



GATEWAY



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This month's article on the SLOBT Family Retreat will be added to the website's Library shortly, and it will become the 5th or 6th SLO retreat article. All these family retreats were enjoyable and informative, and unique insights were gained at each one. But for me personally, this year's retreat was certainly one of the most memorable (see report in this issue).

Gassho,
Rev. Peter Hata

Selected E-mail

From = Mary Matsuda
Subject = website link
Message = Hi Peter! Congrats on attaining ordination and temple! Wow! What a wonderful journey for you! The Kaneohe Temple, with so many changes every 4 years, will be developing a website and I would like to suggest a link to your website. Of particular interest would be the portion of the questions that you field from outsiders as well as your members. Would you allow us to do this? please advise...

Please see L.D. NEWS, con't on page 12

Ed. Note: These two articles should have been included last month but were mistakenly omitted

RECONFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO

REVIVE SHINSHU

By Bishop Koi Sato'o
Chief Administrator, Shinshu Otani-ha



I wish to extend my warmest New Year's greetings to all of you, the members and friends of the Higashi Honganji North America district temples.

As we observed the Shinran Shonin 750th Memorial Service (Goenki) and Hoonko Service of the Goenki Year at our mother temple in Kyoto in 2011, we

Please see SOCHO, con't on page 8



Above: The combined participants from WCBT and Berkeley Higashi Honganji temples squeeze into the Morro Bay Natural History Museum's theatre room for a group pic during the 2013 Family Retreat outing.

The 2013 San Luis Obispo Family Retreat: "Interdependence"

On the weekend of February 15~17, 2013, 26 members of West Covina Buddhist Temple and 18 members from Berkeley Higashi Honganji—44 participants in all—met at the idyllic San Luis Obispo Buddhist Temple for their 2013 Family Retreat. Fortunately, unlike the virtual rain-out of the 2011 SLOBT Retreat, which was our previous time

here, not only did we enjoy perfect weather all weekend long, "interdependence," the theme of this year's retreat, seemed to be evident in regards to the confluence of engaging Dharma talks, lively fellowship, a wonderful temple and surroundings, delicious food, and enjoyable group activities, all of which contributed to a great retreat weekend. Specifically, these causes and conditions seemed ideal for listening to the Dharma.

On Saturday, after a seiza meditation session and morning service led by Rev. Peter Hata, and a delicious breakfast provided by WCBT's Temple Commu-

Please see RETREAT, con't on page 4

North America District Report

By Bishop Noriaki Ito

Happy New Year to everyone. I hope you all have welcomed in a joyous 2013.

The year 2012 was an extremely important year for our Higashi Honganji North America District. Based on the preliminary plans that had discussed the previous year, we began setting up committees so that ministers and members could work together to plan for our North America District 750th Memorial for Shinran Shonin that was held on the weekend of November 17-18. Although there were many last minute decisions that had to be made, the Commemo-

Please see NAD, con't on page 8

Temple Event Highlights:

- Mar.16, Cherry Blossom Fest.
- Mar. 17, Spring Ohigan
- Mar. 23, Oldies Dance
- Apr. 7, Hanamatsuri
- Apr. 7, LBCF Hanamatsuri
- Apr. 8, Intro To Buddhism
- Please See Temple News



T H E G A T E W A Y

DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

"Memories can be beautiful.."
Indeed it is our sincere wish that our Dharma school students (the Gutierrez kids!) now have beautiful memories after taking part in our family retreat up in San Luis Obispo. For us adults, part of the fun was observing the little ones and the bigger ones from the Berkeley Jr. YBA, as well as our very own Taylor & Sean. Their interaction and general exuberance at being together was priceless.

The pictures included in this issue of the Gateway are worth more than any description. But here's an attempt with haiku:

SLO
Experiencing
Nourishment from the Dharma
Little sleep required.

With Gassho,
Diane Hata

Quote of the Month

Interdependence is not an abstract concept but must be embodied and lived in everyday life.

-Dr. Taitetsu Unno.

[Ed. Note: Here are Merry Jitoshō's retreat comments; read along the bottom of pgs. 2-3]

I always look forward to our annual getaway to San Luis Obispo on President's weekend. This year we were joined by Berkeley Higashi Honganji temple members. I enjoyed watching the Jr. YBA teens that went to the Honzan Hoshidan tour together have a mini reunion into the wee hours of *both* nights. Thank you guys/gals for playing my charade/Pictionary game. I am amazed with how much information you all have retained by coming to service every Sunday. Teacher Alice, you continue to do a great job of teaching the dharma to the Berkeley teens. Berkeley, I hope you continue to listen to the dharma and re-challenge West Covina next year. I'll be ready with new games and challenges and will start preparing my gang now.

