The Journey Ahead (Part II)

By Glenn Kameda, BCA Facility Manager

Many, many Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) members have stepped forward to support the operation of the Jodo Shinshu Center (JSC).

A few years after the doors opened, a family from the Southern California district came to see the JSC. Their son was enrolling at UC Berkeley. As we toured the building the father noticed the somewhat tired-looking atrium garden on the second floor. Since that initial visit, the father, family members and friends have been coming at least twice a year to maintain the atrium garden, often bringing replacement plants. This generous donation of labor, plants, and care has been under the guidance of Ken Kawasaki.

The Junior Young Buddhist Associations (Jr. YBA) have been very generous.

The Bay District Jr. YBA donated the screens often used in the lobby; the Palo Alto Jr. YBA donated clock radios for all the hotel and dorm rooms; and the San Mateo Jr. YBA purchased the lamps. The Concord Fellowship donated 30 folding chairs for the lobby. Many more donations, including volunteers who assist in many ways, can always be counted on.

Now, let me mention several events that have taken place at the JSC. Vsekash services held jointly by several Buddhist traditions, the International Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange (IHOPE), a gathering of Nishi Hongwanji kaikyoshi (overseas ministers), Zen Buddhist groups’ retreats and seminars, the West and East Hongwanji Overseas Propagation Exchange (WEHOPE), a first-time gathering of both Nishi Hongwanji and Higashi Honganji ministers; Ohara School of Ikebana Spring and Fall exhibitions; the first west coast exhibition of Tsuneo Ikawa’s Buddhist art; and a three-day retreat for 17 Higashi Honganji (Shinshu Ohkami-ha) ministers and representatives. All of these Buddhists from throughout the world: imposers, monks, teachers, professors, government officials; all came to see for themselves this place called the Jodo Shinshu Center.

The JSC is the home of the BCA Center for Buddhist Education (CBE) whose programs are not only on site but also taken to other BCA districts. CBE on-site programs are quite labor intensive. They include hosting the attendees’ breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, and of course, setup for meeting rooms, sleeping quarters, and fresh flowers for the omairi (altar).

Ryukoku University of Kyoto, Japan routinely hosts 25+ students raising American Culture and English as a Second Language classes at the JSC, for one semester (4.5 months) and between semesters (five weeks). However, they do not live at the JSC. For most students it’s their first experience in the USA.

Hongyanji-ka of Kyoto runs two programs from its office at the JSC: the online English language Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC), and the International Ministerial Orientation Program (IMOP), which trains ministers to serve in Hawaii, Canada, Brazil, or the BCA. IMOP ministers live at the JSC during their four-month orientation. IMOP’s former in the BCA include Rev. Katsumi Kuwakoji, Rev. Yuki Sugahara, Rev. Masanori Watanabe, Rev. Sala Sekiya, and Rev. Natsuki Hayashi.

The BCA Bookstore managed by Gayle Nagoshi is a “must see” and has developed into a great source of outreach for the BCA.

So, all the “footsteps from here and there” have come to the JSC, a place for learning and training, a place where the BuddhaDharma resides. Footsteps of yesterday have returned again and again, bringing with them first-time footsteps.

The JSC has, in its first ten years, established itself as one of the places to see in Berkeley, California. Yes, the Berkeley City Walking Tour group made a journey here. We even had a tour group from Sonoma of about 30 seniors come to visit. So for those BCA members who have yet to bring your footsteps through the doors, I’m waiting.

The MAP Road to Mindfulness

‘Twas a Sunday morning. And all through the JSC Not a creature was stirring Not even a MAP student. When all of a sudden, there Arise the sound of the kendo Resounding throughout the JSC Calling one and all “Sensei, sensei.” Let’s voice the Buddha’s teachings; Let’s awaken our mindfulness As well as our sleepy body-mind.

Come on, Masami, Jim and Carol, Come on, Mutsuki, Shieko, and Henry, Onward Patti, Peter, Jeanine and Michael, Rev. Umezu is waiting in the KODO With senya in hand and asme as well.

Then all of a sudden, the voices rise in unison, “Ga na da buuu” And just as quickly, the voices lowered, “Na man da buuu, na man da buuu.”

All was quiet, mindful that all had Miles to go before the ordination And Miles to go before the omairi ordination.

