



# WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America



A group from the "BCA Members Red Carpet Weekend" and BCA staff and volunteers pose atop the Buddhist Church of San Francisco during a tour of the Holy Relics in July. (Photos courtesy of Robert Noguchi)

## BCA Rolls Out the 'Red Carpet' for Its Members

Participants Get Insightful Look at Organization, Meet Other Nembutsu Followers

By Gayle Noguchi  
BCA Executive Director

Sixteen BCA members gathered with staff and volunteers at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley, California, on July 11-13 for the "BCA Members Red Carpet Weekend," the first event of its kind.

Designed to give members an orientation to the national organization as well as an opportunity to meet fellow Nembutsu followers from other parts of the country, members came from the Northwest, Northern California, Bay, Central California, Coast and Southern districts for this special event.

Thanks to generous grants from the Dharma Forward campaign, the BCA Executive Committee Bloomquist Education Endowment and the Bishop's Expansion Fund, this event was free for all the participants.

Upon arrival, each member received a gift bag con-



BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada welcomes the participants.

taining a Monto Shikisho specially selected for this event

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## BCA Puts Focus on Movie Making at West LA Event

Wealth of Filmmaking Talent in Sangha Spotlights at Gathering

By Rev. Victor Ogundipe  
Berkeley Higashi Honganji  
Buddhist Temple

The BCA held "Behind the Scenes: an Insider Look Into Movie Making" on April 12 at the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple.

The gathering was not only fun and informative, it was an amazing display of the wealth of filmmaking talent that exists in the BCA Sangha. The delicious lunch served after the presentations and catered by West Los Angeles favorite Feast From the East only enhanced the experience and

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## Why I Support Dharma Forward

*Editor's note: The Dharma Forward campaign is in its final stretch run for this year -- and needs your support to reach its goal of \$15 million. To underscore the importance of Dharma Forward, the BCA Endowment Foundation reached out to Sangha members and asked them why they are choosing to support the campaign. To donate, go to [bca.kindful.com](http://bca.kindful.com)*



Sharon Sasaki

By Sharon Sasaki  
Buddhist Temple of San Diego

Growing up as a BCA minister's kid in Stockton, Mountain View and San Francisco, I had a loving family and was surrounded

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## Mom's Final Life Lesson

OCBC's Jeanne Kumagai on Caring for Dementia Parent

*Editor's note: The following essay by Jeanne A. Kumagai, a member of the Orange County Buddhist Church, first appeared in Lion's Roar. The Wheel of Dharma is reprinting it with the permission of Lion's Roar.*

By Jeanne A. Kumagai  
Orange County Buddhist Church



Jeanne A. Kumagai

A while back, I heard a sermon about how difficult it is to drive forward in a car without a rearview mirror.

The lesson is that our past, in-

cluding all of our previous experiences, decisions and relationships, allow us to drive ahead smoothly.

I think that for a person with dementia, that rearview mirror gets a little bit broken each day until driving forward is basically impossi-

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## Dharma Forward Campaign

\$15,000,000



As of July 31, 2025 the Dharma Forward Campaign, to ensure the future of BCA and IBS, has raised 86.87% to goal. With your support, we ready to prepare future ministers and are here for sanghas so the Dharma can continue to be heard.



BISHOP’S MESSAGE

‘I’m There and I’m Back, I’m There and I’m Back’



By Rev. Marvin Harada  
Bishop of the BCA

I am very fond of the poems by the Myokonin Saichi Asahara. Myokonin are Shin Buddhist devotees who exemplify a deep understanding of the Nembutsu. Most of the Myokonin are lay people and some were very uneducated, yet they came to have deep spiritual understanding of the Dharma and of the Nembutsu. Saichi is perhaps one of the most famous.

In one of the hundreds and hundreds of poems by Saichi, there is the following poem:

*I am a happy man, indeed!  
I visit the Pure Land  
as often as I like;  
I’m there and I’m back,  
I’m there and I’m back,  
I’m there and I’m back,  
Namu-amida-butsu!  
Namu-amida-butsu!*

Many people think of the Pure Land only as their destination when they die, but Saichi has a deeper un-

derstanding of the Pure Land. For him, it is a spiritual world, the world of truth, the world of the Dharma, the world of Namuamidabutsu.

Saichi doesn’t have to die to go to the Pure Land. He senses and feels the Pure Land in this world, in this life, as is evident in this poem.

it as he bows in gassho before his meal.

At the same time, he also senses deeply, this world of samsara, the world in which his own greed, anger and ignorance arise in his daily life.

He sees it in the conflicts that he sees in the world around him. He sees it in the

nor is he sunk in despair because his heart and mind has been opened up to a spiritual world beyond his ego self, which he expresses as the Pure Land. The light of the Pure Land illuminates his heart and mind, showing him both this world of samsara, the world of darkness and suffering, and

*Many people think of the Pure Land only as their destination when they die, but Saichi has a deeper understanding of the Pure Land. For him, it is a spiritual world, the world of truth, the world of the Dharma, the world of Namuamidabutsu. Saichi doesn’t have to die to go to the Pure Land. He senses and feels the Pure Land in this world, in this life, as is evident in this poem.*

However, Saichi doesn’t make an arrogant statement like he is a Buddha in the Pure Land. On the contrary, he also senses deeply the opposite of the Pure Land in this world, which is our world of samsara, the world of ignorance, the world of the ego, the world of our greed and anger.

Saichi senses deeply, maybe even acutely, both worlds, as he lives his everyday life. Sometimes, he senses the profound reality of the Pure Land. He might see the Pure Land in a flower or in the world of nature around him. He might sense it in the Hon-do of the temple as he chants the sutra. He might even sense

faces of people suffering. He sees it in his own face. But yet, despite this world of samsara that we all live and are bound to, he senses a spiritual world that transcends this world of samsara, this world of the ego. He senses the world of oneness, the world of great wisdom and great compassion, the world of Buddha, all around him, and within him as well.

What joy it brings him in his daily life to sense both worlds. If he only sensed the world of samsara, he might become despondent and even bitter. Why did I have to be born into this world of suffering and anguish?

But he is not despondent

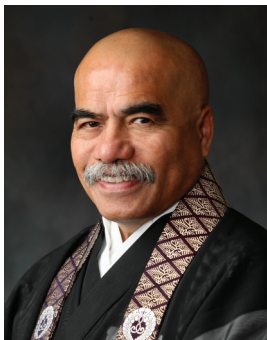
the bright and vibrant world of the Pure Land.

I gain so much insight and teaching from Saichi’s poems that manifest his deep spirituality.

We too can experience the deep reality of both worlds, our world of samsara, that we face in our daily struggles of life and the world of truth, the Pure Land, the world of wisdom and compassion that illuminates our life and gives us a true sense of joy.

We must continue to listen to the Dharma and receive the Nembutsu in our hearts and minds, and someday we too can say, “I’m there and I’m back. I’m there and I’m back.”

Thoughts On Being a Priest



By Rev. William Briones  
Rinban  
Los Angeles Hompa  
Hongwanji Buddhist Temple

The reading I began with is from the postscript of the last chapter of “Kyogyoshinsho.”

Shinran wrote this in opposition to the government officials and the emperor, only after Honen Shonin and some of his disciples, Shinran being one of them, were stripped of their priesthood and exiled to remote parts of Japan.

Honen Shonin’s only crime was to advocate the saying the Nembutsu, a religious act which when practiced exclusively, could lead any human being to salvation in Amida’s Pure Land.

However, Honen’s radical Pure Land interpretation did not sit well with established Tendin monks on Mount Hiei.

*“The emperor and his ministers, acting against the Dharma and violating human decency, became enraged and embittered. As a result, Master Honen, the eminent founder who had enabled the true essence of the Pure Land way to spread vigorously in Japan, and a number of his followers, without receiving any deliberation of their alleged crimes, were immediately sentenced to death or were stripped of their priesthood, given secular names and exiled. I was among the latter. Hence, I am now neither a monk or layman. For this reason, I have taken the term Toku “stubble-haired” as my name.*

— Shinran Shonin

So through political maneuvering, they had Honen and his followers persecuted. Some were sentenced to death and others were stripped of their priesthood and exiled.

As Jodo Shinshu followers, the words “neither priest or layman” should be reflected upon and how it relates to our lives.

I’ve been a minister now for almost 24 years and at times, I can honestly say it’s still difficult for me to believe I’m a Buddhist priest.

A couple of weeks ago, I drove home to see my kids, grandkids, family and friends. Do you think they treat me like a minister? My kids call me “Dad,” my grandkids call me “Papa,” my friends call me “Bill” and everyone else, including my little cousins, call me “Junior.”

Our conversations are centered around what the family is up to, school, work, play and local politics. The Nembutsu seems to be the farthest thing

from my mind ,, at least consciously. After work, I go home, throw off my shirt and tie, get on my sweats and raggedy T-shirt, crash on the sofa, turn on the television and watch the news.

It is within these words of Shinran, “neither priest or layman” that I see myself caught up in a secular world that leads

me to chasing my dreams and desires. How I’d love to get that Mazda MX-5 Miata convertible with six-speed manual transmission.

And yet, I am given the privilege to share and study the Nembutsu teachings with you and to the many visitors that

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Corrections

In the August 2025 minister’s message, Rev. Kazuaki Nakata’s title was incorrect. He is an interim Rimban of the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple.

In the August 2025 Editor’s note, Rev. Giei Sasaki’s position at the Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan, was incorrect. He is not the Bishop and is currently the Director of the Jodo Shinshu Studies and Research Center.

Clarification

The Page 1 article in the August issue on the “Ireicho Book of Names” at Palo Alto Buddhist Temple (PABT) had an omission. Sangha members from Mountain View, San Mateo, San Jose and Southern Alameda County temples provided invaluable help and support in hosting the event at PABT.



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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Survey Results Underscore Importance of Jodo Shinshu Traditions

Findings Also Reveal How Much We All Seek Community and a Sense of Belonging in Our Temples



By Steven Terusaki  
BCA President

September! Where has the year gone? It's time to get back to school; to get back to work; and to focus on completing all those goals and tasks that we've been putting off with the excuse of summer vacations and being too busy with Obon festivals. It has been a great summer, but now it's time to roll up our sleeves and push forward.

In this edition of the Wheel of Dharma, I would like to present the findings of the survey that was first published in the May edition in which I posed five queries:

1. Select the items that you believe are attractive to those new to our temples and churches.
2. Why are you a member, supporter or friend of the BCA?
3. Select the activities that are most important to you.
4. What is your age?
5. What temple or church are you affiliated with?

Seventy-three responses have been received since the survey was opened. Thank you to each one who took the three minutes to complete the survey. Your input has provided an invaluable insight into our

sanghas and provides important data on how we might make future decisions in each of our temples and churches.

The responses came from every district of the BCA. They represented an age demographic that appears to represent anecdotally a cross-section of our engaged BCA Sangha members and the readership of the Wheel of Dharma. Over 45% of the responses were from individuals 60 years or older with 34% in the 40-59 age group.

Age Group	Percentage
17 years or younger	2%
18 - 24 years	3%
25 - 39 years	8%
40 - 59 years	34%
60 - 74 years	42%
75+ years	13%
Prefer not to answer	8%

The three other queries sought to identify what aspects of our temples were attractive and important to both newcomers and legacy members alike. The results from these questions were multiple choice selections without a limit on selection. Respondents selected as many items as applicable from their perspective; the results reflect the highest number of choices.

