



# Fellow Travelers

The monthly newsletter of the Longmont Buddhist Temple

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## Message from Sensei John Minister's Assistant

Covington Catholic High Students at the National Mall As we watch, and too often participate in, the drama of everyday life occasionally an opportunity arises for us to examine our responses to the drama. How good are we in the instant moment at seeing what happened, analyzing the event, and making an accurate judgment as to the right and the wrong of what happened? How often do we misread the situation?

Last Sunday there were a number of activities occurring near the Lincoln Memorial. There was the anti-abortion March for Life rally. There were a number of groups counter protesting and presenting other views. One of these groups was the Indigenous Peoples March and another was a group calling themselves the Hebrew Israelites. The context is a deeply divided country enmeshed in a governmental shut down that is even further dividing the country and hurting millions of Americans, hurting our national defense, and hurting our economy.

The story that arose from this backdrop is familiar to all of you I'm sure. The video of young high school student wearing a MAGA hat staring down an elder of the Ogallala Nation who was playing a drum. My immediate reaction was to label the young man and his group as racists. I judged them as being in the wrong. I judged the Native American Elder as being the subject of racism and having been in the superior position of attempting to diffuse a possibly violent confrontation between the white boys and the black Hebrew Israelites both of which groups felt racist to me.

After learning more over the next few days, the situation was not at all as open and shut. All those involved was at least somewhat at fault. The racially and politically divided status of our country is partially to blame. But, and this is a big but, I am at fault for being so quick to rush to judgment.

I frequently talk about being mindful; about putting a space between stimulus and response. Well, I failed

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again. I need to continue to practice being less judgmental. I need to practice being more compassionate. I need to practice putting aside my prejudices and holding loving/kindness toward all beings. I need to remember not to hold children to the same level of account as fully grown adults.

The last statement is especially important. I need to examine a situation of this type and treat it as a learning opportunity. I need to remember that high school students do not have the judgment that I should have in a charged emotional environment. Let me take the time to examine all the facts and make good decisions. Hopefully I can learn to be a calm adult in difficult circumstances in order to teach by example.  
Namo Amida Butsu, John

## Temple Updates

by Jackie Tono, Temple Board President

What a mild winter we are having!!! I'm glad to see all the snow up in our mountains so our ponds and lakes will hopefully have lots of water this year & the mountains won't be so dry. We haven't had a huge snow fall or increment weather yet but when that day comes and it happens to be a Sunday please remember to look for

an email, check our website or maybe a phone call if you don't do any of the above to see if we've cancelled service for the day we usually send out notices by 8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Because we are renting our Temple February 15- 18<sup>th</sup> to the Aikido Shungenkai (they are hosting an international workshop) Sunday, February 17<sup>th</sup> service will be held but we all need to be done before 1:00 so the Aikido group can conduct their workshop. We've had to move our annual Temple meeting to March 17<sup>th</sup> because of this event. For the annual meeting we will have a potluck after the service and conduct our meeting shortly after. Please plan to stay and participate in the meeting. If you are a member of the Temple and are not able to stay for the meeting please ask for a proxy voting form and give to another member to vote on issues for you. The board has several positions open: Treasurer (after 15 plus years we can finally let Gail Hogsett retire from this position) currently Sharon Lehman is nominated for this position. Recording Secretary – Sharon was filling in for LaDonna Shea who was out on medical leave. LaDonna Shea has agreed to return to fill this position. Secretary – Christina Hildebrandt is willing to stay on for another term. We are also looking at the bylaws to maybe revise them. There will also be a discussion on increasing our dues to \$390.00 per member annually. And of course what would you like to see our temple accomplish this year in 2019.

Our Temple has had many visitors lately and some returning for another service. Everyone has always been open and friendly to everyone but please make all our guests feel welcomed and invite them to stay for community hour after service.

We are already in the second month of the new year, here's hoping that everyone has a wonderful, safe and peaceful 2019.

In Gassho,  
Jackie

### ***New Year's Greeting from Gomonshu Kojun Ohtani***



At the beginning of this New Year, I would like to extend my warmest greetings to you all.

Last year, Japan was hit by frequent natural disasters like torrential rains, typhoons and earthquakes. Other countries, including Indonesia and the United States, were also visited by devastating earthquakes, tsunamis and major hurricanes. Furthermore, the California wildfires last November turned out to be the deadliest in the state's history, taking the lives of many, while others continue to be missing, and a great deal of people were forced to evacuate their homes. I would like to convey my deepest condolences to those who lost their lives through the natural disasters and express my sympathy to everyone affected. We must also never forget that armed conflicts and terror attacks as well as severe starvation is making it difficult to live and lives are being lost every day.

