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Global Perspectives Featured at WBWC District Panel Presentations

Five Diverse Talks Come Together at Convention's 'Live the Nembutsu' Theme

Five outstanding women, who represented the global reach of Buddhism, presented a wide range of perspectives under the common theme of "Live the Nembutsu" at the 16th World Buddhist Women's Convention in San Francisco.

Appearing before a Sept. 1 crowd at the District Panel Presentations were: Sumi Tanabe, of the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin who was representing the Buddhist Churches of America; Setsuko Koga Nishimura, representing South America; Carol Valentine, representing Hawaii; Takako Sahara, representing Japan; and Trudy Gahlinger, representing Canada.

Their speeches spanned a variety of topics -- racism, deaths in the family, intergenerational changes as well as the connection between gratitude and health and wellness. But they were all connected by the Nembutsu teachings.

Tanabe began her talk about "Live the Nembutsu":

"To me, Live the Nembutsu means seeing and appreciating the beauty of Mother Nature.

Live the Nembutsu means hearing the sounds of laughter and passing it on.

Live the Nembutsu means extending a helping hand for those who are homeless, for those who are sick and for those in pain.

Live the Nembutsu means 'being kind and gentle to all living things.'

Most of all, live the Nembutsu means expressing deep gratitude for this life!"

She went on to recount episodes of racism throughout her life -- from the time she was born and as a child returning to California from the Arkansas internment camps during World War II.

"I listened carefully to my Sunday School teachers and learned about Buddhism and the Jodo Shinshu teachings," she told the crowd. "During these difficult growing up years, I was filled with envy at others who had more money and nicer clothes. But the Dharma lessons taught me that my struggles were based on my ego. To me, it was not enough just to listen to the Dharma. The Dharma moved me into action as I grew up to adulthood and parenthood. The struggles of my childhood were lessons on life."

Tanabe said the "internment camp experience was the one significant event



The five women who gave the WBWC District Panel Presentations are, from left: Sumi Tanabe, of the San Jose Betsuin Buddhist Temple representing the BCA; Setsuko Koga Nishimura, of the South America Kyodan; Carol Valentine, of the Hawaii Kyodan; Takako Sahara, of the Japan Kyodan; and Trudy Gahlinger, of the Canada Kyodan. (Courtesy of Mark Shigenaga).

in my life that shaped the person I was to be. It taught me to have a voice, to speak up against injustice, and to advocate for those in need."

After her retirement, she became involved with the homeless through the American Association of University Homeless Committee. The committee raises money to help homeless children go to summer camp, and supports homeless families, especially women and children. She has expanded this involvement with the San Jose Betsuin.

Nishimura of the South America

Kyodan told the gathering she was a Nisei, a daughter of Japanese immigrants born in Bilac, Brazil, a small city in the interior of Sao Paulo. She said her family has valued the Nembutsu.

She had a life-changing experience when she was 6 -- an event that she said "marked my life from then on."

"It is a day I cannot forget -- my father died early at the age of 45," Nishimura said. "But thanks to the Nembutsu and to the fact that our family would always

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WBWC Workshops Share Many Approaches to 'Live the Nembutsu'



The five women who gave the WBWC District Panel Presentations are, from left: Sumi Tanabe of the San Jose Betsuin Buddhist Temple, representing the BCA; Setsuko Koga Nishimura of the South America Kyodan; Carol Valentine of the Hawaii Kyodan; Takako Sahara of the Japan Kyodan; and Trudy Gahlinger of the Canada Kyodan. (Courtesy of Mark Shigenaga).

Two dozen workshop sessions explored a wide variety of topics at the 16th World Buddhist Women's Convention on Aug. 31.

The workshops were presented by mainly BCA ministers, Minister's Assistants, as well as Sangha members. And they all explored and shared the convention theme -- "Live the Nembutsu."

Personal Dharma journeys and ways of applying Shin Buddhism in one's life were shared in several workshops, including: "Buddhist Psychology & Therapy: Stories of the

Transformative Nature of the Dharma," presented by Dr. Carmela Javellana Hirano, an integrative psychiatrist and founder of Sanctuary for Healing and Integration (SHIN) and also a Minister's Assistant at the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple, and Rev. Candice Shibata of the Buddhist Church of Florin; "Dharma Glimpses," which featured several speakers in a session in English and a second in Japanese; and "Intersecting Identities: Shin Buddhism and LGBTQ+," facilitated by Rev. Elaine Donlin, a Minister's Assistant with

the Buddhist Church of San Francisco.

Several workshops focused on the inspiring teachings and life experiences of Jodo Shinshu founders and historical figures such as Shinran Shonin, Rennyo Shonin, Lady Takeko Kujo, and Rev. Yoshio Iwanaga.

Each followed a life of Nembutsu which significantly shaped our Hongwanji, BWA and BCA institutional practices.

The workshops included:

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IBS Calls on 'Compassionate Action' to Climate Crisis

The Institute of Buddhist Studies has issued a pointed statement on climate change and calls on "compassionate action" to combat the climate crisis.

The letter was dated Sept. 16 and written by IBS President Rev. Dr. David Ryoe Matsumoto and IBS Dean Dr. Scott A. Mitchell.

Four years ago, the Global Buddhist Climate Change Collective issued a statement to world leaders before the United Nations Convention on Climate Change in Paris. The statement was intended to add a Buddhist voice "to the growing calls for world leaders to cooperate with compassion and wisdom and reach an ambitious and effective climate agreement," according to the letter.

However, the letter states "no meaningful change has happened" and President Donald Trump's announcement that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Accord "only heightens the crisis."

