



# GASSHO



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

## ON TRADITION

*Rev. John Iwohara*

As a priest I am responsible for both preserving and maintaining tradition. This may sound strange to some because most if not all would consider *preserving* and *maintaining* as synonymous. But I would like to argue that they are significantly different enough from each other to be talking about different things. *Preserving* is to keep the old traditions as pristine as possible so that newer generations can get a sense of what earlier generations experienced through what they created. It is the legacy found behind the tradition. I define *maintaining* a tradition as helping newer generations experience what gave rise to the tradition in a meaningful and personal way. It is not just something that has been passed down from previous generations but becomes the contemporary expression of the receipt of the truth that a faith tradition or community is founded on.



Formulated in this way, *preserving* a tradition includes things such as chanting and ritual. These are the sort of things we can remember happening at the temple from as long back as we can remember. It is the image we might have of our parents or grand-parents from a long time ago. Our continuing this tradition helps us to think things like, "Now, it is my turn." Preserving the tradition is what often allows us to access the tradition. It is what can help us to understand the reliability and timelessness of the teachings.

*Maintaining* the tradition, on the other hand, is meant to "pass on" or transmit the teaching. It is what allows us to know that religion is not a museum piece or a cultural remnant of ages past. It is what helps us to see how the tradition is able to answer questions such as, "Who am I?" "What will happen to me?" "Where will I go?" "When will it happen?" and "Why am I here?" Helping people to answer these kinds of questions, questions that are not limited to any particular age or age group, and the questions that helped to give rise to the tradition in the first place are what makes *maintaining* the tradition so important.

Hopefully, in describing my responsibility as a priest in terms of tradition, everyone is able to see how we are all participants in the tradition. Together, we are those who give the tradition both meaning and vibrancy. As a community participating in the tradition we discover our shared responsibility of making sure we are able to understand what is worth preserving or protecting and what is worth maintaining or passing on

## NOTES FROM EL PRESIDENTE

*Dr. Thomas Yamaguchi*

This is a story I would like to share:

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough, remember the jar and the 2 bottles of soda.

A teacher stood before his class and had some items in front of him. When the lesson began, he wordlessly picked up a very large and empty jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

The teacher then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.



## NOTES FROM EL PRESIDENTE

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The teacher next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full.. The students responded with a unanimous 'yes.'

The teacher then produced two bottles of soda from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

'Now,' said the teacher as the laughter subsided, 'I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things---your family, your children, your health, your friends and your favorite passions---and if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house and your car.. The sand is everything else---the small stuff.

'If you put the sand into the jar first,' he continued, 'there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life.

If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff you will never have room for the things that are important to you.

Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness.

Spend time with your children. Spend time with your parents. Visit with grandparents. Take your spouse out to dinner. Play another 18. There will always be time to clean the house and mow the lawn.

Take care of the golf balls first---the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the two bottles of soda represented. The minister smiled and said, 'I'm glad you asked.' The two cans of soda just shows you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of sodas with a friend.

So take some time from your busy schedule, and spend it with those close to you. Hug your parents, Hug your children, Hug your grandparents.

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## COMO ESTA?

It is already March, and the days just go by so fast. Before you know it Hana Matsuri will be here, summer vacation, VJCC Festival and of course, Our OBON.

This year, our OBON is the last weekend of July. We are working feverishly in preparation for it, as well as the VJCC Festival. Please place the events on your calendar. We will need a whole bunch of help at the events. Keep you ears open and eyes open and look for updates on the website. It is an important event for fund raising and will need everyone's help to make it a successful event.

We are also updating our By Laws, membership guidelines, social welfare guidelines, and developing a welcome package for new members. If you would like to participate in any of the committees, please let me know.

Remember, we have our regular Sunday Dharma School Service each Sunday at 9:30 am. One the first Sunday of the Month, we have our Japanese speaking service at 12:00 pm and the YABA service at 1:00 pm. You are all welcome to attend any of the services.

We continue our Dharma award class, to learn more about Jodo Shin Shu. In addition, we have the Wisteria Class twice a year. Both classes review and go over the history and teaching of the Buddha. Come and learn.

In Gassho,

Tom Yamaguchi



# GASSHO

## ABA

The ABA organization had a very busy last few couple of months in 2012. On November 10, 2012, we held our annual Rib Eye Steak Feast and Bingo fundraiser. We had tremendous support from the ABA membership planning the event, preparing the delicious side dishes, grilling up 200 steaks and some rainbow trout, and running a successful bingo event. I would like to personally thank Mr. Bill Yamane for setting up his always popular wine and margarita bar for the event. This was a fun and financially successful fundraiser where ABA was able to donate \$2,500 to the temple for its operational use.

