



GATEWAY



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Living Dharma News
www.livingdharma.org

Hopefully, by the time you read this, coverage of our 2012 Family Retreat will be uploaded to our website. Perhaps we can even include a video of Taylor Saucedo's thrilling bungee jump (see retreat article in this issue).

Gassho,
 Peter Hata

Selected E-mail

From = alteasheridan garcia
 Subject = advice
 Message = Good evening,
 My name is Altea. I am very interested in learning more about Buddhism, I have read books, researched online and listened to some audiobooks too. I was attending yoga classes for a bit and the combination of meditation and learning about Buddha's teachings has given me so much that I would really like to further my study, it has changed my life for the better but sadly, I feel that i have lost what balance i have gained before. Can you please give me some advice as to how to do this, further my study? Is it possible to find a teacher that can help me even though it is just through email? I live in Lemoore Ca. Thank you very much...

Dear Altea,
 Thank you for sharing. I can understand about losing one's balance. Have you ever watched tight-rope walkers at a circus? You may have wondered how they keep their balance. The secret is that once they're on the wire they have to continually adjust. It may seem subtle at times, like they're standing still on the wire, but they are constantly changing. Arms, legs continually adjust, along with the balance pole they carry. The pole may move slightly in their hands, but the ends seem to really move! All this because their center of grav-

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Above: Participants at WCBT's Family Retreat enjoy a stimulating discussion in the Amphitheater of the Upper Newport Bay's Muth Interpretive Center.

WCBT's 2012 Family Retreat

Why Me? Why Not?: A Closer Look At The Meditation Sutra

On the President's Day Weekend of February 18-19, 2012, West Covina Buddhist Temple once again held its annual Family Retreat. This year however, the location was changed from the popular San Luis Obispo Buddhist Temple to our sister temple in Newport Beach, a fact that had some concerned that this retreat might not live up to our family retreat expectations. In any case, only a relatively small group of two-dozen WCBT members made the "trek" down to Newport Beach. During the retreat, they were joined by a few members from the Newport Beach Sangha. But despite the concerns, the retreat was actually quite enjoyable and in many ways, the change was invigorating.

Interestingly, another fortunate "cause and condition" from this location change was that, since Newport Beach was much closer to home, it provided a rare opportunity to listen to and participate in informal

small group discussions with Bishop Nori Ito. There is an undeniable bond that many longtime WCBT members feel with Ito-sensei because he was our minister in the early 1990s. However, due to his busy schedule as Rinban and now Bishop, the last opportunity we had to share a retreat weekend with him might have been as far back as the 1994 San Luis Obispo Family Retreat, some 18 years ago.

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Temple Event Highlights:

- Mar. 15 , 22, 29 & April 5. WCBT SC Lecture Series
- Mar. 18 , Ohigan Service
- Mar. 24, Oldies Dance
- Mar. 31 , NAD Local Retreat
- Cherry Blossom Festival
- Please See Temple News



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DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

The Beatles' song "All You Need is Love" is simple and direct, just like our visit to the Atria Retirement Home on the February 12th. Thanks to Ella Tomita, Jaylene, Joshua, and Jacob Gutierrez, the Valentine table decorations were safely delivered to the seniors. Our elderly neighbors in Covina enjoyed the decorations, but the adorable messengers from our Dharma school were the real hit!

While we look forward to the coming of Spring, we hope you enjoy the pictures of our family retreat held over Presidents' weekend. Like a lesson in impermanence, we ventured out to the Newport Buddhist Temple for our retreat instead of our traditional trek to San Luis Obispo. Most of the participants were able to arrive at the new destination within an hour. I think we discovered that the venue may have an importance, but as always, it is the Sangha themselves, with all their enthusiasm, questions, and good sense of humor, that make the retreat what it always is, an opportunity to strengthen our friendships as we continue our *work in progress* as students of the Dharma. Thanks Rinban Ito for being our thought-provoking speaker!

With Gassho,
Diane Hata

Quote of the Month

The conviction that all are equal can only come from the realization that I myself am the most evil.

-Shuichi Maida

Retirement Home Visitation



Left: Rev. Ken, Anthony Gutierrez holding Jaylene, Monic Gutierrez, Rev. Fred and Rev. Peter. In front are Jacob & Joshua Gutierrez. Above: Rev. Fred, Gigi and Don Frack, Rev. Ken and Rev. Peter.



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T E M P L E N E W S

Study Center Lecture Series

The WCBT Study Center Lecture Series continues in March and April with "Buddhism and Zen." Bishop Daigaku Rummé will give the lectures on March 15, 22, 29 & April 5. The lectures will be held on Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM. More information will be in the March Gateway or contact Rev. Ken.

Spring Ohigan Service

Spring Ohigan will be observed on March 18 at 4:30 PM. Our special guest speaker will be Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa. Please join us in welcoming Rev. Hasegawa and stay for the complimentary otoki dinner following the service.

Oldies Dance XXXXI

"Don't Walk...Run to Oldies XXXXI!" is set for Saturday March 24. 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 will end 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 Lillian at (626) 780-9866. 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.

NAD Retreat

North American District retreat will be held at 10:00 AM Saturday, March 31, at the Betsuin. Rev. Nobuki Miyoshi will be the English speaker and Rev. Akinori Imai will be the Japanese speaker.

