The Light of Joy Shines in the UK

The Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha in Kyoto initiated a new program that brings staff members from the Hongwanji to the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) for a period of three months to be inspired by what they learn from the BCA temples and members. The study tour is coordinated from the Hongwanji to the Buddhist Church of Stockton and Matthew Hamasaki of Berkeley Buddhist Temple left in March of this year to begin their rewarding experience in Kyoto. Around the same time, Nobuya Dake of Ryukoku University came to Berkeley to begin his year as an exchange student at IBS.

...Continued on Page 6

The Hongwanji Meets the BCA

IBS-Ryukoku University Student Exchange

Graduate students studying at the Buddhist Churches of America’s (BCA) Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) are able to participate in a student exchange program at Ryukoku University in Kyoto. Ryukoku University was started in 1639 by the 13th Monshu of the Hongwanji, Ryoto, as a seminary for Jodo Shinshu priests. It is one of Japan’s oldest institutions of higher education.

To qualify for the exchange, IBS students must have their coursework completed and a draft of their final thesis approved. IBS students Candace Shibata of the Buddhist Church of Stockton and Matthew Hamasaki of Berkeley Buddhist Temple left in March of this year to begin their rewarding experience in Kyoto. Around the same time, Nobuya Dake of Ryukoku University came to Berkeley to begin his year as an exchange student at IBS.

Living as a foreign exchange student in Japan or the U.S. has its moments. “I cannot thank my family and friends enough for their unconditional love and encouragement,” Ms. Shibata wrote. “I must also thank my IBS/Jodo Shinshu Center family for providing the firm push needed to get things done while also giving me gentle hugs when I felt defeated. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the kind individuals, BCA temples, and BCA affiliated organizations for the generous scholarships that I have received to support my studies in Japan.”

IBS students Candace Shibata, IBS Student.

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My wife, Janet, and I had an oppor-
tunity to meet with many Jodo Shinshu Buddhists from around the world during the four-day European Shin Buddhist Conference* (ESBC) held at Solent University in Southampton, United Kingdom, September 1-4. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience; I don’t know how to describe my feelings. There were over 60 people from many countries in Europe, Nepal, Australia, the US, and Japan, including our former Monshu, Koshin Ohtani.

A simple Japanese-style opening service was officiated by Rev. Daichi Gary Rob-
inson, minister-in-charge of the Southamp-
ton Sangha, and his four assistants. Sitting on the hard carpeted floor, they read the Three Treasures, the Jodo Shinshu Creed, and Juseige. After the service, they removed the sacred objects from the onsen jar so that they could proceed with the program. I was surprised to see the young assistants handle the Buddha’s Name scroll with white gloves on. I sometimes forget the proper manner for handling sacred objects, but they showed the highest respect to the scroll. I believe it was a reflection of their deep appreciation of the teaching.

During the four-day conference, many individuals presented papers and had questions and answers related. I enjoyed hearing their views and sincere appreciation of the nembutsu teaching. Some of the speakers have also written books. Rev. Diane Jishin Johnson, though born in Philadelphia, PA, received Tokudo under the European umbrella group. She is re-

*Continued on Page 6

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Official Publication of the Buddhist Churches of America
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All over the world today, as in the past, there are people who are persecuted and killed for adhering to their religious paths. In Japan, there have been times when Nembutsu followers suffered the same treatment. Would you do anything to ensure accessibility to the Buddha-dharma and the Nembutsu teaching? In the grand scheme of temple priorities, what does it rank on your list? In your life priorities, how much do spiritual and religious concerns matter to you?

Buddhism.

The purpose was not only to serve as a vehicle to share the dharma and our Jodo Shinshu teaching. According to an 1899 newspaper article that was reprinted in last month’s issue of the Whirl of Dharma, their purpose was not only to serve Japanese immigrants, but also “to communicate with those among Americans who wish to investigate Buddhism.”

