

WHEEL OF DHARMA

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Buddha's Fire Sermon

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop



Concord (CA) Buddhist Fellowship Kieshiki Ceremony

I was greatly influenced by my father, especially where the understanding of Buddhism is concerned. He was a minister at a small temple in Fukuoka, but I learned that he wanted to become a scholar. At my temple, I remember he used to periodically have a small study class with one or two members.

During my high school days, he taught me a lot. He used to tell me that I had to understand the core teaching of Shakyamuni Buddha before I studied Shinran Shonin's teaching. Because of his suggestion, I decided to major in General Buddhism instead of Shin Buddhism at Ryukoku University in Kyoto. Now I am so grateful for his suggestion and encouragement.

As we welcome the month of April, the month of Shakyamuni Buddha's Birthday, I thought it would be nice to share my father's last message in the *Hanamatsuri* (Buddha's Birthday)

issue of our family temple's newsletter in April, 1983. He wrote it one month before he passed away. His last article was another excellent teaching that I still remember to this day. I contacted my brother and asked him if he still had a copy of the newsletter. Unfortunately, his answer was no. Hence, I will try to recreate it here and share it with you, the readers of the *Wheel of Dharma*.

One day, Shakyamuni Buddha, standing on top of a mountain called Gayasisa, pointed his finger at the village below and said to his disciples, "Can you see the fire? The entire village is burning."

His disciples did not see any fire and said, "No, there is no fire. What you talking about, O Blessed One?"

The Buddha replied, "Their eyes are burning, forms are burning, eye-consciousness is burning, eye-contact is burning, also whatever is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-

nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact too is burning."

The disciples asked, "Burning with what?"

The Buddha replied, "Everything is burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion." He went on speaking of the human being's six sense organs—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind—burning with lust, hate and delusion. His disciples, after listening to him, came to realize what he meant. Shakyamuni Buddha realized the real cause of the pain and suffering of people. He also explained how to contain the fire that is burning.

And my father concluded his message with the following comparison: In Christianity there is a famous teaching called the "Sermon on the Mount." In Buddhism, we have this teaching called the "Message on the Mount," also

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RSVP: My Introduction to Jodo Shinshu Buddhism

By Andrew Thorne

A year ago, I might have told you that I understood *Dana*; the act of selfless giving that alleviated your own suffering from attachment and promoted the cycle of positive karmic energy. I knew about Buddhism and could discuss the basic principles, maybe even toyed with the idea of calling myself a Buddhist. I was first introduced through a course in my freshman year of college, and it made quite an impact. Throughout the next ten years of my life, I kept a steady eye on Buddhism; a few classes here and there, reading material when it presented itself, and at one time a ten-day silent meditation seminar, but I never really dove into it. It never became more than helpful instructions for living a mindful life.

A coworker of mine, Landon Yamaoka, revealed to me that he was a Buddhist, and told me about an amazing conference, *TechnoBuddha*, that he thought I should attend. Eventually I gave in. I remember walking through the side door of the Jodo Shinshu Center, and



Andrew Thorne (left) and Landon Yamaoka, co-chairs, TechnoBuddha 2014.

meeting Sensei Kuwahara, Brian Nagata, and Judy Kono in the kitchen, which was a nice manner of being introduced. Kitchens are wonderful places really; when you feel welcomed into one, you feel welcomed into one's home. What a wonderful community this was! I knew I had found something special.

Somehow, through a series of conversations that took place Saturday night and some lofty praises of my organizational abilities from Landon, Sunday found the two of us co-chairing the next year's conference. I was positively bursting with an array of emotions; honored, accepted, nervous, excited, and terrified. What would I contribute to this community? I needed to get myself introduced fast. I began attend-

ing conferences, so as to develop my frame of reference for how these things went. I met more people than I could count. I visited temples from Orange County to Vancouver, and through the generosity of others, became immersed in this Sangha. I joined a dharma discussion group, and developed my understanding of Buddhist principles, as well as my ability to connect them with my path and choices in life. I grew as an individual, and as a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist.

Buddhism is so much more than something one understands; it must also be lived, and shared, as part of Amida's Golden Chain. This community understands *Dana*, and has shown me how much I have to learn. Working for a non-profit

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HANAMATSURI

By Rev. George E. Shibata

Hanamatsuri (literally Flower Festival) or Buddha Day is commemorated on April 8 to celebrate the birth of Siddhartha Gautama who was later to become enlightened as Sakyamuni Buddha.

The various rites observed during the Hanamatsuri services are based upon the beginnings at the time of Prince Siddhartha's birth. The Hanamido or miniature floral altar of bright flowers provides the setting of the beautiful Lumbini Garden. The statue of the baby Buddha, Tanjobutsu, which has his arm extended, illustrates the merits of Amida Buddha reaching out to all beings. The pouring of the sweet tea on the statues, Kambutsu, represents the gentle rain which fell that day in Lumbini Garden.

The legend is that Queen Maya, returning to the home of her parents to give birth to the child, stopped to rest in Lumbini Garden. As she reached to pluck the Asoka blossoms, the



little baby was born. Immediately upon birth, the child rose to his feet and walked seven steps, raised his right and toward the sky and the left hand downward and proclaimed, "Above heaven and below heaven, I alone am the World Honored One." Then a very gentle and sweet rain fell on the baby and bathed him. The King Suddhodana named his son, Siddhartha, which means "every wish fulfilled."

This story is used to express and describe the birth of an extraordinary person. What is

the significance of the seven steps? This is to show as that the Buddha took a step beyond the six realms of suffering or human bondage and took the extra step to Enlightenment.

All humans can take this seventh step, because all beings possess Buddha-nature or the seed for Enlightenment. The Buddha did not merely teach that all people are equal, but that every person, by realizing his or her highest potentiality, could attain Buddhahood.

Instead of being caught up in the myth of the Buddha's birth, the Buddha sangha should realize the significance and reason for Sakyamuni Buddha being born as a human being to relate the teaching of Amida Buddha so that all beings in the six realms of suffering can awaken hope and actually transcend the six realms as Sakyamuni Buddha did.

Excerpted from the original BCA publication, *The Buddhist Holidays*, first written by Rev. Shibata in 1974.



Prof. Nobuhiro Fukagawa (right) and translator, Rev. Mutsumi Wondra. Photo by Brian Imada.

Prof. Nobuhiro Fukagawa, Kangaku, Completes California Lectures

Recently appointed as Kangaku, the highest academic rank within the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, Prof. Fukagawa delivered two lectures to about 60 people each night at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley on March 19 and 20. On March 22 he spoke at the Gardena Buddhist Church to approximately 150 people. Prof. Fukagawa's lectures were well received.



Hana

By Rev. David Matsumoto
Berkeley Buddhist Temple



We celebrate the birth of the Buddha with a festival of flowers. Hanamatsuri is a joyful and beautiful occasion for young and old. It is also an opportunity for us to hear once again the promise of life, which resounds within the depths of the human heart.

The story of the Buddha's birth is one of praise, adorned with religious symbolism that fills us with a sense of awe and wonder. Queen Maya's dream of a white elephant. Lumbini's garden, blooming with flowers in the summer. The baby's seven steps. The Buddha's cry. Sweet

tea falling from the sky. And flowers. Heaven and earth filled with flowers. A universe in bloom.

In Buddhism, flowers are a symbol of life—both its birth and its decay. They teach us that life is fragile and fleeting. Like the scattering of petals, our lives are all too soon left to the winds of time. And yet, flowers are also a symbol of birth. They teach us of the possibility of waking up to a new world, a new life, and a new self.

We too can bloom, like flowers, and fulfill the potential of our lives. We too can share in the promise that lies within the depths of all life—to become our true selves, to live our true lives, and to give of ourselves to all other beings. The Buddhist priest Nakagawa Sōen reveals this reality with these simple words:

We are all flowers. Blooming! A universe in bloom!

This perspective is not that of Buddhist priests alone. One of my favorite songs is entitled, "Hana: Subete no hito no kokoro ni hana wo" [Hana: May flowers bloom in the hearts of all people], composed by Kina Shoukichi, a world-renown Okinawan singer and songwriter. Flowers are often the subject of Okinawan songs, used as a symbol for many things, including love, their island and their people. Kina, who has long been active in the world peace movement,

sings of flowers, I believe, to express his wish that all people will someday realize their fullest potential, overcome all hardships, and live lives of peace, happiness, and harmony with all things.

*Kawa wa nagarete doko doko yuku no
Hito mo nagarete doko doko yuku no
Sonna nagare ga tsuku koro ni wa
Hana to shite, hana to shite sakasete agetai
Nakinasai, warainasai
Itsu no hi ka, itsu no hi ka
Hana no sakasō yo*

Rivers flow on and on to who knows where.
People also flow on and on to who knows where.
When they reach their ends,
I would have such currents bloom
As flowers! As flowers!
Please cry if you must and laugh if you must,
And some day, some day
Let us have our flowers bloom!

