150 Attend EBL Conference on North American Buddhism

By Joy Fujishima Zavala, Midwest Buddhist Temple

The 2017 Eastern Buddhist League (EBL) Conference took place from September 1-3 with over 150 attendees gathering at the Midwest Buddhist Temple (MBT) in Chicago. The EBL Conference included a mix of participatory events from the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), Buddhist Temple of Chicago (BTC), and Toronto Buddhist Church. Ministers who attended included Rev. Ron Miyamura (MBT), Rev. Patt Nakai (BTC), Rev. Nariaki Hayashi (Ekoji Buddhist Temple), Rev. Earl Ikeda (New York Buddhist Church) and Rev. Kurt Rye (Placer Buddhist Church).

The 16th World Buddhist Women’s Convention (WBWC), a representatives’ meeting. Delegates, bishops, and ministers from Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha overseas districts, and Hongwanji administrations, met in San Francisco for the 16th World Buddhist Women’s Convention representatives’ meeting.

In 2019, the 16th World Buddhist Women’s Convention (WBWC) will be held on August 30 and September 1, at the Churches of Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Buddhist Women’s Associations will bring together several thousand women’s followers from around the world.

Preparing for the 2019 World Buddhist Women’s Convention

First Female U.S. Navy Reserve Buddhist Chaplain

As the oldest national Buddhist organization in America, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) serves as the official endorsing agent for Buddhist Chaplains who serve in the U.S. military and other federal agencies. On August 6, 2017, the U.S. Navy commissioned Lt. Saejeong Ishun Kim of the Won Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles as the first female Reserve Buddhist Chaplain.

Kim was born in Chicago and raised in Korea. Prior to becoming a Navy chaplain, Kim served as a Buddhist minister in the Won tradition in various capacities. This background that has given her a unique perspective in supporting and working with people of different faiths. Even though Lt. Kim is a Buddhist minister, she serves sailors and their families of any and all faiths.

“As a Reserve Navy chaplain, I can bring Buddhist spirituality to service members,” said Kim. “My expectations would also be to support Navy family members suffering from stress and intra-family differences,” she said in a recent Navy publication.

The BCA Office of the Bishop offers its congratulations and best wishes to Chaplain Kim as she embarks on a career of serving our nation and those who protect us throughout the world.
I really appreciate people, whether professionals or volunteers who work hard to help others, especially in cardiac care units such as we have been witnessing throughout the world these past few months. They respond to all emergencies, save people's lives, and maintain order.

In our spiritual realm, I deeply appreciate the rescue efforts of those who have already secured themselves in the shelter of the Dharma. Those human beings are filled with many stories that we can learn from. One that really touches me is a humble follower. It was on a Friday, when a woman was deeply inspired by the teaching of Rennyo Shonin (1415-1499) that he would like to share that he was touched by the story of a humble follower.

When I was in Japan more than 40 years ago, an elderly minister talked about an unforgettable episode when he was a little boy. Since then, his story has been unforgettable for me, too. I would like to share it with you because it is truly and deeply related to the working of the Dharma. His short story also indicates a serious mistake we make when we learn the Teaching.

One day his mother called him, gave him a basket, and said, “Go and get some water with this.” So he went to the water and scooped a couple of times, but he saw nothing left in the basket. He asked his mother and said, “Mom, I tried hard, but I could not get any water with the basket.” “Did you see any difference between before and after, my son?” she asked. “Well, the basket got wet.” “Answer that. Right, the basket just got wet,” she said. “You return from the Tama and get a bucket of water. When you put it in the water, you will see it full of water.”

Although he was young and could not understand what his mother said, he learned it in his mind for years. Later, after he studied Jodo Shinshu, he realized the true meaning of Bodhisattva Dharma. We should be mindful of the Dharma as our ultimate shelter or if we have no aspiration to be born into the Pure Land, it is not possible to develop our condition. Consequently, we must pay more attention to non-urgent matters in our lives and repeat the endless cycle of birth-and-death.

Rennyo Shonin (1415-1499) wrote in his letters to his followers that, because our life is fragile and impermanent, we must quickly understand the heart of the greatest importance of the afterlife, entrust ourselves deeply to Amida Buddha, and recite the nembutsu (from On the White Ashes).

