I hope you and your family and friends remain well and healthy during these difficult times. It has been one and a half months since the stay at home order was issued to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus. Our temple has been closed, and we have had to cancel many of our annual events, such as Oldies Dance, Golf Tournament, and Family Fun Day. This unprecedented time reminds us that meeting our families and friends and spending time with them is truly valuable and essential in our lives.

Sunday services, including Shotsuki Memorial Services, and weekly Dharma study classes are currently held online. This year’s Hanamatsuri Service, which was held on Sunday, April 12th, required a change to be implemented. It has been our custom that members of each Toban bring flowers to decorate the Hanamido before the service, and during service everyone pours sweet tea over the baby Buddha to celebrate his birthday. This year, unfortunately, we could do neither.

Nonetheless, thanks to the flexibility and a positive attitude of our Sangha members, we were still able to celebrate Buddha’s birth with a new procedure. For our Hanamatsuri Service, instead of decorating the Hanamido, our members decorated their tables and desks with flowers from their gardens as they attended the Hanamatsuri Service online. It was just like all Buddhists celebrate this auspicious day in their own countries.

The day before the service, I was wondering if I could find some flowers in our yard, since we really do not have any flowering plants. Soon however, after looking around the yard a little yellow flower under a bush caught my eye. Not only that, but the flower also led me to find other colorful flowers nearby. My exploration paid off. Bringing those flowers into our house, my husband and I were laughing, saying, “Good thing the gardener did not come this week, otherwise we would not have all these ‘weeds!’”

COVID-19 couldn’t keep WCBT Sangha members from celebrating Hanamatsuri as everyone joined online via Zoom and shared their beautiful flowers from their gardens.

The Beauty of Weeds
Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi

Please see BEAUTY, con’t on page 6
Our Mother’s Day Zoom service was enriched by the Mother’s Day signs created by our Dharma School children. It was fun to see the beautiful pictures and messages to our Moms and Grandmothers from the youngsters.

The following story comes to us from the Roman Republic over 2,000 years ago.

**Cornelia’s Jewels**

Cornelia was a Roman lady from a noble and wealthy family. As a child, she was well cared for and well educated. When she grew up, she married and had many children. Unfortunately, most of her children did not live very long. Tragically, her husband died while she was still quite young.

She refused to marry again and became a devoted mother to her two sons, Tiberius and Gaius. Using her wealth, Cornelia paid for the best education she could for her two boys. Most ladies that she knew were very rich. They wore expensive clothes and had beautiful jewelry. The ladies noticed that Cornelia wore plain clothes and no jewelry. They made fun of her and demanded to show them her jewels.

Cornelia drew her two boys close to her and said, “haec ornamenta mea”. Translated from the Latin to English, it means, “they are my jewels”.

This is believed to be a true story from so long ago. It is an example of a mother’s deep love. This is why we celebrate Mother’s Day to acknowledge our Mothers’ love and care for us all.

The following is a book you may want to read: “Love You Forever” by Robert Munsch.

Gassho,
Claire Hansen
Sunday Services
All Sunday services will be conducted via Zoom until further notice. Expect an email from Rev. Miyoshi or Rev. Fred inviting you to the services with the Zoom meeting ID and Password. If you have not received an email from them, please contact the temple (wcbt.livingdharma@gmail.com). The attendance for the services are growing every week and it’s such a pleasure to see all the familiar faces so please join us! For those who are new to Zoom, please read Richard Kagawa’s easy to follow instructions on page 8-10.

Study Classes
The Tuesday bi-monthly study class is now a weekly class held every Thursday at 10 am via Zoom. There is a different topic of discussion each week and a lively discussion with a growing number of participants. Look for the email invitation with the Meeting ID and password.

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

Tanjo-e and Hatsumairi Service
The Tanjo-e will be held on Sunday, May 31 via Zoom at 10 a.m. The Hatsumairi service that was to be held at the same time has been cancelled.

Oldies Dance
The June Oldies Dance had been cancelled.

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

2020 Obon
This year’s Obon Festival has been cancelled. Manto-e lanterns can still be purchased to remember your loved ones. Arrangements can be made to pick them up after the Hatsubon Service.

