



GATEWAY



December 2014 -- Vol. XLIX No. 12



WCBT observed Hoonko Service on Nov. 16 with 7 NAD ministers in attendance.

The Working of Transformation

Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi

As the end of the year approaches, many of us are busy planning for year-end parties. In Japan, they are called 'Bo-nen-kai.' 'Bo-nen-kai' literally means 'a gathering to forget this year.' As we begin with every year, we are naturally optimistic that the New Year will bring good health and happiness. However, our wishes often do not come true because of unforeseen events that inevitably happen in our lives. Then, having fun times at 'Bo-nen-kai' can help us to forget those bad things and make a fresh start with renewed hopes for the coming year.

We all try to have structure in our lives in order to control it. As long as everything works as we plan, our lives seem very comfortable and we are satisfied with life. In this sense, 'bad things' are usually things that do not work out the way we want them

and it brings discomfort and frustration. Therefore, it is natural that we want to forget or get rid of bad things as soon as we can.

However, because of our ignorance that we blindly assume that we control our lives. When things do not go our way and we are unable to accept it, we often say, "It is not supposed to be like this!" Buddhism is the teaching which makes us realize that our assumptions are completely wrong. Buddha is the one who became aware of this ignorance in human beings, therefore, he is called "Awakened One."

The truth that Śākyamuni Buddha awakened to is not complicated or difficult. Rather, it is simple and straightforward. This means that the truth is open to everyone and anyone has potential to awaken to this truth as Śākyamuni Buddha. Two of these

Truths are "Our life is unmanageable from the beginning" and "We all shall die." However, these Truths also reflect our unwillingness to accept them and this is the fundamental root of our suffering.

What Buddha might say to us, then, is "Even if you are able to forget all the bad things of this year, unforeseeable happenings await in the coming year."

This sounds very pessimistic,

Please see Working, con't on page 6

Temple Event Highlights:

- Dec. 7 Shotsuki Service
- Dec. 14 Mochitsuki
- Dec. 21 Year-End Service
- Jan. 1 New Year's Day Service
- Please See Temple News



T H E G A T E W A Y

DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

November was the month of Thanksgiving. The Dharma School children were read a story about thankfulness. After the story, the children shared the many ways in which they are thankful. It was a good and interesting experience for all!

For their November project, the children fashioned paper turkeys using their hands as templates for the turkeys' feathers. The turkeys are very colorful and hopefully were used as part of the centerpiece in their Thanksgiving dinners!

Year-End and Mochitsuki are around the corner. We are busily getting ready for a Year-End presentation by the Dharma School children. It's going to be a surprise. We hope you all come out for the performances and delicious potluck dinner. We're going to work very hard and hope you will enjoy our presentation.

Have a good holiday season and Happy New Year!

Gassho,
Claire Hansen

Quote of the Month

People naturally fear misfortune and long for good fortune; but if the distinction is carefully studied, misfortune often turns out to be good fortune and good fortune to be misfortune. The wise one learns to meet the changing circumstances of life with an equitable spirit, being neither elated by success nor depressed by failure. Thus one realizes the truth of non-duality.

Śākyamuni Buddha

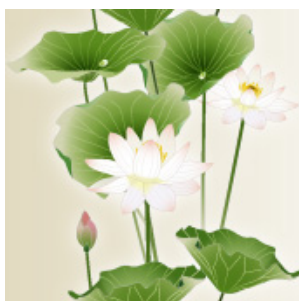
Why do Zazen?

Michael Jitsho

I debated and thought about it all day. I just finished my toughest final of the quarter and was exhausted. It was late and I contemplated whether or not it was worth it to fight through traffic to make it on time. In the end I attended the lecture on Zazen. My curiosity about why other people in today's western society are so drawn to Zen and meditation motivated me to listen to the lecture in person. I wondered if Zen is a fad like many things being popular and trendy and will come and go. Or maybe there is something less superficial and real that draws people to its true essence? Knowing little to nothing about Zen of its philosophy and practice, I came with an open mind and was ready to listen.

