

WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

VOLUME 41

MARCH 2015

ISSUE 3



Ministers photo (upper left photo): The BCA Ministers' Association Meeting was held prior to the National Council Meeting. BCA Bishop Kodo Umezu is pictured in the front row center. Two new kaikyoshi ministers, Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi (San Diego) and Rev. Diana Thompson (Denver), were introduced. Both participated in the Minister's Assistant Program (MAP). Rev. Thompson is in the back row, far right, and Rev. Akahoshi is immediately to her left. Photo by Felix Bonomo

Jr. YBA and Sunday Breakfast (left middle photo): A fundraising breakfast, organized by Junior Young Buddhist Association (Jr. YBA) members from both the San Diego and Vista temples, was held on Sunday prior to the Eitaikyo Service at the Buddhist Temple of San Diego. These are some of the youths who worked hard to serve a delicious meal to about 150 people. Photo by Edythe Vassall.

Council Vote (left middle lower photo): Delegates vote at a session of the BCA National Council Meeting. Seated at the table (from left to right) are: Susan Bottari (secretary, BCA Executive Committee), Tom Nishikawa (parliamentarian), Ken Tanimoto (BCA president-elect), and Dr. Kent Matsuda (BCA president). Photo by Felix Bonomo

Ministers Assistant Closing Service (left lower photo): The closing service Dharma messages were presented by Sensei Ellen Crane (at the podium) and Sensei Vonn Magnin (seated at the far right). Both are part of the Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) and received Tokudo ordination in November 2014. Photo by Felix Bonomo

NCM 2015: Dharma-Centered!

The Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) National Council Meeting for 2015 initiated a format different than in recent years to open up opportunities for workshops and seminars focusing on the Dharma. The day before the meetings, a symposium on Buddhism and Counseling was presented by the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) and the BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE).

Friday and Saturday business meeting time concluded around 2:00 pm each day. Then a "Dharmathon" was

held, in which one minister from each of the eight BCA Districts gave a brief dharma talk. Workshops and breakout sessions followed (*see photos for details*).

Concurrently on Friday evening and Saturday, the Young Leaders Today (YLT), a group of about 13 college and high school aged sangha members, held their activities. These included teambuilding workshops with guidance from Rev. Ryuta Furumoto and Rev. Michael Endo, and a Saturday panel discussion. Nearly 300 people, including 140 delegates, attended the

banquet dinner Saturday evening. Entertainment was provided by talented local Sangha members.

The National Council Meeting concluded with an Eitaikyo service held at the beautiful Buddhist Temple of San Diego. Rev. Patricia Usuki, who gave the English Dharma talk, pointed out that hers was the thirteenth of 14 Dharma talks given during the event. Rev. Takata gave the final Dharma talk in Japanese. The 2015 BCA National Council Meeting ended with high hopes for a better organization.

Symposium photo (at right): The symposium on "Buddhism and Counseling," presented by the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) and Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) on Thursday, was attended by about 200 people. The three panels were moderated by Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Director of the IBS Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies. Pictured are (from left to right) Dr. Robert Weitzel of the Sanctuary for Healing and Integration (SHIN), Dr. David Pating of Kaiser Hospital, San Francisco, Dr. Daijaku Kinst (IBS), Dr. Carmela Javellana Hirano (founder of SHIN), Mr. David Black (SHIN). Seated in front are Dr. David Hirohama and Ms. Nancy Clifton-Hawkins of the Orange County Buddhist Church Mindfulness Center. Photo by Richard Matsumoto



An Unforgettable Year; Unforgettable Teachers

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

The year 2014 will be an unforgettable year for many of us because many eminent Jodo Shinshu teachers returned to the Pure Land. They are Venerable Sen'e Inagi, Rev. Dr. Takamaro Shigaraki, Ven. Jitsuen Kakehashi, and Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno. This is, indeed, a great loss to all of us, and we truly miss them. However, we should realize that we are so very fortunate to have had these wonderful teachers who guided us in the *Nembutsu* teaching.

Out of all these teachers, I would like to talk about Ven. Jitsuen Kakehashi. He was one of the most respected scholar ministers in Jodo Shinshu academia. You may remember him from our Buddhist Churches of America Centennial Service in 1999. He was the keynote speaker and visited us a few more times after that.

Ven. Kakehashi's deep appreciation of the *Nembutsu* teaching has touched tens of thousands of people in the world. One of them sent me a copy of a memorial booklet published in December which featured the life and teachings of Ven. Kakehashi. In this booklet, his last message was included together with his son's observations of his final days.

A dharma friend of Ven. Kakehashi remembers him after World War II, studying under the lights at a train station until dawn because he couldn't rely on the lights at his dorm room in Osaka. He looked like

a ghost. At one time an artist came to use him as a model to draw a picture of a ghost. That is how he studied the *Nembutsu* teachings. It was before he became a Jodo Shinshu minister.

Ven. Kakehashi enjoyed accepting speaking invitations even at an advanced age, and continued making appearances when asked to speak. When he was around 70 years old, another dharma friend said to him, "Sensei, you have been so busy. Are you all right?"

Ven. Kakehashi said something like this: "Yes. I do feel my age, but I am so grateful that I can hear the words of the masters whenever I read the sacred writings. The people who come to listen to me are like bodhisattvas from the Pure Land, because they give me this opportunity to nurture myself." Ven. Kakehashi felt that each opportunity to share the Dharma with others was an opportunity to deepen his own appreciation. Whenever he read the words of Shinran Shonin to others, it was a chance to hear the Dharma himself. That's how he looked at it.

According to his son, he never stopped doing what he wanted to do. Ven. Kakehashi continued to study and share his appreciation of the teaching even as he grew weaker and weaker due to illness and age. One day, his son asked why he worked so hard. Ven. Kakehashi responded, "I am trying my best so that when I see Shinran Shonin in the Pure Land, I can tell him proudly that I did my best."

Ven. Kakehashi always emphasized that even though we live in "the world of love and hate," we all belong to the realm of Enlightenment. Amida Tathagata loves all beings equally as if they are its only child. Ven. Kakehashi said that every being was respectable and had a reason for existing. He further said that when we realize the profound compassionate heart of Amida Tathagata, our life would naturally change and it would become a journey to the Pure Land.

Thanks to the efforts of many ministers and *Nembutsu* followers in this country, we are now able to hear the call coming from the realm of Enlightenment. As we observe O-higan (the Realm of Enlightenment) during the Spring Equinox in March, let us think about the sincere wishes for us from all of the awakened ones of the past and present.

Eminent Pure Land teachers of India, China, and Japan!

Out of pity and compassion, embrace us,

And guiding us to realization of true and real shinjin,

Bring us to enter the stage of the truly settled.

Such is the benevolence of Amida's great compassion,

That we must strive to return it, even to the breaking of our bodies;

Such is the benevolence of the masters and true teachers,

That we must endeavor to repay it, even to our bones becoming dust.

(Collected Works of Shinran, p. 412)



By Rev. K. Ken Fujimoto
San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin

How Easily We Create Suffering!

so they are only minor irritations. However, there are times when our routine is greatly altered or our expectations are shattered. The more we cling to those expectations or to our routine, the more difficult the adjustment becomes.

Some people can alter their routine or adjust their expectations without too much trouble and they will not be faced with as much self-created suffering as others. Other people create a great deal of suffering for themselves because of their inability or unwillingness to adapt. If that unwillingness is due to a commitment or belief, it is understandable, but this is a deliberate decision made with an understanding that complications that may arise. However, when we do not or can not make the necessary adjustments or adaptations in our lives due to an inability to see the options

in front of us, it can become a source of great suffering. This is a simple concept that is easy to see and understand in the intellectual sense, but it is difficult to do in life. It is something that is obvious to us on one level, but something we always seem to ignore on another.