"The human-created climate crisis that we are facing is brought on and worsened by the three poisons of greed, hostility and ignorance," the letter by Rev. Dr. Matsumoto and Dr. Mitchell states. "The purposeful assertion of our values as Buddhists is imperative. We believe that an understanding and purposeful application of the Mahayana in-



Top photo: Rev. Dr. David Ryoe Matsumoto. Bottom photo: Dr. Scott A. Mitchell

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BISHOP'S MESSAGE

Convention Showcased BCA FBWA's Resourcefulness



By Rev. Kodo Umezu
BCA Bishop

when and where the convention would be held, after deciding who would be chairing the huge task. Subsequently, the Federation met and drew a grand picture of the event. They worked really hard and tirelessly. There were many challenges but they were able to overcome them with their determination. The convention was able to happen due to everyone's precious time, personal sacrifices and support.

During the process, one message I clearly received from them was that they were determined to make the conference for them, by them.

Ministers were always attending and supported the planning meetings, but they respected and supported the decisions of the Buddhist women. I really felt the process itself was to "Live the Nembutsu" — the convention theme. I sensed the presence of many Obaachan, Eshin-ni, Kakushin-ni, and all Buddhist women who never gave up, no matter what had happened to them.

They lived their lives together with O-nembutsu.

I would like to share my welcome message that I wrote for the convention booklet with you.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to San Francisco for the 16th World Buddhist Women's Convention. We have gathered there this weekend from throughout the world because we all share one wonderful and common thing. That is – we all Live the Nembutsu.

We are the recipients of Shinran Shonin's teaching which has made its way throughout the generations. Shonin's teaching does not center its focus on those with limited wisdom. Rather, it is a teaching that embraces, nurtures, and welcomes all living beings with unlimited and boundless wisdom and compassion. And when we come to the realization that you and I, the people of the world, are the focus of the teachings, it is then that we are able to encounter our true

parents, and our true brothers and sisters.

And it is because of this wonderful encounter that we are able to live each day with Amida, our true and real parents, reciting the nembutsu regardless of the difficulties and prejudices we may face in life. At the same time, we are reminded that we continue to live each day together with and the many individuals who have gone before us because of the interdependent relationship we have shared.

May this convention serve as an opportunity for you to encounter wonderful new friends. Living each and every day of this precious life sharing the nembutsu teaching with as many people as you can along the way, let us continue together on this path to the Pure Land.

I am so grateful for being part of this historical event with all of you who came to attend the gathering of O-nembutsu. Thank you very much.

Many, many, many "thank you's" to everyone who supported the 16th World Buddhist Women's Convention held in San Francisco during the Labor Day weekend!

It was about eight years ago during the time of Bishop Ogui that the BCA Federation of Buddhist Women's Association accepted to host the 16th World Convention without knowing what was waiting for them.

They had to start from scratch. They needed to decide

Living the Nembutsu Through Candor



By Rev. Candice Shibata
Buddhist Church of Florin

Japanese translator, Mrs. Yuko Suruki, regarding Buddhist psychology and how the Dharma works in transformative ways.

It was also heartwarming for me to spend time with my members from the Buddhist Church of Florin, reunite with Sangha members and also make new Dharma friends. Participating in an event such as this has created a renewed enthusiasm to continue my journey in understanding what living the Nembutsu truly means to me.

One of the most memorable moments during this weekend was listening to Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi's keynote message.

Although I have had the pleasure of previously working with Rev. Motoyoshi as her minister's assistant at the Bud-

dhist Church of Stockton and currently as a colleague in the Northern California District Ministers' Association, her keynote message provided more insight into Rev. Motoyoshi's deep reflection of the Nembutsu teachings in her life through her candor and sense of humor.

Listening to my mentor confess some of her own feelings of inadequacy allowed me to see a different side of Rev. Motoyoshi.

I always admired Rev. Motoyoshi for the guidance and support she has given me, but my admiration for her grew as she shared such an honest and vulnerable side that I have not seen before.

Her openness allowed me to reflect upon my own insecurities as a woman, partner, daughter,

sister, friend and especially, as a minister.

However, Rev. Motoyoshi's message also reassured me that I am accepted just as I am because of the infinite Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha.

Rev. Motoyoshi's candor has given me the strength to confess my own insecurities, but also share a defining moment of clarity of what living the Nembutsu means to me.

In all honesty, I sometimes get overwhelmed with the tasks and responsibilities of managing two temples and balancing my personal life as well. One morning just last month, despite everything that was on my to do list, I felt energized as I walked

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My attendance at the 16th World Buddhist Women's Convention from Aug. 30 to Sept. 1 in San Francisco made an impression on me on many levels as a woman, Shin Buddhist and as a minister.

It was an honor to have an opportunity to facilitate a workshop with Dr. Carmela Javelana Hirano and our amazing

New Tulip Bulb Reveals Nembutsu Lessons

"Other Power is none other than the power of the Tathagata's Primal Vow."

— "Collected Works of Shinran," Page 57



By Rev. Yugo Fujita
Buddhist Temple of Salinas

I am happy to say, it grew very well this year!

When I finally saw the blooming flower, I proudly felt that it bloomed because I had taken good care of the tulip bulb. However, now that I think about it, there were so many contributing factors such as the light and warmth of the sun, the water that originated from the snow on the mountain, etc., that contributed to the blooming of the flower.

Even though I gave the water and placed the bulb in a spot where it could get lots of sunlight, it was not only through

my efforts that enabled the tulip bulb to bloom.

Additionally, there were other natural factors such as carbon dioxide that allowed photosynthesis to happen. But I was able to get a lot of satisfaction growing this bulb because it represented the wonders of life itself. It made me realize that this tulip bulb was able to bloom because of countless opportunities and conditions.

The quotation that appears at the beginning of this Dharma message is from Shinran Shonin and comes from his "The True Teaching, Practice, and Realiz-

ing of the Pure Land Way."

This sentence may seem very simple, but it is very important for us as Shin Buddhists because it offers a clear explanation of what Tariki and Other Power are all about.

I first came across the phrase when I was a college student. At that time, I had no idea what Other Power should mean for me as a Shin follower. But it was these words of Shinran Shonin that first enabled me to understand the concept of Other Power.

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This summer, I tried to grow a tulip bulb at home.

