

WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

VOLUME 37 • ISSUE 6

JUNE 2015

Congratulations to the Class of 2015! IBS Presents Five Master's Degrees and Two Faculty Chairs



Left photo: IBS graduates with faculty and BCA Bishop. Graduates in front row, l-r: Cogen Bohanec, Kory Quon, Candice Tei Shibata and Matthew Hamasaki; not pictured, Haruka Beppu. Back row, l-r: Dr. Paula Arai (keynote speaker), Rev. Daijaku Kinst, Rev. Seigen Yamaoka, Bishop Kodo Umezu, Dr. Richard Payne, Dr. Scott Mitchell and Rev. David Matsumoto. Center photo: Two Endowed Chairs, l-r: Rev. Daijaku Kinst, Ph.D., Noboru and Yaeko Hanyu Professor, Buddhist Chaplaincy and Dr. Scott Mitchell, Ph.D., the Rev. Yoshitaka Tamai Professor for Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies. Right photo: Rev. Matsumoto (center) and IBS Board Chair, Richard Endo (right) announced the endowed chairs. Photos courtesy of Sayaka Inaishi.

As institutions of higher education are emblems of the strength, heart, and vision of the communities who create and support it, the annual commencement recognizes the achievements of each graduate and the entire community is enriched and inspired.

On Friday, May 15, 2015, surrounded by fellow students, family, friends, and community at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, five scholars—including three ministerial candidates—received their master's degrees from the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS), and two professorial endowed chairs were appointed.

Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto chaired the commencement, with Bishop Kodo Umezu (President

of IBS) conducting the opening service. Dr. Richard Payne (Dean of IBS) and Mr. Richard Endo (Chair of the IBS Board of Trustees) welcomed attendees with opening remarks. Dr. Payne and Rev. Marvin Harada (IBS Trustee) presented the graduate degrees.

Dr. Paula Arai delivered a memorable commencement address titled "Tumbling Rocks, Polishing Hearts." Dr. Arai is a doctoral graduate in Buddhist Studies from Harvard University and a visiting scholar from Louisiana State University.

"Starting here, graduates, right in this room, when you turn around, into our muddy world filled with tumbling rocks, may you continue being polished. And may you blossom with peace in your minds,

wisdom in your bones, and compassion in your hearts."

— Paula Arai, Ph.D.

Three graduates achieved the IBS/Graduate Theological Union (GTU) Master of Arts (M.A.):

Haruka Beppu: Thesis: *The Issue of Buddha-Nature in Shin Buddhism in the West*. Committee: Rev. David Matsumoto, Ph.D., Rev. Seigen Yamaoka, Litt.D.

Cogen Bohanec: Thesis: *A Comparison between Selfhood in the Upanisads and the Pali Canon*. Committee: Richard Payne, Ph.D., Gil Fronsdal, Ph.D., Rev. Charlie Pokorny, M.A.

Candice Tei Shibata: Thesis: *The Transformation of Attachment, Loss, and Love Through Religious Experience*. Committee: Rev. David Matsumoto, Ph.D., Rev. Daijaku Judith Kinst,

Ph.D. Candice Shibata was also awarded the Buddhism and Contemporary Psychology Certificate by her Advisor, Rev. Daijaku Judith Kinst, Ph.D.

Two graduates received the Master of Buddhist Studies (M.B.S.):
Matthew Noburu Hamasaki: Thesis: *Evolution of Ritual in the Buddhist Churches of America*. Committee: Rev. David Matsumoto, Ph.D., Scott A. Mitchell, Ph.D.

Kory Hideo Quon: Thesis: *A Discussion of Rennyō's Five-fold Teaching for a Truly Settled Life: Namu Amida Butsu in Contemporary Living*. Committee: Rev. David Matsumoto, Ph.D., Rev. Seigen Yamaoka, Litt.D.

The IBS also announced two endowed faculty chairs, made possible through generous donors:

Rev. Daijaku Judith Kinst, Ph.D., Chaplaincy Program Director, the Noboru and Yaeko Hanyu Professor, Buddhist Chaplaincy.

Scott A. Mitchell, Ph.D. and Assistant Dean, the Rev. Yoshitaka Tamai Professor for Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Studies.

In mid-June 2015, three of the graduates, Matthew Hamasaki, Kory Quon, and Candice Shibata, having received Tokudo ordination last year, will be traveling to the Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto for Kyoshi training and ordination, continuing their ministerial journey.

For more information about Degree Programs and much more at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, visit www.shin-ibs.edu or connect with Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/instituteofbuddhiststudies>.

New BDK America Office Dedicated

On May 5, 2015, the Rev. Kodo Umezu, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Bishop, conducted the dedication services for the new Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai America office located in Moraga, California.

Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (Society for the Promotion of Buddhism), better known as BDK, was founded in 1965 by the late Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata, one of the greatest patrons of Buddhism in the 20th Century. Educated at the University of California, Berkeley in the early 1900s, Numata established the Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research in his beloved Berkeley in 1984. The work coordinating the BDK English Tripitaka Series Project



was started by Numata and overseen first by the Rev. Seishin Yamashita and then by Brian Nagata, and was carried out for thirty years from the Berkeley location.

BDK America's original offices were located on the East Coast. In 1999, the office was moved to the Numata Center building in Berkeley. Having outgrown the facility, an office building in Moraga was purchased and remodeled under the direction of Kajima

Corporation.

Chairman of the Board Rev. Dr. Toshihide Numata and Executive Director Tadashi Ikuta from the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai Tokyo headquarters were in attendance at the building dedication, as was Moraga Councilmember Teresa Onoda.

Messages were offered by Numata, Onoda, and BDK America President Dr. George Tanabe. Following the buffet lunch for fifty

people, koto and shakuhachi entertainment was provided by Naoko and Elliot Kallen.

The new BDK America office will continue to coordinate current projects and programs and also hopes to serve as a bridge to introduce Japanese Buddhism and Buddhist culture to the East Bay area. An initial exhibition in honor of the building dedication featured beautiful flower arrangements by Madame Suiyo Fujimoto and Mitsuko Maruyama of the Ohara School of Ikebana.

BDK America has long been a supporter of the BCA and the Center for Buddhist Education and is looking forward to continuing the relationship from this new location in the years to come.

Kathmandu Hongwanji Update



This is to announce that Kathmandu Hongwanji, Nepal has been trying to reach to a remote place which was destroyed by the devastating earthquakes.

Our first priority is a bright future for the children in the assigned location in the Sindhupalchok District. The Shree Kalika Saran Secondary School was totally destroyed. Hongwanji Nepal is now ready to build eight classrooms and one office room, which can be used as a temporary shelter. It has a capacity for two hundred students.

We wholeheartedly appreci-

ate and extend our gratitude to those who heartily helped and supported us in this present situation, which was caused by the devastating earthquakes.

Thank you so much to Jodoshinshu Hongwanji-ha, Buddhist Churches of America, Honpa Hongwanji of Hawaii, Yohei Izutsu, Shigeru Sensei, Kabita Rai, UK, and people all around the globe who have always been well-wishers of the Hongwanji in Nepal.

In Gassho,
Namo Amitabha Buddha.
Rev. Sonam Wangdi Bhutia



Seeking Professional Help



Rev. Umezu with Paul Jonokuchi (San Fernando) and Mitzi Shimizu (Gardena), honored for 50 years of service as Dharma School teachers.

By Rev. Kodo Umezu
BCA Bishop

I attended the Federation of the Dharma School Teachers League conference held in Los Angeles in April. There were about 150 dedicated Dharma School teachers in attendance. I cannot thank them enough for

what they do for our children week after week. They really care about the wellness of our children. I would like to ask each and every temple to support them in every way they can.

