

WHEEL OF DHARMA

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World Hongwanji Milestones

The 35th World Jodo Shinshu Coordinating Council Meeting was held at the Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan on May 23, 2017 with representatives from the four Hongwanji-ha overseas districts in attendance: North America District (Buddhist Churches of America), Hawaii, Canada and South America. The following day, they participated in the service for the Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition (Dento Hokoku Hoyo) to the 25th Head Priest, Sennyō Monshū.



“Light of the Dharma handed down to us, Let us share this joy with others” Photo, left: Gathering at the Hongwanji in Kyoto, left to right: Mr. Ken Tanimoto, President, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA); Rev. Jerry Hirano, Chairman, BCA Ministers Association; Bishop Tatsuya Aoki, Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada (JSBTC); Bishop Eric Matsumoto, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii (HHMH); Bishop Tetsuei Somayama, Federacao Budista Sul-Americana Jodo Shinshu Honpa Hongwanji; Bishop and Mrs. Kodo Umezu (BCA), Mr. Pieper Toyama, President, (HHMH); Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, BCA Center for Buddhist Education/Hongwanji Office; and Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani, Executive Assistant to Bishop (HHMH). (Photo, right) Overseas district bishops participated in the Dento Hokoku Hoyo on May 24, 2017. Left to right: Bishop Eric Matsumoto (Hawaii), Bishop Kodo Umezu (North America), Bishop Tetsuei Somayama (South America), and Bishop Tatsuya Aoki (Canada). Also pictured from the Hongwanji-ha headquarters are Rev. Shōyū Ogino, Supervisor, Visitors Bureau; and Rev. Shōei Tamai, Vice Governor.

“Light of the Dharma handed down to us -- Let us share this joy with others” is the official slogan for the twenty-fifth Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition (Dento Hokoku Hoyo).

Special Rennyō Shonin Memorial Service at Fresno Betsuin



From left to right: Fresno Betsuin Youth Minister's Assistants Garrett Sano, Trey Sano, and Hannah Mukai; Orange County Buddhist Church Minister's Assistant Sensei Ellen Crane, and Rinban Kakei Nakagawa. Photo by Tom Crane.

**By Ellen Crane, Minister's Assistant
Orange County Buddhist Church**

On June 11, 2017, the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple held their annual Rennyō Shonin Memorial Service. Rennyō Shonin's importance to the Jodo Shinshu tradition is unparalleled and he has long been known as “The Restorer of the Hongwanji*” and “The Second Founder.”

Three years ago, Rinban Kakei Nakagawa of the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple instituted a special memorial service in June to honor his legacy. “Rennyō Shonin's importance cannot be overstated,” Nakagawa sensei said.

“Without him there would be no Hongwanji. In the Buddhist Churches of America, we do not often honor Rennyō Shonin in the same way we honor Shinran Shonin, but his significance is no less important.”

At the service, Orange County Buddhist Church Minister's Assistant Ellen Crane spoke on “Rennyō Shonin's Life, Legend, and Legacy.” Fresno's special service is an opportunity to bring focus to, and express our gratitude for, Rennyō Shonin's invaluable contributions to the Hongwanji and the Shin Buddhist tradition.

**Hongwanji: The Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha is one of the largest Buddhist organizations in Japan. It propagates the teachings of Shinran Shonin and is headquartered in Kyoto.*

The Shibata Obutsudan: Devotion, Resiliency, and Interconnection

**By Rev. Candice Shibata
Berkeley Buddhist Temple**

As I saw it for the first time, my eyes welled up with tears; a moment in Fukuoka, Japan that I will never forget. Karmic conditions allowed me to finally meet my temple family and put my hands together in *gassho* at our *obutsudan**, like so many others had before me at the Heart Mountain Relocation Camp. This emotional experience at the Shibata family temple, *Joonji*, occurred in 2015 following my *Kyoshi*** ordination.

I have been fortunate to encounter individuals who have close family ties to this surviving *obutsudan* and I am eternally grateful for their stories. Mr. Togo Nishiura of *Discover Nikkei* wrote a series of articles regarding *obutsudans* built in camps, which included the Shibata *obutsudan*. His relatives from the Nishiura Construction Company, along with three additional employees and other skilled helpers interned at Heart Mountain during World War II, beautifully crafted it.¹ Mrs. Patti Hirahara also gifted me copies of rare photos taken at the camp by her father and grandfather.²

The story behind the woodcarvings touched me profoundly and has connected me to my late grandfather, Rev. Teshin Shibata, very deeply. I learned that my grandfather had made a special request when this *obutsudan* was being constructed. He asked the craftsmen to carve the sights of camp on the outer



Rev. Candice Shibata at her family's temple, *Joonji*, in Fukuoka, Japan. (Photo by Bradley Menda.) Details of wood carvings of the Heart Mountain Internment Camp on the *obutsudan* doors. (Photos by Candice Shibata.)

panels so people would never forget what happened, stating that this image of camp was the reality of their lives in this *samsaric* world. However, on the inside of the panels, he requested that they carve beautiful lotus blossoms to represent awakening and the Pure Land.

I believe that the Heart Mountain Sangha members' devotion to the *Nembutsu* teachings is held within this *obutsudan*. Their resiliency is shown through the survival of this rare treasure, and the interconnectedness of all beings will remain as we all continue to put our



hands together in *gassho*.

The Heart Mountain War Relocation Center is located in northwest Wyoming. It was one of ten concentration camps used for the imprisonment of people of Japanese ancestry evicted from the West Coast Exclusion Zone during World War II by Executive Order 9066, issued by President Franklin Roosevelt on February 19, 1942.

**obutsudan: a Buddhist family altar or shrine*

***Kyoshi: the second level of ordination in the Shin Buddhist tradition, which signifies becoming a full-fledged minister.*

¹<http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2015/2/5/buddhist-altars-and-poetry-2/>. Accessed June 20, 2017.
² George and Frank C. Hirahara Collection (Washington State University Libraries), Manuscripts, Archives, and Special Collections.



2017 OBON & BAZAAR SCHEDULE

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Karma in Our DNA

By Rev. Kodo Umezu
BCA Bishop

When I go to Japan, it is easy to adjust to the time change. But when I return to the States, it takes longer to readjust to our time. I believe that it is because my biological clock is still on Japan time. My ancestors and their predecessors lived in that time zone for millions of years, and I think the karma in my DNA still remembers it. The fact that I hate snakes also supports my assumption. Long ago in Japan, I had many fearful encounters with snakes, and that still affects how I react to snakes today.

I know I am here as the result of a long history of life. From the beginningless beginning, we have been existing in this world. At one time, we were amoeba. Sometime in history, we were other beings, such as dogs or cats. Who knows? Shinran Shonin said, "For all sentient beings, without exception, have been our parents and brothers and sisters in the course of countless lives in many states of existence." (*Collected Works of Shinran, p.664*)

As for our karmic consciousness, we can say that now we are



Kieshiki at SFVHBT: On June 11, 2017, Rev. Kodo Umezu, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Bishop, officiated the Kieshiki (Affirmation) ceremony for thirteen members of the San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. In receiving their Buddhist names (*homyo*), the members affirmed their reverence for the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and vowed to live a life guided by the Nembutsu teaching.

what we have done, seen, thought, said, heard, and experienced in our past lives. We each do things based on our individual karmic consciousness. And we do things thinking that we are doing something good. However, my good may not be another's good. Everyone in the world is trying to do something good, yet we are not able to bring peace to the world. This is the state of human beings.