Let us all think of Rennyo Shonin’s words as encouragement to put an urgent message for each of us to seek the Dharma. There is, after all, no utopia in this human world. We have been shown that our foolish activities cannot put the end to human suffering. It is through the Light of Wisdom from Nirvana that we can find the way to remove the roots of suffering.

It may seem ineffective to entrust ourselves to Amida Buddha, but Shinran Shonin discovered that this is the shortest and quickest route to peace and a Buddha. When we turn to the Compassionate Light of Wisdom, we realize the rescue efforts of Nirvana and are able to live this human life with deeper appreciation and joy.

The light of purity is without compare. When a person entrusts himself to Amida Buddha, all bonds of karma (the roots of suffering) fall away. So take refuge in Amida, the ultimate shelter (Collected Works of Shinran, p. 326).

As we welcome this Thanksgiving month, let us express our deepest appreciation to the rescue efforts of Nirvana reaching out and touching all beings.

The White River Buddhist Temple is first established as the Shrikawana (White River) Bukkoka in October 1912, and was incorporated as a branch of the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple in Seattle, the latter becoming independent in 1933. Through the 1930s the temple then prospered. However, during World War II, the temple was forced to close. The minister, church leaders, and most members were imprisoned at Tule Lake, Minidoka, and Heart Mountain. At the end of the war, many temple members chose not to return to the area. Those who did return were faced with the dismantling and theft of all items in the temple’s shrine.

Through the 1930s the temple thrived. However, during World War II, the temple was forced to close. The minister, church leaders, and most members were imprisoned at Tule Lake, Minidoka, and Heart Mountain. At the end of the war, many temple members chose not to return to the area. Those who did return were faced with the dismantling and theft of all items in the temple’s shrine.

In 1945 White River Buddhist Temple was without a resident minister for over 26 years. However, miracles took place. The temple was able to reassemble and restore its former self, and construction of a new church building began in 1963 and the temple was dedicated on September 13, 1964.

Today, the White River Buddhist Temple is a diverse community of people that enjoys living harmoniously with everyone.

By Rev. Kodo Umuzu, BCA Bishop

Ultimate Shelter

“Go and get some water with this, my son.”

By Rev. Doei Fuji, Tri-City Buddhist

Denver Buddhist

Temple

White River Buddhist Temple

3625 Auburn Way North

Auburn, WA 98002

Tel: (206) 833-1442

www.wrbt.org

office@wrbt.org

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3625 Auburn Way North

Auburn, WA 98002

Tel: (206) 833-1442

www.wrbt.org

office@wrbt.org

Buddhist Churches of America

BCA NOTICE: The BCA Bookstore at the Jodo Shinnshu Center is temporarily closed to walk-in traffic for this notification. You can order online by visiting bookstore.buddhicenterofamerica.org and clicking on the BCA Books button. The BCA Bookstore will also continue to serve our BCA temples, ministers, and members through book order assistance, contact Gayle Naguchi at gnaguchi@bcbh.org or call (510) 809-1435.
In Memoriam: Rev. Shodo Jim Yanagihara

By Ken Tamimoto, BCA President

As of October 15, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) has a new Administrative Officer (AO). Mrs. Gayle Noguchi is the Buddhist Churches of America’s new Administrative Officer. She is with BCA President Ken Tamimoto (left) and Steve Terusaki, former interim AO.

Gayle Noguchi (center) is the Buddhist Churches of America’s new Administrative Officer. She is with BCA President Ken Tamimoto (left) and Steve Terusaki, former interim AO.

The Buddhist Churches of America announces with deepest sympathy the passing of Gayle Noguchi Emeritus, Rev. Shodo Toyoyo “Jimmy” Yanagihara, 85, on September 19, 2017 in Fresno, California.

Rev. Yanagihara began his adult life as an x-ray tech before abandoning that career to become a BCA minister. He served for 29 years as a BCA minister at the Gardena, Watsonville, San Jose, and San Luis Obispo temples.

Rev. Yanagihara enjoyed his final years at the Vintage Gardens Assisted Living Community in Fresno. Family funeral services were held on October 28 at the Buddhist Church of Fowler. Rev. Yanagihara is survived by son Dale Michio (Boku) Yanagihara of Fresno, Pre-deceased by his wife, the late Patsy Harue and his siblings, brother Tom and sister Mari Tanizaki of San Diego.

By Ken Tamimoto, BCA President

Like the Buddhist Churches of America

President’s Message: Changing the Guard

By Rev. Nariaki Hayashi, Ekoji Buddhist Temple

What Are the Chances You Could Die in the Next Moment?

