

# WEST LOS ANGELES BUDDHIST TEMPLE BULLETIN

2003 Corinth Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90025

(310) 477-7274  
E-mail: [westlabt@verizon.net](mailto:westlabt@verizon.net)

Fax (310) 477-6674  
Web Site: [www.wlabt.org](http://www.wlabt.org)

Vol. 49, No. 5

May 2006

## MAJOR SERVICES FOR MAY 2006

Sunday, May 14	Sunday, May 21	Monday, May 29
<b>Mother's Day Service</b>  9:30 a.m.	<b>Gotan-E Service</b>  9:30 a.m.	<b>Memorial Day</b> <b>Cemetery Service - Woodlawn</b> 10:00 a.m. <b>Cemetery Service - Inglewood</b> 11:30 a.m.

## REV. USUKI'S PAGE

### How will Buddhism influence us during the later stages of life?

*This mind of faith is pure and gentle, always patient and enduring, never arguing, never causing suffering to others but always pondering the Three Treasures: The Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Thus happiness spontaneously rises in their minds, and the light for Enlightenment can be found everywhere.*

*Namo Amida Butsu*

Recently I received a letter from a Jr. YBA (Young Buddhist Association - high school age) student in his preparation for a seminar and I would like to share my reply to his unique request.

Dear Rev. Usuki.

Currently we are working on putting together a program for our Seminar. I am writing this letter in regards to our theme entitled "Today and Forever."

At our seminar we would like to address and discuss what it is like to be a young Buddhist and how we react to others and their questions about our own beliefs. (I know this is how we got our theme, but we have to respect those who are social Jr.'s too. Unfortunately not everyone is Buddhist that will be at our Seminar...even in our own chapter.)

(continued on page 2)

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Los Angeles, CA  
Permit No. 20953

WEST LOS ANGELES BUDDHIST TEMPLE  
2003 Corinth Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Return Service Requested

(continued from page 1)

We would like to touch upon the influence Buddhism will have during our later stages of life. Being Southern District Religious Advisor we would like to hear your comments on these topics. I would like to thank you for your time and wait to hear your response.

What a wonderful letter and request. I was quite moved by this letter and I wanted to respond to him right away but I had to think about his letter for a moment. He said, "We would like to touch upon the influence Buddhism will have during our later stages of life." Hmm, I wonder what he means by "later stages of life." So, I wrote him back and asked him whether he thought "later stages of life" meant when he turns 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70...? It was only my curiosity. He didn't respond so I wrote my reply anyway and this is what I wrote to him right away.

Dear \_\_\_\_:

Here are my thoughts on your questions of:

1. What is it like to be a young Buddhist and how we react to others – whether they are Buddhist or not?
2. How will Buddhism influence us during the later stages of life?

I think your theme, "Now and Forever" is a great approach to life, whether you are young or old.

Buddhism is a religion that caters to people of all ages and also of all races and religions here and now. In a recent National Geographic magazine (December 2005), there was an article titled "Buddha Rising – Out of the Monastery, Into the Living Room." This article was revealing in many ways. It mentioned that in the U.S. alone, there are an estimated 3 million practicing Buddhists. And according to another study, more than 25 million Americans believed that Buddhism had an important influence on their spirituality and life. This means that many non-Buddhists were touched by Buddhism and it is here to stay.

I think this says to us that the spirit and the teaching of Buddhism have a great effect on others and that it is a universal truth of Wisdom and Compassion. I think this is a great way to start a conversation with others.

If you approach life in this way you can appreciate all your friends and colleagues whether they are Buddhist or not. This is one way of "reacting" to others without discrimination. You will find this theme in the Golden Chain, Kokun and the Three Treasures you recite every Sunday at service.

I also think that you do not need to take a defensive posture when talking to others about Buddhism. Because it is a universal truth that teaches interdependence, oneness of life, impermanence, causes and effect, compassion and other wonderful traits of everyday life, you should be able to "share" this message. As long as you believe in these truths you can converse quite equally and meaningfully with others.

During the different grade years, children are taught different aspects of Buddhist etiquette at the temple – how to act in the temple, Gassho, to recite the Nembutsu and how to get along with everyone. This process continues on to learning about Buddhist stories, life of the Buddha and so on. Students then continue to learn more challenging concepts such as kindness, thoughtfulness, interdependency and accepting religious differences.

