WHEEL OF DHARMA
Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America             1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

VOLUME 39  MAY 2013  ISSUE 5

We are getting ready for a big convention to be held in the United States in 2019—the World Buddhist Women’s Conference. Many suggestions are being made during the conference to organize local activities to implement plans for the conference. The President of Iwate Buddah Buddhist Church, In Gassho, wishes to share the history of our activities.

I started this article in early April as I was listening to heavy rain drumming on our rooftop in the early hours of the day. This was just a week after we’d had a string of dry sunny days that seemed to be announcing the arrival of spring in Western Washington. I’m adding to this article from Cleveland, just about when the article is due, after attending the Eastern District Council (EDC) meeting on April 20. While at the EDC we couldn’t avoid talking about the weather. Washington D.C. reached a record 90-degree high on April 10, the Chicago area had 8 inches of rain in a 36-hour period just two days before the meeting, parts of Minnesota had a foot of snow on the day of the meeting, and we saw light snowfall in downtown Cleveland on the same day. Susan Bottari, one of our BCA vice presidents, joined me at the EDC meeting where we reviewed ongoing BCA activities and were accorded time to meet with delegates from each of the five temples in the Cleveland, Ekoji, Midwest, New York, and Seabrook as well as with the Twin Cities Buddhist Association Sangha – to learn about their wellness and issues and to answer their questions. Much like our other BCA temples, the EDC temples are unique, but it was revealing to all of us how our BCA temples face many similar issues. One distinct challenge the Eastern District faces is the distance between temples. The Midwest Buddhist Temple is about 800 miles from both the Cleveland New York Buddhist Church and the Seabrook Buddhist Temple (New York and Seabrook are the closest temples with 130 miles between them) compared to a 790-mile driving distance from the Buddhist Church of Marysville (northernmost of the Northern California District) to Arizona Buddhist Temple (southernmost of the Southern District). Susan and I were very encouraged to hear about the positive outlook expressed by each of the representatives. In turn, the temples learned about the potential for reaching out to their surrounding communities that grew out of the discussions held during the three days. We enjoyed meeting with everyone and wished we had more time to spend together. We thank EDC President, Dr. Erick Ishii, for allowing us to attend the meeting and providing time for us to visit with individual groups. We also appreciate the large amount of work Rev. Ron Miyamura put forth in helping coordinate the weekend. On a side note, out of the rainy weather, the Eastern District Council was scheduled on April 19 to April 21 in Cleveland, Ohio at the Buddhist Center of Cleveland. Our President, Ron Miyamura, was not available due to his family being in Hawaii. We had a very productive meeting and learned a lot. Our next meeting will be held on June 22 to June 24 in Berkeley, California. EDC representatives from five districts, regional districts, metropolitan districts and English-speaking overseas districts, will be attending. Dr. Erick Ishii, EDC President, is in Japan and will not be able to attend. The Eastern District Council will be held on June 22, 2019 at the Buddhist Center of Cleveland. We hope to see everyone there.

By Elaine Donlin, BCBF

The Hongwanji school is a community of people who have joined together reviving the teaching of Shinran Shonin and saying the Nembutsu. We seek to share with others the wisdom and compassion of Amida Tathagata. By doing so, we shall work toward the realization of a society in which everyone is able to live a life of spiritual fulfillment.” (excerpt from “The Essentials of Jodo Shinshu – My Path” section) With this ideal in mind and the intention to further enable many others to encounter the Jodo Shinshu teaching, our Hongwanji headquar-

ders in Kyoto has published a newly created Romanized version of its Nichiyo Gango’s Senin (“Daily Service Book”) as one of the projects of the long-term plans for the 750th Memorial of Shinran Shonin. It is also in response to inquiries and requests from the English-speaking overseas districts, regional districts, metropolitan cities in Japan, and also areas from different parts of the world where there are not any local temples.

