



WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

LIVING THROUGH A PANDEMIC

Teen Leads OCBC's Obon at Home as Tribute to Dad

Inspired by Late Father, Katie Ikemoto and Other Jr. YBA Members Plan, Create 22 Videos

By Jon Kawamoto
Editor, Wheel of Dharma

Katie Ikemoto's idea for the Orange County Buddhist Church's Obon at Home stemmed from the family's old Obon tapes.

"We got to laugh at our young selves winging the moves and seeing my youngest sister running around," said Katie, 17, a student at Yorba Linda High School. Katie, her mother, Teiko, and her two sisters shared laughs and good memories in watching the tapes — dating back to when Katie was in the second grade.

But there was clearly another, bigger inspiration in Katie's mind — her father, Klete Ikemoto, who passed away April 2 of COVID-19 at the age of 52. Klete's larger-than-life personality and his devotion as a "Girl Dad" was a key reason that the OCBC Obon at Home was created.

"To not have Obon this year, after 17 years of going, did not feel right, especially with my dad passing," she said. "So, after watching these videos, I got inspired to do something similar to what we had just felt, but through videos that



The Ikemoto family poses at the 2019 Gardena Buddhist Church Obon in top photo. Shown, from left, are sisters Kelsey, Katie and Kristi, mother Teiko and father Klete Ikemoto, who passed away April 2 of COVID-19. Above left and right are thumbnails of two of the 22 videos created by the OCBC Jr. YBA for its Obon at Home. (Ikemoto family photo courtesy of Ikemoto family and the Obon at Home photos are courtesy of the OCBC.)

FYI

To view the Orange County Buddhist Church's Obon at Home YouTube videos, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbZ-RjesGUxirFzu5FmCmWA>

could instruct people how to have Obon fun at home."

Katie pitched the OCBC Obon at Home idea to the OCBC Jr. YBA cabinet — and enthusiastic members responded by agreeing to volunteer to help plan and organize it. In all, about 20 Jr. YBA members got involved. She also talked with the OCBC Obon Committee for feedback and approval.

Katie utilized Google, Zoom, texts, and emails to carry out her plans — mindful of the need for safety and social distancing. She sent out a Google sheet with various foods — like the OCBC's signature dango — and activities she considered "an essential part of my Obon experience and our members signed up for the ones

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Mountain View Reimagines Obon to Honor Ancestors, Engage Community

MVBT Captures Spirit of Event — While Keeping Sangha Safe

By Julie Satake Ryu
and the MVBT Obon
at Home First Team
Mountain View Buddhist Temple

Obon is more than a summer festival — it's a community endeavor.

Each year, the Mountain View Buddhist Temple (MVBT) comes together to remember our ancestors, share our culture, meet

with friends both old and new, and pass on our traditions. We build booths, cook food, order prizes, organize volunteer shifts, prepare dressing rooms, arrange entertainment, set up the yagura and lighting, teach and practice odori, and so much more.

This year, with the effects of COVID-19 on public gatherings, it was clear we needed a new solution. Would we simply cancel Obon? What would a socially

distant Obon look like? Could we play bingo online? What would happen if we canceled the temple's biggest fundraiser? We needed answers, which meant reimagining Obon in a way that captured the spirit of the event while keeping our Sangha safe and healthy.

With about a month to prepare, the MVBT Sangha came

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Above, Russ Lee poses with the Putra the Panda coloring book created by Kristi Matsumoto. Above right, Marilyn Ozawa dances with her grandson. (Courtesy of Mountain View Buddhist Temple)

'Two Rivers and White Path' Is Relevant in Time of Two Pandemics

Pure Land Master Shan-tao's Famous Dharma Parable Holds Lessons in Interconnectedness

By Rosalyn Dong
Vista Buddhist Temple



The first pandemic is because of the

The well-known parable of the "Two Rivers and White Path" was told by Shan-tao, the fifth Pure Land Master. What does this parable teach us about life during this

COVID-19 virus, which has killed nearly 200,000 people to date in the United States and many more around the world. African Americans are dying in greater proportions than other ethnicities.

The second pandemic has been the widespread street protests against systemic racism, which targets African Americans and people of color for discriminatory treatment, particularly by law enforcement.

The horrific incident that was seen on media outlets and which led to outrage around the world was the brutal killing of George Floyd, an unarmed black man who was choked to death by a white police

officer in Minneapolis on Memorial Day.

As a descendant of enslaved people in our country, both pandemics are causing me increased mental and physical suffering. I can respond to the health pandemic by following the specific recommendations from medical authorities to stay safe. The second pandemic, protesting racial injustice, calls on all of us to support corrective actions to end systemic racism.

As I read Shan-tao's parable of "The Two Rivers and White Path," it seems the traveler's story is relevant to the times that

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INSIDE



The Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple is offering Senior Dana Deliveries each month during the pandemic. Special Obon themed red bags are shown in July. See Page 4. (Courtesy of Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple)



BISHOP'S MESSAGE

The Significance of Numbers 34, 41, and 121



By Rev. Marvin Harada Bishop of the BCA

1, 1899, is the BCA Founding Day.

It's easy for me to remember my anniversary date because it is also the anniversary of my ministerial career and the Founding Day of the BCA.

There is another way that the numbers are all connected. If BCA was never founded, I would never have become a minister.

These numbers are not the numbers to a combination for a safe, nor are they numbers for a secret code.

Over the years, in attending many BCA meetings, I have often heard people criticize the BCA, some even questioning why we had it.

Such thoughts have never occurred in my mind. Without the BCA, having been

the rest of the labor was all done by the members of the temple, who were basically all farmers in those days.

It's easy for me to remember my anniversary date because it is also the anniversary of my ministerial career and the Founding Day of the BCA.

knows how many years I will have to serve, and how many years I will have to live, and how many more anniversaries I will be able to celebrate with my wife.

But Sept. 1, 1899, will go way beyond my lifetime. It is my hope that even centuries from now, Buddhist history will note the significant date of when the BCA was founded and when Shin Buddhism came into this country.

But whether the BCA has a future that goes into the next centuries, depends on us, today. We are the ones who must dig deep into the teachings, then share those teachings with others, of all backgrounds, ages, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientation.

It is my hope that the BCA will someday observe a 200-year anniversary, and a 300-year anniversary, and on and on. I wish I could see it. What a celebration it will be.

founded in 1899, Shin Buddhism would not have been introduced to this country. It made its way to the Japanese communities that built and established churches and temples across our country.

My home temple in Ontario, Oregon, when it was built, had only one professional car-

churches and temples with their own hands.

Thanks to the fact that the BCA was started, and my home temple was started, I came to encounter Shin Buddhism, which eventually led to becoming a minister, and now even more unbelievably, to be serving as the Bishop of the BCA.

