## \*GATEWAY

November 2015 -- Vol. L No. 10



The WCBT Temple Sangha put on their cleverest, most imaginative, and funny costumes at our annual Halloween gathering.

## **Learning From All Experiences**

Michael Jitosho

As many of you know I am in the midst of a long journey to become an optometrist. I still have 114 weeks or 798 days or 19,152 hours left until graduation. My days are filled with classes and labs and nights and weekends are spent in the practice labs preparing for practical and written exams. I am not the smartest, but I am hard working. Putting in extra hours is what gets me by.

Last week we had our latest proficiency test where we must demonstrate to a staff doctor that we are capable at performing a given clinical skill in a timely manner. We were responsible for evaluating the patient's eye using what is called a slit lamp. We had three weeks to master the skill before we were individually evaluated. I practiced more than 20 hours on this one skill set alone. On the day of the

proficiency exam, I felt prepared. My mind was clear and I was ready to go. I completed the exam well in the time frame allotted. The next day I received feedback from the staff doctor on my performance. I had failed. Again it was only a checkpoint to check the progress of our clinical skills before final exams, but nonetheless I was shocked. All the work I had put in and all the sacrifices I had made to stay late in lab, come in early on Saturdays and Sundays weeks prior to the exam resulted in a poor performance. I could not believe it.

On the drive back home I wondered if all the hard work I put in was worth the effort because the end result was not what I was expecting or what I felt I deserved. I began to ponder about my approach to exams and proficiencies moving forward. This

would not be the last of them. The next checkpoint was only days away. I wondered, was it even worth having high expectations about my performance on the exam? My goal for this past proficiency was to ace it and impress the socks off my staff doctor and obviously that did not go as planned. The only thing I was left with was frustration and misery. Then I wondered if it was better to have low expectations for my performance for all future exams and proficiencies. If I expected to fail then there would be no frustration but if I were to pass, it would be a pleasant surprise and one less retake. I thought, "Which of these mentalities was better? Which was worse? How do I choose? What would Buddha do?"

I found some resolution during the recent lecture by Rev. Futoshi Take-

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#### DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

Autumn is upon us. Leaves are turning colors and starting to fall. I'm waiting for the two beautiful gingko tree leaves on my neighbor's property to turn brilliant gold. The days are getting shorter and it's finally getting cooler. It's time to think about Ho-on-ko and Thanksgiving.

Dharma school will be busy with lessons on why we have a special service called Ho-on-ko and why we celebrate Thanksgiving. We will also be starting to plan for our year-end contribution to the entertainment portion of our service.

The Dharma school thanks the Kato Family for our wonderful Halloween Party. The children and adults had a great time with the fun games, unique costumes, delicious food, and, the climax of the day—the awesome pumpkin piñata. It was great to see so many of the children participating. Hope to see you at Dharma school in the coming weeks!

Gassho, Claire Hansen

## Buddhist Rituals and How They Relate to American Society

-Dharma Seeds Report-Michelle Harrison

Reverend Takehashi's seminar on Buddhist Rituals was particularly interesting to me. I have always enjoyed participating in Buddhist rituals including chanting the Shoshinge, offering incense, bowing, and reciting Namu Amida Butsu. As with all traditions, we usually get to a point where we become curious and defiant and demand answers for why we practice them. Although I am fairly new to Buddhism, having been brought up in a Japanese-American household, it was not difficult for me to adhere to the rituals at temple. I found myself looking forward to

chanting the melodic and beautiful Shoshinge every Sunday. I remember reading the translated text of the Shoshinge and realizing that its importance lies in the very act of reciting it, and not necessarily in understanding what is being recited. However, I think it's only natural to question the meaning behind



rituals that we practice every week. Reverend Takehashi explained that most of the rituals in Buddhism are historically based and have been passed on for hundreds of years. He also emphasized that rituals provide structure and routine to encourage people to listen to the Dharma. Whether you look forward to the weekly rituals at temple, drag your feet going with your parents, or are tired of the familiar routine, you can benefit from participating in the traditions of Buddhism. Our participation brings us closer to the Dharma. On a deeper level, in keeping the traditions alive we're listening to the Dharma through the Dharma talks, practicing the Dharma by chanting and singing, and living the Dharma by being part of the Sangha.

