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The Role of the BCA President


YAC Youth Retreat


Letter from Sergio Duarte to Socho Ogui


United Nations / Nations Unies
19, June 2008

Dear Socho Bishop Ogui,

I wish to thank you for the ongoing support and cooperation extended by the Buddhist Churches of America in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation. I have a deep respect for the principles espoused by the Buddha, which promote the very same ideals and objectives that we in the Office for Disarmament Affairs strive to further in our work.

I was very happy to participate in the luncheon hosted by BCA today at the UN, and to meet members of your organization who are dedicated to causes of peace and disarmament on earth.

It is heartening to know that in the Buddhist Churches of America, we have a committed partner in disarmament issues, and I offer my gratitude for your continuing efforts to these ends.

Yours sincerely,
Sergio Duarte
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
To commemorate the 750th Shrinran Shinon Memorial, The Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple held a Meditation Marathon of 26.2 hours. The event was a relay of walking meditation with Nembutsu recitation, held in the Hondo of the Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple in Ontario, Oregon. The Meditation Marathon took place March 15-16, and concluded with our 2008 Spring Ohigan Family Service. This is the first time in the history of the Buddhist Churches of America that a walking meditation with Nembutsu recitation has been held of such scope and length. The Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple is the National Champion of walking meditation with Nembutsu recitation.

The event began with Opening Service 8:30 Saturday morning. The meditation began at 9:00 AM, and continued all day Saturday, through the night, and concluded with the 20 minutes of the meditation. During the course of this event, there were five servicings with emphasis on chanting the mantras of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

During the Ohigan Family Service, paper flower petals were scattered during chanting of the Sanbaju by the Dharma School students, staff, and parents. Solo Wassailing was held by YBA and MAP participants.

The purpose of the IOBT event was three-fold:
1. To commemorate the 750th Memorial for Shrinran Shinon, the efforts and struggles he endured, and through this gain insight into the Jodo Shinshu teachings.
2. The event was co-hosted by the IOBT YBA and the temple. During initial brain-storming discussion stages for putting on this Meditation Marathon, YBA President Grant Saito was asked his opinion of hosting the event. In his usual wordy nature, Grant Saito responded, “Uh … cool.” With this resounding vote of confidence, planning stages for the event began to take place.
3. Participants came from as far as two-hour drive away and flights from California. Four IOBT members were in their 90’s, while the youngest was one. Beyond the IOBT and SATS, many participants came from the greater community and included five clergy of other faiths. Some just dropped in after reading newspaper coverage. Over 150 participants came to walk in this Meditation Marathon. Names of those lost lined the edge of the Hondo floor and bordered the walking path. As the walk proceeded, the list of names grew. The meditation caused awareness and appreciation for our past connections, as first time visitors added to those finding hardship and friends to be acknowledged during the course of the marathon.
4. The theme of “Yononaka Annon Nare,” May Peace and Tranquility Prevail Throughout the World was prominent in print and signage throughout the weekend. Many from outside the Sangha joined in. Their participation led them to share their elevated acknowledgement and recognition of the spiritual realm. For IOBT members, participation in something new and unusual grew to becoming touch and grounding as well as inspiring and bonding. A pizza party was held to celebrate the conclusion of the Meditation Marathon.

Way to go, Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple, National Champion!!

By Fumiaki Usuki
WLA Buddhist Temple

It is almost impossible to find some element of true peace in this world today. As we watch the candidates posturing in the presidential election, we realize that the problems of our society are not only confined to our own country, but also extends to every corner of the world. And what we do as Americans today certainly has an effect on each and every person living behind those thousand of miles away – and they may be just minding their own business, not even realizing that their life has become better or worse because of choices made here.

In our selfish society, we may be oblivious to the fact that our ideals, aspirations, and decisions affect so many others, even if we make efforts to consider universal responsibility, it is a difficult task if we don’t have an insight into the nature of our own true selves. Because our universe has become so small and so fragile, how do we find social, moral and spiritual values that will make sense both for ourselves and others for another one hundred and even one thousand years from now? If you are Buddhist or follow the Buddhist ideal, then you may be the one who can make a difference.

