



GATEWAY



August 2014 -- Vol. XLIX No. 8



The happy faces of our Sangha celebrating Bon Odori

My First Obon Festival at WCBT

Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi

West Covina Buddhist Temple Obon Festival was successfully held on Saturday, June 28 this year. The weather was a little nicer than last year and the center was filled with people who enjoyed chicken and beef teriyaki, cold beer, shaved ice, various entertainment, and of course, Bon Odori.

Since this was my first WCBT Obon Festival as a resident minister, every experience I had was new and memorable. From set-up to clean up, I was astonished by our members for their diligence and hard work.

Needless to say, Obon Festival is fun, but also it is the hardest event to hold. Many people may not see the behind-the-scenes effort how the festival is run. Moving heavy Obon

supplies from storage and unloading them from the truck, building the *yagura*, preparing the grills.... It is all hard sweaty labor under the hot sun and dust. Most of the booths, including the information and raffle booth, are set outside. Members work all day in the hot weather. The chicken and beef teriyaki booth are the booths of inferno and after the festival, their bodies are covered with smoke and soot. Once the Obon weekend is over, everyone is just exhausted.

I was truly impressed with them and was wondering what made them do this...

No matter how difficult it is to hold Obon Festival, we still have a moment to be grateful to be part of it. It is the

experience of joy that the Obon Festival gives us and it enables us to keep this event annually for over forty years. During Obon Festival, we have no time to worry about the past or future. All we focus on is *now*, and just do what we have to do. In other words, we truly live each moment and that is the way of life Buddhism always encourages us. Buddhism says that living each moment is savoring our lives, and if we are able to live our lives like this, we are naturally filled with the feeling of joy and gratitude. And the feeling of joy and gratitude become an energy and strength for us to live our lives. It is Obon Festival when we experience the teaching and live with it.

Moreover, when we savor this moment, we come to realize all causes and conditions that brought us to this moment. It is the time to reflect on all those who have handed down the spirit of the Obon Festival not by telling us but by showing it through their actions. Their devotion, selfless effort, and commitment become part of us and move us from within.

This year's Obon Festival was a special tribute to the late Mrs. Mary Hatakeyama who was one of founding members of this temple. I regret that I did not have the opportunity to know her when she was active at this temple. Yet, through our members I strongly felt her essence and wishes she left for us. They manifest what they have received from her and passed it down to me. They enabled me to encounter Mrs. Hatakeyama through them.

Please see OBON, con't on page 3

Temple Event Highlights:
 •Aug. 3 Shotsuki Service
 •Aug. 7 Howakai Service
 •Aug. 8-10 Las Vegas Trip
 •Sep. 14 Ohigan Service
 •Please See Temple News



T H E G A T E W A Y

DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

I hope you are having a wonderful and fun summer!

With the help of dedicated parents, our Dharma School children put up 3 busy game booths and a wildly popular children's raffle at our recent Obon. Our Dharma School children enjoyed working and playing and they had a great time.

The Dharma School's latest project is to decorate little bags with stickers and fill each one with candy. The bags will be passed out at ESGVJCC's Keiro-no-hi on September 7, 2014.

We hope our Sangha will continue to bring their children and grandchildren to participate in our Dharma School Programs.

The following is a Buddhist Jataka tale that we hope you will enjoy.

The Brave Little Parrot

Long ago in India lived a brave little parrot. One day a bolt of lightning started a fire in the forest where he lived. The fire spread quickly when a strong wind started to blow. The frightened animals began to run wildly in all directions.

The brave little parrot tried to warn the forest animals by calling out "fire, fire". He tried to save them by shouting, "run to the river!" However many of the animals became trapped by the flames. The parrot was desperate to help his friends and suddenly had a thought. He decided to try to put out the fire. He flew through the flames and smoke and dove into the river. He then flew above the flames and shook his wings. A few drops of water were released from his wings. He dove back into the river again and again even though his eyes were burning, his wings became singed and his lungs ached.

