

WHEEL OF DHARMA

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Statement on the Executive Order

The Executive Order signed by President Trump on January 27, 2017 has been causing serious concerns and suffering for many people, especially Muslims and immigrants. It has brought back memories of the unlawful mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Even if the intent of the Executive Order is to protect our citizens from terrorist attacks, we strongly oppose any actions that lead to discrimination against certain groups just because of their ethnicity or faith.

We should remind ourselves that all people deserve to be respected and treated equally under the law. Each faith group should encourage and promote peace and harmony based on its beliefs and principles, and help create a better nation that we can be proud of.

Reverend Kodo Umezu, Bishop, Buddhist Churches of America

Oshitas Named State Assembly Chaplains

By Heather Ito
Nichi Bei Weekly Contributor

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Just three months into their retirement, the former Buddhist Church of Sacramento Rinban Bob Oshita and the Rev. Patti Oshita have already found something new to keep themselves busy. On Dec. 5, the California State Assembly officially designated Bob Oshita as the new chaplain and Patti Oshita as the alternate chaplain of the State Assembly. They will serve as non-elected officers for a two-year term.

“It is, as I now share often, a ‘bucket list’ opportunity to be invited and appointed as the chaplains for the Assembly,” Rinban Oshita said.

Oshita’s involvement with the assembly began in April 2016, when Speaker of the Assembly and 63rd Assembly District representative Anthony Rendon invited the Nikkei to open assembly sessions with a meditation every so often as a guest chaplain, an invitation that Oshita would later believe to be more like “interviews” for the chaplain position.

In June, Rendon invited Oshita and his wife,



Rev. Bob Oshita and Rev. Patti Oshita are sworn in at the California State Capitol, as the California State Assembly Chaplain, and alternate, respectively.

Patti, to meet the Dalai Lama, another unexpected “bucket list” opportunity for Oshita, when the Buddhist spiritual leader visited Sacramento and spoke at a joint convention of the California State Legislature.

“As I said to Speaker Rendon, ‘I’ve come to feel that real ‘bucket list’ wishes are things we never thought would be possible,’” Oshita said.

In July, Rendon asked Oshita to consider being the next chaplain, and in August, Oshita accepted. While finalizing plans in September, Patti Oshita, who is also ordained, was asked to join her husband.

She accepted in October.

“His experience working with young people, tending to the spiritual needs of a variety of communities, and serving for many years in the capitol city as a compassionate and committed reverend will serve us well in his new role,” said Assemblymember Rob Bonta, California Asian and Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus chair.

The Oshitas are not only the first chaplains to be appointed together as husband and wife for the State Assembly, they are also the second (and third) Buddhist chaplains in the history of the California State Senate. According to

the California State Senate Chaplain Website, the first Buddhist chaplain was the Rev. Sholo Masunaga, who served in 1975.

“We know it is an honor we cannot take for granted, for we represent the entire Buddhist tradition in an arena where many are unfamiliar with Buddhism,” Oshita said.

According to the California Asian and Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, the Oshitas will open legislative sessions, serve as spiritual counselors to members and perform ceremonial and symbolic duties.

“It is now our challenge to try to meaningfully represent in a concise and reflective manner, and provide an opening message worthy of genuine consideration,” Oshita said. “This is the perfect challenge for us at this point in our careers.”

Photo provided by Rev. Bob Oshita

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Above photo, from left to right: Adrienne Ito (Heather’s sister), Rinban Bob Oshita, Rev. Patti Oshita, and Nichi Bei Weekly writer, Heather Ito.

Author’s Reflections

I’ve been attending the Sacramento Betsuin since I was five or six years old, maybe even before that. I remember sitting in the *hondo* between my mom and sister as we chanted and followed along with the The Golden Chain. Now in my mid-twenties, the temple has become a place I cherish and is an aspect of my Japanese American livelihood that I am proud of. Along with that, the people of the temple are just as important to me, and those who stand out the most, as it is for many people, are Rinban Bob and Rev. Patti Oshita.

Since they joined the temple before I was born, Rinban Bob and Rev. Patti Oshita were inseparable elements of the Sacramento Betsuin that I almost believed would never change. I grew up greeted by Rinban Bob’s warm embrace after *oshoko* on Sunday mornings, and although I was extremely shy at first, he would always hold my twin sister and me in a double hug without fail. As the years passed, I grew to appreciate this sincere gesture even more as he always asked how I was doing and “How’s mom and dad?” with unwavering interest.

I met the news of their retirement feeling sad to see them go, yet happy knowing no one else deserved retirement more. I had the wonderful opportunity to write about the Oshitas’ retirement for the *Nichi Bei Weekly* and I spoke with so many people who had a wealth of amazing things to say about both of them. It was truly a heartwarming experience.

Retirement doesn’t stop the Oshitas, however, and I am happy to have written the following piece about this new chapter in their lives, as published in the January 5-18, 2017 edition of the *Nichi Bei Weekly*. — Heather Ito



Jodo Shinshu Landscape Evolving



Left: The Buddhist Church of San Francisco, BCA’s mother temple, was repainted with a welcoming new color scheme. Center: On New Year’s Day, Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, conducted the Kieshiki (Affirmation) Ceremony and eight people received Buddhist names (homyo). Right: Rev. Umezu traveled east on January 15th to Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Fairfax, Virginia to bestow 18 more Buddhist names.





Good Friends of Shinran Shonin

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

If the feeling has arisen that you want to hear the Buddha-Dharma, Then that is already proof that you are being held by the hand of Buddha.

Welcome! I would like to welcome each and every one of you to the Temple Leadership Workshop being held at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley. I really appreciate your participation in this weekend program sponsored by the BCA Center for Buddhist Education.

There are innumerable causes and conditions that have guided you to come here. Your participation is itself a sign of a good leader.

However, as a matter of fact, I do not *expect* you to be a good leader. I would like to see you wanting to know more about Shinran Shonin and his message. I would like to see you become good friends with Shinran Shonin. I expect nothing more and nothing less.

I am excited to spend some time with all of you and grow closer together as Shinran Shonin's friends. Let us humbly learn the way of *Nenbutsu* by listening to and interacting with each other...

The preceding quote and message were written for the first Temple Leadership Workshop, held at the end of January. This program was attended by over 30 leaders from BCA temples, churches, and fellowships all over the nation. It was the first of a new series designed to address our place in this evolving world.

Our Buddhist Churches of America has a history of 118 years in this country. No wonder we are currently facing some changes! The makeup of our members is more diversified, and non-Jodo Shinshu people always question us about our teaching. And I feel confident

that, as long as we are deeply connected with the *Nenbutsu* teaching (Buddha's mindfulness), we should not worry too much about our future. What we need to do is stay close to Shinran Shonin. How do we do that? We need to listen carefully to his words.

I would like to share a phrase that Shinran Shonin often used: *bonnō-gusoku*.

At least once a year, usually before *Obon** and/or *Hōon-kō*** all temples and churches do something called *o-migaki*. It is the day of cleaning the *o-naijin* (altar) and polishing its metal ornaments. *O-migaki* requires many members' help. When one participates in this activity, one hears expressions that may be unfamiliar. One of them is *mitsu-gusoku*. On the altar's front table, there is a setting comprised of a flower vase, a candle stand, and an incense burner. This is a *mitsu-gusoku*. "Mitsu" means three and "gusoku" means a complete set.

