

JULY 2025

KALAVINKA

A NEWSLETTER OF EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

EKOJI'S OBON – JULY 12 AND 13 SAVE THE DATE !



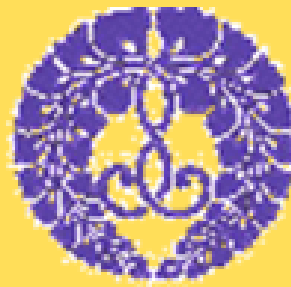
“You can be a fool and just watch or you can be a fool and dance-- dancing is more fun”



Hatsubon Memorial Candles for Sunday Obon Service



Building a new, bigger, safer Yagura



Practicing to provide live music for Saturday's Obon dancing



Closing the Sat. Obon Festival with a Memorial Candlelight Service in the Garden of the Three Treasures



Nen Daiko Performance



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TICKETS LIMITED & SOLD ONLY ONLINE

Obon

EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
Summer Festival

Saturday
July 12
5 - 9 pm



PUBLIC
PARKING

FOOD | FOLK DANCING | LIVE MUSIC
TAIKO DRUMMING | GAMES | VENDORS
GARDEN CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

ekoji.org

46th Ekoji Obon Festival on Saturday, July 12, 2025, from 5 pm to 9 pm at Ekoji Buddhist Temple! Experience Japanese "Bon" dancing, a Nen Daiko performance, delicious food, vendors, and children's activities. Stay for our moving evening memorial ceremony in the Japanese garden, filled with candles honoring loved ones.

- **Location:** Ekoji Buddhist Temple, 6500 Lakehaven Lane, Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039
- **Admission Tickets:** \$6 per person (children 2 and under free). Limited tickets sold online only. **No tickets sold at the gate. Order your tickets at www.ekoji.org.**
- **Gates** open at 5 pm ET, rain or shine. No tents or pets allowed. Folding chairs and blankets welcome. Ekoji is smoke-free. Your e-receipt is your ticket. Tickets are non-refundable and non-transferable.
- **Memory Candles:** \$5 each, available online and at the festival. Order at www.ekoji.org.
- **Volunteer:** Help out and get FREE admission! Learn more about this opportunity at www.ekoji.org.

GO TO THE EKOJI WEB PAGE (www.ekoji.org) to buy tickets, volunteer, pre-order some food, order memory candles for Saturday evening service, etc.



EKOJI'S OBON – WHAT IS IT?

Obon has its cultural roots in Japan and its religious roots in ancient Buddhist legends from India. Many Buddhist denominations consider Obon as a time to offer food and gifts to friends and to those who have passed away before us. They think of it as a time to “welcome and sendoff,” with lit lanterns, the spirits of one’s ancestors who have come to visit.

Our denomination, Jodo Shin Buddhism, however, observes Obon as a time to remember and honor all those who have passed on before us. It is a time for appreciating all that they have done for us and recognizing the continuation of their deeds upon our lives. And in Jodo Shin Buddhism, Obon dancing is a reflection of our joy and gratitude for all that we have received.

ON SATURDAY, JULY 12, WE WILL HAVE THE OBON FESTIVAL



Jodo Shin Buddhism’s Obon celebration came to the United States with the Japanese immigrants

when they came here in the late 19th and 20th centuries and the tradition continues today.

At the festival are Japanese folk dancing, taiko drumming, all kinds of Japanese and other foods, games for the kids, and a really festive and fun time for all.

It is also Ekoji’s biggest fundraiser and requiring enormous Sangha participation to pull it off.

Brant and Maya Horio are again filling their roles, carried over the past several years, as Co-Chairs. Team Captains are meeting to plan and work on getting things ready.

Due to county requirements, attendance will be limited. **All tickets will be sold online only – no-at-the-door sales.** Also, again this year, we cannot have amplified sound so we will again depend on live music to do the traditional folkdances.

We close this portion of the festivities with a traditional candlelight service in Ekoji’s Garden of the Three Treasures.

ON SUNDAY, JULY 13, WE EMPHASIZE THE RELIGIOUS SIDE OF OBON – A MEMORIAL SERVICE

During our 11:00 am Obon memorial service, we remember and pay our deepest gratitude and respect to our loved ones who have passed away.



Within the Obon Service, we hold a special segment for those whose loved ones have passed away since the last Obon service last July. This is called the **Hatsubon** or “**First Obon**”. Each of the Hatsubon families will be called to come up to the altar (Onaijin) and light a small memorial candle in remembrance and gassho.

If you wish to participate in remembering your loved one during the Hatsubon portion of the service, there is a form on Ekoji’s website (ekoji.org) under the Obon tab that you can submit online or give in person to Erick Ishii or Andrea Chapman **by July 4** so that arrangements can be made.

**FOR MORE DETAILS AND CHANGES, PLEASE
CHECK EKOJI’S WEBSITE (www.ekoji.org)**

EKOJI OBON DANCE AND MUSIC PRACTICE SCHEDULES



OBON DANCE PRACTICE SCHEDULE

- June 22, 2025 at 1:00 in the Hondo
- June 29, 2025 at 1:00 in the Hondo

Dances

Besides the traditional dances we have been doing in the past, there will be two new dances to learn, "Lantern Song" and "Fukushima Ondo"

SPECIAL DANCE WORKSHOP WITH THE COMPOSER OF "LANTERN SONG"

Friday, July 11, 2025 From 1-2:30 PM

Ekoji Buddhist Temple Sangha Hall
6500 Lake Haven Lane

MUSICIAN'S AND SINGERS PRACTICE SCHEDULE

MUSICIANS:

- Wed, 6/25/25 6-7 pm, Ekoji Hondo
- Sat, 7/5/25 1:00 - 2:30p Ekoji Sangha Hall
- Sat., 7/12/25 by 2:30 for 3:00 Practice with Bombu Story Group, Ekoji Hondo

