By the time you read this, our Obon will be history, but for now, with the Obon 3 days away, I’ll keep this short since I still have lots of things on my to-do list!

At the last North America District minister’s meeting, we discussed some ideas for possible new works the Shinshu Center of America might be interested in publishing. Of course, you probably know that The Seeker Vol. II is about to be released (a must-read for those interested in Shinran’s life) and it will be followed by a new edition of Rev. Kiyozawa’s December Fan, one of the books which has proven most influential on contemporary Shinshu thought.

One new idea that seemed to have some “legs” was my suggestion of putting together a collection of the “best of the best” e-mail from this very column. As you know, we’ve published countless e-mails since the website began in 1997, and many of you have commented to me how much you enjoy reading our e-mail correspondence. A collection like this would need a concise intro-

Please see L.D. NEWS, con’t on page 6

Graduating students pose at WCBT’s Father’s Day & Grads Service on June 23, 2013 (l-r): WCBT President Mr. John Martinez, Taylor Saucedo, Yazmin Whang, Michelle Harrison, Jennifer Akune, Matthew Ormseth, Sean Underwood, Rev. Peter Hata. The service was made extra special with Mr. Martinez’ address to the students and Mr. Don Frack’s moving tribute to his father, Mr. Don Frack Sr. (our apologies: due to camera problems, we don’t have photos of these speakers)

2013 World Dobo Reports

From 1998 to 2013

By Stephanie Jitosho

Sitting on your ankles, Service Book in your lap, feet getting tingly, back getting sore, goose bumps on your arms from the breeze. And then… the most beautiful, rich, bold chorus of voices singing “Fu ka ki ni no ri ni a i ma tsu ru…” sending chills to your core. Each mouth of a different native tongue joining together to sing the same Gatha filling up the immense space in the Higashi Honganji Honzan Founder’s Hall.

Wearing socks on a tatami mat floor, stomach full from a delicious meal consisting of a dozen dishes, legs cramped from sitting on the floor to eat that delicious meal, body clothed in a bright yellow yukata, standing among friends, at the top of your lungs, singing “All You Need is Love!” Singing not because you want to show

Please see 1998 TO 2013, con’t on page 4

Above: Merry and Stephanie Jitosho pose together at the Shosei-en Garden Luncheon, one of the highlights of the 2013 World Dobo Convention and Tour.

2013 World Dobo Reports

The World Dobo Convention

By Merry Jitosho

This was my 4th World Dobo Convention. I have previously attended conventions in Newport Beach, Kyoto, Hawaii and Kyoto. Each time I think I know what to expect, but instead I become totally overwhelmed with new experiences.

Michael, my son, tells me that you get out of an experience what you put into it. Overcoming the fear of travel-

Please see WORLD DOBO, con’t on page 4

The World Dobo Convention

Temple Event Highlights:
• July 7 Shotsuki Service
• July 14 Sunday Service
• July 21 Obon/Hatsubon Service
• August 9-11 Vegas Trip
• Please See Temple News
Dear Graduates of 2013,

We “older members” of West Covina Buddhist Temple have thoroughly enjoyed watching you grow up from year to year. Whenever it counted, you were always there to help us with our temple events, including family retreats, and fund-raisers. You made us laugh at Halloween, and we even felt pride whenever it was your turn to chair a service or do oshoko.

You have probably seen the movie, _The Wizard of Oz_, at least a dozen times. At the end of the movie, we are led to believe that Dorothy’s primary reason for experiencing her unique adventures on her journey to the Emerald City, was to learn that after all is said and done, “There’s no place like home!”

The idea or concept of home is the first place in which you grew up. It also signifies a place of refuge and comfort. In addition, the food is good, and your friends and relatives are welcomed (as long as they don’t stay too long). This first home is where many interesting discussions and occasional disagreements take place.

Now isn’t it possible for you to consider this temple as your second home away from your first home? The temple is comfortable, the food is great, your family and friends are more than welcomed here. Furthermore, you have had some interesting discussions and disagreements over whose turn it was to be chair person.

You’ve had teachers who resembled your first teachers, your parents, and a few who were dressed in unusual robes with lessons about reality through the eyes of Siddhartha who became the Buddha, and a child priest who became Shinran, the founder of our Jodo Shinshu tradition. It is our true wish or Hon-gan, that this second home continues to nurture your hearts and minds wherever you may be, as you seek to accumulate experiences away from your first home.

