

# WHEEL OF DHARMA

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## Changing the World

Chaplains have long served in the various branches of the United States Armed Forces, including the Continental Army during the American Revolution.

On August 3, 1987, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) became the official endorsing body given the authority by the U.S. Department of Defense to appoint Buddhist chaplains to the military. This was the culmination of 43 years of attempts to have the government approve the inclusion of Buddhist chaplains. The application was created by Col. John Mann, Pentagon Chaplain, the late Rev. Kenryu Tsuji, former BCA Bishop, Kennon Nakamura, and Shig Sugiyama. On October 7, 1988, Rev. Hiroshi Abiko (who retired from the BCA ministry in 2013) was appointed the first part-time regular Chaplain for the Veterans Administration.

On July 22, 2004, Rev. Jeanette Shin, a U.S. Navy reservist, was appointed the first Buddhist military chaplain for the U.S. Navy and is assigned to duty to naval ships in San Diego, California. Since then, the chaplaincy field has opened up and the BCA has endorsed eight chaplains in different service branches. Each chaplain, regardless of his or her ordination, is also required to perform services for a number of religions and denominations.

The official insignia for the Buddhist Chaplaincy is the Dharmachakra (Dharma wheel), which was approved by the World International Buddhist Conference.

The Bishop of the BCA serves as the Ecclesiastical Agent for the Military Chaplaincy. He is also a member of the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF), and the Endorsers Conference for Veteran's Affairs Chaplaincy (ECVAC). Anyone who is interested in being endorsed as a military chaplain needs to contact the BCA Office of the Bishop.

## IBS Commencement Speaker



Rev. Peter Yuichi Clark, Ph.D., manager of Spiritual Care Services, UCSF Medical Center See page 3 article on IBS.

## George Takei: A Present Day Sensation



By Alan Kita, Gardena Buddhist Church

George Takei, actor, activist, and social mediaist, has become quite a sensation—his Facebook page has over 4.9 million followers. “It’s OK to be Takei” is known throughout this world and perhaps the universe, as Star Trek fans know him as “Sulu.”

Mr. Takei grew up in East Los Angeles, but his parents insisted that the Takei kids

hop on the “Senshinji bus” that took them to the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Senshin Buddhist Temple in Central Los Angeles. There, he listened to Rev. Tetsuo Unno’s dharma talks on impermanence and oneness that have been a part of his life.

Mr. Takei has always been an activist supporting meaningful and real opportunities for Asian American actors, from to civil rights, to redress and reparation for Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II, to his current passion for equality in marriage. He married his husband Brad in 2008 in a Buddhist ceremony symbolic of both his and Brad’s heritage. The wedding was officiated by Rev. William Briones of Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Betsuin Buddhist Temple.

“Mindboggling” is a humble description of Mr. Takei’s meteoric rise to social media popularity. “Technology is amazing,” says the crew member of the groundbreaking television series. Mr. Takei would tell people that even the science fiction world of Star Trek has been surpassed in certain areas. “Trekkies” can recall the communicator device that the USS Enterprise crew carried, but they only allowed voice communication. Today, people carry “communicators”

in their pockets that not only carry their voices, but can also send pictures, videos, and text on their journeys.

George and Brad Takei will share their life journey together (27 years, six of them married) in a documentary to be released this summer called *To Be Takei*. It includes footage of their marriage ceremony. Mr. Takei will also speak at the BCA Center for Buddhist Education LGBTQ Seminar, “Being Gay, Being Buddhist,” on June 28, at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley.

“Buddhism fits in today’s world. The concept of oneness is what puts everything in place for me,” says Mr. Takei. Star Trek, as viewers recall, showed the future world where all ethnicities co-existed and worked together, at a time when American television did not.

Before the JSC building was renovated, Mr. Takei appeared in videos urging support. The LGBTQ Seminar will mark the first time that Mr. Takei will step into this space and bring with him his Buddhist experience.

Just recently, Mr. Takei was able to visit with his Senshinji Dharma School teachers, Roy and Terry Nakawatase. Oneness in the world makes all of this possible.

## My Journey into Chaplaincy

By Rev. Somya Malasri

I am Chaplain (Captain) Somya Malasri, a Buddhist chaplain in the United States Army. I am originally from Thailand. My turning point to a religious life came about because of my love for my mother. My mother was physically and mentally ill because her first daughter committed suicide, her second daughter attempted suicide, and I was a son who behaved badly. When I was seventeen years old, I lost myself to very bad things: drinking, smoking, and partying. At that time, my mother was very sick. Her face was pale with depression, anxiety, and worry. It seemed she would pass away very soon. Her situation made me make up my mind to turn to a religious life. Seeing my mother’s condition, I promised her that I would stay at the temple as a novice monk. At that time, I just wanted to please her because she believed that if a son became a monk, his mother would go to heaven after she died. This is a widespread belief among Thai Theravada Buddhists. My promise to my mother, however, changed my entire life and I became a more religious person.

My new life as a Buddhist novice was very difficult at first. I had to get up very early in the morning. I had to participate in morning and evening chanting and meditate with other monks.



I had to study the Buddhist suttas, and the Pali language (the scriptural language of Theravada Buddhism). The more I studied and meditated, the deeper became my sincerity regarding spiritual life. At first I wanted to become a novice only for a short period of time as I had promised my mother, but after learning the suttas and practicing meditation, I really enjoyed monastic life. Buddhism transformed my life completely and made me a much better person.

In June, 2001, I was invited by the Thai Buddhist Sangha Council in the US to serve Thai Buddhist communities in various states such as Colorado, Utah, and Nevada. While I was at the Layton Buddhist Temple in Utah, I met a Buddhist soldier who had come to the temple to get a blessing before deployment. This was when I

considered becoming a Buddhist chaplain for the first time. In 2004, I met another Buddhist soldier who had just finished his basic training and had come to visit the temple. This soldier told me that on Sundays, soldiers attended religious services according to their denominations. This soldier wanted to attend a Buddhist service but a chaplain assistant told him to find a quiet place to meditate by himself because there were no Buddhist chaplains in the Army.

There had been a position open for a Buddhist chaplain since 1991. To become a chaplain, I had to get endorsed by the Buddhist Churches of America, the only endorsing agent for Buddhist chaplains in the US. Fortunately, I received their endorsement in May, 2006. I subsequently went to University of the West to pursue a Master

of Divinity degree in Buddhist Chaplaincy and graduated in May, 2010. I became an active duty chaplain in October, 2010. My first assignment was at Fort Lewis in Tacoma, Washington.

As a chaplain, I provide various kinds of services for soldiers and their families such as counseling, visiting soldiers at their work sites, visiting hospitalized soldiers and their families, conducting retreats for families and for single soldiers, conducting suicide prevention briefings, performing wedding ceremonies, leading prayers at deployment and redeployment ceremonies and at change of command ceremonies, sponsoring weekly spiritual lunches, conducting Vesak Day and Thevarada Buddhist New Year (Songkran) celebrations, and conducting mindfulness-based stress reducing workshops.

I minister however I can to soldiers and their families of all faiths. I also perform Buddhist services twice a week, one for soldiers and their families on the post, and the other for inmates at the Northwestern Regional Correctional Facility. I am very glad to lead religious services for the inmates. Many inmates thank me for transforming their lives from suffering, depression, anger, and anxiety to mindfulness and inner calm. They become happier and calmer persons by discovering inner peace through their religious practice.



# Happy Parents' Day!

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

Father's Day is observed on Mother's Day at the Buddhist Church of Oakland. This is because the church has its annual fundraising bazaar on Father's Day weekend every year. I really want to thank all the Oakland fathers for sacrificing their special day for the church.

This year, I received an early Father's Day gift from my youngest daughter, Michelle, in April. She visited her sister, Amy, who has been working for a few months in Atlanta, Georgia. Michelle came home with some local souvenirs

for all of us. My gift was a glass bottle of Coke with festive wrapping saying "Happy Father's Day." Yes, Atlanta is the home of Coca Cola.

Well, it is not the Coke that made me happy, but Michelle's thoughtfulness. I really appreciated her consideration in buying something for me. Parents become parents when their children think of them. The spiritual interaction between us makes parents, parents and children, children.

Speaking of parents, our founder's name is Shinran. His name is composed of two Chinese characters; *Shin* and *Ran*. The first

character *Shin* was taken from *Ten-Jin* or *Se-Shin*, the second of the Seven Pure Land Masters. The second character *Ran* was from *Don-Ran*, the third master. Shinran really revered these great teachers, so he named himself after them. I think he also liked the meanings of these two characters.

