Over 550 members of the Orange County Buddhist Church gathered on October 4 to celebrate its 50th anniversary as an independent temple, established in 1965 at its present location in Anaheim, California, after being a branch of the Los Angeles Betsuin for many years. The commemorative service was officiated by Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop of our Buddhist Churches of America, with nearly 20 other active and retired Southern District and OCBC ministers. The day before, a Kieishi Confirmation Ceremony was also officiated by Bishop Umezu, and 52 recipients received their Buddhist names.

Following the commemorative service a group photo was taken, and then a reception was held in the OCBC Multipurpose Building. Serving as MCs for the reception were Rumi Nakatani and Craig Ishii. The delicious dinner was catered by noted chef, Akira Hirose, of Maison Akira in Pasadena. OCBC's Daion Taiko provided entertainment, and a moving “I Am OCBC” video was shown. It was the work of many hours of interviews conducted by the OCBC Digital Media Center, led by Greg Goodman. OCBC members of the past and present shared their thoughts and memories on the video.

Co-chairs for the event were Jo Ann Tanioka and Diana Ono, who were both young members of the Sangha in 1965, and whose families have been pioneering members in the history of OCBC. OCBC was privileged to have as guests Bishop and Mrs. Kodo Umezu, Dr. Kent Matsuda, BCA President, temple presidents and representatives of various Southern District temples, and active and retired ministers in the Southern District.
Thanksgiving Day

By Rev. Kodo Umezau, BCA Bishop

We are already in the month of November and this year is coming to an end so quickly. Because of Thanksgiving Day, we can reflect on things we can be thankful for.

As we look around, we find so many things that we should be grateful for. The big question to me is whether or not we really accept everything with a feeling of gratitude. It is easy for us to express our appreciation when something good happens but we take it for granted.

Do you think that the feeling is different? Does the feeling last a long time? Even with the November fashion, we look after ourselves; I myself am always grateful for it.

This reminds me of chapter 9 of Tannisho written by Yuai, a disciple of Shinhon Shonin.

“Although I say the nembutsu, the feeling of dancing with joy is faint within me, and I have no thought of wanting to go to the Pure Land quickly. How would it be?” I asked the Master this, he answered, “I, too, used to have this question, and the same thought passed through my mind. When I reflect deeply on it, by the very fact that I do not rejoice at what should fill me with such joy that I would jump up and down, I realize all the more that my birth in the Pure Land is completely sent and the thing that each should rejoice and keep one from rejoicing is the action of blind passions.”

This conversation continues further “The Buddha, knowing human nature, said, ‘This ordinary (foolish) people possessed of blind passions;’ thus, becoming aware that the compassion: Vow is indeed forth from Vaius, Vaius, who are such beings, we find it all the more trustworthy.”

Our minds are always moving around and not staying fixed on one thing. Even our sense of appreciation is short lived. What Shinhon Shonin and Yuai appreciated was the act of rejoicing and not a Vow that truly understood them. Blind passions are a part of our basic existence and the real cause of pain and suffering. Blind passions make us do many wrong things and we do not see blind passions as such and live our lives regarding other things as the causes of suffering.

When we realize that blind passions caused Amida to do something about our suffering—namely, to establish the Vow and the calling of Namo Amida Butsu—we activate the act that came out of Amida’s compassion, urging us to take refuge in Amitaabha. Therefore, we recognize our blind passions, we utter the Nembutsu. As we recognize our blind passions, we utter the Nembutsu. As we utter the Nembutsu, we realize that what is the most of all. We are brought by the universal compassionate heart and mind. We feel together with Amida-Buddha, the source of the Vow, and recite Namo Amida-butsu in gratitude.

If I was expected to live my life with gratitude 24/7, I could not live. Like Shinnon Shonin, I am not able to “rejoice at what should fill me with such joy all the time.” Therefore, I really, really appreciate the Nembutsu teaching and Shinhon Shonin’s teaching.

As we observe Thanksgiving Day, let us contemplate the kindness of all the people who have shared their resources and that we were able to live in gratitude.

