



WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

MAJOR MILESTONE FOR THE BCA



Vista's Terri Omori will become the first woman president of the BCA in its 123-year history. Above, she and husband Ford Omori enjoy the Bellagio Conservatory & Botanical Gardens on a 2019 trip to Las Vegas. At right, from left, BCA President Kent Matsuda, Omori, and immediate BCA Past President Rick Stambul are all smiles at the 2020 BCA National Council Meeting in Renton, Washington. (Courtesy of Terri Omori)



Terri Omori to Become First Woman BCA President

She Is 'Humbled and Very Honored' with Opportunity; Lists Membership as Priority

By Jon Kawamoto
Wheel of Dharma Editor

Terri Omori, a lifelong Shin Buddhist with deep ties to the San Diego and Vista temples, will become the first woman BCA President — a major milestone in the Buddhist organization's 123-year history.

The formal appointment will be made March 13, after the Eitaikyo Service at the BCA's National Council Meeting. The NCM, which will be virtual, is being hosted this year by the Central California District.

Inside

BCA Leaders Praise Omori for Her Leadership and Breakthrough Role. See Page 6.

"I'm very humbled and honored to be given this opportunity," she said. "When I said yes, it was out of gratitude. It was just the result of the deeper appreciation that I had growing up, and of all the years that I have been able to have the Dharma as part of my life. And, it was also recognizing all

those who have come before me.

"It's an honor, a true honor," she said. "And I hope that during my term that I can continue to make the Dharma accessible for all."

Omori's history with the BCA extends to include her Nisei parents, Ben and Miki Honda, her Issei grandparents and Honda family members — as well as her husband Ford Omori's parents and grandparents.

Growing up in San Diego and attending the Buddhist Temple of San Diego, she attended Sunday services

Continued on Page 7

Beloved Student Leader Kurahashi, 22, Is Mourned

Active Gardena Jr. YBA Member Also Attended Parlier Church's Medaka no Gakko

Editor's note: This article on Conner Kurahashi's tragic passing was written by Rafu Shimpō Senior Editor Gwen Muranaka and is being reprinted with her permission.

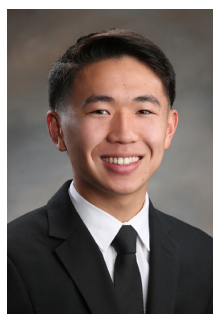
By Gwen Muranaka
Rafu Senior Editor

A great cook, a natural leader, skillful with tools, a real MacGyver, adventurous, outgoing and cheerful: Conner Kurahashi made an impact on everyone who knew him. A diverse, wide community of friends, family and mentors mourned his



The altar is displayed at West High School's Performing Arts Center in Torrance where a Feb. 19 memorial service was held for Conner Kurahashi, 22. (Courtesy of Christine Morimoto)

tragic death at just 22 years old. West High School in Torrance,



Conner Kurahashi

900 people attended the service.

"These moments are never easy, are they?" said Rev. Kory Quon of

where Kurahashi served as ASB student body president, hosted his memorial service on Feb. 19 at the West High School Performing Arts Center and Main Gym, and a crowd of approximately

Continued on Page 8

New Study Is Planned on BCA Membership

Goal Is to Determine How to Increase, Retain Sangha

By Jon Kawamoto
Wheel of Dharma Editor



Daehyeon (Dae) Kim

A member of the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple will be conducting a comprehensive study to explore the BCA's troubling membership issues — with hopes of coming up with recommendations on how to grow the Sangha and retain members.

Daehyeon (Dae) Kim is an organizational and social psychologist who is a Ph.D. candidate studying organizational behavior at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Kim was introduced at the Dec. 4 BCA National Board meeting by Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada. The Bishop was introduced to Kim by Salt Lake Resident Minister Rev. Jerry Hirano, who asked Kim if he'd be interested in doing a research project on a nonprofit organization such as the BCA.

"He indicated that — 'Yes' — he would be very willing and interested," Rev. Harada said. "Several of us have met with Dae and are very impressed with him."

In November 2020, the BCA Executive Committee held a meeting to take a hard look at the BCA's declining membership. From 2010 to 2020, the BCA has seen a 28 percent decline in membership from nearly 17,000 members to the current 12,200. Over the same time, the BCA's total budget has increased 29 percent from \$1.43 million to \$1.85 million. ("BCA Discusses Its Declining

Continued on Page 10

Fresno's New Hondo



The Fresno Betsuin's new Hondo casts a striking glow in this night photo. (Courtesy of Greg Tsudama)

Fresno Betsuin's new Hondo hasn't officially opened yet, but will be showcased during the BCA's upcoming National Council Meeting on March 4-5 and March 11-13. The NCM will be hosted by the Central California District. For more photos of the new Hondo, see Page 10.

BISHOP'S MESSAGE



By Rev. Marvin Harada
Bishop of the BCA

I would like to borrow a wonderful metaphor that Rev. Akio Miyaji, whom I served with for a number of years, used often in his memorial service sermons.

Rev. Miyaji used to talk about the importance of our rearview mirror when we drive in our cars. With his Japanese accent, he used to call it the “bakku mira —.” Clearly, we cannot drive safely without a rearview mirror. Rev. Miyaji used this metaphor to illustrate the importance of seeing our past, where we have been, and paying respect and gratitude for those who lived before us.

When we drive, we can’t just look in our rear view either, or else we will crash into something. We have to look at what is right in front of us. That is our present. Presently, we are dealing with a terrible pandemic. Our churches and temples are still closed. But, we are making the best of the situation and many innovative things have been done to

A Vision for the Future

share the Dharma virtually, to have fundraisers virtually, and to socialize with each other virtually. That is our present that we are facing. That is what is right in front of us as we drive the car of the BCA.

But as we all know, when

I see that in the future, the Dharma will be our focus, and we will have Buddhist education classes and programs everywhere, in person and virtually.

I see that in the future, besides our local temple members, that we will have a virtual Sangha, made up of people from all over the world who join us in following the path of the Nembutsu.

we drive, we can’t look just in front of us, either. We have to look further down the road ahead of us. Is there a traffic jam ahead? Is there road construction ahead? Does it look like there’s rain clouds ahead? What is our view further down the road? That is our vision.

To me, vision must also have aspiration. A true visionary is a person who not only looks to the future, but it is a person who has an aspiration for the future, for what they want the future to become, to be. If a visionary does not have an aspiration, then that person would just be a fortune teller, or a soothsayer, like predicting the next Super

Bowl winner.

Who then, is our visionary in our Shin Buddhist tradition? To me, the most exemplary visionary of our tradition, is Bodhisattva Dharmakara, the hero of the Larger Sutra. Bodhisattva Dharmakara, the mythical

hero of the Larger Sutra had a vision for his life as a Bodhisattva. His vision included his aspiration for the future, for what he wanted to accomplish in his life as a Bodhisattva. As you know, he expresses that vision and aspiration in the 48 vows of the Larger Sutra. Dharmakara sees and aspires for a world in which all sentient beings might find true happiness, true peace, true enlightenment in the world that he vows to create. Dharmakara’s vision is also his aspiration. His aspiration is also his vision.

I am not Bodhisattva Dharmakara, but I have a vision and aspiration for our future, for our temples, and

for our BCA. I see that in the future, we will have vibrant and diverse Sanghas, with people of all backgrounds, all ages, all genders, all ethnicities, and all sexual orientations.

I see that in the future, the Dharma will be our focus, and we will have Buddhist education classes and programs everywhere, in person and virtually. I see that in the future, besides our local temple members, that we will have a virtual Sangha, made up of people from all over the world who join us in following the path of the Nembutsu.

I see in the future a Sangha in which the teachings resonate with their life, that they see the Dharma as indispensable, just as important as the food that we eat and the air that we breathe. I see in the future a growing Sangha that reaches new people, who have never even heard the word Namuamidabutsu before. I see in the future, Shin Buddhism deeply connected to the communities around them, involved and engaged.

Just as Bodhisattva Dharmakara vowed in the Larger Sutra, that if his vows would not be fulfilled, that he would not accept complete enlightenment, so too our vision for the future must include our aspiration and determination to complete, to fulfill our vision as well.



By Rev. Ryuta Furumoto
Senshin Buddhist Temple

At Senshin, I see several animals. I like animals, so I feel a sense of peacefulness whenever I see them.

Temple members bring their dogs, and one dog barks at everyone without any discrimination (it can represent Amida Buddha’s non-discriminating mind). Stray cats or the neighborhood cats take a walk and nap in the courtyard. Also, I enjoy watching a squirrel.

The squirrel living on the Senshin grounds is named “Seemore.” The spelling is not “Seymour.”

The squirrel was named by the children who attended the temple summer program “Saishin Dojo” over 10 years ago. The children enjoyed

‘Seemore’ — and Listen More

watching the squirrel during their break time, and when the chime rang to tell the students to go back to class, the children cried, “We want to see more!” Since then, the squirrel is called “Seemore.”

When you want to see the Buddha, you need to listen more. Shinran Shonin

When you want to see the Buddha, you need to listen more. Shinran Shonin suggested that we could see the Buddha through listening and hearing the teaching. Listening to the teaching is equivalent to seeing the Buddha. He meant knowing the essence of the Buddha is more important than just to see the image of the Buddha.

suggested that we could see the Buddha through listening and hearing the teaching. Listening to the teaching is equivalent to seeing the Buddha. He meant knowing the essence of the Buddha is more important than just to see the image of the Buddha.

In “Kyogyoshinsho,” he quoted a statement from the Nirvana sutra:

“There are two kinds of seeing; seeing through the eyes and seeing through hearing.”
— CWS, P. 189

His intention in quoting this statement was that he wanted to focus on seeing through hearing. It mentions

that while Buddha or the high ranked bodhisattvas can see Buddha nature (or Buddhas themselves) with the naked eyes, ordinary beings are incapable of seeing the Buddha. But they can see the Buddha through hearing.

Since we are full of Bonno, the passions from ego, Amida Buddha chose the way to reach us by becoming the

form of words. In this way, we can perceive the Buddha and his compassion without seeing the Buddha through our eyes.

