Pure Land
Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi

Jodo Shinshu is a tradition within the school of Pure Land Buddhism. Therefore, Pure Land, the land of Amida Buddha, is a critical concept in the teaching. The Sutra on Amida Buddha depicts it as the land of utmost bliss, which is filled with beauty and serenity. However, if we take the image literally, it is easy to confuse it with heaven in Christianity. This is one of the most serious problems Jodo Shinshu faces, especially in the West.

“Where is the Pure Land?” and “When can we get there?”—these questions naturally come to mind when we see the land as an actual place to go. In this case, the Pure Land is the ultimate goal we should reach. And these ideas expose further debate if we go to the Pure Land after we die. I am sure that engaging in an in-depth discussion about it is one way to grasp the Pure Land. At the same time, though, it is also necessary for us to see the Pure Land from a different angle. Instead of seeing it as static existence, perhaps examining the Pure Land as a manifestation of ‘working’ is another way to think about the Pure Land. Considering how the Pure Land works on us and affects our daily lives is focused on through this perspective. Our question then will be “What is the Pure Land?” not “Where is the Pure Land?”

In order to probe the working of the Pure Land, let us look into the meaning of ‘pure’ in Buddhism. ‘Clean’, ‘undefiled’, ‘fresh’...among various descriptions of the term, Buddhism emphasizes the attribute of it as transparency. When we see something crystal clear, we cannot see it per se. However, we know its purity because, if there is something behind it, we see its shape and color as is. Its transparency helps us see things clearly, and this is how the Pure Land works on us.

Imagine a fresh stream. When we look into the stream, we see pebbles at the bottom of the river. We may even find a school of tiny fish. Either pebbles or little fish, when we see their shapes and colors clearly, we know the water is clear and pure. Instead of revealing itself, pure water helps us to see what is there. In the same way, when the working of the Pure Land embraces us, we are...
DHARMA SCHOOL NEWS

Hope you are all doing well during these difficult days! The pandemic, fires, and soaring temperatures make these times very challenging. We have all had to make many adjustments in our lives.

Fortunately, we have been able to see each other through the Zoom services and study classes. Schools from kindergarten through graduate classes have been forced to become virtual. Both staff and students are doing their best.

In order to meet this challenge, Rev. Miyoshi and the Dharma School Staff have met to decide how best to reach out to our students. We came up with a plan involving the Post Office! For every special Buddhist service, the children will receive an envelop containing a story, a simple activity, and short explanation of the significance of that particular service. For example, the first mailing will be about the Fall Ohigan. Periodically throughout the year, we will send a mailing out to our children.

We hope that this will be a fun and informative way to keep in touch with our youngsters. Keep well, and hope to see you soon on Zoom!

Gassho,
Claire Hansen

Acceptance
Yukiko Ann Kovacs

At times, I just feel the need to unload. My husband gets angry when I do this, but I’m hoping that you will be able to read this with an open mind.

Acceptance of yourself – self examination. Look at your faults. See your connection to the past. Admit to being a bonbu (regular human being) whose ego (self preservation) pushes us to do evil (harm to others). Love yourself while acknowledging the ability (need) to grow.

Acceptance of others – respect. Look at the person that you are fighting with. Try to see behind the person. Everyone is saying (doing) what they believe is “right” based on their own individualized thinking. You cannot change someone else. Accept others as they are.

Acceptance of life – interconnectedness. Recognize the preciousness of all life. Have something in your life that is worth living for. Live life with gratitude. Make the most out of what you were given.

Acceptance of death – impermanence. Change is all around us, but we don’t want to accept it. I feel that the most important role of Jodo Shinshu is to help us to accept the death of our loved ones. The saving point of death is that we still have memories of our departed.

Acceptance of uncertainty – the future. We cannot predict what is going to happen. We have no control over things. We must be flexible and adjust to whatever comes.

*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!
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!

Discussion Class
The weekly discussion class will be 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.

