



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

The Problem of Dirty Hands

“Know yourself to be a foolish being of karmic evil caught in birth-and-death, ever sinking and ever wandering in transmigration from innumerable kalpas in the past, with never a condition that would lead to emancipation.”

Shan-tao. A current topic in moral philosophy is the problem of dirty hands. Simply stated the question is: if the only way to change a situation is from within, and it impossible to work from within without getting your hands dirty, is it possible to be a moral person and work to make the world better? This is a thorny problem. The assumption is that many societal ills are so complicated that it is not possible to work to correct the issue without getting your hands dirty. That is to do some harm to someone to do good for the “greater good.” Philosophers go through convoluted difficult machinations to try to arrive at a yes or no answer. That is what philosophers do. Shinran had a simpler answer to this question.

Shinran's answer is: *“I know nothing at all of good or evil. For if I could know thoroughly, as Amida Tathagata knows, that an act was good, then I would know good. If I could know thoroughly, as the Tathagata knows, that an act was evil, then I would know evil. But with a foolish being full of blind passions, in this fleeting world - this burning house – all matters without exception are empty and false, totally without truth and sincerity. The nembutsu alone is true and real.”* Shinran Shonin. In modern English Shinran does not see “dirty hands” as a problem. It is the condition that we find ourselves in.

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We are foolish beings ruled by blind passion unable to know with any certainty if our actions are good or evil.

What we need to do in this life is to take refuge in the boundless compassion of Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light and Immeasurable Life. Once we have accepted that through our own power we are unable to know at the ultimate level what is good and what is evil, the burden of having to be good, with all the ego that is attached to that need, is lifted. We can get into the guts of life, get our hands dirty and do the best we can. There is no longer any need to be right. We do what seems the best in any situation. When that turns out to be correct, we continue to do the best we can. When that turns out to be incorrect, we make whatever amends that are necessary and continue to do the best we can.

December 4th issue of the New York Times has a wonderful article about how Shinran was right at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/04/opinion/purity-is-overrated.html>. If you have the opportunity, it is a great read.

Namo Amida Butsu, John Sensei.

Temple Updates by Jackie Tono
Temple Board President

Happy New Year!! I hope everyone enjoyed time together with family and friends during the holidays. Did you attend the end of the year service with John? Before I go any further I'd like to take a minute to thank the following Sangha members for all their volunteer work, generous donations and true act of Dana: Minister Assistant John Hughes for coming to our temple four Sundays a month to teach the Dharma. Nancy Edmonds for all her technical skills in helping us update our Website, sending out email blasts, composing the newsletter, variety show brochure and many other unknown tasks. Ted Matsuo, Susan Fisher, Gail Hogsett, Karen & Don Wood & The Jane Kanemoto Foundation for their numerous contributions to the temple. Bob Halbert for helping create a beautiful outside landscape for the Temple. Christina Hildebrandt & Stu Cruden for providing accompaniment during our services. Shieko Uno for her hard work during our Diversity Concert. To our board who sits through many meetings and perform many tasks at the Temple. To everyone else whom I didn't mention by name who come to provide Toban, clean our Temple and do all the small unknown tasks to help in true acts of Dana. We are a small sangha so help from everyone, young or young at heart are always appreciated. Thanks everyone for your contribution for Oseibo for John Hughes and Rev. Okamoto. Also thank you all for your contribution to our holiday baskets for our elderly and disabled members, everyone was so thankful for the baskets.

It's that time of year again to renew your membership to our Temple. Please see Gail Hogsett for a membership form. Your dues help to maintain our physical location, ministers' compensation, travel & training, utility bills, insurance, website and BCA dues. Your dues can be paid monthly, quarterly, semi-annually or annually. Our dues are \$360.00 per person annually but if that's not possible please talk to Gail. We will not turn anyone away because our dues are a financial burden.