The word *bonnō* is usually translated as "blind passions" such as greed, anger, hatred, ignorance, jealousy, and so on. So *bonnō-gusoku* means a complete set of blind passions, not lacking even one tiny bit. Shinran Shonin realized the truth of his existence under the compassionate light of wisdom; that he was an ordinary being possessing *bonnō-gusoku* – a complete set of blind passions.

Shinran Shonin was very grateful that he was able to realize the truth about himself and, consequently, to live his life accordingly with humility and joy. He did not ask others to be the kind of person he could not become. When he saw angry, greedy people, he saw himself. I know what he means when I look at the way I am.

I really love Shinran Shonin. He is real. I really respect his



Top photo: Minister's Assistant Certification: Rev. Umezu (right) certified Camille Pating as the newest minister's assistant at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco. Husband, David Pating, fellow minister's assistant gives her a congratulatory kiss. Rev. Ron Kobata (left), BCSF resident minister, assists. Photo by Keith Kojimoto

Lower photo: Hoon-ko Ozenzai at JSC: Ryukoku University Berkeley Center (RUBeC) students enjoy Shinran's favorite food, ozenzai (red bean soup with toasted mochi) that Janet and Glenn Kameda prepare annually for the Jodo Shinshu Center's Go Shoki Hoon-ko (Shinran's Memorial Anniversary Commemoration).

sincerity.

Today, we express anger at each other more openly in public, easily resort to violence, and make our world worse. We lack wisdom. Shinran Shonin sheds tears for us. He is wishing for us to hear the compassionate call from the world of sincerity.

Let us learn from Shinran Shonin, who understands our limitations, anxiety, agony, and

frustration as we live. Let us all become good friends of Shinran Shonin and humbly reflect on the *Nenbutsu* teaching.

(To be continued...)

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

***Hōon-ko*: memorial service for Shinran Shonin, observed on January 16 and/or November 28.

Diary of a Costco Monk:

Underground Buddhahead Serving Time in Samsara

By Rev. Joshin Dennis Fujimoto, Rimban, Buddhist Church of Sacramento



Costco monk goes on his monthly pilgrimage, pushing one of the four-wheeled begging bowls and, Visa card exposed, he enters a realm of expedient means.

In Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, it is said that everyday life is our practice. What better place to gain insight into this path than at Costco?

The typical image of a Buddhist is someone sitting on a pillow alone in a room. It's easy to think you have gained wisdom or insight or even enlightenment while sitting alone in a room. Once you get out with the Sangha or more so in the outside world, the real you comes out. I am tested early in the Costco parking lot as someone steals my parking space. My right hand flies into the air in not so gracious salute. Gradually, the mind of insight re-emerges. I *wanted* to park in the last row and walk through the rain and the puddles of water. How peacefully refreshing... yeah, right...

Buddhist Church of Stockton



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The Buddhist Church of Stockton was established in 1906 by a group of Japanese immigrants and was incorporated in 1913. In 1925, a temple was built at 148 West Washington Street.

During World War II, temple members, along with all people of Japanese descent on the West Coast, spent 1942-1945 imprisoned in internment camps. The U.S. Military occupied our facilities during this period. The temple was returned to us in November 1945.

In 1963, due to increased membership and a State Crosstown Freeway project through our temple site, our temple was relocated to 2820 Shimizu Drive. Our new facilities were constructed and dedicated in June 1969.

We are located in the Central Valley of California, serving members of the San Joaquin Valley communities. The Stockton Sangha includes members from Cortez, Delta Islands, French Camp, Linden, Manteca, Modesto, Tracy, and Stockton, as well as members from a few other outlying areas.

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

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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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JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: Director of Operations

The Buddhist Churches of America, a California non-profit corporation (BCA) is seeking qualified candidates for the position of Director of Operations in the BCA National Headquarters Office in San Francisco. This position is responsible for the administration and implementation of the strategic vision of the BCA. See the complete job posting at: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org, under the "Contact Us" tab, or go to this link: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/job-announcement



President's Message

Seeds of Wisdom

By Ken Tanimoto, BCA President

Ever since I can remember, my father always told me on New Year's Eve that what you do the first day of the New Year reflects what will happen to you throughout the year. And during most of my youth, did I really listen to Dad's wisdom? Heck no, and I paid the price for it.

Now I realize that what my father was saying at New Year's was just to be grateful and appreciate what is important in our lives: friends, family, health, and the teachings of Buddha. It is that simple, because without those connections, I, as well as others, would be facing a life of dissatisfaction and unhappiness.

Dad was always offering me seeds of wisdom to ponder. He did not always make clear to me what he was trying to say because, like many *Nisei/Kibei* (Japanese-Americans born in the US but raised in Japan before World War II), he hardly spoke to me face to face. It was more like he was talk-

ing to himself and allowing me to listen in on what he said.

These seeds of wisdom he offered me reflected his understanding of our world through the Dharma. Dad gave me the wisdom to explore the Dharma and make the Dharma an everyday learning experience.

I often think of what I have learned from him and would love to have asked him what experiences made him such a compassionate person. Like the BCA ministers of the past and present, Dad was and still is my teacher of life.

So, as I celebrated the first day of the New Year, I made sure I attended our *Shusho-e* service to thank my family members who have passed on and to be appreciative of my present family and friends.

I wondered at our service, "What can I do to best help others? What can I do to help others enjoy the teachings of Buddha and



Dharma-Centered at the JSC! On January 20-22, 2017, a gathering of 33 Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) leaders from 17 temples and one fellowship met for the Temple Leadership Workshop presented by the Center for Buddhist Education. Dharma-centered leadership, membership, and outreach challenges and successes were shared as we got to know each other and enjoyed the Jodo Shinshu Center. Other leaders in attendance included (seated, from left to right) Rev. Kiyo Kuwahara and Rev. Marvin Harada, CBE Co-directors; Rev. Henry Adams; Rev. Jerry Hirano, BCA Ministers Association Chair; Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop; Ken Tanimoto, BCA President; and Rick Stambul, BCA President-elect.

Shinran Shonin?"

I now realize the greatest gift I can offer anyone, including my family, community, and temple, is not fame or fortune. Fame and

fortune are fleeting and only temporary. My greatest gift to anyone is to be like my father. Those Dharma seeds of wisdom he gave me will live within me for the rest

of my life.

As we begin our new year, let us turn our focus to the wisdom and compassion of Buddha and the teachings of Shinran Shonin.

Thoughts on My Karmic Evil

Rev. William Briones, Rimban, Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

It is natural to love good and hate evil.

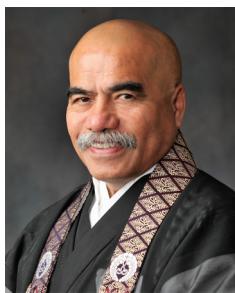
But if evil is merely disliked and not reflected upon, it will never become enlightened as to what it is.

Good should be promoted, but we should not take pride in our good; rather, if we do not cry over our own evil from having seen the evil in others, we will never become aware that we are keeping alive that same flame of evil in our hearts.

Those who do not reflect on their own evil nature are likely to exaggerate the little good that they do. For the devout, both good people and bad are equally close "fellow travelers" along the way.