#### HALLOWEEN 2015













T E M P L E N E W S

#### Ho-on-ko Service

Our Ho-on-ko Service will be held on Sunday, November 8, at 4:30 pm with Rev. Ken Yamada from Berkeley Buddhist Temple as our special speaker. Please join us as we welcome Rev. Yamada and stay for the complimentary Otoki dinner that will follow the service.

#### The Study Class

The Study Class will meet on November 10 and 24 at 10:00 am. Discussions will be based on selected topics that vary from week to week. The class meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month. For more information, please contact Rev. Miyoshi at (626) 689-1040.

## November Shotsuki Service & Board Meeting

November Board Meeting will be held on November 15 at 8:30 am followed by the Shotsuki Service at 10 am.

#### Mochitsuki

WCBT's annual *Mochitsuki* will be held on Sunday, December 13. The special *mochi* rice will be passsed out to Sangha members on November 29. This rice will be washed and soaked the night before and beginning at 7:00 am it will

be steamed until it is ready to be poked and pounded and eventually molded into smooth *mochi* shapes. Some are filled with sweet bean *an* and others are made into the traditional New Years symbolic offering, *okasane*. Come and join us in this annual tradition.



#### Year-end Service & Oseibo

Our Year-end Service, Oseibo gift presentation and potluck dinner will be held on Sunday, December 20 at 4:00 pm. Entertainment will be provided by the Dharma School, youth organizations and other members of the Sangha. If you have a talent you'd like to share, please contact Rev. Miyoshi.

The potluck assignments are as follows: If your last name begins with A-K, please bring a main dish and a salad; L-N, bring a main dish and rice dish; O-Y, bring a main dish and a dessert.

Please join us for a fun evening of entertainment and feasting on the delicious potluck spread from the West Covina Temple members.

#### LEARNING, con't from pg. 1

hashi for the Dharma Seeds program on the topic of the meaning of Higashi Honganji rituals- tradition as it relates to the American lifestyle. Rev. Takehashi expressed the importance of participation in rituals as being an opportunity to lose our self in an activity which we simply can't do alone. For instance have you ever sat in the audience and sung along with your

favorite rock band at a concert or joined in chanting with the home team during a championship sporting event? Have you participated in as a member of a choir or a member of a band? If so you may have experienced your voice or instrument becoming lost in the greater sound of the group. In that moment you stop thinking about if you are in tune or out of tune. You don't worry if

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### **GATEWAY Staff**

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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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#### **NOVEMBER**

Travis Hamachi, Erika
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Jean Nakatani, Hiroko
Takemoto, Wesley Kawaguchi,
Frank Tanji, Andrew Kochi,
Lauren Oshiro, Lynette Godoy,
Kaz Uyechi, Shinuki Okamura,
Brian Endo, Sany Nafarrete

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## MORE SCENES FROM HALLOWEEN 2015









The Kato family clan took charge of the Halloween shindig for the entire Sangha. Not only did they organize fun games and great prizes for the children and adults, they also provided a scrumptious luncheon of hot dogs, several choices of salads, desserts, and drinks for all to enjoy.











## 12<sup>TH</sup> WORLD DŌBŌ GATHERING August 27-28, 2016

Registration fee: \$250.00 (includes 2 lunches and dinner banquet) Anticipated total participation: 380 persons

The World Dōbō Convention is a gathering of members and ministers of Japan, Hawaii, North America, and South America held every three years. Next year's 12th World Dōbō Gathering will be held on the weekend of August 27/28, 2016 at the Hilton Hotel Los Angeles/Universal City and at the Los Angeles Betsuin. The theme of the upcoming meeting is "Dōbō: Seeking Unity in the Midst of Diversity," with the accompanying slogan, "Learning from the Past - Living in the Present - Envisioning the Future." The keynote speaker will be Dr. Mark Unno, associate professor and head of the Religious Studies deptartment at the University of Oregon.

It is an opportunity to make new friends, renew old friendships, to meet together to deepen our understanding of the Buddhadharma, and to learn about the successes and challenges of temples in Japan and in the overseas districts. As the hosts of this gathering, we will be sharing the history of our temples in the North America District going back over 110 years, and the struggles of establishing the Japanese American community on the mainland.

