At the Betsuin’s recent Fall Ohigan service Higashi Honganji’s Head Administrator, Bishop Ko Yasuhara, gave a wonderful Dharma talk. Thanks to Rev. Hasegawa’s English translation, an excerpt of it, entitled “The Heart of Reverence,” has been added to our Library in the Memorable Dharma Talks area (also included in this issue). I was especially struck by the correlation between Yasuhara-sensei’s emphasis on “reverence” and what I perceived, after meeting him, to be his own heart of reverence.

Also added is “Growing the Sangha,” a timely essay by the Mid-west Buddhist Temple’s head minister, Rev. Ron Miyamura, which addresses the increasing need at Shin temples in America—especially as our temple’s Baby Boomer leaders enter retirement age—for new members. The key point of his essay is that our future rests on learning how to address the needs of our non-traditional visitors (i.e., those not raised as Shin Buddhists). Most Shin temples in urban areas receive frequent visitations but these generally don’t result in Sangha growth. As Rev. Miyamura states, “In recent years, we see a lot of initial interest in Buddhism, but we do not know how to transform that interest into a curiosity enough to join the Sangha.”

As a minister himself, Rev. Miyamura accepts responsibility for this issue when he states, “Looking back on my education and training, all the emphasis is on the Dharma which is really necessary. However, it was not balanced with the Sangha and how to manage and nurture a Sangha; and we were not shown the value of the Sangha.” At the same time however, he asks the Sangha itself, “Are we really up to the challenge to accept diverse

Please see L.D. NEWS, con’t on page 4

The Heart of Reverence

Excerpt of a Dharma Talk by Bishop Ko Yasuhara at the Los Angeles Betsuin Fall Higan Service on September 18, 2011 (English translation by Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa)

Shinran Shonin understood the essence of Sakyamuni Buddha’s teaching as the Nembutsu, “Namu Amida Butsu,” and he has passed down the teaching of Nembutsu to us here today. We, the followers of Shinran Shonin’s teaching, single-mindedly listen to the teaching of the Nembutsu on the occasion of the Ohigan Service. What is the Nembutsu teaching?

The first line of the Shoshinge is Kimyo muryoju nyorai. In English, it means “I take refuge in Amida Buddha.”

The Nembutsu teaches us the importance of being humble, of awakening to the sense of humility. And the ultimate form of humility is the heart of reverence. Every religion begins with the heart of reverence, but especially in Buddhism, the heart of reverence is very important. I’d like to quote from the Kyogyoshinsho, Shinran Shonin’s major work:

Taking refuge includes the bowing reverently in salutation. But the bowing is just the gesture of reverence and not necessarily the taking refuge, though the latter includes the bowing.

It is a very short passage but is very

Please see REVERENCE, con’t on page 4
DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

At this special time of the year, may you all enjoy the following:

- Turkey
- Humor
- Anecdotes
- Nutrition
- Kindness
- Self-contentment

With Gassho,
Dharma School Staff

Quote of the Month

In Nagarjuna’s mind, a child creates the parents. A child is the cause of a man and a woman becoming parents. Conversely, the union of that couple causes the birth of a child. The relationship must be considered from both sides. Nagarjuna’s explanation is important because if parents and children truly understand their relationship, they cannot be disconnected.

Problems arise in a family when parents fail to grasp this relationship. They cannot see they were given an opportunity to become parents by the child. In reality, problems between children and parents are caused by a strong sense that parents give birth to children. Parents sometimes say, “I created you so you must obey me.” Children respond, “I didn’t ask you to give birth to me.” Relationships seen from such self-centeredness creates many problems.

By seeing the flip side of this relationship, each side gains a broader perspective into the nature of their existence. Consequently, parents can say, “Thank you for giving me this opportunity to become a parent.” Children can say, “Thank you for giving me life.” If we gain this perspective, then many conflicts would disappear. This is called “a buddha and a buddha, thinking about each other.” Each person regards the other as a buddha.