By Zensho Ron Nakano

What are the chances that you could die in the next moment? 100%? 50%? Less than 40%?

This question came to mind as a result of an experience I recently had. When I was driving back from Virginia via a trip, I witnessed a traffic accident.

A sports car suddenly cut off the truck driving in front of me. To avoid hitting the sports car, the truck swerved to the left, but the tires lost contact with the road. The truck flipped over at least three times. I could see the passenger side of the truck flip over and over. I pulled to the side to offer help. Fortunately, the passenger survived.

Now, I have a very scary and important experience. This is why I have a 100% chance of dying at any moment!

We often see traffic accidents, but we think they will not happen to us. In reality, an accident could happen to any of us at any time. And this brings me back to the question: “What are the chances that you could die in the next moment?”

The answer is that every one of us has the Administrative chance of dying at any moment.

Say you’re moving to a different lane and rely on something other than your side mirror. The same accident I saw might happen to you. Say you’re driving without enough distance between yourself and the car in front of you. One day you might crash into that car. Or say you cross the street in the middle of the block and not at the crosswalk. You could be hit by a car. There are all sorts of hidden dangers all the time. We must be conscious about the attitude we take when we ignore possible dangers and make poor decisions.

Is the life we live just our own? Our lives as parents include the lives of our children and spouse. Our lives as businesspeople or office workers include the lives of all our colleagues, clients, and customers. Even if one lives alone, one still has neighbors, friends, and relatives we are thinking about us.

When we are careless, we are forgetting about all the other people in our lives. We are overlooking everyone who depends on us. One aspect of our interdependence, which is fundamental in our Shin Buddhist tradition, is to realize the many lives we are connected with and how we affect each other in many ways.

We must learn, listen, and live not just for ourselves but also for others around us. Being mindful of this can change our way of living.

Namo Amida Butsu

Alameda Dento Hokoku Tour

By Zensho Ron Nakano

After serving as the resident minister at the Buddhist Temple of Alameda for more than 30 years, Rev. Zuikai and Shoyo Taniguchi led Alameda and other BCA temples on one final tour to Japan in early April 2017.

Beginning with a visit to our Tsukiji Hongwanji in Tokyo and the famed Tsukiji Fish Market next door, we then visited several temples associated with Shinran Shonin including Sainenji, Daikakuji, and Koshoji. We continued on to beautiful Kamakura to pay our respects at Koshoji. We continued on to beautiful Kamakura to pay our respects to the Great Buddha, who was crafted more than 900 years ago. Of course, we had to enjoy at least one enmaiz at Hakone where we could relax and wind down. While riding on the Bullet Train to Kyoto we were able to see Mt. Fuji’s peak through the clouds.

We paid our respects at Shinran’s memorial at Otani Hombuyo and then took part in the Dento Hokoku Hoyo services at our Nishi Hongwanji mother temple with several thousand Japanese, foreigners, and other BCA members. The ceremonies were full of pomp and pageantry. We were impressed to see the new Gomonsu’s children behaving so well throughout the service. Gomonsu’s five-year-old son Taka-shi-sama knew the rituals and chanted Shoshinge-fu mentally. What a great future Gomonsu! They are already growing!

After the service, we met with several members of the Hopo/Fukuoka Fujokai (Buddhist Women’s Association, or BWA), the sister district of our Bay District BWA. Then we visited the Takahayashi Butsu-gu Company, which beautifully restored our natioji (altar) for our temple’s centennial on September 24, 2016.

We continued our tour by visiting the Shinku-ji Buddhist Temple.

At Nishi Hongwanji with the Gosanraku Kojuji Ohtais (front row, center), BCA Bishop Rev. Kodo Umezu (on his left), and BCA President Ken Tamimoto (fourth from left).

The group enjoyed an early blooming sakura tree.
Ministers participating in the 2017 WEHOPE gathering at the Jodo Shinshu Center. Morning and evening service formats and style alternated between the Nishi and Higashi traditions, thereby introducing the distinct styles of chanting and religious practice to see another. Photo by Rev. Anan Hatanaka.

