



GATEWAY



August 2012 -- Vol. XLVI No. 8

Living Dharma News

www.livingdharma.org

New on the site is the 6 minute video, Introduction to West Covina Buddhist Temple, that was created for the temple's Obon display and was shown continuously in the gym during the demonstrations. Check it out if you haven't already seen it; you're probably in it if you are at all active at WCBT.

Gassho,
Peter Hata

Selected E-mail

From = maraya miller

Subject = intro

Message = Hello! My name is Maraya Miller and I'm interested in coming to your temple to learn more about Buddhism. I'm half Japanese and I've grown up going to OCBC for different events but never really learned about Buddhism, only been exposed to it. I'm really interested though, and I looked at your calendar. What services should I attend? I don't know which ones would be appropriate, especially for a newcomer like me. Thank you.

Dear Maraya,

Thank you for writing. When my wife and I got our marriage license she had to be tested first for German measles. The test came out borderline so she had to be immunized for it. German measles, or Rubella, can be extremely serious for an adult. I've heard of mothers sending their children to play with other kids who had the measles in order to catch it. My wife did have it as a child but apparently it wasn't strong enough. It is not enough to be simply exposed. You have to catch it and it has to take. This is very true, too, of Buddhism! It is not enough to be born into a Buddhist environment, after all a mouse born in a cookie jar is not a cookie! You have to be confronted with life and wrestle with it. You have to be thrown down on the mat before you realize that you need help. It sounds like you are at that point now. It sounds like you want to catch the fever.

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Above: Tor Ormseth and Howakai member Yukio Oda work the teriyaki chicken barbecue; this shot (by Merry Jitosh) shows the two working the grill virtually the entire day—they are indicative of the kind of selfless, dedicated help our temple receives every year at Obon (more Obon pics on pages 2~5; a complete Obon Report and Thankyou article should be included in next month's Gateway)

Highlights of Our Kyoshi Ordination Experience

By Rev. Peter Hata

During the week of April 21~27, 2012, Fred Brenion and I, with the guidance of Bishop Noriaki Ito, traveled to the Higashi Honganji headquarters in Kyoto, Japan, and participated in the final installment of our kyoshi training. While there, we attended unique classes and were interviewed individually by



Above: Rev. Fred, Bishop Ito, and Rev. Peter enjoy a healthy Japanese fast-food breakfast during their stay in Japan.

a panel of high-ranking Honzan and Otani University officials. "Kyoshi" literally means "teacher" in Higashi Honganji, and basically is synonymous with "minister."

Of course, I should mention first that prior to being accepted for our kyoshi training at the Honzan, domes-

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Temple Event Highlights:

- Aug. 5, Shotsuki Service
- Aug. 10-12, Las Vegas Trip
- Sept. 9 Shotsuki Service
- Sept. 22, Oldies Dance
- Sept. 23, Ohigan Service
- Please See Temple News



T H E G A T E W A Y

DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

WCBT Bon Dance '12

After contemplating over the Dharma School children's raffle at Obon, abundant with fabulous prizes and the accompanying games including Ms Koga's "angry birds" and Mr. Ormseth's lollipops, this came to mind:

Toys overflowing
Creating smiles for children
With Gassho, we thank.

Enjoy a restful summer. The Dharma School students and staff look forward to the Grandparents' Day luncheon in Sept. We plan to make bookmarks with the lovely "washi" paper donated to us by Mr. Ed Moreno.

With Gassho,
Diane Hata

Quote of the Month

"Why was I born?" I was born in order to meet my parents, siblings, friends, and loved ones. I was born simply to be this self, to live this life, here and now. I was born for this moment, to be with you and care for you. I was born to appreciate all that I receive in the past, present and future, and to realize that it comes from outside of myself, in spite of myself. I was born to realize that out of the depth of grief and despair, there arises inconceivable happiness and joy. When we think about life in this way, we come to understand that the entirety of life is to give thanks. The reason for life is to express our deepest gratitude in verses, stories and songs. It is to wish to give back—to repay our debt of gratitude to all other beings. It is to give what we have received, to teach what we have learned, and to share what we have created with everyone.

-Rev. Dr. David Matsumoto





T H E G A T E W A Y

T E M P L E N E W S

August Schedule

The August board meeting will be held 8:30 AM on August 5 followed by the Shotsuki Service at 10:00 AM. We will then take our annual summer break so there are no Sunday Services on August 12, 19, 26 and September 2. Regular services will resume again on September 9.