On December 8th 2012, ABA coordinated our 46<sup>th</sup> annual Mochi Tsuki. This event truly brings together our community of temple members, friends and family both young and old. There are so many integral steps in successfully running this major fundraiser. From purchasing the materials, to washing the rice, steaming the rice, grinding it, pounding it, cutting it, cooling it, turning it, shaping it, packing it and selling it. And most importantly, EATING IT! If you are reading this article, you probably were involved in some or many aspects of this fun event which ABA is very thankful for. The mochi was incredibly delicious! Personally, the highlight for me was having Eri Iwihara's homemade miso soup which she makes for the volunteer clean up crew every year. It was so "oishi" (delicious). Thank you Eri-san!

As a result of the successful Mochi Tsuki, ABA was able to make a donation of \$10,000 to the temple at the Shinnen En Kai event on January 26<sup>th</sup> at the VJCC. Mark your calendars for Sunday, April 21<sup>st</sup> when ABA will be hosting our 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Country Style Breakfast. More information to follow in the coming weeks.

## JR. YBA

We ended the year 2012 by attending the OCBC JAM session in December. We participated in a scavenger hunt in Downtown Disney, then went to OCBC to play games.

Our new year began with the Southern District Volleyball game on Feb. 1, 2013. With the teams being mixed, the event gave our new members a chance to meet new people in the association. Venice members were on teams that took home 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

This year Venice was in charge of hosting Seminar 1, Dana at the temple, on Feb. 17, 2013. We made blankets and scarves for the homeless teens and we collected school

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## FUJINKAI

Happy New Year to everyone, and welcome to the Year of the Snake! One quarter into the year and the ladies (and gentlemen) of Fujinkai have been busy taking care of business with great enjoyment.

One of the main purposes of the Fujinkai is to learn and live the Dharma, and one tangible way to express our appreciation for the Dharma is to provide service to the Temple. As the old year ended and the new year began, members of Fujinkai prepared refreshments for the temple services, including *soba* at the Joya-e (Year End) Service, *ozoni* at the Shushoe (New Year's) Service, and *okayu* and *shojin okazu* at the *Hoonko Ojinjo* morning services to commemorate the passing of Shinran Shonin.

We were honored to have Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi of the Higashi Hongwanji, be our guest speaker at the Lady Takeko Kujo and Late Fujinkai Members' Memorial Service, and thrilled that her husband, Rev. William Briones of the LA Betsuin, could join us at the service after driving back from a Federation for Dharma School Teachers' League meeting in Reedley.

One of the most exciting events was the Sushi Making Workshop on March 10, where we learned "how to make sushi the Venice way!" Close to 40 women and men attended and learned the secret techniques and processes to make *maki*, *inari*, and *chirashi sushi*. Everyone in attendance rolled their own *maki zushi*, and all the rolls came out round and centered and utterly delicious. The morning ended with more than enough *sushi*, salads, and desserts for all. Many thanks to our great teacher, Tatsumi Omote; our great organizer, June Fujioka! And many other ladies who assisted with the planning, explanations, and clean-up.

## JR. YBA (Continued)

supplies for them as well..We planned workshops to help people further understand what dana really means. A few of our members had the opportunity to drop the items off and tour the facility, to see where our donations were going. Later for dinner we catered food from Cantalini Express, which was delicious. After dinner, we danced with music supplied by a DJ. We would like to thank everyone for the donations to our drive for "My Friend's Place" an organization that helps homeless teens and thank you for your support and help with our seminar.

At the end of the month we will be participating in the Southern District basketball games.

## BUDDHIST EDUCATION COMMITTEE (BEC)

Last autumn our BEC facilitated the Wisteria Award class that was offered under the auspices of Dharma School and taught by Rev. Ray Fukumoto. Rev. Ray led the 2-hour class meetings spread out over six Saturday afternoons, with 9 people in attendance. The course covered Jodo Shinshu doctrine and history. The purpose of the class was to make us become conversant about our Jodo Shinshu Buddhist tradition's history and teachings. At the end of the course, participants shared their understanding with the adult study class that follows Sunday service. BEC and Dharma School will be offering the class again in spring and autumn of this year. Those interested may contact Dharma School superintendent Jayme Heyl or BEC co-chair Richard Modiano for more information.

Last fall, our BEC also put together a workshop which explained how our temple observes our Buddhist holidays and other annual events. This Special Services workshop was divided into two parts, held on separate evenings in September and October.

The first part covered the ways we celebrate our Buddhist holidays and the religious meanings behind each one. These holidays include Ho-onko, Ohigan, Hanamatsuri, Gotanye and Obon. The second part of the workshop explained the activities surrounding our non-religious temple observances. These included events such as Mothers' Day, Dads & Grads, Oseibo Taikai and Mochitsuki.

