NEW YEAR’S GREETINGS

Yul Ōtani
Overseas District Abbot, Shinshū Ōtani-ha (Higashi Honganji)

To our fellow followers in the overseas districts, I wish you all a Happy New Year.

Throughout the previous year, all of us have struggled in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic and it is still uncertain as to what the future will unfold. Despite the challenges, our overseas district temples devised a way to hold Hōonkō services last fall. I wish to express my appreciation to all of you in observing this most important service. I deeply missed the opportunity to attend the services held in the districts and to see all of you in person.

The teaching of Jōdo Shinshū which Shinran Shōnin clarified has always reminded us of the truth of the equality of all people regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender, and age.

As the newly installed Overseas District Abbot, I have renewed my commitment to share the joy of having encountered the teaching of the nenbutsu. It is the embodiment of the original vow of the Buddha, which enables us to realize the equality of all people around the world beyond the boundaries of linguistic and cultural differences.

In sharing the joy of encountering this teaching with each other, we can realize a world where all people are accepted as they are and treated with mutual respect. Such a world will enable us to discover the meaning of having been born as human beings and find true joy of living. I believe this is how we can find a ray of hope for the future of humanity.

On April 5th, 2021, we will hold the

Please see ODA, con’t on page 4
NEW YEAR’S GREETINGS

Bishop Hiroshi Tajima
Chief Administrator, Shinshū Ōtani-ha (Higashi Honganji)

To all of you in our overseas districts, I wish to first extend my New Year’s greetings. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation for the support and understanding you continue to give to our Sangha.

The covid-19 pandemic is still a grave situation to everyone worldwide. I have heard that many temples and sanghas in the overseas districts have managed to share their Hōonkō service and other events remotely with our members using the internet.

Although we have faced many challenges caused by the pandemic, I think that this difficult situation has given us a chance to reflect more deeply on the meaning and significance of our services and temple events. It makes us realize that we should not take these for granted. From that perspective, we need to think about the direction our sangha should take as we move toward the future.

In April this year, the “Preparatory Event for the 2023 Celebration and the 750th Anniversary of the Establishment of Shinshū Honbyō” will be held at our mother temple in Kyoto. This will be a preview for the 850th Celebration of Shinran Shōnin’s Birth and the 800th Anniversary of the Establishment of Jōdo Shinshū, which will be held in 2023. The main theme of the April event is the same as the 2023 anniversary, “Namu Amida Butsu: To Discover the Meaning of Being Born as Human Beings.” We will livestream this event on the internet in order to comply with public health guidance. This will also enable us to share the theme of the event with people throughout Japan and around the world.

It is my sincerest wish that even though we are still living in difficult times, I will be united with all of you in the overseas districts in continuing to listen to the Dharma and work towards restoring and preserving the Shin Buddhist way of life.

In conclusion, I wish to ask for your continued support as we begin the new year.

Thank you.

I wish all the members and friends of the West Covina Buddhist Temple a Happy New Year. As we begin the year 2021, Bill and I hope that the New Year will bring you and your family joy and meaningful moments.

As we reflect upon 2020, there is no doubt that it has been a truly challenging and heartbreaking year. The COVID-19 pandemic turned the world upside down, and our everyday lives were completely changed. No one, myself included, ever thought that we would be deprived of opportunities to conduct Sunday services at the temple. Offering a place to listen to the teachings is the heart of our temple. It is also an invaluable place where people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives can freely share their thoughts and to experience a strong bond based on the teachings. It was truly challenging, that the temple was restricted of those essential roles, when asked to close our doors in March.

Nonetheless, it was during these difficult times when we realize the strength within us. I witnessed an eagerness to listen to the teachings which was the foundation of our Sangha members. Their enthusiasm let me, and the temple move forward. The temple now conducts Sunday services via Zoom since the middle of March. In response to the members’ requests, weekly discussion class and bimonthly evening study classes are also offered online. We were unable to meet in person, yet we stayed connected. With today’s communication technology, our temple has fulfilled its role to listen to the teachings.

The year 2020 was also a milestone in our history. The COVID-19 pandemic, an economic disaster that followed and the presidential election, stimulated social turmoil and shined the light on severe issues in our society. We became aware that our society faces so many problems such as discrimination, economic discrepancy, and a divided society. We also came to realize that these problems have existed all along and only became visible through all incidents that happened in 2020.

