



GATEWAY



August 2015 -- Vol. I No. 8



Every year the WCBT Obon is the happiest place on Earth for all its Sangha members who work hard and dance hard joyously.

Buddhism and Social Issues

Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi

In less than a month, we have witnessed significant political events that will no doubt have a historical impact in this country.

First, same-sex marriage is now legal in the entire US after the Supreme Court ruling struck down state marriage ban on June 26, 2015.

Two weeks later, on July 10, the confederate flag, which had been a powerful symbol of slavery and a racially segregated past, was taken down from South Carolina capital grounds and moved to a museum. There is no doubt that the tragedy of the Charleston church shooting brought the issue of the confederate flag back to our attention and contributed to the taking down of the flag.

It is surprising that these significant changes occurred within a short period of time, and whether we support these

changes or not, we all agree that the year 2015 will become a historical year for America.

When we discuss social issues, people often say, "Where does Buddhism stand on this issue?" Especially, those

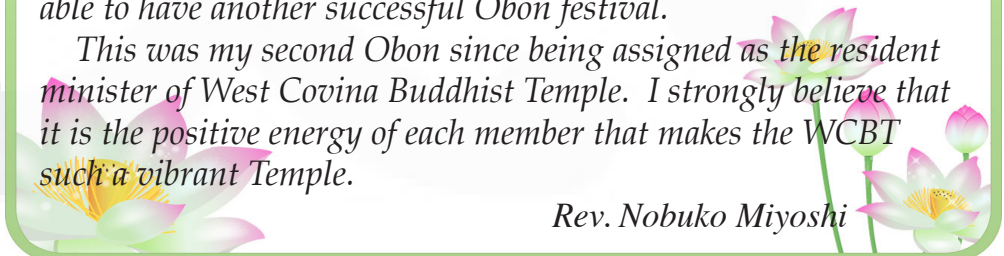
who regard themselves as Buddhists expect Buddhism to give them a right answer to follow. Unfortunately, Buddhism is not a religion that tells people what to do or what not to do.

Please see SOCIAL ISSUES, con't on page 2

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincerest appreciation to the Obon committee, our Sangha members and their families and friends who helped our Obon festival held on Saturday, June 27. With your hard work and dedication we were able to have another successful Obon festival.

This was my second Obon since being assigned as the resident minister of West Covina Buddhist Temple. I strongly believe that it is the positive energy of each member that makes the WCBT such a vibrant Temple.

Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi





T H E G A T E W A Y

DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS



The Dharma School booth is popular with the under 10 crowd for its fun new games and great raffle prizes.



SOCIAL ISSUES, con't from pg. 1

In America, it is true that religions greatly influence our opinions and behavior. Some people have their opinion based on their religious belief. We often hear them say, "I cannot agree with this because our sacred text says..." In this case, their religion certainly gives them a guideline to say what is right or wrong.

On the other hand, Jodo Shinshu never gives us a right answer. It is not a religion that makes us 'right,' but a religion that tries to awaken us that when we think 'I am right,' it actually would create serious problems.

The fundamental truth of Buddhism is that "Everyone is equal and deserves to be respected." There is no doctrinal reason, therefore, to forbid same-sex marriage or to discriminate against homosexuals. Our opinions could be based on this Buddhist teaching. "I follow the Buddhist teaching. Therefore, I am right." That is how we think. However, Jodo Shinshu is critical of this kind of thinking.

Jodo Shinshu keenly points out what we completely ignore. It tells us that the teaching does not give us an excuse to criticize those who have different opinions from us. Justifying ourselves and judging others as wrong

Please see SOCIAL ISSUES, con't on pg. 7

F L O O D !!



Our helpful Sangha members quickly picked up push brooms to sweep out the flooding waters that rushed into the the Sugimoto Social Hall right in the middle of our evening Hatsubon Service.





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 7-9. The \$160 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 8. Please let us know if you are planning to attend and need transportation.

