Building Our Future:  
A Conversation with Three Bishops

On December 7, 2015, Bishop Kodoi and Mrs. Janet Umaze hosted a dinner for former bishops (BCA) Bishops Hakubun Watanabe, Mrs. Kuniko Watanabe, Mrs. Janet Umaze, Bishop Koshin Ogui.

Bishop and Mrs. Umaze enjoying dinner together with former bishops of the BCA. From left to right: Mrs. Mayumi Ogui, Bishop Koshin Ogui, Bishop Hakubun Watanabe, Mrs. Kuniko Watanabe, Mrs. Janet Umaze, Bishop Koshin Ouma.

It was a dark and dirty cavernous space. Walking toward the back, the former auto service area with high ceilings and concrete floors was forbidding. Pool of rain water mixed with dirt covered portions of the floors.

The unoccupied building on the corner of Durant Avenue and Fulton Street had a classic art deco façade. Stepping into the building, it was a dark and dirty cavernous space. It had been a car dealership and Reggie Jackson’s name was prominently painted in bold letters on the showroom’s wall. Earthquake reinforcing struts had been installed along with a second floor mezzanine.

This article is the second in a year-long series commemorating the Jodo Shinshu Center’s Tenth Anniversary.

On December 7, 2015, Bishop Kodoi and Mrs. Janet Umaze hosted a dinner for former Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Bishops Hakubun Watanabe and Koishin Ogui and their wives in San Francisco. Their dinner conversation included discussions about the BCA Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC) and the upcoming 10th Anniversary JSC Commemoration. The following are excerpts from the conversation they had at this gathering as they shared their visions and thoughts about the JSC.

**Rev. UmezU**: I wish to welcome you both back to San Francisco! Thank you for taking time to join me and support this gathering. It’s so nice to have you home again.

**Rev. OgUi**: We certainly appreciate thinking of us and bringing us together for this wonderful dinner and opportunity.

**UmezU**: So Watanabe Sensei, how did the idea of the Jodo Shinshu Center come about?

**Rev. Watanabe**: Yes, thank you UmezU Sensei for inviting us this evening. At the time this whole project began, Bishop Dajo Toyohara, then Governor General of the Hongwanji-ha, was visiting the Bay Area and saw that the property behind the Berkeley Buddhist Temple was for sale. Bishop Toyohara thought that the location would be perfect for creating a center for Jodo Shinshu studies. He went on to suggest that the BCA, Ryukoku University and Hongwanji work together in a joint venture to develop some sort of education center. If you recall, at this time the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) was looking for a permanent site.

**Rev. Watanabe**: As such, Bishop Toyohara suggested that such a center could also serve as a new home for the IBS. We then called an emergency meeting of the BCA National Board during the BCA’s Centennial Observance in August 1999 at the Marriott Hotel in San Francisco to discuss this idea. I asked OgUi Sensei, who was Chairman of the BCA Ministers’ Association at the time, to attend the meeting on my behalf as I was preoccupied with hosting Gomonzaka-sama and Shinshu-sama in our town for the Centennial activities. You remember that right, OgUi Sensei?

**OgUi**: Oh yes, I remember that very well. We, the BCA leaders, got together to discuss the idea of a new home for the IBS and a Buddhist education center in Berkeley. After lengthy discussions, the idea was defeated.

**Watanabe**: That’s right. The idea was defeated. I was so disappointed. But even so, I persevered with the vision and continued to work with the Hongwanji.

**UmezU**: Yes, I remember Watanabe Sensei going to Japan often for meetings to work out more details for this idea and project.

**Watanabe**: Gradually, the IBS started to warm to the idea of moving back to Berkeley and creating some sort of new center.

It was hard to envision that this empty building would become the future BCA Jodo Shinshu Center. The architectural feat of retaining the historic art deco exterior while transforming the building into a three-story mixed-use facility with underground parking was monumental.

The BCA ministerial and lay leadership created the visions for the facility, secured the necessary funds, and worked to transform the facility into the Jodo Shinshu Center.

**Dr. Billy H. Saeki**: Past BCA President (2008-2009)

Since the JSC opened ten years ago, its front lobby with Shinran’s statue has become a favorite gathering place. Above and at left are scenes from the 2016 Goshoki Hoonko which took place on January 15th. Janet and Glenn Kameda serve their annual ozenzai to the JSC community. Read more on page 5.

IBS Hosts First West Coast Exhibition of Tsuneo Iwasaki’s Paintings

Seeing the Wisdom of Compassion

By Chris Sujarit

Imagine stumbling upon a collection of masterpieces of Buddhist artwork hidden away in the artist’s house. Now, imagine being given exclusive access to both the artist and his work just before he passed away. This is the story of biologist-turned-painter Tsuneo Iwasaki, and scholar and author Dr. Paula Arai. On January 9, The Institute of Buddhist Studies held the first west coast exhibition of Iwasaki’s work: a collection of scrolls and monumental paintings exploring the Heart Sutra and Buddhist philosophy. Dr. Arai gave a lecture to an audience including some people who had not even heard of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism before.

