Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition
*Den Dento Hokoku Hoyo

From October 6th through May 20th, 2017, tens of thousands of Jodo Shinshu followers have been traveling to the Jodo Shinshu Honbutsu-ji head temple, Ryokoku-zen Hongoji, in Kyoto, Japan. Ten commemoration sessions of eight days each, with one service per day, have been scheduled so that followed from all over the world could join in the celebration of this historic transition of Nembutsu leadership. Several hundred Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) members and friends have participated. Rev. Matsumi Wondra and BCA president, Ken Tanimori, write about their trips in this issue.

Shown above is the cover of the official Commemoration booklet. Copies were distributed at the recent BCA National Council Meeting Special Chanting session presented by the Center for Buddhist Education. View the session online at YouTube.com and search for 2017 BCA NCM Special Chanting Session - ShonoB Nembutsu.

What is the Commemoration of Accession?

Below is the explanation in the official Accession Commemoration program booklet on page 4.

On June 6, 2014, the Jodo Shinshu Tradition was transmitted to the 25th Head Priest, Sennyo Monshu. The Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition or *Dento* Hokoku Hoyo, is conducted standing before Amida Toshogu and Shinran Shonin to formally announce that the newly-instructed Head Priest will take on the responsibilities of Monshu. He will follow in the footsteps of his predecessors to spread the Dharma to new generations and embrace the opportunity to share the Nembutsu teaching with all people. It is also a festive welcoming event to anyone coming to celebrate the inauguration of the new Monshu.

*Den Dento* literally means ‘transmit light’ in which the Jodo Buddhist Dharma is compared to ‘light’ or ‘a lamp’ that is to be relayed from person to person and generation to generation.

Slogan:
Light of the Dharma handed down to us
Let us share this joy with others

Investiture of Dr. Judy K. Sakaki, President of Sonoma State University

On April 20th, among the highlights of the Investiture of Judy K. Sakaki, Ph.D., as the seventh president of Sonoma State University, BCA members, especially those from the Buddhist Church of Oakland, were a lively presence. Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop, Rev. Dr. Seigen Yamazaki, past BCA bishop, and Dr. Leroy M. Morishita, past BCA bishop, member of the Institute of Buddhist Studies Board of Trustees, were among them. For in addition to her amazing personal achievements, Dr. Judy Sakaki happened to be a longtime member of the Oakland Buddhist Church.

Dr. Sakaki is the first Japanese American woman president in the nation to lead a four-year college or university. She is a first-generation college student, a product of public education and a graduate of both the California State University and graduate school of California. She has devoted her entire career to issues of access, affordability, inclusive excellence, educational opportunities, and achievement for all students. Sakaki earned a Ph.D. in Education from UC Berkeley, and an M.A. in Educational Psychology and B.A. in Human Development from California State University, East Bay.

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Sonoma State University, located in Rohnert Park, California, has an enrollment of over 9,000, and is one of the 23 campuses of the California State University system. Previously Sakaki served as Vice President, Student Affairs, at the University of California Office of the President. She co-chaired a task force on Recognizing Students Interested During WWII that resulted in honorary degrees being awarded to approximately 700 Japanese American students who were enrolled in the University of California in 1941-42.

Speaking to the theme of Investiture Day: "Dance with Change," Sakaki noted, "It's been quite a dance and a time of change for the campus and for me. I am thankful for all that everyone has done to embrace the dance and to work together -- to stretch, to question, to engage, to contribute, to trust, and to re-imagine a student-centered university.

A specially curated exhibit on the new CSU president's life, titled 'I Am Because,' was presented by Dr. Judy K. Sakaki's Journey to the SSU Presidency, "explores the challenges, victories, and motivations that Dr. Sakaki faced on her path to the Presidency. From her grandparents' struggles as first generation immigrants to the inspirational support of her mentors, Dr. Sakaki's personal and professional journey would not be possible without the people and the events that have shaped who she is today."

Exhibit open through July 31, 2017 at Sonoma State University Library, Jean and Charles Schulz Information Center, 1801 East Cotati Avenue, Rohnert Park, CA.

By Rev. Matsumi Wondra, Orange County Buddhist Church

Twenty-three members of the Orange County Buddhist and Gardena Buddhist churches and temples participated in the Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition Service for Sennyo Go-monshu-sama on March 31, 2017 at the Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto. It was a lot of work we had to do. We were able to directly meet and greet Sennyo Go-monshu-sama.

