



## VENICE HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

*To promote a greater understanding and appreciation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and to continue to live the Nembutsu as a warm and friendly temple*

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Los Angeles, California

Spring, 2012

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## PURE LAND OF THE PAST & THE FUTURE

*Rev. John Iwohara*

If asked the question, “Is the Pure Land a world that you go to after death?” the only way for me to answer that question is, “Yes, it is.” However, the Pure Land is not just a place for the “afterlife.” It is not just the world that I will go to after I die.

If you ask why I take the time to say this (and run the risk of further confusing matters) it is because the Pure Land was established at the same time the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha was established. Because of this, the Pure Land has been pointing us towards a particular direction for 10 kalpa, or an extremely unimaginable long time ago. This “working” of the Pure Land that comes from our past includes all the activity of all those who have gone to the Pure Land before us. It is the activity of those who have helped us, even from the distant past, to hear the Nembutsu. It is also because of this kind of activity that I believe that Shinran Shonin was able to declare, “*Those who meet with the power of the Primal Vow, none will live their lives in vain.*”

Although it goes without saying that there is no present without the past, the present also relies very heavily on the future to exist. If there was no future, for example, there would be no hope in the present. There would be no reason for us to dream about what could be. What is this *hope* or this *dream* that I so casually seem to speak of? The future that the Pure Land speaks to us about is a vision of a world where everyone is able to mutually respect and support each other. It is because it is this kind of world that people are able to help each other without doubt or fear and a world where if there is anyone who is wandering in pain and confusion that everyone of that world will have the ability and skill to save that person.

It is true that the Pure Land speaks of the afterlife. But it would also not make sense if that is all it were. Amida Buddha, for example, is not a Buddha who would wait until our death to share the wisdom and compassion of Enlightenment with us. Instead, the Buddha is a very kind, parent-like figure who is working constantly to try to help us find assurance in our lives in the present. For that purpose, Amida Buddha through Namo Amida Butsu is trying to help us to realize that we have already cleared the two most difficult hurdles of what it means to live a rich human life: to appreciate this life that I have already received despite being so difficult to receive, and to appreciate what it means to be hearing the Buddha-Dharma that is difficult to hear.

In coming to realize even these two points we will discover our hearts being moved from a life of the routine to a life of gratitude. The activity from the Pure Land from our past, and the activity from the Pure Land from our future is reaching all of us right now in the present as Namo Amida Butsu. In reaching us in this way, the Pure Land is helping us to live a life filled with appreciation and hope.

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△GASSHO△

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**EL PRESIDENTE!!**



**OLE!!!!!!**

**DR. THOMAS YAMAGUCHI**



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Belated Happy New Year's.

It is already three months into the year. Where does the time go? The first three months were full of many activities at the temple. If you have not been around, then come on by and join everyone. We miss you.

In January we had our annual Shinen en Kai Celebration. We had a wonderful time having "Grateful Crane performing at the event, and the Dharma School Children singing "We are the Dharma". We had Gene Takahashi performing ballads on his harmonicas, and Tom Nishimura's wonderful singing. If you missed this event, then save the date for next years Shinen Kai. It is being planned for January 27, 2013. More details to follow.

Also, in January we observed Hoonko, at a special joint service with the Gardena Buddhist Church. We travelled to Gardena, and had services with the Gardena Sangha. Reverend John was the special speaker, and the Dharma School Students attend the Gardena Dharma School Students. We all had a enjoyable time, joining the members of Gardena Sangha.

On March 25, we will be observing our Spring Ohigan Service. Here's a little background:

**Higan** (彼岸) is a **Buddhist** holiday exclusively celebrated in Japan during both the Spring and Autumnal **Equinox**. It is observed by nearly every Buddhist sect in Japan. The tradition extends from mild weather that occurs during the time of equinoxes, though the origin of the holiday dates from **Emperor Shomu** in the 8th century.[1] People who normally worked in the fields had more leisure time to evaluate their own practices, and to make a renewed effort to follow Buddhism. Today, special services are usually observed in Japanese Buddhist temples, and Japanese temples abroad, based on the particular Buddhist tradition or sect.

For over a millennium, Japanese have taken time on these two mild weather days to celebrate Ohigan (彼岸) by evaluating their lives, and renewing their struggle for enlightenment. (from the internet).

Shortly after, we will be observing HANA MATSURI, on April 8, 2012. The birth of Shakamuni Buddha. For anyone who has a child that would like to participate in this years HATSUMAIRI, please contact Reverend Iwohara.

