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BCA National Council Meeting in Visalia, CA *Cultivating the Buddhadharma: Buddhism & Agriculture*



By Rev. Jerry K. Hirano,
Chair, BCA Ministers Association

Part 1 of 2 Installments

“O Brahmin, I too plough and sow,” replied the Buddha. “And having ploughed and sown, I eat.”

The puzzled Brahmin said, “You claim that you plough and sow, but I do not see you ploughing.”

The Buddha replied, “I sow faith as the seeds. My discipline is the rain. My wisdom is my yoke and plough. My modesty is the plough-head. The mind is the rope. Mindfulness is the ploughshare and the goad. I am restrained in deeds, words and food. I do my weeding with truthfulness. The bliss I get is my freedom from suffering. With perseverance I bear my yoke until I come to nirvana. Thus, I have done my ploughing. It brings the fruit of immortality. By ploughing like this, one escapes all suffering.”

— Kasibharada Sutra

Good morning, everyone. It is truly an honor and pleasure to have been asked to speak this morning at our Buddhist Churches of America (BCA)’s National Council morn-

ing service. I want to begin with a confession, “I love BCA!” If you are here as a representative of your local temple you should feel the same way.

I began my talk with a passage from the Sutra named after the farmer Kasibharadavaja. In this sutra the Buddha was in the village of Ekanala, in Magadha. It was planting season and there was a large farm belonging to a Brahman named Kasibharadavaja. The Buddha went with his begging bowl to the place where this farmer was planting seeds. It was about lunchtime and the farmer said to the Buddha, “I work hard plowing and because of that I eat. My workers work hard and that is why they eat. I don’t see you plowing so why should you eat?” And the Buddha replied with the quote I began with.

This passage reminds me of things I have heard regarding BCA. This sutra comes to mind when discussing no cost of living raise for BCA staff; during long discussions about adding three dollars to the BCA member’s assessment; as Mr. Glenn Kameda tries to establish a guideline for ministers’ salaries and only gets criticized or ignored. On behalf of the BCA ministers we are so appreciative of Mr. Glenn Kameda’s years of work on behalf of us ministers.

In this sutra, Kasibharadavaja is basically saying to the Buddha, “What do I get from feeding you? Why should I feed you? It’s not fair for you to eat without work-



The National Council Eitaikyo Service and installation of officers are held at the Visalia Buddhist Church. See page 8 also. Lower photo: Five newly assigned BCA ministers after their Dharmathon talks. See page 4 for details. Photos by Michael Endo.

ing.” If the Buddha were here at this National Council Meeting, he would have to lead a workshop entitled “What do I get from Buddha?” Or “How much should I put in the Buddha’s Begging Bowl?” But since he is not here we have workshops entitled, “What do I get

from BCA?” and “BCA Ministerial Affairs workshop.”

Ministers must take some responsibility for these difficulties. Maybe we have not been skillful enough in showing you what we do and the value of the Buddhist teachings. In this sutra the Buddha

was able to show Kasibharadavaja how he too was a farmer working the fields of life. I believe that what the Buddha would say to BCA is that we are all farmers, working this life, this society, to grow and harvest the fruit of the *Nembutsu* teachings. *Namo Amida Butsu* is all around us, but we must grow and maintain our temples, so that we can all partake of the harvest.

I could not be a real farmer; I have absolutely no talent in this area. I’m proud just to be able to ride my lawn tractor without messing up my yard. I don’t even like to touch dirt! However, not having the skills or ability to be a real farmer doesn’t mean I don’t admire farmers and feel a deep gratitude for their work. Farmers have been the backbone of BCA. The theme for this conference is “Cultivating the Buddha Dharma.” I really like this theme, because I believe all of BCA should thank and express deep appreciation for our *Issei* and *Nisei* farmers.

BCA has survived many difficult years: the Great Depression, World War II, and the internment of Japanese Americans, and we have done remarkably well. I believe this is in large part because of the farmers in BCA. For example, farmers built my Buddhist temples in Honeyville and Ogden, Utah, in communities with 80 to 90 percent Mormon populations. Much like the farmers who built the temple I was assigned to in San Jose. Like the farmers

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IBS President’s Award Presented to Dr. Alfred Bloom

By Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto
Provost, Institute of
Buddhist Studies

The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) has presented Dr. Alfred Bloom, distinguished scholar, educator, and author, with the third Institute of Buddhist Studies President’s Award for his scholarly contributions to the greater understanding and appreciation of the history, practice, and thought of Shin Buddhism. Dr. Bloom was given the award on March 10, 2016 at the Kailua Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Kailua, Hawaii by IBS Provost Rev. David Matsumoto, on behalf of IBS and its President, Rev. Kodo Umezu.

Dr. Bloom is widely recognized for his important role in cultivating a broader appreciation of Shin Buddhism in America and advancing the field of Shin Buddhist Studies throughout the world. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University, and taught World



Religions and Buddhism at the University of Oregon and the University of Hawaii for twenty-six years. In 1986, Dr. Bloom, already Professor Emeritus at the University of Hawaii, received the appointment of Dean at IBS. As Dean and Hongwanji Professor of Shin Buddhism, Dr. Bloom guided IBS as it joined the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California as an af-

filiated educational center. He was instrumental in developing Master’s Degree programs in the study of Buddhism and Shin Buddhism, in particular, refining a graduate-level curriculum in Shin Buddhist Studies. He served as Dean and Professor until 1994. After his retirement, Dr. Bloom returned to Hawaii where he has remained active in teaching and writing.

His has written many works, including *Shinran’s Gospel of Pure Grace*; *The Life of Shinran Shonin*; *Indian and Far Eastern Religious Traditions*, with Robert D. Baird; *The Linguistic Shaping of Thought: A Study in the Impact of Language on Thinking in China and the West*; *Tannisho: A Resource for Modern Living*; *Shoshinge: The Heart of Shin Buddhism*, with T. Nagatani and Ruth Tabrah; *Strategies for Modern Living: A Commentary with the Text of the Tannisho*; *Living in Amida’s Universal Vow: Essays on Shin Buddhism*; *The Essential Shinran: A Buddhist Path of True Entrusting*;

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Sei Shohara Receives BCA Lifetime Service Award



By Richard A. Stambul
BCA President-Elect

On March 5, 2016, Mr. Sei Shohara, a longtime member of West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple, was presented with the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Lifetime Service Award in recognition of his extraordinary service to BCA and its members. The Award recognizes ministers and lay members who have demonstrated a lifetime of outstanding leadership, achievement, and service towards the advancement of BCA. This was

only the fourth time it has been presented in BCA’s 117-year history.

The BCA Lifetime Service Award was presented by Dr. Kent Matsuda, BCA President, and by the BCA Bishop, Rev. Kodo Umezu, in Visalia, California at the annual BCA Ministers’ Association and National Council Meetings. Pictured in the accompanying photo are (l. to r.) Mr. Sei Shohara, Mrs. Yasuko Shohara, Dr. Kent Matsuda, and Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop. We all congratulate Sei and Yasuko on this great accomplishment.

Metta



Great Happiness

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

I am soooo excited right now. Why? Because one of the major Buddhist magazines, *Buddhadharma*, featured an article titled “What is Enlightenment?” in the current Spring 2016 issue, and Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) was one of four representatives to speak on the subject. The other three are from Theravada, Zen, and Vajrayana traditions. These three schools are well known in the American Buddhist community, but the Pure Land tradition unfortunately has not been regarded very much as an authentic tradition.

Among the four people interviewed, Rev. Matsumoto’s remarks and responses to the questions really shine. They capture our understanding and appreciation of what Enlightenment is. I am positive that many readers of *Buddhadharma* magazine will see authenticity in his words and understand what Shinran Shonin was trying to say.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not trying to put down other traditions. These three traditions are all genuine



Oxnard Temple’s Sangha Award Scouts: “I was very energized to meet these Scouts on March 13. Their joy and pride in helping Rev. Watanabe with the *kansho* (ringing of the temple bell), chanting and wearing a special *samue* (traditional temple work outfit) was so inspiring!” Rev. Kodo Umezu. Left to right: Jeni Kawate, Keith Kujiraoka, Rev. Noriaki Watanabe, Rev. Umezu, Brandon Fujii and Kevin Kujiraoka. By Rene Roberts Photography.

and wonderful. However, from the standpoint of an ordinary person like myself, Shinran Shonin’s message resonates so much. It speaks to me. We are really fortunate that we are able to encounter Shinran Shonin and listen to the *Nembutsu* teaching.