By Glenn Kameda, BCA Facility Manager

10th Anniversary of the Jodo Shinshu Center

Thank you, BCA Jodo Shinshu Center! Recently assigned kaikyoshi from BCA, Hawaii and Canada are reunited at the Futen. Collectively, their paths to the Hongwanji ministry included the JSCC; IMOP, MAP and BCA ministerial programs, all based at the JSC. (Front, l. to r.) Reverends Sala Sekiya, Caroline Shibata, Motoumi Wondra, Christine Yamko and Kenji Akahoshi. (Back l. to r.) Reverends Matthew Hamasaki, Mariaki Hayashi, Kory Quon, Shoji Kawagoe, Satoshi Tomioka, Diana Thompson and Masanori Watanabe.

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By Glenn Kameda, BCA Facility Manager
By Rev. Kodo Umezu

One of my responsibilities is to oversee the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) sponsored by our mother organization in Kyoto. Over 170 students have completed the course and about 50 students are currently enrolled. I have the privilege of signing their certificates of completion.

Whenever I sign them, I check the students’ names and their countries. They are from all over the world. I have even seen students from South Africa and Dubai.

The JSCC is a worldwide program, Rev. Kiyonobu Kowatara, the dedicated and capable coordinator of the program, decided to have the annual JSCC August Workshop in Dusseldorf, Germany this year. I was really impressed by the participants and their appreciation of Shinran Shionin’s teaching that they expressed during the workshop. It was so gratifying to see their smiles of dharma joy. When I was growing up in Japan I never dreamed of

Long Ago Becomes More Real: The Dun Huang Cave Exhibit

By Rev. Kory Quon

Venice Hongwongji

Buddhist Temple

How joyous I am, Goutoku Shinran, disciple of Sakyamuni! Rare is it that ministers of the Jodo Shinshu Church in China and Japan, but now I have been able to encounter the Smiling Buddha. The caves housed documents, artifacts, paintings, and sculptures.

There were three elements to this exhibit: a slide show and 3-D video about one of the Dun Huang caves, replicas of three of the nearly 500 caves; and various artifacts which were found in the caves. Every artifact had deep Buddhist significance, from depictions of the life of Shakyamuni Buddha, to various woodblock prints and mandalas from Buddhist lands.

This trip was quite special for those who were able to share the moment. For myself, the video really excited me. In the center of the front wall was a statue of Shakyamuni Buddha. Painted on the left wall was Guanyin, also known as Kannon (one of Amida’s attendants in the Contemplation Sutra), and painted on the right wall was Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Life known to Jodo Shinshu Buddhists as Amida. Of the entire exhibit, this video made the only mention of Amida or even the Contemplation Sutra, which appears in pictorial form on the same wall. I am glad that they were in the video so that many people would be exposed to them.

I cannot truly convey in words what a once-in-a-lifetime experience this was. Imagine and realize that these pieces are 1,000 years old and have traveled over 4,000 miles. How many languages were spoken over this time and distance? Shinran expresses great appreciation for receiving the Nembutsu teaching and the Three Pure Land Sutras. We have the sutras and we have the teachings, yet sometimes it is hard for our calculating minds to appreciate them. When you have the opportunity to make your Jodo Shinshu life a little more “real” please do not hesitate, just take advantage of that opportunity. Find Shinran’s joy that he conveys through his works and make that your own name. Amida blesses you.

To learn more about the art, visit www.getty.edu/research/exhibitions/past/hinduism/caves_dunhuang

By Rev. Kodo Umezu

BCHA Bishop

Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple

The roots of the Seattle temple began with its original establishment as the Seattle Bukkyo Seinenkai in 1901, later incorporated as the Buddhist Mission Society of Seattle in 1906. The name was changed again in 1909 to Seattle Temple of the Honpa Hongwanji.

The Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple is in Seattle, WA 98144.

Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple
1427 S. Main Street
Seattle, WA 98144
Tel: (206) 229-0800
Email: office@seattlebetsuin.com
www.seattlebetsuin.com

A two-story wooden building was constructed in 1908 but it was condemned by the City of Seattle in 1939. The congregation used a temporary location in until a new structure was built at 1427 Main Street, at a cost of $150,000.

