Three groups of Dharma seekers converged July 18-21 at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley to take part in this year’s annual Pacific Seminar sponsored by BCA Center for Buddhist Education and the Institute of Buddhist Studies to explore the topic, “What Is Enlightenment?”

The seminar brought together Minister’s Assistants, Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course students and interested Dharma seekers to listen and learn from special guest speakers from far and wide.

Headlining the list of eminent presenters was Rev. Dr. Jerome Ducor from Geneva, Switzerland, who received degrees from the University of Geneva and McGill University in Canada, received ordination from the Nishi Hongwanji in Kyoto and currently holds numerous positions as a Buddhist scholar and minister in Europe.

In a slight variation on the main theme of the Pacific Seminar (“What is Enlightenment?”), Dr. Ducor addressed the topic of “Shinran’s View of Enlightenment!” He first explained that Shakyamuni Buddha’s main focus was to deliverance or transcendence from life’s samsara (“difficulties, frustrations, angst, disappointments, and yes, suffering”). To that end, he formulated the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path of the Noble as a way to eliminate the causes of dukkha.

For Shinran, “enlightenment” has the deeper and more experienced connotations of “awakening,” whereby the foolish being, trapped in samsara, transcends suffering and “awakens from the long night of ignorance” to see Amida as the manifestation of reality, embodying the truths of impermanence and dependent co-arising, and, at what Dr. Ducor calls, “interpenetration” — everything is connected. As we recognize reality ever more clearly, we awaken to the working of compassion and wisdom and recognize it as Amida and Namo Amida Butsu.

The afternoon session consisted of presentations on the main theme by three eminent speakers from the Zen, Theravada and Vajrayana (Tibetan) traditions. Dr. Paula Arai, professor from Louisiana State University, presented Soto Zen perspective, which focused on gyobutsu or “acting like a Buddha.” According to Dr. Arai, “everything can be Buddhist activity,” and illustrated the point with an engaging story about wiping a table top with a rag. Soto Zen strives for zoro; total dynamic movement in non-hierarchical engagement, which seemed to mean acting with complete awareness, i.e., mindfulness. For Zen, “practice is enlightenment.” Cleaning a table with engagement and respect, you are enlightenment, and the rag is your teacher.

Venerable Bhikkhuni Thathalo Theri is an American-born member of the Theravada Buddhist Sangha who entered monastic life 30 years ago. With a gentle warmth that bespoke a deep commitment to the Dharma, she illustrated how they help us awaken to the working of compassion and wisdom and recognize it as Amida and Namo Amida Butsu.

Ms. Kodani explained that “it is possible, both gradually and suddenly, to have a vision of nibbana, and to realize it for oneself both in this life and at the time of death…”

Ministers’ Summer Seminar Held in Oregon

The annual BCA Ministers’ Summer Seminar (Fukan) was hosted by the Northwest Ministers Association and held Aug. 6-8 at the Oregon Buddhist Temple. This year’s keynote lecturer was respected Professor Emeritus Rev. Ryuyei Takeda of Ryukoku University.

Participating in this year’s seminar were 36 BCA resident ministers, one Kyosho and five Tokudo ministers, as well as Revs. Shindo Nishiyama and Yoshinichi Ouchi from the Canada Kyodan. A meeting of the BCA Ministers Association was also held during the seminar. This year’s seminar fell on the anniversary dates of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. During his lectures, Rev. Takeda shared his own experiences of experiencing the terrible bombing in Hiroshima as a small child. Rinban Katsumi Kusumono of the Seattle Bet-su-in, whose own father was a “hibakusha” (“atomic bomb victims”) and activist led the ministers in a moment of silence and reflection in memory of all the victims of the atomic bombs.

Next year’s seminar will be held with the World Buddhist Women’s Convention in San Francisco over the Labor Day weekend. It will be coordinated by the Mountain States District Ministers.