May Hanamatsuri be a time when we celebrate the birth of one who would become the Buddha. Someday may we too awaken to the depth and fullness of life, and bloom as flowers. As flowers!

Forgiveness and Buddhism

"If one abuses you, there is a temptation to answer back, or to be revenged. One should be on guard against this natural reaction. It is like spitting against the wind, it harms no one but oneself Misfortune always dogs the steps of one who gives way to the desire for revenge."

By Rev. William Briones
Los Angeles Honpa Hongwanji

Not too long ago Nobuko and I went to a fast food diner for breakfast. Upon our arrival we waited to be seated. But the hostess behind the counter was on her cell phone. She seemed to be having a very serious conversation, "I'm all... she's all... I'm like... He's like..." After what seemed like a minute, I interrupted with a polite, "Excuse me." The expression on her face read, "Excuse me, I'm talking to my friend, do you mind?" She hung up, then grabbed some menus and led us to a booth, tossed the menus on the table and walked back without a word. Needless to say I was very irritated by her lack of respect and her unprofessional manner. I was so upset that this set the tone for our breakfast and all I did was complain to Nobuko on how disrespectful this young generation is and when I was young... blah, blah, blah.

The reading I began with is from the Dhammapada. Shakyamuni Buddha spoke of the suffering and pain caused

by the desire for revenge. And while the remedy for revenge is forgiveness, the Buddha rarely spoke directly on forgiveness... unlike Christianity. Forgiveness is the touchstone of Christianity.

I believe that in Buddhism in the strictest sense, there is no need for forgiveness. Spiritual awareness, by its very nature, includes the practice of forgiveness.

In Buddhism forgiveness is not about turning the other cheek or letting someone continue getting away with behavior that is mean or heartless. Real forgiveness is about letting go. Buddhism teaches us that by becoming aware we are able to forgive and get on with our life. This awareness allows us to let go of holding on to resentment and hurt. It is a way we can keep the energy of life from draining away from us.

How many of us have been emotionally or physically hurt, angered, or betrayed, by someone... friend or stranger? It is as simple as someone cutting you off on the freeway or some restaurant hostess, waiter or waitress, or sales person with

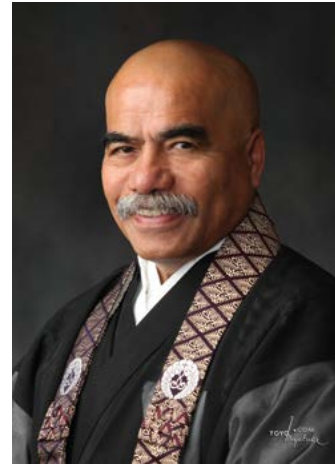
an attitude, or something as complicated as a friend or loved one betraying you.

Many times we refuse to let go of our anger or resentment. We alone carry the burden of our anger and resentment. By not letting go, by being attached to our anger and resentment, we have to suffer the pain over and over again every time we choose to remember and relive the experience in our minds.

Letting go is not about accepting bad behavior or making excuses for others. It means that we let go of the obsession we have with wrongs committed against us. In letting go, we neither forget nor pretend the past did not happen. We simply choose to live in the present.

By being hurt, angry, betrayed or feeling resentment we're living in the past. These feelings are always about the past, but the way you feel is taking place in the present. Worst yet... do you think the hostess knew or cared that I was having a miserable conversation with Nobuko? What a waste of time and energy.

Letting go is a choice that must be freely made if it is to



mean anything. It is not meant to be an act of kindness to the person who is forgiven, but to the person who is doing the letting go. It's for me; it's an act of kindness to myself.

Letting go of the anger, the hurt, the betrayal is difficult. There are times we nurse wounds that are so deep that we feel they will never heal. There are times we want to move on, but feel paralyzed, uncertain... not wanting to get hurt again. Letting go occurs when we want to let go. This is why it takes so long.

When I got home that day I immediately wrote a letter to the restaurant's headquarters and complained about the service. Weeks later I received a letter of an apology and they assured me that they would look into the matter. Victory was mine! Or was it? Is that spit on my face?

Namo Amida Butsu



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First-person articles should be around of 500 words, typed, double-spaced in Microsoft Word. The editors may ask for longer articles, or split in multiple parts at the editors' discretion. All other articles should be in news release form at maximum of 500 words. Documents should be sent as an email attachment to WODeditor@bcahq.org. 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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REVEREND SHINRYO SAWADA 1936 - 2014

Rev. Shinryo Sawada, BCA Minister Emeritus, passed away on February 22, 2014 in Visalia, California at the age of 77. Retired in 2006, Rev. Sawada began his 44 year career with the BCA in 1962 and served at the Oregon Buddhist Temple, Yakima Buddhist Church, Los Angeles

Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple, Visalia Buddhist Temple, Dinuba Buddhist Church (Supervisor), Watsonville Buddhist Temple, Buddhist Temple of Salinas, Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Temple (Supervisor), and San Luis Obispo Buddhist Church & Guadalupe Buddhist Church (Supervisor).

The funeral service for Rev. Sawada was conducted by Bishop Kodo Umezu of the BCA on March 6, 2014 at the Visalia Buddhist Temple. The Ingo SENGAKU-IN (life devoted to the study of the Dharma) was bestowed upon Rev. Sawada by the Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto. Rev. Sawada is survived by his wife, Mrs. Kimiyo Sawada, and sons Jinn, Tomo, and Maki.

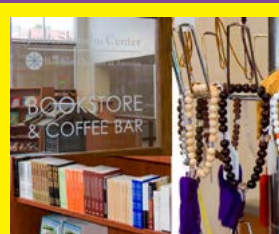
Rev. Zuikei Taniguchi Awarded for 50 Years of Service

In a precious moment, Rev. Zuikei Taniguchi was recognized for 50 years of service to the BCA at the BCA National Council Meeting Banquet on March 1, 2014. Rev. Taniguchi called representatives from San Francisco, Cleveland, Oakland, Southern Alameda County, and Alameda to join him on the stage. Bishop Umezu pointed out that Rev. Taniguchi has experienced almost one-half of BCA's history. Taniguchi sensei received a standing ovation.



Rev. Zuikei Taniguchi (center) is awarded, flanked by Bishop Kodo Umezu (right) and Buddhist Temple of Alameda president Ronald Tsuchiya (left). Photo by Tom Nishikawa.

NEW HOURS
BCA Bookstore
is now open
Wednesday-Saturday
11 a.m. to 7 p.m.





President's Message



By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

The 2014 National Council Meeting

On February 28 and March 1, 2014, the Northwest District hosted the BCA National Council Meeting in Bellevue, Washington. Details about the meeting are presented elsewhere in this issue of the *Wheel of Dharma*. I wanted to touch on a few issues that were presented and discussed.

The BCA budget was approved by the National Council. The dues per BCA member will be \$107.25 for the BCA fiscal year 2014-2015 (which runs from April 1 to March 31). This means that the BCA will receive \$107.25 for every member of each temple in the next BCA fiscal year.

Every year, the BCA Budget and Finance Committee reviews budget requests from the Institute of Buddhist Studies, the Center for Buddhist Education, the BCA Bookstore, all BCA committees, and BCA programs. The money collected is also used to pay the salaries of the Bishop and all BCA employees. In addition, we use these funds to maintain all the BCA buildings and allocate the retired ministers' pensions.

As a temple president myself, I understand that the BCA dues significantly impact each temple's budget. I would like all BCA members to know that the BCA Budget and Finance Committee carefully reviewed the budget requests and tried to keep the expenditures as low as was feasible. Some items were cut, including some that would have benefitted me. Our expenditures were about the same as last year. The final dues amount was higher than last year's primarily because our national membership count decreased.

At the National Council Meeting, one of the attendees commented that an increase in BCA/temple members would answer just about all of our problems. There is some truth in that statement.

At the end of the first day of the meeting, then-president Ron Murakami had us break into four groups and discuss "What the BCA can do for our temples." This brainstorming session was probably the highlight of the entire meeting. The attendees brought up numerous issues that they wanted the BCA to address. The information obtained from this session will be disseminated and discussed for the duration of my presidency. Many good ideas were brought out. The BCA may not be able to address all the issues, but I will see that we cover as many of them as possible.

After the National Council Meeting, I received a note from our Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations president, Dianne Belli. She gave me a list of "What the BCA can do for the Buddhist Women's Associations." More good ideas were brought up. At this point, all the BCA affiliated organizations (the Federation of Dharma School Teachers' League and Young Adult Buddhist Association are the other two) should submit a list of their needs, too.

Two important themes that came out of these brainstorming sessions were that members wanted the BCA to do a better job at communicating to members using current technology and following up on the ideas presented. To that end, I passed out a sheet at the meeting banquet asking temples for the e-mail addresses of their minister(s) and their temple's contact person. I still have some blanks to fill before this list is complete. Also, Judy Kono, chair of the BCA Communications Committee, is already hard at work looking over the list of ideas that were presented.

