



WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America



Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka, right, is shown with Buddhist Church of Oakland ministers Rev. Michael Endo, left, and Resident Minister Rev. Harry Bridge, center, in this March 27, 2022, photo. (Courtesy of Rev. Michael Endo)

Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka: Remembering a Great

Former BCA Bishop,
IBS President Impacted
Countless Lives; Recalled
as Devoted Family Man

“Hanging tight is hard. Letting go is harder.”

— Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka’s Facebook post on Dec. 10, five days before his passing

By Jon Kawamoto
Wheel of Dharma Editor

For most of his life, Rev. Dr. Seigen Haruo Yamaoka shared the Dharma and, through a series of

Continued on Page 7



Rev. Dr. Yamaoka and Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada enjoy the Dharma Forward’s Chef’s Table fundraiser on Nov. 10, 2023. (Courtesy of Glenn and Michiko Inanaga)

In Memoriam: Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka

By Rev. Marvin Harada
Bishop of the BCA

We recently lost a giant in our BCA, Rev. Seigen Yamaoka, who was a former Bishop of the BCA.

My association with Rev. Yamaoka goes back many years to my time in college and at IBS. My first assignment as a minister to the Orange County Buddhist Church came under Rev. Yamaoka’s term as the

Bishop. When I received the letter from him, I was still in Japan, and I didn’t even know where Orange County was. I happily accepted my first assignment and now 38 years have passed.

Flash forward to just this past November, when we had our Chef’s Table fundraising event. Rev. Yamaoka traveled all the way from his home in Southern California to

Continued on Page 2

Firefighters Battle Massive Blaze, Save Arizona Temple

It Began at Construction Site Next Door; No Injuries Reported

By Jon Kawamoto
Wheel of Dharma Editor

Nearly 100 firefighters battled and extinguished a massive overnight fire Feb. 4 at a construction building next to the Arizona Buddhist Temple — and saved the temple from ruin.

The temple suffered some exterior damage, Arizona Minister’s Assistant Rev. Lynn Sugiyama said, and he added that the Hondo and Onaijin areas were not damaged. The Arizona Buddhist Temple was able to continue its Sunday services.

Continued on Page 9

Hoshina Seki Describes Path as a Trans Woman

By Hoshina Seki
New York Buddhist Church
American Buddhist Study Center

It was always meant to be. That’s what my life is all about. But let me unravel how this Japanese American was asked to write this article.

First, I do not know why. I am transgender, and my samsara, the continuous cycle of life, death, and rebirth, keeps going on. This means I’ll return many more times until I get it right.

About nine months



Continued on Page 8

Seattle Bids Farewell to Onaijin — for Now



Seattle Betsuin members bid farewell to the Onaijin and Toro lantern, which are headed for Japan to be refurbished. See story, Page 5. (Courtesy of Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple)



MINISTER'S MESSAGE



By Rev. Hibiki Murakami
Los Angeles Homba
Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

Orientation for the Journey

catch up with these changing circumstances.

Shakyamuni Buddha revealed that nothing is permanent. This principle applies not only to physical stuff, but also our minds. However, our prejudices are hard like unbreakable crystal. This is quite strange in that, despite everything around us changing, our prejudices and desires resist.

You cannot criticize when you claim someone doesn't listen to your talk because everybody has this element of stubbornness. Nothing is permanent, but our stubbornness is exceptionally resistant. That's why the Zen monk approached his problem by continuously learning Buddhism. He knew it was a lifelong work to be completed.

Jodo Shinshu provides a similar solution in terms of relying on Amida Buddha's power. The Buddha's power doesn't require us to change. We turn this orientation into reliance by handing off our stubborn desire to take control. The state of being settled in that reliance is as it ought to be is what we call "Shinjin."

One hundred years ago, there was a Jodo Shinshu priest named Gojun Shichiri in Hakata City, Fukuoka. He

was a minister of the Manpuku-ji temple.

"In our belief, there is no evidence, even a single sentence, endorsing attaining the Pure Land as the goal," Rev. Shichiri said. "There are sayings such as 'Relying on Amida' and 'Having been cleared of doubts by the mysterious working of the Vow.' Above all, the core guidance in Jodo Shinshu directs solely relying on the Buddha's Great Compassion."

Rev. Shichiri shared a parable about the vessel of Hongan. The vessel, Hongwan, shuttled between this shore and the other, carrying passengers. Amida Buddha, two bodhisattvas, Avalokiteshvara and Mahasthamaprapta, are the captains of the cruise.

For the passengers, three tiers of tickets are available to this sturdy ship, which are first class, middle class, and lower class. The first-class ticket is decorated with a pine, bamboo, and plum pattern. (In Japan, this pattern is used as a symbol of good fortune.)

The lucky winners of the first-class tickets are the ordinary beings who are tired of the world. They show the tickets and board the boat. They will enjoy their journey

to the other shore, listening to the sound of the Nembutsu being delivered in a breeze. Moreover, this boat has been insured with the promises of various Buddhas that no matter what happens, it will be safe.

When the passengers looked at the beach from where the vessel set off, they saw the people there waving their tickets in their hands.

Wrongly, they had gone to the beach and were about to swim to catch up. Don't make yourself to be a fool like that. You should go to the port with your ticket in your hand, get aboard the ship, and when you feel at ease, that is the moment to get settled. This vessel surely takes you to the shore of Nirvana.

The vessel of Hongan is anchored in the human harbor for the sake of ordinary beings who have tickets marked with "greed," "anger," and "stupidity" in their hands.

Rev. Shichiri referred to those who are wise and yet wicked as having "wisdom in death" because no matter how smart they are, if they do not understand the reason for things, they will not gain

Continued on Page 4

An old Zen monk was sitting under a tree. A kid asked the monk, "Why are you 'still' learning Buddhism? Another monk taught me that Buddhism is to know satisfaction. Are you still not satisfied with what you have learned?"

The monk replied, "I am learning Buddhism because I 'still' don't understand the things revealed to me."

We are often troubled, confused, and distressed by the things that look complicated. In most cases, however, things are actually less complicated than they seem.

The reason for this is that we have a strong desire to want things to happen exactly as we plan. Things are constantly changing, but our minds seem not to be flexible enough to

Bishop's Message

Continued from Page 1

attend that event. He looked so great and he stayed up till after everyone had left and we were cleaning up. We sat and talked for quite some time. Whenever he talked about the Dharma or the transmission of the Dharma, or how things in our BCA or IBS were going, there was always a light in his eyes, a passion in his voice, and a spirit that I sensed from him.

Rev. Yamaoka studied traditional Shin Buddhism very deeply, attaining the Hongwanji ranking of hokyo, which is second highest to the rank of kangaku, the highest rank of scholasticism in our Hongwanji.

But Rev. Yamaoka didn't just relate the tradition with the same traditional expressions, the same terminology and language that the Hongwanji has been using for centuries. He knew that Shin Buddhism had to be interpreted for the West, for the English-speaking world. All of the major concepts of Shin Buddhism — Amida Buddha, Pure Land, Nembutsu, Shinjin — all had to be explained in a Western context, in a way that Westerners could relate to and that resonated with them. I think it is fair to say that he did this throughout his years of ministry, even after

his retirement.

That still remains to be our challenge, even today. The extent that we do it well will be the extent that our Sanghas and our BCA grow. If our membership is declining, it is also an indication that our message is not resonating with people, that the way we are relating the tradition of Shin Buddhism to their lives is not resonating.

her husband. In his book, he writes the following about that experience:

"As a Buddhist minister, I was fortunate to be able to share Lorna's personal story of the Challenger tragedy from her perspective. The discussions that we shared were honest and straightforward. The transformation in accepting the truth of Ellison's death opened the

situation, the tragic loss of her husband.

We are indebted to Rev. Yamaoka for his spirit of transmitting the Dharma to the West, a task that we now must all take upon ourselves. The baton is now in our hands. It is our turn. It is our time. Whatever we can do, great or small, will contribute to the transmission of the teachings to the West.

Rev. Yamaoka didn't just relate the tradition with the same traditional expressions, the same terminology and language that the Hongwanji has been using for centuries. He knew that Shin Buddhism had to be interpreted for the West, for the English-speaking world. All of the major concepts of Shin Buddhism — Amida Buddha, Pure Land, Nembutsu, Shinjin — all had to be explained in a Western context, in a way that Westerners could relate to and that resonated with them.

Rev. Yamaoka wrote a book titled, "The Transmission of Shin Buddhism in the West," and my favorite section of that book is where he shared his experience of counseling Lorna Onizuka, who had lost her husband, Ellison Onizuka, in the Space Shuttle Challenger tragedy on Jan. 28, 1986. Rev. Yamaoka went to Houston, Texas, to conduct the makuragyo for her husband.

Lorna was terribly distraught, and Rev. Yamaoka talked with her and guided her through her grief and despair to come to accept the loss of

door to courage and a new meaning of life for her. It was not a life free from pain and the feeling of loss, but a beginning that opened the doors of her heart to a new relationship with her husband that only she can know."

Rev. Yamaoka did not quote doctrinal passages to Lorna Onizuka to counsel her. He did not quote the "Kyogyoshinsho" or the "Tannisho." But based on his own understanding and experience of Shin Buddhism, he was able to lead her through her grieving process, to come to accept the truth and reality of

That is the best way that we can honor and remember Rev. Seigen Yamaoka.

Correction

The January 2024 issue of the Wheel of Dharma did not fully include Rev. Dennis Hosen Shinseki's list of temples. Rev. Shinseki is the Resident Minister of Salinas Buddhist Temple in addition to the Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Temple and the Watsonville Buddhist Temple.



