



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Buddhist Churches of America

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I am honored to join together with all of you...with the Northwest District of the Buddhist Churches of America, to celebrate the theme of this conference, "Compassion, Gratitude, Community." Each of these notions, compassion, gratitude, and community, is simple, yet complex, subtle but direct.

Compassion includes empathy, kindness, sensitivity, and love. Gratitude involves thankfulness, a readiness to show appreciation, a return of kindness. Community involves a feeling of fellowship with others, often as a result of sharing common attitudes, goals or religious beliefs. Where does compassion come from? Where is gratitude to be found? And community? Where can we find these things?

This reminds me of a Dharma lesson I learned from Rev. Marvin Harada - compassion, gratitude, and community are not things we can find outside of ourselves. Instead, he offers, they are attributes that we can discover within ourselves.

The Buddhist Churches of America began 120 years ago in 1899. Since then, we have joined with BCA's 60 member temples across the United States to propagate our teachings and preserve our Shin Buddhist teachings for our children, our grandchildren, and for future generations. Join me in keeping this wish alive, and energizing it at this Northwest District Conference.

We come together at this Conference with a commitment to Shin Buddhism in America. Join me in dedicating ourselves to spreading the teachings of Shinran Shonin to the world. Namo Amida Butsu.

In Gassho,
Richard A. Stambul, President
Buddhist Churches of America