On October 4, 1941, the new temple was dedicated in a ceremony conducted by the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Bishop Ryotai Matsukage from San Francisco. The events of that day were marked by a colorful procession of brightly costumed androgyne dancers, Boys Scouts, Camp Yuki girls, and temple members. The procession, led by Rev. Matsuji Schikano and Bishop Matsukage, was five blocks long as it wound its way through the streets to the temple.

The last service before the internment of temple members during World War II was held on May 3, 1942, by Rev. Ryotai Matsukage. The onaijin was sealed with the Shrine of Amida intact, and left in the hands of the temple administrator and minister in charge. After the war, the temple was rebuilt at 1427 Main Street with a new structure at a cost of $150,000.

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The Seattle Betsuin continues to serve the members of the Northwest District of the BCA.

JOB ANNOUNCEMENT: Director of Operations

The Buddhist Churches of America, a California nonprofit corporation (BCA) is seeking an experienced candidate for the position of Director of Operations in the BCA’s home office in San Francisco, CA. This position is responsible for the administration of the organization and implementation of the strategic vision of the BCA. Salary and benefits are competitive. Interested individuals may apply online at buddhistchurchesofamerica.org under the “Contact Us” tab, or go to the link: Director of Operations/BCA director-annoucement.
I have been asked many times about the current state of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA). This question comes up often, so hopefully I can answer questions in this article.

First of all, I can say that the BCA is in good financial standing. This is despite the downturn in membership, increased operational costs, and the ups and downs of market conditions that effect our investments. Under guidance of Budget and Finance Chair and BCA Treasurer Jeff Matsuoka, and Interim Director of Operations Steve Terusaki, the lean staff at BCA headquarters has kept the BCA financially sound.

The BCA membership fee has not increased much over the past three years. Many of you are aware that your dues help fund staffing, and operational costs of the BCA National Headquarters, the Jodo Shinshu Center, and other costs of running a national religious institution. That’s a given. But do you realize that these financial contributions are critical for ministers’ pensions, ministers’ continuing education, publication and distribution of Jodo Shinshu literature, seminars and programs, website updates, and publication of the Wheel of Dharma newsletter? None of these valuable services would be available to ministers, members, and Dharma seekers without your support.

As the BCA continues to be a dynamic organization, a few people back in 1898 wanting to organize Jodo Shinsho teachings in America, BCA members can be proud of the multitude of accomplishments that we have realized. Jodo Shinshu Buddhism has now become a major religious tradition in the world. The BCA has helped to make this happen on many levels. I would like to thank all the BCA ministers and leaders for their part in this achievement.

The Institute of Buddhist Studies has developed into a major learning institution for Jodo Shinshu studies and is now working towards attaining accreditation. The Center of Buddhist Education programs support a thriving ministry, develop and train temple leaders, connect with a broad range of age and interest groups, and educate the public about Buddhism. The Jodo Shinsho Correspondence Course is bringing the Nembutsu teachings to students in 17 countries around the world. The BCA Bookstore serves customers and temples throughout the U.S. and internationally.

The Jodo Shinsho Center, which houses all of these organizations, will celebrate its tenth anniversary this month. And by next year, a Hongwanji International Office will be established in America at the BCA headquarters building. In Watsonville, BCA continues to coordinate communications linking Hongwanji Overseas Districts and Sanghas internationally.

These successes, starting out as just visions of our past and current BCA leaders and bishops, have become valuable impetus for spreading Shinran’s teachings globally as well as domestically.

Since becoming President of the BCA, I have come to realize that the richest resource the BCA has is its ministers and the organizations that house them, just like you who, just like our ancestors, have an important vision of the vision of sharing the Nembutsu teaching with all who seek it.

By Ken Tanimoto
BCA President
Watsonville Buddhist Temple

“Hopeing that there will be a tomorrow is like hoping that the cherry blossoms will not fall in tomorrow is like hoping that wakamaru [Shinran’s childhood Buddhist name] would fall in front of me. ‘Let me go (to the Pure Land),’ I do regret the fact that I could not meet you with my typical smile, laughter and jok- ing personality.

On September 27, 2016, a memorial service for Rev. Shousei Katsukiyo Hanayama, co-sponsored by the Buddhist Churches of America, was held at Watsonville Buddhist Temple. In addition to Mrs. Keiko Hanayama and children Shoren and Elren, who came from Japan to attend, about 450 people came to pay their respects to Rev. Hanayama.

Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, was present. He presented the Intergral service for Rev. Shousei Katsukiyo Hanayama. Incense offerings were made by representatives from all the Coast District temples, as well as from Seabrook Buddhist Temple in New Jersey. Hanayama Sentei was born in NJ, and while at Shoren-in, first assigned temple as a BCA minister.

Rev. Yoshi Nakayama, in his words of remembrance, the Hanayama felt the most important thing was harmony — except when it came to discussing the future of the BCA. He was passionate about that and would argue with other ministers about what was best for the BCA. But otherwise, he always cherished camaraderie, and lettuce who is the BCA was known for his sense of humor.

Rev. Umezu made a poignant analogy in his Dharma message. “Rev. Hanayama was born in New Jersey but moved to Japan as a child. He was a dual citizen of the United States and Japan. We are dual citizens as well; we are citizens of this earth and citizens of the Pure Land. The Hanayama family expressed their heartfelt appreciation for all the generosity and support they have received during their bereavement.

On September 20th, BCSF had a booth at the Castro Street Festival, a major LGBTQ community event held in San Francisco’s Castro district. Elaine Dorin Sensei, minister’s assistant, with other volunteers, engaged the crowd with the “Wheel of Dharma” roulette with Buddhist teaching。“Everyone enjoyed giving it a spin to answer the question. ‘What are you grateful for?’”

As BCA enters its 117th anniversary, September, 1899, when the first Hongwanji ministers arrived in San Francisco and the U.S. mainland, the Buddhist Church of San Francisco enjoyed some new ways to share the Dharma.
Making the Dharma Connection with Children’s Books by Kiyo Masuda

Attention: Dharma School teachers, parents, and all who love children and love to read! Everyone loves a good story. Stories that capture our attention are those that we can relate to in some way, be they funny, scary, sad, or imaginative. They do so by tapping into our emotions, personal experiences, and curiosity. In addition to being enjoyable, stories are a universal tool that expand our knowledge and understanding of the world around us, but also how we see life.

All literature is stories that focus on the human condition of sorrow, or suffering. (That's what makes a good story.) Children's literature, including picture books, are no exception. Unlike novels and other more complex stories, picture books are ideal to share with children because they are generally written with a focus and emphasis on a specific theme or message. Picture books are a rich resource, a bridge to make the dharma personally relevant in our lives.

Book Review: Yoshi's Feast by Kinuko Kajiwara, is her adaptation of an old Japanese tale, “Smells and Jingles.” This is a delightful, exagerrated story that exemplifies the ridiculous nature of our blind greed. Yoshi and Sabu comically play out the Three Poisons of greed, anger, and ignorance, as a number of BCA minister say, “GAS,” greed, anger, and stupidity.

Every evening, Yoshi, a fan maker, eats his meager dinner of rice gruel as he enjoys the delicious aroma of broiled eel wafting from his neighbor Sabu's outdoor grill. Sabu, on the other hand, has a nightly meal with the eel he does not sell that day. One day Yoshi mentions to Sabu how much the delicious smell enhances his meal of rice and gruel. Sabu becomes indignant when Yoshi continues to smell, but refuses to buy. So, he gives Yoshi a bill, charging him for smelling his broiled eel. Yoshi, of course, being just as obstinate, pays Sabu back with the sound of coins rattling in his moneybag. How is this feud to be resolved? It's not. GAS is overcome with goodwill. The feud is resolved in a most amicable, lively way.

Suggestion for teachers and parents: All stories can be interpreted in a number of different ways, depending on the perspective of the reader. Just keep in mind that when making the dharma connection, especially for young children, the story and lesson will be more meaningful when the interpretation is kept simple and relates directly to an Essential Teaching. In this case, for little ones I might emphasize the importance of friendship and working together (i.e., interdependence and non-ego). For our older youth, this story can be used to stimulate a discussion and reflections on personal experiences of “This is not fair” or “This is not right” (i.e., the continuous cycle of the Three Poisons). In the end, the Four Noble Truths, the importance of practicing the Eightfold Path, etc. Happy reading!


