Over the past few months (years?), certain improvements have been in the works for the website, but have yet to be implemented. Sometime this year however, I will transition to a newer website design application. This is necessary to add at least a few of the modern navigational aids most websites (and at least a few Buddhist temple websites) have today, such as drop-down menus. Now that the Library and Real World sections have nearly 200 articles, a more user-friendly organization style is needed. Also, I’ve asked Rev. Fred Brenion to help expand the selections in our site’s Bookstore. There are only eight selections currently, but we can expand that considerably. I’m hoping our bookstore can be distinguished by its choices.

Gassho,
Peter Hata

Happy New Year!
By Rev. Kenjun Kawawata

First of all I would like to express my thanks to everyone who has given me and the temple great support, suggestions, and encouragement during the last year.

Last year was a very busy and active year for WCBT. We had 6 major services in addition to regular Sunday services. We also had 7 major fundraisers and a lecture series. I am so glad we could make last year a successful year too. Thank you very much.

Last July, Peter and Fred received tokudo ordination and became Jodo Shinshu priests. They always lead chanting with me every Sunday. And they also deliver dharma messages when I am absent at temple. This year they are going to receive kyoshi ordination which is like a teacher’s credential for Shinshu ministers. I’m really impressed with their determination to walk on the path of Jodo Shinshu and have a deep appreciation for their effort and time to share the Buddha dharma with all of us.

Once they receive Kyoshi credentials, we will increase the number of lecture series and classes and will have more opportunities to provide religious education for our members and people who want to listen to the dharma. We also would like to have more Yonsei and Gosei participate in our temple activities and operation.

I think that our community is changing and we have more people and

Please see YEAR-END, con’t on page 4
DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

Seasons Greetings everyone! To help prevent brain-freeze over the winter break, try to find 16 words which you can spell using S-H-I-N-R-A-N. Two-letter words do count! (answers below) Good luck and Happiest New Year ever!

With Gassho,
Diane Hata

Clockwise from above: Diane Hata MCs, Johnny Martinez makes Oseibo presentations, the ladies team (Joanie Martinez, Claudia Haraguchi, Pat Sato, Joy Kitaura & Jeanne Kawawata) vs the mens team (Ted Kato, Johnny, Rev. Fred, Rev. Peter & Rev. Ken) in WCRT’s version of Family Feud, Bodhi Tree Band, John Erickson plays an original composition on his piano and Peter Hata, Taiji Miyagawa & Bob Stack jam to A Foggy Day. Opposite page: Bodhi Tree Band with Leo Kowalski, Yasmin Whang, Sean Underwood, Noah Kowalski & Matthew Ormseth.

Above: at the Dec. 4 Bodhi Day Service, Mrs. Deanna Matsumoto gave an interesting slide show presentation on the history of Japanese-Americans in the Los Angeles area, which included some early pictures of Higashi Honganji Sanghas.

Quote of the Month
The buddha-dharma is about examining our lives, our behavior, our speech, and the means by which we earn our keep on this planet—and how all these activities connect with everything else. We have only one choice. Either we awaken, or we do not.

-Steve Hagen

Answers: is, an, in, ash, ran, air, sin, has, his, sir, inn, rash, hair, hairs, rain, rains
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. Rev. Takafumi Bansaka will be our special speaker. A fundraising luncheon will be provided by the Jr. YBA for $10. All lunches will be presale only so make sure you contact one of the Jrs to get your Eitaikyo lunch tickets. Join us for our yearly service and meeting and stay to support our Jrs!

Family Retreat
Our annual Family Retreat will be held on the weekend of February 17-19 at the Newport Beach Higashi Hon-ganji this year. Expect another great weekend with stimulating discussions, quality time with sangha friends, access to the beach and as always, too much food. For those of you who are lamenting the change from San Luis Obispo, think of it as saving 3 hours of driving time each way.

See Rev Ken for more info.

Pet’s Memorial Service
A special service will be held on February 12 at 10:00 AM to remember our animal friends. Everyone who has lost a pet is invited to pay tribute to them on this special day.