The first Chinese character *Shin* is pronounced *Oya* in Japanese and is usually translated as parent. However, according to Chinese dictionaries, the first among many meanings of this character is not parent. The meaning is a person who stays close to you and cares about you. Therefore, the term *Shin*

or *Oya* means a very caring person. And for many Japanese people, parents are really caring people.

Traditionally, Jodo Shinshu members revered the spirit of Amida Buddha as *Oya*. They truly felt that *Oya* cares about us, knows us, and accepts us. As a good friend or a caring person does, Amida Buddha or *Oya* tactfully wakes us up from our nightmare and guides us to the true and real realm.

My parents guided me to the Universal *Oya*. I am very, very grateful for that. After all, my parents really cared for me, loved me, and led me to the Buddha-dharma. They guided me regardless of how



I felt about them. Now I feel a deep sense of appreciation for what they did for me.

Happy Parents' Day! Let's celebrate this special day for all those who care about our wellness and happiness.



By Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi  
Buddhist Temple of San Diego

Although I write as one of the new ministers in the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), my association with BCA has been as a lifelong, active lay person. For me, the Shin doctrine was sometimes refreshingly insightful, and sometimes confusing. About 35 years ago, I encountered transpersonal psychology. This major branch of psychology studies how spirituality and religions connect to the human psyche. I felt compelled to earn a masters degree in this field before I attended the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS).

This education on how

## Receiving, Not Achieving

spirituality functions in our life has enabled me to understand the definitions of traditional Shin terminology. This new perspective is not more correct than traditional terms, but its language and concepts are more familiar to those who have no cultural nor language background in Japanese Jodo Shinshu. More importantly, it provides a quick, shorthand impression of Shin. It relates the same, simple living principles and values that many of our parents, grandparents, and elders held.

Simply put, Shin Buddhism can be explained as a particular way of perceiving or experiencing life. It is the natural attitude when one realizes that we have "received" much more than we what we have "achieved." This attitude is nurtured by a continual reminder of the gifts from others. We tend to call those gifts the compassion of Amida Buddha. Here the notion of Amida is expanded beyond theistic (godlike) terms. Everything that is Light and Life can also be referenced as Amida. Food, clothing, shelter, relationships, and life itself are gifts from many

different causes and conditions. We may work for and earn these gifts, but we might admit that our efforts could only occur after the existence or production of these gifts by others.

The realization that our lives are dependent on the thoughts and actions of others creates an attitude of gratitude. This emphasis on "receiving" is differentiated from our usual thoughts of "achieving" something. This "receiving" is acknowledged by a response of "thank you," which is a simplified introduction to the basic intent of the Nembutsu. Although this is very simplistic, this introduction is compelling to new seekers, as well as other members who have been confused by longer, more complicated explanations.

Our common attitude of "please" focuses on what we don't have and would like to "achieve." We are unsatisfied with what we have and base our life in the future. "Thank you" indicates that we acknowledge something we have, that has been "received" from others. Our present moment is only possible because of the past

action of others (Amida). Isn't this the basic premise of Shin?

Much has been written about gratitude being a fundamental principle of Shin. By focusing on gratitude, we can diminish the endless discussions based on Western concerns of good/evil, ultimate truth, afterlife, or practice. Many of these questions are theoretical, and have little to do with ordinary life. It is more productive to focus on Shin values of everyday life, than to volley answers to theoretical questions about enlightenment or the afterlife.

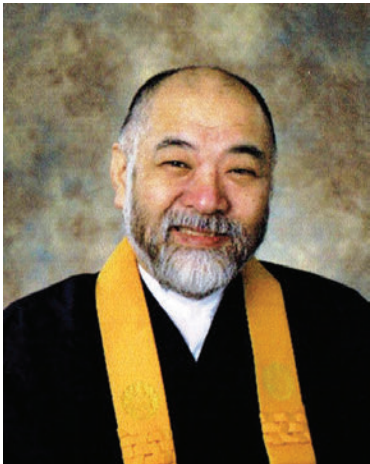
The decline in participation among younger Shin families may indicate a gap in our ability to communicate the value of Shinran's teachings in our everyday life. Of the many interested people who visit our temples, few remain to learn more and become active members. Seekers of Buddhism often dismiss Shin Buddhism because of its superficial similarity to a story of a deity promising a heavenly afterlife. Much of this could be avoided by focusing on the benefit of the awakening power of gratitude. This shift in

perspective addresses many common concerns of daily life. This has been the foundational premise of the workshops that I have been presenting in California, Washington, and Hawaii for the past 15 years.

The emphasis on gratitude as an introduction to Shin has been effective for two reasons. First, it is a concept and value that is familiar to everyone. Second, it has been the basis of life for our Shin pioneers. With meager possessions and a less secure material life, they were rich in their appreciation of relationships and life itself. This focus and emphasis on gratitude is giving voice to their actions and attitude. The response to this introduction to Shin has been rewarding. Many new seekers and returning Shin members have expressed an appreciation for this relevant access to our treasured teachings. From this position of gratitude, the deeper elements of the Shin Teachings become available. "Thank you" allows the Light of Namo Amida Butsu to enter our lives.

In Gassho.

## What did Albert Einstein Think about Future Religion?



By Rev. Kakei Nakagawa, Rinban  
Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple

Recently the so-called "God Letter" written by Albert Einstein, one of the most brilliant minds of the 20th century, was placed on auction by a Los Angeles-based auction agency. The opening bid: \$3 million.

That letter contains his own strong words on religious matters as follows:

"...The word God is for me nothing more than the expression and

product of human weaknesses, the Bible a collection of honorable, but still primitive legends. No interpretation no matter how subtle can (for me) change this."

Einstein also drove home his strong opposition to the idea that Jews, or any people, might be "chosen";

"For me the Jewish religion like all other religions is an incarnation of the most childish superstitions. And the Jewish people to whom I gladly belong and with whose mentality I have a deep affinity have no different quality for me than all other people. As far as my experience goes, they are also no better than other human groups...I cannot see anything 'chosen' about them."

The letter provides a window into the famed genius' religious beliefs. However, I am afraid that some people may create negative ideas toward religion from fragmentary reports about this letter by the media.

We Buddhists have to judge things without personal views. We should remember Albert Einstein's comments of wisdom,

such as "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind." I was impressed by that during my middle-school age. He also stated,

"What is the meaning of human life, or, for that matter, of the life of any creature? To know the answer to this question means to be religious. You ask: Does it make any sense, then, to pose this question? I answer: The man who regards his fellow creatures as meaningless is not merely unhappy but hardly fit for life."

Albert Einstein was a most religious person who recognized the true significance of religion in

his beautiful mind. He described the "future religion" in one of his last books, *Albert Einstein, The Human Side*:

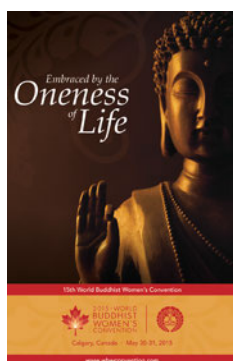
"The religion of the future will be a cosmic religion. It should transcend personal God and avoid dogma and theology. Covering both the natural and the spiritual, it should be based on a religious sense arising from the experience of all things natural and spiritual as a meaningful unity. Buddhism answers this description. If there is any religion that could cope with modern scientific needs it would be Buddhism."

Thank you, Mr. Albert

Einstein, for your insights. And to my dear BCA sangha, please realize the responsibilities we carry on less than 15,000 people's shoulders to bring the true and real Buddha-dharma out to the future communities in the United States of America. We should enjoy our privilege of contributing to the future public good by sharing the essence of Dharma.

Namu Amitabhah in Śākyamuni Buddha's words:

"As long as space abides and as long as the world abides,  
So long may I abide, destroying the sufferings of the world."



## 2015 World BWA Convention "Embraced by the Oneness of Life"

2015 WORLD BUDDHIST WOMEN'S CONVENTION  
CALGARY, CANADA MAY 30-31, 2015  
Please visit: [www.wbwconvention.com](http://www.wbwconvention.com)

Registration is open

Contact temple BWA representatives for important details.