On behalf of the BCA Executive Committee, I would like to thank the BCA members who attended the National Council Meeting for their time and assistance in making our BCA more responsive to the members and in our endeavor to spread the Jodo Shinshu Teachings.

**Change in date of the
National Board meeting:
May 31 (and not June 7)
at the Jodo Shinshu Center**

BERKELEY CENTENNIAL

In 1911, a group of 73 young Japanese immigrants formed a Berkeley men's Buddhist organization, marking the beginning of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple. From that modest beginning, the Berkeley Buddhist Temple has played a key role of furthering the teachings of the Buddha—both within the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) and in the larger American society.

Now, for the first time, the history of the temple's first 100 years are detailed in a book of more than 110 pages titled, *A Century of Gratitude and Joy 1911-2011*, published by Imaging Hawaii and available for purchase.

"A lyrical remembrance of 100 years of life at the Berkeley Buddhist Temple," said Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Berkeley Buddhist Temple minister, in his review of the book. "Clearly the product of careful thought, love, and artistry, this book is reflective of a religious community's enduring spirit of gratitude and joy."

More than a commemorative book, it tells the rich history of one of the most influential temples in the BCA and its role with the Buddhist Study Center, the Institute for Buddhist Stud-



Mary (Tagumi) Bushman and George Takei, as the Buddha, perform a scene from Hiroshi Kashiwagi's play, "Kisa Gotami," at the temple in 1956. Takei was a UC Berkeley student at the time and later transferred to UCLA. Photo by Isago Isao Tanaka.

ies (IBS), and now, the Jodo Shinshu Center. It details the Japanese American community's resilience through racism in the early 20th century, which led in part to the creation of a dormitory at the temple, and through difficulties, including the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

The book is filled with rarely seen archival photos. Among the highlights are photos of the first BCA seminar in August 1952, the popular temple choir in 1951, and a 1956 photo of

actor George Takei, then a student at UC Berkeley, performing at the temple as the Buddha in Hiroshi Kashiwagi's play "Kisa Gotami."

Iconic members known throughout the BCA—as well as celebrities—have passed through the temple. And the notables are mentioned: Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata, founder of Mitutoyo Corp. and Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai; Mrs. Shinobu Matsuura, considered by many as the catalyst in the temple's role in forming the Buddhist Study Center,

which eventually led to the establishment of the IBS; and Rev. Kanmo and Mrs. Jane Imamura, whose many contributions to the BCA are noted. They were responsible for writing several popular gathas as well as being active participants with the Buddhist Study Center and the IBS.

The Imamura's also helped spread the teachings of Buddhism to, among others, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Gary Snyder and Beat Generation legend Jack Kerouac. And Jane Imamura created the temple's famed choir—which counted Takei and Sab Shimono among its members.

A limited number of copies of the book will be available for sale after April 13 at \$25 each. For more information, contact the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, 2121 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94704, 510-841-1356 or email info@berkeleysangha.org. Checks should be made out to BBT Centennial.

The book will also be available after April 13 at the BCA Bookstore, 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704. For more information, contact the bookstore at sales@bca-bookstore.com or call 510-809-1435.

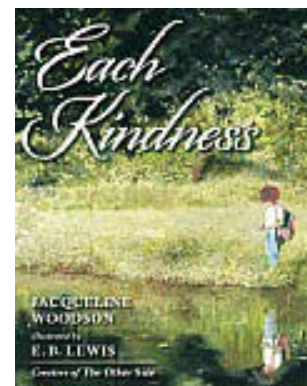
BCA Bookstore News by Gayle Noguchi

Now available: *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Wilson, \$16.99. *Each Kindness* is a poignant story about kindness told from the point of view of a girl named Chloe. Chloe and her friends shun Maya, the new girl in school. Despite Maya's efforts to make friends with them, Chloe and the others always exclude her. Then one day, Maya is gone. When the teacher presents a lesson on kindness and how even the smallest gesture makes the whole world a little bit better, Chloe feels remorseful about the lost opportunity. *Each Kindness* is a recipient of the Coretta Scott King Award and the LA Times Book Prize.

Copies of *Each Kindness* will be available for purchase at the Federation of Dharma School Teachers' League (FDS/TL) Conference April 25-26, 2014 held at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple.

Now available: *Teriyaki Priest – Tales from the Realm of Gratitude* by Reverend Jerry Kyosei Hirano, paperback, \$10.00. All proceeds from the sale of this book are being donated by the author to the Center for Buddhist Education.

With humor and humility, candor and compassion, Reverend Hirano shares experiences from his own life in essays he has written over the past 25 years of



being a Jodo Shinshu minister. Through his insightful reflections he invites us to look deeper where we get a glimpse of the nembutsu teachings that are constantly coming to us through our daily lives.

Reverend Hirano presents the essays in four sections: birth, old age, sickness, and death – the types of sufferings the Buddha taught in the Four Noble Truths. However, far from being pessimistic, Reverend Hirano shows that all experi-



ences lead us to the nembutsu where we can learn what it truly means to be human: that we are embraced by the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha exactly as we are, and with this realization, we enter the realm of gratitude.

You may also order online at www.bcabookstore.com or contact sales@bca-bookstore.com / 510-809-1435. The BCA Bookstore is now open Wed.-Sat. 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.



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BUDDHIST CHURCH OF LODI

The year 2014 is the Buddhist Church of Lodi's 85th anniversary. The history of this church is deeply connected with development of the greater Lodi-Acampo area Japanese-American community, dating back to the first congregational gatherings in 1902. It was in 1929 that Lodi-Acampo Buddhist Church became an autonomous institution with the purchase and remodeling of a mill for the first church, parsonage, and classroom structure at this location, 23 North Stockton Street. Later, a new temple structure was built to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Buddhist Church of Lodi, followed by the social hall annex in 1964. Currently services are held every Sunday. We just launched two new affiliated groups: the Young Adult Buddhist Association (YABA) and Senior Adult Buddhist Association (SABA).

The city of Lodi is the capital of Zinfandel wine production. Please visit our church and also enjoy tasting Lodi's wine.

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



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



High school & college-age youth representing Bay, Central Cal, Coast, Northern Cal, Northwest, and Southern Districts came together on January 24-26 at the JSC to participate in the 8th annual YAC Summit.

YAC Summit Reflections: The Whole World is Out There...

by Taishi Ikeda, Tacoma Buddhist Church

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) Summit was an awesome new experience for me. I didn't know what kind of people were going to be there, whether I would have fun, or if I would make friends. I am a "stay at home" kind of guy. So, despite all the positive things my Dharma School classmates and my sister told me, I would have rather spent that weekend hanging with friends at my house. However, I went and it was the right decision.

During this trip I felt like I was meeting mirror images of myself but as different unique people. Everyone understood the Buddhism jokes and we all knew what each other's lives were like, being of a religion that many people don't understand. There was an inner connection between everyone and becoming friends was the easiest part. At my church there are only two other guys in my Young Buddhists' Association (YBA) and they are two years younger than me. This Summit was the first time I had been around so many YBA members my age. I began to really appreciate the event that brought us all together.

Later we had a cooking contest (that my team won), team scavenger hunts, a meditation walk, services, and late nights just hanging out. I had 10 times more fun than I thought I would and made many friends in just two days. This experience taught me that as long as you keep an open heart to new opportunities, it will make having fun easy. In Buddhism I am taught about impermanence. I can't be a stay at home guy forever. The whole world is out there and sometimes it only takes some nagging from friends and family and a bit of courage to be exposed to the great memories one event can give you. It was an unexpected weekend trip that I will never forget.

For information on the

2014 BCA YAC SUMMER RETREAT - July 7-13, 2014

For Ages 15-18 Years. Contact Rev. Patti Oshita, poshita@comcast.net
Hosted by the Sacramento Betsuin. Sponsored by the Youth Advocacy Committee

Being Gay, Being Buddhist

The LGBTQ Community & Shin Buddhism

Offering an enduring community that values inclusiveness and acceptance, seeking enlightenment through Shin Buddhist teachings.
A Half-Day Seminar

Saturday, June 28, 2014

10 am - 3 pm

9 am: Registration & Coffee

Jodo Shinshu Center

2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704

Guest Speakers:

Pieper & Lois Toyama
"Parenting Our LGBTQ Children"

Presenters and moderators include:

Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, CBE Co-Director;
Elaine Donlin, Minister's Assistant, Buddhist Church of San Francisco; Fred Pelger, Minister's Assistant, Tacoma Buddhist Temple; Hoshina Seki, President, American Buddhist Study Center

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Why is Shinran's Appreciation of Encountering the Dharma Significant for Jodo Shinshu Buddhists?

by Vonn Magnin

I have come to learn in the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course that the time period in which Shinran Shonin lived in Japan was fraught with great uncertainty due to natural disasters, famine and warfare. Needless to say the questions of how to survive day-to-day as well as what lay beyond this life were of great concern for the common people who lived during such times. As I come to know him, I am always impressed and humbled by how Shinran Shonin approached his life during those tumultuous times. I feel that once he discerned a path he embraced it with his entire being, even if he were to later discover that he must change his course in order to reach his ultimate destination.