The bus will depart on Friday, August 7 promptly at 1:00 PM from ESGVJCC. The return bus will leave from the California Hotel on Sunday, August 9, promptly at 11:00 AM.

Please contact Merry Jitosho (714) 271-3803 for more information.

August Schedule

The August board meeting will be held 8:30 AM on August 2 followed by the Shotsuki Service at 10:00 AM. We will then take our annual summer break so there are no Sunday Services on August 9 (Las Vegas trip), 16, 23 and 30. Services will resume again on September 6.

September Board Meeting and Service

The September board meeting will be held on September 6 at 8:30 AM followed by the Shotsuki Service at 10:00.

Fall Ohigan

The Fall Ohigan Service will be held on September 13 at 4:30 PM. Our special guest speaker will be Rev. Futoshi Takehashi who is currently a researcher and senior staff member at Shinshu Otani-ha Research Institute for Rituals. Please join us to welcome Rev. Takehashi and stay for the complimentary *otoki* dinner following the service.

Oldies Dance LII(52)

"We Want YOU at Oldies LII (52)!" will be held on Saturday, September 26. It's our 52nd Oldies with Steve Kikuchi & High Resolution providing favorite hits from the 60's, 70's and 80's. The dance begins at 8:00 PM and will end at 12:00 AM with lots of dancing and fun in between. Presale tickets are \$20 or \$25 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 PM to help with the set-up. Donations are welcome for raffle prizes and drinks. Sign-up sheets for drinks will be at our Sunday service.

GATEWAY Staff

Layout & Editing: Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi, Hisako Koga, Claudia Haraguchi, Richard Kagawa

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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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West Covina, CA 91793
(626) 689-1040

Website: www.livingdharma.org

Facebook: [facebook.com/westcovinabuddhisttemple](https://www.facebook.com/westcovinabuddhisttemple)



AUGUST

Barbara Shirota, Jon Shirota, Tom Ariza, Brittany Kato, Wesley Hamachi, K.C. Koga, Mark Mayeda, Brian Iwama, Aaron Aoki, Rick Fujimoto, Sachi Ezaki, Rene Kuwahara, Sharon Kuwahara, Chico Masai, Vickie Takemura, Joy Ormseth, Frederic Brenion, Gregory Williams, Bill Dubble, Karleigh Nakata, Hideko Ikehara





T H E G A T E W A Y

WCBT Obon 2015



Our young Sangha members enjoyed the bon odori as they pranced joyfully around the yagura.

Stephanie tirelessly drove from "far, far away" twice a week to teach our Sangha the bon dances.

A huge thank you to each and every-one in our sangha, Higashi Betsuin and so many volunteers in making WCBT 2015 Obon a success. It truly takes a whole village to make an event like this happen.

With Rev Miyoshi having one year experience with our obon, she definitely knew what to do this year. Her ministerial leadership filled in the holes for those last minutes things I forgot this year. This was not my best year in keeping things organized because I had my hands full with preparations for my daughter's wedding which took place 2 weeks prior to our obon, as well as taking care of busy projects at work.

My personal goal this year as obon co-chair was to allow any one who wanted to attend the Manto-e service and /or dance during the bon odori dancing to do so. This goal unfortunately created additional stress for those workers who had to man the booths with fewer helpers. Next year I hope to be able to better organize the scheduling or even consider temporarily closing some booths during that

time period.

This year we had a different snow cone machine....or to be technically correct...Hawaiian shave ice. The Haraguchi family did a fantastic job in researching and testing our new machine and syrups.

Thank you Richard and Claudia.

I was excited to be able to offer new happi coats and new obon t-shirts this year. The happi coats took two years of searching and asking around. Please see Merry Jitoshu if you would like a happi coat or obon t-shirt. Thank you, Bruce for getting our t-shirts.

After experiencing a few obons when members were sick or got injured, I am very grateful everything went smoothly. We are grateful that the weather cooperated on that day, too.

