



WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America



Monshu Kojun Ohtani

New Year's Greeting from Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani

Happy New Year, everyone! At the beginning of this New Year, I would like to extend my best regards to you all.

Over the last year, innumerable people worldwide have been affected by natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, and forest fires. I was particularly shocked by the wildfires that devastated the island of Maui in the state of Hawaii. This disaster completely destroyed the temple hall of Lahaina Hongwanji Mission and one temple member was reported to have

lost his life. I would like to offer my deepest condolences to all who have perished in those calamities. I would also like to express my sympathies to those who are still coping with the dire situations. It is my sincere hope that all who have been affected will soon be able to return to a normal daily life.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022 is still continuing. Not only that, conflict between Israel and Palestine has once again flared up from October 2023,

embroiling nations concerned with victimizing a large number of people many of whom are civilians. Looking at the appalling state of the world, the following words of Sakyamuni Buddha come to mind. "Everyone fears violence and is scared of death. In consideration of all life, do not kill and do not make others kill."

Every one of us who has received life as a human being, no matter the reason, must be ensured equally of

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In Gratitude of Tacoma's Rev. Gladys Pratt

She Was the
BCA's First White
Female Minister

By Bill Teague
Buddhist Temple of San Diego

Today, we appreciate and accept the diversity in our ministry.

But in 1936, the ordination of Rev. Gladys Sunya Pratt at the Tacoma Buddhist Church (later the Tacoma Buddhist Tem-

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Rev. Gladys Sunya Pratt is shown in a photo dated April 23, 1936, when she was ordained at the Tacoma Buddhist Church (now the Tacoma Buddhist Temple). Rev. Pratt is widely considered as the BCA's first white female minister. (Courtesy of Richards Studio, T91-1, Northwest Room at Tacoma Public Library)



WOMEN OF THE BCA
A SPECIAL SERIES

Introducing a New Series

"In reflecting on the ocean of great shinjin, I realize that there is no discrimination between noble and humble or black-robed monks and white-clothed laity, no differentiation between man and woman, old and young."

— Shinran Shonin

We are delighted to introduce a new series, "Women of the BCA," in celebration of the Buddhist Churches of America's 125th anniversary this year.

Our Shin Buddhist tradition would not exist today without the crucial contributions of women. Countless remarkable women have served as devout lay members, Bōmori ("temple guardian"), ministers, and leaders.

Historically, the roles of women have been relatively hidden and undervalued. Times are changing. The BCA currently has its first female President, Terri Omori. Seven ministers ordained in 2022 are women and five identify as LGBTQ+. Our temples are moving toward embodying the egalitarianism of Shinran Shonin's teachings.

In this series, we will uncover and share stories about the BCA's

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BCA's Theme for 2024: 'The Right Time Is Now'



By Rev. Marvin Harada
Bishop of the BCA

The BCA theme for 2024 is: "The Right Time Is Now."

This is a quote from Rennyō Shōnin, the eighth Gomonshu of our Shin Buddhist tradition. I am sure that most of you are familiar with Rennyō Shōnin as the author of the famous letter on the "White Ashes" that is frequently read at funerals and memorial services. Rennyō Shōnin was a tremendous propagator of Shin Buddhism and our Hongwanji grew immensely because of his leadership.

I want our theme for 2024 to reflect a sense of urgency in regards to our future. We cannot continue to decline at a rate of 28% every decade. At that pace, we will wither away in a matter of a

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A Festive Chef's Table



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, Koichi Mizushima, and Rev. Michael Endo are all smiles at the BCA's first Chef's Table benefit on Nov. 10 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California. For stories and photos, see Page 5. (Courtesy of Michiko Inanaga)



BCA Members Receive Tokudo Status in Japan



Ten BCA members traveled to Japan for their Tokudo training and ordination from Dec. 6-16, 2023, at the Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto, Japan. The group was accompanied by Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Michael Endo, Executive Assistant to the Bishop, and Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki, Rinban of the Seattle Betsuin. Shown, from left, in front of the Nishiyama Betsuin are: Michael Jones (San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin), Sterling Davenport (Vista Buddhist Temple), Igor Makasyuk (Palo Alto Buddhist Temple), Geoffrey Russell (Salt Lake Buddhist Temple), Stacy Reardon (San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple), Linda Nagai, Blake Honda (Buddhist Church of Fowler/Berkeley Buddhist Temple), John Mullins (Berkeley Buddhist Temple/Las Vegas Buddhist Sangha), Devon Matsumoto (Mountain View Buddhist Temple), James Aoki (Salt Lake Buddhist Temple), and Jean Paul DeGuzman (San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple). Linda Nagai is with the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Kyodan. (Courtesy of Rev. Fujii of the Hongwanji International Center)

Sleepwalking Through Life

"The reason for the Tathagata's appearance in the world is solely to preach the ocean-like Original Vow of Amida. The ocean of multitudinous beings in the evil age with the five defilements should believe in the Tathagata's true words."

— Shinran Shonin's "Shoshinge" sutra

life has been spent stumbling through life and attempting to find myself in the world.

Since 1981, I have been a Jodo Shinshu minister. As I move closer to the end of my career as a minister, I have been contemplating the role of a Jodo Shinshu priest. More often than not, I have found myself falling into the role expected of me and the

perception of what a minister should be.

On the outside, I appear calm and in control, confident, and secure in my position as a minister. The truth is — like anyone else — there is insecurity, anxiety, sadness, and doubt in my life. More often than I care to admit, I have had sleepless nights as I wrestle with my own mind.

I worry about our children, I worry about my health, I worry about many different things. All of this worry causes anxiety, sometimes sadness, and at times, frustration.

It is a truth of life that no one is exempt from the perceived problems that unfold before us. We are so full of ourselves that we cannot see that we are the source of our own problems. All the anxiety, worries, and anger are internal. The source is within ourselves. In this way, we who are ministers are no different

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Note to Readers of BCA's Wheel of Dharma

If you were wondering why the November 2023 issue arrived nearly a month late, you weren't alone.

And, if you happened to receive extra copies of the December 2023 issue, you weren't alone.

The printing plant we had used for the Wheel of Dharma went out of business after 51 years at the end of October.

We rushed to find a new printer, secured one, but issues and delays arose with that printer — who did print the November issue nearly a month late.

We thought we had put any issues to rest with a second printer for the December 2023 issue.

But postal and delivery problems cropped up with some

of you reporting receiving as many as 10 to 12 extra copies and reports of deliveries to wrong addresses. We checked our subscription master list and the error was not with us. Fortunately, we were not charged for the extra copies.

The bottom line is that we now have a new printer for the January 2024 issue. In all, the Wheel of Dharma has been

printed by three separate printing companies in the past three months.

We are hopeful that the problems with printing and delivery will be resolved with our new printer.

Again, we thank you, our loyal readers, for your continued support of the Wheel of Dharma.

— Jon Kawamoto, Editor, Wheel of Dharma

many years no matter when or where they were, and carefully transmitted it to us today.

Let us, too, continue listening to the teaching as the center of our life while cherishing each day.