The success of this event is dependent on all of us of the North America District putting our energies together. The banquet promises to be a most enjoyable part. But it also is an important opportunity to introduce our district and our temples to those coming from other areas faraway, and is also a chance for meaningful meetings and dialogue with other Higashi Honganji members from around the world. With your support and guidance, we are confident that this will be a wonderful event that all participants will enjoy.

We hope that you will mark your calendars for those two days in August next year and plan to join us for this auspicious occasion.

#### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (tentative)

#### Saturday, August 27, 2016

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## (All events at Hilton Hotel Los Angeles/Universal City)

9:30 am - Opening Ceremony

10:30 am - North America District Presentation I (Past)

1:30 pm - Small Group Discussions

3:30 pm – Lecture – Dr. Mark Unno

5:30 pm - Banquet (Entertainment - TaikoProject +)

#### Sunday, August 28, 2016

## (Events at the Hotel, JANM, and LA Betsuin) 8:30 am — Morning Service

9:30 am - North America District Presentation II (Present • Future)

1:00 pm - Tour of Japanese American National Museum

3:30 pm — Commemorative Photo (LA Betsuin)
4:30 pm — Shinran Shonin Memorial Service (LA Betsuin)

5:30 pm - Closing Ceremony

For our North America District members, registration will begin soon. Please refer to the JTB website (<a href="http://online.jtbusa.com/GROUP/DOBO/">http://online.jtbusa.com/GROUP/DOBO/</a>) for online registration. In addition, the North America District has set up a webpage (<a href="http://higashihonganji.org">http://higashihonganji.org</a>) to

access the latest information regarding the upcoming event.



#### 2016年 第12回

## 世界同朋大会

東本願寺の御同朋御同行(親鸞聖人の教えを共に聞き、その教えを生活の拠りどころとして生きる仲間)が世界中から集う世界同朋大会は三年に一度開催されています。2016年は私達の北米開教区が開催地となり、下記の通り開催いたします。世界の同朋達と出会い、共に教えを聞くことができる素晴らしい機会です。どうぞお誘い合わせの上、ご参加いただきますようご案内申し上げます。

開催期日 2016年8月27日(土)から8月28日(日)まで

テーマ 「Dōbō ~多様な世界の中で~」

スローガン「過去に学び、今を生き、未来が開かれる」

開催地 ヒルトン・ロサンゼルス・ユニバーサルシティ

大会参加冥加金 \$250.00 (晩餐会食事一回、昼食二回、博物館入館等の料金を含む)

参加予想数合計380名

日程案 ※日程は変更する場合がございます。 2016年8月27日(土)

9:30 開会式

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10:30 北米開教区からの提言 ~過去~

13:30 班別座談·発表

15:30 海野マーク氏 講演質疑応答

18:00 晚餐会~太鼓演奏等~

#### 2016年8月28(日)

8:30 晨朝·感話·法話

9:30 北米開教区からの提言 ~現在・未来~

13:00 日系人博物館

15:30 記念写真撮影

16:30 ご命日法要

17:30 閉会式





大会の成功には北米開教区の皆様のお力添えが是非とも必要です。大会の内容としては晩餐会のお楽しみを始め「北米開教区の紹介」や「世界の同朋との交流」などの行事があり、開教区の皆様のご活躍を期待しておいます。これから大会までの一年間、準備のための会議や作業が始まり、皆様にお力添えをお願いすることが多くなると存じますが、何卒ご協力いただきますよくお願い申し上げます。

世界同朋大会北米開教区ホームページ http://higashihonganji.org/

参加申し込み (10月15日より開始)はJTBのホームページ <a href="http://online.jtbusa.com/GROUP/">http://online.jtbusa.com/GROUP/</a>
<a href="DOBO/">DOBO/</a> また日本語の大会参加申し込み書は各寺院にご用意致しております。参加締め切りは2016年6月15日です。

お問い合わせはホームページ、または北米開教監督部 (213) 621-4064 までお寄せ下さい。 大会の情報については随時お知らせします。

LEARNING, con't from pg. 3 you are playing the right notes or if you are even chanting the right words. At the peak of the activity you simply cannot even hear your own voice because the amplitude of the sound as a whole is larger than any one person alone. This unison of sound and effort and being lost is the integration of objective self and the actual self.