General Buddhism focuses on this inability to see and adjust and takes us along a path to seeing and adjusting. Jodo Shinshu Buddhism affirms this inability to see and adjust as being the reason for Amida's compassionate wisdom being directed towards us. One way of looking at this is that we try to polish and improve ourselves to adapt; the other is to have our eyes opened to reality because of that energy directed towards us because we are unable to see. In one, you try to make yourself better. In the other, you come to see the efforts of so many be-

ings and conditions working to make things better for us. Both are good, but there are so many pitfalls in the former because we tend to be so good at deceiving ourselves into thinking what we want is what we need. This makes it difficult for most of us to polish and improve.

This insight into the reality of the human condition for the majority of people is where the difference between Sakyamuni Buddha and *Shinran Shonin* becomes manifest. For people who can prepare themselves for the changes in life and see things clearly so that they can quickly make the necessary adjustments, Sakyamuni's basic teaching can lead to enlightenment. For those who are so filled with passion and attachments and who easily deceive themselves, Sakyamuni's teaching is very distant. *Shinran* saw himself this way. He pointed out that he

was so filled with ego, passion and attachments that he had no hope of enlightenment on his own. He saw how easily he could deceive himself and make a seemingly logical compromise that was really very distant from the ideal that he was seeking. This is why he championed the teaching of Amida's compassion, constantly working in its infinite manifestations and through so many people and events to free him and all those like him from these self-created bonds.

To ponder the simplicity of Sakyamuni's teaching and the depth of *Shinran's* is a major reason for our *Obigan* services. To honestly look at ourselves and see which type we really are is another opportunity given to us at this time. Please make an effort to use this time of change as an opportunity to encounter the Buddha-dharma.

The EcoSangha Resolution

By Rev. Don Castro, Rinban
Seattle Betsuin
Buddhist Temple

By the time you read this article, an EcoSangha resolution will have been voted on by the BCA National Council at our annual meeting at the end of February. Whether the resolution is adopted or not, it was already approved by the BCA Ministers' Association on June 30, 2014. The resolution is too long to include in this article but the "Resolved" conclusion reads as follows, "THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that each BCA temple be encouraged to adopt policies that promote an awareness of the profound implications of our behavior on future generations and to promote ecologically friendly behavior in the spirit of 'mottai-nai.'"

At the National Council meetings, I will be conducting a workshop on this resolution along with Mrs. Karen Akahoshi, who is founder of San Jose Betsuin's EcoSangha. Together, we plan to explore a number of issues related to the resolution.

First, it is important to recognize an important fact: to be a Buddhist is automatically to be both an ecologist and a conservationist. I am not talking here about a narrow definition of ecology. The Buddhist scholar Prof. Francis Cook described Buddhism as "cosmic ecology." Buddhism is not just ecology, however. Ecology is science and Buddhism goes beyond science. Being based on a medical model (the Four Noble Truths) Buddhists are always working for a cure. Ecologists tell us the world is in peril from many sources; conservationists seek a cure. This is why Buddhists are both ecologists and conservationists.


The second issue Karen and I want to explore at our workshop is the fact that our temples (our Sangha) should model the behavior we hope to see in our homes. The resolution reads, "...our Buddhist Churches of America not only consume large amounts of resources in themselves but also serve as a model for personal behavior in the homes of each of its members and society at large." Environmental issues are very much in the minds of our Dharma School children,

especially climate change and recycling. They learn about these issues as school and usually are involved in conservation projects. If our children come to the temple and see us both contradicting our own teaching of interdependence and what they are learning in school, the temple will be seen as "out of touch" and irrelevant. Thirdly, we want to explore the last wording of the resolution, "mottai-nai." Since the expression is Japanese, many of our members will not be familiar with it. Yes, it is an expression that was used by Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathi in her acceptance speech of December 10, 2004. She learned the expression when she visited Japan and commented that mottai-nai was exactly what she was promoting with her Green Belt Movement in Kenya. Prof. Maathi returned to Japan and helped set into motion the MOTTAINAI Campaign in 2005 with corporate sponsorship. At the top of the "Who we are" page of their website is written: "Mottainai: It is the message from Japan to the world."

You will notice I have not defined "mottai-nai." That is for you to do; what a great school project! Go online to a search engine; there is an amazing amount of material on this Buddhist-based term. From a Jodo Shinshu perspective, I have found no better treatment of the expression than that of Rev. Chijun Yakumo in his book, *Thank You: Namo Amida Butsu*, published in 1995 by Nembutsu Press and which should be available at most of our temples. I disagree with some of Rev. Yakumo's conclusions about ecology but I found his article very helpful in appreciating the flavor of "the message from Japan to the world." I hope you will study this expression which, I believe, goes hand-in-hand with a Jodo Shinshu world view.



Wheel of Dharma (USPS 017-700) is published monthly by Buddhist Churches of America, 1710 Octavia St., San Francisco, CA 94109-4341. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to WHEEL OF DHARMA, 1710 Octavia St., San Francisco, CA 94109-4341. Subscription free to BCA temple members; \$12.00 annual subscription for nonmembers.



Wheel of Dharma
(USPS 017-700)
Official Publication of the
Buddhist Churches of America

BCA National Headquarters
1710 Octavia Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
Tel: (415) 776-5600
Fax: (415) 771-6293
Info@bcahq.org
www.BuddhistChurchesOfAmerica.org
Email: WODeditor@bcahq.org

Submission Guidelines:
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.

WHEEL OF DHARMA POLICY
HARDCOPY PUBLICATION LICENSE:
Authors who submit articles for publication in the Wheel of Dharma ("WOD") thereby grant WOD a royalty-free non-exclusive paid up license, worldwide, in perpetuity and in all media (the "License") to use, edit, and republish the article(s) and to grant sublicenses to any third party to do so on the same terms. WOD grants third parties an identical License to republish its articles so long as the article(s) is republished in its entirety, without edit, providing credit to the WOD and the Buddhist Churches of America.

ONLINE PUBLICATION LICENSE:
Authors who submit articles for publication in the Wheel of Dharma online ("WOD") thereby grant WOD a royalty-free non-exclusive paid up license, worldwide, in perpetuity and in all media (the "License") to use, edit, and republish the article(s) and to grant sublicenses to any third party to do so on the same terms.
WOD grants third parties an identical License to republish only the first three paragraphs of any article, without edit, providing credit to the WOD and the Buddhist Churches of America, including a hyperlink to the article in WOD.

Editor: Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop
Editor, Japanese Section: Rev. Ryuta Furumoto
Managing Editor: Alan H. Kita
Section Editors: Yumi Hatta, Michael Endo
Copy Editor: Edythe Vassall
Print Production: Jeffrey Kimoto



Orange County Buddhist Church
909 S. Dale Avenue
Anaheim, CA 92804
Tel: (714) 827-9590
e-mail: ocbc909@aol.com
www.ocbuddhist.org

Orange County Buddhist Church

The Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC) celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. It began as a branch of the Los Angeles Betsuin, becoming independent in 1965. At that time, a mere 75 families built the hondo, social hall, and classroom buildings. In 1982, a gymnasium (or multipurpose) building was added, and in 1997, a mini chapel and *nokotsudo** were built.

Presently, the Sangha has grown to over 600 families and 900 members. OCBC recently completed a new social hall with offices and a Buddhist Education Center (BEC) classroom in which a Buddhist online program will be created. Plans are underway to enlarge the *hondo* chapel in 2016.

In addition to its Buddhist education program, cultural programs, and youth programs, OCBC has created a Buddhist counseling center, called "The Mindfulness Center" that helps individuals deal with various life issues from a Buddhist counseling perspective.

**nokotsudo*: a room where urns with ashes of the deceased are kept.

Job Announcement

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



By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

President's Message

The State of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA)

We hope to make the National Council Meeting an opportunity to find out what is going on at BCA headquarters and what new services are available for temples.

