

The Newsletter of Ekoji Buddhist Temple

# Kalavinka

Fairfax Station, Virginia – Established 1981

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July 2014

## BCA Voices - August 27, 1981

By Rev. Kenryu Tsuji

*This month, we are changing the column up a little and including a poem by Rev. Kenryu Tsuji, former Ekoji Resident Minister and former Bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America. According to Ekoji's former librarian, Valorie Lee, this piece "is one of Rev. Tsuji's writings that may be the closest he ventured in the direction of poetry. It originally appeared in the Kalavinka and then was included in The Heart of the Buddha Dharma. Not titled in the Kalavinka, but requiring one for the book, I used the date of the Kalavinka issue in which it appeared."*

August 27, 1981

It is that time of the year.

A single red maple leaf performs a graceful ballet in the cool autumn breeze before it finally joins the other leaves on the ground.

During the warm spring days and in the hot summer

heat, it gave shelter to countless insects, even giving a part of itself to the hungry bugs.  
And now, it is that time of the year.

But before it falls from its branch, it prepares for the future, for next spring, a fresh green leaf will shoot out from the same branch. In its twilight hours it displayed to the world, without pride, without self-consciousness, its ultimate beauty.

Does the human spirit grow more beautiful with each passing day? Or does it become more engrossed in its mortality by creating stronger hands of self-attachment?

Is my life reflecting a deeper beauty as I grow older? What karmic influences will I leave for the good of the world?

I wonder. In the quiet of the night... I recite the Nembutsu.

## HATSUBON- The First Obon

On Sunday, July 13, at 11:00 a.m., we will be observing Obon Service, a memorial service when we remember those who have passed away before us and express our gratitude for all that they have done for us. During the service, there is a special time set aside for all those families who have lost loved ones since the 2013 Obon Service. This special time is called the Hatsubon or first Obon. Families are called forward so that they can light a memorial candle in

memory and gratitude for the loved one who has passed. The loved one could be a family member or a dear friend who has touched and enriched our lives with their presence.

If you are a Hatsubon Family, please contact Rev. Rye or Laverne Imori so that candles can be prepared and you and your loved one can be remembered in Nembutsu a few weeks prior to the Bon Service. In gassho.

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Note: The 84,000 Thoughts column will resume in August 2014.

# Sangha News and Events

## July and Future Events

July 2: 7:30 pm: Dharma Exchange (Howakai) at Ekoji (Hondo)

July 6:

- 9:00 am: Temple Clean-Up
- 10:00 am: Buddhism 101
- 11:00 am: Shotsuki Service
- 12:30 pm: Bon Dance Practice

July 12: 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm: BON ODORI

July 13: OBON

- 10:00 am: Buddhism 101
- 11:00 am: OBon Service

July 16:

- 10:00 am: Oasaji Service (Hondo)
- *Please Note: the Dharma Exchange at Rockville is cancelled for July and August*

July 19: Seabrook Bon Odori

July 20:

- 10:00 am: Buddhism 101
- 11:00 am: Regular Service

July 27:

- 10:00 am: Buddhism 101
- 11:00 am: Regular Service
- 12:30 pm: Board Meeting

August 29-August 31: Eastern Buddhist League (EBL) Annual Conference hosted by Ekoji (find out more at [www.ebl2014.weebly.com](http://www.ebl2014.weebly.com))

September 21: Shuki Higan-E Service, Autumn Equinox

October 4: FALL SEMINAR

Reverend Kodo Umezu, BCA Bishop

October 5: Kieshiki (Affirmation) Ceremony by Reverend Kodo Umezu

November 16: Pet Memorial Service

December 7: Bodhi Day Service

December 31: New Year's Eve Service

## In-kind Donations and Thanks

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

- The many volunteers who are working hard to make Bon Odori 2014 a success!
- Scott Fugitt for his work to repair and illuminate

our Ekoji sign.

- Kalavinka Editor: Andrea Walter
- Dharma School: Maya Horio, Superintendent, and all our volunteer teachers. Most of all to the Dharma School students and parents for showing up!
- Office Management: Jane Blechman
- Pay Officer: Gail Kondo
- Wisteria Lane, Library and Three Treasures Garden: Heidi Forrest
- Temple Supplies: Nora Nagatani
- Onaijin Set-Up and Clean-Up: Minister's Assistants and Heidi Forrest under the leadership of Erick Ishii and Rob Fike

- Dharma Talk Recordings: Michael Galvin

- Hondo Clean-Up: All of our Sangha Members and Dharma School Students who participated in the clean-up. Thank you!

