



Fellow Travelers

The monthly newsletter of the Longmont Buddhist Temple

2017 December

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LONGMONT BUDDHIST TEMPLE NORTHWEST CORNER - PIKE ROAD AND MAIN STREET, (606 PIKE ROAD), LONGMONT, COLORADO 80501

P.O. Box 2083, LONGMONT, COLORADO 80502

Message from Sensei John

Gratitude

by Sensei John Hughes
Minister's Assistant

With Thanksgiving over and the holiday season in full swing, I return to one of my favorite topics. Gratitude is one of the key concepts in Shin Buddhism. The first talk I heard Rev. O'Dowd give at LBT focused on being thankful for all the causes and conditions that arose to allow me to hear the teaching of Shinran Shonin. Over the course of several conversations with members of the sangha it has become clear that after Wisdom and Compassion, gratitude is a very important part of what it means to be a Shin Buddhist.

This teaching of gratitude is not just saying thank you by rote, mindlessly if you will. To me the teaching is about appreciating everything that is part of my life as the opportunity to practice being a better person. Do I fail in this endeavor? Absolutely! Constant failure, picking myself back up and trying to do better the next time is how I grow. Greed, anger, stupidity are constant companions in my life. Probably you can sympathize with my wish to avoid admitting these failings; but they are an integral part of who I am. Being honest about my failings is important to walking this path.

The idea of living with an attitude of gratitude is challenging. How does one learn to walk in gratitude? Some may be able to do it naturally. My hat is off to you. (And I'm jealous.) It takes others more effort. One of the techniques that I have used for many years to improve the focus on gratitude is to keep a gratitude inventory.

When first consciously, mindfully, practicing living an attitude of gratitude it is helpful to keep a written list of what you are grateful for. It can take whatever form is

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useful to you – straight prose – a three or four column list, a spreadsheet if you will – or some other form that works for you. One way of setting up the list is: Column A – Who or what I am grateful for; Column B – Why I am grateful (the cause of my gratitude); Column C - What this affects (Self-esteem, pocketbook, security, etc.); Column D – Looking only at myself what did I do or not do to cause this situation to occur? Do I owe someone thanks or credit for this situation? At least once a day, usually in the evening sit with your list and review the day. Journal anything that seems important or moving to you. Review in the morning if you need to change your attitude. Eventually living in gratitude will become a habit.

One of the benefits of this practice is that it can reduce depression. Being consciously aware of the good things that occur in your life makes it harder to be down. Depression is a debilitating condition. If you suffer from depression, try keeping a gratitude journal; get more sunlight; and find kind compassionate people to interact with.

Namo Amida Butsu,
John

Fellow Travelers - December 2017

News Around Longmont Buddhist Temple

Temple Updates

by Jackie Tono
Temple Board President

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving Day with family and friends. Hopefully you had a few minutes to be grateful for all the small and great gifts in your life.

Minister Assistant John Hughes, his wife, Nancy, and I went to Salt Lake City for the Mountain States annual conference. At this annual meeting, there is usually a board member from the Buddhist Churches of America present to discuss topics that will be discussed at the annual BCA meeting. It's always a good experience to visit other Temples, meet other Sangha members and hear a Dharma talk from different ministers. I always try to encourage everyone to visit other Temples to hear the Buddhist teachings from other ministers and see how other Temples operate. Next year's host will be the Denver Tri-State Buddhist Temple so mark your calendars to attend November 2018 Mountain States Conference.

It's hard to believe we are at the end of the year. So many events that show impermanence. For example, Mike Shibata and Rose Takamoto moved to California in 2017. We also experienced the passing of several of our sangha members: Margaret Miyasaki, Sumi Mayeda and Harriet Bissell. At the same time we had many joyful events such as a successful Diversity Concert, as well as the wonderful Obon service and dancing with Rev. Okamoto, Shieko Uno and Patty Kasadate leading the dance. We held seminars such as Christina Hildebrandt's Singing Bowls, the Death and Dying Workshop and Rev. Nakasone's Road Map to Enlightenment in October.

With the new year around the corner Treasurer Gail Hogsett will be mailing membership forms to everyone as well as asking everyone if they have paid for 2017 dues. I will be contacting everyone with respect to hosting refreshments for community hour after our regular services. Please see Gail Hogsett if you have questions about your membership status and see me if you'd like to keep your same hosting dates or would like to sign up for a Sunday.

