



Fellow Travelers

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The Monthly Newsletter of the Longmont Buddhist Temple

Longmont Buddhist Temple Northwest Corner – Pike Road and Main Street (606 Pike Road), Longmont, CO 80501
P.O. Box 2083, Longmont, CO 80502

Message from Sensei John

by Sensei John Hughes
Minister's Assistant

What is the Mission of the Longmont Buddhist Temple? What do you want from your interaction here?

As spring dawns and our winter of strange weather ends, we will probably be in several inches of snow as you read this since it has been so nice during our traditionally heavy winter season. The winter has been too warm and dry, but we have to deal with reality as is. As part of dealing with the reality of what is as is, please let me know why you are here. What is the mission of the Temple?

What draws you to the Temple? What do you like about our services? What would you like to see different? Do you visit our website? If so why? What would draw you into the Temple? Do you only attend Mindfulness classes? Do you want to learn more about Buddhism? Jodo Shinshu? What activities would you like to see offered by the Longmont Buddhist Temple?

This is a sincere request for direction on how we can meet your needs. It is requested that you provide your feedback in written form. Email to john.hughes@ace-sols.com or mail to Sensei Hughes, LBT, PO Box 2083, Longmont, CO 80501. Any responses will be kept in confidence as far as anyone's identity, but ideas will be shared to help us better develop programs as possible and appropriate. We are a Nishi Hongwanji Temple and we need to respect the traditions and guidelines of the Hongwanji in our activities.

The flip side of this request is: What do you have to offer the sangha? We are always looking for individuals to help with our services. Do you have musical talent? Join in our rich pool of talented musicians to help bring the Dharma through music. Do you have the ability to take one of our service Sundays and host community hour? Toban is the Japanese word for duty. A joyful duty can be

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providing refreshments to your sangha friends. Do you want to take over, or assist with the Buddhist conversation group? Harriet is no longer able to coordinate the group. It is a tradition that we would love to continue. Pick a book and gather a group to discuss how it helps us develop our understanding of the Dharma. Do you have the time to help with one of our committees? The Tori gate to the meditation garden needs to be oiled. The lending library, book store, building maintenance, grounds maintenance, etc. all can use additional volunteers. Do you have a social cause you would like to see us involved in? Habitat for Humanity is always looking for volunteers to help. Would you be willing to be the LBT coordinator with Habitat? Or some other group? Meals on Wheels? Serving a holiday meal at a homeless shelter? Your best idea? A generous member just adopted the cost of providing internet access for the Temple. Do you want to adopt the cost of our utilities? Or hosting and growing our website? Or kitchen supplies? Or mandatory training for me to maintain the ability to serve as your minister's assistant? Do you want to give a talk at a service?

In deep gratitude for everything the Temple provides to my life, I humbly request your ideas on how to better serve. In Gassho, namo amida butsu,

John

Hanamatsuri

by Mike Shibata

Hanamatsuri (literally Flower Festival) or Buddha Day is commemorated on April 8th to celebrate the birth of Siddhartha Gautama who was later to become enlightened as Sakyamuni Buddha.

All religions are tinged to some degree by mysticism. The traditional stories of Queen Maya's dream of the white elephant entering her body and events surrounding the birth of Prince Siddhartha certainly fall into the category of mysticism.

The various rites observed during the Hanamatsuri services are based upon the happenings at the time of Prince Siddhartha's birth. The Hanamido or miniature floral altar of bright flowers provides the setting of the beautiful Lumbini Garden. The statue of the baby Buddha, Tanjo-Butsu, which has his arm extended, illustrates the merits of Amida Buddha reaching out to all beings. The pouring of the sweet tea on the statue, Kambutsu, represents the gentle rain which fell that day in Lumbini Garden.

