

# WHEEL OF DHARMA

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## Nembutsu Vows Kikyoshiki and Kieshiki Ceremonies

By Rev. Henry Adams  
San Mateo Buddhist Temple

This month's edition of the *Wheel of Dharma* features photos taken on the occasion of Kieshiki Sarana Affirmation Ceremonies conducted at local Buddhist Churches of America Temples.

While these ceremonies were conducted at different temples, in all cases, the participants came before the sacred images of Amida Buddha and Shinran Shonin to make a solemn commitment as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists to live the Nembutsu in their daily lives.

In this Shin Buddhist ceremony, the participants took the important step of affirming their reverence for the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and their determination to tread the path to Buddhahood. The Buddha is the Awakened One who spent many years reflecting on the causes of human suffering before realizing a path to liberation for all beings. The Dharma is the true teaching that the Buddha provided as a means to liberate all beings from suffering. The Sangha is the community of people whose lives are illuminated by the teachings of the Buddha.

The Confirmation Ceremony conducted by the Abbot of the Hongwanji Temple, or Gomonsu, is called "Kikyoshiki." The Gomonsu is a direct descendent



of Shinran Shonin, and resides in Kyoto where he serves as the spiritual leader of our Jodo Shinshu tradition. The Kikyoshiki Ceremony is conducted regularly at the Hongwanji Temple, and may also be conducted in conjunction with a visit by the Gomonsu to a local temple. In the Kikyoshiki, the Gomonsu uses a ceremonial razor to express the symbolism of shaving the head—a reference to the ordination ritual conducted for those who entered the Sangha at the time of the Buddha.

The Sarana Affirmation Ceremony conducted by the Bishop of an overseas district is called

"Kieshiki." The Kieshiki Ceremony is often held in conjunction with a visit by the Bishop to a local temple.

A person who participates in the Kikyoshiki or Kieshiki Ceremony receives a Dharma Name (*bomyo*). In the Jodo Shinshu tradition, the Dharma Name consists of three Chinese Characters: *Shaku* and two Buddhist terms that follow. The word "*Shaku*" means "disciple of Sakyamuni" and signifies that the recipient has joined the followers of the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha, a community that transcends race and nationality. Two Buddhist terms are

individually selected to reflect the recipient's unique journey of life guided by the Dharma. In some cases, the officiant has an opportunity to consult with the recipient regarding the selection of the Dharma Name. In other cases, the Dharma Name is chosen by relying on the working of Amida Buddha's great compassion through the flow of causes and conditions.

Participation in a Kikyoshiki or Kieshiki Ceremony is a once-in-a-lifetime event. All Jodo Shinshu Buddhists are encouraged to participate in either a Kikyoshiki or Kieshiki Ceremony. Receiving a Dharma Name is an expression of

personal commitment to the Buddha's teachings. As such, it does not grant any special status within the Sangha. Likewise, a person who has yet to receive a Dharma Name is not any less committed to living on the path of awakening than someone who has.

Those who have received a Dharma Name, either from the Gomonsu or the Bishop, are encouraged to keep it in a safe place. As the Dharma Name one receives on the occasion of a Kikyoshiki or Kieshiki Ceremony is an expression of one's life as a Buddhist, it is used during funeral and memorial

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Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, officiates Kieshiki ceremonies at BCA temples across the US as 2014 concludes. (Top photo:) West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple, November 23. (Left:) Rev. Umezu offers Buddhist names for a father and son at Ekoji Buddhist Temple, Fairfax, VA. (Center:) Placer Buddhist Church, Penryn, CA, November 9. (Right:) Midwest Buddhist Temple, Chicago, IL, November 16.

### December 8: Bodhi Day – Buddha's Awakening – Jodo-e

Bodhi is the Sanskrit word for enlightenment. Bodhi Day is when Siddhartha Gautama became Sakyamuni Buddha. Siddhartha was 35 when he realized Truth. As a Buddha, he shared the Dharma for 45 years until his death at age 80.

### December 31: New Year's Eve – Joya-e

The last day of the year is an opportunity to reflect upon the past year in preparation for the coming new year. It is a time to think about the interdependency of all life and to ponder all the causes and conditions that have enabled us to live. At some temples, the bell is struck 108 times to remind us of the 108 blind passions (*bonno*) that permeate our everyday lives.

Excerpts used by permission, SHIN BUDDHIST SERVICE BOOK, Buddhist Education Center, Orange County Buddhist Church. Available at the BCA Bookstore. Image at right, Buddhist Church of San Francisco's Bodhi Tree shares messages on each leaf.





By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

Last October 38 Jodo Shinshu followers from seven different states visited Japan. This tour was organized by the Center for Buddhist Education to allow members to visit sites related to the life of Shinran Shonin in three major areas of Japan. We also stopped at important Jodo Shinshu temples established after Shinran's time.

The first day in Tokyo, we visited the Tsukiji Hongwanji, which used to be known as Tsukiji Betsuin. The building is famous for its unique Indian-style architecture. There was a sign out front stating that 2014 marked the 800th

# Making Something from Nothing

anniversary of when Shinran Shonin began propagation work in the Kanto region.

We were greeted by Rev. Yoshinari Inohara and Rev. Jo Takeuchi, two ministers who visited many BCA temples and churches in the U.S. last year. They welcomed us with big smiles. Also, Rev. Ryoei Nanjo, a former Ryukoku University exchange student, was there and spent some time with us. It is nice to see familiar faces at new places.

Many people identify Tsukiji as home of the biggest fish market in Japan. It's popular with tourists because they can get great sushi and sashimi using fresh seafood from the market. Many of our tour group members enjoyed lunch at some of the area's restaurants. Many foreigners visit the Tsukiji fish market, but not too many visit the Hongwanji. There is an interesting history behind name of the

area called Tsukiji. I would like to quote some information that appears in the Tsukiji Hongwanji's pamphlet and share it with you.

"The history of this temple dates back to the year 1617 when Junnyo Shonin, the 12th hierarchical leader, or monshu, of the Hongwanji, established a temple at Yokoyama-cho near Asakusa in Edo (old-time Tokyo). Known in those days as the Edo Asakusa Gobo, the temple went up in flames in the Great Fire of 1657. Unfortunately, permission to rebuild on the original site was denied by the Edo Bakufu (feudal government), as it did not fit in with reconstruction plans for the area.

"In exchange, the temple was allocated a parcel of land off the shoreline of Hatchobori, which had to be reclaimed from the sea. This land reclamation and reconstruction project was undertaken

by countless devout followers, mainly living on nearby Tsukudajima. The word Tsukiji literally means "built-up land," indicating that this district was reclaimed land. When the Main Worship Hall, or Hondo, was built on this land, the temple came to be called Tsukiji Gobo. Thus, the district around the temple is called Tsukiji due to this historical background."

When I read this, I was awed. Our predecessors had completed such an enormous project—making something from nothing. I was so moved by their dedication and determination. It is indeed the nembutsu power!

After spending some time in the Tsukiji area, we visited a newly-built TV tower called the Tokyo Sky Tree. They say this is the world's tallest structure. Its construction was made possible by employing the ancient method used to build tall, wooden Bud-

dhist temples in Kyoto and Nara.

Unfortunately, the day was overcast and we couldn't see anything from the Tokyo Sky Tree observatory. There was a big sign saying "Low Visibility." When we left, I shared my dharma thoughts with the tour members on the bus. Our life is very similar to the view from the observatory: low visibility. We have to be aware that our views are finite and not always correct.

As we turn the last page on the year 2014, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to each and every one of you for your support and guidance throughout the year. We don't know what might happen next year, but let us do our best to accept whatever may come, like the sangha members of Tsukudajima.

I wish you a very happy and great year under the guiding light of Amida Buddha.



By Rev. Bob Oshita, Buddhist Church of Sacramento

From the dawn of human consciousness, language and customs and cultures slowly began to evolve. It is interesting to note that the earliest calendar known to exist, dates back to about 10,000 years ago. I was surprised to learn that it was found in Scotland. The time period of this ancient calendar coincides perfectly with the time that human beings were transitioning from living in nomadic tribes to living in

# Beginnings and Endings

settled agrarian communities; domesticating animals and planting crops. To societies based on agriculture, the measuring of time became an important concern. It was essential to know when to plant the crops in order to maximize the opportunity to have a successful harvest.

Because of this need, the concept of having a "Calendar Year" was created by humanity to give a sense of order to the passage of time. The word "Year" actually traces its roots to the extinct Gothic language. The Gothic word "Jer," means "Season." So, the "New Year," marked the beginning of a new cycle of seasons to plant, cultivate and harvest the life-sustaining crops.

We rarely give thought to how or why humankind began to mark the "Beginnings and Endings" of things. But now, with the coming of every month of December, we mark

the "ending" of another calendar year. All the calendars that have ever existed are human creations trying to mark the passing of time; time that is infinite. From the prospective of infinite time, we might say that there is no beginning or end.

But within our Buddhist tradition, we are encouraged to see that each moment is a New Beginning, slipping immediately into the past. And each moment is also an Ending. Most times we give little thought of each moment being a Beginning and an Ending. But every now and then, something happens to make us realize that this is true. With a birth of new baby into our families, we mark that day, that moment, as a new beginning. And each time we have to know the loss of someone we truly love, we quietly mark that day, that moment, as an ending.

But the Dharma reminds us we are interconnected with

all events and all things in the Karmic Fabric of time and space. Where does a mother's or father's life end and their child's life begin? I know that I will never forget the moment that I received the call that I had lost my Dad; and I will never forget that early morning, the moment, when my Mom took her last breath. Yet our lives are never separate. My life is forever interwoven with theirs in the Karmic Oneness of Life.

Not long after my mother died in April of 2005, a friend said to me, "It hasn't been an easy year, has it?" My response was, "I've found the older I get, there are no 'easy years.'" I added, "I think the last 'easy year' I can remember was when I was ten or eleven years old." Our laughter of agreement was followed by a thoughtful silence; a silence during which I think we both tried to reach back into our memories to

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## New York Buddhist Church

The New York Buddhist Church was established by Rev. Hozen and Mrs. Satomi Seki and concerned lay people in April 1938. The church originally started out in Rev. and Mrs. Seki's home and moved to its first location, a brownstone building in the borough of Manhattan (at 171 West 94th Street) about a year later.

The church members wished to share the Buddha-Dharma in America's most populous city, which then had no center for Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. When New York City underwent urban renewal, the church had to move to make way for a new housing development. The City offered \$24,000 for the move.

The funds were used to build a new church on property owned by the American Buddhist Academy on 105th Street and Riverside Drive, overlooking Riverside Park and the Hudson River. It opened its doors in 1963.

