



WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America



BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, center, poses with the Bay District ministers on March 12 before they all enter the Hondo at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple, which hosted the Bay District's special service celebrating the 850th birthday of Shinran Shonin and the 800th anniversary of Jodo Shinshu teaching. Shown, from left, are: Rev. Henry Adams, Rev. Dean Koyama, Rev. Dennis Fujimoto, Rev. Harada, Rev. Harry Bridge, Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji, and Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara. (Courtesy of Jon Kawamoto)

Bay District's Joint Celebration Draws 300

Event Honors Shinran's 850th Birthday, Jodo Shinshu's 800th Anniversary

By Jon Kawamoto
Wheel of Dharma Editor

Despite the torrential rains that blanketed the Bay Area and the start of Daylight Saving Time, a crowd of about 300 people packed the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple (PABT) on March 12 for the BCA Bay District's special service celebrating the 850th birthday of Shinran Shonin and the 800th anniversary of Jodo Shinshu teaching.

The in-person gathering had an energetic, feel-good vibe about it — drawing on the synergy of Sangha members from the nine Bay District (BD) temples. The occasion marked another step to the pre-pandemic ways, even if the crowd wore



Rev. Harada gives a Dharma message with the help of his longtime friend, Freddie the Frog. (Courtesy of Hitomi Silver)

masks.

For those who couldn't attend, the joint celebration was livestreamed on Zoom, and an

additional 130 people signed in to watch.

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How to Attract New Sangha Members to Join BCA Temples

Akahoshi Outlines 5 Benefits of Shin

By Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi
BCA Minister Emeritus



Rev. Dr. Akahoshi

Almost all of the BCA's temples have been losing membership over the past several decades. The concern becomes personal, when we see the popularity of Buddhist practices becoming an acceptable part of America's health and wellness movements.

The reasons for this decline may be multifold. Therefore, the solutions would involve many areas. The BCA Propagation and Membership Committee presented a workshop at the recent BCA National Council Meeting (NCM) on Feb. 25. This article reviews significant points of that workshop.

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Strategic Planning, Vision Committee Is Moving Forward

By Jon Kawamoto
Wheel of Dharma Editor

A new proposal that calls for establishing long-range strategic planning with a shared vision of the BCA is gaining momentum and moving forward.

BCA Vice President John Arima, who unveiled the Vision and Strategic Planning Committee at the Dec. 3 National Board meeting, reported what's new with an update at the Feb. 25 National Council meeting, hosted virtually by the Coast District. Arima is overseeing the

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Honoring My True Teacher on the Nembutsu Path — My Mother

Editor's note: Rev. Todd Tsuchiya of the Midwest Buddhist Temple delivered the following Dharma message on Feb. 24 at the virtual National Council Meeting, hosted by the Coast District. Rev. Tsuchiya has graciously permitted the Wheel of Dharma to publish his message.

By Rev. Todd Tsuchiya
Midwest Buddhist Temple

I would like to begin with the words of Shinran Shonin from the Jodo Wasan.

Please join me in gassho,
It is difficult to meet true

teachers

And difficult for them to instruct.

It is difficult to hear the teaching well,

And more difficult still to accept it.

This passage is taken from the Larger Sutra and is in reference to the Buddha's statement to Maitreya of the importance of hearing the name in the age of the decline of the Dharma.

My journey coming to the ministry is a second career for me occurring later in life. Aligning with the theme of this meeting of "Nembutsu: Appreciate Every Encounter," I would like

to share my personal encounter with the Nembutsu and why I am here today.

The reason I chose this passage is that in my childhood, I didn't understand what it meant to hear the name and live with the Nembutsu. I grew up in Minnesota in a Jodo Shinshu family, but we didn't have a temple or a minister to meet with very often. The opportunity to listen to Dharma messages was infrequent. However, I have come to realize I was surrounded by people who lived with the Dharma in their lives.

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Rev. Todd Tsuchiya, right, is shown at his mother's 88th birthday party in December 2012 at Mystic Lake Casino Hotel in Prior Lake, Minnesota. At left is his brother Frank Tsuchiya. (Courtesy of Rev. Todd Tsuchiya)



BISHOP'S MESSAGE

The Benefit of Being Part of a Sangha



By Rev. Marvin Harada
Bishop of the BCA

This month, I would like to reflect on another benefit of following the path of Shin Buddhism, which is the benefit of being a part of a Sangha.

First of all, let me share something about the meaning of Sangha. I have learned a wonderful teaching from one of Thich Nhat Hanh's writings, in which he teaches that the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha — cannot exist without each other. All three must be present for one of them to exist.

The Buddha needs us, the Sangha, to truly be the Buddha. If there is no one to receive and hear the Buddha's teachings, the Dharma, then the Buddha is not the Bud-

dha.

The Dharma needs the Buddha, an awakened one to expound it, and it needs a Sangha to receive and practice it. Without the Sangha, the Dharma is merely sutras or books sitting on the shelf. For the Dharma to truly be the Dharma, there must be a Sangha to receive and live the teachings.

To be a part of a Shin Buddhist Sangha is to be connected to all three of these treasures.

Over the years, while serving as a minister at the Orange County Buddhist Church, I have met many people who came for the first time to attend a service or class, and they shared that they had read many books on Buddhism,

felt such joy in being a part of a Sangha, to make new friends, to be able to share in the path with others.

That is the great benefit of being a part of a Sangha that Shin Buddhism in particular offers. I love Zen Buddhism, but I have met many who have said that in practicing Zen, they never felt like they were a part of a Sangha. They

In Shin Buddhism, Sangha is virtually everything. We listen to the Dharma together. We discuss the Dharma together. We have coffee and potlucks together. We work together at the bazaars and the fundraisers. We encourage each other, we support each other on the path. The new people learn from the wisdom and experience of the longtime members. The longtime members learn from the questions and freshness of the newcomers.

The Sangha needs the Buddha and the Dharma to truly be a Sangha. Without the presence of the Buddha and the Dharma, we are not a Sangha. We are just a group of people, like any civic organization. Because there is the presence of the heart of the Buddha, and because we are listening to and receiving the teachings, the Dharma, only then can we call ourselves a Sangha.

and even considered themselves "nightstand Buddhists" (because they have many books on Buddhism on their nightstand), but felt that there was something missing in their study and seeking of the teachings.

They said that they had never been a part of a Sangha, and now, after years of just reading about Buddhism, were looking to be a part of a Sangha. After joining, they

would go to the Zen Center, sit in meditation, in zazen, and then after that, leave. They never got to experience Sangha in that tradition. In Zen, you have to live at the monastery, practice Zen full-time to be able to experience Sangha in the Zen tradition.

In Shin Buddhism, Sangha is virtually everything. We listen to the Dharma together.

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'Tenzuru' — Changing One's Relationship With World



By Rev. Gerald Sakamoto
Rinban

San Jose Betsuin Buddhist Temple

miliar to Costello. Although the names are recognizable words, the words are unusual for names — "Who," "What," and "I Don't Know."

ciation with the name and a person. We can see that there is a person, but the name associated with that person is not possible. So I might give

experience to distinguish between various stages of milk decline. Should I drink the milk or is it time to try that experiment and turn it

Our tendency to see the world through our preferences and prejudices results in dividing the world up into what I like, what I don't like, what I want, what I don't want, offering opportunities for difficulties to arise. This is the cause of difficulties, the second of the Four Noble Truths Buddhism is about the resolution of difficulties we cause and experience. Difficulties that result from our tendency to engage the world through our preferences and prejudices.

For Abbott, the names are matter of fact. For Costello, the words do not correspond with what we normally think of as names. If you have not seen this exchange, take a look at it on YouTube. It's a routine that's nearly 80 years old. Still quite hilarious. Quite brilliant.

Like Costello, our misperceptions can lead to frustration and anger. Our perception is shaped by our experience. If, in our experience, we have not had the opportunity to meet someone named "Who," it would be difficult to make that association.

Our experience may tell us that someone named "Who" is not possible. If I hold on to that thought, it would be difficult to make the asso-

that person a name that I'm familiar with, a name that is in my experience of names.

A simple thing like changing a name may not seem that important and, yet, it is perhaps that person's most important identity. Sometimes, we join in being renamed like when we begin to identify with a nickname. Sometimes, our name is taken from us and who we are is taken as well.

Not seeing something or some experience happens often. It may only be a matter of seeing something a little off of what should be. You might pull a carton of milk out of the refrigerator, sniff it and declare it either drinkable or not.

Whether that milk is drinkable depends on our

into plastic. The moment you think, "Maybe I'll have some milk," the possible alternatives begin to present themselves. If I remain with the first intent, to drink some milk, regardless of conditions, I may make a decision that could result in difficulties.

We know that not seeing

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Correction

BCA President Terri Omori's message on Page 3 of the March issue of the Wheel of Dharma incorrectly identified the name of the workshop. It was the BCA Temple Leaders Workshop.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

NCM Lives Up to Theme of 'Nembutsu: Appreciate Every Encounter'



By **Terri Omori**
BCA President

The 2023 Ministers Association and National Council meetings were held online in February by the Coast District Council. The theme, "Nembutsu: Appreciate Every Encounter," was conveyed throughout the event and resonated with many.

The planning committee, led by Perry Yoshida and Linda Kadani, worked diligently for two years. We are grateful for their time and efforts in facilitating the annual event, which was held virtually over a six-day period.

The 2023 Ministers Associa-

tion and National Council meetings began on Feb. 17 with the Ministers Association meeting conducted by chairperson Rev. Harry Bridge. The following day was filled with inspiring presentations and informative workshops.

