

*Ekoji
Buddhist
Temple*

Kalavinka

84,000 Thoughts: A Message From the Minister

Reverend Nariaki R. Hayashi



Around this time of year, many students come to our temple on their school projects and ask questions. Below is one of the common questions that I am asked.

Is Nirvana achievable in this lifetime to a modern Buddhist?

This is a very difficult question to answer, but my opinion is Yes and no.

In the various Buddhist denominations, there are Buddhist schools that believe one can enter Nirvana in one's lifetime. They believe that if one abandons personal life and enters a monastery to practice austerities and meditation, one can attain enlightenment and reach Nirvana. I do not deny this belief and I think it is possible for those who have a true latent ability and who are capable of the above. Unfortunately, not all of us can abandon our personal life and become an ascetic monk.

There must be an alternative way. This is how our founder Shinran Shonin developed his form of Pureland Buddhism, which is one of the paths in Siddhartha's various teachings. Our denomination

of Shin Buddhism is a path that does not require one to enter a monastery. It is a path for a lay person and provides a teaching that we can practice in our everyday lives.

Then, can we ever enter Nirvana and when would we do so?

Pureland Buddhism is the teaching of Amida Buddha, the Buddha of Infinite Life and Light. Amida Buddha accumulated all virtues for us and made the Primal Vow that leads us to the Pureland, the True Enlightenment, after completing our lives.

Thus, we can live an ordinary life as an ordinary person and still practice Shin Buddhism. Pureland is usually interpreted as a place where we go and while I do not deny this interpretation, I believe Pureland is Enlightenment, Nirvana, itself. The term "land" in Pureland helps us with our limited human comprehension to understand its nature. Therefore, there may be those who may be able to enter Nirvana in life time, but Shin Buddhism teaches us that there is also a path by which to enter Nirvana after we have lived.

In this issue:

President's Message	Page 2
Treasurer's 2017 Recap	Page 2-3
Membership Profiles	Page 4
Volunteer	Page 5

President's Message

Stuart Ott, Ekoji Co-President



December is a month of transitions. One state, one form to a new state; a new form. It is the in between time where we can look back at the year past while not yet fully embracing the New Year and all its promise. It is bittersweet.

This month brings the close of the 2016 -2017 Board of Directors and the many challenges this board has faced and overcome. We have come through this together and I believe, left the Sangha and the Temple in a good position to move the Dharma ball farther down the field.

Thank you to all who have served.

- To Joran, thank you for your commitment and persistence has provided a bedrock for the board to operate. Thank you for serving as Co-President and leading us ever so wisely.
- To Maya, thank you for being the heart of the board, always keeping us mindful of why we serve. Thank you for the care of our Dharma School. You have impacted many lives.
- To Mark, thank you for stepping in and stepping up when we needed you the most. You remind us of what courage really is
- To Bob, thank you for your behind the scenes work, always going out of your way to support the temple. Your contributions behind the Naijin are tremendous
- To Heidi, thank you for your many contributions in many ways that nourish the growth of the Sangha. Thank you for being there at a moment's notice.
- To Kendall, thank you for guiding our young Buddhists and communicating the Sangha's work through the Kalavinka
- To Norm and Ken, our Trustees, thank you for your guidance, insight and gentle prodding of the board and keeping our perspective in the right place.
- To Sensei, thank you for being the Spiritual leader of the Sangha and most importantly, being a friend and mentor to all of us.

To our new board and returning board members, congratulations and thank you for your commitment to serve the Temple and the Sangha. We look forward to your leadership and stand ready to support you. You will be awesome.

As for myself, I will not be returning to the board this term. Thank each and every one of you for your trust and faith in me and allowing me to serve as your Co-President these past two years. It has been an amazing experience.

I hope that I have served you well and I look forward to continuing to being part of the Sangha and contributing where I can.

TREASURER's 2017 RECAP: Financial maintenance...for now.

Maya Horio, Treasurer

Ekoji has had a relatively successful year, financially-speaking, because of the constant support of our sangha members and friends in both their monetary contributions and their sweat and labor, and the generosity of our longtime benefactor, Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (BDK). At last month's annual sangha meeting, we walked through

our financial income and expenditures for this year, and had a frank discussion about Ekoji's financial path going forward. We anticipate ending up slightly in the black by the end of year, helped in large part by an end-of-year donation of \$8000 from BDK to help alleviate the burden of our large facility expenses this year (such as the new sangha hall floor, the hondo window replacement, and the new oil tank heating system for the Tsuji Center).