無量寿 MuRyoJi: Immeasurable Life

Since everything in this world is brought about by causes and conditions, there can be no fundamental distinctions among things. Apparent distinctions exist because of our communal prejudices. Mathematical numbers from one to infinity are each complete numbers, and each in itself carries no distinction of quantity. People make the distinctions of quantity for their own selfish convenience.

By Rev. Kengo Ronald Kobata
Buddhist Church of San Francisco

Our human intelligence seems to be mainly concerned with evaluating and thereby evaluating, quantities and qualities of the material and mental world we experience as our “life.” Conventional values are generally based upon some measurable standards. Based on these measurements we think, judge something to be good/bad, right/wrong, desirable/undesirable, etc. Our day-to-day existence seems to be a series of measurements to determine the “meaning” of our life.

In 1893 Abraham Lincoln signed a Presidential Proclamation designating the fourth Thursday in November as a national holiday named Thanksgiving. This was to recall the determination of the immigrants to North America to give thanks for the harvest and the hospitality of the Native American's who shared their resources to enable the settlers to survive in the unfamiliar conditions of what became known as New England. This cultural expression is said to have occurred in 1621.

Using these two historic years to set aside the first Thanksgiving of America's, and the second Thanksgiving, the celebration of Thanksgiving, as we observe it today, is said to have occurred in 1621.

As we look around, we find many examples of how our communal prejudices separate us from one another. Apparent distinctions exist because of our communal prejudices.

It would be interesting to know why you observe Thanksgiving Day.

By Dr. Taitetsu Unno

As we observe Thanksgiving Day, we can reflect on things we can be thankful for.

On October 18, 2015, a Kieshiki Ceremony was held for ten members at the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple by Rev. Kodo Umezau, BCA Bishop (top row, right). Also attending were Bishop Eric Matsumoto of the Honolulu Hongwanji Mission (left) and U.S. SENATE representative. Rev. Jerry Hino (second row, second from right). Photo by Mark Minaga.
He is not the only person who wishes for peace. I think peace is one of humanity’s common goals. People who wish for peace everywhere, in different places, speak different languages, have different cultures, and follow different religious traditions. People have tried hard to make this world peaceful.

In reality, human beings have been fighting each other for a long time. War has never disappeared from this world since the beginning of recorded time. When we look at a world, a country, a town, or a village, there is no place which Buddha shows us, is the path of enlightenment and compassion. Which Buddha shows us, is the path of peace. In

As a result of accepting and respecting others, we can achieve the result of walking the path of enlightenment, we can live in peace. We should do anything if one aims a gun at me. I have no respect, understanding, and compassion. Compassion is having the ability to understand the pain and sorrow of all living beings. Nowadays, we have a lot of sad news and tragedies. At this time, we need to call for global goodwill. We have no advantage to save people who are suffering from war right now. I am just an ordinary person, but I have a path to follow. The path, which is to cultivate our understanding of the path of enlightenment and compassion. I was born in San Jose, California in 1990. My parents moved to Stockton, California shortly after my birth. My mother is the daughter of Tat Shihata and the late Jackie Shihata, the granddaughter of the late Rev. Teshin and the late Haruko Shihata, and the niece of Rev. George and Yasuko Shihata.

I grew up in Stockton while attending Dharma School at the Stockton Buddhist Temple. I attended a junior college and later transferred to California State University, Sacramento where I majored in psychology. After graduation, I was a case manager for children with developmental disabilities. In 2009, I obtained my first Master’s degree in counseling psychology from the University of San Francisco. Following graduate school, I interned as a psychologist at two elementary schools from 2009-2010.

In September 2012, I received Tokudo ordination in Kyoto and served as a Worship Assistant at the Stockton Buddhist Temple. In 2014, I received my second master’s degree in Buddhist Studies from the Institute of Buddhist Studies and Graduate Theological Union in May 2015.

