You’ve probably noticed that our website receives certain types of questions more than others. For example, we often receive questions from students, and this month is no exception. I thank Rev. Fred Brenion for his help in answering many of these questions. But there’s usually also an “unusual” question or comment in the “e-mail bag” and I think Rev. Fred would agree these surprises make responding to the e-mail particularly interesting.

Gassho,
Rev. Peter Hata

Selected E-mail
To: Rev. Peter Hata
Hello there Peter!
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New Dharma School Sunday Service
By Diane Hata, WCBT Dharma School

Traditionally, Sunday mornings are synonymous with waking up on time to attend service at the temple. For those of you who are experienced parents, encouraging the kids to get up on Sunday morning can feel like an act of Congress (oh, maybe not that bad!) Thus, taking into consideration the stage at which our new and potential Dharma School students are, we will dedicate the last Sunday of the month especially for our youngsters who range from 1-7 years of age.

We plan to have a “read-aloud” given by one of our Dharma School teachers, followed by a short sermon delivered by Rev. Peter. The children will then be dismissed to their class where they will do a hands-on activity and, of course, get the chance to stretch their legs by playing outdoors, weather permitting.

The Golden Chain is the overarching theme that we hope to include in everything we do with the children. Please join us to take part in the chain that stretches around the world.”

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One of our youngest members of Dharma School is not even a year old. But as you can see, Josaia is raring to go. He along with our other young students thoroughly enjoyed the reading of Crankenstein, which was read by Ms Claire Hansen before our traditional Halloween party on Oct. 27th. Our next issue of the Gateway should have some terrific pictures to share.

Before you know it, Thanksgiving celebrations will be taking place. As we had mentioned before, the last Sunday of the month’s service will feature a read-aloud geared for the young children in our Sangha. There will be no real turkeys to take home, but the families can expect something festive for their home...

With Gassho,
Diane Hata

A Wish List for West Covina Buddhist Temple

As the year end fast approaches, it has come to our attention that many people are faced with the dilemma of what to give for this year’s Oseibo gift. Unlike a Christmas present, an Oseibo gift is an expression of gratitude for the hard work, support and generosity they have received. In this same spirit of Oseibo giving, this year we thought instead of or in addition to the monetary donations that our Sangha generously gives to our Temple, that we have a West Covina Buddhist Temple Wish List. (Remember your children’s elementary school teachers’ wish list? Same concept!) Rev. Peter, the board, Dharma School teachers and the chairpersons for our annual Temple activities (think Obon, Hanamatsuri, Ohigan, Oldies Dances, Gateway, etc.) will make a list of things WCBT needs to help the Temple fulfill its potential by improving our Temple operations. For example, Rev. Peter and Richard Kagawa are installing new lights for the altar to enhance the appearance of the altar items. They have already installed a portable vac to expedite the cleaning of the altar. The new lighting will cost $200. Sangha members may wish to donate to a fund to this specific item or any other item on the wish list.

We understand that these are hard times. The Temple does need your support in anyway you can offer it; if not in monetary terms, then in terms of volunteering your time to the Temple.

With our profound and sincere appreciation,
The Gateway Staff

Clockwise from top: Kevin Kawawata spoke about his experience in Japan on October 13; Lillian Nishihara with Richard Hiroshima and Frank Tanji, the lucky raffle winners of the lanterns at the Oldies and dancers having a great time at Oldies 46

Quote of the Month
It is time for the great American experiment in freedom, born in the hot revolution of 1776 and nurtured by the outer modernity of the European Enlightenment, to grow to maturity in the cool revolution of the Path and the inner modernity of Buddhist enlightenment.

-Robert Thurman
Kiku Crafts & Food Fair
WCBT will sponsor our 4th Annual Kiku Crafts & Food Fair on Sunday, November 3 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 welcome to shop early from 9:30 a.m.

We hope you can help by signing up to help or if you can’t be here perhaps you can bring homemade baked goods on Saturday or Sunday to the Center. And of course we invite everyone to come shop and eat.

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.

November Shotsuki & Board Meeting
November Board Meeting will be held on November 10 at 8:30 AM followed by the Shotsuki Service at 10 AM.

