishop Tatsuya Aoki (JSBTC, in red robe) chairs a roundtable discussion. (Right) Sensei Joanne Yuasa (standing) leads a workshop. Photos by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara.

### The Dharmakara Series: Our Lifelong Learning Challenge

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE SANBUTSU-GE: Gatha (verses) in Praise of the Buddha (Part 7)

by Rev. John Iwohara

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



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

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

In last month's article we began the first section of the *Sanbutsu-ge* where Dharmakara Bodhisattva praises the virtues of Lokeshvararaja Buddha. The first stanza of the *Sanbutsu-ge* describes the ultimate superiority of the Buddha. In that description it was suggested that the "ultimate" superiority of the Buddha is because the virtues of a Buddha transcend comparison. It was, however, also mentioned that we as human beings can't help but to compare. The next stanza of the *Sanbutsu-ge*, as if to speak at our level, then compares the radiance of the Buddha's face with the lights that we might find around us.

#### 日月摩尼 珠光焰耀 皆悉隱蔽 猶若聚墨

nichi gatsu ma ni shu kou en nyuu kai shitsu on pei yuu nyaku ju moku

*"The flames and sparkle of the sun and moon, and even the mani gems are all completely hidden and covered; it is as if the darkness has gathered."*

We are relativistic in our thinking. Part of this is due to the fact that our senses perceive the world in this way. Our eyes, for example, adjust to the brightness of the objects around us. If something becomes too bright then we shield our eyes by placing something in front of our eyes, like our hands, or close our eyes, and maybe sometimes do both. We are constantly programming ourselves to "judge" in this way. We are helpless like Goldilocks: this light is too bright, this light is too dark, this light is just right. Unfortunately, this is not the only way that we judge. We also judge in terms of quality or superiority. This stanza, at first glance, appears to encourage this prejudice of ours.

The light of the sun and moon are things that humankind cannot live without. It is the sun that provides warmth and light during the day. The light of the moon, although largely replaced by electric lights now, made it possible for people to see even during the evening hours. Moonlight, if you believe some poets, is also invaluable in helping us to see what feelings we might have for another. This light not only makes life possible, but may also be indispensable in providing a deeper quality of life. The light of the Buddha's face is seen as being even brighter than this.

The next comparison is with the mani gems. Mani are gems that are said to have the power of allaying evil. It can make murky waters clear, and can ward off calamity. They are stones that are so pure and beautiful as to embody these kinds of properties. Again, the light from the Buddha's face was seen as even more pure and beautiful than these gems.

In fact, the stanza goes on to say, compared to the sun, the moon, and the mani gems the light emanating from the Buddha's face was so brilliant that the light from these other sources are so overpowered that they seem to retreat back into darkness. In other words, "the radiance of the Buddha's face is spectacularly colossal."

Needless to say, this is a spectacular description. However, is the point to say that the Buddha's light is simply greater? Is this description by the Bodhisattva just a fancy way for Buddhism to make the kind of argument we made as young children when we compared things? Is this description, for example, no different than when we said things like, "No, mine is better by infinity plus one"? The next line helps us to answer this question.

#### 如來容顏 超世無倫 nyo rai you gen chou se mu rin

*"The Tathagata's facial countenance transcends the world and is without compare."*

These two lines conclude the first ten lines of the *Sanbutsu-ge*. These first ten lines are the praise that Dharmakara Bodhisattva had for Lokeshvararaja Buddha when he saw the countenance of the Buddha. Because this is a description of the physical appearance of the Buddha, scholars of the past have understood this section as the Bodhisattva's praise of what the Buddha was physically *doing*. Part of the reason for this is because the Bodhisattva appears to be praising the Buddha in each of the three karmic acts. The three karmic acts are the acts of the body, the mouth, and the mind. Through this praise, the Bodhisattva is helping us to see that, even while seated, the Buddha is in constant motion or "doing" through each of these three acts.

What a Buddha tries to do is Enlighten all un-enlightened beings through the Dharma. Lokeshvararaja Buddha is no different. However, in terms of the *Sanbutsu-ge*, we find the once King now Bodhisattva moved by the appearance of the Buddha or the Buddha's karmic acts of the body. Although the Buddha appears to simply be seated, the Bodhisattva is able to understand that the mere presence of a Buddha is dynamic. This dynamic presence of a Buddha is something that transcends comparison and because of this cannot be reduced to the argument "mine is better by infinity plus one." When we compare in this way something is the best until the next better thing comes along or when we are able to argue, "Mine is better by infinity plus one, plus one more."