The Rev. Mutsumi Wondra, one of our ministers, announced the ordination of two new ministers who recently were appointed to the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) by the Office of the Bishop. We are pleased to introduce the two additional ministers who have been appointed to the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) by the Office of the Bishop.
Two Seattle groups held Women in Buddhism conferences. The first was on Saturday, October 3, sponsored by the Center for Buddhist Education and the Seattle Buddhist Church, with the participation of the Buddhist Community Association. The second was on Saturday, October 17, sponsored by the Seattle Buddhist Temple and the Buddhist Community Association. Both conferences were well attended and provided a platform for women to discuss their experiences of integrating Buddhism into their lives.

The first conference was held at the Seattle Buddhist Temple and was titled “Women’s Role in Buddhism.” It was attended by around 60 people, mostly women, who shared their experiences of being women in the Buddhist community. The keynote speaker was an experienced Buddhist practitioner, who shared her insights on how to be a effective and inspiring leader for women in the Buddhist community.

The second conference was held at the Seattle Buddhist Temple and was titled “Women’s Role in Buddhism.” It was attended by around 70 people, mostly women, who shared their experiences of being women in the Buddhist community. The keynote speaker was an experienced Buddhist practitioner, who shared her insights on how to be a effective and inspiring leader for women in the Buddhist community.

Both conferences were well attended and provided a platform for women to discuss their experiences of integrating Buddhism into their lives. The keynote speaker at the first conference was Rev. Toshikazu Arai, who is a long-time Buddhist practitioner and a leader in the Jodo Shinshu community. He shared his insights on how to be a effective and inspiring leader for women in the Buddhist community. The keynote speaker at the second conference was Rev. Toshikazu Arai, who is a long-time Buddhist practitioner and a leader in the Jodo Shinshu community. He shared his insights on how to be a effective and inspiring leader for women in the Buddhist community.
2015 BCA FBWA Youth Exchange with Japan BWA

by June Shigie, Oregon Buddhist Temple
Youth Exchange Co-chair for NW District BWA

From August 14 - 21, 2015 the Northwest District Buddhist Women's Association (BWA) hosted two students from Japan: 24-year-old Midori Kunisaki of Ryoeji Temple in Hokkaido and 20-year-old Kana Nishida of Koshoji Temple in Osaka. Midori, a hazardous materials practitioner and civil engineer, graduated from Tomakomai National College of Technology. She is currently an architecture graduate student at Mura University. She likes surfing, snowboarding, skiing, and enjoys reading literature.

The host family in Seattle was Suzanne and Eric Fujii and their daughter Alexis. They enjoyed shopping and sightseeing at famous sites including the Pike Place Market, the Seattle Center, the Space Needle, and Seattle's waterfront. Midori and Kana also went to the original Starbucks, and were treated to homemade American breakfasts. A group gathered for a nice farewell BBQ potluck dinner at the Fujishis.

After services at Seattle Betsuin, White River, Oregon, and Tacoma Buddhist Temples, BWA members, their ministers, and minister's assistants treated the girls to welcome lunches or dinner at their respective locations.

The Oregon host family was Lori and Ray Fukunaga and their daughter Kristi. Scenic outings took place at Mt. Hood's Timberline Lodge and other locations, as well as a fun City Tour of Portland on Segways. After shopping at the popular Mt. Horizon Boulevard, they enjoyed a farewell BBQ potluck dinner with special S'mores treats hosted by the Fukunagas.

The Idaho-Oregon BWA created a photo album for the students showing the activities and places they visited. The best part of the exchange was seeing Midori, Kana, and our youths getting to know each other while playing Ping-Pong and badminton, spontaneously singing Buddhist songs, and sharing reasons why Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is meaningful in their lives. Although Midori and Kana have returned to Japan, we continue to keep in touch with them by Facebook and email. We will miss their fun, caring ways and how they expressed their appreciation for everything.

The NW District BWA Youth Exchange Planning Committee thanks the Fujii and Fukunaga families for their generous hospitality. We are grateful that Kristi Fukunaga and Rosie Yasukochi, 2014 Youth Exchange Students to Japan, were available to help organize and participate in the outings. We express our deepest appreciation to Bishop Umezu, Rev. Michael Endo, Rev. Don Castro, Rev. Kojo Kakihara, Rev. Ogi, and Rev. Yukawa for their guidance, and all NW District participants for their support. We hope this valuable Youth Exchange Program continues for many more years to come.