The topic of the first lecture was about Zazen and meditation. The monk, Daigaku, from Zenshuji Soto Temple in Los Angeles explained that meditation comes in as many different forms and people have as many different reasons to use meditation as there are different shapes of snowflakes. Some use meditation in an attempt to relieve stress in the future, become enlightened in the future or to contemplate about a question for the future. However, Daigaku said this is not the true essence of meditation in the Zen tradition. Daigaku gave a very simple example that made the practice of Zen very clear to me. He told us a story about a student named Bosa and a teacher named Nensen. The student sat in

perfect form and mediated, to which the teacher asked, "What is your intention for diligently meditating with such discipline and concentration?" The student replied, "To become enlightened." The teacher then went outside the hall and into the garden and picked up a broken roof tile and started filing it with a stone. The student asked his teacher, "What is your intention for diligently filing that roof tile with such discipline and concentration?" The teacher responded, "So that it will become a precious jewel." This story illustrates the essence of Zen and the practice of meditation in the Zen tradition. One's purpose for meditation should not be to become something in the future or to gain something but, as Daigaku put it, it should be to just "warm the cushion". The ultimate goal is to realize one's own internal imperfections; to let go of desire and accept things as they are. After attempting to meditate for only 5 minutes during the last half of the lecture, I understand this idea more clearly. It was difficult to just let ideas come and go. I was advised not to stop ideas from coming in but to let them float away like clouds in the sky. Honestly speaking, it was difficult for me to accept that I was going to sit there in a cold plastic chair for 5 whole minutes in silence and not do anything let alone think of anything. It was not easy to do even for just 5 minutes. Daigaku said they do it from morning until night in 40 minute intervals. I have much more respect for Zen Buddhism now and see a value in the practice of meditation as a way of seeing things as they are and trying to just let go. I do not see myself attempting meditation for 8 hours a day because 5 minutes is challenging enough. But I do have a newfound appreciation for meditation that is full of emptiness.





T H E G A T E W A Y

T E M P L E N E W S

Mochitsuki

WCBT's annual *Mochitsuki* will be held on Sunday, December 14. Beginning at 7:00AM, the special *mochi* rice, which will be sent home to be washed and soaked the night before, 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 21 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.

The Study Class

The Study Class will meet on December 9 at 10:00 AM. Discussions will be based on selected articles that vary 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.

New Years Day Service

A special service to commemorate the new year will be held on Thursday, January 1, 2015, at 10:00 AM. Please let Rev. Miyoshi know if you're planning to attend.

Board Meeting & Shotsuki Service

The January 2015 board meeting will be held on Sunday, January 4 at 8:30 AM followed by the Shotsuki Service for January.

Eitaikyo & General Meeting

Eitaikyo will be held on Sunday, January 18 at 10 AM. followed by the General Meeting.

A bento lunch will be provided by presale only so make sure you contact Dick Koga to get your Eitaikyo lunch tickets. Join us for our yearly service and enjoy the delicious bento.

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

Happy Birthday ♪



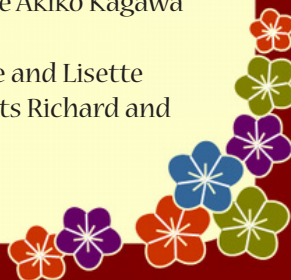
DECEMBER

Allison Haraguchi, Kyle Kagawa, Chris Nakano, Denise Underwood, Larry Oshima, Susan Iwama, Johnny Martinez, Tristan Miyashiro, Sandra Nakano, Jonathan Ogino, Kristin Dubble, Merry Jitosh, Jessica Saucedo, Taylor Saucedo, Katrena Sakaue, Brandon Kwan, Brett Miyamoto, Wesley Zhao Chen, Julie Griffith, Jack Wear, Sean Underwood, Richard Kagawa, Stephanie Akune

Birth Announcements:

A warm welcome to little Amelie Akiko Kagawa born on October 19, 2014.

Congratulations to parents Kyle and Lisette Kagawa and happy grandparents Richard and Ruby Kagawa.





T H E G A T E W A Y

Kiku Crafts & Food Fair 2014

by Hisako Koga

WCBT held our annual Kiku Crafts & Food Fair on Sunday November 2, 2014 and thanks to the help of all the sangha members we had another successful year. We had vendors from Southern California to Arizona display their wonderful creations for everyone to view and select from for their holiday shopping. Thanks to Dick Koga and Jennifer Higa for being in charge of the delicious food and adding a couple of delicious new items to the old favorites on the menu. The chashu and rice and furikake fries were a big hit! Thank you to all the temple members who were there the day before to prepare the food and set up the social hall and who were there early Sunday morning and worked all during the craft & food fair. An event like this is only possible with everyone working together and I am so grateful for everyone's continued support.



Many Sangha members worked hard behind the scene.



Russell Martinz, our next generation BBQer-in-training.



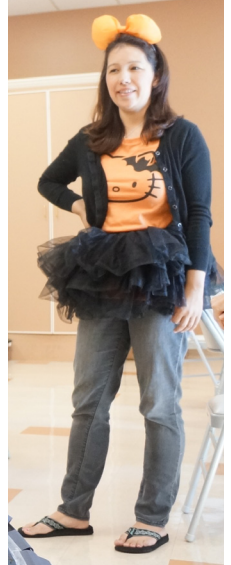
Dick and Rev. Miyoshi are enjoying a secret brew.