Wheel of Dharma

(USPS 017-700)
Official Publication of the
Buddhist Churches of America

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

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

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

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

WHEEL OF DHARMA POLICY

HARDCOPY PUBLICATION LICENSE: Authors who submit articles for publication in the Wheel of Dharma ("WOD") thereby grant WOD a royalty-free non-exclusive paid up license, worldwide, in perpetuity and in all media (the "License") to use, edit, and republish the article(s) and to grant sublicenses to any third party to do so on the same terms. WOD grants third parties an identical License to republish its articles so long as the article(s) is republished in its entirety, without edit, providing credit to the WOD and the Buddhist Churches of America.

ONLINE PUBLICATION LICENSE: Authors who submit articles for publication in the Wheel of Dharma online ("WOD") thereby grant WOD a royalty-free non-exclusive paid up license, worldwide, in perpetuity and in all media (the "License") to use, edit, and republish the article(s) and to grant sublicenses to any third party to do so on the same terms. WOD grants third parties an identical License to republish only the first three paragraphs of any article, without edit, providing credit to the WOD and the Buddhist Churches of America, including a hyperlink to the article in WOD.

Editor:

Jon Kawamoto

Editor, Japanese Section:

Rev. Ryuta Furumoto

Print Production:

Jeffrey Kimoto



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thank You for Honor, Privilege of Serving as BCA President



By **Terri Omori**
BCA President

I have had the honor to experience various leadership opportunities at the temple, district, and BCA levels.

I have enjoyed every moment, met incredible people (now my Dharma friends) and have learned so much along the way.

My time on the BCA Executive Committee has been amazing as well. For the past six years, I have been fortunate to work together with incredible leaders and these past two years have been such a humbling honor to serve as your BCA President.

The 2022-2024 Executive Committee was an awesome team. I was so lucky to have a team of leaders who wants

what is best for BCA — the organization, the ministry, the temples and churches, and the Sangha.

I am forever grateful to Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada for his visionary insight, to Rev. Harry Bridge for his cautious wisdom, to Steven Terusaki, Glenn Inanaga, and John Arima for their organizational expertise, to Jeff Matsuoka for his continued dedication as BCA Treasurer, and to Darlene Bagshaw for her meticulous minutes. Their engagement and concern for the sustainability of the BCA and its temples are the driving force to their leadership efforts.

I am also grateful to our dedicated BCA staff. They make it happen! They take the action items and complete the tasks. With limited staff members, and many are part-time positions, we are so fortunate to have wonderful people who go above and beyond.

My deepest gratitude to Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Michael Endo, Rev. Jerry Hirano, Judy Kono, Koichi Mizushima, Bob Matsueda, Pam Matsuoka, Kevin Arakaki, Gregg Sera, Madeline Kubo, Angela Bartolacci, Alex Tsukahara, Stephanie Fong,



BCA President Terri Omori, center, poses with the BCA Executive Committee members at the Eitaikyo Service on Feb. 25 at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento. Shown, from left, are: Ministers Association Chair Rev. Harry Bridge; Vice President John Arima; President-Elect Steven Terusaki; Omori; Vice President Glenn Inanaga; Secretary Darlene Bagshaw; Treasurer Jeffery Matsuoka; and Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada. (Courtesy of Cathy Fujimori)

and Gayle Noguchi. I would also like to acknowledge Jon Kawamoto, editor of the Wheel of Dharma, and his crew for connecting our BCA Sangha through thought-provoking, informative, Dharma-enriching articles.

As I finish writing my final President's Message, the 2024

National Council Meetings have just concluded. It was an amazing event. There was so much energy, laughter, networking, and, of course, delicious food!

The last time we had come together in person was at the 2020 NCM in Renton, Washington. It was wonderful to

see one another again as well as meeting those we only knew from virtual events. Special thanks to the 2024 NCM Planning Committee, led by Allan Yamashiro, chairperson. The committee, along with the ministers and

Continued on Page 4

Ekoji Buddhist Temple Relaunches Its Echo Ekoji Podcast

By **Jon Kawamoto**
Wheel of Dharma Editor

Echo Ekoji, the Ekoji Buddhist Temple's podcast that began two years ago amid the pandemic shutdown, has been relaunched this year — and is already attracting new listeners and generating a positive buzz.

"In planning for 2024, I made the podcast one of my top priorities," said Ekoji President Andrea Chapman. "I believe this genre of communication is a means for us to bring the lay person's experience to the forefront and it provides us all with an opportunity to hear how other people are integrating the Buddha's teachings into their everyday lives."

Chapman said the podcast began during the COVID-19 pandemic "to help bridge the gap between the isolation many were experiencing."

The podcast proved to be a pivotal moment for the temple because it required an investment in a new iMac and the temple's first microphones.

"Little did we know that was just the beginning of what is now a full-scale professional audio-visual system, which allows us to host hybrid events that are reaching members coast to coast," she said.

However, the podcast's original hosts lost momentum

and Echo Ekoji was put on the back burner for nearly a year, Chapman said, who serves as Echo Ekoji's co-host with Ekoji and Seattle Betsuin Sangha member Joe Gotchy.

"I had come to know Joe via our Dharma Discussion Group, which I also host, and it was apparent to me he shared my passion for Ekoji and all things related to the Dharma," Chapman said.

Gotchy, who became a virtual member of Ekoji during the pandemic, said he's "interested in how Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is evolving in the Americas ... especially as our Sanghas become more diverse." He said he was interested in learning about the history of Ekoji Buddhist Temple and what makes it different from many of BCA's other temples, especially those on the West Coast.

For the podcast, Gotchy writes the opening and closing remarks, develops questions for the interview subjects, and responds to comments and questions from the audience.

Chapman sets up the technology to conduct the interviews, edits and uploads the interviews, and contacts the interview subjects who are members of Ekoji's Sangha.

Chapman said the last question is always the same: "What does Ekoji mean to you?"



FYI

What: IBS presents 2022 To view the Echo Ekoji podcasts, go to: bit.ly/48dq80r

Ekoji President Andrea Chapman, above right, and Joe Gotchy, are the cohosts of the temple's podcast, Echo Ekoji. Also shown is Ekoji member Truc Vo. (Courtesy of Andrea Chapman)

and excited to share the content with newcomers and longstanding members alike," she said. "There's something in every episode that resonates deeply with me. Our guests, to date, are truly living the Dharma and serve as stellar examples of what is possible when you embrace the teachings."

Gotchy said: "Hopefully, these interviews will act as a gateway for other people who want to learn more about Buddhism, Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, and the BCA community. Andrea and I also

want to build stronger bonds between the East and West Coast temples, specifically Ekoji and Seattle, but also include New York, the Midwest and Tri-State/Denver temples because of ties that their ministers have with Ekoji and Seattle."

The podcast is currently hosted on Ekoji's YouTube channel at: bit.ly/48dq80r. Season one of the podcast was initially audio only. Season two incorporates video and Chapman and Gotchy say that is also helping to increase viewership.



Deluge Causes Minor Damage to BTSD

By Ralph Honda
Wheel of Dharma Correspondent

Heavy rain pelted San Diego on Jan. 22 in what would be the fourth-wettest day in the city's history, causing minor damage to the Buddhist Temple of San Diego (BTSD).

Water entered the temple's main building from a nearby drainage overflow, resulting in wet carpeting at the temple's lobby entrance and an estimated 6 to 8 cubic inches of water in the elevator pit. In addition, the rains that day caused ceiling tiles to loosen and fall in the BTSD social hall. There were several roof leaks in the adjacent Sangha Hall. The temple, which was closed on the day of the storm, lost power for approximately two hours.

In all, 2.73 inches of rain fell on the city on Jan. 22, far exceeding the average rainfall of 2 inches for the entire month of January. It was the fourth-wettest day on record in San Diego's history, according to the National Weather Service.

Businesses and residential communities were heavily impacted by flood damage. The neighborhoods of Southcrest and Shelltown, both within close proximity of BTSD, were hardest hit with flooding.



Fallen ceiling tiles in the Buddhist Temple of San Diego's social hall are shown after heavy rains pelted the Southern California region on Jan. 22. (Courtesy of Nancy Martinez)

The Vista Buddhist Temple, located in north San Diego County, did not sustain any structural damage, but did have to mop up its social hall after the Jan. 22 storm. Water from the drainage pipes pushed into the downstairs area, according to BCA Pres-

ident Terri Omori. In early February, a series of atmospheric rivers brought heavy rain and flash floods to the Southern California region once again. Fortunately, none of the Southern District temples and churches reported damage.

Rev. Murakami

Continued from Page 2

merit.

For example, they may be good at swimming and may be able to swim from the beach across the ocean to the other shore. But if the rest of their family can't make it across, it

is meaningless.

When we regard the Pure Land as our goal, we might think that we are simply moving to another place, but the true meaning of "passing" is something else.

If the Pure Land was all around us, then it would not matter whether we went west or east, as long as we could

"only" reach the Pure Land in the end. It is not, however. The reason the Pure Land is designated as being in the west is so that we do not get lost. If we say, "I like this way," or "This way is more interesting," we will be in trouble later on. It is best to go as you are instructed from the beginning.

President's Message

Continued from Page 3

members of the Northern California District, did an outstanding job. Having the meetings at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento took a lot of coordinating and many volunteers. Thank you all so

much!!!

Many have expressed to me that I must be so relieved my term has come to a close. Honestly, this has been an amazing experience. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all who have been a part of this journey. I truly appreciate your support, encouragement, and friendship.

Sangha is priceless!

In closing, I wish Steven Terusaki and the 2024-2026 BCA Executive Committee all the best. I know that they will continue to lead in the best interest of the entire BCA. And thank you to everyone for all that you do in making Shinran Shonin's teachings accessible to all.



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that Bonbu Stories has its own YouTube channel and released the latest music video of "Lantern Song" on it with the video footage from many BCA temple Bon Odori celebrations?

In addition to the videos on the BCA Music

YouTube page for the "Lantern Song" webinar, dance tutorial, and lyric video, please check out the latest music video on the Bonbu Stories YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/@BonbuStories>

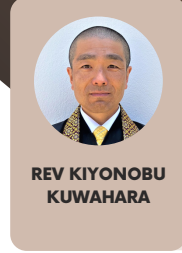
PSYCHOLOGY OF SHINJIN



And how it affects our daily lives

10 AM - 4 PM
11 MAY

A doctrinal, therapeutic, and practical application of Shinjin in our daily lives.



