



GATEWAY



March 2020 - - Vol. LV No. 3



WCBT hosted its 2020 SLO Retreat the weekend of February 14-16. (See Johnny's article on page 1)
We had glorious weather, enjoyed simple but hearty food, got the chance to reconnect with Sangha friends,
and we were able to listen to Rev. Yamada's insightful Dharma Talk on Namu Amida Butsu.

SLO Retreat 2020

Johnny Martinez

WCBT Member

On the Valentine's and President's Day weekend of February 14 - 16, we packed up and drove to our annual San Luis Obispo Retreat held at the beautiful temple there. Because we were all repeated WCBT participants of the SLO Retreat, we knew that all the prep, packing and loading, and the long drive up would be well worth our efforts. Joining us were 7 from Berkeley Higashi, 3 from the Betsuin, and 1 (Chris Hatakeyama) from Oxnard. There were a few newcomers: Tad & Rosa Kawahira and Tom Fukuman from Betsuin, as well as Nina Rizzo from Berkeley Higashi. Though we had a smaller number of total participants this year (24 attendees including reverends), it was, as always, large with warmth

and friendship.

- **Friday night:** We all ate at the SLO temple, figuring the restaurants would be very busy on Valentine's night. We ate heartily and enjoyed delicious carnitas and were also warmed by Haruko's tasty sausage soup.
- **Saturday:** After breakfast, Haruko led us in a simple "Get-to-Know-You" ice-breaker. We were arranged in two long lines that faced one another, and each person had the opportunity to share a few new things about 2 people with everyone else (it didn't matter if they already knew them). It was

such a simple activity but it seemed to bring about a friendly openness and trust that helped us bond with one another. What a great way to start the retreat weekend!

Lecture: "Namu Amida Butsu, Here and Now" was the theme of our 2020 retreat with lecturer Rev. Ken Yamada, Editor of the Shinshu Center of America and former minister of Berkeley Higashi. One meaning we often hear of "Namu Amida Butsu" is "I take refuge in Amida Buddha". This is an expression we say every Sunday and yet the meaning sometimes gets lost in the rote recitation of the nenbutsu. Rev. Yamada explored and shared his understand-

Please see SLO, con't on page 6



T H E G A T E W A Y

DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

It's hard to believe that spring is just around the corner, but my dwarf peach tree assures me it is with beautiful pink blossoms bursting from once dormant buds. The days are getting longer and soon we will advance our clocks one hour. March 8 is the precise day for "springing ahead".

On February 23rd our temple's service honored pets who had passed away during the last year. A Jakarta story about how to cope with the lost of a beloved pet was read during Dharma School.

The Spring Ohigan service will be held on March 22 at 4:30 p.m. The Dharma School Staff plans to continue with our obutsudan project. It is a fun activity and learning experience for our youngsters. We welcome you to bring your children/grandchildren to Ohigan.

The Los Angeles Buddhist Temple Federation's Hanamatsuri Art Contest for children is underway! If you are interested, please contact Sensei or me for the application and art board. The deadline to turn in your art design is Sunday, March 15. Awards will be presented to the winners of the contest on April 5 at JACCC at 1:30 p.m. Hope your youngster(s) choose to participate!

See you at our Spring Ohigan!

Gassho,
Claire Hansen

A TEMPLE LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

Lee Ezaki

I attended the Temple Leadership Workshop at the Jodo Shinshu Center in Berkeley California on January 31-February 2. The topic was "Cultivating Dharma-Centered Leadership".

The beautiful Center houses the BCA Center for Buddhist Education, the Institute for Studies and a Buddhist Book Store. Additionally, there are offices of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) and Ryukoku University. According to Socho Koshin Ogui, the past BCA Bishop, "Through the activities of the Jodo Shinshu Center, we seek to develop and nurture our human resources, while at the same time work for the betterment of all people and society". At this time, the Jodo Shinshu Center is partially supported by the 59 BCA churches in America. At this conference, I counted leadership representative from 15 different temples including 3 from the Higashi temples. I also learned our friend Reverend Marvin Harada from Orange County will become Bishop of the BCA beginning April 1. Congratulations! He plans to commute weekly from his Orange County home. He is going to accumulate a lot of frequent flier miles.

Some of the topics discussed at the conference were: What is Dharma-Centered Leadership?, Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu 101, Buddhist Education Online, and Overview of BCA. Additionally, there were small discussion groups on: Membership, Diversity, Outreach, Temple Culture, Fundraising, etc. Then, my favorite portion (smile), short presentations from each temple on "How we welcome visitors and engage new participants at our temple". Finally each temple representative made a short presentation on "Sharing our Successes".