The ten-day tour in Japan visiting Shinran’s historical sites. First, we visited the Hō-kai Temple at Nino-sato where Shinran was born and Shinrenin where he was ordained by Master Jien, a Tendai monk. We saw the statue of Shinran with his own hair that took us to Mt. Hiei. We visited the Jogyō-za-mon-do (the hall of constant Nembutsu practice) in the Sai-tō area, where Shinran and Eshinni lived for seven years after leaving Kyoto because of the Nembutsu persecution in 1207.

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In Niigata, we visited the Kenshin-do Temple located at Kotaga Beach and for me… I am thankful for the access, affordability, inclusive excellence, educational opportunities, and achievement for all students. Sakaki earned a Ph.D. in Education from UC Berkeley, and an M.A. in Educational Psychology and B.A. in Human Development from California State University, East Bay.

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The Shinran pilgrimage included a service at Kenshin-do Temple.
Thank You, Honen Shonin

By Rev. Kodo Umezue, BCA Bishop

In May, we celebrate the birth of Shinran Shion, whom we all revere as the founder of Jodo Shinshu. But he never thought of himself as the founder. Actually, he regarded his teacher, Honen Shonin, as the founding father of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

Honen Shonin was very fortunate that he was able to hear the true essence of the Pure Land teaching from Honen Shonin. Without that historical encounter, this world would be very different today.

I would like to share with you what Shinran Shonin learned from Honen Shonin. When you read it, you will feel the same excitement and joy as Shinran Shonin did when he first heard this powerful teaching from Honen Shonin.

I quote one section from Honen Shonin’s writing called *Nembutsu Chosen in the Original (A Collection of Passages on the Original Vow)*.

It is, therefore, clear that even the Nembutsu is easy, it is open to everyone, while the various other practices are not open to all types of people, because they are difficult. Very Much to Honen Shonin. We have heard little are very many. The fact is that those who have heard the Basic, Primal, and Original Vow coming from the realm of Suchness, the realm of Nirvana in the distant past. By encountering the Vow, we come to realize our limitations and foolishness and to wish to save all beings. Honen Shonin called himself a foolish being without wisdom. Amida’s Vow is to save all beings, those who have heard the Vow. Moreover, those who have broken the precepts are exceedingly many. If the Original Vow required us to make images of Amida, the embodiment of the world of suffering, the foolish and the unwise would certainly have to give up hope of Buddhahood, the sentient beings of the poor and the destitute would certainly have to give up hope of Suchness. Amida’s Vow has required us to observe the precepts that we have broken, to the extent that those who have broken the six grave offenses and those who have broken the five grave offenses and those who have broken many are few and those who have heard little are very many.

Further, if the Original Vow required us to observe the precepts and abide by the rules for monks’ behavior, those who have broken them would certainly have to give up hope of rebirth, but the fact is that those who observe the precepts are few, while those who have broken the precepts are exceedingly many. Amida’s Vow is to save all beings, and so it is easy, it is open to all people, because they are difficult. Very Much to Honen Shonin. We have heard little are very many.

If the Original Vow required us to prepare for a time for recreation and relaxation, those who are difficult to be brought to the realm of Suchness have been expressed as the myriad practices, such as meditation on Amida, in the distant past when the Buddha, in the distant past when the historical Buddha was called Amida. Let us attend the Festival. We will also welcome Rev. Kurt Rye from America.

The 2017 Eastern Buddhist League (EBL) Conference at the Midwest Buddhist Temple (MBT) in Chicago, Illinois will be here! Be sure to join us for the EBL Conference September 1-3, 2017! North American Buddhism: A Path Forward

By Joy Zavala, Midwest Buddhist Temple

Registration cost is $100 per attendee if paid by July 31, 2017, after which an additional fee of $25 will be charged. Children under 16 may be added at no cost. The fee for Sunday only is $40 per attendee. Optional activities (at an additional cost) include a casino trip and a brewery tour. Hotel accommodations need to be made individually as there is no centrally booked hotel. All information for the conference may be found at mbtchicago.org/ebl2017/

Please see our website for detailed information on registration, accommodations, transportation, and schedule. There are many interesting and exciting places to see and things to do in Chicago (ranging from free on up). Please share this info widely among your Sanghas. We hope to see you in Chicago on Labor Day Weekend!

Visit the BCA website www.buddhistchurchesofamerica.org to find a BCA temple, Educational Events, Resources and more!

Wheel of Dharma

Visit Hongonjji Buddhist Temple

Established in 1930 as a branch of the now Los Angeles Hongonji Buddhist Temple, the Venice Hongonji Buddhist Temple became a Hokkai (grouping to establish Buddhism), meeting in a residence. The temple facility at its current location on Braddock Drive in Culver City took place in 1962. The dedication of the new temple was held in 1963.

