

KALAVINKA

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

Suspension of Ekoji Services and Activities

Dear sangha members and friends,

The safety and well-being of our sangha is of paramount importance to all of us. Information about COVID-19 continues to develop, and we have been closely monitoring local and national health directives and guidance. With COVID-19 now declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization and with States of Emergency declared in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington DC, health officials are making it clear that dramatic steps must be taken to mitigate the risk of transmission.

The Board and Rev. Hayashi have made the difficult decision to suspend all services and activities at Ekoji with immediate effect at least through the end of March. All scheduled activities are immediately canceled, including Saturday's Open Mic Night, all Sunday services, Children's Dharma School activities, Thursday night meditation, the Buddhism discussion group, and any meetings previously planned at the temple.

We recognize that many of our sangha members and friends look forward to the practice of taking refuge in our Sunday services. For that reason, we are planning to post a virtual service, led by Rev. Hayashi, to our website (ekoji.org) and our social media platforms later this weekend. Many of our Dharma Talks can also be found on our website.

For anyone facing life changes such as illness or the passing of a loved one, please contact our main office number (703-239-0500) or ekoji.info@gmail.com. We will do our best to respond in a timely fashion to assist with arrangements.

We will continue to closely monitor the situation and keep you updated of any changes via email, our website, and social media. Decisions to reopen the Temple will be based on global and local guidelines that advise it is safe to do so.

We appreciate your understanding and hope all of you remain safe and healthy.

In gassho,
Rev. Hayashi and the Ekoji Board of Directors

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KALAVINKA

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Articles, letters, and especially photographs are welcome and will be published subject to space and/or content with regard to Ekoji and its newsletter.

Please send them to:

ekojikalavinka@gmail.com

Ekoji Buddhist Temple,
6500 Lakehaven Lane,
Fairfax Station, VA 22039

You are also invited to visit our website at ekoji.org for more information about Shin Buddhism and Ekoji Buddhist Temple.

84,000 THOUGHTS

BUDDHISM AND NON-SELF

BY REV. NARIAKI HAYASHI

In Buddhism, there is a concept called Non-self.

This is one of the fundamental truths of Buddhism, but it is a difficult concept to understand and accept. While Non-self is not a denial of individuality nor of the dignity of the individual; Non-self is a liberation from the absolute "I" that is unaware of the interdependence of the whole of life.

Therefore, this concept is very important within Buddhist thought because it allows us to understand the causes and conditions that make our existence possible.

Buddhism teaches us that there are two forms of understanding. The first is understanding with knowledge and the other is understanding with wisdom. For example, think of the water we drink every day. Knowledge leads us to believe that water can be characterized by measurements such as volume, color, and clarity. Therefore, knowledge is to see the water objectively as something that is separate from ourselves.

Wisdom in Buddhism is the ability to acknowledge that there is no separation between the self and the object. Therefore, wisdom is the condition in which we who are observing and that which we observe are not separate. That is to say, it is to go beyond the difference between subject and object even though the physical separation continues.

So in the case of the water, wisdom is the deep contemplation on how the water sustains you. In other words, it is to see how the life of the water becomes your life, how you are the water and how the water is you. This is the true understanding of the Buddhist concept of Non-self.

The true wisdom for me is to say, I am sustained by the water so I am the water and I and the water are one. That brings me to the problem of understanding non-self for the true wisdom is to understand non-self.

Obviously this is very difficult to achieve. As you can see, I can't even talk about me and the water

without talking about myself. Our Shin Buddhist tradition understands how difficult it is for us to achieve true wisdom. However, I don't think Sakyamuni Buddha would have taught something that is impossible for all of us to equally achieve.

Buddhism does not present us with the impossible and tell us to achieve it. If the universal truth that Sakyamuni Buddha awakened to is universal, then it should be for everyone. This is especially true in Shin Buddhism where we are taught, "The truth is that the truth works on the untruth and as it makes us aware that the untruths are untrue has the power to transform them into the truth."

In other words, the truth is not something that is someplace else waiting for us to reach it, but is a force working on us here and now. This is what I think receiving the truth means.

"Where is Amida Buddha,
Amida Buddha is here
filling my heart,
saying the Nembutsu."

In addition, just as there is always untruth so long as there is truth, the truth will work on us until we become aware of it. This unending working is compassion and this compassion is Amida Buddha. We can bear the burden of our own untruth when we encounter the compassion of Amida Buddha.

Rev. Nobuo Haneda says,
"Many people think that Buddhism means a practice or efforts to perfect themselves, but the most important thing in Buddhism is not practices or efforts to perfect ourselves. It is the realization that something perfect is already given to us. We need only to receive it, to listen to it."

We can encounter the compassionate working of Amida Buddha when we recite the Nembutsu, for as Dr. Mark Unno says, "Namo Amida Butsu is the call of Amida Buddha within every person and their response to that call."

A very devoted Shin Buddhist follower, Saichi, once said, "Where is Amida Buddha, Amida Buddha is here filling my heart, saying the Nembutsu."

CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A.B.Q. (ASK BETTER QUESTIONS)

BY ANDREA CHAPMAN

What aspect of our regular Sunday service do you enjoy most? For me, it would be turning to page 10 in the service book and reciting The Three Treasures. My youngest daughter, Isabel, enjoys chanting and her older sister, Megan, looks forward to the closing meditation.

