



GATEWAY



October 2012 -- Vol. XLVI No. 10

Living Dharma News

www.livingdharma.org

WCBT's Facebook Page seems to be doing well with 45 "likes" (almost twice as many as just last week).

Also, our website's calendar was recently updated from its original "scrolling page" style to a more modern, interactive month-view Google Calendar. Clicking on an event opens up a popup window with event details, a map, and/or links to other pages on our website. Another benefit seems to be that, since this is a Google feature, our temple's events now seem to show up more quickly and be more prominently placed on Google searches.

Gassho,
Peter Hata

Selected E-mail

From = Steve Bastasch
Subject = Shin "pocket size" devotional book

Message = You run a very nice site, but my comment is about Shin in general. I wonder why there are no small devotional Shin books, i.e., a Shin version of all those Christian "pocket New Testaments" we see so frequently. This is not something I would expect you to do anything about, but I'm just running the idea by you: don't you think a "pocket Shin" devotional book would be a great thing to have? It could contain some material from Shin sutras, words of Shinran and Rennyō, citations from the Tanisshō, with a few "Asian-type" illustrations of Amida, the masters, the Myōkonin, etc. It could be printed on thin "Bible paper" be "handsomely bound", and even have that "red ribbon" bookmark, just like its Christian counterpart. Not in imitation, but for practical value and devotional practice. I, for one, would love to have some basic Shin teaching available in a small, easily-carried

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During their recent Youth Hoshidan Tour, Higashi's North American District Jr. YBA, including WCBT's Yazmin Whang (front, far right), Taylor Saucedo (back, 4th from left), Matthew Ormseth (back, 3rd from right), and Sean Underwood (back, far right), and guided by advisors/guides from Higashi Okinawa Betsuin, and Bishop Ito, Rev. Osa, and Rev. Bansaka, enjoy a scenic Okinawan beach.

Meet in One Place

By Rev. Kawawata

First of all, I would like to thank all WCBT members and dharma friends who have been giving me great support and guidance for fourteen years. Without your support I could not be a resident minister at WCBT for so many years. I have countless warm and good memories here at WCBT.

However it is very hard to say "Sayonara, good-by" to my sangha members. I was given a new assignment by the Honzan in Kyoto, Japan, and I will be working for the Higashi Honganji Hawaii District and the Hawaii Betsuin as the Director of the District from October 1, 2012.

Every thing and every event that I experienced at WCBT represented the dharma for me. I really learned what a Buddhist temple is and how I can listen to the dharma in my daily life from this great sangha. The WCBT sangha gave me a chance to learn and share the

dharma together and made me grow.

All of you have really put your effort and time into this temple. Our temple has many fundraisers during the year. You have really worked hard for these WCBT fundraisers, because you really know the importance of a temple and really want to listen to the dharma.

You keep the dharma here and in your daily lives. I was pushed by your enthusiasm. Everyone who comes to our temple really wants to hear the dharma

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Temple Event Highlights:

- Oct. 6, Akimatsuri
- Oct. 22 and 29 Fall Lecture Series
- Oct. 28, Sunday Service/Halloween Party
- Please See Temple News



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DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

Oldies Dance XLIII 09/22/2012

Interdependence will be the guiding theme for our Dharma School students during the new school year. For our younger students, the "ties that bind" will begin by making family trees with names of their family members. We anxiously anticipate their curiosity as their individual trees gradually expand beyond their homes...

It's not too early to start planning your Halloween attire for our annual party on Oct. 28th immediately following Sunday Service. Thanks always to the Jr YBA who continually come up with plenty of tricks and treats for all ages!

With Gassho,
Diane Hata



Quote of the Month

When we complain about our life, we are only seeing the negative side of things. But if we realize our life is not always smooth and happy and that it will contain both good and bad, we can live in peace with both aspects, good and bad, convenient or inconvenient, throughout our life.

When we encounter the dharma, the teaching of truth, our life will change. We will be transformed and appreciate our life as it is. Our life will become creative and dynamic and start to shine.

-Rev. Kenjun Kawawata





T H E G A T E W A Y

T E M P L E N E W S

Akimatsuri

The ESGVJCC Akimatsuri will be on Saturday, October 6, from 12:00 – 8:00PM and WCBT will be in charge of the Teriyaki Barbecue. Sign-up sheet are out for your signatures so please find a time when you can help or call Lillian (626) 780-9866.

We'd like to see everyone come out and support the Temple and the Center.

Study Center Lecture Series

The WCBT Study Center Lecture Series continues in October with Rev. Marvin Harada from Orange County Buddhist Church. He will give the lecture on the 48 Vows on consecutive Mondays evenings, October 22 and 29 at 7:00PM. For more information contact Rev. Peter.

Halloween

Our annual Halloween party will follow the Sunday Service on October 28. There will be fun and games and prizes so get in the Halloween spirit and come dressed in your favorite costumes. There will be refreshments for everyone so join us in the fun!

Kiku Crafts & Food Fair

WCBT will sponsor our 4th Annual Kiku Crafts & Food Fair on Sunday, November 4 from 10AM–3PM. 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.