Decades ahead of their time, the two priests had only a pyramid, a poor command of English, and a hostile social milieu in which to pursue the latter objective. Over a century later, we still have pamphlets, but we also have social media and the Internet with which to communicate information about the dharma and about ourselves. Many of our ministers are native English speakers, and thanks to an initial interest in Buddhism sparked by Erric Thict, Thich Nhat Hanh, and the Dalai Lama, and popular practices such as meditation and mindfulness, the mainstream adoption is finding us through our websites and by word of mouth.

With hard work, dedication and dana from many members and friends, a new temple was built where Nembutsu followers sought solace. The Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Temple began as an independent temple on December 15, 1946. The present location of the temple was purchased in 1978 and on June 13, 1985 the temple building was completed and dedicated. Tragedy struck in January 1979 when a fire destroyed the entire temple.

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When the cheerleaders made a human pyramid, there is always a person at the top. This person is at least 10 feet off the ground (and sometimes more than 15 feet), smiling the entire time. She even stands on one foot while at the top. After the pyramid is completed, the cheerleader jumps off the top, and she is able to jump off the top of the pyramid.

The fear of the cheerleader at the top comes from within, not trusting the people on the ground. But when she removes that fear from within and focuses on the message from the people on the ground, “We will catch you, no matter what happens,” she disappears and she is able to jump off the top of the pyramid. The person at the top just needs to entrust herself to the message conveyed by the people on the ground, complete the performance, and jump.

When I talk about the Pure Land, many people think of the Pure Land as something we go to after we die, and that the Pure Land teaching has nothing to do with this life. But according to the Larger Sutra, we are not going to die; we will be born into the Pure Land. We are not living life to die; we are living life to be born into the Pure Land. The teaching of Amida Tathagata is just like the people on the ground below the human pyramid, waiting and saying, “we will catch you, no matter what happens.”

Don’t worry about it.” Just as the cheerleader on top of the pyramid can smile and focus on her performance because of the support on the ground, the Pure Land teaching becomes the energy we need to live this life fully without worrying about the future. The Pure Land teaching brings us home.

Let’s state the obvious: it isn’t the temples or that is so precious and important. In the Preface to his monumental work, On the Foundation, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way, we read, “How joyous is Maitreya, Gaṇḍakī Śrīnāma, disciple of Śākyamuni! Rare it is to come upon the sacred scriptures from the westward land of India and the commentaries of the masters of China and Japan, but now I have been able to encounter them. Do I not become overjoyed because of the profundity of the Tathāgata’s benevolence. Here I rejoice in the teaching so powerful and essential to our lives to worth give it the priority and support it deserves? If not, why not? Do our ministers have the deep, understanding, and ability to connect meaningfully? Are our activities relevant and reflective of the teaching?

Just as our Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley has met with great success thanks to its many and varied Buddhist educational programs, so our continuation lies in focusing on the Buddha-dharma at our temples. But regardless of what we do or how we see it, Buddhism will follow a course of ebb and flow as it has throughout its 2,500 year history, and just as has happened countless times in the past, temples and organizations will rise and fall. Ultimately, it is beyond our limited vision and self-serving calculation. Only the Nembutsu, like the dharma, is true and reliable.
On Sunday, August 31, 2014, the 32nd World Joint Coordinating Council Meeting for Jodo Shinshu Honpa Hongwanji-ha took place in Southampton, England. This was the first time it was held in Europe. Representatives from the Hon- gwanji in Kyoto met with representatives from the four Overseas Districts (Kyodo): North America, Hawaii, Canada, and South America. (The representatives from the Consulates and BSA-USA Directors, temple Sanghas were unable to attend.) At this meeting, Hongwanji representatives and the overseas directors of the BCA who are happening at their respective locations.

Representing the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) was Rev. Kodo Umezue, bishop, Alan Kita, chief administrative officer and I (as president). Rev. Kodo Umezue was also present representing the Hongwanji Office in the USA.

The BCA’s written report to the Council consisted of many of the facts one would normally see in the Bishop’s Report to the BCA National Council. A copy is available from the BCA temples. In addition, our Bishop shared his middle and long-term visions for international propagation, including ideas such as establishing a Hongwanji International Office in San Francisco to send messages out to the world, and making the Institute of Buddhist Studies a center for the world in 1984.