Through the dynamic presence of a Buddha we are helped to go beyond our normal, relative way of seeing the world. All the tools that we use to measure something, or the things we use to compare another with become moot. We find ourselves being able to live in a world where two unrelated children can both simultaneously say, "My parent is the greatest" without contradicting one another. It is what allows a parent to tell each of his or her children, "You are the most important person in my life" without any contradiction or hesitation. The Bodhisattva, for example, was able to say, "The radiance of the Buddha's face is spectacularly colossal" not because he was able to compare it with the light of the sun and moon and the mani gems, but because the presence of the Buddha allowed the Bodhisattva to see a world beyond comparisons, or a world where every life is ultimate in its meaning and value just as it is. It is also from here that the Primal Vow of the Bodhisattva finds part of its inspiration, and we discover that it is rooted in praise that transcends comparisons.



# The Value and Significance of IBS

By Rev. Marvin Harada  
Orange County Buddhist Church

Many years ago, when I first began to consider pursuing the ministry, I asked as many ministers as I could how I should go about it. Where should I study in order to become a minister? The majority of the ministers I spoke to told me to go straight to Japan after graduating from college and to study at Ryukoku University, Chu-butsu, or similar institutions. At that time, I didn't speak a word of Japanese. I didn't even know what Buddhism was about in English; much less study it in Japanese.

I just couldn't conceive trying to study a deep and profound teaching like Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu in a language that was foreign to me. So I chose the school that I felt was best suited for me...IBS, the Institute of Buddhist Studies.

It was a very small school with an even smaller student body. Most of my classes had only three to five students in them. But IBS was the best place for me to start my study of Shin Buddhism and to begin to prepare for the ministry someday.

After studying at IBS my eyes were opened up to the

great breadth and depth of Buddhism, and I realized that I should also study further in Japan. After three years at IBS, I was ready and eager to now study Shin Buddhism in Japan. But without IBS, I really doubt if I would have gone into the ministry. Going to Japan to study directly was just too big of a leap to take. And that to me is the great value and significance of IBS, now even more than 35 years ago, when I studied there. Because we have IBS, ministerial candidates and anyone can study Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu at the graduate level.

When I studied at IBS and also in Japan, I received scholarship and tuition grants to help pay for my education. The scholarship came from the BCA. I have always felt indebted to the BCA for allowing me to study and to become a minister. Even if I serve 40 years in the ministry, it would not repay the debt of gratitude that I owe.

We can be proud and grateful to have a school like IBS, right here in the United States, so that our ministerial candidates can study and prepare for a future in the Shin Buddhist ministry.

## Rev. Kuwahara

Continued from Page 2

comparatively and implicitly lead us to the realization of how we are. When we can listen to the teachings of Jodo Shinshu by relating those features to our existence and world, they are no longer imaginary stories about a superhuman Buddha living in Utopia far away from us; they are teachings which actually and powerfully affect us here and now. I am sure that daily chanting of Shoshinge in the *kuruyomi* style is a great practice to deepen our appreciation and realization.

## President's Message

Continued from Page 3

celebrating 35 years at their present location. The guest speaker for the anniversary service was recently retired Rev. Frederick Ulrich from the Manitoba Buddhist Temple.

Many of the issues that we face in the BCA are similar to the issues that the Canadians face. They, too, see decreasing memberships and have a minister shortage. Members of the Canadian kyodan have joined BCA members for events that take place in the Northwest and Eastern Districts. Some of the Canadian members have visited the JSC to take classes or attend seminars.

I would like to thank Bishop Aoki, JSBTC President Greg Chor and his wife, Gina, the JSBTC Board of Directors, and the members of the Vancouver Buddhist Temple for their hospitality and friendship. I hope to see many of them at next year's Annual General Meeting at the Steveston Buddhist Temple in Richmond, British Columbia.

## Music

Continued from Front Page

Buddhist Church of San Francisco Choir, directed by Misaye Abiko and accompanied by Betty Fujimoto, Michael Fujimoto, and Brynn Monteith; San Jose Betsuin Choir, directed by Nancy Hikoyeda and accompanied by Brandee Livingston and Michael Yoshihara; and Sacramento Betsuin Choir, directed by Alice Kurotori and accompanied by Myra Okasaki.