I feel the first example of this was when Shinran Shonin entered the monastery on Mt. Hiei as a young boy. Even at his age, Shinran Shonin understood the nature of temporary existence and the frailty of human life. I feel that the poem he composed on the spot reflected this awareness:

*Cherry Blossoms that are felt to last till the morrow,
May well blow away
During the night.*

These simple words reflected his understanding that life is fleeting, and therefore there was no reason to delay his initiation into the priesthood until the morning. Furthermore, his desire to resist waiting until a more convenient hour reflected his appreciation of the Buddha-Dharma by realizing that all things are impermanent, even his impending ordination. At any moment conditions may change through a variety of causes that may affect our ultimate desires, so why wait another moment? At this point, Shinran Shonin formally entered into the priesthood – a path he would follow with great effort over the next two decades.

Another example, and one I am truly grateful for, was when Shinran Shonin decided to abandon his study on Mt. Hiei. Having practiced for twenty years and realizing that he would not attain enlightenment through his own efforts, he charted a new course for his ultimate spiritual liberation. We all know that this decision eventually brought him to his new teacher Honen Shonin. I am sure that this decision was not an easy one to make at first. I suspect that like many people, Shinran Shonin may have at first clung to the idea of "this is what I am supposed to do" by studying at the monastery. He, like many of us in our lives, probably was attached to the notion that this was the correct path to follow because this was what was expected. I feel that it took great courage on his part to accept his limitations and to let go of his attachments to the processes established in the formal training on Mt. Hiei. Again, Shinran Shonin embraced the reality that his path had to change, but I feel that he never lost sight of his ultimate destination.

We know that Shinran Shonin found his teacher Honen after taking refuge in Rokkaku Temple and receiving a vision from Prince Shotoku in a dream. We also know that this is how he came to truly appreciate the working of Amida Buddha's Primal Vow to save all beings, whether "good or evil... priest or layperson, young or old, male or female, or of noble or low birth" through the grateful recitation of the Nembutsu. Shinran Shonin's appreciation of the Buddha-Dharma greatly deepened at this point for he came to realize that his ultimate destination had already been assured through the working of Amida Buddha. He discarded his former path and embarked on his final path, which he never deterred from, by declaring, "I, Gutoku Shinran, disciple of Sakyamuni, discarded sundry practices and took refuge in the Primal Vow in 1201." Even though many obstacles for Shinran appeared on this path (his exile, the loss of his teacher Honen, his disownment of his son Zenran, etc.), his entrusting in the Buddha was so great that he never again felt the need to chart a new course.

I feel that Shinran Shonin's attitude once he encountered the power of the Primal Vow is significant for Jodo Shinshu followers. Once we truly entrust ourselves to Amida Buddha and come to realize that He has been working with us all along, it is only natural to express our gratitude through reciting the Nembutsu. This is not to say that our lives will become easy. We continue to encounter various obstacles on our paths and tend to respond to them by being the foolish beings that we are. For me, I feel that this is part of the human experience and despite this I remain grateful for encountering the Buddha-Dharma. The words we express while reciting the Threefold Refuge are close to my heart:

*Hard is it to be born into human life. Now we are living it.
Difficult is it to bear the Dharma of the Buddha. Now we bear it.*

I am truly grateful to have been able to encounter the Buddha-Dharma despite my limitations as an evil and foolish human being. As a "convert" to Buddhism, my spiritual paths have changed several times in my life and in my quest to reach my ultimate destination. As a child and young adult my ultimate destination was "heaven" and my path was that of a Roman Catholic and its myriad of practices and beliefs. However, perhaps a bit like Shinran Shonin, I questioned many of the elements that comprised this path even as a very young boy – as my parents and several priests can attest to; however, it took me many years to determine that this path wasn't for me and to ultimately abandon it. As I continued my search I found the courage to begin exploring other spiritual possibilities to reach my ultimate destination. I eventually discovered the Buddha-Dharma through reading various books written from the Tibetan and Zen traditions. I found some comfort in the basic Buddhist teachings but remained wanting for a deeper understanding and a firmer path to walk upon. This desire led me to my temple where I first encountered the Nembutsu teachings. It was truly like coming home and I still am brought to tears when I recall encountering these words of Shinran Shonin when I first read them. I felt that they spoke directly to me:

There was a time for each of you when you knew nothing of Amida's Vow and did not say the Name of Amida Buddha... Formerly you were drunk with the wine of ignorance... but since you have begun to hear the Buddha's Vow you have gradually awakened from the drunkenness of ignorance... and come to prefer at all times the medicine of Amida Buddha (CWS, p. 553).

I, too, no longer feel a need to embark on another course for I feel that the Nembutsu path is already leading me to my ultimate Birth. Like Shinran Shonin, I feel that I am incapable of any other "practice" even if this one were to lead me to hell. *Namoamidabutsu.*

When not joyfully busy at the Arizona Buddhist Temple, Vonn is employed as a youth-development management professional for a large national non-profit. He and his wife of 17 years are the happy parents of two boys.

CBE 2014 Calendar of Events

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

February - April: Central Cal Buddhist Education Programs

April 19: Japanese Seminar

May 21: Gotan-e (Shinran's Birthday) Service

June 28: *Being Gay, Being Buddhist* LGBTQ Community & Shin Buddhism Seminar

June 30-July 2: Ministers' Summer Fuku

July 4-6: Summer Pacific Seminar (Summer MAP credit)

August 8-9: Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course August Workshop

September 6: Baby Boomers Seminar with Rev. Patricia Usuki

September 18-20: Fall MAP seminar at New York Buddhist Church

October 20-31: CBE Japan Educational Tour

October 25: Japanese Seminar

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

December 11-16: Winter Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) seminar

See details at www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org

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

CBE Co-Director's Message:

The Way We See Things

by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, CBE Co-director

On March 11 my second son Eight, who is five years old, fell from a tree and broke his arm. My wife told me that he fell while playing with his friends in the backyard after Japanese language school. I felt sorry for my son while watching the pediatrician wrap the hard cast on his arm. I especially sympathized with him for the inconvenience of wearing a cast, such as having to take a shower with a plastic bag on his arm, or scratching an itchy part of his arm with a long stick. Although I have never had a fracture in my life, I knew to some extent how inconvenient it is from seeing other people wearing a cast.

Despite my feelings, Eight looked rather happy to have "something new" on his arm while his doctor was working on it. After going back home, he proudly showed it to his mother and older brother. When he went to school the next day, his friends came up to him and asked what happened. Again he proudly and happily showed his cast and explained it to them. In my eyes, having to wear a cast seems troublesome. However, my son seemed to enjoy it. He said with a smile, "I cannot write and study." Interestingly, although we see the same thing, we interpret it differently.

We usually see things from our own perspective. So do others. It is natural that the way we see things differs among us. However, we tend to forget that and insist on our own viewpoint. Therefore, our views sometimes conflict. Jodo Shinshu teaches us to examine the way we see things in the Light of the Dharma and guides us to realize what kind of "filter" covers our eyes. With such a realization, we are further guided to a broader and more flexible view, which brings humility and fewer chances of conflict.

By the time this article is published, Eight's cast will be off. My son will return to his regular life. Although he may have enjoyed it, from the perspective of a father, I hope he won't need a cast again.

Summer Pacific Seminar - 21st Century:

Sea of Suffering, Ocean of Compassion

July 4 - July 6, 2014 - Jodo Shinshu Center, Berkeley, CA

The Institute of Buddhist Education (IBS) and the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) are pleased to present the Summer Pacific Seminar *Sea of Suffering, Ocean of Compassion* on July 4-6, 2014 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California. This year's distinguished speakers and honored guests demonstrate the dynamic continuum of the Jodo Shinshu tradition here in America.

Keynote Speaker: Rev. Tetsuo Unno, a dharma trailblazer for over five decades, is known for his dynamic talks on Shin Buddhism to temple, community and academic audiences. He has degrees from the University of California at Berkeley, Ryukoku University and Tokyo University; and received his *Tokudo* ordination and *Kyoshi* certification in the late 1950s. During his years as a BCA *Kaikyoshi* (assigned resident minister) in the 1960s, he served at the Seattle Buddhist Temple, Betsuin and Senshin Buddhist Temple. Since then, he has been a part-time minister assisting at the Pasadena Buddhist Temple.



Keynote Speaker: Rev. Dr. Mark Ty Unno is a prolific scholar, author, translator, university professor and passionate dharma teacher working to create new forums for sharing Buddhism. He is the head of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Oregon. He has degrees from Oberlin College and Stanford University and received his *Tokudo* ordination from Nishi Hongwanji. His publications include: *Shingon Refractions: Myoe and the Mantra of Light* (2004) and *Buddhism and Psychotherapy across Cultures* (2006). He has also contributed numerous articles to *Tricycle*, *Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly*, and other leading Buddhist journals. He is the son of Taitetsu and Alice Unno.