Cherry Blossom Festival

The West Covina Cherry Blossom Festival will be on Saturday, March 31, from 12 noon - 7:00 PM and will be held at the ESGVJCC. The Temple will be selling delicious chicken teriyaki as a fundraiser. Work schedule sheets will be available for sign-up at the services

or contact Lillian Nishihara for more information. Keep that day open and come out to support the Temple and the Center.

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!

LACBF 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 LACBF service after WCBT Hanamatsuri Service.

WCBT's 16th Annual Golf Classic

Mark your calendars for WCBT's 16th Annual Golf Classic which will be held on Friday, April 27, at the Pacific Palms Golf Course in the City of Industry. More details will be in upcoming Gateways or contact Roy Takemura.



Gutierrez family enjoys the Interpretive Center activities during the family retreat.

GATEWAY Staff

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West Covina Buddhist Temple Mission Statement:

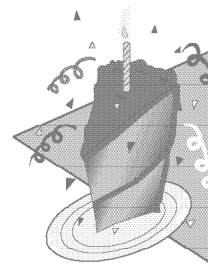
In the spirit of universal brotherhood, West Covina Buddhist Temple provides the opportunity for all to listen to and share the Teachings of the Buddha in order that we may awaken to our true selves, living our lives fully and dynamically.

The Temple's mailing address is:

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MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Brandon Kawaguchi, Kendra Kagawa, Brion Martinez, Edward Miyashiro, Cathy Nakano, Karolyn Fujimoto, Joy Kitaura, Steve Takemoto, Kelley Sakoda, Frank Konno, Kathy Masai, Bob Yamashita, Danny Iwama, Lee Ezaki, Karen Ezaki, Clare Hansen, Dick Koga, Leo Kowalski, Ken Kawawata, Miki Fukusumi, Tamara Teregawa, Alisa Arnheim, Dana Yamada



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Bishop Ito's Saturday talk

After his opening remarks, Bishop Ito introduced the theme of this retreat, "Why Me? Why Not?," with the subject being the Meditation Sutra, one of the three key sutras of Shin Buddhism. Regarding this sutra (a sermon or teaching of the Buddha), he stated that there are about 200 or so medium and long (major) sutras in the Pali Canon, and maybe 600 or so in the Mahayana Canon. Also, besides the sutras, the other parts of the complete Canon, the so-called Tripitaka (or Triple Basket) are the Vinaya (rules for monks and nuns) and the Abhidharma (commentaries on the sutras). "Jodo Shinshu focuses on three main sutras of which the Meditation Sutra is one, but in contrast to the other two—the Larger and Smaller Sutras, which are mythical stories—the Meditation Sutra describes an actual historical event." It involves four main characters, King Bimbisara, his son Prince Ajatasatru, the conniving Devadatta (also a cousin of the Buddha), and the main character of the story, Queen Vaidehi.

However, though this sutra tells an ancient story dating back to the time of the Buddha, the retreat's question of "Why me?" hints at the relevance of its lessons for us today. As Ito-sensei noted, when "bad things" happen, as they do to Vaidehi, it is not surprising for the recipient of such unfortunate events to ask, "Why me?" In contemporary terms, Ito-sensei stated that when a loved one dies, it is very common for the surviving family members to ask, "Why me?, why did this loss have to happen?" He also cited the recent tragic example of the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, when tens of thousands of Japanese also asked, "Why me?" "However," he said, "the Buddha might ask, 'Why not?'" Ito-sensei



Bishop Ito lectures in the temple's gym

clarified though that this would not be an indication of insensitivity; it would instead reflect the truth that Buddhism teaches, which is the constant flow of impermanence. All things—including of course the Earth's tectonic plates—are constantly changing, constantly moving. "Impermanence doesn't choose," he said; "tragic loss can happen to anyone."

Furthermore, contrary to some popular beliefs, he added that natural disasters like earthquakes and tsunamis "don't happen due to 'bad karma'; karma is really much more involved than that." Events occur due to a complex web of myriad causes and conditions. Bishop Ito explained that, no matter how "good" we are, bad things could still happen to us. Thus, the traditional view of karma—that bad things don't happen to good people—doesn't necessarily reflect reality. He clarified that whether or not something happens is, in Buddhist teachings, due first to the "one true cause"—our being born human in an unpredictable and

impermanent world—and second, to the existence of myriad karmic conditions. We have only limited control over these conditions, which has the effect of making us more responsible for our own lives and more awakened to the true reality. This in fact is the lesson of the Meditation Sutra.

The focus of this sutra is the story of Queen Vaidehi, and it is a compelling one. Ito-sensei recounted how she and

King Bimbisara were active members of the Buddha's Sangha. But then Buddha's cousin, Devadatta, driven by his ego-centricity and jealousy of the Buddha—always being in the Buddha's shadow greatly bothered him—planted the thought in the mind of Prince Ajatasatru to overthrow the King and seize power. The Prince did seize power and locked his father in the



The Newport Beach Temple's attractive hondo

dungeon, with the intent of starving the King to death. The Queen saved her husband by sneaking in food, but when the Prince found out, he was so angry he almost killed her. Fortunately for her, some of the Prince's advisors convinced him that killing his mother would be an unspeakably bad act, and

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so he instead imprisoned her in the castle's dungeon.