“…to freely share the truth of the BuddhaDharma…”

2017 WEHOPE Gathering

In 2015, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Center for Buddhist Education initiated a unique gathering called West and East Hongwanji Oversea Propagation Exchange, or WEHOPE. It brings together ministers from the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ja (Nishi Hongwanji) and the Shinshu Otani-ja (Higashi Honganji) traditions for several days of learning, discussion and sharing. Ministers from the BCA, Canada, Hawaii, and South American districts meet every other year for this event.

The 2017 WEHOPE gathering was held from September 26-28 at the Jodo Shinshu Center. Thirty-one ministers, including the bishops of the BCA, the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Temples of Canada, and the Higashi Honganji North America District, were in attendance.

This year’s educational highlight centered around learning about the Islamic faith. Imam Kashif Ahmad, Director of Religious and Social Services of North America District, were in attendance.

“I was very impressed by the topic of this retreat—to learn about Islam in order for us to be better allies of our Muslim friends and neighbors in our respective communities,” said Rev. Patti Nakai, Buddhist Temple of Chicago.

“WEHOPE is a demonstration of how we can work together as ordained ministers to enhance our knowledge and focus on a bright future,” said Rev. Anan Hatanaka.

“The two speakers were very articulate and went to extra lengths to dispel all misperceptions,” said Rev. Yoki Inoue, Motoo Buddhist Church.

“Thanks to the organizers for bringing us together,” said Rev. Toshihiko Tamaki, Seattle Buddhist Temple.

“With my Buddhist spiritual conscience, I cannot help but say ‘Namu Amida Butsu in nunnyo form’ for the food that sustains all life, and for Amida’s infinite compassion and wisdom that accepts us, just as we are.”

“Dharmathon” (a series of short Dharma talks) and spoke about various aspects of Shin Buddhism. During free time, participants had lively discussions about challenges, opportunities, and successful efforts in their local temples.

“I’m amazed at how similar the experiences were,” said Rev. Brian Froshek, Seattle Buddhist Temple. “Yes, just like us. So, I came upon this non-fiction book, The Wolf-Birds by Willow Dawson. It is a factual account of the symbiotic relationship between wolves and ravens in the dead of winter when food is scarce. The desperate need to find food to keep from starving to death is told with unaffected clarity. Being a picture book, the words are sparse and repetitive but very insistently, and the illustrations suggest the danger and violence of the hunt. Too stark for little ones, perhaps, but for our fourth grader and older children, it’s a fascinating, conscious-expanding look at reality in the animal world and how it relates to us.

“Deep in the wild winter wood…” a pack of hungry wolves hunt relentlessly for food. It’s a dangerous, life or death battle to stay alive, but they have no choice but to kill for it in their only means of survival. Two ravens, also hungry, lead the wolves to a food source, an injured buck. The buck runs frantically for his life, but he loses as the wolves overtake him. “In the wild winter wood…one animal’s life helps many others live.” Here we see the wolves and birds feast, then, saturated and content, they go their separate ways that they can carry the ravens to their nest and the wolves to their den. In the den a mother wolf and her pup wait. Read the story. What is your nutritive why?

Dharma Connection: This story is an example of interdependence. The ravens are hungry and cannot find food. The wolves are hungry but cannot find food either. Their mutual need is the cause of this interaction from which both parties benefit. To get what we need and respected, people must find the right way these animals must exist. Yet they kill not out of anger, greed, or ignorance, but because they are carnivores and require flesh to survive. To understand and accept this fact objectively, with no judgments, is Right View.

How about us? In Buddhism, we learn that to kill is one of the Five Evils from which we must abstain. However, just like the wolves, we cannot help but kill to eat, cannot help but take many lives, be they plant or animal, with every bite we take. With my Buddhist spiritual conscience, I cannot help but say ‘Namu Amida Butsu in human language for the food that sustains me and all life, and for Amida’s infinite compassion and wisdom that accepts us, just as we are.”

The Wolf-Birds by Willow Dawson. Hardcover, 40 pages. To view more ideas for sharing the Dharma with young people, visit bcdharma@buddhistchurches.org.

Save the Date: February 21-25, 2018
BCA Ministers Association and National Council Meeting
Together in Gassho
DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Sacramento, CA
Registration Materials were sent to temples in October

Enjoy over 80 Dharma talks and more on the BCA Center for Buddhist Education Channel

Hear the latest from the WEHOPE Dharmathon and the Summer Pacific Seminar. See ministers, lay leaders, scholars, and special guest speakers give a wide variety of presentations in English and Japanese.