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.
Dear families and friends of West Covina Buddhist Temple,

I hope this message finds you and your loved ones safe and doing well! This is the time of the year when we celebrate the lives of our loved ones who have passed. During Obon festivities we hang lights and lanterns, prepare food and demonstrations, visit with friends and families, and most importantly, participate in Manto-e ceremony and Bon Odori. In the past, we have congregated at the East San Gabriel Japanese Community Center and the West Covina Buddhist Temple to honor those that have passed on. We have come together to prepare for this wonderful annual event. With the help of the Sangha and friends, we transform the Center parking lot and grounds into a place to acknowledge the people we miss so much. Unfortunately, I regret to inform the Sangha, families, and friends, that due to our current situation of social distancing, this year’s Obon Festival has been cancelled. However, let us continue to be thankful for the love and memories that our family members have given us and light incense and gassho for them. I look forward to seeing all of you when we, once again, are allowed to gather and celebrate together! Please be safe and take care of yourselves and your family and friends.

Gassho,
Bruce Whang

A Message from the Overseas District Abbot

March 30, 2020

The rapid spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has caused so much anxiety in the last few weeks. My deepest condolences go out to the families of those who lost their loved ones due to the disease, and extend my best wishes for a speedy recovery to those who have contracted the virus. At the same time, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to all of the caregivers who are sacrificing their own well-being to combat this horrific pandemic.

Since all services, Dharma gatherings, and study programs have been cancelled or postponed at our temples throughout Japan as well as in the overseas districts, it is disheartening we are unable to gather together to listen to the teachings of Shinran Shōnin. We were looking forward to seeing all of you at the 13th World Dōbō Gathering that was scheduled to occur in April of this year. I was saddened to hear that the event would be cancelled in consideration of health concerns. At the same time, however, it gave me a chance to remind myself of the truth that everything that occurs in our lives is nothing other than impermanence. Right at this moment, this viral disease is quickly and steadily spreading throughout the world almost as if it were mocking our desperate efforts to stop the pandemic. Seeing the escalation of the devastation it continues to bring, I cannot help but realize how fragile and fleeting our lives are.

The coronavirus epidemic has already caused so much suffering to all of us who live on this planet regardless of such differences as race, nationality, gender, or age. This challenge has confronted us with the indisputable fact that all of us are nothing but ordinary, unenlightened beings. The reality is that we have to understand that the suffering and anxiety we are experiencing in this pandemic has always been a part of human existence. When I reflect on this truth, however, I am able to renew and to deepen my appreciation of the compassionate heart of the Tathāgata which is always reaching out to each and every one of us, embracing us as companions regardless of who we are.

It is my sincerest wish that we will be able to bring an end to the novel coronavirus pandemic as soon as possible so that we can once again join together before Amida Buddha to listen to the Dharma together.

Chōyū Ōtani
Overseas District Abbot, Shinshū Ōtani-ha (Higashi Honganji)
Focusing Back on the Deep Wish Given to Us
-Turning a Crisis into an Opportunity to Restore Our Humanity

March 25, 2020

We cannot predict what will happen to the world due to the recent outbreak and rapid spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Having taken this situation very seriously, we have decided to conduct our annual Spring Service at the Shinshū Honbyō (our mother temple) as scheduled. However, attendance will be limited to the headquarters office staff only. In addition, in consideration of public health, we have suspended all of the volunteer programs (Hōshidan) at the Dōbō Retreat Center since March 1.

We offer our sincerest apology to our temple members who were looking forward to participating in the retreat center programs. Our apologies are also extended to our members in our overseas districts who were planning to participate in the 13th World Dōbō Gathering, and also to the head priests and church administrators from throughout Japan who were preparing for a group tour to the Shinshū Honbyō. All of those events and activities have been postponed or cancelled.

As of today, more than 400,000 people throughout the world have become ill from the virus and nearly 18,000 people have died from COVID-19. We offer our deepest condolences to the families of those who have passed away and extend our best wishes to the countless people who have contracted the virus and wish for their speedy recovery. Also, we express our deepest gratitude and respect to the healthcare professionals who have been striving to treat people during this unprecedented situation. We hope that our combined wisdom and care will bring an end to this crisis as soon as possible.

In retrospect, we human beings have suffered from numerous infectious diseases of unknown origin throughout our history. Despite the uncertainty of what must be done in such difficult situations, we have courageously faced and overcome those crises. At such a time, what is important is that we not socially and emotionally isolate those who are ill and their families. Unfortunately, there seems to be the deplorable trend of blaming those who are suffering from the disease. At such times, it is even more crucial for us to learn from the wisdom of the Buddha who vows to always bear our anxieties and suffering together with us. Even though we must eradicate this virus, we should never separate those who are suffering from our society.

