

WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America

1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

VOLUME 38 • ISSUE 3

MARCH 2016

If You See Something, Say Something

By Rev. Patricia Usuki, San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Entrusting the Vow of the Buddha and reciting the Sacred Name, I shall proceed through the journey of life with strength and joy.

Revering the Light of the Buddha, reflecting upon my imperfect self, I shall strive to live a life of gratitude.

Following the Teachings of the Buddha, discerning the Right Path, I shall spread the True Dharma.

Rejoicing in the Compassion of the Buddha, respecting and aiding one another, I shall do my best to work towards the welfare of society.

— Jodo Shinshu Creed

Adherents to the teachings of the Buddha are generally perceived as being guided by such benign tenets as harmony, not-harming, non-discrimination, and compassion. We have only to reflect upon our daily thoughts, words, and deeds to discover how difficult it is to put this into practice consistently, regardless of the sincerity of our intentions. It should not be surprising, then, that through the centuries entire groups of people calling themselves Buddhist have engaged in or condoned acts of aggression, violence, and worse against those who are considered to be different. The incidences are too numerous to recount in this article, but economics, ethnicity, territory, and power resound as root causes. Do greed, aversion, and ignorance sound more familiar?

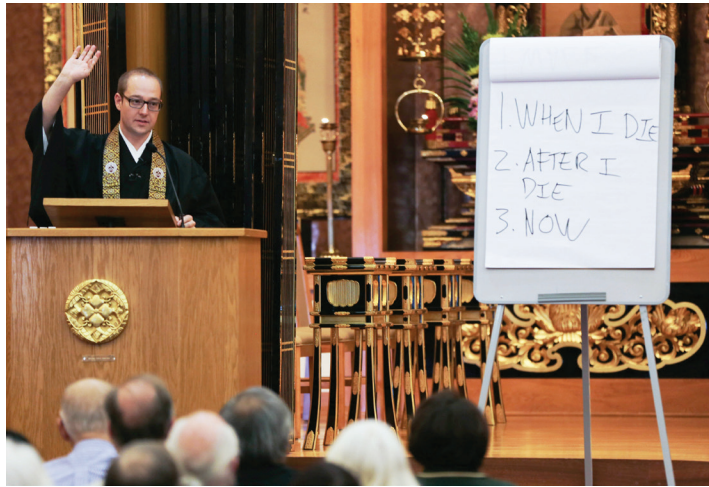
In contemporary times, you may have heard about the oppression of Muslims in Myanmar (also known as Burma), where 90% of the population is said to be Buddhist. A small but vocal faction of monks and nuns, named 969 to represent the supreme traits of the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha), argue that the country and its national religion are in danger of being overrun by Muslims. The latter account for less than 2% of the population, though this is difficult to verify since legislation, encouraged by the 969 movement, has quickly been eroding the rights of these Myanmar-born people. Subjected to extreme violence and hatred, they have been forced to live in concentration camps under inhumane conditions. Many have tried to flee in refugee boats, and many die on the open sea after being driven away from foreign shores such as those of Thailand. This is another largely Buddhist nation which is dealing with its own Muslim "crisis" by militarizing temples and arming soldier-monks in the conflict area. Again, the details of these realities merit an entire study in themselves, but we need to be aware that this is happening and be informed so that we can speak up, not only on behalf of the oppressed, but also in the interests of our teaching.

Why should this matter in a pluralistic country such as this, where freedom of religion is a much-trumpeted right? Because, unfortunately, ignorance is the

Continued on Page 6

Editor's note: Following a Ministers Association discussion on social justice and BCA's role, Rev. Usuki was invited to write an article to encourage broader discussion on this topic.

Over 300 Gather for East Meets West Seminar in LA



The seminar began on Jan. 30 at the Los Angeles Hampa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (left, top; and on page 8) and ended at the Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple (left, bottom) where Rev. Henry Adams presented his English keynote presentation.

Speakers and ministers gathered before the onajin of the Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple. (Seated, left to right) Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara and Rev. Marvin Harada, Co-directors, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Center for Buddhist Education; Rev. Henry Adams, San Mateo Buddhist Temple; Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop, BCA; Bishop Noriaki Ito, Higashi Honganji North America District; Dr. Mark Blum, University of California, Berkeley; Rev. William Briones, Los Angeles Hampa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple; and Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Institute of Buddhist Studies. (Standing, l. to r.) Rev. Gregory Gibbs; Rev. Kenji Akahoshi; Rev. Kory Quon; Rev. Mutsumi Wondra; Rev. Ryoko Osa; Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi; Rev. Peter Hata; Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa; Rev. Jon Turner; and Rev. Toshihisa Enoki.

Please see article on page 4 and more photos on page 8. Photos by Glen Tao.

IBS Milestone: "Making Shinran's Teachings Visible"

The original founding vision and spirit of creating IBS as a world-class educational center is advancing to the next stage, making Shinran's teachings visible. For a person with the kaikyoshi title and experience to assume this leadership position is a true milestone.

And to get to this point, it took years and years of overcoming many challenges to set up the infrastructure. We are very grateful for Dr. Payne's many years of dedication as he passes the baton to the next IBS leader...

-- Rev. Kodo Umezu, President, IBS Board of Trustees & BCA Bishop

2016 marks a milestone in the history of the Institute of Buddhist Studies. Established as a seminary and graduate school in 1966, IBS has provided the educational foundation for scores of students who have gone on to become Jodo Shinshu ministers in the BCA, Hawaii, Canada, South America and Japan. In addition, during the past 50 years, IBS has established itself as a leading institution of Buddhist learning and the foremost center of Shin Buddhist Studies in the English-speaking world.

For nearly one-half of its history, IBS

has been led by its Dean, Dr. Richard K. Payne. With Dr. Payne's guidance, IBS has been able to overcome many challenges as it advanced its educational goals. Now, in 2016, Dr. Payne has decided to retire from the position of dean. As he returns to a focus on teaching and research, IBS has chosen to address this latest challenge by revising its organizational structure and bringing in new persons to expand its educational programs.

On January 8, 2016, the IBS Board of Trustees approved an institutional reorga-

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Reflections of Former BCA Presidents

This article is the third in a year-long series commemorating the Jodo Shinshu Center's Tenth Anniversary.

As we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC), the Planning Committee asked former BCA presidents Jim Usui, Milnes Kurashige, and Gordon Bermant to share their thoughts regarding the early history of the JSC.

Jim was BCA president when the BCA National Council approved the purchase of property and began Campaign BCA: The 21st Century, a major capital fundraising campaign. After his term as president ended, he chaired the BCA Facility Committee that was charged with the purchase and construction of the JSC. Milnes, the late Douglas Iwamoto, and Gordon followed Jim, respectively, as BCA presidents who kept the construction and fundraising moving forward. Douglas Iwamoto, who passed



JSC Groundbreaking Ceremony on May 6, 2005: Past BCA presidents, the late Doug Iwamoto (far right) and Jim Usui (second from left), with Rev. Gerald Sakamoto, past Ministers Association chair (far left), Socho Koshin Ogui (center) and Mayor Tom Bates of Berkeley. Photo by Tom Nishikawa

away on February 23, 2015, served as BCA president from 2004-2005 and will be remembered as an early supporter of

the JSC who worked tirelessly to fulfill the vision. All of the BCA presidents struggled with the debt incurred to establish

the JSC and are grateful for the continued support and generosity of BCA members and friends.

Jim Usui
BCA President (2000-2001)

The Jodo Shinshu Center was first conceived and promoted by a group of BCA ministers and members who felt the need for a central facility that would be developed and utilized by all the ministers and members of the Jodo Shinshu sect in America. The need for a large, pleasant facility that could accommodate large groups of members including youth and adults as well as new ministers from Japan was an urgent priority which needed to be addressed by all.

With the help from BCA headquarters staff head person, Henry Shibata and all of the BCA members, ministers and

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Leaders and the Vow



By Rev. Kodo Umezu
BCA Bishop

I recall that Venerable Daiei Kaneko (1881-1976), an eminent scholar minister of the Higashi Honganji School, once said that people in Japan are very unfortunate because the political leaders of the country do not know the Primal Vow.