Our world is in a constant state of flux and danger, a result of people pursuing their own agendas, and more often than not, blindly harming others along the way. The anxiety, frustration and pain of our human world are caused by our own greed, anger, and ignorance, or, “blind passions.” Because we are inextricably attached to our individual ambitions and desires, we end up hurting not only ourselves, but also those around us. The Buddha taught us the principle of suffering, its cause, and its remedy, with the Four Noble Truths. If this constant suffering did not exist in our world, then there would be no need for the Buddha’s teachings. Unfortunately, absence of such suffering is almost impossible in this existence, so we must rely on the Buddha’s guidance, wisdom and compassion.

Yet, although we follow the Buddhist path, our life is not consistently smooth. When things are going well we are joyful and experience the wonderful hope of universal love and compassion. We have a true sense of peace and appreciation that seems to permeate everywhere. But just as beautiful snow melts in our hands, benevolently feelings fade away as confusion inevitably erupts, along with irritation and upsurge as our grasping minds overcome us once again – and once again we cannot see things clearly. However, this is the body and the life that defines each of us. In every moment, we ourselves contribute to the causes and conditions that determine what happens to us now and in the future. We have no choice but to learn to accept both the pleasant and the unpleasant. Though we may believe that having a peaceful and agreeable life is a goal, we cannot ignore the reality of unfortunate, unpredictable, and messy situations that are bound to crop up. Both desirable and undesirable conditions are opportunities for learning, experience and growth. To clearly see life as it is with all the good, pleasant, wonderful, unfortunate and ugly happenings – and to see our true selves, kind and selfish, wholesome and un-wholesome, benevolent and malevolent – is to awaken to the Truth of Life of Amida Buddha. With this clarity of insight into ourselves, we can learn to communicate with all people from all walks of life and all places, and perhaps catch a glimpse of universal compassion that embraces all beings. It is not the world and others that must change to make things better for us. Rather, it is the responsibility of each individual to see everything, including the self, as it is truly, before the world can change for the better.

By Rev. Yoshiaki Takamurama, Minister Emeritus and Naomi Takamurama with Gomuranto Koshin Ohtani

 spread the teaching of togetherness and compassion which is Nembutsu. Gassho

Reverend Yoshiaki G. Takamurama

Receiving an invitation from Hongwanji, my wife and I traveled to Kyoto to visit and participate in the ceremony for resident ministers in Japan and Kazukichi (overseas ministers) “kaiho, kaiho” held on June 25. Despite it being the rainy season in Japan and the unexpected weather when the ceremony began at Somido Hall with approximately 200 joshoku, and three kazukichi, Rev. Tom Nakashima and Rev. Hiromi Kawaji from Hawaii and myself. Following the chanting of Amida-kyos buta by the congregation, Socho (Governor General) Kodo Fujikawa extended the greetings and Go-monsuru Kohinori Ohtani gave us his congratulatory message. After the ceremony the honorees and Hongwanji dignitaries moved to the Kyoto Tokyu Hotel for a special appreciation reception “Kanjo no taikei,” I felt so honored. Go-monsuru remarked, “You have served in Mexico, too, haven’t you?” as I went to the head table to greet him.

During the reception, I was given a chance to share a few observations about Hongwanji activities overseas. In 2011, Hongwanji will observe its founder, Shinran Shonin’s 750th year memorial service. It is a coincidence that National Museum of Japanese History is going to exhibit my collection from the Issei Pioneer Museum that same year. I am looking forward to regarding the services to be held in the newly renovated Goeido, Founder’s Hall.

In commemoration of the event, Go-monsuru presented each of us with a copy of his classic book “Toku no haaretu ruun no in” (“The fragrance of the Nembutsu is always in existence, so there is certain to be appropriate benefit for every other being. (Myozen)

Benefiting Others

By Fumiaki Usuki
WLA Buddhist Temple

National Champions!!!
Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple!!!

By Rev. Dennis Joshin Fujimoto
Idaho-Oregon Buddhist Temple

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NEW YORK—Dr. Alfred Bloom, the renowned Shin Buddhist author and scholar, has released a memoir describing his extraordinary religious experiences involving three of the world’s greatest faiths: Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism.

“I'm writing this vivid memoir, the story of one unique human being is told in clear, frank and unembellished terms,” said Mark Unno, University of Oregon’s Associate Professor of Japanese Buddhism.

“It is a rich, yet utterly unpretentious study of the man and his personal and religious awakening, full of insights into the protein nature of the religious quest through which the author becomes more and more open to the ever changing landscape of reality.”