Actually, last summer, our Dharma School students grew tulips from a bulb and I tried as well, but mine did not bloom very well.

So this year, I wanted to try one more time as a kind of revenge for myself and this time,



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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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Corrections

- The photo caption on "American Bon Dancing" in the September issue incorrectly identified an individual. Reiko Iwanaga (Hanayagi Reimichi), Natori Bon Dance choreographer and daughter-in-law of Rev. Yoshio Iwanaga, is shown leading the dancers.

- The Young Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE) article, which appeared in the September issue, was written collaboratively by Kate Shue, Stacey Kawabata, Megan Miyamoto, Allison Tanaka, Brent Sakihara, and Emi Nakashima.

- The June article "What Is a Minister's Assistant?" contained a misspelling. The correct title for a Minister's Assistant with Tokudo is Reverend.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Muise and BCA's Social Conscience



By Richard A. Stambul
BCA President

In last month's issue (September 2019), I discussed the rising social consciousness in the world today.

I quoted from a Shinkyō message from our spiritual leader, Monshu Kojun Ohtani of Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto, when he urged us to immediately confront "... our organizational purpose, that is, a peaceful society in which everyone can live life to its fullest." I would like to provide one example of how BCA members have acted to address this injunction.

About two years ago, I spent an afternoon with Rev. Eric Matsumoto, Bishop of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, and a man whom I consider my good friend.

It was at that time that he taught me about a concept of

which I was previously unaware -- muise.

Muise is defined as "the gift of fearlessness. One of the sanse." Sanse is defined, in part, as "the bestowing of confidence." (Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary, Daito Shuppansha (1984).

Rev. Matsumoto teaches that muise is a kind of Dana, one aspect of which focuses on the gift of removing one's fear. I find the notion of *muise* deeply compelling.

BCA's Social Welfare Committee was reactivated in 1979. Its purpose, to quote from its charter, "... is to aid those suffering from deprivations of basic human needs with the ultimate goal of helping to sustain or attain a way of life which promotes mental, physical and spiritual well-being." In other words, by its collective generosity, the committee seeks to remove a bit of the world's fears.

It is guided by the leadership of Terri Omori, one of our exceptional BCA vice presidents. Terri is a longtime member of Vista Buddhist Temple located near San Diego, California, and has long been active in BCA.

In recent years, the committee has provided generous funding to a number of worthy



Members of the BCA Social Welfare Committee pose for a group photo. Shown, from left, are: Rev. Kenji Akahoshi of the Buddhist Temple of San Diego; Arleen Miya of the Gardena Buddhist Church; Rev. Greg Gibbs of the Pasadena Buddhist Temple; Terri Omori, who leads the Social Welfare Committee and is a member of the Vista Buddhist Temple; and Glenn Inanaga of the Orange County Buddhist Church. (Courtesy of Richard Stambul)

causes, including financial relief to assist our Dharma sisters and brothers in the **Hawaii Kyodan** in its relief efforts for the horrific flood damages on the island

overcoming abuse, addiction, homelessness, and poverty in areas of Eastern Washington and Idaho.

It has supported the **Com-**

programs.

The committee has also provided financial assistance through **Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-Ha** in Japan to support

"I believe that the good works of BCA's Social Welfare Committee embody our highest spiritual aspirations, namely, a peaceful society in which everyone can live life to its fullest, and through the Dana of muise, helping to remove fear from life's vicissitudes."

of Kauai and the volcanic activity on the Big Island of Hawaii.

It has also included funding for **Project Beauty Share** of Spokane, Washington, a non-profit organization that provides personal hygiene, cosmetics and beauty products serving women and families

munity Food Bank, a non-profit based in Fresno, California, whose goal is to reduce hunger in Central California. Funds assist in providing fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income and rural communities through the food bank's Neighborhood Market and Mobile Pantry

its disaster relief efforts, aiding those who have suffered from flooding and landslides in the western area of Japan. It has provided financial aid to **Rohingya Refugee Relief** via the United Nations High Com-

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Fellowship Weekend – White River to Yakima

By Karen Murakami
White River Buddhist Temple

White River Buddhist Temple Sangha members and supporters journeyed 160 miles to the Yakima Valley in central Washington for fellowship in the Dharma on June 29-30.

The White River Buddhist Women's Association began the Fun Fellowship program six years ago to provide a relaxing, enjoyable thank you opportunity for these ladies who have supported and nurtured the temple over the years, without adding more work for them. At the same time, the outings help to bond and grow with Dharma friends, including those from other temples. Ideas for these outings are suggested annually in response to "What brings you joy?"

On June 29, Lon Inaba gave an interesting and informative tour of Inaba Farms in Wapato. At the Yakima Valley Museum, the group enjoyed lunch at The Soda Fountain, and viewed "Land of Joy & Sorrow: Japanese Pioneers of the Yakima Valley" and the Native American exhibits.

The group trekked through nearby Tahoma Cemetery, appreciating the newly started Japanese garden project as well as the headstones of Yakima Buddhist Church pioneers.

Most group members dined and some played at Legends Casino that night. One member helped Dean Hata serve dinners at the Yakima Union Gospel Mission homeless shelter. Dean is a volunteer at the



White River Buddhist Temple Sangha members and supporters traveled 160 miles to the Yakima Valley in Washington during the June 29-30 weekend. They posed at the Yakima Buddhist Church Obon Service on June 30. In front row, from left, are: Gayle Takemura (White River); Gabby Mondragon (Yakima); Susan Blackwell (Yakima/Columbia Basin); Leonardo Mondragon (Yakima); Shiz Inaba (Yakima); Mrs. Rona Warrick (White River); Rev. Jim Warrick (White River); Katie Komoto (White River); Char Grinolds (White River); Takako Uchida (Yakima/White River); Janis Yamada (White River); Vivian Alexander (White River); Diane Inaba (Yakima); and Cami Wada (Yakima). In the back row, from left, are: Dean Hata (Yakima); Cheryl LaFlamme (Yakima); Sheila Inaba (Yakima); Gracie Hernandez (Yakima); Kenny Inaba (Yakima); Georgette Magnin (White River); Lon Inaba (Yakima); Katherine Smalley (Yakima); Darlene Yamada (White River); Roy Gondo (Yakima); Stogie Kawabata (White River); Royce Gondo (Yakima); Pat Kawabata (White River); Chester Uchida (Yakima/White River); Will Chichinoff (Yakima); and Ron Murakami (White River). Not pictured is Karen Murakami (White River). (Courtesy of Karen Murakami)

homeless shelter about 15 to 20 times a month.

