

84,000 Thoughts - Monastics

By: Michael Galvin

In adherence with the rules of Vinaya, bhikkus live, now as eons ago, an orderly life that supports “a life focused on spiritual cultivation, free from the distractions of worldly concerns.” Supporting life is a theme that is woven through Buddhism as a simple yet profound phrase that points to the purposes behind it,

When the Buddha passed, there were monks who played significant roles in interpretation and spreading of the Dharma. Mahakasyapa understood the breadth of the teachings, and led the First Council. Upali had internalized the Buddha’s lessons on the monastic life, so articulated the Vinayana. And Ananda, who in the writings is the constant conversation partner of the Buddha, used his fantastic memory to recall and retell the sutras. These monks were the original Sangha, the first storehouse of the Buddha’s teachings. In their travels they developed a symbiotic relationship with the people of the community, who would give material support to the monastic community in exchange for the teachings and the karmic merit that added value to their dana. In later years, supported by the people and patrons, the monastic communities were able to settle in monasteries where they engaged in scholarship, mindfulness practices and finally, recording the Dharma and the associated scholarship in writing.

From the time in which the women in Shakyamuni Buddha’s family joined the Sangha as integral members, the larger monastic community included women, the Bhikkunis. Women from the lay communities, inspired to seek a spiritual path or leaving the oppressive dominance of household life, discovering themselves widowed or alone, chose to join the Sangha as nuns

and play an influential role in the growth and sustenance of the Jodo Shinshu school and the spread of the Dharma.

In support of this spread and continual support of the Sangha and its work, lay Upaakas built and managed temples and monasteries, printed the sutras and created great Buddhist art along the Silk Road the across the growing realm of Buddhist influence. Great rulers who studied the Dharma changed their kingdoms and the world around them as they led with tolerance, compassion and wisdom, and modeled an understanding of the Four Noble Truths and the walk along the Eightfold Path.

Sutras and sastras and other teachings and stories describe the profound impact of wives and mothers in towns and rural regions in support of the Buddhist community and the members of their families and friends who would seek the Dharma. More recently Takeko Kujo and Aung San Suu Kyi stepped up as humanitarians and activists to provide leadership, calm and courage in times of change and crisis, and women’s associations play an active role in the spread of the Dharma, and equal roles in leadership, scholarship and ministry.

The relationships among these four groups and between them and the modern world provides evidence of the impermanence of systems and structures and of the dynamic interdependence between the various schools and the change that marks the ongoing becoming of the universe, the world and identity we share, and the inevitable blurring of boundaries that

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Sangha News and Events

November/December and Future Events

November 14 (Saturday)

- 2:00 PM: Outreach Committee (Board Room)

November 15 (Sunday) Pet Memorial/Music Service

- 10:00 AM: Dharma School
- 11:00 AM: All Sangha Music Service and Pet Memorial
- 12:00 PM: Open Dharma Discussion (Hondo)

November 16 (Monday)

- 10:00 AM: Oasaji Service (Hondo)

November 22 (Saturday)

- 5:45 PM: YBA Dinner Meeting (Tsuji Center Sangha Hall)

November 22 (Sunday)

- 10:00 AM: Children's Service
- 11:00 AM: Dharma School
- 11:00 AM: Regular Service
- Open Dharma Discussion – Cancelled
- 12:30 PM: All Sangha Meeting (Tsuji Center Sangha Hall)
- Seabrook Kieshiki (Affirmation) and Anniversary Service

November 26 (Thursday) Happy Thanksgiving!

November 29 (Sunday)

- No Dharma School
- 11:00 AM: Regular Service
- 12:00 PM: Open Dharma Discussion
- 12:30 PM: Board Meeting (Board Room)

December 5 (Saturday)

- 9:00 AM: MAP Session

December 6 (Sunday) – Jodo-E (Bodhi Day)

- 9:00 AM: All Sangha Temple Hondo Clean-up
- 9:30 AM: Dharma School Tsuji Center Clean-up
- 10:00 AM: Dharma School
- 11:00 AM: Bodhi Day Joint Service
- 12:30 PM: Bodhi Day Potluck Lunch (Tsuji Center Sangha Hall)

December 13 (Sunday)

- 9:00 AM: Religious Committee (Board Room)
- 10:00 AM: Children's Service
- 11:00 AM: Dharma School
- 11:00 AM: Regular Service
- 12:00 PM: Open Dharma Discussion

December 16 (Wednesday)

- 10:00 AM: Oasaji Service

December 19 (Saturday)

- 5:00 PM: Dharma School Family Night (Tsuji Center Sangha Hall)

