



# Fellow Travelers

The monthly newsletter of the Longmont Buddhist Temple

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 Minister's Assistant

### Deep Gratitude

I'm writing this article on Friday after Thanksgiving. To me Thanksgiving is the most Shin of all American holidays. One of the most important facets, and the one that first drew me to the teachings of Jodo Shinshu, is our emphasis on gratitude.

I am grateful for my car – home – comfortable life – all the things I have. I am grateful for family – Nancy and all our children and grandchildren – all our extended family. I am grateful that all our grandchildren are healthy and that all our children are employed and supporting themselves. I am grateful for my friends and customers and my business. I'm grateful to live in this country even with all its problems.

Beyond these things I'm grateful to have been sober for 26 years. I could not have this life without having found sobriety.

I'm grateful to Nancy for suggesting that we visit Longmont Buddhist Temple. From the first time we walked into the Temple, I knew I had found my spiritual home. Reverend O'Dowd, Joe and all the members of the sangha were friends loving and accepting from the first moment. I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve as I strive to learn and become worthy to share the Dharma.

Shinran Shonin came to the Nembutsu teaching from a place of complete defeat. After practicing a Buddhist path of self-effort, he came to the conclusion that he was an "evil person of blind passions. Utterly incapable of attaining enlightenment through his own efforts." Namo Amida Butsu. Na man da bu. Na man dab. Defeated in his effort to become enlightened through his own effort, he heard of Honen who was teaching the Nembutsu in the streets of Kyoto; and Shinran became his student. Shinran took refuge in Infinite Life and Light and spent the next fifty years taking the Nembutsu teaching to normal everyday people.

The teaching of taking refuge in the Infinite, in terms I can understand – surrendering my own will to the ultimate Wisdom and Compassion of the Universe – was the lesson I

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had spend most of my life looking for. I was completely certain that I was unable through my own effort to achieve peace. Unable to live a life through self-power, I found a way to accept that all I was responsible was to be honest to the best of my ability and be confident that, as long as I did what was in front of me to do, everything else will take care of itself.

Still living in the world of samsara – suffering; but no longer needing to be make everything turn out right. I am responsible to do my best. I am responsible to be honest and do no harm; but I am not responsible for the results. The teaching is simple, not easy but simple, treat all beings with respect. Build don't destroy. When I screw up, make amends.

With deep gratitude. Namo Amida Butsu,  
John

## **Temple Updates**

**by Jackie Tono, Temple Board President**

Hopefully this article finds everyone enjoying the nice warm weather we've been having before winter tries to creep its way in. Because of the weather it's hard to believe that the holidays are already here!! I hope everyone enjoyed a safe, happy gathering for Thanksgiving. It's a time to reflect on all the things/people/events that we should be grateful for in our life. I'm thankful for John for all the time he's willing to donate to providing services to us every Sunday and his willingness to continue his training in Shin Buddhism. I'm thankful to Christina & Stu for providing our music for our Sunday services. I'm very thankful for our board members for donating all their time and energy to our Temple. I'm grateful to all our Sangha members and friends who have been so generous with their financial support or who donated new service books or bonsai trees or CD's or other items to our Temple. And I'm thankful to our Sangha for continuing to practice the Shin Buddhist teachings and support our Temple.

The end of the year is approaching fast!! Assistant Minister John will hold a New Year's Eve service to ring in the New Year. Please join him on Monday, December 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:30 p.m. and bring a light refreshment (dessert) to share.

As the Christmas holidays approach we will again make holiday baskets for our elders. This year we will be making 5 baskets on Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>. If you wish to help donate items to fill the baskets please drop off items on Sunday, Dec. 9<sup>th</sup> by 10:00 a.m. Your help and donation is always appreciated.

December 16<sup>th</sup>. we will conduct our Bodhi Day service which is the Enlightenment of Shakyamuni Buddha. So in honor of Bodhi day we will have a potluck lunch so please bring a dish to share and enjoy each other's company for the year end.

Have you driven by the Temple during the night lately? Have you noticed the new outside lights shining on the Temple? Please thank Sean & Sharon Lehman for their generous donation of the solar lights.

The board and I would like to thank everyone for all their hard work and many donations throughout the year. Our Sangha membership is small but everyone is always so willing to help in any way they are able with any of our events. Without your help our Temple would have a hard time surviving. May everyone have a happy, healthy, peacefully 2019.

