

WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

VOLUME 40 • ISSUE 8

AUGUST 2018

A Way of Living as a Nembutsu Follower

We would like to share this message from the Gomonsu — the head of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha — which was issued shortly after his accession in 2016. We would like to be reminded of his wish to live a Nembutsu life, both privately and publicly.

— Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop, Buddhist Churches of America

Buddhism began when Sakyamuni attained enlightenment and became a Buddha about 2500 years ago. In Japan, Buddhism was originally referred to as the Buddha Dharma. The Dharma here refers to the true reality of how the world is and the nature of humanity itself. It is the universal truth that transcends both space and time. The one who awakens to this truth is called a Buddha, and the teaching of the Buddha is the wisdom that teaches us how we can live, while dealing with many anxieties and sufferings we may experience in life.

Buddhism describes the true reality of this world and humanity using such phrases as ‘impermanence’ and ‘dependent origination.’ ‘Impermanence’ refers to the fact that everything changes moment by moment. On the other hand, ‘dependent origination’ explains that all things and phenomena are interconnected with one another, which bring about various causes and conditions that then give another set of causes and conditions and so on and so forth. Therefore, in this world we cannot find an unchanging and fixed ‘self.’

However, we are unaware of this reality and thus we try to find some unchanging and fixed entity we call the self. This mindset is the basis of our egocentric way of thinking in which we judge things whether they are beneficial to us or not, or whether we like something or not. As a result, we suffer when things do not turn out as we like and we become hostile to each other, thus confining ourselves to a bitter reality where we cannot truly be free. In Buddhism, this self-oriented tendency is expressed as ‘ignorance and blind passions,’ which are the very reason we are deprived of our liberty and bound to this world of suffering. Ignorance and blind passions are represented as greed, anger, and foolishness also known as the ‘three poisons.’

Shinran Shonin pursued religious practices for 20 years on Mount Hiei with the hope to attain enlightenment by conquering his blind passions. However, being aware of the depth of human desires which are irremovable by religious austerities, he descended Mount Hiei and under the guidance of Honen Shonin, finally encountered the salvific working of Amida Tathagata. Amida is the Buddha who not only wishes for but is actually working in accordance with the wish to save and guide to supreme enlightenment, all living beings who are in the midst of constant worries and distress. The Buddha’s Wish, or the Primal Vow, declares that Amida’s Great Compassion embraces us all as we are, as beings filled with selfish attachments and blind passions. However, even in encountering such all-inclusive salvific working, because of our own fathomlessly deep egocentric mindset and desires, we still cannot wholeheartedly entrust ourselves to the Buddha’s Great Compassion. How sad this truly is.

By listening to the Primal Vow and how it was established by Amida Tathagata, we are enabled to become conscious of our own ignorance and self-oriented inclinations, and through such awareness, we naturally become gentle in word and deed in our efforts of minimizing our egoistic way of thinking. For example, with regard to how we live our lives, we “learn to be content without wanting too much” and with regard to how we may treat others we “associate with people using gentle expressions and kind words.” Even though our efforts may pale in compari-



son to the Buddha’s Compassion, we are at least guided in the proper direction by the Buddha Dharma. Shinran Shonin clarifies this in his letters addressed to his followers, one of which states, “There was a time for each of you when you knew nothing of Amida’s Vow and did not say the Name of Amida Buddha, but now, guided by the compassionate means of Sakyamuni and Amida, you have begun to hear the Vow. Formerly you were intoxicated with thoughts of greed, anger, and foolishness, but since you have begun to hear the Buddha’s Vow you have gradually awakened from the drunkenness of ignorance, rejected the three poisons, and have come to prefer the medicine of Amida Buddha at all times.” This is a stern admonition we should humbly receive.

In today’s world, there is an endless list of difficult global issues that are directly related to the existence of humanity such as terrorist attacks, armed conflicts, widening economic gap, global warming, mishandling of nuclear waste, and violation of human rights through discrimination. Such are the result of our ignorance and blind passions in which we fail to see the true nature of ourselves. It is indeed true that we are imperfect with our selfish desires and cannot act in complete purity like the Buddha can. However, by trying to live according to the Buddha Dharma, let us make an effort to consider other peoples’ joy as our own, as well as other peoples’ suffering as our own. In this way, we can live to the best of our ability, aspiring to live up to the Buddha’s Wish.

I will endeavor to share Amida Tathagata’s Wisdom and Compassion through simple and clear language with as many people as possible regardless of nationality and ethnic background. Let us encourage everyone to act in accordance with the Buddha’s Wish in an effort to create a society in which everyone can live a spiritually fulfilled life. In the hopes of creating a joyous world, let us continue moving forward by putting these words into action and together walk on our path to the truth.

October 1, 2016

Monshu OHTANI Kojun
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

BCA Summer Youth Retreat: Words of Appreciation



2018 BCA Summer Youth Retreat participants and staff. See pages 5 and 8 for more pictures.

From July 1-7, the boundless dharma energy, creativity, curiosity, and laughter generated by 20 high school students filled the Jodo Shinshu Center. The first Buddhist Churches of America Summer Youth Retreat was presented by the Center for Buddhist Education and supported by over three dozen presenters, advisors, and volunteers. Participants from 10 BCA temples received daily training in chanting and hands-on practice of Hongwanji rituals and other activities. —The Editors

Hello everyone, my name is Anna Tsuchimoto and I attend the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple. I am a representative from Toban A, the “Bamboodhists.” I would like to start with a quote from Winnie the Pooh: “We didn’t know we were making memories, we just knew we were hav-

ing fun.”

Looking back on the past seven days, *Shoshinge*, insects, and cookies come to mind. But to go more in depth, compassion, wisdom, and authenticity also come to mind.

On the first day of the retreat, 20 awkward teenagers came wandering into the Jodo Shinshu Center, not really knowing what to do with themselves. But in a blink of an eye, we soon created a bond with each other that can only be called family. Within the first day, we developed a sense that we could tell each other anything and everything. A group of strangers quickly became a group of strong friends.

On Tuesday, we all had the privilege of seeing the stupa on top of the Buddhist Church of San Francisco and going to the Asian Art Museum

to see “Divine Bodies,” an exhibit that had various art representations of the Buddha. Now let me tell you, after our busy day in San Francisco, getting all 20 of us plus all of the chaperones on and off BART without getting separated was probably the most stressful part of the week. Visiting the UC Berkeley campus yesterday was also difficult. Shout out to the chaperones for handling us rowdy kids! And of course, our trip would not have been complete without everyone circling around a piano near Sather Gate and singing *Ondokusan II* at the top of our lungs.

Now on a more serious note, I speak for everyone when I say this retreat has changed our lives. Practicing *Naikan* with Dr. Carmela [Javellana-

Continued on Page 6



Acronyms

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

You might have already noticed that we use a lot of acronyms such as MAP, IHOPE, WEHOPE, SHARE, MiCE, and CATS for our educational programs. Do you know what each one stands for? (See below.)

One recent event that just ended was called IMOP. It is the International Ministerial Orientation Program sponsored by the Hongwanji and coordinated with the Buddhist Churches of America and the Institute of Buddhist Studies. This program gives Japanese ministers opportunities to experience actual temple life in the U.S. It gives them a chance to get to know what we are like and helps them prepare to serve in one of the Hongwanji's overseas districts. It has been very successful and many IMOP graduates have been assigned to temples throughout the world.