Speaking of happiness from hearing the Dharma, there is

a famous story about the baby Siddhartha and a hermit called Asita. King Suddhodana and Queen Maya took their newly born prince to Asita and asked him about the baby’s future. After looking at the prince, Asita started crying. The parents became fearful and asked him, “Why are you crying? Is some-

thing wrong with him?” Asita replied, “No, no. He is fine. I can foresee that he will be the greatest king to rule the world if he remains a secular leader. But if he pursues the path to become a monk, he will be the greatest spiritual leader in the world. However, I am very old. I won’t be able to hear his message.”

Now, we are able to hear the Buddha’s message—the message that Asita really wanted to hear. There is no greater happiness than this. This happiness surpasses everything that we can think of. Let us attend the celebration of the Buddha’s birthday this month and find out what Asita missed out on hearing.

I think the world is waiting to hear the Dharma, especially the Nembutsu teaching. I am so happy that our teaching is becoming more visible in this country, thanks to our ministers, leaders, and Nembutsu practitioners like yourself.

By the way, if possible, please buy the magazine and read the article carefully. If you cannot find one, your minister has a copy. Please ask him or her to share it with you.

Happy Hanamatsuri!

Nurturing a Buddhist Worldview



By Rev. Kurt Rye
Placer Buddhist Church

This year at the BCA National Council Meeting in Visalia I attended the “Social Justice Workshop.” The presenters discussed whether it was appropriate to discuss social issues at our local temples. I was impressed by the engaging discussion that followed the presentations. One of the recurring ideas was the need for education in order for the Sanghas to become aware of issues in the larger community so that they could come to their own conclusions.

The discussion reminded me of an experience I had with the Fresno Jr. Young Buddhists Association (YBA) while serving the Betsuin. Like many of our ministers, I came to the ministry after a lengthy non-ministerial career. I had worked with the chronically mentally ill and homeless population in the Seattle area for almost twenty years. I mostly worked in outpatient settings and in my last five years I served as the clinical supervisor for a HUD* program that targeted people with mental illness who had been homeless for years. The average client had been homeless for over eight years and had a history of not accepting or following through with services from other providers.

The homeless situation is complicated and multifaceted. There are many misconceptions in public opinion and this was no different for the Fresno Jr. YBA. As a community service activity, the group volunteered to help serve lunch at one of the

homeless soup kitchens in the downtown Fresno area. As we waited in the parking lot I asked the group what they thought were the reasons for someone to be homeless. The most common response was “they want to be homeless.” When I asked why someone would want to be homeless they were at a lack for a reason.

Then I spoke of causes and conditions as they had learned in Dharma School. I explained that homelessness is caused by many different things such as mental illness, domestic abuse, and substance abuse. One Jr. YBA member remembered a friend’s father getting into a car accident and he was unable to work. Fortunately, he and his family did not become homeless, but it took the support of the larger community to help the family through this period. It was rewarding to see this group of young Buddhists grasping the teachings of the Buddha in a deep and personal manner.

Before we entered the build-

ing I also asked the group not to think this activity of serving lunch as something that was nice to do for the “poor homeless”; rather, to think of it in the spirit of causes and conditions. In that way they would gain a greater respect for those who they were serving. I reminded them that if the causes and conditions were different, we might the persons in need of such services.

I felt this was a good example of addressing a social issue that the members were simply unaware of. Through the process of feeding the homeless, not only were people nurtured, but it also nurtured the Buddhist worldview for the Jr. YBA. In addressing social issues from our Buddhist perspective we can all gain an insight into the problems facing the communities we live in and at the same time strengthen our understanding of our Dharma teaching.

*U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Buddhist Church of San Francisco

The Buddhist Church of San Francisco (BCSF), the flagship temple of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), was the first Jodo Shinshu (Nishi) Hongwanji temple to be established in the continental United States. Our history begins with a group of devout Issei Shin Buddhists establishing the first Buddhist organization in North America, in the form of a *Bukkyo Seinenkai* (Young Men’s Buddhist Association, or YMBA) that was officially established on July 30, 1898. On September 1, 1899, with the arrival of the first two *Kaikyoshi* ministers, Rev. Dr. Shuye Sonoda and Rev. Kakuryo Nishijima, Jodo Shinshu began to take root in American soil. Soon after, our Homba Hongwanji mother temple designated the YMBA to be an overseas propagation branch office called the Buddhist Mission of North America. Its propagation efforts went beyond the Japanese community and shared the BuddhaDharma with the general English speaking community.

The BCSF has been at its current location since 1910. In 1935 the King of Thailand offered relics of Shakyamuni Buddha and disciples Sariputra and Moggallana to the BCA. The BCA leadership decided that an appropriate stupa to enshrine the relics should be built on a new temple building. At the same time, the *onaijin* (see picture) was installed.

In its one-hundred-and-eighteen-year history the BCSF sangha has persevered through the natural disasters of the great 1906 earthquake and fire, the internment camp experience of the majority Nikkei membership during the Second World War, and the relocation of members away from San Francisco’s Japantown.

Today we enjoy a sense of growth beyond the traditional distinctions of culture, ethnicity, and identities to realize the meaning of Sangha as a community of people dedicated to living in the Light of Dharma and Life of Nembutsu—the Buddha mind that sustains all beings.



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

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

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2016 National Council Report



At the National Council banquet, outgoing BCA president, Dr. Kent Matsuda (l.) is presented with an appreciation plaque by Rev. Umezu and incoming president, Ken Tanimoto.

By Dr. Kent Matsuda
BCA Past President

The 2016 Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Ministers Association and National Council Meeting (NCM) took place at the Visalia Marriott on March 2-5, 2016. The Central California District hosted the meeting, under the theme “Cultivating the Buddha Dharma.”

The BCA Ministers Association met from March 2-3. They discussed all of the issues that came up during the NCM. Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, announced that Rev. Don Castro (Seattle Betsuin) and Rev. Bob Oshita (Sacramento Betsuin) will both retire this year.

Rev. Jerry Hirano, *Gicho* (Chair) of the BCA Ministers Association, informed the

council delegates that the ministers are working on bylaws for the Ministers Assistant Program (MAP). The Ministers Association created a new committee to work on curriculum for Buddhist Education.

On Thursday, attendees took part in a pre-meeting symposium on “Buddhism and Agriculture.” On Friday and Saturday there were workshops on social justice, ministerial affairs guidelines, growing temple membership, the BCA Endowment Foundation, and on “What BCA Can Do for You.”

Steve Terusaki, the BCA Interim Director of Operations, introduced himself to the attendees. He started working at BCA Headquarters in October, 2015 and will continue until at least April, 2016.

Jeff Matsuoka, BCA Treasurer, discussed the BCA budget for fiscal year 2016-2017. The original anticipated per member dues was calculated at \$113.45. This figure did not include a cost of living increase for the BCA staff. After discussion by the delegates, the National Council voted to award the BCA staff a 2% cost of living increase, with the figure increasing to \$114.23.

Reports on Buddhist Education followed. Rev. David Matsumoto, Provost and Vice-President of Academic Affairs at the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) announced that Dr. Richard Payne has

stepped down as Dean of IBS, and that the IBS has undergone a structural reorganization. In the Spring 2016 term, 40 students are anticipated to be enrolled. The Friends of IBS fundraising efforts raised \$87,000 in 2015.

Revs. Marvin Harada and Kiyonobu Kuwahara, co-directors of the Center for Buddhist Education, informed the delegates that the Fall MAP seminar will take place in Chicago this year to accommodate more Eastern District minister’s assistants.