REV KIYONOBU KUWAHARA



REV DR CARMELA JAVELLANA



REV DR KENJI AKAHOSHI

JODO SHINSHU CENTER

2140 Durant Ave
Berkeley, CA 94704

REGISTRATION LINK

In-person Registration
<http://tinyurl.com/PychShinjin>
email: cbe@bcahq.org

BCA Center for Buddhist Education presents

YOGA, BUDDHISM, AND A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE
Friday, May 24 - Sunday, May 26, 2024
Jodo Shinshu Center, Berkeley



Bob Matsuoda
Yoga and Wellness Instructor;
Yoga Therapist, Government of India, Ministry of AYUSH



Bishop Marvin Harada
Buddhist Churches of America



Rev. Bob Oshita
Retired BCA Minister
Co-author, *Dharma Is Everywhere*



Rev. Ken Yamada
Editor at Higashi Honganji's Shinshu Center of America and retired minister of Berkeley Higashi Honganji Temple



Judy Yushin Nakatomi
Certified Minister's Assistant with Vista Buddhist Temple (BCA) and ordained in the Zen tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh



Denise Matsubara Lapidus
Advanced Yoga Teacher (The Yoga Room), leading "Yoga Nidra"



Alan Hirahara, Chef
Gourmet Vegan Cuisine

Labonee, Traditional Indian dance troupe
Suzi Ko, Therapeutic massage
Arts and Crafts



Workshop space is limited.
Registration will open on Feb. 5th
<https://forms.gle/asUrK9pS9SChgEB87>
cbe@bcahq.org

51ST BAY DISTRICT BUDDHIST WOMEN'S LEAGUE CONFERENCE

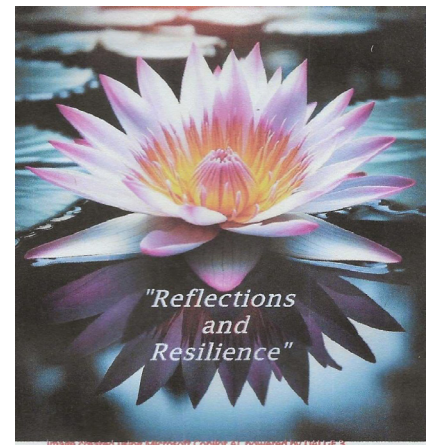
"Reflections and Resilience"

Saturday, May 18, 2024
Registration starts 9:00 a.m.

Guest Speaker:

Former BCA Bishop, Rev. Kodo Umezu

Panel speakers by BWA representatives from each Bay District Chapter



To register, please contact your BWA President
Registration fee \$40.00
Registration deadline: Monday, April 15, 2024

Hosted by Enmanji BWA
Enmanji Buddhist Temple
1200 Gravenstein Hwy, So.
Sebastopol, CA 95472



Seattle Betsuin Resumes Service; Holds Board Installation at Densho

Onaijin Will Be Sent to Japan to Be Refurbished After Arson Fire

By Jon Kawamoto
Wheel of Dharma Editor

Two months after an arson fire occurred at the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple, Sangha members and supporters held a bittersweet ceremony on Feb. 18, offering incense in the Hondo and bidding farewell — for now — to the Onaijin, which is being sent to Japan to be refurbished.

After the offering of incense, or oshoko, a small service was held, with the chanting of “Juseige” and a Dharma talk by Seattle Betsuin Rinban Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki.

Rev. Kusunoki spoke from the heart about the losses the temple is experiencing; the attachment to items; a grateful sendoff to the Onaijin; and appreciation to the Sangha members that attended the service.

Masks were required for the service because smoke is still lingering in the air.

After the service, a hybrid annual membership and board installation meeting was held at the nearby Densho Community Room.

On Dec. 31, 2023, an arson fire in the Seattle Betsuin’s basement area destroyed thousands of irreplaceable historical documents dating back to the temple’s inception in 1901. And, on Jan. 2, the fire reignited as a flare-up and was extinguished in about an hour. Smoke and water caused extensive damage to more than half of the temple’s interior, with areas furthest from the fire requiring refurbishment only.

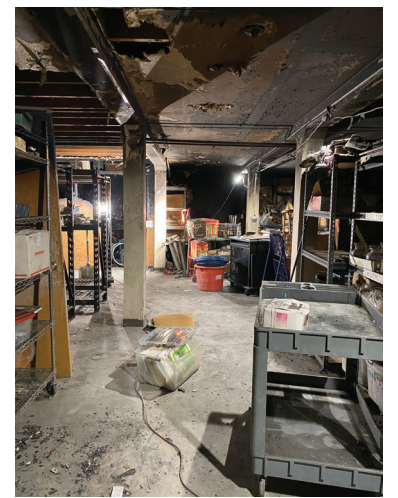
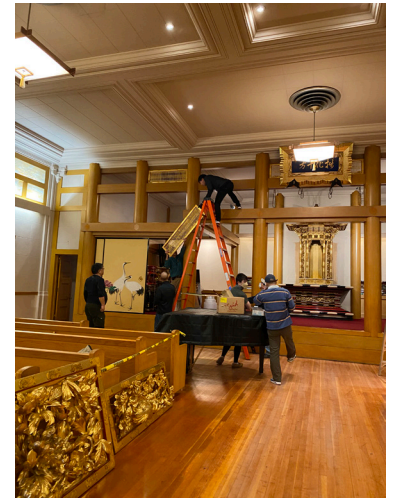
No injuries were reported in either fire.

Waylon Williams, of Richland, Washington, was charged on Jan. 4 with first-degree reckless burning, second-degree burglary and residential burglary, according to the charging documents. Their trial is scheduled to begin on March 5.

Meanwhile, the temple is beginning the long process of reconstructing the interior of the temple, including the Hondo and the Onaijin. To date, more than 22,000 pounds of contents have been disposed.

The temple signed an agreement on Jan. 30 with the Wakabayashi Company from Japan to repair and refurbish several parts of the Onaijin, including the Toro lantern hanging in the Hondo, according to Seattle Betsuin Chairperson Tyler Moriguchi.

The Wakabayashi Company



How to Help

The Seattle Betsuin established an Arson Restoration Fund for donations toward rebuilding the temple. To make a donation online, go to: <https://donate.stripe.com/7slcNfdwRdi59TW8wy> Donations can also be made via check. Please make checks payable to “Seattle Buddhist Church” and include “Arson Restoration Fund” in the memo list. The address is: Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple, 1427 S. Main St., Seattle, WA 98144.



At above top, the Seattle Betsuin Hondo area is shown after the Onaijin and Toro lantern were removed to be sent to Japan to be refurbished. Above, Rinban Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki speaks to Sangha members who gathered for a short service on Feb. 18, before the Onaijin and Toro were removed. At top right, Wakabayashi Company workers dismantle the Onaijin. At center right, Rev. Kusunoki, left, helps workers take down the Toro. At bottom right is a current photo of the basement after more than 22,000 pounds of contents were removed. (Courtesy of Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple)

is familiar with BCA temples and churches, having worked on the Onaijin of the Watsonville Buddhist Temple, Orange County Buddhist Church, Los Angeles Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, and most recently, the Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple.

“Due to the delicate nature of the pieces, each piece will need to be cleaned and repaired by hand,” Moriguchi said in a Feb. 5 letter to the Seattle Betsuin Sangha. “Representatives from the Wakabayashi company will arrive later this month to begin the process of disassembling and packing pieces for transport back to Japan. The entire process is expected to take approximately 12 months.”

Fire, smoke and water damage remediation are ongoing and expected to take several more weeks, he said. Once this initial phase is complete, the temple will be able to accurately determine the extent of damage to its building and finalize a timeline for repairs.

“If feasible, we would like to take a phased approach that will

allow us to reopen the west portion of the temple containing the gym, kitchen, dining hall and Dharma School classrooms, so that we can resume holding some activities at the temple,” he said.

“Thank you to all the numerous temple organizations and volunteers who have reached out to express their support and donate time and energy to the cleanup and recovery effort,” Moriguchi said.

“A special thank you to our sister temples in White River and Tacoma who have welcomed us and allowed us to hold special services and funerals at their temples,” he said. “The outpouring of support from individuals, organizations and temples from across the country and world has been humbling.”

The Seattle Betsuin established an Arson Restoration Fund for donations toward rebuilding the temple.

To make a donation online,

go to: <https://donate.stripe.com/7sIcNfdwRdi59TW8wy> Donations can also be made

via check. Please make checks payable to “Seattle Buddhist Church” and include “Arson Restoration Fund” in the memo list.

The address is: Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple, 1427 S. Main St., Seattle, WA 98144.



Hongwanji For Maui Shirt Project!

Sponsored by Mō'ili'ili Hongwanji Mission

With the fires that devastated Maui in August 2023, Mō'ili'ili Hongwanji is hosting a special project - Hongwanji for Maui Shirt. All proceeds will benefit Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii (HHMH) and be dispersed into the community on Maui & Lahaina Hongwanji Mission for ongoing relief efforts. Mahalo to Squeeze Play Hawaii (Cedric Clinton) & Our Garden Collective (Keri Kubota) for making this project possible!



\$25 per shirt (Small - Extra Large)

\$27 per shirt (Extra Extra Large)

Visit www.molililhongwanji.org to place your order today.

Additional donations are welcomed.

In person pickup is encouraged. Additional shipping fees will apply (shipping available to neighbor islands and US Continental states only) & orders may take longer for processing.

Mahalo for supporting our project! For any questions, please contact our temple office at 808-949-1659 or email: mhm@molililhongwanji.org.