# 2014 FDSTL Conference: Shinran's Journey, My Journey, Our Journey

By Denise Montgomery  
Palo Alto Buddhist Temple

What was it like living in Japan during the Kamakura Period as Shinran Shonin did? How did this environment and key life events shape Shinran's life journey? What are turning points in *your* life journey? These were among the questions explored at the 2014 Federation of Dharma School Teachers' League (FDSTL) Conference held at Mountain View Buddhist Temple on April 26, 2014. Approximately 150 delegates, 21 ministers, BCA Bishop Kodo Umezu, and VIPs from the Hongwanji and BCA gathered to experience "Shinran's Journey, My Journey, Our Journey" as presented by the Coast District DSTL.

We began with a brief service followed by walking meditation and a silent breakfast, as Shinran might have experienced on Mount Hiei. The breakfast consisted of provide foods that Shinran might have eaten: a

bowl of steamed rice, *umeboshi*, tofu, horseradish (in the form of *takuan*, although this pickle was developed in recent times), seaweed, and tea. Attendees noted that the breakfast was meager, vegetarian (meat was scarce in medieval Japan), and healthy.

Workshops followed. Delegates were divided into groups. Each group contained at least one minister who acted as an expert advisor. My group was fortunate to have two ministers and one minister-in-training. There were three workshop sessions, each lasting about an hour. Session One covered Shinran's life and key events that influenced it, using a timeline to visualize its chronology. Participants gained a clear understanding of Shinran's life journey and the causes and conditions that led him to become a disciple of Honen and to establish his Nembutsu teachings and beliefs. It is clear that Shinran was a humble, principled man with a desire to share his belief that, by wholly entrusting

oneself to Amida's Vow (*shinjin*) and reciting the Nembutsu, one can attain enlightenment. As we know, this was a revolutionary idea as it meant that any person, rich or poor, good or evil, could reach enlightenment!

Session Two engaged the participants in journaling. We were requested to select up to three key events in our lives and tell our story in writing. Journaling aids in allowing one to reflect on and document these events. This process was and is important, as it was by this means, through the letters of Eshinni, that we were able to gain a personal perspective of Shinran and his family.

In the final session, participants shared experiences and related commonalities. We were able to see how Shinran's path and many of our paths did intersect. The bravest among us agreed to be videotaped relating a key life turning point in front of a camera—an example of recording oral history. Journaling in some form, be it on paper or

via electronic format, is a tool we teachers can bring back to our classrooms.

The day ended with a closing service, a bento dinner, and a rousing game of *Family Feud*. Contestants had to guess the most popular responses Dharma School students gave to (mostly) basic church questions. I participated as a member of a team of six. Our team won! I guess after nearly twenty years as a Dharma School teacher, I can actually think like a student.

This conference was dedicated to Rev. George Shibata who devoted 30 years of service as an advisor to the FDSTL. Rev. Shibata was in attendance and spoke a bit on his service to the BCA and his passion for nurturing our Dharma Schools. Thank you, Rev. Shibata.

Many thanks to the Coast District DSTL for the wonderful job they did in planning and actualizing this conference. The committee chairs are Jill Kunishige (conference), Carol Harbin

and Mas Nishimura (workshops), June Trachsel (registration), Marie Ochi Jacobs (food), Judy Nagamine (publicity), Lisa Usuki (treasury), Ken Tanimoto (master of ceremonies), Lisa Schindler (volunteer coordinator), and Duane Kubo, Mas Hashimoto, and Ted Nakano (videotaping).

There was a huge effort to make this conference as "green" as possible. Coffee mugs and portable *hasbi* were distributed and reused; cloth table covers and only compostable or recyclable items were used. Another first was that the registration was completely conducted online.

In summary, this year's FDSTL conference provided us with a deeper understanding of the founder of our Jodo Shinshu sect. Each of our journeys is unique but, like Shinran, we all are on the Nembutsu path; each with our own personal goals and needs but working to share and help each other to pass Shinran's practice on to our Dharma School students.



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

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## IBS Commencement 2014

Four Institute of Buddhist Studies' (IBS) Buddhist Chaplaincy students received their joint Graduate Theological Union/IBS Masters Degrees at commencement ceremonies on May 23 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California.

Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto chaired the event, and Bishop Kodo Umezu, President of IBS, conducted the opening service. Dr. Richard Payne, Dean, and Richard Endo, Chair, IBS Board of Trustees, made opening remarks.

Rev. Peter Yuichi Clark, Ph.D., Manager of Spiritual Care Services at the UCSF Medical Center, gave the commencement address. Dr. Clark in his address pointed out one key point and four corollaries that all chaplains must consider based on his reading of the *Tannisho*, Chapter 12. The key point is, "knowledge is the servant of wisdom and compassion, not their master." The first corollary is, "knowledge can promote wisdom, but it can also



Photo by Hiroshi Sojun

Front row: IBS graduates, left to right: Diana L. Clark, Chenxing Han and Carole Gallucci. Not pictured: Trent J. Thornley. Back row: IBS faculty: Rev. Daijaku Judith Kinst, Dr. Gil Fronsdal, Rev. Seigen Yamaoka, Rev. David Matsumoto, Dr. Scott Mitchell and Dr. Richard Payne, Dean.

mislead us if we use it inappropriately." The second corollary is, "*upaya* is an expedient means that requires discernment." The third corollary is, "knowledge is relational; we learn in connection with others." The fourth corollary is, "our training is a trust to be wielded humbly and compassionately, not with a sense of

entitlement or arrogance."

Dr. Payne and Rev. Patricia Usuki of the IBS Board of Trustees presented conferrals of graduate degrees. The ceremony was followed by a reception for family and friends.

The 2013/14 Graduates were:

Diana L. Clark, Ph.D., The-

sis: *The Ambattha Sutta of the Buddhist Pali Canon: Its Socio-Historical and Literary Context*; Committee: Richard Payne, Ph.D., Gil Fronsdal, Ph.D., Scott Mitchell, Ph.D.

Carole Gallucci, Ph.D.; Thesis: *Lojong for Buddhist Chaplains*; Committee: Rev. Daijaku Judith Kinst, Ph.D.; Scott Mitchell, Ph.D.

Chenxing Han; Thesis: *Engaging the Invisible Majority: Conversations with Young Adult Asian American Buddhists*; Committee: Scott Mitchell, Ph.D.; Rev. Peter Yuichi Clark, Ph.D.

Trent J. Thornley; Thesis: *A Literary Analysis of the Ariyapariyesana Sutta*; Committee: Rev. Daijaku Judith Kinst, Ph.D.; Rev. David Matsumoto, Ph.D., Gil Fronsdal, Ph.D., Eleanor Rosch, Ph.D.

Certificate of Buddhist Chaplaincy were presented to Carole Gallucci, Ph.D., Chenxing Han, Judith S. Long, and Trent J. Thornley. Their advisor in the chaplaincy program was Rev. Daijaku Kinst, Ph.D.



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## Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

In 1905, the *Nanka Bukkyokai* or Southern California Buddhist Church (later to become the Los Angeles Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple) was established under the leadership of Rev. Koyu Uchida, Director of the then Buddhist Mission of North America (BMNA). The BMNA became the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) during World War II, and the title of director changed to bishop (and presently is *socho*).

The temple has always been located in the Little Tokyo area of Los Angeles. First it was on Jackson Street. It was called *Hongwanji Bukkyokai* of Los Angeles, then renamed Hongwanji Buddhist Church of Los Angeles. In 1925, a new temple was built on Central Avenue. In 1931 the temple became the first in the United States to be elevated to *betsuin* status. It was later re-named Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.

In 1965, due to city expansion plans and "Nishi" remodeling plans, it was decided to build a new temple on East First Street. The Central Avenue temple still stands, renovated, retrofitted, and restored as part of the Japanese American National Museum and as a historic building.

The "new" building has been located at its current site since 1969. A fiftieth-year celebration will take place in 2019. A 50th Year Project has been announced, which includes restoration of the *onaijin* (altar), repair of the building facilities, and expansion of Buddhist education. We look forward to the participation of all our friends, from the past and the present, in this auspicious celebration.

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



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

### Minister's Assistants Prepare for Tokudo Ordination Twenty Attend Spring MAP Training, March 27-29, 2014

The combined Spring Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) and first Tokudo preparatory session at the Jodo Shinshu Center ran two programs concurrently, but mostly on separate tracks. Thirteen people are preparing for Tokudo ordination. Unlike the "hybrid" Tokudo groups of 2010 and 2012, this group will attend the full 11-day training in Japan from November 4-14, 2014.



(Top): Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki leads both groups in ritual practice. (Center, left to right): Cheryl Ike-miya, Isabelle Bernard, Laverne Imori, Karen Mukai, and Tadao Koyama watch attentively. (Below, left to right): Keith Kato, Yuki Mori, and Vonn Magnin receive instruction from Rev. Michael Endo.

