Thanks to everyone who submitted responses to the Sangha Survey and also to those who took the time to submit additional comments and suggestions on attached sheets. Your concerns, as well as your positive comments, are noted and much appreciated.

Of course, in one sense, distributing and then analyzing the results of the survey is the easy part. The hard part is to move forward and find creative solutions. These will then make up the essence of the temple’s Five-Year strategic plan. Thank you very much for your support.

By the way, because we kept the survey anonymous, we don’t actually know who those of you are that offered to help the temple (and are not already helping), so please contact any of the reverends at service or e-mail the website at dharma@livingdharma.org.

Gassho,
Peter Hata

Selected E-mail
From = [Curious]
Subject = Association
Message = Hello,
I have been visiting the Ekoji Buddhist Temple in the state of Virginia. I have been greatly edified by your articles on the website. Out of curiosity though, I have not been able to find your temple in the directory of the BCA. Are you not affiliated with the BCA? Since the BCA is affiliated with the Nishi sect, are you affiliated with the Higashi sect? I’m just curious.

Thanks,
Curious

Dear [Curious],
Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. I already know a lot about your temple—I think you could say I’m a student of one of

Please see L.D. NEWS, con’t on page 4

Nice Coming Back
by Taylor Saucedo

This family retreat was a great learning experience for me. Ever since I was a little kid my grandmother, Kazuko Ikehara, always took my sisters and I with her to service. I attended Dharma school and listened to the chanting but everything just seemed to travel through one ear and out the other; really the only thing that stuck with me was all the fun I’d have at Obon. Then with my grandparent’s death five years ago and with my family’s busy schedule, there wasn’t anyone pushing me to service anymore. It wasn’t until about a year ago when I realized I wanted to be more involved. It was nice coming back to the environment I grew up around, only with one big difference, I appreciate being here a lot more now. I wasn’t sure what to expect coming back after all these years but this retreat really

Please see SAUCEDO, con’t on page 2

I Know Nothing!
by Stephanie Jitosho

I have been coming to temple since before I could walk. Now that I am older, my ears and mind are open to the dharma and the teachings the ministers are sharing. Because my ears and mind are so open now, I am more confused than ever after attending this retreat.

I was looking forward to this retreat, not only because my very first minister

Please see JITOSHO, con’t on page 2

Temple Event Highlights:
• April 1, Shotsuki Service
• April 8, WCBT Hanamaturi
• April 8, LABCF Hanamat-suri @ JACCC
• April 27, WCBT Golf Tournament
• Please See Temple News
DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

It’s not exactly Christmas in April, but it is the joyous celebration of the Buddha’s birth on April 8th. This occasion which is shared by Buddhists world wide, will not be expressed by giving out presents to relatives and friends. However, we will be encouraged to bring flowers to adorn the “hanamido,” which represents Lumbini’s Garden where Queen Maya gave birth to Siddartha over 2,500 years ago.

With Gassho,
Diane Hata

SAUCEDO, con’t from page 1

made me see how great Buddhism is to my life. I have learned that I can’t always stay fixated on one bad situation. As harsh as it may seem, I’m able to listen to someone ask “why me?” and I can strongly answer “well, why not?” with the understanding that bad situations in life just happen; but that doesn’t mean you can’t cope and move on. There’s so much more that I’ve learned, so much more that I want to learn, but too much to express in a limited amount of words. All in all this retreat has brought me closer to the members of the sangha and really taught me how refreshing life can be if I just keep experiencing life as a student, learning something new everyday.

Quote of the Month

Mahayana Buddhism says, “If you do not produce art, you do not understand Buddhism.”

-Rev. Mas Kodani

JITOSHO, con’t from page 1

was the speaker but because the theme was “Why me? Why not?” Everyone asks themselves “Why me?” some time in their lives, whether during good experiences or bad ones. This theme has a very practical purpose and can directly relate to our lives.

The first major idea that I realized from the retreat was that cause and effect related to karma are not easily interchangeable. The reason people die is because they are born. The car accidents, cancer, or heart attacks people usually blame are just the condition in which this event happens. Simply put, the way we die is arbitrary. Birth is the cause of death and nothing else.

As I learn and digest everything that I’ve heard, I discover how much I don’t know or understand. Rev. Nori talked about the ignorant person and Michael and I were having such difficulty understanding this concept. Here’s why: An ignorant person knows virtually nothing but knows that he knows nothing, which is the Second Noble Truth. Therefore, he is a buddha and constantly learning and seeking. He understands he will never know everything but he continues seeking. We had trouble understanding what he is seeking. We are never satisfied with what we have or the conditions we are in, so we keep looking for something better to change our condition. Furthermore, if you set a goal for your learning, that goal makes you egotistical because the search becomes about you and your self. And what’s the point of becoming awakened anyway, if we don’t know anything in the first place?

