



WHEEL OF DHARMA

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The Kyoshi ministerial candidates assemble for a group photo in the Jodo Shinshu Center's Kodo in Berkeley, California, at the Kyoshi Certification Retreat. Shown, from left, are: Igor Makasyuk, Jan-Marc Nottelmann, Sterling Davenport, Michael Jones, Devon Matsumoto, Blake Honda and David Quirke-Thornton. (Courtesy of Rev. Michael Endo)

New Ministers Hail From US, Europe

Kyoshi Certification Retreat Held Outside Japan at JSC for Only the Second Time

By Dennis Akizuki
Wheel of Dharma
Correspondent
and Jon Kawamoto
Wheel of Dharma Editor

For only the second time in Hongwanji-ha history, a Kyoshi Certification Retreat (“Kyoshi Kyoshu”) was held outside of Japan at the BCA’s Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley, California.

The retreat, which was held from Oct. 31 to Nov. 8, 2024, was a 10-day intensive program featuring services three times a day, special training in chanting and rituals, lectures on Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu, and dialogue and

discussion among the participants and their instructors.

Kyoshi is like receiving teaching certification to teach Jodo Shinshu on behalf of the Nishi Hongwanji. Kyoshi is required to be a resident minister (“jushoku”) in Japan, and it is required to become a Kaikyoshi in the BCA.

BCA ministers Rimban Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki and Rev. Tadao Koyama taught chanting and liturgy.

Two instructors came from Japan to teach the chanting and rituals, Rev. Gentoku Nishioki and Rev. Jun Anezaki, both from the Hongwanji-ha training center, the Nishiyama Betsuin, in Kyoto, Japan.

FYI

Meet the Ministers: They describe their memorable experiences at Kyoshi training. Pages 10-11.

Instructors included ministers and professors from the BCA and Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS). Because of the JSC and because the BCA has trained and qualified teachers, the Hongwanji-ha has agreed to hold the Kyoshi retreat in the United States instead of in Japan. The BCA is also allowed to tailor the instruction and curriculum for serving as a minister overseas,

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Bartender Acts Quickly, Puts Out Fire at Spokane Temple

Blaze Is Extinguished Outside Structure; Tree Burned

By Jon Kawamoto
Wheel of Dharma Editor

A bartender at Spokane’s South Perry Lantern is being praised by Spokane Buddhist Temple members for racing across the street and putting out a fire outside the temple on the afternoon of June 8.

Security video shows bartender Stefan Vill-Olson running with a fire extinguisher after he spotted the fire and heard someone calling 911

to report it, according to published reports by KREM 2 News.

“Frankly, we were lucky that the fire was rather small and put out quickly,” said Spokane Buddhist Temple President Joe Bracco. “The tree that was burned was going to be removed and was only perhaps 6 feet high. We were lucky that the fire occurred during the day so it was noticed and put out quickly. We were lucky that the fire did not spread to

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Sumi Tanabe Breaks Barriers, Blazes Trails for Women

Pioneer’s Impact Felt at San Jose Betsuin — and Throughout the BCA

By Dennis Akizuki
Wheel of Dharma Correspondent



Sumi Tanabe

She’s called out ministers when she thinks they’re wrong, started programs to feed the homeless and blazed trails in leadership for women at her temple and the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA).

Continued on Page 6

BCA National Board Sets New Goals for Strategic Plan

By Jon Kawamoto
Wheel of Dharma Editor

Efforts to move BCA’s vision and strategic plan forward took a quantum leap at June’s National Board Meeting with participants coming up with several new goals.

BCA Vice President John Arima, Chair

Continued on Page 8



Members of the Sakura Square Redevelopment Committee meet with Denver Mayor Mike Johnston in the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple gym on May 21. The mayor toured the temple and Sakura Square to discuss plans for the downtown redevelopment. See story, Page 5. (Courtesy of Alison Nishi)

BISHOP’S MESSAGE

‘No Bada Me’ — and Its Very Buddhist Lessons



By Rev. Marvin Harada
Bishop of the BCA

In a recent monthly online gathering for the Sangha in Texas and for our BCA individual members, we had a new person formerly from Hawaii join our group.

This lady shared that she had recently lost her husband after 63 years of marriage. I was amazed at how she was able to talk about her husband, and not appear despondent or grief stricken.

She shared something that her husband, a Hawaiian, used to say in pidgin — “No bada me.” She said “No bada me” means “No bother me,” or “It doesn’t bother me.” She shared that her husband would say that often in his life and he never let things get to him.

I thought that this was a very Buddhistic expression. Think of how often things bother us in our daily life. We are driving in traffic and someone cuts us off on the freeway. Normally, we curse at them.

What if we could say, “No bada me,” and then continue to drive pleasantly rather than be upset the whole morning just because of that one driver on the freeway.

What if the stock market drops and we lost a ton of money in our investments. Normally, we might be really upset, but what if we could say, “No bada me,” and then move on. What if our boss tells us at work that the company

path (mugedo no michi). This means that for the follower of the Nembutsu, nothing in life is an obstacle or hindrance. Not losing your job, not losing your spouse, not even being told you have cancer is an obstruction. A person of the Nembutsu is able to say, “No bada me.”

This does not mean you have an indifference to life or that you are cold and unemotional. To me, “No bada me,”

lived in the spirit of “No bada me,” or the unobstructed path of the Nembutsu. They have faced great challenges, like living under the rule of tyrants, living through world wars, surviving the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, enduring the internment camps in the United States, and facing the loss of a loved one or, in some cases, many loved ones.

Those Nembutsu followers

Throughout the history of Shin Buddhism, countless Nembutsu followers have lived in the spirit of “No bada me,” or the unobstructed path of the Nembutsu. They have faced great challenges like living under the rule of tyrants, living through world wars, surviving the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, enduring the internment camps in the United States, and facing the loss of a loved one or, in some cases, many loved ones.

is downsizing and looking for younger staff and that we are being laid off. What if we could say to ourselves (but not directly to our boss), “No bada me.” What if we go for our annual checkup and the doctor says to us, “I am sorry but I have bad news. Your X-ray shows that you have cancer.” What if we could respond with, “No bada me.”

Shin Buddhism has a statement just like that. In the “Tannisho,” Shinran Shonin’s devout follower, Yuien, recalls Shinran Shonin to say that the Nembutsu is the unobstructed

does not mean, “I couldn’t care less,” or “Who cares?” It means to have the wisdom to not let things get to us, from small things to big things.

For this lady from Hawaii, I am sure she deeply misses her husband and is grieving in her own way, but she is not devastated by losing her husband. She has learned his attitude of living a life of “No bada me,” and is facing this great challenge with the same spirit that her husband lived with.

Throughout the history of Shin Buddhism, countless Nembutsu followers have

found not only comfort and solace in the Nembutsu, but they found light, wisdom, strength, and a will to live on, in the face of great adversity. Some have had to follow the Nembutsu path in secret, meeting in caves to avoid being executed for simply following their religious faith.

That is the life that the Nembutsu offers us, the great unobstructed path in which nothing in life is an obstacle. We just recite the Nembutsu and move on, or, if we are from Hawaii, we might say, “No bada me!”

Are You Practicing Anticipatory Driving — in Life?



By Rev. Yushi Mukojima
Mountain View Buddhist Temple

My daughter is now 16 — the age when she’s eligible to get her driver’s license. A few years ago, she used to say, “When I turn 16, I want to drive.” But now that the time has come, she doesn’t seem quite as interested. She hasn’t mentioned going to the DMV, and it still surprises me that she’s already old enough to drive.

If she does get her license and begins driving, I know I’ll worry. That’s only natural — every parent worries when their child first gets behind the wheel. I remember when I got my license more than 30 years ago in Japan, my parents constantly reminded me to “drive safely.” Back then, it felt like

they were just nagging me — but now, as a parent myself, I truly understand the love and concern behind their words.

I still remember something from the driver education course I took at the time. An instructor asked us, “What kind of driving is most likely to cause an accident?” Students offered answers like drunk driving, drowsy driving, and distracted driving. But the instructor told us all those answers were wrong.

He said the real answer was assumptive driving — that is, driving based on assumptions about what others will or won’t do. For example: assuming other drivers will yield when you merge, assuming no one will cross the street in a residential area, or assuming that driving a short distance after drinking is no big deal. In each case, it’s not the condition itself that’s dangerous—it’s the overconfidence of thinking, “It’ll probably be fine,” that often leads to serious and irreversible accidents.

Now, decades later, I drive with the confidence that comes from experience. But when I think back to that lesson,

I realize I may have become more of an assumptive driver myself. That beginner’s humility I once had has faded. This

it’s not just about how we drive — it’s also about how we live. We all know, at least intellectually, that life is imper-

If we live with the awareness that life is uncertain — that this day may be our last or that this conversation may be the final one we have with someone — we begin to live more fully. In that awareness, anger naturally softens, gratitude deepens and our relationships become more sincere. We start to appreciate being alive in each moment and to cherish all that supports our lives.

realization brings about deep self-reflection.

And when we think more broadly about “assumptive driving,” we may notice that

manent. Yet most of us live as if tomorrow is guaranteed. We make plans, carry frustrations,

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Ministerial Assignment

Rev. Yuki Himeji, a 2024 International Ministerial Orientation Program (IMOP) participant, was approved for an R-1 visa to become a BCA member.

Rev. Himeji, his wife and child are expected to arrive in the United States in July 2025. He will be assigned to the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple.



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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

Summer Brings Energy of Obon Season and Time to Pause, Reflect



By Steven Terusaki
BCA President

As we step into the heart of summer, I am reminded of the impermanence that defines our lives. The warmth of July brings with it longer days, warmer temperatures and a vibrant energy that invites us to dance and share community during Obon season.

It also offers a time to pause and reflect on the value of our Shin Buddhist practice. In a world that is constantly evolving, we at the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) are also embracing change while staying grounded in the teachings of the Dharma.

Reflecting on the Path Ahead

July marks the midpoint of the year — a time to evaluate our journeys, both as individuals and as a community. This year, we have seen the results of our Dharma Forward campaign; new initiatives taking root that foretell the future of BCA, and an expanding reach of Buddhist teachings within diverse communities through social media and through efforts of each of you at the local temples. It is a testament to the tireless efforts of our members, ministers and volunteers who have worked to adapt the wisdom of the Dharma to meet modern challenges.

Growth also comes with its own set of challenges. Change is inevitable, whether in our personal lives or our collective endeavors. In such times, it becomes even more vital to return to the teachings of impermanence, patience and gratitude. These core principles remind us that every difficulty is an opportunity for learning, and every moment, a chance to cultivate compassion.

Dharma Forward

\$15,000,000



Donate to Dharma Forward and help the BCA reach its goal of \$15 million by the end of the year. Be part of a growing circle of donors empowering spiritual leadership, sharing wisdom, and building a compassionate, connected community for the future. To donate, go to: <https://bca.kindful.com/> or contact Michiko Inanaga at minanaga@bcahq.org

Practicing Gratitude

July is also a time to express gratitude — not just for the sunny days and the beauty of summer, but for the inter-

connectedness that sustains us. Our sangha thrives because of the contributions of every individual. Whether you have participated in temple

activities, supported others in their practice, or simply taken a quiet moment to reflect on the Dharma, your efforts are deeply appreciated.