When I heard this comment, I was shocked. I did not expect him to talk about political leaders. I see that he had such hope for his country and people and he really cared about the wellness

of everyone. I think his heart and mind went out to the leaders of the world, too. I am sure he was talking about anyone who is in a position that can directly affect other people's lives.

His wish is the wish of the Buddha. In world history, there have been leaders who embody the compassionate heart of the Buddha. Two years ago, I mentioned the present King of Bhutan as one example. In Japanese history, there was Prince Shotoku who wrote the first constitution of Japan based on Buddhist ideals. Another famous world leader was King Ashoka of India. As a matter of fact, the Indian flag has the Wheel of Dharma in the middle. The Wheel design came from the time of King Ashoka. These leaders are still respected and revered by people today.

I feel that Ven. Kaneko's

wish extends to this country today. Jodo Shinshu Buddhists have been here for over one hundred years, making efforts to share the Buddha's Primal Vow with people. I have to ask myself what we can do to make it more accessible to the larger community. I feel that more and more people are looking for the true guiding light. They are waiting to hear the message of the Buddha and of Shinran Shonin.

The teaching of the Buddha is so powerful that it can eradicate our foolishness. Our egos are so massive that we are destroying each other. The Buddha wishes for each and every one of us to live a true and genuine life, not to be fooled by our ignorance. Especially those who are in positions to lead the people need to humbly hear the Vow coming from the world of wisdom and compassion.

I would like to share some passages from Shinran Shonin's writings.

The Vow of compassion is like a sharp sword, for it rends the armor of pride and arrogance.

It is like a keen saw blade, for it fells all the trees of ignorance.

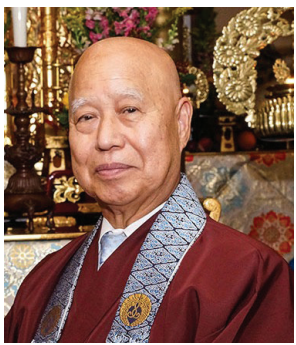
It is like a guiding master, for it informs foolish beings of the essential way of liberation.

It is like the light of the sun, for it breaks through the darkness and ignorance of all foolish beings and gives rise to shinjin in them.

It is like a great fire, for it burns the firewood of all views.

The Primal Vow is extended to all people; regardless of race, gender, color, creed, religion, wealth, etc. During the *O-Higan* season, let us attend the *O-Higan* service and reflect on the Primal Vow coming from the realm of *Higan*, which is the world of wisdom and compassion.

Discovering Temple Treasures



By Rev. Zuikei Taniguchi
Buddhist Temple
of Alameda

I would like to share my joyful heart and appreciation of the Buddha-Dharma through some temple projects we are undertaking as part of the Buddhist Temple of Alameda's Centennial which we will celebrate on September 23-25 of this year, 2016. Through the renovations, we are finding treasures of the history of our *hondo* building.

One of the commemoration projects, which started on February 7, 2015, is the renovation of the main entrance of the temple. Looking at the present design of the main temple entrance, I often wondered when it

was last renovated. The building was built in 1883, 133 years ago. I asked our senior temple members, but nobody knew when the main entrance was rebuilt in its present style.

One of my exciting discoveries was the revealing of the two original main columns within the present pillars at the entrance to the building. Until today, we were looking at big square pillars made of solid wood in front of the entrance doors. When the contractor removed all of the concrete steps, however, I saw that the two original pillars were not solid wood. Perhaps our young *Issei* members did not remove the original supporting pillars. Rather, they just covered them with wood. When the contractor took off one side of the wood covering, the original main entrance column was revealed and found to be in as good shape as when it was first built in 1883. Nobody knew this covered history until today. Overjoyed, I called all of the committee members. Ms. Yumi

Yasuda came right away. We were so happy with this discovery of our temple treasure. I also found two early photographs of the temple in good condition, and I can clearly see the original columns at the main entrance.

Another wonderful discovery was buried electrical wiring for the



two stone lanterns flanking the entrance to our *hondo*. Again, with the passing of over 80 years, nobody knew about the wiring and how it was connected to the stone lanterns. With more digging, we found an old electric conduit which led under the temple

library. Right away, members Mr. Carl Woo and Mr. John McCue checked the wiring, connected new wires and installed new timers and new lights in the stone lanterns.

That night, my wife and I stood in front of the main entrance to the Dharma Hall (*Hondo*). The two stone lanterns

stood beautifully, shining their warm light. After 80 years, the guiding light of the Buddha-Dharma was, again, turned on in the two stone lanterns. Our hearts became full of *arigato* (appreciation) to John and Carl. We offered our humble *gassho* and chanted

Sanbujo. In the darkness of the temple yard, it was as if the shining light from the stone lanterns was saying *omedeto* (congratulations) on reaching our Centennial celebration with our *Issei* pioneers.

This is my *ajiwai*-appreciation of the heart of *Nembutsu* teachings. For our Centennial celebration, one hundred years of buried history was revealed to our present-day Sangha. I feel so grateful for the discovery of these hidden treasures. It is like opening a time capsule. Through these discoveries, I truly sense our *Issei* pioneers' heart and appreciation of the Buddha-Dharma and how they helped to start our temple in Alameda 100 years ago.

I am sure the Dharma Hall of the Buddhist Temple of Alameda is the oldest building in the Buddhist Churches of America. I am truly grateful that we have been able to discover such hidden temple treasures right before my retirement. This is indeed one of the highlights of my 52-year ministry with the BCA.

Visit www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org



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San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

In 1921, Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji (LA Betsuin) began conducting howakai (dharma gatherings) in various locations in the San Fernando Valley (SFV). The SFV Sunday School and Young Buddhist Association were organized in 1932 and met for a time in the San Fernando Japanese Language School (Gakuen). After the war, sangha gatherings resumed at the Gakuen. In 1959, the SFV YBA donated \$6,000 to LA Betsuin towards the purchase of property at the temple's current location. As a result, SFV's original temple building, now the social hall, was dedicated in 1962.

Additional organizations such as the Adult Buddhist Association, Fujinkai, Dharma School Parents, and choir were formed. In 1976, a classroom building was completed, and in 1981, the temple became independent from LA Betsuin. Thanks to the dedication, hard work, and generosity of its members, SFVHBT's beautiful new *hondo* was added and dedicated on October 4, 1992. The sangha continues to evolve and grow to this day.



Wheel of Dharma

(USPS 017-700)

Official Publication of the
Buddhist Churches of America

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Wheel of Dharma (USPS 017-700) is published monthly by Buddhist Churches of America, 1710 Octavia St., San Francisco, CA 94109-4341. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to WHEEL OF DHARMA, 1710 Octavia St., San Francisco, CA 94109-4341. Subscription free to BCA temple members; \$12.00 annual subscription for nonmembers.

Submission Guidelines:

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

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

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Like the
Buddhist
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America





By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA President
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

My term as president of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) comes to an end on March 6, 2016, when Ken Tanimoto is sworn in as the new president at the Eitaikyo Service in Visalia.

I would like to thank the

President's Message

Thank You and Goodbye

members of the BCA National Board and the BCA National Council for their support and assistance in helping guide the BCA. I thank all the members of both organizations for their time and dedication to spreading the Buddha-Dharma.

I would like to especially thank the members of the BCA Executive Committee (Bishop Umezu, Rev. Jerry Hirano, Ken Tanimoto, Charlene Grinolds, Rick Stambul, Susan Bottari, and Jeff Matsuoka) for all the help they gave me over the past two years. We had many

long and fruitful discussions on the issues that concern the BCA.

I thank all the ministers and temple leaders who supported me during the past two years. I regret that I was not able to attend more meetings of the various BCA-affiliated organizations. I also regret not being able to visit more temples. However, Ken Tanimoto has already started attending meetings and visiting temples over the past six months. I know that he will be an excellent president.

Lastly, I would like to thank

all BCA members who have supported our national organization. As a former temple president, I can understand the separation that can exist between our national organization and what happens at the temple level. Bishop Umezu has kept the focus at BCA headquarters on what happens at the temple level. We know that some temples have unique problems that are stressful. It has been breathtaking when our national organization has worked with individual temples and solved our problems together.