During the conference they led many interesting workshops, and I was assigned to participate in one. At the time of the self-introductions, the moderator told everyone to give their name, temple affiliation, and also to share an experience that had made them feel proud of themselves. I couldn't think of anything unusual to share with the group during the workshop. However, afterward I remembered one proud moment which I hadn't shared with them.

About six or seven years ago, I

was able to replace the bathroom plumbing system by myself. I was so proud then. It wasn't easy. I really struggled with it. First, I went to a nearby hardware store and bought the pipes and other related items. Since it was my first experience, I had to go back there many times and talk to a specialist so I had everything I needed to do it right. After I completed the job, I was so proud and happy, I shared my joy with others.

Then about two months ago, I was told that due to a bad installation job, there was damage to the floor around the drain. Yes, I had to get a professional to come and fix the floor. I thought I had saved money by doing everything myself, but I ended up spending

much more.

What I learned from this experience is that ideas and actions based on a "know-it-all" attitude can be very costly.

In our daily lives, we must be careful. The view of a "professional life coach" is very much needed for us to truly live. Self-taught religions or a "know-it-all" attitude can damage our lives and may harm others as well. Humility is the key when we listen to the words of our teachers and masters. They lived their lives as we are living our lives now. They have been kindly guiding us to seek professional help from the Dharma.

We are always uttering the phrase *Namo(u) Amida Butsu*. The

word *namo* or *namu* has many meanings. The first meaning is "take refuge." Shinran Shonin said it means "yield to." He also said it is the command of the Primal Vow calling to and summoning us. In other words, Shinran Shonin is saying that we should leave the matter of life-and-death to the professional, Amida Tathagata.

What I should have done several years ago was "yield to" a professional plumber from the beginning so I wouldn't have had to spend big money later. As for our religious path, we should "yield to" Amida Tathagata. Let us continue to hear the Primal Vow calling each and every one of us so that we will be able to live our lives with joy and fulfillment.

Beyond Living and Dying – How Much Is Enough?



By Rev. Kaz Nakata
Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji
Buddhist Temple

Natural death is not in the least mysterious, but is as understandable as birth itself. Both occurrences are part of a biological process that provides for a perpetual fountain of youth.

— Corliss Lamont,
The Illusion of Immortality

Lamont's book was originally published in 1935. Since then, many health and medical techniques and technological

advancements have changed the world. These advancements have changed the definitions of death and dying substantially. I would like to share an example.

One day I received a phone call from a woman. She requested a *makurakyo* (bedside service for a deceased person) for her husband at the hospital in the Intensive Care Unit. He was in about his mid-40s and appeared to be sleeping. His wife mentioned that he had been in a deep coma for several days. The doctor reported that there was brain function but there was no response. This man was being kept alive by a life support system. In this state he could possibly live another five to ten years.

Having experienced such situations on many occasions, I knew what I needed to do and what to expect. As I was chanting, in my mind I questioned whether there was any possibility for this man to regain consciousness. Before the existence of the life support system, the lives of people in critical

condition simply ended and their families had to accept the loss. Advancements in medicine have now changed something that could not be done to something that can be done.

Rev. Sokusui Murakami, *kan-gaku* (Hongwanji scholar), argued that:

...however much we are convinced that one aspect of our life is fulfilled, it will become an empty delusion when we face our own death. Death is lying at the bottom of our life so that there is no fulfilled life as long as our life is threatened by death itself. Our life can be truly fulfilled only when we transcend the mystical delusion of fearful death. That is the reason why Buddhism encourages us to cope with the solution of death.

—From "Misunderstandings and Understandings of Shinran's Teachings"

Nowadays, we are surrounded by numerous options which can make our lives longer or shorter. The example of my *makurakyo*

experience indicates that the length of our life can be practically managed by manmade solutions or human will. It means we are dealing with and challenging the area of the "threshold" of life and death. However, Buddhism may simply ask us, "So what?" These dealings and challenges do not settle the fundamental problem of how we can "transcend the mystical delusion of fearful death."

One suggestion Buddhism offers in making such decisions when you or a loved one is facing death is to think about what is enough with respect to living beyond a natural death. There is no right or wrong answer to that question in Buddhism. Buddhism is a teaching of awareness so that there is mindfulness of everyday life circumstances.

There is, then, a realization of what is important beyond living and dying. Once this realization takes place, one can live a truly fulfilled life in every moment.

Gassho



2015 OBON & BAZAAR SCHEDULE

Available at buddhistchurchesofamerica.org



PALO ALTO BUDDHIST TEMPLE
2751 Louis Road
Palo Alto, CA 94303
Tel: (650) 856-0123
E-mail: office@pabt.org
www.pabt.org

Palo Alto Buddhist Temple Centennial 1914 – 2014

A gathering at the Alta Mesa Memorial Cemetery in Palo Alto by a few *Issei* (Japanese immigrants) initiated the discussion of establishing a Buddhist and cultural center for the Japanese immigrants. The first gathering to host a religious event was held at a commercial laundry site owned by a *Nikkei* (first generation Japanese American). Subsequent gatherings were in residential homes.

The present site was purchased, and the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple was constructed and dedicated in 1954. This site was to host the Temple's first resident *Kaikyoshi* (overseas minister), the Rev. Daisho Tana, and the current *Sensei* is the Rev. Dean Koyama.

At its 75th anniversary, the Temple was remodeled and expanded to what it is today. The Centennial commemorative projects included a Buddha statue for the *onajin* (altar area), additional pews, and a completely renovated kitchen, as well as upgrades in the Dharma school classrooms.

The Temple has 250+ family members sharing the Dharma. Its annual Obon Festival and Dance is one of Palo Alto's largest events and enjoys the support of the citizens of the city and surrounding communities.



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
Info: info@bcahq.org
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:

First-person articles should be around of 500 words, typed, double-spaced in Microsoft Word. The editors may ask for longer articles, or split in multiple parts at the editors' discretion. All other articles should be in news release form at maximum of 500 words.

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

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: Alan H. Kita
Section Editors: Yumi Hatta, Michael
Endo, Christopher Sujarit
Copy Editor: Edythe Vassall
Print Production: Jeffrey Kimoto

Sign Up for CBE E-News

Hear about educational events, resources, and more with the CBE E-News. Visit the BCA website: www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org and look for the sign up box, email: cbe@bcahq.org or phone: 510.809.1460.



By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

President's Message

“Embrace Change and Awareness”

Diane Kujubu Belli, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) delegate-at-large and I had the honor of attending the annual meeting of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii held on February 13-14, 2015 in Honolulu. The theme was “Embrace Change and Awareness.” Their legislative assembly is commonly referred to as the *Giseikai*.

The Hawaii Kyodan (overseas

district) has a separate organizational history from the BCA. The first Hongwanji kaikyoshi (overseas ministers) arrived in Hawaii before arriving in the continental US. Furthermore, when the Hawaii Kyodan was created in 1907, Hawaii was a US Territory. Although separate districts, the Hawaii Kyodan and BCA have always shared a rich history and work cooperatively and collaboratively on many levels.

The current president of the Hawaii Kyodan is Pieper Toyama. He formerly was the head of the Pacific Buddhist Academy (PBA), the first and only Jodo Shinshu Buddhist high school in the United States. The Hawaii Kyodan is currently in the midst of a capital campaign

to raise funds so that the PBA can construct another classroom building. The Kyodan's subsidy for the school was one of the major topics discussed during the meeting.

Pieper Toyama's goal during the meeting was to put in place a strategic plan for the Kyodan, simplify the Jodo Shinshu message, streamline the organization, and support the 33 committees in the organization.