I hope that the changes will continue to transform the National Council Meeting so that it becomes a more useful resource for temple leaders. I hope that people will look forward to coming to the meeting so that they can learn what is available for their temples and learn how to be better temple leaders. I hope that the meeting energizes people about our Jodo Shinshu traditions and makes people appreciate the words of Shinran Shonin by providing opportunities to hear the Dharma from ministers whom they may not have had a chance to hear previously.

At the National Council Meeting, delegates will be voting on passage of the BCA budget. The

budget is larger than the 2013-2014 budget by \$93,000. It is balanced by an anticipated \$230,000 in donations. Although this may seem like a lot, the BCA received a larger amount of donations than this last year.

Our fundraising efforts will be more prominent this year. A committee comprised of BCA leaders, Institute of Buddhist Studies representatives, and BCA Endowment Foundation members will be planning a strategy for streamlining the donation process. We will be hiring a development assistant who will help us keep track of donations and make sure that acknowledgments go out in a timely manner. The development assistant will also keep us informed about our quest to meet our donation goal.

Last year, the Delano Buddhist Church closed its doors. Being a very small church, I do not

think many people were surprised to see that. What may come as a surprise is that there are other churches and temples in the BCA that are having financial difficulties. Some are having a difficult time paying their bills and BCA dues. To that end, the BCA is trying to keep the dues as low as possible; hence, the budget deficit mentioned above. In addition, we are working with churches and temples having financial difficulties. In the end, this may make a significant impact on our budget. This places greater importance on our fundraising efforts.

Should any more temples close, our Archives Committee reminds us that they are willing to look at any temple artifacts to see what might be appropriate for the BCA collection at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, in order to preserve the history of our temples.

Do you like *Natto*?

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

Do you know what *natto* is? *Natto* is a traditional Japanese breakfast food made of fermented soybeans. It has a strong smell. It is sticky and slimy.

People in western Japan usually don't eat *natto*, so I had never eaten it until I was about 20 years old. When I tried it I didn't care for it, but now I eat *natto* almost every morning. Actually, I love it.

This started last October when I took a group to Japan to visit Shinran Shonin's sites. I tried *natto* the first morning in Tokyo, and found out the taste wasn't bad. On the second morning it tasted good. From the third morning, I started eating it every day. After coming back to the States, I have to have it every morning. I am surprised that I actually enjoy eating *natto* every morning.

Traditionally, *natto* was made by farmers using home-grown soybeans fermented in a bag made of rice straw that contained a certain type of bacteria called *natto-kin*. Today, because of health regulations, it is almost impossible to market *natto* made the traditional way. The *natto* that we eat today comes from factories.

They wash and soak the soybeans in water for from half a day to a day. Then they steam the beans for about six hours and mix them with *natto-kin* bacteria. From this point, the process of fermentation begins. It takes about one full day. After this, they cool down the mixture and put it in a refrigerator for up to one week to allow the stickiness to develop.

As you see here, *natto* is not made overnight. It takes time, and the process is important. The process of making *natto* and the process of how my taste for it changed from dislike to enjoyment reminds me of the process I went through in hearing and appreciating the *Nembutsu* teaching.

Just as I didn't care for *natto* in the past, I didn't like the *Nembutsu* teaching when I was growing up in Japan. However, my parents and other caring people soaked and steamed me in the water of the Dharma by making me perform daily services and recite the *Nembutsu*. It didn't make any sense to me. I thought it was so outdated and meaningless. Well, I was wrong, completely wrong, and now I am so grateful for the past conditions that guided me to the teaching.

The process of hearing and appreciating the *Nembutsu* teaching requires us to be soaked and steamed in the Dharma environment for a while. This gets us ready to accept the next challenge of meeting Shinran Shonin and other *Nembutsu* teachers of the past and present and receiving their "bacteria" or seeds of knowledge. It may take years and years of "fermentation" to hear, listen, contemplate, question, doubt, and experience, until we finally accept the teachings.

Let us think of our life, whether good or bad, as the process of us being nurtured by the Dharma.

Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temples' 100th Anniversary Logo Contest

Congratulations to 18-year-old Connor Ospina, winner of the logo contest recently held by the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temples. This logo symbolizes the theme for TSDBT's upcoming 100th-year celebration in 2016: "Oneness in the Nembutsu; Gratitude for the Past; and Aspirations for the Future." It also expresses what this Dharma School student and Young Buddhist Association (YBA) member of the Denver Buddhist Temple practices daily since his introduction to the Dharma at the early age of two. Another example of Connor's *dana* (selfless giving) is being a co-president of the YBA at the Temple, as well as participating in the many activities offered at the Temple and for the Sangha.

This contest was open to all interested participants. Several Sangha members entered up to three entries each. A few were computer generated and others were drawn by hand. It was difficult to choose one winner, as many were worthy of this honor. As no material prize was offered, all of the contestants truly displayed the reason for participating—to show their gratitude for the present and



Contestants (left to right): Antruan Henderson, Joe Molina, Donna Inouye, Clarynne Blanchard, and Bruce Thompson, with Connor Ospina pictured on the right side of the winning logo. Also pictured is Rev. Diana Thompson, standing behind Joe and Donna. Not pictured: contestant Jeremy Watada and Head Minister Rev. Doei Fujii.

living in the *Nembutsu*. The participants come from a wide range of backgrounds. Some are new to the Temple and some grew up in the Temple, including third-generation members. All of the entries were superlative, expressing their thoughts on our 100 years of exis-

tence in this once small town of Denver, Colorado.

Rennyō Shonin's letter *On the White Ashes* speaks to being 100 years old: "Who among men can maintain his form for even a hundred years?" This Sangha has maintained its form for 100 years and we are cel-

brating this momentous occasion! Please join us!

If you have never been to our Temple or any of the other Tri-State Temples that our dedicated ministers serve, please reserve the weekend of September 30, through October 2, 2016 for the culmination of our 100th year of existence. This weekend will be preceded with many activities, primarily from January 2016, in remembrance of the past and trying to relive the "good ole days." Plans are being made for activities such as a fishing derby, bowling tournament, golf outing, and reunions of various groups. Projects that are currently being worked on are a history book, 100th Anniversary quilt, wedding photos, 1,000 cranes by the Dharma School students, and videos of current activities and members.

Please look for future articles in the *Wheel of Dharma* for information on any of these activities, especially if you were once a member of any of the Temples in the Tri-State area. You may contact Richard Yoshida at (303) 470-6388 or email him at d8793@comcast.net with any questions.

15th World Buddhist Women's Convention

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

embraced by the oneness of life

Registration open until Friday, May 1, 2015. Register online at:
www.wbwconvention.com Presented by the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada Women's Federation (JSBTCWF).

May 30 & 31, 2015

More information:

www.wbwconvention.com



presented by
JSBTCWF



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

2015 WEHOPE Ministers' DHARMATHON

Wednesday, April 15 & Thursday, April 16
7:00 – 9:00 pm at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley

What is a Dharmathon? It's a marathon of Dharma messages. On April 15 and 16 from 7:00 – 9:00 pm, a Dharmathon will be presented by 18 ministers participating in the West and East Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange (WEHOPE). The Dharmathon is free and open to the public. We will also broadcast the messages on the BCA website using new equipment purchased with a generous donation from the Reverend Gyodo Kono Memorial Fund. Everyone is invited to come and hear a variety of dharma messages at the Jodo Shinshu Center in April.



Thirty-one ministers attended the 2015 IHOPE. (Left to right): Bishop Kodo Umezū (Buddhist Churches of America), Rev. Henry Adams (BCA), Rev. Jay Okamoto (Hawaii), Rev. Kentaro Sugao (Brazil), Rev. Kojo Kakihara (BCA), and Bishop Tatsuya Aoki (Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada).

The WEHOPE gathering brings together *Kaikyoshi* and *Kyoshi* ministers and ministers' assistants with *Tokudo* ordination from Hawaii, Canada, South America, Shinshu Otani-ha, and the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) to study and exchange ideas to create the future of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist movement.