The topic for the Town Hall session was this year's BCA theme, "The Benefits of Following the Shin Buddhist Path." Moderated by Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, six presenters shared their personal benefits. Gregg Krech and Rev. Takashi Miyaji shared the benefits of a life of gratitude. Rev. Maribeth Smith and Rev. Gary Jaskula shared the benefits of a teaching that embraces all and forsakes none. Jo Ann Tanioka of the Orange County Buddhist Church and David Correia, Minister's Assistant of the Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Temple, shared the benefits of being part of a Sangha. The afternoon workshops were presented by the Social Welfare Committee, Ministerial Affairs Committee, Executive Committee, Dharma Forward campaign and Endowment Foundation.

FYI

To view the BCA Eitakyo Service, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOO_8FU5CHY

Events continued Feb. 23 with the Institute of Buddhist Studies symposium. Reflecting on the theme, Rev. Harry Bridge, Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Rev. Melissa Opel and Rev. Todd Tsuchiya shared their appreciation of Shinran Shonin's teachings and their life experiences.

On Feb. 24-25, the two-day National Council meeting was conducted with more than 175 delegates. BCA ministers, temple representatives, BCA committee chairpersons and affiliated organization representatives, BCA staff, and IBS board. The Jodo Shinshu International Office and BCA Endowment Foundation joined the Executive Committee and the Directors at Large.

We also welcomed guests David Atcheson and Wayde Toyama from the Hompa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii and Laura Sugimoto from the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples

of Canada.

The business meeting included the acceptance of the 2023-2024 budget, an update report on the Dharma Forward campaign, approval to amend the ministerial salary guidelines, a presentation by the Vision and Strategic Planning Committee, the submission of 40 written reports and the election of three new Director at Large members to the National Board.

Congratulations to Darlene Bagshaw (Stockton), Nadine Kakimoto (Gardena), and Koichi Sayano (Los Angeles).

In addition to the business portion of the meeting, a harassment training program was presented by Camille Pating. We appreciate her work in sharing her expertise. We are also grateful to Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi's presentation, "A Guide to Attracting New Members." On behalf of the Propagation and Membership Committee, Rev. Dr. Akahoshi shared ideas and recommendations. I hope the temple leaders will try to implement some of these methods. Meeting delegates also had a networking opportunity to

meet in smaller breakout groups to reflect on the topic, what benefits have they received while following the Shin Buddhist path.

The event concluded on Feb. 26 with the BCA National Eitakyo service conducted by Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada and the Coast District ministers. You may have watched it from your home or in your temple hondo with other Sangha members. It was a meaningful service as we expressed gratitude to all those who have gone before us for their efforts to allow us to receive the Dharma. Special musical offerings were presented by San Jose Taiko, June Kuramoto and Kimo Cornwell of the iconic musical group Hiroshima, the duo Ko-Ha (Miharu Okamura and Miko Shudo) with Rev. Harry Bridge, and a collaborative rendition of "Ondokusan II" produced by the BCA Music Committee.

The inspiring Dharma message was given by Rev. Gerald Sakamoto. There is still an opportunity to view this special service on the Buddhist Churches of America YouTube channel.

Third Annual Virtual JAMS Features Talent Throughout BCA



The third annual virtual BCA Jodo Shinshu Artists and Musicians Showcase (JAMS) featured performers throughout the BCA on Feb. 26. Shown above are the OCBC Jammers. (Photos courtesy of Koichi Mizushima)



JAMS performers included, at top right, Miko Shudo of Pasadena Buddhist Temple; right center, Mette Mele of Buddhist Church of Sacramento; and bottom right, ABA Sonics of the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. Shudo sang an original song based on Thich Nhat Hahn's teaching of "no birth, no death," and says, "When I remember that I come directly from my ancestors, I know that they are always with me. As long as my heart beats, so will theirs This teaching has been very comforting to me after the recent passing of my mom and obaachan."

By **Koichi Mizushima**
CBE Youth Coordinator

The third annual BCA Jodo Shinshu Artists and Musicians Showcase (JAMS) virtual talent show debuted on Feb. 26 and featured more than 20 performers from throughout the country.

Artists and musicians — both young and old, individuals and groups — were from Fresno, Hawaii, Los Angeles, Orange County, Oakland, Oregon, New Jersey, Pasadena, Palo Alto, Sacramento, and Sonoma County. The performers also included Sangha

members and ministers.

A special thanks goes to NBC Bay Area's Mike Inouye for co-hosting the event, and the more than 1,000 viewers who watched the video.

The entire video can be viewed on the BCA's YouTube channel at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyNeA0_CG9A

Donations received from the event will go to subsidizing travel expenses for BCA youth members to attend BCA youth retreat events.

This is one of my favorite events of the year. I am so impressed with all of the talent in our BCA Sangha. I hope

FYI

To view the BCA's JAMS virtual talent show, go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KyNeA0_CG9A

you all have a chance to watch and share the video at your temples.

Music has a way of bringing everyone together. It is one of the true universal languages that can be enjoyed by everyone. Thank you all for watching and supporting the artists, and please be sure to submit your video next year to be a part of this great show.



Fowler Dharma School Holding Reunion



The Buddhist Church of Fowler's Dharma School will be holding a reunion on May 28 to celebrate its centennial. The Dharma School is shown in a 1939 group photo in front of the church. (Courtesy of Rev. Brian Kensho Nagata)

By Rev. Brian Kensho Nagata
Buddhist Church of Fowler

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Buddhist Church of Fowler Dharma School's founding, and alumni, teachers and parents will be holding a centennial reunion on May 28.

The Nembutsu teachings were first heard in Fowler in 1901, the same year that the

Fresno Betsuin was founded and Fowler became the Betsuin's first branch. As the Nisei generation started appearing, Rev. Itsuzo Kyogoku and Mrs. Kyogoku decided to start the Fowler Buddhist Sunday School in 1923.

Through the years, hundreds of students, including four women who have become minister's wives, or Bomori, and several Tokudo recipients have roots in this "inaka," or

country Dharma School.

All past students of the Buddhist Church of Fowler's Dharma School are invited to come pay respects to your loved ones for Memorial Day and then join us for this once-in-a-lifetime 100th year reunion.

For further information and registration, please contact Barton Ashida at b.ashida@sbcglobal.net or call (559) 284-2955.

BCAEF Welcomes Hitomi Kuwahara

The BCA Endowment Foundation welcomes Hitomi Kuwahara as the new Development Associate.

Ms. Kuwahara will be working on both the administrative and the fundraising functions of the Foundation. She looks forward to building relationships as we support the sharing of the Buddha Dharma through the BCA and the IBS.

She is familiar with many



Hitomi Kuwahara

in the BCA as the wife to Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, supervising minister of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple and the Buddhist Temple of Marin. She is also an active member of the Berkeley Bud-

dhist Temple.

Ms. Kuwahara brings her knowledge of the Buddha Dharma as a Tokudo recipient, teaches at the high school level for those students capable of learning within a Japanese curriculum, and leads a yoga group.

If you have any questions regarding your donations, you can reach her at hkuwahara@bcahq.org.

Bishop's Message

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We discuss the Dharma together. We have coffee and potlucks together. We work together at the bazaars and the fundraisers. We encourage each other, we support each other on the path. The new people learn from the wisdom and experience of the longtime members. The longtime members learn from the questions and freshness of the

newcomers.

We are all on the path together, no better or no worse than one another. We come from all backgrounds, all ethnicities, all socio-economic classes, all genders, all sexual orientations, all ages. As adults, we enjoy the children's Dharma messages. As children, we learn the depth of the Nembutsu from grandpa or grandma.

Without a Sangha, we cannot experience that. That is the great benefit of being a part of

a Sangha.

In the future, we want to try and create such a Sangha, virtually, especially for those who do not live near a BCA church or temple. We hope to create that same feeling, that same atmosphere of a Sangha for those who participate virtually. But for our existing churches and temples, we will continue to provide the experience of being a part of a Sangha, sharing in our lives and the teachings, and being enriched by each other.

Monto Shikisho on Sale at Bookstore

This year marks the 850th anniversary of Shinran Shonin's birth and the 800th anniversary of the founding of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha will be celebrating these events throughout 2023. Honzan has released a specially designed monto shikisho in honor of these anniversaries. If you are interested in



Commemorative monto shikisho

having a commemorative monto shikisho, they are available online now for \$50 plus tax and shipping. The bookstore will be closed during May, so please place your orders early. This monto shikisho can be ordered through the BCA Bookstore at: <https://bcabookstore.mybigcommerce.com/>

Inquiries can be sent to: bookstore@bcahq.org

2023 FDSTL CONFERENCE

April 29-30, 2023
Palo Alto Buddhist Temple,
Palo Alto, California

Learn how to help our students explore their emotions through a Jodo Shinshu lens.