The workshops were attended by both long-time regulars and newcomers to our temple. They ended with interesting Q&A and discussion sessions, and everyone left the workshops having learned something new. Many thanks to Rev. John Iwofara for his excellent slide show presentations and discussion sessions, to Joyce Enomoto for her very organized and detailed handouts and to our BEC for providing refreshments.



## DHARMA SCHOOL

Dharma School started off 2013 by participating in the Temple's Shinnen En Kai festivities. Students, teachers, and parents sang "It's A Small World & Chisai Sekai". The older students created some last minute choreography and the younger students just loved the opportunity to be on stage. We all had a great time!

We continued the year with our annual Scout Sunday! The event was well attended by Cub Pack 79, Girl Scout Troop 532 and Boy Scout Troop 764. At scout Sunday we started to color 300+ horses in preparation for our 2014 calendars to be delivered to Keiro and Culver West Convalescent homes at the end of this year. We will continue to color throughout the year! Thanks to Judy Hopfield for coordinating this event!

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> we hosted Family Fun Night- Wii Bowling Tournament at the temple. Lauren Wolpert was the top individual bowler and the top team consisted of Scot Kawano, Emily Kawano, Alyssa Kawano and Tom Yamaguchi. Thank you to everyone for the yummy dinner! Also thank you to Tom Yamaguchi and Mrs. Sato for planning this event!

### DHARMA SCHOOL DONATIONS:

Dharma School gratefully acknowledges the following donations made from September, 2012 – February, 2013:

#### Birthday

Toni Tokirio  
Drew and Dylan Nakahara

#### Dharma School Installation Luncheon

Fujinkai  
Massie Uyeda

#### Halloween Party

Makaela and Alia Asher  
Sachi Ito

#### Koden Gaeshi

James Mayeda Family  
Family of the late Edith Fukuji  
Hitoshi Shimizu  
Fukuda Family

#### Oseibo

Fujinkai  
Judy Hopfield  
Drs. Tom and Judy Yamaguchi

#### Special

Quinn Okamoto

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## YABA

### Keep Calm, YABA is On!

Venice YABA recently kicked off and introduced its 2013 Cabinet. **Bennett Ito** will be reprising his role as president, **Francesca Lafayette** is the vice president of Events, **Alison Oshinomi** is the vice president of Religious Affairs, **Jennifer Miyoshi** is the treasurer and **Michael Iwanaga** is the secretary.

So far, YABA has already had two Dharma Talks and a Sunday YABA service! Dharma Talks are short discussions on a subject selected by **Alison**, and Sunday YABA service's are services geared towards the YABA-aged crowd, though everyone is welcome.

Most recently, the subject of both the Dharma Talk and SundaYABA was the Pureland, underscoring how important the subject is to Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. **Amy Umezu** gave a wonderful, heartfelt kanwa.

YABA also went cosmic bowling at AMF Mar Vista and had a great time trying to one-up each other. **Francesca** did a terrific job of setting things up, and we were fortunate to get lanes on a busy Saturday night.

The TechnoBuddha Conference, in its 5th year, is an annual youth conference held at the Center for Buddhist Education in Berkeley. It focuses on topics with a more youthful flair, such as Buddhism and hip hop dancing and taiko with a central theme, which this year was "The Middle Path". Over 60 young people attended including the entire YABA Cabinet and YABA's own **Brad Ito**, YABA's previous religious chair, was one of the conference leaders.

### Upcoming Events:

- 17 Mar - SundaYABA
- 3 Apr - Dharma Discussion
- 17 Apr - Dinner Social
- 21 Apr - SundaYABA
- 15 Sep - RetroBuddha Conference - The Golden Chain

Check us out at [www.facebook.com/groups/veniceyaba](http://www.facebook.com/groups/veniceyaba)

## CUB SCOUTS PACK 79

*Keiichi Ono*

On December 20<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 2<sup>th</sup> along with kid from Dharma School and Girl Scouts and reverend John 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.

Also in the month of December, 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 Mochizuki on December 8<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 to sell popcorn which was successful.

### For the month of January,

Our Webelo's scouts were invited to attend Troop 764 Rock Cook Event on January 12<sup>th</sup> at the VJCC. Our scouts learned new things such as cooking eggs in a bag, and hot dogs wrapped in bacon over hot rocks. Our scouts appreciated the invitation and had a good time.

We had our monthly Court of Awards Meeting at the Temple on January 17<sup>th</sup> where we had a surprise uniform inspection by our den chiefs. Each Den that passed the inspection received a patch to place on their Den flag.

On January 27<sup>th</sup>, we had our January Pack Outing at Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier hosted by Letty Robles and Eva Gomez from Den 5. We had a great turn out with scout and families joining the fun starting from 9:00am to 6:00pm.