WEHOPE is a variation of the International Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange (IHOPE) started in 2011. The name change represents the fact that this year there will be ministers attending from the Shinshu Otani-ha (Higashi Honganji) as well as the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha (Nishi Hongwanji).

Presented by the BCA Center for Buddhist Education
www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org
Phone: (510) 809-1460 Email: cbe@bcahq.org

BCA Bookstore News

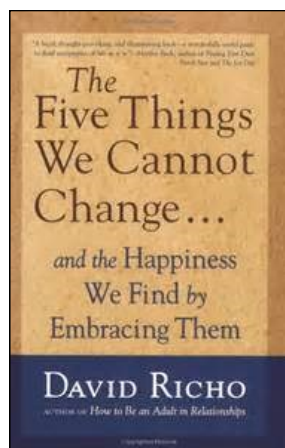
by Gayle Noguchi

Now available: *The Five Things We Cannot Change...and the Happiness We Find by Embracing Them* by David Richo, paperback, \$14.95

As the title suggests, there are five unavoidable facts of human life. Despite our best efforts to escape these givens, we all experience that 1) everything changes and ends, 2) things do not always go according to plan, 3) life is not always fair, 4) pain is part of life, and 5) people are not loving and loyal all the time.

Integrating Western psychology with Eastern spirituality and with Buddhism in particular, Richo shows us how we encounter these givens in daily life, the fear it activates in us, the coping mechanisms we use to mask our fears, and how we can choose to respond in a way that leads to transformation, liberation, and ultimately to true happiness.

The Five Things We Cannot Change and other titles by David Richo are available at www.bcabookstore.com or contact sales@bcabookstore.com / 510-809-1435. The BCA Bookstore is open Wednesday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.



CBE 2015 Tentative Calendar of Events

(at the Jodo Shinshu Center unless noted otherwise. Dates and programming subject to change.)

- March 7: Winter Pacific Seminar @ Seattle Betsuin, WA, with Prof. Tomoyasu Naito, Kangaku, Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha. Co-sponsored by Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS)
- March 13-15: TechnoBuddha Conference with Dr. Jeff Wilson
- April 4: Japanese Seminar with Rev. Henry Adams & Rev. Akinori Imai Conducted in Japanese
- April 14-17: West & East Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange (WEHOPE)*
- April 15 & 16: 2015 WEHOPE Dharmathon, 7pm - 9 pm See article above
- May 21: Gotan-e: A Celebration of Shinran Shonin's Birthday
- June 27: LGBTQ Community & Shin Buddhism Seminar @ NY Buddhist Church See p. 5
- July 3-5: Summer Pacific Seminar: *The Call of the Nembutsu in Nepal* Co-sponsored by IBS**
- August 1-2: Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) August Workshop
- September 18-21: Eastern District Speaking Tour (TBD)
- October 3: Baby Boomers' Seminar with Rev. Earl Ikeda
- October 10: Japanese Seminar
- October 15-17: 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions, Salt Lake City, UT*
- November 13-15: CBE Music Seminar (tentative)

*Ministers' Continuing Education (MCE):

- April 14-17: West & East Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange (WEHOPE)
- October 15-17: 2015 Parliament of World Religions, Salt Lake City, UT

**Minister's Assistant Program (MAP):

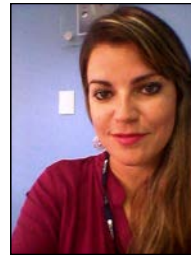
SPRING: March 26-28 SUMMER: July 3-5 FALL: Sept. 24-26 WINTER: Dec. 10-12

Website: www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org
Email: cbe@bcahq.org Phone: (510) 809-1460

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 for course details



How one of the Buddhist teachings has meaning for my own personal appreciation of the Dharma

By Thais Campos
Honpa Hongwanji Temple of Brasilia

The first time I heard Sato Sensei talking about a place with soil made of jewels and birds with the colors of a hundred jewels that sing, melodiously praising the virtue of mindfulness of the Buddha among celestial children dancing in the sky, I thought it was a little "over the top." Coming from a philosophical perspective (I happen to have a degree in Philosophy), it did not make sense to me that a Buddhist school preached about a place you can go to by calling Amida's name ten times, with no effort at all. It sounded anti-Buddhist, since all I had learned about Buddhism before pointed towards self-control and the possibility of attaining nirvana by one's own efforts. Didn't Shakyamuni tell his disciples shortly before *parinirvana*, "be a light unto yourselves, do not depend on others"? However, all I was hearing was that I should depend on Amida's vow to attain salvation.

"THIS DOES NOT MAKE SENSE TO ME AT ALL!!!" I said to my friend, sinking in the chair with folded arms like an angry child. "This looks like an Asian version of Christianity," my friend replied. I left the Temple certain that I would not come back. Little did I know that a few years later I would be bowing before Amida's altar, completely convinced that there is a place in the celestial realms with a lotus throne ready to open up for me whenever I call Amida's name. What happened in this gap of five years between my first frustrated visit to the Temple and the unexpected return as a Sangha member is what made me contemplate the Dharma in all its glory...



Amida Buddha's Pure Land and Heavenly Maidens by Hideya Chiji.

My grandmother's sister Zilda (a person very, very close to me) was lying in a hospital bed, dying at 84 years of age. She wasn't dying because of her age, she was dying because she had been in a car crash caused by her lack of driving skills. (She had insisted on driving even though she could no longer see or hear properly. We learned after the car crash that her driver's license had been expired for almost 15 years.)

"I'm afraid she won't make it," the doctor said. "What can we do?" Grandpa asked. "Not much. Let's keep her comfortable and painless for as long as possible," said the doctor.

But four months later, Zilda was still alive and many complications from the surgeries started to emerge. They had already amputated her leg due to gangrene and some vital organs were severely injured. We were hoping for a smooth departure from this world, but Zilda wouldn't die even though her body was completely debilitated. It was very agonizing to see my great-aunt fighting in vain for a lost battle. Finally, after months of agony, Grandpa pushed the chair to be near her bed.

"Zilda," he whispered to his semi-conscious sister-in-law, "we have done everything we could to keep your company for a little longer. But let me tell you something, do not be afraid of the other side. It's okay to die, you know... you will see a bright and almost blinding light, you'll feel like it's going to swallow you, but hey!, this is the same light you see when you come out of your mother's womb. It looks like death, but that's actually your birth. It's fantastic, Zilda! It's okay to go into this adventure!"

There was no sorrow in his voice. I actually heard a very joyful tone; the same tone he had used when I was six and he first pushed my bike as I tried to balance myself on the bicycle without training wheels for the first time.

Half an hour later, Zilda passed away.

Grandpa never knew I was listening to the whole "conversation" from the restroom. Grandpa is a Freemason and his spirituality always impressed me. Even though he was not a Buddhist, he sounded really Buddhist to me in that moment and I immediately remembered Sato Sensei's words on my first visit to the Temple, when he said we would be born in the Pure Land upon calling Amida's name.

How materialistic I had been in that occasion, understanding the Pure Land literally as an actual place with the absurd soil of frozen water sustained by eight columns with eight sides and eight corners encrusted with jewels that emit a thousand rays of light with 84 thousand colors each. No. Those images are depictions of that which you cannot describe because they are not physical things, but rather, symbolic representations of a state of mind. You go to the Pure Land in those moments when you are not afraid of impermanence, when your mind is free from the obstacles of duality. In birth and death there is no space for self-control; all you have is the recognition of the enlightened nature, the contemplation of the Dharma as it is. The vision of Amida when the lotus flower opens up in the moment you arrive in the Pure Land is the vision of the infinite light that knows no right or wrong, good and bad, big or small—therefore, engulfing everything in front of it.

Even though great-aunt Zilda was no Buddhist, I was pretty sure she was born in the Pure Land at the very moment she let herself go, abandoning the need to be in control. I understood the concept of *Tariki* right then.