The temple facilities were expanded in 1969, and the Venice Hongonji Buddhist Temple became an independent Buddhist Churches of America temple in March 1976.

Like the Buddhist Churches of America
President’s Message: Witnessing Shinran Shonin’s Legacy

By Ken Tanimoto

BCA President

Watsonville Buddhist Temple

On March 31 of this year, I was fortunate to attend the Commemoration on the Acquisition of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition of our 25th Menbutsu (head priest), Ohtani Kojuin, whose Dharma name is Shaku Senno, at the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ka in Kyoto, Japan. Along with 250 other members of the Buddhist Churches of America, I was privileged to witness the changing of our world Jodo Shinshu leadership from father to son. Monsuo Senno will follow in the footsteps of his predecessor to propagate the Joy of the Dharma worldwide.

Now, many of you are probably wondering, “Why is this such an important event that hundreds of thousands of people from faraway lands would travel to witness it?” To tell you the truth, I thought about myself before deciding to go. I had stayed home and visited my new four-month-old grandson whom I haven’t seen in while, so, as everyone enjoyed some relaxation time. Instead I made the decision to attend this historical religious event that will now last forever in my memory.

It was quite a sight to see hundreds and hundreds of opened umbrellas in front of the Amida Hall, waiting to go to the service. The cold and rainy day did not dampen the spirits of those attending. I think everyone was excited to be there to witness and be a part of this historic event with our new spiritual leader, his family, and thousands of other Jodo Shinshu followers.

The act of reciting the Shoshin Nam- butsu in the same room with a descendant of the founder, Shinran Shonin, really warmed everyone’s hearts and energized our minds and bodies. It was an emotional high that I did not expect. The special chanting style we followed was introduced during Rennyo Senno’s tenure. Shoheigi has been chanted at the Hongwanji daisly for over 900 years. I made it even more special to me.

In his brief but enlightening Dharma message, Monsuo Senno affirmed his gratitude to his predecessors for their many contributions in embracing and spreading Amida Buddha’s Primordial Vow to all sentient beings. He also commented that, in our challenging times in our future; and that the only constant which will make our lives stable will be the “Unconditional Compassion and Light of the Dharma.”

After the Accession Ceremony, I was graciously invited by the Berkeley Sangha tour group, led by Berkeley Buddhist Temple’s resident minister, Reverend Candice Shi -bara, and Mr. Michael Endo, to accompany them to the Otani Hombyo Mausoleum. There we would pay our respects to Shinran Shonin, the person who gave us our religious freedom in Jodo Shinshu and founded the Hongwanji-ka. Monsuo Senno is also there. We were allowed to enter the special room that is directly in front of and nearest to the actual shrine of Shinran. Everyone felt moved to be allowed into that sacred room.

I suddenly realized that, in one day, I had the opportunity of the new 25th Menbutsu and was offering incense to the person who founded Jodo Shinshu over 750 years ago. With that thought, there were no regrets about the time and energy spent to experience such a great moment in my lifetime.

Namo Amita Batsu

By Rev. Kaz Nakata

Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji

Buddhist Temple

“I take great care in preparing a rice paddy, as Dharmakara Bodhisattva spent five kalpas (billions of years) in his nudity to establish his 48 vows. I plant each seed wholeheartedly, just as I recite Nembutsu wholeheartedly each time. I remove weeds from the rice field, just as I stay away from the allurement of momentary self-power practices (jiriki). I constantly water the rice field, the way I maintain the Nembutsu teachings from generation to generation. When the end-of-life season comes at autumn, I harvest the rice with pleasure. Namo Amita Batsu.” — Shinran Shonin’s Rice Planting Song

After Shinran Shonin stayed in Echigo for seven years, he decided to relocate to northern Kanto (the Tadagai and Ibuki areas), with his family and other

Harmony of the Nembutsu Teaching

By Rev. Fumiaki Usuki,

Southern District Ministers Association

Many of you are already enjoying the second set of 17 Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Brochures that were written by the Southern District Ministers and other BCA Ministers. They were distributed to BCA Temples during the National Council Meeting in San Jose in March. The Southern District Ministers embarked on this project four years ago, and now a total of 32 brochures have been produced and printed, thanks to funding by the Southern District Council.

Over the years, various brochures and pamphlets have been made available by a number of organizations, including the BCA Bureau of Buddhist Education, the BCA Ministerial Association, Nansha Kyoei-Kyudo (Southern District Ministers Association), and others. Many of the brochures date back to the early 1960s through 1980s, and although they are still treasures, it was felt that the time had come to update some topics and add new ones.

