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In the Spirit of *Mottainai*



By Rev. Don Castro, Rimban
Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple

On February 27, 2015 at our meeting in San Diego, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) National Council passed the EcoSangha Resolution that I wrote about in the March 2015 *Wheel of Dharma*. It calls upon our temples to promote “ecologically friendly behavior in the spirit of ‘mottai-nai.’” Later that evening, Karen Akahoshi and I conducted a workshop on the meaning of mottai-nai and how to implement the resolution. As for the expression “mottai-nai,” I wrote about

it in last month’s article and urged readers to refer to Rev. Chijun Yakumo’s wonderful book *Thank You: Namo Amida Butsu* which was distributed to all BCA temples twenty years ago. It has an excellent essay on mottai-nai from a Shin Buddhist perspective. On the Internet, you can find many references to mottai-nai, but I think the Mottai-nai Campaign in Japan is well worth investigating.

The second part of our workshop focused on implementation of the EcoSangha Resolution. We were impressed at how many temples are already making genuine efforts to be environmentally responsible. As for the grave threat of climate change, there is maybe less we can do about it at our temples than some other areas of conservation such as use of compostable products, reducing use of plastic, and recycling. Conservation efforts result from an attitude and orientation. This is what Karen and I tried to convey.

In implementing conservation measures, it is very helpful to have the backing of the temple Board of Directors and have guidelines for facilities use.

The measures then become temple policy. To this end, Karen shared the EcoSangha “Mission Statement” and “Guidelines for Facilities Use” that was adopted by the San Jose Betsuin Board of Directors and is printed here. To conclude my article, I would like to share it with you:

MISSION STATEMENT

As Buddhists, the EcoSangha of the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin recognizes that we are interdependent with all life. From this position of Oneness, we ask what we can do for our environment. Our goals are to promote:

- Understanding of the inherent ecological nature of Buddhism
- Ecologically friendly behavior through the established guidelines
- Recognition of the profound



(Left to right): Rinban Don Castro (Seattle), Karen Akahoshi (San Diego), and Harriet and Stan Kawamata (San Jose Betsuin) shared how EcoSangha has been implemented at their temples. Photos by Wheel of Dharma

implications of our behavior on future generations

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITIES USE

We encourage:

- 1) use of paper products rather than Styrofoam or plastic
- 2) use of compostable utensils and non-plastic bags
- 3) use of bamboo chopsticks rather than wood
- 4) use of tap water rather than bottled water (pitchers available in temple storage)

5) recycling items in appropriately labeled containers

6) reducing use of non-recyclable products (e.g. use washable plates and utensils available in temple kitchen)

7) use of eco-friendly cleaning products

Editor’s Note: For information on the Mottai-nai Campaign, visit www.mottainai.info/english. For information on the Buddhist Climate Action Network and efforts to stop climate change, visit www.globalbcn.org.

Nature – A Buddhist Ecological Perspective

By Rev. Chijun Yakumo

According to scholars who study such things, there was no equivalent in ancient Japan for the English word “nature,” which in modern Japanese is the word *shizen*.

When a Japanese of ancient times wanted to express the equivalent of our word “nature, he did so by using concrete expressions of it. For example, the ancient Japanese referred to nature itself as “mountains-rivers-great earth” (*san-ga-daichi*) or “grass-trees-country-ground” (*sō-moku-koku-do*). They referred to the changes in nature as “flying flowers-falling leaves” (*hi-ka, raku-yō*).

The fact that the ancient Japanese used concrete terms to express what we today refer to as “nature,” does not mean that they did not have the ability to express things abstractly. It means that rather than considering nature to be something standing in contrast to themselves, or that nature is something to make

use of, they felt nature to be a part of themselves. That is why the poems of that period used mountains, rivers, moon, flowers, wind, etc., to express their feelings of nostalgia, impermanence, love, sorrow, etc.

Today, however, because Japan has been so influenced by the West, nature is considered something to be used for our benefit. This feeling is the basis of science and technological development.

A scientific principle may be important to a scientist just for itself, but for most of us, a scientific principle is important for how it can be used to make life “easier.”

The near catastrophes in American and Russian atomic reactors, however, show what can happen if we one-sidedly try to exploit nature solely for what seems to be our benefit.

We have benefitted a great deal from the scientific and technological developments of recent years, but at the same time, we have lost sight of nature for what it is for

itself. That is, we no longer look at things with an attitude that the thing in itself is sufficient reason for its existence.

Stated in other words, a mountain is no longer simply accepted as a mountain; it is something that must be exploited because it may have various resources. A river is no longer looked on as having value as flowing water. It is looked at for how many kilowatts of power will be generated if a dam were constructed across it. Trees are considered for the number of board-feet of lumber that it will produce, and grass for the number of cattle it will support. Similarly, people are no longer valued as individuals, but for the work they can do and how much they can consume.

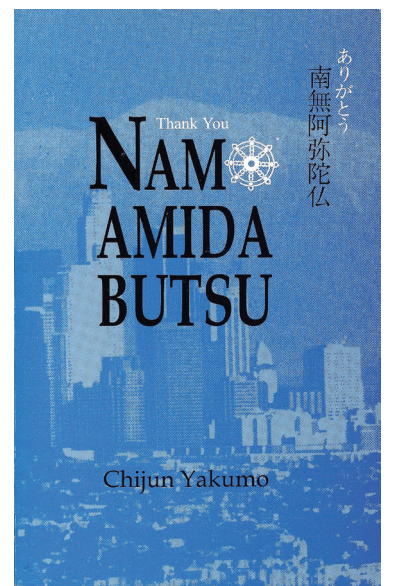
When we consider the utility of things as the most important characteristic of that thing, that thing is no longer what it was, but what it can be used for

Regarding this matter, I am

brought to recall a story about Rennyō *Shōnin*, the Eighth Spiritual Leader of the Hongwanji. He once found a scrap of paper in the corridor. “This belongs to the Buddha,” he said, and reverently placed his hands together in *gasshō* and bowed towards it.

I believe the Japanese term *mottai-nai* should be used more often by us in the United States. This term is written with the characters for “thing” and “essence” and a negating suffix. It is often translated as “irreverent” or “sacrilegious” when used by itself. When used as in, “How *mottai-nai!*” it is usually translated as “How wasteful!” or “What a waste!” But *mottai-nai* implies that if you consider something only from the point of how you can use it, you disregard the essence or life of that thing.

When, however, we consider everything as “belonging to the Buddha,” we accept water as water, a scrap of paper as a scrap of paper, and acknowledge its value for itself.



That is the world in which everything has its own reason for existence. It is the world in which, as the *Amida Sutra* says about the Buddha’s Land, the world in which white colors radiate white light, red colors radiate red light, yellow colors radiate yellow light, etc.

From Thank You, Namo Amida Butsu by Chijun Yakumo. © 1995, Kazuko Yakumo. Reprinted with permission.



Rev. Tomoyasu Naito, Kangaku

Interview with Rev. Tomoyasu Naito, Kangaku

The following interview with Reverend Tomoyasu Naito appeared in the March 2015 *Horin* (Japanese section of the *Wheel of Dharma*). Rev. Naito is a professor emeritus of Shinshu Studies at Ryukoku University, a member of the Hongwanji Kangaku Com-

mittee of Special Advisors to the Gomonshu, and resident minister of Kakujoji Temple in Fukui, Japan. In February and March 2015 Rev. Naito gave a series of lectures for the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) throughout California, concluding with the Winter Pacific Seminar in Seattle, Washington.

Translated by Rev. Ryuta Furumoto from march 2015 *Horin*.

Wheel of Dharma (The

Wheel): Welcome to the United States. Your lectures are very informative and you clarify difficult Jodo Shinshu traditional doctrine with simple explanations and illustrations, so we appreciate it very much. By the way, have you visited the U.S. before?

Rev. Naito: This is my seventh time. I visited my relative living in San Francisco to attend a memorial service and I also went to IBS [Institute of Buddhist Studies] several times to give lectures.

I was once invited to Boston and to Oregon to lecture and give a presentation of my research.

The Wheel: We heard that this time you are going to stay in the U.S. for 40 days.

Rev. Naito: Yes, I just retired from Ryukoku University last year, so now I have time to spend on this lecture tour. I am the resident minister of my home temple in Fukui, but around this season (February – March), due to the

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By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

*Shakyamuni Tathagata appeared in this world
Solely to teach the oceanlike Primal Vow of
Amida;*

*We, an ocean of beings in an evil age of five
defilements,*

*Should entrust ourselves to the Tathagata's
words of truth.*

(Collected Works of Shinran, p. 70)

In the words above, Shinran Shonin expressed his deep appreciation for Shakyamuni Buddha appearing in our world to

expound the Primal Vow of Amida.