Our national organization is only as strong as the dedication that each member brings to each temple. We need to expose more community members to the teachings of our spiritual leaders. How you interact with your community will reflect well on your knowledge and passion about Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Together, we can spread Shinran Shonin's teachings throughout our country.

It has been an honor to work with all of you. Many thanks for your support.



By Rev. Koho Takata
Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji
Buddhist Temple

When I was in Hawaii, I had the opportunity to attend the Junior Young Buddhists Association (Jr. YBA) Federation meeting. I would like to share a very memorable account about hearing the

Buddha-Dharma as reported by an advisor. During an overnight event, the juniors had to place a stone on their pillow. Whenever their head hit the stone, they had to recite, "Namo-Amidabutsu."

This anecdote reminded me of the story of Akao-no-Doshu who lived in my prefecture of Toyama long ago.

Akao-no-Doshu was a follower of Rennyo Shonin, and he had many wounds on his body. He was always hiding them and would not tell others about how he had gotten his wounds. One day, his neighbor secretly went to his home to find out. The neighbor found it strange to see a great deal of firewood in his room. When the time came to sleep, Akao-no-Doshu started to line up the firewood. As he positioned each piece of wood,

he recited the Nembutsu, "Namo-Amidabutsu."

Akao-no-Doshu left 21 teachings. The first teaching was "One's afterlife is a matter of great importance. As long as I am alive, I must always be aware of this." Because of this teaching, he always slept on firewood. He had 48 pieces of firewood because Amida Buddha established 48 vows to bring all beings to the realm of Infinite Light and Life.

Akao-no-Doshu maintained his awareness of the teachings and appreciated the compassionate working of Amida Buddha by sleeping on 48 pieces of firewood. Each morning, when he woke up, he was always filled with great joy and happiness because of his awareness of receiving the Great Compassion of Amida Buddha.

The wounds and pains from sleeping on the firewood was his reminder to express his appreciation to Amida Buddha by saying Namo-Amidabutsu, and of how he was embraced by the Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha.

During the *O-higan* season, the Six Paramitas are often talked about. They were practiced by Dharmakara Bodhisattva in order to become Amida Buddha, the Buddha of Infinite Wisdom and Compassion, to bring all of us from this shore to other shore since we are always filled with blind passions and unable to perfectly accomplish any practices by our own efforts. In Jodo Shinshu, I believe that the practice of the Six Paramitas enables us to be aware of our limitations, rather

than providing a way of liberation from our sufferings. Through this awareness about our true nature, who we are, we become mindful of the intentions of Amida Buddha, carefully listen to the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha, and entrust ourselves in the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life, as demonstrated by Akao-no-Doshu. This appreciation in our daily life is the Jodo Shinshu way of expressing our gratitude and thanksgiving for the wondrous virtues extended to us unconditionally and equally for all.

Let us deeply reflect upon ourselves, realize our imperfections and incapacity through the mirror of the Buddha-Dharma, and appreciate that our foolish selves are constantly sustained by the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life.

JSC 10th: Past Presidents

Continued from Front Page

staff, we began the search for a site that would provide the kind of facility we envisioned.... As luck would have it, the late Doug Iwamoto, rediscovered the building at the Durant site in Berkeley near the University of California campus.... With great help from Amy Hayashida, real estate person, and her husband, Sady Hayashida, architect, we were able to purchase and develop the site as a facility that has met our needs successfully since its opening 10 years ago.

We thank everyone, especially all of you who have supported the facility with your monetary help and your encouraging use of the facility. May the support and universal use by all continue for many years to come.

Milnes Kurashige

BCA President (2002-2003)

The BCA's vision for the JSC is to address the educational needs of its Sangha. The purpose of the Center for Buddhist Education is to augment the study of Shin Buddhism provided by the Institute of Buddhist Studies.... In October 2006 Bishop Kosho Fujikawa, Governor General Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, stated: "In transmitting to contemporary society the teaching of the *Nembutsu* shown by Shinran Shonin, I feel that the stronghold should be the BCA. Therefore, the JSC is an



Groundbreaking Ceremony, 2005: The late Doug Iwamoto and Gordon Bermant (center, left and right); with past president of the Federation of Buddhist Women Association, Sumi Tanabe (far left); and the Venerable Madawala ("Bhante") Seelawimala. Photo at right: Milnes Kurashige, past president. Photo by Tom Nishikawa

extremely important institution and should play a leading role in various activities in the future."

I am amazed at the progress of the JSC in the first 10 years. BCA is reaching out to people of diverse backgrounds and strengthening Jodo Shinshu Buddhism as a major religious tradition in America and the world. In the future, BCA faces more challenges, but also opportunities. With thoughts of gratitude on the accomplishments of our past and present members, let's reaffirm our determination to move ahead and to continue to propagate Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in America.

Gordon Bermant

BCA President (2006-2007)

We celebrate the Jodo Shinshu Center's tenth birthday close to the time that, with good luck, I will celebrate my eightieth birthday. I ask this question: seventy years from now, will BCA be able to honor the

JSC with its own 80-candle cake?

No one can be sure of the answer to that question. But basic principles and clear trends point to some projections of what the future might have in store for the JSC.

One principle is that the characteristic appearances of buildings can become symbols of the institutions occupying them, and of the institutions' purposes. The White House and Capitol Building, the Tower of London, and Notre Dame Cathedral are prominent examples. There is a possible future in which the JSC could come to symbolize aspirations of countless individuals to live in the light of truth about wisdom and compassion in the world, and to share that light with all who wish to be illuminated and warmed by it.

This is a vision for the future of JSC as the embodiment in stone and glass of the virtues main-

tained in the Pure Land teaching, culminating in a Jodo Shinshu that speaks clearly to 21st century citizens around the globe.

Such a joyous vision for the future is not, however, the only possibility. It is also possible that BCA leadership, representing a dwindling membership, would tire of the costs of the building and sell it in order to save money. BCA, IBS, Ryukoku, and the Hongwanji would find other locations to pursue their good work. Coordinated efforts of these partners in Jodo Shinshu would become dispersed and perhaps fragmented. But fearsome debt would have been vanquished.

There are other futures for the JSC that might be envisioned, yet there is a simple truth behind all of them: as BCA goes, so goes JSC. So we need to ask how BCA is going now, and what is its likely future? Of course these are not new questions. But among all of the discussions, no one I know of (including me) has presented a plan to reverse the decline of membership across the span of existing temples.

What would such a plan contain? How can we harness the good intentions and energies of ministers and lay members to take advantage of our strengths and mitigate our shortcomings? How can we develop a sense of urgency and resolve? Facing these questions squarely, it seems to me, is our challenge and our opportunity as we cut the cake to celebrate JSC's tenth birthday.



BCA Archives Accepting Donations

The Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Collection is held at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles, California. The collection, which was transferred to the museum in 1998, spans the entire 20th century (1899-present).

It includes correspondence, financial reports, subject files, photographs, directories, records created by the Office of the Bishop, minister's writings, BCA publications, annual reports, Administrative Office files, Department of Education records, program materials, items from specific districts and temples, records generated by affiliate organizations, audiovisual materials, and ephemera.

If you are interested in donating materials to the collection or have preservation questions concerning any archival items please contact Lauren Zuchowski at collections@janm.org or (213) 830-5615.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

WINTER PACIFIC SEMINAR - 21ST CENTURY

Presented by the Institute of Buddhist Studies,

BCA Center for Buddhist Education & Shinshu Center of America

EAST MEETS WEST

Jodo Shinshu from the Higashi and Nishi Perspectives

Impressions of the “East Meets West” Seminar

By Rev. Peter Hata

In Dr. David Matsumoto’s opening “History of the Split” presentation, we learned that, for political reasons, the Honganji split into *Higashi*/East and *Nishi*/West at the beginning of the 17th century. Now, some four centuries after the split, it seems the “East Meets West” seminar came about largely because many members of both branches wanted to know what, if anything, are the differences. Implicit in the subtitle, “Jodo Shinshu from the Higashi and Nishi Perspectives,” was the assumption that these two perspectives must be different. At the seminar, leading scholars and ministers of both Honganji branches were charged with discussing the “*shinshu*” or “true essence” of Shin Buddhism from the understanding of their respective traditions.