‘Dial the Dharma’ for Enlightening Messages

800-817-7918

Press 1 for English, Press 2 for Japanese, Press 3 for Spanish



Rev. Dr. Yamaoka Praised for Vision, Efforts on Behalf of IBS

By Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto
and Dr. Scott Mitchell
Institute of Buddhist Studies

Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka, revered Dharma teacher, mentor, and friend of everyone at the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS), passed away on Dec. 15, 2023, at the age of 89. Rev. Dr. Yamaoka played a significant role in the development of Shin Buddhism in America. It would be no exaggeration to say that, without his vision and efforts, there would be no IBS as we know it today.

Rev. Dr. Yamaoka served at the Buddhist Church of Oakland from 1964 and the Buddhist Church of Stockton from 1971, becoming the Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America in 1981.

During his 15-year tenure as the Bishop, he was instrumental in establishing the Campaign for Buddhism in America and the BCA Endowment Foundation. This capital campaign generated millions of dollars and established many of the professorial chair endowments at IBS, including the Tamai, Aratani, and Ohtani chairs. These endowments provide the financial foundation for IBS.

Also during his tenure as Bishop, Rev. Dr. Yamaoka fostered important institutional connections. Having received a degree from the Pacific School of Religion, he knew the importance of interreligious dialogue, and so in 1982, he helped IBS become an affiliate of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU). This affiliation gave IBS students access to the vast resources of the GTU, including the research libraries at



Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka is seated at center in the front row with other students, graduates, core faculty and BCA members in this 2018 photo. (Courtesy of Institute of Buddhist Studies)

the University of California, Berkeley, and provided an opportunity to strengthen our academic curriculum.

After his tenure as Bishop ended, Rev. Dr. Yamaoka returned to the ministry at the Buddhist Church of Oakland

In 2013, he became the IBS Vice President of Development. In that position, he continued to find great success

“When he was the Bishop of BCA, Rev. Yamaoka’s dream was that IBS would someday gain accreditation, become a GTU member school and have a solid financial foundation ... his aspirations and tireless efforts have enabled IBS to accomplish those goals.”

— Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, President of the Institute of Buddhist Studies

In that same year, IBS became affiliated with Ryūkoku University in Kyoto, one of the oldest Buddhist universities in Japan. As a result of this partnership, a student exchange program has allowed IBS students to study in Japan and numerous scholars from Japan have been in residence in Berkeley, California.

and began to teach again at IBS.

In 2002, he received the degree of Doctor of Letters (“bungaku hakase”) from Ryūkoku University. He was appointed to IBS’s core faculty in 2009 and the next year was given the H.E. Kosho Ohtani Professor of Shin Buddhist Studies.

in the fundraising efforts of IBS, generating substantial funds for student scholarships.

Rev. Dr. Yamaoka long taught the course “Issues in Buddhist Ministry,” instructing and inspiring new generations of ministerial aspirants and Buddhist chaplains. By encouraging his students to engage in deep self-ex-

amination of their spiritual experiences, he helped them realize ways in which the Buddha-Dharma functions as a transformative spiritual force in their lives. This pedagogical approach was the focus of his 2017 monograph, “Shin Buddhist Education: a New Perspective.”

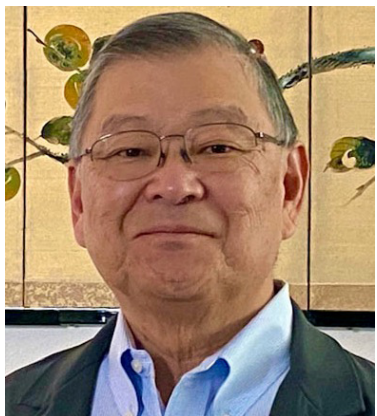
On the occasion of his retirement in 2021, IBS President Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto said, “When he was the Bishop of BCA, Rev. Yamaoka’s dream was that IBS would someday gain accreditation, become a GTU member school and have a solid financial foundation ... his aspirations and tireless efforts have enabled IBS to accomplish those goals.”

Dean Scott Mitchell added, “None of us would be here if it wasn’t for Rev. Yamaoka. His leadership and vision for Shin Buddhism in the United States made possible everything that we’ve been able to accomplish the last few years at IBS.”

Longtime colleague and friend at the Institute, Rev. Dr. Daijaku Kinst, wrote from Japan, “Rarely have I met a person so deeply steeped in the Dharma, so expressive of it, simply, clearly, in every way. His words, his being, and his example continue to accompany me in my own stumbling Dharma journey. Thank you for your gift of wisdom and example of what is possible when we fully entrust ourselves to the way.”

Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka was awarded the status of Professor Emeritus at the IBS graduation ceremony on May 21, 2021. He left a remarkable legacy and a community of Dharma friends who gratefully walk the path he set out before us.

A Letter From the BCA Endowment Foundation Board President



Charles Ozaki

Dear BCA Sangha Members and Friends:

Dharma Forward

Dharma Forward is our vision to build the future of Buddhism in America. It helps to provide the means for the continuous source of support for our Sangha by strengthening the pillars of Education & Programs, Outreach & Technology, Ministerial Support & Scholarships, and Facilities & Operations on which the

Buddhist Churches of America and the Institute of Buddhist Studies stand. As word of this vision has spread, many Sangha members have chosen to contribute. Dharma Forward is part of our generation’s opportunity to help assure the future of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in America and the BCA Endowment Foundation is doing all it can to support this campaign.

2022 BCA Endowment Foundation Results

The Endowment Foundation manages the investments for the BCA, IBS and 26 affiliated organizations.

This past year, the Endowment Growth Fund showed a return of -19.2%, which compares to a return of 20.3% in 2020 and 10.3% in 2021. In retrospect, the past three years set the stage for the financial results that occurred in 2022. The year 2020 brought the COVID-19 financial crash and

extraordinary recovery. The extensive government subsidy of society in 2021 may have helped to initiate the inflation that became a central focus of concern. The war in Ukraine and the Federal Reserve Bank dramatically raising interest rates in its response to battling inflation depressed the financial market in 2022.

Investments decreased by -\$8,059,819 in 2022 compared to an increase of \$3,948,969 in 2021 and \$1,699,293 was disbursed to support programs. Total assets managed by the Endowment decreased from \$47.8 million to \$39.2 million. Although we are experiencing ups and downs in the market, the average annual return over the past 10 years for the Growth Fund has been 6.4%. Investing in equities such as the Growth Fund should be part of a longer multi-year strategy that can accommodate a potential loss along with gains.

As of Dec. 31, 2022, the Dharma Forward campaign has collected \$6.6 of the \$15 million target which is 44% toward the goal. Please consider joining in assuring Jodo Shinshu teachings will always be available to us and others by contributing to Dharma Forward. If you need any assis-

tance, please contact Michiko Inanaga, Director of Development at the BCA Endowment Foundation at minanaga@bcahq.org or 415-651-5164.

In Gassho,
Charles Ozaki
President
BCA Endowment
Foundation

一期一会

SAVE THE DATE

October 4-6, 2024

47th FBWA Conference
San Jose Doubletree Hotel

ICHI GO ICHI E

Each Precious Moment, A Precious Treasure



Hosted by Coast District
Buddhist Women’s League



Above, Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka is seated in the front row in this 1965 Keirokai photo at the Buddhist Church of Oakland with his future father-in-law, Rev. Kenyu Masuyama. At top right, Rev. Dr. Yamaoka, right, is taking a Japanese language class in 1966 at the Buddhist Study Center. At right, Rev. Dr. Yamaoka and Shigeko Masuyama are shown on their wedding day in 1966. (Courtesy of Buddhist Church of Oakland, Isago Isao Tanaka and the Rev. Dr. Yamaoka family)

Rev. Dr. Yamaoka

Continued from Page 1

trailblazing accomplishments, became a monumental figure in leading and shaping the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) and the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS).

Rev. Dr. Yamaoka amassed a 44-year career as a Kaikyoshi minister at the Buddhist Church of Oakland and Buddhist Church of Stockton. He served 15 years as BCA Bishop — and concurrently — as IBS President. He was the H.E. Kosho Ohtani Professor of Shin Buddhist Studies and Vice President of Development at IBS. Through his efforts, IBS became a member school of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, California, in 2020.

He also led the BCA's first national fundraising drive, the Campaign for Buddhism in America, in February 1982.

Rev. Dr. Yamaoka passed away on Dec. 15, 2023, in Seal Beach, California, at the age of 89.

However, all of these accomplishments, and many others, don't fully describe the full measure of the man and the countless lives he touched and impacted — all over the world. He was particularly beloved by Sangha members, IBS students and colleagues, and his family. He was devoted to his late wife Shigeko. He loved and cherished his two daughters, sons-in-law, and grandchildren, craved Costco hot dogs, and was most comfortable at home in his Adidas tracksuit and Raiders cap.

"Hanging tight is hard. Letting go is harder," said Rev. Michael Endo, chairman of the Jan. 20 funeral service at the Buddhist Church of Oakland, in his opening remarks. "This is a sentiment that I think we all feel today as we gather with heavy hearts, and at the same time, with a profound sense of gratitude

to remember and honor one of the Buddhist Churches of America's longtime Dharma teachers and friends, Rev. Dr. Seigen Haruo Yamaoka."

Rev. Endo's opening quote to the overflow crowd was one of Rev. Dr. Yamaoka's last posts on Facebook, just five days before his passing. (He was a popular figure on Facebook, with 1,900 followers.)

"It would be no exaggeration to say that without his vision and efforts, there would be no BCA or IBS as we know them today," said IBS President Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto. "Yamaoka Sensei was a trailblazer. He was a pioneer in many ways. His life and career has been highlighted by a series of firsts."

Rev. Dr. Matsumoto listed those numerous "firsts" in Rev. Dr. Yamaoka's life, among them: the first member of his family to go to college at Fresno State College (now Fresno State University); the first member of his family to study for the Shin Buddhist ministry; a member of the first class of students at the Buddhist Study Center in Berkeley, California, a precursor to the IBS; the first active Kaikyoshi minister to receive a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Pacific School of Religion; and the first American-born Nisei to serve as BCA Bishop.