A few months later I took refuge and went back to the Temple. That might not be the official explanation of the meaning of Pure Land, but it is how I found a way to appreciate the Dharma.

Thais Campos is a Shin practitioner living in Brasilia, Brazil. She graduated from the Universidade do Sul de Santa Catarina (UNISUL) with a Bachelor's Degree in Philosophy, and her passion for Eastern Philosophy led her to Shin Buddhism. Thais has been taking the JSCC online course since 2013 and absolutely loves it.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

Letters from the Buddha

by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, CBE Co-director

Last night (February 14), I got home from the office around 9:30 pm. My sons were about to go to bed. After a brief conversation with me, they went to bed. I had dinner and then went to my room to check emails. By my desktop PC, I found a letter and a gift box on the keyboard. They were Valentine's Day gifts from my family. From the handwriting on the letter, I could tell that it was from my 9-year-old son. The letter was written in Japanese, and the English translation was something like this: "Dad, thank you for working hard every day and making money."



My sons and wife showed their appreciation by presenting me with a box of my favorite chocolates and a letter. I think I don't deserve it, especially as a father and husband, because I spend too much time at the Jodo Shinshu Center and not enough time with my family. I sometimes even have a sense of guilt. But regardless, the letter and the gift taught me that my family at least appreciates my everyday work. You could say that the letter and gift are concrete forms of the appreciation in their hearts.

Sometimes, Buddhist sutras are compared to letters—letters from the Buddha. We can interpret them as Buddha's wisdom and compassion taking the form of language. When we mindfully chant Buddhist sutras, we are listening to Buddha's voice and touching Buddha's heart. However, when we receive a letter from a stranger, it is hard to truly appreciate what he or she is saying. In the same way, it is hard to truly appreciate what Buddha is talking about in the sutras if we do not know Buddha very well. We develop our relationships with our family members and friends in our daily life, which makes gifts from them special and brings us a special appreciation. In the same way, we should also develop our relationship with Buddha by actively engaging in Buddhist activities such as attending Sunday services and study classes, having conversations with ministers, reading books, and so forth. By doing so, we will be able to more deeply appreciate Buddha's heart and voice underlying the Buddhist sutras.

Let me go back to the story of the Valentine's gift. The next morning, I extended words of my deep appreciation and gave my family a hug. Also, I didn't forget to point out to my son that he misspelled "money" in Japanese!

NYBC hosts**LGBTQ Community & Shin Buddhism Seminar
"Embraced by the Heart of Amida Buddha"
June 27, 2015**

"Embraced by the Heart of Amida Buddha" is the theme of the third LGBTQ Community & Shin Buddhism Seminar presented by the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Center for Buddhist Education (CBE). Initiated by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara's inquiry in 2013, these groundbreaking gatherings are a continuing effort to share how the Shin Buddhist teachings can offer an enduring community that values inclusiveness and acceptance of all. (For background information, read "Let's Talk: Is My Sangha Inclusive?" www.lionsroar.com/lets-talk-is-my-sangha-inclusive.) Past participants have included a diverse cross-section of the community: seniors, parents, youth, and adults, of all sexual orientations. Everyone is welcome!

The 2015 seminar will be hosted by the New York Buddhist Church (NYBC) on Saturday, June 27, 2015, from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm the day before the New York Pride Parade. The guest speakers are Dr. Jeff Wilson, author of *Mindful America: The Mutual Transformation of Buddhist Meditation and American Culture* and Rev. Kurt Rye, resident minister of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Fairfax Station, Virginia. Also on the program are Rev. Earl Ikeda, resident minister of NYBC, and Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, CBE co-director. Other speakers/moderators from BCA temples are: Elaine Donlin (SF), Gary Jaskula (NY), Hoshina Seki (NY), Sam Fugitt (VA), Amy Umezu (CA) and Norio Umezu (CA).

The NYBC is located at 331-332 Riverside Drive, NY, NY. Registration rates: BCA members \$30 until May 28; General: \$40. Registration closes on June 20. Please call regarding student discounts. Phone: (415) 776-5600 x212 Email: cbe@bcahq.org. Register online: www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org

Special Feature

This text was presented at the 17th Annual European Shin Buddhist Conference in Southampton, UK in September, 2014.

**JODO SHINSHU: THE SUPREME TEACHING
FOR THE PRESENT AGE (Part 3 of 6)**

by Rev. John Paraskevopoulos

As much as some people are uncomfortable or embarrassed to admit it, they deeply desire salvation. "From what?" you may ask. From the endless ills, frustrations and cruelties of *samsara* along with the myriad poisons to be found in ourselves. If you feel these maladies acutely and cannot seem to find a way through them; if you are prepared to acknowledge the inherent limitations in eliminating your shortcomings or improving the world around you; if you are serious about resolving this problem at its root; and if you feel that sense of mystery and beauty in life that beckons you to look beyond what you can see and touch, then the teachings of Jodo Shinshu may have something vital to say to you.

It may be useful to turn now to the specific features of Shin that make it such a pre-eminent spiritual path for our times. I will focus on about half a dozen or so themes that exemplify the strengths of this tradition with respect to other options available to people today, thereby demonstrating why this much misunderstood and under-appreciated way offers a universal scope that transcends all cultures, nationalities and human dispositions—no one is excluded from taking this medicine dispensed by the Buddha for our ailing times of crisis and confusion.

(i) Experiential Confirmation

As with Buddhism in general, Shin does not demand blind or uncritical adherence to any doctrinal proposition. Of course, it has doctrines aplenty but these have been developed over the centuries through the collective insights and experiences of the Sangha all the way back to Shakyamuni himself—doctrines that have received rich embodiment in the symbolism of the Pure Land tradition.

Shin, in fact, offers itself as an invitation. It says to us: "Consider the human condition and reflect on the impermanence of all things; listen to the exhortations of the Buddha and taste for yourself the liberating fruits of his compassionate message. If you trust it, then follow in his footsteps. There is no coercion here; no rejection or condemnation if you spurn the invitation or disagree with what the Buddha is telling you. Just a recognition that one's own karmic maturity may be at a stage where the Dharma vividly speaks to you and can be accepted—and rejoiced in—wholeheartedly.

The Dharma can only liberate us if we willingly recognise and embrace its truth, not because we are threatened with punitive measures. Despite its many limitations and difficulties, human life is considered most precious in Buddhism as it affords the best opportunity (compared to other samsaric states of existence) for realising the Dharma and thus exiting the wearisome round of transmigration once and for all. For this to be possible, we must want to be liberated and recognise this as our ultimate good.

Shin encourages us to open our eyes, be guided by those wiser forebears who have traversed the path already (as witnessed by the biographical accounts of their powerful and extraordinary experiences) and to accept the compelling evidence of our spiritual intuition as illuminated by the wisdom of the Buddha.

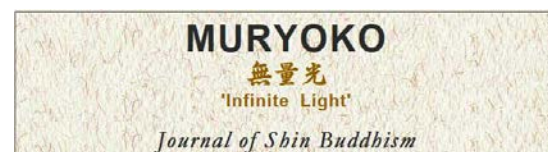
(ii) Ultimate Reality

Given that a number of Western Buddhists have come from Christianity (often having fled from unhappy or disappointing experiences) it is difficult to broach the topic of a higher or "divine" reality without provoking strong, or even angry, reactions. Indeed, some have been so damaged by their Christian past that anything that smacks of "God-talk" is resentfully dismissed as un-Buddhist. This is rather unfortunate and surely a case of throwing out the baby with the bath-water. Let us be absolutely clear about this: Buddhism does not abandon the notion of an ultimate reality. It refines and strips it of many of the troubling limitations that so bedevil theistic notions of God. Even from its earliest days, Buddhism recognised a reality that transcended this world, blissful and free from suffering; a realm of enlightenment and the highest happiness, described (in the early *Samyutta Nikaya*) as:

... the far shore, the subtle, the very difficult to see, the unaging, the stable, the undisintegrating, the unmanifest, the peaceful, the deathless, the sublime, the auspicious, the secure, the destruction of craving, the wonderful, the amazing, the unailing, the unafflicted, dispassion, purity, freedom, the island, the shelter, the asylum, the refuge ...