December 3rd is the Bodhi Day Service with a Potluck to

follow. December 17th will be a regular service and we will have a board meeting following community hour. On December 31st Minister Assistant John Hughes will conduct the end of the year service at the Longmont Temple with a dessert potluck to follow. It's a great way to end the year and start the new year. January 7th will be our first service of the year. During January, we will have the Temple's annual meeting to plan for 2018. We are also looking for volunteers to fill a couple of board positions. Please see a current board member for details.

In case you missed the showing the first time, "Allegiance" the musical/movie by George Takei is showing again on Thursday, December 7th. Please check Fandango or AMC for show times and local theaters. Allegiance is a story of one Japanese American family's journey after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and their imprisonment into concentration camps.

Let's hope 2018 will be a prosperous, happy, healthy, nonviolent year for everyone.

In Gassho,
Jackie

Bodhi Day Service - December 3

Jodo E (Bodhi Day Service)

by Mike Shibata

It was on December 8th that Siddhartha Gautama was "born" as Sakyamuni Buddha. It was while sitting in meditation beneath a Pippala tree (*Ficus religiosa*) that Gautama made a firm resolution to not move from his sitting position until he attained Enlightenment. Since Enlightenment is known as Bodhi in Sanskrit, December 8 is called Bodhi Day and the Pippala tree is sometimes referred to as Bodhi tree.

The word Buddha means "the Enlightened" or "the Enlightened One". Buddhism teaches that all things have Buddha-nature or the potentiality to become Buddhas. Yet to our knowledge there has been no one outside of Gautama in the 2,500 plus years of Buddhism to have attained the state of Enlightenment or Buddhahood.

A Buddha is one who has realized the Universal Truth and can see the true nature of all existence and phenomena as they are. Until this state has been reached or attained, we are leading a blind life filled with suffering and sorrow.

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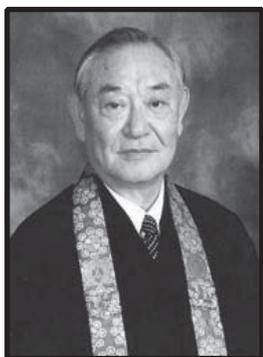
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In reading the biography of many of the more well-known followers of Buddhism, especially in Jodo Shinshu, it is possible to see that it was not at an early age that they were firmly established in their Faith in Buddhism. Gautama was twenty-nine years old when he set out in his search for the Truth. Among the Seven Masters or Patriarchs of Jodo Shinshu, Doran or T'an-luan became converted to the Pure Land teaching when he was about fifty-two, Doshaku or Tao-ch'o when he was forty-eight years old, and Genku or Honen Shonin was forty-three years old. Although Shinran Shonin was nine years old when he entered the priesthood at Shoren-in, he practiced on Mt. Hiei for twenty years before he realized that the self-power practice was not the way in which he could attain Enlightenment. At the age of twenty-nine, Shinran joined Honen Shonin who taught that the essential practice for Birth in the Pure Land is Nembutsu. Shinran in developing the Nembutsu thought, placed a special emphasis on Faith. According to Shinran, Faith is the cause for Birth and the Nembutsu is the accompaniment of Faith and the expression of innermost gratitude.

We should be most grateful that as Sakyamuni Buddha, He did not keep the reason for His seeking Enlightenment as well as His teaching a secret. Realizing the universal Truth or the nature of all existence, He sought to spread the teaching which would enable human beings to cross over the ocean of birth and death, because he attained the Wisdom and Compassion of a Buddha.

Wheel of Dharma - November, 2017

“Go and get some water with this, my son”



By Rev. Doei Fujii,
Tri-State/ Denver Buddhist Temple

When I was in Japan more than 40 years ago, an elderly minister talked about an unforgettable episode when he was a little boy. Since then, his story has been unforgettable for me, too. I would like to share it with you because it is truly and deeply related to the

working of the Dharma. His short message also indicates a serious mistake we make when we learn the Teaching.

His episode goes as follows: One day his mom called him, gave him a basket, and said, “Go and get some water with this.” So, he went to the water and scooped a couple of times, but he saw nothing left in the basket. He went back to his mother and said, “Mom, I tried hard, but I could not get any water with the basket!” “Did you see any difference between before and after, my son?” she asked. “Well, the basket just got wet,” he answered. “That’s right, the basket just got wet,” she said. “You cannot get water with the basket, but I know the way to see the basket full of water. When you put it in the water, you’ll see it full of water.”