On June 30, everyone met at Yakima Buddhist Church where Yakima members treated people from the Columbia Basin region, the Yakima Valley and White River Buddhist Temple to wonderful refreshments and hospitality.

For the Obon service, Rev. James Hozen Warrick shared a Dharma message about influence, appreciation, priorities and control. Lon Inaba shared vegetables.

Darlene Yamada remarked that she always likes listening to Rev. Warrick, and that she enjoyed the

change of scenery this weekend. Darlene added, "I was comfortable being surrounded by familiar faces, but also interested in meeting someone new from Moses Lake familiar with the Japanese Agricultural Training Program of which my dad was a long-time member."

A heartfelt thank you to Lon Inaba, Diane Inaba, Dean Hata and Yakima Buddhist Church members for their warm hospitality to the Yakima Valley; to volunteer drivers, Char Grinolds, Darlene Yamada, and Ron Murakami; and to Rev. Warrick for suggesting this Fun Fellowship.

Before-Tax IRA Donations Are Win-Win Proposition

By Steve Okamoto
BCA Endowment Foundation

Do you have a retirement plan? IRA? 401(k)? Are you 70½ years old?

If you answered "yes," then you know that the IRS requires you to withdraw money from those accounts. These distributions are called Required Minimum Distributions, or RMDs. You must also pay taxes on those distributions. Some of you may need the income and are OK with paying the taxes; some of you don't need the funds, yet you still have to pay taxes on that unwanted income.

Do you support the BCA and other charities with cash donations? Those donations are usually made with after-tax dollars. You may get a charitable tax deduction, but you still had to pay tax on the income to make those donations.

Would you be interested to know that you could make those donations with before-tax dollars?

The IRS is allowing you to use your RMD money to make charitable contributions, and **you do not have to pay income tax on those distributions** from your retirement plans. Every time I have explained it, donors have been surprised to learn about this "win-win proposition."

Some simple rules to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to support the BCA without paying taxes on your IRA withdrawal:

1. The distribution must be made directly from your plan to the BCA;
2. The maximum RMD donation is \$100,000;
3. The amount of your annual RMD is based on a table published by the IRS; and
4. You do not have to pay income tax as long as you make a distribution to a charitable nonprofit like BCA.

For further information, please contact Steve Okamoto at steveokamoto1@gmail.com or 650-468-8184.



Arigato Obaachan (Thank You Grandmother) Campaign Donors and Honorees

The Buddhist Churches of America Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations (FBWA) received special donations in support of the 16th World Buddhist Women's Convention, which was held Aug. 30 to Sept. 1 in San Francisco.

The names below represent women being recognized and honored for their sacrifice, hard work, dedication, generosity, pursuit of the Buddha-Dharma, and help in the propagation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

In recognizing your Obaachan, mother, aunt, sister, or group of women, you are also honoring them for the very special role they have played in your life.

To donate and honor the special women in your life, please go to the wbwc.org website and click on the "Donation" button to download the form.

For information or question, please contact Terrie Masuda at terriemasuda@wbwconvention.org.

Donors are listed first, followed by the honoree's name(s) in bold print. Thank you to all of the donors, and Arigatou Obaachan and all honorees!

October 2019 Wheel of Dharma Arigato Obaachan Donors & Honorees

Satoru Tamaribuchi ~ **Misao Seo, Reiko Matsushita**, Brian and Seiko Tamura ~ **Rev. Zesei and Hiroko**



The Arigato Obaachan campaign donors and honorees are listed on these colored "Bodhi leaves" on display at the WBWC from Aug. 30 to Sept. 1 in San Francisco. (Courtesy of Mark Shigenaga)

Kawasaki, Yoko Umeda and Kikuko Nishi, Tom & Eileen Fukunaga ~ **Miyoko Fukunaga, Kiyomi Kadomoto, Agnes Yamashiro**, Fumiko Onitsuka ~ **Aiko Nishio**, Norman & Yoshie Tachiki, Kim Tachiki-Chin & Scott Tachiki ~ **In memory of their grandmother & my mother Sadako Ishii**, Glenn &

Michiko Inanaga ~ **Mitzi "Baba" Suruki**, Miyaji and Inanaga Families ~ **Miyoko Miyaji**, 6 Miyaji Grandchildren ~ **Rev. Yoshiko "Nana" Miyaji**, Miyaji and Inanaga Families ~ **Taeko Onuma**, Team Inanaga ~ **Taeko Inanaga**, Terrie Masuda ~ **Kelly Calica**, Sharon Noguchi ~ **Chikuyo Nobuto Okazaki**,