Select all items that are attractive to those new to our temples and churches.

The graphs point to a common theme. One significant aspect of our temples and churches is the welcoming and inclusive community that exists within our BCA temples and churches. One of the comments stated, "being part of an intergenerational in-person community where meeting with other people of my age group with whom I otherwise would never cross paths." Other important reasons to come to temple were to learn about Buddhism; attend in-person Sunday services and special services throughout the year; and to attend community and cultural events such as Obon festivals and Bon Odori, food bazaars, Hanamatsuri festivals and Mochitsuki.

Item	Percentage
Being personally welcomed on arrival	69.9%
Seeking to learn about Buddhism	75.3%
Minister's Dharma talk	69.9%
Dharma School	32.9%
Meditation sessions	31.5%
Seeking to find another BCA home temple	23.3%
Vibrant & welcoming community	61.6%
Seeking alternatives to other Buddhist traditions	23.3%
Japanese cultural activities	53.4%
English-speaking community	42.5%
Attend Family Memorial services	26.0%
Participate in supporting community events	46.6%
Youth activities (Scouting, basketball, etc.)	32.9%
Getting involved in social outreach and social impact	30.1%
Feeling welcomed and able to "belong"	74.0%
Shin Buddhist rituals (chanting, incense offering)	39.7%
Music	13.7%
Other	6.9%

Why are you a member, supporter or friend of the BCA?

Continued on Page 14

FDSTL Awards Nitta Scholarships to Two High School Graduates

Awardees Are Jacqueline Aochi of San Jose and Jeffrey Nishida of OCBC; Aochi Is Featured This Month

*Editor's note: The BCA and FDSTL work to support our young adults, aspiring ministers and current minister's continuing education. Through your generous support of the Fred and Helen Nitta scholarship fund, the Dharma Forward campaign and our SFAP scholarship funds, we are able to help members of our Jodo Shinshu community realize their dreams.*

By Darlene Bagshaw  
FDSTL Nitta Scholarship  
Chairperson

Upon their 25th wedding anniversary, Fred and Helen Nitta established a scholarship to honor and give recognition to outstanding Buddhist youth.

Fred Nitta was instrumental in always assuring the Watsonville Buddhist Temple was a steadfast center for the Buddhist teachings even during the unexpected loss of the temple's resident minister. Focusing on the temple youth was his passion as he often held discussions for the young Buddhists of Watsonville. In 1964, the Fred and Helen Nitta Scholarship was founded to feature our active BCA youth.

This year, the Federation of Dharma School Teachers' League (FDSTL) is honored to announce the awarding of



Jacqueline Aochi, of the San Jose Betsuin Buddhist Temple, is a 2025 Fred and Helen Nitta Scholarship Award recipient. She will be attending the University of California, Santa Cruz, where she will pursue a career in microbiology. (Courtesy of Jacqueline Aochi)

two \$750 scholarships. The amazing field of 2025 graduating high school seniors made the selection process quite challenging as each applicant shined as a unique and amazing individual.

The two awardees are Jacqueline Aochi of the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin and

Jeffrey Nishida of the Orange County Buddhist Church. This month, we feature Miss Jacqueline Aochi.

Jacqueline Aochi attended Dharma School in San Jose from preschool through high school, where she became a Dharma School teacher's assistant.

She also participated in the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin's Scouting program and earned the Girl Scout Silver Award in 2021 with her project "Japanese American Incarceration Camp History Minecraft Video and Education."

Not only an exemplary academic, Jacqueline also participated on the Santa Clara High varsity basketball team serving as team captain. Her athleticism didn't end on the court as she utilized her athletic skills to design an obstacle course for the Coast District YBL Conference. This served as an interactive means of learning about Shakyamuni Buddha where participants learned to work together, listen and find meaning in their activities.

The focus of her essay was on the topic of the BCA 2024 theme, "The Right Time Is Now," and her understanding of this quotation from Rennyo Shonin.

"The BCA theme and Rennyo Shonin's quote, 'The Right Time Is Now' resonates with me because, as a Buddhist, I strive to be mindful and present in each moment, which can be challenging," Aochi wrote. "I often find myself reflecting on the past or worrying about the future, which can lead to me being more hesitant to take action or

speak up when needed. Being mindful of the present and taking action are important to leading a meaningful life.

"Last summer, I had the amazing opportunity to visit the Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto and participate in the Hiroshima Peace Program, which is a two-day international event that memorializes those who passed away from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II.

"The Hiroshima Peace Program emphasizes the importance of world peace and humanity. During the program, I had the honor to meet and listen to the first-hand experiences of Mr. Mikio Saiki, a Hiroshima atomic bomb survivor. His words brought the true horrors of war and nuclear weapons into light. Mr. Saiki had kept his painful memories to himself for 79 years, but decided 'the right time is now' to share his story after learning about Russia's threats to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine. Mr. Saiki has inspired me to be an active citizen in making the world a better place.

"I am proud that I took action when I completed my Girl Scout Silver Award project. I am a fifth-generation Japanese American and grew



## Tucson Howakai Holds First Service



The new Tucson Howakai held its first service on Aug. 10 at the H. Murray Sinclair Library, close to the University of Arizona campus. Arizona Buddhist Temple Minister's Assistants Rev. Lynn Sugiyama and Rev. Michael Tang officiated the service, which had five members from the Arizona temple who drove from Phoenix. There were 10 members from the Tucson area who attended the service. Dave Belcheff was instrumental in organizing the service. "I thought it was a good beginning for the Tucson Sangha," Rev. Sugiyama said. He thanked Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada and Arizona's Supervising Minister Rev. Gregory Gibbs for their support. (Courtesy of Rev. Lynn Sugiyama)

NEW LOCATION & TIME

Southern Alameda County  
Buddhist Church  
Sept 13, 2025  
Doors open: 3:30pm  
Showcase: 4pm

  
**Bonbu JAMS**  
Out of the Mud Grows the Lotus:  
Stories of Resilience

Showcase tickets:  
<https://bit.ly/BonbuJAMS2025>





Presented by the Buddhist Churches of America  
and Bonbu Stories

BCA: Center for Buddhist Education Presents:

**DEATH: JODO SHINSHU DOCTRINE & RITUALS**  
Jodo Shinshu Center 2140 Durant Ave, Berkeley 94704

**OCTOBER 25, 2025**

  
**DR MARK BLUM**  
Professor of Buddhist Studies and Shinjo Ito Distinguished Chair in Japanese studies at UC Berkeley.  
"Never Die Alone"

  
**REV KIYONOBU KUWAHARA**  
Program Director at the Jodo Shinshu International Office. Supervising minister of Marin & Berkeley Buddhist Temples.  
"Jodo Shinshu Rituals"

**\$50 IN-PERSON / \$30 ONLINE**

**REGISTRATION & INFO:**  
<https://tinyurl.com/JodoDeath>

## Donate to BCA Dana Program

In the purest sense, Dana is generosity, openness, a capacity to embrace others with compassion and love. Shinran Shonin's life of gratitude has traveled across centuries and continents to arrive in our hearts today. The Dana Program supports the BCA's goals to connect, enrich and educate. By funding programs that share access to knowledge on Shin Buddhism, connect our local temple

Sanghas and provide comprehensive ministerial training, we are all able to listen and experience the Nembutsu. We are able to do so with your generous donations and membership to your local temples. Please join us in making a difference with a contribution today. Visit us at: [bit.ly/4mmWmOG](https://bit.ly/4mmWmOG)



**BCA Music Committee**

### DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know if you missed the "Songs & Dances of Resilience, Gratitude, Joy, and Hope" webinar that was organized by the Bon Odori Taiko Subcommittee of the BCA Music Committee, you can view it on the BCA Music YouTube channel? You can view it at: [bit.ly/45Peslk](https://bit.ly/45Peslk) PJ Hirabayashi, Tiffany Tamaribuchi, and Nobuko Miyamoto were amazing presenters and added great dialogue.

BCA TEMPLES OF THE NORTHERN DISTRICT PRESENT

**YOGA AND BUDDHISM COMMUNITY GATHERING**  
Workshops and discussions on Yoga and Buddhism  
Friday, Sept. 26 - Sunday, Sept. 28, 2025  
Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Sacramento



**Bob Matsueda**  
Yoga and Wellness Instructor, Yoga Therapist, Government of India, Ministry of AYUSH



**Rev. Bob Oshita & Rev. Patti Oshita**  
BCA Ministers (Retired)  
Co-authors, *Dharma Is Everywhere*



**Rev. Yuki Sugahara**  
Rimban Buddhist Church of Sacramento & Northern District



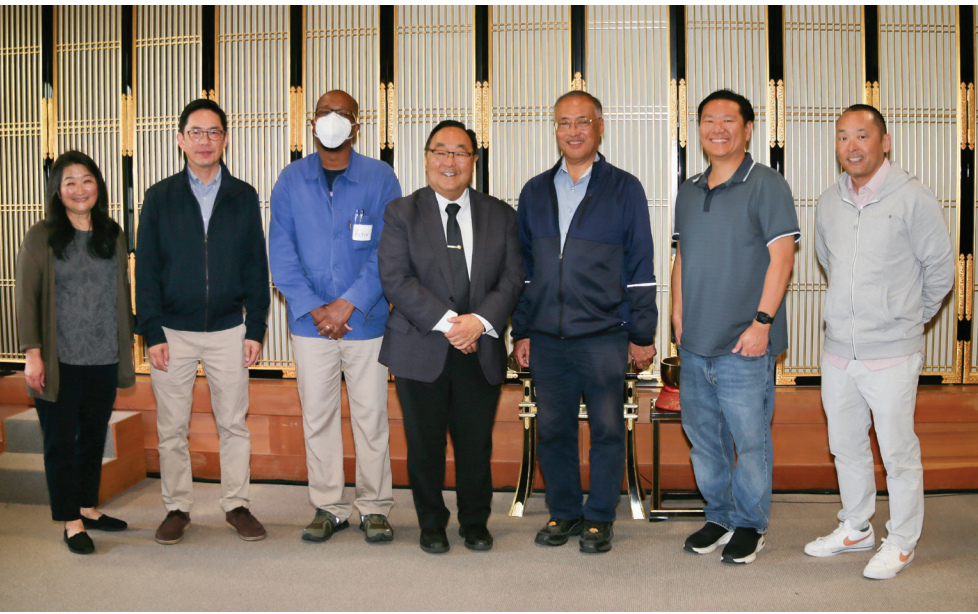
**Rev. Noritaka Imada**  
Minister, Buddhist Church of Florin & Buddhist Church of Lodi

**Everyone is invited – any age and physical condition. No experience or mats are necessary.**  
**REGISTRATION IS LIMITED FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED**  
Information and sign up, please email Rev. Patti Oshita [pattioshita100@gmail.com](mailto:pattioshita100@gmail.com)



\*\*\* We are not endorsing gambling, but we appreciate the venue for the accommodations for this event.