The wishes of the founding members flourish, as today we continue to share the Buddha-Dharma in New York. Our prized possession is the figure of Amida Buddha in our hondo, which Rev. Seki carried in his arms while riding in a one-engine plane from the West Coast to New York City in the 1930s.

New York Buddhist Church  
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## Job Announcement

The Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) and the BCA Endowment Foundation (BCAEF) are pleased to announce a job opening for a Development Assistant. This full-time position will be under the BCAEF, whose primary function is to be the fund raising arm of the BCA, BCAEF and Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS). For a job description and details, please contact Hide Mizuno, BCAEF Executive Director at (415) 776-5068 or email: hmizuno@bcahq.org.

## President's Message



By Dr. Kent Matsuda  
BCA President  
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

The upcoming Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) National Council Meeting will be held at the Crowne Plaza San Diego during the last weekend of February, 2015. Ralph Honda and Terri Omori are the meeting Co-Chairs and have been working on the details for several years. On behalf of the BCA Executive Committee, I would like to thank them and their committees for organizing the meeting.

# A New Format for the National Council Meeting

This year, the main goal is to provide temple leaders with information that they can use to help run their temples. We are trying to give temple leaders tools to help solve some of the common problems that face many of our temples.

Just prior to the meeting, I will host a temple presidents' breakfast at the hotel. Temple presidents will be seated at tables according to the size of their sanghas. I would like the temple presidents to hear from each other about what is working well and what some of the problems are at their respective temples.

The business meeting portion of the weekend has been shortened to just six and one-half hours. Attendees need to read over the materials in the national reports prior to coming to the meeting. We will not have a lot of time for discussions. I would like the attendees to come prepared with questions. This will allow us to utilize our time efficiently.

We will have up to six proposed bylaw changes to go over. I discussed five of them in the

September issue of the Wheel of Dharma; however, I incorrectly worded the proposed change for Issue #2. This dealt with past BCA Presidents serving on the National Board. The way it was worded, it sounds like past BCA Presidents cannot serve on the National Board. As it is currently practiced, past BCA Presidents cannot become directors at large to the National Board unless they have served a three-year term as a district representative. Past BCA Presidents can always serve on the National Board if they are district representatives. The Bylaw change just deals with the situation if the past BCA President wants to become a director at large. Thanks to Dr. Billy Saeki for pointing out the misperception.

At the National Council Meeting, the BCA Budget will need to be passed. Unlike years past, we will vote on the budget right after we discuss it on the National Council floor. Unless the Council votes to do otherwise, I would like the Council to vote on issues after they are discussed and not wait until the following day. Nonethe-

less, parliamentary procedure allows us to delay voting on an issue if the Council votes to do so. Tom Nishikawa from the San Luis Obispo Church will again be our parliamentarian.

On Thursday, February 26, we will have an Institute of Buddhist Studies Symposium on "Buddhism and Counseling." Dr. Carmela Javellana Hirano from the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple and Dr. David Pating from the Buddhist Church of San Francisco will speak. Both are ministers' assistants. That evening, Alan Kita, BCA Chief Administrative Officer, will host an orientation workshop for attendees who are new to the National Council Meeting.

On Friday and Saturday afternoons, we will have a "Dharmathon" session where four ministers will give successive Dharma Talks.

The BCA Eitaikyo Service will be held on Sunday, March 1 at the Buddhist Temple of San Diego. Prior to the service, the San Diego and Vista Buddhist Temple Junior Young Buddhists Associations will hold a breakfast fundraiser.

Please register and make your hotel and travel arrangements early. BCA Vice Presidents Charlene Grinolds and Rick Stambul will be overseeing the registration process. Official temple delegates must return their registration form to BCA headquarters in San Francisco by January 15. Mailed forms must be postmarked by this date. Registration forms can also be faxed or sent via e-mail. One of the official temple delegates must be the temple president. Proxies can only be given to officially registered temple delegates. The proxy form must be signed by the temple president.

I hope to meet all the attendees in San Diego next year, and I hope that everyone who attends this meeting will go home with useful information that can help their temples. Bishop Umezu hopes that everyone attending will go home enthusiastic about being a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist. We welcome feedback from anyone who attends the upcoming meeting. I plan to continue to make changes to the meeting format for 2016 when we meet in Visalia, CA.

## My Path to Becoming a Buddhist Minister



By Rev. Masanori Watanabe,  
Oxnard Buddhist Temple

It will soon be one year since I came to the United States. As the saying goes, time flies.

Ironically, when this article is published in the *Wheel of Dharma* here in the states, I will be in Japan. I've realized that my path to my present position, a Buddhist minister in Oxnard, California, has taken me many places. I'd like to tell you about several experiences which have led me here.

When I was 28 years old, I traveled in India for one month. I visited places such as New Delhi, Benares, Gaya, and Calcutta. I grew up in a Buddhist family, but at that time I was seeking my own way and I believed that traveling might help me find it.

At a spot on the Ganges River I witnessed a cremation. This was shocking to me, as I had not experienced death in such a way before. I could not accept the reality of a person being reduced to ashes. I came back the follow-

ing two days to the cremation site, and again faced my discomfort. After my third experience, I finally acknowledged this ultimate form of impermanence.

When I was in Benares, I heard there was a sightseeing spot near the city. It was a historical site in a village called Sarnath. It was easy to find the ruins because they were really huge. I was impressed by the majesty of the site. There was an enormous stupa. It was beautiful.

Later, I found out that the ruins were where Sakyamuni Buddha delivered his first sermon to his first disciples. The place is called Magadaava in Sanskrit. It means Deer Park. The Three Treasures—Buddha, Dharma and Sangha—were realized there. I had walked on the same grounds on which Buddhism began.

In Gaya, I heard the Dalai Lama. He only spoke for a short time due to illness, but nevertheless, I was inspired by the entire event. Thousands of people came from all over the continent to see him. I admired the Dalai Lama's influence on these Tibetan Buddhists, and saw the strength of their faith in him as a spiritual leader.

During my trip to India I was seeking my way, looking for meaning. Although I came from Japan, where I grew up in a Buddhist family, I definitely was not seeking the Buddhist way, but instead I was looking for other ways. It was much later when I realized these events influenced me to become a Buddhist minister. The experience of the cremation helped me accept the realities of impermanence, and I saw that the Buddha addressed

many other difficulties of life in his teachings.

The Four Marks of Existence is one of the most important of these teachings, because it is characteristic of Buddhism. 1. Life is often uncomfortable (*Dukkha*). 2. Life is impermanent (*Anicca*). 3. Life is interdependent (*Anatta*). 4. Ultimate calm is possible (*Nirvana*). These are key concepts. When we understand these concepts in our hearts, and when we fully accept these teachings, then we can realize our true selves. Siddhartha suffered from the uncertainties of reality, but he found ultimate calm through his enlightenment. His ultimate realization was called Buddhahood. Buddhahood is difficult to imagine. Our tradition's founder, Shinran Shonin, expressed it as Infinite Life and Light.

In his verse *Shoshinge*, Shinran said, "Still the clouds and mists of greed and desire, anger and hatred, cover as always the sky of true and real *shinjin*, but though the light of the sun is veiled by clouds and mists, there is brightness, not darkness."

Shinran Shonin wrote, "Buddha is like the sun. The sun shines on us no matter what happens. Although we cannot live without the sun, we are allowed to live thanks to the sun."

Like this, our Buddha Nature, our ultimate truth, is always with us no matter what our circumstances. Through realizing this, we can feel joy and calm. As long as we are connected to the Buddha, we need not worry. We are embraced by the ultimate truth.

*Namo Amida Butsu.*

## New BCA Kaikyoshi Appointed



The Buddhist Churches of America Office of the Bishop is pleased to announce that Rev. Kenji Akahoshi (left) and Rev. Diana Thompson (right) received Kaikyoshi (Overseas Minister) status from the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha on October 22, 2014. Rev. Thompson serves the Tri-State Denver Buddhist Temple and Rev. Akahoshi serves the Buddhist Temple of San Diego.

**Register now! Check out the new format!**

**2015 BCA MINISTERS' ASSOCIATION & NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING**

**February 25 – March 1, 2015**

**Crowne Plaza Hotel & Buddhist Temple of San Diego**

San Diego, California

Packets have been mailed to BCA temples.

**Registration deadline: January 15, 2015**

In addition to BCA ministers, officers, committee chairs, temple representatives & delegates-at-large, boosters are welcome to exciting new programs.

**Highlights include IBS & CBE programs:**

Feb. 26: IBS Symposium "Buddhism and Counseling"  
Feb. 27 & 28: Dharmathon: Expand the Experience

Conference Co-Chairs: Ralph Honda (BTSD) & Terri Omori (Vista BT)

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# Flourishing Through Difference

## Eastern Buddhist League Meets for the 69th Time

By Kennon Nakamura,  
Ekoji Buddhist Temple

As it has for almost seven decades, the Eastern Buddhist League (EBL) met over Labor Day Weekend 2014, this time at the Ekoji Buddhist Temple in suburban Washington, D.C. In truth, the EBL is a non-organization—it has no constitution, by-laws, articles of incorporation, or officers. It is, instead, the embodiment of a Sangha drawn from nine Jodo Shinshu Buddhist temples and Sanghas located in the eastern part of the U.S. and Canada. It is brought together by a desire to listen to the Buddha Dharma and, through friendship and sharing concerns, to take refuge in the company of fellow travelers.

Ekoji organized and hosted the 2014 conference under the theme “Flourishing through Difference.” The event opened with a “fireside” chat to meet the EBL ministers and continued with workshops for youth and adults to discuss the differences we face at multiple levels: as individuals, within and between our Sanghas and temples, and within our greater society. Differences can divide, differences can be ignored or merely tolerated, or differences can be acknowledged, embraced, and used to benefit the whole. The 2014 conference was a hope for the future that we can all flourish through differences.

At the individual level, we learned techniques through a Naikan (self-reflection) workshop to better understand ourselves and our relationships. At the Meditation and Mindfulness seminar, we sought to exercise our “awareness of our awareness.” Rev. Kurt Rye, Ekoji’s resident minister, commented that contemplative meditation is more than the secular meditation of quieting ourselves. Through contemplative meditation, Buddhism implores us to go beyond our everyday thoughts



Top photo: Rev. Ron Miyamura, Midwest Buddhist Temple; Rev. Kurt Rye, Ekoji Buddhist Temple; Rev. Earl Ikeda, New York Buddhist Church; Rev. Ryuhei Endo, Toronto Buddhist Church; and Rev. Patti Nakai, Buddhist Temple of Chicago.



and enter into our spirituality. The deep listening of Jodo Shinshu can be a part of this.