This year, we had three wonderful *Kaikyoshi* aspirants who want to serve in the Hongwanji overseas districts: Rev. Noritaka Imada, Rev. Etsuko Mikame, and Rev. Hibiki Murakami. They stayed at the Jodo Shinshu Center for three months and visited temples and churches to learn about what we do. They just finished the program in July and went back to Japan. Each of them has shown their commitment and willingness to share the Dharma. I am certain that they will be great additions to our Jodo Shinshu temples.

Now speaking of acronyms, I especially like the term IMOP for this program, because the term implies that they need to grab a mop and clean. I don't expect them to clean the floor, of course, but it suggests that they need to be humble to learn from everyone around them.

I would like to express my appreciation to everyone who spent time with them during their stay in this country. Everything they learned will help them in their future ministerial duties.



IMOP ministers show the gifts they received at their going away party on July 13.

We are all learners like them. We should humble ourselves before the Buddha and discover the real meaning of our life. Venerable Jitsuen Kakehashi once said, "Let's put our thoughts to the side while we listen to the words of the Buddha."

We have lost our humility and always blame others for our difficulties. Let us stay humble and learn from everyone and everything around us.

Acronyms: MAP = Minister's Assistant Program; IHOPE = International Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange; WEHOPE = West and East Hong(w)anji Overseas Propagation Exchange; SHARE = Staff of Hongwanji Advanced Research and Education; MiCE = Ministers' Continuing Education; CATS = Chaplains' Advanced Training Seminar.

Old Age



By Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi,
Buddhist Church of Stockton

The last time I spoke to my aunt Mitsue in Japan was two years ago, by telephone. A year later, she passed away alone. She was my mother's younger sister. My mother and aunt were born in Hawaii and sent to Japan at the young ages of eight and six. Fortunately, my mother was able to return to

Hawaii, but due to her parents' financial difficulties, my aunt was left with her grandparents in Japan.

Mitsue was a strong woman. She was able to get a good education and a good job, and retired in a rural town in Yamaguchi. She did not have any relatives or close friends near her, but she didn't mind as long as she was surrounded by her beloved flowers and trees.

However, when I spoke to her over the phone two years ago, she was sad. She lamented that she no longer had a dream. I was startled to hear that. She was living where she wanted to be, and she was doing well physically. I didn't quite understand her despair.

Then I remembered what an elder member once said. She said, "I don't have any place to go." I asked her, "Where would you like to go? I can take you there." She said, "I don't have any energy to go out. Besides,

I don't know where I want to go." She felt hopeless, frustrated, and empty. Is this how my aunt felt? Is this what old age does to a person? Does no longer having a dream because of old age mean no hope, no direction, no joy?

Once I knew a very devoted Nembutsu follower who found joy every day in her later life. When she had to move to a long-term care facility, she was grateful to be free of making her bed every morning and cooking three meals every day. When she was confined to a wheelchair, she was grateful to be free from falling. She thanked Amida Buddha for her good fortune.

I am not sure what will happen to me in the future. If conditions allow, I could have a very long life. There is a great possibility that I could become completely senile with dementia and complain every day about everything. However, I

find comfort in the following *Wasan* from Shinran Shonin's *Hymns of the Pure Land*, which says,

Seeing the sentient beings of the Nembutsu,

Throughout the worlds, countless as particles, in the ten quarters,

The Buddha grasps and never abandons them,

And therefore, is named "Amida."

(Collected Works of Shinran, p. 347)

Regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, or ability, Amida Buddha embraces us all and never abandons us. That means regardless of my mental and physical condition, I will be always be embraced by Amida Buddha and my birth in the Pure Land is guaranteed. I do not know what my future holds, but I won't be alone. Now I can concentrate on this moment.

BCA Extends Disaster Assistance to Hawai'i

Last April the Hawaiian Islands of Kaua'i and Oahu were hit with severe flooding, and since May the Big Island has been enduring devastation from the erupting Kilauea volcano. Fortunately, no human casualties have been reported, but many homes, workplaces, and some temples have suffered damage, including the complete destruction of over 700 homes on the Big Island.

The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii (HHMH) has been actively assisting the community with disaster relief efforts. In response, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) National Board approved a recommendation from the BCA Social Welfare Committee, chaired by Terri Omori, to provide financial support for their efforts.

The following letter written by BCA President Richard Stambul was sent to Pieper Toyama, HHMH President, and Dean Sakamoto, Chair, HHMH Social Welfare Committee, along with \$25,000 in funds. The letter was copied to Rev.

Eric Matsumoto, HHMH Bishop, and Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop.

July 4, 2018

Dear Mr. Toyama, and Mr. Sakamoto:

The accompanying letter from Terri Omori, Chair of the Social Welfare Committee of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), amply and accurately expresses the sentiments of all of our members. Permit me to add a thought to Terri's letter on behalf of both myself as well as Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop of BCA.

The Buddhist Churches of America considers each and every member of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's temples (HHMH) to be our sisters and brothers in the dharma. Shin Buddhism, and the teachings of Shinran Shonin, join us together as one family. In the context of human society, family is one of the strongest words in the English language. It is not limited by geography. Family means

to feel secure, to have someone you can count on in good times, and also in times of need. It means someone who willingly shares your problems.

To me, we cannot be fully engaged Buddhists, or human beings, until we embrace the notion that our survival is connected to the survival of every person on this planet.

It is important that we continue to nourish the family ties between us. It is with heavy hearts that our members watched the suffering of some of your members and others from the recent natural disasters on Kauai and the Big Island.

We trust this expression of dana and of concern reaches you with a renewed spirit of the dharma, and an appreciation of the immutable connections between BCA and HHMH.

In Gassho,
Richard A. Stambul,
President
Buddhist Churches of America



Wheel
of Dharma

(USPS 017-700)

Official Publication of the
Buddhist Churches of America

BCA National Headquarters
1710 Octavia Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
Tel: (415) 776-5600
Fax: (415) 771-6293

www.BuddhistChurchesOfAmerica.org
Email: WODeditor@bcahq.org

Wheel of Dharma (USPS 017-700) is published monthly by Buddhist Churches of America, 1710 Octavia St., San Francisco, CA 94109-4341. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to WHEEL OF DHARMA, 1710 Octavia St., San Francisco, CA 94109-4341. Subscription free to BCA temple members; \$12.00 annual subscription for nonmembers.

Submission Guidelines:

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

Change of address and subscription cancellations:

Individuals may mail, email, fax or phone in change of address requests and subscription cancellations to the BCA National Headquarters at the address above. Please include the following: Subscriber's name (as written on current subscription); address currently being used; New address and/or name changes; requested action (e.g. change of address, name, subscription cancellation, etc.); phone and/or email of person requesting the change; date of request. Please allow up to 8 weeks for changes to take effect. BCA local temples should send update requests as usual.

WHEEL OF DHARMA POLICY

HARDCOPY PUBLICATION LICENSE:

Authors who submit articles for publication in the Wheel of Dharma ("WOD") thereby grant WOD a royalty-free non-exclusive paid up license, worldwide, in perpetuity and in all media (the "License") to use, edit, and republish the article(s) and to grant sublicenses to any third party to do so on the same terms. WOD grants third parties an identical License to republish its articles so long as the article(s) is republished in its entirety, without edit, providing credit to the WOD and the Buddhist Churches of America.

ONLINE PUBLICATION LICENSE:

Authors who submit articles for publication in the Wheel of Dharma online ("WOD") thereby grant WOD a royalty-free non-exclusive paid up license, worldwide, in perpetuity and in all media (the "License") to use, edit, and republish the article(s) and to grant sublicenses to any third party to do so on the same terms. WOD grants third parties an identical License to republish only the first three paragraphs of any article, without edit, providing credit to the WOD and the Buddhist Churches of America, including a hyperlink to the article in WOD.