Las Vegas Trip

WCBT will be sponsoring a fundraising trip to Las Vegas on the weekend of August 10-12. The \$140 per person fee, for double occupancy, will include round-trip bus fare, two nights at the Main Street Hotel, Bell captain tips and lots of fun and games. A light dinner and beverage will be served on the ride to Las Vegas. Feel free to bring snacks for sharing.

The bus departs on Friday, August 6 promptly at 4:00 PM from ESGVJCC. The return bus departs on Sunday, August 12 promptly at 11:30 AM from the Main Street Hotel.

Please make your reservations ASAP. For application forms and more information, please contact Lillian Nishihara (626-780-9866).

Fall Ohigan

The Fall Ohigan Service will be held on September 23 at 4:30 PM. Joining us, as our special speaker, will be Rev. Lee Rosenthal from Pasadena Buddhist Temple. Please help us welcome Rev.

Rosenthal and stay for the complimentary *otoki* dinner following the service.

Oldies Dance XLIII

Saturday, September 22, is the date for Oldies XLIII, Dance Driven! Steve Kikuchi & High Resolution will provide our favorite hits from the 60's, 70's and 80's. The dance begins at 8:00 PM and ends at 12:00 AM with lots of good fun in between. Presale tickets are \$12 or \$15 at the door. For info and song requests, call Joanie at (626) 284-8192 or Roy at (909) 973-2580.

Your Toban chairs will contact you about work shifts and assignments. Plan to come by the center about 6 PM to help with the set-up. Donations are welcome for raffle prizes and drinks. Sign-up sheets for drinks will be at the Sunday service.



GATEWAY Staff

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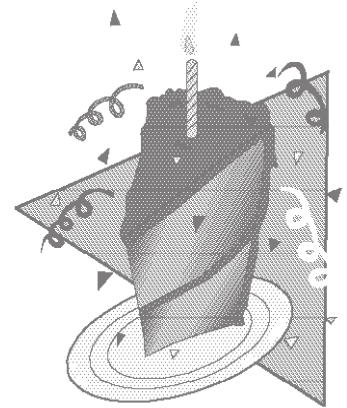
West Covina Buddhist Temple Mission Statement:
In the spirit of universal brotherhood, West Covina Buddhist Temple provides the opportunity for all to listen to and share the Teachings of the Buddha in order that we may awaken to our true selves, living our lives fully and dynamically.

The Temple's mailing address is:

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AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Brittany Kato, Wesley Hamachi, K.C. Kosa, Mark Mayeda, Brian Iwama, Aaron Aoki, Rick Fujimoto, Sachi Ezaki, Shazon Kuwahara, Chico Masai, Vicki Takemura, Joy Ormseth, Frederic Brenion, Gregory Williams



Manto-e Service with Rev. Ken, Rev. Peter Hata and Rev. Fred Brenion at the Obon Festival



T H E G A T E W A Y

WCBT Obon Festival '12



\$6.00 \$3.50
 Asahi Kirin Sapporo
 East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center
 般 Haru
 若 Nya
 湯 To
 Wisdom Water

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75



T H E G A T E W A Y

WCBT Obon Festival '12





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tic training had taken place in August 2010 at Higashi's Shinshu Center in the Newport Higashi Honganji Temple and in December 2010 and July 2011 at the Los Angeles Betsuin. Also, in that July, Fred and I had received Tokudo (priest or first ordination) at the Honzan, a prerequisite for the kyoshi ordination. In each of these training segments, we had attended intensive three-day seminars which included a wealth of information (the material would fill a bookshelf) on the history and doctrine of Indian Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism, and Japanese Buddhism, contemporary issues in American Jodo Shinshu, and training in Shinshu rituals as well. Instructors in these sessions included Revs. Imai, Ito, Nakai, Kawawata, Hasegawa, and Rev. Dr. Ama. All the other half-dozen or so ministers of Higashi Honganji's North American District also attended the seminars, which made for some very lively, interactive sessions.

At the conclusion of the seminars, we were required to take a comprehensive examination and submit a graduate-level thesis. Earlier this year, in March, we were informed our theses had been officially approved by the Honzan, and this then cleared the way for us to proceed to Japan for our final kyoshi training and ordination at the Honzan during April of this year.

One of the highlights of our training at the Honzan was undoubtedly instruction we received which, though relatively brief, was of a very high level. These classes were memorable, even as the material was often quite challenging. However, despite the compressed time frame (each lecture was only two hours), I was thinking about what kind of lecture a skilled teacher might give if told, "You have exactly 2 hours to share with Peter and Fred." Maybe what happens is, the teacher distills their knowledge down, and focuses in on that which they consider most important. At least I think that's what we received. And, with obvious passion and conviction.