Legend tells us that as Queen Maya was returning to Koli Castle, the home of her parents, to give birth to the child, she stopped to rest in Lumbini Garden. As she reached to pluck the Asoka blossoms, the little baby was born. The King Suddhodana named the child Siddhartha which means "every wish fulfilled." Immediately upon birth, the child rose to his feet and walked seven steps, raised his right hand toward the sky and the left hand downward and proclaimed, "Above heaven and below heaven, I alone am the World Honored One." Then a very gentle and sweet rain fell on the baby and bathed him.

Everybody knows that a newborn baby can't take seven steps right after birth. The legendary story of the birth of the Buddha should not be taken literally. This story is merely used to express and describe the birth of an extraordinary person. What is the significance of the seven steps? This is to show us that the Buddha took a step beyond the six realms of suffering or human bondage and took the extra step to Enlightenment.

We as human beings are treading the paths of the six realms of suffering, but only the Buddha transcended the six realms and took the seventh step

to Enlightenment. However, all of us can take this seventh step, because all beings possess Buddha-nature or the seed for Enlightenment. The Buddha did not merely teach us that all men are equal, but that every man, by realizing his highest potentiality, could attain Buddhahood.

It is up to us to decide whether or not we want to explore this potentiality of attaining Buddhahood. Today it appears that not too many people care whether they do or not. Most members feel that what they have learned when they were attending Dharma School was sufficient and have stopped attending church. Religion isn't something that is learned when young and practiced when one is old and ready for the grave. Religion, especially Buddhism, should be practiced every day of our lives in order to be meaningful.

April Temple Updates

by Jackie Tono
Temple Board President

My message this month will be short because I'd rather have the space for Pete to reprint several articles from the March issue of the Wheel of Dharma. The older I get the more I reflect on life and find that the articles in the Wheel of Dharma really hit home, or maybe it's nice to hear other people around the country reflect the same concerns that I have been expressing for years.

Mark your calendar for upcoming events: Hanamatsuri (the birth of Siddhartha Gautama Buddha) will be observed on April 2nd, followed with a potluck. We have asked our very talented sangha members to come perform for us on that day so please come and show your support. May 28th we will have a short memorial service instead of a Mindfulness class. June 4th is our Temple clean up, we will have a short service and everyone is asked to stay to help clean up the Temple inside and outside.

Thank you to everyone for all your support and help to the daily functions of our Temple. I hope everyone is enjoying all this warm beautiful Colorado weather.

In Gassho,
Jackie Tono

BCA Annual Meeting Recap

by Sensei John Hughes
Minister's Assistant

Nancy and I attended the BCA (Buddhist Churches of America) annual meeting in San Jose, March 3–5th. As has been true of all the BCA functions I have attended, the facilities were nice, everyone was helpful and the food was wonderful. The meeting itself was a typical national board meeting. The biggest item of contention was the budget. Once that was settled it was committee reports, approval, adjourn.

The annual per member dues that each temple pays were increased from \$114 to \$133—a 17% increase. There were a number of significant items that changed over the year that contributed to the large increase. The biggest was a decline in investment income due to changes in market conditions. The second largest item was the approved of the hiring of Rev. Hirano from Salt Lake as Bishop Umezu's assistant. Rev. Hirano agreed to work for half the approved salary to help cut the increase to the temples. The Bishop has been without an assistant for five years and it is time to give him some help. There were also a couple of major repairs that needed to be funded.

The best part of the meeting was renewing old acquaintances and making new friends. There was a lot of that for both of us. In addition to the meeting, there were several opportunities to share the Dharma. There were several wonderful Dharma talks. The Chanting session coordinated by Rev. Kusunoki featured a musical version of the Shoshinge to the tune of Junirai with organ, Japanese flutes, a large Taiko drum, percussion, and bells. I hope we that attempt to chant that version some time.

Thank you for the opportunity to attend. In Gassho,

John and Nancy

Wheel of Dharma

Executive Orders and the Primal Vow

By Rev. Jerry Hirano
Salt Lake Buddhist Temple

Primal Vow (Hongan) 18th Vow: If, when I attain Buddhahood, sentient beings in the lands of the ten quarters who sincerely and joyfully entrust themselves to me, desire to be born in my land, and call my Name, even ten times, should not be born there, may I not attain perfect Enlightenment. Excluded, however, are those who commit the five gravest offences and abuse the right Dharma.