The BCA hosted “Behind the Scenes: an Insider Look Into Movie Making” on April 12 at the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple. Six members of the BCA’s new Film & Video Committee shared their experiences in various aspects of movie making. At left, participants pose for a group photo. From left are: Terri Omori, Ming Lai, Rev. Victor Ogundipe Jr., Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, Glen Tao, Gaylen Kobayashi and Kenn Kashima, ACE. At right, Rev. Harada kicked off the event with his presentation, “Buddhism and Movie Making.” (Photos courtesy of Debbie Tao, Glen Tao and Ming Lai)



At left, Kenn Kashima, ACE (American Cinema Editors), described his journey through the film industry from video systems playback editor on “The Joy Luck Club” to his appearance on the early 2000s show, “Blind Date,” where he met his future wife. At right, Rev. Ko’e Umezu’s “Storyboarding Live Action Feature Films,” examined the role of visual artists in creating the visual blueprints of film.

Filmmaking

Continued from Page 1

was a great way to draw a close to an exciting day.

Six members of the BCA’s new Film & Video Committee shared their experiences in various aspects of movie making.

Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada kicked off the event with his presentation, “Buddhism and Movie Making.” He spoke about an encounter that Rev. Takamaro Shigaraki once shared with him.

One day, Rev. Shigaraki was riding in a taxi and it began to rain. At times, rain can be viewed as a hindrance, but Rev. Shigaraki recalled the cab driver saying, “Just as humans shedding tears can clear their vision, the rain clears the smog from the sky.”

Rev. Harada pointed out that when we begin to apply Buddhism in our everyday lives, we start to realize that we can hear the teachings from anyone and at any time. It is, in this sense, that movies and Buddhism are connected.

Rev. Harada mentioned many explicitly Buddhist movies such as “Kundun,” “Little Buddha,” and “Seven Years in Tibet.” Yet, it may have been his sharing of the Buddhist themes in Akira Kurosawa’s “Ikiru” that most powerfully made the point. This film, about a civil servant who upon receiving a terminal diagnosis finally learns what it means to live, revealed



The BCA’s “Behind the Scenes: an Insider Look Into Movie Making” event at the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple showed the wealth of filmmaking talent in the BCA Sangha.

how we can come to deeply hear the Dharma in the flow of everyday life, if we are listening.

Ming Lai’s “Indie Filmmaking” was a deep dive into what it takes to make independent film and was equal parts sobering and hopeful. Sharing what it took to create his company, Humanist Films, and his recent film, “Craft of Speed,” Lai detailed the fortitude, networking and collaboration that it takes to achieve success.

In discussing how the formula for independent filmmaking is evolving, he shared a critical read for budding filmmakers, Alex Ferrari’s “Rise of the Filmtrepreneur.”

Lai encouraged filmmakers to retain control of their own art through learning the holy trinity of the trade: funding, filmmaking and distribution. Most important, Lai urged those interested in pursuing a career as an independent film-

maker to get started today by learning all they can about the craft and taking advantage of the technology already available to them and in their pockets: their cell phone.

Rev. Ko’e Umezu’s “Storyboarding Live Action Feature Films,” was an amazing look at the role of visual artists in creating the visual blueprints of film.

These blueprints of film’s most pivotal moments are eventually turned into the thrilling live action sequences that we see on the big screen. Rev. Umezu shared that most of the commercial and major film productions that we watch begin with storyboarding.

Interestingly enough, though the global community of professional live-action storyboarders is quite small, they quickly produce a shockingly large amount of material. Rev. Umezu was also keen to mention the importance of unions

in the film industry. While live-action storyboarding is not an easy field to break into, Rev. Umezu encouraged those with the passion and drive to work hard, follow their dreams and get to drawing.

In “Journey from ‘Joy Luck Club’ to ‘America’s Got Talent,’” Kenn Kashima, ACE (American Cinema Editors), took the audience on his journey through the film industry.

Kashima shared the story of his days as a young college student and the inspiration he found in an article his mom sent him about Steven Okazaki, the Oscar award-winning Japanese American filmmaker.

He discussed the importance of seeing someone that looked like him thriving in the industry. He also shared his first big break as a video systems playback editor on the set of “The Joy Luck Club,” and his harrowing rite of passage during filming of successfully soldering together a damaged wire in front of the entire cast and crew.

Kashima’s greatest accomplishment, however, might be the video he shared of his hilarious appearance on the early 2000s show “Blind Date,” where he went on a first date with the woman who would become his wife, Karin. He praised his wife for always being his rock.

In reflecting on the film industry, Kashima shared a deep gratitude. He mentioned being able to recall — by name — at least 100 people that were key

in providing him with pivotal opportunities, including Tamlyn Tomita, Patrick Markey and Mary Jo Markey. This deep gratitude has encouraged him to pay it forward and be a source of help for others determined to make it in the industry.

Gaylen Kobayashi’s “Finishing — Fix it in Post” was not only an eye-opening look into the realm of post-production, it was a testament to persistence.

Kobayashi got an early start in his engagement with film starting in the fourth-grade. Though initially drawn to editing, he eventually found his passion in the broader and highly collaborative world of post-production.

Though the viewing public often connects most deeply with those in front of the camera, Kobayashi’s presentation revealed how much of a role post-production plays in the final product that we consume and the emotional connections that we make.

From the startling sound of a window breaking to the energy and vibrant color in a nighttime shot of a city that never sleeps, post-production is where the raw materials from the set are polished by audio engineers, film colorists and a host of others.

Kobayashi’s presentation was particularly informative for helping those interested in careers in film understand the breadth of opportunities that

Continued on Page 14





At left, Brian Piper, of the Buddhist Temple of Alameda, and Malachi Shy, of the Buddhist Church of Oakland, were among the 16 BCA members along with staff and volunteers who attended the first “BCA Members Red Carpet Weekend” from July 11-13 at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley, California. At right, the event began with a Dharma Service. BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada gave a message about the significance of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. (Photos courtesy of Robert Noguchi)



Red Carpet

Continued from Page 1

and a personalized, signed copy of “Discovering Buddhism in Everyday Life” by Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada. Everyone also received a Gohonzon of Amida Buddha and one of the Nembutsu (written by Shinran Shonin). We all gathered in the JSC Community Room for a delicious dinner catered by North Beach Pizza.

The event began with a Dharma Service officiated by Rev. Harada and Rev. Michael Endo. Rev. Harada’s Dharma message reflected on the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, noting that these three elements, together, form our greatest treasure.

Friday evening’s session on July 11 focused on “Getting to Know You.” In a spirit of fun and fellowship, Koichi Mizushima, Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) Youth Programs Coordinator, led everyone in icebreaker activities, which quickly allowed us to see what we have in common with each other and how we differ.

The members, BCA staff and volunteers each shared an experience that played an important part in helping them arrive where they are today in their Nembutsu journey with BCA.

For many, this was an especially meaningful part of the Red Carpet weekend. When asked in the event survey, “Which sessions or moments stood out to you?” one member responded, “Moments when other participants shared some deep personal feelings and memories.”

Another member said, “The Getting to Know You’ session was the moment that stood out the most to me and sharing why and what brought people to BCA personally.” Others said they appreciated getting to know the BCA staff.

Saturday morning on July



BCA Executive Director Gayle Noguchi addresses Red Carpet weekend participants.

12 focused on “Getting to Know BCA.” We began with an overview of the national organization structure, how it operates, and how members fit into BCA’s big picture.

Immediate past President Terri Omori recounted with candor and humor the path that led her from temple member to BCA national leadership. The members watched the video “The Value and Significance of BCA” by Glen Tao, Film and Video Committee Chairperson of the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple and narrated by Michiko Inanaga, BCA Endowment Foundation Development Director.

We took the group by chartered bus to the Buddhist Church of San Francisco (BCSF). Resident Minister Rev. Melissa Opel described the history of BCSF and its significance in BCA as Busshari Hoto,

“The Sacred Tower of the Holy Relics.”

She noted that its construction was funded jointly by BCSF and BCA members — therefore, all BCA members can regard BCSF as their home temple along with their local temples. Rev. Opel escorted the group to the roof to view the Holy Relics.

On the way back to the JSC, we stopped at the Bishop Matsukage Memorial at the Japanese Cemetery in Colma. Rev. Endo conducted a brief service and shared the background of why and how the memorial was created. At the JSC, volunteers Ford and Terri Omori prepared a taco salad bar lunch.

The afternoon sessions included an explanation of the Onajin and guidance on setting up a home altar (Obutsudan) by Rev. Endo, Bob Matsueda teaching us about the connection between Buddhism and

yoga and leading us through yoga exercises, and an overview of BCA’s role in the worldwide Jodo Shinshu community.

Darlene Bagshaw, BCA Secretary and Co-Chairperson of the BCA Committee on Development, gave a moving presentation on the impact BCA has made locally, nationally and internationally with the many generous donations it has received.

The afternoon concluded with a round table session moderated by Rev. Harada in which members asked him a broad range of insightful questions.

One member said, “He was so kind and thoughtful in his responses. He is so accessible, which was very refreshing.” Another individual said, “Having the Bishop present was important and stressed how the Red Carpet was valuable to BCA.”

through music.

Rev. Endo awed everyone with his performance of “Kawa no nagare no yo ni” (originally sung by Japanese artist Misora Hibari). We also enjoyed the extraordinary talent of Jessica Foutz, a certified sound healing therapist and Las Vegas Buddhist Sangha member. Foutz performed a beautiful song she had composed just the day before, inspired by her visit to the California redwood trees. She used multiple crystal singing bowls and played a flute designed with three chambers that was custom made for her.

The event concluded with Rev. Harada conducting a Kie-shiki Affirmation Ceremony for Denise Marie of the San Luis Obispo Buddhist Church.

All of the members gave the Red Carpet weekend experience the highest rating of “Excellent”

*“I enjoyed connecting with the Sangha, feeling our deep interconnectedness, talking with the Bishop and getting to know my extended Dharma family.”*  
— “BCA Members Red Carpet Weekend” participant

Following dinner catered by Berkeley restaurant Musashi, the group enjoyed dancing at Berkeley Buddhist Temple’s Obon festival, adjacent to the JSC. For some, it was their first time attending an Obon festival.

We reconvened at the JSC to conclude the evening with activities. The members broke out into small groups to share what they envisioned as the next steps on their Nembutsu journeys that they reflected on at the start of the weekend. The members contributed their thoughts to the “My Wish for BCA” Bodhi Leaf project and completed an event survey.

Sunday’s closing service on July 13 provided a unique musical program arranged by Rev. Harada. It was an opportunity to receive the Dharma teachings

and all indicated that the event helped them to feel more connected to the BCA community.

“I enjoyed connecting with the Sangha, feeling our deep interconnectedness, talking with the Bishop and getting to know my extended Dharma family,” one member said. Another member put it this way, “Y’all knocked it out of the park!”

The inspiration for BCA Members Red Carpet Weekend came to me when I asked myself, “How do members become acquainted with BCA, the national organization?” I am gratified that we not only educated our members about BCA, but that we also gave them the “red carpet” treatment they truly deserve.

The next BCA Members Red Carpet Weekend will be on Aug. 28-30, 2026, at the JSC.