After lunch, Sensei Koichi kicked off the program and entertained the guests as the emcee. Each choir presented beautifully arranged songs for their individual presentation. The program concluded with a mass choral presentation. Berkeley Sangha Singers Edythe Vassall, Florence Jeong, and Denise Gervais joined in.

Prior to dinner, entertainment was provided by Sensei Koichi, his daughter Ellie Mizushima, father Henry Mizushima, and family friend Peter Shima. The festival concluded with the dancing of "Tanko Bushi."

The entire day was filled with music, laughter, great food, and friendship. We can only hope to have another choir festival in the near future, to once again connect with our Dharma friends through the universal language of music.

## Friends of IBS Ministerial Scholarship Fund

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

The total received in 2013 was \$36,795.46, and since January 1, 2014 we have received an additional \$26,985.00. This brings us to a grand total of \$63,780.46 received since the beginning of our Friends of IBS program.

Thanks to the generous and timely response of BCA members and Friends, we have already begun distribution of financial assistance to ministerial students.

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

Mr. Harry Bergland, Jr. and Mrs. June Masuyama Bergland  
Rev. Kenji and Mrs. Karen Akahoshi  
Rev. John and Mrs. Koko Doami  
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Mr. Roger and Mrs. Nancy Wong  
Rev. Haruo and Mrs. Shigeko Yamaoka

Rev. Janet H. Youth

### IN MEMORIAM

Kayoko Suiyo Fujimoto ~  
In memory of her late husband,  
Reverend Hogen Fujimoto

Steven and Kathleen Terusaki ~  
In memory of Yosh Nakano

David and Aya Nagatomi Windle ~  
In memory of their late father, Dr. Masatoshi Nagatomi

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San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin ~  
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Gregory, Linda and Brittany Nakamura ~  
In Honor of Reverend Seigen Yamaoka,  
Best Wishes on Fathers' Day!

-----Please cut and enclose with your check-----

**Yes! Please count me in as a Friend of the Institute of Buddhist Studies. I understand that these funds will be used directly to support the endeavors of our BCA ministers of tomorrow, who wish to study at the Institute of Buddhist Studies. Checks can be made payable to IBS, with the notation "Ministerial Scholarship" on the memo line. Please mail to: IBS, 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704. Please note that your contributions to the Institute of Buddhist Studies are tax deductible.**

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## Pacific Seminar

Continued from Front Page

sions, encouraging openness and genuine engagement. It was wonderful that we attendees—so diverse in race or ethnicity, jobs, and life experiences—could connect on such a deep level, with the feeling that we are all truly one in the Dharma. For me it was a tangible manifestation of the truth of interdependence and of the meaning of Sangha.

A most meaningful aspect of the seminar was the opportunity to learn from generations of the Unno family, for beyond Taitetsu, Tetsuo, and Mark lies the profound influence of their ancestors. Mark Unno cited the impact on his life of not only his grandparents, Rev. Enryo Unno and wife Hana, but also his great-grandmother, a minister's wife and person of deep *shinjin*. The important and continuing influence of the women in the family was evidenced by the presence at the seminar of Alice, Sumi (wife of Tetsuo), and Megumi (wife of Mark) Unno. Jerry Bolick, a member of the Buddhist Church of San

Francisco, eloquently described the significance of such continuity when he told me, "We are fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from teachers whose forebears have been Shin teachers for multiple generations, both here and in Japan. It creates a richness, a breadth and depth of understanding and appreciation, that surpasses anything that can be put into words."

This understanding that is "beyond words" is the insight I value most from the seminar. The common thread I see in the Unnos' work is the emphasis on Buddhism as *lived experience*. Tetsuo Unno's wide-ranging lectures always stress that we must experience the Buddhist teachings on the deepest level, a level beyond logic and words. Some of his comments are like a slap in the face saying, "Wake up to reality!" Mark Unno works in academia, but his talks were achingly heartfelt, passionate, and down-to-earth as he shared insights gained from university life, the death of a former student, and the passing of his beloved cats Taata and Onyx. Throughout the weekend, whenever he referred to "the oneness of reality" or "the oneness of life," he would literally shout

those words – another urgent wake-up call! All three Unnos are distinguished scholars, but what makes them great teachers is that they know that ultimately Buddhism must be personal: that it is literally about life and death, and that I must absorb the Nembutsu into the fabric of my life, into my very being, if it is to have meaning.