New Romanized Service Book with English Translation

“The Hongwanji school is a community of people who have joined together reviving the teaching of Shinran Shonin and saying the Nembutsu. We seek to share with others the wisdom and compassion of Amida Tathagata. By doing so, we shall work toward the realization of a society in which everyone is able to live a life of spiritual fulfillment.” (excerpt from “The Essentials of Jodo Shinshu – My Path” section) With this ideal in mind and the intention to further enable many others to encounter the Jodo Shinshu teaching, our Hongwanji headquar-

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From the Desk of Rev. Kodo Umezu

Thank You Mom...from Cleveland

Continued on Page 6

Continued on Page 6
By Alan Kita, BCA Chief Administrative Officer

The 101st Legislative Assembly (Gekai) for the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii was held at the Hawaii Theatre on May 7-8. The Buddhist Churches of America sends two observers to the annual meeting and this year BCA President Ron Murakami and I had this opportunity to attend. The Gekai is the equivalent of the BCA National Council Meeting which meets annually to elect officers, pass the budget, and address other Buddhist issues. On our first day, Ron and his wife, Karen, and I were greeted at our hotel by President Alton Miyamoto and his wife, Lyntee and immediate past president, Fred Nonaka, and his wife, Nancy. Their generous hospitality was appreciated and helped to navigate the meetings. Where the biannual meeting of the Kyodan’s board of directors on the first day and this a town hall meeting in the evening open to delegates from all 35 temples.

There are similarities in our organizations but as we discussed with Alton and Fred, it was clear that there were a few differences worth noting. The delegates (lay and ministers) to the Gekai were by designated numbers – when voting they raise little wooden signs with their registration numbers. Delegates must present to vote as proxy voting is not allowed but temple representatives may observe and engineering and still be recognized. The assembly used to support the central administration expenses are distributed among districts. Each island comprises one district with the exception of the island of O‘ahu, which consists of two districts, one for the temples in the city of Honolulu and another of temples in the rest of O‘ahu. Each district determines how to divide the assessment among its member temples.

The assembly for best resolution. Cell phone images are not recommended. Web-based Photo attachments should be sent at 300 dpi JPEG, TIFF or PDF format. Third-party photo sharing websites are not recommended. Color prints or digital prints are acceptable. Color photocopies, inkjets, or scans in black and white in any font, as it translates best for our graphic design department. If you do not have a PDF, please contact us and we will prepare one for you. We prefer Microsoft Word documents in an 11-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced. Longer submissions will be rejected or, if accepted, we may follow our own formatting guidelines in order to fit the piece within our allotted space. Please do not submit anything in HTML format, as it cannot be published.

**Graduation**

By Rinban Hiroshi Abiko

Los Angeles Nishi Hongwanji

During the months of May and June, we often hear about the graduates at various educational institutions. Just before breaking out for summer season, in the spring this month, we watched Cal, just thinking about the graduation bring happy thoughts and lesser prospects. Indeed, seeing those who have a long-time of achievement in the past.

The seniors included in the graduation ceremony were designation students who graduated with the Tearful demeanor. My previous classmate wiping his eyes with his sleeve at the end of the song. After the ceremony, many graduates, the singing and dancing, class were in tears. It doesn't mean that they’re wealthy or talented. But my previous classmate was able to express so many emotions that her tears were all for herself.

The planning of the graduation ceremony was held in the end of the month in the end of the month. The planning committee consisted of the students and for the presentation of the graduates. In the present of the graduates, the president of the Buddhist Churches of America, Dr. Kent Matsuda, President-elect Susan Bottari, Vice President Alton Miyamoto, and his vice president, Ken Tanimoto, Vice President Pauline Sakuma, Secretary Tad Shibata, Clerk Ministers Association

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Shin Buddhist Music in America: a survey

By Scott A. Mitchell, IBS Faculty

Hello from Berkeley!

I am doing research on contemporary Shin Buddhist music in America. In a very general sense, I’m interested in the types of music being composed, performed, and played within Shin communities, who’s making it, and why. I hope gain a better sense of how music functions as part of Shin practice, and my long-term goal is to write a book on the subject.