The National Council voted to make two changes to the BCA Bylaws. The first change will eliminate the January 15 deadline for registering as a National Council delegate. The second clarified the current wording regarding retired ministers not being able to vote at the NCM.

The delegates voted in three new Directors-at-Large. They are Glenn Inanaga (Orange County Buddhist Church), Glenn Kitaseo (Mountain View Buddhist Temple), and Jeffery Matsuoka (Buddhist Church of San Francisco).

Jeff Matsuoka, member of the Audit Committee, informed the National Council that the BCA successfully passed an external audit performed by DZH Phillips of San Francisco. The only issue noted was the Pension Committee’s fiscal year being

different from the BCA fiscal year. The BCA financial records will be audited again this year.

The National Council voted to ratify the decision of the National Board and selected Rev. Umezu to complete a second four-year term as Bishop of the BCA.

On Sunday, the Eitai-kyo Service was held at the Visalia Buddhist Temple. The new officers of the Ministers Association and the BCA were installed at the conclusion of the service. Rev. Jerry Hirano will again serve as *Gicho*. The rest of the Ministers Association officers are: Rev. Ken Fujimoto (First Vice-President), Rev. Kakei Nakagawa (Second Vice-President), Rev. Harry Bridge and Rev. Fumiaki Usuki (Recording Secretaries), Rev. Kojo Kaki-hara (Treasurer), Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki (Auditor), and Rev. Ron Miyamura (At-Large Member).

The new BCA officers are Ken Tanimoto (President), Rick Stambul (President-Elect), Charlene Grinolds and Gary Mukai (Vice-Presidents), Susan Bottari (Secretary), and Jeffery Matsuoka (Treasurer).

Next year, the BCA Ministers Association and National Council Meeting will be held from February 28 to March 5, 2017 in San Jose, California at the Marriott. The theme will be “Buddhism and Technology.”



By Rev. Matthew Hamasaki
Central California District

Growing up, I never really enjoyed my birthdays. As a child I absolutely loved getting presents because I didn’t have any money to buy my own toys

(or socks) and I was more than happy to receive them on an annual basis. I could, however, have done without the actual party. It never really seemed like anything I wanted to do, what I wanted to eat, or people I wanted to be with. I was incapable of planning or cooking or buying anything that I wished for and was at the mercy of whatever my parents decided was going to happen. Furthermore, I had to be paraded around the countless aunts and uncles—I had no idea what their names were—but I had to be nice and show them my talents whenever called upon.

When I went to college I had a little more control over what I

would be doing for my birthday, but I didn’t really have an idea of what I should do. I had residual feelings from before and decided that just to get together with some friends would be enough. Finally, when I went to Japan, I truly felt how it was to have a good birthday. It seems counterintuitive that going to a foreign country and celebrating with people that I had known for less than a year would be such a great thing, but perhaps it was because we were all in the same boat with no one familiar to be with that we made such an effort to make our friends happy. My friends bought me meaningful presents with thought-out cards and even cooked me foods

they knew I liked! Somewhere in between eating the delicious food and reading the cards I finally realized what it was all about! They weren’t getting together to celebrate my life; they were happy to have me in their lives.

This probably seems incredibly egocentric, but the way I understood the meaning of birthdays was even sillier. I thought that people got together to celebrate that someone had survived for another 365 days (which made no sense). Then I realized that we celebrate because we need a special day for each person in our life to appreciate them and how they make our own lives better. Oftentimes we take our friends

and family for granted. This is an opportunity to show them how much they mean to us.

One of the Buddhist holidays coming up is *Hanamatsuri*, the Buddha’s Birthday. We celebrate not because we are amazed at the wondrous birth of the Buddha, but to be grateful that his teachings are a part of our lives. Hopefully we incorporate his teachings every day so that they intertwine with our daily life, but this means that we may not necessarily take the time to thank him constantly (I’m sure this is the reason why and not that we don’t incorporate his teachings every day). Luckily, we have this one day to show our appreciation.

Birthday Gratitude

Order *Buddhadharma - The Practitioner’s Quarterly* at Special BCA Subscription Rate

Order by April 11th to begin your subscription with the Summer issue.

BCA members and friends can subscribe to *Buddhadharma - The Practitioner’s Quarterly* for 38% off the cover price for a 1-year subscription. That works out to \$19.95 for a year which includes 4 issues. As a subscription partner, BCA will also receive a donation of \$10 for each new subscription. Visit the BCA website: www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org for details. If ordered by 4/11/16 your subscription will begin with the Summer 2016 issue. Subscriptions after 4/11 will begin with the Fall issue. See Rev. Kodo Umezu’s article, page 2, about the *Buddhadharma*, Spring issue.

A 10th Anniversary of the Jodo Shinshu Center Commemorative Event

Seeing the Wisdom of Compassion: The Art and Science of the Heart Sutra

Exhibit and Lecture Return to the JSC - June 24, 25 & 26, 2016



Above is a detailed portion of “Flowering Evanescence,” a five-scroll, 14-foot-wide painting of a weeping cherry tree, an unfinished work by biologist-turned-painter Tsuneo Iwasaki (1917-2002).

In her lecture on “Seeing the Wisdom of Compassion: The Art and Science of the Heart Sutra,” an exhibition of the late Tsuneo Iwasaki’s paintings, scholar/author Dr. Paula Arai tells the compelling story behind the unfinished masterpiece, “Flowering Evanescence:”

“After Iwasaki suddenly passed away during the full-blooming of the cherry blossoms in 2002, whenever I went to visit, no matter the season, I saw his widow kept one of his unfinished paintings hanging up in their formal room. The beauty of the painting burst forth in the thousands of soft pink cherry blossom petals he had delicately animated with the Heart Sutra. I found unfinished panels of this painting folded up in his studio. Proposed for the far right scroll was the fluid script of a poem by the highly revered 12th-century Buddhist poet, Saigyō. I was impressed he had such ambitious plans for another massive painting. As I deciphered the highly refined calligraphic script, the import of this painting slowly dawned: ‘May I pass away under the flowers of the spring full moon.’ Then, on one of the folded sheets covered with cherry blossoms, still waiting their turn to have the Heart Sutra wisdom encoded into their petals, I saw it...a single line of sinuous red calligraphic script caressed by pink petals. ‘Namu Amida Butsu. Praise to the one who manifests the wisdom of limitless light.’ ...”

Hear the rest of Dr. Arai’s enlightening commentary on this unfinished masterpiece and many others at the encore exhibition of “Seeing Wisdom in Compassion: The Art and Science of the Heart Sutra” on June 24, 25 and 26, 2016 at the Jodo Shinshu Center. It will be presented by the BCA Center for Buddhist Education as part of its Buddhist Arts & Book Fair. See more 10th Anniversary of JSC events on the BCA Educational Events Calendar, page 5, or visit buddhistchurchesofamerica.org

Read about the exhibit’s West Coast premiere at the JSC in the February 2016 issue of the *Wheel of Dharma*.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

IBS and CBE Events in Visalia at NCM 2016: A Symposium, Dharmathon & Ojoraisan

The 2016 BCA National Council Meeting, took place in Visalia, California, the heart of the Central Valley. In line with the conference theme, "Cultivating the Buddha Dharma," the topic of the Thursday, March 3 symposium was "Buddhism and Agriculture." Speakers with backgrounds in farming gave personal accounts of the struggles and successes of the *Issei* and *Nisei* farmers. The presentations included a TED Talk by Nikiko Masumoto, who was unable to attend in person (visit www.youtube.com and search for "Reigniting the soul of farming").

As summarized by Gary Mukai, who helped to organize the program: "Sometimes we may take for granted how the food on our table got there. George Teraoka represented the *Nisei* generation, Calvin Doi, the *Sansei* generation, and Nikiko Masumoto, through her TED Talk, represented the *Yonsei's* tie to the land. Each presenter had a different, but heartfelt and sincere connection to harnessing the 'Energy of the Universe' into providing all of us with sustenance for our lives. The talks helped us realize the hardships and rewards of the gamble of farming and how farmers have to maintain an attitude of perseverance and optimism. Occasionally, it is necessary for us to hear this message to remind us of how grateful we should be to everyone involved, including the plants and animals that gave their lives, for providing us with the food we put on our table."