When I asked Mark Unno what it meant to him and his parents to take part in this Pacific Seminar, he said: "It was so meaningful to be surrounded by Dharma friends who have supported our family on our path, and just share this journey together. We are returning to Eugene filled with happiness and gratitude. It was very meaningful that Ty, Tetsuo, and Mark were able to be together and reflect on our family legacy. We are grateful for the generations who contributed to the experience of Shin Buddhism in America for over 100 years; we are the recipients of that legacy."

I, in turn, am a recipient of the Unno family's legacy, and of all others who have contributed to Jodo Shinshu in America, and for that I am profoundly grateful. *Namo Amida Butsu.*

# 今月の法話

## お釈迦様の願い

本願寺プレスノ別院輪番 中川嘉慧



今年の布教研究会が六月の末から3日間パークレーのジョウドシンシユウ・センターで開催されました。

この僧侶全員が年に一度一処に集まってきた強会は2600年前のお釈迦様の時代からつづいてきたサンガの伝統です。今回は京都大学の熊谷誠慈准教授をお迎えして、歴史文化のまったく異なるアメリカの地に生まれ現実に生活している人達に、どのようなかたちでお念仏を伝えてゆけるだろうかという、開教の基本を先生の講義を参考にしながら皆がそれぞれ真剣に考えることができました。熊谷誠慈先生は34歳という若さにもかかわらず京都大学の「心の未来プロジェクト」のリーダーの一人で新進気鋭の学者です。そして有り難いことに浄土真宗本願寺派のお寺のご住職でもあります。熊谷先生は国立の京都大学の准教授であります。開教使の先生たちも驚くほど尋常でない熱い思いをこ法義と宗門の未来にかけておられ普通の学者さんとは違い、実地の仏教者の立場からかすかすの提言をしてくださいました。チベットの大乘仏教研究の過程でどのようにして仏教がヒマラヤ地方、現在のチベット、ネパール、ブータンといった国々に伝わっていったのかという事に非常に興味をもっておられ、中でも現在世界中で注目されておりますブータン王国の仏教社会研究の第一人者という立場からのお話はすべて

具体的でした。そのご講義はすばらしい内容で2日間にわたる三回の長時間講義の全てがウルサがた揃いの開教使の先生たちの満場の拍手によって終了した程でした。めずらしいことです。そうして最後の質疑応答のときに明らかになされた事があります。それは仏のみ教えが過去2600年の長いあいだ現在にいたるまで変わることなく人々の希望であり続けた理由であります。それは仏教の伝統がお釈迦様が希念された「アヒムサー」＝非暴力の立場の実現をけつして忘れなかったという事実。仏教でいう「非暴力」とは物理的な暴力だけではなく、文化的、社会的、制度的、心理的暴力のすべてです。ヒトとして生れたものがそれらの「ぼつりょく」によってその幸福実現を妨げられる事のない環境づくりを大変な困難の連続の中、常に忘れませんでした。この事実をしつかりと頭に入れた上で浄土真宗の歴史と未来を考えてみてはどうでしょうか？お釈迦さまのあとに続く七高僧の方々、特に法然さまと跡を継がれた聖覚さま、そして親鸞聖人！蓮如さま、歴代のご門主さま、先だつて後進に道をゆずられた即如上人さまにいたるまで「アヒムサー」の精神は脈々と途絶えることなく現在まで届いています。そして今も難中転更難の真の最中です。

熊谷先生が研究されているブータン王国が近年全世界に向けて発信した度胆をぬくような提言がありました。「わが国はG. N. P (Gross National Product) の増大ではなく、G. N. H. (Gross National Happiness) の増大を第一に考える。」と世界の国々が思ってもみなかった発想での国造り宣言でした。地球上の心ある人達は、物があふれかえっている中で全然しあ



講義をした布研の講師の熊谷師

わせになってない現代人の、われわれの現実を深刻に受け止めました。そしてこのブータン王国が国家の目標として掲げた理想もまた深い仏教思想、とくに「アヒムサー」＝非暴力の立場からのものでした。現在のブータン国王の即位にのぞんでの宣誓の一説をお聞きください。