Venerable Tomoyasu Naito, Hongwanji *Kangaku**, recently visited the BCA for over one month. He travelled to several places and delivered many Dharma messages, including at the San Jose Betsuin for the Coast District Buddhist Women's Conference in February. Unfortunately I was unable to attend the event, but I listened to his Japanese message on YouTube.

In his message, Ven. Naito stated that we are the ones who caused Amida Tathagata to appear from the world of suchness. This truth is very difficult to accept. But imagine this: it is like a doctor going to a village where people are suffering from illness. If there is no illness, the villagers don't need a doctor. Illness causes the doctor to appear. Likewise, our illness caused Amida to appear in our world and prescribe medicine for us.

If you put an inchworm on a rim of a cup, it just goes around and around and ends up dying there. Our daily activities are like an inchworm endlessly circling around the rim of a cup; so said the 5th-century Chinese Pure Land Master T'an-luan. We are, indeed, living lives of false purpose and direction. We are driven to go around in circles in the realm of *samsara*. It is all because of a lack of wisdom.

We are lost. Because of our foolish views and ideas, we disagree with others, harm each other, and make the world a very difficult place to live in. This is what Shinran Shonin was talking about when he described us as "we, an ocean of beings in an evil age of five defilements."

We cannot see ourselves as we truly are. The reality is, we do not think we need medicine for ourselves. We think medicine is needed by other people who make our

lives difficult. When a person realizes he or she needs medical attention, that person is halfway cured. The only thing left to do is find the right doctor.

After 20 years of struggle, Shinran Shonin found the right doctor and the right medicine for himself, and he encouraged others to immediately receive the same medicine. The *Nembutsu* teaching is the medicine that gives us real relief and direction. It makes us realize our foolishness and lets us live a real life with joy, humility, and appreciation.

Shakyamuni Buddha appeared in this world to guide us with true and real wisdom light. Let us all attend a Hanamatsuri Service and celebrate his birth.

Happy Hanamatsuri!

**Kangaku: the highest academic rank within the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha*

Making a Spiritual Offering



Rev. Ron Miyamura
Midwest Buddhist Temple

A spiritual offering can be almost anything because we all feel spiritual things differently and we cannot describe our true spiritual feelings. However, there is a gesture, a physical expression of spiritual offering. In Japanese, the word is *Shoko*, or Incense Offering. It is essentially made up of three parts: the actual offering of incense,

Gassho and *Raihai*.

The offering of incense is quite simple...walk up to the incense burner, bow, step forward, take a pinch of the incense granules, and put it into the burner. Then *Gassho* (put your hands together), then *Raihai* (bow), and then step back.

To offer incense is a reminder of change. The incense itself changes from stick or granule form, burns to give off scented smoke, and then leaves ashes. It is like our life, always changing.

There are many "ways" of doing *Shoko*, and even in our Hongwanji tradition, it has changed several times in the past 100 years or so. There is no right way and wrong way to make an incense offering, just different ways. Some people put the pinch of incense to their forehead, some people take three pinches, and all kinds of different ways.

Gassho is the second part

and is the really important part. To briefly describe it, we put our palms and thumbs together in front of us with our hands at about a 45 degree angle, and then we bow about a quarter of the way down. This is a simple gesture, but has a lot of meaning.

Just recently, when I was talking about *Gassho* to another group, there was a question which I had never considered. The question was, "What are you thinking when you bow?"

I guess I had never given it much thought, but fortunately, I gave an appropriate response... you have one thought...maybe it is to say "*Namu Amida Butsu*" or you say "thank you" for whatever you are grateful for. It should be one spontaneous thought.

Thinking back in my life, I often remember my grandmother who always lived close

by my father, the oldest son. It was my grandmother who fed my brother and me breakfast before school and generally took care of us.

I can remember going to the cemetery after she passed away. I would visit her grave, and when I did *Gassho*, only one word came to mind, "*Obaa-chan*"—grandmother—and "I am grateful."

There is one more thought that I have to mention about the importance of *Raihai*. It is the gesture of bowing our head. We tend to rely on our eyes too much to sense things around us, so when we lower our eyes, our other senses become stronger...we hear better, we smell better, etc. AND, most of all, when we *Gassho/Raihai*, we quit talking.

It is often said that actions speak louder than words. I leave you with that thought.

Douglas Shigeo Iwamoto 1949 - 2015



Douglas Shigeo Iwamoto, former Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) President, passed away surrounded by his family on February 23, 2015 in Salinas, California at the age of 65.

Doug was the BCA President in 2004-2005. During his two-year term, he emphasized the importance of Campaign BCA – The 21st Century to secure the resources needed to fund BCA's initiatives to propagate Jodo Shinshu teachings, including the Jodo Shinshu Center to provide a modern educational facility, the Center for Buddhist Education, and the Institute of Buddhist Studies for Shin Buddhist education and graduate studies. By the end of his term, major construction

of the JSC was completed, the CBE was fully operational, and the IBS had initiated its Chaplaincy program.

A native of Salinas, Doug returned from college in 1971. He began farming green onions under the SEICO label, then started Iwamoto Farms. Later, with partner Mark Mitani, they formed MKM Farms, Inc. Doug was also active in many community organizations.

Doug is survived by his mother, Mary Iwamoto of Salinas, CA, wife, Joann, children, grandchildren, sisters, and other family members.

We are extremely grateful for the contributions he made and the legacy he left for the BCA.



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Oregon Buddhist Temple

The Oregon Buddhist Temple was officially founded on November 29, 1903 by Rev. Shozui Wakabayashi. The *Go-Ku-den* (housing for the Amida statue) is probably the only one made in this country. In 1905 the Lewis & Clark Exposition was held in Portland and a master carpenter, Masaichi Hayashi, was in charge of the Japanese buildings. Reverend and temple members recruited him to build the *Go-Ku-den*.

In September 1905, a gift of a *rokujisongo* (the scroll inscribed with *Namu Amida Butsu*) arrived from Homba Hongwanji, Japan. In 1930, a member donated the statue of Amida replacing the scroll. Planning for a new temple was begun in 1962. Rev. Ikuo Nishimura was the resident minister at the time. The building was completed in July 1966 without leaving any debt. The present temple building was dedicated in November 1966 with Rev. Kazuo Nakagami as the resident minister. The most recent minister was Rev. Jundo Gregory Gibbs.

Today the temple shares the Dharma with a diverse membership and many guests.



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First-person articles should be around of 500 words, typed, double-spaced in Microsoft Word. The editors may ask for longer articles, or split in multiple parts at the editors' discretion. All other articles should be in news release form at maximum of 500 words.

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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Job Announcement BCAEF Development Assistant

The Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) and the BCA Endowment Foundation (BCAEF) are pleased to announce a job opening for a Development Assistant. This full-time position will be under the BCAEF, whose primary function is to be the fund raising arm of the BCA, BCAEF and Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS). For a job description and details, please contact Hide Mizuno, BCAEF Executive Director at (415) 776-5068 or email: hmizuno@bcahq.org.



By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

President's Message

The National Council Meeting in San Diego

and from district to district. Next year, we hope to report on current year financial statements to the Council broken down to specific categories (line items).

All of the proposed Bylaws changes passed. The Bylaws now clearly define what is meant by the term "minister" and all Kaikyoshi ministers have the right to vote at the National Council. Past BCA Presidents can now run for Director-at-Large without needing to serve as a district representative first. The BCA National Board has the authority to approve changes to the Center for Buddhist Education Bylaws and the Guidelines for the Establishment of Temples. The National Board and the BCA Ministers' Association have the

authority to modify the Guidelines for the Selection of the Bishop. The National Council also passed the proposal that made non-substantive changes to the Bylaws to be clear, accurate, and organized.

Glenn Kameda discussed the proposal to install solar panels at the Jodo Shinshu Center. The Ministers' Association favored the proposal, but did not want the assessment to rise to help pay for the \$306,576 project. The National Council voted to have the BCA National Board find and approve alternative ways to pay for the panels.

President-Elect Ken Tanimoto gave the report for the H.E. Kosho Ohtani Monshu Emeritus Special Temple Building Fund. In 2014, the Executive Committee voted to

move \$500,000 from the defunct Ministers' Income Protection Program into the Building Fund. At the December National Board Meeting, Rev. Harry Bridge voiced his concern that the transfer of money should have gone into a fund to strengthen ministers' benefits. At this National Council, it was found that three temples were planning to request a loan from the Temple Building Fund. The Executive Committee voted to look into the temple requests, and any money that was left in the Temple Building Fund would be transferred to a new fund that would provide additional benefits for the ministers.

Representatives from the Las Vegas Sangha showed pictures of their building that was purchased

in 2013. They will be celebrating their 30th anniversary as a Sangha in October of this year. I hope that more of our BCA-affiliated Sanghas will join us in future meetings.

In addition to the meetings, we had workshops on Archiving Temple Documents, EcoSangha, Investing with the BCA Endowment Foundation, Ministerial Affairs, E-polling, What BCA Can Do for Your Temple, and a panel discussion with the Young Leaders Today (YLT) group. The YLT held their annual conference at the same time and at the same hotel as the National Council.