Rather than affirmation of good, it is affirmation of evil that causes us to reflect on our true nature.

— Lady Takeko Kujo, *Muyuge: Flowers Without Sorrow*



By the time you read this, the United States of America will have sworn in its 45th president. Since the election in November, many Americans (74,074,037 who voted against Donald Trump) wonder how someone who based their campaign on building a 1,000-mile-long wall along our southern border, making disparaging remarks against Muslims, women, immigrants, people with disabilities, war heroes, the LGBTQ community and others, could ever be the leader of this great country of ours.

Listening to his bizarre ramblings and witnessing his narcissistic behavior, I wonder how anyone could have agreed with him or even seriously considered him as a viable candidate for the President of the United States. Yet, as I reflect upon his repulsive diatribe against everything I hold dear, I sense that deep down inside Mr. Trump and I share many of the same traits.

The opening reading was written by Lady Takeko Kujo (1887-1928), the daughter of the Koson Otani, the 21st Monshu (spiritual leader of the Hongwanji). She writes,

Good should be promoted, but we should

not take pride in our good; rather, if we do not cry over our own evil from having seen the evil in others, we will never become aware that we are keeping alive that same flame of evil in our hearts.

As I reflect on Lady Kujo's words, I've come to realize that I, too, have the "same flame of evil" in my heart. It is the intractable nature of our karmic evil and attachment to ego that is our true nature. Mr. Trump and I share that same karmic reality.

We all want to be good people. I have no doubt Mr. Trump thinks he's a good person, and of course I think I'm a better person. Yet, as we reflect deeply upon ourselves, it is all delusion, twisted by our own ignorant minds which are being created by our self-centeredness, greed, anger, and ignorance. This is our evil karmic nature; and as we reflect upon it, our awareness of its depth and strength becomes all the more evident. We realize that we have fooling ourselves all long, thinking that we were good, when in fact we are totally incapable of doing what is ethically "good."

Tannisho, chapter III, captures the true

essences of "good and evil" in Jodo Shinshu. Shinran Shonin words speak of the inconceivable working of the Primal Vow, which is *Namoamidabutsu*. And Shinran's words tell us that upon receiving the *Nembutsu*, we are able to become evil persons for the first time, and, in that moment, we are changed forever.

In Jodo Shinshu, the realization of our foolish and imperfect nature is an essential part of our awakening. Our evil karma itself becomes the stuff of wisdom and compassion, teaching and guiding us to the truth.

When evil is not realized, the Buddha is not realized

When evil is realized, the Buddha is realized.

Evil and Buddha are one.

That is *Namu-Amida-Butsu* in six syllables.

How wretched, how wretched!

How grateful, how grateful!

— Saichi

Namo Amida Butsu

Compassionate Conversations/Mindful Actions

By Sterling Makishima, Mountain View Buddhist Temple

On Sunday, January 15, members of the Mountain View Buddhist Temple (MVBT) held a town hall meeting called Compassionate Conversations/Mindful Actions, Mindful Conversations/Compassionate Actions. The purpose was to have a thoughtful community dialogue on the current events impacting our country and communities, from a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist perspective.

The event grew out of a discussion at the MVBT monthly religious planning committee. A majority of the committee felt that, with the current political climate in the USA and world, we as Jodo Shinshu Buddhists needed to show our compassion towards our Sangha and others who are feeling discomfort and uneasiness.

There was much discussion on how to organize this town hall meeting, with the main objective of showing how we care for all people regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientations, social and economic status, etc. Buddha shows compassion especially to those who are suffering. We all wanted to express empathy and solidarity toward those who might fall under discrimination.

We started by saying this was not a political debate (talking about the past election results), but an expression of feelings, emotions, and thoughts about the cur-

rent climate.

Rev. Gerald Kango Sakamoto of the San Jose Betsuin Buddhist Church was our guest speaker. He led this session with a Dharma message explaining the foundations of Jodo Shinshu. Sensei also mentioned that during Shinran Shonin's life, Japan was under extremely difficult times with upheaval and war. Shinran appreciated Amida Buddha's compassionate wisdom and continued to spread the teaching of the *Nembutsu* during those times, with the understanding that Buddhists aren't passive.

Rev. Sakamoto noted, "It is time to remind ourselves of the importance and need to become true human beings and live in awareness and appreciation of each and every instant of our lives, regardless of how happy or miserable we may be."

His message was followed by a general discussion with attendees sharing their thoughts and experiences. The committee was really pleased about the turnout of almost 50 attendees. We are starting to summarize the gathering and determine our future steps.

We all want to thank Rev. Sakamoto and our minister, Rev. Yushi Taishi Mukojima, who gave us their full support.



Mountain View Buddhist Temple's Religious Committee initiated a timely sangha town hall discussion with over 50 participants. Sterling Makishima (shown standing) helps to facilitate.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

Every two years, the Bay District Buddhist Women's League and the Hoppo-Fukuoka Fujinkai participate in an exchange program, where four delegates, alternately from the US or Japan, are hosted by their sister organizations. From October 19-27, 2016, four Buddhist Churches of America delegates visited Japan. This article is reprinted with slight editing from the December 2016 issue of Geppo, the newsletter of the Buddhist Church of San Francisco.

Hoppo-Fukuoka Exchange Trip

By Sadako Kashiwagi, Buddhist Church of San Francisco

First of all, thank you to Rev. Ron Kobata and Elaine Donlin Sensei for driving us to the airport, and Elaine Sensei for picking us up on our return, and Rev. Zuikei Taniguchi for coordinating the Hoppo-Fukuoka Exchange Program for the past thirty years. Many thanks also to the Bay Area Buddhist Women's Association (BWA) Federation and the Buddhist Church of San Francisco (BCSF) BWA for co-sponsoring our trip. Four of us—Junko Hamamoto, JoAnne Hayashida (Buddhist Church of Oakland), Yasuko Fukuda and Sadako Kashiwagi (BCSF)—had the honor of representing our organizations. Each of us received a beautiful BWA shikisho with a commemorative emblem and pins.

The first major event we attended was the Ascension Ceremony of the 25th Gomonshu of the Jodo Shinshu Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto. It was an inspiring and thought-provoking service. Kobata Sensei's daughter Tabitha very ably translated the proceedings in English. On my previous trip, Tabitha had given me a private tour of the temple so this subsequent tour and service were especially meaningful for me.



(Left to right:) Rev. Takaoka, Mrs. Maruo, Mrs. Kakinoki, Mrs. Noguchi, Rev. Adams, Ms. Fukuda, Mrs. Kasimagi, Mrs. Hayashida, Mrs. Hamamoto, Mrs. Ito, Rev. Kei, and Rev. Oyamada in front of the Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan.

After a tour of Kyoto, it was on to Hoppo/Fukuoka via shinkansen (bullet train). Ms. Hamamoto and Ms. Hayashida went to Fukuoka and Fukuda san and I went to the Hoppo district.

The Hoppo women hosted us to a fabulous welcome dinner. Our homestays in Hoppo were with two temple families of Inouye Sensei of Shoenji Temple and Tomiku Sensei of Zenjoji Temple. Both temples and homes were beautiful and the families were most gracious hosts.

