



WHEEL OF DHARMA

Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America



Grateful Crane Ensemble performers, from left, Merv Maruyama, Keiko Kawashima, Haruye Ioka and Ping Wu, perform the BCA-commissioned "Living Gratitude" at the National Council Meeting banquet in Sacramento in 2024. (Courtesy of Catherine Fujimori)

BCSF, San Jose to Host Grateful Crane Shows

Ensemble's 'Living Gratitude' Is Musical Journey Celebrating BCA's 125 Years

By Julie Yumi Hatta

Buddhist Church of San Francisco
and Adrienne Reiko Iwanaga
San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin

The acclaimed Grateful Crane Ensemble will present a musical program titled "Living Gratitude" — a celebration of BCA's 125-year history — at one Bay District and one Coast District temple.

"Living Gratitude" will be presented at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco on Saturday, Nov. 15, and at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin's on Sunday, Nov. 16.

Prices for both performances are

Dharma
Forward

the same: \$50 for pre-ordered bento lunch and show, \$25 for show only, and free to youth 18 and under. San Francisco has a shuttle bus option from the Japan Center parking lot.

The performances are made possible by a grant from BCA's Dharma Forward. For more information about Dharma Forward, go to: bit.ly/4nsmfNg

"It's 125 years of BCA history told through captivating story-

telling and the singing of favorite Japanese, American and Buddhist songs," said the show's writer, Soji Kashiwagi, the Executive Producer for the Los Angeles-based Grateful Crane Ensemble.

"The show is seen through the eyes of the Yamashita family as we follow their Jodo Shinshu journey through pre-war life on the farm, life in camp and the difficult life they lived after camp, where they stayed in Buddhist church hostels and struggled to rebuild their lives and temples after the war."

The Grateful Crane Ensemble was founded in 2001 to inspire

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Mourning for America

Editor's note: Rev. Blayne Higa is the minister of the Kona Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Kealahou on the Big Island of Hawaii and serves as Director of the Buddhist Study Center in Honolulu. The following is the full text of his Dharma message on Sept. 14. The Wheel of Dharma is reprinting the message with Rev. Higa's permission.



By Rev. Blayne Higa
Kona Hongwanji
Buddhist Temple

Rev. Blayne Higa

Good morning. I stand before you with a heavy heart. Earlier this week, we witnessed yet another act of political

Continued on Page 10

Why We Support Dharma Forward

Editor's note: The Dharma Forward campaign needs your support to reach its goal of \$15 million. To underscore the campaign's importance, the BCA Endowment Foundation asked Sangha members why they are choosing to support Dharma Forward. The following testimonial is from Jim Pollard and Janis Hirohama, Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC) members since 2006. Both have served on the OCBC Board of Directors and are certified Minister's Assistants. Hirohama is currently a student at IBS. To donate, go to bca.kindful.com

By Jim Pollard and Janis Hirohama
Orange County Buddhist Church

From long ago to the present day, the genuine Dharma has been transmitted by a

Continued on Page 11

2026 FBWA Conference Set in SD

By Ralph Honda

Wheel of Dharma Correspondent

"To Remember As We Build For Tomorrow" is the theme for the Federation Buddhist Women's Association (FBWA) 48th National Conference.

The conference will take place Oct. 2-4, 2026, at the DoubleTree Hotel in San Diego, California. The theme's Japanese translation is "Kako wo Omoi, Asu wo Hiraku."

The Southern District Buddhist Women's Association (SDBWA) extends an invitation to women of the BWA chapters, temple Sanghas, including men, to attend the confer-



Rev. Yuika Hasabe

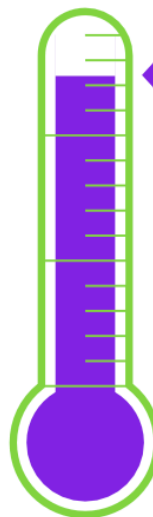
ence. Rev. Dr. Kenji Aka-hoshi, BCA Minister Emeritus and former resident minister of the Buddhist Temple of San Diego, will deliver the keynote address in English. Rev. Yuika Hasebe, Rimban (chief minister) of the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin in Honolulu, will be the Japanese keynote speaker.

Presented biannually, the conference will bring together 300

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Dharma Forward Campaign

\$15,000,000



Raised
\$13,195,823

As of Aug. 31, 2025, the Dharma Forward campaign has raised 87.97% of its \$15 million goal. (Courtesy of BCAEF)

BISHOP’S MESSAGE

For 75 Years, Something Wonderful and Great Has Been Transmitted

Editor’s note: This article is based on the speech that Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada gave at the BCA’s Southern District Jr. Young Buddhist League (YBL) conference banquet on Aug. 30 at the Kellogg West Conference Center and Hotel at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, in Pomona, California. The Wheel of Dharma is reprinting the edited transcript of the speech with the permission of Rev. Harada.

By Rev. Marvin Harada
Bishop of the BCA



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada addresses the 75th Southern District Jr. Young Buddhist League conference on Aug. 30 at Cal Poly Pomona. The decorations represent dust balls from the Studio Ghibli classic, “My Neighbor Totoro.” (Courtesy of Rev. Kory Quon)

There is the possibility — for some of you Jr. Young Buddhist League (YBL) members here tonight — that your great-grandparents could have attended the first conference in 1950.

It is also very likely that your grandparents might have attended and it is very, very likely that your parents or one of your parents attended.

It is even possible that your parents met either at this YBL conference or in a different district or at their local temple, and that you have your life today because of that encounter. I met my own wife from our local temple in Eastern Oregon, the Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple.

I started serving at the Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC) as a minister in 1986.

I remember very vividly that Cindie Nishimoto Nishida, Jeffrey’s mother, was the chairperson of the conference that OCBC hosted in 1988, and she did a terrific job. Now, her son, Jeffrey, is the outgoing President of Southern District (SD) Jr. YBL.

Shortly after I became a minister at OCBC and in the Southern District, Rev. George Matsubayashi handed over the role of ministerial adviser for the Jr. YBL to me. He had done it for 16 years or more. I did it for something like 15 or 16 years as well, and it was a real joy to be a part of the YBL program.

Over the years, as a

minister, I have conducted weddings for young couples who met through YBL. Their bridesmaids and groomsmen were their friends from YBL. Their wedding receptions were like mini YBL conferences.

I have also conducted funerals and memorial services for many of the grandparents and parents of Jr. YBL members over those many years as well.

Believe it or not, I can remember when Rev. Kory Quon, the Resident Minister at the Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, was in the YBL. Rev. Kory’s wife, Kim, was SD Jr. YBL President. To see him as a minister now is a

wonderful thing. To see people like Michiko Inanaga, who was also SD Jr. YBL President years ago, now working for the BCA is also very gratifying. Michiko’s husband, Glenn Inanaga, who I believe was SD Jr. YBL Vice President when she was SD Jr. YBL President, is the BCA President-elect and will take office next year.

The Southern District has continued strongly for 75 years. From the YBL, we have come to receive ministers, BCA presidents, temple presidents, Dharma School teachers, leaders and dedicated members. Something has been transmitted over those 75 years. Something has been handed down from one generation to the next generation. I once watched a wonderful music video by the amazing cellist, Yo-Yo Ma, in which

Continued on Page 14

MINISTER’S MESSAGE

‘Something Changed Within Me’



By Rev. Harry Gyoko Bridge
Buddhist Church of Oakland

I was recently reminded of a conversation I had during my Tokudo ordination training session in 2004.

I was in my early 30s and studying at Ryukoku University in Kyoto after graduation from the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) in Berkeley, California. Most of my roommates were in their 20s and were from temple families. It was a few days into the 10-day session and we had been gradually getting to know each other. They found out that I had been a musician, but left to study Buddhism and become a minister. Several of them were wondering what I was thinking because they had to become ministers, but

wanted to do other things! I don’t think I had a good answer at the time. But thinking about it now, it makes me think back even further to 1995 — 30 years ago.

I was still living in Massachusetts and, at some point over the summer, I decided to quit my band Jiggle the Handle and move to California to attend IBS. It didn’t happen in a vacuum, of course. The band wasn’t doing too well — we had difficulty finding the right drummer and not so many people were coming to the shows. But my interest in Buddhism was also deepening.

As I mentioned in my “Coffee Dharma” article in the November 2023 Wheel of Dharma, I had spent a couple of years scouring bookstores (both new and used) for books on Buddhism.

I remember one gig, in particular, at a club called the Living Room in Providence, Rhode Island. If you were in a band, you had to arrive around 7 p.m. to load in your equipment, then do a soundcheck (if you were lucky), then wait another couple of hours until showtime, which

was never earlier than 10 p.m. and often later.

I had been to a bookstore earlier in the day and could hardly wait for my soundcheck to end so I could go back to the car and sit and read my new book.

I used to live to play music. Now, I lived to investigate and explore Buddhism. I remember mentioning to my guitarist later that night that I was thinking about leaving the band and he understood — he could see a change in me.

So what changed? Obviously, my priorities had changed. Music was the only thing that I had really loved ever since childhood and, in a way, I was living my dream playing in a band.

But the dream changed. As much as I loved music and playing, I was also very insecure. I was almost completely self-taught and I knew that there was a lot about music that I didn’t know. I also realized that I was just playing other people’s music. I had never written a complete song by myself. But Buddhism was

Continued on Page 8

13. Publication Title Wheel of Dharma		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below 10/01/2025	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)			
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	8260	8260
	(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	146	146
	(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®		
	(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)		
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		8406	8406
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541		
	(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies included on PS Form 3541		
	(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)		
	(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)		
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4))		0	0
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)		8406	8406
g. Copies not Distributed (See instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))			
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		8406	8406
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)			

* If you are claiming electronic copies, go to line 16 on page 3. If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17 on page 3.

UNITED STATES
POSTAL SERVICE®

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation
(All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title
Wheel of Dharma08/28/2025

2. Publication Number
017-000

3. Filing Date
08/28/2025

4. Issue Frequency
Monthly

5. Number of Issues Published Annually
12

6. Annual Subscription Price
\$12.00

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®)
Buddhist Churches of America
2140 Durant Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94704

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer)
Buddhist Churches of America
2140 Durant Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94704

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)
Publisher (Name and complete mailing address)
Rev. Marvin Harada, Bishop
Buddhist Churches of America
2140 Durant Ave. Berkeley, CA 94704
Editor (Name and complete mailing address)
Jon Kawamoto (English); Rev. Ryuta Furumoto (Japanese)
Buddhist Churches of America
2140 Durant Ave. Berkeley, CA 94704
Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address)
Rev. Marvin Harada, Bishop
Buddhist Churches of America
2140 Durant Ave. Berkeley, CA 94704

10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)

Full Name
Buddhist Churches of America

Complete Mailing Address
2140 Durant Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box ☒ None

Full Name

Complete Mailing Address

12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)
The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes:
☒ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
☐ Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

PS Form 3526, July 2014 (Page 1 of 4 (see instructions page 4)) PSN: 7530-01-000-9031 PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy on www.usps.com

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POSTAL SERVICE®

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation
(All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

16. Electronic Copy Circulation

Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months

No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date

a. Paid Electronic Copies

b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)

c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)

d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100)

☐ I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership
☒ If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the 10/1/25 issue of this publication.
☐ Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner
Gayle Noguchi, Executive Director for Buddhist Churches of America

Date
08/28/2025

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Linking and De-linking: Moving BCA Into the Future



By Steven Terusaki
BCA President

As I wrote in June 2024, being in the President’s position offers a unique perspective on how all these efforts are interrelated.