# Scenes From the First ‘BCA Members Red Carpet Weekend’



At far left, Friday night's session on July 11 focused on "Getting to Know You," an icebreaker activity led by Koichi Mizushima, CBE Youth Programs Coordinator. From left are volunteer Charlie Bagshaw from the Buddhist Church of Stockton and Aderet Parrino from the Buddhist Church of San Francisco (BCSF) and Mizushima. At left, on Saturday, July 12, the focus was on "Getting to Know BCA." Immediate past BCA President Terri Omori recounted the path that led her from temple member to BCA national leadership. Below left, the group took a chartered bus to BCSF. In below middle, BCSF Resident Minister Rev. Melissa Opel described the history of BCSF and its significance in BCA as Busshari Hoto, "The Sacred Tower of the Holy Relics." In below right, the group stopped at the Bishop Matsukage Memorial at the Japanese Cemetery in Colma. Rev. Endo conducted a brief service and shared the background of why and how the memorial was created. (Photos courtesy of Robert Noguchi)



At left, Darlene Bagshaw, BCA Secretary and Co-Chairperson of the BCA Committee on Development, describes projects the Dharma Forward education pillar has funded. At center, Karen and JW Webb from the Spokane Buddhist Temple were among the participants. At right, Terri and Ford Omori, in center in yellow, and others dance at the Berkeley Buddhist Temple's Obon festival.



The Sunday, July 13, closing service featured a musical program arranged by Rev. Harada. It included a performance by Jessica Foutz, a certified sound healing therapist and Las Vegas Buddhist Sangha member, shown at left. She used multiple crystal singing bowls and played a flute designed with three chambers. At right, the event concluded with Rev. Harada conducting a Kieshiki Affirmation Ceremony for Denise Marie of the San Luis Obispo Buddhist Church.





At left, at the beginning of the Tacoma Buddhist Temple Buddhist Women’s Association (BWA) centennial on April 27, all current and former BWA members and families of past BWA members were asked to stand -- and received a round of applause from the Sangha. (Photos courtesy of June Akita)



At left, BCA Minister Emeritus and former Tacoma Buddhist Temple Resident Minister Rev. Kosho Yukawa is shown with Janice Osaka Vinnedge and Diane Tanbara Taniguchi at the Tacoma BWA event. At right, Sangha members look at a display of the history of the BWA that included inventions of popular toys and other items through the decades.

# Tacoma’s Buddhist Women’s Association Celebrates Centennial

By June Akita  
Tacoma Buddhist Temple

The Tacoma Buddhist Temple Buddhist Women’s Association (BWA) celebrated its 100th-year anniversary on April 27.

After the Tacoma temple was established in 1915, the Fujinkai was founded in 1925 with 30 members. In 1934, Mrs. Kinuko Sasaki was asked by Tacoma Rev. Sensho Sasaki to revise the toban-style leadership to a more organized group and thus she became our first Fujinkai leader.

By 1935, at the Fujinkai’s 10th anniversary, the group had grown to a membership of 55.

The BWA endured World War II and the recent worldwide pandemic. The temple doors were closed twice, but our hearts remained open to our minister’s needs, temple needs and community needs.

Today we have returned to a new normal and have remained strong under the leadership of Rev. Tadao Koyama and BWA President Denise Cline, her dedicated cabinet and supportive members.

After the kansho bell was

rung beginning the anniversary event, Alex Theisen requested all current and former BWA members and families of past BWA members to stand. They all received a well-deserved round of applause from the Sangha.

My Dharma message shared a journey through the evolution and history of the BWA in relation to our temple history and included the inventions of popular toys, items and other icons through the decades, which captured the interest and attention of both young and old. Were you aware that Mr. Potato Head and Tupperware originated in the 1940s? In the 1950s, there was McDonald’s, Barbie and Elvis.

The attendees sang a new gatha called “BWA Anthem” written and composed by Donna Sasaki that incorporated words and phrases from current members. The participants recited along with a video of Michiko Yukawa reading “The Three Treasures” from the 2022 Zoom Hoonko service during the pandemic. It was nice to see her and have her be part of our service.

After the service, everyone was invited for a short social



Tacoma Buddhist Temple Resident Minister Rev. Tadao Koyama gives a toast, recognizing the sacrifices and hardships of past leaders and congratulating the current leaders and members.

hour in the Rev. Gladys Pratt room organized by Lynn Blick. Guests enjoyed homemade treats and also listened to music from each decade. We showcased six new tri-fold boards created by Jill Case, Carrie Mori and myself from the history of BWA to the evolution of toys and kitchen appliances.

The most meaningful displays included the heartfelt and sincere letters received from some of our former honorary advisers (bomori or minister’s

wives). Thank you to Megumi and Rev. Fukuma, Masayo Kakiyama, Linda Koyama, Kaori Miyaji, Rev. Cyndi Yasaki, Michiko and Rev. Yukawa and Rev. Tadao Koyama for taking the time and thought you gave to your very special messages.

Everyone received a special BWA cookbook assembled by Tracy Ling, which included recipes from current and past BWA members and will be a treasured memento.

In addition, everyone received a “June” Post-It favor and admired “Carrie’s” charming table decorations and Les Hitsman’s elaborate centerpiece, enjoyed Patti Wong’s sekihan gohan and viewed and studied our Tacoma Buddhist Temple and BWA historical timeline spanning 60-by-3 feet with appreciation.

Rev. Koyama made a toast, recognizing the sacrifices and hardships of past leaders and congratulated the current leaders and members for practicing and sharing some of these traditions and cultural experiences.

The luncheon would not have been as enjoyable without our YBA students and YBA parents, who served the lunch and made sure everyone had

fresh tea in their cups. Our meal concluded with dessert, which included our original strawberry mochi, a Daifuku mochi and a baked manju.

It is very difficult to envision the many hours spent to create this day as a fun but informative event, to thank the numerous people who joined us, and to thank everyone for the generous donations that we received.

The extraordinary messages from our Japan and mainland okusans — thank you so much. Our connections still remain strong! A special thank you to Rev. Koyama for his spiritual guidance and support throughout the months of planning and on the day of the event.

Our Tacoma Buddhist Women’s Association is not unique. We continue to be a diverse and active group of people who help with all temple fundraisers, community activities, special meals and any special tasks requested from our minister or board.

We look forward to observe what future decades will bring. We say “Okagesama de zento yoyo — Looking to a bright future because of those who preceded us.”





Join the BCA Discord

The BCA Discord server is a free-to-join, online community open to all of our Sangha members and friends. Scan below to get started—we'll see you there!



https://tinyurl.com/bcadiscord



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Fireside Chat Sessions with 20 Laypersons and Teachers

Starts October 4, 2025



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For Details:	Please click <a href="#">here</a>
Topics:	<b>October 4:</b> Boarding the Ship — Starting Our Human Journey <b>November 1:</b> Falling off the Ship — Encountering Suffering <b>December 6:</b> Swimming by Striving — Practice <b>January 3:</b> Gasping for Air — Spiritual Impasse <b>February 7:</b> Letting go — Shinjin Realization and Entrusting <b>March 7:</b> Floating — Ocean that is Amida's Primal Vow <b>April 4:</b> Swimming with Ease — Assurance, Joy, and Clarity <b>May 2:</b> Thinking of Others — Engagement with Others <b>June 6:</b> Reaching the Island — Birth in the Pure Land <b>July 11:</b> Going out back into the Ocean — Returning to this Saha Realm
Instructor and Moderator:	<b>Kenneth K. Tanaka</b> , Professor Emeritus, Musashino University, Tokyo. Former Assoc. Prof. and Assist. Dean, the Institute of Buddhist Studies, Berkeley. Former Minister of Buddhist Churches of America.
Register for the Course:	Please apply <a href="#">here</a>
Donation:	Suggested amount \$50–\$100 (In Japan, ¥6,000) (Less is accepted for students and anyone on fixed or low income.)
Textbook:	<i>Ocean Two: The Ten Phases of Shin Buddhism for the West and Beyond</i> (Draft of this book will be provided free of charge to all registrants.)
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CBT Participates in Silent Walk for Peace

Event Held on 80th Anniversary of Hiroshima, Nagasaki Bombings



The Cleveland Buddhist Temple members participate in a silent walk in downtown Cleveland on Aug. 6 in remembrance of the 80th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (Photos courtesy of Cleveland Buddhist Temple)

By John Barnes  
Cleveland Buddhist Temple

The Cleveland Buddhist Temple participated in a silent walk in the city’s downtown on Aug. 6 in remembrance of the 80th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The opening ceremony included a reading of Rennyo’s “White Ashes” provided by the CBT and read by Francis Chiappa from Cleveland Peace Action.

As he read Rennyo’s words on impermanence, ending with the Nembutsu, those gathered were visibly moved. Maria Smith from the Cleveland Nonviolence Network read two meditations from Thich Nhat Hanh’s book, “Present Moment Wonderful Moment: Mindfulness Verses for Daily Living.”

Five community groups and many individuals collaborated in the walk, dressed in white, the color of mourning, recalling that survivors of the bombing desperately needed water.

The silent procession,



The silent walk concluded at sunset at Cleveland’s Willard Park. Each person placed a small candle and formed a large peace sign, listened to poems and songs about Hiroshima, sang John Lennon’s “Imagine,” and closed with “mir miru mir,” a Russian phrase meaning “peace to the world.”

which began at the Eastman Reading Garden at the Cleveland Public Library, walked to and circled Cleveland’s War Memorial Fountain. Everyone was silent and still. The fountain’s statue, titled “Peace Arising from the Flames of War,” reached skyward, silhouetted against the setting sun. Walkers proceeded slowly, guided by the sound of two drummers and stopped at the

shore of Lake Erie for silent contemplation.

To conclude the walk at sunset, each person placed a small candle into a large peace sign at Cleveland’s Willard Park. The gathering listened to poems and songs about Hiroshima, sang John Lennon’s “Imagine,” and closed with “mir miru mir,” a Russian phrase meaning “peace to the world.”

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## Rev. Kazuaki Nakata Visits WWII Internment Camps — Every Year

Fresno Betsuin Minister Will Lead Pilgrimage to Rohwer, Jerome Incarceration Sites

By Jon Kawamoto  
Wheel of Dharma Editor

When Rev. Kazuaki Nakata began researching topics for his thesis at Ryukoku University, he discovered a subject he knew nothing about — the mass relocation and detention of Japanese Americans in World War II.

“I came across (BCA Minister Emeritus) Rev. Mas Kodani’s book where he talked about Issei, Nisei and Sansei — I had never heard of those terms before. Japanese American history isn’t taught in Japan,” said Rev. Nakata, the interim Rimban of the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple, of the first-, second- and third-generation terms that Rev. Kodani used to describe the history of Japanese Americans.

His interest was piqued, so much so that his final thesis was how Jodo Shinshu Buddhism was integrated into the cultural background of Japanese Americans.

Rev. Nakata’s research into one of the most sorrowful chapters in American history — the mass dislocation and detention of Japanese Americans — would take an unexpected turn when he was at the Buddhist Church of Sacramento in the early 2000s. As a new BCA Kaikyoshi minister, he was under the supervision of Rev. Bob Oshita, the legendary and now BCA Minister Emeritus. Rev. Oshita, along with his wife, Rev. Patti Oshita, currently serve as the chaplains of the California State Assembly.

At a memorial service Rev. Nakata conducted, he said the Issei individual had sacrificed a lot because of the internment.

“The Nisei children questioned me — ‘How do you know about the difficulties?’ I was shocked,” he recalled.



Above, Rev. Nakata stands before a guard tower at Heart Mountain in Wyoming in 2018. At right, he and his daughter Akika bow their heads in gassho in 2019 at Topaz in central Utah.