Trailblazer and Pioneer

"As you can tell, he was a trailblazer," Rev. Dr. Matsumoto said. "He was a pioneer. He did things that had never been done before. And, as a result of that, he always knew he would be the object of criticism. And, indeed, he was. I was there when I saw the arrows pierce him in the front and back. He didn't talk a lot about it. But I knew it hurt him. But he never stopped. He never let the criticism deter him because he knew his vision was clear and he knew his intentions were pure. And he knew he was doing the right thing."

Upon his retirement from the IBS in 2021 as Vice President of Development, Rev. Dr. Yamaoka received another first — IBS Professor Emeritus.

BCA Endowment Foundation President Charles Ozaki described Rev. Dr. Yamaoka as "a person with great insight and wisdom," and said "there are many programs that wouldn't exist and wouldn't be successful without Rev. Dr. Yamaoka."

Ozaki listed some of them, including: the major support programs for retiring ministers; educational programs for IBS students and BCA Sangha members; and the creation of IBS professorial chairs.

Impact on IBS Students

Two of Rev. Dr. Yamaoka's IBS students — Rev. CJ Dunford and Rev. Blake Honda — described the impact and deep friendship they shared with Rev. Dr. Yamaoka.

As an IBS student, Rev. Dunford attended Rev. Dr. Yamaoka's course on Buddhist ministry. After Rev. Dr. Yamaoka retired, Rev. Dunford taught the course and expanded it to include wider perspectives on the Buddha-Dharma from different lineages, as well as perspectives of Dharma teachers of color and queer and transgender Buddhists.

"I recall Rev. Dr. Yamaoka speaking to the ever-changing nature of ministry and the ever-evolving makeup of our founders," Rev. Dunford said. "I recall him saying that 'Our training at Hongwanji is not enough and that we must constantly be in the process of re-evaluating and understanding new methods and approaches to ministry as new generations take on important temple roles, and new people find meaning, and the direction of the Buddha-Dharma.'"

Rev. Dunford said Rev. Dr. Yamaoka was "a wonderful mentor, a dear friend to me and to many other students. We know that while he may no



longer be with us physically, he's now one with the Buddha, providing us with guidance."

Rev. Honda shared a few stories of Rev. Dr. Yamaoka that influenced his life, mainly the conversations the two shared about whether Rev. Honda should apply to the IBS.

"When I was younger, I had aspirations to someday become a minister," Rev. Honda said, saying he wasn't ready to apply to IBS. "However, Yamaoka Sensei was quite persistent. I recall all the times I saw him. It was never the ordinary greetings such as 'Hello, how are you?' 'How are things?' It was more, 'Where are you going?' 'What are you doing with your life?'"

"I would tell him that 'I'm not ready.' He would still be persistent and say I need to go to IBS," Rev. Honda said. "I received letters from him, emails, phone calls."

Rev. Honda recalled one such meeting with Rev. Dr. Yamaoka that convinced him to apply to IBS.

"He said, 'You need to stop running away from this. If you take a moment to stop running, you will realize you are exactly where you need to be,'" Rev. Honda recalled.

"As I was attending classes, I learned that Rev. Dr. Yamaoka was quoting directly from Shinran himself," he said. "The term 'Sesshu Fusha' from the hymns on Amida sutra says that Buddha grasps and never abandons one. Sesshu Fusha pursues the one who seeks to run away."

"Just as Yamaoka Sensei reached out to me, he still embraced me, never to be abandoned, meaning that all will be taken in," Rev. Honda continued. "No one will ever be left behind. I was lost in this constant search for looking for myself, finding my identity, seeking validation and purpose. But all this time, I just needed to stop running. Yamaoka Sensei was someone who I never had to prove myself to to gain any form of validation. He simply accepted me as I am. All I needed to do was to stop running and just simply listen."

Rev. Honda was among the 10 BCA members who traveled to Japan for Tokudo training and ordination at the Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto, Japan, from Dec. 6-16, 2023. Before his trip, Rev. Honda received a call from Rev. Dr. Yamaoka.

"I recently received Tokudo and honestly, I really don't think I could have done it without his push," Rev. Honda said. "Before I left for Japan, he called me to wish me luck. I responded, 'You know, I don't know if I can do this. I don't think I'm ready.' He chuckled. He said, 'Just do it. You'll find that once you let go of what you think you must do, you'll see you're being carried.' That would be the last words I would hear from him."

On the last day of the Tokudo ceremony, Rev. Honda received the news about Rev. Dr. Yamaoka's passing.

Continued on Page 10



Seki

Continued from Page 1

before the United States declared war on Japan, I was born in a hospital in New York City. Then, 14 months later in May 1942, my father, Rev. Hozen Seki, was arrested and taken to Ellis Island by two FBI agents.

A month later, he was moved to Fort Meade in Maryland, then a month after that, to Fort Missoula in Montana, and then to the Kooskia Internment Camp in Idaho. Three years later, in 1945, he was sent to a camp in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and finally released in January 1946. This was the fate of most Japanese and Japanese Americans living in the United States during World War II.

Wartime in New York

All during the war, my mother, brother, and I stayed in New York City, living in an apartment above the Hondo of the New York Buddhist Church (NYBC).

Even though we were Japanese Americans, we weren't sent to an internment camp because we lived far from the West Coast. My mother, Sangha members Stanley Okada, who was the church administrator, Zeiichi Nobumoto, and Rev. Newton Ishiura kept the church open and held Sunday services. Many Jodo Shinshu Nisei soldiers from the 442nd Infantry Regiment attended NYBC before being deployed to the European front.

My brother Hoken and I were temple kids. Hoken was six years older and very protective of me, his little brother, as we were often called "Japs" and subject to other racist remarks. He got into a lot of fights.

My parents kept most of the letters they wrote to each other while dad was at camp. What suffering they both endured. Mother was caring for us, and father could not help or support his family. When I read some of those letters, I could feel their pain. When my father returned, I was 5 years old. We were finally a whole family again.

As a temple kid, I attended all Sunday services. My mother played the piano during the services. On Saturdays, I attended Japanese school at the church.

My father and mother always said, "You are the minister's son; you need to set a good example for the other kids."

However, my parents realized I was no ordinary boy. That something was bothering me. I knew something was wrong, but didn't know what it was.

Instead of trying to find out, I just blocked it out of my mind, but it would not go away. The result was I did poorly in school because I had a hard time concentrating. I



Hoshina Seki, who grew up in the New York Buddhist Church, is shown above in a recent photo, and at right with her parents, Satomi Seki and Rev. Hozen Seki, and her brother, Hoken, when he graduated from Columbia University in the mid-1950s. The family photo was taken at the Hondo of the New York Buddhist Church when it was located at 171 West 94th St. (Courtesy of Hoshina Seki)

hung out with all the school rebels and started drinking in my teens. I graduated from high school but dropped out of college.

Meanwhile, Hoken continued to excel in all his studies. He went to Columbia University, became a lieutenant in the Coast Guard, graduated from Harvard Law School, and was a successful attorney.

three young boys, Louis, Vincent, and Ralph. I was not prepared for parenthood, and my identity issues continued to haunt me.

Before marrying, my father warned Jo that I was not who I was. He knew my identity issues and the difficult road that was ahead for us. I was rebelliously separating my relationship with my parents.

When I finally came out, my temple Sangha members welcomed me. Most temples have a couple of ladies who are the unsung heroes One such hero is Ruth Funai; she was there for me before and after my surgery. Dr. Gordon Bermant and his wife Geri visited while I was recovering When I became a woman, BCA and the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) welcomed the new me. Thank you, Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Kodo Umezumi, IBS President Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Rev. Elaine Donlin, Rev. Brian Nagata, Edythe Vassall, and everyone else who accepted me as a woman.

At the same time, I bounced around, taking courses at Harvard and working in the Cambridge bookstore. When I returned to New York, I got a job at Bloomingdale's in the advertising department. I took courses in visual arts to learn graphic design and advertising. However, my identity issues continued to be a problem without a solution.

Identity Issues

There were many people who tried to help me. My mother, father, and brother wanted to help, but couldn't because I would not let them in. Sangha members knew I was different, but respected me for being the minister's kid.

I was angry and confused. I needed professional help but didn't know it. I thought getting married would solve my problem. So, at 22 years old, I married Josephine (Jo), a non-Japanese woman with

Until then, I felt I was living in one world, and everyone else was living in another. I felt freedom with Jo and our boys. The working of Other Power moved me to attend Sunday service with my new family. Sangha members welcomed us, and my parents were skeptical at first, but seeing me bringing Jo, Louis, Vincent, and Ralph to Sunday service gave them a change of heart. They became supportive and accepted my new family. Eventually, we began spending a lot of time at their home, and while we were in between apartments, we even moved in with them.

All looked good on the surface, but my identity issues surfaced, and I told Jo. Instead of kicking me out, she said I needed to get help immediately. She arranged for me to see a therapist at the local hospital. That was the beginning of my long journey to discovering who I really wanted to be.



When I look back on my life, I remember my father telling me that I was the type of person who must learn things the hard way. He was so right. But the working of Amida was with me all the way.

Amazingly, I ended up having a successful career working in upper management at one of the largest media companies in America and then working

Before transitioning, I was involved with several BCA committees. When I became a woman, BCA and the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) welcomed the new me. Thank you, Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Kodo Umezumi, IBS President Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Rev. Elaine Donlin, Rev. Brian Nagata, Edythe Vassall, and everyone else who accepted me as a woman.

President of ABSC

Today, I am president of the American Buddhist Study Center. My father established the American Buddhist Academy (predecessor of the ABSC) in 1951.

We are still carrying on his mission of introducing Buddhist wisdom and Japanese culture for a better world. We published "Leaves of My Heart" by Lady Takeko Kujo and dedicated it to the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations.