Let us also extend our gratitude outward to the greater community. By embodying the principles of kindness and mindfulness, we can inspire positive change in the lives of those around us. In a world marked by division and “othering,” our practice serves as a bridge to understanding and compassion.

Support Dharma Forward

As we live a life of gratitude and work together to ensure the future of the Dharma, I humbly request your support for the Dharma Forward campaign.

This initiative is dedicated to sustaining our temples, investing in our ministry, expanding access to Buddhist teachings and fostering a resilient sangha for generations to come. Your contributions, whether through donations, volunteering or spreading the word, are invaluable in help-

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Don't Be a Bully — Be Kind and Respectful

Editor's note: BCA Minister Emeritus Rev. Ron Miyamura, former Resident Minister of the Midwest Buddhist Temple (MBT) in Chicago, delivered the following Dharma message on Feb. 9. The Wheel of Dharma is reprinting his message, which appeared in the MBT newsletter The Bulletin, with Rev. Miyamura's permission.



By Rev. Ron Miyamura
BCA Minister Emeritus

This morning, I would like to talk about “The Golden Chain” and Karma.

“The Golden Chain” tells us to “think pure and beautiful thoughts, say pure and beautiful words and to do pure and beautiful deeds.”

It is a reminder of how we think, say and act ... this is really our Karma.

The way I look at Karma, there are two kinds of Karma. One is passive and the other is active.

Our passive Karma is what we are born with. We inherit most of it from our parents.

I was born from Japanese American parents in rural Northern California. I was destined to have black hair, brown eyes, and would not get taller than 5-foot-6, which made my dream of dunking a basketball fail.

We just have to accept the limitations of our passive Karma.

However, the active Karma is something we can do something about. What I think, say and do are controlled by me, and I have to be responsible for what I think, say and do.

And, we have to know that it all starts with what I think. My brain has a thought, and then, I say something. My brain thinks of something and I do something.

So, we have to know what and how we think.

If you are mean and a bully, you want to hurt and control others. And I guess, if you are female and you are a mean girl, then if you are a mean girl, you want to hurt and control others.

We don't want to be bullies or mean girls.

What is it like to be the victim of bullies and mean girls? I think we all have been victims and it is not a good feeling.

No, we want to be kind and respectful. You try to help others and to share.

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The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) students, faculty, trustees and friends gathered on May 21 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California, to celebrate the graduating students. (Courtesy of Slava Blazer Photography)

IBS Holds Commencement at JSC

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

INSTITUTE OF
BUDDHIST
STUDIES



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Edward Tcheleshev
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Certificate in Buddhist Studies

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Maria Nicolacopoulou

Certificate in Shin Buddhist Studies

Rev. Dr. Jean-Paul DeGuzman
Galen Gorelangton
Rev. Rosalie May
Mariko Nishiyama
Sara Perrott
Sharon Sasaki

Students, faculty, trustees and friends of the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) gathered at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley, California, on May 21 to celebrate the graduating students.

Dr. Thomas Calobrisi delivered the commencement address. Faculty and staff also led a memorial service for Camille Reddy, an IBS student who passed away this spring.

Following Dr. Calobrisi's address and remarks by IBS Dean Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji

and and Dr. Leroy Morishita, Rev. Dr. Miyaji acknowledged the 2025 graduates, and conferred degrees and certificates to the following students:

2025 Degree Graduates
Chris Rolitsky, Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies
Sydney Shiroyama, Master of Buddhist Studies
Amy Shoemaker, Master of Divinity

Certificate in Buddhist



The Federation of Dharma School Teachers' Leagues (FDSTL) conference was held on April 26 at the Gardena Buddhist Church. The keynote address was given by Rev. Ko'e Umezu, left, Assistant Minister at the West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple. Participants included two teachers, right, from the Mililani Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Hawaii and Rev. Shinkai Murakami, below, of the Wailuku Hongwanji Mission in Hawaii. (Courtesy of Darlene Bagshaw)

FDSTL Conference Held at Gardena

Event Attracts
85 Teachers;
30 Attend Online

By Darlene Bagshaw
FDSTL President

The Federation of Dharma School Teachers' Leagues (FDSTL) conference was held on April 26 at the Gardena Buddhist Church (GBC) and attracted 85 teachers — and an additional 30 teachers attended online.

This year's conference theme of "Acceptance, Understanding and Respect" was conveyed throughout the day, under the guidance of conference chair Nadine Kakimoto of GBC.

Events included the keynote address by West Los Angeles Assistant Minister Rev. Ko'e Umezu; well-planned workshops; the BCA's Social



Welfare Committee video; and "A Profound Silence" video by Ichi-mi, the GBC affiliated group that provides a safe place for LGBTQ+ Sangha members.

In addition, two teachers from the Mililani Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Hawaii and Rev. Shinkai Murakami of the Wailuku Hongwanji Mission in Hawaii also attended the conference.

During the conference, the following teachers were recognized for their milestones:

Bishop's 10-Year Service Award

- Krysty Emery (Sacramento)
- Tara Tamaribuchi-Gibbs (Seattle)
- Chris Hirata (Orange County)
- Mae Yamasaki (Tacoma)
- Claire Murata (Seattle)

FDSTL Recognition for 25 Years of Service

- Ayako Hirano (Pasadena)
- Alice Horio (Berkeley Hingashi)
- Judy Watanabe (Salt Lake)

FDSTL Recognition for 50 Years of Service

- Sharon Kawakami (Orange County)

'Songs & Dances of Resilience' Set July 23

Activists and icons PJ Hirabayashi, Nobuko Miyamoto and Tiffany Tamaribuchi will be featured in a virtual workshop, "Songs & Dances of Resilience, Gratitude, Joy, and Hope" at 6 p.m. PST on Wednesday, July 23.

Each artist is known for leading many ensembles, including Taiko Peace, Great Leap and JO-Daiko, respectively.

Presented by the BCA Music Committee

Obon/Taiko Subcommittee and the Center for Buddhist Education, the event will offer instructions on "Ei Ja Nai Ka," "120,000 Stories," and "Joy Bubble."

Methods to support and strengthen engagement will be the focus for participants.

To register, go to <https://bit.ly/BCA-SDRGJH>

There is no fee, but donations are welcomed.



BCA Music Committee

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that Nobuko Miyamoto and Elaine Fukumoto choreographed a new Bon Odori to "120,000 Stories" that premiered in 2024 at FandangObon in Los Angeles?

Please listen to the original song from Nobuko's album "120,000 Stories" at: bit.ly/406L3kx

See the flyer to register for the webinar on July 23 to learn more about the creative effort to make a new version of "120,000 Stories" that ties Bon Odori to the Japanese American incarceration history.

JOIN US FOR

SONGS & DANCES OF
RESILIENCE,
GRATITUDE,
JOY, AND HOPE

DANCES THAT SUPPORT &
STRENGTHEN ENGAGEMENT

WEDNESDAY, JULY 23, 2025 | 6:00 PM PST

PJ HIRABAYASHI - EI JA NAI KA
NOBUKO MIYAMOTO - 120,000 STORIES
TIFFANY TAMARIBUCHI - JOY BUBBLE

REGISTER AT: [HTTPS://BIT.LY/BCA-SDRGJH](https://bit.ly/BCA-SDRGJH)
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a nationwide young adult
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role models to younger Buddhists

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values and knowledge

3 spreading Dharma and applying
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SUMMER PACIFIC SEMINAR

Center for Buddhist Education, Institute of Buddhist Studies, Jodo Shinshu International Office, BCA Film & Video Committee

BUDDHISM &
MOVIES







Ming Lai is a filmmaker and photographer. His narrative and documentary films explore the human condition, from social issues to arts and culture. He's created TV commercials and videos for many international clients, including Coldwell Banker, Epson, Fujitsu, Marukome, and Yakult. His fine art and documentary photography express his artistic vision. With all of his projects, he strives to create enduring works of art that benefit humanity.

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.

Victor Ogundipe received Tokudo ordination in September of last year. He is a student at the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) in the Master's of Divinity program. Victor and his family, his wife of 13 years, Mylinda, and his 8-year-old daughter, Sati, just moved to the Bay Area in fall of last year. Victor works as a data scientist at the University of Michigan. He enjoys learning new things, visiting new places (especially visiting Buddhist temples and sanghas that he has never visited before), and he is very interested in exploring ways of sharing the Dharma through film.

AUGUST 1-2

JODO SHINSHU CENTER, 2401 DURANT, BERKELEY, CA 94704
IN-PERSON (ZOOM AVAILABLE)
REGISTRATION: [TINYURL.COM/SUMPAC](https://tinyurl.com/sumpac)



Denver Mayor Mike Johnston, fourth from right in far left photo, and representatives of Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple, the Sakura Foundation, and Sakura Square, LLC, gather for a group photo in front of “The Seeds We Sow” mural by Casey Kawaguchi at Sakura Square. At left, Mayor Johnston speaks with Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple (TSDBT) Resident Minister Rev. Diana Thompson in front of the Onajin. (Photos courtesy of Alison Nishi)

Denver Mayor Tours Tri-State/Denver Temple, Sakura Square

His Visit Comes
Amid Plans to
Develop, Revitalize
Downtown Area

By Alison Nishi
Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple

The Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple and Sakura Square welcomed Denver Mayor Mike Johnston for a visit on May 21 — and the special occasion was marked by the rare blooming of wisteria in the temple courtyard.

The mayor toured the temple and other parts of Sakura Square, the Japanese American block where the temple is located, to learn about plans for the redevelopment of the area, including a new temple that will continue to serve as a spiritual and cultural center for Denver and nearby communities.

Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple Resident Minister Rev. Diana Thompson shared with him the teachings and traditions of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, as well as the rich history of our community and temple.

The mayor’s visit comes at a time when both the city of Denver and Sakura Square are working to develop and revitalize the downtown com-



TSDBT Board President Randy Matsushima explains the meaning of wisteria in Shin Buddhism as he shows off the rare blooms in the temple.

munity.

In December 2024, the Denver City Council approved the city’s plan to invest \$570 million to accelerate economic growth in the downtown Denver core. The

downtowns more active,” Mayor Johnston said recently in an interview with Colorado Public Radio. “One is we’re going to move it from what we used to think of as a central business district to what we’ll call a central neighborhood district. It should be a neighborhood like any other. You used to think about it, oh, you live in a neighborhood, but you go downtown. We want downtown to be more of a neighborhood.”

Sakura Square, developed after the building of the current temple in 1947 as a central neighborhood for Japanese American life and culture in the city, is the only remaining ethnic cultural center in downtown Denver.

It draws people of all generations and backgrounds downtown to live religious, cultural and active lives celebrating our interconnection with the history and future of Denver. The temple and Japanese American communities share the city’s vision for downtown Denver.

The temple community in Denver is growing and evolving, as the city and state evolve, with people from all backgrounds attending services (in-person or on the livestream) and participating in our semi-monthly, free online classes.

The central location brings people together from across the Denver metro area and beyond to hear and receive the Dharma, form new connections and build community ties.