In closing, thank you everyone for working so hard to make our obon a success. And thank you to my co-chair, Bruce Whang. Let's do it again!!!! 2016 here we come. In the meantime, let's enjoy everyone else's obon.

--Merry Jitoshu



We imported our best and youngest workers all the way from Phoenix, AZ. The Godoy grandsons manned the soda booth like pros.



Michelle & Anthony hard at work making oishii okonomiyaki or Japanese pancakes



T H E G A T E W A Y



Time spent at bon odori practice paid off for Haruko who danced gracefully and confidently.



Dancers of all ages enjoyed the bon odori under the mantoe-lanterns



The new Hawaiian style shave ice was a big hit with the customers. Especially popular were the strawberry POG (passion, orange, guava) and the new green tea kintoki



The Ezaki, Martinez & Hata kids had a fun group pic taken at the Obon Photo Booth, a booth generously created by Sachi & Teri.



Some Sangha members were sentenced behind bars all day to barbeque chicken.



T H E G A T E W A Y



HIGASHI HONGANJI NORTH AMERICA DISTRICT
OPEN LECTURE & DISCUSSION

THE MEANING OF HIGASHI HONGANJI RITUALS

Tradition as it relates to the American Lifestyle

REV. FUTOSHI TAKEHASHI

Researcher,
Shinshū Ōtani-ha Research Institute for Rituals
Senior Staff,
Temple Rituals Department of Shinshū Ōtani-ha



Saturday, September 12, 2015

9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple

505 E. 3rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90013

Fee: \$15.00 (Lunch included)

We accept payment by check or cash. Please make your check payable to Higashi Honganji North America District.

OPEN to the PUBLIC

The discussion will be moderated by the Dharma Seeds Program, a three-year educational program for temple leadership.

Speaker Biography:

Born in Hokkaidō, Japan in 1962. Received his Ph.D. in Indian Buddhism from Ōtani University, Kyoto.

A former researcher at the Shinshū Ōtani-ha Research Institute for Shin Buddhist Studies.

Currently serving as a researcher at Shinshū Ōtani-ha Research Institute for Rituals and a senior staff of Temple Rituals Department of Shinshū Ōtani-ha.

For more information, contact:

Higashi Honganji North America District

505 E. 3rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90013 • Phone & Fax: (213) 621-4064 • Email: northamerica@higashihonganji.org



T H E G A T E W A Y

SOCIAL ISSUES, con't from pg. 2

is what we always do, no matter what opinion we have, and to make matters worse, we hardly recognize this problem.

'Everyone is equal' has two meanings; one, 'everyone is equally precious,' and two, 'everyone has the same problem.' What is different between those who harshly criticize same-sex marriage based on their religious belief and those who support same-sex marriage based on Buddhist teachings and denounce people who disagree with them? From the Buddhist point of view, we all have the same problem.

When we forget this point of view, we would also be ignorant of being inconsistent with the teachings. We seem to follow the teaching, but in actuality, we are using the teachings to justify our beliefs, and discern others as wrong,

Regarding having opinions on certain issues, Jodo Shinshu gives us complete freedom. This means that we should take responsibility on how we think, what we say, and what we do. Shinran Shonin cannot speak for us because he does not live in this society. Social issues created by our society are the issues for us who live here and now. We should seriously think about and struggle with social issues that we face, not Shinran Shonin.

It is the uniqueness of Jodo Shinshu that offers us an opportunity to see ourselves through social issues that we are struggling with. Realizing the fact that we all share the same problem as human beings, could lead us to live with 'everyone', including those who have different opinions from us. That is the way to truly live the teaching of Buddhism.



Rev. Patti Usuki from San Fernando Buddhist Temple was the special speaker at our Obon/Hatsubon Service. She was cool and unruffled by the commotion resulted from the efforts to stem the flood waters from entering the Social Hall during her Dharma Talk.

