39th BCA FBWA Conference Held in Fresno

The 39th BCA Federation of Buddhist Women’s Associations Conference, hosted by Central California Buddhist Women’s League, was held Oct. 7 - 9 at the Radisson Hotel in Fresno, California. Over 500 delegates from the Bay, Coast, Eastern, Mountain States, Northern California, Northwest, Southern and Central districts attended the three-day conference. “Sixty-two Reverends graced our presence at the conference,” said a spokesperson. “What an impressive sight to see so many reverends chanting in unison.” The theme of the Conference was “Living in Buddha’s Calling Voice.”

The conference started Friday with various tours to the Gold Casino at Oakhurst. Out-of-towners enjoyed the Ward Park’s Shinzen Garden Tea House and Koi Pond; Forestere Underground Home and Gardens; Woodland Park’s Shizen Garden Tea House and Koi Pond; National Raisin Co. - Raisin Processor/Packer and Simonian’s Farms - Outlet for Local Fruits, Vegetables and Nuts. There was also a booster bus to Chukchelami Gold Casino at Oakhurst. Out-of-towners enjoyed the tours and liked seeing the fruits of our valley.

“The evening delegates enjoyed learning and participating in line dancing.” The keynote speakers for the conference were Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno and Rev. Masako Otaki from Japan. Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno gave the English Dharma talk and Rev. Masako Otaki presented the Japanese talk.

“Rev. Masako Otaki presented the Japanese talk. Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno gave the English Dharma talk and Dr. Taitetsu Unno and Rev. Masako Otaki from Japan. Workshop A was divided into Shiatsu, Tai Chi and Yoga. Workshop B was on Women’s Health Issues. A lot of informative topics were discussed, including Osteoporosis, Menopause and Heart Disease. Workshop C was Getting Your Life’s Assets in Order. Half of the workshop was on Advance Health Care directives and the other half was on how to get your life in order. Workshop D was Creating a Buddhist Environment/Raising Children in a Buddhist Environment. Rev. Dr. Taitetsu Unno was the English workshop leader and Rev. Kodo Umezu was the Japanese speaker. Workshop E was Contemporary Women’s Role in Jodo Shinshu Buddhism lead by Rev. Masako Otaki and Rev. Jo-REN MacDonald.

Rev. Shoyo Taniguchi gave a presentation on the Sri Lanka Project and Kimberly Shintaku presented a PowerPoint presentation of the Youth Exchange Program at the luncheon. Fresh valley fruits were used as the centerpieces at the luncheon and handed out to the delegates to enjoy during the conference. The evening entertainment was Jeremy Pierce, an Elvis impersonator.

The conference concluded on Sunday with the closing service. The installation of BCA FBWA Officers for 2007-08 was conducted by Socho Koshin Ogui. A general meeting after the morning service and concluded the conference with an obento take-out lunch.

“It was a very memorable and meaningful conference.”

Cancer Journey Reflections

By Rev. William Masuda
Paiko Alto Buddhist Temple

Moving through chemotherapy three days remain of this third cycle of chemotherapy. The last 10 days or so have been “normal,” unlike the unpredictability of the first ten days of each chemotherapy session. One never knows with any confidence how one’s body will react to the “enormous” infusion of the chemo drugs. One knows only by the effect the chemo drugs unleash on one’s body, whether it be nausea, fatigue, lethargy, hyper reactions to the prednisone steroid, listlessness, and an array of unexpected side-effects. One may be prepared with other drugs to combat the side-effects of the major chemo drugs, but the timing of their use will determine whether the outcome of handling the side-effects are successful or not.

No matter how our body may be off balance at times with fatigue and exhaustion, one still must be mindful and vigilant in handling the overt and covert reactions of the chemo drugs. Drinking large quantities of water to flush the toxicity from one’s body together with walking and mild exercise even with forced intentions are sometimes necessary in moving through each chemo regimen. Still, the thought of entering another cycle of chemotherapy with its accompanying effects already brings an emotional reaction and resistance to its application. It is like going to work on a Monday morning to a job you really dislike. Somehow, one must re-focus one’s mind and take the next step fully. Namo-amida-butsu.