As their consciousness in dealing with others grows, they learn the Four Grati- tudes of Buddhism and how it affects them – these are kindness to fellow living beings, kindness to family, kindness to your surroundings and again the Three Treasures.

As children grow to into young adults they become aware of the Buddhist way of life through the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Noble Path, the Six Paramitas and the history and teachings of Buddhism. Then at your Jr. YBA age, as you become more deeply engaged with life and your surroundings, more focus is brought to the lessons of our Jodo Shinshu teachings.

Here the aspect of Onembutsu, a life of gratitude and a deeper understanding of "self" become more clear. Onembutsu then becomes a lifelong venture as you live your life as an adult and hopefully, it will help to guide you through adulthood as you learn to appreciate all the challenges that you face, including your job and having your own children and family.

I think the process of Buddhist teaching is very meaningful and its influence will never end but continues to change as your life changes.

Gassho, Rev. F. Usuki

(REV. USUKI'S PAGE continues on page 3)

(continued from page 2)



## SHINSHU CORNER

### Saying the Onembutsu

*When we entrust ourselves to the Vow (18<sup>th</sup> Vow – Hongan) that grasps us never to abandon us, we shall quickly attain birth, regardless of whether we commit evils for unknown reasons and even end our lives without saying the Nembutsu. And when we say the Nembutsu spontaneously, our trust in Amida becomes stronger and our gratitude to Tathagatha becomes deeper as we approach the moment of supreme Enlightenment. To desire to extinguish evil is the thought of self-power, the intention of those who hope to achieve right-mindedness at the moment of death. This shows the lack of true entrusting which is made possible by the working of Other Power (Amida’s Vow).*

*Tannisho, Chapter 9*

### Jodo Shinshu Faith (Shinjin)

The word “faith” has many connotations, but Jodo Shinshu (Shin) faith means the awareness of things, including the self, as they are and a new appreciation of life born from this transforming insight. Furthermore, it is the process of spiritual maturity by which man achieves Buddhahood, the perfection of personality. Shin faith does not mean a blind trust in some omnipotent father image.

Shin faith has two aspects: first, the profound awakening to the true nature of the blind self, eternally lost in the ocean of life and death and never knowing the peaceful calm of inner serenity; and second, the profound awakening to the compassion of Amida Buddha which is directed to this blind self and effects its transformation into a being of enlightenment. The awareness of reality is the dynamic tension between these two aspects. That they form the core of faith is also the central theme of the *Tannisho*...

*The Awareness of Self – Rev. Gyodo Haguri*

(End of Rev. USUKI’S PAGE)



## REFLECTION

Jeff Wilson

There is a beautiful term that appears in the Visualization of Amida Sutra (the Kanmuryojukyo). According to the text, when Shakyamuni Buddha revealed the presence of the Pure Land and that all one had to do to go there was to call Amida’s name, Queen Vaidehi was “wonder-struck.” What a lyrical way to express our first amazement at encountering the Primal Vow and the great compassion of Other Power. Truly, there is something wondrous and striking about the discovery that Amida offers us freedom and ease despite all our shortcomings.

There are many things in my life which fill me with wonder and awe. Sometimes it is the beauty of nature when I’m out hiking in Topanga Canyon or Will Rogers State Park. The scenery is breathtaking and the harmony of the natural world just beyond our crazy chaotic city is humbling—it’s easy to understand why Shakyamuni uses descriptions of lovely trees, streams, and birds to evoke the Pure Land for Vaidehi. Other times people I know or read about strike me with wonder, when I learn about the hardships they’ve managed to overcome or the good things they’ve done for one another. Although this is a difficult world with many problems, there are many people who try to make it a better place for us to live in. And sometimes wonder strikes me just at the realization that I am alive and breathing, and that my life is upheld by the uncountable actions of so many people, beings, and things. The whole world comes together to enable our lives in each moment—surely this is some sort of miracle.

Whenever I wake up for a moment to the infinite support of others, I feel “wonder-struck.” Like Vaidehi, suffering in her prison, I feel suddenly released for a moment from my problems and given a glimpse of true and real life. Without a thought, Namu Amida Butsu pops out. Even in the toil of our daily routines, life offers us many opportunities to wonder and give thanks. I hope that we can all remain open to the call of Amida in each moment of wonder.