*Essential Teaching refers to the “Essential Teachings” chart created by Kyo Masuda as part of her “Making the Dharma Connection” workshops for Dharma School teachers. The chart is available through the Federation of Dharma School Teachers Leagues (FDSTL). Please contact Carl intern, FDSTL President, at yanari@aol.com to get a copy or if your temple would like information on workshops.
JSCC August Workshop in Europe: “Jodo Shinshu is truly an international teaching”

Eko-Haus is a Japanese cultural center in the heart of Düsseldorf. Germany. It has a small museum and visitor center, guest house, garden with a pond, large hondo (temple bell) and a Japanese-style Jodo Shinshu temple building at its center. Construction began in 1988 and it opened in 1993 (www.eko-haus.de). Eko-Haus was built by the late Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata, founder of Bukkyo Dendo Kobutsu (Society for the Promotion of Buddhist Arts), who, among many other philanthropic acts, built Buddhist temples in the U.S., Mexico, and Germany.

In 2015 Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (JSCC) students and alumni were sent a questionnaire to learn if there was interest in holding its annual workshop in Europe, where a number of the students are based. The response was overwhelming. Thus, from August 19-21, 2016, the JSCC Workshop was held for the first time in Europe. Twenty-seven people attended, including current and past students, JSCC instructors, Eko-Haus staff, and guests.

Anita Kazarian of the Cleveland Buddhist Temple reported some highlights from the event. “[Buddhist Churches of America] Bishop Kofo Omena opened the workshop with a welcome message. A representative from each temple presented the status of Jodo Shinshu in their temple and city. Countries represented included England, Belgium, Brazil, Germany, Canada, and the United States. Workshop activities included chanting/ritual instruction by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara, dharma exchanges, and a public lecture by Rev. James Martin.” The day after the JSCC Workshop ended, a group of participants visited Anjin-do in Mönchengladbach, Germany, escorted by resident minister Rev. Frank Kohl. Several people also stayed on to attend the 18th European Shin Buddhist Conference held August 23-26 in Antwerp, Belgium.

Traditionally held at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, California, the change of venue allowed more European Shinshu members to participate. Rev. Jerry Hirano (Salt Lake Buddhist Temple), one of the JSCC instructors, explained, “I was asked to give a Dharma talk at the Eko-Haus lobby for the Sunday morning service. This was a rather strange experience; here I was, a Japanese American, giving an English Dharma talk in a Japanese Buddhist temple in Germany. However, it was here at Eko-Haus that I began to see how the Jodo Shinshu teachings were much more than just a transplantation Japanese cultural way of life. In listening to the European Shinshu Buddhists, I clearly saw that I began to see how the Jodo Shinshu teachings were much more than just a transplant. I began to truly see the universal appeal of Shinran’s teachings. The European students were not Japanese, nor were they connected to Japanese genetically or culturally; however, the Nembutsu teachings were integral to their spiritual lives as human beings.”

The 18th European Shin Buddhist Conference, held in Antwerp, Belgium from August 23-26, was attended by about 50 people. His Eminence Koshin Ohtani, Zenninshu, and Lady Noriko Ohtani, Zenninshu of the Honkan-in in Kanazawa also attended. Various papers and presentations were made by the European participants, expressing how Jodo Shinshu is finding roots within the cultural traditions of their countries. Rev. Hirano observed, “There were Romanians stressing the importance of Shinjin (faith) in our lives, Polish representatives wanting to discuss ecological topics relevant to Shinshu, and English (as in England) representatives speaking about how Shinshu must look to the concept of the diffusion of innovations in a religious sense. Jodo Shinshu is truly an international teaching.”

Rec. Frank Kole welcomes members of the JSCC group to Anjin-Do in Mönchengladbach, Germany. Photo by Andy Mayeda.

Contact the Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course office at (510) 809-1441 or email honkanoffice@bcahq.org. To learn more about the 2016 JSCC August Workshop, visit our website JSCC.bca.org and click on “August Workshop.”