Mary Sakiko Noguchi, Marcielle Tabata, Ayako Morita, Robert & Sally Tanaka ~ **Mumeyo Mitsuda, May Kimiko Tanaka, Shizu Fujino**, Kimihiro & Hitomi Sera ~ **Toshiko Arasuna (mother), Mitsuno Tomoyasu (mother)**, Janice Adachi ~ **Mary Oshima (my mother)**, Karen (Iwamura) Akira ~ **Chiyo Iwamura, Yoshiye Iwamura**, Alexis, Amanda, Bob & Vivian Fujii ~ **Alice Keiko Fujii**, Miyuki Mabel Googins ~ **Fudeko Yoshimura**, Gail & Kathryn Ida ~ **Tsurue Kimura & Betty Yamashita**, JoAnn Kamikawa ~ **Hidemi Kamikawa**, Joyce Miyamoto ~ **Sumino Aso**, Laraine Miyata ~ **Tatsuye Miyata**, Laraine Miyata ~ **Tonase Fujita**, Sharleen A. Nakaoka-Aoki ~ **Fumiko Nakaoka, Kamen Nakaoka**, Dorene Niibu ~ **Dora Mitsue Tengan**, Teresa Ono ~ **Owai Okamura, Kimiye Ono**, "The Kids" ~ **Ethel Y. Sato**, Keiko Toro ~ **Hatsoko Mijun Tora**, Amy Umezu ~ **Mary Teraoka**, Kodo & Janet Umezu ~ **Atsuko Umezu**, Eiko Yamaichi ~ **Hatsuko S. Yamaichi**, Sachiko Yenokida ~ **Mary Yonemura, Michiye Yenokida**, Ken & Joyce Furukawa ~ **Peggy Furukawa**, Mukai, Yamamoto, Yuki, Kato, Trenholme Family ~ **Hifuko Mukai, Yoshiyo Yamamoto, Patricia Shishido-Mori, Mitsuye Yamamoto, Hatsuko Yamaichi**, Dennis & Rumbo Tsukagawa ~ **Florence Tsukagawa and Ito Tsukagawa**.

Palo Alto Temple Students Share Buddhism's Role in Their Lives

Editor's note: This is the first of two parts.

Rev. Dean Koyama's note: In December 2018, the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple held its annual Bodhi Day Service. While observing Bodhi Day with a service is not extraordinary, the service held at PABT was unique because the Dharma School students led the entire service.

Following are the Bodhi Day talks by Jr. YBA students at PABT:



Gabby Tirsell

"One should make haste in doing good deeds; for the mind of one who does not do good tends to take delight in doing evil."

Good morning everyone, I'm Gabby Tirsell. The quote I chose was said by the Buddha in around 540 BCE, way before anyone here was born, probably way before my great-great-great-grandparents were even born as well. Surprisingly, this quote still remains applicable today, but if I were to find a translation into modern slang, I think this Buddhism for kids book does a pretty good job.

"Do good right away. If you

wait, it will be too late."

When I was a kid, I loved going to my grandma's house. She'd teach me Japanese words, and hide coins around the house for me to find. I associate all these wonderful memories with my grandma, but only when I grew up and started to understand the world did I realize how extraordinary my grandma was. The oldest of five siblings, the sole caretaker of her two parents, the baseball enthusiast, and the girl who was forced to grow up at such a young age after her family was interned at Heart Mountain.

I remember asking my mom: "Why can't grandma be a minister? Isn't she Buddhist?" And when my mom started laughing, I asked: "Is it because she's not enlightened enough?" I was soon to learn that since my grandma was retired she probably wouldn't want to go back to work. But my questions about enlightenment continued. Who here believes they're enlightened?

I know I'm not, and I definitely know my parents aren't either. Even though my grandma is the most selfless and caring person I've ever known, she isn't enlightened. This state of enlightenment on some hyperaware level, I've never believed it was even possible for me to achieve, and I'd like to believe it's the same way for most everyday people.

And I started thinking, maybe being enlightened isn't a permanent state of being, but it exists in the small moments of

kindness everyday. From letting that rude driver pass you on the freeway, smiling and greeting friends and strangers, helping someone in need, all are small moments of being aware of your actions, and of being enlightened in some way.

Just like the book said, "Do good right away. If you wait, it'll be too late." I believe my grandma really had the best understanding of this concept by achieving those small moments of kindness everyday. She passed away this past spring, and it's obvious how much of an impact she had on me and on the world around me. All I can do now is learn from her and try to do good right away, because if I brush it off until tomorrow it becomes too late. The time we have is limited, and I'd like to spend it achieving these small moments of enlightenment and living my best life.



Connor Burns

Good morning, everyone. My name is Conner Burns,

I'm 17 and a member of the Kawazoye family. I'm currently attending Prospect High School in San Jose, and I'm in my senior and final year of high school.

Senior year, as many of you know, entails gaining the new pressure that is handed to almost every high school senior, and that's college applications.

Of course, I started my college applications perhaps a few too months later than I should've, but when wondering what I was going to talk about, reflecting on my past experiences and everything I have been through, there were so many times where I would think, "Wow, I could totally use this for my Bodhi Day speech this year." I came to this realization so often because when I thought back on my past experiences, I realized exactly how much Buddhism incorporated into my daily life. A prime example of this is the eSports club at my school.

Now first off, I'm sure that 90 percent of this audience is unfamiliar with what eSports is, so let me explain that first.

So electronic sports, or eSports for short, is essentially competitive video gaming. Now as stupid as that sounds to some you, this is one of the hottest trending markets in recent times, reaching higher worldwide viewership than nearly the NBA finals and World Series combined in recent years.

Not only becoming a booming market for those all over the

President's Message

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missioner for Human Rights. And the list goes on.

Funding for the worthy projects of the Social Welfare Committee comes only from BCA's annual Thanksgiving solicitation letter that is sent out to all BCA members, usually in November. Of course, anyone may donate at any time to the BCA Social Welfare Fund at BCA's website at www.buddhistchurches-ofamerica.org. Click on the pulldown menu, "Donate" on the home page.

For many years now, the Social Welfare Committee has been served by its members most of whom are directors at large, elected annually at BCA's National Council Meeting. They presently include Chairperson Terri Omori who leads an outstanding group composed of Glenn Inanaga, Erick Ishii, Bradley Menda, Arleen Miya, Tyler Moriguchi, Nancy Okada, Celeste Sterrett, Steve Terusaki, and BCA ministers Rev. Gregory Gibbs and Rev. Kenji Akahoshi. We are grateful to all of you.