In addition, Revs. Seigen Yamaoka and Marvin Harada talked about their farming backgrounds, and an interesting presentation about Shinran Shonin's work among farmers in Medieval Japan was given by Ryukoku University Professor Eisho Nasu. The symposium was jointly presented by the BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) and the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS).

On Friday, a "Dharmathon" featured talks by BCA's five newest ministers. On Saturday, attendees participated in a special chanting of the *Ojoraisan* led by Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki and several other BCA ministers. Before and after the chanting, *gagaku* music was performed.



Symposium speakers (top, l to r.) Nikiko Masumoto, George Teraoka, Calvin Doi; (left) Rev. Yamaoka, Prof. Nasu, Rev. Harada. Ojoraisan leaders (lower, l to r.) Reverends Sala Sekiya, Joshin Fujimoto, Yuki Sugabara, Katsuyo Kusunoki, Henry Adams, Ryuta Furumoto, Kojo Kakihara, Kiyonobu Kuwahara, and Harry Bridge.



New BCA Ministers spoke at the National Council Meeting "Dharmathon" on March 4. (From left to right): Rev. Candice Shibata (Berkeley Buddhist Temple), Rev. Mutsumi Wondra (Orange County Buddhist Church), Rev. Kory Quon (Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple), Rev. Matthew Hamasaki (Central California District), and Rev. Sala Sekiya (Seattle Buddhist Temple Betsuin).

Videos on Jodo Shinshu & Buddhism

Visit the BCA website homepage BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.com for CBE and IBS seminars online.

Enjoy over five hours of lectures from the *East Meets West: Jodo Shinshu from the Higashi and Nishi Perspectives 2016 Winter Pacific Seminar*, along with handouts from the program. Speakers include Rev. Henry Adams and Dr. Mark Blum. Panels in Japanese and English include presenters Rev. Noriaki Ito, Bishop, Higashi Honganji North America District (Shinshu Otani-ha); Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop, BCA; Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto (IBS); Rev. Marvin Harada (BCA); Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, (BCA); and Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi (Shinshu Otani-ha).

Also visit: YouTube.com and search: BCA Center for Buddhist Education Channel. CBE is videotaping more programs and they are now being added to the "BCA Center for Buddhist Education Channel" at the YouTube site.

New videos include: "Buddhism and Agriculture Symposium" and Dharmathon presentations which took place during the BCA National Council Meeting, March 3-6, 2016 in Visalia, California, and "Mindfulness" keynote speech by Rev. Henry Adams at the TechnoBuddha Conference, March 26, 2016.

Explore Jodo Shinshu Buddhism Globally and Beyond at the Jodo Shinshu Center, August 19-21, 2016



Keynote Speakers:

Dr. Ugo Dessi
University of Leipzig, Germany



Dr. Elisabetta Porcu
University of Cape Town, South Africa

What would it mean for Jodo Shinshu Buddhism to be recognized as a worldwide religion?

How might that impact diverse cultures, societies and the world? How does that look, sound and feel? Are we already experiencing Jodo Shinshu beyond the borders of nationality, ethnicity, language, culture, history and philosophical traditions?

The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) and Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) will present two special educational opportunities this summer featuring scholars, **Dr. Ugo Dessi**, University of Leipzig, Germany and **Dr. Elisabetta Porcu**, University of Cape Town, South Africa, along with other distinguished scholars and speakers (to be announced). IBS will present a symposium on Friday, August 19. The Summer Pacific Seminar, co-sponsored by IBS and CBE, will begin on the evening of August 19 and end on August 21 at noon. All events will be hosted at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California.

Both Dr. Dessi and Dr. Porcu were born in Sardinia, Italy, studied Buddhism in India and Japan, and taught at the University of Leipzig in Germany. Each has a Ph.D. in religious studies. This husband and wife team lived in Japan for six years, and in 2013 were Scholars in Residence at the Buddhist Study Center in Hawaii. There, Dr. Dessi shared his findings on Japanese Buddhism in global society and contemporary Shin Buddhist ethics, while Dr. Porcu worked with colleagues and discussed themes related to Japanese Buddhism with students and community members.

August 19, 1 pm – 5 pm - IBS Symposium, *Shin Buddhism and Globalization*

This symposium will examine the phenomenon of globalization, the expanding interchange of ideas, world views, products, and cultures, including religious traditions, throughout the world. Scholars will offer perspectives on the manner in which Shin Buddhism is being impacted through its participation in this dynamic, global process, and what the future may hold for the Jodo Shinshu tradition.

Shin Buddhism and Globalization Symposium is Free & Open to the Public

This Symposium is presented by the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) in association with the Yehan Numata Endowment. In celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Institute of Buddhist Studies & the 10th Anniversary of the Jodo Shinshu Center.

August 19-21 - Summer Pacific Seminar, *Jodo Shinshu Beyond Borders*

Prof. Ugo Dessi, Prof. Elisabetta Porcu, and other speakers will explain that Jodo Shinshu has become known throughout the world and, as a result, is both the agent and object of change within a global exchange between religions, cultures, nations, and values. In other words, what does it really mean to say that Jodo Shinshu has become a worldwide religion?

*Presented by the Institute of Buddhist Studies & BCA Center for Buddhist Education
Supported in part by the Sudhana Fund*

For more information visit: shin-ibs.edu or BuddhistChurchesofAmerica.org
CBE@bca.org or Phone: (510) 809-1460

August 20-21, 2016

JSCC August Workshop at Eko-Haus in Dusseldorf, Germany



Eko-Haus (www.eko-haus.de) is a Japanese cultural center that opened in 1993 with support from Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata, founder, Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (BDK).

The 2016 Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) August Workshop will be held at the Ekoji/Eko-Haus in Dusseldorf, Germany this August 20 & 21.

Traditionally held at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California, USA, this change of venue will allow more of our European Sangha to participate and will encourage JSCC students to meet them.

Tentative activities will include a panel of instructors, student presentations, and lectures. Participating JSCC instructors include Rev. Jerry Hirano, Salt Lake Buddhist Temple (Buddhist Churches of America); Rev. James Martin, Calgary Buddhist Temple (Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada); Rev. Kazunori Takahashi, Kapaa Hongwanji Mission and Lihue Hongwanji Mission (Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii), and special guest Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop, Buddhist Churches of America. There will be JSCC students and alumni from the UK, Germany, Belgium, Brazil (tentative) and USA. This event is open to current or past JSCC students and their spouses.

Questions may be directed to JSCC Office at Hongwanjioffice@bcabq.org

The JSCC August Workshop will precede the 18th European Shin Conference (ESC 18) held August 23–26 in Antwerpen, Belgium (about 2 hours by car from Dusseldorf). Participants are encouraged to stay to attend the ESC 18.



BCA Education News & Highlights - Live a Real Life!

“Spring Training” for Ministers’ Assistants at the Jodo Shinshu Center, March 17-19, 2016

The first of four MAP sessions for 2016 occurred at the JSC in March, as eleven ministers assistants, six new Tokudo candidates, some IBS students, and two guests gathered to study how to help bring the Dharma to the sangha members at their temples. Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, introduced a young visiting minister’s assistant from Europe. Prof. Keiko Toro who is a visiting professor from Japan also attended. Tokudo ordination is scheduled for July in Kyoto, Japan. The Fall MAP will take place in Chicago at the Midwest Buddhist Temple in September.



Highlights of the event included talks by Bhante Seelawimala (right), who discussed “What is Enlightenment?” from a Theravada perspective, Dr. Mark Blum (left) on the Tannisho, and Rev. Henry Adams (not pictured) on Fundamentals of Jodo Shinshu.

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

Youth Minister’s Assistant is Certified at Berkeley

By Tara Umemoto
Berkeley Buddhist Temple

I am Tara Umemoto, daughter of Keith Umemoto and Paula Mishima. I was born and raised in Sacramento with my younger sisters Allie and Kayla. I began attending the Buddhist Church of Sacramento when I was in the fourth grade and took Rev. Bob (Oshita)’s Metta Padma class in the fifth grade, which sparked my interest in Buddhism. I was fortunate enough to attend the sixth Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) retreat in 2010. Since then I have been helping out at the church in any way I can, and when I went to college I began going to the Berkeley Buddhist Temple. Here, I have been fortunate to meet such a welcoming community and to be able to continue my study of Buddhism.

