Every Moment Is Unprecedented
Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi

Time goes by so quickly, and August is almost around the corner. However, this summer has been quite different. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many of our temple activities, including our Obon Festivals. Traditionally in the US, Obon is observed from the end of June to the beginning of August. With so many temples in Southern California, there is an Obon scheduled every weekend, and we always enjoy Obon food and Bon Odori at various temples. We are accustomed to enjoying the Obon festivities during the summer months, except for this year. Although some temples still offer a virtual Obon Festival, all of the Buddhist temples in Southern California and the US have had to cancel their Obon festival.

Not only have Obon festivals been affected by COVID-19, but the virus has also had a significant impact on our lifestyle. It has deprived us of important contact with our families and friends. No one knows how long we have to put up with this inconvenience, and many of us feel anxiety about the future.

Instead of being depressed with the current situation, Buddhism encourages us to spend our time to consider something we hardly focus on ever, like the importance of getting together with our families and friends. There are many things we have taken for granted in our lives, and the meaning of having memorial services could be one of them to reflect upon.

Jodo Shinshu values a memorial service as an occasion of ‘encountering.’ It is a time for families to gather together. Also, we receive an opportunity to re-encounter our loved ones as Buddhas who deliver the teachings through their lives. Therefore, having a memorial service is not for the deceased in order to send some good merit to them. Instead, it is an opportunity to listen to them and realize profound wishes and aspirations we have received from their lives.

“Listening to our loved ones” means to reflect upon their lives sincerely. As we reflect on their lives, we become aware that we have received numerous messages in the relationship with our loved ones. They are expressed both verbally and non-verbally. Perhaps it could be delivered through harsh words. However it might take a while for us to come to realize the true
I hope you are keeping well during these difficult and hot summer weeks. Because of the global pandemic, we are unable to have Dharma School classes in person. How long this will last is uncertain. The Dharma School staff and Sensei will meet virtually to put together a curriculum that we hope will service our children until we can meet face to face again. We will keep you informed!

In the meantime, I will continue with stories that help our children understand Buddhist concepts. Please read and discuss with your youngsters the Buddhist lesson in this short Aesop’s fable:

“Mrs. Crab and Her Daughter”

Mrs. Crab and her daughter were walking along the shore of an ocean. Mrs. Crab suddenly stopped to look at her daughter. She frowned and said, “Daughter! Stop walking sideways! You look ridiculous! Walk in a straight line toward me!”

As hard as she tried, her daughter could not do it. She asked her mother to show her how to walk in a straight line. Mrs. Crab tried and tried, but she, too, couldn’t do it!

What do you think about what Mrs. Crab demanded of her daughter? How do you think she felt when she herself couldn’t walk in a straight line? How would you feel if you were the daughter? Ask your parents or grandparents about judgment from the Buddhist point of view!

Book Recommendation: Sadako and the Thousand Cranes by Eleanor Coerr

Stay Safe!

Gassho,
Claire Hansen

Congratulations 2020 Graduates!

Luke
Kindergarten

Derek
Kindergarten

Kalia
8th Grade

Sabrina
Orange Coast College

Sophia
Mt. San Antonio College
Sunday Services
All Sunday services will be conducted via Zoom until further notice. Look for 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!

August Sunday Services
WCBT usually takes a break during August but due to the COVID shut down and the great response we’ve had with Zoom services we will continue to have Sunday Services through the month of August and beyond.

Discussion Class
The weekly discussion class will continue through August every Thursday at 10 am via Zoom. There is a different topic of discussion each week and a lively dialogue with a growing number of participants. Look for the email invitation with meeting ID and password or contact Rev. Miyoshi for the information.

Private Memorial Services
Private memorial services can be conducted via Zoom. Please contact Rev. Miyoshi for more information and to schedule your service.

Ohigan Service
Our Fall Ohigan Service will be held on September 20 at 10:00 am via Zoom.

September Oldies
The September Oldies Dance has been cancelled.

Online Donations
The Living Dharma website now has a link https://livingdharma.org/index.php/donations/ for donations. You can use PayPal, credit and debit cards to make donations to the temple with a few simple clicks. Checks are still and always accepted as well for the traditionalist.

Buddhism Quiz
Every Thursday Rev. Miyoshi leads a Study and Discussion class on various topics on Buddhism. In recent weeks the class talked about Dharma and Karma. Identify the following descriptions/definitions as either karma or dharma.