It's at this point that she calls out for the Buddha's help. Even though he's far away at Vulture Peak, he hears her call. When he arrives, Vaidehi essentially asks "Why me?"; she's a rich and powerful queen, and had been a faithful follower of the Buddha, so how could this be? In her anger, she even begins to accuse the Buddha:

She tore off her ornaments, crying uncontrollably, as she threw herself on the floor. She exclaimed, "Oh World-honored One! What former karmic conditions of mine have produced such a wicked son? And, moreover, by what causes and conditions are you related to Devadatta who abetted my son in such a crime?" [translated by Akinori Imai and Noriaki Ito]

"However," said Ito-sensei, "the Buddha remained silent. And the silence of the Buddha served to turn her focus inward." In essence, as she did, she lost her identity as a queen, her self-centeredness and self-importance, and became a true student of the Buddha. Though she initially only looked outward and placed the blame for her suffering on others, she was able, with the Buddha's guidance, to look inward. As she did so, she was completely transformed. Vaidehi had come face-to-face with the truth of impermanence, which had the effect of exposing her attachment to power and wealth. "She realized the unreliability of human life," he said.

"Eventually, she realized that she was actually the one at fault and was able to accept responsibility for her own suffering. And she expresses to the Buddha her wish to be born in a world



Joanie & Johnny enjoyed the ferris wheel

without suffering. "Of course," said Ito-sensei, "this is kind of the 'miraculous' part of the sutra because the Buddha shows her a vision of the Pure Land." When the Buddha finally speaks to Vaidehi for the first time, he comforts her by saying:

Do you realize that Amida

Buddha is not far from here? Focusing your mind, you should meditate on the One who perfected the Pure Land. Now, I will explain to you in detail the means for attainment. The path is not only for you, but also for all people now and in the future to be freed. To seek the pure way is to cultivate the desire to be born in the land of Amida Buddha...If you can clearly see the indescribable excellence of that land, you will experience a state of joy and happiness, and will immediately acquire insight into the true nature of all existence.

[trans. by Akinori Imai and Noriaki Ito]

Vaidehi's desire to be "born in the Pure Land," her becoming a true student of the Buddha, is the positive outcome of the Meditation Sutra's story, of her looking inward. Thus, what the ideal of the Pure Land really represents is "insight into the true nature of all existence." It is reality itself, or, as Ito-sensei put it, it is "how to live our life awakened, with *shinjin*. It's seeing who we really are."

Bishop Ito went on to clarify the uniqueness of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism: "Unlike traditional Buddhism, which engages in monastic practices to try to suppress the ego and 'climb the ladder' towards enlightenment, Jodo Shinshu asks, 'How can we suppress the ego with our own ego?' This is the same ego that arrogantly says, 'I am the creator of my universe.'" In

contrast, he said, "Shinran, the founder of Jodo Shinshu, defines enlightenment differently; it's seeing the true self." What is this true self?

Ito-sensei then read an important passage from Shuichi Maida's essay, "The Ignorant Person" [from *The Evil Person: Essays on Shin Buddhism*]; Maida was an important 20th century Shin Buddhist teacher:

What is a buddha (an awakened one)? He is an ignorant person. He knows he is totally ignorant. He has awakened to his own ignorance.

What is a deluded person? He thinks that he knows something. He has not yet awakened to the fact that he knows nothing at all. But if a deluded person awakens to his ignorance, he is a buddha. He can easily become a buddha...

A buddha is a seeker. He is a learner. Since he realizes that he does not yet understand the truth, he keeps on seeking it. On the other hand, a deluded person cannot devote himself to seeking and learning. His spirit is stagnant; he stays in the same place. He believes he has already acquired some important knowledge.

A buddha is extremely powerful because he is determined to keep on seeking and learning... Since a buddha regards himself as ignorant, he has no knowledge that he relies on. He has no fixed ideas, no

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Taylor Saucedo soars on the bungee ride!



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attachments. If we believe that we know something, we are bound by our own idea that we know something. If we have awakened to the fact that we know nothing, we become free to deal with everything in this world.

[trans. by Nobuo Haneda]

Ito-sensei added: "While we may intellectually understand teachings like impermanence, we don't think about this in relation to ourselves." Like Vaidehi, only when we come face-to-face with the power of impermanence itself and look inward, do we realize the impermanence of the self itself, and see who we really are. As the Meditation Sutra illustrates and as Maida emphasizes in his essay, though we think there is something permanently good or valuable in us, and which we think of as "my identity" or ego, this is actually an illusion; this is "attachment" or suffering in Buddhism. The ego itself naturally resists this truth. "This," said Ito-sensei, "is the reason why we need to 'take refuge' in the Three Treasures; it is declaring that the Buddha is my eternal teacher, the Dharma is my eternal medicine, and the Sangha are my eternal friends."

Sunday's Lecture

In his Sunday lecture, Bishop Ito looked at the Meditation Sutra from the standpoint of the *Tannisho*, the classic work which contains the sayings of Shinran, and which were compiled several decades after his death by a disciple named Yui-en. If the theme of the Vaidehi story is seeing the true self and taking refuge in the Dharma, the essence of this ideal is strikingly illustrated in Chapter Three of the *Tannisho*:

Even a good person attains birth in the Pure Land, how much more so the evil person.