A Fullbright scholar, Dr. Bloom attended Ryukoku University in Kyoto, Japan. In his long career he taught religion at the University of Oregon, the University of Hawaii, and

The theme of this 21st Century Pacific Seminar was “Honen Shinshu Buddhism and Masters Within Our Contemporary World.” Rev. Harry Bridge of the Buddhist Church of Lodi started off the Friday evening by giving an overview of Honen Shinon’s life and writings, with particular focus on his work “Shinran’s Huisai-nambyutsu or Collection of Passages on the Selection of the Nembutsu in the Primal Vows.” Rev. Bloom pointed out that the selection of the recitative nembutsu practice over the contemplative practices favored in the Heian period of Japanese history opened up the path to enlightenment to many people.

On Saturday morning after breakfast, Rev. Kodo Tanaka, the acting Bishop of Jodo-shu North America and minister of the Jodo-shu North America Buddhist Missions in Los Angeles, introduced the participants to chanting Jodo-shu style. He chanted the Amida Kyo with the BCA ministers, and led participants in a 15-minute continuous vocal nembutsu session which impressed many with a sense of being encompassed by the Name. Rev. Tanaka also gave a presentation in which he introduced the vocal nembutsu while striking a wooden fish (a liturgical percussion instrument). He elucidated the emphasis on this practice in Jodo-shu teaching, and contrasted it with the emphasis on attaining shinjin or entrusting confidence in the Jodo Shinshu tradition.

Dr. Lisa Grumbach of the Institute of Buddhist Studies gave a presentation on the historical and background of Japanese Buddhism in the Heian and Kamakura eras, when Honen Shinon and Shinran Shinon lived. She began with a history of the doctrinal development of Pure Land teachings out of the Mahayana ideas of Buddha-nature and original enlightenment systematized by Zhiyi, the founder of the Tendai sect in which both Honen and Shinran were ordained. Dr. Grumbach also mentioned the influence of the idea of mapri or the latter of the dharma on Shinran’s thought. She went on to discuss the economic changes in the Kyoto of Shinran’s day and the passing of power from the aristocratic class to the warriors.

In the afternoon, Socho Koshin Ogai led a thirty-minute meditation session, after which Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, resident minister of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple and professor at IBS, gave a talk entitled “Honen Shinon and His Disciples.” It was actually a tour de force comprising the history of Pure Land thought from the first patriarchs down through Honen and including Shinran’s contemporaries.

Rev. Kodo Umeya then instructed participants in chanting of the Ojo Rai San, verses of praise to Amida Buddha composed by the patriarch Shin-tao. After dining on delicious chicken bento purchased by the Center for Buddhist Education staff to support the Alameda Buddhist Temple’s Oboon bazaar, participants gathered in several groups with the presenting ministers for informal discussion.

On Sunday morning, after chanting of the Shingon and Wasan on Honen Shinon, dharma messages were delivered by the two Reverends Kodo, Umeya and Tana-ka. Rev. Dr. Matsumoto continued his discussion of Honen’s discipies and concluded with a powerful exposition of the central truth of Pure Land doctrine. According to Shinran’s teaching, as Rev. Dr. Matsumoto explained, wisdom fulfills itself by becoming compassion; the Buddha becomes ignorant beings. The realization of wisdom occurs when we are emptied of all assumptions and calculations, when we become who we truly are, which is to say, foolish and ignorant beings.

After Rev. Dr. Matsumoto’s exposition, a final discussion session brought this year’s Pacific Seminar to a close. Participants were left to feel embraced by the Buddha’s compassion and grateful for the wealth of religious and liturgical expertise from which the Jodo Shinshu Center and its programs allows us all to benefit.

A special thanks is due to the JSC and CBE staff members and volunteers who made this year’s Pacific Seminar possible.
Making our Jodo Shinshu teaching a major religious tradition in America has been identified as one of the goals of our national organization, the Buddhist Churches of America. This is one of the main goals of the current BCA campaign as well. A broad, long-range goal is necessary for the national level, but we need to consider the necessary steps to be taken on the local level to reach that goal. What do we need to do to make this a reality?