The question that I often hear is, “What does BCA do for me?” I hope that turning to Page 3 of the Wheel of Dharma and reading my articles will offer readers deeper insights into the valuable efforts that are being undertaken to make a difference for each and every one of us within our local temples and churches, and the larger communities which we are a part of.

As I travel around the BCA, I am heartened to know that the President’s Message is having an influence in the discourse of “What does BCA do for me?”

Linking BCA’s Strategic Plan Update to Dharma Forward

In this month’s message, I bring forth two initiatives that have been at the forefront of my agenda as BCA President. These two efforts are foundational to the future of BCA:

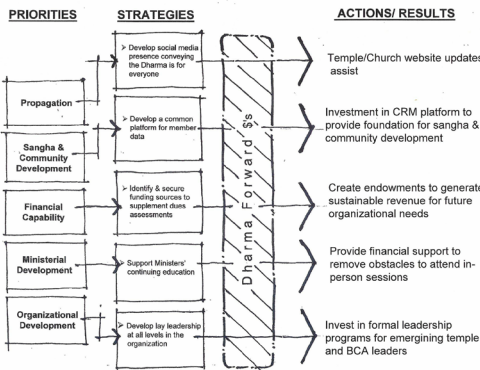
- Strategic Plan Update and;
- Dharma Forward campaign.

Both efforts have achieved significant successes and are now positioned to make a demonstrable effort to execute on the action steps to fulfill an exciting future for BCA. The Vision and Strategic Planning effort has provided:

Our updated Mission Statement:
The mission of BCA is to share the Shin Buddhist teachings of wisdom and compassion to enable all to live a meaningful and fulfilled life of gratitude.

And our updated Vision Statement:
BCA envisions that Shin Buddhism is a flourishing tradition that shares the teachings through an engaging ministry where inclusive communities cultivate peace, understanding, and compassion for everyone.

The plan identifies five priorities to execute so that the BCA can move to the vision stated above. Within each priority area are specific strategies that identify the actions required to implement each strategy.



It is at this nexus where specific strategies require funding that the Dharma Forward campaign can step forward to provide the monies needed to execute on the strategies.

As seen in the diagram, executing on the action plan requires investment dollars. It is this link between the strategic plan and the Dharma Forward campaign that we can see the direct impact that Dharma Forward’s generous donations can make to ensure the future of the BCA.

Currently under discussion are a few initiatives and action items where the strategic plan has defined a need and Dharma Forward is providing the dollars to meet that need.

Priority Area	Strategy	Action
Ministerial Development	Support ministers' continuing education	Provide funding for travel to allow temples to send ministers to CBE continuing ed sessions at the JSC
Organizational Development	Develop a common platform for member data	Invest and Implement in a new CRM system
Financial Capability	Create special purpose funds to support BCA	Invest Dharma Forward monies to create endowments for sources of recurring revenue
Organizational Development	Develop lay leadership at all levels in the organization	Invest in a formal program of leadership development for identified new leaders at the temples/churches and within the BCA, its committees & affiliated organizations

De-Linking Census From Dues Assessments: Let’s Focus on Membership Growth

Let’s now turn to the topic of “De-linking.” A significant impediment to our ability to add to our membership at the local temple and church level has been the disincentive created by the direct link between census and the amount of dues to be paid to BCA.

In our current approach for supporting the national BCA budget, increasing numbers of members at the local temple and church level has a concomitant result of increasing the amount of dues assessed to that temple or church.

The current approach is a mathematical way to distribute the annual monetary support to the BCA based on a prorata share of a temple and church’s membership over the entire national membership count. Sounds fair and simple, right?

On the surface, it has worked for more than a couple of decades. However, the unintended conse-

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FDSTL Awards Nitta Scholarships to Two High School Graduates

Awardees Are Jacqueline Aochi of San Jose and Jeffrey Nishida of OCBC; Nishida 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

In the continued spirit of the Nitta family, the Federation of Dharma School Teachers’ League (FDSTL) awarded two \$750 Fred and Helen Nitta scholarships for 2025.

Fred Nitta nurtured the embodiment of the Jodo Shinshu teachings in the young adults of the Watsonville Buddhist Temple through the discussion groups he led at the temple. Those involved with Fred and Helen Nitta speak highly of their deep connection to their temple and practice of the teachings, but more important, the impact the Nittas had on transferring this passion to the young adults. Upon their 25th wedding anniversary, Fred



Jeffrey Nishida, of the Orange County Buddhist Church, is a 2025 Fred and Helen Nitta Scholarship Award recipient. He will be attending the Arizona State University, where he plans to major in Real Estate and Applied Finance. (Courtesy of Jeffrey Nishida)

and Helen Nitta established a scholarship to honor and give recognition to outstanding Buddhist youth.

The two awardees for 2025 are Jeffrey Nishida of the Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC) and Jacqueline Ao-

chi of the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin.

The selection was a challenge for the scholarship committee as all of our applicants were outstanding academics, and contributors to their temples and communities. This month, we feature Mr. Jeffrey Nishida.

recovery. His perseverance and gratitude in life extend far beyond the basketball court.

At OCBC, he obtained his Eagle Scout award, but continued to assist others in their efforts. Beyond the temple, he served on the Southern District Jr. Young Buddhist League

“Through my experiences, I have come to understand the true meaning of impermanence. Buddhism teaches that clinging to the past or fearing change only leads to suffering, but by embracing the present moment, we can find peace and gratitude. My uncle’s passing taught me to appreciate the beauty in change and the importance of every fleeting moment.”

— Jeffrey Nishida, Orange County Buddhist Church, and 2025 Fred and Helen Nitta Scholarship Award recipient

Jeffrey Nishida graduated from Gretchen Whitney High School in Cerritos with an impressive list of honors and AP classes beginning from his freshman year.

Jeffrey was also captain of his basketball teams, including the varsity team, despite suffering a severe dislocation requiring surgery and an eight-month

(YBL) cabinet.

As Southern District Jr. YBL President, he shared his inspiration and energy working with his team to balance multiple projects and execute all with remarkable attention to detail.

For his essay, he shared what Buddhist lesson or teaching

Continued on Page 11

Donate to BCA Social Welfare Fund

By Rick Oishi
Orange County Buddhist Church

Disasters and needs are common partners and we are grateful to the first responders, organizations and people who take action to provide compassion and hope at a critical time for survival or well-being.

Did you know that the BCA's Social Welfare Committee (SWC) actively participates in programs to help people affected by disasters and programs to improve lives in our society? All BCA members can appreciate the commitment of SWC to respond to incidents that impact the lives of our Sangha and communities, and we need your help.

SWC has contributed aid to wildfire relief in California and Lahaina, to areas affected by floods and tornadoes in the United States, to areas hit by earthquakes in Japan and around the world, to the needs of the displaced Ukrainians and to the unhoused.

We have helped serve meals to the hungry, especially children and animals, supported classroom needs in Nepal, creating a safe space for women and children, and addressed the need for medical attention. The SWC is committed to promoting the sustainability of Earth through programs focused on recycling and waste management.

The work and impact of SWC is Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in action.



We often wonder how we can help and who to contact. The SWC is designed to address or mitigate deprivation of basic human needs. Let SWC help you by pooling resources to support various disaster relief and needs programs. Your contribution is meaningful and we can accumulate donations to make a difference. Be an active part of SWC's distribution of aid.

Let's ensure that SWC can spread some care, compassion and hope.

SWC is not funded by BCA. Many members believe that paying membership dues or donating to BCA includes money to SWC. This is not the case. The funds are generated through direct contributions from BCA members to SWC.

We thank you for your past support and seek your continued support. For others, we invite you to join the BCA Sangha in responding to the many disasters and needs in our society. We seek your generosity and a chance.

Please send your contributions to BCA, SWC through the website, BCA's dedicated donation page: [bit.ly/46La-](https://bit.ly/46La-gEU)

[gEU](https://bit.ly/46La-gEU) or by mail. Consider setting up a recurring contribution to support ongoing initiatives.

Accessing the QR code provides additional SWC information.



A request letter from SWC will arrive in the next few weeks.

We kindly request that you refrain from discarding the letter, but instead consider making a contribution.

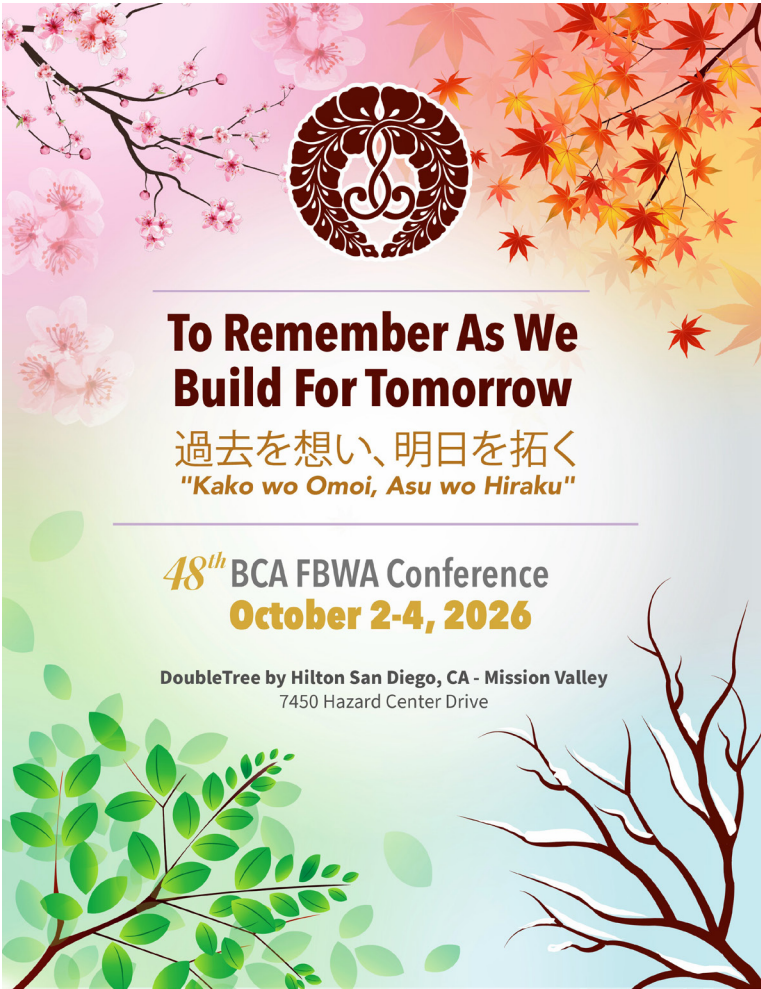
How can we help each other improve? We must be caring and giving.

