



WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America



Seated at the head table for the Oct. 29 retirement ceremony at the Midwest Buddhist Temple for Rev. Ron Miyamura are, clockwise from left, Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Todd and Connie Tsuchiya, Carl and Harumi Ichikawa, and Elaine and Rev. Ron Miyamura. (Courtesy of Carl Ichikawa)

MBT Expresses Its Heartfelt Gratitude to Rev. Ron Miyamura's Years of Service

Crowd of 200 Gathers in Chicago to Honor, Celebrate, Say 'Goodbye'

Editor's note: The following article appeared in the November 2023 issue of the Midwest Buddhist Temple's The Bulletin newsletter. The Wheel of Dharma is pleased to reprint the article with the permission of the MBT Bulletin.

By Ellen Dunleavy
Midwest Buddhist Temple

It's no secret that the Midwest Buddhist Temple (MBT), a Jodo Shinshu temple, is all about gratitude.

We are, of course, grateful

for The Three Treasures and Amida's Primal Vow. But on Oct. 29, we also expressed our thanks to our beloved Resident Minister Rev. Ron Miyamura. And when I say we, I mean we — 200 of sensei's fans traveled from near and far to honor, celebrate and say "goodbye."

A fantastic spread provided by Aloha Eats was augmented by rice and salads prepared by temple members. And there was pie — actually 32 mostly home-baked pies! Rev. Ron really likes pie!

After a delicious lunch, a brief bio of Rev. Ron was

read, followed by a slide show featuring early and not-so-early images of sensei along with heartfelt messages from Sangha well-wishers.

Many tributes followed, first by Cheral Tsuchiya from the Twin Cities Buddhist Sangha, who credited Sensei for sticking with the group's somewhat unorthodox ways and introducing taiko (as he did for several other temples) to Minnesotans.

Elaine Matsushita read her adaptation of Shel Silverstein's book "The

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Breaking Down Arbitrary Barriers, Labels



By Rev. Ron Miyamura
Midwest Buddhist Temple

This is my last Dharma message as an active kaikyoshi minister. I retired at the end of October.

It was 50 years ago that I first came to Chicago and the Midwest Buddhist Temple, on Aug. 1, 1973. Of course, I was out of the active ministry for 29 years between 1981 until 2011. So, I am ending my second go-around as the Resident Minister

since 2011.

For the Dharma message today, I would like to try to share my core message, which is to continue to share the Dharma with everyone.

When I arrived at MBT 50 years ago, I could count on one hand the number of non-Japanese Americans at the temple. Of course, MBT started as an ethnic church in 1944 and, 30 years later, it was just beginning to expand beyond that core membership.

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Editor's note: Rev. Ron Miyamura delivered the following Dharma message on Oct. 22 prior to his retirement at the end of October. The Wheel of Dharma is reprinting his message, with some modifications, with his permission.

Thoughts of a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist and War in Gaza

Palo Alto MA Shares Struggles Over What Shinran Shonin Would Say

Editor's note: Sydney Shiroyama, a Minister's Assistant at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple, submitted the following article for the PABT Sangha newsletter. The Wheel of Dharma is reprinting the article with the permission of Shiroyama.

By Sydney Shiroyama
Palo Alto Buddhist Temple



Sydney Shiroyama

In high school, my friends often asked me about the Buddhist take on social justice issues.

"What do Buddhists think about abortion?" "How about gay rights?" "Do Buddhists eat meat?" "Are you allowed to own a gun?" Sometimes I had an answer, but for other issues, I wasn't sure. I knew I had my stance, but I didn't know what I was "sup-

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NorCal District Joint Celebration Is Held

By Karen Adachi
Buddhist Church of Sacramento

An estimated crowd of 200 people gathered Oct. 8 at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento for a special Northern California District 850th and 800th Joint Celebration service, celebrating Shinran Shonin's 850th birthday and the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Jodo Shinshu tradition.

This special service was sponsored by the Northern California Minister's Association and Sangha members from each of the Northern California District temples

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Rev. Hirano Is Honored



Rev. Jerry Hirano, shown with Rev. Dr. Carmela Hirano-Javellana, is honored for his 30th anniversary as Resident Minister of the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple at the Mountain States District Conference. For story, see Page 6. (Courtesy of Rev. Jerry Hirano)



BISHOP'S MESSAGE

Like the Mandalorian Motto: 'This Is the Way'



By Rev. Marvin Harada
Bishop of the BCA

This fall, I spoke at the Southern District Dharma School Teachers Conference hosted by the Orange County Buddhist Church.

The theme for the conference was taken from the popular TV series, "The Mandalorian," which is a spinoff of the "Star Wars" movies. In that show, there are a group of noble superhero warriors called Mandalorians. They have to follow a strict creed that doesn't allow them to take off their helmets ... ever. Their motto is: "This is the way."

Buddhism is very much a "way" or a "path." We have expressions like "Butsodo," which can mean the path of the Buddha, meaning the path that Shakyamuni Buddha tread, and it can also mean our path to become Buddha. The Chinese character for "the path" or "the way" is pronounced

"michi," by itself, or "do" in a compound, and it can be translated as "the way."

This same character is used in all of the martial arts and cultural arts of Japan. The martial arts of judo, kendo, and aikido all use this character. A tea ceremony is called "sado," or the way of tea. Ikebana or flower arrangement is called "kado," or the way of flowers.

it is used for the term "dendo," which means "to transmit or propagate the way."

My Sensei in Japan, Professor Shigaraki, used to speak of this a lot. He emphasized that there can be no transmission of the way, or "dendo" unless there is a deep "seeking" of the way, "gudo." Seeking the path, and transmitting the path, are like two pistons of an engine moving in synchro-

a lifelong undertaking. Like the Mandalorian who vows never to take off their helmet, our "creed" in Shin Buddhism is to be a lifelong listener and seeker of the Dharma. That is "the way" of the Nembutsu.

As a minister, I have had the wonderful privilege of knowing such lifelong seekers, listeners of the Dharma. At OCBC, the late Sachi Ochiai was such an individual. She attended every Sunday, every study class, every seminar, without fail. I used to teach Introduction to Buddhism at OCBC, and every time I taught it, Sachi would take the class.

I would say to her, "Sachi, you have taken this class maybe eight times. I don't think you need to take this class." But Sachi would reply, "Oh no. Every time I take it, I learn something new."

By her attendance, people new to Buddhism were also touched by her spirit of seeking and learning. Sachi would learn from them, from their questions and sharing in class. The new people also learned a lot from Sachi, from her humble spirit of learning, and of her lifelong spirit of seeking.

Like the Mandalorian, we can also say, "This is the way." To seek, to listen, to learn, to share the Dharma. This is the way.

That is why Buddhist education is not just for the newcomer to Buddhism. Learning, listening, and seeking is a lifelong process, a lifelong undertaking. Like the Mandalorian who vows never to take off their helmet, our "creed" in Shin Buddhism is to be a lifelong listener, and seeker of the Dharma. That is "the way" of the Nembutsu.

In Shin Buddhism, we also use this same character for "the way." We use the term, "Nembutsudo," or the way or path of the Nembutsu. Our life of Nembutsu, our path of the Nembutsu, is a life of listening to the Nembutsu, saying the Nembutsu, and reflecting on the meaning of the Nembutsu.

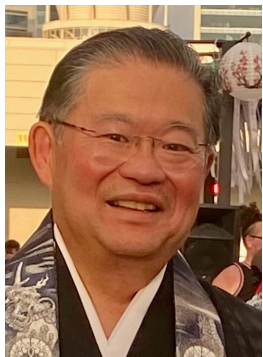
There is another use of this character for "the way" or "the path" in Buddhism. It is used for the term "gudo," which means to "seek the way," and

nism.

Buddhist education has that two-fold dimension. Study classes, seminars, lectures, discussions, or Dharma talks, are opportunities to listen to the Dharma, to dig deep into the teachings, and they are opportunities to share the teachings, to transmit the teachings to others.

That is why Buddhist education is not just for the newcomer to Buddhism. Learning, listening, and seeking is a lifelong process,

The Path to Happiness Through the Gate of Suffering



By Rev. Jerry K. Hirano
Salt Lake Buddhist Temple
Honeyville Buddhist Temple
Buddhist Church of Ogden
Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple

Whenever it comes to December, my mind seems to relax a little and I am allowed to look over the past 12 months and reflect on my life.

It isn't all pleasant, but for the most part, I love this holiday season from Thanksgiving through our Hoonko services in January. One part reflects on my past. I remember my family and the wonderful memories of those gatherings where we get together, eat, laugh, and try to love one another. I remember the incredible gifts of kindness and generosity I have been allowed to receive. I have tried to create similar memories for my own children.