One of the topics discussed during the meeting dealt with a traveling workshop that was sponsored by the Kyodan and focused on temple and minister effectiveness. The goal was to help temples look at their organizational structure and see if there could be better com-

munication between ministers and their sangha, in order to help the temple move forward in delivering the Jodo Shinshu message to everyone in Hawaii. Diane Kujubu Belli, who accompanied me on this trip, had Glenn Hamamura bring this workshop to the Southern District of the BCA. She informs me that the session took place in Los Angeles in May and was well received.

Bishop Eric Matsumoto informed the attendees at the meeting that he had asked the teachers and children at the Kyodan's grade school to make a musical production on the life of Sadako Sasaki. She was a young girl who was exposed to the radiation from the atomic bomb that was dropped

on Hiroshima. As she was suffering from leukemia, she began to fold 1,000 paper cranes in the hope of getting well. The end result of Bishop Matsumoto's request was a moving musical entitled “Peace on Your Wings.” The cast includes children from age six through high school, and it will be performed in Los Angeles at the Aratani Theater on September 18, 2015. Mr. Toyama gave a brief presentation about this musical at our BCA National Council Meeting in February.

I would like to thank Bishop Matsumoto, Pieper and Lois Toyama, and former Hawaii Kyodan presidents Fred Nonaka and Alton Miyamoto for hosting Diane Belli and me during our time in Hawaii.



By Rev. Kurt Rye
Ekoji Buddhist Temple

I have been the resident minister at the Ekoji Temple for over two years and still find the environment exciting and full of challenges. For those who are not familiar with Ekoji, we are located in Fairfax Station, Virginia. Fairfax Station is in Northern Virginia and part of the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Ekoji started as a Sangha in 1981 and moved to its present site in 1998. From the beginning no one knew how the Sangha would evolve, considering the Japanese American population of the area is low. Over the years, I am happy to report, Ekoji Sangha has developed into an active and very diverse Sangha.

The Sangha reflects the diversity of the local population. The area has a large Vietnam-

ese population that immigrated here at the conclusion of the Vietnam War. The first generation immigrants now have children who are American born and raised. Like many first generation Americans, they might not speak the language of their parents' homeland and



they identify as Americans. Many of the parents were raised in the Buddhist faith and want their children to learn the Dharma and Buddhist ethics. Since the local Vietnamese Buddhist temples only speak Vietnamese, several families over the years have come to

Ekoji and its Dharma school. In fact, the last families to join our Dharma school are of Vietnamese decent.

This year Ekoji celebrated the Vietnamese New Year, which is called Têt. By celebrating Têt, Ekoji demonstrated the importance of our role

in our temple families' lives. Têt celebrates the arrival of spring based on the Vietnamese variation of the Chinese calendar, which usually has the date falling in January or February. Because of our long and snowy winter, Ekoji had to cancel and re-schedule the celebration

twice. But this did not diminish the enthusiasm, and on a special Sunday we had a potluck celebration that was hosted by our Vietnamese families. We were introduced to many foods that are served on New Year's Day.

One of our very active members, Kim Vo, invited the Sangha to dine and explained the significance of the meal after the Sunday service. She touched many of us by stating, “Têt is the most important day in the Vietnamese culture. It is a time to be with family, and Ekoji is part of our family. We want to share this celebration with all of the Ekoji Sangha.”

It was a clear and honest expression of how the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha resonate with everyone. Even if one does not find the Buddhist tradition in which one was raised, one can find comfort in the Buddhist teachings and the Sangha from a different tradition. It expresses the universality of the Buddha-Dharma beyond culture, time, and geography.

Namo Amida Butsu

Happy Têt

150 Dharma School Teachers at FDSTL



Left to right: Harley Inaba, Judy Inaba (Sacramento) and Dana Yamaguchi (Pasadena), 25-year Dharma School teachers, with Rev. Kodo Umezu.

By Koichi Sayano
Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Approximately 150 Dharma School teachers and ministers from all over the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) attended the 2015 Federation of Dharma School Teachers' League (FDSTL) conference in Los Angeles at the Concourse Hotel LAX on April 24-26, 2015. Southern District Dharma School Teachers League was the host district, with the theme “Let Go—Of Everything You're Afraid to Lose.”

The keynote speaker was Rev. Masao Kodani, retired minister from Senshin Buddhist Temple. He spoke about our rituals and practices, and their role in highlighting our difficulty in overcoming our egos and desire to maintain control over our lives. This is particularly evident in how funeral rituals and others from key life events have evolved in recent times.

The Bishop's Office and FDSTL recognized teachers who have given many years of service. This year's awardees for 10 years were: Denise Nakamura, (L.A. Betsuin); Chau Arima and Marie Ochi-Jacobs (Mountain View); Jayme Heyl and Richard Modiano (Venice); Bobby Tanaka (Sacramento); Seiju Terada and Nancy Suzuki (Orange County); Connie Ozeki-Chinn and Tina Ko (Seattle Betsuin) and Debbie Bavaro (Oxnard). For 25 years: Harley Inaba and Judy Inaba (Sacramento) and Dana Yamaguchi (Pasadena). And for 50 years: Paul Jonokuchi (San Fernando) and Mitzi Shimizu (Gardena).

At the conference closing, the delegates participated in a formal service, chanting the full *Sboshinge* and six *Wasans*. The Southern District ministers provided instruction to the delegates in chanting the *Wasans* and gave a short background on each of them.

Next year's conference will be hosted by the Northern District Dharma School Teachers League at the Sacramento Betsuin. See Conference details and resources at <https://bcdharmaschool.wikispaces.com/2015+FDSTL+Conference>

Buddhist Leaders Gather First Time at White House

By Rev. Earl Ikeda
New York Buddhist Church

One hundred thirty Buddhist leaders, monks, and ministers of the various sects of Buddhism gathered in Washington D.C., for the First White House US Buddhist Leaders Conference on Thursday, May 14.

The day's event was held at two locations: at the George Washington University and at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building of the White House. The topics were centered on global climate changes and equality issues.

The morning gathering was defining the issues from a Buddhist perspective. Bhikkhu Bodhi eloquently stated the necessity to recognize the issues of global warming and its effects on our world. His presentation was based on the awareness and application of the Four Noble Truths as stated by



Photo by Philip Rosenberg. Visit Lionsroar.com and search for “Buddhists Go to the White House” by Hozan Alan Senauke.

Shakyamuni Buddha in his very first dharma message.

Reverend Angel Kyodo Williams outlined the need to pursue social justice to make necessary changes and Dr. Duncan Ryuken Williams presented a historical background on how Buddhist intervention has had an effort on social changes beginning with movements toward equality in

Hawaii and work conditions during the early 1900s.

The focus of the conference, I feel, was to create an awareness of Buddhism in action or engaged Buddhism to meet the challenges of today's world. It also seemed to challenge each of us to informed and to become active in these environmental and social changes and challenges.

Join the Pride Parades!

This June, several BCA temples will be participating in their local Pride Parades, including: the Buddhist Church of San Francisco (BCSF), Salt Lake Buddhist Temple, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple and New York Buddhist Church.

Why participate? The parades are joyful events for all sangha members to support diversity and celebrate LGBTQ equality. How do temples participate? Contact Elaine Donlin, BCSF minister's assistant, for ideas and resources: edonlin1@yahoo.com and visit bcsfweb.org



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!



Samantha Williams earned a Buddhist Padma Award, presented to her by Rev. Kurt Rye last December.

Samantha Williams Earns Buddhist Scout Padma Award

On Sunday, December 7, 2014, Rev. Kurt Rye led his final service as Seabrook Buddhist Temple's (SBT) supervising minister. During his dharma talk Rev. Rye focused on who Shakyamuni Buddha was and the concepts of Buddhism that make it unique from other religions.