- After-service refreshments: Thank you to all who contributed refreshments, prepared coffee and tea and cleaned up afterward!

- Thank you to those who volunteered to be service leaders, rang the kansho, and helped collect dana. Special thanks to Yuko

Keicho, Greg Nakamura and Samanthie Silva for playing the piano.

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

- Best wishes for a speedy recovery to member John Ohta after his recent surgery.
- Farewell to Captain Audrey Sato who completed her residency and leaves the area at the end of summer. We thank her for her energy and support of the YBA. We'll miss you, Audrey and hope you'll stay in touch.

Please submit news such as special honors or awards, weddings, births, graduations, etc., to Laverne Imori at [limori@comcast.net](mailto:limori@comcast.net), so we can share with the Sangha.



## Nen Daiko: One Group in a Larger Taiko Sangha

Last month's article detailed the humble origins of Ekoji's own Nen Daiko. However, were you aware that Nen Daiko is only one of many temple based taiko groups in the United States? Like most Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) temples, the associated taiko groups are also predominantly located on the West Coast. However, a common unifying theme is a close relationship with their associated temples. Just as a community of followers makes up a temple's Sangha, some temple-based taiko groups also come together in a taiko community to form a larger taiko Sangha.

Out of all the temple-based taiko groups in the United States, Nen Daiko maintains a special relationship with two specific groups: Soh Daiko of New York Buddhist Church and Hoh Daiko of Seabrook Buddhist Temple. Being the only other BCA temples on the East Coast, and therefore the only other temple-based taiko groups as well, both groups were instrumental in providing instruction, moral support, guidance, and friendship as they helped our fledgling group develop. This month we will briefly discuss each group's history and how they were instrumental to Nen Daiko's development.

### Soh Daiko

The first taiko group on the East Coast, Soh Daiko was formed in December 1979 by members of the New York Buddhist Church as a youth activity after members of the Young Buddhist Association saw Chicago's taiko group at an Eastern Young Buddhist League convention. Membership chairman Mamoru Funai and adult advisors Jim Moran and Merle and Alan Okada started a taiko group with a seed grant from the Church and set about learning to make barrel drums with help of drum-making instructions from other taiko groups that came before them.

Asking then resident minister Rev. Hozen Seki for a name that would reflect peace, harmony, and working together, the group was given the name of Soh. The group gained early instruction from Rev. Ron Miyamura of Chicago's Midwest Buddhist Temple Taiko Group and Rev. Masao Kodani of Senshin Temple's Kinnara Taiko in Los Angeles. They taught Soh Daiko not only about drum building, but about basic taiko techniques and philosophy, resulting in the group's evolution from a youth to an adult group.

In the fall of 1994, members of Soh Daiko first came to Ekoji to officially help create Nen Daiko. Walking us through the construction and assembly of our first taiko, they also provided a wealth of knowledge and expertise with regards to

taiko playing fundamentals, as well as philosophical approaches. Ever since, Soh Daiko has remained a guiding pillar and resource for Nen Daiko as we continued our development over the years.

### Hoh Daiko

Hoh Daiko Drummers of Seabrook, New Jersey was established on February 23, 1991, under the auspices of the Seabrook Buddhist Temple. It chose Hoh Daiko for its name symbolizing the way of the drums. The group began by using discarded tires and plastic garbage cans as practice instruments and on the drum made for them by Rev. Ron Miyamura of Midwest Buddhist Temple in Chicago.

Their dedication soon found the group making its own taiko from whiskey and wine barrels, learning the difficult process from Soh Daiko of New York.

Hoh Daiko's rapid emergence was evidenced soon after the national and international coverage of Seabrook Story which was aired in commemoration of

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The Taiko Sangha gathered at Seabrook's Obon in 2013. *Photo courtesy of Claire Wang.*

## Nen Daiko: One Group in a Larger Taiko Sangha

*Continued from page 3.*

the 50th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor by Nippon TV and the National Broadcasting Corporation. Since that time, they have participated throughout the Eastern seaboard at various schools and organizations.

In 1993, prior to Soh Daiko's first visit to Ekoji, Hoh Daiko helped encourage Ekoji's Dharma School students to think about starting their own taiko group by holding a beginning workshop that introduced them to the experience of playing taiko. Once Nen Daiko formed a year later, Hoh Daiko again offered workshops and guidance as to how our fledgling group could further develop our skills.