While we pursue our comfort and conveniences, we have forgotten the plight of others. In our efforts to accomplish our ideal life, we created a bubble to live in. The bubble prevents us from seeing anything and anyone outside of the bubble. We enjoy a comfortable life, and we believe what we see is the whole world. It is comfortable but a delusional life. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, the bubble burst, and we were thrown into the real world. It has opened our eyes and made us realize the gap between the bubble and the outside world.

In conclusion, I wish to ask for your continued support as we begin the new year.

Thank you.

Please see MIYOSHI, con’t on pg. 6
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
An evening Study Class is held every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm and we invite those who are unable to attend the morning Discussion Class to join us. The Study Classes will focus on the history and teaching of Jodo Shinshu and starting in the New Year it will be held on January 12 and 26. 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.

New Year’s Day Service
A special online service to commemorate the New Year will be held on Friday, January 1, 2021, at 11:00 am.

Eitaikyo & General Meeting
Eitaikyo and General Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 24 at 10 am via Zoom.

WCBT Seminar
Because our annual Family Retreat at San Luis Obispo was impossible to do this year, the Temple Communication Staff is planning a wonderful alternative. A virtual WCBT Seminar on Saturday, February 20, 2021 with guest Dr. Franz Metcalf speaking on “What Would Buddha Do in Our Divided Society?” For more information please check out the WCBT Seminar flyer on page 7 of this issue of the Gateway.

Pet Memorial Service.
A special online service will be held on February 28 at 10:00 a.m. to remember our animal friends. Everyone who has lost a pet is invited to pay tribute to them on this special day.

Ohigan Service
Our Spring Ohigan Service will be held on March 21 at 10:00 am via Zoom.

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

JANUARY BIRTHDAY
Tami Kitaura, Ty Tamo Le, Casey Hansen, Kevin Maekawa, Carol Oshima, Kathy Oshima, Neil Kato, Cora Ormseth, Matthew Ormseth, Kristen Nakano, Hidemi Ena, Jesse Sakaue, Aya Kamimura, Aiko Yep, Don Frack, Maya Hendrickson, Stephanie Whang, Brian Yanase, Kelly Nakawatase, Andrew Kobayashi, Ron Yamasaki, Eddie Nakasone, Lisa Nakasone, Mayson Godoy

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY

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.
Greetings to our West Covina Sangha

Johnny Martinez, President

2021 is the Year of the Ox. People born in the Year of the Ox are said to be patient and speak little, they have a gift for inspiring others and this allows them to achieve a great deal of success. However, they are eccentric, bigoted, and anger easily. Like all of us, we have strong and weak points. Listening to the Dharma gives us the chance, if not to change a lot, at least improve ourselves and our lives. We should not wait for a whole year to make resolutions, but do so with each opportunity presented... that is one way of living in the moment. Each morning when I awaken, I have the chance to learn from my mistakes, which are many, and sometimes painful and embarrassing. It appears that the older I get, the deeper my ignorance is revealed to me. But then, so is the opportunity to learn, grow, and become a better person with the help of the sangha. May we all live, learn, and share the Dharma together in this new year 2021!

Dharma School

We hope that all of you had a safe and happy holiday season. It certainly has been a difficult year for all of us!

Dharma School has had to shift our curriculum and method of lesson planning as you all know. Our last mailing was on the topic of Hoonko. A short biography of Shinran Shonin’s childhood was presented along with an activity that reinforced his decision to join a Buddhist monastery at the age of nine.

Our next mailing will focus on the new year—the Year of the Ox. People born in this year are said to be very reliable, hard working, patient, stable, and confident. What wonderful traits to have during this most difficult and scary pandemic! We hope our youngsters will enjoy learning about resolutions and the story about how the Asian astrological years were founded.

Wishing that 2021 will be a much better year for you and your family! Keep safe and hope to see all of you face to face sometime in the coming year!

Reiko Ikehara-Nelson, Treasurer

Happy New Year Everyone.

As the Temple Treasurer, I am happy to report that we have weathered through Covid-19 much better than I could have expected. I wasn’t sure what this year of no fundraisers like Obon, Golf Tournament, Oldies Dances and Kiku Craft Fair would look like and what to expect from our Sangha members.

The generous response in donations this past year made me realize how important the Temple is to so many. As a fairly new member to the Temple, I didn’t truly realize the importance it plays in the lives of so many of our Sangha members including myself. It is not just a place to listen to the Dharma but a place to share laughter, tears, and memories and build a bond between each other.