Study Class
A new evening Study Class is held every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm and we invite those who are unable to attend the morning Discussion Class to join us. The Study Class focuses on the history and teaching of Jodo Shinshu. If you are interested in purchasing “The Teaching of Jodo Shinshu and the History of the Honganji Community” book which will be used as reference, please contact Rev. Miyoshi.

Halloween
WCBT’s Halloween Service will be on October 25 and we invite everyone to “appear” in their finest and most creative Zoom costumes and make-up! Let’s see who we’ll be able to identify only by looking at their screen names. Winner gets bragging rights!

Ho-onko
Our Ho-onko Service (a memorial service for Shinran Shonin) will be held on Sunday, November 15 at 1 pm. Our special guest speaker will be Bishop Kenjun Kawawata from Hawaii. Please join us as we welcome Bishop Kawawata for this special Zoom service.

Cancelled Events
Akimatsuri and Kiku Crafts & Food Fair are cancelled until 2021.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAY
Travis Hamachi, Erika Haraguchi Haines, Kyle Sato, Brandon Kanemaru, Jennifer Higa, Michelle Harrison, Jill Kato, Jean Nakatani, Hiroko Takemoto, Wesley Kawaguchi, Frank Tanji, Andrew Kochi, Lauren Oshiro, Lynette Godoy, Kaylyn Godoy, Kaz Uyechi, Shinyuki Okamura, Metzl Ortiz, Brian Endo, Sany Nafarrete, Jordan Jucksch, Thomas Le, Kaylyn Godoy

OCTOBER BIRTHDAY
During the COVID-19 confinement, I found myself very restless, bored and at times depressed. I wanted to do all the activities as before without being restricted. After the initial restrictions were relaxed and we were allowed to participate in some activities adhering to social distancing and wearing a mask, I adopted a more positive attitude. I began to see the glass as “half-full”.

One of the first actions I took was contacting my siblings to see how they and their families were doing health-wise via telephone. It was gratifying to know that they were all fine and doing well. I hope I will continue to maintain this frequent level of staying in touch with my family members.

Another practice our family adopted was having Zoom meetings once a week with our children, their spouses and our grandchildren. Since we were not allowed to physically get together in numbers, we found this was a very practical way to communicate with each other and share what was happening with our lives. We thoroughly enjoy these Zoom sessions where we can see the faces of all our family members and share our life experiences.

Once the golf courses were allowed to open, I was able to get out of the house and enjoy being outdoors and breathing open air. Playing golf seemed safe because we were outside, practicing social distancing and initially wearing a mask. Even though the scores were nothing to brag about I enjoyed the camaraderie and exercise since I walk when I play. When I first started playing golf again, my legs got weary before the end of the round. To alleviate this weariness, I started walking three miles daily between rounds of golf. Now I can play a round of golf without getting tired. So a benefit of the pandemic is the exercise I have gained by playing golf 3 to 4 times a week plus walking on the other days.

One very unexpected benefit of the pandemic was being able to participate “religiously” in Buddhist study sessions via Zoom online. Being of advanced age approaching “the great change”, I found participating in Reverend Miyoshi’s study classes of great value. I feel for the first time that due to the frequency and depth of the study sessions, I have gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of Buddhism. I am grateful the pandemic offered me this opportunity. I want to thank Reverend Miyoshi for taking the extra time and effort to offer the extra study classes to the Sangha members. She offered these extra classes during the month of August which is her normal vacation time.

Although the confinement caused by COVID-19 is very unpleasant, one can try to make the best of it. I have tried to be flexible and focus on positive activities.

For most of us, we never would have foreseen the life we are currently living. After 6 months, we continue to adjust to the changing ‘new normal’.