December 20 (Sunday)

- No Dharma School
- 11:00 AM: Regular Service
- 12:00 PM: Open Dharma Discussion

December 27 (Sunday)

- No Dharma School
- 11:00 AM: Regular Service
- 12:00 PM: Open Dharma Discussion
- 12:30 PM: Board Meeting (Board Room)

December 31 (Thursday) – Joya-E

- 7:00 PM: New Year's Eve Service
- 8:00 PM: New Year's Eve Somen (Tsuji Center Sangha Hall)

January 1 - (Friday) New Year's Day

- 11:00 AM: New Year's Day Service

January 17, 2016: Ho-Onko Service with Rev. Ikeda

February 7, 2016: Nirvana Day and Scout Sunday

In-kind Donations and Thanks

Thank you to the following individuals who donated their time and skills to help out the temple:

- Thank you to the Sangha members who braved the cold, wet weather to help set up and staff the Ekoji booth at the NOVA Pride event on 10/3 and 10/4: Ed Sams, Sam Fugitt, Bob Shimokaji, Jane Blechman, Sue Cathcart, Don and Tomoko Smith, Michael Galvin, Ngoc-Yen Vu, Devon Tran, Ngan Ha, Jackson Pharris, and Rhiannon Cooper.
- Our deepest gratitude to Stuart Ott, who stepped up to coordinate the Fall Seminar with Reverend Dr. William Masuda. Thanks also to Maya Horio for coordinating the Dharma School Teachers workshop with Mrs. Kiyo Masuda.
- Thank you to Mark Lawall for his Buddhism 101 classes and Thursday night Meditation classes.
- Thank you to Delana Oliver for hosting the Yoga Workshop on 10/24. Please be on the look-out for her next workshop and attend!
- Our appreciation to Sensei Gary Jaskula from New York Buddhist Church for working with the MA's on 10/24 and for his Dharma talk at our first Eitaikyo Memorial Service on the 10/25. We look forward to seeing him again.
- Thank you to Nen Daiko for hosting their Open House in Sangha Hall on 10/25.
- A big shout-out to Jane Blechman and Nen Daiko for a fun Halloween Gathering on October 31st. We hope more families will join us next year for an afternoon of spooky music, games, treats and lots of fun!

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BCA Voices: Shoshinge

By Rev. Masanori Watanabe

The ministers of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) have important lessons to share with us. Through this column, we would like to share many of those lessons with the readers of the Kalavinka. The following article is by Reverend Masanori Watanabe, which appeared in the September 2014 newsletter of the Oxnard Buddhist Temple, Prasada.

I chant Shoshinge every morning in the Hondo. Originally, Shoshinge was our tradition's founder, Shinran Shonin's, verse. It is from his writing called *Kyo-Gyo-Shin-Sho* which means the True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the pure Land Way. The eighth abbot of our tradition, Rennyo Shonin, made it into a sutra and popularized it among Jodo Shinshu followers.

Now I enjoy chanting Shoshinge every morning, but I didn't really like to chant it when I was young. I think there were two reasons for this. One, is the sutra is long. When I was chanting it, I always hoped that it would finish quickly. The second reason was that it was too difficult to understand, and seemed just a mass of Chinese characters for me. But as I got older and studied Buddhism, I realized that Shoshinge is Shinran Shonin's compassionate wish to release us from our own suffering. Our tradition is Jodo Shinshu. The principle teaching of this tradition is that through reciting the Nembutsu (Namo Amida Butsu) with sincere mind, we will be released from all suffering. Everyone can be saved with no distinction between people young and old, good and evil. It seems very simple. Attaining enlightenment through hard training is called *Nangyo (Difficult Path)*. In contrast, the Pure Land Way of our tradition is called *Igyo (Easy Path)*. Shinran Shonin said in his writings and verses that although reciting the Nembutsu looks easy, if we don't know the wish in the Nembutsu, it will be to no avail. Whose wish? It is the wish of Bodhisattva Dharmakara.

He contemplated for a very long time (called five kalpas) on how to release all sentient beings from their suffering, and became a Buddha called Amida.

He achieved great powers such as immeasurable wisdom and life for us. It is a completely altruistic wish. We call it Amida's great wisdom and compassion.

At first, I could not accept this story. I thought it was a fantasy. But studying Buddhism diligently, I realized that I cannot judge if it is true or not, because I don't know everything about the universe. I began

to feel Amida, Sakyamuni, and Shinran's compassion little by little, through reading and chanting Buddhist sutras. They are always watching and guiding us through their Buddhist teachings.