In Dr. Mark Blum’s presentation on behalf of the Higashi tradition, we learned that historically there have been some differences in the interpretation of, for example, doctrines associated with the Pure Land tradition. One example is the doctrine of *Kiho Ittai*, the idea that when one deeply trusts in the Buddha, the Buddha and the believer become one, and which Dr. Blum said has historically had a stronger standing in Nishi than in Higashi (though he later added that Ryojin Soga is one highly regarded Higashi teacher who *did* accept the doctrine of *Kiho Ittai*). In any case, the essence of his focus was on how the challenges of the Meiji era created powerful causes and conditions that in a sense, came to fruition in the person of Rev. Manshi Kiyozawa, who is credited in the Higashi tradition with revitalizing not only the institution, but Shin Buddhism itself. Dr. Blum pointed out that, in contrast to the Edo Period way of expressing Shinshu based on what is known as *shugaku*, or the “correct,” academic interpretations of Shinran’s writings, Kiyozawa instead emphasized *shugi*, which he said refers to an understanding or trust based on personal, subjective experience. Kiyozawa strove to express the dharma in a direct and experiential way and for Kiyozawa, this was the only authentic basis for religious understanding.

Moreover, Dr. Blum clarified that what was perhaps most radical was Kiyozawa’s focus not on the “fulfillment stage”—on Amida as a kind of external savior—but instead on the process or path to attainment, the aspect of enlightenment that is more relatable to we who are still struggling on “this shore.” Kiyozawa’s change of focus was influential, and one example Dr. Blum gave was that his student Ryojin Soga, in his own interpretation of the *Larger Sutra*, focused not on Amida, but instead on Dharmakara, the bodhisattva that perfects his listening practice, ultimately becomes Amida, and who shows us the path to buddhahood.

Then there is Kiyozawa’s tumultuous life. In his life we see the transformative power of impermanence, and that it is especially in encountering the difficulties of life that we can be led to religious experience. As Dr. Blum had said, through these difficulties, “Just like Shinran, Kiyozawa reached the end of logic.” And also like Shinran, that it was at this point that his trust in the dharma was born.

In the afternoon, I also appreciated Rev. Henry Adams’ lecture on behalf of the Nishi tradition. In one memorable story he described the experience of being in the pool with his young children, and that their “blindly” jumping into the swimming pool even though they don’t swim—which demonstrates their trust that dad will catch them—is like his own need to trust in a power greater than himself. From my perspective, his story seemed to echo Kiyozawa’s emphasis on putting one’s trust not in one’s self power but in a power beyond the self. As Rev. Adams said, “It’s all about living in the now with a mind of deeply entrusting.” Regardless of the doctrinal source of Rev. Adams’ statement, it seems clear that, as he had also said, “Nenbutsu is really one teaching.”

I think it might also be mentioned that some of the BCA ministers present, such as BCA Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezu, Dr. Matsumoto, and Rev. Marvin Harada, expressed their appreciation for Rev. Kiyozawa and his influential students such as Soga, Daiei Kaneko, and Haya Akegarasu. Of course, the BCA is a large entity and there is no doubt a range of interpretations amongst its teachers. Still, mutual appreciation between the Honganjis represents one factor that arguably lessens whatever doctrinal differences actually exist.

Finally, perhaps the most important point from this seminar is that, 400 years after the split, and perhaps especially here in America, the similarities between the two Honganjis are much greater than the differences. Not only should we keep in mind that both institutions are in a state of constant change due to causes and conditions such the changing demographics of American Jodo Shinshu Sanghas, we should also remember that these challenges are shared by both Nishi and Higashi. There are no differences in this regard. That the two Honganjis came together I think implicitly acknowledges both this shared reality and the urgency of working together to study and share Jodo Shinshu here in the States. I think it was this coming together, this sharing itself, that might be the real highlight of the East Meets West Seminar.

In 2012, Rev. Peter Hata received *kaikyoshi* and became West Covina Buddhist Temple’s minister. Since 2014, he has been assigned to the Higashi Honganji Los Angeles Betsuin. He is also a musician, having been an original member of the group Hiroshima and a music lecturer at California State University, Los Angeles from 2006 through 2011.

“East Meets West” Seminar: My Personal Reflections

By Laverne Imori

Higashi and *Nishi*. East and West. To many Shin Buddhists, the terms refer to Higashi Honganji (Shinshu Otani-ha) and Nishi Hongwanji (Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha). However, apart from our ministers and scholars, how many of us understand the similarities and differences between the two sects?



I had a superficial awareness of the similarities and differences between Jodo Shinshu and other Buddhist traditions but even less awareness of how Higashi and Nishi were alike or different. I hoped to get a better understanding by attending the 2016 Winter Pacific Seminar, *East Meets West: Jodo Shinshu from the Higashi and Nishi Perspectives*.

In preparation for this article, I asked Nishi friends for their thoughts about the day. We appreciated Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto’s historical perspective that provided a context for the presentations and conversations that followed and wished we had had more time with keynote speakers, Dr. Mark Blum and Rev. Henry Adams. The panel discussion afterward was enjoyable and stimulating.

Other observations centered on comparisons of ritual. The opening service and morning session were held at the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (Nishi). After lunch we walked west (note the irony here) to the Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple for the afternoon session and closing service. We noticed subtle differences in the *onajin* (altar) and in the way we chanted the *Shoshinge* in Nishi style in the morning and Higashi style in the afternoon. One comment I heard from Nishi members was that they appreciated the Higashi version because of the faster tempo.

Dr. Blum, addressing Jodo Shinshu from the Higashi perspective, mentioned several notable scholars who were considered controversial but influential modern-day Shin thinkers: Kiyozawa Manshi, Soga Ryojin, Kaneko Daiei and Chikazumi Jōkan.

Rev. Adams focused on his ministerial training at Chuo Bukkyo Gakuin Buddhist Seminary. A scholar of Buddhist scriptures and of Shinran Shōnin’s works, he shared passages from several sources to illustrate Jodo Shinshu from the Nishi perspective.

I’m not sure I could articulate doctrinal similarities or differences based on what I heard that day. It was clear both sects are rooted in the teachings of the Seven Masters through Shinran Shōnin. Differences seem to arise in interpretation of the teachings, but then again, aren’t there differences of interpretation even within our own sects?

Prior to the seminar, my initial inclination was towards consolidation of the two sects. After all, the split seemed somewhat arbitrary, motivated by the politics of the day. Wouldn’t it be practical from an organizational and economic standpoint to merge?

However, after some reflection, I think it was a fortunate turn of events when Tokugawa Ieyasu set up the conditions that led to the split. From my limited perspective, while Nishi appears to be the more predominant in terms of stability based on organizational structure and number of members, more critical modern-day thinkers seem to have come out of Higashi. One can only wonder if scholars such as Kiyozawa, Kaneko, et.al., would have emerged had the split not occurred.

I think successful seminars provoke thought and reflection. I left this seminar with more questions than answers. In fact, towards the end of the day, I wondered aloud to my friend Irene whether my perspective of Jodo Shinshu might be more Higashi than Nishi.

I don’t have an answer to that question, just the realization that I need to do more listening and reflecting. In any case, I have discarded the notion that Higashi and Nishi need to merge. We are, after all, children of the same parent.

Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA; Nishi), recently recommended I download and read *A Thinking Person’s Guide to Shin Buddhism* by Kaneko Daiei, a Higashi thinker. After the seminar I went back to the book and came upon this passage, which summarizes my experience of the seminar: “...ascending to Pure Land is an invitation to listen to Dharma at temples and *dojos*. Leaving behind our home of afflictions, we join an assembly of listeners. Otherwise, how can we feel the presence [of] Tathagata’s power?” We (Higashi and Nishi) were, for a day, “an assembly of listeners” sharing the experience of the *Nembutsu*. Let’s continue the dialogue. *Namo Amida Butsu*.