To be continued next month

Rev. John Paraskevopoulos is an ordained Shin Buddhist priest based in Australia and author of *Call of the Infinite: The Way of Shin Buddhism*. He holds a first-class honors degree in Philosophy from the University of Melbourne, Australia and is editor of the online *Muryoko: Journal of Shin Buddhism*.



The full text of this article is available online at www.nembutsu.info.

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

PACIFIC SEMINAR - 21ST CENTURY - SUMMER SESSION

The Call of the Nembutsu in Nepal

Keynote Speaker:

Rev. Sonam Wangdi Bhutia
Hongwanji Buddhist Society, Nepal
Head Priest, Kathmandu-Hongwanji
Founder of the First Jodo Shinshu Temple in Nepal

July 3-5, 2015
Jodo Shinshu Center
2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704

Guest Speaker: **Rev. Mitsuya Dake**
Ryukoku University, Department of Intercultural Communication
Engaged Buddhism as a Worldwide Phenomenon
Other Speakers To Be Announced

Registration: \$140 Deadline: June 21, 2015
BCA Member Rate \$125 until June 4
Make checks payable to "BCA" with "Summer Pacific Seminar" on the memo line.
Mail form and check to CBE at 2140 Durant Ave. Berkeley, CA 94704

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT CBE: Email: cbe@bcahq.org Ph: (510) 809-1460
Visit: BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org Click on CBE

Lion's Roar, the online newsletter of *Shambhala Sun* and *Buddhadharma* magazines, has recently featured George Takei's article, "Being Gay, Being Buddhist," based on his talk at CBE's LGBTQ seminar in June, 2014. To view the article, please visit

www.lionsroar.com/being-gay-being-buddhist-george-takei/





By Charles Ozaki
President,
BCA Endowment Foundation

Dear BCA Members and Friends:

2014 was an extraordinary year for geopolitical headlines, including Russia's intervention in Ukraine, protests in Hong Kong, the Ebola crisis, and referendums on independence in Scotland and Catalonia. These headlines, combined with macro-

A Letter from the BCA Endowment Foundation Board President

economic events—such as the massive intervention by global Central Banks and the plunge in oil prices—led to a heightened level of stock, bond, and currency market volatility. This volatility negatively impacted returns, with global stocks generating a modest return of +3.8% during 2014. For the year, the BCA Endowment Foundation Growth portfolio returned +4.1%, while the Growth & Income portfolio returned +4.0% and the Income portfolio returned +3.5%. The Endowment Foundation ended the year with \$31.9 million in total assets under management, which compares to \$25.8 million

in 2013.

In 2014, the Endowment Foundation reviewed its investment policy and made adjustments to accommodate the needs of the BCA and custodial investors, and to diversify. The long-term investment-oriented Growth Fund targets were adjusted to invest 65% in equities, 10% in hedge funds, 20% in fixed income, and 5% in real assets. The Growth and Income Fund, which was established for custodial accounts, continued to invest 45% in equities, 50% in fixed income, and 5% in real assets. The Income Fund, which was also established as a conservative portfolio

investment option for custodial accounts, continued to invest 90% in fixed income and 10% in equities. The BCA Fund was established to provide for a new low-interest rate for the BCA loan by investing 49% of BCA funds in the loan and 51% in equities.

Custodial investments by BCA temples and affiliated groups increased by \$5.9 million in 2014. Total custodial investments increased from \$7.6 million to \$13.5 million. A positive consequence of the increase in custodial investment is the reduction in the annual administrative fee. The fee for custodial Growth Fund decreased from 1.0% to

.80% and the fee for custodial Growth and Income Fund decreased from .80% to .68%. As previously noted, the Income Fund, which was created for custodial investors, earned substantially more than available bank savings account or money market rates. Opening a custodial account with the Endowment Foundation continues to be an option available for temples and affiliated groups.

In 2014, \$630,890 in investment earnings was disbursed through the Endowment Foundation to support the many BCA and Institute of Buddhist Studies programs. The earnings were derived from

contributions that generous donors have previously given to be provided over time for programs. The Endowment Foundation supports the BCA and IBS in their fundraising initiatives to pay off the BCA loan and to raise funds for ministerial scholarships.

The Endowment Foundation asks all members and friends to support the good works of the BCA and the IBS, which are for all of our benefit.

In Gassho

For a copy of the *BCA Endowment Annual Report*, contact Hide Mizuno, executive director, at: hmizuno@bcabq.org or phone: (415) 776-5068.

Sharing My Life Story as a Buddhist: My True Self

By Lila Tsuda Grant
Orange County
Buddhist Church

I was awakened to my great fortune of *being born Buddhist* and to the possibility that I might discover my life story as a Buddhist when I attended the 43rd National Conference of the Buddhist Churches of America Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations "Sharing Our Life Stories As Buddhists" held in Irvine, CA in October 2014. This realization came to me after listening to several distinguished men and women share their personal challenges and struggles on their journey to becoming not only Buddhists, but priests, of various Buddhist traditions.

At the opening service, sitting beside my mother Hiroko, my sister Camille, and Kim, my dear friend of forty-years, I was immediately transported to a place of serenity as I became one with several hundred attendees in a unifying chant. I closed my eyes to hear the last of the ringing bell's fading resonance and imagined Buddha calling me to pay attention to the now; to be mindful.

The size of the audience drawn to the *Mindfulness* breakout session supported the *Time* magazine cover story (February 2014) that we are indeed in the midst of "The Mindful Revolution." While participating in the exercise of *listening without judgment*, I was inspired to consider how being in the moment has played a role in my life story as a Buddhist.

When I was 19, I was



Two generations at the FBWA Conference (left to right): Lila Grant, mother Hiroko Tsuda, and sister Camille Pietrow.

awarded Miss Bussei by the Western Young Buddhist League, a great privilege to represent young Buddhists in America. Upon receiving the honor, my Yoshikawa grandmother shared words of wisdom in *Nihongo* which my mother interpreted in English. Here is what I recall: "*Okage sama de* (benefiting from the shade of those who walked before us)," my *obaachan* said. "Be mindful that you did not receive this honor on your own. It is with the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha, the judges, and each of the contestants, that you have been crowned Miss Bussei. Appreciate this moment." I nodded and said thank you, wondering what my grandmother meant.

When I was 21, I was encouraged to compete in the Northern California Cherry

Blossom Queen Program. With my parents' unconditional support, I eagerly applied and became a contestant for what promised to be a character-building opportunity.

During the contest's Q&A portion, nervous and alone on stage in front of what felt like the entire Japanese community, the MC asked, "Lila, you say you are a Buddhist. What is the difference or similarity between being Japanese and being Buddhist?" Silence. I asked the MC to repeat the question. More silence. I answered, "Being Japanese and being Buddhist are one and the same to me, it's just who I am." Half of me felt humiliated that I didn't know the difference, and the other half of me accepted that in the moment, I had given my

best answer.

My grandmother shared the same words of wisdom which my mother again interpreted. "*Okage sama de*. Be mindful that it was not on your own that you did not receive the honor to be Queen. It is with the wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha, the judges, and each of the contestants, that you were not crowned. Appreciate this moment." I nodded and said thank you, this time understanding exactly what my grandmother meant.

With Amida's unconditional acceptance, I am deeply grateful to practice mindfulness as a Buddhist—to be present in my life and relationships, and aware that the only reality is this very moment.

This is my life story as a Buddhist. What is yours?

