At the Betsuin’s Ohigan Service on Sunday, September 18, which featured a rare visit by the Head Administrator of Higashi Honganji, Socho Ko Yasuhara, several notable events and announcements took place, some of which you will be kept abreast of via the Gateway in upcoming issues. For now however, I wanted to mention that I was very impressed with the Socho’s Dharma talk. I hope to pull the very limited “strings” I have available as a Gateway staffer and be able to put his great talk on our website in the near future.

Gassho,
Peter Hata

Selected E-mail
[Ed. Note: this mail is in response to mail printed in the previous issue]

From: Adam Kozlowski
To: The Living Dharma Website

Dear Peter,
I am most appreciative of your time. I suppose the mistake I have made is thinking about karma too much. It’s been a pattern of thought of mine since I was younger, and has only grown into an internal obsession. That would be where the dwelling and ruminating on the moral aspect of Buddhism comes from. When I first looked into Buddhism, I looked mainly at the Theravadin teachings, which seems to be by far the strictest morally, But I do not know, for, like you said, there are many schools of Buddhism, many of which I do not know of. I certainly agree that I need some form of a teacher or guide, but the only guide I have is the teachings, which, without the ability to ask a book questions, it is easy to get stuck on one or another aspect of them. I unfortunately live in

Please see L.D. NEWS, con’t on page 6

Buddha’s Land in the Mountain
Rev. Kenjun Kawawata

After the Shutsuki Service of last August, our temple enjoyed our Vegas Trip and then we went on summer vacation. However, I was busy every week in August and at the beginning of September.

I attended the Los Angeles Buddhist Coordinating Council (LABCC) camp which is a Buddhist Children’s camp in the San Bernardino mountains. Every year, we send ministers there and officiate morning services, have classes, and lead walking meditation. This year we had about 160 children enjoying this camp. Boys and girls who are 8-13 years can come to this camp. This camp was supported by over 50 volunteers who take vacation for a week just to be able to help out. Most of the volunteers are former campers who grew up going to this camp every summer. LABCC has more than 50 years of history already. Many children came and experienced the Buddha-dharma through this one week camp.

The theme of this year’s camp was “The Six Paramitas.” As you know “paramita” means “to reach the other shore,” which means to become an awakened one, a Buddha.

And the Six Paramitas are the way to be a Buddha. This is the way of the Bodhisattva.

Dana, Fuse—giving

Please see CAMP, con’t on page 4
“The autumn leaves drift by my window...” well, actually they seem to be gathering on our driveway! Yes, we do feel the change of seasons ever so slightly and are anxious to begin our new Dharma School year. Just about every student has heard the phrase, “reduce, reuse, recycle.” We would like to explain another somewhat similar Japanese phrase “mottainai,” which is generally translated as “Don’t be wasteful.” During Sunday’s service on Sept. 25th, we will show the video featuring Ms. Nobuko Miyamoto, who shares the spirit of dana, giving, rather than taking and throwing away.

With Gassho,
Diane Hata

Quote of the Month
Ah, liberation through Power Beyond Self! How my awareness of it frees me from this world of delusion and suffering! How it makes me enter the Pure Land of peace and tranquility!
-Rev. Manshi Kiyozawa
**Akimatsuri**

The ESGVJCC Akimatsuri will be on Saturday, October 1, beginning at 12:00 p.m. and WCBT will be in charge of the Teriyaki Barbecue.

Set-up will begin Friday evening at 6:00 p.m. We’d like to see everyone come out and support the Temple and the Center.

**Study Center Lecture Series**

This fall’s Study Center Lecture Series is scheduled for Monday evenings on October 3, 10, 17 and 24 at 7:00 p.m. The lecture on the Larger Sutra will feature Rev. Masao Kodani from Sesshin Buddhist Temple. The $35 fee for members or $40 for non-members will cover the four lectures. Please contact Rev. Ken for more info.