It is natural for us to wish that we and our loved ones can be spared from misfortune. However, this pandemic of the coronavirus has reminded us of the fundamental truth that no one in this world can be free of suffering. Therefore, we should try as best we can to understand the anxieties and the feeling of isolation that those who have contracted the disease must have. We believe that this is the attitude we must have as human beings.

In times of crisis in history, our ancestors took on these opportunities to show the spirit of the nenbutsu sangha that regards every one of us as companions living together instead of enduring the impermanence of life alone. At this moment, all of our districts, subdistricts, local temples, and chapels across the globe are having no choice but to cancel or suspend their services, study sessions and other gatherings. In light of our ancestors’ spirit, it is important for us to realize that this crisis is an opportunity to reflect on how we should live rather than remaining pessimistic regarding the situation. Because of the restrictions put in place regarding interacting with other people, we should focus even more on deepening and cultivating the relationships we have with each other as encouraged by the Buddha’s wisdom. By returning our focus to the deep wish the Buddha made for us, we should regard this crisis as an opportunity to work together toward restoring true humanity among us.

With expectations that this situation will be resolved in the near future, we hope to resume our normal activities such as welcoming visitors and restoring our volunteer programs. All of the staff at the headquarters offices are striving to maintain services and other events so that you can visit the Shinshū Honbyō again soon to listen to the Dharma together.

Even though we are in the midst of uncertainty, it is our sincerest wish that every one of us can find an opportunity to return our focus to the wish of the Buddha.

Bishop Hiroshi Tajima
Chief Administrator,
Shinshū Ōtani-ha (Higashi Honganji)
BEAUTY, con't from pg. 1

Yes...we can call them as weeds because they grow wildly. They might bother us and need to be pulled out when we want to make our yard look nice. They are weeds when we see them as useless and troublesome plants. This also means that when we are attracted by the beauty of those flowers, and they brighten your day a little, especially under these uncertain circumstances, then they are no longer weeds. Whether they are weeds or not is not really defined by their nature but by how we see them. Our self-centered perception often hinders us from appreciating the beauty of them as they are.

Not only for flowers and plants, our selfish perception always applies to people around us and to circumstances that happen in our lives. We judge them based on whether we like them or not, or if it is convenient for us or not. As a result, we try to exclude or get rid of anything and anyone we do not like. Unfortunately, such a judgment even applies to ourselves. Most of us have an ideal image of ourselves. There are many conditions to make us feel worthwhile, such as being young, healthy, making good money, being kind and compassionate, and so on. We are happy with ourselves as long as we fit those images. That being so, once we no longer satisfy those conditions, we immediately lose self-dignity. It is we who are ignorant about our beauty more than anyone else.

A message we receive from the little flowers is that we are all precious just as we are. Our value is not determined by conditions. Each of us are unique and irreplaceable, therefore, our existence itself is invaluable. This is also what the proclamation of Śākyamuni Buddha, “Below the heavens, above all the earth, I alone am most noble,” means.

Awakening to the beauty of one little flower helps us become aware of the many other flowers around it. In the same way, once we awaken to the invaluable existence of one person, this realization enables us to profoundly respect the numerous people around us. Who is the “one person”? “Below the heavens, above all the earth, I alone am most noble” clearly shows that each of us is that “one person”. When we truly appreciate the fact that we were born and are alive at this moment, we finally come to realize the beauty and preciousness of all living beings.
When the order came to shelter-in-place due to the COVID-19 virus I began sewing masks. Panic buying had cleared the stores of toilet paper, sanitizers, gloves and masks and although I couldn’t do anything about most of those, I could sew masks. It was ideal since I had lots of fabrics I’ve accumulated over the years and now I had lots of time to kill. The masks are made from pre-washed 100% cotton with an inside pocket to insert a filter to make it more effective. Mask filters are hard to come by and aren’t necessary but some substitutions recommended are: blue shop paper towels, HEPA vacuum cleaner bags, two or more layers of coffee filters… I’m working on the masks every day so if anyone is in need of any please call me at 951-818-8740 or email me at hskoga@gmail.com. The masks are free but if you’d like, please make a small donation of support to WCBT. Checks should be payable to WCHHBT and sent to: West Covina Buddhist Temple P.O. Box 1616, West Covina, CA 91793