After thinking this through and not taking it so literally, we realized that the reason behind all of this is for people to be grateful for what they have rather than desire something more and suffer because of that desire. We should be seeking the positive things in life, searching for the silver lining in every bad situation. We should be continually learning, even if we find ourselves in a teaching position. No one can say they know everything, even if they are supposed to have mastered the content they are teaching. Instead, they can share their knowledge with the understanding that they have much more to learn.

These thoughts, among many others were spiraling around in my head as I fought to make sense of them. In hindsight, I have a greater understanding of how to live a better life and what I should be seeking. As always, Buddhism is a life style for me, not a religion. With this in mind, I can incorporate the teachings I hear during dharma messages, retreats, and read in articles into my daily life. But if you ask me to sum up what I learned from the retreat in three words, it would be these: I know nothing!
Study Center Lecture Series
The WCBT Study Center Lecture Series “Buddhism and Zen” with Bishop Daigaku Rumme, which began in March with lectures on March 15, 22, 29 will have it’s final session on April 5. The lectures will be held on Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM. More information contact Rev. Ken.

WCBT Hanamatsuri
West Covina’s Hanamatsuri Service will be held on Sunday, April 8, at 10:00 AM. Everyone is invited to arrive early with flowers to decorate the Hanamido. There will be a special performance by the Dharma school children and light refreshments will be served after the service. We invite you to come and join us to celebrate the Buddha’s birthday!

LABCF Hanamatsuri
The Federation Hanamatsuri Service and will be held on the April 8 beginning at 1:00 PM at JACCC in downtown LA. Everyone is encouraged to attend the LABCF service after WCBT Hanamatsuri Service.

Bonbu Class
The Bonbu Class will meet on April 10 and 24 at 10:00 AM in the dining room. Currently, they are reading and discussing the Larger Sutra. The class meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. For more information, please call Rev. Ken (626) 913-0622.

WCBT’s Annual Golf Classic
Mark your calendars for WCBT’s 16th Annual Golf Classic which will be held on Friday, April 27, on the Babe Zaharias Course at the Industry Hills Golf Club at the Pacific Palms Resort. Registration begins at 11 AM, Putting Contest between 11-12:30, Shotgun start at 1:00 PM followed by dinner at 6:30. Entry fees are $160.
Please submit entry by April 13. For more details contact Roy Takemura at (909) 973-2580.

Mother’s Day Service
A Mother’s Day family service will be held on May 13, at 10:00 AM. A special tribute to all mothers will be presented so please attend this special service.

Tanjo-e & Hatsumairi
The Tanjo-e and Hatsumairi (new baby) Service will be held on May 20 at 10:00 A.M. There will be a special ceremony to acknowledge new additions to our Sangha. Please contact Rev. Ken if you or your family member has had a new baby in the last year.

Free Piano!
A spinet piano is looking for a new home. It may need a little tuning and service but is free to anyone who is interested. Contact Rev. Ken for info.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS
Lauren Miyake, Randy Maekawa, Susan Oshima, Nancy Maekawa, Kevin Kawawata, Tommy Lespron, Yaeko Davis, Kristen Hirananaka, Jacob Kato, Adriana Kochi, Kellie Komoda, Shakyamuni Buddha

A Drawing of the Higashi Honganji Complex in Kyoto, Japan
your members, Mr. Rich Wolford, who was your Director of Outreach. I don’t know if he is still active or not, but his essay, “Jodo Shinshu Outreach Efforts and Results” was very influential on my thinking (it’s in our Library). Please say “hello” for me if you know him.

As to your question, yes, we are affiliated with Higashi. Not to be facetious, but I suspect you are curious because the existence of two Honganjis is in fact, quite “curious.” As you may know, the details of the split are complex because they involve the disagreement of two brothers, the “astute” politics of the shogun Tokugawa, the extremely successful sangha-building efforts of Rennyo (which made the Honganji a threat to the government in the first place), and ultimately, that Rennyo’s success itself was due to the relevance of Shinran’s and Shakyamuni’s teaching for everyday people.