Let the SWC letter guide you.

Still thinking? Please watch the YouTube SWC video at: bit.ly/47QfRLe

In gassho,

SWC Committee article submitted by Rick Oishi for SWC Committee members: Nadine Kakimoto, Chair; Jeff Kawahara, Kelsey Asato, Glenn Inanaga, Steve Terusaki, Bradley Menda, Allan Yamashiro, Arleen Miya, Darlene Bagshaw, Gregg Sera, John Inge, Koichi Sayano, Peggy Okabayashi, Rick Oishi, Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Gregory Gibbs, and Rev. Yuki Sugahara.



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"Kako wo Omoi, Asu wo Hiraku"

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BCA Music Committee



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that the Northwest Minyo Kai is a new group dedicated to preserving, performing and promoting Minyo (Japanese folk music and dance) in the Pacific Northwest?

Made up of musicians from around the Seattle area, including members of Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple and Tacoma Buddhist Temple, the group performed at Bon Odori festivals in the BCA's Northwest District.

The group can be found on Instagram @nwminyokai

Northwest Minyo Kai members are shown at left in a group photo at the Seattle Betsuin's Obon festival in July. (Courtesy of Tyler Moriguchi)



BCA SENIOR YOUNG BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

a nationwide young adult buddhist organization focused on...

1 building community and acting as role models to younger Buddhists

2 sharing and co-creating values and knowledge

3 spreading Dharma and applying Buddhist teachings to our daily lives



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At the Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Coordinating Council (LABCC) summer camp in July and August, a play was featured based on the famous Buddhist parable, “River of Fire, River of Water,” also known as “The Two Rivers and a White Path.” At left, travelers are pursued by wild beasts and bandits. At right, the travelers cross over the white path between the rivers and fire and water. (Photos courtesy of Glen Tao)



At left, the crowd of campers gather for the special presentation of the parable, “River and Fire, River of Water.” At right, the 12- and 13-year-old boys and girls are recognized for the presentation.

At LABCC Summer Camp, Students Learn Buddhist Parable Lessons

Campers’ Journey Is Like Crossing the ‘River of Fire, River of Water’

Editor’s note: The following article by Rev. Ellen Hamada Crane of the Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC) originally ran in OCBC’s newsletter, Korin. The Wheel of Dharma is reprinting Rev. Crane’s article with her permission.

By Rev. Ellen Hamada Crane
Orange County Buddhist Church

The Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Coordinating Council (LABCC) has been conducting a special Buddhist summer youth program for 70 years where campers ages 8 through 13 enjoy nature, engage in meaningful activities, create lifelong memories with their fellow participants and learn a little Buddhism.

LABCC is a consortium of temples in Southern California consisting of many Buddhist traditions, including our BCA Southern District temples, Higashi Honganji, Zenshuj (Zen), Koyasan (Shingon) and Nichiren. This year’s camp had 120 campers, almost an equal number of staff, and was held again at Camp Morning Star in the nearby San Bernardino National Forest.

This year’s theme, “The Three Treasures: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha,” brought



The LABCC has been conducting a special Buddhist summer youth program for 70 years for teenage campers. This year’s camp had 120 campers, almost an equal number of staff, and was held again at Camp Morning Star in the San Bernardino National Forest.

together a dedicated group of ministerial staff who guided and supported the campers throughout the week.

I had ministerial duties to conduct classes and lead a morning service. One of the groups I was assigned to was the 12- and 13-year-old boys and girls — 26 energetic and rambunctious campers.

We practiced and performed a play based on the famous parable “River of Fire, River of Water,” also known as “The Two Rivers and a White Path,” written 1,400 years ago by Chinese Master Shan Tao, one of the seven masters revered by our founder Shinran Shonin.

The parable is about a traveler who is heading westward and encounters an angry, surging river of water to the north and a river of

leaping fire to the south. Each river is bottomless in depth and stretches to the horizon.

Between the two rivers is a narrow white path to the opposite bank. From behind, the traveler suddenly hears wild beasts and bandits approaching who will try to kill him. He faces death at every turn and, in despair, he realizes he is doomed.

The traveler contemplates his situation and says, “If I turn back, I will die. If I remain here or try to cross the river, I will also die. I have no choice but to cross on the path and go forward. Since the path exists, it surely must be possible to walk across it!”

The traveler then hears a voice from his side of the rivers on the eastern bank encouraging him to go forward saying, “Oh traveler, be firm

in your resolution to cross over on the white path, and you will slip the clutches of death! But if you tarry where you are, you will surely die!”

Then from the western bank, he hears another voice, “Oh traveler, with singleness of mind and right attention, go forward at once; I will protect you! Do not be afraid of falling into the perils of fire or water!”

Hearing these words, the traveler resolves singlemindedly to hasten forward and reaches the western bank, where he is safe and finds good friends.

and fire represent the challenges we face within ourselves, what we know as the Three Poisons: greed, anger and ignorance.

The raging water represents our insatiable greed and the leaping flames of the fire is our anger. Ignorance comes from the fact that we are unaware that these poisons are constantly working within us. We all agreed that our life challenges sometimes feel as insurmountable as the rivers of fire and water of the parable.

Next, the campers learned that the wild beasts and bandits represent the difficulties we encounter outside of ourselves, the many obstacles and distractions we face from the world around us. Like the traveler, we sometimes feel there is no hope in escaping from these conditions.

And yet, the voice from the

The beasts and bandits try to reassure the traveler that they mean them no harm, and they are like the false promises of those who want to lead us astray, telling us happiness comes from pursuits like fame, fortune, status and prestige. From the western bank comes the voice of Amida Buddha, who symbolizes the wisdom and compassion that awaits when we take the path across. There we find Dharma friends and a life of awakening.

The campers enthusiastically rehearsed their play, using props I brought, props they gathered and masks they made. The next day, they performed the play wonderfully for the whole camp at morning service. A discussion of the meaning of the parable followed.

I explained that the water

Continued on Page 10



At left, the BCA's Buddhist Youth Retreat (BYR) summer class poses for a group photo at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley, California. In front row, from left, are: Ryan Matsumoto (San Jose), Cole Patterson (San Mateo), George Fujii (Stockton), Gus Carballar (San Mateo), Trevor Sasaki (OCBC), Hajime Nist (Oregon) and Taijo Okamura (Oxnard). In back row, from left, are: Graham Bennett (Sacramento), Kyle Sasaki (OCBC), Kiyoshi Okamura (Oxnard), Hirotoshi Okamura (Oxnard), Hieu Moriguchi (Seattle), Noemi Weinsheimer (Seattle), Mylee Neuschafe (San Luis Obispo) and Mariya Slavich (Sacramento). CBE Youth Coordinator Koichi Mizushima is shown at top right. At right, Weinsheimer and Neuschafe, in the foreground, sing along during karaoke. In back are, from left, Ryan Matsumoto, Mariya Slavich and Kiyoshi Okamura. (Photos courtesy of Ellie Mizushima and Koichi Mizushima)

Seattle Teen Reflects on BYR — and What Makes It So Special

By Noemi Weinsheimer
Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple

My name is Noemi, I am 17 and am from the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple.

If someone had told me the BCA's Buddhist Youth Retreat (BYR) was going to be a highlight of my summer, I wouldn't have believed you.

The conversations, lessons and, most important, the friendships I made at the BYR this summer were unique and special.

My junior year of high school was rough, to say the least. I had to get multiple surgeries and missed a lot of school. I tore my ACL and had complications from the first procedure, which ended my high school athletic career.

Grappling with the fact that I won't get to play my senior soccer season combined with



Weinsheimer is shown with her new friends at the BYR summer session. Above, she and Neuschafe are all smiles. At right, she is shown at right with, from left, Taijo Okamura and Mariya Slavich.

being physically unwell for the winter and spring this year took a toll on me.

Going into the summer, I was burnt out and not feeling like myself.

BYR gave me the space to

take a break, reflect on my situation and allowed me to view everything going on in a new light. Allowing students to leave for a week and giving them teachings that they can apply to any event that arises is huge.



Being a teen Jodo Shinshu Buddhist is rare. Now I am connected with 14 teenagers who I share this part of my identity. Through a week of laughing, talking and chanting, the bonds that were formed are unlike any others I've made.

My energy shift from before to after the retreat was not only noticeable to me, but also to the people around me.

Teenagers having to navigate social, academic and other sectors of their lives is difficult. Providing a place where we can feel safe and open to sharing our feelings with each other is so important — and the way in which BYR does it is unmatched.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to go to BYR and look forward to keeping in touch with my new friends.

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AGES 15 - 25 WELCOME. IF YOU WERE A PAST BYR PARTICIPANT, OR WOULD JUST LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BUDDHISM AND HAVE A GREAT TIME MAKING NEW FRIENDS, PLEASE REGISTER BELOW!

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Scenes From Buddhist Youth Retreat Summer Session



At left, Mylee Neuschafer (San Luis Obispo) is flanked by her parents, Weston and Erica Neuschafer, at the start of the BYR summer session. At right, Rimban Rev. Yuki Sugahara, in his presentation on martial arts and Buddhism, leads the group in several exercises. (Photos courtesy of Ellie Mizushima and Brian Koichi Mizushima)



At left, Hirotoishi Okamura (Oxnard) performs oshoko, or the act of offering incense. At center, the students practice sutra chanting three times a day as well as the basics on Onajin etiquette. At right, the group, on a trip to San Francisco, visits the BCA headquarters in San Francisco's Japantown.



At left, Hieu Moriguchi (Seattle) hugs Cole Patterson (San Mateo). At center, Patterson shows his Amida Buddha tie-dyed T-shirt in the courtyard of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple. At right, the group poses in front of Aquarium of the Bay at San Francisco's Pier 39.



At left, from left, Kyle Sasaki (OCBC), Hajime Nist (Oregon), Gus Caballar (San Mateo), George Fujii (Stockton) and Trevor Sasaki (OCBC) have fun performing full-throated singing during karaoke. At center, Mariya Salvich (Sacramento) presents CBE Youth Coordinator Brian Koichi Mizushima with a 2025 BYR T-shirt signed by all of the students. At right, the students pose for a group photo after they received their certificates of completion and a shikisho.