Editor: Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop

Editor, Japanese Section:

Rev. Ryuta Furumoto

Managing Editor:

Brian Kencho Nagata

Section Editors: Yumi Hatta,

Michael Endo

Copy Editor: Edythe Vassall

Print Production: Jeffrey Kimoto



Like the Buddhist
Churches of America



Find us on:
facebook®



President's Message: Eradicating World Poverty...



By Richard A. Stambul,
BCA President

A few months ago, in the May issue of the *Wheel of Dharma*, I shared my vision for a part of BCA's future when I suggested, "I think BCA ought to be 'roaring like a lion' when it comes to ending suffering. Ending our suffering, the suffering of our friends, that of our neighbors and our countrymen. BCA

should stand at the forefront in speaking out against hatred, against racism, and brutality, against the conditions of suffering visited on innocents who are homeless or living in poverty."

I first raised those issues some time prior to my attendance at the 36th World Jodo Shinshu Coordinating Council Meeting (the Council) of which both I and Rev. Kodo Umezumi, Bishop of BCA, are voting members. You can imagine my pleasant surprise when the Council, on behalf of our mother church, Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha (Hongwanji), unanimously voted to adopt a new initiative to eradicate world poverty.

The Council publicly embraced this vision by declaring the eradication of world poverty as a core project! In a message titled, "A Way of Living as a Nembutsu Follower," Monshu

Kojun Ohtani, spiritual leader of Hongwanji, explains that economic disparity is an imminent issue that threatens the existence of all humanity. He comments, "This economic disparity has forced many into desperate poverty, and the socially vulnerable including children and the elderly have become easy targets." The Monshu continues by directly linking the issue of poverty as a "trigger" for "problems such as armed conflicts and terrorist attacks." He powerfully concludes that "we must immediately confront such issues in order to realize our organizational purpose, that is, a peaceful society in which everyone can live life to its fullest."

It is therefore notable, perhaps even a milestone, when Hongwanji concludes that overcoming economic

inequality and world poverty are issues that need to be dealt with domestically and globally. It refers to this initiative with the slogan, "Dana for World Peace—To overcome poverty and nurture our children."

When I was invited by the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) to speak at its symposium linked to the National Council Meeting in Sacramento last February, I raised a number of questions. Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, President of IBS, recently commented, "I wonder whether, in growing up, BCA has also grown a little old and tired. I wonder whether we haven't grown a little too inwardly-oriented. I also wonder whether we wouldn't all benefit from being infected a little by the religious and global spirit of new Buddhist groups ...which place the Dharma and

its impact upon the lives and hearts of persons in the world at the forefront of their religious concerns."

I concluded that we ought to be talking about the pressing humanitarian concerns of society. We ought to be finding ways to be of service to those suffering horribly right in front of our eyes: the homeless, the impoverished, those without medical care, those less fortunate.

I welcome and applaud this new initiative from Hongwanji. I urge all of us to search for ways in which to move our temples and churches, to move all of us a tiny bit closer to the goal of overcoming world poverty. Let's search together to find constructive ways in which to begin implementation of this worthy campaign.

Namo Amida Butsu!

Joy and Sorrow



By Rev. Kurt Rye,
Placer Buddhist Church

I recently gave a Dharma talk on the subject of the "non-duality of emotions." In that Dharma talk I spoke at great length about the Buddhist concept of how we could see life. I stressed that we should see things as they are and not attempt to change the perception with misdirected thoughts and assumptions. We all too often give in to the temptation to judge or analyze our emotions rather than to live with them. Often, we try to suppress our sadness by pretending to be happy in the hope that the event or events that cause the sadness will somehow disappear. It is human nature to want to escape the feeling of sadness. We are taught as children to "be strong" and that sadness is weakness. We are admonished to "keep a stiff upper lip" and not show emotions. Unfortunately, this only adds to our suffering.

As Buddhists we must look at our life as a process. Events happen during our lifetime. How we interpret them is often unclear and can cause an increase of *dukkha* (suffering). If we are feeling sorrow, it does not help us pretend not

*"Joy is just
joy and sorrow
is just sorrow"*

— Shoma Morita, 1928

to be sorrowful.

This article is prefaced by a quotation by Dr. Shoma Morita (1874-1938) a prominent Japanese psychiatrist who developed a specific form of psychological treatment called Morita therapy. Though not specifically a Buddhist theory, it was based on Dr. Morita's studies of Zen Buddhism and other elements of Japanese culture. His emphasis was not on analyzing our feelings or emotions, but rather working with them. This is a very Buddhist approach to living. Dr. Brian Ogawa, an internationally known Morita therapist and professor, has elaborated on this concept when he discusses the non-duality of emotions as "Life flows from being emotional." He describes emotion as a wave, both pleasant and unpleasant, that can crash over us. This is a fact of life, and if we try to only have "positive feelings" this is blocking the natural flow of life and causes us distress. This is how Buddhism looks at our life process. By attempting to change a natural condition we add and extend the suffering due the time and energy it takes to refuse to accept life as it is.

I am reminded of a phrase I once heard: "Do not look for refuge from the storm, look for refuge in the storm." Life can be a storm. It can also be a sunny day. Life is a non-dualistic, singular process. When you feel sorrow, then mourn. When you feel glad, then rejoice. This too is a very Jodo Shinshu concept we call gratitude. They say in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism the ultimate expression of our teachings is living a life of gratitude. We must be grateful for all that happens to us. This does not mean a "created" gratitude but rather an all-inclusive gratitude for all that we go through in our lives.

Rev. Taniguchi Honored at Hongwanji



Buddhist Churches of America Minister Emeritus Rev. Zuikei Taniguchi was honored at the annual Ministers' Retirement Ceremony held at the Nishi Hongwanji Temple in Kyoto, Japan on June 19, 2018. Taniguchi Sensei served the BCA for over 50 years, ministering at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco, Cleveland Buddhist Temple, Buddhist Church of Oakland, and Buddhist Temple of Alameda before his retirement on May 31, 2017. We wish Rev. Taniguchi and his wife, Rev. Dr. Shoyo Taniguchi, many more years of happiness and good health.



Cleveland Buddhist Temple Dharma Wheel Available

For nearly 50 years, a large Dharma wheel with the wisteria crest of the Hongwanji has adorned the front of the Cleveland Buddhist Temple (CBT). The CBT is selling its Euclid Avenue building and is hopeful that another BCA affiliate temple can use this beautiful symbol on their building.

The symbol is approximately 48 inches (4 ft.) in diameter and is attached to a metal frame. The cost of removing the symbol is estimated at about \$250, plus packing and shipping costs. For further information, please contact Anita Kazarian at anitakazarian@gmail.com.

The CBT will continue to spread Shin Buddhism and to function on donations from BCA temples that are acquiring the contents of its building. Their temporary space is at the First Unitarian Church of Cleveland in Shaker Heights, OH.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

Part one was published in the July 2018 issue of the Wheel of Dharma. Complete article originally published in *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, vol. XXVII, no. 2..org. tricycle.org.

The Original Buddhist Rebel (part 2 of 2)

Shinran, the founder of Shin Buddhism, broke with Japanese tradition to start a religion of radical egalitarianism that opened the benefits of Buddhism to everyone.

