

# WHEEL OF DHARMA

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## Shinran Shonin: Survivor of World War II and 9/11

By Hoshina Seki

American Buddhist Study Center  
and New York Buddhist Church

In 1937 Mr. Hirose Seiichi, a metal works industrialist in Japan, became a devout Jodo Shinshu Buddhist upon losing a child. He cast six identical bronze statues of Shinran Shonin in travel attire. They were each around 15 feet tall and weighed about 1,300 pounds. The reason for casting six statues was to have one to represent each character of the *Nembutsu* (*Namu Amida Butsu*).\* They were installed between 1937 and 1938 in Osaka, Kyoto, Tokyo, Hiroshima, Niigata prefecture, and in his hometown of Kuwana in Mie prefecture.

During World War II, three of the statues were destroyed and the metal was used for the Japanese government's war efforts. However, the one on Hijirigaoka hill, which overlooks Hiroshima city, remained. On August 6, 1945 the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. The epicenter was only two kilometers (about one mile) away from the Shinran Shonin statue. It received the full blast. Right now you can see red burn marks on it, and there is still a trace of radioactivity.



The Shinran Shonin statue's journey to America began towards the end of 1954. The statue was originally donated to the American Buddhist Academy, which was a separate organization from the New York Bud-

dhist Church. Rev. Hozen Seki and his fellow ministers felt New York City needed to have a Jodo Shinshu educational center that teaches Buddhism and peace. The Academy was a learning center for Buddhist studies.

On January 23, 1955, Rev. Seki received a letter from Mr. Hirose containing this message:

*... It has been my long cherished desire to follow through on my plan to have the Statue of the Shonin cross over to America.... Even now as I write this response to your letter, tears of joy well up in my eyes. Shinran teaches that we are fellow seekers, one and all. I believe that the present way things have turned out with our country [Japan] headed down the path of democracy was what Shinran must have set into motion some seven hundred years ago. It is this spirit of all of us being fellow followers that is well-expressed in the form of Shinran as a traveler wearing straw sandals, hat, and holding a cane, that I think is especially well suited for democracy.*

This year is an historic year for all Japanese, Japanese Americans, and Americans, as it is to remember the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII and the 60th anniversary of the unveiling of the Shinran Shonin statue. This statue stood in a Hiroshima park when the first atomic bomb was dropped. The statue witnessed the mass killings and horrific destruction of what mankind created and released on humanity. Rev. Seki brought this statue to New York City. Then, sadly, the

Shinran statue witnessed another horrific act of death and destruction as planes crashed into the World Trade Center in 2001.

**A commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Shinran Shonin statue installation**

On Friday, September 11, 2015 the American Buddhist Study Center and the New York Buddhist Church will be offering an evening of reflection and gratitude on the 60th Anniversary of the unveiling of the Shinran Shonin statue. The event will commence at 6:30 pm at 331 Riverside Drive, New York, NY, with a rededication and restoration ceremony conducted by Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America. Keynote speaker is Rev. Dr. Mark Unno of the University of Oregon. We will hear messages from leaders in our interfaith community as well as other distinguished guests.

This event will be free and open to the public. Donations are encouraged and gratefully accepted. For more information please contact Hoshina Seki at [hoshinazen@gmail.com](mailto:hoshinazen@gmail.com), or visit [www.ambuddhist.org](http://www.ambuddhist.org)

\**Nembutsu* (*Namu Amida Butsu*): the Name of Amida Buddha

## Catholics, Buddhists Discuss "Suffering, Liberation and Fraternity"

Pope Francis, leader of the Catholic Church, invited U.S. Buddhist leaders to participate in a Catholic-Buddhist Dialogue which took place at the Mariapolis Center, his summer palace, 30 minutes by train from the Vatican in Rome, Italy from June 22-27, 2015.

Forty-seven American Buddhist and Catholic representatives from five geographic areas—Chicago, District of Columbia, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco—met in dialogue, sponsored by the Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in collaboration with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. Each of the representatives was involved in interfaith activities in their area.

From the Buddhist Churches of America, Rev. Ron Miyamura of Midwest Buddhist Temple in Chicago and Rev. Ron Kobata of Buddhist Church of San Francisco attended, as well as Bishop Noriaki Ito, Bishop of the Higashi Honganji North America District and Rev. Patti Nakai of the Buddhist Temple

of Chicago, an affiliate of Higashi Honganji North America. Interestingly the Buddhist delegates were primarily from ethnic Buddhist organizations, i.e. people who were raised in the Buddhist tradition, rather than converts from another faith tradition.

Each day began with a different Buddhist service followed by a period of meditation in the meeting room and was followed by a Catholic Mass in the chapel.

The theme of the dialogue was "Suffering, Liberation and Fraternity." Rev. Miyamura said, "It was quite educational for me to learn not only the Catholic view of the world, but also how other Buddhists view the world."

Rev. Kobata reflected that "from a Buddhist perspective, the subjects of Suffering, Liberation and Fraternity could be interpreted as expressions of the Three Treasures. After all, the Buddha is the spirit of a person who awakens to the cause and cure of suffering. The Dharma is the source of spiritual liberation. And the Sangha is a fraternity of people which

Pope Francis identified as '...an essential human quality, for we are all relational beings. A lively awareness of our relatedness helps us to look upon and treat each person as a true sister or brother; without fraternity it is impossible to build a just society and a solid and lasting peace.'"

The convocation also included a visit with the Pope in the official audience room. The Pope entered the room and addressed the representatives with a few words in Italian which were translated into English. "Then he greeted each of us and shook our hands as we presented the Pope with a small gift," remembered Rev. Miyamura. "It was quite impressive to meet the Pope, the leader of over one billion Catholics worldwide."

Rev. Kobata noted "an unexpected outcome of the Buddhist-Catholic dialogue—that an interdenominational dialogue among the Buddhists in the U.S. may be helpful, if not necessary, in addition to engaging in interfaith dialogues." As a follow-up to the gathering in Rome, besides continuing the



Pope Francis (right) shakes hands with Rev. Ronald Kobata (BCA Buddhist Church of San Francisco), as Bishop Noriaki Ito (left, Higashi Hongwanji North American District) and another Buddhist leader look on. COPYRIGHT Servizio Fotografico de "L'O.R."

Buddhist-Catholic dialogue in the respective geographical locations, the Buddhist representatives are also planning to engage in intra-denominational dialogues.

"The dialogue strengthened mutual understanding concerning human suffering and means of liberation, as well as deepened relationships as a basis for interreligious cooperation based on shared values," the joint statement at the conclusion of the dialogue said.

"The objective of this 'dialogue of fraternity,' as it was called by Pope Francis, is to create new and practical forms of collaboration reaching out to those in need in the cities of the participants" in the United States.

"We took some small steps to move forward in global understanding," said Rev. Miyamura.

*A grant for travel was provided by The Rev. Gyodo Kono Memorial Fund.*



## “Respect All Forms of Life”

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

“Respect all forms of life,” Shakyamuni Buddha used to say to his followers. He taught people the importance of the lives of all creatures and animals, not to mention human beings. Therefore, he started a retreat for his sangha during the rainy season in India so that monks would do less harm to creatures on the ground.

This tradition of having a summer retreat is still practiced all over the world. I visited a gathering of Thai Buddhist monks in Los Angeles in June. There were about 400 monks from all parts of the United States gathered together to deepen their understanding of the teachings. I was amazed to see so many monks in saffron colored robes. Their session lasted for one week. Supporters were there to provide meals and all other necessities for the

monks, too.

We, the ministers of the Buddhist Churches of America, meet during summer to study together. It is a requirement for ministers to attend the *Fuken*. My office asks all churches and temples to support their attendance. This year, we will meet in San Jose from August 10 - 12.

Now, speaking of the spirit of not harming other living beings, I do not see such practices in this country. When I was growing up in Japan, our family had a tradition of not eating meat during the weeklong observance of my temple's *Hoonko* services in January, nor during the *Obon* season (about three days). We also did not eat meat on two days each month: my grandfather's memorial day and Shinran Shonin's memorial day. (As a boy I did

not like these days.) Another rule was that I was not allowed to go fishing. To this date I have never been fishing. But now I appreciate these practices as great ways to keep the Buddha's teaching with us.