Reverend Marvin Harada presented his thoughts on what a temple could do to address the issue of declining membership. He said that sponsoring Buddhist educational programs to the public is a way to bring new people to our temples to learn about Buddhism and Jodo Shinshu. The program needs to present the teachings in a manner that resonates, connects with people's lives. Our Sanghas need to be warm and welcoming to newcomers. This comes from our own appreciation of the Dharma and our willingness to share it. We must have the common bond of the willingness to share the Dharma as our Sanghas become more diverse. He focused on the principle that what brings the people to the temple is the Dharma. At West Covina, we can capitalize on our Sangha's family-friendly atmosphere that has attracted new members to our Temple.

I learned the BCA has a website: buddhistchurchesofamerica.org. I visited this website and learned you can view recorded dharma talks, take Jodo Shinshu correspondence courses and order books from their Bookstore. There is much more, check it out.

Of course, there was so much information presented at the conference that it can be difficult to share much of it in a short summary. Suffice it to say, I was surprised to have thoroughly enjoyed the conference and met many wonderful and inspirational leaders and fellow Buddhists in the BCA.





T H E G A T E W A Y

T E M P L E N E W S

The Study Class

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

Cherry Blossom Festival

The 2020 West Covina Cherry Blossom Festival will be on Saturday, March 21, from 12:00-6:00 PM and will be held at the West Covina Civic Center. The Temple will not have a booth but ESGVJCC will need help setting up and breaking down after the festival. Please come out to support the Center.

Spring Ohigan Service

Spring Ohigan will be observed on March 22 at 4:30 PM. Rev. Frederick Brenion will be our special guest speaker so please join Rev. Fred for this special service and stay for the complimentary otoki dinner following the service.

Oldies Dance LXV (65)

"Oldies LXV (65), Let's Dance and Thrive!" will be held on Saturday, March 28. It's our 65th Oldies with Steve Kikuchi & High Resolution providing favorite hits from the 60's, 70's and 80's. Please note the **new hours**. The dance will begin at **7:00 PM** and end at **11:00 PM** with lots of dancing and fun in between. The earlier hours, although giving us less time to set up, will make it easier for the members who come to help clean-up after the dance. Presale tickets are \$20 or \$25 at the door. For info and song requests, contact Joanie at (626) 300-8947, joaniekmartinez@gmail.com or Lillian at (626) 780-9866, lilnish77@gmail.com. Your Toban chairs will

contact you about work shifts and assignments. Plan to come to the Center by 4:30 PM to help with the set-up and at 11:00 PM to help clean-up since we may not have help available to us. Donations are welcome for raffle prizes and drinks. Sign-up sheets for drinks will be at our Sunday service.

LABTF Hanamatsuri

The Federation Hanamatsuri Service and will be held on the April 5 beginning at 1:30 PM at the Japanese American Cultural Community Center in LA. Everyone is encouraged to attend the LABTF service after WCBT Shotsuki Service.

WCBT Hanamatsuri Service

West Covina's Hanamatsuri Service will be held on Sunday, April 12, at 10:00 AM. Everyone is invited to arrive early with flowers to decorate the *Hanamido*. There will be a special performance by the Dharma school children. We invite you to come and join us to celebrate the Buddha's birthday.

"Save the Date"

Mark your calendar for WCBT Fun Day on Sunday, May 17, 2020. We invite all past and current WCBT members, families and friends to join us for a day of fun, food and good times as we spend the day at Murata Farms in Somis (near Camarillo Premium Outlets). The Temple may be chartering a bus from ESGVJCC to Murata Farms so stay tuned for more updates in the next Gateway.



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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West Covina, CA 91793
(626) 689-1040

Website: www.livingdharma.org

Facebook: facebook.com/westcovinabuddhisttemple

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MARCH BIRTHDAY

Brandon Kawaguchi, Kendra Kagawa, Brion Martinez, Edward Miyashiro, Cathy Nakano, Glen Fujimoto, Karolyn Fujimoto, Mae Horie, Joy Kitaura, Kelley Sakoda, Kathy Masai, Bob Yamashita, Danny Iwama, Lee Ezaki, Karen Ezaki, Andrew Kenji Ezaki, Claire Hansen, Dick Koga, Leo Kowalski, Miki Fukusumi, Tamara Teragawa, Alyssa Arnheim, Dana Yamada, Gavin Godoy, John Erickson, Bruce Whang, Emi Wexler, Reiko Ikehara-Nelson, Mitsuru Oshita, Tatsuo Okamura, Manuel Ortiz, Patricia Endo, Steve Underwood, Cayla James Yoburn, Rev. Akira Miyoshi



