

WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

VOLUME 40 • ISSUE 10

OCTOBER 2018

45th BWA Conference Draws 250 in Visalia

The 45th BCA Federation of Buddhist Womens Associations (BWA) Conference drew approximately 250 chapter delegates and members in Visalia, California, on Sept. 14-16.

The conference, hosted by the Central California District BWA chapters, was held with the theme of “Create An Endless Ripple” at the Marriott Hotel and Convention Center. Denise Kusunoki and Julie Doi served as conference co-chairpersons.

“The conference was meaningful and so worthwhile,” said one attendee. “The Central California BWAs went all out to make sure we had a wonderful conference. They set the bar very, very high. I am so grateful for all the people who made it possible.”

Being that this year’s conference was being held in the nation’s breadbasket, it was only fitting that the conference began with a “Farm to Fork” excursion to give participants a first-hand view of some of the delicious and varied agriculture that can be found in the Central San Joaquin Valley.

In the evening, there were workshops on parliamentary procedures and Zumba, as well as a BWA Federation meeting that was chaired by Federation Co-Presidents Nancy Kimura and Nanette Nakamichi.

Saturday’s program began with the opening service. This year’s FBWA conference was the last one for Bishop Umezu as Bishop and he delivered a moving and personal Dharma message.

“We see a continuing change in the generational makeup of the BWA membership, but it is gratifying to see third- and fourth-generation BWA members continuing to find personal meaning in the BWA,” Rev. Umezu said. “This year’s conference committee worked long and hard in producing a program that could be enjoyed and meaningful to all in attendance. I am so grateful for all their efforts.”

The conference’s keynote speakers were an energetic Rev. Ryuta Furumoto from the Senshin Bud-



Left photo: BCA Federation BWA Delegates Meeting. Right photo: FBWA Conference Open Service.



dhist Temple in Los Angeles, speaking in Japanese, and always insightful BCA Minister Emeritus Rev. Bob Oshita from Sacramento, who delivered the English message.

The afternoon workshops began with the first session dedicated to contemporary media and video technology in which the crowd watched video clips of various life events tied to the “Create an Endless Ripple” theme in sharing gratitude and happiness.

The second workshop featured several contemporary BCA women in talking about how to “Create an Endless Ripple” to re-energize the BWA. Moderated by Rev. Karen Mukai, Rev. Candice Shibata of the Florin Church, Camille Pating from San Francisco, Sydney Shiroyama, who grew up in the Palo Alto temple and Jenna Tokeshi a lifelong member of the San Fernando Valley Temple, all shared their perspectives on the topic.

The afternoon Japanese language session featured a discussion led by the Rev. Ryuta Furumoto, Rev. Midori Nakagawa of Fresno Betsuin and Revs. Yuki and Toshie Mori from the Parlier church.

The BCA “Ichijukai” Retired Ministers and

Widows organization also met in the afternoon and conducted a memorial service for colleagues and members.

The conference banquet speakers were BCA President Rick Stambul and Rev. Bob Oshita. The evening’s entertainment was provided by Gordon Ah Tye and Dr. Gary Mukai. A special invitation to next year’s World BWA Convention to be hosted by the BCA at the San Francisco Marriott was extended to all BCA members.

During the banquet, Ichijukai President Rev. Sencho Inouye presented a donation in the amount of \$2,500 from the Ichijukai to the FBWA as its contribution toward hosting the next 2019 World BWA Conference.

Sunday morning’s service featured a Dharma message by the Rev. Midori Nakagawa, Assistant Minister at the Fresno Betsuin temple, and the installation of the next BCA Federation cabinet from the Bay District by Bishop Umezu.

The next BCA Federation BWA Conference will be held in 2022 and hosted by the Northern California District BWA.

Once In A Lifetime—In Gassho! The 19th European Shin Buddhist Conference

By Rick Stambul
BCA President

My wife, Robin, and I arrive by train in Southampton, England on a sunny, August afternoon to attend the 19th European Shin Buddhist Conference.

It is a once in a lifetime, Namu Amida Butsu, moment.

We meet scores of other Shin Buddhists from the UK, Germany, Romania, Japan, Brazil, Argentina, and around the world to hear the presentation of papers, mostly academic, some remarkably personal, on Jodo Shinshu.

The theme of the Conference is “Jodo Shinshu in the 21st Century.”

There is a universal and deep interest in preserving and, equally important, promoting Shinran’s teachings worldwide. Even more than that, it is the friendships we make that will stay with us forever. I am so deeply grateful to Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, who made it possible for Robin and me to attend.

We are joined by representatives from BCA including Rev. Jerry Hirano (Resident minister of Salt Lake Buddhist Temple, and Co-Assistant to the Bishop), Rev. Carmella Hirano (Salt Lake Buddhist Temple), Rev. John Iwihara (Resident minister at Gardena Buddhist Church), and Rev.

Kiyonobu Kuwahara (Resident minister of Berkeley Buddhist Temple, and Coordinator of Hongwanji International USA).

Rev. Daichi Gary Robinson of the UK and his crew of memorable and remarkable colleagues from Chomon House in Southampton run an illuminating and uplifting conference for all of us. We send our gratitude and appreciation.

We are all honored to be joined at the Conference by Zenmon-sama, Koshin Ohtani (Immediate Past Monshu), and his wife, the Zenurakata-sama, Noriko Ohtani. The discussions Robin and I have with the Zenmon about BCA, and Shin Buddhism are memorable and deeply inspiring.

There are more than 17 papers presented at the Conference by Shin Buddhists from around the globe. I am honored to have been invited to present a paper on the connection between the rising social consciousness in the world today and BCA in the 21st



His Eminence Zenmonshu Koshin Ohtani and Lady Noriko Ohtani and participants at the 19th European Shin Buddhist Conference at Southampton, United Kingdom.

Century. Due to limitations of space, permit me to offer a brief glimpse of just a few of the rigorous academic and personal presentations made to the conference attendees.

The keynote speaker, and famous Shin Buddhist known to most all of us in BCA, Dr. Ken Tanaka, talks about *shinjin*. He explains that *shinjin* is the most important soteriological aspect of Jodo Shinshu. He urges a change from use of the word “entrusting” in referring to notions of *shinjin*, to the word “realization.” He suggests

that “realization” best conveys a sense of *shinjin*, of the “... fulfillment of a personal goal that transforms a seeker to experience higher or deeper levels of reality...”, as does the term “self-realization” in the field of psychology and in everyday parlance.”

I am fascinated by Dr. Tanaka’s reference to the closing passages in Shinran’s *Kyogyoshinsho* which, he explains, is about Joy. Why, Dr. Tanaka asks rhetorically and provoca-

16th World Buddhist Women's Convention
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Assistant Buddhist Council of America
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SOCHO'S MESSAGE

Wearing A Friend's Gift of Kindness



By Rev. Kodo Umezu
BCA Bishop

A friend recently brought me a new aloha shirt. He said that he kept seeing me on Face-

book, wearing the same aloha shirt over and over and he felt sorry for me. So, I thanked him for his kindness and wore it during the Pacific Seminar held shortly after I received it.

This reminded me of the notion of 'Eko (transferring of merit or good virtues).' The shirt is not merely a shirt but a sign of my friend's kindness. I liked and appreciated the shirt, and I was really touched by his kind heart. Likewise, the Name, Namo Amida Butsu, is *Eko* from Amida Buddha. It is, however, not just a name. The Name itself is Amida Buddha's compassionate heart and mind.

Shinran Shonin said that we were born into this world to encounter the heart of Amida Buddha through the Name. He said that we have been called by the Universal Compassion and that we were directed to live our lives as a journey to the Real Home which is presented to us as the

Pure Land.