Digital versions are available in the following Google Drive folders. Feel free to upload any documents directly.

Brochures may be downloaded at: https://www.nishihongwanji-la.org/teaching/brochures-on-buddha-dharma/

New Brochures for Outreach & Education

New IMOP Session Begins

On April 24, 2017, the International Ministerial Organization Program (IMOP) held its opening service and reception at the Jodo Shinshu Center. This year’s participant, Rev. Masanari Yamagishi (front, center), received a warm welcome from Rev. Kodo Omura, BCA Bishop (center, right), Rev. Kyosando Kuhwara, Center for Buddhist Education Co-director (at center, left) and other Jodo Shinshu Center staff and IBS students. Rev. Yamagishi is from a temple family in Takasaka in Toyoama Prefecture and aspires to one day serve as a kanyakyo (overseas minister) in Hawaii. IMOP is a 7-week intensive training program which includes English language and culture classes, seminars, field trips and temple internships. Rev. Yamagishi will be one of the speakers at the upcoming Japanese Seminar on May 13.
Now available: The Want Monsters and How They Stopped Ruling My World by Chelo Manche-go, Hardcover, 16.95. Recommended for ages 4-6.

One of the basic teachings of Buddhism that we learn from an early age is that greed is one of the three poisons. Told from the point of view of a child struggling with his inner Want Monster, Manche-go's story presents this teaching with a degree of discernment seldom commended to children. 1) that wanting is not necessarily “bad,” 2) that we all experience wanting things, and 3) we cannot rid ourselves of our Want Monster, but by cultivating awareness we can make peace with it and not allow it to control us. In the beginning, the Want Monster is depicted as gigantic, but by the end as the relationship transforms, the Want Monster shrinks to a manageable size. The story concludes with an invitation to draw what your own Want Monster looks like.

Also available: Gratitude: Effortless Inspiration for a Happier Life by Dani DiPirro. Hardcover, $9.95.

One of the distinguishing elements of Shin Buddhist teachings is its emphasis on awakening to the reality that my life is possible because of the compassion and generosity of others. Gratitude by DiPirro consists of inspirational quotations, reflections, and thought-provoking activities that promote this kind of awareness. Gratitude encourages us to slow down and to see the daily gifts we receive in a life that often go unnoticed. Perfect as a gift for a young adult, adult, or for yourself!

To purchase, go to buddhistchurchesofamerica.org and click on the BCA Bookstore link, or contact cbe@bcahq.org or 510-809-1435. The BCA Bookstore is located in the Jodo Shinshu Center at 2140 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94704. Open Wednesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Like us on Facebook.

2017 BCA Educational Events
Programs subject to change. Events at the Jodo Shinshu Center unless otherwise noted.

May 4 – “Millenials and the Future of Our Temples.” Lecture by Prof. Erik Hum- merson, 7-8:30 pm. Open to BCA ministers, temple leaders, and members. Presented by the Buddhist Church Education Committee.

May 13 – Spring Japanese Dharma Gathering: 10 am - 2 pm, $15 includes lunch. Rev. Ryoshu Yoshima, Hawaii Kyodan minister, and Rev. Masanari Yamagishi, International Ministerial Orientation Program (IMOP), will give Dharma talks. Sponsored by CBE. Email kfunahisa@ucalg.org or call (510) 230-8439 with questions.


May 30-31 – Ministers’/Continuing Education (MCE) Seminar. Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, Dr. Scott Mitchell, others. Presented by Center for Buddhist Education.

June 3-27 ~ Three Jewels (Tres Joias). Preview screenings of the new documentary trilogy about Buddhism in Brazil by Rev. Kentaro Sugao. June 3, Senthin Buddhist Temple; June 4, Orange County Buddhist Church; June 9, DC; June 12, Tacoma Buddhist Temple; June 13, Seattle Betsuin; then on to Japan. Contact CBE or visit the BCA website for more information.

July 3-9 ~ BCA Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) Summer Retreat. Hosted by the Buddhist Church of Sacramento (Sacroramento Betsuin), this week-long retreat is designed for students 15-18 years of age. For more information, contact Rev. Patti Oishi, pbtbl@comcast.net or Rev. Tim & Carol Castle, tncrc@comcast.net.

July 20-23 ~ Dharma Training for School Teachers. A special program open to public school teachers. Presented by Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) and Buddhist Churches of America (BCA). Visit buddhistchurchesofamerica.org for details.


August 17-19 ~ Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course August Workshop. Attendees from the online course will have an opportunity to meet each other and some of their instructors, as well as participate in Summer Pacific Seminar activities.