Kiku Crafts Thank You
Our 3rd annual Kiku Crafts & Food Fair was held on Sunday, November 6 under rainy skies. Our determined Sangha members geared up to cook, serve and help in anyway. Over 20 craft fair vendors arrived to set up their wares, hoping the weather would clear up. Unfortunately the rain fell steadily throughout most of the day but despite it, we also had a slow but steady flow of customers come by.

A big “thank you” to everyone who came out to help. Whether it was helping set up the gym the night before, working in the kitchen, barbecuing in the rain, delivering lunches to vendors, welcoming customers while sitting out in the cold, setting up the mike, coming up with trivia questions, handling the raffle or just coming out to shop to support our vendors and buy some of that great West Covina food, we couldn’t have done it without everyone’s help.

Thank You!
Hisako Koga
proceeded with Sutra chanting led by Rev. Kawawata, with Revs. Brenion and Hata assisting, and also included the gatha “A Special Place,” with the Sangha accompanied by the Bodhi Tree Band.

Next, Rev. Kawawata gave a heartfelt Dharma talk. First, he sincerely thanked the entire Sangha for their support of WCBT throughout the year, not just for attending our services, study classes, and retreats, but also for participating in the various fund-raisers throughout the year that support the temple financially. Moving on, he discussed the topic of impermanence by relating his very recent experience of trying to frantically prepare for his December Japan trip—he was going on a three week tour with the Kinnara Gagaku Group of Senshin Buddhist Temple, and needed to complete various computer-related duties before leaving—only to have his computer suddenly “die.” And as we all know, very early on the morning of December 1st, we all experienced the unprecedented Southern California windstorm which knocked out power to hundreds of thousands of people (including Sensei). But he also ended his talk on a positive note by mentioning how he looked forward to Fred Brenion and Peter Hata completing their kyoshi ministerial training next year and that, at that time, WCBT will be able to enter a new phase of listening to and sharing the Dharma together.

The next part of the Year End program was the annual Oseibo Gift presentations to WCBT’s dedicated staffers by WCBT president Mr. Johnny Martinez. As he called each staffer up to the podium to receive a thank you gift from the temple, he also introduced and discussed how they tirelessly contribute to the operation of the temple.

The entertainment portion began with the Jr. YBA skit, which was a clever game based on Family Feud, and which was often quite hilarious. There were two teams, one made of “the men” (Rev. Ken, Rev. Peter, Rev. Fred, Johnny Martinez, and Ted Kato) which was pitted against “the women” (Claudia Haraguchi, Joanie Martinez, Pat Sato, Joy Kitaura, Jeanne Kawawata). Just as in the Family Feud, one contestant from each team faced each other with a bell in-between. When the question was asked, the contestants had to guess the answers given by the Sangha from a survey that had been previously taken—and tap the bell first. Some contestants got so into it that instead of lightly tapping the bell, they literally smacked it off the table! But the most interesting difference with this game was that the survey questions were specifically about WCBT’s services and about Buddhism itself. Everyone was glued to their seats to hear the answers since the questions were very “close to home.”

There were some fairly easy questions, such as, “Which hand do you hold your ojuzu in?” In the survey, most of the Sangha answered “left” (whew), but yes, 13% actually said “right.” To the question, “What is your most important Buddhist practice during Sunday Service?,” there were many good answers like “listen to the Dharma” (42%), “recite nembutsu” (17%), “chanting sutra” (11%), “gassho” (8%), and “discussion group” (5%). Of course, then there were those who couldn’t pick just one and wanted to cover their bases and responded with “all of the above” (8%). Hmmm… since when was “all of the above” a legitimate survey response on Family Feud?

Not surprisingly—since it is frequently emphasized in sermons and discussion, “impermanence” was the most popular response (31%) to the question, “What is the most meaningful...
YEAR-END, con’t from page 4

Jodo Shinshu teaching?” But it seemed to be the question, “What is the hardest thing about being a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist?” that led to some of the most interesting responses. For example, besides expected responses like “being non-judgemental,” “self-examination,” and “letting go of your ego,” there were several responses that reflect our larger context in America, such as “having to deal with intense Christians at my school,” living in a Judeo-Christian society, and “being seen as a heretic.”