January 1, 2024
Ohtani Koujun
Monshu
Jodo Shinshu
Hongwanji-ha

Gomonshu

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human rights, and no one's life should be threatened. In reality, however, conflicts and terrorist attacks have occurred everywhere in the world and for many people, their right to live and exist has been threatened. As Buddhists who aspire for peace, we must

keep Sakyamuni Buddha's words seriously in our hearts and pursue our endeavor of contributing toward world peace and security.

During the last year, we observed the Joint Celebration of the 850th Anniversary of Shinran Shonin's Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching at Hongwanji, Kyoto for a total

of 30 days, divided into five sessions during the period from March 29 to May 21. On this occasion, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to those who came to Japan to attend, as well as those who supported it in various ways. This celebratory event could be realized only because our predecessors have cherished the Jodo Shinshu teaching as their spiritual foundation for



Wheel
of Dharma

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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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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BCA, IBS Will Celebrate Milestone Anniversaries in 2024



By Terri Omori
BCA President

Happy New Year! On behalf of the BCA Executive Committee, warm wishes for 2024 are extended to all. We look forward to opportunities to connect with you as we embrace this year's BCA theme, "The Right Time Is Now."

This year, we will celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Buddhist Churches of America and the 75th anniversary of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS). As we acknowledge these milestones with gratitude and joy, let us reflect on the efforts of many with deep appreciation in order for us to receive the

Dharma. It is our turn to ensure Shinran Shonin's teachings continue to be shared for many generations to come.

On Dec. 2, 2023, the BCA National Board meeting was held virtually. Thank you to all who attended and submitted reports. This meeting is an overview of the year of the various programs for the BCA, IBS, JSIO, CBE and the BCA Endowment Foundation as well as preparation of business matters

returned to the BCA ministry and was assigned to Tri-State/Denver temple; Rev. Kurt Rye was reappointed as Kaikyoshi of the BCA and assigned to New York, Seabrook and Ekoji temples; Rev. Melissa Opel was assigned to the Buddhist Church of San Francisco as a full-time Kyoshi minister; Rev. Todd Tsuchiya was appointed Kaikyoshi Resident Minister to the Midwest temple; and Rev. Cynthia Yasaki was appointed

their studies and training for Kyoshi certification later on this year.

Sharing Shin Buddhism continues through various programs. In addition to his dedicated efforts in spreading the Dharma for BCA members and its temples, Bishop Rev. Harada continues to conduct outreach sessions each month through Zoom Dharma gatherings with the BCA Individual Members group and Texas

programs in person — and on Zoom, for all.

IBS President Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto reported on behalf of the **Institute of Buddhist Studies** regarding the faculty and staff transitions and appointments for 2023-2024. This includes his upcoming retirement on June 30, 2024. Dr. Scott Mitchell has been appointed to become the next IBS President on July 1, 2024.

Affiliated Organization reports were presented by the **Federation of Buddhist Women's Association and Federation of Dharma School Teachers' League**. The 47th FBWA National Conference will be hosted by the Coast District in San Jose on Oct. 4-6, 2024. The 2024 FDSTL Conference will also be hosted by the Coast District on April 27-28, 2024, at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple. The FDSTL Education Committee has developed a commemorative Monto Shikisho for the BCA 125th anniversary that will be available to all Dharma schools.

A presentation was made by

Continued on Page 10

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for the BCA National Council Meeting in February. The following are some highlights from the meeting.

Ministerial growth and support continue for BCA. Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada reported: Rev. Diana Thompson

Kaikyoshi Resident Minister of the White River temple. Rev. Harada certified nine Minister's Assistants in 2023. In December, 10 members of the BCA traveled to Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan, for Tokudo training and ordination. Some will continue

Sangha. He also continues to share the Dharma each and every week with the Dial the Dharma program. And he has been asked to serve on the board for Lion's Roar, a popular Buddhist publication. The Center for Buddhist Education continues to provide



Above left, approximately 110 delegates from throughout California pose for a group photo in front of the Fresno Betsuin Hondo on Nov. 11 at the 63rd annual Central California Jr. YBA Conference. Shown in the front row are keynote speaker Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Hannah KC Mukai and Rev. Midori Nakagawa. Above right, Mukai and Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival First Princess Kylie Tamura flank Kylie Kubo and Izumi Ryan, the CC Jr. YBA Conference co-chairs. At bottom right, Mukai gives the keynote address. (Courtesy of Glenn Nakamichi, Jenny Kubo, and Noreen Kajihara)

63rd Annual CC Jr. YBA Conference Goes 'BIIG' in Fresno

By Kylie Kubo and Izumi Ryan
2023 CC Jr. YBA
Conference Co-Chairs

The Central California Jr. YBA hosted approximately 110 delegates from Southern and Northern California on Nov. 11 for its 63rd annual CC Jr. YBA Conference at the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple.

This year's theme was "Life is BIIG," centering around the Four Marks of Existence. We were excited to welcome back Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival Queen Hannah KC Mukai as our keynote speaker.

Also in attendance was the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival First Princess Kylie Tamura. Kanon Nakata (Fresno) and Kenji Kajihara

(Reedley) were our recipients of the Buddhist Recognition Award this year.

The San Jose chapter was our winner of this year's talent show.

Our workshops included a parent discussion group, an onenju making workshop, a discussion workshop, and a dango workshop. The "Camping in the Sierras" directors and counselors ran a fun

workshop for all our delegates as well.

We are so grateful for the many Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple Sangha members and parents who came out to help and support our efforts in hosting the conference. Thank you to all the delegates and advisors who took the time to travel and attend our conference this year. We hope to see you back next year!



VHBT Holds Its First Veterans Day Service



The Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (VHBT) held its first Veterans Day Service on Nov. 12, 2023. Ten veterans and their representatives were at the service. In top photo, the veterans and their representatives pose with VHBT Resident Minister Rev. Kory Quon, VHBT President Tom Nakagiri, and members of the temple's Girl Scout Troop 5325 and Cub Pack 79. Above, the Scouts hold a handmade chain while reciting "The Golden Chain." (Photos courtesy of Ron Gee)

By Dianne Kujubu Belli and Ron Gee
Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

The Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (VHBT) celebrated its first Veterans Day Service on Nov. 12, 2023.

Present at the service were 10 veterans, representing many branches of the military. Of the 10 veterans, two were family members representing the veterans.

The service opened and closed with a flag ceremony performed by members of the Temple's Girl Scout Troop 5325 and Cub Pack 79. The Scouts also sang the national anthem, and later held a long, handmade red, white, and blue chain during the recitation of "The Golden Chain."

The most moving part of the service was when individual Scouts reverently bore beautiful red, white and blue ribbon leis to the front of the Hondo where the veterans solemnly stood.

VHBT President Tom Nakagiri and individual Scouts then presented each veteran with a lei and shook each veteran's hand.

During his Dharma message, VHBT Resident Minister Rev. Kory Quon explained the reason for holding this first ever Veterans Day Service at the temple.