I think we should set a high ethical standard for ourselves and establish an individual or family practice of some form. It can be a morning or evening service together with everyone. It can be a practice of *gassho* before meals. It can be a practice of not eating meat on certain days. Anyway, whatever you may choose, it is for us to keep the teaching close to us. It should not, however, be done to criticize those who do not follow your standards. It is not for self-righteousness. It is for you and your family to ponder the teaching imparted by the Buddha. What do *you* think about this?



## Enmanji Kieshiki

On May 17, 2015, Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, conducted the Kieshiki Affirmation Ceremony at the Enmanji Buddhist Temple as part of their Gotan-E Service. The ceremony and service was assisted Mr. George Thow, Minister's Assistant.

## Difficulties Resolved

By Rev. Gerald Sakamoto

San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin



The Buddha-Dharma addresses and resolves the difficulties that result from the value we place on how we engage the world. I

see the world through the narrow lens of my likes and dislikes, creating categories that offer opportunities for conflict. The practices of the Buddha-Dharma cultivate the mind that sees things as they are, correcting the mind that places value on my prejudices. This is core of the Buddha-Dharma. These are the Four Noble Truths. If I do not acknowledge and correct the prejudices with which I engage the world, it is not Buddha-Dharma.

Jodo Shinshu is Buddha-Dharma. It addresses and resolves the same difficulties. I acknowledge my inability to resolve difficulties. Amida assures me of the resolution

of difficulties. This relationship between Amida's absolute assurance and my absolute inability is at the core of Jodo Shinshu.

“Hence, whether with regard to practice or to shinjin there is nothing whatever that has not been fulfilled through Amida Tatbagata's directing of virtue to beings out of the pure Vow-mind. It is not that there is no cause or that there is some other cause. Let this be known.”

— Shinran, *Collected Works of Shinran*, p. 300

Whether there is substance to the myth of Amida matters only in how I am affected. If there is no substance, my belief will not cause Amida to be. If there is substance, what I do or not do will not affect the outcome of Amida's Vows.

The fourth of the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, represents the practices that cultivate the mind of enlightenment. We often think of these practices as ways of enhancing our experience. Guides for better living, however, can be found in many places, from monasteries to Wall Street.

Shinran reflects, without regret, on what he received from Honen.

“The reason is, if I could attain Buddhahood by endeavoring in other practices, but said the Nembutsu and so fell into hell, then I would feel regret at having been deceived. But I am incapable of any other practice, so hell is decidedly my abode whatever I do.”

— *Tannisho*, Chapter 2, *CWS*, p. 662

If I hold the myth of Amida to have substance, Amida's assurance frees me from the practices intended to cultivate the mind of enlightenment. That assurance can change the way I engage the world. The boundaries that result from my prejudices become less harsh. Amida's assurance offers an opportunity to reconsider how we engage the world.

“The light of compassion that grasps us illumines and protects us always;

The darkness of our ignorance is already broken through;

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,

Beneath the clouds and mists there is brightness, not dark.

When one realizes shinjin, seeing and revering and attaining great joy,

One immediately leaps crosswise, closing off the five evil courses.”

— Shinran, *Shoshinge*, *CWS*, p. 70

## 58 Years of Perfect Attendance



With his recent graduation from high school, Ty Tanioka (lower right), completed the Tanioka family's amazing record of perfect attendance at the Orange County Buddhist Church. Older sister Kaycee (left), and older brother Trenton (right) were both 15-Year Perfect Attendance recipients. Ty Tanioka just received his 15-Year Perfect Attendance award as well. Mother, Jo Ann (Wada) Tanioka (seated, center), was a 13-Year Perfect Attendance recipient, when she was a Dharma School student. Together, the Taniokas have totaled 58 years of perfect attendance! Center back is proud father and husband, Kevin Tanioka.

Visit the BCA website [www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org](http://www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org) to find a BCA temple, Educational Events, Resources and more!



## Pasadena Buddhist Temple

In the fall of 1948, the Pasadena Buddhist Church's Sunday school was established at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Yukio Nishimoto, with Rev. Daitetsu Hayashima as head minister and Miss Toshi Nagata as superintendent.

In 1951, the church moved to its first permanent location at 1106 Lincoln Avenue. Outgrowing its confines, property at 1993 Glen Avenue was purchased and a new temple was designed and built by member and architect, Mr. Nobuo Sakai. A formal dedication was held on November 2, 1958. Rev. Masami Nakagaki was our first minister.

The 1960s was a decade of growth for the temple, with the addition of a recreation hall and a new minister's residence. The temple was also given a tea house by the Urasenke School of Tea in Kyoto, Japan. The tea house was re-constructed by temple members. This tea house was donated in 2012 to the Huntington Library in San Marino, California to be utilized in their newly renovated Japanese Tea Garden.

The 57-year history of the Pasadena Buddhist Temple is a result of the guidance, assistance, and inspiration of all of the past and present reverends, presidents, and Sangha members. It continues to serve its Sangha and the community and continues to plan for the future and for its growth.

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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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## President's Message

# Transforming Young Lives

By Dr. Kent Matsuda  
BCA President  
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

If you had the chance to make a life-changing decision, what would you do? At the Buddhist Church of Sacramento, the ministerial staff has seen young people make that decision and never regret the outcome.

For the past eleven summers, the ministerial staff at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento has invited students and young adults to the Youth Advocacy Committee's (YAC) week-long retreat so that young people aged 15 to 18 can experience the life of a minister's assistant. Keith Sawada originally thought up the concept. The church staff was enthusiastic about the idea, and the YAC retreat was born.

The young people who attend the retreat get an intense and focused opportunity to learn the Dharma and to undergo a process similar to what people experience when they obtain Tokudo ordination. The youth learn a

lot about themselves and their colleagues. In the end, they form strong friendships that can last for many years.

Rinban Rev. Bob Oshita does not want young people to come to the retreat with the intention of becoming ministers; he wants them to come to learn the Dharma. As many will attest, Rinban Oshita is one of the best Dharma teachers in the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA).

The youth learn to conduct services, give Dharma talks, and lead in sutra chanting. They get a chance to visit the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley and the stupa at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco.

At the end of the retreat, the young people become certified youth minister's assistants (YMA). Many of the YMA's help conduct services at their home temples.

At the end of June this year, a tenth year reunion took place at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento. Participants from all ten years of the YAC retreat attended. The reunion took



Photo Credit: Jim Shimomaye

place shortly before the eleventh group came to Sacramento to take part in the retreat. The reunion attendees discussed how the retreat made an impact on their lives and how the retreat could change in the future.

On behalf of the BCA, I would like to thank the ministerial staff at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento. Besides Rinban Oshita, the staff includes Senseis Patti Oshita, Carol and Tim Castle, Keith Kato, Grace Hatano, Koichi Mizushima, and Kelvin Mark. In the past, Sensei Peter Inokoji-Kim

participated. I would also like to thank the volunteers, the YAC retreat parents, and the retreat participants for taking part in this unique opportunity to transform young lives. While I was at the reunion, I had a chance to talk to many of the ministerial staff, volunteers, and participants. I was impressed with the participants' knowledge of the Dharma and their desire to help their home temples and districts. If you know of someone who might be interested in going to next year's retreat, please contact the YAC.

## Listening to the Dharma is Meeting with the Buddha

By Rev. Ryuta Furumoto  
Senshin Buddhist Temple

Last summer I went to India by myself. The purpose of my weeklong trip was to visit Shakyamuni Buddha's historic sites. I visited Lumbini, where Gautama Siddhartha was born, and Bodhgaya, where he became the Buddha. Then I visited Sarnath, where Shakyamuni Buddha gave his first Dharma message, and Kushinagar, where he entered into perfect Nirvana. I also spent time in Rajgir, famous for Vulture Peak where Shakyamuni Buddha gave notable Dharma messages, such as the *Larger Sutra* and the *Contemplation Sutra*.

I wanted to see the places where Shakyamuni Buddha walked, talked, and meditated. By doing so, I thought I would feel closer to Shakyamuni Buddha. "If I sit near the Bodhi tree where Gautama Siddhartha awakened to

the universal truth, maybe I can feel something about the Buddha, such as the serenity of his enlightenment, or some kind of vibe of the Buddha." But contrary to my expectations, I realized, "I am much closer to the Buddha at my temple, where I share his teaching with the temple members."