In his written work, the "Kyō Gyō Shin Shō," Shinran Shonin quoted words of Shan Tao;

"The Buddha desires to bring all foolish beings, whether good or evil, to turn about at heart, express this in practice, and so attain birth (into the Pure Land). This is the witness to birth through the nembutsu, a manifestation of the decisive cause of birth in the Pure Land." (CWS p. 37)

Hearing the Name and responding with saying the Nembutsu is called *Shinjin*. This is the real meeting with the compassionate heart of the Buddha.

We live in a world of confusion, not knowing the True and Real world. This state of our existence is deeply sorrowed by the Buddha, so the Vow was established for all sentient beings to be born into the Pure Land. Hearing

the Name changes our way of living now and here. As Gomonsu says in his message, our life style must change by hearing the compassionate call from the Realm of True Equality.

If I look at the aloha shirt as only new clothing, I would not sense the caring heart of my friend. It is my friend's kindness that I will wear from now on. (Well, I should not wear it all the time. If I do so, I am not understanding his *kimochi* or kind heart.)

"When we consider the intention behind Amida's establishment of the Vow, we find that it rose from his mind of great compassion. Not forsaking suffering and afflicted beings, but solely for the sake of saving them by giving all of the virtues he gained, his great compassionate mind was perfected."

(Shinran Shonin p. 38
"Shozomatsu Wasan")

Is It Meaningless to Become a Buddha When We Die?

*"Those who reach the Pure Land of happiness
Return to this evil world of the five defilements,
Where, like the Buddha Śākyamuni,
They benefit sentient beings without limit."*

(Collected Works of Shinran, Page 329)

By Rev. Yuki Sugahara
Oregon Buddhist Temple



I attended *Ango*, the summer study session for ministers at Ryukoku University in Kyoto. *Ango* has been held for more than 370 years and every year, doctrinal topics have been

discussed. This year's main discussion was the aspect for our going forth to the Pure Land and for our return to this world.

Actually, the structure of Pure Land Buddhism is stated in "The Larger Sutra" as follows:

"... when their lives come to an end, they will attain birth in the Land of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life, where they spontaneously receive transformative birth within the seven-jeweled lotus flower."

("The Three Pure Land Sutras," Volume II, *The Larger Sutra*, p. 110)

As we see here, attainment of birth

in the Pure Land is a matter of when our lives come to an end. Our founder Shinran Shonin understood as we enter the stage of the truly settled (assured to become a Buddha) in this life and we become a Buddha when our lives come to the end.

Some people say, "It is meaningless to become a Buddha when we die." But, I wonder if it is really meaningless to become a Buddha when we die?

I'm one of the last ministers who was invited to Watsonville Buddhist Temple as a guest speaker when Rev. Shousei Hanayama was alive. He barbecued for us, played with my daughter, made a lot of jokes as usual, but he did not have much appetite.

It was few months later that he found out that the pancreatic cancer had already progressed to stage four and the diagnosis was that he had only a few months to live. He died in July 2016.

Rev. Hanayama's last Facebook post in Japanese said: "I am happy that there was the Pure Land" and "I will save all of you as (a) Buddha." I feel that this is the best thing about the Jodo Shinshu teaching. We certainly will become a Buddha and lead everyone to the truth of life.

In Vasubandhu's "Treatise on the Pure Land," it says:

"With great compassion, they observe all sentient beings in pain and affliction, and assuming various transformed bodies to guide them, enter and sport in the gardens of birth-and-death and the forests of blind passions. With transcendent powers, they attain the state of teaching and guiding sentient beings."

("The Pure Land Writing," Volume I, Page 66)

Our loved ones who have passed away come back to this world to lead us to the truth of our lives. It does not mean they come back physically. As Vasubandhu stated, they come back by manifesting various transformed bodies to guide us.

I am sure that whenever I go to Watsonville Buddhist Temple, I will remember Rev. Shousei Hanayama. Then, I will realize that there is nothing that we can take for granted, and how comforting and peaceful to know that there is the Pure Land, which is the Buddha's realm of enlightenment, waiting for us.

My daughter Aoi, who was about 4 years old at the time of Rev. Hanayama's death, asked me this question at his funeral: "Daddy, where did Hanayama sensei go?"

"He went to the Pure Land, but he is always here with us as a Buddha," I replied without hesitation.

We can say this with confidence. This is what I believe as the beauty of the Jodo Shinshu teachings.

Namo Amida Butsu.

Welcome the Newest BCA Minister: Rev. Yamagishi to Lodi

Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop, has assigned the newest BCA minister, Rev. Masanari Yamagishi to the Lodi Buddhist Church as of Aug. 1.

He is also the overseeing minister for the Walnut Grove Buddhist Church.

Rev. Yamagishi was born and raised in Toyama Prefecture at the Minshoji temple in Takaoka City. His eldest brother is the current resident priest for Minshoji Temple and is the 18th

generation to serve the members of Minshoji Temple.

Rev. Yamagishi studied International Studies at Ryukoku University and worked in hotel management before becoming a Hongwanji minister. His major influence in deciding to become a priest was reading Rennyo Shonin's letter on "White Ashes."

When asked what he found most surprising in the United States, Rev. Yamagishi said he

finds traffic here moves fast and that food is served in too large a portion for him to be able to eat everything on his plate.

He said he really admires how friendly and kind Americans are and is so appreciative for the kind and warm welcome extended to him by the Lodi members. He also said he is grateful for the fresh and clean air, clear water and delicious fruits and vegetables that he can enjoy in Lodi.

Rev. Yamagishi first came to the BCA in 2016 as a participant in the International Ministers Orientation Program (IMOP) in Berkeley. He is married and his wife Yumi should be arriving before the end of the year. He enjoys horseback riding.

He is really appreciative that the BCA has allowed him to become a BCA minister and he looks forward to meeting all BCA members and sharing the Dharma.



Rev. Masanari Yamagishi

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Richard A. Stambul
BCA President

Let me share a great success story with you. Thanks to the commitment, perseverance, and hard work of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Archives and Historical Preservation Committee (the Archives Committee), we've made a great leap forward.

The Archives Committee is comprised of Lynne Ozawa (chair), and members, Rev. Fumiaki Usuki, Rev. Kazuaki Nakata, Eiko Masuyama, Sandy Saeki, Dona Mitoma, Mitsuyo Tanaka and Jamie Henricks of the Japanese American National Museum (JANM). Aside from dedicated contributions of all committee members, Lynne Ozawa, Eiko Masuyama and Sandy Saeki deserve special

recognition for their extraordinary efforts.

The committee's purpose is to encourage the collection of records related to the BCA for the permanent preservation of their enduring cultural, historical and evidentiary value to the entire Japanese American community and the general public. The committee is dedicated to establishing an understanding, and appreciation of our Collection's historic materials to ensure proper management, and preservation for reference, research, enrichment, and for the continued propagation of Jodo Shinshu in America.

The collection consists of 330-plus feet and is considered to be substantial by archival standards. In 1999, BCA deposited the collection with JANM. Little more than one year ago, JANM informed BCA that the annual cost to continue Collection maintenance would increase by more than 60 percent from \$30,000 to \$49,500 because of rising costs and other factors. This additional expense was unmanageable for

BCA.

The Archives Committee met more than 14 times in just over a year to explore alternative institutions to which the collection could be safely transferred and properly maintained before the BCA's contract expired with JANM.

The Archives Committee determined the three best sites for potential relocation were the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA); University of Southern California; and Stanford University's Hoover Institution Library and Archives.

The committee made visits to each site, some several times. Discussions were held with knowledgeable former BCA leaders. One sunny afternoon, I met with Dr. Ryo Munekata, past BCA president (1970) and a great BCA treasure himself, regarding the wisdom of moving the collection.