Part of this research involves conducting a survey of Shin Buddhists to better understand how music fits into the broader life of Shin Buddhist practice. You can help my research by participating in this survey. The more people who participate the better! In order for me to paint an honest picture of American Shin Buddhist practice, I need survey results from across the country, young and old, new members and life-long Buddhists.

If you are interested in participating in this survey, please visit the link below. The survey is completely anonymous and individual results will not be shared. There is also a Japanese version of the survey. And if you would prefer a paper copy, please contact me, and one can be provided.

For more information on my project, visit my website: www.americanbuddhism.org, or contact me at scottm@berkeley.edu or 510-809-1404.

English survey: www.surveymonkey.com/s/WOD2013E


We gratefully acknowledge contributions to the Wheel of Dharma by the following donor(s):
East Meets West by Rev. Marvin Harada, CBE Co-Director

Recently I travelled to Cleveland, Ohio to attend the Eastern District Council meeting and to help kick off the CBE sponsored Eastern Tour, in which a CBA Minister from the west coast travels to speak at all of the Eastern District temples. This year, Reverend Jerry Hirano from the Salt Lake, Ogden, and Honeyville, Utah temples is the featured speaker. It was a very interesting trip to meet with leaders of our Eastern District temples, and to revisit the Cleveland, Ohio temple.

When you stop and think about it, there is so much potential to share the Nembutsu with other parts of the country. We only have five temples east of the Rockies. Think about how much of the nation’s population lives on the east coast. We haven’t even touched the surface of what Jodo Shinshu should be in the eastern part of the United States. Sometimes living on the west coast, we forget about all the rest of the country over there. Perhaps people on the east coast feel the same about this side of the country.

When we look at our 60 BCA temples, we focus on the trend of decreasing and aging membership. But when you look at the entire country, 60 temples is really nothing. We have the potential to create new Sanhahus, to build new temples, to grow and reach out to countless others. We cannot let negativity influence our outlook. There is unlimited potential. You could go to any major city on the east coast and start something and it would be the first and only Jodo Shinshu group in that city.

As I travelled back from Cleveland, I thought of the unlimited realm of possibilities open to us as we look to the east for areas of sharing the Nembutsu.

CBE 2013 Tentative Calendar of Events
(at the Jodo Shinshu Center unless noted otherwise. Programming subject to change.)

June 22: Over the Rainbow: The LGBT* Community and Shin Buddhism Seminar*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
July 5-7: 21st Century Pacific Seminar on Global Buddhism
with Dr. Mark Blum and Prof. Kenko Toro (CBE credit for intermediate/advanced students)
July 19-21: College YBA Retreat @ San Luis Obispo Buddhist Temple
August 3-4: Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) August Workshop
September 5-7: Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP) seminar for beginner/intermediate
September 27-28: Lay Leaders’ Training Session (tentative)
October 5: Japanese Seminar
October 11-13: College YBA Specialty Seminar
October 18-20: Dharma School Teachers’ Continuing Education
November 1-2: Baby Boomers’ Seminar with Rev. Masao Kodani
November 5-8: International Homonpa Ongyo Hondo Propagation Exchange (HOPE)
December 12-14: Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP) seminar for beginner/advanced

The LGBT* Community and Shin Buddhism Seminar
*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender
Saturday, June 22, 2013 • 9:30 am - 9 pm
8 am - 9:30 am Registration & Continental Breakfast
at the Jodo Shinshu Center

For more information, email: admin@cbecba.org or call (510) 809-1460

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The LGBT* Community and Shin Buddhism Seminar
*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender
Saturday, June 22, 2013 • 9:30 am - 9 pm
8 am - 9:30 am Registration & Continental Breakfast
at the Jodo Shinshu Center

Featuring Guest Speakers, Panel Presentations, Small Group Discussions, Resources & More
Registration is open to the public and includes breakfast, lunch, dinner & snacks!

8 am - 9:30 am Registration & Continental Breakfast
9 am - 11 am Keynote speaker: Brie Miranda, "Buddhism & Gender"
11:30 am - 1 pm Lunch & Panel Discussions
1:30 - 3:30 pm Panel Presentations and Small Group Discussions

Registration is $135 due by June 30:
$120 until June 16:
$100 Early Registration
$50 Extended Registration Dates:
May 2013
 }

Thank You for your DHARMA CAR DONATIONS!
The BCA CBE VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM is making a difference! We appreciate all vehicles...running or not!