For instance, "Hang in there" is just a phrase, but when someone says this, one can feel his or her kindness by these words. In short, words are the means to convey one's thoughts and feelings to others. Sutras are also just a mass of words. But we can feel the Buddhas' compassion by reading and chanting the Sutras with understanding. We can hear the Buddhas' voices in the sutras. They are always with us and guiding us, so we don't need to worry. That's why reading and chanting the Sutras is very important to us.

The eighth abbot, Rennyo Shonin said, "Buddhism is just listening humbly to the Buddhas' voices." We can listen to their voices, and feel their compassion, through reading and chanting Sutras. Amida Buddha lets us feel Buddhas' compassion anytime and anywhere. How? It is Namo Amida Butsu. Through calling Amida Buddha's name, we can realize that Amida Buddha and all Buddhas are always with us regardless of location or time. Thus it is very important to come to the temple to chant sutras and recite the Nembutsu.

Namo Amida Butsu.



Ekoji President's Message

By: Michael Galvin

Dr. Kelly McGonigal wrote the recently-published *Upside of Stress*. She argues very convincingly that we give stress a bad rap. She defines stress as what arises when something you care about is at stake, so stress and meaning are inexorably linked. Kelly thinks of herself as a mindset scientist. Beliefs become mindsets that transcend preferences, learned facts, or intellectual opinion. They become our core beliefs that reflect our philosophy in life.

A mindset becomes our theory about how the world works. When a mindset is activated, it sets off a cascade of thoughts, emotions, and goals that shape how we respond to life, and one of the mindsets that Kelly recommends we check out is the *stress is enhancing* mindset. Research shows that there is a small correlation to optimism in those with this mindset, and a somewhat larger correlation to trait mindfulness and the ability to tolerate and even embrace uncertainty and ambiguity. In the language of another framework, this may be called Shinjin, and equanimity, the capacity to take a middle path along a bipolar continuum so as to avoid binary thinking, value judgment and bias, suggesting once again that suffering is human but misery is optional. A new mindset, like any new and improved world view, doesn't change a situation, but it can change our relationship to the situation, which then can change how we act.

Kelly refers to our ability to know that a mindset is operating in our consciousness as mindset mindfulness. She also paraphrases Hungarian endocrinologist

Hans Selye, saying that the real definition of stress is that it is none other than human system's response to life, which sounds a lot like dukha to me.

I, for one, am willing to grant Dr. McGonigal her hypothesis, especially in these recent times when I find myself facing some stress related to my role at Ekoji. As interim president of the board, I've learned quickly of the high stakes and the sense of immediacy that comes with our version of leadership, and am comfortably unsure that I can step into Laverne Imori's shoes anytime soon. What I am able to do is represent the best interests of the temple, the sangha, the members and all those people and not-people who orchestrated the causes and conditions that bring Ekoji to this amazing place we find ourselves. We have so much promise. We are at the threshold of greatness in American Buddhism.

We are unique and represent the promise of Jodu Shinshu in the United States, and yet, like many temples around the world, we are facing the stress that comes along with insuring our survival. In the next few months, as we set ourselves up for success in 2016, I hope we can all use the stress as simply our reaction to living in Samsara while following the Nembutsu path, and let it enhance our deliberations, decision-making, and ability to care for each other as we wish to be cared for. I look forward to seeing you all at the Annual Sangha meeting on November 22nd, where we will leverage our communal stress to create a shared vision for the year to come.

84,000 Thoughts

Continued from page 1.

emerges in a post-modern and quantum world. In this world the membranes between simulacra and the theoretically objective phenomena they represent, between races and identities and faiths and histories, and (as a result of the influence of Buddhist thought, I believe) between people and the world...are becoming increasingly permeable, as binaries and dualities are subsumed back into the world of delusion from which they arose.

In this newer world, monks and priests have become householders, fathers and mothers, relatives of lay people. And in Shin, women will likely soon share equally in ministry, as more frequently does the lay member. The Sangha now includes the larger temple

community; lay leaders manage the affairs of the temple and hold positions on international Buddhist governing and decision-making bodies. In our temple, laymen and women study the doctrine, the practice and traditions of our school, and take their place as minister's assistants on the Naijin, and in delivery of Dharma messages. We are increasingly one being as we study The Law, spread the Dharma, and keep each other on the eightfold path. In 21st century Jodu Shinshu Buddhism, this is our only option for survival as sanghas and as a school. We are the new face of Jodu Shinshu, poised to thrive in the modern world, because we are the face of change.