At temple and Sangha level workshops, participants discussed temple activities designed to share Jodo Shinshu teachings with non-traditional communities, and the dynamics in multifamily families.

At the Multifamily Families seminar, people shared that they receive more support from their families than they originally thought. In some cases, while family support (or lack thereof) did not present barriers, the individuals imposed their own barriers because participating in temple activities meant time away from family members

who were not Buddhist.

In the last workshop, a panel of representatives from each EBL temple explored challenges they face and how these are being addressed. There were many commonalities, as well as important differences that need to be worked through. There was even discussion related to the future of EBL temples and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in our communities.

Participants in the smaller breakout groups offered additional perspectives. Some felt that Buddhism as it is practiced in our temples is losing its Asian-ness. Others felt it was important to separate Japanese culture from the

Dharma to allow a broader audience to see the universal relevance of the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha and Shinran Shonin.

The Sanghas in our temples are changing. To re-develop a sense of community, everyone needs to feel at home and vested in the sense of Sangha. Temples are struggling to figure out how to instill in members a sense of ownership in the life of the temple. How do we convey that being part of the Sangha is more than financial support, coming to the temple, listening to the Dharma talk and then leaving? It also means volunteering to help with major events as well as the day-to-day running of the temple.

Beyond the workshops, participants enjoyed local tours, shopping, and each other’s company. An added bonus was the taiko concert on Saturday night. *Nen Daiko*, Ekoji’s taiko group, celebrated its 20th anniversary with its *In Gratitude* concert at the Synetic Theater. The dynamic and energetic concert included performances by New York Buddhist Church’s *Sob Daiko* and Seabrook Buddhist Temple’s *Hob Daiko*. Both groups were influential in *Nen Daiko*’s start and growth over the years. The concert offered an exciting and educational evening of heart-thumping taiko rhythms, as well as commentary on the influence of Buddhism on taiko from emcees Beth Fujishige and Alan Okada.

In his inspiring keynote remarks at the Sunday farewell banquet, Rev. Earl Ikeda of the New York Buddhist Church talked about the importance of the Hawaii Kyodan, where he recently came from, and the EBL in the future of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Both groups are consciously working on addressing the changing Sangha while continuing to support the legacy of the Japanese American pioneers and founders. He said the new Sangha has a thirst to learn more about Buddhism, especially Jodo Shinshu. For too long, Jodo Shinshu has been hidden under Japanese foliage and so it was “under the radar” of American Buddhism. It needs to move out of the shadows. Jodo Shinshu may have started in Japan but its paradigm is universal. We face differences at many levels, but with Buddhism and the teachings of Shinran Shonin as a basis, we can all flourish together within a new, dynamic Sangha.

The 2015 EBL Conference is scheduled for Labor Day Weekend and will be hosted by the Cleveland Buddhist Temple. Dr. Jeff Wilson will be the guest speaker.

## Mountain States District Conference



On November 8-9, 2014, the Tri-State Denver Buddhist Temple (TSDBT) hosted this annual conference for the Utah and Colorado sanghas. Ministers and Minister’s Assistants presented

music and stories of the “Myokonin,” the wondrous people whose respect for the dharma allowed them to lead lives inspired by the Buddha, thereby inspiring others. Rev. Doei Fujii, TSDBT

resident minister, tells the story of “Namu Ami Man,” an imaginary character, with his own illustrations. Students also participated in the presentations. Rev. Diana Thompson listens from the naijin.

Join the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple & other BCA Sangha at this historic interfaith gathering!

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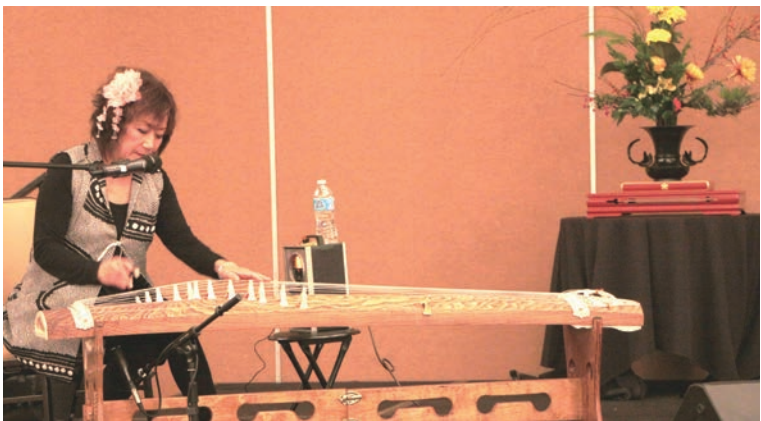
Keynote Speaker:  
**Reverend Harry Bridge**  
Resident Minister  
Oakland Buddhist Temple

Convention Theme:  
**Everyday Rhythm of the Nembutsu**

Hosted by the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple  
Registration Information: [www.seattlebetsuin.org](http://www.seattlebetsuin.org)



# “Sharing Our Life Stories as Buddhists” Draws 650



On October 10-12, 2014, at the Hotel Jamboree Center in Irvine, Calif., the BCA Southern District (SD) hosted the Federation of Buddhist Women’s Association (FBWA) National Conference combined with the SD Federation of Dharma School Teachers League, and the SD Conference. This historic gathering included cultural activities and a variety of Buddhist talks in English and Japanese. Stories of dharma journeys and insights were shared by: Rev. Shimyo Kojima (Soto Zen), Ven. Lekshe Tsomo (founder, Sakyadita International Assoc. for Buddhist Women), Rev. Yoshiko Miyaji (Hongwanji), Rev. Nobuko Mi-

yoshi (Higashi Honganji Betsuin), Mr. Hugh O’Neill (Zen/Mindful Way); Rev. Shoko Angela Oh (Rinzai Zen); Rev. Patricia Usuki (SFV Hongwanji Buddhist Temple); and Rev. Dr. Duncan Williams (Soto Zen/ USC School of Religion).

The banquet program was emceed by Frank Buckley of KTLA’s Morning News. Musical entertainment was provided by koto artist June Kuramoto and keyboardist Kimo Cornwell, both of the popular group Hiroshima. Miko Shudo of the Grateful Crane Ensemble and a group of talented young jazz musicians also performed.



Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi



Ven. Karma Lekshe Tsomo



Rev. Shoko (Angela) Oh



Counter clockwise from top left: Ikebana demonstration; Hoppo Fukuoka guests (center, left to right: Sachiyo Kato, Kinuko Ito, Toyomi Yamashita, Yumiko Noguchi) make a presentation to FBWA Dianne Belli (left), Karen Suyama, BDBWL Chair (right); June Kuramoto on koto; Bishop Umezu installs the new FBWA Cabinet: Northwest District BWA. Photo credit: Tom Nishikawa

## Central Cal Nembutsu Seminar: “Why is the Easy Path so Difficult?”



On October 5, 2014, the Central Cal District Council presented this annual event at the Buddhist Church of Fowler in Fowler, CA. Rev. Kiyo Kuwahara & International Ministerial Orientation Program (IMOP) ministers led interactive presentations for Dharma School students, Jr. YBA, adults and Japanese speakers.

## Bay District Ministers Assoc. presents: “History, Liturgy, Teachings: Shinran Shonin’s Shoshinge”



On October 19, 2014, over 60 people attended this all-day seminar at the San Mateo Buddhist Temple in San Mateo, CA

## Berkeley BWA Celebrates 100 Years



Berkeley BWA Co-presidents Yuki Otake (left) and Caroline Fernandez (right). Photo by Suzie Sakuma.

By Edythe Vassall,  
Berkeley Buddhist Temple

There were many, many hours of preparation leading up to the Berkeley Buddhist Women’s Association (BBWA) Centennial Celebration on September 28, 2014. First, deciding on with the 100th anniversary theme: *Buddhist Women: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. Then lots of meetings and fundraisers.

Two dedicated women—BBWA Co-presidents Yuki Otake and Caroline Fernandez—were at the center of the activity. Talented artists and writers put together the commemorative program booklet. Emiko Katsumoto and Dii Lewis organized practice sessions for the Sangha Singers, who led the gatha singing.

BBWA members and friends



The next generation (left to right): Maya, Kiana, Maile, and Anna, with Russell and Amy Ware. Photo by Suzie Sakuma.

folded hundreds of origami cranes and crafted gorgeous corsages, and Chef Alan Hirahara led a group of volunteers to create 200 delicious bento lunches by hand.

Though these may seem like mundane tasks, they gave us precious opportunities to come together as sangha members with a common goal, under the light of the BuddhaDharma.

A solemn and joyful service celebrated the BBWA of today and honored the many women who brought us here. The service was presided over by Bishop Kodo Umezu and attended by representatives of all the Bay District BWAs and Bay District

Buddhist Women’s League president, Karen Suyama.

Bay Area ministers and their spouses, Keiro kai (senior) members, visiting ministers from Japan, and many other guests were present. In total, over 200 people attended the service and luncheon that followed at the El Cerrito Community Center.

The commemoration left everyone with feelings of gratitude and appreciation for the Three Treasures, for each other, and for the women of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple who have been the backbone of the Berkeley sangha for one hundred years.



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

### Ikiru: To Live

by Rev. Marvin Harada, CBE Co-director

I would like to discuss the classic Akira Kurosawa movie, *Ikiru* (to live) and relate the Buddhist teachings and messages that I received from the movie.

*Ikiru* is about a city bureaucrat in Japan named Watanabe, who finds out that he has stomach cancer and maybe six months or a year to live. Watanabe is shocked and dismayed by his plight. He just can't face his death, because he realizes that he hasn't done anything meaningful in his life.

He goes on a search to find something meaningful. He goes to a bar and thinks about "living it up" for a night, but he realizes his life has been so mundane that he doesn't even know how to "live it up."

Watanabe then begins to follow around and spend time with a young woman who used to work in his office. He is attracted to her not in a romantic sense, but because she seems so alive, so vibrant. He wants to live even one day like her but doesn't know how. Finally, she suggests that he try building or making something. She has a job in which she makes toys. She finds making toys for children very enjoyable.

The light goes on in Watanabe's head, and he realizes that he *can* make something. Mothers had been coming into the city office complaining about a swampy area of town that was a mess, but these citizens just got the runaround. Watanabe himself had sent them off to the engineering department, where they were sent to sewage, then to pest control, etc. etc. He realized he could do something meaningful in his life. He could make a park for children.

In the touching final scene of the movie, Watanabe had gone to the park at night and died while sitting on one of the swings in the park he had built, happy and content with his life, because he had done something meaningful.