"We want to do this because we should be proactive in our appreciation of what we've received," Rev. Quon said. "We should be proactive in saying, 'Thank you,' for the roles that these individuals have played behind the scenes ... to give us our way of life."

Rev. Quon explained how saying the Nembutsu can be an expression of that gratitude: "That's the reason why we're Jodo Shinshu Buddhists and say, 'Namo Amida Butsu.'" The whole key to our tradition is to reflect within. To see what kind of gifts we've received from the efforts of those around us."

After the service, the veterans and all in attendance enjoyed delicious red, white, and blue desserts, and individual Scouts gave each veteran a handmade card which read, "Today



VHBT President Tom Nakagiri greets veteran Ron Fukuji at the Veterans Day Service.

we honor you for serving our country and protecting our freedom. Thank you."

Women of BCA Series

Continued from Page 1

women leaders and fellow travelers. This is not merely a historic reflection and remembrance. This series also serves as an inspiration and guide for leaders. Embracing equality and inclusivity is key to our future. Jodo Shinshu is for everyone.

We sincerely appreciate the Hemera Foundation and the Lenz Foundation, which have provided generous grants in support of our "Women of the BCA" series.

— Sharon Sasaki, project coordinator, "Women of the BCA"

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

SOUTHERN DISTRICT/CBE/IBS/JSIO

WINTER PACIFIC SEMINAR
JANUARY 27, 2024

BUDDHISM AND WAR
"May there be peace in the world." - Shinran Shinon

IN PERSON & VIRTUAL EVENT (9AM - 12PM)
Keynote Speaker (In English and Japanese)


REV. DR. KEN TANAKA

English Speakers	Japanese Speakers
Rev Iwohara	Rev Wondra
Rev Turner	Rev Furumoto
Rev Quon	

GARDENA BUDDHIST CHURCH
1517 WEST 166TH ST, GARDENA, CA 90247

REGISTRATION INFO & IN-PERSON BENTO ORDER:
<https://tinyurl.com/WINTERPACSEM>

Buddhist Churches of America

TEMPLE LEADERS WORKSHOP

Join us on Feb 2-3, 2024

- Network/meet temple leaders from other BCA temples
- Dialogue with your BCA Exec Committee & the Bishop
- Get inspired to be a better leader

This in-person workshop is open to all BCA Temple representatives serving in leadership roles.

Jodo Shinshu Center
2140 Durant Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94704


Life of Gratitude
BUDDHIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA

REG & MORE INFO: <https://tinyurl.com/TempleLeaders>



Chef's Table Fundraiser Brings Together BCA Leaders, Supporters

Nov. 10 Event at JSC Benefits Dharma Forward Campaign

By Michiko Inanaga
BCAEEF Director of Development

"You're much taller than I thought!" That was a comment that was heard repeatedly as BCA leaders and influencers gathered on Nov. 10 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California.

After all, many of those in attendance hadn't seen each other — outside of a virtual Zoom BCA meeting.

The happy occasion for the inaugural Chef's Table event, a fundraiser for the BCA's Dharma Forward campaign.

The high-energy evening was filled with lots of laughter, familiar hugs, chatter, and exchanges like "nice to finally meet you in person." Seeing one another at the JSC brought a renewed sense of community.

Dharma Forward, the fundraising campaign to ensure the future of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, was the driving force behind the Chef's Table idea. The joint campaign for



BCA and Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) is funding immediate and imminent needs. The campaign is also looking to future projects to keep Jodo Shinshu Buddhism growing in the United States.

Because we have Dharma Forward, the IBS can keep professors. Because we have Dharma Forward, the BCA can support ministers and the Sangha.

In the Sangha tradition of interconnectedness and food, amazing chefs Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Michael Endo and Koichi Mizushima shared their talents with dishes ranging from oden to made-to-order sushi, nasudengaku, miso salmon, matsutake gohan, tri tip,

and the star, salmon chazuke topped with ikura.

The multitude of flavors were just like being transported to Japan.

At the fireside chat, IBS President Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto and Rev. Harada were interviewed on their reflections on the importance and relevance of Jodo Shinshu. Topics included the current trends of Buddhism, whether it's harmful or helpful to Jodo Shinshu, as well as dealing with the polarization in the world from a Jodo Shinshu perspective.

The evening wrapped up with great entertainment by Sangha Plus, a Berkeley Buddhist Temple trio of Tony Hale, dii Lewis and Romare

Uyeda-Hale. Thanks to the numerous volunteers from the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, the Jodo

At top left, BCA leaders and supporters gather for the inaugural Chef's Table on Nov. 10, 2023, at the Jodo Shinshu Center. The event was a benefit for the Dharma Forward campaign. At top right, the chefs -- Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Michael Endo, and Koichi Mizushima -- pose with the event's many volunteers. In first row: Judy Kono, Linda Griffin, Rev. Harada, Rev. Endo, Mizushima, and Michiko Inanaga. In second row: Jeffrey Yuan, Hideaki Mizuno, Pat Takeda, Devon Akiyama, Molly Maseba, and Matz Furumoto. In third row: Stacy Uyeda-Hale, Zora Uyeda-Hale, and Emily Torres. In fourth row: June Masuyama, Rumi Taylor, Hitomi Kuwahara, Ellie Mizushima, and Pam Matsuoka. In fifth row: Kurtis Omori. Not shown: Angela Bartolacci, Caroline Fernandez, Jinn Lim, Bob Matsueda, Gayle Noguchi, Yuki Otake, Karen Sugiyama, Lena Yin, Bryan Ainsworth, Terri Omori, Ford Omori, and Glenn Inanaga. Below, Sangha Plus (Romare Uyeda-Hale, Tony Hale, and dii Lewis) entertain the crowd. (Photos courtesy of Glenn Inanaga, Michiko Inanaga, Kurtis Omori, Terri Omori, and Hitomi Kuwahara)

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From a College Volunteer's View, Chef's Table Was a Success



Matz Furumoto is shown at the BCA's Chef's Table. (Courtesy of Matz Furumoto)

By Matz Furumoto
Senshin Buddhist Temple

The Jodo Shinshu Center looked quite different than usual on Nov. 10. Dharma Forward hosted a fundraising event to bring people back together and share a meaningful moment with one another.

Tables and chairs were fashionably set up at the guest area, with butterfly decals and flowers garnishing the ambience.

In contrast to the casually elegant atmosphere, accompanied with live music, the chefs and the volunteers who ran around to make sure all the guests were having a pleasant time were going through a busy rush. The food that the chefs cooked

and that the volunteers served was definitely the star of the show — the guests fully enjoyed the buffet-style dishes along with the Japanese sakes that matched.

It was an endurance test for us younger volunteers, however, as we watched and served the dishes to the guests with our empty stomachs begging for the food that was in front of our eyes.

After a few hours of running around and trying to control ourselves, we lost. We couldn't resist the temptation. There was a feast right in front of us, and some of the adults were encouraging us to eat up. A few of us grabbed some food, took the first bite and let out a sigh of admiration. As expected, the food was amazing. As we tried to continue our secret

feast, we noticed our adviser walking toward us. We were caught and were scolded. We regretfully cleaned up our food and continued to work, waiting for the time when we could properly eat the leftovers while the guests enjoyed various talks and entertainment.