A golden eagle appeared and said to the brave little parrot, "go back little parrot. You can't put out the fire by yourself. Fly away and save yourself". But the little parrot continued diving into the river trying to put out the fire.

The parrot's determination and com-

Please see D.S. NEWS, con't on page 8

Obon/Hatsubon Service

Claudia Haraguchi

When I was a little child many, many decades ago in Hawaii, my grandmother used to tell me stories in order to put me down for a nap. We'd lay on the multi-colored patchwork quilt she had sewn from pieces of our old clothes and she would speak in simple Japanese so that I would be able to understand. She didn't read to me because my grandmother was illiterate. She could neither read nor write in Japanese, but she was a prolific storyteller and my sister, my cousins and I were often mesmerized by the wonderful tales she told us about "Momotaro," or "Issumboshi," or the story of Mogallana who tried to save his mother who had passed on to a world of pain and suffering. Even before going to Sunday School, I was familiar with the story of poor Mogallana who, after seeing his mother suffering, asked the Buddha to help him rescue her from this terrible fate. After all, she was not a bad mother; she stole food to feed her hungry child, or so the story went as told by my obaachan. When I reflect on our Obon at WCBT, or when I tell my own children stories of what I remember about the Obon growing up in Hawaii, I recall the summer afternoons with my obaachan and listening to her tell me the story of Mogallana again.



In the program for our Obon/Hatsubon Service on Sunday July 20, 2014 Rev. Miyoshi wrote about the origins of Obon and of course, the story of Mogallana. She said that what we should take from this parable is that we need to appreciate all that our parents, our grandparents, and our ancestors have done for us in order for us to live a happy life today. "Obon," said Rev. Miyoshi, "is an opportunity to rejoice in the life we enjoy, and express gratitude for all of the conditions, both past and present, that help to sustain our lives."

For this Obon/Hatsubon Service at WCBT, we were fortunate to have Rimban William Briones from the Nishi Hongwanji LA Betsuin. Rev. Briones shared a poignant account of his long and sometimes tumultuous journey from his roots in Catholicism to his present day position as head of the Hongwanji Jodo Shinshu Betsuin here in Los Angeles. It's a fascinating story that, in my opinion, should probably be put down in a book someday. In the story there is a young marriage, divorce, rowdy Mountain View Obons, drinking, gambling, police sweeps in a multi-ethnic farming community. Apparently, Mountain View Buddhist Temple's Obon is a heck of a lot more exciting than our traditional Obon in West Covina. And among all that excitement, what Rev. Briones remembers

Please see Hatsubon, con't on pg. 4



T H E G A T E W A Y

T E M P L E N E W S

Las Vegas Trip

WCBT will be sponsoring its annual fundraising trip to Las Vegas on the weekend of August 8-10. The \$140 per person fee, for double occupancy, will include round-trip bus fare, two nights at the Main Street Station, Bell captain tips and lots of fun and games. A beverage will be served on the ride to Las Vegas as well as all the snacks that everyone brings to share.

The Las Vegas Obon will be on Saturday, August 9. Please let us know if you are planning to attend and need transportation.

The bus will depart on Friday, August 8 promptly at 1:00 p.m. from ESGVJCC. The return bus will leave from the Main Street Station on Sunday, August 11, promptly at 11:00 a.m.

The bus is currently full but if you would like to be put on the waiting list please contact Ted Kato (626-918-2680) or Merry Jitosho (714) 271-3803.

August Schedule

The August board meeting will be held 8:30 a.m. on August 3 followed by the Shotsuki Service at 10:00 a.m. We will then take our annual summer break so there are no Sunday Services on August 10 (Las Vegas trip), 17, 24 and 31. Services will resume again on September 7.

September Board Meeting and Service

The September board meeting will be held on September 7 at 8:30 a.m. followed by the Shotsuki Service at 10:00 a.m.