Would you describe the atmosphere here at Ekoji as peaceful, friendly and accepting? After an extended deliberation those are the adjectives the web design team settled upon and I am curious if you agree.

College students in our area, taking an introduction to religion course, are assigned to visit a church outside their own religion. They frequently email to ask who is welcome to attend our services and if there is anything they should know beforehand. I do my best to alleviate their underlying apprehension and ensure them "all are welcome" before I suggest they bring socks and explain we remove our shoes for the service.

It is with a grateful heart that I make the time to volunteer in the office on Wednesdays. It's a pleasure and honor to be the first to connect with those who call, email and visit during the week. To me, it doesn't seem much time has passed since a few of you extended a warm welcome to my family and I am happy to pay that same kindness forward to those who have yet to experience what it means to be a part of the Sangha here at Ekoji.

As our ongoing outreach efforts (social media, web refresh, weekly emails, Open Mic Night, a tent at the Sakura Matsuri Japanese Street Festival, Second Annual Arts Fair and Obon) begin to attract more visitors to the Sunday service I want to encourage you to take the time to connect with the new guests seated next to you and extend an offer to answer the questions they certainly do have. It is my hope every visitor will leave us with the feeling that Ekoji Buddhist Temple is a safe place to explore their spirituality.

In the coming months you will be receiving a considerably crafted survey from our membership committee via email. Your opinions are important to us and we hope that you will set aside the time to answer the questions so that we "The Board" may better serve you.

FEBRUARY BOARD NOTES

BY ANDREA CHAPMAN

The Board of Directors of the Ekoji Buddhist Temple met on Sunday, February 16, 2020 at 8:30 am in the Board Room of the Tsuji Center.

Following Opening Gassho and acceptance of the Consent Agenda, the board discussed and approved the plumbing costs associated with the men's bathroom in the Temple and the work is scheduled to be completed in March.

Possible designs and wording for a new Ekoji street sign, compliant with Fairfax County ordinances, were explained to the Board by Archer Harmon. Final design decisions regarding our new signage will be made in the coming months. Many thanks to Archer for managing this process.

Our kitchen contractor is generating the required documents and will soon be submitting them to Fairfax County so that we can obtain our building permit and begin construction. We remain hopeful the work will be complete before Obon and grateful to Maya Horio for managing this project.

We are continuing to generate a list of maintenance items that need to be taken care of this year and will soon be reaching out to those who have expressed interest in serving the Sangha in this capacity.

Planning for the 2nd Annual Ekoji Arts Fair is underway and the event will take place at Ekoji on Saturday, May 2, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Volunteer sign up and artist registration will be open mid-March.

Our gratitude to honorary Board member Mr. Yamashita of BDK America for traveling from California to attend our meeting. We appreciate his willingness to share his wisdom and are grateful for the support of BDK.

STEWARDSHIP GROUP SCHEDULES

This year, Ekoji started the Stewardship Group Initiative to share among the Sangha the opportunity to help meet the regular and on-going needs of the temple. Group 2, coordinated by Archer Harmon, worked throughout the month of February, with our gratitude and our congratulations for a job well done.

It is now Group 3's turn led by Ekoji Board Member Maya Horio.

The seven Stewardship Groups are meant to strengthen sangha ties, increase the reliability, accountability, and transparency into supporting temple and sangha daily needs, and provide a practical application of the Dharma. All sangha members are to be automatically assigned to a stewardship group, and a Board member group leader will contact you before your designated "duty" month to introduce group members to each other and divvy up tasks.

The Stewardship Groups for March, April, and May are:

MARCH

Group 3 -- Maya Horio
Fujii, Stanley
Hill, Edward
LaWall, Mark
Minami, Arlene
Pham, Lani and Pierre
Shimokaji, Bob
Bagwell, Tina
Stevens, Annalise

APRIL

Group 4 – Justin Kuramoto
Bagwell, Tina
Barden, Andrew
Churchman, Vickey
Graine, Robin
Horio, Brant
Levy-Benitez, Michelle
Mitchell, Tom
Poon, Leslie
Shirasago, Dale/Susan
Uelmen, Pilar

MAY

Group 5 – Molly Kuramoto
Barrick, Jesse
Cray, Tom/Maria
Guthery, Craig
Ihara, Emily
Long, Clifford
Motonaga, Bert
Motonaga, Nancy
Rask, Tida/Art
Walter, Andrea/Barry

EKOJI DANA IN ACTION: FILL AND RE-FILL THE DANA FOOD BOX

For the past several months, Ekoji has been working with the Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC).

LCAC's food bank program provides families in need with safe and nutritious food as the foundation of a well-balanced diet. The food stored at the pantry is donated by local communities, civic groups, stores, and individuals, such as you. The food is sorted and distributed to all those in need who live in the Lorton, Ft Belvoir, and Newington area to include seniors, unemployed, homeless, single parents and families struggling to make ends meet... ”

Every two weeks, Sangha member, Vickey Churchman, gets the contents of our Dana Box and takes it over the LCAC. LCAC also has partnerships with homeless shelters and food kitchens to share excess, making full use of every donation.