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## FUJINKAI

Congratulations to the VHBT Fujinkai cabinet for 2012, which include the following members:

President	Dianne Kujubu Belli
President-Elect	Judy Hopfield
Recording Secretaries	Mari Tamura, Roseanne Yoshida, & Ayako Masada
Corresponding Secretaries	Joyce Ino, Nancy Nakagiri, Judy Nawa
Treasurers	Sue Sogabe, Gail Sharp, & Phyllis Hayashibara
Auditors	Fusae Nishina & Tatsumi Omote

And a huge thank you goes to Shinobu Koda and Ayako Masada, Co-Presidents for 2011!

The Lady Takeko Kujo/and Late Fujinkai Members' Memorial Service was observed on February 11, followed by delicious otoki. *Chirashi sushi* was also delivered to home-bound friends.

Fujinkai members and friends from the WLA Buddhist Temple Fujinkai enjoyed a most enlightening outing to the Bowers Museum to see the exhibit, "Warriors, Tombs and Temples: China's Enduring Legacy", a landmark exhibition drawn from China's most important archaeological excavations assembled in cooperation with seven leading Chinese institutions. Thank you to Aya Masada for organizing the outing.

In March, over 30 Fujinkai members and friends attended a performance of "Three Year Swim Club" through the generosity of a grant from the East West Players. The play was inspired by the true life story of Soichi Sakamoto. Sakamoto trained the youth of Maui to swim in the plantation irrigation ditches on their path to becoming Olympic champions. Set on the island of Maui in the 1930's, this heartwarming play becomes transcendent as the art of hula becomes the metaphor for competitive swimming.

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## ABA NEWS

*Carey Tokirio*

The last three months for the ABA organization were very busy! On November 12, 2011, we held our annual Steak Feast and Bingo. We served over 200 rib eye steaks as well as rainbow trout dinners with yummy side dishes and delicious beverages. The temple was packed that evening with hungry appetites and many bingo participants. On December 10, 2011, ABA coordinated our annual Mochi Tsuki. This event truly brings together our community of temple members, friends and family both young and old.

This year was very exciting because we saw the inaugural use of four new boilers that Erik Schmid, Joe Belli and Dale Noriyuki worked on during the summer and fall of 2011. The new steamers cooked up 2,300 pounds of rice with no problems at all. I want to thank all of the affiliate organizations for all of their hard work and commitment during Mochi Tsuki. Without your help, we would not have been able to produce over 3,700 pounds of mochi at the 2011 event!

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012, ABA chaired our temple Shinnen En Kai "Year of the Dragon" event. The decorations coordinated by Masako Ido and her team; the Year of the Dragon banner by Dustin Noriyuki, the food catered by Leonard Kim of Cherrystones, entertainment highlighted by magician Bill Yamane, the Grateful Crane Ensemble and the Dharma School singers were amazing. As a result of the successful Mochi Tsuki, ABA was able to make a donation of \$10,000 to the temple at the event. I would like to thank each of the affiliate organizations for their assistance and support in making the 2012 Shinnen En Kai a fun and memorable experience.

As we enter into 2012, I would like to thank Richard Modiano for his dedicated service as our ABA President during the past two years. I look forward to serving in the role of ABA President in 2012-13 and thank you in advance for your support!

### **MOCHI TSUKI REFRESHMENT DONATIONS**

Dale Noriyuki, Carey Tokirio, Mil Kurashige, Joe Belli, James Ido & Tom Nishimura- Total \$120.00

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## DHARMA SCHOOL

*Jayme Heyl*

Dharma School finished off 2011 by participating in the annual visit to the Keiro, and /Culver West Homes with the Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Sangha Teens. The children and residents alike enjoyed the experience.

After a short winter break we came back into session on January 8<sup>th</sup>. Throughout January the students and teachers prepared entertainment for the Temple Shinnen En Kai. We performed "We are the Dharma" with other temple representatives and members of the Grateful Crane on January 29<sup>th</sup> at the VJCC. Thanks to Gail Noriyuki, Lynn Nakagiri and Janis Ozaki for helping put this performance together.

On February 5<sup>th</sup> Dharma School welcomed Cub Pack 79, Girl Scout Troop 5325 and all the other boy scouts and girl scouts in our Sangha for Scout Sunday. There were many, many scouts and their families in attendance. After service the scouts participated in Dharma School classes and enjoyed refreshments. Thank you to Judy Hopfield for coordinating this event.

Please join us for the following upcoming Dharma School Events:

- . Family Fun Night – March 17, 2012
- . Ohagi Making Class – March 25, 2012
- . Mothers Day Service – May 13, 2012
- . Dharma School Picnic with WLA – June 10, 2012
- . Dads & Grads Service – June 17, 2012

You can also check our weekly schedule on the temple calendar at [www.vhbt.org](http://www.vhbt.org)









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## CUB SCOUT PACK 79

*Keiichi Ono*

### **For the month of November,**

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, We had our second pack meeting where we had guest speaker Sean Halbert who is our BSA Crescent Bay Committee Member speak about scouting and the importance of having good relations with our sponsoring organization. He also conducted Youth Protection Training with all of the parents.