We visited many temples and at each we had omairi (religious service), usually chanting Juseige. At Fukuoka Hongwanji, however, we learned the history of the temple but there was no omairi. I was disappointed.

After two nights in Hoppo District, we were briefly united with Ms. Hamamoto and Ms. Hayashida. In Fukuoka, we were guests at a combined welcome and farewell dinner. Wherever we went we were shown respect and kindness. People were surprised that we were familiar with "Tanko Bushi"*** and they were impressed when I told them that there is an Obon boom in the USA.

We were greeted and hosted by many, many people. The core group included Rev. Oyamada, Rev. Manako Kei, Ms. Kinuko Ito, and Ms. Yumiko Noguchi. Kei san was gracious and helpful in so many ways. Without her help in sending our luggage ahead and booking train rides to various places, we surely would have been lost.

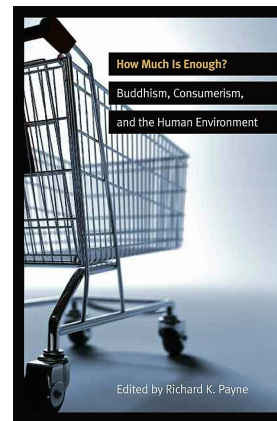
Okagesama de, we made it home safely. The contrast between home and Japan is such that I feel like I'm waking up from a dream.

*Gomonshu: the religious leader of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha.

**Tanko Bushi: a dance performed during the Obon celebration, which is an annual Buddhist event for commemorating one's ancestors.

BCA Bookstore News by Gayle Noguchi

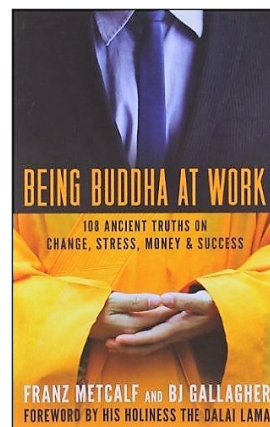
Now available: How Much Is Enough? Buddhism, Consumerism, and the Human Environment edited by Richard K. Payne, paperback \$16.95.



The collection of essays published in this volume were originally presented at the 2003 international symposium on "Buddhism and the Environment" organized by Mitsuya Dake, faculty member of Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan, and Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, then faculty member of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) and now Provost for IBS.

As our recognizing the interdependent nature of all life is crucial now more than ever, the thoughts expressed in these essays highlight how Buddhist teachings can help us to see that a main cause/root of our current ecological crisis is the intellectual construct of self as separate. However these essays do more than share Buddhist perspectives – they demonstrate Buddhism in action by describing various innovative environmental programs grounded in Buddhist teachings. Through these essays we see that Buddhism has much to contribute towards environmental awareness and understanding the interdependent relationship between the social and the natural.

Also available: Being Buddha at Work: 108 Ancient Truths on Change, Stress, Money, and Success by B.J. Gallagher and Franz Metcalf, paperback, \$14.95.



Many people will agree that the workplace can be one of the most challenging environments to practice Buddhist teachings. Presented in the same kind of format at the authors' bestseller What Would Buddha Do?, this publication explores 108 dilemmas commonly encountered at work and provides practical, concrete solutions rooted in Buddhist teachings.

To purchase, go to buddhistchurchesofamerica.org and click on the BCA Bookstore link or contact gnoguchi@bcahq.org or 510-809-1435. These titles will also be available for purchase at the 2017 BCA National Council Meeting. Visit the BCA Bookstore on Saturday, March 4, 2017 in the San Carlos Room at the San Jose Marriott Hotel.

OUR JODO SHINSHU TRADITIONS What is a mitsu-gusoku?



On the front table (maejoku) of the o-naijin (altar), there is a setting comprised of a flower vase, an incense burner, and a candle stand (from left to right). This is called a mitsu-gusoku. "Mitsu" means three and "gusoku" means a complete set. In English, a mitsu-gusoku is called a three-element arrangement.



For special occasions, temples use a five-element arrangement. This is called a go-gusoku.

What's on your o-naijin now?

SAVE THE DATE!

August 18-20, 2017 Jodo Shinshu Center Berkeley, CA

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

SUMMER PACIFIC SEMINAR - 21ST CENTURY

REGISTRATION & DETAILS AT BCA WEBSITE



Shin Buddhism: Current Challenges and Future Prospects



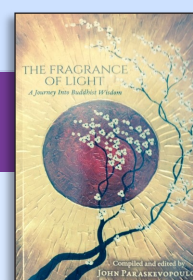
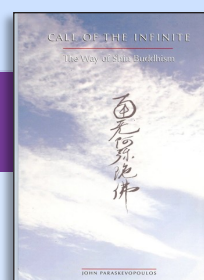
Keynote Speaker: Rev. John Paraskevopoulos

Shin Buddhist priest based in Australia, author of Call of the Infinite, The Fragrance of Light, and The Unhindered Path, and editor of the online Journal of Shin Buddhism (Muryoko).

Other Speakers To Be Announced

Registration opens online in March 2017

www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org Contact: cbe@bcahq.org



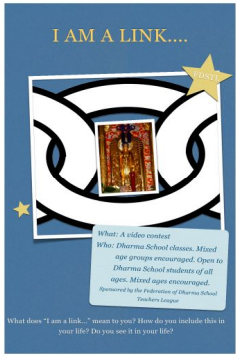
These titles by John Paraskevopoulos are available at the BCA Bookstore: Visit www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org and click on the BCA Bookstore link or contact gnoguchi@bcahq.org or (510)-809-1435. Ask about special discounts!



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

**Video Contest for Dharma School Students:
I AM A LINK...**

Sponsored by the Federation of Dharma School Teachers Leagues (FDSTL)



What does "I am a link..." mean to you?

How do you include this in your life?

Make an original video on the theme "I am a link..." Your video can be any style or form, sent on a DVD. Each video should be three minutes long or less.

The FDSTL will provide each BCA District with a \$100 prize for their entries. Three videos will be displayed at the 2017 FDSTL Conference in Northern California from April 21-22.

The goal is to establish a yearly gallery of children's work, displayed at the annual FDSTL conference.

Temples should submit entries to their District Dharma School representative by April 8, 2017.

If you have questions, email Nanayo Silver at bobandnanayo@gmail.com.

**Open to Dharma School Students of all ages.
Mixed age groups are encouraged.**

**The 10th Annual TechnoBuddha Conference
The Gray Area: Wrongfully Right**
April 28-30 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, CA

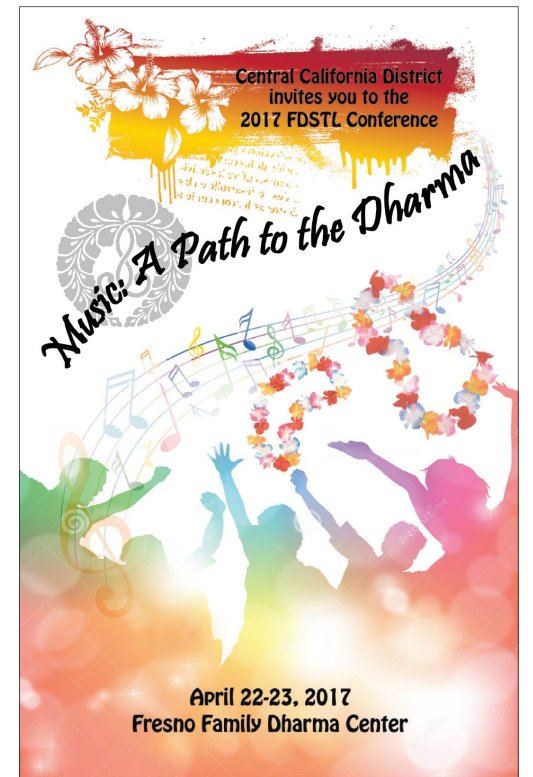
We tend to consider the world in dichotomies. Men/women, active/lazy, outgoing/shy, authentic/phony, good/evil. But when we do this we fail to see the gray areas between both perceptions. We fail to see the full scope of who we are.