The first instructor was Prof. Takami Inoue of Otani University. He gave a thought-provoking lecture entitled "The

Genealogy of Faith-Oriented Buddhism from Shakyamuni to Shinran." The subject matter was very relevant to me personally because, in my kyoshi thesis, I had included a section on the contemporary reappraisal of "faith" in Jodo Shinshu. Inoue-sensei's lecture was so filled with juicy material and insights, it was, in and of itself, rather like the presentation of an engaging, highly topical thesis. In the end, after citing a variety of sources, he gave us convincing evidence in one of the most ancient sutras (the section known as "The Way to the Beyond" from the Sutta Nipata) that the tradition of recollecting and reflecting on the Buddha, which we in Jodo Shinshu know as the nembutsu, actually was taught and endorsed by Shakyamuni himself. This is significant because, contrary to common beliefs that Pure Land Buddhism is a (later) creation of China and Japan, we saw convincing evidence that the roots of the Pure Land Way are actually traceable back to the Buddha's original sangha. To Inoue-sensei, this sutta (sutra), being widely held by Buddhist scholars to be among the very earliest suttas and therefore highly likely to actually have been the recorded words of Shakyamuni, appears to establish a critical link between the Buddha and not only (later) Mahayana ideas such as sunyata, but also, with this particular sutta illustrating *buddhanusmrti*—reflections on the Buddha—with the nembutsu path itself (nen means "thinking of," butsu means "Buddha"). At the end of the sutta, Shakyamuni tells his disciple Pingiya that, because of his reflection practice, "You will go, Pingiya, to the Other Shore."

The second lecturer was Prof. Shin'ya Yasutomi, who gave a fascinating lecture on Shinran's *Kyogyoshinsho*, discussing it in terms of a literary—rather than the typical doctrinal—analysis. Yasutomi-sensei focused on certain definitive features of Shinran's literary style, for example, the dramatic way he describes his "encounters": throughout the *Kyogyoshinsho* Shinran encounters the Seven Masters and often states for

example, "how fortunate..."; Yasutomi-sensei emphasized that Shinran clearly acknowledged that he inherited the Pure Land tradition from the Seven Masters. Also, we always note Shinran saying, "I," just Shinran alone. As Yasutomi-sensei said, "'Encounter' therefore means encountering himself, his true self. Shinran identified himself as being in the tradition of the Primal Vow and thus, his name 'Shinran' comes from the second Shinshu master Vasubandhu (*Jpn* Ses-shin) and the third Shinshu master T'an Luan (*Jpn* Don-ran), who began the tradition of the Primal Vow. In this tradition, he was able to find himself... He's confessing meeting himself through these teachers." Yasutomi-sensei pointed out that many Buddhist scholars in the West who have encountered Shinran's understanding are very attracted to him—a short list might include notable scholars like Paul Williams, Huston Smith, James Dobbins, Minor Rogers, and certainly Alfred Bloom. Why? Prof. Yasutomi explained that, "Shinran very frankly and sincerely exposed himself and showed himself to be very human."

Of course, regarding a literary analysis, the *Kyogyoshinsho* is more a philosophical than a literary work, but still, it can be read as literature. As Yasutomi-sensei said, "Shinran uses literary devices like parable (e.g., the White Path), simile (frequent use of words like "fire"), metonymy (substituting one name for another that it represents; like personification)," and metaphor (direct comparison), all to illustrate the Dharma. In fact, Yasutomi-sensei says the *Kyogyoshinsho*, representing the "world of Shinran," is an "ocean of images." To illustrate, Yasutomi-sensei had us examine Shinran's specific use of metaphor. "Meta" means "beyond" and "phor" means "carry"; so, through metaphor we are carried beyond the secular world to religious truth. In particular, Yasutomi-sensei then focused just on Shinran's use of the word "ocean." He noted it is used 104 times in the *Kyogyoshinsho* and in many contexts, such as the "ocean of birth and

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death," the "ocean of ignorance," the "ocean of one great vehicle," the "ocean of shinjin," and the "ocean of light." In order to convey the deep meaning of his message, Shinran uses this metaphor because the "ocean" is huge, vast, without limit, and inconceivable. Yasutomi-sensei pointed out that, "When standing on the seashore, we feel the infinity of the ocean; this is a religious feeling." And, historically speaking, he pointed out that "Shinran had a powerful 'ocean experience' at Echigo (i.e., on the desolate Sea of Japan during his exile) and also at Kanto (near the Pacific Ocean); for Shinran, the "'ocean' has both positive and negative meanings." In particular, besides the positive meanings mentioned earlier, Yasutomi-sensei mentioned that "one needs to visit the north Japan Sea coast in winter to experience its violent, dark side." As a kid who grew up body-surfing in sunny Southern California, I realized I'd been reading the word "ocean" in Shinran's writing without realizing its literary richness; maybe for those of us that live in California, we might need to think more imaginatively when reading his works. In any case, Yasutomi-sensei's literary examination of the *Kyogyo-shinsho* enhanced our appreciation of the powerful truth that Shinran is taking refuge in; it is through his words that we today are able to encounter Shinran.