"The dharma-gates, each distinct, number eighty-four thousand,

But the keen blade for severing ignorance, its effects, and the karmic causes of suffering,

Is the Name of Amida:

In a single utterance, one's karmic evil is completely swept away."

— "Collective Works of Shinran" (CWS), p. 37

However, the part that I have difficulty with is while I think of the joy in this holiday season for myself, family and friends, what about the incredible suffering in this world?

How many parents are there that cannot create similar memories for their children. I believe that even more difficult than a child not receiving their Christmas wish is the suffering of a parent who is not able to grant their child's wish.

We are in a time where our world seems to be especially angry — war in the Middle East, war in Ukraine, and war in our country over political ideologies. In each of these cases, it is without regard for the feelings of the other. It isn't up to me to say who is to blame. I think in almost all cases, such as those I have listed, both sides must take some responsibility.

However, these are huge problems and questions. What can I do to help alleviate this suffering?

It is a scientific fact that we human beings at a cellular level are hardwired to be bombu (foolish beings). We are filled with greed, anger and ignorance (bonno).

To all the criticism we receive as Buddhists, this should be the answer to those that call us pessimists. It isn't pessimism. It is a reality of the human condition. This may also help us better understand those people we just hate to be around.

Isn't this the beginning of any war? Is not understanding the other person and the suffering they may be feeling the basic instinct that grows into war? This idea that we humans down to the cellular level are filled with greed, anger and ignorance means that we can't help it.

Humans are instinctively driven to war. We are living out our instinctual animal selves. Our suffering, which is a result of our bonno, is not pessimism, but a truthful bit of scientific fact. However, it is also a scientific fact that this bonno can be modified and overcome with gratitude, compassion and mindfulness.

Gratitude, compassion and mindfulness are the characteristics of Amida Buddha. They are also characteristics each of us can strive for to be better human beings.

It is my deep wish that each of us will strive to work toward taming our bonno with gratitude, compassion and mindfulness, not just this holiday season, but everyday.

War is inevitable. However, is there something you can do to help to lessen the suffering of others? As you buy gifts for your family and friends, ask yourself, "Can I help others I may not know personally?"

As Amida Buddha looks to us as bombu as the object of love and compassion, how can we extend that to others in a similar manner? I realize that in Jodo Shinshu we are often



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BCA National Headquarters
1710 Octavia Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
Tel: (415) 776-5600
Fax: (415) 771-6293
www.BuddhistChurchesOfAmerica.org
Email: WODeditor@bcahq.org

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Editor:

Jon Kawamoto
Editor, Japanese Section:
Rev. Ryuta Furumoto
Print Production:
Jeffrey Kimoto

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thank You for Keeping Our Jodo Shinshu Legacy Alive



By **Terri Omori**
BCA President

I had the opportunity to meet with our Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) staff at its in-service meeting on Nov. 1.

Organized by BCA Director of Operations Gayle Noguchi, everybody gathered at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California. It was a time for sharing, learning, bonding and celebration. It was wonderful to hear chatter and laughter. The morning began with the employee recognition of two staff members.

We celebrated the one-year anniversary for administrative assistant Angela Bartolacci and

the 10-year anniversary for accounting assistant Gregg Sera.

Noguchi had some fun activities for everyone to get to know each other better. The main part of the in-service was a discussion on the core values of working for BCA. Words that described the staff's working environment included supportive, patience, mutual respect, mindful, constructive, and communicative.

We have a very dedicated staff who go above and beyond their specific job responsibilities. They want to be here for BCA. There was also a discussion on the BCA's vision and strategic plan regarding governance.

The Executive Committee has implemented a plan to have staff liaisons to each BCA committee. Some of our staff have already been engaged with some of the BCA committees. Each committee has a staff liaison as a part of their team. With the support of the staff, we hope for improved efficacy and communications. The meeting ended with a luncheon. Special thanks to Noguchi for coordinating this important in-service for our staff.

Following lunch, the staff



Gregg Sera, BCA accounting assistant, is honored for his 10-year anniversary by BCA President Terri Omori and Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada at a special in-service meeting on Nov. 1 at the Jodo Shinshu Center. (Courtesy of Michiko Inanaga)

was back in action, demonstrating going above and beyond, as employees met with BCA Endowment Foundation Director of Development Michiko Inanaga.

Final logistics were discussed and planned for the Chef's Table event. On Nov. 10, over 80 people gathered at the Jodo

Shinshu Center for "Chef's Table — Taste of the Dharma." Delectable dishes were prepared by Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Michael Endo, and CBE Youth Coordinator Koichi Mizushima.

Attendees were treated to entertainment by BCA Endowment Foundation Executive

Director Hideaki Mizuno, the band Sangha Plus, and a fire-side chat with Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto and Rev. Marvin Harada moderated by Michiko Inanaga.

It was a wonderful evening reconnecting with Dharma friends and meeting new friends. Thank you to Michiko for her leadership in coordinating a memorable event. Special acknowledgement to the over 30 volunteers, which included staff from BCA, BCA EF, and the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS), for their part in the success of the event. To the attendees, thank you for your presence and your continued Dana. As one Sangha, together, everyone moved the Dharma Forward. Your support allows BCA a path to develop the way Dharma is shared in the United States, for the IBS to cultivate our ministry, to make effective change, and to continue Shinran Shonin's teachings.

As we come to the end of the year, I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you for all that you do. I see churches

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BUTSU BUTSU

Please Give the Gift of Dana to Maui Relief

By **Rev. Brian Kensho Nagata**
Buddhist Church of Oakland

Can you believe we're at the end of another year? In a matter of days, we will be ringing the temple bell to say goodbye to our old habits, evils and human frailties and foibles and to welcome in a whole new set of habits, evils, human frailties, and foibles.

This past year and during the past several years of the pandemic, I am sure so many of us have lost something — we've lost loved ones, friends and community members, perhaps we've lost employment and opportunities and, most certainly, we have all lost unreclaimable time, but that's life as the wise One so taught us.

But as we come to this holiday season, I hope we can take a moment and think about our fellow Nembutsu brothers and sisters in Lahaina who have suffered so greatly in these past few several months.

To paraphrase Lahaina's sensei Rev. Ai Hironaka — "the white shirt, tie, pants, socks and shoes I am wearing today are all brand new, (everything except the underwear), all of these things were purchased with

donations from the Homba Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii and many others ... " (including from many of our fellow BCA members and temples). Sensei, his family, many temple members and citizens of Lahaina lost everything except the clothes on their backs.

Most of us today really don't need to receive any holiday gifts, and in the spirit of the season, in the spirit of compassion to our fellow Nembutsu followers and Dana, I'm going to ask my family and friends who normally give me a gift to please make a contribution to the BCA Social Welfare Fund or directly to the Homba Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii for their Lahaina Fund.

Our fellow Buddhists can most certainly benefit from our Dana to enable them to provide for their everyday necessities, more than I need another shirt or pair of socks. And after that, we all need to support the rebuilding of a new home for the Lahaina Sangha.

In the spirit of the season, giving to others is certainly the greatest gift we can receive. A happy and grateful now to all Namu Amida Butsu.



Bonbu Stories members, from left, Vicky Zhang, Miko Shudo, Miharū Okamura, Sydney Shiroyama, and Kendall Tani have created "Lantern Song," a new interpretation of a modern Bon Odori for the upcoming 125th anniversary of the BCA. (Courtesy of Luke Uyeda)

Celebrate BCA's 125th With New Song

Bonbu Stories' 'Lantern Song' Is Interpretation of Modern Bon Odori

By **Elise Fujimoto**
Shenjin Buddhist Temple

The BCA Music Bon Odori Taiko Subcommittee is excited to introduce a new Bon Odori commission for 2024. For the upcoming 125th anniversary of the Buddhist Churches of America, the committee wanted to promote young Buddhist voices to commemorate this momentous occasion.

Bonbu Stories is an Asian American Arts collaborative dedicated to using music as a medium for raw storytelling and building connections. Made up of six amazing young musicians, this group was

tasked with representing their interpretation of a modern Bon Odori — to express the sentiments of their generation's definition of Obon. Their process involved conversations and mentorship from community leaders such as Rev. Masao Kodani and Nobuko Miyamoto. The result is a beautiful new Bon Odori piece called "Lantern Song."