Representatives of the 18th European Shin Buddhist Conference in Antwerp, Belgium, included (front, l. to r.) Bishop Yoichi Ariki (Ryuju Shinshu Buddhist Temple of Canada), Bishop Kofo Omena (BCA), Bishop Eric Matsumoto (Honju Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii); (second row) Rev. Todajiro Umetsu, Rev. Jerry Hirano, Janet Omena, Rev. Masako Nishiyama, Rev. Kazunari Takahashi, Dr. Carmela Hirano; (third row) Lois Toyama, Piper Toyama (President, HFMWA), and Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara. Photo by Detlev “Ted” Gempf.
Thank You to IBS Donors

The Institute of Buddhist Studies expresses our sincere gratitude to the kind and generous donors who have supported us throughout the year! The IBS has many options for donations: Friends of IBS Shin Buddhist Ministerial Students Scholarships, Buddhist Chaplaincy Students Scholarships, Research Students Scholarships, Endowments, and Institutional Development (unrestricted) donations. You can donate now by visiting shin-ibs.edu/Donate, by messaging s.yamaoka@shin-ibs.edu, or by calling (510) 809-1444.

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In Gassho,
Rev. Segyo Yamako,
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Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church Fujikai
West Los Angeles Buddhist Temple and Buddhist Women’s Association
Annette
Anonymous in memory of Carl Karahara
Ms. Minako Ikeda
Mr. Barton Adams
Rev. Seigen Yamaoka

In Gassho,
Rev. Segyo Yamako,
President, Vice Deﬁnent Institute of Buddhist Studies
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唐獅子（からじほたん）
本堂の装飾には、ほとけ様のみ教える事ながらや、人々の理想や夢が表現されている。外からの訪問者からよく質問されるものに、シーズー犬のような動物の彫像や絵があります。BCAの仏教会に限らず、ほとんどの仏教寺院に行けば必ずと言ってよいほど見ることの出来るものですし、日本の人ならそれが、シーズー犬ではなく、「唐獅子」（チャイニーズライオン）であることは周知の通りですが、少し説明がいるようです。

「唐獅子」は、俗に昔の中国人が作った想像上の動物とされていますが、正確には、昔の中国人が、一度も見た事のない「インドライオン」（19世紀まで、インドにもライオンが沢山いました）を文献だけに頼って描いたものである。ですから、信じてよいのは、人々が見ていた「ライオン」で、「唐獅子」はライオンの絵や像のある処には、必ず大輪の花も一緒に描かれているのに気づくはずです。この花が「牡丹」であることは周知の通りです。

昔々、インド亜大陸にまだライオンが沢山いたころ、そこでも例外にもれず、ライオンは自然界の王者として動物界に君臨していました。ライオンは無敵でした。ベンガルタイガーでも、ライオンの群れを恐れて平原に出ることが出来ず、ジャングルに隠れ住んでいました。しかしながら、この世の中には本当に無敵の存在など有るわけがありません。ライオンにも恐るべき天敵の存在がありました。外にではなく、内にありました。ライオンの肝臓に巣食うある種の病原虫がそうです。一たびこの病原虫が肝臓に巣食うと、如何に百獣の王ライオンといえども、自分ではどうすることも出来ない状態に陥ります。あとは死ぬのを待つだけです。「獅子身中の虫（しし、しんちゅうのむし）」の諺は、ここからきています。

ただし、ここに一つだけライオンの助かる道がありました。ライオンが体調の変化に気づき、その原因が肝臓に巣食う病原虫であると知った時、賢いライオンは群れから離れて、野生に咲き誇る牡丹の群生地に赴きます。実は、この牡丹こそが唯一、ライオンの肝臓病原虫を駆除することの出来る薬草だったのです。特に牡丹の花の香りに含まれるある種の成分を病原虫は嫌うのです。ライオンが野生の牡丹園で静養すること数週間、あら不思議と肝臓に寄生した病原虫はライオンの身体から逃げ出してしまうのです。病の癒えたライオンは、うれしさのあまり、牡丹の園で花を相手にじゃれ遊ぶということになります。

昔のインド人は、この自然界で起こっている事を観察して、ライオンと牡丹園との関係が、何やら人間とお寺の関係に似ていると気がつきました。今や人間こそが、この地球上に唯一、文明を築き上げて君臨する王様であるといえます。その科学と文化に対して挑戦できる生き物など、いないように思われます。しかし、そのような人類にも、ライオンの場合と同じように、生涯の天敵の存在があるのです。このたびは、肝臓の中にではなく、こころの中にです。お釈迦さまは、その天敵のことを「我執（がしゅう）」=「自己中心性」と、ズバリ明確に示されました。