Pacific Seminar Offers Triple Opportunity

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The Song of Life

By Takeuchi Mariya

Living in Southern California, we know about traffic jams. When my 40-minute driving commute is smooth, I am super lucky! During my commute, I am often inspired by wonderful songs. Last week, I enjoyed listening to CD music, thinking about ideas for my next Dharma message, and planning the day, or reflecting on my day on the way home.

Just recently, I listened to the song titled "The Song of Life," composed and sung by Mariya Takeuchi. She became very popular after I left Japan in 1981. Even now, she is one of the best J-pop singers, and she is married to the singer songwriter Tatsuro Yamashita. Let me share her song, "The Song of Life," with you.

"The Song of Life (Iucho no Uta)

Well, here we are, living the same old ho-hum life, day after day.

But when I stop to ask myself, "Hey, what's all about?" I find myself experiencing this warm feeling rising up from deep within.

As I think of all the really wonderful people I've met up to this point in my life, Don't we stop and ask ourselves at least once in our lives, "What is my life? What does it mean to me?"

Our great teacher, Shinran, also thought about this during the 12th century in Japan. He realized the inconceivable working of the Buddha-Dharma to guide him to the supreme awakening (Parinirvana). The way to get there is to have mutual trust with Amida Buddha by hearing and receiving the Buddha's sincere vows of spiritual liberation. Jodo Shinshu or Shin Buddhism teaches us how we can live fully in this one lifetime. Even if we are facing difficulties in our daily life, don't we stop and ask ourselves, "What is the preciousness of life and her deep gratitude to have known the Buddha-Dharma. Hana Amida Butsu."

I just gave up completely.

At those times I'd think of you by my side. You were always there for me when I needed you.

I'd remember the good old days when we would cuddle up.

And watch the sun set in our old hometown as we sang the song of life.

Every time I now have to say sayonara and bye-bye.

To this rocky star we're living on.

There are times when everyone has to leave.

Yes, there are occasions when we are really sad.

But, as everyone has to leave, we have to come together.

In this world where we grew up, there were all the good times we've had with everyone we've met.

And after all our life, we now have to say thanks and bid a fond farewell.

Thank you, dear Life, for everything and a fond farewell to you, we say, as we sing the song of life.

You can hear this song in Japanese on YouTube. It expresses the preciousness of life and her deep gratitude to have known family and friends in this life.

Don't we stop and ask ourselves at least once in our lives, "What is my life? What does it mean to me?"

The Buddha and help create a better society and community.

With the warm compassion of everyone in chanting.

With their curriculum and among their programs.

We often talk about the positive outcome of the program.

That is the wisdom that we human beings can learn from social activities of education, sharing stories, as well as Japanese cultural activities of tea ceremony, taiko drumming, and Japanese Buddha's teachings of life.

That is the wisdom that we human beings can learn from adverse situations. You can deeply accept and turn your life around. That is the wisdom that we human beings can learn from adverse situations.

DAIMONJI YAKYOU

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

The classes were taught by some temple members who volunteered their time and skills, and the school program was overseen by a temple member who was chosen by a middle school principal. At the end of the four-week program, a closing reception was held for the students and their families, at which the students were able to share what they learned from their parents. The students performed taiko and odori, as well as conducted a group presentation. Often, they led everyone in chanting.

I was very impressed with their curriculum and the positive outcome of the program.

The editors may ask for longer articles, but the articles should be around 500 words.

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The editors may ask for longer articles, but the articles should be around 500 words.
Kakuryo Nishijima came from San Francisco immigrants were from pre-region. Fresno was first settled by suin Temple is intertwined with the temple. Therefore, our Nikkei heritage (I include myself and all of us who may not be of Japanese descent) is our joy to be honored. It is, your religious teachings for which we should exist, for ourselves and all beings. How do we sustain our Shin Buddhism in Japan? We are the keepers and the trustees of that wish. We must work to put aside our differences. It is the teachings of Shinnoshin that hang in the balance. We must focus on this all-important and positive narrative.