This year it was a relief we didn't have to worry about bad weather, it was a beautiful gorgeous weekend for spending time

SLO Retreat Comments

Our annual WCBT retreats @ SLO have always been fun, enriching, and rewarding. This year, because members from our sister Higashi temple in Berkeley were able to join in, it was *double* the fun and liveliness (with much "joyful noise" as Susan Shibuya mentioned in her kanwa), with *double* the very tasty food that nourished us, and *double* the servings of food for thought from both Rev. Ken Yamada and Rev. Peter Hata that awakened our spiritual tastebuds and appetites. The theme of "interdependence" was aptly woven into our weekend, from the lectures and messages from both reverends, to the real world connections seen and displayed @ the beautiful Morro Bay Natural History Museum. Nearby, our walk on the boardwalk through the Elfin Forest dramatically illustrated the cause and effect that harsh conditions such as salt water, sand, and wind have on plants and trees. Behind the temple there is a huge and gorgeous

oak tree that seems to beg for kids to climb on its limbs; yet these same trees are but dwarves, and look more like shrubs in the Elfin Forest. In his lecture, Rev. Yamada very enthusiastically pointed out that if we truly understood and could appreciate how dynamic interdependence was, it would naturally encourage actions in us such as creating a more compassionate world, doing our part in helping to improve our environment, society, fellow man, and in unifying our world. To those of us that went, we learned that in our interconnectedness, we're everything and we're "nothing." We will always struggle (in samsara) as human beings, but yet within our world of limitations, flaws, and weaknesses, and because of it, we can also experience moments of nirvana. And like nirvana, the WCBT and Berkeley sanghas were in perfect harmony, sharing the holiday weekend together.

Joanie Martinez

I cannot say thank you enough to *all* the participants for making the 2013 SLO Family Retreat a truly wonderful event. It was as if we were *one* as we planned the retreat, planned all the various activities, picked up/ purchased/hailed back supplies, set up/ cleaned up the social hall, arranged/ cleaned the temple sleeping areas, prepped/ cooked the meals, cleaned after the meals, snapped/ developed pictures and decorated/ assembled picture frames. The Berkeley participants knew the SLO Temple setup well and became *one* with WCBT immediately

outside and for making the trip both to and from San Luis Obispo unlike other years when the weather was not so cooperative. Our excursion to the National History Museum and Elfin forest gave us a change in our regular trip to Avila beach so I hope you also enjoyed a change of location for our outing.

I thoroughly enjoy these joint retreats, because I grew up at Berkeley Higashi Honganji as a child and am now a member of WCBT after my marriage so this retreat

as they prepared a wonderful meal, helped pack up supplies and cleanup. Oh yes, and thank you to the four volunteers that gave the Kanwa. (Phew, took a lot of pressure off the rest of us.) It was as if the retreat just happened on its own. It was wonderful to see how we came together so that everyone could enjoy the retreat. It was this spirit that made listening to Rev. Ken's lectures on interdependence/ interconnectedness that much more meaningful.

Pat Sato

is a definite special treat for me.

Did everyone like the pink champagne cake from Madonna Inn? It was sooooo good. Those of you who didn't make it out this year really missed out.

And we did an amazing job of cooking for everyone's dietary needs. Thank you to all the chefs. And a special thanks to Master chef Joey Ouye for the delicious Japanese and American breakfast. Thank you to Rev Ken Yamada for your dharma talks on interdependence, the three dharma seals



T H E G A T E W A Y

T E M P L E N E W S

Cherry Blossom Festival

The West Covina Cherry Blossom Festival will be on Saturday, March 16, 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 Merry Jitoshō for more information. Keep that day open and come out to support the Temple and the Center.

Spring Ohigan Service

Spring Ohigan will be observed on March 17 at 4:30 PM. Our special guest speaker will be Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi. Please join us in welcoming Rev. Miyoshi and stay for the complimentary otoki dinner following the service.

Oldies Dance XLIV

“Let’s Dance Some More at Oldies XLIV!” will be held on Saturday, March 23. Steve Kikuchi & High Resolution will be back again to 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 dancing and fun in between. Presale tickets are \$12 or \$15 at the door. For info and song requests, call Joanie at (626) 300-8947 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.

Study Center Lecture Series

The WCBT Study Center Lecture Series continues in April with “Introduction and so much more, Rev Peter for coordinating the temple facilities and services, Pat Sato for chairing this event, Diane, Peter and Stephanie providing all of us with the evening entertainment and to everyone who joined participated this weekend. And from all of us that didn’t volunteer to give the dreaded “kanwa”, we thank all four

tion to Buddhism.” The lectures will be held on April 8, 15, 22 and 29, every Monday evenings at 7:00-8:30 PM. For more information contact Rev. Peter.

WCBT Hanamatsuri

West Covina’s Hanamatsuri Service will be held on Sunday, April 7, 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 7 beginning at 1:00 PM at JACCC in downtown LA. Everyone is encouraged to attend the LACBF service after WCBT Hanamatsuri Service.