SINGERS



EKOJI OBON 2025

THINGS TO REMEMBER



- OBON is ultimately a memorial service, both during the festival portion and the service the next day, giving us the opportunity to remember with loving gratitude, those who have passed on before us for all that we have received, and are continuing to be supported by them.
- **Tickets** (\$6.00/individual) for the Saturday evening festival will only be sold online. You will not be able to buy tickets at the entrance to the temple grounds.
- Before the Saturday, (7/12/25), there is **much that can be done online** at Ekoji's website, www.ekoji.org. You will be able to:
 - Buy tickets for the Saturday festival.
 - Pre-order some of the foods sold (food will also be sold on the grounds, but pre-ordering assures you that you will be able to get what you want).
 - Order memorial candles for the Saturday evening closing service.
 - **Hatsubon Families**. If you have lost a loved one during the past year, between last year's Obon and this year's Obon, there is a special part in the Sunday Obon service to recognize your loss. A special candle will be set aside for you in memory of your loved one. On the website, there is a form to fill out and return by July 4, indicating that you will participate as a Hatsubon Family.
- We are very much looking for **volunteers** to help. You can volunteer to help on-line. A benefit is that you will not have to pay an entrance fee.

SCHEDULE

- 5:00 — Gates open
- 5:15 — Opening Ceremony
- 5:30 — Demonstration service
- 5:45- 6:45 — Bon Odori (festival dancing) [End with Lantern Song]
- 6:45 – 7:05 — Okinawan Karate Demo
- 7:05- 7:15 — Dounen
- 7:15- 7:45 — Nen Daiko
- 7:45- 8:35 — Bon Odori (festival dancing)
- 8:45 – 9:00 — Candlelight memorial service
- 9:00 — Obon ends

In between events, enjoy the children and teen games and activities, temple tours and presentations, specialty food, desserts, beverages, vendor and artisan booths.

Editor's note: Below is a reprinted Dharma message by Rev. Melissa Joshin Opel, Resident Minister of the Buddhist Church of San Francisco. It was written for the Light of Dharma prior to the 2024 November election. As Editor, I took the liberty of changing the original first few sentences to take it out of the Election season timeframe and to make the message more universal. The anxieties that were felt by some at that time still leaves many anxious even now. As many continue to feel anxious as we survey the world and our lives, it is felt that Rev. Opel's message is still very relevant. We thank Rev. Opel and the Light of Dharma for permission to use her Dharma message. *KHN*



84,000 THOUGHTS

A Message from Rev. Melissa Joshin Opel – Buddhist Church of San Francisco, Resident Minister

***“MAY THERE BE PEACE IN THE WORLD AND MAY THE
BUDDHA’S TEACHINGS SPREAD” (Shinran Shonin)***

The anxiety being felt today is not new or unique. It is a feeling that rears up often in our lives, and the catalyst can be anything from world events, where our lens is pulled back, far and wide, to the health and well-being of those we love, a closer, tighter lens focused on our daily life. The root, however, is the unknowing waiting for the unknown.

It would be unwise to dismiss these fears as something we should get over or ignore. Many in our community have suffered greatly under politics that fail to embrace all beings equally, with justice and dignity, so the fear comes from a place of experience. The worry and unknowing feel very real. So, what can we do to balance the past and the future? How do we allow our experiences to inform our present without becoming stuck or paralyzed?

When we listen and learn from our teacher, Shinran Shonin, he very rarely speaks about what's happening in the world outside of his endeavors to spread the teachings. We know he suffered great losses through the death of loved ones, we know there was famine, disease, natural disasters, persecution, and attacks from the government, yet Shinran Shonin kept a laser focus on the Nembutsu path – always. He implores us constantly to turn into the embrace of Amida Buddha, to let that be where our hearts and minds are centered in entrustment. Shinran Shonin was not unaware or naive to what was happening around him and his words, “may there be peace in the world” acknowledge that he lived in difficult times and he wished for it to be different than it was. His solution was to spread the Buddha's teachings, and he spent his life doing just that.

(84,000 Thoughts Message, Cont. from Pg. 1)

Buddhism tells us there will be suffering, it is the basic understanding of our faith and it is unavoidable, but our experience, the same ones that cause this worry, tells us we will carry on. It is in our experiences we can find the strength to move forward and know we have the capacity and the ability to survive difficulties. Each of us can think back on uncomfortable times that felt like they would never end, but they did and we are still here. And through each of these difficulties, we have the experience of the Nembutsu supporting us.

On a practical level, we do the things we need to do. We make our voices heard by voting and encouraging others to do the same, not being passive and silent when we see injustices, practicing loving kindness, being compassionate, and acting with calmness and wisdom. Aside from the act of voting, we develop these other qualities by learning and growing in the Buddha's teachings, by reciting Namo Amida Butsu, and by encouraging others to do the same. Our practice is active, and dynamic, and goes with us everywhere. It supports us and sustains our life. When feelings of fear and anxiety arise, we can acknowledge them for what they are, fear of the unknown and fear of suffering. We balance the past and the future by maintaining our practice and embodying the hope that "May there be peace in the world and may the Buddha's teachings spread." All else is beyond our control.

Namo Amida Butsu

EKOJI'S VIRTUAL "DHARMA BREEZE" PROGRAM OF A SERVICE AND DISCUSSION WITH REV. KURT RYE WILL BE HELD EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING, AT 7:00 PM.



DHARMA BREEZE WILL INCLUDE: 3-MINUTE MEDITATION, CHANTING, DHARMA MESSAGE AND A SHORT DISCUSSION.

RSVP FOR THE ZOOM INFO USING THIS LINK:

[HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/MEETING/REGISTER/TZMLCOGSQTOTGDIRTNN5EYDBZXK9F2OVZJO](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/91012020000)



OUR PRESIDENTS THOUGHTS

NAVIGATING CHANGE: EMBRACING COMMUNITY AND RESILIENCE AT EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE

By Andrea Chapman

I extend my heartfelt greetings to each of you as we reflect on the profound journey we share at Ekoji Buddhist Temple, a journey enriched by recent significant achievements.

We proudly acknowledge our participation in the World Pride Parade in DC for the first time and celebrate Lindsay Innis's historic appointment as the first female president of our Young Buddhist Association, marking a new chapter of leadership and dedication.