At the close of the mayor’s visit, a group photo was taken with representatives of Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple, the Sakura Foundation, and Sakura Square, LLC, in front of one of the beautiful murals created by Casey Kawaguchi over the past year.

His artist statement explains the mural titled, “The Seeds We Sow”: “The character holding the basket represents the strong agricultural heritage of the early Japanese American Colorado community and a nod to Jolie (Noguchi) and Pacific Mercantile.

Her basket is filled with sugar beets, one of the main crops that Japanese Americans farmed in the state in the early 1900’s (sic). Butterflies represent the migration journey, the transformation and change our diaspora has gone through, and the future of Sakura Square. The rising light behind the character evokes a feeling of hope and serenity and symbolizes Sakura Square’s future growth. The Sakura (‘cherry blossom’) is a nod to the namesake.”

Rev. Mukojima

Continued from Page 2

and go to bed assuming we’ll wake up in the morning. We often forget to feel gratitude for the day we’ve just lived. We live as if we believe, “I won’t die today,” or “My loved ones will surely be here tomorrow.”

Living like this — believing in tomorrow without acknowledging life’s uncertainty — is no different from assumptive driving. And just as that kind of driving can lead to accidents, this way of living can lead to

deep regret. At the end of life, we may find ourselves saying, “It wasn’t supposed to be this way,” simply because we never truly accepted that life could end at any moment.

So, what did our instructor say is the safest way to drive? He called it anticipatory driving — always being aware that something unexpected could happen. For example, slowing down on a narrow road at night because someone might step out between parked cars, or keeping a safe distance from the car ahead because it might stop suddenly. Anticipatory

driving means being constantly prepared for the unexpected— not assuming everything will go as we wish.

And just as this is a safer way to drive, it’s also a wiser way to live. If we live with the awareness that life is uncertain — that this day may be our last or that this conversation may be the final one we have with someone — we begin to live more fully. In that awareness, anger naturally softens, gratitude deepens and our relationships become more sincere. We start to appreciate being alive in each moment and to cherish

all that supports our lives.

This way of living is nurtured by the great compassion of Amida Buddha. Embraced by the light of the Nembutsu, we are reminded that while our lives are fragile and uncertain, we are assured of birth in the Pure Land where we attain enlightenment. The Pure Land is not only our destination — it is also the source of peace of mind that allows us to live fully here and now.

Without that assurance, life can feel fleeting and filled with anxiety. But with it, we can move through life with trust

and gratitude, knowing that we are always supported. The Nembutsu — Amida Buddha’s compassionate call, “Rely upon me” — resonates most deeply in our hearts when we live not assumptively, but mindfully and gratefully.

As you go about your daily life—especially when you get behind the wheel — I encourage you to practice “anticipatory driving.” But even more importantly, may we all strive to live each day with an awareness of life’s impermanence, guided by Amida Buddha’s wisdom and boundless compassion.



BCA icon and trailblazer Sumi Tanabe is shown, at far left, as a 3-year-old girl in Fowler, California; singing with a Fresno band as a young woman; and with her parents, Sunato and Toshiye Taniguchi on her wedding day in 1964. (Photos courtesy of Sumi Tanabe)



Sumi Tanabe is shown, at left, in 1972; at center, seated at left holding daughter Eileen for a Taniguchi family photo in 1971; and at right, making strawberry shortcake at the San Jose Betsuin Obon.

Tanabe

Continued from Page 1

Though not even 5-feet-tall, Sumi Tanabe has been a commanding presence in everything she's done, whether it's singing in the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin choir, dancing at Obon or speaking at a board meeting.

Tanabe is unafraid to say what's on her mind and is committed to helping the less fortunate and dedicated to serving her temple, the BCA and Shin Buddhism.

Tanabe was the first female president of the San Jose Betsuin and the first woman to serve as BCA vice president, a position she was elected to three times, the first when there were just a handful of women on the BCA National Council.

Last year, Tanabe, 87, became just the fifth person and first woman to receive the BCA Lifetime Achievement Award, recognizing someone dedicated to heartfelt service to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. She was presented the award at the BCA's National Council Meeting in Sacramento.

Former BCA President Ken Tanimoto calls Tanabe "a living treasure of the BCA."

"I look upon Sumi as a fearless leader who you could not stop for voicing her opinion nor changing her mind if she felt right about," Tanimoto



Sumi Tanabe appears with Kathy Sakamoto, bomori (wife) of San Jose Betsuin Rinban Rev. Gerald Sakamoto.

said last year at a San Jose Betsuin birthday party honoring her. He said Tanabe "broke the glass ceiling for women in BCA leadership."

In the 1990s, BCA wrestled with changing the bishop's term from 10 years to two four-year terms. During the discussion, the minister's association, citing their expertise, argued that only ministers should be on the selection committee.

"I was horrified as I listened," Tanabe recalled. "Finally, I raised my hand and spoke something to the effect that if Shinran was here, he would be disappointed in listening to the ministers. He was always a supporter of equality. He viewed himself as a bumbling fool. He would never see himself as better than others."

Tanabe made the motion to keep the bishop selection committee to remain made up of eight lay members and eight ministers. The motion was seconded and passed. That procedure remains in place today.

In addition to her terms as vice president and national board member, Tanabe was chair of the Wheel of Dharma advisory board, the first chair of the Nomination and Human Resources committees, and a member of the BCA Endowment Foundation board for more than 25 years. She also helped draft the organization's sexual harassment policy.

Tanimoto said her greatest achievement was helping to develop the Center for Buddhist Education (CBE), along with Rev. Kodo Umezu.

"I attended many BCA

meetings in which she was the guiding force, with Rev. Umezu, in CBE's evolution and development," Tanimoto said. "And because of her work ... and Rev. Umezu's vision of teachings of the Buddha, CBE is helping the world with the gift of Shinran's teachings."

Tanabe's activism stretches far beyond the BCA. For decades, she taught Dharma School in San Jose, sang in the Betsuin choir and served on its board of directors, including two stints as the temple president in the 1990s.

of the board that managed the Fuji Towers, a senior citizen housing complex in San Jose Japantown that was begun and initially led by Betsuin members.

For more than 30 years, she was a member of the committee that looks after the Japanese section of San Jose's Oak Hill Cemetery.

She also set an example for women in temple and BCA leadership.

Janice Doi, a former San Jose Betsuin president, said Tanabe is a "wonderful mentor

"I attended many BCA meetings in which she was the guiding force, with Rev. (Kodo) Umezu, in (the Center for Buddhist Education's) CBE's evolution and development. And because of her work ... and Rev. Umezu's vision of teachings of the Buddha, CBE is helping the world with the gift of Shinran's teachings."

— Ken Tanimoto, former BCA President

She started a group to help members of the temple and community through compassionate action, the Sangha Support Committee. She is the San Jose Betsuin's first woman Minister's Assistant.

A retired manager for the West Valley-Mission Community College District, she was a leader in the local American Association of University Women, a longtime member

and friend."

During Tanabe's birthday party at the Betsuin, Rev. Etsuko Mikame said: "Sumi, we look forward to continuing to learn from your kindness and passion, and we hope to embody those qualities in all that we do alongside you."

Born in Long Beach, Tanabe is one of Sunato and

Continued on Page 7



Sumi Tanabe is shown, at top left, with former U.S. Rep. Mike Honda of San Jose. Tanabe was a member of Rep. Honda’s fundraising committee. At top right, Tanabe is with her friends at her 60th birthday party. At left, she is with her late husband Art Tanabe during a vacation in Hawaii. At center, the Tanabes show off their granddaughter Emi in 2009. At right, Tanabe celebrates her graduation from the University of San Francisco in 1992. (Photos courtesy of Sumi Tanabe)

Tanabe

Continued from Page 6

Toshiye Taniguchi’s five children. During World War II, her family was incarcerated first in Jerome, Arkansas, then in Gila River, Arizona. Following the war, her family moved to Fowler, where she began attending Sunday School and was taught by BCA icon George Teraoka.

Tanabe considers Teraoka not only as her teacher, but as a mentor and friend. Teraoka encouraged her to become a Sunday School teacher.

“He taught me that I am never alone, that hate can be overcome by compassion, that I am wholeheartedly supported by Amida Buddha and that I can be like a lotus in the muddy waters,” she said in an August 2024 Wheel of Dharma article.

She and husband Art, who passed away in 2012, have three daughters and two grandchildren. Tanabe said she is grateful for her husband’s support in taking care of the family when she was at meetings and conferences.

In recent years, Tanabe has been slowed by a series of health problems. Last year, she began to use a walker and her powerful voice is now just a



Sumi Tanabe became just the fifth person and first woman to receive the BCA Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition for her dedication to service to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. She was presented the award by Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada at the BCA’s National Council Meeting in Sacramento in 2024.

whisper. She continued to give Dharma talks until she retired as a Minister’s Assistant in June.

Tanabe said she suffers from arthritis, hypertension, diabetes, and more recently a new condition: Parkinson’s disease.

“That’s why my voice is so weak. It’s getting weaker all the time,” she told Sangha members during a recent Dharma talk. She noted she can no longer sing, one of her favorite activities.

Rather than dwell on that, she said it “makes me be more

thankful and grateful for the things I can do, even though they’re small things.

“I can spend time complaining about my condition, saying ‘Oh wow, why did this have to happen to me?’ but it’s a waste of time and energy to think that way,” she said. “It is what it is, it is life, it is reality. Sometimes we’re healthy, sometimes we’re not so healthy.”

“I heard one male delegate saying ‘What is she doing up there?’ He was not ready to have a female cabinet member. There may have been others who felt the same. Women can serve as secretary but not as a VP. One man told me that women should be in the kitchen, and he laughed and said he was kidding. But I knew he was not.”

— Sumi Tanabe

Reflecting on her involvement in the BCA, Tanabe said some BCA presidents supported women and placed them in leadership positions. But she also said it was hard being one of the few women on the BCA National Council when she first joined in the 1990s.

Tanabe recalled some disparaging comments when she was walking up to be sworn in as vice president at a National Council Meeting.

“I heard one male delegate saying ‘What is she doing up there?’ He was not ready to have a female cabinet member. There may have been others who felt the same. Women can serve as secretary but not as a VP. One man told me that women should be in the kitchen, and he laughed and said he was kidding. But I knew he was not.”

She said she is encouraged to see more women become BCA leaders and was ecstatic when in 2024 Terri Omori became the first woman to serve as the BCA president.

“Finally!” Tanabe said. “Terri did a great job, but she will not be the only female to be president. It may not happen in my life, but one day there will be a female Bishop of the BCA!”

50+ Years in the Dance Circle: Miyeko Kubota of LA, Fresno Betsuins

Editor's note: "50+ Years in the Dance Circle" will pay tribute to the extraordinary dance instructors who taught Bon Odori at BCA temples for 50 or more years. This series continues with a tribute to the late Miyeko "Mickey" Kubota of Los Angeles and Fresno.

By Dr. Wynn Kiyama
BCA and Honpa Hongwanji
Mission of Hawaii

Miyeko "Mickey" Kubota (1922 – 2021) studied Japanese classical dance with Kansuma Fujima in Los Angeles, and taught Bon Odori at the Heart Mountain concentration camp, the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, and the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple.