Guest Speaker: Rev. Harry Gyokyo Bridge, resident minister of the Buddhist Church of Oakland, studied Buddhism at the IBS in Berkeley, California, and Ryukoku University in Kyoto. As a multiracial person of both Anglo-American and Japanese heritage, he actively pursues the development of "American Buddhism," while at the same time honoring the traditions of the Japanese who brought Jodo Shinshu to the US. The books and lectures of Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno were key influences in his ministerial education. He is also an instructor at the IBS and co-hosts a podcast called the DharmaRealm (www.dharmarealm.com).



Honored Guest: Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno, distinguished minister, scholar, translator and author is widely recognized for playing a key role in cultivating a broader appreciation of Shin Buddhism in America and inspiring new generations of scholars and ministerial leaders. The eldest son of Rev. Enryo Unno, he attended University of California at Berkeley (BA) and Tokyo University (MA, PhD). After receiving his *Tokudo* ordination and *Kyoshi*, he served for several years at Senshin Buddhist Temple. He served on the faculty of Smith College, Department of Religion, from 1971 to the 1990s as the Jill Ker Conway Professor of World Religions. Among his extensive publications on the subject of Pure Land Buddhism are: *Shin Buddhism: Bits of Rubble Turn Into Gold*; *River of Fire, River of Water* and *Tannisho: A Shin Buddhist Classic*.

Honored Guest: Mrs. Alice Unno has been an important mentor and inspiration for Shin Buddhists, traditional and newcomers alike. She holds a BA and EdM from Smith College and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in School Psychology from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She was a special education teacher in the Northampton Public Elementary Schools for many years. During those years, she and her husband founded the Northampton Shin Buddhist Sangha. Mrs. Unno is a contributor to the anthology, *Women Practicing Buddhism - American Experiences*, edited by Peter N. Gregory & Susanne Mrozik (Wisdom Publications).



Left to right: Mrs. Alice Unno, Rev. Dr. Mark Ty Unno & Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno

The BCA member registration rate is \$125 until June 4.

General registration is \$140 and due by June 21.

Register online or download mail-in forms at

<http://www.bcasites.net/Pacific+Seminar++Summer+2014>

Email: cbe@bcahq.org Ph: 510.809.1460

The Dharmakara Series: Our Lifelong Learning Challenge

INTRODUCTION TO THE SANBUTSU-GE: Gatha (verses) in Praise of the Buddha (Part 3)

by Rev. John Iwohara

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



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

In the previous article I said that whenever we chant the *Sanbutsu-ge* we share in the Dharma of Amida Buddha and re-affirm the reason for Sakyamuni Buddha's appearance in this world. It is because of how important the Larger Sutra is that most morning services at the *Hongwanji* in Kyoto, Japan begin by chanting the *Sanbutsu-ge*. The *Hongwanji* in Kyoto is also known as *bonzan* or "primary mountain" to signify that it serves as the "foundation" for all other temples of the tradition. It is the mountain on which all Jodo Shinshu temples are built. Although this tradition of building an entire doctrinal tradition on a single mountain comes from China, there are two mountains in Japan that have become so prevalent that those traditions are known more popularly by their "mountain name" than their temple or doctrinal name. These two mountains are *Hiei* and *Koya*. Because the character for mountain, *yama*, can also be read "san" or "zan" these two mountains are called *Hieizan* and *Koyasan*. These are the mountain names for the Tendai and Shingon traditions respectively. The mountain name for the *Hongwanji-ha* (*ha* can be translated as "tradition") of Jodo Shinshu is *Ryukokuizan*. That is also where the name for the University founded by the *Hongwanji-ha*, Ryukoku University, takes its name. The honzan of Jodo Shinshu *Hongwanji-ha* (often known through the nickname of Nishi *Hongwanji*) is an impressive temple complex.

Whereas all Jodo Shinshu temples in North America and Hawaii have their ritual service areas housed in a single building or hall, the honzan has two separate halls. The main hall enshrines the image of Amida Buddha and is called the *Amida-do* or Amida Hall. The second hall is called the *Goei-do* or "Hall of the Image," and houses the image of Shinran Shonin as well as the Seven Masters. In a typical morning service the *kansho* ("calling bell") is struck to mark the beginning of the service and the chanting of the *Sanbutsu-ge* begins in the *Amida-do*. After the chanting in the *Amida-do* the service is moved to the *Goei-do* where the *Shoshin Nenbutsu-ge* is chanted, and is now followed by a Dharma message that is concluded with a reading of the *Gobunsho* or letters written by Rennyō Shonin, the eighth head of the *Hongwanji*.

Although the *Sanbutsu-ge* is chanted as part of morning service, within the Larger Sutra there are three different verses. The first is the *Sanbutsu-ge*. The second verse is typically called the *Jusei-ge* or "Gatha of the Repeated Promises" by the *Hongwanji-ha* and is typically called the *Sansei-ge* or "Gatha of the Three Promises" by the *Obtani-ha* (also known through the nickname of Higashi *Hongwanji*). The final verse found in the Larger Sutra is the *Ougon-ge* or "Gatha on Going to See."

The *Jusei-ge* is found immediately following Amida Buddha's declaration of 48 Vows. Because the *Jusei-ge* "summarizes" what Amida Buddha as a Bodhisattva has promised to do with the 48 Vows, it is given the title of "Gatha of the Repeated Promises." It is also called the "Gatha of the Three Promises" because the phrase *sei fu jōu shōu gaku* or "(I) promise not to fulfill true awakening (enlightenment)" (unless this condition is met) is repeated three times. The *Ougon-ge*, unlike the *Sanbutsu-ge* and the *Jusei-ge*, is found in the second half of the Larger Sutra. Whereas the first half of the Larger Sutra talks about the causes, conditions and results of the enlightenment of Amida Buddha and the establishment of the Buddha's Pure Land, the second half is devoted to the explanation of the causes, conditions, and results of the birth of sentient beings into the Buddha's Pure Land. The *Ougon-ge* can be largely divided into two sections. The first talks about Bodhisattvas going to Amida's Pure Land to give offerings and the second about the praise given to Amida Buddha by other Buddha. The Gatha gets its name from the Bodhisattva that go to see the Buddha in order to make offerings. The various Bodhisattva going to Amida Buddha's Pure Land and the praise of Amida Buddha from the other Buddha is meant to help us to want to be born in Amida Buddha's Pure Land for ourselves.

Although a brief synopsis of the *Sanbutsu-ge* wasn't given, the reason for mentioning the three verses found in the Larger Sutra was to ask, "Why the *Sanbutsu-ge*? Why not start the morning service with either of the other two verses?" In fact, there might be more reasons to use the *Jusei-ge* or *Ougon-ge* instead of the *Sanbutsu-ge*. For example, of the three verses only the *Sanbutsu-ge* is not directly quoted by Shinran Shonin in his *Kyōgyōshinshō*, or the text that lays the doctrinal foundation of Jodo Shinshu. Furthermore, because the *Ougon-ge* is the only verse not alluded to in the *Shōshin-ge*, chanting the *Ougon-ge*—the verse that most directly speaks to us about our desire for birth in the Pure Land—as part of morning service would mean that all three verses in the Larger Sutra would be mentioned or included as part of the daily morning service if it was chanted instead of the *Sanbutsu-ge*. Because of all these reasons, why the *Sanbutsu-ge*?

Although the answer that I am going to give is completely conjectural on my part, I think we start morning service this way because this is how Ananda also first heard about Amida Buddha. It is because Ananda was able to see Sakyamuni Buddha as the World-honored one, the Great Sage, the Great Hero, the World's Eye, the Pre-eminent one of the world, and the Heaven-honored one that he was first told of Amida Buddha. Similarly, it is because we also are able to appreciate the appearance of Sakyamuni Buddha in this world that we have come to hear of Amida Buddha and his Vow and through this have been allowed to seek the temple and the Dharma of Namō Amida Butsu. Like Ananda before us, we too, are allowed to participate in the virtue of praising. We discover, in our participation, that praise is the beginning of the *Nenbutsu Path* both for ourselves, personally, and for the *Nenbutsu Path* itself, generally. Praise, in other words, is what opens our hearts to hear; it is what makes the truth of the *Nenbutsu* real.

This month's article concludes the discussion of who is talking about the *Sanbutsu-ge* and how it is observed. Beginning with next month's article, I would like to begin talking more directly about the *Sanbutsu-ge* and would like to concentrate on the language and structure of the *Sanbutsu-ge* itself.



Home At Last

By Patty Yamano, Las Vegas Buddhist Sangha

The Las Vegas Buddhist Sangha will celebrate its 30th anniversary next year, and what better way to celebrate it than with the grand opening of its very own Sangha Hall. Thanks to the diligence of its board members, they were able to purchase a building that they can call home.