2014 BWA Youth Exchange students in front of Ryoeji Temple (far left) and Kristi Fukunaga (extreme right), with 2015 student Kana Nishida and Midori Kunisaki at Seattle Betsuin BWA's S'mores.

Buddhists Around the World

By Joanna Gozawa, Palo Alto Buddhist Temple

This is an excerpt from an article that appeared in the August newsletter of the PB&T. Joanna Gozawa’s article speaks not only to the power of unity among different schools of Buddhism, but to interfaith unity as well. This Sakyadhita International Buddhist Women’s Conference was hosted by a Muslim country.

Unable to attend the Buddhist Women’s Association (BWA) Calgary Conference, I went to the International Buddhist Women's Conference held in Indonesia at the end of June instead. Theravada, Tibetan, and Mahayana Buddhists, all convened together around the theme of Compass and Social Justice. It was a life changing experience.

The 1,000 attendees were from at least 20 different countries. While English and Indonesian were prominent languages spoken in conference proceedings, five different simultaneous translations were also available during presentations. And at meals, I heard people speaking in Hindi, Bhuddist Indonesian, Malay, Thai, Vietnamese, Korean, Taiwanese, Burmese, French, as well.

I experienced first-hand how large the Buddhist presence is in the world, how long its ancient history is in Asia; appreciated how different Buddhist lineages all live the Four Noble Truths; and how compassion and wisdom brings its gifts to global challenges like climate change, poverty, inequity for women, and other social injustices.

In this international setting, I constantly understood that the inclusive spirit alive in the Buddhist Churches of America is part of the larger field of compassion realized by Buddhism globally. This larger context also put my day-to-day concerns into perspective, especially since the conference was held in a developing country, and renunciant nuns were prominent participants. We from first-world countries likely came away humbled, or at least reflective about the material priorities that can occupy our lives.

All the people I met were so open-hearted, whether they were affiliated with their country’s equivalent of the BWA, working professionals and housewives who took up Buddhist studies, life-long practitioners, seekers, academicians, or monastics. I fell easily into conversation with all of them who spoke English—women and men who had engaging stories to tell about their lives, about their families, and about their faith. I imagine it was like being on the Silk Road or at the United Nations, getting a changing experience.

Conference, I went to the International Buddhist Women's Conference held in Indonesia at the end of June instead. Theravada, Tibetan, and Mahayana Buddhists, all convened together around the theme of Compass and Social Justice.

It was a life changing experience for me. I perused the Sakyadhita conference website which has a mission to encourage and connect Buddhist women around the world. Amazingly, the eight day international conference once every two years (the one I attended was its 14th) to convene together around the theme of Compass and Social Justice.

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Any questions may be directed to the Development Office at donate@bcahq.org or phone: (415) 776-5600 ext. 311. Thank you for your continued support! Nama Amida Batoa

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Please count me in as a Friend of the Institute of Buddhist Studies. I understand that these funds will be used directly to support the endeavors of our BCA ministers of tomorrow, who wish to study at the Institute of Buddhist Studies. Checks can be made payable to IBS, with the notation "Friends of IBS" on the memo line. Please note that your contributions to the Institute of Buddhist Studies are tax deductible.

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President’s Message
Continued from Page 3

The BCA Social Welfare Fund

Do you know any organizations that need funding for a crucial project? The BCA Social Welfare Committee reviews applications annually from non-profit social service organizations. Application materials are available by contacting the BCA National Headquarters at info@bcahq.org or 415-776-5600 x311.

This year of any amount is appreciated. Together we can make a meaningful difference for thousands.

About the BCA Social Welfare Fund

Thanksgiving Offering Supports the BCA Social Welfare Fund

Over Three Decades of Grants to the Community

Thanksgiving and the year-end are just around the corner! Every year during this season of gratefulness and goodwill, supporters like you have responded with kindness and generosity to the Buddhist Churches of America’s (BCA) Thanksgiving Offering appeal. Gifts received are the primary source of funds for the BCA Social Welfare Fund. In its thirty-six years of operation, this Fund has distributed over $2 million in grants for worthy projects throughout the world.