Our American Buddhist Study Center YouTube channel includes historical videos with Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno, Rev. Dr. Mark Unno and others. We are now setting up an LGBTQ+ group on the East Coast that will include BCA temple members from New York Buddhist Church, Seabrook Buddhist Temple in New Jersey, and Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Virginia. Rev. Kurt Rye is helping us. This coming spring, we are planning a book fair with children's and poetry haiku readings at the ABSC.

Looking back over the past 83 years, I feel my journey was just how it should have been. Many teachers have picked me up from one misstep to another. I am humbled and grateful to them all and thankful to share my story with you.

Namu Amida Butsu.

for a couple of international companies; I waited until both my parents died before undergoing transgender surgery. Along the way, a lot of people suffered because of me. I think Jo knew deep down inside, yet it took me many years to accept myself.

Never Doubted Faith

How grateful I am to have been born into a Jodo Shinshu family. Never doubting my faith was my life's constant denominator. When I finally came out, my temple Sangha members welcomed me. Most temples have a couple of ladies who are the unsung heroes. They cook, clean, care for the resident minister's needs, and visit the sick. One such hero is Ruth Funai; she was there for me before and after my surgery. Dr. Gordon Bermant and his wife Geri visited while I was recovering. I will never forget all the other people and temple ladies who helped me.



GBC's Winter Pacific Seminar Features Rev. Dr. Kenneth Tanaka

His Talk on 'Buddhism and War' Focuses on How Shin Buddhists Can Cope with Conflicts Around the World

By Ralph Honda

Wheel of Dharma Correspondent

"Buddhism and War: How We Can Face Up to It as Shin Buddhists" was the topic for this year's Winter Pacific Seminar (WPS) on Jan. 27 at the Gardena Buddhist Church.

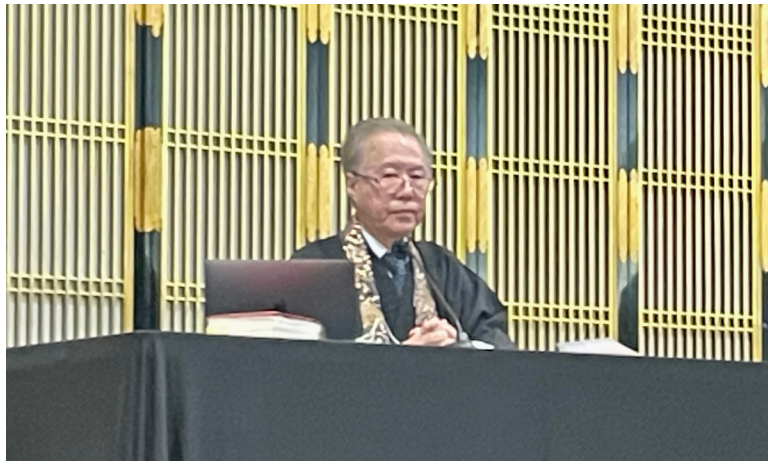
Rev. Dr. Ken Tanaka, Professor Emeritus of Musashino University in Tokyo and former Associate Professor and Assistant Dean of IBS, served as the keynote speaker in both English and Japanese.

Rev. Dr. Tanaka stated that war is a major issue in regions throughout the world. His lecture focused on how Jodo Shinshu Buddhists can cope with the situation.

Many of the references Rev. Dr. Tanaka used for his presentation came from his book "Jewels: An Introduction to American Buddhism for Youths, Scouts and the Young at Heart."

Rev. Dr. Tanaka began his lecture by saying that Buddhism is a "first-person" religion that must be "lived" in our daily lives and not just "learned." Thus, not "bukkyō" (Buddhist teachings), but "butsudō" (Buddhist path).

Rev. Dr. Tanaka elaborated on the death of a former Dharma School student from the Mountain View Buddhist Temple who died in the Viet-



Rev. Dr. Kenneth Tanaka was the featured speaker at the Winter Pacific Seminar on Jan. 27 at the Gardena Buddhist Church. (Courtesy of Jeanne Toshima)

nam War; family experiences during World War II with the mass incarceration camp experience; and the potential threat of nuclear war today.

Three main points of his talk focused on the following points: 1) Buddhists seek to promote peace and avoid war; 2) Recognizing at times that humans are unable to fully live up to the above mentioned ideal; 3) Nevertheless, Buddhists are moved religiously to do what we can to seek peace and avoid war in the Saha world — a world which is full of suffering.

In describing how Buddhists value peace and avoid hatred that can lead to war, he mentioned the first of the Five Precepts or the Ten Wholesome Acts (in the Six Paramitas): "I shall refrain from taking the

life of a living being."

For other values of peace, Rev. Dr. Tanaka referenced statements from Shinran, Honen Shonin and Ceylon's J.R. Jayawardene speech at the San Francisco Peace Conference in 1951.

He also discussed current situations around the world, including wars in the Middle East, Ukraine and the threat from North Korea and how Buddhists are faced with such challenges.

Rev. Dr. Tanaka spoke about the intriguing story of Rev. Sehrii Trylis, a Ukrainian Buddhist priest who served in the Ukraine military for 11 months.

"We must fight a war to realize peace," he quoted Rev. Trylis.

Rev. Trylis, in a recent

interview with Rev. Dr. Tanaka, described the difficulty with conflict of being a Buddhist priest and serving as a Ukrainian soldier. A YouTube recording of the interview can be found at <https://youtu.be/OgBm6czDxGU>

The WPS began with Rev. Koho Takata, Resident Minister of the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple, welcoming both in-person and online participants to the seminar.

Following the chanting of the "Juseige," which was led by Rev. John Iwohara, Resident Minister of the Gardena Buddhist Church, Rev. Takata introduced Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) Director Rev. Jerry Hirano, who provided a welcome greeting and an introduction of Rev. Dr. Tanaka.

"Our current situation seems so crazy and it is affecting our young people today," Rev. Hirano said.

Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, who was not able to attend the seminar, provided a recorded video Dharma message.

"May the Buddha-Dharma spread, and may there be peace on earth," said Rev. Harada, quoting from Shinran Shonin.

After Rev. Dr. Tanaka addressed the English-speaking group, he provided his message to the Japanese-speaking audience.

A selection of ministers

served as panelists to provide their views, based on the theme, both in English and Japanese.

Rev. Iwohara, Rev. Jon Turner (Orange County Buddhist Church) and Rev. Kory Quon (Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple) shared the Dharma in English while Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wondra (Orange County Buddhist Church) and Rev. Ryuta Furumoto (Senshin Buddhist Temple) shared the Dharma in Japanese.

Rev. Gregory Gibbs (Pasadena Buddhist Temple) served as moderator for the English session.

At the conclusion of the seminar, the in-person attendees gathered in the social hall for a bento lunch to welcome Rev. Dr. Tanaka and to rekindle friendships.

The seminar was hosted by the BCA Center for Buddhist Education, Southern District Ministers Association, Southern District Council of the BCA, Institute of Buddhist Studies, and Jodo Shinshu International Office.

There were 107 registered delegates who participated in the hybrid seminar in-person or virtually on Zoom.

Gardena Buddhist Church announced that a recorded video of the seminar was in the process of being edited and would be available for viewing at a later date.

Arizona Fire

Continued from Page 1

No one was injured in the fire and the cause of the fire is under investigation.

"First off, I want to express my relief at the news about the Arizona Buddhist Temple being saved from the accidental fire," Supervising Minister Rev. Gregory Gibbs said.

"We were lucky," Rev. Sugiyama said. "There was no smoke or fire damage inside."

The report of a fire next to the Arizona Buddhist Temple comes less than two months after an arson fire on Dec. 31, 2023, at the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple destroyed thousands of historical documents and shuttered the temple.

The Arizona fire was reported around 11:30 p.m. Feb. 4. Phoenix fire officials were called to the area of 43rd Avenue and Indian School Road in West Phoenix for reports of a debris fire on the east side of the Arizona Buddhist Temple. When firefighters arrived, they found a large fire in a debris pile of a storage lot for a construction company.

The firefighters, concerned that the fire could spread to the temple, called a second alarm for reinforcements. Nearly 100 firefighters from multiple municipalities were at the scene to



Nearly 100 firefighters saved the Arizona Buddhist Temple, in forefront, from a massive fire next door at a construction storage facility on Feb. 4 (Courtesy of Rev. Lynn Sugiyama)

How to Help

To donate to the Arizona Buddhist Temple, go to: <https://arizona-buddhist-temple.square.site>

battle the flames, according to a report on Fox 10 Phoenix.

The fire broke windows at the temple on the east side, and the heat melted many of the temple's roof tiles, Rev. Sugiyama said.

The firefighters broke down the main doors of the temple, Rev. Sugiyama said.

"We will have the insurance from the construction business pay for the damages," Rev. Sugiyama said. He said the insurance carrier would assess the damage.

The Arizona Buddhist

Temple has had a previous brush with an accidental fire. On March 13, 1957, a fire burned down the temple.

Until the Arizona temple was rebuilt, services were held at a barrack from the Gila River mass detention camp that was moved to the temple grounds in Phoenix. The new temple was dedicated on Oct. 1, 1961.

Fox 10 Phoenix and ABC 15 Arizona, and Wheel of Dharma Correspondent Ralph Honda contributed to this article.

FUNDRAISER FOR
Federation of Buddhist Womens Associations

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY
FUNDRAISERS



When
Friday, April 12, 2024
Place your order for pickup or delivery on Friday, April 12!

Where
Available at Panda Express locations nationwide
www.pandaexpress.com

How
Online orders only
Apply code **920186** in the Fundraiser Code box during online checkout at www.pandaexpress.com or via App

28% of sales will be donated to: Federation of Buddhist Womens Associations

Our goal is to raise money for the FBWA 2024 Conference.