This program is administered by the Orange County Buddhist Church (OCBC) and is available in the State of California only. To donate vehicles, contact OCBC:
- Free pick up and DMV paperwork
- Tax-deductible at vehicle’s selling price
- Supports BCA CBE’s Annual Program Fund

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Phone: (714) 827-0950
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Email: ocbo306@aol.com

CBE 500 Club: Be part of our educational mission!
The Center for Buddhist Education needs your help to keep our programs going! Donations of any amount are appreciated. You may make payment by check payable to Buddhist Churches of America (please write “CBE 500 Club” in check memo) or make a one-time donation or automatic recurring payments. To make a tax-deductible contribution, mail check or credit card donations to: CBE (Headquarters), 1710 Octavia Street, San Francisco, CA 94109. To donate online, visit www.BuddhistChurchesAmerica.org. Go to the DONATIONS tab at the top right and click “CBE 500 Club”.

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Boy Scout Troop 611’s Newest Eagle Scouts

From left to right: Rinban Kanesaka Fujimoto, Marshall Seid, Andrew Wong, Justin Hashimoto, and flex Garrik Sakamoto.

Marshall Yukio Seid is the son of Ann Seid and Michael Seid. He began his scouting career in Cub Scout Pack 611 in 2001 as a Tiger Cub where he earned his Merit Religious Award and Arrow of Light Award.

As a Boy Scout in Troop 611, Marshall has held the following leadership positions: Patrol Leader, Patrol Quartermaster, Troop Scribe, Patrol Grubmaster, and Troop Historian. Marshall attended the National Jamboree in Virginia in 2010. In addition to earning the rank of Eagle Scout, Marshall earned a Bronze Palm.

Marshall’s Eagle Scout Project was to design and install a tree cookie flooring for an outbuilding at his Preschool in Campbell. The flooring inside the tipi and the outside patio allows the preschoolers to be able to use this wooden play structure year round without the worry of becoming muddy during the rainy sea-son. He selected this project to benefit the preschool and to give back to a very dear friend, Mrs. Mary Smith, who is the Director of Bright Days Preschool.

In addition to his school and scout activities, Marshall has held the position of Head of Review for the theirelaminenous.com, a website based in Silicon Valley focused on Mac related products for the last 3 years. He has volunteered as, and now works as, a counselor and photographer for Visi West in Cupertino, a program of Visi Services, which serves children and adults with disabilities such as autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, trauma, brain injury and other cognitive or physical disabilities.

Marshall plans to attend either San Diego and major in Chemical Engineering. He plans to continue on to earn his MBA.

Andrew Steven Wong

Andrew Stephen Wong, son of Edward and Denise Wong, is a senior at Silver Creek High School in San Jose, California. Andrew began his scouting career as a Tiger Cub with Pack 611 in 2001. In 2006, Andrew earned his Eagle Scout rank as part of the Den 8 Eagles.

Andrew is a member of the Order of the Arrow. As part of Troop 611, he has served in the positions of Patrol Leader, Assistant Patrol Leader, Patrol Grubmaster, Troop Scribe, Troop Librarian, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, and Senior Patrol Leader. In 2010, Andrew was fortunate enough to attend the Boy Scout National Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill in Virginia and is looking forward to celebrate the Centennial Anniversary of Boy Scouts of America.

For his Eagle Scout Project, Andrew designed, planned, man- aged, and helped construct an 18’x30’ concrete and brick “SC” logo for his high school on the surface of the hill leading into the school’s football field. Andrew selected this project because he felt it was a good way to give back to the school that had given him and his family the opportu-nity of higher education. He also hoped to motivate his fellow students.

Andrew is looking forward to attending a four-year university, one of the UCs or Cal Poly SLO - majoring in mechanical engineering.

