

WHEEL OF DHARMA

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In Gratitude: 74th Anniversary of the BCA Honoring Our Past

On July 8-9, 2017 former internees of the Topaz Concentration Camp and their families came together in Delta, Utah, some 140 miles south of Salt Lake City, to commemorate the formal opening of the Topaz Museum. This museum commemorates the World War II American concentration camp which eventually was called the Topaz Relocation Center.

Most of the residents of the Topaz concentration camp were from the San Francisco Bay Area. However, the significance of the Topaz camp for all modern-day members of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) is that it was the headquarters of the Buddhist Mission of North America (BMNA), predecessor of the BCA, due to the fact that its religious leader, Bishop Ryotai Matsukage, was interned there.

In the spring of 1944, wartime church leaders of the Buddhist Mission of North America came together at Topaz and decided that it was time to change its name because of the circumstances. The BMNA, its ministers, and many members were seen as un-American, untrustworthy aliens. The name was changed to Buddhist Churches of America. The BCA was incorporated within the State of California, even though

the organization and its members were forbidden from living in most of that state.

The Articles of Incorporation were signed by members of the BMNA's Board of Directors, all of whom were residents of Topaz. On May 2, 1944, the articles were filed with the State of California.

From mid-1944 until the end of the war and the return of BCA Headquarters to San Francisco, Toshio Yoshida, Yoshitomi Fukushima, and Albert Hirota served as interim presidents of the new BCA organization.

The Topaz camp was recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 2007. Today's campsite includes 634 acres of land left pretty much untouched since the end of World War II, and now owned by the Topaz Museum Foundation. Still visible are the foundations of some barracks, latrines, and mess halls, in addition to remainders of what were well-tended gardens.

Seventy-four years ago, who could imagine what challenges, uncertainties, and thoughts of the future were harbored in the minds of the then-imprisoned leaders of what was to become our Buddhist Churches of America?

This year marks the seventy-sixth anniversary of the intern-

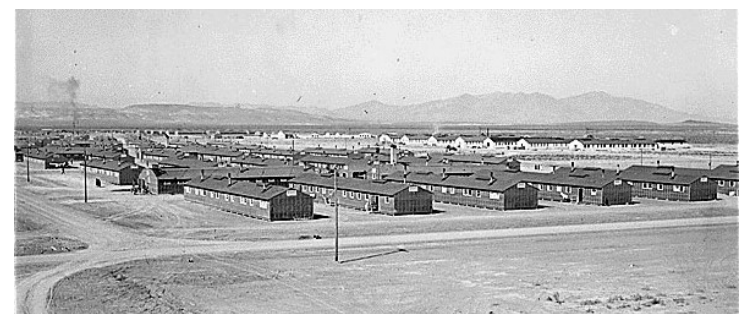
ment of Japanese and Japanese Americans during World War II. In honor and recognition of the fortitude of the men and women who were concerned about the future of our national BCA organization, even while imprisoned and with so much uncertainty in their own lives, let us again gratefully recognize those BCA members whose names appear on the articles of incorporation:

Haruki Kuroiwa, James Yamakoshi, Mitsuru Yamada, Tsuneko Fujimoto, Tony Yokomizo, Tamotsu Tani, Margaret Tomiko Wakayama, Gerry Wakayama, George Kido, Teruyoshi Nomura, Yoshitomi Fukushima, Arthur Takemoto, Henry M. Nakatomi, Masaki Yamashita, Albert Tadashi Hirota, Kaoru Yoshifuji, Yasuko Ishida, Motoki Kudo, Henry Nakatani, Shizu Nakatani, Hideo Kawahara, Masako Hanyu, Frank Shimamoto, Joe Morimoto, Yoshimi Ishimoto, Hiroshi Neishi, Shigeo Kano, Yutaka Henry Nakayama, and Shigetoshi Mikami.

In deepest gratitude to all of the above for their vision and dedication to the *Nembutsu* teaching, and for enabling us to celebrate the 74th anniversary of the Buddhist Churches of America this month.



This obutsudan (above) was constructed for Reverend Ryotai Matsukage, Bishop of the BCA, by Shinzaburo and Gentaro Nishiura at the Heart Mountain War Relocation Center in Wyoming. It was used at the Topaz Relocation Center in Utah, where the Buddhist Churches of America was incorporated. See the article at <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2015/2/12/buddhist-altars-and-poetry-3/> Below: View of Topaz. Photo from National Archives.



TechnoBuddha Conference 2018: Incorporating Buddhism into Our Daily Lives

By Calvin Tamano, Buddhist Church of Sacramento and Kiyumi Nishida, Buddhist Church of Florin

The 11th Annual TechnoBuddha Conference was held at the Jodo Shinshu Center from March 9-11. The annual event is a weekend full of opportunities for young Buddhists, ages 21 to 39, to find a community of like-minded individuals and to introduce Jodo Shinshu to those who are interested in learning. This year's conference theme was centered around the philosophical difference between sympathy and empathy. Former participant and this year's keynote speaker, Rev. Candice Shibata, resident minister of the Buddhist Church of Florin, shared her personal struggles and how she used sympathy and empathy to help her gain perspective, which ultimately led her to become a minister with the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA).

This year's conference was kicked off with a service dedication by Steve Tamekuni (San Jose) to TechnoBuddha friend and former attendee Aaron Lee, who



Chenxing Han's writing workshop was inspired by the late Aaron Lee, author of the *Angry Asian Buddhist* blog and TechnoBuddha alumnus who passed away last year. Left to right, front row: Cynthia Yasaki, Danica Li, Chenxing Han (holding a photo of Aaron Lee), Amy Doi, and Kevin Paul Takahashi. Back rows: John Mullins, Hondo Loblely, Akiko Rogers, Funie Hsu, Tadao Koyama, Asuka Nagase, Jessy Wei, Enrique Galvan Alvarez, Alison Tominaga, and Madeline Kubo. Photo by Tim Shimizu.

passed away from cancer last year.

The three-day conference featured an array of workshops. Some were hands-on, like calligraphy and tea ceremony. Some were mind and body centric, like nutrition, meditation, and "The Joy of Impermanence." And some focused on the application of Buddhism around us: Buddhist Global Relief, Buddhism in Prisons, and Buddhism 101 led by our very own BCA Bishop, Rev. Kodo Umezū. Also included

this year was a special writing workshop focused on the *Angry Asian Buddhist* blog, that was dedicated to our late friend Aaron.

This year's chair, Kiyumi Nishida, also from the Buddhist Church of Florin, said of the event, "This year's conference was great! We had a really good mix of newcomers and returning attendees. And we had a

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Bishop's & President's Message: Two Ways to Support the BCA

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop
and Rick Stambul, BCA President

We deeply appreciate the *Dana* that the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), and the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) has received from so many of you during the past year. Donations from people like yourselves demonstrate that members who sacrifice to support our noble mission of sharing the Wishes of the Buddha with all people can help to meaningfully spread the dharma in America.

We now appeal to every member for your support. We are writing this message together to reach out to you with one voice to express our gratitude and to reintroduce our two fundraising efforts, namely, the Dana Program and the 1000 x \$1000 x 4 Program.

The Dana Program. Initiated by the BCA Joint Development Committee in the fall of 2015, the Dana Program is designed to consolidate and replace all other fundraising projects. It is intended to help all BCA temples by creating those conditions necessary to promote the dharma.

The BCA Endowment Foundation mails out a Dana Program request letter once a year in response to which you can donate any amount using your credit card. Simply go to our home page at buddhistchurchesofamerica.org, scroll down to

"Dana Program," and click. You may then designate the full amount of your donation to BCA and you may choose to share a portion of your offering with any one of our 60 BCA temples.