Along with chanting practice and lectures, the Tokudo aspirants began getting familiar with how to wear and fold their attire.



### Being Gay, Being Buddhist: The LGBTQ Community & Shin Buddhism

June 28, 2014 from 10 am – 3 pm

Keynote Speaker: George Takei — Guest Speakers: Pieper & Lois Toyama  
Registration: \$40 Deadline: June 20. Limited seating; register early.

### Pacific Seminar *Sea of Suffering, Ocean of Compassion* July 4-6, 2014

Speakers: Rev. Tetsuo Unno, Rev. Dr. Mark Ty Unno, Rev. Harry Bridge

Honored Guests: Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno and Mrs. Alice Unno

Register soon! Deadline is June 21 or until filled.

For information: email [cbe@bcahq.org](mailto:cbe@bcahq.org) or call (510) 809-1460

### CBE 2014 Calendar of Events

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

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

June 30-July 2: Ministers' Summer Fuken (assisted by CBE)

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

July 18-20: Young Buddhists International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE) Reunion

August 8-10: Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) August Workshop

August 8-10: Tokudo Preparatory Session #2

August 9: JSCC Public Lecture: *Neither Nun nor Laywoman* by Dr. Lori Meeks

Sept. 6: Baby Boomers Seminar *WWW.Com: Who, Where, Why?* with Rev. Patricia Usuki

September 18-20: Fall MAP seminar at New York Buddhist Church (All levels)

September 26-28: Tokudo Preparatory Session #3

October 20-31: CBE Shinran Shonin Study Tour (in Japan)

October 25: Japanese Seminar

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

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

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

### Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course - Monthly Essay

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

#### What did Honen Shonin Mean When He Said We Are Saved Simply by Reciting the Nembutsu?

By Dennis Madokoro  
Toronto Buddhist Temple



To understand the depth of this phrase "saved simply by simply reciting the Nembutsu" in this question as it applies to Master Honen, we must first trace his life until he uttered this phrase.

He was Seishimaru until the age of nine. The text describes the attack and mortal injury of his father by henchmen hired by a political rival. His father's dying wish was that Seishimaru not take revenge but become a priest. This karmic event set Seishimaru on his spiritual journey rather than a path of revenge. From the age of nine until fifteen, he lived in a local Buddhist temple. He then went to Mt. Hiei, a renowned centre of Buddhist studies. There he changed his name to Honen-bu-Genku. From the age of nine to twenty four, Honen studied with great ability but he did not find enlightenment. Honen left Mt. Hiei to study at various temples in Nara and Kyoto. Again, he found nothing that satisfied his search. Thus another nine years of his life yielded no results.

Honen then focused on Master Genshin's *Essentials for Attaining Birth* with little success. For ten more years, Honen read and re-read the entire contents of Mt. Hiei's library five times through. Then came the thunderbolt, that flash of awareness on reading Shan-tao's concise paragraph in the *Commentary on the Contemplation Sutra*. We must recall that Honen had searched for enlightenment for almost twenty-five years, almost half a human's total life span at that time. We can feel the joy and wonder on Honen's face on reading Shan-tao's words:

*First, single-heartedly practicing the Name of Amida alone—whether walking, standing, sitting, or reclining—without regard to the length of time, and without abandoning from moment to moment: this is called "the act of true settlement," for it is accord with the Buddha's Vow.*

The text states that these words moved Honen greatly. Little wonder, for Honen had been searching for almost twenty-five years and suddenly these words meant to him, "You will be saved by simply reciting the Nembutsu. That is Amida Buddha's desire, his absolute promise to us." We too, like Honen, must diligently search until we are fortunate to encounter that one good teacher who can point us in the right direction. Jodo Shinshu is a solitary journey; we must go alone until the right causes and conditions lead to our awakening. Until then we can recite the Nembutsu with our limited abilities, trying for a sincere heart and mind. The so-called "Easy Path" is not so easy. For me, it is one step forward, two steps back. On a good day it is two steps forward and one step back.

To understand the "we" in the question, "What did Honen Shonin mean when he said that we are saved simply by reciting the Nembutsu," that "we" is us. We are like Honen searching, searching for the path to enlightenment without success. All our questions and more questions never seem to yield any answers. But if we just give up our struggles to gain enlightenment through our own efforts and if we simply recite the Nembutsu with a sincere heart and mind, then through Amida's great compassion, we reach the stage of the truly settled and our birth in the Pure Land is assured. How fortunate we are at that moment. Until that moment, we struggle, we struggle.

Recall Honen's thunderbolt, that flash of awareness after twenty-five years of effort, his whole body responding joyfully and tearfully and the Nembutsu flowing without effort from his mouth. Honen was embraced by Amida. Amida and Honen were one.

May each one of us in our spiritual quest have that moment of wonderment and joy, then tearfully have the Nembutsu flow from our mouth without our effort.

*Namo Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu.*

Dennis and his family converted to Jodo Shinshu in 1990. For 21 of those years, he volunteered at the Toronto Buddhist Temple in various positions including president. For the past three years, he has been serving as a minister's assistant.

### Gotan-e Celebration of Shinran Shonin's Birthday

*Gotan-e* is commemorated at the Nishi Hongwanji and affiliated temples in Japan, where various traditional forms of Japanese entertainment such as *gagaku*, *noh*, *rakugo*, and tea ceremony are held in addition to special services.

Here at the Jodo Shinshu Center, the Center for Buddhist Education presented a unique *Gotan-e* evening service on May 21, 2014. Special chanting and liturgy was led by Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki; a Dharma message was delivered by Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America, and *shakuhachi* master Masayuki Koga played inspiring music. About 40 people attended the event.



Above: Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki of the Buddhist Church of Lodi performs the Toraiban ritual to begin the evenings' chanting. Left: Masayuki Koga, founder of the Japanese Music Institute of America, pauses to answer questions from the audience during his shakuhachi performance.

BCA Center for Buddhist Education presents

The 8th Annual  
**Baby Boomers' Seminar**

**Who, Why, Where**

Interdependence... Discover the breadth and depth of WHO you really are, WHY the unfortunate is fortunate, and WHERE your potential lies.

Keynote Speaker:  
**Rev. Patricia Usuki**  
San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

**Saturday, September 6**  
8:30 am - 8:00 pm  
at the  
**Jodo Shinshu Center**  
2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704

**General Registration: \$75**  
Deadline: August 31  
**BCA Member Rate: \$60**  
before August 6

For online registration and forms:  
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Information: (510) 809-1460  
Email: [cbe@bcahq.org](mailto:cbe@bcahq.org)

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General Registration: \$75 deadline August 31  
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Registration begins on June 1, 2014  
For online registration and forms - log on to [BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org](http://BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org) and click on CBE

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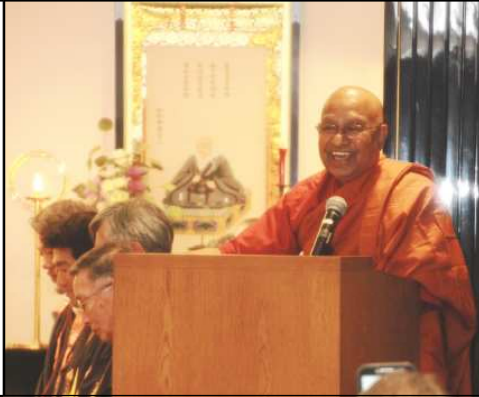
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### BCA Education News & Highlights - Take Refuge in the Light of Joy!

## Buddha Day 2014 Vesak - Hanamatsuri: A Joyful Celebration

On Sunday, May 25, the Buddhist Council of Northern California, Institute of Buddhist Studies and CBE co-sponsored a Vesak - Hanamatsuri Celebration at the Jodo Shinshu Center. Chanting, song, poetry and praises to the Buddha were offered in various languages, including Sri Lankan, Thai, Cambodian, and Vietnamese. Rev. Seigen Yamaoka gave the Dhamma Talk. Everyone bathed the baby Buddha with sweet tea in the *hanamido* flower altar.



Above: Bhante Seelanimala of the Buddhist Council of Northern California offers Words of Appreciation. Below: Nuns from the Compassion Meditation Center of Hayward gassho to the statue of the baby Buddha. Photos: Timothy Nguyen

### CBE Co-Director's Message:

#### Listening Deeply

by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, CBE Co-director

The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) had their 2014 graduation ceremony on May 23, and four students successfully completed their studies. I congratulate them on their graduation. It is my sincere hope what they learned at IBS will enhance their lives and that they will also share it with others.