The next Ministers' Association and National Council Meetings will be held in Visalia, California from March 1 – 6, 2016.

"Oh, for a Lamborghini!"

By Rev. Marvin Harada
Orange County Buddhist Church

Sometimes for my sermon, I play a game with our Dharma School kids. I ask them to name something, anything, and I will try to relate it to Buddhism.

Once, a boy shouted out, "Lamborghini!" A Lamborghini is an Italian-made sports car, and the model is an "Aventador LP 700-4." This is an amazing car. It has a V-12 engine, meaning 12 cylinders. (My car has only 4 cylinders). It has 691 horsepower. (My car has 140 horsepower.) It goes from zero to 60 mph in 2.8 seconds! (My car goes from zero to 60 mph in 8.8 seconds.) It has a top speed of 217 mph! (I don't know what my car's top speed is, but it is probably around 105 or 110 mph.) The Lamborghini costs an unbelievable \$381,700. Wow. With

that amount of money I could buy 19 of my cars. But in gas mileage, my car beats the Lamborghini. The Lamborghini gets 10 mpg in the city, and 14 on the highway. My car gets 30 mpg in the city, and 41 on the highway.

Car enthusiasts would drool over a Lamborghini. In my younger days I used to drool over cars like a Corvette Stingray, or a GTO. Now I drool over a Toyota Prius. I am sure that this Dharma School student probably dreams of owning a Lamborghini someday.

This is how I answered him: "You know, many people dream of owning a nice car like a Lamborghini. They think, if only I had a Lamborghini, I would really be happy. But you know what? I can almost guarantee that if you got your dream car, for a while you would be pretty happy, pretty thrilled. But after a little while that

happiness would fade away and you would realize that even having a Lamborghini is not the ultimate meaning of happiness. Buddhism is trying to awaken us to finding the truest meaning of happiness in our lives. Something external to us, like a car, money, or a house, can never bring a true and lasting sense of happiness. Only something that comes from within us can bring us the truest sense of happiness. Our truest sense of happiness comes from the Dharma."

That was my response to this young student.

When Siddhartha Gautama as a young boy was allowed to go out of his palace, he saw a monk, a wandering ascetic. This monk's life was a striking contrast to his. Prince Siddhartha had every material possession available at that time—the best clothes, the best jewels, the best horses, the

best food, many servants and attendants. He lived in two palaces, one in winter and one in summer. In modern-day terms, it was like living in Beverly Hills, having a mansion with maids and butlers, and having a Lamborghini in your driveway. But although the prince had all of those luxuries, he was not happy. In fact, he was quite sad and melancholy. Then he saw this homeless, wandering monk. Although he had nothing materially, only rags for clothes and no home or even a place to sleep, this monk seemed so radiant, so happy to Siddhartha. He thought, "What does this monk know that I don't know? How can he be so happy, despite the fact that he has absolutely nothing?" This was one of the questions that led to Siddhartha's eventual renunciation and subsequent enlightenment as the Buddha years later.



In many ways, the entire Buddhist tradition is a history of countless people who have discovered that deepest meaning of happiness. All of the great monks, masters, and lay Buddhists over the centuries have discovered and lived this one point, to not be dependent on anything external for happiness, but to live with an inner sense of happiness that comes from the Dharma.

But oh, for a Lamborghini...
Namamidabutsu

Rev. Naito

Continued from Front Page

deep snow, we cannot have temple activities, so this was a good time for me and my wife to come to the U.S. We brought heavy baggage for this trip since we will need a lot of clothes. We started our trip in Los Angeles, then went up north to the Bay Area, Seattle, Canada, and New York. We started in short sleeve shirts, but we will need longer sleeve shirts and jackets, so we brought four big suitcases for the two of us.

The Wheel: Do you still continue teaching after retirement?

Rev. Naito: Yes. I still go to Ryukoku to teach and I also teach at several Hongwanji schools, such as Shugaku-in, Chuo Bukkyo Gakuin, and Tokyo Bukkyo Gakuin. Besides that, I lead a monthly Q and A session on *Shinjin* and the teaching at the Hongwanji in Kyoto and at Tsukiji Betsuin. Furthermore, I deliver the Dharma messages at my temple and at other temples as a guest speaker. I am grateful that I have opportunities in which I can share Shinran Shonin's *Nembutsu* teaching.

The Wheel: Who was your

teacher when you were a student at Ryukoku University?

Rev. Naito: Rev. Bukkotsu Yamamoto and Rev. Sokusui Murakami. When I finished undergraduate classes, my first *sensei* Rev. Yamamoto retired, so my professor became Rev. Murakami when I was in the master's and doctorate programs. I was not the first son of a temple family who is supposed to take over the temple, so when I was a high school student I did not think I would become a minister. In those days I was interested in science. I entered Osaka University. My major was science and technology. However, while I was studying science, somehow my interest turned to Buddhism. Then I left Osaka University and decided to go to Ryukoku to study Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. One of my classmates was Rev. Nobuhiro Fukagawa, who gave lectures for the BCA last year. He often made fun of me and said, "Your understanding of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism sounds scientific."

The Wheel: Could you give us some advice for the future of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in the United States?

Rev. Naito: Having discussions and exchanging ideas among the ministers is important. Through constructive discussions, gradually, the doctrine of American Jodo Shinshu can be established. Since the cultural and religious background is quite different between Japan and the U.S., it is difficult for the Japanese traditional doctrine to take root in the U.S. We must not change the essence of Jodo Shinshu, but we may need to change the manner in which we convey the essence. Those ministers who are born and raised in the U.S. will greatly contribute to this role. But we do not have to change everything to fit the American way. Jodo Shinshu was founded in Japan, so to know Japanese culture and that way of thinking is useful in understanding the essence of the teaching. In this aspect, ministers from Japan can be helpful. They should tell American people how they understand the teaching. Then both American and Japanese ministers can talk each other to find an efficient method to explain the essence of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. In this manner, in the future, American Jodo Shinshu doctrine can be constructively formed.

Service Project to Help the Homeless

By Jeanne Toguri, Midwest Buddhist Temple

We members of the Midwest Buddhist Temple (MBT) Women's Association, along with the MBT Golden Agers, have partnered with an organization called "New Life for Old Bags." This is a not-for-profit organization that recycles plastic bags into "plarn." Plarn is similar to yarn balls but is made of plastic bags that are cut and looped together to form a long chain, which is then formed into a ball. The ball of plarn is crocheted using a large hook to form a sleeping mat measuring 3 feet by 6 feet (3' x 6'). These sleeping mats are distributed to the area's homeless people by a partner organization.

MBT will be a new location in the center of Chicago for the New Life for Old Bags organization. It will be easily accessible to the community. Everyone is invited to participate in making plarn and crocheting sleeping mats. This is open to all age groups and can even be used as a service project for students. You can take part in a wonderful service project while socializing and meeting new friends. We will be hosting this gathering on the second Sunday of each month from 12 noon to 2:30 pm in the MBT social hall.

Visit [BCA Website](http://www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org)
www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

2015 Winter Pacific Seminar at the Seattle Betsuin

by Rosalie and Matt May, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple



Ministers and guests before the onajjin. (Left to right): Rev. Hibiki Murakami, Mr. Yukio Morikubo, Sensei Irene Goto, Rev. Yuugo Fujii, Rev. Mutsumi Wondra, Mrs. Kamiko Naito, Prof. Tomoyasu Naito, Rev. Don Castro, Rinban, Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, and Rev. Kojo Kakihara.

Seattle Betsuin was honored to host the Winter Pacific Seminar on March 7. This marks the first Pacific Seminar to take place in the Northwest District, and it attracted attendees from temples around and beyond the Northwest.

Prof. Tomoyasu Naito presented the keynote seminar on the “Life of Awakening.” A professor emeritus from Ryukoku University, Prof. Naito holds the rank of *kaugaku*, the highest academic rank in Jodo Shinshu.

Prof. Naito’s morning talk, translated by Rev. Mutsumi Wondra of the Orange County Buddhist Church, was a thoughtful and wide-ranging discourse on core principles of Jodo Shinshu, including the role of the *nembutsu*, Other Power, and *shinjin*. He described the *nembutsu* as an act of gratitude for the gift of Amida Buddha—an “expression of joy in one’s definite birth in the Pure Land.” Jodo Shinshu and the *nembutsu*, he said, are fundamentally about this gratitude, rather than the expectation of a future result. Prof. Naito discussed *bonno*, or blind passions, and that the light of the Buddha shows us as we are, allowing us to recognize those passions in ourselves even as we bask in that light. He described the primal vow of Amida Buddha as medicine, helping us to get well, as opposed to the “*sake*” of blind passion which intoxicates us.

