

WHEEL OF DHARMA

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2014 BCA Theme: Take Refuge in the Light of Joy

Amida Tathagata is also known as the Light of Joy. Shinran Shonin said, "Buddha is light; it is wisdom. This wisdom is itself Amida Buddha." (*The Collected Works of Shinran*, p. 543) Anyone who encounters the Light of Amida rejoices; therefore, it is called the Light of Joy.

Kieshiki Affirmation - 49 Receive Buddhist Names



Forty-nine members of the Buddhist Church of Oakland (Rev. Harry Gyokyo Bridge, Resident Minister) received their *Homyo* (Buddhist names) at the *Kieshiki* Affirmation Ceremony conducted by Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, during the 2014 Go-Shoki Hoon-ko Service on January 19, 2014.

Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) 9 Reunion



Front row (left to right): Rev. Peter Inokoji-Kim, Rev. Patti Oshita, Jennifer Kajiki (San Fernando Valley), Sydney Kajioka (Sacramento), Lauren Takeshita (San Fernando Valley), Anh Thu Vo (Ekoji), Evan Ko (Seattle), Rev. Bob Oshita. Back row: Susan Bottari, Charlene Grinolds, Kaylyn Arima (Mountain View), Steven Tanaka (Sacramento), Michelle Nguyen (Ekoji), Matthew Biscailuz (San Fernando Valley), Scott Yebisu (Fresno), Kayla Nodohara (Sacramento) and Keith Sawada. Photo by Keith Sawada [See story on Page 6](#)

SHARING OUR LIFE STORIES AS BUDDHISTS

A Conference for all Seeking the Light of the Buddha Dharma



Save the Date: October 10-12, 2014 in Irvine, CA

This conference will feature nine keynote speakers and is presented as the BCA 43rd Conference of the Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations, the Southern District Buddhist Conference, and the Southern District Dharma School Teachers League Annual Conference.

Visit the [BCA website](http://www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org) for details on this and other events: www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org

Nirvana Day - February 15

On this day, we commemorate the passing of Sakyamuni Buddha into Nirvana.

From *Buddhadharma*
The Practitioner's Quarterly

Is My Sangha Inclusive?

When Reverend Kiyonobu Joshin Kuwahara asked himself that question, he wasn't sure of the answer. So he decided to find out.

One of the most memorable events of my life was attending the Buddhist Teachers' Council at the Garrison Institute in New York during the summer of 2011. I am deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to meet so many inspiring teachers from different traditions and to have gained such wonderful insight through group discussions and one-on-one conversations.

A recurring theme of the council was safety—specifically, that a sangha should be a safe place for everyone, especially for those who have experienced exclusion or discrimination. Some of the teacher participants shared their stories of exclusion by their previous religious institutions, experiences that led them to seek the Buddhist path. Their stories helped me realize the importance of including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) within our sanghas. I asked myself, "Do we, as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, include the LGBTQ community? Are our sanghas inclusive?" Later, I talked with several



Members of the BCSF take part in the city's 2013 LGBTQ Pride Celebration & Parade. Photo by Philipp Weitz

sangha members and found that many of them had a strong interest in these questions as well.

The membership of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) is primarily composed of Japanese Americans. Thus, historically, we have been influenced by Japanese culture and its emphasis on conformity. The LGBTQ community has not been openly accepted in Japan—those who stand out are forced to adapt themselves to the norm. I knew there were a number of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender members in the BCA. However, I was not sure if they felt accepted within their respective sanghas or if they were comfortable being open about their sexuality in that context. This doubt led to my decision to have the Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) hold a seminar to explore these questions.

On June 22, 2013, just four days prior to the Supreme Court decision to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act and one week prior to the forty-third

annual San Francisco Pride Celebration and Parade, we hosted our seminar, *Over the Rainbow: The LGBT Community and Shin Buddhism*, at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California.

Three BCA priests spoke in the morning. The first explored the Buddhist perspective on homosexuality, discussing the monastic precept of celibacy and the lay precept of sexual responsibility. The second addressed the Jodo Shinshu perspective of Universal Oneness, the profound teaching of boundless wisdom and compassion open to all sentient beings just as they are. And the third lecturer detailed positions taken by the BCA with respect to LGBTQ issues, including the BCA's forty-year practice of performing same-sex marriages.

In the afternoon, five panelists shared their experiences of growing up LGBTQ and their paths to Buddhism. Some shared their struggles and hardships, especially in terms of relationships with

[Continued on Page 6](#)



Featured this month in the BCA Calendar
Honeyville Buddhist Temple - Honeyville, Utah

The Honeyville Buddhist temple is located on a small country road in a small farming town in Northern Utah, about 20 minutes from the Idaho border. It celebrated 100 years of Buddhism in Utah along with the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple and Buddhist Church of Ogden in 2012.

The current temple is a former factory for the Utah Idaho Sugar Company, which was purchased and converted into a temple by the local members in 1931. The majority of members were Japanese American farmers who moved to the area in the early 1900s.

Some were planning to find work in the mines of Wyoming and Colorado and were told that the mining camps were extremely dangerous and other work could be found in Northern Utah. During World War II, many Japanese Americans from



California who were incarcerated by the US government in War Relocation Authority "camps" were released to work on the local sugar beet farms and lived in this building.

Currently services are held one Saturday a month. Rev. Jerry Hirano is the supervising minister. Contact: P.O. Box 220, Honeyville, UT 84314. Phone: (435) 279-8477

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by Ron Murakami
 BCA President
 White River
 Buddhist Temple

In Deepest Appreciation

Even before I started my term as President I knew the time would pass quickly, but the days have gone by even faster than I had imagined. And now, conducting the National Council Meeting on March 1 in Bellevue, Washington will be my last responsibility as BCA President. It's difficult to express how fortunate I've felt to have had this opportunity. Fulfilling any responsibility is a way we can show our appreciation for what we've received and to share this appreciation with others.

Thank you to the whole BCA team headed by Rev. Umezu, spanning BCA from the Executive Committee, BCA staff, National Board and Committee members, ministers, Endowment Foundation, Institute of Buddhist Studies, and to the thousands of temple members and supporters who make up our greater BCA sangha.

I've been most fortunate to have met and worked with many exceptional people. These individuals have been positive and encouraging and inspire all of us just by being themselves. One key element essential to our future is to extend this type of attitude and inspirational spirit to everyone we see and meet, especially those entering our temples for the first time. The Buddhist Churches of America is not just a few people, but all of us within our temples. We can achieve great things when working together.

Thank you to those who help others even while coping with struggles in their own lives and those who have steadfastly supported BCA even through difficult times. I give particular thanks to my wife, Karen, for the understanding and support she has provided over many years and particularly during my term as President. In mid-January, Karen had her hair cut to donate to Wigs for Kids. Wigs for Kids is a not-for-profit organization that provides hair replacement systems and support to children who have lost their hair to such medical issues as chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and burns, at no cost to the children. Her effort spanned three years and I admire her and others like her for their compassion and dedication to carry out such endeavors.

Getting to know individual members of our BCA sangha has provided a wealth of experiences and the friendships gained will remain in my heart. Seeing the BCA landscape has been an amazing experience. Thank you one and all.

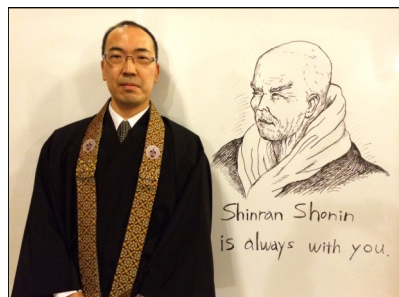
In Gassho.

Oxnard Buddhist Temple's New Minister

My name is Masanori Watanabe. I am from Saitama, Japan. I graduated from Nihon University College of Art where I majored in sculpture. My mother is from a Jodo Shinshu temple family. This being the case, when I was 33 years old, I decided to study Shin Buddhism at Tokyo Bukkyo Gakuin for one year.

After graduation I became a Shin Buddhist Minister and I worked as a minister in Hiroshima for five years. In 2011, I went to New York for one year to pursue my love of art. During that time, I had the opportunity to visit the New York Buddhist Church. While attending the New York Buddhist Church I was given the opportunity to participate and help at services. It was at this time that I developed an interest in the BCA ministry. I subsequently took part in the International Ministerial Orientation Program (IMOP) at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California in the fall of 2012 with the intention of becoming a BCA minister.

I am happy to say that I arrived in San Francisco on December 9, 2013 and have been assigned to the Oxnard Buddhist Temple and Buddhist Church of Santa Barbara. I am honored to be able to serve the temples of the BCA as a minister. My experience in America has been short, but I will do my best. I look forward to your support and to meeting all of you.