IBS, a graduate school which provides academic courses and trains ministerial candidates, is part of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA). But besides IBS, there are many other educational opportunities within the BCA. The Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) provides various Buddhist education programs throughout the year. Seminars and study class are regularly held at local temples. Some people study at home through the online Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course. Thanks to the great efforts of many people, a variety of educational opportunities are available to us. We should make the most of them. I sincerely hope that they are not just a means for us to obtain knowledge and information, but that we are spiritually nurtured by truly listening to and deeply appreciating the Buddha's message.

In an educational situation, generally speaking, there are two parties: those who teach and those who learn. The former is usually called "teacher" or "master"; the latter is called "student" or "disciple." As a young disciple, Shinran Shonin learned the true Nembutsu teaching under the guidance of his master, Honen Shonin. Later, as a leader of Nembutsu Sangha groups, Shinran Shonin gave guidance to his followers. Although we don't know the exact figure, it is true that huge numbers of people received guidance and respected Shinran Shonin as their master. Despite this historical fact, we can find an interesting quote from Shinran Shonin in *A Record of Lament of Divergences*: "For myself, I do not have even a single disciple."

In many Buddhist traditions it is believed that masters play an important or even decisive role in their disciples' attainment of enlightenment. According to this traditional understanding, a master would be the one who enables his or her disciples to attain *shinjin* or recite the *Nembutsu*, which is the decisive cause of attainment in the Jodo Shinshu tradition. Shinran Shonin, however, did not think that way. He believed it was Amida Buddha that directs *shinjin* or the *Nembutsu* to us. Amida Buddha is the one who plays the decisive role in our attainment. Therefore, Shinran Shonin thought that he was not a so-called "master" in the traditional sense. Thus, he had no "disciples" whose attainment was controlled or determined by their human master.

Shinran Shonin's unique understanding is reflected in the titles of Jodo Shinshu ministers. For example, ministers who are engaged in propagation outside of Japan are called *kaikyoshi* (開教使). Ministers who have received a special training and are certified as specialists in delivering Dharma messages are called *fukyoshi* (布教使). In both cases, the Chinese character *-shi* (使) is used, which means messenger. This is particular to the Jodo Shinshu tradition. The Chinese character 師 (*-shi*), which has the same pronunciation but means master, is used for the same titles in other Japanese Buddhist traditions.

In the Jodo Shinshu tradition, both clergy and members are equally the disciples of Buddha. They practice the *Nembutsu* together and follow the same path. This idea is called *Ondobo* and *Ondogyo*. Ministers mediate between Amida Buddha and followers by conveying the message and the wish of Amida Buddha. In order to successfully fulfill our responsibility as messengers, we ministers should study seriously and rigorously. In addition, members and ministers alike should listen carefully to what is conveyed to us and, at the same time, try to grasp the essence of Amida Buddha's wisdom and compassion beyond the verbal messages. I would say that such deep listening is the practice of Jodo Shinshu; this is what we should do when participating in Buddhist education programs or listening to Dharma messages. By listening deeply, we not only obtain knowledge and information, but we are spiritually nurtured to live a more profound and fulfilled life.

## The Dharmakara Series: Our Lifelong Learning Challenge

### INTRODUCTION TO THE SANBUTSU-GE: Gatha (verses) in Praise of the Buddha (Part 5)

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://Dharmanet.org)



<http://www.dharmanet.org/coursesM/Shin/1.html>

In last month's article I began to talk about the meaning of Dharmakara Bodhisattva's name, and ended the article by asking why is Dharmakara, a name that literally means Dharma Storehouse, only a Bodhisattva and not a Buddha? Why, for example, is somebody who has the entire BuddhaDharma stored within them not automatically a Buddha? This question is also alluded to by Lokeshvararaja Buddha, who tells the Bodhisattva that he should already know how to achieve his goal of Buddhahood without an explanation from the Buddha. As the narrative is told, however, the Bodhisattva tells the Buddha that the Dharma is too broad and deep for him to figure out alone.

As the story is first told, we are informed of the fact that Bodhisattva Dharmakara gave up his Kingdom and his Kingship for the Dharma. Although part of the meaning of this explanation is to inform us that the Dharma, or the truth, is far greater in value than material possessions, fame or prestige, I also think that it is meant to help us to understand that the Dharma is not meant to be treated as a possession. It is the reason why the water of the ocean has to be taken out one scoop at a time. If it is treated as a possession, or something that we can choose or not choose to show or share, then it does not "live" as the Dharma. If the Dharma is not lived, then one is, by definition, not a Buddha. It is probably also for this reason that one of the ways to distinguish between a statue of a Bodhisattva and a statue of a Buddha is to see if the figure is decorated with jewelry or not. A Buddha has no jewelry. A Bodhisattva, on the other hand, is often depicted with jewelry or possessions that are meant to distinguish self from others.

The name Dharmakara, then, is telling us that the entire Dharma is stored within the Bodhisattva. Although the Dharma is meant to be protected, at the same time, however, it is not meant to be stored or hidden away. For the Dharma to have meaning as the Dharma it has to be shared openly with others. This aspect, in particular, is emphasized by Mahayana Buddhism. In having established the Primal Vow, Dharmakara Bodhisattva promises to fully realize this ideal of Mahayana Buddhism. Through the Primal Vow the Bodhisattva has vowed and promises the following:

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

The Vow made by the Bodhisattva is to share Enlightenment so fully with all beings that they too can and will become a Buddha through the *Nembutsu*. The promise made to each and every one of us is to renounce Buddhahood unless the Vow is fulfilled for each and every one of us. This promise is no trifling matter. Prior to making this promise, the Bodhisattva has previously renounced the title of King and has abandoned his Kingdom. For the Dharma, the King was willing to give up all the things we blindly tend to pursue. In other words, the Dharma is more valuable than all the power and riches that a King may have. As a Buddha, the Bodhisattva has promised to give up the ultimate realization of the Dharma or Enlightenment for each and every one of us. That, in other words, is how important one life is. That is how important *my* life is. The only reason a Buddha shares the Dharma is to help us to understand this meaning of our lives. Without this sharing, there is no Dharma.

I believe that it is because of this kind of understanding that Shinran Shonin was able to declare that the Larger Sutra is both "the True and Real Teaching" and "the True Essence of the Pure Land" because it is in the Larger Sutra that the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha is expressed. This appreciation is expressed directly by Shinran Shonin when he is quoted in the *Tannisho* as having said:

*When I consider deeply the Vow of Amida, which arose from five kalpas of profound thought, I realize that it was entirely for the sake of myself alone! Then how I am filled with gratitude for the Primal Vow, in which Amida resolved to save me, though I am burdened with such heavy karma.* (CWS, p. 679)

To put the second half of Shinran Shonin's quote into a more contemporary perspective, please allow me to quote Martin Luther King, Jr. who is quoted as having said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." In considering what Martin Luther King, Jr. said, how often do we overlook what is fair and just? How many of us have not been hypocritical at one time or another? How many of us have not lied? How many of us have not broken rules or have become upset when we, instead of another person, gets caught for having broken a rule? How often do we consider how just we are, even while agreeing with what Martin Luther King, Jr. has said? Do we not tend to ignore how much good we can do, and often help to create or maintain the circumstances that aid in the perpetuation of what Martin Luther King, Jr. has called "injustice" even if we have not directly committed an injustice ourselves? We, to borrow another quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. often fail to recognize that, "the ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people."

From this kind of reflection hopefully we understand what Shinran Shonin is trying to say when he talks to us about being burdened by *heavy karma*. Hopefully, too, this also helps us to see that the promise made by the Buddha to us is not a trifling matter. Figuring out how to share the Dharma with all sentient beings so that it does not appear as if it is locked away and out of reach for anyone is how the Bodhisattva Dharmakara became a Buddha. This Dharma that is shared to us through the *Nembutsu* is what helps us to see that "all sentient beings, without exception, have been our parents and brothers and sisters in the course of countless lives in many states of existence." (*Tannisho*, Ch. 5, CWS, p. 664). Through the *Nembutsu*, we no longer have to remain silent. We can help everyone to understand just how important each and every life is. We can express the joy of sharing life versus possessing and trying to control it. The *Sanbutsu-ge* is the beginning of how the Bodhisattva began his journey to share the Dharma with all of us and is ultimately also the story of our salvation.