August 18-20 ~ Summer Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP) Seminar. Begins Friday at 2 pm. Held in conjunction with Summer Pacific Seminar (as lodging hosts).


September 26-29 ~ West and East Hong(oe)anji Overseas Propagation Exchange (WEHOPE) and Ministers’ Continuing Education (MCE) Seminar. Nishi and Hin-gakusho ministers will meet, and dialogue together.

September 30 ~ Fall Japanese Seminar. Speakers to be announced.

October 12-14 ~ Fall Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP) Seminar.

December 7-9 ~ Winter Minister’s Assistant Program (MAP) Seminar.

BCA Bookstore News by Gayle Noguchi

Dharma Training for School Teachers: July 20-23, 2017

Reaching out to educators beyond our BCA circles

If you are working in the teaching profession and a BCA member, you may sometimes wish that there was a way to introduce Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu to your non-Buddhist colleagues, since there are so many lessons the Buddha provided as the quintessential teacher for diverse students.

The Institute of Buddhist Studies and the Buddhist Churches of America Center for Buddhist Education are pleased to present a new educational seminar for K-12 teachers who are interested in learning about the Buddha’s timeless teachings and transformative pedagogy for cultivating wisdom, compassion, and mindfulness in our own communities – as well as within ourselves as teachers.

Dharma Training for School Teachers will take place on July 20, thru July 23, 2017, at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, CA. Topics will include: “Lessons from Buddha,” “Nurturing Compassion in Students,” and “The Mindful Classroom.” Key presenters are the Venerable Madawala Seelawimala (aka Blume), and the Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto.

“I truly believe that teaching is one of the most sacred professions. I also believe that being a schoolteacher is the most difficult position to fill. Schoolteachers need support and respect from parents and communities,” writes Rev. Kodo Ozu. “Buddha will be a convener as well as a presenter.

If you are in the teaching profession, please help us spread the word on this special outreach initiative to rekindled K-12 teachers who are not part of our BCA temple communities who may be interested in Buddhist approaches to edu-

In the wake of the tragic shooting in Parkland, Florida, and in response to the students’ and teachers’ call to action, Buddhism teaches us to be present and to be in charge of our well-being, to practice mindfulness in the moment. We are now offering a special “BCCA Collaboration 2 for 1 Rate” if you are interested in applying with your colleague. Contact CBE to discuss the details by June 1, 2017.

Please go online for application information including eligibility and financial aid at buddhistchurchesofamerica.org. The application deadline is June 1, 2017.

For more information, email cbe@bcahq.org or phone (510) 809-1460.

OUR JODO SHINSHU TRADITIONS
Incense Offering (Jpn. Gudo / Oshoko)

Walk up to the front of the altar and bow at a distance of about two steps in front of the Oshoko table. Step up to the table (starting with your left foot), and with the right hand take a pinch of powdered incense. Drop it into the incense burner, on top of the lit sticks of incense or charcoal. Goto and bow. Take a step backward (beginning with the right foot), bow and return to your seat.

Oshoko represents the acceptance of transitory and fulfillment in life.

(Excerpted from the pamphlet “A Guide to Buddhist Etiquette” by Rev. Lee Rosenthal, published by the Buddhist Churches of America Southern District Ministers’ Association with funding from the Southern District Council.) Visit YouTube.com and search “How to Offer Incense (Oshoko)” to view a video posted by the Golden Buddha Church.
How I of All People Got into a Tannishō Translation Workshop
By Diane Ames, Berkeley Buddhist Temple

I was not sure I wanted to go, as a workshop on Tannishō commenatual materials sounded very scholarly and I think that I have forgotten more classical Japanese than I ever knew. But my husband, who has a Ph.D. in Buddhist studies, thought that it sounded interesting, and we both went as observers with Dr. Blum’s permission.

The Tannishō Commenatual Workshop (March 25-27 at the Jodo Shishū Cen- ter) was indeed pretty scholarly. It turned out to be the first session of a five-year project organized by Dr. Mark Blum and sponsored by the University of California at Berkeley and the universities of Ryōkyō and Osaka, to translate for the first time some important com- menataries on this Shin Buddhist classic. A number of scholars and graduate students in the field having assembled for this purpose, we split into three groups, directed by Drs. Blum of UC Berkeley, Conway of Osaka, and Duke of Ryōkyō Uni- versity respectively. Each group was to begin translating a different com- menaty. My husband and I decided to stay in Dr. Blum’s group, whose task was to translate a commentary written by one Eien in 1662.