SPECIAL GUEST:

History Chat with **D. Trinidad Hunt**, granddaughter of **Dorothy Hunt**, author of **the Golden Chain!**

Hosted by the Bay District Dharma School Teachers League

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Reverend Candice Shibata
Buddhist Church of Stockton

Questions?
Please contact us at:
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JUN 25 - JUL 1, 2023

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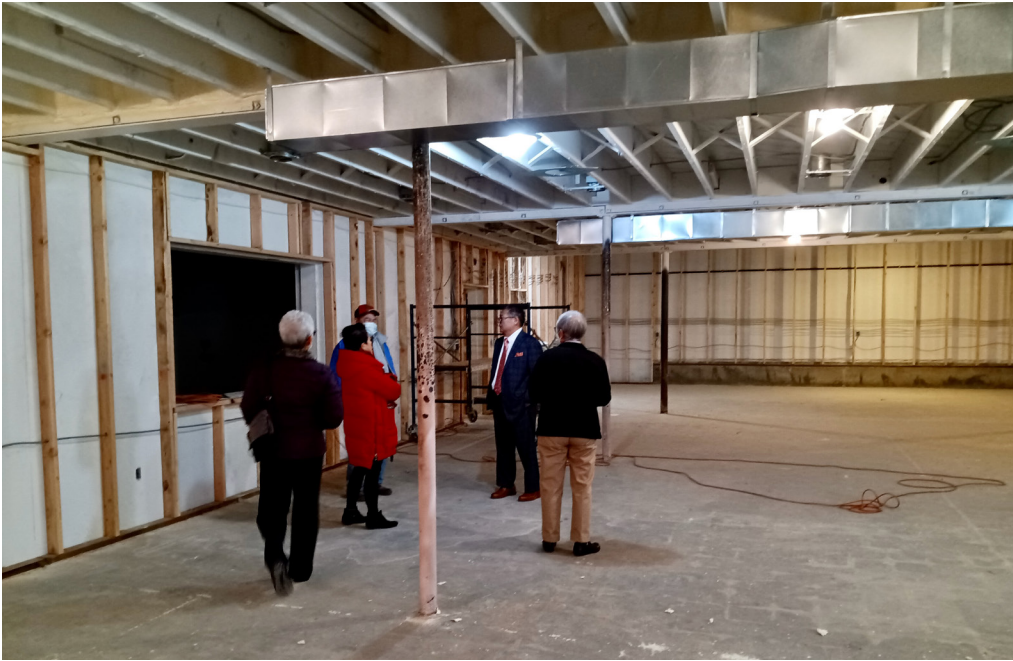
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After Fire, IOBT Is Making Progress in Its Restoration Work



The Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple is making substantial progress in its restoration after last summer's fire damaged the temple basement and caused smoke damage to the Hondo, Onaijin, and Nokotsudo. On Feb. 19, after the temple's Nirvana Day and Pet Memorial service with IOBT Supervising Minister Rev. Jerry Hirano officiating, IOBT Co-President Mike Iseri gave an update on the temple. Shown at left in the basement social hall are: Sandy Adachi, with back to camera; Rev. Carmella Javellana Hirano, in red coat; Mike Iseri; Rev. Jerry Hirano; and Rev. Kathy Chatterton, with back to camera. Shown, at right, in the Hondo are: Rev. Chatterton, Mike Iseri, and Sandy Adachi. (Courtesy of Rev. Anne Spencer)

By Jon Kawamoto

Wheel of Dharma Editor

After a fire damaged parts of the Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple (IOBT) last summer — shutting down in-person services in the Hondo — the temple is now making substantial progress in its overall restoration.

"IOBT is progressing," IOBT Co-President Mike Iseri said. "Sometimes, the progress is fast and furious while other times it crawls. Much of this is due to labor issues and supply chain issues."

The fire occurred on July 8, 2022, and caused extensive damage to the temple's basement. The Hondo, Onaijin, and Nokotsudo suffered smoke damage. The apparent cause was a faulty electrical outlet. (See "Fire Damages IOBT Basement; Hondo, Onaijin Are Spared," August 2022, Wheel of Dharma)

Because of the suspected presence of hazardous material, the temple didn't begin cleanup work until about a month after the fire. The hazardous material assessment determined that only the floor

tile contained asbestos.

Fire damage was initially estimated at \$750,000, Iseri said. But he said the estimate was before the assessment was made and before an insurance adjuster was on site.

He said the insurance coverage "appears to be fairly complete. The insurance company has been very fair and forthcoming with advances so we can cover expenses as we pay them."

Iseri noted the following projects and their status:

- The Hondo lighting has been updated, brightening things and reducing glare.
- A new speaker system is in process.
- HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) installation and upgrades are nearly complete.
- Cables have been pulled for the computer, video and microphones.
- Painting on the Onaijin has been slow because of the need to work around the altar. An altar cleaning company in Japan is scheduled to come out for a week sometime after May.
- Electrical work in the basement has been roughed

live in castes.

Our tendency to see the world through our preferences and prejudices results in dividing the world up into what I like, what I don't like, what I want, what I don't want, offering opportunities for difficulties to arise. This is the cause of difficulties, the second of the Four Noble Truths.

The difficulties of the First Noble Truth is not just the existential difficulty we associate with dukkha. It is the everyday, constant disruptions we encounter. It is the range of difficulties from the last bit of ice cream to the famine induced by war that kills millions. The sum of these difficulties is samsara.

Buddhism is about the res-

How to Help

Donations to the Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple can be made at: <https://iobt.maxgiving.com/>

The mailing address is: Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple, P.O. Box 397, Ontario, Oregon, 97914-0397.

in, meaning that all the electrical cables have been pulled through the studs of the wall and that boxes for light switches, outlets, and receptacles have been placed. But the wiring has not been connected to the breaker box and the various switches, outlets, and receptacles have not yet been installed.

The floor covering is not done and floor staining is scheduled in late May. The temple is waiting for plumbing and HVAC work, insulation and inspections before sheetrock can be installed.

Iseri said the work in the kitchen will have "a bare bones commercial-type kitchen installed. We're starting with only what we know we need. As we use it, we may be adding more to suit future needs. But, we're trying to be very careful to avoid buying things that we don't really need."

olution of difficulties we cause and experience. Difficulties that result from our tendency to engage the world through our preferences and prejudices. If we are able to cultivate a mind that simply sees things as they are, we could begin to soften the boundaries that separate, lessening opportunities for conflict to arise. The Eightfold Path, the fourth of the Four Noble Truths, and its derivations, is the means to cultivate that mind.

Jodo Shinshu is Buddhism. We too are concerned with the resolution of difficulties. Difficulties that continue to nip at our heels no matter what we do. No matter whether we apply our Buddhist understanding or engage the world through a

The wood floor of the Onaijin needs to be stripped and refinished, along with some other wood pieces. The status of the pews is unresolved. The temple is waiting on new fabric samples because it found the chosen fabric was problematic to obtain, Iseri said.

"We have a steady stream of work appointments through May," he said.

"As much as possible, we're using local contractors that we know," he continued. "It goes a little slower that way, but it gives our board a better chance to adjust and tweak along the way. The end result should serve us better."

Iseri said the temple hopes to be able to use the Hondo this summer, and said the rest of the temple will require more time. But no target date has been set because the work is being done in stages.

Buddhist life, there are still wars that kill, economic injustice that drive poverty and hunger, systemic racism that uses up people, then discards them when their lives are no longer useful.

In Shinran's time, it was the Gempei War, which began in the streets of Kyoto. Japan suffered through several severe famines, one of which brought the Gempei War to a temporary halt. In his departure from Hieizan, he questioned his ability to fulfill the practices of the fourth of the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path. From Honen, he understood that the compassion of enlightenment extended to all beings.

"Tenzuru" is an expres-

He thanked the BCA Sangha members and IOBT Sangha members for their donations for the temple and for the IOBT Sangha Taiko, which was also temporarily displaced by the fire. The taiko group used the basement for practice and stored its taiko drums in the basement.

Meanwhile, the IOBT is holding in-person services at 392 SW 3rd St. in Ontario, Oregon, the former office space of Iseri Travel. The office space is able to accommodate up to 30 people and has a large TV for Zoom participants to join in the services, and the temple has been conducting monthly hybrid services. The temple is also holding the shotsuki memorial services on the first Sunday on Zoom only.

"All in all, we are as lucky as we could be," Iseri said. "The Sangha has been supportive and has maintained their habits for pledge, memorial donations and the like. We have extra hands helping when we need it, although the bulk of the work is being done by local contractors. As unfortunate as it was to be stricken with the fire, we're trying to look at it as an opportunity."

sion of transformation that describes a change in how I see myself in relationship to the world around me. I am changed. The assurance of Amida expressed through compassion for all beings allows me to begin to see my imperfections more clearly. I am changed.

And, even with all my failings, I am included in that compassion. My prejudices and my expectations of others is tempered by the assurance of Amida. I am grateful for that compassion. I am changed. That gratitude continues to grow as my understanding of my foolishness deepens. How I see and engage the world is from this place of gratitude and compassion. I respond with Namoamidabutsu.

Rev. Sakamoto

Continued from Page 2

things as they are can have serious consequences. Our assumptions and preferences can distort how we see things. I like vanilla ice cream. I look at a quart. I think there's not enough to share. My preference distorts how I see the world. I think it's OK to call someone named Shintaro — Tom — because it's easier. It's OK to pick fruit from the neighbor's tree whose branches are overhanging the sidewalk because it's a hazard. I may even be doing them a favor. People who live on the street like living that way. They like the freedom. We live in America. We do not



BCA Delegation Experiences 'Aloha Spirit' at HHMH's Giseikai

By Darlene Bagshaw
BCA Secretary

In mid-February, BCA President Terri Omori led the BCA delegation to the Hawaiian island of Oahu for the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's (HHMH) 111th Giseikai (Legislative Day).

Omori's husband, Ford Omori, of the Vista Buddhist Temple, and I completed the BCA delegation to the Giseikai, which is similar to the BCA's National Council Meeting (NCM).

Although Terri Omori participated in the 2022 Giseikai, this was HHMH's return to an in-person meeting. Despite being an important business meeting, we encountered the "Aloha Spirit" with every encounter during this event.

"Aloha Spirit" can be defined as being in the presence of and sharing the essence of life — teaching us lessons of peace, kindness, compassion and responsibility to future generations.

Led by Bishop Rev. Eric Matsumoto and HHMH President Dr. Warren Tamamoto, the HHMH has ensured the intertwining of Amida's compassion with the "Aloha Spirit" throughout its Sangha.

We experienced many of the same concerns within the HHMH as we do in the BCA. Declining membership, small temple challenges, youth participation, technology, improving the ministers' and temple internet environment, protecting our environment, and standardized minister compensation and benefits are

a few of the shared concerns.

Just as within the BCA, each challenge is met with positive energy, creativity, and diligence. By numbers and square miles, the HHMH may be smaller than the BCA, but its dedication to preserving the spread of the Dharma is just as strong.

We may have met these incredible members by the chance of circumstances, but their "Aloha Spirit" will forever keep us connected.