T H E G A T E W A Y

Halloween, Hoonko, and more Kiku Crafts & Food Fair



Rev. Hasegawa gave a Dharma message at the Hoonko Service.



Ministers led the chanting of the special version of Shoshin-ge.

Comic book characters enjoyed a fun time at the WCBT Halloween party.



The Howakai group enjoy the special otoki after their Hoonko Service.



Bob and Ted enjoyed working hard at the Kiku Food Fair.





T H E G A T E W A Y

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

Working, con't from pg. 1

however, it is also Śākyamuni Buddha who said at the end of his eighty-year life, "What a beautiful place this world is! How sweet our life is!" This seems to contradict "Life is suffering," but here I see the working of transformation which Buddhist Teachings have.

No matter how much we listen to the teachings, it does not help us make our life go as we want. When the teachings truly work in our life, we receive the strength to accept everything that happens to us and learn from it. It is a moment of liberation from our selfish judgment.

Everything that happens in our life is originally neutral. They are neither good nor bad. However, when we see them, we immediately judge them from our perspective whether we like them or not. Buddhism reveals that it is our judgment that cause us suffering and frustration. Once we become aware of the problem of our judgment, the border drawn between 'good things' and 'bad things' fades away, and we come to realize that all our experiences, good and not so good are all important. All things, "bad" and "good" are an essential part of our experiences in life.

Losing a loved one is one of the harshest experiences we may have to encounter. No one would like to choose it willingly. However, no one can escape this reality and when we do lose a loved one, no matter how hard we wish, we cannot change the fact.

It is the power of the teachings that give us strength to live with the reality. It helps us to become aware

of the wishes and the legacy our loved ones left for us. It works in order to enable us to realize how much love and friendship we continue to receive. And that our heart breaking experience turns into an opportunity for us to consider seriously how we live our life. Once this transformation happens within us, although it is still a sad and painful experience, it is no longer a 'bad thing' to be negated. This proves that we have encountered the teachings in our life.

Śākyamuni Buddha was the one who was fully aware that life is filled with invaluable opportunities. Encountering the teachings enables us to live our life strongly and to the fullest. He regarded everything and everyone that led him to the teachings as buddhas, his teachers and best friends, and deeply respected them. That is why he described the world as beautiful and life as sweet.

As we conclude 2014, let us take a little time to reflect upon this year and consider what we have learned from it. We would soon realize all our experience, "good" and "bad," are all meaningful.

Buddhism Quiz

This is another in our series on "How well you know your Buddhism." We hope it will be informative for our readers.

Difficulty Level: Very, Very Easy

1. In Buddhism, the original word for suffering is
 - a. samsara
 - b. dukkha
 - c. bombu
2. According to the Buddha, which of the following is not true:
 - a. Suffering is caused by our own ignorance of the reality of impermanence.
 - b. We are the cause of our own suffering.
 - c. Suffering cannot be overcome.

Answers: b, c



T H E G A T E W A Y

転ずるはたらき

見義信香

年の瀬も押し迫ってきました。皆さんにとってこの一年はどのような年だったでしょうか。ご存知のように日本では年末になると種々の忘年会が催されます。この一年の労をねぎらうと同時に、様々なことのあった一年ですが、それらを引きずることなく心機一転、新たな気持ちでまた一年を頑張ろうという意味合いでこの忘年会が開かれていることと思います。特に明るい話題の少ない昨今においては、忘年会を通して嫌なことを忘れ新しく迎える年に期待と望みをかける人も少なくないのではないのでしょうか。

嫌なことがあったら、それを早く忘れてしまいたいと思うのが私たちです。嫌なこととはつまりは自分の思い通りにならなかったことと言い換えることができるかもしれません。しかし裏を返せばそれは、自分の人生は自分の思うようになるべきだという私たちの強い思い込みの表れともいえるかと思えます。自分の思い通りになる人生を限りなく望み、その通りにならないと「こんなはずではなかった」といって否定し続ける、それが私たちの姿といえるのではないのでしょうか。

そのような私たちは真実に目をつぶり続ける「眠っている人」であるということを知ってくれるのが仏教の教えであります。だからこそ、お釈迦様はご自身を「目覚めた人」と名告られ、眠っている私たちが真実に目覚めるよう願っておられるのです。

お釈迦様が目覚められた真実は決して複雑で難しいものではなく、むしろ非常に単純明快なものでありました。だからこそ誰もが目覚めることのできる真実なのです。それは、非常に大雑把な言い方をお許しただけならば「人生は思い通りにならない」ということと「人は必ず死ぬ」ということではないかと思えます。そしてその真実に全身全霊をかけて抗い続けるのが私たちであり、そこに「一切