In gassho,  
Jackie

## **Jodo E, Bodhi Day**

**By Mike Shibata, Former Temple member**

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.

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

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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.

### ***Joya E, New Year's Eve***

By Mike Shibata, Former Temple member

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?

### **Wheel of Dharma November 2018**

#### ***16th World Buddhist Women's Convention Coming to S.F. in 2019***

The Buddhist Churches of America Federation of Buddhist Women's Associations (FBWA) is honored and excited to host the 16th World Buddhist Women's Convention in 2019.

The organizing committee has been working on planning this world convention — held every four years — at the downtown San Francisco Marriott Marquis from Aug. 30 to Sept. 1, 2019.

Although a Buddhist women's convention, everyone is welcome from Japan, Hawaii, Canada, South America, Europe — as well as the continental United States — to this convention with the theme of "Live the Nembutsu." His Eminence Monshu Kojun Ohtani, 25th spiritual head of

the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, will attend the event.

The history of the Buddhist women's movement dates back to 1904-05 and the Russo-Japanese War. It was during this time that Lady Takeko Kujo, daughter of Koson Ohtani, the 21st Monshu spiritual head of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha, along with her sister-in-law, Lady Kazuko Ohtani, co-founded the Buddhist Women's Association with the purpose of doing public service and fostering the solidarity of Japanese Buddhist women.

From these efforts, the World Federation of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Buddhist Women's Association emerged as a program of the Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha with preparations for Shinran Shonin's 700th Memorial Observances which began in 1957.

As a result, in 1961, the World Federation of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-ha Buddhist Women's Association was formed, with the first convention held at the Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan.

Women throughout the history of Shin Buddhism have dedicated their lives and supported the propagation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Prime examples are Lady Eshinni and Lady Kakushinni. Lady Eshinni, wife of Shinran Shonin, appreciated the Nembutsu teaching as expounded by her husband, and supported his efforts to share the teachings with people from all walks of life.

Lady Kakushinni, the youngest daughter of Shinran Shonin and Lady Eshinni, went on to play a vital role in laying the foundation for the spread of the Nembutsu teaching so that future generations would be able to receive and rejoice in her father's legacy.

Today, Buddhist women from Hawaii, Canada, the continental United States, South America, and beyond have and continue to hear calling of Amida's infinite wisdom and compassionate voice through the Nembutsu, Namo Amida Butsu.

Reflecting upon the theme "Live the Nembutsu," and remaining ever mindful of the common thread of the Dharma that brings us together as one community, the BCA FBWA looks forward to welcoming participants from all over the world.

Let us remember the contributions of individuals such as Lady Eshinni, Lady Kakushinni, Lady Takeko Kujo and their sincere hope to see peace prevail and the Buddha-dharma spread throughout the world.

We will continue to share important and exciting information about this event in the upcoming issues of the *Wheel of Dharma*. We look forward to seeing you in San Francisco next year.

## ***Self-Reliance — the Key to Inner Peace***

**By Rev. Kazuaki Nakata**

**Los Angeles Nishi Hongwanji Betsuin**



According to the early discourse of the Buddha, Maha Nirvana Sutra, when the Buddha was near his death, he told his followers, “Rely on yourself, rely on Universal Truth (dharma).”

The term “dharma” is shared among various Indian religious tradition, such as Hindu, Jain, Sikh, and Yoga. Each tradition has their own interpretation of “dharma.” It is often translated as “religious truth.” In Buddhism, however, “dharma” means universal truth. Why the difference? “Religious truth” is accepted without question.

More accurately, this truth should not be questioned so that they can be protected by their ideal gods. Their religious truths such as hell, sins, ghosts and punishment, only applies to those who believe them. Obviously, these negative conceptions do not affect people outside of the belief.

According to the Jodo Shinshu Essentials (Kyo-sho), Buddhism negates religious truth which uses practices of prayer, superstitions, and metaphysical teachings. “Universal” means it applies to everything and everyone whether they believe or deny. Dharma in Japanese writes 法. It consists two characters. One is 氵, and the other is 去. 氵 means water, or drops of water. 去 means leave, away, or flow. When the two characters are combined, it becomes “dharma.” So what does dharma mean from these two characters?