A gift from a dharma friend

As I gather my thoughts, the dominant one seems to be a framed calligraphy given to me by Socho Ogui a month after my diagnosis with cancer.

The thoughts he expressed calligraphically struck me deeply and continues to mirror my thoughts and feelings in a welcoming way. The calligraphy reads “Oman wa oman Continued on Page 4

Mayumi Ogui Hosts Campaign Breakfast

By Robert Noguchi, BCA Campaign Manager

Mayumi Ogui addressing the audience at the BCA FBWA conference.

Mayumi Ogui served as host of a continental breakfast for the leaders and members of the BCA FBWA on Oct. 9, during the BCA Federation of Buddhist Women’s Association Conference in Fresno.

She spoke in both English and Japanese to the group of over 100 ladies about the importance of the campaign and its associated programs. Campaign Steering Committee member Seiko Tamura also spoke about the future of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism in America.

Other speakers included Sady Hayashida of Hayashida Architects, Rev. Kodo Umezu, Director of the Center for Jodo Shinshu Budhismo Studies, and Socho Koshin Ogui.

She was assisted by the following retired and active ministers’ spouses: Mrs. Kayoko Fujimoto, Mrs. Joyce Teras, Mrs. Michiko Yukawa, Mrs. Naomi Takemura, Mrs. Tamiko Tada, and Mrs. Patsy Yanguhara. Present ministers’ spouses in attendance were: Mrs. Megami Fukuma, Mtra. Eiko Hanyama, Mtra. Miki Maku-jima,

Mrs. Noriko Hasegawa, Mrs. Carmela Hirano, Mrs. Patti Oshita, Mrs. Kazuko Miura, Mrs. Yoshiko Miyay, Mrs. Miyuki Fujimoto, Mrs. Tochiyo Kajio, Mtra. Tomoko Ohata, Mrs. Fumie Inoue, Rev. Dr. Shoyo Taniguchi, Mtra. Kimiko Aoyama, Mrs. Kyoko Matsubayashi and Mrs. Shigeko Yamashita.

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NEWLY INSTALLED BCA FBWA OFFICERS 2007-08, FROM LEFT: PRESIDENT, Yuriko Otake; 1st VICE PRESIDENT, Keiko Furusho; 2nd VICE PRESIDENT, Grace Har; RECORDING SECRETARY (E), Irene Preat; RECORDING SECRETARY (J), Shiharu Satoh; CORRESPONDING SECRETARY (E), Karen Sujama; CORRESPONDING SECRETARY (J), Hiroko Kinotsuki; Treaurer (E), Ikuki Lea; Treaurer (J), Setsuko Katsuyama; Auditor (E), Enri Yamamishi; Auditor (J), Hisayo Urumoto; Councilors, Joyce Maniwa and Lenon Terao-Do Zen. Standing, Officializing: Socho Koshin Ogui.

Photos courtesy of Terri Harada

Eiko Hanayama, Mrs. Mika Mukojima, Mrs. Noriko Hasegawa, Mrs. Carmela Hirano, Mrs. Patti Oshita, Mrs. Kazuko Miura, Mrs. Yoshiko Miyay, Mrs. Miyuki Fujimoto, Mrs. Tochiyo Kajio, Mtra. Tomoko Ohata, Mrs. Fumie Inoue, Rev. Dr. Shoyo Taniguchi, Mtra. Kimiko Aoyama, Mrs. Kyoko Matsubayashi and Mrs. Shigeko Yamashita.