Rev. Tatsuya Aoki, bishop, presented for the Jodo Shinshu Tennoji Temple of Canada (JSTBC). His report was similar to what appeared in my column in the August 2013 issue of BCA. In addition, he reminded BCA members going to the 15th World Buddhist Women’s Convention in Calgary in May 2015 to bring their omiyage, assistant, visits to exchange at your banquet table. The BCA Bookstore can give you ideas. Representatives from Honzan (Hongwanji headquarters) informed us that they are still making plans for public services to visit many different temples. Rev. Kawa- hara estimated that it cost about $25,000 to train the four ministers who came last year, not including travel to and from Japan, insurance, meals, or Rev. Kwa- harsha’s time. There are five ministers participated in this year.

A resolution of appreciation was signed by all the overseas bishops and was presented to His Eminence to Honzan, Zenmon-sama, at the meeting’s dinner.

One day following the Joint Coordinating Council Meeting, the 17th European Shin Buddhist Conference (ESBC) began with a joint session of the 14th International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies Conference. The theme of the conference was “Jodo Shinshu in Daily Life.” We heard two papers titled “Nanadamu Anytime, Anywhere,” “Defeating the Mara,” “On Other Power Faith,” “My- konin Okawara and Her Poems of Dispair and Joy,” “Walking the Shin Buddhist Path as a Buddhist,” “The Name and the Light as our Compassionate Father and Mother,” “Mindfulness of Amida: the Application of the Nembutsu in Everyday Life,” “Jodo Shinshu: The Supreme Teaching for the Present Age,” and “The Ordinary Circumstances of Human Life: Reading Rennyo in and Out of Context.” The speakers were from England, Japan, Romania, Austra- lia, Germany, and Belgium.

An address was given by Zenmon-sama at the opening ceremony of the 17th ESBC. The second half of which was held jointly with the International Association of Buddhist Culture. We heard papers on “The Power of Gratitude,” “Nembutsu Po- rey and Daily Life,” “Responding to Climate Change in Daily Life,” “Amida’s Pure Land: My Heaven on Earth,” and “24/7— Isn’t That Too Much?” Both conference groups were taken for a day trip to Stonehenge and Winchester Castle and Ca- thedral. We had tea and stones with the mayor of Winchester. She and Zenmon-sama exchanged gifts.

After the conference I asked BCA headquarters to send fifty copies of the Complete Works of Shinshu Rennyo Shonin to our Southampton Shinshu Fellowship. The next ESBC will be in August 2016, and it will be “The Meaning of Nembutsu.” I hope that a BCA minister and a lay representative will attend.

Looking Ahead to 2015
BCA Annual Meetings

By Ralph Honda, Planning Committee Co-chair

A new vision is on the horizon for the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Ministers Association and National Council Meetings. During February 25-28 and June 1-5, 2015, the BCA will conduct its annual meetings at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in San Diego, California. Bishop Kodo Umezue encourages a fresh look to the decades-long event, with less meeting time and more Dharma dialogue, in an ef- fort to attract more future leaders, both lay and the general public to par- ticipate. “I would like to see the officers of the BCA minis- ters and National Council Meetings to be more of a conference atmosphere,” he said recently.

The Southern District Council of the BCA will host, and the Buddhist Temple of San Diego (BTSD) will host the BCA Annual Meeting. The Plan- ning Committee has been working closely with the BCA National Headquar- ters since January 2013. The Southern District Council of the BCA will host, and the Buddhist Temple of San Diego (BTSD) will host the BCA Annual Meeting. The Planning Committee has been working closely with the BCA National Headquarters since January 2013.

The theme of the conference is “The Meaning of Nembutsu.” The theme of the conference is “The Meaning of Nembutsu.” It will be the keynote speaker. Dr. Hirano is a psychiatrist who has been paying close attention to his medical practice. The theme is from 1 to 5 p.m., and is open to the public.

On Friday and Saturday, workshops will be duced from 2 to 5 p.m. under the guidance of the BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE). Many college-aged Buddhists affiliated with the Young Leaders of the BCA will attend its activities on Friday evening and all day Saturday. The Ending Buddha Lea- der of the BCA, and the BCA Bookstore will also conduct information work participation.

