Such a jarring title for our October lecture series brought many curious WCBT Sangha members (& Kathy Ikeda from Higashi!) together to listen to what Rev. Mas Kodani had to say on Oct 7 and Oct 14. Rev. Kodani cited how the number of BCA (Buddhist Churches of America) resident ministers has dwindled so drastically (he compared it to 1968), that many ministers are doing double, and sometimes triple duty in order to cover temples’ needs. Today there are 60 BCA temples with 30 resident ministers, and 36 of these temples “rent” or share ministers. He said this means that half of the temples are mostly empty. Often times these temples might meet once a month (or less) with a minister, depending on the availability. This is most apparent in California’s Central Valley farming communities, where many empty temples (with parsonages) have used one over-worked minister for the whole valley! We have heard that in its heyday, all the many individual farm temples thrived and were able to provide residences for their ministers, and each had their own Obon. Through their activities they formed their own community identities. As with many communities experiencing the various changes that occur through time, i.e. people moving away, lifestyles, etc., temples have been dying (in the form we know). The Minister’s Assistance Program was one way to address this issue. Also, the practical idea of smaller temples joining together as one temple, such as smaller temples combining with the Fresno Betsuin had been suggested, but it faced much resistance. Joining with other temples is giving up one’s long-held identity that is attached to ways of doing things. Perhaps that ties into what Rev. Kodani said about us being control freaks. We don’t like change, we want to feel comfortable with the people we know, we often might think our way is the better way, and
It’s hard to believe that November and the start of the holiday season is upon us! The fall colors are finally starting to appear and (off and on) the weather is getting a bit cooler.

The Halloween party was a success! There were fun games, candy, pizza, salad, sundaes, and root beer floats. The costumes were adorable and scary, and everyone had a great time.

Thank you Toban A!

November is a busy month with the Kiku Craft Fair, the special Hoonko service, and the Shichi-Go-San celebration. The Kiku Craft Fair offers unique items for sale and WCBT will prepare and offer delicious foods for sale.

Our Hoonko service will be held on November 17 at 4:30 p.m. Dharma School will have a lesson on interdependence and a fun activity for the children. There will be otoki after the service. Hope all of you can attend.

Please let Rev. Miyoshi know if you have a youngster who is or will be 3, 5, or 7 years old during 2019. We would like to honor them during the November 24th service for the Shichi-Go-San ceremony. The children will be recognized and presented with a gift.

Lastly, wishing all of you a Happy Thanksgiving!

Gassho,
Claire Hansen

HOWLING HALLOWEEN HIJINKS
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-on-ko Service
Our Ho-on-ko 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 Otoki 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.

The Study Class
The Study Class will meet on November 12 and 26 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.

Mochitsuki
WCBT’s annual Mochitsuki will be held on Sunday, December 8. The special mochi rice, which will be passed out to Sangha members beforehand, should be washed and soaked the night before and brought to the Temple ready for steaming at 7:00 AM. When the mochi rice is steamed to perfection it is ready to be poked and pounded and eventually shaped into smooth traditional mochis. Some are filled with sweet bean an and others are made into the traditional New Year’s 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 15 at 4:00 PM. Entertainment will be provided by the Dharma School 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.
don’t want to give up that sense of familiarity we’ve had. All things change, and Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu in America are no exceptions.

Throughout his talk, Rev. Kodani made many interesting comments. One was that he felt that the purpose of a Bodhisattva’s endeavors is “to play.” He cited the example of when one watches a child playing with their dog...there is no ego in the interaction. The child is totally at one with his dog, truly enjoying that experience in the moment (Nirvana). Another example was when Rev. Furumoto from Senshin took some Jr. YBA members to Japan. He surprised them by asking them to separately get lunch all by themselves. They had to give up control and comfort by not being allowed to go with friends (for support and help) to a restaurant. They had to open up and rely on the kindness of others to order a meal. From this they gained an unforgettable experience as well as gratitude. He said that to be in control all the time is taxing, but by giving up control one can appreciate the way you experience things. According to Rev. Kodani, it’s good to be put in uncomfortable situations now and then, to change things up from the very familiar. He suggested that it would be good to change things up even in temple services, to make us more present and alive.

Rev. Kodani also expressed that a living temple is one where regular interactions take place among Sangha members. All our temple activities and fundraisers are part of our Jodo Shinshu history and tradition here in America. It is where Sangha bonding occurs. They are vital in our learning about and connecting with one another. If we can truly enjoy one another, laughing and joking around while working hard at our fundraisers and all our activities, Rev. Kodani considers this as Bodhisattva play (or Nirvana). We are fortunate to be able to witness this often at West Covina. We see true interdependence in all the tasks that must be done at each of our fundraisers and activities...whether you’re a chairperson or worker bee, each and every person is equally important in contributing towards its success. We grow closer experiencing this firsthand. We don’t have to agree with one another to appreciate one another. In fact, dealing with views different from our own is a reality to be embraced and to learn from. Conflict is a reality however uncomfortable it may feel. In Buddhism, seeing our own self-centeredness and ugliness, and also realizing our not wanting to see it, is real but necessary for awakening (to our own ignorance). The spirit of all this is what keeps a temple alive and thriving. The Sangha is the heart of Jodo Shinshu.