Rev. William Masuda
James Dobbins Speaks at IASBS Conference Held in Tokyo

By Jerry Bolck

The spirit of dogyōshō prevaled last September at Musashino University, Tokyo, Japan, the site of the 12th Biennial Conference of the International Association for Shin Buddhism Studies (IASBS). Held from September 9th-12th, the conference was attended by delegates from around the globe, gathered to present and discuss some fifty papers, under the theme “Potentially of Pure Land Buddhism in the Changing World.” In addition to a large number of delegates from Japan, many but not all of whom delivered papers in Japanese, delegates came from the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Germany, Australia and Wales, and represented both the Hongwanji Sangha and the Jodo Shinshu sangha, IASBS publishes to the international scope of the broader Shinshu sangha, IASBS publishes The Pure Land, the only academic journal dedicated to Shin, previously edited by Dr. Inagaki, the current editors are Dr. Richard Payne, Professor Eisho Nau and Rev. David Matsumoto, all of IBS. The range of papers presented in September was broad and the discussion rich, rewarding and pointed. The very first panel explored the tasks needed to put on a Sangha service. It’s quite exciting to be a part of this wonderful Sangha!

And of course, your Minister’s Assistant is keeping busy too. With the excellent guidance from Rev. Castro, I am gaining the needed confidence and skill to perform many activities for him. We’re reaching out to the Buddhist community in our area and offering a monthly Sangha service there. To continue my own Buddhist education, I have signed-up to take another online course at IBS this Fall. Finally, I’m fortunate to have the opportunity to have a second article published in the same news magazine Heart Links. I am grateful for your continued confidence and am looking forward to seeing everyone again next month.

In gasho,
Paul Viele
In our contemporary time, we often hear that people are more interested in “spirituality” than “religion.” Religion in many people’s minds involves dogmatic, infallible or indisputable beliefs as the basis of salvation and membership in a religious institution. We are assured of salvation through believing the doctrine of an all-powerful God. Spirituality, on the other hand, is often regarded as a personal experience of awe, mystery, wonder and gratitude. The difference is that spirituality is his understanding of absolute Otherness, which are marks of deep spirituality. In his writings Shinran wrote of the Eternal Buddha, Amida Buddha who enshrines all the other Buddhas. Amida Buddha is the Buddha of causation of all Buddhas from which all Buddhas are manifest. “To praise the one Buddha, Amida, with the mind that is single! is to praise all the unhindered ones.” Shinran broke through the boundaries of mystic belief to see Amida, in faith, as wondrous reality shining through our lives and world.

The second mark of Shinran’s spirituality is his understanding of absolute Other Power. Since Amida is the totality of reality in the outer and inner worlds, micro and macro worlds, nothing happens apart from, or separate from, his ever-active compassion and wisdom. Hence, when he describes the tragic events of the Contemplation Sutra in which Prince Ajatasatru murdered his father, he viewed the people involved with the Prince also as manifestations of Amida’s compassion. They appeared as the meaning: I am a teacher to disciples who come to question him, he declared: “It is up to you to decide what you will believe.” He never shied from a question. He never condemned differences of view unless it was damaging the basis of his own faith to disciples who came to question him, he declared: “It is up to you to decide what you will believe.” He never shied from a question. He never condemned differences of view unless it was damaging the teaching. Consequently, he would not excommunicate an errant disciple.

Shinran never claimed to have a monopoly on truth. He referred followers to scholars when he lacked detailed information. He knew the limits of judgment, declaring, that if he knew good and evil as Amida knew good and evil, then he could claim full knowledge. But he was simply an ignorant, foolish being, like the rest of mankind. He hoped that his ego inspired him to pose as a teacher.

Finally, Shinran’s spirituality was not a private, isolated or individualistic faith. He quoted a phrase from the Chinese teacher Shan-tao, “All Buddha and all beings are one. To know that the true way to express one’s gratitude to the Buddha for his great truth was to share the faith with others. This is the way that Shinran-oriented Buddhism finds its way in the world of competing “isms” and beliefs, and can find its spirituality a guideline for promoting the teaching too大哥, dobro-dogyo, fellow companions and the ethical community in the teaching. Shinran established a new community of shared faith and responsibility. He rejected the Confucian model, headed by a teacher to whom the disciples are subordinate. He declared that he had no disciple. Shinran was responsible to his followers as they were responsible to him as fellow companions on the path.