LCAC Needs:

Food

- Cereal (hot/cold)
- Canned Meats and Tuna
- Canned fruits/veggies
- Pasta/Sauce
- Rice
- Gravy (dry packets work great)
- Canned fruits/veggies
- Cooking Oil
- Crackers
- Healthy snacks (Popcorn, raisins, etc.)
- Peanut Butter/Jelly

Personal Care Items

- Diapers and Wipes
- Toothpaste/Toothbrushes
- Shampoo
- Bar Soap
- Deodorant
- Laundry detergent
- Shaving razors
- Feminine Care Items
- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels

Monetary Donations

LCAC always appreciate monetary donations! LCAC can purchase food at the Capital Area Food Bank for 19 cents a pound – i.e., \$10.00 = about 55 lbs of food.

Dog/Cat Food (dry or wet)

ANNUAL BUDDHIST OBSERVANCES AT EKOJI

Below is a list of annual Buddhist observances held at Ekoji. Services for these observances are generally held on a Sunday close to the designated date.

JANUARY

1/1 New Year's Day (Shusho-e): This is a gathering to learn from our past and begin the New Year with a renewed resolution to endeavor to live a life in the Nembutsu.

1/16 Hoon-ko: This commemorates the passing of the founder of the Jodo Shin Denomination, Shinran Shonin (1173-1263).

FEBRUARY

2/15 Nirvana Day (Nehan-e): The service commemorates the passing of Siddhartha, the historical Buddha, at Kusinagara.

MARCH

3/21 Spring Higan (Shunki Higan-e): Held around the Spring Equinox when nature seems to be in balance, we should reflect on the harmony in our inner lives.

APRIL

4/8 Hanamatsuri (Buddha Day): We commemorate the birth of Siddhartha, the historical Buddha, in Lumbini Garden.

MAY

5/21 Gotan-e (Shinran Shonin Day): Celebrates the birth of Shinran Shonin, the founder of the Jodo Shinshu School, in (1173-1263).

JULY

7/15 Obon (Kangi-e - A Gathering of Joy): A memorial day providing us an opportunity to gratitude, not only to our ancestors, but to all who have passed before us.

SEPTEMBER

9/1 BCA Founding Day: Commemorates the founding of the Buddhist Churches of America.

9/22 Fall Higan (Shuki Higan): Like the Spring Higan, it provides us an opportunity to reflect on the inner peace within us.

NOVEMBER

11/3 Pet Memorial Service: This service is to express our gratitude and remember the love and many lessons given us by our pets.

11/3 Eitaikyo (Perpetual Memorial Service): This service is dedicated to, and expresses our gratitude to those who helped the local temple and its Sangha grow in the Dharma.

DECEMBER

12/8 Bodhi Day (Jodo-e): Commemorates the awakening of Siddhartha to the Dharma while meditating under the Bodhi Tree.

12/31 Year End Service (Joya-e) This is a time to reflect upon our interdependence on everything that has helped us live this past year. It is also a time we ring a bell 108 times to symbolically cast off our 108 defilements and attachments binding us to this world of delusion.



Photo Courtesy of Andrea Chapman

EKOJI SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Regular Jodo Shinshu Buddhist Services:

Each Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

- The first Sunday service in April is a special service commemorating the birth of the Buddha and starts at 10:30 a.m.

Children's Dharma School:

Meets from October 6 to mid-May.

- Children's Service on the first Sunday of the month, beginning at 10:00 a.m. and then break for classes from 11 – 12:00 noon.
- On the subsequent Sunday's the Children meet only for class beginning at 11:00 a.m.

Meditation Group:

Thursday evenings beginning at 8:00p.m.

- If you are new to meditation, it is suggested you arrive about 30 minutes early for orientation.

Oasaji Morning Service:

This Service is held at 10:00 a.m. on the 16th day of each month.

Specials Services:

Arrangements for life marking special services like weddings, funerals, and memorials can be arranged through the minister, Rev. Hayashi at (703) 239-0500 or ekoji.info@gmail.com.

Please check our website at www.ekoji.org for possible changes in schedule.

EKOJI LADIES GROUP MONTHLY MEETING SCHEDULE

The first Saturday of each month the Ekoji ladies group plans an event to get together. Anyone is welcome to join; you just need to get on the email list to learn about up-coming events. To learn about future events, email Vickey Churchman at ekoji.info@gmail.com. All are very welcome!

Sunday, April 5, 2020 at 1:00PM

Feast of Flowers: Lecture, Tasting and Tea
Location: Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria, VA

Edible flowers – fresh and cooked – add tasteful, healthful, and beautifully decorative dimensions to any dish, sweet or savory. Discover which flowers are edible and the surprising ways they can jazz up recipes. Sample a variety of blooms that run the gamut of the flavor spectrum. Registrations are required. \$42 for lecture, tasting and tea.

RSVP to Vickey at ekoji.info@gmail.com



EKOJI MARCH/APRIL 2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, March 1

9:00 - 10:00 Monthly Temple Cleanup
10:00 - 11:00 Dharma School Family Service
11:00 - 12:00 Dharma School Cleaning and Classes
11:00 - 12:00 Regular Shotsuki Service
12:30 - 1:30 Scout Metta/Padma Class - Nenju Making

Sunday, March 8

11:00 - 12:00 Dharma School Classes
11:00 - 12:00 Regular Service
12:00 - 1:00 Art Fair Planning Meeting

Sunday, April 5

9:00 - 10:00 Monthly Temple Cleanup
10:30 - 12:00 Joint Hanamatsuri Service

Sunday, April 12

11:00 - 12:00 Dharma School Classes
11:00 - 12:00 Regular Service

Sunday, April 19

11:00 - 12:00 Dharma School Classes
11:00 - 12:00 Regular Service
12:30 - 1:30 Buddhism Discussion Group

Sunday, April 26

11:00 - 12:00 Dharma School Classes
11:00 - 12:00 Regular Service

Saturday, May 2

10:00 - 3:00 2nd Annual Ekoji Arts Fair

Sunday, May 3

9:00 - 10:00 Monthly Temple Cleanup
10:00 - 11:00 Dharma School Family Service
11:00 - 12:00 Dharma School Cleaning and Classes
11:00 - 12:00 Regular Shotsuki Service

ONGOING:

Meditation, Thursday, 8:00 p.m.