The beautiful, brand new building is located in the new part of North Las Vegas. The floor plan includes a large gathering hall, warming kitchen, bathrooms, and an area that will be rented by the Japanese American Citizens' League (JACL).

The "build-out" should start in the early

part of December with plans to move into the building in 2015. The dedication service will be announced later.

"Our vision is not only to bring the Buddha Dharma to the people of Las Vegas but to also become a cultural center for activities that will promote understanding and cultural heritage to our members as well as to our community," members are saying.

The Sangha would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported Obon and other fundraisers to make this dream come true.

The services continue to be held on the



second Sunday of every month with hopes that this will be expanded.

Additional dana will be gratefully received. Checks can be sent made payable to Las Vegas Buddhist Sangha Building Fund, c/o Pati Lira, Treasurer, 4874 Nardini Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89141.

YLT Convene in Bellevue, Washington

By Rosie Yasukochi
Seattle Betsuin

BCA YAC events have become the things I most look forward to and circle most vigorously on my calendar at home, because I know that when I go, I'm in for a treat. This year's YLT (Young Leaders of Today) Conference at the Westin in Bellevue, Washington was no different. My excitement had been slowly building for that Friday, and, as usual, I wasn't disappointed. To make matters more exciting, the BCA National Council Meeting was being held at the same time in the same place! (More on that later)

When I walked into one of the hotel's conference rooms, where my weekend was to begin, I was greeted by friendly faces, some familiar, some new. My absolute favorite part of all YAC events is that I get to meet new people and reunite with old friends.

I dropped my stuff in the corner, and found an empty seat. Our first session was a series of team-building activities run by Matt Nitta (Sacramento) and Jason Yokoyama (Seattle). Per usual, Matt and Jason brought the fun, with an exciting bonding game in which we were split into three teams to make cars out of K'Nex pieces, which are basically a new-age, modernized version of Legos.

Later, we attended a workshop led by Rev. Kojo Kakihara (Tacoma), where he taught us the many parallels between Buddhism and billiards. For in-



stance, everything we do affects those we interact with, as a ball on a pool table will affect the path of all the other balls it hits. After dinner, we headed back to the conference room to attend a session led by Joanne Yuasa (Vancouver, BC) in which she discussed her own path to Buddhism and what she learned from it. I think something that's cool about Buddhism is that you don't have to go through some sort of ritual or ceremony to become a member. You can just walk through the doors of your local temple one day and be instantly welcomed into the community. I think that this is what gives the BCA such a diverse membership.

The next morning we woke up nice and early for an 8am service. I knew that the NCM was going on, but it hadn't really occurred to me yet that the only people in service would basically be us (YLT), the ministers, and temple presidents. Never had

I ever heard such an incredible chanting of Juseige. It was awesome to listen to and be a part of because everyone was giving it their all (except maybe Socho Umezu, but he led us all in the Amida Kyo later). I bet that they could hear us three floors down in the lobby of the hotel!

After breakfast, we headed back to the conference room for another workshop, this time led by Rev. Kurt Rye (Ekoji). We discussed how to talk to others about our religion. That afternoon, Keith Sawada (Senshin) led us in a leadership workshop. He had us reflect on various quotes about leadership, discuss what makes a good leader, and take a quiz to see what kind of leader we each are. Overall, it was a day full of self-discovery and new-found awareness.

Later that evening was the banquet, which included a wonderful awards ceremony for long-serving and retiring ministers, as well as a highly

entertaining talent show. The acts included some impressive singing from a few of the ministers, as well as some fabulous dance moves and pageant skills from some of the YLT, College YBA, and older YAC kids.

On Sunday, we said our goodbyes and went our separate ways, confident that, not before long, we would be seeing our new friends. I can't wait for the next YAC event to roll around!

From YLT I took away how important it is for all the youths to take part in BCA. Although it's been said that our membership numbers are declining, there's no doubt in my mind that there is an abundance of kids my age who are will step it up and keep us going. As the leaders of tomorrow, we have big shoes to fill. But, we are constantly growing, and with each new YAC group and YAC Summit weekend, more people join us. To be a leader is to know those you are leading, who are essentially the ones you are serving. After YLT, I think it's safe to say that we all had an even better sense of what this means.

We would like to thank our guest speakers, Rev. Kakihara, Rev. Rye, Keith Sawada, and Sensei Joanne Yuasa, as well as Rev. Bob Oshita (Sacramento), and Rev. Patti Oshita (Sacramento) for being such good examples of leaders, and people we can follow and learn from. We would also like to thank all of the NW parents for supplying the fantastic meals and snacks. Thanks for the great time!

RSVP

Continued from Front Page

agency, my sense of commitment to our cause has strengthened, and I've applied my Buddhist practice in my professional life with renewed vigor. I'm excited to be a part of the planning committee for next year's TechnoBuddha Conference, as well as this summer's TechnoBuddha Retreat. I am more connected with what I have to share, and my enthusiasm for contributing to my community is growing steadily. I am finding my Dana.

There's something Landon taught me early on in our conversations. *Okage sama desu*. I've heard that it can be literally translated as "because of your shadow." This past year, I've spent a lot of time in Landon's shadow. His generosity, and the generosity of others I've met along this journey, has been truly inspiring. *Okage sama desu*, Landon. Thanks to you, I have the great fortune and honor of calling myself a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist.

Andrew Thorne is a relatively new addition to the Jodo Shinshu Sangha. He has visited numerous temples, but has yet to settle down with a home temple. 'Drew' is thrilled to be able to apply the Buddha's teachings daily through his work with Abilities United, an agency which supports children and adults with disabilities, their families, and the community, and champions a culture in which all members of society are included and appreciated for their distinctive efforts.

TechnoBuddha is an annual event at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, CA and features interactive workshops, discussions and speakers, along with fun social activities coordinated by a volunteer committee. The participants' ages range from 21 to 39.

Rev. Umezu

Continued from Front Page

known as the "Buddha's Fire Sermon." I remember my father's last message was longer and more elaborate, but the essence, I hope, is captured here.

It is the urgent wish of all the enlightened ones collectively known as Amida Buddha, or the perfect wisdom and compassion, that all beings become aware of the interconnectedness between our karmic consciousness and our suffering and pain, and that we be freed from them.

As we live today in this world, we can see the truth of the Buddha's message given to his disciples on the mountain 2,600 years ago. Within each individual's life, family, organizations, communities, and nations throughout the world, we can see things burning and getting out of control. Out of deep sorrow, the light of wisdom has been shown to us so that we can reflect on our condition and live our lives carefully and mindfully.

Shinran Shonin really appreciated that Shakyamuni Buddha appeared into this world and showed us the light of wisdom. This light of wisdom is, indeed, *Namo Amida Butsu* and is the agent that puts the fire out. Happy Birthday, Shakyamuni Buddha!



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IDAHO-OREGON BUDDHIST TEMPLE Jodo Shinshu in the Treasure Valley

In 1945, a decision was made by a group of active Issei Buddhists to establish an official organization in the Treasure Valley. Land was purchased at a location six miles southeast of Ontario, Oregon and construction started in 1946. After the completion of the building, the first Buddhist Temple was dedicated on April 13, 1947.

With increasing membership, there came the need for enlarging the Temple. It was decided to build in the city of Ontario. The majority of the Japanese residents lived on the east side of town and the present site was chosen. Ground was broken in January of 1952. After over six years of sacrificing and fundraising, the current Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple was completed in February of 1958.

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

Errata: The editors apologize for printing the incorrect story with the o-naijin picture in the March issue. It was corrected for the online version but not in time for the paper that was mailed out. Please forgive us for the inconvenience.