Graduation

Continued from Page 2

In Japan, the graduation has been regarded as completing or ending, and the accompanying ceremony marking the beginning or end of the school year. It is believed that in America, the graduation ceremony is usually called a commencement being handed down from the British tradition and its literal meaning is “beginning”, and at some well known academic circles, the commencement is used to announce the high degree of the importance in time and place.

Converting with the gentle-man, I was reminded of the Bud-dhist interpretation of human beings as an accumulation of the past karma. In karmic philosophy, commemoration will be interior, and commemoration will be ex-terior. The former is a reflection on past karma and awareness of the gravi-ty of debt to fellow beings for making it possible to bring the self to that point in time. The latter is the resol-ution for the future. One is our aspiration toward higher goals one sets for oneself, while the other is the cause for the reason that a real Buddhist is a perpetual student of Buddha-Dharma when-ever, where-ever, what-ever, every-day, any-time, any-day. I look forward to seeing the expressions on the faces of Nishi Center graduates as they march up to the front of altar in the Honda gebruik with their over-sized cap and gowns, then toward the end of cer-e-monies, move the tassel from one side to the other, full of hope and good will.

In Gassho.
FYI: A Parent’s Perspective

By Ko and Paige Yebisu
Fresno Betsuin

last November, my wife (Paige) and I received a “Save The Date” email from Keith Miller, Director of the YAC Leadership. Today Conference planned for the end of March 2013. Keith informed us that the conference would be a busy time at work for me, but hey, than I was because I knew that it was
Paige was more excited to attend
us to attend too. I have to admit that
us that parents were invited and
end of March 2013. Keith informed
Today Conference planned for the

Dharma messages about real-life situations and the chanting of the sutras in unison, the

PAAR Arakawa
Fresno Betsuin

arch 23 and 24 was Spring Higan weekend for the Fresno Betsuin. This year the attendees for both the weekend, one main topic that seems
fits your personality. This was my
dreams would have ever thought that
know me…….who in their wildest
daydreams about the film led him to Fresno, and
his movie? I am sure this was the thought
Fresno Betsuin and seems so symbolic to the
Bodhi Tree located on the grounds of the

During the weekend, we were fortunate to be able to spend some time with Bishop Umemura, both formally during his presentation, which

Boettcher’s background led to Fresno Betsuin and seems so symbolic to the

We were all amazed, of course, that a film of any kind, and especially one that chronicles the Buddhist Churches of America over one hundred year history could be made in the span of a year. We all watched the film, “Streams of Light” and were astounded by the breadth of coverage and hitting on certain

We are all extremely grateful for the experience.

In Gashou

Reflections on “Streams of Light”

By Rumiko & Hunter Arakawa
Fresno Betsuin

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arch 23 and 24 was Spring Higan weekend for the Fresno Betsuin. This year the attendees for both
weekends, one main topic that seems
to be common everywhere is how to reach out to the younger generation. Rev. Sugao
accepting the YAC Leaders and attendees like
who, in past years, had participated
in a training program sponsored by

in the “Streams of Light.” I believe we will all

We were also interested to extend a
special “Thank You” to Rev. Peter, Keith, Charlene Grinolds and all of
the other adult volunteers for mak-
ing the weekend so memorable for us
and everyone else too. Our special “Thank You” also includes Linda Okuno and all the other Orange County Buddhist Church parents for their hard work in preparing all of the delicious meals for the attendees and parents to and Rev. Marvin Harada, Rev. Akio Miyazawa, and Reverend Jon Turner for allowing us to utilize their facilities and for being such gracious hosts.

As this all was happening, Paige and I felt part of the YAC Program family too. We look forward to continuing our journey in Jodo Shinshu Bud-

We were treated to a delicious dinner and then highlight for the week
end for Paige and me, the TALENT SHOW. The individual abilities of all these Youth Minister Assistants were
really incredible and judging by everyone’s reaction, a
falling for his favor. We then had

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In Gashou

By Ko and Paige Yebisu
Fresno Betsuin

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early worked out well for our family,
as we were both busy in our work lives. We
then had a dinner for the attendees while

Buddhist Temple of Marin Presents
Great Compassion: The Miracle of
Life and Death
An all-day seminar with Rev. Mark Unno
Saturday, May 18, 9:30am-3pm
Donation $30, includes lunch

Rev. Mark Unno, an ordained Shin Buddhist priest, is head of the Department of Religious Studies and associate professor of Japanese Buddhism at the University of Oregon in Eugene. He holds a doctorate in classical Japanese Buddhism from Stanford University, with an emphasis on Shin Buddhism, Shingon and Zen.