One thing that has changed for me is the number of times I have ‘attended’ Temple. Previous to the ‘new normal’ it was about attending some Sunday services and helping with a few fundraisers. Now it is Sunday services (even in the entire month of August), weekly discussion groups and now, bi-monthly study class. Well, I never would have foreseen myself listening to and reading articles on the Dharma under the ‘old normal’ to this extent! It has been like returning to school without any finals. It has been a good experience to hear the Buddhist perspective of the conditions we are living in, to read more in-depth (haha, at least for me) about the Buddhist terms we always hear in Dharma talks, and to learn more about the life and times in which Shinran lived. So, had it not been for this pandemic, I do not think I would have attended ALL these opportunities to listen and to learn from WCBT Sangha and Rev. Miyoshi. How much have I learned? Well, I continue to have a difficult time articulating Buddhist and Jodo Shinshu perspectives and terms. It continues to be this life-long experience and reminder of my basic human faults. It has helped to keep me grounded and humble.

I would like to thank Rev. Miyoshi for not only continuing Temple services, as many other Temples have, but for also finding weekly articles for us to read for discussion group and for her preparation and lecture at study class. Thank you to all who participate and share in discussion and study class. It has been great to have new Zoom faces and names participating weekly. Thank you to Rev. Fred for emailing the announcements and for reformatting the articles for reading ease. Thank you to Claire Hansen for the activities for our small, but active Dharma School children. Last but not least, thank you to the Gate-
Please Support the WCBT Membership!

Dear Sangha, Family, & Friends,

As I write this, we are already into September. Time flies even during a pandemic, it seems. I hope you and your loved ones are well and keeping safe from all that is going on right now.

Thank you to those who have already sent in their membership dues for the 2020 year. We also express our appreciation to all of you whose donations have helped keep WCBT independent and running. It has all contributed to counter the revenue lost from the cancelled fundraisers due to the pandemic. This is a gentle reminder for those who would like to be part of the WCBT sangha membership for this 2020 year. Compared to other temples, we have kept our dues low, trying to keep it reasonable and affordable. It is $125/couple/family; $100 for a single. We appreciate your support.

Finally, I would like to encourage everyone to join via Zoom, not only our weekly Sunday services, but also the classes and discussions being offered Thursday morning @ 10 a.m. and every second and fourth Tuesday evening @ 6 pm. For those that work during the day, please consider this evening option. Rev. Miyoshi is an awesome teacher who instructs and guides us into very friendly, stimulating, thought-provoking discussions. We have warmly connected with friends/family and even former sangha members who have moved to other parts of the country. “The gates of Dharma are manifold,” please enter one and join us. We would love to see you.

With Gassho,
Johnny Martinez, President

2020 MEMBERSHIP

The following is a list of our paid 2020 members as of August 31, 2020. In the case of an inadvertent omission, please contact Rev. Miyoshi. Those listed below have already paid their 2020 membership dues. If you are not listed and would like to become a member, please use the application on page 6.

Mrs. Ariza, Sally  M/M Arnheim, Bruce  Mrs. Chen, Mei-Ling  M/M De Leon, James  Mr. Di Santo, Robert  M/M Godoy, Jose  M/M Endo, Brian  M/M Ezaki, Leroy  Mr. Fujimoto, Glen  M/M Hamachi, Ted  Mrs. Hansen, Claire  M/M Haraguchi, Richard  Mr. Hatakeyama, Kris  Mrs. Horie, Mae  Mrs. Ikehara, Hideko  Ms. Ikehara-Nelson, Reiko  Mr. Ishikawa, Tadashi & Ms. Kato, Kazuko  M/M Iwama, Danny  M/M Kagawa, Richard  M/M Kamimura, Akitoshi  Ms. Kato, Tanya  Mr. Kato, Ted  Mr. Kinjo, Katsuhide  Ms. Kitaura, Joy  Mr. Kobayashi, Joe  M/M Koga, Dick  Mr. Konno, Paul  Ms. Kovacs, Yukiko  M/M Kuwahara, Steven  M/M Maekawa, Raymond  M/M Martinez,Johnny  Ms. Mayeda, Haruko  Ms. Mita, Susan  M/M Miyashiro, Marc-Mitchell  M/M Murakami, Akira  (Supporting Membership)  Mr. Nakasone, Eddie  Ms. Nishihara, Lillian  Mrs. Oda, Akiko  M/M Ogino, Martin  Mr. Okamura, Tatsuo  Ms. Oku, Michiko  M/M Ormseth, Tor  M/M Oshita, Mitsuru  M/M Sakaue, Masato  M/M Sato, Ken  M/M Shirotag, Jon  Ms. Sogioka, Sadako  Mrs. Takahashi, Miyo  M/M Takemoto, Takashi  Dr/M Takemura, Roy  Ms. Takemura, Vickie  Mr. Tanji, Frank T.  M/M Teragawa, David  Ms. Tsukamoto, Frances  Ms. Uyechi, Kazumi  M/M Wear, Jack  M/M Wexler, Allan  M/M Yamashita, Bob
LISTENING, con’t from pg. 4
way staff for continuing to plan, format and distribute the Gateway in order to keep the Sangha informed, connected and inspired.