Rev. Kodani distributed and explained a two-columned paper contrasting Christianity and Buddhism. He said that it is very important for us as individuals, parents, and teachers, to really be able to understand and clarify the differences. To remain viable in the future, it is most important that we communicate “Why is Jodo Shinshu important to me?” to our children, to our students, to all those who walk into our temples, and to one another. We learn from one another. We have a better chance of survival if we can see how Jodo Shinshu is different from Christianity. In Rev. Kodani’s view, perhaps some of those temples that have died or are dying, had/have become more Christianized in their thinking so that Jodo Shinshu’s uniqueness in what it can offer has perhaps gotten lost. We live in America, a basically Christian country, so it is only natural that we all have learned Christian words, concepts and ways. How can we not? In its early history here in America, Jodo Shinshu temples copied the Christian format, some of the vocabulary and concepts. Post-war, we were trying to assimilate, trying not to feel so foreign. Yet, Christianity and Buddhism are very different. We face that challenge, as well as needing to pay attention to becoming more Buddhist vs Japanese. However, he also stated that we must know (and teach) the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist vocabulary which of course includes Japanese language. “Itadakimasu” and “Gochisosama” are good examples of the gratitude in Buddhist thinking...appreciating others’ contributions. He felt it was important...
キリスト教と仏教を対比させたプリントが配られました。小谷先生は、私たち誰もがまずはこの二つの宗教の違いを明確に理解することが大変重要だと言われました。浄土真宗の将来は、「なぜ私にとって浄土真宗が大切な教えなのか？」という問いを自分自身に問い続け、同時に子供や生徒や同じ道を歩む人たちと語り合うことができるかにかかっています。キリスト教と真宗の違いをはっきりさせることで、真宗がこの国で生き残るチャンスは増えます。違いにあまり目を向けず、あるいは意識的にキリスト教のスタイルに近づけていくと、遅かれ早かれキリスト教文化に飲み込まれ、真宗は消滅していくことになるだろう、と小谷先生は言われました。

キリスト教が基礎となっているアメリカに生活する私たちは、誰もがキリスト教の概念や価値観を共有しています。かつてこの国に受け入れられるために、あえてキリスト教のスタイルを取り入れた時期もありましたが、けれども実質この二つの宗教は大変異なっていて、並列で比べることもできないほどです。キリスト教と真宗の違いを明らかにすることが大切な課題です。

同時に仏教と日本文化も時には分けて考える必要があります。「いただきます」や「ごちそうさま」のように日本語の多くが仏教の考えに影響を受けているのは間違いありません。だからこそ「お彼岸」や「報恩講」などの言葉をただの日本語の単語として覚えるのではなく、その根底にある仏教の教えを探っていき学ぶ作業が大切なのです。年間を通して勧められる大きな法要は、自分を超えた人々への感謝を表現した儀式を体験する場であり、自己中心的な想いから解放される時間なのです。法要や儀式の意味を丁寧に尋ね、大切にするお寺はより長く続いていくと思う、と小谷先生は言われました。

「あらゆるものは変わっていく」ということだけが変わらない真実だ、と小谷先生は強調されました。セミナーを受けてこのお寺の将来について考えた。変化を経験することが必要でしょう。それは徐々に変わっていくこともしれませんし、急激なものかもしれません。簡単なことではないが、どんな変化にも前向きに対応することが必要なのです。そして、どのような形であれ、僧侶の人々との繋がりをもち続けていければと思います。それが真宗の教えが私たちにどのような意味をもたらすのかを教え続けてくれる道だからです。同時に私たちは自分たちの活動を通してお寺を「生きたお寺」にしたいと思います。困難に直面する時、僧侶の一人であること、多くの人が僧侶となっていてこそあることに励まされることでしょう。日曜礼拝や報恩講、餅つきなどのイベントを多くの人と参加できることを楽しみにしています。そして何よりも仏法と生活し、仏法を多くの人と一緒に聞き続けることができるのが楽しみにしています。
拝啓
晩秋の候、皆さまにおかれましてはお元気のようごしと存じます。さて今年も報恩講の季節がやってまいりました。報恩講は親鸞聖人のご命日法要で私どもの信仰生活を見直す機会とされてまいりました。本年は左記の如く法話会におりまして日本語報恩講法要並び十一月祥月法要を併せて厳修いたしますのでご案内申しあげます。