'Dial the Dharma'
for Enlightening Messages
800-817-7918
 Press 1 for English, Press 2 for Japanese,
 Press 3 for Spanish



Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka is being remembered as a devoted and beloved family man. At top left, Rev. Dr. Yamaoka is flanked by his daughters Stacy Yamaoka Anderson, left, and Jennifer Davis, right. At left, he poses with his grandchildren at his 89th birthday in Marina Del Rey. From left, are Sachi, Franklin, and Evelyn Anderson and Jackson Davis. At top, Rev. Dr. Yamaoka and Shigeko Yamaoka are shown at his Buddhist Church of Oakland retirement party in 2008. Above, Rev. Dr. Yamaoka is with his son-in-law Ryan Davis at the wedding of Ryan and Jennifer Davis in Hawaii in 2009. (Courtesy of Rev. Dr. Yamaoka family)

Rev. Dr. Yamaoka

Continued from Page 7

“My mind went through a rollercoaster of emotions — anger, confusion and sadness,” he said. “Selfishly, I wanted to go home and tell him I made it to Tokudo.”

“As we sang ‘Ondonkusan II’ earlier today, for the first time, tears ran down my face where I began to understand its true meaning,” he said. “Receiving this gift from Amida Buddha, our hearts are filled with joy, indebted, we respond with gratitude to passing it forward to the point our bones become dust. I thought Rev. Dr. Yamaoka did just that, sharing this deep within his heart with all of us to his very last breath.”

Wore Many Hats

Ryan Davis, Rev. Dr. Yamaoka’s son-in-law, affectionately referred to him as “Rev” during his words of remembrance.

“Rev” wore many hats throughout his personal and professional life from his early days as a farmer in Fresno to becoming the Bishop of the BCA,” Davis said. “He wore a hat as a minister. He wore a hat as a professor, an author and as a sports journalist. But, most important, he wore a hat as a family man. You could often find him lounging around the house wearing his Adidas tracksuit, watching Korean films with his wife, Shigeko.”

“He was always a teacher,” Davis continued. “I know he

taught me many things. He taught me patience. He taught me to be a good listener. He taught me about Buddhism. And he also taught me that no trip to Costco was complete without getting a hot dog, and as we all know, everything at Costco is extra large, including those hot dogs.”

“As a matter of fact, he could eat three or four of them in a single sitting,” Davis said. “But I remember our ride home from that very first trip to Costco. ‘Rev’ leaned over, tapped me on the shoulder, and said, ‘Ryan, don’t tell Shigeko about the hot dog.’ And we both had a good laugh, and I assured him that his secret was safe with me. And, from that day forward, every time we went to Costco, we would get a hot dog.”

Davis said Rev. Dr. Yamaoka “loved his wife more than anything — they were married for 52 years,” and remained by Shigeko’s side as she spent the last few years of her life in a full-time care facility.

“Although that transition was tough, ‘Rev’ made a commitment to visit his wife every single day at 5 o’clock, so they could have dinner,” he said. “And when I say ‘Rev’ was there every day, he was there every single day. It didn’t matter where ‘Rev’ was or what he had going on that day. He made it a priority to be there with his wife. And he would often stay late into the evening visiting to take care of her and ultimately wait for her to fall asleep before he went

home. And that’s the type of family man ‘Rev’ was.”

“He was a provider,” Davis continued. “He was a protector. And he was always there when his family needed him most. And it was amazing to watch him operating during these very difficult times. He never complained. He was never bitter or resentful. He never wondered, ‘Why me?’ He just continued to walk the path, and throughout that journey, he often expressed gratitude.”

Shigeko Yamaoka passed away in 2018.

“Rev” was grateful for his wife Shigeko,” he said. “He was grateful for all the good times. He was grateful for all the love and joy they shared together as a family. And I’m so grateful to call ‘Rev’ my father-in-law. I’m grateful for all the stories that were shared with me. I’m grateful for all his guidance and wisdom over the years. And I’m grateful for all the time we were able to spend together as a family.”

BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada said his association with Rev. Dr. Yamaoka went back nearly 40 years to his time as a college student and at IBS and Japan.

Rev. Harada recalled the last time he shared a conversation with Rev. Dr. Yamaoka at the BCA’s Chef’s Table event on Nov. 10, 2023, at the Jodo Shinshu Center.

“Rev. Dr. Yamaoka traveled all the way from his home

in Southern California to attend the event,” Rev. Harada recalled. “He looked so great, and he stayed after almost everyone had left and we were cleaning up. We sat and talked for quite some time. I’ve received words of wisdom from him over all of these 38 years, and that evening was no different.”

“Whenever we talked about the Dharma or the transmission of the Dharma, or how things in the BCA or IBS were going, there was always a light in his eyes, a passion in his voice and a spirit that I sensed from him,” Rev. Harada said.

Rev. Dr. Seigen (Haruo) Yamaoka was born on Aug. 21, 1934, in Fresno, California. His parents were Haruichi and Rika (Ogawa) Yamaoka. Rev. Dr. Yamaoka had two older siblings, Shizue and Noburo Yamaoka.

He received his bachelor’s degree in journalism from Fresno State College (now Fresno State University) in 1956, and his master’s degree from Ryukoku University in 1961. While in Japan, He took up karate and earned his black belt.

Rev. Dr. Yamaoka’s first assignment as a Kaikyoshi minister was as an assistant minister to Rev. Kenyu Masuyama at the Buddhist Church of Oakland from 1964 to 1971. In 1966, he married Shigeko Masuyama, and they had two children, Jennifer in 1975 and Stacy in 1982.

He served as Resident Minister at the Buddhist Church of Stockton from 1971 to 1981. He received his doctorate from the Pacific School of Religion in 1969.

For the next 15 years, from 1981-1996, Rev. Dr. Yamaoka served as both BCA Bishop and as IBS President. He returned to the Buddhist Church of Oakland as its Resident Minister in 1997. He received a Doctor of Letters degree from Ryukoku University in Jodo Shinshu Studies in 2002.

After his retirement from active ministry in 2008, Rev. Dr. Yamaoka served as the Vice President for Development at the Institute of Buddhist Studies as well as an adjunct professor. He retired from the IBS in 2021.

Rev. Dr. Yamaoka wrote several books, including: “Meditation Gut Enlightenment: The Way of Hara,” “The Awakening of Gratitude in Dying (Buddhist),” “The Teaching and Practice of Jodo Shinshu, Life Simple,” and “Jodo Shinshu, a Religion of Human Experience.”

Rev. Dr. Yamaoka was predeceased by his wife, Shigeko Yamaoka. He is survived by two daughters, Jennifer (Ryan) Davis and Stacy (Chris) Anderson; four grandchildren, Jackson Davis, Sachi, Franklin and Evelyn Anderson; and numerous nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Not About Titles

Bishop Rev. Harada spoke about Rev. Dr. Yamaoka’s humble, self-effacing nature by mentioning his recent participation every Wednesday night at the online Vista Buddhist Temple and Orange County Buddhist Church joint meditation service and discussion.

“One of the newly certified minister’s assistants there recently shared with me that he had attended several of those sessions with Rev. Dr. Yamaoka, not knowing who he was,” Rev. Harada said. “He was so shocked to learn that Rev. Dr. Yamaoka was the former Bishop of the BCA.”

“Yamaoka Sensei was not about positions or titles,” Rev. Harada continued. “He always stood on the ground of the Dharma like Shinran Shonin, listening to others, learning from others, and then sharing his own thoughts on the Dharma freely. A real propagator of the Dharma functions in this manner, very unassuming, naturally, without any false pretense, without any air of status or position. Just sharing the teachings and sharing one’s life.”

“I think that is the legacy and teaching that Rev. Dr. Yamaoka leaves us to each do our part to transmit the teachings to the West, to this country and culture, but in a greater sense, to all the world,” Rev. Harada said.

今月の法話

「大丈夫」

ローダイ仏教会・フローリン仏教会

開教使 今田法翔



Rev. Hosho Imada

以前、車の運転中に突然ハンドルが揺れ始めた事がありません。

私は

近くに車の修理屋を探して、なんとか修理屋まで運転してたどり着く事ができました。そこで車体をチェックしてもらった結果、ある部品が破損している事がわかりました。その部品を新しい部品と交換する必要があります。注文してから届くまで数日かかるため、後日また運転して来るようにと言われました。

そうすると私はこのハンドルが揺れる状態の車を運転して家まで帰らないといけないと気づき、修理屋の方に「この状態で運転しても大丈夫なんですか？」と聞きました。すると「家まで帰るくらいなら運転して大丈夫ですよ、もし揺れがひどい場合はブレーキを軽く踏むと揺れが止まります。」と教えてもらいました。

そうして無事に家に帰れたのですが、私はあることに気づきました。

修理屋までの行き道と、修理屋から帰る道とは、運転する時の安心感が明らかに違いました。行きも帰りも部品をまだ交換していない状態の車であり、車自体にはなんの違和感もありません。同じ壊れた車を運転しているのに、行きは「もしタイヤが外れたらどうしよう、急にエンジンが止まるのではないかと、爆発するのでは？」と心配事が次から次へと頭をよぎりましたが、帰りの道はそこまで不安になることはありませんでした。

ハンドルが揺れはしましたが落ち着いてブレーキを軽くふみ揺れを止めながら運転できました。対処法を覚えてもらったというのも落ち着けた理由の一つですが、安心できた一番の大きな理由は「大丈夫」という言葉だったと思います。

車のプロである修理屋の方が言う「大丈夫」という言葉によって私の不安は取り除かれ、自信を持って運転する事ができたのだと思います。この時、私は親鸞聖人のこのご和讃を思い出しました。

「本願力にあいぬれば むなくすぐるひとぞなき 功德の宝海みちみちて 煩惱の濁水へだてなし」(高僧和讃)

車の話と同様に、人生においてもこのような事がいえると思えます。車ではなく自分自身が怪我をしたり病気になったり、身近な人を失ったりした時、死んだらどうなるのか等の心配事は強くなります。