As a result of Executive Order 9066, signed by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, approximately 120,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were forcibly moved off the West Coast of the United States into concentration camps, mostly to remote areas of the country. Of those 120,000 individuals, roughly two thirds were American citizens. In one of those concentration camps, called Topaz, in a desert area near Delta, Utah, near the Nevada border, the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) was formed.

BCA was formed not to organize our temples into a formal legal religious organization; BCA was formed out of fear that the United States government would begin attacking our Sanghas. The name Buddhist “Churches” was intentionally chosen, even though in Japanese the name “Hongwanji” translates to “Temple of the Primal Vow” and not “Church of the Primal Vow.” The leadership of our original organization founded in 1899 was formed by ministers (*Kaikyoshi*), and the lay membership provided the financial support for the organization. In the 1940s, the majority of *Kaikyoshi* were not U.S. citizens, but the *Nisei* (second generation) membership were all American citizens. It was during this period that lay members were included into the leadership of BCA.

The United States has had a history of immigration exclusion acts directed at Asian countries. There was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Immigration Act of 1917, and the Immigration Act of 1924. These legal restrictions were based upon the fear that Asians were coming to

the United States for nefarious reasons. On Friday afternoon [January 27, 2017], President Donald Trump issued a new executive order titled “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States.” During World War II Executive Order 9066 was aimed at Japanese Americans on the West Coast, while not very many Italian or German Americans were arrested or incarcerated. It was later proven that Executive Order 9066 was a targeted assault against the successful Japanese American farmers on the West Coast to force them to sell their farms and property for pennies on the dollar. It’s certainly curious how the seven Islamic nations in the current executive order excludes countries such as Saudi Arabia where President Trump’s family has many business interests.

As American citizens, it is our duty to question what our leaders present to us as “law.” This is the basis for democracy that we hold dearly in these United States of America.

In Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, there is also an “Executive Order”: it is the Primal Vow of Amida Buddha. I began with the translation of this Primal Vow, or *hongan*—the 18th vow of Dharmakara Bodhisattva, who became Amida Buddha upon fulfillment of all his 48 vows. Within these vows, he explains who will be allowed into his country, the Pure Land, “Jodo.” In the 18th vow, there is an exclusion clause that specifies the five deadly transgressions. They are listed, not to exclude anyone, but to bring to mindful attention that we are all capable of these transgressions. In the *Kyogyoshinsho*, on page 38 of the *Collected Works of Shinran*, vol. I, Shinran explains the meaning of *Namo Amida Butsu*.

From these passages we see that the word *Namu* means to take refuge. In the term to take refuge (*kimyo*), *ki* means to arrive at. Further, it is used in compounds to mean to yield joyfully to (*kietsu*), and to take shelter in (*kisai*). *Myo* means to act, to invite, to command, to teach, path, message, to devise, to summon. Thus, *kimyo* is the command of the Primal Vow calling to and summoning us.

This call of the Infinite could be considered the “executive order” of Amida Buddha. It is an executive order regarding immigration into the Pure Land. Shinran Shonin in *Tannisho*, chapter II explains to us why he accepts this order (*chokumei*). However, even this executive order is something that

we should not blindly accept. If we are told to question the executive order of Amida Buddha, should we not question the executive order of the President of the United States? Given our history as a predominantly Japanese American organization that has suffered through past executive orders; given that we have suffered as a result of legislation based upon religion, have we not had enough experience of painful and dire consequences that we should not question these types of laws? I personally reject all laws based upon discrimination of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. To stand silent at this time is to accept, if not acquiesce to, this bigoted agenda. Have we forgotten that as Japanese American Buddhists in 2017, that our history is deeply rooted in previous generations who spoke up in our defense, who fought courageously in World War II because they believed in democracy, equality, and justice for all? My personal beliefs are based upon my understanding of the teachings of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. This is now up to you, and this generation, for serious reconsideration, to accept or reject.