In pondering this question, I came to realize that each household needs to make our Jodo Shinshu teaching a major force in our homes. This may seem like a sacrificial action, but first, we need to honestly ask ourselves how important our teaching traditions are in our own households. We may be a family with a long tradition of supporting the temple and attending services, but when we really look at the time, energy, and money we devote to Jodo Shinshu observances and how much we expect to benefit from them are questions that we need to answer.

We need to ask the question, “How major a role does our Jodo Shinshu teaching play in our personal lives?” If we use the amount of time and energy devoted to our major observances as a standard, the answer would seem to be, “Not very.”

Part of the reason that this happens is that we do not stress taking time away from our daily life to have our observances, but rather, integrates these observances into our daily routine. We do not really have Buddhist holidays. We are actually supposed to make an effort to “sacrifice” special observances into our daily routines. It may not make it as “special,” but it is supposed to be part of our daily lives and not something apart from it. This is the whole thrust of our teaching. Shinran took the teaching out of the realm of the leisure classes so that the life in the Nembutsu could truly be accessible to all.

A person does not have to be special in order to do it. One does not have to have the luxury of being able to go away on retreats, take time away to meditate or anything like that. Living life is the practice and one can become able to be mindful of what one does, whatever and whenever it is being done. This can be considered a meditative state as well, as can be seen in people who have gone on silent retreats. We need to consider the gardener or fruit picker who stays on a falling ladder and continues to work without thinking about it, and takes a one-foot jump rather than a seven foot fall. We can see the awareness of this in the sea and weather that an old sailor or commercial fisherman has.

There are many examples similar to this that we have heard from various Buddhist followers that are often referred to in showing how religious insight was found in the course of their daily lives, and this is a major religious tradition in America. The teachings must become a part of our lives, a part of us, to naturally grow and expand. Only then, can Jodo Shinshu become a major religious tradition in this setting.

I have frequently stated the fact that to be a Buddhist is to be an ecologist. This is not ecology in a narrow sense but cosmic ecology, meaning everything is profoundly interconnected. We often say, “The earth has no country.” However, since ecology is a science, I want to emphasize that in making BCA, Buddhism is not just science, it incorporates science. To exercise our best judgment in making decisions is one need as much as possible to understand relationships and interactions. The more we use the scientific method to gather information in order to make these sound and informed decisions, the better. Needless to say, our decisions include our values and these values are outside the scope of science.

Buddhism is a religion of healing and the compelling motive in Buddhism is the compassionate elimination of pain and suffering (dukkha). In this regard, the Buddha is frequently called “The Great Physician.” Buddhism is based on a medical model as formulated in the Four Noble Truths: 1. symptom, pain and suffering (dukkha) 2. diagnosis, the problem is caused by selfish attachments, ignorance, greed, etc. 3. prognosis, a cure is possible 4. cure. The Eight-fold Path. Like any skillful doctor, the Buddha as the Great Physician uses the technique and findings of science to investigate an illness and effect a cure. This technique is just as applicable to the individual and global level as well as on the personal level.

The central object of reverence in our temples is usually the statue of Amida Buddha; the right, raised hand representing wisdom and the left, lowered hand compassion. The wisdom side of Buddhism is the universal, ecological, evolutionary; deep ecology in its deepest sense. The compassion side is the natural living out of this vision. It is an awareness of the source of pain and suffering and an empathic response. It is, in a word, our compassion. Thus, in conclusion, to be a Buddhist is to be both an ecologist and a conservationist.
More than the Nembutsu
By Serona Tanaka
Stanford University

As I write this, I’m sitting in my living room with my window open, listening to the first two cicadas—the first sign to an authentic Japanese summer. By the time you read this, I will have only graduated high school, but I will also have moved away from my adoptive home in Japan, back to my birth place in California. Like all second semester seniors, I imagine the life outside of the comforts of our family’s nests is jarring. So you can understand the emotional and spiritual rollercoaster that I’m facing. Thinking of the future has made me realize the past few months unbelievably frightening and terrifying: I’ve bitten off ten fingers but one thing that I’ve gained out of this fear, besides a desire not to feel fear anymore, is a catalystized response that has rekindled my search for a deeper understanding of the Dharma.

After months of constant searching, I can happily say that through my own personal initiative, I can feel that I’m on the right path. Through interfaith dialogues and exposing myself to new reading, I’m confident that the path to living the Dharma takes more than chanting the Nembutsu in its traditional form.