Rev. Masanori Watanabe is also an artist.

Chanting to the Beat of the Taiko

by Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

From January 14 to 16, I attended the annual National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces and the Endorsers Conference for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy held in Virginia. Since I was going to be on the East Coast, I arranged to visit three temples there: Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Fairfax, VA, Seabrook Buddhist Temple in New Jersey, and the New York Buddhist Church. It was a very fruitful trip. I was encouraged to see and hear their unique approaches to welcome more people.

Since my visit to New York Buddhist Church was on the weekend, I was asked to officiate their Hoonko Service. As I started chanting Shoshin-ge, I heard taiko drumming. They have a taiko group called "So-Daiko" that participates in their regular services.



Rev. Kurt Rye (back row, far left, minister of Ekoji Buddhist Temple and Seabrook Buddhist Temple) and Rev. Umezu (back row, fifth from right) visit with members of the Seabrook Buddhist Temple, located in Bridgeton, New Jersey.

I was told that it was Rev. Hoshu Matsubayashi's idea to have them join the services. The taiko drums help to keep the pace of the chanting. But the amazing thing was that they increased the pace as we started chanting the section on the Seven Masters. At the beginning of each Master's stanza, they beat the drum faster as if to encourage us to listen to what the sutra was saying.

This reminded me of an anecdote by Rev. Daiei Kaneko, a very famous minister scholar who passed away about 30 years ago. He said that the sound of dharma eventually gets weaker and weaker as time passes, but then someone appears and hits another dharma drum so that people will be able to hear and appreciate it.

We can see that many people in the past beat the dharma drum, namely: Rennyō Shōnin, Shinran Shōnin, Honen Shōnin, Genshin, Zendo (Shan-tao), Doshaku (Tao-cho), Donran (T'an-luan), Tenjin (Vasubandhu), Ryūju (Nagarjuna) and Shakyamuni Buddha. Each person was inspired by the dharma and shared his joy with the people of his time.

I think we, as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, often focus on Shinran Shōnin too much. It is important for us to study the life of Shinran Shōnin and his writings, but more important is to be inspired by the sound of the dharma that he heard from people before him.

Shinran Shōnin tried to clarify the true essence of Shakyamuni Buddha; Shakyamuni Buddha reminded everyone not to focus on him, but on the dharma. Just before he passed away and entered into parinirvana, the Buddha gave the following messages to his followers:

"My disciples, my last moment has come, but do not forget that death is only the end of the physical body. The body was born from parents and was nourished by food; just as inevitable are sickness and death.

"But the true Buddha is not a human body; it is Enlightenment. A human body must die, but the Wisdom of Enlightenment will exist forever in the truth of the Dharma, and in the practice of the Dharma. He who sees merely my body does not truly see me. Only he who accepts my teaching truly sees me.

"After my death, the Dharma shall be your teacher. Follow the Dharma and you will be true to me.

"During the last forty-five years of my life, I have withheld nothing from my teachings. There is no secret teaching, no hidden meaning; everything has been taught openly and clearly. My dear disciples, this is the end. In a moment, I shall be passing into Nirvana. This is my instruction."

(from *The Teaching of Buddha*, published by Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai)

With the Buddha's final words in mind, I would like to remind you that the annual Nirvana Day service will be observed in February at your temple or church. Let us hear the Dharma together with all of our teachers, past and present.



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www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org



The Three Most Important Questions: When, Who, What

by Rev. Alan Sakamoto



I am reading the book *Who Ordered This Truckload of Dung?* by Ajahn Brahm. Perhaps some of you are familiar with the book, and perhaps, some of you have even read it. It is a wonderful collection of short stories by a man who was born in London, England, and is now a monk. He has provided us with “inspiring stories for welcoming life’s difficulties.” After reading a particular story, I have quietly thought to myself, “Wow!” That story clearly provides guidance in my life, so I’d like to share it with you.

“Long ago, an emperor sought a philosophy of life. He needed wisdom to guide his rule and govern himself. The religions and philosophies of the time did not satisfy him. So he searched for his philosophy in the experience of life. Eventually he realized that he required the answers to only three fundamental questions. With those answers, he would have all the wise guidance he needed. The three questions were these:

1. When is the most important time?
2. Who is the most important person?
3. What is the most important thing to do?

After a long search, which took up most of the original story, he found the three answers on a visit to a hermit. What do you think the answers were?”

The answer to the first question is commonly found in Dharma messages and Buddhist books. It is NOW! The past is gone forever, and the future may or may not happen. All that we can be sure of is the NOW. Having been brought up in a somewhat typical Japanese-American home, we weren’t very emotional. We did not hug nor did we tell each other that we loved each other. I always thought that there was plenty of time to tell my parents that I loved them. And when I thought about saying it again, I said, “Well, there is always time.” Now, I can tell you that my time came and is gone. Both of my parents have passed away, and I never made the time to tell them that I “loved” them. Don’t put off what is important. Do it NOW!

The answer to the second question is interesting. It is the answer that made me think about my life. What do you think the answer is? I originally answered, “me.” Perhaps this self-centered answer is a result of the “ME” generation approach to life. We are a part of it in so many things that we do. For example, our cell phone. How many times are we looking at something on the phone, i.e. the most current sports scores, and texting our friends (when sometimes they are sitting next to us)? What about our addiction to social media programs like Twitter and Facebook? Our how about how self-centered we become when we plug in those headphones to listen to music on our phones or iPods?

The answer is that the most important person is the one you are with. Have you ever spoken to someone who is listening to you, but not really hearing you? They may be physically near you, but mentally they are somewhere else. There is a tremendous feeling of caring and importance when someone takes the time to pay attention to you. Communication, caring and love can only be shared with someone you are with, no matter who they are, no matter when. It happens when you are together at that “NOW” moment.

Many times we are alone, and at that moment, yes, the most important person is “me.” At that time, we need to take care of ourselves. A minister that I know told me that he wakes up every morning and says, “Namu Amida Butsu,” thereby, expressing his gratitude and appreciation for his life.

Continued on Page 6

Introducing the Friends of IBS Annual Giving Fund

I have some wonderful news to share with all of you. After you read this entire article, I believe you will think this is a good thing as well. On November 8, 2013, the Board of Trustees of the Institute of Buddhist Studies unanimously approved the start of the “Friends of IBS” Annual Giving Program. The purpose of the program is to, with the help of our Sanghas, support IBS students who are ministerial aspirants. The “Friends of IBS” Program will annually raise money to create the IBS Ministerial Scholarship Fund.

The retiring of Kaikyoshi Ministers currently serving BCA temples is ongoing, and, indeed, the number of retiring ministers will be greater than the number of ministerial students currently in the study programs. I believe this to be a problem for the future, and here’s why: The current tuition cost of a Masters Degree for ministerial students at IBS totals \$46,800.00 for three years of inten-

sive graduate studies. This does not include cost of living adjustments. Additionally, there is one-year exchange program at Ryukoku University, which, while not a requirement for the Masters Degree, is an invaluable enhancement to our ministerial students’ experience. Although recommended, the cost is in addition to the \$46,800.00!

When these figures were brought up at a gathering of BCA ministers, we were astounded by what it costs today to attain the Kaikyoshi degree. We all grew quiet as we contemplated how that number would grow in the coming years. Understanding this reality, it is imperative that we establish a long term funding resource for IBS ministerial aspirants. This is how and why we came up with “Friends of IBS”.

The support and generosity of the BCA membership has been the source for the development of BCA ministers to this point in our history.

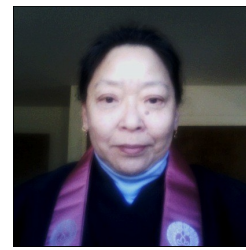
To be able to educate the BCA minister of the future, we need your generous participation and continuous support, now and into the future.

Please consider what you can afford to contribute on an annual basis. Your contribution(s) can be made in one lump sum each year, or mailed to IBS monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually. Simply indicate your preference so that we can maintain proper records, and we will send you a summary for your tax records. (Yes, of course, lending your support to our future ministers is tax deductible!) If your circumstances change, and you find you can no longer contribute to this fund, no worries.

We appreciate anything you can do to help. There is never a contribution too small. I also urge Dharma Schools, Jr. YBA, Basketball teams, etc., to think about creating an annual fundraiser for “Friends of IBS”. Never underestimate the great power of bake sales and car washes!