In 1922, Miyeko "Mickey" Azeka was born in Los Angeles, California, to Taketaro and Tokiwa Azeka. The youngest of three daughters, Mickey studied shamisen and singing, attended Japanese language school for 12 years, and excelled in oratorical contests.

She graduated from Lincoln High School in Boyle Heights and started taking Japanese classical dance lessons with

Kansuma Fujima. At the same time, she attended business school and eventually became a secretary for the Los Angeles City Hall.

During World War II, Mickey and her family were incarcerated at the Heart Mountain concentration camp in Wyoming. She worked as a secretary in the Community Enterprises department, which ran the general store and organized movie screenings. In addition, she participated in kabuki productions directed by Tomofuku Nakamura and taught Bon Odori for the Heart Mountain Buddhist Church's Obon.

After the war, Mickey briefly moved to Chicago before returning to Los Angeles, where she helped to teach Bon Odori at the Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. Mickey met James Kubota at a Buddhist conference and the two were married in 1947. The young couple soon moved to Fresno and had four children — Russell, Debbie, Marshall, and Barton. James worked as an attorney and served as City Attorney for Fowler and Parlier, and Mickey worked as a legal secretary, sometimes with her husband.



Miyeko "Mickey" Azeka is shown at the Obon in the Heart Mountain concentration camp in 1943-44. Courtesy of the George and Frank C. Hirahara Photograph Collection, Washington State University Libraries. (Courtesy of George Hirahara)

Mickey Kubota led Bon Odori at the Fresno Betsuin

Buddhist Temple for over 50 years beginning in the late 1950s, teaching dances such as "Bon Odori Uta," "Fresno Ondo," "Shinran Ondo," "Tanko Bushi," and "Yosakoi Naruko Odori" from Fresno's sister city of Kochi.

She choreographed two instrumental works as Bon Odori: Tak Shindo's "Brass and Bamboo" in the 1960s and Mamoru Maseba's "Gumyo" in the 2000s. As a dancer, she was known for her precision, purposeful movements, joyful demeanor, and grace.

Kubota retired in the late 2000s and was featured in the documentary "Hidden Legacy: Japanese Traditional Performing Arts in the World War II Internment Camps" (2014).

To view a full list of 50+ teachers, follow the link: www.bit.ly/fiftyplusyears. If you have an additional dance instructor for the BCA Music Committee to consider, please email Wynn at wynnkiyama@gmail.com.

Wynn Kiyama lives in Honolulu, Hawai'i, with his family and is a member of the BCA and the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. He is currently working on a history of Bon Odori in the continental United States.

BCA Strategic Plan

Continued from Page 1

of the Vision and Strategic Planning (VSP) Committee, led the drive to jump-start the committee's work at the June 8 meeting.

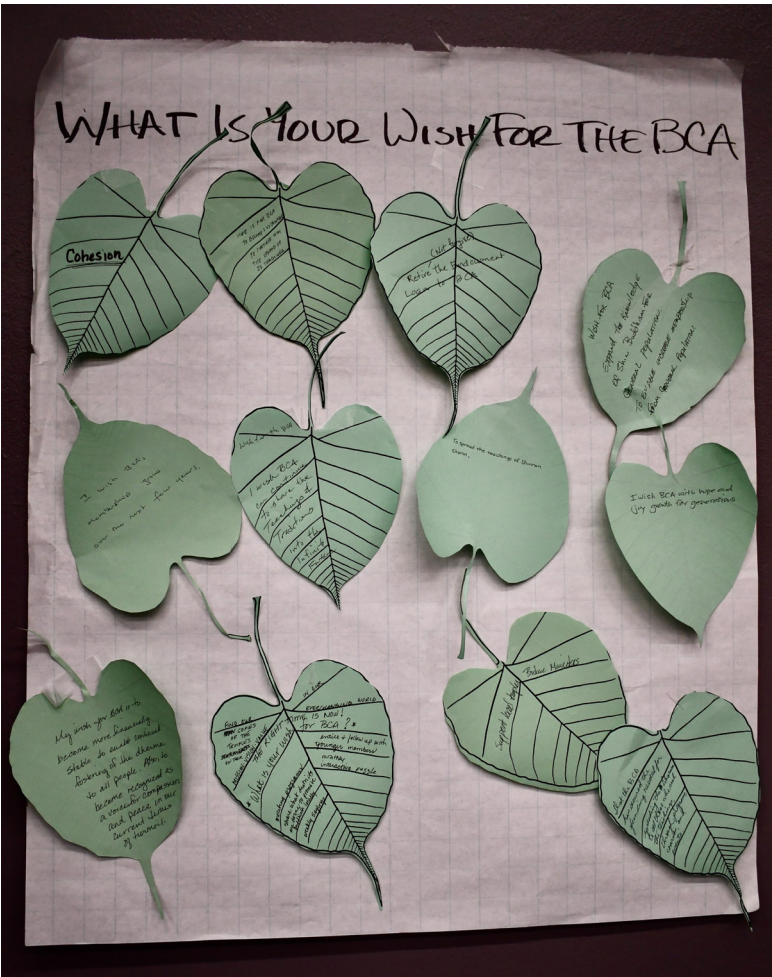
Arima oversaw breakout sessions tackling longstanding BCA issues and topics, including its membership problems, Sangha and community development, financial structure, and ministerial issues.

And he tasked the participants to come up with a set of goals, resources and deadlines within an hour.

"How do we actually make this a document that we can regularly use and not just stick inside the guidebook and wait 20 years from now to look at again," Arima said, adding that the goal is to make the strategic plan a "multi-year document."

Before the participants broke into groups, BCA President-elect Glenn Inanaga emphasized the importance and significance of the moment.

"Just one quick thought, which is one of the biggest complaints that I often hear about the vision and strategic plan is that it is very aspirational and does not get into the reality of what is happening today at the temple," he said. "The work that translates into actual producible results is the work that begins today with all of us. So as we turn it into an everyday action or an everyday goal, this is where you see the vision and strategic



BCA members wrote down their comments, concerns, criticisms and suggestions on "Bodhi leafs" at the 2024 National Council Meeting in Sacramento. In all, eight "Bodhi leaf" projects were held at various BCA conferences and more than 250 leaves were gathered, read and categorized by subject. (Courtesy of Catherine Fujimori)

plan coming into action."

The breakout sessions focused on the following topics:

- Propagation
- Sangha and Community Development
- Financial Capability
- Ministerial Development
- Organizational Development

These topics were established through a series of eight "Bodhi leaf" projects held at various BCA conferences beginning in 2024, kicking off with the National Council Meeting (NCM) in Sacramento. BCA members wrote down their comments, concerns, criticisms and suggestions on a paper Bodhi leaf and more than 250 leaves were gathered, read and categorized.

- Some of the ideas hatched as a result of the breakout sessions included:
- Creating a library of ideas collected from the BCA temples and churches on how to respond to newcomers and to encourage them to get involved, with the eventual goal of increasing membership.
 - Listing the contacts in each temple's directory such as the Dharma school contact, and developing materials to hand out to non-Buddhists who visit temples.
 - Moving away from a flat tax membership assessment to a franchise model, where temples and churches give a percentage of revenue as an alternative to membership head count.
 - Establishing a ministerial affairs committee at each temple and church to increase and facilitate communication between the ministers and their Sangha members.
 - Developing a standard member data collection tool to better understand the needs of the temple population.

The groups all set a deadline of either the next National Board Meeting in December or the next National Council Meeting in February 2026.

Arima was pleased with the

results from all the participants.

"I think this is really a great next step that we've taken as the national board and I want to thank all of you for participating so actively," Arima said. "Being able to kind of float around and watch the interactions and discussions is really encouraging because now we're talking about getting people that have different perspectives or parts of different committees or organizations really trying to come together and have goals that are going to move the BCA forward."

Efforts to establish a long-range strategic plan for the BCA and update both a mission and vision statement began at the December 2023 NBM. There was no five- or 10-year plan for BCA facilities, and no longrange vision and mission and no guidelines beyond the short term, from one fiscal year to the next.

Meanwhile, the VSP Committee has updated its mission statement and vision. The new mission statement is on the wall inside the JSC, next to the key donors of the BCA.

The mission statement is:

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

The vision statement is:

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.

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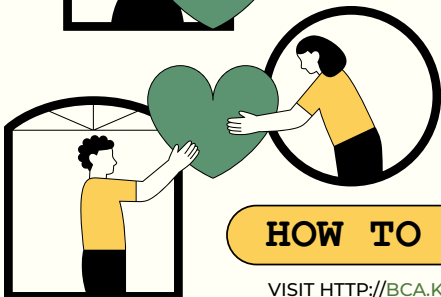
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CBT Marches in Cleveland Pride Parade

By John Barnes

Cleveland Buddhist Temple

The Cleveland Buddhist Temple again participated in the Pride in the CLE march and festival on June 7 when over 25,000 members and supporters of the LGBTQ+ community gathered downtown. The temple was one of 25 religious groups.

“We knew our group was gathering in the right place when we saw a sign proclaiming, ‘Buddhists with Pride,’” said John Barnes, Minister Assistant of the Sangha’s parade unit. “People stopped to ask about our temple. We had handouts with CBT information for those who asked.”

The overall Pride in the CLE messages conveyed love, empathy, compassion, inclusion, justice and kindness. Many of the parents from the religious groups brought their children, demonstrating that they practiced the values they were promoting.

With such a warm welcome, it was easy to believe the T-shirt



Sangha members of the Cleveland Buddhist Temple participate in the Pride in the CLE march and festival on June 7. The temple was one of 25 religious groups that participated. (Courtesy of John Barnes)

messages, including “This pastor loves you,” “This bishop loves you,” or “This pastor’s kid loves you.”

As the Sangha members walked the one-mile route, those values were on full display. Marchers regularly left the route, running to the spectators to offer the “free mom hugs” and “free dad hugs” that their shirts invited. They embraced

as if they were not strangers, but family.

The first four words on the Cleveland Buddhist Temple’s website are “come as you are.” Pride in the CLE demonstrated that central Shin Buddhist theme. Pride in the CLE celebrates each person’s authentic self on full display. Everyone was welcomed, exactly as they were.”

Spokane Fire

Continued from Page 1

the tree next to it and set the temple on fire.

The taller tree had its leaves dried by the heat of the fire and hung over the smaller tree that burned, according to Bracco.

“We are very thankful to Stefan and look forward to continuing to strengthen our relationship with the community,” Bracco said, adding that the temple was “very thankful” for the help of neighbors.

Bracco said “it was very heartwarming to hear the concern from the community. Our neighbors reached out, and the news crew and police were taking this event very seriously.

“I was happy to see how we each helped to clean up, responded to concerns on social media, attended a neighborhood meeting, as well as met with Stefan and presented a gift to him. Everyone did their part,” he said.

He said police are still investigating the fire and are reviewing security camera footage from the neighborhood.

Meanwhile, on June 17, the Spokane Spokesman-Review reported that police were questioning a man seen walking away from multiple fires in the South Hill bluff that burned on May 25. The newspaper did not mention the fire at the Spokane Buddhist Temple and said Spokane police have not made any arrests and continue to investigate.

The South Hill area is nearby the temple, according to Bracco.