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, all popcorn sale orders were picked up by each den and distributed to all of the families who participated in the sale.

### **For the month of December,**

Scouts from our pack came to support the Temple Mochi - tsuki on December 10<sup>th</sup> where they had a chance to put the rice dough in the grinding machine and pound the mochi with wooden mallets. We also setup a booth and had our scouts make Christmas cards in preparation for the Senior Gift Presentation.

On December 15<sup>th</sup>, a few of our Scouts participated in the One Voice at the Barker Hanger at the Santa Monica Airport. This event is to help less fortunate during the holiday season.

Several of our Cub Scouts attended the annual holiday caroling to Keiro and Culver West Care Facilities on December 29<sup>th</sup> along with children from Dharma School and Girl Scouts and Reverend John Iwihara from the Temple. They also passed out colored calendars to all of the seniors, which were much appreciated. The kids looked great and did a super job.

### **For the month of January,**

Our scouts got together again this year on January 5<sup>th</sup> for our Senior Gift Presentation at the VJCC where our Cub Scouts helped serve food to all of the seniors, sang Christmas songs and passed out Christmas cards and gifts.

On January 21<sup>st</sup>, we had our January Pack Outing at the Toyota Ice Rink in El Segundo hosted by Ernie Bucher. We had a great turn out with over 120 participants attending the event.

On January 28<sup>th</sup>, our Webelos attended the annual Rock Cook with Boy Scout Pack 764 at the VJCC. There was lots of food at the event and our boys learned a lot from the Boy Scouts while having fun!

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## Shinnen en kai Photo album (Continued)



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## Shinnen en kai Photo album







## MORE SHINEN EN KAI PICTURES







## **2012 CALENDAR OF MAJOR SERVICES & ACTIVITIES**

### **MARCH, 2012**

25 SPRING OHIGAN SERVICE – 10 A.M.

### **APRIL, 2012**

8 HANAMATSURI/HATSUMAIRI SERVICE – 10 A.M.  
14 TEMPLE CLEAN UP DAY  
22 ABA COUNTRY STYLE BREAKFAST – 7 A.M. TO 10 A.M.  
27-29 FEDERATION OF DHARMA SCHOOL TEACHERS LEAGUE CONFERENCE

### **MAY, 2012**

13 MOTHER'S DAY SERVICE – 10 A.M.  
20 GOTANYE FAMILY SERVICE – 10 A.M.  
26 WAR VETERANS/VIET NAM KIA SERVICE – (JACCC LITTLE TOKYO)  
27-28 MEMORIAL DAY GRAVESITE SERVICES

### **JUNE, 2012**

17 DAD'S & GRAD'S SERVICE – 10 A.M.  
23 & 24 VJCC NATSUMATSURI

### **JULY, 2012**

7 VENICE OBON FESTIVAL SET UP – 8:30 A.M.  
8 OBON – HATSUBON SERVICE – 10 A.M.  
14 & 15 VENICE OBON FESTIVAL  
22 DHARMA SCHOOL KID'S SERVICE – 9:30 A.M.  
7/28 – 8/4 LABCC SUMMER CAMP

### **AUGUST, 2012**

5 "A" BOMB/ VIET NAM MEMORIAL SERVICE – 9:30 A.M.  
7 – 9 BCA MINISTER'S FUKEN

### **SEPTEMBER, 2012**

1 & 2 SO. DISTRICT JR. YBA CONFERENCE  
15 YABA SEMINAR – 9 A.M.-4 P.M.  
16 FALL OHIGAN SERVICE & BOOK CLUB – 10 A.M.  
22 ABA MEMORIAL SERVICE – 7:30 P.M.

### **OCTOBER, 2012**

12 – 14 BCA NATIONAL FUJINKAI CONFERENCE – SAN JOSE  
20 FUJINKAI ESHINISAMA SERVICE – 7:30 P.M.  
28 DHARMA SCHOOL HALLOWEEN PARTY – 5 P.M.

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## 2011-12 CALENDAR OF MAJOR SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

(Continued from page 9)

### NOVEMBER, 2012

- 3 YABA SAKE TASTING – 7 P.M.
- 10 ABA STEAK FEAST – 6 P.M.
- 11 EITAIKYO SERVICE – 10 A.M.

### DECEMBER, 2012

- 1 MOCHI TSUKI SET UP – 8:30 A.M.
- 8 MOCHI TSUKI – 7 A.M.
- 9 MOCHITSUKI WRAP UP & CLEAN UP – 8:30 A.M.
- 16 OSEIBO APPRECIATION SERVICE – 10 A.M.
- 30 JOYA-E END OF YEAR SERVICE – 7:30 P.M.