Terri Omori was consulted by various individuals time and time again, curious to learn of the BCA approach to a challenge as well as her valued perspective on a topic.

On the topic of membership and propagation, the HHMH committee led by John Toguchi has created a beautiful brochure that introduces who the HHMH is and also Shin Buddhism to the community. The committee plans to have this ready for all temples before the summer bon dance season.

As Toguchi eloquently wrote in his report, "Buddhist values are timeless and provide one with the tools to cope with the complexities of life. Sharing and exemplifying these values are ways we reach outward."

In addition to the meetings, retired Sacramento Betsuin Revs. Bob and Patti Oshita presented their thoughts during a rap session along with thoughts by former HHMH President Pieper Toyama. Both provided different aspects of how to truly be a Dharma-centered leader. They shared tips on what is

FYI

To view the BCA Social Welfare Committee joint workshop with the HHMH Committee on Social Concerns on "Our Interdependent Lives: Food Waste and Sustainability," go to: [To https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxfU2Ax5bJs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxfU2Ax5bJs)

attractive to newcomers as well as how to create a strong long-lasting bridge to retain and expand our Sangha.

In 2022, the BCA Social Welfare Committee joined with the HHMH Committee on Social Concerns to present "Our Interdependent Lives: Food Waste and Sustainability." We touched upon efforts by the Sanghas to protect and preserve our fragile environment. ("BCA, HHMH Team Up on Food Waste, Sustainability Project," October 2022, Wheel of Dharma)

The HHMH has an entire committee, the Green Hongwanji Committee, dedicated to formulating a plan to organize, educate, take action and develop leaders to help promote and improve the general welfare of the environment in which we live. The committee report included a thought-provoking survey through which temples can assess their level of "green." This committee is another example of interdependence as Karen Akahoshi and the San Diego EchoSangha were noted as contributors.

Just like the BCA, technology has become prominent in the post-pandemic era, opening up many new avenues to explore. From temple-level internet to the hiring of a



BCA President Terri Omori led the BCA delegation to the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii's 111th Giseikai (Legislative Day) in February in Oahu. Shown, from left, are: Laura Sugimoto, President of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada; Warren Tamamoto, President of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii; BCA Secretary Darlene Bagshaw; and BCA President Terri Omori. (Courtesy of Terri Omori)

social media and information technology coordinator, this is an echo of pathways we have all taken as a result of the pandemic and subsequent temple closures.

Terri Omori was a source of information as we have crossed many of the roads the HHMH is currently facing. Both the HHMH and BCA leaders have realized the younger generations do not necessarily turn to the print or TV broadcast media. Their initial point of encounter is through social media. We are fortunate to have Alex Tsukahara on the BCA staff as well as the TOSC subcommittee under the BCA Communications Committee, which has done wonders in developing the BCA website

and reaching out through social media to connect with younger members.

But all was not just work. We had a wonderful dinner hosted by Bishop Rev. Eric Matsumoto, where we were able to interact with HHMH leaders and incoming Bishop Rev. Tatsuya Aoki and Laura Sugimoto of the Canada Kyodan.

The closing banquet was a luncheon during which we were treated to learning about the "2023 Living Treasures of Hawaii," in which the HHMH honors individuals who have truly invoked the "Aloha Spirit" through their contributions to society. Finally, we enjoyed

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Make Every Effort to Visit Our BCA Home — the JSC



By Gordon Ah Tye
Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Church

On a cold and rainy weekend in February, I had the good fortune of attending the BCA Temple Leaders Workshop at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley, California. As cold and wet as the weather was, the atmosphere at the JSC could not have been warmer.

As our group of three representatives from Fresno arrived, we were warmly welcomed by Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) Project Coordinator Judy Kono, who was dressed in an

apron, doing kitchen chores. She provided us with our room keys for the JSC.

It almost felt like "Mom" was welcoming us into her home, as the aroma of food permeated the check-in area.

Our first events on Friday evening, Feb. 3, were a welcome to attendees, dinner, and a tour of the JSC. It was a great experience touring this impressive building, to actually see the hub of our Buddhist educational endeavors.

On our second day, we had a great Dharma message from our Bishop, Rev. Marvin Harada, about "What Is BCA." He spoke about the benefits of life as a Shin Buddhist, and the importance of living life "inside out" versus "outside in."

His analogy of a nurse working to take care of people, in contrast with a nurse working to cover their hours, was descriptive of the passion we have as temple leaders.

In the course of the day,

we also: shared stories of success in breakout sessions; what our responsibilities are as temple leaders; what challenges we face; and what pathways we might consider to improve. Just sharing experiences with each other and knowing that many of us are facing similar challenges was valuable.

I would encourage all of you to make every effort to visit our JSC, just to feel the richness of the facility, to see how the generosity of our Sangha has made it all possible, and to absorb the experience firsthand where the education of our Jodo Shinshu teachings are so actively being taught.

The workshop was informative and filled with information as we got to know one another more intimately through our conversations over meals.

But the primary value I got out of the weekend was seeing how hard our BCA leadership

and staff works to serve us all. Not only in an executive manner, but by rolling up their sleeves and providing us with basic needs for our stay.

Rev. Michael Endo cooked a delicious dinner. Bishop Rev. Harada cooked our last lunch. Judy Kono was always doing kitchen duty in preparing and cleaning. And all of

the BCA staff (BCA Administrator Gayle Noguchi, Assistant Facilities Manager Pam Matsuoka, Administrative Assistant Angela Bartolacci, Facilities Manager Bob Matsuda, and CBE Youth Coordinator Koichi Mizushima) provided us with other basic

needs that made our stay as comfortable as being "home."

I will always have fond memories of my weekend at the JSC. The Dana of meeting with fellow temple leaders; sharing the Dharma; and simply being together with fellow leaders with a common goal, energized me and helped me more fully realize and understand why I am a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist.

I would encourage all of you to make every effort to visit our JSC, just to feel the richness of the facility, to see how the generosity of our Sangha has made it all possible, and to absorb the experience firsthand where the education of our Jodo Shinshu teachings are so actively being taught.

You should all, at some point, experience a visit to our Jodo Shinshu "home." Namu Amida Butsu.

Gordon Ah Tye is past president of the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Church.



50+ Years in the Dance Circle: Fumiye Nancy Shibata of LA, OC

Editor's note: "50+ Years in the Dance Circle" will pay tribute to the extraordinary dance instructors who taught Bon Odori at BCA temples for 50 or more years. The series continues with a tribute to Fumiye Nancy Shibata.

By Dr. Wynn Kiyama
Oregon Buddhist Temple

Fumiye Nancy Shibata studied with Mitsusa Bando, established the tradition of coordinating dances in the BCA Southern District, and taught Bon Odori in Los Angeles and Orange County for approximately 60 years.

Nisei couple Kango and Yoshiye Naito ran a hotel on M Street in Sacramento's Japantown and their only child, Fumiye Nancy Naito, was born in 1934. Beginning at the age of 5, Nancy studied Japanese classical dance with Shizuko Inbe and Misa Bando, who had recently completed her dance training in Japan.

During World War II, Nancy and her family were incarcerated at the Tule Lake concentration camp, and there she was reunited with Misa Bando and resumed her dance lessons. Nancy was paired with another young girl, Yumi Funakoshi, in the dance, "Kira



Fumiye Nancy Shibata is shown with her grandchildren at Orange County Buddhist Church's Obon in 2010. Shown, from left, are: Fumiye Nancy Shibata, Nathan Shibata, Rachel Wong, Kayla Shibata, Lauren Wong, and Scott Wong. (Courtesy of Fumiye Nancy Shibata)

no Nikichi," and after numerous performances, the two became known throughout Tule Lake as "Fumi and Yumi."

Nancy and her family moved to Los Angeles after the war, and in yet another coincidence, rediscovered Misa (Mitsusa) Bando. Nancy continued her lessons and earned her professional dance name, Misaye Bando, during

a whirlwind summer trip to Japan in 1958.

Nancy attended services at the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in the early 1950s and was recruited by Dorothy Takata Lord to help teach Bon Odori.

In the mid-1950s, she and other instructors were escorted by Rev. Masami Nakagaki to the Orange County

Buddhist Church to assist the local teachers. By the late 1950s, she became the lead Bon Odori instructor in Los Angeles and regularly visited Bunkado in Little Tokyo to peruse the latest Bon Odori records.

She taught older dances such as "Hinomoto Ondo," "Kagoshima Ohara Bushi," "Sakura Ondo," and "Tokyo Ondo," and choreographed newer dances like "Manmaru Ondo," "Shinran Odori," and "Tsurukame Ondo."

During this time, Nancy called a meeting of all the Bon Odori teachers affiliated with the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and its branch temples. News of this meeting spread, and at the appointed date, representatives from across the BCA Southern District were in attendance. The teachers convened in the basement of the Los Angeles temple, collectively decided on a shared repertoire of eight to 10 dances, and taught those dances to their respective temples. In this way, dancers were encouraged to attend different Obon festivals throughout the summer. This practice proved extremely popular and continues to the present day.

Nancy and Alvin "Al" Shibata were married in 1962, moved to Orange County in

1965, and had four children — Bruce, Craig, Nanelle, and Noreene. Nancy became the lead instructor at the Orange County Buddhist Church in 1967, taught a Bon Odori class for men in the 1970s to encourage their participation, and ran her own classical dance studio.

During Bon Odori practices, Nancy would explain the meaning of the dances and patiently break down each phrase into manageable steps and movements.

At the Orange County Obon, you would find Nancy volunteering in the boutique booth, running off to help people dress in their yukata, and dancing joyfully in the inner circle. Nancy retired from teaching Bon Odori in 2015.

To view a full list of 50+ teachers, follow the link: www.bit.ly/fiftyplusyears. If you have an additional dance instructor for the BCA Music Committee to consider, please email Wynn at wynnkiyama@gmail.com.