Thanks to Pilar Uelmen's efforts, we've secured a generous \$7,000 grant from the Department of Criminal Justice Services, through the Fairfax County Police, allowing us to enhance our facilities with a new sign at the end of our driveway and additional security cameras.



**Volunteers making breakfasts for
"Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast"**

Our recent Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast was a moment of gratitude, where we honored the collective efforts of our Sangha, with special thanks to Kim, Ed, Erick, and Bob for their outstanding contributions to this event.

As we plan our annual Obon celebration, we remain committed to nurturing our community through various activities, including our weekly virtual Wednesday services, Thursday meditation sessions, monthly movie groups, and hybrid Sunday services. Meanwhile, a devoted team of volunteers continue to work diligently behind the scenes to maintain our campus and support the temple's ongoing initiatives.

However, as I compose these words, I find myself grappling with a sense of disconnection from our temple and the world at large. Recent events have been challenging, reflecting a world that often seems in misalignment with our core values. I encounter friends and acquaintances who are struggling, and like many of you, I am walking through a reality that does not quite match our expectations.

In these times, it's essential to remember the teachings of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, which encourage us to remain grounded in compassion, gratitude, and interconnectedness. The world may present obstacles, but our mission to create a worldwide sangha stands unwavering, even amidst challenging political landscapes.

As we navigate these perplexities, I believe it is imperative to strengthen our alliances. Let us invest in communities that uphold the causes and conditions aligned with our values. The middle path here embodies balance and conscious engagement, promoting understanding and peace without forsaking our principles.

(Pres. Column, "Navigating Change", Cont. on Pg 4)

(President's Message, Cont. from pg. 3)

Managing our temple and practicing the Dharma requires mindful decision-making. For example, our Obon festival, our largest fundraiser, occurs against the backdrop of global conflicts that create underlying tensions and fears. This confusion and fear can paralyze action and inhibit authentic engagement. Yet, amid uncertainty, it is our responsibility to foster a supportive environment where faith, gratitude, and compassion prevail.

I urge each of you to engage at levels that are both authentic and productive. The Dharma teaches us resilience and the importance of maintaining our spiritual integrity even when faced with adversity. Together, let us cultivate a safe space for reflection, dialogue, and action.

May we find solace in our shared journey and continue to support one another with empathy and understanding. Let us embrace the challenges with courage, always guided by the wisdom of the Dharma.

Namo Amida Butsu



JOIN OUR TEMPLE

[THE EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE -- THE TEMPLE OF THE GIFT OF LIGHT](http://ekojobuddhisttemple.wildapricot.org)

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://ekojobuddhisttemple.wildapricot.org>

ALL OUR WELCOME -- COME AS YOU ARE



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.

Based on the year of the passing of a loved one, for 2025 the years for Special Family Memorial Services are: 2024 – 1st Year; 2023 – 3rd Year; 2019 – 7th Year; 2013 – 13th Year; 2009 – 17th Year; 2001 – 25th Year; 1993 – 33rd Year; 1976 – 50th Year; 1926 – 100th.

FOR THE MONTH OF JULY, WE WILL BE REMEMBERING WITH GRATITUDE:

June 2025

Kimi Kawamura
6/11/1992
Mary Nobuko Okamoto
8/14/1920 – 6/12/2017

July 2025

Mitsu Yasuda Carl
10/22/1924 – 7/13/2001
John Malcolm
7/2/2012

August 2025

James Grohl
12/9/1938 - 8/6/2014
Kimiko Sugiyama
12/5/1925 - 8/31/2013



EKOJI 2025 SHOTSUKI MEMORIAL LIST



JANUARY

Evelyn Kitahara
4/22/1918 – 1/12/2001
Mariko Tamura Horita
12/4/1925 – 1/13/2016
Dr. Ray Murakami
1/24/2018
Yukio Kawamoto
11/13/1919 – 1/7/2019
Shigeki James “Shig” Sugiyama
12/19/1927 – 1/14/2019
Richard Kenichi “Dick” Amano
7/11/1947 – 1/15/2019
John Sutch
1/20/1932 – 1/11/2020
Sayo Omori Kawamoto
3/23/1922 – 1/31/2023

FEBRUARY

Lillian Oie
1/25/1940 – 2/1/1998
Fred Okamoto
2/21/2000
Rev. Kenryu Takashi 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
Sakaye Kawabata Tsuji
7/29/1924 – 2/14/2025

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

MAY

Rev. Dr. Yehan Numata
4/27/1897 to 5/5/1994
Claire Minami
1/12/1915 to 5/24/2009
John Craig
5/25/2019

JUNE

Kimi Kawamura
6/11/1992
Mary Nobuko Okamoto
8/14/1920 to 6/12/2017

JULY

Mitsu Yasuda Carl
10/22/1924 to 7/13/2001
John Malcom
7/2/2012

AUGUST

James Grohl
12/19/1938 to 8/6/2014
Kimiko Sugiyama
12/5/1925 to 8/31/2013

SEPTEMBER

Akiko Iwata
9/27/1999

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

James “Jimmy” Kitahara
6/14/1905 to 11/ /1992

DECEMBER

Takashi “Tak” Horita
12/19/2007
Richard “Dick” Carl
12/13/2002



EKOJI JOINS WASHINGTON'S WORLDPRIDE PARADE AND SHARES THE TRUTH OF THE DHARMA



By Jimmy Major

*“Sangha in the shade,
Hiding from incessant sun.
Mindfully, we’ll march”*

That was the Haiku that popped in my head as our marching troupe waited patiently for the World Wide Pride Parade to start. Our staging time was set to be 12:30-1:00pm, and mindfully, everyone showed up around the requested time.

Although the parade step-off was to begin at 2:00pm everyone understood that we were more likely to walk around 3:00 as various troupes and floats were ahead of us. An hour passed and we remained motionless. Then another. It seemed as though the sun’s waves were slowly becoming unwelcome as people retreated into the shade, and eventually some of us even began going to nearby grocery stores to pick up water and fruits for everyone while we waited. Suffice to say, the wait was long, yet I was comforted in the fact that Ekoji’s walking troupe- our Sangha, simply passed time mindfully- catching up with each other’s lives, playing games, and talking about the various waves and cheers they’d perform once marching. In that roughly three hour period that we waited, I could see the buddha nature of my fellow members, displaying perfect ksanti (patience) as they passed the time with simple smiles on their faces.