"Witnessing the horrors of war in the nuclear age and triumphs of technology in the 20th century, a Japanese biologist and devout Buddhist, Tsuneo Iwasaki (1917-2002), was driven to ameliorate the fragmented attention, environmental destruction, and personal and communal violence that..."
By Rev. Kodo Umegu
BCA Bishop

Our 2016 annual National Council (NC) Meeting, together with the Ministers’ Association Meeting, will be held in Visalia, California in March. Because these events will take place in the heart of So Joaquin Valley, the NC Planning Committee selected “Cultivating the Buddha Dharma” as this year’s theme. At the 2015 NC Meeting in San Diego, we changed the format drastically. We limited our business meetings to eight hours and added an extra day for some extra time learning the core values of our religion by incorporating more Dharma-related sessions. Thus, the delegates from all 60 temples and churches have more opportunities to hear and appreciate the Nembutsu teaching together. They will also have time to exchange ideas with each other and so that they can go back to their respective temples and try out new programs. From my perspective as the Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America, I feel that the BCA is like a farmland. It is my office’s responsibility to be sure that the local ministers and their team members are receiving enough support and care from the national organization so that they can devote their time to cultivating their fields. I need to listen to these views so that our continuing education seminars meet their needs and enhance their growth. I need to know where more dharma water is needed. I also need to sit down with the temple leaders and discuss the best way to assign ministers to their temples or areas. For example, the Central California District leaders agreed with a new idea and started a pilot program last year to share ministers. Instead of each of the seven temples and churches having its own minister, three ministers have been assigned to the District to take care of the religious needs of the entire Valley. This is something new for us and I would like to see how it serves the needs of the people there. Just like farming, we need to pay close attention and make use of the dharma water. Then, the dharma water is flowing into every part of the fields in the Valley. There are other people and areas throughout the United States in need of dharma water too. They are just waiting to hear the Nembutsu teaching. The Center of Buddhist Education sent Rev. Shinjo Fujimoto to speak in Anchorage, Alaska for the first time this year. And there are many individuals within our own communities who are thirsty for the dharma, yet we are not making ourselves available to them. There, many opportunities for strong dharma communities in these dry lands.

As individuals, we each need to cultivate our own spiritual ground. We need to plant the seed of the Dharma and tend to it constantly. By doing so, we can take root and cultivate the dharma field within ourselves and help the water flow out into the communities around us.

By Rev. Doi Fuji
Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple

In 1846, there lived an interesting young man who lost his father when he was 13. He was confused by his father’s death and developed a strong concern about his own death. At the age of 19 he visited the Hongenji in Kyoto, thinking it would provide him with a rare chance to resolve his questions by talking with a real and true Nembutsu follower one after another. The young man had only a limited amount of money—just enough to cover one week’s expenses. However, finding an answer was his first priority.

After visiting the Hongenji, he decided to call on an old woman in Mino (about 50 miles from Kyoto in Gifu Prefecture). He told her, “I came from Tanba (about 100 miles from Kyoto in Hyogo Prefecture). I don’t know how to settle my birth in the Pure Land, and I have decided not to go back home until I have a clear and solid answer. I need your advice.”

The old woman responded, “Your visit is timely because the priest listened in amazement and explained to the priest what her words and thought that her statement was heresy (I-An-Jin).”

Next, he visited a Buddhist temple in Mikawa (about 100 miles from Kyoto in Aichi Prefecture) and explained to the priest what the old woman had said to him. The priest listened in amazement and said, “You have headed the essence of Amida’s Teaching from the young man. Our doubts are clearly being solved.”

The meaning of this story is that we have doubts about birth, and we need to plant the seed of the Dharma and tend to it constantly. By doing so, we can take root and cultivate the dharma field within ourselves and help the water flow out into the communities around us.

A Doubtful Mind

The young man stayed and joined in the Dharma discussion for four days, but he gained nothing. As he reluctantly left her house, the old woman called to him and advised him, “You will probably visit Nembutsu followers one after another from now on. But please remember, if you feel that you have finally gotten some sort of solid answer to your question and you feel assured in your mind, it is time for you to say goodbye to Shinnon Shonin. If you go back home as you are, Shinnon Shonin will be happy because you will understand the view of Amida Buddha.”

The young man doubted her words and thought that her statement was heresy (I-An-Jin).

“If you feel that you have finally gotten some sort of solid answer to your question and you feel assured in your mind, it is time for you to say goodbye to Shinnon Shonin.”

“I don’t have to assume my new life once again. Once is good enough!”

By Rev. Kodo Umegu
BCA Bishop

On January 1, 2016, Rev. Kodo Umegu, BCA Bishop, certified Lea Joslin as a minister’s assistant at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco, Photo, Nft to right, Elaine Donor Sensei, Lea Joslin, Rev. Umegu and Rev. Ron Kibata, resident minister.

Buddhist Temple of San Diego

On January 27, 1916, a major flood destroyed farmland in One Valley, located in south San Diego County, killing 11 Japanese Americans, most of whom were Buddhists. Through this tragedy, families pursued embarked on a mission to form a temple. The Buddhist Temple of San Diego (BTSD) was established on May 17, 1916. The temple stood open upon the upper floor of a building in downtown San Diego to hold its weekly services. Over the next five years, a growing Sangha occupied the facility. A larger property was purchased two miles east of downtown, and on January 11, 1931, the new temple opened.