NAD 750th Memorial

North American District Goenki Conference will be on Saturday, November 17 from 9:30AM followed by the banquet at 5:00PM. Shinran Shonin's 750th Memorial Service will be on Sunday, November 18 from 10:00AM. The conference and service will be held at Higashi Honganji Temple and the banquet will be at Quiet Canyon in Montebello. Please see Rev. Ken for more info.

Ho-onko Service

Our Ho-onko Service will be held on Sunday, November 25 at 4:30PM. Rev. Ken Yamada from Berkeley Higashi Honganji will be our special speaker. Please join us as we welcome Rev. Yamada and stay for the complimentary *Otoki* dinner that will follow the service.



GATEWAY Staff

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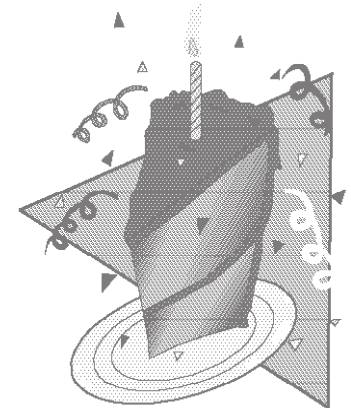
West Covina Buddhist Temple Mission Statement:
In the spirit of universal brotherhood, West Covina Buddhist Temple provides the opportunity for all to listen to and share the Teachings of the Buddha in order that we may awaken to our true selves, living our lives fully and dynamically.

The Temple's mailing address is:

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and really enjoy listening to the dharma. I was reminded by those members of something the Buddha said in the Larger Sutra: "If you have heard the Dharma and do not forget it, but regard and respect it with great joy, you are my good friend. For this reason, you should awaken aspiration for Enlightenment."

I realized that all of you are good friends of Buddha and so naturally, our temple has become a real place to listen to the dharma, which is the Pure Land.

My 14 years of life at WCBT and in this district is my real treasure. I appre-

ciate everything that you have done for me and my family.

I will move to Hawaii, however we will listen to same dharma and share the same teachings together. We will be living in the same sangha, so this is not real separation. Therefore I would like to ask your continued support and guidance even after I leave for the Hawaii District.

Thank you very, very much for your warm-hearted support.

In Gassho,
Kenjun Kawawata

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

Ethan Ezaki, Kelly Yamashita, Traci Take-mura, Glenn Nakatani, Diane Hata, Jane Earley, Kimio Earley, Miyo Takahashi, Erik Akuna, Melissa Kozono, Melanie Pai, Woo



T H E G A T E W A Y

Japan: Living Kyoto and Okinawa

By Yazmin Whang

Twelve hours and nothing to do but eat, watch movies, and sleep. That's what I did on the plane to Japan. The thing I didn't expect on that long trip, what that the food was so delicious! Also that it was hard to sleep for so long in a chair that doesn't really recline.

I remember the first thing I thought when I got off the plane in Kyoto was that it was so humid. Definitely insane. I was about to die, but thank goodness for air conditioned buses, which we were on for about another hour before we finally got to our hotel. That's where we first met the boys from Berkeley. "Oh you're part of the trip too?!" We were all laughing right off the bat. We were then introduced to the Hawaii and Los Angeles groups which were all the start to a very unique and quick-bonding group.

The things I remember most about Kyoto was when we stayed at our "mother" temple and when we went shopping the last couple days. We stayed about 3 days and slept in futons on tatami floors. The food was amazing, of course, and I noticed that everyone ate so fast! The cleaning up together part was an experience because it's not something that everyone really does here in America. In Japan, it seems like everyone is always thinking about the person coming after them. Everyone is just so polite and generous. Even the pigeons were nice. My cousin and I kept saying it was because they were "Japanese" pigeons and that they were so clean and nice. People laughed and thought we were crazy however.

The days seemed like forever as we woke up at 6 am every morning to Japanese singing and a morning service. We took a tour of the temple and we got to see many interesting parts of it. To me, it felt like a Japanese

horror movie when the Reverends were taking us through a maze of rooms and dark hallways. When you looked down the hallways, it felt like someone would be standing right across from



you. However, I was rewarded with the sight of the temple garden. Oh, it was gorgeous. It was very green; hardly any flowers, but the little waterfall and the rocks and trees were just breathtaking. I could have spent hours just sitting there looking at it all. But of course, I couldn't and before I knew it, we were back at hotels again before heading off to Okinawa. That's when we went out to eat at this really amazing conveyor belt sushi restaurant with Kisa. To me, that just made the whole experience complete.

To add to that completeness, we visited Otani Junior and Senior High School. It was so different from American high schools. For example, when

we took pictures for the students, they laughed and posed for us. They were screaming and so excited to be taking pictures with us as well. I'm sure it made everyone feel like a celebrity.

Normally, in America, if you visited a high school and you took pictures of us, we'd look at you like, "What on earth are you doing?" Anyways, Maya, from Hawaii, taught us and the Japanese school kids how to Hula dance. We all loved it. It's amazing how much we enjoyed ourselves.