Today, we Shinshu followers in America are left to wonder what can be done about “the split.” I know quite a few Nishi ministers and both they and our Higashi ministers consciously try to work around it; there is considerable sharing of resources. There are even some “brave souls” (if you can excuse the term) on both sides who would like to see the two Honganjis re-united, or at least develop an even closer relationship. For example, check out what Dr. Nobuo Haneda once said as the keynote speaker for Higashi Honganji’s Hawaii District 100th Anniversary. At the event, I believe both the Higashi and Nishi bishops were in the audience, along with a bunch of other dignitaries. He specifically mentioned both Higashi and Nishi branches in Hawaii joining forces, but I think the implication is that the same should happen here on the mainland as well.

Dr. Haneda said that, because of the ways Shin Buddhism is changing in America, the future is clear. For example, he says that, unlike the hereditary succession of Buddhist ministers in Japan (which tends to result in ministers lacking a serious commitment to Buddhism), in America people become Buddhist ministers because of their personal religious motivations; he states this “Americanization of Shin Buddhism” is a “truly revolutionary thing.” He also observes that, unlike previous generations of Japanese-Americans, today’s third and fourth generations — and certainly those who are not of Japanese ancestry at all — are not that interested in “connecting with Japanese ethnicity” and don’t feel that being Japanese automatically makes them Buddhist. Instead, he says they feel they must actually “study Buddhism to become Buddhists.” And therefore, he states:

“We must make further changes in our temple institutions. Here I want to propose another change concerning the Shin Buddhist temple institution in this country. I believe that the time has come for the two major branches of the Shin Buddhist tradition in Hawaii, the Higashi Honganji and the Nishi Honganji, to join forces and work together for the propagation of Shinran’s teachings. If I say something like this, probably many Shin Buddhists in Japan may think that I am saying something quite outrageous. But as I have pointed out, the American Shin Buddhist temple has already taken a form that is quite different from its Japanese counterpart; Shinran’s teachings do not exist for the enhancement of sectarian institutions. Sectarian institutions exist for the enhancement of Shinran’s teachings. Most of us here have some affiliation with the Higashi Honganji; we have some attachment to it. But I sincerely desire that all of us think not from a sectarian viewpoint, but of what Shinran wants us to do, and transcend our sectarian attachment.”

Thanks again for your timely question.

Best Wishes,
Rev. Peter Hata

To: dharma@livingdharma.org
From = Rene
Subject = desire
Message = Hello, I came to the realization that I am never satisfied. I want, and want and want, like an empty pit. This wanting covers all areas of my life, from never having enough money, to not having the “right” love, to not feeling at home where I live. How can I finally address this and find true fulfillment?

Dear Rene,
You have actually already begun to address your problem. You have discovered on your own the First Noble Truth that Buddha discovered. That there is dissatisfaction in life. We get what we want and we are not satisfied. We don’t get what we want and we are not satisfied. We get what we want and already we are afraid of losing it. Or we strive over and over to keep and maintain that original want at greater and greater cost. Now, if you want to strive towards “true fulfillment” you must follow out the logic of the other three Noble Truths. The Second Truth is that we are attached to whatever it is that we want. And it is maintaining these attachments that is the cause of our pains. The deepest of these attachments, and the poisonous root that underlies all the others is the attachment to self. I have often said that Buddha know only two swear words. They are “Me” and “Mine.” It’s “Me, Me, Me” and “Mine, Mine, Mine.” This is the subtle poison that turns everything else in life sour. The Third Noble Truth is the light that comes from without. On our own we cannot find the solution, but it comes to us not on our own power, but from something deeper, the fundamental sense that compassion and wisdom always reach out to us, and accepts us. We are embraced by Buddha-compassion with a resounding “Yes!” There is a solution! We are then presented with the Fourth Noble Truth — which is the Eight-fold Noble Path. The first step is Right Understanding. You are beginning to get that Understanding by seeing that your life is unsatisfactory. You will now explore your own inner self, what we call our “Bodhi Nature,” that we are foolish and silly beings who deceive ourselves over and over, but through the life which is the Dharma, that comes from Buddha, through the Sangha — the Three Treasures — we find that we are bits of rubble turned into gold. This is enough for you for now. Examine and consider the Dharma as you begin your path towards true fulfillment. There are many excellent works on Buddhism available that will give you a good start. I personally like “River of Fire, River of Ice” and “Shin Buddhism” by Taïtetsu Ueno, however “Buddhism, Plain and Simple” by Steve Hagen is an excellent starter. You have found the First Truth, continue with the rest!