## SPRING OHIGAN SEMINAR & SERVICE

Haru Matsumune

On Saturday, March 11, 2006, nearly forty people attended the Spring Ohigan seminar here at West LA. Thanks to Rev. Usuki, we were able to learn from two engaging speakers: **Rev. Gregory Gibbs** (English) and **Rev. Michihiro Ama** (Japanese). Rev. Gibbs is the resident minister of Oregon Buddhist Temple in Portland, and Rev. Ama is a Ph.D candidate at UC Irvine.

Rev. Gibbs first used a stream to illustrate the development of Buddhist thought through a timeline of several thousand years. His diagram begins with concepts and ideas which influenced Śākyamuni Buddha, highlights the *nembutsu* tradition in particular, and ends with us here in the 21st century. It is interesting to see which concepts pre-dated Śākyamuni Buddha and which ones originated with him.

The focus on *nembutsu* continued with Rev. Gibbs explaining his handout on the "Introduction and History of the Nembutsu." He described various forms of *nembutsu* practice (such as visualization and petitionary utterance), contrasting them with the one we are familiar with: recitation of the name of Amida Buddha as *namo[namu] amida butsu*.

Rev. Gibbs spent the remainder of the session presenting a 21st Century approach to Amida Buddha and some basic Pure Land notions (pure land [*jōdo*], *hongan*, *hongan riki*, great practice, and returning phase [*gensō ekō*]).

For those with a philosophical mind, one could say that, for the 21st Century, Rev. Gibbs is trying to balance the views of modernism and its successors existentialism and post-modernism.

If you missed the seminar but wish to study Rev. Gibbs's handouts, please stop by the office for copies.



(English seminar)

Regretfully we do not have an English summary of Rev. Ama's Japanese seminar.



(Japanese seminar)

After the seminar, a BWA *toban* group began preparing *chirashi* for *otoki* for the Ohigan service the next morning. In the next photo, toban members facing the camera are, from left to right: **Hisako Shintaku**, **Kaye Okitsu**, **Kiyoka Totani** (with **Rev. Usuki** hungrily peering over

her shoulder), **Kay Kikunaga** and **Nobuko Kozawa**. Others present but not seen in this photo include the toban chairperson **Chiyo Nitta**.



Thanks to those in the February and March toban groups for the wonderfully tasty *otoki*.



The ministers who conducted the seminar the day before were also the guest speakers for the Sunday Ohigan Service: Rev. Michihiro Ama on the left and Rev. Gregory Gibbs. Many thanks to them for their illuminating presentations on this Ohigan weekend.



## 80 PLUS NEWS

At the monthly 80 Plus Lunch in March, **Mrs. Miyoye Takahashi's** birthday was recognized with a special birthday cake brought by her daughter, Jean, and a chorus of *Happy Birthday*.



Then, we learned **Mrs. Alice Ikeda** had turned 90 a few days before, so she too was recognized with *Happy Birthday*.



(Alice Ikeda, left, seated with Chiyo Nishina, and Chiyo Minato.)

# YARD SALE

FUND RAISING EVENT FOR 80+ LUNCH PROGRAM

SATURDAY, JUNE 24, 2006

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



**YOUR DISCARDS MAY BE SOMEONE ELSE'S TREASURE**

**ITEMS SUCH AS  
MATTRESS \* COMPUTER\* LARGE TV\*  
CANNOT BE ACCEPTED**

Please drop off your contribution at the temple between 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday or call Masako Ishioka (310) 398-2902.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

**Southern District  
Buddhist Churches and Buddhist Women's Association  
2006 Conference**

**“Live a Life of  
Awakening”**

**9:30 am – 3:15 pm, June 11, 2006  
Hyatt Westlake Plaza Hotel**

**Featuring:**

**Reverend Kodo Umezu (E) and Reverend Shoki Mohri (J)**

**Registration \$40**

**A bus will depart from the Temple at 8:15 am**

## **DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS**

Grace Mizushima

Dharma School was busy again in the month of February preparing for the Open House on February 19, 2006. All Dharma School students made a profile of themselves and we displayed their work along with their pictures on poster boards. I hope everyone had a chance to see all the children's work and their pictures.