Office Hours, Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Check ekoji.org for last minute schedule changes.



CARING FOR EKOJI'S FACILITIES: A COLLECTIVE SANGHA TASK

BY MAYA HORIO, CO-PRESIDENT

Over the past five years, we have already replaced the HVAC systems in the hondo and the Tsuji center, replaced the picture windows on one side of the hondo sitting area, scrubbed and repainted the interior walls of the hondo, remediated the asbestos flooring in the Tsuji Center and installed new flooring in about 75% of the building, de-rusted and repainted the gate to the garden, and more.

In addition to the big-ticket items, we regularly have smaller must-do's pop up. For example, we are in the process of repairing the urinal in the men's bathroom in the hondo at a cost of more than \$600. We would be remiss if we did not also express our sincere gratitude to our benefactor, BDK, which provided Ekoji with generous grants to help subsidize many of these fixes.

Identifying and caring for these needs is a constant task, and we are looking for your help in sharing this burden. Many thanks to those sangha members who have already volunteered to help! The Board will organize a meeting soon to start the prioritization task.

In the meantime, we are also looking for your help in identifying reliable and affordable trade specialists with whom the Board can start to build professional relationships. We now have a plumber that we will look to use as our primary provider, and Erwan Dapoigny proved himself to be an outstanding

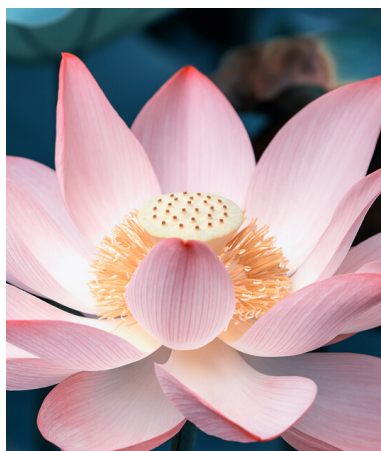
contractor in installing our new wood flooring in the Tsuji Center. We would like to identify an electrician; if you know of one whom you trust and is affordable, please let the Board know via ekoji.info@gmail.com. We also welcome your ideas on ways to better manage our facilities' care and feeding without over-burdening any one sangha member.

Any homeowner can immediately understand the responsibility (and burden) of maintaining their home's equipment and structure, and the risk involved with postponing maintenance, whether big or small. All of us are "homeowners" of Ekoji's facilities, regularly "living" in the spaces as we conduct services, classes, meetings, and socials. Ekoji's Board of Directors serves as a Homeowners Association for our facilities, identifying maintenance needs, the urgency of those needs, and what we can afford and when.

As our temple ages, we have an ever-growing list of maintenance needs that the Board and our facility volunteers will need to prioritize. As just a few examples, the picture windows on one side of the hondo sitting area need to be replaced, the upper exterior glass windows in the hondo need a thorough scrub and cleaning, the garden trellis and side patio retaining walls are rotting and need to be replaced, and the roof on both the Tsuji Center and hondo may need to be replaced in the next five years or so. Our first priority is getting the commercial kitchen done...a project that itself was prompted by failing kitchen equipment and a decision on whether to just replace the equipment or move towards a space that would finally serve the sangha's functional needs.

SPRING HIGAN

EKOJI
CELEBRATED
SPRING HIGAN
ON SUNDAY,
MARCH 15



Ekoji observed the spring Higan (Shunki Higan-e) with a virtual service on Sunday, March 15, after closing the temple to physical gatherings to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Higan, which means the "other shore" of Nirvana or Enlightenment as opposed to "this shore" of Samsara or Delusion, is observed by Japanese Buddhists during the spring and autumn equinoxes of each year. During these two times of the year, the days and nights are thought to be about equal in length and the weather is neither too hot nor too cold. It is a time for Buddhists to meditate on the harmony of nature which pervades the universe and to devote ourselves to the realization of this harmony in one's own inner life.

The Higan observance is not mentioned in Indian or Chinese records, and is believed to have originated in Japan in the time of Imperial Regent Shotoku Taishi (574-622). The two times of the year are described in the Meditation Sutra as appropriate to the first meditation facing the setting sun in the west, the symbolic direction of the Pure Land of Amida. During this time, study and meditation is placed on the practice of the Six Paramitas which bring us to "the other shore".

Jodo Shinshu, however, emphasizes the basic harmony of all elements of the universe as represented by the virtues of Amida Buddha.

(Masao Kodani and Russell Hamada, Traditions of Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji -Ha, Senshin Buddhist Temple, 1984, p. 52).