Sincerely,
Rev. Frederick Brennon

From = Dustin Hughes
Subject = A word on Common Misconceptions
Message = I think you made a mistake in thinking that gashso and Christian
From: dustin hughes
You make a very good point Mr. Hata. Thank you for the clarity.
You lead me to ask another question for my own personal inquiry. Dharma is as you say the Universal Truth. I find myself wanting to relate Dharma as taught by Buddhism, to that of the Holy Spirit in the Christian Trinity. In Christian teachings, one achieves salvation in the acceptance of the Holy Spirit.
The Holy Spirit can simply be broken down as God’s will and presence on all things. I feel that all real practicing Christians, have found their enlightenment through this belief.
Because of this, Christians could easily practice Buddhism without feeling like they have forsaken their god. What do you think? I also plan to ask my local church’s minister his or her opinion on the matter as well.
Thank you for your time Mr. Hata and I hope to hear from you soon.
-Dustin Hughes

Dear Dustin,
Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. You are correct that humility is not unique to Buddhism. Some more liberal-minded Buddhists and Christians have for example compared Jesus and the Buddha as both being compassionate, humble, and also social radicals in their day. Probably you’d agree also that there are wonderful human beings of all religions and faiths.
However it is also true that Christian prayer is often of a type known as “petitionary prayer” (“Give us each day our daily bread...”). It is this more common type of prayer that the article was referencing. We’ve added the word “petitionary” in the article to clarify this point. It’s certainly understandable in Christianity, which holds that there is an omniscient, omnipotent, creator deity, for there to be both petitionary prayer and prayers of thanksgiving. However, in Buddhism, in which there is no creator deity but instead the Dharma or universal truth of the impermanence and interdependence of all life, petitionary prayer is seen as particularly a problem or impediment to enlightenment. The object in Buddhism is to let go of all such desires of the self and instead “become one with” this Dharma, this reality of life, to see all life as one moving, flowing, interdependent truth. To put it another way, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are God-centered religions. Buddhism is Dharma-centered. This is a basic doctrinal distinction, and in fact, it may be more correct not to refer to Buddhism as a “religion” at all, since it is not theistic. Some Buddhists refer to it instead as a “teaching,” or “way of life.”
Thank you for your e-mail.
Best Wishes,
Peter Hata

Subject: Re: A word on Common Misconceptions
Buddhism and Christianity are not etched in stone, but as history has shown, are constantly in flux and even today, are being reinterpreted for our contemporary world. Is it just the language or vocabulary that is changing, or are the very meanings of “God” and “Buddha” subject to personal interpretation? And how do I know if my interpretation is authentic? What I believe all Buddhists and Christians are seeking, is a positive, transformative spiritual experience. And, though these comparisons and interpretations are interesting and perhaps even beneficial in leading one forward on their search, I would caution you not to take someone else’s interpretation as your own. The teaching must come alive for you and you alone. One influential 20th century teacher in my own Shin tradition was the “rediscovery” by Rev. Manshi Kiyozawa, that the essence of Buddhism was actually not in the doctrine at all, but—as Shakyamuni Buddha himself had taught—in the subjective experience of its truth. Therefore, taking us back to the topic that we began with, whatever this “truth” is—Dharmakaya or God/Holy Spirit—it is ultimately beyond our limited human capabilities, and thus, I think many Buddhists and Christians can agree that when subjectively encountering this truth—or when realizing one’s inability to completely grasp it—there is a natural arising of humility and gratitude; we are all so fortunate to have been given this life. In Buddhism, this spirit is known as Namu Amida Butsu, or I take refuge in (namu) the Dharma (amida butsu). This is the essence of Shin Buddhism, and I think it is this humble, seeking spirit that naturally enables us to live together in peace.

Thank you again for your comments, and please continue to ask your questions.

Best Wishes,

Peter Hata
日本語座談会ご案内
3月10日並び24日
午後1時
センターダイニングルーム
気軽に参加出来る座談会です。
お友達をお誘いの上お出で下さ

4月祥月法要
法話会花祭り法要
4月5日
午後7時半

永代経II
番坂啓史

先ほども申しましたが、私たちは、
欲にとらわれた存在です。そのような
私たちは、自分自身を疑うことはあり
ません。自分自身を信じています。
「私は正しい」そう思い込んでしまっ
ているのです。そしていつしか、自己中
心的になってしまう。

亡き人をご縁として、ご法事をお勤
めになるということは、お念仏を繰りとし
て自分自身を見つめ直すということです。
阿弥陀様を通して亡き人から掛けられ
ている願いに気付く機会をいただきた
ということです。「教えを聞く」「教えに
遇う」ということは仏教を通して、普
段意識することの無い「凡夫である私
の姿」に気づかされるということ
です。