We have raised approximately \$360,000 including \$31,000 for our temples. We need your help to continue our work. Kindly consider forming a small committee to promote the Dana Program and help us to spread the dharma by ensuring BCA's future operations as well as also supporting our local temples.

The 1000 x \$1000 x 4 Program. This is a grassroots fundraising effort initiated by Rev. Marvin Harada. He suggested that if 1,000 people donated \$1,000 a year for four years we could repay all the funds that we borrowed to build the Jodo Shinshu Center. Since this was never an official BCA fund raising project, we did not promote it as we should have. Even so, more than 55 people stepped forward and have contributed a total of about \$185,000. If 950 more sangha members and friends will join them, we could be completely free of debt for the Jodo Shinshu Center building. We now proudly announce that the 1000 x \$1000 x 4 Program is an "official" BCA fund raising project and we ask every one of you to join us.

Continuous Fundraising Effort

The BCA is a non-profit, volunteer religious organization. Consequently, we

1000 X \$1000 X 4
Wishes

A grassroots effort to replenish \$4 million for today, tomorrow and beyond

A number of Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) members, leaders, and friends have graciously responded to Rev. Marvin Harada's informal challenge at the end of 2014 for a "Thousand a Year" goal to total \$4 million. The Jodo Shinshu Center is a wonderful facility that has served many benefits for our entire BCA. While it was originally built to serve the Jodo Shinshu Center, it is now being used to serve the entire BCA. The thought occurred to me: What if we could get 1,000 people from our entire BCA to donate \$1,000 a year for 4 years? There are 24 million dollars here to be raised by all good old and for good old to receive that much more funding from the Jodo Shinshu Center through the Endowment! That is the challenge behind the "Thousand a Year" goal. This is a challenge to ourselves to ensure that the BCA Endowment Foundation will have adequate funds to keep supporting our "Dharma Mission."

Rev. Marvin Harada suggests: "Thousand a Year" goal. We have given over \$175,000 to support the BCA Endowment Foundation! Find out how you can help support this effort by contacting the Development Office.

BCA Endowment Foundation
1710 Octavia Street
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must rely on the kindness of our members and our friends in order to operate. Reflecting on our history, we should recall that our pioneer members courageously stepped forward to carry on the responsibility of preserving and propagating our Jodo Shinshu teachings. We are hopeful that you will match the commitment and sacrifice of Shin Buddhist members over the last century and exhibit our respect and gratitude to them by supporting that vision.

Namo Amida Butsu



By Rev. Seijo Naomi Nakano,
Guadalupe Buddhist Church,
San Luis Obispo Buddhist Temple

Starve the ego, feed the mind
—anonymous

It was a cold and blustery day when I was driving from a doctor's appointment. The wind was howling and the falling rain obscured my vision. It was dreary and I was hungry. My stomach was growling and complaining. I stopped at a local restaurant, famous for their coffee shop. It was full of tourists, visitors and regular customers. I was seated and proceeded to order breakfast.

I ordered sausage and eggs

with hash browns and toast. Of course, I had to have my cups of coffee and water. As I waited for my meal to arrive, I sat and listened to the sounds of dishes and conversations. I heard laughter, a baby crying and many foreign languages. I watched as people came and went.

My meal finally arrived. I said "*Itadakimasu*" and dived straight into it. I stopped listening to what was around me. My focus was on that plate of food. It was yummy! Finally, my stomach was full, my brain stopped thinking only of food, and I was a happy camper. This food fed my brain and nourished my body. One could call this meal "food for thought." That is when it dawned on me what I wanted to write about for this article. This sounds like the beginning of a bad mystery novel.

I like food. I enjoy cooking and baking. When people sit

at my table, find pleasure with each other and share a meal, that is *Nembutsu* at work. The guests are able to relax, listen to each other and to truly be present with each other. It seems food does bring people together in peace, joy and harmony.

When we are hungry, our thoughts of course turn to food, and we forget everything else. Our body tells us when we should feed it. But what indications are there to feed the inner self, heart and mind? We reach for "snackies" to feed that empty spot we feel during the midday slump, but what do we reach for to alleviate our suffering and sorrow? There is always something that can feed that hunger for the truth.

We attend temple to hear the Dharma. However, after a while we stop listening. It is important to hear the words and to allow the action of these words to feed, guide and direct us, but we find some excuse to

forget the words of the Dharma once we leave. Yet these words can nourish what we crave. We must examine what we are and what is missing in our lives. In the meantime, it is *Namo Amida Butsu*. This recitation can give us that "midday snack" to truly look at our true self.

The blind passions of greed, anger, ignorance, impatience and self-centeredness prevent us from seeing and digesting the teachings. Our hunger or craving can be satisfied. It is the teachings and *Nembutsu* that can help diminish those blind passions that torment us. However, it is up to each individual to thoroughly seek answers to what we truly are. It is a difficult task. Sometimes what we realize and discover about ourselves is scary. We can only continue to try seeking those answers of what the truth is. Until we satisfy that hunger, it is *Namo Amida Butsu* that will feed our hearts and minds.

Sangha Award Ceremony Held on Scout Sunday

By John Hamakami,
Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple



Sangha Award Ceremony participants: (left to right), Rev. Don Castro, Nicholas Hamakami, Evan Kato, Brent Nakashima, Gabe Shen, Jacob Lee, and Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki. (Not pictured, Rev. Sala Sekiya and minister's assistant Jason Yokoyama). Photo by Corey Murata.

The first Sunday of February is known as Scout Sunday by the Boy Scouts of America, in recognition of the 12th point of the Scout Law, "A Scout is Reverent."

On February 4, 2018, five scouts from Boy Scout Troop 252, sponsored by Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple, received their Sangha Award as part of the Scout Sunday service. The recipients were Nicholas Hamakami, Evan Kato, Jacob Lee, Brent Nakashima, and Gabe Shen.

The purpose of the Sangha Award is to give the Buddhist scout practical guidance in the spiritual pledge of the Scout Oath and Law.

The program consists of class time, attending Sunday services, participating in Young Buddhist Association seminars, field trips, and community service. Notable field trips were to the Seattle Asian Art Museum exhibit on Buddhism and a visit to the Vancouver Buddhist Temple. The curriculum covers Buddhist history, rituals and etiquette, Jodo Shinshu, and history of the Buddhist Churches of America, and culminates in leading the chanting of *Shoshin Nembutsu Ge* and *Wasan* during Scout Sunday.

After two years and countless hours of study, the Sangha class students would like to thank all the instructors for sharing their knowledge and for their dedication to the Sangha Award program.



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Submission Guidelines:

Articles should be around 500 words, typed, double-spaced in Microsoft Word. The editors may ask for longer articles, or split in multiple parts at the editors' discretion. Documents should be sent as an email attachment to WODEditor@bcahq.org. Please include the article's author or contact, temple, and suggested title. Images, preferably in color, must be submitted as 300 dpi JPEG or TIFF in separate attachments and never embedded in a Word document. PDF is not preferred. The editors reserve the right to crop images and to edit articles. Articles and news releases are reviewed for publication on the 10th of every month.

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Individuals may mail, email, fax or phone in change of address requests and subscription cancellations to the BCA National Headquarters at the address above. Please include the following: Subscriber's name (as written on current subscription); address currently being used; New address and/or name changes; requested action (e.g. change of address, name, subscription cancellation, etc.); phone and/or email of person requesting the change; date of request. Please allow up to 8 weeks for changes to take effect. BCA local temples should send update requests as usual.

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President's Speech: Imagine



By Rick Stambul, BCA President

This text is excerpted from the address presented at the IBS/CBE Symposium, "Religiosity and Social Consciousness in the Buddhist Churches of America" presented in conjunction with the 2018 BCA Ministers Association and National Council Meetings in Sacramento, CA.