PURE, con’t from pg. 1
finally able to see ourselves as we really are.

The Pure Land reveals that we are incomplete and often make mistakes. Simultaneously, the Pure Land also declares that we are invaluable and precious. “Incomplete and invaluable one” is the truth of our existence proclaimed through the Pure Land. However, it is not easy to entrust ourselves to the truth, for those two characteristics usually do not go together. In our society, a valuable person is usually someone who has fewer frailties. Thus, we tend to avoid admitting our mistakes, whereas we blame others’ mistakes to confirm our superiority. In our mind, we are always either incomplete or invaluable.

Facing difficulties, we try to avoid looking at those problems and wish someone or something to take us away from the situation. To make our wishes come true, however, is not how the Pure Land works on us. It is a zest for life that emerges when the Pure Land brings the truth of us to light, and we sincerely entrust ourselves to it. It is this resiliency to stand up again and keep walking in our lives. Our imperfections no longer plunge us into desperation.

Entrusting ourselves to the Pure Land is not necessary to believe that we are going to the beautiful ideal place after we die. Instead, we rely on the working, which leads us to awaken our preciousness and energize our lives. It is the sincere encouragement that lets us accept whatever happens to us, learn from them, and strive to live our lives.

Encountering the working of the Pure Land, we are finally liberated from our view of ourselves and return to our true selves. It is a dynamic transformation arising from within us. The Pure Land has reached out to us, and the encounter with the Pure Land can happen any time, even at this moment, not after we die.

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2020 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)

*Please make your check payable to WEST COVINA HH BUDDHIST TEMPLE
P.O. Box 1616 West Covina, CA 91793
Telephone (626) 689-1040
www.livingdharma.org/wcbt_livingdharma@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/westcovinabuddhisttemple

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Online Donations
The Living Dharma website now has a link (https://livingdharma.org/index.php/donations) for donations and membership dues. 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.
拝啓
今年はコロナウィルスの流行、そして山火事など不安な毎日が続いていますが、皆さまにおかれましては無事にお過ごしのことと存じます。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たちの信仰生活を見直す機会会とされてまいりました。本年は左記の如く法話会におきまして日本語報恩講法要並び十一月祥月法要を併せてオンラインにてお勤めいたしましたのでご案内申しあげます。

日本語報恩講法要
二〇二〇年十一月五日(木)
午後七時(Zoomにて)

Ho-onko is the annual memorial service of the founder of Jodo Shinshu, Shinran Shonin. Shinran lived from 1173-1262 and devoted his life to studying and sharing the teaching of Nembutsu. On this occasion we gather to express our appreciation to Shinran Shonin.