Out of deep sorrow over our

condition, Amida Tathagata, the embodiment of the sincere heart and mind of what is true and real, selected a vow to bring us true peace and happiness. I would like to quote Shinran Shonin's realization of our human condition:

However, since the beginningless past, the multitudes of beings have been transmigrating in the ocean of ignorance, sinking aimlessly in the cycle of all forms of existence and bound to the cycle of

all forms of pain; accordingly, they lack the entrusting that is pure. In the manner of their existence, they have no entrusting that is true and real. Hence, it is difficult for them to encounter the unexcelled virtues, difficult to realize the supreme, pure shinjin. In all small and foolish beings, at all times, thoughts of greed and desire incessantly defile any goodness of heart; thoughts of anger and hatred constantly consume the dharma-treasure. (CWS, p. 98)*

We are amidst much confusion and many disagreements due to our ignorance and foolishness. We, as Buddhists, need to humbly reflect on the words of the Buddha, masters, and teachers.

As we observe the Japanese Buddhist holiday called Obon,** let us once again be mindful of the vow that has been established for all of us and find a way to be kind and gentle to all beings. We are being thought of by the Buddha and by all those people who have returned to the Pure Land before us.

**shinjin: deep entrusting in Amida Buddha's Vow to save all beings from suffering*

***obon: an annual Japanese Buddhist event for commemorating one's ancestors*

Yorokobi Mamori Tamonari: Rejoicing in and Protecting Us



By Rimban Katsuya Kusunoki
Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple

Buddhism is the path to be freed from the suffering of birth and death. How does Buddhism show us this path to freedom?

When I lived with my parents at my family temple Kogenji in Nagasaki, Japan, I used to see and talk with them every day. But I have been living away from my parents for over 20 years. I came to the USA in 2010. After I came here, it became natural to live my daily life without seeing them. Since then, we had been corresponding constantly. One day, I realized that it is natural that I live everyday life without my parents.

In November 2015, my father and I went on a trip together in Ja-

pan. I really enjoyed spending time with him for the first time in a long while. Four months later, in March of 2016, my father died. When I heard this sad news, I returned to Japan right away to attend his funeral service. In my car on the way to the airport, I shouted "Otoosan!" (Father).

People offered their condolences. I told a lot of people about my father's death. In the days after my father's death I tried to act as if I were settled, but my mind was shaking and restless.

Last April I went to Nagasaki, Japan to attend the first-year memorial service of my father. My mother, younger brother, and nieces also went to Kyoto to entomb some of my father's ashes at the Otani Honbyo mausoleum.

Even now, my wife and I often talk about my father. I read books and Dharma talks which he wrote, as well as his article on his experience surviving the atomic bombing of Nagasaki that I translated a few years ago.¹ I put my father's picture by my *obutsudan*. Every morning, I chant a sutra there.

When I thought it over carefully afterwards, I began to see that I am spending a lot of time thinking about my father. I sometimes feel

that my father may be in my mind more than before he died.

The truth that my father has died will never change. I still feel sad and lonely. I still want to see and talk with him. At the same time, I feel that my father is with me somehow.

Our founder, Shinran Shonin, wrote in one of his hymns:

When we say "Namu-amida-butsu,"

The countless Buddhas throughout the ten quarters,

Surrounding us a hundredfold, a thousandfold,

Rejoice in and protect us.

(Collected Works of Shinran, p.355)

At my family temple, I used to chant this hymn at *Obon* service. I memorized it without knowing its meaning. I used to think that thousands of golden Buddha statues surrounded me. I didn't care much about this hymn. But now, when I think that my father surrounds and embraces me when I recite *Namo Amida Butsu*,* my heart is warmed. I feel that we are still living together in *Namo Amida Butsu*.

We call one who teaches us the Buddha Dharma a *Bodhisattva*.** We call one who guides us to the

truth of our life a *Bodhisattva*. For me, my father is now a *Bodhisattva* and gives me an opportunity to think about the meaning of human life.

As I think of my father, I put my hands together and recite *Namo Amida Butsu*. I mindfully listen to the Buddha Dharma and reflect upon my life.

July is the month of the *Obon* and *Hatsubon**** service. *Obon* is the occasion to think about our loved ones who have passed away. On this occasion, please reflect upon your life and your loved one's life through the Buddha Dharma.

¹"The 70th Anniversary of the A-Bomb," by Rev. Tatsuya Kusunoki, *Wheel of Dharma*, July and August 2015.

**Namo Amida Butsu: a command to take refuge in Amida Buddha; an expression recited in gratitude.*

***Bodhisattva: a person who is able to reach nirvana but delays doing so out of compassion in order to save suffering beings.*

****Hatsubon: the memorial held during the first obon season after a person's death. Obon is an annual Japanese Buddhist event for commemorating one's ancestors.*



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Vista Buddhist Temple

In 1921, two Japanese families settled in the northern area of San Diego County. By 1929 there were about twenty-five families. These farmers pooled their labor and financial resources and built a school house near Delpy's Corner in Vista, CA. In 1938, the Japanese residents purchased property on Cedar Road to be used for Buddhist activities and a Japanese Language school. After World War II, the property served as a hostel for the returning evacuee families.

Vista was originally a branch temple of the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. A Dharma School program was started with the support of lay leaders from the now Buddhist Temple of San Diego. Through the Buddhist Churches of America's 75th Anniversary New Horizons program, temple activities were enhanced with the regular presence of a minister from the Los Angeles Betsuin. In 1981, the Vista Buddhist Temple gained its independent status and in 1987 the Sangha built its own temple.

Today, along with the Vista Buddhist Temple and the Japanese American Cultural Center, the same school house from Delpy's Corner stands on the Cedar Road property. The temple continues to be a gathering place to listen to the Dharma, as was intended by its pioneers.



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Articles should be around 500 words, typed, double-spaced in Microsoft Word. The editors may ask for longer articles, or split in multiple parts at the editors' discretion.

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

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President's Message: Embracing BCA's Next Generation

By Ken Tanimoto, BCA President

As Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) President, I have the privilege of attending many BCA events that open my eyes to our Jodo Shinshu Buddhist legacy and future. One such event was the 10th annual TechnoBuddha Conference held April 28-30, 2017.

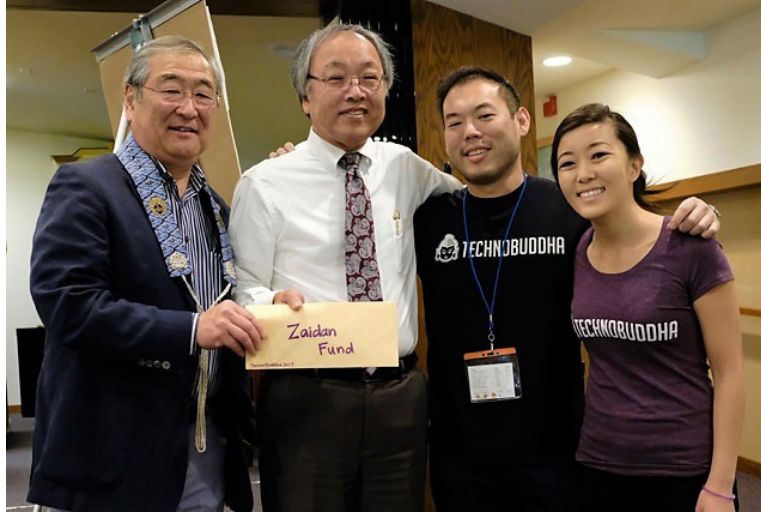
TechnoBuddha attendees are mostly from the millennial generation, people born from approximately 1981 through 1997. They are more educated than other generations and more diverse in ethnicity and culture. Compared to previous generations, this group will likely make many changes in society. For this reason, I feel millennials are vital to the future of our BCA temples and churches. Millennials now outnumber baby boomers as the largest living generation in the United States.