The food was just so good that we broke a taboo. The guests also repeatedly mentioned how great the dishes tasted.

It is definitely safe to say — from the point of view of a youth volunteer — that the Chef's Table event was a success, and should be hosted again for the BCA Endowment Fund supporters to gather and have a nice time.

Matz Furumoto is a member of the UC Berkeley Nikkei Student Union (NSU) and is the daughter of Rev. Ryuta Furumoto of Senshin Buddhist Temple.

Arizona Buddhist Temple Celebrates 90th Anniversary

By Rev. Michael Tang
Arizona Buddhist Temple

On the weekend of Nov. 18, the Arizona Buddhist Temple celebrated its 90th anniversary in Phoenix, which included BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada as well as special guests Rev. Michael Endo and Supervising Minister Rev. Gregory Gibbs and his wife Kyoko.

The weekend's festivities were a commemoration of the Sangha's growth and prosperity over nine decades that involved a storytelling workshop that explored the history of the temple and culminated with a Kieshiki service and luncheon the following day.

Nearly two dozen temple members had their official Buddhist names bestowed upon them, ranging in age from children as young as 6 months to long-standing temple members in their 80s.

The temple was founded by Rev. Hozen Seki in July 1933 on the Yamamoto farm where Nisei farmers had informally gathered their families together to chant "Junirai" and hold makeshift Obon dances in orange groves.

Unable to purchase land or pay a minister an equitable salary, the Nisei founders initially struggled for years to establish an official temple until Rev. Seki moved across state lines to bring Jodo Shinshu Buddhism to the valley.

Nine decades later, the Sangha members born from those humble origins still remain, and through their hard work, they have grown their temple into the longest standing Jodo Shinshu Buddhist institution in the state of Arizona.

As I reflect on my own childhood at the temple, as well as my time as a minister's assistant, my first thought on the 90th anniversary is simply one of gratitude. Gratitude toward each and every individual who has played a role in the temple's history.

In all honesty, we have really defied the odds. A long-lasting Buddhist Sangha in Arizona was never a guarantee when it was founded. The fact that it's still going strong nine decades after its establishment is truly a tes-



BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada and Rev. Michael Endo, Executive Assistant to the Bishop, join the Arizona Buddhist Temple ministers -- Supervising Minister Rev. Gregory Gibbs, Rev. Lynn Sugimoto, Rev. Vonn Magnin, and Rev. Michael Tang -- and the Arizona temple members for a group photo at the temple's 90th anniversary celebration. (Courtesy of Rev. Michael Tang)

tament to not only the Sangha members that came before us, but every single one of us today.

It has not been easy. There have been challenges, but we've been able to meet them. We've

the COVID-19 pandemic.

We've made something like 20,000 pounds of mochi, largely by hand, and largely in the same way that they were making it in the 1970s. We've dressed

camp and shared our stories of internment. We've hosted thousands of curious visitors from the coast for workshops, conferences and seminars and perhaps most impressively,

In all honesty, we have really defied the odds. A long-lasting Buddhist Sangha in Arizona was never a guarantee when it was founded. The fact that it's still going strong nine decades after its establishment is truly a testament to not only the Sangha members that came before us, but every single one of us today It has not been easy. There have been challenges, but we've been able to meet them. We've reopened after the temple's closing during World War II, when most of the members were relocated to mass detention camps. We've rebuilt the temple after a massive fire reduced the old one to ash. We've held services in repurposed Gila River barracks and trailer parks in times of crises, erased walls of vandalism and graffiti, and streamed online services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

reopened after the temple's closing during World War II, when most of the members were relocated to mass detention camps. We've rebuilt the temple after a massive fire reduced the old one to ash. We've held services in repurposed Gila River barracks and trailer parks in times of crises, erased walls of vandalism and graffiti, and streamed online services during

our Hanamido and Onajin for more than seven decades.

We've sent Sangha members to Japan year after year, to pay their respects to the Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto, to take part in naming ceremonies, and to bring back the experiences to share. We've guided scores of students and educators through the remains of the Gila River

we've fed them.

We've had 18 ministers in our history, and we've sent three more temple members through Tokudo ordination, and two more through Kyoshi. Together, they have likely given around 6,000 Dharma messages throughout this time, some in Japanese, others in English, always for someone who is willing to listen.

The Buddha sought to save all human beings by blessing us with the benefit of the vow that is true and real. We are already the benefactors of his vow, it has already occurred, so there is nothing more for us to do but say the Name.

In our moments of sleepless nights, we come to the realization that we have limitations,

We've written original taiko songs and transported our compositions from coast-to-coast. We've stripped old wine casks into makeshift drums to teach new generations of musicians how to keep traditions alive. We've founded new schools and styles in classical Japanese dance, adding our own flair in forms of ribbon poles and the rhythms of the Beach Boys to an art that transcends the existence of Buddhism on this continent. We've held an Obon festival nearly every year that the temple has existed, some in orange groves, some in watermelon fields, some over Zoom and some on the backs of truck flatbeds.

We've sung, we've chanted and we've danced together. And we've been here to cry with one another after losing people we've loved, but also to celebrate the new beginnings of families and the times that we've shared with each other.

With every moment listed, we have said the Buddha's name in gratitude, but this is not the only constant. There can be no temple without a Sangha, and there can be no Sangha without each and every one of you.

The singular experiences shared there are unique, irreplaceable, and could not take place exactly as they did without the community and its members that define it. We are all threads of a tapestry that we have been weaving together for nearly a century.

We didn't start it, but we do participate in determining where it goes from here. Certainly, nothing in life lasts forever and this includes our temple, but it's been a tremendous ride and the story is nowhere near the end.

Our Arizona temple President Kris Nakashima, put it best by stating: "The fact that we have been in Arizona for 90 years is actually not that long a time in the grand scheme of things. We have to remember that in truth our Jodo Shinshu tradition is at least 800 years old since it started in Japan, and Buddhism as whole dates back to at least 2,500 years to India and Nepal. Quite frankly, we are only in our first 90 years, not even in the triple digits yet. We still have a long way to go."

that we cannot solve all our problems and anxieties. How can we awaken and become true and real? Shinran says it is Namoamidabutsu. When we come to realize all that is done for us, that our parents' lives continue to take effect on our lives, we awaken to infinite and boundless life. Namoamidabutsu.

Oxnard, Pasadena Host 2023 Southern District Conference



Rev. Jundo Gregory Gibbs
Pasadena Buddhist Temple
Arizona Buddhist Temple
Buddhist Temple of San Diego

The 13 temples of BCA's Southern District held its 2023 Buddhist conference on Oct. 14 at the Pasadena Buddhist Temple.

The in-person and virtual conference was co-hosted by the Sangha members of the Oxnard Buddhist Temple and the Pasadena Buddhist temples.

The Dharma-message for the opening service was delivered by Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada. He spoke about the deceased Bishops of the BCA and mentioned that Rev. Kenryu Tsuji, the only one of the past Bishops whom he met personally, had influenced him strongly.