Fall Ohigan

The Fall Ohigan Service will be held on September 14 at 4:30 p.m. Please join us to welcome a special guest speaker and stay for the complimentary *otoki* dinner following the service.

Oldies Dance XLIX

"Aging Like Fine Wine, Oldies XLIX(49)!" will be held on Saturday, September 27. It's our 49th Oldies with Steve Kikuchi & High Resolution providing favorite hits from the 60's, 70's and 80's. The dance begins at 8:00 p.m. and will end at 12:00 a.m. with lots of dancing and fun in between. Presale tickets are \$15 or \$18 at the door. For info and song requests, call Joanie at (626) 300-8947 or Lillian at (626) 780-9866

Your Toban chairs will contact you about work shifts and assignments. Plan to come by the center about 6 p.m. to help with the set-up. Donations are welcome for raffle prizes and drinks. Sign-up sheets for drinks will be at the Sunday service.

Welcome Gathering for Rev. Miyoshi's Parents

There will be a potluck lunch on Sunday, September 7, after Shotsuki Service organized by Toban A to welcome Rev. Miyoshi's parents who will be visiting L.A. from Japan. We encourage all our Sangha members to come out to welcome the Rev. Akira and Rev. Etsuko Miyoshi to West Covina and show our own Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi our show of support!



AUGUST

Barbara Shiota, John Shiota, Brittany Kato, Wesley Hamachi, K.C. Koga, Mark Mayeda, Brian Iwama, Aaron Aoki, Rick Fujimoto, Sachi Ezaki, Sharon Kuwahara, Chico Masai, Vicki Takemura, Joy Ormseth, Rev. Frederic Brenion, Gregory Williams, Bill Dubble, Karleigh Nakata

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West Covina Buddhist Temple Mission Statement:
 In the spirit of universal brotherhood, West Covina Buddhist Temple provides the opportunity for all to listen to and share the Teachings of the Buddha in order that we may awaken to our true selves, living our lives fully and dynamically.
The Temple's mailing address is:
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OBON, con't from pg. 1

Obon Festival is the fundraising event, but it is surely more than that. It is a precious occasion when we directly experience the teaching. Our smiles and laughter prove that living in the teaching bring us great joy in the midst of tough work. It is also the time when we are aware of all support and friendship from our Sangha members and feel profound connection with those who handed down this festival with their sincere wishes.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest appreciation to the Obon chair, Mrs. Merry Jitosho, members of the Obon committee, and all members and friends of West Covina Buddhist Temple for their devotion and commitment. Without their tireless effort, we could not have made this year's successful Obon Festival possible.

Arigato gozaimashita.



T H E G A T E W A Y

WCBT OBON 2014

On behalf of the 2014 obon committee and WCBT temple, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to our West Covina Buddhist temple members and all the outside volunteers who came out to make this year's obon a great success!! And what is the definition of success: Great financial outcome, many guests coming out to enjoy our food, entertainment and odori, our annual temple reunion of former members and kids coming back from college or coming back after many years absence, or finally grasping the real meaning of obon and participating in our Manto-e service and our Bon Odori dancing and being very proud to be a West Covina Buddhist temple member. We have a unique obon with our small, but hard working sangha. We work together, sweat together and somehow every year are

able to pull together to make our obon festival happen.

Many volunteers from the outside have come out to help us this year in various ways. We are so thankful for this wonderful support. A special thanks to our fellow Higashi members from the Betsuin for the much needed manpower.

From the preparation meetings to set up day to the actual obon day to clean up, thank you everyone for coming out and making time to create our West Covina Obon. And yes, it's over for 2014!!! Yeah..... until next year.

In gassho and gratefully yours,
Merry Jitoshō
2014 Obon Chair



Chief BBQer Dick Koga and the Okonomiyaki women, Michelle and Reiko take a short break from the heat and smoke of cooking.