The next day, we had two more classes. The first involved chanting instruction in the Honzan's rituals department with Rev. Sakatani, a "dosu" (professional-level rituals specialist at the Honzan). Not surprisingly, Sakatani-sensei had a beautiful and powerful chanting voice, but in addition, he was also a very enthusiastic instructor. He began by clarifying that, contrary to common beliefs, the purpose of Shinshu shomyo (Buddhist chanting music) is not to "pacify the gods" or "purify our *tamashii* or soul"; "Shakyamuni taught

anatman (no-self)," he reminded us. Rather, its purpose is to praise Buddha and, in shomyo, "Practice makes the teaching concrete; praising and chant-



Above: Peter and Fred sing Shinshu Shuka during their kyoshi ordination

ing is where teaching and practice come together." Of course, given that my own thesis was in fact on shomyo, this was another highly-relevant class for me personally.

Because of this emphasis on teaching and practice, Sakatani-sensei emphasized that our chanting should not be sloppy; "It should be disciplined," he said. However, at the same time, he—compassionately, I think—gave us novitiates a "break" and also pointed out that the most important thing was not so much how accurately we chanted, but that we always express our joy of chanting.

In instructing us on specific shomyo such as the Shoshinge, Amida-kyo, Ofumi, and Kada, he constantly emphasized "listening, listening, listening." And also, that we "Bring to shomyo the full range of human feelings into your chanting. Chanting is living; it expresses living with all other human beings."

Our last class was on the Shinshu Otani-ha constitution, the constitution which governs all members of Higashi Honganji worldwide. Our instructor was Rev. Hatakeyama (no relation to WCBT's Hatakeyamas), who placed great emphasis on the history of why the constitution needed to be rewritten in

the 1980s due to the so-called "Kaishin incident." The system that led to this incident was a pyramidal hierarchy with the Honganji (head temple) at the very top, and the blood descendent of Shinran, the head abbot, as not only the head priest, but also the administrative leader, thus giving one person enormous power. Hatakeyama-sensei also pointed out that as "hossu" (head priest) he was considered "noke" or teacher and everyone else was considered "shoke" or "listeners" (i.e., they were "below him"). Finally, to make matters worse, the abbot even tried to use Higashi Honganji funds for his own purpose.

Hatakeyama-sensei pointed out that there were those Higashi members, such as the leaders of the Dobokai Movement (founded in 1963), that criticized this pyramid system and pointed out how Shinran had always said that everyone was equal, and that he would have criticized any kind of duality. Shinran called fellow followers "ondodo"; an honorific title expressing Shinran's respect for all.

Eventually, the matter was resolved and in the current constitution, the abbot is no longer called the "lord of the Dharma," but is the "monshu" or "keeper of the gate." This revised constitution is egalitarian or democratic in nature and establishes a balance of power between the Administration and Diet (analogous to the British system of prime minister and parliament).

Rev. Hatakeyama emphasized that knowing the history of this Kaishin incident (also referred to as the "denomination problem") explains the significance of the Three Fundamental Rules in the constitution:

1) *Jishin Kyoninshin*: This is 5th Shinshu master Shantao's phrase which means, "to realize shinjin oneself and to guide others to shinjin"; it represents the classic Bodhisattva ideal of realizing enlightenment for oneself in order to benefit

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others. This leads to an equal, egalitarian Dobo Society. The key though, said Hatakeyama-sensei, is we must have shinjin (faith, or true entrusting); with it, our actions naturally cause others to also have faith.

2) *Revere and maintain the Shinshu Hombyo* (i.e., the Honzan): "The hombyo houses—in a manner of speaking—Shinran's spirit," said Rev. Hatakeyama. "And this is a sanctuary for all followers, not just the 'noke'... Most important is that hombyo means both the 'temple' (Honganji) and the 'sect' (Shinshu Otani-ha) and both are one or ittai; both need to be protected by a united body of believers (sect) and temple (Honganji). Really, all are ondo, including all kyoshi ministers."

3) *All administration is based on open discussion; no one can act only on their own decision*: Hatakeyama-sensei explained that this principle addresses the earlier problem of the abbot independently doing all kinds of things, such as illegally using funds. "This rule is designed to be anti-authoritarian," he said. Thus, in the re-written 1983 constitution, the earlier pyramid model becomes a "flat" organization; the Shinshu Hombyo is at the center of all the temples. But it is not at the top of them.