In addition to the regular membership pledge payments and other sangha donations, we cannot express enough gratitude to the fundraisers that sangha members initiated and executed. Some of the fundraisers required a lot of pre-planning, expertise, and volunteer hands, such as our first Hinamatsuri Doll Festival in March and the recent Buddhist art course, both of which were initiated and organized by Terry and Sandy Kita. Our annual Obon festival continued to be our largest fundraiser of the year, with Chairs Brant Horio and Emily Ihara leading a rockstar committee and an army of volunteers. Other fundraisers required only an idea and minimal execution, such as the Japanese snack sale initiated by Yukari Hayashi (using Japanese vegetables that went unsold when Suzuki Farms came to Ekoji) and the pass-the-hat donations that Ann and Joran Stegner's musical group collected at their concert. And others fell somewhere in-between, including the delicious Tet New Year luncheon sponsored by Ekoji's Vietnamese families, the Thanksgiving flower arrangement sale organized by Kim Nyugen, and our annual yard sale. Many thanks also to everyone who came out each month to support our Restaurant Nights at the Potbelly Sandwich Shop in Fairfax.

It is these types of events that we will need to rely on to bring in continuing and new sources of income as Ekoji's financial future becomes increasingly dire. One of the main issues we discussed at the annual meeting was the status of our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BDK, which stipulates that BDK's financial support will decrease over a ten-year period. BDK has been Ekoji's primary financial benefactor since the temple's founding, paying all costs associated with having a full-time resident minister. 2018 will be year six of the 10-year MOU, which is the last year that BDK pays for 75% of the minister costs; from 2019-2021, BDK is scheduled to pay 50% of those costs, and in 2022, BDK support is scheduled to drop off completely. The 2018 budget that the sangha approved last month has an anticipated deficit of almost \$25,000—and that is with BDK support at 75% of minister costs. As we move to BDK support at 50%, and with our facilities continuing to age and require more maintenance, our anticipated annual deficits start to balloon to more than \$50,000 per year.

It is easy to become overwhelmed and fearful the more we dwell on these types of numbers, wondering whether Ekoji will be able to survive through the next decade and beyond to allow us a place to learn and appreciate the Dharma. But we are constantly reminded that life is a series of causes and conditions, some of which we can anticipate and are able to influence, and we are looking for ideas on how we can work to supplant BDK's financial support with our own income sources. The Board and Finance Committee are looking particularly into quasi-endowment funds and money market accounts with a high rate of return that would allow us to make our financial assets work harder for us. We are aiming to establish that path early in 2018 to help us mitigate the anticipated drop in BDK support to 50% of minister costs in 2019, and we welcome anyone who has investment expertise to help us investigate possibilities.

On behalf of this year's Board of Directors, we express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to everyone who helped Ekoji maintain our financial status this year. Our sangha is full of vibrant and engaged individual who contribute to the sense of community that underscores why the sangha is a part of the Three Treasures. We look forward to continuing to work with everyone to help maintain the temple as a place for all to hear the Dharma.

Membership Profiles

Vickey Churchman, Membership Committee

We come to Ekoji on Sundays and together learn the Dharma. We share conversation over “snackies” and yet there is always more we can learn about each other. Sangha Profiles asks members a series of questions that will shed some new light on members we already know and love.



This month: Hossein Assef and Mahkameh Doroud

Hossein and Mahkameh are a busy family raising their two sons, Bardia and Barard .

Of course that means lots of homework help and running to many activities. However, the entire family looks forward to Sundays and their time at Ekoji. Hossein particularly enjoys the potlucks!! Don't we all.

Hossein enjoys electronics and playing video games along with his sons. Mahkameh loves to bake and has generously shared many of her goodies for “snackies” and other temple events. Both come from Iran and came to

America as business owners of a home improvement company.

However, their business is not just your typical contracting company. Hossein and Mahkameh specialize in home modifications for people with disabilities. They are an example to us all on how to make the Eightfold Path a reality when having the “right livelihood”.

Volunteer at Ekoji!