Rest up. The year comes around quickly.

Hatsubon, con't from pg. 2

is seeing the colored paper lanterns swaying in the breeze and the smell of teriyaki chicken.

Rev. Briones recalled that he began his journey by standing in the back of the temple and listening to the Dharma messages when he dropped his children off at the Mountain View Sunday School. Where have we heard this before? The first step is always to listen, to listen intently and with purpose. And he did. He became active in the temple and its activities and the Dharma school.

Just about this time Rev. Russell Hamada took over as minister at Mountain View Buddhist Temple and Rev. Hamada started to talk about the Dharma of Shinran. This may have been the real beginning of Rev. Briones' interest in Buddhism.

An interesting observation that Rev. Briones made is that the bazaar and odori are not the usual characteristics of Obon in Japan. Obon as we know it at WCBT or in the United States for that mater, with the teriyaki chicken booth, snow cones, and various odori danced to the beat of the taiko is not generally

observed at Jodo Shinshu temples in Japan. The reason is that the idea of the "soul" of our dead relatives returning to us does not agree with Jodo Shinshu doctrine of Buddhism. Unfortunately, many non Jodo Shinshu temples and even western interpretation of Obon perpetuate the idea that Obon is when the "souls" of our loved ones return to us and we are so happy that we burst out in joyous rapture and dance around the yagura. On the third day, Buddhists light candles on paper boats and set them off in the river and have them float away to the ocean to light the way as the same spirits return from where they came. At which point in his talk Rev. Briones sighed, "Thank God we're Jodo Shinshu Buddhists!"

For Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, Obon is a memorial service. We don't believe in the idea of a "soul" let alone one that defies death and operates independently even after the physical body is gone. Rev. Briones said, "Obon is the expression of joyful gratitude we feel toward our ancestors for all the sacrifices that they made so that we can be here at this moment. This gratitude turns to

pure joy and it manifests itself in our everyday life in how we move through the world."

After the Dharma talk, Toban A prepared a delicious otoki of cold somen with condiments, edamame onigiri, sweet, cold watermelon and an array of wonderfully delightful desserts. We very much appreciate the time and effort that toban A put in to prepare the wonderful meal for us.

It was an enjoyable Obon/Hatsubon Service. It was the first Obon Service for our Rev. Miyoshi at WCBT and the first opportunity she had to formally introduce her husband, Rimban Briones to our Sangha.



Hatsubon candles were lit for the family members of our Sangha who passed away since our last Obon.



T H E G A T E W A Y

Reflections of Obon 2014

My 1st Obon at WCBT clearly demonstrated the harmony, dedication & determination of the members of our temple. It took the efforts of each member to make it happen.

Phillip Underwood

The Obon this year was very enjoyable. I liked helping out and relaxing afterwards.

Noah Kowalski

It was exciting to see new blood, Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi, being pumped into our Obon. A great time, lots of fun.

Frank T. Tanji

It was a damn good Obon!

Ted Kato

I was glad to be at Obon this year because I was in the hospital last year. I missed the comradery of friends and family. Obon at West Covina is much better than the hospital.

Mary Kato

I've attended every Obon and each year it becomes better.

Jon Shirota

We are thankful to the MOST "Senior" members of the Sangha who faithfully show up to man the reception/raffle booth – regardless of the weather! Usually it's hot!

Anonymous

All the tables were used during dinnertime. Glad we ordered extra.

Anonymous

It was fun, hot and we enjoyed helping.

Gutierrez Family

I always enjoy Obon. I have a few suggestions

- 1) Having a posted schedule outside and in the gym*
- 2) Having an invitation to attend service*

Don Frack

Obon is always a time to see familiar faces and to catch up with old friends. It also gives us an opportunity to remember the loved ones who have passed away and everything that they have taught us. This time of year is always very humbling.