The Buddhist Temple of San Diego, where the National Buddhist Association of Young Buddhists (YBA) will conduct a breakfast fundraiser for everyone to enjoy. Registration and hotel information will be mailed and emailed to temple presi- dents and ministers towards the end of October.
The Jodo Shinshu Center has been very busy lately. The dorm rooms are full of attendees, both Senseis and students. Wonderful dharma weekend!”

“It was a privilege to host the first Eastern District MAP session at NYBC. I am indebted to all of you. The session was held September 18-21, with 29 attendees. Following are some comments from participants:

Not only did I have the opportunity to deepen my connection to the Dharma, but to learn about and practice the rituals and hymns of Jodo Shinshu and other religious traditions. Through this hands-on experience, the reverends can develop a broader perspective to take back with them to Japan. This may blossom into something new for the future of Jodo Shinshu.

Reverends Takamine and Hanakawa may be visiting your church or temple as part of their staff development training. When they do, you should engage them, please be nice to them.

NYBC Welcomes Minister’s Assistant Program

The Fall 2014 MAP Seminar was held at the New York Buddhist Church last September 18-21, with 29 attendees. Following are some comments from participants:

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Reverends Takamine and Hanakawa may be visiting your church or temple as part of their staff development training. When they do, you should engage them, please be nice to them.
This was my first time attending a Baby Boomers’ Seminar, so I was not sure what to expect. When I arrived, I noticed several people were already seated and I asked Rev. Patricia Usuki questions on anything. Besides learning about her path to being a senior this fall. While not the only reason, Pacific Buddhist Academy has been providing high school students with a new and transformative college preparatory experience that has our graduates confidently striding into the world with the knowledge of who we are and knowing why things happen to empower us to live a full and rich life. Once we realize the who and why, we can’t help but feel with gratitude and live a life of Nembutsu.

Thanks to Rev. Patti Usuki for her wonderful insights. Her thoughtful message was easy to listen to and understand. Thank you all for such a wonderful time.

The Dharmacarika Series: Our Lifelong Learning Challenge

INTRODUCTION TO THE SANBUTSU-GE: Gatha (verses) in Praise of the Buddha (Part 9)
by Rev. John Iwohara

This is the continuation of a series of articles on the Sanbutsu-ge. The reader is also encouraged to visit the on-line site: Dharmanet.org http://www.dharmanet.org/courses/M506v1.html

Section 3: In praise of the Buddha (continued)

Following Dharmacarika Bodhisattva’s praise of the Buddha Lokesvararajya’s actions of the body, speech, and mind, the next two lines contain praise for the manifestations of the Buddha’s virtuous acts and focusses on the karmic acts of the heart or mind. This praise of the karmic acts of the mind are again divided into two large sections. The first four lines focus on the five virtuous acts of speech, then the next section focuses on the manifestations of the Buddha’s virtuous acts and the next two lines focus on vortu. Beginning with this article I would like to focus on the first of four lines or the introduction to the five acts of speech.

成瑞新治・三味境室 san mai shin jin san mai e

“Fourties, Fifties, Sixties, Seventies, and Wisdom.

Dharmacarika Bodhisattva’s praise of the Buddha’s karmic acts of the mind are represented through the five virtuous acts of maintaining precepts, hearing frequently, endeavoring, concentrating, and having wisdom. The first of these five virtuous acts, or maintaining precepts, might be construed as “doing” something and because of this can arguably be categorized as either an act of the body or mind. However, when we take a look at how precepts are generally written we do see that it is always “not doing” something. Because of this, the first act of mind is act of hearing.

Ostensibly, maintaining precepts or kesho (我)because we all have the potential of doing something—seems to be relatively easy to accomplish. We think that it is much more difficult “to do” something than it is “not to do” something. We often equate laziness with not doing something. Why, then does the Dharmacarika praise the Buddha for being able to refrain from bad intentions andactions? It is not just the degree of boredom of being a virtu? On the other hand, we assume that maintaining precepts is hard, that the first of precepts listed is the longest list of those things that are very easy for us to do.