2018 is off to a busy start. January 7th is our first service of the New Year. January 21st is our Hoonko service (Shinran Shonin's memorial service) with a potluck after. Please bring a dish to share. February

18th will be our annual Temple meeting during our community hour after a short service so this also a potluck. If you are interested in serving on the Temple board, we are looking for someone for the position of vice president. All positions on the board are two-year positions. Please contact myself or any other board member for details. March 10th, Saturday night, is our 3rd annual Diversity Concert. If you have a hidden talent (sing, dance, rap) and would like to participate please contact myself or Shieko Uno for try outs.

If you have an idea for a seminar or guest minister or something that you'd like to see our Temple to host in 2018 please contact a board member so we can discuss this at a board meeting.

Here's hoping that 2018 will be a more peaceful year with less violence and more understanding, tolerance and compassion.

Thank you for all that you do for our Temple.
Jackie Tono

Hoonko by Mike Shibata
Temple Member

The Hoonko Service held in honor of Shinran Shonin, the founder of the Jodo Shin Sect, is held each year during the month of January.

Literally the Chinese characters "Ho-on" means "return of gratitude" and "ko" means "to clarify the meaning of" or "a gathering" of those who wish to return this gratitude.

We are born into the Pure Land through the Compassion and Wisdom of Amida Buddha and, thus, given an easy path of crossing over from this world of suffering to the Pure Land. Amida Buddha's virtue is transferred to us in the form of His Name, Namo Amida Butsu, and becomes the true cause for our Birth in the Pure Land.

Since we are incapable of performing any practice which would give us enough merits to attain Birth in the Pure Land, such efforts on our part would be ineffective. Thus, the only recourse is to rely on Amida Buddha for our Birth in the Pure Land. We are enabled to attain Birth instantly upon our death and there is no need for anyone to conduct memorial services in the hope that we would be born into the Pure Land or any other place.

This being the case, why is it necessary to observe memorial services? Such services are unnecessary, but they provide us with the opportunity to quietly meditate or reflect upon the cherished memories of the deceased and remind us of the impermanence of life. This brings us to the further awareness of our own changing existence. As we recall the countless benefits bestowed upon us by the deceased, there arises within us a feeling of gratitude toward the deceased and others for making life possible for us.

Memorial services, therefore, should be looked upon as being an opportunity to listen to the Buddha-Dharma and to express our gratitude to Amida Buddha and the deceased person for whom the memorial service is being conducted. This in turn should lead us to devote ourselves for the good of others in memory of the deceased. By realizing the true significance of memorial services in the light of the Jodo Shinshu teaching, it will become much more significant and meaningful to us.

The main reason for conducting the Hoonko Service is that in our daily lives, most of us are too busy to think of gratitude. Therefore, the Hoonko Service provides us an opportunity to do so on the anniversary of the death of Shinran Shonin. At this time, we should once again trace the footsteps of Shinran Shonin with deep appreciation in our hearts and resolve to dedicate ourselves in the service of others to truly make our world more friendly and happier for all mankind.

Wheel of Dharma December 2017

Shin Buddhism?

By Rev. Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop



A new movie called *Shin Godzilla* was released in Japan last year. The title caught my attention; especially the term “*shin*.” So, I searched the Internet to find out what it means. The Japanese word *shin* has many meanings: new, god, faith, friendliness, true, and more. Some people refer to our religion of Jodo Shinshu as

“Shin Buddhism.” I don’t know who named it that. We don’t call it Shin Buddhism in Japan. I don’t even know how the word “*shin*” would be written in *kanji* (Chinese characters) in this context. I know it is not *shin* meaning god, but is it *shin* meaning new? *Shin* as in *shinjitsu* (truth), *shin* as in Shinran Shonin, or *shin* as in *shinjin* (faith)?

Shinran Shonin did not start a “new” school of Buddhism. Inspired by Honen Shonin, Shinran Shonin realized the path to *nirvana* for ordinary people. He showed us his deep realization of the true essence of the way to Enlightenment, the Pure Land way, and he called it Jodo Shinshu.