But the people of the world constantly say, even the evil person attains birth, how much more so the good person. Although this appears to be sound at first glance, it goes against the intention of the Primal



Retreat participants pose at the Muth Interpretive Center

Vow of Other Power. The reason is that since the person of self-power, being conscious of doing good, lacks the thought of entrusting the self completely to Other Power, he is not the focus of the Primal Vow of Amida. But when he turns over self-power and entrusts himself to Other Power, he attains birth in the land of True Fulfillment.

[trans. by Taitetsu Unno]

For many people, this statement of Shinran is very difficult to comprehend. Ito-sensei clarified however that "Shinran is speaking from a humble, non-dualistic view." In contrast, he pointed out examples in the news media of highly dualistic thinking, such as the recent tragic story of the father who locked himself in his home and set fire to himself and his two boys, or the mother who tried to drown her two girls in the bathtub. We've also seen recent examples of workplace violence, of an employee resorting to murder those co-workers they judge to be their "enemy." "This," he said, "represents an 'I'm right/you're wrong' judgmental duality." Of course, we also frequently see this kind of dualism in today's political arena. However, in stark contrast, we read another famous passage from the

postscript of the *Tannisho*:

I know nothing of what is good or evil. For if I could know thoroughly, as is known in the mind of Amida, that an act is good, then I would know the meaning of "good." If I could know thoroughly, as Amida knows, that an act was evil, then I would know "evil." But for a foolish being full of blind passions, in this fleeting world—this burning house—all matters without exception are lies and gibberish totally without truth and sincerity. The nembutsu alone is true and real.

This shows Shinran's deep inward self-examination and humble self-awareness. Certainly, by Maida's definition, Shinran was a buddha. Bishop Ito then read a short passage written by Ryojin Soga, another important 20th century Shin teacher, where Soga comments on the above *Tannisho* passage and compares Shinran to Honen Shonin, who was Shinran's teacher. Soga underscores Shinran's uniqueness even within the Pure Land tradition by pointing out that, while Honen also used terms like "evil" and "good", they were used in the conventional sense from the standpoint of an "observer":

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Honen speaks from his standpoint as a guide of other people; Shinran, on the other hand, simply bares his own self-realization, and then waits for people of the same conviction to come forward.

[trans. by Jan Van Bragt]

Ito-sensei concluded his lecture by stating, "Whereas Honen served as guide for others, Shinran bared his soul and then waited for others of like conviction to join him. This statement comes from the realization that we cannot enlighten ourselves...it is this realization that puts us on the path."

Outing

After lunch, the retreat participants carpooled to the Balboa Fun Zone. The weather in the afternoon was near perfect: it was a cool, breezy day, but this was offset by the warmth of the sun. Again, invigorating. Of course, while many of the participants rode the colorful ferris wheel—even two-year old Jaylene Gutierrez rode with mom Monique—only teen Taylor Saucedo had the courage to experience the bungee jump ride with its thrilling 20+ foot leaps and spins. Even hours later, Taylor commented that she still felt an adrenaline rush. To be honest though, there was quite a bit of "peer pressure" involved in getting her to step up onto the trampoline, and even Bishop Ito contributed to this by personally pulling out his wallet and paying for Taylor's ride!

After the Fun Zone, the group took the unique Balboa Island Ferry to Balboa Island (oops; only the six participants in Rev. Peter Hata's van were actually able to take the ferry due to the delays in the garage for the other vehicles—the Hatas had found street parking). This was the same ferry that made the news not long ago when a van driven by some Asian tourists was inadvertently pushed off the ferry into the water, and the family narrowly escaped in time. Hmm...perhaps the other retreat drivers subconsciously avoided the ferry? Fortunately, the "Asian tourists" in this particular van

did not get wet. In fact, this sort of thing happens very rarely; the ferry operator said the last time it happened was 30 years ago.

Next, the group drove a couple of miles up the Upper Newport Bay to visit the Muth

Interpretive Center, where they watched an engaging short film on the four seasons of the Upper Newport Bay's birds, fish, worms, and crabs, browsed the museum's informative exhibits (the kids had a great time in the center's interactive classroom), and of course, marveled at the inspiring scenic vistas of the enormous preserve that surrounds the museum. As large as it is however, we learned in the museum that 90% of California's coastal wetlands have been lost to development. Upper Newport Bay is the largest of only a few remaining natural estuaries in Southern California.

Discussions

One of the features of a retreat such as this is the opportunity for small group discussions on the ideas expressed in the lectures. And besides a rewarding group discussion the participants were able to enjoy in the unique setting of the Muth's natural amphitheatre, there was a lively discussion Saturday in the temple's gym and on Sunday, there was another very productive roundtable discussion in the temple's kitchen. It would be impossible to capture the interactive nature of these discussions in this report, but one memorable moment occurred in the Sunday discussion when moderator Rev. Peter asked Bishop Ito to specifically comment on the relevance of this

subject of dealing with life's impermanence for the young people who attended this retreat. Ito-sensei commented that, while young people naturally tend to think dualistically and try to focus only on the "good things" in



Taylor goes against Ito-sensei in the Buddhist/Not a Buddhist game

their lives, all the while trying to block out the "bad things," "Eventually, they realize that the positive growth in their lives is actually because of the 'bad things.'"

