

SEPTEMBER 2024

# KALAVINKA

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A NEWSLETTER OF EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

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HIGAN -- SEEING THE BALANCE IN NATURE



SEEKING HARMONY WITHIN OURSELVES



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## 84,000 THOUGHTS

### **BUDDHIST GRATITUDE IS DEEPER THAN “SOCIAL ETIQUETTE”**

By Rev. Kurt Rye

When requesting articles for this issue of the Kalavinka, the editors asked that we submit something that represents the Eastern Buddhist League Conference. It will be held at Ekoji October 18-20, 2024, and will be a hybrid conference, offering in-person and virtual attendance options. The committee has spent over a year preparing the event so that it will be a meaningful conference for all those who participate. I hope you can join us.

The conference theme is “Gratitude is Timeless”. This succinct and fitting theme was penned by Rev. Tsuchiya of the Midwest Buddhist Temple. The theme has given me the motivation to explore the concept of gratitude from a Buddhist perspective.

Gratitude is a word that perhaps is used too much in our daily lives and has lost some of its deeper significance. Often it has been used as an expression of appreciation for something that a person has received, as a gift or act of kindness. It has become part of our social etiquette. I have heard parents ask their kids what they are grateful for. Commonly the response is a material item, for example, as a present. When the child is pressed for a more in-depth response, they might respond with love of their parents or friends. This is expanding their response, going beyond material possessions to the more abstract ideas of interpersonal relationships. How does one take a further step to explain gratitude as something more Buddhistic as our teachings of Jodo Shinshu?

When the idea of gratitude is asked in reference to the Dharma, it is often professed as someone being exposed to the Buddhist teachings. This is an excellent response but, specifically, how does this manifest? The Dharma is a vehicle for us to see the world as it is, not what we see through our often-tainted perception based on our views, consciously or unconsciously. In other words, to see the world from a less self-centered perspective. The teachings are a guide to direct us to see life as an ever-changing reality that is in constant flux. The Dharma can help give us a distinctive perspective of life and give us guidance.

( *Buddhist Gratitude*, Cont on Pg 2 )





## HIGAN – A TIME FOR PERSPECTIVE AND GRATITUDE

By Ken Nakamura

In the months of March and September, many Jodo Shinshu temples observe Spring and Fall Higan periods, which could be a special service or a week-long observance. This observance is traditionally set near the Spring and Fall Equinoxes, when days and nights are generally equally long, the temperature is neither too hot nor too cold, and nature seems to be in balance. Here in the Washington area, in the Spring the leaves are a pale green on their way to the dark green of summer, and in the Fall, the leaves are starting to change color on their way to the beautiful, bright fall colors.

According to Hongwanji's **Jodo Shinshu, A Guide**,

*“Higan” means the “other shore.” It is an abbreviation for “to higan” meaning “reaching the other shore (or Nirvana)”. During this period of balance in Nature, it is a time when practitioners “should reflect and meditate on the harmony of nature and devote themselves to the realization of the harmony in their own lives. During the week-long observance (especially in Japan), emphasis is placed on the observance of the Six Paramitas which lead to the Other Shore”.*

The Six Paramitas are:

1. Dana – selfless giving
2. Sila – discipline or morality
3. Ksanti – patience
4. Virya – endeavor
5. Dhyana – insight or meditation
6. Prajna – wisdom.

However, Rev. Dean Koyama of the Palo Alto Buddhist Temple points out that, “We are living in unsettling times.” Polar opposites seem to be coming into contact. Whether it is the wars and conflict in the world, or the incivility that seems to have become part of our world, or the rise in gun violence and killings that seem to have become more common place, and seem to have become a regular way to settle disagreements, all of these and more, challenge our ability to find our inner peace in this world of Samsara.

Rev. Koyama says, more than ever, “we need the Buddha-Dharma to help us cope and find balance. All the more so do we need to keep in mind that instead of being fixed on seeing only one way to look at things, that perhaps by having a change in perspective we can come to understand the true reality of a situation, thereby awakening a mind and heart of compassion, and then act with wisdom from that compassion.”

By realizing what we have already received, he says, our practice of the Six Paramitas is transformed from one of trying to attain something, to a practice of the Six Paramitas as a response of gratitude.

As the 2024 EBL Theme reinforces, “Gratitude is Timeless”.

***Namo Amida Butsu***



## HOW ARE YOU SPENDING YOUR “DASH”?

By: Andrea Chapman

I recently volunteered to assist with a memorial service at Ekoji for a longtime member who I unfortunately never had the pleasure of meeting. My job was to monitor the Zoom room and operate the cameras, skills I acquired during the pandemic and further refined as a result of our technology upgrades here at Ekoji. Whilst doing so, I recall feeling grateful that we can offer members the opportunity to host hybrid services so that those who live outside of the area are able to attend.

As I listened to the sermon, offered by Erick Ishii, I was deeply inspired by a sentiment he referred to as “the dash”. Later, he explained to me the concept is from a poem by Linda Ellis, which I will in turn share with you below.

But, before I do, allow me to offer my condolences to the Teubert family on the loss of their father, Charles (Chuck), and my gratitude to Erick for translating the Dharma in a way that made me realize, for the first time, this is my only chance to live this one life as Andrea. I hope you will also find value in the message below and “spend your dash wisely”.