What would you do if the doctor told you that you had six months or a year to live? It could happen to any of us at any time. Would you feel like Watanabe, that you wouldn't be able to die because you had never done anything meaningful in life? How would you live those remaining months?

It is a challenging question. If we have been living a meaningful life, then even if we only had six months to live, we would be able to face and accept our death. But if we haven't had a meaningful life, if we have been just existing and not truly living, then death poses a real question for us. What have I been living for? Just to take up space on this earth? Just to consume precious natural resources? Even if we have had a meaningful career, we might feel like we were just one cog in a big wheel of a corporation that went on just fine without us after we retired.

The late Rev. Kakue Miyaji, father of our Rev. Akio Miyaji, used to say in his lectures that if you truly understand Shin Buddhism, then you can die at any time, no matter when it comes. I think this means that a person who has found their deepest meaning of life is able to face and accept death whenever it comes, because they have lived a most meaningful life, every day.

The *Myokonin*\* Saichi says in one of his poems, "When I die, I will become the immortal *Namuamidabutsu*." For Saichi, he can die at any time because he has found the deepest meaning of life in the *Nembutsu*. Death doesn't mean simply the end of his life, because he has encountered the truth of the *Nembutsu* as a timeless, eternal truth. Saichi doesn't become immortal, but he becomes the immortal *Namuamidabutsu*.

Through the *Nembutsu* we can find our deepest meaning of life. We can come to know deeply what it means to live (*ikiru*), and we can come to face and accept our own death because we have lived something meaningful.

\**Myokonin*: a very devout Jodo Shinshu follower; usually a person from a humble background.

### IMOP Ministers Successfully Complete Training

Buddhist Churches of America Bishop, Rev. Kodo Umezū presented the participants in the International Ministerial Orientation Program (IMOP) with certificates of completion at a special service on November 21, 2014. IMOP ministers aspire to become *kaikyoshi* ministers in the mainland US, Hawaii, or Canada. The program enables them to learn about Jodo Shinshu ministry in the West. In three months, they visited over 20 temples, participated in 34 activities, and attended over 186 hours of lectures.



Mission Accomplished: IMOP participants received their completion certificates. (From left to right:) Rev. Makoto Ichiba, Rev. Nariaki Hayashi, BCA Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezū, Rev. Joshin Kamuro, and Rev. Shinji Ouchi.

"One of the most memorable experiences of the past three months was attending the Ministers' Continuing Education Seminar. I got a lot of useful advice on my Dharma talk from Dr. George Tanabe and the other participants. Moreover, I was able to hear twelve other ministers' Dharma talks during the three days. I really learned a lot from this workshop, and deeply appreciated the seminar." —Rev. Joshin Kamuro

"My most unforgettable experience was giving a Dharma talk in English. English pronunciation was especially hard, but I learned that I am supported by many people." —Rev. Makoto Ichiba

"Through the IMOP program, I truly found out that Shin Buddhism is not a religion just for the Japanese, but for the entire world and for the entire human race. I felt the power of *Nembutsu*, how it connects people together. It is a big challenge for me to spread the *Nembutsu* to others who haven't yet encountered the Dharma; however, I am looking forward to engaging in my ministry for the BCA in the near future." —Rev. Nariaki Hayashi

### Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course - Monthly Essay

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



#### On the Relationship between Seeking Spiritual Awakening for Oneself and the Practice of Helping Others on the Bodhisattva Path of Mahayana Buddhism

By Caroline Brazier  
Tariki Trust, Leicester, UK

The great innovation of Mahayana Buddhism was the establishment of the *bodhisattva* ideal as the path to awakening. The bodhisattva vows to save all beings before entering nirvana him or herself and to "remain in the realm of birth and death working for the benefit of all beings until every last one is delivered from suffering."

Whilst the Buddha himself had established a teaching based on ethical behaviour and had exemplified compassion and practical caring in his dealing with the early *sangha*, the spiritual tradition which emerged from his time was largely based on the idea of individual progression within the ordained *sangha* towards personal liberation. This was achieved through following a lifestyle of practice and asceticism. The path of the *Arahat*, as it was known, was the embodiment of nobility and was supported by adherence to a set of rules known as the *vinaya*.

About five centuries after the time of the Buddha, a new movement was established within Buddhism. This was partly the result of various changes which had happened in the Buddhist community and disputes which had arisen over its monastic vows. We can, however, see that this movement in fact gave form to aspects of Buddhist thought which dated back to the time of the Buddha himself.

Mahayana Buddhism seems to have emerged as a distinct entity around the first century CE. It was particularly associated at that time with the growing popularity across East Asia of the Lotus Sutra. This text particularly expressed the bodhisattva ideal, a concept which was to become the hallmark of the Mahayana.

#### Vows and Aspiration

The bodhisattva ideal is centered on the bodhisattva vow. This vow to save all sentient beings is aspirational. In contrast with the practical monastic vows of the *vinaya*, which define behaviour, its tone is expansive and, in practical terms, its aim is unattainable. Vowing to save all sentient beings is a logical impossibility, especially if one is competing with all other Mahayana Buddhists for the privilege! Rather, vows of this kind primarily offer inspiration. They are intended as much to evoke particular mind states as they are to be literally achieved. This does not negate the intent of the practice in developing deep compassion, however. Compassion is the bedrock of Mahayana.

The idea of aspirational vows permeates Mahayana thought. The traditions of this movement, which is known as "the great way", are big-minded. The great vows of the tradition indeed evoke big-mindedness; they give birth to the vow-mind. In the text this month, in addition to reference to the bodhisattva vow itself, we read of the great bodhisattvas; celestial beings who are each associated with particular vows. These figures, including Dharmakara Bodhisattva, show that the vow-mind itself becomes a channel for the transformation of all sentient beings.

#### Vows and Personal Transformation

The bodhisattva vows are intended to cultivate compassion and to invite nobler mind states. They are also concerned with personal transformation. Many Mahayana traditions have extensive practices related to developing bodhisattva mind. More than this, the bodhisattva vows aspire to transcend selfishness through the focus on others. Transcending self is the path to enlightenment, since, in the service of others, one naturally moves away from self-preoccupation.

This link between the bodhisattva aspiration and personal transformation raises questions. Does a person aspire to save all beings altruistically, or is the aspiration basically for their own benefit because it is a route to enlightenment? In response to such critiques, some Mahayana Buddhists claim that in order to help all sentient beings they need first to be enlightened, since without the insight of an enlightened mind, they are likely to be acting out of self-interest anyway. Such arguments, however, seem to me rather circuitous and against the spirit of Mahayana.

#### The Bodhisattva Vow: Self Power or Other Power?

Although, the bodhisattva vow reads as the ultimate expression of intentionality, it is also deeply devotional. The eighth century Indian scholar, Shantideva, described *bodhicitta*, the bodhisattva mind, as a lightning flash in the dark of night. Aspiration to *bodhicitta* is as a gift, arriving unexpectedly to inspire the practitioner to joy-filled good works. This sense of the bodhisattva spirit is similar to the Pureland idea of the *nembutsu* arising out of a moment of grace. The Bodhisattva vow can therefore be seen as an expression of transformation as much a route towards it, embodying the spirit of Buddha within everyday practice.

The vow-mind is not our own. According to the Shin tradition, it is Amida's grace, working through us. In allowing the vow-mind to work within our lives, we do not choose our own enlightenment or to work for universal salvation, so much as we allow our lives to attune to the light, unfolding in the fruition of Amida's vow, available to all who seek it.

Caroline Brazier is a Shin practitioner living in Leicester, UK at Tariki Trust ([www.tarikitrust.org](http://www.tarikitrust.org)) where she teaches and practices psychotherapy. She has been taking the online JSCC study program with BCA for the last year.

### CBE 2014 Calendar of Events

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

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

**March 7, 2015:** Winter Pacific Seminar at the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple  
Guest Speaker: Rev. Tomoyasu Chiko Naito, Professor Emeritus, Ryukoku University

**March 13-16, 2015:** TechnoBuddha Seminar

**June 27, 2015:** Shin Buddhism & the LGBTQ Community Seminar at the New York Buddhist Church

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



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

**Ministers' Assistants Receive Tokudo Ordination**



On November 14, 2014, thirteen North American ministers' assistants received Tokudo ordination after completing a 10-day training session in Kyoto, Japan. Twelve are from the Buddhist Churches of America and one is from the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada. First row, l to r: Irene Goto, Laverne Imori, Karen Mukai, Toshie Mori, Ellen Crane, Carmela Javellana-Hirano, Isabelle Bernard, Cheryl Ikemiya. Second row, l to r: Yubachiro (Yuki) Mori, Tadao Koyama, Keith Kato, Vonn Magnin, and Robert Gubenco. Photo by Rev. Yoshiko Morioka, Hongwanji Press. Please read the article below by Sensei Tadao Koyama to learn more.

**Our Tokudo Experience**

By Sensei Tadao Koyama, Buddhist Church of Florin

I was certainly blessed to be accompanied by extremely supportive and encouraging individuals. Despite all of us being from different temples, states, and in Bob's case, from another country, we all stuck together and supported each other. We were the "gaikokujin" or "foreigner" Tokudo group. Not that we faced prejudice from the Japanese group—they were extremely supportive of us as well—but we especially needed to look out for each other as many of us were not familiar with the culture of Japan. Thank goodness we had Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Rev. Gene Sekiya, and the Hongwanji staff to assist us!

During our stay at the Hongwanji International Center, we were fortunate to have Sekiya Sensei and Kuwahara Sensei escort us to many of the historic and significant sites that played a large part in Nishi Hongwanji's past, such as the Otani Mausoleum, Higashi Hongwanji, and the Honzan [Nishi Hongwanji] itself. After three days of touring these sites, we were driven to Nishiyama Betsuin to begin our training.

Our schedule was incredibly demanding. Wake up every morning at 5:30 am for cleaning chores, Shoshinge morning service at 7:00 am, a three-hour morning lecture at 9:00 am, another three-hour lecture after lunch, Shoshinge evening service at 5:00 pm, testing starting at 6:45 pm, bedtime service at 7:30 pm, and if you were assigned to sit on the *Naijin* (shrine area) for the next day's service you had rehearsal right after! Some nights we did not get to sleep until 11:00 pm. We would repeat this schedule for ten days and by day eight, we were starting to buckle against the schedule.

Our instructors were incredibly strict! They would scold us many times if we made a mistake in our chanting or if we made the slightest error in our ritual practice. They expected us to do our very best and refused to accept anything less. While the instructors might have seemed harsh, our group also viewed them as some of the most caring and compassionate people we have ever met. They wanted to convey the seriousness of us becoming Tokudo ministers and not to take it lightly. We were reminded again and again that people will now look at us as ministers so our expectations for ourselves should be just as high if not higher than those of the Hongwanji. Our instructors made sure that we were in the best condition when we were officially ordained as Jodo Shinshu ministers on the tenth day by *Gomonshu Sama*. Our group will forever be grateful to them.