Sixth International Ryukoku Symposium on Buddhism and Japanese Culture

The Sixth International Ryukoku Symposium on Buddhism and Japanese Culture, co-hosted by the University of California, Berkeley Center for Japanese Studies and the Institute of Buddhist Studies, will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2015 from 9 am to 5 pm at the Jodo Shinshu Center, 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA.

The symposium will be in two-parts. From 9 am to 12 pm, three papers will be presented in Japanese. The presenters and titles of their papers are:

Yukio Kusaka, Professor of Japanese Literature, Ryukoku University, *Revealing the Teachings: Popular Sermons in Shin Buddhism*.

Sei Noro, Lecturer of Buddhist Studies, Ryukoku University, *Doctrinal Debate in Kegon School*.

Jijun Yoshida, Adjunct Lecture of Buddhist Studies, Ryukoku University, *Early Tendai Buddhist Disputes with Other Schools*.

Following the break, the afternoon session will be in English from 2 pm to 5 pm. Presenters and titles of their papers are:

Takahiko Kameyama, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Institute of Buddhist Studies, *The Significance of "Faith" in Medieval Shingon Buddhism*.

Tatsuo Florian Sailes, Graduate Student, Buddhist Studies, UC Berkeley, *The One or the Three, the One and the Three, and/or the One as the Three: Observation on the Relationship Between the Single Vehicle and the Three Vehicles in Medieval Japanese Hossō Thought*.

Mark Blum, Professor and Shinjo Ito Distinguished Chair in Japanese Studies, East Asian Languages and Cultures, UC Berkeley, *Contextualizing Posthumous Kaimyō Ritual in Japan: Indian and Chinese Precedents for Renaming the Dead*.

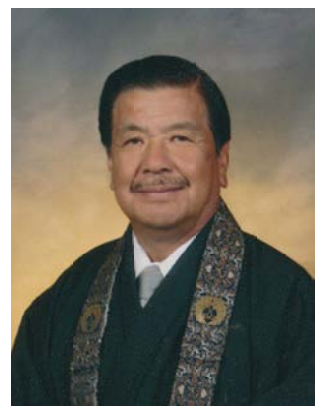
The symposium is open the public and free of charge. For more information contact: cjs-events@berkeley.edu or (510) 642-3415.



今月の法話

「業」

名誉開教使 宮地 彰雄



以前に、少し古い「本願寺新報」を読んでいた。記事はある門徒さんからの質問を、藤田徹文先生が答えておられるものです。紙面上全文をご紹介します。ご了承下さいませ。

ある浄土真宗の門徒さんが、こう質問されました。

「この世のことは、全て前生の業による」と言われました。私は納得できません。仏教では「業」「前世」をどのように説いているのでしょうか。

この世について説明のつかないことや、またどう考えても納得のいかないことが多くあります。だからと云って「前世の業」で何もかも済ませてしまうのも問題です。それでは、人間によってゆがめられたあり方による苦しんでいる人に、「前世の業」であきらめを強いることになってしまいます。

積尊ご在世の時代、多くの人は

- ①人生は神さまのおぼしめしによる（神意論）
- ②人間にはそれぞれ運（宿）命のようなものがあり、それによる（運命論）
- ③人生は、その人がどのような人や事柄に出会うかによる（偶然論）

と考えていました。

積尊はこれら三つの考え方を否定し、「人生はどのような行為をするかによる（行為論）、その行為の継続による（精神論）、行為の継続によって身につく力による（業論）」と言われました。

その門徒さんの質問は積尊が否定された運命論にちかいものです。仏教における「業」の解釈は「行為の継続によって身につく力」ということ

とで、「運命論」とはまったく違うのです。また「前世」ということですが、私たちがこの世に誕生する前の『生』を前世、この世を生きた今の「生」を今生、さらにこの世の「いのち」を終えてから後の「生」を「後生」といいます。私たちがわかっているのは「今生」で、「前世」「後世」についてはわからないというのが正直なところ。わからなくても、わたしの「命」は無から生じたものではないのですから「前世」はあるのです。また「死」によって私の命は無になるわけでもありませんから、間違いなく後生はあるのです。み教えに遇って、「今生」の私のあり方があきらかになることによって、わからなかった「前世」「後生」があきらかになるのです。

善導大師は、み教えに遇って「今、ここにある身は罪悪深重の身、生死輪廻の身、凡夫の身である」ということがあきらかになると、「昔の昔から常に罪悪の中に身をはずめ、常に生死流転してきた身であった」こと、さらに「永遠に今のあり方から出る手がかりも、離れる縁もない身である」ことがあきらかになると述べておられます。

結論です、今、阿彌陀仏の摂取の光明の中にある身であることに目覚めたら「後生」に間違いなく浄土に生まれるのです。

合掌

今月のインタビュー

今月は一月末より全米各地で講義をされている内藤勸学にお話をうかがった。

編集部：内藤勸学、ようこそ米国へお越しくたさいました。和上のご講義は伝統的な教学をわかりやすく説いてくださるので、たいへん有難いと僧侶、門徒ともに皆喜んでおります。今回の訪米は初めてですか？



内藤勸学：今回の訪米を含めて、7回目です。私の親戚がサンフランシスコにおりまして、法事のために訪れたのと、IBSの講義で来たことがあります。ポストンやオレゴンにも研究発表と講義に行きました。今回は親戚の法事で訪れる予定にしていたのですが、ご縁あってBCAの各寺院で講義することになりました。

編：今回は講義のために約40日滞在されるそうですね。

勸学：はい、昨年龍大を定年退職しましたので時間ができました。自坊の福井は今雪のシーズンでお参りもお休みですから、妻と一緒に来ましたが、暖かいロサンゼルスからサンフランシスコ、シアトル、カナダ、ニューヨークと、だんだん寒い場所へ移動しますので、着るものなどで荷物が多くなって大変です。

編：龍谷大学を退職されてからも教えられているのですか？

勸学：龍大、宗学院、中央仏教学院、東京仏教学院などで教えています。本山でのご示談や、各寺での法話や講義、自坊の法務などもあるのですが、退職してからもみ教えを分かち合う場があるのありがたいです。

編：龍大の学生時、ゼミの先生はどなたでしたか？

勸学：山本仏骨和上と村上速水和上です。私が修士に進む時に山本和上が退職されたので、村上和上のゼミに行くことになりました。私は大阪のお寺の次男でしたので、最初は僧侶になるかどうか迷っていました。それで高校卒業後は、大阪大学の理学部へ進学しました。けれども、やはり思うところがあり、阪大をやめて龍大に入学することにしたのです。同期に深川宣暢勸学がいます。学生の時、彼には私の真宗学は理系だと、冗談を言われてました。

編：米国の浄土真宗の教学や布教に関して、和上のお考えをお聞かせください。

勸学：開教使の皆さんが議論をし、アメリカの教学や伝道法が確立すればよいと思います。やはり日本と米国では文化や風土、考え方がちがうので、日本の教学そのままでは根付くのは難しいかもしれません。真宗の教えの要は変えずに、米国で生まれ育った開教使さんの感覚を大事にして、また門徒さんたちへの伝道を通して、米国の人々に伝わりやすい表現を研究するのは大切なことです。けれども、すべてのことをアメリカの考え方にあわせる必要はないと考えます。日本からの開教使は日本の文化背景や思考法から真宗を理解するので、その理解や表現が米国人には伝わり難いことがあるかもしれません。が、いたずらにアメリカの考え方に迎合せず、日本人的な真宗の理解の仕方を米国人に伝えるとよいと思います。それで米国の僧侶や門信徒の方と、表現法や解釈について話し合い、議論していくと、建設的なアメリカの真宗教学ができあがっていくのではないのでしょうか。

（一面、「親鸞聖人の足跡を訪ねて」よりの続き）

「この旅を通して、親鸞聖人ご自身は一生涯、法然上人のお弟子だと思われていたことがわかりました。」とは参加者のマー・デクスターさん。浄土真宗の教えは親鸞聖人がお手紙に書いておられるように、師の法然上人から受け継いだ教えを、後に深められたものだと思います。流罪という経験が、教信証を書かれる機縁となったのではないのでしょうか。聖人がおられた場所を訪れたことで、教えがもつと身近になり、味わいもふかまったような感じがします。」