Beginning with next month's article, I would like to share the meaning of the contents of the *Sanbutsu-ge* and start answering the question, "What is the meaning of the words that I am chanting?"



# A Debt of Gratitude

By Landon Yamaoka  
San Mateo Buddhist Temple

At the 2014 Federation of Dharma School Teachers Leagues' (FDSTL) Conference we had a very thought-provoking topic: we discussed and reflected on Shinran Shonin's path. We went over his journey and major life experiences and discussed what we might learn from his struggles and endeavors. We discussed how his experiences helped him to find such great meaning in the Dharma. We were asked to consider how we came to be, and I believe this was to help us appreciate our own experiences. Like Shinran, we search for a greater appreciation for the

Dharma so we can better influence our youth.

We participated in a journaling session, and to me it showed how our experiences were not separate, but just markers on our own path. In the journey of life we end up who we are because of the circumstances we go through. The idea was to write down major events in our lives and see what major life changes we have had. My reflections were all connected to how I rediscovered Buddhism; so while my memories were separate, they were all part of one big push to help me help myself. Shinran's life had ups and downs, but all of those experiences helped reinforce his faith in Buddhism and in his

teacher, Honen. Had it not been for his teacher's influence on his Buddhist practice and his life struggles, perhaps Shinran would not have become the religious figure we all know today.

Growing up I had a teacher named Carl Yanari, who was a major influence in my life. Not only was he my teacher, but he also helped me get back into the Temple as his assistant teacher. We all have circumstances that forge us for better or for worse. When I reflect on all the major life changes I've had, they have been both bad and good. I don't see myself as good, but because of that I understand how fortunate I was to have had a teacher like

Carl. I have read a translation for *okagesama desu*. *O* is an honorific meaning your; *kage* means shadow or shade; *desu* means because of; so the translation is "because of your shadow." What is implied is "I have refuge from the sun."

I cannot repay Carl for allowing me to help him teach. I was not a shining example of a student much less teacher material, but he always provided me with compassion. I am grateful for this gift. I know I cannot repay his kindness; the closest thing I can do is to try to do what he did for me, by trying to plant the seeds in the next generation of the Buddhist Churches of America.

I feel that, by the process of

studying Shinran as well as looking at our own life experiences, we were being asked to remember what led us to being who we are. We teach the children because all of us have been given something by the Temple, and we try to share this gift with the kids. We don't know how we will influence our classes, but you never know, we may help mold a future Dharma school teacher, even a Sensei.

I really enjoyed the FDSTL Conference because it made me remember how lucky I was to have a teacher who didn't judge me, helped me through my whole life, and guided me down my own path with the Dharma.

In Gassho.

## Las Vegas Sangha Center Dedication Service

By Rev. Marvin Harada  
Orange County Buddhist Church

After a history of over 30 years as a Sangha that has met in the homes of members and various rental facilities, the Las Vegas Sangha recently dedicated their new "home," a building in North Las Vegas that has been custom-built inside for use by their Sangha.

Many years ago, the late Fred Fukumoto and other pioneering members of the Las Vegas Sangha met with Rinban Shoki Mohri, who was

the head minister of the Los Angeles Betsuin, to discuss the possibility of starting a Sangha in Las Vegas and having a minister from the Betsuin attend monthly to conduct services for the Sangha. At that time a young minister serving the Betsuin, Rev. Kodo Umezu, was in attendance at that meeting with Rinban Mohri. Decades later, on May 11, 2014, Rev. Umezu officiated the dedication service of the new building as the Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America.

At the dedication service,

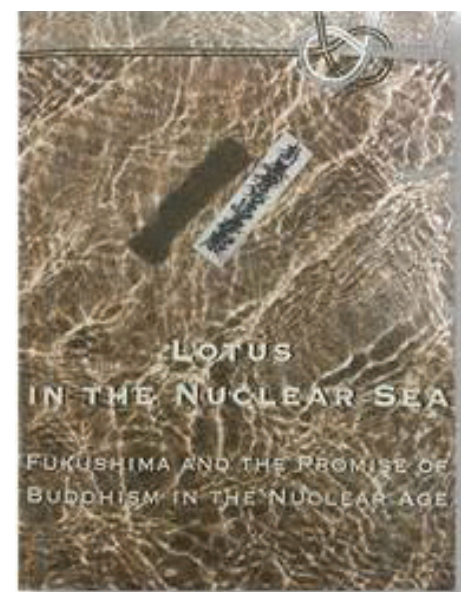
Wayne Tanaka gave a history of the Sangha from those earliest years, and reflections were given by Bill Muraoka and Chelsea Kurashige on what the Sangha means to them. President of the Sangha, Stan Isa, extended a welcome. Congratulatory words were extended by Brian Nagata of the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai, and by Rev. Marvin Harada, supervising minister of the Las Vegas Buddhist Sangha. A very meaningful Dharma Message was given by Bishop Umezu. Pati Lira served as chairperson

of the service.

The service was followed by a luncheon reception and all in attendance were able to see and enjoy the new building.

The Las Vegas Sangha meets on the second Sunday of every month, with services held at 10 a.m. Anyone who is visiting Las Vegas is welcome to join in on their monthly gatherings. The address is 4110 N. Martin Luther King Blvd., North Las Vegas, NV 89032. Email: lvjacl@cox.net. Website: www.lasvegasbuddhist.org. Phone: (702) 633-4810.

## BCA Bookstore News By Gayle Noguchi



Now available: *Lotus in the Nuclear Sea – Fukushima and the Promise of Buddhism in the Nuclear Age*, edited by Jonathan Watts, paperback \$14.00.

It has been over three years since the triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown in northern Japan. At the annual International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB) Executive and Advisory Committee Meeting, the group drafted and adopted an official statement on nuclear energy. *Lotus in the Nuclear Sea* was published by the hosts of the event, the Kodo Kyodan Buddhist Fellowship, in an effort to carry out the action platform of this declaration. The project is ultimately in support of Buddhist priests and temples serving as centers of sustainable living based on the Buddhist values of sufficiency, care for all sentient beings, and interdependence.

Compelling, relevant, and eye-opening, *Lotus in the Nuclear Sea* documents the heartache and trauma of those who have remained as well as those who evacuated the area. These essays are primarily edited transcriptions from talks given by Fukushima residents that the INEB group visited in November 2012. It also looks at the work of a wide variety of Buddhists who are confronting and dealing with the crisis. The last section offers an in-depth view on nuclear energy from a Buddhist perspective with essays by Deep Ecology pioneer Joanna Macy, environmentalist David Loy, as well as Japanese Buddhist activists.

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

## Does Your Employer Offer Matching Gifts for Charitable Contributions?

Matching Gifts may be available to you, but it is one of the areas that many of us are unaware of as a benefit provided by our employers. If you are a "Friends of IBS," employed by a major corporation with a matching gift program for their employees, the process is simple:

- Go to the Human Resource Department or Finance Department and inquire if they have a matching gift program.
- Inquire if they will match your gift to the Institute of Buddhist Studies.
- You may find that your employer will not match gifts to a religious based seminary,

which is how the Institute of Buddhist Studies is defined. If you wish to have your contribution to the Institute of Buddhist Studies matched by your employer, and if your employer has this kind of restriction, the gift can still be made to us through the Graduate Theological Union with the designation "IBS Ministerial Scholarship Fund." The Graduate Theological Union is an accredited consortium of religious seminaries, of which IBS is a participant.

- The Human Resources representative at your company can provide you with a form to fill out. You will need to request that your gift will be sent to the Graduate Theological Union, 2400 Ridge Road,

Berkeley, CA 94709, with the designation, "Institute of Buddhist Studies Ministerial Student Scholarship Fund", or "IBS-MSSF".

- Upon signing up with your company's *Matching Gift* program, the IBS will be able to receive double the donation that you make!

I hope you will take the time to check this out with your Human Resources department. You may be pleasantly surprised, and can join us in supporting our ministerial students.

Gassho,  
Seigen Yamaoka

## Plug Into Buddhism

By Troy Yamaguchi, OCBC Publicity Chair

The 2014 Southern District Jr. YBL National Conference, "Plug Into Buddhism," is just around the corner on Aug. 30 to Sept. 1 at the Hilton Costa Mesa in Costa Mesa, California. We would like to take this opportunity to elaborate on our two special guest speakers that will be featured at our National Conference, Reverend Jon Turner from the Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC) in Anaheim, California and Reverend Harry Gyokyo Bridge from the Buddhist Church of Oakland in Oakland, California.