As lay members of BCA’s National Board of Directors, we are responsible for ensuring the well-being and welfare of our ministers who have chosen to serve us. They are not employees or workers to sell or straighten out. They are our ministers, our friends, and our elders. Many of you have financially supported both BCA and Bisha in the past, and I ask each of you to do so now. Encourage others to join you! Urge them to do so.

I ask each of you to return home to your districts and temples with this positive story. We are the vanguard of all those who came before us to preserve and propagate our Jodo Shinshu teachings, which are the true essence of BCA.

Together we can accomplish great things. As an old proverb says: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”

Kodo Umezu has guided CBE almost since its inception and has grounded it in the solid earth of our Shin Buddhist teachings. We need to support the work of BCA by our votes and funding, and by our wallets! Many of you have financially supported both BCA and Bisha in the past, and I ask each of you to do so now. Encourage others to join you! Urge them to do so.

With the last bite of my hot dog, consider again, which voice is the real you? And with that, I will sign off. I am reminded of Sunday Service. Chanting together is what I appreciate about Buddhism. Chanting together is the blend of voices that provides a calming, soothing groundedness that makes my day. We need and seek that grounding connection, causing us to return. When we chant, there are two voices. One voice is engaged in chanting the sutra. The other voice emerges around line three, and looks around the Hondo and plans what we should do for lunch and the rest of the day. Which voice is the real you? The second voice is the one we recognize. It is the voice we hear first thing in the morning and the last thing we hear at night. Clearly, that is the voice of the me I know. It is the voice of our ego controlling, planning, calculating our every move. We trust that voice because we know that voice. What if the first voice is ever hidden and that voice will be the second was the real you and the real me? Just by chanting, we are giving the first voice priority and status over the second voice. The ego voice is second fiddle! When does that ever happen? A huge role reversal as the ego voice does everything it can be in power and in control of every situation. In defiant revolt, the ego voice does all it can to re-gain control. Let’s not chant anymore! I don’t understand the sounds! It’s a waste of time! Let’s chant in English so it can control how it goes and what it means! Let’s not go to church at all! The first voice, in its duty of chanting, is connected to the other voices in the room. This first voice is connected to the Dharma. The first voice is connected to the infinite past, the infinite future.

The first voice is connected to Amida. It is the voice that entones the Nembutsu when it finally gets to mean something true and real … connecting self to other … connecting I to all … dissolving divisions and separation. With the last bite of my hot dog, consider again, which voice is the real you and the real me?

Help Us Preserve Our Shin Buddhist Teachings

Shopping and Chanting Diary of a Costco Monk

By Richard A. Stambul
BCA President

By Rev. Dennis Fujimoto
Betsuin Temple of Alameda

On June 2, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) National Board Meeting began as a part of the Buddhist Cultural Center in Berkeley, California. Bishop Kodo Umezu’s Dharma talk urged a path for&BCA’s propagation to be grounded in the teachings of Shinran Shonin. I then adopted a similar tone and approach, which had been proposed before. For eight years, the historic narrative as follows:

“I appeal to each of you, I urge you as members of this National Board, as Shin Buddhism, as human beings, to embrace a positive narrative in your life. That includes the mission and the vision of BCA.”

BCA and its predecessors began in America 119 years ago. It has received support and guidance from many persons. Reflecting for a moment on the first Kakeioki ministers who landed on our shores in 1859, and on our founders, ministers, teachers, leaders, and friends, we all agree that BCA can provide a foundation for the propagation of Shin Buddhism.

We are the keepers and the trustees of that wish. We must work to put aside our differences. It is the teachings of Shinnoshin that hang in the balance. We must focus on this all-important and positive narrative.

As lay members of BCA’s National Board of Directors, we are responsible for ensuring the well-being and welfare of our ministers who have chosen to serve us. They are not employees or workers to sell or straighten out. They are our ministers, our friends, and our elders. Many of you have financially supported both BCA and BCA in the past, and I ask each of you to do so now. Encourage others to join you! Urge them to do so.