-Rev. Ichijo Ogawa
December Birthdays
Allison Haraguchi, Kyle Kagawa, Chris Nakano, Denise Underwood, Larry Oshima, Susan Iwama, Johnny Martinez, Sandra Nakano, Jonathan Ogino, Kristin Dubble, Merry Jitosho, Jessica Saucedo, Taylor Saucedo, Marvin Bernstein, Katreina Sakaue, Brandon Kwan, Brett Miyamoto, Julie Griffith, Jack Wear, Sean Underwood

Shotsuki/Bodhi Day Service
Our Shotsuki Service and Bodhi Day Service will be held on Sunday, December 4, at 10 AM. Our Guest speaker will be Mrs. Deanna Matsumoto. Please come and give Mrs. Matsumoto a West Covina welcome.

Year-end Service
Our Year-end Service, Oseibo gift presentation and potluck dinner will be held on Sunday, December 11 at 4:00 PM. Entertainment will be provided by the Dharma School, youth organizations and other members of the Sangha. If you have a talent you’d like to share, please contact Diane Hata or Rev. Ken.

The potluck assignments are as follows: If your last name begins with A-K, please bring a main dish and a salad; L-N, bring a main dish and rice dish; O-Y, bring a main dish and a dessert.

Please join us for a fun evening of entertainment and feasting on the delicious potluck spread from the West Covina Temple members.

Mochitsuki
WCBT’s annual Mochitsuki will be held on Sunday, December 18. Beginning at 7:00AM, the special mochi rice, which will be distributed earlier to be washed and soaked the night before, will be steamed until it is ready to be poked and pounded and eventually molded into smooth mochi shapes. Some are filled with sweet bean azuki and others are made into the traditional New Years symbolic offering, okasane. The Jrs will be serving their delicious breakfast and are asking everyone to bring a $5 toy for the toy drive. Come and enjoy the breakfast and join us in this annual tradition.

New Years Day Service
A special service to commemorate the new year will be held Sunday, January 1, 2011, at 10:00 AM. Following the service, Jeanne Kawawata will be serving her delicious Oshiruko so please let Rev. Ken know if you’re planning to attend.

Eitaikyo & General Meeting
WCBT Eitaikyo will be held on Sunday, January 22 at 10 a.m. followed by the General Meeting. A fundraising luncheon will be provided by the Jr. YBA. Join us for our yearly service and meeting and stay to support our Jrs!

On Friday, October 28, 2011, Dr. Nobuo Haneda (at head of table) lectured in Japanese on the topic of “Finding Shakyamuni and Shinran in Daily Life” at the Betsuin’s North American District Dobo Retreat; Haneda-sensei gave a similar lecture on Saturday October 29 in English.
REVERENCE, con't from page 1

important. Simply put, “bowing” means “lowering your head,” while
“taking refuge” means “your head bows down naturally.” The two look
similar, but they have totally different meanings. The gesture of bowing
includes the heart of reverence, but does not necessarily mean that your head
bows down without effort. Your head bowing down naturally always means
taking refuge and includes bowing reverently in salutation. This is what
the quote means.

The first line of the Shoshinge is
Kimyo muryoju nyorai. In English, it
means “I take refuge in Amida Bud-
Dhá.” In other words, we bow our
heads in reverence before Amida
Buddha. In this case, we don’t bow
our heads; rather our heads bow down
naturally. In truth though, we humans
can bow our heads, but find it impos-
sible to have our heads bow down
naturally. That is because of our attach-
ment to our ego-self. The human being
who is attached to the ego-self can have
his or her head lowered down only
through the working of the Buddha
which happens when we listen to the
teaching. We are given the heart of tak-
ing refuge by listening to the Buddha’s
teaching. Taking refuge has the same
meaning as Namu has.