Water leaves, water goes away, or water flows. Water will form clouds from the ocean into the sky. It will fall on the mountains as rain. Water will not stay on the surface of the mountain. Water on the ground and underground will create little streams and leave from the original location where they dropped, and these streams will join together to become a river. Great amounts of water will make a big stream of river and will flow into the ocean from where it originally came.

Jodo Shinshu founder Shinran Shonin often used the ocean to exemplify the source of our life. He also believed that the ocean is the place for our life to return. In fact, when near death, he requested that his body be thrown into the Kamo river in Kyoto in order to return to the ocean. “Rely on yourself or self-reliance” could be misunderstood as the cause of selfishness or arrogance in the American culture. This is a wrong assumption.

We often hear the phrase “you have to sacrifice yourself to \_\_\_\_.” This is not a Buddhistic idea but more of an

Abrahamic religious ideology. “You must sacrifice your life to God so that he will protect you and take care of you” is an example of such ideology. In Buddhism, the Buddha will not help you, will not protect you, or take you to a better place because he passed away 2,500 years ago.

The sense of self-reliance comes from trust, confidence, respect and mindfulness. A simple translation is: “We shall accept as we are. It is the beginning of the self-confidence.”

When the historical Buddha was born, it is said that he proclaimed, “I am a most honored one.” This story cannot be accepted as real, but how should we interpret it? The Buddha’s declaration did not mean he was the only person that should be respected or honored. It can be understood as everyone has Buddha nature. It means that all sentient beings have the potential to be enlightened and become a Buddha. So, each of us should respect ourselves and honor our existence and life.

In general, religion asks of its followers to rely on their deities and that these deities will dictate the fate of an individual’s life based on their faith.

The way of Buddhahood is not a conventional faith-based religion. It is a way of living. Your way of living can be decided by you is the essential teaching of the Buddha. That is why, the Buddha stated, “rely on yourself” instead of relying on the Buddha. The way of Buddhahood will help you to cultivate and grow your internal peace which is *sukha* सुख in Sanskrit and *gokuraku* 極樂 in Japanese. *Gokuraku* is known as the utmost peaceful and calming state in our Jodo Shinshu teachings.

It is my hope that every one of my readers will attain the state of *gokuraku* by cultivating and growing their internal peace. Gassho

### ***Minister’s Assistants***

#### ***Learning Continues at Ekoji***

On October 4 - 6, the Center for Buddhist Education’s Fall Minister’s Assistant Program [MAP] Seminar was hosted at Ekoji Buddhist Temple in Fairfax Station, Virginia. Fifteen certified minister’s assistants experienced a full schedule of lectures, ritual practice, and dharmathons, and had an opportunity to discuss new MAP proposals with CBE Co-director, Rev. Jerry Hirano.

Having this MAP Seminar at the Ekoji temple allowed Eastern District Minister's Assistants an opportunity to attend an in-district session which included a lecture on American Buddhism by Dr. Jeff Wilson; continued study of the Seven Patriarchs of Shin Buddhism, this time focusing on Doshaku, presented by Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara; chanting and ritual practice with Rev. Anan Hatanaka; and special lecture by Ekoji member, Dr. Sandy Kita, on the Nembutsu, from an art history perspective.

Some MAP participants took advantage of an optional tour to the Smithsonian Institute's Freer and Sackler Galleries, and attended the Ekoji Sunday Service. The CBE and seminar participants extend their deepest appreciation to the Ekoji temple and its members for their hospitality in hosting this seminar.



Front row, left - right: Rev. Ron Miyamura (Midwest Temple, IL, resident/ supervising minister); Rev. Anan Hatanaka (Hongwanji Office); Rev. Kiyo Kuwahara (Hongwanji Office); Rev. Jerry Hirano (CBE Co-Director); Rev. Dr. Jeff Wilson (keynote speaker); Rev. Earl Ikeda (New York, resident/supervising minister); Rev. Nariaki Hayashi (Ekoji, resident/supervising minister). Second row, l-r: Laverne Imori (San Diego); Gary Jascula (New York); John Hughes (Longmont); Chiemi Bly (Midwest); Gordon Bermant (Seabrook, NJ); Roger Suekama (Midwest); Jesse Zavala (Midwest); Cheryl Ikemiya (NY); Isabelle Bernard (NY); Cynthia Mee (Midwest); Kennon Nakamura (Ekoji); Bob Shimokaji (Ekoji); Anita Kazarian (Cleveland); Joy Zavala (Midwest), and Erick Ishii (Ekoji).