During WWII, the damaged stands of the upper floor of the temple, destroying the stage. A replacement stage was gifted to BTSD following the closure of the El Centro Buddhist Church in 1956. Today, the temple thrives with a dedicated and diverse Sangha. Last year, this year, October 16, 2016, the temple will observe its 90th anniversary.

The sounding of the Nembutsu resonates in the light of Manzanar.

This is truly the power that reveals the way.

- Translated by Rev. Duncan Williams


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Manzanana no
Hikari ni hibkuru
Nembutsu no
Koe ni michibiku no
Chikara nari keri
-Nagatomi Shinjo


The sound of the Nembutsu resonates in the light of Manzanar.

This is truly the power that reveals the way.

- Translated by Rev. Duncan Williams

Job Announcement:

Administrative Assistant

The Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) is accepting applications for a full-time Administrative Assistant. This position, under the direction of the Administrative Officer and the Administrative Assistant, is responsible for assisting and managing the administrative activities of the BCA National Headquarters office located in San Francisco. To view the complete job posting, visit the BCA website: buddhichurchesofamerica.org and look under the Contact Us tab, or go to this link: buddhichurchesofamerica.org/job-announcement

Support Guidelines:

Articles should be around 800 words, typed, double spaced and title page included. Manuscripts will be submitted as a PDF file. Authors should submit electronic files that contain their name, abstract, keywords, and 500-word (maximum) summary. Failure to include the author’s name or contact information in the body of the manuscript will result in rejection of the submission. All authors are expected to obtain IRBapproval for any research conducted for the article. Pages should be double spaced (10-12 point type). Manuscripts must be submitted in Microsoft Word format. Submissions should be sent as an e-mail attachment to WODeditor@bcahq.org. Please include the author’s name or contact information on all e-mail communications. Submissions will be subject to plagiarism checks and possible rejection if found to be in violation of any copyright. The Wheel of Dharma reserves the right to crop images and manuscripts, and to charge a fee for publication. By submitting a manuscript, you agree to the above Terms of Use. Manuskripts should include the author’s contact information (e-mail address and phone number), title, and abstract. Any change of address and subscription cancellation should be sent as an e-mail message to WODeditor@bcahq.org. Authors should notify the journal if any articles published in The Wheel of Dharma (“WOD”) thereby grant sublicenses to any third party to do so. Authors will be notified if any photograph, artwork, or other material is used without proper credit. All photographs used in the Wheel of Dharma must be credited to the photographer or artist. There is a $5000 USD publication fee for any article that includes photographs. A $500 fee will be charged for any article that includes artwork. Authors will be notified of any article, such with publication. The view of the national headquarters office located in San Francisco. To view the complete job posting, visit the BCA website: buddhichurchesofamerica.org and look under the Contact Us tab, or go to this link: buddhichurchesofamerica.org/job-announcement

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San Jose Chidori Band Concert Commemorates Watsonville Buddhist Temple’s 110th Anniversary

By Perry Yoshida
Watsonville Buddhist Temple

On Saturday, February 27, the San Jose Chidori Band will perform a concert to commemorate the Watsonville Buddhist Temple’s 110th Anniversary Celebration. This concert is one of many events being planned to celebrate the temple’s anniversary.

In 1903, the San Jose Chidori Band was among several Japanese American bands that formed in communities across the United States during World War II. This was a time when Japanese Americans were reestablishing their lives after returning from incarceration camps across the country. These bands formed to give something back to the Joss generation, who had few sources of recreation, by providing Japanese entertainment. The San Jose Chidori Band was one of the few bands that remained.

Today’s Chidori Band, led by Music Director Daane Takahashi, is primarily third- and fourth-generation musicians and include Shin Jossi who performs for the love of Japanese music. Their music includes a variety of Japanese music including niten classes and contemporary J-pop songs.

The highlight at Obon Festival is the dancing. Whereas most Buddhist Obon festivals have recorded music, the Bay Area is fortunate to have the Chidori Band provide live music for the Obon dancing.

The Chidori Band plays live music at the following Buddhist Obon festivals: Amadera, Mill Valley, Mountain View, Oakland, San Jose, San Francisco, and Union City. Over the years, the band has performed for various celebrations throughout Japanese American communities in areas such as Cortex, Fresno, Hanford, Livingston, Lodi, Los Angeles, Sebastopol, and Stockton.

Last year, the Chidori Band was featured at a concert to commemorate the 125th anniversary of San Jose’s Japantown. The Chidori Band will be honored on January 23, 2016 with its induc tion into the 2015 Bunka Hall of Fame for perpetuating Japanese culture in America. Over the past year, the Chidori Band has produced three CDs, which will be available at the concert.

The Chidori Band provides live music at the following Buddhist Obon festivals: Amadera, Mill Valley, Mountain View, Oakland, San Jose, San Francisco, and Union City. Over the years, the band has performed for various celebrations throughout Japanese American communities in areas such as Cortex, Fresno, Hanford, Livingston, Lodi, Los Angeles, Sebastopol, and Stockton. Last year, the Chidori Band was featured at a concert to commemorate the 125th anniversary of San Jose’s Japantown. The Chidori Band will be honored on January 23, 2016 with its induction into the 2015 Bunka Hall of Fame for perpetuating Japanese culture in America. Over the past year, the Chidori Band has produced three CDs, which will be available at the concert.