Imagine, just imagine for a moment that it's February of 1942 and we're all living on the west coast of the United States. Two months earlier the Japanese government bombed Pearl Harbor, killed thousands of Americans and the U.S. officially entered World War II. Your family has been ordered to leave all your possessions behind,

each person to bring only what he or she can carry, and prepare to be removed from your home. In February 1942 the historical trauma of evacuation and imprisonment had not yet occurred. No one really knew what was in store for those ordered "evacuated" or the suffering that would be endured by those imprisoned and by those not yet born but who were raised by those camp survivors.

What would your family do? What would you want your friends, and your neighbors to do if it was your family, your brother and sister, your cousins, your own parents who were being threatened? What would you want your Buddhist church to do? Would you expect your Buddhist temple, your minister, to take a position? To speak out? Equally difficult is the question of what you would do to protect your neighbors and friends if they were the targets of such an order. What would your friends want you to do?

These were difficult and powerful questions in 1942, and they remain equally important in 2018. Do we wait for Muslim-Americans, for example, to be

deported solely because of their religious beliefs before we speak out? When should we begin talking about such questions in our churches?

Should the Buddhist Churches of America, should Shin Buddhists address these social and moral issues? When is the time, if ever, when we as Shin Buddhists, as members of BCA, as people interested in the civil and religious rights of all human beings, should speak out? Is the danger too great? Let's try to look at the moral imperative here.

Historically, has BCA and its religious leaders publicly taken action on issues of social consciousness? The answer is a resounding, "Yes!" One significant example of political and social action is highlighted by the life and actions of Rev. Kenryu Tsuji, who served as Bishop of BCA from 1968 to 1981.

I think BCA ought to be "roaring like a lion" when it comes to ending suffering. [...] Ending our suffering, the suffering of our friends, that of our neighbors and our countrymen. BCA should stand at the forefront in speaking out against hatred, against racism, and brutality, against the conditions of suffering visited on innocents who are homeless or living in poverty.

Let me be clear. I do not

advocate BCA's involvement in politics, in supporting or opposing political candidates. It is my vision for BCA that as Shin Buddhists we ought to be teaching our members about the moral and social issues of our day from a Buddhist perspective as Rev. Dr. Bloom, and former BCA Bishop Tsuji both so eloquently urged. We ought to be talking about the pressing moral concerns of our society. We ought to be finding ways to be of service to those suffering in front of our eyes: the homeless, the impoverished, those without medical care, those less fortunate. It's the discussion that's important, not the conclusion.

This is a crucial moment for the future of Shin Buddhism in America and in the world. In half a century will we prosper and grow or vanish down to a handful of large-city churches forever turned inward? We should proclaim that we stand for the end of suffering as a noble goal for which everyone is invited to join us. That is why BCA should be in the vanguard of discussion, of teaching, and of action to address some of the great social and moral issues of today's America. To me, this is part of what American Shin Buddhism is all about.

Our concern with the social consciousness rising in America

and in the world today resonates with many of our members and, I believe, also touches many people seeking a new religious home. We can move forward, and we should. I don't think this is the only way for BCA or Shin Buddhists to move ahead in the 21st century [...] but it is one of the things we should aggressively pursue. I believe that the issues of racism and hate lurk just beneath the surface of our society. Every generation must understand the historical truth that the battles for religious freedom and racial tolerance are never over.

I think we should also build bridges of understanding and cooperation with other religious and civic organizations to join in addressing the great moral and social issues of our day. BCA would be well-served to establish deep connections with other national religious groups who may be willing, in times of racial and religious persecution, to come to the aid of their fellows.

I believe in the promise of *Namo Amida Butsu*: that through every person who suffers from homelessness, poverty, inadequate medical care, who suffers from racism and hatred, that BCA and our leaders can offer hope and relief through our religious ideals. Together, we can move mountains... stone by stone.

Remembering Elson Snow

The Buddhist Churches of America announces with deep sadness that long-time BCA *Wheel of Dharma* editor Elson Snow passed away on February 28, 2018 at the age of 92. Elson devoted his time and talents to the *Wheel of Dharma* from the beginning of the publication in the 1970s and continued for at least 25 years.

Elson became interested in Buddhism in the 1950s. He met his future wife, Patricia Anne Hayes, at a Buddhist function in San Francisco.

Elson and Patricia had three children. "Sometimes it was difficult being a 'Caucasian Buddhist family' in the '60s and '70s," daughter Tani noted. "Other kids and families just didn't understand how we could be Buddhists."

Long-time friend Jerry Bolick remembers often hearing Elson say, "I'm not a scholar." Bolick went on to say, "Maybe Elson was a bit controversial from time to time, but he was humble and dedicated to both *Nembutsu* life and the BCA."

Elson devoted years to the BCA's prison outreach work, translated and wrote commentaries on Buddhist topics, and dabbled in poetry as well.

Friends are invited to attend memorial services for Elson at the San Mateo Buddhist Temple on May 19, 2018 beginning at 1:00 pm.

Elson's wife Patricia passed away in 2013. He is survived by his three children and three grandchildren.



The Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) announces with deep sympathy the passing of BCA Minister Emeritus Rev. Akira Tairyō Hata on March 27, 2018.

Rev. Hata was born on December 1, 1920, the eldest son to Rev. and Mrs. Taigan Hata in Saga-ken, Japan. He

In Memoriam: Rev. Akira Tairyō Hata

came with his mother to San Francisco in 1923 while his father was serving at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco.

Hata sensei spent much of his youth in Oakland. He graduated from UC Berkeley and later received a Master's Degree from Tokyo University. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1953.

Rev. Hata received Tokudo ordination and Kyoshi certification in 1955 and was given Kaikyoshi status in 1959. He was assigned to the Fresno Betsuin (1959-1965), Placer Buddhist Church (1965-1976) and West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple (1976-1989), retiring

from active ministry in 1989. In retirement, Rev. Hata assisted at the Buddhist Temple of San Diego and the Buddhist Fellowship of Concord Dharma School.

Rev. Hata was married to the late Catherine Itatani Hata, who passed away in 1998. He is survived by their daughter Dr. Tissa Uchiyama, her husband Christopher, and two grandchildren, as well as three brothers and three sisters.

A funeral service co-sponsored by the BCA and the Buddhist Church of Oakland was held on April 14, 2018 at the Buddhist Church of Oakland.



Above: Overseas Bishops and BWA representatives gathered outside the Hongwanji. Below: Overseas district delegates respectfully participated in the engi (formal procession).

Remembering Eshinni-ko: World Buddhist Women Gather at Hongwanji

Buddhist Women's Association (*Fujinkai*) representatives from Hawaii, Canada, South America, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), and Japan gathered at the Hongwanji in Kyoto from April 12-14, 2018 for a special representatives' meeting of the World Buddhist Women's Federation, and to attend the 750th Memorial Services for Eshinni-ko, wife of Shinran Shonin.

Also in attendance were Bishop Eric Matsumoto (Hompa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii), Bishop Tatsuya Aoki (Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada), Bishop Mario Kajiwara (Jodo Shinshu Honpa Hongwanji South American Buddhist Federation), and Bishop Kodo Umezu (BCA).

In addition to Bishop Umezu, the BCA was also represented at the meeting and services by Mrs. Janet Umezu, Mrs. Susan Bottari, Mrs. Terrie Masuda, Mrs. Janice Doi, Mrs. Peggy Okabayashi, and Rev. Michael Endo.

A highlight of the Eshinni-ko Memorial Service was the opportunity for the overseas district delegates to take part in the service's *engi* (formal procession) from the Amida-do (Hall of Amida) to the Goei-do (Founder's Hall).