Laverne Imori is currently a member of both the Buddhist Temple of San Diego and Ekoji Buddhist Temple (Fairfax Station, VA). She started her Dharma journey at the Seattle Betsuin. She is grateful for so many wonderful teachers and friends on this Nembutsu path.

See pages 1 and 8 for photos from the “East Meets West” Winter Pacific Seminar.



Winter Pacific Seminar - 21st Century:
EAST MEETS WEST:
Jodo Shinshu from the Higashi and Nishi Perspectives

This historic gathering was held on January 30, 2016. The keynote speakers were Dr. Mark Blum, professor of Japanese Studies at UC Berkeley and Rev. Henry Adams, resident minister, San Mateo Buddhist Temple. Presentations are in English and Japanese. An overview on “The Establishment of the Hongwanji” was made in English by Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, director, IBS Center for Contemporary Shin Studies and in Japanese by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, co-director, BCA Center for Buddhist Education. Concurrent English and Japanese panels featured speakers from both the Higashi and Nishi traditions. To view, visit the BCA website at: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/2016-winter-pacific-seminar-east-meets-west/ or go to [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search for **BCA Center for Buddhist Education**.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

“Live a Real Life”: A discussion on the BCA theme for 2016

Did you know “Live a Real Life” is the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) theme for this year? All BCA members are encouraged to remember this theme so that it can be a guide to live meaningfully every day throughout the year. The following is based on a dialogue held at a BCA temple discussion class in January. This article was translated from the January 2016 Horin.

The BCA Office of the Bishop announces the annual theme every New Year. In 2016, Rev. Kodo Umezu decided on “Live a Real Life” as the theme, continuing from last year. In his message in the January 2015 *Wheel of Dharma*, Rev. Umezu mentioned that this theme is based on the words of Prince Shotoku and Shinran Shonin.

Prince Shotoku Taishi (574-622) is one of the most important figures in Japanese history and in the history of Buddhism. He promoted Buddhism in Japan as a regent of the central government. He is credited with promulgating a Seventeen-article constitution based on Buddhist teachings. That is one of the reasons Japanese culture and life are greatly influenced by Buddhism.

Prince Shotoku thought that in order to have a peaceful country, people need to value harmony. Buddhism promotes harmony. He encouraged people to respect the Three Treasures: Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. These ideas form the content of the first and the second articles of the constitution. The BCA theme “Life a Real Life” is related to the tenth article, which states in part:

“Let us control ourselves and not be resentful when others disagree with us, for all men have hearts and each heart has its own leanings. The right of others is our wrong, and our right is their wrong. We are not unquestionably sages, nor are they unquestionably fools. Both of us are simply ordinary men...”

The tenth article is telling us how to live a real life. The idea that “what is right to me may not be right to others” is very simple, but we often forget this. Our self-centered view makes us think, “I am right, you are wrong.” We often expect others to think, speak, and act based on our viewpoint. When their ideas and ours are different, we get frustrated. Being humble and respecting each other is key to walking the path of a real life. “We both are ordinary, so I may be right and you may also be right.” This thought encourages us to listen others, to understand each other.

Shinran Shonin was deeply influenced by Prince Shotoku. Shinran Shonin also referred to ordinary people as foolish beings (*bonbu* in Japanese). Something similar to Prince Shotoku’s tenth article appears in the postscript of *Tannisho (A Record in Lament of Divergences)*, in which Yuien, Shinran Shonin’s disciple, wrote what he had heard from his teacher:

“I know nothing at all of good or evil. For if I could know thoroughly, as Amida Tathagata knows, that an act was good, then I would know good. If I could know thoroughly, as the Tathagata knows, that an act was evil, then I would know evil. But with a foolish being full of blind passions, in this fleeting world—this burning house—all matters without exception are empty and false, totally without truth and sincerity. The *nembutsu* alone is true and real.” (*Collected Works of Shinran*, p. 679)

In Buddhism, what is real is something reliable, something which does not change. But in this world, everything is changing. Nothing is permanent. We change, the environment changes, the value of goods change, the code of ethics changes... everything is fleeting and nothing is reliable and real. In such “fleeting world,” Shinran Shonin said that what is true and real is the Nembutsu.

It requires something outside of ourselves to shed light on all of us and show us how foolish we are. Out of deep sorrow and sadness, the call *Namo Amida Butsu* comes from the true and real realm. Unless we encounter the call, we will never know that things in this world are not reliable.

It is often said that Jodo Shinshu followers need to listen to the meaning of the Nembutsu; that the Nembutsu is real and that we are empty and false. Listening to the teaching and reciting the Nembutsu is a way to live a real life. So this year, we shall continue to listen to the teaching and live with the Nembutsu, remembering the BCA theme “Live a Real Life.”



Shotoku Taishi

The Dharmakara Series: Our Lifelong Learning Challenge

In the past two years, we have been honored to share Rev. John Iwohara’s column on the Sanbutsu-ge and Rev. John Parakevopoulos’ six-part presentation, “Jodo Shinshu: The Supreme Teaching for the Present Age.” Now we are happy to introduce a guest series on the Juseige by Rev. Henry Toryu Adams. It is my hope that you will enjoy this and share it with others. — Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

Reflections on the Juseige: Who is Your Hero?

By Rev. Henry Adams

If you have attended even one service in the Jodo Shinshu tradition there is a good chance that you have heard the following words chanted in classical Buddhist Chinese:

GA GON CHO SE GAN
HIS-SHI MU JO DO
SHI GAN FU MAN ZOKU
SEI FU JO SHO GAKU

These are the opening lines of the *Juseige*, a section of verse from the *Sutra on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life* in which the Bodhisattva Dharmakara reiterates the vows he has established in the presence of the Buddha Lokeshvararaja. Here is an English rendering of these familiar syllables, provided by the Hongwanji Translation Committee:

I have established the all-surpassing vows
And will unfailingly attain supreme enlightenment.
If these vows should not be fulfilled,
May I not attain perfect enlightenment.

(*The Three Pure Land Sutras, Volume II: The Larger Sutra*, p. 30)

These words express Dharmakara Bodhisattvas’s aspiration to become a Buddha and realize the heroic state that will enable him to deliver all beings from suffering and delusion. As I reflect on this bold proclamation, I am reminded of the great heroes I have looked up to in my life.

As a young child in the 1980s, one of my first heroes was Luke Skywalker from the Star Wars movies. I remember my father taking me to see a re-release of *The Empire Strikes Back* in 1983 just before *Return of the Jedi* was released. I was five years old, and in retrospect, was perhaps little young for a PG-Rated movie. We arrived a little early, but back in those days you bought your ticket and they let you into the cinema regardless of when the next showing began.

When we entered the theatre, there were still a few minutes left in previous showing. Like all great action movies, there is a climactic battle scene towards the end of the film. So I walked right into an epic light saber duel between the villain Darth Vader and the hero Luke Skywalker. As a spectator thrust into this final action scene having not experienced the plot development up to that point, I was terrified by what was happening on the screen. I got so upset that I started crying inconsolably and gave my father serious second thoughts about whether or not he should let me sit through the film in its entirety.

However, in between the showings I managed to calm enough to regain my eagerness to see this movie that I had been looking forward to for many weeks. Likely against his better judgment, I convinced my father that we should stay and watch the film from the beginning. As the opening narrative flowed across the screen, I remember my father saying to me, “If it gets too scary, we can leave anytime.” But as I watched the plot develop, I gained confidence in Luke Skywalker. I trusted that as a hero he would have the courage and strength to meet whatever challenges he faced.

The Larger Sutra also tells us the story of a hero. That hero is Dharmakara Bodhisattva who through lifetimes of dedicated effort fulfills his vows and becomes Amida Buddha, the Awakened One of Immeasurable Light and Life, a being of Boundless Wisdom and Compassion. We chant the words of the Juseige before a sacred object (*gobonzon*) that reminds us of the presence of the Buddha in our daily lives. That object may be the Six Character Name of the Buddha (*Namo Amida Butsu*) written on a scroll or a plaque, a painted image, or a statue of the Buddha.