He has also worked in the areas of comparative religious thought. Buddhism and psychotherapy and interreligious dialogue.

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The Buddhist Temple of Marin is located at 390 Miller Avenue in Mill Valley, CA 94941 Phone: (415) 388-1173 www.buddhisttempleofmarin.org

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In Gashou

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Continued from Front Page

We had a good number of people out there. It’s not that many people are interested in coming to meet Mother’s Day. Then, on the other hand, we had two of them are longtime family friends who we often think of but haven’t had an opportunity to see them very often. And so our social leaders, who I know are great at making connections with others, have positioned the translations as a study and educational tool. As much as possible, we move the translations of the Three Treasures, Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, and its ministers have been in the forefront of many cultural milestones, including the Teikoku, a kind-hearted person that her compassion seemed to extend to everyone she knew and the sufferings of others caused her great pain. Despite quite a long way, the most important thing is not the size of our children but the emotional and psychological resource of being in touch with our Shinshu sangha.

In continuing with this concept of careful thought and deliberation, the Honpa Hawai‘i International Center decided to use the same basic layout and format of the Japanese service book with some slight variations and adjustments. The book is divided into two parts, with the first part focusing on the cultural heritage and the second, as it were, is meant to give us a better understanding of the life of the founders and their mission.

It’s not so far fetched to think of my mom as a very kind person, who always had a smile on her face. Perhaps the most challenging thing is deciding what to do with this world. We don’t choose to be given life, but we do choose how we live it. Whether our lives can seem difficult, but it is important to note that the Honpa Buddhist Temple in the Bay Area. The Emanjiki temple is part of a network of Emanjiki temples, each of which contains a beautifully painted wall and ceiling, and framed depictions of events in Shakyamuni Buddha’s life. There’s a sense of inclusiveness and acceptance. The BCA Mission of Hawaii established this program in 1976.

This year the Living Treasures of Hawaii’s honorees included: Michael Na‘ahiki, cultural ambassador, teacher, and proponent of Hawaiian culture; Billy Yamasaki, chef; and Dennis Raubahi, business leader.

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皆さんに好きな音楽というものがあると思います。二〇一二年は世界的に有名な「ザ・ビートルズ」がデビューしてから五十周年という事でしたが、今も彼らの曲や歌詞といったものは多くの人達の心を動かしています。音楽、特に歌詞という「言葉」には何か人を動かす力があるようなものです。しかしその当時に流行った歌の歌詞というものは知らず知らずの間に覚えていたり、今でも口ずさんだりするものです。歌と言う「生きた言葉」となって私に届いているから、私達は心の底からその歌を愛し、歌詞に思い入れするのではないでしょうか。

私は開教使になる前はロックバンドでベースを弾いていたのですが、どうも歌うのは苦手で、最近は歌謡曲などのメロディーをベースで弾いたりしますが、やはりそれを上手く歌える人には「伝える」という点では私は叶わないなと思います。それほど「音」そのものよりも「言葉」のものには力があるのでしょう。

人が歌を好むのは昔も今も変わりはないようですね。平安時代末期をテーマにした昨年の大河ドラマ「平清盛」が終了してしばらく経ちますが、劇中でも歌を詠む場面が何度かありました。歌を詠むという事が、当時の粋な感情の伝え方であったのでしょう。中でも時の権力者、後白河上皇(後の後白河法皇)は「今様を痛めたという記録が残っておりますし、『梁塵秘抄(りょうじんひしょう)』という今様の歌集を残されました。よくよく考えてみますと、平安時代(七九四～一一八五年頃)には電化製品や車・電車等はありませんでした。今はどちらかと言えば、洗濯機の回る音であったり、冷蔵庫のモーターの音、車や電車の走る音等、機械的な音が溢れていますが、当時は人の歩く音、馬車の行き交う音、おしゃべりをする声、料理を作る音等、より人間の生活している姿を想像しやすい音が溢れていたのではないかと思われます。