Bracco said that, considering the fires in California and



A fire outside the Spokane Buddhist Temple on June 8 was quickly extinguished by South Perry Lantern bartender Stefan Vill-Olson. A small tree burned and was removed in the foreground and the larger tree in the background had its leaves dried. This photo also shows the proximity of the South Perry Lantern, located across the street from the temple. (Courtesy of Joe Bracco)

Seattle, the Spokane temple had reevaluated its insurance and found a policy that would cover religious property. He said the new policy greatly increases the temple’s coverage and reduces its cost.

In addition, Bracco said the temple has installed new smoke detectors that are integrated with the wireless alarm system, so that the fire department can

be alerted instantly even if the temple is vacant.

“The Spokane Buddhist Temple is grateful to Stefan for looking out for our temple and community,” said Rev. Cyndi Yasaki, Supervising Minister of the Spokane temple. “We are very honored to have such amazing community members surrounding us with love and support.”

Kyoshi

Continued from Page 1

instead of serving in Japan.

“We hope to continue this program every four years, which will help to create the pipeline to ordain and train future ministers to serve not only in the BCA, but also to serve in Canada, Hawaii and Europe as well,” said BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada.

The BCA would like to thank the following ministers and officials who participated in the Kyoshi retreat: Bishop Rev. Tatsuya Aoki of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada; Rev. Henry Adams; BCA Minister Emeritus Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi; Rev. Jun Anezaki; Dr. Mark Blum; Rev. Harry Bridge; Rev. Jerome Ducor; BCA Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada; Rev. Jerry Hirano; Rev. Dr. Daijaku Kinst; and Rimban Rev. Katsuya Kusunoki.

Also: Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara; Rev. Eric Matsumoto; BCA Minister Emeritus and IBS President Emeritus Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto; Rev. Etsuko Mikame; Rev. Dr. Takashi Miyaji; Rev. Gentoku Nishioki; Rev. Melissa Opel; BCA Minister Emeritus Rev. Dennis Shinseki; Rick Stambul; Rev. Tadao Koyama; Rev. Jon Turner; BCA Minister Emeritus Rev. Kodo Umezu; and Bishop Rev. Toshiyuki Umitani of the Homba Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii,

Following are brief bios of the Kyoshi participants:

Sterling Davenport

Home Temple: Vista Buddhist Temple

Most Meaningful Kyoshi Moment: “My most meaningful moment was working together one night with everyone after all the training was done. All the other candidates had stayed late that night to prepare for the next day’s service. Although several teachers were there to watch and help us, all the candidates could walk through and practice the entire service without any help. It was great to work with everyone, support each other and practice something we had just learned a couple of hours earlier.

“I remember asking one of the teachers how it looked when we were done, and they smiled and said it looks excellent! No one told us to stay late that night; we just wanted to work together and practice to ensure everything was perfect for the next day. It was a fantastic opportunity to practice rituals, build relationships and experience Sangha.”

Hardest Kyoshi Moment: “As someone who’s usually asleep by 8 p.m., I remember it being very hard to stay up till 11 (p.m.) every single night for 10 consecutive days. I especially remember the last night we had to practice a new chant and for the life of me,



Sterling Davenport

I could not chant my leader line correctly. I knew how to do it; I could do it before we practiced as a group, but I kept getting tongue-tied when we were all practicing together. No matter how many times I tried to do it at the moment, I couldn’t get it to come out right. It was frustrating, but I knew I was just exhausted. The funny thing was, after we were done practicing that night, I remember doing it in my bedroom repeatedly without any problems.”

Kyoshi Reflections: “It was a fantastic opportunity I wouldn’t give up for anything — a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience. I met and got to know so many amazing people. I especially enjoyed hearing everyone’s three-minute reflections after every morning service. It was inspiring and reminded me why we were here and training. Although this was our last step, it was a good reminder that we were just getting started and at the starting line of a much longer journey.”

Future Plans: “Right now, I’m working as a part-time minister and hope to eventually work as a full-time minister. However, I enjoy taking every day one step at a time.”

Blake Honda

Home Temple: Buddhist Church of Fowler

Most Meaningful Kyoshi Moment: “The most meaningful part of Kyoshi was that I somehow made it through. But through deep reflection, it was because of the support of the instructors and my fellow Kyoshi aspirants.

“One noteworthy part is that Judy Kono, Rev. Michael Endo and volunteers kept us well-fed at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) in Berkeley, California. I was grateful for Judy’s deep concern that we were getting the nutrients we needed to keep up with the schedule. Their kindness and act of ‘Mama-san’-ness (acts of parental love) is a wonderful reminder of the compassionate acts of Amida Buddha, reminding me why I am pursuing Kyoshi. I am deeply grateful to be carried through Kyoshi by many wonderful Nembutsu companions.”

Hardest Kyoshi Moment: “I think the hardest part for me was being tested on ‘Toraiban,’ which is a ritual in observance



Blake Honda

of Hoonko (Shinran’s memorial) or other special services. There are many steps, and it never fails that I mess up.”

Kyoshi Reflections: “As I reflect on Kyoshi, and other than the relief that it is done, I am grateful for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I am grateful to all those who were involved in making this happen.

“The staff, volunteers, teachers, donors, and especially Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, who always checked on us every morning to ensure we were well. Or in my case, making sure that I hadn’t escaped.

“Even though I have made it this far, I am humbly reminded that this is just the beginning, which is exciting because I am granted the opportunity to share my joy of Dharma with others and learn from them as well. And all that is required is to continue to learn and help one another ‘Just as we are.’”

Future Plans: “I hope to complete my master in divinity degree at the Institute of Buddhist Studies by the end of this year. And serve as a full-time minister for the Buddhist Churches of America.”

Michael Jones

Home Temple: San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin

Most Meaningful Kyoshi Moment: “During the Kyoshi training, I was given the opportunity to wear (best dressed in) the very formal Shichi-go-gesa (seven panel) robes. These robes are very ornate and very costly. The way in which they are worn is complex and so the minister wearing them requires help from at least one other person to get them on and in place. I had two people dressing me.

“The dressing process took about 30 minutes. We then conducted a service, with me sitting in the officiant position in the Shichi-go-gesa. The robes are very restrictive, which means that reaching for things and placing the service book inside the robes was very difficult. After a while, it becomes very warm.

“It was an honor to be able to wear these robes. I doubt that I will ever wear them again, since it is primarily the Bishop, one of the five Rinban in BCA, or the occasional Resident Minister (Kaikyoshi) who would wear them on rare occasion.”



Michael Jones

Hardest Kyoshi Moment: “After going through Tokudo, it is difficult for me to consider anything in the Kyoshi process difficult. Through the efforts of Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada and Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, we were able to do our Kyoshi training in the United States at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley. The instruction was in English and did not require us to wait for translations after each segment. The number of things to be memorized was minimal.

“That said, the most difficult thing for me was learning to chant the ‘Godensho.’ We had learned to chant the ‘Gobunsho’ in Tokudo. These are the writings of Rennyo, voiced in a melodic and ritualistic manner. The ‘Godensho’ is Shinran’s biography and the style of chanting them is more complex and nuanced. I enjoy doing both, but it will take me much more practice to get the ‘Godensho’ done correctly.

Kyoshi Reflections: “During the Kyoshi training in Berkeley, we had aspirants from Europe. Although they were occasionally on some of our training sessions throughout the year via Zoom, this was the first time we had met them in person. Unlike the five of us from BCA who had completed our Tokudo at the end of 2023, these Europeans had completed their Tokudo ordination several years earlier. However, they have few opportunities to work in a fully functional Jodo Shinshu temple in their home areas.

“The five of us from the United States were very fortunate to be able to better understand the challenges of spreading the teachings from the perspective of these European pioneers. Having them with us, and having such a small group overall meant that we had a lot of time to focus on the rituals, the instruction and the way that each of us approached our practice.

“We were reminded on several occasions that the completion of our Kyoshi journey was not an ending, arriving at a destination. Rather, it is a beginning, and the conclusion of our Kyoshi journey, marked the beginning of our journey to teach and spread the Dharma.”

Future Plans: “My primary goal is to continue to serve the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin and to help the resident ministers in any way I



Igor Makasyuk

can. Because of some current circumstances, I have started to work part-time as a paid Assistant Minister at the San Jose Betsuin. I have also applied to the Bishop and the Hongwanji to be assigned to San Jose as a Kaikyoshi-ho minister.”

Igor Makasyuk

Home Temple: Palo Alto Buddhist Temple

Most Meaningful Kyoshi Moment: “There were moments while learning complex rituals when I would get a palpable feeling that we were following the path that thousands of priests have walked, that we were becoming a part of that group. Reading the ‘Godensho’ by Kakunyo Shonin as part of the service was another such moment. Another moment was the concluding service with ‘Shoshinge’ and chanting the wasans that were chanted at Nishi Hongwanji on that day.”

Hardest Kyoshi Moment: “The sad moment was when I realized that the training was about to be completed and we would not be meeting again, likely, at least not in that group, to study, learn rituals and conduct services together.

“Kadai — tests — were hard. Giving a Dharma message from memory following the Hongwanji ritual was so hard that I barely remember how it went.

“A hard and funny moment was at the last Amida-kyo ritual service. That is a complex three-part ritual that includes circumambulating the Amida Buddha statue while chanting and dropping keha — paper leaves — that we carried in the metal plates, kero. I am the doshi and I lead the chanting from the raiban.

“The second part where we walk around Amida Buddha starts with me getting off the raiban. The egakari who directs the service brings out the kero, I squat and pick it up, everything goes fine. Then I need to start the second part of the sutra by chanting the line and dropping off one leaf. I go under the Amida-kyo book for the keha, but it is not there. The egakari brought out the kero for me but there was not one leaf in it.”

Kyoshi Reflections: “I feel very grateful for being accepted into this tradition now as a priest. We had excellent Nishi

Kyoshi

Continued from Page 10

Hongwanji licensed teachers and countless wonderful ministers who joined in person and on Zoom from all parts of the country, as well as from Canada and Hawaii. They cared to take time out of their schedules to share with us what they have learned over lifetimes of ministry. That experience is priceless and will stay with me.

“I am very grateful to the JSC staff. Although they are called ‘staff,’ they treated us like family. That is another memory that I am keeping from both Tokudo and Kyoshi sessions. The more I learn, the clearer it becomes how little I know. This training was another reminder that the ministry, as life itself, is a continuous learning process.”

Future Plans: “The plan is to continue serving as a Minister’s Assistant at the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple, help conduct services, give Dharma talks, write to the temple Sangha guide, and help the temple and BCA as needed. Also, I plan to complete my Master of Divinity degree and to continue studying.”

Devon Matsumoto

Home Temple: Mountain View Buddhist Temple

Most Meaningful Kyoshi Moment: “My most meaningful Kyoshi moment was being able to listen to the impromptu Dharma reflections from my fellow Kyoshi candidates. It was nice to hear a heartfelt



Devon Matsumoto

unscripted Dharma message.”

Hardest Kyoshi Moment: My hardest Kyoshi moment was everything. From the chanting rituals, Dharma talk, lectures and posture, I felt like I was always stumbling trying to keep up.”