The anniversary concert begins at 2:00 pm. There is no admission fee, but all donations will support the Watsonville Buddhist Temple’s 110th Anniversary Celebration activities. Guest performers from the Watsonville Buddhist Temple will also join the band for this special concert to celebrate Japanese music.

For more information, please visit the Watsonville Buddhist Temple website at obonwiki.org or contact Perry Yoshida (951) 239-7540 or email perry76@ aol.com.

Setjin Shiki in Gardena

The Gardena Buddhist Church recently held their Saji Shiki (literally, “Coming of Age Ceremony”), an annual observation in Japan that is typically held in January. Participants in this year’s ceremony were: Jean and Shin Iwahara, Lauren Nation, Justen Mamiitani, Nicole Hamasaki, Hana Lamb, Toji Kowashira, Amie and Natsumi Hayama, Lauren Kawahara, Kaye Iwagawa, Kevin Maruyama, Sarah Takemoto, and Tommy Mayemura. It was officiated by head minister, Rev. Nobuo Miyaji, and assisted by associate minister, Rev. John Iwahara.

1942 - 1945: Buddha Behind Barbed Wire

In his ill state, Bishop Marusaki carried the Holy Relics of the Buddha and the War and Peace Wheel of Dharma. From there, he was relocated to the sandy desert of Topaz, Utah, together with others of Japanese ancestry. Wherever the Bishop resided was recognized as the Headquarters, and therefore, the Topaz Buddhist Temple was considered as Headquarters of the North American Buddhist Mission. The Bishop took command from his home at 4-2-C, Topaz Camp. Excerpt from the article, “Bishop Rynsai Marusaki and the BCA: The War and Peace Wheel of Dharma, November, 1974.”

Featured on page 113 of Memories, Revised Edition: The Buddhist Church Experience in the West during the Wartime Years, 1942-1945. Funded by California Civil Liberties Union. Available at the BCA Bookstore.
FDSTL Bishop’s Fund Sponsors
Sharing the Dharma through Music: Gatha Workshops with BJ Soriano
By Maya Lawrence, Board Member, Federation of Dharma School Teachers’ Leagues

American Buddhists have a long tradition of embracing songs in our services. Some wonderful compositions have come from Chiz Ishii, Jane Imamura, Yumi Hojo, and Linda Castro to name a few. Now we can add BJ Soriano to our growing list of remarkable composers.

BJ Soriano is a musician, composer, and member of the Hilo Betsuin of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. She has shared her music with the mainland through a Gatha Workshop at the 2008 Federation of Dharma School Teachers’ Leagues (FDSTL) Conference in San Mateo, and for several years has led singing and ukulele workshops for children at the Buddhist Church of San Francisco’s “A Special Place” Summer Dharma School.

Two years ago, BJ conducted a Gatha Workshop at Berkeley Buddhist Temple (BBT), sponsored by BBT and the Buddhist Church of San Francisco. It was attended by over 60 temple members from the Bay Area. The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii had supported the development of piano arrangements by Michael Springer, so we all sang with lovely accompanist scores. Copyrights for these songs are held by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, and BJ is able to share her songs broadly through workshops such as these. Her songs are yuwas, catchy, sincere—and above all, Buddhist! What better way to share the Dharma than through songs?

The FDSTL recently approved funding for at least two workshops to give Dharma Schools and teachers an opportunity to learn from BJ directly and experience the passion and energy of her songs. The FDSTL has printed the score and song books which will be distributed to temples and at workshops. The first workshop was held at the San Jose Betsuin on December 6, 2015, where 19 members of BCA Coast and Bay District Dharma Schools and Sanghas were introduced to BJ’s gathas. The FDSTL welcomes applications from Districts that would like to learn from BJ Soriano directly by hosting a workshop. Applicants may email direc@bcadharmaschool.org.

Mas Nishimura, one of the organizers of the San Jose Betsuin’s December Gatha Workshop commented, “Our group was enthusiastic and had a wonderful time learning and singing the songs; BJ reviewed nine songs with us as “Together as One;” “Four Noble Truths,” “Listen to Amida with Your Heart;” “Shinshu Pledge;” “Amida’s Our Horizon;” “Let’s Weave Amida in Our Lives;” “Live Amida’s Love;” “Amida’s Guide to Life;” and “Hands Together in Goshuin.” Each song was introduced and practiced with her deft ukulele accompaniment and recorded piano arrangements. Some of the most interesting “nuggets” during the workshop were her anecdotes about how she came up with several of the songs. One of the participants,Rod Aki of San Jose remarked that he really appreciated how he can “hear the [Hawaiian] islands in the songs.”

The FDSTL workshop was held in connection with the Federation of Dharma School Teachers’ Leagues (FDSTL) Conference, held at the San Jose Betsuin on December 6, 2015, where 19 members of BCA Coast and Bay District Dharma Schools and Sanghas were introduced to BJ’s gathas. The FDSTL welcomes applications from Districts that would like to learn from BJ directly by hosting a workshop. Applicants may email direc@bcadharmaschool.org.