On the following day, Bishop Ito, Fred and I attended the daily 7 am service at the Honzan, and were able to participate in the Mitsuyuri-style of the Shoshinge (this is the chanting style my thesis focused on). Actually, "participate" is a bit of an overstatement; these early-morning services are led by the professional chanters like Rev. Sakatani and thus a better description of what I actually did would be to "rapidly flip pages." Still, it was a great experience.

Then, at about 10 am, Fred and I were each interviewed individually by a panel of Honzan officials. The interviewers were 6 high-ranking cabinet officers (very high, according to Ito-sensei) and academics from Otani University,

including Professors Inoue and Yasutomi. Before the interviews began, Ito-sensei gave us a glimpse of the room where this would take place. There was a long table with about 6 or 7 chairs on one side and one chair a few feet in front facing the table (there was also another chair slightly behind the single chair that would be used by our interpreter,



Above: Rev. Fred, Bishop Ito, and Rev. Peter pose in front of Shinran Shonin's tomb at the Otani Sobyō

Michael Conway). The thought of the "grilling" that was about to take place was rather intimidating to us.

However, despite our worries, and even though some challenging questions were asked, the interviewers were not at all adversarial but more curious; they were interested in learning about us and about our interests as expressed in our theses. For example, the interviewers were very interested in Fred's thesis, which concerned his experience of recovering from alcoholism, the role Jodo Shinshu played in that process, and the benefits the Shinshu teachings could have if shared in contemporary America. In my case, they asked many questions about my thesis, *Shomyo*:

Music of the Pure Land, such as "How would I compare the transmission of the Dharma in *howa*—a Dharma talk—vs. in *shomyo*?" or "How might I adapt Shinshu *shomyo* and promote it in America?"; Prof. Yasutomi also asked me to comment on the use of Western music styles in Shinshu rituals. Interestingly I was even asked about earlier

projects I'd been involved in, such as the *History of Shin Buddhism* DVD that was made in conjunction with our 50th anniversary in 2009. I believe it was the *Somubu* himself, Higashi's Head of General Affairs, Bishop Edgiru, who was very interested in that DVD as a method of propagating the Dharma (Edgiru-sensei also gave a wonderful Dharma talk during the ordination ceremony).

After our interviews, we went to lunch and then Fred, myself, and maybe especially Ito-sensei (the "nervous parent"), anxiously waited together in a room waiting to hear whether or not we would need to change into our formal robes for the actual ordination ceremony. In other words, our kyoshi ordination was still in doubt while the interviewers discussed (debated?) our kyoshi candidacy. Fortunately though, after about 20 minutes, one of the Honzan's staff quietly entered the

room and announced in a very officious tone, "Peter Hata and Fred Brenion have officially passed the interview process. Please prepare now for the kyoshi ordination ceremony." Whew. With hindsight, I think that for both Fred and I, though initially nerve-wracking, our interviews proved very positive and we left with a strong feeling of enthusiastic support from the Honzan.

The Kyoshi ordination ceremony itself was short (30 min.) but perhaps because it was in the Founder's Hall, it was extremely moving. Here we were, actually receiving our kyoshi certificates. After successfully reading our joint pledge to uphold the responsibili-

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ties of all kyoshi—these center around the meaning of *jishin kyoninshin*—the final “hoop” we had to jump through was just to sing Ondokusan, which of course, I’ve sung countless times. As most of you know, the words of Ondokusan are (English translation from our Service Book):

*I vow to express my gratitude for the Great
Compassion that embraces me continuously,
until my body turns to dust.*

*I vow to express my appreciation for
the wonderful lessons of my Dharma teacher,
until my bodily form is shattered.*

The very seriousness and gravity of these words stimulated a kind of deep personal introspection in me. I wasn’t thinking specifically about the lyrics, but since I know what this gatha is about and, standing in the Founder’s Hall, the whole “world of Shinran”—to use Prof. Yasutomi’s phrase—seemed to simultaneously flood my thoughts and feelings. As I was singing Ondokusan, what happened spontaneously and unexpectedly is that I actually got quite choked up and had difficulty singing at all.

All the classes, lectures, studying, researching, writing, and traveling, had led to this moment. I had studied and read so much about all these great teachers in our tradition, each of whom had expressed tremendous gratitude and joy at having been able to listen to the teachings. And here I was, face-to-face as it were, with Shinran Shonin in the Founder’s Hall itself, expressing my own gratitude for the opportunity to receive the teaching. It was too much for me to process at that moment, and I got quite emotional. It literally felt like some kind of power beyond me, beyond my self-control, “took control” of me, and for that moment during Ondokusan, I couldn’t help myself.