1. Describes workings of cause and effect.
2. “...is always present, whether or not there is a Buddha to preach it or a sangha to practice it.”
3. “...is the teachings delivered by the Buddha and added to by count less generations of accomplished and realized men and women.”
4. “...Every action is conditioned by an interdependent set of previous actions, and every action provokes a subsequent cascade of resulting actions.”

Answers: Karma: 1, 4; Dharma: 2, 3

GATEWAY Staff
Layout & Editing: Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi, Hisako Koga, Claudia Haraguchi, Richard Kagawa
Contributors: Claire Hansen, Michael Jitosho, Joanie Martinez, Phillip Underwood
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.
The Temple’s mailing address is:
West Covina Buddhist Temple
P. O. Box 1616
West Covina, CA 91793
(626) 689-1040
Website: www.livingdharma.org
Facebook: facebook.com/westcovinabuddhist-temple
E-Mail: wcbt.livingdharma@gmail.com

Happy Birthday
AUGUST
Hope Is A Four-Letter Word
Phillip Underwood

A thesaurus is designed to help “find the words you need to express yourself more effectively and more interestingly.” That’s what it’s meant to do. We all have those moments when just the right word is as far from our brain as a jet-liner soaring overhead. Those moments when an idea is right at the tip our tongue, but it might as well be a thousand miles away, because as hard as we may try, it just won’t peek from behind the clouds inside our head. And the harder we try, the more frustrating it becomes. I have a copy of the Oxford Thesaurus, and it defines hope as “ambition, aspiration, craving, desire, longing, wishing and yearning.” All of those are relatively good and desirable things. Whatever our situation may be, hope is always there encouraging us to stay the course, or as Jesse Jackson used to say, “keep hope alive.”

Just over a year ago hope became one of the most important concepts in my life. It was in June of 2019, when my wife, Trina, was diagnosed with metastatic cancer in her lung that had spread throughout her body and brain. Trust me when I say that very few things in my life have had such a devastating effect on all I know, believe and possess. It turned our world completely upside down. Now fortunately, my youngest daughter is a physician assistant in anesthesia at MD Andersen Hospital, located in the world renown Texas Medical Center in Houston. MD Andersen is considered the pre-eminent cancer hospital in the country, and maybe in the world, so we immediately booked a flight to Houston, took up residence at my daughter’s house, and began months of treatments and therapies to beat this thing called cancer. And I honestly cannot tell you how many trips we’ve made to Texas between June and February.

One of the benefits we’ve had is that my daughter arranged for the head of thoracic oncology to be Trina’s attending physician. That means that the doctor who today has trained many associates practicing around the world, is in charge of the treatment and care of my wife. What more could I hope for? Other than a complete cure, I honestly don’t know. But just the fact that she was in such competent hands gave us immense faith…and hope. He explained to us that he knew of only 200 people worldwide that had a particular molecular deformity affecting them, and only 3 that had a different deformity that caused their cancer, but only 1 person that had both of these deformities. And that person is Trina. So, as difficult and frightening as this situation is, she is in great hands, because a leader in his field is learning from her case.

Additionally, a tremendous benefit of this situation is that we get to see both of my daughters and their families (5 grandchildren). They all live in the Houston area because both of our sons-in-law work for Exxon Mobile, which is headquartered just north of Houston.

All of the things that I’ve said, up to this point, give us hope. But that hope comes with considerable anxiety because there is still a great deal of uncertainty. Will the treatment be successful, and if so, for how long? How many treatments will be necessary, and how often? How many more flights? We hope, but as Reverend Miyoshi says, “we don’t know”. All we can do is continue to stay determined, trust the science and skills of the medical team providing her treatment, and…hope.

BBQ Stolen

Greetings WCBT Sangha.

I hope everyone is being safe, vigilant, and healthy. Don’t forget your masks when out, better yet, stay at home. On a happier note, Pasadena Buddhist Temple held a Virtual Obon. I checked it out at their website and it looked really fun. They had a Manto-e ceremony, bon odori, and even a virtual market place. Also, our Betsuin will be having a Vitual Obon Festival on July 25th. I deeply regret not being able to enjoy our Obon. I missed seeing all the families and friends of the Sangha enjoying the festivities and each other’s company. On that note, during a time when people should be working together to make things better, some people have turned to taking things that are not theirs. Some people have taken our West Covina Buddhist Temple’s BARBEQUE! Our teriyaki chicken BBQ! I was shocked to hear of this. But, during desperate times, people do desperate things. I thought I should share this unfortunate occurrence.