One of the participants, Rod Aki of San Jose remarked that he really appreciated how he can “hear the [Hawaiian] islands in the songs.” Several of the attendees are planning to introduce the songs to their Sanghas: several temples plan to introduce how he can “hear the [Hawaiian] islands in the songs.” Several of the attendees are planning to introduce the songs to their Sanghas: several temples plan to introduce how he can “hear the [Hawaiian] islands in the songs.”

“Tsunagatte: Linked in the Nembutsu”
Northeast District Buddhist Women’s Associations
Host Annual Meeting and Upcoming Conference
By June Aikta, Co-Chair, 44th FBWA Conference

44th FBWA Annual Representatives’ Meeting

Eighty-six Northwest District Buddhist Women’s Associations (NWBWA) representatives and guests convened on October 10, 2015 at the DoubleTree Suites in Tulelake, Washington for the FBWA’s Representatives Annual Meeting, Rev. Kodzo Umezoe, Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) and Rev. Ronald Kohata, Buddhist Church of San Francisco, shed light upon our theme, “Tsunagatte: Linked in the Nembutsu” during our Saturday gathering. It was a pleasure to visit with Mrs. Janet Umezoe and Mrs. Sayoko Kohata as well. The short meeting also provided everyone an opportunity to meet Rev. Saka Sekiya, a new minister at the Seattle Betsuin. Numerous NWBWA members (chaired by Kiyoh Takashima, Seattle) greeted our guests and hosted a hospitality room (chaired by Jayne Ichikawa, Oregon). Patti Wong of Tahoma taught three fun, well-received sessions on Friday evening demonstrating how to make a hapki coat out of a t-shirt (towel).

Shinze Yahata, President, Federation of Buddhist Women’s Associations (FBWA) chaired the main meeting in which BCA President Dr. Kent Matsuda sang a song he wrote advertising the upcoming 2019 World Buddhist Women’s Conference. The FBWA Conference Planning Committee also compiled their favorite recipes into a small booklet as an invitation to everyone to attend the forthcoming 2016 FBWA Conference.

Save the Date: October 7-9, 2016 FBWA Conference in Bellevue, WA

Co-chairs Fran Shintaku and June Aikta ask that you save October 7-9, 2016 to attend the 44th Federation BWA Conference to be held at the Bellevue Westin Hotel. We plan to host a meaningful as well as an enjoyable weekend for all of our guests.

We look forward to hearing wonderful messages from our guest speakers, Rev. Mitsumi Wondra, Oregon County Buddhist Church, and Dr. Sharon Suh, Department Chair, Theology and Religious Studies, Seattle University. Our committees are diligently meeting and anticipate a fun and inspiring event. We hope to see many familiar and new faces at the 44th FBWA Conference, “Tsunagatte: Linked in the Nembutsu” in October.

BCA Bookstore News

by Gayle Noguchi

Now available: Don’t Worry Be Grumpy: Inspiring Stories for Making the Most of Each Moment by Ajahn Brahm paperback, $16.95.

By the author of the bestselling How to Order This Book, Don’t Worry Be Grumpy offers a collection of 108 stories and anecdotes; some will make you chuckle and some will make you laugh out loud as you see life from a new perspective. Each story is brief (only one to two pages long), is delightfully entertaining, and concludes with a simple, yet profound teaching from which we all can learn. Don’t Worry Be Grumpy is the type of book one can open randomly to any page and receive a valuable teaching. Anyone who gives Dharma talks or teaches Middle/High School Dharma School students will find rich material here for sharing the Dharma in an engaging and memorable way.

To order, go to www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org and click on the BCA Bookstore link or contact gayleb@dharma.org / 510-809-1435. Open Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.

Join the Center for Buddhist Education and Institute of Buddhist Studies for special educational programs in Visalia, CA, March 3 and 4, 2016

Presented in conjunction with the BCA National Council Meeting. See page 3 for schedule and details.
Go Shoki Hoonko 2016 at the Jodo Shinshu Center: “Why Jodo Shinshu?”

“Why Jodo Shinshu?” was the theme of this year’s Go Shoki Hoonko (Shriner Shinran’s Memorial Day), held on Friday, January 15, at the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC).

Rev. Kyōnozō Kewahara, Co-director, Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) welcomed nearly fifty members of the JSC community, including staff and students from the Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS), CBE, the BCA Bookstore and the Ryukoku University Berkeley Center (RUBEC). This year, the presence of many RUBEC students, along with Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) participants who came for a weekend retreat, added new energy and excitement to the occasion.

After chanting Shinran Shinran’s Shōōkyō, a variety of personal responses to the question “Why Jodo Shinshu?” were shared in Dharma talks presented by IBS students Landon Yamaoka and Tadao Ozawa. (Left) The reverends presented awards to Dereck Morimoto, Kai Munekata, and George Nobuo Miyaji (right) flank Boy Scout award recipients. (Above) Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, CBE Co-director, greeted more than 90 attendees at the Hoonko event. Talk topics were given by IBS students Landon Yamaoka (left) and Tadao Ozawa. Guest ministers (below, left to right) included Rev. Candice Yuchie Hoshino (RUBEC), Rev. Ken Adams (San Mateo) and Rev. Harry Bridge (Oakland).