**Our True Leader is the Buddha**  
**By Rev. Kodo Umezu, Bishop**  
**Buddhist Churches of America**

The outcome of the recent presidential election has created feelings of uncertainty and fear among many people in our community and country. At the same time, it made many people happy and gave them joy and hope for the future.

At a time like this, we need to be reminded of the universal caring heart and mind of Amida Tathagata embracing all people. It takes us to the realm beyond the tribulations of this human world.

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The loving heart and mind of the world of Oneness touches us and wishes for all of us to live in peace, overcoming our limited viewpoints. The true guide for all beings, to me, is Amida Buddha. Amida Buddha cares about all people regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, wealth, social status, etc. Amida Buddha shows compassion especially to those who are suffering. No matter what type of conditions we may be living in, Amida Buddha will always be there. Therefore, in my opinion, Amida Buddha is the true leader for all.

If we do not turn to the Light of Wisdom we will continue to dwell in a world of darkness and live with fear, loneliness, and endless anxiety. Being guided by this Compassionate Light of Wisdom, realizing our afflictions, we do what we can to be good citizens of the world.

Amid all the commotion, let us, together with fellow travelers of this path, pause and hear the words of guidance and encouragement coming from individuals who have been touched by the Buddha's universal mind and heart. And let us reflect on how our lives and actions can be guided by this Teaching.

*“When we reflect on the establishment of the Vow, We find that the Tathagata, without abandoning sentient beings in pain and affliction, Has taken the directing of virtue to them as foremost, Thus fulfilling the mind of great compassion.”*  
*(Shinran Shonin, Collected Works of Shinran, p.408)*

**Fundraiser: Amazon Smiles**  
**By Nancy Edmonds, Temple member**



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 An easy way to contribute to LBT

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Thank you for participating in an easy way to help LBT.

***Oseibo Gift to Ministerial Staff***

**By Gail Hogsett, Temple Treasurer**

With the blink of an eye, 2018 has flown by! 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 our Minister's Assistant, John Hughes gives tirelessly to the temple by officiating over services or mindfulness classes almost every

Sunday. Also, Rev. Okamoto has been generous with his "retirement" time, to serve as our guest minister two times this year.

This is the perfect time to directly show our appreciation to the ministerial staff 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 22nd to Gail Hogsett – 3511 Boxelder Drive – Longmont, CO 80503. Thank you for your generosity to our ministerial staff!

## November Calendar

December 2	<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
December 9	<b>Mindfulness Class with Sensei John Hughes</b>	10:00 am - 11:00 am
	Board Meeting	8:30 am
December 16	<b>Bodhi 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
	Lunch Potluck in Community Room	11:30 am – 1:30 pm
December 23	<b>Mindfulness Class with Sensei John Hughes</b>	10:00 am - 11:00 am
December 31	<b>New Year's Eve Service</b>	7:30 pm
	Bell Ringing	
	Dessert Potluck	

<b>Contact Information</b>		
Temple Website:		<a href="http://longmontbuddhism.org">longmontbuddhism.org</a>
Temple E-Mail		<a href="mailto:info@longmontbuddhism.org">info@longmontbuddhism.org</a>
Minister's Assistant: John NyuDō Hughes	303-997-6896	<a href="mailto:sensei@longmontbuddhism.org">sensei@longmontbuddhism.org</a>
<b>Board Members:</b>		
President: Jackie Tono	303-517-4622	<a href="mailto:jjtonto2@gmail.com">jjtonto2@gmail.com</a>
Vice President: Kelli Koga	303-910-0415	<a href="mailto:krkoga1010@gmail.com">krkoga1010@gmail.com</a>
Secretary: Christina Hildebrandt	720-284-8710	<a href="mailto:soundheals@earthlink.net">soundheals@earthlink.net</a>
Financial Secretary: LaDonna Shea	303-494-2465	<a href="mailto:shearanch@aol.com">shearanch@aol.com</a>
Treasurer: Gail Kanemoto Hogsett	303-776-9578	<a href="mailto:gkhogsett@gmail.com">gkhogsett@gmail.com</a>