The lyrics of "Lantern Song" depict an intergenerational conversation between a living person and their departed loved ones. The piece does not shy away from the realities and mixed emotions that can be so prevalent around Obon such as loss, legacy, remembrance, and

celebration. They encourage us to dance, sing, and cherish the memories under the lanterns.

In celebration of the 125th anniversary of BCA, we encourage all temples to join us in celebration and remembrance of our loved ones and include "Lantern Song" in your Obon dance lists this summer. The audio recording and dance tutorial video is available on the BCA's "Obon: Gathering of Joy" webpage: <https://bit.ly/3QBQLFt>

For more information about "Lantern Song" and Bonbu Stories, visit the links below:

BCA "Lantern Song" launch

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MAs Certified at PABT, Vista



Four Palo Alto Buddhist Temple Minister's Assistants -- Joanne Gozawa, Igor Makasyuk, Sydney Shiroyama and Carl Yanari -- received their certificates on Sept. 26, 2021. Shown above, from left, are: PABT Resident Minister Rev. Dean Koyama, Gozawa, Makasyuk, Shiroyama, Yanari, and Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada. At the time, PABT was only holding online services. At right, Sterling Davenport was certified as a Minister's Assistant at the Vista Buddhist Temple on July 16. Shown, from left, are Rev. Jon Turner, Davenport, and Rev. Harada. (Courtesy of Rev. Landon Yamaoka and Rev. Harada)



Ministerial Assignments Are Announced

The Office of the BCA Bishop has made the following ministerial assignments:

Rev. Kurt Rye was reappointed as Kaikyoshi of the BCA and has been assigned to the New York Buddhist Church, Seabrook Buddhist Temple, and Ekoji Buddhist Temple, effective Sept. 1, 2023.

Rev. Ronald Miyamura of the Midwest Buddhist Temple retired from the BCA ministry on Oct. 31, 2023.

Rev. Todd Tsuchiya was appointed Kaikyoshi resident minister of the Midwest Buddhist Temple, effective Nov. 1, 2023.

Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, supervising minister of the White River Buddhist Temple, concluded this assignment on Oct. 31, 2023.

Rev. Cynthia Yasaki was appointed Kaikyoshi resident minister of the White River Buddhist Temple, effective Nov. 1, 2023.

Rev. Hirano

Continued from Page 2

taught that no matter what we may want to do to help others, it is tainted with our ego and greed. Nevertheless, if each of us tried to adjust our attitudes a bit — although it may not change the world as we would like — I believe we could still help to alleviate

some of the suffering that is so prevalent.

The bells of Christmas rung by the Salvation Army volunteers remind me of the sound of enlightenment. Just as the gate of suffering leads to the path of happiness, these bells of enlightenment show us the pain and suffering in the world. The gate of suffering can lead us to our own path to happiness and

possibly at least shed some light on the path for others.

On behalf of myself and my family and BCA's Center for Buddhist Education staff, I thank you for your support throughout the year.

Please join us in strengthening our Sanghas with kindness, gratitude and compassion. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Happy Hoonko! Namō Amida Butsu



President's Message

Continued from Page 3

and temples thriving thanks to the efforts of their ministers, leaders and members. We have Sangha across the continental United States, which includes our BCA Individual members. There are various programs to be enjoyed by all ages. We have a rich tradition that embraces all. Thank you for keeping our Jodo Shinshu legacy alive through your selfless giving and compassionate action.

Wishing you a wonderful, memorable holiday season.

At left: Angela Bartolacci, BCA administrative assistant, is honored for her one-year anniversary by BCA President Terri Omori and Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada on Nov. 1. (Courtesy of Michiko Inanaga)



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that "The Bodhi Tree" was composed by Linda Castro as part of a Seattle Betsuin Dharma School play "The Bodhi Tree Lesson" by Janet Takahashi and Linda Castro?

"The Bodhi Tree" gatha video is featured this month on the BCA Music webpage at: <https://www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/music>

Bonbu Stories

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webinar recording: <https://bit.ly/40FxOpW>

Bonbu Stories website:

<https://bonbustories.art/>

Bonbu Stories Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/bonbustories/>

Fujimoto is a member of the BCA Music Bon Odori Taiko Subcommittee.

BONBU STORIES
"LANTERN SONG"

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS OF THE BCA

<https://bit.ly/40FxOpW>

2024 BCA
NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

EMBRACING THE DHARMA WITH HOPE AND JOY

VIRTUAL
February 16 Ministers' Association
February 17 Workshops

IN-PERSON
February 23 & 24 National Council Meeting

VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON
February 24 IBS Symposium
February 25 Eitaikyo Service at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento

Hosted by the
Northern California District Temples



Northern California District's Joint Celebration Was Beautiful, Moving



By Rev. Candice Shibata
Buddhist Church of Stockton

that this celebration occurs every 50 years, which made me realize that I may not be able to witness the next commemorative service. In 50 years, I will be 95 years old if I am fortunate to live that long. Because of this realization, this service reminded me of how fortunate I am to have encountered the Buddha-Dharma through Shinran Shonin's dedicated efforts.

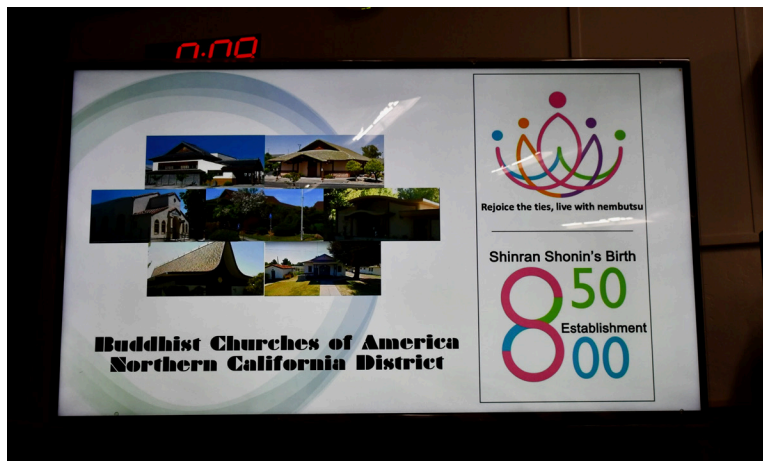
This realization and my appreciation grew during the entire service. Each component of this gathering encompassed and seemed to express the deep appreciation of the Dharma from all of the attendees.

I watched Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada in amazement as he ascended the raiban and offered the dedication of the service, which reminded us of the importance of this gathering. Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto expressed his deep appreciation of Shinran Shonin's efforts and also reminded us of Venerable Shinran's own struggles and searching. The voices of the Sangha, as we chanted and sang together, resonated with deep meaning of being in community together and how connected we are as we collectively praised Amida Buddha and Shinran Shonin.

Following the service, I heard many attendees mention how beautiful this musical service was and how they never had an opportunity to chant "Shoshinge" in such a melodic way. Even hearing the gatha,



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada poses in the above photo with guest speaker IBS President Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto and Rev. Michael Endo, along with the Northern California District ministers, from left, Rev. Noritaka Imada, Rev. Candice Shibata, and Rimban Rev. Yuki Sugahara. At left is a sign of the district's special 850th and 800th Joint Celebration service, celebrating Shinran Shonin's 850th birthday and the 800th anniversary of the founding of Jodo Shinshu teaching. (Photos courtesy of Cathy Fujimori)



As the Northern California Ministers' Association embarked on planning a districtwide 850th and 800th celebration service to commemorate the establishment of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and Shinran Shonin's birthday, I became quickly overwhelmed at the task at hand.

Of course, a gathering such as this had many moving parts and getting lost in all of its details to ensure that everything went smoothly was something that I was guilty of. However, due to the help and support of my ministerial colleagues, the Northern California District Council, and countless temple members, it was a wonderful event that came together beautifully and made me realize why this gathering was so important.

Our chairperson, Mrs. Sharon Ito Warren, made an impactful statement noting

"Shinran Sama," played on the guitar by Rev. Yuki Sugahara was a very special tribute for us to witness.

This service was not only beautiful, but it moved me. It moved me in such a way to inspire me and rededicate

myself in expanding my knowledge of Shinran Shonin's life, his deep appreciation for his teachers, and his praise of Amida Buddha's great Wisdom and Compassion. It moved me to become reinvigorated about sharing the Dharma with oth-

ers. It moved me to be aware of and witness the Dharma unfolding in my everyday life.

Namu Amida Butsu

Rev. Shibata is the Northern California Ministers Association (NCMA) Kyokucho.



The Northern California District's special Joint Celebration service on Oct. 8 drew an estimated crowd of 200 people. IBS President Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto was the guest speaker. At right, Rimban Rev. Yuki Sugahara performs "Shinran Sama" on his bass guitar.