皆苦」という言葉で表されるような、私たちの苦しみの根源があるということを見抜かれたのでした。つまり、今年一年の嫌なことを忘れても、来年もまた思い通りにならない苦しい毎日が待っていますよ、と私たちに教えてくれているのが仏教なのであります。

このようなことを聞くと、私たちはつい人生に夢も希望もないように感じてしまいます。しかし、人生は苦であると目覚められたお釈迦様は同時にその八十年の生涯を終えられる時に「ああ、この世はなんと美しい処であろうか。人生はなんと甘美なものであろうか」と語られたと言われているのです。「苦しみに満ちた人生」と「美しく甘美な人生」——見すると全く矛盾しているように聞こえるこの二つの言葉ですが、ここに私は仏法のもつ「転ずる」というはたらきを見ることができのではないかと思うのです。

仏法のもつはたらきは、思い通りにならないことを思い通りにすることでもなく、嫌なことを早く解決してくれることでもありません。それは思い通りにならないことを思い通りにならないこととしてしっかりと見つめる目を私たちにくださるはたらきであります。それは言い換えるならば、自己中心的に物事を見て、自分の思いに沿って物事を判断していく私たちの分別の目からの解放を促すはたらきといえるかもしれません。

そしてその目を授かったとき、私たちは自分にとって都合のよいこと、悪いことという枠を超え、この私が仏法に出会うためになくはならない御縁として、あらゆる事柄を受け止めていける生き方が始まるのです。例えば、身が崩れるような悲しみを経験された方が、その悲しみの只中において、そこからまた立ち上がって歩み出す。その時にその人の背をそっと押し、歩む一歩を支えているのが仏法のもつはたらきではないのでしょうか。その時その悲しみは悲しみのままで、その人が人生を歩み直すきっかけとなり、その人を取り囲み支えているあらゆる御縁に目を開かせるきっかけとなってくれているのです。それは自分を取り囲む

全ての事柄、あらゆる人々を仏法へと導いてくれる諸仏として敬っていける世界との出遇いといえるのではないのでしょうか。そのような出遇いに満ちた世界をお釈迦様は「美しく甘美な人生」として私たちに示してくださったのではないかと思うのです。

二〇一四年を締めくくるにあたって、今年一年の様々なことを忘れる代わりに、それらの事柄を通して私たちに語りかけられている願いや問いに耳を澄ませてみてはいかがでしょうか。その時、この一年は「忘れる年」ではなく、この身に起こった出来事の一つ一つが大切な意味をもつ出来事と転換され、私たちの人生にしっかりと刻まれていくことでしょう。

お寺ニュース

12月法話会祥月法要 忘年会

今年も余す所ひと月となりました。12月の法話会・祥月法要是4日(木)午後7時よりセンターにてお勤めいたします。また法要後例年の如く忘年会を催します。法話会とお寺よりお刺身が用意されます。皆さま方にはご自慢のお料理やデザートをお持ちくださるようお願い申し上げます。また歌や踊り、隠し芸などもご用意ください。一年を振り返りつつ皆さまと楽しい時間を過ごすことを楽しみにしております。

餅つき

今年のお餅つきは12月14日(日)午前7時より行われます。200ポンドの餅米をつきますのでお手伝いを宜しくお願いいたします。なお、餅米は12月4日に皆様にもって帰って頂き一昼夜水につけた後当日持って来ていただきます。みんなで美味しいお餅をつきましょう。当日は仏教青年会による朝食もごございます。

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 **GATEWAY** 

December 2014 - - Vol. XLIX No. 12

December

- 4 7:00 pm Howakai Shotsuki Service
Year-end Party
- 7 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 7 10:00 am Shotsuki/Bodhi Day Service
- 9 10:00 am Study Class
- 14 7:00 am Mochitsuki
- 21 4:00 pm Year-end Service

2014年12月行事予定

- 4日 午後7時 法話会祥月法要/忘年会
- 7日 午前8時半 理事会
- 7日 午前10時 祥月法要/成道会
- 14日 午前7時 もちつき
- 21日 午後4時 年末日曜礼拝

January

- 1 10:00 am New Year's Day Service
- 4 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 4 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 8 7:00 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 11 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 13 10:00 am Study Class
- 18 10:00 am Eitaikyo Service/General Meeting
- 25 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 27 10:00 am Study Class

2015年1月行事予定

- 1日 午前10時 修正会法要
- 4日 午前8時半 理事会
- 4日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 8日 午後7時 法話会
- 11日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 18日 午前10時 永代経法要/総会新年会
- 25日 午前10時 日曜礼拝

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仏智に照らされて

初めて愚鈍の身と知らされる

信國 淳