My life is limited and who

Reflections on the Middle Way



By Rev. Harry Gyokyo Bridge Buddhist Church of Oakland

and non-existence.

I love the flexibility of the Middle Way doctrine — it isn't tied to any one set of circumstances.

means "to persevere, to persist." Another form, "ganbatte," can be said to someone else and means, "Keep trying!" or "You can do it!"

Even though I don't like to use Japanese terms too much in my writing, both of these

regard for circumstances may not be realistic.

As you are probably aware, California experienced some unusual lightning storms in August that set off fires all over the state.

Fortunately, I have a box of N95 masks left over from the last round of fires, so when I go out I put one of those on. Driving around, though, I was surprised to see many people driving with their windows open! And no masks!

I always wonder: Do they not know about the damage the smoke can do to your lungs? Or maybe they don't care? Maybe there are other possibilities: Maybe they don't

Ultimately, I am led to the Middle Way by the Nembutsu. As much as I may try to walk the Middle Way, it is very difficult to truly accomplish skillfully on my own.

I have written about the Middle Way several times in my articles for the Wheel of Dharma. The Middle Way is to be found between two extremes.

The classic example is found in the life story of Shakyamuni Buddha, who became awakened after a life consisting of the extremes of pleasure and self-torture.

"Shoganai" (also "shikataganai") means something like "it can't be helped" or "nothing can be done."

are important Japanese cultural words and concepts. Together, I find them to suggest a possible Buddhist approach to life.

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Of Halloween, Masks, and Nembutsu Teachings



By Rev. Candice Shibata Buddhist Church of Stockton

I think I say this every month, but last month flew by! I still cannot believe that the year is almost over! However, before we ring out 2020, many of us may be reflecting upon this upcoming holiday season and wondering if we should or can spend the holidays with our extended family members.

I always look forward to seeing my family and

enjoying (too much) delicious foods at our family gatherings, which warms my heart and my tummy. The pandemic has definitely shed some light on the gratitude of being able to freely see our loved ones prior to March of this year.

Speaking of the holiday season, Halloween always seems to be the observance that kicks off the festivi-

ties at the end of the year with the abundance of shared sweets and candies. To be honest, I was never too fond of Halloween.

I believe that it is mostly due to being afraid of Halloween masks, which began early on in my life and continues to be a memory that still gives me shivers when I think about

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Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation for Wheel of Dharma, 09/09/2020

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many temples have not been able to put on their traditional summer fundraisers.

The BCA Executive Committee is acutely aware that this impacts the ability of the temples to raise funds to sustain the temple and to pay their ministers. Despite the hardships, many temples have been paying their BCA assessments. For that, I and the BCA Executive Committee are grateful.

The Effect of COVID-19 on BCA Temples and Assessments

This year, the BCA Executive Committee has been utilizing Zoom technology to keep in contact with temples and has tried to help temples weather the pandemic. The committee has held Zoom meetings since the pandemic started to go over many topics that it thought would be of interest to temple leaders. So far, the committee has put on Zoom meetings on reopening temples and on virtual fundraisers. As of Sept. 13, the committee is planning on another Zoom meeting in September dealing with innovative ways to hold services, have fundraisers and to help community causes.

These Zoom meetings are produced by the BCA Executive Committee. I cannot recall any time in the past when the BCA Executive Committee has met so often and produced events for our temples. The committee is trying to help our temples continue as best as they can by sharing success

stories from other temples and how they have been able to conduct services, raise funds, and continue to help their communities.

At the same time, the Social Welfare Committee, led by Celeste Sterrett, has changed some of its procedures to help temples. A new grant program has been started where Social Welfare funds can be used by

the donation amount expended by a temple up to \$3,000. Any temple interested in these programs needs to contact Celeste Sterrett or the Social Welfare Committee.

BCA has also been giving temples a grant of up to \$200 to pay for a Zoom account for the rest of this year.

The BCA Budget and Finance Committee is starting to

Executive Committee will be discussing if any changes will be made to the 2020-2021 dues assessments.

Like some temples, BCA was able to acquire money through the Payment Protection Program from the federal government. We will be making our application to forgive the loan soon and the money we received from the federal government would effectively become a grant.

Nonetheless, the Executive Committee is aware that some temples have had financial difficulties because of having to cancel fundraisers. Part of the reason that the committee is holding the Zoom meetings about how some temples were able to effectively raise funds this summer is for other temples to put on some type of fundraiser before the year ends.

The committee knows that many temples have been hold-

I hope that temples take advantage of the resources that BCA is offering for your temple's welfare. Please let me know if there is anything that BCA can do to help your situation.

any temple to get a \$5,000 loan for just about any reason (except paying BCA assessments) if they have been financially impacted by the pandemic.

The Social Welfare Committee has also agreed to help temples who are currently assisting community efforts to alleviate suffering by matching

formulate the BCA budget for 2021-2022. The preliminary calculations (and these are just preliminary) indicate that we should (at the very least) be able to keep the BCA dues the same as what we voted for in February in Renton, Washington. The Budget and Finance Committee and the BCA

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BCA President Raises Provocative Questions on Teachings, Racism



By Joanne Gozawa, Ph.D.
Palo Alto Buddhist Temple

Thank you, BCA President Dr. Kent Matsuda, for posing these provocative questions in the July Wheel of Dharma: "Do the teachings not resonate in the Black or Brown community? Or, are we racist?"

I take these questions as invitations to contemplate and to share thoughts in order to spark more discussion throughout our community. In that spirit, I offer the following.

First, there are two supporting questions I would like to add to the discussion: 1) What is white supremacy and how does it encourage interracial divides among people of color? and 2) Has transgenerational trauma about the experience of internment diminished the spirit of Japanese Americans, limiting their capacity to extend themselves beyond their families and temple relations?

I suggest that unless we take on these questions deeply, we will not be effective in supporting Black Lives Matter nor relevant to other people of color.

We Japanese Americans may be well intended to live the Buddhist ideal of non-discrimination. However, if we don't recognize that the very American cultural waters we swim in are racialized through the normalcy of white supremacy, we will unwittingly fall into complicity with its inherent colonizing dynamic of divide, control, and exploit.

This way of relating flies in the face of relation-

ulate only on behavioral transmission.

Oppression — being singled out as not the norm and subject to perpetual scrutiny and exploitation for being "other" — has its traumatizing effects.

Japanese immigrants (unlike enslaved Africans, who bear additional suffering) came with the hope of doing their best for the promise of earning economic security and acceptance — for being able to assimilate.