Shinran’s spirituality was both personal and medical. As he reflected on the importance of the vow of Amida, he exclaimed that “it was made for me, Shinran, alone.” While many follow traditional religion because it is in their culture, Shinran practiced Buddhism as a personal decision. Though Shinran declared he never said Nembutsu once out of filial piety, he was not rejecting the concern for parents and ancestors. Rather, he was highlighting the universality of the teaching that everyone can be saved.

Shinran’s broad spirituality afforded him an openness, permitting dissent and freedom of expression among his disciples. While some saw the limits of his own faith to disciples who came to question him, he declared: “It is up to you to decide what you will believe.” He never shied from a question. He never condemned differences of view unless it was damaging the teaching. Consequently, he would not excommunicate an errant disciple.

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The Buddha taught us Anitya, everything changes, nothing stays the same. It is easy to see how others have changed. I attended the ‘Oldies Dance’ at Orange County Buddhist Temple last year. I had a great time and I saw a short, over weight, old woman with thinning orange hair. Maybe I should have done it for Hallowe’en and good trick or treating wearing my robes.

Soon after I arrived in Denver, I recall asking the late Rev. Yoshitaka Tamae Sensei this question, ‘How did you manage to stay in Denver for such a long time at that!?’ At that time he had been a Tri-State minister for forty-five years. Tamae Sensei’s reply was ‘very quickly’. Now I know what Tamae Sensei was telling me. The thirty years here have indeed gone by very quickly for me too. As I think about the past years and how it has gone by so quickly, I know that it is the members of the Tri-State who have made my life and ministry here so enjoyable.

The teachings of the Buddha are not for someone else. The Teaching of the Buddha is for me. When the Buddha was asked ‘Why is there Death?’, his answer was, ‘Because of impermanence’. Now, I am 5’3” short. Of weight and have shrunk. I used to be 5’4’’ tall. Now, I am 5’4’’ tall. When I first moved to Denver in 1975, my hair was long and black. Now it’s short and pepper. Since moving here I’ve put on a lot of weight and have shrunk. I used to be 5’4’ tall. Now, I am 5’3’’ short.

My daughter Lisa and son Aki told me that they should dye my hair. I asked them, what color should I dye it? They told me to dye my hair orange.

I laughed when I imagined myself with orange hair. I saw a short, over weight, old man with thinning orange hair. Maybe I should have done it for Hallowe’en and good trick or treating wearing my robes.

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The wisdom reflected in the calligraphy, especially at this time, speaks to me as the wise and compassionate voice of Amida Buddha. The wisdom reflected in the calligraphic voice resonates with the practitioner of true faith, abides in the stage of the truly settled, for he or she has already been granted, never to be abandoned (by Amida Buddha). There is no need to wait in anticipation for the moment of death, no need to rely on Amida’s coming. At the time faith becomes settled, birth (in the Pure Land) too becomes settled; there is no need for the deathbed rites that prepare one for Amida’s coming.

Shinran’s comforting words... for me
The practitioner of true faith abides in the stage of the truly settled, for he or she has already been granted, never to be abandoned (by Amida Buddha). There is no need to wait in anticipation for the moment of death, no need to rely on Amida’s coming. At the time faith becomes settled, birth (in the Pure Land) too becomes settled; there is no need for the deathbed rites that prepare one for Amida’s coming.

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今月の連載
希望をもって
生きていくこと

お礼と謳歌
一日に何度も

おかあさん おかあさん
日日に何度
おかあさん おかあさん

月に一度

小さな子供も 小さな子供も
小さな子供も 小さな子供も

小さな子供も 小さな子供も

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