### FYI

Fresno Betsuin interim Rimban Rev. Kazuaki Nakata is leading a pilgrimage to the Rohwer and Jerome internment camps in Arkansas on Sept. 17-19. For more information, contact Rev. Nakata at [rev.kaznakata@gmail.com](mailto:rev.kaznakata@gmail.com)

“The next of kin, the children, said, ‘Without knowing or going to the camps, how do you know?’ Because they, as Nisei, also experienced the camps.

“So, I really didn’t know,” he continued. “Without going to these locations (internment camps), how can I reassure them? My knowledge was only from books.”

That criticism — whether it was intended to or not — jumpstarted Rev. Nakata’s visits to the internment camp sites, beginning with Poston in 2006. He traveled to the Arizona camp site during the blazing heat of summer and recalled dodging scorpions while wearing sandals.

Since then, he’s made pilgrimages every year, except during the pandemic, when travel was on hold. He’s led groups of Sangha members, mainly from Central California churches and temples,

“I realized that people died during World War II and in the camps, including a lot of babies,” he said. “So I conduct memorial services for them.”

He’s since visited all 10

of the U.S. War Relocation Authority’s mass incarceration camps as well as the camp in Santa Fe, New Mexico, which was run by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service or the U.S. Army.

Rev. Nakata’s next pilgrimage will be to the Rohwer and Jerome camps in Arkansas on Sept. 17-19. That pilgrimage has attracted widespread interest beyond Central California Sangha members. Others, from the Bay Area and Northern California, have signed up.

Unlike most of his other trips by car, he’ll be flying to nearby Little Rock, Arkansas, leading a group of Sangha members whose parents and grandparents were sent to the Arkansas camps.

Rev. Nakata fully realizes he can’t begin to comprehend what the internees experienced, but he says the camp visits — at the very least — give him an inkling of how the internees lived in the harsh environment. He has visited the camp sites in snowy winters to blazing hot summers, complete with thunderstorms and unbearable humidity to the dust blowing in the harsh winds.

“I try to imagine how people were living at the camp sites,” he said. “If there was a fishing pond (as was the case at Jerome), I try to imagine fish jumping in the pond.”

He tries to go at least every year to a different camp. And, in the case of the Amache detention camp in Colorado,



Fresno Betsuin interim Rimban Rev. Kazuaki Nakata has visited all 10 U.S. government internment camps that housed more than 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II, leading pilgrimages and conducting memorial services over the years. At left, Rev. Nakata led a pilgrimage to Manzanar in California’s Inyo County in 2023 with Fresno Betsuin Sangha members, shown at left. From left, the others are Rev. Nakata’s daughters, Kanon, Michilu and Akika and Rev. Nakata. Above, Rev. Nakata conducts a memorial service at the Tule Lake internment camp site in 2022. It was after the pandemic, but he and others were required to wear masks on the federal property. (Photos courtesy of Rev. Kazuaki Nakata)



he initially went there before it became a national park with an information center in March 2022.

There have been some memorable trips — like the time when he drove from Virginia to Arkansas with his daughter, who was 2 at the time, more than a decade ago. He didn’t check the weather and he ran into fierce thunderstorms — and there was a tornado, too.

He said he looks forward to each trip and wants to share the

Jodo Shinshu lessons.

“Jodo Shinshu is the teaching of interdependence,” he said. “So, even if the current generations, the fourth- or fifth-generation Japanese Americans, may not have heard anything about the camps from their grandparents or great-grandparents, they are connected to the past generations — and their difficulties. They should at least know about what their ancestors did, who worked hard to strive for a better life.”

## ROHWER/JEROME PILGRIMAGE 2025

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(2 nights)

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9/17—Fly to Little Rock  
9/18—Visit Museum and Rohwer  
9/19—Visit Jerome and return home

**If you are interested, please contact Rev. Kaz!**

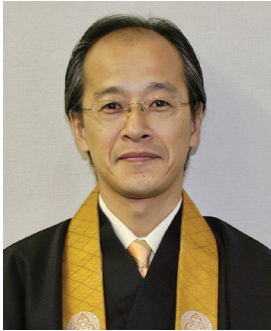
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or (424) 666-7101





# The Origin of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching — Part 3

*Editor’s note: This is the third of four articles on “The Origin of Jodo Shinshu Teaching” by Rev. Giei Sasaki that will appear in the Wheel of Dharma. Rev. Sasaki is currently the Director of the Jodo Shinshu Studies and Research Center in Kyoto, Japan.*



By Rev. Giei Sasaki  
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

Who, then, guided T’an-luan to the teaching of Amida Buddha? In the “Shoshinge,” there is a line that goes, “Tenjin bosatsu ron chuge.” There is also another similar line, which goes “Tenjin bosatsu zo ron setsu.”

Which line do you think comes first? If you confuse them, you will end up repeating them and the chanting of “Shoshinge” will not end. The answer is “Tenjin bosatsu zo ron setsu” followed by “Tenjin bosatsu ron chuge.”

The first line, “Tenjin

bosatsu zo ron setsu,” signifies that “Bodhisattva Vasubandhu composed a treatise (on Amida Buddha and the Buddha’s Pure Land).” (CWS I, p. 71, the original translation slightly edited) The second line, “Tenjin bosatsu ron chuge” explains that “T’an-luan created a commentary on the treatise of Bodhisattva Vasubandhu.” (CWS I, p. 72, the original translation slightly edited)

Therefore, it implies that T’an-luan was introduced to Amida Buddha’s teaching through Vasubandhu’s writings.

Vasubandhu lived in the northern area of India, which is located at the end of the 5,000-mile-long Silk Road connecting China and India. The exact years of Vasubandhu’s birth and death are not known, but they are believed to be around 400 and 480. On the other hand, those of T’an-luan are known to be 476 and 542.

Comparing the dates of the two figures, they are only a few decades apart. These two masters can be considered as contemporaries, but lived far apart from each other.

There are two surprising factors connecting them. One is how within such a short period of time, an assembly of nameless Buddhist priests

had travelled the life-threatening distance of 10,000 miles roundtrip between China and India in search of Buddhist scriptures. It is said that Vasubandhu’s works were among the writings that were brought to China.

The other factor was the comprehension of both Indian and Chinese languages. With Vasubandhu being from India, he spoke ancient Indian while T’an-luan, being from China, spoke classic Chinese. To overcome the language barrier, there must have been priests who were fluent in both languages, enabling T’an-luan to appreciate Vasubandhu’s writings.

Today, we have the internet and it has become an era of convenience. However, such things did not exist in those days. Meanwhile, Vasubandhu’s writings were translated and conveyed to T’an-luan. Upon reading them, T’an-luan wrote a commentary, all within less than half a century.

This miraculous accomplishment was realized in ancient China approximately 1,500 years ago.

I will not go into detail here, but Vasubandhu also made a great historic achievement. He established the foundation of the world’s oldest university, which is

Nalanda University. Its ruins have remained in India and its scale is mind-blowing.

Going back approximately 400 years, from the time of Vasubandhu in the southern area of India was a person who truly appreciated the Nembutsu. The line in “Shoshinge” reads “Ryuju daiji shutto se.” It is Nagarjuna. This line means that “The mahasattva Nagarjuna would appear in this world.” (CWS I, p. 71).

The exact dates of birth and death of Nagarjuna are also not known, but are believed to be sometime in the second and third centuries (circa 150-250), which was about 1,800 years ago.

Can you imagine what life was like back then? As a side note, people living in the Japanese archipelago during that time were illicitly hunting, using bronzeware, and may have been living in caves. It was when they began building home-like structures and rice paddy farms.

On the other hand, southern India was, at the time, well advanced. Gold coins from the western Roman Empire were discovered in the southern Indian stratum from Nagarjuna’s time, proving that southern India was trading with the western Roman Empire. In southern India,

there already existed a highly civilized society and that is how Nagarjuna’s writings were able to be passed down to us today without being lost.

But who then communicated the teaching of Amida Buddha to Nagarjuna? Maybe it would be clear if I said this person was born on April 8. It was Śakyamuni Buddha.

Hearing the Three Pure Land Sutras during services, what exactly are the three sutras? They are the Larger Sutra, Contemplation Sutra and Amida Sutra. The complete title of each sutra begins with “Bussetsu,” which is comprised of two kanji characters; “butsu” or Buddha and “setsu,” which means “preach.”

The sutras were sermons by Sakyamuni Buddha, and through these sutras, we hear the teaching of Amida Buddha. We have quickly covered the origin of the Jodo Shinshu teaching that began 2,500 years ago.

In terms of spatial distance, the teaching of Amida Buddha has travelled from India, China, Japan and on to the United States of America, covering a distance of over 15,000 miles. We cannot help but to feel the importance and significance of the historical and geographical depth of the transmission of the teaching.

## Aochi

Continued from Page 3

up knowing that my grandparents were incarcerated as children during World War II.

“In my history classes at school, I was surprised that not all of my classmates were aware of Executive Order 9066 and the wrongful incarceration of Japanese Americans.

“For the project, my Girl Scout sister and I created an educational Minecraft video that takes a narrated journey into the past, starting with the issuing of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066 and showing the forced evacuation of Japanese Americans from the West Coast and the harsh conditions in the incarceration camps. Additional teacher resources are posted on YouTube and Teachers Pay Teachers as a free resource for classrooms

nationwide.

“In a feedback survey, many students expressed their astonishment and concern that these events happened.

respect for all people, which will create a more peaceful society for everyone.

“Recently, I took action in my community when I wrote a

City Council had previously planned to create a Japanese American memorial, but it has been left to a vote for financial reasons. I hope that my voice,

in microbiology.

She is planning to pursue a career in the biotech field, where she hopes to help people around the world live

*“I am proud that I took action when I completed my Girl Scout Silver Award project. I am a fifth-generation Japanese American and grew up knowing that my grandparents were incarcerated as children during World War II .... For the project, my Girl Scout sister and I created an educational Minecraft video that takes a narrated journey into the past, starting with the issuing of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066 and showing the forced evacuation of Japanese Americans from the West Coast and the harsh conditions in the incarceration camps .... In a feedback survey, many students expressed their astonishment and concern that these events happened. My Girl Scout Silver Award project reminded me that it is never too late to speak up against past injustices.”*

— Jacqueline Aochi, San Jose Betsuin Buddhist Temple and 2025 Fred and Helen Nitta Scholarship Award recipient

My Girl Scout Silver Award project reminded me that it is never too late to speak up against past injustices. When students become aware of these injustices, they can gain a deeper understanding and

letter to the City of Sunnyvale Council Members to express my support for the construction of a Sunnyvale memorial dedicated to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. The

as well as others, will be heard in support of the memorial.

“With my Buddhist perspective, I know that things are always changing, but by keeping in mind Rennyo Shonin’s quote, “The Right Time Is Now,” I will have the confidence to embrace change, take action when needed, and be mindful and grateful for the present.”

Jacqueline will be attending the University of California, Santa Cruz to pursue a degree

healthier lives.

We look forward to her continued participation in the BCA through the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin.

She has a passion for growing succulents, so every time you view a succulent, think of Jacqueline and share her confidence in the teachings, her mindfulness of the present and gratitude for the past.

The FDSTL congratulates Jacqueline Aochi and all our 2025 high school graduates.

support the BCA

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ECOSANGHA PERSPECTIVES

# The Medical Model of Buddhism



By Rev. Don Castro  
BCA Minister Emeritus

Buddhism is based on a medical model. This is clearly seen in the Buddha’s first sermon (sutra), “Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma,” where he presents the Four Noble Truths.

