



Fellow Travelers

The monthly newsletter of the Longmont Buddhist Temple

Longmont Buddhist Temple Northwest corner – Pike Road and Main Street
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Message from Sensei John Minister's Assistant

Hana Matsuri - The Flower Festival

I suspect that most of you will be surprised to hear that the BCA (Buddhist Churches of America,) established in 1899, is older than the Japanese celebration of Hana Matsuri. To be sure Buddhists have celebrated the birth of the Buddha for over 2,500 years; but Hanamatsuri came into being at a meeting of 18 Japanese Buddhist scholars, including the first bishop of BCA, Rev. Dr. Shuye Sonoda, at a meeting in Berlin, Germany in 1901. It is interesting to learn unexpected facts about events that we think we understand. So often our "knowledge" is based on rumor, supposition and false information.

I have talked with individuals who "know" that Hanamatsuri is a general Buddhist holiday. This is incorrect. Celebrations of the birth of Sakyamuni Buddha are ubiquitous across different traditions, but the names, dates and methods of celebration vary greatly.

Southern Buddhists celebrate Vesak on the date of the full moon in May. Vesak celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of Sakyamuni on a single day. In Tibet the holiday is known as Saka Dawa and celebrated for an entire month. Chinese Buddhists celebrate the birth of the Buddha on May 15th this year as Wesak; Parinirvana enlightenment (Bodhi Day) on December 8th; and Nirvana Day on February 15th. Other traditions celebrate these key occurrences in the life of Sakyamuni with other names and on other dates. However, the importance of the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha are recognized across all Buddhist traditions.

We celebrate Hanamatsuri on April 8th in Jodo Shinshu. It is a beautiful celebration of the flowers of springtime and honors Sakyamuni's birth. One part

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of the tradition that we in Longmont haven't practiced in recent years is the spreading of flower petals around the Hondo to welcome the Buddha. We chant this calling to the Buddhas at most Services:

Sanbujo – Three Respectful Callings

Bu jou mi da nyo rai niu dou jou San ge ra ku	We respectfully call upon Tathagata Amida to enter this Dojo As we joyfully scatter flowers of welcome.
Bu jou sha ka nyo rai niu dou jou San ge ra ku	We respectfully call upon Tathagata Shakyamuni to enter this Dojo As we joyfully scatter flowers of welcome.
Bu jo ji-ppo nyo rai niu dou jou San ge ra ku	We respectfully call upon the Tathagatas of the ten directions to enter this Dojo As we joyfully scatter flowers of welcome.

Namo Amida Butsu,
John Sensei

Temple Updates by Jackie Tono
Temple Board President

Professional football and college basketball are over, the ski season is about over, professional baseball hasn't started yet. We are at that quiet lull between sports and weather seasons. If you find yourself bored with nothing to watch on TV, then why don't you come to the Temple and start pulling the weeds in our mediation garden or yard!! Those never ending, hard to kill weeds are popping their little heads back out of the ground!!!! I don't think we can wait until June 3rd clean up to tackle those weeds.

At the end of February, I went to Sacramento for the annual BCA meeting hoping for warmer weather. One morning when I woke up I heard someone scraping the frost off their car windows!!! Other than the cold weather, it was nice to visit with various ministers and other Temple members to see what innovative ideas they are using at their Temples. Mark your calendars for June 16th & 17th. Rev. Ron Miyamura from Chicago's Midwest Buddhist Temple will be coming to Longmont to do a one-day seminar and conduct the Sunday family service. More details on his seminar to come at a later newsletter.

We will be holding our Hanamatsuri service on April 1st to commemorate the birth of Shakyamuni Buddha we will also have a potluck following the service so please stay and enjoy the wonderful food everyone prepares.

As the person in charge of Toban schedule we are still in need of a Toban host for May 20th, June 17th, July 15th and August 5th. It's usually easier if there are two families who are willing to host one of the Sundays. We usually like to keep it simple with light refreshments, flowers & a food offering for the altar. Hosts set up the refreshments prior to service and clean up after the community hour. There is a list of the duties hanging on the bulletin board in the community room or please ask anyone on the board for more clarification.