HANAMATSURI or BUDDHA DAY

Ekoji is scheduled to celebrate the birth of the Buddha on Sunday, April 5, with its traditional Hanamatsuri or Buddha Day Service.

Symbolic of the birth of Siddhartha, we traditionally use a flower altar (Hanamido) representing Lumbini Garden and a small statue of Siddhartha as the baby Buddha inside the Hanamido. In lieu of the usual oshoko burning of incense, each person instead pours sweet tea over the baby Buddha, as the birth-legend says that the world celebrated his birth and sweet tea/rain fell from the heavens.

Below is the birth story of Siddhartha, the future Buddha.

As was the custom in those days, Queen Maya was on her way to her parents' home to give birth to her child.

It was the eighth day of the fourth month of the 5th or 6th century BCE. Spring came late that year, and the hills and fields were bursting with flower, creating a most colorful sight. Queen Maya's retinue was so taken by the beauty of the Lumbini Garden, which they encountered on their journey home, that they decided to rest there for a while and enjoy the garden. While rising to take a closer look at a



branch of a lovely Asoka tree, the queen suddenly gave birth to a beautiful prince. The name chosen for him was Siddhartha.

According to the sutras that describe the event, Siddhartha took seven steps as soon as he was born. Pointing to the heavens and to the earth, he said in a loud voice, "In the Heavens above and on the Earth below, I alone am the World-Honored One. All that exists in the Three Worlds is suffering, but I will bring comfort."

The Heavens were said to have been so moved by these words that they rained down sweet tea in response...

The day of his birth, April eighth is celebrated today as Hanamatsuri (lit., "Flower Festival") or Buddha Day.

Namo Amida Butsu

Adapted from Jodo Shinshu: A Guide, published by the Hongwanji.

"In the Heavens above
and on the Earth
below, I alone am the
World-Honored One.

All that exists in the
Three Worlds is
suffering, but I will
bring comfort."

SHOTSUKI MEMORIAL SERVICE

EKOJI'S PAST – OUR PAST

The first Sunday of every month, Ekoji conducts a Shotsuki Service in memory of those people whose date of death (meinichi) falls in that month. The Kalavinka provides a list in remembrance of Ekoji's members and friends who passed away during the month of the issue.

This Service is not for those who have passed away because they are already taken care of by the fulfillment of the 18th Vow, but it provides us an opportunity to remember, express our gratitude and reflect on their continuing influence on our lives.

Traditionally special family memorial services are held on specific years following the death of a loved one. It provides us, as a family, to once again remember those who passed away and to hear the Dharma together.

Arrangements for Special Family Memorial Services may be arranged by contacting Rev. Hayashi.

FOR 2020 the years for Special Family Memorial Services are:
2019 – 1st Year; 2018 – 3rd Year; 2014 – 7th Year; 2008 – 13th Year; 2002 – 17th Year; 1996 – 25th Year; 1988 – 33rd Year; 1971– 50th Year.



EKOJI TO HOLD RETIREMENT AND ESTATE PLANNING SEMINAR –

Sunday, April 26

There is an old axiom that in this world only death and taxes are certainties. As Buddhists, we understand the importance of relying on ourselves. So, as we face our mortality, this should be our approach to our financial planning as well.

We often have a very idealistic dream of retirement - doing all the things we never had time to do. Social Security may be around when you retire, but the benefits you receive may not provide enough income to fulfill your retirement dreams or provide for basics.

To help us address these concerns, Ekoji will host a one hour introductory seminar on retirement and estate planning with experts in the field.

WHAT: 1 Hr Introductory Seminar on Retirement and Estate Planning

WHEN: Sunday, April 26, at 12:30 after the regular Sunday Service

WHERE: Ekoji Sangha Hall in the Tsuji Building

For the months of **FEBRUARY, MARCH, and APRIL**, we will be remembering with gratitude:

FEBRUARY

Lillian Oie
2/25/1940 – 2/1/1998
Fred Okamoto
2/21/2000
Rev. Kenryu T. Tsuji
3/1/1920 – 2/26/2004
Yone June Honda
4/8/2014
Kenichi Kuwabara
2/5/1925 – 2/23/2015
Hisao “Mat” Matsumoto
2/13/2018

MARCH

Reiko Matsumoto
3/12/2016

APRIL

Robert Thomas Miyashiro
4/7/2003
Geraldine Hamai Cantwell
8/13/1944 – 4/6/2007
Ralph Ishii
4/16/2007
Masaru Ushiro
4/26/2008
Rev. Shojo Honda
6/25/1929 – 4/13/2015
Junichi Kamikawa
11/11/1922 – 4/2/2003