(「仏教徒」9頁からの続き)

いくと、仏教徒を名のる人が仏教の立場を知りたいと思う気持ち、そしてその立場に従って行動したいという願いはごく自然なことだと思うのです。

けれども、そこには大きな問題が孕んでいる、ということを仏教は、特に親鸞聖人は教えてくださっています。

「親鸞聖人がこうおっしゃっているから」ということを自分の意見や行動の根拠にすることは、一見聖人のお言葉に従っているように見えます。けれども実際は、自分の考えを正当化するために聖人を利用しているに過ぎないのです。自信をもって私は正しいと主張するために、もっと言うならば、正しいという立場から、異なる意見の人を批判するためにあらゆるもの、自分が信仰している宗教すらも利用するのが私たちの姿なのです。そうした私たち

が抱える深い闇を知らせ続けてくださるのが、仏教であり、浄土真宗であり、親鸞聖人という方なのでしょう。

「あらゆる人は等しく、そして敬われるべき存在である」ということを私たちの存在の真理として開いているのが仏教でありますから、同性婚を否定する理由も根拠もこの教義には存在しません。けれどもその教えは同時に、同性婚を支持する立場に立って「仏教徒なら同性婚を支持するのが当たり前だ」と主張したくなる私たちの問題を厳しく知らせる教えでもあるのです。それは、そこに立っている自分を「正」として、異なる意見の人を否定し批判している姿であります。それこそ「あらゆる人は等しく、そして敬われるべき存在である」という教えに背いている姿に他ならないのです。

現代社会が抱える問題に、親鸞聖人が直接答えを出すことはありません。なぜなら、現代社会の問題は、現代に生きる私たちの問題であって、私たちが考え背負っていくべき問題だからです。親鸞聖人に私たちの問題を肩代わりさせることはできないのです。浄土真宗の教えは私たちに「こうしなさい」とか逆に「こうしてはだめです」という答えを与えてくれることはありません。あくまでも、「あなたはどう思うのですか?」と問い続けてくれる教えであります。その問いかけを聞きながら、その問題に向き合い一生懸命に考え、自らの意見や行動に責任をもつ、そしてその問題を縁として仏教が教えてくれる自分自身の姿に目を開いていく、それが仏教徒としてのあり方ではないかと思うのです。





T H E G A T E W A Y



Buddhism Quiz

Here is another one of our quizzes to test you on "How well you know your Buddhism." We hope that it will continue to be informative and entertaining for our readers.

Difficulty Level: Super-duper easy

The onaijin or alter in a Jodo Shinshu temple is beautiful and ornate and is a symbol of the Pure Land. The main object of reverence in our alter is Amida Buddha, the symbol of wisdom and compassion.

1. The image of _____ hangs to the right of Amida Buddha.
 - a. Honen Shonin
 - b. Shinran Shonin
 - c. Sakyamuni Buddha
 - d. Rennyo Shonin

2. The image to the left of Amida Buddha is _____
 - a. Rennyo Shonin
 - b. Guatama Buddha
 - c. Honen Shonin
 - d. Shinran Shonin

Answers: b, a

Quote of the Month
 You must be the change
 you wish to see
 in the world.
 -Mahatma Gandhi



T H E G A T E W A Y

「仏教徒としての 立場」とは？ 見義信香

ここ1ヶ月余りの間、この国の大きな変化の波を私たちは経験しています。

6月26日、アメリカの連邦最高裁判所は同性婚を憲法上の権利として認めるとする判断を示しました。そしてこの判決により、事実上全米で同性婚が合法化されることになりました。

また、南部のサウスカロライナ州で、州議会の敷地内に掲揚されてきた南部連合の軍旗を撤去する法律が成立し、旗は7月10日午前10時に下ろされた後、博物館に移されました。

この旗は、南北戦争で奴隷制を支持した南部連合のものであると同時に、その後アフリカ系アメリカ人の権利拡大に反対する運動のシンボルとしても扱われてきました。そして、今回の法律の成立に際して、6月17日に発生した同