Dr. Munekata was fully supportive of the move. Regrettably, shortly after my meeting with him, he passed on to the Pure Land without witnessing

the conclusion of this exciting saga.

Expert archivists at all of the institutions the committee considered as new homes for the BCA Collection made us aware that our collection has enormous historical value as an enduring record of the Japanese experience in the United States during the 20th century, and through today.

Ultimately, UCLA was unanimously recommended as the new home for our BCA Collection. Committee member Dona Mitoma, a recently retired college head librarian, advised that UCLA is at the forefront of preservation and archival programs, and already well-established in Buddhist and Japanese-American studies.

The archival storage facilities at UCLA are considered cutting edge, including a fire-suppression system which suppresses fires by eliminating oxygen, thus avoiding permanent water damage to the materials. Most significantly, UCLA's policy and mission are

to permanently and expertly house and preserve all collections it receives, and to make them freely available to scholars and the public, in perpetuity.

The 2018 National Council voted unanimously to approve moving the collection to UCLA. I am so pleased to tell you that it now resides at UCLA's archival depository.

UCLA will not to charge BCA anything to transport, insure or maintain the collection. It will soon be accepting new contributions of materials from our temples and churches, as it will continue to remain a living collection. BCA will let everyone know when we can resume the delivery of additional materials to UCLA and how best to do that.

The accomplishment of this gargantuan task was due to the efforts of the Archives Committee which demonstrated what dedication and commitment to our shared values can bring. I wish to express my deep gratitude on behalf of BCA to this dedicated group of Shin Buddhists.

European Conference

Continued from Front Page

tively, are we into this Shin Buddhist exploration if not for joy?

To highlight just a few other papers, David Quirke-Thornton of the UK Fellowship talks about information technology in our digital age. What catches my imagination is his inclusion of a poem by Thornton Wilder (The Bridge of San Luis Rey (1927)), where Wilder writes, in part:

"Today many folk feel lost.

Lost.

Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you
Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here"

"You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows
Where you are. You must let it find you."

Rev. Kiyo Kuwahara presents a paper and speaks about "oneness" and dualism in Jodo Shinshu. His talk sparks some differences of opinion as he explains with great eloquence and academic rigor the traditional view that sentient beings and Amida Buddha can never become one. Others urge their understanding that Shin teaches the beauty of the absence of dualism, that Amida and lay followers are indeed one both in mind and in spirit. Who am I to say which is wrong and which is right? Namu Amida Butsu.

Let me add that the scores of Shin Buddhists attending the Conference from around the globe are dedicated, committed Buddhists. Moreover, they make clear through their comments, and their behavior, that BCA is the primary beacon they look towards as the keeper of our faith and our teachings. Everyone is in tacit agreement that keeping our teachings alive, and preserved for future generations, is our mission. And that by so doing, we honor all those who came before us. *O kage sama de.*

In gassho,
Richard A. Stambul, President
Buddhist Churches of America

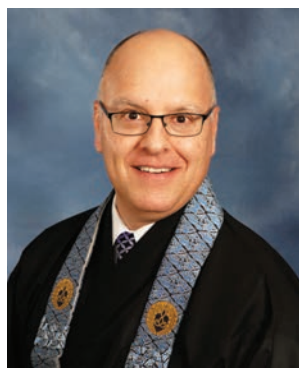


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The Way of Affirmation



By Rev. Jon Turner
Orange County Buddhist Church

In religious studies, there are two terms that I think of often though I don't always remember how to spell them.

One is "cataphatic" and the second is "apophatic."

Cataphatic describes a type of spirituality that relies on "positive" terminology, using symbols and forms. You might call this the "way of affirmation."

Apophatic uses a more "negative" approach that might be called the "way of negation." In Christianity, Catholicism is more cataphatic while Protestantism emphasizes the apophatic style. Similarly, in Buddhism, we find the Pure Land schools to be more cataphatic while the Zen schools

tend to use an apophatic approach. I keep these two terms straight by remembering a little mnemonic: cats have form.

In April 1997, my family and I came to the Orange County Buddhist Church for the first time. My wife was taking a social diversity class and she had an assignment to experience something outside her cultural boundaries. We had always been curious about Buddhism and its sense of equanimity so we searched the internet and happened to find the Orange County Buddhist Church's Hanamatsuri festival. So we went that next weekend. This was our first contact with Buddhism.

We immediately sensed the warmth and camaraderie of the volunteers. It was a feeling that was much different than what I was used to. We ate the food and toured all the displays. Then we came to the Hondo. We entered the double doors and in the distance, we saw a very large golden altar. We were the only ones there. It was quiet. With incense sticks burning, the scent gently reached my nose. I wasn't exactly sure what I was looking at but I knew how it made me feel. I remember thinking that I wish my life felt the way the *naijin* looked – bright, warm and golden.

I didn't know it then, but I was looking at the Pure Land or enlightenment itself. It was like one of those dioramas that children create from a shoe box that depicts a scene for their book report. The items on the *naijin* are often called adornments. That is, the formless (apophatic) is adorning itself with form (cataphatic) in order to make itself known to those who happen to be gazing at it.

It was like seeing a movie that you can't stop thinking about weeks later. It creates a curiosity in the viewer. I couldn't shake the contrast between how I was experiencing my life and how I experienced the *naijin*. It is interesting but this is all by design. In the Pure Land tradition, these symbols and forms are meant to awaken an aspiration within us to seek the path. It is without words but without form. It is concrete and immediate.

I think of this event in my life often especially now that our *naijin* has been refurbished. I hope others have the same experience as they enter the *naijin* for the first time at our festivals. It radiates now even more brightly than it did 20 years ago, silently waiting for the next visitor to enter the Hondo. With palms together -- Namu Amida Butsu.

BCA Job Announcement

The Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) is looking for a part-time youth coordinator to help to develop Buddhist education programs for young people from high school to young adults, to network and connect with Young Buddhist Association (YBA) groups throughout the BCA, and to help stimulate and invigorate YBA programs at the local, district, and national level.

For a complete job description and information on how to apply, go to the Buddhist Churches of America website www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org or contact Gayle Noguchi, gnoguchi@bcahq.org, 510-305-8835. The deadline to apply is October 31, 2018. Resumes received after October 31st will not be considered.



Las Vegas MA's, BCA Bookstore Create Shikisho for Veterans

Nov. 11 will mark a milestone in American history -- the 100-year-old anniversary of Veterans Day, which began as Armistice Day after World War I.

In gratitude and appreciation for all active U.S. military members and veterans, the Las Vegas Sangha Minister's Assistants -- Michael Tanaka, Dave Hopper and Al Kayatani -- collaborated with the BCA Bookstore to create a red, white and blue monto shikisho for the 100th anniversary of the WWI Armistice. Kayatani served in the U.S. Army and his uncle and friends served in the all-Nisei 100th Infantry Battalion.

"For me, I felt that what we did, having all veterans stand up to be recognized was just not enough for their service, commitment, and sacrifice they made for the rest of us," said Michael Tanaka, the project leader, referring to last year's Las Vegas Sangha's Veterans Day service. "I wanted something more that would stand out at any service. Wearing the red, white and blue shikisho I thought would have them be recognized not just on Veterans Day, but at any service they (would) attend throughout the year."

After last year's Las Vegas Sangha's Veterans Day service, the Minister's Assistants began the process of coming up with the special shikisho -- with the support



(Right photo) Las Vegas Ministers Assistants, from left to right: Michael Tanaka, Al Kayatani and Dr. Dave Hopper. (Left photo) New Veteran's Shikisho.

of the board, Tanaka said.

"I connected with Gayle (Noguchi) at the BCA Bookstore to discuss my idea," Tanaka said. "She enthusiastically accepted the challenge. This journey took longer than expected for the custom shikisho -- it had to be made from scratch. The cloth had to be woven and cord-dyed."