At Shakyamuni Buddha's historic sites, Buddhism is past history and heritage for the tourists, but the teaching is not active anymore. I did not see local Buddhists coming to bow to the stupa or gathering to hold services. There were a number of Buddhist monks and followers from Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, Tibet, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan who chanted sutras, sat in meditation, or walked around the stupa, but they were visiting from other countries. The local people were selling souvenirs and food but they did not appear to be Buddhists, and some of them were trying to rip me off. They

were selling statues of the Buddha and *ojuzus* which were overpriced. I thought, "In the U.S., the BCA Bookstore always gives me a discounted price, but here I am just a tourist (maybe a sucker), not a fellow Buddhist."

In India, Buddhism vanished around the 13th or 14th century. Now, there are Buddhists but the number is very small. Most people living around Shakyamuni Buddha's sacred places are not Buddhists anymore. I recognized many local people actively worshiping Ganesha, Shiva, and other Hindu gods. In the same town where the historic sites of the Buddha are located, I saw young and old crowded in the Hindu temples, offering flowers, burning incense, and chanting sutras.

At one time Shakyamuni Buddha taught his disciples, "Seeing (listening to) the Dharma is meeting the Buddha," and as I visited the places where Shakyamuni

Buddha lived, I began to understand that a pilgrimage is not necessarily to meet the Buddha. In our temples, we can listen to the teachings of the Buddha, and we can meet the Buddha. We have an active sangha, a gathering of Buddhist friends that makes Buddhism alive.

Our founder, Shinran Shonin from 13th century Japan, did not go to India, but saw the Buddha in the *Nembutsu*, sutras, and the Dharma messages delivered by his master Honen Shonin. In his writings, Shinran Shonin often used the word "Listening," which suggested, "Listening/hearing the teaching is meeting the Buddha."

In the preface of *Kyogyoshinsho*, he expressed his gratitude and joy from meeting the Buddha through listening and stated, "Here I rejoice in what I have heard and extol what I have attained." (*Collected Works of Shinran*, p.4) In the fifth chapter he mentioned "...seeing the Buddha



through hearing." (*CWS* p.189)

In my temple in Los Angeles, I meet with the Buddha. As Shinran Shonin taught, listening to the teaching is important. This is what I gathered from my India trip. Wherever the Buddha's teaching is heard, practiced, and shared, including in our temples in the U.S., the wheel of Dharma is actively turning.

## Rev. Shojo Honda: Bringing Buddhism to Washington, D.C.



June 25, 1929 – April 13, 2015

On April 13, 2015, the Rev. Shojo Honda returned to the Pure Land, culminating his extraordinary life as an American, Shin Buddhist minister, and follower of the Dharma.

Born in Koloa, Hawaii on Kauai where his father served as a Hawaii Kyodan minister, Honda Sensei and his family returned to Takatsuki, Osaka, Japan before World War II. Rev. Honda

received his *Tokudo* ordination from the Nishi Hongwanji in 1946 and he graduated from Ryukoku University in 1952, majoring in Indian and Buddhist Philosophy. Honda Sensei received his *Kyoshi* and *Fukyoshi* ordinations and then decided to return to the United States.

Upon arriving in the US, Sensei taught Japanese at the Japanese Institute of Sawtelle in West Los Angeles. When asked why he wasn't assigned to a Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) temple, Sensei explained that there was an overabundance of ministers at that time, and he had no temple to be assigned to.

In 1958, Honda Sensei moved to New York City and assisted at the New York Buddhist Church while continuing his English studies at Columbia and New York Universities. In 1959 he married June Ito (originally from Oakland, CA) and they moved to Washington, DC.

Upon arrival, Honda Sensei

embarked on his next challenge as a minister. He formed the Washington, DC Buddhist Sangha, the first BCA and Buddhist organization in the Southeast US. At this time, Sensei was appointed as a BCA minister.

In 1961, Sensei was speaking with a Japanese section reference librarian who was lamenting that the Library of Congress had thousands of old Japanese books which could not be catalogued because no one could read the old-style Japanese characters which were no longer used. However, when shown the books, he told the librarian that he could read the old kanji characters. He was immediately hired as a specialist for the Japanese Collection in the Asian Division, eventually rising to Senior Reference Librarian of the Japanese Section. It is said that the Japanese collection is the second largest at the Library of Congress after the English language collection, and this was due for the most part to Rev. Honda's dedicated

efforts.

As probably the first Buddhist priest in Washington, DC of any sect and denomination, Honda Sensei would often be called to the U.S. State Department and other government agencies, as well as the White House, to offer advice and consultation on Buddhism.

In 1963, Honda Sensei was officially invited to participate in the funeral services of President John F. Kennedy as one of the official representatives of America's Buddhist community by Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield. Together with Rev. Hozen Seki of the New York Buddhist Church, their faces can be prominently seen in some photographs at JFK's burial ceremony at Arlington Cemetery, standing just behind world leaders such as Charles DeGaulle of France and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. However, in some official photographs including those currently on display at the Arlington National Cemetery, Rev. Honda's face does not ap-

pear. Sensei said his image had been removed for some unknown reason.

As the only Buddhist priest in Washington, DC, Honda Sensei would be called upon to assist with Buddhist services for various Asian embassies which had no Buddhist priests there from their own nations. Rev. Honda also provided Buddhist funerals, inurnment, and annual memorial services for American soldiers of the Buddhist faith who were to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery and other facilities. Honda Sensei also played a major role in securing the right for American Buddhist soldiers to have the Dharma Wheel inscribed on their U.S. government-issued tombstones.

When the U.S. Air Force Academy was opened in Colorado in 1963, Rev. Honda was called upon by the Department of the Air Force to design the Buddhist altar placed in the Academy Chapel. This Buddhist Chapel exists even

Continued on Page 6



### BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

## Engaged Buddhism Comes to Life at Pacific Seminar

By Sandra Michels Adams, Midwest Buddhist Temple

The 2015 Summer Pacific Seminar, “The Call of the Nembutsu,” held at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, gave this Chicago traveler a warm human gift of meeting, learning, and practice in the Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP).

The seminar’s theme of “Engaged Buddhism” was a concept I was aware of, but had limited personal experience with. Teachers from diverse Buddhist sanghas brought engaged Buddhism to life from their own global experiences, including work in Japan, Sri Lanka, Africa, Nepal, and California.

I learned that engaged Buddhism is something living, something which would ask me, “What breaks your heart?” and what I would want to do about it. We learned about real ways to feed, clothe, educate, and care for our brothers and sisters around the world.

I was grateful to continue my MAP education among students from BCA sanghas in Illinois, New York, Virginia, Idaho, and California. By Sunday service, all ministers’ assistants had had opportunities to participate in the services, gratefully encouraged by the more experienced, Tokudo-ordained ministers’ assistants. New friendships arose on the *naijin* and from delightful talk and laughter in the dining room.

Thank you! Thank you! To all the kind BCA and BCE staff, sangha members, teachers and friends, I offer gratitude and look forward to learning and laughing with you again. In *gassho*.



(Above) Speakers and attendees included (seated, left to right) Sensei Elaine Donlin, Buddhist Church of San Francisco; Rev. Seigen Yamaoka, Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS); Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, IBS; Rev. Kodo Umezū, Bishop, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) and President, IBS; Prof. Mitsuya Dake, Ryukoku University; Rev. William Masuda; and Dr. Kent Matsuda, BCA President. (Left) Sensei Mushim Ikeda, East Bay Meditation Center. Not pictured: Rev. Uma Lama Gbising (aka Rev. Ashma), Kathmandu Hongwanji, and Santussika Bhikkhuni, Buddhist Global Relief.

## “Embraced By the Heart of Amida Buddha”

### Seminar and Pride Parades celebrate new era in LGBTQ equality

On June 27, 2015, concluding a historic week which marked the Supreme Court’s milestone decision legalizing same-sex marriages throughout the US and on the day before the New York Pride Parade, the Buddhist Churches of America Center for Buddhist Education presented a half-day seminar: “Embraced By the Heart of Amida Buddha: The LGBTQ Community and Shin Buddhism.” [See photo on page 8 of this issue.]