Visit YouTube.com and search “BCA Center for Buddhist Education Channel” to view the many selections.

Contact CBE at cbe@bcabhq.org or (510) 809-1460

Making the Dharma Connection with Children’s Books

By Kiyo Masuda

Wolves and Ravens Make the Dharma Connection

A BCA School teacher mentioned that her fourth-grade grandson prefers non-fiction to fiction and stories about real animals, not personified ones. This inclination is not uncommon. As their worldview expands, children reach out to explore what is out there, finding out what they like and dismissing what they don’t like. Yes, just like us. So, I came upon this non-fiction book, The Wolf-Birds by Willow Dawson. It is a factual account of the symbiotic relationship between wolves and ravens in the dead of winter when food is scarce. The desperate need to find food to keep from starving to death is told with unaffected clarity. Being a picture book, the words are sparse and repetitive but very insistently, and the illustrations suggest the danger and violence of the hunt. Too stark for little ones, perhaps, but for our fourth-grader and older children, it’s a fascinating, conscious-expanding look at reality in the animal world and how it relates to us.

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San Diego Teens Start Walk to Feed the Hungry

By Sharon Sasaki, Buddhist Temple of San Diego

Shanga Teens are 6th-8th graders at the Buddhist Temple of San Diego, which belongs to the Jodo Shinshu school of Buddhism, the most popular form of Buddhism in Japan. Typically, our group helps with temple fundraisers (like our halloween trick or treat booth) and attends social mixers with sister Shin Buddhist temples. While seeking a form of community service to participate in this year, we stumbled upon an article in the newsletter of our Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), Wheel of Dharma. Reading about the “Walk to Feed the Hungry” fundraisers supported by sister temples in San Francisco, New York, and San Jose, we were inspired to start a walk ourselves. This was the community service activity we’d been looking for! In our privileged, sheltered lives in Southern California, we experience stress and pain, but we never have to worry about clean water, food, or the ability to go to school. Watching videos on the Buddhist Global Relief website, we learned about caring, compassionate groups and people around the world that would benefit from a fundraising walk. Why did we choose Buddhist Global Relief? With many people around the world hungry and in need, “doing something” as Buddhists was important to us. A walk was a perfect choice, an outdoor event for all ages and families. After reviewing photos of walks in other cities, we were a little concerned about scale, since our group comprised a total of ten youth. But we decided to forge ahead anyway. Small or large, we knew we could do something to make a difference!

We settled on April 30th in Liberty Station Park in San Diego. To publicize the event, we posted flyers and a sign-up sheet at the temple, made announcements during services, and e-mailed temple members. We made signs on neon poster boards so onlookers could understand our purpose, and our high school student organizer, Hailey Sasaki, produced T-shirts commemorating the event. Perfect weather shined the day of our walk, so our 27 intrepid participants were off to a great start. We started with a Dharma talk by our Minister’s Assistant, Laverne Imori. Laverne inspired us, helping us realize how lucky we were to be able to participate. Perhaps the young students would later think about this day as their start as engaged Buddhists. Our route was a 1.5 mile loop around the park. Since it was a lovely day, we had a great time walking and chatting while holding our signs. After the walk, we relaxed and enjoyed pizza and refreshments together. Best of all, with the support of our wonderful Sangha, we raised $987.86 for Buddhist Global Relief.

Here are some comments from participants:

“The Walk to Feed the Hungry was a great experience. It was fun to hang out with people from the temple, and to know that we were doing it for a good cause, too.” -- Ava Yamamoto, age 12

“The Walk to Feed the Hungry that the Sangha Teens organized was a fun, inspirational experience. It definitely made me think more about people who are not as fortunate as most, and motivated me to try to help those in need more often.” -- Zoe Yamamoto, age 14

“The Sangha Teens never cease to amaze us! Once they decided to do the walk, their organization, attention to detail, and thoughtfulness came through with each aspect on the day of the event. The signs, smiling faces, positive energy, and camaraderie in the air was infectious to everyone who participated. All of their hard work fell into place and it was nice that strangers took notice and gave support, while Kakushinni established the foundation and center from which to transmit his teachings for many generations.

The contributions of Eshinni and Kakushinni have had a lasting impact on Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Eshinni gave Shinran Shonin her complete dedication and support, while Kakushinni established the foundation and center from which to transmit his teachings for many generations.