**NAD Joint Retreat**

A North American District Joint Retreat with Dr. Nobuo Haneda will be held on October 28 and 29 at L.A. Higashi Betsuin. The retreat for Japanese speakers will be held on Friday, October 28 at 1:30 p.m. followed by the English language retreat on Saturday morning, October 29 at 9:30 a.m. Registration is $12.00.

**Halloween**

Our annual Halloween party will follow the Sunday Service on October 30. There will be fun and games as well as prizes so get in the Halloween “spirit” and come in costume. There will be refreshments for everyone so join us in the fun!

**Kiku Crafts & Food Fair**

WCBT will sponsor the Kiku Crafts & Food Fair on Sunday, November 6 from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. Asian inspired crafts, clothing, jewelry, giftware, unique wood items and lots of delicious food will be offered. Each vendor will be handling their own sales and not all take credit cards so come prepared. WCBT members are welcomed to shop early from 9:30 a.m.

Come for some holiday shopping. Stay for the fun and food!

For more information or if you can help, please contact Hisako Koga 909-626-6131 or hskoga@gmail.com.

**Shichigosan Service**

Shichi-go-san or 7-5-3 Family Service will be held on Sunday, November 13 at 10 a.m. This special service is to recognize anyone who has reached the ages of three, five or seven this year. Please inform Rev. Ken if you have a family member or know of someone who will be the perfect age for this service.

**Ho-onko Service**

Our Ho-onko Service will be held on Sunday, November 20 at 4:30 p.m. Please join us in welcoming back Bishop/Rinban Noriaki Ito from L.A. Higashi Betsuin. Stay for the complimentary Otoki dinner that will follow the service.
CAMP, con’t from page 1
Sila, Jikai—observing precepts
Ksanti, Niniku—patience
Virya, Shojin—endeavor, effort
Dhyana, Zenjo—Meditation, contemplation
Prajna, Chie—wisdom, insight, understanding

For children, Dana means to be considerate of others. Sila means following camp rules and having a harmonious way of life with others and with nature. For this purpose, they learn that they need patience, effort, and good behavior. This way, they can realize the Buddha’s teaching and receive the settled mind needed for their daily lives.

During this camp, some children got sick, some had problems with others, and some small children became homesick. However, when children had problems, counselors and staff members took care of them as much as they could. When I saw all the care being given, I realized that unconsciously, they are all walking on the Bodhisattva path. All these young campers want to see fellow campers on a year and enjoy this camp life with them. Me too. I want to see all their faces and enjoy the wonderful atmosphere of this camp. I think that the campers don’t realize that Buddha’s compassion is pushing them to come to the camp and walk on this way of the Bodhisattva.

I realized this camp is like a Buddha’s land which is opened once a year in the mountains. At the camp, I saw staff members, children, and nature all shining brilliantly.

L.D. NEWS, con’t from page 1
a suburban town, and am currently without a mode of transportation to travel to the nearest city with a temple, which would be about a half hour away. I also have a tendency to overthink things, which has kept me in a “which one, which way” circle for too long, without making any progress. But your correspondence has inspired me to forgo any choice on that matter until I can talk to someone with more actual experience than I have, for which I would like to thank you. I hope to soon make the next true step in seeking truth and enlightenment.

Thank you, once again
Adam

From = Cleve
Subject = looking
Message = trying to find a temple for Caucasians in the Tacoma, Wa area.
Thank You

Dear Cleve,
Thank you for visiting our Living Dharma Website. As to your question, I’m not sure what circumstances caused you to feel you had to ask your question, but all Buddhist temples should be open to all people. Buddhism is a teaching that is trying to get us to see beyond all categories that separate us, such as ethnicity.

Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, despite its having been imported here from Japan, tends to be a very open teaching. This is because of the humble insights of its founder, Shinran Shinonin. There is a Jodo Shinshu temple in Tacoma. I’m not familiar with its minister, but check it out: http://www.tacomabt.org/
Best Wishes,
Peter Hata
The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple

Subject: Re: looking
From: Cleve Parker
Thank You for the information. I was mainly concerned with understanding the language.