The keynote presentation by Dr. Jeff Wilson, titled “A Queer History of Buddhism” is available to view on YouTube (BCA Center for Buddhist Education Channel). Additional information and resources from the seminar, including “Safe Space Agreements” and “Helpful Terms” will be online at the BCA website in the CBE section.

On June 28, the NYBC had its first official contingent in the NY Pride Parade, celebrating a new era of LGBTQ equality. Also on this day, the Buddhist Church of San Francisco participated for the third time in SF Pride. Other BCA temples participating in local Pride Parades in May and June include: Denver, Spokane, and Salt Lake City.

Below is an excerpt of an article by Dr. Jeff Wilson, first published by Tricycle magazine, online edition, on June 27, 2015.

## A Big Gay History of Same-sex Marriage in the Sangha

### Without fanfare, American Buddhists have been performing same-sex marriages for over 40 years.



Buddhist same-sex marriage was born in the USA. That’s a little known but significant fact to reflect on now, just after the Supreme Court has declared legal marriage equality throughout the country. Appropriately enough, it all started in San Francisco, and was conceived as an act of love, not activism.

The first known Buddhist same-sex marriages took place in the early 1970s, at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco. Founded in 1899, it’s the oldest surviving temple in the mainland United States. It’s also part of the oldest Buddhist organization outside Hawaii: the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), part of the Shin tradition of Pure Land Buddhism...

The complete article is available at [www.tricycle.com/blog/big-gay-history-same-sex-marriage-sangha](http://www.tricycle.com/blog/big-gay-history-same-sex-marriage-sangha)

## Thank you to all of our generous donors!

The BCA has instituted a change in policy for receiving donations. Please make donation checks payable to the **BCA Endowment Foundation** and specify in the memo line where you would like the donation to go. Questions? Please call (510) 809-1460 or email [cbe@bcahq.org](mailto:cbe@bcahq.org). Thank you!

## Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course - Monthly Essay

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

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



### Thoughts on the Tradition of Receiving a Dharma Name (*Homyo*)

By Nancy Dodd  
Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church

I feel the granting of a Buddhist Dharma Name has great significance, whether it is done at the time of death or earlier in life. In my experience, however, each type of confirmation has a different meaning and purpose. As a *sansei*\* Jodo Shinshu Buddhist, I researched back three generations and have discovered that my maternal grandmother, mother, father and I all received our *homyo*s in confirmation ceremonies.

Buddhism has always been a part of my family’s life now for four generations. Being presented with our Dharma Names while living affirms our faith in Amida Buddha.

#### Role of *Homyo* in My Grandmother’s Life

My grandmother was a very devout Buddhist, evidenced by her daily morning and evening ritual of coming before her home *obutsudan* and chanting *Rai San Mon*, or Japanese “Three Treasures.” Her life was difficult – having to endure internment at Poston, Arizona – but guided by her strong belief in the Buddha, which she instilled in her four daughters. All four daughters, my mother included, followed in her footsteps as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists.

#### Role of My Own *Homyo* in My Life

My mother and father had the foresight to have my confirmation rite in 1952, when I was five years old. I received my *homyo* and attended church with them almost every Sunday growing up. Buddhism was a part of me, just as much as my physical features and nationality.

When I married in 1976, my husband was in the Navy, stationed in Virginia—away from any Buddhist community. I corresponded with the minister who married us, and was sent various books to keep me centered and focused on my Buddhist roots.

#### Role of Posthumous *Homyo* after My Miscarriage

I had a miscarriage in February of 1978. My baby, who only lived three months in my womb, was unnamed, but received a *homyo* over a decade later. At first, I felt the baby’s breathing stopped due to something I did or a pre-natal drug I was given at the time. Now I realize the baby could have been a being who, like a Buddha, strived to bring about awakening in me, its mother, who was still mired in ignorance, pain and suffering. It wasn’t until 1991 that I asked my temple’s minister to have a confirmation ceremony and memorial service. With just my daughter and myself present, the *Sensei* led chanting of a sutra and delivered a Dharma message, giving the baby’s *homyo* to us to keep safe. This brought much-needed closure to my life as a single mother. Now, each February at *Shotsuki Hoyo* service, I reflect upon a life that could have been Stacy’s older sibling. I am grateful that I had my confirmation and received my *homyo* as a child, for Buddhism helped guide me through very rough as well as very joyful times.

In conclusion, the *homyo* can play many roles in a Buddhist’s life. It can provide a sense of connection and grounding in faith when given during one’s lifetime. And, when granted at the time of death or afterward, it can give solace to the survivors in their time of grief. *Namu Amida Butsu*.

\**sansei*: third generation Japanese American

Nancy Dodd was Religious and Buddhist Education Committee Chair from 2011 to 2013 at Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church, under Rev. Carol Himaka. Nancy worked for the Newark Unified School District as a substitute aide in Special Education for 23 years. Now semi-retired, she works weekends as brand ambassador for a pet food company, and proctors California high school proficiency exams. A mental health advocate, Nancy recently participated in her first 5K SF Bay Area National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Walk at Golden Gate Park.

## Learn Buddhism Online!

### Orange County Buddhist Church Launches Online Learning Program

The Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC) Buddhist Education Center is happy to announce a new, online, distance-learning program. Three courses are being offered at this time, with other courses to follow in the near future.

The first course, “Resolving Life’s Problems through Buddhism,” is a four-session course dealing with four major issues of life: matters of life and death, relationship issues, Buddhism and the workplace, and self-esteem issues.

The second course, “Lectures on the *Shoshinge*,” is a character-by-character, line-by-line study of the *Shoshinge*, which is one of the primary texts of Shin Buddhism. In this text of 120 lines, Shinran Shonin expresses his deep spirituality and praises the teachings of the Seven Masters. This course is designed for those who have no background in reading or writing in Chinese or Japanese, and instructs students in the meaning and writing of each character, plus the meaning of the passage.

The instructor for both courses is Rev. Marvin Harada, resident minister of the OCBC.

The third course offered is “The Process-Driven Life,” taught by Rev. Jon Turner, part-time minister at the OCBC. The course explores a life of process rather than one of purpose; a life in the here and now rather than yearning for an idealized future. The how then becomes more important than the what.

To take the online courses, go to the OCBC website at: [www.ocbuddhist.org](http://www.ocbuddhist.org). Click on the “learn” tab, and then the “Buddhist Education Center” tab. You will see the online classes listed there.

We welcome any Dharma listeners and seekers to the online study program.



### BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

*Special Feature: This is the second of a two-part series to observe the 70th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It recounts the memories of Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki, who survived the bombing of Nagasaki. View the original articles written in Japanese online at [www.asahi.com/articles/OSK201311110028.html](http://www.asahi.com/articles/OSK201311110028.html) and the final segment at [saimyoji.jugem.jp/?eid=765](http://saimyoji.jugem.jp/?eid=765).*

## THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE A-BOMB (Part 2 of 2)

by Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki  
President, Nagasaki Buddhist Association

Translated by Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, Buddhist Church of Lodi



**Translator's Note:** The first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima City at 8:15 a.m. on August 6, 1945, and the second one was dropped on Nagasaki City at 11:02 a.m. on August 9, 1945. About one-third of each city's population was killed instantly; around 140,000 people in Hiroshima and about 70,000 people in Nagasaki. My father, Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki, a survivor of the Nagasaki A-bomb, was six years old at that time. Seventy years have passed since then. Before retirement he had been the resident minister of Kougenji Temple, his family temple in Nagasaki, for over fifty years. Even after retiring, his unceasing desire is to share his experiences and his wish for peace with others. I would like to present my father's reminiscences of the A-bomb, written in 2013 and published in the local Japanese newspaper, *Asahi* on November 11, 2013. The last segment appeared in the *Nishinihon* newspaper on January 1, 2013.

### A memory of the late Katsuji Yoshida

The late Mr. Katsuji Yoshida was an A-bomb survivor who spoke about his experiences. Mr. Yoshida said, "Regardless of one's principals and ideology, we spontaneously do whatever we can for peace. It is peace activity."

Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki has never ever forgotten these words.

He first met Mr. Yoshida in his high school days when Rev. Kusunoki visited his house to conduct a memorial service. He sat at the household *obutsudan* and chanted a sutra. After that, he turned around and faced Mr. Yoshida. The next moment, he looked away from Mr. Yoshida's face. He looked like a monster. His face had been burned because of the A-bomb. Rev. Kusunoki was scared to look at Mr. Yoshida, so he avoided seeing him after that.