During the process, Madeline Kubo took over from Noguchi as BCA Bookstore Manager.

"The colors are bold, so I think a simple shikisho design was a good idea," Kubo said. "This is one of the first things I've done since starting at the bookstore, so I'm glad we were able to see it through and that they turned out well. I hope the veterans and active military will like them."

The shikisho are available

through the bookstore for \$25 each at <http://bcabookstore.mybigcommerce.com/>. If BCA temples would like to order them, they can contact Kubo at mkubo@bcahq.org for a temple discount to \$20 each.

"I am very proud to have been a part of this project and my hopes are that other temples consider this special recognition for their veterans and active military members," Tanaka said.

"I wish my father was alive to be able to give him one for his service in the Korean War," Tanaka added. "Although I never served, I grew up on a military base, and now I have the honor to teach the tactical medics of all branches just before deployment, which I am very proud to do and to give back for their service."



Alameda Temple's Takano named Parade Grand Marshal



Mas Takano

Alameda Buddhist Temple member Mas Takano was selected as one of four Grand Marshals for the Mayor's Fourth of July Parade in Alameda, California, for their outstanding contributions to the community.

Takano said being selected as Grand Marshal was "a great honor," and noted that he and his family traveled the next day to the Amache concentration camp to attend a reunion of internees.

"As I sat on the automobile smiling and waving, it was a thought-provoking experience, a terrific mix of emotions," Takano said. "Should I be bitter, disappointed? In my mind, I thought I had forgotten and forgiven whatever happened to us with Executive Order 9066 (which authorized the relocation and evacuation of Japanese Americans

from the West Coast), but I realized I hadn't ... it overcame me like a wave.

"I still don't know if I'm completely over what happened to the Japanese Isseis, Japanese Americans who were interned (and) lost everything, the family bond, which Japanese always treasured," he continued. "For years after, I used to look at my dad and could not imagine how he felt, what he went through for us, his family."

Takano has been a longtime Alameda temple board member and past president and is often called upon to represent the temple and Japanese American community in city activities and programs.

A lifelong Alameda resident except during the World War II years that he and his family spent in the Amache, Colorado, concentration camp, Takano was a Vice President of Sales for Hawaiian Airlines and today also serves on the board of J-Sei, the San Francisco East Bay Nikkei social services organization and continues to be active in the community and all aspects of the Alameda temple.

From Your On-Line BCA Bookstore....

New Gift Items for the Holidays



accept themselves for their own characteristics.

Japanese and English text appear together on each page along with bright and playful illustrations. It is a story that teaches the Buddhist idea of accepting others and oneself. Kenneth Tanaka (author of *Ocean*) calls it, "A moving story that accepts your goodness 'just as you are!'" This would be great for children as well as people who'd like to practice their Japanese with a side-by-side translation.

The book's English translation was done by Tabitha S. Kobata, who is on the staff of the Hongwanji International Department in Kyoto and is the daughter of Rev. & Mrs. Ron Kobata,

We have also stocked a brand new hanging wisteria enamel pin by That's Good Paper. It is a beautiful one-inch, gold plated, white enamel pin. It was designed specifically with Shin Buddhists in mind. *When the Blue Bird Sings* and the enamel wisteria pin are now available in the online store.

To order, go to www.bcabookstore.mybigcommerce.com.

The BCA Bookstore has just stocked a new children's book called *When the Blue Bird Sings* (青い鳥がなくなるとき) by author and illustrator Noryco. This is her first picture book. After spending 10 years at the Honpa Hongwanji Temple of Londrina in Parana, Brazil, she learned about these two mistaken birds and created this book at the end of 2017. It is based on the mystery of who the "bupposo" birdsong belongs to. Scientists did not discover which bird it belonged to until 1935.

The book revolves around two birds, a beautiful blue bird and a plain Japanese scops owl. Their voices, like their appearances, are very different, but each learns to

The BCA Bookstore has moved online! The Bookstore in Berkeley will no longer be open for walk-ins, but you may place orders at any time at www.bcabookstore.mybigcommerce.com. If you have any questions about products or ordering please contact the manager, Madeline Kubo, at mkubo@bcahq.org. Thank you for your continued support. Gassho.

BCA Eastern District Makes Obon Pilgrimage to Willow Grove Cemetery



This year's Eastern District members participating in the Willow Grove Obon Service. Photo by Riccardo Venancio

Continuing a tradition that began more than 40 years ago by Rev. Kenryu Tsuji, the BCA Eastern District made its annual Obon pilgrimage to the Willow Grove cemetery in New Brunswick, New Jersey, to honor some of the earliest Japanese immigrants.

It was nearly 150 years ago before emigration from Japan was allowed by the feudal government that young Japanese students were being sent to several Western nations to study various aspects of the Western world.

The Japanese students who were sent to America were enrolled at Rutgers University in New Jersey, about a two-hour drive south of New York City.

The Japanese students had little immunity from a variety of Western diseases and several died. Taro Kusakabe, originally from Fukui Prefecture, was the first Japanese to become a Phi Beta Kappa. Kusakabe he died a few weeks before graduation because of tuberculosis.

Kusakabe and six other early day Japanese students from Hyogo, Kagoshima, Fukuoka, Yamaguchi and Okayama prefectures, plus a Japanese infant who died in 1877, are buried here in the Willow Grove Cemetery Japanese section and are remembered each year by the BCA Eastern District.

Typhoon Jebi Causes Major Damage in Japan

Over the U.S. Labor Day weekend, Japan was hit by Typhoon Jebi, the strongest and most powerful tropical storm to strike in 25 years.

High winds and torrential rains caused 11 deaths, hundreds of injuries and damage to thousands of buildings, bridges, public facilities, and temples including the Nishi Hongwanji headquarters in Kyoto.

The whole Nishi Hongwanji compound is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and several National Treasure buildings including sections of the outer wall at the South Noh stage area and a section of the Hiunkaku Pavilion were damaged or destroyed. Typhoon Jebi struck at speeds of up to 135 mph.



Damage to the Hongwanji's South Noh stage's outer wall. Jiji Press



Century Old Sangha Rivalry: Seattle vs. Tacoma



Participants in the 2018 Tacoma-Seattle rivalry. In the Buddhist spirit of Sangha, two games were played, one with children and older members and then a more competitive game.

In a competition that began nearly a century ago, the Tacoma-Seattle baseball rivalry was brought back to life in 2017 when the Tacoma temple's then Rev. Kojo Kakiyama challenged Seattle's Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki to a softball game.

The 2017 game was won by Tacoma and allowed Rev. Kakiyama to get revenge on

Rev. Kusunoki for a game the ministers played against each other while they were attending Ministers' Seminary School in Kyoto and Rev. Kusunoki's team won that match.

This year's "Annual Battle of the Buddhas" Softball game was held at Browns Point Elementary School and ended in a 2-2 tie after nine innings.

Young Buddhists Gather for 68th Annual Southern District Jr. YBL Conference



INSTALLATION CEREMONY: Members of the 2018-19 Southern District Junior YBA cabinet include (from R to L): Rev. Kory Quon (Ministerial Advisor, Venice), Michael Nishimoto (Historian, OCBC), Melanie Oda (Treasurer, Gardena), Megan Miyamoto (Secretary, San Fernando), Kellie Yada (2nd Vice President, OCBC), Emiko Matsumoto (1st Vice President, Arizona), Kotaro Chavez (President, Nishi), Sydney Matsubara (Girls Athletics, OCBC), Montgomery Hamabe (Boys Athletics, OCBC), Logan Ueno (Religious Chairman, OCBC), Tyler Morimoto (Ex-officio, Gardena), Mr. Ralph Honda (Lead Advisor, San Diego), Mr. Frank Yada (Assistant Advisor)

By Katie Shue
Pasadena Jr. YBA

The 68th annual Southern District Jr. YBL conference was held September 1 and 2 at the Los Angeles Marriott Burbank Airport Hotel, and was hosted by the Oxnard, Pasadena and San Fernando Jr. YBA groups.