Shinran Shonin stated in “Shoshinge”:

“Although I, too, am within Amida’s grasp, passions obstruct my eyes and I cannot see the light. Nevertheless, great compassion is untiring and illumines me always.”
— CWS, P. 73

Due to our Bonno, we cannot see Amida Buddha and his light through our naked eyes. But by listening to the teaching, we can know that Buddha’s compassion is always working on us for our sake. Although we cannot see Amida Buddha through our naked eyes, we can see Amida Buddha by listening to the teaching.

We are planning to reopen Saishin Dojo this year. I hope the students can see Seemore at the temple and they listen more to the Nembutsu teaching to see Amida Buddha.

Namoamidabutsu



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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.

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Tying Up Loose Ends



By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President

At the time that I am writing this, all eyes are on Ukraine and Russia. For inexplicable reasons, Vladimir Putin has chosen to invade Ukraine. Our BCA Social Welfare Committee is working on sending funds to the relief agencies in Eastern Europe taking care of Ukrainian refugees. The world is looking to Putin to end the hostilities.

More locally, on our continent, we were saddened to hear of the vandalism that took place at the Calgary Buddhist Temple. Being the site of the 2015 World Buddhist Women’s Convention, some of you may have had the chance to see their temple as the renovation work was finishing. I made a

donation to their temple on behalf of BCA to help clean up the graffiti and replace the lettering that was removed from the temple walls.

In our BCA world, we were saddened to hear of members of the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple and Longmont Buddhist Temple who either lost their homes or were affected by the Marshall Fire. Thanks to those who donated to the Colorado temples’ efforts to raise funds for the affected people.

And, I was saddened to hear of Herb Osaki’s death in February. Mr. Osaki was a member of the Oregon Buddhist Temple and was president of the BCA in 1982. On behalf of the BCA, I would like to offer the Osaki family condolences on his passing.

This will be my last column in the Wheel of Dharma as president of the BCA. On March 13, after the BCA Eitaikyo Service, Terri Omori from the Vista Buddhist Temple will become the BCA’s first woman president. Please watch the Eitaikyo Service and many of the activities surrounding our National Council Meeting that are open to everyone.

Although I will no longer be president of the BCA, I

will now become the Chair of the BCA Ministers’ Pension and Retirement Committee and the Hongwanji Overseas Mutual Benefit Program. The latter will be turned over to Terri Omori once the charter has been rewritten. I am not a pension expert, but I did study pensions during law school and I oversee the retirement funds in my office. However, if anyone is an expert on pensions or retirement planning and would like to chair (or be on) the committee, please contact me. I would like to thank Harry Bergland from the Buddhist Church of Oakland for chairing the committee for the past many years.

I would like to thank Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada for leading our organization and for making so many sacrifices for our organization. Had it not been for his decision to not use the Bishop’s residence in Belmont (now called the “Waterloo property”) and to forgo having an office at BCA

headquarters in San Francisco, we would not be able to rent out the second floor of the BCA headquarters building and the Waterloo property. Though both properties need maintenance work, both properties are now generating income for the BCA.

I would also like to thank Gayle Noguchi and the BCA staff for all the work that they did on my behalf. Our former BCA president, Rick Stambul, taught Gayle well, because I was not able to oversee her work at headquarters/home as closely as Rick did. Nonetheless, Gayle did exemplary work and was able to take care of the business of running the BCA with little supervision from me. She and the rest of the BCA staff worked flawlessly during the pandemic when most people were working from home.

I would also like to thank the BCA Executive Committee for their tireless work and dedication to the BCA

membership. We met more times during the past two years than any BCA Executive Committee has ever met. Traditionally, the BCA Executive Committee meets in person about three times a year. In 2021, our committee met nine times. These meetings lasted for hours. It is incredible how dedicated and proficient the members of this committee are. The BCA is extremely fortunate to have everyone from this committee returning (with the addition of John Arima) for another two years.

Finally, I would like to thank the ministers and members of the BCA for allowing me to be president of this organization again. The past two years have been marked by a pandemic that affected all of our temples. As we get to the point of slowly opening out temples again, I hope that all of you realize what BCA has done for our temples and members during this difficult time.

In our BCA world, we were saddened to hear of members of the Tri-State/ Denver Buddhist Temple and Longmont Buddhist Temple who either lost their homes or were affected by the Marshall Fire. Thanks to those who donated to the Colorado temples’ efforts to raise funds for the affected people.

Buddhist Values and Leadership

A Conversation with Dr. Leroy Morishita

Rev. Dr. David Ryoe Matsumoto
President
Institute of Buddhist Studies

Dr. Leroy Morishita has guided the Institute of Buddhist Studies as the Chair of its Board of Trustees since January 2021, following a distinguished career of leadership in higher education.

Leroy was born in Fresno and raised on a family farm in Del Rey, California. He received a bachelor’s degree from University of California, Berkeley, and a master’s degree from San Francisco State University. He earned a doctorate in Administration, Planning & Social Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Leroy flourished during a 29-year career at San Francisco State, eventually serving as its Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance and Chief Financial Officer.

In 2011, he was selected to be the President of California State University, East Bay. As President, Leroy galvanized the students, faculty, staff, and alumni, and the surrounding community.

Leroy led many initiatives in



Dr. Leroy Morishita

the CSU system. He also served on numerous local and national organizations, furthering higher education, accreditation, and community development. He has long been active in the Asian American community, the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, and the JA Health Benefits Trust.

President Morishita retired in December 2020 after a remarkable career in higher education. He and his wife Barbara now enjoy spending more time with their two sons’ families, especially their four granddaughters.

Leroy and I talked about his first year as IBS Board Chair. Here are some excerpts from our conversation.

Rev. Dr. Matsumoto: What

did you learn, growing up as a Buddhist in Central California?

Dr. Morishita: I learned a lot from my parents. They took us to the temple every Sunday. They treated everyone equally. It instilled in me the belief that everyone is important, no matter who they are or what they do. Treat everyone as you would like to be treated. And always treat everyone with respect. Everybody matters. My parents taught me about Buddhism through their actions and practices.

Rev. Dr. Matsumoto: How would you describe your style of leadership?

Dr. Morishita: When I arrived at CSUEB, my plan was to build pride in the university, student body, staff, and community. My view was that we would do everything within the context of highlighting pride in the university. I also wanted to exhibit integrity. I wanted people to trust in what I said and know that I would do what I said I would do.

Rev. Dr. Matsumoto: How did Buddhist values impact your leadership style?

Dr. Morishita: As a leader, I wanted people to run with me and then take over. I brought in people who were smart and de-

Continued on Page 5



The EBL annual conference was held virtually on Feb. 12-13. (Courtesy of Cheral Tsuchiya)

Eastern Buddhist League Holds Annual Conference

By Cheral Tsuchiya
Twin Cities Buddhist Sangha

The 2022 annual EBL conference, “Dharma Friends Staying Connected,” was held virtually on Feb. 12-13.

This year’s Zoom event was a collaborative effort of all of the temples and Sanghas in the Eastern Buddhist League: Midwest Buddhist Temple, New York Buddhist Church, Ekoji Buddhist Temple, Seabrook Buddhist Temple, Cleveland Buddhist Temple, Toronto Buddhist Church, Manitoba Buddhist Temple, Albany Buddhist Sangha, Buddhist

Temple of Chicago and Twin Cities Buddhist Sangha.

After a Saturday morning service hosted by Ekoji Buddhist Temple, we had the honor of welcoming Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji as the keynote speaker.

He shared his thoughts on staying connected during times of separation and uncertainty through Amida Buddha’s great aspiration, the essence of Jodo Shinshu.

The newest EBL member, Albany Buddhist Sangha, hosted a Dharma School activity in the afternoon. Japanese

Continued on Page 10



Bon Odori Webinar Set for March 26

While summer is still months away, some temples are starting to plan for a virtual, live, or hybrid Obon.

If you are interested in Bon Odori or Obon planning, the BCA Music Committee and the Center for Buddhist Education invites you to two back-to-back webinars from 2 to 3:30 p.m. (PST) Saturday, March 26.

At 2 p.m., the Bon Odori Sharing Session will present unique Bon Odori taught by Reiko Iwanaga (San Jose), Elaine Fukumoto (Los Angeles), and Laurie

Kagiyama (Arizona).

After an open session where participants can ask questions and share information, we will begin the Obon Forum 2022 at 2:45 p.m. This informal webinar will provide a forum for temple members to share questions, best practices, and ideas for holding a safe, meaningful, and engaging Obon.

Register at bit.ly/bonodoriwebinar for the Zoom link.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you attend the CBE webinar last year “Kinnara and the Roots of Taiko”? The recorded webinar is available to view on the CBE YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSPsNZ5fDhU>

This year we are excited to offer an upcoming three-part webinar in April “Kinnara Taiko Teaches ‘Ashura.’” See flyer for details. Registration is required.

— BCA Music Committee

A VISION OF SHIN BUDDHISM FOR TODAY

Social Engagement

Editor’s Note: The following is the fifth in a series and is an excerpt from “The Dr. Taitetsu Unno Memorial Lecture,” delivered at the Institute of Buddhist Studies by Rev. Dr. Kenneth Tanaka on March 19, 2021.

By Rev. Dr.
Kenneth K. Tanaka
Former BCA Minister,
IBS Associate Professor
and Assistant Dean



Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno
(Courtesy of Unno family)

The Third Dimension of Shinran Shonin’s Teachings

The third dimension of Shinran’s teachings is social engagement. Many people regard Pure Land Buddhism as a path that rejects this world in favor of the Pure Land in the afterlife.

However, that does not accurately reflect Shinran’s understanding, for he valued Shinjin realization, which is attained in this life, and strove tirelessly to help others for 60 years. Regarding the Shin path, Dr. Unno has stated, “... it’s primary focus is on the here and now” and “underscores our responsibilities in society.”

Despite this, there exist in contemporary Shin Buddhism two factors that discourage social engagement in this life: 1) our fear of self-power

and 2) our “perceived” incapability.

Self-power (“jiriki”)

Shinran rejected “self-power,” so some Shin Buddhists have gone so far as to equate self-power with any effort we make. For example, a former graduate student of mine once remarked with a smile on her face that some Shin Buddhists are even afraid to give up a seat in a bus for an elderly person, out of fear that such a deed would be criticized as “self-power.”

Self-power and self-effort are not the same. If all efforts were to be criticized, then we would need to reject even the hallmark Shin religious act of “listening to the Dharma” (“monpō”)!