An example of millennial

generation religious leaders are our newest BCA ministers; Rev. Kory Quon, Rev. Candace Shibata, and Rev. Matt Hamasaki. Future millennial ministers will be Tadao Koyama and Takashi Miyaji.

This is the third TechnoBuddha Conference I have attended. I've seen the group's outlook change from focusing mostly on being a social gathering, to concern with social and environmental causes, personal growth, and most importantly, understanding the importance of the Dharma in their lives. This realization is best exemplified by the 2017 conference theme "The Gray Area: Wrongfully Right." The theme explored the bias of our human perspective regarding life's challenges and issues.

Like the baby boomers did, millennials are questioning social injustice and inequality here and globally. The two generations are very similar in terms of being socially active and socially conscious.



TechnoBuddha Conference attendees decided to support the Zaidan Fund, established in 1926 to ensure a strong and lasting foundation for the Buddhist Churches of America. Receiving the donation were (left to right) BCA President Ken Tanimoto and BCA Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezu; the gift was presented by TechnoBuddha Chairpersons Steve Tamekuni and Kim Koga.

However, according to a 2013 report by the *Philanthropy News Digest*, millennials passionately support causes rather than the institutions working to address them. This reluctance to join organizations is a concern and chal-

lenge for the BCA and its temples and churches. It means we will have a difficult time increasing our membership. Traditional thinking about growing our membership is going to have to change.

Being a baby boomer myself, I

once had reservations about being part of any organization. True, the times are different now than when I was younger, but the fact remains there will always be a need to live a balanced life, to have a sense of belonging to something that works toward the betterment of humankind, and to search for reasons why good and bad things happen. The Jodo Shinshu Buddhist teachings offer us kindness and compassion, the foundations of joyfulness in our lives. The temple gives us a place to hear and experience the Dharma, from childhood all the way up to adulthood.

I applaud the past and present TechnoBuddha members who have taken part in the past ten years of conferences. They seem to understand the value of Dharma in their lives and want to continue the camaraderie and friendships that developed from this event. Let us support them in their continuing journey as part of our *Nembutsu* family.

We Are Not Fools, Nor Are We (Yet) Bodhisattvas



By Rev. Jundo Gregory Gibbs
Pasadena Buddhist Temple

There is a pseudo-Buddhist teaching you may have heard someone try to pass off as Shinran's teaching. It runs something like this: "We are all fools and if you know that you're a fool, you are ahead of other fools but we will all always be fools so, ha, ha, ha." This is not Jodo Shinshu. It is not any sort of Buddhist teaching. This nonsense was pushed on Nishi Hongwanji thinkers by the Japanese government at the turn of the 19th century. If you follow this teaching you are following a version of anti-Buddhist propaganda imposed by a version of the Japanese government that

became extinct 149 years ago.

Shinran's teaching is: "There was a time for each of you when you knew nothing of Amida's Vow and did not say the name of Amida Buddha, but now, guided by the compassionate means of Shakyamuni and Amida, you have begun to hear the Vow. Formerly you were intoxicated with thoughts of greed, anger and foolishness, but since you have begun to hear the Buddha's Vow you have gradually awakened from the drunkenness of ignorance, rejected the three poisons, and have come to prefer the medicine of Amida Buddha at all times." *Collected Works of Shinran, vol. 1, p. 553*

This is one of the passages that our *Gomonshu* (head priest), His Eminence Kojun Ohtani, quoted on the occasion of his ascension to the position of Abbot of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha. The *Gomonshu* sees this passage, as do most scholars, as an admonition. In other words, the transformative influence of the Buddha's Fundamental Vow of Universal Liberation (*hongan*) has been flowing into our lives; why do we still engage in so many greedy, hate-filled, and foolish behaviors?

Shinran Shonin and his 17th generation grandson, His Eminence Kojun Ohtani, are *not* telling us that we are *bakata* (utter fools) and should just live with our irresolvable moral malaise. On the contrary, they are asking us why, despite hearing the calling voice of the Buddha, in forms like "Namo Amida Butsu," we are still acting on base urges. If we open ourselves to the Vow – if we say the Buddha's Name – the flavor of greedy, hate-filled, and stupid motivations becomes distasteful to us. We may still, occasionally, indulge in such poisonous behavior. Even so, little by little, the compassion of the Buddha settles into our hearts, minds, and bodies. More and more often, when those selfish urges arise, as they will, we simply ignore them and behave in a wholesome, decent way that is appropriate to the circumstances.

Yes, Shinran Shonin's teaching is that it gets better. Our behavior and the quality of our lives improve as we live in the light of the Vow, with the Name of the Buddha on our lips or pulsing in the backs of our minds and hearts. We are not yet bodhisattvas, and we have our foolish moments, but we are not fools.

"Jodo Shinshu for the Average Joe" Draws 300



The Southern District Conference, with the theme, "Jodo Shinshu for the Average Joe," was held on June 10. Almost 300 people enjoyed keynote speakers, Rev. Koyo Kubose (English) and Rev. Kazuaki Nakata (Japanese). In the afternoon, they laughed and cried while identifying everyday challenges of life through a series of videos produced by the members of host temple, San Fernando Valley Hongwanji. Southern District ministers gave commentaries in both languages from a Jodo Shinshu perspective following each video.



In the road rage video, Rev. Umezu made a cameo appearance and then gave a commentary on the situation.

2017 BCA National Board Meets at the Jodo Shinshu Center

Nearly sixty BCA National Board members and national staff convened for the biannual BCA National Board Meeting hosted at the Jodo Shinshu Center.

Lobby level, front row: Larry Oda, Rev. Kodo Umezu, Charlene Grinolds, Judy Kono, Rev. Marvin Harada, Ken Tanimoto. Second row: Gary Mukai, Mick Kubota. Third row: Karen Suyama, Lucy Hamai, Yumi Hatta, Rev. Kojo Kakiyama, Michael Endo. Fourth row: Rev. Ken Fujimoto, Tom Nishikawa, Kent Matsuda. Descending from stairs, front row: Lynne Ozawa, Nadine Kakimoto, Terri Omori, Arleen Miya, Nanette Nakamichi, Jeff Hiroo, Glenn Inanaga, Rev. Masanari Yamagishi, Perry Yoshida. Back row: Richard Uyematsu, Steven Terusaki, Amy Doi. Balcony, left to right: Richard Stambul, Ron Kawahata, Rev. Kurt Rye, Gordon Nitta, Rev. Kakei Nakagawa, Candy Hayashi, Michael Tanaka, Harry Bergland, Celeste Sterrett, Joyce Iwasaki, Hideaki Mizuno, Kevin Arakaki, Larry Hirahara, Erick Ishii, Roger Itaya, Julie Yamasaki, Alice Yamasaki, David Chin, Nancy Okada, Isabelle Bernard, Rev. Ron Miyamura, Richard Endo, Ron Hiraga, Glenn Kitasoe, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Rev. Dean Koyama, Carl Yanari, Koichi Sayano. Photo by Michael Endo