T H E G A T E W A Y

Pics from 2020 San Luis Obispo Retreat





T H E G A T E W A Y





T H E G A T E W A Y

SLO, con't from pg. 1

ing of it. He made an analogy as to how we live in a bubble. The bubble is our own protective world where we seek and allow what is good and comfortable to enter. It contains truths-as-we-see-them and/or want to see them in our lives. We think we understand life's truths, but it is only through our own perspective or bubble. Our lives are a conflicting mixture of duality. In our world of dualism, we separate and judge good/bad, right/wrong, important and unimportant, what is of value and what is not, life and death, etc, all the while being surrounded by our ignorance (samsara). We don't see or realize the ultimate or greater Truth because it takes us out of our comfortable bubble, yet we also want to see the ultimate "Truth". We struggle with issues caused by our egos, don't like and/or have difficulty accepting impermanence, and we want to control our lives and everything attached to it. Our ignorance prevents us from seeing the light of ultimate Truth which is Oneness or non-dualism, which leads to Nirvana/Pure Land. Rev. Yamada used sunlight as an example of the ultimate Truth freely providing the light, warmth, and illumination that exists for all. It can be experienced when there's a puncture in our bubble and a realization occurs, sometimes painfully. When we say "Namu Amida Butsu" we rely on the light of wisdom that awakens and liberates our mind. We want to receive this light that can enable us to change our perspective, and thus help us to become more compassionate. Rev. Yamada gave the example of a time when he was on a flight and was annoyed by the person sitting in front of him who kept playing with his seat. The person kept reclining multiple times which naturally irritated Rev. Yamada. It wasn't until Rev. Yamada heard this passenger's response to the flight attendant did

he have a change of perspective. The flight attendant had asked the passenger to put his seat up in preparing for takeoff. The passenger informed the flight attendant that he had been trying to put the seat up but that it was broken. Upon hearing this, Rev. Yamada realized his misjudgment and was humbled by this Truth. He said that when the Truth presents itself as in this situation, it is natural to accept. When we're in our own bubble, we may not see the big Truth.

"Namu Amida Butsu" is a 2,000 year old oral tradition that came after the Buddha's passing. When we attend classes and lectures, we are encouraged to just listen to the teachings. Repeating the Buddha's name can help us recall his lessons, the Dharma. Perhaps when all else fails us, the reciting of "Namu Amida Butsu" will help remind us that we are all interconnected, never truly alone unless we shut everyone out. "Namu Amida Butsu" is a precious teaching to realize and share with others. It can help us deal with the endless difficulties and suffering we encounter in life; it is to be cherished and passed on throughout our lives.

Rev. Yamada's talk generated much interest, questions, and discussion.

Post-Lecture: Some of us went on a hike to the beach, others walked part-way and then went back to the temple/motel to rest, while still others had to take care of errands for the retreat.

Saturday Night: After dinner, we played more mixer games led by Joanie and Nina. We laughed a lot as we learned even more about what we have in common with one another, and also learned how competitive some of us can be! To work off some of our dinner, we also played a team balloon game and learned a simple line dance.

Saturday & Sunday Services: We had morning and evening services on Saturday and in the morning on Sunday. Sensei asked some participants to lead in the chanting and hitting the gong. Services also included "kanwas" or reflections. Thank you to Nina & Lee for their thoughtful insights. We know that it takes a bit of courage to do the kanwa.

We had a wrap-up lecture and question and answer period on Sunday morning.

Final Thoughts: Besides the fun we had in our interactions, activities, and in the sharing of meals, there were also moments of deep reflection and opening up. Everyone seemed to have really enjoyed the time spent and shared here with our Sanghas. The temple clean-up at the end was another example of Sangha interdependence at work.

(「リトリート」 11 ページからの続き)

ち合い、そして自分の人生を通して伝えていくべき教えだと思います。

アクティビティや一緒に食事をすることの楽しさに加えて、今回のリトリートは深く自分を見つめる時間、そして心の内を開く時間となりました。友情と信頼が一段と深くなったこの週末を参加者はとても楽しんでいました。後片付けにみんなが忙しくしている姿は、つながりを生きているという教えが生き生きとはたらいっているサンガの姿であると感じました。

Quote of the Month

If you want to
take care of tomorrow,
take better care of today.

We always live now.

All we have to do is
entrust ourselves
to the life we now live.