I graduated from UC Berkeley in 2015 majoring in Social Welfare and minoring in Education and am currently an AmeriCorps VISTA member working with the Oakland Unified School District in the Health and Wellness unit. I hope to pursue a career in Social Work, while still helping at the temple when I can. I am grateful to everyone who has helped me on this path and for their continuous support.



On February 21, 2016, Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America, certified Tara Umemoto as a minister’s assistant at the Berkeley Buddhist Temple.

2016 BCA Educational Events

Programs subject to change. Events at the Jodo Shinshu Center unless otherwise noted.
This is a partial listing.

April 15 * IBS Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies Symposium: Shinran and Continental Philosophy: Shinran, Heidegger, Levinas. 9am-5pm. Supported by the GTU Asia Project. For more information, visit shin-ibs.org

April 29-May 1 * 2016 Federation of Dharma School Teachers’ Leagues Conference: Dharma for Dummies III: What Would Renny Shonin Do? At the Buddhist Church of Sacramento. Hosted by Northern District DSTL. For details, visit bcadharmaschool.wikispaces.com/2016+FDSTL+Conference

May 3-5 * Minister’s Continuing Education Seminar: East Meets West: Jodo Shinshu from Higashi and Nishi Perspectives. Dr. Mark Blum and Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto continuing the discussion for ministers.

May 13-15 * Ohara School of Ikebana exhibition, including flower arrangement demonstration. Hosted by the JSC as part of the 10th Anniversary Commemoration.

May 20 * Gotan-e. A celebration of Shinran Shonin’s birthday. Service Dharma message by Rev. Jerry Hirano, Salt Lake Buddhist Temple. 6:30-8 pm.

June 9-11 * Tokudo Preparatory Training #3.

June 24-26 * Buddhist Art & Book Fair. Art Exhibit: “Seeing the Wisdom of Compassion” by the late Tsuneo Iwasaki and related lecture by Dr. Paula Arai, Sat. 11 am. Exhibit Fri. 3-8:30 pm, Sat. 10 am-4 pm, Sun. 10am-2 pm. Book discussion with author Caroline Brazier (*The Other Buddhism: Amida Comes West*), Fri. 6:30-8 pm.

August 19 * IBS Symposium: Shin Buddhism & Globalization. 1-5 pm.

August 19-21 * Summer Pacific Seminar: Jodo Shinshu Beyond Borders. Keynote speakers: Dr. Ugo Dessi and Dr. Elisabetta Porcu. (See article on page 4.)

August 20-21 * Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course August Workshop, in Dusseldorf, Germany. (See article on page 4.)

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

The Dharmakara Series: Our Lifelong Learning Challenge

This is the second part of a five-part guest series on the Juseige. We hope you enjoy it.

Reflections on the Juseige: Our Great Benefactor

By Rev. Henry Adams

Many of our central liturgies, such as *Juseige* and *Sanbutsuge*, are excerpts from the *Sutra on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life Delivered by Shakyamuni Buddha*, which is often referred to as the *Larger Sutra*. In that sutra, Shakyamuni Buddha tells the story of Dharmakara Bodhisattva, a king who renounced his throne and established vows to create a Pure Land where all beings can realize freedom from suffering. The second verse of the *Juseige* is a powerful expression of the Buddha’s Great Compassion:

GA O MU RYO KO
FU I DAI SE SHU
FU SAI SHO BIN GU
SEI FU JO SHO GAKU

If, for countless kalpas to come,
I should not become a great benefactor
And save all the destitute and afflicted everywhere,
May I not attain perfect enlightenment.

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

Shakyamuni goes on to describe how those vows were fulfilled when Dharmakara Bodhisattva realized perfect awakening and became Amida Buddha.

You may be wondering, “If the vows have been fulfilled, why do I still see people suffering all around me?” The logic of the *Larger Sutra* is that through the fulfillment of Amida Buddha’s vows, a Realm of Peace and Bliss, or Pure Land, exists as the potential for all beings to realize freedom from suffering. Those who continue to suffer have not yet realized Birth in Amida Buddha’s Pure Land, but all have the potential to be born there. Therefore, ultimate freedom from suffering is assured for all beings. When we open our eyes to that reality, our path to awakening will be settled.

Following the observance of memorial services for Shinran’s wife Eshinni and their daughter Kakushinni, I had an interesting conversation with a Sangha member about the following passage from a letter that Eshinni wrote to Kakushinni when nearing the end of her life:

I myself will be going to the [Pure Land] paradise very soon. There everything can be seen without any darkness, so be sure to say the nembutsu and come to the paradise to be with me.

(*Letters of the Nun Eshinni*, trans. James C. Dobbins, p. 40)

In our conversation, the Sangha member said that when she first encountered this letter, she was troubled because on the surface, the Buddhist Pure Land that Eshinni describes sounds similar to the idea of “heaven.” As we looked deeper into the meaning of this letter, we came to understand that Eshinni’s words are a beautiful expression of bodhisattva compassion, the wish for her daughter and all beings together to realize a life free from the darkness of ignorance and illuminated by the great compassion of the Buddha’s wisdom. This understanding of Eshinni’s words enabled us to appreciate how the motherly kindness she shows in this letter touches our own lives, even though we live 750 years later with our modern scientific way of looking at the world.

Shortly before Shakyamuni Buddha departed from this world, he advised the Sangha “Rely on the meaning, not on the words.” (Quoted in the *Collected Works of Shinran*, p. 241). This is an encouragement for all who study the Dharma look beyond the literal expressions of the sutras and reflect on their deeper meaning. At the same time, it is also important to pursue one’s doubts, questions, and curiosities until one’s mind is settled. In the end, you may find that the settled mind arises from a deep appreciation of profound reality that transcends rational thinking. Nevertheless, we each need to go through the challenges of grappling with the teachings in our own way, rather than relying solely on the experiences of others. That is why Shakyamuni Buddha also advised the Sangha to, “rely on the dharma, not on people who teach it.”

Viewed in this manner, the Pure Land that Eshinni describes in her letter to Kakushinni provides a guiding principle and clear direction for Buddhist practice in this very life and this very moment. With our destination in the realm of awakening clearly illuminated before us, we practice patience and kindness toward the people around us as we mutually support each other on our respective paths to freedom from the darkness of ignorance. In this way the Amida Buddha’s vow to “save all the destitute and afflicted everywhere” is fulfilled in our lives. *Namo Amida Butsu*

BCA Bookstore News by Gayle Noguchi



Now available: **16 oz. Stainless Steel Tumbler**, \$20.00

No more plastic water bottles and disposable lidded coffee cups! This sleekly designed tumbler in black matte with grey accent, and lavender *sagarifuji no mon* (wisteria crest) is constructed with a stainless steel outer wall, vacuum insulation, and copper-plated stainless steel inner wall. Features easy one-touch push-button lid and locking mechanism. Keeps hot drinks hot for 8 hours and cold drinks cold for 16 hours.

Also available: ***Ants in Your Pants, Worms in Your Plants! (Gilbert Goes Green)***

by Diane deGroat, hardback, \$16.99

Gilbert must come up with an Earth Day project for class, but all the good ideas seem to be taken! Gilbert wants to do something original – and then finally, after much brainstorming, Gilbert comes up with a great idea. Learn about what we all can do to care for the earth. For ages 4-8.



These and other books and unique items will be available at the Federation of Dharma School Teachers’ League (FDSTL) Conference, Saturday, April 30, 2016 at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento. Or to order, go to www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org and click on the BCA Bookstore link or contact gnoguchi@bcahq.org / 510-809-1435. Open Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.