The sense of unity is the ultimate purpose of rituals. In times when people are discontent or uneasy within themselves, Rev. Takehashi says they flee to activities such as participation in rituals. Why, because one can gain a sense of fulfillment being surrounded by people involved in an activity done as one which counteracts feelings of uneasiness. Rituals like chanting allow us to drive away our emotion of isolation. It is a feeling of unconditional acceptance. However, we have no absolute escape from this discrepancy between what I think of myself and who I truly am. We cannot ignore the differences that set apart the objective self and actual self. But with the Buddhist teachings we are able to live life in the midst of suffering caused by self-discrepancy. We feel uneasy when we are not able to meet our expectations just as I felt when my performance results did not stack up to my own expectations. Prior to the exam I internally set a standard for myself and put myself on a high pedestal of achievement before the exam even took place. Some may call this confidence and others may call it arrogance. Either way I was shocked when my performance did not match my expectation. I too felt isolated from classmates that did well. I could not accept myself for falling short of my expectations which resulted in my discontentment.

However, like any ritual that is meant to unify, rituals also exclude people even if unintentional. We use rituals to express the Dharma through human expression, even though human expression is limited. We are limited in language, time and space while the Teachings of the Nenbutsu are boundless in time and space. The Dharma

embraces anybody and everybody unconditionally.

At this point you must feel confused as I was during Rev. Takehashi's discussion on rituals. At one point Rev. Takehashi makes a claim that rituals are good because they unify people. Rituals unite our image of our self and who we actually are. Then again he goes on to explain that rituals depicted through human expression are limited tend to exclude others which is not beneficial because the Teachings of the Nenbutsu do not exclude anyone and embrace all unconditionally. So what's the bottom line? Are rituals a good thing that we should keep doing or bad thing that we should stop? Maybe that is just what it is meant to be by giving us the opportunity to awaken to our own limitations and become more self-aware.

Many people proclaim to going on soul searches or self-discovery journeys to find themselves. I catch myself thinking I wish I could be more intelligent and be more fit, but in those moments I am not my true self. I also catch myself thinking I will become my imagined self one day when I am a lit of many things like intelligent and more fit. But my innermost wish is to accept myself for who I really am. Every opportunity including a failed mini proficiency is my chance to look into myself and see who and what I really am. My goal in life is not just to be a good person. My goal is not just to be a person that is easily to get along with but to find my limitations and to become humbled by all that I am not. I am not the best. I am not the smartest. I am me.

In an attempt to tidy up my room for a fresh start I came across an old article written by Dr. Nobuo Haneda entitled "What is Shin Buddhism?". When I read it my mind was blown away because the contents of his article came to me at the right time just when I needed it most. His article talks about the very same dilemma I was facing with accepting Buddhism into my daily life as a young adult full of ambition, desires and dreams. He answers my questions through his advice to

Dharma school teachers about how they should teach Dharma school children. He says, "Growing must come first. Let them have all the ambition and goals and desire they want. Let them pursue. It is only after having pursued their ambitions and having become an adult do they reflect upon themselves and see their limitations at which point maturity has begun. Dharma school teachers should not be attempting to make perfect Buddhas at such a young age." Dr. Haneda says it is like "creating monsters". At this young age how is a child supposed to comprehend Shinran's concepts like deep self-awareness? He goes on to say that Dharma school teachers can prepare children now for the maturing state in their future. They must teach their students the ultimate goal in life is to become humble. Humility is the most important universal virtue. Only a humble person can have the greatest happiness and joy. Dharma school teachers themselves must learn to be humble more than anything else. Even though teachers become focused on delivering countless Sunday school lessons, activities and outings the students will soon forget everything about Dharma school. However, they will always remember the humble attitude and respect they have seen in their teachers.

Dr. Haneda explains that being a good person is not enough. A good person must become a humble person. Bowing our heads with respect for the Dharma is all that is necessary in Buddhism. Many people think that Buddhism means practices or efforts to perfect themselves. But the most important thing in Buddhism is the realization that something perfect, a wonderful Dharma tradition, is already given to us. We need only to receive it, to listen to it. Thus the most important thing in Buddhism is not what-ness, not what we can do to achieve it. It is how-ness, how humbly we can respect the Dharma and how deeply we are bowing our heads before it."