WCBT Golf Classic

Mark your calendars for WCBT’s 17th Annual Golf Classic, which will be held on Friday, April 19, at the Industry Hills Gold Club on the Eisenhower “Ike” Course, One Industry Hills Parkway, City of Industry, CA 91744. Registration starts at 11:00 am, Putting Contest is 11:00 am – 12:30 pm, Shotgun start is 1:00 pm and Dinner at 6:30 pm. The \$160 entry fee includes golf, cart, putting contest, accuracy drive contest, hole-in-one contest, pre-tournament snack, dinner and prizes. The format is Scramble and the options are 3 Multiigans for \$10 and 50/50 closest to the pin for \$5. Please contact Roy Takemura (909-973-2580) if you’d like to participate, sponsor or volunteer.

of you that did volunteer and spared us from that “agony.” And a special thanks to Anthony Gutierrez for knowing the third dharma seal, so the rest of us wouldn’t appear as poor listeners of the Dharma.

This weekend retreat was all of us being there, listening to the dharma and working together, interdependence, this retreat

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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.

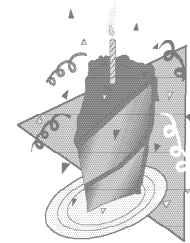
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MARCH

Brandon Kawaguchi, Kendra Kagawa, Brion Martinez, Edward Miyashiro, Cathy Nakano, Karolyn Fujimoto, Joy Kitaura, Steve Takemoto, Kelley Sakoda, 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

happened because we were there for each other. And sadly, the weekend ending so soon, the impermanence of time.

Being able to borrow the San Luis Obispo temple was truly nirvana. Thank you SLO for the use of your temple.

In Gassho,
Merry Jitoshō



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nications Staff under the direction of Mr. Dick Koga, featured speaker Rev. Ken Yamada of the Berkeley Higashi Honganji Temple began his Saturday lecture. Rev. Yamada emphasized that "Buddhism is not doctrinal"; there is no necessity of believing dogmatically in the Buddha's teachings. "In fact," he said, "you don't even have to believe in the Buddha; we're only concerned with the Dharma, with truth; and interdependence is one of these truths that is true for everyone."

Of course, while Buddhism is non-doctrinal, there are certainly concepts in Buddhism that are helpful in pointing to the ultimate truths, and Rev. Yamada identified these as the Three Dharma Seals [Ed. note: these are also known as the Three Dharma Marks];

-Non-self (Pali *anatta* or Sanskrit *anatman*): There is no separate, permanent self.

-Nirvana: perfect bliss, enlightenment, or "pure land"; "This is the opposite of dukkha," said Rev. Yamada as he drew a large circle on the whiteboard. He explained that the circle perfectly symbolizes nirvana because "It has no rough spots and no beginning, no end."

Next, Rev. Yamada spoke about Nagarjuna, the Indian teacher Shinshu founder Shinran Shonin considered the first

master of Shin Buddhism, who had written the "Treatise of the Middle Way." This is the rather "heady" work that attempts to point to the truth beyond dualities such as "existence" and "non-existence," towards what is known as The Middle Way. Yamada-sensei explained this as a way of seeing beyond what we think of as separate entities. For example, he pointed out that contrary to our

normal way of thinking, Nagarjuna said that "Fire and wood are not separate but inseparable"; there can be no fire without wood and vice versa. Rev. Yamada then recalled how this truth was driven home to him in his personal experience of witnessing the birth of Cole, his first child. Apparently his wife Naomi had a very difficult time delivering Cole. However, judging by his highly animated reliving of

the dramatic events of childbirth, Rev. Ken may have struggled even more than Naomi. In any case, he pointed out how Nagarjuna's way of seeing the unity or interdependence behind childbirth was very perceptive. As Nagarjuna had put it, not only do the parents of course create the child; it is just as true that the parents are created by the child.

"Teachers like the Buddha and Nagarjuna," Rev. Yamada continued, "left us these great truths to broaden our understanding; they allow us to participate more fully, to see the interdependence of life." The Sanskrit term for interdependence is *pratityasamutpada* (or *engi* in Japanese), and the English term is "dependent arising," he said. Basically, the interdependent nature of everything implies that all things arise or come into existence together, or dependently; as in the examples of fire and wood or parents and child, nothing appears on its own; all reality is interdependent.

Outing

On Saturday afternoon, after a simple, but tasty lunch of gourmet sandwiches, retreat participants took a break from the lectures and went on a memorable outing to the



these are the core concepts a tradition or school must have in order to be considered Buddhism. Actually, because of differences between Southern (Theravada) and Northern (Mahayana) traditions, Yamada-sensei clarified that there are actually four "seals" or "marks":
 -Impermanence: this is the truth that everything is constantly changing.
 -Suffering (Sanskrit Dukkha): these are the difficulties in our lives, but as Rev. Yamada pointed out, they're not something to get rid of; they are an important starting point for us. "Difficulties, such as our fear of death and our anxiety, spurn our search for truth," he said.