In medical terms, they are: 1) symptom; 2) diagnosis; 3) prognosis; and 4) cure. I have heard it conjectured that these truths may have derived from Indian Ayurvedic medicine and been transmitted to ancient Greece by Buddhist monks, where they formed the basis of Western medical technique. Speculation on origins aside, the Buddha is often referred to as “The Great Physician” whose mission is essentially to identify the cause of pain and suffering (dukkha, Skt.) and bring about a cure.

By comparison, Jesus is also called “The Great Physician,” but only Buddhism is based on a medical model. The Judeo-Christian tradition is based on a legal model: The Covenant (contract law), The Ten Commandments, judgment, reward-and-punishment, are all legal terms.

Particularly, fundamentalists, who are extremely influential in American politics at present, believe God has a divine plan that is working itself out in history and will be resolved on Judgment Day. Such a belief avoids human responsibility for the environmental crisis since, ultimately, “It’s in God’s hands.”

The medical model of Buddhism, by contrast, is a path of personal responsibility. There is no God who will intervene to save us from our destructive actions. As Bud-



dhists, we begin our quest for liberation with the experience of “dukkha,” a Sanskrit word usually, and inadequately, translated as “suffering.”

While suffering is one type of dukkha, the term has a vastly broader meaning, including pain, dissonance, disharmony, etc. Dukkha is related to the English word “disease,” which relates well to our medical model and the often-heard statement, “Mother Earth is sick.”

Mother Earth is not just mildly sick, but is in distress, adding a great sense of urgency to the First Noble Truth of symptom. The cause of the crisis, the diagnosis, is generally obvious to anyone paying attention to environmental science and is extensively written about and broadcast in documentaries and the news. The major source of disagreement I’ve seen regarding the cause of the crisis is the role of overpopulation, a topic I intend to write about in a future article.

The Third Noble Truth, prognosis, directs us to the issue of sustainability, meaning the adoption of a lifestyle where all beings live in harmony with the resources of the Earth.

The “Earth Charter,” adopted in The Hague on June 29, 2000, states, “As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning .... Let ours be a time remembered for the

awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.” (Pope Francis’ “Praise Be to You” pages 139-140).

The issue of sustainability was adopted in recent years by the United Nations and constitutes the basis of its Sustainable Development Goals, which are a collection of 17 interconnected global goals designed to achieve a more sustainable future for all by 2030.

As for the prognosis for Mother Earth, I believe we must think a cure is still possible. Otherwise, there is no point in going on to the Fourth Noble Truth — the cure. Normally, the Fourth Noble Truth is presented as the Eightfold Path. I agree with many scholars who believe the Eightfold Path was added to the Four Noble Truths at a later date. Being practice-oriented, the Eightfold Path is not emphasized in our Jodo Shinshu tradition. However, all Buddhist schools, Jodo Shinshu included, adhere to the basic medical model.

If we examine the Fourth Noble Truth, cure, from a Shin perspective, it takes us back to the BCA EcoSangha Resolution adopted in 2015: “BE IT RESOLVED that each BCA temple be encouraged to adopt policies that promote an awareness of the profound implications of our behavior on future generations and to promote ecologically friendly behavior in the spirit of ‘mottainai.’”

This is why I have been writing so much about the meaning of mottainai — in order to get a visceral sense of what it means, for with the spirit of mottainai we get a healthy dose of environmental medicine: humility, reverence, harmony, self-restraint, sustainability, etc. We can’t do everything. We can’t even do much, but we can do our part. Remember, the cure is contagious.

# IBS Offers Online Master of Arts

By Rev. Gesshin Greenwood  
Communications and  
Admissions Director  
Institute of Buddhist Studies

The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) is pleased to announce that a new online Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies (MABS) has been approved by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

Applicants are welcome to apply for spring 2026 matricu-

lation at: [bit.ly/3SUe7Ib](https://bit.ly/3SUe7Ib)

The current in-person MABS provides students an opportunity to deeply engage with Buddhist history, thought, texts, and practices.


The new online version will share these goals. The mission of IBS is to provide graduate level education in the full breadth of the Buddhist tradition with specialized education supporting Pure Land and contemporary Shin Buddhist Studies, while advancing Jodo Shinshu Buddhist minis-

try and Buddhist chaplaincy.

Offering a Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies online increases the institution’s ability to meet its goal of creating an accessible learning environment, in which students can academically study Buddhism through distance education.


Additionally, the opportunity to offer this program in an online capacity increases the institute’s potential to reach broader audiences in

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(additional areas on back page)



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Kumagai

Continued from Page 1

ble. It is a cruel disease, not only for the person suffering from it, but for the family and caregivers as well.

As Dharma School students, we were taught that life is suffering and that life can be very hard at times. Taking care of a person with dementia definitely falls into this category. There is no caregiving manual and the disease can affect each individual so differently that it would be impossible to even consider making one.

The lesson of impermanence is constantly driven into us as we lose a part of the person whom we knew and loved each time that we see them. It took away our mother slowly, bit by bit. The person we knew and loved slowly changed into a stranger.

The principle of perspective was also a constant. We were constantly wrestling with her altered perceptions of reality. When she asked about her long deceased brother, we would reply that he’s doing fine. When she asked when she was going home, we would reply soon. When she asked why she couldn’t move back home, we would have stock photos on hand of a flooded attic. Were we lying? Yes. Were we being compassionate? Yes. Were we feeling guilty? Yes! Buddhism teaches compassion. However, compassion is very difficult to practice when barraged with crisis intervention, frustration and anger.

How can she not know that it’s evening and not time to wake up? How can she not understand not to walk with her broken knee cap? How can she not know who we are? We were desperate to seek answers to questions for which no answers existed.

Our mom did not display oppositional or aggressive



Mrs. Kinuko Hirata, the mother of Jeanne Kumagai, is shown above in 1987 and at left in 2020 at her 90th birthday. Mrs. Hirata was the Bomori (minister’s wife) of the late Rev. Satoshi Hirata, the first minister of the Orange County Buddhist Church. (Photos courtesy of Jeanne Kumagai)

behavior as so many people with dementia do. For family members dealing with that type of aggressive and angry dementia, the emotional toll would be much more magnified. We were lucky in this regard.

Buddhism also stresses the importance of gratitude and appreciation. Because life is hard, we truly recognize and appreciate when life is not.

Those of us who have experienced caring for a person with dementia understand the pureness and stability of the status quo. We can appreciate the good days because they are in such stark contrast to the many more bad days. We can

appreciate the present because we understand that no matter how cruel it may be, worse days are ahead for a person with dementia.

My friend and I would joke that what we thought was hard at the beginning, wasn’t so bad after all in comparison to where we were later. And, of course, this spiraling cycle would just continue. My catch phrase during this time was, “If mom is happy, we are happy.” It meant that everything, in that moment, was OK.

Then there’s the guilt. We wrestled with guilt at the beginning because we didn’t see how bad the situation was (after all, “denial land” is an easy place to be). We wrestled with guilt toward the end because we knew what needed to happen for this journey to end and it isn’t anything that anyone should wish for someone else. And, let’s face it; we wrestled

with guilt with every decision we made. Although we knew that all of our decisions were made with mom’s best interest and safety in mind, the guilt was ever present. How can it not be?

Upon the passing of my mom, both my daughter and my niece expressed their surprise that my sister and I did not appear to be very sad. We explained that because we lost a little part of her slowly, over time, our grief was a gradual process.

that life has to offer. Things can change in an instant. We all know that. Yet each time it occurs, it comes as a complete shock.

Couple this with the hard reality that dementia can happen to anybody. My mom was a woman who could sew a dress without a pattern from a magazine photo! She was so smart and active. So, how can we not live in gratitude and joy when life is good?

I have become a full believer in taking opportunities,

*As Dharma School students, we were taught that life is suffering and that life can be very hard at times. Taking care of a person with dementia definitely falls into this category. There is no caregiving manual and the disease can affect each individual so differently that it would be impossible to even consider making one. The lesson of impermanence is constantly driven into us as we lose a part of the person whom we knew and loved each time that we see them. It took away our mother slowly, bit by bit. The person we knew and loved slowly changed into a stranger.*

Although the end was sad, it was, truthfully, somewhat of a relief. It helped knowing that mom, on some level, also desired for her journey to end. No doubt that she would not have wanted to live like that. Dementia took away everything she knew, understood and loved.

I’m not sure how sharing my experiences will be of any benefit to anyone. However, I do know that I understand, more than I would like, how conflicted and difficult caring for someone with dementia can be.

I also believe that I have come out of this experience with more compassion, appreciation and gratitude for all

doing what you want while you can. No hesitations. No excuses. No waiting for a better time. Life is to be enjoyed to the fullest while we are able to do so. Each moment is truly something to appreciate and treasure.

In writing this article, the hardest part for me was to come up with a title. I didn’t want it to be something like “Buddhism and Dementia.” I don’t know enough about either of these topics to be worthy of a title like that! As I completed this essay, it became clearer to me that I have been changed by my experience with my mom’s dementia. It truly was, and continues to be, her final life lesson for me.

Rev. Briones

Continued from Page 2

come to our Betsuin.

I find my marriage with Nobuko (Higashi Kaikyoshi minister) to be very meaningful in that we can share our thoughts about the Nembutsu. It is through our relationship that I feel that I am on the Nembutsu path. It is through our deep discussions of our understanding of the Dharma during dinner or driving that I realize that I am neither a layman ... of course, not in the same profound sense that Shinran expressed himself.

You don’t have to be a minister to reflect upon Shinran’s words either. Are you so preoccupied with the frivolous stuff that you forget about finding the true self?

Priest or lay person, we cannot escape this mundane world. Even Shinran could not escape this reality. Shinran lived a life in clear violation of his vows. Although he continued to share

the Nembutsu teachings and wore priestly robes, he also got married and had a family. Shinran’s marriage and family life were definitely not something that monks were doing at that time.

everyday problems of survival.

Even getting old, sick, and yes, even death, are part of this mundane world, yet through self-reflection, through the Nembutsu teachings, we consider what is really important

*You don’t have to be a minister to reflect upon Shinran’s words either. Are you so preoccupied with the frivolous stuff that you forget about finding the true self? Priest or lay person, we cannot escape this mundane world. Even Shinran could not escape this reality. Shinran lived a life in clear violation of his vows. Although he continued to share the Nembutsu teachings and wore priestly robes, he also got married and had a family. Shinran’s marriage and family life were definitely not something that monks were doing at that time.*

Shinran Shonin showed us the way to live in this mundane world. And though Shinran lived almost 750 years ago, we are still plagued with the same

to us, and aspire to understand and seek ultimate truths which remain constant in spite of ever changing conditions of our mundane world.

Sasaki

Continued from Page 1

by warm, caring individuals who selflessly gave their time and energy to the temple community.

How lucky was I? However, sadly, I didn’t appreciate this life situation. Somehow, I felt entitled. And unfortunately, this sense of entitlement has carried on throughout my life. Needless to say, this is regrettable and embarrassing to admit.

My parents, the late Rev. LaVerne and Helen Sasaki had a favorite Japanese phrase, “okagesamade.” It means that my life and situation are only possible because of countless people, animals and other living things. As an ordinary foolish person, I’m only aware of a tiny fraction of what I’ve been given.