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BCA Ministers Fuken Held in Lodi



The Northern California District Ministers Association hosted the BCA Ministers Fuken in Lodi, California, on Aug. 19-21. In addition to the business meeting, the ministers gathered for a series of lectures concentrating on aspects of Clinical Pastoral Education. Lectures and case review studies by Rev. Dr. Elias Burgos, Manager of the Spiritual Care Department of South Sacramento Kaiser Permanente, encouraged the ministers to examine their own grief and bereavement and how that informs them while working with temple and community members. Additional lectures by Professor Naoki Nabeshima of Ryukoku University provided doctrinal background on Shinran Shonin's approach to grief and bereavement. At top, the BCA ministers gather for a group photo. Bottom left, the BCA ministers conduct the business meeting. Bottom right, Rev. Dr. Elias Burgos addresses the ministers on grief and bereavement. (Photos courtesy of Catherine Fujimori and Rev. Michael Endo)

Rev. Bridge

Continued from Page 2

something interesting — fascinating — that I could study and learn about. And the learning wasn't just intellectual, it was about life and how to live it.

I actually had a non-band related experience around the same time: I remember sitting on my parents' bed with a copy of the Pacific World, the journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies that a friend's mother had given me a few years earlier when I first got interested.

At that time, the articles were too difficult for me, but this time, I opened to the inside cover and read a description of the IBS. The first line I read said something about IBS being a graduate school for studying Buddhism and I thought, "That's what grad school is for! It's to study stuff you are interested in from teachers that know about the subject. That's what I want to do — go to grad school and study Buddhism!"

I kept reading and saw that it was also a seminary for ministry, and I realized, "That's what I want to do — I don't want to be a professor, I want to be a minister!"

I remember not just the thoughts, but an almost physical feeling inside myself like something turning inside me. It actually happened twice, once for each realization.

Looking back at these experiences, it makes me wish I could make similar things happen to other people. But I can't. Because, first, everyone is different. We each have our own circumstances, our own experiences and dare I say it, our own karma. The way I got into Buddhism is only one of myriad possibilities.

Second, we aren't supposed to fit some mold coming from a certain background and becoming some single, easily defined ideal. Instead, in Shin Buddhism, we become our foolish selves. We don't have to try and be something we are not.

And, third, I didn't make it happen to myself. It was something much bigger than

myself. It was my friend and his mother who helped ignite my initial interest. It was the Institute of Buddhist Studies and everyone involved that resulted in that journal being read and that shift happening inside me.

It was even my band — seemingly unrelated and yet such a huge part of my life and a part of the process of my embarkation on the Nembutsu path. Looking back now, I can see that ultimately it was Amida Buddha — perfect Wisdom and Compassion — acting on me through the Vow and the Nembutsu — even if I didn't know it at the time.

Thinking back to my Tokudo roommate's question, maybe I could have answered in this way. But I wasn't aware of it at the time. And would he have listened?

If you have read this far, then maybe I was able to draw you in with my story. But it isn't my story that's important. It is that each of us has our own story and we can engage with the Buddha-Dharma through that story — your story.

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BCA Sends Five Students to Japan for YBICSE Program in 2025

Youth From Around the World Explore Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Culture, Heritage

By Jon Kawamoto
Wheel of Dharma Editor

The BCA sent five students to Japan in July to take part in the Young Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE) program, which provides youth from around the world the opportunity to explore the historical and cultural heritage of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha tradition.

The official program was held from July 2-8 and the BCA group extended its stay in Tokyo to do some sightseeing. In all, there were 17 students. In addition to the five from the BCA, there were two from Hawaii, five from Canada and five from Brazil.

The students gathered at the Hongwanji in Kyoto and participated in joint activities with Japanese youth and deepened their cultural and spiritual appreciation of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha tradition.

The Hongwanji youth exchange includes tours of historical sites related to the history of the Hongwanji and the life of Shinran Shonin, as well as lectures on general and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and the history of the Hongwanji.



The BCA sent five students to Japan in July as part of the Young Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange (YBISCE) program. The students, along with BCA officials, are shown at San Francisco International Airport. Shown, from left, are: Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada; Rev. Candice Shibata, who served as chaperone; Travis Nakahira (Orange County Buddhist Church); Shigeo Yoshida (Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple); Verena Chao (Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple); Lea Smith (Buddhist Temple of Marin); Izumi Ryan (Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple); Rev. Michael Endo; and Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara of the Jodo Shinshu International Office (JSIO), which is in charge of the YBISCE program. (Courtesy of Rev. Michael Endo and YBISCE)

The group also visited the Hiroshima Peace Park and museum.

The Jodo Shinshu International Office (JSIO) is in charge of the YBICSE program.

Following are reflections from four members of the 2025 YBICSE group — Travis Nakahira of the Orange County Buddhist Church, Izumi Ryan of the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple, Lea Smith of the Buddhist Temple of Marin and Shigeo Yoshida of the Los Angeles Homba Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. The Wheel

of Dharma thanks Nakahira, Ryan, Smith and Yoshida for their submissions.

Travis Nakahira

“Over the summer, I took part in the Young Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE) program. It was very informative and definitely an experience I will take with me as I start the next chapters of my life.

“My main takeaway from this experience is that it gave me a lot of perspective in seeing what kinds of other people there are

in the world. Going into it I did not really know what to expect, more accurately, I did not know what kind of people to expect to travel with. I had heard so many good things about this program from various adult members of my church who went on this trip as teenagers. I had been to Japan three times before, but those had always been family trips. The program mentioned we would be traveling with other people from different temple groups, not just BCA. These anxieties I had were

pretty irrational because once I started traveling with the other kids from the BCA cohort we immediately got along pretty well.

“One particular day of the trip that I can remember was when we were going to meet the students from the Kyoto Women’s University. During this day, they mixed up all the cohort members and university students to have us all talk about differences in school lives. It was very fun simply discussing the many ways our school lives differ from one another, but also the many ways they are similar to one another. I think in that there is a very Buddhist sentiment, the idea that we are all, in essence, very similar, one Sangha. In a weird way, it made the world smaller to me, smaller in the sense that I feel more connected to people. I feel more confident approaching people because despite how I can have a life on the complete opposite end of the world as someone, we can still find things to connect on and speak about.

“I am incredibly grateful to have been given this opportunity and for all the people who made our experience in Japan so smooth. I would like to thank Rev. Candice Shibata for watching over all of us during our trip, Rev. Michael Endo for getting us acquainted with what to expect in Japan, Rev. Dr. Mutsumi Wondra for

Continued on Page 12

‘YBICSE Truly Inspirational — in Bringing People Together’

Editor’s note: The Wheel of Dharma inadvertently omitted the Young Buddhist International Cultural Study Exchange (YBICSE) program reflections by Ellie Mizushima of the Buddhist Church of Sacramento when it ran other reflections by 2024 YBICSE participants. Those other articles appeared in the January 2025 issue.

By Ellie Mizushima
Buddhist Church of Sacramento

My name is Ellie Mizushima and I was a participant of the 2024 YBICSE program that took place at the start of July 2024. I am so grateful and honored to have been one of the select representatives of the BCA on this trip.

Traveling to Japan with the other young people on this trip was an incredible opportunity that strengthened my connection with Buddhism, my own Japanese heritage and my relationships with other young people in my community.

We were able to experience so many different things in our short 10-day trip. I was able to see the most incredible sights, eat delicious food, and visit different monuments related



Ellie Mizushima poses in front of the Onajin at Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan. (Courtesy of Ellie Mizushima)

to Japanese history and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

However, getting to visit Nishi Hongwanji and attending the 6 a.m. service was one of my favorite experiences. The chanting in the Goeido Hall was like nothing I’ve heard before and was very moving.

Even though I had traveled across the ocean to a foreign country, attending service at the temple still felt familiar and welcoming. I was surrounded by young people I had never met before. Still, I was able to meet individuals from all over the world! It felt easy to relate to everyone

because of our similar beliefs and appreciation for the opportunity to be in Japan.

I was able to make lifelong connections and find genuine moments with almost all 25 participants on the trip. To me, the true purpose of this program was to make connections and to learn something new from those who are different from you.

It was all of the small moments, from listening to the strong and familiar chanting during service to sharing my okonomiyaki leftovers that I couldn’t finish with the boys from Brazil that reminded me that we really aren’t that

I was able to make lifelong connections and find genuine moments with almost all 25 participants on the trip. To me, the true purpose of this program was to make connections and to learn something new from those who are different from you. It was all of the small moments, from listening to the strong and familiar chanting during service to sharing my okonomiyaki leftovers that I couldn’t finish with the boys from Brazil that reminded me that we really aren’t that different from each other.

— Ellie Mizushima, Buddhist Church of Sacramento, and 2024 YBICSE participant

different from each other.

The idea of difference is what seems to always tear people apart, but during this trip, I really realized that we all come from a place of wanting to share compassion and community.

Programs like YBICSE are truly inspirational because of its ability to bring people together from anywhere in the world. After this trip, I truly feel more connected to the teachings and can’t wait for others to experience the same in the future.

I would like to extend a

huge thank you to BCA for providing this opportunity. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada for sponsoring a large portion of the trip’s cost for me and the other BCA participants. And thank you to Rev. Michael Endo for all the planning.

I could not be more grateful for an experience as special as YBICSE. I had an incredible time on this trip and have come out appreciating Buddhism and the community it has brought me more than ever before.

Rev. Higa

Continued from Page 1

violence — the murder of a popular conservative activist who was gunned down while speaking at a college campus. This horrific event has sent shockwaves through many communities. Many in our country, who regarded him as a man of faith and a champion for their values, are mourning his loss, while others, who viewed him as an oppressor promoting hate and division, are not.

Polarized Times

It’s not my place, nor anyone else’s, to tell someone how they should feel right now. We need to extend grace and compassion to everyone during this tumultuous time. This underscores the complex reality of being human, of grief, and the polarized and dangerous times we are living through. However, we should all mourn the loss of another human being to the culture of rage, contempt and gun violence that threatens to consume us all.

Charlie Kirk championed positions and a worldview I wholeheartedly oppose. Yet, he was not an enemy but a fellow American exercising his right to free speech. I respect that and mourn his violent death. We should all be appalled by political violence in any form. Full stop. This is not how we resolve our differences in America. We debate civilly and passionately, present our views to the public, and hold free, fair elections that showcase competing visions for our country. Violence in any form contradicts the sacred principles of democracy.