Cleve

Hi Cleve,
That’s a good point. As far as I know, all Jodo Shinshu temples in the U.S. conduct services in English. Depending on the particular temple, the minister may be American-born, or a 2nd, 3rd or even 4th generation Japanese-American born here in the States. These ministers of course are native English speakers. On the other hand, the minister may be a 1st generation Japanese-born minister. These ministers may have been in America for decades or for a relatively short time, and so, though they of course speak English, their English ability will vary.

The speaking ability of a minister is important in Jodo Shinshu, since this tradition emphasizes not Zen-style meditation practice or practices to “build merit,” but rather, simply “listening to the Dharma,” reflecting on the words of our teachers. Typically, these words must be communicated through the temple minister. However, having listened to the sermons of many ministers, lecturers, and scholars—of all speaking abilities—I think that more important than sheer speaking ability is the “content” of the sermon, the wisdom the minister is really trying to share. I’ve heard truly memorable talks by speakers of all levels of English-speaking ability. So, try to keep an open mind (and ears).
Best Wishes,
Peter Hata

To: The Living Dharma Website
From = Julie Schuhknecht
Subject = Bombu Class
Message = I was interested in the Bombu class, but was curious as to what I would be learning about. And I was also hoping that its O.K. to attend. I am very interested in Buddhism and would love to learn more about it.
Thank you for your time.

Dear Julie,
Of course it’s o.k. for you to attend! The Bombu class often discusses a work about Buddhism or about our tradition. I think you will get a flavor of “Real World Buddhism” in that there will be sharing about how and what this all means for our everyday lives. I hope you’ll come. I know you’ll be welcome!
Gassho,
Fred

To: dharma@livingdharma.org
From = Eternity
Subject = Buddhism and controversies?
Message = Hi, my name is Eternity and I’m doing a project in history about religion and I choose Buddhism as my topic. One thing that I cannot seem to find is if Buddhism is controversial or not. Is Buddhism controversial? And if so why? If you could respond back then I would greatly appreciate it.
Thank you.
Dear Eternity,

Yours is probably the most interesting question I’ve tried to answer in a long time! I’d like to tell you a story. A Brahmin priest with many followers came to Buddha and asked him a question. It was one of those metaphysical questions that the rest of the world religions like debating about. In fact there are 14 such questions that people addressed to the Buddha and he reacted the same way. He sat there in silence. The Brahmin asked if the world was eternal. Buddha just sat there. He asked if the world was not eternal. The Buddha just sat there. The Brahman left in anger saying the Buddha knew nothing important. Ananda, Buddha’s faithful attendant, asked Buddha why he didn’t answer. Buddha could have increased his following if he had. Buddha said that if he affirmed the Brahman’s question that would have led him into error. If he negated the Brahman’s question that would have led him into error. But if he understood the Buddha’s silence he would have realized that some questions have no answers. They are a waste of time and energy. It should be noted that Buddha did answer many kinds of questions and it is important to notice how and why. There’s a good article at: www.buddhanet.net/budatas/ebud/whatbudbeliev34.htm on the Buddha’s Silences. But the bottom line is that Buddha had no interest in such controversial matters. They were not important to what should be asked. Buddha said that his mission was devoted to just one topic: Suffering and how to end it. Period. Some might say that that is pretty controversial! I think Buddha would smile and say, “I’m here to end controversy. I’m here to get to the heart of the matter. I’m here to ask Ms. or Mr. Eternity one question. A question far more important that whether Buddhism is controversial or not. The question you should be asking, but we’re going to ask you instead. That question is this: Why are you interested in controversy? Why is this important to you?” You see, Eternity, if you come to a Buddhist we’re going to turn the tables on you and want to get to the root of the matter. You asked your question for some reason. A question that says a lot about you. Maybe you want controversy. Maybe you don’t. But it’s bothering you somehow or you have some need for it. We’d walk you down the Four Noble Truths to discover that perhaps this is causing you discomfort, dis-ease, suffering. That’s the First Truth. Then we’ll dig out that at the bottom is some deep issue about yourself that you just can’t let go of. Some attachment you have ultimately to you! That’s the Second Truth. At this point you’re going to get pretty worried and we’re going to tell you that you can get out of that pit. That’s the Third Truth. And then we’re going to tell you how you’re going to get out and that’s the Fourth Truth - the Eight-fold Noble Path. Of which the first step is “right understanding.” And that’s what I’m trying to do now. Getting you to understand and look at your questions and what you should really be asking. Is that controversial? You’re probably feeling it for yourself. But that’s the point of the Four Noble Truths. Buddhism is not really about the Buddha, it’s about you. That may be the most controversial thing I’ve said yet in an answer. But I say it to end the controversy for you. Controversy is a mere stirring of the pot. Buddhism says it’s time to serve what’s in the pot. Good luck on your project. Honestly, I’d like to know how it goes!