Compassion & Wisdom for a February Memory

by Rev. Seijo Naomi Nakano



*Within the mind lies
The peace of Nirvana,
Which is within and eternal.*

Kay Mieno Kato, 1968 - *Buddhism for Everyday Living*

Yet, this moment can change in an instant. That special moment may be shattered by a crucial phone call or a circumstance that cannot be dismissed. We think how unfair and cruel it is, however we should also understand that everything is subject to change. It was by accident that Sakyamuni Buddha reached Parinirvana and according to the lunar calendar he passed away around February 15.

Sakyamuni Buddha passed from this earthly realm at the age of 80 years old; he propagated the Buddha Dharma for 45 years. We recall the story of the passing of Sakyamuni Buddha. Even as he lay dying the Buddha continued to teach his disciples to the very last moment about compassion and wisdom.

As the Buddha lay dying between two Sala trees with his head toward the north and this body facing the west, he continued to share his teachings. He did not hold any hostilities against Cunda, the blacksmith. The Buddha understood that it was no one’s fault. Sakyamuni Buddha spoke in a very faint voice, “Cunda is not to be blamed. O-Bhikkhus, great is the virtue of an offering of food to the Buddha and greater the offering of the last nourishment and Cunda offered it. Virtuous is Cunda and great is his merit.”¹ Even faced with his own death Sakyamuni Buddha remained compassionate toward his disciple.

Changes can upset our thinking and expectations. We always ask our self, “why me?” and not someone else. We make a firm decision about a circumstance, a thought, or a situation and we are determined to stick with it. We do not have to alter our way of thinking; it should always be the other person. However, if it is not to our benefit, we try to change the conditions to our liking. However, change is not the problem. It is our self-centered self, our ego that demands “perfection.” It is either “my way or the highway.”

It is very difficult to understand this impermanence. A big if: if we could achieve Nirvana in this physical form, it may be achieved through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, which is right views, thought, speech, conduct, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and meditation. However, as long as we have a physical self, we will still have greed, anger, and ignorance to deal with. We are constantly swirling around in the ocean of birth-and-death. There is much to think about and to learn, but know that there are teachers for support and we can ask questions.

This Valentine’s Day will be romantic for those who wish it to be. We try to be mindful of what is given and received. We share our Nembutsu with the decision that change is good and we can still continue to try. We can only be who we are and try to let go our self-centeredness and think about others.

Gassho

¹Shibata, Rev. George, *The Buddhist Holidays*. San Francisco, Buddhist Churches of America, Dept. of Buddhist Education, 1969.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: BCA Facilities Manager

Alan Kita, BCA Chief Administrative Officer, announced the opening of a new full-time position: BCA Facilities Manager. The job includes overseeing the operations and maintenance of the Jodo Shinshu Center as well as other BCA properties: the headquarters building in San Francisco and the bishop’s residence in Belmont. A complete job description is available through the National Office.

Please call (415) 776-5600 or email info@bcahq.org.

Thank you! I can be reached at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704-1589 or email me at instituteofbuddhiststudies@shin-ibs.edu. I look forward to hearing from you.

Gassho,
Rev. Seigen Yamaoka



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

“Making the Dharma Connection” - District by District

Central California District Fresno Dharma Center

2690 East Alluvial Ave., Fresno, CA 93720

Sat., Feb. 22, 2014 * 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Free - Open to teachers from all BCA districts

USING BOOKS, ACTIVITIES
AND
OTHER RESOURCES



On Saturday, February 22, the Central California Dharma School Teachers League and Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) will present “Making the Dharma Connection” led by Kiyo Masuda.

The seminar is appropriate for teachers of any grade level and anyone interested in Buddhism. Teachers: Please bring your successful activities, books, songs, videos, movies and or other media to share. Coffee & Tea at 8:30 am. Lunch will be provided. Call (559) 442-4054 for more information or go online: www.bcasites.net/Central+Cal+DSTL+Dharma+School+Workshop

Kiyo Masuda shares dharma school teaching tools: Since retiring as an educational curriculum specialist in K-12 education, Kiyo has been sharing the “Dharma Connection” curriculum, a work-in-progress, at CBE seminars, the Southern District Dharma School Teachers League Conference and, recently, the Bay District Dharma School Teachers’ League Dharma Exchange. These interactive workshops provide resources to take home and support in building lessons for use in classrooms at any level.



Bay District - On January 18, the Bay District Dharma School Teachers League presented a workshop led by Kiyo Masuda at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple. Over 20 experienced and new teachers attended from Bay and Coast district temples.



TECHNOBUDDHA

MARCH 14, 15, 16, 2014 | JODO SHINSHU CENTER
ICHIGO ICHIE “ALWAYS CHANGING, ALWAYS FLOWING”

Explore the meaning of Ichigo Ichie, “Always Changing, Always Flowing” and connect with other great people at the 2014 TechnoBuddha conference! TechnoBuddha is for adults ages 21-39 the weekend of March 14-16, 2014 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, CA, and is a fun and educational conference for young adults to have a great experience within the context of the Jodo Shinshu tradition, featuring interactive workshops, discussions and speakers, along with fun social activities.

2014 WORKSHOPS:

- Jodo Shinshu 101 - Intro to Jodo Shinshu
- Jodo Shinshu 201 - Advanced Discussion
- Social Science Workshop
- Buddhist Sites in Japan (primer for 2014 Japan Trip!)
- Dharma Talks/Extended Discussions
- Swedish Massage
- Morning Running
- Instagram Photo Scavenger Hunt



2014 TECHNOBUDDHA KEYNOTE SPEAKER: REV. PATTI OSHITA



ABOUT THE KEYNOTE: Rev. Patti Oshita was born and raised in the town of Fowler, outside Fresno. She attended Fresno City College and worked as a medical assistant. She later moved to Los Angeles and in 1984, she moved to Sacramento and worked for Congressman Robert Matsui for 6 ½ years. Rev. Oshita returned to school to complete her BA in Humanities and Religious Studies at California State University, Sacramento in 1995.

As of September 1, 2011, Rev. Oshita retired from State Service at Caltrans and in April 2012, joined the Sacramento Betsuin as the Assistant Minister, Program Development. Rev. Oshita continues volunteering as a Girl Scout leader under the Betsuin with 235 girls and 80 leaders. Since receiving her tokudo ordination in 2003 and kyoshi certification in 2007, she continues her volunteer work with the YAC programs.

Rev. Oshita is married to Rev. Bob Oshita and enjoys her spare time shopping, watching the Food Network and golfing when she has time.



Get registered today! Check out TechnoBuddha on Facebook for registration information and conference updates!
[FACEBOOK.COM/TECHNOBUDDHACONFERENCE](https://www.facebook.com/TECHNOBUDDHACONFERENCE)

CBE 2014 Calendar of Events

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

- February 22: Making the Dharma Connection at the Fresno Dharma Center
 - February - April: Central Cal Buddhist Education Programs
 - March 14-16: TechnoBuddha Conference with Rev. Patti Oshita
 - March 19-21: Ministers’ Continuing Education (MCE)
 - March 22: Spring Pacific Seminar at Gardena Buddhist Church
 - March 27-29: Spring Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP) seminar
 - April 5: Japanese Seminar
 - April: Tour group from Japan: “Jodo Shinshu in America” (tentative)
 - May 21: Gotan-e (Shinran’s Birthday) Service
 - June 28: LGBTQ & Buddhism Seminar
 - June 30-July 2: Ministers’ Summer Fukun
 - July 4-6: Summer Pacific Seminar (Summer MAP credit). See ad on page 4
 - August 8-9: Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course August Workshop
 - September 6: Baby Boomers Seminar with Rev. Patricia Usuki
 - September 18-20: Fall MAP seminar at New York Buddhist Church
 - October 4: Japanese Seminar
 - October 20-31: CBE Japan Educational Tour
 - November 11-13: Ministers’ Continuing Education (MCE)
 - December 11-16: Winter Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP) seminar
- See details at www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org
Email: cbe@bcahq.org Ph: (510) 809-1460

Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course - Monthly Essay

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



Does *shinjin* make a difference in one’s present life?

by Ryan Alford

I believe the experience of *shinjin* makes a difference in one’s everyday life. Speaking for myself, I feel that the easiest way to explain why is by reference to Rev. [Taitetsu] Unno’s¹ description of the process of sedimentation, which illuminates precisely how the experience of Bodhi mind during *shinjin* alters one’s perception of life and one’s attitude towards it.

At the moment, I feel that my experience of *shinjin* can best be described as a feeling of profound compassion, of a sort that is entirely new to me. Immediately afterwards, I have a sense of optimism, an intuition that it is, after all, possible for me to feel this compassion towards myself despite my many flaws—indeed, in spite of the fact that I am such a foolish being that I have caused myself and others great pain.