NorCal District

Continued from Page 1

(Florin, Lodi, Marysville, Placer, Sacramento, Stockton, and Walnut Grove) were in attendance.

Participating in the service were Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, and guest speaker,

Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, president of the Institute of Buddhist Studies.

The service was coordinated by Northern California ministers, Rimban Rev. Yuki Sugahara, Rev. Candice Shibata, Rev. Matt Hamasaki, and Rev. Noritaka Imada. The chairperson for this special service was Sharon

Ito Warren.

The service included a Toraiban and Goraiban ceremony by Bishop Rev. Harada, Shuso Sango Sahou chanting, and the reading of excerpts from Shinran Shonin's book, "Kyo Gyo Shinsho," by Rev. Imada from the Florin and Lodi temples and Rev. Shibata from the

Stockton and Walnut Grove temples.

Rimban Rev. Sugahara accompanied the singing of the gatha, "Shinran Sama," with his bass guitar. The Sacramento Betsuin choir closed the service by singing "Tabiyuki Shinran" and "Shinshu Shuka."

Preceding the service,

attendees were treated to a continental breakfast, and after the service, lunch was provided, giving the service attendees an opportunity to visit with each other.

This special service can be viewed on the Buddhist Church of Sacramento's YouTube channel and Facebook page.



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Mountain States District Conference Honors Rev. Jerry Hirano

The Mountain States District Conference, held on Nov. 3-5, honored Rev. Jerry Hirano's 30th anniversary as Resident Minister of the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple.

The Salt Lake City, Utah, conference, also included guest speakers Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada and Rev. Nariaki Hayashi of Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple. There were workshops on Naikan meditation and "kintsugi," the Japanese art of repairing ceramics with lacquer and gold and leaving a gold seam where the cracks were. The workshops were arranged by Rev. Dr. Carmela Hirano-Javellana.

The highlight of the conference was the banquet to honor Rev. Hirano. The conference and dinner each drew an estimated crowd of 125 people.

Before returning to his home temple in 1993 — Salt Lake — Rev. Hirano served six years at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin.

Rev. Hirano is currently the Resident Minister of the Salt Lake temple, and Supervising Minister for the Ogden and Honeyville, Utah, temples, as well as the Idaho-Oregon Buddhist (IOBT) Temple. He is also the BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) director.

There were letters of congratulations from Rev. Hirano's good friends, Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) President Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto and Rev. Jay Shinseki, the Resident Minister of the Monterey Peninsula and Watsonville Buddhist temples.

Words of congratulations were from Rev. Harada and Mrs. Gail Ida of Tri-State/



Rev. Jerry Hirano is honored for his 30th anniversary as Resident Minister of the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple at the Mountain States District Conference on Nov. 3-5 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Flanking Rev. Hirano in the above left photo are Rev. Dr. Carmela Hirano-Javellana and Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada. Above, Rev. Hirano holds his special plaque honoring his 30 years of service. Below left, a Kieshiki (affirmation service) ceremony was held Nov. 5 for 26 people who received their Homyo, or Buddhist name. (Courtesy of Rev. Jerry Hirano)



Denver Buddhist Temple, one of Rev. Hirano's oldest friends.

They met 51 years earlier at a Mountain States District Conference and have been good friends ever since.

On Sunday, Nov. 5, the closing service was held for the Mountain States District's Joint Celebration service celebrating the 850th birthday of Jodo Shinshu founder Shinran Shonin and the 800th anniversary of Jodo Shinshu teaching.

Rev. Harada was the speaker for the special service and held a Kieshiki (affirmation service) ceremony for 26 people.

Miyamura Message

Continued from Page 1

Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism, had some unique understanding of the Dharma. He saw that one did not have to be a monk or a nun to practice Buddhism and encounter Enlightenment. He saw that Amida's Vow to save all sentient beings applied to everyone — with no exceptions. Both monks and lay people, both educated and illiterate.

In short, everyone — regardless of who or what one was. Regardless of race, gender or any other label. We all could receive the gift of shinjin — to become a Bodhisattva of the highest rank and to be assured to Enlightenment.

Let me share a simple, yet profound, story. When MBT's Legacy Garden was being built, the architect, Mr. Hoichi Kurisu, was bringing in the rocks and laying out the garden. I remember asking him why he insisted on having a water feature in the garden.

I remember thinking, it freezes each winter and having

a water feature would be a lot of work to maintain. And he explained that Shinran and drinking water were an important teaching.

When Shinran started thinking about leaving Mt. Hiei, he was on a 100-day walking meditation, which was a Tendai practice. Each night, he would walk down the mountain for a 25-mile walking meditation.

who gave him the ladle. In the traditional Tendai way, he should have refused the water because it was offered by a woman.

It was then that Shinran realized, when one is thirsty, it does not matter if a man or a woman offered you a drink. One just accepts the gift of water.

This was the start of Shinran breaking down the

Amida's perspective. We are all simple ordinary beings full of limitations.

Somehow, Mr. Kurisu remembered this story and insisted on the water feature — and I was reminded of an important lesson.

This simple understanding was a revelation in Buddhism and is a fundamental difference of Shin Buddhism. Breaking down the barriers and

Of course, here in America, we operate differently and the legal system is so different. We are now at the point of finding out what spreading the Dharma means.

We have so many challenges as we move forward. We have so many lessons to remember, but we have the guidelines of Buddhism to guide us.

We remember that everything is constantly changing and that everything is interconnected and interrelated. And the Sangha, the group of fellow travelers, are all different and yet we all get along together in harmony because we are different.

Everyone is embraced by the Wisdom and Compassion of Amida Buddha.

Namu Amida Butsu, with gratitude and kindness beyond words.

As a closing remark, I would just like to thank the Midwest Buddhist Temple for allowing me to be the Resident Minister for the past 13 years, plus the first eight years. And, although I will be retired, I will still be around and helping Rev. Todd Tsuchiya and the temple in many ways.

Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism, had some unique understanding of the Dharma. He saw that one did not have to be a monk or a nun to practice Buddhism and encounter Enlightenment. He saw that Amida's Vow to save all sentient beings applied to everyone — with no exceptions In short, everyone — regardless of who or what one was. Regardless of race, gender or any other label. We all could receive the gift of shinjin — to become a Bodhisattva of the highest rank and to be assured to Enlightenment.

One hot summer night, he was tired and thirsty. He stopped to rest, and someone offered him a ladle of water, which he simply accepted and drank.

But when he looked up, he realized that it was a woman

arbitrary barriers and labels that some religions used. The Amida Buddha does not care if one is rich or poor, if one is gay or straight, if one is a monk or a married householder. These barriers and labels really have no meaning when seen from

labels led to so many things and is the strength of Shin Buddhism, such as: the married clergy, which also led to the hereditary temples of Japan, which was the foundation of the growth and stability of Shin Buddhism in Japan.



'Dharma Is Everywhere' Shares Reflections of Revs. Bob and Patti Oshita

By **Edythe Vassall**
Berkeley Buddhist Temple

On Jan. 7, 2017, at the California State Assembly, Revs. Bob and Patti Oshita opened the session with a reflection welcoming the new year, newly elected members of the Assembly, and their new beginning as chaplains for that legislative body.

The Oshitas had recently retired from 32 years as resident ministers of the Buddhist Church of Sacramento. Just before retiring, they were honored to be invited to serve as the chaplains for the Assembly.

"Dharma Is Everywhere" is a compilation of the reflections that they shared in opening the Assembly floor sessions over the four years that they served.

As Anthony Rendon, former Assembly speaker, noted in the book's forward:

"The Oshitas were the first Buddhist chaplains of the California State Assembly, and they brought their unique spiritual perspective to our house. Rather than simply speaking to legislators and staff gathered in the chamber for session, they challenged us to look inward and ponder some of the fundamental truths of life and the world around us. The Oshitas endeavored to center us for the work ahead and remind us of the interconnected human impact of all that we do."

At the beginning of each session, Rev. Bob or Rev. Patti Oshita shared a brief reflection relevant to a specific occasion, such as the Persian New Year, Mother's Day, or the Day of Remembrance; a particular incident, like the 2019 Super Bowl or yet another school shooting.

Their reflections honored the words and deeds of famous



Revs. Patti and Bob Oshita have issued a new book, "Dharma Is Everywhere," that shares their reflections as chaplains of the California State Assembly. (Courtesy of Revs. Bob and Patti Oshita)

individuals such as Cesar Chavez and Aretha Franklin, and shared personal memories with universal significance, like the joys of love, the wisdom of a child, perspectives on aging, and also the reality of

death.