In my message entitled, "A Way of Living as a Nembutsu Follower," which I presented on Oct. 1, 2016, the first day of the Commemoration on the Accession of the Jodo Shinshu Tradition, I have stated, "by trying to live according to the Buddha Dharma, ... we can live to the best of our ability, aspiring to live up to the Buddha's Wish." In agreement with this proposal, beginning last April, our organization has launched a campaign against poverty under the slogan, "Dana for World Peace -- overcoming poverty to nurture our children." Unable to part from our self-centered mentality, we are simply foolish beings, incapable of attaining supreme enlightenment through our own strength. It is all through the salvific working of Amida Tathagata that we are enabled to realize our selfishness. Furthermore, because of this self-awareness, with the hope of responding to the Buddha's boundless compassion even just a little, we are enabled to aspire for everyone's happiness and make a sincere effort in dealing with the many difficult problems of bitter reality in this world.

In this New Year, as we receive the Dharma and recite the Nembutsu, let us make every effort to acknowledge and cope with the reality we face.

Jan. 1, 2019

OHTANI Kojun Monshu Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha  
(Translation provided by the Hongwanji International Department)

**A Plea to the Women of BCA, Part II**  
**By Rick Stambul, BCA President**



*Editor's Note: This is Part II of two parts and is edited from an address presented by Stambul at the FBWA Conference in Visalia, California, on Sept. 15.*

Paraphrasing from Rev. Patricia Usuki's important work about women in BCA entitled, "Currents of Change," she comments that regardless of "... the obstacles, women are doing their part to contribute to the continued ... " survival of Shin Buddhism in America, "and not only through the cooking, cleaning, and crafts for which they are traditionally known."

Updating Rev. Usuki's figures, as of 2018 more than 25 women now serve as presidents, and 27 sit as vice presidents on 60 temple boards in the United States. Usuki Sensei continues, "These developments started to take root around the beginning of the 1990s and the involvement of women in leadership positions has been growing steadily ever since."

But it is not enough. I believe that BCA needs the adrenaline that women can best provide.

If our goal is to preserve and protect our Shin Buddhist teachings, then we, the men and especially the women of BCA, must forge an equal partnership to lead BCA into this new century. I am making a plea to you, the women of BCA, for your direct involvement in the national leadership of our organization. BCA needs constructive change in governance, attitude, and direction. I believe that women can best provide that energy.

Women constitute more than a majority of BCA's members. For too long, women have worked in the background while men have taken positions of leadership. It is time to change the patriarchal structure of leadership in BCA. We must forge a new coalition of members if we are to survive, and — most of all — if our teachings are going to survive and flourish.

I am suggesting an active coalition of women and men to lead BCA forward. More than that, I urge the women of BCA to step up to positions of leadership both in the ministry and among our lay members. We should proclaim that we stand for the end of gender discrimination as a noble goal for which everyone is invited to join us. The greater inclusion of women in leadership roles will help BCA be in the vanguard of

discussion, and of action, to address some of the great social issues of our time, such as poverty and homelessness.

Our concern with social consciousness in the world today resonates with many of our members. It is highly significant that it also attracts and touches many people seeking a new religious home. It appears to be a magnet attracting a new generation. Can we afford to ignore this grassroots movement spreading around the globe? Regardless of the path forward, it must be led by women and men working together, both in and out of the BCA board room.

I believe in the promise of Namo Amida Butsu: that for every person who suffers, Shin Buddhism can offer hope and relief through our religious ideals. Now is the time!

In less than one year, on Dec. 7, 2019, the BCA National Board will hold elections for national officers. The time has come for women to lead BCA; to develop new ways, in new partnerships, in which to preserve our teachings, and to re-energize our temples for the future.

This is my plea to the women in BCA: We need your leadership! The time is past due for women to lead our national organization, to change it, to refresh it, to make it come alive.

**Treasuring Gratitude, Kindness, Humility**  
**By Rev. Ron Miyamura, Midwest Buddhist Temple**



Earlier this year, I was asked to give a public talk on the topic of

"Where Is Amida Buddha?"

Of course, the answer is: Amida Buddha is everywhere and nowhere.

The short explanation is that Amida Buddha is a symbolic Buddha, that is, Amida is not a real person. Amida is the combination of two Buddhas. Amitabha is the Buddha of infinite light and Amitayus is the Buddha of infinite life. Light and life are the two characteristics of Amida; light and life are the symbols for wisdom and compassion. So, Amida Buddha is the Buddhist of infinite wisdom and compassion.

In the historical development of Pure Land Buddhism, Amida is both real and symbolic. Amida is real in that he/she/it is my friend; so, when I am lonely, I can call the name of Amida, and Amida is here as a friend that brings comfort. Amida is also symbolic when we look for wisdom and compassion and I can call the name of

Amida to receive wisdom and compassion. We call the name, and say “Namu Amida Butsu” and we can receive all the benefits of the thing being named. Therefore, we say the name and Amida finds me.