Kyoshi Reflections: “Kyoshi was very meaningful for me, especially that it was held at the JSC. I feel deeply tied to that space. I participated in the Ochigo procession when the JSC first opened and throughout high school attended Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) summits there where we would play hide and seek or sneak into rooms we maybe weren’t supposed to be in. It is crazy to think that this building, where I was given space to be a mischievous teen, is now a space I can think back on as one where I received my Kyoshi certification. It truly reminds me of all that I have benefited from to be where I am today.”

Future Plans: “I plan to



Jan-Marc Nottelmann

move to Japan and attend Chubutsu, and upon my return, pursue Kaikyoshi.”

Jan-Marc Nottelmann

Home Temple: EKO temple, Dusseldorf (Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai)

Most Meaningful Kyoshi Moment: “It was those moments when I felt the personality of a teacher like Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada. Every teacher demonstrated to me in his or her way a mode of being a Shin Buddhist priest.”

Hardest Kyoshi Moment: “Two or three days after the course had started, I felt physically exhausted, but nevertheless, we tried hard to review our lessons until late at night. My younger fellow students helped me a lot with their enthusiasm.”

Kyoshi Reflections: “To be a Shin Buddhist priest is a job for the people. You must love people, if you want to be a good Shin Buddhist priest.



David Quirke-Thornton

This is not my own reflection, but it is kind of the essence.”

Future Plans: “I want to continue to teach Shin Buddhism here in the EKO House, and I want to explain Buddhism easily so that people can understand it.”

David Quirke-Thornton

Home Temple: Jodo Shins-hu United Kingdom (UK)

Most Meaningful Kyoshi Moment: “Being in fellowship with the other Kyoshi aspirants and doing all the services with them. The number of us undertaking Kyoshi was perfect and meant that there was a role for everyone each time we did service. The harmony of the chanting was very powerful and moving. It was a deeply spiritual experience and very meaningful for me. Thank you.”

Hardest Kyoshi Moment: “None, thankfully, due to the incredible support and preparation of our teachers in advance of the Kyoshi session.

Taking place in the United States at the Jodo Shinshu Center was also very helpful and familiar to us all. I am very grateful that Hongwanji-ha allowed this second U.S. Kyoshi session and that they sent such excellent teachers and assessors.”

Kyoshi Reflections: “I hoped to deepen my knowledge and improve my skills to be the best priest I can be in sharing Jodo Shinshu here in the UK and Europe. The Kyoshi session was everything I hoped for and more. It was intense and the days were long and full, but every moment was beneficial. I really enjoyed the experience and also deeply appreciate the care and support of all who made it possible.”

Future Plans: We will open a small temple and begin in-person services to complement the online activity of Jodo Shinshu UK. It’s very exciting! Our aspiration is to have a larger temple in London someday as there is growing interest in Jodo Shinshu here and we wish to secure a home for our Sangha.

“We’re also busy preparing to host the 21st European Shin Buddhist Conference in Oxford in September. There has been incredible interest and this will be the largest conference ever held in Europe. We’re looking forward to seeing some friends from the United States who are also attending the conference — our cousins from across the pond. The future for Jodo Shinshu looks very bright here. We will work hard to share Shinran Shonin’s teachings in the UK and across Europe.”

The Origin of the Jodo Shinshu Teaching — Part 1

Editor’s note: This is the first of four articles on “The Origin of Jodo Shinshu Teaching” by Rev. Giei Sasaki that will appear in the Wheel of Dharma.

Rev. Sasaki holds the position of Bishop at the Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan, where he is involved in training students, and has the special title within Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha of “Shikyo,” which literally means “conduct training” in English. “Shikyo” is the second-highest academic position in Jodo Shinshu studies. Rev. Sasaki teaches at Ryukoku University and the Central Buddhist Institute.



By Rev. Giei Sasaki
Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha

I would like to talk about the origin of Jodo Shinshu teaching. I would like to begin by asking: “Who introduced you to the Jodo Shinshu teaching?

Your parents? Grandmother or grandfather? Or perhaps your temple minister?”

I am guessing that many people helped you to encounter Jodo Shinshu teaching. Looking back, who would you say began the Jodo Shinshu teaching? Many will probably say Shinran Shonin. Indeed, Shinran Shonin enabled us to encounter the teaching.

Shinran lived in Japan approximately 850 years ago, which in Japanese history is known as the Kamakura period (1185-1333). Some may think that Shinran suddenly expounded the Jodo Shinshu teaching all by himself.

However, this is not the case. In the “Shoshinge,” there is a line we chant that goes “Honshi Genku myo bukkyo, Master Genku, well-versed in the Buddha’s teaching.” (“Collected Works of Shinran,” or CWS I, p. 73) To elaborate on this phrase a little further, it means that our teacher, Genku (Honen’s alias) shared with us the teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha.

As you all are aware, Honen (1133-1212) was 40 years older than Shinran and Shinran learned the teaching of Amida Buddha from Honen. Who

was Honen’s teacher?

In the “Shoshinge,” there are the following lines, “Genshin kōkai ichidaikyō, Henki an’nyō kan issai. Genshin, having broadly elucidated the teachings of Sakyamuni’s lifetime, wholeheartedly took refuge in the land of peace and urges all to do so.” (CWS I, p. 73) Therefore, it is clear that Honen learned it from Genshin (942-1017).

Although Genshin and Honen were not contemporaries, Honen and Shinran encountered the teaching of Amida Buddha through Genshin’s writings.

Through the verses above, it is also clear that Genshin studied various teachings of Sakyamuni Buddha, and encouraged everyone to aspire to be born in the Pure Land of Amida Buddha.

Genshin was a priest from about 200 years before Honen’s time. He lived during the Heian period (794-1185), which is approximately 1,000 years ago.

At that time, the capital of Japan was in Kyoto and not Tokyo.

The Heian period, during which Genshin lived, experienced two significant historical transformations.

One was the end of the ancient monarchical system of court and aristocracy, as warriors who used to serve the aristocracy gained power and began ruling the nation. The power shift resulted in great societal turbulence, the likes of which had never been

seen before in Japan. The other transformation was the development of the hiragana alphabet.

Before the Heian period, there were very few people who were able to read and write because the use of kanji characters was mainstream but difficult.

However, during the 10th century, the hiragana writing system was introduced and quickly gained popularity among the common people. As a result, a variety of literature

blossomed during this period.

One of the most well-known Japanese classics, “The Tale of Genji,” was written during this period and was set in Kyoto. In this famous book, Genshin appears as a kind-hearted Buddhist priest, exhibiting how respected he was by the people of Kyoto at that time.

The reason for this is that he carried on the wish of his mother, who was a devout Buddhist. Throughout his life, he was indifferent to fame and only sought the teaching of the Nembutsu. His sincere and modest way of living became legendary and passed down through years at Mount Hiei, which was at the time, the most authoritative Buddhist monastery.

Seeking the teaching of Amida Buddha, many priests gathered at Yokawa, a remote area on Mount Hiei, where Genshin used to live. Among the priests were Honen and young Shinran, who later became Honen’s disciple.

Although Genshin and Honen were not contemporaries, Honen and Shinran encountered the teaching of Amida Buddha through Genshin’s writings.



Ekoji Buddhist Temple participants in an April 12 yoga and Buddhism retreat gather for a group photo with others attending on Zoom around the United States. (Courtesy of Evan Michio)

Ekoji Hosts Yoga and Buddhist Retreat Led by Bob Matsueda

Editor’s note: The following article first appeared in the Ekoji Buddhist Temple’s Kalavinka newsletter in May. The Wheel of Dharma is reprinting the article with the permission of Donna R. Omata of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple.

By Donna R. Omata
Ekoji Buddhist Temple

Ekoji Buddhist Temple hosted a yoga retreat on April 12 presented by BCA Facilities Manager Bob Matsueda, a certified yoga instructor, as part of a series of yoga retreats that he is leading throughout the BCA temples and churches.

The series is supported by the BCA’s Dharma Forward campaign, which provides grant funding for the programs. It is also supported by Bishop



Rev. Marvin Harada, the BCA and the BCA’s Center for Buddhist Education (CBE).

Matsueda, from the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, is an experienced yoga and wellness instructor and yoga therapist, certified by the Government of India.

During the first part of the retreat, Matsueda explained that in the Western world, yoga is generally promoted as an exercise with intense poses.

In contrast, Matsueda’s practice focuses on Buddhistic meditation and deep yogic breathing, along with gentle



Attendees at the yoga retreat listen to a Dharma message from BCA Minister Emeritus Rev. Bob Oshita of the Buddhist Church of Sacramento. (Courtesy of Bob Matsueda)

Oshita and Rev. Patti Oshita from the Buddhist Church of Sacramento. They currently serve as chaplains for the California State Assembly.

They spoke about the roots of yoga, delving into its ancient origins by tracing its spiritual significance within Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and its broader Indian context.

They explained that Shakyamuni Buddha utilized yoga practices on his path to enlightenment. This presentation discussed the core principles and philosophies of yoga.

After their presentation, Jimmy Major led an outdoor guided walking meditation in the Ekoji temple garden, informed by Major’s study of Zen meditation. Frank Swithers followed by extending an invitation to Ekoji’s weekly Thursday evening in-person silent meditation sessions.

The day concluded with an in-person and online sharing circle to discuss thoughts and reactions about the yoga retreat.

We are deeply grateful to the following people and organizations for collaborating on an amazing restorative yoga retreat: Bob Matsueda, instructor; Rev. Bob Oshita and Rev. Patti Oshita, presenters; Andrea Chapman, event coordinator; Anna Tecson, Hondo greeter; Tom Cray, technology; Mah Doroud, chef; Nori Nakamura, assistant; Gail Kondo, assistant; Kim Nguyen, soup chef; Jimmy Major, meditation leader; Frank Swithers, mediation leader; Erick Ishii, Minister’s Assistant; and Bob Shimokaji, Minister’s Assistant.

For more information about Bob Matsueda, go to his website at: <https://www.bobmatsueda.com>

A book written by Rev. Bob Oshita and Rev. Patti Oshita, “The Dharma is Everywhere” is at: bit.ly/3Zfnupl

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JUN 21

Land of Medicine Buddha
Soquel, CA

JUL 12

BCA Red Carpet Weekend
Berkeley, CA

AUG 23

San Diego Buddhist Temple
San Diego, CA

AUG 24

Vista Buddhist Temple
Vista, CA

SEP 6

White River Buddhist Temple
Auburn, WA

SEP 27

Walnut Grove Buddhist Church
Walnut Grove, CA

DATE TBD

Las Vegas Buddhist Sangha
Las Vegas, NV

DATE TBD

Mountain View &
Palo Alto Buddhist Temple



ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR
Bob Matsueda

Yoga & Wellness Instructor, Yoga Therapist

Certified by the Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India
Yoga Certification Board

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ECOSANGHA PERSPECTIVES

Mottainai and Children



By Rev. Don Castro
BCA Minister Emeritus

My favorite children’s story is long out of print. Published in 1968, it was probably long out of print in 1989 when I checked it out of the library to read to my two young sons.

I was so captivated by the story I photocopied the book to use with my Campfire Karuna Award class at the temple. Years went by and I used the story several more times, twice with adults, but mostly I set the story aside.