I wonder if the experience of internment makes even subsequent generations susceptible to unconscious fears that we

If Buddhism is confined to our individual awakening without cultivating awareness of social forces, will we truly awaken? Or will we simply foster a false humility, one that simply keeps us from unpleasantness and the ire of the master?

ships built on entrusting, mutuality and reciprocity, which arguably are both Buddhist and Native American wisdoms and surely can be found in other traditions.

This brings me to transgenerational trauma. While there is some work being done on actual genetic change because of historic trauma, I spec-

are perpetually vulnerable to losing our place at the table. To survive, we are compelled to keep our heads down. (While not standing out in an egoic way may be an ancestral inheritance, deliberately hiding because of trauma is something else.)

Do we harbor angst

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Seattle Japanese American Theater Collection

Seattle Betsuin's Shibai Exhibit Is Available Online

The Wing Luke Asian Museum in Seattle has created an online exhibit of Shibai-related items from the collections of the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple and the families of Shibai performers.

The exhibit includes background information, costumes and props from Japanese plays and entertainment performed from the 1930s through the mid-1980s.

To view the online Shibai exhibit, go to: <http://collections.wingluke.org/exhibits/show/shibai>

The exhibit was made possible through support from 4Culture, ArtsFund and the Guendolen Carkeek Plestcheeff Fund for the Decorative and Design Arts.

The Seattle Betsuin wants to extend a special thank you to the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to

the exhibit: Seattle Betsuin Rinban Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, Rev. Donald Castro, Rev. Masao Kodani, Ellen Hale, Sadie Yamasaki, Fusae Yokoyama, Stacy Nakata and Mark Yuasa, Susie Yamane and Kathy Hasegawa, Nina Tomita-Kato, Marianne Wick, Kasumi Yamashita, Joan Nakano, and Densho.

The Seattle Betsuin is grateful to the Wing Luke Asian Museum for its partnership and support. The museum is currently closed, but there are many ways to support it. For more information, visit the museum's website at <https://www.wingluke.org/> and click "Join+Give"

For more information and questions, contact Andrea Mano or Dana Nakashima of the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple at office@seattlebetsuin.com.



SEVEN PHASES OF A
DROWNING SAILOR:
A SHIN BUDDHIST PATH

Phase 5: Joy

Introduction: This is the continuation of the article from the September issue, the fifth in a series of seven segments.

By Rev. Dr. Kenneth Kenshin Tanaka
Professor Emeritus,
Musashino University, Tokyo
Former BCA minister and
IBS Associate Professor



Courtesy of Hiroshi Tarui

The ocean holds him up without any effort on his part and the sailor is thus overjoyed. Now the water feels warm and the waves have stilled. The ocean that was about to drag him under and drown him now caresses him. Knowing that he is all right, the sailor is filled with gratitude and happiness.

The sailor was about to drown. When he began to go under, he was struck with a sense of utter terror. Then, when he relaxed and let go, he found himself floating. How could he not be overjoyed?

Further, his sense of joy is accompanied by the realization that he was fine all along. He just didn't know it. The ocean has not changed at all. But because he stopped striving so hard, the sailor's relationship with the ocean was transformed. The sea changed from being a dangerous and frightening enemy to being a friend who embraced and supported him.

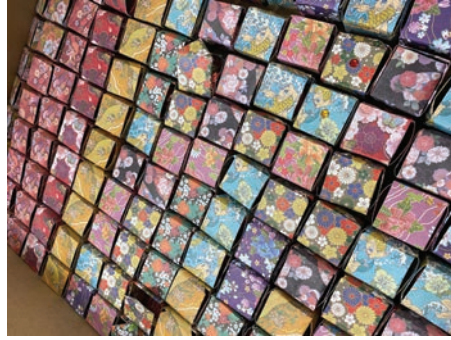
Shinran's encounter with the teachings of Honen (1133–1212) revealed a path of naturalness wherein all beings are embraced, even with their blind passions intact. Shinran expressed the profound joy that came upon him with this awakening:

Oh, how happy I am! My mind is firmly planted in the ground of Universal Vow (Amida's workings) and my thoughts flow in the Inconceivable Dharma Ocean.

Next: Phase 6: Swimming with Ease and Assurance

Editor's note: This article originally appeared in the quarterly magazine Tricycle: The Buddhist Review in its Spring 2019 issue. The illustrations were drawn specifically for the Wheel of Dharma.

Venice Offering Senior Dana Deliveries



Rev. Kory Quon, minister of the Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, and Aleyna Minamoto, of the VHBT's Sangha Initiative, pose with bags set for delivery to Venice Sangha members over the age of 70. Above left, special origami boxes created by a Girl Scout member, contained a special chocolate surprise inside. At below left, Marina Cub Scout volunteers are preparing to deliver the bags. (Courtesy of Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple)

By Aleyna Minamoto
Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

During these uncertain times, the Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple is working in a collaborative effort to strengthen its community outreach activities.

In an effort to support our Keiro members (age 80 and over), the temple organizations — including the Buddhist Women's Association, Girl Scout Troop 5325, Marina Cub Scout Pack 79, the Sangha Initiative, Senior Outreach, Adult Buddhist Association, Jr. YBA and Dharma School — have come together to offer Senior Dana Deliveries during this pandemic.

Three sets of deliveries have been made to date, with the most recent delivery of 136 bags. Deliveries also went out to the Venice Sangha members over the age of 70.

The delivery bags included practical items such as hand sanitizer, face masks and toilet paper, as well as food items such as fresh fruit, senbei, and snacks donated by temple Sangha members and friends.

Each recipient receives a card made by Girl Scout Troop 5325 and a message from Rev. Kory Quon.

The first delivery of 84 monthly care packages was made to our Keiro members in June and a second delivery was made on July 19. The

July Obon-themed bags included sacks of rice and ochazuke nori generously donated by Kubota Mortuary, and August deliveries included books donated by Hongwanji Place and a small plant to accompany the usual goodies.

This collective effort, safely bringing together young and old, is under the guidance of Rev. Kory and led by Aleyna Minamoto of our Sangha Initiative.

We hope to continue this program through the rest of 2020, or as long as we continue to face COVID-19 challenges.

As Rev. Quon noted: "Although we are physically apart for now, we will continue to practice compassion and stay connected together."

Rev. Shibata

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it. It may even contribute to my love of comedies instead of scary movies.

Despite the distance between our family in California and my mother's family in New York City, we still had many opportunities to visit with each other during vacations and are still very close.

I remember our cousin coming for a visit in California and while he stayed with us, he scared me (multiple times) with a Halloween mask of an old man. I am sure it was funny for my older cousin, but no matter how much I may have anticipated his teasing, it completely scared me!