The conference theme was 'iOS 9.18 Make Buddhism Your Operating System' and was targeted towards the teen's use of technology and social media. Approximately 120 delegates representing 12 Southern District chapters participated in a weekend full of activities.

Eleven ministers from the

district participated. Rev. Kory Quon from Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple served as keynote speaker.

Following the opening service and group picture, there were icebreakers activities. This was followed by three workshops which explored the Buddhist ideas of learning about one's true self and being able to understand situations from different perspectives.

During the banquet, awards were presented to teams that finished in first place at the basketball and volleyball tournaments. Other presentations included the chapter sign contest, religious award and scholarships to the recipients of

the Chuck Matsumoto Kokoro Award. Mrs. Linda Okino was recognized for her many years of service to the Southern District. The dinner concluded with a slideshow highlighting the 2017-18 term and recognizing the graduating seniors. The evening concluded with a dance.

On Sunday, during the closing service, the 2018-19 SD Jr. YBL cabinet was installed. The president will be Kotaro Chavez from Nishi. A slideshow capturing the weekend's activities wrapped up another fun and successful conference.

Next year's conference will be August 24-25 and will be hosted by the Venice Jr. YBA.

Ekaji's Nen Daiko Performs at Japanese Embassy



Nen Daiko performs at a recent reception at the Embassy of Japan. Photo courtesy of Japan Local Government Center

Founded in 1994, Ekaji Temple's "Nen Daiko" group has been performing for nearly 25 years in the greater Washington, D.C., area including performances for the White House and the Japanese ambassador. Nen Daiko -- along with Soh Daiko from the New York Buddhist Church and Hoh Daiko from the Seabrook Buddhist Temple -- perform at each other's Obon festivals. In addition, Nen Daiko has also

performed at the dedication of the Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II; the Japanese ambassador's appreciation barbecue honoring the U.S. troops that fought in the Middle East; and at the National Theater and the Smithsonian Institution's Folklife Festival. In 2015, Nen Daiko performed at the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Reflections on Obon

By Rosalyn Dong
Minister's Assistant
Vista Buddhist Temple

I love Obon. The reason I love Obon so much is that it reminds me of home and the people who were responsible for caring for me during my childhood.

Home for me is the small southern town near Knoxville, Tennessee, where I was born and lived for 13 years. This is place where my ancestors are buried. Every year, I take a trip near the Fourth of July to return to my beloved community of Alcoa, Tennessee.

This year, with Obon in mind, I visited the small cemetery that, in the past, was the only place where African Americans could be buried. Even cemeteries were segregated.

For a long time, I considered this act of discrimination based on race an unforgivable injustice. Things have changed now and cemeteries are integrated. However, the small African American cemetery still remains as a historical site. Because of the relatively small space that the cemetery occupies, I was able to slowly walk the entire area. I read each grave stone. Not all the people were known to me, but I say their name aloud anyway. Everyone deserves to be remembered.

For all the people who



Enjoying this year's Vista Temple's Obon Dance Festival.

loved and nurtured me, I stop and bow at the graves and say, "Thank you. I will always remember you." Buried here are my maternal grandparents, the doctor who delivered me in the house that still stands, several of my elementary school teachers, neighbors and family friends.

As long as I remember them, they will continue to live through me. I am humbled by the legacy that they have left. I am the elder now, and it is up to me to see that the next generation remembers these worthy and most noble ancestors. We stand on mighty shoulders.

As long as we remember those who have died in our hearts and mind, death has no hold on them.

My memories will always keep them alive. While I am visiting my hometown, stories

are shared among friends who remember what it was like to grow up there. There is laughter and sometimes tears for those whom we miss dearly.

I return to Southern California, bringing my fond memories of so many special people. I help my Sangha prepare for our Obon festival. When the weekend arrives, I joyfully dance Bon Odori with gratitude and appreciation for the special people I left at the small cemetery in Alcoa, Tennessee. I am also grateful for all the ancestors I did not know who have made it possible for me to hear the Dharma at Vista Buddhist Temple.

With gratitude and love, may we always remember the people who paved the way for us to be in this place, at this time and on this most sacred path of Shin Buddhism.

Namo Amida Butsu



2018 BCA HOON-KO SERVICES

December 15-16, 2018

at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco
1881 Pine Street, San Francisco CA

❖ Dec. 15, Saturday: "OTAIYA" (Hoonko Eve) SERVICE -
2:00 PM - Dharma Message by Bishop Kodo Umezu

❖ Dec. 16, Sunday: HOON-KO SERVICE -
10:00 AM - Dharma Message in English by Rev. David Matsumoto,
Institute of Buddhist Studies

Dharma Message in Japanese by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Hongwanji Office,
Berkeley & Berkeley Buddhist Temple, Supervising Minister



Arigato Obaachan (Thank You Grandmother) Campaign Donors

The Buddhist Churches of America Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations (FBWA) has been receiving special donations in support of the 2019 World Buddhist Women's Convention, to be held in San Francisco, California from August 30-September 1, 2019.

The names below represent Buddhist women being honored for their sacrifice, hard work, dedication, generosity, pursuit of the Buddha-Dharma, and help in the propagation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Donors are listed first, followed by the honored *obaachan's* name(s) in bold print. Donations are listed in order received through September 16, 2018.

Thank you, donors and *arigatou, obaachan!*

San Luis Obispo Buddhist Church and the SLO BWA - **All Past and Current members of the SLO BWA**, Mari & Misa Masuda - **Haruko Masuda & Shizue Nii**, Marie Etsuko Yano - **Harue Murakami**, SACBC - **All SACBC Obaachans**, Jan Takeuchi - **Jane Tanigawa**, Aunt Toki Nakayama, Bachan Tanigawa, Grandma Hama-

moto Imogene Imada - **Mitsuko Ota**, E. Junko Nakagawa - **Kazumi Nakagawa**, Alice Nobuko Fujita, Grace Takako Yamamoto, Sachie Enami, Chisato Mihara, Mrs. Robin Lehrer, Mrs. Susie O'Neil, Toyo Inouye - **Miyo Maruyama**, Julie Miyata - **Tomiko Miyata**, Barbara Matsuba - **Fusao Nakai & Ruth E. Suekama**, Michiko Mukai - **Mrs. Hatsumi Takeshita**, May Yamaoka - **Tatsuno Tamura**, Jean A. Sato - **Chiyoko Terashima**, Kimiko Sato, Yasuko Fukuda - **Teruko Naito**, **Sakiye Kusama**, WLA BWA - **Women of WLA Buddhist Temple**, Lorraine Otsuka - **Rev. Yamaoka**, Allan Kawaharada - **Glen Tao**, **Setsuko Nakahara**, **Rose Ann Takahashi**, **Laura Iwamoto**, Catherine Nagareda - **Sumiye Kobayashi**, Lillian K. Uyeda - **Satoko Kumagai**, Patti Hisaoka - **Tama Sakuda**, **Betty S. Fujimoto**, Teruye Oshidari - **Mrs. Michiko Uyemoto**, Susan Higashi Rumberg - **Etsuko Esther Higashi**, Michi Hotta - **Toshiko Hotta**, Phyllis Sugimoto and Elaine Jones - **Tsuneyo Nomi**, Morris Shintaku & Patty Higashioka - **Fusa Higashioka**, **Yaye Hi-**

gashioka, **Shizuyo Higashioka**, **Yoshie Yamahata**, **Chiyoko Shintaku**, Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii - **Arigato Obaachan**, Lynne Neishi - **Kikuyo Neishi & Hisao Furuzawa**, Thomas H. Notebaert - **Arigato Obaachan**, Tamiko Tada - **Arigato Obaachan**, Yukiko Hirata - **Arigato Obaachan**, Rayco Exteriors - **Mieko Nakano**, Christeen Oniki - **Fujie Oniki**, Patsy Fujiwara & Carl Wilmsen - **Fumiye Fujiwara**, Yamamoto Family - **Wasa Osaki & Shizue Yamamoto**, Teruko Yoshikawa - **Miya Yoshikawa**, Sandy Okuno - **Lois Tanaka**, Peggy Okabayashi - **Yokuno Takeuchi**, **Isao Ito**, **Tayeko Takeuchi**.