OCBC's own Reverend Jon Turner fits very well into our theme of different viewpoints of Buddhism. Raised as a

Christian, Reverend Jon Turner offers his own unique insight on the Dharma that is grounded as well as intriguing. In addition, his background in computer programming fits perfectly into our theme, "Plug Into Buddhism." A dynamic speaker, Reverend Turner regularly incorporates movies, TV programs, and modern culture into his dharma talks and seeks to encourage us to find meaning and poetry in our everyday lives.

Reverend Harry Bridge provides a similarly diverse and modern interpretation of Buddhism. Reverend Harry Bridge hosts a Buddhist podcast called the DharmaRealm, which he uses to explore the various facets of our belief. Being a mixture of Anglo-American and Japanese,

Reverend Bridge stresses the importance of balancing the two halves of his identity, which he communicates through his dharma talks. Being a musician on top of all of this, Reverend Bridge is a diverse individual with a similarly diverse approach to Buddhism, and fits well into the 2014 Southern District Jr. YBL National Conference.

The national conference hosts, OCBC Jr. YBA are extremely grateful to our special guest reverends for taking the time out of their schedules to speak at our 2014 Southern District Jr. YBL National Conference. We hope to see you all there, and enjoy "Plugging into Buddhism," with us. For more information, please visit: [www.Plugintobuddhism.webs.com](http://www.Plugintobuddhism.webs.com).

# 今月の法話

## 「テリヤキプリースト」

ソルトレイク仏教会  
開教使 平野ジェリー

よきこころのおこるも、宿善のよほすゆえなり。悪事のおもはれせらるるも、悪業のはからふゆえなり。故聖人（親鸞）の仰せには、「卯毛、羊毛のさきにいるちりばかりもつくる罪の、宿業にあらずといふことなししるべし」と候ひき。



(歎異抄十三章)

これは私が経験した不思議なお話です。ある夜、お寺の事務所にいると、本堂の明かりがついていて、お内陣の前のにお花の香りが漂っていました。でもそれはお内陣からのお香やお花からの香りではなく、それはなぜか、テリヤキチキンをバーベキューする時のおいででした。なぜだろうと思ってドアを全部開けると、何百、いや何千羽ものチキンたちが本堂に集まって鳴いたり叫んだりしているのが目に飛び込んできたのです。

お内陣のほうに目をやると、お仏壇がお葬式の荘厳になつていて、お内陣の前にはお棺ではなく、金色の装飾がほどこされた伊万里の大皿が置かれています。その大皿にはお寺のバザーで売ったテリヤキチキンが積み重ねられていて、ソースと油で光るチキンの周りには、小さな白いカーネーションが丁寧に飾られています。そんな光景を見て私は思わず声を漏らしてしまいました。すると本堂は一瞬さっと静かになって、チキン全員が私の方に振り向き、そして私は、お内陣の方から「人間よ！前に来なさい。そして苦しみを味わいなさい！」と大きな声で呼ばれたのです。

私の体を恐怖が駆けめぐります。「テリヤキチキン？チキンが本堂に？苦しみを味わえ？」ということは、「私はテリヤキ坊主になっちゃったの？そんなのヤダ！」頭の中でどんなに抵抗してみてもなぜか足が勝手に動いてお内陣の方へ進んで行きます。頭から汗が吹き出てきてその汗がだらだらとほかに流れてきます。そのさまは、テリヤキソースにまみれたチキンの姿に似ていたにちが

いありません。目に入った汗をふくと、私がいつも法要でお話しするときに使う演台のところに、大きなチキンが立っているのが見えました。驚いた事に、そのチキンは私に英語で話しかけてくるのです。そしてオズの魔法使いがドロシーに命令するような声で言うのです。「人間よ、前に出なさい。お前に本堂の苦しみを教えてやろう。私はお前が法話でメンバーたちに向かって苦しい話しているのを知っているのだから。だが、お前は本堂の苦がなにかわかっていないのか？お前やお前の仲間たちが受ける苦だけでなく、お前たち人間がわれわれチキンや他の衆生に与える苦についてだ！」

この僧侶の衣をまとったチキンが話しかけると、お内陣の前に立つ私を囲み始めていたチキンたちが怒りで羽を逆立てたり、叫んだりしています。私は「やっぱりタイエットしておけばよかった。この体でテリヤキ坊主になつたらおいしそうに思われちゃうな。」とぼつちやりのした私の体型をうらめしく思いました。

「わ、私は知らなかったのです。」金切り声をあげてチキンたちに弁解しました。「バカ野郎、黙れ！」と大柄なチキンの僧侶がどなりまします。「お前は一体何回、衆生という言葉を使ったのだ！一体何回、苦と感謝について話したと思っているのだ！どの口から、私は知らなかった、とでてるのか？そんな芝居は誰も信用しないぞ。よく聞け、人間よ。我々チキンも人間と同じ衆生なのだ。知らなかったでは済まされないのだ。兄妹たちよ、こいつは、知らなかった、という言葉で我々を侮辱しているぞ。それならばこいつに教えてやろうではないか！」

そこにまだ模様の大きなチキンが私のほうに羽ばたいて来て、群衆の前には私に話しかけました。「今までにアメリカの浄土真宗のお寺でバーベキューにされたチキンは、何百万羽にもおよんでいる。それは我々の親であり、祖父母であり、子であり、孫であった。我々の家族の犠牲によってお寺が存続できたのだ。そうお前やお前のサンガが仏法を聞くために我々の家族が死んだのだ。お前は、人身受けがたし、のありがたい人間の身に生まれたのだ。それをお前は理解しているのか。」



「だまれ、だまれ！まだ話は終わってないぞ。」チキンの群衆からヤジが飛んできます。

「我々チキンは仏法が真実だとよく知っているのだ。それにチキンに生まれたからには多くの者がお前たちのバザーやお盆でテリヤキにされるということも。我々の慰みはただひとつ。お寺のために犠牲になることだ。その方がチェーン店のフライドチキンやナゲットなんかになってしまふより、はるかにいいのだ。我々の子供たちが、仏法の為死ねばならぬ、あきらめもついてもいいのだ。それがお前とされたら、私は知りませんでしたなどと泣きじゃくりやがって。吐きそうになる。人間の僧侶よ、何百万羽のチキンが仏法のために犠牲になったということだけは知っておけ。さもなければ、お前の耳をついて食いちぎってやるからな。」

まだ模様の大きなチキンが話している間中、私は本堂のチキンたちが私の方に近づいてきているのを感じていました。「コケコッコ。」と雄鶏たちが気を荒立たせています。「あいつの目をついてやろうぜ。」と声を荒らげて言う者もいます。「ヘニーペニー！皆落ち着きなさい。チキンリトルの空が落ちてくるって話をおぼえているかい？よく考えなさい。」チキン僧侶がいさめると、皆が静かになりました。

「人間よ。我々はお前を痛めつけたりはしないし、チキンテリヤキセールをやめさせようなんて思っていない。我々の要求は、仏法を聞くためのお布施はお前たち人間の金や労力だけでなく、われわれチキンの命もあるってことを深くわかってもらうことだ。」

「お前たちのお寺のメンバーの中には仏法を聞く事のありがたさや、ご信心の大切さを理解してない者がいることも知っている。仏法を聞かずに、バザーを手伝うだけの仏教徒も少なくないからな。だが、そういう奴らにこそ知ってもらいたいのだよ。我々は日系文化のためだけに犠牲になっているのではないってことを。たとえは、お盆はただの日本文化ではないのだ。お盆は仏法を聞くためのものなのだ！我々はただ人間の楽しみのためだけ、文化のためだけに死にたくないのだ。我々の命は、仏法を聞いてくれよ、という願いをもってお前たちに与えているのだ。聞け、どうか聞いてくれ。それだけがわれわれの望みなのだ。」

私はチキン僧侶の話をして、ただ頭をさげ「南無阿彌陀仏」と申して聞くしかありませんでした。

大きなチキン僧侶とチキンサンガは、私の口から出るお念仏を聞いて、落ち着きを取り戻しているようでした。「よろしい。人間は弱い生き物だ。けれど、我々はチキンとしての役目を受け入れて、お前たちが仏法を聞けるように助け続けよう。お前のサンガに我々の思いを伝えてくれ。たのんだぞ。」

「ありがとうございます、チキン先生。今日教わった事を必ず皆に伝えます。」私が言うと、チキン僧侶は「コッコ。」と鳴いてうなずき、他のチキンたちも同じようにうなずいていました。私はそこで、ふと、自分がオフィスのイスに座って、歎異抄の第十三章を開けていた場面に引き戻されました。そうです。チキン僧侶たち