「〈前略〉 あらゆる面において、私が治世している間は、国王として、決してあなた方を統治するつもりはありません。私は、親としてあなた方を守り、兄弟としてあなた方をいたわり、息子としてあなた方に仕えるつもりです。私は、すべてをあなた方に与え、何も保持するつもりはありません。〈後略〉」

中世的絶対王権さえも、仏の教えのもとでは暴力的支配の枠組みから自由になれます。「アヒムサー」のすばらしさです。いまだに世界のほとんどが憎みあっている現実のなかで、仏のみ教えの実現を夢見る事はヒトとして自然なことです。そしてこれを夢で終わらせてしまつては次第相承の善知識、いのちを伝えてくださつたご先祖の方々に本当申し訳ないと感じた今年のPUKEN (布教研究会) でした。

## 夏のパンフィックセミナー

### 海野ファミリーによる講義

7月4日(金)から6日(日)に浄土真宗センターでパシフィックセミナーが開催された。セミナーの講師は海野徹雄師、海野マーク師、ブリッジ・ハリイ開教使が主と、海野大徹師と夫人のアリス氏も特別講師として招かれた。大徹師、徹雄師は故海野円了開教使(1903~1984)の子息で、二人とも開教使としてロサンゼルス洗心仏教会に駐在し、父、円了師とともに布教、伝道に従事した。後、大徹師はポストンのスミスカレッジ、徹雄師はカリフォルニア州立大学で教鞭をとった。マーク師は大徹師の子息で、現在オレゴン州立大学で仏教を教えている。海野家から影響を受けた開教使や門徒は数多く、今回のセミナーには約150名が参加、浄土真宗センターの講堂に入りきらなかったため、急遽パークレー仏教会本堂へ



パークレー仏教会での講義の様子 Pacific Seminar

会場を変更した。講義は「生死の海、慈悲の海」で、それぞれの講師が講義をした後、パネルディスカッションの形で質疑応答が行われた。講師の海野マーク師は「昔の法友が大勢来てくださつてなつかしかったです。今回で父の大徹が皆さんの前に出てくるのは最後となるかもしれません。たいへんありがたいご縁でした。」とセミナーを企画したCBEに感謝し、また、20代の若者がセミナーに参加し、会場設定などを手伝う姿を見て、「BCAの将来は明るそうですね。」と期待をよせた。

## LGBTQセミナーの開催

6月28日(土)に浄土真宗センターでLGBTQの方のためのセミナーが行われ、約80名が集った。

LGBTQとはレス、ゲイ、バイセクシャル、トランスジェンダー、クィアの頭文字をとったもので、性的マイノリティの方のためのセミナーは今回が二回目、前回の参加80名を上回った。基調講演には米人気SFドラマ「スタートレック」に出演したことで有名な武井・ジョージ氏が招かれ「仏教徒でゲイであること」の講義で

話した。武井氏は幼い頃から浄土真宗のお寺のダルマスクールに通い、UCバークレー校時代には仏教青年会で活躍した。役者として成功をおさめた後、2005年にゲイであることを公表し現在はパートナーのアルトマン氏と結婚している。また、ハワイのパシフィックブッディストアカデミー元校長の当山パイパー氏と現在ハワイ教団の婦人会で活躍するルイス夫人も招かれ、性的少数者の娘をもつ両親としての経験や思いを話した。他に、ゲイやレスビアンを公表している開教使アシスタントおよびお寺の会員による講義やオリエンテーションがあり、参加者は性別の多様性に関する意識、理解を高めた。翌日29日(日)にはサンフランシスコ市で性的少数者の集うイベント「プライドパレード」が開催されたにあわせ、サンフランシスコ仏教会のメンバーとともにパレードに参加した。



写真(右)はセミナーに参加したサンフランシスコ仏教会の小畑ロソ開教使。プライドパレードの参加の折、メンバーが性的少数者のシンボルである虹色を使った輪袈裟を手作りした。 Rev. Kobata put on a waga that was designed to participate the Pride Parade that was held on June 29th, 2014 at San Francisco.