### **DASH**

*Between the dash, my birth and death,  
What have I done with my time on earth?  
Have I made a difference? Have I made it count?  
Or have I just been wasting my time?*

*The dash is short, it's fleeting and fast,  
It's the only time we have, it will not last.  
So what will I do with my dash?  
Will I make it count? Or will it just dash away?*

*I will make my dash count, I will make it matter,  
I will use my time to make a difference,  
To leave the world a better place than I found it.  
I will live my life with purpose and meaning,*

*And when my dash is over, I will be able to say,  
I made a difference; I lived a full life.*

***In Gassho, Namo Amida Butsu***

Celebrating

WOMEN OF THE BCA

Seminar

all are welcome!

### PATHS IN JODO SHINSHU

Women have long played an important supportive and largely “behind the scenes” role in the expansion of the Dharma and at BCA. Today we have many opportunities to grow in leadership, engage in our Sanghas, and share the Dharma.

**SEPT. 28, 2024, SAT**

**9:30AM-5:00PM**

optional activity Friday & Saturday evenings

Keynote Speakers



**REV. CANDICE SHIBATA & REV. MELISSA OPEL**



*Come be inspired to forge your own path!*

**Jodo Shinshu Center**

2140 Durant Ave. Berkeley 94704 - and parts online -

**Register by Sept. 15, 2024** @ <https://forms.gle/8m7BysFcYpZRZfwM9>

**\$50 Registration & Meals**, Register for online Free\*

Some rooms available to stay overnight @ the JSC

\*Supported by the Hemera Foundation and the Buddhist Churches of America's commitment to Women in Buddhism



# EKOJI'S MONTHLY STEWARDSHIP GROUPS FOR SEPTEMBER

By Maya Horio

**What is a Stewardship Group Anyway?** Stewardship Groups is an initiative that started at Ekoji just before the Pandemic hit, and the groups came to a screeching halt. These groups had a practical side of sharing the work of taking care of our temple a month at a time. But it also has a religious side of working to strengthen Sangha ties. Besides working together in taking care of Temple activities, we hope that working together in small groups will provide each of us the opportunity to meet, get to know each other, and forge new, and deeper connections.

**How were the Groups Formed?** Each Sangha member has been assigned to a small, designated Stewardship Group which is led by a Board Member. There are 5 in-person groups and two virtual groups. The Stewardship Groups will be repopulated yearly.

**On a Regular Basis, What Do Stewardship Groups Do?** Each Group will be “on call” for a month at a time. During their “on call” month, the Group would divvey up a list of responsibilities. For the **5 in-person Groups**, these responsibilities include:

- the monthly temple clean-up,
- providing snacks for after the service social time, and cleaning-up after the snacks,
- set-up and clean-up for any temple potlucks,
- other special requests

**For the two virtual Groups:**

- Help capture post-service Dharma discussion highlights
- Serve as Ekoji’s Sunshine Committee in periodically checking-in with other Sangha members.
- Help host virtual Sangha building initiatives

## SEPTEMBER STEWARDSHIP GROUP

**Leader: Roger Scott**

Greg Nakamura	Molly Kuramoto
Lisa Nakamura	Art Politano
Joy Aso	Ed Sams
Thomas Brickhouse	Frank Swithers
Tasha Brickhouse	Rob Fike
Brant Horio	Stephen Fike (YBA)
Justin Kuramoto	Hiroya Hobbs (YBA)

## SEPTEMBER DIGITAL STEWARDSHIP GROUP

**Leader: Jim Daniel**

Christina McQuirk	Jerry Rankin
Sean Ross	Kyoko Carey
Jude Sharp	Erick Ederer
Ted Coleman	Kaeli Gardner
Joe Crilley	Rahman Gunawan
Akane Ogren	John Nix
(Jack Perry)	Kathleen Teubert



## AUGUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

By Michael Paul Huff, Secretary

The Board meeting covered several important topics, starting with updates on the temple's activities. Rev. Rye couldn't attend due to travel, but he would host a training session during his August visit and attend a pasta luncheon in the Tsuji Center. The Board approved the consent agenda, including minutes from June and July and the treasurer's report.

The Board focused on the upcoming 125th anniversary of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA). They proposed canceling the regular service at Ekoji that day and instead holding a potluck lunch followed by a live-streamed viewing of the anniversary service. The idea was to have everyone participate together in this special event, with plans to synchronize certain rituals during the live stream. The Board agreed, deciding to open the temple for those who wish to attend in person and manage the event's logistics.

The group also discussed technical arrangements for streaming the service and decided to skip their usual Zoom setup, encouraging participants to watch the BCA's stream directly. They also considered getting a birthday cake to celebrate the BCA's milestone. The plan was to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for everyone, both in person and virtually.

The Board reviewed updates on the HVAC system, which was recently repaired. While it was still noisy, it was cooling properly. There was still uncertainty about whether it had resolved ongoing fire alarm issues, which were being monitored. They also discussed the budgeting process, explaining how it is prepared by averaging past expenses and projecting future costs. The Board planned to set a tentative date for the annual meeting in November and considered adding more members for better continuity.

The Board also discussed the ongoing transition of the temple's website, moving from a complex multi-page site to a simpler, one-page design. The new setup would be user-friendly and modern, aimed at visitors unfamiliar with the temple. However, there was concern about preserving historical content, like archives of past ministers and photos. The plan was to create a secondary website linked from the main site to house detailed historical information and media.

The meeting covered other projects, including using a computer application to manage volunteer roles more efficiently.

Regarding the upcoming EBL Conference, the Board also discussed a canceled tour to the Smithsonian and proposed catering a Chinese luncheon after a Sunday service,

*(Aug. Board of Directors Report, Cont on Pg 8)*

( Aug. Board of Directors Report, Cont. from Pg. 7 )

though budget concerns were raised. They considered a middle ground by ordering some dishes and supplementing with a potluck.