### **Soh, Hoh, and Nen Daiko: A Taiko Sangha**

Just as New York Buddhist Church, Seabrook Buddhist Temple, and Ekoji Buddhist Temple historically maintained and enjoyed a close relationship with each other, so too have their associated taiko groups fostered close relationships of mutual support, collaboration, and friendship. The three temples' relatively close proximity to each other meant that all three groups were able to meet up annually at Seabrook's

Obon Festival – this year held on Saturday, July 19th. This festival is eagerly anticipated as an opportunity to see each other again, catch up, and enjoy each other's company and fellowship.

Given our shared history and profile as the only three BCA temple-based taiko groups on the East Coast, we are happy to have both Soh and Hoh Daiko as our honored guests for our celebration of Nen Daiko's 20th Anniversary on Saturday, August 30th. Tickets are on sale now, so please come out and enjoy performances by each group!

And one last note, until our Anniversary performance, be sure to come check out Ekoji's Obon festival Saturday, July 12th too! Besides Nen Daiko, there is Japanese folk dancing, great food, and an open house to view the temple Hondo and learn more about Buddhism! For more information, be sure to check out [www.ekoji.org](http://www.ekoji.org)!

Note: Group information from [www.sohdaiko.org](http://www.sohdaiko.org), [www.hohdaiko.org](http://www.hohdaiko.org), [www.nendaiko.org](http://www.nendaiko.org)

## **Ekoji President's Message - The Essence of OBon By: Laverne Shidou Imori**

Interdependence is one of the tenets of the Buddha Dharma. OBon is an expression of our gratitude to loved ones who have passed on before us and without whom we would not enjoy the lives we are living today. As Jodo Shinshu Buddhists, we strive to live a life of gratitude and compassion.

We will commemorate OBon 2014 with dancing (odori), good food, entertainment, and in the company of friends on Saturday, July 12th, at Ekoji Buddhist Temple. We hope you can join us in this celebration and at the OBon Service on Sunday, July 13th at 11 am.

During our candle lighting service at the end of Saturday's Bon Odori, we will pause to reflect on the many gifts we have received from departed family and friends. This year's service will be extra special as we remember Mrs. June Honda, who started the tradition at Ekoji. Our thoughts will be with Reverend Shojo Honda, son Tamon, and Tamon's wife, Marisa, as they observe this first OBon after

Mrs. Honda's passing.

We hope you will also take time to reflect on Ekoji, our "Gift of Light" from the late Reverend Yehan Numata, whose dream was to share the Buddha Dharma. Bon Odori is Ekoji's biggest fundraising event to pay for Temple operating expenses so we can continue to support Numata Sensei's dream.

On behalf of the Ekoji Board of Directors, thank you to the many members and friends of Ekoji who have stepped forward to volunteer their time to support OBon activities. If you have not yet done so, please consider donating your time or providing financial support to help us continue the legacy of those who built Ekoji and those who work so hard to support Ekoji's Dharma activities.

Gratitude is the very essence of Obon.

With much gratitude and in gassho, Laverne



## Ekoji Dana List - June 2014

*Ajit and Samanthie Silva*

*Allen A. Thomsen*

*Anna Chulaki*

*Anna Tecson*

*Art Politano*

*Bert and Nancy Motonaga*

*Bob Shimokaji*

*Curtis Rothrock*

*Cynthia Gurey*

*Erick Ishii*

*Erni Diez-Fugitt*

*Frank Swithers*

*Heidi Forrest Jane*

*Blechman*

*Janelle Curtis*

*Joy Aso*

*Jussara Cohen*

*Laura Clapsaddle*

*Laverne Imori*

*Lawrence Anderson*

*Mark LaWall*

*Mark Nagy*

*Michelle Amano*

*Norm and Gail Kondo*

*Paul Q. Piper*

*Peter Golemboski*

*Rachael Lang Harris*

*Reiko and Hisao*

*Matsumoto*

*Rev. Shojo Honda*

*Ron and Nora Nagatani*

*Sharon Kosai*

*Shigeko Walton*

*Stuart Ott*

*Susan Grimes*

*Thomas Griffin*

*Wolf Run Foundation*

*Yuko and Toshiaki Keicho*

*Helen Berger for Masoko*

*Imamura*

*Ron and Nora Nagatani for*

*June Honda*



## Kalavinka

**Managing Editor:** Andrea A. Walter

**Assistant Editors:** Rev. Kurt Rye,  
Ken Nakamura, Laverne Imori

Sangha members and community businesses can publish **advertisements in Kalavinka**. Please contact us for information!

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[www.ekoji.org](http://www.ekoji.org)

### 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](http://www.ekoji.org).



**EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE**

6500 Lake Haven Lane  
Fairfax Station, VA 22039

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**FIRST CLASS**