Fast forwarding to Okinawa, the thing that I really wanted to mention and recognize was the Battle of Okinawa tour. It was just so distressing at times, like when we went to the caves, the memorial museum, and the mass grave site. We had gone into these caves that thousands of Japanese civilians had to cram into because of the bombing. It was absolutely pitch black, and the only light to guide us was the glare from our flashlights around our necks. Our tour guide had us take a moment and turn them off and just sit there in

the dark, so we can experience the feeling that these people were overtaken with. He told us the story of a mother and her (I believe) 9 month old baby. It was how they were in the pitch black with civilians screaming and maggots munching on flesh and the mother could not take care of her baby. The baby was slowly dying because the mother was so undernourished that she couldn't produce milk for her baby. She couldn't even see her baby when it slowly kissed death's lips. To try to even imagine how that must be like is unfathomable.

The memorial museum had the most impact on me. There was a replica of

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a medical cave inside the museum, which was where children within the ages of twelve to seventeen took care of injured, dying and dead soldiers and civilians. In front of that cave were these huge books, with the survivors' stories of their experiences. As I read the pages, flipped through them with a heavy heart, I slowly came to realize that many of these children were the age of my little sister. And I kept thinking and thanking some higher power that this situation didn't happen here. It's so hard to imagine your little sister having to be in the middle of falling bombs and suicidal people. The blood and gore of this event, mixed with images of my baby sister literally knocked the breath out of me. Once that thought hit me, I couldn't breathe.

Tears were falling like waterfalls down my face as images from the reading kept making their way into my head. I remember wanting to go home so much at that point, just to be able to hug my little sister. I would like to believe that this tour had the most impact on my life. I've become more appreciative and just mature from it, I feel.

On a happier note, it was a wonderful experience that I wouldn't think twice about reliving. It was dreadful saying goodbye to everyone, but all good things must come to an end. But I'm keeping in mind that our bond that we all made, in such a short time will last forever. Let's just say, it'll be the longest lasting "basket" in the world.

A Path to the Pure Land

By Sean Tetsuo-Wells Underwood

Arriving that first night in Kyoto not knowing a thing about Japanese customs except for the improper actions my grandparents would yell at

me for as a child, I knew that night was only the beginning of an unforgettable adventure. Wanting to understand the very basic criterion of Buddhism was my original goal for this trip but I feel that as my time at the Honzan went on my intuitions changed. I feel that on this trip the Six Paramitas presented themselves as the core teachings of being in Japan. I had experienced Dana, Ksanti, Dhyana, and Prajna

father but as soon as the damages were paid for the boy and man went in different directions. A complete stranger not knowing who the boy was or what he had done had used his own money to settle a dispute he had nothing to do with, pure Dana.

Being a Hapa kid visiting Japan for the first time I knew only about three phrases in Japanese, so that was a concern that I had on my mind for a while.



Thankfully as time went on I saw the true patience and humility of the Japanese people all around me. I tried my hardest to understand their English, as I tried to utter my equally bad Japanese. But being exposed to this dilemma every day for the entire trip, it taught me to have patience and only through

patience that we can achieve our goal no matter how menial.

This adventure being a religious retreat meditation was an everyday aim. But being in Japan made meditation much clearer and more meaningful to me. Just having that sense that this is where Jodo-Shinshu was started, having that connection with the hundreds of people around you made meditating much easier. Although I am no longer in Japan or surrounded by those hundreds of other people, I plan on making meditation part of my daily routine, if it's to help relieve stress from school or to concentrate before one of my games, I've learned that this is a tool that will help me not only travel the path to the Pure Land, but to help me mature as a person.

While in Okinawa we went on a tour about the Okinawa War. One of our fascinating stops was at a cave in which, our tour guide told us, there

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all first-hand but not in the way you would expect. These were not part of a lecture, or involved in the stratagem. I saw all of these through the kindness of not only the Japanese people, but also through the members of our tour group.

Dana is really the definition of the Japanese people. In Japan things are run in a completely opposite fashion from the United States. Anything from entering a store to simply walking past someone on the sidewalk, you are treated with respect and an unheard of level of kindness. A prime example of this is while sight-seeing in Kyoto I witnessed a shop owner and a boy angrily arguing with each other. What exactly the dispute was exactly I don't know as it is I don't speak Japanese, but from my assumption the boy could not pay for something he had broken, when a man came to the store owner and offered to pay for the boy. When I saw this I assumed it was the boys



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was a sad story of one family in that cave. This family was among one of the several hundred families taking refuge from the bombings on the island. Being bound to this cave for the fear of death or apprehension, the amount of food and water was exceptionally scarce. The mother of this family tried to feed her infant whatever she could attain in this barren cave. When her milk had run out and the cave could supply no more the expected had come, her child had died in her arms. Being in that horrid cave hearing this story gives you the worst feeling of suffering in the world. To imagine the agonizing time spent in there being swallowed by darkness and listening to the cries of the families around you can be described as hell in itself. Prajna means to see things as they are without the prejudices and perspectives that come from within, and our minute time spent in that cave was exactly that.

The time spent in Japan was an eye

opener, I know that the lessons learned on this trip will stay with me for the rest of my life as they have impacted me in a way that I never knew was possible. I am grateful to the sangha for allowing me to go on this journey and in hoping to continue the meaning of these lessons I will try my hardest to spread these practices and values with the sangha. I am more than willing to give any who have questions more insight to our trip. I know that I am incredibly lucky to have experienced this amazing trip and hope to return one day.