A new fundraising idea was introduced: offering cooking classes at the temple to engage the community and raise funds. Although the initial date for a Valentine's Day event in 2025 didn't work, the Board agreed to explore other dates and themes.

The final part of the meeting focused on recruiting more volunteers for an upcoming festival. The Board decided to advertise the need for volunteers more widely to increase participation. They also discussed a potential flower arrangement fundraiser for Thanksgiving, aiming to market it to the broader community.

The meeting concluded with updates on ongoing projects, planning for an upcoming memorial service, and scheduling the next Board meeting. One member mentioned they would be unable to attend due to a trip to Italy. The meeting ended with a motion to adjourn, which was passed unanimously.

### **IN REMEMBRANCE AND IN GASSHO**

On August 21, 2020, Sangha member Marine Major Charles "Chuck" Teubert (Ret) passed away. The Teuberts, Chuck, wife Kathy, daughter Kristin, and son Trevor, were always helping and the kids were a part of the Dharma School. When they think of Chuck, his many Ekoji friends remember him for his huge, infectious smile.

When Chuck passed away, he had wanted to have his service at Ekoji, his temple, and be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. He was buried at Arlington, but because we were at the height of Covid, the temple was closed. On August 24th, Chuck's wish was fulfilled when Kathy and the family held a memorial service for him with Rev. Erick Ishii officiating the service.

With our Gassho to Chuck and the Teubert Family.

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On August 12, 2024, **Gladyce Tomiko Takemori Sumida** passed away at Greensprings Retirement Community in Springfield, VA.

Gladyce, who was the youngest of six siblings, was born in Fresno, California, and was sent to the Gila River Internment Camp in Arizona during World War II when the United States government incarcerated, without cause, 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry. In 1944 when the camps were starting to be closed, her family moved to Seabrook, N.J. and worked at Seabrook farms.

Gladyce and her family then settled in Washington in 1949. In August 1958, she married Dwight Sumida. In Washington, Gladyce worked in the Civil Service, in the private sector, and on Capital Hill for Congressman Richard Bolling of Missouri.

When Ekoji started, Gladyce became a member and, as ever, was a great help to the temple. Rev. Erick Ishii will officiate her memorial service at Greensprings on September 7, 2024.

To the Sumida and Takemori families, Ekoji offers it sincere Condolences and Gassho



# September Treasurer’s Report

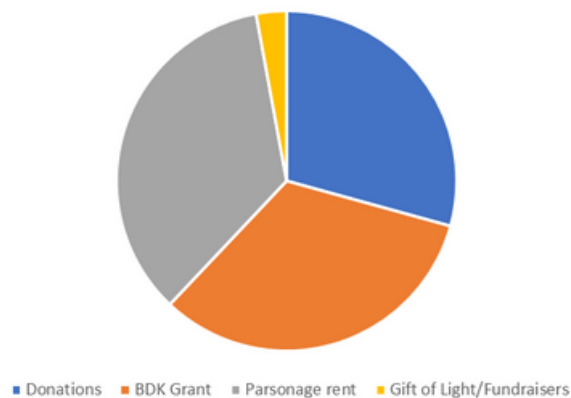
By Maya Horio, Treasurer

This monthly column is a result of Board discussions at our strategic planning retreat last December, where we identified transparency, sangha “ownership,” and responsible management as key goals for 2024. We share the results of our financial management and the proposed budget for the following year at our annual sangha meeting each fall, but much of our daily financial flows happens behind the scenes. The Board hopes that including a monthly recap of our finances in the Kalavinka will provide sangha members and friends with more insight on how we use your donations and the challenges in realizing our goal of financial self-sufficiency. We welcome your thoughts and questions, as directed to our temple Treasurer, Maya Horio, at [ekojitreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:ekojitreasurer@gmail.com).

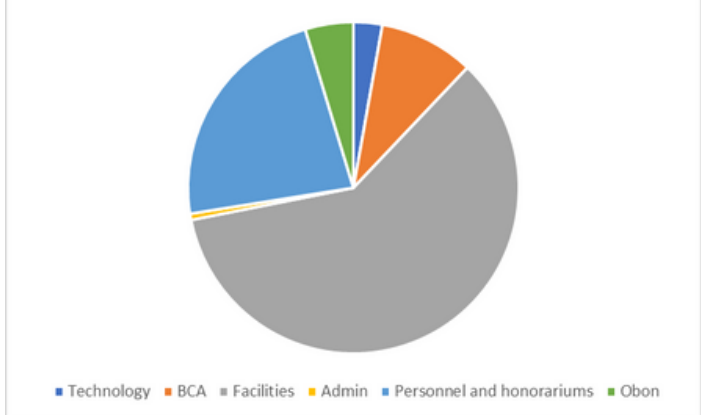
**Aug 2024 Finance Flows:** Our expenses far outweighed our income this month as we tried to figure out how to fix our hondo HVAC system and rekeyed the temple doors. August tends to be a slow month for donations each year, as many sangha members go on summer vacations and everyone is tapped out from donating in both financial and volunteer hour support for our Obon festival last month. We think we have fixed the hondo HVAC system for now, as the foyer feels generally cooler and the false fire alarms have died down. We learned in the process how interconnected our hondo HVAC and fire alarm systems are, which will help us better understand how to maintain the facility.