Amidst warm spring weather and a beautiful blue sky, the Goei-do reverberated with the sound of the *Shoshinge* as *Fujinkai* members from all over Japan filled the Founder's Hall to pay tribute to and honor the life of Eshinni-ko.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

SPECIAL FEATURE: This is a translation of the original Japanese article which appeared in the March 2018 issue of the Wheel of Dharma/Horin. It is a memoir on the occasion of the retirement of Rev. Koshin Ogui, former Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America.



My Memoir: Life in America

By Rev. Koshin Ogui, BCA Minister Emeritus

This April, I will be leaving my life here in America and returning back to Japan. Since arriving here back in October of 1962, 56 years have passed. It seems just like yesterday when I arrived in San Francisco after a nine-day boat trip. I was only 22 years old.

During Japan's Meiji era, my grandfather, Gankai Ogui, wanted to emigrate to America. However, members from his temple Sennen-ji in Kyushu's Saga Prefecture stopped him. I, however, was allowed to come to America because I was thought to be the reincarnation of my grandfather.

Arriving in America, and after receiving orientation at the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, I was assigned to the Los Angeles Betsuin. Being my first assignment, I was a nervous wreck. My English Dharma talks didn't go as well as I wanted. I had a hard time carrying on conversations in English. I had car accidents, and even ended up having fights with my superiors. Being deemed "a good-for-nothing and impertinent guy," I was reported to and received a telephone call from the Governor in charge of the Hongwanji International Department. "I hear that you may have gone off the deep end. Is this true?" the Governor asked. I responded by saying, "Since the day I was born, I've always been a little different," to which the Governor responded with big laugh. "Don't worry, you'll be ok. Just be careful of women and your temper," he told me, and ended the call.

Had it not been for the intervention of then Somu (Hongwanji Governor) Rev. Jokatsu Yukawa, father of now retired Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) minister Rev. Kosho Yukawa, I sincerely believe I would not have survived here in America.

After that incident, I was placed under the supervision of Bishop Shinsho Hanayama, Ninth Bishop of the BCA and worked at the BCA Headquarters bookstore. It was at this time that I met Roshi Shunryu Suzuki. Roshi Suzuki was serving as the head minister of San Francisco Soko-ji Zen Temple. Seeing how miserable I was, he encouraged me to attend his zazen meditation sessions.

Feeling depressed and sorry for myself, all I could think about was committing suicide. I consulted with Suzuki Roshi, and he yelled at me saying, "Why are you in such a rush to die? Death is inevitable so when your time is up, your time is up! So you can die then. The Jodo Shinshu teaching tells us that we are allowed to live our life in the life of Amida Buddha. How presumptuous and arrogant it is of you to think that your life is simply your life alone!"

To this day, those words continue to live on in me. The whole Roshi, zazen meditation, and hippie era experience was incredible, and the stories can go on and on. But I'll leave those for another opportunity.

In April of 1965 I was reassigned to the Oxnard Buddhist Temple. The temple's membership was 80+, with 40% being Japanese American farming families. A railroad track ran behind the temple, and each time a train went by, the minister's residence would shake. Sometimes, dust from the bedroom ceiling would come falling down. I thought to myself how luck it was that I was single at the time.

Along that same street, there were Mexican restaurants and bars. During funerals, we would hear Mariachi trumpets blaring, which would turn the services into a sad and happy occasion.

Three years went by and the Oxnard Buddhist Temple began to grow. As a result, a Christian church was purchased in a new part of town to become the new and larger temple. One of the Nisei members told me that in order to propagate Buddhism here in America to Americans, you need to go back east to study. Accepting his advice, I went to Connecticut and enrolled in the Yale School of Divinity, majoring in Christianity.

During my breaks at Yale, I enjoyed taking trips to New York City and visiting with Rev. Hozen Seki at the New York Buddhist Church. It was a two and half hour drive from New Haven to New York. Rev. Seki, in 1936, after establishing the Arizona Buddhist Temple, flew over the Rocky Mountains to New York in a single propeller plane with the aid of a Nisei pilot friend. At that time, he carried the six-character *Na Mu A Mi Da Butsu myogo* scroll in his bosom.

While at Yale, one of my fellow students and friend who happened to be a Catholic father, fell in love with a Jewish woman. After much contemplation, he decided to leave the priesthood and pursue a career as a college professor. I was honored to officiate over the wedding ceremony for my friend and his wife. Even today, this memory remains fresh in my mind. The Catholic father was so impressed with the Buddhist teaching.

During the summer break of 1968, I had the opportunity to spend time with my three great senior teachers, Rev. Seki, Rev. Gyodo Kono, who established the Midwest Buddhist Temple, and Rev. Yoshiaki Tamai, known as the Shinran Shonin of the Rocky Mountains. During that gathering, Rev. Kono said, "America is so big!" Upon hearing this, Rev. Seki said, "No, the world is big!" In response to this, Rev. Tamai proclaimed, "No, the world of Amida Buddha is infinite!" The three teachers then went on to agree that we need to free Shinran Shonin and Rennyo Shonin from the jail of traditional concepts and think about what they would do or say if they were here in America today. Hearing these three teachers say that Buddhism and the Jodo Shinshu teaching needs to be

shared widely and broadly in a way that is understandable and convincing, I, as a 28 year old, was so impressed and moved and by their words. This feeling continues to be my challenge.

In July of 1970, I was assigned to the Buddhist Church of San Francisco by Bishop Kenryu Tsuji, an assignment that would extend for seven years. Rev. Daijyo Moriyama, Zen master of the Zenshu Soko-ji Temple, Rev. Ryugaku Sugahara, great master of the Nichiren Hokke-ji Temple, and I who became known around town as the three great priests, drank a lot together, and enjoyed many wonderful conversations. It was a great experience for the three of us who came from different religious backgrounds to work together. Although the three of us were so different, amazingly I can honestly say that we were able to find unity in the Dharma.

While serving in San Francisco, I experienced divorce. Deeply regretting how I let love turn to anger, I decided to return to my original heart and mind of propagating the Buddha-dharma and re-focus my energy on my ministry.

In January 1977, at my request, Bishop Tsuji transferred me to the Cleveland Buddhist Temple in Ohio. I was 37 years old. There, I was warmly welcomed by a congregation of around 20 mainly Japanese American members. Apparently, most of the Japanese American members had relocated back to California.

Arriving in the midst of Cleveland's frigid winter season, the first thing I did was purchase a heavy coat and a pair of boots and began shoveling all of the snow around the temple. Having been born and raised in Kyushu, this was the first time I ever had to shovel snow. At Sunday service, there were only around 14-15 members in attendance.

For the first year, I kept a low profile. But after one year, I began to think about what I could do for the temple. "If you're able to persevere for 10 years, people will gather..." It was these words of Suzuki Roshi that resonated in my heart.

That scolding I received from Suzuki Roshi reminding me that I live the life of Amida served as a sense of encouraging warmth that could help to overcome even the coldest of feelings I was experiencing. Out of every ten telephone calls I would receive at the temple, six would be inquiries about meditation. At first, I would respond by saying that we don't do meditation in Jodo Shinshu. Then I thought to myself, if I turn away six out every 10 people who call the temple, we would go out of business.

Remembering the zazen mediation lessons I received from Suzuki Roshi, I decided to introduce simplified meditation sessions using Namu Amida Butsu as a koan paradox. I took on this challenge with a feeling of uneasiness and yet a burning passion to do something new; "...to challenge oneself amidst the uncertainties of work and life, and not be afraid to try new things or make mistakes along the way!" It is these words of wisdom that served as my compass to direct me and encourage me along the way.

"...there is no other path than the path of gassho."

— Rev. Koshin Ogui

I received so many questions and heard so many statements such as, "Who is Amida-san? Is he Chinese or Japanese?" "Recite hard-to-pronounce words such as Namuamidabutsu and you'll become enlightened, or you'll become a Buddha, or you'll be born in the Pure Land. You must be joking!" "People are nothing but defiled and ignorant beings who are unable to achieve enlightenment." "This type of understanding seems so negative and miserable sounding!" "Buddhism is a teaching about enlightenment. It is a positive religion and a teaching that helps to instill courage, isn't it?" "Buddhism is a religion of awakening, not one of simply believing."