Thanks

West Covina Buddhist Temple retreats are known for providing an abundance of delicious food, and this one was no exception. To that end, the temple would like to thank Diane Hata for getting the retreat off to a great start with Saturday's continental breakfast, Pat Sato for the tasty lunch, Jeanne Kawawata for the Saturday evening classic curry dinner, and Joanie Martinez for Sunday's great breakfast casserole.

Another staple of our family retreats are the interactive games. Here, thanks go to the Jitosh family for Saturday's games and puzzles, one of which

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was like a hilarious combination of "Pictionary" and "Telephone" where everyone would write down a word on their pad and then pass it to the next person who had to then draw the word. The next person then wrote down the word that described the picture, and so forth. Not surprisingly, in a group of maybe 7 or 8 or so people on each team, when each person finally received their original pad and looked at the last picture or word entry, *very few* reported that the word or concept had returned intact. Of course, the word "swordfish" eventually becoming a picture of goldfish in an aquarium is perhaps understandable, as are the words "walking stick" ending up as a picture of a matchbook. But how do you explain "maple syrup" ending up as a drawing of a snowman, or "gong" ending up as a picture of a vacuum cleaner? And how can "cheerleader" possibly become a picture of a toilet bowl?



Bishop Ito lectures on Sunday morning

More fun arrived with Diane Hata's "Buddhist/Not a Buddhist" game complete with ringer bells for the paired contestants to hit if they knew the answer. There are of course some well-known celeb Buddhists, such as Keanu Reeves, Sharon Stone, Richard Gere, and Phil Jackson, but those that proved especially tricky for the contestants were some not so well-known, such as Tina Turner, Uma Thurman, and Gov. Jerry Brown.

An especially meaningful aspect of this retreat was that this was the first time for almost half the participants, all of whom have been active at WCBT for less than a year. In that regard, many thanks go to Rev. Ken Kawawata and WCBT's Temple Communications Staff for working hard to ensure the retreat was memorable and rewarding for our first-timers. Thanks also go to Newport Beach Higashi Honganji for allowing WCBT to use their facility. Lastly, we thank Bishop Nori Ito for deepening our appreciation of the timeless story of Queen Vaidehi by revealing the link between this ancient teaching of the Buddha, our Jodo Shinshu tradition, and most importantly, our everyday lives today. ❀

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ity continually adjusts as the wire below twitches and bends. If they truly stopped and rested as we think of it the result is certain: they will fall. Our life is often like this. Buddhism reminds us that we are all in a state of constant flux and change. Sometimes that flux is small, sometimes major, but we all change or have change thrown at us. The Buddhist way of life is to move and adjust or we will fall. If we are wise we prepare for change, but even if we're not ready we can often find strength and guidance through others to help us on our way. You in turn can also help and teach others simply by the example of how you live your life.

As for how to further your study, let me share that, like you, I read books, researched, and so on. I'm a librarian by profession so that's pretty natural for me. BUT there is a need for being with others. In Buddhism we call this the Sangha. Ananda, the closest follower and friend of the Buddha, once asked Buddha if friendship was half of the spiritual life. Buddha said no, it was the whole of the spiritual life. I needed a Sangha to truly grow. I was lucky to find one. I did some checking and found a Buddhist temple about 9 miles from Lemoore. It's the Hanford Buddhist Church. Their address is 238 N. Green St. Hanford, CA 93232, phone: 209-584-8077. Don't be worried about their use of the

word "church." Many Buddhists who came to America from Japan faced racial persecutions and tried to show they could fit in and used local terminology. Most Buddhist temples will strive to welcome you and make you feel comfortable, so give them a chance and see what happens. There's another temple further in Visalia, and more as you head towards Fresno. But if you don't find any that are suitable for you then you are more than welcome to email at least and we'll do our part to help as we can. Just remember that we're all students, and we all learn from each other. So you will be teaching us as well.

*Sincerely,
Frederick Brenion*

From = [Name Withheld]

Subject = Family issues

Message = Hi, my sister is together with a person who my parents dislike because he has been criminal before and maybe still is, and also because he comes from a certain country and culture. Initially I didn't have anything against her boyfriend (now fiancée) but when I started to know him and his family better then I began to doubt if he was good enough for her. They are planning to start a family and I'm really worried that she might start a family with the wrong person. I haven't talked to my sister for like half a year since I don't want to argue with her. Sooner or later I need to tell her about my doubts (which she probably already senses a little bit) but I'm afraid of hurting her since basically the rest of the family doesn't talk to her, and if I also disconnect with her permanently then it might be too hurtful for both of us. I would appreciate advice on what to do. Thanks.