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Morro Bay Natural History Museum. Besides the informative, interdependence-themed exhibits on such subjects as the impact of housing developments on the Morro Bay region, the effect of the earth's constantly changing geology, the constant erosion of the land by wind and rain, and the fragility of the lifecycles of various endangered species in the area, there were memorable views of Morro Bay and the iconic Morro Rock from the museum's balcony.



Following the museum, retreat participants carpooled to the fascinating Elfin Forest

which is near the Los Osos area on the other side of the large Morro Bay Estuary. A mile or so boardwalk circles the large preserve, and along the way there



are many opportunities to view Morro Bay, Morro Rock and admire nearby peaks in the area. Also, in the bay and estuary are water fowl like ducks, cormorants, and egrets. The boardwalk passes through sage, chamise, and a variety of shrubs, but the most interesting plant on the hike are the short but sprawling pygmy oaks which spread their branches overhead, providing a shady shelter. A strange whitish moss hangs from the oaks like tinsel (we learned this is actually a kind of fungus



that exists in symbiotic relationship with the oak). Though they are said to be a couple hundred years old, these California Live Oaks are only 20 feet tall or less; as yet another living example of interdependence, the rather harsh dune environment limits the oaks' growth.

Later, on Saturday Evening, after a delicious primo macaroni casserole dinner, put together again by Dick Koga and the WCBT kitchen crew, the Sangha gathered in the temple's social hall to play some great games under the direction of Stephanie Jitosh. One of the games was an incredibly energizing game called "Have you ever?" With the entire group of 45 people standing around the room in a circle (SLOBT's Rev. Naomi joined our evening activities), Stephanie would call out



a question like, "Have you ever received your Buddhist name?," at which point, all those that did would literally swarm into the center and "high five" each other. It was fascinating enough to watch this when only half of the participants were involved, but the last question, "Are you having a good time?," caused *everyone* to swarm into the center. It's highly unlikely that all 45 people high-fived 45 people, but no

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matter; everyone had a blast.

Sunday morning began again with seiza, and a morning service with chanting of the Shoshin-ge, but interestingly, this time the chanting was led not by Rev. Hata but quite expertly by WCBT member Michelle Harrison.



After the chanting, Rev. Hata gave a short Dharma talk. He discussed what it is that we do at a retreat, and that though the verb "to retreat" implies a kind of passive activity such as seiza meditation, there could also be



the sense of being at a retreat and, as he put it, "retreat-ing," or actively being engaged in whatever it is that is helpful in advancing us towards enlightenment or awakening. "In this sense," he said, "retreat-ing means participating in all our group activities from chanting the ancient Buddhist sutras, to singing, playing games, listening to Dharma talks, and certainly enjoying and appreciating the wonders of nature as we did in our outing to the Natural History Museum and the Elfin Forest." In addition, though we of course can do most of these things at our home temples, he asked "Don't you find something

special about all these activities in the context of our retreat? Here, we're not just chanting, we're 'retreat-ing,' we're not just listening to dharma talks, we're 'retreat-ing,' we're not just eating together, we're 'retreat-ing.'" In addition, he offered his opinion that the food at our retreats always seems to taste just a little better. "In other words, I think we're chanting, singing, eating, listening, and observing just a little more intently, with a little more awareness. And I think, to the extent that we are "retreat-ing," we are moving forward along the path of Buddhism."

Rev. Peter expressed his hope that we take these experiences back with us even as we rejoin the hustle-bustle of our daily grind. "If we can," he said, "it's to return reinvigorated, refreshed and rejuvenated. It's to return and to continue enjoying listening to the Dharma, continue enjoying the fellowship of the Sangha, continue enjoying the gifts that we receive from nature, and from all the life that supports us. If we do this, it is like looking at life in a fresh, new, and more appreciative way."

Following the morning service, the participants enjoyed a very different but very tasty Japanese-themed breakfast organized by Mr. Joey Ouye and his Berkeley crew.



Following that, Rev. Yamada gave the second part of his lecture.

Rev. Yamada began by continuing to discuss interdependence by demonstrating another way of understanding it. He held a grapefruit and pointed out that, while it's of course here, it's

also "not really here," at least not in the permanent sense. "It's changing and impermanent," he said. Clearly, it also exists because of many interdependent causes and conditions. These include not only obvious ones such as soil, water, and sun that caused the grapefruit to grow, but the fossil fuels used to transport the grapefruit to the market. "The burning of fossil fuels represents the release of life energy from many, many years ago," he said. And, he added, clearly, "We should try to live in harmony with life, we should try to recycle our trash and not create unnecessary garbage."