After approximately five years, our gathering grew to over 70 people, and we named our group the Zenshin Sangha. We created positions such as Junior Dharma Assistants and Senior Dharma Assistants to help teach and lead others. I think it is fair to say that it is from these gatherings that the BCA's Minister's Assistant Program emerged.

From Cleveland I would drive two and one-half hours to Columbus, then from Columbus to Detroit, Michigan which took another three hours, and then another three and one-half hours back to Cleveland. Winter days were more dangerous than others. But it was 15 years of truly getting a feel for what it meant to propagate the Dharma.

In September of 1992, I was reassigned to the Midwest Buddhist Temple in Illinois, and finally in April of 2004 I was elected the 13th Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America.

During my eight years as Bishop of the BCA, I was guided by my motto: "...to challenge oneself amidst the uncertainties of work and life, and not be afraid to try new things or make mistakes along the way!" I was also inspired by those powerful words of my three wonderful senior ministers, Rev. Yoshiaki Tamai, Rev. Hozen Seki, and Rev. Gyodo Kono when they said, "...we need to free Shinran Shonin and Rennyo Shonin from the jail of traditional concepts, and think about what they would do or say if they were here in America today." Because of these words, I was able to move forward with overwhelming energy even amidst many uncertainties. Supported by the sacrifices, kindness, thoughtfulness and patience of so many people, I am able to say how deeply grateful I am for my 56 years of truly meaningful ministry.

In closing, there is no other path than the path of gassho. "In life, nothing is a waste, and nothing happens without meaning." This I can say with conviction.

Gassho.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!



Sunday Service at Knott's Berry Farm: "Sangha Teens Had a Blast!"

By Rev. Kaz Nakata, Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and Sangha Teens Ministerial Advisor

On Sunday April 1, the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (aka Nishi) organized a special Sangha Teens outing to the Knott's Berry Farm Boysenberry Food Festival in Buena Park, California. Sangha Teens from six chapters (Oxnard, West LA, Pasadena, Senshin, San Diego, and Nishi) participated.

Sangha Teens is an age-based Buddhist group for middle school youth. Sangha Teens events are one of the fun ways kids can participate in Temple activities. In fact, many non-Sangha Teens children joined the Knott's Berry Farm event as potential candidates to the group.

Before entering the amusement park, we held a Sunday Service in the parking lot. We chanted *Juseige* and I shared a Dharma message on friendship. Two youth ministerial assistants, Kevin Kujiraoka (Oxnard) and Marley Uyemura (Nishi) kindly helped with the service. Some of us enjoyed the roller coaster, and we got together for *gassho* before lunch. The weather was very good, and so was the food. There was also boysenberry wine tasting, so some parents had fun, too!

Lani Matsumoto Receives Fred Nitta Scholarship

The Fred Nitta Scholarship was established in 1964 through the generous donation of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Nitta of Watsonville, California. It was their intention that this scholarship to be awarded annually to honor and recognize an outstanding Buddhist youth.

The 2017 recipient is Lani Masumoto from the Pasadena Buddhist Temple. Lani is currently a freshman at the University of California San Diego majoring in Economics. She is the daughter of Ray and Lynne Masumoto, and the granddaughter of the late Reverend Ken Yamaguchi.



Lani Masumoto (left) received the Fred Nitta Scholarship from Rev. Gregory Gibbs and Pasadena Buddhist Temple President, Jeannie Toshima. Photo by Lynne Masumoto

OUR JODO SHINSHU TRADITIONS: Gotan-e

Gotan-e is the celebration of the birthday of Shinran Shonin, who is revered as the founder of Jodo Shinshu (Shin Buddhism). He was born on May 21, 1173. He dedicated his life to teaching the *Nembutsu* practice until he passed away in Kyoto on January 16, 1263 at the age of 90.

2019 BCA Calendar Photo Contest

The World Buddhist Women's Convention will be held in San Francisco on August 30 to September 1, 2019. Shin followers from throughout the world will be gathering under the theme "Live the *Nembutsu*" at the San Francisco Marriott Marquis Hotel.

Throughout the history of Shin Buddhism and the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), our "obaachans" (grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, daughters and female friends) have been the underlying foundations of our temples and responsible for passing on the *Nembutsu* teaching to succeeding generations of followers.

What better way to honor this heritage and the World Buddhist Women's Convention than by honoring all of the "obaachans" of our BCA temples.

The 2019 BCA Calendar theme is "Arigato Obaachan!" (Thank you Grandmother!). We are announcing a photo contest for photos to include in the 2019 calendar. Contest participants are asked to submit photos of your Buddhist Women's Association (BWA) members (and "obaachans") in scenes of their activities, past and present, and representative of their hard work at your temple. **Photo submission deadline is May 15, 2018.**

Please note the following photo details:

- ALL photos must be in landscape digital format of the highest resolution possible (minimum 350 dpi @ 11" X 8 1/2").
- Collages (multiple photos) may be submitted as one calendar page BUT they must be of the same highest resolution quality as individual photos and the collages must come pre-positioned and camera-ready when submitted.
- Please limit your submissions to one calendar page per person.
- Send photos to: Judy Kono: jkono@bcahq.org and include your name and temple affiliation.
- The June 2018 BCA National Board will cast their votes and the winning 12 photos will be in the 2019 BCA Calendar.
- All submissions become the property of the Buddhist Churches of America.

BCA Calendar Committee: Michael Endo and Judy Kono



Lady Takeko Kujo co-founded the Buddhist Women's Association (Fujiinkai) in Japan in 1904.

2018 BCA Educational Events

Programs subject to change.

Events at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) unless otherwise noted.

May 12 ~ Spring Japanese Dharma Gathering, 10 am-2 pm. \$15 donation includes lunch. Dharma talks will be given by International Ministerial Orientation Program ministers Rev. Etsuko Mikame, Rev. Hibiki Murakami, and Rev. Noritaka Imada. To register, call Yumi Hatta at (415) 370-1477 or email yhatta@bcahq.org. Sponsored by BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE).

July 1-7 ~ BCA Summer Youth Retreat at the JSC. A new Dharma and youth development opportunity for high school students. Sponsored by CBE.

July 20-21 ~ Summer Pacific Seminar, "Shinran's View of Enlightenment." Keynote speaker: **Rev. Dr. Jérôme Ducor**, Shingyoji Temple, Geneva, Switzerland. More Views of Enlightenment from **Ayya Tathaaloka** (Theravada), **Dr. Paula Arai** (Zen), and **Mayumi Kodani** (Tibetan). Register online at buddhistchurchesofamerica.org or download form and register by mail. Co-sponsored by the Institute of Buddhist Studies and CBE.

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



American Academy of Religion Thanks IBS and JSC for Hosting 2018 Regional Meeting

By Jonathan Lee, PhD, Past-President, AARWR and Associate Professor, San Francisco State University

On behalf of the American Academy of Religion Western Region (AARWR), its Board and its members, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) and the staff and volunteers at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC). Please accept our deepest and most heartfelt gratitude for generously hosting the AARWR annual meeting at the JSC on March 23-25, 2018.

Throughout the weekend, I heard many participants express appreciation and awe for the kindness that was in action and on display by IBS staff, leadership, and students. This reveals that IBS is achieving its goal of cultivating human kindness inspired by Buddhist ethics and values. IBS is, by far, the best and most generous and thoughtful host AARWR has had. IBS's hospitality and attention to details resulted in producing an enjoyable and successful AARWR annual meeting for everyone involved. AARWR members remarked on the warmth and positive energy of the IBS campus, as well as the hospitality shown to members who stayed at the JSC.

