I take refuge in the Sangha. May we, together as one, united in the spirit of universal brotherhood as a member of the Sangha, strive to live for the enlightenment of all beings.

The preceding is from the passage in “Three Treasures.” This sounds very familiar to us, since we recite this at every Sunday Service. “Treasures” means something very important for us and our lives. In other words, Three Treasures—Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha—are the three things that our lives should be based on. Among them, I would like to focus on the word Sangha. What does Sangha mean after all? As I reflect upon this question, I find that I hardly consider the meaning of Sangha, even though I recite this passage all the time.

I believe the most common image of Sangha might be “a group” or “gathering” consisting of Buddhists. There is no doubt this is the basic meaning of Sangha that can be found in the Buddhist dictionaries. As for us, the people of the Sangha has a more specific image. When we think of Sangha, we actually think of our own temple members. It could be said, then, that “A group of Buddhists” is the most common image of Sangha that we usually have. However, I am afraid that this is somewhat lacking when we try to explain what Sangha really is.

Regarding a group, we all know that there are so many different kinds of groups in our societies, and we belong to multiple groups in our everyday lives. Also, one’s nationality and ethnicity are categorized as groups too. Looking at our lives, we belong to various kinds of groups and gatherings. If we understand Sangha as a group, is it possible to consider Sangha as one of these groups in our societies? I believe that there is one significant difference between Sangha and all other groups.

The very basic purpose of any group in any society is to divide people into those who are inside of the group from those who are outside. The system exists because of our tendency to distinguish ourselves from others. When we see someone who does not share a commonality with us, then we think, “I am not like him/her.” “All living things are unconditionally equal” is a statement that most of us can readily agree with. Yet, in actuality, our heart and body does not always resonate this truth. Rather, we prefer to distinguish ourselves from others, or even discriminate between others, by focusing on any differences that exist. Moreover, generally speaking, we easily regard those that we like as part of us, members of our group, whereas we tend not to accept anyone that we do not like to be part of our group. As a result, making boundaries between “us” and “them” is the fundamental meaning of creating groups.

On the other hand, Sangha has no boundaries to divide people. Sangha is a gathering of people who awake to the Teachings of Buddha. It is the teachings of the truth that every living thing is unconditionally equal. “Unconditionally equal” does not necessarily mean everyone is the same. Rather, it means that every living thing is unique and different, yet we are not subjected to discrimination that...
It has been over a year and a half since my dad was assigned as the head minister of the Hawaii Higashi Honganji district. It was a huge jump for him, being the minister of West Covina for 14 years, and it impacted my life as well. I was given the choice to move to Hawaii, or stay here. When I heard my dad was given the position in Hawaii, it was initially a sudden shock, but now I see it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that would never come again. Looking from now and then, a lot has changed between us.

My dad was born and raised in Japan as the youngest of three in a family running a Buddhist temple. He had a typical childhood in Japan, though I found it hard to believe he was a naughty rascal. He was also a boy scout in Japan, and was taught many skills in life. He graduated from Otani University with a degree in Philosophy. He moved to LA in 1986 being assigned to Higashi Honganji as a minister. That was where he met my mom, who was working at the Lumbini Childcare Development Center, which is part of Higashi. He was then assigned to West Covina in 1998, and was the minister there until he was assigned to Hawaii in 2012.

My relationship with my dad over the years is rather interesting. It is hard for me to tell when he is serious or just messing around. In the past, when I did not really understand what it was to be a minister, I often found him asleep with a book, which made me think that he was lazy. He often took me to places like the beach, though I did not enjoy it much back then. This was probably more obvious when I was in my teens and early 20s. When my dad and I were together, we always seemed to find something to argue about. There was also a time while I was in college that I stopped going to service—since I had to listen to him talk all the time. Even if I was at service, I would not particularly listen. My dad once said that I sometimes hated him, which I guess I cannot argue about.

I started to get along better with my dad as I graduated from college. I think I finally started to give him respect even more when he moved to Hawaii, though I miss the bickering. It is hard for me to talk to him directly, as his schedule is busy, so whatever messages I have to give him, I normally tell my mom. I even thought of becoming a minister since I notice he is learning all the time through his books and messages, though I obviously cannot chant as loud as he does. It also runs in his family. His family in Japan has been influencing my life as well, as I want to live in Japan one of these days.

It feels like my dad is like a father to many at West Covina, and to Higashi too. He has impacted many of our members with his support. Members from both remember him in different ways. Some remember him for his dharma messages, others remember him for his good sportsmanship in golf, and this can go on. What do you remember him for? Father’s Day is a day not only to honor your fathers, but also to remember them for what they have done for you during their life.
Obon & Hatsubon Service
Obon & Hatsubon Service will be held on July 20 at 4:30 PM. Come and join us in welcoming Rimban William Briones from Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple (Nishi Betsuin) and then sit back and enjoy as he speaks for the first time with Rev. Miyoshi (his wife) as head minister of West Covina. 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 26-27. 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.