Ekaji Fall Seminar Recap

By: Ken Nakamura

On Saturday, October 10, about 25-30 Ekaji Sangha members and friends joined Rev. Dr. William Masuda in a stimulating day-long seminar/discussion on the *Journey to a Shin Buddhist Enlightenment*.

Rev. Masuda retired from active ministry in 2012 after serving for a total of 45 years in both Hawaii and the mainland U.S. Besides serving at various temples in the U.S., he also served for nearly seven years as the director of Buddhist Education and the director of the Buddhist Study Center with the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii. In 1983, he was enticed to leave Hawaii for San Francisco and became the Director of Buddhist Education with the Buddhist Churches of America from March 1983 to September 1986.

In the seminar, Rev. Masuda said that the Dharma pushes us toward what is real for us, who we really are. He said that there is a resume self and a real self, but for the most part, we don't really understand or know ourselves. The Dharma pushes us to delve into ourselves – it is a mirror for us to look into. But the question is how do we find direction in the Dharma? Rev. Masuda says that there are 84,000 ways to enlightenment but the hardest thing is to know what your path is. To know this means that you know who you are and where you are going.

Rev. Masuda had participants go through an exercise together. He said that we all knew the Four Noble Truths. But what we needed to do to understand it as part of our lives was to put it into our own words. What we came up with showed a range of feelings.

For first truth, Life is Suffering (Dukkha) we included the ideas of: Rage, traffic, expectations, anxiety, bumpy road, dis-ease (his spelling). For the second truth, the Cause of Suffering: my-self, inside desire, living itself, expectations, impatient, egoistic, me, me, me. For the third truth, the Resolution of Suffering: serenity, contentment, realization, blissful, harmonious. For the fourth truth, the Way to Resolution: the Eightfold Path, which Rev. Masuda cautioned was not linear. View – seeing things as they are takes enormous amounts of effort to seeing things as they are. We need more clarity in being aware of things as impermanent, interdependent, that each being has to let go of his/her prejudices, fears, and ego.

Rev. Masuda pointed out that our denomination's founder, Shinran Shonin, originally sought a practice of self effort. However, during a point of despair because of a self-awareness of how little progress he was

actually making, he came under the influence of Honen Shonin where he found the Nembutsu Path.

“Shinran does not denigrate self power,” said Rev. Masuda. He doesn't accept the dualism of either self power or other power. There are other ways of looking at this. He said that for many, logical thinking has an end also and then Buddhists say that is where the leap takes place. You leave the tool of logic.

For Shinran, the idea of being “neither monk nor lay” freed him to discover his own humanity. From this viewpoint, he saw the 1st and 2nd of the Four Noble Truths as describing our human condition. The 3rd and the 4th truths are the gift of Amida providing the way. The gift of engaging the 4th Noble Truth is not linear but it is a view, a process in total to the achievement of our enlightenment.

The doctrine of Other Power, Self Power, is a guise to help us get to the point that requires a leap. In examining the 48 Vows of Dharmakara/Amida Buddha, the 19th Vow is a way to become good people -- ethical/good people -- all doing our best to do good. But our own effort is not enough. The 20th Vow recalls that Amida Buddha is the embodiment of Compassion and we remember Amida through the Nembutsu.

Beyond the seminar, Rev. Masuda also gave the Dharma Talk at the Sunday service, held a consultation with Ekaji's Minister's Assistants, and participated in Ekaji's Open Dharma discussion following the service. Mrs. Kiyoko Masuda also provided an informative session for Ekaji's Dharma School teachers.

All of this, according to Rev Masuda, culminates in the 18th Vow that says the Buddha World accepts us just as we are – come as we are – this the culmination of the point of relaxation and fulfillment. It can't be earned but is given. This is the transformation, the awakening. This is the point of faith awakening, the realization of Amida Buddha addressing the sojourner. This is the point of integration of self power and other power. Shinjin is often translated as faith, but a better word, according to Rev. Masuda, is awakening.

Ekaji is grateful to Stuart Ott, who served as General Chair, and his leadership team of dedicated volunteers, headed by Ann Ishikawa, chair of the Hospitality Committee and its members, Michael Galvin in charge of taping, and Joy Aso as general advisor. The temple and its Sangha are very grateful for Rev. and Mrs. Masuda sharing their time and insights with the Ekaji's Sangha and friends.

Buddhist and Jodo Shinshu Symbols - Homyo, Ingo, and Kikyoshiki

HOMYO: In the Hongwanji-ha tradition, all dharma names of followers used throughout are personally selected by the Monshu from the Jodo Shinshu scriptures. There is no distinction made from person to person with respect to the conferred worth of any given Homyo, since all people are considered to be equal. That is why the Homyo always consists of two (Chinese) characters following Shaku.