Although he was young and could not understand what she meant, her words stayed in his mind for years. Later, after he studied Jodo Shinshu, he realized the true meaning of his mother’s words.

This young woman was a *Nembutsu* follower, and she guided her son to become a wonderful minister. Her perception was deep. When we listen to the Dharma we try to understand it, or scoop it up. But she wanted to say that our accumulated knowledge and understanding of the Dharma doesn’t help us at all. We attend services and lectures to listen to the Dharma, and we get knowledge and understanding. However, like the basket, we just get wet. On the contrary, when we put ourselves in the Dharma, we are filled with it and the Dharma clearly works on us.

In other words, when we listen to the Dharma in the subject (I)/object (Dharma) relationship, we just get wet, like the basket. We are not filled with Dharma. But when we listen to the Dharma in the subject (I)/subject (Dharma) relationship, we clearly see ourselves in the Dharma and come to realize the true working of the Dharma.

For example, remember the First Vow of *Amida* Buddha. It says, “There is no anger, greed, or ignorance in my country.” Do you ponder the meaning of anger, greed, and ignorance? Or do you see them in yourself with your mind’s eye?

Don’t try to scoop up the Dharma; put yourself in the Dharma and identify yourself there. Find yourself in the *Nembutsu*.

Wheel of Dharma - November, 2017

Ultimate Shelter

by Rev. Kodo Umezu,
BCA Bishop



BCA Bishop, Rev. Kodo Umezu (right) presented Jodo Shinshu Correspondence Course Certificates of Completion to Tim Shimizu (left) and Liat Parker at the closing of the 2017 JSCC August Workshop. See page 4 for more about the JSCC August Workshop.

I really appreciate people, whether professionals or volunteers, who work hard to help others, especially in catastrophic situations such as we have been witnessing throughout the world these past few months. They respond to all emergencies, save people's lives, and maintain order.

In our spiritual realm, I deeply appreciate the rescue efforts of those who have already secured themselves in the shelter of the Dharma. The narratives of humankind are filled with many stories that we can learn from. One that really touches many, many people is the Dharmakara story. I would like to share that this month.

Long ago, there was a king who met a Buddha called Lokeshvararaja and was deeply inspired by him. The encounter made him renounce his throne and become a humble follower. *San Butsu Ge* recounts the praises of Lokeshvararaja Buddha by the king. This king became Bhikshu Dharmakara (Dharma Storehouse).

Bhikshu Dharmakara, seeing our human suffering and feeling our pain as his own, expressed to Lokeshvararaja Buddha his sincere desire to do something, saying, "I wish to attain perfect enlightenment in this world **quickly** so that I can remove the roots of suffering and affliction in birth-and-death." This is how the well-known Forty-Eight Vows were established. *Juseige* is the summarization and reaffirmation of his vows.

As the result of determination and commitment, Bhikshu Dharmakara became a Buddha, known as Amida Buddha, and his Pure Land, the Home of all beings, has been shown to us as the ultimate refuge

where all beings can be freed from suffering and affliction.

Do we, even after hearing the story behind the Pure Land, really care about the intent of Bodhisattva Dharmakara? We should understand that this is not a historical story, but rather the highest expression of Universal Compassionate Wisdom. I don't know if we think of the Pure Land as our ultimate shelter, or if we have no aspiration to be born into the Pure Land. It is as if we do not even recognize our condition. Consequently, we pay more attention to non-urgent matters in our lives and repeat the endless cycle of birth-and-death.

Rennyō Shōnin (1415-1499) wrote in one of his letters to his followers that, because our life is fragile and impermanent, "we should all **quickly** take to heart the matter of the greatest importance of the afterlife, entrust ourselves deeply to Amida Buddha, and recite the nembutsu." (from *On the White Ashes*)

Let us all think of Rennyō Shōnin's words of encouragement as an urgent message for each of us to seek the ultimate shelter. There is, after all, no utopia in this human world.

We have been shown that our foolish activities cannot put the end to human suffering. It is through the Light of Wisdom from Nirvana that we find the way to remove the roots of suffering.

