It has been a challenging time amid this unpredictable situation with the coronavirus. I hope you and your family are well and safe, and to those who engage in essential services, I sincerely appreciate your hard work.

Due to a stay at home order announced in California on March 19th by Governor Gavin Newsom, West Covina Buddhist Temple has been closed and all services and activities at the temple have been cancelled. This serious situation makes me consider more than ever what I can offer to our members and how I can help them to connect with each other. There is no doubt that this is a challenging time, but it also can be a meaningful opportunity to start something new to keep providing temple services to our members.

At the same time, I have come to realize that it is the time we truly need to listen to the teachings in our daily lives. When Jodo Shinshu teachings work in our lives, it gives us the strength to face reality and deal with it.

No one ever predicted this coronavirus epidemic. Uncertainty also stimulates our anxiety and fear. Some expect religions to make them strong so that they can overcome or get rid of their fear. However, Buddhism does not encourage us to be strong in this sense. Being afraid of something completely unexpected is natural to all human beings, therefore, having a sense of anxiety is not a problem. The problem, however, is that we care only about ourselves in order to dispel our anxiety. This self-centeredness creates more troubles in our lives and societies.

Since the threat of the coronavirus has spread in our communities, we surprisingly see long lines at Costco and shelves for water and paper products are completely empty. Hoarding tons of stock at home is our common manner to make ourselves feel secure. Needless to say, this act is based on our anxiety and fear, which we all have.

The Japanese tradition of hanami or cherry blossom viewing can be traced back at least a thousand years. It is an occasion for people to meet, eat, drink sake and bond with fellow workers, neighbors, friends, and family. In early March, WCBT enjoyed its own hanami under the fleeting pink petals of the cherry trees at our Community Center.

“An Ordinary Person Whose Mind Is Weak and Inferior” Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi

Please see MIND, con’t on page 6
Message from WCBT President

Dear Sangha Members and Friends,

How are you all doing during these extraordinary times of social isolation and heightened precautions? I miss seeing all of you and hope that you and your families are well as we deal each day with the effects caused by the viral threat. Rev. Miyoshi is exploring ways to interact with the Sangha online. On Sunday, March 22nd, as a trial, about a dozen of us connected online with her through an app called Zoom. We were able to see and interact with one another (one speaker at a time) through our computers and smartphones. We decided that this would be a worthwhile way for our entire Sangha to meet and listen to the Dharma. We can also conduct meetings this way, such as our board meetings, Buddhism study classes, or other temple business that may come up. As Rev. Miyoshi would be the host of this site, she would be emailing an invite letter to you, with directions to sign into our Zoom account. For now, you can just download the app to your computer and/or smartphone if you want, and then wait for Sensei’s upcoming letter.

Until we can look forward to meeting each other once again, giving real hugs, being closer than 6 feet apart, and sharing otoki with one another, I look forward to seeing you on Zoom.

With Gassho,
Johnny Martinez

DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

Hope this finds all of you healthy and not too bored! Because we can’t meet in person, I would like to share this Aesop’s fable with you:

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

A lion was taking a nap one warm afternoon when a tiny gray mouse accidentally ran across his paw. This woke the lion up making him very cross! The lion scooped up the frightened mouse and roared with rage. Just as he was going to kill the mouse, the little creature begged the lion to let her go.

“Please Mr. Lion”, pleaded the trembling mouse, “if you let me go, one day I will repay your kindness.”

The lion laughed and laughed to think that this tiny mouse could help him one day. Because she amused him, the lion let her go.

A few weeks later some hunters laid a trap for the lion. The King of the Jungle was caught in a net and could not free himself. He roared and roared. The mouse heard the lion and ran to see what happened.

Miss Mouse knew instantly what to do! With her sharp teeth she began to gnaw at the rope of the net. Soon she set the lion free.

The lion was very grateful to the mouse. “Now you see that even a tiny mouse can help the King of the Jungle” chuckled the mouse. The lion roared with agreement!

Aesop said that the moral of the story is: A kindness is never wasted. This story also illustrates the concept of interdependence.

A suggestion to parents and grandparents: The following are a few books that you may want to share with your youngster(s): “When Buddha Was an Elephant” by Mark W. McGinnis and “Kindness” by Sarah Conover.

Take care of yourselves and Gassho,
Claire Hansen
Due to the announcement from Gov. Newsom that all in California should stay at home amid the coronavirus outbreak, the status of the temple and temple activities are as follows.

**Temple**
The Temple has been closed until further notice. Sunday Services and Study Classes will be conducted via Zoom.