Wynn Kiyama teaches at Portland State University and is a member of the Oregon Buddhist Temple and the BCA Music Committee. He is currently working on a history of Bon Odori in the continental United States.

Two New Collaborative Gatha Videos Created for NCM

By Kemi Nakabayashi

Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple
BCA Music Committee Chairperson

The Coast District Planning Committee for this year's BCA National Council Meeting envisioned including music offerings for the virtual Eitaikyo service held on Feb. 26.

After Sambujo and Sanbutsuge, San Jose Taiko presented "Ei Ja Nai Ka" as a tribute in memory of the late Rev. Hiroshi Abiko, who was a founding member of taiko in San Jose during his first ministerial assignment at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin.

PJ Hirabayashi composed "Ei Ja Nai Ka" and was in-



The BCA's Eitaikyo service on Feb. 26 featured several musical performances, including a new song called "Golden," performed by, from left, Rev. Harry Bridge on bass guitar, and Ko-Ha (Miharu Okamura and Miko Shudo). (Courtesy of Jon Kawamoto)

spired to name the song after long and deep conversations with Rev. Abiko about its

meaning and significance to taiko. The piece has evolved to become a Bon Odori dance.

June Kuramoto and Kimo Cornwell of the legendary band Hiroshima followed with "Heritage" on koto and electric keyboard.

After San Jose Betsuin Rinban Rev. Gerald Sakamoto's Dharma message, Ko-Ha (Miharu Okamura and Miko Shudo) presented a new composition "Golden," performed with Buddhist Church of Oakland Resident Minister Rev. Harry Bridge on bass guitar.

As chairperson of the BCA Music Committee, however, I wish to communicate appreciation for the request for collaborative gatha videos for the BCA National Council

Meeting opening service and Eitaikyo service.

The BCA Service Music Subcommittee convened on Jan. 4 with short notice to discuss how we could record and produce two new gatha videos representing all eight districts of the BCA. How grateful and proud I am that the team of many contributors rose to the occasion! Some vocalists and instrumentalists had already learned during the pandemic to record and transmit tracks for collaborative recordings. Others were willing to learn.

"We Are One," a Northwest District favorite gatha composed by Donna Sasaki of Tacoma Buddhist Temple, was chosen as an upbeat opening service musical offering,

in part because the Ekoji Buddhist Temple Sangha and Ekoji's former Resident Minister Rev. Nariaki Hayashi, now at Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple, were also familiar with it.

Others agreed to learn the gatha melody or the new harmony part. The four-part harmony arrangement of "Ondokusan II" by the late Yumiko Hojo was proposed for the Eitaikyo service. In addition to the archived virtual Eitaikyo service on the BCA YouTube channel, the gatha video of "Ondokusan II" has been posted along with "We Are One" on the BCA Music Committee YouTube channel at: www.youtube.com/@buddhistchurchesofamericam9267

Elaine Jones from the San Jose Betsuin accepted the challenge and accomplished the audio mixing of both gathas. Alex Sakamoto (Seattle Betsuin) with Clarynne Blanchard (Tri-State/Denver)



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know Donna Sasaki composed "We Are One" in 2006, and that it was first published in the Tacoma Buddhist Temple "Dharma School Service Book"?

The new collaborative gatha video of "We Are One," produced by the BCA Music Committee, is featured on the BCA Music webpage, <https://www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/music> — and can also be found on the BCA Music YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/@buddhistchurchesofamericam9267>

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Rev. Tsuchiya

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I would like to tell you about one person who was my true teacher who had a significant influence on my path, and that was my mother.

My mother was a loving mother and wife, who unselfishly took care of our family. But she also suffered a great deal in her life. She and her family survived the internment camps of World War II along with so many others. As a result, their family lost everything they owned.

My Mother's Sadness

But what I think contributed most to my mother's sadness was the death of her daughter — my sister — to cancer when my sister was 26. This deeply affected and changed the lives of our entire family. As many of you know, my sister's husband was a young attorney named David Matsumoto. His life direction certainly changed from this experience.

I now have a son who is the same age as my sister when she died and I understand more deeply the impact this had on my parents. When I reflect back, I see how the compassionate working of Amida Buddha was a guiding light in my mother's life. Through her, I have come to realize that the Dharma was being taught to me every day.

It would be natural for a parent to look for blame or to deliberate unanswerable questions after the death of one's child. Although the passing of time helped ease her

grief, her grief did not fully go away. She began to do better because her life grew richer. My mother found seeds of wisdom through her sadness, pain and loss.

If we can come to understand that we are different as the result of our experiences and what that is for each of us, we can learn to continue our changed life with fullness and meaning. She began to let go and entrust in Amida Buddha.

in her later years as she developed Alzheimer's disease. Her cognitive decline affected her memory, but did not seem to affect her Buddhist understanding.

However, I wondered if Alzheimer's disease would change her attachment to her ego-self. I wondered if it would affect her ability to allow for the working of Amida Buddha into her life.

I watched as she interacted

a different lens of understanding as we are stripped down to a basic, yet deeper understanding of our life. Through my mother, I began to understand what it meant to live a life of Namo Amida Butsu. Shinran Shonin quotes from Shandao when he states, "Now, encountering a true teacher, I have been able to hear the Name that embodies Amida's Primal Vow."

When I think about my

Nembutsu path. In reflecting on my journey, I have been walking with and carried by countless others. Without them, I would not be where I am.

We tend to think of our path as a means to an end — to get to a destination. That is not what the Nembutsu path is. The path of the Nembutsu is the journey and the journey is the destination. It does not mean that we don't come across difficulties. When we look back, we can see more clearly the things that we have received, then our hearts are filled with gratitude. That is our life of Namo Amida Butsu.

When we say Namo Amida Butsu, we hear the calling voice of the Buddha. It is a path that is always there for us even if we don't see it.

With the sadness of my mother's death, I now see that the tears I shed were the cleansing of my eyes to see more clearly. I have been able to hear the name through the Buddha activity embodied by my mother. This has allowed me to encounter Amida Buddha and the teachings of Shinran Shonin through her.

In closing, I would like to again read the words of Shinran Shonin from the Jodo Wasan. Please join me in gassho,

It is difficult to meet true teachers

And difficult for them to instruct.

It is difficult to hear the teaching well,

And more difficult still to accept it.

Namo Amida Butsu

With the sadness of my mother's death, I now see that the tears I shed were the cleansing of my eyes to see more clearly. I have been able to hear the name through the Buddha activity embodied by my mother. This has allowed me to encounter Amida Buddha and the teachings of Shinran Shonin through her.

With the outpouring of support after my sister's death that continued throughout my mother's life, she became aware of being supported by something even greater. She understood the compassionate activity of the Buddha as she still lived her life with kindness and humility.

When we open our heart to the working of Amida, we can be led out of darkness and into light. In our daily lives, we often fail to recognize these moments of awakening. However, simple acts of kindness remind us there is a light in the darkness and there is always hope for transformation and change. We simply need to open our eyes to see it. The Nembutsu was alive within her heart and mind.

I came to understand her sense of the Dharma better

with the staff and fellow residents in her care facility and also observed their reaction to her. After her death at the age of 92, caregivers and family members of other residents reached out to express their appreciation for the gratitude my mother extended to each of them. I understood then that the Nembutsu, Amida Buddha's presence, was in her kind smile, her gentle reactions, and her profound gratitude even with her cognitive decline.

On Nembutsu Path

We often intellectualize our understanding of hearing the name and shinjin, but through my mother, I realized that it is not directly correlated with cognitive ability.

When living with the reality of Alzheimer's disease, we cannot help but develop

family's history and the causes and conditions our path has taken us, it certainly has not always been a smooth and unencumbered path. But as Shinran is quoted as saying in the "Tannisho," the Nembutsu is the single path free of hindrance. If we think of the Nembutsu like a stream, there may be pebbles or rocks in the way. But the stream always finds a path. It does not push the obstructions out of the way, but it works its way beyond them. Being part of the whole, we are carried through by the flow of the stream itself, by the flow of others. When we say Namo Amida Butsu, we hear the calling voice of the Buddha. It is a path that is always there for us even if we don't see it.

As I look back, I now realize I have always been on the

Gatha Videos

Continued from Page 7

produced the video of "We Are One." Paul Endo (San Jose Betsuin) with Clarynne Blanchard produced the video of "Ondokusan II."

In gassho with appreciation also to all the recording artists:

"We Are One"

Singers

Clarynne Blanchard, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple
Audrey Charness, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple
Jackie Davenport, Vista Buddhist Temple
Paul Endo, San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin
Alice Fukushima, Palo Alto Buddhist Temple
Tony Hale, Berkeley Buddhist Temple
Rev. Nariaki Hayashi, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple
Allan Hikoyeda, San Jose

Buddhist Church Betsuin
Nancy Hikoyeda, San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin
Sue Ann Kashiwagi, Buddhist Church of Sacramento
Julie Kawaye, Buddhist Church of Sacramento
Irene Mano, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple
Merv Maruyama, Buddhist Church of Sacramento
Rene Maruyama, Orange County Buddhist Church
Paul Mori, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple
Karen Mukai, Buddhist Church of Fowler
Rod Nishikawa, Buddhist Church of Sacramento
Pilar Uelmen, Ekoji Buddhist Temple
Dennis Yamashita, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple
Richard Yoshida, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple

Piano

Donna Sasaki, Tacoma Buddhist Temple

Flute

Annette Inouye, Vista Bud-

dhist Temple

Guitar

Rev. Nariaki Hayashi, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple

Bass Guitar

Rev. Harry Bridge, Buddhist Church of Oakland

"Ondokusan II"

Singers

Clarynne Blanchard, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple
Audrey Charness, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple
Jackie Davenport, Vista Buddhist Temple
Rev. Michael Endo, Buddhist Church of Oakland
Paul Endo, San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin
Alice Fukushima, Palo Alto Buddhist Temple
Tony Hale, Berkeley Buddhist Temple
Rev. Nariaki Hayashi, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple

Allan Hikoyeda, San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin
Nancy Hikoyeda, San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin
Sue Ann Kashiwagi, Buddhist Church of Sacramento
Julie Kawaye, Buddhist Church of Sacramento
Elaine Marume, Vista Buddhist Temple
Merv Maruyama, Buddhist Church of Sacramento
Paul Mori, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple
Karen Mukai, Buddhist Church of Fowler
Rod Nishikawa, Buddhist Church of Sacramento
Naomi Takemura, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple
Pilar Uelmen, Ekoji Buddhist Temple
Dennis Yamashita, Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple
Richard Yoshida, Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple
Michael Yoshihara, San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin
Piano
Elaine Jones, San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin

Giseikai

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the closing performance of "Peace on Your Wings," a musical to honor Sadako Sasaki in memory of the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This troupe plans a tour to Los Angeles and Hiroshima later this year.