For more information, contact Lee Osaki at the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple 1340 Kern Street, Fresno, CA 93706. Call (559) 442-4054 or email info@fresnobuddhisttemple.org

Fresno Betsuin Numata Scholarships

Attention College Seniors and Graduate Students: The Fresno Betsuin Numata Scholarship applications are now available. The deadline for filing is April 14, 2016. For students from the Central Valley, please apply for the Regional Scholarship. For students outside of the Central Valley, please apply for the National Scholarship. If you are a graduate student who has been awarded in the past, you may apply again. Thank you and good luck!

For more information, contact Lee Osaki at the Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple 1340 Kern Street, Fresno, CA 93706. Call (559) 442-4054 or email info@fresnobuddhisttemple.org

100 Scout Religious Awards Presented in Gardena

The Gardena Buddhist Church recently presented Sangha Awards and Senior Bupda Awards to seven scouts. Recipients of the Boy Scout Sangha Awards were Bryce Katagaya, Scott Mitani, Derek Morimoto, Kai Munekata, and George Otoratu. Receiving the Girl Scout Senior Bupda Awards were Tetsu Sakakita and Lindsey Yoshizama. The awardees worked for over one year under the instruction of Tom Sakakita. Presenting the awards were Rev. Nobuo Miyaji and Rev. John Ishihara. Learn more about Buddhist scouting awards online at BC-Scouting.org.

TechnoBuddha Conference

March 25-27, 2016
Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, CA

Firstly, this symbol is presented as a physical representation of the present moment. Vertical forms (appearing like water two drops on top and bottom) represent time – past and future. Horizontal forms represent space – 360 degrees. And the one is always in the center – being here and now – perfect equanimity.

Secondly, you can see a symbol of a water drop. This is one of the most often used metaphors to represent the idea of mindfulness. Only this water drop symbol is presented in a kind of mirrored way. But do not think about it, because as mentioned above, this is time – past and future, both are illusions, stay centered in the present.

This image and description come from the open source website Atomicbomb.com. Please join fellow TechnoBuddha Conference attendees ages 21-39 as we welcome keynotes Devendra Adney and Alice Wong for an in-depth discussion of the meaning of mindfulness in the Jodo Shinshu tradition.

Register online at: BuddhaChurchesofAmerica.org
Also, please visit us at: facebook.com/technobuddhaconference
And contact: chair@technobuddhaconference.org

Mindfulness in Jodo Shinshu

By Alex Pescarzi, Member, TechnoBuddha Committee

“Shukki Shinran think of mindfulness?” The question has been on my mind for some time, even before I attended my first TechnoBuddha Conference last year. This year, in an effort to give back to my Sangha, I am on the committee to produce TechnoBuddha, and so it happens that our theme this year is Mindfulness in Jodo Shinshu. So again, this question arises, but this time with a group of likeminded friends who will help me in gaining better understanding. Like so many of experiences in the Jodo Shinshu Sangha, I will come to learn and understand more by not just opening myself up to these questions, but by sharing these questions with others.

As I gathered on the planning call with my TechnoBuddha buddies to discuss more about how we would engage this concept of mindfulness as it applies to Shinran’s teachings, our committee leader shared the advice of our supporting ministers at Berkeley: “Give consideration to mindfulness in terms of how it motivates you to help others.” Immediately this sparked a resonance within the confines of my confused skull. Here in the midst of a “mindfulness craze” where everything from a paperweight to a soda is said to make us more mindful, was a completely humble and clear view of mindfulness, that uniquely carried with it the overall intention I have felt in my heart from the loving community I have become a part of.

These words from BCA ministers reminded me that Sangha is a constant reminder of mindfulness; of our self and others and of the truth that the difference between the two is an illusion. Every opportunity I have had for mindfulness comes ultimately from the gifts of those in my Sangha who have brought me closer to the Dharma, and all living things.

As the words sunk in deeper, I realized that they illuminated something from the little purple book that I had been reading, fellow practitioners will know as Shinran’s Essays. A Guide published by Hongrei. I had recently been reading the original story of Shinran, looking for insights on how mindfulness applied to his life outside of saying the Nembutsu, and had come up short, not understanding the story fully until that moment.

I remembered that in the story, in the course of surviving a terrible cold, Shinran had taken to reciting the Thirteen Pure Land Sutras, then the Longer Sutras, then returned back to the Nembutsu. After all of this, Shinran concluded that he could best serve his community not by just praying for them, but by actually going to them, serving them, and teaching them what he knew. And the way that he did so was by talking with folks person to person, getting to know them, and being generous with his understanding and compassion. It is in this manner, this way of being that I see in the ministers and general Jodo Shinshu community that makes it a Sangha. A Sangha that I want to belong to, that our celebrations mindfulness through the escape of ego, by encouraging its members to remember:

“I take refuge in the Sangha
May we live in harmony with all beings, united as followers of Buddha.
In the life of harmony, in a spirit of Universal Oneness.
Freed from the bondage of selfishness.

As the next TechnoBuddha conference draws near this March and we settle into this new year, and the ads for mindfulness apps and mindfulness cookbooks and mindfulness everything, I am grateful for the opportunity to rely more on our wonderful Sangha to help me realize the true meaning of mindfulness. Especially the kind that is freed from the bondage of selfishness.