I ask each of you to return home to your districts and temples with this positive story. We are the vanguard of all those who came before us to preserve and propagate our Jodo Shinshu teachings, which are the true essence of BCA.

Together we can accomplish great things. As an old proverb says: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” Join me in this noble quest.

With Sale, Fresno Betsuin Embarks on New Chapter

Capping nearly a century of Buddhist celebrations -- including weekly services, funerals, as well as memorial and weekly services -- the final, emotional and heartwarming “Farewell Service” was held Aug. 4 in the 1340 Kern Street Hondo, and was conducted by Rinban Kakei Nakagawa. For eight years, the historic temple was up for sale and received a number of offers. But the final, accepted offer was made with need and calm overriding greed, anger and ignorance. We scurry through the aisles with our giant shopping carts. Only the best samples are tasted twice as hors d’oeuvres before lunch. Ringing through the aisles, I am made aware of the incessant voice of me planning every move from the moment I turn in to the store.

I am reminded of Sunday Service. Chanting together is what I appreciate about Buddhism. We are the keepers and the trustees of that wish. We must work to put aside our differences. It is the teachings of Shinnoshin that hang in the balance. We must focus on this all-important and positive narrative.

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The 16th World Buddhist Women’s Convention (WBWC) will be held August 30 through September 1, 2019 at the San Francisco Marriott Marquis in San Francisco, California. Approximately 2,000 women and men of many generations are anticipated to gather from Japan, Canada, Brazil, Hawaii, and throughout the US mainland to explore and experience the Convention theme: “Live the Nembutsu.”

The WBWC is an opportunity for Jodo Shinshu followers to gather together on an international level; meet new people, learn together, and spread the circle of Dharma followers today and for generations to come. Originally, the Convention was for women only; but over the years it has welcomed all, men and women, in the Jodo Shinshu teachings through how they lived.

Several weeks ago I received the June issue of the Wheel of Dharma and on page 2 was an article titled, “World Jodo Shinshu Leaders Meet.” It was not at all difficult to see that the Shin “leaders” sitting around the table (Representatives and Bishops from Kyoto, Hawaii, Canada, So. America and the US) were all men.

We can talk all we want about our declining membership, outreach, etc., but if we don’t walk the talk of our Shin teaching which is rooted in equality, and in governance. For when that happens, rather than perpetuating the current contradiction between our teaching and our institutions that privilege men over women, we will finally be living the Nembutsu.

My wish and aspiration for the future of BCA is the following:

May we live to see the day when women participate equally and fully in all aspects of our organization’s leadership – nationally and locally, religiously and in governance. For when that happens, rather than perpetuating the current contradiction between our teaching and our institutions that privilege men over women, we will finally be actualizing / bringing to reality our profound and beautiful teaching, . and its vision. Namo Amida Butsu.
Inside the time capsule was a letter written by eight-year old Yuki Sugahara, who in time would become our sensei. The letter expressed his memories of being 2018, after a brief ceremony and family memorial service, the members of our tour and Korinji Temple members shared the honor of opening the time capsule.

The Korinji Temple is currently served by Rev. Toshiki Sugahara, who was educated about the history, culture, values, the teachings of the Buddha, and about each other as well. The sights, sounds, and heart of Japan will always be within our hearts.

Another tour highlight was the opening of the Korinji Temple’s 30th anniversary time capsule on the grounds to commemorate its 350th Year Anniversary. We visited Hokkaido, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Tokyo, and Rev. Sugahara’s hometown Shinran studied in his early years before hearing the Nembutsu. We also visited the historic and venerable Mt. Hiei, where Shinran’s remains are interred. We also visited the historic and venerable Mt. Hiei, where Shinran’s remains are interred. We also visited the historic and venerable Mt. Hiei, where Shinran’s remains are interred. We also visited the historic and venerable Mt. Hiei, where Shinran’s remains are interred. We also visited the historic and venerable Mt. Hiei, where Shinran’s remains are interred.