Rev. Harada said that Rev. Tsuji was the first minister he ever heard describe the six realms of existence in non-literal, realistic terms, and he found Rev. Tsuji's down-to-earth approach to Buddhist doctrinal terms engaging.

The keynote English speaker was Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi, the former minister of the Buddhist Temple of San Diego, who spoke on the importance of living gratefully.

He urged the audience to see Jodo Shinshu as a religion

that says "thank you" instead of "please" as in the petitionary prayer of some traditions. His wife, Mrs. Karen Akahoshi, spoke about finding her own sense of identity beyond being a good daughter and a loyal temple member.

She also spoke about her tragic loss of her son Kirk, who passed away at the age of 44. While many of us would be devastated by the loss of our child at such an early juncture, Karen Akahoshi found gratitude for the time she had with him. This was a brave, strong, and deep perspective shared by Karen Akahoshi, and everyone was moved by her presentation.

The Japanese language keynote was given in the Pasadena garden classroom by Rev. Nobuo Miyaji, who served the majority of his Kaikyoshi career in the Southern District. He told anecdotes about impressive teachers and lay leaders he encountered.

A subsequent question-and-answer session was held in both languages. Rev. Dr. Akahoshi and Karen Akahoshi led the English section, and the Japanese language gathering was led by Rev. Miyaji, Rev. Koho Takata, Rev. Hibiki Murakami, and Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wondra.

Senshin Buddhist Temple's Hongwanji Place had a number of books, nenjus and other



The BCA's annual Southern District conference was held at the Pasadena Buddhist Temple on Oct. 14. Above, the BCA's Southern District ministers pose for a group photo at the conference. Shown in front row, from left, are: Rev. Ko'e Umazu, Rev. Koho Takata, Rev. Shinji Okada, Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi, Rev. Nobuo Miyaji, Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wondra, and Rev. Ellen Crane. In back row, from left, are: Rev. Hibiki Murakami, Rev. Ryuta Furumoto, Rev. Gregory Gibbs, and Rev. Kory Quon. At left, the attendees gather in the Pasadena temple Hondo. Below, Rev. Miyaji gives the Japanese language keynote at the Pasadena garden classroom. (Courtesy of Jitipawn Okumura and family)



district conference will be held on Oct. 19, 2024, and the conference will also commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Buddhist Churches of America.

It will be hosted by the Buddhist Temple of San Diego on the temple grounds. The English language keynote will be delivered by Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada.

Thank you to everyone who attended the Southern District conference. And, thank you, in particular to the members of the Oxnard and Pasadena temples who worked so hard to present this event.

Buddhist goods on sale.

The conference attendees were treated to a large and delicious bento lunch at the Pasadena temple's multipurpose Sakai Hall, which was available at the hall and for

takeout.

After the lunch, Conference Chairperson Kathy Kumagai led a Southern District Buddhist Women's Association meeting.

Next year's Southern Dis-

Bishop's Message

Continued from Page 1

few decades.

Rennyō Shōnin grew the Hongwanji at a time when it was in a state of disarray and decline. Rennyō Shōnin built numerous temples and shared the Nembutsu throughout Japan, even remotely, by his letters. In those days, he could not travel around the country by car or by plane like we do today. There were many groups of Nembutsu followers located throughout Japan. Rennyō Shōnin wrote letters to his followers and those letters were read aloud at gatherings and were like listening to his sermon directly.

This particular phrase, "The Right Time Is Now,"

is urging us to listen to the Dharma now, to come to receive the Dharma now, not to wait for tomorrow, or next week, or next month, or next year.

then the teachings become dynamic, relevant, and have an impact on our lives. If we put real listening off because we have this or that, making excuses every week or

I will never forget one talk by Rev. Tetsuo Unno, in which he said that we should listen to the Dharma with the same attitude as if we were listening to our doctor give us the results of our biopsy If we can listen with that kind of urgency, then the right time is always now.

at every opportunity to listen, then we might never come to the heart of the Dharma.

Rennyō Shōnin urges us not to wait for tomorrow. The right time to listen is — now.

I will never forget one

talk by Rev. Tetsuo Unno, in which he said that we should listen to the Dharma with the same attitude as if we were listening to our doctor give us the results of our biopsy.

Maybe some of you have had that experience. You have a biopsy of a tumor or mass in your body. You go to your doctor to await the news. It is like hearing the sentence from a judge — guilty or not guilty, life or death.

If it is benign, then you have life. If it is malignant, then you might face death. There is no putting off hearing that kind of report from your doctor. You wouldn't say, "I have a chance to play golf that day, can I come next week instead?" No. You would go to hear the news from your doctor at the first opportunity.

If we can listen with that kind of urgency, then the right time is always now.

By returning to our core, to our foundation, to our essence, we can make the right time now.

We can make the right time now to listen, to study, to reflect, to engage. We can make the right time now to share with others what we have come to appreciate about Shin Buddhism and the life of the Nembutsu.

We can make the right time now to do what we can to support our local temple, our district, and our BCA. We can make the right time now to move the Dharma forward. We can make the right time now to listen to and receive the heart of the Buddha, which is great wisdom and great compassion.



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Return to Lahaina



minor damages, such as cracks in the glass doors and some heat damage to the roof, but the interior, including all the niches and the altar, was intact. This is truly good news for the temple family, especially for those who have their loved ones interred in the Nokotsudo. We offered the incense and again chanted the sutra "Sanbutsuge" in front of the altar. It is indeed fortunate that the Nokotsudo was intact.

We then wore protective gear and began searching through the burnt rubble and assessing the situation. Although cloudy, it wasn't easy to continue working with protective clothing for a long time. It was necessary to take breaks every 30 minutes or so to rehydrate. The temple building, minister's residence, garage, temple office, social hall, and the Japanese school building were all burned down, leaving only a few remnants, such as the stone pillars and walls. We carefully and respectfully searched the remains, especially in the altar area, while taking photographs of the damaged area. It is truly regrettable to report that the Gohonzon (Amida Buddha's statue) and the other altar ornaments, such as picture scrolls of Shinran Shonin and Rennyō Shonin, Daikin bell, Shumidan, Maejoku table, pews in the Gejin area, etc., were all burned to the ashes. We discovered some altar ornaments, but they were all heavily damaged, and it was hard to identify what they were.

By Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani
Bishop of Honpa Hongwanji
Mission of Hawaii

As the re-entry restriction to zone 12B was lifted for the residents of Lahaina on Nov. 27, 2023, Rev. Ai Hironaka — the minister of the Lahaina Hongwanji Mission — Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii (HHMH) Business Manager Derrick Inouye and I returned to the Lahaina Hongwanji Mission for the first time since the wildfire devastated the town of Lahaina on Aug. 8.

Upon arrival at the temple, the three of us stood on the top of the stairs leading to the temple's front entrance. We placed our hands together in Gassho and chanted the sutra "Sanbutsuge" as we overlooked the debris-filled altar area destroyed by fire. The sound of the Nembutsu echoed through the quiet town.