We also had the following students speak on behalf of Dharma School at the Open House: **Emily** and **Katie Hoy**, **Mona** and **Maya Narumi** and **Nathan** and **Ryan Ohkawahira**.

We are a very small but cozy group and are always looking for fresh new faces. If you know anyone who would like to bring their children to Dharma School, by all means, please have them come and check us out. A good way to “lure” the children to church is to “entice” them with the fact that we have snack time after every service!! Ask any Dharma School student what their favorite part of Dharma School is, and I guarantee you'll get the same answer out of every one of them....SNACK TIME!!!

## MAY SHOTSUKI HOYO - 10 a.m. Saturday, May 6, 2006

Fujino, Yoshi

Fukiage, Miyuki

Hayashida, Isekichi

Hisaoka, Denichi

Ige, Takeichi

Ikemiya, Shigeaki

Ishihara, Sue

Iwamoto, Shohei

Kawasaki, Mineko

Kinoshita, Zenzo

Kishi, Sukichiro

Kitahara, Keikow

Kitahara, Misuko

Koda, Hideo

Masuda, Chie

Masuda, Ishi

Masukawa, Koyono

Masunaga, Taki

Matsumoto, Bob

Miyake, Kinue

Miyasaki, Tetsutaro

Miyata, Fred

Nakamura, Tatsumi

Nakamura, Sumiko

Nakasako, Doreen

Nakashima, Owari

Nakawatase, Reiko

Nishida, Mitoshi

Nishikawa, Harry

Nishimoto, Hisae

Nonoguchi, Chiyoichi

Ohara, Hideyoshi

Okubo, Tomi

Onami, Tazuko

Oshimo, Takeru

Reva, James

Sakamoto, Tetsuji

Sakurai, William

Sasaki, Seino

Sasaki, Koyoshi

Shibata, Yaeko

Shimohira, Ichi

Shintaku, Jun

Soeda, Toshio

Sujishi, Mutsuko

Sunada, Miyaichi

Takade, Yasue

Takayama, Frank

Takazumi, Bunsuke

Takemoto, Yoshihiko

Tanigawa, Yukio

Terada, Fumi

Toguchida, Gono

Tonai, Ichiro

Yamaguchi, Midori

Yasuda, Akira

Yonemori, Yoshito

Yukawa, Hajime

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

**Gene & Atsuko Morimoto**

# **Bingo**

**7:30 p.m.**

**Third Friday of each month.**

**Come support your Temple.**



**2006 WLA Buddhist Temple**

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

**Application Deadline – May 31, 2006**

**Get application forms in Temple Office**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5/1 Deadline for June articles 5/10 Bulletin folding Toban: Taiko	1 7:30 pm Board Meeting	2 Rev. Usuki Off	3 7:30 pm Taiko	4 1 pm Study Class (E)	5 Rev. Usuki Off	6 10 am Shotsuki Hoyō
7 9:30 am Sunday Service/Dharma School Study Class (E)	8	9 SD Ministers' Meeting at Betsuin	10 7:30 pm Taiko	11 1 pm Study Class (E) 7:30 pm Buddhist Men Meeting	12 7:30 pm SD Council Meeting at Gardena	13 10 am BWA Service and Meeting 10 to 2 Taiko Making Session
14 9:30 am MOTHERS' DAY SERVICE and DHARMA SCHOOL Toban: Dharma School 12 Noon Gourmet Academy	15 Rev. Usuki Off	16	17 7:30 pm Taiko	18 1 pm Study Class (E)	19 7:30 pm <b>BINGO</b>	20
21 9:30 am GOTAN-E SERVICE and DHARMA SCHOOL Toban: YBA 80 + Lunch preparation	22 12 Noon 80 Plus Lunch	23 Rev. Usuki Off	24 7:30 pm Taiko 7:30 pm Asoka Fujinkai Meeting	25 1 pm Study Class (E)	26 Rev. Usuki Off	27 10 to 2 Taiko Making Session
28 Temple closed	29 10 am Cemetery Service-Woodlawn 11:30 am Cemetery Service - Inglewood	30 Rev. Usuki Off	31 7:30 pm Taiko	<b>MAY 2006</b> Office hours: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm 310-477-7274 <a href="mailto:westlabt@verizon.net">westlabt@verizon.net</a>		