-Dainin Katagiri



T H E G A T E W A Y

WEST COVINA HIGASHI HONGANJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

February 24, 2020

Dear Members and Friends,

The West Covina Buddhist Temple and its Board of Directors cordially invites you to attend the Spring Ohigan Service which will be held on Sunday, March 22, 2020. The schedule for the service is as follows:

Date: Sunday, March 22, 2020
 Time: 4:30 P.M.
 Dharma Message: Rev. Frederick Brenion

We will be serving Otoki dinner immediately following the service.

Higan, meaning the Other Shore (of enlightenment), is a service is conducted on or about the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. At these times of the year, we endeavor to strengthen our commitment of the Buddhist life.

門信徒の皆様へ

立春を過ぎても例年になく寒い日が続いておりますが、皆様におかれましてはお元気でお過ごしのことと存じます。さて春のお彼岸法要を下記の如くお勤め致しますのでご案内申し上げます。お彼岸は古く聖徳太子の時代より行われてきた伝統ある法要です。私ども先達はこの機会を仏様の教えを聞く良き機会としてまいりました。ご家族で一緒にお参り下さい。

記

春のお彼岸法要

日 時 2020年3月22日 午後4時半
 場 所 日系コミュニティセンター
 法 話 フレデリック・ブレニオン師 (英語)

*法要後当番の皆様によるお齋がございます。

合 掌

Nobuko Miyoshi, Minister
 開教使 見義信香

Johnny Martinez, President
 理事長 ジャニー・マルティネス



T H E G A T E W A Y

WEST COVINA BUDDHIST TEMPLE PRESENTS

OLDIES LXV(65)! LET'S DANCE AND THRIVE!!

**Saturday, March 28, 2020
7pm to 11pm**



At the ESGV Japanese Community Center



Tickets: **\$20 presale**, \$25 at the door



Music by guest **HIGH RESOLUTION**



Drinks available, must be 21 or over



Dressy Casual



For tickets and/or information Call or Text:

Joanie: **(626) 300-8947** (calls only)

Lillian: **(626) 780-9866**

or email: lilnish77@gmail.com or
joaniekmartinez@gmail.com

Irwindale Ave	WCBT/ESGVJCC 1203 West Puente Ave West Covina	
Sunset Ave	West Puente Ave	Vincent Ave
map not to scale	San Bernardino (10) Freeway	
	West Covina Fashion Plaza	

WCBT/ESGVJCC is located about a mile north of the West Covina Fashion Mall. Parking in rear of buildings.



**NO HEELS
for Ladies.**





T H E G A T E W A Y



*Lee Ezaki represented WCBT at the Temple Leadership Workshop to discuss cultivating Dharma-Centered Leadership.
(See his article on page 2.)*

To All Past and Current WCBT Members, Families and Friends

SAVE THE DATE

SANGHA REUNION & FAMILY FUN DAY



*Join us for a day
Full of Fun, Food and Good Times
Sunday, May 17, 2020*

*10am - 2pm
Murata Farms
400 La Vista Ave.
Somis, CA 93066*

(Near Camarillo Premium Outlets)

*Temple may be chartering a bus from ESGVJCC to Murata Farms
More information to come*



T H E G A T E W A Y





T H E G A T E W A Y

2020 年家族リトリート
マルティネス・ジャーニー

バレンタインとプレジデントデーがあわさった週末、2月14日から16日にかけて毎年恒例のリトリートがサンルイスオビスポのお寺で開催されました。ウェストコビナからはおなじみのメンバーが揃いました。準備も何を用意するかも会場設営も手馴れたものです。今年はバークレーから7名、別院から3名、そしてオックスナードから1名が参加してくれました。別院の川平ローザ、忠英夫妻、福満トムさん、バークレーのリッツォ・ニナさんは今回が初参加です。先生方を入れて24名と例年に比べて少人数で行われたリトリートですが、非常に温かで友情に溢れる週末を過ごすことができました。

金曜日の夜はお寺で夕食をとりました。この日はちょうどバレンタインデー。どこのレストランもいっぱいだろうと思ったからです。カルニタと春子さん特製のスープはとても美味しく、くつろいだ時間を過ごしました。

土曜日の朝食の後、春子さんがリードを取ってくれて参加者同士が打ち解けるための時間が設けられました。参加者は2列に分かれて目の前の人と、その隣の人に質問をします。簡単なアクティビティですがその効果は大きく、おかげで私たちの距離が一気に縮まったようでした。