Please do not think that when you bow your head before a sacred expression of the Buddha that you are bowing to something outside yourself. As a hero, Amida Buddha possesses virtues that we aspire to receive for ourselves. The scrolls and statues remind us that by taking refuge in Amida Buddha and trusting in the power of the Buddha’s wisdom and compassion to prevail over our ignorance and foolishness, we will all become Buddhas through birth in his Realm of Peace and Bliss.

Namo Amida Butsu

BCA YOUTH VOICES: Young people share their experiences in Buddhist Churches of America’s (BCA) youth leadership and Buddhist education activities.

What Buddhism Means to Me

By Jesse Abrams
Buddhist Church of San Francisco
First Class Scout, Troop 29



Jesse Abrams is an 8th grader at KIPP San Francisco Bay Academy.

Buddhism to me is a way of life and how to live one’s life. I also compare it to change. For example, I was very selfish before I studied Buddhism, but now I try to think of others while thinking about myself.

From this class, which I have been taking for a year now, I have learned many things, but two teachings speak out to me. These are the “Golden Chain of Love” and the Three Poisons. I like these two teachings because I compare them to the yin and yang of Buddhism. My favorite lines are: “to protect all who are weaker than myself,” and “to think pure and beautiful thoughts, words and deeds.”

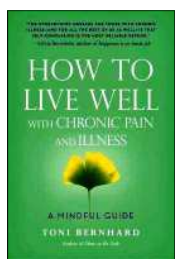
As a teen, I myself can be angry at the world and be stupid, but now I put that feeling into other things like giving back to people. For example, I have a friend whose parents are laid off and they live in the ghetto. I usually give them food. Also I am planning a skate-a-thon for skateboarders to support affordable housing in San Francisco. Just last week I gave some shoes to homeless people in Civic Center. They told me their stories and how they got to be homeless. One of the people I talked to got kicked out of his house because of the Three Poisons.

I also like the Three Poisons – Greed, Anger and Stupidity – because it shows myself and others how not to live your life. As a person of color, I feel like this theme runs in my family and in a lot of other families of color, because a lot of anger just revolves around the family. For example, I have friends who have no parents, they are dead or gone. Or their family does drugs, or everything else. The Three Poisons revolve around this, just anger, just a boiling pot of feelings.

Thank you to everyone who has guided me in my journey: the Pating family, Elaine Donlin sensei, Matt Stimson sensei, Rev. Kobata, Susan Sakuma and everyone else. You are the real MVPs.

BCA Bookstore News by Gayle Noguchi

Now available: **How to Live Well with Chronic Pain and Illness: A Mindful Guide** by Toni Bernhard
paperback, \$16.95



Award winning author Toni Bernhard has been living with chronic illness since 2001. She was a law professor and dean of students at University of California, Davis until her debilitating illness forced her to retire. A practicing Buddhist for 25 years, Bernhard offers a guidebook to finding a measure of peace and equanimity that allows one to live a rich, fulfilling life regardless of the state of one’s health.

In particular, Bernhard focuses on mindfulness to ease the mental and emotional suffering that accompanies chronic illness. She offers practical techniques for skillfully navigating these challenges such as breaking free from stressful thought patterns that give rise to guilt, anger, frustration, and embarrassment. She also addresses issues such as the invisibility of one’s condition (when you look fine to others), isolation, longing for one’s pre-illness life, asking for help, and educating family and friends. Also included is a section specifically for “Family, Friends, Caregivers, and Anyone Concerned about Chronic Illness.”

To order, go to www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org and click on the BCA Bookstore link or contact gnoguchi@bcabq.org / 510-809-1435. Open Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.



Charitable Estate Planning

Remember

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A bequest is a transfer by will of property such as cash, securities, or tangible property to an individual or a charitable organization.

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Because of the tax advantages associated with a bequest to a charitable institution, assets from your estate that would otherwise go directly to government treasuries can instead be given to the BCA Endowment Foundation to meet the needs of the BCA and Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS).

The BCA, IBS, and BCA Endowment Foundation are grateful to the generous members who have remembered both BCA and IBS in their estate plans. In 2015, the Buddhist Churches of America Endowment Foundation received the Noboru and Yaeko Hanyu Institute of Buddhist Studies Buddhist Chaplaincy Professorial Chair Endowment from the trust of Mr. and Mrs. Hanyu.

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Most commonly, donors bequeath cash or securities to the BCA Endowment Foundation.

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The most common type of bequest is one in which you direct cash or specific assets to the BCA Endowment Foundation. Sometimes the bequest is stated as a fixed amount or value; it can also be stated as a percentage of your estate.

With a **residuary bequest**, you direct that BCA Endowment Foundation receive all or part of your estate remaining after other specific bequests and expenses related to settlement of your estate have been made.

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What other methods are available for giving to the BCA Endowment Foundation after my death?

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You can designate by beneficiary, specifying that the BCA Endowment Foundation will be the beneficiary of the remainder of your Individual Retirement Account (IRA), Keogh plan, tax shelter annuity or qualified pension, profit sharing plan, or life insurance plan.

Does BCA Endowment Foundation want to know my bequest intentions?

The BCA Endowment Foundation recognizes that your bequest intentions are a personal matter and that you may quite understandably wish to keep them confidential. If you are willing to inform us, however, knowledge of your intentions is very helpful to the BCA Endowment Foundation in its financial planning.

How do I go about making a bequest to the BCA Endowment Foundation?

Please call us for suggested language for a bequest to the BCA Endowment Foundation. It is not intended as legal advice. You should seek the advice of your own attorney. Your attorney is encouraged to consult with BCA Endowment Foundation legal counsel for further guidance.

By leaving a bequest in your Will or Trust, you will help to propagate the Buddha Dharma and the teachings of Shinran, and to promote the religious welfare of the BCA Sangha.

We would be happy to provide additional information about the full range of planned giving options. Your personal circumstances will determine the best structure for you. We will be glad to answer questions and offer suggestions confidentially. Please contact us at: bcaendowment@gmail.com or (415) 776-5600 x311 or BCA Endowment Foundation, 1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109



Photo by Chris Sujarit



San Luis Obispo Buddhist Church-Photo by Keith Uyemura.

Thank you to all the supporters of the BCA Dana Program!

To date, your gifts have totalled over

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In Gassho,
Buddhist Churches of America
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Rev. Usuki

Continued from Front Page

primary cause of *dukkha*—suffering, dis-ease, dissatisfaction, discontent—and it is just as rife here as anywhere else. Coupled with this, media and politics thrive on controversy whether real or imagined. Hence, publications such as *Time* magazine and the *Los Angeles Times* have featured major articles about the persecution of Muslims by Buddhists, leaving readers to send comments expressing disappointment at what they once thought was a religion of peace.

Several months ago I had proposed to the BCA Ministers' Association that we take action to address the claims of the 969 movement in Myanmar. The intent at the time was to make a statement protesting the persecution that was taking place through the misuse of religious authority. Already, 381 Buddhist teachers in the United States had signed an open letter to President Obama asking him to speak out against anti-Muslim violence in Myanmar.

Buddhist leaders all over the world also co-signed a letter to fellow Buddhists in Myanmar reminding them of the tenets of the dharma and

offering support to stand up to the violent movement. American media articles did not seem interested in asking whether one small group represented the entire religion. Does this sound familiar?

Our Muslim friends here have for some time been dealing with similar bad press caused by certain groups who purport to be acting in the name of Islam. We need to be informed to even think of passing judgment. Sadly, ignorance and fear burn brightly together. People fear the unknown; they fear what is different.

Unless we speak up to educate and inform others of what our teaching represents, we have only ourselves to blame if we are swept up in generalizations characterized by sensational headlines.

A Pew Research survey of Muslims in America indicated that roughly half of them felt that their own religious leaders had not done enough to speak out against Islamic extremists.

