Finding Strength in the Dharma

Michelle Harrison
WCBT Member

Buddhism has enriched my life in more ways than I probably know. It has been a source of comfort and stress relief; a constant, unwavering support system that I can fall back on whenever I am foolish enough to forget what I have learned. I believe there is a Michelle before Buddhism and a Michelle after Buddhism. Since I haven’t been able to attend Sunday services due to work constraints, I feel a difference in how I deal with challenges on a small scale. I find myself yelling at my boyfriend about the car that tailgated me the whole way home, or the people who drag their feet in front of me - don’t they know I have 2 minutes to get to work? When I was regularly going to temple I was able to let go of all of that which was out of my control much faster and with less anger. As far as the big challenges go, even now, the Dharma always manages to return to the forefront of my mind and provide me with the support I need along the way.

Buddhism came to me during a time of much difficulty. My uncle had just died suddenly, and I was confronted with my own mortality as a 16-year-old. I decided to accompany my Auntie to church and temple to address the existential crisis I was facing, and to be her companion in a time so very dark. West Covina Buddhist Temple felt so much different than going to bible study or a Christian church. It felt like home. Listening to the Dharma and being part of the Sangha gave me a sense of community and belonging that I had not felt before. Years later when my dad died, it did not send me into the spiritual crisis I experienced with my uncle. It felt instead like the impermanence of life coming full circle. Having the privilege of going to temple and receiving support from the Sangha during that time helped me in innumerable ways. During the first family retreat I went to after my dad died, I talked to a fellow Sangha member in front of the altar for hours into the night. She shared her experience of losing her dad and it helped me understand and process my grief with someone who had lived what I was going through. Experiences like that perfectly embody the importance of Buddhism in my life.

Having experienced so much change over the years, having Buddhism in my spiritual arsenal has irrevocably altered the way I cope with adversity and hard-
DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

I hope you all had a great summer and a good start to the new school year!

The Fall Ohigan service was held on September 15. The Dharma School staff had an Ohigan project for the children. If you were not able to attend the Ohigan Service, your youngster(s) will be able to finish the project whenever they come to the temple. A big Thank You to Mrs. Pat Sato for designing the project.

In October, the staff is planning to have our next project based on the interconnection of life. The activity will be designed to make the children aware of how they are dependent on all living things in the world. Since the children are of different ages, there will be several kinds of activities based on the ability of each child. We think this will be a fun way to teach one of the important concepts of Buddhism.

October 27 will be our Dharma School/Halloween Party. Time to dress up and enjoy the games and goodies of our party. Hope to see all of you there!

Gassho,
Claire Hansen

DHARMA, con’t from pg. 1

ship. Early last year, my family and I had to move out of the home we had lived in for 25 years. At the same time, I was studying for the GRE and about to begin an intensive prerequisite program for Speech-Language Pathology. I truly thought that going through my dad’s old things and so many relics from my childhood would force me to tears and keep me from making the decisions I needed to make. I thought I would surely resist all the change I was faced with, but I did not. I remembered that change is simply that, and what makes it good or bad are what we choose to project onto it, not change itself. That simple, yet profound concept helped me get through everything I was confronted with and come out the other end victorious. I was able to get through the move, get the score I needed on the GRE, as well as complete the first semester of my program with good grades. I believe that I have Buddhism to thank for the resilience I have cultivated over the years. Without it, I may have followed a path that prevented me from moving forward.

Who knew when I first began attending temple that Buddhism was going to be so helpful to me in the years to come. Processing the death of my father, coping with so many changes, and staying resilient along the way – I attribute all of that to the lessons I have learned and internalized through the Dharma. My co-worker recently asked me what Buddhists believe, which is a question I always found hard to answer. What I said to him reinforced why Buddhism resonates with me so much and why it has been the foundation of all my choices thus far: Life is suffering; Everything is impermanent; Everything is interconnected; Live in the present. Those four teachings encompass what Buddhism means to me. They are teachings I am always able to find solace and strength in because they are universal truths. I take great comfort in knowing that whatever karmic conditions I may encounter in the future, I will always have Buddhism there to help guide me along the way. The Dharma has not led me astray so far – I doubt it ever will.

Bishop Ito presented Michelle Harrison with the 2019 NAD scholarship. Michelle is the first from WCBT to receive this scholarship. Read her winning essay on page 1.
Akimatsuri
The ESGVJCC Akimatsuri will be on Saturday, October 5, from 12:00-8:00 PM and WCBT will be in charge of the Teriyaki Barbecue. Sign-up sheet will be out for your signatures at upcoming services so please find a time when you can help.

We’d like to see everyone come out and support the Temple and the Center.

Fall Study Center Lecture Series
West Covina Buddhist Study Center & Dharma Seeds Program presents their Fall Lecture Series “Why I think Jodo Shinshu is Going to Disappear” with special speaker Rev. Masao Kodani. The series will be held on two consecutive Mondays, October 7 & 14, from 7:30 – 9:00 PM at the Center in room 3. The fee for the series is $20.

The Study Class
The Study Class will meet on October 8 and 22 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.

Halloween
Our annual Halloween party will follow the Sunday Service on October 27. There will be lots of fun and games and prizes so come dressed in your favorite costumes and get in the Halloween spirit! There will be refreshments for everyone so join us in the fun!

Kiku Crafts & Food Fair
WCBT will sponsor our 11th Annual Kiku Crafts & Food Fair on Sunday, November 3, from 10 AM-3 PM featuring Asian inspired crafts, clothing, jewelry, giftware, ceramics, original artwork with many new and exciting vendors. New for 2019 is women's clothing! And of course lots of delicious food will be offered for sale and consumptions. Each vendor will be handling their own sales and not all take credit cards so come prepared. WCBT members are welcome to shop early from 9:30 AM. Come for some holiday shopping. Stay for the fun and food!