It may seem ineffective to entrust ourselves to Amida Buddha, but Shinran Shōnin discovered that this is the shortest and quickest route to peace and harmony for all beings. When we turn to the Compassionate Light of Wisdom, we realize the rescue efforts of Nirvana and are able to live this human life with deeper appreciation and joy.

*The light of purity is without compare,
When a person encounters this light,
All bonds of karma [the roots of suffering] fall away
So take refuge in Amida, the ultimate shelter.
(Collected Works of Shinran, p. 326)*

As we welcome this Thanksgiving month, let us express our deepest appreciation to the activities of Nirvana reaching out and touching all beings.

REMEMBER TO SAVE THE DATE



Think about how you can HELP contribute to the success of our musical recital:

- Provide baked goods
- Donate silent auction items
- Share your musical talents with the community
- Attend the performance
- Sell ads and tickets for the performance
- Solicit donors for contributions
- Work with the backstage crew
- Discover additional ways to assist

Let's work together for a wonderful presentation, fun evening, and successful activity.

Special New Years Eve Service

NEW YEAR'S EVE (Joya E)

By Mike Shibata

On New Year's Eve we meditate on the countless blessings we have received throughout the year and express our gratitude to our parents, our nation, all beings and Amida Buddha.

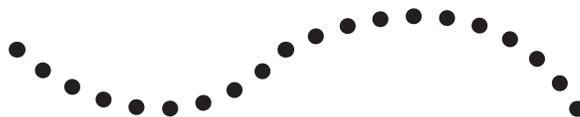
Since man has devised a means of dividing time into seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months and years as well as the past, present and future, we are able to look back and at the same time look ahead. As we come to the close of the present year, we can look back and reflect on whether the past year was a good year or not. If not, then we can expectantly hope that the coming new year will be a year worth remembering. We must realize, however, that hoping alone will not make it so. Whether the past year was good or not, we can all be thankful that we are able to be alive and, thus, be able to have even greater expectations for the coming year. There were thousands of people who will not be able to do this, because they are no longer with us. Thus, we have a reason for reciting "Namo Amida Butsu". But, then do we really need a reason?

JOYA E SERVICE FOR 2017

Sunday, December 31, 2017 7:00 PM

Ring in the New Year

Dessert Potluck to Follow



LONGMONT BUDDHIST TEMPLE

2018 MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT

- *I would like to become a new LBT member*
- *I am already a member and would like to make my annual pledge*

The LBT's guideline for membership dues is a minimum of \$360 per year for each adult. If you are able to contribute more than the minimum, your generosity will be greatly appreciated. Other ways of contributing to the Temple include serving on the board or a committee and offering monetary donations at services (including individual family services for weddings, funerals or memorial services). By joining the Longmont Buddhist Temple, you also become a member of the Buddhist Churches of America (national headquarters located in San Francisco).

Date _____

Name _____

Spouse name _____

Children's names/ages _____

Address _____

City, State, Zipcode _____

Telephone number(s) _____

Email address _____

Membership pledge amount for 2018 _____

Please choose the payment schedule you'd prefer:

To be paid: monthly _____ *quarterly* _____ *semi-annually* _____ *annually* _____

For further information, please contact Jackie Tono (jjtonto2@gmail.com – 303-517-4622) or Gail Kanemoto Hogsett (gkhogsett@gmail.com – 303-776-9578).

*Please return this form and check payable to Longmont Buddhist Temple to:
Longmont Buddhist Temple - P.O. Box 2083 - Longmont, CO 80502*

Membership Benefits

LBT 2018 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

by Gail Kanemoto Hogsett
Treasurer, Temple Board

As 2018 approaches, it's that time of the year for our Membership Drive to determine our member count in the new year. This count is crucial for financial budgeting for LBT and determines the dues we pay monthly to The Buddhist Churches of America.

Our membership dues will remain the same for 2018 - \$360 per member. LBT's primary purpose is to provide the Nembutsu teaching offered by Shin Buddhism, to practice mindfulness meditation and discover the Buddha nature that is in each of us. We work to understand the reality of interdependence and impermanence in this world. This mission involves the expenses of maintaining a physical location, of ministers' compensation, travel & training, utility bills, insurance, internet & website, and dues to BCA.