In order to clarify what I mean, let
me talk about Life. My life has been
given to me by my parents and has
been supported by the lives of many
kinds of beings. Our life is something
we cannot privatize. Even so, we do
think of our lives as belonging to us
and try to control how we live. This is
the source of our anxieties and suffer-
ing. We cannot get rid of the suffering
in our life by listening to the Buddha’s
teaching, but we are made to realize the
meaning of suffering by the teaching.
By being made to realize the meaning
of suffering, we are given the courage
to accept those challenges and to live
our lives to the fullest.

Humility is the source of our will
and our energy to live. And it is also
the source of our consideration toward
others. One of the problems we have in
this modern age is that we lose sight of
humbleness.

I sincerely hope that we live our
lives being able to say, “I was born as a
human being solely with the purpose
of listening to the Buddha’s teaching.”
Listening to the Buddha’s teaching
is not just a solitary activity. When
listening to the Buddha’s teaching, we
always listen to it together with our
fellow followers and with people who
are closely connected with us. There
is a phrase, “Jishin Kyoninshin” in the
teaching, which means, “To realize
shinjin oneself and to guide others to
shinjin” (The Collected Works of Shinran).
Let us live our lives being able to say,
“I live together in mutual dependence
with everyone.” To put it more precisely,
let us live our lives being awakened
to the preciousness of relationships
with others through listening to the
Buddha’s teaching and reciting the
Nembutsu. This is what the buddhas
are always wishing for us.

Namu Amida Butsu.

L.D. NEWS, con’t from page 1

people who have no real idea what it
means to be a Buddhist?”

In becoming a Shinshu priest my-
self, I feel grateful to have been able
to gain a deeper understanding of our
tradition’s teachings and rituals. Yet I
personally feel at a loss for solutions
when facing the complex challenges
of our 21st century, both as an individual
and as a member of the WCBT Sangha.
Because of the scope of the challenge,
I believe our future depends on both
clergy and lay taking responsibility
and creatively working together to
grow the Sangha.” Please read this
thought-provoking essay and share
your thoughts with us via e-mail or in
person.

Gassho,
Peter Hata

Selected E-mail

Hi there!
I just wanted to let you know how I
came across your page, KidsLinks.html,
while googling “science links.” I actu-
ally found your web page to be pretty
helpful! I’ve used some of the informa-
tion towards my lesson plan, I hope you
don’t mind. Anyway, my students came
rtobsn.net/resources/great-science-
links-for-kids/, and thought it would
be a great replacement link for “Her
Online” or “Kids Space” on your web
page. Those links aren’t working. Would
you mind adding it to your page? My
students really think the visitors of your
page would find it useful. They would
be so thrilled to see their link suggestion
up on your page, and even more thrilled
because they’d be getting a pizza party
and extra credit. You really see kids get
motivated when extra credit is involved.
Just a friendly suggestion. Let me know
what you think!

Cheers,
Sana Evan

Dear Sana,

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma
Website, and for pointing out the problem
with the links. I’ve recently gone through
all the links on our site, but those were just
about the last ones on my To Do list. Hope
it’s not too late for your pizza party because
I did actually check out all the links on your
suggested and then linked directly to over a
dozen of the sites that were my favorites.
Thanks to you and your students, and let’s
hope some curious kids out there can really
get inspired!

Best Wishes,

Peter Hata
Dear Sol Ta Triane,

I’m glad you enjoyed the articles on our website! Certainly on the Buddhist side there’s great latitude in seeing common unities with other religions. In fact Buddhism commands that we are to be respectful of other traditions and to listen carefully to criticisms of ourselves, we might actually learn something! For myself the further I entered that focus on the human. I have come to appreciate that what Buddhism brings to the table is the ability to critique, to get under the supernaturalistic facade, or magical ways of thinking, and bring out the human dilemma of our suffering and address our facing up to that problem within ourselves, because we are the source of the problem. Of course it is so easy to overinvest one’s own group to the exclusion of all others. It is hard to be humble and acknowledge that the other might have something worthwhile to say and to share. For myself I am glad to have found a faith that allows me, in fact tells me to grow, mature, and to be open for further growth. It is counted as a virtue to be childlike in matters of faith, but I think that many use it as an excuse to be childish instead. Such a pity. The whole point of being a child is to learn to grow up! Still, we all grow at different rates, and I am still far from being really, really mature. Just ask anyone here! Anyway, I hope you will continue to share, and continue in your explorations of our common unities! With deep gassho (hand put together and bowing towards you),