The afternoon featured a second talk by Prof. Naito in Japanese, as well as an English-language talk by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara of the Center for Buddhist Education (CBE). Rev. Kuwahara talked about his deep appreciation of Prof. Naito, describing both the talks he’d given on his visit, as well as the books he has written which helped shape Rev. Kuwahara’s understanding of Buddhism as a student. Some of Prof. Naito’s works are in the process of being translated by the CBE.

We are grateful to Prof. Naito and Rev. Kuwahara for their excellent and heartfelt talks, and for bringing the Pacific Seminar to the Northwest District.

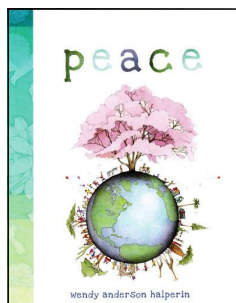
BCA Bookstore News

by Gayle Noguchi

Now available: *Peace* by Wendy Anderson Halperin, hardcover, \$17.99.

This wonderfully creative book was written and illustrated by acclaimed artist Wendy Anderson Halperin, who has illustrated dozens of books for children including *Turn! Turn! Turn!* by Pete Seeger.

Peace addresses the compelling question, “How can we bring peace to the world?” Along with engaging illustrations, *Peace* shares a multitude of thoughts on the matter in the form of quotations by people such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, Gandhi, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Albert Einstein, Meryl Streep, Confucius, Jimi Hendrix, William Faulkner, and more. *Peace* offers a rich resource of material for teaching Dharma School classes, particularly Middle School and High School students.



The BCA Bookstore will have copies of *Peace* available at the Federation of Dharma School Teachers’ League (FDSTL) Conference at the Concourse Hotel in Los Angeles, CA, April 24-26, 2015. You may also order it at www.bcabookstore.com or gnoguchi@bcahq.org/510-809-1435. The BCA Bookstore is open Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.

CBE 2015 Tentative Calendar of Events

(at the Jodo Shinshu Center unless noted otherwise. Dates and programming subject to change.)

April 4: Japanese Seminar with Rev. Henry Adams & Rev. Akinori Imai Conducted in Japanese

April 14-17: West & East Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange (WEHOPE)*

April 15 & 16: 2015 WEHOPE Dharmathon, 7pm - 9 pm See page 5

May 21: Gotan-e: A Celebration of Shinran Shonin’s Birthday

June 27: LGBTQ Community & Shin Buddhism Seminar @ NY Buddhist Church See page 5

July 3-5: Summer Pacific Seminar: *The Call of the Nembutsu in Nepal* Co-sponsored by IBS**

August 1-2: Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) August Workshop

September 18-21: Eastern District Speaking Tour (IBD)

October 3: Baby Boomers’ Seminar with Rev. Earl Ikeda

October 10: Japanese Seminar

October 15-17: 2015 Parliament of the World’s Religions, Salt Lake City, UT*

*Ministers’ Continuing Education (MCE):

April 14-17: West & East Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange (WEHOPE)

October 15-17: 2015 Parliament of World Religions, Salt Lake City, UT

**Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP):

SUMMER: July 3-5 FALL: Sept. 24-26 WINTER: Dec. 10-12

Website: www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org

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

NCM Dharma Talk: “My Map Experience”

By Ellen Crane, Orange County Buddhist Church

On February 28, 2015, Sensei Ellen Crane gave a Dharma message at the BCA National Council Meeting in San Diego, CA. This is a slightly edited version for Wheel of Dharma readers. Next month we will present the Dharma message that was given by Sensei Vonn Magnin of the Arizona Buddhist Temple.



My name is Ellen Crane and I am a minister’s assistant at Orange County Buddhist Church [OCBC], in Anaheim, CA. Today I want to tell you how the Minister’s Assistant Program [MAP] changed my life.

Dogen Zenji said that “To study the Buddha way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things.” Indeed, for me MAP has been my path to self-discovery and awakening awareness.

I was the quintessential prodigal *sangha* member—the person who was lost to her temple and returned to its embrace after a long absence. I was raised attending OCBC, and engaged in many of the usual activities—Japanese school, Sangha-teens, Jr. YBA [Young Buddhists Association], sports, and *Obon*. After college I drifted away from the temple as I pursued other things—I became an elementary school teacher, lived in Japan, traveled in Asia, moved to Washington, D.C., became a lawyer, married a Catholic man from the east coast, moved back to California, and raised three sons. I became a stay-at-home mom and immersed myself in motherhood, Boy Scouts and PTA. We attended St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church for 15 years. Like Shigaraki Sensei once wrote, “Life is a series of choices made and rejected,” and so it was for me.

In so many ways my life was full and we were pretty happy... and yet... it was somehow not quite complete. There was that proverbial “something missing.” During those years my visits to OCBC had been few and far between beyond the occasional *Obon* festival or funeral. In my own mind I was never anything but a Buddhist, but I was not behaving like one.

Eleven years ago, after a 26-year absence, I started attending Sunday services at OCBC again, taking Buddhist Education Center classes, and registering for retreats and seminars with my mother. Like the Terminator in the movie of the same name who had said, “I’ll be back!” I had come back. In my typical obsessive compulsive manner, I immersed myself at OCBC and in the dharma. I had found the missing piece in my life.

Six years ago, Rev. Harada asked if I would consider becoming a minister’s assistant, and somewhat dubiously I said yes. When I was involved in Boy Scouts, we always told potential volunteers “It’s only one hour a week,” and that’s basically what Rev. Harada said. He assured me this wouldn’t take much of my time. Of course that’s not what happened.

In everyone’s life there are defining moments—decisions that chart the course of one’s future. As Buddhists we know that causes and conditions come together to manifest and create the ebb and flow of our lives. I am grateful beyond words that these causes and conditions have led me here, and that I stand before you today to share what I have learned about the Buddhadharmas because of MAP.

What my path has allowed me to do is experience firsthand the enormous benefit to be gained by MAP for the individual and for the sangha, which I would like to highlight here.

For the individual, MAP provides a tremendous growth opportunity for dedicated members to delve deeper into the Buddhadharmas. The program is highly adaptive and flexible, allowing for a range of commitment levels depending on an individual’s inclinations and desires. OCBC has MAs [minister’s assistants] that cover the spectrum of duties. For some it is helping setup the *naijin* on Sundays and conducting an occasional Wednesday meditation service. Others have chosen to take MAP all the way to a Master’s degree at the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) and *Kyoshi** ordination. Opportunities to study and learn are provided at MAP training seminars offered four times a year at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC). These are invaluable, with the best teachers the BCA has to offer. Here MAs from all over the BCA come together to meet and learn and build their own networks of friendship and communication.

As an aside, it is generally, but not universally, true that many MAs are older sangha members, which has the added benefit of people who have experienced many of life’s challenges and joys, and have a deeper appreciation of their lives. They bring this vital backdrop to their MA duties. Our *Tokudo*** group was a good example of this rich diversity.

For temples, there are numerous benefits, including literally more hands to help carry on the purposes of the head minister and BCA. Trained MAs are invested and committed and naturally move on to take more responsibilities at temples as they learn and grow in knowledge. They help fulltime ministers in innumerable and varied ways, and free up ministers’ valuable time to pursue other important temple goals. We could not have all the programs and projects that we have at OCBC without the help of so many hands. MAs are also a very visible presence for members and visitors and help to create a more unified and cohesive sangha.



BCA minister’s assistants (l. to r.) Vonn Magnin, Isabelle Bernard, Carmela Javellana Hirano, and Ellen Crane received *Tokudo* ordination last November.

In closing, I’d just like to say that becoming a minister’s assistant has been one of the most important experiences of my life. It has been my dharma gate to the *Nembutsu* path. Through it I have been the recipient of wonderful teachers and teachings, who have helped me delve ever deeper into the vast and boundless world of Amida’s wisdom and compassion. It led me to IBS and the great storehouse of learning I have received there. Most importantly, I came to encounter Shinran in a deep and personal way. Last November, along with eleven BCA and one Canadian minister’s assistant, I participated in *Tokudo* training and ordination in Kyoto. It will remain one of the most profound experiences of my life. I am indebted to the vision of all those who created MAP and made this path possible for me. *Namu amida butsu*.

**Kyoshi*: certification by the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, following *Tokudo*

***Tokudo*: the initial ordination by the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

The Council Meeting that Felt Like a Conference, or Was it a Conference that had a Council Meeting?

by Rev. Marvin Harada, CBE Co-director

This year's BCA National Council meeting was the first of its kind. It was the vision of our Bishop, Rev. Kodo Umezu, to have more Dharma content and Buddhist education rather than to have long, tedious business meetings. With that thought in mind, business meeting time was shortened to some 6 hours, and each afternoon had 2 ½ hours of Dharma talks, discussions, and workshops.