(Based on the pamphlet “Eshinni and Kakushinni, Shinran Shonin’s Wife and Daughter, and the Beginnings of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha” by Rev. C. Myokei Himaka, published by the Buddhist Churches of America Southern District Association with funding from the Southern District Council. Part of an educational initiative by the Federation of Buddhist Women’s Associations.)

Eshinni’s life was serialized in the manga narrative, “Shinran Shonin’s Wife, Eshinni-sama” in Daijo magazine, published by the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha from January 2009 until March 2010. Illustration: Elderly Eshinni (above) and her daughter Kakushinni restle the Nembutsu.

JSCC August Workshop Connects with Pacific Seminar

This 2017 Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course (August Workshop (above) was combined with the Summer Pacific Seminar and the Minister’s Assistant Program (August 17-20). Seated front row center is Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop, Buddhist Churches of America, with guest speaker Rev. Al Hirakawa of the Lahaina Hongwanji Mission, Maui, Hawaii, on his right.

Comment from Melissa Opel, Minister’s Assistant, Spokane Buddhist Temple: The Summer Pacific Seminar, Minister’s Assistant Program, and Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course August Workshop was a very special event to attend, and I am so happy that I was able to be there. Meeting other Jodo Shinshu practitioners from around the world left me feeling the far-reaching grasp of Amitābha’s embrace. Even though I had to choose between the MA program and the JSCC August Workshop, there was plenty of opportunity to interact with all participants and build relationships. I truly do not feel like I missed out on anything. We have so much to learn from our global Sangha and I feel like I am still thinking on all that I learned.

OUR JODO SHINSHU TRADITIONS

Who Were Eshinni and Kakushinni?

Eshinni (1182-1268), was the daughter of a high-ranking samurai. She was reared and educated. Shinran Shonin and Eshinni were married around 1210 and lived in Echigo, where he had been exiled in the year 1207. Because Eshinni owned land, she and Shinran Shonin were able to overcome the hardships of the times and raise six children while he pursued his life’s mission of spreading the Nembutsu teaching imparted by Honen Shonin.

They moved to the Kanto area sometime between 1212 and 1219, and to Kyoto around 1233.

Their youngest child, Kakushinni (1224-1283) was nine or ten when they moved to Kyoto. Kakushinni married Hino Hirotsuna, a follower of Shinran Shonin, and in 1239 gave birth to a son, Kakue. Her husband died when Kakue was seven, and Kakushinni and Kakue returned to live with her parents.

Around 1254 it became necessary for Eshinni to return to Echigo to take care of her land and two orphaned grandchildren. Kakushinni cared for Shinran Shonin during his last years. Three years after he died, Kakushinni married Onomia Zennen, who owned valuable property in Kyoto.

In 1273, Shinran’s ashes were removed from their original interment site to Zennen’s estate. Some dedicated disciples of Shinran gave donations to build the Ancestral Hall, which is the nucleus of today’s Jodo Shinshu Hongwan-ji. In 1274, Zennen gave the property on which the Ancestral Hall stood to Kakushinni. He stipulated that she should decide whether his son (Yuzen) or stepson (Kakue) would inherit her land. However, Kakushinni went beyond tradition and decided instead that the land would be jointly owned by the disciples of Shinran Shonin. She also specified that the upkeep of the Ancestral Hall and the position of its protector, the Rusushiki, should be inherited by Shinran Shonin’s descendants. Kakushinni was the first Rusushiki and served until she passed away in 1283. Kakue succeeded her. His successor was his grandson, Kakunyo (1270-1351). He changed the role of the Rusushiki from caretaker to administrator. Today, the head of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwan-ji is known as the Marsho or Abbot.

The following article is from Helping Hands, Volume 9 Number 3 Fall 2017, the newsletter of Buddhist Global Relief. Reprinted with permission. To learn more, visit BuddhistGlobalRelief.org.
Friends of IBS Annual Giving Fund Raising
Meeting the WASC challenge:
Strengthening funding for scholarships and programs

Dear Friends,

The Institute of Buddhist Studies (IBS) that we enjoy today as has its foundations in the dream of Buddhist Churches of America pioneers. With roots tracing back to 1949, IBS was incorporated in 1966 as a graduate school and seminary for training Jodo Shinshu ministers here in the US, and now offers a range of graduate-level degree and certificate programs across the full breadth of the Buddhist tradition.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to you and all the dedicated supporters, teachers, leaders, and friends of the IBS, who have contributed thus far to help us move closer to fulfilling the IBS founders’ dream.