Thirty years later, he visited Mr. Yoshida to conduct another memorial service. After the service, Mr. Yoshida told him about his horrible A-bomb experience. For the first time, he heard Mr. Yoshida's story and his wish for peace. Rev. Kusunoki regretted his attitude because, until then, he had judged Mr. Yoshida only by his appearance. They became good friends and often drank together. In 2007, Mr. Yoshida gave a talk at Kougenji on his experience using drawings on cards. Mr. Yoshida passed away in 2010. Rev. Kusunoki presented his Buddhist name: *Annon-In Shaku Katsuji*. *Annon* means peaceful and tranquil. *In* is an honorary posthumous title. *Shaku* comes from Shakyamuni Buddha. And *Katsuji* is his first name.

Rev. Kusunoki always talks about Mr. Yoshida when he gives talks about the A-bomb and peace. He says, "Mr. Yoshida's words are related to the Buddha's teaching. He was just like a Bodhisattva who sincerely practiced peace activities."

### Handing down the wish for peace to Dharma school kids

There is a baby Buddha statue halfway up the mountain where the Kameyama Shachu Museum, connected with Ryoma Sakamoto, is located. Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki erected the baby Buddha statue in commemoration of the birthplace of Kougenji's Dharma school, *Hikari Kodomokai*.

*Hikari Kodomokai* is the oldest Dharma school in Nagasaki. Rev. Monshin Ecchu founded the Dharma school and Tatsuya's older brother, Rev. Tetsuya Ecchu, succeeded their father in taking care of it. After WW2, Rev. Tetsuya Ecchu gathered children who were poor and had lost their parents and taught them reading, math, and mountain climbing skills. Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki took over for his brother in 1957. He said, "I learned from my brother that a Buddhist temple is not only a place for funerals and memorial services, but also for accepting people and sharing people's feelings."

Every Saturday night, students of all different age groups from kindergarten to high school come to the Dharma school. More than one hundred children used to come and now ten to fifteen children still attend. Every year when August 9 approached, Rev. Tatsuya talked about his memories of the A-bomb. He wanted to tell the students that the A-bomb is a weapon that could cause all human beings to vanish from this world. His wish is to hand down the stories of the A-bomb from generation to generation, just like the tales of old Japan

### Shakyamuni Buddha's ashes enshrined in the Peace Park

After Shakyamuni Buddha's passing, Buddhists shared his ashes and built mausoleums in which to enshrine them. Buddhists cherish the mausoleums and have services there. The former prime minister of India, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, presented Shakyamuni Buddha's ashes to Hiroshima, Nagasaki and some other cities in Japan in 1954 to console the victims of the A-bomb and express his wish for peace.

The Hiroshima city government enshrined the ashes in 1966. The shrine has been managed by Hiroshima since then. The Nagasaki city officials also had a plan to enshrine the ashes but it was canceled because of the belief that it created a conflict with the separation of religion and politics. Therefore, Nagasaki city officials gave the ashes to the Nagasaki Buddhist Association. Since then, the ashes have been handed down to the successive presidents and kept in an inconspicuous place.



The Interfaith Peace Assembly conducted a ceremony to enshrine Shakyamuni Buddha's ashes at Nagasaki Peace Park in 2013. Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki (center) officiated.

A few years ago, a local newspaper found out that the ashes were being kept in an inconspicuous place and wrote an article about it. Shortly after that, Nagasaki city officials visited Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki to discuss how to enshrine and manage those important ashes. Nagasaki city officials eventually decided on a location in the Nagasaki Peace Park to enshrine Shakyamuni Buddha's ashes. The ashes of unidentified A-bomb victims are also enshrined in the same building. Nagasaki city officials decided to put up a new sign about it and tighten security. The ashes were finally situated in a place that everybody can visit. Nagasaki city officials said, "The former prime minister of India, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, presented this treasure and expressed his wish for peace and consolation for the victims. Unfortunately, the city had never discussed this issue until the article brought it under public scrutiny. The city has made the decision that it is not against the idea of the separation of religion and politics." The President of the Nagasaki Buddhist Association, Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki stated, "Based on Mr. Nehru's wish, the Peace Park is the best place to enshrine Shakyamuni Buddha's Ashes."



## Hibakusha (A-Bomb Survivor)

By Jack M. Dairiki

Buddhist Church of San Francisco

In Hiroshima City's Atomic Peace Park, there is a poem carved into a rock which states, "Please rest in peace, for this error shall never be repeated." It is a pledge to all living people of the world to protect all of humanity. I witnessed the holocaust three and one-half miles from the atomic bomb detonation point.

I traveled to Hiroshima, Japan in August, 1941 with my father as a summer vacation to visit my ailing grandfather. Unfortunately, we were stranded there in September of that year. Finding no passage to return to Sacramento, California, my father and I were separated from my mother and four siblings who were interned in the Tule Lake, California, Jerome and Rowher, Arkansas, and finally, the Amache, Colorado camps.

I, along with my classmates, were conscripted to work for the Japan War Effort (*Gakuto Do In*) at Toyo Factory. I was a 14-year-old student. We worked there from January, 1945 until the atomic bomb was dropped on August 6. On that fateful day, because of air bombing raids, my commuter train to the Toyo Factory was delayed by 15 minutes. That delay saved me and my classmates from being in Hiroshima City. We were taking roll call at 08:15 when the bomb was detonated.

We noticed three B-29 bombers traveling towards Hiroshima. It was shortly after that sighting that we experienced the horrific explosion of the first atomic bomb. First, a blinding flash and a horrific blast of wind that took out 99% of the Toyo Factory windows. I felt my body being lifted by this wind. When I opened my eyes, I was in the midst of dust and smoke and could not see my hands. Then I heard a fellow student run toward the bomb shelter which was a few hundred yards away; the entrance was at a higher elevation. Perhaps 30 seconds had elapsed. I looked back at Hiroshima and saw the monstrous fire column rising thousands of feet into the air. The whole city was on fire, covered in smoke and fire with no buildings to be seen.

An hour later we peeked out from the cave shelter and witnessed the first victim. A young woman walking with her arms extended—her ragged clothes hanging from her arms and her hair burned off. She was looking straight ahead and walked like a ghost. We noticed as she came closer that it was not burned clothes, but her skin hanging from her arms.

We were instructed to return home if we were able to walk. I boarded a ghost train with the paint burned off and windows shattered. Inside the train were many injured people asking for medical aid. I could not help them so I dismounted the train to walk home, a distance of 10 miles. My grandmother welcomed me—she was scanning the horizon for my return. The house was not damaged, except all the sliding doors were down but unbroken.

There were 55 hospitals, 200 doctors and 2,000 nurses in Hiroshima City before the bombing. What remained were three hospitals, 20 doctors, and 170 nurses to help the wounded. There were 80,000 people who died in the city and near me. I can never forget the image nor the smell of death.

Renny Shonin stated: "In the Buddha Dharma there is no such word as tomorrow; only the magnificent today. How grateful I am for this moment." This awoke me to the fact that every split second of my life, I must live with gratitude. Each *Nembutsu*, each breath, each heartbeat is my gratitude. As long as I am alive, my thoughts are on the people who went before and are around me, guiding me.

In *Gassho, Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu, Namu Amida Butsu*.

Mr. Jack Dairiki has been a devout member of the BCA for many years and is now serving as an honorary minister's assistant under Rev. Ronald Kobata at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco. He was honored with a "Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition and Peace Award," signed by Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, awarded to him during the National Japanese American Historical Society of San Francisco's event on May 3, 2015, for his activity in speaking about his experience and the movement for peace.

## BCA Bookstore News

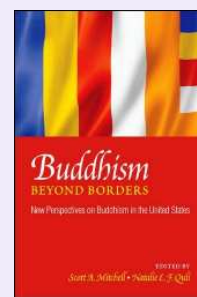
by Gayle Noguchi

Now available: ***Buddhism Beyond Borders: New Perspectives on Buddhism in the United States***  
Edited by Scott A. Mitchell and  
Natalie E. F. Quli, hardcover, \$70.00.