We all may have had different causes and conditions that led us to Kyoto. However our group shared one thing in common that will forever bind us together; we wish to share the Dharma and teach our traditions of Jodo Shinshu in the United States and Canada. I am grateful to our Tokudo group, to our teachers here in the United States for amply preparing us for this session, to the Buddhist Churches of America, and especially to the Buddhist Church of Florin for giving me this opportunity to participate in this journey.

In deep gratitude, I recite the Nembutsu; *Namo Amida Butsu*.

**MCE Seminar Features Dharma Talk Workshop**

The Ministers' Continuing Education (MCE), from November 11-13, 2014, included lectures and presentations by several speakers. However, the highlight of this seminar was an exciting and challenging Dharma Talk Workshop created and facilitated by Dr. George Tanabe, professor emeritus in the Department of Religion at the University of Hawaii. Dharma talks were given by the attendees, digitally recorded, and then played back for review and critique.

"This may be a first for us, in BCA, to have a ministers' training session like this, dedicated to critiquing each other's dharma talks and getting feedback for improvement," said Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) Co-director, Rev. Marvin Harada. "We really appreciate Dr. Tanabe's guidance in this dynamic and interactive workshop." About 18 ministers attended the workshop.

"I appreciated that... after I delivered a dharma talk, other ministers gave me some frank and honest opinions," Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki stated. "Later, I deeply thought about how I could improve my dharma talk with reference to their opinions. It was a good opportunity to reconsider my dharma talk."

"Thanks to Dr. Tanabe for his careful planning of the seminar on dharma talks," said Rev. Henry Adams. "I came away from the seminar with a better understanding of how I give dharma talks and areas in which I can improve. As much as reflecting on my own speaking, I was inspired by hearing other ministers speak."

This seminar was co-sponsored by Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai America.



Ministers' Continuing Education seminars provide BCA ministers with valuable opportunities to improve their skills. In addition to the Dharma Talk Workshop, led by Dr. George Tanabe (left), other speakers included Rev. Michio Tokunaga of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha (via skype), and Sister Ayya Santusika, representing Buddhist Global Relief. (BuddhistGlobalRelief.org)

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

**PACIFIC SEMINAR - 21ST CENTURY - WINTER SESSION**

**Life of Awakening: True Teaching**

Guest Speaker & Visiting Scholar:  
**Professor Tomoyasu Chiko Naito**  
 Kangaku, Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

**Saturday, March 7, 2015**  
**9:00 am - 4:00 pm**  
**Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple**  
 1427 S. Main Street, Seattle, WA 98144

Keynote Presentation in Japanese: English Translation by Rev. Mutsumi Wondra

**Registration: \$30 (includes lunch) Deadline: February 23, 2015**

BCA Northwest District Temple Members: Please register through your temple. Please make checks payable to "Seattle Betsuin" Memo: "Winter Pacific Seminar 2015" Mail to: Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple (at the address above) Attn: Winter Pacific Seminar

**Contact: Email: office@seattlebetsuin.com Phone: (206) 329-0800**

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# Finding Our Second Home

## Federation of Buddhist Women's Association Youth Exchange to Japan

By Kristi Fukunaga,  
Oregon Buddhist Temple &  
Rosie Yasukochi,  
Seattle Buddhist Temple Betsuin



Left to right: Rosie Yasukochi, Kristi Fukunaga, and Japan exchange student to Hawaii, Fukumi Ta, with Lady Ruzumi Ohtani.

Between the two of us, we had different reasons for wanting to go on the exchange program:

For me, Rosie Yasukochi, I've found that being half Japanese puts me in a weird position of self-identification, so traveling to Japan has always seemed like not only a good way to help me learn more about where I come from, but also become more self-assured in who I am. For me, Kristi Fukunaga, I had wanted to go to Japan because of the lack of Buddhism I experienced while at college. I had missed the selfless time and space to reflect and the community that Buddhism offers.

The opportunities during those two weeks were unmatched by anything we'd experienced before, something we are both incredibly grateful for. During our trip we got to attend services at Hongwanji, tour the Hongwanji National Treasure rooms, see other temples throughout Japan, taste the waters of Kiyomizu, visit the historical sites of Shinran's birth, life, and death, and view the Peace Museum in Hiroshima. Having the opportunity to visit such sites was amazing because the history we learn at such a small age became a reality around us. Visiting these areas and going to services at the Hongwanji also brought an awe and peacefulness we had missed that can only be felt at temple grounds.

We were also very intrigued by the opportunity to learn how young Buddhists in Japan explore their religion; especially in comparison to the programs and Young Buddhist Association (YBA) retreats we have attended here in the states. When we went to Sapporo, the age range of the Japanese YBA was shocking since the age group seemed to be predominantly mid 20's to mid 30's, whereas here in the US the age groups are predominantly under 21. It was suggested that for Japan to involve more young people, they should introduce programs similar to our Youth Advocacy Committee and Young Leaders of Today Conferences here in America. On the other hand, here in the US we lack programs for people out of college to attend, so having something like the Japanese style YBA conference would continue opportunities for young professionals just out of school. It is this age group that we feel is a shame to lack opportunities for because they are the people who are able to get more involved as they start to figure out their lives, and it is this age group that younger students look up to the most.

When we reflect back on our experience, what we remember most and feel the most apprecia-

tive for are all the people we had the chance to meet along the way. We had always wanted the opportunity to stay with host families, but it was twice as amazing to be paired with a Buddhist families. They were wonderful people; everyone was hilarious and friendly, and it was also cool to see how they ran their days as residential ministers. Getting to know the different Fujinkai ladies was a lot of fun, as they all had their own pizzazz. Being around them made us realize how fortunate we are to have them around, both in the States and in Japan. Meeting the Gomonshu and Lady Ohtani was a lifetime experience; they were so humble and nice. But most of all, spending time with the different reverends was amazing. It was eye opening to meet the abundance of younger reverends in Japan because it made us realize that this could be a lifestyle for a young adult too.

In the end, Japan gave us exactly what we were looking for: a personally fulfilling experience and a chance to meet different people and places. It gave us an opportunity to learn about our history and culture, and an understanding of the differences between America and Japan that can be used to help both countries. For Kristi it also opened up an opportunity to use and improve her Japanese skills. All these components are what made this a trip of a lifetime. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the people who made this incredible trip possible. To the Federation of Buddhist Women's Association, we hope to help build up more membership in people our age, because we don't think enough of us realize just how incredible an organization you are. Thank you to the Gomonshu and Lady Ohtani, to our host families, to the members of the Hongwanji International and Educational Department, the Fujinkai, our translators, everyone else we had the luck to meet, for allowing us to have such an incredible and meaningful time. We hope to come back and visit everyone really soon because Japan and its people have a special place in our hearts.

## 2014 PABT BWA Ruby Inouye Scholarship Recipient Essay

### What Buddhism Means to Me

By Stephanie Aurelius  
Palo Alto Buddhist Temple

I'm a minority in my town. In Danville, California, the majority of the 50,000 people who reside here are Christian. Sometimes people ask about the religion, and I'm never quite sure how to accurately describe it. I usually give the simplified version: treat all beings with respect, avoid anger, greed, and ignorance by being compassionate. To me, Buddhism is a way of life. Buddhism teaches patience, understanding, and empathy. With these teachings, I see life in a different way than others. I don't just use Buddhist teachings at church; I practice them every single day. Buddhism has shaped me into the person that I am today.

I use Buddhism during the day. More often than not, some wild mom cuts me off on my drive to school. Instead of shouting some choice words, I take a breath and imagine things from her point of view. Maybe she's late to a meeting for a job that she slaves over. Maybe she's rushed to get to a job interview that she needs in order to provide for her family. With this mindset, I realize that the situation that she is in is most likely more important than me getting to school twenty seconds earlier



The Palo Alto Buddhist Women's Association awarded its 2014 Ruby Inouye Scholarship to Stephanie Aurelius, daughter of Lani and John Aurelius of Danville. Stephanie was the Palo Alto Jr. YBA co-president and was the Bay District Jr. YBA co-historian. She is attending California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo and majoring in Environmental Science. From left to right: Rev. Dean Koyama, Stephanie, Ruby Inouye, Lani and John Aurelius.

than I would have. It's not worth getting angry. I've learned to take a step back and analyze the situation before getting emotional or taking things personally.

I use Buddhism at night. When I get home from school, all I want to do is take a shower and sleep. This plan is usually interrupted by my parents' relentless questions about classes, homework, and my social life. As much as I want to lock myself in my room and relax, I know that I have to suck it up and hang out with my family. After being separated for the majority of the day, they just want to be able to spend time with me and savor the little time they have left before I leave for college. I need to appreciate that they care about how my day was. I understand that they are just doing their jobs as parents. I

shouldn't be annoyed with them, I should be looking up to them; they are amazing parents and I aspire to be like them when I'm a parent myself.

Buddhism is a huge part of my life. Sometimes I don't even realize that I'm using the practices that I have learned. I don't think that I would be the person that I am today if it wasn't for my Buddhist upbringing. The traits that I have acquired from practicing Buddhism will help me throughout my life. Now, I separate myself from insignificant situations and I look at things from other points of view. Buddhism has taught me that when I grow up, I want to be the best person that I can be for myself and my family. No matter where I end up or what I do, I want to be happy with myself and my decisions.

## BCA YAC Summer Retreat: July 6-12, 2015

The Youth Advocacy Committee will sponsor the 2015 BCA YAC Summer Retreat on July 6-12, 2015.

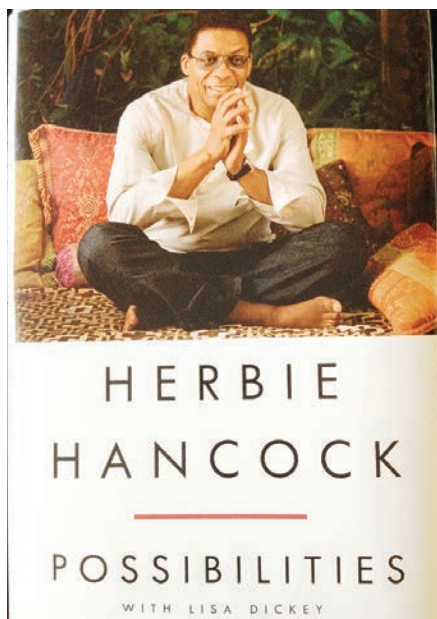
Hosted by the Sacramento Betsuin, it is open to youth ages 14-18 years old.