The Face of War By Matthew Ormseth

Our guide took us to a dripping staircase hewn into the jungle rock, descending deep underground into one of Okinawa's many natural caves. We crawled through a narrow tunnel into pitch darkness—the flashlights dangling round our necks provided

the only source of light. The cave was eerily silent, save for the trickle of a subterranean stream. The tunnel led to a cavern with a high ceiling, not unlike that of a cathedral. The floor was strewn with boulders, which we sat on as our guide began telling us a story. The story was that of a young family of three, forced down into the cave along with nearly 600 other native Okinawans by American bombing raids. Our guide asked us to turn off our flashlights before he began. The darkness was absolute, enveloping. It seemed to press down on my eyes and throat and ears, and I felt as if it alone would suffocate me. It was easy to imagine huddling here, deep underground, the ceilings shaking as bombs fell shrieking from the skies, the smell of fear rank in the cavern. Our guide told us that the 600 refugees were trapped in the cave for two weeks without any food. He told us how the mother of the young

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family tried desperately to keep her infant of 9 months alive by feeding him sugarcane juice once her milk ran out. He spoke through a translator, yet as he continued on, the hesitation and tremor in his voice was universal. Moments later, our translator told us what we already knew. The baby had starved to death in the darkness of the cave as the mother clutched her son's failing body to her chest, helpless, desperately searching for a pulse that had ceased to be.

The memorial to the Battle of Okinawa was located on the bluffs where countless families chose death over capitulation, throwing themselves over the cliffs, down into the sea hundreds of feet below. Behind the bluffs were the black marble markers commemorating the roughly 200,000 casualties of the battle—Japanese, American and Okinawan alike. There were hundreds, perhaps thousands of these huge stone markers, looming like massive tombstones. It was the most terrible sight I had ever seen. Every stone bore hundreds of names on both faces, front and back. And the realization that every single etching belonged to a face, and that that face had belonged to a person, a real living, breathing person, was a terrible thing to comprehend. I tried to put the numbers in perspective, but I couldn't even fathom what 200,000 people would look like. Two football stadiums, packed to capacity? Three?

In my 11th grade history class I had read about the battle; how the Japanese forces had fought tooth and nail, and that the fighting had been so ferocious the battle of Okinawa has been accredited by modern historians with swaying approval for dropping the atomic bomb. I knew that 200,000 lives had been lost in the fighting, and that over half of them had been civilian casualties. Yet somewhere in between this little island in the Pacific and my textbook, the horror of those three months had been lost. It had been lost in the faceless statistics, the cold numbers that meant and told nothing.

I could stand here and tell you all

that our trip was "amazing;" that it was an "unforgettable experience," or that it was "great." But the truth is that these tired adjectives would not do it justice. It left me feeling refreshed and invigorated, as if I had just emerged from one of those communal bathhouses Sean and I had so initially dreaded. And while our visits to the battle sites on the island of Okinawa were sobering and at times nearly unbearable to comprehend, I can say in all certainty that those images will remain with me for the rest of my life, a reminder of the stark, unromanticized face of war—the only face of war—and its terrible cost on humankind.

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format for pocket, backpack, glove box, vacations, etc. So, if not impertinent, I would just like to ask that - if you think this might be handy to the practice of Shin - maybe you could kick it around among yourselves and your congregation - who knows, maybe sometime, someone who owns a press or publishing house might think it's feasible. Last I looked, the BCA Bookstore doesn't carry anything like I'm talking about - so I occasionally ask Shin sanghas and organizations about it ... Anyway, thanks for bending your ear. Keep up the great work here :)

Dear Steve,
Thank you for writing and I'm very glad you enjoy our website. Last April I passed my Kyoshi training and received ordination. At the end of the ceremony I received a beautiful gift from our Mother Temple, a copy of the "Shinshu Seiten." It is a collection of the major source materials of our tradition: the three major Pure Land Sutras, extracts from the Seven Pure Land Teachers, portions of Shinran's writings - The Kyogyoshinsho, his Wasans, letters, Tannisho, letters of Rennyo, and so on. It is very much like what you would like to see done, including having a ribbon for a bookmark! It is in Japanese. Gazing at it reminds me of the wonderful heritage I have been given to preserve and to give to others. There are two English versions of this

work, produced by the Nishi Branch of Jodo Shinshu. One, from the BCA, was done in 1978. Unfortunately its cover bleeds out, if you have sweaty hands it will stain - get a plastic wrap cover for it. Its English is matter of fact, more like a study book. The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii did one in 1955. I like its style of presentation, the English is rather antique, but I like it very much. It is comfortable. You may be able to check with BCA bookstore about obtaining these, or check used book search services. Someday I hope there will be an English version from the Shinshu Otaniha (Higashi), and I will carry it around everywhere!