*Dear [Name Withheld],
I will be upfront and tell you that there is no easy solution to your concerns. But then, maybe there is! You have written to a Buddhist site so I presume you have some interest in Buddhism, or that you are interested in a Buddhist approach. In the school of Buddhism that we belong to, Jodo*

*Please see L.D. NEWS, *con't* on page 9*



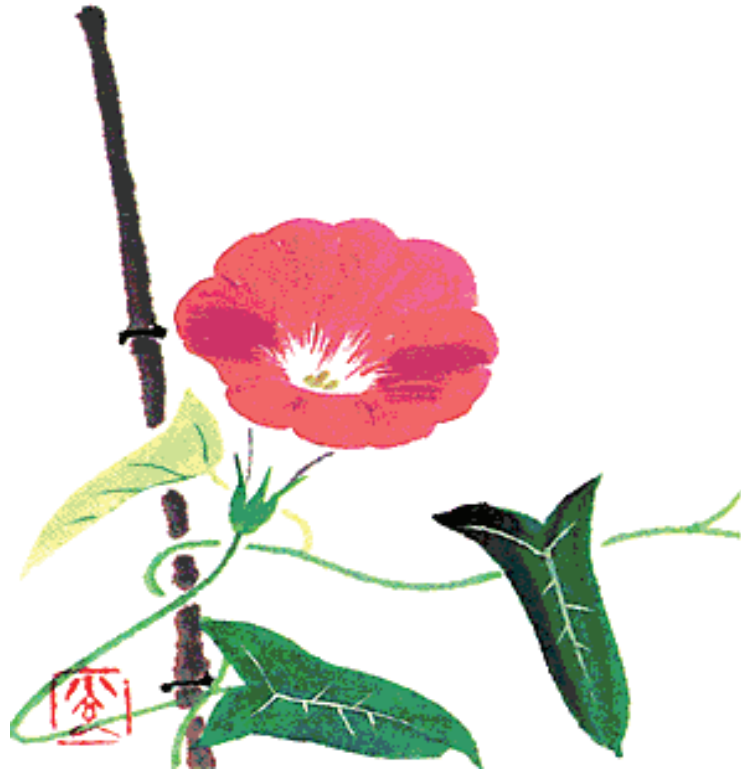
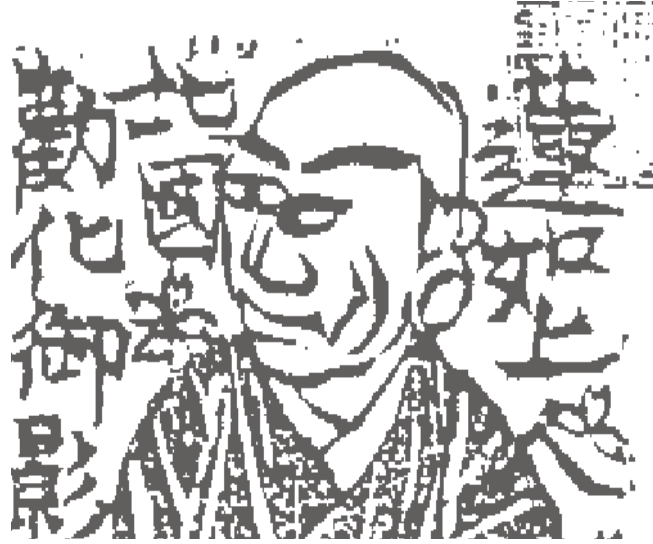
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Shinshu, our practice is to simply listen to the Dharma. We listen to it in our daily lives, interactions, and so on. We share with each other what we have heard and what we have seen. I think our best Dharma talks are often those that we call "Real World."

What I am suggesting is that you listen to your sister. Really, really listen. Listen to her boy friend too. Try to see what she sees in him. And try to see what he sees in her. And, by all means, invite her out to lunch and have a real heart-to-heart. Talk about your worries, but don't prejudge her or him. This is what I'm worried about, you and your parents are prejudging. We all do this. It's very human. But we do need a reality check here.

We have a Buddhist teacher, Shinran Shonen, who founded our school of Buddhism. In a famous passage he talks to a fellow follower saying that "If I told you to kill a 1000 people and that you would gain enlightenment, would you do it?" His friend said "No!" He wasn't that kind of person. But Shinran told him that that wasn't true. If causes, conditions and effects were different it would be very easy for him to commit a crime. We all could. None of us are exempt from the possibilities that reality may bring about. Also you are making a major assumption that her boyfriend can't or isn't reformed. Do you really know this for a fact? Maybe it is true. Maybe it isn't. Did you know that one of Buddha's most famous followers was a murderer? His name is Angulimala. Look him up on Wikipedia! He changed. Yes he had to still suffer consequences from his past actions, but he was able to still change. He listened to the Buddha, and the Buddha listened to him. I like to think your sister's boyfriend can change too. Just remember that if causes and conditions were different you could have easily become him! We all could. Now you mention about him coming from a "certain country and culture." I don't even know where to start with this! But maybe it might be helpful to think that his parents and family might be saying the same about your sister. Do you think that's fair of them? Let's get real here. That's what Buddhism is about—getting real. I'm not saying your sister's path is going to



be easy. It might not. But don't go making it more difficult for her, or him. Try to make the path a little more smoother. So share with her, listen to her, and if she decides that he is the one for her then support her. Don't plan on ever saying "I told you so" even if it is warranted. Help them to suc-

ceed. And if they fail then help them to pick up the pieces. And if they split, why, keep listening to her and be supportive of her. All this is Buddhism in the Real World. Take care. If you wish, let us know how it goes. Sincerely,
Frederick Brenion







T H E G A T E W A Y

West Covina Buddhist Temple presents

"DON'T WALK...RUN TO OLDIES XXXXI"