For application details, please contact the following: Rev. Patti Oshita, poshita@comcast.net, Revs. Tim & Carol Castle, teamcastle@comcast.net, Sensei Grace Hatano, bghat1@sbcglobal.net, Sensei Koichi Mizushima, bkmizu@gmail.com, Sensei Kelvin Mark, 273kmark@sbcglobal.net and Sensei Keith Kato, kmasamikato@gmail.com



## BCA Bookstore News

By Gayle Noguchi



Now available: *Herbie Hancock – Possibilities*, Hardcover \$29.95.

In the first two pages of this memoir, legendary jazz musician Herbie Hancock recounts an embarrassing moment while performing on stage with Miles Davis that could easily be a dharma talk.

With humility, Hancock shares the unfolding events of his extraordinary life blessed by rare and unique talent – from his beginnings as a child prodigy, his professional days of working with Miles Davis and other incredibly talented musicians, his groundbreaking innovation with new forms of jazz, winning multiple Grammys, to his receiving an Oscar for the score of *Round Midnight*.

However, through his reflections we see that his life

is actually no different from anyone else's – it comes down to a myriad of circumstances, connections, challenges, and choices that form the raw material for awakening and inner transformation.

Hancock credits his Buddhist practice of over forty years with inspiring and guiding him both creatively and personally.

Following his chosen path of Nichiren Buddhism, Hancock's spiritual journey continues to awaken him to the universal truths of the Buddha-Dharma to which all paths ultimately lead.

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



# Brave, Courageous, Bold! Women in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism

By Julianne Ho, Lauren Ho,  
Stacey Kawabata,  
Kylie Mukoyama, Vicky Shinkawa  
Mountain View Buddhist Temple,  
Girl Scout Troop #60736  
Padma Award – Dharma Talk given  
on Girl Scout Sunday, March 2014

Brave, courageous, bold, articulate, determined, and independent. Raise your hand if some of these words describe someone that you know. Keep your hand raised if that person is a family member. Now, keep it raised if it is a woman. If you are still raising your hand, she has something in common with women who have influenced Buddhism. We are going to tell you about some brave and bold women and their contributions to Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

First we will go to India 566 BCE.

**Queen Maya:** Queen Maya is an important person in Buddhism. She is the mother of Gautama Buddha. Queen Maya had a dream that a white elephant walked around her five times and then struck her on her right side. It meant she would have a powerful son. She gave birth to him in Lumbini's garden and then died seven days later. After Siddhartha became enlightened he visited his mother in heaven for three months to pay his respects. As the mother of Gautama Buddha, Queen Maya is an important Buddhist matriarch.

**Prajapati:** Maha Prajapati Gotami was a princess and Queen Maya's younger sister. After Queen Maya died, Prajapati mar-

ried King Suddhodana and took on the responsibility of raising Prince Siddhartha. After Siddhartha became enlightened, Prajapati was very determined to join the sangha, but Gautama Buddha refused. She led a following of ladies to practice the Buddha's teachings, and boldly pleaded with Gautama Buddha to allow women to become members of the sangha. She was determined to join the sangha when no women were allowed. It was brave and courageous of her to give up the life of a privileged queen, cut off her hair and wear the yellow robes of a monk. Prajapati's contribution to Buddhism is very important. She became the first Buddhist nun, allowing other women to join the sangha.

Now let's fast forward to 12th century Japan ...

**Eshinni-ko:** Eshinni-ko and Kakushinni-ko are two very important women in our religion. They were the closest family members to Shinran. We have them to thank for much of what we know about our founder. Their letters reveal not only their existence, but also the well-being of Shinran in his last days.

Eshinni-ko was Shinran Shonin's wife, born as an aristocrat's daughter in Niigata prefecture. As a very independent woman, she didn't depend on her husband for food or money. Eshinni-ko was one of Shinran's major benefactors, supporting their family financially when her husband was not able to, due to his exile.

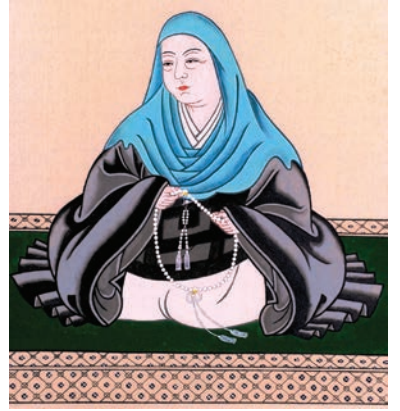
She is known for the ten letters that she sent to her daughter,

Kakushinni-ko. These letters tell us how ordinary women practiced Buddhism at the time. They show us how the Nembutsu guides someone through the typical worries of life. The letters also give us some insight into Shinran's life. Eshinni-ko was a resilient woman because, even though the era might have been tough for a woman, she still found time to live a fulfilling life through the Nembutsu teachings.

**Kakushinni-ko:** Kakushinni-ko was Shinran Shonin's daughter, his sixth and youngest child. While Eshinni-ko took care of Shinran in his productive years, Kakushinni-ko was his caregiver in his final years and in his last days in Kyoto. She was about 30 years old when he died. After her father died, she created a memorial structure at her father's gravesite. The mausoleum became the foundation of the Hongwanji. It is credited with keeping Jodo Shinshu alive past Shinran's days.

Kakushinni-ko was devoted to her father and determined to spread his teachings. She took care of his mausoleum, and made sure that the property available to her through her second husband would belong to the Jodo Shinshu sangha. This was the beginning of the Hongwanji temple. Incidentally, the current monshu can trace his lineage to Kakushinni-ko's son, rather than one of Shinran's older male children.

Eshinni-ko and Kakushinni-ko were smart and devoted followers who were at the same time women who had to take care of a family



and household. It is important to remember that even today women have always been as important as men in the foundation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

Without these two women, we may not even be practicing Jodo Shinshu Buddhism today.

And today, there are women who continue to lead us in the practice of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Two current day ministers are Reverend Seijo Naomi Nakano and Reverend Patricia Usuki.

**Reverend Seijo Naomi Nakano:** Reverend Seijo Naomi Nakano is the current minister at Guadalupe Buddhist Church and San Luis Obispo Buddhist Temple. Reverend Nakano was brave to decide to go back to school after 20 years. She spent her first year learning how to become a student again. She was courageous to go into a field of study where there are mostly men. She was determined to become a minister and spent 5 years at the Institute of Buddhist Studies where she received her master's degree. Reverend Nakano's contribution to Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is that she became a minister and teaches us the true meaning of the Golden Chain and the teachings of Amida Buddha.

**Reverend Patricia Usuki:** Reverend Usuki is currently the head minister at the San Fernando Val-

ley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. Like Queen Maya, she is also an important Buddhist woman. She was born in Toronto, Canada and was brought up in the United Church of Canada. As an adult she began to reflect on her life and the reasons she's been able to enjoy such a wonderful life. In Shin Buddhism she found her answers. She says, "I am the beneficiary of the wisdom and compassion of all life that has come together." In 2007 her master's thesis was published as a book, *Currents of Change: American Buddhist Women Speak Out on Jodo Shinshu*. This was the first study of women's experiences in the Buddhist tradition, and she was invited to speak at temples across the U.S. She says her own experience in being a Buddhist reverend has been very positive. Reverend Usuki is an important Buddhist woman.

Before we lose your attention, ponder this; would you be here without these women? Would your lives be the same if they never existed? Does the brave, courageous, bold, articulate, independent woman you know sound like any of these women? We hope that you have learned something new through our Dharma talk today, and that you appreciate these historical and current figures a bit more.

*Namo Amida Butsu*

## Remembering a Good Dharma Friend



Masami Mayeda, good Dharma friend of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS), passed away on Sept. 21, at the age of 88. For many decades, Mr. Mayeda engaged everyone at IBS in spirited conversations about the Buddhist teachings



humble respect for all beings.

As the landscape gardener at IBS, Mr. Mayeda demonstrated that our shared empathy for all beings—humans, animals, plants and earth—will allow happiness and hope to grow. In this 1978 photo Mr. Mayeda is seen planting a bodhi tree in front of the IBS on Haste Street in Berkeley. That tree, as well as the enlightenment that it symbolizes and the Dharma that everyone at IBS loves to talk about, is thriving today. Thank you, Mr. Mayeda, for enriching our lives in so many ways.

*In Gassho,*

The board, faculty, staff and students of IBS

and importance of Jodo Shinshu in the world. In particular, he loved to stress the Buddha's teaching of equal treatment for all, Prince Shotoku's policy of harmony, and Shinran Shonin's

## Selected Haiku

By Ji-Shin Marcus Cumberlege

*If Shinran reaches  
the Pure Land how much more so  
a bombu like me?*

*Every single leaf  
in our tiny garden  
whispers Amida's Name.*

*Life is a learning  
process and I am grateful  
for some hard lessons.*

*True meaning of  
Namo Amida Butsu  
is 'bearing the call'*

*Friends are like stars,  
you cannot always see them,  
but you know they are there.*



© Marcus Cumberlege. Reprinted with author's permission. www.marcuscumberlege.com A Belgium-based poet and educator, Marcus was a participant at the 17th annual European Shin Buddhist Conference held at Solent University in Southampton, UK, September 1-4, 2014.

## IN GRATITUDE TO OUR DONORS

### Friends of IBS Ministerial Scholarship Fund

The Institute of Buddhist Studies would like to gratefully acknowledge all who have extended their generosity and support of the Friends of IBS Ministerial Scholarship Fund. The total received since we began this fund is \$82,745. Thanks to the generous and timely response of BCA members, organizations and friends, we have already begun distribution of financial assistance to ministerial students. Following are the individuals, families and organizations who have made contributions from October through November 1, 2014:

Mrs. Misako Akiyama  
Mr. Mark Aratani and Ms. Lauren Asaba  
Dr. Ben and Mrs. Kiyo Chikaraishi  
Ms. Beth Fujishige  
Mrs. Yukiko Hirata  
Mr. Tim and Mrs. J. Kajita  
Mr. and Mrs. Kuni Kitajima  
Ms. Gayle Kono  
Mrs. Lynne Masumoto  
Dr. Kent Matsuda  
Mr. Roy and Mrs. Masako Matsuo  
Rev. Nobuo and Rev. Yoshiko Miyaji  
Mr. David and Mrs. Lily Nakatani  
Mrs. Chiyoko Nishimori  
Mr. Steve and Mrs. Fumi Nishimori and Family  
Mr. Robert and Mrs. Gayle Noguchi  
Mr. Rickey David Ono  
Mrs. Joyce Ouchi  
Mr. Charles and Mrs. Teri Ozaki  
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Mr. Isamu and Mrs. Mariko Yoneyama  
Mr. Kevin and Mrs. Keiko Yoshida  
Mr. Ronald and Mrs. Janice Yoshimoto  
Ms. Midori N. Yoshimura

### IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. Chiyoko Nishimori ~  
In memory of her late husband, Mr. Minobu Nishimori

Mr. and Mrs. Steve Nishimori and family ~  
In memory of Mr. Minobu Nishimori

Mrs. Lynne Masumoto ~ In memory of Rev. Ken Yamaguchi

### ORGANIZATIONS

Gratitude to the members of the Federation of Buddhist Womens' Associations (FBWA) for allowing the Institute of Buddhist Studies to be present at the national conference held in Irvine, this past October. The Friends of IBS Ministerial Scholarship Fund raised \$5,730 as a direct result of the conference. Special thanks to Mrs. Dianne Belli, President of the BCA FBWA, Mrs. Sandy Saeki of the FBWA Conference Committee, and Mrs. Gayle Noguchi of the BCA Bookstore, for their support and assistance in what is being accomplished in our ongoing effort. Thank you, FBWA members!