Perhaps it was choosing not to recognize this which created the type of divisive nature that was brought to the forefront in 2016. Perhaps with compassion and understanding, especially when looking at differences, we can find a way to see these gray areas.

Please join us in exploring this idea further as we take part in various workshops, eat, drink, and be merry. This year our keynote speaker will be **Reverend Matt Hamasaki**, newest addition to the Central California District. This conference is for adults aged 21-39 and will be held on the weekend of **April 28-30, 2017** at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, CA.



Check out TechnoBuddha on Facebook for registration information, announcements, and more!
facebook.com/technobuddha.conference



For details, check with your church or temple Dharma School Superintendent or visit the BCA Dharma School page on the BCA website:

BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org/bca-dharma-school

2017 BCA Educational Events

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

March 1-4 ~ Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Ministers Association and BCA National Council Meetings (NCM) in San Jose, CA.

March 2 ~ Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) Symposium "Buddha at Work" at San Jose Betsuin, 1-5 pm. Featured speakers: Franz Metcalf and B.J. Gallagher, co-authors of *Being Buddha at Work*, Dr. Richard Payne discussing his book, *How Much is Enough?* and Brian Nagata on the Buddhist Philanthropist, Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata. Symposium is free and open to the public. In conjunction with BCA NCM.

March 3 & 4 ~ Chanting and Dharmathon at San Jose Betsuin, Friday 3:30-5 pm, and Dharmathon at San Jose Marriott Hotel, Saturday 3-4 pm. Chanting of musical version of *Shoshinge* for the Gomonshu's Accession Ceremony; speakers Rev. Nariaki Hayashi and Rick Stambul. Saturday speakers include Rev. Jay Shinseki, Sumi Tanabe, Gary Mukai, Nick San Juan, and a youth from the Youth Minister's Assistant Program sponsored by the Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC).

March 9-11 ~ Spring Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) Seminar. Dr. Mark Blum will continue the lectures on *Tannisho*. Other presenters to be announced.

April 22-23 ~ Federation of Dharma School Teachers' Leagues (FDSTL) Conference in Fresno, CA.

April 24-July 10 ~ International Ministerial Orientation Program (IMOP)

April 28-30 ~ 10th Annual TechnoBuddha Conference. Keynote speaker: Rev. Matt Hamasaki.

May 13 ~ Spring Japanese Seminar. Rev. Ryoso Toshima, Hawaii Kyodan minister emeritus, and IMOP ministers will present in Japanese.

May 19 ~ Gotan-e Service. Program and speakers to be announced.

May 30-June 1 ~ Ministers' Continuing Education (MCE) Seminar. Presented by CBE. For more details, contact CBE.

July 20-23 ~ Dharma Training for School Teachers. A special program open to public school teachers. Presented by IBS and BCA. See the BCA website for details.

July 22-30 ~ Eastern Tour: Rev. Sonam Wangdi Bhutia, Head Priest, Hongwanji Buddhist Society, Kathmandu, Nepal. Speaking tour to Chicago and New York. Presented by CBE.

August 17-19 ~ Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course August Workshop. Attendees on the online course will have an opportunity to meet each other and some of their instructors, as well as participate in Summer Pacific Seminar activities.

August 18-20 ~ Summer Pacific Seminar begins Friday at 7 pm. Keynote speaker: Rev. John Paraskevopoulos, author of *Call of the Infinite* and other books on Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Other speakers TBA. Co-sponsored by IBS & CBE.

August 18-20 ~ Summer Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) Seminar. In conjunction with Summer Pacific Seminar (see listing above).

August 25-27 ~ Book Talk and Seminar with Rev. Dr. Ken Tanaka, author of *Ocean, Buddhism On Air*, and other books.

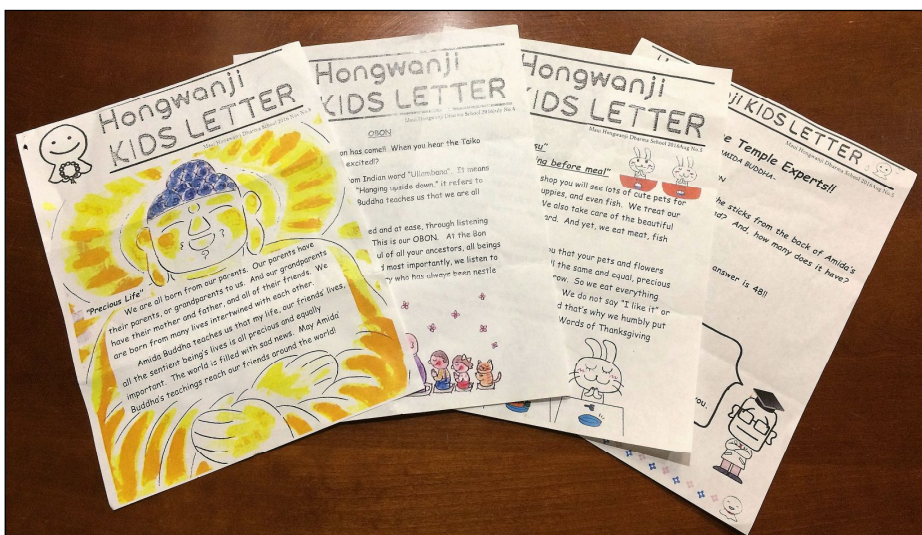
September 26-29 ~ West and East Hong(w)anji Overseas Propagation Exchange (WEHOPE) and Ministers' Continuing Education (MCE) Seminar. Nishi and Higashi ministers will meet, study, and dialogue together.

September 30 ~ Fall Japanese Seminar. Speakers to be announced.

October 12-14 ~ NOTE NEW DATES AND LOCATION: Fall Minister's Assistant Program (MAP) Seminar at the Jodo Shinshu Center.

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

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



**"You've Got Mail!"
HONGWANJI KIDS LETTER PROJECT**

By Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, BCA Center for Buddhist Education

When I was an elementary school boy, it was my job to collect the mail delivered to my home. A bunch of letters were delivered each day. However, none of them were for me. I envied my father because he received letters from somebody every day. The first week of January was a special time for me, because it was the only time I personally received letters--New Year's cards from my friends. I think it is a big deal for young children to receive letters addressed to them.