In other Buddhist schools, this dharma name is usually called Kaimyo, which means precept-name, and generally consists of three or more characters.

INGO: This special honorific title is posthumously conferred on those who, throughout their lives, have contributed considerably to the advancement of the propagation of the Shinshu teaching.

CONFIRMATION CEREMONY: The Kikyoshiki or Confirmation Rite, is performed by the Monshu

only, or in special cases, by his selected representative. Following the symbolic shaving of the head, a Dharma name (Homyo) is given to the person who has confirmed his or her entry into the Path of the Nembutsu. In Japan, this rite is conducted at Honzan (Main Temple in Kyoto) only.

For the overseas districts, this ceremony may be conducted by the Monshu, Zemmon, Shinmon, or a relative of the Monshu who has been appointed to do so. On occasion, the Socho (bishop) of the overseas district may conduct a similar type of ceremony, though it is then given a different name – Kieshiki or “Affirmation Rite” in the United States meaning refuge.

(Jodo Shinshu – A Guide, Hongwanji International Center, Kyoto, Japan, March, 2002. pp. 135, 138-139.)

Sangha News and Events

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- A very special thank you to Yuko Keicho, Stuart Ott, Samanthie Silva, and Greg Nakamura for coordinating the Music Service on November 15th! Please give your feedback to Erick Ishii, Lead Minister’s Assistant, and Kennon Nakamura, our Religious Committee Chair.
- Kalavinka Editor and Contributors: Andrea Walter (Editor), Kennon Nakamura, Michael Galvin, and Laverne Imori.
- Special thank you to the Ekoji Minister’s Assistants: Laverne Imori, Erick Ishii, Rob Fike, Michael Galvin, Kennon Nakamura, Norman Kondo and Bob Shimokaji.
- Office Management: Jane Blechman
- Wisteria Lane, Library and Three Treasures Garden: Heidi Forrest
- Temple Supplies: Kim Nguyen
- Dharma Talk Recordings: Michael Galvin and Frank Swithers
- After-service refreshments: Thank you to Ann Ishikawa, Hospitality Chair for organizing volunteers who contributed refreshments, prepared

coffee and tea and cleaned up afterward! We need more volunteers to bring refreshments and help clean up afterward. Our sign-up sheet is in the foyer.

- Thank you to those who volunteered to be service leaders, rang the kansho, played the piano, and helped collect dana.

My apologies if we missed any names. We are, indeed, fortunate to have so many volunteers assisting with Temple activities. Laverne Imori

Sangha Member News

Farewell to the Curtis Family (Darren, Janelle, Riley and Sophie) who moved to San Diego on Nov. 1st.

Please submit news such as special honors or awards, weddings, births, graduations, etc., to Laverne Imori at shidouimori@gmail.com, so we can share with the Sangha.

Buddhism 101

The dates for the Buddhism 101 classes are as follows: November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 and December 6 (Crossing over to Jodo Shinshu).

Ekoji Dana List - October 2015

Ajit and Samantha Silva

Allen A. Thomsen

Ann and Joh

*Anne-Christine and David
Moore*

Anthony and Kristy Capizzi

Arlene and Wayne Minami

Arlene Mayeda

Art Politano

Bob Shimokaji

Clifford Long

Curtis Rothrock

Datryga Tarnah

Dharma School SS

Frank Swithers

Gloria Ohta

Heidi Forrest

Hula Class -Senior Centers

Without Walls Program

Jane Blechman

Joran and Ann Stegner

Lani Pham & Pierre Karen

Laverne Imori

Lisa and Greg Nakamura

Marisa and Tamon Honda

Mark LaWall

Michael Chen

Norm and Gail Kondo

Paul Q. Piper

Peter Golemboski

Prabhavati Chititala Reddy

Rebecca Perry and William

Nelson

Ron and Nora Nagatani

Trust

Rosemary Burke

Sam Fugitt

Sarah Barlow

Shigeko Walton

Stuart Ott

Susan Grimes

Terence and Sara May

Thomas Griffin

Tida and Art Rask

Tim and Susan Cathcart

William Robertson

Yuko and Toshiaki Keicho

Kalavinka

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Michael Galvin

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Join us at Ekoji!

Adult Service: Sundays at 11 a.m.

Meditation: Thursdays at 8 p.m.

Yoga: Mondays at 7:30 p.m.

Children's Dharma School (Sept. through June):
10 a.m. family service and 11 a.m. classes

**Consult the Ekoji website for the
complete event calendar at www.ekoji.org.**



EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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FIRST CLASS