By Rev. Dr. Mark Unno



The *nembutsu* is derived from the Sanskrit *Namo Amitabha Buddha*. *Namo* is the same as the “*namas*” of the South Asian greeting “*namaste*,” “I bow to you.” In Pure Land practice, “*Namo*” or “*Namu*,” “I bow,” is an expression of deepest humility, naturally following from the awareness of oneself as a foolish being filled with blind passions. Amida Buddha’s name comes from the Sanskrit *Amitabha Buddha*, which means the “Buddha of Infinite Light” (alternately, *Amitayus Buddha*, “the Buddha of Eternal Life”). Yet since boundless compassion is always unfolding and never static, the more precise rendering is “the awakening of infinite light.” Just as we often experience a palpable darkness when we are troubled and a feeling of clarity or illumination when we are freed from our worries, the realization of emptiness/oneness comes to us as a vivid sense of limitless light: We become more aware of the presence of nature around us, such as the subtle hues of wild flowers blooming by the roadside.

We can never get rid of blind passions entirely, however, as long as we live in this limited mind and body that we call the “self.” In any moment of release from our ego-prison, we may feel the deep impetus never to complain again, never to prejudge others again. And yet we do complain; we still prejudge. However, once we have been awakened to the working of Amida’s boundless compassion, each moment of ignorance and blind passion becomes another opportunity to gain insight and learn anew, and over time our attachments begin to soften and release a bit more easily. In Shin Buddhism, we greatly value our blind passions as the very source of our own wisdom and compassion.

In the daily rhythm of the life of *nembutsu*, of saying or chanting “*Namu Amida Butsu*,” the smallest moments of reflection and appreciation carry as much significance as great realizations. Whether we are actively in the moment of saying “*Namu Amida Butsu*” or not, our life becomes transformed over time by being steeped in the totality of dharma, through hearing the teachings as well as chanting, bowing, and other bodily practices. Thus, seeing a plant beginning to wilt, I am reminded of my foolishness in forgetting to provide water to the being that gives me beauty, fresh air, and sprouts new life. In hearing my cat meow, I turn to look at my watch, seeing that in my preoccupations I have forgotten his dinner.

Whether we are lay or ordained, women or men, it is only through recognizing our mistakes that we learn and grow. Our blind passions are like fertilizer for the field of our own spiritual development, as blind passions and boundless compassion go hand in hand: the more we become aware of our foolishness, the greater will be the illumination of boundless compassion; the deeper we go into the ocean of boundless compassion, the more we realize how we have been drowning in our own foolishness. It is a process whereby we are illuminated and immersed in the ocean-light of Amida’s great compassion. In chanting the Name of Amida, the true, real, and sincere mind of Amida becomes one with the mind of the follower through the working of boundless compassion. Shinran saw himself as the most foolish being of all and called himself “*Gutoku Shinran*,” meaning literally “Shinran, the bald-headed fool.” His robes were not so much a sign of religious attainment, but rather a reflection of his self-representation as a foolish being receiving the gift of boundless compassion.

Shinran on Having an Honest Heart

Those who do not even know the characters for good and bad,

All have honest, real hearts.

Those who pretend to know what is good and bad
Are just putting on a show.

I do not know what is really right or wrong, orthodox
or heterodox.

Though without the slightest mercy or compassion,
[I] want to be recognized and teach others.

(Shozomatsu Wasan)

This is a universal message that anyone can relate to. Even the most accomplished Buddhist masters are nevertheless human, have foibles and limitations, and are subject to error and human fallibility. Thus, among the followers of Shinran’s path of Shin Buddhism there were learned monks as well as illiterate peasants, and certainly one might see a master as further along the Buddhist path than a mere layperson. Yet Shinran saw things a bit differently. Whereas the norm is to see the learned monkhood as well advanced on the path, Shinran saw his lay followers, many of them illiterate peasants, as equal to or even superior to the monks of his day. In what is perhaps the most famous passage from the *Tannisho*, a record of Shinran’s words made by his follower Yuien, Shinran is quoted as saying,

Even a good person attains birth in the Pure Land [realization of the realm of emptiness], how much more so the evil person [who is burdened with the karmic weight of blind passions].

But the people of the world constantly say, “Even the evil person attains birth, how much more so the good person.” Although this appears to be sound at first glance, it goes against the intention of . . . other power. The reason is that since the person of self-power, being conscious of doing good, lacks the thought of entrusting the self completely to other power, he or she is not the focus of [boundless compassion], . . . Amida Buddha. But when self-power is overturned and entrusting to other power occurs, the person attains birth in, [or realizes,] the land of True Fulfillment [the Pure Land of emptiness].

This statement carries a universal significance. It is the human, karmic condition to want to identify with the “good” and to avoid seeing the “bad,” or potential for karmic evil, within. Yet always to seek to present oneself as “good” is to be caught in the workings of the ego self, or what Shinran calls “self-power,” preventing one from opening up to the spontaneous unfolding of buddhanature, great compassion, what Shinran calls “other power” because it is “other than ego.” Shinran’s statement “how much more so the evil person” also carries specific criticism of his contemporaries, learned monks who presume to be the Buddhist “experts” but flaunt their social status and privilege, in contrast to farmers and common folk who lack such pretensions and are in greater harmony with the rhythms of nature, who possess very little material wealth and must live in constant awareness of impermanence. The subtle point here is that Buddhism is a *bodily* practice first, in which one speaks the *nembutsu* aloud. Then the heart may open and the mind may follow, but only if one is sufficiently humble and clear of the need to possess and the desire to control the world through the intellect.

Shinran defined two key moments in the arc of the *nembutsu* path: *shinjin*, true entrusting, as the moment of realizing boundless compassion, and *ojo*, birth in the Pure Land, which comes at the end of life. There is a parallel with the story of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni: his attainment of nirvana at age 35 and his entrance



Shinran Shonin

into *parinirvana*, complete repose, at the age of 80. These two moments are also known as “nirvana with a remainder” versus “nirvana without a remainder,” where “remainder” denotes the residue of karma that remains while living this finite life. To realize true entrusting is to be illuminated, embraced, and dissolved into the great light of Amida’s boundless compassion, but it is only at the end of life, entering into the Pure Land beyond conception, that one is fully released from the bonds of existence. Even then, the Shin Buddhist promise is to stop just short of release and return to this world to complete the bodhisattva journey of universal liberation in service to others.

While some may experience a great moment of realization, akin to the Buddha’s realization of nirvana, others may experience a series of smaller moments that are no less significant. Here there is a certain similarity to *koan* practice in Rinzai Zen, the series of nonlinear problems that the practitioner must pass through. Some experience a great, life-altering breakthrough followed by lesser realizations that aid in one’s maturation; others experience a series of smaller realizations that punctuate a deepening process of awakening. Great or small, little or big, each moment is beyond compare as an expression of the awakening of infinite light.

This is our dance with reality and with ourselves, the rhythm and song of “*Namu*,” our foolishness, and “*Amida Butsu*,” the wellspring of boundless compassion that arises from our own deepest, truest reality. Ultimately, even the *nembutsu* arises not from ourselves, from our own ego, but is experienced as a call from the deepest level of reality, from the depths of our own being, in which the flow of emptiness or oneness is realized in each manifestation of form and appearance. Thus Shinran states, “True entrusting is buddhanature.” The movement of boundless compassion is also known as the Primal Vow of Amida (Japanese, *Amida no bongan*), the vow to bring all beings to the realization of oneness, spontaneously arising from the depths of existence. The *nembutsu* expresses our receiving this deep vow to liberate and realize oneness with all beings, because all beings are the self. It is an expression of deepest gratitude, that our lives are sustained within the larger web of interdependence. We are sustained by those who help provide for our livelihood, food, shelter, family, and friendships, and at a deeper level we are naturally moved to express our appreciation for our shared suffering in life and death, our mutual illumination in foolishness and compassion, our oneness in the path that takes us beyond life and death. This is *Namu Amida Butsu*.