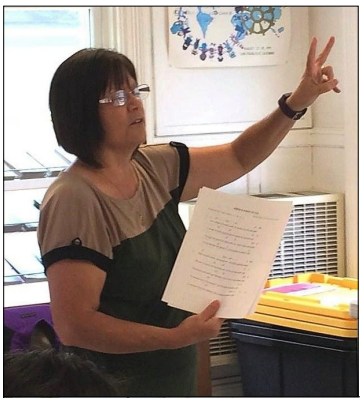


BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

**“Hands Together in Gassho”
Buddhist Gathas with a Hawaiian Flair**

by Edythe Vassall, Berkeley Buddhist Temple

On June 24, 2017, the Berkeley Buddhist Temple welcomed BJ Soriano of the Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin in Hilo, Hawaii. BJ shared her musical talents (and her great sense of humor!) with 18 people from BCA temples in Palo Alto, San Francisco, and Berkeley. The workshop, “Buddhist Gathas with BJ Soriano,” was a refresher class for ukulele and guitar with a special focus on accompanying Buddhist songs. There were several singers and even a banjo player in attendance. You can watch a short video of BJ leading the ukulele players on one of her gathas, “Amida’s Guide to Life” on the Berkeley Buddhist Temple’s Facebook page at the following link: www.facebook.com/BerkeleyBuddhistTemple



The workshop materials included two books: *Gathas for Ukulele & Guitar* (chord book with assorted songs by various songwriters) and *Hands Together in Gassho* (gathas by BJ Soriano). Both are available for free in both written and MP3 audio files on the Hawaii Betsuin website: www.hawaiibetsuin.org. You can download and make copies, but no selling of copies is allowed. Or, you can email BJ at bj.soriano@hilobetsuin.org for copies and files.

Mahalo to BJ Soriano for sharing her time and wonderful music!

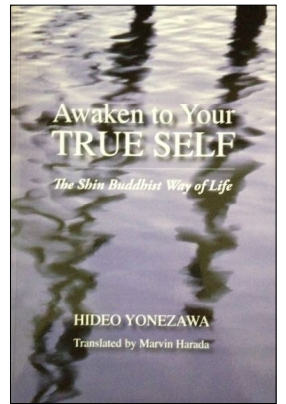


(Upper:) BJ Soriano of the Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin leading the lively Buddhist gatha workshop. (Lower:) The musical group that enjoyed the program. Photos by Jon Kawamoto (upper) and Edythe Vassall.

BCA Bookstore News: Gifts for All Seasons

By Gayle Noguchi

Now available: *Awaken to Your True Self: The Shin Buddhist Way of Life* by Hideo Yonezawa, translated by Marvin Harada. Paperback, \$10.00.



Published previously in Japanese as *Shin to wa nanika (What is Faith?)*, *Awaken to Your True Self* is the latest release from the Orange County Buddhist Church Buddhist Education Center. Inspired by the unique way that Dr. Yonezawa speaks about Shin Buddhism, Rev. Harada chose to translate *Awaken to Your True Self* so that it may touch the lives of westerners as well.

The book is short (less than 150 pages and only six chapters) and yet each page is dense with meaning. The chapters were originally talks given by Dr. Yonezawa, so it feels as if he is speaking directly to you, encouraging you to look closely at daily life and see the “Living Dharma” that is present and active in all of our lives right here, right now. Dr. Yonezawa discusses in simple, down-to-earth language the oftentimes difficult-to-understand concepts like the Pure Land, Dharmakaya, and *shinjin*, and he offers a way of understanding them that everyone can easily relate to. Most interestingly, Dr. Yonezawa shares his understanding of Amida Buddha as the “true self.” Stressing the importance of meeting with the “living Nembutsu,” Dr. Yonezawa concludes by sharing specific examples of *Myokonin*, ordinary people whose *shinjin* is expressed in their everyday lives. Destined to become a contemporary classic, you will want to keep *Awaken to Your True Self* accessible on your bookshelf and re-read it time and time again.

To purchase, go to buddhistchurchesofamerica.org and click on the BCA Bookstore link or contact gnoguchi@bcabq.org or 510-809-1435. The BCA Bookstore is located in the Jodo Shinshu Center at 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704. Open Wednesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.



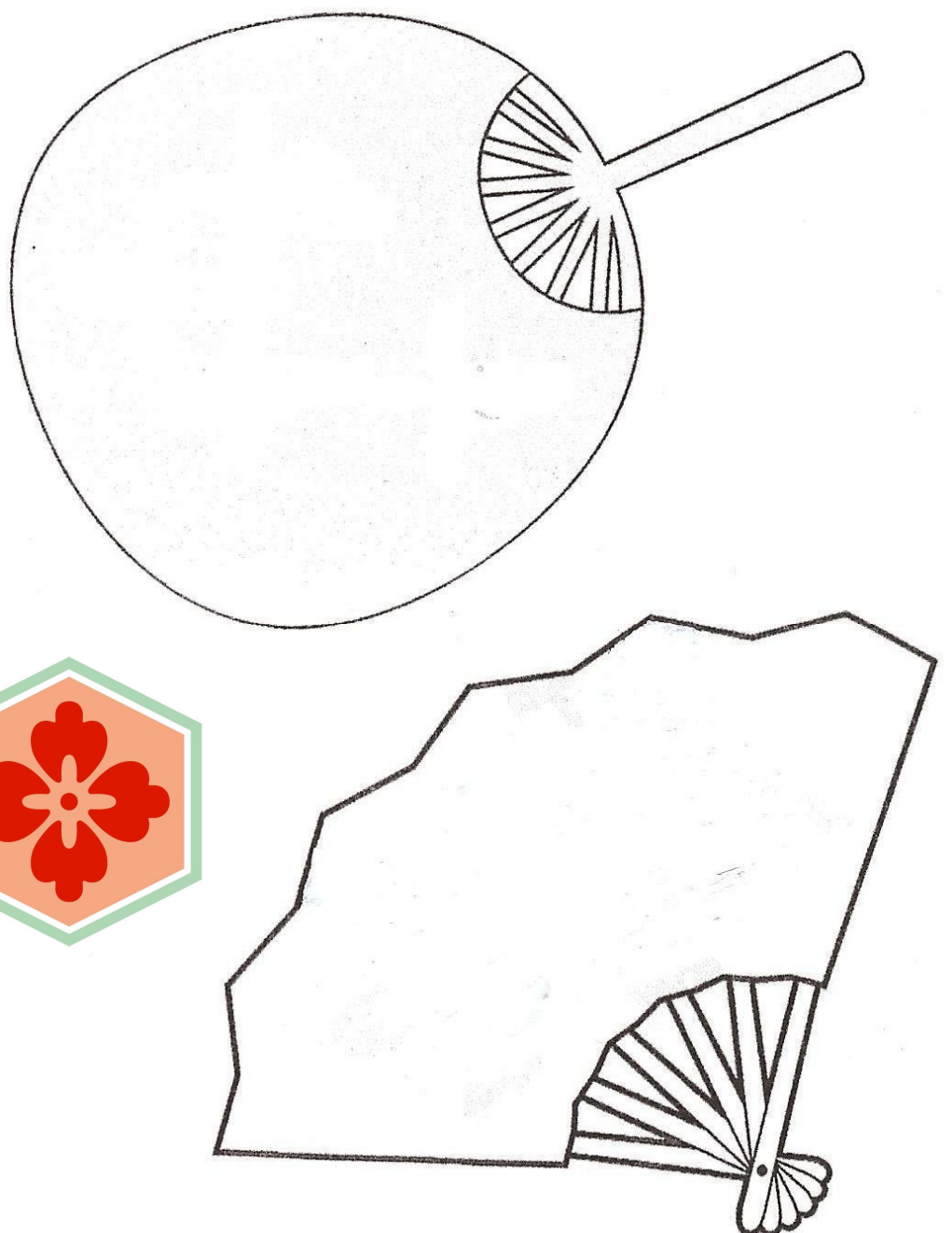
Gear up for **Bon Dancing** at the BCA Bookstore! Shop for fans, *kachi kachi* and more!