The Social Welfare Fund was established in 1981 to "provide support to projects that aid those who are suffering from deprivation of basic human needs. The ultimate goal is to eliminate the root causes of poverty in the totality of life which promotes mental, physical and spiritual well-being. These funds are not limited to Buddhists, Nikkei, and/or American organizations."

Through your generosity, the BCA Social Welfare Fund has been able to provide grants to community and social organizations in need and provide emergency relief for natural disasters such as Japan’s Tohoku tsunami and earthquake in 2011 and more recently, the Nepal earthquake in April, 2015.

In 2015, the Social Welfare Fund supported the Asian Community Center’s (ACC) Senior Services Transportation Services with a grant of $10,000 to connect seniors—especially low-income seniors and those using wheelchairs and walkers—with vital daily services such as lunch programs, medical appointments and social activities. Additionally, when the first 2015 Nepal earthquake struck in April, the Social Welfare Fund was able to provide an immediate $20,000 grant to the K mustard Gangwan for its relief efforts prior to BCA’s launch of the special Nepal Earthquake Relief fund which raised an additional $178,000.

Please join fellow BCA Sangha members and friends in caring for the suffering in our communities and in the world. Look for the BCA Thanksgiving Offering letter in the coming weeks. Your gift of any amount is appreciated. Together we can make a meaningful difference for thousands.

The BCA Social Welfare Fund

My purpose in attending the Senate Service at the SLBT was to listen to the sermon. The SLBT is a Buddhist temple in Berkeley, California, that focuses on the practice of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and has a diverse membership. The sermon was given by Rev. Jerry Hirano, the temple’s current minister. Rev. Hirano spoke about the importance of practicing mindfulness and living a life of gratitude. He also emphasized the importance of community and the power of collective action. The sermon was very inspiring and resonated deeply with me. I left the temple feeling uplifted and grateful.

The SLBT Sangha is a close-knit community of individuals who share a commitment to Buddhist teachings and practices. The Sangha meets weekly for a three-hour morning service followed by a discussion group. The Sangha is open to anyone interested in learning more about Buddhism and practicing meditation. I attended the service and found it to be very welcoming and supportive. The atmosphere was peaceful and the energy was positive. The SLBT is located near the center of Berkeley and is easily accessible to me. Overall, the experience was very positive and I would definitely recommend it to others.
苦、解放、そして友愛