Rev. Ai Hironaka of Lahaina Hongwanji Mission, Hawaii and his wife Megumi started a project called "Hongwanji Kids Letter" in April 2016. Kids who register for this project receive a monthly letter addressed to them. The letters share Jodo Shinshu and Buddhist teachings in very simple language with cute illustrations, and are appropriate for kids from preschool through fifth grade. The letters cover various topics, such as the features of Amida Buddha, the meaning behind special services, etc. It is wonderful educational material to broaden their knowledge, deepen their understanding, and especially, to nurture their appreciation of the Buddha-Dharma. And I am sure the kids look forward to having a monthly letter delivered just to them.

If you are interested in this project or wish to register your child(ren) or grandchild(ren), please contact Rev. Ai and Megumi Hironaka at: aiji0128@aol.com or call (808) 661-0640. Registration is free; the Hongwanji Kids Letter Project is fueled by the generosity and enthusiasm of Rev. and Mrs. Hironaka.



IBS Reflections: A Dream Come True



By Rev. Dr. Seigen H. Yamaoka
Institute of Buddhist Studies,
Vice President of Development

Part 3 (Conclusion)

On October 22, 2016, the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) celebrated its 50th anniversary as a graduate school in conjunction with the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA)'s 10th anniversary of the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC). As a participant in much of this journey, here are some of my reflections.

With the support of BCA leaders and members, we have come a long way in fulfilling the dreams of the early IBS founders and BCA leadership: to establish an educational institution for the training of American-born ministerial students and provide them with the best education possible so that they may serve as ministers in our temples. To meet the needs of

BCA's changing temple membership, the early founders believed that the BCA must train their ministers in the American setting.

Traditionally, before IBS programs existed, all the ministerial students were required to study in Japan after receiving a bachelor's degree in an American college. Undergoing doctrinal training and study of the Japanese language in Japan was a requirement for a minister to serve in the BCA, even though the students were not proficient in the Japanese language. So, the BCA provided scholarships to those students who went to Japan to study at Ryukoku University in Kyoto.

I was one of those students who did not want to go to Japan, but was required to do so. I went to Japan in 1958 and returned in 1964 and was eventually assigned to the Buddhist Church of Oakland. In 1966, IBS was established as a graduate school.

In its early years, IBS faced many difficult issues including how to attract students interested in ministry. Due to a great deal of uncertainty, some students dropped out and others went to Japan to study in spite of cultural and language difficulties. Finally, in 1972 under the leadership of Tony

Yokomizo, IBS Trustee Chair, and Rev. Haruyoshi Kusada, Executive Director, June King and Kenneth O'Neill graduated from IBS. In 1973, Kanya Okamoto, Robert Oshita, Ken Tanaka, and Ronald Kobata completed their degrees, furthered their studies in Japan, and returned to the US, launching a new generation of BCA ministers. Reverends Okamoto (retired), Oshita (retired), and Kobata have spent their entire careers as Jodo Shinshu ministers.

As IBS steadily established itself as a rigorous educational program, the Hongwanji accredited IBS as a training center. A Sectorial Decree was granted, which ordered the admission of IBS graduates to full ordination with no further examination. However, following IBS graduation, those who wished to enter the ministry were still required to go to Japan for further study to strengthen their language and doctrinal proficiency. Until the 1990s, scholarships were provided by the BCA to support this practice.

As IBS struggled to create a new academic path for Jodo Shinshu ministerial training in the US, it also struggled to find a home for its programs. In 1966, the BCA purchased the building at 2717

Haste Street in Berkeley for IBS; in 1987, a building on Addison Street was purchased; and in 1997, IBS moved to the Mountain View Buddhist Temple due to the high cost of retrofitting the Addison Street site. IBS classes were also held at various schools in the Graduate Theological Union (GTU).

In 2002, Campaign BCA-The 21st Century, coordinated by campaign manager Robert Noguchi, with the tremendous generosity of BCA members and friends, raised some \$20,000,000 over eight years to support the construction of the Jodo Shinshu Center. Finally, IBS could return to Berkeley, establish an academic home, and focus on upgrading its curriculum and programs!

Today, IBS is seeking accreditation with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), a major step towards becoming a world-class academic institution. Accreditation has been a primary goal of the IBS since its inception as a graduate school; however, the road has not been easy due to its high standards.

In 1970, the California State Department of Education approved the IBS as a degree granting institution under the Cali-

fornia Education Code. The IBS Board of Trustees even started a movement to establish a Buddhist accreditation association, but the task was too difficult for Buddhist institutions at that time. With the encouragement of the GTU, IBS made numerous inquiries to the Association of Theological Schools, an accreditation association for Christian schools. But IBS as a Buddhist school did not meet the requirements. In 1985, IBS became affiliated with the GTU so that IBS students who wished to take the common MA program could receive an accredited degree. Currently, IBS has Shin Buddhist Ministerial, Buddhist Chaplaincy, and Research Study students.

IBS is at a historical moment in its history. We must look back at our past with a deep sense of gratitude for the support and vision of the IBS Board of Trustees, faculty, the BCA, and the BCA membership, past and present, who shared this dream. Without their foresight, encouragement, and financial support, we would not be at this point in our history.

See the April 2016 and November 2016 issues of the Wheel of Dharma for Parts 1 and 2 of this series.



At left: IBS and IMOP ministers gather at the Jodo Shinshu Center. In recent years, IBS ministerial graduates, together with IMOP (International Ministerial Orientation Program), ministers have revitalized the BCA and other overseas Hongwanji districts.

Center: Current IBS students are part of the next generation of ministers and chaplains.

Right: A scene from the documentary film, "Streams of Light - Shin Buddhism in America": IBS alumni, Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Jerry Hirano and Rev. David Matsumoto, reflect on their student days and the vision of early mentors like the late Rev. Russell Hamada. Rev. Harada and Rev. Hirano now serve as IBS trustees and Rev. Matsumoto is IBS provost. The DVD is available at the BCA Bookstore!

BCA Dana Program Update

We would like to express sincere gratitude to all the BCA Dana Program donors. Thanks to your generous support, the Dana Program raised over \$130,000 in 2016!

The Dana Program has prospered and grown in its second year. Donors across the nation have given generously to benefit the BCA's temples and ministers, educational programs, Center for Buddhist Education, Institute of Buddhist Studies, and the Bishop's Office, as well as outreach programs and events, all of which are spreading the teachings of the Buddha and Shinran Shonin to seekers everywhere.

We are striving to reach \$200,000 in 2017 by developing a broad base of supporters who make recurring donations. Would you like to participate?

You can download the Dana Program brochure or donate online at BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org/bca-dana-program. To receive a brochure in the mail, call the BCA at (415) 776-5650 x311, message donate@bcabq.org, or visit your local temple and pick one up in person.

Year after year, your commitment allows Shin Buddhism to continue thriving in America.



Thank you for supporting the Buddhist Churches of America!

Please complete this form and mail to:
BCA Endowment Foundation, 1710 Octavia Street,
San Francisco, CA 94109-4341.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE _____
TEMPLE AFFILIATION _____
E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

A **RECURRING DONATION** to the Dana Program is recommended. Your offerings will be allocated to the areas of greatest need.

You can make your offerings at any frequency: *annually, bi-annually, quarterly or monthly*. If you choose monthly, please consider the online giving option.

Yes! I would like to make a recurring donation
Suggested amounts **PER YEAR**:
 \$1,200 \$600 \$300 \$ _____
(E.G. \$1,200 = MONTHLY OFFERINGS OF \$100; OR QUARTERLY OF \$300)

I am making a one-time donation now.
Amount: \$ _____

Please make your check payable to: **BCA ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION** and put **DANA PROGRAM** in the memo section.