This conference was record breaking and history making for AARWR because we had the highest number of registered participants. Overall, the two-day conference was an overwhelming success:



AARWR Past-President Jonathan Lee, PhD (left) and Dr. Scott Mitchell, Dean, Institute of Buddhist Studies.

there were 210 registered participants, 48 panels, 185 papers, and over 90 audience members for the keynote speech delivered by Dr. Jane Naomi Iwamura entitled "Meditations on Loving-kindness." In addition, we had international participants from the United Kingdom, Canada, and Norway, and domestic participants from across the United States. Participants included faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, community activists, artists, filmmakers, and religious professionals from various faith traditions who share an interest in religious studies.

Thank you for assisting the AARWR achieve its mission of:

Promoting the academic study of religion in California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands;

Mentoring students in the

profession of religious studies;

Creating opportunities for research, dialogue, and engagement for religious studies scholars; and

Fostering awareness of the importance of religious studies for understanding contemporary issues.

At this moment in time, it is urgent that we keep religious dialogue civil and public so as to cultivate a more kind and just society. On this note, IBS and AARWR share a common goal.

Again, please accept our most heartfelt and wholehearted thanks! Thank you for sharing your space, your classrooms, sleeping rooms, food, kindness, staff, work, labor, effort, and overall generous hospitality.

With sincere appreciation, and on behalf of the entire AARWR Board of Directors, and all of AARWR members: thank you!

BUTSU BUTSU...

By Brian Kensho Nagata,
Managing Editor

Of course, we all know about karma.... Oftentimes, unaware people will use terms like "good karma" or "bad karma" *but* Buddhists know that karma is karma, there is no such thing as good karma or bad karma...

Guest speakers for *Hanamatsuri* (Buddha's Birthday) services were in short supply since *Hanamatsuri* (April 8) actually fell on Sunday this year and most ministers could not leave their own temples to speak elsewhere. Therefore, I was graciously invited to pinch-hit at the Twin Cities Buddhist Association's (TCBA) *Hanamatsuri* service in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Twin Cities Sangha is one of the BCA's original fellowship groups. Their founding goes back to the days of World War II. During the war, the U.S. military set up a Japanese language program at nearby Fort Snelling, where hundreds of Japanese-speaking *Nisei* were recruited into the MIS (Military Intelligence Service) to teach Japanese to their fellow American military personnel. At the end of the war, most *Nisei* returned to their former homes, but there were some who decided to make their new home in Minnesota. Since that time, BCA members have moved or been transferred to Minneapolis due to their careers, and the TCBA sangha has continued to thrive all these years.

We all know about the "BCA grapevine." Everyone chuckles at how, if you dig deep enough, everyone in the Japanese American community is somehow related; but little did I expect to have karmic connections with probably *half* the membership of the Twin Cities Sangha.

One member was born and raised in my town *and* she turns out to have been a childhood classmate of my mom nearly 80 years ago! Another lady told me she was raised in the town next to mine and she knows my aunt from their "young days." *But* to establish even closer karmic relations, she received her Korean DVDs from my aunt's sister—who happens to be *my mom* (again)! Another TCBA member is the sister of a college roommate of mine.... And then my mom was (concentration) camp neighbors with one of the "main" clans of TCBA who had lived near Bishop Umezu's in-laws' farm in my hometown before World War II.

Let's see, did I get all my karmic connections? Oh yes, on my dad's side of the family, his uncle was in the MIS and he became life-long best friends with a *Nisei* he served with at Ft. Snelling, whose family was also one of the founding members of TCBA. Now I am good Dharma friends with that family too!

We often hear of the Buddha's Infinite Wisdom and Compassion. If you're like me, I have a hard time understanding what "infinite" represents because of my *very limited* brain capacity. In the same way, karma is also infinite and beyond my limited human understanding. Thank you TCBA for showing me the wonderfulness of the Dharma *and* what karma is all about! *Nam Man Da Bu...*

TechnoBuddha

Continued from Front Page

ton of workshops that touched on so many different topics. I hope everyone had the opportunity to learn a little more about sympathy and empathy and using that to understand and help those around us. And of course, incorporating that and Buddhism into our daily lives."

Next year's 12th Annual TechnoBuddha conference will be chaired by San Mateo regular, David Chin and San Jose's Laurie Handa. Regarding next year, Laurie said "The TechnoBuddha Conference is a great opportunity for young adults to connect with Buddhism, but more importantly, with our peers. We're really looking forward to continuing that next year." The conference will take place on March 22-24, 2019.

The TechnoBuddha committee continues to be grateful to the Jodo Shinshu community, and for the support of the employees and volunteers at the Jodo Shinshu Center and the Berkeley Buddhist Temple. Judy Kono has always been the heart of this event, and we're extremely thankful for her help and guidance while planning throughout the year.

For any questions or comments, please visit our Facebook page, [facebook.com/technobuddha.conference](https://www.facebook.com/technobuddha.conference), or send an email to chairs@technobuddhaconference.org. And please tell your friends and family about us! We look forward to meeting and hearing from you. See you next year on March 22!

Over 200 Attend Enmanji Firestorm Benefit

By Julene Leach,
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

In response to the massive destruction caused by the Northern California wildfires in 2017, Enmanji Buddhist Temple held a fundraiser benefit luncheon on February 24 to raise funds for eight families and individuals who were severely affected. Over 200 people came to show their support.

Contingents of people came from Buddhist Churches of America temples and churches, including Alameda, Southern Alameda County, Oakland, Berkeley, and Marin. We also had a group of students from Kagoshima, Japan who fit the benefit into their plans and made a donation. The Honorable Patrick Slater, Mayor of Sebastopol, also attended.

It was a fun-filled day. A wide array of American and Japanese food and drinks were served. Enmanji Temple member Kevin Iwamura, and his wife Lindy Day performed on American Indian flute and guitar. Internationally known composer Jason Farnham played a wonderful selection of songs on the piano, and our own Sonoma County Taiko performed.

Our families have gone through great devastation and appreciate everyone's kindness and generous *dana* during these past six months.



Organizers, guests, and beneficiaries at the event included (from left to right) Ray Yamasaki, Dennis Yamaoka, Tom Garland, Charlene Garland, Julene Leach, Evan Garland, Sebastopol Mayor Patrick Slayter, Emily Carey, Talia Carey, and Todd Carey. Photos by Katherine Azanza Photography.

Firestorm Co-chairs Julene Leach, Nancy Davlin, and Milton Yoshioka would like to thank Buddhist Temple of Alameda, Alameda Buddhist Women's Association (BWA), Buddhist Church of Florin BWA, Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Temple, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple, as well as our own Temple and BWA, the Sonoma County Japanese American Citizens' League (JACL), and WorkRite Ergonomics of Petaluma for their generous donations.

Thank you, Project Kokoro of Orange County Buddhist Church for the very generous donation of gift cards for the families.

To date we have collected just over \$13,000 including gift cards. One of our temple members also made a *maneki neko* good fortune kitty out of clay for each family.

Unfortunately, only two of the affected families were able to make it to the benefit. We will keep this fundraiser open until the end of 2018.

If you would like to donate, please send a check to payable to Enmanji Buddhist Temple with "Firestorm" in the memo line and mail to the temple at 1200 Gravenstein Hwy. South, Sebastopol, CA 95472. Thank you all so much.