- Income (\$7,629): Our BDK grant, parsonage rent, and sangha donations comprised almost equal chunks of this month’s income.
- Expenses (\$13,165): Facility costs made up the bulk of our expenses this month, as mentioned above.

Aug Income



Aug Expenses





## UPON THEIR SHOULDERS EKOJI'S PAST -- OUR PRESENT

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. Your Ekoji Buddhist Temple exists because of their devotion and efforts as they become a part of our Nembutsu history.

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 allows us, as a family, to remember once again those who passed away and to hear the Dharma together. Arrangements for Special Family Memorial Services may be arranged by contacting Ekoji at [ekoji.info@gmail.com](mailto:ekoji.info@gmail.com).

Based on the year of the passing of a loved one, for 2024 the years for Special Family Memorial Services are: 2023 – 1st Year; 2022 – 3rd Year; 2018 – 7th Year; 2012 – 13th Year; 2008 – 17th Year; 2000 – 25th Year; 1992 – 33rd Year; 1975 – 50th Year; 1925 – 100th.

**FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER, we will be remembering with gratitude:**

### **August**

Kimiko "Kimi" Sugiyama  
12/5/1925 – 8/31/2013

James Grohl

12/9/1938 – 8/6/2014

Maj. Charles "Chuck"  
Teubert, (USMC – Ret.)  
12/18/1950 – 8/21/2020

Dr. Herbert "Herb" Kazuto Oie  
12/16/1933 – 8/31/2021

### **SEPTEMBER**

**Akiko Iwata**  
**9/27/1999**

### **October**

Nora Mineyo Nagatani  
6/20/1945 -- 10/23/2021



## JOIN THE EKOJI VIRTUAL MOVIE DISCUSSION SESSIONS



*The Dharma speaks to us through the sounds of the world –  
Forcefully, eloquently and beautifully.  
It speaks of the unending change around us,  
The immutable truth of interdependence,  
And the peace in nature  
Do we have the ears to hear and listen...?  
(Rev. Kenryu T. Tsuji, *The Heart of the Buddha Dharma*, p. 67)*

Enjoy Ekoji's **virtual movie discussions**. They are held on the third Sunday of each month. And are led by Ann and Joren Stegner. RSVP for the Zoom link [here](#). The discussion is casual, it wanders away from the movie a lot, and it is always a chance hear the Dharma through the movie and the discussion, regardless of whether it was on topic. The discussion for August was the Japanese movie, Perfect Days.

**The movie for September is "Sliding Doors"**. The Zoom discussion will be **at 2:00 on September 15**. It can be watched on Amazon Prime, HBO Max, Apple TV, Peacock, and other streaming services -- some are for free and other serves charge.



### JOIN OUR TEMPLE

#### THE EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE THE TEMPLE OF THE GIFT OF LIGHT

We are committed to growing a worldwide Sangha and invite you to join our diverse community. Explore the benefits of membership by visiting our membership portal at: <http://ekojibuddhisttemple.wildapricot.org>

ALL OUR WELCOME -- COME AS YOU ARE



## *In Gassho*

Dana from July 29 to August 26, 2024

Jane Blechman  
Melvyn Byrne  
Joseph Crilley  
Kirk Flashner  
Stanley Fujii  
Marisa and Tamon Honda  
Michael Huff  
Emily Ihara  
Cheryl Kameda  
Katsuko Kameda  
Yuko Keich  
Shelby Kennedy  
Norm and Gail Kondo  
Sandra Lukic-Dapoingy

Thea Maggard  
Richard Malone and Rick Ware  
Bert and Nancy Motonaga  
Ken and Nori Nakamura (*in memory of  
Fusako Akahoshi*)  
Ken and Nori Nakamura  
Donna Omata  
Ayako Rosi  
Edward Sams  
Roger Scott  
Anna Tecson  
Joanna and Mike Therway  
Charles Uyeda



Check out Ekoji's monthly podcast interviews at <http://tinyuri.com/EchoEkoji>  
This Month Andrea and Joe are joined by Ekoji's own **BRANT AND MAYA HORIO**



## BUDDHIST

## LEAGUE CONFERENCE

### What to Expect:

- **Keynote Speakers**  
Gain insights from Dr. Scott Mitchell of IBS, Rev. Kenji Akahoshi, Rev. Patti Nakai and others...
- **Workshops & Panels**  
Engage in interactive sessions designed to provide inspiration and guidance.
- **Networking Opportunities**  
Connect with like-minded travelers and share your lived experiences with new friends.
- **Enjoy Ekoji**  
Unwind in our Japanese garden, dine with Sangha friends, play Bodhi Bingo with our ministers and more...



### Registration Now Open!

Visit <https://ekojiбуддhisttemple.wildapricot.org/EBL-2024> for registration and more information.

Don't miss this opportunity to engage with the Sangha and listen to the Dharma!