日本語報恩講法要

二〇一九年十一月七日（木）
午後七時

岡田在子師（北米開教監督部）

前記の予定となっています。どうぞご家族お揃いで法要にお参りください。

記

Gassho,
Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi
Johnny Martinez, President
Board of Directors
2019 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP (家族護持会費) $125 (New / Renewal)
SINGLE MEMBERSHIP (個人護持会費) $100 (New / Renewal)
SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP (賛助護持会費) $______ (New / Renewal)

NAME: (名前) Birth Month

Husband/Wife: (夫・妻) Birth Month

Children: (子供) Birth Month(s)

ADDRESS: (住所)

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE:

TELEPHONE #: (電話番号) E-Mail:

Would you like to receive the "Gateway" and other announcements by E-Mail instead of mail? (Yes / No)

P.O. Box 1616 West Covina, CA 91793
Telephone (626) 689-1040
www.livingdharma.org/wcbt_livingdharma@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/westcovinabuddhisttemple
Quote of the Month
Every time something bad happens to me, I don’t ask the question, ‘Why did it happen to me?’ The question I ask is, ‘Why did it happen for me?’ -Elijah Cummings

The Temple has registered with the AmazonSmile donation program. For those of you who shop online with Amazon, the AmazonSmile foundation will donate 0.5% of your purchase price to the Temple, at no cost to you. You just need to login to “smile.amazon.com” which will connect you to the same Amazon website you know. It will display the same products, same prices, and same service. On your first visit select ‘West Covina Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple’ as the organization that you wish to support. It’s that easy.
Happy shopping!
秋季セミナーレポート
「なぜアメリカで真宗がなくなってしまうのか」
ジョニー・マルティネス

小谷政雄師による10月のセミナーにはこんな衝撃的なタイトルがつけられました。でも逆に私たちの興味を引き、ウェストコビナはもとより別院からも参加者が足を運びました。

小谷先生はまず現在のBCA（Buddhist Churches of America）の開教使数の減少を紹介し、結果としてひとりの開教使が複数のお寺の世話をしなければいけない現状を話しました。約半数のお寺が現在駐在開教使不在の状況とのことです。そうとうお寺は世話役の開教使数に合わせ、月一でその先生をお呼びしているということでした。特にカリフォルニア中部では開教使不足が深刻であると聞き、私たちは驚きました。というのも、私たちはその全盛期を知っているからです。お盆をはじめとする様々な活動を通じて、お寺はコミュニティとして機能していました。けれども時を経て、人々が地域を離れ、ライフスタイルが変わるなど、様々な変化に直面し、多くのお寺はこれまですでの形を維持することが難しくなっていきました。Minister’s Assistance Programは開教使不足という課題に直面するなかで考えられた打開策のひとつなのでしょう。また、お寺の統合の話も出てくるようになりました。けれどもこれを実現するのはかなり困難です。自分たちのお寺に愛着のある人にとっては、そのお寺が自らのアイデンティティの一部になっているからです。またそれは、小谷先生の言葉を借りれば私たち誰もがもつ執着の問題でもあります。小谷先生は「思い通りにしたい」と思いますが、それが現実なのです。仏教では、自らの自己中心性や醜さ、見たくなる自分の姿を見つめ、それが実在であるという方が目覚めなのです。10月14日の2度目のセミナーでは、生活を深く探求しようとする思いを捨てた時、私たちは人生をありがたいと感謝することができ、経験することに対する見方を変えることができるのです。
November
2 10am-2pm Center Health Fair
3 10am-3pm Kiku Crafts & Food Fair
3 10:00 am Sunday Service
7 7:00 pm Howakai Shotsuki/Hoonko Service
10 8:30 am Board Meeting
10 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
12 10:00 am Study Class
17 4:30 pm Hoonko Service
24 10:00 am Sunday Service/753 Service
26 10:00 am Study Class

December
1 8:30 am Board Meeting
1 10:00 am Shotsuki Service/Bodhi Day Service
5 7:00 pm Howakai Japanese Service
8 7:00 am Mochitsuki
10 10:00 am Study Class
15 4:00 pm Year-end Service

2019年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 法話会報恩講法要
10日 午前8時半 理事会
10日 午前10時 祥月法要
17日 午後4時半 報恩講法要（英語）
24日 午前10時 日曜礼拝/七五三法要

12月行事予定
1日 午前8時半 理事会
1日 午前10時 祥月法要／成道会
5日 午後7時 法話会
8日 午前7時 もちつき
15日 午後4時 年末家族礼拝

生きることと死ぬことをもっておるものそれが人間である
藤元正樹『地上に立つ宗教』