研修旅行の最終日には、昨年6月にご門主に就任された大谷光淳さまにお会いすることができ、たいへん光栄でした。その折に、心よりご門主の訪米をお待ちしていることを伝えることができました。サヨナラディナーは有名な、がんに二条苑で行われました。ディナーには現在IBSから龍谷大学へ留学している生徒さんたち、ワンドラ睦さん、柴田キャンディスさん、浜崎マシューさんを招きました。

スポケン仏教会のステレット・セレストさんは「とても素晴らしい研修でした。ご門主とお会いできたこと、親鸞聖人がおられたお寺に参りできたこと、梅津総長や他のお寺の門徒さんたちと一緒に旅できたことなど、どれもよい思い出になりました。」と旅行の感想を述べてくださいました。

最後に、研修旅行をお世話してくださったJT Bのベテランガイド平野泉さんに感謝申し上げます。また、梅津総長が訪れたお寺などで浄土真宗の教えや日本の文化歴史などを説明してくださいましたので、教えの理解が深まりました。ありがとうございます。また、気の合う仲間との楽しい会話、美味しい日本の料理などがCBEの研修旅行に花をそえ、意義深いものにしてくれました。おかげで私たちの偉大な師、親鸞聖人のお徳をますます仰ぎ、すばらしいお念仏の教えをより深く聞かせていただけたようになつたと思います。

春の日本語聞法セミナー

Spring Japanese Dharma Gathering at the Jodo Shinshu Center

午前の部
「在家の法門：お念仏と家庭生活」

ヘンリー・アダムス師
(サンマテオ仏教会駐在開教使)

午後の部
「御縁」 今井 亮徳師
(真宗大谷派 前北米・ハワイ開教監督)

日時：2015年4月4日（土）
午前 10:00 - 午後 3:00

場所：浄土真宗センター
2140 Durant Ave, Berkeley

参加費：\$15（昼食代込み）

友人、ご家族をお誘い合わせの上、是非ご参加ください。

連絡先 ☎ 米国仏教団仏教教育部 担当：桑原
Email: kkuwahara@bcshq.org Tel: 510-230-8439

法輪

2015年3月号

発行所
米国仏教団
Buddhist Churches of America
1710 Octavia Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
電話 (415) 776-5600
FAX (415) 771-6293
Email: info@bcahq.org
for WOD: WODeditor@bcahq.org

二〇一五年度教化標語
「まことの人生を歩もう」

あの記事をもう一度!
法輪のバックナンバーがBCAウェブサイトにて読めます。
<http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/about-us/wheel-of-dharma>

西北部教区大会が開催される

～お念仏をリズムにのせて～

2月13日(金)から15日(日)の三日間、西北部教区仏教徒大会がベルビュー市のウエスティンホテルで開催され、約400名が集った。大会のテーマは「Everyday Rhythm of the Nembutsu」で基調講演にはプリッジ・ハリ―

師(オークラノド仏教会)が招かれた。大会のテーマは「Everyday Rhythm of the Nembutsu」で基調講演にはプリッジ・ハリ―



西北部ダルマスクールの子供たち
North West District's Dharma school kids

がたいですが、若い方にお念仏の教えが伝わるのなら、現代的な音楽の法要があってもいいですね。」と感想を語った。分科会では西北部教区の開教使が音楽と浄土真宗の教えを関連づけて講義をし、寺院での鐘の響きや太鼓の音だけでなく、ポップミュージックの歌詞などからも仏さまの教えが聴こえてくる



カンファレンスの様子 於ベルビューウエスティンホテル
Conference at Bellevue Westin Hotel

総長コラム

米国仏教団 総長 梅津廣道

昨年是我们浄土真宗の門徒にとっては忘れられない年となりました。梯實圓和上(わじょう)、稻城選恵和上、信楽峻麿先生、それに海野大徹先生がお浄土に還っていかれたのです。本当にさびしくなりました。先生方は長年日本だけではなく世界中の人たちとお念仏の喜びを分かち合ってくださいました。その中の一人が先日、ありがたいことに梯先生のテープと追悼誌を送ってくださいました。

ご存知のように、梯先生は私たちの百周年のご講師として来られ、またその後二、三度ご縁を結んでくださいました。この追悼誌の中には、先生から教えを受けた多くの

ことがあると、話した。また、仏教青年会員およびダルマスクールの生徒が音楽演奏や劇の上演をし、たいへん活発な大会となった。

親鸞聖人の足跡を訪ねて

～2014年CBE日本研修旅行パート2(先月号の続き)～

(昨年10月にCBE(仏教教育部)による日本研修旅行が行われ、40名が親鸞聖人の旧跡をたずね、聖人のご生涯や土地に根付いたお念仏の教えを深く学んだ。以下の記事は旅行を引率した永田ブライアン師が書かれたものを編集部が意訳した。)

京都ではまず、午前6時から始まる本願寺のお朝事にお参りました。それから親鸞聖人の御廟所、大谷本廟へ参拝し、納骨堂にもお参りました。本廟の納骨堂にはBCAの区画があり、亡くなられたBCA会員の名前が記録されたものが、各教区や仏教会の壇に納められています。午後からは僧侶の衣やお仏壇を荘厳する織物などをあつかう、さつみや法衣店を訪れました。それから本山の目の前にあり、四〇〇年の歴史を持つお香のお店、薫玉堂、二〇〇年間近くお仏壇をつくっている若林佛具製作所にも行きました。これらのお店はBCAの多くのお寺にお仏壇や仏具、お衣を納めてくださっているのご存知の方もいらっしゃるでしょう。

親鸞聖人の足跡をたどる研修旅行を終えるにあたり、まず仏光寺へお参りました。仏光寺は真宗十派のひとつに人たちの思い出やご子息による晩年の先生の様子などが書き記されています。

梯先生は戦後間もないころ、国土が荒れ果て、十分な食べ物もなく、勉強をするにしても夜中まで電灯のついていない駅の待合室で明るくなるまで本を読んでいたということなんです。栄養も足りず、画家が幽霊のモデルになってくれというくらいに形相をしていたということです。

そこまでして親鸞聖人の教えを体得された先生は、ご病気になったあとも、ご法縁があると断ることなく、ご法座は自分を育ててくださる場であると喜ばれたそうです。また、ご子息が、どうしてそこまでがんばるのかと問いましたところ、「お浄土で親鸞聖人にお会いしたとき、胸をはって報告ができるように努めている」と申されたそうです。



ご門主様(中央)とツアー参加者たち 於京都本願寺
Gomonshu(center) with tour participants @ Kyoto Hongwanji

数えられる仏光寺派の本山です。それから、円山公園を通して親鸞聖人が法然上人に初めて出会われたという安養寺、聖人が9歳の時にお得度をされた青蓮院、浄土宗の総本山、知恩院へも参詣しました。

(2面に続く)

先生は平日頃、私たちから見た世界は好き嫌いの世界であり、人を愛したり憎んだりして生きていくけど、仏さまの目から、驚かされると、みんな尊い人であるとおっしゃっておられました。そういう世界の中に生かされているご自分の喜びを出来るだけ多くの人たちと一緒に喜びたいという願いを持っておられました。

私たちはこのようならばらしい先生方のお導きをいただき、仏さまの世界に出会わせていただくことができるのであります。米国仏教団もその歴史の中に多くの念仏を喜ばれた人たちがいて、私たちに願いをかけていてくださいます。お彼岸の季節、仏さまの世界から願われている私であるということをもう一度思い起こしましょう。

如来大悲の恩徳は 身を粉にしても報ずべし
師王知識の恩徳も 骨を砕きても謝すべし