親鸞聖人は平安時代末期の一一七三年にお生まれになりました。どうも煌びやかなイメージのある平安時代ですが、特に末期には保元の乱・平治の乱、治承・寿永の乱と大きな内乱が起き、貴族中心の政治体制から武士主導への政治体制への変換の時期であった、さらには富裕層と貧困層の格差は大きくなる一方だったと言います。

今様はそんな時代にひろく詠まれたわけですが、それはどこか昭和の戦後・高度経済成長期の日本と重なる所があります。戦争で傷つき、高度成長の波に押し流され・・・そんな日本人を勇気づけてきたのは美空ひばりや坂本九といったアーティスト達でした。特に坂本九の「上を向いて歩こう/SUKIYAKI」は日本のみならず、アメリカでもヒットし、多くの人達に勇気を与えてきました。それは「上を向いて歩こう」の歌詞とメロディーが心に響くものであったからでしょう。歌の持つ力というのは本当に非常に大きなものがあります。

親鸞聖人は五百首を超える「和讃」を残されましたが、このご和讃は全て「今様」の七・五調のスタイルで構成されています。「和讃」というのは読んで字の如し「和語による讃歌」、つまりは「経典や教えを和語(日本語)でほめたたえる讃歌」であります。作曲や作詞をされた経験のある方ならばご存知のことと思いますが、決められた文字数の中で言いたいことを伝えるのは非常に難しいものです。「今様」という七・五調の枠組みの中で五百首を超える素晴らしいご和讃を残された聖人がどれほど苦労されたのかは想像もつきませんが、それと当時にご和讃からは聖人の非凡なる芸術的才能を垣間見るのであります。浄土真宗で言うご和讃とは大抵の場合、「三帖和讃」を指される三つの和讃『浄土和讃』『高僧和讃』『正像末和讃』のことを指しますが、『浄土和讃』『高僧和讃』の成立が一二四八年頃、『正像末和讃』の成立が一二五七年頃と約十年(構想も含めれば実質十年以上と思われます)の歳月をかけて製作されております。そこから察するに、聖人は流行歌であった今様調の「和讃」こそが、大衆の人々へとお念仏のみ教えを伝える大事な手段であるとお考えになったのではないか、「生きた言葉」として人々の心に染みわたるとお考えになったのではないかと思うわけです。
四月二十六日から二十八日の三日間、桑湾教区の主催で二〇一三年のダルマスクール教師全国大会がカリフォルニア州サンマテオ市のマリオットホテルで開催され、全米各寺より約一八〇名のダルマスクール教師が集い交流を深めた。開教使は十九名の参加があった。今大会のテーマは「ICE Being Buddhist in a Diverse Society（多様化した社会で仏教徒であること）」で基調講演はブリッジ・ハリー開教使(オークランド)とオークランド市に所在するイーストベイメディテーションセンターの池田ムシン師で、人種、性別、年齢などにこだわらない、多くの人々に開かれた寺院のあり方を提案した。 偏見やとらわれで固められた氷が阿弥陀仏のすべての者に至り届く光によって溶かされていくとのイメージから、“ICE”というテーマが選ばれている。ワークショップでは「どのような行動が新しくお寺に来た方に良い印象を与えるか」また、「自分が善かれと思っただけの行動が相手によっては悪く捉えられることもある」など異なる背景を持つ者と効果的に交流をはかる方法が話し合われた。分化会では「多様化」をキーワードに、新しい仏教讃歌の練習、世界のお茶の試飲、曼荼羅を模した絵を共同で描くなどが行われた。ディナーではダルマスクール教師勤続十年、二十五年、五十年の方々が表彰された。二〇一四年の大会は沿岸教区の主催でマウンテンビューで開催の予定。