WEEKEND OF  
**18-20**  
OCTOBER 2024  
EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE  
Fairfax Station, Virginia

Email:  
• [ekoji.info@gmail.com](mailto:ekoji.info@gmail.com)

**REGISTER NOW!**

## **2024 EBL CONFERENCE SCHEDULE -- "GRATITUDE IS TIMELESS"**

### **COME JOIN US -- ON LINE AND/OR IN PERSON !!**

#### **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18TH: IN PERSON ONLY**

**7:00 PM:** Fireside Chat with Eastern District Ministers (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

**8:00 PM:** Bodhi BINGO! (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

#### **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19TH: IN PERSON AND LIVESTREAM VIA ZOOM**

**8:00 AM:** Walking Meditation in the Garden of the Three Treasures (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

**8:00 AM:** Pancake Breakfast sponsored by the Young Buddhist Association (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

**9:00 AM:** Hybrid Opening Service led by Rev. Ron Miyamura (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

**10:00 AM:** Keynote Address by Dr. Scott Mitchell (Institute for Buddhist Studies) (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

**12:00 PM:** Lunch (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

**1:00 PM:** Gratitude Workshop with Rev. Kenji Akahoshi who will join us via Zoom (Retired BCA Minister) (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

**2:45 PM:** Nen Daiko Presentation by Maya Horio who will join us in person (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

**3:45 PM:** Break for shopping, dinner on your own, rest

**7:00 PM:** Book Discussion at the Fair Oaks Marriott --Mt. Vernon Room

#### **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20TH: IN PERSON AND LIVESTREAM VIA ZOOM**

**8:30 AM:** Walking Meditation in the Garden of the Three Treasures (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

**8:30 AM:** Continental Breakfast sponsored by the Minister's Assistants (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

**9:30 AM:** Butsudan Making Activity & Dharma School Service (additional cost: \$40) (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

**11:00 AM:** Sunday Service led by Rev. Patti Nakai (Buddhist Temple of Chicago) (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

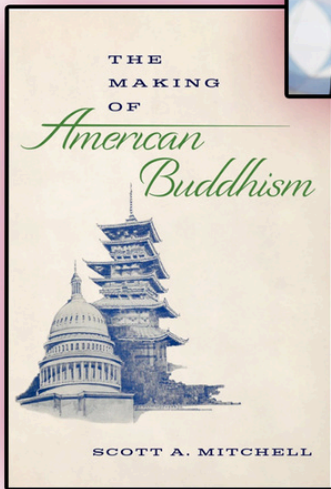
**12:00 PM:** Dharma Discussion Group led by Andrea Chapman (Ekoji Buddhist Temple)

**1:00 PM:** Free Time to get to know each other even better -- **WE are the larger Sangha.**



# Gratitude is Timeless

Dr. Scott Mitchell  
President  
Institute of Buddhist Studies  
effective July, 2024



## Eastern Buddhist League Conference

OCTOBER 19-20, 2024

Keynote speaker, Dr. Scott Mitchell  
will discuss his new book

### THE MAKING OF AMERICAN BUDDHISM

Get your copy now and join the conversation.

As of 2010, there were approximately 3-4 million Buddhists in the United States, and that figure is expected to grow significantly. Beyond the numbers, the influence of Buddhism can be felt throughout the culture, with many more people practicing meditation, for example, than claiming Buddhist identity. A century ago, this would have been unthinkable. So how did Buddhism come to claim such a significant place in the American cultural landscape?

**Watch for the full agenda and registration materials coming soon!**

### **BUDDHISM AMONG ASIAN AMERICANS : A PEW Research Study October 11, 2023**

- About one-in-ten Asian American adults (11%) say their religion is Buddhism, a slight decline from 14% in 2012.
- A much larger share (21%) currently say that, aside from religion, they feel close to Buddhism for reasons such as ancestry or culture. In total one-third of Asian Americans express at least some connection to Buddhism.
- Asian Americans of Southeast Asian origin are the most likely to actually identify as Buddhist.
- Among East Asian origin groups, most respondents who have a connection to Buddhism do not identify as Buddhist, but rather say they feel “close to” Buddhism aside from religion

## GRATITUDE IS TIMELESS

### **EASTERN BUDDHIST LEAGUE CONFERENCE OCTOBER 18-20, 2024**

*From the Editor: For the next three months leading to the EBL Conference in October, we would like to publish an article a month on Religion in America, and particularly the future of Jodo Shin Buddhism. We hope you will find these articles interesting and thought provoking. KHN*

#### **DR. SCOTT MITCHEL'S THE MAKING OF AMERICAN BUDDHISM: A REVIEW**

By Michael Paul Huff

In February of this year, I flew to Sacramento to attend the 2024 National Council Meeting of the Buddhist Churches of America. Surprisingly, the flight went quickly — I was reading Dr. Scott Mitchell's book, *The Making of American Buddhism*, and rather than being dry & academic, it was an engaging read about how Japanese American Buddhists, especially the second-generation Nisei, helped Buddhism grow in America from the 1930s to the 1960s.

The story starts with the early 20th century when Buddhism was mostly unknown in America. By the mid-20th century, Buddhism had become more popular, thanks to the Nisei. These Japanese American Buddhists published a magazine called the *Berkeley Bussei*. They said Buddhism was a religion that fit well with American values, being rational, scientific, and peaceful. Their efforts laid the foundation for modern American Buddhism.

A major theme in the book is the hard work behind the scenes that made this possible. The *Berkeley Bussei*, published from 1939 to 1960, was a key platform for Nisei Buddhists to express their identity as both Americans and Buddhists. They argued that Buddhism could positively contribute to American society. This magazine, along with other community efforts like conventions and translation projects, created a strong religious foundation that supported their community and helped popularize Buddhism among others, including white converts and Beat poets.

Mitchell's research challenges the common stories about American Buddhism. He critiques the idea that Buddhism in America is divided into two groups: intellectual converts and immigrant communities. This view ignores how these groups influenced each other. Mitchell highlights the contributions of Japanese American Buddhists, who are often overlooked in favor of more famous white converts and intellectuals. These Japanese Americans played a crucial role in establishing Buddhism in American religious life.