It seems to me as if this compassion is accompanied by wisdom (I hesitate to associate myself with such a characteristic, but in this context it has very little to do with me, but rather with a source that comes from beyond the limited horizons of my ego). This wisdom consists largely in the awareness that my ego is not all that there is, and that it is possible for me to relate to others not with my ego, but with the settled mind that results from my experience of *shinjin*.

My limited experience (which I sincerely hope will be confirmed as I take another few steps along the White Path) of the effect this has on my everyday life can be summed up as follows: My attachment to my ego, which in the past has been inordinately strong, has seemed to gradually weaken. This is not because I have an intellectual understanding that the hard shell of my ego has prevented me from feeling connected with life, but rather because I now feel an increasing confidence in the ability to relate to reality in a different way.

The sedimentation into my consciousness of this awareness (of Bodhi mind and the wisdom and compassion that it consists of) has affected the practicalities of my everyday life as well. The knowledge that one is grasped by Amida’s love—never to be let go—has produced such a feeling of relief that it now considerably easier for me to go through life. Furthermore, the sense that it is possible to feel a profound connection with others (as the rigid ego becomes more porous) seems to lead to new ideas about the meaning of my life, and what it is for.

Previously, my life revolved around a quest for achievement. Mainly, this involved an attempt to prove to others (and to myself) that I deserved praise, respect, or merely to be considered worthy of existence. It is difficult to imagine what can remain of this once one is fundamentally assured of unconditional love, great compassion, and of the accompanying wisdom (against which the knowledge I had obtained by other means now seems rather pale in comparison).

The reassessment of my life in the light of the compassion that I experience is a more gentle process than I think one might expect. Again, sedimentation seems to be the analogy that best clarifies this experience. Gradually my priorities appear to be shifting owing to the increased importance of and value that I now place on compassion. Given that I now feel more related to and connected with others, I feel that the meaning of my life has more to do with helping others rather than with self-interest and vanity.

Finally, I would add that my experience of *shinjin* has helped me adjust into what I would characterize as a more mature attitude toward life. By being exposed to the 12-step model of recovery, I learned that the most important things to living a fulfilled life were acceptance and gratitude. To be precise: that one could only be happy if one gained the ability to accept things just as they are and to learn how to be grateful for what one has received. Unfortunately, my intellectual understanding of the importance of this was not at all sufficient.

As a result of *shinjin*, I now feel that I have a much greater capacity for acceptance and gratitude. Now that I am assured that I am accepted just as I am, and that I have a reliable connection to boundless compassion, I am finally able to accept reality even when I find it absurd, or painful, or unjust—and to experience feelings of gratitude even when I am having difficulties accepting the way things are.

Of course, sedimentation is a process, and I have only just begun. However, the optimism that I feel as a result of my early experiences of *shinjin* is so important to me, and I am grateful. Namo Amida Butsu!

¹Taitetsu Unno, *Bits of Rubble Turn into Gold* (New York, Random House, 2002).

Ryan is a law professor living in Victoria, British Columbia. He is a member of the Steveston Buddhist Temple and enrolled in the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course in the fall session of 2012.

Hoon-ko Ozenzai at the Jodo Shinshu Center

On January 16, 2014 CBE held two Hoon-ko (Shinran Shonin’s Memorial) services. After the first service at noon, Jodo Shinshu Center facilities manager Glenn Kameda, and his wife Janet prepared *ozenzai*, sweet red bean soup with toasted mochi—said to be Shinran’s Shonin’s favorite food. *Itadakimasu!*





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

**CBE Co-Director's Message:
Powered by the Dharma**

by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara

The year 2014 has just begun (although I know that by the time you read this article it will be February). At the beginning of year, some of you may have established resolutions. I hope you are still keeping them; after all, only one month has elapsed!

In 2013, CBE presented various programs, hoping that we could share the joy of the Dharma with more people and deepen our appreciation of the teaching. We will further develop our programs this year and hope that more people will participate in them. Please check our event calendar in the *Wheel of Dharma* or on our website for more information.

CBE staff members work very hard to plan and run the programs. The people who join our program committees and our other volunteers work very hard, too. Thanks to their hard work, we have wonderful events. I sometimes wonder why they work so hard. I think it is because the Dharma energizes them. You could say that they are powered by the Dharma.

Our staff chose to work at CBE, and our volunteers help at events out of their own preference. They decide to do so. However, how are their decisions made? There must be various factors, but I can tell from their fulfilled faces and dedication that their ties to the Dharma play a big role in their decision. It could be said that their dedicated support is brought about by the Dharma. The Dharma has a big influence over their lives. They live with the Dharma.

My resolution—maybe my lifetime resolution as a Jodo Shinshu minister—is to make every effort to see that more people will be “Powered by the Dharma.”

Prof. Nobuhiro Fukagawa Lectures in Berkeley & Gardena

The Institute of Buddhist Studies and the Center for Buddhist Education are pleased to present Professor Nobuhiro Fukagawa at two major educational gatherings this March. He is on the faculty of Ryukoku University's Department of Shin Buddhist Studies in Kyoto and serves as the resident minister of Sainen-ji Temple in Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan.

March 19 & 20: RYUKOKU LECTURES

Issues in Jodo Shinshu Propagational Studies

6 - 9 pm Free & Open to the Public

Jodo Shinshu Center - 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA

Presented by the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS)



March 22: SPRING PACIFIC SEMINAR

The Benefits of a Life of Shinjin

9 am - 4 pm Registration \$30 (Includes lunch) Due: March 8

Gardena Buddhist Church - 1517 West 166th Street, Gardena, CA

Presented by IBS & BCA Center for Buddhist Education

Hosted by the Southern District Ministers Association & Buddhist Education Committee

This year's Spring Pacific Seminar will address questions such as: Why aspire to live “a life of shinjin”? What are “the ten kinds of benefit realized in the present life (by a person of shinjin)? How do we experience the primary benefit of “entry into the ranks of the truly settled”? How is this pursuit different from the notion of seeking “worldly benefit”? How can this transform our lives today?

The seminar sessions will be in Japanese and English including:

* Prof. Fukagawa's keynote presentation in Japanese with English translation by Rev. Mutsumi Wondra. Prof. Fukagawa will also present a lecture in Japanese, moderated by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, CBE Co-Director.

* Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Director, IBS Center for Contemporary Jodo Shinshu Studies will present a lecture in English, moderated by Rev. Marvin Harada, CBE Co-Director.

* A dialogue with Prof. Fukagawa will be conducted in Japanese and English.

Registration and other program details available at
www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org (click on CBE)

BCA Southern District members are urged to register through their temples.

**For IBS course offerings, podcasts, online videos
and publications, visit: www.shin-ibs.edu**

	<p style="text-align: center;">SAVE THE DATE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Keynote Speakers: Rev. Tetsuo Unno & Prof. Mark Unno</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Honored Guests: Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno & Mrs. Alice Unno</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Visit website for details</p>
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**New! The Dharmakara Series
Our Lifelong Learning Challenge**

It is a joy and privilege to discover the abundant treasures within the Buddhist scriptures. With this issue of the WHEEL OF DHARMA we are launching this new column. Rev. John Iwohara has been invited to be our guest columnist for the coming year to share his appreciation of Sanbutsuge. The Buddhist scriptures have so much to offer to people today. Let us enjoy this new series. — Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

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

by John Iwohara

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

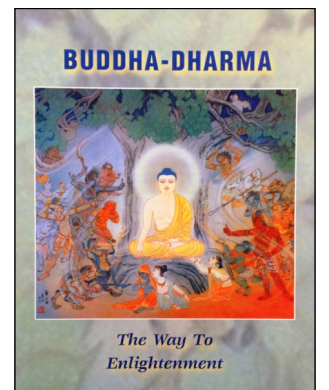


<http://www.dharmanet.org/coursesM/Shin/I.html>

The *Sanbutsu-ge*, which literally means “Gatha (verses) in Praise of the Buddha” is found in the *Larger Sukhavati Vyuha Sutra* or the *Daimuryoujukyou* which is the title given to the text in its Chinese translation. Daimuryoujukyou is often abbreviated to *Daikyō* or “Larger Sutra.” Honen Shonin in establishing the Pure Land School (Jodo-shu) as a completely independent tradition within Buddhism identified the Larger Sutra, the Contemplation Sutra and the Amida Sutra (*Amida-kyō*) as the three sutras that establish the doctrinal lineage and authenticity of the tradition. Later, Shinran Shonin, who was a student of Honen Shonin, would identify the Larger Sutra, in particular, as “the True and Real Teaching (*Shinjitsu no kyō*)” and as “the True Essence of the Pure Land (Jodo Shinshu).” Although the importance of the Larger Sutra was identified by Honen Shonin, Shinran Shonin goes on to say that Sakyamuni Buddha appeared in our world specifically to teach the Larger Sutra. In other words, Shinran Shonin is saying that Sakyamuni Buddha became a Buddha so that we could all meet with *Namo Amida Butsu*. This point is particularly important for Shinran Shonin because he discovered that the only way for him to find salvation was through *Namo Amida Butsu*.