With Gassho,
Diane Hata

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**Quote of the Month**

As Buddhists, we should express to the world what we’ve learned about Jodo Shinshu...Each one of us must develop the kind of energy and vitality Rennyo had. Like Rennyo, our active participation will allow us to better understand our environment. We must accept this challenge on a continual basis. In so doing, we can establish our own ‘ko,’ our own ‘grassroots movement.’

-Rev. Tamamitsu
July Board Meeting
The July board meeting will be held 8:30 AM on August 7 followed by the Shotsuki Service at 10:00 AM.

Obon & Hatsubon Service
Obon & Hatsubon Service, on July 21 at 4:30 PM, will be a joint English and Japanese Service. Come and join us for this special service with Rev. Tomoyuki Hasegawa giving the Japanese talk and Rev. Peter giving the English talk. Please remain for the complimentary otoki dinner that will follow the service.

Betsuin Obon Festival
The Betsuin Obon will be held on the weekend of July 27-28. WCBT will again be selling our delicious tamales. Sign-up sheets will be at upcoming services so please find a time you can help out in the tamale booth and join in the dancing and festivities at the Betsuin Obon.

Bonbu Class
The Bonbu Class will meet on July 9 and 23 at 10:00 AM. Discussions have been completed on the Larger Sutra and beginning in July we will begin studying the Sho Shin Ge. The class meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. For more information, please call Rev. Peter, (626) 337-8373.

Las Vegas Trip
WCBT will be sponsoring a fundraising trip to Las Vegas on the weekend of August 9-11. The $140 per person fee, for double occupancy, will include round-trip bus fare, two nights at the Main Street Station Hotel and Casino, Bell captain tips and lots of fun and games. A beverage will be served on the ride to Las Vegas as well as all the snacks that everyone brings to share.

The Las Vegas Obon will be on Saturday, August 10. Please let us know if you are planning to attend and need transportation. The bus departs on Friday, August 10 promptly at 1:00 PM from ESGVJCC. The return bus departs on Sunday, August 12 promptly at 11:30 AM from the California Hotel.

There are a few seats available so if you’d like to join in the fun please contact Ted Kato (626-918-2680) or Lillian Nishihara (626-780-9866).

August Schedule
The August board meeting will be held 8:30 AM on August 4 followed by the Shotsuki Service at 10:00 AM. We will then take our annual summer break so there are no Sunday Services on August 11, 18, 25 and September 1. Regular services will resume again on September 8.

Above: Myozenji Temple in Shirakawago Village; right, Rennyo’s towering statue at Yoshizaki

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: West Covina Buddhist Temple P. O. Box 1616 West Covina, CA 91793 (626) 337-8373
Website: www.livingdharma.org Facebook: facebook.com/westcovinabuddhisttemple E-Mail: dharma@livingdharma.org

JULY BIRTHDAYS
Jamie Nakatani, Kevin Hata, Lauren Koga, Russell Martinez, Laura Miyake, Margaret Takemoto, Ryoko Kodama, Richard Haraguchi, Craig Taguchi, Corey Taguchi, Terri Takemura, Pat Sato, Garrett Kawaguchi, Marcus Nishihara, Lillian Nishihara, Vincent Lespron, Kurt Kowalski, Jamie Teragawa, Jonathan Hoey, Jeffrey Akune, Jaylene Gutierrez
off your impressive vocal skills nor shying away because you have just the opposite. Singing just for the joy of singing with friends.

These are the moments I cherished during our recent trip to Japan for the 11th World Dobo Convention. The last time I had been to a convention was when I was 10 years old, my first trip to Japan. That trip taught me a different side of who I am and where I come from as a Japanese American. I learned that I am without a doubt my father’s daughter! We spent time touring with fellow West Covina Sangha members including my family, my uncle Frank and my grandpa. I did not take in much of the religious aspects of the Convention. My eyes were too busy looking at all the food that sadly wouldn’t fit into my small stomach but I was going to try anyway. My brother and I were also occupied with entertaining Rev. Kiyota’s young daughters, Sakura and Koyuki. We did show and pay our respects when necessary, or when our parents gave us that warning look. But I mostly thought the trip was a vacation in a land that I didn’t understand.