In actuality, the problem of self-power lies not in the effort itself but in the attitude in carrying

out the effort. Such a self-power attitude is seen, for example, in a person volunteering at a homeless kitchen, who sees oneself as being “a superior person” and expects others to recognize him/her for the work. Instead, a Shin Buddhist would be motivated simply as a natural expression of one’s concern for others and the desire “to repay for the received spiritual benefits” (“hōongyō”).

Such an effort can be seen, for example, in the teaching of “constantly practicing great compassion,” (“jōgyō-daihi”), one of the 10 benefits that a person of Shinjin realizes in this life. The tradition has understood it to mean to just recite the Nembutsu. I, however, feel that its scope needs to be expanded to include social engagement in response to such issues as climate change, racial justice, and income disparity, motivated by the Shin ideals of compassion, equality, and interdependence.

Our ‘Perceived’ Incapability

The second factor suppressing social engagement is our self-perception that we humans are incapable of fully helping others as we wish, as expressed, for example, in the fourth chapter of

the “Tannishō.” In it, we are admonished to recite the Nembutsu in order to quickly attain Buddhahood in the next life. Then, as buddhas, we can return to save others freely as we wish.

In my view, this may be appropriate as a message on the pristine spiritual level but not on the ethical and social level. Yes, it is true that we are incapable of fully benefiting others as our hearts desire. Nevertheless, we can do something in this life!

Rather than waiting to become buddhas in the next life, Shin Buddhists can attain Shinjin realization in this very life. Shinran called a person of Shinjin a “white lotus among people.” Even though such people are still limited and imperfect, the endowed wisdom and compassion of Shinjin will not hold them back from caring for others. So, they are like the “blooming white lotus flowers” growing out of the mud. Included within this mud are the many societal problems that await the attention of social engagement by Shin Buddhists, not because they feel pressured or obligated but because they are so moved naturally!

Next: Religion of Awakening and Action

BCA Music Committee & Center for Buddhist Education present

BON ODORI

Sharing Session & Obon Forum 2022

SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 2022 • 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. PST

The purpose of the Bon Odori Sharing Session is to share information and document bon odori from across the continental United States. The program will begin with three short presentations showcasing the history and breadth of our bon odori tradition by Reiko Iwanaga (“Bussei Koshinkyoku” and “Remember Me”), Elaine Fukumoto (“Tokyo Gorin Ondo” and “Joban Tanko Bushi”), and Laurie Kagiyama (“Ac-Cent-Tchu-Are the Positive” aka “Goshu Ondo”).

Following these presentations, we will have an open session where participants can ask questions about songs, recordings, choreographies, or anything related to bon odori. While the organizers may not have the answers, we hope that other bon odori teachers and enthusiasts in the webinar will share their knowledge.

At approximately 2:45 p.m., we will start the Obon Forum 2022, an informal discussion with Obon organizers to share ideas and concerns about planning summer festivals. With the pandemic constantly providing new challenges in social gatherings and event management, this forum aims to share questions, best practices, and lessons learned for having a safe, meaningful, and engaging Obon. Registrants are encouraged to contribute questions and their own expertise and experiences.

Register at the bitly address below to receive the Zoom link.



REGISTER HERE for Zoom link:
bit.ly/bonodoriwebinar

KINNARA TAIKO TEACHES “ASHURA”



Learn “Ashura” in three (3) Webinars
Sundays in April
April 10, April 17, April 24, 2022
Time: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. PST

The groundbreaking Buddhist taiko group Kinnara Taiko will present a series of three 1-hour webinars teaching their signature composition, “Ashura.” This webinar series will include instructional videos, a Q/A section, and a discussion of Buddhist taiko and the history and context of “Ashura” by members of Kinnara Taiko.

The three webinars will be held on April 10, 17, and 24 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. (PST). The instructional videos will be available to webinar participants after each session. Admission is free and open to all taiko groups and individuals. Donations will be accepted for the BCA Music Committee.



REGISTER HERE:
<https://bit.ly/kinnarataiko>
Admission Free with registration



Dharma Forward

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Mar. 11, 2022 Fri of National Council Meeting

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IBS Event

2022 Ryukoku Lectures



Bunei Takada
Professor, Ryukoku University,
Faculty of Letters

Lecture Title:
Ōjōyōshū - A Collection on the
Essentials Concerning Birth and
Shinran Shōnin

「『往生要集』と親鸞聖人」

Save the Lecture Dates and Time
Pacific Standard Time

March 14 (Mon) 6:00PM – 7:30PM
March 15 (Tue) 6:00PM – 7:30PM
March 17 (Thu) 6:00PM – 7:30PM
March 18 (Fri) 6:00PM – 7:30PM

Ōjōyōshū - A Collection on the Essentials Concerning Birth is the important scripture in the Shin Buddhist studies. The author was Genshin, one of the Seven Pure Land Masters selected by Shinran. Shin Buddhist researchers and scholars tend to read this text in the context of Jōdoshinshū, and unconsciously overlook the original intention of Ōjōyōshū. This lecture is about two points: the intention of Ōjōyōshū, and how Shinran understood the text. Please join us to appreciate the profundity of scripture interpretations by carefully reading Ōjōyōshū.

『往生要集』は浄土真宗の「聖教」であり、その著者源信和尚は浄土真宗の「七高僧」の一人として尊崇されている。そのため私たちが『往生要集』を読む場合、最初から浄土真宗流に読んでしまい『往生要集』の原意は等閑に付されがちである。では『往生要集』は本来どういう教えなのか？そして親鸞聖人はそれをどう読まれたのか？この度の講義では、この2つの視点をもって『往生要集』を読み、聖典解釈の奥深さを味わいたい。

There will be four lectures on the live Zoom. Registration information coming soon on the IBS site. Lectures are free and open to the public. Prof. Takada will speak Japanese and the English translation will follow by Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wondra.



A Letter from the BCA Endowment Foundation Board President

Dear BCA Members and Friends:

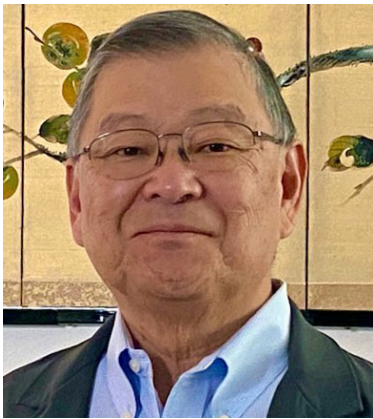
Carrying the Dharma Forward

When, over 124 years ago, our fellow Jodo Shinshu Buddhist forebears requested that our home Temple in Kyoto, Japan send ministers to share the Dharma in the United States and created Sanghas where they lived, when our forebears refused to give up Jodo Shinshu Buddhism while incarcerated in U.S. World War II concentration camps, and when our forebears rebuilt and created new Temples, Sanghas, the Buddhist Churches of America organization and the Institute of Buddhist Studies after the war, they cherished the teachings that are available for those who have followed. Jodo Shinshu

Buddhist teachings will always be relevant for people working to understand human nature, the root cause of suffering and what the future might hold.

It is our time to assure that the Dharma is carried forward for ourselves and for others by supporting our Temples, Sanghas, the IBS and the BCA.

The far-reaching Dharma Forward program of the BCA and the IBS will touch us and others in many ways as the conditions of our lives continually change. Creating and maintaining the technological base to share and receive the teachings, continually refreshing and expanding the educational foundation for the teachings and preparing the people who will share them with us and others and assuring that the needed facilities will be available are



Charles Ozaki

funded through the Dharma Forward campaign.

2021 BCA Endowment Foundation Results

The Endowment Foundation manages the investments for the BCA, IBS and 27 affiliated organizations. A very heated economy withstood medical and socio/political turmoil over

two preceding years and began to respond to concerns about a more mobile workforce with changing attitudes, inflation and uncertain public policy in 2021.

This past year, the Endowment Growth Fund showed a return of 10.3 percent, which compares to an average of 20 percent returned in each of the two prior years. The trend is toward potential ups and downs in the coming year and consequently investing in equities such as the Growth Fund should be part of a longer multi-year strategy that can accommodate a potential loss along with gains.

The overall investment earnings in 2021 was \$3,948,969 and \$1,136,703 was disbursed. Total assets managed by the Endowment increased from \$42 million to

\$48 million, due to investment returns, donations and deposits into custodial accounts. As of Dec. 31, 2021, the Dharma Forward campaign has collected \$5.2 million of the \$15 million target which is 35% toward the goal.


Please consider joining in assuring Jodo Shinshu Buddhism teachings will always be available to us and others by contributing to Dharma Forward.

If you need any assistance in doing so, please contact Michiko Inanaga, Director of Development, at the BCA Endowment Foundation at mi-nanaga@bcahq.org or 415-651-5164

In Gassho,
Charles Ozaki, President,
BCA Endowment
Foundation

CENTER FOR BUDDHIST EDUCATION PRESENTS

ESSENTIALS of JODO SHINSHU BUDDHISM



REVEREND DR. TAKASHI MIYAJI

SATURDAY MARCH 26, 2022
11AM - 1PM (PACIFIC TIME)

REGISTER HERE

SOCIAL WELFARE FUNDS AVAILABLE

Know of a charity that you or your temple would like to support?



PLEASE make use of these funds! Just go to the BCA website tab Giving/Social Welfare or Who We Are/BCA Resources/Social Welfare Grant Applications. Contact socialwelfare@bcahq.org for more information.



BCA JR YBA SUMMIT EVENT

EXCHANGING AND CREATING IDEAS FOR YOUR JR YBA ORGANIZATION

04.16 2022
2pm (PT)

REGISTER

<https://tinyurl.com/2vx57pm5>

bkmizushima@bcahq.org

ABOUT THIS EVENT
Jr YBA leaders will discuss the challenges they have had to overcome over the past 2 years. And together will develop new ways to engage and grow our organizations.

Talk on Jodo Shinshu, LGBTQ+ Set in Cleveland

Cleveland Buddhist Temple

Rev. Kaitlyn Kongō Mascher-Mace will present a talk at this year's Cleveland Humanities Festival entitled "Universal Inclusivity in Japanese Pure Land Buddhism: LGBTQ+ and Jodo Shinshu" on Tuesday, April 5.

The theme of this year's festival at Case Western University is "Discourse."

Rev. Mascher-Mace is a Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-Ha priest and the Kaikyoshi-Ho Minister at the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple in Denver, Colorado. She is completing her master's degree in Buddhist Studies at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, California.