I started to study Bud-

dhism and Jodo Shinshu more seriously in 2021, when Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi asked me to become a minister’s assistant at the Buddhist Temple of San Diego. Since then, I’ve felt increasingly humbled by our Nembutsu teachers and teachings. At age 59, I’m now an aspirant for Tokudo in Japan in October.

Deep down, do I feel accepted and worthy? Can I confidently face loss and uncertainties that are around the corner? The Buddha-Dharma and Jodo Shinshu path can help us resolve these questions. We can come to realize how rich and precious life is.

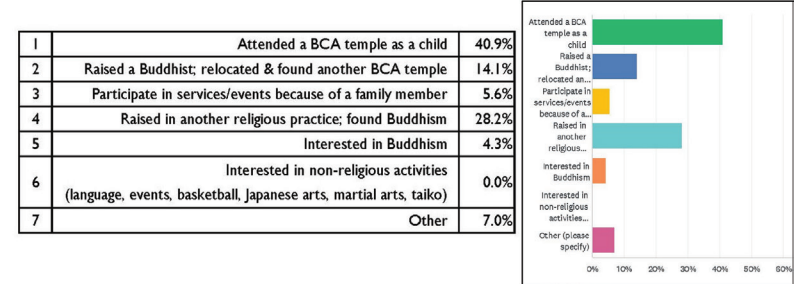
Our family decided to give to Dharma Forward to help ensure that more people and future generations are able to encounter the teachings. Okagesamade, we’re fortunate to be able to “give back” to a small degree.



President’s Message

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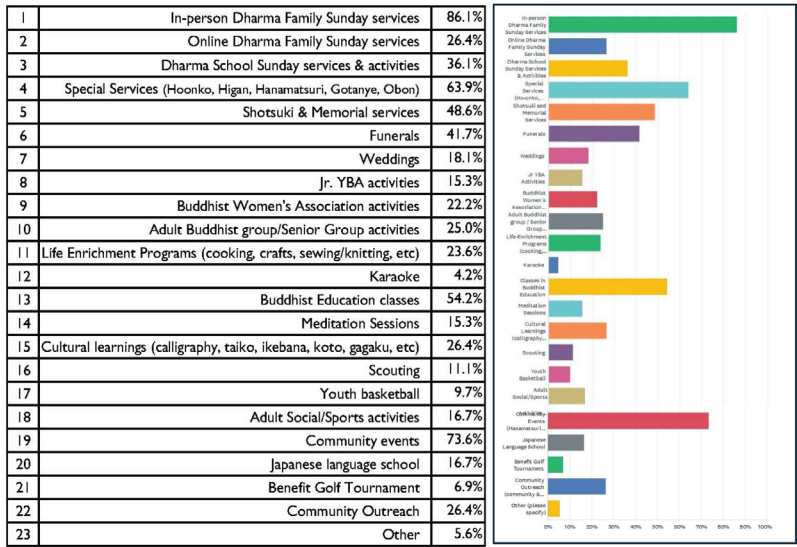
The responses to the question about being a member, or supporter of a BCA temple reflects that many have a long history with a BCA temple. Understanding the sample population that responded to the survey, 55% of respondents grew up in a BCA temple and continue to belong to those temples or have joined another BCA Sangha. Another 38% are those who have “crossed over” from other religious faiths; some because of a family member who is a Jodo Shinshu follower and/or because of an interest in Buddhism.



Select the activities that are most important to you.

The survey sought to identify what is important to each respondent. Key takeaways included the following offerings from our temples and churches:

- In-person Sunday services
- Community events (cultural festivals)
- Special services (Hoonko, Higan, Hanamatsuri, Obon, Eitaikyo, Bodhi Day, etc.)
- Buddhist education classes
- Funerals and Shotsuki/memorial services



As stated earlier in this article, the survey provides important data points for future decisions for the BCA and for each of our local temples and churches. The survey also points to the need for a more rigorous survey to poll those who did not respond to this survey. Will those responses

IBS MABS

Continued from Page 12

diverse educational contexts, through distance education, without students having the added expense of moving to the Bay Area. The online course will pro-

be similar or will they uncover missing data points that may inform a different direction for the BCA? For example, the sample of respondents is missing many younger members of our sanghas. Will their responses alter our understanding of the importance of youth activities, a greater interest in the social impact and community outreach? Will the input from a larger sample of those who have found Jodo Shinshu Buddhism also change the importance of the Japanese cultural traditions that we have within our temples and churches? These are just a few of the questions that arose as I analyzed the data. What the survey does

uncover is the importance of our Jodo Shinshu traditions: hearing the Dharma from our ministers regularly at in-person Sunday services, and funerals and memorial services, including monthly Shotsuki services. It also uncovers how much we seek community. Our institutions such as Buddhist Women’s Associations, Dharma Schools, Adult Buddhist Associations (ABA), Jr. Young Buddhist Associations (YBA) provide a way to promote the “belonging” factor within our temples and churches, an important aspect

of creating a culture of welcoming. We often do not step back and see that the 125-year history of BCA has allowed the development and flourishing of these organizations. And despite the perspective that these can become “exclusive” and not “inclusive,” their presence is a statement to our evolution as

vide students an opportunity to deeply engage Buddhist history, thought, texts, and practices as a foundation for further academic study at the doctoral level or professional service in a religious community, the nonprofit sector or other areas. The program is built on a foundation of academic

an organization that has much to look forward to in our shared future. Our Shared Future - BCA’s Strategic Plan Update and a Culture of Philanthropy As we look forward to this shared future, the current work undertaken by the Vision and Strategic Planning (VSP) Committee is setting the framework for that future. John Arima, of the Mountain View Buddhist Temple, as VSP Chair, and Andrea Chapman, of Ekoji Buddhist Temple, as Vice Chair, have been instrumental in providing the leadership to ensure that the Strategic Plan update approved at this year’s National Council Meeting is a continuing conversation that makes the plan a living document. Among the five priority strategies is one that is important for our shared future. It is to pursue financial capability. The first goal within that strategy is to: Establish fundraising programs into perpetuity. As the Dharma Forward campaign is nearing its completion at the end of this year, the success of establishing a robust financial capability for BCA requires the importance of having a “culture of philanthropy” and the systems to ensure that such a culture is supported. The Dharma Forward campaign is the first step in affirming this culture of philanthropy. We are seeing the fruits of the campaign’s success in the many projects and initiatives that have been supported by Dharma Forward donations. The recent July 2025 letter headlined, “We’re So Close...help us cross the finish line!” summarizes those projects. As of the end of July 2025, we have received over \$13 million in donations with less than \$2 million to go to meet the campaign’s target of \$15 million. If you have not yet donated, please consider joining the many others who have pushed the campaign to this milestone. And if you have been a contributor to the campaign, please consider reinforcing BCA’s “Culture of Philanthropy” with a pledge donation before the end of the year — that pledge offered over your specified timeframe will mean that your total pledge is counted in the Dharma Forward campaign totals. Pledge forms are available by contacting Michiko Inanaga at: minanaga@bcahq.org. Stay tuned for updates on the various ways that your Dharma Forward contributions are making a difference across the BCA and for your temple and church in particular. Buddhist studies in a practitioner-friendly environment, allowing for intellectual growth connected to communities of practice and vocation. Interested parties are encouraged to reach out IBS Admissions Director Rev. Gesshin Greenwood at gesshin@shin-ibs.edu.

Filmmaking

Continued from Page 5

the industry offers. Glen Tao, the chair of the BCA Film & Video Committee, presented “Photography and Videography,” a very practical and easy to understand grounding in the basics of filming. This was an excellent presentation for those ready to take heed to the Ming Lai’s encouragement to get started. Tao covered the crucial role that sound plays in creating a satisfying movie-watching experience. He discussed the importance of composition, thinking carefully about what is in the frame while filming. Additionally, he discussed the emotional impact that different kinds of shots (long shots, medium shots, closeups, etc.) can have in conveying a filmmaker’s vision. Topics like the importance of camera stabilization and how to effectively use supporting footage to create richer stories was also covered. Tao’s presentation tied together all of the topics covered at the event and provided beginners with a highly approachable starting point. What the “Behind the Scenes: an Insider Look Into Movie Making” event made clear is that the BCA contains a deep well of Sangha members who are skilled in the various aspects of filmmaking. The hope is we discover even more of this talent with future events. It was difficult to leave this event without thinking that maybe Rev. Harada’s dream of Jodo Shinshu films being on the big screen becomes a reality soon.

Center of Buddhist Education | Living the Dharma Committee

## Finding My Path as a Young Adult With Cancer



Guest Speaker

**Paul Daisuke Goodman**

Creative Director,  
Eight East Productions

Paul Daisuke Goodman is the creative director at Eight East Productions and the writer and director of the award-winning film, No No Girl. He is also an editor at the popular online Buddhist school, Everyday Buddhist and has contributed to publications such as Lion’s Roar and Pacific Citizen. Paul is a three time cancer survivor and began making feature films after his initial diagnosis in 2016.

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# 今月の法話

「あつがいのいのち」—おかげさまで—



Rev. Yuki Himeji

ロサンゼルス別院

開教使 姫路 雄紀

皆さま、こんにちは。このたびロサンゼルス別院に開教使として赴任いたしました、姫路雄紀（ひめじゆうき）と申します。この場をお借りして、自己紹介を兼ねつつ、私がかつまで歩んでくることができた「おかげさま」のご縁について、お話しさせていただきます。

私は日本の秋田県出身です。秋田は北海道のすぐ南に位置する雪深い地域で、自然豊かで四季の移ろいがはっきりとしています。春は桜が川沿いに咲き誇り、夏は深い緑が山々を覆い、秋は黄金色の稲穂が一面に広がり、冬は雪が音を吸い込むように降り積もります。その中で育った私は、自然の厳しさと恵みの両方を受けて成長しました。秋田は温泉や美味しいお酒でも知られています。特に有名なのは忠犬ハチ公、そして「ナマハゲ」という伝説行事です。ナマハゲは鬼のような姿をして大晦日の夜に「泣く子はいねが」「怠け者はいねが」と叫びながら家々を回ります。幼い頃の私はその姿に恐怖で泣き出したのですが、今振り返れば、そこには「怠けずにしっかり生きなさい」という地域全体の願いが込められていました。叱られながらも守られている、怖さの奥に慈しみがある——そうした経験は、のちに仏教の教えに出遇ったときに深く響き合うこととなりました。

私たちは、妻のキャンディス慧弥（えみ）、娘のキャサリン那由（なゆ）、そして犬のプアレアと一緒に、2025年7月11日にロサンゼルスに到着しました。プアレアはボストンテリアで、もうすぐ3歳になります。飛行機での長旅を無事に乗り越えて、今はすっかり家族の中心として元気に暮らしています。妻は幼い頃から大学までテニスを続けてきました。今は「ロサンゼルスではピククルボールに挑戦したい」と楽しみにしています。

娘はフラダンス、チア、ヒップホップ、テニス、フィギュアスケートなどを経験し、現在はゴルフに夢中です。カリフォルニアはゴルフ環境に恵まれているので、家族で一緒に楽しみたいと思っています。