I believe that the good works of BCA's Social Welfare Committee embody our highest spiritual aspirations, namely, a peaceful society in which everyone can live life to its fullest, and through the Dana of muisse, helping to remove fear from life's vicissitudes. Namu Amida Butsu

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Dana Program to Focus on Education Via Technology

The Dana Program was introduced four years ago as an important vehicle to bring the Buddha-dharma to everyone.

Last year, your generous donation contributed to a growing base of support that achieved our highest proceeds to date.

Your support for Buddhist Education provided a 21 percent increase in gross receipts last year. And 82 percent of these proceeds were allocated directly to the Center for Buddhist Education and Institute for Buddhist Studies, advancing our common wish to share Shinran Shonin's teachings with the world. Another 10 percent of funds were shared with local temples by donor request.

This year, we continue our Buddhist Education efforts with a focus on technology and digital media. It is time to invest in the equipment and capabilities needed to guide new seekers to Shin Buddhist communities, digitally connect our temples to innovative programs at the Jodo Shinshu Center, and highlight the inspirational messages of our dedicated ministers.

Dana Program funding initiatives include live streaming of Jodo Shinshu Center events and Dharma Talks, expanded YouTube video education, and upgraded digital communications tools. It's simple: the more we grow the Dana Program, the more we can expand these initiatives.

We ask that you join us in building upon our vision for the public, our temples and our ministers to walk the Nembutsu path together. Our annual brochure was mailed to your home, but you can set-up a one-time or recurring donation today at buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/donate

For more information, contact the BCA Endowment Foundation at donate@bcahq.org or call 415-776-5600 x311.

IBS

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sight into the interconnected causality of all things is vital."

In addition, the letter continues, "our practice as Buddhists brings about a recognition of the profound consequences of our behavior on future generations. Our greed, hostility and ignorance on individual, national and international levels make us complicit in the destruction of our environment."

The letter by Rev. Dr. Matsumoto and Dr. Mitchell concludes: "As Buddhists, we understand that awakened minds can unfold in this world as compassionate action. The climate crisis calls upon us to open our spiritual and worldly eyes and embody that awakening in our actions."

For the full text of the letter, go to: www.shin-ibs.edu/statement-on-climate-change/

A Short Presentation of Shin Buddhism

Editor's Note: This is the sixth installment of a series of articles that Bishop Kodo Umezu would like to share with the readers of the Wheel of Dharma. It was written by Rev. Shitoku A. Peel of Belgium some years ago and published as a small booklet. Rev. Peel has influenced many people in Europe. Please enjoy his appreciation of Jodo Shinshu teaching.

By Rev. Shitoku A. Peel

How about the "Pure Land"?

One should certainly not look for it in the sense of a geographically or astronomically situated "heavenly kingdom." As has already been mentioned before, the Pure Land is nothing other than Final Nirvana of No-Abode. In contrast to most Buddhist schools who approach Nirvana mainly in a negative way (via negative), the Pure Land School has a clear and positive image of it.

The "Pure Land" is not an imaginary paradise as one could be

led to believe after a first reading of a description of it. It is better to depict the Pure Land as a kind of spiritual force-field. The source of the salvific activity in this force-field is Amida Buddha. Amida here stands for Infinite Buddhahood, or in other words, all qualities and characteristics of all Buddhas. The "Vow-Power" of Wisdom/Compassion is directed towards the Birth of all beings in the Pure Land: the realization of Enlightenment.

What then does the follower have to do in order to realize this Birth?

Well: nothing!

Under the influence of Shakyamuni's charisma, it was possible for many to realize Enlightenment. However, when the distance in time to Gautama Buddha became wider, it also became more difficult to realize this objective. The charisma of the historical Buddha weakened with time, and his followers were confronted with increasing difficulty in walking the Path to Enlightenment. For this reason, we

speak of the "Age of the Decadent Dharma" (mappo), in which people are no longer capable of realizing the Pure Land as a result of their own efforts, unless of course they want to be saints.

What brings us to Birth in the Pure Land is thus not our own effort or our moral, ritual and meditative practices, but solely the Vow-Power of the Infinite Buddha. This Vow-Power can be seen as a natural Loving-Kindness that leads the follower to Nirvana, just as gravity pulls us towards the center of the earth, or as the water in a river inevitably flow back towards the ocean.

It is thus not through man, but through Buddha's salvific power that the whole process of liberation is accomplished.

We can understand this when we realize that Amida's Loving-Kindness is, by definition infinite, limitless and measureless and therefore not dependent on our actions. How could the 'good-and-evil' of man be compare with this?

Rev. Fujita

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However, a few years after I encountered this phrase, I realized that these words had a much more deeper and important meaning.

After quoting this phrase, Shinran Shonin then quoted from Master Donran's explanation of Other Power. It is my understanding that the working of Amida Buddha is Other Power itself. And it is the working of Amida Buddha who wishes to save us. Amida Buddha's working is directed toward us with immeasurable wisdom and compassion and the working discriminates against no one.

According to "A Record in Lament of Divergences," the Nembutsu, for its practitioners, is not a practice or a good act.

Since it is not performed out of one's own designs, it is not a practice.

Since it is not good done through one's own calculation, it is not a good act.

Because it arises wholly from an Other Power and is free of self-power, for the practitioner, it is not a practice or a good act. Thus were his words.

It is true that we recite the Nembutsu and the sound of Namu Amida Butsu emerges from our mouths but it is not because of my mental feelings or consciousness to recite Namu Amida Butsu.

If I said that reciting the Nembutsu is due to my power and working, then it has the same meaning as if I could have claimed to have grown the tulip bulb by myself.

The Nembutsu is not my good

act. The Nembutsu is Amida Buddha's good act and that is why it is called a "Great Practice." When we recite the Nembutsu, we are actually receiving the opportunity to recite the Nembutsu from Amida Buddha.

As we recite the Nembutsu, our self-centered nature is revealed by Amida Buddha's Primal Vow that was established for the foolish me. The "me" that needs to be liberated from my own deluded mind and can come to realize what a foolish being I am.

