



# 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

## May Temple Updates

by Lisa Halbert  
Temple Board Vice President

Last month's *Hanamatsuri* service to commemorate the birth of Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha, was beautiful. Deep gratitude for all who helped make this service a truly memorable one--including those who prepared ahead of time, our talented musicians, and presiding minister Reverend Okamoto.

In May, we will have regular services on the first and third Sundays, and a mindfulness class on the second Sunday.

On May 21, our Founder's Day (*Gotan-E*) service, we celebrate the birth of Shinran Shonin. We will have a potluck after service, so please bring a dish to share.

Our Memorial Day service will take place on Sunday, May 28, at 10 a.m. Memorial Day was originally created to remember those who died in active U.S. military service. At our temple, we honor *all* of our departed loved ones. John Sensei will start with a short service at the temple followed by remembrances at Mountain View Cemetery. Please join us at both locations. Feel free to bring framed photographs of your loved ones to display in the *hondo* during the short service.

I look forward to seeing you at the temple--whenever and however you are able to show up!

"So I always have to feel settled and put my body and mind in focus before proceeding. When we come to the temple, let's leave our preoccupations, biases, and ego-mind at the door and just listen. How else can we hear that perfect sound of the wisdom of enlightenment that awaits our visit?" - from "Ohigan--Gentle Persuasion" by Rev. Fumiaki Usuki, *Wheel of Dharma*, March 2017

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## Wheel of Dharma

### *President's Message: Choosing What is Right*

By Ken Tanimoto  
BCA President  
Watsonville Buddhist Temple

The Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Ministers Association and National Council Meetings (NCM) were held at the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin and San Jose Marriott Hotel from March 3-5, 2017, under the theme of "Buddhism and Technology." Delegates and ministers from across the nation attended this gathering to attend religious services, hear reports from BCA committees and affiliated organizations, and to participate in workshops, the Center for Buddhist Education's "Buddha at Work" Symposium, and Youth Advocacy Committee (YAC) workshops. Most importantly, they voted on issues that concern the future of the BCA.

This National Council meeting was faced with several challenges. The first challenging matter began many months prior to the actual meeting. Coast District, host of this year's meeting, realized that the cost to hold the whole event at the San Jose Marriott was extremely prohibitive. After many meetings, the Planning Committee, co-chaired by Joyce Iwasaki and Ken "Deuce" Nakano, decided to hold the major portion of the events at the San Jose Betsuin and only use the hotel on Saturday. The change of location and donations from many Coast District members and temples to defray expenses

helped to reduce the cost of registration considerably. We all owe the Coast District Planning Committee, the San Jose Betsuin, and the Coast District Temples a deep debt of gratitude.

The second and most challenging issue of the National Council was approving the 2017-2018 BCA budget. For the last six months, the Budget and Finance Committee headed by Jeff Matsuoka have worked diligently to prepare this budget.

Several important items had been postponed for years in order to avoid increasing the BCA dues. These included upgrading ministerial benefits and pensions; reinstating a full-time Executive Assistant to the Bishop, and needed repairs and maintenance for the Bishop's Residence and BCA Headquarters. In addressing these important issues, the necessity for an increase could no longer be put off.

During the NCM, the proposed budget was discussed and a compromise was reached. It was decided to utilize funds that BCA already has in existing unrestricted accounts to finance some of the items. The Bishop's Executive Assistant will only be funded part time, and Rev. Kodo Umezu offered to find another way to raise funds for repairs on the Bishop's residence. The proposed budget was amended, voted on, and approved.

I applaud the delegates of the NCM who voted to approve next fiscal year's budget. They had to vote on issues that concern the future of the BCA.

Reflecting on this National Council Meeting reminded me of a quote by Professor Dumbledore from the Harry Potter movies. After a difficult time in Harry Potter's life, the professor told him, "You must choose between what is right and what is easy." Both the National Council Planning Committee and the BCA leaders and ministers chose what is right.

In Gratitude.

### Smiling or Snarling?

by K. Ken Fujimoyo

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I was thinking about the animals that are often depicted in our naijin. There are many birds and they

are there as depicted in the sutras representing the beautiful and wondrous birds in the Pure Land that call out the sounds of the Buddha-dharma. However, when we consider the other animals depicted, we have the lion, or lion-dog type creature and dragons. Though majestic, in one sense, the lion and dragon can also be considered frightening creatures.

The main depiction of the lion in the naijin area of most of our temples is the carving of the lion and peony found on the shumidan, the base of the altar where the statue or scroll of Amida or the scroll with the characters for Namo Amida Butsu can be seen. Most members have probably never seen or noticed it because there is usually a table in the way, preventing a clear view.

The significance of the lion and the peony is based in East Asian lore. The lion is considered the king of the animal kingdom and the peony is considered the king of the flower kingdom. The lion is strong and does not fear any other creature. However, it can be destroyed from within by worms that can form in its digestive tract and will eat at it and eventually kill it from within. To cure this, the lion seeks out the peony because parts of the plant have medicinal properties that will rid the lion of these worms.

This is a lesson for humans that, we too, need not fear that which is outside of ourselves, but can be destroyed from within. Like the lion who seeks out the peony, we are encouraged to seek out the Buddha-dharma that can cure that which can eat away at us from within.

Other places that the lion can be found is on the top of some of the incense burners and this is a symbol of the roar of the Buddha-dharma resounding throughout the world. Yet, another place is at the edge of the beams at the top of the naijin area that faces the seating areas. The Fresno Betsuin had these and they are considered to be guardians of the temple. They had a look that could be seen as either as snarl or a smile. Elementary school groups who came to visit would notice these right away and when I asked the students if the lions were smiling or growling, almost all of them saw the figures as smiling.

If a person enters the temple with good intentions, they will look like they are smiling at you. A person with bad intentions will see a snarl or growl. The same with the dragons. They can either be seen as smiling at you or ready to attack.

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The workmanship to make these characters seem as if they are either smiling or snarling is remarkable, but the importance is that it shows us that our preconceptions or intentions can affect how we perceive things. How we feel about something influences what we see and how we see it. This is showing us an important aspect of the Eightfold Noble Path. Right View is not just what we see, but is influenced by what we think. The eight are not simply a progression, but are closely intertwined. We are not to do these in order, but we are to see how each one influences the others. What we see influences what we think. What we think influences what we see. What we see and/or think will affect how we express something. How we express or say something will affect how we perceive it and so on.

This is showing us that much of what is on our altars may seem like simple decoration, but they often have important lessons for us. We need to remember that in Buddhism, the altar is more a tool to teach us rather than an object of worship.

<b>May Calendar</b>		
5-7	Family Service	In memory of Robert Mayeda, George Tanaka, and Tom Tanaka
	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	11:30-12:30 AM
5-14	Mindfulness Class	10:00 AM
5-21	Family Service and potluck Toban: Gotan-E, in celebration of the birth of Shinran Shonin	Schedule as above
5-28	Memorial Service Short service at temple, followed by remembrances at Mountain View Cemetery, led by Sensei John Hughes	10:00 AM
	<b>UPCOMING EVENTS</b>	
6-4	Temple Cleanup	

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