Their reflections honor the value of every human being and remind us never to take anyone or anything for granted. The chaplaincy of Revs. Bob and Patti Oshita ended

in December 2020, several months into the coronavirus pandemic.

"Dharma Is Everywhere" includes seven pages of photographs documenting special moments before and during the Oshitas' term, including visits to the California State Assembly by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, and other celebrities. Each of the 166 reflections transmits an encouraging, meaningful message and ends with the phrase, "Namo Amida Butsu ... let us live with kindness and gratitude beyond words."

"Dharma Is Everywhere" was published in 2022 by the American Buddhist Study Center. To purchase a copy, visit the ABSC website bookstore at ambuddhist.org, the BCA Bookstore at bcabookstore.mybigcommerce.com, or the Buddhist Church of Sacramento.



Rev. Ron Miyamura is presented with a gift from the temple: A calligraphy painting by Shozo Sato, featuring the characters "Bon Soku Shin," which expresses the idea that our human limitations simultaneously occur with our Shin Buddhist awakening. (Photos courtesy of Jason Matsumoto, Alvin Hayashi, Joy Zavala and Rev. Ron Miyamura)

Rev. Miyamura

Continued from Page 1

Giving Tree," retitled "The Rev. Ron Dana Tree." Elaine's perceptive and thoughtful retelling featured illustrations borrowed from Silverstein's book and reinterpreted with a somewhat leafy sensei, perfectly capturing Rev. Ron's selfless giving to MBT.

Rev. Todd Tsuchiya reflected on his long relationship with sensei and echoed what we were all feeling when he said, "Rev. Ron showed me how to live a life of Namuamidabutsu."

Then, of course, there were gifts: A \$25,000 from the Kono Fund for the BCA's Dharma Forward campaign bestowed by Ron Kono, son of the late Rev. Gyodo Kono, MBT's founding minister; a certificate of appreciation from the BCA awarded by Bishop Marvin Harada; and a gift from MBT's Women's Association, presented by Jeanne Toguri.



Above, MBT Taiko performs "Ashura," one of the group's earliest pieces using one of the drums built by Rev. Miyamura. At right, the celebratory cake wishing a happy retirement for Rev. Miyamura.

The final gift of the day, this one from MBT and presented by Jason Matsumoto, was magnificent calligraphy written by Shozo Sato. The characters "Bon Soku Shin" express the complex idea that our human limitations simultaneously occur with our Shin Buddhist awakening. This



sentiment truly embodies Rev. Ron's deep understanding of the Dharma and, in particular, Shinran's teaching.



The wedding photo of Rev. Ron and Elaine Miyamura was taken on May 3, 1975, at the Midwest Buddhist Temple in Chicago. The wedding was officiated by Bishop Rev. Kenryu Tsuji.

Then it was time for Rev. Ron to share some thoughts. He thanked everyone for coming and for allowing him to share his life with us. Though he found times that were both difficult and rewarding at MBT, he was grateful for the relationships, including with those who are no longer with us.

Sensei also assured us that we are not getting rid of him, that he will still be around to support Rev. Todd and MBT in any way possible — with the exception of being Ginza chairman. He made that last part very clear.

A standing ovation followed.

Anyone who knows MBT knows that music is a part of all our events. In honor of Rev. Ron, Ho Etsu Taiko and MBT Taiko performed "Ashura," one of their earliest pieces using one of the drums that Rev. Ron built.

It was a perfect ending to a perfect day, as Rev. Ron

accompanied the groups on the conch shell.

There were smiles and tears and laughter and lots of hugs. It was an opportunity to reflect on the meaning and importance of Sangha and of the inestimable value of a great teacher.

The opening meditation that morning, taken from the "Kyogyoshinsho" and chosen by Rev. Todd, summed up our relationship with Rev. Ron perfectly:

"Now, encountering a true teacher, I have been able to hear the Name that embodies Amida's Primal Vow."

We are very grateful for Rev. Ron's teaching and his friendship and so happy to be able to thank him so spectacularly.

The Sangha is also very grateful to Kristin Park and her team for organizing a wonderful send-off for Rev. Ron, and to Jeanne Toguri and Rich Taura for leading the kitchen crew. Thank you, all!



JSC Hosts Ohara School of Ikebana Exhibit; 600 Attend

BCA Art Committee, Northern California Chapter of Ohara School Present Event on Oct. 14-15



The Ohara School of Ikebana Northern California chapter transformed the BCA's Jodo Shinshu Center into a gallery of ikebana art on Oct. 14-15. The exhibit attracted more than 600 attendees. (Courtesy of Yoko Tahara)

By Rev. Joshin Dennis Fujimoto
Buddhist Temple of Alameda
Enmanji Buddhist Temple

The Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) was the site of the Ohara School of Ikebana Exhibit, which was presented by the Northern California chapter of the Ohara School and the BCA Art Committee.

The ikebana exhibit took place Oct. 14-15, attracting more than 600 attendees who viewed the flower arrangements and demonstrations, and enjoyed the JSC in Berkeley, California.

Madame Suiyo Fujimoto and her students have held this Ohara Ikebana Exhibit since 1965 at various locations in the Bay Area. The shows at the JSC began in 2012, and this was the fifth exhibit at this location. This year's show had the added distinction of participation from four generations of Fujimoto Sensei's students.

The exhibit is kicked off with a Hana Kuyou Service, a memorial service for flowers. The participants gathered in the JSC Kodo for this special service, led by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, Supervising Minister of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple.

After the chanting of the Juseige, Rev. Kuwahara shared a story of a sunflower grown by his son a few years ago. From seed to flower, the growing process took about 70 days to culminate into a mature and beautiful sunflower.

Even a single flower, beyond personal care and attention, takes a myriad of causes and conditions working and combining behind the scenes



for the flower to emerge. Rev. Kuwahara delivered this Dharma message with a wish that those who arranged flowers could deepen their appreciation with such a Buddhist view of the interdependence of all of life.

"We had 40 participants with their arrangements, and nine participants leading demonstrations throughout the weekend," said teacher-student Mrs. Yoshiko Gilli. "Mrs. Fujimoto made a spectacular arrangement with assistance from Mrs. Y. Naiki and Mrs. Y. Grave. For the first time, six students were tasked to prepare their first Taisaku (large arrangement representing the chapter), with guidance from Fujimoto Sensei."

The large arrangement, placed at the center of the JSC lobby, is usually prepared by Fujimoto Sensei. This year, the group of students were

challenged to step up and expand their creative expression in a large-scale setting.

"We took our first steps; a long ways to go, but ikebana is a never ending endeavor," Gilli said.

New BCA Art Committee member Joyce Nojima, of the Enmanji temple, said: "The Ohara ikebana show signaled a beautiful welcoming to the autumn season. The colors and careful consideration in the arrangements did not fail to impress. While I anticipated a very formal setting in this centuries-old tradition, I was pleasantly surprised by the absolute warmth and camaraderie between all the attendees. The demonstrations were an excellent experience to see this intense art practice woven with such tenderness and generosity from this community."

Nojima's partner, Christopher Barnett, was new to the world of ikebana.

"The show at the JSC was a wholly different experience for me; I went in as a fresh observer completely unfamiliar with the art of ikebana and found myself immersed in the complexities of the exhibit and the demonstration that took place while I was present," Barnett said. "There is a certain order among the beauty of the arrangements, a careful structure that is woven through every piece in its own unique way that I came to appreciate."

Ohara member and student Mrs. Setsuko Iwami provided details of the arrangements placed.

"The Ohara School of Ikebana Northern California chapter transformed the Jodo Shinshu Center into a gallery of ikebana art," Iwami said. "A masterpiece of the Landscape Realistic Moribana arrangement was positioned near the entrance to welcome the many

guests and visitors. Shinran Shonin's statue was accompanied by the highly creative and inspiring arrangement by Grandmaster Suiyo Fujimoto. A variety of arrangements from the traditional to contemporary arrangements filled the main hall of the center. A Bunjin-cho ikebana favored by Chinese literati was created to match a hanging frame for the alcoves. It was a world of beauty and tranquility with a perfect harmony between nature and human life. I am once again deeply impressed by the mysterious power that ikebana art can produce."

Rev. Harry Bridge of the Buddhist Church of Oakland and his wife, Mika, were also attendees to the show.

"This year's exhibition was spread throughout the first floor of the JSC," Rev. Bridge said. "Whether in the main lobby where there were many arrangements side by side or in the hallway with single arrangements in the various alcoves, the viewer was called to marvel at and appreciate the harmonious placement of the various elements."