との出会いは夢だったようです。けれども、不思議なのは、私の足下を見ると、靴の底にチキンの羽根が何枚もくっついていてたことです。

あれは本当に夢だったのでしょうか・・・？

南無阿彌陀仏

(この法話は平野開教使が上梓した法話集「テリヤキプリースト」の中の一章を編集部が翻訳しました。「テリヤキプリースト」はBBC Aブックストア等でお求めできます。)

## 浄土真宗センターで 降誕会



お勤めの様子

5月21日に浄土真宗センターで宗祖親鸞聖人の降誕会法要が勤修され、約40名が集った。法要では、楠開教使（ロータリー仏教会）が導師を務め、登壇をされ、梅津正信偈を唱えた。梅津総長が法話をされた。法要後にはパークレー在任の日本人尺八奏者、古賀雅之氏が演奏を披露し会場を沸かせた。



尺八演奏の古賀氏

## ダルマスクール 教師の集い



4月26日（土）に、全米ダルマスクール教師大会が沿岸教区の主催により、マウンテンビュー仏教会（向嶋祐史開教使）で行われた。

昼食の様子

全米各地から約一六〇名が集い、ハワイ教団からも参加があった。大会のテーマは「Shinran's Journey, My Journey, Our Journey」で親鸞聖人が歩まれた人生を学び、参加者自身が念仏の教えとの出会いを振り返る機会となった。参加者は8つのグループにわかれ、一人ひとりが自身の人生の出来事を話した。

南カリフォルニアからの参加者は、自分が幼い時、ワシントン州からロサンゼルスに家族で引越したことを思い起こし、「親鸞聖人が比叡山で学ばれた事や、築いてこられた地位などすべて捨てて比叡山を去られたことは、私の家族が住み慣れた家やコミュニティを去って、新しい土地で生活を始めたことと、似ているように思いました。」と聖人の人生と自分の人生を重ね合わせました。

次回の大会は南部教区主催で、2015年4月24日から26日にロサンゼルス空港ラティソンホテルで開催の予定です。

## 梯勧学、往生される

本願寺派勧学、梯実園（かけはじつえん）和上が5月7日に往生の素懐をとげられた。行年八十八才。葬儀は5月10日に大阪の津村別院で勤まった。梯和上は長年、行信教行で教鞭をとり、数多くの真宗僧侶を育てた。米国内にも招かれIBSや各寺院で講義をされていた。英訳された著「Bearer of the Light・Life And Thought of Rennyo」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」

## 本願寺派宗務所から 視察団が訪米



サンフランシスコ仏教会社交室で会談、中央が栄部長。

4月下旬に浄土真宗本願寺派国際部と人事部の職員が北米を訪れ、各寺院を視察した。

本山では職員を北米開教区に派遣し、北米での寺院運営を学ぶ研修を企画している。研修は、浄土真宗センターで行われるIMOP（国際伝道者養成プログラム）や、各寺院の法要への参加を通して、開教使や門徒と交流を持ち、本山職員の視野を広めることを目的としている。寺院活動支援部長（国際担当）、栄俊英師は、「南米の開教使を志していた時もありましたので、こうやって海外の開教に関わる事ができ、たいへんうれしく思います。本山とBCAが協力して、お念仏の教えが世界に広まることを願っています。」と将来の連携に期待をよせている。

ターを訪れ、近隣の開教使と話し合いを持った。翌26日にはマウンテンビュー仏教会で開催されたタルマスクール大会に出席し、タルマスクールの教師たちと交流した。月曜日からは南部教区へ移動、ロサンゼルス別院をはじめ、オレンジカウティ仏教会、洗心仏教会などを訪れ、開教使、門徒から歓迎を受けた。

## タコマ仏教会 一〇〇周年を迎える



5月4日(日)にタコマ仏教会(柿原興乗開教使)の一〇〇周年記念法要が勤修された。

法要は、梅津総長導師で柿原開教使、タコマ仏教会の前開教使、西北部教区の開教使が勤め、長年のタコマ仏教会メンバーをはじめ、カリフォルニア州、日本、カナダから、約二〇〇名が参集した。法要後のランチにはタコマ市長もお祝いにつけた。法要の前日には、仏教会の将来を話し合う集いや、折り紙や墨絵、風呂敷などの日本文化を学ぶワークショップ、世代をこえた交流をはかったポーリング大会が行われた。

「昔、ヒロシマホテルの一室で行われた開法の集いから始まって、今日、お寺で一〇〇周年をむかえることができましたのは、たいへんありがたいことです。それはひとえに開教使の先生や二世の先輩たちが、お念仏の教えを伝えたいという願いをもって努力してくださったおかげだと感謝しています。我々も次の世代に教えを伝えていけるようにお寺を護持し、発展させていきたいと思います。」と柿原師。

## ラスベガスに 念仏の声

5月10日(日)、世界中から観光客が訪れる街ラスベガスで、念仏者の開法の間、ラスベガスサンガセンターがオープンした。



## 総長コラム

米国仏教団 総長 梅津廣道

私が以前いたオークランド仏教会では父の日は5月の母の日と一緒に祝われます。そのわけは、6月の父の日は毎年基金募集のパワーが催されるからです。オークランド仏教会のお父さんたち本当にありがとうございます。

さて、私事ですが、4月に三女のミッシェルから早々と父の日のギフトをもらいました。仕事でジョージア州アトランタに三ヶ月ほど任んでいる姉のエミのところ週末に遊びにいらして、お土産として「ハッピーファーサーズデー」と書かれた珍しい瓶入りのココアを持って帰ってきたことです。ココアより、その気持ちがうれしかったことです。親子は、それぞれが互いのことを思うときに親が親になり、子が子になるのではないのでしょうか。

親という言葉で思い起こすのが、私たちの宗祖親鸞さまです。親鸞さまの名前の「親」はインドの天親菩薩から、「鸞」は中国の鸞大師からそれぞれいただいたということです。「親」という字は普通「おや(父母)」を思い起こさせますが、辞典では最初に、「したい」、「いつくしむ、かわいがる」、「めぐむ」、「したしんでちかづく」とあり、最後の方に「おや」と定義されています。親鸞さまは、ただ尊敬する方々の名前をいただくだけでなく、その意味をよるこんでおられたのではないのでしょうか。

昔から、多くの人たちは阿彌陀さんのことを親さまと尊んできました。上の意味に照らし合わせて考えても阿彌陀さんを親さまとよばしていただくことが何と自然なことかと思われまます。親と子が呼び合う世界、それが私たちの世界ではないのでしょうか。

サンガセンターの落慶法要は、梅津総長と原田開教使が勤め、約一〇〇名が参集した。

ラスベガスでは1984年ころから開法の集いがおこなわれており、JACL(日系アメリカ人市民協会)の建物を借り、月に一度開教使を招いて開法をしていました。現在ではBCA本部の監督下でラスベガスファミリーサンガとして活動しており、総長のエグゼクティブアシスタントを務める、原田マリーピン開教使(オレンジカウティ仏教会)が同サンガを指導している。同サンガ会員は、「長年、自分たちのお寺を持ちたいと思っていたのでとてもうれしです。30年来の念願がかないました。」と喜びを話してお。昨年11月に物件を購入した時は建物は外壁だけしかなかったが内装をはじめホール、キッチン、トイレなどサンガのメンバーが協力して作り、完成させた。ラスベガスサンガセンターはノースラスベガス市に所在し、観光客でにぎわうラスベガスストリップからは車で約20分の住宅街にある。

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## BCAブックストアの営業時間が変わりました

浄土真宗センターにある、BCAブックストアの営業時間は、水曜日から土曜日の午前11時から午後7時になりました。

浄土真宗や仏教関係の本をはじめ、お香やお数珠、お仏壇なども販売しています。お店のウェブサイトとフェイスブックのページがありますので、ご覧下さい。

ウェブサイト、www.bcabookstore.com  
フェイスブックアカウント、Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Bookstore



ラスベガスサンガのパイオニア、福本さんと。

れがお念仏の世界であります。私たちのことを本当に案じて、ちかつき、目覚めさせ、そして安心させてくださる、大きなお心を阿彌陀さん、または親さまと呼び、親と二人づれのお念仏の生活をおくっていかれたのです。

父の日を迎え、私たちのことを本当に案じてくださっている真の親さまに気づき、感謝いたしましょう。ハッピーファーサーズデー!