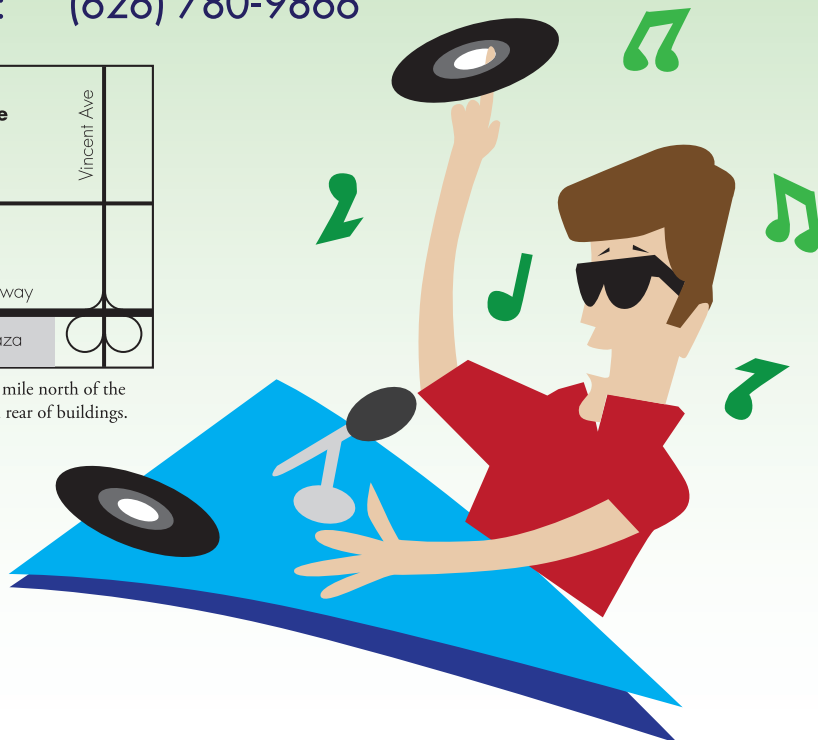
Saturday, March 24, 2012

Same ol' same ol' for the rest, but remember it is from 8 to midnite

-  At the ESGV Japanese Community Center
-  Tickets: **\$12 presale**, \$15 at the door
-  Music by High Resolution
-  Drinks available, must be 21 or over
-  Dressy Casual
-  For tickets and/or information:
 Joanie: (626) 284-8192
 Lillian: (626) 780-9866

Inwindale Ave	WCBT/ESGVJCC 1203 West Puente Ave West Covina	Vincent Ave
Sunset Ave	West Puente Ave	
	San Bernardino (10) Freeway	
map not to scale	West Covina Fashion Plaza	

WCBT/ESGVJCC is located about a mile north of the West Covina Fashion Mall. Parking in rear of buildings.





T H E G A T E W A Y

West Covina Buddhist Study Center

Presents

A Lecture Series

“Buddhism and Zen”

(Sakyamuni Buddha and Dogen Zenji)

Lecturer: Bishop Daigaku Rummé
(Zenshuji Soto Mission)



Daigaku Rummé was born in Mason City, Iowa in 1950. He was ordained a Soto monk by Harada Sekkei Roshi in 1978. For more than twenty-seven years, he practiced under Harada Roshi at Hosshinji Monastery in Fukui, Japan. In March 2003, he moved to San Francisco to work on the staff of the Soto Zen Buddhism International Center. For the seven years he worked there, he resided at the San Francisco Zen Center.

On April 1, 2010, he was appointed as Director of the Soto Zen Buddhism North America Office. He currently lives in Little Tokyo and spends as much time as possible at Zenshuji, where he is the head priest. He is the translator of *The Essence of Zen* by Harada Roshi, which was republished by Wisdom Publications in 2008.

Date: Thursday, March 15, 22, 29 & April 5, 2012

Time: 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

**Place: East San Gabriel Valley Japanese
Community Center, Room 3
1203 West Puente Ave.,
West Covina, CA 91790**

Fee: \$40.00

Phone: (626) 913-0622

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

West Covina Buddhist Temple
P.O. Box 1616 West Covina, CA 91790
Telephone (626) 913-0622
www.livingdharma.org



T H E G A T E W A Y

WEST COVINA
HIGASHI HONGANJI
BUDDHIST TEMPLE

February 25, 2012

Dear Members and Friends,

The West Covina Buddhist Temple and its Board of Directors cordially invites you to attend the Spring Ohigan Service which will be held on Sunday, March 18, 2012. The schedule for the service is as follows:

Date: Sunday, March 18, 2012
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Sermon: Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa
(Higashi Honganji NAD Office)

We will be serving Otoki dinner immediately following the service.

Higan, meaning the Other Shore (of enlightenment), is a service is conducted on or about the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. At these times of the year, we endeavor to strengthen our commitment of the Buddhist life.