Rev. Rye also presented SBT Brownie Girl Scout, Samantha Williams, with her Buddhist Scout Padma Award. Samantha gave a short presentation about the requirements she fulfilled to complete this award over the past year under the supervision and direction of dharma school teacher, Susan Jacques.

The following is an abbreviated version of Samantha's speech:

The following is an abbreviated version of Samantha's speech:

"To earn my Buddhist Scout Padma Award, I had to fulfill the following requirements: For the Buddhist Shrine requirement, I had to be a ready helper. I helped take care of our home altar, or *butsudan*, and learned the meaning of the objects on the shrine. I also learned the meaning of other parts of our Buddhist practice such as *gassho*, *nenju*, and the burning of incense.

"For the Buddhist Sangha requirement, I had to be a friend maker at temple, school, and in my community. I learned how to recite the Golden Chain meditation. The Golden Chain is actually very similar to the Girl Scout Law. I practiced applying the Golden Chain at home and at school. I was a Brownie friend-maker when I welcomed new scouts to our troop. I showed how to be a friend-maker in my community by doing service projects like roadside cleanups, planting trees, recognizing veterans at memorial day services, distributing free reusable water bottles at local events, caroling at nursing homes and raising funds for the Humane Society.

"For the Ways of a Buddhist requirement, I had to be a discoverer. With the help of Miss Sue, I discovered the Teachings of the Buddha by learning the Four Gratuities: Gratitude to parents. Gratitude to all life. Gratitude to country. Gratitude to Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. I also attended dharma school regularly, practiced meditation, and learned how to express Buddhist gratitude before and after meals."

Following the service, Rev. Rye conducted a brief Buddhism seminar. Then sangha members shared a delicious luncheon to congratulate Samantha on her award and thank Rev. Rye for his year of service to our temple.

(Excerpted from Seabrook Buddhist Temple's Middle Way newsletter, January 2015.)

Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course - Monthly Essay

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

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



On the Significance of Religious Practice and Study in Buddhism and How it is Related to Shinran's Search for Enlightenment

By Landon Yamaoka
Palo Alto Buddhist Temple

In Buddhism, we are taught that life is suffering. I don't believe this means if you are alive you will constantly suffer, but to be mindful that we do suffer in life. The Buddha tries to show all followers that we human beings create much of this suffering for others and ourselves. Most things we do cause our own suffering: being greedy, selfish, arrogant. By being blind to this, we trick ourselves into thinking we are always right, but by doing so we cause even more suffering. The Buddha wanted to show us the way to enlightenment, as he wanted to end all suffering and found a way to do it for himself. The Buddha gave his followers the precepts and the sutras to show us how to better live our lives, and to follow the same path he had taught when he was alive.

There are Forty-Eight Vows that the Buddha said one could follow to attain Buddhahood. In my opinion, Shinran was following the more difficult of the paths, as he was attempting to use what is called the Path of Sages. The Tendai sect he had been ordained in as a child was made for the more rigorous trainings. Shinran felt as he grew older that he was not getting closer to realizing enlightenment; instead, he felt incapable of doing the practices, and that he was just an evil person.

When Shinran heard the Pure Land teachings, he was overcome with joy. Amida Buddha says that the work that he has done ensures that all beings gain enlightenment, or even he, Amida Buddha, would forfeit it. Shinran was eternally grateful for this gift. He was always saying he was not a worthy candidate for enlightenment, but because of the 18th Vow, he was given the gift of enlightenment.

Shinran studied the Seven Masters who brought Buddhism from India, to China, and to Japan, so that he could be able to experience these teachings. Shinran writes that these masters all believed in the Primal Vow, all wished to attain entrance to the Pure Land, and they all said this was not to be blindly followed. To me, Shinran's experience in the Tendai School is what drew him to these teachings. He did not feel engaged with the practices of the school, and when trying to walk around the statue of the Buddha while reciting the *Nembutsu*, he could only remember his impure thoughts and deeds. I think Shinran was able to appreciate the teachings of Amida Buddha because he could focus on self-reflection without the pressure or worry of being incapable of another practice.

While there are differences in each sect of Buddhism, I would argue that none are wrong or right. They are just different cups of tea for different types of people. One may have a preference of one type over another, and that is okay. For us who practice the Pure Land sect as Shinran did, I feel if we truly appreciate it, we see we are lucky he chose that teaching. The majority of us are incapable of gaining entrance to the Pure Land without Amida Buddha's infinite wisdom and compassion. I think Shinran chose this type of Buddhism because he knew the difficult practices would not help him find enlightenment or change his ego, which he felt was impure and full of blind passions.

I think Pure Land Buddhism will cause a person who really has even a small understanding of *shinjin* to be overcome with joy and gratitude because they can appreciate the energy from reciting *Namu Amida Butsu*. If you feel this, I believe you are only able to give appreciation to Amida Buddha, but you must also try to work on yourself. Because you understand that Amida allows you to come as you are, you should try your best to live in the ideology that helped you feel that saving power. I think Shinran understood this better than most, and this is why he chose to live and teach Pure Land Buddhism.

*The Eighteenth Vow: "If, when I attain Buddhahood, the sentient beings of the ten quarters, with sincere mind entrusting themselves, aspiring to be born in my land, and saying my Name perhaps even ten times, should not be born there, may I not attain the supreme enlightenment. Excluded are those who commit the five grave offenses and those who slander the right dharma." (Collected Works of Shinran, Vol. I, p. 80)

Landon currently lives in Sunnyvale, CA and is a Sunday school teacher at Palo Alto Buddhist Temple. He enjoys being part of the TechnoBuddha conference held at the Jodo Shinshu Center. He works as a case manager at a local nonprofit, teaching life skills to adults with developmental disabilities. He enjoys dancing and likes to make people laugh.

BCA Bookstore News

by Gayle Noguchi

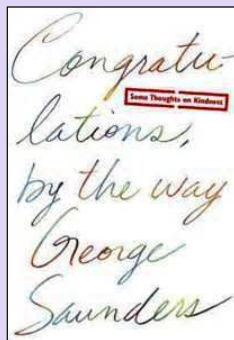
Now available: **Congratulations, By the Way: Some Thoughts on Kindness**

by George Saunders, hardcover \$14.00.

"Looking back, what do you regret?" Acclaimed author George Saunders answered this question in a commencement speech he gave at Syracuse University on May 11, 2013. A transcript of his speech was posted on the website of *The New York Times* and within days it had been shared over a million times. *Congratulations, By the Way* is an expanded version of those words of wisdom he shared with the graduates that day. His message is simple, yet profound, both personal and universal: his biggest regrets in life are what he calls "failures of kindness."

With sincerity and self-effacing humor Saunders describes moments in his life when another person right in front of him was suffering in some way and instead of responding generously with open-hearted kindness and compassion, he responded "sensibly, reservedly, mildly." Saunders also shares his thoughts on what prevents us from being kinder: our fundamental illusions – 1) we're the center of the universe, 2) we're separate from the universe, and 3) we're permanent (of course death is real – but for you, not me). He concludes by advising the graduates that while they're pursuing that great job, happiness, love, home, family, fame and fortune, etc. to also make it a priority to pursue that which reminds us of our interconnectedness – the antidote to the sickness of selfishness.

Congratulations, By the Way makes a wonderful gift book with a timeless message that graduates can take to heart for the rest of their lives. Order at www.bcabookstore.com or contact 510-809-1435 / sales@bcabookstore.com. Open Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.