*Buddhism Beyond Borders* continues the exploration of the exciting, emerging, and evolving subfield of Buddhist studies focused on Buddhism in the American context. This volume consists of a collection of essays by leading scholars based on a wide range of lectures given at Buddhism Without Borders, a four-day conference held at the Institute of Buddhist Studies in March 2010. The essays presented in *Buddhism Beyond Borders* provide critical consideration of not only seminal questions such as "What roles do ethnicity and race play in the adaptation of Buddhism to U.S. culture?" but they also expand the conversation by posing new areas to consider such as the impact of our globally interconnected world on the development and practice of U.S. Buddhism. Anyone fascinated with the establishment, adaptations, and impact of Buddhism in America will appreciate the complexities of the issues that the contributors address. *Buddhism Beyond Borders* concludes with an Afterword "Buddhism Beyond Borders: Beyond the Rhetoric of Rupture" by Dr. Richard K. Payne, Dean of the Institute of Buddhist Studies.

Scott A. Mitchell is Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at the Institute of Buddhist Studies and a core doctoral faculty member at the Graduate Theological Union. Natalie E. F. Quli teaches at the Institute of Buddhist Studies and is Assistant Editor of *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*.

To order, go to [www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org](http://www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org) and click on the BCA Bookstore link, or (510) 809-1435/gnoguchi@bcahq.org. The BCA Bookstore is open Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.





## Social Welfare Fund in action: ACC Rides connects seniors to meals & community

Mary Ann Miyao, chairperson of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Social Welfare Committee, announced that a grant of \$10,000 was approved this past June for ACC Rides Transportation Services, a program of ACC Senior Services.

ACC Rides provides door-to-door transportation services to individuals for medical appointments, dialysis, personal errands, and other needed services. Seniors who use ACC Rides are unable to drive or use public transportation due to frailty or physical and cognitive impairments. The funds will support 5,000 round-trip rides for seniors to Meals on Wheels lunch sites in Sacramento County, including to three new locations: the Sacramento River Delta towns of Walnut Grove, Locke, and Courtland.

Without ACC Rides, most of these seniors would not be able to come to the lunch center. For many, this lunch is their most nutritious meal of the day and the only time they are not alone. The lunch centers, which are often community centers or churches, are used by Foodlink and Senior Brown Bag as distribution points for free food for the seniors. Transportation to the lunch center is not just a ride to get lunch. It also gives seniors with very low incomes access to important community resources. Learn more about ACC at: [www.accsv.org](http://www.accsv.org)

"It is only with contributions of time, talent and money



that ACC can be a reliable part of safety net programs for all elders regardless of their incomes and circumstances.... The gift from Buddhist Churches of America...provides much needed support for our efforts to serve elders most in need."

— Donna Yee, ACC CAO

**What is the BCA Social Welfare Fund?** Every year near the Thanksgiving season, the BCA conducts a mail appeal for donations to the BCA Social Welfare Fund. Starting this year, Social Welfare donations will be received by the BCA Endowment Foundation.

The BCA Social Welfare Fund responds to emergency needs resulting from natural disasters or other tragic cir-

cumstances affecting the global Jodo Shinshu community and beyond. Past emergency donations gave aid to victims of the Tohoku tsunami and earthquake. This past May, the Social Welfare Fund sent \$20,000 to the Kathmandu Hongwanji for earthquake relief efforts. Recent grants to social service organizations have included the Poverello House in Fresno, CA and the Fresno Food Bank.

Do you know of an organization that needs some extra funding for a crucial project? The BCA Social Welfare Committee reviews applications annually from non-profit social service organizations. Apply by contacting BCA headquarters at [info@bcahq.org](mailto:info@bcahq.org) or phone (415) 776-5600, ext. 114.

## Rev. Honda

Continued from Page 3

to this day.

At his Library of Congress office, Sensei was once approached by an American gentleman who asked, "How do you build a Japanese pagoda?" Sensei did his best to show this gentleman pictures of pagodas and tried to explain from memory how pagodas were built in Japan. Unbeknownst to him, Rev. Honda was helping to design the Japanese pagoda built at Epcot Center at Walt Disney World in Florida.

Honda Sensei was longtime friends with U.S. Senator Sparky Matsunaga from Hawaii. Their special relationship stemmed from the fact that they were both born in the same town in Kauai. Sensei would often be called to the Senator's office to read Japanese documents and explain their nuances. When they were together, they were just two boys from Kauai.

Once while talking about Sensei's Dharma work in Washington, DC, they came up with the idea of holding a Buddhist service in the U.S. Capitol. However, they needed to have a purpose and reason. Even though Senator Matsunaga was a Christian, his father was Buddhist and the idea was hatched to conduct a Buddhist memorial

service in memory of Senator Matsunaga's father. This service, conducted by Honda Sensei, was probably the first and only Buddhist service ever conducted in the Nation's Capital to this day.

As the resident "Buddhist and Japanese expert" in Washington, DC for numerous governmental agencies, presidents and Congress, Rev. Honda's knowledge and wisdom was also shared with distinguished publications such as *National Geographic* magazine, the *Time-Life* Series, and *Smithsonian* magazine. Sensei wrote for various Japanese publications as well and continued to share his knowledge and wisdom until the end of his life.

Rev. Honda was a sharer of the Dharma in every sense of the word, and as a Buddhist priest, he served our Nation's Capital for over fifty years. Upon his retirement from the Library of Congress, Sensei jumped at the opportunity to serve the Ekoji Buddhist Temple as its second minister after Rev. Kenryu Tsuji. At an age when most people retire, Sensei and his wife, June faithfully served the growing and emerging Sangha at Ekoji for ten years before his second retirement and appointment as Minister Emeritus to Ekoji in 2010.

Sensei's wife, June would often share how sensei would work all week long on preparing

his Sunday Dharma message. His messages would flow like college lectures, filling every moment with facts, wisdom, and the Dharma. Listening to Sensei's Dharma Messages was truly the highlight of attending weekly services, and his introduction to the Dharma helped to inspire many of Ekoji's most dedicated members today.

After ten years of service at Ekoji, Sensei embarked on writing a storybook called *Stories for Wisdom*, which was published and distributed to all BCA temples. *Stories for Wisdom* was written not only for children, but for people of all ages, as wisdom is ageless and ever emerging.

June was Sensei's wife and partner in life and the Dharma for 54 years. She passed away in 2014 from cancer. Their son Tamon and his wife Marisa live in Arlington VA.

Ekoji Buddhist Temple, the BCA, and the United States of America mourn the departure of Rev. Shojo Honda but we are grateful for the lifetime of dedicated services Rev. Honda provided to fellow followers of the Dharma and our Great Nation. In deepest gratitude, we say (as Sensei would usually say), "Namaste, Honda Sensei." Thank you for your extraordinary life, your extraordinary wisdom and knowledge, and most of all, thank you for your extraordinary friendship shared with so many.



## Answering the Questions "Why Jodo Shinshu? Why BCA?"

By Steve Terusaki, Co-Chair, Joint Development Committee of the BCAEF

"I am so grateful that I encountered Shinran Shonin in my life. Without him, I don't know what my life would have been like.... He is the best companion for everyone in the world," wrote Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) in the July issue of the *Wheel of Dharma*. Rev. Umezu was responding to the question, "Why Jodo Shinshu?" The "why" started with his own personal journey to the ministry and with the realization that Shinran had touched all the people that have surrounded him, indirectly influencing his life. And for whatever answer each of us finds to the question "Why?", Rev. Umezu writes, "...you [we] are touched by the heart of Buddha."

Being touched by the heart of Amida Buddha happens because we are able to listen to Shinran's teachings. Those teachings are available to each and every one of us because of the sacrifices and commitment of all who came before us to allow this tradition to continue. As our predecessors have done in the 800 years since Shinran, each of us must now ask ourselves, "What will it take to continue my own commitment to ensure that this legacy continues? What small part can I play?"

This fall, the Endowment Foundation of the BCA will be launching an annual program of *dana* to fund ongoing BCA activities

that support the question, "Why Jodo Shinshu?" Among the areas of particular need include Buddhist education; ministerial training and support; promoting a vibrant and expanding U.S.-based Jodo Shinshu ministry; and local temple support. This annual program of *dana* will complement the existing Social Welfare program; include and expand programs that support the Center for Buddhist Education and the Bishop's Expansion Fund; and coordinate with annual fundraising efforts on behalf of the Institute of Buddhist Studies. More information will be forthcoming in next month's *Wheel of Dharma*.