Upon reflection, I think Ondokusan powerfully states the deep gratitude and lifelong aspiration of the Shinshu seeker to repay what they have received from the Shinshu teachings. But this is a most difficult goal. As Shinran himself says in the *Kyogyoshinsho*:

*To realize shinjin oneself and to guide others
to shinjin*

*Is among difficult things yet even more difficult.
To awaken beings everywhere to great
compassion*

*Is truly to respond in gratitude to the
Buddha’s benevolence*

And yet, we know from Shakyamuni’s and Shinran’s life, and the lives of all our great teachers, that it is possible. But rather than being like a task we must strive to complete, we also see in their lives that studying, listening, and reflecting for oneself, and guiding others along the path is really a lifelong goal; it is a path that one constantly walks. And that, in Shinran’s understanding, it is actually the path that “walks me.” I think that when I was singing Ondokusan it suddenly hit me that this indeed is also my own lifelong path, my aspiration. And I think I speak for Fred in stating that this is why both of us personally pursued kyoshi ordination.

After the ceremony, we took a taxi to Shinran’s mausoleum (Otani Sobyō) to pay our respects. I think for both Fred and I, this was our third visit (we both had paid our respects during our tokudo ordination and also before that, during the Ho-onko Hoshidan for Fred and during the Lotus Band’s Japan Tour for myself), and the meaning seems to deepen with each successive visit. After that, since we had some free time—and maybe sensing that we still needed to wind down—Ito-sensei kindly took us on a wonderful 2-hour walking tour of the hillside Higashiyama area of Kyoto where, besides Shinran’s mausoleum, there is Rennyō’s birthplace, the historic temple where Shinran ordained at the age of 9, Honen Shonin’s temple, and other places of interest. It was very interesting to see these historic sites I’ve read so much about, and also, walking amidst the verdant greenery of Kyoto in the spring was a perfect way to relax after the week’s events.

In closing, we’d like to thank all the senseis of the North American District who have given us guidance during the past two years of training at the Shinshu Center of America and at the Los Angeles Betsuin. We especially want to thank Bishop Ito for guiding us through the

kyoshi ordination at the Honzan (and the tokudo ordination last year). We also thank Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa for his long, difficult work in translating our theses into Japanese. Of course, we are very indebted to Rev. Kawawata, with whom we began studying way back in 2007 as part of WCBT’s Minister’s Assistant Program. Throughout it all, Rev. Ken has always supported and encouraged us. As a personal note, I would not have been able to write my thesis without first having developed an appreciation for shomyo through my studies with Rev. Ken.

Lastly, we want to thank the WCBT Sangha for their strong encouragement and support. In a very real sense, when asked why we sought kyoshi ordination, why we seriously studied the Dharma, it was of course, “for us alone,” to deepen our personal understanding of Jodo Shinshu. We need to listen to the Dharma. But it could also be said that, echoing the truth of interdependence, this difficult task of receiving kyoshi ordination could not truly have been attained if it had literally been for us alone. We always are aware that there is a sangha encouraging us, and actually, carrying us along.

Gassho,
Rev. Peter Hata
Rev. Fred Brenion



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*So please come to our services and we'll talk
this over with you. But we will not force you.
All we can do is share our perspectives on what
Buddhism means to us, how we live it, what it
offers to us in terms of perspective. If you have
confusion on what Buddhism teaches we'll try
to clarify. But it comes down to you "seeing
it", "catching it", well, we'll see. In Buddhism
we teach that causes, conditions, and effects are
paramount in whether things like this will hap-
pen or not. Still, the fact that you want to catch
it is a good sign that you are catching it!*

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I recommend the regular 10 am Sunday Services (which includes those noted as "Shotsuki Services") for you right now. This weekend is our annual big Obon Festival which you are welcome to check out, but there's no service this Sunday. Upcoming regular services in July are on the 8th, 15th, and 29th. After the Dharma talk we usually have an adult discussion group where we talk about whatever comes to mind, and share questions and answers. I think that's what you probably would get the most out of. We'll look forward to meeting with you, and learning from you as well. That's how we grow too! See you soon, I hope.

Gassho,
Rev. Frederick Brenion

From = Ming

Subject = Clarify A Report on the lecture given by Dr. Luis Gomez at the Higashi Honganji Betsuin

Message = I enjoyed the writing of Dr. Gomez very much. I am quoting his article, "Mahayana Buddhism: Images of Liberation, Acceptance, and Adaptation to the Needs of Others," which I found in your Library, in my MA thesis. May I seek your advice if it is appropriate for academic purposes?