15 years later, so much has changed. I have grown to internalize the Buddha’s teachings and incorporate them into my everyday life after the many struggles our family has endured since that blissful trip long ago. My mother and I made the trip by ourselves this time, braving the language barrier and elaborate transportation systems. We accompanied the LA Higashi Betsuin Sangha members who took us in as their own. But most importantly, I was able to understand the true meaning of these World Dobo Conventions. It is not simply to listen to the teachings of the Buddha or to go to another country. It is about the people you meet and the experiences you share that make the 11-hour plane ride and the $$$ all worth it. It’s about singing the same Gatha with people who don’t speak the same language. It’s about learning and understanding the same stories while standing in front of the same place with perfect strangers of the same world Sangha.

I have always felt close to my Sangha and always warm and welcomed in its presence. However, I never felt a part of something so large and so close knit as I did during this Convention. Although we may not have understood each other if we tried to communicate, we all had the same feeling in our hearts of oneness and selflessness. We made new connections and reunited with old friends from the States and overseas reaching across thousands of miles to Japan, Hawaii, and Brazil. I feel so fortunate to have had this opportunity. That all of the causes and conditions surrounding my life allowed me this chance to gain this awareness and have these experiences. The number of things that could have prevented me from making this journey and yet remained in check astounds me, from my health to the weather to natural disasters.

So I have shared with you the lessons that I have learned from my trip in gratitude for this chance. I could tell you about how I pretty much ate my way through Japan (which hadn’t changed in 15 years) or all the beautiful sites that we toured or even the day-by-day schedule we followed during our stay. But those things would be trivial and forgotten in an instant. I don’t even think I could do justice to the experiences and the feelings I had during this trip. Watching my brother go through the Tokudo ceremony and making that leap from “lay person Michael” to “Rev. Michael” was moving to witness. (However, I still think “Rev. Michael” sounds way to weird for my ears.) Participating in the chanting of Shoshin-ge with people from all over the world filled my heart with warmth and a community feeling. All of these people all over the world listen to the same teachings and try to become better people by incorporating the Dharma into their lives and by helping the world with these teachings. I will be honest and say that when I got back to the States, my selflessness and enlightened spirit was left in Japan for when I arrived back, I hit the ground running with all the loose ends I left behind. My focus immediately returned to ME, ME, ME! I certainly have a long way to go and so much more to learn but having experienced this Convention and now further reflecting on my time spent in Japan, I can transfer those feelings, lessons, and experiences into my everyday struggle that is my life. I urge each and every one of you reading this to attend the 12th World Dobo Convention in 2016. For most of you, you won’t even have to print out a boarding pass because it will be in L.A! So with that, see you in 2016!!!

In Gashho,
Stephanie Jitosho

WORLD DOBO REPORT, con’t from pg. 1

Please see WORLD DOBO, con’t on pg. 5
be more scientific she should at least match the kanji character to the kanji of our destination. But not wanting to purchase the wrong ticket, we frantically looked for help. I was able to get a security officer to assist us and Stephanie was right all long. Then she noticed a small button on the upper corner of the screen.....English!!! For the rest of the trip, she always made sure to push the English button.

When we finally got to Kyoto, I was very excited to see Michael. He had not been able to come home since August 2012. He had grown up and had assimilated into the Japanese culture.

With a delicious makisushi to munch on, I didn’t mind the 20 minutes it took to find each other at the bustling Kyoto train station. Thanks to Rev Miyoshi’s Japanese cell phone, we were able to stay in contact until we found each other. It took two taxis to get us to Tonami Inn with all of our luggage.

Thank you Bansaka Sensei for making the reservation. At first it was too much of a culture shock, a Japanese style bed and breakfast, Ryokan, but later I appreciated the big open room so we could hang out together and open all the luggages in one place.

Then we proceeded to the Honzan to prepare for Michael’s tokudo ceremony with Rinban Nori’s assistance. The robes and accessories were ready for Michael to pick up. He practiced putting everything on and he can now fold up the minister’s robes precisely to maintain the original creases, all with Nori sensei’s gentle guidance. Please don’t ask Michael to model the robes for you. It might take awhile to fold it back up.

Then came the shaving of all his hair. There was a line of tokudo candidates from Brazil ahead of us. After introducing ourselves, we soon became good friends. With the nervous tension of having their hair shaved, they became a loud and rowdy, fun bunch of ministers. We shared how our temples are run, (our website, study classes, retreats, fund raisers), ideas for 2016 World Dobo and how successful Brazil Higashi is becoming. They have 30 plus temples in Brazil!

The next day was the tokudo ceremony with 35 other candidates ranging in age from 9 years old to 80 years old with a fair number of females which surprised Nori sensei.