The exclusion of marginalized groups within society via the endorsement of religious bodies has been a topic of much attention but little change.

Doctrinal and qualitative statements are often used to define the behavior and expectations of followers of many different faiths.



Rev. Kaitlyn Mascher-Mace

The unwelcoming and exclusive environment and discourse has led to a generalized rejection of religion by many people in marginalized communities.

Within schools of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, specifically Jodo Shinshu schools, universal acceptance of all people through acknowledgement of human nature provides inclusivity as a hallmark

of Shinshu faith structure since the 13th century.

Non-discrimination within Jodo Shinshu is applied to all those who are differently abled, members of the LGBTQ+ community and people of different socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds, providing universal acceptance.

The discussion will explore doctrine and the practice of universal acceptance and how it is applied today, in everyday life.

This event will be live streamed at 4:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Tuesday, April 5 at: case.edu/liuvestream/s1.

Registration requested for those attending in person. To register, use the following link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeF8GidEjHp6xA6Dv-C9AqE5Iwg2rlbh4yqCYIHJ9Zo-EyWheVQ/viewform>.

This event is co-sponsored by Cleveland Buddhist Temple, Buddhist Churches of America — Office of the Bishop, and the Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities.

Dr. Morishita

Continued from Page 3

mandated that they respect each other. I was most proud that my cabinet was very diverse in gender and ethnicity. That's because I made sure that our candidate pools were very robust and I hired the best people.

I was open to learning and changing course. Not 180 degrees. But when I would change, I would always give the reasons why, based on information that I had received. With new information, it's OK to alter your path. So, I was open to criticism and others' ideas.

Rev. Dr. Matsumoto: What have you learned in your first year as the Chair of the IBS Board?

Dr. Morishita: Over the past year, I have better appreciated all of

the people who have contributed to the growth of IBS. Dr. Jack Fujimoto and Jeff Folick passed away last year, and I could see their deep relationships with Buddhism and IBS. The retirement of Rev. Dr. Yamaoka reminded us that he did a lot of hard work to build our financial foundation.

I am grateful for the many people who laid the foundation for everything that we've been able to accomplish. And, at the same time, I have come to think about how we can continue to move forward.

Dharma Forward will enable us to raise funds to build an even more stable foundation. It makes me excited for the future. We can bring our professorial chair endowments to full funding and then maybe add more chairs. It's exciting that our new faculty are bringing their teaching,

research, and global perspectives on how to build IBS into a world-class institute of higher learning. They will play a great role in helping to bring Buddhism and Shin Buddhism to the fore.

I deeply appreciate everyone who learned new ways to work and teach in online formats during the pandemic. As we tap into the potential of broad, internet-based education, people from around the country and the world will be able to listen to lectures or take classes. This will allow us to spread the teachings further, even as we continue to educate our degree seekers in Berkeley.

We still face challenges, but we are willing to work hard in moving toward the future. To honor the legacy of those who have gone before us, we need to move forward, not rest on our laurels.

BCA Leaders Praise Omori for Her Leadership and Breakthrough Role

By Jon Kawamoto
Wheel of Dharma Editor

BCA leaders, officials and organizations — from Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada to the FWBA — were unanimous in their praise of Terri Omori and for leadership skills, experience and for her breakthrough role in becoming the first woman president in the Buddhist religious organization’s 123 years.

The Wheel of Dharma reached out to several individuals in the BCA for comment and this is what they had to say:

**BCA Bishop
Rev. Marvin Harada:**

“I am thrilled that Terri Omori will be our first woman president for the BCA, but more than being the first woman president, I am grateful that someone with her sincerity and leadership will be serving as our next president. I look forward to working with her.”

**Outgoing BCA President
Kent Matsuda:**

“In March 2022, the BCA will install Terri Omori from the Vista Buddhist Temple as our first woman as BCA president. Like many BCA presidents before her, she has been a former temple president. She is currently one of the primary leaders at Vista and has overseen the daily events at the temple for years. She is the wife of the ever helpful Ford Omori.

“During the time that I was BCA President, I gave Terri several difficult tasks to do. She helped to oversee several BCA committees and has been part of the leadership for organizing several of the recent National Council meetings.

“She has great organizational skills and is able to bring reason and calm to any difficult situation. During the past two years, I have been extremely impressed with her skills and her knowledge of subjects that every temple leader should know.

“Approximately 15 years ago, there was a picture on the first page of the Wheel of Dharma that showed the women who were part of the BCA National Board. Although every one of the women pictured was capable of being the BCA President, in the end, none of them received that honor. Terri will bring the strength of those women with her as she shows all of us that gender makes no difference when it comes to BCA leadership.

“I wish her well for her upcoming term as BCA President. I know that she will do an excellent job and that she will be the first of many women leading our organization.”

**Federation of Buddhist
Women’s Associations
(FBWA) President
Peggy Okabayashi:**

“Federation of Buddhist Women’s Associations (FBWA) congratulates Terri Omori, for becoming the first female BCA President.

“The FBWA looks forward to collaborating with President Omori on programs/projects of mutual interest and benefit. Buddhist women need role models who are strong leaders that understand the need to inspire other women to achieve. Women like President Omori can be powerful agents of change. She is authentic and practical, innovative and action focused and as an empowered woman she will bring about improved outcomes and results for BCA.

“The theme for the 2022 FBWA Conference is ‘Winds of Change’ and the ascension of Terri Omori to BCA President substantiates our theme. We look forward to the ‘Winds of Change’ throughout BCA during President Omori’s term.”

**Vista Buddhist Temple
President Ricky Schesinger:**

“Of course, we at Vista Buddhist Temple are delighted to have our own Terri Omori become the first woman president of the BCA.

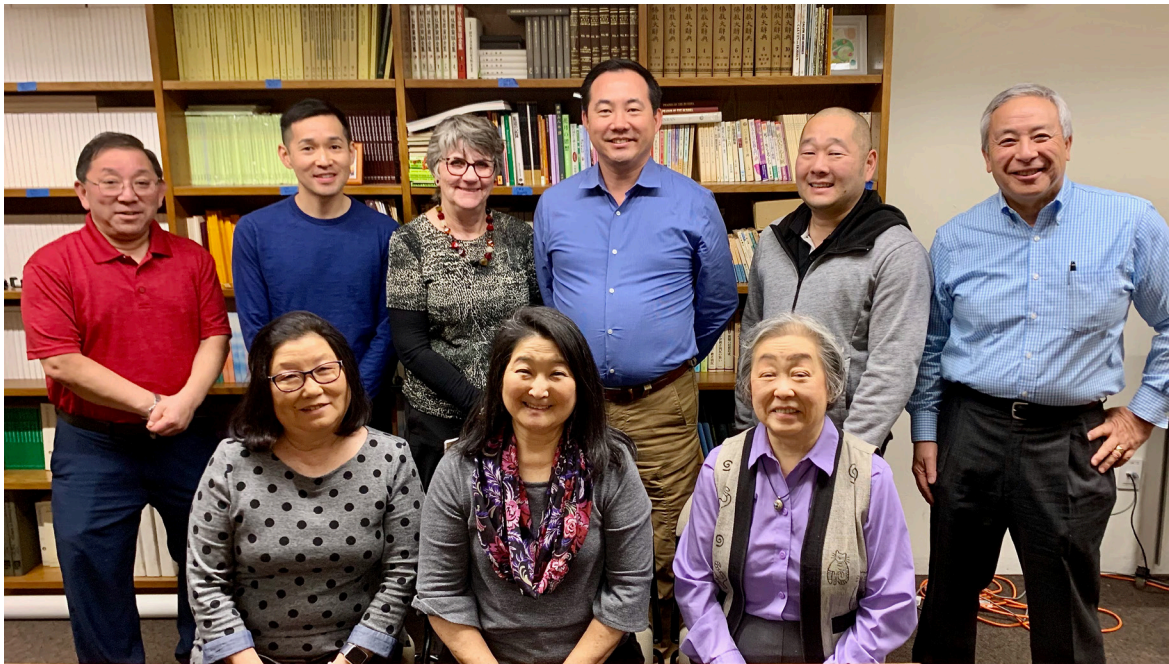
“The work she has done at VBT, and her lifelong engagement in the BCA and her Jodo Shinshu practice makes Terri deeply qualified. This is a responsibility and an honor Terri has earned. If a woman can successfully run the United Kingdom, be the Chancellor of Germany, and the CEO of General Motors, there no longer should be a gender concern regarding the President of the BCA. We all look forward to her leadership. Too bad her term limit is only two years.”

**Immediate Past BCA
President Rick Stambul:**

“The ascension of Terri Omori to lead BCA is an historic moment because she is the first woman in 123 years to be elected BCA President.

“But in a larger sense, BCA is fortunate to have Terri Omori as our incoming national President not because she is a woman, but because she is an exceptional human being. I have always found her kindness, her Namoda Butsu nature, her ability to deeply hear what is being said, her insistence on being all-inclusive, to be part of who she is at her core. Terri’s default is “Yes!” I have no doubt she will use that kindness, compassion and wisdom to lead Shin Buddhism forward in America.

“A key responsibility of our



Terri Omori has been a lifelong Shin Buddhist with extensive ties with the BCA. Above, she poses with other members of the 2019-2020 BCA Social Welfare Committee and at left is shown with the Vista Buddhist Women’s Association and Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada at the 16th World Buddhist Women’s Convention in 2019 in San Francisco, (Courtesy of Terri Omori and Peggy Okabayashi)

temple and national Presidents is to identify future leaders and encourage them to undertake the Presidency with the vision to preserve and promote our Shin Buddhist teachings for our collective future.

“This is part of an effort to ensure that fundamental Buddhist values such as the equal treatment of all our members regardless of gender and race, as opposed to political agenda, continue to flourish.

“I look forward to her leadership and her ability to make a difference for the future of BCA.”
— BCA Vice President Steve Terusaki

“Glass ceilings be damned! Ultimately, it does not matter whether a Shin Buddhist is a woman or a man, disabled or athletic, LGBTQ or straight, Asian or Caucasian, young or old. Instead, we embrace all sentient beings equally regardless of gender, appearance or ability because we all come from the same family: we are all one.

“We join together in welcoming Terri Omori as our next BCA President.
Namoda Amida Butsu!”