I’ve come to the personal conclusion that to fully manifest the Dharma, in today’s world, we first must take the initiative to live the Dharma. And I believe that the first step is to take advantage of one of the most attractive qualities of American society— the advocacy of interfaith dialogue. I’ve found myself through the help of someone who could be considered my spiritual antithesis. I first started talking to Dallin backstage during musical rehearsals—he was Kenickie, and was dancing the musical “Grease.” He eventually became my other half on and off stage. What struck me was how he talked about his faith. He and his family are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, colloquially known as Mormons. He spoke of his church, his faith and his personal relationship with God will not please the ardent that I just had to know more of what compelled him to feel such seemingly constant spiritual high.

Our discussions range from the pedantic histories of our religions to the elation we get from being in complete harmony with our teachings. Out of all the words I could use to sum up how I feel about those discussions—I choose jealousy. Though an ugly word for such a spiritual topic, I’m truly jealous of his passion towards his religion. He is so sure that the teachings in the Book of Mormon are the truth that he is with the spirit, he’s not only happy, but he wants to share that happiness.

I have never felt that sure about anything, let alone the Dharma. I don’t want to give the wrong message. I’m not bitter, nor did I only feel jealousy. In fact, because of those heartfelt dialogues, I feel more enlightened. I too will work for that passion. Dallin’s zeal towards his beliefs offered me a different perspective on faith that has helped me mold my own personal quest towards a more active life dedicated to the Dharma. After exposing myself to these texts, I realized that to be Buddhist takes a lot of effort. It’s a hard religion to fully submit to. It’s based more on intellectual reasoning rather than the spiritual faith that is the backbone in many Western religions. However, that intellectual journey, if taken the time to explore will eventually release the mind from the grip of daily problems. What I’ve realized after reading different theological texts is that Shintoism is honest. Meaning, we recognize the flaws of mankind and refuse to hide them. Even the most skeptical feel this.

The next 2009 BCA Southern District Conference will be hosted by Venice Hongwanji Buddhist Temple on June 13, 2009. There is always something to learn with each new moment and each new experience. Don’t let the new moments pass you by! Thank you to all the participants, guest speakers, panelists, and ministers for joining us. See all of you next year.

With gasbo

What is True Religion?
By Alfred Bloom
Emeritus Professor, University of Hawaii

American society is considered one of the most freely religious societies in the world. Despite the contemporary involvement of religion in politics, our principles of freedom of religion and separation of church and state encourage all forms of faith to express themselves without hin- drance. No one religion has become the paramount religion recognized legally by the government. Consequently, there are a myriad of truth claims, promulgated by each religion which believes it is the true religion. There is a way to dispel the broad confusion concerning these claims. We need a different perspective, something out of the box, that goes beyond the simple differences of belief, ritual or organization.

We must find the true essence of religion in principles that enhance and fulfill the life of all people without discrimination, not only followers of a particular religion. There are four principles which are life-enhancing and life fulfilling. These are Love-Compassion, Justice, Peace and Community.

Love-Compassion are the fundamental basis of human relations. While promoting life and mutuality or reciprocity, dispel fear and about our beliefs, practices and violence. These values inspire respect for the other person, the insider, as well as outsider. They do not abolish inter-religious problems, but they encourage us to identify with the other, put ourselves in their shoes, in order to discover a true resolution. If there is true love and compas- sion, there will be justice. One cannot say that one loves and permits a person to be treated unfairly and unjustly. Justice means respect, treating others right, seeking their welfare and happiness. ”I John 4:19 states: “If a man says, ‘I love God,’ while hating his brother, he is a liar.” No one who loves and practices compassion wishes to see others harmed. In Buddhism the person on the path to enlighten- ment does not harm “living beings (but) through his harmless- ness towards all living beings he is called an Ariya (Noble).” Also Buddhism indicates that hatred solves nothing: “Occasions of hatred are certainly never settled by hatred. They are set free by abundance of love and compassion from hatred. This is the eternal law.”

If there is real justice, there will be peace. Grievances and misunder- standing can be alleviated if we seek justice rather than victory or advantage. The result of sharing love- compassion, seeking true justice, creating interfaith dialogue. Under such conditions people can live together without destroying each other. No one can live mean- ingfully without a nurturing, supporting community. In commu- nitv we find our common humanity and our need for love and compas- sion, justice and peace. We can live without fear of love casts our fear.