親鸞聖人が七高僧の第一祖にあげら
れております龍樹菩薩は、人間の一番
美しい姿は合掌姿であると言われまし
た。（手というのは、感謝や敬いなど相
手に対する気持ちが表れる部分と言わ
れています。人が病気やけがをした時
に「手当て」という言葉が使われますが、
相手を思いやる気持ちが手を当てるだ
けで伝わるからこのような言葉になり
ました。）合掌は、右と左の手を合わ
す姿と言います。これは、古来よりイン
グレート・ホークス・ゴルフクラブにて開催されます。ただい
て、またティースポナー及び
ブックレットの広告を募集しております。
なお皆様のご寄付はお寺の青
少年教育活動や維持費に使用されて頂
きます。みなさまのご協力をお願いし
ます。

本日、永代経法要をお勤めさせて
いただきました。私自身も私のご法要
をお勤めし、阿弥陀様そして先私の先
輩達からの願いに改めて触れさせてい
ただきました。これを縁として、今日
一日、そして明日と、かけられてい
る願いを感じて過ごして参りたいと
思っております。

お寺ニュース
花祭り法要
今年の花祭り法要は4月8日午前
10時より厳修いたします。この花祭
りでは毎年皆様にお花をご持参いただ
き、花御堂をお飾りしのお祝いさまのお
誕生をお祝いいたします。法要後、日
曜学校子どもさん達の物語などがあり
ます。その後リフレッシュメントもご
昼食をお存じください。永代経法要

WCBT ゴルフ基金募集
今年のお寺のゴルフ大会は4月27日
午後1時よりイングストリーヒルスゴ
ルフクラブにて開催されます。ただいま
参加者、またティースポナー及び
ブックレットの広告を募集しております。
なお皆様のご寄付はお寺の学
年教育活動や維持費に使用させて頂
ます。みなさまのご協力をお願い申
し上げます。

私たちは、亡き人手を合わせる事
で、亡き人からご縁を頂き、阿弥陀様
の願いに触れさせていただいております。
私たちは、亡き人達から「手を合わせ
る身」、「仏法をお聞かせいただく身」として育てていただいているので
す。

母の日家族礼拝
5月13日（日）午前10時より母
の日家族礼拝をお勤めいたします。例
年のごとく会員の方の母の日メッセー
ジがございます。また青年会では母の
日朝食を用意し、ダルマスクールでは
素敵なプレゼントをお得にお母さん、
おばあちゃんに用意しております。み
なさんでお参りください。

親鸞聖人誕生会
並び新生児初参り法要
本年の親鸞聖人誕生会並び新生児初
参り法要は5月20日午前10時より
厳修いたします。親鸞聖人のご誕生をお
祝いし、またあわせて新生児初参りを
お勤めいたしますので、みなさまのご
家族お知り合いの0歳から6歳ま
での子供さんにお薦めください。お申
込みは河和田開教使まで。（626）
913-0622
April
1 8:30 am Board Meeting
1 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
5 7:00 pm WCBT Study Center Lecture
5 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
8 10:00 am WCBT Hanamatsuri Service
8 1:00 pm LABCF Hanamatsuri @ JACCC
10 10:00 am Bonbu Class
15 10:00 am Sunday Service
22 10:00 am Sunday Service
24 10:00 am Bonbu Class
27 1:00 pm WCBT Golf Tournament

May
3 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
6 8:30 am Board Meeting
6 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
8 10:00 am Bonbu Class
13 10:00 am Mother’s Day Family Service
20 10:00 am Tanjo-e/Hatsumairi Service
22 10:00 am Bonbu Class
27 10:00 am Sunday Service

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4月行事予定
1日 午前8時半 理事会
1日 午前10時 祥月法要
5日 午後7時半 法話会
8日 午前10時 花祭り法要
午後1時 仏連花祭り法要 於: JACCC
10日 午後1時 同信会座談会
15日 午前10時 日曜法要
22日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
24日 午後1時 同信会座談会
27日 午後1時 ゴルフ大会

5月行事予定
3日 午後7時半 法話会
6日 午前8時半 理事会
6日 午前10時 祥月法要
8日 午後1時 同信会座談会
13日 午前10時 母の日家族礼拝
20日 午前10時 親鸞聖人誕生会／初参り法要
22日 午後1時 同信会座談会
27日 午前10時 日曜礼拝

他力と言うは
如来の本願力なり
（親鸞聖人）