EKOJI'S EVOLVING WEB PAGE – ekoji.org

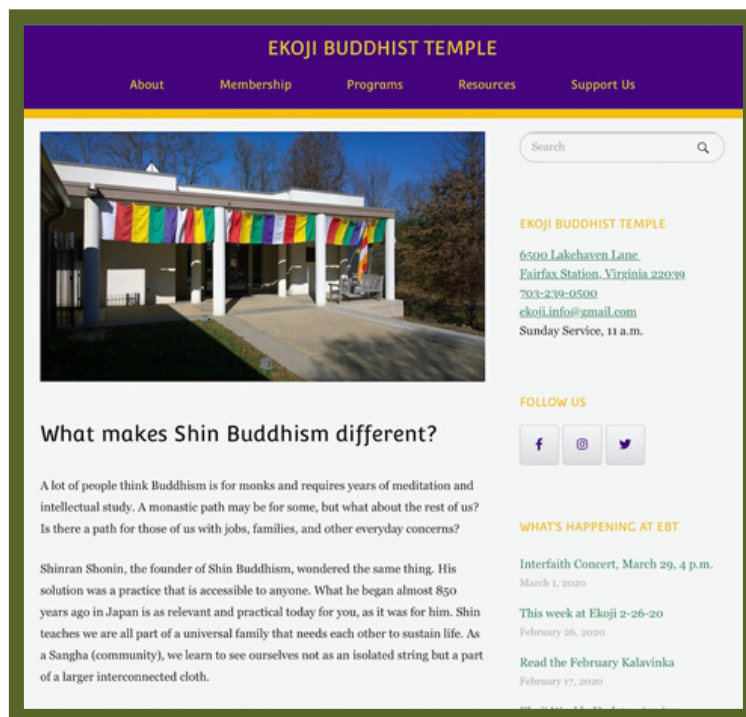
BY ANDREA CHAPMAN, CO-PRESIDENT

Much like understanding the Dharma, ekoji.org is a slow process that unfolds week by week.

The temple website, ekoji.org, is likely the first place new visitors will go to find out where we are located, when we meet and what we believe. It is also the most convenient and affordable means for us to relay information to our Sangha and the greater Shin Buddhist community.

Over the years there have been many renditions of the website. And, with every change of leadership, a new attempt is made to improve upon the content. This year is no exception. What is different, perhaps, is our desire to create a virtual space that represents the people and practices of Ekoji Buddhist Temple.

Currently, Andrea Chapman (co-president), Molly Kuramoto (vice president) and Jane Blechman (past president) are curating the content. On Wednesday mornings we meet in



the office for a few hours to discuss, define and implement our color, font, and content selections.

The majority of the home page is dedicated to welcoming the new visitor. A great deal of thought went in to the copy which was selected from an abundance of literature provided by Buddhist Churches of America. We believe the following excerpts differentiate Shin Buddhism from other denominations and extend a warm welcome to the newcomer.

“A lot of people think Buddhism is for monks and requires years of mediation and intellectual study. A monastic path may be for some, but what about the rest of us? Is there a path for those of us with jobs, families and other everyday concerns?”

“Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhism, wondered the same thing. His solution was a practice that is accessible to anyone. What he began almost 850 years ago in Japan is as relevant and practical today for you, as it was for him.”

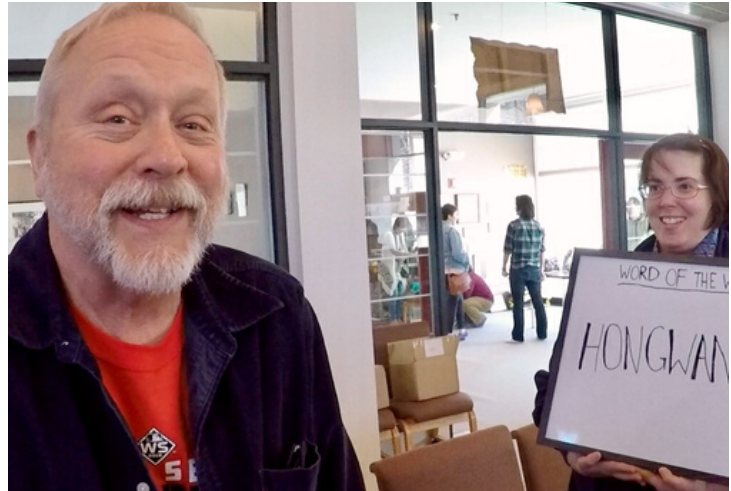
“Shin teaches we are all part of a universal family that needs each other to sustain life. As a Sangha (community), we learn to see ourselves not as an isolated string but a part of a larger interconnected cloth.”

Just off to the right, in the sidebar, we have conveniently located information related to our current events, links to our social media accounts, mailing list sign up and a button to make a donation with ease for our returning visitors.

STEP ON UP AND CLAIM YOUR 15 SECONDS OF FAME !

**BY ANDREA CHAPMAN,
CO-PRESIDENT**

At the winter board retreat we were brainstorming ways that we could share more information about our temple and Shin Buddhism with the community at large. My favorite idea was to create a podcast for Ken and Jay. "Grumpy Old Buddhists" we lovingly entitled it as we watched the two engage one another in a few hot topics surrounding Buddhism. While the podcast may one day become a reality—we are starting small with another board initiative called "Word of the Week" or #WOTW.



You may have noticed our camera crew roaming the temple with a white board and randomly asking people to pronounce the word written on it. We hope you will accept our apologies for the interruption to your regular Sunday service and our gratitude for your participation in this new Ekoji tradition.

Our first word of the week, "**Hongwanji**", stumped all but a few. Followed by "**Oasaji**" and "**Gassho**" which were easier for most to pronounce. Interestingly enough not many could define all three words which means this could be a learning tool for us as well.

After we record the content, it is edited to create a 30 to 45 second video clip that is later shared that week on our social media platforms. While we would prefer to spread the Dharma in person, video is a viable alternative for us to offer the world a glimpse of our Sangha and share a bite size piece of Buddhism.