Finally, around 3:50pm, a horn blared from one of the nearby vehicles as its tires began to move. Like a river, everyone rose and followed, as did Ekoji proudly holding a banner of the Wisteria. Block by block

we passed a sea of screaming, shouting, and gleeful people some pointing and shouting at us as we passed. “Buddhists! Eightfold path! Okay, karma!” They were lighthearted and funny remarks, reminding me of the sorts of exclamations monks would make upon reflective realizations. Yet, as these words were shouted it also reminded me of a profound truth: that the Dharma is spreading.

(Ekoji and WorldPride Parade, Cont on. pg. 8)

(Ekoji Participation in World Pride Parade, Cont. from Pg 7)

It is for that truth that I believe it was so important for Ekoji to participate in D.C.'s World Wide Pride Parade. To spread the Dharma, loving-kindness, and Ekoji's motto: "Come as you are". By holding up Ekoji's banner, passing out rainbow bracelets with Ekoji's motto, and marching mindfully- everyone was able to share an opportunity of peacefully spreading the Dharma.

In the Lotus Sutra, it is said that "of any who hear the Dharma, none shall fail to achieve Buddhahood", and in this instance, I can only hope that of the thousands of people we greeted, saw, and gifted, all are able to achieve Enlightenment in their own way.



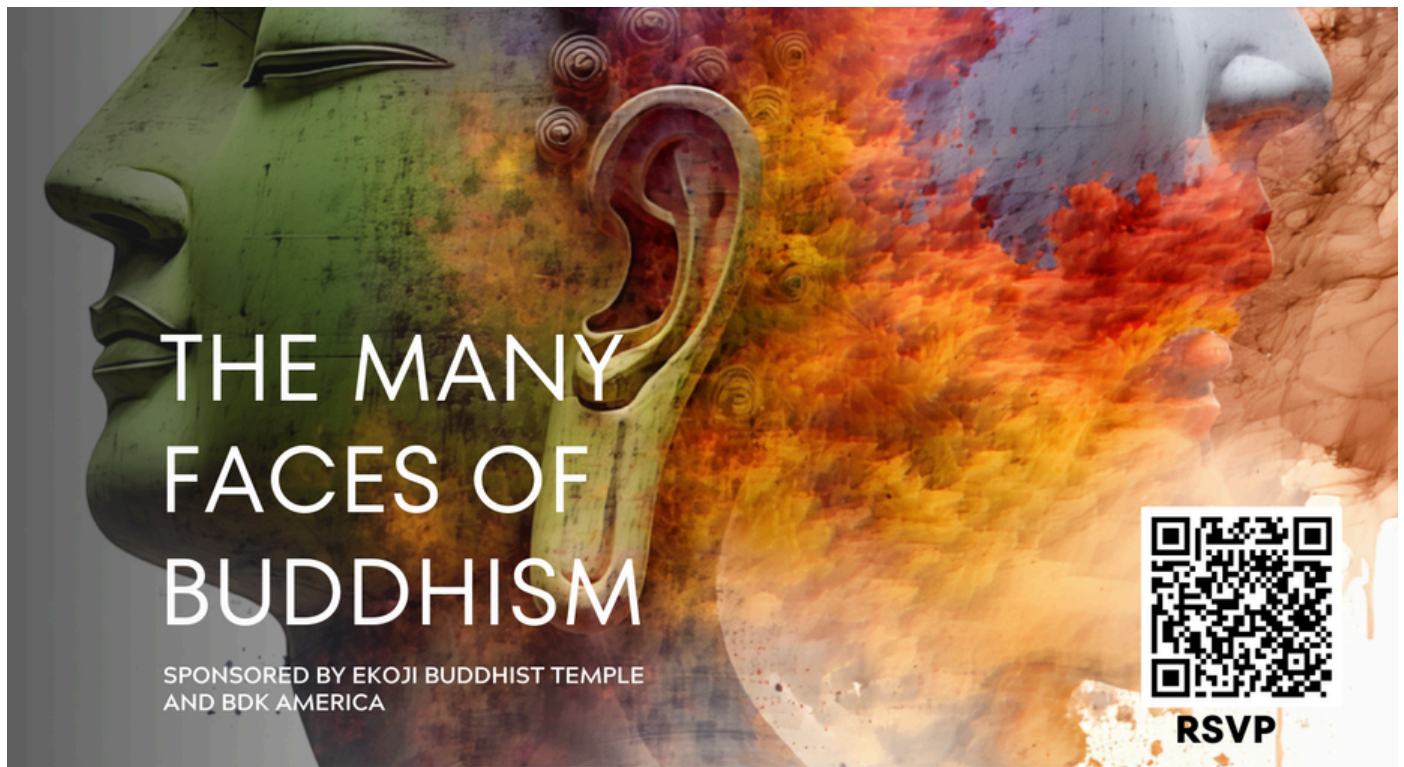
Ekoji Contingent to the Washington WorldPride parade

THE THIRD OF AMIDA'S FORTY-EIGHT VOWS

If, when I attain Buddhahood, the humans and devas in my land should not all be the color of genuine gold, may I not attain the perfect enlightenment.

Rev. Henry Adams of the San Mateo Buddhist Temple and the Coordinator, Shin Ministerial Program with the BCA's Institute of Buddhist Studies, explains that this Vow expresses the Buddha's wish to liberate all beings from the suffering of inequality based on skin color and social class. Living with the mindfulness of the 3rd Vow can open our hearts to treasure the rich diversity of the communities we live in.