The LBT Board is very grateful to the many members who make up our wonderful sangha. We have been facing a decreasing member count, but hope that 2018 can see the start of an upward trend. May I request that all members fill out a Member Sign-up Form included in this newsletter by December 31 and return to address on the bottom of the form? And please encourage any prospective members to do the same. Your dues do not have to be paid this year, but please indicate your schedule of payments on the form. Of course, if you'd like the extra tax deduction this year, we'll gladly receive your 2018 dues now!

We look forward to your being a part of this great sangha in 2018!

Oseibo

OSEIBO GIFT

TO MINISTERIAL STAFF

by Gail Hogsett,
Treasurer, Temple Board

Oops, you blinked! Where did 2017 go? At the end of each year, we practice the Japanese tradition of giving Oseibo gifts to the ministerial staff as an expression of gratitude. As the Minister's Assistant, John Hughes gives tirelessly to our temple by officiating over services or mindfulness classes almost every Sunday. Rev. Okamoto has been generous with his "retirement" time, to serve as our guest minister numerous times this year.

This is the perfect time to directly show our appreciation to them with a tax-deductible contribution. A suggested donation is \$25 each, but any amount would be a kind act of dana. You may write one check, payable to Longmont Buddhist Temple, and indicate the individual amount you wish to give to John and/or Rev. Okamoto. Please bring your Oseibo gift to a December temple service or send your check by Wednesday, December 27th to Gail Hogsett – 3511 Boxelder Drive – Longmont, CO 80503.

Thank you for your generosity to our ministerial staff!

Fellow Travelers - December 2017

Contact Information Board Members		
Position: Name	Phone	Email Address
Board Members		
President: Jackie Tono	303-517-4622	jجتonto2@gmail.com
Vice President:		
Secretary: Christina Hildebrandt	720-284-8710	soundheals@earthlink.net
Financial Secretary: LaDonna Shea	303-494-2465	shearanch@aol.com
Treasurer: Gail Hogsett	303-776-9578	gkhogsett@gmail.com
Committee Chairpersons		
Bookstore: Susan Fisher	303-678-8426	writefisher@gmail.com
Building and Maintenance: Bob Halbert	303-709-4462	bob.halbert67@gmail.com
Communications: Newsletter:		
Website: Nancy Edmonds	303-997-6896	nancy.edmonds@comcast.net
Social Media: Cathy Maxwell	720-985-7636	cath144@msn.com
Community Hour (Toban) Interim Host Coordinator:	303-517-4622	jجتonto2@gmail.com
Membership:		
Music: Christina Hildebrandt	720-284-8710	soundheals@earthlink.net

Fellow Travelers - December 2017

December Calendar		
December 3	Enlightenment Day (Bodhi Day Service) In memory of Takashi Mayeda, Issac Jun Nishida, Hiedichi Yoshida, Kunihei Miyasaki, Jimmie Kanemoto	
	Newcomers' Welcome	9:30 am - 10:00 am
	Meditation Service	10:00 am - 10:30 am
	Bodhi Day Service and Dharma Talk	10:30 am - 11:30 am
	Toban POTLUCK in Community Room Please bring something to share and help with clean-up	11:30 am - 12:30 pm
December 10	Mindfulness Class with Sensei John Hughes	10:00 am - 11:00 am
December 17	Regular Service with Sensei John Hughes	
	Newcomers Welcome	9:30 am - 10:00 am
	Meditation Service & Dharma School	10:00 am - 10:30 am
	Regular Service	10:30 am - 11:30 am
	Toban (Coffee/Tea Hour) in Community Room	11:30 am - 12:30 pm
	Longmont Buddhist Temple Board Meeting	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
December 24	NO Mindfulness Class	
December 31	NO REGULAR SERVICE - 5TH SUNDAY OF MONTH	
	SPECIAL SERVICE - New Year's Eve (Joya E) Service with Dessert Potluck following (see page 5 for description)	7:00 pm
	UPCOMING EVENTS	
March 10, 2018	We Are All One: Diversity through Performance held at the Stewart Auditorium, Longmont Museum (see page 5 for more information)	7:00 pm

LONGMONT BUDDHIST TEMPLE
 Northwest Corner - Pike Road and S. Main Street, (606 Pike Road), Longmont, Colorado 80501
 P.O. Box 2083, Longmont, CO 80502
 Minister's Assistant: John NyuDō Hughes (303-997-6896); sensei@longmontbuddhism.org

Please check web site for latest updates on services, classes and event times at longmontbuddhism.org
 Temple E-Mail: info@longmontbuddhism.org