The first section of the com- menaty was kind of slowly, as Eien apparently felt obliged to define virtually every word in the prologue of the Tannishō. When the group kept coming to phrases that even Dr. Blum didn’t know, necessi- tating prolonged consultation of reference works to establish that it was the title of a long-forgotten Chinese dictionary Eien had used, I admit that I secretly considered flight. However, we eventually came to the part that I found most interest- ing, which was translating the Prologue of the Tannishō itself (as quoted by Eien).

Here I played an unexpected role, as I was the only person who had brought a couple of the most popular English translations. So when we got to, say, the first phrase, “Honka ni guan o megurashite,” Dr. Blum would ask, “What does Dennis Hirono’s translation have for ‘megurashite’?” And I would reply that in the back of Hirono’s book, it supposed to be a rather literal translation, he has “pondering,” making the whole phrase “pondering my foolish thoughts within myself alone,” while in his more literary translation in the front of the book, he has “within my foolish thoughts.” I would add that Tateshi Uno has “reflecting” and translates the whole phrase “in reflecting upon my foolish thoughts.” Then Dr. Blum would declare that neither translation completely satisfied him, so everybody would consult classical Japanese dictionaries and try to think of an appropriate translation for “megurashite.” My husband, who has made a five-hundred-page translation of a Bud- classical Japanese dictionaries and try to think of an appropriate translation for my foolish thoughts.” I would add that Taitetsu Unno has “reflecting” and translates alone,” while in his more literary translation in the front of the book, he has “within of Hirota’s book, which is supposed to be a rather literal translation, he has say, the first phrase, “Hisoka ni guan o megurashite,” Dr. Blum would ask, “What does Dennis Hirono’s translation have for ‘megurashite’?” And I would reply that in the back of Hirono’s book, it supposed to be a rather literal translation, he has “pondering,” making the whole phrase “pondering my foolish thoughts within myself alone,” while in his more literary translation in the front of the book, he has “within my foolish thoughts.” I would add that Tateshi Uno has “reflecting” and translates the whole phrase “in reflecting upon my foolish thoughts.” Then Dr. Blum would declare that neither translation completely satisfied him, so everybody would consult classical Japanese dictionaries and try to think of an appropriate translation for “megurashite.” My husband, who has made a five-hundred-page 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IBS Symposium Generates New Conversations
Interdependence/Intersectionality: Marginalization, Oppression, and American Buddhism

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「本願真実のみ教え」

フローリン仏教会
開教使 菅原 佑軌

如来興世の本意には 本願真実ひらきてぞ
難 値 難
見ととき
tまひ 猶霊瑞華としめしける」（『浄土和讃』54）（現代語訳）

釈尊がこの世にお生まれになった本意は、『華厳経』や『般若経』や『法華経』などの方便の教えではなく、第十八願の本願真実の教えを開き顕すためであった。この本願真実に遇い、信を得ることは、「難値難見」、三千年に一度しか咲かない霊瑞華のようなものである。今、遇いがたくして遇わせていただき、聞き難くして聞かせていただいたのである。（黒田覚忍（2009）『聖典セミナー 浄土和讃』、本願寺出版、p.207）

はやいものでもう五月ですね。「五月蝿い」と書いて「うるさい」と読みますが、確かにこの五月頃から蝿が活発に活動を始めます。お寺のキッチンでも秋田のなまはげの如く、「蝿はおらんかー」とハエタタキを持ちながら徘徊されておられる方を見る事もありますが、不殺生戒を守ることがいかに難しいかということを思い知らされる季節でもあります。

さて、「本願真実のみ教え」というのは迷いの世界から抜け出すものを何一つ持っていないこの私が、迷いの世界とは反対であるさとりの世界へといたらせていただく「まことの利益」を恵むみ教えであり、それは「必ず救う、われにまかせよ」という阿弥陀如来さまの第十八願、ご本願のお働きによります。この第十八願の一つ前、第十七願を親鸞聖人は「諸仏称揚の願」と名付けられました。これは諸々の仏さまがたが阿弥陀如来さまのことを褒め称えて、「南無阿弥陀仏」というお念仏を私たちにおススメしてくださっておられるという願いであります。このことを少し例え話で味あわせていただきたいと思いますけれども、みなさん、「スイカ割り」というのをご存知でしょうか。

スイカ割りというのは一人が目隠しをして、棒でスイカを割るというピニャータに似たシンプルなゲームです。今回は2チームに分かれた場合を想像していただきたいと思います。目隠しをされた状態で何のガイドもなくスイカを割ることは難しいですね。そのためにチームメイトが右だとか左だとかガイドをしてくれます。そしてチームメイト以外の人は適当なことを言ってスイカを割ろうとしている人を惑わします。