Shinran’s statement “I am neither monk nor layman” comes at the very end of his major work, the *Kyogyoshinsho* (Treatise on Teaching, Practice, True Entrusting, and Realization). It is a historical statement, describing the circumstances of his teacher and himself in limbo: exiled, defrocked, yet still ministering in the countryside. It is also a philosophical statement in keeping with the twofold truth, with emptiness as the basis of religious attainment that is beyond all categories, lay and ordained. Ultimately, it is Shinran’s own self-expression as a foolish being: “I am not qualified to be regarded as a good monk or a good layman.”

Shinran’s egalitarianism is rooted in the realization of profound oneness with all beings. It is radical in its inclusivity, beyond words and in the depth of self-awareness. Any criticism leveled at his contemporaries in the priesthood, as well as his fondness for peasants and fishermen, came from a place of inclusivity in which Shinran saw himself as the greatest of fools. In a time of great social and political turmoil, he expressed his criticism and advocacy alike from a place of great compassion. Perhaps there is something of value in this for us to consider today.

Rev. Dr. Mark Unno is Associate Professor of East Asian Buddhism in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Oregon and the author of *Shingon Refractions: Myoe and the Mantra of Light*. He lives in Eugene, Oregon.

Detail of Shinran Shonin statue at New York Buddhist Church. Photo by Edythe Vassall.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

Snapshots from the BCA Summer Youth Retreat, July 1-7, 2018



Leah Chase, Charlene Din, Brianne Hanamoto, Stacey Kawabata, Taylor Kawate, Shanti Knutzen, Janay Luke, Grace Matayoshi, Kyle Nishimura, Jessica Sakamoto, Matthew Shikada, Minami Suruki, Anna and Katie Tsuchimoto, Evan Tsukahara, Logan Ueno, Shaniya "Niya" Weaver, Kellie Yada, and Bennett and Cody Yoshida. Photos, clockwise from left: the toban (work) groups display their banners; learning to make obuppan rice offerings; a Nembutsu sugar cookie; practicing calligraphy at the Berkeley Buddhist Temple; and an afternoon of taiko drumming in the Jodo Shinshu Center lobby. Read more about this event on page one.



Participating in the 2018 BCA Summer Youth Retreat were:



Join us for an inspiring day of Compassion in Action!

Visit our Walks to Feed the Hungry Page:

firstgiving.com/event/BuddhistGlobalRelief/2018-Berkeley-CA--Walk-to-Feed-the-Hungry

Buddhist Global Relief (BGR) projects are designed to provide direct food aid to people afflicted by hunger and malnutrition, to promote ecologically sustainable agriculture, to support the education of girls and women, and to give women an opportunity to start right livelihood projects to support their families.

To raise funds, BGR holds annual "Walks to Feed the Hungry" in cities and towns around the US and elsewhere, including Cambodia and India. We invite you to join us in this effort. You can help by mobilizing the members of your temple, dharma group, or community to participate in a walk, near you, or you can start a walk in your area. For help in organizing a walk, contact info@buddhistglobalrelief.org.

- Portland OR, August 18**
- Seattle WA, September 15**
- St. Louis MO, September 23**
- Milford MI, September 29**
- Willington CT, September 30**
- Portland ME, September 30**
- Berkeley CA, October 6**
- Philadelphia PA, October 7**
- New York NY, October 27**
- Montclair NJ, November 3**
- Houston TX, November 10**



64th Annual Jodo Shinshu Convention in BC, Canada, September 8-9, 2018

The 2018 British Columbia Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temple Federation Convention and Annual Meeting will be hosted by the Vernon Buddhist Temple on September 8-9, 2018. The theme: "Buddhism and Moving Forward Just As You Are: Living in These Uncertain Times," will be addressed by Hongwanji minister and author, Rev. Dr. Kenneth Tanaka, and professional photojournalist, Wayne Emde.

Vernon, BC is located in the beautiful Northern Okanagan region of Canada, known for its lakes and beaches. Convention hotel accommodations are at the Village Green Hotel. For further information, please contact cameron37@shaw.ca.

2018 BCA Educational Events

Programs subject to change.

Events at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) unless otherwise noted.

September 9-16 ~ Tomoshie Tour. A group of young Jodo Shinshu priests will perform shadow graph storytelling, followed by Dharma talks on the stories' themes. Three stories will be performed at LA Betsuin (Sept. 9 & 10), San Mateo Buddhist Temple (Sept. 12), and Seattle Betsuin (Sept. 16). Free admission, donations gratefully accepted. Visit BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org. Sponsored by BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE).

September 14-16 ~ 45th BCA Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations' National Conference, Marriott Hotel, Visalia, CA. Keynote speakers: Rev. Bob Oshita and Rev. Ryuta Furumoto. Contact your BWA to register. Email BuddhistWomensAssociation.Reg@gmail.com for details.



September 25-27 ~ Ministers' Continuing Education (MCE) Seminar. Study and discussion for BCA ministers. Schedule TBD. Sponsored by CBE.

September 29 ~ Creating Inclusive Youth Programs Seminar: Supporting LGBTQ Youth & Families: Nurturing Compassionate Communities. Keynote speaker: Aiden Aizumi. A half-day seminar for leaders of youth programs with focus on supporting LGBTQ youth and families at our temples and affiliated youth programs. Speakers will be from Jodo Shinshu Buddhist and Christian perspectives. Register by September 21; \$20 donation includes lunch. Visit buddhistchurchesofamerica.org to download form or register online.

October 26-27 ~ Adult Buddhist Association (ABA) Leaders Workshop for ABA Leaders and Aspiring Leaders. Topics include: What is ABA? Why have an ABA? Growing your ABA or starting an ABA, Sharing Successes and Challenges, Ideas for Buddhist Education. Registration: \$50 before Oct 1, \$60 after Oct 1. Optional Bus Excursion to Enmanji Buddhist Temple, a local winery, and Graton Casino (additional cost) on Sunday, Oct.28. To download registration form or register online, visit buddhistchurchesofamerica.org. For JSC lodging, contact Glenn Kameda at gkameda@bcahq.org.

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

You are cordially invited to the
6th Annual Women in Buddhism Conference

Tools for Spiritual Wellness

Saturday, September 22, 2018 9:30AM - 3:30PM
Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple

Carmela Javellana - Hirano M.D.



The Wounded Heart
Integrative Psychiatrist
Founder
Sanctuary for Healing and Integration
Assistant Minister, Salt Lake Buddhist Temple

Elizabeth Myoen Sikes Ph.D.



Tara's Response: Deep Listening and Right Speech in Our Relationships
Counselor, LMHCA
Japanese Soto Zen Practitioner
Co-director, EcoSangha at Seattle University

Sponsors: Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple and Women's Association
1427 S Main St, Seattle, WA 98144 Ph: 206.329.0800
Office@SeattleBetsuin.com and www.SeattleBetsuin.com
Register at seattlebetsuin.wufoo.com/forms/r1hf0w10ezyu7/



Let Us Support the IBS in Honoring Eshin-ni and Kakushin-ni

The World Federation of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Buddhist Women's Associations (WFBWA) adopted a resolution to honor Eshin-ni, Shinran Shonin's wife, in 1967. In 2002 in Sao Paulo, it was decided to establish Kakushin-ni Day (dedicated to their youngest daughter) to recognize her contribution of founding our organization.

In 2016, the Buddhist Churches of America Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations (BCA FBWA) wanted to take further action and adopted a new resolution to establish an Endowed Chair in Jodo Shinshu Studies at the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) in honor of these two important Buddhist women. Some devout donors contributed \$50,000 seed money to the IBS. Then the BCA FBWA proposed the idea to the WFBWA that all Jodo Shinshu Buddhist women throughout the world might participate in this worthy project to raise \$3 million or more.