Thank you, San Jose Buddhist Betsuin BWA!



# Photographing Nishi Hongwanji, Kyoto

By Carol Bonomo  
Vista Buddhist Temple

When we announced our plan to visit Kyoto during *Gotan-e\**, my husband Felix was asked to bring back photographs of our mother temple, Nishi Hongwanji, to share with temple members and dharma friends who otherwise might not have the opportunity to visit it themselves.

It also became a way of seeing through the camera lens with the eyes of the sangha rather than a photographer's usual emphasis on the mechanics of focal point, composition and color balance. Felix would have to pay attention to those mechanics too, of course, but his overriding concern would be to capture the spirit of the place and bring it home.

The first surprise was the size and scale of Nishi Hongwanji. Behind its walls and gates—some of them works of art in themselves—lay a complex of buildings filled with rituals, rites, education, outreach, and administration for a worldwide Buddhist sect. “How can I do justice to this?” he asked, a little desperately at our first glimpse.

First you regroup and drink tea. The Visitor's Center offers free hot tea all day, and the chance to sit and

think about what we've gotten into.

We found the Chinese Gate (*Kara-mon*) to photograph first. “It's famous,” I insisted to encourage him to begin photographing.

“There's a gate covering nearly half of it!” he protested. Sure enough, an ugly wooden picket fence protected the treasure from the people who walked by steadily to take a quick photo. There is nothing quick in Felix's approach, and his mantra, he told me, was *get closer*. Even though the sign next to the fenced-in gate informed visitors that touching the gate would set off alarms, he began photographing through the slots in the gate.

I think that encapsulated his photographic way around Nishi Hongwanji—obey the signs, respect everything and everybody—and *get closer*. No, it was impossible to go inside the *Kyodo* (Sutra Library) that claims to hold every Buddhist sutra. (“What does that look like?” he marveled, frustrated that he would never know. “It looks like a really big pile of really old books,” I suggested.) He contented himself with a very fine photo of it from the outside.

And anyway, the spirit of Nishi Hongwanji wasn't going to be found in dusty old sutras, or inside the Drum Tower (another place he was dying to get inside, and also to



no avail). It was in the Amida Hall, where the faithful gathered by 6:00 a.m. each morning to chant with more enthusiasm than you hear at football matches, with *Namo Amida Butsu* rumbling up from their socks and setting the air to tingling. It was in the *kansho*, caught in early morning silence before ringing

to bring ministers, students, the faithful—and two Caucasian visitors—rushing to Founders Hall to begin chanting *Shoshinge*. It was in the wooden statue that Shinran (it is said) carved of himself—a 13th century “selfie”, much venerated, whose lacquer coating is mixed with some of the ashes of its maker.

Felix photographed the spirit of Nishi Hongwanji—not some ghostly or supernatural force, but the living, breathing life of *Nembutsu* that permeated the buildings, the sangha, and the light between, like incense.

His Eminence Koshin Ohtani officiated the *Gotan-e* service. While neither Felix nor I speak a word of Japanese beyond *arigato* or *sayonara*, I had been practicing *Shoshinge* for three months in preparation for this moment. It had just never occurred to me that the *Monshu* was *real*. I saw his photograph at temple every time I entered; I'd read his books. But his unexpected presence, as he began to chant, brought the spirit of Shin Buddhism itself, of our founder Shinran Shonin, into those halls, bigger than even a city block of buildings, this spirit, this sudden, strong sense of history and present collapsed into *now*. He led; we followed; Felix photographed.

We all got closer.

\**Gotan-e: Shinran Shonin's birthday.*

(Felix Bonomo's images, “*Ken Shin: Seer of Truth*” will be on exhibit in February 2015 as part of the historical photographic exhibits at the Buddhist Churches of America National Council Meetings in San Diego, California.)

## Kieshiki

Continued from Front Page

services after one passes over to the Other Shore. In a case where someone passes over to the Other Shore before

receiving a Dharma Name, the minister who officiates the funeral service will present the Dharma Name for the deceased during the service.

For this reason, one occasionally encounters the misunderstanding that receiving a Dharma Name at a Ki-

kyoshiki or Kieshiki means that death is drawing near. This is not the case. Participating in these ceremonies is a wonderful way to affirm one's commitment to living a full life guided by the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha.



Top photo: Kieshiki at Palo Alto Buddhist Temple's 100th Anniversary, Palo Alto, CA, October 19.



Ekoji Buddhist Temple, October 5.



## Placer MAP Certification Ceremony

On Sunday, November 9, 2014, Rev. Umezu, BCA Bishop, officiated the Minister's Assistant Certification Ceremony for Richie Kawahata, Ron Kawahata, Michi Mitani and Ed Nakamoto.

## Rev. Oshita

Continued from Page 2

see if we could remember just a moment of that simple innocence.

As December comes to a close, New Year's Eve becomes a naturally reflective time. It is a moment that we quietly look back on the year we have lived through. We reflect on the many Changes we've lived through. We reflect on the many Endings and New Beginnings; the many new meetings...and also difficult partings.

But we know that deep within even our most difficult of partings there remains, at the very heart of our sadness, a feeling of endless Gratitude; Gratitude for the Love and Life that we have been able to share with the people whose lives

have given meaning to our own.

With the Dharma as our guide, every year also becomes a year of growth. Knowing that every moment is a “Beginning and Ending,” the Dharma encourages us to live our lives trying to appreciate every day...and every opportunity we have to be with those we love. To live with our Dharma Eyes Open, is to live each day, aware that every moment is filled with “Beginnings and Endings.” To live with our Dharma Eyes Open, is to Live a Life of Nembutsu.

With the start of a New Year, we begin a New Cycle of Seasons. Let us all try to live the New Year with our Dharma Eyes Open; appreciating each day...and every opportunity to be with those we love.

### A Seminar for Dharma School Teachers: Helping Children Deal with Difficult People



Guest Presenter: **Kiyo Masuda**

We will use children's books to connect with [Jodo Shinshu](#) Teachings. Share your lessons that help children deal with difficult people.

Open to all Dharma School Teachers in any FDSTL District  
**Saturday, January 10, 2015 9:30 am to 2:30 pm**

*No registration charge. Lunch will be provided.*

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2140 Durant St., Berkeley, CA 94704 (510) 809-1460

Please register by January 3, 2015.

Email your name, temple and the grade level that you teach to Maya Lawrence ([maya.lawrence@comcast.net](mailto:maya.lawrence@comcast.net)) or mail to Buddhist Church of Oakland, 825 Jackson St., Oakland CA 94607

This seminar is funded by the Bay District Dharma School Teachers League (BDDSTL) & Federation of Dharma School Teachers' Leagues (FDSTL)

Visit: <http://bcadharmaschool.wikispaces.com>

# 今月の法話

## 「サンタクロースの神話」

オレンジ郡仏教会  
開教使 原田マービン



今月の法話は、原田開教使の英語法話集、*Discovering Buddhism in Everyday Life* (写真コラム3段目) 所収の一篇を編集部が翻訳した。初出はオレンジ郡仏教会寺報「光輪」1998年12月号。

今月のご法話のタイトルは仏教のお話としては少し変に聞こえるかもしれませんが、けれども12月のホリデーシーズンに入ると、町のいたるところでクリスマスデコレーションを見たり、クリスマス曲が聞こえてきたりしますので、私もなにかクリスマスにちなんだお話をしてみようかと思っただけです。そこで今日はサンタクロースのお話を通して大無量寿経の説話をご紹介したいと思います。

最近私は、サンタクロースのお話はとても美しいメッセージを伝えている神話だと考えるようになりました。けれども普通私たちが、サンタクロースのお話を神話ではなく、さまざまな解釈をしていると思います。子供達は、サンタクロースが本当に存在していると思っていて、クリスマスに素敵なプレゼントがもらえることを心待ちにしています。大人にとっては、サンタクロースはおとぎ話のたぐいのもので、子供達をきちんと育てるのに有効なものだと思っています。クリスマスが近くなると、「そんな悪い子にはサンタさんが来てくれませんよ。」という言葉にはとても効き目があります。青春期の若者たちは、サンタクロースは「子供っぽいもの」とみなして、本心に存在するなんて思っていない。けれども彼らはクリスマスには新しい服やお小遣いなどがもらえるものだと期待

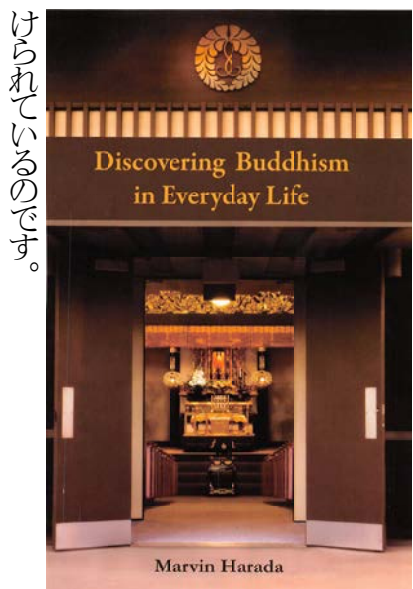
しています。このように、世代によってそれぞれのサンタクロースの見方や解釈があります。