We then entered the Nokotsudo (columbarium) building. The exterior seemed to have



Lahaina Hongwanji Mission Resident Minister Rev. Ai Hironaka, shown in the above photo, returns to the remains of the Buddhist temple on Nov. 27, 2023 in Maui, Hawaii. It was his first time back since the Aug. 8 wildfire destroyed the temple and the adjacent residence where his family lived. At left, the statue of Shinran Shonin is shown surviving the wildfires next to the temple entrance. (Photos courtesy of Matthew Thayer of The Maui News and Lahaina Hongwanji Mission/Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii)

In the desolate scenery, the statue of Shinran Shonin was still standing firmly with great dignity. His back, blackened by fire, indicated the fierceness of the blaze that engulfed the temple. By the side of Shinran Shonin, the small tree that the Gomonsu planted during his official visit to Hawaii in 2017 survived the fire and sprouted some new green leaves. The

blackened statue of Shinran Shonin and a humble tree with greenery symbolize our resilience and commitment to the future. The road to recovery has just begun. We never know what the future holds. But we will move forward together. The Lahaina Hongwanji's statue of Amida Buddha has disappeared, but in our own voice of the Nembutsu, the three of us clearly heard the voice of

Compassion that still embraces and sustains us warmly. Namō Amida Butsu.

The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii received an outpouring of support from Hawaii and worldwide, including the ministers, members, and the temples of the Buddhist Churches of America. We are truly grateful for your heartwarming and compassionate action. As of Oct. 31, 2023, we

have raised close to \$700,000. We have distributed \$288,400 from the Maui Wildfire Disaster Relief Fund. Combined with \$28,000 distributed from the HHMH Social Welfare Fund, a total of \$316,000 in emergency aid has been allocated.

On behalf of Rev. Ai Hironaka, the Lahaina Hongwanji Mission, and the people of Lahaina, I would like to humbly ask for your continued support.

Note: You can find a more detailed account of Rev. Ai Hironaka in the Maui News article written by Matthew Thayer at: bit.ly/483kFdo

Chef's Table

Continued from Page 6

Shinshu Center, BCA staff, and UC Berkeley Nikkei Student Union (NSU).

Special thanks to event sponsors: Bishop Rev. Marvin and Gail Harada, Glenn and Michiko Inanaga, Dr. Kent Matsuda, Jane Naito, Rick and Dolly Oishi, Sandra Takeda, Richard Uyematsu,

and Ken Tanimoto, with sake pairings by Takara Sake USA. To support the future of Jodo Shinshu in America gifts can be made to Dharma Forward online at bca.kindful.com



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know Rev. Harry Bridge and Rev. Yuki Sugahara have both recorded "Shinran Sama" and made their renditions available on YouTube?

These two gatha videos of "Shinran Sama" have been on the BCA Music YouTube channel playlist.

Please check them out at: bit.ly/3t9Pi1H

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ALOHA

Sitting Together in Our Pews Is a Gift Worthy of Appreciation



Editor's note: Rev. Anne Spencer, of the Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple, delivered the following Dharma message on Nov. 3, 2023. It marked the first time that the Sangha members were able to sit in the restored pews after a damaging fire on July 8, 2022. The Wheel of Dharma is pleased to reprint Rev. Spencer's Dharma message with the permission of Rev. Spencer.

By Rev. Anne Spencer
Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple

Please put your palms together in gassho as I read the English translation of three verses of "Tsuicho no Uta," a song that we sang regularly in Japanese at many of our in-person Shotsuki monthly memorial services in the past.

Though you have gone to Buddha land, my thoughts are on you. As I long to see you, your face floats before my eyes as I intone the Buddha's name.

How many friendships have these pews seen over the years? Who have you sat with here? For those of you who have been coming for many decades, who do you remember your parents or grandparents sitting with? How many people have comforted friends and family in these pews during funerals or difficult times? Or maybe celebrated a holiday or a wedding here? A LOT has happened in these pews over the years.

Today, when spreading the mat to hear the teachings, I turn to you. Come to us now at this gathering for friends who remain.

How joyous! The Compassion of the Buddha now fills our being. As for us, we turn to you while intoning the Nembutsu.

Isn't it fun to watch our temple being put back together after the fire? Today many of you are getting to experience having our pews back. These are the same pews we had before the fire, but with new upholstery. And we made

some changes to the configuration here in the front and on the sides to make it easier for people to get in and out and to move around. But these are not new pews, they are our pews — the ones that have been at the temple for decades.

And in honor of the return of the pews, I wanted to share some thoughts on sitting. Not just sitting, but sitting together, sitting and being together with our Sangha. Not running around and doing things, not coming and going, but sitting together, sharing time and space together. Genuinely appreciating being in the presence of those around us.

The second stanza of the gatha I just read says, "Today, when spreading the mat to hear the teachings, I turn to you. Come to us now at this gathering for friends who remain."

Traditionally, in Asia, Buddhists sat on the ground or the floor to hear the Dharma. But because the ground is dirty or hard, people would bring special mats, cushions, or carpets to sit on while they, surrounded by their community, listened to the Buddhist teachings. Can't you imagine people coming together, looking around for their friends, exchanging greetings, and then spreading out their mats near friends and family, to sit and listen to the Dharma surrounded by their loved ones?

It's just like coming into the Hondo, the main hall of the temple, and looking around in the pews for a friend



The refurbished Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple Hondo and the pews are shown in these photos. Rev. Anne Spencer delivered the Dharma message on Nov. 3, 2023, which marked the first time that Sangha members were able to sit in the restored pews since a damaging fire on July 8, 2022. (Courtesy of Rev. Anne Spencer and Rev. Kathy Chatterton)

afterwards she and I planned to stay in touch. That was Sept. 12, 2005.

On Nov. 30, 2005, Debbie died suddenly. It was shocking! And I was so grateful for that time we had together and so happy that we had had the drive to Sun Valley and back to just sit together and become friends that day. That was our only chance to be friends and I am so glad we took full advantage of our time together.

Our Buddhist teachings tell us that everything is impermanent and death is a normal part of life. This teaching reminds us to appreciate each moment we have with each other and to not take our own life or the lives of others for granted.

Getting to sit together with another person is a gift that we should appreciate whenever we have the chance. Inviting others to sit with us is something we can do to make the world a better place. The teachings also remind us that all things are interconnected and that our memories and connections with the deceased are real and meaningful even after death.

As we sit in the temple, at home, in a coffee shop, or even on a bus, we can continue to remember and appreciate the time we get to share with others.

And take a moment to appreciate the pews — oh, the stories of friendship they could tell!

I have a memory that I wanted to share today of Debbie Ogura, whose name is on our list this month. I met Debbie on Sept. 12, 2005. The Dalai Lama was speaking in Sun Valley, Idaho. And Ruth and Hideo Harada invited both Debbie and me to come with them — I believe that they had four tickets and they wanted us to be their guests. Several of the Buddhist groups in Idaho got together and chartered a bus up there.