Frederick

From: Sol Ta Triane
To: The Living Dharma Website
Subject: Re: Article on understanding Christianity
Message = Hello,

My name is Kristen and I am a student from Azusa Pacific University. Currently, one of my classes is teaching about other world religions outside of Christianity and how they are similar or different to what Christians believe. Recently, we have been assigned to read a chapter on Buddhism from our textbook and the assignment associated with that is to evaluate the description given by the author to test whether it is accurate or not. Therefore, myself as well as a small group of students also from my class, were hoping we could meet with one of the leaders in your community (for 30 minutes to an hour) to discuss the depiction of Buddhism given by this author. We were hoping to discuss

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If this author gives a correct view on Buddhism or if his description is biased and inaccurate. I would gladly send you the chapter anytime if you would like to look over it before the interview. Do you think that is something you would be willing to do for us and if so, would it be possible to meet sometime in the next two weeks?

Thank you so much for your consideration,

Kristen

Dear Kristen,

I’m sorry—I just saw your e-mail this morning, but you are welcome to come to our service at 10 am today and discuss your question. I would say what you are asking is a tough question since Buddhism, like Christianity, is really a diverse mix of doctrines and beliefs, maybe even more so. However, like Christianity, there are certain core doctrines that must be present for a teaching to be “authentically Buddhist.”

Best Wishes,

Peter Hata

From = Cole Whitehouse
Subject = Question
Message = A classmate and I attended your temple service last Sunday, and we were wondering if Reverend Ken, or one of the other priests would be willing to serve as a cultural mentor? What that would entail is meeting with us for one hour a week for the next four weeks to discuss various aspects of life through a buddhist perspective as well as the different cultural differences between us and them to better understand the other culture. I understand if the time commitment is too much so just let me know. We would be honored, however, to be able to learn more about buddhism as a life style with your help. Let us know.

Thanks!

Dear Cole,

For myself, I would be delighted to volunteer, though I am certain that Rev. Ken and Rev. Peter would also be happy to talk and share with you. Rev. Ken won’t be in for this Sunday service. Peter and I will be. I’ll be doing the Dharma talk this occasion. I’m still rather new at this so I hope it won’t be too amateurish! Anyway we can talk afterwards and see where this will take us. I enjoy opportunities to share and explore differing views and approaches. So let’s plan for this Sunday if all works out. And if Rev. Peter or Rev. Ken is more suitable for your needs I will have no problem in stepping aside, so have no fear there!

Sincerely,

Frederick

From = Fe Marie
Subject = Sunday Service
Message = Hello,

I was just wondering what your Sunday services are like. I need to conduct an ethnographic assignment for my anthropology class for CSU Fullerton, and I need to observe a religious ritual that is different from those that I know of.

Dear Fe,

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your question, you are welcome to ask your questions then.

Best Wishes,

Peter Hata

From = Max
Subject = questions
Message = Hi I am a college student in a world religions class and I was asked by my professor to interview people from different religions and was wondering if you would allow me to ask a few questions regarding your religion and your choice of it.

Dear Max,

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your question, you are welcome to attend any services of ours. Check the calendar page for dates/times. You can see some of our rituals on our 50th Anniversary page. However, these are from our anniversary celebration, so our normal services are not such big events.