Looking back, this mask was not gory or particularly scary. However, it was being caught off guard seeing him in that mask as an old man that scared me the most. As a young child, I may not have completely understood the reality of aging and how it affects all of us. I can only imagine how Siddhartha Gautama felt as he left the comforts of the palace for the first time and encountered the sights of an old man, an ill man and lastly, a man who

passed away.

During these outings, Siddhartha Gautama was accompanied by an attendant who revealed to the young prince that all living beings experience this process of life. These encounters, in addition to meeting an ascetic who was living a simple life, compelled Prince Siddhartha to leave the palace to search how to end suffering.

As humans we also wear masks that prevent us from seeing reality clearly, others and ourselves, which in turn causes suffering. These masks blind us in the form of greed, anger and ignorance. Sometimes our own insecurities create masks we wear so we can feel brave when facing others.

However, the teachings of the Buddha and Shinran Shonin can give us strength and comfort to help us to remove our masks of greed, anger, ignorance and insecurities to live our lives with gratitude and humility.

Rev. Shibata wrote this article for the October newsletters of the Buddhist Church of Stockton, Buddhist Church of Lodi and the Walnut Grove Buddhist Church. We are reprinting this with the kind permission of Rev. Shibata.

BCA Center for Buddhist Education Every Day Buddhism Committee Presents:

DHARMA IN YOUR LIFE

October 24, 2020
10:00 am to 12:00 pm (PDT) Zoom

	Rev. Marvin Harada Bishop, Buddhist Churches of America "Discovering Buddhism in Our Everyday Lives."
	Rev. Maribeth "Smitty" Smith Minister's Assistant, San Diego Buddhist Temple "Becoming a Buddhist Everyday: Realizing that the Dharma has been there all along."
	Rev. Jon Turner Resident Minister, Orange County Buddhist Church "Everyday Practice: Merging our Secular and Spiritual Lives."

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SOCIAL WELFARE FUNDS AVAILABLE

This year especially there are many nonprofit groups that are stretched to their limits that could use our help.

PLEASE Get an application for your favorite charity. At buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/socialwelfarefund/ We have 2 new programs available – Temple Charitable Match Program and the Temple Supporting Charitable Program. Contact Social Welfare Chair Celeste Sterrett @ dcsterrett@yahoo.com for more information.



Dong

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I am living through — cautiously avoiding illness and experiencing the trauma of racial injustices.

The white path is symbolic of the human journey toward awakening. In real life, the path is far from smooth and straight. Life can contain many difficult challenges, which are the sources of human suffering as taught by Shakyamuni Buddha.

I identify with the traveler approaching the white path. The white path provides a direction for me to navigate the twists and turns of life with spiritual guidance from my Shin Buddhism practice. The Nembutsu is the tether that keeps me on the path despite what is happening around me. The noise of chaos and disharmony can make it difficult for me to hear the voice of Shakyamuni encouraging me to go forward and Amida Buddha beckoning me to come as I am. Deeply entrusting in Amida Buddha's compassion, I can loosen my grip on my fears and anger brought on by the river of fire, which to me symbolically represents suffering caused by hatred, discrimination and inhumane treatment of Blacks.

When I look at the river of water, I see many hopes and dreams drowned

by the greed of ego-driven policies that keep Blacks, people of color and other marginalized cultures oppressed. Those privileged to be at the political, social and economic top seek to protect their positions and possessions by denying others the opportunities to gain what they enjoy.

They are like the wild beasts of greed, anger and ignorance who fail to see their interconnectedness to all beings. From their position of privilege, they cause untold pain and suffering to others by subtly or overtly perpetuating systemic racist practices.

The pursuing bandits represent the structural and systemic racism that has existed in our country since the institution of slavery. Laws meant to protect all citizens are applied for the benefit of some and to the detriment of others, leading to an unjust society.

Prejudiced behaviors pursue Blacks in all aspects of life: social, political and economic. The impacts of racial hatred, far too often, make life extremely dangerous for Black men, women, and children who continue to be murdered at the hands of white police. Blacks are even murdered in their own homes by police as in the case of Breonna Taylor in Louisville.

As a Black Shin Buddhist, I want to find answers as to how I can save myself from burning in the river of fire

(discrimination) and avoid drowning in the river of water (injustice).

By following the white path, I can find shelter in the Three Treasures of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Amida Buddha's Primal Vow gives me a rope to hold on to when life's circumstances become unbearable. I turn to Shinran Shonin, who was familiar with difficult times during his life. Shinran looked to Amida Buddha without failing.

Shinran writes:

"The liberating wheel of life is without bound; Each person it touches, it is taught, is freed from attachments to being and nonbeing."

So take refuge in Amida, the enlightenment of nondiscrimination."

— Shinran Shonin (CWS, P. 325)

The white path parable continues to be relevant to Shin Buddhists. The many dangers from the river of fire and the river of water are always nearby. Now is an opportune time to recognize our interconnectedness with others.

In Buddhism, we are reminded that Dharma lessons can be found everywhere. Currently, a Dharma lesson is coming from the Black Lives Matter protests in our nation and around the world. Black Americans, since the onset of slavery some 400 years ago, continue to endure unequal treatment.

Acts of discrimination diminish all of us. People of all ages and races are now supporting Black Lives Matter protests for long overdue racial equality.

In 1942, the lives of Japanese Americans did not matter when more than 100,000 Japanese Americans of all ages and walks of life were sent to concentration camps. There was no strong public outcry at that time that Japanese American lives mattered. The silence of many allowed the racist actions toward Japanese Americans to take place. Sadly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in anti-Asian racism.

In closing, I quote the last verse in the Shin Buddhist Life Principles:

"Rejoicing in the Compassion of the Buddha; Respecting and aiding all sentient beings; I will work towards the welfare of society and the world."

— Shin Buddhist Service Book, Page 9

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "We are all complicit when we tolerate injustice." May we not remain silent.

Namo Amida Butsu

Rosalyn Dong is a Minister's Assistant at the Vista Buddhist Temple. She is currently in her second year as a student in the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course.

Rev. Bridge

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have any masks or they just forgot to bring one. Actually, a cloth mask like we have been wearing because of the coronavirus isn't sufficient against smoke. So maybe they are just taking a break from being masked while they are driving. But shouldn't they shut their windows? To be honest, I think a lot of people just can't be bothered.

So how should I react? One way is to identify the extremes: I can get angry about what they are (or aren't) doing, or I can just shut up and not care. The Middle Way, I guess, is to shut up and care?! Especially if it is someone I care about. Or maybe my extreme is worrying about their

behavior when I should be more concerned with my own. It's much more important for me to see my own foolishness than to get upset about someone else's. It's a fine line. It is so easy to judge someone else for something I myself am guilty of.