Sincerely,

Frederick Brenion

From = Samantha Bonilla

Subject = Interview for Buddhism

Message = I am looking to interview an active member of Buddhism for a research paper I am doing for my college class. If anyone would like to help me out, I would greatly appreciate it. Your name may remain anonymous for the paper, if you wish. If you are interested in helping me with my research paper, please provide answers to these questions. Thank you for your time and help!

Dear Samantha,

Thank you for asking! I will do my best to help you. While I will try to be to the point, several of your questions really deserve long in depth responses, but then I’d be writing you a book! I should say that what I’m sharing with you is from my own perspective. Other Buddhists, from other schools will emphasize different aspects. By the way, I am combining two of your questions together and separating one of them into two. Here goes!

1) How did you become Buddhist? And how long have you been a Buddhist?

If you know the story of the Ugly Duckling then you will know I did not so much become a Buddhist as rather discovered that I had been a Buddhist all the time. I just did not know it till many years later. Sufficient to say I have striven to learn and live a Buddhist life for the last dozen years or so. I formally took refuge in 2003, and was recently ordained a little over a month ago. I am grateful to have found the precious treasure of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. My singular desire is to share this treasure with others.

2) Do you meditate? Could you describe how this is done?

Personally, I rarely meditate. If I do I use it as a technique to calm or center myself. It may surprise you to learn that most Buddhists don’t meditate! I’ll point out an interesting article on the subject by the noted Buddhist scholar Jeff Wilson at: www.tricycle.com/blog/jeff_wilson/3723-1.html. There is a giant misconception that meditation is a major Buddhist practice. It isn’t. But it is valued by those who do use it, and that’s the Buddhist point. It’s a tool to be used appropriately as needed. My own tradition, Shin Buddhism, which is the largest Buddhist group in Japan, doesn’t use meditation at all. Rather we listen to the Dharma, as we hear it in temple or encounter it in our daily life. I am encountering the Dharma right now by listening to your questions.

3) Could you explain what Karma is? “Karma” merely means “action”, as in cause and effect. Do get out of your head any popular notion that “karma” is something that’s floating around “out there” that is being tallied up like a bank account, that some of it is “good” and some of it is “bad”. Karma is just action, whether it is “good” or “bad” depends on how we observe it or deal with the consequences of it.

Please see L.D. NEWS, con’t on page 6
I shall share a personal story here. Twenty-three years ago I “hit bottom” as an alcoholic. Most people consider this as “bad.” In many senses it was. But for me I look on that day now as being one of the best days of my life, because it allowed me to experience at last the true truth of my life and opened my eyes to real Reality. At that moment I awoke to myself and that was a karmic seed that grew me, determined me, towards the Dharma. Or if you would rather have another story then consider Michelangelo who one day received a piece of flawed marble that no one else would use. Yet through a deeper insight Michelangelo drew out a magnificent statue of an angel that is marveled at to this day. Look at your “karma” the way Michelangelo looked at that flawed marble and draw from it the beauties and wonders that can form your own life.