We easily performed acts of our becomes precepts when these acts are all we have discovered to be harmful to self or others. Although not a precept, one example of an act that is easy for us to do and yet should be avoided is picking at the scars of a recently healed wound.

Sakyamuni Buddha, in thinking about what easily performed acts should be avoided by peo? ple who wish to practice wholeness in love, he taught the five lay precepts. These five things “not to do” are acts that should be avoided, as a mini? mum, by anyone who they wish to live a virtuous life. If we consider their lives guided by Buddha principles. These five acts that should be avoided include: (1) killing, (2) stealing, (3) adultery, (4) lying, and (5) becoming intoxicated. The last precept of avoiding intoxication probably also includes the act of not becoming addicted. Of these five the first precept of “not to kill” seems reasonably obvious. It is not a very few of us, if any, who consider ourselves to be ruthless, killing machines. Having said that, however, there are also times when we might be somewhat cavalier in our attitudes towards taking a life.

For example, we can “kill” a termite, a bug, a fly or an ant. With regards to taking life it was genocidal in its scope. I signed the paperwork with very little, if any, re? sponse, and instead hoped that the treatment would be complete in its amputation. On a more regular basis we are frequently looking for care of insecticide or putting out ant traps in the hopes that I can kill the entire colony. I also find myself swatting at flies without even a pause. The only time I find myself hesitating from “killing” is when I am cutting the only place where I am reminded that I am a Buddha. Otherwise, it seems that I merely reflect on these acts of killing. Although it may seem somewhat trivial to be talking about insects, the attitude that I have shown towards the life of an insect and the attitude shown by Sakyamuni Buddha and his disciples is markedly different. For example, in the sa? suta or inner altar area of our Jodo Shinshu temples is often found a lantern called the kana tooro (or tan tooro) hanging from either side of the goharuma or the “palace” where the Bud? da image is seated. The kana tooro or “Covered Meal Lantern” was originally de? veloped in order to help prevent fires as well as to keep flying insects from acciden? tally killing themselves in the flames of the lantern. Even more, is found in Jodo Shinshu temples, it is a kana tooro that became more decorative than practical, but part of the meaning behind the lamp is the protection of life including but not limited to the in? sects that I would so recklessly destroy with abandon. Not doing something, then, is not necessarily something that is easy for us to do (or not do as the case may be). In the case of the kana tooro we are shown, at the very least, how mindful the Buddha and the Sangha used to be in their practice of how not to take life. The mindfulness that is required when we are faced with an insect was born from an appreciation of how delicate, beautiful, and rare life is even in the form of an insect. It is because of this lack of appreciation for life, the lack of mindfulness that we tend to show towards taking life, that the other lay precepts become relatively easy for us to ignore as well. In other words, if we can teach ourselves how not to appreciate life because we can call it an “insect,” then it is easy for us to do so. In other words, if we can teach ourselves how not to appreciate life because we can call it an “insect,” then it is easy for us to do so.

Prior to Sakyamuni Buddha teaching the contents of what would become the Longer Sutra, he himself was prophesied to become either a great spiritual leader or the next great king. Conquests are generally achieved only after spilling much blood. Prior to the introduction of the five virtuous acts of maintaining precepts, hearing frequently, endeavoring, concentrating, and having wisdom.
Friends of BS Ministerial Scholarship Fund

The Institute of Buddhist Studies would like to gratefully acknowledge all who have extended their generosity and support of the Friends of IBS Ministerial Scholarship Fund.

The total received since January 1, 2014 is $72,550. Thanks to the generous and timely response of BCA members, organizations and Friends, we have already begun distribution of financial assistance to ministerial students.

Following are the individuals, families and organizations who have made contributions from July through September, 2014.