Omigaki
On Sunday, Nov. 10, please try to stay a little while after service to help with the altar cleaning, known as omigaki. The Sangha cleans and polishes the altar pieces for the upcoming Hoonko Service, the most important service of the year.

Fall Lecture Series
West Covina Buddhist Study Center presents “Buddhism and Christianity: Our Common Spiritual Quest” with special lecturer Rev. James Fredericks, Ph.D on November 11, 18 and 25, 2013. The fee for the three lectures is $30.

See page 5 for more details.

The Study Class
The Study Class (formerly known as Bonbu Class) will meet on November 12 and 26 at 10:00 AM. Discussions will continue to focus on 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

Ho-onko Service
Our Ho-onko Service will be held on Sunday, November 17, at 4:30 pm with Rinban Noriaki Ito as our special speaker. Please join us as we welcome back Rinban Nori and stay for the complimentary Otoki dinner that will follow the service.

Mochitsuki
WCBT’s annual Mochitsuki will be held on Sunday, December 8. Beginning at 7:00AM, the special mochi rice, which will be sent home to be washed and soaked the night before, will be steamed until it is ready to be poked and pounded and eventually molded into smooth mochi shapes. Some are filled with sweet bean an and others are made into the traditional New Years symbolic offering, okasane. Come and join us in this annual tradition.

Year-end Service & Oseibo
Our Year-end Service, Oseibo gift presentation and potluck dinner will be held on Sunday, December 15 at 4:00 PM. Entertainment will be provided by the Dharma School, youth organizations and other members of the Sangha. If you have a talent you’d like to share, please contact Diane Hata or Rev. Peter.

The potluck assignments are as follows: If your last name begins with A-K, please bring a main dish and a salad; L-N, bring a main dish and rice dish; O-Y, bring a main dish and a dessert.

Please join us for a fun evening of entertainment and feasting on the delicious potluck spread from the West Covina Temple members.
YOUNG ADULTS, con’t from pg. 1

ing, “Why?,” especially since, as mentioned, our young people attend temple regularly only through high school, then basically they are not expected to attend after that. Two exceptions were the Lotus Band’s coming together again after college, along with many of our former Jr. YBA, for WCBT’s 50th anniversary, and also, how the temple received much-needed help from its former Jr. YBA members at our Obon Festival. Thank you very much for your help. But actually, when I saw all the help we did receive from our former teen members at Obon, I was a bit dismayed to think that, though you are still helping the temple, the temple is no longer helping you. You are no longer an active beneficiary of the Three Treasures.

But for the most part, it is true that Shin Buddhist temples tend to lose the participation of their young adults. Of course, at this stage of your life, you are very busy with building your careers and for some of you, also raising a family. Perhaps you also feel there’s no place in your contemporary urban lifestyle for “religion.” But I would like to ask you to consider first that Buddhism is not technically a “religion,” at least in the key sense that there is no creator deity at its center. Rather, at the center of Buddhism is the Dharma, the teaching of truth; the reality that all life is both impermanent and interdependent.

Consider how you became the person you are today. Looking calmly at your life so far, isn’t it true that you were born because of a multitude of interwoven, singular events such as how and why your parents met, and why your four grandparents met, and so forth? Isn’t it also true that things have not always gone the way you wanted them to? You were not the best looking, smartest, or wealthiest person amongst your peer group (I apologize to those of you that were!) so you had to somehow get to a place of self-acceptance, develop your unique gifts, and live your own life. Maybe you tried to achieve certain goals but didn’t, which probably resulted in disappointment, but which maybe also made you a little wiser and more appreciative of what you already have. Or sadly, you’ve no doubt witnessed the passing of many people close to you even at your young age; grandparents, maybe parents for some of you, probably even a few of your peers. This is the reality of all our lives. But then, if you are one of those young adults who has come to not only accept but actually appreciate these life lessons and how they’ve made you “grow up,” does the urge ever arise to somehow share what you’ve learned—your appreciation of your life—with others? The ways in which you could share are only limited by your imagination and passion. These twin aspects of being deeply touched by the reality of life, and yet simultaneously moved to somehow help others is the heart of Namu Amida Butsu.