But when it comes right down to it, do we really need our books to look like Bibles? Of course a work like the Shinshu Seiten should be printed with a sense of beauty and treated with respect. But we are not a "book" religion like the major Western religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. If you were to mistreat a Bible in some parts of our country you may well get yelled at, maybe even assaulted. If you did the same to the Quran, you will get executed in other parts of the world. But, in some schools of Buddhism if you used a page of the sutras for toilet paper you would be complemented for your deep insight! And that may be the real point. Our writings are not "divine revelation." They are not the "Word of God." Ours is a very human religion. It addresses human needs and human situations. I do not read Shinran as if he was some prophet of old. I read him as a fellow traveler on the same path. I do not "pray" the Kyogyoshinsho, though I do try to sing the Wasans! But the Wasans are not the "Book of Psalms." They are the songs of one heart singing to others, and that makes them very human to me. My Sensei, Rev. Ken, once told me that I chant at times like a Christian, in that I tend to chant "vertically." I want to "uplift." He pointed out that Christianity is a vertical religion. It goes from earth to heaven. Look at the architecture. Tall buildings, opened up roofs, steeples reaching to the sky. Altars you gaze up at. Buddhism is horizontal. Our buildings are low and open wide to contain people. They are meant to embrace

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the world. I must learn to chant "horizontally." So too my talks. Western religious devotional materials tend to "uplift". Ours need to open us out. Ours don't need to be pretty, they need to be earthy, real, and human. There is the real beauty!

I come from a Christian background. I understand and know the effects of the Bible. I am a librarian by profession. Books are everything to me. But I am now a follower of the Nembutsu. My books are just an attachment that I need to let go of. When I first started on this path I had wished, like you, that our writings could be carried around like a Bible. I'm tempted to get my copy of *The Collected Works of Shinran* rebound in leather and then thump it during my Dharma talks! But seriously, who would I be impressing? We don't look at our important books the same way. Can you imagine saying, "In *Tannisho* 3:16, thus saith Shinran?" Nah, that is not the way to go.

No, we are not "People of the Book," as Jews, Christians, and Muslims are often called. We are People of the Vow, the Primal Vow. If we have a "devotional" it is the Nembutsu. All our written and spoken materials are designed for one purpose.

Shinran made it very clear what that purpose was in the *Tannisho*. That all our studies, if they are to be of any worth, is to help clear up the import of the Primal Vow, that it is for everyone, and in clearing it up to respond to the Vow in gratitude with the Nembutsu. Reading *Shinran*, *Rennyō*, the stories of the Myōkonin – how I love them! – are all aids to becoming a person of the Nembutsu. One of our greatest spiritual heroes in our tradition is the Myōkonin Saichō. He wrote his aspirations to Amida on wood shavings while making clogs. Nothing gilt edged or with red ribbons. I think if he saw us collect his poems into books with gold letters he would cry in pain. He would say that his words are just Fool's Gold. It is Amida's Vow that turns us from bits of rubble into the only real gold. We don't need golden books, we need to become golden people. Hear the Nembutsu. Don't just read it. Just hear it and the rest will follow. Devote yourself to it, but don't be devotional. Be human.

With Deepest Gassho,

Rev. Frederick Brenion

To: The Living Dharma Website
Subject: Re: Shin "pocket size" devotional book

Dear Rev. Frederick,
Thanks so much for replying to my inquiry and for your insightful comments :)

Yes, I do believe that I will try to find an English version of the "Shinshu Seiten". Not as a scripture, but as a mobile reminder of what the sutras and the Masters have said. I will, as you suggest, check the BCA Bookstore on its availability. Thanks for the tip.

Thanks, too, for sharing information concerning your personal Shin practice (congratulations on your recent ordination), as well as your "worldly" profession. You have been very generous and friendly to me, and I appreciate it very much.

Best of everything to you - and thanks for all the help.

Gassho,
Steve Bastasch

From = Maria
Subject = Sunday Service Sept. 16
Message = Hi, my name is Maria and I'm a masters degree student for Nursing. I'm currently taking a spiritual care class and I would like to visit your Sunday Service to experience the Buddhist religion and enrich my knowledge. With this knowledge I want to better help my patients coming from the Buddhist religion. I read in your website that visitors are welcome and you provide information for students as well. I have a question: Can one of your members please assist me in better understanding your Sunday Service if possible? Thank you so much for your time, and see you Sunday at your 10am service.

Dear Maria,
Thank you for writing. I think it is wonderful that you want to enrich your understanding in order to help others. You are walking on what we call the "Bodhisattva Path!" A Bodhisattva is one who

seeks to help others and in so doing, helps themselves as well - and vice versa! It is funny that you ask but I am actually in the process of trying to redo a pamphlet on our services. It still needs work though. Anyway, you are very welcome to come to our services. If you come a bit before 10 a.m. I, or any one of our ministers, as well as our members will be more than happy to help you with your questions. Also, after the service we usually have a discussion where you can bring all your questions. I shall look forward to seeing you!

Sincerely,
Rev. Fred Brenion

Subject: Re: Sunday Service Sept 16
From: Maria Manzo
To: dharma@livingdharma.org
Dear members of the Living Dharma, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude for helping me learn more about Buddhism by letting me participate during your service and the informal discussion. I learned more than expected (in a good way) and for that I'm trully thankful. I am very honored to gain this knowledge and apply it in my nursing vocation. Once again thank you to all members of the Living Dharma.
Sincerely,
Maria Manzo RN, BSN

From = Bethany and Shannon
Subject = Questions about Buddhism
Message = Hello, We both are high school students working on a project about Buddhism in our Modern History class. We were wondering if someone who knows a lot about Buddhism could answer a few questions for the interview component of our project. We appreciate this very much. Thank you so much for your help. If you need to contact me you can email me at <mailto:Be.Simon123@gmail.com>Be.Simon123@gmail.com (Bethany)
Thanks,
Bethany S. and Shannon D.