Center for Buddhist Education Public Lecture Held in conjunction with the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course - August Workshop 2015 Presents



Evolving Buddhism: Transformation of Zen and Shin in the 20th Century

On Zen: Dr. William M. Bodiford
Professor, University of California, Los Angeles,
Dept. of Asian Languages and Cultures

On Jodo Shinshu: Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto
Professor, Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley

Synopsis: "A look at the transformation of traditional Zen Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu as they each developed in Japan, both confronting social and political changes in the 20th century, and together facing challenges and prospects in the 21st century."

Two special lectures and a Q & A session

Saturday, August 1, 2015

1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Free and Open to the Public

Jodo Shinshu Center

2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704

For more information email us at hongwanjioffice@bcahq.org or call 510-809-1441



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

PACIFIC SEMINAR UPDATE

Please Note: Due to the devastating earthquakes in Nepal, our original keynote speaker, Rev. Sonam Wangdi Bhutia, is unable to attend.

THE INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST STUDIES & BCA CENTER FOR BUDDHIST EDUCATION PRESENT

PACIFIC SEMINAR - 21ST CENTURY - SUMMER SESSION

The Call of the Nembutsu
July 3-5, 2015

Jodo Shinshu Center 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704

Speakers:

Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto

Professor, Institute of Buddhist Studies

Professor Mitsuya Dake

Ryukoku University, Department of Intercultural Communication

Engaged Buddhism as a Worldwide Phenomenon



Special Guest Speaker: **Rev. Uma Lama Ghising**

Kathmandu Hongwanji, Nepal

Rev. Ghising will discuss her path to Jodo Shinshu and update us on earthquake relief work currently being led by Kathmandu Hongwanji founder and head priest, Rev. Sonam Wangdi Bhutia, in Nepal.

Panel Discussions on Engaged Buddhism with **Santussika Bhikkhuni** *Buddhist Global Relief*
Sensei Mushim Ikeda *East Bay Meditation Center*
Sensei Elaine Donlin *Buddhist Church of San Francisco*

Please help our guests who have severe allergies by not wearing cologne, perfume, or any scented products. Thank you.

Registration: \$140 closes June 21 **BCA Member Rate: \$125** until June 15

Register online or download form at: www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org
Click on CBE Email: cbe@bcahq.org Phone: (510) 809-1460

Special Feature

This text was presented at the 17th Annual European Shin Buddhist Conference in Southampton, UK in September, 2014.

JODO SHINSHU: THE SUPREME TEACHING FOR THE PRESENT AGE (Part 6 of 6)

by Rev. John Paraskevopoulos

(viii) Practical value

There is an increasing tendency to treat the Buddhist teachings as a tool with which to improve our everyday lives. We see a growing focus on its therapeutic value, its ability to help us deal with stress, anxiety and unhappiness; to address relationship problems or injustices in society. We see a broken world and we want to “fix” it. This is most commendable and much good has been done by Buddhists, and others, to alleviate suffering in our society. Clearly, such efforts must always continue unabated. But, of course, one doesn’t have to be a Buddhist to recognise suffering and feel prompted to address it. Many people in the world are very active and successful in this respect and have absolutely no spiritual beliefs or inclinations whatsoever. So, what more does Buddhism offer in light of the pervasive suffering we find in the world?

The Dharma has always taught us to moderate our expectations regarding the world and what it can give. There is no naïve optimism about life and its outlook is thoroughly realistic, always informed by a close observation of the nature of things. Shinran, in particular, was under no illusions about samsara and its limited ability to provide enduring satisfaction, peace of mind or unfettered well-being. In fact, he distinguished these states from a kind of joy (*keangi*) that derives from spiritual realisation, not something the world can give. This is true bedrock, that which cannot be undermined by the vicissitudes of fortune unlike ordinary happiness. The joy of shinjin enables us to tap into a greater realm from which we can draw sustenance to see us through the unpredictability and disappointments of life.

It is true that there are some Buddhist schools that advocate various practices (mindfulness meditation, tantric rituals, chanting the title of the *Lotus Sutra*, etc.) to harness spiritual energies in order to help improve our human lot. However, there does not appear to be much evidence to support the efficacy of such practices in addressing the unsatisfactory nature of human existence. We will always have sickness, ageing and death to contend with—this is what this *Saha* world of endurance is and always has been.

Therefore, attempts to promulgate a view of the Dharma that is entirely this-worldly are bound to fail. We must not be deceived by empty promises and false hopes. Our assessment of the world and human nature should be clear-eyed. This is more than just being honest—it also implies looking at things with the eyes of wisdom, which are given to us when we awaken to Amida’s Light. If we are not interested in the truth, we can choose to ignore it and just busy ourselves with the creation of futile utopias or be distracted by superficial remedies to the real problems that we face.

The truth of the Dharma can seem like bitter medicine at times but it also leads us on a path to spiritual maturity and self-awareness. Wisdom destroys our illusions and purges our ego. There can be no more “practical” consequence of the teachings—indeed, its fruits are incalculable in guiding our everyday lives.

The great strength of the Shin teaching is that it offers an indirect taste of the Pure Land here and now (in rare moments of grace and lucidity) while assuring us that our final destiny is the Buddha’s realm of utmost bliss. Many will not be satisfied to know that they cannot experience complete emancipation here and now and that they must wait till the end of their lives—but what is this life anyway but an illusory chimeric fate to impermanence; an insubstantial blip on the radar screen of the universe; a mere snap of the fingers between two eternities? And yet, the Buddha’s Light shines through it all and shows us where our journey must end.

Conclusion & Exhortation

We can see how Shin has inherited the most profound insights of the Mahayana tradition, and of early Buddhism as well, while expanding them to encompass the further riches of the Pure Land faith. As mentioned earlier, it is a compelling invitation to abandon oneself on a journey of spiritual emancipation where true joy can be found.

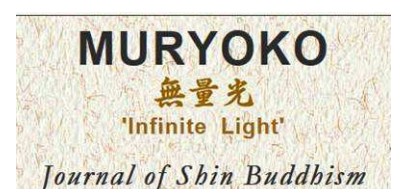
Therefore, we can only challenge those who hesitate or feel that this path is somehow inadequate or even a cause for some embarrassment. The only just response in light of this magnificent teaching should be one of gratitude, not insecurity. What other teaching is more suited to the needs of our time and the sober realities of the human condition? Its vision is without peer as is its unconditional acceptance of every sentient being. This blend of breadth, depth and realism is a precious gift and a lasting legacy for the spiritual benefit of generations to come.

For those who believe, with Shinran and his predecessors, that we live in a dark age where confusion and disorder prevail with seemingly no hope on the horizon, the taste of Amida’s Dharma is to be savoured like life-giving nectar. We should feel honoured and humbled to count ourselves as wayfarers on this path—privileged, in fact, to have encountered this most rare of teachings bequeathed to us by a succession of compassionate sages who recognised our need for it and who understood, as we must surely realise even more today, that it is the only path left open to us given what we know about ourselves and the world around us. An impartial assessment must reveal that this remains the sole option for benighted beings who find themselves yearning for permanent release from the great round of birth-and-death.

Jōdo Shinshū gives us a gift of wisdom and compassion that transcends impermanence, suffering and doubt. Indeed, there can be no more relevant or universal response to the ills of our time and the ills within ourselves.

²“Although my defiled life is filled with all kinds of desires and delusions, my mind is playing in the Pure Land” – Shinran (*Jogai Wasan* No.8).

Rev. John Paraskevopoulos is an ordained Shin Buddhist priest based in Australia and author of *Call of the Infinite: The Way of Shin Buddhism*. He holds a first-class honors degree in Philosophy from the University of Melbourne, Australia and is editor of the online Muryoko: Journal of Shin Buddhism. The full text of this article is available online at www.nembutsu.info.