Then came the internet and online book sales. Initially, I never thought I would find a copy of a children’s book 40 years after it was published. Now, I own five copies of it, two in mint condition, plus two I’ve given to my grandchildren!

The book is “A Good Morning’s Work” by Nathan Zimelman who, according to the internet, is presently 104 years old and living in San Francisco. He came to writing children’s books in middle age — after helping with the family business in Sacramento — and eventually published 51 books in his long career. Living in Sacramento most of his life, I feel he must have come in contact and been influenced by the Sacramento Betsuin and Buddhism because of the gentle and charming flavor of the story.

The story tells of a young boy, Mitsuo Yamada, who is tasked by his father to clear the vegetable garden for spring planting. As he goes about his task, he discovers the beauties and wonders of nature in his backyard and says: “How can I destroy the spider’s web shining with a thousand suns?” “How can I destroy the little pool and its tiny frog?” and the butterfly and bees and flowers and bird’s nest?

Mitsuo’s father calls from time to time, “Are you clearing the weeds?”

Mitsuo replies, “Yes, father,” but to himself, he says, “If I did not eat carrots every Tuesday, we would not need to plant so many.”



And, later, in lines reminiscent of the haiku poet Issa’s talking with animals, Mitsuo says, “Frog, sir, you are in the Yamada vegetable garden. If you stay in your water, from where will come the Yamada vegetables when summer is here? Well, I suppose I can always give up spinach on Wednesdays.”

At the end of the morning as he goes off to lunch, Mitsuo looks back on all the weeds he has cleared. He worked twice as hard and fast to make up for all the creatures he had spared and in order to provide enough vegetables for the Yamada table.

He says to himself, “It was a good morning’s work, a good morning’s work indeed!” As it says in “The Golden Chain,” “I will be kind and gentle to every living thing and protect all who are weaker than myself.” Isn’t this the impulse we try to instill in our children?

As gentle and charming a story as this is, life is not so simple, which is why so many ministers have issues with “The Golden Chain.” When I have used this story with adults, I ask them to identify with Mitsuo and then I ask them what they would do when encountering gophers, aphids, slugs (we grow them big in Seattle), snails, etc. — even beautiful cabbage butterflies that lay eggs on my kale. What about the invasion of ants in our kitchen, the spider in the bathtub or even the sewer rat that came up in one of our member’s bathroom (guess from where)?

We take life even though we say that all life is sacred — all life has Buddha-Nature and is worthy of compassion: mottainai.

I catch this spider in a cup and toss him (or her) out into the garden. I wash that spider down the bathtub drain. This beautiful snail lives and that

equally beautiful snail dies. To paraphrase Issa, “Troublesome snail, become a Buddha by my foot.”

As Shinran says in chapter four of the “Tannisho” (Unno translation): “In this life no matter how much pity and sympathy we may have for others, it is impossible to help another as we truly wish; thus our compassion is inconsistent and limited. Only the saying of nembutsu manifests the complete and never ending compassion which is true, real, and sincere.”

Our inability to “be kind and gentle to every living thing” is the reason many ministers have issues with “The Golden Chain.” However, “The Golden Chain,” while expressing a problematic sentiment for humans, is mostly expressing the essence of the Primal Vow of Dharmakara Bodhisattva to bring all beings to enlightenment. “The Golden Chain” sensitizes our children to the sacredness of all life.

Here, to bring home my point, I must make a humbling confession. As a child, I used to catch small butterflies and cast them into a spider’s web to watch the spider catch and eat them.

It was the brutish action of a desensitized child divorced from the well-being of other forms of life. Since I was raised Christian and taught that animals don’t have souls, I really had no sense of a reverence for life.

I needed Buddhism to teach me about the oneness of all life; how to see myself in others and others in myself. As stated in chapter 10 of the Dhammapada, “All (beings) love life and all fear death. Knowing this, see others as yourself and do not kill or cause others to kill.”

The difference between my brutish killing of butterflies as a child and my crushing of a garden snail is the feeling of mottainai. Just like Mitsuo, I say to the snail, “If I let all you snails live, from where will come the Castro vegetables when summer is here?”

I believe the best we can hope for and teach for in our children is a sensitivity to the feelings of others and the sacredness of all life. May they have, like Mitsuo, an impulse toward kindness and gentleness to every living thing. If they must kill, may they have a feeling of regret and mottainai. This is why our Hongwanji tradition admonishes its members not to hunt or fish for sport.

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Our BCA Digital Sangha is a free-to-join, online community open to all our BCA members and friends. Scan below to get started—we’ll see you there!



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OCBC Grads — Now and Then



Orange County Buddhist Church high school graduates posed for a group photo in June — and sought to recreate where they posed in 2010 as Dharma School preschool students. Shown, from left, are: Jeffrey Nishida, Tesshin Aoyama, Skyler Wada, Kyle Sasaki, Jack Hirotsu, Olivia Inanaga, Kenna Kashima, Ryan Shimada, Kaitlyn Nakagawa, Madison Ige, Travis Nakahira and Nanami Sugimura. The photographer for both photos was Mike Nishida and the person who put the photos together was Bryan Furumoto. “It’s a really great photo and it’s amazing how many of those students from the momo (preschool) class continued all the way to high school graduation with OCBC,” says Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada. (Courtesy of Mike Nishida)

President’s Message

Continued from Page 3

ing us achieve these goals. With less than six months before the campaign ends, we are seeking everyone to fully participate and reach the remaining \$2 million to reach the target goal of \$15 million.

If you have pledged to the campaign, a renewal of your pledge would make a significant step toward the campaign’s success. If you have would like to live a legacy gift in an irrevocable trust, that is yet another way to ensure the campaign’s success.

If you haven’t yet participated, your contributions today, either as a pledge over five years or as a single contribution, every bit of your support strengthens the foundation of our collective practice and ensures that the light of the Dharma continues to shine brightly. Questions about giving can be directed to Michiko Inanaga at

minanaga@bcahq.org

Summary of June 2025 NBM

During the June 2025 National Board Meeting (NBM), BCA leadership gathered in-person at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California, to discuss critical initiatives and strategies facing the BCA.

Key topics included the progress of the Dharma Forward campaign, work on execution of key strategies in the updated BCA strategic plan and providing input into the discussion on “Who is a Member?” The national board received updates from BCA committees on a variety of topics including expansion of membership propagation and outreach efforts; new ways to engage Sangha members through social media; Social Welfare grants that are making a difference for those in need; and available low-interest loan monies for temple renovations and repairs.

The meeting also high-

lighted the exceptional contributions of our ministers and volunteers, whose ongoing efforts continue to drive positive change within our community. The discussions were both productive and inspiring, reflecting our collective commitment to the growth and resilience of the BCA.

Looking to the Future

As we move forward, let us remember that the Dharma is not static — it is a living, breathing guide that evolves with us. Together, we can navigate whatever challenges arise, grounded in the wisdom of the Buddha’s teachings. Let this summer be a season of renewal, where we recommit to our practice, our sangha and the greater good.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to the BCA and the Dharma. May this July bring you moments of peace, joy and profound insight. As always, I am here to listen, to learn and to serve alongside you.

Rev. Miyamura

Continued from Page 3

And we remember the first part of “The Golden Chain” — “I will be kind and gentle to all living things and protect those who are weaker than myself.”

Today, when we look around, we see immigrant children afraid to even go to school because they are afraid of being rounded up and deported.

Regardless of how or why the parents are in this country, children should not have to suffer and be afraid, but they are.

When we look at history, every ethnic group that came to America was not welcomed and faced discrimination and even hatred.

The first white settlers were not welcomed by the Native Americans, then it was the Irish, then the Italians, then the Polish, then the Greeks, and so on. Then on the West Coast, the Chinese, then the Japanese, then the Koreans, and then the southeast Asians were not welcomed.

Now it is the Muslims and the Mexicans and other Spanish-speaking people who are not being welcomed.

But they all settled in and became Americans.

Each group started at the bottom of the economic ladder, working long hours and doing difficult work — maybe out in the fields, or maybe as dishwashers and bus boys.

History tells us that we should not fear new immigrants. They may speak a different language and eat different foods, but they are still humans that want a better life.

What am I saying? Maybe, not to be bullies and mean girls. We should think, say and do kind things so there will not be so much fear.

For us, as Buddhists, we need to be a part of the flower garden with so many different colors of flowers — each flower adding its own color to the beauty of the garden.

We have to know what kind of person we are — and what kind of person we want to be.

This is our Karma. We have to take responsibility for our thoughts, words and actions.

Namu Amida Butsu, with gratitude and kindness beyond words.



Center for Buddhist Education
Living the Dharma Committee

SAVE THE DATE:

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

Time: 5 to 6 PM on Zoom

Speaker: Paul Daisuke Goodman

He will speak about his life - his journey through cancer, growing up as a Buddhist in Orange County Buddhist Church (and how it has helped him with his cancer) and his filmmaking.

The Lion’s Roar magazine recently published Paul’s article, titled “What cancer taught me.”

The registration information will be out in July.

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今月の法話

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サンマテオ仏教会

開教使 アダムス ヘンリー



Rev. Henry Adams

いよいよ夏が到来し、子供たちも夏休みに入ったので、天気がいい日はビーチに行ったり、旅行をしたりして、出来るだけリラックスして楽しく過ごしたいと思う今日この頃ですが、ずっとそのような幸せな気分が続くというのはなかなか難しいものです。仏教の基礎的な教えの一つに、私たちは自らの行いと言葉と考え方によって、自分がどのような人間になるのか、どのような環境に暮らすのが決まるとあります。この仏さまの教えによれば、賢く優しい人間になりたいと一生懸命努力する人は幸せな人生を送ることが出来ると言えるでしょう。賢い人は熱心に勉強し知識を得、すでに穏やかで幸せな人生を送っている人たちからそのための方法を習い、智慧を得ようと努力をします。優しい人は常に相手の気持ちを考え、自分がされたくないことは他の人にしないよう心掛け、お慈悲の心を示します。

慈悲を極めた仏様は全ての命あるものを平等に哀れられたので、経典には不殺生（生き物を殺さないよう心掛けること）と説かれてあります。以前、私の息子の一人がペットとして虫を飼いたいと言ってきました。本人はクモを飼いたかったのですが、私は不殺生の教えを考えると、誰かが虫を捕まえて餌としてクモにやらないといけないから、餌として食べられる虫が可哀想に思えたので、代わりに葉っぱを食べる虫にしようと思子に提案しました。そう言われた息子はちょっとがっかりした顔をしていました。

その後、子供を公園に連れて来ていた時にちょうど息子が欲しがっていた種類のクモを見つけたので、私はすぐにそのクモを捕まえて家に持って帰りました。そして

て家に帰って、すでに死んでいたハエをクモにあげてみました。が、全く食べませんでした。そこで息子に「じゃあ、もし明日までこのクモが食べる虫を捕まえてくれなかったら、また外で餌を自分で捕まえられるぐらい元気がある内に逃してあげようか？」と息子に提案してみました。息子も「うん」と答えてくれたので、とりあえず私も安心していました。