With this emphasis, Shinran Shonin tells us why he is able to claim that the Larger Sutra is the reason for Sakyamuni Buddha's appearance in this world. He says, “How is it known that [this sutra] was the great matter for which Sakyamuni appeared in the world? The Larger Sutra states: ...” and continues by quoting the following passage from the Larger Sutra. It is a passage that has Ananda greeting Sakyamuni Buddha; it is the passage that prefaces the telling of the story of Amida Buddha as found in the Larger Sutra:

“Today World-honored one, your sense organs are filled with gladness and serenity. Your complexion is pure. Your radiant countenance is majestic, like a luminous mirror in which clear reflections pass unobstructed. Your lofty features are resplendent, surpassing all words or measure. Never before have I beheld your lineaments as sublime as they are now. Indeed, Great Sage, I have thought to myself: Today, the World-honored one abides in the dharma most rare and wondrous. Today, the Great Hero abides where all Buddhas abide. Today, the World's Eye abides in the activity of guide and teacher. Today, the Preeminent one of the world abides in the supreme enlightenment. Today the Heaven-honored one puts into practice the virtue of all Tathagatas. The Buddhas of the past, future, and present all think on one another. Do not you, the present Buddha, also think on all the other Buddhas now? Why does your commanding radiance shine forth with such brilliance?” [*Collected Works of Shinran (CWS)*, Pp. 7-8]



Buddha-Dharma
Numata Center for Buddhist
Translation & Research, 2003

Because Ananda constantly accompanied Sakyamuni Buddha it would neither be unusual for nor unexpected of Ananda to ask this kind of question to the Buddha. At the same time, however, it was particularly meaningful for Ananda to be the one who asks this question, since Ananda—as a “foolish being” or *bonbu*—represents us. Jodo Shinshu scholars of the past, for example, have pointed out that whereas Ananda spent years listening to the messages of Sakyamuni Buddha, and in fact was called the disciple of the Buddha foremost in hearing, he was still not fully able to actualize the teachings until after the passing of Sakyamuni Buddha. That Ananda was not able to fully live the Dharma that he heard is recorded in the *Nirvana Sutra* or the sutra that describes the final days of Sakyamuni Buddha's life in the human realm. The *Nirvana Sutra* tells the story of how Ananda asked the Buddha to “revise” his prophesy of his own demise from three months to a kalpa or even half a kalpa, to which the Buddha is said to have replied,

“O, Ananda, be not grieved; even if I could remain for the duration of another kalpa, beings that come together will sooner or later be separated. Such is the way everything is. Be not distressed about my passing away. Even though this physical body perishes, the body of the Dharma I taught remains forever.” [*Buddha-Dharma – The Way to Enlightenment*, 2003 (*Buddha-Dharma*), p. 639]

Despite having received these words, Ananda still could not maintain his composure at the death pyre of the Buddha. At that time, not able to restrain his tears despite being told not to grieve because death is part of the fundamental teaching of impermanence, Ananda is said to have composed the following verse:

Continued on Page 6



BCA Bookstore News

by Gayle Noguchi

The Nirvana Sutra (Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra) Volume I

New! *The Nirvana Sutra (Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra) Volume I* translated from the Chinese by Mark L. Blum, Professor, Buddhist Studies, Shinjo Ito Chair in Japanese Studies, University of California, Berkeley, East Asian Languages and Cultures, hardcover \$80.00.

The first of four volumes, this book translates the first ten fascicles of the Dharmakṣema translation into English. Mark Blum shared with me the following comments about this new publication:

"I am happy to announce the publication of volume one of my translation from Chinese of *The Nirvana Sutra*, the Mahāyāna version of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*, as part of the Numata Translations series published by the Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai (BDK). This is one of the most influential sutras in all of East Asian Buddhism, frequently quoted in the writings of every Buddhist school in China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan. The only scripture equal in stature with the Lotus Sutra in the Tendai school (both in China and Japan), it was part of the core curriculum on Mt. Hiei that Honen, Shinran, Dōgen, and Nichiren received, but in the writings of these founders of the new schools of Kamakura Buddhism, the *Nirvana Sutra* is quoted most often in the writings of Shinran and Nichiren.

"In Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō*, it is the second most quoted text after the *Larger Sutra*, and Ōtani University has always had a chair in *Nirvana Sutra* studies since it was founded 110 years ago. Its most influential teachings are on buddha-nature, vegetarianism, when violence can be justified to defend the Dharma, the eternal presence of all buddhas, and the Ajātaśatru (J. Ajase) story of patricide, confession, and forgiveness." *Read more commentary online.*

To order *The Nirvana Sutra*
Visit: www.bcabookstore.com
Email: sales@bcabookstore.com
Phone: (510) 809-1435



Three Questions

Continued from Page 3

This is something that maybe we should say to ourselves first thing in the morning and the last thing before we go to bed.

And, the third question? I've already given you the answer! It's TO CARE! If we care, then we will pleasantly and cheerfully greet each and every person that we come across every day. This is Dana (selfless giving). If we care, then we will take the time to share our kindness and help each person that we come across every day. This is Wisdom and Compassion. And, if we care, we become shining examples sharing the Buddha-Dharma with each person that we come across every day.

The Three Questions: When? Who? What? The answers are rooted in Buddhism. Remember, Shakyamuni Buddha sat under the Bodhi tree to find the answers to the difficulties of everyday life. His answers continue to be relevant, and can help each and every one of us every day. Namu Amida Butsu

Is My Sangha Inclusive? Continued from Page 1

their parents. Others spoke of their feelings of acceptance and inclusion within their respective sanghas. After the panel, we formed small discussion groups so that everyone present could share their thoughts and comments freely.

Listening to the animated conversations during dinner and reading participants' feedback after the event, I realized that we had successfully created a beneficial forum for dialogue. I myself learned a lot from this one-day seminar. What impressed me most was the panelists' deep commitment to living within the teachings and the gratitude and joy they find in being part of their sanghas.

Prior to this event, the BCA has had a long history of LGBTQ inclusion; the first same-sex marriage ceremony performed by a BCA priest

YAC 9 Reunion

Continued from Page 1

by Ahn-Tu Vo, Ekoji Temple

The summer of 2013 was a summer full of memories; and the perfect way to start off the new year of 2014 was the YAC Retreat 9's reunion, from January 17-20. Michelle Nguyen and I are both from Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Virginia, and our flight to San Francisco was over five hours long, which was plenty of time for me to worry about the littlest things that could go wrong during our trip. What if my Howa (Dharma Talk) was not good enough? What if we did not get along as much as we had during the summer?

As soon as we arrived at the Jodo Shinshu Center, all of my worries vanished. Before we knew it, it was time for that first service. We were a little rusty, but by the second service BAM! We were back into the swing of things. That night we created our own Buddhist song, which was to the tune of Cups by Anna Kendrick. We were probably not the most productive that night but we spent the time hanging out and bonding. Everyone finally had arrived and we were finally all reunited.

The next morning after service, we had our introduction class on chanting Shoshinge and Wasans. The session was two hours long, but we did not even notice how fast time flew by. Then it was time to have a tour of the UC Berkeley, led by Tara Umamoto, a YAC 6. Berkeley was amazing, and the weather was perfect; Michelle and I had just come from 10-degree weather in Virginia.

On Sunday, we attended service at Mountain View Buddhist Temple. Reverend Mukojima warmly greeted us and gave us brief instructions for service. We did a quick run through, and then it was service time. That service was one of our best services. We chanted our loudest and bowed perfectly in sync. Reverend Mukojima gave a wonderful dharma talk. It amazed me how he could captivate the whole audience; even the restless kindergarten dharma school students were interested. We attended the high school dharma school class and felt right at home. Everyone at the Temple was so welcoming. When we got back to the JSC, Rev. Patti and Rev. Bob led our last session, a Q&A. We sat outside and enjoyed the sunshine and each other's companionship. The late afternoon consisted of watching the 49ers versus the Seahawks' football game sandwiched in between services. Monday morning was our last service of reunion, and we tearfully said our thank-yous and goodbyes and took our last pictures together. Before we knew it, we were off on our separate ways.