Returning to the ideas of Nagarjuna, Rev. Yamada emphasized the point that "We're not really 'ones' (unique, independent beings); we're really 'zeros.' This is known as the teaching of emptiness or Sanskrit *shunyata*." What does this emptiness mean? To help explain it, Yamada-sensei compared two ways of seeing the universe. The Chinese way, he explained, is that everything in the universe is negative (*yin*) or positive (*yang*), and he drew the familiar Taoist yin-yang symbol on the whiteboard (i.e., a circle with white and black halves separated by a curved "s" shaped dividing line). He pointed out that in Taosim, the goal is to keep these opposites in balance. The Buddhist way of seeing the universe however, is as just "zero," as oneness or emptiness. In other words, there is no dualism in Buddhism. As he put it, "Buddhism sees the entire universe contained in a single grain of sand. In the same way this grapefruit contains all life."

Interestingly, Rev. Yamada stated that time can also be understood from the standpoint of interdependence; "Time is not made up of 'past, present, and future.' There's only now. We can't have the present without the past, and we can't have the future without the present," he said. And in a related way, understanding this truth of interdependence helps us to realize the deep meaning in memorial services and funerals. "Yes," said Rev. Yamada, "they are sad occasions. But just as



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Nagarjuna had said there's no parent without the child, there's also no real independence of parent and child. He explained that, from the standpoint of interdependence, the parent, even after death, lives on in their children. "Therefore, *pratityasamutpada* is true; the previous life of my parent—and all the interdependent lives that contributed to my parent—all live on in me... right now. My life contains all life. I'm connected to the whole universe." And the implication here, Yamada-sensei pointed out, is that "There's no birth and no death; there's no death because there's no birth; you are part of all life, you are the causes and conditions that made you." Ultimately, he pointed out, this leads to the teaching of non-attachment; this is the goal in Buddhism—become one with the flow of life, with the truth of impermanence.

In his closing, Rev. Yamada recited the Japanese poet Issa's famous poem (written upon the tragic death of his child):

The world of dew,
Is the world of dew,
And yet, and yet...

This poem expresses Issa's deep insight into the truth of impermanence ("the world of dew") but at the same time, Issa acknowledges his still being a limited human being, unable to fully accept this truth ("and yet, and yet"). To Yamada-sensei, this poem—or more precisely, Issa's humble self-awareness—expresses the ultimate truth of Buddhism. The world of dew is the world of *samsara* or *dukkha*; this is the everyday experience of suffering and difficulties that we try to escape from. Naturally, knowing that *nirvana* is the cessation of suffering, we begin to long for such a state of peace. However, as Rev. Yamada reminded us, Issa's poem reveals a deep insight into the same non-duality that Nagarjuna emphasized, to the inherent interdependence of the world of dew and of our essential limited human nature. In essence, Issa's poem expresses his emptiness, or state of "zero," and thus, even while suffering the reality of impermanence,

Issa has also transcended it. In this sense, *samsara* and *nirvana* are only separate in our unawake mind. Rev. Yamada then ended his second lecture on Sunday by stating the ultimate truth, which is that, in reality—and as Nagarjuna himself had stated—"Samsara is nirvana."

Following the conclusion of Yamada-sensei's lecture, there was a short closing service, temple cleanup and another delicious lunch, which gave us the energy to make the trek back to our respective homes.

In closing, West Covina Buddhist Temple would like to deeply thank Rev. Ken Yamada for his thought-provoking lectures. We greatly appreciate Yamada's sensei's inspired efforts to open the Dharma storehouse for us. His lectures gave us all much to think about and hopefully share in our future Sangha discussions. We also would like to thank WCBT Temple Communications Staff members and Rev. Peter Hata who worked together to create the retreat program, plan the excellent outing adventure, and the fun activities. Actually, it's possible that one reliable measure of the success of this retreat was that the four kanwas—personal sharing of one's experiences at the retreat, and which were given voluntarily by Taylor Saucedo, Scott Yamashita, Kenny Ouye and Susan Shibuya—all

seemed to express the same genuine appreciation for having participated in this retreat.

We also thank Dick Koga and Joey Ouye for their tasty meals which sustained us with great energy. Finally,



we thank San Luis Obispo Buddhist Temple and Rev. Naomi Nakano for being such warm and welcoming hosts.

On the one hand, WCBT's 2013 Family Retreat certainly offered a wonderfully refreshing experience of literally "retreating" from our urban Southern California environment to the beautifully scenic Central Coast. On the other hand, the weekend's dynamic activities, especially within the context of the strong fellowship that naturally arises when studying and sharing the Dharma with others, provided a truly memorable glimpse into the essential truth of "interdependence." ❁





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took the opportunity to start addressing the challenges facing our efforts to promote the Shinshu Dobokai Movement as well as the overall administrative reforms in order to embark on a new chapter in our denomination's history. Although there are a wide range of issues to be dealt with, such as Shinshu studies, propagation of the teachings, organizational structure, administrative improvement, financial administration, and so forth, I have renewed my commitment to take on these challenges with thorough deliberation and discretion, while carefully listening to the opinions expressed by ministers and members of local temples.