JOIN US AT EKOJI'S AUGUST LECTURE SERIES WITH DR. GEORGE TANABE, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF JAPANESE RELIGION, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII



DESCRIPTION

Everything changes, including Buddhism itself. There is no such thing as Buddhism in the singular, only many Buddhisms in the plural. In the four sessions of this seminar, we will start by visiting Sakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism in India, then fly over China and Korea and land in Japan, where we will examine the major Buddhist denominations, all of whom share some similarities but are also wonderfully different. Join us on this tour of the variegated Buddhist landscape in Japan, where we will learn, once again, that everything changes.

SCHEDULE

Hybrid Series, Wednesday, 7pm ET

August 6 Sakyamuni (In person or Zoom)

August 13 Tendai and Shingon (Zoom)

August 20 Hōnen and Shinran (Zoom)

August 27 Dōgen and Nichiren (Zoom)



LECTURER

George Tanabe is Professor Emeritus of Japanese Religion at the University of Hawaii. His books have been published by university presses at Harvard, Hawaii, Columbia and Princeton. The Japanese government has honored him with the Foreign Minister's Award (2007) and the Imperial Order of the Rising Sun (2012). In 2025, the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii named him as one of the Living Treasures of Hawaii. He has published his first novel, *Miki's Mad* (available through Amazon Books), and remains active as President of BDK (Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai) Hawaii and BDK America.



EKOJI BUDDHIST TEMPLE
A Dharma Message by Brant Horio
June 1, 2025

ON DEEP LISTENING

Namo Amida Butsu.

Good morning.

Thank you for the chance to speak today.

Not long ago, I asked my kids, “What makes a teacher your favorite?”

My daughter said, “They make it fun — it’s not just classwork.”

My son said something similar, but with a nuance that really made me pause and think: He said, “They engage with you more like a friend than a teacher. When they explain things, the difference is subtle... but noticeable.”

Their insights opened a flood of self-reflection.

- Do I engage with my children that way?
- Do I teach them as companions on a shared path? Or do I dictate without listening? Instruct without context? Speak facts without empathy? Think without judgment?

And what about others in my life? My family, my friends, colleagues, strangers?

- Do I enter conversation to persuade... or to deeply listen? To connect... or to control? To receive... or to impose?

And perhaps the biggest question of all:

- How do I teach myself? Do I treat myself as a friend?

Deeply listening to everything around us, and within us, is central to our practice as Buddhists. As the Buddhist Churches of America puts it:

“In Shin Buddhism, rather than striving to attain enlightenment, we listen to find ourselves within enlightenment — within the heart of the Buddha, which is wisdom and compassion.”

“Listening can mean hearing Dharma talks at the temple, but it can also mean reading, discussing, reflecting, or even listening to the ordinary voices around us. Anyone and anything can become a teacher — if we have the heart and mind to listen, to learn, and to receive.”

And this is where today’s message begins, **where we recognize listening is not preparation for the path. It is the path.**

- From children who become teachers,
- To questions that become mirrors,
- To methods that become partners,

All toward a continuous evolution of ourselves.

(Horio Dharma Message on Deep Listening and AI, Cont. on Pg. 11)

So how do we listen?

Rev. Kiyonobu Kuwahara writes: “Jodo Shinshu Buddhism is the path of deep listening.”

He offers three listening postures as guidance:

1. Listen as if hearing the Dharma for the first time.
2. Listen as if the message is for me alone.
3. Listen as if this may be the last Dharma talk I ever hear.

To these, I’ve added two more to account for what comes after we listen, why deep listening matters:

4. Listen to the echo of the Dharma within myself — and surrender to it.
5. Listen and re-listen — again and again, from different angles — because what I’m able to hear today may be different from what I’ll hear tomorrow.

A quick story.

I had an argument with my father. It was a small one! But, I was passionate — convinced I was right — and everything he said was filtered through that certainty.

At one point, he calmly said, “That’s true in your head.”

I understood the Dharma behind those words — that my assumptions influence me. But in that moment, I couldn’t hear it. I was too caught up in my human-ness.

Later, I told my wife — my best friend — about the exchange. I didn’t even finish the story. With just a look, she deflated every breath of fire and wind from my sails. She wasn’t correcting me. She was reflecting me. And I heard the truth then, that I could not hear before. I surrendered to it, and met the moment in that breath.

I’m not perfect. I’ll get swept up in myself again. But I know that the kind of listening I’ll need in those moments will change, because I am in constant change.

That’s why deep listening must be a continuous practice — to help us meet the right teacher, at the right time, whether it’s a Dharma message... or a glance... a comment by children... a situation of adversity... or something else entirely and completely unexpected.

So now I come back to the difficult questions I started this talk with: How do I listen to myself?

Can I sit with my own discomforts and doubts, consider my lived experiences, and hear my emotions with patience — like a friend would? Or do I try to control the narrative of my life too tightly?

These days, I’ve started a new practice:

In moments of inspiration or discomfort, I ask only questions.

Not to interrogate, but to listen.

To discover where I am — and who I am — in this breath.

I recently sat down with Andrea Chapman and Joe Gotchy on the Echo Ekoji podcast. We talked about deep listening — and about an unexpected partner on the Buddhist path: artificial intelligence.

I know AI is a loaded topic. And I explore it more deeply on the podcast — I hope you’ll give it a listen.

But here's the heart of what I've learned:

The most valuable thing AI has given me... is the chance to listen more deeply to myself.

- Not to replace ministers.
- Not to automate the Dharma.
- But to create space — space for reflection I might otherwise skip past. When used mindfully, AI becomes a mirror. It reflects my questions, challenges my assumptions — mostly because I don't know where the conversation will go. And that unpredictability -- It's often exactly what opens up new ways of hearing.

I know not everyone here is familiar with AI tools like ChatGPT or Gemini, or what it even means to “talk” to AI. So imagine this:

You're texting a friend. You share what's happened. You explain what you think it means. How you feel.

But instead of advice, the reply is gentle inquiry. Clarifying questions. Reflections you didn't expect.

That's what it's like.

Earlier this year, I was feeling overwhelmed — by the ripple effects of federal layoffs, a car break-in that shook my sense of safety, and the quiet weight of watching loved ones struggle. I wondered: Am I doing enough? Is my family safe? What can I do?