EMBRACED BY THE HEART OF AMIDA BUDDHA

The LGBTQ Community & Shin Buddhism

Sat. June 27, 2015 9:30 am – 3:30 pm
New York Buddhist Church 331-332 Riverside Dr., NYC
Register online at: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org
Deadline: 6/20

Presented by the BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE)
Hosted by the New York Buddhist Church

Register online: \$40 by June 20. Call for Student Rates: (415) 776-5600 ext. 212
Visit: www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org Email: cbe@bcahq.org

Guest Speakers:
Dr. Jeff Wilson
Author, *Buddhism of the Heart and Mindful America*
Rev. Kurt Rye
Resident Minister, Ekoji Buddhist Temple, Fairfax Station, VA

Presenters & Moderators:
• Rev. Earl Ikeda
• Rev. Kiyo Kuwahara
• Elaine Donlin
• Sam Fugitt
• Norio Umezu Hall
• Gary Jaskula
• Hoshina Seki
• Amy Umezu

Gotan-e Service features Ancient Gagaku Music

More than 50 people celebrated Shinran Shonin’s birthday at the Jodo Shinshu Center on May 21. BCA Bishop Kodo Umezu made the opening remarks, and special liturgy was led by Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, Matthew Hamasaki, and Candice Shibata (*lower right*). Nine members of the Northern California Gagaku Group provided musical accompaniment (*below*). Rev. Yushi Mukojima of Mountain View Buddhist Temple gave a thought-provoking Dharma message. Molly Miyako Kimura (*lower left*) enchanted the audience with a *bina* performance and discussion of her instrument and her history, with comments by Karen Wilson (*not pictured*), author of *An Immigrant’s Daughter, a Biography of Molly Miyako Kimura*. Before the program, attendees enjoyed *soba* noodles, and afterwards were served *zenzai*—sweet red bean soup with *mochi*.





2015 IBS Buddha Day/ Vesak Celebration



Top photo: Vesak program participants: Front row l-r: Dawn Neal, Dr. Paula Arai, Rev. Daijaku Kinst, Rev. Seigen Yamaoka, Rev. Kodo Umezu, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara and Rev. Konin Cardenas. Back row: Matthew Hamasaki, Tadao Koyama, Ven. Yuan Wu Shi, Rev. David Matsumoto, Glenn Kameda, Dr. Scott Mitchell, Candice Shibata and Nobuya Dake. Bottom photo: Kneeling: Ven. Yuan Wu Shi and Nobuya Dake chant the Verses of Bathing the Buddha.

The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) sponsored the annual Buddha Day/Vesak Celebration on Friday, May 8, 2015 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley. Some 40 persons were in attendance.

The program booklet cover read, "In gladness and in safety, May all beings be at ease!" and a Prayer for the People of Nepal, written by Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, was printed on the inside cover.

The event opened with a processional of ministers and IBS ministerial students, led by Bishop Kodo Umezu, President of IBS. Flower offerings were made to the Buddha by JSC community members.

Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto acted as chairperson and made the opening marks. Glenn Kameda, JSC Facility Manager, greeted the guests in attendance.

Ms. Dawn Neal, IBS student, led the chanting of the *Tisarana* and *Five Precepts*. Jodo Shinshu ministers chanted the *Zenshokada*. *Verses of Bathing the Buddha* was chanted by Ven. Yuan Wu Shi, IBS exchange student from Dharma Drum College, Taiwan and Nobuya Dake, an IBS exchange from Ryukoku University. The *Hannya Shingyo* (Heart Sutra) was chanted by Soto Zen Priests, followed by meditation led by Rev. Dr. Daijaku Kinst, IBS Chaplaincy professor.

Bishop Umezu in his Dharma Message, commented on the importance of all Buddhists, regardless of their individual traditions, working, studying, and learning together with mutual respect as followers of the historical Buddha.

Rev. Konin Cardenas led the "Merit Transference," followed by words of appreciation by Prof. Scott Mitchell, Assistant Dean of IBS.

Attendees offered sweet tea to the baby Buddha's statue, and a reception followed.



From Kathmandu Hongwanji's Facebook page (clockwise): path to the temple, an area nearby, relief workers.

New Development Office Coordinates BCA Nepal Earthquake Relief Drive

Wheel of Dharma readers may be interested in knowing what it took to expeditiously respond to the urgent need created by the recent Nepal Earthquake. The BCA-wide effort was a "group" effort that was coordinated and conducted by the BCA Endowment Foundation and its new development staff. However, it took many players to make it happen.

Following the devastating earthquake on April 25, Reverend Sonam Wangdi Bhutia, founder and head priest of the Kathmandu Hongwanji, posted an update on Facebook to assure everyone that he and his sangha were safe, however, many others in the country were in dire need of aid and support. Immediately, Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA bishop, and Kent Matsuda, BCA president, consulted with the new Joint Development Committee and the newly organized BCAEF Development Office to facilitate individual donations from the BCA sanghas and broader public.

Two days after the earthquake,

the BCA Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund was established. BCA's response to this special call for help from the Kathmandu Hongwanji, is part of ongoing support for the work of Rev. Sonam to share Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in Nepal and provide social welfare programs for the community-at-large. (Please see page 1.)

Within the first week, the BCA Social Welfare Committee approved a donation of \$15,000 from its emergency disaster relief fund. Also within the first week, the BCAEF worked with the BCA Communications Committee chair, Judy Kono, webmaster Jim Shimomaye, and BCA administrative staff to set up clear procedures for collecting the donations online with a new PayPal account, membership mailing, temple leader notification via the BCA Update, and CBE Enews notifications.

In just two weeks, BCA supporters have sent almost \$20,000 in contributions to BCAEF's relief fund, and more is expected. Working with the various BCA organizations and lead-

ers, BCAEF continues to coordinate all aspects of this special fundraising appeal. Acknowledgements are being sent out daily, and updates on the progress of relief activities will be posted on the BCA website and Facebook page. Local temples, the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS), the Center for Buddhist Education (CBE), and other BCA-affiliated organizations are all coordinating efforts with the BCAEF to help the people of Nepal. Please note that BCAEF is receiving and processing gifts to Nepal from all these groups. Donors are asked to make checks payable to "BCA Endowment Foundation" with *Nepal Earthquake Relief* in memo line.

Your generous gifts are making a meaningful and crucial difference, and the BCAEF is grateful for the opportunity to help coordinate this project. Any questions may be directed to Chris Sujarit, BCAEF development assistant at email: csujarit@bcahq.org, or by phone: (415) 776-5600 ext. 311.

Gassho.

IBS Participates in Harvard Conference

By Dr. Richard K. Payne
Dean, Institute of Buddhist
Studies

What does it take to develop a successful Buddhist ministry? How do we foster more collaboration among Buddhist ministers, trainees, and institutions, including at the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS)?

From April 23-25, 2015, IBS faculty members, Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto (Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies), Rev. Dr. Daijaku Kinst (Buddhism and Psychology), and Dr. Richard Payne (Dean), attended the *Education and Buddhist Ministry: Whither and Why?* conference at the Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The conference addressed challenges, insights, and questions for the 21st century.

Participating organizations are making efforts to prepare people to serve in a variety of functions that fall under an expanded sense of ministry. These include not only institutionalized

education programs such as those growing out of the seminary model (like IBS), but also social service-oriented groups using hands-on methods of training, and monastic institutions seeking to be more socially engaged. Some participants resisted the idea that institutions should satisfy every need of training. Alternative forms of social organization need to be validated, as they may be able to avoid the power issues and hierarchy that institutions seem to enable.

Professor Ruben Habito of the Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, and Maria Kannon Zen Center in Dallas, Texas spoke on an expanded understanding of ministry. He noted that the origin of the term minister means "to serve." The general understanding of a minister links them to a specific community or sangha. The expanded vision as offered in the course of the conference opens the field of service not only human beings, but also to the

entirety of the living world.