This year marks the 400th anniversary of the passing of Kyonyo Shonin who established the Higashi Honganji when it was divided from one Honganji into two. I wish that the Memorial Service for Kyonyo Shonin will become the opportunity for all of us to reflect upon his life and to express our sincere gratitude toward him.

Kyonyo Shonin is often described as a strong military-type leader who staved off the pressures of the political leadership of that era. But if you look more closely into his life, he could be seen as a devout Buddhist who wouldn't hesitate to risk his life to protect the teachings of Shinshu in the war-torn society. What was it that kept him motivated to do everything possible in his power to promote the Buddhadharma and to protect the Honganji temple while maintaining a clear-sighted perspective on the political turmoil during the battle against Oda Nobunaga and political negotiations with Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu? I believe it was his deep sense of responsibility for the revival of Shinshu solely based upon the spirit of "Expounding the Truth of the Pure Land," which our spiritual forebear Shinran Shonin found as the basis of Buddhist teachings.

It would not be an overstatement to say that the history of our denomination is, in some aspects, the history of

the continuous revival of Shinshu. The 500th Memorial for Rennyō Shonin held 15 years ago was a precious opportunity for us to recognize him as "the Shonin who revived Shinshu" and to appreciate his tremendous efforts to interpret the teachings of Shinshu in clearly understandable ways for the rest of us. Kyonyo Shonin also risked his life to protect the teachings and exerted his fullest efforts to pass the teachings down to future generations.

Given the fact that the Shinshu Dobokai Movement emerged as one of these continuing efforts, it is critically important that we bring back the movement's original spirit so that it truly becomes the Shinshu revival movement in this modern society. The basic principle of that effort was to reorganize ourselves to be a denomination that can serve modern society better by presenting true principles and direction to the real world. This declaration reminds me of the high aspiration of the teachings; because since it is so easy to forget what is most important for a human being in this defiled world, it is even more important to present true principles and direction for human life. The principle is expressed as *Namu Amida Butsu* and the direction is the aspiration to be born in the Pure Land.

It has become more critical for us to convey the message to the world that the last refuge for us human beings is none other than *Namu Amida Butsu*, that is, *Amida's Original Vow* manifested as the *Buddha's Name*.

Those who, hearing Amida Buddha's

Name,

Rejoicing in it with reverence and praise,

Receive its treasure of virtues;

The great benefit acquired with one utterance is supreme.

(The Collected Works of Shinran, Volume 1, p. 332)

In closing, I wish to confirm my commitment to continue to listen to the teaching, always keeping in mind the Shinshu revival spirit and all the efforts made by our predecessors.

NAD, con't from pg. 1

ative Dobo Conference and Banquet on Saturday and the 750th Memorial Service were held with compliments from everyone who attended. We were honored to have the Overseas District Abbot Choyu Otani and his wife, Satika, and the Chief Administrator of our Kyoto Honzan, Bishop Ko-I Sato'o grace us with their presence.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ministers and members who worked so hard to ensure that the Memorial would be an historic event that we can all be proud of. Thanks to the many members and friends who attended the various events.

In mid-July, we had a wonderful group of young people participate in the bi-annual Youth Hoshidan Tour. Ten members (including two from the Hawaii district) participated and gained so much from their experience. In addition to the meaningful retreat at the Honzan with lecturer, Rev. Michael Conway, the group also learned so much from their study tour to Okinawa.

In October, Rev. Kenjun Kawawata who had served for 14 years as a *Betsuin* minister, and then 14 years as the resident minister at our West Covina Higashi Honganji, was appointed as Bishop of Hawaii district and Rinban of the Hawaii *Betsuin*. We were sad to see him leave us after so many years here. But congratulate him on his appointment and wish him the best in his new endeavor.

Two members, Rev. Peter Hata and Rev. Frederick Brenion went to Kyoto in April to receive their *kyoshi* (full) ordinations. It signaled the first time ever that full ordination was granted to non-Japanese who did all of their study and training in the United States. Rev. Hata has subsequently been appointed as Rev. Kawawata's replacement as resident minister of the West Covina Higashi Honganji. Rev. Brenion is now serving as a minister attached to the Los Angeles *Betsuin*. He, however, is serving on an as-needed basis, because he is still working full-time in his current job.

This development gives us hope for

Please see NAD, con't on pg. 12



T H E G A T E W A Y

WEST COVINA
HIGASHI HONGANJI
BUDDHIST TEMPLE

February 25, 2013

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 17, 2013. The schedule for the service is as follows:

Date: Sunday, March 17, 2013
Time: 4:30 P.M.
Sermon: Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi
(Higashi Honganji Los Angeles Betsuin)



We will be serving Otoki dinner following the service.