私は大学まで野球を続け、ピッチャーとしてプレーしていました。野球は個人の力だけでは勝てないスポーツです。仲間、監督、家族、応援してくれる人々——数えきれないほどの支えがあつて初めて一つの試合が成り立ちます。特にピッチャーというポジションは、一見すると孤独にマウンドに立っているようですが、バックで守る仲間がいるからこそ全力で投げられます。もし野手の支えがなければ、どんな好投も報われることはありません。勝利の喜びの背後には必ず仲間の力があり、敗北の悔しさも共に涙を流すことで癒やされました。そうした経験を通して、人は決して一人で生きられないこと、支え合いの中にこそ自分の歩みがあることを学びました。今振り返れば、この体験はそのまま私を仏縁に導いてくれたと感じています。

日本では私は「ナユタ指圧治療院」という施術所を営み、10年以上にわたり国家資格を持った指圧師として活動してきました。患者さんの身体に触れる中で学んだのは、人は体だけでなく心の支えを必要としているということです。言葉を交わすうちに涙を流される方もおられ、痛みの背後には孤独や不安が潜んでいることを感じまし



Rev. Himeji and family

た。一方、妻は「キャンディーズ（Candy's）」というお店を経営し、アイシングクッキー教室やネイルサロン、パーティーアレンジメントを行っていました。そこでは「きれい」「かわいい」「おいしい」といった小さな喜びが、人の心を温かくし、笑顔を生み出す力になるのを実感しました。私たち夫婦は方向性は違つても、人を支えたい、人を笑顔にしたいという願いを共有してきました。この経験は、これから地域やお寺での活動に必ず生かされると信じています。

私はもともと寺院の出身ではありませんが、妻の父が山口県の真宗寺院の長男である縁から、浄土真宗のみ教えにふれるようになりました。そして「姫路家」に婿入りしました。この姫路家には長い開教の歴史があります。明治33年、13代目が本願寺からハワイへ正式に派遣された4人目の開教使となり、その後、祖父の代まで4代にわたりハワイや北米でご奉仕しました。その中には私の大叔父にあたる姫路義昭（ひめじぎしやう）も含まれ、彼は1960年から1968年までロサンゼルス別院に奉職していました。結婚後、こうした歴史を知るたびに「もしかすると次は自分の番ではないか」という思いが強くなりました。祖父の代で一度途切れた開教使の流れを私が再び継ぎたい——そう決意して今日を迎えています。

渡米前は「何を準備すればよいのか」「果たして生活を始められるのか」と不安でいっぱいでした。しかし、初めてロサンゼルスの自宅に着いたとき、驚きと感動に包まれました。家具や食器、タオルに至るまで準備されており、犬用の器やぬいぐるみまで置いてありました。そして、私が大ファンであるドジャースのユニフォームまでご用意いただいていたのです。その温かいお心に触れ、心の底から感謝の気持ちが溢れました。見ず知らずの私たちのために、これほどまでに準備をしてくださった方々がいる。そのこと自体が「おかげさま」という言葉を身をもって教えてくださいました。

日本語には「おかげさまで」という美



しい言葉があります。日常会話でもよく用いられる表現ですが、その背景には深い意味が込められています。英語では「Thanks to you」「I appreciate it」などと訳されることが多いですが、「おかげさまで」には「見えないところでの支えやはからいのおかげで、今の私がある」というニュアンスがあります。自分の力で生きているのではなく、無数のご縁の中に生かされているという感覚です。仏教に照らせば、それはまさに「阿弥陀さまのおはたらき」によるものです。阿弥陀さまは、私たちが準備できていないといまいと、その前にすでにすべてを整えてくださっています。浄土という行き先、南無阿弥陀仏という喚び声、そして歩むべき道——これらはすべて、凡夫である私をこそ救おうと願われたご本願のおはたらきにほかなりません。私がここに立っているのは、自分の努力や能力だけの結果ではなく、数えきれないほどのご縁とおはたらきのおかげです。「おかげさまで」という言葉は、そのまま「阿弥陀さまのおかげさま」と受けとめられるのではないのでしょうか。

正直に言えば、責任の重さに不安を感じることもあります。しかし、先人のご苦労、ご門徒の皆さまの支え、そして阿弥陀さまのおはたらきに生かされながら、一步一步歩んでまいりたいと願っています。これまでこのお寺を支えてこられた開教使の先生方、ご門徒の皆さま、そして先人たちに心から感謝を申し上げます。あらためまして、「おかげさまで」、私はここにいます。どうぞこれからもよろしく願ひいたします。ともにお念仏のみ教えを歩んでまいりましょう。

合掌 南無阿弥陀仏

前ページ「浄土真宗の源流」の続き  
「正信偈」の後半に入ると、阿弥陀さまのおところが、釈尊から、インドの龍樹さま、天親菩薩さまに、次いで、5000マイルのシルクロードを経て、中国の曇鸞さま、道綽さま、善導大師さまに、そして、日本海を渡って、日本の源信さま、源空さまへと伝わっていることが記されています。このようにして、「わたし親鸞は、お念仏の教えを聞かせていただいた」と喜んでいらつしやるのが「正信偈」であるのです。私たちは、このような「正信偈」をお書きになった親鸞さまのおところを受け継いで、この「正信偈」の続きを紡いでゆくということになるでしょう。

（終）



# 法 輪

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## 総長メッセージ

「あちちと思えばまたこちち」

米国仏教団総長 原田 マービン



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada

私は浅原才市（あさはらさいいち）さんという妙好人の詩がとても好きです。妙好人とは、念仏を通じて浄土真宗の深いお念仏の心を体現する人々のことをいいます。多くは在家の人々で、学問のない人も多かったのですが、深い宗教的理解に至った人々です。その中でも、才市さんはおそらく最も有名な一人です。

何千首にも及ぶ才市さんの詩の中に、次のような詩があります。

わたしやほんにしやわせもの  
かつてきままだに浄土にまいる  
あちちと思えばまたこちち  
あちちと思えばまたこちち  
あちちと思えばまたこちち  
あちちと思えばまたこちち  
なむあみだぶつ

多くの人は、浄土を「死後に行くところ」とだけ思っています。けれども、才市さんはそれ以上の意味を感じ取っていたようです。才市さんにとって浄土とは、真実の世界、法の世界、南無阿弥陀仏の世界で、この世での人生において、感ぜられる世界であったといえます。

しかし、才市さんは「自分が浄土の仏である」といったような傲慢なことを言っているではありません。むしろ、浄土とは逆の、この世、すなわち迷いの世界、無明の世界、自己中心の世界、貪りや怒りの世界をも深く感じ取っているのです。

才市さんは日々の生活の中で、二つの世界を深く、時には鋭く感じ取っています。あるときには、花や自然の中に浄土を見、あるいは本堂でお経をとなえるときに浄土を感じ、食前の合掌の中に浄土を味わっておられたようです。

同時にまた、日々の生活の中で、自らの貪りや怒りや無明がわき起こる娑婆世界も深く感じ取っていました。世の中の争いの中、人々の苦しむ顔、そして自分自身の顔の中にもそれを見ておられました。

しかしそのような娑婆の世界の中にありながらも、自己中心を超えた一如の世界、大いなる智慧と慈悲の世界、仏の世界を自分の周囲にも、自分の内にも感じていたのです。

浄土と娑婆の二つの世界を感じ取ることは、才市さんにとって日常の大きな喜びでした。もし娑婆世界だけしか見なかったなら、「なぜ私はこの苦しみと悲しみに満ちた世に生まれたのか」と絶望や苦悩の中に沈んでしまっただかもしれません。

けれども才市さんは、絶望も悲観もしていません。なぜなら、自己中心を超えた精神世界、すなわち浄土が心に開かれていたからです。浄土の光は、娑婆世界という闇と苦悩をも示すと同時に、明るく生き生きとした浄土の世界をも心に照らし出してくれるのです。

私たちもまた、才市さんの深い宗教性が表れた詩に表現されているように、日常の中で直面する苦悩の娑婆世界と、智慧と慈悲に満ちた浄土の世界、この二つの深い現実を感じ取ることができるようになると思います。その浄土は私たちの人生を照らし、真実の喜びを与えてくれます。

これから仏法を聴聞し続け、心に念仏をいただいていきましよう。私たちもまた、「あちちと思えばまたこちちら、あちちと思えばまたこちち」と言えるようになることでしょう。

## 布教研究会がローダイで開催

8月19日から21日にかけて布教研究会が行われ、開教使および開教使補ら34名（ハワイからの2名を含む）が集った。



Fuken at Lodi

今回は北加地区がホストを務め、ローダイ市のフェアフィールド・イン&スイーツを会場として開催された。

BSなど各団体・委員会からの報告がなされたほか、開教使の連続研修会、BCAガイドブック、9月に京都で行われる得度についても話し合われた。

20日・21日には、キリスト教の聖職者でサクラメント市カイザー・パーマネンテ病院のスピリチュアルケア・マネージャーを務めるブルゴス・エリアス博士による「宗教者のカウンセリング」に関する対面講義と、

龍谷大学真宗学教授・鍋島直樹師による「浄土真宗とパストラルケア―親鸞聖人における死と大悲―」の録画講義があり、参加者は活発に意見を交換した。

また、今回の研究会では、7月にロサンゼルス別院に赴任した姫路雄紀師が紹介され、オープニングサービスにおいて法話をお取次ぎした。



Fuken at Lodi

## 浄土真宗の源流

【全4回連載 最終回】  
本願寺派司教 佐々木 義英



Rev. Giei Sasaki

最後に忘れてはならない重要なことがあります。それは、どうして釈尊が、阿弥陀さまの教えをお説きになったのかということです。その答えは、阿弥陀さ

まの本願の中にあります。本願とは、阿弥陀さまがさとりを開いて仏となる前、法蔵という名の菩薩であったときに立てられた誓いのことです。全部で48の誓いをお立てになっっています。その17番目の願いには、次のように誓われています。「私がはれてさとりを開くことができたら、この世でさとりを開くことができないものを救い取り、お念仏ひとつで浄土に生まれさせ、必ず私と同じようにさとりを開かせたい。どうか他の仏がたよ、自らの力で煩惱を断ちきることができずに苦しんでいる人々のために、このようなはたらきをする私がいることを、あちこちの世界で説き広めて欲しい」という願いです。

釈尊は、かつて阿弥陀さまが法蔵菩薩であったときに立てられていた本願に忠じて、その教えをお説きになっているということなのです。そうすると、浄土真宗の源流は、どこにあるということになるでしょうか。それは、まさしく阿弥陀さまの本願、阿弥陀さまの願いにあったということになるでしょう。

阿弥陀さまは、釈尊を窓口にして、ご自身のことを私たちに知らせていらっしゃるということです。そして、釈尊は、阿弥陀さまの願いに突き動かされるようにして、私たちに阿弥陀さまの教えをお説きくださっていたということです。皆さんが拝読されている「正信偈」は、実は、親鸞さまが浄土真宗の教えに出会われるまでのすべてが記されているのです。

「正信偈」は「帰命無量寿如来南無不可思議光」とお念仏から始まります。ここには、お念仏を申したいという親鸞さまのお姿を見ることが出来ます。「正信偈」の前半は、まず、阿弥陀さまの本願のおこころが記されています。それは「浄土真宗の源流」が、阿弥陀さまがお立てになった本願にあるということが示されているということです。そして、その本願のおこころが、今から2500年前にインドにお生まれになった釈尊へと受け継がれていることが記されています。 次ページへ続く