The Ohara teachers and students were most appreciative to once again hold their exhibit at the Jodo Shinshu Center. The use and support of the JSC began years ago under the friendship and guidance of the late Mr. Glenn Kameda. Each show is a tribute to Mr. Kameda's deep appreciation of ikebana and the parallel connections to the Jodo Shinshu teachings. This year, the BCA Art Committee was honored to work in collaboration with the Northern California Chapter of the Ohara School.



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PABT Holds Good CARma Car, Bonsai Show; Hundreds Attend



Vintage cars, sports cars and luxury cars were all on display Sept. 23 at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple (PABT) parking lot. The occasion that drew hundreds to PABT was the Good CARma car and bonsai show. The temple fundraiser was organized by PABT President Eric Quock and board member and longtime Obon chair Shiz Kobata. (Photos courtesy of Kenin Coloma, Danny Song and Carl Yanari)

By Eric Quock
Palo Alto Buddhist Temple

Where were you on Saturday, Sept. 23? Hopefully, you were one of the hundreds in the parking lot at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple (PABT) enjoying the sun and having fun at the Good CARma car and bonsai show.

It was another successful temple fundraiser organized by temple president Eric Quock and fellow board member and longtime Obon chair Shiz Kobara.

The show was a perfect blend of two different subcultures, car lovers and bonsai lovers. The Akebono Bonsai Club attracted many with their beautiful displays, sales, raffle and demonstration.

Car lovers from across the Bay Area preregistered and participated by driving their treasures to park alongside their friends and made new friends as all had their own car story to share.

There were bonsai that were 100-plus years old, along with a 1932 Ford Highboy Roadster as well as a new 2023 full-electric Genesis GV60 owned by Paul Yonemura.

We had brand new Toyotas, Volvo and a 2023 McClaren Artura courtesy of Toyota Sunnyvale and the Price Family Dealerships for everyone to see and enjoy.

We were all entertained by a spectacular taiko performance by Taiko SOBA and the wonderful sounds of live music from our house band “Bad Karma.” Both generous groups also perform at our Obon each year and we are all very grateful.



Featured cars, from counterclockwise, included classics such as a Fiat convertible, Ford Thunderbird, a fleet of Lexuses, and vintage grills of a Ford Thunderbird, Mercury Cougar and Chevrolet SS.



With the help of many including the Jr. YBA who managed the beverage booth and sold hot dogs and sausages along with deliciously refreshing Hawaiian-style shave ice courtesy of the Tad Kuwano family.

There was a magnificent food team that prepared a wonderful teriyaki tri-tip sandwich box that included crunchy tater tots. We sold out and distributed over 200 lunches.

Grandma’s Treasures, which is run by our BWA, was open for sales and we also concluded our summer raffle temple fundraiser by drawing the winning tickets for cash prizes. It turned out to

be a busy but marvelous event.

Good CARma attracted not only members and other temple supporters, but the community as well and many participants traveled good distances to show their car. We had many spectators from the area who simply came to enjoy the ambiance.

The show has become a way to showcase our wonderful temple and share the love of bonsai and cars. Do not miss out next year and mark your calendar now for Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024. The show usually runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Come for a little good karma and experience PABT’s Good CARma.



At far left, Taiko SOBA performed at the car and bonsai show. At left, a row of bonsai trees on display at PABT.



Shiroyama

Continued from Page 1

posed” to believe.

Some of my religious friends seemed so set on their opinions, and part of me envied their strong conviction even if I didn’t agree with it. As someone who wanted things spelled out in black-and-white terms, the ambiguity of Shin Buddhism felt frustrating. Just tell me — it’s never OK to kill, right?

Even today, part of me still wants a clear path on what I should do and think as a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist follower. With issues of social justice, I want to be told that my religion validates my own beliefs. I’ve talked to some people in the Shin Buddhist community who also crave this clarity, and I’ve heard arguments that Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) leadership should take a stronger organizational stance on social issues to advocate for justice and change. The most recent issue being the war in Gaza.

Reminded of Passage

I can’t begin to understand the anguish, fear, and horror that Palestinian and Israeli families are currently enduring. I struggle to find words that convey the heaviness of this collective suffering. Families have been torn apart, and heartbreaking killings continue with no end in sight. The ripples of trauma will be felt for generations.

I feel so helpless absorbing news from the safety and privileges of my home, feeling like there’s nothing I can do to ease such pain. With Jodo Shinshu being such a key part of my identity and community, I find comfort in knowing that our religious organization stands firmly against evil.

But ... do we? As I struggle with how to wrap my mind around war conflicts, I’m reminded of a passage from one

of the exhibits of the Wing Luke Museum in Seattle, Washington.

This beautiful museum focuses on the art, culture, and history of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. One of the permanent exhibitions includes a brief walkthrough of the history of various Asian American diasporas, with a section featuring Cambodian Americans. This part of the exhibit includes historical depictions of the Cambodian genocide.

As disturbing as it is to be reminded of such a brutal part of history where millions of people were killed, I appreciate that the museum does not shy away from the truth. At the end of the description, it states:

To simply finger a “brutal regime” however is to risk missing a valuable lesson from the Cambodian genocide. The initial aims of the Khmer Rouge were hardly evil — they did not set out to decimate the Cambodian people. Instead, Khmer Rouge leaders were swept away in an ideology. They were corrupted by power and abandoned common sense in an attempt to make a flawed belief system work. The lesson of the Cambodian genocide is not that the Pol Pot was evil; it is rather that — like good — evil lurks in the heart of every human being. Don’t view the exhibition here and wonder only, “How could they be capable of such evil?” Instead, as well, “How could I be capable of such evil?” and pledge to prevent it from happening again.

To me, this feels very much aligned with Shin Buddhist thought. Shinran Shonin talks at length of the cruel realities of the world and the evils of human nature. Not only the evils of humans in general, but specifically our own capacity. Our suffering — this “burning

house” — is fueled by our own human anger, ignorance, and greed.

Shinran’s Interaction

In the “Tannisho,” Shinran has an interaction with Yui-en-bo, one of his followers. He challenges Yui-en-bo’s loyalty by telling him to kill a thousand people.

Yui-en-bo responds: “Though you instruct me thus, I’m afraid it is not in my power to kill even one person.”

Shinran replies: “By this you should realize that if we could always act as wished, then when I told you to kill a thousand people in order to attain birth, you should have immediately done so. But since you lack the karmic cause inducing you to kill even a single person, you do not kill. It is not that you do not kill because your heart is good. In the same way, a person may wish not to harm anyone and yet end up killing a hundred or thousand people.”

thousands of civilian deaths?”

Surely, I could never do the same. However, Shinran reminds me that the more I tell myself that there is a moral disparity between myself and militant fighters, the more I conclude that they must be morally flawed for enabling such suffering. As I result, I am less likely to value their lives and extend compassion and understanding.

Some people might not see this thought process as an issue. After committing such atrocities, are they even worthy of our compassion and understanding? I would argue that trying to understand and extend compassion does not mean we’re passive or complicit. We can form opinions and take action, while understanding that our perspectives stem from our own subjective causes and conditions.

Causes and Conditions

I think Shinran helps us understand that someone’s ac-

opinions and reflections about current events, I can see why BCA would struggle with the issue of taking a strong stance on behalf of everyone in the organization. As a collective of “foolish beings,” no one can speak for everyone.

However, I want to be clear that not having a unified organizational position does not mean that we need to be passive. In our community, I believe it’s essential to create space to address heavy topics that are on our minds and discuss how they relate to Jodo Shinshu thought.

PABT Discussions

At Palo Alto Buddhist Temple, we often have discussions after service where people can talk about what’s on their minds. The topics have included controversial issues.

During the discussions, I don’t always agree with everyone and sometimes hearing a different perspective sets me even more firmly into my own

Instead of condemning individual actions and seeing groups of people as the problem, I believe that Shinran challenges us to look upstream at the karmic conditions that inform these choices. How do anger, ignorance, fear, and greed contribute to patterns of oppression, imperialism, colonialism, and war, and how do we stop our own evil nature from becoming corrupted by and contributing to these powers?

As shown in this passage, Shinran points out that Yui-en-bo’s ability to refuse to kill anyone is a privilege of his circumstances rather than a testament to his morals. If Yui-en-bo feared that his family would be hurt if he didn’t comply, then he may have acted differently.