Stephanie Jitosh



T H E G A T E W A Y

Images from Obon 2014

In commemoration of Mary Hatakeyama's Hatsubon, two of our Sangha members, Karolyn Fujimoto and Laura Miyake, designed, printed, and cut out the fan shape to make the uchiwas. These fans were used during the second half of the Bon Odori as the dancers joyfully danced to Mary Hatakeyama's favorite odori music. Mary was WCBT's Bon Odori teacher for 45 years. She taught all of us the proper hand and foot movements and the way to keep in time to the rhythm of the music so that during the Bon Odori we could forget form and enjoy being in the moment as we danced around the yagura.



Rev. Miyoshi & Michael J conducted the Manto-e Service



Left: Rev. Miyoshi & her husband Rimban William Briones from Nishi Hongwanji LA Betsuin



Jennifer Higa continues the tradition as Bon Odori teacher.



T H E G A T E W A Y



Thank you to the many Betsuin members who came out to help at our Obon



The two Underwoods



2014 Obon introduced our new food quad, "Cafe Covina BT West" (as dubbed by the Gateway staff)



T H E G A T E W A Y

D.S. NEWS, con't from pg. 2

passion for his fellow animals touched the heart of the golden eagle. He began to cry. He cried and cried until his tears extinguished the forest fire completely. (This eagle was a magical eagle!) The animals were safe! The brave little parrot's actions saved the animals' lives!!

This tale shows how one individual's compassion and contribution can help many others. If everyone can show some compassion and help his fellow humans, many of the fires of conflicts that we experience in the world today may be lessened and even extinguished.

Gassho, Claire Hansen



Buddhism Quiz

This is August's 2014's "How well you know your Buddhism." We hope it will be interesting and informative for our readers.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

1. Shoshin-Ge, written by Shinran Shonin is a poem which expresses the Pure Land teaching and is written in
 - a. Classical Chinese
 - b. Classical Pali, the ancient language of Theravada Buddhism
 - c. Classical Japanese

2. Since the chanting of sutras is done in languages we no longer speak
 - a. they are chanted to discipline and challenge the mind of the practitioner of Buddhism.
 - b. they are symbolic gestures of listening to the Dharma and considered as forms of meditation.
 - c. they are practiced only in the Pure Land teaching of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism.

Answers: a, b



Quote of the Month
 The great compassion,
 without tiring,
 illumines me always.
Shinran Shonin



T H E G A T E W A Y

お盆まつりを終えて 見義信香

今年のウェストコヴィナ東本願寺のお盆まつりは6月28日（土）に開催されました。昨年に比べて気温も幾分穏やかではなかったかと思えます。お陰さまで当日はたくさんの方に足を運んでいただき、盛況のうちに幕を閉じることができました。

特に今年は赴任して初めてのお盆まつりということもあり、私にとってとても思い出深いお盆まつりとなりました。

あらためて申すまでもないことではありますが、お盆まつりは決して楽なイベントではありません。開催日は一日ですが、それにかかる準備や後片付けには相当な時間と労力を必要とします。頭にタオルを巻き、Tシャツを汗でびしょりと濡らしながら櫓を組み、照り焼きチキンやビーフのブースを担当してくれている人の姿に私はいつも圧倒され、驚嘆します。そしていつも一つのことを思うのです。「なにがこの人たちを動かしているのだろう・・・？」と。

私たちが楽しいと感じるのはたいてい楽でリラックスしている時です。ですから日常の生活では、忙しく大変な作業は普通喜びとは結びつきにくいものです。けれども、私たちは暑さの中で大変な思いをしながらお盆まつりを開催しているその最中に、お盆まつりに今年も参加していることに喜びを感じる瞬間が間違いなくあるのではないのでしょうか。お盆まつりは私たちに今そこにいるということ、すべきことを精一杯するということの大切さを教え、そしてそのことが大きな満足となるという