Ruth wanted Debbie and me to become friends and so she arranged for the two of us to share a seat on the bus. Debbie and I sat together and talked the whole way up to Sun Valley and the whole way back — it was a great time and

of time and attention to the place we are in and the people we are with. Our sitting down demonstrates that we want to be here.

How many friendships have these pews seen over the years? For those of you who have been coming for many decades, who do you remember your parents or grandparents sitting with? How many people have comforted friends and family in these pews during funerals or difficult times? Or maybe celebrated a holiday or a wedding here? A LOT has happened in these pews over the years.

As I read the names on the shotsuki list, how many of you have memories of spending time with one or more of these people? Do you remember sitting with them during service,

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今月の法話

「他力とは何か」

カーテナ仏教会 開教使 庵原 シヨウ



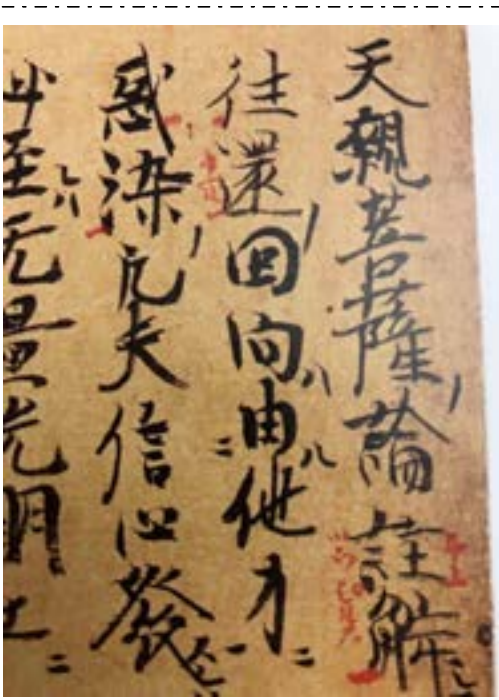
Rev. John Iwihara

「他力」とは何か。まずは、「他力」は「自力」に対する言葉です。宗祖様が書かれた『一念多念文意』という著述に自力を次のように説明していま...

欲もおほく、いかり、はらだち、そねみ、ねたむ、ごころおほく、まなくして、臨終の一念にいたるまで、とどまらず、きまき、たえずと、水火二河のたごへにあらはれたり。

それ菩薩は仏に帰す。孝子の父母に帰し、忠臣の君后に帰して、動静おのれにあらず、出沒かならず由あるがごとし。恩を知りて徳を報す、理よろしくまづ啓すべし。

「自力」の「自」とは頼りにならないものであるから、親鸞聖人は頼りになるものを我々に勧めるわけです。その頼りになるものは「他力」の「他」です。例えば、『修行信証』の「行巻」に親鸞聖人が他力を次のように説明されています。



"Tariki" handwriting by Shinran Shonin

この行信に帰命すれば撰取して捨てたまはず。ゆゑに阿弥陀仏と名づけたてまつると。これを他力といふ。この行信をいただくなら、仏は撰め取つて決してお捨てにならない。だからこの仏を阿弥陀仏と申しあげるのである。これを他力といふ。

教を伝えてくださったことに感謝(報恩)の思いをもちて宮仏法要が報恩講です。くつかりの寺院は旧暦にあわせて11月28日前後に報恩講をおつとめしています。京都の西本願寺では日本時間の1月9日から16日まで報恩講の法要が法話などがインターネットで中継されますので西本願寺のウェブサイトを閲覧になってください。



山岡誓願名譽開教使(89)が12月15日に往生の素懐をこげられた。1934年にフランスに生まれた山岡師は、1956年にフランス国立大学を卒業後、龍谷大学へ留学。1961年に修士号を取得し、1964年に博士課程を修了した後に、オークランド仏教会の駐在開教使となった。1971年からストックトン仏教会に駐在となり、1981年から1996年まで米国仏教団総長を務めた。1996年から再びオークランド仏教会の駐在となり、2008年に引退。ベイエリアで引退生活を送られ、数年前より南カリフォルニアに転居されていた。教団葬が2024年1月20日、午後1時(西海岸標準時)よりオークランド仏教会で営まれる。葬儀はオークランド仏教会のYouTubeチャンネルで配信される予定。https://www.youtube.com/c/buddhistchurchof oakland

ダイヤルザタルマで日本語法話

電話でいつでも法話を聞くことができる「ダイヤルザタルマ」が好評を得ている。(800)817-7918に電話すると、原田総長の声で音読ガイドが始まる。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1時に更新される予定。



At left, an initiation ceremony is held at the Tacoma Buddhist Church (now the Tacoma Buddhist Temple) on May 21, 1934. In the front row are: Mrs. Kinuko Sasaki, Rev. Sensho Sasaki, Bishop Rev. Kenju Masuyama, Rev. Gladys Sunya Pratt, and Rev. Robert Clifton. Above, Rev. Pratt is honored at a 50th anniversary testimonial dinner at the temple. (Courtesy of Tacoma Buddhist Temple)



Rev. Pratt Continued from Page 1 ple) was truly groundbreaking. The press descriptions of the time likely seem racist and sexist when describing Rev. Pratt as the "First White Buddhist Priestess." Surprisingly, those terms were supplied by her sponsor, the Buddhist Mission to North America (BMNA), precursor to the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA).

Who was she really? Gladys Brice was born on Feb. 6, 1898, in Great Britain. Around the age of 14, she picked Buddhism for her spiritual path. She had studied all world religions, as urged by her philosopher father. She continued to study Buddhism on her own. As a young woman working as a typist at an air base during World War I, she met and fell in love with Canadian soldier Wesley Pratt. They were married and moved to Canada to begin a family.

her passing, she is remembered with fond memories for her work with the Tacoma Sangha. A collage of photos depicting Rev. Pratt can be found in the hallway outside the Hondo of the Tacoma Buddhist Temple. Rev. Pratt's legacy continues in Tacoma to the present. The temple hosts a Rev. Sunya Pratt BEC (Buddhist Education Committee) seminar every year, and has a library room dedicated in her name. And, as for the legend? Technically, Rev. Pratt was not the first white female BMNA minister. One or more women preceded her, but their time with BMNA was short. For more information, I urge readers to read Justin Wadland's excellent 2019 online article at https://historylink.org/File/20731. (In writing this appreciation, I am also indebted to the writings of Michihiro Ama, who is identified in Wadland's online article.) Wadland summarizes Rev. Pratt's legacy as follows: "As a figure in the larger history of Buddhism in the United States, she stands out as a female spiritual leader, notable for her steadfast dedication and service," he wrote. And she stayed the distance. Among the 10 or so white Buddhists who in the 1920s or 1930s converted to Jodo Shins-hu, Rev. Pratt was the only one who kept her connections to the BCA throughout her life.