今月の法話

『中村久子さんとWLAの宝物』

ウエストロサンゼルス仏教会
開教使 宇宿文章



それは去年の12月6日のことでした。私が駐在しているウエストロサンゼルス仏教会のトイレの水道用パイプが壊れ、本堂とクラスルームがある建物が水浸しになってしまいました。その後、トイレの修理やフロアの掃除などを終えるのに二ヶ月もかかったのですが、そのおかげで長い間、箱の中にうもれていたお寺の宝物を見つけることができました。

水浸しになったあと、本堂の後ろの部屋を掃除するために、部屋にある段ボール箱を他の部屋に運びました。箱は長い間開けてなかったものもあつたのですが、いくつかの箱にはウエストロサンゼルス仏教会の歴史を伝えるものがあつて、昔の写真、本、法要のプログラムをはじめ、お寺が始まったころの資料などが入っていました。それらの資料を二階の「ルーム6」に持って行き、これを機会に他の資料とあわせて整理しようと思ひ立ちました。「ルーム6」は多目的な部屋になっていて、サービスマンやメデイエーションをする他、ミーティングなどにも使われています。そしてそこにお寺の歴史資料の展示や収納もしているのです。下の部屋にあつたものを持っていつて資料を整理しはじめました。すると、ある箱の中に「こころの手足」の著者有名な中村久子さん直筆の書を見つけたのです。両手両足を失つた久子さんが口を筆をくわえて書かれた書はたいへん立派なもので驚きました。「こころの手足」はウエストロサンゼルス仏教会に駐在されていた藤村文雄先生が編集したものを英訳して出版されているのでご存知の方も多いでしょう。驚きもつかのま、別の箱からは中村久子さんの書が二つもでてきました。それらは絵や書の掛け軸が数軸入っていた箱の中に長い間埋もれていたのです。

おそらく、その三枚の書は中村久子さんのお息女からいただいたギフトだろうと思ひます。中村久子さんの娘さんは久子さんが亡くなられた後、1972年にウエストロサンゼルスにお参りされているからです。三枚の書すべてに久子さんのサインが書かれており、69歳と書かれた時の年齢も記してあります。私は1991年に「こころの手足」の英語版が出版されたときに、はじめて久子さんのことを読んだのですが、久子さんが耐えてこられた人生の壮絶

さに胸をしめつけられ、とちゅうで読むのをやめようかと思つたのをおぼえています。今でも「こころの手足」を読むのをためらうことがありますが、ひとたび読み始めると、久子さんのお念仏からでくる明るさや、阿弥陀さまへの感謝を通して困難を乗り越えていく姿にたいへん勇気づけられます。

ここに中村久子さんの略歴と、「こころの手足」の中で特に印象深かつた二つの詩を紹介したいと思います。久子さんは1899年、3歳の時に凍傷にかかりそれが悪化して壊疽し、最終的には両手両足を切断することになりました。このことが彼女の信じていた困難に見舞われる人生へと向かわせ、22年間見世物小屋で生活することになります。けれどもそんな中、四度の結婚をし、三人の子供に恵まれました。後に、久子さんはヘレン・ケラーさんとお念仏の行者になられました。

「親鸞さまをお慕ひして」

手足を切断して十四年の間、苦痛と貧乏の谷間に落ちて命のともしびはかたたくもゆれていたこのともしびを消えてはならないと、あらしの昼も雨の夜も守りつづけて育てて下さつたのは、今は亡き大恩ある父と母のおかげさま、南無阿弥陀仏をとふれば、この世の利益きわもなし流転輪廻のつみきえて定業中天のぞこりぬと教えてくださったのは親鸞さまとあなたでございました。あなたでございました。うつし身の手足のない苦しみをかなしみ最上の縁として、極重悪人のわたくしをお救い下さつた歓喜の世界に、光かがやくこの地上に、お何たる素晴らしさでしょう。真実の仏法のみ教を、聞かせていただき、この大きな幸福を下さつたのは親鸞さま、あなたでございました。生きがたくして生かされているこのしあわせを、遇いがたくして遇わせていただくこの大遠忌、聞きがたき正法を聞かせてくださった親鸞さま、今日のお念仏のうちに、お慕ひ申させていただき、ほんとうにほんとうに、ありがとうございます。(合掌)

「ある ある ある」
さわやかな秋の朝
「タオルをとってちょうだい」
「おーい」と答える夫がある
「ハイ」という娘がある

歯をみがく義歯の取り外し顔を洗う短けれど指のない、まるいつよい手が何でもしてくる断端に骨のないやわらかい腕もある、何でもしてくれる短い手もある、みんなあるさわやかな秋の朝

(このご法話は宇宿先生がウエストロサンゼルス仏教会の寺報に書かれたものを編集部が編集、翻訳しました。)

深川宣暢博士のインタビュー



今月は龍谷大学真宗学教授で本願寺派勸学、深川宣暢(ふかがわのぶひろ)と和上にお話をうかがつた。深川和上は真宗学IBS(仏教大学院)とCBE(仏教教育センター)共催による春のパンフィックセミナーのご講師として訪米された。

「ようこそ米国へ来てくださいました。和上は最近本願寺派学階の最高位、勸学に就任されましたが、米国では勸学から教を聞く機会がめつたにないの、今回のセミナーはたいへんありがたい縁となりました。和上は米国を訪れたのは初めてですか?」

「今年が三度目になります。米国本土は初めてです。昨年の三月にハワイ教団のセミナーに講師として招かれて行きました。それと、若いときに一ヶ月ハワイに滞在していたことがあります。1979年、龍谷の博士課程の時に指導教授の研究のお手伝いでハワイに行つたのですが、その時に開教使の先生方にお世話になりました。モイリ本願寺など数ヶ寺でお説教をするご縁もいただけても勉強になりました。」

「指導教授はどなただったのですか?」

「信楽先生です。学生時代は実家に帰ると父(深川倫雄、本願寺派勸学)からは伝統的な教を学び、龍大では信楽先生から伝統教から違つた角度の解を学びましたので、たいへん有意義でした。ご実家は山口ですね。そうす。長門市の西念寺というお寺で私は一九

代目の住職になります。ですから今は、週末は法務のためにお寺にいて、平日は龍大で教えるという生活をしています。とても忙しいのでなかなか外に出られないのですが、この度は春休みで、お寺では早めにお彼岸法要をお勤めしましたので、米国に来ることができました。」

「長門市ですと金子みすずさんで有名ですね。和上も親子二代で勸学です。長門は浄土真宗の信仰が盛んなところなので、やはり何か伝道の工夫があるのでしょうか?」

「昔からご門徒が熱心です。僧侶も熱心なご門徒さん方に支えられてきたので、真剣な人が多いように思います。また家庭で大人から子供に浄土真宗の教育がなされていることが大きいですね。」

「たとえば、ふだんはえらそうにしているお父さんが、家庭のお仏壇の前で深々と頭をさげている姿を見ることで、子供には何か人間を超えたすごい存在があるのだと自然に学ぶことになりました。また、私のお寺では夏にお泊り会をしています。これは私が学生のころに始めましたので、もう40年近くやっています。子供たちは普段は、お坊さんと話す機会が少な

いので、黒い衣を着たお坊さんをめざらしそうに見ている子もいます。でもお寺に泊ると、私たちが話すことで、お坊さんも自分とあまり違はないんだとわかつて、お坊さんへの親しみが生まれるようになります。お寺に泊まると、お寺が身近に感じられるようになり、お寺に来るようになります。」

「夏のお泊り会ではどのようなことを教えるのですか?」

「お勤めのやり方、マナー、作法、仏様のありさまなどを話します。そこで子供たちが家に帰って、親にお寺で習つたことを教えることもあるわけです。親たちが「子供にお勤めのやり方や食事の合掌のことでおこられました」などと嬉しそうに話してくるので、うまくいつてるなと思つてます。あとは阿弥陀さまのことや親鸞聖人のことなども話します。」

「子供に阿弥陀さまをどのように説明されるのですか?」

「基本的にお慈悲の仏さまという意味で「けつして怒らない仏さま」だと話しますね。いつも私たちが見て下さつているといいますが、決して監視するよくな眼で見ているわけではなく、常にやさしく、まもるよに見て下さつていて、「またやつたか、しようがないなと、決しておこらない仏さまですよ」と話しますね。仏さまを暖かい存在だと受けとつてくると、何か安心するようになります。でもそうやって教える、たまに母親たちから「先生、子供のしつけのために、悪いことをしたり、勉強しなかつたりすると仏さまが罰を与えるというように教えてくれたい」と言われることがあります。」

「人間は気をつけていてもまちがつたことをしてしまふことがあるのですから、決して見捨てない、自分最後の方よりどころとなるものがあることを知るのが大切なですよ。」と言っています。大人になつたつて間違ふことがありますが、それで泣いたり苦しんだりするのですが、それは子供も一緒です。子供でも大人でも、どんな状況になつても受けいれ、てくださるといいます。おまかせする存在があると、安心して生きていけます。」

「最後に、み教えについておたずねしたいのですが、最近、米国人の浄土真宗への興味が高まつていて、質問が多いのが信心をいただく時についてのことですか?」

「信心をいただく時を意識すること、つまり信心をいただくことを覚えていくことが、信心をいただくという証明にはなるのですか?という意味の質問ですね。基本的にはその時を覚えていくかどうかは大事ではありません。覚えていくということは、救いの条件ではないからです。」

「けれども、信心をいただく時を意識するかどうかは、人によつてちがつてきます。たとえば、私は子供のときにビールが苦かつたのです。しかし今は美味しいと感じますね。それなら「美味しい」と思えるようになった時はいつか、と問われましても覚えてはいません。いつとはなしに美味しくなりました。しかし、人によつては、あの父の法事の時に、はじめて美味しいと思えるようになったとか、あれは母の誕生日の日であつたと覚えていた方もあるかもしれません。実際にはそういうことはあるわけです。」

「信心のことも同様に、いつとはなしに、という方もおられる。あの時の先生の話をとか、あの縁に遇つた時であつたと覚えていた方もおられるでしょう。大事なことは私たちにその自覚がなければ救われたことにはならないということではなく、如来さまが必ず救うと今も私に届いて下さつていくことです。そしてそれを、今いただいているかいかという事です。」