州チャールストンの教会でのアフリカ系住民9人が犠牲となった銃撃事件が、人々をこの旗のもつ問題に真剣に目を向けさせる発端となったことは、多くの人が認めるところでしょう。

こうした大きな変換が短期間に続けて起こったということは、実に驚くべきことであります。この変化に賛成にしる、反対にしる、今まさにアメリカの歴史の証人であることを実感しているという点では一致しているのではないのでしょうか。

社会問題を考えるとき、よく「仏教の立場」を聞かれることがあります。そしてその質問は、仏教を学んでいる人、または自分は仏教徒だと言われる方から尋ねられることがほとんどです。

社会問題とは私たちが抱える問題そのものであります。なぜなら、問題を抱える社会を作り上げているのは、ほかでもないそこに生活している私たちだからです。ですから、社会問題に無関心でいることは、私たち自身の問題に無関心でいるということ

あると思います。だから、社会の問題に関わり、深く考え、自分の意見をもつというのはとても大切なことだと思います。ただ、「仏教の立場」を自分の意見や行動が従うべき「正解」として期待するのは、少し違うのではないかと思うのです。

確かに私たちが抱える問題に対して意見をもつとき、その根拠となるべきものがあります。それは、両親から受けた教育、置かれている環境、付き合っている人々との関係など様々で、そして宗教も確かにそのひとつになります。特にアメリカでは、自身が信仰する宗教に基づいて賛成や反対の意見を主張することは珍しいことではありません。そうした観点から見て

(「仏教徒」7頁に続く)

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6日(木)午後7時半よりお勤めいたします。どうぞご家族、ご友人とお誘い合わせの上、ご参詣下さいませよう、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26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13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せよう願ひ申し上げます。

お盆まつりのお礼

6月27日に開催されましたお盆まつりは、今年も無事に終えることができました。例年以上に多くの方のご苦勞とご尽力のおかげをもちまして、来ていただいた方に楽しんでいただけたのではないかと考えております。また私たちウェストコビナのメンバーにとっては、サンガの一人として強い絆を確認することのできた週末ではなかったでしょうか。私にとってはこちらに開教使として赴任して二度目のお盆まつりでした。お寺というのは、お寺を大切に思ってくださいの方々のその姿によって、活き活きと躍動するのだということを改めて実感いたしました。

この場をお借りしまして、お手伝いいただきました全ての皆さまに心から厚く御礼申し上げます。

本当にありがとうございました。

見義信香

East San Gabriel Valley
Japanese Community Center, Inc.

West Covina Buddhist Temple
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P.O. Box 1616, West Covina, CA 91793

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THE WEST COVINA BUDDHIST TEMPLE

 **GATEWAY** 

August 2015 - - Vol. L No. 8

August

- 2 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 2 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 6 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 7-9 WCBT Las Vegas Trip
- 16 (No Service)
- 23 (No Service)
- 30 (No Service)

September

- 3 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 6 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 6 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 8 10:00 am Study Class
- 12 9:30 am NAD Open Lecture
- 13 4:30 pm Fall Ohigan Service
- 20 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 22 10:00 am Study Class
- 26 8:00 pm Oldies Dance
- 27 10:00 am Sunday Service

2015年8月行事予定

- 2日 午前8時半 理事会
- 2日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 6日 午後7時半 法話会
- 7-9日 ラスベガス旅行
- 16日 日曜礼拝休み
- 23日 日曜礼拝休み
- 30日 日曜礼拝休み

9月行事予定

- 3日 午後7時半 法話会
- 6日 午前8時半 理事会
- 6日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 12日 午前9時半 北米開教区公開講座
- 13日 午後4時半 秋季彼岸法要
- 20日 午前10時 日曜礼拝

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人間の不安は、
人間の人の智とともに成長する
金子大榮