The bond is strong here at West Covina Buddhist Temple and with your continued support we will be able to not just weather Covid-19 but grow in new directions in 2021.

ODA, con’t from pg. 1

“Preparatory Event for the 2023 Celebration and the 750th Anniversary of the Establishment of Shinshū Honbyō” at our mother temple in Kyoto. It is my wish that this event will serve as an opportunity for all of us around the world to celebrate the birth of our spiritual forebear, Shinran Shōnin, together. For myself, it will be the chance to reaffirm my commitment to continue to listen to and learn from the teaching.

In closing, I share my sincere wish that our world will return to normal soon so that we will be able to see each other again.

Thank you.
2020 – What a year! Needless to say it has been a very different and most difficult year that we experienced. Due to the CDC guidelines, most of our temple services, fundraisers and special activities were canceled. As a result our Tobans have been inactive. Therefore, our Tobans have been released from Sunday service setup, providing otoki after our special services, preparing for the selling of tamales at Higashi’s Obon, organizing mochitsuki, and assigned duties at our Obon, the Oldies Dances, and Kiku Craft & Food Fair.

In the past, to be honest, I would utter under my breath “Not again, it is our Toban’s turn for the next three months.” However, I am now looking forward to 2021 with the hope that the COVID-19 pandemic will be is contained and our lives will return to some resemblance of normalcy. Once the shutdown order is lifted and we can resume our services, special activities and fundraisers, I will shout at the top of my lungs “Yes, I’m so grateful it’s our Toban’s turn for the next three months”.

On behalf of the Toban chairs: Toban A - co-chairs Joy Kitaura/Hiroko Takemoto; Toban B - Lee Ezaki; Toban C – Dick Koga, I wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year!

*If you do not see your name here and would like to join one of our Tobans, please contact Rev. Miyoshi.

THANK YOU!

NEW YEAR’S GREETINGS FROM TOBAN LEADERS
Dr. Roy Takemura

Tobans are responsible for providing obuppan/flowers for all services and a chairperson for major and Shotuki services

**Toban A**
(Joy Kitaura/Hiroko Takemoto)
(April–June)
- Akune, Denise
- Ariza, Edith
- Fujimoto, Glen
- Hamachi, Wesley & Connie
- Kagawa, Richard & Ruby
- Kitaura, Joy
- Maekawa, Raymond & Nancy
- Nakatani, Glenn & Jean
- Nishihara, Lillian
- Sato, Ken & Pat
- Shirotka, Jon & Barbara
- Takahashi, Miyo
- Takemoto, Takashi & Hiroko
- Takemura, Roy & Judy
- Takemura, Vicki
- Teragawa, David & Cheryl
- Underwood, Phillip & Autrina
- Yamasaki, Ron

**Toban B (Lee Ezaki)**
(July–September)
- Chen, Mei Ling
- Di Santo, Robert
- Earley, Jerry & Jane
- Ezaki, Lee & Karen
- Gonzalez, Mario & Stephanie
- Harrison, Michelle
- Ikehara-Nelson, Reiko
- Kato, Tanya
- Kovacs, Yukiko
- Mayeda, Haruko
- Oshima, Larry

**Toban C (Dick Koga)**
(January–March, October–December)
- Godoy, Jose & Lynette
- Hansen, Claire
- Haraguchi, Richard & Claudia
- Kato, Ted
- Koga, Dick & Hisako
- Kovacs, Yukiko
- Kowalski, Kurt
- Martinez, Johnny & Joanne
- Ogino, Martin & Leslie
- Ormseth, Tor & Diana
- Oshita, Mitsuru & Mitsu
- Underwood, Steve & Denise
- Wexler, Alan & Emi
- Whang, Bruce
- Yamashita, Bob & Kay

*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.*
been a harsh experience, yet we are finally able to see how our world and society look like through the experience. And we have awakened to the truth, that critical issues in the world are actually our own issues.

Learning from the Buddhist teaching is the path to seek the way to confront those issues with people who have different thoughts and perspectives. Buddhism always encourages us to live together amid diversity. It was not until the year 2020 that we genuinely awakened to the virtue, beauty, and difficulties of this ideal. This means that, instead of touchy-feely phrases, Buddhist teachings actively work in our real lives. It is not an easy or a comfortable path, yet it is a path to peacefully coexist with people who have diverse opinions than your own. I would like to continue to listen to the teachings and walk the path with all of you.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to our Temple President, Mr. Johnny Martinez, members of the Board of Directors, and all our members for their generous support and guidance. I am deeply touched by their support and encouragement, which kept me moving forward as a minister. I would also like to thank Rev. Frederick Brenion for sending the temple events’ information to our members via email.