This trip to the Giseikai expanded our Sangha family. We renewed friendships with BCA members who now reside in Hawaii, met those whom we had only encountered in a Zoom square and met a plethora of wonderful new Ohana.

Though our challenges may seem insurmountable at times, by working together within the BCA, across the ocean with the HHMH, or north with our Canadian Kyodan friends, nothing is impossible if we just keep that "Aloha Spirit" close to our hearts.



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New Members

Continued from Page 1

Each delegate received a handout of ways to attract new members and a sample information sheet to present to every visitor to our temples.

Hopefully, this information can be used as a guide to evaluate the conditions at each temple to see what attracts or detracts visitors from returning to see if temple participation may be something beneficial to the visitor. It would be most effective for temples to form a committee just for the purpose of evaluating present conditions and instituting changes that make it more inviting for new members.

One wonders how many temples are actually using materials generated by BCA, such as the presentation last year by Vista Buddhist Temple at the 2022 NCM. The Wheel of Dharma has published several articles: "Vista Is Singled Out for Its Membership Growth," February 2022; "Town Hall Held on 'Messaging and Membership,'" April 2022; "BCA Town Hall Presents Variety of Ways to Grow Membership," May 2022; and "Town Hall Focus: Buddhist Education," June 2022. We can determine our future by making changes that bring positive results.

Our situation may be made more vivid by this analogy. If we were a retail store with our business going downhill, we might wonder why. Poor ads and signage might not let shoppers know what we sell. Once inside, shoppers would not know how to find what might help them. Current, popular products are not available. Information about the store's history would not help if other signs and labels are confusing. Store employees were not knowledgeable about their products. Regular customers would know where different products are placed, but new shoppers would be lost. Would you return to this store?

BCA temples differ in size, locations, and sanghas. Some may be doing well. Others not so well. By focusing on these six areas of concern, any temple will find a shift in attitude. The basic points of this approach are to share what our present



Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi gives a Zoom presentation on how the BCA can attract new members at the National Council Meeting on Feb. 25. (Courtesy of Jon Kawamoto)

members enjoy about participating in our Sangha.

It is more appealing to hear the benefits of the temple, rather than an explanation of the doctrine. It is difficult to relate 13th-century mythology to a 21st-century problem. By relating the benefits of Shin, the doctrine becomes valued.

We have identified five benefits of Shin that should interest new seekers:

- Gratitude as a familiar way for ordinary people to realize the uniqueness of receiving as a practice. Voicing "thank you" for ordinary things leads to a life of gratitude that leads to a spiritual awakening.
- Belonging to a temple or Shin community is to have a suitable place to practice with fellow travelers. Shin values and practices differ from the usual American, religious thought.

- A definition of self that is practical and leads to a spiritual component.

- Service to others as a fundamental value in an awakened life.

- Our connection to our spiritual nature as a balanced effort to counter our ego-centric nature. Our spiritual nature maintains our connection to all those in the past, present, and future.

More details of these benefits are offered in a CBE seminar presented on March 11. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hieqrZ2v-jc>)

There are six areas of temple activity that can be enhanced to appeal to new and former members. Many of our adult children who have gone through

Dharma School and YBA are prime candidates to become new members. We should ask them why they were dissuaded from our temples and what we might do to correct that.

If all six areas are enhanced, the results will be increased not by a factor of six, but exponentially by 36. Even if the new member numbers are not as expected, the attitude of the present membership will be positively improved. By recognizing the benefits, we naturally feel better.

In this 21st century, our website is the main source that will attract new seekers. The BCA can help with the design. Rather than have educational material on doctrine or the history of Shin, have information on how one may attend a service. The Palo Alto Buddhist Temple (<https://www.pabt.org/>) and Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC) (<https://www.orangecountybuddhist.org/>) are good examples of inviting websites.

At all services and activities, all members should greet new faces with "Welcome. My name is _____. What is your name?" It is much more effective to have all members as greeters, instead of designated greeters, as that encourages other members to ignore new faces.

We should provide each new visitor with a simple pamphlet that promotes the temple. A sample pamphlet was given to each National Council delegate. We should inform the visitor of our benefits at their first visit when their interest in

FYI

To view Rev. Dr. Akahoshi's March 11 seminar on "Benefits of Living a Shin Buddhist Life," go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=hieqrZ2v-jc

Buddhism is at the highest. It is important to get the name and email of the visitor in order to invite them to future events.

We want to make it easy for the visitor to return to receive more information about our Shin temple. This pamphlet of activities should be kept current by printing it monthly. Also, it would be helpful to have a sheet explaining rituals in a way that relates to our current concerns, not some traditional history.

We should be aware that people come to hear how the doctrine helps them. Using familiar terms to describe traditional terms is helpful. Does the Dharma talk help the listener realize the benefits of the Shin Dharma? If the Dharma talk is more inspirational than informative, it will touch the heart and encourage the seeker to return to learn more.

We should be aware that services are not just to hear about doctrine, but to experience it. That means that we are building relationships with each other. An informal hospitality time after the service is best with tables, chairs, snacks, and drinks. Visitors should be invited, personally. The speaker also has a chance to clarify her/his talk and answer questions.

Temples often have other groups that use temple facilities

or are affiliated. Membership may or may not be required. Members of these groups should be invited to become temple members. New groups, such as EcoSangha, crafts, ukulele, dana or WellCare groups could be formed to accommodate the interests of new members. A recurring introductory class would be helpful.

Most temples have popular community fund-raising events (bazaars, Obon). It is a great time to have short, introductory talks in the Hondo. The talks should emphasize the contemporary benefits of Shin and not be an explanation of foreign, traditional terms, which only presents Shin as an outdated, historical religion. Collect the names and emails of those who attend. Send email invitations to these people to attend a more informative introductory talk a few weeks after the community event. Provide food, drinks, and social time.

Become better known in the community by having minister's assistants and leaders participate in community events, such as LGBTQ Pride week, interfaith events, and civic events. The temple may use their property to host some events.

The five benefits of Shin and the six areas of temple activity are listed on a handout given to each delegate at the recent NCM, along with a sample welcome pamphlet. Temples may use this as a guide and add or modify the suggestions. It will take some time and effort to implement the many changes.

We suggest a good method to check the effectiveness of our efforts. Each month, have a former Dharma School or YBA adult attend a service. Have them report whether they might become interested in joining the temple. Our potential pool of new members come from outside the Nikkei community and also from those who grew up and left the temple. Their assessment is a clear indication of why our temple conditions dissuade or appeal to others.

It is up to us whether the legacy of the Issei and Nisei continue to provide practical and spiritual support to those in the future. Share the reason you are an active member of a Sangha.

BCA Vision

Continued from Page 1

new committee. (See "New Vision, Strategic Plan Panel Is Unveiled," January 2023, Wheel of Dharma)

The next steps, he said, will be forming the committee's membership and defining the committee's charter. Arima said he's already been contacted by several Sangha members who are interested in serving on the committee.

The initial draft of the charter will be completed by mid-

March, he said, after which it will be sent to district councils, affiliate organizations, the ministers association, and "every organization that is part of or even tangentially part of BCA."

Based on the timeline, the target is to have a mid-April completion of the charter and the roster of the new committee finished by early May, Arima said.

He said he also wants to do a "visioning exercise," which he defined as "a process to get all BCA stakeholders' shared values." To that end,

he's contacted some nonprofit evaluation service providers and independent contractors engaged in this line of work.

"I'm defining a scope of work of holding virtual workshops so that we can get everybody in BCA from Eastern District, Mountain States (District) ... everyone we need to get the input from," he said. "That way, we can utilize these values through this visioning exercise and then take that data, analyze it, and come up with a proposed vision statement for the BCA."

"Once we do that, then we

really have the foundation to go forward with planning, for the long term," he said.

Arima said the goal is to have the proposal for the visioning exercise put forth by the June National Board meeting.

The two main purposes of the committee are: updating and maintaining the shared vision of BCA; and developing and maintaining three-, five-, and 10-year strategic plans for the BCA.

He said the committee's work will apply to be paid through an allocation from the

Dharma Forward campaign.

BCA Treasurer Jeffery Matsuoka praised Arima's work on the committee and said having a long-range plan would benefit the BCA's budget process.

"Right now, we sort of go year by year, and just try to keep the lights on, so to speak," Matsuoka said. "But it would be really great if our budget processes would be guided by more of a long-term strategic vision. That would really help us as far as how best to use monies to get the maximum value for long-term growth and sustainability."



A crowd estimated at 300 people from the BCA's nine Bay District temples attends a special Bay District service on March 12 at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple. The joint celebration service was held in honor of the 850th birthday of Shinran Shonin and the 800th anniversary of Jodo Shinshu teaching. (Courtesy of Jon Kawamoto)

Bay District

Continued from Page 1

The joint celebration also was a success for the BCA's Dharma Forward campaign, which received the donations to the event as well as the Osaisen.

BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada served as the officiant, and after the Kansho, the ministers entered the Hondo with court music performed by the Berkeley Buddhist Temple's Gagaku group.

Aside from Rev. Harada, the Bay District ministers in the procession were: Rev. Henry Adams (San Mateo and San Francisco); Rev. Harry Bridge (Oakland); Rev. Dennis Fujimoto (Alameda and Enmanji); Rev. Dean Koyama (Palo Alto); Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara (Berkeley and Marin); and Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji (Southern Alameda County).

With Revs. Koyama and Miyaji leading the chanting of the "San Bu Jo" — the chant inviting the Buddha to enter the Hondo — the Sangha scattered paper flower petals in the air with every chant of "San."

Freddie the Frog

And Rev. Harada's Dharma message — aimed at the Dharma School students — took a decidedly lighthearted tone with his friend, Freddie the Frog, which led to good-natured laughs and smiles from the audience.

Freddie told the crowd he liked cooking "gourmet pizza" like "sashimi — just raw pizza," but his "very favorite is natto — slimy Japanese beans that look like boogers."

Rev. Harada said: "That's one way to describe natto."

He told Freddie it was a special occasion — Shinran Shonin's 850th birthday — and Freddie replied, "850th? Wow. How old are you?"

Rev. Harada said: "I'll be



Rev. Dean Koyama, center, and Rev. Harry Bridge, right, share a laugh in reaction to a comment by Rev. Dennis Fujimoto, left. The ministers shared how they came to encounter Shin Buddhism and how they appreciate it as part of the English discussion after the service. (Courtesy of Hitomi Silver)

70 this year."

Freddie: "So, if I do the math, you only have 780 more years to go."

Rev. Harada taught Freddie how to say the Nembutsu — Namu Amida Butsu.

Freddie: "Now that I can say it, what does it mean?"

Rev. Harada: "That is a good question. Well, Freddie, the best answer is, 'Only you can find yourself.'"

Freddie: "Are you saying you don't know the answer to what it means?"

Rev. Harada: "No, I'm not necessarily saying that, but that's a question for each of us. Everyone of us, as a Nembutsu follower, we have to keep asking ourselves, 'What does Namu Amida Butsu mean to me?' And in the course of your lifetime, you'll have deeper and deeper meanings of it."

Freddie: "Does it mean like, 'Ribbit, ribbit, ribbit?'"

Rev. Harada: "I don't think it's the same as 'Ribbit,' but people who follow the path of the Nembutsu can become awakened, become Buddha through this path."

Freddie: "OK, I'll keep trying to say it."

Rev. Harada: "Basically, let me give you this answer, Namu Amida Butsu means 'Thank you.'"

Freddie: "Thank you? That's pretty simple."

Rev. Harada: "Think of it as meaning 'Thank you.'"

Freddie: "'Thank you' to who?"

Rev. Harada: "'Thank you to my parents.' 'Thank you to my teachers.' 'Thank you to the living beings that sustain my life.' 'The earth, the air, the water.' Everything that nurtures and sustains my life. We can say 'Thank you' through Namu Amida Butsu."

Freddie: "Oh, I think I can understand that."

Rev. Harada: "That's a good way to start. You'll continue to say it, hear it, and deepen your own appreciation of Namu Amida Butsu."

Dharma Gatherings

Following the service, the audience members split up into various Dharma gatherings: Dharma School students met at the classrooms; Jr. YBA students went to the temple's mini chapel; English discussion was held in the Hondo; and Japanese discussion was in the Issei Hall.

The English discussion speakers were Rev. Dennis Fujimoto, Rev. Dean Koyama, and Rev. Harry Bridge, who shared how they came to encounter Shin Buddhism and how they appreciate it. The Japanese section speakers were Rev. Henry Adams, Rev.

FYI

Donations will be gratefully accepted online or by check payable to BCAEF (with BD 850/800 in the memo). Proceeds will go the BCA Dharma Forward campaign.

To donate, go to: www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/_files/ugd/458b11_055c6df7bd844530a570cdd1a7e50cca.pdf or <https://bca.kindful.com/>

To view the Bay District's joint celebration service and the subsequent English language panel discussion, go to the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple website at: www.pabt.org/videos-1

Kiyonobu Kuwahara, and Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji.

After the Dharma discussions, the attendees reconvened for a delicious bento lunch in the temple gym next to the Hondo.

During lunch, the festivities continued with a donation drive that netted nearly \$2,000 via a "Jan Ken Po" challenge. A representative from each of the nine temples and Rev. Harada had five minutes to collect as much cash from attendees in the gym.

Each of the representatives and Rev. Harada were paired up for a Jan Ken Po challenge, with the winners taking the money. The challenge went on until there was only one winner left with a handful of cash. Minister Assistant Rev. Keisuke Lee-Miyaki won \$1,855 for the Dharma Forward campaign on behalf of the Buddhist Church of San Francisco.

The idea of holding a Bay District joint celebration came from a Bay District minister, and the Bay District Ministers Association played an integral role in organizing, coordinating, and implementing various facets of the service.

Ministers' Key Role

The ministers took care of all the details for the service, including developing and printing the program, advertising, and covering the orei to the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple and to those individuals who were asked to participate

such as the Berkeley Buddhist Temple Gagaku group, the pianists, and others.

And it was the Bay District ministers who determined that the donations would go toward the Dharma Forward campaign.

The Bay District ministers also invited the former Bay District ministers, their spouses and widows who retired in the Bay Area. Among the invited guests were BCA Ministers Emeriti Revs. Eijun Kujo, Zuikei Taniguchi, LaVerne Sasaki, and Kodo Umezu. Mrs. Kayoko Fujimoto and Mrs. Misaye Abiko also were in attendance.

A heartfelt appreciation of gratitude go to all of the Bay District temples and organizations who contributed to the success of the joint celebration: Buddhist Temple of Alameda; Berkeley Buddhist Temple; Enmanji Buddhist Temple; Buddhist Temple of Marin; Buddhist Church of Oakland; Palo Alto Buddhist Temple; Buddhist Church of San Francisco; San Mateo Buddhist Temple; Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church; Bay District Jr. YBA; Bay District Dharma School Teacher's League; Bay District Buddhist Womens' League; and the BCA Bay District Council.

A special note of thanks goes to Palo Alto Buddhist Temple for hosting the wonderful event and for the temple's warm hospitality in welcoming all the Bay District Sangha members.

今月の法話

「手を合わせる日々」の生活を



Rev. Kaz Nakata

中加教区開教師 中田 和朗

「がつしょう なもあみだぶつ いただきます」三人娘のいる我が家では、毎日、夕食の前に全員で手を合わせ、お念仏を称える習慣があります。朝昼はそれぞれ別々の時間に登校し、なかなか一緒に手を合わせる機会がありませんので、一日一回でも一緒になもあみだぶつと称えることで、わたしたちは念仏者なのだ娘たちを感じてもらえるといいなと思っています。レストランなどで家族と外食した時も、「がつしょう なもあみだぶつ いただきます」と手を合わせお念仏を称えてからお食事をいただきますので、ときどき周りの他のお客さんが振り返ることもあります。アメリカは一般的にキリスト教国だといわれますが、一般のアメリカ人の方で、食事前のお祈りをしてるのをレストランなどでほとんど見たことがありません。以前宗教者会議の昼食会に参加した時に、同席したテーブルの牧師さんや神父さんが誰もお祈りをせずに食べ物を口に運んでいたのを見て、さもありませんか、と感じたことがあります。わたしもときどき、お寺のみなさんから、「お寺以外の場所で念仏するのですか？ 僧侶だからといって毎日しませんよね？」と聞かれることがあります。そのときは、「お寺で称える念仏より、日々の生活の中で称える念仏のほうが多いです。ただ、数を競っているわけではないので、多い少ないは気にしないでいいですよ」とお答えしています。みなさまはいかがでしょう？

わたし自身中加教区に赴任してまだ四年目なので、ご法事の後の食事会（おとぎ）には遺族や参列者との親睦を深めるためにできるだけ参加するようにしています。最近ではどこから出回っているのかわからないのですが、『中田先生が食事会に参加される時、かならず大きな声で合掌念仏される』と言われていて、食事会に参加すると、みなソワソワしながら、「いつかいつか」などと箸を取らずに待っていたら、わたしが称えた瞬間「いただきます！」とそれぞれのテーブルから大きな声

で念仏が称えられます。少し間を置いてわたしが「Let's eat」と参加者に呼びかけますと、みなさんが待つていましたとばかりに笑い声をあげます。口伝鈔という書物の中の逸話に、御開山親鸞聖人はお酒を勧められ、笑うほど遺族をなぐさめて帰らなさいと言われたそうです。わたしはおとぎの席で酒を飲みながら誰かを笑わせるほどの大人物ではないので、食前の言葉で少しでも誰かの心が軽くなれば、と思います。こうして少しずつでも手を合わせるということを日々の生活の中で感じる方が増えればいいなと願っています。

ほかにも日々の生活の中で手を合わせる動機付けとなるもの（仏具）があります。それは、お仏壇です。たいていのお寺の倉庫には、遺族から譲り受けたお仏壇が一つや二つあるとおもいます。少しでしたら、日曜学校などで子供たちのお経やお荘厳「しょうこん」（お花やお仏飯を、お内陣やお仏壇に用意すること）の練習という形で、再利用されるでしょう。しかし、わたしが教区開教師として法務をおこなうお寺の一つ、フレスノ別院の倉庫にはなんと十二ものお仏壇がほりぞかづつた状態で保存されていました。別院理事たちに声をかけ、何とかお仏壇を再利用、再生することができないものかと相談した結果、みんなでお仏壇の大掃除を行うこととなりました。ほつぎ、はたぎ、金箔をお洗濯する洗剤などを用意し、半日ばかりで一センチほど積もったほりぞきを取り除きますと、新品とは見えますが、経年劣化でも味のあるお仏壇としてよみがえりました。掃除を行った週末の日曜法要で、さつそくお仏壇の意義と、いつでも手を合わせることでできる場所としてのお仏壇の重要性についてお話しさせていただきました。