サンフランシスコ仏教会

開教使 小畑 ロナルド

日本語に「ご縁」という言葉があります。英語だと「honorable (karmic) conditions」という訳になるでしょうか。親鸞聖人は歎異抄の中で人生に起こるわたしと他とのつながりをこの語で言い表しておられます。私は去る6月22日から27日の間、仏教徒とカトリック教徒との対話に参加するご縁に恵まれました。この対話は、全米司教協議会の全キリスト教および宗教間対話のための委員会と宗教間対話のためのカトリック教皇協議会のふたつの団体が共同で催したもので、ローマから電車で30分くらいのところにある、アルバン丘のガンドルフォキャッスルにあるローマ法王の夏用宮殿に隣接するマリポリスセンターで行われました。対話には27名のアメリカ人の仏教徒、そして同数のアメリカ人カトリック教徒が参加し、参加者はアメリカの5地域、ワシントンDC、ニューヨーク、シカゴ、ロサンゼルスとサンフランシスコから招かれました。それらの地域でインターフェイスに関わっている僧侶や信徒が選ばれており、意義深いことに、浄土真宗の僧侶が最も多く参加していました。中西部仏教会の宮村ロン師、ロサンゼルス東本願寺別院の伊東憲昭輪番（兼北米開教監督）、同じく東本願寺のシカゴ仏教会の中井パティ師、そして私の4名です。また、興味深いことには、仏教徒の代表者は主にアジア系で伝統的仏教の影響を受けて育った者が多く、他宗教から改宗した、いわゆる「西洋人の非伝統的仏教徒」はあまりいませんでした。マリポリスセンターは2000席を擁した講堂を持つ大会施設です。そこにはいくつもの通訳者のブースがホールに沿って設置され、可動式の壁がある会議室、宿泊部屋、大きな食堂があります。このセンターは約50年前にフォコレアという国際的な信徒団体によって建てられました。主に女性がスタッフで、地元の方と様々な国の方が一緒に働いておられます。センターから10分ほど歩いたところにガンダルフォキャッスルの小さな街があり、かなりの数のレストランやカフェ、お土産屋が立ち並んでいます。ローマ法王が夏に滞在される時に訪れる巡礼者たちが主なお客さんです。対話期間中はミーティングルームで毎朝7時から仏教のお勤めがあり、続いてチャペルでカトリックのミサがありました。様々な仏教徒の代表者が日替わりでお勤めをし、様々なカトリックの僧侶がそれぞれの伝統的なやり方でミサをリードしました。開会式は大会運営の統括者、ドナルド=ミッチェル教授のウエルカムメッセージで始まりました。それから、教皇会の宗教間対話委員会会長のジーンルイス=タウラン枢機卿、全米司教協議会の全キリスト教および宗教間対話のための委員会事務局の準責任者、アンソニー=チレリ博士、フォコレア運動の会長の一人、ジーザス=モラセペダノ神父、ワシントンブッディストハーラー会長の、マハーラガマ=ダンマサリ尊者が続いて挨拶をされました。四日間の対話は「苦、解放、そして友愛」というテーマに沿って行われました。初日のトピックは「関係性の苦とその原因」で、二日目のプログラムには、ヴァチカンでのローマ法王フランシスとの面接、そして博物館、システィナ礼拝堂、聖ペテロ大聖堂のツアーがありました。三日目には仏教徒、カトリック教徒それぞれの代表者がテーマに関する見解を述べ、続く四日目では、「前に進んで行くための友愛とは」について話し合いました。そして最後にこの対話の締めくくりとして、パネリストたちがそれぞれのコミュニテ...トピックで、意見を交換しました。グループセッションでは仏教徒とカトリック教徒の代表者が論文を発表します。発表では論文をそのまま読む人や論文を要約したものを話す人もおられました。代表者が発表を終えると、他の参加者が質問やコメントを述べます。一日に二回のセッションが行われ、セッション後には五つの地域別のグループに分かれて二時間のディスカッションがありましたが、そのディスカッションは食事の時にも続きましたし、夜になってもずっと話し合っていました。この大会のインビテーションレターには以下のことが書かれてありました。「…この対話は...の精神に基づいた兄弟姉妹として、いかにしてこの世の中を癒やし調和していくかについて話し合われる。この対話に参加する仏教徒とカトリック教徒の指導者たちは、米国へ帰国するまでにローマ法王フランシスによってインスパイアされた友愛を築き、またローマに滞在期間中にその友愛を育むこととする。それは代表者の所属する寺院、教会の会員たちもまた友愛の対話の精神を理解するためである。」英語の「友愛(Fraternity)」の語には男性的な響きがあるのではないかと思われる方がいらっしゃるかもしれませんが、こも今回の対話では「友愛」とは友情や助け合いという広い意味で使用するだと明言されています。対話のテーマ「苦、解放、そして友愛」を私なりに解釈しますと、これは仏教の三宝を言い表していく。そしてダルマとは精神的解放の源泉で、サンガとは人々の友愛心です。友愛に関してフランシス法王が以下のように言われています。「…人間の根本的な性質。なぜなら我々は関係性の中で成り立っているからである。人と人とのつながりを深く見つめてみることは、他人を兄弟姉妹として敬うことにつながっていくのであるエリア。友愛なしには安定して継続する平和な社会を築くことは不可能であろう。」この仏教徒とカトリック教徒の対話に参加させていただいて、予期せぬ成果が得られました。それは、米国において、インターフェイスに関わり続けることに加え、さまざまな伝統を持った仏教徒同士の対話の必要性に気づいたことです。私は今回の対話で他の仏教徒たちが私たちとは異なるさまざまな表現で仏教を語ることに驚きました。けれどもそのおかげで仏教が「8万4千の法門」と言われていることがよく理解できました。以前は「8万4千の法門」とは仏教のオープンな性格を表していると思っていたのですが、他の仏教徒との相違点を知った今では、そのフレーズは複雑で、深い意味を持つのだと考えるようになりました。すべての仏教徒が諸行無常と縁起が根本的な仏教の教えだと認識していますが、仏教徒の生活スタイルについては、おのおのの文化的背景に強く根ざしていることもまた根本的なことのように思えます。私はローマでの対話後、米国において仏教徒とカトリック教徒が対話を続けるにはもちろんのこと、仏教徒同士の対話も始めることが決まったのです。この対話の締めくくりとして、双方が協力してそれぞれの地域での社会問題に取り組んでいくことにフォーカスした共同声明をしたためました。終わりに、マリポリスセンターのスタッフの方々、また私がこの対話のためにローマへ行くための費用を出してくださった河野行道メモリアルファンドの方々に感謝いたします。そして、私と宮村ロン師を対話に参加できるよう推薦してくださった田中ケネス博士にも感謝申し上げます。南無阿弥陀佛
MCEの開催