Bill and I wish you and your family a very meaningful and fulfilling new year in 2021. To be sure, the new year will bring more challenges and changes. With our Sangha members’ continued support and guidance, and most of all, with their heartfelt enthusiasm for the teachings, I am confident that we can overcome these situations and move toward a brighter future.

Gassho

January-February 2021

THE GATEWAY

Quote of the Month
Difficult roads often lead to beautiful directions.
-Unknown

Gassho

MIYOSHI, con't from pg. 2

法を基礎とした人との絆やつながりを感じることのできる場所です。コロナウィルスの世界的感染拡大によって、昨年はそうしたお寺の根幹の活動が制限される事態となりました。

困難な一年であったことは間違いありません。けれども同時に困難に直面したことで、メンバーの方々の関法への熱意を改めて実感することができました。3月にお寺で勤める日曜礼拝の自粛を決めましたが、その後2週間後にはオンラインでの法要が始まりました。また毎週のディスカッションクラス、さらには月二回の学習会もオンラインで開催されるようになりました。特に学習会は私が旗振り役になったというよりも、メンバーの方々の熱心な関法の姿に背中を押されながら、お寺は関法道場としての役割を果たし続けました。

また昨年は私たちの社会が抱える様々な問題が明るみとなった年ではなかったでしょうか。差別や経済格差、社会の分断など、これらは急に生み出された問題ではなく、社会が常に抱えていた問題であり、コロナウィルスの蔓延が縁となり、それらが顕在化しただけです。言い換えれば、これまで私たちが見過ごしてきた問題であったということでしょう。しかし、私たちが前向きに直面した問題であるということでしょう。便利や快適な追求に邁進した結果、私たちは自分や家族さえよければ、という実に自分本位な生活を当たり前としてきました。それ故、人の痛みや苦しみに無関心な生き方であり、あたかも硬い殻の中で自分だけが快適な生活を楽しんでいるようなものです。コロナウィルスの流行が直接の縁となり、その硬い殻が粉々に砕けるのを私たちは実感しました。それ故、それは衝撃的であり、厳しい体験ではありました。けれども同時に今ま
West Covina Buddhist Temple Presents

The 2021 Online Seminar:
“What Would Buddha Do In Our Divided Society?”

Lecturer: Dr. Franz Metcalf

Date: Saturday, February 20, 2021, 1 pm
(No Registration Fee)

Pre-register by email to
wcbt.livingdharma@gmail.com to be added to the Zoom meeting invitation for the seminar.

More Info: (626)689-1040
revnobuko@gmail.com (Rev. Miyoshi) or pishsato@gmail.com (Pat Sato)

About the Seminar

It has been a deadly, frightening, outrageous, frustrating 12 months. The November election has shown us how truly divided this nation is. We have heard and seen more division in our life as it relates to the pandemic, political, social, economic issues, etc. The arguments have been passionate, hateful and untrue. How does one, especially those that follow the Buddhist path, live more peacefully and balanced in a society that can be easily ignited by either side of the issue? These people are our family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, community leaders or a passerby. What would Buddha do in our deeply divided society?

About the Lecturer

Please join us as we listen to WCBT returning guest speaker, Dr. Franz Metcalf, author of What Would Buddha Do?, Being Buddha at Work, What Would Buddha Do at Work?, Buddha In Your Backpack, Just Add Buddha. He received his MA from the Graduate Theological Union and PhD from the University of Chicago. He is past President of the American Academy of Religion, Western Region, book review editor of the Journal of Global Buddhism, a Religious Studies instructor at Cal State University, Los Angeles and an active leader in the Forge Institute for Spirituality and Social Change.