**BCA Secretary
Darlene Bagshaw:**

“I’ve only known Terri for a short while, but I’ve become a friend. I truly respect her compassion for others and her willingness and desire to help all those who need her assistance. She is so very kind and patient — it is no wonder

people want to be a part of Vista!

“Her actions in daily life embody the Jodo Shinshu teachings. She cares for the BCA and all the Sangha members. Terri is an excellent listener, which will make her a great leader for the BCA.

“She’s like that super bright link in ‘The Golden Chain’ — always keeping her link bright and strong, always kind and gentle, always thinking of

experienced her friendliness at a National Council meeting in California. I was there by myself, not knowing a lot of people. I entered the crowded hotel restaurant.

“Terri, her husband Ford and several others were seated already having breakfast. Terri spotted me looking around and right away invited me to join their group. That gesture made me feel so welcomed and made me think — ‘Yes, indeed, I am part of this group.’ This, along with her leadership skills, will help move Shin Buddhism to a recognizable, thriving religion in the west.”

**BCA Vice President
Steve Terusaki:**

“Terri and I have a long history together going back to our roots at the Buddhist Temple of San Diego.

“Terri’s parents, Ben and Miki Honda, were Jr. YBA advisors and second parents to a generation of Jr. YBA members in San Diego. Terri and her brother Ralph were our adopted younger siblings and it goes without saying we all have a deep appreciation for all that they have done as active members and supporters of the Buddhist Temple of San Diego and the Vista Buddhist Temple.

“Terri’s commitment to the Buddha-Dharma is, without reservation, as temple president, Dharma School superintendent at Vista and her involvement in Southern District Council, FDSTL and various BCA committees.

“It has been equally exciting to see the leadership of BCA presented to Terri as she becomes our first woman BCA President. I look forward to her leadership and her ability to make a difference for the future of BCA.”

**BCA Social Welfare
Committee Chair
Celeste Sterrett:**

“Terri is a rising star in the BCA and it’s easy to see why. The article in February Wheel of Dharma spotlighting how the Vista Buddhist Temple has more than doubled its members in 15 years explains a lot.

“Leadership skills, but also, and in my mind — the most important reason — her warm and welcoming manner. I first



Omori

Continued from Page 1

and Dharma School, eventually becoming an assistant Dharma School teacher helping in her mother's class, participated in Obon as well as other temple events, joined the Jr. YBA, the Sr. YBA, and then taiko group and served as the temple's organist.

A turning point

A pivotal event occurred when she married Ford Omori in 1989 and moved to Vista. The Vista Buddhist Temple building had just been dedicated in 1987.

"After Ford and I got married, it was just natural for me to join the Vista temple and I got involved right away," she said, recalling that she and Ford would bring his Bachan (grandmother) to services.

Since Omori had been the temple organist in San Diego, Vista's Resident Minister Rev. Art Takemoto, asked her if she would play the organ at Vista and she agreed.

"So, I started playing with the other musician, and I started seeing that there were one or two children, really young, coming to services," she said. "There was no Dharma School at the time. So I asked the parents, 'You want me to take the children downstairs and I'll teach them some Dharma School gathas?' And, they said, 'Yes.' So I started doing that."

One thing led to another commitment and further involvement. Terri and Ford Omori assisted the Jr. YBA, and she also joined her husband in the Vista taiko group.

When the Omoris began having their own family in the early 1990s — first, daughter Katie and then, son Kurtis — along with other families, the Dharma School got off the ground and it became part of the Southern District Dharma School Teachers League. As the temple babies were growing



Above, Terri Omori, her mother Miki Honda, and brother Ralph Honda pose during a visit by the Gomonsu to the Buddhist Temple of San Diego in the fall of 2019. At left, Terri Omori and her husband Ford Omori gather with other Sangha members during the Bon Odori event immediately after the 16th World Buddhist Women's Convention in 2019 in San Francisco's Yerba Buena Gardens. (Courtesy of Terri Omori and Rev. Marvin Harada)

up, Omori helped initiate a Jr. Taiko group and the Jr. YBA for the high schoolers.

Terri Omori has remained an active Dharma School teacher beyond her own children's graduation from high school — and was honored last year with 25 years of service by the Federation of Dharma School Teachers League (FDSTL).

In 2007, Terri Omori was selected as the Vista Buddhist Temple President, where, to this day, she remains the first

and only woman to hold that title. She would continue in that leadership role for the next three years.

Oversaw Vista changes

During her tenure, she, Ford Omori and Vista board member (and current Vista President) Ricky Schlesinger and other Sangha members took major steps to come up with a plan to address its declining membership and grow the Sangha.

Their efforts have been nothing short of exceptional. Since then, Vista has more than doubled its paid membership to about 115 paid members and its story has become a successful template for other BCA temples and churches to follow on how to grow its Sangha. (See "Vista Is Singled Out for Its Membership Growth" in the February 2022 issue of the Wheel of Dharma.)

As Vista President, Omori's involvement expanded into the BCA. She began attending the National Council meetings. In 2014, she became the Southern District Council Chair-elect, and was one of its representatives to the National Board.

She was elected as a BCA Director-at-Large, and was automatically made a member of the Social Welfare Committee. She also volunteered to be on the Membership and Propagation Committee because membership issues remain a key concern to her. And she served on a BCA ad hoc committee in charge of the 10th anniversary of the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California, in 2016.

to the Women of BCA: Part II," December 2018 and January 2019, Wheel of Dharma)

In a groundbreaking speech on "A Vision for BCA in the 21st Century" at the FBWA conference in Visalia in Sept. 15, 2018, he said: "The path forward for women in Shin Buddhism in America, in BCA, must not only involve women, as it has, but must be led by women."

Later, in that same speech, Stambul said: "In about one year, in December of 2019, the BCA National Board will hold elections for national officers. The time has come for women to lead BCA. Let me repeat that. The time has come for women to lead BCA; to develop new ways, in new partnerships, in which to preserve our teachings, and to protect our temples in the future."

(Omori had already agreed to serve as a Vice President before Stambul's speech.)

Another key advocate for Terri Omori has been her husband, Ford. "I always had Ford say, 'Go do it.' And he was always very supportive," she said.

Lists her priorities

Now, as she looks ahead to the next two years as BCA President, Omori lists among her priorities the persistent issue of membership affecting the BCA.

In November 2020, the BCA Executive Committee addressed the issue of declining membership and discussed strategies. From 2010 to 2020, the BCA has seen a 28 percent decline in membership from 16,994 members to the current 12,200. Over that same time, the BCA's budget has increased 29 percent, from \$1.43 million to \$1.85 million. (See "BCA Discusses Its Declining Membership, Strategies," December 2020, Wheel of Dharma)

"The one goal that I have which is in line with Rev. Harada is, of course, growing our membership," she said.

Omori wants to explore outreach in a variety of ways, including online and social

In 2017, rumors began swirling around the BCA about Omori and her possibly running for the BCA presidency. Rick Stambul, who was BCA President-elect at the time, proved to be an influential and significant figure who ultimately would succeed — with the help of others — in convincing Omori.

But when Stambul first asked Omori if she'd consider becoming BCA President in 2017, her answer was quick — "No."

She explained: "I truly felt I wasn't qualified to be the BCA President, and that was my main reason for saying 'No' the first time he asked me."

And when Stambul approached Omori again, she replied: "No."

"When I said yes, it was out of gratitude. It was just the result of the deeper appreciation that I had growing up, and of all the years I have been able to have the Dharma as part of my life. And, it was also recognizing all those who have come before me."

— New BCA President Terri Omori

Circumstances changed when Stambul became BCA President in 2018. He once again approached Omori, and after considerable discussion and thought, she agreed to serve on the Executive Committee.

"I said, 'Yes, I'll be one of the VPs (Vice Presidents) because I wanted to support Rick during his time as president,'" she said.

Stambul's role in contacting Omori and encouraging her to run as BCA President is no surprise because he's been a staunch advocate of having more women in leadership roles in the BCA. (See "A Plea to the Women of BCA" and "A Plea

media, and help temples develop a plan to grow and retain members at the same time. She praised the establishment of a new category — an individual BCA membership — for those who don't have a temple nearby.

"We see people joining in online at the temple services, and participating in CBE events from all over the United States," Omori said. "We're reaching out and providing them with the Dharma. I think we really have to continue to think of different ways of doing outreach as well as providing the individual with the Dharma and making them feel a part of the BCA."

BUDDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA
Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations
Virtual National Conference

Hosted by
Northern California District

October 14-16, 2022



Winds of Change
Jidai no Shinka ni Kiku
時代の進化に聞く

FBWA 2022



Conner Kurahashi's involvement with the BCA churches and activities was extensive. In top row at left, Conner speaks during the Buddhist Church of Parlier's Medaka no Gakko in the summer of 2006. In top row at center, as student body president at West High in Torrance, he addresses the senior class in 2018. Top right, he shows off his marksmanship in archery at the Los Angeles Buddhist Coordinating Council (LABCC) Camp at Camp Morning Star in San Bernardino in 2012. In second row at left, Conner takes part in an internment program at Parlier's Medaka no Gakko in 2012. In second row at center, he and other junior high students sell soda at the Gardena Buddhist Church's spring Fujimatsuri Bazaar. In second row at right, Conner poses as the ASB President at West High In Torrance. (Courtesy of Gay Kurahashi. Brian Kurahashi and Toyo Miyatake).

Kurahashi

Continued from Page 1

Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, who officiated the service. “Usually, when we say someone that’s lived into their 90s, we could say a lot of wonderful things. And yet — 22 years — look at how many wonderful things have been said. Look at how many wonderful lives have been made better by Conner.”

Rev. Quon said Kurahashi’s homyo, or Buddhist name, is Shaku Ikkyo 釋偉教 or “Great Teaching.”

Kurahashi was an active member of the Junior Young Buddhist Association at Gardena Buddhist Church. At GBC, during high school, he served as chairman for services, helped with church recycling, led Jr. YBA seminars, and was historian in his sophomore year and treasurer as a senior.

Kurahashi also attended Medaka no Gakko, a Japanese class at the Buddhist Church of Parlier in Central California, from 2005 to 2013 — from the time he was in kindergarten to the seventh-grade. His mother, Gay (Koga) Kurahashi, would drive up from Southern California to drop Conner off with her parents, and her mother Midori Koga and sister Jan Koga would volunteer during

the two-week program.