Both days featured a one hour "Dharmathon" in which four ministers each gave a 15-minute Dharma talk. Each minister was unique and each shared a wonderful Dharma message. Following that was a choice of workshops. One was a follow-up discussion from last year's National Council meeting on "What can the BCA do for your temple?," led by members of the BCA Executive Committee. Another was a Dharma discussion on questions submitted from the previous day's e-polling workshop led by Rev. Harry Bridge. Another choice was a panel discussion of our high school- and college-aged youth who were attending the Young Leaders Today (YLT) seminar in conjunction with the National Council meeting. It was refreshing to hear the thoughts and voices of our young people.



Rev. Patricia Usuki shares instant e-polling responses from delegates via texting. Photo by Rich Matsumoto.

On my way home, I felt like I had attended a conference and not the usual National Council meeting. I think many attendees felt invigorated, inspired, and enthused about the Dharma, our temples, and the BCA. Hopefully this format will be followed again in the future.

WEHOPE DHARMATHON

April 15 & 16, 2015 at the Jodo Shinshu Center

A Dharmathon—a marathon of Dharma messages—will be presented by 18 speakers participating in the West and East Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange (WEHOPE). There will be nine Dharma talks given from 7:00–9:00 pm PST each evening. The Dharmathon is free and open to the public. We will also broadcast the messages on the BCA website using new equipment purchased with a generous donation from the Reverend Gyodo Kono Memorial Fund.

2015 WEHOPE Dharmathon Speakers

West Hongwanji (Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha)

Messages in Japanese: Rev. Ryuta Furumoto, BCA, Sushin, and Rev. Shinji Kawagoe, Hawaii, Papaikou Hongwanji Mission
 Messages in English: Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, BCA, Lodi; Rev. Ronald Kobata, BCA, San Francisco; Rev. Jerry Hirano, BCA, Salt Lake, Ogden, Honeyville; Rev. Diana Thompson, BCA, Tri-State Denver; Rev. Kosho Yagi, Hawaii, Aiea Hongwanji; Rev. David Fujimoto, Hawaii, Puna Hongwanji, and Rev. Cristina Sato, S. America, Honganji Brasilia

East Honganji (Shinshu Otani-ha)

Messages in Japanese: Rev. Miki Nakura, N. America, Jodo-Shinshu Shin-Buddhist New York Sangha, and Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi, N. America, West Covina Higashi Honganji
 Messages in English: Rev. Ryoko Osa, N. America, N. American District Office; Rev. Ken Yamada, N. America, Berkeley Higashi Honganji; Rev. Patti Nakai, N. America, Buddhist Temple of Chicago; Rev. Peter Hata, N. America, Higashi Honganji Los Angeles Betsuin; Rev. Marcos Sawada, Hawaii, Hilo Higashi Honganji; Mr. Jean Jacques Algeri, S. America, Nambei Honganji Brasil Betsuin, and Mr. Mauricio Ghigonetto, S. America, Nambei Honganji Brasil Betsuin

Watch the live streaming video on the BCA website at
www.BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org
 Phone: (510) 809-1460 Email: cbe@bcahq.org

Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course 2015 Fall Enrollment opens May 1

The Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course Office will begin accepting applications for the 2015 Fall Enrollment from May 1. The popular two-year, computer-based program continues to offer online instruction in the origins and development of Buddhism, Shinran Shonin's life and teaching, sutras & masters of the Pure Land tradition, and history of Jodo Shinshu.

Applications may be submitted online through the course website from May 1. Limited enrollment - first come, first served. Course starts September 1. For more information, please visit: www.JSCC.cbe-bca.org

Questions may be directed to:

Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course Office
 2140 Durant Ave., Berkeley, CA
 Tel: 510-809-1441, Email: hongwanjioffice@bcahq.org

Special Feature: This text was presented at the 17th Annual European Shin Buddhist Conference in Southampton, UK in September, 2014.

JODO SHINSHU: THE SUPREME TEACHING FOR THE PRESENT AGE (Part 4 of 6)

by Rev. John Paraskevopoulos

In the Pure Land tradition, the attributes of Nirvana or the Dharma-Body are developed even further so that they became invested not only with the quality of wisdom and blissful liberation but active compassion as well; a reaching out to suffering beings which are only so many aspects of itself—hence the indissoluble bond between them.

We are able to respond to this compassion in everyday life as a form of awakening (through our saying of the *nembutsu*) and, at the end of our lives, it becomes the means for returning to our true state. Such a realisation cannot be generated within the confines of our cramped and petty egos or in the ephemeral concerns of this passing world. This is why it is such a perilous error to simply identify Nirvana with the world without any qualification. The world both "is" and "is not" Nirvana ("not" in the sense of being riddled with ignorance and suffering of which Nirvana is free and "is" in the sense that it is a manifestation or "crystallisation," at a lower level, of this same reality).

In any event, to dismiss something because it resembles (in part) something you have already rejected, does not make it false. Yes, Shin does have features in common with other religions (how could it not?) but it also distinguishes itself from them in very important ways that are unique to it. Suzuki once remarked that all religions have their origin in the Dharma-Body which has dispensed their saving teachings in a way that conforms to the countless needs and limitations of humanity. Indeed, in light of this, some have observed that Shin is, in fact, a kind of summation or distillation—into one essential form—of all previous teachings.

Once that which is formless takes on salvific forms to express itself, it must also assume the shortcomings that come with it (and in a plethora of ways according to the endless varieties of human nature) such that differences—often deep-seated—are inevitable. If the highest reality is truly compassionate, it will leave no sector of humankind without guidance and illumination, despite the strife, conflict and mutual incomprehension to which the varied religious forms often give rise. In this sense, much more separates Buddhism from contemporary atheism than it does from other faiths, which—at the very least—recognise the primacy of the spiritual.

(iii) Problem of Evil

A major stumbling block for theistic faith is the difficulty of reconciling the goodness and omnipotence of God with the incomprehensible suffering and unhappiness we find in the world. In fact, one could argue that it is well-nigh impossible. Buddhism offers the distinct advantage of not positing an all-powerful deity that brings creation into being through a conscious act of will. And yet, in the non-dual scheme of the Mahayana, the supreme bliss of Nirvana is not severed from the miseries of Samsara but, clearly, neither are they identical. To be sure, this is a profound mystery at the heart of reality but it cannot be avoided. A conclusion we can reach is that this world is, in some respects, a manifestation of a better one (that cannot be fully realised in this life and of which the reality of *dukkha* is a constant reminder). Its unsatisfactory nature reflects our remoteness from it while the joy, love and beauty we do find in it reveal its luminous presence at the core of everyday life, prompting us to seek a higher awakening. Evil is a consequence of living in a realm that is evidently not the Pure Land but this world is not, nevertheless, entirely bereft of its light. The reality of suffering is no reason, therefore, to doubt the reality of Nirvana—our very capacity to recognise suffering as such, and to want to free ourselves from it, is proof enough of its opposite.

(iv) Universal Salvation

This brings us to one of the most outstanding features of Jodo Shinshu: the notion of universal salvation. No other spiritual tradition is as explicit in proclaiming that all sentient beings are embraced spiritually and that all will be eventually released from their current bondage to pain and ignorance.

Amida Buddha is the "personal" or human-facing dimension of Nirvana—the accessible aspect of the Dharma-Body that condescends, so to speak, to address us directly according to our pitiable condition. It can do so directly and intimately because, at base, it is "us"—our fundamental essence—so by liberating us as individuals it is also liberating aspects of itself. This is why no one is—or can be—left behind. All that is required is that we accept the working of the Vow which saves us, unencumbered by our fretful and flawed calculations. And this is where the simple believer, in many ways, has the advantage. A literal belief in Amida Buddha is uncalculating, and allows the *nembutsu* to penetrate unhindered whereas more sophisticated adherents get bogged down in over-intellectualizing faith which leads to a host of fruitless doubts and spiritual paralysis.

Buddhism assuredly has its hells (sixteen of them in fact!) but they are not eternal. Some individual karmas are worse than others and therefore require more radical expiation but, in the end, all beings are destined for the Pure Land. Many will simply refuse to believe this and, indeed, our current age of spiritual myopia strongly encourages us to remain sceptical. Even those who are vaguely attracted to the teachings will say: "Surely, this is too good to be true."

From the perspective of perfect compassion, however, "too good" is precisely why it is true. Our innate longing to be liberated from our mortal shackles is, in fact, the evidence of that which fulfils this very desire. To invoke a cardinal Buddhist law—no effect without a cause.

(v) Accepting imperfection

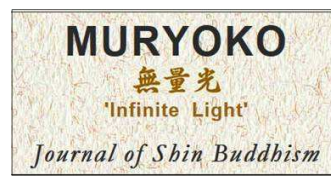
In light of the foregoing considerations, it is easier perhaps to see why the frail and deeply flawed nature of unenlightened beings is no obstacle on our Jodo Shinshu path. There is no crippling perfectionism because this is impossible; what is inherently imperfect, can never cease being so. The very conditions that keep us bound in chains of anger, greed and delusion are essentially ingrained in human nature and in the fact that we inhabit terribly unstable and unpredictable physical bodies riddled with endless desires and infirmities.