Program: 1:00 - 3:00 pm

1:00-1:20 Welcome/Intro
1:20-2:00 Lecture
2:00-2:10 Break
2:10-2:40 Breakout Room
2:40-3:00 Wrap-up

*If you wish to make a donation, 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. Please make your check payable to WEST COVINA HH BUDDHIST TEMPLE, and mail to P.O. Box 1616, West Covina, CA 91793. We truly appreciate your generous support.
海外在住の全ての同朋の皆さまに新年のご挨拶を申し上げます。

コロナ禍という先の見通せない状況下にあって、昨年末、各開教区では、様々な工夫をしながら報恩講をお勧めいただきましたことに感謝申し上げます。本来であれば、各別院の報恩講の折に、皆さまとお会いすることを楽しみにしておりましたが、出向がかなわず大変残念に思っております。

さて、親鸞聖人がひらかれた浄土真宗は、国や人種、性別、年齢などに関わらず、差別のない平等の世界を説いている教えです。

今後、開教司教として、それぞれの言葉や文化的違いを超えて、平等なる地平に立った本願念仏の教えに遇った喜びを、世界中の方々と共にしていく喜びを発露することによって、皆さまにお届けしたいと思います。

今年度の年頭の行事として、開教区の皆さまにご挨拶を申し上げます。皆さまにおかれましては、平素より聞法精進の生活をお送りいただいていること、拝察いたします。

さて、新型コロナウイルス感染症の世界的拡大は今なお厳しい状態にあり、各開教区におかれましても、報恩講や諸行事のオンライン開催がなされていると聞き及んでおります。

つまりそれは、教えをいただきている私たち一人ひとりが教えに遇った喜びを、世界中の方々と共有していく喜びを、一筋の光明が開かれてくるのではないかと感じているからです。

来年4月5日には、「真宗本廟お待ち受け大会及び本廟創立七百五十年記念大会」が執り行われます。前の開教使になって以来、日曜礼拝がお寺でお勤めできなくなった日が来るなど想像することもありませんでした。お寺は報恩の場であり、それは様々な考えを持たれた人々が集い、それぞれの生活の中で開いた教えを分かち合う場です。また様々な活動を通して仏教を広めることを切に願っています。

本年も、どうぞよろしくお願いいたします。

謹んで新年のご挨拶を申し上げます。

2020年は世の中が、そして私たちの生活が一変した一年でした。開教使になって以来、日曜礼拝がお寺でお勤めできなくなる日が来るなど想像することもありませんでした。お寺は報恩の場であり、それは様々な考えを持たれた人々が集い、それぞれの生活の中で開いた教えを分かち合う場です。また様々な活動を通して仏教を広めることを切に願っています。

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今年で当たり前のこととしてお勧めしてきた法要・行事について、改めてその意味や大切さを丁寧に受け止め、これから考えていく課題をいただいているのではないかと思います。

いよいよ今年4月には、宗祖親鸞聖人御誕生850年・立教開宗800年慶讃法要に向け「真宗本廟お待ち受け大会及び本廟創立七百五十年記念大会」が執り行われます。そしてその模様は、現下のコロナ禍に鑑み、インターネット配信を行い、日本国内はもとより世界中の方々と共に、慶讃テーマ「南無阿弥陀仏 人と生まれたこの世の意味をたずねていこう」のもと、生まれた意義と生きる喜びを真摯に確かめ合う集いと存じます。

先行きの見えない不安定な状態においても、開教区の皆さまと心ひとつに信心の生活回復を期して、報恩の歩みを進めてまいりたいと心に念願しております。本年も、どうぞよろしくお願いいたします。

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**January**
- 1 11:00 am New Year’s Day Service-online
- 3 8:30 am Board Meeting-online
- 3 10:00 am Shotsuki Service-online
- 7 10:00 am Discussion Class-online
- 7 7:00 pm Howakai Japanese Service-online
- 10 10:00 am Sunday Service-online
- 12 6:00 pm Study Class-online
- 14 10:00 am Discussion Class-online
- 17 10:00 am Sunday Service-online
- 21 10:00 am Discussion Class-online
- 24 10:00 am Eitaikyo Service/General Meeting-online
- 26 6:00 pm Study Class-online
- 28 10:00 am Discussion Class-online
- 31 10:00 am Sunday Service-online

**February**
- 4 10:00 am Discussion Class-online
- 4 7:00 pm Howakai Japanese Service-online

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**2021年1月行事予定**
- 1日 午前11時 修正会法要ーオンライン
- 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 法話会ーオンライン
- 10日 午前10時 日曜礼拝ーオンライン
- 17日 午前10時 日曜礼拝ーオンライン
- 24日 午前10時 永代経法要／総会
- 2月行事予定
- 4日 午後7時 法話会ーオンライン

＊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。

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