There are some key advantages to this somewhat unconventional marketing strategy. First, it costs us nothing. Second, we are creating a digital archive of our diverse Sangha. Third, it's fun.

So, next time you see the camera rolling in the Hondo, we invite you to step up and give it a go and then be sure to follow @EkojiBuddhistTemple on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter so you can see, like and share your 15 seconds of fame with everyone you know!

Oh, by the way, "**Hongwanji**" means "Temple of the Primal Vow" and generally refers to the main temple and headquarters for Shin Buddhists. In actuality, because of a political disagreement in 1593-1602 (hard to imagine religious organizations splitting over a political disagreement, right?) the Shin Buddhist organization was divided into two factions each with its own Hongwanji in Kyoto, Japan. They are popularly known as Higashi (lit. East) Hongwanji and Nishi (lit. West) Hongwanji. Although they are now two different Jodo Shinshu organizations, there is basically no difference in their teachings. Ekoji and the Buddhist Churches of America are part of Nishi Hongwanji tradition. "**Oasaji**" refers to a morning service held on the 16th of each month at Jodo Shinshu temples. Shinran Shonin, the founder of Shin Buddhist tradition, died on January 16, 1262. The service on the 16th of each month is to commemorate his passing and to remember and express our gratitude for his teachings. "**Gassho**" literally means "palms joined together." It is used as a gesture of greeting, farewell, gratitude, and reverence, especially to the Buddha.

A photograph of two children, a girl and a boy, sitting on the ground in a garden. They are surrounded by blue bags filled with fallen leaves and twigs. The girl is on the left, looking towards the boy on the right. The boy is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows more garden plants and a gravel path.

SAMPOH-EN (GARDEN OF THREE TREASURES) CALL TO ACTION

BY GABRIELLE HARRISON VU, GARDEN COMMITTEE COORDINATOR

Fellow Ekoji garden keepers!

Early bloomers like Maples, Bradford pears, and forsythias along with daffodils are already taking advantage of the mild winter temperatures to start unfurling their flowers ahead of the fast-coming spring! Even the DC area Cherry Blossoms are predicted to reach their peak bloom around the last week of March.

This means that Ekoji Sampoh-en is also waking up and ready to put forth new growth, which also means that it is time for us garden volunteers to mobilize and get busy to give the garden a late winter clean up so the new growth can take off unhindered.

I had put out a garden upkeep schedule in the February Kalavinka, but below is again what's needed to be done. The top priority task is to cut the old Liriope growth and the clean-up of dead leaves that we did not get to do during wintertime. For any questions, come find me in the garden most Sunday mornings around 10 a.m. or earlier if I can get up early.

Early Spring

- Clean up leftover fallen leaves
- Fertilize evergreens
- Exterminate/Relocate plants that have been added later that did not belong or fit in with original garden design
- Cut Liriope old growth if not done in Fall

Leslie, Daichi, and Cody have a head start on us, so I hope to see lots of you coming out to join them to give Sampoh-en a great renewal and help keep it in tip-top shape.

Bring your garden gloves, rakes, clippers, shears, leaf blowers, and weed whackers and let's clean up!

Gift of Light Fund – Dana

BY RICH WOLFORD,
GIFT OF LIGHT FUND CHAIRMAN

In leading the effort to raise money to support the temple through the Gift of Light Fund, I've sometimes strayed away from the Buddhist concept of Dana – selfless giving. In those instances my thoughts, and the communications that flow from them, focus on giving to the temple as a sacrifice or what the “return” to the giver will be. It's not hard to

The Buddha taught that when we give to others, we do so without expectations of reward. We give without attaching to either the gift or the recipient. Ultimately the giver and receiver are one and notions of desire, attachments and expectations are replaced with simple gratitude.

get to that place. Giving or donating to causes typically involves something in return for the donor. A tote bag, a name on a building, a tax deduction, or a sense of fulfillment.

Reflecting on this brought me back to giving and its role in Buddhism. Giving is a foundational practice in Buddhism and one that aids us in our efforts to purify our minds, reduce our attachments, and help break the grip of ego-driven cravings and desires. The act of giving alone will not accomplish this. It is only when giving is accompanied by wholesome volition does true Dana arise. The Buddha taught that when we give to others we do so without expectations of reward. We give without attaching to either the gift or the recipient. Ultimately the giver and receiver are one and notions of desire, attachments and expectations are replaced with simple gratitude.

It is this context, you as a sangha member and giver and the temple as receiver, that I appeal for all to come together in deep appreciation for each other to practice the perfection of generosity.

To make a donation or a pledge use the donor form in the Gift OF Light Fund Brochure. They are located in the temple lobby or you can get it online at www.ekoji.org/gift-of-light-fund.

SANGHA SCOOPS

Congratulations to **Tony and Kristy Capizzi** on becoming new grandparents. Two months ago, daughter **Abby**, a former Ekoji Dharma School student, gave birth to **Lillian Claire Campbell**. Abby is now with the Air Force as a helicopter technician stationed in South Carolina. Congratulations on this new venture in your lives. This also means that Abby's sister, **Amanda**, and brother, **Alex**, have new roles as aunt and uncle. Congratulations to the Capizzi family. Ekoji asks that you give Abby our best wishes and we look forward to seeing her and Lillian Claire.