IBS Celebrates 50 Years as a Graduate School

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

This year, 2016, the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) is celebrating its 50th year as a graduate school for Buddhist learning. Historically, the initial founding date for what was to become IBS is considered to be 1949. It took many years of study and deliberation to forge the foundation for a school. One point extremely clear to the leaders at that time was that they wanted to establish a high level educational institution to train ministers in America in English.

In February of 1966, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) National Council proceeded to establish an institution of Buddhist studies under the leadership of Bishop Shinsho Hanayama. Shintaro Ito, from Stockton, became the campaign director for the special scholarship fund drive. A total sum of \$300,000 was pledged by devout Buddhists across the country. A school building was necessary, so the house at 2717 Haste Street in Berkeley was purchased for \$110,000 for the education and training of potential American-born ministers. The Institute of Buddhist Studies was officially



Top photo: Rev. Dr. Matsumoto introduces IBS team and asks for IBS alumni in the room to stand: they include Rev. Umezu, Rev. Hirano and many other ministers and minister's assistants. Bottom photo: Prof. Eisho Nasu (left) of Ryukoku University presented at a recent IBS Ryukoku Lecture, one of the many programs throughout the year.

started on October 1, 1966. This marked the beginning of the first Buddhist ministerial school in the United States.

In March of 1966, the BCA Board of Directors had decided to call the new educational in-

stitution the Buddhist Institute of America. However, in June, Rev. Kanmo Imamura, Executive Director of the Institute pointed out that the normal English form of an institute's name demanded a change to the

Institute of Buddhist Studies. This was authorized accordingly.

From its outset, the IBS was looked upon as having two main objectives: a high level of instruction leading to *Tokudo* and *Kyosbi* ordinations, and a Master's Degree program. In October 1966, a committee on the ministerial training committee curriculum under the chairmanship of C. Birch had pointed out the necessity of securing some form of accreditation for the IBS. Changes in the California Education Code and the wishes of the trustees required the IBS to be incorporated and organized as a graduate school. Thanks to the hard work of Rev. Haruyoshi Kusada, a full program of classes was already being offered.

The formal establishment of the institution was completed on May 14, 1970 when a letter was received from H.E. Summers of the State Department of Education that the IBS had been approved as a degree-granting institution under Section 29007 (A) (3) of the California Education Code.

In 1971, the IBS officially adopted for public use the title: The Institute of Buddhist Studies: A Graduate School for Buddhist Ministry and Research.

To be continued

Rev. Hirano

Continued from Front Page

who built the temples of Central and Northern California and the Northwest Districts of BCA. Southern District also had many farmers. These farmers built the foundation for this amazing organization we call the Buddhist Churches of America.

These farmers loved our Buddhist Churches of America. They loved their temples and realized they were partners in the dream of BCA. Mr. Calvin Doi stressed at his informative talk at the IBS [Institute of Buddhist Studies] symposium, "Farmers are able to see the interconnectedness of it all. Farmers are able to act upon the basic Buddhist teaching of the interconnectedness of all life." Our local temples are BCA and BCA is our local temples. I am so grateful for these farmers and their sacrifices.

However, I have a deep concern for the future of BCA, not because of the lack of ministers. I was blown away by our new BCA ministers. Listening to their Dharma talks yesterday at the Dharmathon made me so proud of Revs. Shibata, Hamasaki, Sekiya, Quon, and Wondra. The future as far as the talent of ministers looks very bright. It is also a bit of a relief, for many years ago my teacher and mentor, Rev. Russell Hamada, told me that one of the main goals and responsibilities of becoming a *Kaikyoshr** is to work towards molding future BCA ministers. It is our responsibility to ensure that the future generation be better than our generation of ministers, in training and compensation. Yesterday's Dharmathon showed me that one part of Rev. Hamada's directive has been accomplished; the new ministers are definitely better trained than my generation. However, what worries me is that these new ministers who have dreams for the future of BCA, just as my young Minister self once did almost 30 years ago, may not have such a bright future. They too love the Buddhist Churches of America or they would not have jumped through so many hoops to become BCA ministers.

However, as a result of the success of the Japanese Americans, we have lost the farmers within our Sanghas. The farmers didn't want their children to have to labor as hard as they did. These farmers wanted their children to go to college and become professionals: engineers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, something other than farmers. Although this dream was realized, it is rather disappointing that so many of these children of farmers not only left the farms but have lost the *attitude* and *spirit* of the farmers of previous generations.

This is what I mean by a Farmer's Attitude and Spirit: Self-sacrifice and perseverance for an outcome that they could not immediately see, but believed in; Generosity, optimism, and strong work ethic for their family's future well-being; Vision and investment in the future, and less concern about immediate rewards; [and] Taking risks in the face of hardship and uncertainty. "Gambling" was a part of their life.

To be continued in the May issue

*a minister ordained in Japan to work outside of Japan

President's Letter – 2015 Annual Report The BCA Endowment Foundation: Long-term Growth for Our Future

Dear BCA Members and Friends:

The Buddhist Churches of America Endowment Foundation (BCAEF) has invested donated funds in equities and bonds, and the income derived from these investments has supported many BCA and Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) programs for many years. The equities and bonds market has fluctuated over the years, but the long-term results are very positive. For example, the annual return for the Standard and Poor's 500 Total Return Stock Index has been +8.2% on the average over the past 20 years.

The long-term investment has grown the generous donations that form the basis of the funds held by the BCAEF. Investing for the long term implies that over shorter periods the BCAEF's portfolio will

experience the ups and downs of the market—and 2015 was no exception. Macro-economic headlines including concerns over the U.S. Federal Reserve's change in monetary policy, the future path of China's growth, and sharp declines in commodity prices led to a heightened level of stock, bond, and currency market volatility. This volatility negatively impacted returns across all asset classes during 2015. The fluctuation in the market has affected the BCAEF's investments in the following way: for 2015, the BCAEF's Growth portfolio returned -3.0%, the BCA Fund portfolio returned -0.4%, the Growth and Income portfolio returned -1.9%, and the Income portfolio returned +0.1%.

Investing for the long term will continue to provide the BCA Endowment Foundation the best source of income to

distribute to BCA and IBS programs.

The BCAEF received a total of \$1,286,450⁽¹⁾ in donations in 2015, disbursed \$940,470 to BCA and IBS programs and experienced a net loss of -\$603,754 on investments. Of the donations received, \$379,014 was contributed towards permanent income producing endowments and \$970,436 was given for programs.

Twenty-one (21) affiliated organizations invest with the BCAEF in custodial accounts. An additional \$410,224 was deposited to custodial accounts in 2015.

The BCA, IBS, and the BCAEF are working together in a joint effort for fundraising development. A Joint Development Committee has been established and the BCAEF has hired a Development Assistant

Charles Ozaki,
President,
BCA
Endowment
Foundation



(Christopher Sujarit) to support its efforts. Details regarding the work of the Joint Development Committee was presented at the National Council Meeting.

The BCA Endowment Foundation asks all members and friends to support the good works of the BCA and IBS for all of our benefits. Please consider contributing and contact Hideaki Mizuno, Executive Director at the BCA Endowment Foundation if you need any assistance.

In Gassho,
Charles Ozaki,
President, BCA
Endowment Foundation

⁽¹⁾ Including \$331,770 unspent donation pool transferred from BCA.



THANK
YOU
for your
gifts to the

BCA
Dana
Program!

Visit: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org

Haven't heard of the Dana program?

Download the brochure or donate online or ask your local temple leadership for a Dana brochure. Gassho.

IBS Symposium: Shinran and Continental Philosophy

The Institute of Buddhist Studies Center for Contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies will present a symposium titled "Shinran and Continental Philosophy: Shinran, Heidegger, Levinas," on Friday, April 15, 2016 from 9 am to 5 pm at the Jodo Shinshu Center, 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Leading scholars who will present include Dr. Dennis Hirota, Professor Emeritus, Ryukoku University; Dr. Charles Hallisey, Harvard Divinity School; Dr. Rein Raud, University of Helsinki; Dr. Bret Davis, Loyola Marymount University; Dr. Leah Kalmanson, Drake University; and Dr. Ryan Coyne, University of Chicago Divinity School.