Gassho,
Rev. Nobuko Miyoshi
Johnny Martinez, President
Board of Directors
Quote of the Month
“So, this is something like ‘otera (temple)’ coming to our house.”
-Satsue Sakaue
(after the first Zoom Howakai Service)
はたらきとしての
浄土
見義信香

私たち真宗門徒にとって浄土とは大切なもので、阿弥陀仏の浄土浄化の世界と表現される浄土ですが、それをそのまま受け止めて浄土のことは分かった」と満足している人はあまり多くないと思います。逆に大切なものであるとよくわからないと感じている人もいらっしゃらないでしょうか。

浄土を語るときには様々な視点があります。浄土についてよく聞かれる質問の一つは「浄土はどこにあるのですか？」というものです。この質問にはしばしば「いつその浄土に行くことができるのですか？」という質問が続きます。これは浄土を場所として捉え、いつ到達するゴールと見たときに生じる質問で、その答えは死後往生についての問いにかかわってきます。「私たちがこの場を終えた後に浄土に生まれるのか？」このこと自体を考えるのはとても大切なことだとと思います。ただ、私たちが現在の場所として浄土を考え、そのイメージに捉われると、浄土は私たちの姿をはっきりと教えるはたらきとなっています。

浄土の「浄」は清らかで濁りがないとというものです。「清浄」という言葉でも表現されます。浄土を場所として見ると、そこは清らかで澄んだ空気をたたえ、穏やかな場所をイメージすることでしょう。一方で浄土は私たちの姿をはっきりと教えるはたらきとなります。

私たちは真宗門徒にとって浄土とは大切なキーワードの一つです。阿弥陀仏の清らかな世界と表現される浄土ですが、それにそのままで受け止めて「浄土のことは分かった」と満足している人はあまり多くないと思います。逆に大切なものであるとよくわからないと感じている人もいらっしゃらないでしょうか。

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私は、コロナウイルス感染の収束がなかなか見通せない中、今度は大規模な山火事が発生しました。皆様、そしてご家族の方は無事にお過ごしでしょうか。

去る9月3日（木）にオンラインにて法話会をお勤めしました。初めての試みでしたが、幸い9名の方に集まりました。新しいテクノロジーに慣れずに多少苦労されておられた方もいらっしゃいましたが、3月以降お顔を合わせなかった方々との再会に笑顔が溢れていました。お互いに近況を報告したり、健康を気にかけていたり、お顔を合わせて行っていることが難しくなったからこそ、それができることがありがたいと感じています。法話会では今後もオンラインによる法要を続けていきたいと思っております。10月の法話会は10月1日（木）、11月の法話会ならびに報恩講は11月5日（木）を予定しております。時間はいずれも午後7時となっております。法要参加に必要なインフォメーションは法話会案内とさせて皆さんのお手元に郵送でお届けいたします。

10月、11月の法話会で皆さまとお会いできるのを楽しみにしております。質問がございましたらいつでも見義開教使までご連絡ください。

不自由な生活が続いていますが、どうぞ健やかにお過ごしくださいませ。
October

1  7:00 pm Howakai Japanese Service
   -online
4  8:30 am Board Meeting-online
4  10:00 am Shotsuki Service-online
8  10:00 am Discussion Class-online
10 9:30 am Dharma Seeds Retreat
11 10:00 am Sunday Service-online
13  6:00 pm Study Class
15 10:00 am Discussion Class-online
18 10:00 am Join the Eshinni/Kakushinni
    Memorial Service at San Mateo
    Buddhists Temple-online
22 10:00 am Discussion Class-online
25 10:00 am Sunday Service-online
27  6:00 pm Study Class-online
29 10:00 am Discussion Class-online

November

1  Kiku Craft & Food Fair-cancelled
1  10:00 am Sunday Service

2020年10月行事予定

1日  午後7時  法話会ーオンライン
4日  午前8時半 理事会ーオンライン
4日  午前10時 祥月法要ーオンライン
11日 午前10時 日曜礼拝ーオンライン
18日 午前10時 サンマテオ仏教会の恵信尼
    ／覚信尼法要に参加ーオンライン
25日 午前10時 日曜礼拝ーオンライン

11月行事予定

1日  菊クラフトフェアーキャンセル
1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。