Any religion that promotes these principles and works to bring people together in exalting life is a true religion. Vocabularies may differ with history and culture, but true religion brings out the deepest awareness of interdependence and the oneness of humanity within the world of nature. These are not simply unreachable ideals but necessities of our modern world. We need converging spiritualities in our pluralism that will help man move from each other and aid in realizing the true religion within each faith.
Journeys of the Heart East and West: A Brief Conference Report

By Gordon Bernart
Ekho Buddhist Temple

April 10-12, at Ryo-

koku University in

Kyoto, approximately 25
cyberpsychologists and

scholars met to share insights

and to further the growth of practices

that link Buddhism with therapeutic

psychology. Titled "Psychology: Journeys of

the Heart East and West," the conference

was hosted by Ryokoku's Center for

Religion, Science, and Philosophy

(CHSP) and chaired by its
director, Professor Naoki Nabeshi-

ma. The Center extended extra-

ordinary hospitality to all who were

involved in the conference.

Conference co-sponsors included

BCA's Institute of Buddhist

Studies (IBS), the University of

Oregon, and Kyoto Bunkyo

University. Conference presenta-

tions were given in both English and

Japanese.

Professor Mark Unno of the

University of Oregon provided

skilled interpretations between the

languages during the conference.

Over the days of the confer-

ence, many themes and applica-

tions were earnestly discussed. This

brief report cannot hope to capture

the richness of the materials and

experiences that conference partici-

pants shared. I will try to set out

one theme and some of its

practical consequences.

"Opening the Doors of the Heart" opens the door to understand-

ing this theme. Repeatedly during the conference, the idea of

helping others to be who they are was a theme that ran through

many single human life. Suffering can become the basis for its

own transformation into compassion and identification of "my self" as a

participant in the universal human condition.

In his opening address to the participants at Ryo-koku University,

Shinran Shonin explained how Minamoto Shonin

emphasized this balance between emotional sharing and spiritual

growth. This balance is present in the letters and conversations published

after his death, in the Kudanbutsu.

The conference keynote speaker, Ron Beebe, an

eminent American psychoanalytic

in the tradition of Carl Jung. Dr. Beebe believes

in the balance that "Objective Sympathy," to a general

audience of several hundred people. The speech emphasized

both the difficulty and necessity of the therapist’s finding the balance.

between entering into the emo-

tional world of the client and

remaining emotionally detached. He is enough to characterize it objectively.

The therapist’s balanced response helps the client to emerge from the

interpersonal experience. The conference was the final meeting of three

years of the conference. It is an exact parallel to the balance

that Shinran described in the

Kudanbutsu, but, for a secular

psychologist, Buddhist vocabu-

lary and faith traditions are not

available for therapeutic communi-

cation. The secular therapist’s task is to

find a means of moving the client into a healing awareness that
does not rely on unsharable religious assumptions.

Dr. Beebe said

"Therapy is not a ministry, but there are occasions when the

therapist is called upon to teach... to act." He went on to list several

interventions which stretch the usual boundaries between the

therapist, the client, and the

client’s world and which may make the therapist both psychologically and

ethically more vulnerable. He

historically-settled boundary between the psychoanalyst and the client is shifted here, with the

resultant becoming what Dr. Beebe called "the bodhisattva in the

consulting room."

Most therapies and counseling

must be brief and specific and

more than psychoanalytic even though the objective problems of the

clients may be enormous.

No poignant example was presented by

Anne Spencer of Caldwell, Idaho, who

attends the Idaho-Oregon Buddhist

Union. We stayed up late each night to

get the required power naps whenever we could.

And we never got to sleep before 3 a.m. some nights! We actually left

night climbing notes under the doors of each others’ rooms, playing basketball,

beating each other new card

games, or just simply talking.

JAC Report

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losing these items, just to be able to

keep my cell phone close at hand. Not having our phones, however,

served as our first ice breaker. The

room was filled with comments like

"I miss my phone," or "I don’t know what all my friends are doing..." I want

to be on Facebook!" From then, we

developed a constant theme of: what are all my friends doing...? "I want

all my friends are doing...? "I want

and leaves with your right, bow

from everything I had to remember.