I would like to thank the newly formed fundraising committee members who are taking time from their busy schedule to be an active part of our Temple. Start going through your house and garage looking for gently used articles that you will be willing to donate for this year's garage sale. The garage sale will

be in July. Keep your eyes posted for announcements for more details. We will also be asking for volunteers to help with this event.

It's hard to believe but I will mention that on May 27th (which is Memorial Weekend) Sensei John will hold a short service at the Temple to honor our ancestors and then he will go to the Mountain View Cemetery to pay his respects there.

In gassho,
Jackie

Buddha Day (Hanamatsuri)
by Mike Shibata, Temple Member

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.

Wheel of Dharma December 2017

Are You An Evil Person?

By Rev. Yushi Mukojima, Mountain View Buddhist Temple



Do you often argue with others? I am afraid that I have often argued with my wife. In Japan, when we don't get along with others or have difficulties in personal relations, we call this situation a "bump." I imagine many of you also live stressfully, bumping into many

obstacles.

The reason why we bump into things is because we can't see what is around us very well. If we could see the path ahead of us clearly, we would never run into anything. The fact that we bump into things all the time indicates that we are in darkness; namely, we live in the world of delusion and cannot see what is really in front of us. We have a tendency to believe without any doubt that, "I alone can see everything." Because we walk assuredly everywhere as if we own the place, we who cannot actually see anything often bump into each other.

In Buddhism, the "world of darkness" refers to the foolishness which prevents us from seeing our true selves, which are full of self-centeredness. Selfishness can be divided into three minds. First, there is the mind of believing, which is certain that "I alone am always right." Second, there is the mind that wants to have its own way in everything. And third is the mind that loves only itself.

All of us are constantly confused by our selfish minds.

Even if we are wrong, we cannot apologize. We take for granted the kindness of others, so we cannot show our thanks. And because we cannot forgive the faults of others, we always complain about them. It is our sad nature that when we accuse others, we brush aside our own shortcomings. We unconsciously see ourselves as the standard of justice, and this situation makes us angry.

In contrast, from the Jodo Shinshu point of view, an evil person refers to a humble person illumined by the light of wisdom who is aware that his or her true self is filled with self-centeredness and arrogance. An evil person in Jodo Shinshu is one who can reflect deeply on his foolish way of living that is ruled by selfishness. He lives cultivating the humble mind and the mind that respects others.

Because we are living in darkness, we tend to believe, "I am a good person." But a society established by good people can only be hellish.

A society which embraces the Nembutsu teaching is not a world full of arrogant good people who only judge other people and criticize other people's faults. We need to become evil people—namely, those who are able to feel shame—who acknowledge our shortcomings and mistakes and are able to apologize to one another.

The Nembutsu teaching is the light of wisdom. Please remember that those who always try to see and reflect on their mistakes can visualize world peace;

and those who always believe that they alone are right, are actually creating hell. Let us try to realize the precious world which is established by evil people; namely, a community and families filled with peace and harmony who rejoice in the light of Nembutsu!

Are you a good person? Or an evil person?

Temple Bookstore and Lending Library

In our community room on the south wall is our bookstore. We have a variety of Buddhist books for sale. There are some used books and new books, some books on Zen, Tibetan and Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. On the northwest corner of the community room we have a leaning library for our members to use. Any member can sign out a book to read but please remember to return the book for others to use next.

The Happiness the Handless Hand Received

This article below (The Happiness the Handless Hand Received) is a chapter from one of the books for sale, Dharma Breeze – Essays on Shin Buddhism by Nobuo Haneda. This book is a great introductory book into Buddhism.

INTRODUCTION

There are two ways of seeing the self. One is seeing it as something independent and autonomous; and the other is seeing it as interdependent and interconnected with all things and people that exist outside it. Here I want to discuss this issue by referring to an experience that Rev. Junkyo Oishi, a nun belonging to the Shingon Buddhist school, had. After experiencing many difficulties in the earlier part of her life, she became a Buddhist. I want to discuss one episode in which she moved from one view of the self to another view of the self.