Most recently, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) recognized the IBS as a Candidate for Accreditation. This is a major organizational milestone for institutions of higher learning, and it is part of a complex process toward full accreditation. Working toward the goal of full accreditation, IBS must now focus on addressing WASC’s areas of concern. These include increasing IBS’s financial capacity in the areas of student scholarships; and on-going program funding.

Accordingly, the Friends of IBS Annual Giving Fund Raising programs has been expanded to reflect those priorities:

• Ministerial Student Scholarships
• Buddhist Chaplaincy and Buddhist Research Studies Student Scholarships

IBS in session: Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto, IBS Provost and Vice-President of Academic Affairs, teaches a class in Shii Buddhist Studies to scholars, including international exchange students.

• Institutional development gifts to support on-going IBS Programs.
• I invite you to be part of IBS’s next stage of development as a graduate school to further share the teaching of Jodo Shinshu and Buddhism to the world. Please join us in fulfilling the dream of our pioneers who laid the foundation for our religious tradition, particularly the first generation (Issetsu), who professed the importance of education.

Gassho (with palms together),
Seigen Yamaoka, Litt.D. Institute of Buddhist Studies Vice-President for Development

Buddhist Churches of America
Hoonko Service

10:00 a.m., on Sunday, December 3, 2017
at the Jodo Shinshu Center, Berkeley, California

Each and every temple observes the Hoon-ko service to express our deep appreciation to Shinran Shonin. It is a time to listen to the Nembutsu teaching that Shinran Shonin taught us 800 years ago. He is the person who clarified the essence of the Pure Land Way and shared it with all people.

This day he entered into Nirvana was January 16, 1263 (the 28th day of the 1st month of the second year of Kocho). The Hongwanji in Kyoto was January 16, 1263 (the 28th day of the 1st month of the 2nd year of Kocho). TheHongwanji in Kyoto observes Hoon-ko services for seven days, from January 10 to January 16 every year. Local temples observe theirs prior to the Hongwanji services so that members can attend the services held in Kyoto.

We, too, like to observe Hoon-ko before January 16 and encourage our members to attend the Hoon-ko services in Kyoto. This year, the BCA will be observing Hoon-ko at the Jodo-Shinshu Center on December 3, 2017; the day after our National Board meeting.

Next year the BCA will to hold our Hoon-ko service at our North American Hongwanji, also known as the Buddhist Church of San Francisco. Since our organization is said to be made up of people who revere Shinran Shonin and his teaching, we should remind ourselves that we would not be here without him and his teaching.

I would like to encourage everyone, especially the leaders of our organization, to attend the Hongwanji Hoon-ko at least once in your lifetime. It will be a very memorable experience and an opportunity to deepen your appreciation of the Nembutsu teaching.

Let’s Meet in Kyoto for HOONKO!

January 14-17, 2018
Escorted by Rev. Kodo Umzu, BCA Bishop

Join Rev. Kodo Umzu, Bishop of the Bud- dhist Churches of America, for a unique opportunity to express your gratitude and participate in Hoonko, Shinran Shonin’s Memorial Observance, at the Nishi Hongwanji, January 14-17, 2018. “Hoonko in Kyoto” involves attending the Hoonko Service with translation by Bishop Umzu, plus a special Hoonko commemorative vegetarian lunch within the historic Hongwanji Shin Chambers.

Afterwards you are free to stay on your own or return to the USA. Sign up by December 1. For further information, please contact: cbe@bcusa.org

I’m sure all of you are starting to shop for holiday gifts. Well, I’d like to introduce BOMBAS SOCKS to you. You may ask why am I introducing a company this month? Well, there are several reasons…

Bombas has a very simple and basic sales plan: Bombas Socks will donate one pair of socks for every pair that you purchase.

They have a unique mission, perhaps like the Buddhist Churches of America. The word “bombas” means “bumblebee” in Latin. Why this theme? According to their website, “Bees live in a hive and work together to make their world a better place.” Wouldn’t it be great if we had the same mission and focus in the USA?

They go on to say we’re all connected (sound familiar?) and “little improvements can add up to make a big difference.”