ご門徒の皆様へ

春を感じる今日このごろ皆様にはお元気でお過ごしのことと存じます。さて日本語春のお彼岸法要を下記の如くお勤め致しますのでご案内申し上げます。お彼岸は古く聖徳太子の時代より行われてきた伝統ある法要です。私ども先達はこの機会を仏様の教えを聞く良き機会としてまいりました。ご家族で一緒にお参り下さい。

記

春のお彼岸法要法要

日 時 2012年3月18日 午後4時半

場 所 日系人コミュニティーセンター

法 話 長谷川 智行師 (東本願寺北米監督部)

*法要後当番の皆様によるお齋がございます。

Kenjun Kawawata, Minister
開教使 河和田賢淳

John Martinez, President
教団理事長 マルチネス ジョン



T H E G A T E W A Y

永代経

番坂啓史

皆様、おはようございます。本日は、皆様ご参集のもと、ウエストコピナ東本願寺の永代経法要をお勤めさせていただきました。このように、亡き人をご縁として、皆様が一堂に会し法要をお勤めするという事は大変意義深い事であります。

昨年は京都の本山において宗祖親鸞聖人七百五十回御遠忌法要が勤まりました。私はこの法要で、一人のおじいさんに会いました。おじいさんは足を悪くされていたので、私は心配になり話しかけました。すると、おじいさんはこんな事を私に語ってくれました。「この50年に1度の法事に会わせていただくことができた。ありがたいことだ。ナンマンガブツ。」私はこの言葉がとても印象強く残っております。この「会わせていただく」という姿勢こそが、阿弥陀様の前でお念仏申す際、一番願われていることではないでしょうか。

本日、お勤めいたしました「永代経」にかけられた願いとは一体どのような願いなのでしょう。一般的には「永代経は先祖への永代の追善供養」という認識が強いですが、実は、浄土真宗における「永代経」とは、「先達・先祖を御縁として私が教えを頂き未来永代に伝える」ことが本義となります。

親鸞聖人も嘆異抄と呼ばれる書物の中にこのように仰られました。

「親鸞は父母の孝養のためとて、一返にても念仏申したることいまだ候はず。」

つまり「私は親の供養のためにお念仏を申したことはありません。」と言われました。亡き人の冥福を祈りお念仏申すのは、お念仏のいただき方が違いますよ。と言われておる訳です。

親鸞聖人は、何故このようなことを言われたのでしょうか。親鸞聖人は、自身を凡夫（愚かな身である）と名乗られました。私たちの生活振り返ると、「あれが欲しい」「これが食べたい」「あいつは羨ましい奴だ」など様々欲にまみれて生きております。そしてそのような欲は決して絶える事はありません。自分自身を救うことすら出来ないそのような身である私たちが、ましてや他人の事を救うことなどできるはずもない。そのように親鸞聖人は仰られたのだと思います。

では何故、法事を勤めるのでしょうか。供養にならないのであれば法事を勤める必要がないのではないか。そう思われる方も少なからずおられるのではないのでしょうか。答えは私たちの為に勤めるのです。(次号に続く)

お寺ニュース

日本語お彼岸法要

日本語春のお彼岸法要は3月法話会、祥月法要を兼ねて3月5日午後7時半よりお勤め致します。

また英語春のお彼岸法要は3月18日午後4時半より厳修いたします。法話は北米監督部より長谷川智行師をお招きしております。英語法要にもご家族でお参りください。

南加同朋リトリート

来る3月31日午前9時半より同朋リトリートが別院にて行われます。日本語講師に今井亮徳前開教監督をお迎えしております。講義は積尊と親鸞聖人、生活の中の仏教というテーマでおこなわれます。また英語は別院開教使、見議信香師がお話しされます。どうぞお友達をお誘いの上ご参加ください。

センター桜祭り

今年のセンターの桜祭りが3月31日に開催されます。毎年4月にまたは5月に行われておりましたが、本年は早めに行われます。お寺は昨年同様、この桜祭りに照り焼きチキンとお寿司をもって参加致します。この行事をもって寺の基金募集並びに地元への宣伝も兼ねて行うことができると思います。つきましては皆様にお寿司の協力をお願いもうしあげます。巻寿司でもお稲荷さんどちらでも結構です。当日朝午前11時半までにお寺に届けていただければ幸いです。ご協力お願い申し上げます。

WCBT スタディーセンター

春のレクチャー

来る3月15日より恒例の春のレクチャーが行われます。この度は曹洞宗北米総監、ルメー大岳師をお招きし仏教と禅というテーマで4回にわたりお話しいただきます。講義は英語で毎週火曜日午後7時から8時半まで行われます。



3月祥月法要 法話会お彼岸法要

3月1日
午後7時半

日本語座談会ご案内

3月13日並び27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

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

March 2012 - - Vol. XLVI No. 3

March

- 1 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 4 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 4 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 11 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 13 10:00 am Bonbu Class
- 15 7:00 pm WCBT Study Center Lecture
- 18 4:30 pm Ohigan Service
- 22 7:00 pm WCBT Study Center Lecture
- 24 8:00 pm Oldies Dance
- 25 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 29 7:00 pm WCBT Study Center Lecture
- 27 10:00 am Bonbu Class
- 31 9:30 am NAD Local Retreat
Center Cherry Blossom Festival

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

3月行事予定

- 1日 午後7時半 法話会
- 4日 午前8時半 理事会
- 4日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 11日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 18日 午後4時半 お彼岸法要
- 24日 午後8時 ダンス基金募集
- 25日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 31日 午前9時半 同朋リトリート (於: 別院)
午後12時 センター桜まつり

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

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仏心というは

大慈悲心これなり

(観無量寿経)