Posthumous honors

At the Feb. 19 service, surprise guest speaker state Assembly member Al Muratsuchi presented Kurahashi with a posthumous Community Recognition award for his dedication to community service and to the community.

In addition, U.S. Rep. Ted Lieu requested that the U.S. flag be flown in Kurahashi’s honor at the U.S. Capitol.

FYI

Donations to West High School ASB in Kurahashi’s memory can be made at <https://westhighasb.myschoolcentral.com>.

suffered in a car accident on Jan. 22 as he and friends were on their way to snowboard in Big Bear.

Kurahashi was in his last year at California Polytechnic

Motoyasu.

“He had an amazing heart, always doing the most for people, super nice, always willing to drive, always planning everything,” Motoyasu continued. “He was the ‘mom friend.’ He was the one planning, cleaning the house, cooking. He even picked up gardening during the pandemic.”

Motoyasu became friends with Kurahashi when they

Kurahashi was not the best player, but he had an ease and a willingness to work hard, which made him popular with athletes and coaches. His friends were recently playing basketball in an adult league at the Terasaki Budokan in Little Tokyo on Sundays.

Chang said: “One time I asked him, ‘Man, do you ever get tired?’ He said, ‘No.’ Later, I found out he was running cross-country for high school. The kid never really got tired. He was constantly hustling, running and making plays.”

‘Like a brother’

His best friend in high school, Haley Jones, is a cadet playing forward on the women’s basketball team at the Air Force Academy, a Division 1 team in the Mountain West Conference. She missed the Feb. 19 memorial service because it was Senior Night for Air Force, who faced Utah State. Air Force defeated Utah State 67-56 on Senior Night.

“Coach (Chris Gobrecht) and I talked it over. She said, ‘You don’t want to miss Senior Night.’ But I’ll fly out that night. Thinking about hosting a little brunch next morning for whoever wants to be there to have a moment to pause and grieve. He was like a brother,” Jones said. There were about 20 people at the brunch, sharing stories about

“He had an amazing heart, always doing the most for people, super nice, always willing to drive, always planning everything. He was the ‘mom friend.’ He was the one planning, cleaning the house, cooking. He even picked up gardening during the pandemic.”

— Blake Motoyasu, roommate of Conner Kurahashi at California Polytechnic University at Pomona

Rep. Lieu also read a tribute of Kurahashi’s contributions into the Congressional Record on Feb. 9, stating that “he was known for his exemplary leadership skills, devotion to civic engagement, and commitment to community service.”

J. Brett Blanton, architect of the U.S. Capitol, wrote in a letter with the U.S. flag that was sent to the Kurahashis: “We will never know all the good he would have done because his life ended so soon. We honor Conner with this flag.”

Kurahashi died of injuries

University at Pomona, majoring in urban and regional planning and looking forward to graduating this spring. His passing has been devastating for his college friends, who were looking forward to spending their last days at Cal Poly Pomona together, an experience already altered by the pandemic.

“We’re fourth-year seniors. We were not going to take any days for granted. We’re not kids anymore, we should cherish each other, cherish the house. It’s been hard,” said roommate Blake

played basketball together as third-graders in club ball called SGV.

Tiger Dragons Coach Robert Chang remembered Kurahashi for his speed and his hustle, on the court and off. Chang’s son Marcus was also a roommate at Cal Poly Pomona. The Tiger Dragons, named for the fact that most of the kids were born in 2000, the Year of the Dragon, were not considered one of the elite teams, but in their last year, they won at the Hollywood Dodgers tournament in Las Vegas.



Conner Kurahashi, in main photo at top, bows before the altar at the 2018 Jr. YBA Southern District Conference at Camp Morning Star in San Bernardino. Below, the Jr. YBA Southern District Conference group poses with a banner listing the words to “Juseige.” At top left, Rev. Kory Quon of the Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple officiates Conner’s memorial service on Feb. 19, and below that are photos of Conner on display at the service at West High in Torrance. In the last row, are family photos of the Kurahashis. At left, are Conner, sister Bailey, mother Gay and father Brian Kurahashi. At bottom right, Conner and Gay are shown at Camp Morning Star in 2018. (Courtesy of Gay Kurahashi, Ashley Ishigo and Christine Morimoto)

Kurahashi

Continued from Page 8

Kurahashi. Jones and Kurahashi served at the high school’s student council for four years. She said Kurahashi was organized and would make sure their plans for service projects would come to fruition, including a Lip Dub video that showcased the accomplishments of West High students and involved the entire campus. “Sue (Eriksen, ASB advisor) will tell you, we were a very good pair. What I forgot he would do, he would come behind me and figure out the

a tribute on their Instagram page, noting that he led the student body “fearlessly.” “He was genuinely interested in making West High a better place,” Eriksen said. “Not just for his college apps. He had such good follow-through on his work ethic. Other kids have ideas; he also had amazing follow-through.” **Strong support for family** The support has been tremendous for Kurahashi’s family, mom Gay, father Brian and sister Bailey. Many credited Brian, who owns an auto repair shop, for his son’s mechanical skills. Rick Kane, owner of Hawaiian Sweet Islands,

“He was genuinely interested in making West High a better place Other kids have ideas; he also had amazing follow-through.”
— Sue Eriksen, ASB advisor at West High in Torrance

X’s and O’s,” Jones said. Eriksen said West High prepared the Main Gym for overflow seating. In all, about 475 people were in the Performing Arts Center and about 410 people were in the Main Gym. COVID-19 safety protocols, including masks, were observed. Attendees were asked to bring a vaccination card or a negative COVID test from within the past 48 hours. The setting was fitting both for the large seating capacity and Kurahashi’s impact on the school. West High posted

employed Kurahashi when he was in middle school, and even at that time, the young man showed his curiosity and interest in fixing things, including carts used to transport the Hawaiian shave ice syrup. “He was sharp. Everything he did he had a purpose. He loved to fix things and tinker around like his father,” Kane said. Kurahashi’s friendliness and sense of community spirit came from his mom. Both Conner and Bailey played basketball and Gay was the team mom, organizing fundraisers,



working snack bar shifts, taking pictures — anything to support the team. A wide circle of friends have stepped up to support the family. The OCO Crew led by Clay Sakurao cooked barbecue for the reception. Joyce Mebed, a friend of Gay’s, is on the OCO Board of Directors. “We are overwhelmed with love,” Gay said. Another gesture of support came from Little Tokyo. As they prepared for their son’s funeral, Kurahashi’s parents went to Bunkado in Little Tokyo to purchase ojuzus. Dane Ishibashi helped them and when he found out what had happened, rushed to find the couple as they ate at Hachioji ramen to return their money. “When the pandemic hit, the community really supported Bunkado so it was im-

portant to pay that forward. It’s important to support each other, you know?” Ishibashi said. On Feb. 19, a whole community gathered to mourn and share stories of Kurahashi’s life. He was just on the cusp of adulthood, ready to start looking for a job and a career. Dad Brian recalled a family trip to Epcot in Florida. It was the first time he bought his son a beer and they talked about his future. Brian had discouraged his son from becoming a mechanic, a physical job that is hard on the body. “He said, ‘You know if I can’t find a job right away, I don’t want to sit around after I graduate. I want to go to grad school.’ I asked, ‘Which one?’ He said, ‘USC, because it is a private school and they will help me find a job and I

will make more money.’ “It was that moment as we were laughing and drinking, I looked at him and said, ‘I am no dad anymore. He is my buddy and that’s what I will miss the most.’” Kurahashi is survived by his parents, Brian and Gay (Koga) Kurahashi; sister, Bailey; grandmother, Kazuko Kurahashi; uncle, Robert Kurahashi; aunts, Pattie Johnson and Jan Koga; and many other relatives. Donations to West High School ASB in Kurahashi’s memory can be made at <https://westhighasb.myschoolcentral.com>. Additional reporting on this article was provided by Rafu Shimpo reporter Mikey Hirano Culross and Wheel of Dharma Editor Jon Kawamoto.

Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple’s New Hondo Nearing Completion



The Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple’s new Hondo isn’t ready to open for services yet, but organizers are hopeful of a spring date. Above left, the front of the Hondo is framed by cherry blossoms. Above right, the theater seating surrounds where the Onajin will be. (Courtesy of Greg Tsudama)

Membership

Continued from Page 1

Membership, Strategies,” Wheel of Dharma, December 2020)

In holding initial meetings with BCA leaders and with other members about membership concerns, Kim concluded, “We have a crisis in terms of the membership.”

In his PowerPoint presentation, Kim laid out the focus of his study.

“So the first question is, ‘How can we increase the membership of non-Japanese Americans? And are there any factors that might be hindering non-Japanese Americans from joining our temples?’ He noted that Zen Buddhist temples have a lot of non-Japanese American members. “So this indicates that Buddhism has potential in the United States — but why Zen? Why not us?” Kim said. “What makes us not grow and what makes a place where non-Japanese Americans feel that they cannot join — if that is the case. These are two other research questions that I will try to find answers to during my collaboration with the BCA.”

Kim said there’s nothing wrong with having predominantly Japanese American Sangha members in BCA temples and churches. But he also spoke about the inherent risks, given the demographics and overall aging of the Japanese American population.

“The Jodo Shinshu Buddhist temples have served as cultural centers for Japanese Americans so they can maintain their cultural heritage and cultural identity,” he said. “There is a beauty in that and our temples have served this role.

“However, when it comes to the future of the BCA, we need to think about increasing the number of non-Japanese American members because otherwise the Dharma that we love might not exist in the United States.”

He said that conducting research can help in several ways, including: interviews; case studies comparing the

cultures of two similar sized BCA temples and churches; a survey of BCA members; and field experiments.

Kim said one issue he discovered is that many young Sangha members don’t come back to temples or churches once they graduate from high school or college. He added that many other religious organizations are facing the same problem with young people.

He noted that most of the BCA temples and churches are on the West Coast, and primarily in California — which creates a geographic obstacle for many students who move away from the West Coast to attend colleges and universities.

“I’m currently in St. Louis, but there’s no close temple nearby,” he said. “So, I have been out of the Sangha for about four years.”

“Taken together, with some level of understanding the current parameters of how temples are reopening, might give us some indication of a different way to think about membership,” he said.

Seattle Betsuin Rinban Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki said he wanted the study to show “some positive aspects” that visitors express in their decisions to come to the BCA temples, as well as the comments from Sangha members who continue as temple members.