*(Review of American Buddhism Book, Cont. on Pg, 16)*

The book also explores the difficulties Japanese American Buddhists faced during and after World War II. The Nisei generation dealt with significant racial discrimination, including being put in internment camps. Despite these challenges, they continued to advocate for an American identity that included their Buddhist faith. Their hard work is shown through archival research, revealing the contributions of less-known figures like Jane Imamura and Mihoko Okamura. These women, among others, played vital roles in supporting their temples and communities, often without recognition.

One of the most interesting parts of the book is its focus on the everyday work that kept the Buddhist community going. Mitchell shares stories of how community members helped important figures like D. T. Suzuki by providing transportation, accommodation, and financial support. These everyday tasks were essential for the success of American Buddhism. Mitchell's narrative shows that the achievements of American Buddhism were a collective effort, relying heavily on the unrecognized contributions of laypeople, especially women.

Mitchell's book also discusses broader cultural and theoretical issues about the development of American Buddhism. He critiques the simplifications and biases in previous research, which often depicted white Buddhists as modern and universal while viewing Asian American Buddhists as traditional and ethnic. Through a detailed analysis of the Berkeley Bussei and the activities of the Shin Buddhist community, Mitchell presents a more inclusive story. He shows how these Japanese American Buddhists participated in and contributed to the discussion on Buddhist modernism, expanding the field's boundaries.

Overall, *The Making of American Buddhism* is an important book for understanding American religious history. It highlights the crucial but often overlooked role of Japanese American Buddhists in shaping American Buddhism. Through careful research and a compelling story, Mitchell honors the hard work and legacy of these pioneers, reminding us of the complex nature of American Buddhism. This book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the crossroads of religion, culture, and identity.

***Namo Amida Butsu***



## THE EASTERN BUDDHIST LEAGUE (EBL) An Ancient (Pre-Pandemic) View

By Ken Nakamura

As we come together at the 2024 EBL Conference this coming October, it's interesting to note that back in the "olden days", there were, and actually still are, two Judo Shin Umbrella organizations in the Eastern part of the United States, one official, and the other, not so much.

The first organization, **the Eastern District Council (EDC)**, is a legitimate part of the Buddhist Churches of America (BCA), created in the BCA By-Laws as one of its seven districts. The temples of the EDC met twice a year, as well as sending representatives to national meetings of the BCA.

The second Shin Buddhist organization, **the Eastern Buddhist League (EBL)**, is an "organization" by tradition. There is no official organizing document, there are no "officers", and it seems "to run" by consensus, and recognized need. The EBL includes the temples and Sanghas of the EDC, as well as the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, which is a Jodo Shu Temple, and the Jodo Shin temples and Sanghas in eastern Canada, the largest of which is the Toronto Buddhist Temple. By tradition, the officers of the EDC generally also serve as the "officers" of the EBL. One of the main purposes of the EBL was to assure that a conference where we could come together as friends, sharing the Buddha Dharma, and sharing our lives, was held annually, and the temples of the EBL took turns, on a rotating schedule, hosting the annual Conference.

**A Buddhist Tent With A Common Ethnic Center Pole.** In the case of both the EBL Conferences and the BCA temples, besides its basis in the Buddha Dharma, they had another important reason for their existence. The post-World War II BCA Sanghas were basically composed of Japanese and Japanese Americans, who had a common heritage of experiencing both pre-war and post-World War II racism, which was highlighted when the United States government incarcerated, without due process, 120,000 Japanese residents and Japanese Americans into 10 camps spread around the country. With a large number of Japanese and Japanese Americans relocating from the camps to the Midwest and East Coast, they could find comfort, security, and people with a common history through the temples and in district get-togethers. In the decades following WWII, whenever a new Japanese American came to a temple, they would often be asked "Where are you from?", which meant where in the west coast were they from, or more importantly, "Which camp were you in?" The answers would serve as a "shoe-horn" for easy acceptance into the group.

*(EBL- An Ancient View - Cont. from Pg.17)*

Until the late-1980s, the Toronto Buddhist Church, the Midwest Buddhist Temple, the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, and the New York Buddhist Church, each with a busload of participants, and Seabrook Buddhist Church and Cleveland Buddhist Temple, each with a couple of carloads, would go to a weekend EBL conference –usually over the Labor Day Weekend.

**What an EBL Conference Was Like.** At the conference, we would get together in seminars to learn about and share the Buddha Dharma, meet with old friends and make new ones. For those interested, they could participate in Japanese folk dance workshops since almost every temple had its own “Minyo” folk dance group or try Yoga or other experiences. There were other seminars for children’s Dharma School teachers, and for younger members who came with their parents. It was a family affair. And these conferences, which were founded on a common history, fostered a sense of a larger Sangha beyond each temple, and provided a forum for discussion of common issues.

**The Times They Are-A-Changing.** But, as the Buddha Dharma teaches, all things are matters of the coming together and dissipation of interdependent causes and conditions, and all things are impermanent. So it is, especially for the eastern temples and for the District and League themselves.

Things are different and changing because the demographic and social dynamics within the temples and the district have changed.

With the passage of time, the Japanese American members of the Sanghas, who shared a common story of pre-War racism, WWII incarceration, and starting lives anew in the eastern United States and Canada, have almost all died or are in their very senior years. At one time, they were the foundational rock of the temples, and seeing each other at district get-togethers was a strong magnet that brought them to conferences. They were and are our temples legacy families, and they supported their temples and each other in the larger Sangha.