On August 10, 1988, The Civil Liberties Act was signed into law: The US Government issued an official apology to the Japanese American community for its unlawful transgressions. This apology is much appreciated, but this does not mean blind acceptance of blatant discrimination against the seven countries that Trump administration has imposed. I believe this teaches us how we must not forget, or history will repeat itself.

Borders

By Rev. Jay Shinseki
Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Temple

“Shariputra, in the land of Ultimate Bliss, a pleasant breeze wafts, swaying the rows of trees colored with various jewels and waving the gauze curtains with little bells, stirring an exquisite melody. This is just as though hundreds of thousands of musical instruments were being played in unison. For all who hear this melody, their devotion to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha is spontaneously deepened. Shariputra, in this way the land of Ultimate Bliss is an ideal environment so that whatever one hears will bring about awakening.

Shariputra, why do you suppose this Buddha is called Amitabha? Shariputra, this Buddha emits immeasurable light, shedding light upon all the worlds of the ten directions without obstruction.”

--*The Amida Sutra* (Skt. Smaller Sukhavativyuha Sutra) Translated by Karen Mack, *Journal of Jodo Shu Edification Studies*, No. 14, 2003

A border is defined as a line that separates something from something else, usually referring to a state or country. In the *Amidakyo* it is referred to as an obstruction. In the case of the quote above, it refers to no borders or obstructions. There is a reference to Amida's light reaching us despite the borders we have created in our world.

Both visible and invisible borders exist. In our gardens and yards, borders refer to bricks or hedges. In our homes, rooms are bordered by walls, our house is bordered by fences, then our city is bordered by city limits, expanding to county, state, and country borders. We are defined as a resident such and such street, in Monterey, in California, in the United States. And we have international date lines.

In our everyday lives, we live with borders that define where we live and who we are. With these borders we define ourselves and label ourselves as Californians, Americans, Canadians, etc. These labels are some of the numerous unseen borders in our lives. However, on occasion these borders are dissolved. For example, every year at our national ministers' meeting we gather from Canada, Hawaii, and all over the Continental United States. Each morning we come together as one to chant the sutras and listen to the Dharma. As we chant together, one beautiful sound is created. At that moment, all borders disappear.

Borders have been created to supposedly keep us safe and defined, to keep us separated. As a result, we have created ideological borders that separate us, and some people are talking about building physical walls to separate us even more. Ideological borders can manifest themselves into neighborhoods, states, and nations with defined characteristics. Ideological borders come about when we don't agree with other ways of life, religious views, and political views.

And yet there are the numerous ways in which life crosses those borders unimpeded. The sound of a wind chime in a garden, a cooling breeze on a hot

night, the light of the sun and moon illuminating us all cross over the borders we have created. In the very same way, Amida reaches far beyond and touches us, illuminating and revealing to us the truth of our lives. The world of the free press, enlightening books, and the Dharma help to break down the ideological barriers and open up for us the true and real world.

Although I create all sorts of borders, life still comes to me. I am able to experience the wind, the sun, the sounds of life. I create borders of doubt and ignorance, and yet Amida's compassion still comes to me, revealing my true nature. I am eternally grateful for the people who have come into and gone through my life and compassionately shown my true nature to me.

It is as the Buddha explained to his disciple Shariputra, "For all who hear this melody, their devotion to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha is spontaneously deepened. Shariputra, in this way the land of Ultimate Bliss is an ideal environment so that whatever one hears will bring about awakening. Shariputra, why do you suppose this Buddha is called Amitabha? Shariputra, this Buddha emits immeasurable light, shedding light upon all the worlds of the ten directions without obstruction."

President's Message: Reflecting on My Past Year

By Ken Tanimoto
BCA President

I have almost finished my first year as President of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA). A reflection of the past year has brought back many moments that I will never forget. Through my travels near and far; through countless meetings and hundreds of emails; through many seminars and conferences I have attended, I have come to realize even more the importance of the *Nembutsu* in our lives.