Dharma Fun: A fun activity for kids of all ages

July 15: Obon – Gathering of Joy – Kangi-e

Obon is a day to remember those who have gone before us with gratitude for enabling us to exist and to encounter the Dharma. For Shin Buddhists, outdoor folk dancing (bon odori) is done in memory of the deceased and not to welcome back the spirits of the departed or to generate merit for them. Thus, it is also called Gathering of Joy (Kangi-e) in grateful remembrance of all those who have influenced our lives. (Shin Buddhist Service Book, p. 179. Published by Buddhist Education Center, 2013.)

Color your own fan.





BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

In the June 2017 issue of Wheel of Dharma, Rev. Kodo Umezu mentioned the skillful explanation of why we chant given at the tenth TechnoBuddha Conference opening service by Tara Umemoto. Following are Tara's remarks.

OUR JODO SHINSHU TRADITIONS

Why Do We Chant?

By Tara Umemoto, Minister's Assistant, Berkeley Buddhist Temple

When I first started going to church I didn't chant at service, because I didn't know what the words meant. I didn't want to chant if I didn't know the meaning of what I said. Also, no one chanted at the temple I went to, so I didn't want to stand out. How many of you have similar feelings about chanting?

I wanted to take a few moments to talk about why we chant. There are three aspects to chanting:

1. Meditative aspect: to be completely or fully focused on chanting, which allows us to also be focused on that moment. If you have meditated before, it would be similar to that but your focus is instead on chanting. We are able to experience this aspect even when we do not understand the words.
2. Ritual aspect: that connection between us chanting the sutras and those who chanted the same sutras before us. It is that idea that we are all connected, we are chanting this sutra and so did people centuries ago.
3. Learning aspect: us listening to the Dharma. When we chant we are chanting teachings of the Dharma.



Photo by Tim Shimizu

Yesterday we chanted *Shoshinge*, which is the teaching of Shinran Shonin, the founder of the Jodo Shinshu sect of Buddhism. Today we are going to chant *Juseige*, the *Three Sacred Vows*, from the *Larger Sutra*. In the *Three Sacred Vows*, Dharmakara expresses his intent to become a Buddha and create a place, a Pure Land, where all suffering beings can be saved.

So, this is the learning aspect in that, by listening to the words, we are able to begin to understand the meaning of what we are chanting and learn the teachings.

Sources:

1. *Shin Buddhist Service Book* (Anaheim: Buddhist Education Center, 2013), pp. 28, 32, 40-41.
2. *Shinshu Seiten, Jodo Shin Buddhist Teaching* (Denver: Tri-States Buddhist Temples, 1978). <https://sites.google.com/site/buddhiststudycenter/download/juseige>

2017 BCA Educational Events

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

July 3-9 ~ BCA Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) Summer Retreat. Hosted by the Buddhist Church of Sacramento (Sacramento Betsuin), for students ages 15-18.

July 20-23 ~ Dharma Training for School Teachers. A special program open to public school teachers. Presented by Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) and Buddhist Churches of America (BCA). Visit buddhistchurchesofamerica.org for details.

July 22-30 ~ 2017 National Speaking Tour: Shin Buddhism in the Land of Shakyamuni. Rev. Sonam Wangdi Bhutia, Head Priest, Kathmandu-Hongwanji, Nepal, will speak in Hawaii, Chicago, and New York. Presented by CBE and Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Buddhist Study Center. In association with Midwest Buddhist Temple, New York Buddhist Church, and American Buddhist Study Center.

August 17-19 ~ Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course August Workshop. Online course attendees will have a chance to interact in person with instructors.

August 18-20 ~ Summer Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) Seminar. Begins Friday at 2 pm. Held in conjunction with Summer Pacific Seminar (see below).

August 18-20 ~ Summer Pacific Seminar. Begins Friday at 7 pm with a public book talk and signing at the BCA Bookstore by keynote speaker, Rev. John Paraskevopoulos, author of *Call of the Infinite*. Additional speakers: Thais Campos (Brazil), David Quirke-Thornton (UK), Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto (IBS), Rev. Kodo Umezu (BCA), and Rev. Ai Hironaka (Hawaii). Co-sponsored by IBS & CBE. (See flyer on this page.)

August 26 ~ "A Day with Rev. Dr. Ken Tanaka." 9 am - 5 pm. Presentation and signing of his new books, and panel discussion. Sponsored by the CBE Every Day Buddhism Committee. (See flyer on this page.)

September 23 ~ Fifth Annual Women in Buddhism Conference, "Buddhist Paths: Women's Choices," 9:30 am - 3:30 pm, at Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple, 1427 S. Main St., Seattle, WA. Speakers: Rev. Carol Himaka, Rev. Candice Shibata, and Professor Kyoko Tokuno. For more information, see ad on this page, call (206) 329-0800, visit seattlebetsuin.org or email office@seattlebetsuin.com. (See flyer on this page.)

September 26-29 ~ West and East Hong(w)anji Overseas Propagation Exchange (WEHOPE) and Ministers' Continuing Education (MCE) Seminar. Nishi and Higashi ministers will meet, study, and dialogue together.

September 30 ~ Fall Japanese Seminar. Dharma talks in Japanese will be given by ministers participating in the WEHOPE gathering.

October 12-14 ~ Fall Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) Seminar.

December 7-9 ~ Winter Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) Seminar.

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

The Institute of Buddhist Studies & BCA Center for Buddhist Education present



SUMMER PACIFIC SEMINAR - 21ST CENTURY



**SHIN BUDDHISM:
Current Challenges and Future Prospects**



Keynote Speaker:

Rev. John Paraskevopoulos

Author, *Call of the Infinite: The Way of Shin Buddhism* and other works

August 18-20, 2017

Jodo Shinshu Center 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA

Other Presenters:

Thais Campos, a Shin practitioner who has a bachelor's degree in philosophy and came to Shin Buddhism by way of the Honpa Hongwanji Temple of Brasilia, Brazil.

David Quirke-Thornton, a former Franciscan Friar and a member of the Shin Buddhist Fellowship United Kingdom: Chomon House.

Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Provost of the Institute of Buddhist Studies and Director of the Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies Program.

Dharma Talks by:

Rev. Kodo Umezu Bishop, Buddhist Churches of America

Rev. Ai Hironaka Lahaina Hongwanji Mission

Moderators:

Rev. Marvin Harada and **Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara** CBE Co-Directors

For program details and registration information, visit: www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org and Click on CBE or Email: cbe@bcahq.org
Registration ends on July 18, 2017

BCA Center for Buddhist Education

Every Day Buddhism presents...