With gassho,
Bruce Whang
MOMENT, cont’ from pg. 1

meaning behind those words. And some important teaching will reach out to us through their lives even if they might not have intended to do so. So when we do have a memorial service and reflect upon the life of our loved one, we will awaken to the fact that the teaching we receive through their lives illuminates our lives and leads us to the path we should take amid difficult and uncertain times.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, we hear the word “unprecedented” more than ever. No doubt the outbreak of this virus has caused an unprecedented impact on our lives in every way. No one ever imagined that we would not be allowed to be at our loved one’s side or hold their hand at their last breath. It brings further grief and pain to the family.

Also, because no one has ever experienced this novel Corona virus before, we do not have the right answer to deal with it. There is no way to predict our future. It is this uncertainty that brings us great frustration and anxiety. It is uncomfortable for sure. Yet, surprisingly, Buddhism does not see our current situation with pessimism. On the contrary, Buddhism reveals that these difficult times give us a rare opportunity to awaken to the reality of life—“Every moment in our lives is unprecedented.”

In actuality, our life is always uncertain. No matter how much we prepare, there is no guarantee that tomorrow goes as we plan. Some unexpected things could happen and cause havoc. Or, we may not be able to have tomorrow. Only because today is the same as yesterday or a week ago, we just assume that tomorrow comes as today or yesterday. A sense of security is merely based on our assumption, which is easily turned upside down in our reality. There is no certainty in life, whether we are with the virus or not.

“Everything should have an absolute answer, and we can get it immediately”—this is another illusion we have created about our lives. Due to the remarkable progress of technology, we enjoy an extremely comfortable life. The navigation app gives us any location and estimate time. Smart speakers answer questions instantly. We accomplish a convenient lifestyle. However, such accomplishments reinforce our illusion about life. As a result, we think there is always an answer for our lives and we can control our lives as long as we get the answer. The COVID-19 pandemic has completely shattered this illusion and brought us back to life as it is.

Helping us to control our life is not Jodo Shinshu. Believing that we can control our own life is our illusion, and, as long as we rely on the illusion, we struggle with frustration and discontent. Through the teaching of Buddhism, Jodo Shinshu enables us to be aware of our delusional perspective of our lives and liberate us from it. This awakening gives us the strength to accept unprecedented events that happen to us and how to live with them. Rev. Ryojin Soga expresses this virtue saying, “Buddhism does not evaluate or judge what had happened to us. When we encounter the teaching of Buddhism, we are given latitude in living our life flexibly, even in the midst of devastation.”

When our delusional perspective of life is finally broken down, instead of wasting our time expecting someone to tell us what to do, we are able to focus on what we have to do ‘now’ and do our best. At the same time, we are able to realize that those who lived before us also lived in an unprecedented time in history. The realization lets us relate to them, learn from them, and respect them as Buddhas.

We are not the only ones who have gone through unprecedented times. For those who immigrated to this country from their homeland, those who were finally able to settle down and lost everything during WWII, and those who raised their voices for their dignity and the equality of everyone, their path was not pre-established. In their life, each moment was unprecedented, and they did the best they could do. Re-encountering them through their lives, we receive the profound wisdom to live our lives in the midst of these challenging times.
Quote of the Month
The scars and stains of racism are still deeply embedded in the American society.
-John Lewis

Wondering how to keep busy while sheltering at home during a Covid-19 pandemic? Try 1,000 piece jigsaw puzzle!

*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.

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!
Statement Against Injustice and in Support of Black Lives

Discrimination, racism and police brutality have no place in a free society. The tragic deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and other Black Americans prove there’s still much wrong in our world. Now is the time to protest against a system that breeds injustice and the senseless taking of human life. We must all work together towards much needed change.

Our Jodo Shinshu Buddhist temples and members in the United States are no strangers to discrimination and racism. Founded by Japanese immigrants more than a hundred years ago, our temples were vandalized, burned and shuttered during World War II. Many Japanese Americans were arrested and incarcerated without due process of law, solely based on their ethnicity. Entire communities—grandparents, adults, and children—were forced to abandoned homes and sent to concentration camps.

These actions were especially unjust because they were Americans, denied their civil rights and liberties as U.S. citizens. Today it’s a sad fact that Black Americans still face ongoing systemic discrimination, racism and brutality. It’s time for change.

The Buddhist teachings encourage us to hold all life as precious. Moreover, we all are interconnected and inter-dependent, so it’s important to recognize these truths and try to work together and live in harmony. These are not merely sweet words without substance; they represent true reality. We must see them in our lives here and now. We must try to live in accord with these truths in our communities, in our country, and in our world at large.