As a start, please consider simply coming to an initial meeting at your convenience—it does not have to be Sunday morning and could be Sunday afternoon, Saturday morning, a weekday evening, etc. Let me know your preference. Also I welcome any suggestions about what kinds of activities such a group might do. It could include a wide range of activities from purely social gatherings, to activist-types of projects (political, green, careers, healthy lifestyles, parenting resources, etc.), to more purely Dharma-centered gatherings like lectures, Buddhist film/music trips, and small group discussions.

Aren’t you curious what might happen if you could get together under the guidance of the Dharma, but not as Dharma-school kids or teens, but now as mature, thoughtful adults? (sorry, some of you were actually thoughtful teens!). I personally feel that we—many Shin Buddhist temple leaders in America—have it all wrong if we think Buddhism is “not relevant” to young adults, or that they’re too busy, or that they all think of religion as being “uncool.” Young adults may actually be at a special age where they are old enough to have been deeply touched by the Dharma and yet also young, creative, curious, and energetic enough to be very interested in studying and, together with their peers, sharing the Dharma with others.

L.D. NEWS, con’t from pg. 1

young man.

One of them is in the hospital, suffering the after-effects of an infection from last year that caused some memory loss and poor health. One of them is from a low income background, struggling to support her and her father on a small part time wage. And just this last week I found out for the first time that one that I had often disagreed and argued with had lost their fiance in a tragic accident years ago.

Somehow, in a roundabout fashion I am seeing the suffering of these people I have grown to know and was profoundly moved by the experience. I realized how fortunate I am to be alive and healthy, and about how transient those can be.

I wanted to thank you for the class Heather and I took at West Covina, and pass along that I am trying to use what I learned!

Steve Toyoshima

Dear Steve,

Thanks for your message. I’m glad to hear the dharma is beginning to come alive for you and is not just a bunch of doctrines. Do you mind if we print your message in our “Living Dharma News” column of the Gateway? I think your message will resonate with our readers.

Alternatively, if you like writing and sharing, you’re welcome to write a short essay for our “Living Dharma” column, which only runs occasionally. I attached a couple of past Gateway issues as examples.

I know you are a member of the Betsuin, but since the Intro class was here at WCBT, I think you can write for us.

Best Wishes,

Gassho, Rev. Peter

Steve Toyoshima

Please see L.D. NEWS, con’t on pg. 7
The West Covina Buddhist Study Center Presents:

Buddhism and Christianity: Our Common Spiritual Quest

Lecturer: Rev. James Fredericks, Ph.D

Date: Mondays; Nov. 11, 18, & 25, 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: $30.00*
Info: (626) 337-8373
dharma@livingdharma.org

About the lecture series:
To most Americans, it might not seem obvious that Buddhists and Christians share a common quest, or that if there is one, it must have something to do with reincarnation or an eternal afterlife. There is however a common spiritual quest shared by these two great traditions, and it is one that can in fact positively affect our everyday lives in the here and now.

About the lecturer:
Jim Fredericks is a priest of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and a member of the Department of Theological Studies of Loyola Marymount University. He is a specialist in inter-religious dialogue, especially the dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity. He has worked as a Fulbright Scholar in Kyoto, Japan and is a member of the Los Angeles Buddhist-Catholic Dialogue and the Bay Area Chan, Zen, Catholic Dialogue. In addition to many articles, he is the author of *Buddhists and Christians: Through Comparative Theology to a New Solidarity* (Orbis) and *Faith Among Faiths: Christian Theology and The Non-Christian Religions* (Paulist). He has lectured on inter-religious understanding in Kyoto, Tehran, Rome, Vienna, Beijing and other parts of the world.

*Pre-registration is requested; but fee is payable either with pre-registration or at 1st class (make check payable to “WCBT”)*

West Covina Buddhist Temple
P.O. Box 1616, West Covina, CA 91790
Telephone (626) 337-8373
www.livingdharma.org
Subject: Re: Four Gates Experience
From: Steven Toyoshima
To: Peter Hata,
Sure, you can reprint for the Living Dharma News! I might also take you up on the offer to do some writing.