Dear Bethany and Shannon,
Thank you for writing. I will do my best to
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answer your questions, though I have come to realize that if you think you know a lot, you don't! There's a popular Buddhist saying that 'Beginner's Mind' is best mind. A student is always ready to learn, an expert thinks he/she has got it already. The best Buddhist teachers are those who are always learning, always open. Either way, I'm not an expert, but I'll be happy to share and study with you. Here goes!

1) What sect of Buddhism are you a part of?

I am a member of the Jodo Shinshu, also known as Shin Buddhism.

2) Can you tell us a little bit about your specific sect?

Historically, my sect began almost 800 years ago. A monk named Shinran found that after trying to practice various forms of meditation, observances, exercises, for over 20 years he was no closer to reaching deep understanding than when he started. He left the monastery to reflect on what he should do. He found a good teacher named Honen Shonen, who taught a path that anyone could walk. You did not have to be a monk to do it. Beforehand almost all Buddhist practices were done in the monasteries, and laypeople, the poor, the young, the old, and women, had little hope of ever achieving Buddhist understanding. Honen discovered a teaching that relied on simply recollecting the Buddha and relying on the acceptance that a Buddha has for all. Shinran deepened this understanding from Honen and began to present it to those who were considered unfit for Buddhism and the message took off. Soon Shinran's school became the largest Buddhist group in Japan, and still is today. There is more involved in this story and with the teachings, but I would describe Jodo Shinshu as the Buddhism for Broken People. It is the Buddhism you come to when you can't do anything else. It is when you break that you begin to discover your true nature and that is where the Buddhist path begins. And when you begin to discover that you have always been accepted, as you are right now, and every now, that the import of Buddhist life begins to hit.

3) What influenced your choice to continue practicing Buddhism?

There are many reasons, but the principle

one is that Buddhism allowed me to truly see myself. Do you know the story of The Ugly Duckling? This ugly bird tried to live as a duck, quack like a duck, and do all kinds of duck things, but he never fitted in. He traveled about looking for acceptance but found none. Then he saw some swans. They were beautiful. He went to them and pleaded for them to end his life as he couldn't bear it anymore. They said "Why? You're one of us." He looked into the water and saw that he did look like them. He was a swan all the time. He flew into the air and below him he could see his duck family and he knew they were beautiful as they were, and he found his own beauty now and it was all good. That would be my story. I tried to be one thing and failed constantly. I stopped seeing everything with eyes that weren't mine, and I began to see with my true eyes.

4) What is your take on what Buddhism means?

Buddhism, for me, is the art of seeing yourself, the world, everything, with open eyes. Often we look at everything with tinted glasses. Buddhism would have you remove those tinted glasses and see things as they really are.

5) What is the Middle Way to you?

The Middle Way is the way of avoiding extremes. Buddha had experienced this before his awakening. He had lived a life of pleasure as a prince. He experienced a life of denial as a monk. Neither worked for him. In fact it almost killed him in learning this. In awakening to his situation Buddha came to understand the Four Noble Truths. 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 word. That the origin of this discomfort lies in my own cravings. That I can be cured of these cravings, and that the 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. All this is to aid me in walking that Middle Way.

6) Why do you think Buddhism is spreading?

Buddhism is world wide. In some areas it is barely alive. In other areas it is growing. It is new here in America and is growing. I think perhaps because it is a practical and realistic religion. Lot of religions like to hand out metaphysical ideas and hopes. We're dealing with the here and now and what you need to do about it. I find this exciting. But for a Buddhist the most important question is not what is the state of Buddhism and will it grow. Rather what is the state of Bethany and Shannon? What is the state of me, Frederick? That is far more interesting and important. And really, the future state of Buddhist growth depends on how well we live and answer that question!

9) How does a person become a Buddhist?

Have you ever seen pictures of refugees? They have fled their homeland looking for a safe spot to go to. They have lost everything. I believe that can be experienced spiritually as well. That is why in Buddhism our most important act is to take refuge in the Three Treasures - to take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. The Buddha, of course, is our teacher. The Dharma is the teachings by which we come to understand our life, and the Sangha is the community of those who have come to take refuge together in this. I was lost and the Buddha took me in. I was lost and the Dharma gave me light. I was lost and the Sangha gave me a spiritual home in which I find life.

10) Why do you eat vegetarian food?

You will be surprised to hear this, but I probably eat the same kinds of foods that you like! Most Buddhists eat the kind of foods that are available in their ethnic cultures. Some will eat lots of rice, some eat potatoes! Some Buddhists are vegetarians, some eat meat. Monks and nuns are generally vegetarians. But if they go out begging for food, as is the ancient custom, and someone gave them meat, they would accept the offering humbly. Because I was born and raised an American, I like ham-

Please see L.D. NEWS, con't on page 10



T H E G A T E W A Y

L.D. NEWS, con't from page 9

burgers and french fries! Our temple often serves teriyaki chicken and rice! Whatever we all eat, we try to eat mindfully, realizing that all life depends on life.

Well! That's a lot of questions and I hope the answers will help you with your class project! If you have more questions or follow-ups I'll be more than happy. But I think you've got the idea now that there is more to Buddhism than you realized. Please keep studying! Please keep exploring! Keep that Student mind, always learning! Always open!