The Study Class
The Study Class will meet on July 8 and 22 at 10:00 AM. Discussions will continue to focus on the Shoshin-ge. The class meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. For more information, please contact Rev. Miyoshi at (626) 689-1040.

Las Vegas Trip
WCBT will be sponsoring its annual fundraising trip to Las Vegas on the weekend of August 8-10. The $140 per person fee, for double occupancy, will include round-trip bus fare, two nights at the Main Street Hotel & 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 9. Please let us know if you are planning to attend and need transportation.

The bus will depart on Friday, August 8 promptly at 1:00 PM from ESGVJCC. The return bus will leave from the Main Street Hotel on Sunday, August 10, promptly at 11:00 AM. The bus is currently full but if you would like to be put on the waiting list please contact Ted Kato (626-918-2680) or Merry Jitosho (714) 271-3803.

August Schedule
The August board meeting will be held 8:30 AM on August 3 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 10 (Las Vegas trip), 17, 24 and 31. Services will resume again on September 7.

The Ormseth family celebrated their daughters’ graduation: Joy from middle school and Cora from college.

GATEWAY Staff
Layout & Editing: Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi, Hisako Koga, Claudia Haraguchi, Richard Kagawa
Contributors: Rev. Fred Brenion, Claire Hansen, Merry Jitosho, Joanie Martinez
Circulation: Joy Kitaura
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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JULY
Jamie Nakatani, Jaylene Gutierrez, Kevin Hata, Lauren Koga, Russell Martinez, Laura Miyake, Margaret Takemoto, Ryoko Kodama, Richard Haraguchi, Craig Taguchi, Corey Taguchi, Terri Takemura, Pat Sato, Garrett Kawaguchi, Tyler Kobayashi, Marcus Nishihara, Lillian Nishihara, Kurt Kowalski, Jamie Teragawa, Jonathan Hoey, Jeffrey Akune, Jaylene Gutierrez
Dancers swayed to the ever popular “Shiawase Samba.”

Kevin and Joanie showing us their dance skills.

Ted Kato swept Mary off her feet as they twirled around the dance floor.

The lucky winners of our 50/50 raffle!
May arise from our differences. Moreover, the Truth of equality tells us that there are no lines or boundaries to divide living things into “our group” and “the other group.” In other words, it is Sangha that enable us to go beyond any boundaries drawn between “us” and “them.”

Nothing—a certain nationality, ethnicity, social status, jobs, or sex—is required to become a member of Sangha. Also, none of those distinctions should ever become a reason to exclude someone from Sangha. Moreover, whether one is a Buddhist or not does not even matter with Sangha, for the truth that Buddhism reveals to us is not truth only for Buddhists, but also for all living things. In this sense, wherever we are in the world, whatever we do, whoever we are, whether we are a Buddhist or not, and even when we were born, once we realize the preciousness of life we receive and life of others, Sangha will surely reach us. And through us and our life, Sangha ceaselessly will keep expanding and growing toward those who are around us. The interconnectedness of those who appreciate the truth will keep the world of Sangha wider and deeper. The world of Sangha includes both those who we like and do not like, and to those who were born before us and those who will be born in the future. Sangha is the world without any boundaries, and it keeps expanding wider and deeper through those who are awakened to the truth of the equality of all living things. And this is the world that the passage of the Three Treasures clearly shows us.

It was Shinran Shonin who was truly amazed in discovering the world of Sangha, and found that it was the only place to which he could return. Therefore, reciting, “I take refuge in the Sangha” is meant to be our declaration that we realize that the world is truly equal, and live our life based on that understanding.

The world of Sangha includes both those who we like and do not like, and to those who were born before us and those who will be born in the future. Sangha always reminds us of the interconnectedness with all things. Therefore, reciting, “I take refuge in the Sangha” is meant to be our declaration that we realize that the world is truly equal, and live our life based on that understanding.

The Gateway Sangha, con’t from pg. 1

Jennifer leading the Bon Odori practice.

Buddhism Quiz

This is July’s “How well do you know your Buddhism.” We hope it will be interesting and informative for our readers.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

1. According to Shinran, Pureland Buddhism is
   a. A theist version of Buddhism with Amida Buddha in the role of a god leading everyone to salvation and the Pureland.
   b. A symbol of the Dharma
   c. Our destination goal

2. The Buddha realized the nature of impermanence. Which of the following statements is FALSE?
   a. Impermanence is neutral.
   b. Changes that occur in our life are not necessarily good or bad in and of themselves although they are labeled as such depending on our reaction to them.
   c. Suffering is caused by our own ignorance of the reality of impermanence.