"A Day With Rev. Dr. Ken Tanaka"

Saturday, August 26, 2017
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
(For early arrivals, a casual discussion with Rev. Dr. Ken Tanaka on Friday, August 25, 7:00 pm-9:00 pm)



Presentation of his new books:
Jewels: Introduction to Buddhism for American Youths, Scouts and the Young at Heart (with humor)

Buddhism On Air
(Books available at the BCA Book Store)

Panel Discussion: "Engaged Buddhism for Our Personal and Social Lives"

BCA Member Registration: \$35 before July 15th
Non-BCA Member Registration: \$45 before July 15th
BCA/Non-BCA Member Registration: \$55 after July 15th
Final Registration Date: August 15th

Register online:
www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org

Jodo Shinshu Center / 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704
For more information call: (510) 809-1460 Email: cbe@bcahq.org

COMING TO SEATTLE IN SEPTEMBER

Join us for
Seattle Betsuin's 5th Women in Buddhism Conference
"Buddhist Paths: Women's Choices"
a day to gain understanding of the connection between Buddhism and women's everyday lives

Saturday, September 23, 2017
Seattle Buddhist Church
9:30 am - 3:30 pm



Rev. Carol Himaka
Resident Minister
Southern Alameda County
Buddhist Church



Kyoko Tokuno, Ph.D.
University of Washington senior lecturer in
Comparative Religion at the Jackson School
of International Studies



Rev. Candice Shibata
Minister
Berkeley Buddhist Temple

Transformation Through Love, Loss, and The Buddha-Dharma

The 35th Vow of Dharmakara/Amida Buddha and its meaning

Salvation by Proxy: Buddhist Nun's Sutra Burial at Mt. Kōya in Heian Japan today

Sponsored by Seattle Buddhist Church Nishi Hongwanji-ha and Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Women's Association
(206) 329-0800 1427 S Main St, Seattle, WA 98199 www.SeattleBetsuin.org office@SeattleBetsuin.org



Join the Institute of Buddhist Studies,
BCA Center for Buddhist Education, and
BCA Bookstore for this special evening!



Call of the Infinite

A BOOK TALK

WITH SHIN PRIEST/AUTHOR:

JOHN PARASKEVOPOULOS

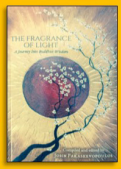
Friday, August 18, 2017

7 pm - 8:30 pm

Jodo Shinshu Center

2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC



John Paraskevoopoulos is an ordained Shin Buddhist priest and author of *Call of the Infinite: The Way of Shin Buddhism, The Fragrance of Light, and The Unhindered Path*. He is editor of the online *Journal of Shin Buddhism (Muryoko)*. All titles are available at the BCA Bookstore: Visit BCA website, below, and click on the BCA Bookstore or (510)-809-1435.

PRESENTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH SUMMER PACIFIC SEMINAR - 21ST CENTURY

www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org

— Call for Papers — Mass Meditation: Practices and Discourses in Contemporary Global Buddhisms

The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) is pleased to announce a call for papers for an upcoming conference on the topic of “Mass Meditation: Practices and Discourses in Contemporary Global Buddhisms,” to take place on Friday, October 6, 2017 at the Jodo Shinshu Center, located at 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA. The symposium’s keynote speaker is Dr. Erik Braun, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia and author of *The Birth of Insight* (co-winner of the 2014 Toshihide Numata Book Award in Buddhism).

This conference will focus on the phenomenon of mass meditation (e.g., lay meditation practices, mindfulness, secularization) in contemporary global Buddhism. Of particular focus will be the means by which Buddhist meditation is understood and promoted in various contexts. We welcome submissions that consider how meditation has gained an ambivalent relationship to Buddhism—sometimes being promoted as a “spiritual technology” not connected to any particular tradition, sometimes as the *condition sine qua non* for Buddhist identity and the only practice recommended by the Buddha. Through the presentations given, we hope to reflect not only on the ways that meditation has been constructed through the Buddhist encounter with modernity, but how it has altered modernity and modern peoples through its global impact.

Topics include but are not limited to: the origins and popularization of lay meditation practices in Burma, Thailand and Sri Lanka; the Vipassanā (Insight) and Mindfulness movements in North America, Europe, and Asia; meditation practice and the construction of Buddhist identity or subjectivity; the “mystification” of meditation in promotional literature; the use of scientific language to justify and promote meditation both within and beyond Buddhist contexts.

Call for papers: Graduate students at any stage of their program are encouraged to submit paper proposals. Please send abstracts of no more than 500 words to Thomas Calobrisi (tcabrisi@ses.gtu.edu). The deadline for submission is July 15, 2017. Applicants will be notified about their submission by August 15, 2017. Limited travel funds may be available; low-cost housing is available on site at the Jodo Shinshu Center.

More Ways to Donate Online!

Visit: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org

Click on “Donate” tab at the top right.
Follow easy instructions to make a gift to the BCA Dana Offering, BCA Social Welfare Fund, Thousand x Thousand Fund, and more. Thank you for your support!

Email: donate@bcahq.org
Phone: (415) 776-5600 x311

“Be the Refuge”: Reflections on Karma & Gratitude, Suffering & Spiritual Friendship

(Part 1 of 3)

**Commencement Address
to the Graduating
Class of 2017
Institute of Buddhist
Studies, Berkeley, CA
May 19, 2017**

**By Chenxing Han, MA
(Class of 2014)**

Good morning graduating students; members of the faculty, staff, and board of trustees; families and friends and other esteemed guests who have joined us today to celebrate this auspicious occasion. It is an honor—and, I admit, somewhat surreal—to be standing here three years after accepting my master’s diploma on this very stage. When I received Reverend Matsumoto’s invitation to be this year’s commencement speaker, I was surprised and humbled, as I can easily think of countless people who are far more qualified and credentialed to give this speech, many of whom are currently sitting in this room.

Tasked with delivering a message of insight and hope, reality and relevance, I did what any self-respecting scholar would do... I Googled “how to give a commencement speech.” I’ll spare you the details of how unhelpful this method was (it was about as effective as writing a term paper using only Wikipedia). Clearly, this occasion is a little different than speaking to thousands of 22-year-olds at Harvard. And, I am sorry to report, I am not J.K. Rowling.

One reason my digital inquiry came up short is that the Institute of Buddhist Studies is truly one-of-a-kind: it was groundbreaking in 1949 when it began educating Buddhist leaders, and remains pioneering 68 years later. This

is not surprising, given our school’s roots in the Japanese American Jodo Shinshu community, a group whose contributions from the late 1800s, to WWII, to the civil rights era, to the present day, are integral to the fabric of American Buddhism. I hope today’s graduating students take a moment to celebrate their connection to this historically significant institution, even as we celebrate their achievements and look forward to

immigrated to the US at the age of... Those of you who have had to submit CPE [Continuing Professional Education] applications know how difficult it is to concisely give “a reasonably full account of your life.” But Prof. Gu was not, I think, looking for my life story. I’ve had a year and a half to ponder her question. If she asked me again today, I wouldn’t have a direct answer, but I might tell her this story from my year of clinical

to talk about religion!” I quickly assured her that we didn’t need to talk about religion, *sui bian liao liao tian ye ke yi*, we can just shoot the breeze. So began the first of many visits over several weeks until she was discharged from the hospital. The chaplains in the audience today won’t be surprised to hear that she did eventually bring up spirituality in our conversations, and that her dignity and compassion in the midst of vulnerability and pain left a strong impression on me.

Half a year later, another colleague at the Berkeley campus of Alta Bates mentioned that she had just met a patient who remembered meeting with a Chinese-speaking chaplain. I went straight from our CPE group didactic to the hospital—and there was Mrs. J. Her breathing was labored, but she asked how I was and urged me not to go home too late. That weekend, I had a particularly intense 24-hour on-call shift, my pager buzzing nonstop as I responded to a dozen consecutive calls at three different campuses. One was for an impending death at the Berkeley hospital. As you can probably guess, it turned out to be none other than Mrs. J.

What were the causes and conditions that made it possible for me to be there the day she drew her last breath? Some would say past life affinity, others would say God’s will, still others would say mere coincidence. But I think Mrs. J’s last words say it beautifully: *Xiexie*. Thank you.