In June, Oregon Buddhist Temple’s Rev. Yuki Sugahara led a tour to Japan with members from his temple and the Buddhist Church of Florin. We visited Hokkaido, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Tokyo, and Rev. Sugahara’s family temple, Korinji, in Oda City, Shimane prefecture.

We had a wonderful tour. One of the highlights included attending the 6:00 a.m. hour-long service at the Nishi Hongoji Temple in Kyoto. We paid our respects to Shinran Shonin at the Omote Hombyo where his remains are interred. We also visited the historic and venerable Mr. Hiei, where Shinran studied before his early hearing the Nembutsu teachings from Honen Shonin.

Another tour highlight was the opening of the Korinji Temple’s 30-year-old time capsule.

The Korinji Temple is currently served by Rev. Toshiki Sugahara, Rev. Yuki Sugahara’s father. In 1988, members of the temple buried a time capsule on the grounds to commemorate its 350th Year Anniversary and a visit by Gomonsu Koshin Ohtani. Thirty years later on June 23, 2018, after a brief ceremony and family memorial service, the members of our tour and Korinji Temple members shared the honor of opening the time capsule.

Inside the time capsule was a letter written by eight-year old Yuki Sugahara, who in time would become our sensei. The letter expressed his memories of being 2018, after a brief ceremony and family memorial service, the members of our tour and Korinji Temple members shared the honor of opening the time capsule.

If you would like to donate, please contact Karen Suyama at karen.suyama@wbwconvention.org.
Daruma no Gakko, a program that began in 1978 by Teresa Ono and Laura Inouye and is one of the oldest continuing programs founded by Japanese Americans who were mostly members of the Berkeley Buddhist Temple, recently celebrated its 40th year.

The idea for Daruma no Gakko began to form in 1978 with 10 Japanese American women who were concerned about the richness and strength of their Japanese cultural heritage and wanted to develop their self-esteem as Japanese Americans. They established a curriculum taught by credentialed teachers to help build strong,clean, solid self-images and identities while learning about Japanese American history. The program draws students from mainly Berkeley, Oakland, El Cerrito and Alameda. But other students come as far as San Jose, Larkspur, New York and Washington state.

“Daruma no Gakko was an amazing experience from the lifelong friends I made to the Japanese American culture I embraced,” said Riley Togashi, 17, who will be attending UC Berkeley as a freshman. “As a student, I gained a great sense of pride for my heritage and as a program aide, I gained valuable leadership experience. The program has had a lasting impact on my life and I am fortunate to be part of such a fantastic program.”

Berkeley temple temple sponsor Lorin Kagehiro, attended the program during the early 1990s and reflected on the program’s impact on her. “Daruma no Gakko is a special place, and I am so lucky to have had the privilege to be a part of it,” Kagehiro said. “In those summer weeks, my classmates and I learned about our cultural tradition, culminating in a spotlight on a female impersonator of Japanese Americans during World War II. I still remember interviewing my grandparents about their experiences, never realizing how precious those conversations would be to me today.”

“Many years later, my memory of participating in the sixth-grade evacuation simulation is so clear,” Kagehiro continued. “How could I possibly pack my life into one small suitcase? The lessons about what was lost, how our grandparents made joy out of desert dust, and how the community glasses are treasures I carry with me.”

“Daruma no Gakko, which ran from July 13 to July 13, commemorated its 40th anniversary with a Undokai (sports day) June 23 at Canyon Trail Park in El Cerrito. In addition, a crowd of about 300 people attended the Gakugeikai (end of year program) July 13 at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in Berkeley. The event featured a performance by all of this year’s students singing Japanese songs.”

Daruma no Gakko had a wonderful 40th anniversary session,” said Stacy Uyeda, who taught this year’s sixth-graders. “The co-directors and the board worked hard to incorporate the specialties of the保修 with all the tried-and-true traditions of our Nikkei heritage program.”