Save the Date!
Summer Pacific Seminar: August 19-21, 2016
“Shin Buddhism & Globalization”

Keynote Speakers: Dr. Ugo Dessel, University of Leipzig, Germany
Dr. Elisabetta Porcu, University of Cape Town, South Africa
Additional speakers to be announced
This seminar will be in conjunction with the Jodo Shinshu Center 10th Anniversary, the Institute of Buddhist Studies 50th Anniversary, and the Numata Symposium

Contact the Center for Buddhist Education at cbc@bcasg.org or call (510) 809-1460
In December, the Institute of Buddhist Studies was granted eligibility to pursue accreditation with the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC). This is an important first step in the next chapter of IBS’s development. For the past thirty years, IBS has jointly offered an accredited Master of Arts (MA) degree with the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley. This program has been an integral part of our mission to bring the teachings of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and the study of Buddhism to the public at large. Due to our contributions to higher education laws in the State of California, and following a retreat for members of IBS’s Board of Trustees in March 2015, the Board has committed itself to IBS’s revised mission statement: “To provide graduates with expertise in the full breadth of Buddhist education in the full breadth of the Buddhist tradition with specialized education supporting student growth and community.” Accreditation will allow IBS to engage the broader world of higher education and religious education in the United States; attract potential students for unique perspectives, grounded in the teachings of Shinran Shonin, to a wider audience. Preliminary evaluation is necessarily long and complex. IBS took the first step on this path by having already completed accreditation with WSCUC. WSCUC has reviewed the application and determined that IBS is eligible to proceed with an application for Candidacy and Initial Accreditation. A determination of Eligibility for Candidacy and WSCUC does not necessarily ensure future accreditation. It is a preliminary finding that IBS is potentially accredited and can proceed to be reviewed for Candidacy or Initial Accreditation status with WSCUC. This is a new chapter for IBS, and we are excited about our future! Questions about Eligibility may be addressed to instituteofbuddhiststudies@shin-ibs.edu, or to WSCUC at wscuc@wscuc.org or (510) 748-9901.

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お浄土とは？
サンノゼ仏教会
藤本　顕信

私たちは何か時も阿弥陀如来の仏国(ぶっこく)のことを簡単に「お浄土」と言いますが、他の仏さまにもそれぞれの仏国が有りますので、正確に言いますと阿弥陀如来のお浄土は「極楽浄土」と言います。他の仏国の例として弥勒菩薩(みろくぼさつ)の兜卒天(とそつてん)が挙げられます。ほとんどの人はお浄土を清浄なる国土で有ると言うことが大切です。極めて楽しいところであると言えることも魅力的かも知れませんが、この世の穢れに反映して清らかで有ると言うことが大切ではないでしょうか。お浄土は穢れていないと言うことだけではなく、その国の清らかさのことによってこの世の穢れが見えてくるのです。清らかな世界を見る事によって、この世の穢れがより良く見えるのです。空気、水、音などのことで始まり、私たち、この世の人間、一人一人の穢れが見えてくるのです。

単に楽しいところであると思って求めて行くと本当に浄土往生を求めているのか、ただこの世の苦しみから逃げ出そうとしているのかが問題になってくるのではないでしょうか。お浄土は苦しみからの逃げ道ではないのです。この世の苦しみを認めながら、抱きながら阿弥陀如来に願わせると見ても良いでしょうが、どちらかとすればその穢れているまま、私たちを受け入れて下さると言う方が正しいと思います。これは阿弥陀如来の広大な働きを示していると言えるでしょう。私たち人間の穢れと言うのは煩悩によるもので、自分に我・欲・偏見等で穢れているばかりです。それに対してお浄土は自利利他・空・縁起の思想の表れで清浄なもの。この世の中の全ての物は、縁起によって、根本的に一つであると言う考え方を踏まえているので自己中心のはからいによる穢れは一切ないのです。私たちに浄土往生が勧められるのは楽しいからではないのです。「極楽」を強調することは分かりますが本当の価値は清らかで、一切の者がそのまま受け入れて下さると言うところに有るのです。阿弥陀如来の慈悲は広大であるので、私たちの穢れを受け入れても問題は無いのです。これほど有り難いことが有ってもよいのでしょうか。これこそもったいないと言う他はないでしょう。

合掌（一ページより続き）展示品ではありませんが、荒井先生のご講義によると、岩崎先生のご逝去後も、お宅に一年を通じて掛けられている一枚の絵があるそうです。それは岩崎先生が最晩年に手掛けられた満開の桜の絵です。岩崎先生が体調を崩された後、お医者様から癌の診断が下され、ご家族は病名をご本人に伏せておられました。しかし、ご逝去後、ご自宅にあった医学辞典の、まさにその病の記載されている箇所に、岩崎先生の手で傍線が引かれてているのをご家族がお見付けになりました。静かに歩み寄る死を見据えながら、先生はいつもと変わりなく自室にお入りになって何か絵を描き続けておられたようです。それが先生のお好きな桜の花の絵でした。ある年、荒井先生が岩崎先生の残された紙類を見せていただく機会に恵まれ、「岩崎先生、先生が見つけてほしいと思われるものがあれば、どうぞ見つけさせてください」と祈る気持ちで、一枚一枚束を開いていかれたところ、未完成の一連の桜の絵が何枚も出てきたそうです。ご自宅に飾られていた一枚は、屏風絵のように並ぶはずの未完の大作の一部だったのです。そして風に揺らぐ満開の花に寄りそうように、朱筆でくっきりと記されていたのは「南无阿彌陀佛」の六文字でした。慈悲のお呼び声を聴きながら、信心とお任せの結晶である「南无阿彌陀佛」という祈りを、これから風に任せて散りゆく桜に嫁して、刻みつけていかれたのでしょう。先生は「願わくは花の下にて春死なんそのきさらぎの望月のころ」と歌った歌人の僧侶、西行(1118-1190)のように、桜の花咲く季節に安らかに旅立って行かれたそうです。