**WCBT and LABTF Hanamatsuri**
WCBT and the Federation Hanamatsuri Service have been cancelled.

**WCBT Sangha Fun Day**
The Sangha Fun Day has been postponed. A new date is yet to be decided.

**WCBT Annual Golf Tournament**
Our annual Golf Tournament has been postponed until June of 2021.

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**GATEWAY Staff**

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*Circulation:* Rev. Fred Brenion, Joy Kitaura  
*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.  
*West Covina Buddhist Temple Mission*  
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**APRIL**
Kevin Kawawata, Tyler Koji Isaksen, Susan Oshima, Lauren Miyake, Randy Maekawa, Nancy Maekawa, Jacob Kato, Adriana Kochi, Kellie Komoda, Kristen Hiranaka, Tammy Lespron, Phillip Underwood, Lexi Shams, Maria Whang, Yuechen Zhau Chen, Mario Alberto Gonzalez, Nancy Hombo, Maddie Akari Mayeda, Sienna Mirai Martinez, Shakyamuni Buddha

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**Golf Classic Announcement**

“Fore!”, “Great Shot!” “Nice Putt!” will not be heard this year at our 24th Golf Classic. The COVID 19 pandemic has forced many events to either be cancelled or postponed. Unfortunately, the golf tournament is not immune to today’s course of events. Therefore, the golf committee decided to postpone the tournament to June of 2021. We are looking forward to another successful tournament in 2021.

On behalf of the committee, I wish you and your family to stay safe and keep healthy.
THE GATEWAY WAY

Special Buddhism Quiz

How can we continue to demonstrate mindful behavior during this time of fear and uncertainty due to the recent pandemic that has gripped our lives?

One way is to be well informed with the latest updates from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and our State and Local government officials.

Identify the following statements as True or False. The statements were taken from the CDC website (cdc.gov) and the California Department of Public Health website (cdph.ca.gov).

1. The COVID19 virus can ONLY be spread between people who are in close contact with another person through respiratory (micro) droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes and these droplets land in the mouths, noses and eventually into the lungs of people nearby.

2. “Community Spread” means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

3. There are states in the USA that do not yet have the virus. These states are called “Safe Havens.”

4. It’s perfectly ok to reuse single use face masks to protect yourself from the virus.

5. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

6. The virus can spread from contact with contaminated surfaces or objects.

7. So far, the CORVID19 virus is highly contagious and is spreading continually without stopping.

8. America is a free country. As long as we are symptom-free we can socialize in small groups of less than 30 people.

9. Two ways to protect yourself is to wash your hands often and vigorously with soap and water for 20 seconds after touching public/shared surfaces and very important, shelter in place. Stay at home!

10. Avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth with unwashed hands.

11. Hand sanitizers with 50% alcohol is a good substitute for soap and water.

12. Washing hands with expired beer is another good way to disinfect your hands. The alcohol in the beer will do the job!

13. Everyone in California is asked to stay at home (shelter in place) except for Essential Needs personnel in order to slow the rate of spread.

14. Some, but not all inclusive symptoms for COVID19 are fever, cough, shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, lack of energy, loss of smell and taste.

15. People between the ages of 20-50 years old are immune to the virus.

16. Older adults and people, regardless of age, who have underlying health conditions such as diabetes, asthma, heart problems, respiratory issues, an organ transplant, is a cancer survivor, etc. should be very vigilant and avoid public places and/or crowds and they should follow the CDC guidelines to stay virus free.

False: 1,3,4,8,11,12,15
True: 2,5,6,7,9,10,13,14,16
Greetings from Bishop Noriaki Ito

We send our best wishes to you during this extremely challenging period of living in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it seems to be slowing down in some parts of the world, as of now, the number of infections and those who have died from the disease in our country continues to rise.

With the stay-at-home order throughout the state of California, we are all being forced to change our everyday lifestyles in ways we’ve never imagined before. Although this brings on new challenges, we also realize that this is the best way to slow down the spread of this dangerous disease and to keep ourselves and those around us healthy.

Our temples have also had to change how we operate and we are happy to see that you are exploring new ways to share the Dharma through virtual services that our members and friends can access through the internet. Our ministers are primarily working at their homes. But you can contact any of us through email or phone.

What we are experiencing is an example of the kind of unexpected impermanence that the Buddha said is an ever-present part of everyday life. It is extremely sad that so many people are suffering and dying from this pandemic. But it is also an opportunity to understand the true nature of life and to accept the challenges that we face as well. Impermanence also means that a return to our normal lives will eventually come.

I am reminded of the wise words of Rev. Yasuda Rijin who once said, “Nenbutsu is not the way to take the burden off one’s shoulders, and be comfortable, but to give us strength and courage to shoulder any burden, even the ones we think are more than we can bear.”

We hope that you are well and that you continue to take care of yourselves and your loved ones, and find the patience and resolve to get through this difficult time.

Gassho,

Noriaki Ito
Bishop/Director
Higashi Honganji North America District
MIND, con’t from pg. 1

And when we are solely obsessed with getting rid of ‘our’ anxiety, we become blind to our surroundings and other people. As a result, the necessary resources cannot be provided to those who are in need. Seeing them makes us feel scared again, and we end up rushing to markets and buying more stuff. We are totally ignorant about the fact that we are the ones who create this confusion and fear.