In July, Kono, another founding member from the Berkeley temple, was appreciative of the contributions from students, parents and alumni.

“We are so proud and grateful to the generations of families who have kept Daruma-no Gakko going for 40 years,” Kono said. For more information about Daruma no Gakko, go to daruma-no-gakko.org.

**POSTSCRIPT:**

On Oct. 6, world-renowned drummer Akira Tana, son of the late Rev. and Mrs. Daisho Tana, will perform with his band called “Otonowa” (“Sound Circle”) at the Mitchell Park Community Center in Los Altos, Ca., to raise funds for the “Tohoku Tsunami Relief Benefit Concert” to raise funds for those Tohoku victims with the hope of never having to experience this kind of natural disaster ever again.

Seven years after this disaster, there are still more than 100,000 displaced people, many in temporary housing or having to live with relatives and friends. Sadly, I wouldn’t know how to live the same all over. The needs of these displaced survivors and cleaning up the nuclear power plant mess are no longer a priority. But in the United States, the people of New Orleans are still dealing with the aftermath of the Katrina hurricane from 2005. How sad, how sad.

I am pitching my house in the “Great Rim of Fire and the Big One is definitely coming again … it’s only a matter of time. I purchased my house on Chabot Drive in 1989 and the viewpoint of the San Andreas Fault, thinking I would be safe from earthquakes. But wouldn’t you know it that I later learned that an earthquake spurs runs only one block away from my house. It’s only a matter of time.”

We in the San Francisco Bay Area all know the Big One is coming, but somehow it seems not to have come.

How many of you have a sturdy pair of shoes sitting besides your bed in case of an earthquake or house fire, you will need to run outside as quickly as possible. How are you going to look for your vehicles in the dark? Did you ever think that there will be broken glass and other dangers when you run through the house in your bare feet in such an emergency?

Unfortunately, I live in the life in the Northern California region that what will inevitably come for me BUT in the same breath, I must admit that I do not believe the “Big One” is on the horizon, but in this reality certain is my departure from this saba world.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

For more information, please contact Toshokuharaarts@gmail.com.
山東寺開教使
藤井 道栄
日曜日のお参りの時だった。「先生、あの人がキッチンにまだいます。始めるのを少し待ってあげてください」という。その人が4、5分も遅れて本堂に入って来た。「遅くなってすいませんでした。実はお数珠を探していたのですが、やっと見つけました」と安心顔でいう。その人は「お参りには必ずお数珠がいる」と思い込んでいたのだろう。法が先で聴聞が先である。「お参りにお数珠なんて、あっても無くてもいいのにねー。そこで私は次のよ...、ひもが切れてバラバラになったり、と今まで多くの数珠を失いました。どうしてそう多くを失ったかと言えば、お数珠を持っていたからです。持っていなければ、失うこともないのですから、安心ですよ。皆さん、そう思いませんか」というと皆が笑った。笑いごとではないのですよ。