Yes! I would like to share 50% of my offering with:

NAME OF BCA TEMPLE / CHURCH _____

Yes! my employer will make a matching contribution.
The BCA Endowment Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit charitable organization.
(BCA ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION EIN: 94-2857583)

On-line Offering

You can easily make your offering using your credit card by visiting the BCA website at:

buddhistchurchesofamerica.org

and selecting the Dana Program icon

or going directly to:

bca.kindful.com

By giving online you will be able to electronically track and modify your giving schedule.

Other Methods of Offering

I will make arrangements with my Bank for **DIRECT PAYMENT** to the **BCA ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION**

Charge my **CREDIT CARD**

NAME ON CARD _____

CARD NO. _____ Exp. Date _____ CCV _____

SIGNATURE _____

BILLING STREET ADDRESS _____

BILLING CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE _____

Please end my recurring offering on: (optional)

MONTH _____ DAY _____ YEAR _____

Yes! Contact me regarding Planned Giving, bequests, and other opportunities for long-term giving opportunities with the BCA Endowment Foundation.

We are here to answer your questions about the Dana Program at donate@bcabq.org or 415-776-5600 x311.

今月の法話

有縁のなかにある私

サリナス仏教会
開教使 藤田 裕豪



一切の有情はみなもつて世々生々の父母・兄弟なり。

づれも、この順次生に仏に成りてたすけ候ふべきなり。わがちからにてはげむ善にても候はばこそ、念仏を回向して父母をたすけ候はめ。……神通方便をもつて、まづ有縁を度すべきなり。……（『浄土真宗聖典・註釈版』834～835頁）

皆様初めまして、この度新しくBCAの開教使にならせていただきました、藤田裕豪です。2016年9月26日にアメリカ・サンフランシスコに到着し、サンノゼ別院で研修を受けさせていただきました。その後、サリナス仏教会へやってきました。私事です。少し自己紹介させていただきます。私、香川県は日本で一番小さい県でありまして、華やかな県ではない田舎なのですが、「讃岐うどん」や「瀬戸大橋」等が有名な県です。アメリカ・サリナスでの生活が4か月過ぎました。多くの方々の大きな助けや支えがありまして、おかげさまで段々と生活に慣れてきました。しかしまだ多くの事を知らなく、日々新しいことを学ばせていただいております。中でも慣れないのが車の運転です。多くの方がご存知の通り、日本とはハンドルも走行も逆です。私は日頃から抜けている所があるので運転中は注意深くし、逆走しないようにしないといけません。また、一般道からハイウェイに入る時、上手く入れるかいつもヒヤヒヤしながら運転して

います。というのも私が運転免許を取得したのはサリナスへきてから2か月経ってからです。それまではソーシャルセキュリティ番号の取得に時間がかかり運転免許証の申請ができず車がない生活を送っていました。正確には仏教会には車があるのに運転ができないという状況です。ですので移動手段がほぼない中で仏教会の敷地以内からは出られないという状況が2か月続きました。しかし、その状況は私にとつて辛い時間ではありませんでした。それはメンバーの方々やわがわが仏教会へやってきて声をかけてくださったり、食事をあてて下さったからです。また、会議などでサンノゼ等、他の町に行かなければいけない時などは、わざわざ私を乗せてくださりました。

アメリカにおける車の重要性がわからない日本で住んでいる方々からは「車なくて不便なの？大丈夫？」という言葉が出てくるかと思えます。一方でアメリカにおける車の重要性を知っているアメリカに住んでいるメンバーの方々からは「大変だねえ、かわいそうに、何かあったら連絡して」という言葉をかけていただきました。どちらの言葉も私を思いやり気にかけて下さっている言葉です。ただの言葉による微妙な違いですが、大きな差があります。このようなメンバーの方々からかけられた言葉や食事等を通して、メンバー様への感謝の気持ちと同時に有縁の中で生きる私の姿や、阿弥陀様の無縁の大きな慈悲・大悲を僅かではありますが感じさせていただきました。

1番初めに書かせていただきました『歎異抄』第5条のお言葉から、時代などを超えて私たち人間は父・母・兄弟・姉妹の係性をもち、それは人間だけではなく全ての生き物のいのちが繋がっているという見方ができるかと思えます。しかし、冷静に考えられない時に「すべての生き物と繋がっている」と問いかければ素直に頷けるでしょうか。多くのメンバー様が助けてくださったように、自分も今後アメリカへ新しく来た方とであつたら手伝ったり、助けようと思えました。しかし、であつたら縁がなければ私は新しくアメリカへ来た方を手伝うこと

ができないでしょう。自分に直接縁がある方々にしか、お手伝いすることや、気にかけてくれる事ができません。

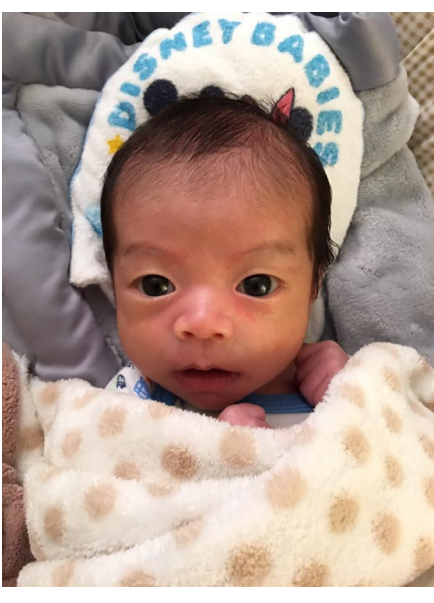
阿弥陀様という仏様は無縁の慈悲をもって生きておられます。有縁の中で生きていく私達の世界とは違います。互いに繋がって生きていくというものを解っておられます。ですので、総てのものにはたらきかけ、すくって下さるのです。私は阿弥陀様の大きな慈悲にふれることで今ある有縁の繋がりをより大切に、互いに敬い助け合っていくことが大事なことだと気づかせていただきました。有縁の中でいる自分に阿弥陀様が無縁の慈悲をもってよんでくださっている。この阿弥陀様のお心を聞かせていただくことがお念仏の心であり、感謝のお念仏だと感じられます。

有縁の中で生きる私達でも、阿弥陀様の大悲に今いだから感謝しお念仏し、精一杯自分にできることをする。そうした姿が真宗徒の実践・生活なのかと私は思っています。感謝のお念仏を精一杯皆様とご一緒に、ここアメリカからお称えさせていただきますと思います。阿弥陀様は分けへだてなく平等に、常に私達にはたらきかけて下さっています。

南無阿弥陀仏

フローリン便り

10月29日にフローリン仏教会駐在の菅原裕軌開教使に男の子の赤ん坊が授かった。名前は菅原・ザック・暉（ひかる）。体重は6パウンドちょうど。
Zack Hikaru Sugahara