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### REGULARLY SCHEDULED SERVICES & MEETINGS

- FAMILY DHARMA SERVICE – *Sundays 9:30 A.M.*  
*Student Dharma School Classes & Adult Service – Immediately following Family Dharma Service*  
*High School Student Class – First Sunday of each month following Family Dharma Service*
- TEMPLE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – *First Friday of each month, 7:30 P.M.*  
*(Except the December General Member's Meeting is scheduled for 11/30/2012 at 7:30 p.m.)*
- BUDDHIST WOMENS ASSN. (FUJINKAI) MEETING – *Tuesday following Temple Board meeting*
- ABA MEETING – *2<sup>ND</sup> Tuesday following Temple Board Meeting, 7:30 P.M.*
- YABA MEETING – *Every Wednesday 7:00 P.M.*
- DHARMA SCHOOL STAFF MEETING – *First Sunday of each month, 8:30 A.M.*
- JR. YBA MEETING – *First Sunday of each month after Family Dharma Service*
- MONTHLY YABA SERVICE – *First Sunday of each month. 1 P.M.*
- DAILY MORNING SERVICE – *Everyday except Mondays & Wednesdays, 9:30 A.M.*
- JOREI FUKYO – *Monthly Japanese Language Service. First Sunday of each month – 12 Noon*
- MONTHLY TSUKI TSUITO SERVICE – *Fourth Saturday of each month - 9:30 A.M.*
- MEINICHIKO SERVICE – *16<sup>TH</sup> of each month, 7:30 A.M.*
- CUB SCOUT PACK 79 PARENT'S MEETING – *First Thursday of each month, 7 P.M.*
- CUB SCOUT PACK 79 MEETING – *Every Third Thursday of each month, 7 P.M.*
- TAI CHI CLASS – *Every Tuesday, 10 A.M.*

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## YABA

YABA's has been out and about in the last few months. In February, we managed to have our first general meeting, to conduct our first Dharma Talk on Siddhartha, the 4 Noble Truths, & early Buddhism, to eat at Kay 'n Dave's and still had enough energy to go ice skating in Culver City.

In March, many of us attended the TechnoBuddha conference for young adults at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley, CA. I personally had a great time meeting new people, catching up with old friends, and attending the workshops and activities arranged by the awesome

TechnoBuddha planning committee, of which several YABA members were a part of. Attendees came from San Diego, Los Angeles, Fresno, San Jose, Salinas, San Francisco, Sacramento and even Canada!

As part of our own efforts to explore our young adult Jodo Shinshu Buddhist identities, YABA will be having monthly planning meetings beginning in March for the second annual seminar. The seminar, held at the VHBT, was started to echo the efforts of what the TechnoBuddha conferences began. If anyone is interested in learning more about the upcoming seminar or to participate in the planning process, please email [seminar@veniceyaba.org](mailto:seminar@veniceyaba.org).

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**2012 SOUTHERN DISTRICT OBON ODORI SCHEDULE****JUNE**

9	ARIZONA BUDDHIST CHURCH	6:45 P.M.
23 & 24	SUN VALLEY BUDDHIST CHURCH	7:00 P.M. & 6:30 P.M.
30	SENSHIN BUDDHIST TEMPLE	7:00 P.M. & 9:00 P.M.
30	WEST COVINA BUDDHIST CHURCH	7:00 P.M.
6/30 & 7/1	SAN FERNANDO BUDDHIST TEMPLE	7:00 P.M. & 6:30 P.M.

**JULY**

7 & 8	L.A. BETSUIN (NISHI HONGWANJI)	7:00 P.M. & 6:30 P.M.
14	OXNARD BUDDHIST TEMPLE	6:00 P.M.
14 & 15	PASADENA BUDDHIST CHURCH	6:30 P.M.
14 & 15	<u>VENICE HONGWANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE</u>	6:30 P.M.
21 & 22	ORANGE COUNTY BUDDHIST CHURCH	7:00 P.M.
22	GUADALUPE BUDDHIST CHURCH	3:00 P.M.
28 & 29	VISTA BUDDHIST TEMPLE	6:30 P.M.
28 & 29	WEST LOS ANGELES BUDDHIST TEMPLE	6:30 P.M.
28 & 29	HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE	6:30 P.M.

**AUGUST**

4 & 5	GARDENA BUDDHIST CHURCH	6:00 P.M.
4	SAN DIEGO BUDDHIST CHURCH	6:30 P.M.
4	SAN LUIS OBISPO BUDDHIST TEMPLE	6:30 P.M.
11	LAS VEGAS BUDDHIST SANGHA	12:45 P.M.





## 2011 MOCHI TSUKI







# 2011 MOCHI TSUKI

*(Continued)*