After reading Dr. Haneda's article

Please see LEARNING, con't on pg. 8



#### LEARNING, con't from pg. 7

I felt more disappointed at myself. How foolish of me, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year student, to believe I could master a technique that has taken my staff doctors years to master. This one setback has allowed me to have a new found respect for the optometric profession and all the physicists and doctors that studied, designed and lobbied for the instruments that optometrists are able to use today. The profession has grown from a mere dispensary of glasses to a full fledged gatekeeper to the health of patients' overall well-being. Many of the top killers of Americans are no longer diseases like TB or polio; they are things like cardiovascular disease and diabetes which present little to no symptoms until most of the damage is already done. Many of these diseases manifest themselves in ways that affect vision which optometrists can detect. The systems of the body are all interconnected and the eye is no different.

At the time, what seemed to be a large setback in my life, ended up being so trivial in the grand scheme when life as a whole is put into perspective.

(This article was abridged by the editors due to limited space.)

#### **Buddhism Quiz**

Here is another one of our quizzes to test you on "How well you know your Buddhism." As in the last two Buddhist quizzes, today's questions are about the Buddhist altar.

#### Difficulty Level: Easy review

- 1. The burning of incense in the urns in and near the altar
  - a. symbolizes the transcending of selfishness or ego to become one with others.
  - b. symbolizes the ancient tradition of bathing before appearing before the altar
  - c. soothes the senses so that one is able to listen more intently to the Dharma.
- 2. Flowers which grace the altar are appreciated not only for their beauty, but
  - a. the many colors of the bouquet represent the many sentient beings of the world
  - b. as a reminder that we are all fragile and delicate creatures.
  - c. as a symbol of impermanence and the continuous change within and around us.

Answers: a, c

#### Quote of the Month

I speak not for myself but for those without voice... those who have fought for their rights... their right to live in peace, their right to be treated with dignity, their right to equality of opportunity, their right to be educated.

-Malala Yousafzai



## あらゆる経験が 学びになる 地頭所マイケル

(\*今回は9月27日の日曜礼拝で地頭 所マイケルさんが話してくれた法話の抜 粋をご紹介します。)

私は飛び抜けて優秀な生徒ではありません。けれど、努力は惜しまないタイプだと思っています。試験にしても実習にしても私のモットーは早く準備に取り掛かり、十分に本番に備えるということです。

先週検定試験が行われました。診 療の技術が正しく身についているか を確認するものでした。私たちは3 週間かけてその検定のために必要な 技術の講習を受けました。その技術 を身につけるために私は20時間以 上を費やしました。おかげで検定試 験当日は準備万端の思いがありまし た。当然試験にも自信をもって臨み ましたし、出来も上々だったという 手応えもありました。けれども、結 果は不合格でした。再度その検定試 験を受けなければならないというこ とよりも、不合格という結果に大き なショックを受けました。あれだけ の努力と時間が全て無駄だったよう な気がして、とてもその結果を受け 入れることができませんでした。

帰り道の車の中ではどのような姿勢で試験に臨むことが正しいのか、 ということを考えていました。実際 別の検定試験も数日後に迫っています。努力が必ずしも期待通りを合っていまをもたらしてはくれないことをの試験では思い知らされました。は、最初から結果に対してあまいない。高いはなりすることも惨めな思したがったがったがあることもないでしょうから。時のではんでいる時のでは、"Dharma Seeds Program"の研修会で受けた竹橋太先生のお話を思いしたのです。