My ‘New Normal’
Karen Ezaki

This is my new normal. My girlfriend Lynn Gross treated me to our annual birthday lunch and gave me a beautiful flower arrangement. We never thought of quitting this ritual and I’m glad we celebrated early. As my friend sprayed and wiped everything down, I told her to not get us thrown out of the place. But in hindsight, it was good practice. She is a meticulous housekeeper and cook. She was looking forward to helping cook for our toban otoki dinner. I’ve learned new things like how to order pantry items from delivery services and restaurants and how to disinfect groceries, packages, and mail. I made a few mistakes like forgetting the word “baby” and received 3 bunches of giant bok choy. I even contemplated starting a new company called “Bubba Gump Bok Choy Company: fried, boiled, raw, sautéed, stewed....” There has to be a Buddhist lesson as you look at your toilet paper. Its existence is so essential in our life whereas before, I think I never gave it a thought. It’s time to be more aware and grateful. The new normal that is most difficult to accept is that I have become a virtual grandparent. I can’t visit with or hug my grandsons. I so appreciate our kids, too. They explain why we have to stay isolated from them. I know it’s because they want us around for a few more years. Sachi and James bring groceries even though they work in front line healthcare jobs. Please keep them and Teri and Ethan in your thoughts. They are out there helping people. It’s dangerous work and I worry about them.
Using ZOOM

The COVID-19 virus has caused many disruptions in our daily lives. One of them has been the weekly denial of attending our Sunday services to receive the teachings of the Buddha Dharma. Our Temple has now taken advantage of an application called ZOOM. It allows us to join in a group meeting hosted by Sensei Miyoshi. ZOOM can be used by a computer, iPad, tablet, or smart phone.

On an iPad, tablet, or smart phone the simplest method to get access to ZOOM is to go to the app store and search for ZOOM. Download it and follow the instructions. The meeting ID and password will be provided by Rev. Miyoshi’s E-mail.

On a computer the first step is to download the ZOOM application from the Internet search field.

https://zoom.us/download

The next screen will look something like this showing the portion we’re interest in:

A small window will appear that will download the Zoom installer program.

After the download completes, you should see the next screen. The download icon should be blue.
Using ZOOM

Do this next.

After the installer executes, the ZOOM page should be displayed.
Using ZOOM

The meeting ID and password will be given in an E-mail sent by Rev. Miyoshi whenever a meeting has been scheduled. Enter a name that you would like to be displayed during the meeting. There might be a slight delay before you actually join the meeting.

ZOOM is also used for the WCBT Study Class. Look in your E-mail from Rev. Miyoshi for the next scheduled meeting date and time.

DISCLAIMER

The examples shown here are from a PC using Windows 10. Hopefully the steps required to downloading ZOOM will be similar enough on a MAC computer or other devices.

Page 3
Covid-19 & Buddhism

Across
1. (3 words) Sign to go to the hospital
2. The rules have changed and you should/need to wear one
3. (2 words) Avoiding close contact (6 feet)
4. App or platform for WCBT mtgs/services
5. The organ the Coronavirus attacks
6. Buddhist symbol of impermanence on the altar
7. Location of our temple’s headquarters in Japan

Down
1. Buddhism is a religion of ___________
2. The 2 pillars of Buddhism are Wisdom and ______
3. Our connectedness in needing one another
4. Carrying the virus without signs
5. (2 words) Cause of Covid-19

6. Top U.S. infectious disease expert
7. U.S. national epicenter for Covid-19
8. Machines needed for seriously ill
9. Need 20 of these to wash your hands
10. These are not prayer beads
11. (2 words) Religious sect of WCBT

submitted by Joanie Martinez
(*Key is on page 12)
Haiku of the Month
Lavendar blooms now,
Bees buzzing ’round,
birds chirping
Inside, we shelter...