最後になりましたが、岩崎常夫先生のご家族、荒井ポーラ先生のご家族、ご友人、浄土真宗センター、米国仏教団、及び米国仏教大学院関係者、ご参加者を始め、このイベントの成功に貢献してくださった皆様に米国仏教大学院より心より感謝申し上げます。
去る1月15日（金）に浄土真宗センターで報恩講が営まれた。正信偈（行譜）をお勤めした後に、ご法話のテーマを「Why Jodo Shinshu?」とし、なぜ自分が浄土真宗を信仰するようになったかを5名の開教使およびIBSに通う学生らが話した。法要には約40名が参加、センターで行われる法要や講義への常連の参加者に加え、龍谷大学の留学生やYouth Minister’s Assistantプログラムの生徒など若者が多く集った。参加者は僧侶たちがなぜ浄土真宗と出遇ったのかのお話に、うなずき共感しながら聞き入った。本願寺オフィススタッフは、「大変感動しました。いつもは忙しくて法要に参加できなかったのですが、今日こそはと思い、時間をつくって参加しました。これからもお聴聞を重ねていきたいと思います。」とよい法縁となったようだ。法要後、親鸞聖人の好物といわれている、ぜんざいが振る舞われた。法話はIBSに通う山岡ランドンさん、小山忠男さん、教師の柴田キャンディス師、開教使のアダムス・ヘンリー師とブリッジ・ハリー師が話した。法話はCBE（仏教教育部）のYouTubeチャンネルで視聴することができる。

一月九日に浄土真宗センターで岩崎常夫氏の写経画展および荒井ポーラ博士の講演が行われた。以下はIBS職員の稲石さやか氏によるレポート。二〇一六年一月九日（土）浄土真宗センターにて、Institute of Buddhist Studies（米国仏教大学院）主催、岩崎常夫先生（1917―2002）作、荒井ポーラ宗教学準教授講演の、細密字写経画展を開催いたしました。テーマは"Seeing the Wisdom of Compassion - the art & science of the Heart Sutra"「慈悲の智慧を観じて『般若心経』の真髄を芸術と科学で読み解く」で、十五点の写経画が展示されました。荒井先生は岩崎先生のご存命中より岩崎先生の作品のご研究を続けてこられ、現在その成果をまとめたご本をご執筆中です。当日の公開講義で、荒井先生は、ご家族の度重なる死を通られ、とてもお苦しみになった女性が、岩崎先生の絵をご覧になった後、「今まですべてのものは空という教えは冷たいと思っていたけれど、本当はあたたかいものだったのですね。」とおっしゃったことを講義の初めに紹介されました。そして、すべての縁起（存在の相互依存性）を認める科学の理解と、縁起と慈悲という仏教の洞察とがひとつとなって描かれた岩崎先生の絵のもたらす癒し...。当日は浄土真宗のメンバーの方々を初め、禅宗のコミュニティーから多くの方々が訪れ、岩崎先生の筆致の美しさと『般若心経』の新たな味わい、また荒井先生のお話を通じて、岩崎先生の絵の制作意図や心温まる逸話に心を打たれておられました。岩崎常夫先生は敬虔な仏教徒でおられ、生物学の研究職を六十五歳にてご退職後、顕微鏡を拡大鏡に、ピンセットを絵筆に、研究室をご自宅の書斎に替え、その後二十年にわたって「細密字写経画」の作成に精進されました。「写経」は日本で伝統的に行なわれて来た、ひとつの観想のかたちです。印刷技術の発達するまで、仏教の経典は人々の手で書き写されることによって広められました。印刷技術の発展により、その必要性がなくなった後も、人々は供養や心願成就を願い写経を続けてきました。一切空（全てのものは縁起で成り立つ、故に自体・本体・実体と称すべきものがない）の智慧の真実を説く『般若心経』は写経によく用いられるお経です。科学の世界に精通した岩崎先生は、ビッグバンを描いた広大な宇宙規模のテーマから、自然現象の稲妻、小さな蟻、さらには、裸眼では見えない二重螺旋構造のDNAに至るまで、あらゆるかたちの生命共同体を精細な筆致で描き、その中に縁起の智慧を説く『般若心経』の文字を、物差しと拡大鏡を使いながら、細筆で一字一字、丁寧に写経していかれました。岩崎先生の絵には、彼の生きとし生けるものへのあたたかなまなざしと観想が込められています。

（二ページに続く）