今月の法話

「仏をほめたたえる意味」

タコマ仏教会 開教使 宮地 崇



Rev. Takashi Miyaji

昨年12月よりタコマ仏教会に駐在開教使として赴任しました宮地崇と申します。私はアメリカのユタ州で生まれ、大学を卒業するまでカリフォルニア州で育ちました。父の信雄も開教使であり昨年カーデナ仏教会を退職し引退しました。私は長いこと宗教に全く興味はなく、むしろ疑っていたと言っています。大学での専攻は西欧哲学でした。が、勉強をしていけばいくほど、論理というものは結局人間が本来的に抱えている人生の悩みである「自我の死」というものに対して、解決が見出せないことに気づきました。そこで父に仏教のことを尋ね始めました。それから次第に仏教に興味を持つようになり、もっと仏教の理解を深めたいということになり、日本で7年間研究を続けさせていただきました。去年の12月に帰ってきました。

ある日、ご門徒からの質問がありました、「なぜお経を唱えるのですか」と聞かれました。宗派によってそれぞれお経の答えがあげられるでしょう。一般的には、功徳を積み、それを他人に与えたり、自分が来世にお坊さんになるようにするためのものなどの理由があるそうです。私たち浄土真宗では、お経は「仏徳讃嘆」のために唱えさせていただいております。つまり、仏の恩徳を感謝するためにお経を唱えているのです。しかし、これを聞くとなかなかしっくりこないという意見もあります。「仏の徳をほめ讃えるのはいいであろうが、私にどう関係するのか」、または「日曜日にわざわざ時間を作ってお寺に来たのでね…」などと言ったお考えは稀ではないでしょう。これに対して私の答えを提案してみたいと思います。

ある日、私はある先生の法話を聴いた時に、先生がお浄土について次のように説明されました。「お浄土は宿泊するところみたいなものです。ある旅行をしていて、その夜どこに泊まるのかが分かっていけば、安心してその一日を楽しく過ごせることができるでしょう。しかし、夜泊まるところがなければ、その一日いろいろな計画を立てていても、ひたすら夜どこに泊まるのかが頭の中に入っていて、

結局その一日を楽しむことができなないのだ。お浄土があるからこそこの今を楽しむことができるのだ」と説明されました。私たちが死んだ後にどこに行くのかが決まっているのならば、今の人生を不安なく向き合うことができず。それがお浄土の意義の一つなのだといたので聞いておりました。そしてこの話を聞いた時、私が大学の時に体験したことを思い出しました。

ある時、友人からカリフォルニア州にあるヨセミ国立公園でスノーボードと一緒に誘いがありました。私は楽しみにしていました。友人たちは4人でロサンゼルスから行って、そして私は当時バークレー市に住んでいたため、一人でヨセミアに向かうことになりました。しっかりと準備せずに軽く荷物を積んで行きました。車のタイヤにつけるチェーンなど持っていないので、天気予報も見ませんでした。遊ぶことに夢中になっていたので、そして後から分かったことは、私が走っていた高速道路は、山の奥のあるところで行き止まりになっていたのでした。

山の奥の道路が閉鎖されている場所に来た時にはもう夜の9時になっていました。森の中の暗い夜で車を運転することはかなり怖いものです。高速道路の閉鎖を知らせる看板もなく、ぐるぐる循環させられていました。「ちょっと待てよ。さっきあのところを通らなかつたっけ?」と思いついて、気づいたら同じところを三回ぐらいついていました。まるであの有名なアレピンリクス「トワイライト・ゾーン」に出そうなシーンみたいでした。しかも、ガソリンもなくなりそうで、携帯電話の充電もなくなっていました。「やばい! ガスもない、携帯もない、ラジコも聞けない、食べ物も水もない、あったかい服もない。僕は今日ここで死ぬかな!」と焦りました。

さらに、最悪なことに雪まで降ってきました。「オーマ イブダ! もう終わりでだ」と。本当に怖くなりました。とにかく山から出ようと思っただけで、途中でガソリンスタンドが出てきました。真暗の中のちっちゃなスタンドで、そこで車から出てガソリンを入れたいといけなかつたのですが、そのことは人生の中で一番怖い思いをした体験でした。手を震わせながらカードを入れてガソリンを入れられました。意外と問題なくガソリンが入り、すぐにガソリンスタンドから飛び出しました。

山を降りている途中、遠くに明るい場所が出てきました。近づくと、その明るさがまるで大きな建物が出てきました。「ホテルだ! やっと安全なところに来た」と思いました。しかも車がたくさん駐車していたので、人もたくさんいる

と分かりました。その時のほっとした気持ちは何よりでした。真暗の中で輝いているホテルは大きくて私を歓迎しているように思えました。長い夜の中怖い思いをしましたが、やっと安心することができました。

この大学の時に起きた出来事は、楽しいことばかり考えていてちゃんと準備をしないと大変なことになる、との教訓になりました。「まあいいだろう、いいだろう、なんとかなるでしょう」と思っている中で、気づいたらツー・レイトでした。実際に高速道路で循環していた自分は、ぐるぐると同じところを回されていることに気づかされたのです。この人生でも、同じような苦しみが何度も、何度も繰り返して起きます。世俗の社会はいろいろな方法で私たちの気をそらせます。しかし、よく見ると私たちが真実に向かわせる気配があるように思えます。その気配は、この世は苦しみの世界だということを知らせようとしているのです。私たちがの近くにいた家族や友人はいつか亡くなります。楽しく過ごしていた時があつたという間に去っていきます。一切のものは無常であります。私たちはいつか歳をとっていきます、肉体的な元気が薄れてきます、病気がかかります、そしていつか自分も死にます。この真実に果たして向き合っているのでしょうか?

これに向かわしていただくのが仏法というものです。仏法は私たちに人生を楽しむなどは言っていない。感情、気持ちなどを抑制し、欲を滅しなさいとは言っていないのです。仏法は、物事をそのまま見せていただくことがその目的であり、欲望は滅するためのものではなく、人生のありのままを見せるためのものでもあります。それはどういふものなのかと言いますと、世の中はキリのない苦難であるが、仏のお慈悲によってその迷いの世界から抜け出させていただけるということです。そして車にガソリンを入れて闇の中に走り続けていける力となるものは、他力に対する委ねの心であります。

今の人生が全てではないと分かれば、ぎゅくに今生きている人生そのものに意味があらわれてきます。あの暗い道の中で突然あらわれた明るいホテルは、私に安心を与えたのであります。これと同じように、お浄土は私たちにこの怖い迷いの世界の中に歩んでいける力をくださるのであります。お浄土についての教えは、迷いの世界がいかに怖いのかと感じる人たちのためのものです。そして、この迷いの中でよりどころとなるものが分かったら、「ありがと!」と答えるのです。

最初の質問に戻りますが、「なぜお経を唱えるのですか」に対して次のような答えが挙げられます。それは日々忙しい生活を送っている中で、悩みに飲みこまれることがあり

ます。自分や他人に対する責任、しないといけない様々なことであつたり、現実的な心配が多々あります。さらに、休む時間や遊ぶ時間も必要です。これを全部含めて考えれば、いつ自我の人生に対する向き合いがあるのでしょうか? いつ自分の人生に対して真面目に向き合うことができるのでしょうか? それは日曜礼拝の時であつたり、「仏徳讃嘆」つまりお経を唱えている時ではないでしょうか。または、お念仏を称える時ではないでしょうか。仏法によって今の自分に向き合わせていただいているのです。そのために声明を通して如来の恩徳をほめたたえるのであります。

合掌

波多師往生される

3月27日(火)に波多・亮・泰亮名誉開教使(97歳)が往生の素懷を遂げられた。師は佐賀県出身でご尊父の泰巖師もBCA開教使。1953年にUCバークレー校を卒業後、東京大学大学院で学ぶ。1959年に開教使としてフレス別院に赴任。1965年にプラサー仏教会へ異動、1976年よりウエストLA仏教会に駐在し1989年に引退された。葬儀は4月14日(土)オークランド仏教会で教団葬および仏教会葬として営まれた。