Then there a few realistic responses like “getting to service on time”; apparently, not everyone is a “morning person.” Of course, there was at least one person who was seemingly overwhelmed by it all and responded with “everything” regarding what was hard about being a Jodo Shinshu Buddhist. Maybe he/she should hook up with the person who responded to this same question with, “nothing” (both are right).

In the musical portion, Mr. John Erickson played an enjoyable and evocative solo piano piece he had recently composed entitled, “The Illusion of Hope and the Affirmation of Belief” that had everyone listening very intently. Following him, the Bodhi Tree Band played a very well-received set consisting of “Simply to Forget” (a contemporary rock tune encouraging us to try to make the world a better place for all), the ever-popular “Sukiyaki,” and the pop hit, “Kids,” by the group MGMT. Next Bodhi’s talented vocalist Yasmin Whang sang a very beautiful and Buddhistic contemporary Christmas tune entitled, “My Grown Up Christmas List,” accompanied by Peter Hata on guitar and special guest Taiji Miyagawa, an accomplished jazz bassist. As a finale, Peter and Taiji were then joined by the mellow sounds of Bob Stack on tenor sax. The trio improvised several melodic choruses on the well-known Gershwim gem entitled, “A Foggy Day.”

Of course, no sooner had the ending chord of that song finished sounding that everyone rushed their growling stomachs to the kitchen to eat!

Because of the diverse contributions of the Sangha, this was a memorable Year-End Service, arguably one of the most successful ever. Perhaps the most encouraging aspect was that it was also a very well-attended service, with a sizable number of the people being newcomers who have been active at WCBT less than a year.

L.D. NEWS, con’t from page 1

Selected E-mail
From = Enrique Reyes
Subject = Buddhist’s Life in California
Message = To whom it may concern,
Hi, I am doing a school research as to how Buddhism is a lived tradition in California. Where may I find more information or is there someone that may be willing to answer small questions/ interview via email?
Thank you for your time.

Dear Enrique,
Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your question, there is a great deal of relevant information on our website. Go to our Library page and browse the titles of the various links. For example, in the “Memorable Dharma Talks” section, Rev. John Doami’s “True Listening Can Change Your Life” and Rev. Maryin Harada’s “Message to Baby Boomers—The Best Years of Your Life Are Ahead” are two great essays. In the “Living Dharma Articles” section, which are thoughtful essays written by our lay Sangha: “Searching for the Way,” by Reiko Ikehara Nelson and “My Path to Buddhism,” by Julie Griffith are quite relevant to your research. Finally, in the Retreats and Seminars section, I’d recommend any of the reports on our temple’s family retreats at the San Luis Obispo Buddhist Temple; there are four different short reports for 2004 and 2005, with guest speaker Dr. Franz Metscalf (author of “What Would Buddha Do?”), 2009 (with Revs. Fred Brenion and myself), and 2011 (with Rev. Mas Kodani). While these retreats feature lectures on Buddhist teachings, they are probably most popular with our Sangha because over the weekend, participants get to relax and enjoy each other’s company away from the hustle and bustle of city life (San Luis Obispo is about a 4 hour drive from Southern California). At these retreats, listening to the teachings, cooking and eating together, and enjoying the beautiful scenery, Buddhism truly comes to life as a member of the Sangha. If you need more info, feel free to contact us.
Best Wishes,
Peter Hata
The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple

From = June Kuehn
Subject = Cookbook
Message = I am looking for a cookbook that came from recipes from members at a Buddhist temple but can’t recall which location it came from. Do you have a book of this kind? Thank you.
June Kuehn

Dear June,
Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your question, you didn’t mention which city you live in (that might be a helpful clue), but in any case, we don’t have a cookbook, not yet at least. But I recommend you go to the Buddhist Churches of America’s Bookstore and check out the various temple cookbooks they stock: http://stores.buddhistbookstore.com/Categories.bok

Near the bottom of the page, they have cookbooks from the Makawao Hongwanji Temple, Buddhist Church of Lodi, Buddhist Temple of San Diegno, Ekko Temple, Gardena Buddhist Church, Los Angeles Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, Stockton Buddhist Temple, and Toronto Buddhist Church. If those titles don’t ring a bell, you can always e-mail Gayle (sales@bcabookstore.com) and ask her to recommend a cookbook.
Best Wishes,
Peter Hata
The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple

From: “Dharma Learner”
Subject: Mahayana sutras in English
Dear friends, Of the 31 Mahayana Buddhist sutras posted on this website at <>http://www.sutrasmantras.info, please see L.D. NEWS, con’t on page 6
Sutra 8 is actually a subsection in the Shurangama Sutra. As Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva teaches in the Heart Sutra (Sutra 16) the principle, Great Might Arrived Bodhisattva teaches in Sutra 8 the practice. It is a real gem. Buddhists are recommended to recite this mini Sutra from memory along with the Heart Sutra. This website does not represent any Buddhist group, but is intended to serve all Buddhist students. Would you please share this website with your friends? Thank you and wishing you joy in the Dharma,

Sincerely,

Dharma Learner

Dear Dharma Learner,

Thank you for sharing your website with us. It is always good to be aware of the great teachings that have been given to us. I see that your site presents the great Chinese teachers of the Pure Land. Our own tradition, which developed in Japan, Jodo Shinshu, looks with great pride on our Chinese inheritance that we received from such great teachers as Donran, Doshakuk, and Zendo. In Japan, the great teacher Honen learned from them, and his disciple, Shinran, carried the the Pure Land Way to new heights and brought it to our hearts today.

I think you might find Shinran inspiring as he found the way of relying completely on Amida’s Vows. Thank you again. I appreciate the hard work that our spiritual cousins in the Pure Land Way have done in keeping the Chinese Buddhist heritage alive and vibrant for us all to study.

Sincerely,

Frederick Brenion
The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple

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 I was wondering if you would allow me to ask a few questions regarding your religion and the choice of it.

Dear Max,

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your question, you are welcome to attend any Sunday Service. Towards the end of our services, we usually have an informal discussion group and you are welcome to ask your questions then.

Best Wishes,

Peter Hata
The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple

From = Anh Chung
Comment = Do you speak Vietnamese at your services or is it all in English?

Dear Anh,

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your question, our services are in English.

Best Wishes,

Peter Hata
The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple

NEW YEAR, con’t from page 1

members from outside of the Japanese American community. We’ll keep our traditions but we need to change and open our temple to people who really seek the way and teachings for life.

We will again have a busy and exciting schedule this coming year. I hope that we listen to the dharma together and have a good and meaningful 2012.

I would like to ask for your support for this year again.

Thank you in gassho,

Rev. Kenjun Kawawata
新年のご挨拶

河和田賢淳

皆様お世話になっております。昨年中はお寺の法話会にご理解とご協力いただきました。皆様のご協力により一年を成し遂げることができました。皆様のご協力は本当に感謝の意を表したいと思います。この度は御講師に伊東憲昭開教監督を招き、年が明かされる前に新しい始発点、新しい一年に向けたご挨拶をさせていただきます。ご多幸にあたりまして、ご尽力いただき心より御礼申し上げます。新年度も皆様のご協力を得て、一層のご発展を祈念申し上げます。

皆様にご協力いただき、お寺の法人activitiesが充実することができたと感じております。これからの年を更に発展させ、皆様のご尽力を深く感謝申し上げます。
### January 2012

<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
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<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>New Year’s Day Service</td>
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<td>7:30 pm</td>
<td>Howakai Japanese Service</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Shotoku Service</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Bonbu Class</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Sunday Service</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>Eitaikyo Service /General Meeting</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Bonbu Class</td>
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<td>29</td>
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<td>Sunday Service</td>
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### February

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<td>7:30 pm</td>
<td>Howakai Japanese Service</td>
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<td>8:30 am</td>
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<td>Shotoku Service/Nirvana Day Service</td>
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<td>17-19</td>
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<td>28</td>
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### 2012年1月行事予定

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<td>祥月法要</td>
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<td>同信会（座談会）</td>
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<td>同信会（座談会）</td>
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### 2月行事予定

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<td>午前10時</td>
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<tr>
<td>28日</td>
<td>午後1時</td>
<td>同信会（座談会）</td>
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### いつもはだか いつもはだか

はだかで出発する 尊いことだ

竹部勝之進