「我執（がしゅう）」=「自己中心性」とは、自分のことのみ考えて、他人のことを一切考えない心の働きです。本当は実体のないテレビの画像に似た束の間の存在である「我」に、これが永遠に続くと錯覚して「執（とらわれ）」ている状態と説明されます。この誤った執着の心はいつも自分だけを大切に思っています。たとえ他人を気遣うそぶりはみせても、その心の奥底では自分の損得のみを考えています。この心は無意識の内にも働くので、実に厄介な天敵と言えましょう。人間が生きて行く上で経験する、ほとんどすべての苦しみや厄介事は、この「我執（がしゅう）」=「自己中心性」にその原因があることを、お釈迦さまは明らかにされました。人間はこの心によって平気で他人を傷つけました。自分に都合のよい理由をつくりあげ、自分の利益のために他人を押しのけて、うまく生きようとします。そうする事によって生まれた結果が、いつか必ず形を変えて、自分に戻って来ることも知らないで。

人間は自分の考える正義に基づいて、胸を張って他人や外国を攻撃し、多くの人々を殺します。自分の正義が、相手にとっては迷惑であることなど、目にも耳にもはいりません。すべて、「我執（がしゅう）」=「自己中心性」のことです。

原力を用いて、超能力を保持するとされる現代社会が、この「我執（がしゅう）」にあやつられた人間の意志によってのみ運営されるとしたら、その未来におおきな危惧を抱くのは、こころある人なら当然だと思われます。われわれはもう一度、真剣にほとけの教えを聞く必要があるように思います。ライオンが牡丹園に行くように。その理由がお分かりいただけたらと思います。

【MAP in シカゴ】
MAP hosted in Chicago(right)
EBL conference at Seabrook Buddhist Temple
--EBLカンファレンスがシーブルックで開催され、ニューヨーク、バージニア、シカゴなどから約60名の門徒が参加した。（写真右下）
九月のレイバーデイウィークエンドにニュージャージー州のシーブルック仏教会で東部教区カンファレンスが行われ、ニューヨーク、バージニア、シカゴなどから約60名の門徒が参加した。（写真左下）

【人事】
サクラメント別院の大下ボブ輪番が8月に引退、藤本デニス開教使が後任として赴任した。藤本師のいたアイダホオレゴン仏教会は平野ジェリー開教使が監督する。サリナス仏教会の不二川往来開教使が8月に辞職、新関デニス開教使がサリナス仏教会を監督する。
8月20日（土）、21日（日）に浄土真宗英語通信教育のワークショップがドイツ、デュッセルドルフ市に所在する恵光寺で行われた。ワークショップは毎年8月に浄土真宗センターで開催されているが、今年はヨーロッパで浄土真宗への関心が高まっていることを受け、ドイツで行われることになった。恵光寺にはヨーロッパの受講生をはじめ、北米、ハワイ、カナダ、南米からも受講生やインストラクター、合計29名が集った。BCAからは梅津総長、平野ジェリー開教使、桑原浄信開教使、谷本ケン教団理事長らが参加した。

プログラムには、各開教区の活動報告、教義に関しての質疑応答、各参加者がどのようにして浄土真宗の教えに出遇ったかを発表する集いが設けられた。BCAからの参加者は「ヨーロッパの方たちは、お盆など日本文化のあまり影響のない視点から浄土真宗を理解されているところが新鮮でした。また、禅やチベット仏教などを経て真宗にこられた方が親鸞聖人がお念仏の教えに出遇われたことに似ていることも私たちと違っているところだと思いました。」と刺激をうけた。また、ブラジルからの参加者が、正信偈のポルトガル語訳をお勤めで読んでいると話したことから、読経やお勤めは現地語でやるべきかのディスカッションに発展、参加者全員で伝統的な正信偈のお勤めをしたところ、「やはり500年以上続いている正信偈の響きはいいですね、意味はわからずとも、親鸞聖人の言葉で皆の声が一つになるのが素晴らしい。」と言葉や人種の違いを超えてつながる一体感に感動した様子。本願寺オフィスの桑原開教使は「英語通信教育を立ち上げた当初は主にBCA、ハワイ、カナダ開教区の方が受講されましたが、最近では南米開教区、ヨーロッパ、アフリカ、アジア、中近東各国からの問い合わせも増えてきました。」と念仏の声が世界にひろまっている状況を喜んだ。