第25代専如門主 伝灯奉告法要記念
Buddhist Church of Florin members at Hongwanji in Japan

初のビリヤードのプロとなった人物から手ほどきを受けた。「玉をポケットに入れるだけで簡単に見えますが、実は頭を使うスポーツです。将棋のように、何手先も予測して進めていきます。上手い人になると、最初の一撃を打った時点で、テーブル上に散らばった残りの球をどこに入れるか、すでに頭の中で決まっています。」とその魅力を語る。開教使として渡米後、しばらくビリヤードから遠ざかっていたが、ふとしたことからふたたび始めることになった。「亡くなったメンバーさんの息子さんの家でまたまビリヤードキューを見かけ、お話しをしたところ、一緒に大会に出ましよう！と声をかけてくださって、。思わぬところに縁があるものです。」とほほ笑む。

ビリヤードと仏法との関りは？との問いに「もちろんあります。お分りだと思えますが、縁起ですね。すべてが繋がっていることです。一つの球が次の球にあたり、それが互いに影響を与え、状況が変わっていきます。また、手玉と撞く球だけに集中しがちですが、目の前の撞く玉に集中しつつも、いつも全体の球の配置を頭に入れておくことが大切です。それは、自分の日常生活でもそうです。自分の言動が自分だけでなく、周りの人まで影響をおよぼします。自分の見えることだけに執着するのではなく、全体を見ようとしていくことが大切でしょう。」と仏法とビリヤードの味わいを語ってくれた。柿原師とビリヤード対決をしたい方は法輪編集部まで連絡のこと。

開教使の趣味

タコマ仏教会、柿原興乗開教使の趣味は、ビリヤード。高校生、大学生時代は、友人と遊びでする程度だったが、約十五年前に友人と一緒に自分のキューを購入、頻りにプレーするようになった。現在は、シアトル地区でのリーグ戦に参加している。師が中央仏学院に在籍していたころ、級友に誘われたのがきっかけで、日本



Rev. Kakihara

法輪

2017年2月号

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二〇一七年度教化標語

「まことの人生を
歩もう」

あの記事をもう一度!

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

門徒代表者の集い

1月20日(金)から22日(日)までの三日間、浄土真宗センターにおいて寺院の運営に携わる代表者を対象とした研修会が開催された。BCA所属の60ヶ寺、6サンカグループを2グループに分け、二年にわたって研修会を行う。今年は19ヶ寺、1サンカグループから32名が参加した。「仏法を中心としたリーダーシップ」をテーマとし、仏教や浄土真宗の基本的な教え、より効果的な情報発信を行うためのインターネットやソーシャルネットワーク活用などを学んだ。ディスカッションでは各寺院で共通する問題点についての意見交換が行われた。また各仏教会の現状や取り組みで成功している事例紹介のプレゼンテーションも行われた。



Temple Leadership Workshop

参加者は「門徒数は減少しているのでは、将来はどのようになっいくかわかりませんが、お念仏の教えが中心となっていくことがお寺が活性化していることだと学びました。そのことをお寺に帰って皆に伝えたいと思います。」と真宗門徒としての思いをあらたにした。

総長メッセージ

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

二月から三月にかけてサンノゼで教団の総会が開催されます。この総会は、全国から代表者が出席して、教団の予算を決めたりし、これからの方向をさだめる大切な会議です。どんな団体も、その団体の目的というものがあります。米国仏教団の場合は浄土真宗の教えを喜ぶ人たちが各地に仏教会を設立し、全国組織を作り、一緒にその喜びの輪を広げていこうというのが目的です。

しかし、時として、その目的がはつきりしなくなり、ただの普通の団体になりがちです。それで、仏教教育部は浄土真宗センターで各地の仏教会のリーダーを集めて研修会をおこなっています。この一月には三十名以上の人たちが各地から集まり、お念仏の教えにしたがって、よりコミュニティに開かれた団体づくりをするように努めています。

私はこの研修会の開会式で、リーダーは親鸞さまに近づいてほしいということをお願いしました。親鸞さまのお言葉に親しみ、一緒に人生を歩む人になってほしいということです。親鸞さまに近づいたためには、親鸞さまのおっしゃる言葉を聞かせていただかねばなりません。必ず親しみを感ずることができると信じています。

親鸞さまのお言葉の一つを一緒に考えてみたいと思います。それは「煩惱具足(ぼんのうぐそく)」という言葉です。

ところで、皆さんの仏教会ではお盆や報恩講の前に、おみぎをされると思います。おみぎはお内陣の中の仏具の呼び方を学ぶよい機会となります。お内陣の前にある大きなテーブルを前卓(まえじょく)と呼びます。その上にはふつうロウソク立てと花瓶(けびょう)と香炉(こうろ)の三つが置かれています。この三つを「三具足(みつぐそく)」と言います。具足というのは全部すべてが完全にそろったセットという意味です。

だから、煩惱具足というのは、ありとあらゆる煩惱という煩惱すべてを持っている自分ということ。欠けたものはなに一つないということです。大智大悲の眼に照らされて、親鸞さまはご自身のことを煩惱具足であると知らされ、恥づべし、痛むべしと、心の内を素直に述べられています。

私もそういう親鸞さまに親しみを感ずさせていただきます。他の人にもそれを言える立場にありません。今、アメリカ全体、いや世界が悩んでいます。本当の姿に気づくことなく、お互いの非難合戦です。自分自身を振り返ることなく、すべて自分以外のせいにしてしまっているのが私たちではないでしょうか。そういう時にこそ、お念仏に立ち返らせていただかなければなりません。

私たちの姿を悲しみ痛み、同悲していただくのが親鸞さまではないでしょうか。お念仏は仏さまが私たちのことを念じていてくださるといことです。すべての人が光に出会い、お浄土への旅を共にする、御同行(おんどうぎょう)、御同朋(おんどうぼん)であることに目覚めてほしいというのが仏さまの願いであります。そのことを忘れては、教団の意味はありません。仏教会の意味はありません。仏教会や教団の底を流れる深い願いをもう一度掘り起こし、このような団体を作って残して下さった方々に感謝させていただきます。

念仏者の詩

不定期連載のこのコーナーでは、念仏のみ教えを喜ぶ方が書かれた詩を掲載している。「よろこびの歌」はパスの事故で被害を受けたのち、いろいろな病気に罹り、足が不自由になったが、お念仏の喜びの生活を送られた大分県宇佐市に所在する寺院の坊主(故人)によるもの。二つ目の詩は、サンマテオ仏教会の門徒、山畑よしえさん(故人)が書かれたもので、詩の内容もさることながら、詠み人が「婆」とされているところにも真宗の味わいが表現されている。

よろこびの歌

二度三度
人並みはずれた病気に
いろいろな苦痛はあるけれど
自分に残った業だから

今月の一枚



サンノゼ別院の日本語話話会。「毎日曜日、聞法を楽しんでいます。」
San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin, Nihongo Howakai

誰にも不足はありません
何と不思議なことだろう
八十路を越えるこの坂を
知らず知らずに越えました
これから先の人生は
こんなことが起こるやら
凡夫の私は知りません
残りすくない人生の
終わりの来ましたその時は
足のいたみも何のその
光明かがやくお浄土の
み親の元に参ります
みなさまお世話になりました
ああ有難やもったいない
南無阿弥陀仏 南無阿弥陀仏 南無阿弥陀仏

平成二年一月十五日 紫雲ももせ

おろかなる
我にしあれば みほとけは
はなれたまはぬ お六字となり

(婆)