Shinran explains this further: “For those who make their living drawing nets or fishing in the seas and rivers, and those who sustain their lives hunting beasts or taking fowl in the field and mountains, and those who pass their lives conducting trade or cultivating field and paddies, it is all the same. If the karmic cause so prompts us, we will commit any kind of act.”

When I think about the violence in Palestine and Israel, I find myself wondering, “What kind of people kill and rip others from their homes and families?” and “How could people drop bombs and make decisions that lead to tens of

tions are not theirs alone, but rather a result of their causes and conditions. This includes situational circumstances, subjective perspectives, implicit biases, and fears that dictate one’s judgment.

Instead of condemning individual actions and seeing groups of people as the problem, I believe that Shinran challenges us to look upstream at the karmic conditions that inform these choices.

How do anger, ignorance, fear, and greed contribute to patterns of oppression, imperialism, colonialism, and war, and how do we stop our own evil nature from becoming corrupted by and contributing to these powers?

It seems that Jodo Shinshu Buddhism doesn’t tell us what we should and shouldn’t do because navigating these decisions is something that we must go through ourselves with our individual karmic conditions. While I think it’s OK for leaders to express

thought process. However, as my outlook shifts and grows, I’m always grateful to have gained insight into what others are thinking and feeling. With skilled facilitation, some trust, and lots of practice, I feel that we’ve been able to express and receive our opinions and reflections with respect.

Amidst violence and seemingly endless cycles of suffering, I’ve noticed that I feel less alone and helpless after these discussions. As I awaken to my own internal biases and capacity for evil, I also know that I am embraced by a community. A community of “foolish beings” whose collective wisdom and compassion is deeper than I’m able to grasp alone. I am eager to continue discussions with our sanghas about Palestine and Israel — exploring the depths of our wisdom and practicing compassion as we walk the Shin Buddhist path together toward a more peaceful world.

As seemingly pessimistic (or perhaps, realistic) as Shinran was at the capacity of humans to overcome their greed, anger, and ignorance, he also talked about the infinite wisdom and compassion of Amida Buddha and the promise of universal liberation for all sentient beings.

When we discuss and process the heavy realities of human evil and suffering, I know that we, like Shinran, can create space that fits both critical self-reflection and hope as we strive for a future with more compassion and peace.

Heard by Us

Dharma as received by students under the guidance of Rev. Dr. Nobuo Haneda

What is the starting point of Buddhism? Nobuo Haneda returns to this question again and again. Within a tradition of interpreting Shinran Shonin (1173-1263) that began with Manshi Kiyozawa (1863-1903), Haneda’s Dharma talks are sessions of “studying out loud.” The spirit of studentship permeates Haneda’s written and spoken words. He shares the gift of self-examination with those willing to listen to the uncompromising call to “Come to Wisdom!” found in the teaching of the nembutsu: *Namu Amida Butsu*. In this anthology, ten classmates who have benefited greatly from Dr. Haneda’s studies express their gratitude.



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今月の法話

「価値と意味のまなざし」

サンノゼ別院 開教使 三瓶 悦子



Rev. Etsuko Mikame

以前法話をお聴聞した時、このようなことを教えて頂きました。

「ものごとには「意味」という視点と「価値」という視点がある。一つの物事

を見るときも、二つの視点、意味の視点と価値という視点がある。」
例えば、お念珠を「価値」という視点で見るとすると私たちがどのようなことに心を奪われるでしょうか。きつとこのお念珠の素材、値段などだと思います。

では、「意味」という視点で味わってほしいでしょうか？私が個人的に使っているこのお念珠についていいますと、一見普通のどこにもあるお念珠に見えるのですが、実はこれは亡き祖母が生前にずっと使っていたものです。昨年両親が日本よりサンノゼに尋ねてくれた際、頼んでもいないのに、おばあちゃん子であった私のためにお念珠を大事に使っています。このお念珠を手持ってお参りする度に祖母が手を合わせる姿を思い出し、一緒にお参りしているような気がするのです。私にとっては大切な意味のあるお念珠です。

お念珠を「意味」の視点で味わう時、一般的にいうとお仏事の時に使わせていただく大切な道具、または個人的には祖母の大切な形見という意味合いが見いだされていきます。そしてもう一点、物事を「意味」という視点で味わう時、そこには「価値」という視点が入る余地が無くなつていくのだと教えて頂きました。

確かに、もしも素材や値段などの価値の視点でこのお念珠を味わう時、もしかしたら「そんなもんか」という印象を持たれるかもしれません。しかし「意味」の視点でこのお念珠を味わう時、このお念珠がいくらだとか、どんな素材だとか「価値」の視点が入らず、ただただお念珠に込められている大切な「意味」が光を放ちます。

いろんなものに対してこの価値と意味の二面性で生きていくのが私ですが、皆さんはどちらを大切に生きていくのでしょうか？
最終的には「意味」の視点を大事にしていると言いたいのですが、正直言ってどうしても価値の方が気になつてしまうのではないのでしょうか。

では命に対してはどんなふうに見ているのでしょうか。命とは、血が通って生きているこの瞬間だけではありません。仏教でいう命とは、生に老いや病や死も含めた「生老病死」の現実をどのように見ていくかを課題にします。生きていることへの意味なんて何も知らず勝手にいつの間にかこの世に生まれてこの命を歩んでいる私です。そして老い、病、死など、自分で思い通りにならぬものを抱えながらもここを歩んでいます。

ですから「価値」の視点でこの命を見た時、老い、病や死に対して生よりも価値を見出すことはなかなか難しいような気がします。だから私の生き方は自分の人生にどってプラスのものを集めることばかり果ててしまふのかもしれない。健康やお金、地位などを集めて、それを失くさないように必死で握りしめる。それなのに、命終わるときはそれを手放して置いていかないといけない、何ともいえない寂しさが待っているように感じます。

私事で恐縮ですが、私にはいつも遊びに行くところ「よきたなあ」と優しく迎えてくれる母方の祖父がいました。今から約十七年前に往生させて頂きましたが、生前は自宅で小さな商店を営んでおり、静かだけれど大きな背中なんでも器用にこなす姿が大好きでした。その祖父は私が大学生の時胃がんを患い入院することになりました。娘である母は毎週のように祖父の元に行き、栄養の取るものを持ってお見舞いに行っていました。休みで実家に帰るたびに病院に行くといつも「ようきたなあ」と祖父は迎えてくれていました。しかし、久しぶりに見た祖父は以前に比べて少し痩せているように見えました。「また来るけんね」と言つて手を握つて別れたのが祖父との最後の時間になりました。ちょうど夏休み前の試験の真つ只中、父から祖父が往生したという連絡が来ました。あまりにも突然でありましたし、大事なテストの最中ということ、そのテストを終えてから帰ることにさせてもらいました。私が帰つた頃にはお葬式も終わっており、久しぶりに母の実家に行くところには「よきたなあ」と迎えてくれる祖父はおらず、仏壇には祖父の遺骨と写真が飾られていました。お仏壇でお参りをしていると、たまたま通りかかった近所の方が「この度は気の毒だったね」「かわいそうにね」と声をかけて下さいました。きつと慰めて下さったのだと思つたのですが、「おじいちゃんかわいそうだったのだろうか」となんだかふと気になつてしまいました。

しかしそのような気持ちもすっかり忘れ、時は流れ、ご縁あつてお坊さんになるご縁を頂きました。以前お寺でお聴聞した時このようなことをお聞かせ頂きました。「病に敗れた」という表現をしますが、命終えたのは「負け」なのでしょうか？死は「負け」なのでしょうか？その当人は最後まで精一杯生きた命なのだから命に勝ち負けはないはず。勝ち負けの話ならば、医療が病を治せなかったことから医療、医学が負けと言つた方が正しい言い方でしょうか。やっぱり私たちにはお念仏しかないですね。」

「講師さんからそう聞かせて頂いた時、私はふとあの時ご近所さんに祖父の死について言われたことを思い出しました。「おじいちゃんもあの時、苦しい中だったかもしれないけれど病気の命を最後まで精一杯生き抜いたんだ。かわいそうな命ではなかった」とほつと気づかせて頂いたことでした。すると、同時に私は思い出しました。長寿で生き抜かれた方に対しては称賛し、病気で亡くなられた方々、若くして亡くなられた方々、ニューアスで流れてくる芸能人の死に対して「かわいそうだな」という気持ちで漠然と持っていたことを。命に対して、優劣をつけられて悲しんでいたけれど、私だって同じようにしていたんじゃないかと思ひ恥ずかしくなりました。私は命に対してどんなふうに見ていたのでしょうか？