# 法輪

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二〇一四年度教化標語  
「歓喜光に帰命せよ」

## 布研inバークレー

### 夏季布教研究会および開教使会議

BCA布教研究会(布研)および開教使会議が6月30日(月)から7月2日(水)まで浄土真宗センターで行われた。

今回はフレスノ別院(中川嘉慧輪番、坂本アラン開教使)を中心とする中加教区の担当であったが、同週の週末に開催されたパンフレットセミナーに開教使が参加できるように、センターでの開催となった。

布研の講師には浄土真宗僧侶で京都大学、こころの未来研究センター准教授、熊谷誠慈師が招かれ、「中観派の真俗二諦説」と「ブータンの仏教」について講義した。参加者は「昔から唯識を学ぶには最低三年かかる」と



講義する熊谷氏  
Dr. Kumagai @ JSC



高度な仏教哲学の講義を集中して聞く開教使  
BCA ministers attending the lecture

われていますが、今回は三時間で三年分学んだように感じました。頭をフル回転して理解しようとしたが、ちょっと難しかったですね。お寺に帰ったら講義のノートとプリントを見てじっくり復習しようと思います。」と多くを学んだよう。

開教使会議では、BCAの403bを扱う会社がフランクリンテンプレート社からマスマニューチャル社へ変更したこと、百万人から1ドルの寄付を募り、お念仏のご縁を結んでもらう「百万人の念仏」の計画、各寺が地球環境に配慮した活動を奨励する「エコサンガ」の概要、などについて話し合われた。

来月号に熊谷先生のインタビュー記事を掲載します。ご期待下さい。

## 総長コラム

米国仏教団 総長 梅津廣道

いつもは八月に行われる夏の開教使の布教研究会が、今年七月の始めに行われたので今月は大きな行事がありません。ただ八月末にイギリスのロンドンの近くにあるサザンプトンというところで本願寺の連絡協議会(総長会議)が行われ、そのあと、国際真宗学会とヨーロッパ真宗学会の会議が予定されており、出席することになっています。

浄土真宗の寺院はヨーロッパ各地にもあり、親鸞聖人を慕う人々も数は多くありませんが、少しずつ増えてきています。ここアメリカでも、今までの会員の枠を超えた人たちが教えを求めて仏教会にきています。

その人々の中には、他の仏教を求めていろいろやってきたが、どうも落ち着かないという人たちがいます。そういう人たちが、縁あって私たちの仏教会に足を運び、やっと自分の家を見つけたと喜んでくれています。

ところで、今までメンバーである人々も自分たちの教えをもっと知りたいという願いがあり、それに応えるように、南部教区の開教使会は教えをわかりやすく書いた英語のパンフレットを発行しました。全部で十二のタイトルがあり、これからも少しずつ増やしていきたいということです。

開教使会議では、せっかく作成したパンフレットは南部教区だけに配布するのではもったいないということで、全仏教会に配るということに決めたのです。それも無料で。そのため、南部教区の一の先生が



教師資格を有する開教使とアシスタントの先生方  
Rev. Harada was explaining about Ministers' assitant Program @ Fuken

## 中西部仏教会が70周年

シカゴ市の中西部仏教会が70周年を迎え、6月22日(日)に記念法要と行事が開催された。同仏教会は河野行道開教使(1911年~1975年)と二世、二世たちの尽力によって戦時中の1944年に設立されている。法要では広島県呉市西林寺住職の河野師の甥がご法話をした。法要後、新しい庭園のオープニングセレモニーが行われ、戦中戦後を通じてお寺を支えてきた二世の門徒たちが招かれた。宮村ロン開教使は「今回は70周年なのであまり大きな法要にしませんでした。75周年には前駐在開教使の先生方を招いて盛大にお祝いしたいと思います。」と門徒と共に5年後の法要の計画を練っている。

## 今日の一枚



車をレントし何百マイルもドライブしてご自分で五つの教区を周り配達したのです。ただ、東部教区など遠い教区までは車でいけないので、布教研究会に出席した開教使にお願いして全部持って帰っていただきました。

この事業は法蔵菩薩の願いを思い起こさせてくださいました。パンフレットの内容、校正、印刷、費用の捻出、配送、すべてを引き受けてくださった南部教区の先生方に心からお礼を申し上げます。また、その費用を負担した教区のリーダーの一人ひとりにもお礼を申し上げます。パンフレットを手にするとき、その後ろにある多くの人のあたたかい思いを感じていただきたいと思います。

それから、このパンフレットをご縁として、より多くの方々に南無阿彌陀仏のお心にふれていただきたいと思います。今日このごろです。



ファウラー仏教会お盆の様子  
Fowler Buddhist Temple's Obon