冗談に聞こえますが、これミダの心のことを言っているのですよ。またある時、白髪のご婦人が来て言った。「先生、私は長らくお参りしておりますが、何もはっきりしたものを得ておりません。何もわかっておりません。心中はモヤモヤしたもので一杯です。これから私はどうしたら良いのですか」と真剣に問う。その人は心中にはっきりとしたものが無いという。「これでもう大丈夫だと思える確かなものを得たい」、「はっきりとしたものを得たい」「心をすっきりとさせたい」等と願うのが凡夫の心です。ですが、この思いこそがミダの世界を開く鍵となるのです。「この魚は大海にいた。この魚が生きている時には身は塩辛くなかった。だが、この魚が死んでから塩に漬けるとすぐに塩辛い味になる」と念仏者はいう。何のことだろうか？彼は阿弥陀仏の世界を短く語っているのです。ミダ法(真実)の中で「自分をどこまでも良しとし頼る心念」が生きている間には法が身に沁み込むことはない。だが、その心が死ぬと法が直ぐに身に沁み込んで法味となる。私たちはミダ法の中にすでにいるのだが、己を良しとする心がある間はミダ法がしみこまない。この心が死ねばミダ法はしみこむ。「これで大丈夫だ」と思えるようなはっきりとしたものを願う心は迷い心で、この心が威張っている間はミダ法はしみこまない。機(衆生)の心の上に確かなものを求めることはいらないのです。なぜならミダ法はそのように出来上がっていて、そのように働くからなのです。さらに、「貴方はどのようにしてミダの世界を聞き開きましたか」との質問に念仏者は次のように答えている。「自分に一つでも良き心があれば、それにとらわれて惑うのですが、一善も無いと気付いた時、ミダの世界が開けていました。二乗や実無とされる程の妙法を求めて、幾多の難を突き破り、無上法を求めていきました。ようやく無上法を手にした時、彼は阿弥陀仏の世界を短く語っているのです。ミダの無量なる働きとはどのような働きなのか？ミダの世界とはどのような世界か？これらに答えているのが「本願・念仏」なのです。
8月7日から9日の3日間、開教使布教研究会および開教使会議が開催され、開教使46名が参加した。西北部教区の主催でオレゴン州ポートランド市、ユニバーシティプレースホテルが会場。テーマは浄土論註で龍谷大学名誉教授の武田龍精師を講師に招き、曇鸞大師の浄土教思想を学んだ。参加者は「論註の内容は難解でしたが、他力など親鸞聖人のみ教えの根幹をなす思想が書かれてあるので、また注意深く読んでみようと思います。」と意義深い講義となった。質疑応答では、師の幼少時の広島での被爆体験を話すこととなり、「長崎の原爆の日に貴重なお話しを聞くことができました。」と参加者が平和を念ずるおかげになることとなった。講義前のサービスでは通常、重誓偈や讃仏偈などの偈文がおつとめされていたが、今回はそれらの偈文の出拠となる大無量寿経上巻を読経。多くの開教使が喜んでおつとめをし、好評のサービスとなった。開教使会議では開教使アシスタントの役割や将来のBCA像に関しての話し合いが行われ、それぞれ意見交換をした。次回は山中部教区の主催となるが、世界仏教婦人会大会がサンフランシスコで開催されることにあわせ、同時期にベイエリアで布教研究会を行う予定にしている。

ヨーロッパ真宗会議は2年に1回開催されており、ヨーロッパ各国の浄土真宗僧侶、門信徒、学者らが、学術論文や伝道活動の発表を行っている。日本からもIABC(国際仏教文化協会)関係者で主に真宗系大学教授が参加する。今回は海外開教に積極的に関心をよせられる大谷光真前門主、前裏方ご夫妻もご臨席された。会場地となったサウサンプトン市には聴聞ハウスという真宗寺院があり、会場は寺院に近いソレント大学。会議のテーマは21世紀の浄土真宗で、イギリス、ドイツ、ルーマニア、日本、ブラジル、米国の参加者がプレゼンテーションを行った。BCAからは、桑原浄信開教使が「北米の浄土真宗における一如(ワンネス)の考察」、スタンブル・リック理事長が「BCAにおける社会問題への取り組み」を発表し注目された。BCAの参加者は「ヨーロッパの念仏者の方々から、念仏の教えを知りたいという真剣な熱意を感じました。私も聴聞や教学の研鑽にはげみたいと思います。」と世界に弘がる親鸞聖人の教えを目の当たりにし、よい刺激をうけていた。

夏休みに各寺院で小中学生を対象としたサマースクールが行われた。寺院によって、さまざまなプログラムが用意されており、門信徒や近隣住民の子供たちが寺院に集っている。中でも、シアトル別院、サンマテオ仏教会、ガーデナ仏教会、ロサンゼルス別院と洗心仏教の合同スクール、は仏教を中心としたプログラムを重視し、将来のBCAを担う子供たちを育成している。