Charlene Grinolds posed a question to each of us in last month's article, "Why BCA?" She wrote, "I can't tell you your particular 'why' for BCA, but I ask you to come up with your own individual 'why.'" In response, I found inspiration while waiting in the serving line at the Enmanji Temple Teriyaki BBQ and Bazaar this July. The organizers for the bazaar had sought to make the long wait for the chicken dinners more palatable by posting some of the daily reflections from Rev. Seigen Yamaoka's collection. In particular, one caught my eye:

*To give is truly difficult to do unless we deeply realize what we have received and continue to receive.*

For me, it is Shinran's *Nembutsu* teachings.

Gassho.

## Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund Update



Clockwise from upper left: volunteers prepare to go to the construction site; the community receiving benefit; a banner announcing the project and its sponsors, the nearly-completed school building; and distribution of medicine at the site.

Last May, the BCA Social Welfare Fund sent \$20,000 to the Kathmandu Hongwanji for earthquake relief efforts, and to date BCA members' individual contributions to the Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund have totaled over \$130,000. On July 3 at the Pacific Seminar, Rev. Uma Lama Ghising presented a slideshow update on the project led by Rev. Sonam Wangdi Bhutia of the Kathmandu Hongwanji to rebuild a school in rural Nepal. She stated that getting supplies to the remote site is difficult and expensive, often requiring the use of helicopters. However, the building is almost complete with six classrooms and a principal's office (but no doors), and is being used as a temporary shelter.

# 今月の法話

## 「ヒロシマ・ナガサキから70年」

ローダイ仏教会  
楠克也開教使

昭和20（1945）年8月6日8時15分ヒロシマ、8月9日11時2分ナガサキに原子爆弾が投下されました。広島では約14万人、長崎では約7万人の命が一瞬にして奪われました。あれから、今年で70年になります。当時、6歳であった私の父、楠達也は、その経験をもとに伝えようと励んでいます。その一つの取り組みとして、10年前、私の自坊、光源寺は『光源寺門徒の戦後60年 “戦争そして原爆”』の悲しみを越えて”』を自費出版しました。今回は、その中に書かれている父の体験記を紹介し、みなさんと共に、戦争と平和について考えたいと思います。

記憶していません。昼休みの時間、本堂で談笑しておられる兵隊さん達の回りを走り回っていた私に、「坊や手を出してごらん」と、たくさんコンペイ糖を天にも昇る気持ちでいただきました。

ある日突然、「兵隊さん達が発せられるよ」と真夜中に起こされました。境内に整列した兵隊さん達は肅々と出発され、私は、日の丸の旗を無言で振り続けていました。その後、誰一人として帰ってこられませんでした。おそらく南方の海にみずく屍となられたのでしょうか。そのコンペイ糖の味を本当にいただいたのは数十年前経った後でした。ある日ふと思ったことです。昭和19年の夏に出陣された人々は、故郷に幼き子を残してこられた方々だったのでない

平和が続くと平和が解らなくなってくるのでしょうか？戦争そして原爆、その地獄を体験して二度と起こしてはならないとの誓いが、いつのまにかあやしくなりだした今日のごころ。今一度、あの日、あの時をそれぞれの記憶をよみがえらせていただきたいと思えます。

坂村真良さんの『二度とない人生だから』にある一説です。「二度とない人生だから 戦争のない世の実現に努力し、そういう詩を一遍でも多く作ってゆこう 私 が死んだら あとをついでくれる若い人 たちのために この大願を書きつけてゆこう」に共感させていただき、私は幼き日々、強烈に思い出される光源寺での「あの日あの時」をと思い、ペンを走らせてみました。

昭和19年の夏、暑い日でした。驚くほど多くの兵隊さん達が私のお寺に宿営をされたのです。一週間だったのか十日間だったのか、定かではありませんが、この間の日々は、とても悲しい日々として



楠開教使の「尊父、達也師。Rev. Kusunoki's Father in Nagasaki.

かと思付かされました。「そうか！私の手のひらにっぱいのコンペイ糖は、ふるさとの我が子への贈り物。私を通してふるさとの子供さんに…そうだったのか！」急いでコンペイ糖を買って走り、口にふくんでみると、とめどなく涙が溢れてきました。

沖繩で勤められた五〇回忌法要の時、この話をさせていただきましたが、改めていのちの大切さと、平和への思いを遺族の皆様とともに念じさせていただいたことでした。

昭和20年8月9日は、もっと強烈でした。境内でセミ取りに木に登っていた時です。ブーンと轟音が聞こえてきました。私は、私はセミ取りに夢中でした。「なんぼしょとね、走って逃げろ」と大声で叫ばれたようです。飛び降りて玄関に入ると、ピカドンが同時にした。ガラガラと家の中のすべてが吹き飛んだようでした。私はすぐ裏の防空壕に飛び込みました。母が2歳の弟を抱いて血だらけになって飛び込んできました。なにがなんだか解らず、ただワンワン泣き続けるだけ、その夜は防空壕で寝たよかったです。

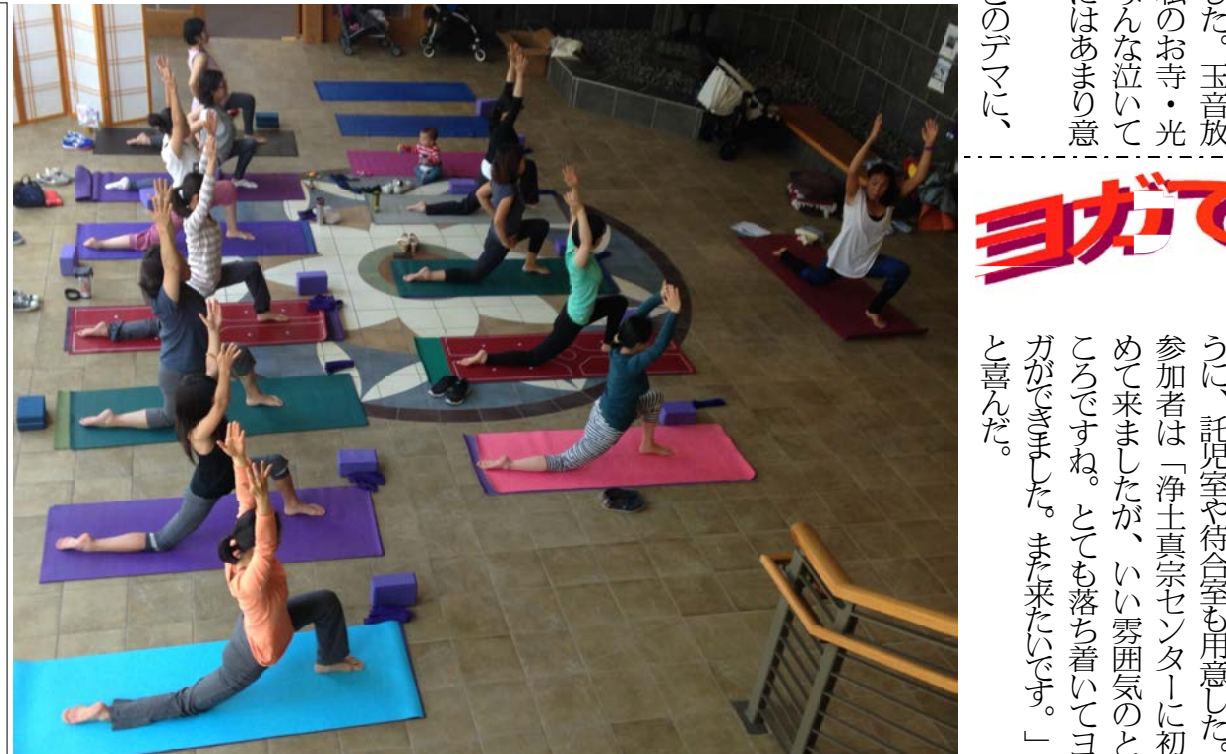
諫早から届けられた炊き出しのおにぎりの味が忘れられません。とにかくそのころは食べる事に大変な時代でした。