- Outreach – To develop strategies for increased visibility in the community.
- Hospitality – To plan and execute the social needs of the Sangha including the purchasing of all provisions.
- Religious – To work with the minister regarding Ekoji's religious aspects, programs, dialogue, and talks.
- Membership – To encourage Temple membership and manage all tasks related to new and renewing members while working with related committees.
- Facilities – To update and make recommendations to the Board of Ekoji, regarding the five-year master plan.
- Finance – To support the Treasurer in managing and maintaining the financial matters at Ekoji.
- Communication – To develop and maintain communications and publicity about Ekoji and its programs, seminars, and special events.

If you are interested in joining any of these committees, please contact ekoji.info@gmail.com.

**Ekoji thanks the following individuals for their selfless dana in the month of
November:**

Robert A. Rowe and Archer W.
Harmon
BDK America
Joran and Ann Stegner
Norm and Gail Kondo
Arthur and Keiko Brown
Anthony and Kristy Capizzi
Justin and Molly Kuramoto
Ken and Nori Nakamura
Yuko and Toshiaki Keicho
Jennifer Ann Smith
Carmen Bernett
Jane Blechman
Kristie Brinker

Mahkameh Doroud
Oneness Family School
Kelli Gary Higgins
Susan Grimes
Archer Harmon
Edward Hill
Maya and Brant Horio
Yukie Kariyado Shiromizu
Sandy Kita
Rachel Lang Harris
Mark LaWall
Geoffrey Lee
Clifford Long
Sandra Lukic-Dapoingy

Christopher Macey
James McMahon
Arlene and Wayne Minami
Owen Munford
Stuart Ott
Leslie Poon
Ed Sams
Edward Sams
Potbelly Sandwich Works LLC
Ajit and Samantha Silva
James Springler
Frank Swithers
Pilar Uelmen
Mikio Yamashita

Ekoji Buddhist Temple

6500 Lake Haven Lane
Fairfax Station, VA 22039
703-239-0500
www.ekoji.org

JOIN US FOR SERVICE

Adult Service: Sundays at 11 AM
Meditation: Thursdays at 8 PM
Children's Dharma School: Sundays (10 AM Service; 11 AM Class)

Thank you to our contributors of the December Kalavinka: Rev. Naraki Hayashi, Andrea Chapman, Vickey Churchman, Maya Horio, Kendall Kosai, and Stuart Ott

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE!

Ekoji Buddhist Temple
6500 Lake Haven Lane
Fairfax Station, VA 22039

Ekoji Buddhist Temple

December 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 9:00 am All Sangha Temple Clean-Up 10:00 am Dharma School Family Service 11:00 am Dharma School Classes 11:00 am Weekly Adult Service 12:30 pm Doll Festival (Hina Matsuri) Meeting / Conference Room 1:00 pm Nen Daiko Youth Program 2:00 pm Nen Daiko Practice	4 6:45 pm Tai Chi 8:00 pm Tai Chi	5	6 7:30 pm Nen Daiko Practice	7 8:00 pm Meditation	8	9 5:00 pm Dharma School Family Night
10 10:00 am Dharma School Classes 11:00 am Joint Bodhi Day Service with Potluck 12:00 pm Potluck Luncheon (after service) 1:00 pm Nen Daiko Youth Program 2:00 pm Nen Daiko Practice 2:00 pm Nen Daiko Temple Cleaning	11 6:45 pm Tai Chi 8:00 pm Tai Chi	12	13 7:30 pm Nen Daiko Practice	14 8:00 pm Meditation	15	16 10:00 am Oasaji Service 11:00 am Hatsumairi
17 10:00 am NO DHARMA SCHOOL ACTIVITIES 11:00 am Weekly Adult Service 12:30 pm Buddhism Book Discussion and Study Group	18 6:45 pm Tai Chi 8:00 pm Tai Chi	19	20	21 8:00 pm Meditation	22	23
24 10:00 am NO DHARMA SCHOOL ACTIVITIES 11:00 am Weekly Adult Service	25 6:45 pm Tai Chi 8:00 pm Tai Chi	26	27	28 8:00 pm Meditation	29	30
31 10:00 am NO DHARMA SCHOOL ACTIVITIES 11:00 am Weekly Adult Service 7:00 pm New Year's Eve Service w/ traditional Soba following						