YAC 9 consisted of people from all over the country from the East to the West coasts. We all had different cultural backgrounds and some of us said funny different phrases, but YAC brought us all together. We rooted for different sports teams and completely different school systems. But despite all of our differences, my YAC friends are truly my Dharma Buddies for Life, just like Reverend Tim Castle said during the YAC retreat. The people I met are my lifelong friends. The question is not if I will see them again, but when. Each and every one of them taught me something about themselves that I had not known before through their dharma talks and their actions.

We cannot take for granted our treasured moments and memories of one another. YAC would not have been possible without all of the adults who helped support us. During the reunion, they spent so much time and effort to make it a success. There will never be enough thank yous to express all of the gratitude

occurred in the 1970s. In 2004, the BCA Ministers' Association issued a formal resolution condemning the U.S. government's prohibition of same-sex marriage. Earlier this year, the Ministers' Association again took a stand with a formal resolution encouraging the Boy Scouts of America to remove all limitations of participation due to sexual orientation, both for scouts and leaders. And just last month, the Buddhist Church of San Francisco, for the first time in its history, participated as an official contingent in the 2013 San Francisco LGBTQ Pride Celebration and Parade.

The Buddha's teachings are for everyone. We strive to follow the spirit of Buddha and share the dharma with others universally. All of our BCA temples share a common teaching of openness and inclusion. Our struggle is to ensure that each of our temples expresses it. Exclusion and discrimination,

Sambutsuge

Continued from Page 5

Despite having received these words, Ananda still could not maintain his composure at the death pyre of the Buddha. At that time, not able to restrain his tears despite being told not to grieve because death is part of the fundamental teaching of impermanence, Ananda is said to have composed the following verse:

"Fortunate was I to be born in the same Sakya clan as the World-Honored One;
Fortunate was I to have accompanied the World-Honored One for more than two decades.
Now the World-Honored One has gone to the great nirvana, leaving us behind.
Sad am I, groping my way in the long night of ignorance.
I have not yet disentangled myself from the mesh of delusion, nor have I departed from the shell of ignorance."
[*Buddha-Dharma*, Pp. 717-718]

This reaction is in marked contrast to Anuruddha, another of the Buddha's disciples, who at the time of the Buddha's death yelled out: "Enough, my brethren, be not grieved nor lament. Has not the World-Honored One, moments ago, taught us that all things are equally impermanent in both their nature and their form?" [*Buddha-Dharma*, p. 717]

Given who and what Ananda is, it is no wonder that after being asked the question that prefaces the telling of the story of Amida Buddha, Sakyamuni Buddha first questions Ananda by asking, "Did devas so instruct you that you ask this, or do you inquire of my noble mien out of your own wisdom?" To which, Ananda responds: "No deva came to teach me; I ask this myself, simply from what I observe." [*CWS*, p. 8]

Because Ananda represents us: foolish beings (bonbu), this conversation takes on special significance. We learn that the Dharma of Amida Buddha is so serene and powerful that even Ananda, without the aid of others, is made to recognize it. Upon hearing this response, Sakyamuni Buddha praises Ananda by saying:

"Well spoken, Ananda! Your question is excellent. You ask this insightful question having summoned up deep wisdom and true and subtle powers of expression, and having turned tender thoughts to all sentient beings. ... This question you now ask will bring immense benefit; it will enlighten the minds of all devas and human beings." [ibid]

Ananda, as bonbu, has opened the door to the path that will allow even a bonbu to become a Buddha. It is here that Shinran Shonin found emancipation. It is also here where he finds joy.

YAC continued

we have for them. On the behalf of the YAC 9ers, I would like to thank Susan Bottari, Charlene Grinolds, Keith Sawada, Jim Shimomaye, Reverend Patti, Reverend Peter, Reverend Bob, Reverend Mukojima and Mountain View's Sangha, and Reverend Kuwahara and the Jodo Shinshu Center for making YAC 9 reunion possible. We also would like to thank everyone at Sacramento, who helped with the YAC Retreat and the YAC Committee. Thank you to all of the many Dharma School Teachers and parents, who pushed us to go to YAC. Lastly, thank you to all you YAC 9ers because meeting you has made a major impact on my life and I cannot wait until we see each other again.

even in our minds, is not justifiable. That said, discriminatory attitudes may arise. At such times, we should humbly scrutinize ourselves under the light of the Dharma and sincerely receive Buddha's guidance. Only then can there be genuine respect, enabling everyone to find a safe and welcoming place within the Buddhist community.

The sangha, for me, is where the Dharma finds its actual dynamic expression. It is this very dynamism that allows us to transform our ignorance into the awareness of living as equals, together, within the Dharma. Namu Amidabutsu

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今月の法話

今月の法話は故藤村文雄先生が一九九五年に法輪紙に寄稿されたものです。この法話を大切に保管し今でも時折読まれているという有縁のご門徒さんからコピーをいただきました。藤村師によると、ご法話での出来事は、一九五九年のことですが、半世紀前のご門徒さんや開教使がご信心に関して真剣に求められていることが伺えます。今月号は、温故知新ということで昔のご法話を掲載してみました。先人に学びましょう。

S

「曇りてもよし富士の山」

藤村 文雄

もう何十年も昔になるが、戦後サンマテオに移住された、私の前任地サリナス仏教会の会員であった今は亡き、日氏から、次のような手紙をいただいた。

「教団総会に先生がおいでのことと思い、二十四日モンテレーに待つておりましたが、先生はお忙しかつたのでしょう、私はある人よりありがたいお話を聞きました。その時は心がハレハレして、これが本当の信心かと喜び、お念仏の中に日暮らしさせて頂いておりましたが、いつの間にかあの心持が無くなり、元の根性に戻って、今はさほどありがたい心とは思われません。」

先生がお立ち寄りの時、この事について、タテリ話でよいか聞かせていただきたいと思うておりました(以下略)

私は当時西羅府仏教会に駐在しておりましたので、その返事を仏教会の会報「慈光」誌に書いて送りました。「拝啓 先般私のために貴重な紙面を掲載下さり、ありがとうございました。感謝いたしてお念仏の日暮らしをさせて頂いております。」

私はある人から信心の『対決』『対談』の時、どうしても人様のように胸にこんです。あなたは一室に入り考えなさいと申すのです。いくら考えても喜びが生まれません。また氏と対談したす内に、何か胸が明るくなり涙と共に喜びました。あくる日、そしてあくる日も嬉しかったが次第々々その喜びが消え、この事につき先生に聞きたかったのであんな失礼な手紙を出したので。お許し下さい。

先生の「慈光」を拝読させて頂いたとき、お味わいさせて頂きました。ありがとうございます。(以下略)

私が日氏に送った「慈光」(一九五九年二月)

「あなたのお尋ねの件であります、あなたはこの頃、信心を得た当初のような喜びが無く今はうすくなったとおなげきのこと、ご無理もないこととお察し申します。喜ばれるということは、大変ありがたいことではあります。夫の喜びが仏さまのお救いの条件では無いことを、はっきりと知ってお頂かなければなりません。喜びを自分の手許にぎょうとされる、喜ばれない時が淋しくなり、お救いが心もとなくなり、心配になってくるのであります。自分の喜びを、これが信心だとかんでおもうと思つと、その喜びが消えねばよいがいつも心配であり、喜ばねばという、私の力み心がある、信心がつかれてくるのではないでしょう。ひるが

えって静かに、私自身の本当の心を反省して見て下さい。一席や二席位のお話で、飛び立つように喜ぶような、素直な私であったなら、如来さまに五劫思惟のご苦勞はおさせしなかつたはず。十人百人の先達が束になつて、私一人に聞かせようとして下さつても、テコでも動かぬ私であります。

姿形は仏さまに向かつて掌を合わせ、殊勝気にお念仏を称えてはいるが、その下から仏さまに背を向けている私、人前を気にしてカス念仏ばかり称えている私なのでないでしょうか。

今日の喜びが明日まで続かぬ私の手もとに、喜びをにぎょうとしなさい、仏さまに背を向けて逃げ通し私に、久遠の昔から追いかけて、呼びつづけて下さる、み仏さまの大願業力のお慈悲のお手もとに、安心させていたたくてあります。

お説教を聞いたその時は、少し有難いような喜びにひたるがすぐ帰り道には、その喜びの消えるような、まことにあてにならない私の手もとに安心を求めたのではなく、喜びも悲しみも淋しさも不安も、凡てを救い取つてくださるのが、わが浄土真宗の絶対他力のお救いなのであります。