The only response by Amida Buddha to such a state of affairs is profound concern, not condemnation. Therefore, the Buddha has vowed to remove the conditions that bind us so woefully—through awakening us to the truth in this life (*shinjin*) and by guiding us to the Pure Land of Nirvana when we relinquish our defiled minds and corruptible bodies at the time of death. Hence the emphasis in Shin on lay life; that is, on living fully in this world with all our burdens and responsibilities but recognising the reality of our earthly plight honestly and without pretence by living lives of acceptance, humility and quiet joy without the compulsion to be something we cannot be.

The Buddha does not judge our countless faults, errors, cruelties and insensitivities—creatures of blind passion can do little else. As a friend remarked to me recently: "Expecting us not to get wet when we are thrown into the ocean of karma is absurd." The only response from the "Other Shore" is compassionate regard and a desire to dispense the necessary cure for our existential sickness. This is what we must consider next.

To be continued next month

Rev. John Paraskevopoulos is an ordained Shin Buddhist priest based in Australia and author of *Call of the Infinite: The Way of Shin Buddhism*. He holds a first-class honors degree in Philosophy from the University of Melbourne, Australia and is editor of the online *Muryoko: Journal of Shin Buddhism*. The full text of this article is available online at www.nembutsu.info.



EMBRACED BY THE HEART OF AMIDA BUDDHA



Guest Speakers:
Dr. Jeff Wilson
 Author,
*Buddhism of the Heart
 and Mindful America*

Rev. Kurt Rye
 Resident Minister,
 Ekoji Buddhist Temple,
 Fairfax Station, VA

Presenters & Moderators:

- Rev. Earl Ikeda
- Rev. Kiyo Kuwahara
- Elaine Donlin
- Sam Fugitt
- Norio Umezu Hall
- Gary Jaskula
- Hoshina Seki

The LGBTQ Community & Shin Buddhism
 Sat. June 27, 2015 9:30 am - 3:30 pm
 New York Buddhist Church 331-332 Riverside Dr., NYC
 Register online at: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org
 Deadline: 6/20

Presented by the BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE)
 Hosted by the New York Buddhist Church



By Matthew Hamasaki, Student
Institute of Buddhist Studies

Over the past year I studied at Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Japan. It was quite a whirlwind when I got there since my Japanese was sub-par at best and I had not been there since I was two years old. Luckily, there was a designated student waiting at

IBS-Ryukoku University Student Exchange

the airport to help me on my way. While he was from Japan, my dorm-mates and classmates were all international students.

Although some students came from English-speaking countries, in order to communicate with the majority of them I had to learn Japanese.

It was fun getting to know people from all around the world and comparing where they came from with where I came from. Together we learned the language and the culture and the land.

It wasn't an easy workload because all the classes were in Japanese. Being immersed in the language made me pick it up quickly, though. It helps that I had to speak Japanese in order to do anything at all, especially eat! The food was delicious there no matter where I went. To my surprise and delight, it was even

good at the convenience stores. I also managed to get familiar enough with the train and subway systems that I could do some sightseeing and travelling.

Living in a country with such a long history was much different than America and it was incredible to see buildings that were centuries older than America itself. And within Japan, since Kyoto was the capital for a long period of time, it was full of culture with countless historic sites including shrines, temples, and even castles!

Looking back at the year I spent there, the contrast in cultures was one of the big things that stood out for me. Since I spent so much time eating, the lack of tipping was something that I had to really adjust to. I suppose it's similar to how tourists coming to America feel when

they have to learn how tip.

But the funny thing is that one would think that with the lack of tipping, the customer service in Japan would be terrible. In fact, the complete opposite is true! The employees are so nice and they always greet you with a smile and are helpful as they can be. They don't have a monetary incentive to be good at their job, that's just how you're supposed to be.

Manners in general are a big part of the culture. For example, people are not supposed to talk on their cell phones in the subway and you are supposed to give your seat up to an elderly or handicapped person.

These are not unwritten rules though. As the Japanese have a love for paperwork and regulations, there are plenty of signs telling everyone these rules, and they will be enforced by regular

citizens. It's not because anyone thinks that they have authority over another person, but rather that we are all in the same car together and so we should be courteous to everyone.

This mentality had a profound impact on me and how I view the world. It's true that in Buddhism we are always encouraged to see how interconnected we are with those around us, but this experience has given me an even greater appreciation of what that means.

I would like to thank all the people in Japan who helped me while I was there, as well as all the support I have received from various people and organizations in the Buddhist Churches of America.

It would not have been possible without all of you and I am so grateful that I was able to have such a wonderful adventure.

Fund-raising for a Sustainable BCA: the Joint Development Committee



By Steve Terusaki
Co-chair, Joint Development
Committee of the BCAEF

In last month's *Wheel of Dharma*, Charles Ozaki, president of the Buddhist Churches of America Endowment Foundation (BCAEF) highlighted the Endowment Foundation efforts and developments in 2014. A significant initiative by BCAEF in 2014 was to undertake

responsibility for fund-raising and development within the three-party BCA structure: BCA, BCAEF and the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS.) A collaborative and coordinated effort was launched and the Joint Development Committee (the Committee), comprised of representatives from the three organizations and the Ministers' Association, was established. The Committee reports to the Board of BCAEF.

Why do we need fund-raising/development within BCA?

Operating BCA is critically important to the long-term sustainability of all of our local temples and churches. The development and training of ministers; outreach and propagation; Buddhist education; ensuring that we have a place to hear and share in the Dharma for ourselves and future generations of Jodo Shinshu followers are only a few examples of the critical importance that accrues from having BCA support our local temples and churches. Revenue to support

these efforts come from three main sources: temple dues assessments; proceeds from investment returns from the BCAEF portfolio; and general donations made to BCA. It is the latter revenue source that comes individually from each and every one of us, for we are all BCA. It is on this premise that the Committee is moving forward.

How does this initiative impact current fund-raising programs?

There are several ongoing fund-raising initiatives that are working to fill the needs of BCA, including the Ministerial Scholarship program by IBS (see page 6); CBE 500 Club; Sustaining Membership; Zaidan collections; Social Welfare Fund; Planned Giving; and the BCA 1,000 x 1,000 x 4 Campaign. Each of these efforts will continue and will be folded into an over-arching fund-raising/development strategic initiative that coordinates these multiple "Asks." "Asks" may continue to focus on specific needs that restrict monies

for that purpose. New "Asks" may focus on a commitment to perpetual giving of unrestricted monies to allow the greatest flexibility in meeting the overall needs of BCA.

Why a Joint Development Committee?

The Committee provides a focused body whose sole purpose is to move forward in a sustained way the critically important initiative of development and fund-raising for BCA through stakeholder representation, collaboration, and a focus on communication. Since its inception, the Committee has been working on formalizing its governance, strategy, and management of development efforts within BCA. A Committee Charter has been developed; Committee members have been identified and efforts are underway to find dedicated staff to provide the tactical day-to-day and operational needs of fund-raising for the BCA organizations.

The current committee is co-chaired by Charlene Grinolds

(BCA / White River), Rev. Jerry Hirano (Ministers' Association / Salt Lake City); and Steve Terusaki (BCAEF / Oakland.)

Other committee members include: Koichi Sayano (BCAEF / LA Betsuin), Billy Saeki (BCAEF / Venice), Tom Nishikawa (BCAEF / San Luis Obispo), Kent Matsuda (BCA / Enmanji) Richard Endo (IBS / Mountain View), and Rev. Seigen Yamaoka (IBS / Oakland).

We have also extended an invitation to the young adults in our Sanghas through the Youth Advocacy Committee to be active participants in helping to develop strategic fund-raising initiatives.

We also encourage each of you to provide input and comment to any of the Committee members, or by emailing me at: terusaki@gmail.com.

We share our commitment to a robust future for Jodo Shinshu in America and it is through these efforts and through your support that we can all make this happen.