And yet, we cannot ignore the very real harm his words and actions caused to many in our country. We can both mourn what his loss means for his loved ones and acknowledge all that he did to hurt others. All of these truths can coexist. We can face complexity with honesty, sensitivity, and compassion. We’ve seen this clash of realities in the news and on social media over the past few days, with heartfelt tributes to a loving husband and father alongside calls to hold him accountable for the harmful and destructive things he said and stood for. When our lives come to an end, we are remembered as a whole person, not just the parts we want others to focus on. We have the capacity to accept the full scope of a life with all its contradictions. That is what it means to be a mature human being. In this time of deep anger and division, we should reflect on the words of Shotoku Taishi, the revered patron of Buddhism from 6th-century Japan, who said:

“Let us cease from wrath and refrain from angry looks. Nor

let us be resentful when others differ from us. For all beings have hearts and each heart has its own leanings. Their right is our wrong and our right is their wrong. We are not unquestionable sages, nor are they unquestionably fools. We are both simply ordinary beings.”

His wise words, rooted in the Buddha’s teachings, encourage us to recognize our shared humanity and to live with humility and compassion for others, even those with whom we disagree. Prince Shotoku reminds us that our very existence depends on our relationships with others. When we honestly reflect on who and what we are, we realize our deep connection and mutual dependence on all things. The Buddhist practice of loving kindness begins with ourselves and extends to all beings, including those we find challenging to love and care for. When we reflect deeply on our interdependent lives, we see that what harms one person likely harms others, and what benefits one will probably benefit many. This is how we should cultivate the empathy and compassion needed to help heal our deeply fractured nation and world.

The Buddhist practice of loving kindness begins with ourselves and extends to all beings, including those we find challenging to love and care for. When we reflect deeply on our interdependent lives, we see that what harms one person likely harms others, and what benefits one will probably benefit many. This is how we should cultivate the empathy and compassion needed to help heal our deeply fractured nation and world.

Two-Headed Bird

In a teaching from the Amida Sutra, one of the three sacred scriptures of Shin Buddhism, there is a beautiful two-headed bird named Gumyocho that dwells in the Pure Land. Meaning “shared life,” the Gumyocho is said to have a melodious voice that sings the Dharma, guiding those who hear its song toward enlightenment. According to legend, the bird’s two heads had very different personalities and desires. When one head was sleepy, the other wanted to play. When one was hungry, the other wanted to rest. Eventually, the two heads began to resent and hate each other. One day, while one of the heads was sleeping, the other feasted on delicious fruits and flowers until he was full. When the sleeping head awoke, he wanted to eat too, but he was already full because they shared one stomach. He was angry that he could not enjoy any of the food. So, he took revenge by secretly poisoning the other head, which resulted

in its death. However, he also suffered and died because they shared the same body. As he was dying, he realized how foolish he had been. While he resented his other head, he failed to see that his own life depended on it. By harming his other head, he was also hurting himself. In the Pure Land, the Gumyocho sings, “The way which destroys others also destroys oneself. The way that keeps others alive also keeps oneself alive.” Through this story, the Buddha teaches that we are all living a life of mutual dependence. However, it often feels as though we are living in vastly different worlds from one another. This clash of perspectives and values has led to the dehumanization of those we disagree with. The pain and hurt we continue to cause each other result in mutual harm. In our obsession with winning and being “right” at all costs, we have lost sight of our shared humanity. Despite our differences, we are part of one community, one nation and one world. We are one human family and our lives are bound together. So yes, I do mourn the murder of Charlie Kirk as

Tranform Suffering

Just like a lotus flower rises from muddy water to bloom beautifully, we can also transform our suffering into something greater. The Buddha shared with us a path of continuous becoming. Every moment of our lives is an opportunity to look inward and gain a deeper understanding of the workings of our own heart and mind. The Buddha’s path isn’t about escaping the ocean of suffering but about diving into it and immersing ourselves to be transformed.

learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.” We should deeply reflect on the words of the Buddha and Dr. King, which remind us that our path forward cannot be built on anger, contempt or violence. We should strive to respond thoughtfully and peacefully rather than react impulsively and violently in the days ahead.

Choice Is Clear

Perhaps we can finally understand what it truly means to be human through these

Perhaps we can finally understand what it truly means to be human through these tragedies before we destroy each other. Our choice is clear: We can become better versions of ourselves or remain trapped in resentment, anger and fear.

Just as a lotus flower cannot grow in clear water, we can’t grow without the “mud” of our lives. Our challenges, obstacles and hurts are the nutrients that help us grow. The Buddha’s teachings enable us to accept it all and turn the muck into a life of awakening. But we must intentionally choose to do this difficult work. It is very easy for us to be consumed by anger. However, our unchecked anger and resentment will only lead to more suffering. The Buddha teaches that “Blood stains can not be removed by more blood; resentment can not be removed by more resentment; resentment can be removed only by forgetting it.” And as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. warned, “we must

tragedies before we destroy each other. Our choice is clear: We can become better versions of ourselves or remain trapped in resentment, anger and fear. It’s time to set aside these childish and selfish games, put on our big kid pants, and do the messy work of healing our broken and divided country before we face the fate of the two-headed bird. We can and must hold each other accountable because our future depends on it. In closing, please join me in Gassho to recite the Name of Amida, the Buddha of all-inclusive wisdom and all-embracing compassion, with the aspiration to be better and do better in these troubled times. Namo Amida Butsu.

LABCC

Continued from Page 5

eastern shore are the words from the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni, reassuring the traveler there is a way forward. The Buddha opened a way to liberation, which is represented by the white path and, like the traveler, we realize that because the path exists, there must be a way to cross. We can all trust that there is a way to resolve the challenges we face. The beasts and bandits try to reassure the traveler that they mean them no harm, and they are like the false promises of those who want to lead us astray, telling us happiness comes from pursuits like fame, fortune, status and prestige. From the western bank comes the voice of Amida Buddha, who symbolizes the wisdom and compassion that awaits when we take the path across. There we find Dharma friends and a life of awakening. In some ways, going to camp is akin to the journey

of the traveler in the parable. Campers don’t face rivers of fire or water, but it is nonetheless a challenging situation, especially for the first time. There is often the fear of a new situation, away from the comfort and security of home and family, and the stress and uncertainty of encountering new and challenging tasks. Activities include an overnight campout, unfamiliar food, meeting new people, learning the rules, coping with expectations and learning new skills. The challenges abound from within and without — physically, socially and emotionally. By trusting in their leaders and counselors, who are like the voices of the Buddhas, by adapting and being open to new possibilities, the experience transforms into one where a camper finds their place. This is what the camp experience is supposed to achieve and it happens most of the time. And it is why campers and adults have been coming back for 70 years. Namo Amida Butsu



The Origin of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching — Part 4

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

Lastly, there is one important thing we must remember.

It is the reason for which Sakyamuni Buddha clarified the teaching of Amida Buddha. The answer can be found in Amida Buddha’s Primal Vow. The Primal Vow was made by Amida Buddha before becoming the Buddha, when he was known as Bodhisattva Dharmakara. In total, he established 48 vows. The 17th vow is as follows: “If, I attain Buddhahood, the countless Buddhas throughout the worlds in the ten quarters should not all glorify and praise my Name, may I not attain the perfect enlightenment.” (“The Three Pure Land Sutras,” or TPLS II, p. 22) In other words, this vow describes Bodhisattva Dharmakara’s aspiration to save all beings, particularly those who cannot become awakened by themselves, by guiding them

to his Pure Land through the Nembutsu so that they are enabled to attain supreme enlightenment. Dharmakara also expressed his resolution, saying that if he could not make this wish come true, he himself would not become a Buddha. To accomplish this aim, Dharmakara beseeches all other Buddhas to recite his name in order to let his existence be known to all living beings. Therefore, Shakyamuni’s sermon on Amida Buddha was delivered in accordance with this vow. Through this aspect, it becomes crystal clear that the Jodo Shinshu teaching originates from the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha. In other words, we are made aware of Amida Buddha’s working through Shakyamuni Buddha’s existence, and driven

by Amida Buddha’s wish, Shakyamuni Buddha clarifies Amida Buddha’s teaching for us. The “Shoshinge” is a complete narrative of how Shinran was guided to the Jodo Shinshu teaching that is the true teaching of Pure Land Buddhism. “Shoshinge” begins with the Nembutsu that is, “Kimyo muryo ju nyorai, Namo fukashigiko,” translated as “I take refuge in the Tathagata of Immeasurable Life! I entrust myself to the Buddha of Inconceivable Light!” (CWS I, p. 69) We are able to see Shinran’s figure reciting the Nembutsu. Written in the first half of “Shoshinge” is Amida Buddha’s aspiration; the Primal Vow and its workings. It reveals that the origin of the Jodo Shinshu teaching is found in the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha. What

is also noted in the “Shoshinge” is that the spirit of the Primal Vow was succeeded by Shakyamuni Buddha, who was born in India some 2,500 years ago. In the latter half of “Shoshinge,” the Buddha’s aspiration was passed on from Shakyamuni Buddha to Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu in India, and traveled 5,000 miles along the Silk Road to reach Tan-luan, Tao-cho, and Shan-tao in China, and then was carried across the ocean to Japan where it was received by Genshin and Genku. In this way, “Shoshinge” is a work that expresses the joy and appreciation that is felt by Shinran, who rejoices in the Nembutsu teaching. As recipients of Shinran’s joyous heart that is found in “Shoshinge,” we must weave our own story as a sequel to “Shoshinge.”

