

# Southern District Newsletter

January, 2007

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## Special Insert: 2007 Special Service Calendars

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*New sections to the Newsletter to include a Japanese Dharma Message section as well as a report on the study activities of the*

## Message from the Editor

Please let me begin the new Southern District Newsletter by thanking and acknowledging Rev. Marvin Harada who first conceived, implemented, edited and distributed the Southern District Newsletter. It is largely through his efforts that the newsletter has become a mainstay of the Southern District. I would also like to acknowledge all the members of the Southern District BEC without whose support and encouragement this newsletter would also be impossible. Finally, a word of thanks to all the affiliate groups and members of the Southern District for providing the articles as well as the interest that makes this newsletter a reality.

For this and subsequent issues, the newsletter would like to report on not just the different Southern District events, but also would like to share the discussions that the ministers are having in their study classes. This is a new feature we hope everyone enjoys. Also, we hope to have a Japanese Dharma message included with every issue. With the number of Japanese newsletters in decline we hope that our Japanese readers will enjoy this feature.

For any questions or comments, please write to the editor at: [sensei@vhbt.org](mailto:sensei@vhbt.org).

## Kyogakubu Report

November 14, 2006 the Kyogakubu held its first bi-monthly study class meeting (held on odd numbered months) at the Los Angeles Betsuin. The November meeting focused on the meaning and practice of the funeral and memorial service.

The discussion began with the topic of "soul" and the question, "If there is no soul, then why do we have memorial services? Why do we celebrate Obon?" This practice of memorial services was contrasted with the Christian philosophy and practice: Christianity does talk about a soul, but has not given rise to the practice of conducting regular memorial services. Related to this discussion was a discussion on the necessity of clarifying definitions. For example, the term "Ojo," it was discussed, needs to be more clearly defined if it is to have any impact on the current discussion. The term Ojo, literally means "go to be born." Other terms that were brought up as terms needing more definition included "ni shu no eko (the two types of merit transference)," and the difference between "nehan (nirvana)" and "metsu-do (extinction)." In talking about Ojo,

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## Kyogakubu report (...continued)

however, a brief discussion about the meaning of the homyo (Dharma Name) also took place.

The discussion also included the changing nature of how the memorial services are currently being practiced at the different temples. Questions such as, "how many temples still hold the makurakyo service, or the otsuya service?" was asked. Another question of interest included the combination of memorial services and whether temples still strictly adhered to the memorial service numbering system.

Although many of the discussion items were left open-ended, at the conclusion of the seminar a consensus was reached on the necessity of explaining the different aspects of the ritual service as it is practiced with the funeral and memorial services if it is to continue to have any meaning in the spiritual lives of our temple membership.

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*Kyogakubu:  
The month of  
November focused on  
the funeral and  
memorial ritual service*

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## Southern District Federation of Dharma School Teacher's League

The Venice Hongwanji Dharma School hosted the SDDSTL Mini-Workshop #1 on Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>. The theme "The Animated Temple: Who are you? What's your name?" was supported by viewing the animated film "Spirited Away" and working in grade-level groups to produce lesson plans.

On Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, the Vista Dharma School Teachers and Rev. Lee Rosenthal hosted SDDSTL Mini-Workshop #2. The theme was "I am a Dharma School Teacher – What's in it for me?" and addressed the issue of Buddhism for the teacher personally.

Oxnard Buddhist Temple and San Luis Obispo Buddhist Church hosted the SDDSTL Conference on Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, at Oxnard. The theme was "Living Together in a World of Oneness" with guest speaker Rev. Tetsuo Unno. Over 50 teachers in attendance enjoyed the dynamic wit, humor and wisdom of Rev. Unno. After an excellent lunch and delegates meeting, we broke up into groups for hands-on workshops. It was an excellent conference!

During the delegates meeting, the following were elected to the 2006-07 cabinet:

President	Nancy Tamehiro (Gardena)
Vice President	Koichi Sayano (Los Angeles)
Recording Secretary	Emily Kariya (Venice)
Corresponding Secretary	Tami Okazaki (Gardena)
Treasurer	June Kondo (Los Angeles)
Religious Chair	Sandy Hiroshima (Orange County)
Music Chair	Mitzi Shimizu (Gardena)

On Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, West Los Angeles Dharma School Teachers and Rev. Fumiaki Usuki will be hosting the SDDSTL Mini-Workshop #3, "Myth in Buddhism".

Come visit the SDDSTL Hongwanji Place for your oseibo gifts or for any other occasion. There are books for adults and children, nenjus, candles and incense, tee shirts of all sizes, cards for various occasions, many other gift items and even ojuzu repair. Visit the Hongwanji Place at 311 East First Street, Los Angeles 90012, (213)680-0364. Hours are: Thursday (10 a.m.-3 p.m.), Friday (10 a.m.-4 p.m.), Saturday (10 a.m.-5 p.m.).

## Tri-temple Seminar Reports

Western:

The Western region seminar was hosted by the Gardena Buddhist Church on October 29, 2006. The theme of the seminar was "Alzheimer disease, caregiving and Buddhism." The seminar explored the early signs of Alzheimers as well as issues around the care of caregivers.