One answer to Prof. Gu’s question is: I don’t know. But I am grateful.

To be continued in the August issue. Complete text is also online at www.shin-ibs.edu



Chenxing Han (center) with Ven. Tian Hua, Shi (left) and Ven. Charlene Chang (right) in the Dharma Drum Institute of Liberal Arts University and IBS Exchange Program.

their future contributions.

*
As some of you know, after earning my master’s, I completed a yearlong hospital chaplaincy residency here in the East Bay before spending a semester at Dharma Drum, a Buddhist institute in Taiwan. One of my favorite professors there asked me one day in her spiritual education class: have you ever thought about the *yin yuan*, all of the karmic causes and conditions, that make it possible for you to be here with us in this moment? I could ask the same question of all of you: what are the remarkable circumstances that enabled you to be here in *this* moment? Back on that autumn day at Dharma Drum, my first impulse was to start out with: well, first I was born in Shanghai, and then I

pastoral education at the hospital:

I had been assigned to the oncology unit at Alta Bates Summit in Oakland. However, as the only member of the spiritual care team who spoke Mandarin, I sometimes got referrals to other parts of the hospital. In the fall, one of my colleagues asked me to visit a Taiwanese American woman who was on the rehab unit recovering from surgery after an unexpected cancer diagnosis. Her daughter had to work during the day, and wondered if someone could check in on her non-religious, limited English proficiency mom, whom I’ll call Mrs. J. So that autumn afternoon, I explained my role in the best colloquial Chinese I could muster, to which Mrs. J responded, “I don’t want



Ministers Continuing Education (MCE): Rev. David Matsumoto was a presenter at the BCA Center for Buddhist Education’s MCE seminar on May 30-June 1.



Rev. Masato Yanagida (left), Ryukoku University and IBS Exchange Program student, works with Brian Lee, program assistant, English Studies Institute/Ryukoku University Berkeley Center.



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今月の法話

「聴聞の心得」のご紹介

浄土真宗センター 桑原浄信



Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara

皆さんは浄土真宗と聞いて何を思いうかべますか？「お念仏」「信心」「お浄土」「阿弥陀様」「親鸞聖人」「本願寺」「下り藤」「ダルマスクール」「バザー」等々、色々あるかと思いますがこれら以外に浄土真宗を言い表すものとして「聞法」や「聴聞」を挙げる事ができるかと思われま。浄土真宗を開いて下さいます親鸞聖人（1173-1263）は「聞即信」と仰り、浄土真宗で最も大事とされる信心が「聞く」ということを深く結びついていることを指摘していらっしやいます。また15世紀に浄土真宗を全国規模の教団へと発展させて下さいました蓮如上人（1415-1499）は「仏法は聴聞に極まり」と仰っていらっしやいます。

「聞法」、「聴聞」共に「きく」ということでありますが、これは阿弥陀という仏様のご本願を疑いなく、計らいなく聞かせていただくこととあります。ご本願とは自らの怒りや欲や浅はかさによって自分自身を苦しめ、また周囲にも大なり小なり迷惑をかけるような生き方をしているこの私の本當の姿に気づき、その上でどう生きていくべきかを仏法に耳を傾けながら一生懸命に生きてくれよとの仏様の願いであります。またこの命終わった後にはそのような私を二度と怒りや欲や浅はかさで苦しむ悩むことのない存在である仏と成らしめ、その上で残された方々をもまた仏法で心豊かに生きていけるよ

う導く存在へと仕上げんとする願いでもありません。

仏様から私たち一人一人に掛けられたこのよくな願いを聞かせていただくのが浄土真宗であります。浄土真宗のご法話とは表現の差異はあれ、基本的にはこの仏様のご本願を説くものであります。つまりご法話から私たちが何を聞き受けるべきかと言えは仏様の願いということになります。

では私たちはただ座ってお坊さんがご本願について話されるのを聞いておけばいいのかというところではありません。ここまでは「何を聞かうか」ということに触れてきましたが、それと同じくらい大事なことでして「どう聞かうか」ということがあります。冒頭で「ご本願を疑いなく、計らいなく聞かせていただく」と述べましたが、これはどう聞かうかということであり、この他にも私たちがどう聞かうかということでも下記のような言葉があります。

この度のこのご縁は初事と思うべし
この度のこのご縁は我一人の為と思うべし
この度のこのご縁は今生最後と思うべし

これは「聴聞の心得」と申しまして私たちがどう聞くべきかを示したもので、日本のお寺ではご法話が始まる前にお参りに来られている方々と一緒に読み上げることがあります。それぞれ「行に」「ご縁」という言葉が出てまいります。これはこれから聞かせていただくご法話のこととあります。

第一句目ではこれから聞かせていただくご法話を「初事と思うべし」とされています。お寺に長年お参りに来ていらっしやる方の中には同じお話を何度か耳にされることもあるかもしれません。そうした時に、「なんだ、これはもう以前に聞いたことのある話じゃないか」となるあまり真剣に聞き入らないかもしれませぬ。しかし考えてみますと、以前にそのお話を聞いた時の自分の置かれていた状況や心の状態は決して同じということはないはず。言い換えると今のこの私の心の状態でこの話を聞くのは初めてということとあります。たとえ以前に聞いたことがあるお話でもそのように考え、初め

て聞くお話として真剣に聞けば以前には気づかなかったことに気づかせていただけるかもしれませぬし、以前よりも味わいが深まることもあるかもしれませぬ。

第二句目では「我一人の為と思うべし」とされています。浄土真宗のご法話では阿弥陀如来様の光によって照らし出された、怒りや欲や浅はかさ振り回されている私たちの生き様を赤裸々に知らせてくださることがあります。そのようなお話を聞いて、「そうそう、まさにそれはくさんのことだわ」と自分のことを棚に上げて他の人のことを述べたものとして聞いてはいけません。仏様のお言葉はこの私が自分自身の本當の姿に気づけるようにと説いて下さっているもので、決して他の誰かのことを言い表しているのではありません。目をそむけたくなるような自分の悪いところや、気づけていなかったところに本當に気づかせていただくところで生き方が変えられていくのではないのでしょうか。

逆に言えばご法話や仏様のお言葉を自分以外の人のこととして聞いているうちは、耳でお話を聞いているのかもしれないがその言葉はこの私の心には届いていないということとあります。最後の第三句目では「今生最後と思うべし」とあります。私たちは無常の世に生きております。浄土真宗のお葬式に参列されたことのある方は耳にされたこともあるかと思いますが、蓮如上人の書かれたお手紙である『御文章』の中に収められている「白骨章」というお手紙では、「朝に元氣はつらつとしていても、夕方には亡くなっているかもしれない」と無常の世の厳しさについて述べていらっしやいます。日曜にお寺参りをし、キッチンのお手伝いや色々な用事で本堂でお話を聞くことができないこともあるかもしれませぬ。しかしそれによってもしかすると人生最後の聞法の機会を逃しているかもしれない。また本堂でご法話を聞いていても眠気に襲われてしまい眠りにおちることもあるかもしれません。しかし第三句目にあるようにこれが人生最後のご法話と心得るところに自ずと真剣に聞き入るようになるのではないのでしょうか。ある開教使の先生が仏法の聞き方として、「自分の親や最愛の人の最後の言葉をあなたはどのように聞きますか。」と仰っていらっしやっ