Responses will be by Dr. Thomas Sheehan, Stanford University; Dr. James Fredericks, Loyola Marymount University; and Rev. Gregory Gibbs, Pasadena Buddhist Temple. This symposium is free and open to the public.

IBS

Continued from Front Page

and *The Shin Buddhist Classical Tradition: A Reader in Pure Land Teaching*, vols. 1 and 2.

Dr. Bloom is the third recipient of the prestigious IBS President's Award. Previous recipients were Dr. Taitetsu Unno (2014) and Dr. Lewis Lancaster (2015). It is indeed appropriate that this honor comes during the fiftieth year of IBS' existence as a seminary and graduate school. As the well-known Buddhist magazine *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* has stated, "Bloom is widely regarded as one of the most important American figures of the past five decades in the Jodo Shin school of Buddhism."

The President, Board of Trustees, faculty, staff and students of IBS join together in expressing their respect and gratitude to Dr. Alfred Bloom for his many contributions to IBS and the understanding of Jodo Shinshu throughout the world.

今年の法話

「裸にて生れてきたのに何不足」

開教使 安孫子 淨海 洋



Rev. Hiroshi Abiko

現役 引退 筆不精

ですが、勿体無いか、法輪に一筆書かしてもらうこととなった。その上、釈尊降誕「花まつり」の時節である。三度お参りしたルンビニが思い浮かぶと共に、各地の花御堂飾りつけや法要次第が顧みられる。

サンデースクールの子供さんが甘茶を漉ぎながらクスクスと楽しんでいるのも一つの「花まつり」シーンである。「どうしたの？」と尋ねると、「素っ裸で可愛そう。何か着せてあげてー！」であった。又、上海のエメラルド寺では、甘茶で濡れた誕生仏像を、全参拝者がタオルで拭くのが習慣である。三年前参拝させてもらった時は貧弱な農村であったルンビニが、世界に有名な日本建築家の丹下健三氏の思考で大規模（五マイル×五マイル）な聖地公園となり、色とりどり、大勢の観光客をあつめている。誕生仏のお話を聞きますと、お釈迦様は、お生まれなると同時に七歩進んで、天地を指し「天にも地にも、ただ我独り尊し」と宣言されたと言いますが、いくらなんでも生れたての赤ん坊にそんなことができそうには思えず、又、「我独り尊し」ということは独善主義のようで、抵抗を感じる方々は少なくないと思う。宗教とその儀式は子供たちのためと思っておられる方々や、自分はお寺に参る程、年を取っていないと思っている方々に以前から次の様に話かけている。

物事には事実と真実の在り方を考えることが大切で、それは事実はずしも真実とは限らない。たとえば、今日どこで災害があった

ということとは、事実であっても真実とはいえない。真実とは、それに依って、自分もひと共は無事であればならない。そして、真実とは人間が見出していく本当の価値を教えている。先の誕生仏のお話は、事実であったか無かったと問うよりも、そこに教えられる真実には何を意味しているのであらうかと思う心に真実心が芽生える。そして先ず無我を説く佛教では、独善はありえず、数え切れぬ程の因縁で、生まれ、お育ちを受け、生かされて頂いている、生命の尊厳と言いましようか、と考えるのが適当です。又、人間として生れてきた、と言うことは、誠にかげがいのないことである。それを奥深く自覚してこそ、自分をいとおしみ、自分の人生を意義あらしめようという覚悟が生まれてくる。しかも花御堂で素っ裸である誕生仏は、一切の飾りや、ごまかしを捨て、本当の自分にかえり、真実の願いを燃やしつつ生き抜くことを示している。

教えという字は、偏の「孝」と旁の「(ほく)」という字からなっている。「孝」とは、子供が大人に交わることを現し、学ぶ者、先達者を求めて近づくことを意味する。また「(ほく)」とは、人間の与える動作を意味している。「要するに、教とは求者と与える者が同時に逢ってこそ成立され、一方だけでは成立されない。禅の公案を百題収録する「碧巖録」(へきがらんろく)(十六題)に「卒喙同時」(そつたくどうじ)という教えがある。卒とは、雛が卵を破って誕生するにあたって、その雛がいよいよ生れる時がきて、卵の中からコツコツとつくことをいい、喙とは、その卵の中の音を聞いて、親鳥が嘴をもって、外から殻を破ってやることをいう。

その両者は、時間をへだたせず、呼吸ピッタリしてこそ、雛は誕生することができるのである。ただのチキンではあるが、親鳥が卵を温めながら、ジーンと殻の中の様子を聞いているのは親心というべきものであろう。その上、雛が殻の外側には親がいて、今か今かと待機しているのを認知していることも大切である。それと同じように、佛教を学び、生き、さらにお念仏に生きようと真剣に求める者は、自己の殻を破るお師匠、善知識が必要である。

こんな実話がある。その昔、江戸で手広く商いをしていた人が事業に失敗し、全部財産を失った。「もう、だめだ。」と江戸を逃れて死の旅に出た。「どこで死のうか？」と死ぬ場所を甲府まできてしまい、安宿に入った。夜、ふと枕元を見ると、貧弱な屏風に「裸にて生れてきたに何不足」と書かれた文字が薄目にとまっていた。それを見て、彼はハッとときぎいた。「自分は一切をなくして丸裸になってしまったと嘆いているが、もともと裸でこの世に生まれてきたのではなかったのか。本来の姿に戻っただけではないか。それなら、生れたときの気持ちになつて、セロからやりなおせばいいのだ。」と、気をとりなおした彼は、江戸に引き帰り、商いで大成したそうである。アメリカ人の諺に、「貧乏人とは持っているものが少ない人をいうのでなく、多くのものを欲する人を言う。」ともある。

裸で生れてきた者が、どうして不平などいえないでしょうか？ 量ることの知れない程の恩恵を受けているので今日までいたっている。「阿弥陀さん、有難うございます！」と両手をあわせられるこそ、よろこびのある、又、よろこばれる者である。門弟達が、日頃親鸞聖人に教えてもらった念仏往生の生き方に疑いを持ち、聞法、念仏に苦しみつつ関東より京都の聖人をたずね、その真意を問うた。聖人は自分自身の心中を開け、次のお言葉で返事なされた。「詮ずるところ、愚身におきてはかくのごとし。このうちは、念仏をとりて信じたてまつらんとも、またすてんとも、面々のおんはからいなりの。」「歎異抄」

決して冷淡につきはなしたお言葉でなく、門弟を思い、確かに育てようと願うお心です。合掌

3月1日より

林斉昭ラジヤン師が赴任

3月1日ついで、林斉昭(はやしなりあき)ラジヤン師がBCAに開教使として加わった。2014年のIOMPを受講した師はヴァージニア州の恵光寺に赴任する。

門徒さんに聞く

ダルマスクール教師、刈谷エミリー

今回はベニス仏教会の会長およびダルマスクールの教師をされている狩谷エミリーさんにお話をうかがった。

このインタビューは、BCAの次代をになう子供たちに仏教を伝えるダルマスクールの先生を紹介するものです。特に日英のバイリンガルで日米両方の文化を知っておられる方ということで、狩谷さんにインタビューをお願いしました。

狩谷さんのご出身はどこからですか？

ロサンゼルススのベニスで生まれ育ちました。父は和歌山、母は茨城出身で、私は新2世です。

いつからお寺にお参りするようになったのですか？

小学校五年生の時からです。バスケットボールチームの友達みんなお寺に行っていたので、私もお参りするようになりました。松林忠芳先生が最初の先生でした。

日本語はどこで学ばれましたか？

小さい頃は両親からと地元の日本語学校です。それと夏休みには日本の祖父母の家に滞在していました。日本のテレビ番組を見たり、音楽を聴いたり、雑誌を読んだりするのが好きで、楽しく日本語を学びました。大学はUCCLAに行き、3年生の時は東京のICUに1年留学しました。卒業後、JETプログラムに応募したら、大阪府庁で通訳や広報などの仕事をすることにになりました。滞在中に阪神大震災がおこり、カリフォルニアからの視察団を神戸に案内したことは印象に残っています。大阪には5年いました。