Gassho

FRIENDS OF IBS MINISTERIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND



The Institute of Buddhist Studies gratefully acknowledges all who have extended their generosity and support of the Friends of IBS Ministerial Scholarship Fund. The total received since we began this fund is \$148,180.00. Thanks

to the generous and timely response of BCA members, organizations and friends, we have already begun distribution of financial assistance to ministerial students. Following are the individuals, families and organizations who have made contributions from December 2014 through February 28, 2015:

Ashland Howakai
Mrs. Darlene Bagshaw
Mrs. June Masuyama and Mr. Harry Bergland Jr.
Dr. Gordon Bermant
Mrs. Mary Cogger
Rev. John and Mrs. Koko Doami
Mr. Richard and Mrs. Emilie Endo
Mr. Jeff and Mrs. Nancy Follick
Rev. Eijiro and Mrs. Michiko Fujii
Ms. Denise Gervais

Mr. Miles Hamada
Mr. George and Mrs. Shizuka Hanada
Mrs. Sharon Harada
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hasegawa
The Hatakeyama Family
Mr. Tom and Mrs. Masako Ishioka
Mrs. Joyce Iwasaki
Mr. Richard and Mrs. Xiao Yu Jensen
Ms. Rosie Maruki Kakuuchi
Mr. Hirohi Kariya
Mr. Bruce and Mrs. Yo Kawabata
Mr. Curt Kawabata and Ms. Joan Aoki
Ms. Robbin Kawabata
Ms. Brenda Koga
Rev. Dean and Mrs. Linda Koyama
Mr. Richard Kuramoto
Rev. Katsuya and Mrs. Ayano Kusunoki
Ms. Joyce Maniwa
Mr. and Mrs. Don Matsubara
Rev. David and Mrs. Diane Matsumoto
Mr. Jeffrey Matsuoka
Mr. Andy and Mrs. Lisa Mayeda
Mr. Bradley Menda
Mr. Osamu and Mrs. Helen Mori
Dr. Leroy and Mrs. Barbara Hedani Morishita
Mr. Ronald and Mrs. Carolyn Murata
Col. James and Mrs. Alice Nagahiro
Mrs. Catherine Nagareda
Ms. Aki Nagatomi
Mr. Shigemi and Mrs. Namie Naito
Dr. Ittsei and Mrs. Kiriyu Nakagawa
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Mrs. Jean Nomura
Mrs. Joyce Oishi
Ms. June Okubo
Mr. Joe and Mrs. Jill Ozaki

Rev. Kurt Rye
Mr. Harold and Mrs. June Sano
Mr. Richard and Mrs. Kay Shellhase
Mr. Ralph and Mrs. Pearl Sugimoto
Ms. Margo Spears
Mr. Steven and Mrs. Kathy Terusaki
Mr. and Mrs. James Tsuda
Mrs. Sakaye Tsuji
Rev. Kodo and Mrs. Janet Umezu
Mr. Kazuo Utsunomiya
Mrs. Opal Wakayama
Mr. Roger and Mrs. Masae Wong
Mr. and Mrs. Steven Yamami
Mrs. Marrie Yamashita
Ms. Dorothy Yanagi
Ms. Gayle Yanagi
Rev. Haruo and Mrs. Shigeo Yamaoka
Mr. Isamu and Mrs. Mariko Yoneyama

ORGANIZATIONS

Ashland Howakai
Buddhist Temple of Alameda Buddhist Women's Association
Berkeley Buddhist Temple Buddhist Women's Association
Buddhist Church of Oakland Buddhist Women's Association
Buddhist Church of Oakland Dharma School
Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations
Orange County Buddhist Women's Association
San Diego Buddhist Temple Fujinkai

IN MEMORIAM

In Memory of Mrs. Jane Bergland-Serr ~
Rev. Haruo and Mrs. Shigeo Yamaoka

In Memory of Mr. Masao Honda ~
Mrs. June Masuyama and Mr. Harry Bergland Jr.

In Memory of Mrs. Yasuko Kariya ~
Mr. Kazuo Utsunomiya

In Memory of their father, Mr. Masami Mayeda ~
Mr. Andy and Mrs. Lisa Mayeda

In Memory of her father, Rev. Dr. Masatoshi Nagatomi ~
Ms. Aki Nagatomi

In Memory of Mr. Moe Neishi ~
Mr. Steven and Mrs. Kathy Terusaki

In Memory of Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno ~
Rev. Dean and Mrs. Linda Koyama

In Memory of Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno ~
Col. James and Mrs. Alice Nagahiro

In Memory of Ms. Jane Yagade ~
Mr. Richard and Mrs. Xiao Yu Jensen

In Memory of Rev. Kiyoshi Seishin Yamashita ~
Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara

In Memory of Rev. Kiyoshi Seishin Yamashita ~
Steven and Kathy Terusaki

In Memory of Rev. Kiyoshi Seishin Yamashita ~
Mrs. Marrie Yamashita

IN HONOR OF

Honoring Mr. Rich Kaneko's 80th Birthday ~
Ms. Sharon Harada

Honoring Mr. Jack Wakasa's 80th Birthday ~
Ms. Sharon Harada

今月の法話

「頑石(がんせき)って何？」

マウンテンビュー仏教会
開教使 向嶋裕史



(意識)きわめて硬いものは石である。きわめて柔らかいものは水である。そのやわらかい水が硬い石に穴をあけるのである。「心の奥底まで徹すれば、どうして仏のさとりを成就しないことがあるのか」という古い言葉がある。どれほど信心を得ていない者であっても、真剣に念仏のみ教えを聴聞すれば、阿弥陀仏のお慈悲によって、信心を得ることができるのである。ただ仏法は聴聞することだけに尽きるのである。「蓮如上人御一代記聞書」

数力月前、日曜礼拝が終わって、境内を歩いていると、数人の子供達が鬼ごっこをしながら元気一杯に遊んでいるのを見かけました。すると、その内の一人の男の子が私に走り寄ってきて、「先生、僕の宝物見せてあげる」と言っていて、片手を差し出しました。その小さな手のひらには何ともかわいらしい真ん丸の石ころが載せてありました。「へえ、見事な石だね」と言ってみて、手にしたのですが、思いの外、あまりの肌触りの良さに思わず何度も手の中で転がしてしまいました。本来ごつごつとした石ころがこれほどまでに滑らかな石に仕上がったのは一体何故なんだろう？そんな事を考えながら、返すのも忘れて両手で石ころの肌触りを楽しんでおりました。そして、そこでふと思いついたのが上に紹介した蓮如上人のお言葉です。

これは、蓮如上人が仰せになられた有名なお言葉ですが、硬い石と柔らかい水を用いて人間の自我の心と阿弥陀仏の大慈悲心の関係を上手に譬えられた素晴らしい表現だと思います。

皆さんもご存知のように、石は硬いものであって、水は柔らかいものです。しかし、どんなに硬い石であっても、何年、何十年と雨だれのしずくが落ち続けると、いつのまにか石の表面に窪みができます。更に、川底に眠る石は、どんなにごつごつとした石であっても、柔らかい水が長い歳月をかけて硬い石を丸くし滑らかにしてくれます。

よくよく考えて見ますと、ごつごつとした硬い石とは私達、人間の自我、または煩惱を表しているように思えてなりません。七高僧の一人である曇鸞大師は「往生論註」の中で、阿弥陀仏の光明を拒絶する人間の煩惱を石に譬えて「頑石」といわれています。どんなに雨が降ろうとも、大きな岩石があると、その下の土は決して濡れることはない。それと同じように、私は既に阿弥陀仏のお慈悲に包まれながらも、自らの煩惱のために仏法のはたらきを拒んで、阿弥陀仏の智慧のみ光を受け入れようとはしないのだというのです。

曇鸞大師がおっしゃるように、私達の心は石のように頑固で、仏のみ光のみならず、周りを受け入れる柔軟な心を持ち合わせていません。その上、ごつごつとした言葉や態度で相手を傷つけかねない危ない存在です。

「ヤマアラシのジレンマ」というお話がございます。ある冬の朝、寒さに凍えたヤマアラシの夫婦が、お互いを暖め合おうと近づきますが、彼らは近づけば近づくほど自分達のトゲでお互いを傷つけてしまいます。その痛さに耐えられず、お互いの距離を開いてしまいますが、冬の寒さには勝てず、再び恐るおそろ近づき合います。この様に、ヤマアラシは、近づいたり離れたりを何度も繰り返していくうちに、適度に暖かく、しかもあまりお互いに傷つけないで済む、ちょうどよい距離を見つけ出したというお話です。

この話は私達人間の対人関係をうまく表しています。どんなに親しい人でも近づきすぎるといやなことがあります。それは、夫婦関係であったり、親子関係、友人関係、男女関係等といったもので、お互いが親しくなり、近づき合えば合うほど、利害関係も密接になって、私達の自

我、即ち「ヤマアラシのトゲ」が相手を傷つけ、憎しみ合う感情になってきます。

昨年、私達夫婦も結婚して一〇年という節目を迎えましたが、この「ヤマアラシのジレンマ」の話が痛いほど心に響いてきます。結婚する前は、お互いのちょうどいい距離を保ちながら、相手を傷つけず、相手の気持ちを理解し合い、優しい言葉を掛け合って、愛を育んできました。もちろん、時には意見の食い違いから多少は喧嘩をして、お互いの距離を開ける事はありませんが、やはり寂しいものだから、すぐにちょうどよい距離へと戻ります。

しかし、結婚して毎日のように顔を見合わせ生活して見ますと、自我というものが先行して、恋愛関係の時にほどよく保っていた距離も中々測れなくなってしまうようになりました。時には離れすぎて意思の疎通が図れなくなったり、その反対に、近づきすぎて互いを傷つけてしまいます。しかし、今改めて、この話を通して我が身を振り返って見ますと、結婚前より、結婚後の方が言い争う場面が増えたのは、相手のトゲばかりを気にしていた私が、実は自分の方がもっと鋭いトゲ(自我)を持っているというのを忘れていたように思います。全ては自分中心に物事を考えていた私の責任だったと反省せざるを得ません。