The resolution was presented at the special delegates meeting held in Kyoto in April 2018 and approved by the WFBWA. Excerpts from the Resolution:

WHEREAS, a primary purpose of the World Federation of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Buddhist Women's Associations is to support the propagation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism from its origin in Japan, throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, Jodo Shinshu Buddhism was founded by Shinran Shonin with the support of his wife, Eshin-ni, and the foundation of the Hongwanji school was laid by their daughter, Kakushin-ni; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Buddhist Studies, was established to educate the future religious leaders in the United States of America to share Jodo Shinshu Buddhism with all people; and

[...]

WHEREAS, the World Federation of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Buddhist Women's Associations wishes to promote the vision and passion of two important Buddhist women, Eshin-ni and Kakushin-ni, and to honor them by establishing an Endowed Chair in Jodo Shinshu Studies at the Institute of Buddhist Studies; and

WHEREAS, an estimated \$3 million is needed to establish this proposed Endowed Chair.

[...]

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that World Federation of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Buddhist Women's Associations shall make and support the following request...

"Request and strongly urge an average of 30 individuals, young and old, men and women, from every Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha temple throughout the world to donate a minimum of \$10.00 per person to achieve overall funding of \$3 million for the establishment of the Eshin-ni and Kakushin-ni Endowed Chair in Jodo Shinshu Studies at the Institute of Buddhist Studies."

Let us support the vision of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist women's organizations so that the IBS can create more professorial chairs to truly become the center of Jodo Shinshu Studies in the USA.



Scroll of Eshinni and Kakushinni at the White River Buddhist Temple in Auburn, WA.

BUTSU BUTSU...

By Brian Kensho Nagata, Managing Editor

A few months ago, while I was in Japan, some BCA friends and I attended a Nippon Ham Fighters baseball game in Sapporo (for you Hanshin Tigers' fans...Hanshin won!). It was quite an experience and a lot different than watching an American baseball game....

But what *really* surprised us was that you could literally eat off the floor of the stadium! And at the end of the game, everyone takes their own trash—cups, wrappers, napkins, etc. and disposes them in recycle containers before leaving the stadium. At the recent FIFA Soccer World Cup matches in Russia, the international media also made a big deal of the Japanese fans cleaning up the stadium after their match.

While this seems quite *strange* and unthinkable to us Americans, it's something that is quite *normal* for Japanese. And why is that??

When we're eating our peanuts and throwing the shells on the floor or spilling our drinks and throwing the paper wrappers and other waste on the floor, we're doing it because it's a matter of convenience for ourselves. We don't think about any inconvenience that maybe caused to any of the other attendees or the people who clean the stadium; after all, they are paid to clean. We paid for our seat to see the game and it's our *right* to throw our garbage on the floor.

We all know that there are many differences between cultures. The concept of "self" and how one views oneself being a part of a community, or the Buddhist concept of "interdependence" certainly plays a role in how we view ourselves and others.

As a child, when my family went to a park for lunch or on a camping trip, I was taught by my father that we should always leave the place looking better than when we arrived. Not only as a sign of respect to the park, the trees, and plants, but also as a sign of respect to the next guests.

What can I say about the way our American stadiums look, or the circling sea gulls that somehow know when a game is coming to an end at our Oakland Coliseum?

I wonder why is it that we can't we pick up and dispose of our own garbage when leaving the stadium? Go Giants, A's (and Nippon Ham too)!

Postscript: For the last ten years, the BCA Center for Buddhist Education and more recently this *Wheel of Dharma* has been enhanced by the contributions and efforts of Edythe Vassall. It is with a heavy heart that I announce to all of you that Edythe will be leaving CBE and the *Wheel* as of this issue. As much as we will all miss her presence, I am happy for her in that she is moving on to the next chapter in her life, beginning with the fulfillment of a personal obligation for which I offer her my deepest respect. *Edythe, thank you from the bottom of my heart and may the Dharma always be the Light in your life!*

Namo Amida Butsu.

Another Turning of the Wheel?

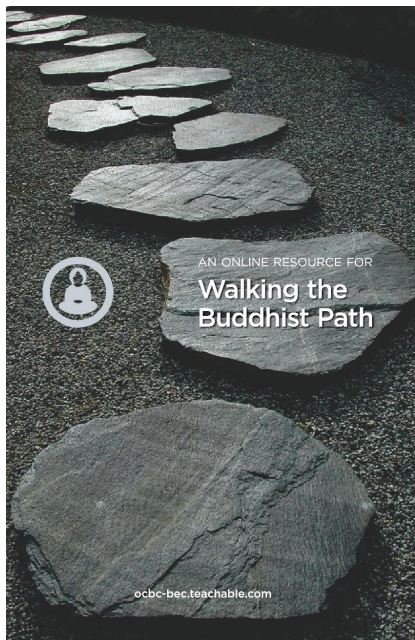
By Rev. Jon Turner,
Orange County Buddhist Church

Originally, the Buddha Dharma was memorized and shared orally. This was the only technology available at the time of the Buddha's death and served the Sangha well for hundreds of years. These early teachings were codified communally as the Pali canon.

Some 500 years later a new technology became available: writing. Writing enabled individuals to record Buddhist teachings, and this opened up a new era of creativity within the Sangha. Some scholars believe that writing helped initiate the Mahayana movement.

The great technological leap of our times, the Internet, is also a new medium offering creative ways to communicate. The written word is beginning to be replaced by video as the preferred mode of communication. Perhaps this will also invigorate the Buddhist tradition with new ways to convey the teachings to others. Some visual learners may find this approach much more effective for them.

At the Orange County Buddhist Church, we have begun a new online school. You can find it at our website ocbc-bec.teachable.com. Online study connects people with the Dharma and augments our temples by engaging the general public. We launched our



school about six months ago and already have nearly 100 students enrolled, with close to 20 courses offered in both English and Japanese. We hope that, through this online program, many new people will seek out a Buddhist Churches of America temple or Sangha in their area.

Introductory, intermediate, and study courses are being offered in three formats: on-demand videos and materials, correspondence courses, and live streaming. Some courses are free; others range from \$10 to \$40. Each course consists of multiple lectures with an instructional video and additional reading materials. The lectures

usually follow a taped PowerPoint presentation that is also posted as a PDF file. Most classes end with a survey to better meet the needs of our students.

The courses cover many different areas of Buddhism. Some deal with issues in everyday life; some introduce students to Buddhism; others teach Buddhism in new and creative ways. Our instructors include Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Mutsumi Wondra, Dr. Nobuo Haneda, myself, and Gregg Krech. Students may interact with our instructors via a school-wide blog or by commenting on an individual lecture. We hope to include reverends and scholars from throughout the BCA and the Buddhist community at large.

While some people want to walk a spiritual path in their everyday lives, others prefer a formal academic approach. These two groups are not mutually exclusive, and students can move effortlessly between the two approaches.

So please visit us at ocbc-bec.teachable.com. There is a "how to" video explaining the steps to navigating our school. To sign up, you just need a name, email address, and password. This is free. Then you can enroll in courses. You can also email questions and comments to OcbcBecOnline@gmail.com. We would love to hear from you.