From = (Name Withheld)
Subject = Becoming a Buddhist
Message = Hello, I have been dealing with issues of depression and anxiety over the past few years, which have left me in difficult places at times. A couple of days ago I lost my father to cancer and I have had trouble dealing with that as well. I just need to find some kind of centeredness to bring peace to my life, soul, and mind. I happened upon your website and, as cliche as this may sound, I felt a welcoming and comfortable vibe from your temple. I would like to visit. I do not speak Japanese (although I’m part Japanese). I hope this will be OK.
Will I be welcome to attend services? Thank you for your time and attention. Best,
(Name Withheld)

Dear (Name Withheld),

Thanks for visiting our Living Dharma Website. Our condolences to you for your loss. All of us have experienced the loss of a loved one and have also found it difficult. I’m glad you found something beneficial on our website.

As to your question, yes, you are welcome to attend any of our services. We are probably a 90% English-speaking temple in terms of our members but since Jodo Shinshu Buddhism came here with the Issei immigrants, there are still some remnants of Japanese language, especially in our chanting rituals and in a few gathas (songs). I think we’re kind of reluctant to change these because, even though they pose some difficulty for Americans, they also provide a meaningful link back to the 13th century founder of our tradition, Shinran Shonin. For that matter, we also recite a small part of the Three Treasures (universal Buddhist pledge) in Pali, which is an even older language dating back 2500 years to the founder of Buddhism, Shakya-muni Buddha (actually, Pali is probably easier than Japanese to pronounce even for Americans). But you do not have to participate in any of this unless you want to. Most newcomers become familiar with our rituals little by little, which is fine.

Please check our calendar for days and times (http://www.livingdharma.org/Calendar.html).

By the way, we only have one Japanese language service, which is our Howakai service on the first Thursday of the month (2 days from now), but even there, when English-speaking people have shown up, we will also provide an English dharma message. But yes, everything else on our calendar is for English-speaking people.

Best Wishes,
Rev. Peter Hata
The Living Dharma Website
West Covina Buddhist Temple
恩という字の成り立ちをみると、"因"については"いたむ"という意味があり、恩は"いたむところ"がもともとの意味であるといわれます。つまり、ただ恵みがあってうれしいというのではなく、そこに"いたむところ"のありること、言い換えれば、悲願のあることを知ること、それが恩を知ることになるのでしょう。

私たちは、ともすると報恩講は御恩報謝することだと考えて、どうしたら本当の報恩になるだろうかと考えます。自分なりになんだか仏の心に叶うような報恩の仕方を考えます。しかし、実はそのことが如来の恩（=いたむところ）を知らぬ姿でありましょう。私たちが仏法を信じないからでしょう。私たちが理屈ばかりを言って念仏を申さないからでしょう。身を粉にし骨を砕いているのは如来の方なのです。

ここに、報じ難き仏恩の深遠なることを信知する時が到来し、逆謗の徒とは仏恩報ずる思いされるのである。

(2005年版「真宗の生活」– 東本願寺発行 – より引用)
November

2  10:00 am  Center Health Fair
3  10:00 am  Sunday Service
3  10:00 am  Kiku Craft Fair
7  7:30 pm  Howakai Hoonko Service
10 8:30 am  Board Meeting
10 10:00 am  Shotsuki Service
12 10:00 am  Study Class
17 4:30 pm  WCBT Hoonko Service
24 10:00 am  Sunday Service
26 10:00 am  Study Class

December

1  8:30 am  Board Mtg
1 10:00 am  Shotsuki Service & Bodhi Day
5  7:30 pm  Howakai Year-End Party
8  7:00 am  Mochitsuki
10 10:00 am  Study Class
15 4:00 pm  Year-End & Oseibo Service

November

3  10:00 am  日曜礼拝
3  10:00 am  菊クラフトフェア
7  7:30 pm  日本語法話会報恩講 / 祥月法要
10 8:30 am  理事会
10 10:00 am  祥月法要
10 10:00 am  LA 別院報恩講
17 4:30 pm  報恩講（英語）
24 10:00 am  日曜礼拝

December

1  8:30 am  理事会
1 10:00 am  祥月法要 / 成道会
5  7:00 am  餅つき
8  7:00 am  日本語法話会忘年会
15 4:00 pm  年末法要 / 忘年会