However Buddhism also teaches us the greatest impediments to peace within ourselves and in the world are greed, anger and ignorance. We naturally are attached to our own views and strongly tend to be selfish and self-centered. We all must break through this cloud of ignorance to see the greater good.

Shinran Shōnin, founder of Jodo Shinshu, welcomed all who wanted to hear the Buddhist teachings. He treated everyone equally, calling them “fellow travelers.” With this attitude, we also are encouraged to see others as equals, to be helpful, and to support people in need.

In this spirit, let us strive for a more equitable and just society. Let us try to see ignorance and selfishness within our selves, to speak out against discrimination, injustice, and brutality, and to work together to create a more peaceful and harmonious world.

Bishop Noriaki Ito
Higashi Honganji North America District
未曾有の出来事
見義信香

今年はいつもとは異なると何も静かに夏になりました。例年であれば6月末から8月初頭にかけて、毎週末どこかのお寺で盆踊りの音楽を聞くことができます。しかし今年、コロナウイルスの影響を受けて今年は全てのお寺でお盆祭りが中止となりました。また、初盆法要もオンラインを通じてお勤めされ、ウェストコビナのお寺も例外ではありますが、今後の生活を不自由を感じる方がたくさんいらっしゃることでしょう。それは例えば、法要をお勧めする意味そのひとつかもしれません。

浄土真宗では初盆法要や法事を「出逢いの場」として大切にしてきた。それは、普段離れて生活している家族や親類が集う場であること、同時に、亡き人と改めて会う場としてもあります。その意味で、浄土真宗では法要をお勧めするのは亡き人のために良さそうなことであるからです。

今年の夏はまだ朝晩爽やかな風が吹き抜ける日々が続いています。カリフォルニア州ではまた感染拡大の波が到来し、相変わらず不安な毎日が続いています。状況の変化に応じて、宗教施設再開についてのガイドラインもその都度改訂されています。ソーシャルディスタンスの確保やマスク着用はもちろん、飛沫による感染を防ぐため、勤行や讃歌斎唱などを行わないように求めております。また、65歳以上のメンバーについては、引き続き自宅待機が勧められています。このような状況を鑑みて、理事会においては再開についての準備を進めていくものの、やはり再開には慎重に考えざるを得ないということで一致しました。そのため8月の再開は見送り、9月に関しても感染状況を見ながら判断していくこととしました。つきましては8月6日、9月3日（木）に予定しておりました法話会も残念ながら中止とさせていただきます。日曜礼拝は引き続きオンラインを通じてお勤めいたします。

皆さまが安心してお寺に足を運んでいただくよう細心の注意と準備をしてまいりたいと思います。今しばらくお待ちいただきますようお願い申し上げます。

皆さん、今年の夏はまだ朝晩爽やかな風が吹き抜ける日々が続いています。カリフォルニア州ではまた感染拡大の波が到来し、相変わらず不安な毎日が続いています。状況の変化に応じて、宗教施設再開についてのガイドラインもその都度改訂されています。ソーシャルディスタンスの確保やマスク着用はもちろん、飛沫による感染を防ぐため、勤行や讃歌斎唱などを行わないように求めております。また、65歳以上のメンバーについては、引き続き自宅待機が勧められています。このような状況を鑑みて、理事会においては再開についての準備を進めていくものの、やはり再開には慎重に考えざるを得ないであります。そのため8月の再開は見送り、9月に関しても感染状況を見ながら判断していくこととしました。つきましては8月6日、9月3日（木）に予定しておりました法話会も残念ながら中止とさせていただきます。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。

皆さん、今年の夏はまだ朝晩爽やかな風が吹き抜ける日々が続いています。カリフォルニア州ではまた感染拡大の波が到来し、相変わらず不安な毎日が続いています。状況の変化に応じて、宗教施設再開についてのガイドラインもその都度改訂されています。ソーシャルディスタンスの確保やマスク着用はもちろん、飛沫による感染を防ぐため、勤行や讃歌斎唱などを行わないように求めております。また、65歳以上のメンバーについては、引き続き自宅待機が勧められています。このような状況を鑑みて、理事会においては再開についての準備を進めていくものの、やはり再開には慎重に考えざるを得ないであります。そのため8月の再開は見送り、9月に関しても感染状況を見ながら判断していくこととしました。つきましては8月6日、9月3日（木）に予定しておりました法話会も残念ながら中止とさせていただきます。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。