Nishida

Continued from Page 3

he received from someone or something that was not even Buddhist, illustrating how you can find Buddhism anywhere: “Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift ... that’s why it’s called the present.” (Master Oogway, “Kung Fu Panda,” 2008) “While this insightful quote was spoken by a fictional Kung Fu master in one of the greatest movies of my childhood, it perfectly reflects one of my favorite Buddhist teachings: impermanence. Life is all about change. “Right now, I am experiencing one of life’s biggest transitions — moving from high school to college. As I write this essay and reflect on my experiences, I can’t help but wish that childhood could last forever. However, that’s not

how life works. Nothing lasts forever. “Around the time I was born, my maternal grandfather sadly passed away. His brother, whom I refer to as my ‘Uncle,’ stepped into that role and played an instrumental part in my growth and development. My uncle was one of my biggest supporters of my passion to play basketball. He would always talk to me after every game to give me advice about the sport and life in general, and even when I played horribly, he would cheer me up. When I got to high school, he continued to show up and support me even when his physical health started to deteriorate. “At the end of my freshman season, I suffered a devastating injury. I had dislocated my shoulder and torn my labrum. I required surgery that would sideline me for most of my sophomore year. After months of rest and dozens of sessions of

physical therapy, I was finally ready to have my breakout season as a junior. “Less than a month before the season started, I came home to heartbreaking news: My uncle had passed away. I was in complete shock. Just a week earlier, we had been excitedly talking about my schedule and making plans for him to come to my games. I didn’t know how to process my emotions, and for the first time in my life, I lost my passion for basketball. “Instead of a funeral, my uncle had always wanted an informal celebration of life and due to the close relationship I had with my uncle, his kids wanted me to participate in the remembrance. Earlier that summer, I had attended the BCA Buddhist Youth Retreat (BYR), so in their words, I was ‘the closest we had to a minister.’ The family asked me to give a Dharma message at the service. I had no idea what to

say. How could I possibly give an insightful and positive message in times of such sorrow? “Then, I remembered a sermon about the Buddhist teaching of impermanence. “Suddenly, everything clicked. I realized why my uncle didn’t want his life to be mourned, but rather celebrated. It was a gift to have experienced those moments with him. During my message, I read ‘White Ashes’ and for the first time, I could personally relate. It is beautiful to have loved someone so much that their absence leaves such a void. Nothing lasts forever and that’s exactly why we must cherish every moment and truly live in the present. “So while the quote I opened with may have been from a children’s movie, it has such a deeper Buddhist meaning to me. Through my experiences, I have come to understand the true meaning of impermanence. Buddhism

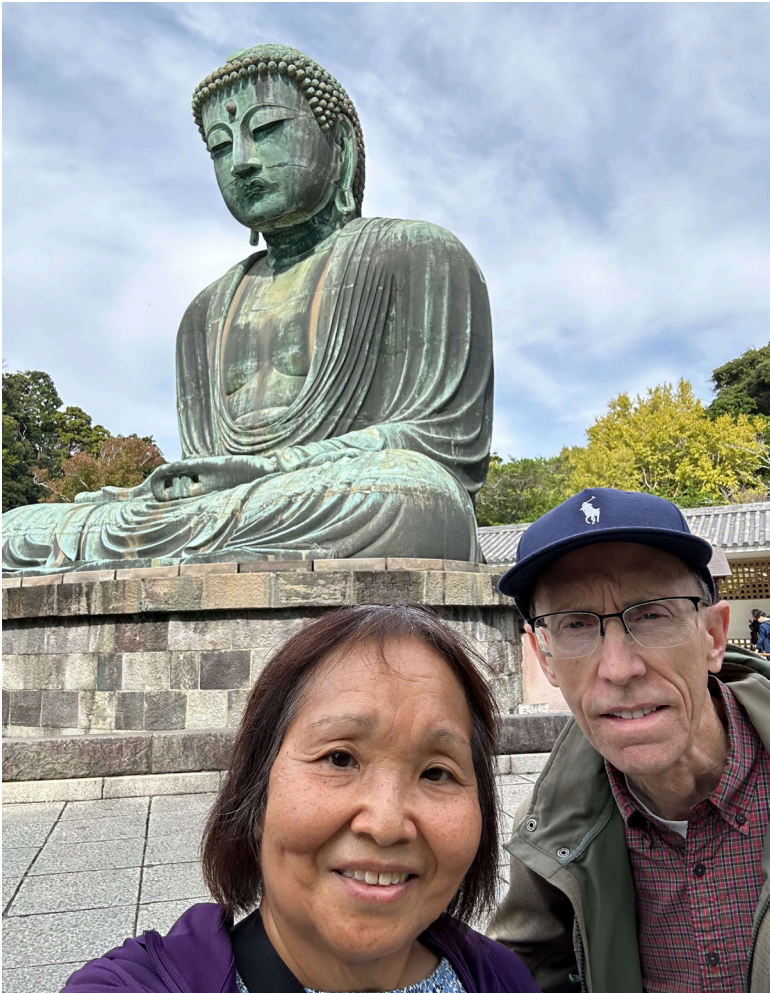
teaches that clinging to the past or fearing change only leads to suffering, but by embracing the present moment, we can find peace and gratitude. My uncle’s passing taught me to appreciate the beauty in change and the importance of every fleeting moment.” The FDSTL congratulates and wishes Mr. Jeffrey Nishida a continued life of gratitude as he begins studies at Arizona State University. He plans to major in Real Estate and Applied Finance, where he will utilize his education as an entrepreneur in real estate. We look forward to Jeffrey’s continued support through OCBC where he stated, “Out of all my extracurricular activities, Jr. YBA was my favorite.” Congratulations to all our outstanding high school graduates of the Class of 2025. We wish all of you continued success throughout your journey in your Life of Gratitude.

Dharma Forward

Continued from Page 1

lineage of teachers and students, the zenchishiki, or good knowledge holders. Dogen calls this transmission “the great road of Buddha ancestors.” Encountering a Dharma teacher can be the most important event of our lives. It is said that the hidden seed for meeting the teacher exists within us all along. When external conditions ripen for the seed to sprout, the teacher will somehow appear. Nineteen years ago, when we encountered a Buddha ancestor for the first time, we were not looking for such a person. Actually, we were not on the Buddhist path and knew nothing of it. As it happened, the ancestor first appeared in the hospital ICU where Janis’s brother, Kent Hirohama, was being treated for a terminal illness. The teacher we met

there was BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada, who was at the time the Orange County Buddhist Church minister. Rev. Harada began teaching us at that moment, although we were unaware of it. He did not speak about any Buddhist ideas or concepts, but through his actions there in the ICU, he expressed the genuine Dharma. The spiritual depth that we sensed in Rev. Harada was not his own creation. Rather, he received it from Sakyamuni and Shinran through his personal teachers, each of whom had ancestors leading back to Shinran. This teaching lineage is “the great road of Buddha ancestors” that we were able to encounter through the Buddhist Churches of America. Our aspiration in supporting Dharma Forward is that those who come after us will likewise encounter the Dharma gateway identified by Shinran.



Janis Hirohama and Jim Pollard, both certified Minister’s Assistants at the Orange County Buddhist Church, are shown in front of the Great Buddha of Kamukura in Japan. (Courtesy of Janis Hirohama and Jim Pollard)

White River Hosts Its First Buddhism and Yoga Retreat

By Tessa Asato
White River Buddhist Temple

What is a great way to decompress after a busy and stressful week?

For 55 individuals, it was attending the White River Buddhist Temple's (WRBT) first Buddhism and Yoga Retreat at the temple in Auburn, Washington.

The retreat took place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sept. 6 consisted of three workshops, including yoga, meditation, nutrition, art and Buddhism.

Anika Klix, a WRBT board member, and the temple's Religious Committee collaborated to organize and plan the retreat. The day was split into three sections.

The first section featured Bob Matsueda's two-hour yoga session, where he introduced key concepts about yoga and incorporated breathwork and instruction. The second session



The first Buddhism and Yoga Retreat at White River Buddhist Temple in Auburn, Washington was held on Sept. 6. At left, participants engage in yoga exercises led by Bob Matsueda. At right, BCA Minister Emeritus Rev. Bob Oshita and Rev. Patti Oshita lead a workshop connecting Buddhism to yoga. (Photos courtesy of Tessa Asato)

was led by Karrie Z. Myton, of Art Words and Yoga, and incorporated self-reflection, art and the power of intention.

The third session was led by BCA Minister Emeritus Rev. Bob Oshita and Rev. Patti Oshita, who serve as chaplains for the

California State Assembly. They connected Buddhism to yoga in an informative and thought-provoking presentation.

Participants were able to explore mindful yoga exercises, meditation and wellness discussions, and learn more about yoga



and Buddhism in a welcoming and accessible environment.

Many participants spoke highly about the retreat and really enjoyed themselves.

Gratitude to the volunteers who helped cook and set up lunch and snacks for retreat attendees.

The White River Buddhist Temple also wishes to acknowledge and thank the BCA's Center for Buddhist Education and Dharma Forward for their support. This event would not have been possible without their efforts.

YBICSE Program

Continued from Page 9

reviewing my initial application and allowing me to go on this trip, and of course my Mom and Dad for encouraging me to even go on this life-changing experience in the first place."

Izumi Ryan

"In early July, I had the opportunity to participate in the 2025 Young Buddhist International Study Exchange program (YBICSE) in Japan, which was an invaluable learning experience.

start of each day encouraged me to be more mindful and aware throughout the day. Yet, at the same time, it made me think why I don't try more actively at home to try taking the time to reflect during the day.

"Although I go to temple and Dharma School on Sundays, I find it difficult to think about Buddhism that actively the rest of the week. However, this trip has made me more aware of how the teachings of Buddhism can be implemented in so many ways in daily life, such as in routine and ordinary actions like cleaning my room

Hiroshima, but we also learned beautiful and happy things like the temples being built.

"During this program, I felt closer to the Sangha than ever before. The friends I made, I still talk to. It was wonderful to share such a profound experience with kind friends. I am immensely grateful to everyone who made this trip happen. Thank you!"

Shigeo Yoshida

"The YBICSE program granted me a unique experience to visit historic Buddhist sites and allowed me to meet with people similar to my age that

"One particular day of the trip that I can remember was when we were going to meet the students from the Kyoto Women's University. During this day, they mixed up all the cohort members and university students to have us all talk about differences in school lives. It was very fun simply discussing the many ways our school lives differ from one another, but also the many ways they are similar to one another. I think in that there is a very Buddhist sentiment, the idea that we are all, in essence, very similar, one Sangha."

— Travis Nakahira, Orange County Buddhist Church

"Through the program, I had the chance to meet other youth from the BCA, Canada, South America, Hawaii and Japan. Being able to meet other youth through this program was a truly special experience because I was reminded of how we are connected despite having different upbringings, cultures, experiences with Buddhism, time zones, ages or even languages through Buddhism.

"An interesting experience on this trip was seeing how culturally integrated Buddhism is in Japan. To elaborate, for the majority of the program, we stayed near the Nishi Hongwanji temple, where daily and brief morning services are held in comparison to the weekly services we have here.

"I feel that having such convenient access to hearing the teachings of the Dharma at the

or taking walks to stay in the present.

"Overall, the YBICSE program reminded me how I can find the teachings of the Buddha in everyday life and left me with a deeper appreciation for its community and teachings."

Lea Smith

"During the YBICSE program, I began to understand many parts of Jodo Shinshu that I'd never experienced while practicing in Mill Valley.

"One of the first things I was shown on the trip was the correct mannerisms in Jodo Shinshu. Using these helped me act respectfully. I always had helpful people who answered my questions. I also had the opportunity to be taught about the history of Japan along with Jodo Shinshu's history. This included depressing histories like the atomic bombing of

have also been influenced by Buddhism.

"I particularly enjoyed the more social events of the program such as the exchange event held at the Kyoto Women's University. Events such as these allowed me to practice my Japanese and share experiences and interests with others.