In an ironic twist, recent pronouncements in this country have eclipsed my original intent of speaking out solely and specifically against religious discrimination in another country. The situation in Southeast Asia is indeed grave. However, we can do something right where we

are. Given our teaching, and living in strength and joy, we can speak out in defense of others—not with sanctimony, but with humility and gratitude for the great compassion we've been receiving, even as we struggle with our own mind of discrimination. It doesn't have to start with a grand gesture. If asked for a Buddhist perspective about an issue, or if we see something that misrepresents our teaching, it is incumbent upon us to respond. If we're not sure, we can ask a minister.

Even starting a discussion among ourselves is a step in the right direction and then we have to resolve to walk the talk in our greater community by doing whatever we can, each in our own way.

Knowing we are imperfect beings is no excuse for inaction. In our indebtedness to Infinite Light and Life that got us to this comfortable state, are our hearts open to the call "to respect and aid one another and do our best to work toward the welfare of society?"

May all beings be happy and well

May no harm or difficulty come to us

May we live in peace and harmony

Namo Amida Butsu

IBS

Continued from Front Page

nization and made a number of administrative appointments.

Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto – the director of the IBS's Contemporary Shinshu Buddhist Studies programs and a past resident minister of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple -- will now serve in the newly created position of IBS Provost & Vice-President for Academic Affairs. He will be the administrative officer for the institute and have overall responsibility for the academic program.

Rev. Matsumoto will also work directly with the IBS President, Bishop Kodo Umezu, and the IBS Board of Trustees, in order to ensure that IBS will operate in close alliance with BCA, the BCA Endowment Foundation, Hongwanji and Ryukoku University.

The new Dean of Students & Faculty Affairs is Dr. Scott Mitchell, whose duties will

include the management the curriculum, oversight of the student enrollment and registration, and work with faculty committees. In addition, Dr. Mitchell will continue to serve as the liaison officer as IBS pursues academic accreditation from the WASC Senior College & University Commission (WSCUC).

Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka will continue to lead fundraising efforts for IBS as the Vice-President for Development. As Executive Director, Ms. Linda Shiozaki will manage office staff and bookkeeping functions, among other duties. Finally the new Registrar & Director of Student Services will be Ms. Helen Tagawa. Continuing in their roles will be Rev. Dr. Daijaku Kinst, who directs the Buddhist chaplaincy program, and Ms. Sayaka Inaishi, the IBS librarian and resource specialist.

Regarding a new era for IBS, Rev. Matsumoto commented: "The staff and faculty of IBS are committed to helping fulfill

its mission, which is "To provide graduate level education in the full breadth of the Buddhist tradition with specialized education supporting Pure Land and contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies and advancing Jodo Shinshu Buddhist ministry."

We look forward to continued work in cooperation with the leadership and members of the BCA, as well as its supporters throughout the religious and academic worlds."

This is the biggest step forward in a long, long time...The appointment of Rev. Dr. Matsumoto as provost. He's such a well-respected minister and scholar, and has a legal background... He's the right person, at the right time. Furthermore, the entire IBS team is made up of people with all the right skills; everything is being well-executed; we have clear goals, and once we achieve accreditation, it will open a whole new world for Jodo Shinshu ...

--- Rev. Seigen Yamaoka, IBS Vice President of Development

今月の法話

親鸞聖人の宗教

ガーデナ仏教会

開教使 宮地 信雄



親鸞聖人の宗教という変なトピックについて書いてみようと思う。浄土真宗の宗祖親鸞聖人は勿論宗教者です。ですから普通親鸞聖人といえはす

に宗教のことを語ることになるのです。しかし、いまここではあえて親鸞聖人の宗教ということをお話したいのです。なぜならば、親鸞聖人の宗教というのは他の人の宗教とは少し違うからなんです。それではそれはどのように違うかというと、他の人の宗教というのは人間を超えたもの、つまりニーチェのいうように超人という考えをすぐに持つて来るのです。西洋の宗教というのは大体この超人思想によっていっているところの神という概念は大体この考えによるものといえるのです。ところが、親鸞の宗教はそのような超人間的なものを信じているというのではないのです。親鸞が信じたもの、それは一体なんであったかということ人間そのものであったといえることができるのです。宗教というのは人間の限界の上にとっているものから人間を離れなければ美は宗教にならないのですが、親鸞の場合はその人間から一歩も出ようとはしないのです。人間そのものの中に本当に信じるものがあるというのが親鸞の宗教なのです。ですから私は今その事についてお話したいと思うのです。

本題に入る前に、浄土真宗門徒であるなら誰でも知っている親鸞聖人の宗教批判というものがああります。それはあの「真假偽判」とい

れているものです。こんな言い方をすると宗教用語に慣れていない人はまたこの人はなんて難しい話を出すんだと言ってしまう。この小論を読まなければいけません。実はこれはなんのことはない話なんです。つまり、この世の中の宗教を親鸞聖人が三種類にわけて分類されたにすぎないのです。まず第一にこの世の中の宗教で一番多いとされるのは「偽」の宗教です。これは読んで字の如く「偽もの」の宗教のことです。宗教という名の下にこの世にはびこっている金儲けか単なる世に出る為の売名行為かそういった類いの宗教のことです。この宗教を語る人が使う手口は、この神さま仏さまを信じなかつたら罰が当たるぞというものです。あるいは、癌で死にかけの人に、この仏さまを信じたら治るぞというものです。今まさに自分が或は自分の身内のものでそういう状態になれば誰だってそういう宗教についてい込まれてしまうものなんです。私の知っている人で、自分の子供が学校で遊んでいてガラスの扉におつかって死んだお子様を持っておられる人がいました。この子は残念ながら亡くなってしまいました。ある新興宗教の団体がこの事件のすぐ後にやってきて、この人に云わくもう一人のお子さんがあんな目に遭わないように私達の宗教に早く入りなさいと熱心に勧めたのです。この人はそうだが私が信心深くなかったためこんなことになったのだとその宗教に入ったそうです。人間というのは弱いものなのです。ですから日頃からそういうまやかしの宗教にだまされないように理性を研ぎすましておこななくてはならないのです。さんまの頭も信心からといわれる類いの宗教がこの世にはなんと多いことか気をつけねばなりません。

宗教の説明は少し厄介なことになるので次のように簡単に言うておきます。それは、道徳を教える宗教と云うていいでしょう。道徳とは、人の道といわれるように人としておさめなければならぬ約束事と云うていいものでしょう。約束事と云うてもそれは法律やなにかで縛られるという様な堅苦しいものではなく、ソクラテスが「悪法もまた法」なりと云うて毒をあおいでいったという時のソクラテスの気持ち、信条をいいます。自分の中でこうしななければ納まらないとする感情です。ですからこういう教えはとも美しく清廉潔白に見えるのです。このような教えを信じている人を見ると本当に頭が下がる思いがします。そういう意味でこの種の宗教はこれまた少なからずの人が迷わされてしまふのです。しかし、親鸞聖人はこういう宗教はまだ本当の真実の宗教ではないとされたのです。

では何が本当の宗教かというところを聖人は、他力念仏の教えこそ本当のものだとおっしゃっているのです。他力念仏の教えとは何か、それは親鸞聖人があの有名な『歎異抄』の中でおっしゃっているお言葉に要約されるものです。そこには「念仏して弥陀にたすけられまらばすべし」とよき人の仰せをこうむりて信ずるほかに別の子細なきなり。」とおっしゃっていられるのです。

「念仏して弥陀にたすけられまらばすべし。」と親鸞聖人におっしゃったのは勿論法然上人です。ということは、親鸞聖人の宗教はこの「念仏して弥陀にたすけられまらばすべし」といわれた法然上人のお言葉を信じる以外に何処にもなかったといえるのです。法然という一人の人間の言葉を全面的に信じておられる親鸞聖人がそこにはおられるのです。聖人はこのあとに「自分にはこれ以外に知っている道等何もない」と言い切っておられます。つまり「念仏して弥陀にたすけられまらばすべし」という他力念仏の教え以外に本当の宗教はないというのです。そしてそれは法然上人がそうおっしゃるからそれに間違いはないといわれるのです。親鸞聖人の法然上人への全面的な信頼がそこには宿っています。これが浄土真宗なのです。さらに親鸞聖人は「法然上人がいかれるところはたとえそれが地獄であっても私は聖人についていって悔いがない」とまで言い切ることができたのです。親鸞という人の宗教はこういう宗教なのです。人間である法然を信じて止まない人間親鸞がそ