Dr. Linda Engstrom
Rev. Haruo and Mrs. Shigeko Yamaoka
Rev. Ken Kurisu
Rev. Jay and Mrs. Jane Shinseki
Mr. Steve and Mrs. Reiko Tsuchida
Mrs. Sally Takada
Mrs. Nancy Hino
Rev. Hatanaka
Mr. Neil and Mrs. Donna Higashida
Mr. Tomiaki (Tom) and Mrs. Nobuko Okada
Mr. Steve and Mrs. Reiko Tsuchida
Mrs. Sally Takada

In memory of Mrs. Jane Yagade, Dharma School Teacher

Buddhist Organizations

Dharma School Teacher

Southern District Junior Young Buddhist League

In Oregon Buddhist Temple – Para Land Joggers and Sinhers

SPECIAL TRIBUTES

SPECIAL TRIBUTES

In Honor of Reverend Seigen Yamada, Best Wishes on your Birthday!

Today, we are witnessing many conflicts wars all over the world. We can hear people screaming and crying and at the same time, we can hear the words of the Buddha:

“Thousands of people may live in a community but it is not one real fellowship until they know each other mutually and have sympathy for one another. A true community has faith and wisdom that illuminate it. It is a place where the people know and love one another and where there is social harmony. In fact, harmony is the life and real support of a true community or an organization.”

Our visit was a very gratifying experience. I feel we need to have more interactions with our inter-continental counterparts. I am glad to establish human fellowship and harmonious relations.

UK

Continued from Front Page

After the conference was over, Rev. Robinson kindly invited us to his residence called Chomom House, where sangha members regularly meet and listen to the nembutsu teaching. There was a simple Jodo Shinshu hondo set up in the upstairs room that could hold about 20 people maximum. Rev. Robinson proudly showed us the hondo and explained from where they had received the Buddha’s name scroll and other sacred objects. Though the hondo was simple, it meant a lot to them.

I understand that, besides the United Kingdom, there are Jodo Shinshu temples in Poland, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Hungary, and Romania. Some members are taking the Hongwanji Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) offered from Berkeley and plan to receive ordination from the Hongwanji. As a matter of fact, I met two JSCC students during the conference.

We could see that the international sangha members were so grateful to have encountered the nembutsu teaching that their joy was overflowing in their words, actions, and faces. We felt like we had been transported back to the time of Shinran Shonin, or even the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, because the people we encountered were so genuinely happy. During the closing session of the conference, Rev. Robinson read a section from The Teaching of Buddha: After listening to him, I couldn’t help but think about the world in which we live now. The question is: do people live in absolute darkness, frightened and unable to recognize one another. They do not know how to associate with each other in peace and harmony. With no light of wisdom in their minds, they wander about in loneliness and fear. The Buddha describes this as a great darkness, and by his wisdom and compassion he illumines the world. In this light people find themselves as well as others and are glad to establish human fellowship and harmonious relations.

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正信偈拙訳 日の出とともに、世界の情勢を見ていますと、大変なことになってきています。この記事を書いている時、私の目に飛び込んできたニュースは本当に信じがたいものでした。それはあのイスラム国の残虐行為です。皆さんも見られたことでしょうが、それこそ数えきれない人が見ている目の前で、罪もない人を殺すという野蛮で凶暴きわまりないことが行われたのです。これを見たとき私は恐ろしさにふるえてしまいました。人間の狂気もここまでくるのかと戦慄したのです。皆さんはどう思われましたか。あれが私と同じ人間のすることでしょうか。あの後で殺された人のご両親が出てコメントをされておられましたが、どんなお気持ちであろうかと考えますと、本当にいたたまれない気持ちです。

親鸞聖人の師である法然上人のご両親という方は当時押領使といってその国の治安維持などに関わっておられた方と聞いています。そのお父様が、多分土地の分配の件か何かで人から恨みを買い、夜討ちにあって無惨にも自分の目の前で惨殺されたと伝えられています。その時、お父様の遺した言葉が、後の法然上人を育てたとされています。つまり、憎しみを憎しみで返せば、その憎しみがまた次の憎しみを生み出す。「お前はこの憎しみを仇で返すのではなく僧侶になって私の菩提を弔ってくれ」というものでした。まだ幼い子供に対してそういい残して亡くなったお父様も立派な方でありますが、後に一人残された幼き法然上人の気持ちはどんなであったでしょうか。