十月十二日から十八日にかけて、ユタ州ソルトレイク市で開教使の連続研修(MCE)が行われ、17名が参加した。今回、研修はソルトパレスコンベンションセンターで開催された万国宗教者会議(World Parliament of Religion)の日程にあわせており、開教使が会議に参加し、他宗教の指導者や信者と交流し、浄土真宗を広く知らせることに主眼がおかれている。約8千人が訪れた大会では、BCAとIBSがブースを出し、パンフレットや本を来場者に手渡した。

開教使らが浄土真宗の教えを紹介するレクチャーを聴いた200名の聴衆を集めた。初めて浄土の教えを聞いた来場者は「Raisan, it's great! また聞きたいです。できたら私も唱えてみたいです。」と伝統的な声明の旋律に魅了されていた。開教使は「多くの方が真剣に聞かれていました。米国において浄土真宗への関心がますます高まっているように思います。そろそろ真宗が米国仏教界を超えて一般にも浸透していく時期が来ているのではないでしょうか。」と語り、実りある研修となった。

今年も秋の聞法の集い

十月十日（土）に浄土真宗センターにおいて、秋の聞法の集いが行われた。聞法の集いは春と秋の2回開催され、ベイエリアや近郊教区の日本語話者に親しまれる聞法会となっている。例年、秋の聞法の集いではIMOP（国際伝道者養成講座）の受講生が法話を担当し、米国で生活する日本語聞法者へ仏法を伝えることを通し、…… 桑原師「小啓で真宗」。

なお、当日の法話を聴聞希望の方は浄土真宗センター、桑原師までご連絡ください。

総長メッセージ

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

もう今年も余すところが少なくなりました。今月はサンクスギビングデーの月です。それから十一月に報恩講をお勤めする仏教会もあるかと思います。サンクスギビングというのは感謝の思いを表すという意味です。もともとは、移民してきた人たちが最初の収穫や助けてくれた先住民に感謝するとか、また神に感謝するという意味が入っている。しかし、私たちが毎日常に感謝の思いで生活しているかといえば、はたして「そうです」と言うことができるでしょうか。何か都合のいいことがあったり、ものをいただいたりしたら、自然に感謝の思いが湧いてくるでしょう。しかし、それだけ湧くことはないのかもしれません。それよりも、それ以外の思いが次々と湧いてくるのです。これとは少し事情が違いますが、親鸞聖人とお弟子の唯円坊の会話を思い起こします。ある時、唯円坊が「彼の言うのはまだ古いのかもしれないし、躍り上がるような喜びを持つべきなのに、そうでないということこそが、このたびのお浄土への往生は間違いないことなのですよ。喜ぶべきことを喜ばせないのが煩悩の仕業です。そして、このような私どもであるということをかねてからご存知の仏さまは、私たちのことを「すべての煩悩という煩悩を兼ね備えている凡夫」と見抜かれ、そのような私たちのために願いを建てられたことを知らされ、いよいよ頼もしく思えます。」