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

ご門徒の皆様、

早春の候、ご門徒の皆様にはご清祥のこととお慶び申し上げます。

さて、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仏教行事です。私達の先達の時代より、お彼岸は仏様の教えを聞く良き機会として勤められて参りました。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 2013年3月17日 午後4時30分

場 所 日系コミュニティーセンター

法 話 見義信香師 (ロサンゼルス別院開教使)

* 法要後当番の皆様によるお齋がございます。

Peter Hata, Minister
開教使 幡ピーター

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









T H E G A T E W A Y

West Covina Buddhist Temple presents

LET'S DANCE SOME MORE AT OLDIES XLIV (44)!!!

Saturday, March 23, 2013

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) 300-8947
 Lillian: (626) 780-9866



*Please No Pointy Heeled Shoes!
Newly renovated gym floor.*

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

**The West Covina Buddhist Study Center Presents:
Introduction to Buddhism
Lecturer: Reverend Peter Hata**

Date: Mondays; April 8,15, 22 & 29, 2013

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: \$35.00

**Info: (626) 337-8373
dharma@livingdharma.org**



About the lecture series:

2500 years ago, the Buddha awakened to a way of looking at life that was radically different from the prevailing views in ancient India. His teachings, having migrated through China, Japan, and now to North America, are no less radical even in our advanced technological society and continue to inspire people from all walks of life to seek the same truths he awakened to. What are these eternal truths?

About the lecturer:

Rev. Peter Hata’s interest in Buddhism began in the early 1990s at West Covina Buddhist Temple as the newsletter editor and manager of the temple’s www.livingdharma.org website. He completed Minister’s Assistant Program training in 2009, received tokudo ordination in 2011 and kyoshi ordination in 2012. That same year, he received kaikyoshi status, and was assigned as resident minister of the temple.

Rev. Peter, who directs a youth band and an adult choir at the temple, is also a jazz musician and one of the original members of the Sansei band, Hiroshima, with whom he recorded several albums and toured throughout the U.S. and Japan. He also holds a Master’s degree in music and has taught a variety of graduate and undergraduate music courses at Cal State LA.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

West Covina Buddhist Temple
P.O. Box 1616, West Covina, CA 91790
Telephone (626) 337-8373
www.livingdharma.org



T H E G A T E W A Y

NAD, con't from pg. 9

cultivating homegrown ministers for our two English-speaking districts. We hope to locate and educate individuals interested in studying Buddhism so that others may follow their footsteps.

In December, three of us, Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi, Rev. Takafumi Bansaka, and I participated in the Overseas Ministers' Retreat at the Dobo Retreat Center at our Honzan in Kyoto. We all learned so much from the lecturer, Rev. Minowa, and had the chance to share concerns and visions with ministers from the other two districts, South America and Hawaii.

In May of this year, a group of us will go to the 11th World Dobo Convention to be held in Kyoto Japan. This gathering was actually scheduled for May of 2011, but was canceled due to the terrible earthquake/tsunami that occurred on March 11 of that year. We hope to gather as many as 50 participants for this tour. Applications and the itinerary were already sent out. The soft deadline is January 31. But applications will be accepted until sometime in March. Please consider joining us for this convention that is held once every three years.

Thank you for the tremendous support you have given us over the years. We look forward to your continued cooperation and guidance throughout this year.

Gassho,
Noriaki Ito
Director/Bishop

L.D. NEWS, con't from pg. 1

Dear Mary,

As far as linking, you can link to anything you'd like to on our website. However, regarding e-mail questions/answers, we have them in two areas: one is the collection of mostly older e-mails that are permanently on our site, such as "Buddhism101," and the other is the Gateway page where you'll find the current ones we publish in our Gateway newsletter.

You're welcome to use any and all of it.

Nice to hear from you Mary, and I hope you can continue working for the betterment of the Kaneohe temple.

*Best Wishes,
Rev. Peter Hata*





T H E G A T E W A Y

仏教 Q&A

問い 『正信偈（しょうしんげ）』にある法蔵菩薩（ほうぞうぼさつ）とは、どういふお方なのですか。

（60歳・女性）

答え 法蔵菩薩は実在した人物ではありません。お釈迦さまが説かれ、親鸞聖人が「真実の教」だと言われた『大無量寿経（だいむりょうじゅきょう）』に、物語の形で説かれています。

あるとき、一人の国王があつて、仏の説法を聞いて深く心に感ずるところがあり、求道心（ぐどうしん）を起こして、国をすて、王位をすてて、一求道者となり、世自在王仏（せじざいおうぶつ）という名の仏をたずね、みずからの深い志を述べて、重ねて次のようなことを申されました。

「私は道を求めたいと思います。どういふ世界が私のたすかる世界であり、どうすればそれを得ることができるか、願わくは、それについての教えをいただきたいと存じます」。

そこで世自在王仏は、その願いに応じて、あらゆる仏の国土、あるいは人間世界の幸・不幸のさまざまな状態をまざまざと、目に見えるように説かれ、これによって法蔵菩薩は本願を発され、阿弥陀仏の浄土を建立されたと述べられています。