On January 28<sup>th</sup>, our Webelo's 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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## **CUB SCOUTS PACK 79**

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### **For the month of February,**

We had our second Storefront Popcorn Sale on February 2<sup>nd</sup> at Ralphs Market on Lincoln and Maxella on Saturday before Super Bowl Sunday. The event was a huge success where we were able to sell all of our remaining popcorn ending the popcorn sale season.

Scout Sunday was celebrated on February 3<sup>rd</sup> where a special service was hosted by Reverend John Iwohara at the Venice Hongwanji Temple for all scouts and families in Pack 79, Girl Scout Troop 5325 and Boy Scouts 764.

All of our Webelo II scouts were invited to Troop 764 First Aid Event at the VJCC on Saturday Feb 9<sup>th</sup>, where they learned basic first aid skills and got to view different help scenarios.

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, we had our Court of Awards Pack Meeting. After the awards ceremony, our scouts went down stairs and made Easter greeting cards which will be presented at the VJCC Senior Luncheon in March.

Lastly, we had our Pack 79 Pinewood Derby Wood Shop on February 23<sup>rd</sup> that was hosted by former Cubmaster Joe Belli at his woodshop where our scouts learned how to cut, shape and sand their cars in preparation for race day.

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## 2013 CALENDAR OF MAJOR SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

### APRIL, 2013

- 7 HANAMATSURI – HATSUMAIRI SERVICE 10 A.M.
- 13 TEMPLE CLEAN UP – 8 A.M.
- 21 ABA COUNTRY STYLE BREAKFAST

### MAY, 2013

- 12 MOTHER'S DAY SERVICE – 10 A.M.
- 19 GOTANYE FAMILY SERVICE – 10 A.M.
- 26-27 MEMORIAL DAY GRAVESITE SERVICES

### JUNE, 2013

- 6 DHARMA SCHOOL PICNIC
- 16 DAD'S & GRAD'S SERVICE – 10 A.M.
- 22-23 VJCC NATSU MATSURI

### JULY, 2013

- 7 VENICE OBON & HATSUBON SERVICE – 10 A.M.
- 20 OBON FESTIVAL SET-UP – 8:30 A.M.
- 27-28 VENICE OBON FESTIVAL
- 7/27-8/3 LABCC SUMMER CAMP

### AUGUST, 2013

- 4 "A" BOMB/VIET NAM MEMORIAL SERVICE – 9:30 A.M.
- 24 ABA "50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY" OBSERVANCE

### SEPTEMBER, 2013

- 8 SUNDAY SUNDAY – NEW DHARMA SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS
- 15 FALL OHIGAN SERVICE & BOOK CLUB - 10 A.M.
- 21 ABA MEMORIAL SERVICE – 7:30 P.M.

### OCTOBER, 2013

- 5 FALL TEMPLE CLEAN UP – 8:30 A.M.
- 10 FUJINKAI ESHINISAMA MEMORIAL SERVICE – 7:30 P.M.
- 27 DHARMA SCHOOL HALLOWEEN PARTY – 5 P.M.

### NOVEMBER, 2013

- 9 ABA STEAK FEAST – 6 P.M.
- 10 EITAIKYO SERVICE – 10 A.M.
- 29 GENERAL MEMBERS MEETING – 7:30 P.M.
- 30 MOCHI TSUKI SET UP

### DECEMBER, 2013

- 4 WASH MOCHI GOME – 7 P.M.
- 7 MOCHI TSUKI – 7 A.M.
- 8 MOCHI TSUKI WRAP UP & TEMPLE CLEAN UP – 8 A.M.
- 15 OSEIBO APPRECIATION SERVICE - 10 A.M.
- 30 JOYA-E END OF YEAR SERVICE – 7:30 P.M.

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## 2013 CALENDAR OF MAJOR SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

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### **REGULARY SCHEDULED SERVICES & MEETINGS**

- FAMILY DHARMA SERVICE – Sundays, 9:30 A.M.  
Student Dharma School Classes & Adult Service – Immediately following Family Dharma Service  
High School Students Class
- TEMPLE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – First Friday of each month – 7:30 P.M.  
(Except the General Member's Meeting scheduled for November 29, 2013)
- BUDDHIST WOMENS ASSN. (FUJINKAI) MEETING – Tuesday following Temple Board Meeting.
- ABA MEETING – 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday Following Temple Board meeting.
- YABA MEETING – Every Wednesday – 7 P.M.
- DHARMA SCHOOL STAFF MEETING – First Sunday of each month – 8:30 A.M.
- JR. YBA MEETING – First Sunday of each month following 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.
- VHBT BALLROOM DANCE CLASS – Every Sunday – 2:30 P.M.



**MORE SUSHI MAKING CLASS**

# GASSHO

Los Angeles, California

Spring, 2013

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## Let's Make Sushi

FUJINKAI SUSHI MAKING CLASS



# GASSHO

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## Let's Make Sushi

FUJINKAI SUSHI MAKING CLASS