The original Buddhism was for all people. Shakyamuni Buddha travelled in India from village to village and shared his message with everyone, including people at the bottom of the caste system. He cared about everyone’s spiritual wellness and wanted every person to be touched by the heart of Enlightenment. However, in Japan before the 12th century, Buddhism was only for select people: the nobility, monks, and nuns. Ordinary people were excluded from the hope of attaining nirvana.

In the history of Jodo Shinshu, we cannot forget Rennyō Shonin. He wrote many letters to people to express the essence of the *Nembutsu* teaching. He reached out to people from all walks of life, so that during his time (the 15th century) our mother temple, Hongwanji, became one of the most religiously, economically, and politically influential organizations in Japan. Rennyō Shonin is well known as the author of the letter “On the White Ashes.” I would like to share part of another letter called “Hunting and Fishing.”

“The important point of the settled mind in our tradition does not lie particularly in refraining from evil thoughts or keeping delusory thoughts and attachments from arising. We may just carry on trading, working as servants, hunting or fishing. If we deeply realize that the Primal Vow of Amida Tathagata promises to save such worthless people like us, who are absorbed, morning and evening, in our daily engagements, deluded under the influence of our evil karma, and if we single-heartedly entrust ourselves to Amida Buddha’s compassionate Vow without any doubt, while having firm assurance of our emancipation – since such a single thought of entrusting is sincere, will certainly be saved by the Tathagata.”

Shin Buddhism is Buddhism for people full of blind passions and delusive thoughts, like me. People really cherished the profound message of the *Nembutsu* teaching. They felt included in the timeless, compassionate Vow.

I appreciate the innovative expression “Shin Buddhism.” It is authentic Buddhism that is always new, based on faith (entrusting), friendly, true and real. Let us revisit our religious tradition by listening to the deep meaning behind the Primal Vow during the religious season in December. Please attend your temple’s Hoonko Service in memory of Shinran Shonin. It is the most significant service in our Jodo Shinshu tradition.

Namo Amida Butsu.

Wheel of Dharma December 2017

BCA Executive Committee Committed to Shinran’s Teachings By Ken Tanimoto, BCA President



I have been asked by many of our Sangha members, “What is the role of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Executive Committee and what effect does this group have on the BCA, its members and ministers?” My answer is, “The Executive Committee is the governing body that coordinates various activities, programs, and other business delegated by the BCA National Board. It is comprised of eight officers, six of whom are elected by the National Board for a term of two years. The Executive Committee discusses and decides on many issues that serve the needs of the BCA ministers and members.” That is my general definition.

You might now be thinking, “Should I keep reading more about such boring a subject, or should I not continue?” The scenario is as simple as this: When paying taxes to my local, state, and federal government do I read and inquire more to find out how my taxes are being utilized to best fulfill the

needs of everyone, including myself, or do I not think about it?

After many years of being involved with the BCA I can truthfully say that the BCA Executive Committee does its best to achieve the impossible task of pleasing everyone. Sometimes their decisions do not fulfill everyone’s expectations, but I believe that, the vast majority of times, correct choices are made and executed.

The main criteria of the Executive Committee’s policymaking decisions are that they must support the teachings of the Buddha and Shinran Shonin, and that they must support the BCA Ministers’ welfare and livelihood. It is imperative that all decisions are made with those two important concerns in mind.

For most of my two-year presidency, I have relied heavily on the Executive Committee. Without their support and guidance, I could never have accomplished anything, nor could I have made any progress in developing the BCA’s future. This group faced many challenges and made difficult decisions that dealt with the betterment of the ministers, temples, and members.

The current BCA Executive Committee members are: President-elect, Rick Stambul; Vice-presidents, Gary Mukai and Charlene Grinolds; Secretary, Susan Bottari; Treasurer, Jeff Matusoka; Ministers Association Chair, Rev. Jerry Hirano, and BCA Bishop, Rev. Kodo Umezu. Also helping to advise the Executive Committee are Rev. Marvin Harada from the BCA Office of the Bishop, and Steve Terusaki and Gayle Noguchi, former and current Administrative Officer, respectively.