さて、これが本願真実のみ教えとどう関わっているのかということですけれども、まずチームメイト以外の人達は自分たちが勝つために目隠しされた人をスイカから遠ざけようとしています。ですから彼らは偽の教えを説く「邪道・外道」と呼ばれる人達です。よくこんな話を耳にしますね。この壷を買えばかならず幸せになりますとか、あなたに悪霊がついているからお払いをしなければならない。そのためにはこれだけのお布施をしてもらわないといけないという人達の話。このように私たちを真実から遠ざけ、適当なことをいって自分の私腹を肥やしているのが「邪道・外道」の人達です。これは「まことの利益を恵む」教えとは全く逆の教えです。

さて、この私たちというのは目隠しをされた人のようなものです。煩悩という目隠しをして生きている私たちですから何が真実か、がわからない。この人生をどう進んでいくべきかもわからない。そうであるにも関わらず、一生懸命に棒を自分勝手に振り回しているんです。危険ですね。煩悩で目隠しをされているのに一生懸命、自分で物事をコントロールしようとしているのが私たちであり、自分の力で真実へといたることが出来ると思っているのが私たちです。

では、煩悩によって目隠しされているこの私たちがスイカを割る、つまり迷いの世界から抜け出すにはどうしたら良いか。それは私を導いてくださる声に耳を傾けることです。たとえばチームメイトの一人が一生懸命「こっちへこい、こっちへこい、大丈夫だから私にまかせてこっちへこい」とスイカへと導いてくれるように、私たちを真実へと導いてくださっておられるのが阿弥陀如来さまです。このように「われに任せよ」と願われているのが阿弥陀如来さまのご本願のおこころです。

そして、残りのチームメイトが「その声にまかせれば大丈夫だぞ」、と呼びかけているように、私たちに「ご本願の呼び声におまかせしろよ」と呼びかけてくださっておられるのが諸々の仏さまたちであります。これは第十七願のおこころです。私たちは煩悩という目隠しをされていますから阿弥陀さまや諸仏のお姿はみることができない。しかし、その呼び声を聞くことはできます。それが「私に任せて、こっちへこい」という呼び声、「その声におまかせしろよ」という呼び声、「南無阿弥陀仏」という呼び声であります。

数年前にお浄土へと還られましたが、深川倫雄和上という和上さんがおられました。深川和上は「阿弥陀さまというのは、見える仏になったんじゃない、聞こえる仏になってくださった」などと言っているとおりです。我々は煩悩に眼を障えられて、見ることはできないけれども、この私を導こう、真実へと目覚めさせようとお働きは「南無阿弥陀仏」という呼び声となってくださったわけです。

さて、チームメイトの呼び声に対して「本当だろうか」という疑いの心を持って自分の思うように棒を振っていればスイカを割ることは出来ません。ですから、呼び声にただただおまかせしていくのです。「本当だろうか」という疑いの心、はからいのこころがなくなり、呼び声にただただおまかせしていく、おまかせしておけば大丈夫だ、というこころが浄土真宗でいうところの「信心」であります。

この呼び声におまかせしていけば、この眼が煩悩によってさえぎられたままでも必ず真実の世界へといたることが出来ますから、「本願真実のみ教え」は「まことの利益を恵む」教えであるわけです。この「まことの利益を恵む」教えに出遇うとどうなるかということが示されており、これが「浄土真宗の生活信条」であると私は味あわせていただいております。

「みほとけのめぐみをよろこび、互いに敬い助け合い、社会のために尽くします」とありますね。こうならなければいけない、というわけではありませんが、南無阿弥陀仏という呼び声に出遇わせていただくことによって、自分勝手に生きていた自分に気づかせていただき、他人を傷つけてばかりいた自分を反省して、互いに敬い、助け合っていくよう次第になっていく、それが念仏者の生き方ではないでしょうか。
4月下旬にIMOPが開講された。IMOPとはInternational Ministerial Orientation Programの略で、開教使を目指す日本人僧侶を対象とした養成プログラムである。2008年より開始され、浄土真宗センターの本願寺オフィスのもとで運営されている。...