We welcome **Rev. Hayashi, Erick Ishii, and Justin and Molly Kuramoto** back from Seattle, WA. where they participated in the Buddhist Churches of America National Council Meeting on our behalf. The National Council Meeting is the legislative body of the BCA and is made up of representatives from all of the BCA temples. We certainly thank them for their service in representing Ekoji, and we are glad they all came back healthy as Seattle is in King County where there are many cases of the Coronavirus.

It's really good to see **Terry and Sandy Kita** back at the temple. They had been away from the temple as Sandy learned new life skills to accommodate his recent loss of sight. But talking to them and hearing them laugh and laughing with them, it is great. Welcome home! You were missed!



Did you notice, we have **new Service Books and new Gatha Books** for the temple? The Shin Buddhist Service Book was developed by the Orange County Buddhist Church and contains many new explanations of and translations of the sutras and the western musical notations of how the sutras are to be chanted. The Gatha book, Sing Namu Amida Butsu, was the product of the Seattle Buddhist Temple and its Gatha Book Project Committee led by Kemi Nakabayashi and Dennis Yamashita. This book contains many English translations of older gathas originally written in Japanese, and new, original gathas written in English. With the older Japanese Gathas, both the Japanese and the English translations appear. The new Gatha were composed by people like BJ Soriano of Hawaii, Donna Sasaki of the Portland Buddhist Temple, and of course, the late Linda Castro of the Seattle Buddhist Temple. We'll have a lot more Gathas to learn and to sing as another way to touch our spirituality



EKOJI WELCOMES ITS NEWEST AND THANKS ITS RENEWING MEMBERS

Anyone is welcome to attend Ekoji's Sunday services and any social events at Ekoji regardless of their membership status.

But becoming a member of Ekoji Buddhist Temple is something more. It is a way of expressing our personal investment in continuing the temple's ability to share the Dharma and to meet the needs of its sangha.

So Thank You for joining and re-joining us in Ekoji's Sangha!

WELCOME TO EKOJI'S NEW MEMBERS

Serkan Arslanalp	Christina Call	Mark Nagy
Tina Bagwell	Sam Call	Annalise Stevens
Erica Baisch	Jeff Freeman	
Peter Boudriault	Timothy Lee	

2020 RENEWED PLEDGE EKOJI MEMBERS

Aso, Joy	Horio, Phoebe	Nguyen, Kim
Barrick, Jesse	Horio, Thomas	Ondrusek, Samatha
Bernett, Carmen	Ihara, Emily	Poon, Leslie
Blechman, Jane	Ishii, Erick	Rask, Tida
Brickhouse, Tasha	Keicho, Yuko/Toshiaki	Read, Seth
Brickhouse, Thomas	Kita, Sandy	Sams, Edward
Chapman, Andrea	Kondo, Gail	Scott, Roger
Churchman, Vickey	Kondo, Norman	Shimokaji, Bob
Crawley, Ronald	Kuramoto, Justin	Silva, Samanthaie/Ajit
Cray, Tom/Maria	Kuramoto, Molly	Stegner, Ann
Crilley, Joe	LaWall, Mark	Stegner, Joran
Diep, Katherine (Kate)	Lindenberg, Jay	Tecson, Anna
Grimes, Susan	Long, Cliff	Uelmen, Pilar
Graine, Robin	Lukic-Dapoigny, Sandra/ Erwan	Vo, Hung
Harmon, Archer	McMahon, Jim	Wellck, Miki
Harrison, Gabrielle	Minami, Arlene	Wolford, Rich/ Maureen
Hill, Edward	Nakamura, Kennon	
Honda, Tamon	Nakamura, Noriko	
Horio, Brant	Nguyen, Diana	
Horio, Maya		

Team Purple Membership Committee
Vickey Churchman and Leslie Poon
(membership@ekoji.org)

DANA LIST

EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE THANKS THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS FOR THEIR GENEROUS GIFTS DURING JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2020:

BDK America
Joy Aso
Tina Bagwell
Erica Baisch
Jane Blechman
Tasha and Thomas Brickhouse
Arthur and Keiko Brown
Sam and Christina Call
Anthony and Kristy Capizzi
Andrea Chapman
Ronald Crawley
Joseph Crilley
Katherine Diep
Mahkameh Doroud
Stanley Fujii
Robin Graine
Susan Grimes
Rahman Gunawan
Archer Harmon
Gabrielle Harrison
Edward Hill
Marisa and Tamon Honda
Maya and Brant Horio
Emily Ihara
Yuko Keicho
Norm and Gail Kondo
Justin and Molly Kuramoto
Mark LaWall
Timothy Lee
Jay Lindenberg
Clifford Long
Sandra Lukic-Dapoigny
James McMahon
Arlene and Wayne Minami
Arlene and Wayne Minami
in memory of Fred Okamoto
Bert and Nancy Motonaga
Ron and Nora Nagatani
in memory of John Sutch
Mark Nagy
Ken and Nori Nakamura
Lisa and Greg Nakamura
Diana Nguyen
Leslie Poon
Piyatida Rask
Seth Read
Ayako Rosi
Wolf Run Foundation
Edward Sams
Roger Scott
Bob Shimokaji
Ajit and Samanthaie Silva
Andre & Marcy Sobocinski
Joran and Ann Stegner
Frank Swithers
Anna Tecson
Pilar Uelmen
Michael and Miki Wellck
Richard Wolford
Mikio Yamashita
MARCH/APRIL 2020



Name Amida Butsu