竹橋先生は儀式のもつはたらき についてお話してくださいました。 儀式は私たちをつなげ、一体感を生 み出します。それは私たちが頭で 色々と考えて得るのではなく、その 場にいるという事実を通して私たち を感動させるはたらきです。一体感 は私たちに大きな喜びと感動をもた らします。そして、それこそが儀式 のもつ究極の役割であります。「け れども同時に・・・」と、竹橋先生 は言葉を続けました。「儀式は人を 排除するようにもはたらく」と。私 たちが感じる一体感が強ければ強い ほど、その輪に入れない人にとって はより大きな疎外感となります。そ れは儀式のもつジレンマです。そし て、儀式というものが本来人間に よって作られたものであるというこ とは、そのジレンマはそのまま私た ち人間が抱えるジレンマを反映して いるといえるのではないでしょう か。自他の区別なく一体になりたい と願いながら、自己と他者を分ける ことで「自分」というものを確立し ようとするのが人間です。しかも、 その自分はありのままの自分ではな く、自分が期待する自己の姿なので す。ですから、現実の自分がその理 想の自分の姿を満たすことができな い時、自分自身を受け入れることが できず、そのギャップに苦しめられ るのです。それはまさに検定試験を 通して見えてきた私の姿そのもので した。結果の前に「受かって当然の 自分」を思い描いていた私。それこ そが私のあるべき姿だと思っていた が故に、不合格の自分を受け入れら

れない私。そして、合格したクラスメートに対して疎外感を感じる私。 努力が失望と不満をもたらしたのではなく、こうあるべきという自分のイメージに執着していたということが、今の私の不満を生み出していたのです。

理想の自分を思い描くこと、そし てその実現のために努力することは 大事なことですし、成長していくた めには必要なことです。けれども、 仏教は同時に私の中の深い願いにも 耳を傾けるよう促してくれているよ うに感じます。それは、ありのまま の姿の自分を大切に受け止めるとい うことです。あらゆる出来事が、そ れこそ検定試験に落ちるという経験 も、自分の姿を映す鏡となってくれ ていました。私の人生の目標は、よ い人間になることではありません。 どんな人ともうまく付き合っていけ る人間になることでもありません。 私の人生の目標は、自分の至らない 部分に向き合える人間になることで す。あらゆる人を敬い尊敬すること ができる人に、そうではない自分の 姿をいつも教えられ続けることを通 して、なっていきたいと思っていま

#### お寺ニュース

#### 法話会報恩講(日本語)

法話会では11月5日(木)午後7時より、11月祥月法要と併せて報恩講を厳修致します。報恩講は親鸞聖人への報恩謝徳の為に行われる最も大切な仏事です。どうぞ皆様お誘い合わせの上、ご参詣下さいますようご案内申し上げます。

#### 報恩講 (英語)

11月8日(日)午後4時半より、本年度の報恩講法要(英語)を厳修致します。講師としてバークレー東本願寺より山田ケン師をお招きしております。法要後には、お斎をご用意いたしております。報恩講は一年の節目となる最も大切な法要です。どうぞ皆様でご参詣下さい。

East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center, Inc.

West Covina Buddhist Temple 1203 W. Puente Avenue, West Covina, CA 91790 P.O. Box 1616, West Covina, CA 91793 NON-PROFIT ORG. U.S. POSTAGE PAID Permit No. 38 Covina, CA 91722

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THE WEST COVINA BUDDHIST TEMPLE



November 2015 -- Vol.L No.10

#### November

5 7:00 pm Howakai Hoonko Service

8 4:30 pm Hoonko Service

10 10:00 am Study Class

15 8:30 am Board Meeting

15 10:00 am Shotsuki Service

22 10:00 am Sunday Service/753 Service

24 10:00 am Study Class

29 10:00 am Sunday Service

#### **December**

3 7:00 pm Howakai Japanese Service

6 8:30 am Board Meeting

6 10:00 am Shotsuki Service

**Bodhi Day Service** 

8 10:00 am Study Class

13 7:00 am Mochitsuki

20 4:00 pm Year-end Service

#### 2015年11月行事予定

5日 午後7時 法話会報恩講

8日 午後4時半 報恩講法要(英語)

15日 午前8時半 理事会

15日 午前10時 祥月法要

22日 午前10時 日曜礼拝/七五三法要

29日 午前10時 日曜礼拝

#### 12月行事予定

3日午後7時 法話会

6日午前8時半 理事会

6日午前10時 祥月法要/涅槃会

13日 午前7時 もちつき

20日午後4時年末家族礼拝

# In Normal StateNormal Stat

世俗の論理の行き詰まることを 教えるのが仏法

栗山力精