By around the decade starting in 2010 or so and going to now, the number of people attending these Conferences shrank to the dozens, and most of them were from the local temple. Some of the temples were asking to be left out of the rotation of hosting an EBL Conference, because they had neither the members nor the resources to serve as the host temple.

**Today.** Now, the EBL and its member temples exist in a society where many think of themselves as “spiritual” but not necessarily in need of a religious organization. There are some, with a Japanese American heritage, who look to the temple to reaffirm that heritage but not necessarily for religious reasons, while there are others, without a Japanese American or Asian legacy, who look for other ways to become one with the Buddha Dharma. In the later years, if you looked closely, you might see the old model of an organization, counting on a common ethnicity and history, might not be working anymore.

**The real question though is, “What’s Next?”**



## **A Modern Gathering: The 2024 Eastern Buddhist League Conference October 18, 19, and 2024**

By: Andrea Chapman, EBL Co-Chair

### **Embrace Gratitude and Connect with Community**

Join us for a vibrant and inclusive Eastern Buddhist League Conference (EBL) at the serene Ekoji Buddhist Temple, just outside Washington, D.C. This year's event offers a unique hybrid format, allowing you to participate in person or online, making it accessible for everyone.

### **A Welcoming Setting**

Ekoji Buddhist Temple offers a tranquil atmosphere to deepen your Buddhist practice. Take a mindful walk through our picturesque Japanese Garden of the Three Treasures, a space designed for reflection and peace. Our modern and inviting temple will be your home for the weekend, with a sleek altar that fosters a deep sense of reverence.

### **Nourishing Body and Mind**

Savor delicious meals prepared with love by volunteers in our newly completed commercial kitchen. Breakfast and lunch are included, and refreshments will be available throughout the weekend to keep you energized. Enjoy the company of your extended Sangha as we share meals together in a spirit of oneness.

### **Engaging Activities**

#### **Friday Evening:**

- Mingle with fellow travelers over snacks and a Fireside Chat with our esteemed ministers.
- Test your Buddhist knowledge in a fun round of Bodhi Bingo (optional – but brushing up on your trivia can't hurt!).

#### **Saturday:**

- Start your day with a peaceful walk through the garden before breakfast.
- Immerse yourself in the wisdom of Dharma talks broadcasted live, thanks to our new audio-visual system. This interactive experience allows for online and in-person participation.
- Delve deeper into Dr. Scott Mitchell's acclaimed book, "The Making of American Buddhism," during our engaging "Between the Covers" session at the Fair Oaks Marriott.

*(The EBL -- A Modern Gathering, Cont on Pg.19)*

## **Sunday**

- Begin your day with breakfast and a unique Butsudan-making activity.
- Participate in our Sunday service and enjoy a closing luncheon before departing.

### **What Makes This EBL Special?**

This year's EBL marks a historic first for the Eastern District – a hybrid event! Whether you prefer attending in person or joining virtually, you won't miss a single opportunity for connection and growth.

This conference also celebrates a spirit of collaboration. The EBL Planning Committee features representatives from various temples across the Eastern District, showcasing our commitment to teamwork.

### **Building a Vibrant Community**

At Ekoji Buddhist Temple, we believe in fostering a welcoming community. We've invested in technology to connect with Dharma friends across the country, both new and old.

Following the mantra of Rev. Tsuji, who believed the "Dharma is for everyone," we aim to celebrate 125 years of the Buddhist Churches of America and the Eastern District Sangha, which has become more inclusive and diverse than ever before.

### **Don't Miss Out!**

This unforgettable weekend offers a chance to deepen your practice, connect with Dharma friends, and experience the "Gift of Light" that is Ekoji Buddhist Temple.

### **Register Today!**

Secure your spot online at <https://ekojobuddhisttemple.wildapricot.org/EBL-2024>.

### **Accommodations:**

For the most convenient stay, book your room at the Fair Oaks Marriott by September 18th: <https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1712856328538&key=GRP&app=resvlink>

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU TO EBL 2024!**

***Need assistance registering or have questions? Contact, EBL Co-Chair Andrea Chapman at [aoandreachapman@gmail.com](mailto:aoandreachapman@gmail.com) or call / text 703-577-0283.***

***Namo Amida Butsu***



## WHY THE EBL?

By: Rev. Dr. Todd Tsuchiya  
Midwest Buddhist Temple

You may be familiar with the Eastern Buddhist League (EBL) Conference. It started in 1945 as the Eastern Young Buddhist League (EYBL) but the name was changed to EBL in 1976. The first conference was held at the Olivet Institute in Chicago (see photo). There were well over 250+ in attendance the first year, which is amazing when you think they were all just resettling in new cities after being released from incarceration by their government. Early conferences attracted upwards of 400 delegates! This year's theme is "Gratitude is Timeless."



The EBL is comprised of Temples and Sanghas in the Eastern part of North America. It currently consists of Buddhist Churches of America (BCA) Temples and Sanghas in the Eastern District, Shin Temples in Canada and non-BCA Shin Temples in the US. The Eastern District of the BCA, of which Ekoji is a part, is the largest geographically but the smallest by membership. Most districts can gather with car rides to a location since the density of temples on the west coast is greater. Due to the smaller number of temples and sanghas in the Eastern half of North America and the greater distance between them, groups can feel isolated.

When the EBL started having gatherings, they included other temples that were nearby but still isolated in their respective regions. Temples like the Toronto Buddhist Church, Manitoba Buddhist Temple, and several small fellowships.