Dr. Freddi Segal-Gidan, co-director of the Rancho/USC Alzheimer's Research Center of California, assistant clinical professor of neurology at the USC Keck School of Medicine and USC School of Gerontology, and Ms. Coleen Michiko Nakamura, manager of the Asian and Pacific Islander Services, Alzheimer's Association of Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties Chapter, Assistant Administrator for Keiro Nursing Home, were the two speakers at the seminar. Although speakers from the Millennia Personal Care Services were also scheduled, because of extended training in Japan they were not available.

Although many people in attendance were fearful that they may have symptoms for Alzheimer's—being forgetful or losing things—Dr. Segal-Gidan mentioned that many of these things are just the natural outcome of a busy lifestyle and not necessarily related to Alzheimer's. She continued by helping the attendees with a comprehensive yet understandable guide to identifying symptoms for the disease.

Ms. Nakamura, on the other hand, led a discussion on how to prevent "burnout" for the caregiver.

The Gardena Buddhist Church hosted this particular seminar because many members of the Gardena Buddhist Church were not able to come anymore because of care giving. Rev. Nakano reports that she wondered about those who could no longer recite Nembutsu on their own.

Northern:

A most informative and interesting mini-seminar, "Gagaku for Dummies" was held at the Oxnard Buddhist Temple on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Rev. Masao Kodani spoke on gagaku, its history and showed instruments as well. A video featuring

## Article Requests

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*The Southern District Newsletter needs your input in order to be a truly effective tool in sharing everything that goes on in Southern*

## Japanese Dharma Message

### 満足大悲

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*This issue's Japanese  
Dharma Message is by  
Rev. Yasunori Teruoka  
of the Los Angeles  
Betsuin*

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小さなこと、些細なこと、他人から見れば、あー はいはい そうですね。といわれるくらいの仕様もないこと。そういうことって実は全然小さなことなのではないのかもしれないんじゃないか？と私は思うことがある。むしろその小さなものこそがその本人にとって、とっても大事なことだったりすることってありますよね？と時々ひとりでつぶやいてみたりする。

人は（みなさんお気づきのように）ひとりでは生きてはいけないうってわかっている。だからお互いの顔色を見たりなんかして、なるべく傷つけあわないようにしていこうとする。

けれど、さっきも言ったその小さなことって、なかなか隠し続けられるものでもないし、ときどきそれが人前でポロッと顔を出しちゃったりなんかすることがあると・・・

そのことで思いもかけないようなダメージを負うことになってしまう。そしてどこからともなく不機嫌なるもうひとりの自分がぶつくさぶつくさ文句を言いながら現れてくる。

抽象的な表現ではわかりづらいと思うので、簡単な話で説明すると

誰かしらからか植木鉢をもらった。たいして興味がないけどもらったからにはポイと捨てるわけにもいかず、とりあえずおいておく。そしてついうっかり枯らしてしまい、あーやっちゃったなあという気持ちがありつつも深い痛みを心に覚えない。

しばらくすると、なんだかよく知らない植物がその鉢から芽を出してきた、そしてそのうちつぼみが膨らみ始め、名前も知らない花が咲く。頼まれてもいないのに勝手に出てきちゃうところがなんとなく憎めなくて、とうとうその鉢を捨てられなくなってしまった。

そして、ようやくそれに愛着がわくようになり世話をしだしたころ・・・

## Japanese Dharma Message

ある日帰宅してみるとその植木鉢が捨てられていたりする。

「枯れた植木鉢なんか置いていても仕方ないでしょ」だから片付けてあげましたよ！

と満足顔で言われ、おいおい待てよ、その端っこにちょこんとあったやつが俺の本命だったんだってば！となり、そして、それがきっかけでとうぶん口をきかなくなってしまう。

おそらくこんなことをひとさまに話したら、

「そんな些細なことでへそをまげるなんて、器が小さい、子供じゃないんだからさ」

と言うだろう。まあ一般的にはそれが普通の反応かもしれない。

けど、実はこういった些細な、小さなことでその相手と上手に付き合っていけるかどうかの相性ってあるように思う。そしてこれがなかなか難しい。家族なら相性があうのか？というところ…さあみなさん胸に手をあてて考えてみてください。どうしてあの親から私みたいなものが？とか、夫婦でもラブラブな時期は何か夢のような時間を互いに共有し、そしてその夢が覚めたとき、こんな人だったかな？となるわけです。

だいたい、あなたは本来の植木鉢の植物を枯らしてしまいたくせに、いまさら後から出てきた2番目にうつつを抜かすとは何事か！といわれても仕方ないかもしれないですね。

でもひとの姿というのは、やっぱり自分に化粧をせずに生きていこうとすれば、どこかしこでぶつくさぶつくさ文句を言っておる自分が出てくるのです。

でなんとか好きな自分になろうとして、にこにこ笑おうとしてみたりする。

けれどやっぱり心の中にいつまでも残っているのは、初めて誰かに告白したときに見た空の色とか、悪いことをしてこっぴどく親に怒られたときの涙とか、初めてアルバイトでお金を受け取った時の興奮、そういったものは他人から見たら小さなことかもしれないけど、人が生きていけるのはその部分があるから、それがあって人は生きていけるんだと思う。

世の中に完璧な人間がないのは、そういった小さなものがそれぞれの中で呼吸を続けているからだろうし、またそれは大切にしたい。そんな気がします。

生きることに満ち足りる私たちの生き方は、そこに根付いているのかもしれない。

合掌