しかし、少し見方を変えてサンタクロースを神話として解釈してみると、そこには時間を超えたメッセージ、歴史や事実を超えた真実というものが見えてきます。

サンタクロースと彼の妻の生活に目を向けてみましょう。彼らは一年の全きを使っておもちゃを作り、それを贈り物として子供達に届けるのです。しかもそれを無料で行い、報酬もありません。また何かの賞を受け取ることもありません。さらにサンタクロースは夜、わざわざ皆が寝ている時間を選んで誰にも見られないようにプレゼントを届けるのです。もし私が誰かに贈り物をする場合、自分でその人に渡したいと思いませんし、またその人がプレゼントの包を開けて私に「なんて素晴らしいプレゼントでしょう! どうして私が欲しいものがわかったの?」と賛辞と感謝の言葉をかけてくれるのを期待していません。それどころか、プレゼント交換の場合だと、自分が贈ったプレゼントと自分がもらったプレゼントを比べて、「えー、このプレゼントだと、自分があげたものの値段の方が高かったよ。損してしまった。」なんて思ってしまうこともあります。一方、サンタクロースはどうでしょうか? 彼は決してそんなことは思わないでしょうし、それどころか感謝の言葉さえも期待せずにプレゼントを贈るのです。さらに彼は良い気候のときではなく、一年で最も寒く、届け物をするのが困難な時期にこのプレゼント贈り物を行います。そんな苦勞の多いサンタクロースに私たちがするたつたひとつのことといえは、クッキーとミルクを置いてあげることだけです。

もう少しサンタクロースについて考えてみましょう。彼は年老いていて、もうリタイアして楽しい老後を送ってもよいはずですが、けれどもリタイアなどせず、骨を折っておもちゃを作り、しかもそれを贈り届けるのです。そしてそれは自分の子供のためでなく、他人の子供のためです。

このように私はサンタクロースの神話には時代を超えた美しいメッセージがあるように思えます。私たちの住む、欲の多い、自己中心性の世界において、サンタクロースは仏教というダーナ(布施)を行じる者のお話なのではないでしょうか。彼の純粋な贈りものは世界中の子供に向



けられているのです。

「サンタクロースは本当にいるのでしょうか?」科学や歴史の見方で見ると、私たちは「いません。」と答えなければならぬでしょう。けれども、神話や詩的現実の見方からはどうでしょうか? もちろんサンタクロースはいるに決まっています。何億もの子供たちにとってサンタクロースは間違いなく存在していますし、彼はこれから何百年も、いや何千年も生き続け、世界中の人々に純粋な贈りものについて教えていくのです。

私たちが通常、「本当」だとみなしている科学や歴史の事実からはそういった深い真実は見えてきません。むしろ私たちは神話の表現を通してこそ深いレヴェルの真実に気づき始めることができるのです。

もし私たちがサンタクロースの神話の中に詩的に表現された真実を見いだそうとすることができるとしたら、それは大無量寿経に示されている、たいへん深い真実をいただくのに、心の準備ができてきたというところではないでしょうか。

大無量寿経には釈迦牟尼仏のお悟りの心の最も深いところが表わされています。このお悟りの心はとても深遠で難解なので、釈尊は最初、そのことを説くのをためらったと言われています。他の人々に話しても、理解してもらえないだろうと思われたからです。けれども、後に釈尊は法を説き始め、そのおかげで釈尊の教えが2500年経て、私たちに届いてくださっているのです。

釈尊が、大無量寿経となったご法話をされたとき、今までになく輝いておられたと伝えられています。釈尊の弟子、アーナンダは釈尊の顔が尊く光り輝いていることに気づいたので、なぜかを尋ねました。「今日のお釈迦さまのお

顔はたいへん気高く、威厳に満ちておられます。なぜなのでしょう?」と。釈尊は「よくぞそのことに気がついた。君の智慧と深い洞察力が気付かせたのだろう。」とアーナンダを誉めました。そして釈尊はお悟りの心の最も奥深いところを、説話、つまりは神話のスタイルを用いて説きはじめたのです。恐縮ではございますが、私なりにその奥深い大無量寿経のお話を以下にまとめてみました。子供たちがサンタクロースの膝にのるように、あたかも私たちが仏さまのひざに座らせていただいていると思ってください。そして、仏さまが私たちにお話をしてくださっていると思って、仏さまの深く、素晴らしいお話をお聞かせいただきましょう。

とおい、とおい昔、とおく、とおく離れたところに、ある仏さまがおられました。この仏さまは慈悲と智慧にとてもすぐれておられ、そのお徳は並ぶものなく、人々からたいへん尊敬されておりました。

その時ある王がいました。王は仏さまに出会い、感銘を受け、心を揺り動かされました。それで自分もその仏さまのようになりたいと思いい、王をやめ、すべての所有物を捨て、真実を探求する者、菩薩となったのです。この菩薩の名を「法の蔵」を意味する、ダルマーカーラといひます。ダルマーカーラは彼の人生の師となつた仏さまを讃え、師仏の以前におられた仏さま方を敬い、そして彼自身の仏に成りたいという深い願いを表明します。その表明は「讚仏偈」という美しい詩歌の形式で表現されています。

ダルマーカーラは人生の師を褒め称えた後、自身の具体的な願いと人生のゴールについて述べ始めます。それが四十八種の願いとして立てられ、それは自身が仏となることへの深い願いだけでなく、苦しむすべての衆生を救いたいという慈悲の心が表わされています。ダルマーカーラの願いは、この世界を変えることだけでなく、苦しみ、人種差別、怒り、欲望、無知、自己中心性から解放された世界を建立することでもありました。彼がそのような世界を建立しようと思ったのは、すべての衆生が本当の幸福と心の安らぎを見出し、この世を喜びとハーモニーとを持って生きていくことができるように、と願ったことでした。

皆さんは、ダルマーカーラがその願いを成就して、本当にそのような世界を建立したと思えますか? 「そうです。ダルマーカーラはすべての願

いを成就され、阿弥陀という仏に成られたのです。」

ではダルマーカーラが建立した世界はどこにあるのでしょうか? 「それは西の方向へ何十億マイルも行った彼方です。」そんなところに、どうやって行くことができ、安心、調和、幸福や静寂を得るのでしょうか? 「それはとても簡単です。南無阿弥陀仏と、阿弥陀さまの名前を称えるだけでいいのです。お念仏がダルマーカーラが建立した世界へと連れて行ってくださるので、私たちが南無阿弥陀仏と称えらると、ただちに何十億マイルもの距離を超越し、真実のお悟りの世界へとつながることができるようになります。」

これが、大無量寿経に説かれている尊い説話の内容です。この時代を超えてお悟りの世界からはたつき続ける智慧と慈悲のメッセージを深く聴聞させていただきましょう。

### またお会いしましょう



I M O P の受講生たちが3ヶ月の研修期間を終え日本に帰国した。写真は10月22日に行われた終了式のときのもの。各受講生の研修に関する記事は来月号に掲載する予定。

# 法輪

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二〇一四年度教化標語  
「歡喜光に帰命せよ」

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## 開教使研修会行われる

### 法話の伝え方などを学ぶ

十一月十一日(火)から十三日(木)の三日間、開教使連続研修会(MCE)が浄土真宗センターで行われた。今回のテーマは「効果的な法話の仕方」で、ハワイ大学名誉教授の田辺ジョージ博士が講義をした。参加者は十六名で、それぞれが五分から十分の法話を実演、ビデオに録画し、田辺博士や他の参加者から良い点や悪い点などの指摘を受けた。はじめて自分の法話をビデオでみた開教使は「思っていたほど悪くなかった」とか「自分のお話のスピードがわかってためになった」など感想を述べ、有意義なワークショップとなった。



研修に参加した開教使たち

The attendees of Ministers' Continuing Education seminar

社会参画仏教の講義の様子  
A lecture on Engaged Buddhism



積では「現生往生(生きていけるうちに浄土に生まれること)」はな

## 総長コラム

米国仏教団 総長 梅津廣道

十月下旬に全米七州から集まった三十八名と一緒に親鸞聖人のご旧跡参拝旅行をしました。品川プリンスホテルに宿泊して、初日は築地本願寺にお参りいたしました。築地と聞いてまず思い出すのが多分魚市場ではないかと思えます。多くの外国人が訪れ、新鮮な魚介類を使ったお寿司のレストランも多く人気の場所です。私たちがエンジョイさせていただきました。築地本願寺の門には大きなサインが掲げられていて、今年がちょうど親鸞さまが関東に移られて八百年ということになります。記念すべき年に関東のご旧跡を訪れることができうれしさが倍増いたしました。駐車場では、昨年こちらで研修を受けた竹内さんと猪原さんが出迎えてくださいました。また、以前龍谷大学からの留学生として一年パークレーにいた南条さんも駆けつけ、挨拶してくださいました。なれないところで懐かしい顔を見ることはうれしいことで

## パロアルト仏教会100周年記念法要

パロアルト仏教会は今年で創立100周年となり、10月18日(土)に記念法要と行事が行われ、梅津総長、小山ディーン駐在開教使をはじめ、前駐在開教使と門徒など、約400名が集った。



## ローダイ仏教会85周年記念法要

ローダイ仏教会では11月16日(日)に85周年記念法要がお勤めされた。約180名が参集し、楠克也駐在開教使や前駐在開教使とともに寺院を創立、護寺して下さった先輩方に感謝した。



## 二仏教会で創立記念法要

さて、築地という名称のいわれをご存知ですか。本願寺にパンフレットがありましたので引用させていただきます。『1617(元和3)年の創建当時は、浅草近くの横山町に第十二代宗主(門主)准如上人によって浄土真宗本願寺派の「別院」として建立され、「江戸浅草御堂」と呼ばれていました。しかし、1657(明暦3)年、「振袖火事」と呼ばれる歴史的に知られる大火事で坊舎を焼失してしまいました。幕府の区画整理のため、もとの場所への再建が許されず、その替え地として用意されたのが、八丁堀の海上でした。そこで佃島の門徒が中心になり、本堂再建のために海を埋め立てて土地を築きました。それが「築地」という地名の由来となっています。』

築地のあと、世界一高いタワーといわれている東京スカイツリーの見学です。この塔を作るのに、奈良や京都にある五重塔などの仏教建築の方式を使っているということを知り、昔の人の知恵にただただ驚くばかりでした。当日は残念ながらあいにくの雨で、地上三百五十メートルからの視界はほとんどゼロでした。そういえば、入場する所にサインがあり、「今日は視界不良」と書かれてありました。スカイツリーを後にしながら、バスの中で一言みんなに感話。「今日は視界不良でした。私たちの人生も同じように視界不良の中を歩んでいます。視界不良ということは、自分の考えが必ずしも正しいわけではないし、知っていることにも限りがあるということです。」と。この一年が終わろうとしています。皆さま方に心より感謝申し上げます。来年はまた何が起こるか分かりませんが、何が起っても佃島の念仏者のように、お念仏申して、精一杯生き抜いてまいります。来年もよろしくお願いたします。