Emily Kariya, Dharma school teacher at Venice Buddhist Temple

今はサンタモニカ高校で日本語の先生をされているそうですね。今年で14年目です。大阪からロサンゼルスに戻った後、また日本に行き、和歌山大学で日本語教授法を学びました。それからカリフォルニア州立大ロングビーチ校で教師の資格を取りました。私は勉強することが好きなんですよ。

ダルマスクールはいつから教えているのですか？

高校生の時からです。日本に行っていたときはお休みしましたが、通算20年になります。私はとにかくお寺が好きで、大学生のときもお参りに行っていました。お寺は落ち着きますし、みんないい人なので、とても居心地がいいです。

ダルマスクールの生徒にはどのようなことにポイントをおいて教えていますか？

お念仏です。南無阿弥陀仏の意味を知り、理解することが中心です。やご本願のことが中心です。

中学生や高校生になると、そういう教えを素直に聞かないという声がありますが？

いえ、お念仏の教えはすっと入るようになってくるのです。お寺でお念仏のことを教えなければ、何を教えるのですか？と聞きたいです。ベニスのお寺の高校生たちは、お念仏は阿弥陀さまへの感謝のお念仏だと言っていることができますよ。松林先生、宮地先生、庵原先生、クワン先生のおかげで、お寺がお念仏をとらえやすい雰囲気になってきていると思います。先生方にほんとは感謝しています。

法輪

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二〇一六年度教化標語

「まことの人生を
歩もう」

4月は
花祭りの
法要が営まれます。
お寺にお参りして

全米開教使 ・代表者会議の開催

3月上旬にカリフォルニア州ヴァイセリア市で全米開教使会および寺院代表者会議が行われた。今年では中加教区の主催で、マリオートホテルが会場、中部カリフォルニアは農業が主要産業であることから、会議のテーマを「Cultivating the Buddha Dharma」とした。3月2日、3日に開教使会会議が行われ、会則に関する話が話し合われた。昨年からは6名の開教使および教師資格を有する僧侶が開教使会に加わったことに関連し、新しく開教使会に加わった会員は1年の研修期間中から投票権を持つことが決められた。また、開教使会議長の任期は2年で最長2期となった。



BCA National Council Meeting

3日午後には、IBSとCBE共催で「仏教と農業」を主題にしたシンポジウムが開催。アイダホ州の農家出身である原田マーヴィン開教使、龍谷大学の那須英勝教授、IBSの山岡誓願師、中加教区の門徒で農家の寺岡ジョーンズ氏、土井キヤルヴィン氏が話した。4日からの代表者会議では2016年度の予算の承認、BCAの付属団体や各コミッティーから活動報告などがなされた。投票により、今年度のBCA会員一

2016 BCA Kyokuchō and National Board cabinet



人当たりのBCAへの割り当て寄付金は、114ドル23セントとなった。4日午後、会議終了後に昨年から始められた法話会「ダルマソン」が行われた。ダルマソンでは開教使、および教師として寺院に駐在している新任の僧侶5名が10分ずつ法話をした。また、5日の会議終了後には「往生礼讃」のおつとめがされ、参加者全員で読誦した。参加者は「正直なところ、会議は退屈するところがあったのですが、ダルマソンやおつとめは、とても気持ちリフレッシュさせてくれました。梅津総長が提唱されている、仏法を中心とした会議 になってきているように思えます。会議に来てよかったです。」と好評であった。6日はヴァイセリア仏教会で永代経法要が営まれ、今年引退予定のカストロ・ドナルド、シアトル別院輪番が法話をした。法要後にBCA理事会員就任式が行われ、谷本ケン氏(ワッソンビル仏教会)が新理事長となった。(Photos by Michael Endo)

総長メッセージ

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

鉄道の旅は楽しいものです。先日西海岸のオックスナード仏教会とサンタバーバラ仏教会へご縁をいただき、アムトラックで往復しました。オークランドから片道10時間弱です。車で行っても7時間かかることを考えたら、そう長旅でもないと考えたからです。

アメリカのシステムは日本と違って、乗車するとき席番号を書いた紙を渡されます。そして、その席に座っていると車掌が来て切符の確認をします。そして、行き先を小さな紙に書いて荷物棚のへりの隙間に差し込むのです。他の座席を見てみるとそれぞれの頭の上に行き先を書いた紙切れがあります。皆安心した顔をして旅を楽しんでいるようです。もちろん、私の頭の上にはオックスナードと書かれた紙が挟まれていました。

ところで、人生の旅、一体私たちはどこに向かっていくのでしょうか。帰るとしたらどこに帰るのでしょうか。いつもも称えている南無阿彌陀仏の「南無」というインドの言葉を、親鸞聖人は「帰命」と訳されました。ここに「帰」という字が使われていることに深い意味があるようです。この言葉は、私たちにいのちの方向を示してくださいようです。

迷いを迷いと知らずにウロウロしている私たちに、呼びかけてくださる方がおられるのです。そして、私たちの帰るのを待っていてくださる世界があるのです。その世界に気付かされた人たちは、大安心して与えられたいのちをお念仏を称えながら、精一杯生き抜いていられました。そういう人たちの声を聞かせていただくのが、仏教会です。

四月には各地で「花まつり」の法要がお勧めされます。親鸞聖人は、阿彌陀如来はインドのブツダガヤに釈迦牟尼仏として形を現されて、私たちに真実の世界を教えてくださいと喜ばれました。私たちも、一緒におみりを聞かせていただき、安心して人生の旅を続けさせていただきます。

110周年に向けて

ワッソンビル仏教会(沿岸教区)は2017年11月に創立110周年を迎える。駐在開教使の花山勝清師は、創立記念のキックオフイベントとしてコンサートを行った。イベントは2月27日(土)に同仏教会、体育館で開催。花山師は、サンノゼで活躍する日系人音楽グループ「千鳥バンド」の演奏をバックに歌謡曲などを熱唱、門徒から大喝采を得た。

師は「親鸞聖人のみ教えがこの地に伝えられて110年続いているのですから、来年は歴代の開教使をお招きして細やかに楽しく祝賀会を開催したい」と思い、キックオフイベントを試みました。ご門徒さんだけでなく、近隣の市

Rev. Hanayama & Chidori Band



民の方も来場され、とても喜んでもらえたようです。ご寄付も予想以上に多くしていただけたのでとても満足です。」とイベントの成功を喜んだ。コンサートの様子はyoutubeで視聴できるので、「千鳥バンド」と「Watsonville」の語で検索。

MEMORIAL

「くぐら」と南無阿彌陀仏 岩崎常夫氏

以下は、英語欄に掲載されている「くぐら」の絵の解説。

新井先生のお話によると、岩崎氏のご逝去も、お宅に一年を通じて掛けられている一枚の絵があるそうです。それは岩崎氏が最晩年に手掛けられた満開の桜の絵です。岩崎氏が体調を崩された後、お医者様から癌の診断が下され、ご家族は病名を本人に伏せておられました。しかし、ご逝去後、ご自宅にあった医学辞典のまさにその癌の記載されているところに岩崎氏の手で線が引かれていることをご家族がお見付けになりました。迫り来る死を意識しながら先生はいつもと変わりなく自室に入って何か絵を描いておられたようです。それが先生のお好きな桜の花の絵でした。ある年新井先生が岩崎氏の残された紙類を見せたいという機会に恵まれ、岩崎先生へどうぞ見つけてほしいと思つものがあれば見つけさせてくださいと祈る気持ちで一枚一枚開いていったところ、未完成の一連の桜の絵が何枚も出てきました。ご自宅に飾られていた一枚は屏風絵のような未完の大作の一部だったのです。そして薄い桜色の花びらに寄りそうように赤い絵の具で書き込まれていたのは「南無阿彌陀仏」という六文字でした。「南無阿彌陀仏」という祈りをこれから風に任せて散り行く桜に嫁して刻み付けられたのでしよう。先生は「願わくは花の下にて春死なんそのきさらぎの望月のころ」と歌った西行のように桜の花咲く季節に旅立って行かれたそうです。(IBS職員、稲石さやか)