今回のリトリートの講師は山田ケン先生で、「今ここに生きる南無阿弥陀仏」というテーマでお話してくださいました。山田先生は元バークレー東本願寺の開教使で、現在は真宗センターで編集の仕事に携わっておられます。

「南無阿弥陀仏」とは「私は阿弥陀仏に帰依します」ということです。そしてこれは私たちがいつも聞いていることです。けれども逆にその意味が曖昧になってしまっているという問題があります。山田先生はご自身の受け止めについて話してくださいました。「私たちの生活はシャボン玉の中にいるようなものです」と言われました。これは私たちが自分を守るための世界に生き、その中で何が善なのか何が自分にとって都合がよいかを判断しているということです。そしてそこでは私が見ているもの、あるいは見たいものが真実となります。

また私たちの生活は複雑に絡み合った分別の世界です。二元論で成り立っている世の中では、私たちは常に善悪、正誤、重要／不必要、価値／無価値、生か死かなどというような二者択一の判断を下しています。この見方が私たちの無明性を表しています。二元論に依っている限り、私たちは究極の真実に気づくことはできません。つまり自分で作り上げた居心地のよいシャボン玉の中にいる限り、その外にある真実に会うことはできないのです。けれども一方で私たちの心の奥、自分でも気づかないほどの奥には常に真実に出会いたいという願いがはたらいているのです。

エゴから生じる様々な問題に振り回され、無常の理に抗い、自分の人生や執着するものを思い通りにしたいと願う、それが私たちの姿です。私たちのもつ無明の闇は真実の光を見ることを妨げているのです。真実の世界は一如の世界であり、無分別智の世界です。それが涅槃、あるいは浄土と表現されてきたのです。山田先生は真実の光を太陽の光に例えられました。それは私たちに光を届け、温め、照らすはたらきです。

大切にしていたシャボン玉が弾ける時、それが目覚めの時です。もしかしたらそれは苦しい体験かもしれません。私たちが「南無阿弥陀仏」と称える時、私たちを目覚めさせ、意識を解放する智慧の光に帰依しているのです。その光を通して私たちが見えていたものの見方が変わります。そして自然と他の人の痛みを感じる生き方に私たちを導いてくれるでしょう。

南無阿弥陀仏は2000年の歴史です。勉強会や講義に参加する時、聞くことの大切さを教えられます。阿弥陀仏の名前を口に称えることは、私たちに仏の教えを思い出させてくれます。全てがうまくいかないと感じる時、南無阿弥陀仏と称えることは私たちが世界のあらゆる人や物事とつながっているということ思い出させてくれるでしょう。それは自分は決して一人ではないということに気づくことができるということです。南無阿弥陀仏の教えは困難や苦しみの多い人生をそれらと共に生きる道を教えてくれているのです。この教えは多くの人と分か

(「リトリート」6ページに続く)

お寺ニュース

日本語春のお彼岸法要

日本語春のお彼岸法要は3月法話会、祥月法要を兼ねて3月5日(木)午後7時よりお勤めいたします。

また英語によるお彼岸法要は3月22日(日)午後4時半よりお勤めいたします。フレデリック・ブレニオン師をお招きして法話を聴聞します。英語法要にもご家族で是非お参りください。

4月の祥月法要は4月2日(木)午後7時半よりお勤めいたします。

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

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DATED MATERIAL

THE WEST COVINA BUDDHIST TEMPLE

GATEWAY

March 2020 - - Vol. LV No. 3

March

- 1 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 1 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 5 7:00 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 8 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 10 10:00 am Study Class
- 15 10:00 am Sunday Service
- 21 12:00 pm Cherry Blossom Festival
- 22 4:30 pm Spring Ohigan Service
- 24 10:00 am Study Class
- 28 7:00 pm Oldies Dance
- 29 10:00 am Sunday Service

April

- 2 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
- 5 8:30 am Board Meeting
- 5 10:00 am Shotsuki Service
- 5 1:30 pm LABTF Hanamatsuri
(@JACCC)
- 12 10:00 am Hanamatsuri

2020年3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
- 5日 午後7時 法話会
- 15日 午前10時 日曜礼拝
- 22日 午後4時半 春季彼岸法要
- 28日 午後7時 オールディーズダンス
- 29日 午前10時 日曜礼拝

4月行事予定

- 2日 午後7時半 法話会
- 5日 午前8時半 理事会
- 5日 午前10時 祥月法要
- 5日 午後1時半 仏連花祭り
(於日米文化会館)

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あらゆるいのち生きるもの、
そのなかに満ち満ちておる
大きなはたらきを「いのち」と言う
和田 稠