So I turned to AI — not for answers, but for perspective. We went back and forth in conversation. I sifted through what came back, listening for what met me in that moment. Sometimes, it helped me hear what I wasn't yet ready to find on my own.

It's a partner that, like my wife, sometimes offers a simple truth... in a form I didn't expect.

AI AS MY PARTNER ON THE NEMBUTSU PATH

That's the spirit behind a project I created called **The Dharma Remix** — a way to reimagine the Buddha Dharma through music, poetry, and creative reflection, grounded in the messy human reality of everyday life.

Not to dilute the teachings — but to hear them anew. To create fresh space for deep listening — to ourselves, and to each other.

Here's how it works:

- I begin with a Dharma message drawn from real experience.
- I write lyrics that carry its emotional truth.
- Then, I turn it into song.

And at every step, AI is part of the process.

Not to write the message, or the lyrics. Not to replace the Dharma. But to challenge me with new angles, offer creative suggestions, and help surface the questions I might not ask on my own.

With the music, AI composes — but I produce, I shape the style, play with tone, and fine-tune the dynamics. AI brings skills I don't have — but I bring the vision.

Together, we create reflective spaces. Spaces where someone, somewhere, might hear the Dharma in a new voice — and feel seen.

And maybe, even begin to listen again when we might need it the most.

ECHOES IN THE TIDE

One of the first Dharma Remix projects I created was called Echoes in the Tide — a reflection on the Buddhist metaphor of the ocean and waves, and how it helped me live alongside grief, rather than be swept under by it.

It reminded me that waves — like our lives — are temporary.

Each one rises, crashes, and returns to the sea.

But the water continues. It flows back into the larger ocean, gives rise to new waves, and propels others already in motion.

In this way, the people we love don't disappear. Their influence lives through us — carried forward, just as we carry the currents of those who came before.

Death and loss, then, are not an end —

but part of a deeper, ongoing truth that is always moving, always present.

[And now, Echoes in the Tide.]

LISTEN NOW



ECHOES IN THE TIDE

A Cost too High

Another Dharma Remix I created is called A Cost Too High.

It reflects on the truth of suffering — and the teaching that Enlightenment means the end of suffering, if we can let go of all attachment.

But for me, my human love for my children is everything.

And that's a cost I'm not willing to pay — not even for my own Enlightenment.

So I choose, with open eyes, to live a life that includes suffering.

Because with love comes loss. With joy, sorrow.

That's the cost. --- And also the gift.

[And now, A Cost Too High.]

LISTEN NOW



A COST TOO HIGH

The Dharma takes many forms.

What matters is how we meet it — and whether we listen.

And sometimes, the voice that helps us remember the truths within, doesn't come from where we expect.

Sometimes, it's a child.

Sometimes, a partner.

Sometimes — even AI.

Not as a teacher, but as a mirror.

One more way to listen differently.

- As if for the first time.
- As if it's only for us.
- As if it might be the last time.

So it might change us.

As we listen again, and again.

Please join me in gassho.

Namo Amida Butsu



ECHO EKOJI

TEMPLE PODCAST

Can AI be your partner on a Buddhist path?



This month on ***Echo Ekoji*** we are pleased to welcome back Brant Horio, a longtime member of the temple, and the creator of the ***Dharma Remix***: <https://the-dharma-remix.com>

Brant is going to take us on a deep dive into something that is both cutting-edge and, frankly, a little provocative: the use of artificial intelligence as a new approach to deep listening to the Dharma.

<https://youtu.be/WRCpg7YfJFs>



The Dharma Remix



Echo Ekoji Podcast



EKOJI REPORT ON JUNE 2025 BOARD MEETING

By Michael Huff, Board Secretary

Ekoji Board Discusses National Opportunities, Eagle Scout Projects, and Facility Improvements

The EKOJI Buddhist Temple Board of Directors convened on June 16 for a wide-ranging discussion that included potential national-level responsibilities, temple facility improvements, and exciting updates on youth involvement.

MINISTER'S UPDATE: NATIONAL COUNCIL ROTATION PROPOSAL

Rev. Kurt Rye reported on his recent attendance at the BCA National Board Meeting in Berkeley. A key topic was a proposal to include the Eastern District in the rotation for hosting a virtual National Council meeting every four years. While such meetings require less logistical work than in-person sessions, this would represent a long-term commitment by the Eastern District. Discussion among board members revealed both enthusiasm and hesitation, particularly around future volunteer capacity, technological infrastructure, and the addition of work on future ministers.

Rev. Rye emphasized that a decision would be made after further consultation among Eastern District leaders via a dedicated Zoom session.

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE: YOUTH, PRIDE, AND AFFILIATE INITIATIVES

President Andrea Chapman shared several updates:

- A prospective Eagle Scout is seeking to complete a service project at EKOJI. Members brainstormed ideas, including upgrading the center courtyard into a meditation garden, adding benches with Buddhist teachings, refurbishing the back patio, or converting the old boardroom into a dual-purpose children's/music room.
- Landscaping improvements were completed at the temple parsonage.
- The Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast was a success thanks to volunteers including Eric, Kim, Bob, and Brant.
- EKOJI's presence in the Pride Parade was strong, well-attended, and inspiring, with photos and an upcoming Kalavinka article to highlight the experience.
- The temple has joined the "Everyday Buddhism" affiliate program. This gives EKOJI's Minister's Assistants (MAs) one year of free access to the platform's resources, along with the opportunity for group learning and fundraising through referrals.
- Andrea also announced that Lindsay Innes has been elected president of the Young Buddhist Association (YBA), ensuring continuity and renewed momentum for the group.

(Board Mtg Report, Cont. on Pg 16)

FACILITY NOTES AND MAINTENANCE

Discussion turned to ongoing facility concerns:

- Board members considered the practicality of painting the temple's bathroom tile floors, with Mah volunteering to research and potentially test high-traffic epoxy paints.
- Additional suggestions included repainting or repairing bathroom stall doors and evaluating acid-resistance due to prior damage in the men's room.

LOOKING AHEAD

The next board meeting is scheduled for July 21 at 7 PM. Several ongoing topics—including final decisions on the Eagle Scout project, national meeting participation, and bathroom maintenance—will continue to be developed after the upcoming Obon festival.