Summer Youth Retreat

Continued from Front Page

Hirano] has made us examine our relationships with others, draw and name our most painful emotions, and even write *haiku* about cookies. Our nightly Teen Talks with Rev. Candice [Shibata], Rev. Matt [Hamasaki], and Koichi [Mizushima] gave us an opportunity to talk about whatever was on our minds, whether it was a painful memory that put the whole group into tears or laughter that we weren't able to control. We were pushed out of our comfort zones, having to chant *wasan* lines on our own and giving a Dharma talk in front of all our peers and teachers. We were spending time together while being in our most vulnerable states, pulling us closer and closer each day.

We have received Jodo Shinshu teachings every day in the past week, and I think that this group has given back through making all of our teachers proud of how much we've grown. To the students, I hope you are all proud of what we have accomplished, and are proud of the love we feel for Buddhism. From sharing our deepest fears to singing karaoke until 4 a.m., we have not only created a sangha, but a unique bond that is like no other.

今月の法話

「ねるもほとけ おきるもほとけ なむあみだぶつ」

恵光寺開教使 林 斉昭



Rev.N. Hayashi & son

私事ですが、5月23日に第一子の長男、大馳が誕生しました。体重は6ポンド14オンス(3.12kg)で、とても元気な産声とともに生まれました。当初は壊れそうなこの体を一体どうやって扱ったらいいのかかわからず、息子のちょっとした体調変化にもビクビクしながらの毎日でした。それから2ヶ月ほどが経ち、少しずつ子育てにも慣れ、今では妻は息子の泣き方の違いが分かるまでになりました。妻は泣き声で「お腹すいたのね、眠いのね」と聞き分けるのですが、私にはまるで違いがわかりません。

最近携帯のアプリ(APP)で子育てに関するものが多く存在しています。私たちがよく利用し、とても助かっています。どういふものがあるかと言いますと、赤ちゃんの体調管理のために、摂った食事の回数やトイレの回数を記録するものや、赤ちゃんを安心させるためにお母さんの胎内にいる時の音を再現したものを流せるもの、さらには赤ちゃんの視線で写真が撮れるというものまであります。これはとてもシンプルなもの、生まれて間もない赤ちゃんの目に映る世界がどのようなものなのか、赤ちゃんの誕生日を入力すると、その赤ちゃんの現在の視力で写真撮影ができるというものです。このアプリによると、生後1週間では赤茶色の湯気の中にぼんやりと人の顔が浮かんでいるようにしか見えません。生後1ヶ月になると、やや視界は明るくなりますが、まだ人の顔はおぼろげにしか見えません。ようやく生後6ヶ月になり、ほぼ大人が見ているのと同じくらい見えるようになるそうです。つまり現在の息子から見た私たちはぼんやりしていて、まだ顔の形や色ははっきりと判別できていないということになります。

では、生後まもない赤ちゃんがどのように母親を認識するのでしょうか。一般的に言われるのは母親の匂いです。赤ちゃんは母親の胎内にいるときから母親の匂いを知っているそうです。ゆえに母親の匂いが一番安心すると言われています。もう一つ言われるのは愛情です。近年では代理出産や里親に育

てられるということもよくあります。この場合、出産する親と実育てる親は異なります。しかし多くの場合、子供はその育ての親を本当の親と同等に認識します。母親と同じ匂いがないと、愛情によって育ての親も母親になるのです。先日ある番組でこんな一節が紹介されていました。

「母親が母親となるのは、子供を産むからではない。母親が母親となるのは母親の心が子供に伝わり、子供が母として認識した時である」

息子は最近よく、眠る時と起きる時に笑顔を見せ、かわいらしい音を出すことがあります。生後まもないときは、笑顔といえるような表情はしなかったです。音というよりは泣くほうが多かったように思います。きつと全てが初めてのことばかりですごく不安だったのしょう。しかし、今は妻をしっかりと自分の母親として認識し、寝る時も、起きる時も常にそこに母親がいるという安心感から笑みがこぼれ、声が出るのだと思います。

お念仏の人生を生きた浅原才さんが詠った詩に

「ねるもほとけ おきるもほとけ さめるもほとけ さめてうやまう なむあみだぶつ」

というのがあります。これは常に仏さまとともに暮らすことのできる安らぎをうたにしたもので、憂いばかりの人生を生きている私たちを、じつとつつんでいて下さるかたが仏さまだと味わわれたものです。

生後まもなく不安だらけで自分ではどうすることもできなかった息子が、ようやく見つけた母親の存在、それが彼に大きな安心感を与えています。安心感で満たしてくれた母親に対して、息子は笑顔で返事をするのでしよう。その姿がいわゆる「お念仏を申す」というものなのかもしれません。

阿弥陀仏という仏は無量寿仏(時間的無限性をあらわす)、無量光仏(空間的な無辺性をあらわす)ともいわれ、限りない命、限りない光の、いわゆる「無限」の世界から南無阿弥陀仏というかたちをとって現れた仏さまです。そしてその無限の世界は限りあるいのちを生きる私たち、有限を包み込んでいます。無限と有限はもと一つであり、本来的に別れた存在ではありません。しかし、私たちはその時間的にも空間的にも超えた無限の世界に包まれながらもそれに気づかず生きています。だからこそ無限のほうから南無阿弥陀仏というかたちをとって有限の私たちに常に用きかけています。息子が、実は母親に包まれていたということにより気づいてきたように、実は無限のいのちに包まれていたんだということに私たちが気づかせていただいたとき、それは言葉では言

い表せられないほどの安心感を与えてくれるでしょう。息子が返事をするように、その安心感に対して南無阿弥陀仏と応えていくということこそがお念仏なのではないでしょうか。

無限のいのちからいたたく安心感の中で、本当にあてになるのはお念仏だけだと気づかせていただき、たった一度きりの人生をしっかりと歩ませていただきたいものです。

南無阿弥陀仏

IMOPP終了にあたって 2018

開教使を目指す日本人僧侶を対象としたプログラム、IMOPP(国際伝道者養成講座)の修了式が7月13日に行われた。今年3名の僧侶が受講し、4月から約3ヶ月間、パークレーの浄土真宗センターに滞在。講座期間中、英語学校へ通うほか、現役、引退開教使、門信徒や他宗派の僧侶、他宗教の聖職者から講義を受けた。また各寺院を訪れ実際の開教、伝道の現場から学んだ。3ヶ月の研修期間を終えた受講生、今田法翔師、三瓶悦子師、村上響師に感想をたずねた。

IMOPPを終えてどうでしたか？

今田 ます、BCAとJSCのスタッフの皆様へ感謝の気持ちをお伝えしたいと思っています。私が3ヶ月の研修を無事に終えることができたのも、BCAの門徒さんや開教使の方々だけでなく、ご講義をくださった外部の先生方のお陰で無事終了を迎えることができました。この度のIMOPPでは多くのことを学びましたが、それを一言で言うとなんか自分自身を知ることになったと思います。3ヶ月で知った自分の弱さと強さを、これから自分がもっと自分らしくなれるよう、良い意味でそれらを磨き上げていきたいと思っています。

三瓶 大変な事もありましたが、多くの出会いの中で楽しみなが無事に3ヶ月過ぎることができました。

研修中にあったメンバーの方々、開教使の方々、共に乗り越えてきた他の研修生の方々の支えに心から感謝しています。

村上 濃い3ヶ月でした。様々な人に出会い、歴史や現代の社会問題まで学びました。実際にお寺を訪ねて現場の空気を肌で感じ、より開教使になりたいという気持ちが強くなりました。

研修中、苦労したことを教えてください。

今田 一番苦労したことは英会話です。JSCから一歩外に出て、お店で買い物をするときは難しいことが多かったです。話す速度が速い時や、訛りの入った英語を聞き取ることが普通英語を聞き取れない自分にとっては、特に理解するのが苦痛しました。聞き取れないことを素直に聞き直すとということが身につきました。