Best Wishes,

Peter Hata

The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple
報恩講を終えて

本年も無事報恩講をお勤めする事ができました。今年の報恩講は御正宗報恩講といわれ、丁度親鸞聖人750回御遠忌にあたる報恩講でした。北米開教区の僧侶が集まる機会を持って、報恩講の勤行である、正信偈真四句目下げ、五海念仏和讃の練習を重ねました。そしてこのウエストコピナでもこの伝統のある勤めを何と9名の僧侶、また御門徒の皆様と一緒に勤めたりました。雨にもかかわらず沢山の方々がお参りになり、伊東輪番のご法話に耳を傾けたことでした。今年はこの北米からも京都の本山で厳修された750回御遠忌と並びに世界同朋大会に70名以上の方が参加を予定しておりました。しかし3月11日に起きた東日本大震災により法要と大会は変更を余儀なくされ、日本行きは中止されました。震災後北米教区において義援金への寄付をお願いし多くの方々より寄付を頂き、本国をもって寄付させていただきました。皆様のご協力に心から御礼申しあげます。

この地震を通じて私どもはいのちや人生について再考させられる機会を頂きました。何が次の瞬間に起こるか分からないのちを人生を生きていること、いかに人間が造ったものも破れたこと、自然の営みは人間の思いを超えて動いていることなどを知らされました。そして地震の前にただ何も出来ず、呆然としていた自分を発見しました。被災地では近しい方を失い、住居を失った方々が、悲しみ、失意、不安を抱えながら生活の立て直しにかかっておられます。此の現実を受け入れ、新たな生活の場の再生に励んでいるのです。亡なられた方々に哀悼を表すると共に被災され今もなお不自由な生活を強いられている方々にお見舞い申し上げます。

この報恩講では私どもに仏道を開いて下さった親鸞聖人に感謝の念を表すとともに、仏法を通して自分の本当の姿を一生見続けて来られた親鸞聖人生き方に私の人生を見て行く事です。親鸞聖人の生きられた時代も決して平穏な時代ではなく飢餓や災害が多くありました。その様な時代の中で何が本当の救いなのかを真剣に問い続け、念仏のみぞまことと、何があろうとも仏法とともに生きる事以外、なめあてにする事が出来ないという事を身を持って体験され、聖人は90年の人生を生ききられたのです。

私は仏法の聞き続けた聖人に力強さを感じるとともに、仏法が親鸞聖人と支え、仏法に力を頂いて生きられた90年のただの事として知らされます。また私どもの上にも同じ力強さを頂き、何が起きても、いのちのあらが限りは柔軟に力強く生き続けることができることを知らされることです。

(河和田記)

お寺ニュース

12月法話会祥月法要・忘年会

今年も早くも12月となりました。みなさまにはこのような一年でしたでしょうか。12月の法話会・祥月法要は1日（木）午後7時よりセンターにてお勤めいたします。法要後一年を振り返りつつ皆様と楽しい時間を過ごしたいと思います。

法話会とお寺でお刺身が用意されます。皆様方にはご自慢のお料理やデザートをお持ちください。またご自慢の歌や踊りもご用意ください。また歌や隠し芸も持って来てもと来ください。

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報恩講を終えて

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December
1  7:30 pm  Howakai Japanese Service
4  8:30 am  Board Meeting
4  10:00 am  Shotsuki/Bodhi Day Service
6  10:00 am  Bonbu Class
11 4:00 pm  Year-end Service
18 7:00 am  Mochitsuki

January 2012
1  10:00 am  New Year’s Day Service
5  7:30 pm  Howakai Japanese Service
8  8:30 am  Board Meeting
8  10:00 am  Shotsuki Service
10 10:00 am  Bonbu Class
15 10:00 am  Sunday Service
22 10:00 am  Eitaikyo Service/General Meeting
24 10:00 am  Bonbu Class
29 10:00 am  Sunday Service

I N S I D E  T H I S  I S S U E
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2012年1月行事予定
1  日 午前10時  修正会法要
5  日 午後7時半  法話会
8  日 午前8時半  理事会
8  日 午前10時  祥月法要
10 日 午後 1時  同信会（座談会）
15 日 午前10時  日曜礼拝
23 日 午前10時  永代経法要／総会新年会
24 日 午後 1時  同信会（座談会）
29 日 午前10時  日曜礼拝

今、いのちが
あなたを
生きている
宗祖親鸞聖人750回御遠忌テーマ