仏教哲学者梅原猛氏によると、お釈迦様も自分を含む全氏族をすべて殺されたといわれています。その時のお釈迦様のお気持ちはどうであったか、同氏は非常に興味深いものがあると仰っています。

これらのことを考え頂きますと、この地球上で繰り広げられている残虐行為というのは昔も今も全く変わりがないと思われます。こういった一人の人間としてどうしようもない状況におかれたとき、私達は一体どうすればいいのでしょうか。仏教では末法の時代ということを言ってきました。先ほどのイスラム国のことなどまさにこの末法時代を表しているのではないでしょうか。

それに加えて地球の温暖化により急激な気候変化による多大なる自然災害被害が続出しています。これからもこれらの災害被害による死者や被害者は想像がつかないと聞きます。人間の力が何処まで及ぶのか本当に心配な限りです。

46億年の地球、その中のほんの一点にすぎない人類の歴史、進化論を信じる私達人間がいつまで生きていることができるのか、誰も想像さえつかないのではないでしょうか。地球の命は一説によると一〇〇億年です。となると後54億年残っていることになりますが、果たして私達人類はいつまで生き延びていることができるのでしょうか。長々とつまらぬことを書き連ねましたが、親鸞聖人が仰る「五濁悪世」の自覚が本当に私達にあるのでしょうか。私達はまぎれも無くこの悪世に生きているのですが、そんな思いのひとかけらもないように思われてなりません。五濁悪世のど真ん中に生きておりながらそうは思わない。いや、五濁悪世そのものに気がついていないのが私達ではないでしょうか。つまり私達は五濁悪世という現実にどっぷり浸かっているから五濁悪世ということする知らないでいるのでは無いでしょうか。真っ暗闇の中に育つ魚が居るそうです。この魚には目がありません。この魚には光を見る必要がないから目がいらないのです。私たちもこの魚のように光の無い闇の世界に住んでいるので、本当の世界を見る必要がないのです。五濁悪世に住んでいながらそれを五濁悪世と知らないでいるのです。ここに私たちの本当の不幸があります。これを親鸞聖人は「凡夫」と呼ばれたのです。

あの偉大な哲学者ソクラテスは、「無知の知」という有名な言葉を遺しています。私達は知らないことを知っている、だから賢人、つまり哲学者なのだというのです。これが人類のサイエンスと呼ばれるものの始まりであります。この無知の知を知ることこそ人類の最も偉大なところなのであるというのが理性人たる私...もう一歩突っ込んで人間は知らないことを知らないでいつづけてしまう存在ではないかというのが親鸞聖人の反省ではなかったかと思われます。人類は今大変なときに来ています。そしてそれを示唆するような様々な恐ろしいことが私達の回りで起こっています。そんな中に生きている私たち、つまり仏さまから見れば「凡夫」を救おうとされているのが阿弥陀さまなのです。今この五濁悪世の中に何も気付かずに生きている私達にはこの阿弥陀さまのお慈悲に任す以外に他に出来ることはないのではないでしょうか。

南無阿弥陀仏　

九月八日（月）から浄土真宗本願寺派の職員二名が研修に訪れている。宗務員海外研修と呼ばれるこのプログラムには、本願寺派の職員の髙峰顕晃師（所務部）と畑中阿難師（築地本願寺）が参加。二人は九月から十二月までの約三ヶ月間、浄土真宗センターを拠点として研修を受ける。九月のひと月は英語を学び、その後各寺院を参拝し開教使や門徒と交流する予定。

高峰師、畑中師ともに、「できるだけ英語でコミュニケーションしたいと思いますので、私たちが訪れたさいは英語で話しかけてください。よろしくお願いします。」とBCAメンバーとの出会いを楽しみにしている。以下各師の紹介。佐賀県出身。浄真寺（佐賀教区松浦組）本願寺派所務部、文書担当研修で特に学びたいこと:北米開教区の歴史並びに現状及び伝道活動について日本のお寺とアメリカのお寺がちがっていること。

福井県鯖江市出身。明正寺（福井教区河和田組）総務部研修で特に学びたいこと:日本の寺院とBCAの寺院の活動の相違点をよく学び、互いの良いところ・悪いところを理解したいです。そのうえで、さらにお念仏の喜びが広まる方法を模索できればと考えています。日本のお寺とアメリカのお寺がちがっていることで、良いところ:こちらのお寺には皆が集まる体育館があり、皆が集まる日曜礼拝がある。すばらしいです。あまり良くないところ:こちらのお寺では、あまり毎朝のお参り（お晨朝）をされていないそうですね。生活スタイルと合わないので仕方のないことですが、少 ...