I am so grateful for the workings of Amida Buddha, and to have the opportunity to live with the Nembutsu with people from near and far. The Nembutsu gives me an opportunity to think about the causes and conditions that have allowed me to be here with Amida Buddha. In Gassho.

Rev. Shibata

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into the office earlier than usual.

Before I tried to tackle the numerous tasks that were on my desk, I felt pulled to chant a sutra in front of an obutsudan that was donated to the temple, which is in the reading room of my office.

Although my mind wandered

on what needed to be done that day while I chanted, once I was finished, I closed my sutra book and placed my hands together in gassho.

My eyes were pulled to the rays behind Amida Buddha's image and I felt a calmness come over me. I continued to recite "Namu Amida Butsu" several times until it became just a whisper from my voice.

Surprisingly, my eyes began to well with tears and I realized that

the Nembutsu was providing me with the comfort I needed.

Despite my own feelings of greed, anger, ignorance, anxiety and insecurity, the Nembutsu teachings reassure me that I am going to be just fine. I believe that living the Nembutsu allows me to honestly acknowledge these feelings and understand the root of their cause, which creates compassion for others, but for myself as well.

Palo Alto Students

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world, as you could imagine eSports has reached the youthful generation as well, and has become a huge passion for many kids all over the world.

I learned this quickly when me and a couple of my friends decided to found the eSports club for our school back in 2016. To our disbelief, it was a complete success, with around 150 kids attending our first club meeting — 150 kids. From a school of around only 1,500 students, that's about one-tenth of our entire student body, which is

absolutely insane.

When founding the club, my friends and I wanted to create a space to help out fellow students who we could relate to — people who felt afraid of meeting others and those who felt like they didn't belong.

We wanted to shatter the negative stereotype that scared these students from being themselves, the stereotype that labels video gamers as anti-social introverts.

People were afraid to show what they love because of what other people thought, and my friends and I wanted to show that they truly belong.

Seeing everyone's happy faces at that first meeting, the excitement

that someone had finally taken the initiative to unite a previously underrated community on campus made me realize that making a more helpful community for the people around me is one of the best things I can do.

I quickly realized that helping others who have trouble connecting with people they may not know is truly fulfilling. To see the happiness on their faces makes me hope I can continue to do this much more often, even after I graduate. Especially since I've done four of these speeches by now, I have seen how Buddhism has made its way into my daily life in many different ways. Thank you for listening.

GBC ICHI 味 MI

CALL FOR STORIES

ARE YOU AN LGBTQ INDIVIDUAL OR A FAMILY MEMBER OR RELATIVE OF AN LGBTQ INDIVIDUAL?

DID YOU OR YOUR FAMILY ACTIVELY GROW UP IN A JODO SHINSHU TEMPLE?

IF SO, WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Gardena Buddhist Church Ichi-Mi invites you to submit your personal stories to share at our seminar in November so we can learn how to grow as a sangha.

We realize stories can be extremely difficult to share, so you may identify yourself within your story or remain anonymous.

To submit your story visit:
<https://tinyurl.com/ichimistories>



District Panels

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go to the temple, participating in its activities, we managed to overcome this sadness.”

Nishimura recounted the experiences of the visits of three generations of Gomonshu.

“They are, to me, auspicious occasions that fill my heart with joy,” she said. “I believe that all this is due to the incalculable conditions and auspicious opportunities in which the teachings of the Nembutsu have been passed on to us, and so I have only to thank all the kindness received.”

Nishimura noted that last year marked the 110th anniversary of the first Japanese immigrants to Brazil.

“Japanese-Brazilian society is currently in the transition phase between the fourth- and fifth-generation of descendants who can no longer understand the Japanese language,” she said. “However, the activities of our Buddhist Federation in the temples continue to be carried out mainly in Japanese language. In such (a) way, it becomes very difficult to convey the precious teachings of today.”

She is optimistic because Rev. Mario Kajiwara, the grandson of Japanese immigrants, was chosen as the new Bishop of South America Kyodan. “We are hopeful that from now on the teachings can be taught more in Portuguese language,” Nishimura said.

Nishimura said this convention was the fifth she has attended and called it a “great joy” where “everyone shares the joy of living in the same teaching of the Nembutsu, overcoming the differences of languages and cultures.”

Carol Valentine, of the Hawaii Kyodan, spoke of four qualities she considered important to practice as a Buddhist: gratitude, kindness, compassion and interdependence

“With apologies to the ministers, I believe that ‘Living the Dharma’ is not about being the best we can be at chanting or doing gassho perfectly,” she said. “It is not about how well we sing or offer incense. It must go beyond rituals, beyond Sunday service and be part of our lives every single day, to include how we treat others and how we

handle adversity whether we are with our Sangha on a Sunday, with strangers on a Wednesday or with our families every day.

“We should be a living, breathing advertisement for Buddhism every moment of our lives,” Valentine continued. “Others may not know we are Buddhists, but they will know we cared.”

Valentine concluded her remarks by mentioning Amida Buddha and the Nembutsu.

“In closing, a reminder for me, the foolish person,” she said. “I know that Amida Buddha is always there with me and for me. He is with me and he will wait for me at my finish line, no matter how many detours I may take or bumpy roads I choose to travel. As we have heard, the Nembutsu is not my call to the Buddha; but the Nembutsu is the Buddha calling me.”

Takako Sahara of the Japan Kyodan recounted a very personal story involving the death of her 5-year-old son from leukemia and said “it is clearly known how I had been lost before encountering the Nembutsu teaching.

“The first thing that comes to mind through my connection with the temple is the importance of listening to or receiving the Dharma,” she said. “I have learned and come to realize that it is even more important to make the effort to hear the Dharma when one is busy.”

At the age of 18 -- 45 years ago -- Sahara said she suffered from an inferiority complex in college “always thinking that everything was all about winning or losing.” And despite getting a job, getting married and having a child, “I had no sense of appreciation and was constantly unhappy with things that did not go as planned.”