BCAカレンダーフォトコンテストの締め切りが迫る

2019年のBCAカレンダーに掲載される写真を募集している。今年のテーマは「ありがと! おおあちゃん」で、2019年に開催される世界仏教婦人会大会に向けた募金活動の名前と同じものになっている。コンテストに出品する写真は、各仏教会の婦人会員や婦人会の活動を撮影したものが好ましく、最近撮影されたものだけでなく、1世や2世の時代のものでもよい。コンテストに応募されたい方は各寺院の開教使か浄土真宗センターの河野ジュティさんへ連絡。締め切りは2018年5月15日。



法輪

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二〇一八年度教化標語

「平和と調和」

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

唯識を学ぶ



Yuishiki Seminar at JSC

3月26日から30日の5日間、浄土真宗センターにおいて「唯識三十頌」の講義が行われた。講師は日本で唯識研究の第一人者として知られる横山絃一師。有志の開教使ら十二名が集い横山師の講義を熱心に聴いた。参加者らは「5日間、朝から晩まで唯識のことを学び安居のようでも有意義でした。」「講義の内容は難解ですが、横山師の説明はわかりやすかったです。」「唯識の思想が、天親菩薩の浄土論や親鸞聖人のみ教えとどのようにつながりがあるのかを研究したいと思えます。」とそれぞれが学びを深めた。

IMOPが始まる

開教使を目指す日本人僧侶対象としたプログラム、IMOP(国際伝道者養成講座)が4月21日から開講された。同プログラムは本願寺オフィスのもとで運営され、今年で10年目を迎えた。今年も三名の僧侶が受講し、7月中旬までの3ヶ月間、パークレーの浄土真宗センターに滞在、開教使になるために必要な知識やスキルを習得していく。講座期間中、現役、引退開教使、門信徒や他宗派の僧侶、他宗教の聖職者から講義を受けるほか、各寺院を訪れ実際の開教、伝道の現場から学ぶ。以下は受講生の紹介。

今田 法翔(いまだ のりたか)

1991年1月23日生まれ、広島県出身
所属寺院 安芸教区 佐伯東組 浄教寺
出身校 中央仏教学院
開教使志望の動機は?

カトマンズ本願寺を訪れた際、本山と同じお香の香りがしました。日本から遠く離れた地へ親鸞聖人の教えが伝わっている事に感動し、この伝統を守る事に携わりたいと感じました。

アメリカのご門徒さんたちに一言

多くの人々が守ってこられたお寺で、開教師として役に立てるよう頑張ります。親鸞聖人の教えを共に味わい、共に学びを深める事を楽しみにしております。

好きな食べ物 ひまわりのタネ

好きな音楽 Shinsu Anthem

趣味 ギター、料理、絵

親鸞聖人の好きな言葉

明日ありと思ふ心のあだ桜 夜半に風の吹かぬものは

三瓶 悦子(みかめ えつこ)

1988年1月4日生まれ、島根県出身
所属寺院 山陰教区 大田東組 徳善寺
出身校 早稲田大学、中央仏教学院
開教使志望の動機は?

開教使の活動に興味を持ち、以前米国で見学させていただきました。その際、出遇わせたいただいた開教使の先生方、メンバーの方々のお念仏のみ教えを自らの生活の中で大切にされている姿に感銘を受けました。開教使として一緒にみ教えを味わい、お育ていただきたいと思志望させていただきました。

アメリカのご門徒さんたちに一言

皆様にお目にかかるのを心から楽しみにしております。ご一緒にお念仏のお心を大切にお聞かせいただきたいと思ひます。よろしくお願ひします。

好きな食べ物 辛い食べ物(唐辛子が大好きです)

好きな音楽 ラジオが大好きなので何でも好きです。

趣味 ヨガ、映画鑑賞、ラジオを聞くこと

親鸞聖人の好きな言葉

慶ばしいかな、心を弘誓の仏地に樹て、念を難思の法海に

流す。(教行信証後序、註473)

村上 響(むらかみ ひびき)

1993年6月23日生まれ、福岡県出身
所属寺院 北豊教区 小倉組 浄念寺
出身校 龍谷大学
開教使志望の動機は?

私の曾お爺さんがアメリカ・台湾で開教使をしていたことがきっかけで、自分も浄土真宗の海外開教に興味を持ち、また海外に広がるお念仏を知りたかったのです。

アメリカのご門徒さんたちに一言

若年のベビーフェイスなので、お気軽に接して頂ければと思います。あと、たくさんこちらのメニューさんとお話しがしたいです。

好きな食べ物 メロン、オレンジ、焼うどん、カレーライス

好きな音楽 洋楽TOPS、クラシック(特に、ドビュッシーの「月の光」)

趣味 乗り物を運転すること(バイク、自動車)、出掛けること

総長コラム

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

数年前から、私の家の玄関前のマットの上に死んだネズミが置かれていることが何度かありました。ヘイトクライムではないかと思ひ、色々な方面に問い合わせたら、多分猫かタヌキの仕業であろうということでした。よく聞いて見ると、猫やタヌキは恩返しをするということなんです。死んだネズミは多分タヌキからの恩返しギフトだったのです。

ところで、私たちはタヌキにも劣る存在ではないでしょうか。こう言ったらタヌキに失礼かもしれませんが、タヌキでも恩を感じ、それを行動で示してくれています。それを聞いて、いつも唱和する『恩徳讃』の「如来大悲の恩徳

親鸞聖人の好きな言葉
浄土真宗に帰すれども
虚仮不実のわが身にて
讚)

真実の心はありがたし
清浄の心もさらになし(正像末和)

春の日本語聞法セミナー

Spring Japanese Dharma Gathering at the Jodo Shinshu Center



「命のつながりの中の私」
いまだ のりたか
今田 法翔 師 (IMOP受講生)
Rev. Noritaka Imada



「温かなまなざしの中で」
みかめ えつこ
三瓶 悦子 師 (IMOP受講生)
Rev. Etsuko Mikame



「法からの呼び声-阿彌陀様から私へ-」
むらかみ ひびき
村上 響 師 (IMOP受講生)
Rev. Hibiki Murakami

Date: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm Saturday, May 12, 2018
Place: Jodo Shinshu Center 2140 Durant Ave, Berkeley, CA
Fee: \$15 (昼食代込み / 当日いただきます)
事前のお申込みは必要ありません。

米国仏教団仏教教育部 担当: 八田 由美(Yumi Hatta)
Email: jyhatta@bcahq.org Tel: 415-370-1477

は 身を粉にしても報ずべし 師主知識の恩徳も 骨を砕きても謝すべし」の歌詞が頭に浮かんで来ました。

本当にうれしい時はそれが体全体にあふれ出ます。隠すことはできません。人生において、お念仏の教えに出会う以上喜びはないのです。この教えによって、本当の自分と出会うことができます。人生の方向も定まります。辛いことも悲しいことも引き受けて生きる力をいただきます。南無阿彌陀仏の呼び声を聞くということは、真実の「親(親しい人)」に出会うことです。

その親はいつも一緒にいてくださいます。悲しいときも嬉しいときも、一緒にいてくださいます。

この教えは日本人だけのものではありません。そういう教えを喜ぶ人が世界中にいます。多くの人たちが「親鸞さ

ま、ありがとう」と喜んでいてくださいます。五月は親鸞さまがお生まれになった月です。一緒にお祝いし、お念仏申しませう。

深きみのりに あいまつる身の幸 何にたとうべき ひとすら道を 聞き開きまことの目 いただかん

永遠の闇より 救われし身の幸 何にくらぶべき 六字のみ名を 称えつつ世のなりわいに いそしまん

海のうちのの へだてなくみ親の徳の 尊さをわがはらからに 伝えつつ

万国(お浄土)の旅を 共にせん

南無阿彌陀仏