SUTRA ON LOVING KINDNESS **(Palo Alto Buddhist Temple Version)**

**May all beings be happy and well,
May no harm or difficulties come to them,
May they live in peace and harmony.**

**May I be happy and well,
May no harm or difficulties come to me,
May I live in peace and harmony.**

**May my family be happy and well,
May no harm or difficulties come to them,
May they live in peace and harmony.**

**May teachers be happy and well,
May no harm or difficulties come to them,
May they live in peace and harmony.**

**May my friends be happy and well,
May no harm or difficulties come to them,
May they live in peace and harmony.**

**May strangers be happy and well,
May no harm or difficulties come to them,
May they live in peace and harmony.**

**May my enemies be happy and well,
May no harm or difficulties come to them,
May they live in peace and harmony.**

**May all beings be happy and well,
May no harm or difficulties come to them,
May they live in peace and harmony.**



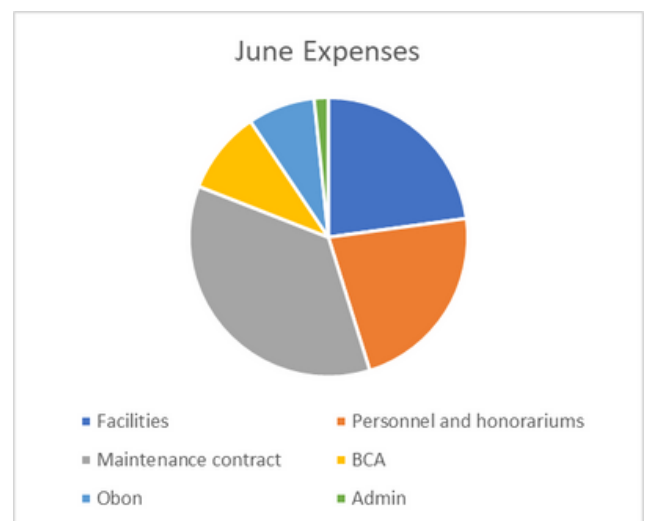
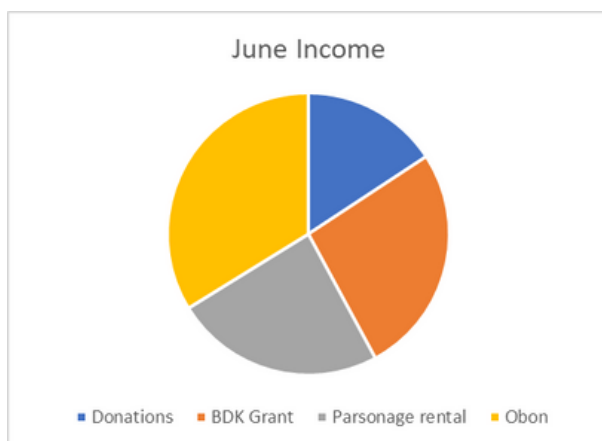
MONTHLY TREASURER'S REPORT

By Maya Hoio, Ekoji Treasurer

The Board presents this column to make transparent how we use sangha donations and our other income streams, and to illuminate the daily financial flows that happen behind the scenes, complementing the financial recap and outlook that we share at our annual sangha meeting each fall. We welcome your thoughts and questions, as directed to our temple Treasurer, Maya Horio, at ekojitreasurer@gmail.com.

June 2025 Finance Flows: Obon income continued to flow in this month, with participants snapping up tickets and pre-order items and donating for our Obon mini-sponsorships through our online Square payment site. We'll take this opportunity to remind everyone again that **OBON TICKETS WILL BE SOLD ONLINE ONLY** this year, and they are quickly selling out! We found one hiccup, which is that customers need to purchase their Obon tickets separate from all other preorder items. Thank you to those who flagged this one for us; our online sales will be an iterative process, so we'll look to smooth the purchases for next year. Our Obon volunteer sign-up site has many slots still open, so we hope to see those filled in ASAP as we gear up for our biggest fundraiser of the year!

- **Income (\$13,751):** Our Obon income made up the biggest chunk of income this month, closely followed by our monthly grant from BDK America and parsonage rental income. Thank you to the tens of donors for our Obon mini-sponsorships, which will go a long way toward defraying our costs for the festival!
- **Expenses (\$13,429):** The quarterly invoice for our maintenance contract made up the biggest chunk of our expenses, with facility costs, personnel payments, BCA dues, and Obon-related expenses comprising the rest of our outflow.



“NOT TO BE MISSED” EXHIBITION AT THE SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM ON THREE OUTSTANDING JAPANESE AMERICAN WOMEN PAINTERS OF THE 20TH CENTURY

By Donna R. Omata

Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi, and Miné Okubo presents an in-depth look at the careers of three trailblazing American women of Japanese descent and asserts their rightful place in American art.

Miki Hayakawa (1899-1953), Hisako Hibi (1907-1991), and Miné Okubo (1912-2001) were three of the most active and critically acclaimed American artists of Japanese descent in the years leading up to World War II. Their careers spanned eight decades and four US states, yet the full extent of their contributions remain underrecognized within twentieth-century American art history.

All the works and information presented in this exhibition are worthwhile to view. It is noteworthy to point out that Hisako Hibi’s faith in Jodo Shinshu teachings were communicated in her 1970 painting entitled, “Poems by Lady Takeko Kujo”, oil on canvas. Lady Kujo, (1887-1928) was an important educator of Jodo Shinshu teachings. According to Dr. Alfred Bloom, Takeko Kujo “ had a broad spiritual outlook, viewing the wonder of the universe. At the same time, she was aware of the very evil that inhabits our own minds and gives Shin Buddhism its distinctive character. She was also an independent spirit and provides a modern example of a spiritually-grounded, independent woman.”