The *Nembutsu* has connected me with so many people in our Sangha who make me feel honored as well has humbled by their dedication to spread the Dharma and their closeness to our Jodo Shinshu practice. These connections make it worth the time and effort to head the BCA and to face the challenge

of keeping the Dharma at the forefront of our organization.

I have seen from hundreds of different and diverse Sangha members from coast to coast that the Nembutsu is the driving force behind a thriving temple. It is the only thing that remains constant and reflects the only truth in our lives.

The number one question I have been asked at so many temples is, “What can the BCA do to help our temple increase its membership?” Many temples are concerned that without increased membership and the financial support that comes with it, how can their temple exist in today’s world?

My answer to that is, “How can you yourself help foster the growth of the Nembutsu in your community?” One should take a look what the main purpose of our temples. The temple is our extended home in which we enjoy learning the teachings of Buddha, the guidance and comfort of the Dharma, and our connections to our extended Sangha family. These are the main ingredients for a thriving temple.

One may wonder how a temple can thrive with a small or even shrinking membership. I can only say that, even though membership numbers are important, I have seen members attend services time after time to hear the Dharma without being conscious of how many people are attending. That is how absorbed they are in the Dharma; that is the real beauty of our Nembutsu. The Nembutsu is for me and me alone, to reflect on the importance of my life. Foster the idea that everyone who enters our temple doors needs the Dharma in their life, and our temples will thrive.

With this in mind, it is my mission to work even harder in my second year as BCA President to help keep our temples connected to the only thing that is important, which is the Dharma in all its rich diversity and inclusivity that we are to embrace.

Namo Amida Butsu.

Toban Coordinator Needed

by Lisa Halbert

Now that I have been elected vice president of the board, I am looking for someone to take over as Toban Host Coordinator.

In general, Toban means ‘duty or responsibility’, and it is a way of spreading the work of the temple among its members. At LBT, Toban is what we call our Community Hour, which takes place after the family service on first and third Sundays.

Throughout the year, the Toban Host Coordinator sends email reminders to Toban hosts as their turn approaches. Near the end of each year, the Coordinator contacts members of our sangha to ask for Toban commitments for the following year. Often, members keep their commitments from year to year, so filling the calendar is fairly easy.

I am grateful to have been your Toban Host Coordinator for just over a year. If you are interested in finding out more about this position, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your consideration!

Fellow Travelers – April, 2017

April Calendar		
4-2	Family Service (Hanamatsuri) with Rev. Okamoto	Also in memory of Goroku Kanemoto, Johnny Mayeda, and Jack Miyasaki
	Newcomer's Welcome	9:30-10:00 AM
	Meditation Practice	10:00-10:30 AM
	Dharma School	10:00-10:30 AM
	Family Service	10:30-11:30 AM
	Toban (Potluck)	11:30-12:30 AM
4-9	Mindfulness Class	10:00 AM
4-16	Family Service with Sensei John Hughes	Schedule as above
4-16	Board Meeting	11:50 AM
4-23	Mindfulness Class	10:00 AM
	UPCOMING EVENTS	
5-28	Memorial Service in place of Mindfulness Class	
6-4	Temple Cleanup	

Contact Information		
Board Members		
President: Jackie Tono	303-517-4622	jjtonto2@gmail.com
Vice President: Lisa Halbert	303-709-5509	capaldo.halbert@gmail.com
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Financial Secretary: LaDonna Shea		
Treasurer: Gail Hogsett	303-776-9578	gail@waltersandhogsett.com
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Toban Coordinator: Lisa Halbert		
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Music: Christina Hildebrandt	720-284-8710	soundheals@earthlink.net
Lending Library:		
Membership: Rose Takamoto	970-353-5718	tagrover@q.com
Music: Christina Hildebrandt	720-284-8710	soundheals@earthlink.net

LONGMONT BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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