In the first couple days, my mind

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挨拶 仏教徒のたしなみ

西横薬仏教 永楽文書

私たちは、天の恵みと地の福、そして人の働きを讃仰しよう。恵みをたえずもとめてやまぬのは、可憐なことである。しかし、常々日々のいとなみのなかにも、ゆるかな恵みを見るのがあらぬのは、寂しいことである。

九条元武 仏教撰

僧侶になるため本願寺で勉強しているとき、忘れ難いことを経験しました。それは一般の人や僧侶の立ち振る舞いです。私は日本で生まれ、アメリカで育ち、知らず知らずのうちにアメリカの大衆に習得している習慣や振る舞い、それが個人主義、自立思考、利己主義ということが身についていました。世界のいろいろなところで交わされる挨拶というような簡単な礼儀作法も、ところによって大きく違っています。そういったものが自分の中に住していたということにも気がつきました。そして、それは私が今も自然にできます。

京都滞在中、本願寺での教職の一つとして、本山で朝早くお勤めされるお朝参に毎日欠かずお参りするということがあります。毎朝本山の梵鐘の音を聞くのが楽しみでした。それが聞こえると、起きて準備をして境内の総堂まで歩いているのです。泊まれている本願寺国際センターを出ると、その角にある大きな親鸞聖人の銅像の前に立ち止まり、聖人に向かって、「親鸞さま、おはようございます」と挨拶をするのです。朝だけではないく、親鸞聖人の銅像の前を通るときには、いつも挨拶をするのです。最初は何か変な気持ちがありました。でも、何度か繰り返してみると、その習慣が自然のものとなり、頭を下げない bây1i411に、それが意味深いものとなっていったのです。最近、ここ（西山勝林寺）でも、近くの女の人たちが仏教を親鸞さまの銅像の前に立ち止まって、頭を下げている姿をみかけるようになりました。日本や他のアジアの国ではこのようなことはあたりまえのことで、ごく自然なことなのです。

本願寺での朝と午後のお参りには仏教徒というタイトルを持った僧侶が特に法話いたします。なお、仏教徒とは、本願寺の僧侶の中でも、特別に教育を受け、全国を問わず仏教を教する方針が特許されている人によりされる職です。この本願寺が毎月頃に本願寺での法話を担当するのです。その中でも一人二役印象に残っている仏教徒があります。彼は小柄（少なくとも私よりも）な人で、その身体から出る声は大きく力強さのがあかりました。演台の前になると、必ずご本尊に向かって、「阿弥陀さま、おはようございます」そして親鸞さまのお姿に向かって、「親鸞さま、おはようございます」それらを運転台に向けあって、「親鸞さま、おはようございます」そして最後に、お参りしている人に向かって、「皆さま、おはようございます」と、大きな声で挨拶をするのです。

初めてその光景を見た時、大きなショックを受けました。そして、恵まし、自分に恵まし、言葉にあわせない感動を受けたことでした。彼の声、態度、そしてみなざみな自覚というものは、他のどの僧侶から感じることを完全に超えたものでした。しかし、それは私たちをただの感覚であり、かつ彼が自分を立派に見せたためしたものではなく、めでたい大切なことなのです。それは、私が今まで見たことのない、なに、大きなほほえみをもって決していないなに、たいへんなことを言葉で表現したかつての事実です。今、今日、この感想に役立てています。

住職 開関院退任式に出席して
名誉開関院 竹村義明

引退してからは、ゆっくりと生活を過ごすことができましたが、幸せに健康に、もてなされるようにと決意を一貫して、一貫してご教授の終業に住職に参じ、形をかえて日々の生活をおくっています。

ご本山の招待を受けて八月二十五日の退任式に出席するため妻と訪日しました。梅雨時にもかかわらず、当たり好天に恵まれ、式は総堂での法要から始まりました。出席者は日本各地から約四百名、海外からは三百名（ハワイ州中西利正、アメリカ東南両州）と、私でした。会場の阿弥陀院の前、新川公勝総長の挨拶、大谷光真門主のお参り、中西智雄講師の法話などを蓮華音としました。

ひきついて、北陸の京都東急ホテルにて開かれたパーティ「感謝のつい」に招待されました。メインテーブルのご案内も挨拶に、ぜひご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願っております。今後も、のご案内をいただきたいと願しております。