For more information or if you can help, please contact Hisako Koga 951-818-8740 or hskoga@gmail.com.

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

Ho-onko Service
Our Ho-onko Service (a memorial service for Shinran Shonin) will be held on Sunday, November 17 at 4:30 PM. Our special guest speaker will be Rev. Akiko Okada from NAD. Please join us as we welcome Rev. Okada and stay for the complimentary Otoku dinner that will follow the service.

7-5-3 Service
7-5-3 or Shichi-go-san Service will be held on Sunday, November 24 at 10 AM. This special service is to recognize anyone who has reached the age of three, five or seven this year. Please inform Rev. Miyoshi if you have a family member or know of someone who will be the perfect age for this service.
の教えは、何の問題もない時に聞くととてもシンプルな教えです。けれども困難な経験を通してその言葉は初めて意味のある言葉となるし、その状況を生き抜く力となってくれるのではないでしょうか。

結果として引越しも無事に済み、試験にも合格しました。そして一学期目を上々の成績で終えることもできました。なにがあっても、そこからもう一度立ち上がり、歩き出す力、その力を長年にわたり培ってきたのが仏教だと思っています。

お寺に通いだした頃、仏教が将来これほど私を助けてくれるとは誰か想像したでしょう。父の死を受け入れること、たくさんの変化との付き合い方、そして立ち上がり続ける力―聞いてきた教えが私となり、進むべき道を教えてくれました。最近仕事の同僚が仏教徒はなにを信じているの、と聞いてきました。答えるのにいつも苦労する質問です。彼の質問を通して、なぜ仏教がこれほど私に響くのか、そしてなぜ自分の行動や選択の基準となっているのかに改めて気づくことができました。「人生は苦である」「すべては移り変わっていく」「あらゆるもののはつながっている」「今この瞬間を生きる」―この4つの教えが仏教が私を迷わせることはありませんし、これからも決してないでしょう。
Kiku Crafts & Food Fair
Sponsored by West Covina Buddhist Temple

Sunday, November 3, 2019
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Asian inspired crafts, giftware, jewelry, books, original art, kids & adult clothing, womens wear and delicious food!
Come for some holiday shopping, Stay for the fun and food!

For more information go to: livingdharma.org/CurrentEventsWCBT.html or call 951-818-8740
仏法に見出す生きる力
ミシェル・ハリソン

私は、答えを求めて叔母と一緒に様々な宗教施設に足を運びました。その時期は出口のないトンネルを歩いているような気分でした。ウェストコビナのお寺と出会ったのはそんな時でした。聖書の勉強会やキリスト教の教会に参加した時には感じなかった、故郷のような感じがしたのを覚えていました。開封をし、僧侶の一員となったことを通して、今まで感じたことのない人との繋がりと、自分がいるべき場所に出会ったという感覚を体験することができたのです。その数年後に今度は父が亡くなりましたが、その時は叔父が亡くなった時のような精神的危機に陥ることはありませんでした。むしろ、父の死は私が諸行無常の教えに深く顕現したのです。黙啓に辛い時期でしたが、そんな時だったからこそお寺とメンバーの支えが量り知れないほどの助けとなってくれました。むしろ、父の死は私が諸行無常の教えに深く顕現したのです。

生きるということは変化を経験し続けるということです。仏教の教えと出会ってからは困難や逆境との付き合い方が劇的に変化しました。例えば昨年初旬のことです。私たち家族は25年間住んでいた家から移住を余儀なくされました。都合が悪いといえば、その頃の私は音声言語病理学を学ぶためにGRE（大学院進学適性試験）の試験勉強の最中にでした。父の遺品や子供の頃の思い出の品などの片付けは辛く、この直面している思い通りにならない状況に抵抗するだろうと思っていた。けれども、実際、その場に立った私の心情は、変化をただありのままの変化として受け止める仏教の教義でした。起こっている変化を見るかによって良い経験に悪い経験にもなるということを改めて私に思い出させてくれました。このことから感じることは、仏法が私の人生の中で活きているということを教えてくれているようです。

人生で辛い経験をする時、仏教は私のそばにいました。叔父が突然亡くなった時、私は16歳でした。自分も死ぬ身なので、ということを初めて感じた時でした。そのことをとても恐ろしいと思ったよ

法話会報恩講（日本語）

法話会では11月7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17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。講師として北米講師部より岡田在子師をお招きしております。法要後には、お茶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。どうぞ皆様のご参加をお願い申し上げます。
October
3 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
5 12:00 pm ESGVJCC Akimatsuri
6 8:30 am Board Meeting
6 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
7 7:30 pm Lecture Series 1
8 10:00 am Study Class
13 10:00 am Sunday Service
14 7:30 pm Lecture Series 2
20 10:00 am Sunday Service
22 10:00 am Study Class
27 10:00 am Sunday Service/Halloween Party

November
210am-2pm Center Health Fair
310am-3pm Kiku Crafts & Food Fair
3 10:00 am Sunday Service
7 7:00 pm Howakai Ho-on-ko Service
10 8:30 am Board Meeting
10 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
12 10:00 am Study Class

2019年10月行事予定
3日 午後7時半 法話会
5日 正午 センター秋祭り
6日 午前8時半 理事会
6日 午前10時 祥月法要
13日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
20日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
27日 午前10時 日曜礼拝/ハロウィーン

11月行事予定
2日 午前10時 センターヘルスフェア
3日 午前10時 菊クラフトフェア
3日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
7日 午後7時 法話会報恩講
10日 午前8時半 理事会
10日 午前10時 祥月法要

生死は我等の自由に
指定し得るものにあらざるなり
清沢満之