- Joanie Martinez

Crossword Key
Across
1. shortnessofbreath
2. mask
3. socialdistancing
4. zoom
5. lungs
6. flowers
7. kyoto

Down
1. awakening
2. compassion
3. interdependence
4. asymptomatic
5. coronavirus
6. drfauci
7. newyorkcity
8. ventilators
9. seconds
10. ojuzu
11. jodoshinshu

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!
このお盆祭り開催中止のお知らせ
門信徒の皆さま

今年の盆祭り開催中止のお知らせ
門信徒の皆さん

皆さま無事にお過ごしでしょうか。夏も近づき今年も亡き人の生き方に想いを馳せるお盆の時期が巡ってきました。お盆祭りでは万灯会の提灯やライトが空を彩り、屋台やデモンストレーションでお寺は活気に溢れます。多くの方々が足を運んでくださいます。お盆は懐かしい人に久しぶりに再会できる絶好の機会でもあります。また盆踊りの前の万灯会法要はお盆の本来の意味を私たちに思い出させてくれる大切なひと時です。

長年にわたってウェストコビナ東本願寺は東サンガブリエルバレー日系コミュニティセンターで、このお盆の传承を続けてきました。門信徒の皆さんが一体としてこの素晴らしい行事を大切にしてきました。

しかしながら、現在のコロナウィルス感染拡大の防止として自宅待機命令が出されてから1ヶ月半が経ちました。皆さまはご家族ともに無事にお過ごしでいらっしゃいますでしょうか。

お寺での日曜礼拝も3月8日以降お勤めできない状態が続いています。家族や友人と顔を合わせ、言葉を交わし、共に時間を過ごすというのは、私たちにとってどれだけ大切なものであったのか、ということに改めて気付かされました。

4月12日には花祭りをお祝いする予定でした。例年では当番の皆さんがお花を持ち寄って花御堂を飾ります。3月に暖かい日が続いたため、藤の花が花祭りよりずっと早く満開を迎えそうだと、メンバーの方も話していました。この時期の花祭りは例年通りに開催されます。例年通りに開催されるため、花御堂を飾り、お釈迦様に甘茶をかけるといういつもの形での花祭りは実現できませんでした。日曜礼拝は3月22日からはオンラインでお勤めをしています。そこで、門信徒の方々と話し合ったところ、3月には暖かい日が続いて芝の隙間から様々な花が咲き始め、庭の手入れをしていなくてよかっただろう、と思っていたところ、皆さまの皆さんが花祭りやいかに楽しみにしていたことを感じ取りました。

私が見つけた花々は芝の隙間から顔を出していたり、庭の隅で咲いているものでした。芝の隙間から顔を出していた花々に目をつらげて、その花の美しさに目が止まる時、それが鈍る時期で、花が咲き始めた時に、それらを役に立たないもの、あるいは邪魔なもの、と見る時、それは確かに雑草です。けれどもその花の美しさに目が止まる時、それは意味のないものでもなくなるのです。

皆さまいかがお過ごしでしょうか。ご家族の皆さんも無事にお過ごしいただけますか。3月19日に出された外出禁止の命令は5月初旬の現在のところまだ解除されておりません。そのため5月7日に予定していた法話会も中止となりました。その後の法話会につきましては追ってお手紙でお知らせさせていただきたいと思います。また日曜礼拝は引き続きオンラインを通してお勤めいたします。皆さまにはご不便とご迷惑をおかけしており心よりお詫び申し上げます。一日も早く皆さまとお会いできる日を心より願っております。質問がございましたらいつでも見開きを開けてお知らせください。

合掌
お盆祭り実行委員長
ウォン・ブルース
May 2020 - - Vol. LV No. 5

May
3  8:30 am Board Meeting-online
3  10:00 am Shotsuki Service-online
7  10:00 am Study Class-online
7  7:30 pm Howakai Japanese Service
   -cancelled
10 10:00 am Mother’s Day Family Service
    -online
14 10:00 am Study Class-online
17  WCBT Fun Day @ Murata Farm
    -cancelled
21 10:00 am Study Class-online
24 10:00 am Sunday Service-online
28 10:00 am Study Class-online
31 10:00 am Tanjo-e Service-online
   Hatsumai Service-cancelled

2020年5月行事予定
3日 午前8時半 理事会ーオンライン
3日 午前10時 祥月法要ーオンライン
7日 午後7時半 法話会ーキャンセル
10日 午前10時 母の日家族礼拝ーオンライン
17日 家族ファンデー 於村田ファームーキャンセル
24日 午前10時 日曜礼拝ーオンライン
31日 午前10時 誕生会法要ーオンライン
   初参り法要ーキャンセル

*If you have not received emails from the temple, please send your email address to us (wcbt.livingdharma@gmail.com). We will send you invitations to services and updated information. Thank you.

*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。

御名をきくも本願より成じてきく。
一向に他力なり。
『安心決定鈔』