にぎった信心は落とす心配があり、不安であります。私ににぎるのではなく、如来さまに、にぎられていることに気付かせていただくのです。

晴れてよし曇りてもよし富士の山 もとの姿は変わりざりけり。晴れてよし曇りてもよしわが心 弥陀のお慈悲は変わりざりけり。」

(一九九五年十二月法輪掲載)

藤村文雄誓夫(ふじむらぶんゆうちかお、一九〇一―一九九七) 米国仏教団名誉開教使、故人。岐阜県善徳寺に出生。一九三四年龍谷大学卒業後、一九三五年にサリナス仏教会に赴任。一九四二年、日米開戦後に日系人収容所へ拘留される。リヒングストン、サンタフェを経てボストン収容所へ。終戦後、シカゴ中西部仏教会へ駐在し、一九四六年にサリナス仏教会へ再赴任。一九五七年にウエストLA仏教会へ転任、約20年駐在し一九七六年に引退。一九九七年に亡くなる。著書に「Thought I be Crushed」がある。

井上先生54年間、

ありがとうのこぼりまじりた

二〇一三年十二月をもって開教生活に終止符をうたれた井上宣正先生にお話をうかがった。

長い間米国で開教にご苦労して下さりましてありがとうございます。先生は何年間開教使をされていたのですか？

54年です。一九六〇年に開教使としてアメリカに来まして、二〇〇八年に引退したので、現役開教使としては49年間です。引退後はパリア仏教会をパートタイムで手

伝いました。それで、それを合わせると54年になります。

先生はどうして開教使になろうと思われたのですか？

龍大の時、増山頭珠学長にスカウトされたからです。増山先生はBCAの総長を

された後、龍大にこられたのですが、その時は私に大学院で中観派の研究をしていました。またその頃ちょうどBCAが京都に「米国仏教団開教使研修所」という日本人開教使を養成するプログラムをつくって、第一期生を募集していました。それで増山先生から学長室に呼ばれて、先生が申込書に私の名前やら住所やらをぜんぶ記入したから、私にサインするように、と言われたのです。このプログラムは勉強しながら給料ももらえらるということだったので、全国から百五十名の応募があつて試験もありました。それで試験に合格して、晴れて第一期生となり、北大路通と鴨川の近くにあった研修寮に入りました。一九五七年から五九年までそこで過ごし、そこではアメリカで開教使をされていた龍大の藤本龍雄先生や池田頭蓮先生から講義を受けたり、海野先生やカナダの生田先生などの二世の留学生から英語を学んだりしました。私の他に第一期生はBCAの村上利夫先生、大畑正法先生、それと開教使就任後シカゴ大に行った藤本師、開教使にならなかつたけど東大に行った朝枝師のあわせて5名でした。

研修を終えられて、一九六〇年にオークランド仏教会に来られたのですか？

そうですね。クリーブランド号という船に乗って来ました。途中ハワイに寄った時に一泊だけだったのですが、ハワイ教団の総長を連れてきた大原性実先生と開教使の林芳秀先生(BCA名誉開教使)が開教使としてハワイにおられ、私をハワイ観光につれていってくださったことを覚えております。サンフランシスコに着いて花山総長に会い、それからオークランド仏教会に行きました。増山頭珠先生の息子さんの頭雄先生が主任開教使でした。オークランドに3年いてその間に日曜学校の校舎を建てるを手伝ったのですが、それからというものの駐在した仏教会では何か新しい建物の建設にたずさわることにな

りました。一九六三年から六五年まではブラサー仏教会の駐在です。ブラサーでは何か建物を建てたのですか？

ブラサーには花山総長から、新しい本堂と会館を建てるようにと命をうけて行きました。お寺は新しい本堂のための土地を購入して行きましたが、その後なかなか寄付が集まらなかったのです。それで門徒さんの山崎さんと田中さんと一緒に各家庭をまわって寄付をおねがいしました。山崎さんと田中さんは篤かな方でだいぶ寄付をしてくれたので他の門徒さんが「山崎さんと田中さんがそれくらいですなら、うちもこれくらいはできないか」となって、そういう具合に寄付を募っていったら、最終的には本堂と会館だけでなく、日曜学校の校舎もたてることができました。それが終わると今度はロサンゼルス別院へ異動となりました。

ロサンゼルス別院には一九六五年に行かれて、七六年に副輪番にられましたか？

ロサンゼルス別院に行った時升岡隆英先生が輪番で、中垣昌美先生が副輪番でした。来て一年くらいして中垣先生が帰国することになり、先生がたずさわっておられた新しい本堂や会館の建設を「井上、たのむ」とまかされて、また建物建設のプロジェクトをすることになりました。他にはお寺で花、お茶、そろばんなどのクラスをはじめたり、お寺に来られない方向けに婦人会家庭法座をしたりしました。家庭法座は結構好評でした。それから劇団もつくりましたね。「未来」という名をつけて私がプロデューサーみたいなのをやって門徒さんが役者です。これも好評でサンフランシスコのお寺などに公演旅行にいきました。あとあまり知られてないのですが、ロサンゼルス仏教会の紅白歌合戦もはじめました。最初は門徒さんのおど自慢大会を開催していたのですが、それが紅白となり、今も続いているのは自分でも驚いています。

ロサンゼルス別院に20年おられて一九八五年にサンノゼ別院に行かれたか？

サンノゼには山岡総長から命をうけて輪番として行く事になりました。柳原ジム先生、仲宗根ロビン先生、阪本坂本ツェリー先生、平野ジェリー先生、日間賀キャロル先生など若い三世の先生たちと一緒に一緒にきやかでした。サンノゼ別院では新しく事務所をたてようとして計画したら、門徒さんたちが寄付をしてくださつて、おかげで本堂の横に二階建てのいい事務所を建てる事ができました。サンノゼでは11年間お世話になりました。一九九六年からファウラー仏教会へ異動し、ハンフォード仏教会を兼務しました。二〇〇八年に引退したのですが、引退後はパリア仏教会をパートタイムで手伝っていました。それを合わせると54年間開教生活をしたことになりました。

どうして完全に引退されることを決められたのですか？

年齢です。二〇一三年の十二月二十一日に80才になりました。それでできがいいの後はお寺の仕事から離れて、自由にお念仏の生活をしてみようと思つたのです。二〇〇八年に引退したあと、二〇〇九年正月に、「初春やじき友の目のあたたかさ」という句をつくりました。そのときには約50年前に京都の開教使研修所で一緒だった友は皆亡くなつていたので、その友たちがお浄土から私を見守つてくださり、「どうかこの世で仏法を伝えてくれよ」とお浄土から私の開教生活をバックアップしてくれていたように思えたのです。そういう思いもあって、できるだけ布教活動を続けようと、パートタイムでパリア仏教会を手伝つたのですが、昨年末に傘寿になりましたから、そろそろやめましようということ。それで今年の新春に詠んだのが、「五十四路(いそしじ)も弥陀にまかせてわが人生」です。54年間、皆おまかせの中にある開教人生でした。阿弥陀さまはもとより、ご門徒さん、家族、友人、みなに助けられました。

最後に皆に一言おねがいします。

仏教会では皆がほんとうに仏さまのお慈悲の心が喜ばれて、そのよるごび心を中心としてお寺が活発になるようにねがっています。お寺がただの文化センターにならないように、仏法を中心とした教化センターであり続けてほしいと思います。

井上宣正師 一九三三年十二月二十一日生まれ。長野県、正行寺衆徒。一九五六年龍谷大学文学部仏教学科卒業、五九年仏教学修士号取得後に渡米、開教使として布教活動をはじめ。オークランド仏教会、ブラサー仏教会、ロサンゼルス別院と歴任し、一九七六年にロサンゼルス別院副輪番、八五年にサンノゼ別院輪番となる。一九九六年よりファウラー仏教会駐在、ハンフォード仏教会を監督。二〇〇八年に引退後、パリア仏教会をパートタイムで手伝う。二〇一三年十二月三十一日にパートタイムの職を辞し、現在ファウラーの自宅に妻典枝さんと念仏の日暮らしを送っている。三月に三番目の孫が生まれる予定。