However, after her son died, she recalled a book -- a life-changing book — even though she never got around to reading it and eventually misplaced it.

Sahara was 18 when she rode the train to Kansai with her paternal grandmother. On the train was a middle-aged gentleman who her grandmother recognized as “sensei” and the two exchanged words.

As the man was about to get off the train at his station, he handed Sahara a book entitled,

ican Buddhist Study Center.

Other workshops were: “Live the Nembutsu through Bon Dance,” which presented the story of Rev. Yoshio Iwanaga, a BCA Kaikyoshi, who introduced this cultural and spiritual practice 88 years ago. This complemented a new traveling exhibit that was on display during the WBWC.

Contemporary perspectives on Nembutsu practices in one’s personal life are addressed in “Mindfulness and Shin,” presented by Leo Joslin, LMFT, who is also a Minister’s Assistant at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco; and “Practicing ‘No Practice’: The Nembutsu in Our Modern Lives,” presented by Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi of the Buddhist



On Sept. 1, the BCA Federation of Buddhist Women’s Association Cabinet was installed during the BCA FBWA general meeting at the Marriott Marquis Hotel in San Francisco.

The new cabinet will host the 46th BCA FBWA national conference in October 22 at the Doubletree Hotel in Sacramento. The theme for the 2022 conference is “Winds of Change.” In front row, from left, are: Virginia Uchida (Co-Vice President); Peggy Okabayashi (President); Cathy Fujimori (Co-Vice President); and Katsuko Hirota (Recording Secretary-Japanese). In back row, from left, are: Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezu; Claudia Nakata (Auditor); Carol Kusama (Co-Recording Secretary-English); Sachi Yenokida (Treasurer); Lois Kashiwase (Co-Recording Secretary-English); Teruko Matsumura (Corresponding Secretary-Japanese); Lois Tanaka (Counselor); Judy Waters (Corresponding Secretary-English); Rev. Candice Shibata (Ministerial Adviser); and Rev. Yukiko Motoyoshi (Ministerial Adviser). (Courtesy of Cathy Fujimori).

“Shinran.”

“Although I never got around to reading the book before misplacing it, it has become the seed that planted Jodo Shinshu in my life,” Sahara told the audience. “Me, who once had my back turned to the Nembutsu.

“I am simply filled with a sense of gratitude, to such encounters,” she said. “The man who had given me -- a young girl setting off on a long journey not knowing where the path may lead -- his book at the spur of the moment, and to my grandmother, who although it may have been by chance, had warmly introduced me to him.”

Sahara said she has “come to understand that reciting the Nembutsu is also an expression of gratitude. I, too, hope that I can become a small seed for someone to encounter the Nembutsu.”

Truly Gahlinger of the



Sumi Tanabe speaks at the WBWC’s District Panel Presentations on Sept. 1 in San Francisco. Tanabe is a member of the San Jose Betsuin Buddhist Church. (Courtesy of Mark Shigenaga)

Canada Kyodan spoke about her experience as a health and wellness coach and the real health benefits of a spiritual practice based on gratitude.

“While Shinran understood almost 900 years ago that the Nembutsu is our path to liberation, science is only now catching up to the impact of gratitude on freeing us from poor mental and physical health,” she said. “Gratitude is good medicine!”

Gahlinger said research on the benefits of gratitude on physical health shows positive results in preventing disease and promoting good health. Recent studies, she said, conclude that grateful people sleep better, have better nutrition and have more energy.

She also noted the impact of gratitude on psychological health.

“Grateful people are less depressed, have higher self-esteem and feel more capable of dealing with life’s challenges,” she said. “In addition, grateful people handle stress better,

both the minor stress of daily life as well as the major stress resulting from personal tragedies or traumas.”

She also said that gratitude “helps us become more aware of our interdependence and strengthens the bonds among us.”

Gahlinger said we can all integrate gratitude into our daily lives by starting with simple steps such as pausing for a few moments each day to feel grateful and we can also say thank you to others more often.

“The best thing about gratitude is that it is available to everyone,” she said. “We don’t have to lose weight, exercise more or finish our to-do list. We can start practicing gratitude right now, just as we are, and experience the benefits immediately of reframing life in a more positive way. In the same way that Shinran created a new kind of Sangha in Japan where all members were equal, the opportunities for gratitude are freely given to everyone.”

Workshops

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“Conversations: Responding to Shinran’s Wasan through Poetry,” which was led by Jerry Bolick, Minister’s Assistant at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco; “Lady Takeko Kujo: The Secret of her Inner Beauty,” which was presented by Orange County Buddhist Church Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wondra in two sessions, one in English, and another in Japanese.

It was a timely and insightful discussion of the new English translation of Lady Kujo’s writings, “Leaves of My Heart,” recently published by the Amer-

ican Buddhist Study Center.

Temple of San Diego. Institutional changes in the BWA’s at the temple level were also addressed by a panel of speakers in “Changing With the Times,” moderated by Rev. Ron Miyamura of the Midwest Buddhist Temple.

In the workshop titled “Blissfully Ever After – Buddhist Weddings in BCA,” another level of institutional change is addressed: the variety of Jodo Shinshu marriages now conducted in BCA was discussed by Rimban Katsuya Kusunoki of the Seattle Buddhist Temple Betsuin, with slides of many examples of weddings, including same-sex marriages.

“Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, Mottainai, and EcoSanghas” was led by Rev. Donald

Castro, BCA Minister Emeritus, Karen Akahoshi of the Buddhist Temple of San Diego, and Joanne Gozawa, PhD, of the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple. They discussed how Rennyō Shonin’s mottainai sensibility is a quiet and urgent reminder and inspiration on what one person can do, connecting the personal and spiritual with the welfare of society and the planet earth. The workshop shared how EcoSanghas are being established temple by temple.

Additional sessions utilized creative and fun approaches writing making greeting cards, tasting a variety of chocolates, learning/singing new gathas, following along in line dancing, and Bon dancing.