秋の間法セミナー

日時…2014年10月25日
午前10時から午後3時まで
場所…浄土真宗センター
講師…禿 定心師、一羽 諒師、林 斉昭師、大内 深生師
費用無料、昼食付き
詳細は桑原まで
(510) 230-8439
kkawahara@bcahq.org
八月三十一日(土)から九月一日(月)のレーバーデイウィークエンドに、オレンジカウンティにおいて、ジュニアYBA全国大会が開催された。会場はオレンジカウンティ仏教会とコスタメサ市のヒルトンホテルで、大会のテーマは「Plug into Buddhism」。大会は南部教区のジュニアYBAが主催し、南部教区のジュニアYBAの高校生を中心に全米の十四ヶ寺から一三五名の生徒と七〇名のアドバイザーが集った。

基調講演にはオークランド仏教会のブリッジ・ハリー師が招かれ、コンピューターを使用しての写真のスライドや、ベース演奏などを通じて仏教を伝えた。参加した生徒は「他の教区の生徒たちと出会えて楽しかったです。」「テクノロジーを使った仏教の講義はわかりやすかったです。」など、好評の大会となった。一年の活動が最も顕著だったグループに送られる南部教区ジュニアYBAアワードは洗心仏教会が受賞した。

九月六日(土)に浄土真宗センターでベビーブーマーの世代を対象としたセミナーがあり、サンフェルナンド仏教会の宇宿パトリシア師がキーノートスピーカーとして招かれた。講題は「WWW.Com: Who, Where, Why?」で、自分とは一体なにか、どこへ向かい、何の目的をもって生きているのかを見つめなおすことに主眼を置いたセミナー。参加者は約30名で、主に60年代、70年代にジュニアYBAで活動していた方が集い、同窓会のような和気あいあいとした中で仏法の学びを深めた。

講師の宇宿師は「私もベビーブーマーですから、同世代の方たちと仏法をシェアできてとてもうれしいです。青春時代に聞いていた音楽の歌詞が意外と仏教的なので、それを聴いてもらいました。みんな知っている曲なので、みんなで歌ったりおどったりしたのが楽しかった。」と楽しみながら仏法を体験した。

海外開教区の代表者が集う、第三十二回世界浄土真宗連絡協議会が八月三十一日(日)にイギリスのサウサンプトンで開催された。浄土真宗本願寺派北米開教区の代表として梅津総長、理事長の松田氏、本部職員の喜多氏が参加した。協議会では北米、ハワイ、カナダ開教区、更にヨーロッパの各開教地区からの活動報告がなされ、代表者同士が活発に意見交換をした。翌九月一日から国際真宗学会およびヨーロッパ真宗会議が行われ、各国の真宗者がサウサンプトンを訪れた。サウサンプトンにはロビンソン・ゲリー師が代表をつとめる英国浄土真宗教会(聴聞ハウス)がある。

米国仏教団 総長 梅津廣道
去る八月七日(木)にローダイ仏教会の楠活也開教使がストックトン市をホームとするポーツ球団(オークランドアスレチックス傘下1A)の始球式をつとめた。ポーツ球団は毎年、ジャパニーズヘリテージデイを開催しており、日米の友好を育んでいる。今年の始球式にはローダイ市の日系人野球チームで活躍する楠開教使が選ばれた。楠師は「投げる前には失敗したらどうしようかと緊張しましたが、南無阿弥陀仏ととなえたら安心していい球が投げられました。」とお念仏のはたらきに感謝した。