They’ve donated over four million pairs of good quality socks made especially for the homeless, in-need, and at-risk communities in the USA in two and a half years. What a wonderful gift and concept all aroundplus someonetakes a great pair of socks for their gift! I guess all my family and friends now know what they’re getting for Christmas and year-end gifts! Nam Man Da…
誕生日の法話

「今月の法話」

上月20日は私の誕生日です。皆さんから何かプレゼントをいただきたいから書いているわけではありませんが、もしプレゼントをされたいと思う方がいらっしゃったら、お待ちしています。今年で39歳になります。

すべての人に誕生日があります。それは、どこにいても、子どもでも、若かろうが中年になろうが、年をとったとしても、とても大切で特別な日です。誕生日を家族や友人と一緒に過ごされる人もいるでしょう。一人で静かに過ごされる人もいるでしょう。いずれにしても、誕生日は、自分がこの世に、いのちをいただいて生まれて、喜び、感謝する日です。それと同時に、自分の周りの多くの人に感謝する日でもあるように思います。何故なら私たちは、誰一人として、一人で生まれてきたわけではありませんし、自分ひとりの力で今まで大きくなって、今を生きているわけではないからです。

私たちは、両親を直接のご縁として、この世に生まれてきました。では、私の両親、父親と母親は、いつ生まれたでしょうか。年齢的には、私よりずっと年上ですが、仏教の縁起の思想から考えてみると、私の誕生日と、私の父親、母親の誕生日は同じです。どういうことかと言うと、私が生まれた瞬間に、私の両親は、それぞれ、私の父親、母親になったのです。そう考えると、私の誕生日は、私の両親が、私の父親、母親として生まれた誕生日でもあるのです。そして、私が生まれた日は、私の母親...ことを忘れてはならないでしょう。そして、ただ私が健康に育つように、自分の時間やお金、愛情を一心にかけ続けて育ててくれたのです。ですから、自分の誕生日をお祝いする時は、自分のことだけでなく、自分のお父さん、お母さんのことを思って、感謝しましょう。

そして、家族、友人、近所の人、お寺で出会う門徒さん、職場の同僚、その他数えきれない人やものに支えられて、私たちは今こうして、生きることができるのです。たとえ一人きりで部屋で過ごしている時でも、周りを見回してみてください。家族の写真、友達からいただいたクリスマスカード、親が残してくれた家具など、あるでしょう。一人でいても、目に見えなくても、私たちは数えきれない命のつながりの中に生かされているのです。そういった、私のいのちを支えるすべてのいのちに感謝する日が、誕生日であるように思います。

そして、私たちの人生には、あと二つ、とても大切な誕生日があると言われます。それに関して、ある詩を紹介します。今日は私の誕生日です。今も来る日も誕生日です。迷い離れる誕生日に出会うた誕生日に。生まれたときの阿弥陀仏に出会う時、阿弥陀さまのはたらきの出会う時、それは新しい生き方、新しいいのちをいただく誕生日なのです。つまりお念仏の人生は、その毎日が、仏さまの教えを喜び、自分のいのちに感謝し、嬉しいこと、ありがたいことに出会う誕生日になる、ということです。そして、この世の命を終える時も誕生日です。しかしそれは、いのちの終わりではなく、仏教では、「往生」と言われるように、阿弥陀さまのさとりの世界、お浄土に往き、仏という、新しいいのちとして生まれるのです。つまり、私の限られた命が、仏とう限りないいのちとして生まれる、誕生日なのです。

ご存知の方もいらっしゃると思いますが、私は今年いっぱいで開教使を退任し、広島の自坊へ帰ることになりました。2008年1月にロサンゼルス別院に赴任して2年半。その後、タコマ仏教会で7年半お世話になりました。あっという間の10年でした。赴任時はまだ独身でしたが、気づけば結婚し、二人の子どもの父となりました。皆さんとのご法縁をいただき、楽しく充実した開教使生活を送ることができました。アメリカでの経験、皆さんとの思い出は、一生の宝です。この場を借りて、心よりお礼を申しあげます。ありがとうございました。今後、場所は違っても、同じみ教え、阿弥陀さまのお心をいただく法友として、お念仏とともに生きていきましょう。またいつかどこかでお会いできる時を楽しみにしています。もしそれがかなわなくても、お浄土では必ずお会いします。
第二回WEHOPEの開催

秋の聞法セミナー

総長コラム

オレンジ郡仏教会 郷土

法輪のバックナンバーがBCAウェブサイトにて読めます。
http://buddhistchurchesofamerica.org/about-us/wheel-of-dharma