If ministers are considered to serve the entire living world, there seems to me to be no *functional* difference between ministers and chaplains and bodhisattvas. However, there are context-specific skills that should inform the education of ministers and chaplains and bodhisattvas. The institutional context of a church, meditation group, or other sangha requires different skills from those required for service in a hospital, hospice, jail, prison, military, or university setting. In order to best provide beneficial service, Buddhist ministerial trainings must consider the wellness match between curriculums we offer and the contexts of the services the ministers provide.

Buddhist ministerial training programs may encourage social action, social justice, and engaged Buddhism. This resists the understanding of Buddhism as only or necessarily individualistic, feel-good, or escapist, much less as

exclusively in the service of consumption capitalism. The issues here are in many cases familiar, such as eco-Buddhism, women's issues, and systems of oppression generally. An important suggestion was that Buddhist understandings and Buddhist leaders emerging from minority and marginalized communities are a particularly important direction for the future growth of the dharma.

Other participants will no doubt take away other ideas and impressions from the conference; these are mine. It is to be hoped that the people and institutions involved in these three days of conversations will continue to communicate, and collaborate in the development of Buddhist ministry.

For more information about the conference, visit the Harvard Divinity School website at hds.harvard.edu and search Video: Education and Buddhist Ministry. For IBS news and photos, visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/instituteofbuddhiststudies.

The 17th Biennial Conference of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies

Subjectivity in Pure Land Buddhism

August 7-9, 2015
Jodo Shinshu Center 2140 Durant Avenue Berkeley, CA 94704

Join us in Berkeley for the 17th Biennial meeting of the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies, the largest international professional organization devoted to studies of Pure Land Buddhism. Our theme this year explores the concept of subjectivity: How has subjectivity — who "I" am or who "we" are — been understood across Buddhist cultures and histories? How does subjectivity come into being? How is it known? How is it experienced?

Thursday, August 6
Shinran and the Sutra of Immeasurable Life
Pre-conference symposium hosted by the Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies
For more information, visit: <http://goos.gi/Ch/198>

Friday, August 7 - 5:00 pm
IBS President's Award Presentation and Reception
2nd Annual IBS President's Award will be presented to Dr. Lewis Lancaster, Emeritus Professor, Department of East Asian Languages at the University of California, Berkeley.

Saturday, August 8 - 5:00 pm
Keynote Address: Professor Luis Gómez
Professor Gómez is founder of the Buddhist Studies Program at University of Michigan and the author of *The Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light* (1996), a translation of the *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtras*.
Reception to follow.

Sunday, August 9 - 3:00 pm
Special Film Screening - Buddhism After the Tsunami: The Souls of Zen
This documentary presents perspectives on Buddhism in the midst of Japan's recovery from the March 11, 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters.

Other Presenters: Wendi Adamek, Galen Amstutz, Toshikazu Arai, Melissa Anne-Marie Curley, Takami Inoue, Kazuhito Ishida, Stephen Jenkins, Charles Jones, Takashi Miyaji, Jessica Starling, Kenneth Tanaka, among others.

To register, please visit: <https://iasbs2015.wordpress.com>
This event is generously supported by the Institute of Buddhist Studies and BDK America.

今月の法話

「浄土真宗の本分」

ワッソンビル仏教会
開教使 花山 勝清



世紀末でもないのに、毎週のように、悲しい現実が報道されています。自然災害、テロ事件、内戦や犯罪、そして、政治や役人の不正事件……。新聞であれ、インターネットサイトであれ、嬉しいニュースなど、本のひとつかけら程度です。むしろ、「世の中、地獄そのもの……」と思わされるような出来事ばかりで、現実から目を伏せがちになってしまっている。

しかし、少し考えてみれば、「世の中、苦ばかり……」と説いて下さったのが、お釈迦様であり、親鸞聖人の時代の鎌倉では、飢饉「ききん」や疫病「えきびょう」、揉め事は、日常茶飯事……。現在の日本やアメリカのような豊かさはありませんでしたし、平和な時代も長続きしなかったのです。人々は限られた食料のために争い、場所を確保するために殺し合い、そして、兄弟・親戚の間ですら、愛を奪い合った。

過去に於いては、どんな戦いでも、勝った方が「正義」であり、負けた方は「悪者」でした。もちろん、「自分だけは正しい」と思わなければ、何も主張できませんし、世の中何も変わりません。しかし、お釈迦様並びに親鸞聖人は、「自分が正しくないかも知れない」という疑問が原点となり、「自我の解脱」を志したのではないのでしょうか？ つまり、自分の考えや視点が正しいのか、それとも、違うのかどうか、の確認実証を繰り返されたのではないかと……と思えます。

現在は、様々な情報が瞬時に送られてくるため、多少情報過多ではありますが、長い目で見

てみると、昔と全然変わりがなく、「世の中、苦だらけ……」ということになります。だからこそ、親鸞聖人の見極められた「浄土真宗」の教えが、今も生きていけるのであり、必要とされているのです。しかし、そのことに気が付かなくなってしまう人々があまりに多く、軽視されがちなのが気掛かりです。

私個人の見解ではありませんが、「浄土真宗の本分とは、日々の人生避難訓練であり、誰をも支える阿弥陀援助団への参加……」ではないかと信じております。というのも、私たちの人生に於ける最大の難関は「死」であり、それまでを如何に楽しく、有意義に過ごせるか……が、私たちに課せられた任務だ……と思うのです。また、生きておれば、必ず出遭わなければならない「愛する人々や生き物との別れ」「愛別離苦」をどのようにして克服することができるとか……。

阿弥陀援助団への参加資格は、いたって簡単です。「何かに助けられたい……」あるいは、「何かを助けたい……」と感じるだけで良いのです。すると、お念仏は自然と口から零れ「ぼ」れて来るそうです。もし、そのことに気が付いていないのであれば、気付くだけでも大丈夫です。阿弥陀仏は、国や言語、種族や宗教、年齢や性別に関係なく、頼まれもしないのに、四六時中、私たちを救おう……と手を差し伸べられているのです。ただ、私たちがそれから目を背けている……。

私自身、自分が正しいかどうかは、はっきり言って、分かりません。しかし、30年前に、意識して、阿弥陀援助団に参加させていただきました。そして、今、気付いたのが、私は生まれる時から、阿弥陀援助団の一員だったのだ……という事です。また、これからも、阿弥陀援助団の一員として、誰かを応援したり、誰かに応援されたり、楽しく一生を過ごしたい……と思っています。

そ……して……いつの日か、自分たち自身も阿弥陀「仏」となり、永遠「とわ」に子や孫、友人たちを応援できる……なんて、素晴らしい……と思いませんか？ それこそ、自分が生きた証であり、浄土真宗の本分を全うすることなのではないかと……信じております。

北米で真宗に携わる人々

遠藤了覚師

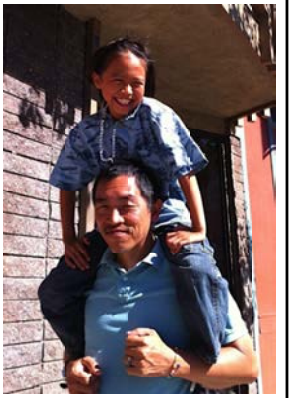
北米には浄土真宗本願寺派の僧籍をもつ方が留学や仕事などで居住し、各地の

仏教会の活動に参加されている方が少なからずおられる。今回はセバストポール市、園満寺にかかわりのある、遠藤了覚師を紹介する。遠藤師は、滋賀県大津市の寺院出身。放送関係の仕事で渡米され、赴任先にあったニューヨーク仏教会、ホノルル別院でお寺と関わりをもった。2012年にセバストポール市に居住したことで園満寺にお参りするようになった。家族の知子さんと長男のルーク君が園満寺のダルマスクールに通っている。