“I want to know what points they like, why they want to be a member or if they choose to come to the temple and continue being a member — then maybe we are able to see BCA temples’ uniqueness and maybe a strong point,” Rev. Kusunoki said.

Northwest District Pres-

“We have a crisis in terms of the membership.”
— Daekyeon (Dae) Kim, Ph.D. candidate at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri

Kim emphasized that all BCA Sangha members, friends and supporters who take part in the study would be assured of confidentiality and would not be identified. He signed a non-disclosure agreement with the BCA to legally protect the confidentiality of anyone who takes part in the study.

“I think the study has been valuable to address many of the concerns that BCA leadership has in its membership,” said BCA Vice President Steven Terusaki of the Buddhist Church of Oakland in the subsequent question-and-answer session.

“Because of the pandemic, we’re in a very unique time of the BCA. and the approach to address embedded cultures in local temples may not be representative right now of what the past situation has been among local Sanghas,” Terusaki continued, calling for a need for “a different perspective” with Kim’s study.

Terusaki also pointed out the need “to address the current success of our online work and our online efforts to promote the Dharma.

ident John Inge mentioned that the BCA conducted a survey of members and guests a few years ago. Among the results, he said, was a finding that showed a stark difference between Japanese Americans and non-Japanese Americans as to why they chose to attend the temples.

“Non-Japanese Americans were there for religious reasons, but the Japanese Americans, many of whom were longtime members, were there for the sense of community and to be with other Japanese Americans,” Inge said. “It could be food, it could be seeing their friends. It was much more of a community center (to Japanese Americans) and I would be very interested to hear in your research if these findings were true throughout.”

Kim intends to take up to two years for his study, contacting, interviewing and surveying the BCA Sanghas of temples and churches, ministers and officials — as well as seeking out individuals who have visited temples but who have decided not to return or join.

EBL

Continued from Page 3

language speakers had a late afternoon opportunity to share the Dharma with Rev. Chiemi Onikura Bly.

Then the fun began as we all went to the kitchen, computers in hand, to enjoy a “connection cocktail” and together learn how to make okonomiyaki. We chatted, we laughed, we learned and we ate. Thank you, Seabrook Buddhist Temple!

After the Sunday morning service, which was broadcast live from the Toronto Buddhist Church, Twin Cities Buddhist Association hosted a panel discussion with the four EBL Kaikyoshi ministers — Rev. Ron Miyamura, Rev. Nariaki Hayashi, Rev. Yoshimichi Ouchi and Rev. Patti Nakai.

They discussed topics ranging from the current social climate to their personal influencers to how Buddhism will remain relevant.

Although the ongoing pandemic has kept us physically apart, it was wonderful to connect, learn, laugh and be in fellowship with our greater EBL Sangha.

FYI

All of the sessions are recorded and available at the following links:

Opening Service hosted by Ekoji: <https://vimeo.com/674972545>

Keynote Speaker Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji: www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_pTwZ01TUo

Closing Service hosted by Toronto Buddhist Temple: www.youtube.com/watch?v=WaIWEpKBMNg

EBL Kaikyoshi Ministers Panel Discussion: www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvFI5ulKLIg

CBE Online Seminar

SHINSHU AT THE MOVIES: TRAPPED IN A CYCLE



REV JON TURNER

SATURDAY 03.19.22
11:00AM (PACIFIC TIME)

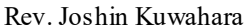
Reverend Turner is currently serving as one of the resident ministers at the Orange County Buddhist Church.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

CBE | CENTER FOR BUDDHIST EDUCATION

「川にそつて岸がある 私にそつて本願がある 川のための岸 私のための本願」

開教使
桑原
浄信



うと多くの人が感じているというところでしようか。

さて3月は皆様のお寺で春の彼岸会が行われると思います。3月の春分の日、そして9月の秋分の日、1年のうちで昼夜の長さが等しくなり、太陽が真東から昇り、真西に沈む日であります。この命を終えた後に往生させていただく阿弥陀如来様のお浄土は西の方角にあるとお経には説かれています。彼岸会は、太陽が真西に沈むこの時期に、心をお浄土にいたし、お念仏のみ教えに出会えたことをよろこばせていただく仏事であります。

今回はお彼岸ということで「岸」にちなんだお話をさせていただきます。冒頭で紹介いたしました詩は東井義雄（1912-1991）という方のものであります。東井氏は教育者として戦前・戦後の日本の教育のために大変尽力された方であると同時に、真宗の僧侶としてみ教えと共に人生を歩まれた方でもありました。東井先生が残された言葉はどれも大変素晴らしく、カレンダーやお寺の掲示板等で紹介されることもあります。ご興味のある方はインターネットで「東井義雄」と検索してみてください。著書や言葉といった様々な情報を見つけることができます。

この詩に出会うまでは川と岸の關係について考えたことはなかつたのですが、言われてみれば確かにそうだなと思ひました。どんな大きな川でも、どんな小さな川でも、どんな清流の川であっても、どんな濁流の川であっても、その両側には必ず岸があります。多くの川は、その水源から岸に寄り添われながら進んでいき、いずれ大

ここで阿弥陀如来様のご本願について少しふれさせて
いただきます。阿弥陀如来様は成仏される前は、法蔵と
いう名の菩薩様でありました。法蔵菩薩がこの世界をこ

覽になられると、煩惱により自らを苦しめ、また他者をも苦しめている者で満ちあふれていることに気づかれませんでした。煩惱により自らを苦しめ、また他者をも苦しめているのは他でもないこの私自身であります。迷いの世界で悩み、苦しむ我々を含む全ての生きとし生けるものを何としてもその悩み、苦しみから解放したいという願いをお持ちになられた法蔵菩薩は、どのようにすれば救えるかということを「五劫」というそれは長い長い時間をかけて考え込まれました。法蔵菩薩は、その考えをもとに今度は長い時間をかけて修行に励まれ、お念仏一つでどんな者でも救われる仏道を仕上げて下さいました。このような阿弥陀如来様の我々に対する深い慈悲、そして大いなる願いが本願であります。

世間一般では宗教と申しますと、「こうしてくれ」、「ああしてくれ」と人間が仏様や神様に向かつて願いを押し付けていくものがほとんどです。たまたま願いが叶えば、欲に駆られて「じゃゝ次は…」と更なる願いが際限なく出てきます。願いが叶わなければ、「寄付の金額が足らなかった」と言ってみたり、仏様や神様をののしる言葉を口にしたりと、あさましい姿をさらします。浄土真宗は人間の願いが中心となる宗教ではなく、阿弥陀という仏様の方から我々に対してかけられている願いを深く聞き、その願いと共に生きていく教えであります。

さて阿弥陀如来様が法蔵菩薩の時に仏になることを志され、修行に励まれたのは、上述いたしましたように悩み苦しむ我々の存在があつたからこそです。ですから、阿弥陀如来様の大きな願ひというのはこの私、そして皆さんお一人お一人のためにたてられたものであり、その願ひに基づき成仏された阿弥陀という仏様は、我々とは切つても切れない存在であると言えるでしょう。東井先生は阿弥陀如来様について、「拝まない者も拝まれている 拝まない時も拝まれている」という詩も詠んでいらつしやいます。阿弥陀という仏様はひと時も休むことなく我々に寄り添つてくださり、その願ひは絶えず我々に向けられています。東井先生はこのような阿弥陀如来様のお姿、ご本願の働きを喜ばれ、そしてそれを川から決して離れることのない岸の姿に重ね合わせ冒頭の詩を詠まれたのであります。

大きな川の水、小さな川の水、清流の清らかな水、濁

流の濁つた水、様々な水が海へと流れ込みますが、海はどんな川の水であつても分け隔てなく受け止め、そして等しくしよっぱい水へと変えていきます。全ての生きとし生けるものを救うという願いをもとに築き上げられた阿弥陀如来様のお浄土も同様に、徳のある聖者であつても、煩惱にまみれた凡夫であつても、分け隔てなく迎えてくださいます。そしてお浄土に往生した者を、等しく最高のさとりをそなえた仏へと仕上げてくださります。人間の世界では、きれいなものは受け入れ、汚いものは拒絶され、優秀な者にはより優れたものが与えられ劣つた者には分相応のものしか与えられないということが往々にして見受けられますが、阿弥陀如来様のお浄土ではこのようなことはありません。なぜならば人間の価値判断とは全く異なる仏様の智慧と慈悲にもとづいてたてられたのがお浄土だからです。親鸞聖人が浄土真宗のみ教えをまとめてくださった『正信偈』の中に「如衆水入海一味（どのような川の水も海に入れば一つの味になるように）」というご文がごさいます。親鸞聖人はこのご文で、全てのものを分け隔てなく迎え入れるお浄土の徳、そして往生したものを等しく最高の仏へと仕上げてくださる阿弥陀如来様のご本願の力を讃えていらつしやいます。

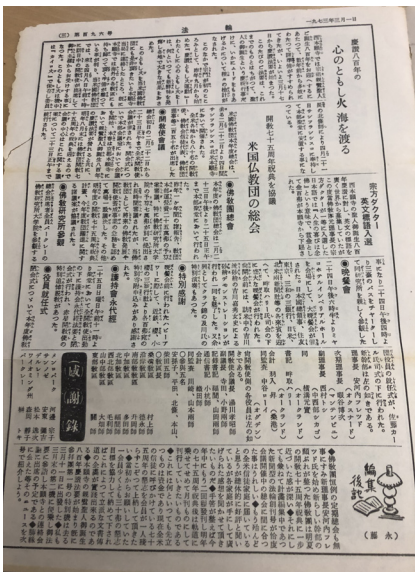
聞法を続け、阿弥陀如来様のたいなる願いを聞き開き
本願と共にこの娑婆世界をお浄土に向かつて力強く生き
てまいりましよう。