法輪

2014年 2月号

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二〇一四年度教化標語
「歓喜光に帰命せよ」

2019年 世界仏教婦人会 大会に向けて

一月十五日に浄土真宗センターにおいて二〇一九年サンフランシスコで開催予定の世界仏教婦人会大会開催に向けてミーティングが行われた。ミーティング前には親鸞聖人のご命日にあわせて、聖人のご遺徳を偲ぶ報恩講を営み、皆で正信偈をお勤めをした。大会が開催される桑港教区をはじめ、近郊の沿岸教区や北カリフォルニア教区の各寺院から開教使と約40名の婦人会代表者が出席し、大会の会場やブックレット、テーマなどについて話し合った。テーマは「Live the Net Boutsu」に決められた。準備委員会の会長は荒川ジャネット氏（パロアルト）とボッターリ・スーザン氏（サンマテオ）がつとめ、小畑ロン開教使（サンフランシスコ）と梅津総長夫人、ジャネット氏がアドバイザーをしている。



YAC

青少年仏教徒の研修会

YACの名で活動している高校生や大学生を中心とした仏教徒のグループが集い、研修会を開いた。研修会は一月十七日から二十日にかけて浄土真宗センターで行われ、十九日にはマウンテンビュー仏教会（向嶋開教使）で日曜礼拝に出席した。



正信偈をお勤めする向嶋師とYACメンバー

参加者は11名でサクラメント、サンフェルナンド、マウンテンビューの高校生に加え、ワシントンDCやシアトルからも参加があった。研修会では正信偈、和讃のお勤めと七高僧の教えなどを学んだ。アドバイザーの一人は、「子供たちが正信偈をお勤めするのを見て、私も刺激されて自分のお寺で正信偈をとるようになるようになりました。」と、共に学ぶ機縁となっているようだ。

いだかれて
ともにつながる
わたしのいのち

第5回世界仏教婦人会大会
2014 WORLD BUDDHIST WOMEN'S CONVENTION
2014年11月14日 - 17日 米国カリフォルニア州
www.wbwcconvention.com

総長コラム

米国仏教団 総長 梅津廣道



先月の中旬、毎年開催されるチャープレン任命権者会議に出席するためワシントンを訪れました。この会議には毎年全国各地から二百名以上の宗教団体の代表が出席し、そこで二日半にわたり陸海空の三軍とベテランス（軍属）病院で勤務するチャープレン任命に関する報告を受けたり、問題点の質疑応答が行われるのです。

米国仏教団はその中でただ一つ、仏教のチャープレンを任命できる団体として認められています。これは辻開教総長の時代からの願いで、山岡先生が総長の時の一九八七年八月に国防省から正式に認められたものです。それまではキリスト教とユダヤ教の聖職者だけがその仕事をまかされていたのですが、初めて仏教が認められ、安孫子洋開教使がベテランス病院のチャープレンに任命されました。

ご存知のように米国仏教団は百年以上の歴史を持ち、数多くの若者が兵役につき、国のために尽くしてこられました。その人たちが亡くなっても墓には仏教のシンボルを使用することができません。米国仏教団が任命権を許される前から、せめて国立墓地に法輪をすることができなかつたか、最初働かされたのが、現在バージニアにおられる本田正静師です。師は一九六〇年からワシントンで開教使として活躍されていて、アーリントン墓地の仏教徒の墓石に十字架が彫られているのを悲しみ、法輪を使用して欲しいと申し込んだのです。その時の言い訳は、法輪の型がないので、つくるのに時間がかかるということだったと、本田先生は当時を振り返って話してくださいました。そしてそれから十数年後、やっと全国の国立墓地の仏教徒の墓石が全部法輪に変えられたのです。

現在では米国仏教団が全仏教団を代表して、チャープレンを任命することができ、七名が陸軍、海軍、それにベテランス病院で活躍しています。この会議のいろいろな人と話をすることができ、有意義でありました。中には一つの団体で千六百名ものチャープレンを任命している大きな組織もあり、中には二人という小さな団体もありました。ここに一緒に写っている人は小さい団体の任命責任者で、元チャープレンです。北米ドイツ系バプテスト教会のハリ

ス師です。ノースダコタ州に本部があり、ドイツ系の会員が多く、今ではドイツ語を話す人はいないということですが、サービスのあとのドイツ料理にみんな舌鼓を打つと聞き、何か親しみを感じたものです。

会議の後、近くにある恵光寺を訪れ、会員と歓談し、次の日の朝には本田正静師御夫妻を表敬訪問しました。師は国立国会図書館に勤めていた関係上、政府関係者となりがかり、非公式に仏教を代表してチャープレンとしていろいろな宗教行事に参加されたりしておられました。

その日の午後恵光寺のライ開教使に運転していただき、ニュージャージー州のシールブルック仏教会を訪れ、新しく世話をされることになったライ先生を正式に紹介し、これからの方針について話し合いももちました。次の日、そこからアムトラック（鉄道）でニューヨークに向かい、夜理事會と一緒に食事をして将来のことを話し合いを持ちました。

翌日曜日は報恩講ということで法要の導師をし、参詣者と一緒にお正信偈をいたしたのですが、普通のお参りと違って、太鼓の音がリズムを添えてくれるのです。仏教会には僧太鼓というグループがあり、前任の松林先生のアイデアで法要に参加するようになったというのでした。はじめは四行ごとに太鼓をたたいたのですが、七高僧のころになるとより力強い音がドンドンドンと聞こえてくるのです。まるで七高僧が「よく聞け、よく聞け」と催促しているように聞こえました。

今は亡き金子大榮先生が、お釈迦さまの教えは時代とともにその真意が聞こえなくなるが、そういうときに誰かがまた太鼓をたたいて教えを聞かせてくださるとおっしゃったことを思い出しました。お釈迦さまのあと、いろいろな方が出てきて、その時代、その場所、法の太鼓をたたいてくださいました。そのお蔭で今また私たちが法の太鼓の音を耳にすることができるようになりました。

そういう尊い縁に会い、同じ日の午後の飛行機で帰路に着きました。帰りには仏教婦人会が用意してくださいましたお寿司のお弁当を飛行機の中でした。一週間のいろいろな出来事を味わい直したことです。また、東部に出発する前日の日曜日はオークランド仏教会で帰依式を行い、四十九名が新しく仏教徒として歩みを新たにされました。頼もしい限りでした。

いろいろな地域や仏教会で開教使やアシスタント、理事やボランティアの方々が日夜活躍してくださっています。本日に頭が下がる思いでした。二月には各地で如月忌や涅槃会がお勤めされます。お寺まわりもわずかなようにいたします。

米国仏教大学院・米国仏教団仏教教育部主催

2014年春季パシフィックセミナー

「信心生活の利益について」

講師：深川 宣暢 教授
龍谷大学大学院文学研究科真宗学
浄土真宗本願寺派司教

日時：2014年3月22日（土）
午前9:00 - 午後4:00

会場：ガーデナ仏教会
1517 W. 166th Street, Gardena, CA 90247
電話：(310) 327-9400

スケジュール：
午前 - 基調講演：深川 宣暢 教授
（原義は日本語で行われますが英語の通訳がつきます）
午後 - 日本語講義：深川 宣暢 教授、英語講義：デービッド・松本 教授
- 深川 宣暢 教授との対話（日・英両語）

参加費：\$30（昼食代込み）申込期限：2014年3月14日
南部教区の方は所属している仏教会を通してお申し込み下さい
チェックは「SD BEC」宛てで、メモ欄に「Spring Pacific Seminar 2014」とご記入下さい
送付先：Los Angeles Botwin 815 East First St., L.A. CA 90012 Attn: Spring Pacific Seminar
連絡先：William Briones 輪香 Email: malik615@msm.com 電話：(213) 680-9130
ウェブサイト：www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.orgにて「CRE」をクリックして下さい
その他お問い合わせは Email: cba@bcqh.org 電話: 510.509.1460 まで

協賛 米国仏教団南部教区開教使・南部教区仏教教育部

桑原先生の記事が 仏教雑誌「ブツダ ダルマ」に掲載中!

浄土真宗センターの桑原浄信開教使が書いた記事が米国の仏教ムーブメントを牽引する雑誌「ブツダダルマ」二〇一三年冬号に掲載された。記事では昨夏浄土真宗センターで開催されたLGBTの仏教徒のためのカンファレンスを紹介し、また、私たちBCAの寺院は性的マイノリティや日系人種以外の方々に対して開かれた場になるように努めているが、実際にお寺に來られる方々ほどのように感じてもらえるだろうか？と問いかけている。桑原師は「阿彌陀さまの十方衆生への呼びかけに呼応したサンガづくりを目指していきたいですね。」とできるだけ多くの方がお念仏のご縁ができるようにと抱負を語っている。（桑原師の記事の全文をご覧になりたい方は全国の書店等で雑誌をお求めください。）

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