今月の一枚

Shiran Statue @ Buddhist Temple of Marin



ここに浮き彫りにされるのです。法然の真実に生きる姿に人間を本当に越える真実を見いだしていかれた親鸞聖人の宗教はこの意味で本当に革命的な宗教であったということが出来るのです。南無阿弥陀仏

去る1月に親鸞聖人の木像がマリソン仏教会に奉納された。同仏教会にご縁のあった方の遺言により、聖人像が寄付されることになった。木像を製作したのはセバストポール在住の日本人彫刻家、造士貴之(ぞうしたかゆき)氏。聖人像のやわらかな表情と60色を混ぜた落ち着いた衣の色が見る者を和ませる。造士氏はオーランド仏教会に安置されている。聖人像も制作している。

春の日本語聞法セミナー

Spring Japanese Dharma Gathering at the Jodo Shinshu Center



「聞思して遅慮することなかれ」
菅原 祐軌 師
(フローリン仏教会駐在開教使)



「ルンビニ食べ歩き」
安孫子 洋 師
(米国仏教団名誉開教使)

日時：2016年4月9日(土)
午前 10:00 - 午後 2:00

場所：浄土真宗センター
2140 Durant Ave, Berkeley

参加費：\$15 (昼食代込み)

友人、ご家族をお誘い合わせの上、是非ご参加ください。

米国仏教団仏教教育部 担当：桑原
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法輪

2016年3月号

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二〇一六年度教化標語
「まことの人生を歩もう」

3月はお彼岸の法要が営まれます。
お寺にお参りして聴聞しましょう。

ロサンゼルスで 冬太平洋セミナー開催

2016年1月30日(土)にIBS(米国仏教大学院)とCBE(米国仏教団仏教教育部)、真宗大谷派アメリカ真宗センター共催のパンフィックセミナーがロサンゼルス西別院と東別院の両別院で開催され、310名が参加した。テーマは「East meets West」で西本願寺と東本願寺の教えの相違点などを学び、本願寺派と大谷派の僧侶がお互いの理解を深めた。午前中は西別院で本願寺派の節での正信偈の勤めの後、基調講演が行われ、UCバークレー校のブラム・マーク博士とサンマテオ仏教会のアダムス・ヘンリー開教使がそれぞれ日英両語で話した。また、IBSの松本アイルビド開教使(英語)、CBEの桑原浄信開教使(日本語)による「本願寺が西と東に別れた歴史的背景」についての講義も行われた。昼食後、参加者は徒歩で東本願寺別院へ移動、日本語と英語にわかれているパネルディスカッションが行われた。閉会のお勤めでは大谷派の



Winter Pacific seminar @ Hiasashi

Winter Pacific seminar @ Nishi



節での正信偈のお勤めをした。参加した開教使は「昨年、浄土真宗センターで本願寺派と大谷派の開教使が合同で研修をしました。ご法話の内容やお勤めのしかたなどに違いがあつて、とても刺激をうけました。でも、同じ親鸞聖人の教えなので共通点もあり、同じ念仏の仲間だと実感したのです。それを今回は多くのご門徒さんたちと学べ、たいへん素晴らしいセミナーでした。」と喜びを語った。(Photo: Glen Tao)

総長メッセージ

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

「怒っている時には叱るな」ということを聞きます。その通りだと思いますが、実際は難しいことですね。親は子供を叱る時には気をつけなければなりません。

ところで、仏教は一人ひとりに対してのお叱りだと思えます。そして、そのお叱りの後ろには怒りはありません。ただあるのは深い悲しみだけです。真実の親は私たちに真実を知らせようとしているいろいろな手段(てだて)で働きかけていくのだと思います。その直接の働きかけが南無阿彌陀仏の呼び声です。それは、私たちにたいする挑戦です。私たちにたいする問いかけです。私たちにたいするお叱りです。「お前は一体何に南無して生きているのか?」と問いかけているのです。「南無する相手が間違っているぞ」と言っ

BCA総長メッセージ

「ありがとう、さようなら」

松田ケント

私のBCAのプレジデントとしての任期が2016年3月6日をもって終わり、ハイセリアでの総会後に営まれる永代経法要で、谷本ケン氏が次のプレジデントとして就任します。

この場をお借りして、私の在任期間中、サポートしてくださったBCA理事会のみなさま、また仏法を広めるためにご尽力くださったすべての方々に感謝申し上げます。

特に梅津総長、平野ジェリー開教使会長、谷本ケン氏、グリノルズ・シャリーリン氏、スタンフル・リック氏、ボックタリ・スーザン氏、松岡ジェフ氏からなるBCAエグゼクティブコミッティーのみなさまには、この二年間たいへんお世話になりました。BCAの課題について長く、実りのある討議を何度もしたことはよい思い出です。

また、すべての開教使の先生方、お寺のリーダーの方々にも多くのご支援をいただき、感謝しております。これからはBCAのいろいろな団体のミーティングや各お寺にお参りしてみなさまとお話できる機会が少なくなるのが残念です。新しいプレジデントの谷本ケン氏はすでに6ヶ月前から各団体のミーティングや各お寺の行事に参加しており、すばらしいリーダーとなること期待しております。最後にBCA全体をサポートしてくださっている会員の

ておられるように思えます。

南無阿彌陀仏というのを、親鸞聖人はいろいろな言葉で言い換えておられます。

「南無」はインドの言葉で、日本人に分かる中国の言葉では「帰命」とか「帰依」というように言い換えられます。それで、聖人は南無阿彌陀仏を「真実明に帰命せよ」とも言い換えておられます。真実の明かり、すなわちまことの光、まことの智慧を頼りに生きていかねばなりませんとおっしゃっておられます。

では一体、私たちはどのように生きているのでしょうか。私たちが頼りにしているのは真実明ではなく、暗闇の中の自分の決めた善悪です。真実明ではなく、人間の限りある知恵です。それを迷いとも知らずに生きているのが私たちの偽りのない人生でありましょう。その中で争い、憎しみあい、殺し合っているのが自分を含めた人間の世界であり



みなさまにお礼申し上げます。私は私の所属するお寺のプレジデントを務めていたもので、各お寺とBCA全体を統括する本部とは考え方に違いがあるということには理解していました。けれどもそういう状況にあって、梅津総長はBCA本部が各お寺の立場にたつてもものごとを見ていくことにフォーカスされました。お寺によって問題や課題はさまざまでしたが、それを本部とお寺が一緒になって解決していったことは、たいへん感動的な経験となりました。

私たちBCA全体の力はみなさまの自分のお寺への貢献度の強さによってきます。私たち一人ひとりが、できるだけ多くの人々をお寺のお参りにさそって、深く親鸞聖人のみ教えを聞いていただくことが大切なのです。所属するコミュニティー、会社、団体、学校などにだけ関わっていくかは、わたしたちがどれだけ浄土真宗の教えを理解し、感動しているかの度合いに比例しているといえるでしょう。これからも共に、聖人のみ教が米国全土に広まってい

くように協力しましょう。

この二年間、みなさまと一緒に念仏の教えを広めるお手伝いをできたことはたいへん光栄でした。多くのサポートをいただき、たいへんありがとうございました。

ます。その姿を悲しみ、迷いを迷いと知らしめるのが、仏さまの教えであります。それはやるせない大悲の心であり、大智のお叱りの声でもあります。

今アメリカは大統領選の真っ只中にあります。しかし、誰が大統領になろうとも、一人ひとりが自分の足元を確かなものにしなければ、人生は不完全に終わるのです。せっかく人間として生まれながら、仏法を聞くことがなければ、人間として生まれてよかったという思いがでてきません。そのために、仏教では昔から、私たちの歩むべき方向をお浄土として示してくださっているのです。

三月には各地の仏教会で春のお彼岸法要がお勤めされます。彼岸というのは、お浄土であり、さとりの世界であり、仏さまの世界であり、真実の世界であります。どうか、仏さまのお言葉の深いお心を聞かせていただきますように。