8月15日、本堂は人でいっぱいでした。玉音放送を当時長崎新聞社となっていた私のお寺・光源寺で人々と一緒に聞きました。みんな泣いていました。でも小学校1年生の私にはあまり意味のわからない出来事でした。

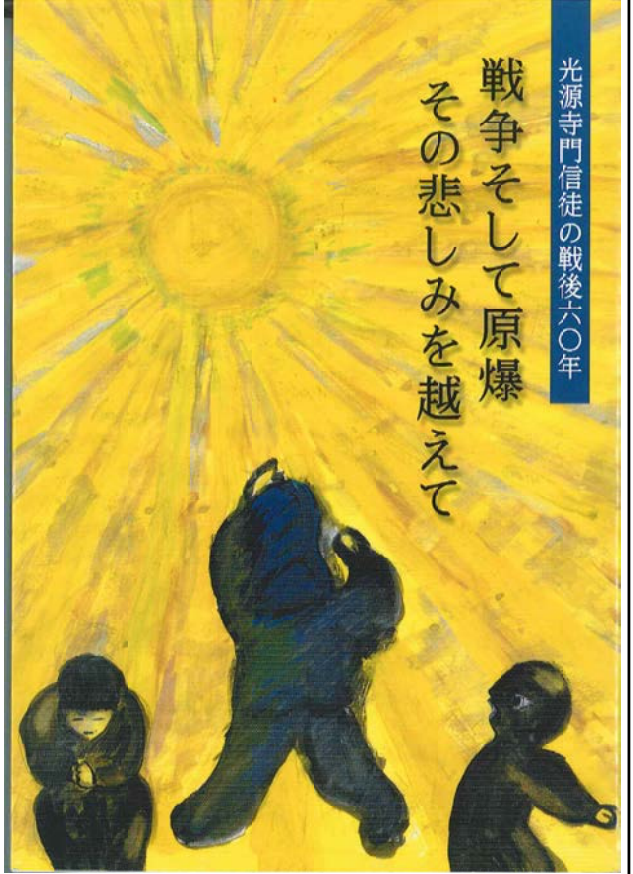
「アメリカ兵が上陸してくる！」とのデマに、日見トンネルを越えて、夏の炎天下をどこまで歩いたでしょう。母は、私の手をひき、弟を背中におぶって歩いてくれました。

今、思うのです。あの病弱の母にどうしてあんな力があつたのかな…と。「なんとしても子どもを！」と思う母の念力がそうさせたのでしょうか。そんな母の願いで今日六十六年のいのちを歩き続けている自分にアツと驚かされます。なんとしても生かしめあげられたいとして下さっている親の願いが届いた時こそ、子どもは身を粉にしても、骨を砕いても、歩める力を賜うのだと。

「子の母をおもふがごとくにて衆生仏を憶すれば 現前当来遠からず 如来を拝見うたがはず」との、親鸞聖人の『ご和讃』のお心が、ずしんと胸に響いてくださる戦後六〇年であります。



女子会ヨガの様子、"Yoga Session at JSC"



楠開教使の自坊が出版した本

翌日、今度は兵隊さんではなく、多くの人々が避難にこられて、寺はいっぱいとなりました。でも薬も何もなく、次々に亡くなってゆかれたようです。その遺体はリヤカーや大八車に乗せて、近くの伊良国民学校に運んで火葬されました。その匂いがお寺までにおつていたような気がします。

# ヨガでリフレッシュ

写真は6月20日（土）に浄土真宗センターで行われた女子会の様子。龍谷大学卒業生の会、龍谷大 学校校友会北カリフォルニア支部が「女子会Yoga Room小町」と題してパークレー近郊の龍大OGや関係者を集めてヨガのセッションを行った。校友会事務局の桑原開 教使夫人、ひとみさんは、「子育てなどが忙しく、女性校友会が集まる機会が少ないので、ヨガでリフレッシュをかねて情報交換ができる場をもうけたい」と思っているのを企画しました。と参加者が、ゆつくりとヨガを楽しめるように、託児室や待合室も用意した。参加者は「浄土真宗センターに初めて来ましたが、いい雰囲気のところですね。とても落ち着いてヨガができました。また来たいです。」と喜んだ。

# 法輪

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二〇一五年度教化標語  
「まことの人生を歩もう」

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## LGBTQも仏教徒 ニューヨークで

LGBTQに関する理解を深めるためのセミナーが6月27日(土)にニューヨークで開催された。LGBTQとは性的少数者を表す語でレス、ゲイ、バイセクシャル、トランスジェンダー、クィアの頭文字をとったもの。今回のセミナーは3回目でニューヨークでの開催は初となり、仏教会メンバーを中心に三十名が集った。基調講演には「米国の同性婚と浄土真宗」の著がある、ウィルソン・ジェフ教授(ウオータールー大学)が招かれた他、自らが性的少数者を公表している開教使、開教使アシスタント、門徒がプレゼンテーションを行った。質疑応答では活発な意見交換がなされ、性別の多様性に関する理解を深めた。参加者は「ちょうどこのセミナーの前日に米連邦最高裁が全米で同性婚を認める歴史的な判決を出したので、たいへん意義深い集いとなりました。」と仲間たちとの交流を喜んだ。



ニューヨーク仏教会前で

## 青少年がご本山へ

二年毎に開催される青少年仏教徒国際文化交流研修会(YBICSE)の参加者が、7月14日(火)に京都へ旅立った。研修ではBCA各寺院から選ばれた16歳から21歳の男女15名が本山で研修を受けるほか、神戸の寺院などにホームステイする。梅津総長と中田和朗開教使(ロサンゼルス別院)が研修団を率い、7月23日(木)に帰国する。写真はサンフランシスコ空港で出発前に撮影したもの。



## 蓮如上人御一代記聞書

### が英訳される

宮地ブラザーズとして親しまれている宮地信雄開教使

(ガーデナ仏教会)と宮地明雄名誉開教使が、蓮如上人の語録などを収録した「蓮如上人御一代記聞書」の英訳を上梓した。英題は「Heard and Recorded During Master Rennyō's Lifetime」



r Rennyō's Lifetime  
「英訳本を手にした開教使からは「宮地先生方が、長年の伝道活動の経験を通じて英訳された蓮如上人のお言葉は、わかりやすく、たいへんありがたいですね。ご門徒さんにも勧めたいと思います。」と好評。念仏プレスから出版され1冊15ドルの寄付を受け付けている。お問い合わせはガーデナ仏教会(310) 327-9400 まで。」



お釈迦さまはすべてのいのちを大事にすることをいつも説いておられました。特に多くの虫や生き物が地面を這い回る雨期には、出来るだけ無駄な殺生をしないようにという思いから、一定の期間歩かないようにしたのです。その間はお互い学んだことを復習したりする研修にあてたのです。この習慣は今でも各地の仏教団体に受け継がれています。

六月の末、ロサンゼルスで開かれたタイ仏教の僧侶の研修会に招待されました。そこには何百人という数の僧侶がアメリカ中から集まって一週間かけて勉強をしていました。そして、それをサポートする信徒が数多く周りにいて、みんなのお世話をしていました。

## 総長コラム

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

この流れを汲んで、米国仏教団では開教使布教研修会が毎年八月に開催されているのです。今年サンノゼで八月十日から十二日にかけて開催されます。これに出席することは開教使としての努めであり、総長室から全仏教会にサポートをお願いしているのです。

僧侶の研修会は形を替えて今でも行われているのですが、いのちを大切にということあまり見ることができないように思います。

今同じことをしなさいと言っただけではありませんが、それぞれが何か一つふたつ、自分に対して戒めをもつということは大事ではないでしょうか。浄土真宗は何をしてよいのだというのではなく、やはりお釈迦さまの精神を大事にしながら、生活の中に習慣を作っていくことが大事ではないだろうかと思えます。

その習慣は、朝晩のお参りでもいいし、精進の日を作ってその日だけでも生き物のいのちの大切さを考える日にしてもいいし、食事の前の合掌だけは絶対にするとか、もうギャンブルは絶対しないとか、何でもいいと思います。ただし、それでそれを守らない人より自分の方がよい人間であると思っようなことがあってはなりません。私たちの生活の基準を上げるように努め、親鸞聖人の教えを聞くことも大事だと思います。皆さんはどう思われますか。