「きわめて硬いものは石である」とは、正に私達人間の自我、我執の心を表しているのです。私達は生命の大切さ、相手の人格の大切さ、人権の尊重ということを良く知っていますが、我執の心は、硬い石と石とがぶつかり合うように人と人とが憎しみ、争い、殺し合い、そして、人と人を引き裂く悲しい歴史を私達人間は引きずって生きています。その現実を見つめる中に、その迷いを越えていく道が開けてくると思っています。

蓮如上人は『御一代記聞書』の中で、「信心を得たなら、念仏の仲間荒々しくものをいうこともなくなり、心も穏やかになります。阿弥陀仏の誓いには、光明に触れたものの身も心も和らげることがあるからです。逆に、信心がなければ、自分中心の考え方になって、言葉も荒々しくなり、争いも必ず起ってくる」と、信心に恵まれた人の在り方について述べられておられます。信心を得ることで、私達の頑なに閉ざされた心が解かれ、不平や愚痴が感謝に変わり、相手の痛みが分かる思いやりの心を持つことが

できるとおっしゃっておられるのです。

そして、その信心を得るには聴聞が絶対不可欠です。聴聞を通して、阿弥陀仏の大慈悲心(法水)が、私達人間の頑なな心(頑石)を和らげ、滑らかにして下さるのです。なぜなら、たとえ私達の心がどれほど硬い煩惱に覆われていようとも、日々の聴聞が、滴り落ちる雨だれのしずくのように、少しずつ窪みを作り、ついには煩惱の頑石に風穴を開けて信心への世界へと心が自ずと開かれていくからです。

このように、聴聞を通して、阿弥陀仏のご本願の起こされた理由と、それが私達一人ひとりに届くまでのご苦勞を何度も聞かせて頂くうちに、阿弥陀仏の大慈悲心(法水)が私の歪な形をした心(頑石)を滑らかに仕上げ下さいました心(頑石)を滑らかに仕上げ下さいました。その丸く滑らかなに仕上がった心こそが信心なのです。そして、その信心を頂いたもの同士が作る世界とは、互いを思いやれる慈悲の心に満ちたお浄土の世界ではないでしょうか。

宝物の石を返してもらえるかどうかが心配そうに私を見つめていた男の子に申し訳ないことをしたと反省すると同時に、彼の宝物を通して大切なことを思い出させてくれた少年に心から感謝しています。大変有意義な日曜日の昼下がりでした。

合掌

今月の三枚



(上段)コロラド州議会での会議開始前のプレイヤードを行った、山東三州仏教会 藤井道栄師。二枚目



パークレーン仏教会で活躍する北カリフォルニア雅楽会がサンフランシスコ市で開催された東北震災のメモリアルイベントで演奏した。三枚目

総会の朝のサービスで法話をした開教使アシスタントのお二人。



法輪

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二〇一五年度教化標語
「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>

サンデーエゴで総会

2月25日(水)から2月28日(土)にかけて開教使会議および全米代表者会議が開催された。

今回は南部教区が主催でサンデーエゴ市のクラウンプラザホテルが会場となった。

開教使会議は25、26日に行われ40名が参加。環境に配慮した寺院運営を奨励するエコサンカ活動、死刑制度についての浄土真宗の立場、浄土真宗センターの省エネルギー化などについて話し合われた。

26日午後にはIBS、CBE共催のシンポジウム「仏教とカウンセリング」が開かれ約150名の聴衆が訪れた。

27日からの代表者会議では全米各寺院より約250名が参加、2015年度の予算の決議を始め、IBSやCBEをはじめBCAの各コミッティーが活動報告をした。

今年の会議では梅津総長の発案で、会議をより仏法を中心としたものへ移行する試みがなされ、会議終了後にダルマソンという法話会が催された。1日に4名ずつ、各教区から選ばれた開教使が15分程度の法話を実演。会議参加者に加え、会場近郊のサンデーエゴおよびピスタ仏教会の門徒が足を運び聴聞した。



総長コラム

四月八日は花祭り。お釈迦さまがお生まれになった日をお祝いする行事が各地で行われます。世界の人々に光を与えてくださったのがお釈迦さまです。

ところで、親鸞聖人は、お釈迦さまがこの世に現れたのは、ただひとえに阿弥陀仏の誓いを私たちに説いて聞かせてくださるためであったと、お釈迦さまのお誕生を喜んでおられます。

そのことはお正信偈に次のように書かれています。

如来所以興出世 教主世尊は 弥陀仏の
唯説弥陀本願海 誓い説かんと 生れたまう
五濁惡時群生海 にごりの世にし まごうもの
応信如来実言 教えのまこと 信すべし

二月から三月にかけて全米各地で法縁を結んでくださった内藤知康先生(本願寺勸学)は、サンノゼ別院で開催された沿岸教区の仏教婦人会大会のご講師として有り難いお

参加者は「ダルマソンのアイデアはとてもおもしろいです。会議ではビジネス一辺倒になり、世俗の価値観をもって損得ばかりでものを考えてしまいがちになるので、その考えを諫めるために会議で仏法を聞かせていただくのは大事なことです。」と好評であった。また会議前の朝のお勤めでは開教使アシスタント2名がそれぞれの念仏との出遇いを語り、聴衆に感動を与えた。

会議終了後、3月1日に永代経法要がサンデーエゴ仏教会で勤まり、先亡のBCA開教使、門徒を追悼した。来年は中加教区の主催でバイセリア市で行われる予定。



話をしてくださいました。残念ながら参加できませんでしたが、幸い後でインターネットを通じてご縁に遇うことができました。

内藤先生はお話の中で「神が人間を創るといいますが、阿弥陀仏は私たちがつくったのです」とおっしゃってられました。ちょっと言葉だけを聞くと何のことかと思われそうです。譬えば、病気に苦しんでいる人がいる村に、そのことを心配して医者が出陣してきたというようなことだと思えます。病気がないければ医者も必要ありません。私たちの心の病に対応して阿弥陀仏が現れ私たちに薬を処方してくださいているのです。

尺取り虫をコップのふちにおきますと、その周りをグルグル回り最後には命果ててしまいます。私たちが生きるといっても、迷いの世界をグルグルと回っていて、尺取り虫と一つも変わらないということを中国の曇鸞大師がおっしゃっておられます。私たちは智慧もなく、惑いの世界に業を作って、苦しみから苦しみにと果てしない旅を続けているのです。

真実を真実と見る眼を持たない私たちが、自分の思いを第一として、他の人と争い、殺し合う姿こそが、親鸞聖人が「濁りの世にし まごうもの」として嘆かれています。

私たちは自分の姿を見ることができません。そういう病気がないでしょうか。

私たちが自分の姿を見ることができません。そういう病気がないでしょうか。しかし自分が病気であるとも思わないので、医者が必要とか薬がいるということを考えもしません。しかし、自分の人生の中で立ち止まって、自分自身のあり方に疑問を持ち、医者が必要と思う心がおこるといことはすばらしいことだと思えます。あとは、本当に私たちの病を治してくださいる医者に出会うことです。

親鸞聖人は二十年という長い間いろいろ試してみました。そして最後に本當の医者に遇い、薬をいただいたのです。このお念仏の薬を喜ばれ、それを同じような境遇にある人たちに勧めたいとくださるのです。この薬のお蔭で、人生に喜びがわき、感謝が生まれるのです。

お釈迦さまのお生まれになられたことをお祝いする「花まつり」には、仏教会に足を運び、お念仏の教えを聞かせていただきます。

テクノブッダ開催される

3月13日(金)から15(日)に、浄土真宗センターで毎年恒例の青年仏教徒の集い「テクノブッダ」が開催された。

参加者は主に20代、30代の若者で、コンピューターなど情報科学テクノロジに親しんでいる世代を対象としたセミナーであることから、「テクノブッダ」と名づけられている。今回は8回目の開催となり71名が参加した。テーマは「The Good, The Bad, and The Bachi」で基調講演にウィルソン・ジェフ博士(ウオータール大学)を迎え、業に関する講義やディスカッションが行われた。また、土曜日の午後からは様々なワークショップが開かれ、今春、龍谷大学への留学を終え帰国した開教使候補の浜崎マシューさん、柴田キャンディスさんらが仏教と真宗についてのクラスをリードし参加者と共に理解を深めていた。浄土真宗センターの桑原開教使は「テクノブッダは若者たちが自主的に集まり、企画、運営をしています。年々、参加者が増え、今年も浄土真宗センターが一杯になり若いエネルギーであふれていました。彼らが所属寺でも活躍してくれるといいですね。」と将来のBCAを担う青年門徒たちに期待をよせた。