With Thanks, Ming

Dear Ming,

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your question, yes, if any of us that contribute to the Living Dharma Website can aid you in your thesis, we will do what we can. The article you are interested in was written by me from my notes of the lecture Dr. Gomez presented that day.

Best Wishes,
Rev. Peter Hata

Dear Rev. Peter Hata

Thanks for your prompt reply. It is really a delight to be able to read the notes from the lecture. Would you have any idea if Dr. Gomez will be publishing a book in relation to this lecture Mahayana Buddhism : Images of Liberation, Acceptance, and Adaptation to the Needs of Others ?

I really enjoy and admire his writings and thoughts. May I ask some more questions?

1) am I right Living Dharma is a Buddhist

organisation?

2) Can you help me understand more about this organisation please ?

Thanks in advance.

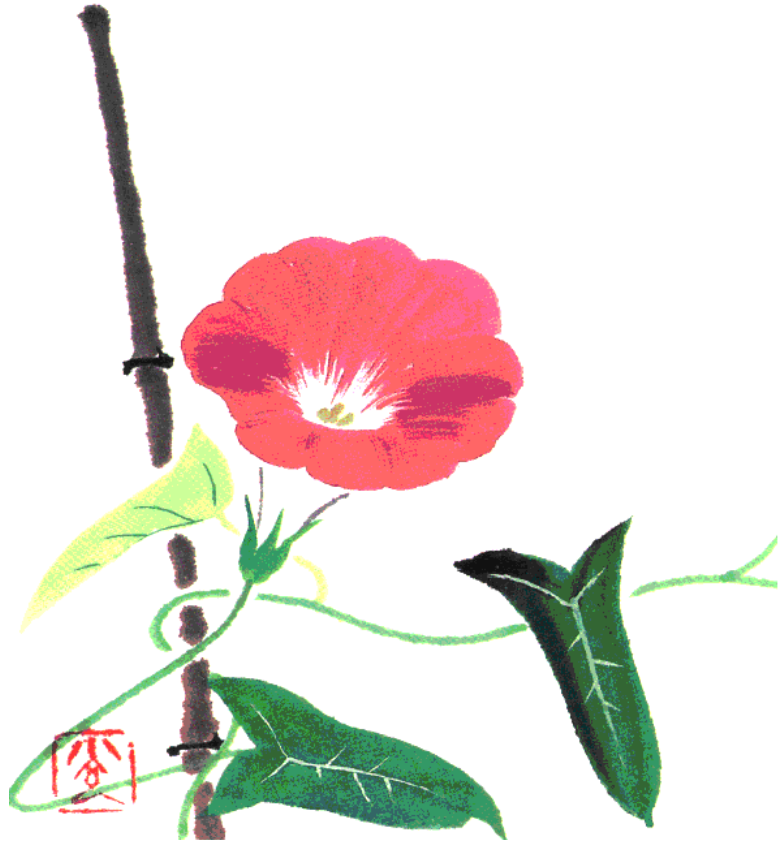
Best Regards, Ming

Hi Ming,

I believe Dr. Gomez' most recent book is The Land of Bliss, which presents his English translations of Sanskrit and Chinese versions of the Sukhavativyuha Sutras (key texts of Pure Land Buddhism). The book also includes in-depth introductions to these translations that are worth reading for his ideas about Mahayana/Pure Land Buddhism, and the processes involved in translating ancient texts. The book is available at Amazon.com.

Regarding your other questions, The Living Dharma is the website of West Covina Buddhist Temple, which belongs to the Shin (Pure Land) tradition of Buddhism. "Dharma" means the teachings or truths of the Buddha; the Dharma is "living" when these truths come alive for us in our everyday lives; this is the "liberation" Dr. Gomez refers to. If you are interested, there are many recommended books in our Bookstore and you can browse our Library (where you found the Dr. Gomez lecture), which has many in-depth articles and essays on a wide variety of Buddhist topics.