たのが思い出されます。繰り返しになりますが浄土真宗のご法話はこの私にかけられている仏様の願いを聞かせていただくわけですが、私たちがそれをどう聞かか大きく変わってまいります。「聴聞の心得」に述べられているようなご法話の聞き方ができるように共につとめてまいります。

I-MOP 受講生インタビュー

開教使を目指す日本人僧侶対象としたプログラム、I-MOP（国際伝道者養成講座）が7月7日に終了を迎える。今年、富山県出身の山岸昌也師が受講し、各寺院を訪れ実際の開教、伝道の現場から多くを学んだ。以下は山岸師の紹介。



Rev. Masanari Yamagishi

名前 山岸 昌也
やまぎし まさなり
生年月日 1979年2月14日
出身地 富山県高岡市
所属寺院 富山県高岡市 五位組 照照寺（みんしょうじ）
開教使志望の動機

私は十八歳で得度しましたが、大学を卒業してから一般の会社員として働いていました。しかし、八年前に父が往生し、六年間には東日

本大震災と福島第一原発事故が起こりたくさんの人々が被災しました。さらに、その翌年に母が往生し、たった三年の間に多くの命が往生したのに、私は僧侶として何もできない自分を、とても恥ずかしく思いました。

それから私は真宗のみ教えを一から勉強し直す決意をしました。被災された福島の人々とボランティアを通じて交流をするなかで、真宗移民の歴史にとっても関心を持つようになりました。その真宗移民のなかで、みなさんのご先祖のお話を学び、日本から遠く海外へ渡った真宗のみ教えを今でも大切に守っておられることととても感動しました。

私は開教使として、移民の子孫であるみなさんと共に真宗のみ教えを学び、念仏の道を歩んでまいりたいと思います。

アメリカのご門徒さんたちに一言
今、若い世代のなかでは宗教離れが進んでおり、真宗のみ教えに関心が薄らいでいきつつあると聞きました。私はいくら生活が便利になっても、心の悩みやさみしさは消えないと思えます。このような時代だからこそ、真宗のみ教え、親鸞聖人が歩まれた念仏の道を大切に守り続ける必要があります。これは私一人の力ではできません。みなさんと御同朋として一緒に守り続けて行きたいと思えます。また、研修期間は大変お世話になり、ありがとうございました。この場をお借りしましてお礼申し上げます。またみなさんとお会いできることを楽しみにしております。

好きな食べ物 お刺身、納豆
好きな音楽 ジャズ、クラシック
趣味 シュノーケリング
親鸞聖人の好きな言葉 如来大悲の恩徳は身を粉にしても報ずべし 師主知識の恩徳もほねをくだきても謝すべし

法輪

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二〇一七年度教化標語
「まことの人生を歩もう」

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開教使の連続研修会



有志の開教使による連続研修会(MCE)が5月下旬に浄土真宗センターで行われ、約15名が参加した。今回は米国におけるイスラム教や政教分離の原則がトピック。

の共通点などを取り上げた本、「Common Ground between Islam and Buddhism」についてのディスカッションに加え、イスラミックネットワークビューローのジャン・アメリナさんによる「アメリカのムスリムとその信仰」の講義を聴き、イスラム教への理解を深めた。政教分離に関してはIBSの松本ティビッド開教使が講義し、チャーチとステイトのセパレーションについて歴史上の背景や最近の判例、論文などの資料を照らし合わせ、参加者それぞれが考えや経験をシェアした。参加者は「今回のトピックはトランプ政権下において、私たちも影響を受けていることなので、お寺でも門徒さんたちと話し合いたいと思います。」と有意義な学びの場となった。

南部教区大会の開催

6月10日(土)にロサンゼルス近郊のオネツセイレストランにおいて、南部教区大会が開催された。サンフェルナンデバレー仏教会が主催し、テーマは「Jodo



Southern District Conference at Los Angeles

Shinshu for the Average Joe (普通の人のための浄土真宗)」。南部教区の僧侶と門信徒300名が集った。基調講演はロサンゼルス別院の中田和朗開教使(日本語)と久保瀬コーヨー師(英語)。日本語には約50名の聞法者が集った。午後からは、サンフェルナンデバレーを短い再現ドラマ仕立てに製作したものを視聴。南部教区の各開教使に加え梅津総長が浄土真宗の教えからの味わいやトラブルの解決法をコメントした。参加者は「ドラマは手作り感があってとてもよかったです。門徒さんたちは名演技でした。梅津総長がドラマにサプライズで出演されていたのが最高でした。」とアットホームな念仏者の集いを楽しんだ。

「ブラジル仏教」の上映会

南米開教区の菅尾健太郎開教使によるドキュメンタリー映画「Tres Joias. ブラジル仏教」の上映会が各地で行われた。6月3日(土)の洗心仏教会を皮切りに、オレンジ郡、フレスコ、浄土真宗センター、サンマテオ、サンフランシスコ、タコマ、シアトル、オレゴン



"Three Jewels" screening at Seattle Betsuin

の各仏教会を周り、試写会を開催、多くの参加者を集めた。「この作品は3部作なのですが、今は1部だけが完成しています。2部と3部は編集段階で、今年末に完成する予定なのですが、試写会とときにいただいた感想や意見を編集に反映することができると、とても意義深いご縁となりました。開教使の先生方にもお世話になり、大変ありがとうございました。師は米国での上映後、龍谷大学や仏教伝道協会での試写会のため日本へ発った。映画の完成後、再度米国を訪れ上映会をする予定にしている。

総長メッセージ

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

五月に京都で会議があり日本に行ってきましたが、こちらから日本に行く時にはあまり時差に悩まされることはないのですが、こちらに帰って来てからは何日も時差に苦しみます。そう考えると、自分の体内時計は今でももしかしたら日本時間ではないかと思ってしまう。なにしろ、先祖は何万年、何十万年、何百万年と同じところで生活してきているので、遺伝子の中に記憶されているのではないかと思います。また、私は蛇が大嫌いです。それも、自分の前世に蛇にいじめられたことが影響しているのではないかと思います。

私たちの命は生まれかわり、死に変わり、いろいろな形をとって今日まで来たのは間違いないことです。アメリカみたいな時もあったでしょうし、犬や猫のような存在でもあったかも知れません。親鸞聖人は、一切の有情はみなもて世々生々の父母兄弟なり、とおっしゃっておられます。すべての生き物に対しても自分の命とのつながりを感じていくべきです。

私たちの生命の体はどのように続いていますか、心というか、私たちの思いというの、過去からの積み重ねの中今の自分の思いがあるということも忘れてはなりません。それを宿業とも言います。それぞれが皆、違う思いや考えを持っているのです。それで、争いやもめごとがおきたりします。本当に悲しいことであると、親鸞聖人はおっしゃってられます。聖人は、この世のすべての人たちは、遠い昔から今日の今まで、穢(よご)れに染(し)みて清浄(きれいな)心なく、いつわりのみで真実(まこと)の心がない、と人間の歴史的事実をはっきりとおっしゃっておられます。その身を悲しむことで、仏さまのおこころを知らしていただくことができるでしょう。

今まさに、世界各地で争いが絶えることなく、身近なところでも愛と憎しみの中で苦しんでいる私たちが、大きな世界から願われているということを感じていただかねばなりません。



Rev Umezu chanting at Hongwanji

お盆の季節です。すべての生命を大切に生きてきた先祖の思いをもう一度思いおこし、お互いがお念仏の中で、すべての人たちと一緒に生きていくことのできる道を探求していかなくてはなりません。どうか、私たちの前に浄土に生まれた方達の声を、また願いを聞かせていただきますように。