Correction: We apologize for the errors (correction underlined) appearing on the previous acknowledgement: Whitney Okabayashi & Sharon Chu - Tomie Okabayashi, Rose Takamoto - Sekiyo Nishikawa

For corrections, questions or if you would like to donate, please contact Karen Suyama at karensuyama@wbw-convention.org.

BUTSU BUTSU

By Brian Kensho Nagata
Managing Editor

Well, another summer has ended....and time keeps moving forward....

First of all, I want to personally thank each and every one of you who worked so hard at this year's Obon festivals throughout the BCA. I know countless hours of planning, negotiating, headaches and unplanned obstacles go into every festival BUT when we feel the vibes of the joy of dancing, the happiness and friendships shared, I realize that Obon, the memories of our loved ones and comraderie of the present make it all worth it.

A few months ago, the 98-year old Fresno Betsuin Temple building was sold. I was born and raised in Central California, so the Fresno temple was always "The Betsuin," or head temple for our district. But more than that, it stood proudly, the only three-story building in the center of what was once a great, bustling Japantown. It was such a proud testament to our *Issei* generation. I can't imagine how hard life must have been to just exist and provide for oneself and the family and yet our *Issei* generation somehow also found a way to build "The Betsuin" and our BCA temple system. It simply baffles me how the *Issei* accomplished what they did.... Sure wish my generation had such guts!!

In sharing memories of "The Betsuin" with friends who also grew up in Central Cal, we came to realize that our own friendships started at that very temple location. How many marriages, relationships and friendships through the Dharma came about because of "The Betsuin." If only those walls could talk! To many, it may only be a building or location, but for those who came before me and for my generation, "The Betsuin" IS me. It's an integral part of MY life story.... I place my hands together in "Gassho" and say "Thank you, thank you from the bottom of my heart to the Grand Dame at 1340 Kern Street."

Many BCA temples observe "Keiro" (Respect for the Elderly) Day to honor senior temple members. At my temple, this tradition was started to recognize the *Issei* pioneer generation, then we started to honor the *Nisei* senior members who turned 75 years of age and now, third generation members are starting to appear in the annual picture. Before I know it, I will be standing there amongst our temple's senior members....

With the changing of the seasons, I wish everyone good health (get your flu shots)..... *Gassho*.

Join Bishop Umezu in January for *Hoonko* in Kyoto

Once again, Bishop Kodo Umezu is planning to attend *Hoonko* observances at the Nishi Hongwanji *Honzan* (Mother Temple) in Kyoto next January. BCA President Rick Stambul will also be joining Rev. Umezu for two days of observances and opportunities to hear the Dharma during the most important Shin Buddhist holiday of the year.

Interested persons can make their own schedules and travel arrangements but should plan to be in Kyoto on January 15-16, 2019. Hotel arrangements should be made as soon as possible as Kyoto will be crowded with thousands of followers coming to Hongwanji for *Hoonko*. For further information, please contact Bishop Umezu directly at kumezu@bcahq.org.



From the BCA Endowment Foundation

Dana Program for Buddhist Education

The Dana Program was introduced three years ago as a vehicle to bring the Buddha-dharma to everyone. This year, we begin a new focus on Buddhist Education programs that build upon this vision for the public, our temples and our ministers to walk the Nembutsu path together.

Initiatives are being launched to increase public outreach through digital media, develop Dharma activities for BCA members of all ages, and assist the education of our ministers, who dedicate their lives to their sanghas. It's simple: the more we grow the Dana Program, the more we can expand these initiatives.

In appreciation for Shinran Shonin's teachings and to help share them with the world, donors may contribute each week, month, or whenever possible to sustain and strengthen essential programs. We encourage you to set-up a recurring donation online at: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/donate.

What is the Dana Program?

EDUCATE the public about Jodo Shinshu Buddhism

The Dana Program is a continuous effort to share our greatest resource: the *Nembutsu* teachings. Shinran Shonin's life of gratitude has traveled across centuries and continents to arrive in our hearts today. Together we can invest in the future of our temples by expanding the reach of Jodo Shinshu in America.

Over the years, BCA ministers, scholars, and temples have created extensive English-language tools for sharing the dharma. The digital age provides us with fantastic new opportunities to engage the public through online education and media.



Public Initiatives

- Enhance BCA website introduction to Jodo Shinshu Buddhism; provide direct referrals to local temples
- Increase outreach through online and social media communications
- Develop YouTube video education resources, tutorials, and Dharma Talks

CONNECT temples through BCA member events and seminars



The Center for Buddhist Education cultivates an engaged national sangha, with dharma-focused activities throughout our network of temples and churches in the United States:

- Annual workshops, conferences, and special events
- Temple Leadership Training
- Summer Youth Retreats & Exchanges
- Gatherings for Japanese speakers
- Seminars on diversity and inclusion, arts and culture, health and wellness

Temple Initiatives

- Expand events and roadshows to reach temples locally
- Connect temples to Jodo Shinshu Center events through live streaming
- Develop programs targeted to older members and other BCA populations

ENRICH Shin Buddhist ministry with comprehensive training

BCA Ministers provide guidance and inspiration to their sanghas. They help us realize the workings of Amida Buddha's wisdom and compassion in our everyday lives, and are often the first teachers for prospective members who are interested in the dharma. Their spiritual education is a lifelong process, encompassing many steps along the way:

- Assistants Program
- Tokudo* and *Kyoshi* ordination training
- Master's Degree at the Institute of Buddhist Studies
- International Ministerial Orientation
- Ministers' Continuing Education



Ministry Initiatives

- Enhance Assistants Program to encourage more individuals to enter the ministry
- Develop minister speaking tours to engage new audiences

Support the Dana Program

Dana is an opportunity to express appreciation for the immeasurable influence of the teachings on our lives. Your recurring donation supports thriving Buddhist Education programs and enables new BCA initiatives for the public, temples, and ministry.

Make an online offering today at buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/donate

- Follow the link and enter your donation amount.
- Create a **RECURRING TRANSACTION** on a weekly, monthly, or other schedule of your choice. (One-time donations also available.)
- Complete credit card details and submit. You will be e-mailed a receipt. You can also create an account to track or adjust your recurring donation schedule.