O-butsudan showroom at Fresno Betsuin

うと、前日の土曜日に、一二のお仏壇を別院の多目的ルームに展示し「お仏壇ショールーム」と銘打ちました。これだけ多数のお仏壇を一堂に展示しますと、掃除に参加した理事たちもその壮観さに「お〜」と声を上げました。アメリカひろしといえども、高さ1mを超える大型仏壇をこんなに多数展示しているところはないと思います。日曜の朝、本堂での法要の前に、事前に連絡したわけでもなかったのですが、多目的ルームにたくさん集まっていた、興味津々に並べられたお仏壇を見て回られていました。本堂での法要のあと、お内陣の片づけを済ませ多目的ルームに向かいますと、なんと半分以上のお仏壇がすでに姿を消していました。多目的ルームに併設された台所で婦人会と日曜学校の家族の方たちが軽食を準備されていたのでお話を聞きますと、日曜法要の後、我先にと参加者が入ってこれられ、比較的小さなお仏壇はあつという間に、そして大きなお仏壇は名札を貼るか、トラックをとり家に帰られた家族もおられたそうです。残ったお仏壇をみると、どのお仏壇にも名前の書いた名札が貼られてあり、十二すべてのお仏壇が本来の意味をもって日々を送るべくそれぞれの家族のもとに引き取られていくことになりました。掃除を手伝ってくれた理事たちもわたし自身も、こんなにもお仏壇の需要はあるものかと、正直とても驚きました。残念ながらすでに帰られていたいくつかのお仏壇をお見送りすることができませんでしたが、取り置きされたお仏壇に手を合わせながら「ご縁があつてよかったね」と話しかけました。お仏壇は手を合わせるという動機付けにとっても適した仏具であると思います。特にアメリカでは大きなお仏壇を入手することは困難なことと思います。ありがたいありますが、大きいお仏壇を抱えて帰られる姿には感謝しかありませんでした。みなさんのおうちにお仏壇がありましたら、それは有難いことです。蓮如上人は「本尊は掛け破れ、聖教は読み破れ」と仰られたので、積極的に六字の名号とよばれる南無阿弥陀仏を書かれた紙を配られたそうです。今のようなお仏壇の姿ではありませんが、蓮如上人は日々の生活の中で手を合わせるという念仏者の在り方を積極的に形作つていかれました。

アメリカというキリスト教国で、浄土真宗のみ教えを学び伝えていくことには大変な困難がともないますが、まずは、わたしたち自身、手を合わせる日々の生活を続けていくことがやがて、お念仏の広がりにつながっていくと願っています。みなさまもどうぞ、南無阿弥陀仏のお念仏のみ教えに生かされる日々をお過ごしください。合掌

広田徹然名譽開教師が往生される

広田徹然名譽開教師（94）が3月6日に往生の素懐をとげられた。広田師は、ご尊父、泰然師が開教師としてサンタマリア仏教会に駐在されていた1928年にサンタマリアに出生。1930年に広島県呉市蒲刈の蓮生寺へ家族とともに帰郷された。1949年に龍谷大学を卒業後、1958年に開教師としてオレゴン仏教会に赴任。1960年にセバストポールの園満寺へ転任され、駐在中、マリン仏教会の創立に大きく貢献された。その後、ミッドウエスト仏教会（1963-1965）、アイダホオレゴン仏教会（1965-1972）、ワッソンプル仏教会（1972-1980）に勤められ、1980年からパサデナ仏教会に駐在、1999年に引退された。教団葬が3月25日にパサデナ仏教会で営まれ、多くの有縁の開教師や門信徒が参列した。

今月の一枚

3月4日、サンマテオ仏教会で榎木美波さんの成人式をアダムス・ヘンリー開教師が司式した。美波さんの母優子さんは「娘が仏教の教えを学んで成長してもらいたい」と思い、お寺に行くようになりました。娘のおかげで私も仏法に出遇うことができました。親子ともども、阿弥陀さまや仏教の皆様に子育てをいたされた喜びがたいていです。」



Seijin Shiki at San Mateo Buddhist Temple

法輪

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二〇二三年度教化標語
「念仏道 行けば
わかるさ 一南無阿弥
陀仏をとえれば」

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>



ご縁を喜び、お念仏とともに

親鸞聖人 御誕生
50
立教開宗
800

りません。私たちのサンガは、さまざまな文化的、民族的、社会的地位、性別、性的指向、年齢の人々

れまでに様々な状況で参加が難しかった人、また東部以外から、南部、西海岸、ハワイ等からの参加者も増加した。

総長メッセージ

サンガの一員であること

米国仏教団 総長
原田 マービン



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada

今月も今年のBCAの標語「The Benefits of Following the Shin Buddhist Path」

は「サンガの一員であること」について考えてみましょう。

がることなのです。

オレンジカウンティ仏教会につめていたとき、日曜のサーブスや仏教のクラスに初めて参加された方々に話を聞くと、彼らは、仏教に関する多くの本を読んで、自分自身を「ナイトスタンドブディスト」(ベッドの横にあるナイトスタンドに仏教に関する本を置いていて、という様子からこのように呼びます)「だと思っていたけれども、教を学び求める上で何か欠けていた」と感じていたそうです。

彼らは何年も仏教について読むうちに、サンガの一員になりたいと思うようになったと言います。お寺のメンバーになると、サンガの一員であること、新しい友人ができること、他の人と道を共有することに喜びを感じていました。

これは浄土真宗でサンガの一員であることの大きな利点です。私は禅宗の教えから多く学ぶところがあると思っていますが、禅の修行をされた方々の中には、自分がサンガの一員であることを感じたことがないと言う人もおられます。彼らは禅センターに行つて座禅をしますが、座禅の後はずいぶん家に帰るのだそうです。そういう所では、サンガの一員だという経験が得られたいのかもしれない。禅宗では、サンガを経験するためには、僧院に住み、フルタイムで禅を実践する必要があるように思っています。

浄土真宗では、サンガがすべてだと言えます。私たちは一緒にダルマを聞き、一緒にダルマについてディスカッションをしたり、一緒に「コーヒー」を飲んだり、ポットラックを食べたりします。また、バザーやファンドライザーと一緒に働きます。私たちは互いに励まし合い、協力し合います。新しくサンガの一員になった人たちは、長年のメンバーの知恵と経験から学びます。長年のメンバーは、新しい人たちからの疑問や新鮮さから学ぶことができます。私たちは皆、共に道歩んでいるのであり、優劣はあ

で構成されています。大人たちは、子供たちがダルマを学び、エンジョイしている姿を楽しみます。子供たちは、おじいちゃんやおばあちゃんがと見えるお念仏から教えるの奥深さを学びます。

特別法要は各仏教会の代表によって行われた。シーブルック仏教会による喚鐘にはじまり、中西部仏教会のブラウン氏によるメディテーション、シカゴ仏教会の中井開教使による表白文、クリーブランド仏教会による拝読、ニューヨーク仏教会による三奉請、トロント仏教会の大内開教使の調声による重誓偈がお勧めされた。

2023年東部地区大会、オンラインで開催

2月11日、第78回東部地区大会がオンラインで開催され、百二十名以上が各仏教会から参加した。この大会は、ミシシッピ川よりも東側に位置する北米開教区の寺院、仏教会6ヶ寺と、大谷派のシカゴ仏教会、カナダ開教区よりトロント仏教会、マニトバ仏教会等が参加して毎年開かれている。今回も昨年に引き続き、コロナ感染症対策の影響下、オンラインで行われた。

今年のテーマは「embusuu as Living」『人生と共にある念仏』。ゲストスピーカーにライ開教使補、基調講演にはIBS(仏教大学院)学長、松本デビッド開教使を迎えて行われた。

今回は、コロナ感染対策によるパンデミックが始まってから3回目の大会。生活は一転し、各仏教会での活動も変化した。これまでの門信徒の活動をどのようにして維持し続けるか、そしてこの機会を新しい変化につなげていくための契機とするための対策を各仏教会で検討を重ねるためにどのような活動を行ってきたか、報告をした。あう場としても大事な役割を果たした。パンデミック以前は、毎年東部地区各寺院、交代でホストを務めてきたが、2020年よりオンラインの開催になって以来、こ

法話のあと、ツインシティ仏教会の鬼倉ライ開教使補により日本語で、マニトバ仏教会のモア開教使アシスタントにより英語でご文章が拝読された。アルバーニ法話会のダルマスクールの子どもたちによる元気なGolden chainの拝読によって、特別法要は終了した。

松本デビッド開教使による講演の今回のテーマは、embusuu as Living『人生と共にある念仏』。親鸞聖人をはじめ、先哲方は「南無阿弥陀仏」のお念仏は、阿弥陀如来が私たちを救い遂げ、浄土に往生させるために選び取られた「行」であると示されている。松本開教使は、ご自身の人生経験の中から、辛い苦しい経験からお念仏に出逢い、我が身が阿弥陀さまのお救いのなかに常にあつたことを知らされてきたことを参加者に語られた。2023年の東部地区大会は大成功のうちに終わった。中西部仏教会の土屋トッド教師ミニスターの企画と円滑な運営により、各仏教会代表がそれぞれの役割を務めることができ、100名以上の参加者があり、大変有意義な大会となった。

(記事、ツインシティ仏教会、ブライ鬼倉知永美開教使補)

そして、サンガが真にサンガであるためには、ブッダとダルマが必要です。ブッダの心があり、教えるダルマに耳を傾け、受け取っているからこそ、サンガとなりえるのです。

真宗のサンガに所属することは、この三つの宝とつな