三瓶 英語の聞き取りがなかなかうまくできなくて苦労することが多くありました。分からないときには諦めず聞き返す事の大切さを実感しました。

村上 IMOPP期間中に英語法話をさせて頂き、繊細なニュアンスを英語で伝える事の難しさを改めて実感致しました。伝えたいことを英語でより深く表現する為に、これからも勉強し続けたいです。たくさん様々なお寺で法話をさせて頂き、貴重な経験となりました。感謝しております。

楽しかったことは何ですか？

今田 楽しかったことは、この期間を通して自分の新しい側面を見つけたことです。自分がアメリカンフードが好きだということや、身体を動かすことが好きということ、また法話の準備の時に本を読み漁る癖など日本と違う環境にいたからこそ気付けたことがたくさんありました。「好きこそ物の上手なれ」と言いますが、自分が学びたいと思えることがあることに気づけたことが嬉しかったです。

三瓶 色んなお寺にサンデーサーブイスやバザーの度に出席して多くの方とお話しできたことが楽しかったです。また、研修の後半であったユーストリートの研修に関わられたことも楽しかったことのひとつです。

村上 バザーのお手伝いで、皆さんと笑いながら料理をした事が印象に残っております。初めて食べたスパムむすびがとても美味しかったので家でも作ろうと思います。

開教使の先生や門徒さんたちに一言

今田 己を知ることが仏道の第一歩であり、自分自身のありのままの姿が見えてこそ、阿弥陀様のありがたさも見えてくるのだと思います。自分自身の姿を見つめ直す機会をくださった開教使や門徒さんの方々にお礼を申し上げます。

三瓶 未熟なところも多々あったかと思いますが、どのお寺に向いてもメンバーの皆様、開教使の先生方はいつも暖かく迎えて下さったことが本当に有り難かったです。返しても返しきれないほど支えをいただいたので、少しずつ返していけるようこれからも精進したいと思えます。

村上 多くの人々のご協力や、おかげさまでこの3ヶ月を無事に終える事ができました。本当にありがとうございました。またお会いできる事を心より楽しみにしております。

(写真、右より三瓶師、今田師、村上師)



法輪

2018年8月号

発行所
米国仏教団
Buddhist Churches of America
1710 Octavia Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
電話(415) 776-5600
FAX (415) 771-6293
Email: info@bcachq.org
forWOD: WODeditor@bcachq.org

二〇一八年度教化標語
「平和と調和」

あの記事をもう一度!

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

夏のパシフィックセミナー

7月20日と21日の二日間、浄土真宗センターでIBSと仏教教育部共催による夏季パシフィックセミナーが開催された。テーマは「悟りとは何か?」で、スイスジュネーブに所在する信楽寺住職およびパリの仏教学院 (Institut d'études bouddhiques) 理事長のドゥコール・ジュローム師が基調講演をした。最近、往生論註のフランス語訳を終えたという師は、曇鸞大師の教えを中心に浄土真宗での悟りについて自身の見解を述べた。参加者は「七高僧の理解と親鸞聖人の教えがどのようにつながっているのかよくわかりました。」と学びを深めた。基調講演の後、タタロカ比丘尼 (上座部仏教)、小谷真由美さん (チベット仏教)、アライ・ポーラ博士 (禅) から米



Pacific Seminar at JSC

国生まれの女性仏教研究者らがテーマに沿った発表を行った。松本デイビッド IBS 学長がモデレーターを務め、パネルディスカッションも行われた。パシフィックセミナーに合わせて、MAP (開教使アシスタントプログラム)、浄土真宗通信教育受講生の集いも開催され、セミナーには一般の聴衆とあわせて約80名が参加した。

BCAユースリトリートの開催



BCA Youth Retreat at JSC

7月1日から7日までの1週間、浄土真宗センターで、高校生を対象にした仏教教育のための合宿が行われた。全米各地の寺院から20名のティーンエイジャーが参加。浄土真宗のみ教えや儀礼を共に学んだ。講師は開教使や開教使アシスタント、門信徒らが主となり、ディスカッション、グループワークなどをリードした。教えや読経のクラス、その他、内観やヨガ、コルマ日本人墓地への参拝などを通して、参加者同士交流を深めた。講師をつとめた開教使は「高校生たちの熱意を感じました。彼らが将来のBCAを担っていくと思うと頼もしいです。」と期待を持った。

日本語真宗・オンラインコースのお知らせ

オレンジカウンティ仏教会がオンラインコースで仏教を学ぶプログラムを始めた。現在、本願寺オフィスが浄土真

宗の教えを学ぶための通信教育を開講しており、多くの受講生を集めている。英語で学ぶ通信教育は、米国だけでなく世界各地に受講生がおり、念仏の音が世界に広まってきつつある。オレンジカウンティ仏教会通信教育では日本語のコースも用意されており、日本人や日本語を理解する方がいつでも受講することができる。以下はワンドラ睦開教使からのお知らせ。



Orange County Buddhist Church, Japanese Howa Group

浄土真宗の教えをいつでも、どこでも学びたいなあとお望みの方に、日本語真宗オンラインコースが出来ました。サイト・アドレスは ocbc-dec.teachable.com です。まずは、このアドレスを開いて受講登録をすれば、どのようなクラスが用意されているのかがわかります。それぞれのクラス受講費用は10〜50ドルほどで、クレジット・カードもしくはPayPalで決済ができます。現在のところ、入門編として「とつてもやさしい はじめの仏教」、「みんなわかる浄土真宗の教え」、また本格的に七高僧を学びたい方へ「高僧和讃」から学ぶ「七高僧」が用意されています。今後は、浄土三部経、浄土教、鎌倉仏教について、また親鸞聖人の生涯とその著作、覚如上人、蓮如上人についてお聖教を中心とした講読編の作成を進める予定です。このオンラインコースでは、数々の英語クラスも用意されています。

総長コラム

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

去る七月十三日、今年の開教使希望の人を対象にした国際伝道者養成プログラムの修了式が執り行われ、三名の参加者に修了証が授与されました。今年の修了生は三瓶悦子さん、今田法翔さん、村上響さんの三名です。このプログラムはバークレーにある本願寺オフィス (桑原開教使主任) が仏教大学院などと協力して行われています。十年前に始められ、現在十五名がすでに各地で活躍されています。

このプログラムは英語では「インターナショナル ミニステリアル オリエンテーション プログラム」と呼ばれ、略称はその頭文字をとってIMOPと言います。私はこのプログラムの名前が好きです。それは、プログラムの内容がそのまま名前となっているからです。IMOPとは「私がモップ (掃除道具) を手にする」という意味合いがあるのです。「モップを手にする」というのは、ものごとを習うために入門したときの初心者の気持ち、すなわち「何でもします」という謙虚な心を表しているように思えます。

仏さまの教えを聞かせていただくときも同じような心持ち

で聞かせていただかないとならないと先生方から教えられました。梯実田和上は「私の思いをちょっと横に置いて、仏さまのお言葉を聞かせていただくことが大事です」とおっしゃっておられます。私の都合で話を聞き、私の勝手な解釈をしてしまうと、仏さまのお心に出会うことができませぬ。何度も何度も聞かせていただくことが大切でしょう。

私たちが思ったり考えたりする世界を超えた世界から全ての生きとし生けるものを慈しむ仏さまのお言葉は、お言葉が仏さまであります。南無阿彌陀仏が仏さまであります。私は何でも知っています。私には何もなく、初心者の気持ちでいつもいつも新しい喜びを感じさせていただけます。たいものです。



Bishop Umezu and IMOP Students