The nine-year-old was so cute amongst the adults. In witnessing Michael’s tokudo, I pictured Shinran at that age going through this same ceremony. There are many rituals and traditions dating back to Shinran Shonin’s time, such as candidates receiving their tokudo in the dark (lights out) as Shinran did in the middle of the night, without family. Michael received his homyo from the chief administrator and paid respect to Shinran’s gravesite afterwards.

Congratulations to Michael in taking this big step in his life with the support of Rev. Kawawata and Rinban Ito. Rev. Kigoshi and Rev. Imai were both part of the chain of events leading up to Michael receiving his tokudo that day. You were my first ministers who introduced the Buddhist teachings to me with my parents persistence. I was raised a Higashi Buddhist in Berkeley and raised Stephanie and Michael as Higashi Buddhists in West Covina. It was very special for me to meet Rev and Mrs. Kigoshi and their children in Kyoto for this convention and for their son, Rev. Wataru Kigoshi, now a cabinet member in the honzan administration to participate in Michael’s ceremony. A special thank you to Rev. Kigoshi for introducing Jodo Shinshu to my family. Mom and Dad would be proud of my family for continuing this path you started for the Tanji family.

My brother, sister and I are still very active in our own temples today. Meeting the Kigoshi family again after 46 years, was definitely one of the highlights of this trip. Having grown up with them as a child until about 12 years old and seeing them again in my fifties was very special. I found myself reminiscing about those day in Berkeley with tears in my eyes when I pictured my parents with us.

Each time I attend a service in the Honzan, I enjoyed reciting the Shoshinge and singing Shinshu Shuka and Ondokusan with the other sangha members. The full sound in unison in the huge hall was incredible. I was so happy to be able to participate.

We enjoyed a Japanese bento lunch at Shosei-en Garden with the North American District representatives including Rinban Ken and Jeanne from Hawaii, Sharon Kawagoe, and Rev Patti and Gary Nakai from Chicago.

The opening ceremony at Honzan started with a commemorative group photo. It was followed by two lectures at Rihga Hotel with Rev Yutai Ikeda, topic: Shinran and Contemporary Times.

Ron Sato received a crystal ojuzu gift from the Honzan on behalf of the North American District which represents all of us, there was a benefit bazaar, which was Rev Osa’s idea. It was a very successful event raising a significant amount of money for the tsunami victims. All my scarves were sold!!

Then we separated into study tour groups. Ours went to Enryakuji temple on Mt. Hiei. We enjoyed a cruise on Biwako Lake and had a delicious Japanese bento lunch. We continued on to Gomura Betsuin (associated with Kyo Shonin) and Nagahama Betsuin (built 1657).

After the long day sightseeing we gathered for a very formal French cuisine dinner at the Rihga hotel. The NAD entertainment was a simultaneous slide show and singing of Shinshu Shuka, I am a LINK in the Golden Chain and Shinran Sama.

Brazil, Hawaii and Okinawa temples also did fantastic performances. Other entertainment was an incredible calligraphy artist, Hidekazu Mori and an outstanding Okinawan vocalist, Hisako Koja in memory of the Tsunami victims.

Then the World Dobo ended with the closing ceremony at Founder’s hall.

I’m glad to be home again, but will keep many memories of this 11th Dobo Convention with me.
One way is with books. I should warn you, I am a librarian by profession! Your public library, as well as school library should have a reasonable selection of materials to draw from. I recommend a more general approach, learn the “lay of the land” as you focus on different aspects of Buddhism. But first, I’d like to recommend for your son an excellent work by Franz Metcalf, “Buddha in Your Backpack: Everyday Buddhism for Teens,” and for you, by the same author, “What would Buddha do?” I think it is important, right off the bat, to look first at how Buddhism approaches our daily problems. While Buddhism may help us explore what’s going on in our heads, we definitely do not what it to become a “head-trip!” A Buddhism that does not address our daily problems -- which is what brings us to Buddhism in the first place, is not worth looking at.

Oh! When you’re each done, then share the books with each other!

Another work I liked is “The Buddha Way” by William Corlett and John Moore. This was designed as part of a series for young people on world religions and I found it quite engaging in expressing Buddhist themes. “Buddhism: A concise Introduction” by Huston smith will give you a good historical overview to the many forms of Buddhism, though a tad more academic. (By the way, my own school of Buddhism, Shin Buddhism, is talked about in the afterward, and does a good job of it!) His “World Religions” is also an excellent choice.