As for her unorthodox ordination, she eventually caught up too, with a traditional formal ordination conducted by Bishop Rev. Kenryu Tsuji in 1969. Examples of Rev. Pratt's loving support of the Japanese American community include the difficult years of World War II, when Japanese Americans were rounded up on the West Coast, uprooted from their homes, and sent to federal mass incarceration camps from 1942 to 1945. On the radio, Rev. Pratt protested the rise in anti-Japanese sentiment, explaining the community's loyalty. When Tacoma

Sangha members were first removed to a temporary shelter in horse stables, she talked her way past guards to visit and assist as best she could. Later, when the Sangha members were moved to permanent barracks, she traveled to help conduct Buddhist services and visit with them. And we should appreciate the ordinary nature of her life. When she began her official ministry in 1936, she was 38 years old, a mature adult, a mother of two, and had a full life of her own. She and her husband ran a modest home business, the Tacoma Button Company. This naturalness is counter to racist tropes implied in her legend; Rev. Pratt was not some exotic great white hero. She was, like us, an everyday person, in her way. And she knew suffering. In the late 1970s, her husband died in his early 90s, followed two years later by her daughter Veronica, who was 61. Rev. Pratt grew deeply depressed and withdrew from temple duties. Despondent, she would sometimes keep temple friends on the phone for hours, bemoaning her situation and grappling with how her life had

Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course 2-year online program. Personalized feedback on a monthly assignment. Tuition: \$60 per year. Annual Starting Date: Fall Semester - September 1st, Spring Semester - March 1st.

President's Message Continued from Page 3 Kevin Kujiraoka and Mitchell Kita on behalf of the Sr. Young Buddhist Association. Recently reorganized, the youth group for 18-24-year-olds made a request to the BCA National Board to become a Candidate Affiliated Organization. Their request was enthusiastically approved. We look forward to working together and supporting the progress of the organization. 2024-2026 BCA Executive Committee Officers election was held. Congratulations to Steven Terusaki (President), Glenn Inanaga (President-Elect), John Arima

法輪

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二〇二四年度
教化標語

「今がその時」

あの記事をもう一度!

法輪のバックナンバーがBCA
ウェブサイトにて読めます。
<http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/about-us/wheel-of-dharma>

「門主年頭の」挨拶



年頭の辞

新しい年のはじめにあたり、ご挨拶申し上げます。

昨年も世界各地で地震・洪水・山火事など様々な災害が起こり、多くの方が被災されました。特にハワイ・マウイ島における山火事ではラハイナ本願寺の本堂が全焼し、メンバーの方々の被害も報告されています。ここに災害によってお亡くなりになられたすべての方々に謹んで哀悼の意を表しますとともに、被災された皆さまに心よりお見舞い申し上げます。皆さまが一日も早く、日常の生活を取り戻されますことを願っております。

また、2022年2月に始まったロシア連邦によるウクライナ侵攻はいまだに続いており、2023年10月以来、イスラエルとパレスチナの武力衝突では関係国を巻き込んで、民間人を含む多くの犠牲者が出ています。私がいま思い

起すものは、「ちへつ」の者は暴力でござんす。すべての者は死をおそれる。己が身にひきまわすべし、殺してはならぬ。殺さしめてはならぬ。」（『ダンマパダ』第129偈）というお釈迦様のお言葉です。

この世に生を受けた私たちは、いかなる理由があろうとも等しく人権が保障され、命が脅かされるようなことがあってはなりません。しかし、現実には世界各地で紛争やテロが勃発し、生存の権利が脅かされている人々が数多くおられます。平和主義を掲げる仏教徒である私たちは、お釈迦様のお言葉を深く心に刻み、国際社会の平和と安全に大きく貢献することが求められています。

さて、昨年は本願寺において3月29日より5月21日までの5期30日間にわたり、「親鸞聖人御誕生850年立教開宗800年慶讃法要」をお勤めいたしました。ご参拝くださいました皆さま、お力添えを賜りました皆さまに心より感謝申し上げます。私たちが立教開宗800年の慶讃法要をお勤めできましたことは、時代や場所を超えて多くの先人の方々が、浄土真宗のみ教えを生きた支えとして、今日まで大切に受け継いでこられたからに他なりません。

これからもみ教えを聞き、それを支えとして、一日一日を大切に過ごしてまいりましょう。

2024年1月1日

浄土真宗本願寺派
門主 大谷光淳

謹賀新年

今年もよろしくお願ひ申し上げます。

今掌
編集部一同



「The Right Time Is Now — 今がその時」

米國仏教団 総長 原田 マービン



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada

これは第八代
BCA標語は英語では「The Right Time Is Now」になりました。

2024年の標語はBCAの将来に対する危機感を反映しています。現在、10年ごとに28%のメンバーを失っている状況です。このようなペースでメンバー数が減少していくと、数十年のうちにBCAは衰退してしまわう。蓮如上人は今から約500年前、本願寺が衰退していた時に「門主」となられたのですが、様々な方法で伝道された。数多くの寺院を建立し、本願寺を大きく成長させました。上人の伝道方法の一つは、お念仏の教えを手紙によって日本中に伝えられたことです。日本各地の念仏者のグループへ手紙を送り、念仏者の集いがあるときに、その手紙を代表者が朗読するようにしました。各地の念仏者は、蓮如上人とは遠く離れていても、あたかも直接上人のご法話を聞くことのできるような体験ができました。

今年の標語「今がその時」(The Right Time is Now)「今がその言葉は、明日、来週、来月、来年を待つのではない。今、仏法に耳を傾けなさい。」「今、仏法をいただきなさい」と催促してくれる言葉です。

私たちは皆、お寺が成長することを望んでいますが、真の成長の鍵は、「仏法を学ぶこと」に再び焦点を合わせることから私たちの心ははずれます。まるで明日がないかのような切迫感をもって教えに立ち返るとき、教えはダイナミックなものとなり、私たちの人生に影響を与えるようになるのです。

あれがあるから、これがあからと後回しにし、毎週、あるいは機会があるときに言い訳をし、聴聞することを躊躇していると、いつまでたっても教えの真髄に触れることができません。

それで蓮如上人は、「明日を待つな。仏法を聞く時は今なのだ。」とおっしゃるのでした。

海野徹雄師が以前、「仏法は、生体検査の結果を医師から聞かされると同じような気持ちで聞くべきだ」と言われていました。

皆さんの中に体内の腫瘍などを調べるために生体検査を受けたことがある方がおられると思います。腫瘍が良性なら命はありますが、悪性なら死に直面するかもしれません。検査の後、その診断を待ちます。「有罪か無罪か」、「生か死か」と、裁判官の判決を聞くような気持ちになるでしょうが、そんなとき私たちは、診断結果を聞くのを先延ばしにしようか? 「その日はゴルフの予定があるので来週来てもいいですか?」とは言わないでしよう。主治医に病気の診断を聞きに行くことが先決なのです。

同様に、もし私たちが生死の問題に対して切迫感を持っては、聞法するタイミングは常に今だと気づくことができます。今こそが、仏法を聴聞し、深く学び、理解したことをみなとシェアする時なのです。

そしてまた、今こそが、皆さんが所属するお寺や教区やBCAを支援する時でもあります。大いなる智慧と大いなる慈悲である仏の心をいただいていることを聞き、ダルマフォワードキャンペーンなどを通して、お寺やBCAをサポートしていきましょう。