この物語を私たちは、ただのお話として聞き過ごしてはならないと思います。物語というものは、理論では表せない、もっと深い意味を表す形式であつて、人間にとって、ほんとうに深いもの、私たちにとって実に大切な問題が語られているのであります。

さまざまな生物の中で、人間も同じ生物の一種であります、人間はいろいろ

ろのことを問題にし、また悩みます。もうひとつ奥には、人間は自分を問題にし、自分に悩むということがあります。経済的なこと、政治的なこと、家庭内での問題、対人関係の問題など、さまざまな問題がありますが、それらのことを問題にしている自分自身が問題になったところから、ほんとうの求道が始まるのでしょうか。

だから道を求めないのは、いちばん身近な、いちばん大切なものを見失って生きているということになろうかと思ひます。いふならば、人間の歴史の底を流れてきた、真に人類の魂（たましい）である生命のさけびが、法蔵菩薩の名のもとに説かれているかと思ひれます。

（真宗大谷派大阪教区ウェブサイト「銀杏通信」より引用）



お寺ニュース

日本語春季彼岸会 日本語祥月法要 / 法話会

今年の日本語春季彼岸会は3月の法話会及び日本語祥月法要と兼ねて、3月7日（木）午後7時30分よりお勤め致します。どうぞご家族、ご友人お誘い合わせの上、お参り下さいますようご案内申し上げます。

また、英語春季彼岸会法要は3月17日（日）午後4時30分よりお勤め致します。ご講師としてロサンゼルス別院より見義信香先生をお招きし、ご法話を頂きます。どうぞ英語法要にもお誘い合わせの上、お参り下さい。

桜祭り

コミュニティセンターの桜祭りが3月16日（土）に開催されます。今年もお寺は、照り焼きチキンとお寿司の担当として参加いたします。この桜祭りへの参加によって、お寺の基金募集と地元の方々への広報とを兼ねて行いたいと思います。つきましては皆様にお寿司（巻き寿司でも稲荷寿司でも結構です）をお持ち頂き、お手伝い頂きますようお願い申し上げます。当日の午前11時頃までにお寺に届けて頂ければ幸いです。皆様のご協力を何卒よろしくお祈り申し上げます。

WCBT スタディセンター 春の仏教講座

来る4月8日（月）より、好例の春の仏教講座が開かれます。幡ピーター開教使を講師として、4回にわたり「仏教入門」のお話を頂きます。講義は英語にて行われ、毎週月曜日午後7時から8時30分まで行われます。どうぞお誘い合わせの上、ご参加下さい。

同朋リトリート（日本語）

来る4月28日（日）午後1時、ロサンゼルス別院にて同朋リトリート（日本語）を開催いたします。テーマは「釈尊と親鸞：暮らしの中の出遇い」です。ご講師として羽田信生氏（毎田仏教センター）をお招きし、ご講義を頂く予定です。詳しくは北米監督部(213-621-4064)までお問い合わせ下さい。



3月祥月法要 / 法話会

3月7日（木）

午後7時30分より

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 2013 - - Vol. XLVII No. 3

March

- 3 8:30 am Board Mtg
- 3 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 7 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 10 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 12 10:00 am Bombu Class
- 16 12:00 pm ESGVJCC Cherry Blossom Festival
- 17 4:30 pm Spring Ohigan Service
- 23 8:00 pm Oldies Dance
- 24 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 26 10:00 am Bombu Class
- 31 10:00 am Sunday Service

April

- 4 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 7 8:30 am Board Mtg.
- 7 10:00 am Hanamatsuri Service
- 7 1:00 pm LABCF Hanamatsuri @ Jodoshu
- 8 7:00 pm Introduction to Buddhism Study Class 1
- 10 10:00 am Bonbu Class
- 14 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 15 7:00 pm Introduction to Buddhism Study Class 2
- 19 11:00 am WCBT Golf Tournament
- 21 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 22 7:00 pm Introduction to Buddhism Study Class 3
- 23 10:00 am Bonbu Class
- 28 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 29 7:00 pm Introduction to Buddhism Study Class 4

3月行事予定

- 3日 午前8時半 理事会
- 3日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 7日 午後7時半 日本語祥月法要 / 法話会
- 10日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 16日 午前12時 桜祭り (センター)
- 17日 午後4時半 春季彼岸会
- 23日 午後 8時 オールディーズ・ダンス
- 24日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 31日 午前10時 日曜礼拝

4月行事予定

- 4日 午後7時半 日本語祥月法要 / 法話会
- 7日 午前8時半 理事会
- 7日 午前10時 花祭り
- 7日 午後 1時 LA 仏教連合花祭り (於 LA 浄土宗)
- 14日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 19日 午前11時 ゴルフ大会
- 21日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 28日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 28日 午後 1時 同朋リトリート (於 LA 別院)

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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