Those who get caught up in self-centeredness and only care for themselves are described as “an ordinary person whose mind is weak and inferior” in the Contemplation Sutra when Sakyamuni Buddha speaks to Vaidehi. Through their conversation, the sutra shows us the serious problem we all have. “An ordinary person” is each of us without exception. And “mind is weak and inferior” means that, unlike Buddha’s wisdom mind, our mind is always controlled by our desires and convenience. Our acts are based in the mind, therefore, we become self-serving, indifferent to others, and contrary to the truth of interconnectedness. Being obsessed with a mind of self-interest is not a problem of a certain group of people, rather, it is the inextricable human nature in all of us. In other words, we, who criticize hoarders, also have the same problem of self-centeredness. Through listening to the teachings, we finally come to realize it.

There is nothing wrong with being cautious about our health under the current situation. We need to do our best to protect our families’ safety and well-being. However, once we abandon ourselves to only benefit our families and ourselves, our world becomes narrow and inconsiderate. Other people are considered dangerous and jeopardize our health and life. Increased numbers of confirmed cases of the coronavirus are scary, but we do not see people’s pain behind those numbers. We may even be relieved saying, “Good thing they are not my family.”

Awakening to our ignorance is the only way to liberate us from our self-centered narrow world. Jodo Shinshu teachings do not make us a completely selfless person. Rather, they reveal to us that when we are genuinely aware of our ignorance, our selfish world is broken through. This is the moment we return to the world of interconnectedness and it enables us to empathize with patients, their families and friends, and medical staff who fight against the virus, and those who are struggling with their lives under this severe situation.
皆さまもご承知の通り、新型コロナウィルス感染症が世界的な広がりを見せています。皆さまにおかれましては健康に留意しつつも不安な毎日をお過ごしいただくことを心よりお祈り申し上げます。

カリフォルニア州で3月19日に外出禁止の命令が出されたことを受けまして、ウェストコビナ東本願寺は現在お寺での全ての活動を自粛しております。つきましては4月2日（木）の法話会は中止にさせていただき、5月の法話会については現在のところ未定です。追って皆さまにはご連絡させていただきます。また日曜礼拝は当面の間オンラインを通じてのみお勤めいたします。

皆さまにはご不便とご迷惑をおかけすることになり心よりお詫び申し上げます。どうかご理解いただきますようお願い申し上げます。

思いもしなかったことを経験する時、不安を感じるのはごく自然なことです。仏教は不安を感じないような強い人間になることを奨める教えではありません。なぜなら仏教の教えとは、仏の教えを信じて行動しているのです。そのことが間違っていたと考えているのが仏教の教えなのであります。

世界中で新型コロナウィルス感染症の拡大が止まりません。カリフォルニア州では3月19日に感染拡大を防ぐため外出禁止命令が出されました。外出が制限され、連日報道される状況を見ながら不安な毎日を過ごしている方々が多いと思われます。ウェストコビナのお寺も当面の間日曜礼拝を始め全ての活動を自粛することとなりました。

言うまでもなく、お寺は仏教を基礎として人々が集う場です。そして僧侶の仕事は人と会って話をすることができるということを考えなければなりません。同時に今こそ改めて正本尊の教えを聞く機会と場所が奪われてしまった今、僧侶としてできることは何か、ということを考えずにいられません。同時にここを改めて仏教の教えを教える場とし、そして私自身のことをと考え、現実に向き合って生きていく力をいただきたいという教えです。

思いもしなかったことを経験する時、不安を感じるのはごく自然なことです。仏教は不安を感じないような強い人間になることを奨める教えではありません。なぜなら仏教の教えとは、仏の教えを信じて行動しているのです。そのことが間違っていたと考えているのが仏教の教えなのであります。

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April
2 7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service -Cancelled
5 8:30 am Board Meeting -Online
5 10:00 am Shotsuki Service -Online
5 1:30 pm LABTF Hanamatsuri @ JACCC -Cancelled
12 10:00 am Hanamatsuri Service -Cancelled
12 10:00 am Sunday Service -Online
14 10:00 am Study Class -Online
18-26 World Dobo Gathering in Kyoto -Cancelled
19 10:00 am Sunday Service -Online
26 10:00 am Sunday Service -Online
28 10:00 am Study Class - Online

２０２０年４月行事予定
2日 午後7時半 法話会ーキャンセル
5日 午前 8時半 理事会ーオンライン
5日 午前 10時 祥月法要ーオンライン
5日 午後 1時半 仏教連合会花祭りーキャンセル
12日 午前 10時 花祭り法要ーキャンセル
12日 午前 10時 日曜礼拝ーオンライン
18日～26日 世界同朋大会ーキャンセル
19日 午前 10時 日曜礼拝ーオンライン
26日 午前 10時 日曜礼拝ーオンライン

*Emailをお使いの方はメールアドレスをお寺までお知らせください。(wcbt.livingdharma@gmail.com)
オンラインでの日曜礼拝のご案内、最新の情報をお送りいたします。

煩悩というのは、
真実の世界を気づかせるために
与えられておるものである。

米沢英雄