IBS主催の龍谷レクチャーが3月14・15・17・18日の四日間にわたり、米国太平洋標準時、午後6時から7時30分までライブ・ズームで行われる。

講師は龍谷大学真宗学教授、高田文英先生で、講題は「『往生要集』と親鸞」（詳細については英語欄記載のフライヤーをご参照ください）。

今から
48

号の法輪に
は、ロサン
ゼルス別院
の山本義弘
開教使の
「宗教の實



行」、同じくロサンゼルス別院、乗元恵三開教使の「うしろ姿で」の法話が掲載されている。米国仏教団総会の記事には、総会は2月22日より四日間、サンフランシスコ仏教会で行われ、全米各地から八十名の開教使、信徒代表と仏教団理事等が二百五十名参加したとある。開教使会議では、この年に京都本願寺で行われる親鸞聖人ご誕生八百年慶讃法要、翌年（1974年）の米国仏教団七十五周年の祝典に関する議案が話し合われた。また、西本願寺が聖人ご誕生八百年慶讃で英文の標語を募集したところ、元教団理事長のドクター宗方の「人生の喜びは念仏」という意味の標語が一等に入選した、との記事もある。1973年のBCA標語は「仰いで感謝、迎えて躍進」。

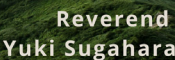
CBE日本語座のお知らせ

4月2日、1時から1時（米国太平洋標準時）、CBE日本語法座が行われる。講師はオレゴン仏教会の菅原祐軌開教使で、トピックは「清浄樂を帰命せよ」。法座はオンラインでおこなわれる。参加希望の方は、CBE、または、各仏教会の開教使に連絡。

Take Refuge In Amida, The Music of Purity

04.02.22 @ 11AM (PT)

親鸞聖人作『浄土和讃』第三十九首を一緒に味わわせていただきます。



法輪

2022年 3月号

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二〇二二年度教化標語
「進め！み教えと朋
に歩もう。ー仏法を次
代に、子や孫にー」

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>

総長メッセージ

将来のビジョン



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada

米国仏教団 総長 原田 マービン

オレンジカウンティ
仏教会で長い間一緒
だった先輩、宮地明
雄名誉開教使が法事
の法話でよく話され
ていたお話がありま
す。それは、車を運
転するときのバックミラーの重要性です。英語では「リ
アビューミラー」と言いますが、宮地先生は、日本語英
語で「バックミラー」と呼んでおられたのが印象に残っ
ています。先生は、バックミラーがなければ、安全な運
転はできないように、人生を歩んでいくには私たちの後
ろ、つまり「過去」を見て、亡くなられた先祖や先輩に
尊敬と感謝をすることが大事だと言われていました。

けれども、車を運転するとき、バックミラーばかり見
ていては何か衝突してしまうので、目の前にあるもの
も見ることがあります。目の前にあるものは私たちの
現在です。今もまだコロナウィルスのパンデミックの
影響下にあり、お寺はまだ閉鎖されています。けれど
も、私たちはこの状況を最大限に利用して、バーチャル
で法を伝え、バーチャルで募金活動を行い、バーチャル
で交流するなど、多くの革新的な伝道方法に取り組んで
きました。それは、BCAという車を走らせている私
たちの目の前にある問題を見て対処してきた現在の状況
です。

しかし、私たちは車を運転するとき、目の前だけを見
ているわけにもいきません。もっと先の方までも見な
ければならないのです。「この先、渋滞していないだろ
うか？道路工事はしていないだろうか？雨雲があるよう

に見えるか？」その先に何が見えるかを予測します。
それが、私たちのビジョンとなります。

私は、ビジョンには志や願望が必要だと思っています。真
のビジョナリー、先見の明を持つ人、とは、ただ単に未
来を見るだけでなく、未来に対して「こうになりたい」
「こうあるべき」という志を持つている人のことです。
もし、ビジョナリーが願望を持たなければ、その人は次
のスーパーボウルの勝者をするような占い師とあまり変
わりがありません。

浄土真宗でビジョナリーとは誰のことを指すのでしょ
うか？私にとつては、「大無量寿経」の主人公である
法蔵菩薩です。法蔵菩薩は、最高のビジョナリーと思
います。菩薩としての人生で何を成し遂げたいかという
明確なビジョンと未来への願望を持っていました。そ
のビジョンと願望は「大経」の四十八の誓願に表現され
ています。法蔵菩薩は、すべての衆生が真の幸福、真の
平和、真の悟りに至ることができると世界の実現を目指
したのです。そのビジョンは、法蔵菩薩の願望でもあり、
願望がビジョンでもあるのです。

私は法蔵菩薩ではありませんが、私たちの未来、私た
ちの寺院、私たちのBCAのためのビジョンと願望を持っ
ています。

私は将来、あらゆる経歴、年齢、性別、民族、性的指
向を持つ人々が集まり、活気に満ちた多様性のあるサン
ガになると思います。

私は将来、お寺が以前にも増してダルマを中心とし、
あらゆる場所で、対面でもオンラインでも、仏教教育の
クラスやプログラムが開催されるようになると思います。
そして、現在のお寺のメンバーに加えて、世界中の人々
で構成されるバーチャルなサンガができ、ともにお念仏
の道を歩んで行くようになることでしょう。

私は将来、お念仏の教えがサンガのメンバーの心に共
鳴し、ダルマが生活に不可欠なもの、私たちが食べる食
物や吸う空気と同じくらい重要なものであると考えるよ

うになる方が増えると思います。

私は将来、「ナムアミダブツ」という言葉を聞いたこ
ともないような新しい人々にお念仏の教えが届いていく
ようなサンガが成長していくのが見えます。浄土真宗は、
将来、周囲の地域社会と深く結びつき、関わりを持つよ
うになると思います。

法蔵菩薩が「大経」の中で、「もし自分の誓いが果た
されないなら、完全な悟りを開くことはできない」と誓っ
たように、私たちの未来へのビジョンにも、完成させる、
ビジョンを果たすという願望と決意が含まれていなければ
なりません。

2022年東部地区大会、 オンラインで開催

2月12日から13日までの二日間、2022年の東部地
区大会が開催された。この大会は、ミシシッピ川よりも
東側に位置する北米開教区の寺院、サンガ6ヶ寺と、大
谷派のシカゴ仏教会、カナダ開教区よりトロント仏教会、
マニトバ仏教会等が参加して毎年開かれていた。昨年に
引き続き、コロナ感染症対策の影響下、オンラインで行
われた。

今回のテーマは、「仏縁でつながる絆」。長引くコロ
ナ感染の影響で、お寺で集まることができない中、仏縁
を通じて繋がり続ける朋友の輪を確認する機会となった。

初日は開会式の勤行が恵光寺の担当で行われ、林開教
使の御法話をいただいた。その後、ニューヨーク仏教会
の傘下にある、アルバーニ仏教会のダルマスクールの紹
介があった。アルバーニ(NY)は、ニューヨーク仏教会
へ通うには距離があるので、メンバーの自宅や、近隣の
教会を借りてダルマスクールを開催している。さまざま
な工夫を凝らした創作活動などを行っていて、参加して
いる子供達が楽しみながら仏縁にふれている様子が伺え
た。

その後、本大会の特別講師、南アラミダ郡仏教会開教
使、IBS(仏教大学院)助教授の宮地崇先生より、「阿
弥陀如来のご本願に生かされる私たちのきずな」と題し、
ご講義をいただいた。阿弥陀さまのご本願について、先
生の手書きのかわいらしいイラストとともに、第十八願
本願成就文にはなぜ抑止文が欠かさず述べられているの
かなどわかりやすい説明があり、真実の教えをいただく
ことによって、人間のみならず全ての生きとし生けるも
のが共に生きる世界を示されていること、限らないあみ

ださまのお慈悲の中で生かされている私たちであること
をいただき、仏縁の深さへの感謝をあげた。

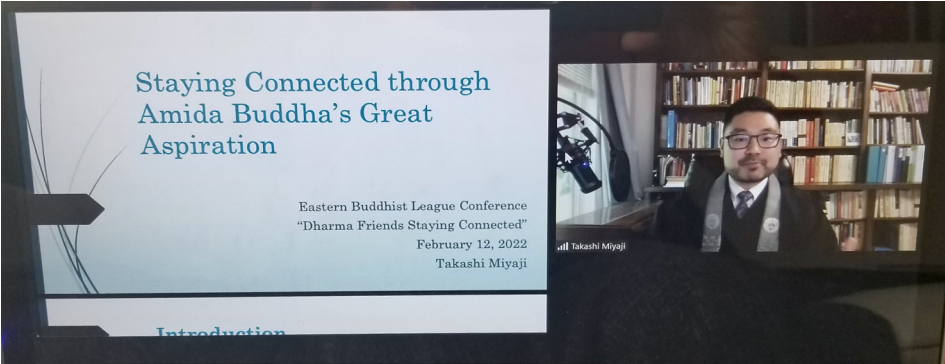
本大会では初の試みとして、日本語でのディスカッショ
ンの時間が設けられた。約30人の参加者があり、東部地
区でも日本語での伝道、寺院活動の需要があることがわ
かった。パンデミック以降、ニューヨーク仏教会、ツイ
ンシティ仏教会等でオンラインの日本語での集いが続い
ている。日本人独特の宗教に対する考え方、現代人にとつ
ての仏教とはなにかについて話しあった。会の後に参加
者から、「アメリカに住んでいると、日本語で僧侶に話
を聴ける機会はなかなかないので、全米50万から10
0万人といわれる日本人のために、北米開教区で日本語
のご法縁を続けてほしい。」という意見があった。

夜は、シーフルック仏教会主催により、バーシャルディ
ナー、カクテルタイムが開催された。バーチャル料理教
室でお好み焼きを各家庭で作り、本大会オリジナルカク
テル「コネクションカクテル」と共に、交流を楽しんだ。

二日目は開会式の勤行がトロント仏教会の担当で行わ
れ、大内開教使から御法話をいただいた。その後、ツイ
ンシティ仏教会のホストで、東部地区の開教使との交流
を目的に参加者からの質疑応答の会があった。なぜ開教
使になったのかなど個人的な質問もあり、参加者からは
コミュニケーションとして、

さらに距離が近く感じら
れるようになったとの声
があった。

オンラインでの開催は、
広範囲にわたる東部地区
では避けられない、長距
離の移動が厳しい状況に
あっても参加ができるこ
うな利点もあり、来年以
降の開催についてはその
利点を失わない条件が期
待される。長期化する未
曽有のコロナ感染という、
人と人との交流が難しい
環境下にあるながら、共
にお念仏を喜び、同朋と
しての繋がりを確認する
ことができ、意義ある大
会に終わった。
(ツインシティー仏教会
開教使補、ブライ鬼倉知
永美)



Eastern District Conference Photo by Cheral Tsuchiya