そして、翌朝、私がシャワーを浴びようとした時、浴室に大きなシミがいたのを発見しました。前日は不殺生を一生懸命考えていたのにも関わらず、私はそのシミ見た途端、クモのエサになる！と、すぐにタッパーに入れて捕まえて、息子が起きるまで彼の机の上に置いておきました。その時の私は、息子が起きるのを楽しみにして、正直に言うと、息子が喜ぶと思ったので、そのシミを捕まえることも楽しんでいました。

慈悲に満ちみちた仏さまのように生きるつもりが、自分の息子が可愛く、息子が可愛がるペットのクモも可愛いと思っていました。が、シミのことは可愛く思っていま

小慈小悲もなき身にて
有情利益はおもふまじ
如来の願船いまさずは
苦海をいかでかわたるべき

わずかばかりの慈悲さえもないこの身であり、あらゆるものを救うことなど思えるはずもない。阿弥陀仏の本願の船がなかったなら、苦しみに満ちた迷いの海をどうして渡ることが出来るであろう。

ペットを飼っている方の中には、そのペットに対して家族のような愛情を持っている方が少なくないでしょう。

そのため、ペットと別れる時の悲しみと寂しさは深いに違いありません。このように命が無常であることに気づかされるその時こそ、仏様の教えに耳を傾けるご縁の時であり、私たちが今日ここに生かされていることは誠に不思議で大変有り難いことだと改めて実感することが出来るのです。

昨年のある日、息子たちが家に飛び入ってきて、「お母さん！お父さん！早く来て！大きいカマキリが裏庭にいるよ！」と興奮して言うので、それまで野生のカマキリを見たことなかった私は、カマキリを是非見たいと思い、急いで息子たちの後について裏庭に行きました。庭に出ると、10センチくらいのとても大きいカマキリがパティオにいました。これまで見たカマキリの中で一番大きいカマキリが自分の庭にいたことに私はとても感動しました。

実はその野生のカマキリを裏庭で見つけた数年前の三月頃、私たち家族はナースリーで長男が見つけた容器に二つ入っているカマキリの卵し

カマキリが孵化した時のその小ささとその命のはかなさを見た後で、長さ10センチものカマキリが自分の庭に現れたのはどれほど不思議なことかと私は実感しました。この時私は、お念仏を喜んでいた小林一茶の次の俳句を思い出しました。

蟪蛄が片手かけたりつり鐘に

私たちは人生の中で無常の風が常に吹いていることに気づかされる時があります。毎日安全で安定した暮らしをするために頑張っているにもかかわらず、実はその命

はつり鐘に片手がかかっている蟪蛄(かまきり)のように

南無阿弥陀仏

（一面「浄土真宗の源流」の続き）
そのお寺は、現在も、中国の山西省に残っています。玄中寺というお寺です。このお寺こそ、かつて曇鸞大師が居られたところであつたのです。お寺は跡形もなく破壊されてしまいましたが、そこには曇鸞大師が書き残されていた石文が残っていました。それは「お念仏ひとつで救い取られてゆく」という阿弥陀さまの教えであつたのです。その後、道綽さまはお寺を再興し、生涯を通して、お念仏の道を歩まれたのです。道綽さまの晩年、そのお寺の門を叩いたのが、ひ孫のような弟子、善導大師であつたのです。実に、中国の曇鸞大師、道綽禪師、そして、善導大師は、期せずして、同じお寺で、浄土真宗のみ教えを継承されているのです。

ダイヤルザダルマとポッドキャストで聴聞

電話で聴聞ができるプログラム「ダイヤルザダルマ」がポッドキャストでも聞くことができるようになった。（800）817-7918に電話すると、原田総長の声で音声ガイドが始まる。英語の法話を聞きたい人は1を、日本語は2、スペイン語は3を押すと、それぞれの言語で約5分間の法話を聴聞できる。英語は原田総長のメッセージ、日本語は日本語スピーカーの開教使によるメッセージ、スペイン語は英語のメッセージをスペイン語に訳したものになっている。法話は毎週水曜日午後

ポッドキャストで聴聞したい方は、BCAのウェブサイト<https://www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/podcasts>やスマートフォン

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総長メッセージ

「ノー・バダ・ミー」と無碍の一道

米国仏教団総長 原田 マービン



Bishop Rev. Marvin Harada

最近、テキサスのサンガとBCAの個人会員を対象としたオンラインの集まりに新しい参加者が加わりました。その方は、以前はハワイに住んでいた女性です。

彼女は、63年間連れ添ったご主人を最近亡くされたそうです。にもかかわらず、彼女がご主人のことを穏やかに語り、悲しみに打ちひしがれている様子がなかったのがとても印象的でした。

彼女は、ご主人がよく使っていたハワイのピジン英語の言葉を紹介してくれました。それは「No bada me (ノー・バダ・ミー)」という言葉で、「気にしないで」とか「気にするな」「どうってことないよ」といった意味だそうです。ご主人は、どんなときもこの言葉を口にして、物事に動じることなく、穏やかに生きておられたそうです。

私はこの言葉を聞いて、「なんて仏教的な表現だろう」と感じました。日常生活の中で、私たちは本当にいろいろなことに心を乱されがちです。たとえば、運転中に割り込みされると、ついイライラしてしまい、一日中気分が悪くなる場合があります。でも、そのときに「No bada me」と言いつつ、気持ちを切り替えることができれば、心が軽くなるでしょう。

株式市場が下落して、大きな損失を出したときはどうでしょうか？ 通常なら大変落ち込みますが、そのときに「No bada me」と言ってみると、前に進むことができるのではないのでしょうか。あるいは、職場で上司に「会社は若返りを図っていて、あなたには退職してもらう」と言われたとき。心の中で「No bada me」と言っ

てみると、状況を受け入れることができるかもしれません。また、健康診断で「がんが見つかりました」と医師から告げられたときでも、「No bada me」の精神を持って、がんに向き合ってみるのです。

親鸞聖人の弟子、唯円さんが聖人から聞いた教えを記した『歎異抄』の中に、「念仏者は無碍の一道なり」という言葉があります。念仏の道を歩む者にとつて、人生のどんな出来事も妨げとはならないという意味です。職を失うことも、大切な人を亡くすることも、病氣と向き合うことも、障害ではないのです。念仏者は「No bada me」と言えるのです。

もちろん、だからといって人生に無関心になるとか、冷たい人間になるという意味ではありません。「No bada me」とは、「どうでもいい」とか「関係ない」といった意味ではなく、「物事に振り回されない智慧を持つ」ということです。

ハワイ出身のその女性も、きつと心の中ではご主人を深く想い、悲しみも抱えていると思います。でも、彼女は「No bada me」というご主人の生き方を受け継ぎ、その精神でこの大きな別れを乗り越えようとしているのです。

浄土真宗の歴史の中で、多くの念仏者たちがこの「No bada me」の精神を持っておられました。念仏をとなえ、無碍の一道を生き抜いておられたのです。過去の念仏者たちは、暴君の支配下で暮らした人々もおられましたし、戦争や原爆、強制収容所、そして大切な人の死など、数々の苦難に直面されたのです。

そうした念仏者たちは、念仏の中に慰めや癒しを見出すだけでなく、光や智慧、強さ、そして生きる力を見出し、出していたのです。中には、信仰を守るために洞窟でひそかに集まり、命の危険を冒して念仏を称えていた人たちもおられました。

それが、念仏の道なのです。何ものにも妨げられない偉大な道。ただ念仏を称えて、歩み続ける。あるいは、ハワイの言葉で言うなら、「No bada me」という道です。

浄土真宗の源流

【全4回連載 第2回】

本願寺派司教 佐々木 義英



Rev. Giei Sasaki

それでは、この源信さまは、どなたから阿弥陀さまの教えに出会われたのでしょうか。

先程と同じように「正信偈」をご覧いただき、その源流は、日本にとどまらず、もはや日本海を渡って、中国にまでさかのぼることになります。その善導大師は、今から約1300年前、中国の山東省・Shandong Province というところにお生まれになったといわれています。

善導大師が活躍なさった時代は、中国の歴史の中で、もっとも栄えた時代の一つ、唐・T'ang (618-907) という国の時代です。時には、お経の内容を大きな絵に描いて、絵解きをしながらお念仏の教えを広められ、さらには、「おつとめ」や、仏前の作法についても、詳しく説明されています。

この他、ユネスコ世界遺産に登録されている中国の三大石窟：stone cave / cave temple の一つ、龍門石窟・Longmen Grottoes の大仏：a stone image of the Buddha の造営の監督をされるなど、実に精力的に活動されていたのです。因みに、三大石窟とは、龍門石窟と雲岡石窟・Yungang Grottoes、そして、敦煌莫高窟・Dunhuang Mogao Caves です。これらの石窟は、後ほどお話をいたしますが、曇鸞大師の時代から造営されています。

話を元に戻しますと、その善導大師がお書きになっていた『観無量寿経』の解説書や仏前の作法を記した書物が、日本海を渡って、比叡山に伝わっているのです。こうした善導大師の書物を通して、日本では、源信さまをはじめ、法然聖人、そして、親鸞聖人は、阿弥陀さまの教えに出会われているということなのです。

それでは、この善導大師に阿弥陀さまの教えをお説き

になった方はどなたでしょうか。もう皆さんはお分かりでしょう。「正信偈」には「道綽決聖道難証唯明浄土可通入」と書かれていますね。その方は、道綽さまです。この文の意味は「道綽さまは、この世で自力でさとりを開くことは難しく、浄土に往生してこそさとりを開くことができる」と明らかにされた」ということです。

皆さんは、すでに法然聖人と親鸞聖人は師弟関係というところをご存じあると思いますが、実は、善導大師と道綽禅師も師弟関係であったのです。年齢は、なんと51歳も離れています。ひ孫とおじいさんのような関係ですね。

余り知られていないことですが、善導大師の師、道綽さまは、命の危険にさらされるという非常に苦しい時代を過ごされた方なのです。今は時間の関係で、詳しくお話しすることができませんが、そのご生涯のなかで、国籍が4回も替わっているのです。そのご生涯は、順に、北斉・Northern Qi (550-577) という国の時代にはじまり、北周・Northern Zhou (556--581) という国の時代、隋・Sui (581-618) という国の時代、そして、唐・T'ang (618-907) という国の時代にまでわたっています。

このうち、北斉という国にいらつしやった幼少の頃には天災や飢饉に見舞われ、国中の人々が生きる希望を失っていました。青年になられた頃には、北周という国によって、母国の滅亡をまのあたりにし、その上、中国の歴史の中で、もっとも激しいといわれた仏教弾圧を受けながら、ひとすじに阿弥陀さまの教えを求められていたのです。そして、隋という国の時代に入ると、ようやく仏教を再び広めることができるようになりました。

その頃の資料には、「新しく造ぐられた仏像や修復された仏像は十数万体を超える」とあり、また、「あらためて書写された『お経』は十三万数千点に上る」と記されています。この膨大な数は、弾圧がどれほど激しいものであったのかを物語っているといえるでしょう。道綽さまは、このような時代の中で、阿弥陀さまの教えを求め、各地を転々と流浪されています。

そのような中、ほんの少しの希望をもって、ご自身の生まれ故郷にあった小さなお寺に向かわれます。

(2面に続く)