Ultimately, I am led to the Middle Way by the Nembutsu. As much as I may try to walk the Middle Way, it is very difficult to truly accomplish skillfully on my own.

But the Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha are always reaching out to me, urging me along. If I am able to see that I am edging too close to an extreme, it can help me realize that I am not living my life in a vacuum — everyone around me is part of my journey, and we all have the Nembutsu as our guide.

Palo Alto

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that we will be associated with Black and Brown people and lose our status as the "model minority" (a politically motivated racial trope)? Do our anxieties make us deaf to the injustice experienced by African Americans and Native Americans whose cultures were decimated and whose suffering extends over hundreds of years? If so, divide, control, and exploit has had its way with us.

If Buddhism is confined to our individual awakening without cultivating awareness of social forces, will we truly awaken? Or will we simply foster a false humility, one that simply keeps us from unpleasantness and the

ire of the master? There are certainly those that are more enlightened and who reflect true compassion, but they are so rare.

With recent events, there is hope at least at the mundane level. (That is not to say that we foolish beings should not aspire to entrust in infinite compassion and wisdom even as we engage with the finite world.) It seems that more Americans (including white Americans) are coming to realize the cost, both material and spiritual, of white supremacy. What beliefs will take its place and how will American culture transform then?

Again, many thanks for your challenging questions. I hope that opportunities for mutual discussion amongst BCA and temples will be forthcoming.

BCA Center for Buddhist Education

CBE Seminars Online For All (SOFA)
FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - REGISTER FOR ZOOM LINK

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2020
11 am - 1 pm (PDT) Check local time zone

SHIN BUDDHISM & THE SUPERNATURAL

Speakers:
REV. JERRY HIRANO
Director, BCA Center for Buddhist Education
Resident Minister, Salt Lake City Buddhist Temple

Rev. Hirano was born in Salt Lake City, Utah in the year of the fire rooster. He attended the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple as a child where he is now the resident minister. He earned an M.A. in Buddhist Studies from the Institute of Buddhist Studies and completed his ministerial training at Chuo Bukkyo Gakuin in Kyoto, Japan. After receiving Kyoshi ordination from Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto, he returned to the U.S. as a BCA minister. His first ministerial assignment was at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin (6 years) before he returned to the SLCBT as its resident minister. Currently he is also the minister at the Ogden, Honeyville, and Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temples. For the past four years, he has served as a co-director, and now director of the BCA CBE.

Journey to the supernatural from a Shin Buddhist perspective.

- Do Shin Buddhists believe in the supernatural? Ghosts? Spirits?
- How do we discuss this topic if we don't believe in the 'soul'?
- What dharma teachings are we referring to, if any?
- Are there Shin Buddhist ghost stories? Do you have one of your own?

In the spirit of the Halloween season, questions like these will be explored.

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BCA CENTER FOR BUDDHIST EDUCATION & TECHNOBUDDHA PRESENTS...

Saturday, October 10
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Free & open to everyone

Good Trouble!

"I don't think slavery ended in 1865... I think it just evolved."
-Bryan Stevenson

Tens of thousands marched throughout America, and around the world, following the horrific death of George Floyd. What led to this seemingly sudden outpouring of solidarity? How do we deal with the burden of injustice, and of racial inequality? How can we awaken to our history of depraved indifference and brutality?

Richard Stambul
Attorney, past BCA President, Foot soldier in the Civil Rights movement, Trustee of the Institute of Buddhist Studies.

Rick Stambul practiced law for 41 years in Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, D.C., with a focus on issues of Social Justice. He was a past BCA President. He received his B.A. in History from UCLA, and a J.D. from Loyola Law School where he taught as a Teaching Fellow. He has lectured about his involvement as a foot soldier in the Civil Rights movement and the incarceration of Japanese-Americans during WWII throughout the United States. He is co-author of *Lawless Law Enforcement* (4 Loyola Law School of L.A. Law Rev. 161, 1971) discussing police brutality targeting the African-American community.

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President's Message

Continued from Page 3

ing virtual services during the pandemic. Please mention to the viewers on Facebook, YouTube and social media that your temple is accepting donations from those who are financially able to help support your virtual services.

I suspect that it will be well into 2021 before temples will be able to hold in-person services. Many temples may have a backlog of memorial services that will need to be held. However, it may be well into the summer of 2021 before enough people are vaccinated against COVID-19 and large gatherings are permitted.

Until that time, I hope that temples take advantage of the resources that BCA is offering for your temple's welfare. Please let me know if there is anything that BCA can do to help your situation.



OCBC

Continued from Page 1

that they felt were their favorites.”

Jr. YBA members had about a week to film and edit their videos. And other members “went above and beyond and volunteered to create our thumbnails, emcee or edit a few extra videos,” Katie said.

“I could definitely feel the whole Sangha come together for this Obon,” Katie said. “So many members volunteered to film and/or edit a video and that overwhelming support and diligence just revealed how special this Obon is to all of us.”

“The OCBC Obon Committee and board was asking me if I needed anything and truly helped to spread the word across OCBC and the JA community,” she continued. “Our Jr. YBA advisers, especially Carol Sakamoto, knew how important this was to our Sangha and especially me.”

In all, there were 22 videos created for the OCBC Obon at Home, which was held from July 17-25. Once the videos were shown on the OCBC Facebook page and on YouTube, the response was overwhelming.

“My mom showed me pictures of an OCBC basketball team making fans together over Zoom, children making dango for their family, families decorating their house and playing games together,” Katie said. “Seeing so many families cherishing time together is so rewarding to me.”

There have been nearly 20,000 views of all the videos and, of course, the food videos have proven to be the most popular.

“I was surprised that it reached many non-Buddhist JA organizations that often attend and participate in Obon,” Katie recalled. “Even within my own Yonsei Basketball Team, there was tremendous support and encouragement for the video series.”

OCBC Rev. Jon Turner praised the efforts of Katie and the Jr. YBA.

“The Obon at Home event at OCBC was a joy,” Rev. Turner said. “It was so much more than just YouTube videos, rather it was a youth-driven outreach program that replaced physical distance with social intimacy through a shared experience. The Jr. YBA reimagined Obon not as merely a festival or fundraiser but as an affirmation of culture, family and



OCBC Jr. YBA member Katie Ikemoto gives her thanks for the Obon at Home event in the concluding YouTube video. (Courtesy of Jon Kawamoto)

Buddhism.

“Katie Ikemoto was my point of contact and I was so impressed with her dedication and vision,” Rev. Turner continued. “It was executed with not only technical skill but also with heart and depth. This event confirmed to many that the future of our Buddhist tradition is in very good hands.”