(この記事は、幼い子をもつ家庭向け仏教誌「ないおん」2014年11月号より転載しました。ないおん誌のウェブサイトを<http://www.onet.ne.jp/~nainon/>)

浄土真宗の寺の長男に生まれた私は、去年まで13年間アメリカで暮らしていました。現在は妻と長男を北カリフォルニアに残し、単身東京で働きながら実家を手伝い、病床の父に代わって住職を継承するべく勉強に励んでおります。在米時から現在も関わっているのは、メジャーリーグやその他のスポーツ番組で、英語を使って海外と日本のテレビ局間の橋渡しをする仕事です。海外スタッフと文化の違いに苦労することが多いものの面白い仕事です。

文化の違いは家庭内にもあります。今年9歳になった息子はアメリカ生まれのアメリカ育ち。現地の小学校に通い、授業も友達と話すのも英語です。家族と話すべきだだけが日本語で、



遠藤師とルーク君 Rev. Endo and Luke

「子供に日本語と日本文化をどう学ばせるか」は海外にお住まいのご家族に共通の悩みかと思えます。わが家の解決法はお寺でした。家から車で15分のセバストポール市に、昭和3年に建立された浄土真宗の「園満寺」があり、現在も三〇〇軒ほどのご門徒がお寺を支えておられます。ご縁あってお寺のお手伝いをし、毎週日曜朝のお勤めにお参りするようになりました。いつも50人前後の方がお参りされ、お勤めも法話も多くは英語ですが、「なむあみだぶつ」は日本語です。日本から遠く離れたアメリカの寺院にお念仏が響くのを聞くと、感慨深いものがあります。

このお寺で子供たちに日本語と日本文化を教える日曜学校があり、そこに息子は通っています。お勤めの後には講堂で軽食がふるまわれるのですが、そこに並ぶお菓子と友達と遊ぶのも楽しみのようです。漢字ドリルはあまり好きではありませんが、ドラえもん漫画で日本語を勉強しながら、お寺で「なんまいだく」と手を合わせる息子が、どんな成長をしてくれるか楽しみです。

今や園満寺ご門徒も高齢化が進み、お参りされる人数も減ってはいますが、お寺を中心とした地域の繋がりと交流がここにはあります。日本に戻って私は今、曾祖父が築いた保育園の運営もお手伝いしていますが、お寺や園での交流を通して、子供たちが日本の文化を大切にし、誇りを持てるような環境を作りたいと考えています。

本田師、往生される

4月13日(月)にワシントンDCで長年にわたり伝道に携わった本田正静師が亡くなりました。享年八十五歳。ハワイに生まれ、大阪で育った師は1952年に龍谷大学を卒業後、1954

今月の一枚

サンマテオ仏教会、初参りの様子。ご門徒さんの家族をはじめ、やアダムス開教使夫人の友人など、九名の赤ん坊と親御さんたちがお参りされ、本堂にぎわった。



San Mateo Buddhist Temple "Hatsumairi"



法輪

2015年6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@bcahq.org
 forWOD: WODeditor@bcahq.org

二〇一五年度教化標語
 「まことの人生を
 歩もう」

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>

全米ダルマスクール 教師大会開催される

4月24日(金)から26日(日)にかけて第六十四回全米ダルマスクール教師大会が行われ、約一五〇名が集った。

今回は南部教区の主催で会場はロサンゼルス空港近くのコンコースホテル。大会のテーマは「Let Go...of Everything You're Afraid to Lose」で基調講演には名誉開教師の小谷政雄師が招かれた。分科会では、ダルマスクールのクラスで教えられる工芸やビデオ映像を利用した教材づくり、意見交換会や教義に関して



写真右、右下共にカンファレンスの様子於ロサンゼルス
 Dharma School Conference at Los Angeles

のディスカッションなどが催され、参加者は熱心に学んだ。また、伝統的な儀式やお勤めを学んで現在の米国でのサービスのありかたを見直してみようと、正信偈と和讃のクラスが行われ、閉会式では正信偈六首引きをお勤めした。閉会式では洗心仏教会の緊那羅雅楽会が「越天楽」を演奏し、参加者は「いつもの短いお勤めや、オルガンミュージック、西洋的な音楽のないサービスは何か意義が深いように思えました。」と伝統から新鮮さを感じ取った。



総長コラム

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

四月の終わりにロサンゼルス空港近くのホテルでダルマスクール教師大会が開催されました。この大会には全国から約百五十名の熱心な教師が集まり、部門会を通じて多くのことを学んでいました。毎週毎週私たちの子供達の情操教育のためにご苦労してください。先生方にはただ頭が下がるのみです。各仏教会も、できるだけ先生方のサポートをしてあげていただきたいと思えます。

この大会中、私も部門会に出て一緒に学ばせていただきましたが、最初に司会者が参加者それぞれに、名前、出身地、それから自慢に思った経験や出来事をそれぞれ自己紹介と

浄土真宗センターで

降誕会

5月21日(木)に浄土真宗センターで宗祖、親鸞聖人の誕生をお祝いする法要「降誕会」が営まれ、約六十名が参詣した。この降誕会は数年前から行われており、近隣の聴聞者から親しまれてきている。今年もマウンテンビュー仏教会の向嶋裕史開教師が法話を担当、ローダイ仏教会の楠活也開教師と、開教師候補の浜崎マシューさん、柴田キャノンディスさんらが勤めをリードした。北カリフォルニア雅楽会も法要に参加した。センターでは本願寺の降誕会で能が舞われることになって、法要後に日本の伝統芸能を鑑賞する時間をもうけている。今回は琵琶奏者の木村・ミヤコ・モリーさん(写真左)が招かれ、演奏を披露した。参加者は「琵琶の演奏は初めて聞きました。親鸞聖人の時代にはポピュラーな楽器だったそうですから、聖人が琵琶の音色をどのような気持ちで聞かれたのかを想像しました。」と楽しんで聴いて



降誕会法要の様子 於浄土真宗センター Gotanve @ JSC

ていた。また、法要の前後にそばとせんざいが振舞われ、たいへん好評だった。

して発表するようになると言われました。その時は、自慢する経験が思い浮かばなかったのですが、あとで一つ思い浮かべたので、それをここに紹介いたします。

もう六、七年前のことですが、自宅のトイレが壊れたので、もちろん、素人ですからどうしていいのか全くわかりません。近くの建材店に何度も行き、担当の人と話をしながら、近々取り替えることができました。そのときの喜びという嬉しさは言葉に表すことのできないもので、他の人にも自慢して回ったことを思い出しました。

ところが二ヶ月程前、他のことで専門家がバスルームをチェックしていたら、トイレの周りのフロアーが痛んでいるので張り替えないといけないと言われてビックリしました。自分で取り替えお金をセーブしたと思っていたのが、結局余計にお金がかかることになったのです。

自分で自分の能力を過信して何かをすることの危うさを知らされたことです。

毎日の人生でも、そこには専門家の意見に耳を傾ける必要があるということですね。人生を立派に生き抜いた人たちの言葉や経験に素直に学ぶことが大切です。それが仏法です。

ところで、南無という言葉は「寄りかかる」「頼みにする」という意味があります。私たちはいつも自分の考えに寄りかかり、頼みにして、人生を歩んでいますが、親鸞さまは人間の思いを超えた真実の智慧の世界からの呼び声を聞きなさい、方向転換しなさいとおっしゃっておられるのです。

一度しかない人生を間違いないものにするために、専門職に南無していくことが大切ではないでしょうか。一緒に仏さまの願いを聞かせていただきましょう。