"Another aspect of the trip that I enjoyed was the tour of Nishi Honganji. I particularly enjoyed this tour due to my liking of history. The rooms we visited were used by Toyotomi Hideyoshi during the Azuchi Momoyama period (1568–1600) and included raised platforms and optical illusions to make himself look bigger than he actually was.

"Overall, I enjoyed the program immensely and would recommend it to other people as well."

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With Gratitude ~ Palms Together

Grateful Crane

Continued from Page 1

and educate the public about the experiences of first - and second -generation Japanese Americans. The ensemble's theme, "Performing Out of Gratitude," defines its mission of highlighting the hardships and accomplishments that are inspirational for the present generations.

The Grateful Crane performers will include Haruye Ioka, Keiko Kawashima, Merv Maruyama and Ping Wu.

Interspersed throughout the show are period and classic Japanese, American and Buddhist songs to set the musical tone for the show. Pre-war songs include "Shina no Yoru," "Soran Bushi" and "Otomi-san." Camp songs include "Don't Fence Me In" and the "Viva YBA Gatha." Post-war songs include "Amer-



President’s Message

Continued from Page 3

quences of this mathematical approach are to disincentivize the efforts to grow our sanghas.

Further, membership information is collected and forwarded to BCA for only those individuals who “pay” a specified membership dues amount determined at the local temple and church level. How does that capture who is truly an engaged Sangha member in your temple and church? How can we disseminate information and excitement of what’s happening across BCA and its temples and churches without growing our contact database from membership information from the local temple and church?

In my October 2024 article, I asked the question, “Who Is a Member?” I followed with a few thought-provoking questions:

- How does your temple or church count its members? Is it based on a “payment”?
- Does it matter how much an individual offers as a “payment” to be a member?
- Should it matter that the “payment” is offered as a membership fee; a “pledge;” a donation; or a contribution to the maintenance of

the temple or church?

- When you greet an individual who regularly attends temple services, what prevents you from considering that individual a member?
- When has your temple, or resident minister, not provided services to someone in need? Is it based on membership? If services are provided, are they a member?
- Why are not members of Fellowships and Sanghas not counted as BCA members?
- What might be the protocol to count individuals who are members of more than one temple/church?

I encouraged the discussion of who is a “member” to be held at each of our temples and churches a year ago. Since then, I have realized that those discussions will require leadership from the BCA. That leadership must take the form of guidelines, or organizing a set of principles that can be used throughout the BCA.

Without a BCA-initiated set of guidelines, the conversations will not happen and the initiative to increase our membership will continue to be “put on the back burner.” Because a BCA member is a member at the local temple or church, the determination of “Who is a member” must

be decided at the local temple and church.

De-linking the census from dues assessments is a first step in being able to have the conversations about “Who is a member?” This will not be a simple answer since the link between headcount and an individual temple and church’s support to BCA has been a methodology that has worked for decades and has supported the operational needs of BCA.

However, the disincentive perception of building membership that leads to increased dues is real. With declining “paid members” reported from a majority of the temples and churches of the BCA, it will only be accentuated unless there is an intervention.

In the June 2025 National Board meeting, members of the National Board tackled the financial capability priority of the updated strategic plan.

Brainstorming ideas, the breakout room discussions offered some intriguing options on how to think about re-imagining an approach to support the annual operating expenses of the national organization. Among the ideas were:

- Go to a franchise model that is based on a percentage of revenue and income versus headcount and use the districts versus temples and churches as the basis.

- Diversify and secure other streams of revenue as a supplement to temple and church dues assessments.
- Seek “non-member” revenue.
- Freeze the dues assessments per temple or church with the BCA annual budget in year 0, and increase annually on an agreed-upon percentage over “x” many years.

Increasing the number of supporters and members is an obvious way to build strength at the local temple and church level. Removing the disincentive to increase numbers that increases the financial burden of the local temple/church is the goal.

In the end, it is BCA’s responsibility to ensure that its actions and efforts align with the needs of members at the

local level. Our ability to create value and benefit all who are actively engaged will only be enhanced with increased numbers in the census from local temples and churches.

While we build strength, we need to realize that the long-term result will be increased revenue. However, we need not be short-sighted in trying to financially balance the need for increased services and programs with an increased membership, and, therefore, increased costs to the temples and churches. It will take time to realize increased revenues with increased membership, but membership increases are foundational to being able to achieve that financial capability.

Thank you for your input and comments. My inbox is always available at: sterusaki@bcahq.org I look forward to hearing from you.

Bishop’s Message

Continued from Page 2

he explained that once he was playing the cello in a concert and he was trying to play a perfect concert, but he was bored out of his mind.

It was then that he realized something. He realized that the object of his music was not perfection, but it was to transmit something that lives on in somebody else, to transmit something that lives on in somebody else.

We could say that we are doing the same thing. We are transmitting something that lives on in somebody else. What are we transmitting? We are transmitting the teachings, the Dharma, the Nem-buttsu, so that it lives on in somebody else — in our children, in our grandchildren, in our great-grandchildren, in those who are encountering the Dharma for the first time and in those who have been lifelong Buddhists.

As you face your life ahead of you, I hope that you will find that the Dharma is a foundation for your life like the ground that you stand on. I hope you will find that the Dharma is the anchor of your ship of life that keeps you from drifting aimlessly. I hope that you find that the Dharma is the pathway for your life to maneuver the many twists and turns, and the ups and downs of life that

you will go through.

Someday, you will meet the love of your life, but at the same time, you might lose the love of your life. Someday, you might get your dream job, but you also might be laid off from your dream job. Someday, you might get the sports car of your dreams, but you also might not be able to afford even a used Prius. Life will present many challenges to you as it does to all of us.

What can remain as a constant for us is the Dharma, the teachings, that you might not always think of, but I hope will be what you will fall back on when you feel sad or lonely, when you feel lost, when you feel that the world around you is dark and gloomy, when you feel that the whole world is working against you and nothing seems to go right.

That is when the Dharma might really come alive for you, at your lowest moment and at your darkest time. That is when great immeasurable light can illuminate your heart and mind and you will know what needs to be done and you will know what direction to go in life.

Through your years of attending the temple, attending Dharma School classes, going to Jr. YBL seminars, retreats and conferences, listening to a variety of speakers, I think that — although you might not feel that way now — something has been trans-

mitted to you that lives on in you.

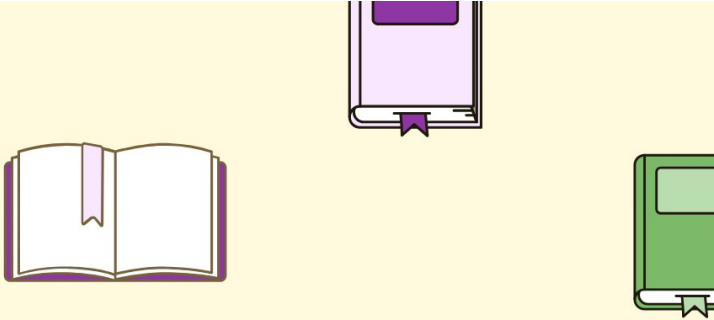
That something might lay dormant for some time, for even years, but at the right time, with the right life experience, the Dharma will emerge in your life if it hasn’t already.

It is then that you will find a deeper meaning in the teachings. You will find meaning in the Three Treasures of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. You will find meaning in your own life that you have been given out of eons and eons of time.

You have this one life to live. You have this one life to cherish. You have this one life to find meaning, depth and fulfillment.

May you find that the Dharma is your life companion, that it is your silent but steady friend, that it is your center of being, that it is the very marrow of your bones and that it is always with you, always a light, always a source of wisdom and insight, always a source of warmth and compassion.

It is my hope that this Southern District Jr. YBL Conference will continue for another 75 years, and someday at a future anniversary like this one, some of you might be a minister, or a Jr. YBL adviser, or a YBL parent or maybe the Bishop of the BCA, and you too can share the Dharma so that it lives on in somebody else.



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今月の法話

「凡夫である私」

ガーデナ仏教会 開教使 庵原ジョン



Rev. John Iwohara

親鸞聖人は90歳まで生きた長い人生に、たくさんの著述を著わしました。漢文で書かれたもの、和文で書かれたものがあります。漢文で書かれたものの中、御本典と呼ばれている『顕浄土真実教行証文類』、略して『教行信証』があります。当時、漢文の書き物の方が学問的であり、レベルが高いと思われていました。それに対して、和文は一般的であり、庶民的であると思われました。しかし、親鸞聖人はたくさん和文の著述を残しました。

今回、和文で書かれた『一念多念文意（いちねんたねもんい）』と題された著述について述べていただきたいと思います。『一念多念文意』は法然上人の弟子であった隆寛（りゅうかん）律師が書かれた『一念多念分別事（いちねんたねんぶんべつじ）』に基づいていると言われています。『一念多念分別事』と『一念多念文意』のテーマは一念か、多念か、即ち一声の念仏の一念義なのか、又は数多くの念仏を称えなければならぬの多念義なのか、どちらが阿弥陀如来の極楽浄土に往生するためには正しい行為であるのかという論議に対する書き物です。結論として、『一念多念分別事』も『一念多念文意』のいずれも、お念仏は称える数ではありません、と書かれています。つまり、お念仏が問題するのはそれが衆生を救うか救わないかということです。お念仏の称える数が問題ではありません。

お念仏を称える数がどうして問題にならないかと言えば、これはあまり適当な例えではありませんが、オレンジ・ジュースの味を分けるには一カップが必要か100リットルが必要かは問題にならないようなものです。飲むか飲まないかが問題です。飲まなかったならば、一カップでも100リットルがあっても意味がないのです。

一カップを飲めばそれだけでオレンジ・ジュースの味

が分かります。しかし、味が分かったから、美味しいと思うようになったからもう飲まなくてもいいということではありません。他力信心のお念仏を称えれば、本願力の働きが完成するのですが、その喜びは続くのです。しかし、ここで注意しなければならないのは救われる者が救われたからと言って、救い働きにもう頼らなくてもいいというわけではありません。例えば、救命浮き輪にかまっている人はもう沈まなくてもすむのですが、だからと言ってその人が泳げるようになったとは言えません。泳げないままです。救命浮き輪を手放せば、また沈みます。

その事実について、『一念多念文意』のなか、浄土真宗がいう「凡夫（ぼんぷ）」についての定義もされています。それは次の言葉です。

「凡夫」といふは、無明煩惱われらが身にみちみちて、欲もおほく、いかり、はらだち、そねみ、ねたむころおほくひまなくして、臨終の一念にいたるまで、とどまらず、きえず、たえずと、水火二河のたとへにあらはれたり。

現代語に直すと、次のようになります。

「凡夫」というのは智慧のない煩惱にあふれている自分であり、欲望も多く、怒りや腹立ちやそねみやねたみの心ばかりで絶え間なく起り、まさに命が終わるまでには止まることなく、消えることもなく、絶えることもない二ヶ白道の例えに示されている通りです。