**The goal of the EBL is to utilize shared resources to bring the dharma to us in the eastern part of North America and to share these experiences with each other.**

In our Shin tradition our practice is often described as deep listening or Monpo. That is not hearing with our ears but with our hearts and minds. Socializing with other Shin Buddhists sharing our life experiences with each other is where we learn the most. I have met many EBL attendees over the years that have become friends. These conversations with other Jodo Shinshu Buddhists and reconnecting with our friends is an important part of our practice.

(Why the EBL -- Cont on Pg 22)

*(Why the EBL?-- Cont from Pg.21)*

There is an organization that comes out of the EBL called the Eastern District Coordinating Council (EDCC) that started in 1963. It is composed of representatives and ministers from each temple in the district and acts as a support network. It is a more formal way for our temples and sanghas to stay connected to help one another. This has been an invaluable resource.

For those of you coming for the first time, besides meeting Shin Buddhists from other temples, there are wonderful learning opportunities. Because of shared resources, we can bring in outside speakers to a forum like this. For the upcoming EBL, we will have the rare opportunity to hear from Dr. Scott Mitchell, who is the President of the Institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, California. He recently published a book called “The Making of American Buddhism” and will be speaking about his book and taking questions from attendees.

You will have a chance to hear Dharma Messages by experienced ministers from other parts of the country to hear their perspective on the teachings. With the advances in technology, we will also have a presentation on gratitude over zoom by Rev. Dr. Kenji Akahoshi, a retired BCA minister, that we can experience together in the Ekoji hondo.

Lastly, there is nowhere in the world that you can have the opportunity to build a home butsudan designed by a member of the Twin Cities Sangha. It is of exceptional quality and you will be proud to have one in your home. It is easy enough that I can even do it!

We recognize it has always been a burden on the local temple to organize and support the EBL, yet one of the best outcomes is what the local sangha receives from their effort. So as members of Ekoji, this conference is really for you. It is an opportunity to rally around an event, to make connections with one another in the sangha, and to hear and meet other Buddhists.

**This is monpo in action!**

**This is just the tip of the iceberg of what you will experience from attending the EBL. These are rare opportunities to listen to and experience the Dharma in various forms. This is gratitude, what we receive by attending the EBL.**

***Namo Amida Butsu***

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS, SEPTEMBER 2024 |

### WEEKLY

#### **SUNDAYS (EXCEPT September 1, 2024 when we Celebrate the BCA's 125th Anniversary)**

- HYBRID SERVICE, 11:00AM WITH AN AFTER-SERVICE HYBRID DISCUSSION IN THE HONDO.
- SEPTEMBER 1, 2024, BCA'S 125TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL SCHEDULE
  - >> 10:00 am - Temple Clean Up - [Stewardship Group #4, Led by Roger Scott \(Team Leader\)](#)
  - >> 11:30 am Sangha Potluck Luncheon – bring a main dish, side salad or dessert to share
  - >> 1:00pm: Join us in the temple to watch the BCA 125th Anniversary Service via Zoom. If you normally join us via Zoom, you will use this YouTube link to watch the event

#### **WEDNESDAY**

- DHARMA BREEZE ONLINE SERVICE WITH REV. RYE , 7:00PM IN THE EKOJI ZOOM ROOM.

#### **THURSDAY**

- IN-PERSON MEDITATION GROUP, 7:30PM IN THE HONDO.

### MONTHLY

#### **FIRST SUNDAY**

- TEMPLE CLEANUP, 9:30AM – 10:30AM [For September Stewardship Group #4, Led by Roger Scott \(Team Leader\)](#)

### SPECIAL EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS (DETAILS AT [WWW.EKOJI.ORG](http://WWW.EKOJI.ORG))

- **POTLUCK LUNCHEON** IN THE SANGHA HALL, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 11:30AM.
- **SPECIAL SERVICE** COMMEMORATING THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BCA, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1 AT 1:00PM IN THE HONDO.
- **SHOTSUKI SERVICE**, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 11:00AM – DURING THE CHANTING OF A SUTRA, SANGHA MEMBERS WHO HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE DURING THAT PARTICULAR MONTH IN ANY PRIOR YEAR ARE INVITED TO GO BEFORE THE ALTAR TO GASSHO AND BURN INCENSE IN LOVING MEMORY AND GRATITUDE FOR THE PERSON WHO HAS PASSED.
- **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH** ON SEPT 7 AND/OR 8, TO HELP SET-UP, STAFF, AND TAKE DOWN THE EKOJI BOOTH AT THE BURKE COMMUNITY FESTIVAL ON BURKE CENTER PARKWAY. SIGN UP ON LINE TODAY OR USE THE SHEETS POSTED IN THE TEMPLE LOBBY.
- **MOVIE GROUP DISCUSSION**, "SLIDING DOORS", SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 AT 2:00PM IN THE EKOJI ZOOM ROOM.

### MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS

- **WEDNESDAY**, 1:00PM TO 2:00PM
- **SCHEDULE A ZOOM OR PHONE MEETING** WITH REV. KURT RYE BY CALLING 703-239-0500 OR EMAILING [RYE.EKOJI@GMAIL.COM](mailto:RYE.EKOJI@GMAIL.COM)

*A Kalavinka is a mythical bird with the head of a human and a long flowing colorful tail. It lives in the Pure Land, and it has a beautiful Voice that sings praises to the Buddha, the sutras, and the words of the Buddha.*



## **YOUR 2024 TEMPLE LEADERS**

***SUPERVISING MINISTER***  
**REVEREND KURT RYE**

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