「深川宣暢(ふかがわのぶひろ)と和上本願寺派勸学。龍谷大学文学部真宗学教授。1953年3月生まれ、山口県長門市出身。研究テーマは真宗の伝道と教の解釈と表現。著書に「一念多念文意」講義の専門書をはじめ、一般向けに書かれた「日本仏教十三宗」などが、万筆や腕時計などアナログ的なものを好む。」

「勸学とは?」

「本願寺派僧侶の学識の階位で、勸学、司教、輔教、助教、得業の五階位があり、最高位の勸学は一流の優秀な学識として学を人に勧むる(真宗大辞典)という意味。現在勸学は18名おり、ご門主から教のことで意見を求められる立場にある他、龍谷大学で夏に開かれる学階位保持者のための勉強会(安居(あんこ)で本講という役割を担う。本願寺派では勸学を「和上(わじょう)」と敬つて呼ぶ慣習がある。」

法輪

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二〇一四年度教化標語
「歓喜光に帰命せよ」

IBS
と
CBE
共催による
春の

パシフィックセミナー

三月中旬にパークレーとガーデンナで深川宣暢勸学によるレクチャーが開催され、多くの真宗門徒や学生が聴講した。19日(水)と20日(木)の夜には浄土真宗センターで「浄土真宗における伝道」と題した講義が行われ、連日約50名の参加があった。15日(土)にはガーデンナ仏教会で春のパンフィックセミナーが開催され、南部教区の開教使、開教使アシスタント、門信徒など一五〇名が集った。午前中は深川勸学によるレクチャー「信心生活の利益について」が本堂で行われ、午後からは英語と日本語に分かれて、英語は松本デイビッド開教使(パークレー仏教会、IBS教授)、日本語は深川勸学が講義をした。その後、深川勸学による示談があり、信心の生活に関する質疑応答が行われた。参加者は「アメリカで示談をしてくださっ

於ガーデンナ仏教会、左から松本師、深川和上、ワンドラ師



てありがたかったです。浄土真宗で一番大事なこと、信心のことがよかったです。」と聞法の喜びを語った。深川勸学の通訳はオレシカワウヰー、仏教会出身で現在龍谷大学博士課程在籍のワンドラ陸師が務めた。

(写真下は、浄土真宗センターでの講義の様子)



有志の開教使が研修会で学びを深める

3月19日(水)から21日(金)にかけて開教使連続研修会(MCE)が浄土真宗センターで開催され、15名の開教使が集った。MCEは年に数回開かれるプログラムで有志の開教使が参加、学術の研鑽を深めるほか、実践での伝道方法について意見交換をしている。今回は三月に本願寺派開教使に就任された深川宣暢勸学がIBS主催の講義のため、深川勸学を研修会に招いて教義について質疑応答の時間、名号と心の関係などの専門的なことも



のから、お寺に来たことのない方が往生したいのかどうかなど葬儀、法事で問われるような実践的な質問に丁寧に答えられた。参加した開教使は「勸学から直接お話を聞くことができてたいへん勉強になりました。こちらではあまり伝統的な学問を学んだり議論する場がないので、今回の研修会は大いに学びました。」と研修での学びを深めた。研修会では他に、梅津総長とのBCA将来像に関する話し合い、IBS教授陣によるアメリカ仏教やチャップレンについての講義などが行われた。

テクノブダ

3月15日(土)、16日(日)に浄土真宗センターで青年仏教徒の集いが開催されカナダを含めた西海岸の真宗門徒を中心に52名が参加した。参加者は主に21才から39才までの社会人で、コンピュータなど情報科学テクノロジーに親しんでいる世代であることから、「テクノブダ」とネーミングされている。今回は7回目を集いとなりテーマは「一期一会」。基調講演はサクラメント仏教会の大下パティ師がつとめ、「ご縁の中に生かされる自分とすべてのものとのつながり」について話した。他に、今春から龍谷大学に留学する開教使候補の浜崎マシューさん(パークレー仏教会)やサイコロピストの赤星カークさん(サンディエゴ仏教会駐在赤星健治師の次男)が分科会の講師を担当した。参加者同士で「仏教と死」についてのディスカッションも行われ、活発に意見を述べあった。浄土真宗センターの桑原開教使は「ふだんあまり死について考えることがない人が多かったため、ディスカッションは刺激的だったようです。これ



テクノブダの参加者

総長コラム

米国仏教団 総長 梅津廣道

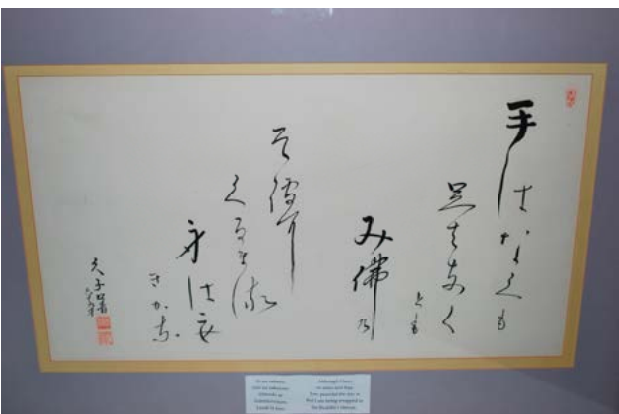
最近特に、自分の考え方はだいたい父親からの影響が多いのではないかと思います。父は福岡の田舎の小さな寺の住職でしたが、住職というより学者肌の僧侶でした。勉強には時間をさいていました。そして、ときどき一人二人の同行相手に仏教講座を開いたりしていたことを思い出します。父は、親鸞聖人の教えを学ぶ前に、原始仏教をしっかりと勉強しないとだめだということを言っていました。私の高校時代には、それとはなしにお釈迦さまの教えを私にしてくれていました。父が亡くなる一ヶ月まえのお寺のニュースレターにお釈迦さまの教えの一つが掲載されていました。いわば、父の最後の法話とでもいえるかもしれせん。それでお釈迦さまのお誕生をお祝いする四月にあたり、その記事を読者の皆さまに紹介しよ

うと思ひ、兄に連絡したところ、残念ながら家を新築したこともあってでしよう、ないということでした。そこで、思い出しながら、その要旨を紹介いたします。キリスト教には「山上の垂訓」という有名なお話がありますが、仏教にも「山上の説法」という有名なお話があるのです。それは、ある時多くの弟子たちと遊行に出かけたお釈迦さまは、ガヤシーサという山に登られました。その山の上から下に見える村を指さし、「お前たち、あの村が燃えているの見えるか?」とたずねられました。弟子たちは、「いいえ、火も見えないし、煙も見えません。」と答えました。お釈迦さまは、「あの村は燃え盛っている。人々の物を見る眼は、燃えている。欲の思いで燃えている。怒りの思いで燃えている。おろかな思いで燃えている。耳も、舌も、心も同じように燃え盛っている。」と弟子たちに、人間の生きている姿を教えられたのです。お釈迦さまは、「人間は煩惱の火によって燃え盛っている。その火を厭い、消

さなければならぬ。」と弟子たちに諭されたのであります。私たちが生きるということは、煩惱によって営み続けているということなんです。今の私たちの生きている世界、自分自身を含めて、煩惱によって燃え盛っています。お釈迦さまのおっしゃることが本当にまがいがないことであると領かれます。このありさまは、生きている悲しい人間の悲しい業であります。その業を悲しみ、その業を断ち切りたいと願っておられるのが、お釈迦さまのおこころ、阿彌陀如来の願いであります。親鸞さまは、お釈迦さまがこの世に生まれたのは、阿彌陀如来の願いを知らせるためであるとおっしゃっておられます。それを私たちの側から言い換えますと、私たちがこの世に生を受けたのは、阿彌陀如来の願いを聞くためであるということであります。お釈迦さまのお誕生を喜び、私たちも人間に生まれて、この教えに遇うことができてよかったという人生を歩みたいものであります。

今月の一枚

中村久子さん直筆の書
(2面に関連記事あり)



詳細は浄土真宗センターまで(問い合わせ先: 米国仏教団仏教教育部 担当 桑原浄信 510-230-8139)がつく。

2014年春の聞法の集い

浄土真宗センターで「春の聞法の集い」が開催される。この集いは春と秋の二回催され、バイエリアを中心とする北カリフォルニア地区の浄土真宗門徒だけでなく、仏教に興味を持つ在米の日本人などが集う。今回、講師は四名で、引退開教使の西村郁雄師、松林芳秀師、谷口昌陽師と、開教使歴50年を迎えた谷口瑞溪師(アラメダ仏教会)。日時は、四月十九日(土)午前十時から午後三時の予定。参加費は20ドルで昼食がつく。

を機にもっとお寺に足を運ぶようになって法話を聞いてくれるようになると思います。」と将来のBCAを担う青年門徒たちに期待を寄せた。