きつと価値という視点で見えていたのではなかったのか。自分と他を分ける

「本願力にあひぬれば むなくすべるひとぞなき 功德の宝海みちみちて 煩惱の濁水へだてなし」
親鸞聖人の和讃の中の「むなくすべる」は「空しい」と漢字で表わされます。空しいとは空っぽということ。つまり様々に大切なものを必死にかき集める人生は中身が詰まった豊なように見えても、それらを失う縁に遇えば中身が抜けた空っぽな人生に「こんなはずじゃなかった」と嘆く私の有り様をここでは「空しい」と示しています。しかし、阿弥陀様の願ひのはたらきに出会った人は、空しい命では決して終わらないと教えて下さっています。生き方、死に方を問わず、どんな歩みであろうが「光り輝く仏の命に生まれさせる」という阿弥陀様の大きな願ひに私が抱かれて今こを歩ませて頂いているとお聞かせいただきます。



「価値」を当てはめると長い方が「良い」、短いと「かわいそう」と言つてしまふのが私の視点です。では、その講師の方に「お念仏しかありませんね」と言わしめたお心は何でしょうか。それは自と他を分けずにどんな存在であつても逃さずぎゅつと抱いている仏様の願ひのはたらきです。

私にとつて都合の悪いことはたくさんあります。この価値観で生きていく限り、私たちが迎えていく老病死に対して、いやだいやだと人生終わつていくとしたら空しい人生だったかもしれない。でも、そうではないと私を呼び覚まそうと働きかけて下さっているのはたらき「南無阿弥陀仏」と私の命の上に届いています。生き方、死に方を問わず、生きていくものも命終えていくものも、どのような歩みであろうと等しく尊い命であると抱いて下さる仏様の悟りのはたらきです。私に掛けられたその限りの願ひの意味を聞かせて頂くと、普段私が物事をより分ける時に使う価値の視点が入る余地がありません。しかし、そうお聞かせ頂きながらも、きつとまた私は自分の物差しで自分や他の命を無意識のうちにより分けてしまつてしまふでしょう。

だからこそ、私は、せめてこの仏様の前に座らせて頂く時は、その物差しを少し置いて、仏様の悟りの世界にこの身を溶け込ませて頂ければと思います。私はこれからこの人生をどのように歩んでいこうか、それぞれに仏様に尋ねながら歩ませて頂ければと思います。

法輪

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Buddhist Churches of America
1710 Octavia Street
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電話 (415) 776-5600
FAX (415) 771-6293
Email: info@bcahq.org
forWOD: WODeditor@bcahq.org

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総長メッセージ

This is the Way

米国仏教団 総長 原田 マービン



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada

先日、オレンジ・カウンティ仏教会で行われた南部地区のダルマススクール教師カンファレンスで講演をしました。

カンファレンスのテーマは、映画「スター・ウォーズ」のスピノフで、人気テレビドラマシリーズの「マンダロリアン」から取りました。このドラマでは、マンダロリアンと呼ばれる高貴な戦士集団が登場します。彼らはいつもヘルメットをかぶるという厳しい信条を守っていて、ヘルメットを脱ぐことは許されません。そして、彼らのモットーは「This is the Way」で、「これが道である」とか「我らの道」、「我らが歩むべき道」などを意味します。

仏教はまさに「道」です。「仏道」という表現がありますが、これは仏の道、つまりお釈迦様が歩まれた道という意味であり、仏になるための道という意味でもあります。「道」という漢字は、単独では「みち」と読み、他の漢字と複合すると「こう」と読みます。

この漢字「道」は、日本のマッシュアルーツや文化芸術にも使われています。マッシュアルーツは「武道」と呼び、柔道、剣道、合気道など「道」をつけますし、お茶は「茶道」、生け花は「華道」と呼ばれます。

真宗でも「道」という字を使い、お念仏の道を「念

仏道」と言います。お念仏を聞き、お念仏をとえ、お念仏の意味を考える生活、それが私たちの「お念仏の道」なのです。

また、仏教では「道を求める」という意味の「求道(ぐどう)」「や「道を伝える、広める」という意味の「伝道(でんどう)」という語もよく聞かれます。

私の師である信楽先生は、このことをよく言われていました。信楽先生は、道を深く「求道」しない限り、それを伝える「伝道」はあり得ないと強調しておられました。道を求めること、道を伝えることは、同時に動くエンジンの2つのピストンのようなものなのです。

仏教教育にはその同時性があるように思います。学習クラス、セミナー、講義、ディスカッション、あるいは法話は、仏法を聴き、教えを深く掘り下げる時であると同時に、教えを分かち合い、他の人々に教えを伝える時でもあります。

だからこそ、仏教教育は仏教を初めて学ぶ人のためだけのものではないのです。学び、聴聞し、求めることは、生涯をかけて行うプロセスであり、生涯の求道なのです。ヘルメットを決して脱がないと誓うマンダロリアンのように、私たち真宗の「信条」は、生涯にわたって仏法を聴き、求め続けることです。それが念仏者の歩むべき「道」です。

私は開教使として、そのような生涯の求道者、念仏者と知り合うという素晴らしい縁をいただいています。オレンジカウンティ仏教会のメンバーだった、落合サチさん(故人)がそのような方でした。サチさんは毎週日曜日、すべての学習クラス、すべてのセミナーに欠かさず出席していました。私は仏教の入門クラスを教えていたのですが、私がクラスをするたびにサチさんが来ておられました。

ですから私はサチさんに「このクラスに8回来てい

ましょう。もうこのクラスを取る必要はないと思いますよ。」と言いました。でもサチさんは、「そんなことはないですよ。クラスを受けるたびに新しいことを学べるんです。」と答えられるのです。

サチさんはクラスで新しくお寺に来られた人々の質問やコメントから学ばれ、新しい人々もまた、サチさんの謙虚な学びの精神から、そして彼女の生涯をかけた求道の姿から、多くのことを学ばれるのです。

マンダロリアンのように、私たちも「This is the Way」という思いを持ちましょう。求めること、聴聞すること、学ぶこと、ダルマをシェアすること、これが私たちの歩むべきお念仏の「道」なのです。

HOPEの開催

11月7日から9日に浄土真宗センターで浄土真宗本願寺派の海外開教使合同研修会、「International Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange」が開催され、約20名が集った。

研修会には、「お坊さんが教えるところが整う掃除の本」の著書や「グッド・アンセスター わたしたちは「よき祖先」になれるか」の翻訳で知られる松本紹圭師が招かれ、英語と日本語で講義をしたほか、BCA開教使による大無量寿の内容に関する講義、「新しい頭解」やみ教えと差別に関するディスカッションなどが行われ、活発な意見交換がなされた。研修期間中の朝夕のお勤めでは大無量



IHOPE

寿経を四回に分けて読経。参加者は「大無量寿経はやはり大というだけあって長かったです。一回45分くらいの読経で疲れましたが、と覚えていて、仏様の教えが毛穴から入ってくるようでありたい気持ちになりました。今度は一度で全部を読経してみたいですね。」と皆と声を合わせて読経できたことを喜んだ。別の参加者は「久しぶりの対面式の研修会で、他の先生方と直接会ってともに学び、話し合うことの素晴らしさがわかりました。」と実りある研修会となった。

猫田円整名誉開教使が往生される

猫田円整名誉開教使(103)が10月3日に往生の素懐をこげられた。1919年にカナダ、バンクーバーに生まれた猫田師は、1950年よりカナダで開教使をつとめ、1963年よりBCAに転任。サンフランシスコの開教本部で日曜学校のプログラムやテキストの制作などに従事され、1976年よりプラサー仏教会に駐在された。1990年に引退後、ロサンゼルスに生まれたのちに、2014年からサニーバールに転居され、マウンテンビュー仏教会の法要やイベントなどに参加しておられた。教団葬が11月2日にマウンテンビュー仏教会で行われ、多くの有縁の開教使や門信徒が参列した。写真は猫田師が引退後にウエストロサンゼルス仏教会を手伝われていた時に作成した折り紙。



Rev. Nekoda's Origami

ダイヤルザダルマで日本語法話

電話でいつでも法話を聞くことができる「ダイヤルザダルマ」が好評を得ている。(800)817-7918に電話すると、原田総長の声で音声ガイドが始まる。英語の法話を聞きたい人は1を、日本語は2、スペイン語は3を押すと、それぞれの言語で約5分間の法話を聴聞できる。英語は原田総長のメッセージ、日本語は日本語スピーカーの開教使によるメッセージ、スペイン語は英語のメッセージをスペイン語に訳したものになっている。法話は毎週水曜日午後更新される予定。