Sakamoto said the idea “was to bring

“For me, Obon has just been something I have done every year,” Katie said. “It’s like a ‘tradition’ to spend that time dancing with my sisters, mom, and baachan while my dad and jiichan take pictures on the side. We dress up in yukatas for one of the days and wear happi coats for the second. As I have grown older, I have gotten to appreciate having my family there with

“The Obon at Home event at OCBC was a joy. It was so much more than just YouTube videos, rather it was a youth-driven outreach program that replaced physical distance with social intimacy through a shared experience.”

— Rev. Jon Turner, Orange County Buddhist Temple

some joy and some togetherness into our homes when it was needed most. With the pandemic and all the closures, it was nice that we could bring parts of Obon to everyone in the comfort of their homes.”

Sakamoto said that from the Jr. YBA, the focus wasn’t on fundraising, but on “bringing the spirit of Obon.” But there was an opportunity for the OCBC Sangha and friends and supporters to donate if they wished to and to buy specially made T-shirts.

Sakamoto also praised Katie Ikemoto. “It was a very special way that she could remember her father and dedicate the Obon at Home to him,” she said.

me as well as my friends dancing alongside me.”

For Katie’s mother, Teiko, the granddaughter of Rev. Zesei Kawasaki who served as the Gardena Buddhist Church minister from 1958 to 1968, Obon is an annual event that she holds near and dear to her heart.

Her family lived about two miles from the Gardena Buddhist Church. On July 12, 1980, an arsonist set fire to the church, which forced the church board to decide whether to hold Obon that year in August. In the end, the Obon was held.

“I remember distinctly that same smell of damp burnt wood while dancing on the

street,” Teiko said. “I am so grateful that Gardena was able to continue and put on Obon that year. Every year at Gardena, when I hear the first dance ‘Obon Odori,’ I tear up. All those thoughts and emotions really come back, along with my memories of all my grandparents and friends that I’ve lost on the way.”

On Nov. 20, 1981, the Gardena Buddhist Church was hit with a second arson fire — when the church reconstruction was about 70% complete.

There was a third small fire set in the church’s basement on Feb. 12, 1982, but it caused little damage. In July 1982, John Alden Stieber walked into the Gardena Police Department and confessed to the fires and other church fires, according to the 2001 Gardena Buddhist Church’s book of the GBC’s first 75 years.

“My girls understand how important Obon is to me and also to them,” Teiko said. “That’s why Katie felt so compelled to make sure Obon went on. Especially this year, when we would be dancing for our own Hatsuobon for Klete.”

Teiko said she was “proud, amazed, but not surprised that Katie was able to put this together.”

“It provided a chance for us to heal and endure our hardship,” she continued. “She got the idea and put it together in the true spirit of Obon and Dana — in order to provide everyone a chance to experience Obon and not miss a year of memories due to the pandemic. It took a lot of time, energy, organization, commitment and passion, but Katie was up to it. She never got down, and the stress was more a sense of urgency, not worry.”

“I think it really brought not only the OCBC members and families together, but reached our extended families and friends, really pulling the entire community together,” she said.

In retrospect, Katie said she was grateful to all those who made the OCBC Obon at Home a reality.

“With this being dedicated to my dad, the overwhelming support that was given to make this the best quality possible means so much,” she said. “I learned how much hard work it takes to run an Obon festival in person and appreciate all of the effort every year to make these experiences possible. I really hope my dad is proud of me and I am happy to see so many families enjoying Obon together.”

Mt. View

Continued from Page 1

together to plan an event to honor our ancestors and most important — to involve and engage our community.

More than 250 members came together and spent countless hours to create an Obon experience that was purely MVBT style. Our members invited us into their living rooms, back yards, kitchens and lives. They shared MVBT Cookbook recipes, yukata tips and tricks, Obon memories, and family stories.

Temple members recorded reflections, produced videos, served as tech support, shared Facebook posts, created logos and art, and authored a coloring book.

In true community spirit, other Sangha members wore masks, drove safely, and arrived on time to pick up “Obon in a Box” or bingo and pull-tab prizes. Others took care of themselves and the community

by staying safely at home and participating in the live broadcast.

In a time where all of us are feeling so separated, these members’ efforts brought joy and a sense of togetherness to our Sangha community as a whole. Despite being apart, we were able to dance together, play together, eat together, celebrate milestones, learn new things, watch musical performances, and pass on important traditions.

In addition to recreating the cultural and community aspects of Obon, we also had to reimagine our donation structure. Led by our desire to honor our beloved ancestors, we developed the idea of “digital dedication lanterns.”

These lanterns were offered in a variety of designs depending on the sponsorship level of the donor. This truly struck a chord within our Sangha and in our community and we ultimately received sponsorship for more than 530 lanterns to honor our loved ones, which will remain



Frances Sawamura makes her ginger chicken as part of the Mountain View Buddhist Temple’s Obon at Home. At right, a Sangha member picks up “Obon in a Box” at the temple. (Courtesy of Mountain View Buddhist Temple)

on our website until next year’s Obon.

This lantern concept inspired several other temples to adopt this idea and design their own lanterns in the spirit of Obon.

As we approach the upcoming year of temple activities, inspired by the resilience of our Sangha, we are opening our minds to new ways of gathering for services, Dharma School classes, meetings, events and



fundraisers. How can we redesign our activities to continue dancing, playing, eating, and celebrating together? How can we stay connected as we shelter apart?

We are both proud and humbled by the outpouring of support from within our community to embrace this entirely new concept, while honoring our Obon traditions.

The positive energy of everyone involved in Obon at Home was a huge inspiration. We at

MVBT are deeply grateful to our ancestors and founders to set the stage for a strong and lasting community. The energy and effort required to create Obon at Home proves that our Sangha is interconnected, energetic, talented, resilient and ready for any future challenges.

The MVBT Obon at Home First Team is: Sterling Makishima, Susan Yuen, Brent Izutsu, Elise Fujimoto, Donna Okubo and Linda Uyechi.