Rev. Junkyo Oishi(1890-1965)

Rev. Oishi's childhood dream was to become a professional Japanese dancer. Thus, when she was seventeen, she went to live in the house of a dance teacher in Kyoto. She was given the name Tsumakichi as a novice dancer. One night, a tragedy happened.

The dance teacher's wife ran away with her boyfriend. On being informed of this, the dance teacher turned into a madman. He took out a sharp samurai sword and started to slash everybody he encountered. First, he chopped off the head, arms, and legs of his wife's mother.

Then, he did the same to his wife's brother and sister. Then he attacked the three dance students who were in the house at the time. Tsumakichi was one of them.

When the bloody cutting and slashing were over, people found five dead bodies that were completely mutilated. In a pool of blood, they also found the barely moving body of a girl whose two arms were cut off from her shoulders. When a doctor examined her, he said that she would not live. But miraculously she did survive. This girl was Tsumakichi.

A DANCE RECITAL

Then, one day when Tsumakichi was in her mid-twenties, some people offered her an opportunity to participate in a Japanese dance project. She was supposed to play the leading role in the dance called the Sambaso, one of the most famous Japanese dances that all Japanese dancers dream of dancing. How could she, an armless person, play the leading role in the dance? They planned it this way. Her two arms were to be played by two famous puppeteers wearing dark robes to hide their bodies. With one exposing his right arm and the other exposing his left arm, these two puppeteers would stand behind Tsumakichi and her arms were to accompany her dancing.

Tsumakichi was excited about this dance project, because it was her lifelong dream to dance the Samsaso. She and the two puppeteers practiced and practiced. But as the day of their performance got closer, they were frustrated because there wasn't coordination between Tsumakichi and the two puppeteers. Her body appeared to belong to one person and her arms to another. Tsumakichi got quite worried about the opening day.

A few days before the opening day, Tsumakichi had a hard time sleeping because she was anxious about the dance recital.

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Then all of a sudden she heard a voice telling her, "How conceited you are! How egoistic you are! You have been thinking that you are the lead dancer and those two arms should follow you. You have been so frustrated because those two arms do not follow your performance. But, don't you think that is a conceited idea? Those two puppeteers are, a lifeless doll, as if it were alive. They have no problem in handling you, a living being. Your ego is standing in the way. You are nothing but an amateur dancer. Why do you have to strain yourself to lead the dance? Why don't you become a puppet and let them guide you? Why don't you let the two arms guide you and just follow them?"

After she had this realization, there was perfect coordination between the two puppeteers and her. Their recital was a great success.

ONE FAMILY, INDIVISIBLE

**EAGLE ROCK SCHOOL
PRESENTS**

ALLEGIANCE

BOOK BY MARC ACITO, JAY KUO AND LORENZO THIONE
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY JAY KUO

THURSDAY APRIL 5

FRIDAY APRIL 6

SATURDAY APRIL 7

7:30PM

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April Calendar

April 1	Hanamatsuri Service	
	Newcomers Welcome	9:30 am - 10:00 am
	Meditation Service	10:00 am - 10:30 am
	Hanamatsuri Service and Dharma Talk	10:30 am - 11:30 am
	Potluck in Community Room	11:30 am - 12:30 pm
April 15	Mindfulness Class with Sensei John Hughes	10:00 am - 11:00 am
April 22	Regular Service with Sensei John Hughes	
	Newcomers Welcome	9:30 am - 10:00 am
	Meditation Service	10:00 am - 10:30 am
	Regular Service and Dharma Talk	10:30 am - 11:30 am
	Toban in Community Room	11:30 am - 12:30 pm
April 29	Mindfulness Class with Sensei John Hughes	10:00 am - 11:00 am
	Upcoming Events	
May 27	Memorial Service	
June 3	Temple Clean Up	
June 16	Rev. Ron Miyamura seminar	
June 17	Rev. Ron Miyamura Service	
July TBD	Garage Sale	

Contact Information

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