You’re both going to want to explore the nuts and bolts of Buddhist teachings. This can get a bit heavy, involves learning strange terms, but a good start is “Buddhism Plain and Simple” by Steve Hagen. Very straight forward! The following you’ll want eventually, it’s like a mini-encyclopedia of Buddhist teachings, is “The Heart of Buddhist Teaching” by Thich Nhat Hanh. IT IS dry. Wait on this till you’re ready. Thich Nhat Hanh however has written lots of other books that are really enjoyable, and easier. My favorite is “The Sun My Heart.”

As you explore you will be discovering that there are many ways of expressing Buddhism: Theravada, Tibetan, Mahayana with its many schools like Zen and Shin, and so on. I recommend you try different ones to get a flavor of their insights. Some you’ll find appealing, some may be very exotic. What is important is what works for you at the now you’re at! There will be teachings that appeal to you right now, and others that you’ll groove into in time. What I do recommend is that you study thoughtfully, and critique-fully. Don’t accept anything just because you read it. Think about it. Test it out. Above all, continue to face yourself. That’s the Buddha-way!

There are also good movies you both should try out. Our website lists a number of Buddhist themed movies that might intrigue you both. Let me first recommend a special done by PBS called “The Buddha.” This is a good visual introduction to the Buddhist story that is narrated by Richard Gere. Another movie I liked is “Little Buddha.” It is from a Tibetan viewpoint and the highlight is the retelling of the story of Buddha featuring Keanu Reeves! Some of us think that was his best role!

Finally, the best way to learn about Buddhism is to go meet some! There will be a point where you’ll each want to visit a temple, or a center. Many will offer classes or lectures. But more importantly I think it is best to see the Sangha at work and play. You’re not just embracing a teaching, you are embracing life. That’s what it’s all about! Do remember that there are different schools of Buddhism, so sample about till you find a place where you can be challenged and where you can grow. Above all find a place where everyone is a student -- including the teacher. “<http://www.dharmanet.org>www.dharmanet.org” and “<http://www.buddhanet.info>www.buddhanet.info” have excellent directories to the different Buddhist groups that you might discover in your area.

I guess that’s enough for now. I hope you did not overwhelm you. You two are going to have such an incredible adventure together! Remember -- take your time. Please write back if you have more questions, and just to let us know how you’re both doing!

Gassho (which means I place my hands together and bow to you),
Rev. Frederick
The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple
お盆

お盆は、限りなくひろく、長いのちの関わりを、直接に私に伝えてくださった方として、親やご先祖の御恩を念ずる法会であることを意味しています。

私たち一人ひとりのいのちは、それぞれの身に賜っているものです。しかし、そのいのちは、決して、それぞれ個人のいのちとして、単独で、バラバラにあるものではないのです。たとえば、四十四歳の時、旧里・伊賀上野にかえった芭蕉は、

慈愛のむかしも悲しく、
おもうことのみあまたありて
旧里や臍（ほぞ）の緒に泣く
としの暮

とうたっています。「臍の緒」、それは自分のいのちがしっかりと親のいのちにつながっていることの証でしょう。そしてその「臍の緒」は、限りなく長い歴史を次々とつながっています。その始まりから、行きつく先も見通せないほどに長いのちの歴史と、広い世界を内容として、私は今、このいのちを身に賜ってい

お盆 / 初盆法要

本年のお盆 / 初盆法要は、7月21日(日)午後4時30分より厳修いたします。本年のお盆 / 初盆法要は、日本語祥月法要 / 法話会と合同でのお勤めとなります。英語の法話は幡ピーター開教使、日本語の法話は長谷川智行開教監督部嘱託が行います。法要後には、お斎が用意されます。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。

お寺ニュース

お盆 / 初盆法要

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別院お盆フェスティバル

来年7月27日(土)と29日(日)の両日、ロサンゼルス別院お盆フェスティバルが開催されます。
July
7 8:30 am Board Mtg.
7 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
9 10:00 am Bonbu Study Class
14 10:00 am Sunday Service
21 4:30 pm Obon/Hatsubon Service
23 10:00 am Bonbu Class
27-28 Betsuin Obon
28 10:00 am Sunday Service

August
1 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
4 8:30 am Board Mtg.
4 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
9-11 Las Vegas Trip
11 (No Service)
18 (No Service)
25 (No Service)

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生きている
宗祖親鸞聖人750回御遠忌テーマ