4) Could you explain what Reincarnation is?
Reincarnation is an idea that infiltrated from Hinduism into Buddhism, and is very popular with many. But a deeper understanding of Buddhism weans us away from dwelling on what might be. The First Noble Truth is that there is suffering, discomfort, dis-easement with everything. The Second Noble Truth is that we endure these things because of our attachments, of which the greatest is to ourselves. There is a cure (Third Noble Truth), and it is cured by following the Eight-fold Noble Path (Fourth Noble Truth). One of the steps in that path is Right Understanding. We come to understand that our desire for “Me” and “Mine” is what is most destructive to our happiness. It is in giving up the actions (karma) that make me demand “Me, me, me” and “Mine, mine, mine” that lead me to experience peace and compassion. We no longer concern ourselves with some other life, but live truly the life we have now. If there is another life then let that life live itself and explore the Dharma without carrying over the baggage of “me.” I wouldn’t inflict myself on some possible future being! Just live this life now. Now is all you have anyway. Don’t worry about the next now!

5) Could you explain the importance of the four noble truths and the 8 fold path?
If you study the “Four Noble Truths” carefully you will see that they are not separate truths, but really one that is being unfolded, namely the truth of our disquietude and what can be done about it. Buddha simply pointed out the obvious that there is suffering, or discomfort in the world, that the origin of this discomfort lies in my own cravings, particularly in my own self. Buddha saw that we can be cured of these cravings, and that cure can be applied through the application of correct view and intention - which is the basis of Buddhist wisdom, the application of correct speech, action, and livelihood - which is the basis of Buddhist ethical conduct, and the application of correct effort, mindfulness, and concentration - which is the basis of Buddhist mental development. This is the basic framework for Buddhist understanding.

6) Do you have a favorite teaching or story of the Buddha?
There are so many! This one that touches me deeply: There was a man named Mahanama who was very troubled and he shared his fears with the Buddha, saying, “When I’m here with you and your followers I feel happy and peaceful. Then I go back home to Kaplavetthu... It’s a big city, full of dangers and I lose that peace-ful feeling, Blessed One. Suppose that I were to die like that, what would become of me?” Buddha said, “Don’t be afraid Mahanama. Your death will be free from evil. Suppose there’s a tree that’s leaning towards the East -- If it’s cut down, which way will it fall?” Mahanama said, “To the East, Blessed One.” The Buddha replied, “Mahanama, you have put your trust in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, you have kept the precepts. Like that tree, your mind is leaning towards liberation. So, if you get cut down, that’s the way you will fall.” Mahanama went away happy. He wasn’t worried any more. For me, I find that I am embraced by the compassionate life of the Buddha. My heart yearns towards his light of wisdom. And so I lean towards that light and that life, entrusting in it. It embraces me, even when I fall. It calls to me, and I can only respond in gratitude. That is the heart of my Buddhism, that is the heart of our Jodo Shinshu teachings.

Sincerely,
Frederick Brenion
West Covina Buddhist Study Center
Presents
Lecture Series

“Lecture on Larger Sutra”

Lecturer: Rev. Masao Kodani
(Senshin Buddhist Temple)

Rev. Masao Kodani
Sansei (Third generation of Japanese American)
Born and raised in Los Angeles, Calif.
Education: BA East Asian Studies
University of Calif. Santa Barbara
MA Buddhist Studies
Ryukoku University, Kyoto, Japan
Senshin Buddhist Temple 1968–Present.