今月の法話

「仏さまの願く」

浄土真宗インターナショナルオフィス
畑中 阿難



Rev. Anan Hatanaka

早いもので、今年3月中旬から始まったステイホームから半年以上が経過しようとしています。特に一日の大半を自宅で過ごすこと多く、最近はやや季節感を感じることが難しくなってきたように思います。

そこで私は近ごろ、近くの朝市と申しますが、ファーマーズ・マーケットに行くと、季節のお野菜を見つけて、それを家に持ち帰って料理し、頂戴することで季節感を少しでも楽しむようにしております。つい先日は、アメリカで初めてモロヘイヤを見つけて、とても嬉しくなったこととございます。

さて私が、まだ京都に居りました時に、大谷本廟の掲示板で次のような法語を見つけました。お寺の掲示板には、よくハッとさせられる言葉が書いてあるものです。

仏さまの教えとは、私の願いを聞き入れて貰うのではなく、仏さまの願いをこの私が聞かせて貰うのが、仏さまの教えである。

ついつい、私たちは、神仏を前にすると、健康

や長生きを祈ったり、商売の繁盛を祈ったり、するものです。それは人としてごく自然なことだと思います。しかし、それは私から仏様へ向けられた私の願いである、と言えるかもしれません。

以前にこんな話を聞いたことがあります。ユニークな京都のタクシー運転手さんのお話です。最近の修学旅行は、団体行動だけでなく、4人くらいの小さなグループに別れて、そのグループをタクシーの運転手さんが京都案内するというものがあるそうです。

そのグループ行動の中で、修学旅行生が西本願寺を訪れた時のお話です。タクシーの運転手さんは、本堂に入り、阿弥陀様の前に座って、修学旅行生に、阿弥陀様の説明をする時に、こう説明されたそうです。

「この仏さまは、ちょっと変わっていてね。みんなの願いを聞いてくれない仏さまなんだよ。」一見何を言っているのだろうか？と思われた方もいらっしゃるかもしれません。しかし、この表現はあながち間違っていないかもしれません。

私はこの話を聞いた時に、ふと2年前のことを思い出しました。ちょうど2年前程のことです。京都の西本願寺宗務所から、職員の方がサンフランシスコに研修に来られるお手伝いをする機会がございました。

その研修の参加者のお一人に、まだ20代の若い女性の職員の方で、お寺のご出身ではあるのですが、お得度をされておられない方がいらっしゃいました。

彼女は、ご縁があって、研修の一環でサンフランシスコ仏教会にて、人生で初めてのご法話をしてくださいました。人生初のご法話です。とても緊張している彼女のお姿を今でも鮮明に覚えています。

そのご法話の中で、彼女は自身の過去の願いとして、ご自身の弟さんが高校受験をする時に、近くの神社に合格祈願に行って一生懸命に弟の合格を願ったことがあった。ということをご紹介されました。

しかし続いてその後、その自身の願いを振り返り、もし自分の弟が高校受験に受かったとしたら、その他に受験した方の中で、高校受験に落ちてしまっている、ということを知り、自分の願いの危うさを知ったというご法話をしてくださいました。

私はそのご法話を聞いて、とても優しい彼女の人の、お寺でこれまでたくさんお聴聞されてこられ、自然と身体にお念仏が身に付いておられることに変化が下がったこととごさいました。

私達の願いは一見、麗しい願いのように見えます。しかし、実はそれを反対の方向から見れば、自分の願い・欲望を叶えたい、という危うい一面を持っていると言えるかもしれません。

その願いには、私から仏さまへの方向性、ある意味で「私」と言う限界のある願いだと言えるかもしれません。実はその「私」の願いは、自分の思い通りに叶うことがなく、反対にその願いが叶わないことで日々苦しめられているのであります。

その「私」という方向性の願いから少し離れて、反対に仏さまから「私」に向けられている願いを聞いてみてはいかがでしょうか？

この「私」を他の誰と分け隔てることなく、そのまま抱き取ってくださる「私」に向けられた温かい大きな願いがここにあります。

ご門主様はご親教「念仏者の生き方」の中で、次のようにお示しくださいました。阿弥陀如来とは、悩み苦しむすべてのものをそのまま救い、さとりの世界へ導こうと願われ、その願い通りにはたきつけてくださっている仏さまです。この願いを、本願といえます。我執、我欲の世界に迷い込み、そこから抜け出せない私を、そのままの姿で救うとはたきつけてくださる阿弥陀如来のご本願ほど、有り難いお慈悲はありません。しかし、今ここでこの救いの中にありながらも、そのお慈悲とすじにお任せできない、よるこべない私の愚かさ、煩惱の深さに悲嘆せざるをえません。

私たちは阿弥陀如来のご本願を聞かせていただくことで、自分本位にしか生きられない無明の存在であることに気づかされ、できる限り身を慎み、言葉を慎んで、少しずつでも煩惱を克服する生き方へとつくり変えられていくのです。

私たちは、阿弥陀様の願いを聞かせていただくときに、この私に向けられた大きな願いに出逢います。それと同時に、私の願いの限界と危うさに気が付き、その願いこそが自分の執着・欲望であり、迷いの根源であることを知らされます。その姿は誠にお恥ずかしいことであり、またそこからなかなか抜け出せません。しかし、少しでも仏さまの願いにかなうよう、申し訳がないよう、自分の姿をできる限り振り返り、今生を仏さまの願いと共に生き抜かせていただく、それがお念仏をいただいた念仏者の姿ではないでしょうか？共に、お念仏しましょう。

南無阿弥陀仏

今月の法話

渋柿の渋がそのまま甘みかな



お彼岸が過ぎ、秋の訪れを感じようになり、秋の果物といえは柿ですね。BCAの門徒さんの中には、渋柿を甘く美味しい干し柿にされるのが上手な方

が多いです。この法語にあるように、干し柿は渋を取り除いて甘くするのはなく、太陽の光と秋風を受けることによって渋が甘く転ぜられるのです。太陽と秋風は阿弥陀様のおはたらき、柿の渋は私たちの煩惱に喩えられ、煩惱にまみれた私たちが、仏力によって浄土に生まれ仏になる身に転ぜられることが表現されています。親鸞聖人や蓮如上人は、浄土真宗の教えは「煩惱を断せずして涅槃を得る」とお示しくださっています。干し柿を作るときや食べるときにこの法語を思い出し、お念仏しましょう。

ダイヤルザダルマで

日本語法話

コロナウイルスの世界的な感染拡大を受けて数ヶ月に渡って外出が制限されている中、BCAでは電話をすれば5分間の法話を聞くことができる「ダイヤルザダルマ」プログラムがはじめられている。コンピューターをあまり使わない門信徒の方から好評を得ているこのプログラムに、5月から日本語の法話が増えられた。(800) 817-7918に電話すると、原田総長の声で英語の方は1を日本語の方は2を押すように促される。2を押すと約5分間の日本語の法話を聞くことができる。法話は毎週水曜日午後1時に更新される予定。

オレンジ郡仏教会の日本語 浄土真宗クラス

オレンジ郡仏教会のワンドラ開教使がオンラインでの浄土真宗のクラスを開講した。参加希望の方はワンドラ開教使まで連絡。

ズームで真宗土曜講座

参加希望の方は名前・所属寺院名・メールアドレスを記載して、rewondra@ocbuddhist.orgまでお申し込みください。ズームのリンクを送付します。みんなで楽しく学ぶ真宗講座を創っていきましょう。

法輪

2020年10月号

発行所
米国仏教団
Buddhist Churches of America
1710 Octavia Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
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二〇二〇年度教化標語

「尊び敬ぶ心」

あの記事をもう一度!