生の二人は5月13日（土）に浄土真宗センターで催される春の聞法セミナーで法話をする予定。3月下旬に京都の本願寺で伝燈奉告法要が営まれ、北米、カナダ、ハワイの海外開教区から約240名が参加した。BCAAからは、ロサンゼルス別院、シアトル別院、オレンジ郡、ベニス、バークレー、アラメダ、マウンテンビューの各寺院の僧侶と門信徒、191名が参拝した。法要参拝後、各寺院は各自が開教使が引率するツアーに赴き、親鸞聖人ゆかりの地や観光名所をおとずれた。以下はオレンジ郡仏教会、ワンドラ睦開教使のレポート。

肌で感じた親鸞聖人旧跡巡りツアー

3月31日に本山にて行われた伝燈報告法要に参拝のあと、オレンジ、ビスタ、サンディエゴの門徒さんたちは、オレンジ郡仏教会の開教使ワンドラ師のプランのもと、親鸞聖人旧跡巡りの旅を楽しみました。一行は、京都をあとにバスに乗って、まずは親鸞聖人ご誕生地の日野の里の法界寺、続いて聖人が天台宗の慈円大師のもとで得度を受けられた青蓮院を参拝しました。青蓮院では聖人の髪の毛が植えられている珍しいお像がありました。京都の町を北東に向かって20年間の山のご修行をされた比叡山へ。山から吹き下ろす冷たい風を受けながら、一行は西塔にある常行三昧堂を見学しました。90日のあいだ、不断の念仏をさわったというお堂です。

4月4日には新潟県にある国府別院を参拝。親鸞聖人は1207年の念仏弾圧によって京都を離れ、奥さまの恵信尼さまとともに7年間、念仏の教えを説かれた土地です。日本海に面した居多ヶ浜にある見真堂でお勤めをして、恵信尼博物館を見学し、国府別院にもお参りしました。4月なのに道路には1メール近い雪が、また見上げる日本アルプスは雪化粧。親鸞聖人と恵信尼さまはこんなに厳しい気候のところで生活されていましたか？...と思いました。このあと、一行は長野の善光寺をお参りして、東京に到着。今年は一週間遅れの桜でしたが、上野公園は桜が満開でした。やっと見られた日本の桜。淡いピンク色の花びらが春の風に舞っています。10日間の旅は、時空を超えて親鸞聖人と恵信尼さまを肌で感じることができる素晴らしい旧跡巡りツアーとなりました。

総長メッセージ

米国仏教団総長 梅津廣道

五月になりました。五月といえば、親鸞聖人のお誕生をお祝いする降誕会（ごうたんえ）がお勤めされます。聖人は旧暦の四月一日にお生まれになったと伝えられています。それを新暦に直して、五月二十一日にお祝いをするのです。

親鸞聖人は浄土真宗を開いたとされているが、聖人は師匠である法然上人が浄土真宗の開祖であると言っております。私たちが素晴らしい教えにあうことができるのも、法然上人と親鸞聖人の出会いがあってのことです。

では、法然上人の教えとは一体どういうものでしょうか。親鸞聖人は法然上人から何を聞かれたのでしょうか。その教えは『選択本願念仏集』という書物に詳しく説かれています。その中の一部を紹介いたします。

（略）念仏は、ほかの行とちがって、誰にでもできる易しい行だからです。本願というのは、誰一人もらすことなく、すべての人を浄土に生まれさせようとするものですから、難しい行を差し置いて、易しい行として念仏を選んだのではないでしょうか。もし本願が、裕福でお寺や仏像を作ったり寄進することを条件としたら、そうでない人たちが浄土に生まれることはできませんし、その望みを捨てなければなりません。実際は、貧しい人の方が多いのです。もし本願が、智慧や知識をもつことを条件にしたら、知識を持てない人の方が多いのです。もしまた本願が、戒律を守ることを条件にしたら、戒律を守れない人は浄土に生まれることができませんし、その望みを捨てなければなりません。実際はそれができない人の方が多いのです。そして、ほかの行についても同じことが言えます。

こういうわけで、すべての人を救いたいという願いから、阿弥陀如来はいろいろな行を条件とした本願を建てなかったのです。たった一つ「我が名を称えよ」という本願を建てられたのです。

ところで、五月は母の日の月でもあります。子どもが母を「母さん」と呼ぶときに母は母となるのです。母の願いは子どもにとどき、子どもは母を呼ぶのです。一如の親は、すべての衆生の母であり、父であります。人間は、過去からの宿業で自分の殻をつくり、その中で右往左往しています。真実の親の呼び声は、人間の思いを超えた世界から呼びかけていてくださいます。人間の価値判断の世界に真実はありません。だから、念仏だけを選んで、称えてくれよとの願いがおこされたのです。

本当の自分、本当の親に出会えて親鸞聖人は念仏を申されたのです。一緒に真実の世界からの願いの呼び声を聞かせていただきましょう。