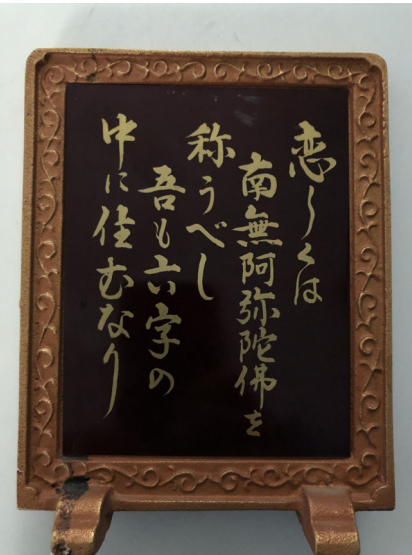
そんな時に「大丈夫」と言ってくれるプロは誰なのか考えてみると、阿弥陀仏だと思います。阿弥陀仏は全ての生きとし生けるものを心配してお浄土という世界を作られました。お浄土を用意しているから心配ない、大丈夫だと伝えるために南無阿弥陀仏という言葉となって、いま私の元に届いています。

阿弥陀仏は私が生まれる前から、私という人間がこの時代に生まれる事も、私が悩む事も分かっています。私に届くように南無阿弥陀仏という言葉を用意してくれました。そして私がいなくなった後も、次の世代、また次の世代へと届いていくでしょう。

皆さんは自分の家族の何世代前の人まで会った事がありますでしょうか。

私はひいおばあちゃんに会ったという記憶があります。が当時は自分が幼すぎて彼女の顔をよく覚えていません。さらにひいおばあちゃんの両親となると私はまだ生まれていませんし、写真もないので顔も分かりません。そう考えると、もしも私にひ孫やそのまたひ孫がいたとしても彼らは私の顔も名前も知らないと思います。

未来でいつかは私が完全に忘れ去られる日が来るのは



少し寂しい気がありますが、こんな言葉があります。

「恋しくば 南無阿弥陀仏を称うべし 我も六字のうちにこそ住め」

六字のうちに住むというのが、南無阿弥陀仏という言葉の中で存在し続けるという意味なら、命が尽きた後も南無阿弥陀仏となり、どんな時代にも届いていくので、ひ孫やそのまたひ孫の世代がお念仏を称えている未来を想像すると、寂しさが少し和らぐかもしれません。

家族、友達、出遇ってきた人たちといつかは必ず別れる日が来るという寂しさは仏教では愛別離苦といわれ大きな苦の一つです。別れがあってもそれで終わりではなく、お浄土という場所でもまた会えると思える事は念仏者の最大の喜びであるといえます。人生の中で、悲しい別れがあり「また会いたい」と思う人もいれば、逆にもう二度と会いたくないと思う人もいるかもしれません。

しかしお浄土に生まれるという事は仏になるという事で、そこには仏しかいないので好き嫌いはなく喧嘩や争いもない、そんな世界がお浄土です。

水と氷がぶつかるとどちらも割れるように、私の心が固いときに人とぶつかります。私の心が水のように柔らかければ氷とぶつかっても包み込む事ができるでしょう。さらにお湯のように暖かい心であれば相手の氷を溶かす事もできるかもしれません。

しかし、いくらお湯でもずっと冷やし続けられれば氷になる事もあるのです、気をつけなければなりません。

日々の生活の中で仏法を聞き続け、阿弥陀仏の暖かい光の中で心をあたため続ける事が大切なようです。

罪障功德の体となる こほりとみづのごとくにて こほりおほきにみづおほし さほりおほきに徳おほし 高僧和讃

4月より原田開教使が総長二期目

第15代北米開教区総長の原田マービン開教使が昨年12月に開催されたBCA理事会および2月のBCA総会で総長として二期目を務めることが承認された。

任期は2024年4月から2028年3月末までとなる。

ウエストLA仏教会で大学生の集い



College students gathering at West LA Buddhist Temple

2月上旬にウエストロサンゼルス仏教会(高田興芳開教使)で大学生を対象とした集いが開催された。同仏教会の近くに所在するカリフォルニア大学ロサンゼルス校やロヨラメリーモント大学から約30名が集い、読経や食事、ゲームなどを通じて交流を深めた。参加者は「こういう集いがあると、次からお寺に来やすくなると思います。日曜日のお参りなどにも来てみたいです。」とご縁を喜んだ。

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5時に更新される予定。

法輪

2024年 3月号

発行所
米国仏教団
Buddhist Churches of America
1710 Octavia Street
San Francisco, CA 94109
電話 (415) 776-5600
FAX (415) 771-6293
Email: info@bcahq.org
for WOD: WODeditor@bcahq.org

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
ウェブサイトで読めます。
<http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/about-us/wheel-of-dharma>

総長メッセージ

山岡誓源師を偲んで

米国仏教団総長 原田 マービン



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada

昨年12月、BCAの巨人ともいべき、元BCA総長の山岡誓源名譽開教使が亡くなられました。

私は大学生の時に初めて山岡師にお会いし、IBSで学んでいた時にお世話になり、私をオレンジカウンティー仏教会にアサインしてくださいました。師が総長をされていた時のことでした。師からアサインメントの手紙を受け取った時、私はまだ日本にいて、オレンジカウンティーがどこにあるのかも知りませんでした。開教使としての最初のアサインメントを喜んで引き受け、それから38年が経ちました。

亡くなられる少し前、昨年11月にパークレーの浄土真宗センターでシェフズ・テーブルという募金イベントを開催しました。師はそのイベントに出席するため、南カリフォルニアの自宅からはるばる駆けつけてくれました。師は、みんなが帰った後、私たちが後片付けをしているときまで残ってくださいっていて、師といういろいろなことについて話そうとした。師が、みんなが帰った後、私たちが後片付けをしているときまで残ってくださいっていて、師といういろいろなこと



Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamaoka

のことや伝道のこと、BCAやIBSの現状や将来について話すときはいつも、目に光があり、声には情熱があり、身体全体に伝わってくるスピリットがありました。

山岡師は伝統的な浄土真宗の教えを深く学び、輔教(ほきょう)という本願寺の学階の位を授けられていました。

師は、本願寺が何世紀にもわたって使ってきた伝統的な表現、専門用語を西洋、英語圏向けに解釈されなければならぬとの信念を持っておられました。阿弥陀仏、浄土、念仏、信心といった真宗の中心となる教えや概念は、西洋の文脈で、西洋人が共感し、共鳴できるような方法で説明されるべきだと、引退後も、長年にわたる伝道活動を通して、そのことに取り組んでこられました。

それは、今日でも私たちの課題として残っています。私たちがそれをうまくやれるかどうか、私たちのサンガとBCAが成長する鍵だと考えるでしょう。もし私たちの会員数が減少しているとしたら、それは私たちのメッセージが人々の心に響いていない、つまり私たちが真宗の伝統を人々の生活に関連付ける方法が響いていないことの表れでもあります。

山岡師は「The Transmission of Shin Buddhism in the West」及び「西洋における真宗の伝道に関する本を書かれましたが、その中に印象深いお話があります。それは1986年1月28日のスペースシャトル・チャレンジャー号の爆発事故でご主人のエリソン・オニツカさんを亡くされたローナ・オニツカさんをカウンセリングされた時のお話です。師はローナさんのためにテキサス州ヒューストンに赴き、枕経を行ったそうです。

そして、ひどく取り乱しておられたローナさんと話すことで、彼女が悲しみを乗り越え、夫の死を受け入れられることができるように導かれました。師は本の中で、その時の体験について次のように書かれています。

「仏教の聖職者として、チャレンジャー号の悲劇に直面したローナの話を書くことができたことをありがたく思います。私たちの話し合いは、正直で率直なものでした。彼女にとつてエリソンの死を受け入れることは、たいへん勇気がいることでしたが、人生の新たな意味への扉を開いたのです。夫を失った痛みや喪失感がなくなったのではないのですが、彼女にしか知りえない夫との新たな関係が築かれることになったのです。」

師は、ローナさんに『教行信証』や『歎異抄』からご文を引用してアドバイスをしたではありません。自身の真宗の教えの理解と経験に基づいて、夫の死という悲劇的な現実を受け入れるように導かれたのです。

山岡師が、西洋に仏法を伝えるという精神を自身の伝道活動を通じて示してくださいましたことに感謝します。師が持っていたバトンは今、私たちの手の中にあります。私たちに渡されたのです。今が私たちの時なのです。どのようなことでも、西洋へ教えを伝える手助けをしましょう。それが、山岡誓源師に感謝し、偲ぶことのできる最善の方法だと思います。

BCA総会がインパソンで



2024年のBCA総会が北カリフォルニア教区の主催で2月23、24日にサクラメント別院で開催された。対面式での総会は、2020年2月にシアトル市近郊で行われて以来となり、全米各地の仏教会の開教使と代表者ら、約200名が参加した。

総会では、各団体や委員会、ダルマフォワードキャンペーンなどのレポートのほか、2024年度の予算の承



BCA National Council Meeting

認がなされた。また、中西部仏教会の土屋トッド師とホワイトリバー仏教会の矢崎シンディ師が開教使の資格を得たことが報告され、開教使輪袈裟が授与された。24日の総会后、IBSシンポジウムが行われ、IBSのスコットミッチェル学部長と宮地崇開教使(南アラメダ郡仏教会)が「The Making of American Buddhism」のテーマで話した。25日にはBCA永代経サーブスが営まれ、観無量寿経作法のおつとめの後、昨年引退した宮村ロン名譽開教使(前中西部仏教会駐在)が法話をした。

参加者は「やはりインパソンの総会はいいですね。皆と会って、話して、一緒に食事をしたりすると、念仏者同士の交流が深まるので、とても嬉しいです。」と4年ぶりの再会や新しい出会いを喜んだ。来年の総会は桑湾教区がホストで2月末から3月初めに開催する予定。



BCA National Council Meeting