皆さん、今年の夏はまだ朝晩爽やかな風が吹き抜ける日々が続いています。カリフォルニア州ではまた感染拡大の波が到来し、相変わらず不安な毎日が続いています。状況の変化に応じて、宗教施設再開についてのガイドラインもその都度改訂されています。ソーシャルディスタンスの確保やマスク着用はもちろん、飛沫による感染を防ぐため、勤行や讃歌斎唱などを行わないように求めております。また、65歳以上のメンバーについては、引き続き自宅待機が勧められています。このような状況を鑑みて、理事会においては再開についての準備を進めていくものの、やはり再開には慎重に考えざるを得ないであります。そのため8月の再開は見送り、9月に関しても感染状況を見ながら判断していくこととしました。つきましては8月6日、9月3日（木）に予定しておりました法話会も残念ながら中止とさせていただきます。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。

皆さん、今年の夏はまだ朝晩爽やかな風が吹き抜ける日々が続いています。カリフォルニア州ではまた感染拡大の波が到来し、相変わらず不安な毎日が続いています。状況の変化に応じて、宗教施設再開についてのガイドラインもその都度改訂されています。ソーシャルディスタンスの確保やマスク着用はもちろん、飛沫による感染を防ぐため、勤行や讃歌斎唱などを行わないように求めております。また、65歳以上のメンバーについては、引き続き自宅待機が勧められています。このような状況を鑑みて、理事会においては再開についての準備を進めていくものの、やはり再開には慎重に考えざるを得ないであります。そのため8月の再開は見送り、9月に関しても感染状況を見ながら判断していくこととしました。つきましては8月6日、9月3日（木）に予定しておりました法話会も残念ながら中止とさせていただきます。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。

皆さん、今年の夏はまだ朝晩爽やかな風が吹き抜ける日々が続いています。カリフォルニア州ではまた感染拡大の波が到来し、相変わらず不安な毎日が続いています。状況の変化に応じて、宗教施設再開についてのガイドラインもその都度改訂されています。ソーシャルディスタンスの確保やマスク着用はもちろん、飛沫による感染を防ぐため、勤行や讃歌斎唱などを行ないように求めております。また、65歳以上のメンバーについては、引き続き自宅待機が勧められています。このような状況を鑑みて、理事会においては再開についての準備を進めていくものの、やはり再開には慎重に考えざるを得ないであります。そのため8月の再開は見送り、9月に関しても感染状況を見ながら判断していくこととしました。つきましては8月6日、9月3日（木）に予定しておりました法話会も残念ながら中止とさせていただきます。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。

皆さん、今年の夏はまだ朝晩爽やかな風が吹き抜ける日々が続いています。カリフォルニア州ではまた感染拡大の波が到来し、相変わらず不安な毎日が続いています。状況の変化に応じて、宗教施設再開についてのガイドラインもその都度改訂されています。ソーシャルディスタンスの確保やマスク着用はもちろん、飛沫による感染を防ぐため、勤行や讃歌斎唱などを行ないように求めております。また、65歳以上のメンバーについては、引き続き自宅待機が勧められています。このような状況を鑑みて、理事会においては再開についての準備を進めていくものの、やはり再開には慎重に考えざるを得ないであります。そのため8月の再開は見送り、9月に関しても感染状況を見ながら判断していくこととしました。つきましては8月6日、9月3日（木）に予定しておりました法話会も残念ながら中止とさせていただきます。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。
August
2  8:30 am  Board Meeting-online
2  10:00 am  Shotsuki Service-online
6  10:00 am  Discussion Class-online
6  7:30 pm  Howakai Japanese Service-cancelled
9  10:00 am  Sunday Service-online
13  10:00 am  Discussion Class-online
16  10:00 am  Sunday Service-online
20  10:00 am  Discussion Class-online
23  10:00 am  Sunday Service-online
27  10:00 am  Study Class-online
30  10:00 am  Sunday Service-online

September
3  10:00 am  Discussion Class-online
3  7:30 pm  Howakai Japanese Service-cancelled
6  8:30 am  Board Meeting-online
6  10:00 am  Shotsuki Service-online
10  10:00 am  Discussion Class-online

2020年8月行事予定
2日 午前8時半  理事会ーオンライン
2日 午前10時  祥月法要ーオンライン
6日 午後7時半  法話会ーキャンセル
9日 午前10時  日曜礼拝ーオンライン
16日 午前10時  日曜礼拝ーオンライン
23日 午前10時  日曜礼拝ーオンライン
30日 午前10時  日曜礼拝ーオンライン

9月行事予定
3日 午後7時半  法話会ーキャンセル
6日 午前8時半  理事会ーオンライン
6日 午前10時  祥月法要ーオンライン

＊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。