I applaud each of them for their expertise on the BCA and their time and dedication to the propagation of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, always keeping in mind Master Shinran’s teachings of gratitude and appreciation for the Dharma.

LBT 2018 Membership Drive by Gail Kanemoto Hogsett Temple Board Treasurer

As 2018 approaches, it’s that time of the year for our Membership Drive to determine our member count in the new year. This count is crucial for financial budgeting for LBT and determines the dues we pay monthly to The Buddhist Churches of America.

Our membership dues will remain the same for 2018 - \$360 per member. LBT’s primary purpose is to provide

the Nembutsu teaching offered by Shin Buddhism, to practice mindfulness meditation and discover the Buddha nature that is in each of us. We work to understand the reality of interdependence and impermanence in this world.

It is always a challenge for the majority of our temple leaders and ministers to agree on policy and issues.

This mission involves the expenses of maintaining a physical location, of ministers' compensation, travel & training, utility bills, insurance, internet & website, and dues to BCA.

The LBT Board is very grateful to the many members who make up our wonderful sangha. We have been facing a decreasing member count, but hope that 2018 can see the start of an upward trend. May I request that all members fill out a Member Sign-up Form included in this newsletter by December 31 and return to address on the bottom of the form? And please encourage any prospective members to do the same. Your dues do not have to be paid this year, but please indicate your schedule of payments on the form. Of course, if you'd like the extra tax deduction this year, we'll gladly receive your 2018 dues now!

We look forward to your being a part of this great sangha in 2018!

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 alter 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.
- 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.

LONGMONT BUDDHIST TEMPLE
2018 MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENT

- I would like to become a new LBT member

- I am already a member and would like to make my annual pledge

The LBT's guideline for membership dues is a minimum of \$360 per year for each adult. If you are able to contribute more than the minimum, your generosity will be greatly appreciated. Other ways of contributing to the Temple include serving on the board or a committee and offering monetary donations at services (including individual family services for weddings, funerals or memorial services). By joining the Longmont Buddhist Temple, you also become a member of the Buddhist Churches of America (national headquarters located in San Francisco).

Date _____

Name _____

Spouse name _____

Children's names/ages _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip code _____

Telephonenumbe(r)s _____

Email address _____

Membership pledge amount for 2018 _____

Please choose the payment schedule you'd prefer:

To be paid: monthly _____ quarterly _____ semi-annually _____ annually _____

For further information, please contact Jackie Tono (jjtonto2@gmail.com – 303-517-4622) or Gail Kanemoto Hogsett (gkhogsett@gmail.com – 303-776-9578).

Please return this form and check payable to Longmont Buddhist Temple to:
Longmont Buddhist Temple - P.O. Box 2083 - Longmont, CO 80502



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY
THROUGH
PERFORMANCE

MARCH 10, 2018
7:00 PM

Bake Sale and Silent Auction to be held during Event

Think about how you can HELP contribute to the success of our musical recital:

- Provide baked goods
- Donate silent auction items
- Share your musical talents with the community
 - Attend the performance
 - Sell ads and tickets for the performance
 - Solicit donors for contributions
 - Work with the backstage crew
 - Discover additional ways to assist

Let's work together for a wonderful presentation, fun evening,
and successful activity.

January Calendar

January 7	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 (Coffee/Tea Hour) in Community Room	11:30 am - 12:30 pm
January 14	Mindfulness Class with Sensei John Hughes	10:00 am - 11:00 am
January 21	Hoonko Service with Sensei John Hughes	
	Newcomers Welcome	9:30 am - 10:00 am
	Meditation Service	10:00 am - 10:30 am
	Hoonko Service and Dharma Talk	10:30 am - 11:30 am
	Toban (Coffee/Tea Hour) in Community Room	11:30 am - 12:30 pm
January 28	Mindfulness Class with Sensei John Hughes	10:00 am - 11:00 am
	Upcoming Events	
March 10	WeAreAll One: Diversity through Performance Stewart Auditorium, Longmont Museum (see page 7 for more information)	7:00 pm

Contact Information

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