ことを教えてくれています。

私たちは過去を思い悩んだり、未来を心配することに多くの時間を費やしています。仏教で今この瞬間が最も大切なのだと繰り返し教えられてもなかなかその通りに生きることができません。そんな私たちにとってお盆まつりは過去と未来に終始する生活から、今いること、あることをそのまま喜びとする生活へと私たちを促してくれる時間と言えるのではないのでしょうか。

また、どんなに大変な作業でも、共に苦勞してくれる人、その大変さを分かち合う人がいるとき、それがそのまま私たちの力となってくれます。そこでは苦勞はただ苦しいだけで終わらず、時には笑い話となり、お盆まつりの歴史に刻まれていくのです。僧伽としての結びつきとそこから生み出される生き活きとした力、それを最も強く感じることでできる行事がお盆まつりではないのでしょうか。休憩中に照り焼きチキンを味わいながら周りを見回したとき、メンバーの方々の忙しく歩き回る姿がすぐに眼に入りました。そしてどの顔も笑顔であったことがとても印象的でした。

さらにいうなら、そのことを言葉ではなく、その姿で教えてくれた人たちに私たちは確かに出遇ったのです。このお寺を支え私たちに手渡してくださった先達の方々は今を生きることの大切さ、その喜びを全身で表現し、私たちに伝えてくださったのです。その出遇いこそが私たちを動かし、もう一年お盆まつりを勤めさせる力となってくれているのではないかと感じます。

お盆まつりは確かに基金集めのイベントであります。けれども、それだけにはとどまらないのもお

盆まつりです。僧伽の秘める力を感じ、今を生きるという仏教の基本の教えが、喜びになり力になるということを経験できる時間であり、そして同時にそのことを身を通して教えてくれた先達の方々の時間を越えたつながりに目覚めることのできる時間でもあるのではないかと思うのです。

最後になりましたが、お盆まつり開催に際し例年以上に皆さまには多大なるご尽力、ご支援を賜りました。皆さまのご協力なくしては一年で最も大きなこの行事を滞りなく進めることは到底できません。この場をお借りして心より感謝申し上げます。ありがとうございました。

お寺ニュース

日本語祥月法要 / 法話会

8月の日本語祥月法要並びに法話会は、8月7日（木）午後7時半より厳修いたします。どうぞご家族、ご友人とお誘い合わせの上、ご参詣下さいますよう、ご案内申し上げます。

基金募集

オールディーズ・ダンス

秋の基金募集オールディーズ・ダンスは、9月27日（土）午後8時より開催されます。どなたでも歓迎致します。お気軽にご参加下さい。

秋季彼岸会法要（英語）

本年度の秋季彼岸会法要は、9月14日（日）午後4時半より厳修いたします。法要後にはお斎が準備されます。どうぞ皆様でご参詣下さいますようお願い申し上げます。

East San Gabriel Valley
Japanese Community Center, Inc.

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 **GATEWAY** 

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August

- 3 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 3 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 7 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 8-10 Las Vegas Trip
- 10 (No Service)
- 17 (No Service)
- 24 (No Service)
- 31 (No Service)

2014年8月行事予定

- 3日 午前8時半 理事会
- 3日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 7日 午後7時半 法話会
- 8-10日 ラスベガス旅行
- 10日 日曜礼拝お休み
- 17日 日曜礼拝お休み
- 24日 日曜礼拝お休み
- 31日 日曜礼拝お休み

September

- 4 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 7 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 7 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 9 10:00 am Study Class
- 14 4:30 pm Ohigan Service
- 21 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 23 10:00 am Study Class
- 27 8:00 pm Oldies Dance
- 28 10:00 am Sunday Service

9月行事予定

- 4日 午後7時半 法話会
- 7日 午前8時半 理事会
- 7日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 14日 午後4時半 秋季彼岸法要 (英語)
- 21日 午前10時 日曜礼拝

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一本の草さえ、
生きねばならぬ使命をもっている

藤原鉄乗