As I said earlier, Amida is everywhere and nowhere. Amida is part of my life in inverse relation to my ego. Ego is the image of myself. Amida is nowhere when the ego takes over my life. When my ego is strong and out of control, I become selfish and self-centered.

Amida is everywhere when the selfless-self is allowed to come out; my ego-self diminishes. When the selfless-self is present, I can listen to the Dharma (the Buddhist teaching) and allow myself to receive the benefits of wisdom and compassion.

At our Shin Buddhist temples, we encourage people to come as they are and to stay awhile. As Shin Buddhists, there are no requirements to come to the temple. We don't expect you to change just because you come here.

As Shin Buddhists, we don't have a dogma -- no set required beliefs, and we want everyone to just be the ordinary people that we are. As a Sangha – a group of “fellow travelers” – we learn from each other and we come to treasure some simple values such as: Profound Gratitude, Great Kindness and True Humility. It is most interesting that these are values that cannot be taught.

As a minister, we are expected to be teachers and we can teach facts and historical events. But we cannot teach spirituality, we cannot teach humility nor can we teach kindness. We can only show examples. One can read about these things, but it does not mean anything without experiences. We learn these things by observation and by coming close to these experiences.

For example, there are people who have turned sorrow and anger into gratitude when perhaps a young daughter passes away before the mother, but the mother can transform that sorrow into gratitude for the few years her daughter shared – this can be Profound Gratitude.

We know that there are children as young as 8 years old who would use their allowance, without any prompting, to purchase shampoo to donate to the homeless women's shelter – this can be Great Kindness.

There are people who can bury their ego and just say “thank you” for just a smile – this can be True Humility. These are things that come about by being part of our Buddhist temple. The organization allows the Sangha to be the vehicle to share the Dharma because we are “fellow travelers” on this path of life.

Let Profound Gratitude, Great Kindness and True Humility change your life.

### **Toban Host by Jackie Tono Temple Board President**

Being a Toban Host is a way for our members to practice generosity and patience. These are two of the six perfections shared as practices in Buddhism. Volunteer work is our expression of Dana; the selfless giving that reflects our gratitude to Amida Buddha.

The following is a description of responsibilities for a Toban Host. This list is to make things clear for everyone, especially new members. No one person is expected to perform these duties. Instead it is a guideline of what is needed. If you see another way to make the outcome happen, please share your wisdom. ***The main thing is to keep in mind is to keep it simple.***

#### Duties for Community Hour

- Provide coffee, tea & soft drinks or juice as well as simple snacks after the service.
- If there are not enough small plates, napkins, hot/cold cups, tea, & coffee the host should purchase more (in the past members have just donated these paper goods. However, if there is a major purchase, the host can submit their receipts to our treasurer for reimbursement of these paper goods).
- Inspect the Temple and do a simple cleaning job such as vacuuming, dusting, wiping up bathrooms, wipe tables & chairs, sweep floor, dump and take all trash etc.
- Provide flowers for altar as well as sweets (usually cookies or fruit) to put on the black lacquer stands, also be sure there are white candles for service.
- Cleaning up after refreshments. It is nice to divide flowers up neatly for members to take home.

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Before closing the temple, check that all lights are out, certain doors are closed (see signs on doors), thermostats (two) are turned down to 52, takeout all the trash with you, & make sure the toilets have all been flushed. Lock the door and gate.

If you are able to be a host, please contact Jimmy Venditti for available Sundays.

## February Calendar

February 3	<b>Regular Service</b>	
	Newcomers Welcome	9:30 am - 10:00 am
	Meditation Service	10:00 am - 10:30 am
	Service and Dharma Talk	10:30 am
	Toban (Coffee/Tea Hour) in Community Room	11:30 am - 12:30 pm
February 10	<b>Mindfulness Class with Sensei John Hughes</b>	10:00 am - 11:00 am
February 17	<b>Nirvana Day Service</b>	
	Newcomers Welcome	9:30 am - 10:00 am
	Meditation Service	10:00 am - 10:30 am
	Service and Dharma Talk	10:30 am
	Toban in (Coffee/Tea Hour) in Community Room	11:30 am - 12:30 pm
February 24	<b>Mindfulness Class with Sensei John Hughes</b>	10:00 am - 11:00 am
	<b>Upcoming Events</b>	
February 15-17	Aikido Workshop	
March 17	Potluck Lunch and Annual Meeting	
April 7	Hanamatsuri	
May 26	Memorial Service	
June 30	Clean Up Sunday	
August 4	Obon	

<b>Contact Information</b>		
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