Thank you for your generous offering.
Namo Amida Butsu



今月の法話

「阿弥陀さまと共に歩む私たち」

ローダイ仏教会

開教使 山岸 昌也



Rev. Masaya Yamagishi

私が開教使として、ローダイ仏教会とウォルナット・グループ仏教会に赴任してから約二ヶ月が経ちました。まだまだ開教使としても私生活においても慣れないことだらけの日ですが、メンバーや先輩開教使のみなさんの協力のおかげで楽しい毎日を送らせていただいております。先日は梅津総長が新任の私のことを案じて、様子を伺いに総長自らローダイまでお越しくださいました。ちょうどその日は仏教会において、Shinukaiという月に一度のメンバーのみなさんと一緒にランチパーティーをする日でありましたので、梅津総長にもご参加いただき楽しいひとときを過ごすことができました。

そのあと梅津総長を私の自宅にお招きし、しばらく談話をしていただきました。すると梅津総長から「この家の中に、お仏壇はどこにあるのですか。」と尋ねられ、私ははっと気づきました。私は開教使でありながらまだに自宅にお仏壇を設置しておらず、その認識すらしておりませんでした。梅津総長からは、「自身で手書きの名号でもいいから、すぐに阿弥陀さまを自宅に招き入れなさい。」と助言をいただきました。

ローダイ仏教会へ行くと、本堂の内陣裏の奥に「一世(いっせい)ルーム」とよばれる控室や会議室に使える中部屋があります。その部屋には名のとおり、日系アメリカ人一世の歴史にまつわる絵や展示品が飾られています。展示品の主な物は生活用品や手芸品など様々ですが、その中でひととき私の目を引いたものは、手作りのお仏壇でした。お世辞にも上手とは言えない粗さのあるお仏壇でしたが、中央にはしっかりと阿弥陀さまがいらっしゃり、手入れの跡もあることから当時の持ち主にとってはいかに大切なものであったか、見るだけでとるようにはわかる素敵なお仏壇でした。

この今日でも大切に残されているお仏壇を眺めていると、私はふと自分の出身地である富山のことを思い出しました。

私の実家も真宗のお寺であり、高岡教区に属しております。富山も含めて北陸地方一帯は、蓮如上人が伝道布教なされたおかげもあって浄土真宗が盛んであり、高岡教区では約三百のお寺があります。そして門徒のみなさんのおうちには、しっかりとお仏壇が設置されており大切に守られています。ところが、この頃では時代の流れを反映するかのようには門徒のおうちの中にも跡取りが見つからず、空き家となる家が増えてきております。ご家族の若い世代のみなさんは都市部に任んでおり、ふるさとの実家についてはほとんど管理しきれないことも原因となっているようです。

あるとき、私の知り合いの僧侶が東京に住む同級生のひとりにから、こんな相談を受けたそうです。「俺の実家は親も亡くなってもう誰も任んでいない。取り壊しかたづけようと思ってるんだが、大きな仏壇が邪魔でしかたない。お坊さんだからどこか知ってる廃業者でも紹介してくれないか。」と、とても残念な内容だったそうです。もちろん知り合いの僧侶の彼は、その友人にきちんと自分で管理して残すように説得を試みました。しかし、その友人は東京の家はせまいからとかたくなに拒み続けました。するとその僧侶の彼は、「ご本尊の阿弥陀さまと聖典はお寺で預かる。ただし条件がある。お前はこの家の最後の見届け人として、このお仏壇が廃棄されることを最後まで見届けてほしい。お前の何世代も何世代も前から、ずっと大切に守り続けてきたそのお仏壇が、重機で潰されて粉々になるまで処分される姿をしっかりと最後まで見届けてい。」と強く言ったそうです。そこでやっと、その友人は思いとどまりお仏壇を廃棄することをあきらめてくれたそうです。そのお仏壇は今でも実家の中にしっかりと保存されており、その友人は「富山にはいつでも帰れるところがある。実家とお仏壇を残しておいてよかった。」と話してくれたそうです。

なぜこうしてまで、梅津総長のお話や、一世ルームの手作りのお仏壇、富山の知り合いの僧侶のお話にあるように、お仏壇を大切にしなければならぬのでしょうか。それは、当然、阿弥陀さまがそこにいらっしゃるからです。阿弥陀さまがそこにいらっしゃる、私たちは常に阿弥陀さまと共にいることを知るためにお仏壇があるのです。

阿弥陀さまは限りない光と寿(いのち)の仏さまであります。阿弥陀さまはさとりをひらく前は、法蔵菩薩というひとりの修行僧でした。しかし、私たちすべてのものを必ず救いたいと願いを起されて、限りない光と寿の仏になる誓われました。そして果てしなく永い永い修行を経て、ついに阿弥陀如来となられました。阿弥陀とは、推し量ることのできない、という意味です。阿弥陀さまは、その推し量ることのできない限りない光をもって、この迷いの世界に住む私たちを照らし摂(おさめ)取ってくださいたいま

す。そのことは、今こを含めて世代も時代も超えて、ずっと以前からあることでもあります。親鸞聖人は浄土和讃のなかで、次のようにお示しされています。

十方微塵世界の
念仏の衆生をみそなはし
摂取してすてざれば
阿弥陀となつてまつる

東西南北、さらに東北や西南も含めて、またさらに上方と下方も加えて十方すべてのありとあらゆる世界に、念仏の衆生、私たちがいます。この念仏を称える私たちを、念仏になり、決して捨てぬぞと、その限りない光の中に摂め取ってくださいます。そして私たちが必ず往生成仏させていただくこの仏さまこそが、阿弥陀如来であります。

お仏壇を大切にするということは、この阿弥陀さまを中心とした生活を送るためでもあります。毎日の生活のなかで、念仏を称えて阿弥陀さまのお心を聞き、感謝申しあげるためにお仏壇があるのです。思い返せば、私たちの先人の方々は、来る日も来る日も朝一番にはお仏壇のお参りで一日を始められておられました。おいしく炊けたご飯は、どんなにお腹が空いていてもまず一番に仏飯としてお仏壇に供えておられました。労働で得た収入も贈り物でいただいたものも自分の懐に入れる前に、やはりまずお仏壇に供えてからいただいております。それらは全て私たちの生活は阿弥陀さまによって成り立っているということ、私たちのことを心から心配してください、常に一緒にいてくださる阿弥陀さまのことを忘れないためでした。私たちが先人を見習い、同じようにお仏壇の前で念仏を称えて、阿弥陀さまと共に歩む生活を送りたいと思います。合掌。

(1) ページ目鬼倉さんインタビュー(続き)

大学卒業後、若者、女性向けの雑貨店を経営する会社で仕事をしていたときに、国際交流員として市役所で仕事をしていた主人と知り合ったのですが、実は、知り合う前に、主人は私の実家のお寺を散歩がてら、観に行っていたことがあったそうに驚いていました。結婚のため2000年にミネソタに来て、現在では14歳、12歳、9歳、の二男一女の子育てをしながら、日本語補習校の高等部で国語科の教鞭をとっています。

—どのようにしてツインシティー仏教会にいられたのですか？

ミネソタへ移住して数年経ってから、偶然「光顔太鼓」というグループに会いました。お寺育ちの私にはもちろん「光顔太鼓」が頭に浮かび、お尋ねすると、本願寺派

のサンガとわかり、このミネソタにもそんな縁があるとは想像もしていませんでしたので、そのときの感動は忘れられません。

—なぜアシスタントになろうと思われましたか？

宮村開教使に、日本での経験をアメリカで生かしてみませんか？と勧めていただいたのがきっかけです。真宗寺院で育った自分が日本を遠く離れたところで、微力ながらも人のお役に立てるなら、と思いお受けしました。アメリカにきて10年がすぎ、英語もままならず過ごしてしまっていたので、自分には難しいと思いましたが、通信教育(JCC)のおかげで英語で再度、仏教や真宗の歴史、教義について学ばせていただきました。以来、セミナーやコンベンションに参加し、ミネソタでもたくさんの方々と会うことで、様々な経験をさせていただいております。2016年8月にアシスタントを拝命し、2016年12月に得度を受式しました。教師は子育てが一段落したら、目指したいと思っています。