法輪のバックナンバーがBCA
ウェブサイトにて読めます。
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総長メッセージ

34、41、121という数の意味

米国仏教団 総長 原田 マービン



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada

この3つの数字は金庫の組み合わせでもないし秘密の暗号でもありません。これは私の人生において重要な意味を持っている数字で、すべて9月1日に関係しています。

最初の数字34は、私が開教使として勤めてきた年数です。1986年9月1日から開教使としての生活が始まりました。二つ目の数字41は結婚してからの年数です。妻と私は1979年9月1日に結婚しました。三つ目の数字121は、BCAの歴史の年数です。1899年9月1日はBCA創立記念日です。

これらの記念日で、私が開教使となつてからの年数と、BCAが創立してからの年数は覚えやすいのですが、結婚してから何年目を覚めるのは苦勞します。私たちは1979年という奇数年に結婚したので、結婚して何年になるのかを計算するのが少し面倒なのです。ですからたまに1980年まで結婚するのを待つべきだったと思うことがあります。

私はこの三つの数字はすべて関わりあつていふように思います。もしBCAが創立されていなかったら、私は開教使になつてはなかつたでしょうし、もしBCAが創立されていなかったら、私の故郷であるオレゴン州オタリオにあるお寺は存在

しなかつたでしょう。そうなる、私は妻のゲイルと知り合うことも出会うこともなかつたでしょう。彼女の両親は、私が高校生の時にジュニアYBAのアドバイザーでした。そして義父は、私が開教使になるための重要なきっかけとなったIBSのサマーセッションへの参加を最初に勧めてくれたのです。長年にわたり、多くのBCAのミーティングに出席する中で、BCAを批判する声をよく耳にしてきました。中にはなぜBCAが必要なのかと疑問に思っている方もおられ、その中にはBCAへ納める賦課金が高すぎると思われている方や、金銭的な支援をしなければならぬような大きい組織は必要ないと考えている方もおられます。

けれども私はそのような考えを起したことはありません。1899年にBCAが設立されてなければ、浄土真宗はこの国に伝わっていませんでした。全米各地に教会や寺院を建てたことで、日本人コミュニティに教えが伝わりました。多くの寺院は、文字通りメンバーの手によって建てられたのです。

私が住んでいたオレゴン州オタリオにお寺を建立した時、プロの大工は一人しかいませんでした。お寺のメンバーは、当時はほとんどの方が農業関係の仕事をしていたので、畑で仕事をしていた冬の間、皆が協力してお寺を建てたのです。

私の叔父はお寺の建設中にはごから落ちて腕を骨折しましたが、叔父だけでなくBCAのお寺の多くにはそのような話があります。1世や2世のパイオニアたちは、文字通り自分の手で教会や寺院を建ててくださったのです。

私は、BCAが創立され、そしてオタリオにお寺が建つたおかげで、浄土真宗に出会い、それで開教使になり、さらに信じられないことにBCAの総長を務めることになりました。

私の人生には限りがあり、あと何年開教使を続けられるか、あと何年生きられるか、あと何回結婚記念日を妻と一緒に祝うことができるのかはわかりません。うまくいけば金婚式はできると思っています。

しかし、1899年9月1日は私の人生の限りをはるかに超えています。何百年後には、BCAが創立されて浄土真宗が米国に入ってきた重要な日として、仏教の歴史に記録されることになるでしょう。

けれども、BCAが次の世紀へと続いていくことができるかどうかは、今の私たちににかかっています。私たちは、教えを深く掘り下げ、その教えを、あらゆる背景、年齢、民族、性別、性的指向の人々とシェアしなければなりません。

私は、BCAが二〇〇周年、三〇〇周年を迎え、その後もずっと続いていくことを願っています。その時はきっと素晴らしい記念日として祝われていることでしょう。

米国に響くお念仏の声

④

日系2世、ルーシー・陽子・ハマイさん(81)は1942年から1948年まで、両親、姉とユタ州トパースのキャンプ(強制収容所)で暮らした。入った時が4歳、暮らした。サンマテオ仏教会は戦争で閉鎖され、本堂は残つてなく、日本人は週末ごとにそれぞれの家に順番に集まり、法座を開いたという。やがて、その集まりが組織化され、本堂の再建へと向かった。苦勞して築いた財産を戦争で失った日本人らは、貧しい中、お金を出し合い本堂を建てた。現在、サンマテオ仏教会の体育館として使われている建物が当時の本堂だ。ハマイさんの姉はこの本堂で仏前結婚式を挙げたという。ハマイさんは今、カリフォルニア州

パークレー市に暮らす。「戦争で私たち日本人は何もかも失つたが、メンバーの人たちは『何とかなる』という前向きな人が多かった。その根底には、阿弥陀さまはいつでもこの私を見守っていてくださる、ありのままの私を受けとめてくださる、という浄土真宗の教えがあったと思う」と話す。仏教会の存在は再起を目指す日本人らの心の依りどころとなった。

オークランド

仏教会メンバーの吉田房江さん(92)はワシントン州タコマ生まれの日系3世。祖父がタコマ仏教会や日本語学校の世話だったこともあり、吉田さんは5歳の頃からお参りし、仏教会に親しんでいた。

「親鸞さまのお話もよく聞いた」という。14歳の時に戦争が始まり、カリフォルニア州北東部ツールレーキのキャンプに家族7人で収容された。クリーニング店の借金の返済がようやく終わり、両親が「さあ、これから」と意気込んでいた時だった。

終戦後、キャンプを出ても行く当てもない一家が知人の誘いで向かったのは、一時的な受け入れをしていたカリフォルニア州オークランド市のオークランド仏教会。「住む家もなく、行く当てもなく、どこへ行ったらいいのかと思つていたら声をかけてもらった。お寺と聞いて安心した。私たちにとつて、お寺とはそういう存在だった」。オークランド仏教会の仏教青年会活動に参加し、後に夫となる日系2世の栄一さん(故人)と出会った。

今もサンデーサービス(日曜礼拝)に参拝し、仏教会で月2回開かれる敬老会の会計担当の役員を務める。2人の息子も同仏教会の理事。家族そろって仏教会と関わる吉田さんは「お寺は特別な存在ではなく私の生活の一部。普通に家にいるのと同じ感覚で過ごせる場所」と笑顔で話した。(年齢は昨年9月取材時)



Mrs. Lucy Hamai



Mrs. Fusae Yoshida