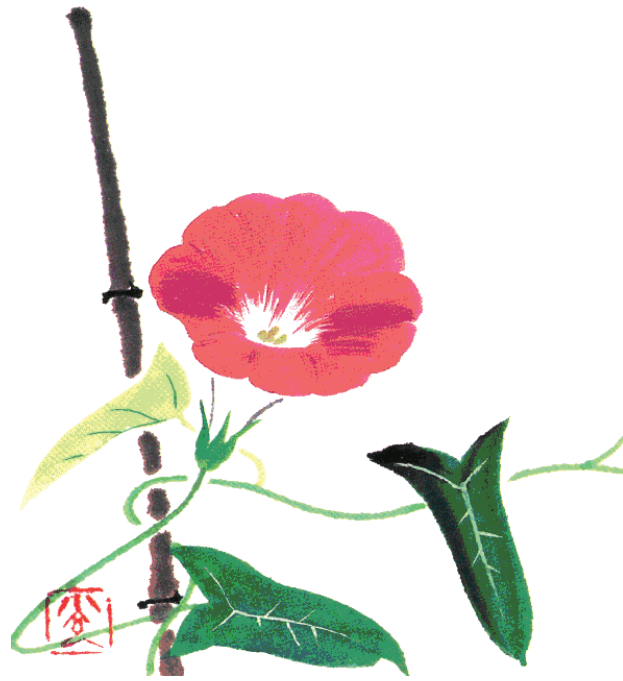
Sincerely,
Rev. Frederick

From: Bethany Simon
To: The Living Dharma Website <dharma@livingdharma.org>
Thank you so much for your response!
Much appreciated.
~Bethany and Shannon

From = Kyle Rooke
Subject = Buddhist funeral
Message = hi I'm a student doing a assignment on buddhism. I was wondering if you could give me or tell me a website or book that has information on the purpose of a buddhist funeral and symbols used in the funeral?

Dear Kyle,
Thank you for your thought-provoking question. Basically, as far as the symbols used at Jodo Shinshu (or Shin) Buddhist funerals, I'm not that knowledgeable about funeral symbols in other traditions, but at least on the surface, it would seem that Buddhist funerals share much in common with, say, Christian funerals. At most funerals, there usually seems to be lots of flowers, religious songs, maybe incense offerings, or other offerings and prayers, and of course, there is the casket.

What does seem to be different though is the content of the religious talk given by the officiant at the funeral. And of course, as this message differs, the meaning of the symbols used will also change. For example, living in the Christian-dominant United States, even most Buddhists are familiar with the Christian belief in eternal life after death. Perhaps some Buddhists, attending a



friend's or acquaintance's Christian funeral might even be envious when they hear the Christian minister or pastor state that the deceased has moved on to a "better life." Surely, the grieving family members derive comfort from this message.

In Shin Buddhist funerals however, a letter entitled "White Ashes," is usually read by the officiating minister. This letter was written by Rennyo Shonin (a revered 15th century Japanese priest). It reminds us of the truth of impermanence, which is the same truth that the Buddha himself awakened to in the 5th century BCE. "White Ashes" refers to the fact that, though we may be in fine health today, and may think our life is going fine, sooner or later we too will be "white ashes" (i.e., deceased). Thus, in reference to your question about symbols, where, in a Christian funeral, flowers might symbolize the beauty of the world the deceased is about to enter, in a Buddhist funeral flowers might symbolize impermanence; even the most beautiful flowers soon wither away. Every living thing eventually must perish.

This emphasis on impermanence is also represented in the Mahaparinirvana Sutra, the last sermon the Buddha himself gave as he was dying. In it, he tells his disciples, "My

end is approaching, our parting is near, but do not lament. Life is ever-changing; none can escape the dissolution of the body. This I am now to show by my own death, my body falling apart like a dilapidated cart. Do not vainly lament, but realize that nothing is permanent and learn from it the emptiness of human life. Do not cherish the unworthy desire that the changeable might become unchanging." The Buddha then advised his disciples to live their lives in the light of this truth.

Though Buddhism's emphasis on impermanence seems negative, this is ultimately a positive teaching: it alone is the powerful truth that can wake us and enable us to fully appreciate the preciousness of life. I think that, even people of other traditions that believe in an eternal life, must face this truth of impermanence. No one who truly appreciates the joys our everyday lives offer us actually wants to die.

Buddhism teaches that only when we face the truth of impermanence, can we then discover the true beauty and wonderful gift that life provides.