Answers: b, a
お寺ニュース

日本語によるお盆 / 初盆法要は、7月3日（木）午後7時半より7月祥月法要と併せてお勤めいたします。

また英語によるお盆 / 初盆法要は、7月20日（日）午後4時半よりお勤めいたします。ご講師には本派本願寺羅府別院のブリオネス・ウィリアム輪番をお招きいたします。法要後にはお斎をご用意しております。ご家族、ご友人をお誘い合わせの上、是非お参り下さいますようご案内申し上げます。

別院お盆フェスティバル

来る7月26日（土）と27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。当寺院では例年フードブースにてtamaleを販売しております。ご多用中とは存じますが、どうぞお手伝いいただきますよう、よろしくお願い申し上げます。

基金募集ラスベガス旅行

来る8月8日（金）から10日（日）まで、当寺院恒例の基金募集ラスベガス旅行が行われます。参加費はお一人$140です。宿泊はメインストリートホテル2泊（お2人で1部屋です）で、往復のバス運賃込みです。ラスベガスへの往路では、軽食とお飲み物が用意されます。

往路のバスは8月8日（金）午後7時、コミュニティセンターより出発します。復路のバスは10日（日）午前11時30分にメインストリートホテルから出発します。

参加希望の方は、地頭所メリー氏（714-271-3803）までお問い合わせ下さい。

法話会 7月祥月法要

お盆 / 初盆法要

7月3日（木） 午後7時半

広がり続ける僧伽 見義信香

自ら僧に帰依したてまつる。まさに願わくは衆生とともに、大衆を統理して一切無碍ならん。

ご存知のようにこれは三帰依文の一節です。折に触れ皆さんも唱和されている耳に馴染みのある文ではないかと思います。三帰依文とは仏・法・僧を私たちの拠り所といたしますという私たちの宣言文でありますが、このうちの「僧」、つまり「僧伽」について皆さんはどのようなイメージを抱いていらっしゃるでしょうか。もしも誰かが「僧伽って一体なんですか？」と尋ねられたら、皆さんはどのようにお答えになりますか。かくいう私がもしそのような質問をされたら、おそらくドキッとすると思います。それは聞き慣れ、言い慣れてきたこの文言を、何となく分かったつもりで今まできてしまったということに、否応なく気づかれる質問だからです。

「僧伽」という言葉を聞いたとき私たちが思い浮かべるイメージは、仏教にご縁をもった人が寄り集まっている様子ではないでしょうか。仏教学辞典を開きますと、まさにそのイメージ通りの「仏法を信じて仏道を行う人々の集団」という説明を見つけることができます。またお寺で「僧伽」という言葉を使うときは、そのイメージはより具体的になり、御門徒ひとりひとりの顔と重なることでしょう。

ところで、私たちは日常生活において僧伽以外にも様々な集団の中に身を置いているわけですが。学校や会社、スポーツ部や興味の同好会、ボランティアのグループなど、私たちの生活には様々な集まり、グループが存在します。さらに、私たちひとりひとりは日本人やアメリカ人という集団のメンバーでもありますし、家族も同じような視点で見れば、ひとつの集団と考えることができるものかもしれません。このような私たちの思いに基づいて築き上げられたあらゆる垣根を乗り越えていくのが、僧伽なのです。職業や社会的地位、性別や国籍など、いかなることが僧伽に障害をもたらすものでもいいません。さらにいうなら、仏教徒だとして自覚しているかどうかまでも問題にはなりません。なぜなら、仏教の説く真理は仏教徒にとってのみの真理ではなく、あらゆるいのちあるものに Truth であるからです。世界中のどこで生活しても、どんな職業でも、どんな人であろうと、さらには、どの時代に生まれようと、自分と周りのあらゆるいのちの尊さに目覚め、僧伽はすでにその人の足元まで確実に広がっているのです。
### July 2014

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<tr>
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<td>7:30 pm</td>
<td>Howakai Japanese Service</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>7:30 pm</td>
<td>Obon/Hatsubon Service</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
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<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Shotsuki Service</td>
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<td>Study Class</td>
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<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Sunday Service</td>
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<td>Obon/Hatsubon Service (English)</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>26-27</td>
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<td>Betsuin Obon Festival</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>Sunday Service</td>
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#### August 2014

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<td>8-10</td>
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<td>17</td>
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浄土は言葉のいらぬ世界
人間界は言葉の必要な世界
地獄は言葉の通じぬ世界

ー曽我量深