Plan your visit to the gallery: <https://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/pictures-of-belonging>



Editor’s Note: *The painting is by Hisako Hibi and the writing on the painting is inscribed by Hibi. It is from a portion of Lady Kujo’s poem “Yowakiga mamani” (as weak as you are)*

PICTURES OF BELONGING

Currently on view until August 17, 2025,

- Open Daily, 11:30 am to 7pm,
- Free Admission at:
- Smithsonian American Art Museum, 8th and G Streets, NW
- Washington, DC 20004

(The Gallery Place Metro Stop is within walking distance.)

Hossein Assefbarkhi
Christine Baldridge
John Barnes
Jesse Barrick
Shirley Bertoni
Jane Blechman
Jessica Brooks
Alexander Corbin
Mahkameh Doaroud
Stanley Fujii
Joseph Gotchy
Connie Hoffman
Marisa and Tamon Honda

Emily Ihara
Trelaine Ito
Yuko Keicho
Sandra Lukic-Dapoingy
Thea Maggard
Bob Matsueda
Arlene Mayeda
Arlene and Wayne Minami
(in memory of Mary Okamoto)
Bert and Nancy Motonaga
Timothy Munuhe
Ken and Nori Nakamura
Jordan Norkewicz

Donna Omata
(in memory of Hiroko Kamikawa Omata)
Jerry Rankin
Edward Sams
Carolyn Seeger
(in memory of Rev. Kenryu and Mrs. Sakaye Tsuji)
Joran and Ann Stegner
Edgar Sullivan
Frank Swithers
Anna Tecson
Pilar Uelmen

JOIN EKOJI'S MOVIE DISCUSSION



*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 almost regularly on the third Sunday of each month and are led by Ann and Joran Stegner. The discussion is casual, may wander away from the movie a lot, but it is always a chance hear the Dharma through the movie and the discussion, regardless of whether it was on topic.

Due to travel and Obon in July, we will **skip July's meeting**, so **we'll meet next on Sunday, August 17th at 2 pm, and will discuss two short films based on Roald Dahl's stories: *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar* and *The Swan* (there are two other shorts in the series as well).** Both are available on Netflix.

Join the Zoom Movie Discussion
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84021310685>
Meeting ID: 840 2131 0685

SANGHA SCOOPS

By Ken Nakamura

EKOJI WELCOMES BONBU STORIES - AN ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS COLLABORATIVE TO OUR 2025 OBON



PROJECTS - LANTERN SONG

“When the BCA Music Committee asked us to create a new Obon song, we were excited and honored to take on the challenge. Most members of our group are yonsei, and we grew up attending Obon with our families. To us, Obon represents summer, friends, culture, and community.

“When thinking about BCA’s 125th anniversary, we reflect upon how the BCA pioneers worked so tirelessly and bravely to create a space where we can embrace our culture and religion. Like Nobuko Miyamoto said when asked about Obon, “This is a space created by our ancestors that we are stepping into.” With this in mind, and with immense respect and appreciation, we are incredibly grateful to have this opportunity to weave our voices into the sounds of Obon.”

Come join the “Bonbu Stories Workshop” including a Video Presentation of “Lantern Song”, Crafts, and Bon Odori Choreography Tutorial, Friday, July 11, 1:00 - 2:30 PM in the Sangha Hall.



Brant, Maya, Connor, and Nami Horio have returned from a relaxing pre-Obon break from their routine. We saw a lot of pictures of eating while in Hawaii. Importantly they went to the Wahiawa Hongwanji Obon festival, and we saw them dancing on YouTube. Wahiawa is the temple where Connor and Nami’s great grandfather, Rev. Shingetsu Akahoshi, served as Resident Minister for more than 17 years and where Nori grew up. They had a chance to experience a real Hawaii Obon, and to meet Nori’s old friends.

We had a chance to chat with **Wyatt Spage** during the after-service discussion. He attended the service and stayed for part of the post-service discussion. He had to leave because he was getting ready to start his shift as a National Part Service Ranger in the Napa Valley area of California (he was in uniform). He loved his job, and on his free time, he said he was starting to make the rounds of the temples in the area. He expressed his best wishes to his Ekoji’s Sangha.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES, JULY 2025

WEEKLY

SUNDAY

- HYBRID SERVICE, 11:00 AM WITH AN AFTER-SERVICE HYBRID DHARMA DISCUSSION IN THE HONDO.

WEDNESDAY

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

THURSDAY

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

MONTHLY

FIRST SUNDAY

- TEMPLE CLEANUP, 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM, ALL ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE
- SHOTSUKI SERVICE, 11:00 AM– 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 NAIJIN TO OFFER GASSHO AND BURN INCENSE IN LOVING MEMORY AND GRATITUDE FOR THE PERSON WHO HAS PASSED.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS (DETAILS AT WWW.EKOJI.ORG)

- OBON MUSICIAN PRACTICE, SATURDAY, JULY 5, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM IN THE SANGHA HALL.
- BONBU STORIES WORKSHOP, INCLUDING VIDEO PRESENTATION OF “LANTERN SONG”, CRAFTS, AND BON ODORI CHOREOGRAPHY TUTORIAL, FRIDAY, JULY 11, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM IN THE SANGHA HALL.
- **OBON FESTIVAL, SATURDAY, JULY 12, 5:00 PM – 9:00 PM, RAIN OR SHINE.** TO PRE-ORDER TICKETS, CANDLES, OR FOOD, OR TO SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER AT THE EVENT, PLEASE VISIT WWW.EKOJI.ORG
- **OBON SERVICE AT WHICH WE MEMORIALIZE ALL OUR LOVED ONE WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY, AND THE HATSUBON SERVICE, IN WHICH WE COMMEMORATE THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF A LOVED ONE’S PASSING, SUNDAY, JULY 13, 11:00 AM.**

MINISTER’S OFFICE HOURS

- WEDNESDAY, 1:00 PM TO 2:00 PM
- SCHEDULE A ZOOM OR PHONE MEETING WITH REV. KURT RYE BY CALLING 703-239-0500 OR EMAILING 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. IT HAS A BEAUTIFUL VOICE THAT SINGS PRAISES OF THE BUDDHA, THE SUTRAS, AND THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA.



KALAVINKA

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**SUPERVISING MINISTER
REV. KURT RYE**

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