Best Wishes,
Rev. Peter Hata





T H E G A T E W A Y

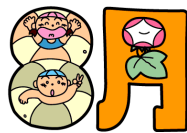
真宗大谷派 教師資格取得お祝い

河和田賢淳

本年4月幡ピーター並びブレニオンフレッド両師は真宗大谷派の教師資格を取得し、正式に真宗大谷派教師となりました。お二人はウエストコピナ東本願寺の門徒として長きに渡り仏法聴聞され、また積極的にお寺の教化活動にその中心となって参加して参りました。ウエストコピナ東本願寺では教化委員会が10数年前に組織され両氏ともに委員長を務められました。また同じ頃ご門徒の方々が日曜礼拝時にお話をするプログラムも始められ、お二人は何度法要の機会にお話しされておりました。2007年よりお寺ではその予算を組み、開教使の手助けをする開教使アシスタント養成プログラムが始まりました。このプログラムでは仏教、浄土真宗の教えまたお読経の練習がカリキュラムとして生まれ、両師はもっと積極的にお寺をまた開教使の援助をしたいとの願いを持ってこのプログラムに参加されました。お二人共に2009年このプログラムを終えられの当寺50周年慶讃法要の折にその終了証が授与されました。両氏はその後さらに真宗の僧侶となりまた大谷派の教師資格を取得しお寺やこの北米開教区のお手伝いをされたという願いをもたれ、その後3回の研修（一回3日間泊まり込みの研修）を受けられ、昨年7月、本山にて得度式にてお剃刀をうけられ正式な大谷派僧侶として新たな歩みを始められました。また昨年暮れには研修を終えられ、

論文を提出しその審査に合格され、本年4月再度本山にて研修を受けられ正式に大谷派教師の資格を取得されました。両師は初めてすべての課程を英語によって受けられ、大谷派教師となられた方となりました。将来この北米また英語圏での英語研修による教師取得の可能性を示された事です。これからのお二人のご活躍が期待されております。この両師の教師取得にあたり、ご援助頂きました、ウエストコピナ東本願寺、北米教区、ご本山、そして研修指導された開教使並び講師の先生方に心より御礼申し上げます。

お二人に心からお祝いを申しあげますと共に、この国で生まれ育った方が僧侶になられ多くの方が親鸞聖人の教えを聞かれ、お念仏の教えが広く聞かれるように念じることです。



お寺ニュース

8月日本語祥月・法話会

定例日本語祥月法要並び法話会は8月2日午後7時半よりお参りされます。どうぞお友達をお誘いの上お参りください。

ラスベガス基金募集旅行

前号にてお知らせしましたが8月10日ー12日お寺のラスベガス旅行が行なわれます。8月8日午後4時センターよりバスが出発

します。今年の宿泊はダウンタウンのメインストリートステーションです。参加費は交通費、宿泊費が含まれ140ドルです。まだ少し座席がございますのでご参加ください。申し込みは西原リリアン夫人(626)780-9866または河和田開教使までご連絡ください。

オールディーズダンス基金募集

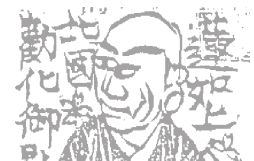
秋のオールディーズダンス基金募集は9月22日(土)午後8時より開催されます。若い方々にお薦めいただきますようお願い致します。

お彼岸法要

秋の英語お彼岸法要は9月23日(日)午後4時半よりお参り致します。どうぞ今から予定に入れておいて下さい。法要後お斎の接待もございます。

日本語座談会開催

来る9月より日本語仏教講座を再会致します。この座談会は第2火曜日第4火曜日の午後1時よりセンターで行われます。参加ご希望の方は河和田開教使までご連絡ください。(626)913-0622



8月祥月法要

法話会

8月2日

午後7時半

East San Gabriel Valley
Japanese Community Center, Inc.

West Covina Buddhist Temple
1203 W. Puente Avenue, West Covina, CA 91790
P.O. Box 1616, West Covina, CA 91793

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GATEWAY



August 2012 - - Vol. XLVI No. 8

August

- 2 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 5 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 5 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 10-12 Las Vegas Trip
- 12 No Sunday Service
- 19 No Sunday Service
- 26 No Sunday Service

8月行事予定

- 2日 午後7時半 法話会
- 5日 午前8時半 理事会
- 5日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 10-12日 ラスベガス旅行基金募集
- 12日 日曜礼拝お休み
- 19日 日曜礼拝お休み
- 26日 日曜礼拝お休み

September

- 2 No Sunday Service
- 6 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 9 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 9 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 11 10:00 am Bonbu Class
- 16 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 22 8:00 pm Oldies Dance
- 23 4:30 pm Ohigan Service
- 25 10:00 am Bonbu Class
- 30 10:00 am Sunday Service

9月行事予定

- 2日 日曜礼拝お休み
- 6日 午後7時半 法話会
- 9日 午前8時半 理事会
- 9日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 16日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 22日 午後8時 オールディスダンス
- 23日 午後4時半 お彼岸法要
- 30日 午前10時 日曜礼拝

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あなたを

生きている

宗祖親鸞聖人750回御遠忌テーマ