Date: Monday, Oct. 3, 10, 17, & 24, 2011
Time: 7:00 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_________________________
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For more information go to: livingdharma.org/CurrentEventsWCBT.html or call 909-626-6131
浄土は「いのち」の故郷

一般的に言って、「浄土はいのちの故郷である」という。金子大栄先生も「懐かしき魂の郷里である」と浄土を語っているが、そのようなフレーズに出会ったとき、私たちは何をイメージするのであろうか。

例えば、西方浄土という観念、西の彼方に太陽が没ていく、そこに自らの人生の終焉を重ね合わせて、生死する「いのち」が終わって帰っていく、その故郷としての浄土である。誰も安らかな死後に願わずにいられないからである。そのような死後の世界に往生したいと願う気持ちは、心安らかな心情であり、一概に批判されるべきではないのが、そこで止まってそれで完結するならば、それは仏道とは言えないであろう。何故ならば、宗祖親鸞聖人によって常に確認されているように、浄土に生するということは、「無上大涅槃にいたる」、無上涅槃のさとりをひらくという、その仏道が実現されることであるからである。涅槃とは、釈尊が説かれた縁起の道理によって解明された「いのち」の本来的な究極寂滅という在り方である。その本来的な「いのち」が対物目覚め、それを自らの上に実現していこうとするのが仏道である。この基本点を疎かにしたならば仏道は成立しない。

しかし、仏道としての「無上大涅槃にいたる」往生浄土ということが、「婆娑の縁つきて、ちからなくしておわるとき」（『歎異抄』聖典六三〇頁）という生死する「いのち」の終焉を重なるために、現在世の延長線上の未来世へと転生する死後の世界と受けとめ、その落とし穴から抜け出せないままに、浄土が様々に語られているのである。年間の講師は洗心仏教会の小谷政雄師をお招きし大無量寿経のお話を頂きます。皆様のお越しをお待ちしております。なお参加費は会員35ドル、非会員40ドルとなっております。参加ご希望の方は河和田開教使まで（626）913-0622

お寺ニュース
センター秋祭り
センター秋祭りが10月1日（土）に開催されます。本年お寺は照り焼きチキンを担当しております。法話会の皆様には照り焼きのお手伝いをお願い申し上げます。この秋祭りの収益金はセンターの維持費、さらにお寺の教化活動、運営費等に使用させて頂きます。お忙しい事とは思いますがご協力のほどお願い致します。

秋の英語レクチャーシリーズ
来る10月3日（月）午後7時よりセンタールーム3号室にて秋のレクチャーシリーズが始めます。このシリーズは毎週月曜日、3日、10日、17日、24日の4回行われます。今年の講師は洗心仏教会の小谷政雄師をお招きし大無量寿経のお話をお選びいただき、皆様のお越しをお待ちしております。なお参加費は会員35ドル、非会員40ドルとなっております。参加ご希望の方は河和田開教使まで（626）913-0622

10月法話会/祥月法要
10月6日（木曜日）午後7時半
October 2011 - - Vol. XLV No. 10

October
1 11:00 am Center Akimatsuri
2 8:30 am Board Meeting
2 10:00 am Shosaku Service
3 7:00 pm Study Center Lecture
6 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
9 10:00 am Sunday Service
10 7:00 pm Study Center Lecture
11 10:00 am Bonbu Class
16 10:00 am Sunday Service
17 7:00 pm Study Center Lecture
23 10:00 am Sunday Service
24 7:00 pm Study Center Lecture
25 10:00 am Bonbu Class
28 1:30 pm NAD Japanese Joint Retreat
29 9:30 pm NAD English Joint Retreat
30 10:00 am Sunday Service/Halloween Party

November
3 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
6 10:00 am Kiku Crafts & Food Fair
6 10:00 am Sunday Service
8 10:00 am Bonbu Class
13 8:30 am Board Meeting
13 10:00 am Shotsuki Service & Shichigosan Celebration
20 4:30 pm Ho-on-ko Service
22 10:00 am Bonbu Class
27 10:00 am Sunday Service

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