—ツインシティーのサンガについて、活動などを教えてください。

ミネソタ州への日系人の移住は、戦時中に、ミネソタに米軍が日本語を教える機関を作ったことにはじまりました。その頃から、真宗のサンガの集まりも始まりました。長い間、キリスト教の教会を借りたり、日系人のコミュニティセンターを借りて、サーピスを行ってまいりました。今もミネアポリスのYWCAの会議室を借りて、サーピスを行っています。

数年前までは、サーピスの度に、シカゴから宮村開教使に来ていただいていたので、年に5回くらいしか集まることできませんでした。2016年に私を含めて3名のアシスタントが任命されたからは、アシスタントのみでサーピスを執り行うことができるようになりました。今年から、毎月1回、集まるようになりました。登録されているメンバーは、30から40家族くらいですが、サーピスにはその知り合いや友人も多く来られます。様々な宗教や文化のバックグラウンドの方達が来られています。

—趣味はありますか？

音楽は子供の頃からやっています。お寺育ちの子どもなので、最初にオルガンで弾けるようになった曲は、「恩徳讃」その次は「真宗宗歌」。それ以来、お寺の行事のたびに、仏教讃歌を弾いていました。音楽法が好きで、日本にいるときは、自坊のみならず、他のお寺さんにも出張演奏をさせていただきました。好きな曲は、「四弘誓願」と「礼讃歌」です。

(来月号へ続く)

法輪

2018年10月号

発行所
米国仏教団
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二〇一八年度教化標語

「平和と調和」

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第45回 中加教区で婦人会大会

9月14日から16日の3日間、第45回仏教婦人会大会が中加教区のバイセリア市、マリオットホテルで開催された。「Create an Endless Ripple (仏法ひろまれ波紋のごとく)」の大会テーマのもとに、全米より約230名の婦人会会員および関係者が集った。基調法話には大下ボブ名誉開教使(英語)と洗心仏教会の古本竜太開教使(日本語)が招かれ、人から人へ伝わるお念仏の教えや仏の慈悲心について話した。法話は日本語、英語の順番で行われたが、英語母語の聴聞者は「日本語でのお話はほとんどわかりませんでした、南無阿彌陀仏と何回も言っておられたのはわかりました、それが印象に残りました。」と念仏には言葉の違いを超えて弘まる力があることを学んだ。パネルディスカッションには、柴田キャンディン開教使(フロリダ州)をはじめ、開教使アシスタントや寺院活動に積極的に関わる20代の女性メンバーらがテーマについて語りあった。大会中、引退開教使の集い「一樹会」のミーティングも行われ、引退開教使と夫人方が旧知の仲を深めた。また、同会の活動を支援する仏教婦人会に感謝のしるしとして寄付金を贈った。



BWA conference at Visalia, CA

影絵で布教

9月中旬に影絵を用いた布教団「ともしえ」がロサンゼルス別院、サンマテオ仏教会、シアトル別院で影絵実演を行った。9名の若手僧侶で構成される同団は、手作りの切り絵を用いた劇と法話で、わかりやすく仏教の教えを伝えることで知られ、日本中の浄土真宗寺院に招かれている。今回は初めて海外の寺院での実演を行い、好評を博した。「光と陰のコントラストを使った切り絵が芸術的で、お話にひき込まれました。もともとみてみたかったです。」と参加者。切り絵の作り方のワークショップで、門信徒や子供たちと交流を持ち、皆が楽しんだ。



Tomoshie at San Mateo Buddhist Temple

ノースウエスト甲子園が開催

8月25日にタコマ市でソフトボールの試合が行われ、シアトル別院とタコマ仏教会が対戦、門信徒同士の親交を深めた。以下はシアトル別院輪番、楠克也開教使による記事。

昨年、柿原開教使と楠開教使の十年來の因縁から再開したタコマとシアトルのソフトボール大会(ノースウエスト甲子園?)が、今年も開催された。昨年は、強力な打撃陣を誇るタコマが打ち勝ち、優勝を飾った。

今年は、タコマに強力な助っ人として、湯川名誉(引退)開教使も参戦。第一試合は、レクリエーション試合として、老若男女多数のプレーヤーが、白球を追っかけた。乱打戦の末、シアトルが勝利する。第二試合は、一転して、緊迫

Softball Tournament at Tacoma



した試合展開となる。試合序盤にシアトルが2点を先制するも、中盤にタコマが1点を返す。楠開教使の粘りの投球で、最終回7回裏2アウトまでこぎつける。次の打者が、セカンドフライを打ち上げ、誰もゲームセットと思ったその時、まさかの落球。精神的に動揺したのか、その後、連打をくらい、同点とされ、試合は延長戦へ。延長戦は、2イニング限定とされた。最後の最後に、タコマがノーアウト三塁のチャンスをつかむも、期待の宮地開教使があえなく凡退。試合は、引き分けのまま終了し、両チーム優勝。今年から復活したトロフィーは、今年もタコマがディフェンディングチャンピオンとして持ち帰ることとなった。両チームのプレーヤー、観戦者合わせると、60名くらいの参加者であった。お互いの健闘をたたえ合った両チームは、一年後の再戦を約束して、帰途へ着いた。タコマ、シアトルのライバルストーリーは、今後も続きそうである。

総長コラム

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

この頃は情報が一瞬にして世界中を駆けめぐるようにになりました。またスマートフォンでいつでも写真を取ることができ、その写真も誰でも見られるようになっていきました。気をつけたいといけませんね。

ところで、二か月ほど前あるパーティに呼ばれて行ったのですが、そこで写真を撮られてフェイスブックでシェアされてしまいました。それは良いのですが、それを見たのでしよう、友達の一人が私に「これをあげます」と言って、アロハシャツをくださいました。その友達は、いつも私が同じアロハシャツを着ているようなので新しいのをプレゼントしてくださいました。私のことを案じてのことでした。

このように、私はアロハシャツをいただいたのですが、本当に当にいただいたのはシャツではありません。そのシャツに込められている友達の思いやりの心です。同じことが「南無阿彌陀仏」の名乗りに言えます。それはただの言葉ではありません。「お願いだから、本願を信じて念仏申してくれ」と言う南無阿彌陀仏の呼び声の中に込められている真

フライ鬼倉知永美さんインタビュー

1946年、ミネソタ州でツインシティー仏教会が発足。約70年間、アメリカ中西部の代表的都市で念仏の教えがシェアされてきた。現在、シカゴ中西部仏教会の宮村ロン開教使が兼務しており、近年開教使アシスタントの養成によって、毎月一度の法要が行われるようになった。今回はアシスタントの一人として活躍されているフライ鬼倉知永美さんにお話をうかがった。

ーご出身はどこですか？

福岡市早良区です。お寺は浄覚寺で、福岡教区早良組に所属しています。宗門校の福岡にある筑紫女学園高校と筑紫女学園大学を卒業しましたが、どちらも仏教が必須科目で、今になってとても役になっています。

ーアメリカにいられた理由は何ですか？

ミネソタ出身の主人が、福岡で仕事をした時に知り合い、結婚してこちらで生活をするようになりました。(二ページ目へ続く)



Chiemi Onikura

実の親の温かい心がそれです。ただ口に称えるのではなく、なぜ私たちに呼び声となって現れてくださるのかを聞かせていただかねばなりません。

暗闇の中をさまよっている私たちに、声となり光となって道を示してくださいます。全ての生きとし生けるものの親さまが、迷いを迷いと知らせ、帰って来いと呼びかけていてくださいます。人間として生まれ、真如の世界の呼び声に出会って、間違いのない生き方ができるのですと、親鸞さまや私たちの先達が表示していてくださいます。

シャツの話に戻りますが、私がかまた、この新しいシャツをいつも着るようなことがあれば、友達の好意を分かったとは言えないでしょう。友達の気持ちをお大切に、時々違うものを着るようにしたいと思います。

称名



Socho and Mrs. Umezu with BWA members