Best Wishes,
Rev. Peter Hata





T H E G A T E W A Y

離任のご挨拶

河和田賢淳

1998年より14年の長い間このウエストコピナ東本願寺の開教使として勤めさせて頂きました。その間メンバー皆様より温かいご支援いただきこの大任を勤めることができましたこと心より御礼申し上げます。

此の度ご本山東本願寺よりハワイ開教区の開教監督という大任を仰せつかりました。熟慮の上この大任を引き受けさせて頂く事になりました。つきましては、この10月1日よりハワイ開教区での開教に従事致す事になりました。数ヶ月間はこちらとハワイを行き来し新任の方との受け継ぎを終える次第です。皆様のご理解を頂きまようお願い申し上げます。

前任の清田元裕前開教使の後を受け着任致しましたのは1998年5月1日でした。英語も不十分で新しいお寺に戸惑う私をメンバーの皆様方は辛抱強く見守り、育てて下さいました。この14年間のコピナでのいろいろな事が思い出されます。毎月の法話会での美味しい夕食、お盆でのお寿司の作業やそうめんの準備、そして恒例の忘年会での楽しかった事。またその逆に長い間一緒に聴聞し続けてこられた方が亡くなられ、お別れをしなくてはならない事は本当に悲しい寂しいことでした。皆さんが喜んで法話会や法要にお参りされ、仏法聴聞を慶んでくださっている笑顔が憶いおこされます。英語の方々には先生の法話は理解できない。もっと英語を勉強して解りやすく短くして欲しいとの要望があったり、年間の行事の中で一番大きなお盆フェスティバルに高熱をだしてお休みしたり、本当にいろいろな事がありました。

しかし、仏法聴聞をもっとして行きたい、お寺を守って行きたいという熱

い皆さんの思いに推されて今日までこのお寺の開教使として勤め、お育てを頂いたことだと思います。大無量寿経の中で釈尊は「法を聞いて忘れず、敬い大きに慶べば、すなわち我が善き親友なり。」と言われております。このお寺の皆さんは法を聞いて慶んでおられるお釈迦さまの親友であります。そのような方々に囲まれて14年間このお寺で開教使として生活させて頂きました。本当に稀なご縁を頂いたことでした。心より御礼申し上げます。これからホノルルへ移りますが、同じサンガの中で同じ仏法聴聞させて頂くことです。これから遠方とはなりますが変わらぬご指導、ご援助をお願い申し上げます。ハワイに来られた折にはどうぞお寄りください。本当にありがとうございます。合掌

お寺ニュース

センター秋祭り

センター秋祭りが10月6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、並びお寺の教化活動、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。

ヒロインパーティー

恒例の仏青並びダルマスクールによるヒロインパーティーが10月30日(日)は午前10時の定例日曜礼拝の後行われます。子供達は思い思いのコスチュームをきて、ゲームや昼食などで楽しい一時を過ごします。どうぞ皆様にもご一緒に参加いただきますようご案内申し上げます。

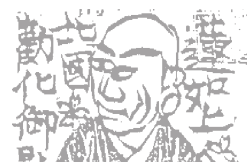


北米教区親鸞聖人750回

御遠忌法要

前号にてお知らせ致しましたが北米教区おきまして、来る11月18日午前10時より親鸞聖人750回御遠忌法要が東本願寺ロスアンゼルス別院に於いて厳修されます。また法要後かみそり、帰敬式(仏弟子となり法名を頂く儀式)が大谷開教司教の司式の下お勤めされます。

法要に先立ち前日11月17日午前9時半より別院におきまして750回ご遠忌を記念して北米教区同朋大会が開催されます。大会にはパークレーの毎田センターより羽田信生博士並びニューヨーク大学のブルマーク博士をお招きし、大会テーマ“苦悩から目覚めへ”下お話をいただきます。そして昼食の後パネルディスカッションを予定しております。お話は英語でなされますがすべてに日本語の翻訳がございますので皆様にご参加いただけるように計画されております。そして17日の夜5時半よりモンテペロウーのクワイアットキャノンにおきまして記念晩餐会が催されます。美味しい食事と楽しい出し物でお楽しみいただき、北米での親鸞聖人750回ご遠忌のご縁に出会えた喜びを皆様とともに分かち合いたいと思います。後日案内状がみなさまのもとへ発送されますので、申し込み用紙にご記入の上返信ください。



10月法話会

祥月法要

10月4日

午後7時半

East San Gabriel Valley
Japanese Community Center, Inc.

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

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GATEWAY

October 2012 - - Vol. XLVI No. 10

October

- 4 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 6 11:00 am Center Akimatsuri
- 7 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 7 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 9 10:00 am Bonbu Class
- 14 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 22 7:00 pm Study Center Lecture
- 23 10:00 am Bonbu Class
- 28 10:00 am Sunday Service/Halloween Party
- 29 7:00 pm Study Center Lecture

November

- 1 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 4 10:00 am Kiku Crafts & Food Fair
- 4 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 10 10:00 am Bonbu Class
- 11 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 11 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 17 9:30 am NAD Shinran Shonin 750th Dobo conference
- 6:00 pm NDA Shinran Shonin 750th Banquet
- 18 10:00 am NDA Shinran Shonin 750th Memorial Service
- 25 4:30 pm Ho-on-ko Service
- 27 10:00 am Bonbu Class

10月行事予定

- 4日 午後7時半 法話会
- 6日 午前11時 センター秋祭り
- 7日 午前8時半 理事会
- 7日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 14日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 16日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 23日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 28日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- ハロウィンパーティー

11月行事予定

- 1日 午後7時半 法話会
- 4日 午前10時 菊クラフトフェア
- 4日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 11日 午前8時半 理事会
- 11日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 17日 午前9時半 北米教区親鸞聖人750回御遠忌記念同朋大会
- 午後6時 北米教区親鸞聖人750回記念晩餐会
- 18日 午前10時 北米教区親鸞聖人750回御遠忌法要/帰敬式
- 25日 午後4時半 報恩講法要

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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