この定義によると、凡夫の私たちが本願に救われたと言えても、その時点で仏様になったわけではありません。まだ凡夫のままです。しかし、残念ながら凡夫であるからこそまだ凡夫であってもそれに甘えるのです。何でもかんでも自分が凡夫だと言って自分が起こしてしまうすべての事を自分で許す傾向があると思います。「私は凡夫だから」と言うのです。凡夫であることは確かでしょうけれども、そう軽く受けるべきではありません。そのままではまだ沈む一方、泳げないままです。救命浮き輪がなければ、沈んで死にます。しかしながら、残念なことに人は時々、凡夫であることを自慢する場合もあるようです。

『一念多念文意』の言葉をもう一回見ると、「欲もお

ほく、いかり、はらだち、そねみ、ねたむころおほくひまなくして、臨終の一念にいたるまで、とどまらず、きえず、たえず」と書かれています。自分がこのような人間であると言われることは嬉しくないはずですが、逆にそういうわれたら、否定するでしょう。けれども、恥ずかしながら、私の場合はそれを否定はできません。

実は、この記事を書くには締め切りの時間に追われ、だいぶ苦労しました。法話に当たっても、記事に当たっても、「自分のお念仏の喜びを語るべき」と教えられましたが、法話も記事も時間に焦っていると全然楽しく感じません。全く喜べないのです。「何でこれをしなければならぬのか」とまで感じました。しかし、焦っている気持ち収めると、特にうまくいったと感じた場合は元氣と自信いっぱいになります。自分が最高と思うぐらいいです。自分が偉いと思えます。そして、残念ながら、自慢していると、自分に酔っぱらっていて、なかなかお念仏が出てこないようすです。出てこないだけではなく、考えないのです。逆に、もううまくいかない場合はお念仏よりもため息がでます。恥ずかしながら、これが私の本当の姿です。救いのない存在です。

しかし、南無阿弥陀仏はその救いのない私に、例えばお寺でよくあげる「我建超世願（が・こん・ちよう・せ・がん）」「われ、世を超える願を建てる」を聞かせているのです。阿弥陀如来様は世を超える願をたて、その心を私に与えようとしているお念仏に遇わせます。自分が自分に酔っぱらっているとき、お念仏を聞こうとしないとき、お念仏を受け入れないようにしているとき、「誓不成正覚」「誓って、正覚（さとり）をとらない」と私のわがままの責任まで取ろうと約束する南無阿弥陀仏であります。救われるはずのない私であってもどうしても救わなければならないと思つて下さる本願を建ててください、それを苦勞の上の苦勞があつて完成してください。南無阿弥陀仏です。

凡夫であることを自慢できる私、凡夫であることを反省せず、軽く受け取る私に南無阿弥陀仏があります。南無阿弥陀仏を思わない、感謝しない凡夫である私のために「とどまらず、きえず、たえず」「止まることなく、消えることもなく、絶えることもない」の南無阿弥陀仏があつて本当に良かったです。有難いです。

南部教区でジュニアYBA大会

75周年記念大会が開催



SD Jr. YBL conference

南部教区ジュニアYBA大会が、カリフォルニア州立ポリテクニク大学のキャンパス内、ケロッグ・ウエスト・カンファレンスセンター&ホテルで開催された。高校生69名のほか、僧侶12名、各寺院のアドバイザーやジュニアYBA卒業生ら約80名が参加した。

テーマは「スタジオ親鸞プレゼンツ：Living in the NOW（今を生きる）」で、本願（ほんがん）に焦点を当てた。

ワークショップでは、エスケープルーム、仏壇の組み立て、太鼓など、さまざまな体験型プログラムが行われ、参加者は積極的に他寺院の高校生たちと交流し、楽しみながら学びを深めた。

開会式ではミズシマ・コウイチさんによる基調講演があり、晩餐会では原田総長が講演した（総長メッセージを参照）。今回は南部教区ジュニアYBAの75周年を祝う記念すべき大会となり、現在、各寺院で代表者を務めている、元ジュニアYBAだったメンバーたちも集い、再会を喜んだ。



SD Jr. YBL conference

法 輪

2025年 10月号

発行所
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San Francisco, CA 94109
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総長メッセージ

「75年間伝わってきたもの」

米国仏教団総長 原田 マービン



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada

編集者注 今月の総長メッセージは、BCA総長、原田マーヴィン開教使が、8月30日にカリフォルニア州立ポリテクニック大学ポモナ校のケロッグ・ウェスト・カンファレンスセンター&ホテルで行われた、南部教区、ジュニア仏教青年会 (Jr. YBA) 大会の晩餐会にてお話しされたものです。大会は8月30日から31日にかけて開催されました(2面に関連記事)。

今回の南部教区ジュニアYBA大会は75回目になります。もしかすると、今夜ここにいる高校生の皆さんの曾祖父母が、1950年に開かれた第1回の大会に出席していたかもしれません。おそらく祖父母が参加していた可能性は高いと思いますし、両親のどちらかが参加していた人はかなりいるのではないのでしょうか。もしかすると、両親がこの大会、あるいは別の教区やお寺で出会い、その出会いがあつてこそ、今日の皆さんのいのちがあるのかもしれません。ちなみに、私自身も地元のアイダホ・オレゴン仏教会で妻と出会いました。

私は1986年にオレンジカウンティ仏教会(OCBC)の開教使として勤め始めました。1988年にOCBCが大会を主催したとき、ニンダ・ニシモト・シンディさんが高校生で大会の実行委員長を務めてくれたことをよく覚えています。そして今は、シンディさんの息子、ジェフリー君が南部教区Jr. YBAの会長をしています。OCBCに赴任して間もなく、16年以上Jr. YBAのアドバイザーをされていた松林ジョージ先生から、その役を引き継ぎました。私は15、16年ほどアドバイザーを務め、とても楽しかったことを覚えています。年月を重ねる中で、私はYBAを通じて出会った若いメンバーた

ちの結婚式を司式しました。新郎新婦の付添人はYBAの仲間たちで、披露宴はまるで小さなYBA大会のようでした。また、多くのYBA会員の祖父母やご両親の葬儀や法事も勤めさせていただきました。

現在ヴェニス本願寺仏教会の駐在開教使であるクオン・コリー先生が、高校生の時、YBAだったことを知っていたか? 先生の奥さんのキムさんは、南部教区Jr. YBAの会長でした。今、クオン先生が開教使となったのは、本当に素晴らしいことです。

また、かつて南部教区Jr. YBA会長を務めた稲永道子さんが、現在BCAのスタッフとして活躍してくれているのも大変うれしいことです。ご主人の稲永グレンさんは、当時Jr. YBAの副会長でしたが、来年からはBCAの会長に就任されます。

このように南部教区は75年間、力強く歩み続けてきました。その間、YBAからは僧侶、BCA会長、寺院会長、日曜学校の先生、リーダー、献身的なメンバーが輩出されてきました。仏法が、世代から世代へと確かに受け継がれてきたのです。

少し前に、チェリストのヨーヨー・マ氏のインタビューを見たことがあります。彼は、演奏会で完璧に弾こうとしていた時は、退屈で仕方がなかったと話していました。けれども、ある時、音楽の目的は「完璧に弾くこと」ではなく、「何かを誰かに伝え、それがその人の中に生き続けること」だと気づいた、と言われていたのが印象に残りました。

考えてみると、私たちも同じことをしているのだと思います。私たちは、他の人の中に生き続けるものを伝えたいのです。それは、仏法や念仏で、それが子どもたち、孫たち、曾孫たち、初めて仏法に出会う人々、生涯仏教徒として歩む人々の中に生き続けるものです。

仏法は、皆さんのこれからの人生で、大地のように人の基盤となり、人生を航海する船を無意味に漂わなないようにする礎となり、でこぼこ道や曲がりくねった道を進むための道しるべとなるものです。

人生では、愛する人に出会う日があるでしょう。しか

し同時に、その愛する人を失う日もあるかもしれません。夢の仕事に就く日があれば、その仕事を失う日もあるかもしれません。スポーツカーを手に入れる日があっても、中古車すら買えない日があるかもしれません。人生には多くの試練があるものです。

そんな時に、常によりどころとなるものが仏法です。悲しい時、孤独な時、迷った時、世の中が暗く感じる時、すべてがうまくいかないと感じる時、仏法は皆さんの心に灯りをともすでしょう。

お寺に通い、日曜学校に参加し、Jr. YBAのセミナーやリトリート、大会に出席し、さまざまな講師の話を聞いてきた皆さんは、今は実感してなくても、すでに何かを受け取っているはずです。その「何か」は、時が来れば必ず芽を出し、皆さんの人生に生きるものとなるでしょう。

その時、三宝(仏・法・僧)に深い意味を見いだし、自分の人生に深い意味を見いだすことができるのです。皆さんには、この一度きりの人生があります。この一度きりのいのちを大切にし、意味と深みと充実を見いだしてください。

仏法は、皆さんの人生のガイドであり、静かで確かな友であり、存在の中心であり、骨の髄にまで染み渡る支えであり、常に智慧と慈悲を与えてくださる光です。

この南部教区Jr. YBA大会がさらに75年続き、将来の記念大会において、ここにいる誰かが僧侶となり、アドバイザーとなり、保護者となり、あるいはBCA総長となつて、仏法を他の人の中に生き続けさせる存在となつてくださることを心より願っています。

2025 第7回ノースウエスト甲子園

野球殿堂入りを果たしたイチロー選手の背番号51番が、シアトルマリナーズの永久欠番となり、そのセレモニーが8月9日に行われた。それと同日、シアトル、タコマ、ホワイトリバーの3か所の球児たちが、タコマのやや北にあるFederal Wayの球場に集結した。第7回のノースウエスト甲子園。今年、優勝トロフィーを手にするのは、どのチームになるのだろうか。

第一試合は、シアトル対タコマ。タコマが先制するも、猛打がさく裂したシアトルが逆転し、10対5でシアトルの勝利。第二試合は、タコマ対ホワイトリバー。タコマ打線が打ち出の小づちのごとくヒットを量産し、12対2で勝利。第三試合は、ホワイトリバー対シアトル。初の決勝進出を目指すホワイトリバーが意地を見せるも、そ



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の猛攻をシアトルが防ぎ切り、9対8でシアトルの辛勝。

この結果、7大会連続で、決勝戦はシアトル対タコマという同じ組み合わせとなった。これまでの決勝戦での対戦成績は、タコマの3勝2敗1引き分け。シアトルとすれば、勝って決勝戦での成績でタコマに追いつきたいところだ。これまで何度も対戦を重ねてきた両チーム。お互いに研究を重ね、相手の攻撃パターンを知り



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